

Apple, Samsung 'tablet war' overshadows Berlin tech show

August 30 2012, by Marie Julien



The Samsung booth during the 52nd edition of the "IFA" (Internationale Funkausstellung) trade fair in Berlin.

The repercussions of Apple's billion-dollar patent victory over Samsung were still being felt at Europe's biggest consumer electronics show, as the South Korean firm launched a host of new gadgets.

After losing the biggest patent case in decades, Samsung came out fighting at the IFA show in Berlin which opens on Friday, with a sweeping media [launch](#) of smartphones, tablets, a "smart PC" and a voice-controlled camera.

But as Samsung made every effort to shrug off the defeat with a dazzling array of new toys, there were concerns the court case could stifle innovation as firms fear to launch new products that could be the [target](#)

of patent suits.

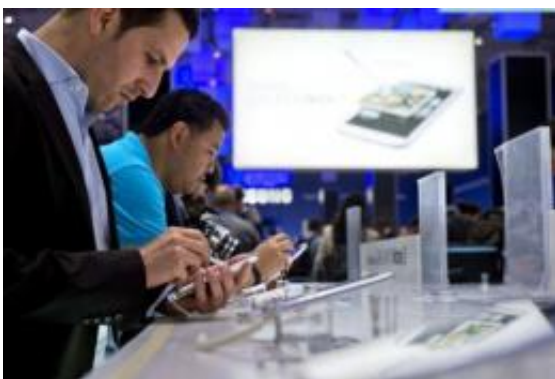
"Behind closed doors, you can be sure that there will be serious discussions taking place, device makers talking to different platforms makers," said Florian Mueller, an intellectual property expert.

"There will be private meetings in which it will be a big issue," he added.

"An overprotected market can stall innovation and infringe competition ... We are not there yet, but we have to keep an eye on this," he said.

"For the moment, I don't fear a lack of competition," said Mueller, although he believed high-tech manufacturers would be wary of the power of the patent courts in future.

Juergen Boyny, from [consumer affairs](#) think tank GfK, said the "tablet war" between Apple and Samsung—which forced the South Korean firm to pull one of its products out of last year's show—was a "limited conflict."



Visitors try out the smaller tablet Galaxy Note II at the Samsung booth during the 52nd edition of the "IFA" (Internationale Funkausstellung) trade fair in Berlin.

"It will not stop the development of innovation, nor will it stop smartphone or tablet sales," he told AFP.

"Everyone at the moment is developing tablets."

Indeed, IFA organisers say the global market for consumer electronics is poised to defy the [economic slowdown](#) and post a two-percent gain this year to around \$1.1 trillion.

"It's innovation that drives growth," said Rainer Hecker, the president of the German federation that organises the IFA.

The show opens on Friday to the public, with more than 1,400 exhibitors unveiling the latest touch-screen tablets, 3D televisions without special glasses and smaller, smarter and more interconnected devices to wow punters.

Samsung's main competitors, however, were to be absent from this year's IFA.

Apple never exhibits at international fairs and neither Google, which has just launched its Nexus-7 mini-tablet, nor Microsoft, set to unveil its "Surface" tablet soon, is setting up shop at this year's IFA.

The landmark victory of Apple over Samsung is poised to shake up the sector and could slow the momentum of Google and its Android system, analysts say.

Apple won more than \$1 billion in the case last Friday, after a California jury found the South Korean electronics giant infringed on dozens of patents held by the iPhone and iPad maker.

Samsung has pledged to keep fighting the case, and said that if it stands

"it will lead to fewer choices, less innovation, and potentially higher prices."

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Citation: Apple, Samsung 'tablet war' overshadows Berlin tech show (2012, August 30) retrieved 13 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-08-apple-samsung-tablet-war-overshadows.html>

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