

Japan court rejects Apple patent claims against Samsung (Update)

August 31 2012, by Kyoko Hasegawa



An employee shows an Apple iPhone 4s (L) and a Samsung Galaxy S3 (R) at a mobile phone shop in Seoul on August 27. A Japanese court Friday rejected Apple's claim that South Korean rival Samsung stole the US firm's technology for its own products, the latest ruling in a global patent battle between the tech giants.

A Japanese court Friday rejected Apple's claim that Samsung stole its technology, dealing a blow to the iPhone maker which last week won

more than \$1 billion in damages in the US from its bitter rival.

The ruling by the Tokyo District Court is the latest chapter in a long-running global patent war between the smartphone giants which have accused each other of stealing intellectual property for their own products.

The Japanese court found that the South Korean firm did not infringe Apple's iPhone and iPad patents for some of its own Galaxy smartphones and tablet computer. The three-judge panel also awarded legal costs to Samsung.

"The defendant's products do not seem like they used the same technology as the plaintiff's products so we turn down the complaints made by (Apple)," Judge Tamotsu Shoji told the court.

Apple had sought damages and to block sales of some Samsung products in Japan, where both firms have seen their popularity rise in a market traditionally dominated by domestic giants such as Sharp and Sony.

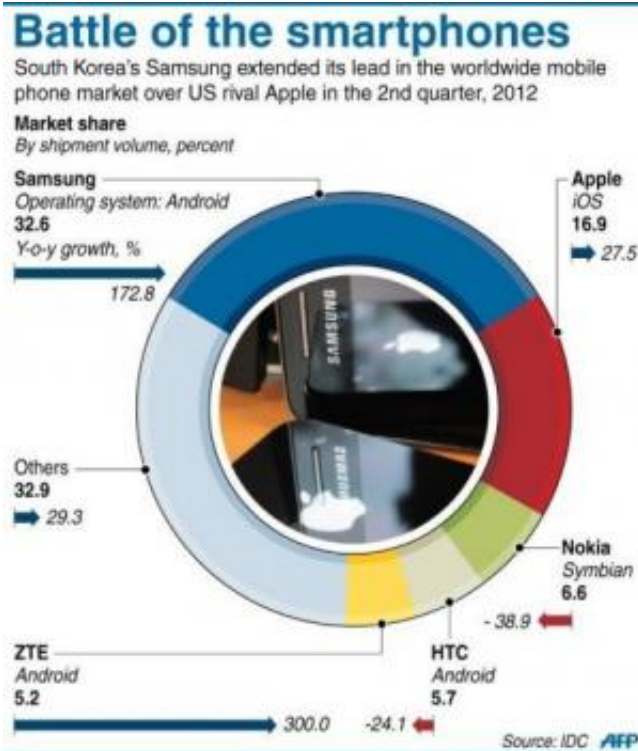
As well as dealing a blow to the US firm, the ruling will help Samsung pick itself up after the defeat in the United States, analysts said.

Samsung shares closed 1.48 percent higher in Seoul on Friday.

"Investors were encouraged by the ruling in Tokyo... it eased concern over Samsung's future which had been raised by the defeat in the US court battle," said Seo Won-Seok, analyst at Korea Investment Securities.

Samsung, which has steadfastly denied its rival's claims in a string of similar cases filed across the globe, hailed the Tokyo court's ruling.

"We welcome the court's decision, which confirmed our long-held position that our products do not infringe Apple's intellectual property," it said in a statement.



Graphic showing market share for smartphones in Q2 2012, led by Samsung with 32.6 percent share and followed by Apple with 16.9 percent.

A Japan-based spokesman for Apple, which can appeal the verdict, declined to comment.

Last week the iPhone maker won \$1.05 billion in a massive US court victory over Samsung with jurors finding that the South Korean firm had "willfully" infringed on Apple's patents.

The Japanese case, which focused on Apple's claim that Samsung stole

technology used to transfer music and video files, sought a comparatively small amount—100 million yen (\$1.27 million)—in damages.

"It was a ruling on just one technology so it is difficult to draw any conclusion on its overall impact," said Michiru Takahashi, a patent lawyer at Jones Day in Tokyo.

"But... if Samsung had lost again it would have considerably hurt its image."

Samsung and Apple are reportedly fighting patent cases in at least 10 countries.

The high-profile verdict in the United States last week regarded patents on a range of Samsung products including some of its popular smartphones and its Galaxy 10 tablet.

Jurors rejected the South Korean electronics firm's patent theft counterclaims against Apple.

Also last week, a court in Seoul ruled the pair swiped each other's technology, ordering Apple to pay damages of 40 million won (\$35,000) while saying Samsung must pay its rival 25 million won for violating one of Apple's patents.

Each company had sought damages of 100 million won.

The South Korean court said there was "no possibility" that consumers would confuse Samsung and Apple smartphones—a key issue in the US trial—and that Samsung's smartphone icons do not infringe Apple's patents.

But it said Samsung infringed Apple's patent for bounce-back technology, a widely copied spring-back action when users reach the edge of a document.

The court imposed a partial ban on both firms' product sales.

The patent cases come as Apple loses ground to rivals including Samsung that use the Android operating system developed by Google.

Samsung shipped 50.2 million smartphones globally between April and June, while Apple sold 26 million iPhones, according to research firm IDC.

The Asian firm held 32.6 percent market share compared to 16.9 percent for Apple, which has a roughly 70-percent share of the global tablet market.

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