

US Patent Office denies 'iPad Mini' trademark

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A customer looks at an iPad mini at an Apple store in Shanghai on December 7, 2012. The US Patent and Trademark Office has denied Apple's application for a trademark to safeguard its widely popular iPad mini tablet, saying the case to own the phrase was too weak.

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Apple, however, has until July 24 to better explain how the [iPad](#) mini is different and unique from the larger-sized iPad to counter the rejection seen as largely a formality.

The iPad mini mark "merely describes a feature or characteristic of applicant's good," said the rejection letter dated January 24 but that has only emerged in recent days.

"In this case, both the individual components and the composite result are descriptive of applicant's goods and do not create a unique, incongruous or non-descriptive meaning in relation to the goods being small handheld [mobile devices](#) comprising tablet computers capable of providing Internet access."

It was referring to the components of the device's name: "I," "pad" and "mini."

Unless Apple demonstrates to the USPTO that the "iPad mini" is a distinctive aim, it will be forbidden to "claim exclusive rights to terms or designs that others may need to use to describe or show their goods or services in the marketplace," the letter said.

The USPTO reviewer also criticized Apple for failing to submit a sample [tablet computer](#) with its application and providing product website pages instead.

The application "fails to include a picture or a sufficient textual description of the goods in sufficiently close proximity to the necessary ordering information/a weblink for ordering the goods, and thus, appears to be mere advertising material," the letter said.

Launched in November, the touchscreen device measures just 7.9 inches (20 centimeters) and weighs less than half the original iPad, at 0.68

pounds (308 grams).

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