

Trial pitting Waymo against Uber delayed a month

October 4 2017, by Glenn Chapman



The case stems from a lawsuit filed in February by Waymo which claimed former manager Anthony Levandowski (pictured) took a trove of technical data with him when he left to launch a competing venture that was later acquired by Uber

A judge on Tuesday delayed the start of trial in Waymo's suit against Uber over swiped self-driving car technology, giving the unit of Google-parent Alphabet time to study fresh evidence.

US district court judge William Alsup bumped the start of the trial here to December 4, granting a Waymo request to put it off so attorneys could dig into an internal Uber report turned over last month as part of the evidentiary process.

"We welcome the court's ruling,' a Waymo spokesperson said in response to an AFP inquiry.

"New evidence continues to come to light through thousands of documents and hundreds of previously unexamined devices that defendants are only now turning over."

The case stems from a lawsuit filed in February by Waymo, formerly known as the Google self-driving car unit, which claimed former manager Anthony Levandowski took a trove of technical data with him when he left to launch a competing venture that went on to become Otto and was later acquired by Uber.

Uber early this year fired Levandowski just ahead of a date set by a judge for Uber to return files taken from Waymo.

Levandowski missed a company deadline for assisting with an internal investigation related to the litigation, according to an Uber spokesperson who asked not to be named.

'Stroz report'

Before Uber completed its purchase of Otto, lawyers for the firms retained Stroz Friedberg to investigate Otto employees who previously worked at Waymo, according to legal documents.

Attorneys for Levandowski had argued against a request by Waymo that the findings, referred to as "the Stroz Report," be handed over as part of

the evidence discovery process in the case.

Court wrangling on the matter ended last month with Uber being told to give Waymo a copy of the report.

A copy of the report available online indicated Levandowski had, and later destroyed, self-driving car data taken from Google. It remained to be proven whether any Waymo secrets made their way to Uber.

"The court has made clear that Waymo's case is not what they hoped, and that more time will not change the hard fact that their trade secrets never came to Uber," the San Francisco-based smartphone-summoned ride service said in response to an AFP inquiry.

"We're ready to go to trial now, and will be ready after this very brief continuance."

Waymo's lawsuit contends that Levandowski in December 2015 downloaded files from a highly confidential design server to a laptop and took the data with him to the startup.

"Waymo has confirmed that Uber acquired Anthony Levandowski's company while knowing he had taken and retained massive amounts of confidential Waymo information," Waymo said.

"And, we have uncovered significant evidence that Uber is in fact using Waymo trade secrets in its technology."

Waymo argued in the lawsuit that a "calculated theft" of its technology netted Otto a buyout of more than \$500 million and enabled Uber to revive a stalled [self-driving car](#) program.

Uber acquired commercial transport-focused Otto late last year as the

company pressed ahead with its pursuit of self-driving technology.

Levandowski, a co-founder of Otto, headed Uber's efforts to develop self-driving technology for personal driving, delivery and trucking.

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