Judges in US, Canada approve Nortel patents sale

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(AP) -- U.S. and Canadian judges have approved a $4.5 billion cash bid from a consortium that includes smartphone makers Apple and Research In Motion for patents held by bankrupt telecom-equipment maker Nortel.

The judges approved the results of Nortel's patent auction at a joint hearing Monday, just over a week after the consortium offered five times more than Google Inc.'s initial bid of $900 million for some 6,000 patents and patent applications. Phones running Google's Android system compete with Apple Inc.'s iPhone and Research in Motion Ltd.'s BlackBerry devices.

The patents represent the last of Nortel's major assets and cover a variety of technologies, including wireless and data networking.

Toronto-based Nortel Networks Corp. filed for bankruptcy protection in 2009 and has been selling off its operations bit by bit since then.

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