



Walker Digital targets Microsoft, eBay and 98 others for patent infringement

Richard Lee, Staff Writer
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Jay Walker, left, speaks with Stephen Bull, president of the Greater Danbury Chamber of Commerce, during the United Way event at the Amber Room in Danbury, on Wednesday, April 21, 2010. Photo: ST, Michael Duffy / The News-Times | Buy This Photo

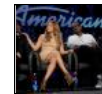
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Stamford-based Walker Digital Management LLC said Tuesday it has filed 15 lawsuits in a Delaware court against more than 100 companies to stop what it claims is the unauthorized use of its intellectual property.

The companies being accused in the suit include Microsoft, eBay, Amazon.com, Facebook, WalMart, Groupon, Apple, Sony and Google. A Microsoft spokesman declined to comment.

Jay Walker, Walker Digital's chairman, helped found online travel giant priceline.com in 1998, which now has a market value of more than \$25 billion.

"A number of great companies can trace their genesis to technology that was first developed at Walker Digital in the mid-to-late 1990s," Walker said in a statement.

The company said its inventions, which have generated direct licensing revenues in excess of \$200 million, are protected by more than 400 issued and pending U.S. and

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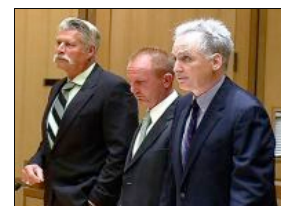
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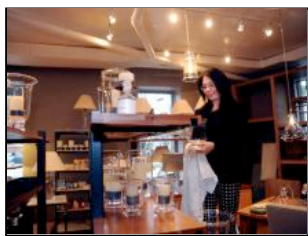
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foreign patents.

IP Navigation Group is acting as Walker Digital's intellectual property adviser.

"This is a plain and simple case of some companies taking advantage of the high costs and built-in delays of the U.S. legal system with their refusal to negotiate," said Erich Spangenberg, CEO of IPNav.

Attorney Paul Greeley, a patent attorney and partner in Ohlandt Greeley and Perle, a Stamford law firm, described Spangenberg as a "patent troll."

"He makes his money by enforcing patents," he said. "In the past decade, people are seeing an opportunity to enforce patents that haven't been commercialized. This is big because Walker Digital has all sorts of patents."

Some companies do a better job than others in investigating patent filings, Greeley said.

Walker Digital has a reputation for obtaining patents that cover as much material as possible, said Mark Nowotarski, president of Markets, Patents & Alliances in Darien and holder of 17 patents.

"Walker Digital's patents are designed for withstanding litigation. When you're playing in this league being sued is part of the licensing process," he said, estimating that 95 percent of patent lawsuits are settled before a verdict is rendered.

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