

Seiko Epson Sues Ink Cartridge Makers

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Moving to protect its lucrative printer cartridge business, Seiko Epson has filed patent infringement lawsuits against two companies that manufacture replacement cartridges for its printers.

Seiko Epson claims that certain cartridges made by Arcor, of Nantes, France, and Multi-Union Trading, of Hong Kong, infringe on several of its cartridge-related patents. Seiko Epson, along with two U.S. affiliates, filed lawsuits against each of the companies in the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon in Portland.

The complaint against Arcor was filed Monday. It alleges that more than 30 cartridges produced by Arcor and its U.S. and German subsidiaries infringe on Seiko Epson patents.

The complaint against Multi-Union was filed slightly earlier, on April 21, and expands on a prior suit filed against the company, which uses the PrintRite brand for its cartridges. Seiko Epson's original complaint was focused on 23 Multi-Union cartridges, and the latest adds a further 49 cartridges to the complaint.

The filings cite a total of 16 patents altogether. They are related largely to dot-matrix printers, but some cover ink-jet printers, according to copies of the documents.

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