

Microsoft challenged for Bing trademark

SAN FRANCISCO: Lawyers for a small US technology firm said it is suing Microsoft on the grounds its has prior claim to the name "Bing."



Bing! Information Design (BID) filed suit in a circuit court in the state of Missouri accusing Microsoft of trademark infringement, unfair competition, and "tortious interference with business expectancy."

"For nearly ten years my client has been using the Bing! mark," attorney Anthony Simon said in a release.

"Microsoft's use of the identical mark and its aggressive advertising have gutted all of my client's efforts to distinguish its business and created confusion that must be remedied."

Microsoft said that it had yet to see a copy of the lawsuit but that the argument is specious.

"We have not been served with a complaint, but are aware of the suit based on media reports," Microsoft spokesman Kevin Kutz said in an email response to an AFP inquiry.

"We believe this suit to be without merit and we do not believe there is any confusion in the marketplace with regard to the complainant's offerings and Microsoft's Bing."

He added that Microsoft is looking forward to defending its position in court.

BID creates interactive illustrations, designs, graphics, animations, and technical diagrams, according to Simon.

A BID website featured sports stories and quizzes localized for St. Louis, the city where the company is based.

Microsoft rolled out its new Bing search engine worldwide in June in a challenge to Internet powerhouse Google.

Microsoft entered into a 10-year Web search and advertising partnership with Yahoo! in July that set the stage for a joint offensive against Google.

Microsoft has also begun integrating messages from hot micro-blogging service Twitter into Bing and plans to do the same with status updates from Facebook.

Source: AFP

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