



Business

Cisco, others sued over patent; Suit centres on technology for sending current over Internet lines

Jeff St.Onge

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NEW YORK

NEW YORK - Cisco Systems Inc., the biggest maker of computer-networking gear, and six other companies were sued by Network-1 Security Solutions Inc. over technology for sending electrical current through Internet lines to power devices.

Network-1's patent-infringement complaint, filed Thursday in federal court in Tyler, Texas, also targeted Adtran Inc., Enterasys Networks Inc., Extreme Networks Inc., Foundry Networks Inc., Netgear Inc. and 3Com Corp. Network-1, based in New York, develops data-networking technology.

Network-1 "will suffer irreparable damage and impairment of the value of its patent rights unless" the companies are blocked from using the technology by court order, the company said in the complaint. Taiwanese computer-network equipment maker D-Link Corp. agreed in August to pay Network-1 royalties to settle a lawsuit over the same patent in the same court.

The dispute is over ways to send power remotely through Ethernet cables to devices such as security cameras and Internet-based telephones to eliminate the need for a separate plug into an electric wall socket.

The patent, which expires in 2020, involves sending a low-level current to first test if the device can accept power, and then sending the remote power.

Network-1 wants cash compensation for past violations of the patent and an order banning the companies from using the technology without permission.

The Eastern District of Texas, where the case was brought, was the second-most-favourable jurisdiction for patent owners who sued from 1995 to 2006, according to a PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP study last year.

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