

Apple Wants Russian Internet Stores to Stop Using Its Name

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A worker looks over a construction project near the Apple retail store in downtown San Francisco, California.

U.S. tech giant Apple is suing a Russian online store for trademark infringement, the Kommersant newspaper reported Tuesday, citing a copy of a claim filed with the Moscow Arbitration Court.

Apple is suing for a total of 16.5 million rubles (\$320,000) from four Russian companies and a website administrator, all allegedly connected to the online store `apl-msk`, which owns a range of Apple-related domain names, the report said.

An Apple spokesperson told Kommersant that they could not comment on an ongoing court proceeding.

The targeted vendor is just one of about 400 online stores in Russia that use the word “apple”

in their names, Mikhail Burmistrov, the CEO of information agency Infoline-Analitika, told the paper.

These internet vendors — most of which import their goods illegally — stand to rake in as much as 15 to 20 billion rubles (\$290-\$390 million) in sales this year, Burmistrov said.

Apple's lawsuit comes as the firm ramps up its direct presence in the Russian market. Apple launched a Russian version of its official online store and began importing products to Russia directly only in 2013. Last year, the company launched its first television advertising campaign in Russia.

Pavel Ivchenkov, a lawyer at legal firm Delovoy Farvater, told Kommersant that Russian courts are increasingly ruling in favor of trademark owners. If Apple wins the case, the California-based technology firm could use the ruling as a precedent for taking down more online retailers for trademark infringement, he said.

Apple's Russian subsidiary reported 48.5 billion rubles (\$940 million) in revenues and a profit of 81.7 million rubles (\$1.6 million) in 2013, Kommersant reported, citing data from analytics agency kartoteka.ru. Data for 2014 is not yet available.

Correction: A previous version of this story said Apple was suing over copyright infringement, when in fact the case concerns trademark ownership.

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