

Seagate Drops SSD Patent Lawsuit Against STEC

By Chris Preimesberger

2009-02-20

UPDATED: Following discovery and evaluation of STEC's intellectual property and technology, data storage company Seagate Technology drops all claims associated with STEC's purported patent infringement.

Solid-state drive maker STEC on Feb. 19 announced the mutual dismissal of a patent infringement lawsuit brought by [Seagate Technology](#) in April 2008.

The lawsuit was initiated by [Seagate's allegations that STEC misappropriated Seagate's intellectual property](#). Following discovery and evaluation of STEC's intellectual property and technology, Seagate has dropped all claims associated with STEC's purported patent infringement.

As a result of the lawsuit's dismissal no money was exchanged, and neither party licensed its technology to the other, STEC said.

"This is an important development in light of the mass adoption of SSDs," said Manouch Moshayedi, chairman and CEO of STEC.

"With Seagate having dropped its case against us, we believe the uniqueness of SSD design relative to traditional HDD technologies has been established. We have always contended that SSD does not borrow from existing hard-drive technology but rather offers an altogether new approach to storage."

Seagate's legal action contended that STEC had profited by infringing upon several key intellectual property patents. Bill Watkins, Seagate's CEO at the time, wrote on his company Web site during the legal action that Seagate had invested \$7 billion over the last 10 years in R&D and had more than 3,900 U.S. patents in its portfolio, and that STEC had been profiting from that research.

STEC, which claims to be one of the first companies to build SSDs, began designing, manufacturing and shipping SSDs as early as 1994, long before any of the four patents in question were issued to Seagate, Moshayedi said.

Seagate spokesperson Rachel Adams forwarded a response to eWEEK.

"Seagate dismissed its patent infringement case against STEC and STEC dismissed its counterclaims against the company and Mr. Watkins," Adams wrote in an e-mail. "The economic conditions today are drastically altered from those that existed when we filed the litigation and the impact of STEC's sales of SSD's has turned out to be so small that the expenditures necessary to vindicate the patents could be better spent elsewhere."

Editor's note: This story was updated to include a response from Seagate.