

Chinese City Seizes iPads In Name Dispute

Joe McDonald, AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Authorities have seized Apple iPads from retailers in a city in northern China due to a dispute with a domestic company that says it owns the iPad name, an official said Monday. The Chinese company said it is asking for similar action in more than 20 other cities.

The dispute with Shenzhen Proview Technology threatens to complicate Apple's efforts to sell its popular tablet computer in China, its fastest-growing market.

Investigators started seizing iPads on Thursday in Shijiazhuang, southwest of Beijing, after receiving letters from Shenzhen Proview, said an official of the economic investigation unit of the city's Xinhua district. He would give only his surname, Wang.

"All the Apple iPads in the big shopping malls and supermarkets have been taken off shelves in Xinhua district," said Wang. He wouldn't say how many devices had been seized or the number of retailers affected.

An Apple Inc. spokeswoman in Beijing, Carolyn Wu, declined to comment.

Cupertino, California-based Apple has five stores in mainland China — two in Beijing and three in Shanghai — and authorized resellers in other cities. Phone calls to the Beijing and Shanghai commercial bureaus, which enforce trademarks, were not answered.

Shenzhen Proview registered the iPad name in China in 2001. Apple bought rights to the name from a Taiwan affiliate, Proview Taipei, that registered it in various countries as early as 2000. The mainland company says it still owns the name in China.

A Chinese court rejected Apple's complaint in December that Shenzhen Proview was violating its rights to the iPad name. The court ruled Proview is not bound by a 2009 agreement under which Proview Taipei transferred the trademarks to Apple for 35,000 pounds (\$54,700).

Shenzhen Proview says it filed a trademark violation complaint in January with the commercial bureau of Beijing.

The company has asked authorities in more than 20 cities to investigate and to destroy promotional materials that violate its trademark, said its lawyer, Xie Xianghui. He declined to identify the cities, saying that might disrupt investigations.

"We haven't made a demand for economic compensation. We will pursue it through another channel," Xie said.

Chinese City Seizes iPads In Name Dispute

Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

Shenzhen Proview Technology is a subsidiary of LCD screen maker Proview International Holdings Ltd., headquartered in Hong Kong.

Source URL (retrieved on 10/01/2014 - 12:24am):

<http://www.impomag.com/news/2012/02/chinese-city-seizes-ipads-name-dispute>