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Sun slammed for anti-competitive UK practices

ASCDI complains to the Office of Fair Trading

Robert Jaques, vnunet.com, 24 Apr 2007

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Sun has been accused of refusing to supply product-specific historical sales and distribution information to independent UK resellers

A complaint has been filed with the **Office of Fair Trading** against **Sun Microsystems**, accusing the vendor of illegal and anticompetitive practices.

The allegation was made by the Association of Service and Computer Dealers International (ASCDI), which represents the interests of computer resellers, service providers and end users worldwide.

The charges centre on Sun's alleged refusal to supply product-specific historical sales and distribution information to independent companies which resell Sun products in the UK.

"Prior to 2006, like other computer equipment manufacturers, Sun had not interfered with the free trade of Sun products by independent resellers," the ASCDI claimed.

"In 2006, however, Sun made the need for provenance information critical to the trade in its products in the UK, and elsewhere in the EU, under the guise of trademark protectionism.

"It began a policy of refusing to provide such information whenever requested by independent resellers.

"The ASCDI supports Sun's legitimate trademark rights but without Sun's cooperation, Sun has made it impossible to know whether a given Sun product is or has been placed on the European Economic Area [EEA] market with Sun's consent."

This policy effectively closes the secondary market trade in Sun products to any company other than Sun, according to ASCDI president Joe Marion. "It is anti-competitive behaviour plain and simple," he said.

Prior to filing the complaint, the ASCDI said that it had made "numerous direct requests" to Sun for access to its provenance information and to resolve the issue, but to no avail.

It added that Sun is the only major computer manufacturer challenging the importation of its products into the EEA.

In contrast, provenance information is readily available from other manufacturers including IBM, HP and Cisco, according to the organisation.

All Server

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