

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

BANERTEK LLC,

Plaintiff,

v.

ECOBEE, INC.,

Defendant.

Case No.

COMPLAINT FOR PATENT
INFRINGEMENT

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff Banertek LLC (“Banertek”) demands a jury trial and complains against Defendant ecobee, Inc. (“ecobee”), and states as follows:

THE PARTIES

1. Banertek is a corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of Texas, conducting business in this judicial district.

2. On information and belief, ecobee is a company organized under the laws of the Ontario, Canada with its primary place of business located at 250 University Avenue, Suite 400, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5H 3E5, and conducts business in this judicial district.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

3. This action arises under the patent laws of the United States of America, Title 35 of the United States Code. This Court has jurisdiction of this action under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1338(a).

4. Banertek is informed and believes, and based thereon alleges, that ecobee is doing business and committing acts of infringement of the patent identified below in this judicial district, and is subject to personal jurisdiction in this judicial district.

5. Venue is proper in this judicial district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391 and 1400(b).

THE PATENT

6. On January 4, 2005, U.S. Patent No. 6,839,731 B2 (“the ‘731 Patent”) was duly and legally issued to Vigilos, Inc., naming Bruce Alexander, David Antal, Matthew Litke, Christopher Schebel, and Paul Thompson as the inventors. The ‘731 Patent claims an invention entitled “System and Method For Providing Data Communication In a Device Network”. On March 28, 2014, Vigilos, Inc. assigned all rights, title and interest in and to the ‘731 Patent to Olivistar LLC and on June 10, 2016, Olivistar LLC assigned all rights, title and interest in and to the ‘731 Patent to Banertek LLC. A copy of the ‘731 Patent is attached to this Complaint as Exhibit 1 and incorporated herein by reference.

7. The ‘731 Patent is directed to a novel system and method for data communication in a device network in a distributed control system. The network is comprised of a central communication device, a number of premises-server computing devices, and a number of client computing devices, wherein the client computing device communicates with the central communication device to request access to device data from the premises-server computing devices. Once access rights are established, the client computing device communicates directly with specific premises-server computing devices having the requested data. A command application resident on each resident-premises computing device administers the flow of data between the computing devices.

8. For example, the system can be one provided by a company such as ecobee that includes one or or more premises-server computing devices (e.g., thermostat) in communication with a number of input and/or output devices (e.g., smart devices), a central communication device (e.g., ecobee server), and at least one client computing device (e.g., smartphone or tablet) in communication with the central communication device. The premises-server computing devices and client computing devices can be handheld or desktop devices onto which software has been downloaded and which

transforms such devices into the claimed premises-server computing devices and client computing devices, respectively, that enable devices to communicate with one another based on common identification attributes specified by such devices. Without the software, the devices could not be transformed into and constitute the respective computing devices that are part of the network claimed in the '731 Patent.

9. Claim 1 of the '731 Patent is directed to a system that includes at least one or more premises-server computing devices, a central communication device, and at least one client computing device in communication with the central communication device. The system employs a method for processing device data communicated between the different devices comprising: transmitting an access request to the central communication device from the client computing device, the access request including one or more identification attributes corresponding to the client computing device; obtaining from the central communication device a listing of available premises-server computing devices that the client computing device is authorized to communicate with based at least in part on the identification attributes; transmitting a communication request to communicate with at least one of the premises-server computing devices; establishing a direct connection with a proxy application in each of the one or more premises-server computing device for which the communication request is successful; and obtaining device information from each proxy application associated with the one or more premises-server computing devices, the device information corresponding to a current input and/or output state.

10. Claim 2 of the '731 Patent is directed to the same method as Claims 1, 2 and 15 with the added requirement that transmitting an access request includes transmitting information to authenticate an individual user.

11. Claim 15 of the '731 Patent is directed to a system that includes one or more premises-server computing devices in communication with a number of input and/or output devices, a central communication device and at least one client computing device in communication with the central communication device, and a method for processing device data, the method comprising: obtaining an access request from a client computing device, the access request including one or more identification attributes corresponding to the client device; generating a list of premises-server computing devices available for communication with the client device, the list of premises-server computing devices corresponding to a set of premises-server computing devices the client device obtains access to based upon a processing of the one or more identification attributes; and transmitting the list of premises-server computing devices available for communication with the client device, wherein the client device cannot directly access the premises-server computing devices prior to obtaining the list of premises-server computing devices available for communication.

ECOBEE'S INFRINGING SYSTEM AND METHOD

12. Without authority from Baneritek, ecobee makes, uses (including by having its employees test), markets and sells or otherwise provides a control system and method for providing data communication in a device network. Specifically, ecobee provides a system that includes one or more premises-server computing devices (e.g., ecobee thermostat) in communication with a number of input and/or output devices (e.g., room sensors, HVAC fan, etc.), a central communication device (e.g., ecobee server), and at least one client computing device (e.g., smartphone or tablet) in communication with the central communication device, i.e., "the Accused ecobee Instrumentality", wherein the premises-server computing devices and client computing devices can be handheld or desktop devices onto which software has been downloaded and which transforms such devices into the claimed premises-server computing devices and client computing devices, respectively, that enable

devices to communicate with one another based on common identification attributes specified by such devices.

13. The Accused ecobee Instrumentality allows users to “[a]djust temperature and comfort settings easily from the ecobee mobile app on your Android and iOS devices, including Apple Watch”, and provides other remote capabilities. See <https://www.ecobee.com/ecobee4/>.

14. ecobee explains how to use and provides support for the Accused ecobee Instrumentality. See <https://support.ecobee.com/hc/en-us>. These instructions teach and suggest to use the Accused ecobee Instrumentality in a way that infringes at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the ‘731 Patent.

COUNT I
DIRECT INFRINGEMENT

15. Banertek repeats and incorporates herein the entirety of the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 14 above.

16. As a result of making, using (including having its employees internally test and use the Accused ecobee Instrumentality, as alleged below), marketing, and providing its Accused ecobee Instrumentality, ecobee has directly infringed at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the ‘731 Patent literally and/or under the doctrine of equivalents. As set forth *supra*, the Accused ecobee Instrumentality is specifically designed to perform each and every step set forth in at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the ‘731 Patent and each use of the Accused ecobee Instrumentality will result in infringement of at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the ‘731 Patent.

17. Upon information and belief, ecobee directly infringed at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the ‘731 Patent when it internally tested the Accused ecobee Instrumentality, which is programmed to operate on a client computing device, e.g., a handheld or desktop device. Upon information and belief,

ecobee employees and/or individuals under ecobee's control downloaded software onto a ecobee employee's handheld or desktop device, to test the operation of the Accused Instrumentality and its various functions, in the manner set forth in the '731 Patent and described in detail in paragraphs 7 through 16 above. Banertek therefore alleges that ecobee directly infringed at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the '731 Patent by using the Accused ecobee Instrumentality to perform the systems and methods claimed by the '731 Patent.

18. Upon information and belief, ecobee also directly infringed at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the '731 Patent when its employees use the Accused ecobee Instrumentality, which is programmed to operate on a client computing device, e.g., a mobile phone. Upon information and belief, ecobee employees and/or individuals under ecobee's control downloaded software onto an ecobee employee's handheld or desktop device to use the functionality of the Accused ecobee Instrumentality, in the manner set forth in the '731 Patent and described in detail in paragraphs 7 through 16 above. Banertek therefore alleges that ecobee directly infringed at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the '731 Patent by using the Accused ecobee Instrumentality to perform the systems and methods claimed by the '731 Patent.

19. Since at least the date of the filing of this Complaint, ecobee has willfully infringed at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the '731 Patent by directly infringing the patent with knowledge of the patent and in spite of an objectively high likelihood that its actions constituted infringement of the '731 Patent.

20. Banertek has suffered damages as a result of ecobee's direct infringement of the '731 Patent.

COUNT II
INDIRECT INFRINGEMENT

21. Banertek repeats and incorporates herein the entirety of the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 20 above.

22. The Accused ecobee Instrumentality is particularly adapted for use in a manner that infringes at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the '731 Patent. Specifically, as alleged *supra*, The Accused ecobee Instrumentality is designed to facilitate mobile communications between users based on common identification attributes specified by such devices.

23. ecobee has been aware of the '731 Patent since at least the filing date of this Complaint, and upon information and belief was aware, or should have been aware, since at least such date that the use of its Accused ecobee Instrumentality constitutes direct infringement of the '731 Patent.

24. In spite of its knowledge of the '731 Patent, ecobee has continued to offer its Accused ecobee Instrumentality to its customers and has continued to instruct them on how to use the Accused ecobee Instrumentality in a manner that infringes at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the '731 Patent, intending that its customers use such instrumentality.

25. Upon information and belief, at least one of ecobee's customers has used the Accused ecobee Instrumentality in a manner that infringes at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the '731 Patent since ecobee became aware of the '731 Patent.

26. ecobee indirectly infringes at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the '731 Patent by inducing others to use its Accused ecobee Instrumentality in a manner that directly infringes the asserted claims. ecobee provides its Accused ecobee Instrumentality to the public and encourages and instructs them on how to use it, including by encouraging and instructing the use of each of the features claimed by the '731 Patent. Due to ecobee's encouragement and instruction, ecobee customers that use the Accused ecobee Instrumentality directly infringe at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the '731 Patent by performing each element set forth in the '731 Patent and described in detail in paragraphs 7 through 16 above. ecobee has induced these infringing uses with full knowledge of the '731 Patent and with full knowledge that the use of its Accused ecobee Instrumentality as directed constitutes infringement

of the '731 Patent.

27. ecobee indirectly infringes at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the '731 Patent by contributorily infringing the patent through its provision of the Accused ecobee Instrumentality. ecobee customers that use the Accused ecobee Instrumentality directly infringe the '731 Patent by performing each element set forth in at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the '731 Patent and described in detail in paragraphs 7 through 16 above. Since at least the filing date of this Complaint, ecobee has known that the use of the Accused ecobee Instrumentality on handheld or desktop devices infringes at least Claims 1, 2 and 15 of the '731 Patent, that the combination of the software for the Accused ecobee Instrumentality as used on handheld or desktop devices was patented and infringed the '731 Patent, and that such combination of components has no substantial non-infringing use.

28. Banertek has suffered damages as a result of ecobee's indirect infringement of the '731 Patent.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff Banertek prays for judgment against Defendant ecobee on all the counts and moves for the following relief:

- A. Declaration that Banertek is the owner of the right to sue and to recover for infringement of the '731 Patent being asserted in this action;
- B. Declaration that ecobee has directly infringed, actively induced the infringement of, and/or contributorily infringed the '731 Patent;
- C. Declaration that ecobee and its customers are jointly or severally responsible for the damages from infringement of the '731 Patent through the use of the Accused ecobee Instrumentality;
- D. Declaration that ecobee is responsible jointly or severally with its customers for the

damages caused by the infringement of the '731 Patent through the use of the Accused ecobee Instrumentality by ecobee's customers;

- E. An accounting for damages under 35 U.S.C. §284 for infringement of the '731 Patent by ecobee, and the award of damages so ascertained to Banertek together with interest as provided by law;
- F. Award of Banertek's costs and expenses;
- G. Award of Banertek's attorney fees; and
- H. Such other and further relief as this Court may deem proper, just and equitable.

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Plaintiff Banertek demands a trial by jury of all issues properly triable by jury in this action.

Dated: November 17th, 2017

/s/ Gustavo A. Chico-Barris

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