

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
TYLER DIVISION**

SMARTFLASH LLC, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

APPLE INC., et al.,

Defendants.

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CIVIL ACTION NO. 6:13cv447

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

SMARTFLASH LLC, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

**SAMSUNG ELECTRONICS CO., LTD.
et al.,**

Defendants.

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CIVIL ACTION NO. 6:13cv448

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

This Memorandum Opinion construes the disputed claim terms in United States Patent Numbers: (1) 7,334,720; (2) 7,942,317; (3) 8,033,458; (4) 8,061,598; (5) 8,118,221; and (6) 8,336,772. Also before the Court are Defendants Apple, Inc., Robot Entertainment, Inc., KingIsle Entertainment, Inc., Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd., Samsung Electronics America, Inc., Samsung Telecommunications America, LLC, HTC Corporation, HTC America, Inc., Exedea, Inc. and Game Circus LLC’s (collectively “Defendants”) Motions for Summary Judgment of Indefiniteness (6:13-cv-447 Doc. No. 161 & 6:13-cv-448 Doc. No. 177) (“Motions for Summary Judgment”). On July 17, 2014, the parties presented arguments on the disputed claim terms and the Motions for Summary Judgment at the *Markman* hearing. For the reasons discussed below,

the Court resolves the claim term disputes as stated below and recommends that Defendants' Motions for Summary Judgment of Indefiniteness be **DENIED**.

BACKGROUND

On May 29, 2013, Plaintiffs Smartflash LLC and Smartflash Technologies Limited (collectively "Smartflash") filed two separate actions, one against Defendants Apple, Inc., Robot Entertainment, Inc., KingIsle Entertainment, Inc., and Game Circus LLC (6:13-cv-447), and one against Defendants Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd., Samsung Electronics America, Inc., Samsung Telecommunications America, LLC, HTC Corporation, HTC America, Inc., Exedea, Inc. and Game Circus LLC (6:13-cv-448). Smartflash alleges Defendants infringe the following patents: U.S. Patent No. 7,334,720; U.S. Patent No. 7,942,317; U.S. Patent No. 8,033,458; U.S. Patent No. 8,061,598; U.S. Patent No. 8,118,221; and U.S. Patent No. 8,336,772. All patents are titled "Data Storage and Access Systems." The patents-in-suit all stem from a common specification and share a common written description and figures. In the interest of simplicity, the '720 Patent is cited unless otherwise specified.

APPLICABLE LAW

Claim Construction

"It is a 'bedrock principle' of patent law that 'the claims of a patent define the invention to which the patentee is entitled the right to exclude.'" *Phillips v. AWH Corp.*, 415 F.3d 1303, 1312 (Fed. Cir. 2005) (quoting *Innova/Pure Water, Inc. v. Safari Water Filtration Sys., Inc.*, 381 F.3d 1111, 1115 (Fed. Cir. 2004)). The Court examines a patent's intrinsic evidence to define the patented invention's scope. *Id.* at 1313–1314; *Bell Atl. Network Servs., Inc. v. Covad Commc'ns Group, Inc.*, 262 F.3d 1258, 1267 (Fed. Cir. 2001). Intrinsic evidence includes the claims, the rest of the specification and the prosecution history. *Phillips*, 415 F.3d at 1312–13; *Bell Atl.*

Network Servs., 262 F.3d at 1267. The Court gives claim terms their ordinary and customary meaning as understood by one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention. *Phillips*, 415 F.3d at 1312–13; *Alloc, Inc. v. Int’l Trade Comm’n*, 342 F.3d 1361, 1368 (Fed. Cir. 2003).

Claim language guides the Court’s construction of claim terms. *Phillips*, 415 F.3d at 1314. “[T]he context in which a term is used in the asserted claim can be highly instructive.” *Id.* Other claims, asserted and unasserted, can provide additional instruction because “terms are normally used consistently throughout the patent.” *Id.* Differences among claims, such as additional limitations in dependent claims, can provide further guidance. *Id.*

“[C]laims ‘must be read in view of the specification, of which they are a part.’” *Id.* (quoting *Markman v. Westview Instruments, Inc.*, 52 F.3d 967, 979 (Fed. Cir. 1995)). “[T]he specification ‘is always highly relevant to the claim construction analysis. Usually, it is dispositive; it is the single best guide to the meaning of a disputed term.’” *Id.* (quoting *Vitronics Corp. v. Conceptor, Inc.*, 90 F.3d 1576, 1582 (Fed. Cir. 1996)); *Teleflex, Inc. v. Ficoso N. Am. Corp.*, 299 F.3d 1313, 1325 (Fed. Cir. 2002). In the specification, a patentee may define his own terms, give a claim term a different meaning that it would otherwise possess, or disclaim or disavow some claim scope. *Phillips*, 415 F.3d at 1316. Although the Court generally presumes terms possess their ordinary meaning, this presumption can be overcome by statements of clear disclaimer. See *SciMed Life Sys., Inc. v. Advanced Cardiovascular Sys., Inc.*, 242 F.3d 1337, 1343–44 (Fed. Cir. 2001). This presumption does not arise when the patentee acts as his own lexicographer. See *Irdeto Access, Inc. v. EchoStar Satellite Corp.*, 383 F.3d 1295, 1301 (Fed. Cir. 2004).

The specification may also resolve ambiguous claim terms “where the ordinary and accustomed meaning of the words used in the claims lack sufficient clarity to permit the scope of

the claim to be ascertained from the words alone.” *Teleflex, Inc.*, 299 F.3d at 1325. For example, “[a] claim interpretation that excludes a preferred embodiment from the scope of the claim ‘is rarely, if ever, correct.’” *Globetrotter Software, Inc. v. Elam Computer Group Inc.*, 362 F.3d 1367, 1381 (Fed. Cir. 2004) (quoting *Vitronics Corp.*, 90 F.3d at 1583). But, “[a]lthough the specification may aid the court in interpreting the meaning of disputed language in the claims, particular embodiments and examples appearing in the specification will not generally be read into the claims.” *Constant v. Advanced Micro-Devices, Inc.*, 848 F.2d 1560, 1571 (Fed. Cir. 1988); *see also Phillips*, 415 F.3d at 1323.

The prosecution history is another tool to supply the proper context for claim construction because a patentee may define a term during prosecution of the patent. *Home Diagnostics Inc. v. LifeScan, Inc.*, 381 F.3d 1352, 1356 (Fed. Cir. 2004) (“As in the case of the specification, a patent applicant may define a term in prosecuting a patent”). The well-established doctrine of prosecution disclaimer “preclud[es] patentees from recapturing through claim interpretation specific meanings disclaimed during prosecution.” *Omega Eng’g Inc. v. Raytek Corp.*, 334 F.3d 1314, 1323 (Fed. Cir. 2003). The prosecution history must show that the patentee clearly and unambiguously disclaimed or disavowed the proposed interpretation during prosecution to obtain claim allowance. *Middleton Inc. v. 3M Co.*, 311 F.3d 1384, 1388 (Fed. Cir. 2002); *see also Springs Window*, 323 F.3d at 994 (“The disclaimer . . . must be effected with ‘reasonable clarity and deliberateness.’”) (citations omitted)). “Indeed, by distinguishing the claimed invention over the prior art, an applicant is indicating what the claims do not cover.” *Spectrum Int’l v. Sterilite Corp.*, 164 F.3d 1372, 1378–79 (Fed. Cir. 1988) (quotation omitted). “As a basic principle of claim interpretation, prosecution disclaimer promotes the public notice

function of the intrinsic evidence and protects the public's reliance on definitive statements made during prosecution." *Omega Eng'g, Inc.*, 334 F.3d at 1324.

Although, "less significant than the intrinsic record in determining the legally operative meaning of claim language," the Court may rely on extrinsic evidence to "shed useful light on the relevant art." *Phillips*, 415 F.3d at 1317 (quotation omitted). Technical dictionaries and treatises may help the Court understand the underlying technology and the manner in which one skilled in the art might use claim terms, but such sources may also provide overly broad definitions or may not be indicative of how terms are used in the patent. *Id.* at 1318. Similarly, expert testimony may aid the Court in determining the particular meaning of a term in the pertinent field, but "conclusory, unsupported assertions by experts as to the definition of a claim term are not useful." *Id.* Generally, extrinsic evidence is "less reliable than the patent and its prosecution history in determining how to read claim terms." *Id.*

The patent in suit may contain means-plus-function limitations that require construction. Where a claim limitation is expressed in means-plus-function language and does not recite definite structure in support of its function, the limitation is subject to 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 6. *Braun Med., Inc. v. Abbott Labs.*, 124 F.3d 1419, 1424 (Fed. Cir. 1997). In relevant part, § 112 mandates that "such a claim limitation be construed to cover the corresponding structure . . . described in the specification and equivalents thereof." *Id.* (citing 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 6.). Accordingly, when faced with means-plus-function limitations, courts "must turn to the written description of the patent to find the structure that corresponds to the means recited in the [limitations]." *Id.*

Construing a means-plus-function limitation involves two inquiries. The first step requires "a determination of the function of the means-plus-function limitation." *Medtronic, Inc.*

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