

Micron Technology Inc., Samsung Electronics Co., Hynix Semiconductor Inc. and competitors, some believe the companies are illegally cooperating in order to save business. Together, the companies hold approximately 75% of the DRAM market.

A spokesman for the U.S. office of German DRAM maker Infineon confirmed yesterday a subpoena from the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California and an investigation. Two Taiwanese companies, Nanya Technology Corp. and Winbond, along with subpoenas, according to news reports, as has Japanese manufacturer Elpidio NEC Corp. and Hitachi Ltd.

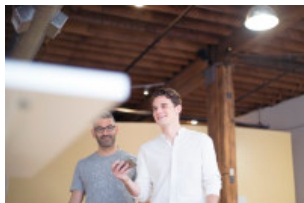
These companies join Micron, in Boise, Idaho, and the U.S. division of Korean DRAM they have been served with subpoenas ([see story](#)). Samsung, the world's largest manufacturer involved. Calls to its U.S. headquarters went unreturned.

A spokeswoman for the DOJ confirmed this week that the antitrust division is conducting an investigation but declined to comment further.

Industry participants have suspected collusion on memory chip pricing for some time. Dell Computer Corp. Chairman and CEO Michael Dell noted that memory maker prices. The companies supply DRAM to PC makers for use as main memory in desktop computers.

"There was some cartel-like behavior by a number of DRAM suppliers," Dell said. "It's not surprising that some of the companies that they could have both an incredible increase in the price of memory at the same time. The world just doesn't work that way."

DRAM pricing has a dramatic effect on PC vendors such as Dell, since main memory is a major materials cost, said Jim Cantore, principal analyst for memory at market research firm.



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"The major [PC vendors] really felt they were getting hit by a unified action; they wanted to set prices higher," Cantore said. "But from the [DRAM] industry standpoint, the

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