

MOBILE & WIRELESS

MTN accused of infringing mobile money patent

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A South African court has ruled that mobile operator MTN and the banking group Standard Bank infringed a mobile payments patent held by 3MFuture Africa. Business Day reported. The patent allowed users to switch their payment cards on and off with their mobile phones, thereby eliminating the problems of card cloning, skimming and theft. 3MFuture claimed that Standard Bank, MTN and MTN Mobile Money conspired to infringe the patent following meetings he held with Standard Bank, where he made presentations on his system. He said in 2006, MTN Mobile Money was launched as a joint venture between Standard Bank and MTN, and the transaction authorisation system was the same as the one 3MFuture Africa patented in 2001. Judge Tati Maggoka ruled that 3MFuture Africa's technology was valid and was infringed by the MTN service until the "on/off" functionality was disabled in January this year. The judge will release a full judgment in the next month. Standard Bank said it was still studying the order and would comment later.

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