# Chinese writers say Apple is online book pirate

The Associated Press

A group of prominent Chinese writers have demanded compensation from technology giant Apple Inc. for allegedly selling unlicensed versions of their books in its online store.

The case is a departure from the usual pattern of U.S artists or companies going after Chinese copycats.

The official Xinhua News Agency reported late Sunday that a group of 22 writers, including novelist and race car driver Han Han, are seeking 50 million yuan ($7.7 million) in compensation from Apple.

They say the company allegedly sold pirated copies of 95 Chinese books via its online store.

Xinhua said the Writers Rights Alliance has sent a letter to Apple demanding compensation, citing writer Bei Zhicheng who heads the group.

Product piracy is a major irritant in China-US relations, but usually involves complaints that Chinese are copying American products.

Trade groups say illegal Chinese copying of music, designer clothing and other goods costs legitimate producers billions of dollars a year in lost sales.

It's not the first time Chinese have cried foul over copyright infringement by an American company. In 2009, the government-affiliated China Written Works Copyright Society complained that Google had scanned nearly 20,000 works by 570 Chinese authors without permission as part of its digital library project, drawing an apology from Google.

Apple is embroiled in a battle in Chinese and U.S. courts over the iPad trademark with Proview Electronics Co., a computer monitor and LED light maker that says it registered the trademark more than a decade ago.

Proview wants Apple to stop selling or making the popular tablet computers under that name.

Apple says Proview sold it worldwide rights to the iPad trademark in 2009, though in China the registration was never transferred.

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