



---

*The German computer software company, SAP, has been fined \$1.3bn for stealing trade secrets from another company. Lawyers for Oracle, the other company involved, said the fine is the largest ever awarded in a corporate copyright abuse case. Mark Gregory reports.*

The judgement is being seen as a severe blow to the reputation of the world's largest provider of software for business computer systems. SAP has always accepted that one of its **subsidiary companies**, TomorrowNow, which is now **defunct**, downloaded **copyrighted** Oracle software over the internet and used it in its own systems to lure customers away from Oracle.

SAP argued the financial consequences were small and it should pay no more than \$40 million in **damages**. But the jury appears to have accepted Oracle's argument that the scale of the damages should reflect what it would have cost SAP to buy a license to use the stolen software at the **outset**, a far larger amount.

The penalty is certainly one of the biggest ever awarded in a **corporate copyright case**. Oracle's lawyers say it is the largest. Top executives from both firms gave evidence in the three-week trial, which has **captivated the attention** of California's Silicon Valley, a global centre for high technology industry.

SAP, Oracle and another company, Hewlett Packard, are involved in a bitter three-way **tussle** for control of the multi-billion dollar market for corporate computer systems. SAP's longstanding dominance is **under threat** by the other two. SAP says it's likely to appeal against the award. If nothing else, the case has brought home the potential financial risks firms face if they take others' **trade secrets**.

Mark Gregory, BBC News

## Vocabulary and definitions

<b>subsidiary companies</b>	smaller businesses in the same group of companies
<b>defunct</b>	not operating or in business any more
<b>copyrighted</b>	something created or made and owned by a person or company. It cannot be used by somebody else without permission
<b>damages</b>	compensation
<b>outset</b>	beginning
<b>corporate copyright case</b>	legal disagreement where companies argue about who is entitled to use something that is copyrighted
<b>captivated the attention</b>	attracted and held the attention
<b>tussle</b>	fight or competition
<b>under threat</b>	at risk or in danger
<b>trade secrets</b>	ideas that are private and are very important for the success of a business

**More on this story:** <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-11826167>

**Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:**

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2010/11/101124\\_witn\\_software\\_fine\\_page.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2010/11/101124_witn_software_fine_page.shtml)