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Teen sued by Apple in trade-secrets case gains legal help

BOSTON (AP) - A lawyer specializing in freedom of speech and the Internet said Wednesday he will defend free of charge a 19-year-old publisher of a Web site facing a lawsuit over an article that revealed trade secrets about an Apple computer. Nicholas Ciarelli, publisher of the site [www.ThinkSecret.com](http://www.ThinkSecret.com) and a Harvard University student from Cazenovia, N.Y., will be defended by Terry Gross, of the San Francisco-based firm Gross & Belsky.

Ciarelli said last week he could not afford to defend a lawsuit that Cupertino, Calif.-based Apple Computer Inc. filed Jan. 4 in Superior Court in Santa Clara County.

Ciarelli had sought legal help from groups including the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a San Francisco-based organization that Gross has represented in the past.

The EFF declined to take Ciarelli's case. But the group and other civil liberties organizations helped him secure representation from Gross, who said he will handle the case on a pro bono basis.

Apple sued a week after Ciarelli's Web site published an article that revealed details of the \$499 Mac mini computer. Defendants include Think Secret and unnamed sources who tipped off the online publication two weeks before Apple's Jan. 11 Mac mini introduction.

Apple has said the Web site "solicited information about unreleased Apple products from these individuals."

Gross said in an interview that Ciarelli and his Web site used proper newsgathering techniques and deserve First Amendment protection. He said he plans to file a motion asking a judge to dismiss the lawsuit.

Another Think Secret story on Jan. 6 correctly predicted Apple's rollout last week of a \$149, 1-gigabyte flash-memory version of the company's popular iPod music player.

----- INDEX REFERENCES -----

COMPANY: Apple Computer Inc (APPLC)

INDUSTRY: (Computers/Electronics (I3302); Desktop Computers (I3302003); Computing (ICOMP); Computer Hardware (ICPH))

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