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## **Sony Joins U.S. Patent Fund to Skirt Patent Litigation Targeting Settlements**

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As a measure against patent trolls, US corporations which buy patent rights without partaking in research and development or manufacturing activities, Sony formed an alliance with RPX Corporation, a specialized patent fund. Sony is the third Japanese company to form the alliance with RPX, following Seiko Epson and Panasonic.

Reportedly, there are over 200 patent trolls in the U.S. Many of them buy patents with funds collected from investors. These corporations file lawsuits against manufacturers and distribute settlements among the investors. In 2008, more than 16% of patent lawsuits in the U.S. involved the trolls. In recent years, cases targeting Asian manufacturers sharply increased.

Sony will reduce the risk of litigation having RPX buy patents that are related to their business before the trolls purchase them. The patents bought by RPX can be used freely in exchange for an annual fee.

RPX, which began the operation last November and funded by American venture capitalists, plans to purchase \$100 million of patents in the first year. With the participation of Sony, the number of companies that have joined RPX total fourteen including Samsung, LG and IBM.