

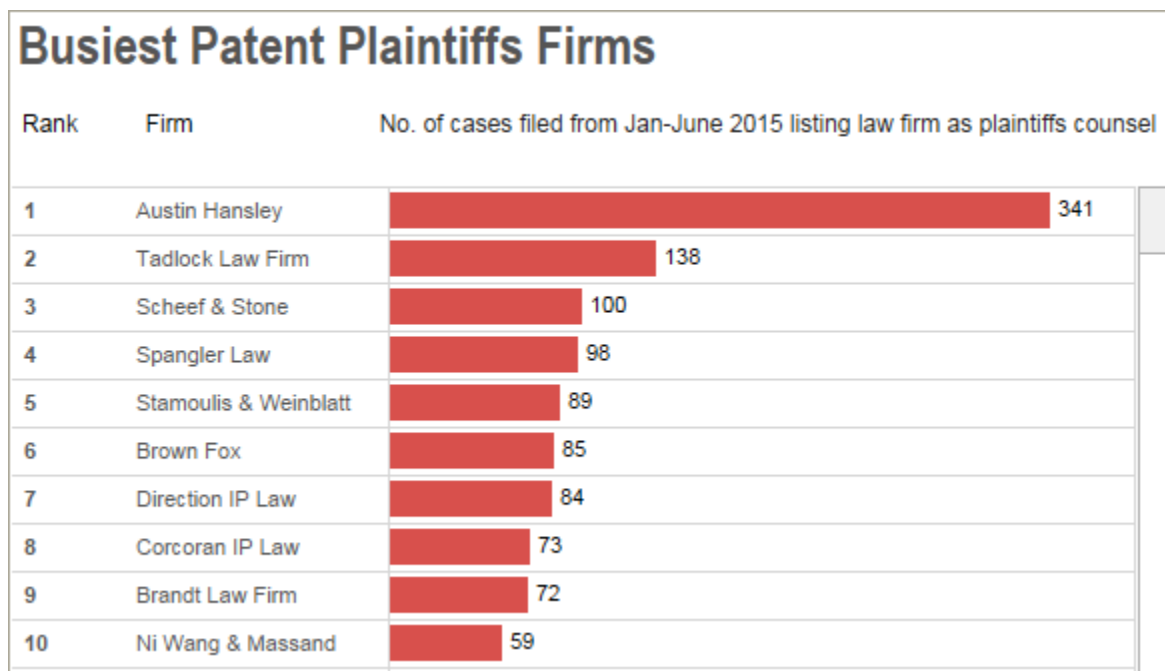
# Law360 Ranks The Busiest Patent Practices

Share us on: By **Jacqueline Bell**

Law360, Boston (September 28, 2015, 9:27 PM ET) -- There's been no shortage of work for patent lawyers in 2015, with a surge of new complaints hitting courts around the country. After a 19 percent dip in patent litigation in 2014, plaintiffs are once again on the offense, and law firms on both sides of the docket are seeing an uptick in workload.

From boutique firms to local firms in litigation hot spots to BigLaw practices with big footprints, lawyers of all stripes are always looking to attract new patent litigation clients and hang on to high-profile repeat customers. Law360's analysis of the firms that picked up the lion's share of new litigation work in the first half of 2015, according to a review of court filings, includes a broad cross section of the patent bar.

There is, however, a common theme to the law firms that populate the top ranks of Law360's Most Hired Firms Report: Texas.



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## Busiest Patent Plaintiffs Firms

Rank	Firm	No. of cases filed from Jan-June 2015 listing law firm as plaintiffs counsel
1	Austin Hansley	341
2	Tadlock Law Firm	118
3	Scheef & Stone	103
4	Spangler Law	95
5	Stamoulis & Weinblatt	88
6	Brown Fox	85
7	Direction IP Law	84
8	Corcoran IP Law	73
9	Brandt Law Firm	72
10	Ni Wang & Massand	59



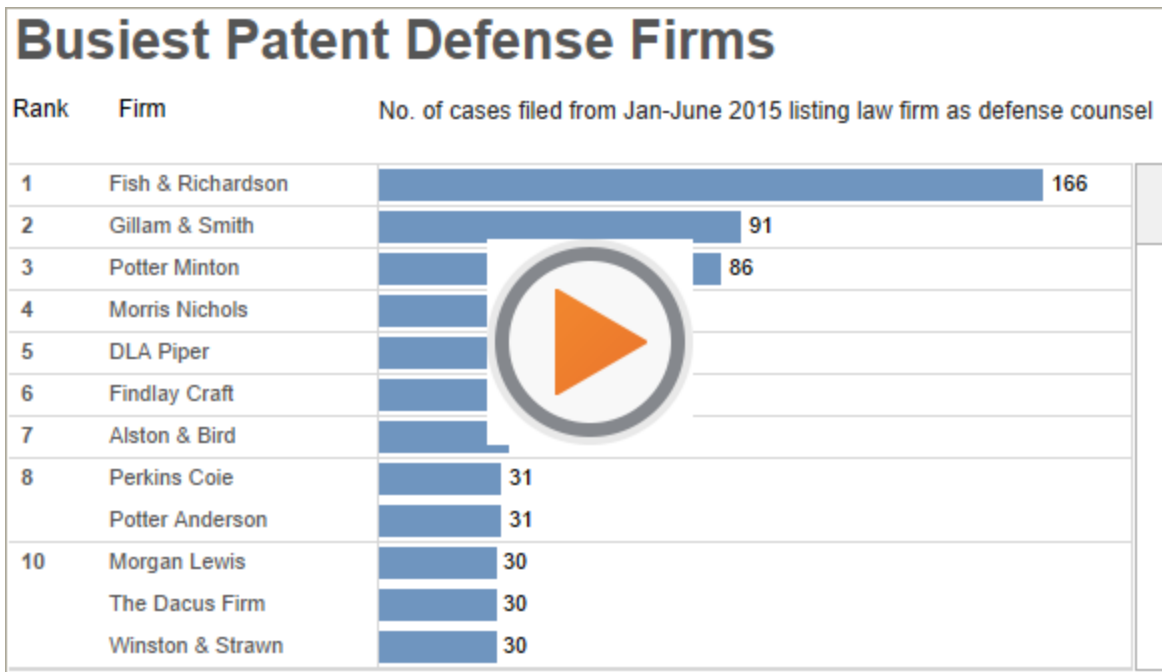
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2015 is shaping up to be a busy year for patent litigation in the U.S., after a dip in activity in 2014. According to an analysis by Law360, in just the first six months of 2015, courts have seen a 13 percent increase in the number of new patent complaints filed as compared with the first six months of 2014.

## Busiest Patent Defense Firms

Rank	Firm	No. of cases filed from Jan-June 2015 listing law firm as defense counsel
1	Fish & Richardson	166
2	Gillam & Smith	91
3	Potter Minton	86
4	Morris Nichols	43
5	DLA Piper	37
6	Findlay Craft	34
7	Alston & Bird	33
8	Perkins Coie	31
	Potter Anderson	31
10	Morgan Lewis	30
	The Dacus Firm	30
	Winston & Strawn	30

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That's potentially leading to a big change in the volume of filings from 2014 — a year when there was a 19 percent drop in the number of new patent cases filed in the U.S. as compared with the year before.

But the recent surge in patent filings has been driven largely by [a spike in activity](#) in a notorious hotbed of patent litigation: the Eastern District of Texas. That court has seen a more than 50 percent increase in the number of cases filed in the first half of 2015, as compared with the same period last year. In the first six months of 2015, the Eastern District of Texas grappled with nearly half of all patent cases filed in the U.S.

That reality is clearly reflected in Law360's list of the busiest patent plaintiffs firms. The top four law firms — Austin Hansley, [Tadlock Law Firm](#), [Scheef & Stone](#), and [Spangler Law](#) — represented plaintiffs exclusively in the Eastern District of Texas.

Austin Hansley led the charge in that district in 2015, filing more than 300 cases in just the first six months of 2015 on behalf of some notoriously litigious clients. The law firm filed more than 100 cases on behalf of Plano, Texas-based eDekka LLC, all in late April and early May.

eDekka — the most active plaintiff in patent infringement litigation in 2014 — targets retailers with claims that their websites include a "shopping cart" functionality that infringes an eDekka patent. eDekka recently faced a [major setback](#) in the Eastern District of Texas, however.

Austin Hansley also represents other active plaintiffs, firing off 41 cases in March for plaintiff Olivistar LLC, the second most frequent filer of patent litigation in 2014, along with 68 cases for Data Carriers LLC and 55 cases for Wetrotan LLC.

Far behind Austin Hansley was another familiar Texas law firm and onetime eDekka counsel, Tadlock Law Firm, which filed more than 130 cases in the first half of 2015 for plaintiffs including Eclipse IP LLC, Avioniqs LLC, Broadcast Solutions LLC and Verifire Network Solutions LLC.

None of the firms that topped Law360's list of busiest patent plaintiffs firms responded to requests for comment last week.

The boom in activity in the Eastern District of Texas also buoyed the law firms at the top of the list in Law360's look at the most-hired patent defense counsel of the first six months of 2015.

Intellectual property boutique [Fish & Richardson](#) took the top spot easily, snapping up the title of defense counsel in more than 160 cases filed in the first half of 2015 — nearly double the number of representations nabbed by the next group of firms on the list.

That came as little surprise to Ann Cathcart Chaplin, an intellectual property litigator and litigation practice group leader at Fish & Richardson, who said the IP boutique has long dominated the field of patent defense, and confirmed that the firm continues to see an increase in demand for its services.

The firm is able to nimbly handle the demand, Chaplin said, in part because of its deep bench of seasoned trial lawyers.

“We have so many first-chair trial lawyers. It changes the number of cases we can handle, and it's definitely one of the secrets to our success,” Chaplin said.

Not only does the law firm know how to win cases for its Fortune 500 clients, but it also has worked to sharpen its efficiency in order to handle a broad range of clients who may not typically face patent litigation at a cost-effective rate. That's particularly valuable in the Eastern District of Texas, where a wide variety of defendants may face the same plaintiff over the same patent and could benefit from joining forces with the help of one law firm with long experience in the district, Chaplin said.

“We have always been focused on giving the absolute best patent litigation services imaginable,” Chaplin said.

Local Texas firms [Gillam & Smith](#), [Potter Minton](#) and [Findlay Craft](#) made the top ranks of Law360's list of busy patent defense counsel, all because of their expertise shepherding cases through the increasingly crowded dockets of the Eastern District of Texas.

Eric Findlay, founding partner at Findlay Craft, said the firm's work is a mix of local counsel and some lead counsel representations for smaller clients, but acknowledged the firm has certainly been able to take advantage of the increase in activity this year in what was already a busy district.

“We've definitely seen that same uptick, and it appears it's going to remain steady,” Findlay

said.

Large general practice law firms [DLA Piper](#), [Perkins Coie](#), [Alston & Bird](#) and [Morgan Lewis](#) also found themselves in the top echelons of Law360's list of the most hired defense firms in the first half of 2015.

John Allcock, global and U.S. co-chair of DLA Piper's intellectual property and technology practice, said the ranking reflects the firm's decadelong effort to expand its intellectual property practice and take on a much higher volume of cases.

"We have had an upward trend in part by broadening the number of high-quality, first chair-capable lawyers that we have in the firm," Allcock said.

Eric Kraeutler, partner at Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP and the global leader of the firm's intellectual property practice, said the firm's large, broad-based practice with deep benches in key patent hot spots such as the Eastern District of Texas keeps the practice strong and enticing for defendants.

"Being in the most active jurisdictions and knowing the judges and having a good track record is definitely an advantage," Kraeutler said.

Still, while Texas racked up an eyebrow-raising level of cases this year, it isn't the only place defense firms can pick up significant numbers of clients. [Morris Nichols Arsht & Tunnell](#), a Delaware-based law firm powerhouse that specializes in providing local counsel representation for defendants in the country's second-busiest patent jurisdiction, also ranks high on Law360's list of busiest patent defense firms.

Rodger D. Smith, partner at Morris Nichols Arsht & Tunnell LLP, said the firm has built a reputation with clients and co-counsel as a go-to firm when defending patent litigation in the district.

"We have a deep bench of talented lawyers. We are able to staff and properly represent a large number of clients, and we've built on our prior success by continuing to recruit high-quality lawyers and train them on the practices of Delaware," Smith said.

All of the firms in the top ranks of Law360's list of busy patent defense firms warn the frenetic pace of patent litigation in 2015 is unlikely to wane over the remainder of the year, as patent plaintiffs return to courthouses with renewed vigor after a very brief summertime lull.

"It is in fact getting busier. I don't think it's just us. Across the industry, it seems to be going up," said Michael Newton, partner at Alston & Bird LLP.

Methodology: Law 360's midyear report on the most hired law firms examines representations in cases filed between Jan. 1 and June 30, 2015, using raw data from PACER filtered by Law360's sophisticated docket tracking systems and reviewed by Law360 staff. Plaintiffs attorney data includes all law firms listed in the complaint. Defense attorney data includes all law firms that

can be verified as defense counsel through a search of PACER and case filings. The defense counsel ranking includes all cases where at least one defense attorney made a notice of appearance on or before Aug. 25.

--Editing by Kat Laskowski and Kelly Duncan.

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