Gatehouse and New York Times Co. settle lawsuit

By Denise Lavoie
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BOSTON—An agreement has been reached in a copyright infringement lawsuit filed by GateHouse Media against The New York Times Co. in a case that had been closely watched by journalists and bloggers, a court official said Monday.

GateHouse sued the Times, the parent company of The Boston Globe and its Boston.com Web Site, last month, claiming the Globe's new community Web sites use GateHouse's newspaper headlines and lead sentences without permission.

A clerk to U.S. District Judge William Young said the two sides reached an agreement over the weekend just before the case was set to go to trial Monday in U.S. District Court.

No details have been announced. Lawyers for GateHouse and the New York Times Co. declined immediate comment Monday morning. Catherine Mathis, a spokeswoman for the New York Times Co., did not immediately return a call seeking comment.

Last fall, Boston.com launched "Your Town" community Web sites covering Newton, Waltham, and Needham, which compete with the "Wicked Local" sites run by Gatehouse.

GateHouse claimed Boston.com violates copyright and trademark laws by taking GateHouse material published on its "Wicked Local" Web sites. Boston.com offers links that send readers directly to "Wicked Local" stories -- bypassing ads posted on home pages that help fund GateHouse's operation and creating confusion on the source of the original reporting, GateHouse claimed in its complaint.

News organizations and bloggers said the case could have far-reaching implications for determining how much content one news organization or Web site can use from another.

GateHouse, based in Fairport, N.Y., owns 97 daily newspapers, 400 other publications and 260 related Web sites reaching more than 10 million people in 21 states. Its Massachusetts publications include The Patriot Ledger, The Enterprise, the Newton TAB and the Daily News Tribune of Waltham.

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