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Apple charges denied by former chairman

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MR STEVE JOBS, co-founder and former chairman of Apple Computer, yesterday denied charges that he attempted to "steal" proprietary information and key employees from the company.

Responding to a suit filed against him by Apple Computer, Mr Jobs said that he had "no intention of taking or using any Apple confidential information or proprietary technology to his new company."

Apple Computer is charging that its former chairman misappropriated confidential information, lured away key Apple employees, violated his employment contract and breached his fiduciary responsibilities as chairman of the company.

The suit follows Mr Jobs' resignation last week and his announcement of plans to form another computer company. Mr Jobs hired five

Apple employees to join him in the venture.

Apple's suit claims that Mr Jobs' new company will compete with Apple and calls Mr Jobs' conduct "wanton, wilful, malicious and outrageous."

"This sort of thing sure as hell doesn't help Apple or its employees. We don't want to get involved in an unjustified lawsuit. We just want to build our company and invent something new," Mr Jobs said.

Mr Jobs has so far declined to provide details of his planned venture. He is, however, understood to be planning the development of a high-performance personal computer for university and college users. Apple Computer has undertaken a major marketing effort to sell its Macintosh computer to U.S. universities.

The Apple lawsuit also names Mr Richard A. Page, who formerly held the title of "Apple Fellow." He is one of five senior Apple employees hired by Mr Jobs for the new company. Mr Page was responsible for designing Apple's next generation personal computer.

Apple alleged that Mr Jobs "secretly made plans for the new company while serving as Apple's chairman, that he falsely represented his company and intentions to the board of Apple computer, and that his company planned to compete with Apple."

Apple is seeking unspecified monetary damages as well as prohibiting Mr Jobs from using any of Apple's confidential information and from inducing other Apple employees to join him in his venture.