

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS

Jane Doe, by and through next friend John Doe, Richard Robinson,
Yolanda Brown, Jonathan Leblond, Patricia Orris, Angela Stevens,
Jessica Jackson, Melissa Oatman, Justin Revelo, and Taylor Vall, on
behalf of themselves and all other persons similarly situated v. Apple
Inc.

Doe v. Apple Inc. · No. 3:20-CV-421-NJR · Decided January 12, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois addresses four motions by Apple Inc. to maintain information under seal in a putative class action. The court grants two motions in full and two in part, finding that much of the material contains confidential intellectual property, research and development information, source code, and technical details, while identifying three documents that do not warrant continued sealing. The court states that it will revisit the propriety of sealing the information at the conclusion of the case.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Nancy J. Rosenstengel
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
DECIDED	January 12, 2026
DOCKET	3:20-CV-421-NJR
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The court ruled on four motions by Apple to maintain under seal information filed in connection with the pleadings, class-certification briefing, summary-judgment briefing, and Daubert briefing.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The party seeking to restrict public access bears the burden of showing good cause for sealing judicial records, and the court must independently review the requested redactions.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unknown

TOPICS

civil procedure

trade secrets

intellectual property

commercial litigation

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

commercial litigation

intellectual property

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the materials Apple sought to seal were judicial records subject to the presumption of public access.
2. Whether Apple demonstrated good cause to maintain particular documents or portions of documents under seal because they contained trade secrets, proprietary business information, or other information warranting confidentiality.

HOLDINGS

1. Documents that affect the disposition of federal litigation are presumptively open to public inspection, although the presumption may be rebutted for trade secrets or other bona fide long-term confidential information, or when a statute, rule, or privilege justifies confidentiality.
2. Apple established good cause to maintain most of the challenged materials under seal because they contained intellectual property, research and development information, and source code whose disclosure could provide others with a competitive and economic advantage, but three identified documents did not contain trade secrets or proprietary business information and were not properly kept under seal.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Documents that affect the disposition of federal litigation are presumptively open to public view.” (Page 4)

“The determination of good cause cannot be elided by allowing the parties to seal whatever they want” (Page 4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The sealed materials included portions of amended complaints, answers and affirmative defenses, class-certification briefing, summary-judgment materials, exhibits, and Daubert briefing. Apple asserted that the materials contained employee names, plaintiffs' personally identifying information, confidential business and research information concerning the Photos application, People album feature, and iCloud service, source code, and other technical details. Apple submitted copies of the documents, proposed redactions, and a chart explaining why each document or portion should remain sealed.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The court had previously granted in part an earlier motion by Apple to maintain documents under seal. Apple then filed four additional motions seeking to continue sealing those documents and to seal additional materials

alleged to contain confidential information. After reviewing the complete documents, proposed redactions, and Apple's rationale for confidentiality, the court granted two motions in full, granted two in part, denied them in part, and ordered that three identified documents not remain sealed.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Goesel v. Boley Int’l (H.K.) Ltd., 738 F.3d 831, 833 (7th Cir.)
- Baxter Int’l, Inc. v. Abbott Lab’ys, 297 F.3d 544, 545 (7th Cir.)
- Seattle Times Co. v. Rhinehart, 467 U.S. 20 (1984)
- City of Greenville, Ill. v. Syngenta Crop Prot., LLC, 764 F.3d 695, 697 (7th Cir.)
- Union Oil Co. of California v. Leavell, 220 F.3d 562, 568 (7th Cir.)
- Heraeus Kulzer, GmbH v. Biomet, Inc., 881 F.3d 550, 566 (7th Cir.)
- Citizens First Nat. Bank of Princeton v. Cincinnati Ins. Co., 178 F.3d 943, 945 (7th Cir.)