

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Abdi Nazemian, et al. v. NVIDIA Corporation

Nazemian · No. 24-cv-01454-JST · Decided December 4, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California addresses several motions to seal materials filed in connection with a dispute between Abdi Nazemian and other plaintiffs and NVIDIA Corporation. The court applies the compelling-reasons standard to most materials, grants sealing of one declaration and portions of certain exhibits containing confidential business information, and denies sealing of references to publicly discussed pirate databases and related allegations.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jon S. Tigar
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	December 4, 2025
DOCKET	24-cv-01454-JST
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Order resolving several administrative motions to seal materials filed in connection with plaintiffs' motion to modify the scheduling order, motion for leave to amend the complaint, and related briefing.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied Civil Local Rule 79-5 and the common-law presumption of public access. It required compelling reasons supported by specific factual findings for materials attached to motions affecting the merits, and applied the good-cause standard under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c) to materials only tangentially related to the merits.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order; nonprecedential
PARTIES	Abdi Nazemian, et al. v. NVIDIA Corporation

TOPICS

civil procedure

motions to dismiss

motion to amend

trade secrets

commercial litigation

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

commercial litigation

intellectual property

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the parties satisfied Civil Local Rule 79-5 and overcame the applicable presumption of public access sufficiently to seal or redact the challenged materials.
2. Whether references to publicly available pirate databases, allegations concerning the use of those databases, and related public information constituted sealable confidential business information.
3. Whether materials concerning genuine product development and confidential business decision-making warranted partial sealing based on competitive harm.
4. Whether the court should grant or deny the motions to seal at ECF Nos. 192, 200, 203, 207, 210, and 211.

HOLDINGS

1. A party seeking to seal court-filed materials must comply with Civil Local Rule 79-5 and rebut the strong presumption of public access. Materials attached to motions affecting the merits require compelling reasons supported by specific factual findings, while materials attached to motions only tangentially related to the merits may be sealed upon a showing of good cause under Rule 26(c).
2. NVIDIA failed to establish compelling reasons to seal or redact references in the proposed amended complaint and related briefing to Anna's Archive, Books3, LibGen, Sci-Hub, and Z-Library, as well as allegations that NVIDIA attempted to pirate copyrighted works.
3. NVIDIA sufficiently demonstrated that Exhibits D, E, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, and R contained genuine product-development and confidential business-decision information whose disclosure could foreseeably cause competitive harm; the motion was therefore partially granted as to those exhibits.
4. Documents covered by denied sealing motions would not be considered unless the filing party filed them on the public record without redaction within seven days of the order.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The Court will grant the motions to seal in part and deny them in part.” (at 1)

“A party seeking to seal a document filed with the court must (1) comply with Civil Local Rule 79-5; and (2) rebut the “a strong presumption in favor of access” that applies to all documents other than grand jury transcripts or pre-indictment warrant materials.” (at 1-2)

“The Court is not persuaded. For one thing, reliance on “conclusory statements that publication of the information ‘could pose significant commercial harm to [the party seeking to maintain information under seal]’ . . . does not come close to establishing compelling reasons to conceal this material from the public.”” (at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiffs sought to file an amended complaint and related briefing containing references to Anna's Archive, Books3, LibGen, Sci-Hub, Z-Library, and allegations that NVIDIA attempted to pirate copyrighted works. NVIDIA also sought to seal materials concerning its product development, confidential business decision-making, and a declaration submitted in opposition to amendment. The court found that the references to publicly discussed pirate databases were not confidential, while certain internal product-development and business materials could foreseeably cause competitive harm if disclosed.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs and NVIDIA filed competing motions and oppositions concerning the sealing of documents and portions of filings. The court granted the motion concerning a confidential NVIDIA declaration in part, denied sealing of references to publicly known pirate databases and related allegations, and partially granted the motion concerning exhibits containing genuine confidential product-development and business-decision information.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Kamakana v. City & County of Honolulu, 447 F.3d 1172 (9th Cir. 2006)
- Pintos v. Pacific Creditors Association, 605 F.3d 665 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Nixon v. Warner Communications, Inc., 435 U.S. 589 (1978)
- Center for Auto Safety v. Chrysler Group, LLC, 809 F.3d 1092 (9th Cir. 2016)
- Apple Inc. v. Psystar Corp., 658 F.3d 1150 (9th Cir. 2011), cert. denied, 132 S. Ct. 2374 (2012)
- Skillz Platform Inc. v. AviaGames Inc., No. 21-CV-02436-BLF, 2023 WL 7678649, at *1 (N.D. Cal. Nov. 13, 2023)
- Corvello v. Wells Fargo Bank N.A., No. 10-cv-05072-VC, 2016 WL 11730952, at *1 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 29, 2016)
- Kadrey v. Meta Platforms, Inc., 23-cv-03417-VC, ECF No. 373 at 1 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 8, 2025)
- Rodman v. Safeway Inc., No. 11-cv-03003-JST, 2014 WL 12787874, at *2 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 22, 2014)
- Bartz v. Anthropic, 787 F. Supp. 3d 1007, 1015 (N.D. Cal. 2025)
- Kadrey v. Meta Platforms, Inc., 788 F. Supp. 3d 1026, 1041 (N.D. Cal. 2025)

OPINION

Nazemian

PER CURIAM.

1 2 3

4 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

5 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

ORDER RE: MOTIONS TO SEAL

v. 9 Re: ECF No. 192, 200, 203, 207, 210, 211

10 NVIDIA CORPORATION,

Defendant. 11 12 13 Before the Court are several motions to seal and oppositions to motions to seal. ECF Nos. 14 192, 200, 203, 207, 210, 211. The Court will grant the motions to seal in part and deny them in 15 part.

16 I. LEGAL STANDARD

17 A party seeking to seal a document filed with the court must (1) comply with Civil Local
18 Rule 79-5; and (2) rebut the “a strong presumption in favor of access” that applies to all
19 documents other than grand jury transcripts or pre-indictment warrant materials. *Kamakana v.*
20 *City & Cty. of Honolulu*, 447 F.3d 1172, 1178 (9th Cir. 2006) (citation and internal quotations
21 omitted). 22 With respect to the first prong, Local Rule 79-5 requires, as a threshold, a request
that 23 (1) “establishes that the document, or portions thereof, are privileged, protectable as a trade
secret 24 or otherwise entitled to protection under the law”; and (2) is “narrowly tailored to seek
sealing 25 only of sealable material.” Civil L.R. 79-5(b). An administrative motion to seal must
also fulfill 26 the requirements of Civil Local Rule 79-5(d). “Reference to a stipulation or
protective order that 27 allows a party to designate certain documents as confidential is not
sufficient to establish that a 1 With respect to the second prong, the showing required to overcome
the strong 2 presumption of access depends on the type of motion to which the document is
attached. “[A] 3 ‘compelling reasons’ standard applies to most judicial records. This standard
derives from the 4 common law right ‘to inspect and copy public records and documents,
including judicial records 5 and documents.’” *Pintos v. Pac. Creditors Ass’n*, 605 F.3d 665, 678
(9th Cir. 2010) (quoting 6 *Nixon v. Warner Commc’ns, Inc.*, 435 U.S. 589, 597 n.7 (1978)). To
overcome this strong 7 presumption, the party seeking to seal a judicial record must “articulate
compelling reasons 8 supported by specific factual findings that outweigh the general history of
access and the public 9 policies favoring disclosure.” *Kamakana*, 447 F.3d at 1178–79 (internal
citations omitted). 10 On the other hand, records attached to motions that are only “tangentially
related to the 11 merits of a case” are not subject to the strong presumption of access. *Ctr. for Auto*
Safety v. 12 Chrysler Grp., LLC, 809 F.3d 1092, 1101 (9th Cir. 2016). Instead, a party need only
make a 13 showing under the good cause standard of Rule 26(c) to justify the sealing of the
materials. *Id.* at 14 1097. A court may, for good cause, keep documents confidential “to protect a
party or person 15 from annoyance, embarrassment, oppression, or undue burden or expense.”
Fed. R. Civ. P. 26(c). 16 A district court must “articulate [the] . . . reasoning or findings underlying
its decision to 17 seal.” *Apple Inc. v. Psystar Corp.*, 658 F.3d 1150, 1162 (9th Cir. 2011), cert.
denied, 132 S. Ct. 18 2374 (2012).

19 II. DISCUSSION

20 A. Motions at ECF Nos. 192 and 200 21 Plaintiffs filed an administrative motion to seal

NVIDIA-designated materials Plaintiffs 22 wish to submit in connection with their motion to modify the scheduling order and for leave to file 23 an amended complaint. ECF No. 192. NVIDIA filed a statement in support of Plaintiffs' motion 24 to seal providing justifications for the sealing of the entirety of several documents and the 25 redacting of other documents. ECF No. 195 at 2–3. Plaintiffs oppose the sealing or redaction of 26 three documents NVIDIA seeks to seal: Exhibit A (Plaintiffs' proposed amended complaint); 27 Exhibit B (a redline version of the proposed complaint); and Exhibit F (an email chain between 1 that electronic library). ECF No 200 (citing ECF Nos. 192-4, 192-5, 192-8). The portions of 2 Plaintiff's proposed amended complaint NVIDIA seeks to seal consist largely of references to this 3 pirating website and similar websites. ECF No. 192-4, 192-5. 4 Because the materials sought to be sealed are contained within a motion to amend the 5 complaint, the Court applies the “compelling reasons” standard. *Skillz Platform Inc. v. 6 AviaGames Inc.*, No. 21-CV-02436-BLF, 2023 WL 7678649, at *1 (N.D. Cal. Nov. 13, 2023). 7 NVIDIA argues that this standard is met because the references to Anna's Archive “relate[] to a 8 potential collaboration with a third party for research that discloses NVIDIA's research priorities, 9 research and development strategy, as well as specific technical details of NVIDIA's internal 10 development process, the public disclosure of which would harm NVIDIA's competitive standing 11 and create a risk of injury as competitors could use such information to gain a competitive 12 advantage.” ECF No. 195 at 5. 13 The Court is not persuaded. For one thing, reliance on “conclusory statements that 14 publication of the information ‘could pose significant commercial harm to [the party seeking to 15 maintain information under seal]’ . . . does not come close to establishing compelling reasons to 16 conceal this material from the public.” *Corvello v. Wells Fargo Bank N.A.*, No. 10-cv-05072-VC, 17 2016 WL 11730952, at *1 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 29, 2016). For another, “[i]t is clear that [NVIDIA's] 18 sealing request is not designed to protect against the disclosure of sensitive business information 19 that competitors could use to their advantage. Rather, it is designed to avoid negative publicity.” 20 See *Kadrey v. Meta Platforms, Inc.*, 23-cv-03417-VC, ECF No. 373 at 1 (N.D. Cal. Jan. 8, 2025). 21 Anna's Archive declares on its website, “[w]e deliberately violate the copyright law in most 22 countries. This allows us to do something that legal entities cannot do: making sure books are 23 mirrored far and wide.” “Introducing the Pirate Library Mirror: Preserving 7TB of books (that are 24 not in Libgen).” Anna's Blog, <https://annas-archive.org/blog/blog-introducing.html> (last accessed 25 Dec. 3, 2025) (permalink: <https://perma.cc/R4NK-33KR>). For similar reasons, the Court finds 26 that NVIDIA has not shown compelling reasons to seal the references in the proposed amended 27 complaint to its use of other pirate databases such as Books3, LibGen, Sci-Hub, and Z-Library, 1 databases, *id.* ¶¶40–41; and allegations that NVIDIA attempted to pirate copyrighted works, *id.* 2 ¶¶44, 52. The requests to seal or redact Exhibits A, B, and F are denied. 3 The Court finds that NVIDIA has sufficiently demonstrated that Exhibits D, E, G, H, I, J, 4 K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, and R relate to genuine product development and confidential business 5 decision-making—the

disclosure of which could foreseeably cause competitive harm to the 6 company. See e.g., *Rodman v. Safeway Inc.*, No. 11-cv-03003-JST, 2014 WL 12787874, at *2 7 (N.D. Cal. Aug. 22, 2014) (sealing “internal, nonpublic information discussing [the defendant’s] 8 pricing strategy, business decisionmaking, and financial records, which would expose [the 9 defendant] to competitive harm if disclosed”). The Court partially grants the motion as it relates 10 to those exhibits. 11 B. Motion at ECF No. 203 12 NVIDIA seeks to seal portions of Plaintiffs’ motion in opposition to NVIDIA’s statement 13 in support of sealing, specifically its references to Anna’s Archive. ECF No. 203.1 Plaintiffs 14 oppose the motion. ECF No. 209. 15 For the reasons stated above, the Court finds neither good cause nor compelling reasons to 16 seal these materials, because they are not confidential. The Court therefore denies the motion to 17 seal at ECF No. 203. 18 C. Motion at ECF No. 207 19 NVIDIA seeks to seal a declaration attached to its opposition to the motion to amend the 20 complaint. ECF No. 207. NVIDIA contends that the declaration contains confidential business 21 information. *Id.* at 2. Having considered NVIDIA’s motion, the arguments in support thereof, 22 1 It also seeks to redact references to an article NVIDIA published on the training of large 23 language models, as well as the publicly-available Kadrey order cited above. In connection with other motions, NVIDIA seeks to seal citations to publicly filed orders from recent cases. For 24 example, NVIDIA seeks to seal the following: (1) “As Bartz recognized in describing Pirate Library Mirror: ‘[a]lthough what was downloaded and later duplicated from [Pirate Library 25 Mirror] was sometimes referred to as data or datasets, at bottom they contained full-text []books or scans’” (citing *Bartz v. Anthropic*, 787 F. Supp. 3d 1007, 1015 (N.D. Cal. 2025)); and (2) 26 “Similarly, in Kadrey, in discussing the infringement at issue, the court stated, ‘Meta also downloaded Anna’s Archive, a compilation of shadow libraries including LibGen, Z-Library, and 27 others.’” (citing *Kadrey v. Meta Platforms, Inc.*, 788 F. Supp. 3d 1026, 1041 (N.D. Cal. 2025)). 1 and the declaration support thereof, the Court grants the motion to seal at ECF No. 207. 2 D. Motions at ECF Nos. 210 and 211 3 Plaintiffs moved to seal materials NVIDIA designated as confidential that were included in 4 Plaintiffs’ reply brief in support of its motion for leave to amend. ECF Nos. 210, 211. As with 5 other motions that are the subject of this order, NVIDIA seeks to seal references to pirating 6 platforms that it allegedly used to develop its AI models. NVIDIA claims that these materials 7 “contain confidential business information and public disclosure of the identified portions would 8 create a substantial risk of harm to NVIDIA.” ECF No. 215-1 ¶ 5. For the same reasons set forth 9 above, the Court finds no basis for sealing and will deny these motions.

10 CONCLUSION

11 The Court denies in part the motion to seal at ECF No. 192. The Court will not consider 12 the documents as to which the motion is denied unless the filing party files those documents in the 13 public record without redaction within seven days from the date of this Order. For the foregoing 14 reasons, the Court grants the motion to seal at ECF No. 207. The Court denies the motions to seal 15 at ECF Nos. 203, 210, and 211. The documents that are the subject of those motions will

not be 16 considered by the Court unless the filing party files the documents on the public record
within 17 seven days from the date of this Order. 18 IT IS SO ORDERED. 19 Dated: December 4,
2025 20 _____

21 JON S. TIGAR

United States District Judge 22 23 24 25 26 27