

# How a Supreme Court Ruling on Printer Cartridges Changes What It Means to Buy Almost Anything

The U.S. Supreme Court has handed a victory to consumer groups in a case about printer cartridges – or more specifically, *toner* cartridges, the kind used by laserjet printers. The case has huge implications for the way we think about technology ownership in America, and your rights as a user, according to *The Washington Post*.

As **IPWatchdog** explains it: The court ruled “that when a patent owner sells a product the sale exhausted patent rights in the item being sold regardless of any restrictions the patentee attempts to impose on the location of the sale. In other words, a sale of a patented product exhausts all rights – both domestic and international.”

The *Post*’s Brian Fung explores how the ruling can affect commerce:

The practical question is how much Lexmark or any other company can control what you do with the things you buy. This debate isn’t limited to printer cartridges. If you buy a car, how do you know you really own it? What does ownership actually entitle you to do with your property, anyway?

**Read the *Washington Post* article.**