From: John Ludwig
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 1997 10:57 AM
To: Thomas Reardon
Subject: FW: HTML "Openness"

thoughts on answer?

—Original Message—
From: Bill Gates
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 1997 10:34 AM
To: Paul Maritz; Brad Silverberg
Cc: Nathan Myhrvold; Aaron Contorer; Jim Allchin (Exchange); John Ludwig; Richard Fade; Jon DeVaan; Steven Sinofsky
Subject: HTML "Openness"

There has recently been an exchange on email with people in the Office group about Office and HTML.

In one piece of mail people were suggesting that Office had to work equally well with all browsers and that we shouldn't force Office users to use our browser. This is wrong and I wanted to correct this.

Another suggestion in this mail was that we can't make our own unilateral extensions to HTML. I was going to say this was wrong and correct this also.

However I think I better make sure that we have a consensus at the level of people on this email before I make this statement.

My view is that in order to maintain a strong operating system position we have to enhance the Windows API and make Trident a fully integrated part of the story. It can't be Windows APIs versus Trident - they have to be complimentary although Trident will obsolete some Windows calls.

I think we want to make Trident extremely hard to clone. I think we want to patent elements of Trident. I think we want to make extensions to Trident on an ongoing basis.

I reconcile this with our statements about HTML by saying that we need to have "tags" that we view as Office/Windows/Microsoft specific.

Some people may disagree that we ever get to do anything "proprietary" in the browser. If so we have to stop viewing HTML as central to our strategy and get on another strategy.

To avoid middleware taking over an operating system you have to make sure the integrated services are different from the middleware - otherwise the middleware approach has no disadvantages and it wins. I think the path we were going down of building on AWT was a sure disaster - it was creating a situation where pure 100% Java applications would look just as good as pure Windows applications which we have to avoid.

Perhaps this is a topic that needs face to face discussion.

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