Win98 Browser choice matrix

Windows 98	Netscape Communicator	Impact/Risk	Notes:
Accept Win98 as is with full Internet Explorer integration	Do not install Netscape Communicator	Some web sites will not be fully compatible with IE, user training, end user support training, and establishing technical support and developer guidelines.	
Accept Win98 as is with full Internet Explorer integration. Use IE as the "Standard" browser	Install Netscape Communicator as "Alternate" browser	Possible DLL and registry contention issues. User confusion about what browser should be used. Developers will develop sites that require one or the other browser requiring users to switch browser depending on what site is being accessed.	current testing of RC0 has not exposed significan problems.
Accept Win98 as is with full Internet Explorer integration	Install Netscape Communicator as "Standard" browser	"	"
Remove Internet Explorer Desktop icon	Install Netscape Communicator as "Standard" browser	"	"
Remove Internet Explorer Desktop icon, disable browser function for Web served documents	Install Netscape Communicator as "Standard" browser	The extent to which it will be possible to disable Internet Explorer	"
Reject Windows 98 with integrated browser, require Windows 98 without browser integration	Install Netscape Communicator as "Standard" browser	Unlikely that Microsoft will de-couple browser from OS.	"

GOVERNMENT EXHIBIT 633

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Window 98 browser issues

This is a rough outline of the potential issues that I expect or have observed in the Windows 98 product.

- In the RC0 release, crashing the web browser causes an O/S crash or a re-start. (This may be resolved in the future rc's or the production release, but should be carefully tracked)
- DLL contention issues. Numerous application have dependancies on specific versions of MSVCRT.DLL (and related DLL's) and other system resources (common dialog boxes, windows network sockets, windows API calls, etc). Most of these problems should be minor but potential for serious problems in the area cannot be underestimated.
- Relying on Internet Explorer as the only browser may not allow support for current standard architecture components. CORBA/IIOP, JavaBeans, Digital signatures, certificate based authentication services, etc.
- Installing Netscape as an alternative browser may lead to user confusion about what browser to use. Some sites may require a specific browser. We have been working to minimize this possibility but this risk still exists.
- Removing Explorer (or disabling the web access capabilities) will likely prove to be impractical or impossible. This will leave us with 3 likely alternatives:
  - Install both browser, allow user to select which browser to use.
  - Install only Explorer, require all web sites to be completely neutral.
  - Remove Explorer (or disable all web access capabilities) and install Communicator for web access.
- JDK version dependancies.
- Viewer/plug-in/helper application integration. Some viewers are dependant on specific browser version.
- Browser software is frequently updated for bugs and security problems. Applying these patches to a browser that is part of the operating system may have unpredictable side effects.

This list is still not exhaustive.

There will be many more issues driven out as we move forward with this. The most serious problem is that in the Web environment it is impossible to exhaustively test the web browser. The helpers, plug-ins, various protocols, and the nature of the information on the web make testing all possible features impossible. As an example of this I would point out that nearly 18 months after there respective releases BOTH Netscape and Microsoft were still fixing bugs in thier 3.0 level browser products. As the complexity of these products increases this is not going to get any easier to accomplish.

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