From: Jim Brown
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/17/01 4:11pm
Subject: Let there be choice for the average software consumer!

The home computer is a staple of modern life. People use their computers to communicate with each other, conduct business, research, and even for entertainment. Our society as a whole depends upon the home computer.

I am a fan of windows 2000. It is an operating system that doesn't crash very often. It is easy to use and has a lot of built in features. I understand Windows XP takes this to a new level.

I am not against features in an operating system. They add to a users experience and the power of their computer. What I am against is the lack of competition that Microsoft faces. Admitedly they do a good job of innovating even when they hold a monopoly of the market. But imagine for a moment that two Windows XP caliber operating systems were being produced by two different companies, both vying to land on your desktop as a home user. Undoubtedly, prices would be lower to the consumer and features of the operating systems would become even better. Problems that today are overlooked would be given quick attention (such as some of the serious security holes that Microsoft rarely gives second thought to.) The consumer wins. It has been established that Microsoft uses the most aggresive tactics of anti-competitiveness available. If there is any way that they can take out a competitor, or assimilate them, they will. This only increases their monopoly, and decreases competition in the market place. I say this is unfair, and it is high time the government steps in and does something intelligent to remedy the situation. What action is called for I do not know.. But something must be done! Although innovative in features and user-friendliness, Microsoft has a long standing history of serious security flaws that repeatedly appear in their products. So called "e-mail viruses" actually only affect people who use Microsoft's Outlook Express mail reader. Why the media calls them "e-mail viruses" and not "Outlook viruses" I do not know.

Why is Microsoft not held accountable when their mail program facilitates the spread of these so-called "email viruses?" I do not know. But I call for accountability. And I call for government intervention that there might be serious competition in the market place. All this so that so that your average consumer can have more than one good choice for a full featered operating system. Microsoft does not stand for the freedom of choice that capitalism offers as it's benefit. Microsofts first interest is market dominance at all costs, and to them the consumers interests come second. More and more features of the home computer now fall under the power of this monopoly. The only good choice for Word Processing is Microsoft Word. The only good choice for web browsing is Internet Explorer. The only good choice for your operating system is Windows. This is how Microsoft wants it to be. Unfortunately for most people, this is how it is. No good and meaningful competition in the marketplace, no good alternative choice for the average consumer. Something must be done to remedy our situation as consumers, who for now must depend upon one company alone - Microsoft.

The innovation and development of the home computer has come from many companies and still continues to come from many companies, such as AMD, Intel, IBM, Cyrix, Macintosh, HP and others. For a society which has reaped the benefits of computer hardware engineered competatively by many different businesses in the private sector, why must we reap the shallow benefits of software engineered by only one company? Please, as the government of this wonderful country, do something to protect our rights as consumers. Please do something to let there be choice and freedom in the software market. Please stop the company Microsoft that has shown it will at any cost try to destroy this choice and freedom for us, the consumers.

Thank you sincerely,
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