From: Andy Lee
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/21/01 10:56am
Subject: alternate proposal

To the US Department of Justice:

When I read about Microsoft's settlement offer, I thought of the old restaurant joke: "The food here is bad -- and the portions are so small!" When it comes to software, you can't make up for qualitative flaws with volume.

I have seen Red Hat's proposal <http://biz.yahoo.com/bw/011120/202744_1.html>, but for all the reasons it makes sense, it would make even more sense to have Microsoft spend that billion dollars on Apple hardware.

Wouldn't it be much more appropriate to have Microsoft buy computers that can't run their operating system? If Microsoft would buy the hardware, I'm sure Apple could be persuaded to donate software and support, though Apple computers already come bundled with the operating system and many easy-to-use applications at no extra cost. Microsoft could donate copies of Office, the Mac version of which is very well liked.

My proposal would be much better for students than either Microsoft's or Red Hat's. For example, Apple's iBook laptops, along with their Airport technology, are a very inexpensive way to get a whole school connected wirelessly to the Internet; there is no equivalent in the Wintel world. Also, Linux is terrific, but it's never been anywhere near the #1 platform in the education market, as Apple is. I doubt Red Hat would expand their offer to include porting hundreds of educational apps from the Mac platform to Linux -- or retraining hundreds of teachers and administrators who are already happy with Apple computers.

I believe what I am suggesting is (a) fair to all parties, (b) more appropriate than what Microsoft is offering, and (c) much more beneficial to the cause of educating American students. I hope you will agree.

Respectfully yours,
--Andrew G. Lee