

From: Ed
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/26/01 8:38pm
Subject: Microsoft Anti-Trust Settlement

I have read of the implications of the settlement of the Anti-Trust case against Microsoft. I understand this email address requests comments on the outcome of that case.

I have been working with computers in education for about 23 years. I've taught with systems from dialup mainframes with time sharing to today's Pentium systems. I understand that the market votes with their purchases of software and operating systems. However, I am very concerned about any action that would actually encourage additional marketshare for any one company.

If one of the terms of the settlement is to let the company "donate" computers and software to schools, I fail to see how this "makes up" for any alleged wrongdoing. It appears to actually enhance the problem that the lawsuit seemed to address. Schools with donated Microsoft software may be less likely to use alternate operating systems or applications, and this simply adds to the "repeat business" that will add to the market share and create an even larger base of Microsoft customers. There are already many problems that arise due to Microsoft dominance, and any remedy should encourage a broader base of platforms and software options, rather than narrowing the options available to users. A better solution would be a donation of equivalent funds to schools, and let the schools "vote" for what is right for their school. Reduced funding for schools choosing products other than those from Microsoft forces the schools into a one-way decision process.

I have found that by using systems outside the "mainstream," we have avoided many of the problems that other users experience. Several of the issues we have avoided are the viruses so prevalent in the Windows world, the security issues often mentioned with servers and networking devices, and overall quality issues. I am concerned about a world where the Passport system becomes "required" defacto to do business on the Internet and where one day we become so dependent on one company to provide all the software we need. If the "mainstream" becomes the "only stream," we may have fewer choices, quality may be lowered, and consumer options become limited.

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