From: Alan Martello
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/5/01 8:33am
Subject: Proposed Microsoft Settlement

To whom it may concern:

I am outraged that the same company that has monopolized operating systems and desktop application development for the past 10 years is being granted, courtesy my tax dollar and the U.S. Government, a new monopoly in our school systems.

Clearly, most of the people negotiating the deal have never sat *FOR DAYS STRAIGHT* (4 days this past week) in front of a Microsoft operating system trying to perform a relatively simple task which simply can't be done due to poor planning on Microsoft's part. "But in our free market economy" (I hear the critics charge), "this would change as market forces would propel them to make changes."

NOT WHEN YOU HOLD A MONOPOLY

And just in case their stranglehold on desktop operating systems is not strong enough, let's allow them to put $1 Billion dollars of their product in our schools.

... oh, and by the way ... let's see ... if the OS + Microsoft desktop apps (Word, Excel, etc.) costs (conservatively) $500 retail BUT the CD and distribution material costs them (in quantity) around $0.25 (seems reasonable since I can get 1,000 CD's manufactured for less than $1 each), that means their $1 Billion settlement is worth 1/2000-th of that or $500,000 in real cash (not "lost sales", REAL CASH!).

Let's see ... perhaps Bill G., Steve B. and Paul A. can set aside a hand in their weekly poker game to cover the settlement. $500,000 is a pretty small sum to buy a government sanctioned monopoly in our schools.

Do the people negotiating the DOJ settlement honestly thing this is a good idea?

At a minimum, the $1 Billion settlement to benefit schools should be for HARDWARE ONLY which each school district or state should get directly. In that way, Microsoft can't use it's $1 Billion hardware purchase to put the screws to local vendors or make a sweetheart deal with one of the big multi-national hardware companies that Microsoft routinely is discovered in bed with making backroom marketing and distribution deals.

In closing, let me add that my company has made its livelihood using Microsoft products for almost ten years. While they do bring some useful offerings to the marketplace, their unembarassed attitude as they strongarm

the industry has resulted in my working LONGER HOURS for LESS MONEY because of INFERIOR MICROSOFT PRODUCTS. Any significant competition is simply silenced by driving them out of business. Is there any other defintiion of a monopoly?

I feel outraged and frustrated that it is going to take the EU to show the DOJ what backbone is about when it comes to negotiating with the world's largest software monopoly.

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