

From: Joel P. Hnatow
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/9/01 11:29pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement.

To whom it may concern:

Regarding the proposed settlement between the US DOJ and Microsoft, there are several notable issues that I observed.

Section III(J)(2) of the settlement refers to communications protocols, and the fact that Microsoft need not document anything regarding these APIs. This effectively allows Microsoft to use their monopolistic powers to disallow Open Source software the ability to communicate with Microsoft products. An example of Open Source software which communicates with Microsoft software is the Samba project. This software allows computers running operating systems such as Linux or Unix communicate over a LAN (local area network) with a computer running Microsoft Windows.

In my opinion, one of the most heinous crimes Microsoft has committed is the fact that they rampantly disregard standards. When they happen to introduce a particular standard to the computing industry, they tend to leverage this power to drive other products out-of-business, in a monopolistic and bullying fashion.

Simply forcing Microsoft to document many of their protocols, such as the Word document, Excel file, or their networking protocol (SMB/CIFS) would, in my opinion, be a much more deserving "punishment" for Microsoft.

Please reconsider the anti-trust settlement. As a student, I often use Open Source software, because it is very powerful and free. If Microsoft is allowed to make their products inoperable with other software after the settlement as they have before it, including Open Source software, where does this leave students, such as myself, who use Open Source software primarily for economic reasons?

Thank you for your time.

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