

From: Aaron Luttman
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/10/01 4:54am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Greetings and Salutations,

I am a mathematician by education, a computer programmer by trade, and a user of Microsoft products. I am also very much against the proposed department of justice settlement with Microsoft. As I said, I use Microsoft products, and that means that I will be among the first to gain if the department of justice takes a HARDER line with Microsoft. I use Microsoft products, because they are the best available for what I do. The reason that they are the best is not that they are good, but rather that Microsoft has destroyed any other company that might produce a better product.

Rather than just complaining, though, I will actually present to you what I think is an important point to make. There is nothing you can do to change the current market dominance of Microsoft systems for personal computers. Moreover, a point that few seem to consider, is that it doesn't matter that you can't do anything about it. Microsoft knows you can't do anything about, but they are scared anyway. You may not understand this, but Microsoft products as we know them, such as Windows (prior to XP) and Office, are going to be obsolete as concepts much sooner than you might guess. Microsoft knows this. They have some people there who are as technically astute as their lawyers are legally astute, and they know such software is going the way of the dodo.

Then what is the problem? The problem is that Microsoft is being allowed to use its current powers to conquer other industries. It is Microsoft's Internet Information Server that is the problem. It is MSN and its partner Microsoft Passport that is the problem (and I won't even get started on the civil liberties infringements of those products). It is X-Box that is the problem. It is an often-heard joke that Microsoft won't stop until it has achieved total world domination. We laugh, because it is funny. We laugh, because it is, in some sense, true, at least in the technical world. Over the last couple of years, in particular, Microsoft has used its muscle to push its way into other technical areas of our lives, the same way Tony Soprano might expand his 'territory.' This is the problem. This is what we need to be afraid of. This is what we, as consumers, need the department of justice to protect us from.

Windows XP is the problem. It is not an operating system in the way that previous versions of Windows were, or the way that Linux is, or the way that MacOS is. These other operating systems are systems that basically manage the way that other programs use the memory of your computer. These systems keep track of which programs are using, or 'own,' what memory. That is their primary function. Windows XP treats this as an aside. The main purpose of Windows XP is to act as a portal by which Microsoft can dominate the 'cyber-life' of every person. It is not just a software that lives on a PC, but rather product for guiding users through the Microsoft vision of the internet.

Forget about Microsoft's dominance of the PC. It's too late, and it doesn't matter. It is not too late - and it does matter - to stop Microsoft from pushing its way into dominance of other industries and other aspects of consumers' lives. This is where the DoJ needs to focus and make the tough decisions that are needed to prevent this.

Sincerely,
Aaron Luttman