

From: Scot Snyder
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/10/01 11:05am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement.

To whom it may concern:

I am very upset concerning the proposed settlement between the Department of Justice and Microsoft.

The specific area in which I am concerned about is the settlement's verbiage which gives Microsoft the ability, through legal channels, to stop a distribution of a software package. For discussion purposes I will cite the "SAMBA" software package, but please know that there are several other packages which may fall into this category.

The SAMBA software package is an open source (meaning that the source code of the software is open to scrutiny by any user) and free software package that allows Unix, Linux, and other non-Windows computers to interface with Microsoft Windows computers. Please understand that I am using "Unix" to cover several vendor specific operating systems such as IBM's AIX, SGI's Irix, Sun Microsystems' Solaris, as well as several free and open source operating systems: namely OpenBSD Unix and FreeBSD Unix. There are several smaller unices that are in use as well that I do not mention.

While on the surface, the settlement's verbiage giving Microsoft the ability to stop these distributions from being published may seem like a good business idea, it is most definitely not a good idea to businesses that do not utilize a homogeneous Microsoft based network.

Examine all those institutions that use a Linux or Unix server and Microsoft Windows desktop clients. Please recall, that Unix is being used as a general blanket term to cover all those operating systems given above. The list of corporations and government facilities that use a network topology such as this is a number that is growing rather than shrinking.

Many network administrators and information technology officers are looking to Linux and Unix as a viable alternative to Microsoft Windows on a server platform due to lower operating cost and higher system

reliability. Others are using Linux and Unix with open source alternatives to simplify server management. As anyone can imagine, it is much simpler to manage a single vendor's product rather than multiple vendors products. The number of companies that would be impacted has the potential to be very large.

As a practical example of this I would cite an article on ZDNet, the on-line arm of Ziff Davis Media, dated June 25, 2001, entitled "Department of Defense adopts StarOffice." This article explains how the Department of Defense is utilizing a service contract with Sun Microsystems, which is already in place due to Sun servers in use at the Department of Defense, to implement Sun Microsystems' StarOffice office productivity package at a reduced cost to the tax payer. If the Department of Defense is using Sun Microsystems' Solaris as a server operating system and Microsoft Windows as a desktop system, a move by Microsoft to stop the SAMBA package would have very costly ramifications to the Department of Defense and the tax payers.

I have very briefly given one example of a software package that is in wide use in business and in higher education that could be impacted by Microsoft at great expense to the American people.

Thank you for your time.

Scot Snyder

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