

From: Daniel Carrera
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/12/01 1:55am
Subject: RedHat's proposal on Microsoft antitrust settlement

Dear Justice Department member,

I am writing to express my support for RedHat's proposed alternative for the Microsoft antitrust settlement. RedHat has proposed that all the money that Microsoft was currently planning on giving in the form of software be redirected towards providing more hardware for the poorest schools in the country. RedHat then proposes to offer all necessary software to the schools, itself, free of charge, plus technical support.

This proposal has many large advantages over the original plan.

Problems with the original proposal:

- 1) In giving so much Microsoft software to the schools, the original proposal would result in extending Microsoft's dominance over the education sector. This does not make sense since the reason why there is a settlement is that Microsoft was found guilty of illegal monopolistic practices.
- 2) Microsoft's software licences would expire after 5 years. After that time, the schools would be under great pressure to start paying very large software fees to Microsoft which ultimately hurt their funds very severely. The alternative would be to move away from Microsoft products, but that would be very difficult because the curriculums would already be based around the Microsoft software.

Benefits of RedHat's proposal:

- 1) RedHat offers to provide all the necessary software to the schools free of charge. Unlike Microsoft's proposal, this offer will not expire. The RedHat software, including all upgrades, will remain completely free to all the schools in the US indefinitely.
- 2) RedHat extends the proposal to add free customer support to the schools (also for an unlimited time).

With this proposal, the schools can safely build a curriculum around the software available. They can rest secure in the knowledge that the software they might enjoy, will remain available to them at no cost.

- 3) In redirecting the cost of software towards hardware, many more schools would be able to benefit from this settlement. This change would more than quadruple the number of computers brought to the schools (from 200,000 to over a million). The number of computers per school would grow

from 14 to over 70.

It is clear that this new proposal brings a much greater benefit to the schools.

4) RedHat's proposal also extends to many more districts. If Microsoft provides the hardware for the 14,000 poorest school districts in the US, RedHat will provide the software for every single school district in the entire country.

5) This proposal has the final benefit of putting the decision on which software is run (and thus what students learn) right where it should be: on the hands of educators and parents. Since there is no requirement to use the RedHat software, and no loss if they don't, the choice remains theirs.

On the merits of RedHat software:

I am an educator myself. I am a Mathematical Physicist currently teaching at the University of Toronto and next year I will start teaching at the University of Maryland. I can testify as to the merits of the software that RedHat is offering to the schools. This is the same software that I use myself.

For the areas of mathematics, science, and engineering, there is simply no comparison. There are very powerful utilities that make excellent teaching instruments for all the sciences. The mathematics and scientific software available for this platform (free of charge) is of a variety and quality that simply has no comparison under the Windows operating system (including commercial software). I use this software myself in my own teaching.

In other areas, the RedHat software will provide excellent tools for image manipulation, vector graphics, office applications and more.

For computer science, RedHat is offering the best possible platform for software development. Educators have a choice of an immense array of the best programming languages in the world, each with its own strength, all available by default.

It is my honest opinion as a scientist and educator that the software that RedHat is offering free of charge far surpasses what would be available to the schools through Microsoft software.

I would like to strongly encourage the Justice Department accept the offer from RedHat and greatly extend the help offered to the most needy schools in the nation.

If you wish to ask questions or clarifications about any of what I have

written here, please do not hesitate to ask. I am a strong believer in the importance of education, and this is a great opportunity to help those who are least capable of affording one.

Sincerely,
Daniel Carrera.