

From: Tim O'Hare
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/6/02 8:50pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Hi,

Even though I reside in Australia I am deeply concerned about the effects of the Microsoft settlement currently taking place.

I am concerned that our choice is been severely limited by Microsoft and it's anti-competitive behaviour. Two examples of this are the current X-Box product being sold by Microsoft and the current .Net proposition being put forward by Microsoft. They have the ability to throw massive resources at whatever stands in their way, as shown by when they were threatened by Netscape and the Navigator Browser. It is becoming clear that they will have a major impact in the gaming console market and if their dream comes true, all online commerce will be effected by .Net. I can only see this path developing and evolving - will we all be driving cars made by Microsoft in the future?

I am not an anti-Microsoft zealot, the company has unified the computer industry over the last two decades and provided a means for many people to access a computer who could not have done so otherwise. I use their products everyday.

I just wish for some regulation to provide efficient and stimulating competition.

Instead of braking the company up (I think this isn't going to happen now?) or some other method of paring Microsoft down, my suggestions would be to make the external interfaces of their software open and allow anyone to write software which can connect to Microsoft software. This is analogous to a third party muffler manufacturer having the dimensions so that they can connect their muffler to a Ford engine. This way Microsoft can still make the Office suite and if it is still the best product available, they will make profits from it but if another product is better then this means Microsoft cannot cut them out of the market by changing the format of the files.

Some of the things I would like to see be made open and documented are their file system, the Office suite file layout and API and the Win32 API.

The other thing I see necessary is to make sure OEM's can pre-configure computers to have a dual boot option or to load any operating system without significant penalty. This makes sure that Microsoft allows OEM's to put other operating systems on computers besides Windows.

If Microsoft continues to make the best product and the one most closely aligned to what the user wants, then they should have nothing to fear.

Regards,

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