From: Augenstein, Rob
To: 'microsoft.atr(a)usdoj.gov'
Date: 1/16/02 10:00am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I have been following the anti-trust case against Microsoft for almost four years now and believe that Microsoft did nothing wrong. The bottom line is that consumers were not harmed. As a user of Microsoft products, and previously of Netscape Navigator, I actually benefited. When I was using Navigator, Netscape improved and expanded the product due to the competitive pressure from Microsoft. To make a switch in Internet browser compelling, Microsoft had to make their own improvements. Now that I've switched to Microsoft, I wouldn't go back to Netscape. What no one involved in this case seems to see is that people like me benefited because we had choices and the products available to us were improving at a rapid pace.

It is not necessarily a bad thing if a company has monopoly power and then tries to use it. It is most certainly a good thing in fact if a broad base of consumers will benefit. Unfortunately, Judge Jackson did not see that people like me benefited from Microsoft's actions. In fact, I have actually been harmed since the ruling by Judge Jackson. With Microsoft on the defensive, the pace at which significant new products have come to market has been slow. I think the browser was the latest new product genre - and that was 5 years ago. So I haven't had as much new software to play with as I did before. More importantly, the ruling initiated a long slide in the stock market that still continues. Since my investments in the stock market have declined in value, I have not made further investments in things for my family like a new car, house or computer. And since I believe that I am not the only one who has had this happen, I attribute our country's economic slowdown to the ruling by Judge Jackson against Microsoft.

I am interested in seeing the economy get back off the ground and firmly believe that letting Microsoft pursue its free enterprise strategy of innovating with new products is in our country's economic interests, both domestically and internationally. I am hoping you will see things similarly and will move aggressively to stop the legal challenges aimed at Microsoft.

Sincerely,
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