

**From:** Ray Petrone  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
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**Subject:** Microsoft Settlement

Please consider this REUTERS NEWS Release.

SEATTLE, Jan 17 (Reuters) - Microsoft Corp. (MSFT) on Thursday posted a smaller quarterly net profit -- the result of a \$660 million legal charge...

The subtle message is that no matter what additional judgment might occur the lawyers of this country will be the big winners and certainly not consumers. That goes for lawyers employed on both sides of this fight. Consumers could probably have benefited more by having Microsoft focus more on its work of creating software and from the cost savings that might have been, at least in some small measure, passed on to consumers. Stockholders would have benefited and that means that a million households would probably have a bit more in this weak economy. And any number of children will receive somewhat less from the Gates Foundation in years to come. You can be cynical and scoff at my premise but you are probably ignoring facts that are easy to prove. Consumers by and large don't feel put upon by Microsoft or they would not have bought 15 million copies of Windows XP and 1.5 million units of XBox. Consumers are happy with Microsoft just as it is or was while some Microsoft competitors feel that there chances to gain market share are better with government punishment of Microsoft than the chances their products and services offer.

Move on to more important work with more egregious offenders.

Respectfully,  
R. Petrone, P.E.