From: Bob Nystrom
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/21/02 11:24pm
Subject: Re: U.S. v. Microsoft: Settlement Comments

I am 50 and have been in the electronics business since I was 15. I grew up with computers and have watched the rise of Bill Gates & Co. I have several conclusions on the anti-trust case:

1. There is no one- repeat no one- in this business who doubts for one minute that Microsoft is a monopoly. Everyone is looking over their shoulder to see if they will be the next casualty. Microsoft is not where they are because of good products. The products have been forced upon the consumer by leverage of their operating system monopoly. This monopoly- through licensing and other means- has NOT allowed the consumer to evaluate alternative products. I could not buy a PC without Windows. Dell and the others COULD NOT sell me one. In my informal polls, the average consumer does not understand that Windows 95, 98, 2000, XP, etc even come from the same company. They do not realize that a PC box from Dell, Gateway, IBM, etc are all the same. They think of it as Ford, GM, or Honda- which, of course, it isn't. There is no choice.

2. I would venture that you- the judges, clerks, etc are close to my generation. No where is the computer gap more evident. I can't believe you have even a clue as to the extent of Gates's reach and the significance of complete control of the operating system. This monopoly goes way, way beyond steel or the Bells.

3. The proposed settlement is a joke. It is known in the art that Microsoft is a monopoly. They have been legally declared a monopoly. And what do you do? This is not even a slap on the wrist. And as with every other involvement with Gates, he is telling YOU what YOU are going to do. The three person oversight is completely ludicrous and unworkable.

4. In the trenches, the conclusion is that this is a buyoff with Bush. This is so blatant there can be no other explanation. As sad as Sept 11 was, it provided an excuse for the administration to back off of Microsoft. Software types that I run into just write this off as a complete sell out by the Justice Department. Your department really is the laughing stock of the software community. You can't be this clueless, can you? How does this settlement help me, the consumer? How does it help the innovative companies that have been steamrolled by Microsoft? How? How?

5. I am sure the boogeyman here is we don't want to hurt the economy by upsetting Microsoft. I would posit that 39 billionaires, 900 multi-millionaires, and 100 just plain millionaires would stimulate the economy far more than one "forty billionaire" who will stop at nothing to own it all. Microsoft does not partner- Period.

6. As XP becomes entrenched, there will be control of so many systems and points of distribution that it will make past actions look like child's play. It is a Trojan horse. Microsoft is pulling out all stops on this one. They are taking no prisoners. You are way too little and way too late.

7. This is the last chance to stop Microsoft. This settlement is a disgrace to your office and to this country.

Sincerely,
Robert Nystrom
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