From: Imad
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 7:53am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Dear Sir or Madame,

I would like to take just a moment to share my views on the current proposed Microsoft anti-trust settlement. It is my opinion that the proposal, as it now stands, is a slap -- nay, a pat -- on the wrist approach that fails to truly allow competition in those areas where Microsoft has abused its monopolistic powers.

First and foremost, Microsoft must be forced to make its APIs, file formats, and protocols totally and unequivocably open. As it stands, there is far too much ambiguity in the clause pertaining to this -- as interpreter of the document, Microsoft can well claim that, say, Linux developers are not to have this information shared with them as they do not represent a commercial product. Likewise, there is too much leniency granted by the exclusion of remote Windows 2000 administration related protocols. Many of these protocols -- SMB/CIFS, for example -- are used indirectly for Windows 2000 remote administration but are also crucial for creating products that are interoperable with Windows 2000 server. The "Reasonable And Non-Discriminatory" licensing terms hurt Microsoft's biggest competition -- the open-source/free-software movement that has given us Linux, OpenBSD, Mozilla/Netscape, OpenOffice, KOffice, and the like. All standards, API calls, protocols, etc. MUST be open for these valued members of the software community.

Futhermore, the document must be revised to remove the mess of loopholes that exist which allow Microsoft to obey the word of the settlement without conforming to its spirit of non-discriminatory behavior. As it stands, Microsoft can ignore much of the document as it is riddled with technical loopholes. For example, Microsoft is able to force PC makers to associate internet content with Internet Explorer, word processing documents with Microsoft Word, and the like -- removing shortcuts doesn't change the underlying behavior when a user clicks on a text document or an internet link. The three-member enforcement crew has two members picked or approved by Microsoft itself, nullifying any usefulness of the group, especially when coupled with the fact that none of the members are allowed to speak of the atrocities they see committed by Microsoft. Such litigation is absurd and meaningless, but could be salvaged by revising the terms of the settlement to preserve the spirit but allow less leeway to Microsoft, which has a history of twisting or disobeying court orders.

Lastly, Microsoft's non-operating system groups must be either internally or externally seperated so that they are not allowed "backdoor" entrance to the operating system; the Microsoft Office team

should have the same information on operating system-related APIs and protocols as does the competition (e.g., Corel's WordPerfect Office team, Sun StarOffice team, KDE's KOffice team).

Thank you for your time.

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Best,
Imad Hussain
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+===== OpenBSD. Functional. Secure. Free. http://www.openbsd.org =====+

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