From: Paul Varga
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 8:17am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I'm somewhat bewildered with by how the current actions are going to prevent Microsoft from continuing to bully the market, expand its monopoly to new ones, and trample innovation.

Being a programmer, I have to keep an eye on this situation more than most. Some of the arguments that I've read that I agree with restrict the following areas:

-For better or for worse Microsoft's software has become largely dominant. The business market was taken more than most. To free this entrapped market the easiest solution appears to be releasing the source code to Microsoft's file loading and saving routines. Failing this, a full tried-and-true set of documentation would help. Some of this source code would be in the Windows API, which should be considered for opening as well. In either case, updated source code or documentation should also be released in upcoming years to maintain the effectiveness of this measure. Doing this would alleviate issues with Word Processors, Spread Sheets, Presentation, and Audio/Visual Multimedia formats. That's a large effect for seamingly such a small change.
-Although this is less often thought of the network protocols behind Windows and much of Microsoft's software is a barrier at least as large as Microsoft's file formats. The already existant formats are largely conquered by independent and inquiring minds. The one exception that I know of is Microsoft's DirectPlay, part of DirectX. The protocol documentation behind this released to the public as well. However, that does not protect the future. Microsoft should be barred from writing protocols that are not open and standardized by internation bodies in the future. Making this enactment retroactive (applying to all existant protocols) would also aid our efforts to make the work seamless and give people choice.
-Microsoft should not be able to so easily bundle its products with new computers that are sold. Not only would this give a chance to competing operating systems, it would lower the effectiveness of Microsoft's "bundle to make dominant" strategy with its Windows included products.

Thank you for your time,
Paul Varga