

From: Todd
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 9:51am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To whom it may concern:

I would like to take advantage of the public comment period and speak my opinions regarding the Microsoft antitrust case. I am sure you have received

many of these letters, and are not concerned about hashing over Microsoft's guilt or settlement shortcomings, so I will avoid these topics.

First off, I am a network administrator for an outdoor equipment distributor,

and I feel that it is not only my job but also my interest to follow this case

and be involved. I have been watching this trial closely since its origin, and

would like to think I have an educated view from a business and technical standpoint, though not so much from a legal perspective.

In my five years of network administration experience I have used many of Microsoft's operating systems, programs, and equally as many systems from their

competitors. Though I will implement any given system that fits the niche in

which it is being used for, be it Microsoft or not, it would greatly please me,

the corporation that I work for, and all of my colleagues to see a fair market

and competition against Microsoft. Therefore I believe it is in the public interest to resolve this case in an effective manner.

Now I would like to make a few comments about Microsoft's monopoly and the settlement that will be implemented. Microsoft has roughly 95% of the desktop

Operating System market; this is their cornerstone, and it is huge. They can

control what nearly every computer can and can not do. This is not necessarily

illegal, until they abuse it. They abused it to win the web browser battle.

And they did win. It is all but over, granted I don't use IE, but I am a small

percentage. I think that it would certainly be appropriate to punish them for

this action, but far more important to prevent future abuse. They have already

won the browser battle, so putting restrictions on them according to what they

have done in the past is not enough. We have to predict what they will do in

the future to expand their monopoly illegally. To do this, we have to look

at
who they will compete against next. I think this would be IBM, Red Hat
Linux,
and other Unix variants. To ensure fair competition there are two major
points
that must be addressed in any settlement, in addition to the several others
that
are being proposed concerning vendors and policies.

First point: In almost every corporate computer network nearly 90% of the
desktops run a Windows operating system. This is a monopoly, and Microsoft
will
make attempts to use this monopoly to expand their server market. To
prevent
this, all network protocols that a Microsoft desktop operating system
(Windows9X, WindowsME, Windows XP, Windows 2000 Professional) uses to
communicate with a server must be documented, updated regularly with any
changes, and most importantly made available to ANYBODY who wants them. If
Microsoft gets to pick and choose who gets access to this documentation,
then it
will not be effective. I should not be forced to buy a Microsoft server
just
because I have a network of Microsoft desktops. I should have the freedom
of
choosing an IBM server, a Sun server, a Linux server, or even an Apple
server.
There is a decent amount of freedom of choice in this area now, and that is
why
action must be taken now to prevent Microsoft from abusing its monopoly of
desktops and gaining a monopoly of server operating systems.

Second point: Businesses should have the freedom to use any other desktop
operating system along with Microsoft desktop operating systems. You might
say
that the freedom is there, but I disagree. Microsoft's monopoly in office
applications prevents any user who wants to communicate with others from
using
an operating system that does not have Microsoft Office (anything other than
Windows or Macintosh). Microsoft should be forced to document, and disclose
to
everybody, all file formats used by Microsoft Office. Microsoft would argue
that it is not illegal to have proprietary file formats, and this is true,
however I think that Microsoft has abused this illegally. Microsoft
constantly
changed the file format with the intention of breaking any other application
that attempts to read them. A perfect example is Corel. Microsoft's
constant
changing of their file formats, with the intention of breaking Corel
Office's
compatibility, has severely damaged Corel's business, and, since I am from
Utah,

my local economy as well. It comes down to one point: Microsoft has a monopoly in Office software, this monopoly removes my ability to choose another desktop operating system, and therefore illegally maintains Microsoft's monopoly of desktop operating systems.

In closing, I say that all are surely in agreement that the resolution of this case is of great importance, not just now but for many years to come.

This suggests a careful and deliberate penalty is far more important to the health of the nation than is a hasty one.

Thank you for listening to my opinions,
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