

From: Rich Jones
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 6:27pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

As a Linux user, I am opposed to the way that Microsoft is placing a stranglehold on my ability to use an operating system of my choosing.

The proposed settlement offers methods for businesses (ISV's and OEM's, to name a specific few) to gain protection from Microsoft's monopoly dealings and some limited recourse. While I do not feel that these provisions go far enough, a greater harm may be done by specifically naming types of corporations either for profit, or non-profit.

The danger is that Microsoft will remain unchecked against open, free collaborations without corporations or legally recognized institutions to stand directly behind. A few examples come specifically to mind:

- 1) The Ogg Vorbis music format. Ogg Vorbis is a non-commercial alternative to the MP3 and Windows Music Format (WMF), both of which give me serious restrictions with what I legally can and cannot do with their formats, and, in my opinion, offer lesser performance. Ogg Vorbis is technically the superior of both of these formats, but you will NEVER see a Microsoft brand music player work with Ogg without sterner restrictions by the government. Why? Microsoft has no need for the superior format, since its adoption by the large Windows user base would lessen Microsoft's ability to control how users use their systems. If Ogg Vorbis fails and falls out of use without either a serious technical jump by MP3 or WMA, then it will be the fault of the US Justice Department for not ensuring it's ability to compete based on it's merits.
- 2) The Linux kernel. As it stands now, Linux has many corporations, both for profit and non-profit, that stand behind it and struggle to ensure it's future and success. However, when Linus Torvalds began the kernel, there was no such organizations. Microsoft has seen competition by Linux, and left to it's own devices, will squash all new similar forms of competition now that it's eyes have been opened by Linux's success. How many similar technological innovations will be squashed by Microsoft if the Justice Department does not afford them equal rights of a corporation?

Please reconsider your current progress of maintaining the status quo.

Sincerely, Richard Jones
53 Highland Ave.
Mansfield, MA 02048
joner@naisp.net