

From: jeff
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/24/02 12:29am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I would like to go on record as opposing the proposed settlement in the anti-trust case of Microsoft v. United States.

I have been a computer professional for 24 years. I don't believe that the proposed settlement is in the public's best interest. The proposed settlement is not even a slap on the wrist for Microsoft. The proposed settlement is too complex. The most effective remedy would be one that is very simple and straight-forward. Just as in software or systems design, the less complex the agreement, the easier it will be to "debug." Microsoft was very innovative in finding loopholes in the 1995 Consent Decree, and it is my belief that they will be just as innovative in finding loopholes in this proposed agreement should it be accepted as is.

To have come so far as to find Microsoft guilty of illegally maintaining it's Operating System monopoly, to have the Court of Appeals uphold this finding, and then to propose a settlement that does not include any provisions to punish Microsoft for its past behavior is irresponsible at best. The fact is Microsoft profitted from an illegal act. As a taxpayer I find it a shame that public tax dollars should be squandered in such a manner.

As far as the future is concerned, I see no relief in this proposed settlement. When I purchase another computer, I must pay for a Microsoft Operating system, as well as an application bundle. There is no incentive for the Original Equipment Manufacturers to not preload the Microsoft Operating System and the application bundle. I would propose that a fitting punishment for Microsoft would be a stipulation that Microsoft pay for any added expense that Original Equipment Manufacturers incur to preload a non-Microsoft Operating System, for customers that request it. This stipulation would remain in effect until Microsoft no longer has an Operating System monopoly or for ten years, whichever comes first. It would provide an incentive to Original Equipment Manufactureres to offer alternatives to customers. If Microsoft truly has superior software, then they should have nothing to worry about, no one would want an alternative. On the other hand, if Microsoft software cannot compete with the alternatives, it won't be long until they no longer have a monopoly and competition is truly restored.

Thanks for considering my opinions.

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