

From: William Hegarty
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To whom it may concern:

First of all, I find it ironic that I needed to go to a British website, www.theregister.co.uk, to find out that my Department of Justice is soliciting comment on this matter. That said, I shall move on to the matter at hand.

The proposed settlement is no more than a slap on the wrist that will do little to introduce competition into the software business. Although cutthroat competition in the hardware arena is resulting in price slashes and improved products, the software business remains at least unchanged, if not worse.

The average consumer is stuck with the software which comes with the computer for any improvements are prohibitively expensive. Not only that, they are usually bundled with other products that are not desired or wanted.

For example, I recently completed library school. For one course I wanted to index an old local magazine in the local library. Since the library uses Access, Microsoft's database program, to index the local newspaper I thought it would be good to do the same.

However, my computer came with Microsoft Works, not Office. I had to buy Access if I wanted to do the project. So I went to Staples.

I had a choice. I could buy Access as part of the Office package, or I could buy it alone. I ended up doing neither because both were too expensive.

What irritated me though, was that Access alone was perhaps half as expensive as the entire Office package. In other words, to buy the components of Office is almost twice as expensive as the entire bundle.

Since I already have the operating system and some Microsoft applications such as Word preloaded into my computer my preference is to get more (for some reason non-microsoft programs are extremely buggy on Microsoft computers but we won't go there). The bundled pricing of the Office programs makes that preference even stronger, to the exclusion of Microsoft's competitors. I would be more likely to buy the entire package even though I might prefer some other presentation software to Powerpoint, or organizing software to Outlook and so on.

It seems to me that Microsoft has not learned its lesson. For that reason I am opposed to the settlement.

Sincerely

William Hegarty