

From: Leon Moore
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/25/02 10:44pm
Subject: Re: Public comments on the settlement between the DOJ and Microsoft

I would like to add a comment for your consideration in the settlement of the Microsoft case. I can say it no better than Russell Pavlicek did in his column *The Open Source* from InfoWorld.com, Wednesday, January 23, 2002. Let me quote that and ask only that the settlement you configure with Microsoft not reward the company for it's actions that have been deemed in Federal Court as monopolistic.

Personally, I like the counterproposal put forward by Red Hat: Let Microsoft donate money for computing resources for underfunded schools, but let those donations go toward hardware only; then populate those machines with open-source software.

Why open source? Consider the future: What will the schools do when they need to upgrade? If you give schools Microsoft software, they will be caught in the endless upgrade cycle that has characterized life in the Microsoft world. Those upgrades will cost money, money that these targeted school districts, by definition, cannot spare.

Instead, arming schools with open-source software will have two benefits. First, it will set schools down a long-term path that they can afford. The cost of obtaining open-source upgrades is trivial. Without low-cost software upgrades, all those nice shiny computers run the risk of becoming boat anchors in short order. I'm sure someone is saying, "But open source is too difficult to administer!" Such does not have to be the case, but I'll deal with that issue in a future column.

Also, the Red Hat proposal does not reward Microsoft in the long term. If a company is convicted of overpowering markets, why would you reward them by putting one of the few markets they don't lead under their control? This sounds a lot like a seed-unit program for education, not the penalty imposed from losing a trial.

Corporate misdeeds are supposed to earn punishment, not long-term investment opportunities. I believe we would all be better off if the courts acknowledged the difference between the two.

--

leon moore USUHS/BID 4301 jones bridge road bethesda md 20814
moore@cim.usuhs.mil 301-295-3669 (ph) 301-295-3585 (fax)