From: Sean Turner
To: Microsoft ATR,billg@microsoft.com@inetgw,cyrusm@ha...
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

While Microsoft can be considered a monopoly, should they be punished for this? I used to be a Netscape User; then, when Internet Explorer 3 was released, I tried using it and found it to be substandard and buggy. As a result, I continued to use Netscape. Then, with Microsoft's release of IE 4, I found it to be much faster, more stable, and more feature complete then Netscape, and decided to switch browsers, not because it came bundled with my operating system, but because it was a superior program Microsoft ultimately developed a technologically superior product, is it not logical that people would then use it instead of Netscape? Should they be punished for this? Can you legally punish a company because they are successful? Microsoft integrated its browser to provide a better product for the consumer. They are in no way inhibiting Netscape's ability to accept. They in no way impede a user's ability to download Netscape and use it. Even AOL Time Warner believes IE is a superior browser. In their own AOL browser, they use the IE browser instead of Netscape. Success is not a crime.

Should they be punished for bundling their browser with Windows? Now, the browser is tightly integrated with almost all features of Windows. It is virtually impossible to separate the two. Every time you open "My Computer," view a help file, open Word, boot, or even view your desktop, you are using Internet Explorer. Back when Windows 3.1 was popular, IE didn't exist, and, users used a much more cumbersome and buggy interface to navigate files. Now, instead of using 2 different applications for folder browsing and web viewing, Microsoft integrated the two programs, in effect speeding up overall system performance and reliability. Furthermore, it also helps new computer users to "get online" without having to go through complex processes to install a browser. Now, all someone has to do is boot their computer, and they have all the software they need to connect to the internet. Should Microsoft be punished for enabling people such as my mother to effectively use a computer? If yes, then why not punish Apple? They have much the same approach. Apple controls the all the hardware used on their computers, and install Apple's own programs by default in an attempt to simplify setup for users, thus allowing the computer illiterate to use a computer without having to have a tech-savvy friend set it up for them. This strategy of simplification is used throughout the industry, why should only Microsoft be punished for it? You cannot separate Microsoft because everything is so tightly integrated, Microsoft is nothing without this integration, much like Apple is nothing without their tight integration of software and hardware. This is the direction the entire industry has taken, should we thus turn the clock back on the computer industry?

It is not the government's job to police the computer industry. Before the government tries to break up private monopolies, they should abolish their own. For example the US Postal Service was, for a long time, the only way to send mail, and thus, it had to reason to improve its services and was notoriously slow. With the advent of FedEx and UPS, the postal service has improved its service, but still is loosing market share because other carriers offer a better product. And now the government is trying to make taxpayers pay for its failure by trying to tax email. It is not the government's job to police private industry and punish companies for their success. I ask that the federal government and states drop all charges against Microsoft.

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