From: Benson Chow
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/28/02 1:40am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Appended contact information.

Microsoft has tried hard to squash all competition. And it has succeeded. One specific example is how the company's product, Internet Explorer, has quickly reached the top. Now with so many users, and them putting in proprietary extensions that nobody knows except Microsoft, it essentially makes Netscape and other browser users crash or render pages incorrectly - thus forcing us to use their product if we wish to obtain their content. This is totally unacceptable, we have a right to choose what product to use to view content. This is like having only one brand of TV available. Imagine having to watch news where you *must* buy a specific brand of TV, else it won't work. The same thing has happened to Operating Systems and Office Applications. I agree with the ruling that Microsoft has violated the Sherman Antitrust Act.

I do however have a complaint about the proposed remedy. Microsoft wants to donate millions of dollars worth of goods to needy schools. This sounds very good on the surface, we are helping our the most disadvantaged children.

Now the problem is, it does not solve the problem we have ruled against. Those millions of dollars worth of 'goods' they want to be Microsoft goods. Now we are going to be feeding these Microsoft goods to the children. They will grow up thinking Microsoft is the only thing available, and will continue to buy Microsoft software. Have we done anything? No - we have made the problem WORSE. We need to bring different choices to our children in order to guide them that there is more than Microsoft.

Many possible other solutions are possible. While it would be nice to allow companies that were destroyed by Microsoft to be rejuvinated, this is short of impossible. Or perhaps a rebate to all purchasers of Microsoft software. No, this is not good either, it does not help the problem. We need to do something that makes a difference - A charitable donation is a good start. But it needs to show choice. Perhaps they must purchase machines and software from their remaining competitors for their settlement. Perhaps they should open up their standards to allow competitors to once again compete. It's a tough call, destroying a powerful company is never a good thing, but a virtual, "cyber monarchy" could be formed and Microsoft at its head, with the current settlement as it stands today.

I am a Linux user. I would like to see things such as them complete the following at an unspecified percentage and split:

- Open up Internet/application/operating standards they have created
to allow competitors to design competing products.
I would like to see projects like Netscape, Caldera Office, and WINE
to get big breaks from the settlement.
- Purchase computers for schools for the same amount, but use competitor
software or buy more computers and use open-source, or free software.

I do not necessarily want to see a breakup of the company. They will
still hold a monopoly on their respective business units.

Thank you for reading this. I hope this will encourage you to reconsider
the settlement and let users and thousands like me to enjoy content the
way we want to, instead of how Microsoft wants to.

-bc

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