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To: Microsoft ATR,microsoftcomments@doj.ca.gov@inetgw,...
Date: 11/28/01 5:46pm
Subject: Thank you for your continued pursuit of Microsoft

Greetings.
My name is Tyler Lagrange of Sarasota, FL.

I will try not to ramble on for too long and I beg of you to read all I have to say as it pertains to what I believe to be the most significant antitrust lawsuit I will see in my lifetime.

Thank you very much for not accepting the lenient settlement that has been proposed in the Microsoft case. I have been following the case from the beginning and have read many articles that have followed your progress. My favorite was an article in Wired magazine about a year ago that really went in to a lot of detail that even I did not know. At that point I really felt the case was going in the right direction, but that feeling has understandably changed in the recent weeks.

I don't feel you need me to point out reasons why Microsoft has committed illegal monopolistic activities, however, I want to point out the ones that really hurt me as both a consumer and an internet software developer. I am a 26 year old programmer with a 4 year Computer Science degree and I've been a computer user since my first grade year at Hunt Elementary in South Florida (20 years ago).

As a consumer, my choices are severely limited by what Microsoft has done. I was really upset by what Microsoft did with the web browser wars as I preferred Netscape (along with 80% of the internet users back then). I can not really understand how they could get away with simply copying somebody else's ideas and designs, and to then force it down everybody's throats. They claim that it is best for me as a consumer and they offer it up to me for free as if that is generous. They only gave it to me for free because there was competition. What I would really want for free is Microsoft Office. Why isn't that a part of the OS? Microsoft Office is the de facto standard for sending formatted papers and office/business documents to and from people. A majority of the people out there have it and use it for daily use - probably even more than Internet Explorer. The reason that Microsoft will never offer that to us free is not just because it costs them more to develop (that is untrue as they have already recouped their costs), but because they face no serious competition in that realm. If you ask 100 consumers if they would rather have Office or IE bundled with their OS, you know what they would say. Microsoft is not doing what the consumers want, but is illegally protecting their desktop monopoly and extending it in to any other area that they can get in to. I do not want Internet Explorer. I do not want Windows Media Player. I do not want the other stuff they seem to think I do.

As an internet software developer I have also had many problems with what Microsoft has done. My biggest problem is really undocumented and unknown by most people who do not develop internet software. By having such a huge user base, they have made it virtually impossible (undesirable really) to write software that does not support Internet Explorer. They may claim that their browser supports more "standards" but in fact they support whatever they feel they want to. One of the most severe things they have done is to have a more lenient parser (the system that reads the HTML and displays it) that will not enforce strict HTML. This allows coders to be lazy and to not adhere to the HTML standards. Once they get used to that (and for the most part they just debug their sites in IE and don't look at any other browsers), they will most likely NOT adhere to standards and as a result the web sites will only act appropriately in Internet Explorer (I have worked in 3 startups and they all have focused solely on Internet Explorer as the default platform). As consumers see these things acting correctly only in IE, they feel that IE is the only one that works. Now it may look like they are being nice and "guessing" what us web programmers mean to do, but by not enforcing the standards, we will never be able to progress beyond the inadequate capabilities we have today. I don't know for sure, but I bet at least 80% of the web sites out there would break if standards were enforced. I honestly feel that this is deliberately done to prevent other web browsers from gaining a significant share of the marketplace again (unless they are programmed to display improper HTML to maintain compatibility). This also prevents serious progress because they have to maintain this broken compatibility to display those 80% that were not written well in the first place. Web developers must write software to work well in IE or they will have problems with their customers. This just extends their monopoly.

Beyond that, it is hard for me to feel that with an idea I can be successful in the free marketplace. That is a horrible lesson the courts are trying to teach me. Even with the best ideas in my head, as soon as Microsoft has me in their sites, they could embrace it, extend it, build it in to their next OS, and push me aside. I will never be able to charge money for my software, as Microsoft can always afford to give it away free and to throw more R&D money at it to "make it better" than me. So in order to beat them, I will probably need some capital behind me. But investors, after seeing what Microsoft is allowed to get away with, will be less likely to dump money in to my company with the risk that Microsoft will overtake us and we will lose all that we have. They have too much power and too much freedom and will continue to pursue these initiatives even harder if they are allowed to get out of it this time.

I am disgusted by the bundling that they were allowed to get away with with XP even after it was determined that Internet Explorer pushed and entire company essentially out of the market. They will now push remote

administration systems, media players, digital camera software vendors, cd burning software vendors, and many others out of business. This does not help the economy. This is also not about progressing in to a "modern operating system". This is about extending a monopoly.

It may seem extreme to a lot of people to break up a company, but it has been done successfully before, and it may need to be done again. I feel that Microsoft makes some good applications, and has some good operating systems. However, if their operating systems division was separate from their applications divisions, it would prevent this overlapping we see of OS services and Application services. It would also allow for more choices and more opportunities for other vendors to produce top quality software that WILL benefit consumers, and WILL boost the economy, and WILL save the future of computing.

I feel so powerless when I sit at home and read about all the bad things Microsoft has done. I watch the arrogance they display when they claim that they know more than you or I do about how the future of computing should be regulated. I beg you to not fall like the others have before you. I urge you to do your best to represent me in this monumental case. I thank you for all that you have done, and will continue to do.

If you made it this far thank you very much,
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