From: chrise@SPRI.Levels.UniSA.Edu.Au@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/24/02 10:09pm
Subject: A right to use

It is difficult describe how I fell about the antitrust case against microsoft. I am unsure at this time how this email will be received. I am a 30 year old Information Technology and Telecommunications engineer working in South Australia, I have been involved with computers and computing since I was 15 years old, so I have 30 years experience dealing with computing issues and operating system.

I am unsure if the American judicial system is allowed to consider opinions from out side of the USA. However, when you talk about the computer industry and partially Microsoft any anti-trust suit is not just important to Americans it has far reaching effects all around the world.

Software defies conventional trade boundaries, a new piece of software can be all over the world in a matter of weeks and be used by billions of computer businesses and home users in this time. What Microsoft has accomplished in it's time as the major operating system is develop the computer platform to a stage where anyone in the world can use it and use it effectively.

But it has done this at a cost. The first PC I acquired was an Amstrad 286 at the time windows was not even an OS and DOS was king. Thousands of companies produced word processing programs land other utilities and the consumer was able to talk with their wallets. If a piece of software was no good then they migrated to another and never used that software again.

This is the way it was in the beginning. The free market at it's best.

Mac had a market dominance, it's OS and windows type platform was the easiest for all users to use. A large number of users used the mac platform instead of the PC as the PC OS was difficult to use. Then along came windows.

Windows was produced to compete against the Mac OS which made Mac's one of the most sold computer systems there was. Windows copied a lot of the Mac features and low an behold a Graphical user interface was available for the IBM PC. Real competition began in the PC market.

The combination of the IBM PC and the Microsoft windows product won out over the Mac. Not because it was the better of the two systems they were both pretty much the same it's just the IBM PC's were cheaper then Macs and thus market forces won the day.

Microsoft became the main OS of today. This wasn't a problem as Windows used DOS as the basis for it's OS and all the DOS software companies could easily port their packages to the windows format.

But microsoft wanted more, recognizing their clear advantage due to there financial, market and marketing dominance they started to develop the peripheral programs, borrowing ideas from these other companies and going with the market trend.

The Microsoft OS today could no longer strictly be called an OS. The operating system of a computer controls the interface between the human and the computer components and allows programs to talk and control these components in a managed manner.

Microsoft dose this and so it in a reasonable manner. But it a lot includes programs which load automatically without the user asking. And as things like word programs, net surfing programs, picture editing programs are freely available why go out and by the other superior programs as well the ones we have may not be the best but they will do.

By allowing microsoft to continue to add programs to there OS that do not have anything to do with the OS you perpetuate the destruction of superior software and operations during our time. Microsoft is holding the world in a computing stasis, by not allowing the best program to be presented to the consumer, developments are lost and our pool of knowledge shrinks.

At this time microsoft has dominance of the world computer market. They control 99% of the worlds computers. Their software has proven time and time again that it is not the best, but it is adequate and why by the better stuff if the stuff I have works.

I have had several programs that I love to use of the years become useless because microsoft change small parts of it's code to make it more difficult for other programs to run under windows. Microsoft at the issuing of a new OS can decided that the world has to change to suit it's vision. In actual fact when you think about it Microsoft has more power then the US government and the US court systems.

Microsoft can make changes that effect the world in radical and dramatic ways. They can broaden or shrink the differences between the haves and the have not. This gives them a massive amount of power and ultimate power corrupts.

The microsoft solution is a difficult one and I do not envy you. The split up of microsoft will be a blow to the company no doubt. But, I believe they said that there development divisions (those that produce office and Internet Explorer) would not be able to work as efficiently as they do now when they are connected to the OS side of things.

This is definitely true ! However, isn't this what all other companies have to put up with. Microsoft limited access to their software interfaces to external companies. Meaning that the internal software development teams have an unfair advantage when it comes to developing software as they can use the full set of microsoft OS tools, while other companies can only deal with half the OS tools or less.

If you can do nothing else you should at least include in the settlement that MS must release the full Software and interface specs to the MS Windows OS to allow others to compete on a more level playing field.

Yours

Chris Evans