From: David Stoddard
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/24/02 11:21pm
Subject: Microsoft antitrust case

As a graphic designer and a college teacher I deal with web page production on a regular basis. It is my experience that Microsoft's web browser Internet Explorer has default settings which are designed to force designers to depend on Microsoft products for web page development.

By setting the default size of html text to a large size Microsoft insures that text will appear too large and therefore may cause some designs which depend on sliced images in tables to have gaps or otherwise be distorted. To compensate for this designers may have to reduce the size of type to such a small size that it becomes difficult to read on other browsers. This effectively makes it difficult to design for any browser but Explorer and makes using non Microsoft development tools require extra steps. Since the other development tools are often more intuitive to use than the Microsoft tools, not going through the extra steps requires designers to use less effective products.

Undermining the standard in order to control the market seems to be Microsoft's main method for success. The strategy seems to be irritation over innovation, This is such a bad practice. Internet Explorer is a great product. So, I can't tell if it is greed or paranoia that motivates Microsoft to attempt to control all aspects of the web where software is concerned.

Practices such as this should be regulated or punished. Unfortunately, no one is in a position to punish Microsoft in the market place. It would be good if government would do its job. If corporations could be trusted to do the right thing we would not need government. I think we need to see something better than a slap on the wrist or rewarding Microsoft by giving them a sure method of getting their products into schools without competition. How does this change things for the better?

David Stoddard
a concerned citizen