

Microsoft report 12361

[Technology](#), [Computer](#)



Park Place, Boardwalk, Next Stop Microsoft?

In the 1920's and 30's, Standard Oil became one of the most controlling companies America had ever seen. Under the watchful eye of John Rockefeller, Standard Oil methodically phased out any and all competition. Back then, the government realized what was happening and put into effect the anti-trust law. The government, however, could easily disband Standard Oil; America could simply go to a different oil company. The government could not have seen what problems have arisen with the anti-trust lawsuit against Microsoft, one of the most influential companies ever. Microsoft is not just another company that serves the world, in many ways, Microsoft runs the world. Computers are still considered to be in their infancy. When Bill Gates made the first PC, he had the control over what would be the future of computers. Instead of letting other companies make the software to run this new machine, Gates made his own company to handle it. Doing this, Gates made a company that would run every part of the new computers and this would make Microsoft a world power in the business world within just a few years, ironically this would also cause one of the most controversial lawsuits against any company.

Bill Gates, along with Steve Jobs, made the world's first personal computer in 1984. This new machine was very simple to today's standards, but technologically advanced for its time. This new computer needed software, and Gates just happened to know how to write software for it, and thus, started Microsoft. As more and more companies started to use computers, Microsoft quickly moved up the ranks of the business world. Computers first became an everyday use in companies, and soon became everyday use in

every part of everyday life. Behind the majority of the software used by these computers was Microsoft, and before anyone knew it, Microsoft was controlling the industry. Any company that tried to make software to compete with Microsoft, was offered to be bought out. If any company refused, they were forced out of business by the Microsoft machine. With 95% of computers operating systems running Windows, Microsoft's pride and joy, there was little companies could do to stop it. Microsoft became so powerful that in 1993, two of the largest computer companies, Sun Microsystems and Oracle, waged war on Microsoft and vowed to make an operating system that would over take Windows. Even with the 2nd and 3rd most powerful companies combining to try to beat Microsoft, they merely put a small speed bump in Microsoft's dominance. The new system failed, and nearly put the two companies out of business. When this occurred, two things happened. First, Microsoft's dominance was proven, but more importantly, the government saw how monopolistic Microsoft was becoming.

In 1994, the government filed charges against Microsoft claiming a monopoly. Bill Gates went on the stand and tried to use technical jargon to discredit the government's claim, but the judge wouldn't have it. In 1994, it wasn't ruled that Microsoft was a monopoly, but rather got a slap on the hand and told not to do it anymore. Even as little as 5 years ago, the government still didn't see how powerful Microsoft was becoming, and therefore, didn't punish them as severely as some thought they should have. Gates didn't take this verdict seriously, and why should he have, nothing really happened so Gates had no reason to change his ways, just maybe be more discrete about them. Without punishment, Gates and Microsoft went

about their ways, one difference was that they now knew nothing would happen to them if they continued their practices, and while this would satisfy most, Gates was determined to push the lines of a monopoly.

Only four years later, Gates and Microsoft are again in the headlines, but not for what Bill Gates had hoped for. The courts decided in late 1998 that the investigation of Microsoft's monopoly would be re-opened. At first, Gates had little to worry about. The last investigation took a long time, came up with nothing and there was nothing to show that this time anything would be different. However, on November 3rd, 1999, the Supreme Courts ruled that Microsoft was indeed a monopoly. This was a great victory for every company that ever tried to compete with Microsoft, for they now had a reason for not succeeding. With all the hype and congratulations going around after the ruling, not many people stopped to think what would happen with this ruling?

To understand what this ruling means for Microsoft, and more importantly, the business world, you must understand how big of an impact Microsoft has had on the computer revolution. From the beginning, Microsoft has redefined the word "domination" for a company. 97% of computers running right now, in the world, run off of or have multiple Microsoft applications on them. Microsoft has made it a practice that if any other company comes up with an idea that threatened Microsoft's empire; they would either buy the company or crush them before their product even got off the design room floor. This meant that if anyone wanted a program that Microsoft made, they would have to buy it from Microsoft, there was no generic brand to buy.

So Microsoft is a monopoly, big deal. What does that mean for you and me? A lot. When it was ruled that Standard Oil was a monopoly, the company split up and the people could just pick a new company to go to. It's not so simple with Microsoft. Computers have now become an everyday part of society. It is also an ongoing process. The programs Microsoft made are used everyday; the business world is dependent on them in many ways. If the courts try to break up Microsoft like they did to Standard Oil, there is nothing to really stop Bill Gates from packing up Microsoft and taking it off the market, and since there are no other companies to take its place, what would the world do? My feeling is that the courts do not have much power in this situation and they know that. They just let Microsoft get too powerful, which in my feeling is not necessarily a bad thing. Microsoft is always trying to build a bigger, better product and they have usually kept it at a good price, so where is the trouble?

One of the biggest problems with Standard Oil was that they abused their power, and while Microsoft may be abusing their power, they are doing a better job at covering it up. I say just let Microsoft be until they make a mistake or do something wrong, things have been working just fine, so why try to mess that up.