From: John Messerly
Sent: Friday, June 16, 1995 7:33 PM
To: bens
Subject: RE: Give WickN access to \\bens5\lycos

The chokehold on the internet platform is the browser. We will use it to make sure we don't lose mindshare with our formats, scritping language, and object architecture.

When publishers choose which formats to use, (eg quicktime vs. video for windows) the format which wins is the one which performs best on both platforms. How is it that folks choose Quicktime for two big reasons, both of which apply to this question.

You do not have credibility with information publishers if you cannot sell into both installed bases. The most frequent question when we were selling Viewer as a CDROM tool was, when does the Mac version ship? Quicktime and Macromind director, Verity, Acrobat and Java (and on a different environment, Notes) are winning because they are great across both platforms. These groups recognize the strategic importance of owning and controlling the development inhouse.

If you contract this, you will get a slow browser which ships at least a half year after the latest windows version does. HTML page creators will notice the asymetry, so will be inclined to use Netscapes features, and Netscape's preferred formats, because they have a more uniform behavior, and deployment schedule. These guys want good internet infrastructure, and choice of browser will be determined by which connects you to the most people.

People on the web need to be assured that MS is as serious about multiplatform with their browser as their are with their Apps, or OLE. If we contract this out, they will think of it as a systems weapon, and that MS is a poor choice. (Ask around about how hard it is to find Mac developers as good as Windows developers- let alone those who can get real excited about working for MS.)

My point in my first note opening this subject is that the importance of your browser achieving dominance will in places override other (in this case systems) interests. Systems want to show that Windows is as good if not better Multimedia platform than Mac (as a former multimedia systems division developer, I very much believe in that mission). In some respects, having an Ohare broswer that screams as fast on the Mac as it does on Windows works against that goal. But let's not loose our sense of proportion about what this downside cost is though. It's not like netscape won't be making their mac client as fast as possible, or like other groups in MS aren't making their products as fast as they can possibly be on Mac.

The benefits of winning the browser war outweigh the minor costs of making the Mac version as good as and in lock step with the rollout schedule of the windows version.

But this position will never prevail as long as you are in a systems group.

| From: Ben Slivka
| To: John Messerly
| Subject: RE: Give WickN access to \\bens5\lycos
| Date: Friday, June 16, 1995 4:34PM
|
| It's not obvious to do Mac, nor is it obvious not to do Mac.
| Your cross platform argument is perfectlly valid, except that Windows
| is by far the dominant web viewing platform (>70% and growing), and
| we have an advantage over Netscape and others by just focusing on
| Windows and doing that really, really well. We can really leverage
| cool features in Windows (like we did w/Internet Shortcuts) that we
| could not do (easily) on other platforms.
|
| So, our current thinking is to have some 3rd party do the Mac
| adaptation of our stuff, so at least our flavor of HTML & scripting
| is cross platform.
|
| How does this sound?
|

PENGAD-Bayonne, N.J.
GOVERNMENT EXHIBIT
332

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| From: John Messerly
| Sent: Friday, June 16, 1995 1:43 PM
| To: bens
| Subject: Give WickN access to \\bens5\lycos
|
| Yesterday, I could connect Wick's machine to this share, but he
| couldn't view any files.
|
| Regarding your memo- the similitarities of our views are sometimes
| eerily similar (eg nightmare scenario with the set top box, and
| skepticism about big bang projects).
| The Mac issue is a litmus test for our differences. You have no
| plans to do such a client, and I'll bet if you are still in systems
| next year you still won't have one. But you cannot establish
| legitimacy until you have a cross platform client, and until you
| secure these perimeters, you will lose your battle against Netscape.
| (No way am I advocating hostility to Systems' business interests.
| There's nothing that says that the windows versions won't have
| certain inherant benefits because they can take advantage of more MS
| technologies.)
|
| Our position crumbles without cross platform clients: How do we
| think that there will be a critical mass of VB code out on the net
| unless we are cross platform? (Just hope that people won't care
| about any of the mac users? Why shouldn't they just use Java instead?)
|
| Your business unit must have autonomy from Systems.
|
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