

MICROSOFT IS NO MONOPOLY

МАЙКРОСОФТ — ЭТО НЕ МОНОПОЛИЯ

After more than five years of investigation, the European Commission has fined Microsoft almost 500m for monopolistic abuses. This happened because evidently Microsoft hasn't convinced many observers, least of all the judge, that Windows is not a monopoly.

That is not the first time when Microsoft is accused of monopolism. Microsoft pursuit started in 1991 in the USA with the claims that the company monopolized the market for PC operating systems. Today's complainants want Microsoft to take out Windows Media Player from Windows and to share Windows' programming code with Microsoft's competitors.

Thus, the question for many of us is whether Microsoft has a monopoly on the market. We know that monopoly means the ability to gain greater profits by raising price and regulating market production and stagnant technology. It's interesting that neither prices nor market regulation was present in Microsoft case.

That's obvious that the price of Windows has fallen greatly. Many features that come today as parts of Windows — modem support, drivers - originally cost more than all of Windows costs today. Besides, Windows 98 users paid less than 20 % of what they paid in 1989 for software with much fewer features and unfriendly interface. Moreover, most analysts admit that if Microsoft were a monopoly, it could charge far more than it does; and users would gladly pay the higher price.

What about Microsoft's 90 % share of the PC operating systems market? Doesn't that signify monopoly power? The answer is no. The point is that the government defined the market as operating systems that used an Intel-compatible microchip. It means that Apple's market share (10 %, 1998) didn't count because Apple used a Motorola chip; Sun's share (30 %, 1998) wasn't Intel-based too; and Linux came too late to be included in calculations. Considering this, Microsoft's market share would hardly exceed 50 %. So Microsoft's market share of 90 % is nonsense.

As for technology, it might be said that if Microsoft didn't want to make its products better and more qualitative it wouldn't spend 17 % of its revenue on research and development while its rivals — Oracle, Sun, IBM — spend between 6 and 10 %.

Actually the dynamics of lawsuits against Microsoft is very interesting. It was mentioned that today's European judgment supposes Microsoft to take out its Media Player from Windows. In the late 90s there was the same story with Netscape who asserted that bundling Internet Explorer with Windows is harmful for competition. But we must understand that

Microsoft created its operating system and has the right to sell it as they want. No one other than Microsoft may take out or add there any applications. But antitrust law pays little attention to such property rights.

The following question arises: if Microsoft is not a monopoly, then who needs these stories about market monopolization? One example: such "businessmen", like Larry Ellison of Oracle and Scott McNealy of Sun Microsystems, have wrongly used the government, trying to bring down a competitor. On the other hand such cases are used as the way to advertise different companies or products (like Netscape or Sun).

That is why today's conflict with Microsoft is a glaring example of vainness and irrationality of antitrust laws of a modern state. Fighting with the so-called "unfair" competition the government threatens fair competition itself.

Сегодняшний затяжной конфликт с Майкрософт является ярким примером пагубности и нерациональности антимонопольной деятельности современного государства. Борясь с так называемой нечестной конкуренцией, государство ставит под угрозу само понятие честной конкуренции. Сначала американские, а затем и европейские власти ведут дела против Майкрософт, с каждым разом пытаясь причинить все больший ущерб компании. Является ли на самом деле Майкрософт монополистом на рынке программного обеспечения и насколько верны доводы оппонентов компании, рассматривается в этой работе.

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PROBLEMAS ECONOMICOS ESPANOLES EN VISPERAS DE LAS ELECCIONES GENERALES

Estos días estamos asistiendo a una serie de noticias económicas, que están levantando sentimientos y miedos en el mundo del trabajo. A corto y medio plazo, España se va a ver sacudida por fenómenos económicos muy importantes: la deslocalización industrial, el incumplimiento del tratado de Kyoto, la falta de inversión extranjera, la desaparición casi total de la ayuda europea, la falta de proyectos en I+D, etc. Veamos los efectos que producen y que producirán estos hechos.

La estrategia de la deslocalización sigue unos pasos marcados, siempre pensando en salarios bajos y alta reducción de otros costes. Para la Unión Europea la continua transformación de la economía española es inevitable. La deslocalización y demás ajustes son, en consecuencia, inevitables.

Varios sectores de la economía nacional pueden verse afectados por el efecto de la deslocalización. Los sectores que sufrieron más por esta tendencia fueron: el automóvil, el textil, la electrónica de consumo, las tecnologías de la información y las comunicaciones.