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U.S. V. Microsoft: The Inside Story Of The Landmark Case



Synopsis

-- The United States v. Microsoft is one of the most watched trials of the century. The implications of this battle will affect everything from electronic commerce to network communications.-- Available just weeks after Judge Jackson issues his final remedy, making this the first book available that contains inside analysis on the implications of the outcome and the overall battle.-- Complete, unaltered story of the trial told by the most respected newspaper in the world, The New York Times.-- U.S. v. Microsoft offers readers the inside scoop on this infamous trial -- from fascinating behind-the-scenes information to insightful analysis of the day's events, the ruling, and how the case affects entrepreneurs and capitalism.

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Customer Reviews

It had all the elements of a Perry Mason television drama: big, powerful protagonists; shady witnesses; carefully argued points of law; leading players we loved to hate; rabbit-out-of-the-hat revelations; an irascible judge. And for much of the late 1990s, it held our attention (if not always our comprehension) like a flickering computer monitor. U.S. v. Microsoft, the nation's biggest antitrust trial since the breakup of Ma Bell almost 20 years earlier, played itself out before us in many fascinating ways. Whether you were a techno-geek who spent his off-hours tinkering with the Windows registry for relaxation, a state attorney-general concerned about the near-total dominance of the Windows operating system for the world's PCs, a student of the human character, a corporate PR counsel, a manager at a dot-com, or just someone who wondered why her PC seemed to crash more times than a Ford Pinto, there was something in the case of U.S. v. Microsoft for you. Now,

two journalists have produced an eyewitness account of this landmark trial. Joel Brinkley and Steve Lohr covered the story for The New York Times from the beginning. Given that, this book is likely to become the definitive work on the case for the general reader. Brinkley and Lohr pull together a comprehensive chronology of the events that led up to the trial and the judge's proposed remedy: the breakup of the world's largest, richest, and most powerful software company. They frame their reportage (much of which is reproduced from their Times news stories) with fresh commentary and analysis of key events and biographical portraits of the players on both sides. It's all here: the damning internal e-mail messages, the botched technical demonstrations used to counter the government's proposed remedies, Microsoft's competitors twisting the knife on the witness stand, the infamous videotape presentation before the court by Bill Gates, Judge Jackson's incredulity at some of the testimony. And while the final verdict may yet be years away, the case of U.S. v. Microsoft will provide many salutary lessons for both governments and large companies--many of which in the high-tech world are growing bigger every day. --Alan J. White

The federal government's antitrust lawsuit against the world's best-known software maker created headlines and sound bites all over the world. Journalists Brinkley and Lohr, who covered the case for the New York Times, offer a giant, information-packed survey of the case's ups and downs so far, along with analyses of its prehistory and profiles of the main players and witnesses, among them Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson and the government's star lawyer, David Boies. Six chapters take the controversy from 1995 (when Assistant Attorney General Joel Klein joined the Justice Department and started looking at Microsoft's behavior) to 1998 (when the lawsuit was filed) and up to the present. While the bulk of each chapter consists of reprinted Times articles on the trial, each with the date on which it ran, a new and detailed essay explaining part of the case, often relying on new interviews, opens each chapter and new summaries and explanations are interspersed as well. Seven new paragraphs about AOL and its senior v-p, David Colburn, introduce two articles about his testimony in October 1999. Next comes a short new essay about some lawyers' unfamiliarity with computers, a quick (new) intro to an Apple exec and then a longer (reprinted) article about his testimony. The case itself is currently hanging fire as Bill Gates and his allies appeal Judge Jackson's far-reaching order to break up the company. When it's all over, other writers, media critics, techies and legal experts will no doubt weigh in with more analytical books on the topic. This volume, though necessarily repetitive, will remain an invaluable source for those who want to study the court case and its public reception as it unfolded day by day. (One-day laydown, Aug. 21)

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I can only recommend this book for researchers who want easy access to the original news articles and other documents regarding the complex and long antitrust case the U.S. government filed against Microsoft. The authors reprinted their own newspaper columns and stories, interspersed with details about the case. It just didn't make for very compelling reading, and I lost interest about 3/4 of the way through the book.

If you want to understand the Microsoft case - the people behind it and the evolving context of antitrust law - this is the book. What it is, really, is a reference work - the New York Times coverage - surrounded by additional reporting and writing from the authors Joel Brinkley and Steve Lohr. It begins with a long lead-in chapter that traces the investigative origins of the case and the hardening position of the Justice Department and state investigators - and the early lost opportunities to settle the case by Microsoft. It has profiles of the key players in the case, it explains the shifts in antitrust doctrine over the years, and it has an intriguing piece on the tricky role played by Microsoft's competitors in encouraging the government to pursue the case. And Judge Jackson's comments, based on interviews during and after the trial, provide a fascinating and controversial glimpse of how his views of the company became increasingly negative as the case went on. Microsoft is basing its appeal partly on its claim that the judge's comments to the press, especially granting interviews to the New York Times before the case had left his courtroom, were improper. But what this book is not is a Microsoft book. What you learn about the company is based mainly on the testimony for the company and against it, and the evidence in the trial. What emerges is a picture of a company convinced that it is right, even virtuous, and whose win-every-point mentality that served it so well in the marketplace worked against it in the antitrust case. And oddly, after reading the book, I had the impression that while Microsoft is going to lose this case, it will probably not end up, after all the appeals, as the one-way shellacking it was in Judge Jackson's courtroom. The importance of that is that it will affect the eventual sanctions against Microsoft. In short, don't bet on a breakup of the company. This case isn't over yet.

Looking for an excellent story that seems to deliver both sides of the law suit brought against Microsoft, than this book is a must read for you. The authors take on a delicate subject and give you the best opportunity to make an informed decision. Using actual court transcripts, documents and company emails, a story develops with a natural curiosity that kept this reader going along and following the story as if it was actually taking place in the present time frame. The story does not

read like a mystery novel, a thriller or action story, instead the blend of legal-ease and objective opinion makes the book enjoyable. The overall reality of the storyline is what gives this book a real shot in the arm. Over 350 pages are not near enough to completely cover this story, as there is room for 350 more. The refreshing blend of investigative journalism and objective reporting are certainly the high points of the book. Overall this is one the best books I have read this year.

I admit I have not read the entire book, but what I've read so far has been very interesting. Its a book worth picking up if you're interested in Microsoft and/or the Microsoft trial of the late 90s (U.S. v. Microsoft).The book really does not go either prosecution or defense. It simply reports on what happened, and goes over the entire story. It is well written, as well.The only problem I have is that the book repeatedly uses articles by either Steve Lohr and Joel Brinkley (also the authors of this book). I didn't pick this book up for newspaper clippings. That's why the newspaper articles bother me, and I also believe the articles throw the reader off, because there's no flow of words. While talking about the trial, the authors will throw in an article. It's really a pain, although the articles are well written. I'd prefer a continuous story.

The book does not go into real detail. Everything in the book you could have learned from the nightly news. No new discoveries or anything. Book is filled with Newspaper articles that repeat the same thing over and over again. I dont think they could have mentioned that microsoft owns more than 90% of the worlds operating systems any more than they did. It was on every page!

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