

网络奇闻

NET NEWS

(英语读物)

刘正光 主编

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湖南大学出版社

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前 言

19 世纪初叶,华盛顿·欧文笔下的 Rip Van Winkle 在小山村里一觉醒来,发现眼前的一切变得完全陌生,恍如隔世,简直难以相信时代变化如此之快,顿感跟不上时代的步伐了。在快两百年后的今天,当我们已经进入“宽带”传输信息社会的今天,感觉又如何呢?

这是个知识的时代、信息的时代。网络技术的发展与普及更使得知识的更新、信息的传播越来越快。有了网络,我们足不出户,只要轻轻一点就几乎可以同步知道世界上所发生的一切。正如 Osborne Bennet Hardison 所言,我们现代人已越来越 universal 了。也正由于此,我们更加需要新知识、新信息,以更好地把握今天,预测明天。然而,网络到底离我们有多远,我们需要了解它,利用它。一个不可忽视的事实是,无论是网络建设本身,还是信息技术,国外已走到了我们的前面。因此,我们需要学习,需要引进。

学习外语的目的不仅仅是学习外语本身,而更重要的是在外语学习的过程中同时学习新知识,了解新信息。出于以上目的,我们从国外的最新杂志精选了这些精美时文编成系列读物,奉献给读者朋友。当然,这不是专题研究,更多的是关于网络在我们生活中方方面面的报道。希望读者们在享受

阅读快乐的同时,能体验到今天的语言的新鲜与活力,了解昨天的语言的陈旧与呆板;藉此聊以对教科书语言的老套做一补救,这也是我们的初衷。

本系列共三册,按语言的难度大致可做如下排序:《网络奇闻》《网络生存》《网络教育》。

说到“网络奇闻”趣事,不能不提微软。过去的几年里,微软一直是媒体的焦点。其与政府的官司一拖就是几年。虽然盖茨使尽浑身解数,无奈众怒难消,民意不可违。再加上司法部长 Reno 和检察官 Klein 铁了心要肢解微软,盖茨徒有无奈。网景公司(Netscape)作为微软案中的勇敢斗士还未来得及享受胜利的喜悦,就被美国在线收购了,真应验了“人算不如天算”这句老话。网络市场的竞争残酷无比,连微软和美国在线这样的大公司有时也会使用下三烂的手段,当然苦了的是用户。而有的网络公司为了吸引用户,则使出了用大奖作诱饵的办法,用户们何乐而不为呢?真是乱世出英雄,自古少年多才俊,稚气未脱的 15 岁少女 Ashley 在父亲的指点下创办了一个闻名全美的网站,听起来真有点天方夜谭的味道。网络业的快速发展离不开政府的强力支持。为此,美国国会商务委员会主席、国会议员 Thomas 不遗余力地从法律上给予其支持。这多少能给我们一点启示。关于网络的是是非非,众说纷纭。纵观历史的发展过程,每一次技术革命总会给那些没有准备的人带来冲击,这不足

为奇。

网络业有太多新奇和令人神往的故事。然而，限于篇幅，我们只能忍痛割爱。书中如有错误，欢迎读者批评指正。

2001 年 4 月
编者于岳麓山

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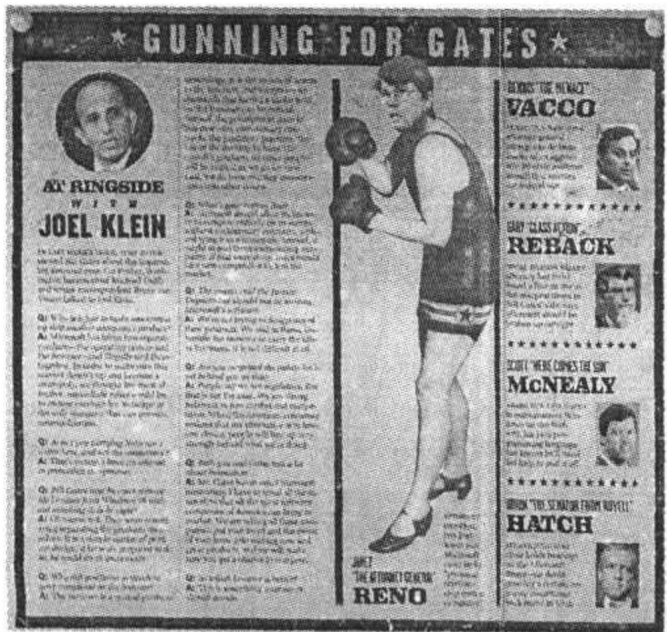
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1. Government Sues Microsoft

导读:

微软的捆绑销售在计算机市场形成垄断之势,遭到了行业内其他巨人的一致反对,政府不得不出面干预,以保护公平竞争。政府起诉微软主要是因为微软不公平地使用视窗操作系统迫使用户连带使用其他软件,尤其是互联网络浏览器。虽然盖茨竭力反驳政府及州立法院的起诉,可众怒难平。

America's top trustbuster^①, Assistant Attorney General^② Joel



Klein, launched a renewed attack on software giant Microsoft. He was joined by Attorneys General Dennis Vacco of New York, Tom Miller of Iowa and Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut. (Dennis Cook/AP Photo)

SEATTLE, May 18 — Microsoft has vowed^① to fight a pair of antitrust lawsuits filed today by the U.S. Department of Justice and the attorneys general of 20 states.

The two suits, filed in federal court in Washington, claim that Microsoft has unfairly used its Windows operating system to force customers to use its other software products — most importantly, its Internet Explorer Web browser^②.

The states and DOJ^③ are seeking a preliminary injunction^④ against the software giant. Should a judge approve the injunction, Microsoft would have to strip^⑤ Internet Explorer out of the Windows 98 operating system, due^⑥ on store shelves^⑦ June 25, or the company would have to include Netscape's Navigator Browser and another competing browser along with the new operating system.

Gates Strikes Back

Microsoft chairman Bill Gates, in a press conference at the company's Redmond, Wash.^⑧, headquarters today, accused the government of trying to stifle^⑨ innovation.

"This kind of government intervention would put judges and jurors^⑩ in the unwelcome position of designing computers," Gates said, quoting a recent appellate^⑪ ruling in the ongoing^⑫ browser battle.

District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson, who presided over^⑬ the first browser battle lawsuit, will also hear the Windows 98 lawsuits. A scheduling conference has been set for Friday, and the states plan to

ask the judge to rule on their preliminary injunction against Microsoft.

U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno says the suits will prevent Microsoft from using the popularity of its Windows operating systems — used to run more than 90 percent of the world's personal computers — to dominate other software markets, such as the market for Internet browsers.

"Consumers and computer manufacturers should have the right to choose the software they want installed on their personal computers," Reno says. "We are acting to preserve competition in the software industry."

Bad News For Microsoft

The states, spearheaded^③ by the attorneys general from Iowa, New York and Connecticut, filed a similar suit today in Washington. The DOJ and attorneys general were involved in weekend negotiations with Microsoft, which fell through^④ on Saturday. Bad blood^⑤ from the failed talks seemed to seep through today.

"Microsoft claims that we were overreaching^⑥," says New York Attorney General Dennis Vacco, whose office is handling the bulk of the states' case. "But it is Microsoft who is acting like an Orwellian big brother^⑦ by controlling the range of products available to consumers."

Vacco says the states filed separate suits in recognition of their own individual state interests. New York, for example, seeks to protect the numerous software start-up companies springing up in Manhattan's "Silicon Alley^⑧".

"We have a burgeoning^⑨ software industry in New York state and we would like to see it grow," Vacco says. "I doubt if Mr. Gates faced a behemoth^⑩ like Microsoft when he first started out, that he would have been as successful as he is today."

Anticompetitive Or Innovative?

Gates asserted “the government is wrong to attack innovation” and said the suits are without basis. He added that Windows 98 will be shipped to computer makers as it is, without the modifications demanded by the DOJ and states.

The lawsuits, he added, are “a step backwards for America, for consumers and for the personal computer industry that is leading our nation’s economy into the 21st century”.

Microsoft has maintained that Internet Explorer cannot be separated from Windows 98 without rendering the entire operating system unusable. Gates says Microsoft negotiated in good faith^⑤ for 10 days, even offering at one point to provide a link to Netscape’s home page, where the Netscape Navigator product may be downloaded^⑥ for free.

“We kept making concessions^⑦, and the government kept coming back with unreasonable demands, wanting us to install Netscape for them,” Gates said. “It was like hearing ‘Netscape this, Netscape that,’ all the time.”

Cheers From Netscape

For its part, Netscape applauded the lawsuits, issuing a statement saying the move was “the initial step in loosening the chokehold^⑧ the Microsoft monopoly^⑨ has on the computer industry”.

The Justice Department says it will continue to investigate Microsoft as it pursues its latest lawsuit against the company.

“We are filing this action now to address^⑩ time-sensitive aspects of the shipment of Windows 98, aspects that could significantly harm competition,” antitrust chief Joel Klein says. “Our investigation of other Microsoft practices is ongoing.”

The DOJ claims to have a number of internal Microsoft documents

outlining the company's plans to use Windows to dominate the Internet browser market. Vacco claims that Microsoft also used its operating system to boost sales of its Office software suite[®] — a package that includes word processing, e-mail, and spreadsheet[®] programs.

But Gates says going after[®] any integrated software[®] is an attack on innovation.

“By going after the basic principle of integration, the government can conceivably go after a very broad set of things,” Gates says.

The Associated Press[®] and Reuters[®] contributed to this story.

Battle For The Desktop

One of the secondary issues addressed in the lawsuits is that of the Windows desktop — the first image you see when you turn on your computer for the first time.

The Department of Justice and states claim in their lawsuits that Microsoft should not have its logo appear the first time a Windows-programmed computer starts up.

At his press conference, Microsoft chairman Bill Gates disputed the claims, using five computers from five different manufacturers to make his point. He noted that none of the five had the Windows 98 logo on the first screen, and that computer makers had the option of customizing the initial desktop configuration to their own tastes.

The Department of Justice, however, wants Microsoft to remove certain restrictions in its contracts with computer makers. Currently, Microsoft requires that Internet Explorer cannot be deleted from the package of bundled software[®] accompanying the operating system, and that the IE icon[®] be just as large and accessible as any other browser's icon.

The lawsuits require Microsoft to drop these requirements, allow-

ing computer makers more leeway^⑩ in configuring^⑪ their systems.

Notes

- ①Justice Department 以及下文出现的 Department of Justice 均指“司法部”。
- ②antitrust: 反托拉斯, 反垄断
- ③trustbuster: 联邦反托拉斯检查官
- ④Attorney General: 司法部长
- ⑤vow: 起誓, 发誓
- ⑥web browser: 网络浏览器
- ⑦DOJ: Department of Justice
- ⑧injunction: 强制令
- ⑨strip: 删除, 去除
- ⑩due: 到期
- ⑪store shelf: 这里指在货架上摆放的期限。
- ⑫Wash.: Washington
- ⑬stifle: 抑制
- ⑭juror: 陪审员
- ⑮appellate: 上诉人
- ⑯ongoing: 进行中的
- ⑰preside over: 主持
- ⑱spearhead: 带领, 牵头
- ⑲fall through: 失败; 成为泡影
- ⑳bad blood: 怨恨
- ㉑overreach: 管得太宽
- ㉒Orwellian big brother: 指英国作家, George Orwell 的讽刺小说《1984》中的独裁者。
- ㉓Silicon Alley: 硅巷, 仿 Silicon Valley (硅谷) 而成。通常指百老汇附近从 23 号大街延伸到哈得逊河以下某处的一条公司林立的走廊型地带。
- ㉔bubbling: 萌芽中的; 欣欣向荣的
- ㉕behemoth: 巨兽; 庞然大物

- ㉓ in good faith: 抱有诚意的
- ㉔ download: 下载
- ㉕ make concessions: 做出让步
- ㉖ chokehold: 原指摔跤中令人窒息的扼制, 这里指“桎梏, 障碍”。
- ㉗ monopoly: 垄断
- ㉘ address: 处理, 对付
- ㉙ suite: 套件, (软件) 套装
- ㉚ spreadsheet: 表格
- ㉛ go after: 追查
- ㉜ integrated software: 集成软件
- ㉝ the Associated Press: 美联社
- ㉞ Reuter: 路透社(英)
- ㉟ bundled software: 捆绑软件
- ㊱ IE: 即微软公司的 Internet Explorer(浏览器); icon: 图标。
- ㊲ leeway: 选择余地
- ㊳ configure: 配置

Exercise

Answer the following questions :

1. What are the main points of the lawsuits by the government and states?
2. Do you think these lawsuits are fair? Why?
3. State the main counterattack points by Gates.
4. Do you think the counterattacks by Gates convincing? Why?