

It is ironic that while the Department of Justice is searching for a single sweeping solution to Microsoft's monopoly power (when there is little reason to believe that any one decision will have a big effect on that power), other branches of government appear to be considering using new rules which will have the effect of protecting that monopoly power. Microsoft achieved its current position largely by businesses to write software that only runs on its operating systems.

If the lawsuits being pursued by the MPAA succeed in stopping development of Linux-based DVD players, that will mean one more area in which Linux will be artificially prevented from competing with Microsoft's operating systems.

The MPAA has not provided any plausible reason for believing that unauthorized copying of DVDs will be more attractive to the average user than buying DVDs in the next few years.

A more plausible explanation for the movie industry's concern is that it wants the ability to control when a user can view a DVD that he or she has purchased - a desire that the authors of the constitution could hardly have had in mind when they authorized congress to enact copyright laws. It is also not too hard to imagine this case being used as a precedent for a digital book distribution system that might supplant existing paper books but prevent users from copying small excerpts for the purpose of criticism.

Peter McCluskey
1571 El Camino Real W., Apt 15
Mountain View, CA 94040

I am a software engineer, not currently employed.