

From yordool Fri Mar 8 10:59:46 1991
To: bens billg bradai jsmall paulas steveb
Subject: The Win4, DOS6, Win/N Marys
Cc: anthony bobau ryppe steven
Date: Fri Mar 8 10:57:23 1991

Basically, your proposal is that Win4 becomes the operating system and just provides a "DOS compatibility box". This is one of the possibilities that I outlined in my earlier memo, with one significant difference: your proposal totally disbands DOS 6. As you state, Win4 will run DOS 5 as it's compatibility box.

So the question that you raise is, "what role does DOS 6 play? Can we just cancel the project?" First, I'll reiterate the original DOS 6 goals.

- Capture New Sales
I guess your argument here is that new sales will either go to Win4 or they'll go to DOS 5 and that DOS 6 won't have any significant driving power.
- Win upgrades from current users
Your argument is presumably that if they didn't upgrade to DOS 5 then they won't upgrade to DOS 6.
- Reclass market from Cloners
your proposal only half way addresses this. In a sense, you lock cloners out of the Win4 market, but we only benefit from this if you increase the price of Win4 to be that of Win3 + DOS. Otherwise, we've destroyed the DOS market under Win4, revenue-wise, so this is a pyrrhic victory.

As for the non-win4 environment, we're fully vulnerable to cloners. There won't be any more DOSes coming out since Win4, a very popular product, freezes the DOS environment at DOS 5. DSI is talking about their response to DOS 5 - are we willing to just tough this out?

- Be smaller, faster, take advantage of hardware environment
your proposal totally punts this on the 386. Your argument is that nobody wants to run DOS on a 386; they'll run Win4. You bite it on size - Win4 (even configured "Win4 as DOS") is much larger. Performance is down some too, probably, due to VM overhead.

On the 386, DOS 6 was going to offer easier configuration and an integrated, better performing SmartDrv. We loose this. Perhaps we'd ship a DOS 5.1 that has these features.

Well, this can be tossed around some more. The bottom line is . . .

- are we happy with DOS 5 as the final DOS?
- do we agree that if you have a 386 you're going to be running windows, and that the size/speed hit of "Win4 configured as DOS" is OK?

note that we can't just say, "well, we'll ship DOS 5.1 or whatever to add new features such as compatibility with the new APIs or network drivers, since having DOS 5.0 hardware is Win4 will prevent us from doing any more than maintenance releases to DOS, I claim. If we embrace this Win4 proposal then we'll take the kernel cleanup and speech work that's been done and just ship that as DOS 5.01. We'll have to undo and discard the speed/size gains obtained from rearchitecting internal things such as the buffers, the INT2f interface, etc. So we'll give back about half, very roughly speaking, of our speed and size gains. And naturally, we'll drop anything that involves new capabilities.

Comments?

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