

Microsoft Memorandum

To: Pete Higgins, Chris Peters, Chris Graham, Jonathan Lazarus; Lewis Levin, Dawn Trudeau, Vijay Vashe, Hank Vigil

From: Philippe Goetschel

cc: Kathleen Schoenfelder, Robbie Bach, Mark Kroese, Darrell Boyle, Virginia Howlett; Mary Dieli, Monicah Harrington, Gaby Adam, Marianne Allison, Jon DeVaan, Ed Fries, TimMcGuire; Gerard Baz, Mike Conte, LoisO

Date: May 10, 1993

Subject: Office ISV Strategy

Recommendation

This memo is to recommend the creation of a limited MS Office ISV program for non-competing software companies. Th basis for this work would to popularize some of our most visible IDG feature in the industry with the objective to making the products of our direct competitors look different and odd over time.

Background

Bill Gates has pointed out that we work more closely with a set of vendors to have them have closer affinity to our office product.

In addition, on the recent product synergy press tour some discussions with editors focused around how to make applications from different vendors interoperable better. We responded by saying that if all vendors would support OLE 2 and provide as many file conversion filters as we do, applications from different vendors would work much better together. We are slightly vulnerable in rolling out product synergy to articles that could redefine product synergy as cross-vendor product synergy in addition to intra-vendor product line synergy. The recent PC Magazine article by Michael Miller provides an early evidence for this potential trend, even though we believe we successfully redirected his thinking on this issue during the press tour last week.

Our recommendation is to address above issues with a highly visible Office ISV strategy. The objective would be to communicate to the PC press, to ISVs and to our users that Microsoft applications are committed to making our product synergy components available to other ISVs and enable them to advance cross vendor product synergy. End users throughout the industry would benefit from synergistic and interoperable products. We would only make the program available to non-peting ISVs. Over time, end users would be surrounded by the look and feel of Microsoft and Microsoft like applications, making the products of our direct competitors look different and odd.

Preliminary analysis suggests we could make the following IDG components available to non-competing ISVs

Toolbar Buttons

Candidate buttons would include all buttons that are in the standard section of the IDG toolbar plus selected others: File New, File Open, File Save, Print Preview, Spell, Cut, Copy, Paste, Zoom Control, Help, Font, Font Size, Bold, Italic, Underline as well as the Alignment buttons. In addition, we could make some of our internal button design guidelnes available as well as the code that controls button appearance, colors and state (buttoncur.dll).

Philippe

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It is important that all ISVs commit upfront to adopting our exact button behavior and our look. Even the slightest changes by ISVs would be very counterproductive to our strategy. We estimate that cleaning up the existing spec would take about 1/2 week, making the existing code ready for limited distribution 1 week. Documentation for the code would have to be created and should take about 1 week.

3 Dimensional Dialog Look

One of most visible contributors to our 93 wave of applications look is the 3 dimensional look implemented today in Excel 4 and word 6. The 3d dll which is already used internally by most non SDM MS applications is already on IDIS as shared code could be made available with minimum documentation. We estimate the Office team could write the documentation in one person week because the code already has a well written readme file.

Short Cut Menus

The current thinking is to make the code available which generates the right click popups in our applications. This would be supplemented by a short description of what menu items should be listed and in what order. We would also make recommendations about the size of the pop-up menus and about not listing the keyboard short cuts inside the short cut menu pop ups. It would take 1/2 week to finalize the spec, 1 week to make the code ready and 1/2 week to prepare the final documentation.

Tab Dialogs

Even though the tab dialogs (booktabs) are among the most proprietary features of the 93 wave of applications, we believe we should make them available to non competing Office ISVs because they include some very frequently used dialogs such as the Font dialog and the Page Setup dialog. It would not be practical to share code that implements a particular booktab but we could share code for a generic tab dialog with a variable number of tabs and ISVs could then adopt it to their needs. The deliverable would be a detailed spec (1 week) including bitmaps describing a generic MS apps tab dialog. Producing the generic code would take about 2 developer weeks and documentation another 1/2 week.

Table Driven Setup

The Setup Toolkit group is finalizing its table driven ACME tool by the end of June. Based on our experience to date, writing a table driven file to drive the setup of an individual file takes about 2 people weeks plus testing. The Office Team would have to document ACME which could take about 3 people weeks depending on how detailed we want the documentation to be.

Spell Checking Engine

The current thinking is to make designs of the current IDG spell checking dialogs available. Microsoft owns the spelling API (CAPI) but most of the tools to hook up specialized dictionaries are owned by our dictionary vendors.

Our recommendation is make the CAPI and the spelling dialogs available. This would take about 1 week to finalize.

Start Up Screen Template

The idea is to provide a generic startup screen template that would make it very easy for ISVs to simulate their initial look of a Microsoft application. The template would include the 3d grey panel and placement information where to put the product visual and the product name and a couple of Microsoft applications examples.

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Object BASIC Support

The idea is to target carefully selected applications vendors to include Object BASIC hooks in their applications. Target applications would be selected on the basis of being very synergistic with ours' from a programmability point of view such as AutoCad or Gilbert Associates' Views. Views might even be competitive with the our future efforts in the document management group.

We would also let them ship all of Object BASIC but as Bill pointed out for a small royalty. The details of OB support need to get finalized further.

Shared File Converters

The objective would be to make it easier for ISVs to import files created in Microsoft applications. The Word converters group has developed installable dlls that are already documented and being used by other product groups.

Support

This program would have very limited support because of IDG resource constraints. We should find ways to work with Cameron's group and understand how his organization could assist us in rolling the ISV program out.

Target Companies

Using the 92 Sofletter 100 list we recommend to initially target the following companies. More research and internal consensus building is necessary to understand to what extent we really do not compete with these companies:

Software Publishing	Intuit	Autodesk	Chipsoft
Funk	Central Point	Fifth Generation	BLOC Development
Reality Technologies	Micrografx	Walker Richer & Quin	Caere
Datastorm	Software Products Intl.	Wall Data	Traveling Software (?)
Mathsoft	MapInfo	Calera	

Implementation

The current thinking is to be ready to rollout this program concurrently with rolling out our product synergy strategy this fall. We need to clarify what the roles and responsibilities of the following groups should be:

- **Interoperability and Design Group:** finalizing most of the IDIS specifications. Estimated workload: xx weeks
- **MS Office Group:** creating most of the documentation above. Documentation as well as code module could be put on a CD.
- **Applications Marketing:** Packaging of the materials
- **Developer Relations Group:** Approach and help identifying developers
- **Open and to be determined:** Technical support ?

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