

Donna Poreda

From: Brad Silverberg
To: davidcol; paulma
Cc: stevesi; johnlu
Subject: RE: shell in office
Date: Tuesday, June 15, 1993 10:19AM

i agree with all this.

in addition, i fear that if we are in Shell Wars, it will lead to the view that the shell is just an app, not an integral part of the system. Thus Shell Wars will only serve to delay cairo adoption. the shell is such a central part of the whole notion of cairo's information access; we need to be in control of the shell or else cairo will just be yet another (radical) variant and won't usher in a new age of component software.

further, if the shell is now viewed as an app rather than as part of the system, then it devalues windows itself and makes it easy to clone.

now, one can argue that lotus et al are going to do it anyway. my counter is that it will be viewed more as some random activity, a layer on top of windows rather than a full replacement, and won't get third party support.

our competitors are going to do everything they can to fragment windows. they will build their own middleware to claim api ownership. they will do clones. they will try to diverge at the ui level. we should not take actions which encourage and reinforce those efforts.

From: davidcol
To: paulma
Cc: bradsi; stevesi
Subject: shell in office
Date: Tuesday, June 15, 1993 9:22AM

I've been thinking about this a bit since the retreat. It's an incredibly dangerous thing that we should not do.

The danger is clear. Shipping a shell in office forces the other vendors to ship shells as well. Either the competition teams up and uses the same shell, or they all have their own. In either case the Windows UI world is completely fragmented and we lose control. In fact, since shells are usually the things that break from release to release, we'll be cornered into either breaking other shells and thus office suites and making customers unhappy, or restricting what we do in each rev. Either choice means Windows stagnates; users won't upgrade if it's not compatible and they won't upgrade if it's not compelling. I think the danger of major vendors shipping a Windows shell even if we don't in office is low, they want to be part of the Windows church. Us kicking them out of the church is the only thing that will really force them to make a church of their own.

The whole notion of people buying more office because it adds value to the system contradicts my view of Windows being just an appliance. People care about apps, they buy apps. It's not clear to me that a significant number of additional people would buy office if it had some features which enhanced the system or if it had a shell of their own. I also doubt users will buy the MS Office just because it had a shell that was more like the Windows church shell than a break off shell. People make buying decisions based on apps and how those apps interoperate.

Forcing multiple Windows churches is bad.