

5404641374

Thitiporn Siricururatana

Bill Gates

1104 words

Nowadays, computer has become inevitably vital in every aspect of our lives and it is not exaggerated to say that everyone who has access to it has heard about Microsoft and its billionaire founder, Bill Gates. His dedication to the company rapidly pays off as Microsoft grows steadily, launching many products into the market and also raising its stock values. The key to the success of Microsoft lies in Bill Gates' vision and, more importantly, aggressiveness which is reflected on his every work and can be said to be his most contribution to mankind.

Although it might not sound philanthropically good, the truth that all the offensive traits considered evil such as greed and self-interest have indirectly benefited mankind and are necessary for business success is still unlikely to be invalidated.<sup>1</sup> Bill Gates, unfortunately for his rivals, certainly has all those traits. During the time of adolescence, Gates was sent to the counselor to solve his rebellious act; however, the treatment failed and the counselor told his mother that competitiveness was his nature.<sup>2</sup> After graduated from Lakeside School, he carried on his education at Harvard but soon quitted and founded Microsoft with his partner, Paul Allen.<sup>3</sup> Led by Gates under his will to become a monopolist in the software industry, Microsoft has grown steadily and has, as a matter of fact, started to gain market dominance after it signed a contract with IBM and launched

---

<sup>1</sup> Rivlin, Gary. *The Plot to get Bill Gates : an irreverent investigation of the world's richest man. . . and the people who hate him*. 1999. p.16.

<sup>2</sup> Gatlin, Jonathan. *Bill Gates : the path to the future*. 1999. p.13.

<sup>3</sup> Petechuk, David. "Gates, Bill 1995." *Encyclopedia.com*. 11 Feb. 2012.  
<[http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Bill\\_Gates.aspx](http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Bill_Gates.aspx)>

MS-DOS.<sup>45</sup> Gates did not stop there; he has never stopped ensuring Microsoft's monopolistic position. He relentlessly blocked every possible way that his rivals may be able to pose a threat to his company by using the network effect, which is considered to be a nature of computer industry, along with its huge market share.<sup>6</sup> By doing so, Microsoft manages to thrive in this highly competitive industry for many years; nowadays, Microsoft Windows still accounts for 84% of total market share in operating system industry.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Gates continued to develop new version of Windows despite a huge sale of an existing version to confirm his company's position. Consumers were provided with a newer and better product and benefited from it as a consequence of his action.

Gates' practice may be perceived as evil by many people, mostly his competitors, and the US government, causing many antitrust lawsuits against Microsoft; however, there is still a laudable side about it.<sup>8</sup> Because it is compatible with much hardware unlike that of Apple, Microsoft operating system, Microsoft windows, has always been the most popular operating system since the release of windows 3.1.<sup>910</sup> Thus, Microsoft has actually set a standard for programmers and small companies that served as a guideline for creating applications and programs to be compatible with operating

---

<sup>4</sup> "From MSWord to MSWorld: How Microsoft is Building a Global Monopoly." *NetAction*. 10 Feb. 2012. <<http://www.netaction.org/msoft/world/part2.html>>

<sup>5</sup> Gatlin, Jonathan. *Bill Gates : the path to the future*. 1999. p.39-43.

<sup>6</sup> "From MSWord to MSWorld: How Microsoft is Building a Global Monopoly." *NetAction*. 10 Feb. 2012. <<http://www.netaction.org/msoft/world/part2.html>>

<sup>7</sup> "Operating System Market Share." *NETMARKETSHARE*. 9 Feb. 2012. <<http://marketshare.hitslink.com/operating-system-market-share.aspx?qprid=8>>

<sup>8</sup> Rivlin, Gary. *The Plot to get Bill Gates : an irreverent investigation of the world's richest man. . . and the people who hate him*. 1999. p.5-8

<sup>9</sup> Spam.pong. "Why does Microsoft dominate the desktop and networked software market?" *Answers.com*. 11 Feb. 2012. <[http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Why\\_does\\_Microsoft\\_dominate\\_the\\_desktop\\_and\\_networked\\_software\\_market](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Why_does_Microsoft_dominate_the_desktop_and_networked_software_market)>

<sup>10</sup> Wikipedia contributors. "Microsoft Windows." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 11 Feb. 2012. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft\\_Windows](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_Windows)>

system.<sup>11</sup> Since the operating system used all over the world is somewhat united and has same standard, when their products meet that standard, programmers can be sure to sell them to a wide variety of consumers; therefore, they are encouraged to constantly develop new products. This allows computer industry to grow rapidly, improving quality of products and most importantly reducing the price which enables consumers to fully benefit from this technology. This is all because of Gates' pursuit of success and monopolistic position. Furthermore, Gates' concern of his company's success was always his priority; as a result, he even made business contract with his antagonists.<sup>12</sup> This, without any question, gives more advantage to consumers comparing to if he was not to separate personal feeling from business.

In 1997, while Apple was facing difficulties and was so desperate that it unrepentantly attempted to file Microsoft another lawsuit, Jobs came back to the company as an interim CEO and immediately went to see Gates to settle this undesirable lawsuit.<sup>13</sup> Despite the fact that Microsoft and Apple have been fighting each other under a long lasting case about whether Microsoft window 1.0 infringed Apple's Macintosh operating system copyright or not, Gates, appearing via satellite, and Jobs announced that Microsoft would invest 150 million dollars in Apple and also declared the cooperation of the two leading computer companies.<sup>1415</sup> That action seemed so generous that his

---

<sup>11</sup> "From MSWord to MSWorld: How Microsoft is Building a Global Monopoly." *NetAction*. 10 Feb. 2012. <<http://www.netaction.org/msoft/world/part2.html>>

<sup>12</sup> Gatlin, Jonathan. *Bill Gates : the path to the future*. 1999. p.103

<sup>13</sup> Wikipedia Contributors. "Apple Inc." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 12 Feb. 2012. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apple\\_Inc.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apple_Inc.)>

<sup>14</sup> Wikipedia Contributors. "Apple Computer, Inc. v. Microsoft Corporation." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 12 Feb. 2012

<sup>15</sup> D. Kawamoto, B. Heskett and M. Ricciuti, "Microsoft to invest \$150 million in Apple." *CNET*. 12 Feb. 2012. <[http://news.cnet.com/MS-to-invest-150-million-in-Apple/2100-1001\\_3-202143.html](http://news.cnet.com/MS-to-invest-150-million-in-Apple/2100-1001_3-202143.html)>

opponents started to alleviate their hatred.<sup>16</sup> Gates, then, became Apple life-savers and a man whose most concern is the future of computer industry.<sup>17</sup> Still, the reason behind his action remained in dispute.

Critics claimed that Gates only did that in order to serve his company's own goods not because he really cared about Apple (and the whole industry) future. His action really did cease, or at least decrease, government's anxiety about his company's position as a monopolist; Apple accounted for about 10% of market share and Microsoft actually let its rival survive by saving its life.<sup>18</sup> This certainly had underlying meaning contrasting with its conviction as a greedy monopolist and, thus, helped supporting Microsoft against the antitrust accused. Furthermore, investing in Apple, in fact, benefited Microsoft with huge revenue since Microsoft was actually the major supplier of Macintosh software and it also expanded Microsoft's customer base.<sup>19</sup> The agreement that Microsoft made with Apple required its Internet Explorer to be the default browser on Macintosh rather than the browser developed by its rival, Netscape.<sup>20</sup> That is, this agreement encouraged Microsoft's likelihood to defeat Netscape and become number one in the internet browser field. In spite of Gates utter aggressiveness toward his company's success, that fact that Microsoft's action in 1997 prolonged Apple's life still holds. Without it, Apple might be out of business since 1990s and, as a consequence, we human might not have been introduced to such trendy innovations called iPad and iPhone by now. And since iPhone has presently become part of our lives, the 33rd organ, metaphorically, Gates' self-interest

---

<sup>16</sup> Gatlin, Jonathan. *Bill Gates : the path to the future*. 1999. p.145-147

<sup>17</sup> Gatlin, Jonathan. *Bill Gates : the path to the future*. 1999. p.149.

<sup>18</sup> "Microsoft bites into Apple" *PBS*. 12 Feb. 2012. <[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/media/july-dec97/apple\\_8-6.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/media/july-dec97/apple_8-6.html)>

<sup>19</sup> Gatlin, Jonathan. *Bill Gates : the path to the future*. 1999. p.153

<sup>20</sup> "Microsoft bites into Apple" *PBS*. 12 Feb. 2012. <[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/media/july-dec97/apple\\_8-6.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/media/july-dec97/apple_8-6.html)>

did play significant role to mankind. If Gates had known that Apple would become his major rival, whether he would still have taken the same action is still in question. In any case, the society has gained so much benefit from his action.

Aggressiveness, even though sometimes perceived as unwanted trait and is sure to have some negative sides, when belonged to an appropriate person can also be effective. Gates' willingness to win and to be number one in the industry he involved led him to take many actions, some of which were criticized harshly by his antagonists and also by the government itself due to its fear of intimidating monopolist. Those actions have had substantial impacts on, not only the computer field, but also those he has invested in and the relating industries, all of which are among the most important industries in our society. His aggressiveness is, indeed, the core root of those impacts and has contributed so much to mankind.