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Ipsos-Reid EXPRESS Monday Morning Report

On Friday and Saturday, Ipsos-Reid's new U.S. Public Affairs Division asked a representative sample of 1000 American adults nationwide to comment on the federal appeals court's decision in the Microsoft antitrust trial. This is another in a series of Monday morning reports on what Americans were thinking over the past weekend. To find out about future Ipsos-Reid EXPRESS reports on U.S. public opinion (which will usually focus on the topics people are talking about as each workweek ends), call Ipsos-Reid U.S. Public Affairs President Thomas Riehle at 202-463-7300, or email at thomas.riehle@ipsos-reid.com.

America's Thoughts This Weekend: June 29–30, 2001

U.S. and 19 states v. Microsoft: In the Court of Public Opinion

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 2) -- The final decision in the Microsoft antitrust case will be the work of hundreds of lawyers and judges. But this weekend was a moment when many Americans made their own judgments about the state of the case, what should happen next, and how all this will affect Microsoft, and them. **Most Americans (65%) report they are aware of the court's ruling.**

An important part of the appeals court's 7-0 decision vacated the penalty imposed by the lower court: The breakup of Microsoft into two companies. By a two-to-one margin, Americans endorse the appeals court decision to block the immediate break-up of Microsoft (58% say that is good news for consumers, 25% say it is bad news).

"Americans want a Microsoft that is unified, innovative, and no longer in court. A lot of people believe Microsoft will be careful about abusing its position now—and almost none believe the appeals court decision will embolden Microsoft to arrogance or cockiness. And that appears to be what most people want out of this effort on their behalf by the Justice Department and state attorneys general. Most want the government to drop the case now," reports Thomas Riehle, President, US Public Affairs at Ipsos-Reid, the independent public opinion polling company that conducted the survey.

In the ruling, the federal appeals court overturned the decision by a lower court judge to break up Microsoft into two smaller companies. When you hear that Microsoft might NOT be broken up, do you consider that good news for consumers like you, or bad news?

	Good News For Consumers That Microsoft Will Not Be Broken Up	Bad News For Consumer That Microsoft Will Not Be Broken Up	Don't Know
All Adults	58	25	16
Heavy Internet users (10 + hours per week)	69	24	7
Light Internet users (Under 10 hours weekly)	55	28	18
Do not use Internet	52	23	26



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The Government's Next Step

Almost half of all Americans (46%) would like to see the government simply drop the case. That is much more than twice the number (18%) who want the government to try to reinstate the break-up penalty. Only 29% took the middle position that the government should drop the effort to break up Microsoft or restrict the features it can add to its operating system, but should continue to pursue other. In effect, 75% oppose a breakup or restrictions on what features Microsoft adds to its software.

Which of these three statements comes closest to what you think the government should do now? Do you think the government should ...				
	Drop the case	Keep pursuing the case of Microsoft's monopoly over operating systems, but drop efforts to break up Microsoft and do not restrict Microsoft's ability to add more features to its operating system	Seek to defend the original court ruling and continue to try to get a court order to break-up Microsoft	Don't Know
All Adults	46	29	18	7
Democrats	43	28	23	6
Independents	45	26	17	12
Republicans	49	33	14	5
Heavy Internet users (10 + hours per week)	50	32	17	1
Light Internet users (Under 10 hours weekly)	43	30	21	6
Do not use Internet	48	22	15	15

Taking the Lead for the Government Team

The appeals court decision may expose rifts within the government team that enjoyed such success in the lower court. Those divisions could play out along party lines. Republicans tend to prefer the judgment of Bush's Justice department over the attorneys general, Democrats agree but by a narrower margin, and Independents are split on that question.

The Microsoft lawsuit was brought by the U.S. Justice Department AND 19 state attorneys general. Now they all need to agree on how to proceed on the case. If there were a disagreement about what to do next, do you think you would be more likely to have confidence in the approach of ...				
	U.S. Justice Department	State Attorneys General	Equal confidence or lack of confidence in each	Don't Know
All Adults	43	34	13	10
Democrats	42	38	10	10
Independents	30	30	24	16
Republicans	49	31	16	4



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Microsoft Today and Tomorrow

For now, most Americans believe the effect of the antitrust case will be to make Microsoft more careful about how it treats its customers and competitors. By a 7-to-1 margin, people believe Microsoft will be more careful, rather than less careful, as a result of this antitrust trial.

Do you think that as a result of this antitrust trial experience, Microsoft will be more careful about how it treats customers and competitors, do you think they will be less careful, or do you think this will not lead to any changes at Microsoft?				
	Microsoft will be MORE careful about how it treats customers and competitors	This will not lead to any changes at Microsoft	Microsoft will be LESS careful about how it treats customers and competitors	Don't Know
All Adults	49	41	7	3
Heavy Internet users (10 + hours per week)	50	42	7	1
Light Internet users (Under 10 hours weekly)	47	44	7	3
Do not use Internet	51	38	7	4

That explains the confidence expressed by 54% of all Americans—and 60% of heavy Internet users—that Microsoft's announced planned innovations to make Internet operations more an automatic part of the operating system itself is more good news for consumers rather than a reason for concern.

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