

**DOWJONES** | Newswires**Justice/Microsoft -2: Suit Wouldn't Block Windows 98 >MSFT**

By Scott Ritter

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WASHINGTON (Dow Jones)--The Justice Department filed a sweeping antitrust case against Microsoft Corp. (MSFT) Monday, alleging the company unfairly leveraged its Windows monopoly to snare a bigger share of the Internet software market.

Twenty states' attorneys general and the District of Columbia filed a similar action Monday.

The much-anticipated suit, filed in U.S. District Court here, comes as the Redmond, Wash., software maker is set to begin shipping Windows 98 to personal computer makers. Last-minute talks aimed at resolving the dispute collapsed over the weekend.

The government's suit doesn't seek to block the release of Windows 98. Instead, it would require Microsoft to include Netscape Communications Corp.'s (NSCP) Internet browser when shipping Windows 98 with its own Internet Explorer software. Computer manufacturers would have the option of deleting either browser, Justice said.

If Microsoft does not want to include Netscape, it must unbundle Internet Explorer from Windows 98.

The antitrust challenge also seeks to give PC makers new freedom to determine what buyers see when they first turn on new computers. That would give PC makers the ability to offer consumers greater choice in the products and services installed on their machines.

"Consumers and computer manufacturers should have the right to choose the software they want installed on their personal computers," Attorney General Janet Reno said. "We are acting to preserve competition and promote innovation in the computer software industry."

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