it's already a toxic waste dump. as we have heard from customers, it's too large to be useful.

803
From richab Fri Mar 29 10:13:19 1991
To: bradsi steveb
Subject: SYSPAC
Date: Fri Mar 29 10:11:07 1991

I let lindaa know that we didn't get the message till too late and I think she'll make an effort to get the word to us earlier next time.

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>From steveb Fri Mar 29 09:47:06 1991
To: bradsi richab
Subject: SYSPAC
Date: Fri Mar 29 09:44:33 1991

other groups all seemed to knwo and get people there
what was the problem

804
From richab Fri Mar 29 10:13:26 1991
To: bradsi
Subject: Re: Bill Johnson
Date: Fri Mar 29 10:11:26 1991

thanks!

805
From w-maria Fri Mar 29 10:17:52 1991
To: bradsi
Subject: keep me in the loop on this dos stuff
Date: Fri Mar 29 09:59:18 1991

>From w-maria Tue Mar 26 18:06:28 1991
To: w-collin
Subject: keep me in the loop on this dos stuff
Cc: w-maria
Date: Tue Mar 26 18:06:20 1991

We did not "pre-announce" DOS 5. However we did start a fud campaign around the time we knew DRI was talkinga bout their version. Basically we took advantage of editor interest that was native (based on DRI activity) and told them a few things.

However around this time also MS ahd started previewing the product to a very small group of corporate guys. I suspect PART of the motivation was

fud but this is so normal...I mean, DRI calls on them, they call MS and say, hey, I just heard from DRI, give me some reasons why I shouldn't go with them. So MS comes out and says, OK we will put you under NDA so you can undrestand our strategy and make an informed decision (i.e., not buy DRI). Then these guys leak and we start getting speculative calls from reporters.

We gave a very small amount of info to reporters lke Gina Smith. Other features she "collected" from various sources and ran by us. We did the old, "I wouldn't print that" behind the scenes stuff.

I don't think this strategy was really any different from any other product leak management strategy. A couple of other things to bear in mind:

1) The product did slip, badly. We didn't THINK we were going out as early as it ended up being. at the time we first started acknowledging, "yes, we are working on a future gversion of DOS" we thought we would announce at Comdex.

2) We also knew that this was going to be a MASSIVE beta program. We took a more philosophical view about leaks and decided not to be as secretive because who were we kidding. We knew with a beta program anticipated to be that big there WOULD be leaks, so we wouldn't get hysterical.

3) DOS 4 was a dog so we didn't care if rumors about another version would hurt its sales.

4) I am not under the impression that ACTUAL FEATURES were "designed" to counter DRI DOS. However once the DRI product was more public, I am sure MS took a look at it and said, hey this is a good idea, let's do it. I don't know, is this bad? Seems like it happens all the time.

5) There is a funny anecdote about how the task switcher ended up in DOS 5 spec. Gina Smith reported her sources told her there would be a task switcher similar to Software Carousel 's in MS DOS 5. At the time it was not part of the spec. I didn't tell Gina not to write this (because again, I was working behind the scenes and we didn't want to get into a confirm/deny on individual features) so she reported it anyway. Markche got such a great response from OEMs hwo called him and said, Hey I read in PC Week you are doing a task switcher. Great idea!! And on that basis, MS became convinced it was a feature worth implementing. I told Gina about this when she left PC Week for PC Computing. I called it the "Gina Smith memorial task switcher."

So, net net:

Did MS "help" leak some info about DOS 5 in response to DRI? Yes. Did we preannounce? No. I would say we gave editors a scent and they took off after it. Was this something that editors were independently hearing about ANYWAY? Yes.

I can go back into my notebooks around this timeframe to see if I have more info and dates if it would help.

Marianne