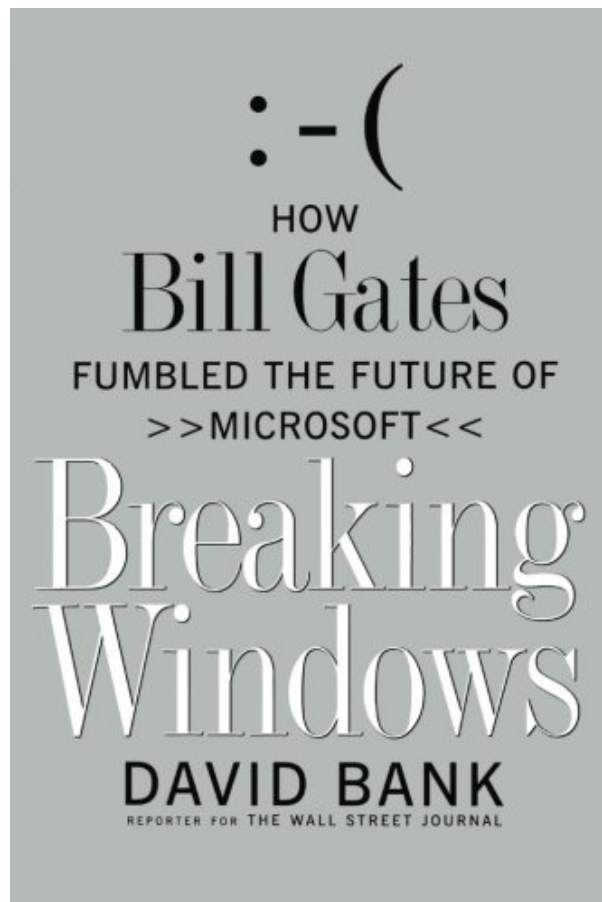


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FUMBLER THE FUTURE OF MICROSOFT  
BY DAVID BANK**



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HOW

Bill Gates

FUMBLER THE FUTURE OF  
>> MICROSOFT <<

Breaking  
Windows

DAVID BANK

REPORTER FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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The year is 1997, and despite the machinations of its rivals, Microsoft is master of the digital universe and the darling of corporate America. Windows and Office generate staggering profits, the company's share price is stratospheric, and Bill Gates is the preeminent icon of the information age. No outsider could guess what Gates knew -- that the most powerful threat to Microsoft's prized Windows platform came not from Sun or Netscape or AOL or even from the U.S. Department of Justice, but from within the company's own ranks.

Breaking Windows tells the story of the battle for the soul of Microsoft that raged inside the company from 1997 to 2000 and continues to reverberate today. Drawing on hundreds of e-mails among Microsoft executives, trial testimony, and exclusive interviews with Gates and his chief lieutenants, Wall Street Journal reporter David Bank reveals the bitter maneuvering between what he calls Microsoft's "Windows hawks" and its "Internet doves." On one side were the fierce defenders of the hegemony of Windows, on the other those who championed a new way of doing business based on the Internet's "open standards." The reformers wanted to break free from the legacy of Windows and dare to compete on the merits of their software. At the center of this pitched battle stood Gates, the tactical genius who had created the company in his own image and who now accepts full responsibility for his fateful choices. "Every mistake you can lay at my feet," he told Bank, who takes him at his word -- offering the first critique of Gates's leadership not from the perspective of government prosecutors or envious software rivals but from inside the company itself.

Ambitious in scope and surprising in its conclusions, Breaking Windows contains sharply drawn portraits of key past and present executives, including Steve Ballmer, Jim Allchin, Brad Silverberg, Adam Bosworth, and Paul Maritz. Bank argues persuasively that the rifts within Microsoft underlie many of its recent troubles -- from the antitrust courtroom debacle to the exodus of many of the company's most talented employees to Gates's own fall from grace as a corporate leader and technology visionary. Yet even now, Bank contends, Gates could embrace the new rules of competition and restore Microsoft to leadership, perhaps ushering in a new era of openness and innovation.

Breaking Windows breaks new ground in its analysis of Microsoft's past and future business strategies. As Microsoft faces the waning importance of Windows, rallies behind XML, and confronts the open-source insurgency, the past Bank reveals is vital to understanding the future of this company and the still unfinished digital revolution it helped unleash.

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8 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Interesting History, Not so Interesting Editorial

By A Customer

David Banks does a masterful job of telling the story of the internal battle between Windows and Internet Explorer. It is insightful story over the struggle for strategy. Written in the tradition of the Wall Street Journal Bank's paints colorful vignettes of the key personalities and imbues the struggle between these two groups with drama.

However one of the interesting ironies of the business press is that journalists confuse themselves with their subjects. (I know of very few who went from covering a beat to running a company.) Unfortunately the more famous the publication you write for, the less you seem to remember that. This book simply fails when Banks puts on this business analyst hat. Luckily when you hear the scraping of the soapbox those pages are few and can be easily skimmed.

If you're interested in an internal history of Microsoft during the browser wars, buy this book.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

Insight in to the Internal and External Struggles at MS

By A. Valentine

"Breaking Windows" is a must read for anyone interested in learning how the nut and bolts Microsoft's intellectual assets really function. This book gives great insight in to how Microsoft reacted to it's two most recent crises, the Internet and the DOJ. David Bank does a great job in explaining the many divisions, which exist at Microsoft but don't show up on the company's organizational chart. Themes such as "Windows Hawks" vs. "Internet Doves" and "Bill guys" vs. "Steve Guys" to name a few. Personally, this book has given me a clear vision on how it will deal with it's next big crisis, the Open Source Revolution.

42 of 45 people found the following review helpful.

I was there...

By Benjamin Slivka

David Bank used to cover Microsoft for the Wall Street Journal. In this book he describes the period 1997-2000 at Microsoft as it coped with the success of Windows and Office and the threat of the Internet to the continuation of Microsoft's dominance. From e-mail snippets and interviews with many current and former Microsoft employees, he presents the "protect Windows" perspective of Bill Gates and Jim Allchin and contrasts that with the "do the new internet thing" perspective of people like Brad Silverberg and myself and others. Obviously Bill Gates prevailed and so a lot of people left. Overall I think a very balanced presentation -- you at least understand why Bill did what he did, even if you don't agree with his decision. Several juicy quotes from me. :-)

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