



The American Antitrust Institute



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
December 21, 2010

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**CONSUMER GROUPS CALL ON MICROSOFT TO GRANT AMERICANS THE  
SAME BROWSER CHOICES AS EUROPEANS**

WASHINGTON, DC – Consumer advocates are asking Microsoft to give American consumers browser choices beyond Internet Explorer when purchasing a Windows operating system.

In a letter to Microsoft CEO Steven Ballmer, the American Antitrust Institute (AAI), Consumers Union, the National Consumers League (NCL), and Consumer Action express “ongoing concerns that American consumers do not have access to the same choices among browsers that are today available to our European counterparts.”

When the United States settled its antitrust litigation with Microsoft nine years ago, it allowed Microsoft to continue bundling the Internet Explorer web browser with the Windows operating system. Last year’s European Union settlement with Microsoft unbundled Internet Explorer from Windows and gave consumers a software ballot asking them to choose which browser to install from a list of 12 options.

“European consumers are choosing browsers other than Explorer,” said NCL Executive Director Sally Greenberg. “We would expect similar behavior in the U.S. market should consumers be given a choice.”

The letter cites earlier discussions the consumer advocates had with Microsoft on this issue, “In fact, we did ask this question to a Microsoft representative some months ago, but the reply was that the settlement in Europe was forced on the company and is a bad idea because consumers really don’t want choices and those who care enough can learn how to change their settings in order to use a different browser. This seems like the wrong response for a company that views itself as innovative and consumer-friendly.”

“Our aim is not to choose winners or losers in the marketplace, but to ensure a competitive process,” said AAI President Bert Foer. “It in fact may be procompetitive for a consumer to choose Internet Explorer in an environment where other choices are available; but it is anticompetitive for a consumer to use Internet Explorer because he or she was not given a choice. This holiday season, we are asking Microsoft to give American consumers a much deserved and appreciated holiday gift; the gift of choice.”

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### About the American Antitrust Institute

The American Antitrust Institute is an independent non-profit education, research and advocacy organization. Since its formation in 1998, the AAI's mission has been to increase the role of competition, assure that competition works in the interests of consumers, and challenge abuses of concentrated economic power in the American and world economy. To learn more about the AAI, please visit [www.antitrustinstitute.org](http://www.antitrustinstitute.org).

### About the National Consumers League

The National Consumers League, founded in 1899, is America's pioneer consumer organization. Our mission is to protect and promote social and economic justice for consumers and workers in the United States and abroad. For more information, visit [www.nclnet.org](http://www.nclnet.org).

### About Consumers Union

Consumers Union (CU) is an expert, independent, nonprofit organization whose mission is to work for a fair, just, and safe marketplace for all consumers and to empower consumers to protect themselves. The organization was founded in 1936 when advertising first flooded the mass media. Consumers lacked a reliable source of information they could depend on to help them distinguish hype from fact and good products from bad ones. Since then CU has filled that vacuum with a broad range of consumer information. To maintain its independence and impartiality, CU accepts no outside advertising and no free samples and employs several hundred mystery shoppers and technical experts to buy and test the products it evaluates. Visit [www.consumersunion.org](http://www.consumersunion.org)

### About Consumer Action

Consumer Action has been a champion of underrepresented consumers nationwide since 1971. A nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, Consumer Action focuses on financial education that empowers low to moderate income and limited-English-speaking consumers to financially prosper. Our diverse staff provides expert commentary on key consumer issues supported by solid data. We offer access to victim testimony, as well as expertise on current financial issues affecting low to moderate income and limited-English-speaking consumers. Visit [www.consumer-action.org](http://www.consumer-action.org)