How the Web Was Won

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The inside story of how a small band of agitators at Microsoft staged the stunning turnaround that transformed the company from an Internet laggard into such a dominant force that it was accused of monopolizing the industry.

1993. Microsoft's Windows software ruled the desktops of America. Nine out of ten personal computers ran the operating system, and most applications--from word processors to spreadsheets--couldn't function without it. When Bill Gates peered into Microsoft's crystal ball, he saw a world of Windows.

Then the Internet burst on the scene, and suddenly Gates's Windows-oriented future didn't look so bright. The Internet ran on UNIX, not Windows. The World Wide Web, not Windows, linked information in a global electronic library. A new software program called Mosaic, not Windows, made finding and reading Web documents as easy as skimming a magazine. Moreover, companies with little stake in Windows--Netscape, America Online, Sun Microsystems--were laying first claim to the Internet frontier.

The Internet was the future of computing--and the world's largest software company wasn't ready for it. Yet four years later, Microsoft's Internet metamorphosis was so complete that the Department of Justice slapped the company with the broadest antitrust action since the breakup of AT&T. In **How the Web Was Won**, veteran *Seattle Times* journalist Paul Andrews chronicles, for the first time, the most remarkable business turnaround of the 1990s: the story of Microsoft's turbulent journey from Windows to the Web--and of the handful of Internet believers who led the charge.

Taking the reader into the mind of Microsoft, Andrews reveals how the company struggled first to comprehend and then capitalize on the Net. How twenty-two-year-old Internet hound J Allard was shocked to learn that nobody at Microsoft seemed to know anything about networking computers when he arrived in late 1991. How Steve Ballmer, Gates's Harvard buddy and second in command at Microsoft, lit the Internet fuse with a head-scratching e-mail in December 1993. How Gates's technical assistant, Steven Sinofsky, discovered in early 1994 that Cornell University, his alma mater, was more "wired" than the world's most successful software company. And how by mid-1995, awash in the rising tide of Netscape, America Online, Java, and the Web, Bill Gates assigned the Internet the highest level of importance, launching an effort that, in a matter of months, would provoke the Justice Department, competitors, and industry analysts to warn that Microsoft could someday rule the Internet.

Based on three years of reporting and more than 100 interviews with the prime movers driving Microsoft's Internet strategy and deployment, **How the Web Was Won** captures the explosive drama and high-stakes gamesmanship of Microsoft's epic struggle for Internet supremacy. The result is an illuminating portrait of a software empire under siege and an intimate look at the fiery competitiveness that kindled its dramatic reversal of fortune.

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