

So every time we take Office, whether it's on Windows or Mac, we have to say what is the brilliant new stuff that will go in there. And so you never - this is not an industry you can ever rest on your laurels because it's always about the new thing.

U. MAG. I have a couple quick, easy ones. What's your favorite food?

BILL GATES: Oh, no. I like a lot, Thai food, Indian food. I'd put Thai food probably top of the list.

U. MAG. Favorite game, videogame.

BILL GATES: Oh, videogame. Project Gotham Racing. That I can actually play that one decently compared to Halo where I'm not good at all.

U. MAG. What about your favorite game that's not a videogame?

BILL GATES: Oh, bridge. I've got a friend, Warren Buffet, who loves bridge and got me playing, and now I'm a real bridge addict.

U. MAG. What about poker?

BILL GATES: Yeah, he's actually -- his fault again -- He's asked me to play in a few hold 'em tournaments. I played a fair bit of poker when I was at Harvard, actually a lot, and then when I got going with Microsoft I didn't have any time for it, so I'm not some big poker player. But this hold 'em thing has caught on enough that Warren had me in a couple different hold 'em games.

U. MAG. Okay. What's your favorite stock, besides Microsoft?

BILL GATES: Oh, Berkshire Hathaway. (Laughter.) I mean, I'm on the board, you know, and Warren is my great friend, so I'm biased on that.

U. MAG. Do you still hear the Evil Empire bit or has it passed?

BILL GATES: Well, all successful companies have -- I mean there's this great admiration of the products they've created, the jobs they've created. There's always this, you know, also this fear of what are they going to do. I remember when I grew up IBM was always this huge company and we'd always talk about, ah, what's going to happen with IBM.

So every company has to get their individuals to get out and show why they do what they do and their passion for their work, and when you do software there are lots of improvements people ask for that you've got to show you're making very quickly.

So we'll always be subject to criticism and criticism is good, it helps drive us in a certain direction. People should know it's just about smart engineers wanting to build the best software though, there's no intent other than empowerment.

The tools we've built have made a huge difference. You can go look at how blind people get information now or disabled people or kids learn, go to libraries and see how we've gotten PCs and software into every library. It's very motivating to see the products in use.

U. MAG. I wanted to ask a question about Google. Obviously they're a threat in the search market. And it's a unusual situation that they've kind of done the reverse of what you've done. Traditionally you came in when there was a product there, and you came in afterwards and improved the product such as you killed Lotus -- thank you -- you came in with Word after WordPerfect. Now Google has done the reverse and came out after MSN has kind of been out there. They're a brand new product and in order to compete with them you can't compete in your traditional sense because no one is paying money

to do searches.

BILL GATES: Well, advertisers are paying. Anyway.

U. MAG. Advertisers, but the consumer, to get the consumer mindshare.

BILL GATES: Right, but advertisers are paying anyway. And right now nobody is paying the consumer for their time, which eventually people will. If you're willing to use a search engine you'll get paid to do that.

U. MAG. To actually search?

BILL GATES: Yeah. Say when you watch TV you're effectively being paid for watching ads because you get great shows and that's your motivation. Today in Web search you're getting nothing and the company on the other side is making 50, 60 bucks a year from your time. Over time as that's more competitive you'll get either a check or coupons or free content in return for the value you're creating. That's what happens in competitive markets. Anyway.

I don't see Google as any different than any other situation we've been in. Over half of what we do are where we're alone in an area, take like Tablet PC, that's us alone; take Media Center, that's us alone; the original Microsoft BASIC. Actually, we did Word before WordPerfect came along, we did DOS Word was there before that existed at all. We also did a spreadsheet before 1-2-3, a thing called Multiplan that you probably don't remember, but that was there first. So in the world of software, you have cases where you're out on your own and then you have cases where you have very strong competitors. In database you have people like Oracle and IBM, in videogame it's Sony, in search it's both Google and Yahoo!. And it's very simple. It's a great deal that everybody in search is hiring the smartest people and innovating as fast as they can. Search today is complete garbage compared to what it will be even three or four years from now. I mean, today it's a treasure hunt where you get all these links and you're going to have to look around. It's nowhere near what it can be and will be.

U. MAG. Well thanks Bill, I appreciate your time and I look forward to seeing what will be ...

Microsoft College Recruiting Facts

Primary career fields:
*design engineers,
program managers, and
test engineers.*

Additional career fields:
*MBA's, finance,
marketing, sales,
operational roles, &
customer support.*

Little known fact:
Even a philosophy or linguistic majors could be hired.

Efforts to hire college students, one word: HUGE
Number of colleges with students applying: 500+
Number of colleges in which they hired students: 250
Candidates interviewed per year: 12,000-15,000
Students hired last year: 1,000
Percentage of all hires that are tech related: 40%
Best opportunity for students to find jobs:
www.microsoft.com/college



Main Microsoft entrance sign and flagpoles on the Redmond Campus, May 1991.