

A kinder and gentler Microsoft?

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Gone are the days when the Redmond, Wash.-based software giant was out to take no prisoners and brutally crush its competitors. Now, it seems like Microsoft is all about cooperation and making friends within the tech community.

Several analysts said that rivals, and investors, shouldn't be fooled. Beneath all the talk about partnerships and collaboration lies the same old Microsoft, a company that is looking to find ways to reignite its moribund earnings growth and extend its dominance in the software market.

"It's nice to think that Microsoft is learning to play well with other software players but there is a fundamental economic reason to get these deals done," said Sam Saunders, an analyst with Fulcrum Global Partners.

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