



Stanford eCorner

Case Study: The Shift in Netscape

Marc Andreessen, *Serial Entrepreneur*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/2462/Case-Study-The-Shift-in-Netscape>

Netscape Co-founder (and current serial entrepreneur) Marc Andreessen speaks candidly about Netscape's necessary pivots when it was threatened by Microsoft's Internet Explorer in the late 1990's. He recalls that making the browser free, as well as focusing on the website and business applications, propelled the company's success in a turbulent market.



Transcript

The question was as Netscape started to come under pressure and started to have issues, particularly with browser market share in the late 90s. We executed two shifts. Now one of the things about a story like Netscape is you don't often actually read the whole story because there is set of popular perceptions. When companies actually become too popular in consumer consciousness, it's hard to actually track what they do as businesses because narratives gets set. But we did two things. One is we took the browser to free. And then we ultimately released it as Firefox. And so everybody who loads up Firefox today, it's huge numbers today, is basically using the Netscape browser, essentially version 10 or something like that version 12, if you look at the lineage. And then the other thing we did was we put a massive investment and a massive turn focusing on actually two things, software for businesses and then our website. Actually interestingly, Netscape grew revenue all the way through it existence as a public company.

It was profitable for virtually the entire existence. And then of course it ultimately sold for a lot of money to, basically a combination of AOL and Sun.