Bill Gates Essay, Research Paper

Bill Gates:A Cultural Icon What is Windows? What is Microsoft Word? What is Excel 1.0? These are all product of Microsoft. What is Microsoft? It is a 18 billion dollar computer program corporation that Bill Gates is running. He strives for what he believes in, which is doing the best he can for the computer world. He also never gave up at things even though they did not work out right away. Bill Gates started his journey when he was young. Know he is seeking to improve the future. Bill Gates is a major cultural icon that is trying to help us out with the visions of computers. CHAPTER 1-The Past William Henry Gates III was born October 28, 1955, with his family in Seattle, Washington. He was the middle child and his father, a lawyer and his mother, a teacher. Bill was sent to Lakeside School, an all boys prep school. Lakeside is where Gates taught himself to hack his way into a minicomputer program. Hacking is basically decoding how the computer works. This is also where he made his first software program when he was thirteen, a tic-tac-toe game. In order to play the game Gates and other class mates had to flip switches and then had to wait, for a long time, for the reply to come out. Paul Allen, a classmate of Gates, helped Gates create Swanson 2Microsoft. Gates, Allen and a group of friends were offered to create a program for payroll services (Gross 337). Gates also formed a pint-sized company, Traf-O-Data, that studied traffic patterns for small towns near Seattle. Gates was 19 when he graduated from school then he moved on to Harvard. Gates spent most of his time hacking at the computer lab. He also did not attend many of his classes. Allen and Gates worked on making a BASIC program for a minicomputer. BASIC is a language a computer uses to run its system. That program was used in computers now. This kept the men writing their programs. In 1975 the two founded what was then, Micro-soft (Gross 339). Gates did all of this before the young age of twenty-one. After they founded Microsoft, Gates move out to Albuquerque by Paul Allen. Tandy, a big computer company, came out with a computer that had the first display terminal and keyboard. Tandy bought the rights to Microsoft’s BASIC program. Microsoft’s sales went up around 1.5 million dollars a year after signing the rights to Tandy. Microsoft made a move up north, back to Washington. IBM soon became interested in Microsoft and signed them to an agreement, even though Gates was not as professional looking as others. At first Gates declined and told IBM to go to Digital Research. IBM did not like the way Digital Research worked so they offered the Swanson 3job to Gates again. He did not refuse the opportunity twice (Economist S5). About a year after being with IBM, Microsoft came up with the program MS-DOS. This program was in eighty percent of PC, Personal Computers, sold (Gross 344). It was standard program in computers. With the new program raking in a lot of money, Microsoft gained eighty-one million dollars in three years. In 1983 Allen had to leave the company because he was diagnosed with Hodgkin’s disease. Even though the company was selling $200 million of products a year, Gates did not get overwhelmed by the money. He would eat fast food and travel coach class just like everyone else (Gross 346). He is also the type of man that isn’t going to explain everything twice says employee of Microsoft (Sherman 86).”Gates is a remarkable piece of software in his own right. He is childishly awkward at times, throws things when angry, and fidgets uncontrollably when he speaks. But he is extraordinary intelligent master programmer steeped in technical knowledge about his complicated business. At the same time, he is monstrously competitive.”(Sherman 82) In 1985 Gates made a program to better the Lotus program 1-2-3, it was Excel 1.0. Two years after creating Excel, Gates created Windows. Even though Windows is popular now, it didn’t quite make it back then. Windows was the first program where you could use a mouse Swanson 4to click on icons to get to programs. Gates figured that he rushed into the program too quick for that generation. IBM and Microsoft worked on a program that was going to succeed MS-DOS, named OS/2. IBM and Microsoft soon had disagreements and split apart. IBM kept the OS/2 and Microsoft had the rights to Windows. After the break apart other companies wanted to run on the updated Windows. Gates said, “Windows 3.0 was the most extravagant, extensive, and expensive software introduction ever (Gross 348).” The company gained half a billion dollars in a matter of three years due to Windows. “The only power great enough to stop Microsoft may have been the federal government (Gross 350).” This was thought to have made Microsoft go under The Federal Trade Commission investigations. The investigations were based on Microsoft making companies pay royalties for the machines produced, whether it had MS-DOS or not. The investigation went on for thirty months and the Justice Department’s antitrust unit decided to back down and stop the investigation. Throughout this whole investigation Gates was positive and knew that everything was going to be all right. After all of this has happened Gates became less hands-on but he said he was still hard-core. Gates latest program is Windows 95. Gates is now looking into the future trying to upgrade technology. He is now Swanson 5married to Melinda French, a Microsoft executive, and has his daughter born in April 1996, Jennifer Katharine. Gates was asked what he would since he conquered the computer world and Wall Street by the age of 30. “I haven’t given it much thought,’ says Gates. “Right now, this company is pursuing the goal of putting a personal computer on every desk top(U.S. News & World Report 44). CHAPTER 2-The Future Gates is always looking to improve America’s future. A good example of this is when he first introduced Windows. Like before he was a little far advanced for his time. He has planned out several different future inventions for the home, business and, for education. His house is very futuristic with tons of inventions that are too advanced for us now. He also wants to dominate the Internet. There are a few inventions that Gates has planned for homes in the future. The fist invention is a home control console. This is about the size of a light switch and it enables one to work with lighting,

temperature and, security within the home. Another invention is Asynchronous Television, where you are able to watch whatever program you want whenever you want to. Interactive T.V is another invention, this one allows you to skip to part of T.V Swanson 6programs that you want to watch. Finally for the home is the Electronic Marketplace this is pretty much self explanatory, but you would also be able to contact be who bought a product and ask them how they like it. Gates has planned out a few inventions for the work place. The first one is Electronic Commerce this is a small wireless computer allows you to pay with digital money and it is going to help shorten lines up. Another invention is the Wallet PC which allows you to view maps, get directions, receive messages, get news updates, store electronic money and, finally store lots of digital pictures. Mobile Communication and Video Conferencing are pretty much the same they allow you to conference with others while in a car and in other places. Finally is Voice Recognition machine, this allows you to record stuff just like a tape recorder but is writes it out on a small screen so you can see it. It also plays what you said back to you. Finally we reached the schools and Gates inventions for them. He planned to have all of the schools hooked up to the Networks and Multimedia. This will help connect kids with interesting facts and other oddities around the world. Also he said that the classroom environment would be a lot different. This is because the teachers would work with smaller groups of people do to the amount of technology that we have. Another thing Gates had planed was a Swanson 7Digital White Board. This board is hooked up to a computer a copies everything you right down and puts it on the computer in more of a business style. As people can see Gates is trying to improve the world everyday. He just feels that he has to take it slowly. He doesn’t want to overwhelm the world with to much. Also he doesn’t want to jump to far a head like he did with Windows. For that he should be known as a cultural icon.Chapter 3-The Cultural Icon What is a Cultural Icon. First what is culture, according to the Random House Webster’s Dictionary culture is the ways of living built up by a human group and transmitted to succeeding generations. Next, what is and icon, the same dictionary says an icon is a picture, image, or other representation. This would mean a cultural icon is someone who has affected generations of people. We know what a cultural icon is now but how does Bill Gates tie in as a cultural icon? Bill Gates is a cultural icon because of many reasons. One reason is he the cofounder and is now CEO of a company that has changed the world. Another reason is he strives to better the future and has never given up when trying to accomplish that. Swanson 8 The major company that changed the world is of course, Microsoft. Why did this make him such a cultural icon because, of many reasons. One reason is that we might not be as far as advanced as we are today. Without products from Microsoft we wouldn’t have Windows, which is a very widely used program today. Without Windows we would probably have a lot of confusion with computers. Windows has made it much easier to work with computers. It is just point and click. Plain and simple it, Windows has changed one generation and is going to keep changing generations. Another reason is was always looking to better the company. “William H. Gates III, wants to make Microsoft the General Motors of the industry by taking command of a much bigger and more promising market segment, the so-called applications software that consumers buy.”(Sherman 85) This shows that he had his mind set on making his company better. He did not want to give up this was his favorite thing to do. To show that he didn’t want to give up, their was an article written in 1984 by Statford P. Sherman that said:”Like other fast-growing companies racing to seize transient opportunities, Microsoft has devoted little time to developing the kind of management depth that will Swanson 9be needed to turn temporary victories into long-term dominance.”(86)He was pick to not succeed but he still did and he is continuing to do so. “More impressive to some of the computer industry has been Gate’s ability to make the shift from creative genius to businessman, a transition other founders of high-tech companies have failed to navigate.”(U.S. News & World Report 44) This section of an article shows that he is different than other people. Just like how he eats fast food and flies coach class. He can always fit the mood. Gates is always trying to better the future in technology. In Chapter 2 some of his future invention were listed. These inventions are great examples of showing that he is always looking into the future. In Chapter 1 it said that Gates created Windows but it was not successful. He did not want to give up so he made a better version and waited a while to release it. He also said that he was going to be more careful and not get to far advanced. He was not going to have another incident like the Windows one. That is why he has those inventions planned out for the future. He did not want to rush those inventions to quickly and fail again.Swanson 10 All of the examples on the other page show how Bill Gates is a cultural icon. This section is to explain these reason further in detail. Everything listed above is what makes someone a cultural icon in peoples minds. First everybody has a lasting impression of Henry Ford because he maid the first moving car. Gates invented the first point and click program. Another example is he is always looking towards the future and seeing how he can benefit it and his company. He wants us to be well of on technology and he also want his company to succeed. He is always inventing things for the future. He also never gave up in what he believe in. Everyone is looking for someone to get them off on the right foot and give a push and Gates is. He never let anyone get the best of him, even though he fail he still kept his head and tried harder. He was also picked not to go anywhere with his company by some people. People look at that as a great quality in someone. That quality rea!lly makes someone stick out and people are bound to notice that. These are some of the qualities that every person looks for when they think of a cultural icon. A cultural icon is someone that has a made an impact in the countries mind and makes a lasting impression in there mind. Bill Gates possesses the qualities that society cast as a cultural icon. That is why some feel that Bill Gates is a cultural icon.