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John R. Read  
Chief, Litigation III Section  
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LITIGATION III, ANTITRUST DIV.  
U.S. DEPT OF JUSTICE

Dear Mr. Read:

I have read Mr. Lipskar's and Ms. Hochman's letters in regards to the DoJ's ruling on the settlement proposal between the three publishers over e-book pricing and I would like to add my support to the AAR's objection.

The ability for internet trade giants such as Amazon.com to be able to offer an artisan's creative work at super competitive rates below that product's fair trade value is unacceptable. It only contributes to the further degradation of our culture as it turns more and more to the "gotta have it" mentality that makes discount stores and cheap, knock-off quality so attractive in our current economy. In fact, it hurts everyone except the trade corporations. The author that spent time and energy; the agent that edited, battled, and promoted; the publishing staff that set type and further promoted to the shelf; the bookseller going out of business; and most of all, the reader that would have otherwise received a quality piece of literature under the traditional and/ or agency models. If the pricing of literature is allowed to continue in the manner prescribed by this proposed settlement, agents, publishers, and booksellers may not be able to stay in business and the burden of quality will fall on the trade corporations. It is obvious even now that those corporations are not interested in quality beyond a star-rating scheme; a system that is flawed because it lacks professional control measures.

Agents and publishing houses serve as quality checkpoints that keep our Library from becoming overrun with garbage. True, the cost of books is set so that everyone is paid for their work and this drives the cost of the product to a higher amount than a digital discount market can sell it for in their preferred larger quantities, but the return is that a higher quality of Western literature is maintained. To undermine this system will effectively reduce the future literary value of our Library as a direct result of lowered support for all involved except the large trade machines. They reap the benefits of discount store sales numbers, and likewise, our literature gets reduced to discount store quality. By keeping the agency model and allowing for the continuation of the functioning market as spelled out in Mr. Lipskar's and Ms. Hochman's previous letters, we will be able to thrive as a qualitative literary society.

Mr. Read, I encourage you: please consider the AAR's request to reject this settlement proposal and safeguard the market as it stands. Thank you for your attention in this matter,

v/r



Christopher S. Nelson  
Author