

John Read  
Chief, Litigation III Section  
Antitrust Division  
U.S. Department of Justice  
450 5th Street, NW, Suite 4000  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Read,

Please re-consider your case against book publishers and Apple in the matter of the e-book agency model. The agency model has done what it was intended to do: preserve fair and diverse competition in the e-book industry. It has respected the idea that a book is worth something, that the author's time, the editor's time, the publisher's time, the bookseller's time... that all of that is worth something. Without the agency model, Amazon—the only competitor who could possibly benefit from this lawsuit—would devalue the cost of e-books to the point where not only is it impossible for anyone else to compete for sales, but also to the point where publishers would likely be unable to afford to continue to produce them. At the end of the day, there would only be one e-bookseller left standing: Amazon.

If the point of this legislation is to promote fairness in the marketplace, then it will fail. Independent booksellers, chain retailers, publishers, and others have spent a lot of energy to offer customers choices in where they buy their e-books. Without the agency model, we will lose what share of the market we have succeeded in reaching. If that happens, Amazon will be the only e-retailer left and will have a monopoly on that market.

In a recent survey conducted by the St. Louis Independent Booksellers Alliance here in St. Louis, we found that of our responding customers, 41.7% own and use a Kindle, which means they can already only buy e-books from Amazon due to proprietary issues. The numbers show, though, that over half of our customers are reading e-books in other ways: through their Nooks, on their iPads, on their smart phones, on other e-readers, and on their computers. In other words, Amazon still has the lion's share of the e-book world—even when it comes to indie bookstore customers—but we have succeeded in giving customers choices that they want.

I'm a bookseller. I work hard to provide my customers with recommendations, service, and experiences they can't get on Amazon. I've shown people how to work their e-readers, hosted events such as a Technology Petting Zoo where customers could try out different e-readers, and more. I want to be able to continue to sell e-books. I'm happy to continue to work to get customers to buy e-books from my store, but without the agency model, I am certain Amazon will completely take over the market.

And *that* is what you should be interested in preventing in order to keep a fair, diverse, and viable market in the e-book industry.

Thank you for your consideration,

Danielle Borsch  
Events Coordinator  
Left Bank Books  
St. Louis, MO