

From: Michelle [mailto:michellerichmo[REDACTED]]

Sent: Monday, June 25, 2012 9:14 PM

To: Read, John [John.Read@ATR.USDOJ.gov]

Subject: The Amazon dilemma

As an author who also happens to be married to someone who has worked for DOJ for 15 years, I am deeply disturbed by the proposed lawsuit against Apple and several publishers. No single entity has done more to destroy book culture than Amazon, whose aggressively monopolistic tactics hurt bookstores, publishers, and ultimately writers. If Amazon is allowed to continue on its current path of putting booksellers out of business through unethical business practices, writers like me will soon cease to have any chance of making a living through our creative work.

We rely on publishers for advances and royalties. Apple's implementation of the agency model wrestled back some of the ebook market from the most ferociously anti-author player in the business--Amazon. For authors, the agency model insures that we can continue to receive a fair price for our books.

It saddens me to see DOJ siding with the behemoth Amazon against authors, bookstores, and publishers. It is an extraordinarily short-sighted position which can only be detrimental to book culture.

In the end, an unchecked Amazon will lead to the death of the publishers, and to a book culture dominated by those who do not need to make a living because they are supported by family wealth, spouses, or other means. In other words, writers like me and almost every author I know. There was a time in the not too distant past when most books were written by the upper classes, persons whose comfortable lifestyle allowed them to pursue artistic endeavors. Advances paid by publishers level the playing field, rewarding talent and merit. When publishers cannot afford to pay advances, the opportunity for new writers of ordinary means to break into the marketplace will be seriously impeded. Which means that readers will have far fewer opportunities to discover great books.

If there's anyone who doesn't need a government handout, it's Amazon. Please don't feed Jeff Bezos authors' heads on a platter.

Sincerely,  
Michelle Richmond