

Megan Sullivan
Harvard Book Store
1256 Mass Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138
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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,

I'm writing to you today about the current lawsuit against Apple and several major publishing houses, in which you contend that they have colluded about raising the prices of e-books. I have been happily employed at an independent book store—one of the best in the country--for over twelve years now. Though this lawsuit alleges to be about being fair and protecting the consumer, I have to argue that your lawsuit will nothing but harm to my beloved store.

Before the agency model, Amazon priced their e-books well below cost to gain the top spot in the marketplace. The agency model brought a level playing field to the e-book market. Now independents, chains, and online had to compete fairly. The sales of e-books rose. More e-readers were released onto the market. Amazon still sells the top selling e-reader on the market. Why do they need to price everyone else out of the market? Amazon began this all by artificially lowering the prices of e-books, selling them as a loss leader to gain customers. Lured in by the cheap e-books, they then might by other products for which they can charge more and earn more.

What is the value of the e-book, one might wonder. It's not a tangible thing that you can hold in your hand like a book. Yet someone has to write it, another edit, more to distribute not to mention market, etc. It costs money to produce this thing that has no concrete thing in the real world. How does one determine its value? Tough question obviously but one large corporation like Amazon shouldn't determine this. The lawsuit could make this the outcome.

Cheaper prices are certainly better for the customers in the short term but no item should cost so little that it's actual value becomes nothing. What happens to the great literature of this country? What happens to the young authors out there struggling to get published only to not earn any money on their hard worked novels because one company decided they could sell more diapers by artificially deflating prices?

I urge you to rethink this case. Please think about the future of our great literary tradition and our small business. As mentioned in the first paragraph, I've been part of the Harvard

Book Store family for over twelve years and therefore part of a larger literary community. Removing the agency plan would be devastating to us all.

Sincerely,

Megan Sullivan