

From: [Jodi Meadows](#) [jodi.meadows@REDACTED]
To: [Read, John](#) [John.Read@ATR.USDOJ.gov]
Subject: Proposed DoJ settlement
Date: Thursday, June 07, 2012 7:38:23 PM

To Mr. John R. Read:

Regarding the proposed settlement for five major publishers and Apple, I'll try to make my letter brief, as I hope you are receiving many such letters from authors, booksellers, and other publishing professionals. As an author and book-lover, I'm very concerned about this proposed settlement and what it means not only for authors, but the publishing and book-selling business as a whole.

Though I'm relatively new to the publishing industry, I very clearly remember the day Amazon pulled the buy buttons from all the Macmillan titles on their website. I remember how *frightening* it was that a retailer would do something so harmful not just to the publisher, but to the authors who rely on Amazon as one of the major sources of their sales. When one of the primary retailers decides to pull every title from one publisher -- in what they called a glitch but was *clearly* a reaction to that publisher wanting to use the agency model -- this affects authors' livelihood.

We've seen bookstores folding under the weight of Amazon's discounts. Borders closing was a huge blow to the publishing industry. But with Amazon cutting prices so steeply, who can hope to compete? No physical bookstore can offer discounts like that on all of their books. One cannot fault buyers for going to the cheapest price -- these are difficult times for everyone -- but as a result, bookstores close, Amazon grows more powerful and able to offer steeper discounts, more bookstores close . . . How long until Amazon is a monopoly because publishers have no power to control the prices of their products?

I think [Peter Glassman of Books of Wonder](#) said this very well: "*If a foreign owned company were to do this in the US, they would be forced to stop what would be deemed "predatory pricing" -- notwithstanding its positive benefits for consumers. I am at a loss to understand why it is okay for Amazon -- a US company -- to do this and damage other US companies, when we would never allow it from a foreign company.*"

I cannot help but agree, and wonder at why this damaging practice is acceptable for Amazon. Surely you agree that this is not beneficial to the market. With this settlement and forcing publishers to give up the agency model, the DoJ is only empowering an already very powerful company -- one that has shown itself to attempt bullying maneuvers when it does not get its way.

Given Amazon's history of damaging retaliatory actions, what is to stop them from retaliating against the publishers who -- for being unable or unwilling to continue fighting this settlement -- agree to the settlement? What is to stop them from using their renewed control over ebook pricing against these publishers -- and therefore authors. Surely you can see that the terms are not beneficial to anyone but Amazon, a company that already has so much control over the market.

Mr Read, please reconsider the wisdom of this settlement and prove that the Department of Justice is not blind to what is so clear to everyone else.

Jodi

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Best wishes,
Jodi Meadows
www.jodimeadows.com

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