

From: Sarah Brown [mailto:buddhabro[REDACTED]]
Sent: Monday, June 25, 2012 6:10 PM
To: Read, John
Subject: Comment on the Proposed Consent Decree in United States v. Apple, Inc., et al., 77 Fed Reg 24518

John Read

Chief, Litigation III Section

Antitrust Division

U.S. Department of Justice

450 5th Street, NW, Suite 4000

Washington, DC 20530

Dear Sir,

I am writing concerning the DOJ's lawsuit against Google and several publishers concerning the Agency model system of pricing e-books. I have worked in Independent bookstores for about 10 years now, and this is the greatest threat to our survival that I have witnessed so far. Not only is this suit a threat to the indie booksellers of America, but I believe there is a greater concern - the threat to our literary culture as a whole. If Amazon is allowed to continue its policy of price-gouging (selling books as a loss-leader to sell other products, a practice that in many countries would be illegal) they will come to dominate the book market absolutely. This means that a company motivated only by profit will decide who and what gets published. No longer will there be passionate editors taking a chance on young unknown authors, or small print runs that allow these gems to be discovered. Our reading habits in the U.S. will be determined by fewer buyers, causing less diversity of ideas in our culture as a whole.

The Agency Model was created to protect us from this corporate domination of our book culture. It allowed us to compete with Amazon in the sales of e-books, which we will need in the future to keep our bricks and mortar store open to the public. It is the responsibility of the government to protect a vibrant and thriving culture of ideas, and if we wish to maintain an intelligent, healthy society in the future, we need to make more than blockbuster mysteries available to the public.

In my store we work hard every day to get great books into people's hands. We take the time to help each individual find a book that speaks to him. We help people learn how to train their new puppy, how to build a deck, how to survive the loss of a loved one. Without the Agency Model these kinds of interactions will disappear, and the only way to buy a book will be to point and click - with an algorithm that will tell you what other people who purchased the book you're buying liked. The joy of discovering an old copy of Ulysses with the same cover you had in college will be gone, along with people's sense of adventure when it comes to reading.

Every day indie booksellers put up with the many advantages that Amazon has, along with their aggressive, bullying business tactics. Here in Arizona, Amazon has four distribution centers that make use of our air, water, roads schools etc., yet Amazon is not required to collect the sales tax that pays for these things. While this is not the issue being addressed here, I include it to show you that the playing field was not level even before this lawsuit.

At the heart of this issue is the idea that books are more than a product. To treat the sale of books in the same manner as the sale of pencils or nails is a dangerous practice, because books hold our heritage, our ideas, our future - books are at the heart of our nation. Please take the time to consider these related issues as you decide whether to eliminate the Agency Model. It is the only fair way to price e-books, a way that protects bookstores and prevents an Amazon monopoly that would hurt our society immensely.

Thank you for your time,

Sarah Brown

--

Sarah Brown
Assistant Book Buyer & Used Book Manager
Changing Hands Bookstore
6428 S. McClintock Dr.
Tempe, AZ. 85283
[\(480\)730-0205](tel:(480)730-0205)