

From: Allison Bruce [mailto:alliejanebru[REDACTED]]
Sent: Thursday, June 21, 2012 10:55 AM
To: Read, John[John.Read@ATR.USDOJ.gov]
Subject: I oppose the civil suit against Apple and 5 publishers re: e-books

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 oppose the civil suit regarding the sale of e-books that the Department of Justice has brought against Apple, Hachette, HarperCollins, Simon and Schuster, MacMillan, and Penguin, and I believe that it is against the public's interest to pursue this suit.

I am 27 years old and work as a school librarian for a K-8 school in Harlem, where I live. Previously, I worked in a small, independent bookstore, and I believe that small independent bookstores are priceless community assets.

The Department of Justice claims that these 5 publishers, plus Apple, have colluded and conspired to dictate the terms under which e-books are sold. Big companies are not supposed to collude, lest it become too easy for them to squeeze out small or up-and-coming competition and achieve a de facto monopoly. But in this case, the publishers and Apple have merely collaborated to prevent Amazon.com from walking away with such a monopoly.

Previously, publishers sold e-books at flat rate and allowed retailers to mark up the consumer price as they wished. This policy allowed Amazon to slash prices and under-sell any competition, especially small, independent bookstores who cannot afford to sell at such reduced prices. Then, publishers changed their policies: they controlled the final consumer price and gave retailers a commission. This gave small, independent bookstores a fighting chance. Revoking publishers' ability to set the consumer price will allow Amazon to undersell independent bookstores once again, restoring what was, in truth, an Amazon-controlled monopoly on e-books.

The alleged goal of this suit is to prevent a monopoly, but it will, in fact, create one.

Independent bookstores are already fighting competition on too many fronts. Here in Harlem, The Hue-Man Bookstore, led by Marva Allen, is struggling; this is more than a bookstore, it is a community center that features author talks, space for conversation among neighbors, and a cafe that promotes healthy eating for a community desperately in need of healthy options. Recently, an extraordinarily brave woman named Aurora Anaya-Cerda opened La Casa Azul in Spanish Harlem; this tiny, Hispanic-

centered bookstore has a calendar that features musical events, cooking classes, a Frida Kahlo festival, and a book drive for a local public school. To eliminate the chance such bookstores have to sell e-books is to punish small, community-oriented organizations and reward Amazon.com -- all in a suit allegedly brought to prevent a monopoly.

Please allow Apple and the publishers to continue to set the consumer prices of e-books.

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