

Mary Pope Osborne, Goshen, CT, 06756

June 20th, 2012

RE: U.S. vs Apple, Inc., et al., 12-cv-2826(DLC)(SDNY)

Dear Mr. Read,

I am writing in regard to the Justice Department's allegations that Apple and five large publishers colluded to introduce "agency pricing" to e-books. I don't know whether the companies colluded, but I urge the Justice Department to consider the needs of authors, book sellers, and most of all, the reading public, in its settlement.

The predatory pricing of Amazon threatens independent bookstores in an unprecedented way. For years, the small stores have struggled valiantly to support authors and publishers with face-to-face bookselling. A settlement favoring Amazon will most certainly force nearly all of these stores to go under.

That would be an enormous loss. Without hand selling, many quality books would never find an audience. (My own series of children's books would never found the light of day without the help of booksellers nationwide.) Unknown authors will not be introduced to the public through book signings, store-sponsored book clubs and reading programs.

A settlement favoring Amazon will most likely guarantee that not only will shop owners and authors suffer, but local communities will, too. A world of only virtual bookselling will remove the cultural repository that a local bookstore offers to a community. Parents will have fewer places to take children to peruse books and choose their own; or to look through picture books to experience the full impact of a book's design and illustrations. All book buyers, in fact, would lose the opportunity to hold a book and turn the pages to fully appreciate the contents.

Finally, imagine that Amazon had a monopoly on bookselling. It's not such a stretch. Imagine the corporation found an author's words disruptive to its plans in any of its businesses. Or imagine someone

at Amazon chose to act against an author simply out of spite, perhaps for writing words such as these. Can you imagine Amazon removing buy buttons from the author's books, or "hiding" them in its vast virtual store? I can. Crazy things sometimes happen. With no other viable vendors left, there would be no large marketplace for the "censored" work.

The government should not help any corporation get that kind of power. For the sake of readers, no one should have that much control over our books.

Sincerely,

Mary Pope Osborne