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Sent: Monday, June 25, 2012 11:30 PM
To: Read, John [John.Read@ATR.USDOJ.gov]
Subject: Department of Justice (DOJ) lawsuit

I do not understand how the DOJ can support its position in this matter. The DOJ did not institute proceedings against Amazon when Amazon tried to strong arm publishers into fixing the price of every e-book sold on Amazon at \$6.99. Amazon wanted publishers to give their permission to sell authors' creative works which the publishers had paid the authors handsomely for and then license that work to Amazon in an e-book format that 1) did not allow for any profit to the publisher, but 2) seemed to be for the express purpose of undercutting any and all competition in the e-book industry--a 21st century "marketplace of ideas"-- that the law has valued for so long and which the DOJ and Mr. Holder are supposed to uphold.

When publishers did not agree and made deals with other book distributors that gave the publishers fair compensation for the works that Amazon wanted to sell in e-book format, Amazon ended up having to give in somewhat and play by fair rules. They had to negotiate with the publishers and sign agreements with fairer terms to both sides. However, this meant less profit to Amazon.

In the meantime, Amazon became Amazonian. It went from first being the first well-known online distributor of physical books to being a distributor of everything you can imagine. (I think of it as the "Walmart of the Internet") In its next evolution, it wanted to be the biggest (and perhaps in the future) the ONLY source for e-books through its Kindle e-reader. How to accomplish this ? At first, they designed a very good product. Then, Amazon put out money for advertising and branding. All legitimate, ethical ways to compete. Through its growth in selling so many things, it had huge budgets for development and marketing to the public. It sold its product.

Then, it seemed to take unfair tactics as competition in e-readers increased. Having failed at one price for all its versions of ebooks, it started buying titles, negotiating directly with authors and seeming to want to become a quasi-publisher itself. This put Amazon in direct competition with publishers--with one key difference. The size of Amazon dwarfs most publishers. Amazon became the Goliath going after the David-like publishers. When it was time to re-negotiate deals with some publishers, they said "no". But how dare some of these little guys say "no".

To prevent this from continuing in a competitive marketplace, Amazon seems to have flexed its political muscle. For instance, let's put a former DOJ official on our Board of Directors. Let's have the Department of Justice spend hard-earned, taxpayer dollars going after the Davids that won't agree to our terms in an industry that is supposed to be a shining example of the dissemination of ideas and creativity from the all the citizens of this country. (Just a reminder, as a taxpayer, you work for me, not for Amazon).

Then what is the next political muscle flexed? The Department of State is about to buy 7500 Kindles from Amazon for approximately \$16 million taxpayer dollars over 5 years. Do the math. Amazon sells Kindles on the average of \$199 each. 7500 at that price would be \$1,492,500. \$16 million cannot be justified without undue political influence--the type that Americans trust the DOJ to investigate. Half of that \$16 million could go along way to funding programs abroad to help real people and not multi-billion dollar corporate citizens.

Lastly, but MOST IMPORTANT, is the censorship that could occur if the DOJ and other governmental entities persist in going against the publishers that were sued from the beginning until now. If this suit destroys or severely weakens the publishers attempts to publish titles as e-books, thus making Amazon the predominant player in this e-book industry, it could easily lead to

a monopoly by Amazon in this area. It would be the sole gatekeeper for for what gets into e-book format. If Amazon doesn't like a particular idea or view, or the terms its offered--no e-book access. No e-book distribution. One less idea in the marketplace of ideas that this country and its laws, and is people hold dear Amazon and some small group in its headquarters would be the censor of e-book publishing in this country. This is a real concern and fear if the DOJ persists.

Protect the publishers and other independent bookstores and distributors that are trying to compete fairly and to disseminate ideas of all sorts through both physical books and the 21st century, e-book format. Protect the book lovers and the lovers of the diversity of ideas in this country. Stand up for the little guy whether he is a publisher, an independent bookstore or, most of all, a reader that wants the broadest access to ideas in the greatest number of formats and sources.

Thank you for reading and listening to my plea.

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