

From: Sandy Dijkstra [mailto:san[REDACTED]]
Sent: Friday, June 22, 2012 7:25 PM
To: Read, John [John.Read@ATR.USDOJ.gov]
Subject: In Response to Justice Action

Dear John Read,

We are writing to protest the Justice Department's initiative against American publishers, an action that should have instead been taken against Amazon for its predatory and destructive pricing practices and non-payment of taxes, both of which have given them an unfair advantage, and seriously impinged upon the business of independent booksellers.

As a representative of authors, the Sandra Dijkstra Literary Agency has also been affected by Amazon's guerilla ebook pricing, given its repercussions for our industry as a whole.

Amazon's pricing practices are harming America's publishers by not allowing them the right to price their own products, so we support the industry's right to find alternative ways to get this fundamental right back, by finding competitors to Amazon. The settlement which the U.S. government is trying to enforce will only allow Amazon to gain back its stranglehold on the ebook market since they can afford to have a sacrifice profit on book sales to build their customer base for other products they offer. The rest of the publishing industry cannot afford to do this and stay in business.

The Agency model was never something the uninformed public fought against: Indeed, by saving publishers, it affords book buyers a wider choice of product. We are dismayed that instead of going after Amazon, whose egregious tax-avoidance, pricing and monopolist behavior has negatively impacted publishing, you chose instead to fight publishers who tried to find an alternative, making them the ones made to pay a penalty. This settlement, if it stays in place, will only further erode our democracy and the real losers in all this will be book buyers, who will see a diminution of choice as publishers cut back to only the most commercial books and authors. If Amazon is allowed to have this pricing prerogative, which should be in publishers' hands, this will damage booksellers, publishers' employees, and agents, all of whom will find themselves being cut due to the further financial losses.

We have already seen the devastation of Borders Book Store chain, and the loss of many independent bookstores, reducing the array of books so vital to our industry. We would hope for encouragement from the government of these vital arenas for our democracy rather than the support the Justice Dept. is giving to the predator, Amazon, by this unfair initiative.

Sincerely,
Sandra Dijkstra