

From: Allison Hill [mailto:ah[REDACTED]]
Sent: Friday, June 22, 2012 2:18 PM
To: Read, John
Cc: 'Allison Hill'
Subject: agency model public input

June 22, 2012

John Read
Chief Litigation III Section
Antitrust Division
U.S. Department of Justice
450 5th St, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Read,

I represent a 117-year-old independent bookstore in Southern California. We employ 140 employees, give 1% of our sales to local charities, and work passionately to champion books and reading.

We believe strongly in the agency model. We feel that in the short term, it has been very good for our business and our industry but, more importantly in the long term, we believe the agency model is a good thing for readers and the culture at large. The agency model creates a more level playing field in the marketplace, it supports a more competitive, more diverse marketplace, and it safeguards the cultural landscape. The fact that Amazon.com had a 90% market share in e-books prior to the agency model speaks to why they want to see it eliminated. But I hope the Department of Justice sees beyond one company's agenda and recognizes that the agency model is actually essential to the book industry as a whole—publishers, independent booksellers, Barnes & Noble, and readers. Without it, Amazon returns to 90% of the market, and consumers suffer a shrinking of available titles, fewer publishers, less opportunity for first time writers, and so on. Ultimately, we believe that the agency model is essential to reading, literature and free speech.

I understand that one of the Department of Justice's concerns is that Apple and the publishers colluded to raise the prices of e-books by switching to the agency model. I hope the DOJ can recognize that given that the agency model really is in the best interest of everyone, collusion wasn't necessary. It was inevitable that everyone would individually come to the same conclusion. And the assumption, that because of the agency model retailers lost their ability to compete on price, is simply false when one reviews the big picture, not just Amazon's view.

I trust the Department of Justice to look at the big picture here. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Allison Hill
President/COO
Vroman's Bookstore