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Independent Since 1969
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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:

Please drop your case against the agency model in e-book publishing.

As a bookseller for four decades, I can assure you that the agency model is a vital aspect in maintaining a vibrant and competitive marketplace for books. Without it, Amazon is free to do whatever it wants, which it already is.

Amazon routinely sell books and ebooks below cost to lure consumers to their website and steer them to other, more lucrative non-book items. In so doing, they have virtually gutted publishing and bookselling. We have lost thousands of bookstores across the country and seen publishers shrink and die under the monopolistic demands of Amazon.

The agency model, in contrast, has given publishers and booksellers a way to remain competitive. We have been able to sell ebooks at prices consumers want. They now have *more* choices, not fewer. We have been able to continue to offer our vast array of other titles and services, such as author events and other local cultural programming. We have been able to continue to provide jobs in our communities and pay taxes to our local and state governments which, in turn, benefit the quality of life of our customers and neighbors.

Publishers are not price-fixing, Amazon is. If you destroy the agency model, you will hand Amazon complete power to monopolize all aspects of publishing. In a democracy that is founded on freedom of speech, this is, to me, a fundamentally unacceptable future.

Sincerely,

Kris Kleindienst, co-owner

Left Bank Books, Inc.

