

**VILLAGE BOOKS**

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JUN 27 REC'D 2012

LITIGATION III, ANTITRUST DIV.
U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE

Mr. 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,

My wife, Dee, and I have operated Village Books, an independent bookstore in Bellingham, Washington, for thirty-two years. I am also a past president of the American Booksellers Association. I am writing today to plead with you to consider the possible effects of your lawsuit against publishers for introduction of the agency model for ebooks.

It is my understanding that the interests of the Department of Justice are in maintaining, not limiting competition. Nothing has increased the competition in the sale of ebooks as much as the agency plan. In the year prior to its adoption our store sold six (6) ebooks. Since that time we have sold nearly eight hundred (800). That same phenomenon has held true for hundreds of independent booksellers nationwide. Prior to the introduction of the plan, Amazon controlled ninety (90) percent of the ebook market. Today that market is shared by Barnes & Noble, Google, Apple, Kobo, and indies from coast to coast. The market has become far more diverse and competitive. Consumers have been offered much greater choice.

Should the agency model go away and Amazon, using its below-cost pricing formula, once again comes to totally dominate the market, the ultimate reduction in the number and diversity of titles that are likely to be distributed will certainly be sad news for the reading public.

Please consider the impact that your action could have in diminishing the cultural landscape and in destroying true competition. Please do the right thing.

Sincerely,

Chuck Robinson