

June 20, 2012

John Read

Chief, Litigation III Section

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U. S. Department of Justice

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JUN 27 REC'D 2012

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

Dear Sir,

I'm simply an American. I don't work for a book store but I do love to read. I feel that reading is one of the most important things about being human. I read a lot and in order to read good books I seek advice. I read reviews on the internet but I find the most helpful information in independent book stores. They know me, they take the time to think about what I like to read and they care. I want to buy books and to download books onto my Nook from them.

What scares me about your possible decision is that Amazon has all the power and will use it to destroy all the little guys, and then they'll up the prices because no one will be left to keep them in check. Publishers are scared of them. Authors are beginning to sell books directly through them (and the effects are terrible – even great authors need great editors). If you eliminate the agency model then you'll be enabling a massive vertical monopoly. Amazon has already used its enormous power to take the "buy" buttons off books by certain publishers when those publishers wouldn't toe the line and reduce the price they set to sell to Amazon.

In ten years do you want to be remembered for destroying all the mom and pop book stores and for making it impossible for authors to make a living due to Amazon's imposition of lower royalties? If the agency model goes away, there will be little or no incentive to publish quality books that Amazon doesn't deem to be profitable. If the agency model goes away, there may soon be a new "It's a Wonderful Life" movie focusing on the terrible decision of the Department of Justice to destroy books, book stores and authors.

Please add this letter to the public record you are compiling.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Ritchie