

US settles with final publisher in Apple e-book case

February 8 2013



A woman tries out an e-book reader app on an Apple iPad at the Leipzig Book Fair on March 15, 2012. US authorities said Friday they reached a settlement with Macmillan, the last of five publishing firms accused of colluding with Apple in an e-book price-fixing conspiracy.

US authorities said Friday they reached a settlement with Macmillan, the last of five publishing firms accused of colluding with Apple in an e-book price-fixing conspiracy.

The [Justice Department](#) said in a statement that with the five [publishers](#) having settled, the case will proceed against [Apple](#), and that a trial was set to begin in June.

Macmillan joined Penguin Group, Hachette Book Group Inc., HarperCollins and Simon & Schuster in settling the charges of an illegal [conspiracy](#) to raise e-book prices.

Macmillan agreed to immediately lift restrictions it has imposed on discounting and other promotions by e-book retailers, and its practices will be monitored under the settlement.

US officials allege the price-fixing scheme was aimed at ending a discounting effort by Amazon, which sold most e-books at \$9.99 until Apple's new pricing plan was forced on the retail giant.

The move almost instantly raised the prices [consumers](#) paid for e-books to \$12.99, \$14.99 or higher, according to the US complaint.

"As a result of today's settlement, Macmillan has agreed to immediately allow retailers to lower the prices consumers pay for Macmillan's e-books," said Jamillia Ferris of the Antitrust Division at Justice.

"Just as consumers are already paying lower prices for the e-book versions of many of Hachette's, HarperCollins' and Simon & Schuster's new releases and best sellers, we expect the prices of many of Macmillan's e-books will also decline."

According to the lawsuit filed last April, the five publishers and Apple were unhappy Amazon's efforts had reduced e-book prices and the retail profit margins of the book sellers to levels they thought were too low.

The suit filed in US District Court in New York said a conspiracy dating

back to 2009 involved "schemes to limit Amazon's ability to discount e-books," hurting consumers by pushing up prices.

Macmillan's parent firm Holtzbrinck Publishers LLC is owned by German-based Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck GmbH.

(c) 2013 AFP

Citation: US settles with final publisher in Apple e-book case (2013, February 8) retrieved 22 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-02-publisher-apple-e-book-case.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.