



Yolo County Library

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October 2, 2019

Mr. John Sargent
Chief Executive Officer
Macmillan Publishing
120 Broadway
New York, NY 10271

Yolo County Library Calls for Macmillan to Reverse Library eBook Embargo

On July 25, Macmillan Publishers announced it would become the only major publisher to limit eBook lending for U.S. libraries. Under Macmillan's new licensing model, scheduled to begin November 1, 2019, a library may purchase one copy upon release of a new title in eBook format, after which Macmillan will impose an embargo on additional copies of that title sold to libraries.

Yolo County Library advocates for equitable access for our residents, accordingly, we protest your decision to embargo new eBooks. If your embargo is not rescinded we will boycott the purchase of new Macmillan's eBooks, effective November 1. We demand that you refrain from creating future barriers for libraries.

We choose to boycott because we believe that your decision is based on a mistaken premise that libraries will continue to do business with you, even if you place limitations on libraries and library patrons. This is not the case. Please consider:

1. We have an ethical obligation to ensure that our patrons have access to a broad range of material. When a publisher creates a barrier to access, we must look to other publishers whose materials are not similarly limited.
2. We are trusted stewards of public funds and are obliged to spend the money that taxpayers entrust to us as effectively as possible. It is fiscally irresponsible to work with a publisher who creates barriers when there are other publishers offering similar material who do not create barriers.

As such, we will continue to spend our budgets normally, choosing authors and titles represented by other publishers.

We have invited other public libraries to join this boycott. It is in the best interest of all public libraries to oppose barriers and support the intellectual freedom of every resident. We will communicate this boycott, and the reasons behind it, to library patrons and community stakeholders through press releases, reports via social media and other digital platforms, and in one-on-one conversations with patrons, community leaders and elected officials.

We take these steps because we truly believe that services without special barriers to libraries are best for both for our patrons and your business. Libraries provide publishers with many services of which you may be unaware, as their impact is difficult to measure, but that have real, long-lasting impacts on your business:

- Marketing: The public can try out your authors in thousands of U.S. library locations. Do you think it would help your business if your books were visible in every Starbucks in the country, even just on loan? Consider this: **There are 2,500 more library locations than Starbucks in the United States.**
- Personalized assistance with discovery: How do readers find the Macmillan titles that they will love? On Amazon, there is no way for readers to explain the kind of books they like and receive personalized suggestions from book experts. In thousands of communities, library staff regularly provide this kind of **personalized service.**
- Nurturing your future customers: U.S. public libraries spend \$4-5 billion per year on materials and services to improve young people's literacy. They visit schools and conduct free public programs weekly for infants through teenagers. They help kids discover books, authors, and genres they like, and encourage them to become **lifelong readers.**
- Nurturing your current customers: Pew Research Center reports library cardholders read more books than non-library cardholders do, and that 47% of library cardholders said that they bought rather than borrowed the last book they read. In other words, **library users are also book buyers.**

If you have questions, concerns or comments regarding this request, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Mark Fink