

July 17, 2018

Tom Doherty
Chairman
Tor Books
175 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10010

Dear Mr. Doherty

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Canadian Urban Libraries Council / Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada (CULC/CBUC), regarding your four-month embargo on sales of new Tor ebooks to libraries. CULC/CBUC member libraries expend over \$90 million annually on collections including \$11 million on digital resources. More than 65% of all Canadians are served by a CULC/CBUC member library, and the activity in CULC/CBUC libraries comprises more than 80% of Canada's public library activity.

We are both disappointed and surprised regarding your statement that “eLending is having a direct and adverse impact on retail eBook sales”. We are unaware of any evidence to prove that claim, and, in fact, you should consider the following:

- Similar to the 2014 Pew Research Centre study that cited “...those who use libraries are more likely than others to be book buyers and actually prefer to buy books, rather than borrow them,”¹ BookNet Canada confirms that patrons who are book-buyers buy more books than non-patrons at a rate of 2.3 vs 2.1 per month.²
- “Libraries are key to the reading ecosystem. Their importance cannot be overstated. Libraries provide consumers with no-risk ways to try new media.” Maya Thomas, former senior vice president at Hachette Group³
- “For publishers, the library will be the showroom of the future. Ensuring that libraries have continuing access to published titles gives them a chance to meet this goal, but an important obstacle remains: how eBooks are obtained by libraries.” David Vinjamuri in *Forbes*⁴
- “And so it seems like a no-brainer. Libraries should be able to buy the books the same way you buy books, the same way I buy books, the same way they bought books forever, the same way that they bought books for longer than there's been copyright, for longer than there has been publishing, for longer there's been paper. Libraries should be able to buy books and they should be able to buy them on fair terms.” Cory Doctorow, Tor author⁵

This adversarial approach you are implementing is a direct affront to readers who rely on public libraries for access to their educational and recreational reading materials. Has research been undertaken to explore the significant increase in indie or self-publishing, and whether that might be the cause of the decrease in sales? For example: six out of the current ten top-selling science fiction books on Amazon are self-published.

1 <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/06/30/7-surprises-about-libraries-in-our-surveys>

2 Noah Genner, CEO, BookNet Canada

3 <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2016/01/04/whats-store-ebooks/>

4 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidvinjamuri/2012/12/11/the-wrong-war-over-ebooks-publishers-vs-libraries/#3d032a4f6da0>

5 <http://www.ilovelibraries.org/author-video/cory-doctorow>

The implications of this change will be less demand and use from library users when your titles finally become available, resulting in fewer purchases of Tor books. This will particularly effect your new and midlist authors who depend on libraries for discovery of their titles. We contend that the ongoing loss of library sales, in conjunction with the long-term loss of retail sales due to reduced discovery of your authors will ultimately have a negative impact on your business. On behalf of public libraries, authors, and readers, we appeal to you to reverse this decision and instead engage public libraries to develop solutions to support one other in ensuring we continue to remain vital and flourishing organizations while at the same time provide excellent service to our customers.

CULC/CBUC is invested in the long-term health and viability of a vibrant publishing industry, which we hope will include Tor Books. We are willing to work with publishers to achieve that goal, and we will be in touch with you on August 14 to arrange a meeting to discuss and identify alternative options that would benefit your company, your authors, public libraries and all readers.

Sincerely,



Pilar Martinez

Chair, Canadian Urban Libraries Council / Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada (CULC/CBUC)
CEO, Edmonton Public Library

cc Jefferson Gilbert, Executive Director, Canadian Urban Libraries Council / Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada (CULC/CBUC)

CULC/CBUC Members