November 1, 2019

Dear Macmillan Publishers:

We write on behalf of the 45 public libraries whose representatives have signed below and who use OverDrive to provide eBooks and eAudiobooks to our residents. Macmillan notified libraries that as of November 1, 2019, it will prevent libraries from purchasing more than one copy of all new eBooks for eight weeks after release to the public.

As advocates for equitable access for our residents, we protest your decision and, as a result, will boycott all Macmillan eContent for 14 months (November 1, 2019 – December 31, 2020). We ask you to reverse the embargo and to 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 public servants 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.

We will also invite other public libraries to join this boycott. It is in the best interest of all public libraries, as responsible stewards of public funds, 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 both for our patrons and for your business. Libraries provide publishers with many services that have real, long-lasting impacts on your success:

- Marketing: The public can try out your authors in ~16,500 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. Amazon itself has acknowledged this limitation by opening some brick-and-mortar stores. But 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.**

Please allow us to help your customers without constraint. The alternative – explaining why your titles are available for them to purchase, but not for download from the library – is a conversation that only hurts you and them.

Thank you for your consideration,

Washington Digital Library Consortium in Washington State, representing:

- Anacortes Public Library
- Asotin County Library
- Bellingham Public Library
- Blanche Bradley Cathlamet Public Library
- Burlington Public Library
- Camas Public Library
- Carpenter Memorial (Cle Elum) Library
- Castle Rock Public Library
- Central Skagit Library
- Columbia County Rural Library District
- Davenport Public Library
- Denny Ashby (Pomeroy) Library
- East Adams Library District (Ritzville)
- Ellensburg Public Library
- Gilmour Memorial (Kittitas) Public Library
- Grandview Library
- Guemes Island Library
- Harrington Public Library
- Hesseltine (Wilbur) Public Library
- Jefferson County Library
- Kalama Public Library
- Kelso Public Library
- La Conner Regional Library District
- Liberty Lake Municipal Library
- Longview Public Library
- Lopez Island Library District
- Mount Vernon City Library
- Neill Public Library
- North Olympic Library System
- Ocean Shores Public Library
- Odessa Public Library
- Orcas Island Public Library
- Port Townsend Public Library
- Puyallup Public Library

- Reardan Memorial Library
- Richland Public Library
- Roslyn Public Library
- San Juan Island Library
- Sprague Public Library
- Upper Skagit Library
- Walla Walla County Rural Library District
- Walla Walla Public Library
- Weller (Waitsburg) Public Library
- Whatcom County Library System
- Whitman County Rural Library District