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## The Battle of \$9.99: How Apple, Amazon and the “Big Six” Publishers Changed the E-Book Business Overnight

New E-Book Single from *Publishers Weekly* Tells the True Story Behind  
Apple’s E-Book Price-Fixing Trial

NEW YORK—June 18, 2013—How did Apple and five major publishers end up charged by the U.S. Department of Justice with a sweeping conspiracy to fix e-book prices? In **The Battle of \$9.99: How Apple, Amazon and the “Big Six” Publishers Changed the E-Book Business Overnight**, *Publishers Weekly* senior writer Andrew Richard Albanese goes behind the headlines to tell the story of how Apple, for the first time in its corporate history, landed in serious legal jeopardy with the American government.

In this deeply reported essay, to be published on June 20, 2013, coinciding with the delivery of closing arguments in the closely watched trial, *The Battle of \$9.99* takes readers from the opening days of Amazon’s game-changing Kindle e-book device in 2007—and its controversial \$9.99 e-book prices—through the final tense moments as five major publishers and Apple struck the deals that would ultimately land them in the government’s crosshairs.

Albanese synthesizes volumes of court filings and evidence, including testimony, e-mails, documents and other records, to create a blow-by-blow account of how Apple and five major publishers used the January 2010 release of the iPad as a lever to wrest control of the e-book market from the dominant player in the business—Amazon, and its “wretched \$9.99 prices.” There was just one problem—state and federal authorities claim that the plan was an illegal conspiracy to end retail price competition in the nascent e-book business.

Here is the story, told through the words of the players themselves, including top executives at all of the major book publishers, Amazon and Apple—even the iconic Steve Jobs himself, who was personally committed to Apple’s foray into e-books, one of the last major undertakings of his life.

How did it come to this? How did the Big Six publishers find themselves locked in a bitter dispute with Amazon over its \$9.99 e-book prices? Why were they powerless to take charge of their own affairs without the help of a player like Apple? And how did they wind up charged with a conspiracy to fix e-book prices?

For the e-book business, the close of Apple's trial means the long legal nightmare is now ending. Each publisher has settled with federal and state authorities, agreeing to pay as much as \$175 million to consumers, most of it in the form of e-book credits.

"Apple's trial has generated a lot of media coverage, and has captivated the publishing industry, but for the e-book business, the final verdict matters little," Albanese observes. "Whether Judge Denise Cote finds that the parties' conduct was illegal or not, their conduct succeeded in shifting the e-book industry to a new business model. Nothing in the verdict will change that."

Albanese continues, "And this is far from the last battle we'll see over e-books. In the coming months and years, we're going to see things heat up between authors and publishers over digital royalty rates. We're going to see issues continue about library lending of e-books."

Jim Milliot, co-editorial director of *Publishers Weekly*, says, "*The Battle of \$9.99* provides a behind-the-scenes look at why consumers pay what they do for e-books."

Speaking of the consumer, Albanese says there will indeed be lingering issues—and issues more important than price: "What rights do e-book consumers enjoy? Generally speaking, you can't give your e-books away, or resell them, or lend them. This is a fundamental cultural shift in the way we have always enjoyed books, and has implications well beyond the publishing business, including for education, libraries, equity of access to information and freedom of speech."

*The Battle of \$9.99*, ISBN 9781625390929, costs \$1.99 and is available for purchase as of Thursday, June 20, 2013, at [www.publishersweekly.com/shop](http://www.publishersweekly.com/shop).

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#### About the Author

Andrew Richard Albanese is senior writer and features editor at *Publishers Weekly*. As a journalist he has covered the publishing and information technology field since 1999, and has written about the industry for numerous publications in the U.S., Europe and Asia. He is also a former editor of *American History* at Oxford University Press.

#### About *Publisher Weekly*

*PW* is the international news platform of book publishing and bookselling. Founded in 1872 and published continuously since then, the weekly magazine boasts nearly 400,000 Twitter followers; publishes eight eNewsletters; five blogs; and a robust Web site that reached more than 5,000,000 unique visitors last year. The magazine has also launched a mobile edition, digital editions and apps. Each year, *PW* reviews nearly 9,000 books, as well as e-books, apps and audio books, in addition to featuring author interviews and news and analysis about the world of publishing.

[photo:]

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