



South Carolina Association of Public Library Administrators

November 27, 2019

This month, Macmillan Publishing implemented an embargo on library e-book purchases that prevents libraries of any size from purchasing more than one copy of a newly released e-book for the first eight weeks after publication. Macmillan, a German-owned company, is one of the five major book publishers in the U.S.

This embargo directly opposes the mission of the South Carolina Association of Public Library Administrators (SCAPLA) and the aim of public libraries across the state of South Carolina: to provide the public with free and equitable access to information and services. As a result of this decision, patrons could wait months or longer for access to some eBooks. Also, despite Macmillan's claims that library lending is negatively impacting digital sales, it's important to recognize that libraries already pay up to five times the retail price to purchase e-books for lending.

Effective immediately, SCAPLA is urging all member libraries to cease purchasing all materials from Macmillan and its imprints, including ebooks, e-audiobooks, and print materials. This boycott will last for at least 12 weeks to be revisited in January at the next SCAPLA meeting.

“Quote from Laurel Sharp, SCAPLA President and Chester County Library Director. “Libraries are advocating for equal access for their patrons. We are also asking Macmillan to recognize that libraries are valued customers of the publishing industry as we purchase books for our collection from their publishing house. Libraries also build readers, and readers buy books.”

In addition to SCAPLA and many other libraries nation-wide, the American Library Association has also publicly denounced the embargo with a full campaign featuring an online petition. Member libraries can join the over 214,000 people that have already voiced their opposition by signing the petition at ebooksforall.org.

Public libraries bring together authors, publishers, and readers for the purpose of boosting knowledge, creativity, literacy, ideas and imagination. We also advance literacy and promote a

love of reading to our communities. As we always have, libraries should be working with authors and book publishers to advance those important goals, not against them.

It is our goal to continue to advocate equal access to materials for our patrons, and to ensure that libraries are able to supply their patrons the books they love within a reasonable timeframe. We are hopeful that the American Library Association will continue to have a dialogue with Macmillan to discuss a refreshed approach to their current eBook lending model.

SCAPLA asks library patrons to be patient and understand that we are operating in their best interest during this time period.
