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VAST: Don’t Buy This Book

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A Growing Sensation

 In 1994, Amazon.com, Inc was founded as an online bookstore. Jeff Bezos, who is the founder and CEO of Amazon.com, decided to start the company due to the rising success of the Internet within the United States. Amazon.com became an extremely successful competitor in the book market. However, Amazon did not become the dominant retailer in the book world until the introduction of a new device that allowed for electronic reading known as the Kindle. The Kindle was introduced to the public in 2007 and it started a whole new trend of reading for Amazon customers. By 2011, Amazon had found that “more Kindle books were sold by Amazon than traditional printed books” ("Amazon.com, Inc. History."). All of the positives of electronic reading became evident with the growing success of the Kindle. However with the many positives, there are also many different economic and social disadvantages. With an overwhelming dominant company like Amazon, the world of electronic reading will eventually hurt our reading skills and our economy if changes are not made in order to aid in adapting our society to our social and our technological changes.

 Currently, Amazon “dominates the e-reader market” with its success of the Kindle, the Kindle Fire, and all of its other unique electronic readers (Albanese). The company has almost entirely knocked out any real competition in the book market. Many small bookstores along with even larger corporate bookstores like Barnes and Nobles are struggling to keep up with Amazon’s growing success in this area. When it comes down to electronic books, Amazon clearly has created a monopoly, as companies are not able to effectively enter the market due to Amazon’s digital rights management technology better known as DRM’s (Albanese). The success of Amazon could have a negative effect on our economy. If Amazon becomes a monopoly by knocking out all other competition, it will become the only provider for electronic readers available to our society, which means it could raise prices to almost any amount it wants. Although the economic side is important, there is also another loss that comes with Amazon’s success in the electronic book market. Books have been known throughout the years for encouraging reading and learning. However, not all electronic books have been designed for that direct purpose. Amazon’s newest invention the Kindle Fire was created with the ability to play games, surf the web, and even online shop. This new technology has changed the process of reading. Children no longer have to sit down and read a book from page to page. They can now read for a second and stop to play a game on the exact same device. Although the concept of reading has not changed, this new form of technology has transformed the process and the impact of reading. These are only a few of the negatives associated with Amazon’s triumph with electronic readers. However with time, there could be more social and economic changes that are caused by this new form of technology.

 Although there are many negatives of electronic books, there have been some growing successes in the reading and writing world due to the introduction of electronic reading. For example, the Amazon Kindle creates an extremely easy access for people to read at anytime of the day. People no longer have to wait for a book to arrive or run out to a bookstore to purchase a book. Now on an electronic reader, all a person has to do is simply give a credit card and click the purchase button. Then within five minutes, the book is downloaded and ready for the person to start reading it. This new technology encourages reading by making it easier, more convenient, and cheaper. Many of Amazon’s books are cheaper to purchase electronically, which has the potential to save the consumer a large amount of money in the long run. The new Internet abilities of electronic readers can also be argued to really encourage people to learn by giving them the ability to easily look up a word or sentence they do not understand. Amazon, also, supports struggling writers and authors by introducing them to readers through its borrowing library. An author can enter into Amazon’s borrowing library for ninety days and make money according to how many times the book is read ("eBook Exclusivity — A Good or Bad Idea?"). Although this seems different, this should be important to many unknown authors as it gives them the opportunity to get their name and their writing out there. Also, electronic readers make books available to everyone everywhere. As books begin to become published more and more electronically, people will no longer have a problem trying to track down a book because the book will be readily available on any electronic device (Sasson).

 In today’s society, Amazon and the electronic book market is extremely important. Although there are many different negatives associated with electronic reading, the growth of technology including electronic books is very important and relevant to our growth. In order to continue the growth of reading and writing, companies like Amazon should focus on trying to fix the negatives associated with electronic reading. The most important way to keep electronic reading relevant to our society is to make sure companies like Amazon do not become a monopoly. Technology is created through competition. Therefore, we need to allow companies to fully compete and vie with one another so we continue to get the best inventions and the best prices. Also, it is important to continue to publish books with a hard copy and an electronic version. That way a reader is allowed to have the originality of the hard copy of a book while enjoying the benefits of the electronic version. These few changes would allow for the growth of the electronic book market and the growth of our society as a whole making electronic reading extremely valuable and relevant in today’s world.

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