

Amazon pressure tactics reported in Hachette contract talks
Malaysian Insider
May 11, 2014

Amazon is pressuring the Hachette Book Group, a subsidiary of French company Lagardere, by delaying deliveries of its books as the two renegotiate their contract, The New York Times reported yesterday.

The Times said Amazon's secret campaign to discourage customers from buying books by Hachette has also involved tactics like charging more for its books than other retailers and suggesting that readers might enjoy a book from another author instead.

It said the "scorched-earth tactics" arose as Hachette balked at Amazon's demands for better terms in contract negotiations.

Hachette confirmed that many of its older titles and a few new releases sold by Amazon were being hit with shipping delays that it attributed to the negotiations with the e-retailer.

"We are satisfying all Amazon's orders promptly, and notifying them constantly of forthcoming publicity events and of out-of-stock situations on their website. Amazon is holding minimal stock and restocking some of HBG's book slowly, causing 'available 2-4 weeks' messages, for reasons of their own," Hachette said in a statement.

"We are grateful for the patience of authors and all Amazon readers as we work to reach an agreement and to encourage Amazon to be back to offering Hachette Book Group's books within normal shipment times," it added.

Amazon did not respond to requests for comment.

The campaign has Hachette authors fuming, according to the Times, which quoted author Marla Heller as saying sales of her book "The Dash Diet Weight Loss Solution" has been "dramatically impacted." – AFP, May 11, 2014.

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Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/business/article/amazon-pressure-tactics-reported-in-hachette-contract-talks>