

Amazon will kill off independent record stores within t...

www.taxresearch.org.uk/Blog/2013/09/23/amazon-will-kill-off-independent-record-stores-within-thre

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The following comes from [Ethical Consumer this morning](#). I should mention I write a regular column for Ethical Consumer, but am not paid for it:

One of the UK's leading independent record stores has predicted the death of independent record stores in the UK within three years.

Independent record stores are currently involved in a desperate battle for survival and one of the key issues is that Amazon is able to offer shoppers lower prices because of their aggressive tax avoidance policies.

Within the last nine years more than 60 per cent of the UK's independent record stores have closed and now just under 300 remain.

Doug Anderson from Coda Records in Edinburgh which has been selling Scottish, Irish and English folk CDs and records since 1997, and who predicts the death of the independent record store including his own, said:

"Shoppers compare independent record stores like us to Amazon on price which is a completely unfair comparison. We make no profit to speak of but we pay tax and VAT on everything we buy."

Anderson also warns of the consequences when the last independent record stores closes:

"Do people seriously think that Amazon are good guys and will keep their prices cheap when they've no competition? When the last store closes prices will shoot up and people will then have no choice but to shop at Amazon."

This dire warning comes as Ethical Consumer magazine publishes its latest Amazon-free buyers' guide to shopping for CDs, MP3s and streaming.

With the majority of music now being bought online, the buyers' guide reveals that

many online music businesses are now adopting tax avoidance policies similar to those of Amazon.

The two biggest players in the online music business are Amazon and iTunes who each control around 30 per cent of the market. Both companies are aggressive tax avoiders.

Ethical Consumer researcher Tim Hunt said:

"There are obviously many factors which are causing the crisis for independent record stores. However the fact that Amazon is unfairly undercutting the independents on price is the single biggest factor.

"The situation is complicated in that Amazon have now created a culture of dependency as many independent stores now rely on Amazon Marketplace which further entrenches Amazon's market dominance."

"We're now calling on shoppers to think hard about shopping at Amazon and instead support their local record store."

Pip Piper, the director of Last Shop Standing, the film which chronicles the fortunes of the indy record shop said:

"It is important we support our independent record shops as they are the people who support their own local music scene and champion new music. Without them music will stagnate."

Ethical Consumer recommends that the ethical alternative to buying music from Amazon is to buy second-hand CDs from Discogs, MusicStack and Oxfam.

For new music Ethical Consumer's recommends that shoppers support their local independent record store.

To find their nearest independent record store Ethical Consumer recommends that shoppers visit:

www.lastshopstanding.com

www.recordstoreday.co.uk

The following are also recommended for CDs:

Propermusic for buying CDs online; Crochet, MDT and Presto Classical for classical music CDs.

For downloadable MP3s Ethical Consumer recommends Fairshare because of its charitable donations.

For new CDs and MP3s Ethical Consumer also recommends buying directly from the artist or label rather than through Amazon.

Ethical Consumer currently cannot recommend any company for streaming.