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## JACQUELINE WILSON RETAINS CROWN AS UK'S MOST BORROWED AUTHOR

Jacqueline Wilson is the most borrowed author in UK libraries for the fourth year in succession, according to the latest annual figures on library lending released by Public Lending Right (PLR) today.

Titles by the immensely popular children's writer were lent almost two million times between July 2005 and June 2006. Wilson's nearest rivals are the adult novelists, James Patterson, Josephine Cox, Danielle Steel and Ian Rankin who each need to clock up at least another half million loans annually before they can pose a threat to the 'queen of library lending'.

When it comes to the adult fiction we borrow from libraries, our obsession with the darker side of life continues to prevail over love and romance. US thriller writer James Patterson is the UK's second most borrowed author, consigning romantic novelists Josephine Cox and Danielle Steel to third and fourth places respectively in the Most Borrowed Authors list. Scottish crime writer, Ian Rankin moves up from eighth to fifth place.

Children's, young adult and educational books represent 31% of all books borrowed nationally. In addition, four children's writers have appeared in the top 10 Most Borrowed Authors list for the past four years: Jacqueline Wilson, Janet & Allan Ahlberg, Mick Inkpen and Roald Dahl.

However when it comes to the popularity of individual fiction titles overall, new, if not wholly surprising names emerge. Dan Brown takes first and fourth place in the Most Borrowed Titles list with 'The Da Vinci Code' and 'Digital Fortress'. JK Rowling's 'Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince' was the second most borrowed book nationally, with Maeve Binchy's 'Nights of Rain and Stars', and Patricia Cornwell's 'Trace' taking third and fifth places respectively.

JK Rowling's 'Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince' was the most borrowed children's fiction title of the year, ahead of Jacqueline Wilson's 'Clean Break'.

Our growing national preoccupation with self-image sees Gillian McKeith's 'You Are What You Eat' and 'You Are What You Eat Cookbook' take first and third place in the list of the Most Borrowed Non-Fiction Titles, with two Paul McKenna titles, 'Change Your Life in Seven Days' and 'I Can Make You Thin' placed fourth and fifth. The second most popular non-fiction title however was Sheila Hancock's 'The Two of Us: My Life with John Thaw'.

Public Lending Right became law in 1979 and plays a crucial role in the UK's creative economy by supporting authors financially. Public libraries across the country accumulate lending figures by ISBN for PLR which collates the data and distributes the money it receives from the government directly to writers. In 2005/06, 23,869 authors will receive payments at an increased rate of 5.98 pence per loan.

This income is invaluable to the nation's writers as is the data that PLR is increasingly able to provide to the creative industries that depend on writers. Such data can support public libraries, decision makers in the cultural sector, the reading industries and publishing by providing a fuller picture of the nation's reading habits.

Thanks to LEWIS, a sophisticated computer software programme, PLR is able to analyse the data it collects, identifying trends and changes in our national and regional reading habits and providing a fascinating insight into our preferences, pastimes and obsessions. PLR is currently testing this facility with public libraries as a potentially valuable tool to support decision making over book stock.

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## Editors' Notes

1. PLR was established by an Act of Parliament in 1979. It gives authors the legal right to receive remuneration from government for the public's use of their work through the public library system.
2. PLR is funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Culture Secretary, Tessa Jowell, writing in PLR's 2005/6 Annual Report expressed her delight that so many writers, illustrators, editors and translators benefited from PLR. She said of PLR: "It is now a well-established right, enjoying widespread recognition for the key role it plays in supporting the literary endeavours of the country's authors on which so much of the creative economy depends". The Annual Report is available on PLR's website ([www.plr.uk.com](http://www.plr.uk.com)).
3. PLR's funding from DCMS stands at £7.65 million for 2006/7.
4. In February 2007 - relating to book loans during the period July 2005-June 2006 - PLR is distributing £6.81 million to 23,869 authors at a record rate per loan of 5.98 pence.
5. Authors are eligible for payment if their PLR earnings reach a minimum of £1. There is a maximum payment threshold of £6,600 for the top-lending authors. This year, 262 authors will receive the maximum payment.
6. Since its inception in 1979, PLR has distributed over £101 million to authors.
7. Author Simon Brett is currently Chair of the PLR Advisory Committee. Previous chairs have included writers Clare Francis and Michael Holroyd.
8. Authors living in other European Union countries also qualify for payment from the UK scheme for loans of their books from public libraries in the UK. Authors living in Ireland are the principal beneficiaries. British authors currently qualify for payment from PLR schemes in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands.

