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## **JAMES PATTERSON TOPPLES JACQUELINE WILSON TO BECOME UK'S MOST BORROWED AUTHOR**

### **with the Rainbow Fairies in hot pursuit.....**

After a four year reign as the 'Queen of library lending', Jacqueline Wilson has been narrowly beaten into second place by US thriller writer James Patterson in the Most Borrowed Authors list.

According to the latest annual figures on library lending released by Public Lending Right (PLR) today, titles by James Patterson were lent over 1.5 million times between July 2006 and June 2007. Aside from Jacqueline Wilson in second place, Patterson's nearest adult fiction rivals are novelists Josephine Cox, Nora Roberts, Danielle Steel and Ian Rankin.

Former advertising executive James Patterson is the author of almost fifty novels, and with the help of co-writers now produces up to eight books each year. Described in a Time magazine profile as the 'Man who can't miss', his pacey thrillers have sold over 130 million copies worldwide. Patterson, best known for his books featuring black homicide detective and single father Alex Cross, is also the creator of a series of books for young adults entitled 'Maximum Ride'.

Children's, young adult and educational books represent around 30% of all books borrowed nationally, and the latest Most Borrowed Authors list reflects this. Apart from Jacqueline Wilson, four other children's writers appear in this year's top 10: Daisy Meadows (3<sup>rd</sup>); Mick Inkpen (8<sup>th</sup>); Janet & Allan Ahlberg (9<sup>th</sup>) and Francesca Simon, creator of Horrid Henry (10<sup>th</sup>). Daisy Meadows, is flying particularly high: the creators of the Rainbow Magic series have leapt into 3<sup>rd</sup> place from 26<sup>th</sup> last year.

When it comes to the popularity of individual fiction titles overall, new, if not wholly surprising names emerge. Patricia Cornwell takes first place in the Most Borrowed Titles list with 'At Risk'. Victoria Hislop's 'The Island' is the second Most Borrowed Title, as the powerful effect of Channel 4's Richard and Judy's Book Club impacts on library borrowing. 'The Island' is one of three past Richard and Judy selections to appear in the Top 10: the others are 'My Best Friend's Girl' by Dorothy Koomson and Elizabeth Kostova's 'The Historian'.

Public Lending Right became law in 1979 and supports the UK's creative economy by providing important financial support to the nation's writers. Public libraries across the country accumulate lending figures by ISBN. The PLR office collates this data and uses it to make payments to authors on the basis of how often their books have been lent out. PLR is funded by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), and in 2007/08 will distribute £6.66 million to 23,942 authors at a rate of 5.98 pence per loan.

Margaret Hodge, Culture Minister said: "As we start the National Year of Reading 2008, the PLR's statistics on library book loans provide a fascinating insight into the reading habits of the nation. Free access to books and reading is the cornerstone of the public library service and our authors play an essential role to inform and entertain us. Our reading pleasure is recognised in the highly valued annual payments PLR makes to loaned authors".

Not only does PLR provide much needed financial support for writers but also, thanks to its sophisticated (LEWIS) computer software, provides valuable analysis of national reading trends. This data offers public libraries, cultural sector decision-makers, the reading industries and publishers, a tool to support effective and efficient business decisions.

Thanks to the LEWIS software, and PLR's analysis of the data, these organisations benefit from the comprehensive picture of national reading trends, changes in our national and regional reading habits and a fascinating insight into our preferences, pastimes and obsessions.

## Ends/February 08

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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). Funding for 2007/08 stands at £7.68 million. Following the government's recent Comprehensive Spending Review, PLR's funding for the next three years is as follows: 2008/09 (£7.43 million), 2009/10 (£7.58 million) and 2010/11 (£7.68 million).
3. The UK writing economy: a typical writer has seen their income drop by £3000 pa since 2000; a typical writer earns 33% less than the national average wage; the top 10% of writers earn 50% of total income (cf other equally skilled professions where the bottom 50% earn almost 40% of total income); nearly 80% of authors need a second job to survive; in 2004 the publishing industry exports contributed £1.5 billion to the economy; the creative industries currently contribute 8% of GDP. (Source: ALCS What Are Words Worth? & the DCMS commissioned report 'Staying Ahead: the Economic Performance of the UK's Creative Industries')
4. In February 2008 - relating to book loans during the period July 2006-June 2007 - PLR is distributing £6.66 million to 23,942 authors at a 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 242 authors will receive the maximum payment. In a recent survey of PLR's top earners, 80% specified that their annual PLR payment is core to their income.
6. Since its inception in 1979, PLR has distributed over £107 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. Payments are distributed by the Authors' Licensing & Collecting Society (ALCS).

