



THE PLR LIFELINE: WHAT PLR PAYMENTS & LIBRARIES MEAN TO AUTHORS

For 80% of PLR's top earners, annual PLR payments form the core of their income. (PLR Author Survey 2006/07)

Today, Public Lending Right announces its annual public library lending figures and author payments for 2006-07. As the quotes below illustrate, PLR is of great importance for the majority of authors; not only as their legal right, but also as a financial lifeline in the battle to survive as a writer. It is clearly also an organisation which authors hold in high regard.

The statistics overleaf give a graphic snapshot both of the value of today's writers to the UK economy, and the financial challenges they must overcome in order to continue writing despite their contribution to the nation's prosperity.

"PLR has two main benefits for me. First, I live and support a family entirely from my fluctuating income as a writer, and over the years PLR has been the one stable element in that income: often it literally pays the mortgage. Second, the loans figures give a reassuring glimpse of an unseen community of readers..."

"Dwindling royalty earnings, thanks mainly to high discounting, has greatly increased the value of PLR payments and have made them, for me, an important part of core income."

"Due to the overwhelming power of the book chains and the consequent massive discounts they command (meaning a reduction in royalties by as much as 70%) PLR is no longer the cherry on top of the cake but forms a large slice of said cake."

"I was able to use my PLR to demonstrate my library readership to a publisher, who is now re-issuing an out of print series of mine."

"Very appreciative of the work of Brigid Brophy and other pioneers to obtain PLR for authors. Thank heaven for libraries!"

"I have found PLR to offer outstanding service – prompt and efficient, how a business should be run."

'THE WRITING ECONOMY' – VITAL STATISTICS

- In 2004 publishing industry exports contributed £1.5 billion to the economy.
From 'Staying Ahead: the economic performance of the UK's creative industries'
Commissioned by DCMS from The Work Foundation.
- A typical professional author has seen their income drop by £3000 pa since 2000.
- A typical writer earns an average of £4000 pa - less than a supermarket check-out assistant.
- Almost 50% of UK households have broadband, but over 85% of UK authors are yet to receive payment for use of their work on the internet.
- The top 10% of UK writers earn 50% of total income; in other equally skilled professions the bottom 50% earn almost 40% of total income.
- Nearly 80% of UK authors need a second job to survive.

The above quotes and statistics are included in PLR's recent publication, *Writers Talk*. This booklet gives an overview of the year at PLR from Jim Parker, Registrar, together with feature articles on the broad context of authors' rights. Contributors include Barry Turner, a member of the PLR Advisory Committee, authors' rights campaigner and writer, Maureen Duffy and journalist Danuta Kean.

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You can access *Writers Talk* on the PLR website at www.plr.uk.com.

For media enquiries about PLR's annual lending figures please call:

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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. 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.
4. 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.
5. Since its inception in 1979, PLR has distributed over £107 million to authors.
6. Author Simon Brett is currently Chair of the PLR Advisory Committee. Previous chairs have included writers Clare Francis and Michael Holroyd.
7. 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).

