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LIFE GETS SIMPLER & MORE COST-EFFECTIVE FOR AUTHORS

PLR Launches New and Improved Online Registration Service

Today sees the launch of a new and improved online registration service for writers and other rightsholders – illustrators, translators and editors - who qualify for PLR.

“A lot of these improvements have been made at the suggestion of authors,” says Jim Parker, Public Lending Right Registrar. “We wanted to make online registration as easy as possible for all those who wish to use it and have responded to feedback and requests from authors. We are also aiming to reduce costs by bringing the management of the new service in-house and by allowing authors access to information that we normally print out and post.”

For authors to qualify for PLR, which is the legal right that they have to be remunerated for the lending out of their books by public libraries, they must register every new book and every new edition of existing titles. The sophisticated PLR system that tracks loans in library authorities across the country does so by individual ISBN. It is important for authors that they can add new books and update existing details easily and quickly.

In addition to providing a more streamlined system for registering new books, the new service allows authors to view and amend previously registered titles. They can also access and update personal or payment information, and communicate with the PLR office in a secure and confidential environment. The redesigned system conforms with current best practice on making information and resources via the web accessible to all.

January would normally see the PLR team printing, packing and mailing some 30,000 payment statements to authors. Building on the new service, the next online development (planned for January 2008) will be to allow authors to access their statements online, thus saving time, paper and postage costs.

“We continually strive to improve the cost-effectiveness of our operation,” says Jim Parker. “The improvements in our online service will help ensure that authors receive the maximum benefit from the PLR fund.”

The new service is available on PLR’s website at www.plr.uk.com.

Media contacts - for further information please call:

Susan Ridge at the Public Lending Right office on 01642 604699

Editors’ Notes

1. PLR was established by Act of Parliament in 1979. It gives authors the legal right to receive payment from government for the lending out of their books by public libraries.
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).

3. PLR's funding from DCMS stands at £7.63 million for 2007/8.
4. In February 2007 - relating to book loans during the period July 2005-June 2006 - PLR distributed £6.81 million to 23,866 authors at a record rate per loan of 5.98 pence. Authors must register with the PLR office to qualify for payment. A basic online registration service was introduced in 2003. Currently 65% of first-time registrations are received via the online service.
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. In 2007, 257 authors received 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. Payments are distributed by the Authors Licensing & Collecting Society.

