



The All Party Writers' Group

The All Party Writers' Group was established in November 2007. Its aims are:

- To represent the interests of all writers;
- To safeguard their intellectual property rights; and
- To ensure they receive a fair level of recognition and reward for their contribution to the economy and society as a whole.

Public Lending Right (PLR)

Recently the Group has focused on a campaign lobbying for reform of the Public Lending Right (PLR) Scheme – the system that ensures that authors receive recompense for the free availability of their books in public libraries.

In 2009 to mark the 30th anniversary of the Public Lending Right Act (1979) the Group began working with the PLR office and writers' bodies such as the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS) to secure Government support for a review of the current PLR scheme, to ensure that it recognizes the changing nature of library services in the digital age. In particular the Group wanted the scheme to recognise all the differing formats for books, by extending its terms to audiobooks and e-books, as well as traditional print. In April the Group presented a paper to the Libraries Minister outlining its proposals. The Digital Britain report published by the DCMS and BIS in June confirmed a commitment to the reform process. Following a DCMS consultation, the measures put forward by the APWG were included within the Digital Economy Bill. In April 2010 the Bill received the Royal assent.

The challenge for the Group in 2010 is twofold: firstly, to work with the Government to ensure that the expanded PLR scheme continues to deliver the excellent service it has in the past, secondly to ensure that an appropriate and proportionate level of additional funding is available to permit this expansion.

Writers and the Digital Economy

Government figures place the contribution of the Creative Industries to the overall economy at around 8%, identifying a sector growing at twice the pace of any other, notwithstanding the economic downturn. The contribution of writers to this sector is as essential as it is diverse, pervading the worlds of publishing, broadcasting, theatre and video games, producing the creative raw material to drive multi-million pound industries.

However independent research on writers' earnings suggests that the level of rewards available in this sector already present a real threat to the future viability of content creation in this core area of the Creative Industries.

Clause 43 of the Digital Economy Bill aimed to provide legislative mechanisms to allow greater access to creative works, while respecting the principles of copyright – including the author's right to receive a fair return for the use of their work. Unfortunately this clause did not make it into the Digital Economy Act (2010). However these issues remain important for the creative economy and the writers that help to sustain it. The APWG will work with the Government to ensure that these issues are given due prominence on the policy agenda.

Year of Writing

The National year of Reading in 2008 was a great success, bringing together Government Departments, funding bodies and literacy agencies to encourage the nation to read more. The APWG is working with the National Literacy Trust to secure Government support for a Year of Writing.

For more information please visit our website <http://www.allpartywritersgroup.co.uk>