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ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY WRITERS GROUP WEBSITE GOES 'LIVE'

What's the latest on writers' rights?

What are the challenges facing writers in the digital age?

What are the 'hot' topics for discussion?

Keep in touch at www.apwg.co.uk

The recently formed All Party Writers Group (APWG) is delighted to announce the launch of its website. The site features the latest news on writers' rights, information on the APWG, its activities and plans and information on the current issues and challenges that all UK writers face.

"It's a critical time for writers," says Dr Ian Gibson MP, Chair of the APWG "and we are delighted that the Secretary of State for Culture Media & Sport, The Rt Hon Andrew Burnham MP, has accepted our recent invitation at Question Time to address the APWG."

"Writers face many challenges over their moral and financial rights in the digital age," continues Dr Gibson. "We cannot afford to underestimate how much script writers, novelists, educational and academic text book writers, writers of non-fiction and poets, in fact all types of writers, contribute to our creative economy. Nor, can we afford to ignore the value of the internet in disseminating knowledge and enabling enjoyment for users. What we support is an equitable solution; one that strikes a fair balance between the needs of writers and those of users."

The APWG was launched in November 2007 with the aim of *"representing the interests of all writers; to safeguard their intellectual property rights and ensure they receive a fair level of recognition and reward for their contribution to the economy and society as a whole."*

The group is a forum for elected Parliamentarians in Westminster to consider and discuss matters of importance to writers. As a focal point for authors' interests, with its links to UK writer organisations, APWG is well placed to draw attention to the current issues facing writers amongst an audience of decision-makers at Westminster and beyond. It is chaired by Dr Ian Gibson MP with Dennis McShane MP as vice-chair and Ed Vaizey MP as Secretary. The affairs of the APWG are administered by the Authors' Licensing & Collecting Society (ALCS).

"Writers are facing as many challenges as musicians with the prevalence of the re-use of works on the internet," says Owen Atkinson, ALCS's CEO. "These challenges include some of the recommendations for implementation following the Gowers Review of Intellectual Property in

2007, internet piracy and concerns for users over the government's '3 strikes and you're out' initiative. At ALCS we are determined to find a balance between users' needs and creators' rights and are delighted to support the APWG."

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Notes for Editors

About All Party Groups: All Party Groups provide an opportunity for Members of Parliament to help keep the Government and Opposition informed of opinion both inside and outside Parliament on policy issues.

About ALCS: ALCS collects fees on behalf of the whole spectrum of UK writers: novelists, film & TV script writers, literary prize winners, poets and playwrights, freelance journalists, translators and adaptors, as well as thousands of professional and academic writers who include nurses, lawyers, teachers, scientists, and college lecturers. All writers are eligible to join ALCS: further details on membership can be found at www.alcs.co.uk

ALCS – History, Status & Commitment: the Society is a not-for-profit company and was set up in 1977 in the wake of the campaign to establish Public Lending Right to help writers protect and take advantage of their secondary rights. The Society is committed to ensuring that the rights of writers, concerning their intellectual and moral property, are fully respected and fairly rewarded. To achieve this, the Society is also committed to fostering an awareness of copyright issues in the writing community and beyond.

The Society collects fees that are difficult, time-consuming or legally impossible for writers and their representatives to claim on an individual basis: money that is nonetheless due to them. Fees collected are distributed to writers twice a year in March and September. Since its inception, ALCS has distributed over £170 million to the nation's writers.

Contact information: **ALCS**, The Writers' House, 13 Haydon Street, London EC3N 1DB Tel: 020 7264 5700; email alcs@alcs.co.uk. Website: www.alcs.co.uk

ALCS – Sources of Income: ALCS has developed highly specialised knowledge and sophisticated systems which track writers and their work (both print and audiovisual) against various secondary uses for which they are due payment. The main sources of fees due are secondary royalties from: photocopying (through the Copyright Licensing Agency which is jointly owned by the ALCS and the Publishers Licensing Society); international Public Lending Right; cable retransmission; fees from the Educational Recording (ERA) and sources such as blank tape and machine levies for private copying and small miscellaneous literary rights).

ALCS – The International Picture: the Society is recognised internationally as a leading authority on copyright matters and authors' interests. It maintains a close watching brief on all matters affecting copyright both in the UK and around the world and makes regular representations to the UK government and to the European Commission. ALCS pays royalties to member writers based in 137 countries around the globe. ALCS has reciprocal arrangements with over 50 collecting societies around the world.