



**“YES,” SAY CONSUMERS.
“CREATORS SHOULD BE REWARDED WHEN WE
DOWNLOAD THEIR WORK!”**

Parliamentary All Party Writers Group looks for framework that both rewards creators and helps consumers download within the law

At the inaugural meeting of the All Party Writers Group last week, the Authors' Licensing & Collecting Society (ALCS) announced the findings of their recent survey into consumer attitudes to creators whose work is re-used in the digital environment.

55% of those questioned in the survey into public attitudes to copyright in the digital age, believe writers and other creators of works that are subsequently made available online should be paid fairly for this digital re-use of their work. Of these, 70% said they would be willing to pay a 'reasonable sum' to be able to download such work.

“It’s enormously encouraging,” says Dr Ian Gibson MP, Chair of the Group. “If there is consumer will to make sure writers and other creators are rewarded for the work they create which is then made available on-line, it will be far easier to look after writers and ensure they are given fair recognition and reward for their contribution.”

This survey gives a snapshot of the impact of our 'cultural footprint' in the digital environment. With 55% of respondents now owning an iPod or other MP3 player and a further 8% owning handheld digital media players, downloading 'culture' - music and other material - is now a regular feature of everyday life. Of those questioned, 28% admitted they had downloaded material without paying for it.

“In 2006 illegal downloads were up 46% on the previous year and are set to rise again in 2007,” says Owen Atkinson, CEO of ALCS. “We need to resolve this issue urgently as writers are losing out every second of every day as people access increasing quantities of downloaded material.”

Alongside the plans recently announced by the government to deal with those who download material illegally – 'three strikes and you're out' – it is important that consumers are given the opportunity to access digital material legally within a practical and simple framework that balances consumer needs with the right of the creator to be rewarded.

"We cannot afford to under estimate the value writers bring to our lives, be it on the page, on air or on the internet," says Dr Gibson. "It is the aim of the All Party Writers Group to ensure that writers' interests are represented at the highest level, to safeguard their intellectual property rights and to ensure they are paid when their work is used. Consumers will be the losers in the end if this issue is not addressed."

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Notes for Editors

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

The All Party Writers Group (APWG)

The APWG is a forum for elected Parliamentarians in Westminster to consider & 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 ALCS. The APWG website will be launched in March 2008.

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 £156 million to the nation's writers.

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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.