



Queen Mary
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The Business of Being an Author

A Survey of Author's Earnings and Contracts

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Executive summary

- 1 A survey of authors was carried out between January and March 2014 with approximately 35,000 writers being contacted and asked to complete the survey. There were 2,454 respondents (7% response rate) starting the survey and 1,477 respondents (4.2% response rate) completing it. The results therefore present a fair reflection of UK authors in 2014.
- 2 The survey found that earnings of authors have been falling in real terms over the last decade with average current earnings of £16,809. This means that in real terms authors earn 19% less today than they did in 2005. Professional authors, those who spend more than 50% of their working life engaged in self-employed writing, do not fare much better. Their average earnings are £28,340 which represents a fall of 8% since 2005.
- 3 There is a high concentration of earnings with a small number of writers earning most of the money. Therefore when the typical 'median' earnings are considered the picture is more concerning. The typical earnings of all authors are only £4,000 and those of professional authors are merely £11,000 which represents a drop of 29% in real terms since 2005. This means that a professional author is earning less than the minimum wage from his or her writing.
- 4 It also appears that young writers suffer disproportionately as writers earn the most in their mid-40s to 50s. Further, there remains a significant gender pay gap amongst professional authors (with women earning 80% of that earned by men). However, the gender gap has essentially disappeared in relation to writers as a whole group.
- 5 A substantial number of authors will retain their copyright in the work (42%) with most others retaining it most or some of the time. Only 12% never retain any copyright in their work after publication.
- 6 It appears that advances continue to be paid, with two-thirds of respondents having received an advance at some time which rises to over three-quarters of professional authors. Nevertheless, this is a decline since 2006 and, furthermore, the size of these advances is also falling.
- 7 A substantial majority of all authors assert their right to be identified and do not waive their right to object to derogatory treatment. Furthermore, it appears that disputes between publishers and authors over moral rights are quite rare with only 1 in 20 authors ever having faced such a dispute. It appears that relationships between publishers and authors have improved since 2006.
- 8 Self-publication appears to enable writers to utilise further value from old works. A quarter of authors had self-published a book at some point and the most successful self-publishing ventures have an average rate of return of 154% (and a typical 'median' rate of return of 40%). It remains a risky venture, however, as the bottom 20% of self-publishers made losses of £400 or more.
- 9 Authors have a very strong perception that writers as a profession have a substantially weaker bargaining position than they did five years ago, but the cumulative results of the individual respondent authors suggest this is not actually the case.

1. Methodology

1.1 Introduction

In late 2013, the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS) commissioned the researchers to devise and conduct a survey of writers. The survey was intended to deal with two issues: writers' earnings and contractual issues. Its purpose was, in part, to be an update of an earlier survey conducted in 2006 by the Centre of Intellectual Property Policy and Management (CIPPM) at Bournemouth University¹. However, the two surveys covered different ground in many respects.

1.2 Structure and conduct of the survey

The survey was conducted online using SurveyMonkey (the survey is at Appendix 2). It included a maximum of 67 questions devised in sections whereby if a respondent answered "no" to an opening question in a section they would be moved to the next section. Further, the nature of SurveyMonkey means that it was possible for respondents to answer some, but not all, of the questions. This meant that many respondents started the survey and answered some questions but then did not continue.

The survey was entirely anonymous² so as to enable respondents to give frank answers about their salary and contracts.

A prize draw was available to those who completed the survey. To avoid participants having to identify themselves in the survey an email address was established. The address was provided to respondents if they completed the survey. A respondent could then decide, independently, whether to give their name to be put in the prize draw. This draw was conducted entirely by ALCS and the researchers were not involved in the draw itself.

1.3 Response to the survey

The survey opened when ALCS sent an email to members on 15th January 2014 and it ended when the survey was closed on 16th March 2014.

Every member of ALCS and the Society of Authors who had provided those organisations with an email address was contacted and asked to complete the survey. The email included a link to the survey on surveymonkey. It is estimated that 35,000 people were contacted and asked to complete the survey.

In total 2,454 people (7% response rate) started the survey and 1,477 people (4.2% response rate) answered the last question (ie 977 people did not complete the survey).³

1.4 Reporting caveats

This report is based solely on what respondents said in the survey. There was no attempt to verify any information objectively or to ask for evidence of anything stated by a respondent. Accordingly, if a respondent gave incorrect information this would be recorded and treated as accurate. Further, the results made it clear that respondents, despite being asked to produce accurate figures, gave estimates and round figures. For example, a respondent might report that they earned £10,000 from self-employed writing when in reality the precise figure was £10,353 or £9,759. Assuming these rounding estimates went both ways then it is likely that across the sample this error would be averaged out.

We have taken the reported information at face value; accordingly we have not excluded outliers or otherwise unusual data.⁴ This absence of "smoothing" of the data means that some results may be exaggerated by unusually large or small responses. However, these wide discrepancies are not unexpected as they reflect what is a very diverse marketplace.

Further, as respondents could avoid answering questions which were not relevant to them many of the questions had far fewer responses (than the 1,477 who completed the survey).

¹ Martin Kretschmer and Philip Harwick, Authors' earnings from copyright and non-copyright sources: A survey of 25,000 British and German writers (December 2007). The survey ran from Spring 2006 to 30 June 2006. It was based on earnings in the 2004-5 tax year: see pp 73-4.

² IP address were collected by surveymonkey as standard, but no names, addresses or other identifying information was requested in the survey.

³ The demographics of the respondents are in Appendix 1, Table 14.1, 14.2 and 14.3.

⁴ Save in one instance in relation to self-publishing, the fact is noted there however.

1.5 Abbreviations

The results are reported using the following abbreviated labels:

Abbreviation	Explanation
Adult Fiction	Fiction (other than children's and YA)
Non-fiction	Non-fiction popular (excluding travel)
Technical	Professional/technical
Children's Fiction	Children's (and young adult) fiction
Educational	Educational / teaching (school age)
Audio-visual	This includes an author who writes any audio-visual material whether they write in printed matter as well ⁵
Children's non-fiction	Children's non-fiction (other than educational)
Professional author	See Section 2.1
Occupational writer	See Section 2.1
Author	Someone who identifies their "primary occupation" as author (whether a professional author or occupational writer as well): see Chart 2.1
Writer	A shorthand for all writers – ie everyone who responded to the particular question irrespective of other factors
CV	Coefficient of variation

⁵ Thus, there may be some double counting as 252 of 388 respondents are listed as a writer for a particular genre as well as being audio-visual writers: for a break down by genre see Appendix 1, Table 3.4.

2. An author's life and earnings

2.1 Introduction

Most of the respondents were still active writers with a little over 70% having had a work exploited during 2013⁶ and 83% having earned money from writing in that year.⁷

2.2 Occupational and professional authors

A little under half of respondents (47%) said that “writing” was their primary occupation (what will be called an “occupational writer”).⁸ However, another 7.5% of respondents, who said writing was not their primary occupation, actually spent the majority of their working life undertaking self-employed writing.⁹ A second category, the “professional author”, represented 51% of respondents. These were writers who spend more than 50% of their working life on self-employed writing.¹⁰

2.3 Primary occupation and type of writing

All respondents were asked how they would describe their primary writing occupation. As the following chart shows, nearly 40% described themselves as authors, 21% as academics, with the remaining 39% giving a variety of different indications.

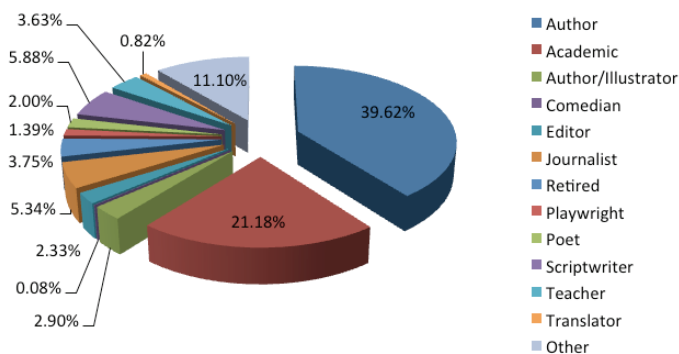


Chart 2.1 Description of primary occupation¹¹

The rankings of the respondents' sources of income showed that they came from a very mixed background of genre without any particular type of author dominating.¹² From whichever genre an author comes, the most significant source of income remained traditional books, then magazines/periodicals followed by digital publishing.¹³

2.4 Average earnings

2.4.1 Low levels of remuneration

It is apparent that, for the majority, writing remains a low earning profession. The survey found that the median (typical) pre-tax net earnings which professional writers obtained from their writing (£11,000)¹⁴ was a little over 40% of the national average median earnings (£27,011).¹⁵

There is also a huge inequality in earnings. The top 10% of professional authors (those earning £60,000 or more) earn 58% of all the money earned by professional authors;¹⁶ and the top 5% of professional authors (those earning £100,100 or more) earn 42.3% of that money. The bottom 50% (those earning £10,432 or less) earn only 7% of all the money earned by all writers cumulatively. The Gini-coefficient for professional authors demonstrates this inequality (at 0.69) which is much higher than the national average for original earnings of employees across the UK (0.45¹⁷). Thus, it appears that writing is a profession where only a handful of successful authors make a very good living while most do not.

2.4.2 Unremunerated writing

Indeed, it appears that 17% of all writers did not earn any money from writing during 2013. Further, of those writers, 98% had had a work published or exploited in each year from 2010 to 2013. Thus, at least 17% of writers are continuing to work without any expectation of earnings.

⁶ See Appendix 1, Table 1.1.

⁷ See Appendix 1, Table 1.2.

⁸ See Appendix 1, Table 2.1. Some authors said it was not their primary occupation and another 54 said nothing either way.

⁹ See Appendix 1, Table 2.2. In this table “All” represents those who did not answer whether their primary occupation was writing.

¹⁰ See Appendix 1, Table 2.3.

¹¹ See Appendix 1, Table 3.1.

¹² See Appendix 1, Table 3.2.

¹³ See Appendix 1, Table 3.3.

¹⁴ See Appendix 1, Table 4.2.

¹⁵ This figure comes from ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2013 Revised Results (November 2014) and is based on full-time employees who have been in the same job for twelve months.

¹⁶ See Appendix 1, Table 7.1; this is slightly down on the CIPPM survey where the top 10% earned 60% of the wealth: CIPPM survey, p 23.

¹⁷ ONS, The Effects of Taxes and Benefits on Household Income, 2011/12 (July 2013), p 6 (the CIPPM survey appeared to reported the GINI coefficient for the UK for the disposable income at p. 23).

2.4.3 Relative decline in earnings-professional authors

The average earnings of professional authors have almost stayed the same in absolute terms since 2005, but have declined in real terms by 19%. There is both an absolute decline and a bigger decline in real terms in the typical (median) earnings of professional authors. In real terms they are earning 29% less than they were in 2005.¹⁸ More troubling is the increased concentration of earnings evidenced by the substantial increase in the Gini Coefficient. Thus, since 2005 the typical author has become poorer against society as a whole and now (from self-employed writing) earns only 87% of the present minimum wage.¹⁹

	2004-5 Tax Year	2012-13 Tax Year
Mean earnings	£28,340	£28,577
(in 2014 money ²⁰)	(£35,511)	-
Median earnings	£12,330	£11,000
(in 2014 money)	(£15,450)	-
Gini coefficient	0.63	0.69

Table 2.1 Earnings of professional authors²¹

2.4.4 Relative decline in earnings from authorship generally

The earnings from authorship (ie all writers) has also declined over this period. As the following table shows, in real terms the average earnings of writers have fallen 19% since 2005 (and there has been a fall of 20% in typical 'median' earnings). Further, the income has become slightly more concentrated in fewer people.

	2004-5 Tax Year	2012-13 Tax Year
Mean earnings	£16,531	£16,809
(in 2014 money ²²)	(£20,714)	-
Median earnings	£4,000	£4,000
(in 2014 money)	(£5,012)	-
Gini coefficient	0.74	0.76

Table 2.2 Earnings of all writers²³

2.4.5 Multiple incomes to survive

The typical median earnings of a writer are very low and, as mentioned above, below the minimum wage. Thus, nearly 90% of writers need to earn money from sources other than writing. Further, it appears that even the better paid writers still obtain money from other sources. The following demonstrates the amount of income professional authors get from writing compared to other sources:²⁴

% of individual income	N	% of authors	Mean writing income	Median writing income
More than 50%	373	62	41,955	19,000
More than 75%	228	37.8	51,493	20,100
More than 90%	107	17.8	47,045	18,000
100%	69	11.5	26,544	15,000
Overall	602	100	28,577	11,000

Table 2.3 Self-employed writing as a proportion of a professional authors earnings

¹⁸ However, the survey also found that 36.25% of authors had an increase in earnings since 2008 (so there are three years unaccounted for between 2005-2008). See Table 6.2, Appendix 1; it does appear that there has been slightly more of a decrease in earnings for fiction writers (both adult and Children's)

¹⁹ The minimum wage in 2013 was £6.10 per hour which on a 40 hour week for 50 weeks a year gives earnings of £12,620. This assumes a person takes two weeks holiday a year.

²⁰ This is based on the retail price index which in December 2005 was RPI 188.5 and by December 2013 was RPI 236.2.

²¹ See Appendix 1, Table 4.1 and 4.2.

²² This is based on the retail price index which in December 2005 was RPI 188.5 and by December 2013 was RPI 236.2.

²³ See Appendix 1, Table 4.1 and 4.2.

²⁴ The table is based on the reported net earnings from writing as a percentage of that respondent's individual income.

2. An author's life and earnings (cont.)

Where the results of respondents is broadened to those who did not report income figures the picture improves, with 22% of professional authors appearing to have earned money only from their writing after they started (and therefore they have not required a second job). As the following chart indicates, the need to earn money from other sources is relevant across all groups, including professional authors.:

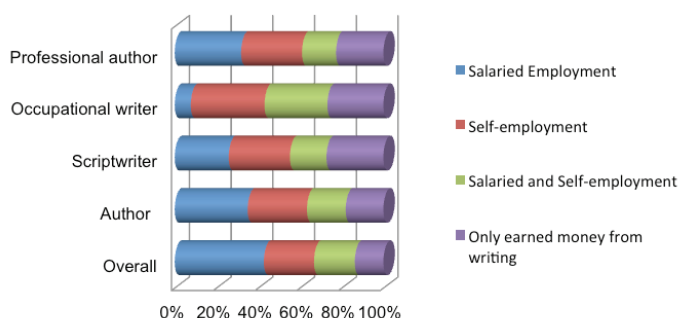


Chart 2.2 Continuing to earn money from other sources after becoming a writer

Thus, writers usually need to have some other source of income to mitigate against the risk of failure. This is evident from the contribution to household income provided by writing as set out in the following table:

	Writing income	Individual income	Household income
Respondents	630	932	851
Median	£28,577	£40,068	£71,283
Mean	£11,000	£27,000	£50,000
CV%	228	184	350
GINI Coefficient	0.69	0.59	0.55

Table 2.4 Average earnings of professional authors

A professional author will therefore contribute about 40% of household income from his or her writing (based on median income it is only 22%). Further, the median income of writers from all sources indicates that these are typical earnings nationally.²⁵ It appears that writers' earnings as a group have declined relatively since the 2006 survey.²⁶ Further, assuming a household represents two people earning the national average then a writer's household also appears to be typical and similar to the national average.²⁷

²⁵ ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2013 Revised Results (November 2014).

²⁶ CIPPM Survey, p 26.

2.4.6 The differences in earnings between genre

Not only do there appear to be huge variations in earnings between individual writers²⁸ within a genre, but also there are wide discrepancies between different genres of writing. The highest paid writing, by a significant margin, is audio-visual; whereas the lowest is academic writing. Indeed, an academic will earn only 11% of that earned by an audio-visual writer; although academic writers usually have another source of income (eg employment at a University).

	Respondents	Net income Mean	Net income median	CV (%)
Overall	1,239	£16,809	4,000	290
Academic	274	£3,826	£1,000	299
Technical	136	£8,525	£2,500	180
Travel	46	£8,539	£6,250	99
Non-Fiction	216	£14,135	£5,206	226
Children's fiction	75	£25,614	£10,000	225
Educational	137	£25,862	£9,000	217
Adult Fiction	217	£28,809	£6,268	297
Audio-visual writers	200	£33,934	£14,000	187
Non-fiction for children	21	N<30	(Sample too small)	

Table 2.5 Earnings by genre

2.4.7 Sources of income

The survey asked respondents to indicate their earnings from respective sources. It can be seen from the chart below that the source of a substantial majority of writers' income across all groups remains publishers' royalties. The one group where another source of income is particularly significant is the group "academics" where (additional) lecturing income forms a large part of the writer's related earnings.

As the table below demonstrates, it is clear that for writers as a whole the most significant contribution to earnings comes from royalty payments. Yet the concentration of royalty payments (ie the Gini Coefficient: 0.83) is higher than it is for the earnings of all authors more generally (0.76). In contrast, the payments by ALCS and PLR are marginally more egalitarian than the overall distribution of income.

²⁷ This is not how the ONS calculates household income: see ONS, The Effects of Taxes and Benefits on Household Income, 2011/12 (July 2013).

²⁸ This represents all respondents and not just "professional authors".

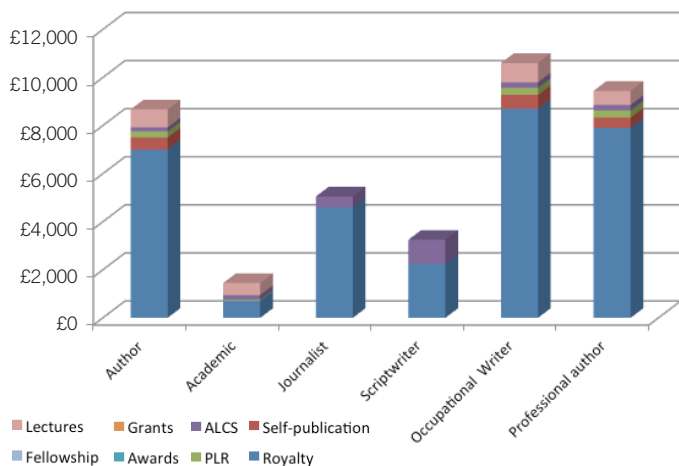


Chart 2.3 Source of earnings for authors²⁹

	All income	Royalty payments	ALCS	PLR
Respondents	1239	1193	1149	613
Mean	£16,809	£17,325	£853	£768
Median	£4,000	£2,475	£200	£150
Coefficient of variance	290	366	302	187
Gini Coefficient	0.76	0.83	0.75	0.75

Table 2.6 Authors' sources of income

2.5 Demographics of earnings

2.5.1 Is there still a gender gap?

In the 2006 Study there was found to be a significant gender gap in the earnings of professional authors. In the last decade this gap has closed (and based on median earnings, closed significantly). This gap is much greater than in the population as a whole (where women earn 91.5% of male earnings³⁰). This discouraging finding is balanced slightly when the figures for all writers are included, showing that the gender gap is much smaller than the national average, with typical 'median' earnings of women being significantly higher than those of men.

²⁹ Appendix 1, Table 5.2. "Author" represents those who described their primary occupation as "Author".

³⁰ ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2013 Revised Results (November 2014).

Income of female writers as a percentage of male income	2006 Study ³¹ (mean)	2006 Study (median)	2014 Study (mean)	2014 study (median)
Professional authors	77.5%	75.8%	80.6%	88.8%
All writers	90.3%	100%	97.1%	136.2%

Table 2.7 Relative earnings between the sexes³²

2.5.2 The professional life of an author

The career of a professional author appears to begin in his or her late 20s or early 30s and earnings continue to increase into his or her 30s and 40s and then slowly decline in his or her 50s after which there is a sharp decline. However, in contrast to other professions, professional authors continue to earn money from their writing long after the conventional "retirement" age. This might be because they are still writing or they are still earning money from their existing body of work.

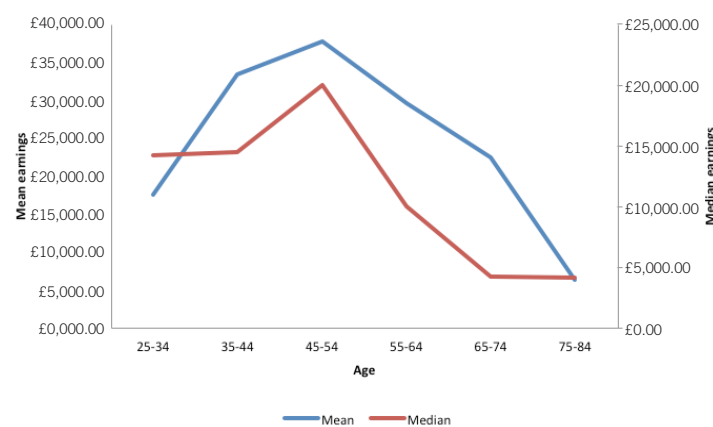


Chart 2.4 The mean and median earnings of professional authors by age³³

³¹ CIPPM Survey, pp. 86 and 99.

³² Appendix 1, Table 7.2 and 7.3.

³³ See Appendix 1, Table 7.5.

3. Contractual clauses

3.1 Introduction

Several questions were asked regarding publishing and other contracts. In this section the responses to these questions are reviewed. It is important to note that, following a recommendation in the questionnaire, in some cases the responses may have been obtained from a writers' agent whereas in others the writers will be answering the questions themselves. It is safe to assume that agents would be able to provide a more precise answer than that given by writers themselves as contractual matters are often entirely dealt with by agents.

3.2 Agents

Overall, 26.2% of writers have an agent and this rises to 42% for professional authors and to 62% for audio-visual writers.³⁴ This is consistent with the 2006 survey where 43.5% of professional authors had an agent³⁵ as did 62.5% of audio-visual writers.³⁶ The commission paid to agents ranges from 2% to 20% with the mean average being 13% and the typical (median) commission being 15%.³⁷

3.3 Retention of copyright

The respondents were asked whether their contracts allowed them to retain the copyright in the work. The survey asked authors how often they retain copyright: (a) always; (b) most of the time (more than 50% of the time); (c) some of the time (less than 50% of the time); or (d) never. The chart below shows the results for all writers (overall) and break down the result by genre. Writers were allocated to only one genre based on the genre which generates their highest earnings.³⁸

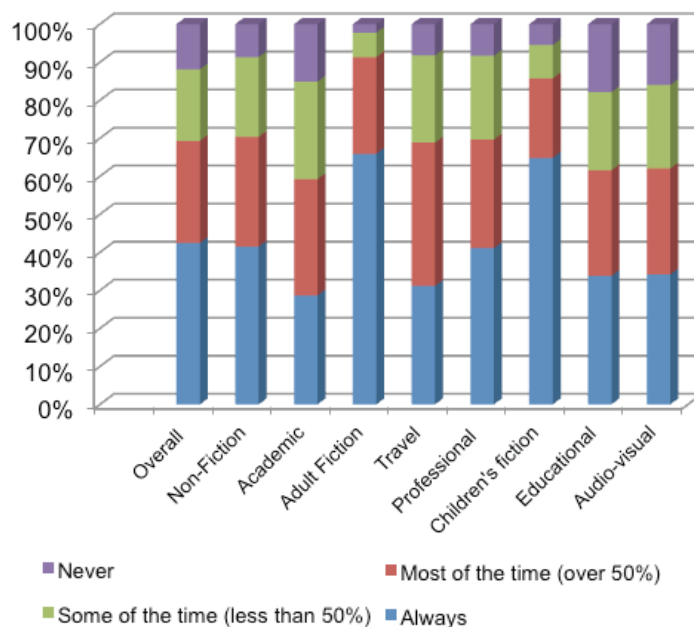


Chart 3.1 Copyright retention by genre³⁹

This shows that 42% of writers always retain their copyright whereas 12% never retain their copyright. Furthermore, it is clear that fiction writers (adult: 66% and YA: 65%) are more than twice as likely to retain their copyright than academic writers (28.6%)⁴⁰ or travel writers (31%). This is likely to be because many academic journals require the assignment of copyright and travel books go through many editions with multiple writers.

³⁴ Appendix 1, Table 12.1.

³⁵ CIPPM Study, p 174.

³⁶ CIPPM Study, p 184.

³⁷ See Appendix 1, Table 12.2.

³⁸ The methodology means that a writer who earns most of his or her money from adult fiction and some from non-fiction and who retains the copyright in all of his or her fiction works but none of the non-fiction works would report a "some" or "most" of the time response. This response would be included in adult fiction (and erroneously suggest not retaining copyright in fiction works). This noise is likely to be balanced out between respondents in any event. Put simply, where respondents rated their earnings from adult fiction as "1" and their earnings from travel as "2" they would be recorded as "adult fiction" only notwithstanding some of their contracts would relate to travel books.

3.4 Buy-out contracts

It was believed that writers were increasingly signing so-called “buy-out” contracts: that is, a contract where there is a single payment for use of the work without the further payment of royalties. In fact, it turns out that only 46% of writers had ever signed such a contract⁴¹ and it appears that only 30% of writers thought the number had increased over the last five years.⁴² There is no genre where respondents reported that more than 60% of the contracts they signed were buy-out contracts. Even where such contracts were expected, in the audio-visual sector, 39% of writers report never having signed a buy-out contract.⁴³

3.5 Global contracts

Another belief was that there is an increased expectation on authors that they have to sign away their rights for a work globally (a clause granting rights “in all territories, in all media, for the full term of copyright”). However, the survey found that 61% of writers had never signed such an agreement and only 6% signed such an agreement⁴⁴ in 90% or more of their contracts signed in 2012-13⁴⁵. Thus, it is not surprising that only 26% of respondents thought that the use of such clauses was increasing to any degree.⁴⁶

3.6 Other problematic clauses

Respondents were asked about clauses they had seen in contracts which they considered problematic. The responses were a free text entry and so the lists below provide summaries of the types of clause raised although reports included minor variation. The first list includes clauses which were mentioned by numerous respondents as something they saw as problematic.

Problematic contractual clauses

- Requirements to offer next work to publisher (on first refusal basis);
- Restriction on competing works;
- Costs with illustrations, indexing or copy-editing being placed on authors;
- Obligation to produce new editions on publishers’ demand;
- Indemnity clause so author pays if the work infringes copyright;
- In edited collections, royalties going to the editor and not the authors of the contributions;
- Requiring assignment of copyright in journal articles.

The second list set out below includes clauses which were raised by one or two respondents but appeared to cover issues which appeared to be unusual.

Other interesting contractual clauses

- Getting permission to use own works for teaching;
- Issues with “Commonwealth works”;
- Rights ending on author’s death (so can bring in replacement author);
- Film contracts allowing company to develop characters as they see fit for any sequel;
- Sitcoms, sometimes a requirement that only a certain number of episodes are written by the originator of the idea (so compelled to bring other authors in);
- Promises to do “a reasonable amount’ of promotional work, and what is reasonable to be decided by the publisher.

³⁹ See Appendix 1, Table 8.1.

⁴⁰ It is a little higher in relation to educational writers: 34%.

⁴¹ See Appendix 1, Table 8.2.

⁴² See Appendix 1, Table 8.4.

⁴³ See Appendix 1, Table 8.3.

⁴⁴ See Appendix 1, Table 8.5.

⁴⁵ See Appendix 1, Table 8.6.

⁴⁶ See Appendix 1, Table 8.7.

4. Advances, royalty rates and moral rights

4.1 Advances

The survey asked respondents whether they had ever received an advance. It was found that 66% of writers had received an advance at some point in their career and this rises to 76% in relation to professional authors. This represents over a 5% decline in the number of professional authors receiving advances since the 2006 survey.⁴⁷ As Chart 4.1 shows, advances are less likely to have been received by academic writers and technical writers and most likely to have been received by educational and non-fiction writers. Indeed, of those writers who had received an advance, 44% said that the value of the advance has gone down over the last five years.⁴⁸

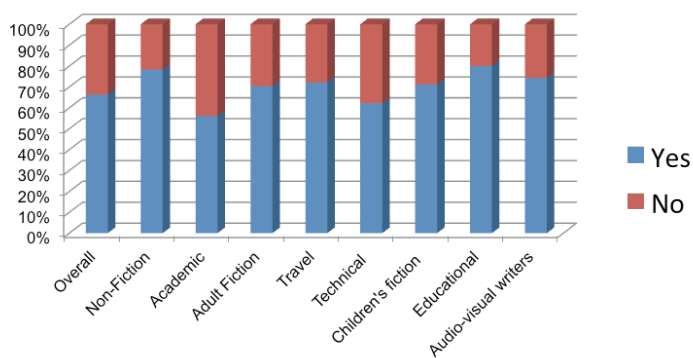


Chart 4.1 – Advances paid to author by genre⁴⁹

4.2 Royalty rates

Respondents were asked about their royalty rates⁵⁰ on hardbacks, paperbacks, e-books and e-lending. These are set out in the following table:

Percentage of retail / publisher's price (n=322)	Hardback (n=220)	9.68%
	Paperback (n=254)	9.43%
Percentage of net receipts (n=512)	Hardback (n=325)	8.42%
	Paperback (n=419)	9.12%
Rate on e-Books (n=859)	-	19.69%
Rate on e-lending (n=34)	-	33.71%

Table 4.1 Royalty rates

Comparing these royalty rates with the CIPPM survey in 2006, the mean royalty rate at that time was 10.07%⁵¹ (although the 2006 survey did not specify the basis of the royalty paid and so no direct comparison can be made). However, in relation to e-Books, 78% of respondents reported that there had been no change in the royalties they received.⁵²

⁴⁷ CIIM Study, p 176 (81.7% of professional authors had received an advance).

⁴⁸ See Appendix 1, Table 9.2.

⁴⁹ See Appendix 1, Table 9.1.

⁵⁰ Numerous respondents complained they could not enter fractions but this is likely to correct itself with rounding both ways.

⁵¹ CIPPM Study, p 177.

⁵² See Appendix 1, Table 9.3.

4.3 Moral rights

4.3.1 The right to be identified

The number of respondents who always asserted their right to be identified was very high - at nearly 79% - with only a little under 5% saying they have never asserted their moral rights at all. Professional authors were slightly less likely to assert their right to be identified (77%) but are also less likely never to assert the right (3.8%). In terms of genre, it was Educational writers who were least likely always to assert their right (69%), but of such writers only 5% never asserted the right.⁵³ This appears to demonstrate that a much greater awareness of moral rights has evolved since 2006 - at that time 20% of professional authors never asserted their moral rights.⁵⁴

4.3.2 The right to prevent derogatory treatment

In relation to the right to prevent derogatory treatment, 77% of writers never waived the right (and 71% of professional authors) whereas 10% of writers always waived it. It was least likely to be waived by technical writers (84%), educational writers (83.7%) and then academics (82.5%). The right to prevent derogatory treatment was most commonly waived by adult fiction writers (19% always waived it), audio-visual writers (14.6%) and then children's fiction writers (13.8%).⁵⁵

4.3.3 Moral rights disputes

The number of disputes over moral rights was low, with only 4% of writers ever having had a dispute with a publisher. There was a slightly higher number of disputes involving professional authors (5.8%);⁵⁶ however, there appears to have been a substantial decline in such disputes since the 2006 Survey (reported at 11.4%).⁵⁷ This suggests an increasing acknowledgement of the importance of moral rights by publishers as well as writers.

⁵³ See Appendix 1, Table 10.1.

⁵⁴ CIPPM Study, p 178 (the study referred to all moral rights and not just the right to be identified).

⁵⁵ See Appendix 1, Table 10.1.

⁵⁶ See Appendix 1, Table 10.1.

⁵⁷ CIPPM Study, p 179.

5. Reversion clauses and self publication

5.1 Introduction

There has been a perception that self-publication was not a good way of earning money from writing. Indeed, it has often been associated with vanity publishing (rather than making money). This section briefly addresses this issue.

5.2 Reversion clauses

A reversion clause permits a writer to recover the right to publish their work from a publisher (either by ending an exclusive licence or assigning copyright back to the writer). Respondents were asked how many of their contracts included a reversion clause, how many relied upon such a clause, and whether after reversion the writer made any more money from the work. It appears that 57% of contracts have reversion clauses and, where a contract has a reversion clause, 38%⁵⁸ of writers have exercised their right to reversion.⁵⁹ Where that right was exercised 70% of writers went on to make more money from the work, including by self-publication. Accordingly, it is apparent that even when a publisher considers that the economic life of a work is over a writer might still be able to make money from the book by exploiting it himself or herself.

5.3 Self-publication

A little over a quarter of respondents (26.5%) self-published a book at some point in the past.⁶⁰ Those who had self-published were asked about their most successful self-publication to date.⁶¹ The following table sets out the success of that venture:

	Mean	Median	CV%
How much did you spend on getting the work published (£) (n=261)	2,470.17	500	401
How much third-party funding did you secure to support the publication (£) (n=31)	2,982	1,500	135
How much did you receive (in gross receipts) (£) (n=299)	6,290.42	700	430

Table 5.1 Profits from self-publishing⁶²

It can be seen that the average return on investment from the respondents 'most successful' self-publication venture is a quite remarkable 154%.⁶³ However, as can be seen from the coefficient of variation, the range of spending to self-publish is very high. A median ('typical') return on investment for self-publishing is a more modest 40%. The top 10% of self-publishers all made a profit of £7,000 or more (the top 20% making at least £2,975) whereas the bottom 20% made losses of at least £400. It remains a risky venture therefore, but one where there are meaningful returns on investment in some cases.

⁵⁸ There were 869 respondents who had a contract with a reversion clause and 329 of them had relied upon it.

⁵⁹ See Appendix 1, Table 11.1.

⁶⁰ See Appendix 1, Table 11.2.

⁶¹ One respondent, a poet, reported spending £1.5million on getting the work published and making £4million. This result was noted; however, as an extreme outlier, it was excluded from calculations to avoid misleading bias in the final results

⁶² Also see Appendix 1, Table 11.4.

⁶³ Where only those ventures reporting both a cost and expense from self-publication were included (n=230), the average profit was higher - £5,728.50 (from a cost of £2,062.93). Accordingly, the return on investment would be greater at 178%: See Appendix 1, Table 11.4.

6. Advice

6.1 From whom do writers seek advice?

The survey investigated whether respondents ever took advice before signing a contract. It appears that overall 36% of writers take some advice⁶⁴ before signing a contract. This increases in professional authors where 53% take advice before signing a contract.⁶⁵ Respondents were asked from whom they had taken advice. It can be seen from the following table the largest providers of advice were professional bodies followed by agents.

Adviser	
Lawyer	21.2%
Agent	40.4%
Professional body / union	64%
Work colleague	18.4%
Friends	17.5%
Other	2.6%

Table 6.1 Person from whom advice sought⁶⁶

6.2 What advice do writers seek?

Where respondents indicated that they had sought advice they were asked whether certain things were a main concern or a secondary concern when taking advice. They could indicate more than one thing was a main concern (or secondary concern) as it is clearly possible that a person could be equally concerned about copyright and self-publication. The following table sets out the main concerns when advice was sought:

	Main concern	Secondary concern	Not concerned at all
Rights (eg copyright)	78.45%	16.54%	5.01%
Fees and remuneration	70.05%	23.60%	6.85%
Options	40%	35.44%	24.56%
Self-publication	9.22%	16.50%	74.27%
Contracts	81.99%	12.80%	5.45%
Other matters	22.55%	30.39%	47.06%

Table 6.2 Nature of the advice sought⁶⁷

It is clear that when advice was sought the main concerns were connected to contracts and copyright, with fees and remuneration coming in a close second. Few of those who sought advice did so in relation to self-publication.

⁶⁴ Strangely, it appears that of those writers with agents 52% still take no advice before signing a contract. As an agent is invariably involved in the signing of a contract, it might be that some respondents construed this question to be “outside” advice, that is, advice from people other than people with whom they normally work.

⁶⁵ See Appendix 1, Table 12.3.

⁶⁶ Also see Appendix 1, Table 12.4.

⁶⁷ Also see Appendix 1, Table 12.5.

7. The bargaining position of authors

7.1 An author's bargaining position

Respondents were asked to consider whether they thought that their own personal bargaining position had improved over the last five years and then they were asked about the bargaining positions of writers more generally. The overall result shows little has changed. As the following chart demonstrates, only 36% of writers thought their own bargaining position had got worse over the last five years whereas 22% thought it had got better. The ebb and flow of a writer career would suggest that bargaining positions for some writers would improve while for others it would get worse.

In contrast, when considering the industry as a whole, writers have a much bleaker picture. Only 5% of respondents thought that the position for writers had got better over the period whereas 64% thought it had got worse (and 14% thought it had got much worse). One would expect that the view of the industry as a whole should be very similar to the cumulative responses of the individuals as to their own position. Thus, it is clear that writers have a picture of the industry far bleaker than is actually the case.

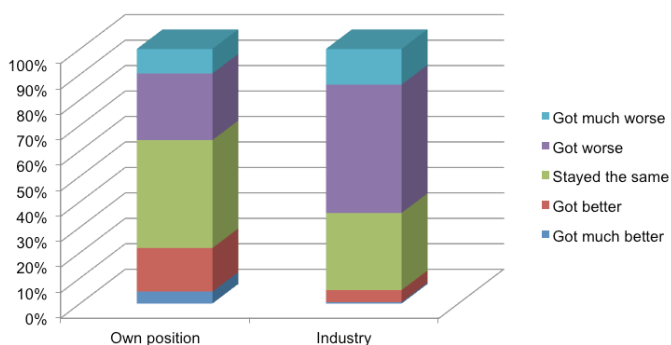


Chart 7.1 Change in bargaining position⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Also see Appendix 1, Table 13.1.

Key findings

Earnings

- The average earnings across all writers was found to be £16,809 and the typical (median) earnings £4,000;
- The average earnings of “professional authors” was found to be £28,340 and the typical (median) earnings £11,000;
- In real terms the average earnings of all writers are down 19% since 2005 (typical earnings down 20%);
- In real terms the average earnings of professional authors are down 8% since 2005 (typical earnings down 29%);
- There is a high concentration of earnings in a handful of successful writers whereas most do not earn much at all;
- The gender pay gap remains significant for professional authors (with women earning 80% of that earned by men), but it has essentially disappeared in relation to writers overall.

Contracts

- A substantial number of writers always retain their copyright (42%) when they sign a publishing agreement whereas only 12% never retain it;
- Whilst 66% of writers had received an advance at some point the size of these advances seems to be diminishing.

Moral rights

- Nearly 80% of writers always assert their right to be identified and generally a similar number never waives their right to object to derogatory treatment;
- Only 1 in 20 respondents had ever had a disagreement with a publisher over moral rights.

Self-publication

- Reversion clauses existed in about 57% of contracts;
- A little over a quarter of respondents had self-published a book;
- The average rate of return on a self-publishing venture was 154% (and the typical rate of return was 40%).

Bargaining position

- Writers have a very strong perception that they have a substantially weaker bargaining position than they did five years ago, but the cumulative results of the individual respondent writers suggest this is not actually the case.

Appendix 1

Data tables

1. Periods of writing activity

Work exploited in period	Respondents
Before 1960	28
1960-1969	130
1970-1979	386
1980-1989	819
1990-1999	1,372
2000-2005	1,629
2006-2009	1,798
2010	1,590
2011	1,581
2012	1,593
2013	1,585
Total respondents	2,245

Table 1.1 The periods during which respondents exploited works

Earned money from writing in period	Respondents
Before 1960	25
1960-1969	98
1970-1979	317
1980-1989	788
1990-1999	1,346
2000-2005	1,661
2006-2009	1,890
2010	1,875
2011	1,921
2012	1,968
2013	1,939
Total respondents	2,335

Table 1.2 The periods during which respondents earned money

2. Occupational writers and professional authors

Writing is primary occupation	Respondents
Yes	1144
No	1188
Total	2451

Table 2.1 Whether writing is the primary occupation of respondents

Percentage of time writing	<50%	50-59%	60-74%	>75%	Total
Occupational writers	154	117	144	714	1,129
Other writers	968	120	42	23	1,153
Overall	1,144	244	191	757	2,336

Table 2.2 The amount of working time respondents spent on self-employed writing

Respondent is a professional author	Respondents
Yes	1192
No	1144
Total	2336

Table 2.3 Whether the respondent is a "professional author"

3. Type of primary writing occupation

Primary writing occupation	Respondents
Author	971
Academic	519
Author / Illustrator	71
Comedian	2
Editor	57
Journalist	131
Retired	92
Playwright	34
Poet	49
Scriptwriter	144
Teacher	89
Translator	20
Other	272
Total	2451

Table 3.1 Primary writing occupation

Type of work	Average ranking
Academic	5.80
Non-fiction	6.22
Technical	6.67
Adult fiction	6.71
Educational	7.39
Children's fiction	7.80
Travel	7.96
Non-fiction for children	8.40

Table 3.2 Earnings ranked (1 to 9) by genre

Type of media	Average ranking
Books	1.815
Magazines / Periodicals	4.313
Digital Publishing	4.783
Newspapers	5.646
Audio / Audio-visual productions	5.671
Theatre	6.393

Table 3.3 Earnings ranked (1 to 7) in relation to categories of work

Genre of paper writing	Number also audio visual writers
Adult fiction	79
Travel	8
Non-fiction	68
Academic	29
Technical	18
Children's fiction	36
Non-fiction for children	2
Educational	12
Total respondents	388

Table 3.4 Audio-Visual writers who do other types of writing

Appendix 1

Data tables (cont.)

4. Authors earnings

Type of writer	Personal income mean (SD)	Household income mean (SD)	Gross earnings from writing mean (SD)	Net earnings from writing mean (SD)
Overall	£40,133.83	£67,782.66	£25,515.07	£16,808.69
	(62,937.39)	(183,740.6)	(224,678.6)	(48,747.1)
	N=1835	N=1672	N=1411	N=1239
Authors	£39,791.86	£69,331.37	£41,242.01	£23,768.68
	(74,511.46)	(214,326.96)	(340,586.8)	(65,861.15)
	N=785	N=723	N=604	N=530
Academics	£47,471.66	£73,390.19	£3,583.86	£3,300.07
	(49,861.18)	(71,657.50)	(8,869.63)	(8,360.12)
	N=401	N=361	N=325	N=269
Journalists	£30,903.29	£53,137.96	£22,722.42	£18,817.34
	(34,086.85)	(73,509.92)	(26,823.04)	(23,647.54)
	N=100	N=89	N=73	N=65
Scriptwriters	£65,099.95	£82,419.65	£48,623.41	£38,808.09
	(77,935.79)	(69,566.95)	(66,812.54)	(56,846.12)
	N=105	N=100	N=78	N=75
Occupational writer	£41,352.39	£74,285.82	£48,312.11	£30,274.98
	(75,460.83)	(254,034.20)	(323,261.67)	(66,705.92)
	N=903	N=822	N=675	N=606
Professional author	£40,068.37	£71,283.63	£45,526.38	£28,576.77
	(73,852.26)	(249,343.7)	(316,152.6)	(65,361.88)
	N=932	N=851	N=706	N=630

Table 4.1 Mean earnings

Type of writer	Personal Income median	Household income median	Gross earnings from writing median	Net earnings from writing median
Overall	£27,000	£50,000	£4,500	£4,000
	N=1835	N=1672	N=1411	N=1239
Authors	£21,000	£45,000	£8,371	£7,000
	N=785	N=723	N=604	N=530
Academics	£45,000	£65,000	£1,000	£1,000
	N=401	N=361	N=325	N=269
Journalists	£25,000	£40,000	£15,000	£13,000
	N=100	N=89	N=73	N=65
Scriptwriters	£36,000	£60,000	£25,500	£20,000
	N=105	N=100	N=78	N=75
Occupational writer	£22,000	£45,000	£15,660	£12,000
	N=903	N=822	N=675	N=606
Professional author	£27,000	£50,000	£13,658	£11,000
	N=932	N=851	N=706	N=630

Table 4.2 Median earnings

	Respondents	Net income mean (SD)	Net income median	CV (%)
Overall	1,239	£16,808.69	£4,000	290
		(48,747.10)		
Adult Fiction	217	£28,809.32	£6,268	297
		(85,699.47)		
Academic	274	£3,825.69	£1,000	299
		(11,427.52)		
Non-Fiction	216	£14,134.84	£5,206	226
		(31,980.59)		
Travel	46	£8,538.87	£6,250	99
		(8,438.48)		
Technical	136	£8,524.60	£2,500	180
		(15,383.94)		
Children's fiction	75	£25,613.52	£10,000	225
		(57,729.65)		
Non-fiction for children	21	N<30	(Sample too small)	
Educational	137	£25,862.01	£9,000	217
		(56,039.95)		
Audio-visual writers	200	£33,933.88	£14,000	187
		(63,365.26)		

Table 4.3 Earnings by genre

Appendix 1

Data tables (cont.)

5. Source of income

	Salaried employment	Self-employment	Salaried and Self-employment	Only earned money from writing	Total
Overall	1006	566	460	323	2,355
Author	337	274	179	174	964
Scriptwriter	37	42	25	39	143
Occupational writer	80	366	312	278	1,036
Professional author	373	342	191	266	1,172

Table 5.1 Respondents who continued to earn from other sources after starting writing

	Royalty	Self-publication	PLR	ALCS	Awards	Grants	Fellowship	Lectures
Overall	£2,470	£425	£150	£200	£275	£2,250	£2,100	£500
Author	£7,000	£500	£255	£166	-	-	-	£750
Academic	£3,700	-	£50	£200	-	-	-	£500
Journalist	£4,600	-	-	£450	-	-	-	-
Scriptwriter	£2,250	-	-	£1,000	-	-	-	-
Occupational Writer	£8,700	£571	£300	£232	-	-	-	£800
Professional author	£7,905	£425	£300	£229	-	-	-	£588

Table 5.2 Median earnings by source

6. Change of incomes

	Respondents
It has gone up substantially (at least doubled)	223
It has gone up slightly	340
It has remained the same	258
It has gone down slightly	277
It has gone down substantially (at least halved)	327
Not applicable (you were not writing in 2008)	130
Total	1,553

Table 6.1 Change of income since 2008

	Up substantially	Up slightly	Same	Down slightly	Down substantially	N/A
Overall N=1,553	223	340	256	277	327	130
Adult fiction N=263	56	46	26	45	61	29
Academic N=368	39	92	99	60	63	15
Non-fiction N=254	36	57	36	40	67	18
Travel N=61	6	12	11	15	13	4
Technical N=169	21	45	31	29	28	15
Children fiction N=91	16	10	5	21	28	11
Non-fiction for children N<30	Not reported, sample size too small					
Educational N=152	27	47	17	35	22	4
Audio-Visual N=238	40	53	35	43	58	9

Table 6.2 Change in income by genre since 2008 (where an respondent was not an author in 2008, they were asked to respond N/A)

Appendix 1

Data tables (cont.)

7. Distribution of income

Level of earnings	No (%)
Over £250,000	10 (0.15%)
£100,000 to £250,000	27 (4.2%)
£75,000 to £99,999	20 (3.1%)
£50,000 to £74,999	27 (4.2%)
£40,000 to £49,999	30 (4.6%)
£30,000 to £39,999	33 (5.1%)
£25,000 to £29,999	28 (4.3%)
£20,000 to £24,999	43 (6.6%)
£17,500 to £19,999	23 (3.5%)
£15,000 to £17,499	42 (6.5%)
£12,500 to £14,999	20 (3.1%)
£10,000 to £12,499	53 (8.2%)
£7,500 to £9,999	40 (6.2%)
£5,000 to £7,499	52 (8.0%)
£2,500 to £4,999	66 (10.2%)
£500 to £2,499	101 (15.6%)
Less than £500	45 (6.9%)
Total	648 (100%)

Table 7.1 Distribution of earnings – Professional author

	Respondents	Mean (SD)	Median
Male	664	£17,655.89	£3,500
		(55,488.36)	
Female	488	£17,140.20	£4,770
		(42,532.65)	

Table 7.2 Earnings by sex – all authors

	Respondents	Mean (SD)	Median
Male	304	£32,764.39	£11,950
		(78,408.00)	
Female	284	£26,414.88	£10,610
		(53,092.38)	

Table 7.3 Earnings by sex – professional authors

Age	Respondents	Mean (SD)	Median
Under 25	2	£357	£357
		(411.54)	
25-34	28	£15,213.75	£9,860
		(15,690.10)	
35-44	171	£22,411.35	£8,500
		(78,998.68)	
45-54	275	£22,872.54	£7,000
		(46,120.52)	
55-64	366	£17,577.14	£4,000
		(47,351.90)	
65-74	252	£11,823.19	£2,000
		(40,840.54)	
75-84	61	£3,790.72	£700
		(5,673.074)	
85+	3	£234.33	£123
		(231.08)	

Table 7.4 earnings by age – all authors

Age	Respondents	Mean (SD)	Median
Under 25	0 (sample size too small)		
25-34	22	£17,520.59	£14,250
		(15,432.73)	
35-44	106	£33,361.94	£14,450
		(98,806.93)	
45-54	149	£37,749.20	£20,000
		(57,315.55)	
55-64	188	£29,668.76	£10,000
		(63,309.33)	
65-74	100	£22,415.17	£4,250
		(60,805.90)	
75-84	24	£6,314.21	£4,120
		(5,990.08)	
85+	2 (sample size too small)		

Table 7.5 earnings by age – professional authors

8. Contractual issues

	Always	Most of the time (over 50%)	Some of the time (less than 50%)	Never
Overall (n=1,541)	654	414	290	183
Non-Fiction popular (n=253)	105	73	53	22
Academic (n=363)	104	111	93	55
Children's fiction (n=264)	174	67	17	6
Travel (n=61)	19	23	14	5
Professional (n=168)	69	48	37	14
Children's fiction (n=91)	59	19	8	5
Non-fiction for children (n=22)	N<30 (Not reported, sample size too small)			
Educational (n=151)	51	42	31	27
Audio-visual writers (n=237)	81	66	52	38

Title 8.1 Authors who retain copyright in their work

	Respondents
Yes	728
No	859
Total	1,587

Table 8.2 Respondents who had signed a "buy-out" contract

Type of author	0%	1-9%	10-39%	40-59%	60-89%	90-100%
Overall (n=696)	330	77	61	67	49	112
Non-Fiction (n=144)	65	12	11	19	13	24
Academic (n=145)	79	14	12	21	5	14
Adult Fiction (n=81)	48	14	9	2	2	6
Travel (n=32)	13	3	4	3	4	5
Technical (n=66)	33	5	7	5	6	10
Children's fiction (n=50)	26	7	6	2	3	6
Non-fiction for children (n=20)	N<30 (Not reported, sample size too small)					
Educational (n=96)	42	13	8	10	7	16
Audio-visual writers (n=144)	56	16	12	17	12	31

Table 8.3 Proportion of contracts signed in 2012-13 tax year which were "buy-out" contracts

Appendix 1

Data tables (cont.)

8. Contractual issues (cont.)

	Respondents
Substantially increased	96
Slightly increased	103
No change	356
Slightly decreased	24
Substantially decreased	95
Total	674

Table 8.4 Proportion of “buy-out” contracts changed over the last five years

	Respondents
Substantially increased	78
Slightly increased	82
No change	335
Slightly decreased	20
Substantially decreased	44
Total	557

Table 8.7 Proportion of “global” contracts changed over the last five years

	Respondents
Yes	609
No	971
Total	1,580

Table 8.5 Respondents who had signed a “global” contract

	Respondents
Substantially increased	58
Slightly increased	76
No change	338
Slightly decreased	15
Substantially decreased	37
Total	524

Table 8.8 Proportion of “buy-out” and “global” contracts changed over the last five years

	0%	1-9%	10-39%	40-59%	60-89%	90-100%
Overall (n=542)	281	37	39	39	46	100
Books and articles (n=493)	259	34	37	37	40	86
Audio-visual (n=115)	45	11	7	12	13	27

Table 8.6 Proportion of your contracts signed in 2012-13 tax year which were “global” contracts

9. Advances

	Yes	No
Overall	1,043	530
Professional	576	177
Occupational	550	168
Non-Fiction	198	55
Academic	206	161
Adult Fiction	187	79
Travel	44	17
Technical	105	64
Children's fiction	64	26
Non-fiction for children	Not reported, sample size too small	
Educational	124	31
Audio-visual	182	63

Table 9.1 Advances by genre

	Respondents
Substantially increased	31
Slightly increased	103
No change	361
Slightly decreased	171
Substantially decreased	291
Total	957

Table 9.2 Change in value of advances

	Respondents
They have gone up substantially	31
They have gone up	99
They have stayed the same	612
They have gone down	35
They have gone down substantially	9
Total	786

Table 9.3 Change in e-Book royalties since 2008

Appendix 1

Data tables (cont.)

10. Moral rights

	Right to be identified included in contract	Do you waive right to prevent derogatory treatment?	Have you had any issues with moral rights?
Overall	Always: 1,139 Sometimes: 246 Never: 60 N=1,445	Always: 127 Sometimes: 156 Never: 963 N=1,246	Yes: 62 No: 1380 N=1,442
Occupational writer	Always: 519 Sometimes: 123 Never: 27 N=669	Always: 69 Sometimes: 88 Never: 403 N=560	Yes: 39 No: 620 N=659
Professional author	Always: 544 Sometimes: 132 Never: 27 N=703	Always: 73 Sometimes: 96 Never: 422 N=591	Yes: 40 No: 653 N=693
Adult fiction	Always: 227 Sometimes: 18 Never: 4 N=249	Always: 39 Sometimes: 25 Never: 140 N=204	Yes: 9 No: 239 N=248
Academic	Always: 279 Sometimes: 55 Never: 14 N=348	Always: 24 Sometimes: 31 Never: 258 N=313	Yes: 6 No: 338 N=344
Non-fiction popular	Always: 169 Sometimes: 54 Never: 13 N=236	Always: 15 Sometimes: 33 Never: 154 N=202	Yes: 15 No: 218 N=233
Travel	Always: 44 Sometimes: 14 Never: 1 N=59	Always: 3 Sometimes: 12 Never: 38 N=53	Yes: 5 No: 54 N=59
Technical	Always: 125 Sometimes: 35 Never: 4 N=163	Always: 9 Sometimes: 14 Never: 120 N=143	Yes: 7 No: 153 N=160
Children's fiction	Always: 77 Sometimes: 6 Never: 3 N=86	Always: 9 Sometimes: 8 Never: 48 N=65	Yes: 3 No: 82 N=85
Non-fiction for children	N<30 (N=21) (Not reported, sample size too small)	N<30 (N=18) (Not reported, sample size too small)	N<30 (N=21) (Not reported, sample size too small)
Educational	Always: 99 Sometimes: 37 Never: 7 N=143	Always: 11 Sometimes: 10 Never: 108 N=129	Yes: 5 No: 145 N=150
Audio-visual	Always: 164 Sometimes: 37 Never: 9 N=210	Always: 25 Sometimes: 36 Never: 110 N=171	Yes: 11 No: 190 N=201

Table 10.1 Moral rights

11. Reversion clauses and self-publishing

	Yes	No	Total
Do contracts have reversion clauses?	869	648	1,517
Relied on reversion clause	329	527	856
Did you earn more money from work after reversion?	232	101	333

Table 11.1 Reversion clauses

	Yes	No	Total
Have you ever self-published a work?	402	1,113	1,515
Would you self-publish again?	326	55	381

Table 11.2 Self-publishing work

	Mean
Average spend	£2,062.93
Average receipts	£7,791.43
Average profit	£5,728.49

Table 11.3 Profits from self-publishing work (based worked out on spend and receipts)

	Mean (SD)	Median
How much did you spend on getting the work published? (n=261)	£2,470.17	£500
	(9,983.98)	
How much third-party funding did you secure to support the publication? (n=31)	£2,982	£1,500
	(4,028.50)	
How much did you receive (in gross receipts)? (n=299)	£6,290.42	£700
	(27,076.68)	

Table 11.4 Profits from self-publishing work⁶⁹ (across all works)

⁶⁹ A Poet who spent £1,500,000 to publish and made £4,000,000 from the endeavour was excluded.

Appendix 1

Data tables (cont.)

12. Agents and advice

	Yes	No
Professional authors	305	414
Occupational writer	298	380
Audio-visual	143	86
Overall	390	1098

Table 12.1 Respondents who have agent

	Commission (%)
Highest rate ⁷⁰	20
Lowest rate	2
Average (Mean)	13
Average (Median)	15

Table 12.2 Rates of commission

	Yes	No
Professional	92	82
Occupational	91	84
Has an agent	74	69
Overall	542	968

Table 12.3 Authors who have taken advice before signing a contract

Advice from	Number
Lawyer	113
Agent	215
Professional body / union	340
Work colleague	98
Friends	93
Other	14
Total	531

Table 12.4 From whom authors take advice

	Main concern	Secondary concern	Not concerned	Total
Rights (copyright)	313	66	20	399
Fees / remuneration	276	93	27	394
Options	114	101	70	285
Self-publication	19	34	153	206
Contracts	346	54	23	422
Other matters	46	62	96	204

Table 12.5 Nature of advice

⁷⁰ One entry was excluded as it was entered as 125%.

13. Negotiating position

	Got much better	Got better	Stayed the same	Got worse	Got much worse	Total
Own position	67	245	606	374	138	1,430
Industry	7	64	404	673	187	1,335

Table 13.1 Change in bargaining position

Appendix 1

Data tables (cont.)

14. Demographics of respondents

	Respondents
Male	828
Female	643
Don't want to say	6
Total	1,477

Table 14.1 Sex of respondents

	Respondents
Under 25	2
25-34	43
35-44	204
45-54	352
55-64	455
75-84	325
85 and over	91
Don't want to say	8
Total	1,490

Table 14.2 Age of respondents

	Respondents
North West of England	145
North East of England	129
South West of England	212
South East of England	328
East of England	143
Scotland	121
Wales	50
London	273
Northern Ireland	9
Channel Islands / Isle of Man	1
I do not live in the United Kingdom	46
Total⁷¹	1,457

Table 14.3 Where respondents lived

⁷¹ There was no option for the Midlands.

Appendix 2

The ALCS: Writers' earnings survey

Help us to support writers

ALCS exists to ensure that writers are treated fairly and remunerated appropriately. This is increasingly challenging at a time when digital technology is driving new markets and leading the copyright debate; to make the case for writers' rights, we need accurate, independent data. By updating the findings of a similar survey undertaken seven years ago, this research project will be the first to capture the impact of the digital revolution on writers' working lives.

To make this survey as reliable as possible we would like to hear from writers of all genres and income brackets.

The questionnaire requires you to provide indications of your earnings for the 2012/13 tax year and basic information concerning the type of contracts you enter into. Before completing the survey it would be therefore advisable to have this information to hand or to request it from your agent.

All information is provided on an entirely anonymous basis.

Please try to answer all the questions in the survey that are relevant to you – even partial responses are useful.

Respondents to the survey have the chance to enter a prize draw to win one of 5 book vouchers worth £100 each. To enter the draw, simply follow the instructions at the end of the survey.

By taking the time to complete the survey you will help us to support you and your fellow writers.

Thank you for your assistance.

Owen Atkinson,
ALCS Chief Executive

Appendix 2

The ALCS: Writers' earnings survey

About you									
1. Is writing your primary occupation?									
Yes		No							
2. How would you describe your primary writing occupation?									
Author		Academic		Poet					
Author/ Illustrator		Journalist		Translator					
Editor		Playwright		Comedian					
Teacher		Scriptwriter		No longer writing (retired)					
		Other (please specify)							
3. Did you have any works exploited (published/broadcast) during any of the following periods?									
Before 1960		1990 - 1999		2011					
1960 - 1969		2000 - 2005		2012					
1970 - 1979		2006 - 2009		2013					
1980 - 1989		2010							
4. Did you earn money from your writing during any of the following periods? (do not include any earnings from any salary)									
Before 1960		1990 - 1999		2011					
1960 - 1969		2000 - 2005		2012					
1970 - 1979		2006 - 2009		2013					
1980 - 1989		2010							
5. After you first earned money as a writer, did you also:									
Earn money from salaried employment?									
Earn money from self-employment (other than from being a writer)?									
Earn money from salaried employment and self-employment (other than from being a writer)?									
No, I only earned money from being a writer.									
6. Please estimate the amount of your working time you spend on your (self-employed) writing:									
95+%		50 - 59%		Less than 10%					
75 - 94%		35 - 49%							
60 - 74%		10 - 34%							
7. Are you a member of any of the following organisations? (indicate all those that apply)									
ALCS									
Society of Authors									
Writers' Guild of Great Britain									
National Union of Journalists									
								Other writing organisation (please specify)	

Relative importance of each type of work

8.	In order of magnitude, rank your earnings arising from each of the following categories of work (whether in traditional or electronic format): (1 is highest)		
	Books		N/A
	Newspapers		N/A
	Newspapers		N/A
	Theatre		N/A
	Audio/Audiovisual productions (e.g. films and radio / TV programmes)		N/A
	Digital Publishing		N/A

Books and articles

Note: If you did not earn money from a source please select “No earnings” and do not rank it.

*9.	Do you earn money from writing books/articles?			11.	In relation to your personal earnings directly from your writing please indicate the sources in order of magnitude: (1 is highest)		
	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No		Printed Media (including books, magazines and newspapers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings
10.	In order of magnitude, rank your earnings from writing books (and articles) in the following genres: (1 is highest)				E-books or E-articles (e.g. Kindle versions or e-editions of other publications)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings
	Fiction (other than children's and YA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings		Audio Books	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings
	Travel	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings		Online access to writing (e.g Guardian online, online textbooks, JSTOR)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings
	Nonfiction popular (excluding travel)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings	12.	Please add any explanatory comments below:		
	Academic	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings				
	Professional / Technical	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings				
	Children's (and Young Adult) fiction	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings				
	Educational / teaching (school age)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings				

Appendix 2

The ALCS: Writers' earnings survey (cont.)

Audio/Audiovisual Productions

Note: If you did not earn money from a source please select "No earnings" and do not rank it.

*13. Do you earn money from writing material for audio/audiovisual productions (e.g. films and radio / TV programmes)?			
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. In order of magnitude, rank your earnings as a writer from the following types of work: [1 is highest]			
Film	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Film Documentary	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>
TV Drama	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>
TV Documentary	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children's TV	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>
TV Comedy	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>
TV Soap	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio (fiction)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio (nonfiction)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. In relation to your earnings from writings which are incorporated in radio/audiovisual works, please rank the following in order of importance [1 the most important]:			
Broadcasting (including radio, cable and satellite)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Downloading of film and radio / TV programmes (e.g. iTunes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online streaming of film / television / radio (e.g. iPlayer and Netflix)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rental (physical and / or online)	<input type="checkbox"/>	No earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Please add any explanatory comments below:			

Overall earnings

Note: Please answer all questions in this section based on the 2012-13 tax year (6th April 2012 to 5th April 2013).

All figures should be based on earnings BEFORE tax from all sources (i.e. not just writing)

17. Please indicate the approximate earnings of:	
<input type="text"/>	You Personally (£)
<input type="text"/>	Your Entire Household (£)

Earnings from being a writer

Please answer all questions in this section based on the 2012-13 tax year (6th April 2012 to 5th April 2013).

All figures should be based on earnings BEFORE tax and should exclude VAT (this is your profit, after the deduction of expenses).

18. Please indicate the amount you earn from your self-employed writing.

Amount Gross
(before deduction of your expenses) (£)

Amount Net
(after deduction of your expenses) (£)

**19. In relation to the earnings stated in the previous question, please indicate the approximate amount (if any) you personally received from the following sources:
Please indicate the gross figure (before any deductions).**

Publishers
(royalties and other income) (£)

Selfpublication (£)

Public Lending Right (£)

ALCS (£)

Awards and Prizes (£)

Grants and Bursaries (£)

Fellowships WritersinResidence (£)

Lectures / Appearances / School visits (£)

20. Please add any explanatory comments below:

Earnings as an employed writer

21. Please indicate your total earnings as an employee from the following (before tax and deductions):

Journalist (including editorial roles) (£)

Commercial Researcher (£)

Copy Writer (£)

Book Editing (£)

Academic (£)

Translation (£)

Appendix 2

The ALCS: Writers' earnings survey (cont.)

Change in income	
22.	How has your income obtained from writing changed since 2008:
	It has gone up substantially (at least doubled)
	It has gone up slightly
	It has remained the same
	It has gone down slightly
	It has gone down substantially (at least halved)
	Not applicable (you were not writing in 2008)

Copyright	
23.	How has your income obtained from writing changed since 2008:
	Always
	Most of the time (more than 50% of contracts)
	Some of the time (less than 50% of contracts)
	Never

"Buyout" contracts	
*24.	Have you ever signed a "buyout" type contract, that is, a contract where there is a single payment for use of the work without royalties?
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
25.	What proportion of your contracts signed in 2012-13 tax year (6th April 2012 to 5th April 2013) were "buy-out" contracts?
	90% - 100%
	60% - 89%
	40% - 59%
	10% - 39%
	1 - 9%
	0%
26.	How has the proportion of "buy-out" contracts changed over the last five years?
	Substantially increased
	Slightly increased
	No change
	Slightly decreased
	Substantially decreased

Global contracts	
*27.	Have you ever signed a “global” type contract, that is, a contract where the rights for the entire world are transferred (“in all territories, in all media, for the full term of copyright”)?
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
28.	What proportion of your contracts signed in 2012-13 tax year (6th April 2012 to 5th April 2013) were global contracts?
	90% - 100%
	60% - 89%
	40% - 59%
	10% - 39%
	1 - 9%
	0%
29.	How has the proportion of global contracts changed over the last five years?
	Substantially increased
	Slightly increased
	No change
	Slightly decreased
	Substantially decreased

Global and “buy-out” contracts	
30.	What proportion of your contracts signed in 2012-13 tax year (6th April 2012 to 5th April 2013) were both buyout and global contracts?
	90% - 100%
	60% - 89%
	40% - 59%
	10% - 39%
	1 - 9%
	0%
31.	How has the proportion of contracts which are both buyout and global changed over the last five years?
	Substantially increased
	Slightly increased
	No change
	Slightly decreased
	Substantially decreased

Appendix 2

The ALCS: Writers' earnings survey (cont.)

Advances (where applicable)	
*32.	Have you ever received an advance ahead of creating a work?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Advances	
33.	Has the value of advances from publishers changed over the last 5 years?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Substantially increased
<input type="checkbox"/>	Slightly increased
<input type="checkbox"/>	No change
<input type="checkbox"/>	Slightly decreased
<input type="checkbox"/>	Substantially decreased

Royalty rate (where applicable if you receive royalties from a publisher)	
References to royalties relate to the royalty rate for initial full price sales in the United Kingdom for standard editions.	
34.	Is your royalty rate paid as:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Percentage of retail / publisher's price?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Percentage of net receipts?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)
35.	What is your usual royalty rate?
<input type="text"/>	Hardback (%)
<input type="text"/>	Paperback (%)
36.	Any comments on royalties generally?

Royalties on e-books and e-publishing	
37.	What is your usual royalty rate on e-books?
	Amount (%)
38.	Have your royalty rates for e-books changed since 2008?
	They have gone up substantially
	They have gone up
	They have stayed the same
	They have gone down
	They have gone down substantially
39.	If you have royalties from a publisher for lending of e-books in libraries what rate do you get? (Enter 0% if you receive no royalties)
	Percentage (%)
40.	Any comments on royalties for e-books?

Moral rights	
41.	Do your contracts include your (moral) right to be identified as the author (attribution)?
	Yes, always
	Yes, sometimes
	Never
42.	Do your contracts waive the (moral) right to prevent derogatory treatment (integrity)?
	Yes, always
	Yes, sometimes
	Never
43.	Have you ever had a dispute with a publisher or producer over moral rights?
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
*44.	Have any of your contracts ever included a reversion clause which gives you publishing rights or copyright back if the publisher is no longer exploiting your work?
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 2

The ALCS: Writers' earnings survey (cont.)

Reversion clause	
45.	Have you ever used or relied upon such a reversion clause?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
46.	After the rights reverted back to you, did you receive any further earnings from that work either from a new publisher or through self-publishing?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
47.	Please add any explanatory comments below:

Other contractual arrangements	
48.	Are there any clauses you have had in a contract you have signed which you think are problematic? If so, explain the gist of those clauses.
*49.	Have you ever self-published a work?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
50.	Have you self-published as a traditional or electronic publication?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Traditional publication
<input type="checkbox"/>	Electronic publication
51.	In relation to your most successful self-publication:
	How much did you spend on getting the work published (£)
	How much third party funding did you secure to support the publication (£)
	How much did you receive (in gross receipts)(£)
52.	Would you self-publish again?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
53.	Please add any explanatory comments below:

Professional advice			
54.	Do you have an agent?		
	Yes		No
55.	If applicable, what commission do you pay your agent?		
			Commission (%)
*56.	Have you ever taken legal or professional advice before signing a contract related to your writing?		
	Yes		No

Advisors and type of advice						
57.	From whom have you taken advice? (indicate all those that apply)					
	Lawyer			Work colleagues		
	Agent			Friends		
	Professional body / Union			Other		
58.	From whom have you taken advice? (indicate all those that apply)					
		Main concern		Secondary concern		Not concerned at all
	Rights (e.g. copyright)					
	Fees and remuneration					
	Options					
	Self-publication					
	Contracts					
	Other matters					

Negotiating position	
59.	Over the last five years, do you feel your negotiating position as a writer has:
	Got much better
	Got better
	Stayed the same
	Got worse
	Got much worse
60.	Over the last five years, do you feel the negotiating position for professional writers as a whole has:
	Got much better
	Got better
	Stayed the same
	Got worse
	Got much worse

Appendix 2

The ALCS: Writers' earnings survey (cont.)

About you			
61.	What sex are you?		
	Male	Female	Do not want to say
62.	Please specify your age range		
	Under 25		65 - 74
	25 - 34		75 - 84
	35 - 44		85 and over
	45 - 54		Do not want to say
	55 - 64		
63.	How many adults are there in your household?		
			Number
64.	In which region do you live?		
	North West of England		Wales
	North East of England		London
	South West of England		Northern Ireland
	South East of England (excluding London)		Channel Islands and Isle of Man
	East of England		I do not live in the United Kingdom
	Scotland		
65.	Do you have any comments about anything raised by this survey?		

Thank you for completing the survey. If you would like to enter the prize draw please email your name, ALCS reference (if applicable) and contact details to:

surveyprizedraw@alcs.co.uk

NO INFORMATION from this survey is linked to that name or those contact details.

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