



Must-have Info for Authors

by Julie H. Ferguson

Author and professional speaker, Julie H. Ferguson leads live and tele-workshops that provide aspiring authors with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to approach publishers and succeed. Her workshops are available as downloadable booklets and as fully-narrated CD-ROMs through Beacon Literary Services at www.beaconlit.com, then click on Writers' Tools.

Advances and royalties for books engage every writer's mind sooner or later. But there are extras that few of us know about, such as the Public Lending Right and the copyright payment, both of which are paid annually.

Celebrities and best-selling authors are the ones most likely to command six figure **advances**. First-time authors and those of us who write for niche markets often receive very small amounts – sometimes less than \$1000.00, paid in two or three progress payments. Don't be too horrified about this – what you don't get in an advance will come to you in **royalties** once your book starts selling. If it sells well, a cheque that delights will arrive every quarter or semi-annually. The advance is taken off your royalties until it is paid out, so you receive the same earnings one way or the other. I prefer a low advance and more royalties, which start coming sooner.

The **Public Lending Right** (PLR) is a program which compensates authors who have their works in public libraries. Canada, the UK, and thirteen other countries provide such a program. From a pool of government funds, each author receives an amount calculated on the number instances their books appear on library shelves across the nation. All that authors need to do is submit their titles and ISBNs via the appropriate website and once a year a cheque plops into your mailbox.

Canada: www.plr-dpp.ca/PLR

UK: www.plr.uk.com/

Australia: www.dcita.gov.au/plr.html

USA: does not have a PLR program yet.

Copyright collectives also exist in some countries and provide users, who have paid for a licence, with immediate, lawful and economic access to published works. Countries like Canada also ensure that publishers and creators are fairly compensated for this copying. Schools and universities are examples of users who pay an annual licence fee to let them photocopy course material. Again, all that authors need to do is register with the agency. This also applies to photographers, composers, etc. Canadians should register their works at www.accesscopyright.ca/.

Other countries' copyright agencies may not compensate their authors but you should be able to find out at:

UK: www.cla.co.uk/

Australia: www.copyright.org.au/

US: www.copyright.com

Also available from *Access Copyright* in Canada is an excellent free email course on our copyright laws. Sign up at the site listed above and make yourself aware of this essential “must-have” info for writers.

Don't forget to apply for all the compensation you are entitled to as an author. It's more than you think—I earn nearly \$1000.00/year this way....

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