



EXTENSION OF PUBLIC LENDING RIGHT TO RIGHTS HOLDERS OF BOOKS IN NON-PRINT FORMATS

RESPONSE TO THE DCMS CONSULTATION BY THE BRITISH LIBRARY

1. The British Library welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's consultation on the Extension of Public Lending Right to Rights Holders of Books in Non-print Formats.
2. As the Department will be aware, the British Library is the national library of the United Kingdom. The Library is the beneficiary of legal deposit, and it also purchases widely material of research value. It is estimated there are well over 150 million items in the Library's collection. The Library provides access to its collections in support of research, business, the wider library network (including the public libraries) and wider educational goals, through its reading rooms, through its exhibition galleries, educational programmes and loans to other institutions, through its remote document supply and inter-library loans services, and through provision of information and bibliographic services.
3. The Library notes that the consultation concentrates on the *principle* of expanding the Public Lending Right Scheme and that the practical detail of any consequential changes will be subject to a subsequent consultation. In view of this the Library wishes to make the following brief high-level comments.
4. The British Library supports the proposal that PLR should be extended to book in non-print formats. This would have the following benefits:
 - This will bring the existing 1979 Scheme up-to date and provide an equity of approach towards 'books' across all media at a time when there is an inevitability that changing technology will lead to still new ways of facilitating loans of authored text for the digital age.

- This would remove the need for public libraries and rights holders to negotiate individual licenses for lending books in non-print formats.
 - This would provide an incentive for public libraries to provide a greater breadth of non-print books in their collections and stimulate growth in the audiobook and e-book lending sector. It would also facilitate new access to titles available on demand via digital repositories.
 - This development would be an enhancement of the public library lending service and a broadening of choice for all citizens.
 - Significantly, this development would be of particular importance to those who are visually impaired. Public libraries must respond adequately to the increasing need for books that are accessible to those who are print-disabled. Thus it will be important to ensure that the necessary assistive technology is provided and that the text-to-speech function is not disabled by producers' DRMs.
6. The British Library supports the principle that an extension of PLR to books in non-print formats must be accompanied by an extension of eligibility for PLR to the additional rights-holders who contribute creatively to their production.
 7. The British Library supports the Department's intention to secure suitably robust and future-proofed legislative amendments to allow the Scheme to be hospitable to changes in technology.
 8. Should these proposals for an extension to the PLR Scheme be approved, the Library stands ready to comment on the practical detail of the changes needed to implement these policy proposals.

British Library
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