

6. Survey Methodology

6.1 Questionnaire design and coding

A key lesson from earlier studies was the importance of capturing copyright earnings in the context of non-copyright income, in particular earnings from other activities, and earnings contributed by a partner.

The first question of the questionnaire was a self-definition prompt that encouraged respondents to identify their profession as they saw it, and if in doubt allocate percentages to the time spent in different professions. (See questionnaires attached at the end of this report).

Eight professional categories were then created to code all respondents: Authors, academics, teachers, audio-visual writers, journalists, translators/linguists, other professionals and retired.

Coding by (i) profession, (ii) genre/media and (iii) contribution to total individual earnings allowed us to define sub-samples that could be used for cross-country and cross-profession comparisons.

6.2 Response rates and reliability

In the UK, the questionnaires were posted with the 2006 ALCS Spring Newsletter to 19,500 ordinary members. In Germany, we were unable to gain access to VG Wort's equivalent list of members. We therefore cooperated with two professional bodies: *Verband deutscher Schriftsteller* VS (5,000 members: similar in profile to the membership of the UK *Society of Authors*) and the screenwriters' professional body

Verband der Drehbuchautoren VDD (450 members: similar in profile to the *Writers' Guild of Great Britain*). The German questionnaires were posted in March 2006 with the magazine *Kunst & Kultur* (VS members) and with the VDD newsletter.

Only returns received by 30 June 2006 were processed. A total of 1,345 questionnaires were returned by writers in the UK and 242 by writers in Germany. Of these, 1,334 UK questionnaires and all 242 German questionnaires contained useful information. These represent overall response rates of 6.8% and 4.5% in the UK and Germany respectively, although the response rates to individual questions varied considerably. These sample sizes are satisfactory for statistical analysis – indeed, they are not very different from the sample sizes commonly used in market research and pre-election opinion polls, where errors of no more than 4 or 5 percentage points are expected. However, since not all respondents answered every question included in our questionnaire, the number of valid responses in some cases is well below the 1,334 UK total responses and the 242 German total responses.

To determine the reliability of the estimated means, therefore, we have in each case computed the 'coefficient of variation of the estimate' by calculating the standard error of the mean (i.e. the standard deviation divided by the square root of the sample size) as a proportion of the estimate. Where this statistic exceeds 20 per cent, sample means are marked with an Asterisk (*) to indicate that they may be unreliable as estimates of the true population means because the number of valid responses is small relative to the coefficient of variation. This is a technique used by the Office for National Statistics to indicate possibly unreliable estimates in national economic and social statistics.

We were able to cross reference the German data with a specially commissioned analysis of tax data by the federal statistics office *Statistisches Bundesamt*. It shows that in 2001 (the latest year for which tax data was available), 20,072 German authors had taxable income from

self-employed writings, and for 9,015 authors, income from writing accounted for more than 50% of their self-employed income. The mean and median of these declared earnings confirm that our German sample represents a different constituency than the UK sample. Roughly, the German respondents are to a larger extent professional writers. This is also borne out by the different professional profiles our two surveys picked up (see below: characteristics of respondents).

For cross-country comparison, we therefore defined various sub-samples, including:

- *Professional authors* are those who allocate more than 50% of their perceived *time* to being an author
- *Main-income authors* are those who earn at least 50% of their total individual *income* from writing
- *Audio-visual authors* are those who mainly work in TV, Film, Radio and Internet media

For Germany, the income differences between the full (professional body) sample, and the sub-sample of professional writers (who allocate at least 50% of their time of writing) is very small. In fact, the median is identical for both samples. For cross-country comparisons, we therefore favour using the full German sample against the UK professional writer sample, in order to increase the validity in the analysis of small numbers of responses to some questions.

6.3 Characteristics of respondents

Table 6.1 Gender

<i>Gender</i>	<i>UK</i>		<i>Germany</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Male</i>	769	64.1	137	58.3
<i>Female</i>	430	35.9	98	41.7
<i>Valid responses</i>	1199	100	235	100

Table 6.2 Age profile

<i>Age group</i>	<i>UK</i>		<i>Germany</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Under 25</i>	1	0.1	0	0
<i>25 - 34</i>	25	1.9	13	5.6
<i>35-44</i>	105	8.1	54	22.8
<i>45-54</i>	287	22.0	69	29.1
<i>55-64</i>	446	34.2	54	22.8
<i>65 and over</i>	440	33.7	47	19.8
<i>Valid responses</i>	1304	100	237	100

Table 6.3 *Size of households*

<i>Size of household</i>	<i>UK</i>		<i>Germany</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>1</i>	288	22.4	71	32.9
<i>2</i>	676	52.6	91	42.1
<i>3</i>	143	11.1	29	13.4
<i>4</i>	130	10.1	21	9.7
<i>5</i>	38	3.0	4	1.9
<i>6</i>	7	0.5	0	0
<i>7 and over</i>	4	0.3	0	0
<i>Valid responses</i>	1286	100	216	100

Figure 6.1 *Main professions of the UK respondents*
(1,334 valid responses)

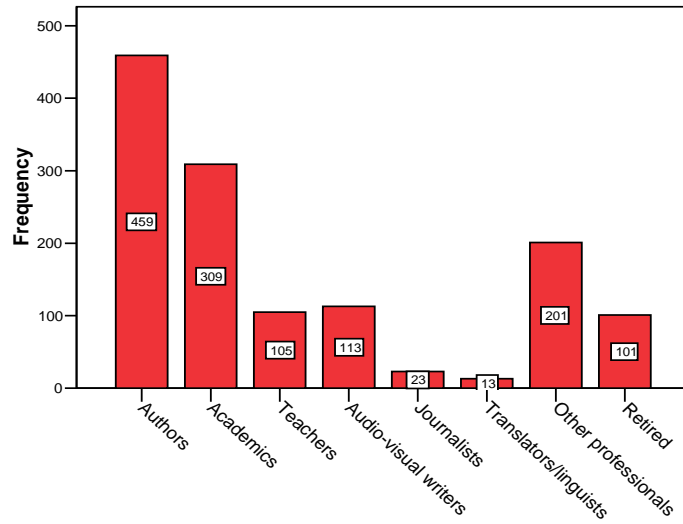


Figure 6.2 *Main professions of the German respondents*
(239 valid responses)

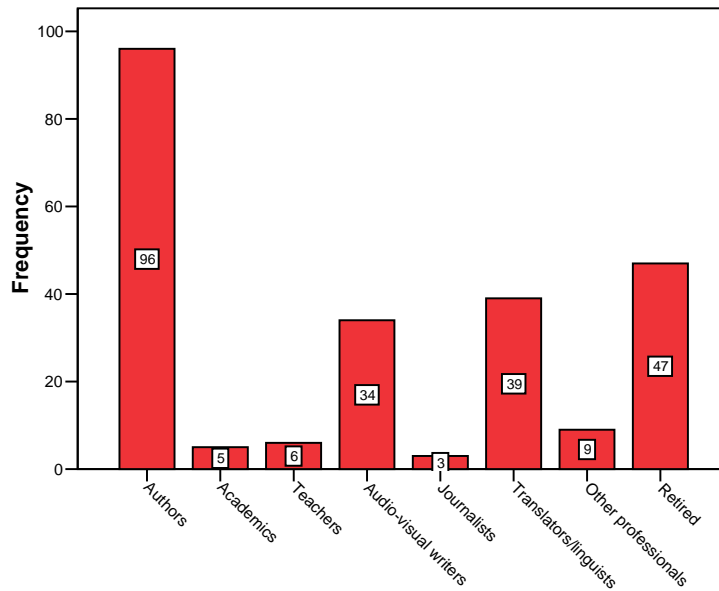


Table 6.4 *Average number of years spent as professional writers*

	<i>Number of years spent as self-employed writers</i>	
	<i>UK</i>	<i>Germany</i>
<i>Mean</i>	16.3	15.8
<i>Median</i>	14.0	14.0
<i>Standard deviation</i>	11.7	11.1

Figure 6.3 *Main genres of the UK respondents*

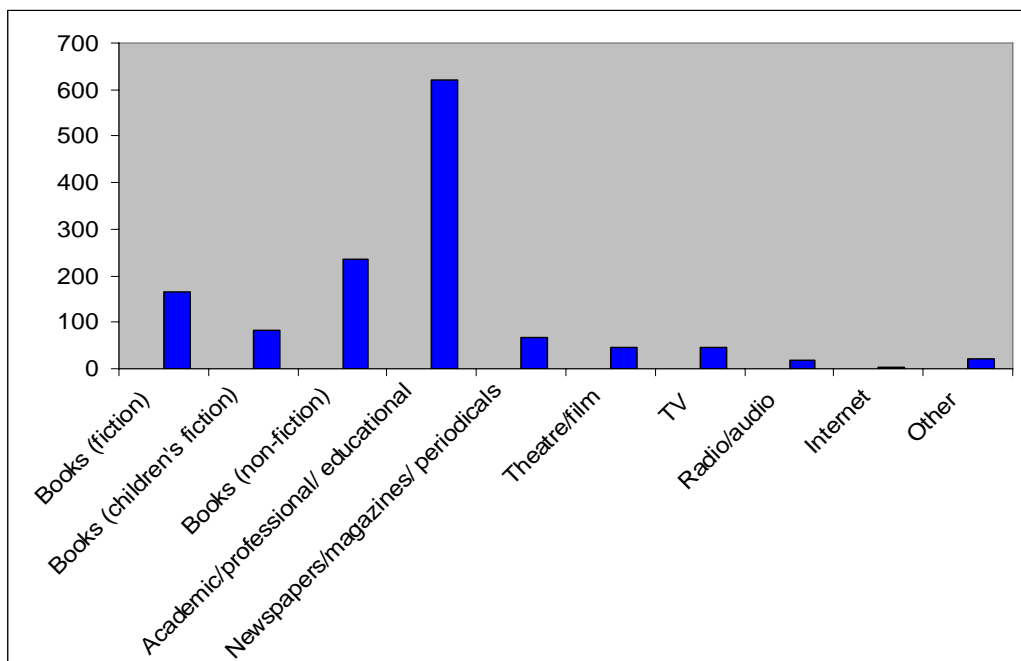


Figure 6.4 *Main genres of the German respondents*

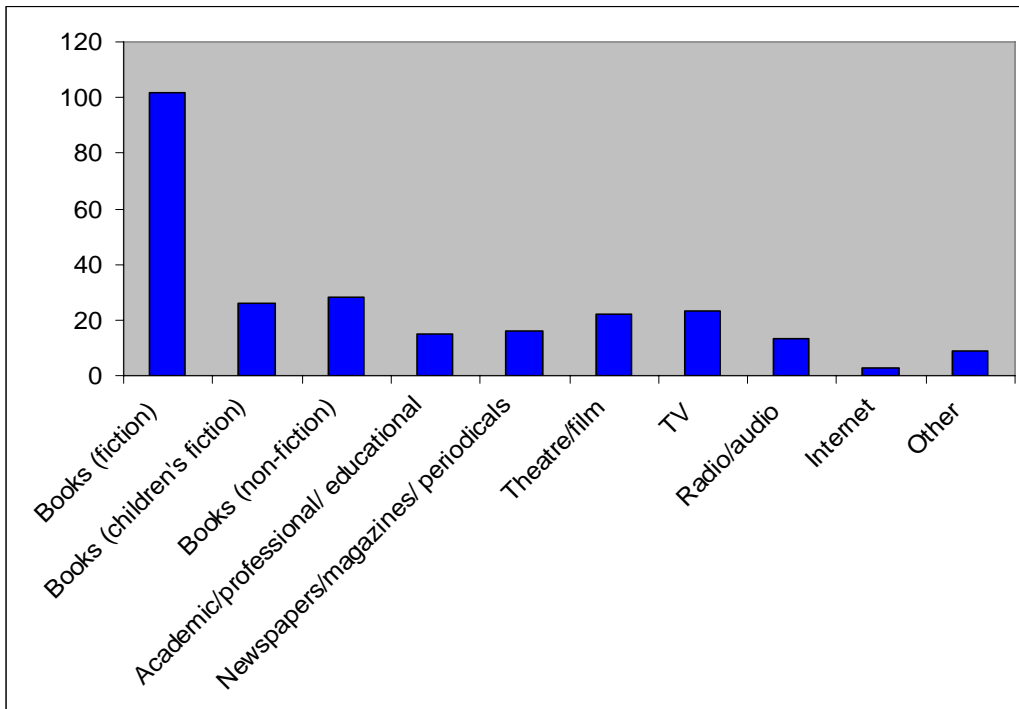


Table 6.5 *Membership of professional associations by UK respondents*

<i>Professional associations</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of sample</i>	<i>Mean length of membership (years)</i>
<i>Society of Authors</i>	<i>541</i>	<i>40.6</i>	<i>12.3</i>
<i>Writers' Guild</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>6.7</i>	<i>14.7</i>
<i>Others</i>	<i>393</i>	<i>29.5</i>	<i>21.2</i>

**Table 6.6 Membership of professional associations
by German respondents**

<i>Professional Associations</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of sample</i>	<i>Mean length of membership (years)</i>
<i>VG Wort</i>	<i>142</i>	<i>58.7</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>VG Wort-group fiction and drama ("schönggeistig")</i>	<i>153</i>	<i>63.2</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>VG Wort-group journalists and non-fiction</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>23.1</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>VG Wort-group academic/professional</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>14.9</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>VS</i>	<i>158</i>	<i>65.3</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Ver Di (media union)</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>12.4</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>VDD (screenwriters)</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>12.8</i>	<i>N/A</i>
<i>Others</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>26.0</i>	<i>N/A</i>

Table 6.7 Location of UK respondents

<i>Location</i>	<i>% of sample</i>
<i>London</i>	<i>21.2</i>
<i>East and South-East England</i>	<i>30.4</i>
<i>South and South-West England</i>	<i>13.5</i>
<i>Midlands</i>	<i>3.8</i>
<i>Northern England</i>	<i>17.5</i>
<i>Scotland</i>	<i>5.8</i>
<i>Wales</i>	<i>3.3</i>
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	<i>0.3</i>
<i>Non-UK</i>	<i>4.2</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Table 6.8 Location of German respondents

<i>Zip Code</i>	<i>% of sample</i>
<i>0 (Dresden, Leipzig)</i>	<i>4.3</i>
<i>1 (Berlin)</i>	<i>21.0</i>
<i>2 (Hamburg, Bremen)</i>	<i>11.2</i>
<i>3 (Hannover)</i>	<i>6.0</i>
<i>4 (Düsseldorf)</i>	<i>6.0</i>
<i>5 (Köln)</i>	<i>10.3</i>
<i>6 (Frankfurt)</i>	<i>8.2</i>
<i>7 (Stuttgart)</i>	<i>6.9</i>
<i>8 (München)</i>	<i>16.7</i>
<i>9 (Nürnberg)</i>	<i>4.7</i>
<i>Switzerland</i>	<i>3.4</i>
<i>Austria</i>	<i>1.3</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100.0</i>