

Having worked in the publishing industry for over twenty five years as publisher, printer and now literary agent I feel confident in stating that at no time previously has the trading in rights been better. This situation of both buying and selling rights has come about as the industry matures and becomes better at what it does. It is worth many millions of dollars in export income to authors and publishers. The printing industry benefits by publishers purchasing rights for this territory and making sure those titles are available in a timely manner by the existing 30/90 day rule. In many cases we are able to read books months prior to their release elsewhere. The trading in rights can only take place where Territorial Copyright exists, it is the cornerstone. Without this security, which is enjoyed by both the UK and US, our authors, publishers and printers are in a very vulnerable position.

As an agent I am currently helping one of my children's authors deal with the demands of her US publisher to considerably change her text for their market. This book has already been published in Australia and has been well reviewed. If she agrees to the changes the integrity of the text will be significantly damaged. This could well be the version available in Australia in future. So much for supporting and maintaining our unique national identity. Adding insult to injury the author would receive a lower royalty, the lesser export rather than home royalty.

In another situation an award winning young adult writer, whose first novel, published in 2005 still enjoys healthy home sales. These increase as each new book is published. If the 12 months suggestion for PIRs was adopted both her publisher and the author's income could be severely reduced as books could be brought in from either the UK or the US. In both cases the publisher in these territories, different to her Australian publisher, is a multinational also operating in Australia and with a core business of selling directly to schools. As the author is an Australian resident and therefore not readily able to promote her works in the UK and US they are likely to be considered as overstocks at an earlier stage and shipped to her home territory, where better sales can be expected. Once again a lesser income for the author and a disincentive for her original publisher to continue supporting her new works.

Only with the retention of Territorial Copyright and the 30/90 day rule will authors, publishers and agents be able to maintain and further increase the trading of rights on the world stage. Therefore improving the cultural and economic well being of all Australians.

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