



Publishing & The Pandemic 3

with

- **Tony Bradman, Authors Licensing & Collecting Society (UK)**
 - **Mary Rasenberger, Authors Guild (US)**
 - **Ian Moss, STM**

**For podcast release
Tuesday, April 28, 2020**

KENNEALLY: Welcome to Copyright Clearance Center’s podcast series. I’m Christopher Kenneally for Beyond the Book.

Around the world, the coronavirus pandemic has marked half the planet’s population for confinement in an effort to block spread of the disease.

In this special report for CCC’s Beyond the Book, a trio of trade association leaders share with me how writers, researchers and their publishing partners are coping with an unprecedented public health and economic crisis.

From London, bestselling children’s book author Tony Bradman, who serves as chair of the Authors’ Licensing and Collecting Society, tells me that quarantine not only cuts off writers from their audiences but also from a living.

BRADMAN: In Britain, a lot of writers make a living from other things – activities around writing, such as school visits, festivals, events. Poets do readings. And a lot of that has been cancelled, clearly, because of the lockdown. I knew a lot of writers who were really struggling almost immediately.

KENNEALLY: In the United States, Authors Guild executive director Mary Rasenberger has directed her organization to be an online lifeline as a clearinghouse of essential information.

RASENBERGER: We’re organizing that information and providing a one-stop place where authors can find information related to the crisis that is crucial to them. We have information about how to obtain relief from the federal assistance programs. We also have information about the various funds that are providing relief for writers right now –



A Copyright Clearance Center Podcast

additional emergency relief. We also are offering a number of webinars and how-to videos to help authors market their books.

KENNEALLY: Ian Moss stepped into his role of CEO at STM only in late December. While he expected 2020 to be a year of change, he couldn't have anticipated just how much.

MOSS: I was lucky to come to an organization that had refreshed itself. It had said, we want to go forward in collaboration towards a world of open science, and we are going to take some big decisions to do that, and we are changing as an industry. Science is undergoing a massive transformation. Consumption is changing dramatically. The nature of the research community and how they are interacting and working with each other is changing, and that's fundamentally altered their expectations on our industry.

So I think a lot of the things that we're experiencing now are part of a much wider change in the way that all of our companies are going to be operating now and in the future. And I think it's a really fantastically interesting time for the organization, and it's been great for me to be able to take over in that climate.

++++++

KENNEALLY: Tony Bradman is an award-winning author of more than 50 books for children. He has also edited many anthologies of short stories and poetry and reviewed children's books for the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, the *Times Educational Supplement*, and various specialist journals. He serves as chair of the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society and is co-chair of the UK's Copyright Licensing Agency. Tony Bradman joins me on the line from London. Welcome to Beyond the Book, Tony.

BRADMAN: Hi, Christopher. It's very good to be here.

KENNEALLY: I suppose we should start by telling people a little bit about ALCS. It's a collecting society set up by writers, for writers, and just in recent weeks has paid out something like £24 million to over 89,000 writers.

BRADMAN: That's right. ALCS goes back a long way. It was founded over 40 years ago by writers, as you say, for writers. And yeah, we work very hard collecting secondary rights income for writers from all around the world.

I think it's probably the same in the States, but in Britain, a lot of writers make a living from other things – activities around writing, such as school visits, festivals, events. Poets do readings. And a lot of that has been cancelled, clearly, because of the lockdown. I knew a lot of writers who were really struggling almost immediately.



ALCS has always worked very closely with other rights organizations, such as the Society of Authors and the Writers' Guild of Great Britain. And we immediately spoke to them, and the society had an initiative to put together an emergency fund for writers. It was easiest, really, to run it through one organization, so we all put money into the society's fund, and they're managing it. But it's open to any writers in Britain – professional writers, that's TV, film, script, journalists, books, children's writers, anybody – to apply for a grant for there. We made a substantial donation to that, and we did that almost immediately.

KENNEALLY: Immediately is exactly the point, Tony Bradman. This is a crisis that arrived without warning at all, brought the economy of the world to a halt, and as you say, for many writers, really deprived them immediately of the income that they had been expecting. So the response has to be just as immediate.

In addition to that private response that you have engaged with the Society of Authors and others to accomplish, there is some government support for writers, for self-employed authors. What is the situation in the UK with that kind of income assistance from the government?

BRADMAN: Well, that's tricky. It's very difficult. The government immediately with the crisis, like most governments around the world, announced a range of measures to help businesses and individuals and families. So it comes through the benefits system and welfare payments of one kind or another. That's very easy for people who are employed, who pay their taxes and have jobs and welfare numbers, because that's part of the system, and there is a system that exists for that already, much, much harder for the self-employed writer. And it took a couple of weeks for the government to understand that.

Self-employed writers are the same as many self-employed people – builders, plumbers, musicians, all kinds of people – and it's very hard to help them. So the principle was to base it on three years of accounts, and that's fine for a lot of writers, because if they've been doing it, well, they probably will have three years of accounts. But as we all know, incomes in the creative businesses and writing can go up and down, so it's hard to get an average over three years. And there are also people who may only have been doing it for a while or may be doing it part-time. So there's a lot of problems there and a lot of complex issues.

It's taking time. I think even for people who are in everyday jobs, normal jobs, who pay their taxes and who are employed, the money is quite slow to come through. So there's lots of worries about people struggling and businesses struggling. But I think we'll get



there. We just have to pull together and try and make sure that we do as much as possible, as quickly as possible.

KENNEALLY: Another area where there possibly are gaps isn't on the income side, but on the content side. Tell us about the work that ALCS is doing to provide online resources for the kind of homeschooling that is now going on.

BRADMAN: Well, clearly the homeschooling is very important. In my world, the world of children's books, a lot of authors are very quick to offer free materials, free content, reading sessions, all sorts of stuff. And I had a little bit of a concern with that, because people in their desire to help – which is completely understandable and a wonderful thing, it's typical of the writing community – were I think slightly in danger of giving away too much too quickly. There's been some moves with us, the rights organizations, and publishers to work together to get a proper set of principles involved so that we can do things and give away a lot of stuff without actually giving it all away for nothing forever.

We had to work very closely with publishers – and really it was a bigger problem for them, I think. Writers, we're sort of the end of the chain. We're happy to make sure that our stuff can be out there and helping people. There are a lot of principles and a lot of rights issues that publishers had to face. Also, they had to agree amongst themselves to get a plan. We've increased the amount institutions can copy and all sort of other concessions that will help them during the time of the crisis. Because we want to help. We want to make sure that we can do our part in making sure that education can continue under these extraordinary circumstances. But at the same time, we need to do it properly on the basis of principles that will preserve publishers' businesses and writers' incomes in the future.

KENNEALLY: Well, Tony Bradman, finally I want to ask you about something that everyone in the world shares, whether they are an author right now or whatever they do. We're all coping with isolation. But authors know a good deal about this. They cope with that challenge every day of their working lives. I wonder whether you can share some insights that you've gained over your own writing career that may help others handle the isolation and perhaps even be productive in it.

BRADMAN: Everybody I know now, certainly, at ALCS, they're having to work from home and struggling a little bit with it sometimes, I think. But I've done it for over 30 years. I joke with my colleagues at ALCS. I say it's OK – after the first couple of days, you'll be hearing a lot of voices in your head. But it's OK for you, because they're probably coming through on Zoom. I've been listening to voices in my head for a very long time. It's just that the difference with us is we write them down and make stories out of them.



A Copyright Clearance Center Podcast

If you've been doing it a long time, you know that you need to have a structure. Probably you need to give yourself time off. You need to have some boundaries between work and relaxation, which is incredibly hard, and there are times in my career when I've been very bad at that. But those are the things that really work.

Also, part of that is if you're lucky enough to have family or friends in your lockdown, that's great. But keeping in touch with colleagues, with editors, with publishers, with other writers, using social media – I've got a lot of friends on Facebook, and there's some amazing stuff happening on there, people supporting each other and talking about each other's work and family and friends. I do a lot on Instagram. All of those things – social media can be really difficult sometimes, can be toxic when it's bad. But when you need it, if you've got a good circle of friends who are very supportive, then you should really use it.

I do think if you're fortunate enough as an author to have a project on the go, as I do – I'm writing a book at the moment – that's great, because it can ground you back to it. It gives you that structure and something to aim at and do every day.

Beyond that, I think a lot of writers are facing uncertainties, because they're not quite sure what's going to happen with projects. Publishers are struggling a little bit to work out what they can do. Inevitably, some things will be put back. Some projects might actually not happen because of what's been going on. It's hard to pitch new projects. That's all really tough. If you've got an agent, work with them. If you've got an editor, again, talk to them.

But I think what we should always bear in mind is that people through this and beyond this, and perhaps even more because of this, will need books. They'll need stories. They'll need information. They'll need nonfiction. They'll need great TV shows. They'll need theater. They'll need film – maybe not later this year, but certainly next year and beyond that. So as writers, we will be needed even more in the future. I say to writers, stick with it. Work on your stuff. Do the things you're good at, and you'll come out of it in the end and will be stronger eventually.

KENNEALLY: Tony Bradman, thank you for joining me on Beyond the Book, and we will let you get back to your writing table.

BRADMAN: Cheers. Thanks, Chris.

++++++



KENNEALLY: Mary Rasenberger is the executive director of the Authors Guild and Authors Guild Foundation. The Authors Guild is the leading professional organization for writers in the United States, aiding and protecting authors' interest in copyright, fair contracts, and free expression since 1912. Mary Rasenberger, welcome to the program.

RASENBERGER: Chris, thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity to be on your podcast show. It's a wonderful opportunity for us. We're very busy working to help authors right now during the crisis, and this is a great opportunity for us to get our information out about what we're doing.

KENNEALLY: Indeed. We are very happy to have you join us, Mary. The economic repercussions of the coronavirus pandemic must be hitting authors particularly hard. Bookstores are closed as well as libraries and festivals. Any book clubs, too, that might continue have to retreat online.

So what's an author to do? The Authors Guild just surveyed its members to learn about their predicament. What did you find?

RASENBERGER: So what we found is of the 940 responses that we got, well over half already were seeing a significant decrease in income due to COVID-19. And I think we immediately think of musicians being out of work and that sort of thing, but writers are also losing work, and of the 54% who said they had already lost income, at least a quarter overall, 232, pointed to missing speaking and performance engagements cancelled. So we can't underestimate how important speaking engagements are to authors.

Journalism came in second. We've seen a major decrease in freelance journalism right now, in part because the publications have lost ad revenue by the droves and have had to lay off staff and are not using freelancers as much. And of course, it's very hard to get anything published today that's not related to the coronavirus crisis. In addition, there are a number of events – things that just aren't happening right now, so you can't write about them. So sportswriters are out of work. Arts writers – there's no galleries open, museums open, that sort of thing.

So we are seeing writers in crisis, as well as some are suffering from the virus or have family members and are in need of assistance.

KENNEALLY: The Authors Guild is responding in this unprecedented crisis. Your mission, after all, is to support, protect, and defend authors. You're doing that in a number of ways.

RASENBERGER: So we have a number of different initiatives going on right now. The first is that we are lobbying Congress for clarifications to the CARES Act, because freelancers



who can work from home, which includes most writers and authors, are not clearly covered by the CARES Act relief programs right now.

KENNEALLY: For our listeners, Mary, we want to make clear that the CARES Act is that tremendously important stimulus package that Congress approved a few weeks ago.

RASENBERGER: Right. It's the \$2 trillion package – stimulus relief package where every individual who earns up to \$75,000 gets \$1,200. But there are a lot of other provisions in there, including – a boost for unemployment is one of them. So if you're a W2 worker, you can get additional unemployment of \$600 a week. But in addition, for the first time ever, we've seen an unemployment provision for freelancers and independent contractors, which is hugely important to writers who work on a 1099 basis.

The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance part of the CARES Act does provide for – it tells the states that you need to provide this assistance to those who are not otherwise eligible for unemployment and provides funds for it. It has a number of criteria, however, that the freelancer or independent contractor must meet, and in addition has a criteria that you cannot be able to telework for pay. Because most authors work at home and freelance writers, they do not necessarily or clearly qualify under the terms of the PUA.

So on April 14, we wrote a letter to Congress and are lobbying them to both the Senate and also to Speaker Pelosi and others in the House asking for a clarification, whether through an amendment to the CARES Act or through obtaining clarification from the Secretary of Labor that those freelancers who can work from home, but have lost income because the work just simply isn't there – the clients and employers who normally would hire them are now unable to – and we are hoping that we will get that kind of clarification. In fact, just moments after we sent the letter yesterday, we did see that a group of Democrats in the Senate had sent the Secretary of Labor a letter asking for certain clarifications, including exactly the one that we had asked for. So we are feeling very hopeful about that. In the meantime, we're telling writers to go ahead and apply for the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance if you have lost 1099 income due to the COVID crisis.

And we are also going to be lobbying in New York City for enforcement of the Freelance Isn't Free legislation, which provides that all freelancers need to get paid within 30 days of invoice, because another issue we're seeing – which is across many industries, I realize – is that writers just aren't getting paid right now what they're owed, and authors are having contracts cancelled, postponed, or they're just not seeing the royalties that they should be getting. So we are also assisting authors individually – members – in terms of enforcing contracts.



In addition, I would say one of the main things that the Authors Guild is doing right now and I think is really crucial is we're acting as a clearinghouse for information. There is just so much information coming at all of us right now. So we're organizing that information and providing a one-stop place where authors can find information related to the crisis that is crucial to them.

We have a page on our website – our website is authorsguild.org – and we have a page devoted to COVID-19 resources. It's simply authorsguild.org/covid19. We have information about how to obtain relief from the federal assistance programs. We also have information about the various funds that are providing relief for writers right now – additional emergency relief. There are several that have been in existence for many, many years, including the Authors League Fund and the Dramatists Guild Fund. There are several new funds that have been created for the crisis. And those are all listed on the website as well.

We also are offering a number of webinars and how-to videos to help authors market their books. This is a really difficult time to be publishing a book, obviously.

Most discovery happens in bookstores or person to person, from personal recommendations. So we're doing a couple things to help authors with books out right now. One is webinars, how-to videos on doing online events, on using various tools to reach your readers, doing online book groups, doing online events, working with bookstores right now to get information about your book out. We're advising authors to be creative and be aggressive, because you have to right now to get your book noticed. Think about who your readers are. How can you reach those readers outside of the normal book chains of commerce and information?

In addition, we have a campaign that we launched April 8, I believe it was, that is ongoing, and it's called – it's #SupportAuthors. It is a video social media campaign and also text-based for authors to talk about other authors' books that are coming out this spring – in other words, to help support and market those books. And there have been some wonderful, wonderful videos done already. There are links to those also on our website, where authors – bestselling authors or other established authors are trying to help promote books particularly of new authors or midlist authors that may not have the same ability to get the word out there about their book.

KENNEALLY: Mary Rasenberger, what about industry-wide outreach? Has the guild tried to work with publishers and booksellers in any new, collaborative ways?



A Copyright Clearance Center Podcast

RASENBERGER: Yes, we are in constant touch with booksellers and with publishers about how we can support one another. I must say it's been a very positive environment to work in, in that everybody's dealing with this crisis and willing to help each other.

With the booksellers, we have been trying to promote purchasing books on platforms that give back to independent bookstores. In particular, the bookstores are – many of them are just – it's devastating to have to close right now. Many bookstores have their own online selling platforms. We recommend to use those or IndieBound. And there is, serendipitously, a new online bookstore that launched – had a soft launch in January and is really picking up now. It's Bookshop.org. And it gives a percentage of every sale to independent bookstores. So we are encouraging people to shop there. We're also talking to bookstores about doing online events and how we can help promote those, how authors can do more of those, that sort of thing.

We're all trying to understand how we can support each other, how we can promote the books that are out right now, and just support the ecosystem in general. One of the amazing things that the publishers' association has done is just to make sure that distribution centers and warehouses and printers can stay open as essential businesses.

KENNEALLY: Mary Rasenberger, executive directors of the Authors Guild and Authors Guild Foundation, thank you for joining me on the program.

RASENBERGER: Thank you very much, Chris.

++++++

KENNEALLY: The International Association for Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers, STM, has 150 members around the world who collectively publish 66% of all journal articles and tens of thousands of monographs and reference works. Its membership includes academic and professional publishers, learned societies, and university presses. Ian Moss is STM's chief executive officer. Welcome to the program, Ian.

MOSS: Welcome, Chris, and a warm thank you for inviting me on.

KENNEALLY: Tell us about, first, the role that publishers who are members of STM are playing right now.

MOSS: We are as a community, of course, extremely committed to helping combat the virus, and whatever resources we could add to the effort was very important to us to offer. And I think we were all struck by the severity of the crisis, and I think the scientific community was early on in the process flagging up the seriousness of what was about to happen. So I



A Copyright Clearance Center Podcast

hope – and I think we did – respond very quickly to what was coming out originally from Wuhan and the information and evidence that was beginning to brew. That meant that we acted, I think, quite rapidly and decisively, because we saw that this was a problem that globally we were going to have to face together.

KENNEALLY: STM announced in early March, as an answer to the epidemic announcement of the World Health Organization, that it was committed to doing a number of important things. Tell us about those.

MOSS: Well, our response goes back to January. At the end of January, the last week of January, publishers started to deploy resource hubs for the immediate access to resources. I wrote to all our members on the 30th of January to say that in our view, this was something that our members should consider and that where they had given access to resources, we wanted to know, so we could publicize that more widely and also input that information to the relevant authorities as well.

We launched our own resource page on the 10th of February, and as of last week, I think, there's about 30 of our members that have links to resources and freely available content, and I think we're up to about 32,000 articles, chapters, and other resources that are findable and usable in that manner. We started straightaway, so when requests came in from governments, as they did in late February/early March, we already had those resources in place, and we already had the access to those resources. That meant that we could really positively respond to those requests from governments.

KENNEALLY: And among those responses, apart from providing access to all of these important published articles, there's a commitment among the publishers to accelerate the review of articles that may in fact add to the collected knowledge. So it's not just what's already published, but what is coming down the pipeline.

MOSS: Yes, and I think on this, it's really important to understand that this is a serious and significant commitment, but it does not come without a cost. And we also caution alongside this that this is not a process that is scalable. This is something we are giving additional resources to from our members in order to deal with the current problem at hand, coming with all of the caveats that we can't speed up getting the right answer. We have to make sure that all the relevant checks are in place, and we have to make sure that the science that is published is verified and correct. That still takes some time. So what we are doing, really, is putting resources in that we couldn't do in normal states as part of the publisher contribution to the response.

KENNEALLY: And the reader of this information today – there are two, really. There are the human readers, the researchers and the laboratories, but there are also the computers,



A Copyright Clearance Center Podcast

which will be able to mine the published material for the important information that could result in a treatment or a vaccine.

MOSS: That's absolutely right. We're enabling the use of AI and other tools to analyze the freely available research to open interoperable systems such as Crossref and other aggregate solutions, and we are also trying to ensure that the publications related to COVID-19 – and other coronaviruses, as well, because we want to understand the wider science on this and related epidemics – that they're available in both human and machine-readable formats. So we are relaxing all access rights in order to allow people the rights to enable text and data mining, to allow reuse, and to allow secondary analysis. This is a fully open and readable and minable resource that our members have made available, and hopefully that will help both the science, but also the public engagement with the science as well. I think that is an important aspect to it to understand what is currently happening.

KENNEALLY: At STM, there's a lot of work that goes on for publishers around the world. There are a variety of important committees. But STM is also the sponsor of a number of conferences, most particularly the Frankfurt Book Fair conference in the fall and the STM US conference, which is typically in Washington, DC, at the end of April. Not surprisingly, you have had to pivot there to go to a virtual conference, which is coming up at the end of April. Tell us about how you managed that move. It's not easy to do.

MOSS: I think that STM went through a process that a lot of people did, where when I initially asked the question as to whether we should think about going virtual, which I did on the 2nd of March, there was still a kind of a feeling that it was premature to make that sort of decision and that life hadn't really changed at that point. It was incredible, I think, how quickly it changed, because we were still that week thinking, well, we could have a mixture of physical, and those countries that are in the middle of the crisis maybe will struggle to send delegates. But within a week or so, it was very clear that this was a rapidly escalating situation and that we wanted to hold onto the community and those community discussions and deliver it in a way that people could access and engage with the content.

And the speakers have been fantastic. We asked them all originally how they wanted to handle what was going on, whether they wanted to continue to go ahead, and they all really wanted to engage. We've looked at different technical solutions in order to be able to provide a rich experience. And also, I think we had to make some decisions about length of sessions and presentations because of the different nature of virtual to a physical conference, and we've had to do that pretty quickly. But I think there are others that have had to do it even quicker than we have who really have risen to the challenge, to say, look, we are still a community that wants to talk. We are still a community that wants to interact



A Copyright Clearance Center Podcast

and learn from each other. And let's have a rich experience online that people can engage with.

KENNEALLY: Ian Moss, you became chief executive officer at STM not too long ago, in December, and you must have had many plans for 2020, all of which are now, as we say, out the window. But there remains a commitment that STM has made for this new decade, which is to examine itself and to ensure particular points, such as public trust in science and connectivity to research. Give us a sense of the vision for STM today and in the decade to come.

MOSS: Yeah, I came into STM at a time when the organization and the membership had both reflected very carefully on where they wanted to take the organization, but also very carefully on the changes – on the rapid changes that have happened in the industry. And I think in some ways, I was lucky to come to an organization that had refreshed itself. It had said, we want to go forward in collaboration towards a world of open science, and we are going to take some big decisions to do that, and we are changing as an industry. Science is undergoing a massive transformation. Consumption is changing dramatically. The nature of the research community and how they are interacting and working with each other is changing, and that's fundamentally altered their expectations on our industry.

So I think a lot of the things that we're experiencing now are part of a much wider change in the way that all of our companies are going to be operating now and in the future. And I think it's a really fantastically interesting time for the organization, and it's been great for me to be able to take over in that climate.

What I've not been able to do is marginal, I guess. It's stopped a little bit of the travel and interaction and the kind of face-to-face, but it hasn't stopped the hunger and experience to want to hear from everybody – from our members, from research community, from funders, from libraries – and to really talk about how we're going to work together in the future.

KENNEALLY: Ian Moss, STM's chief executive officer, thanks for joining me on the program.

MOSS: Thank you ever so much for inviting me, and I hope that everyone out there is well and healthy and that we get through this together.

++++++

KENNEALLY: In nature, the coronavirus is smaller than a dust particle but its effect on both individual health and society at large is massive.



A Copyright Clearance Center Podcast

The abrupt halt to all but essential businesses that has shuttered bookstores and libraries is leading to catastrophe for authors and others creators in book publishing.

Meanwhile, research to identify treatments and develop a vaccine is stretching the limits of science and technology.

For more reporting on Publishing and the Pandemic, visit CCC's Velocity of Content blog at copyright.com and for archived episodes of Beyond the Book go to beyondthebook.com

Jeremy Brieske of Burst Marketing is our co-producer and recording engineer. For Copyright Clearance Center, I'm Christopher Kenneally.