

Attention!

Any NUJ member contemplating work for Cat Mag Communications Ltd should first telephone the Freelance Office on 020 7843 3735.

The Rate for the Job

THIS MONTH'S Rate for the Job included illustrations, tip-offs, an educational book series, and fees paid in the Eurozone.

Thinking about work for a company you've not dealt with before? Simply look at the Rate for the Job to find out what companies in similar niches have paid. Then aim higher.

You can submit rates online, in confidence, at www.londonfreelance.org/rates. Please give not only the basic rate (e.g. for FBS, First British Serial rights) but extra pay-

ments negotiated for extra uses, like the Web – or for print if it's a Rate for the Online Job. These are shown as (eg) £400 + 100. We now record rates paid in Euro as well.

Rates marked **X** are, in the editor's fallible opinion, below par. Treat all rates as minima, even perhaps the happy ☺ (none this issue ☺).

Illustrations: *Focus on Africa*, one or more illustrations £450.

Photography: *National Geographic* 7 pictures US \$3000; *Community Care* photos + 1000 words £300 **XX**.

Shifts: Reuters reporting day £217; *Building* subbing two days £150; *Guardian* day shift (web) £130.92 **X**; ExaroNews.com day shift £120 **XX**; Taschen books per day picture research + lunch and travel, £50 **XXXX**.

Tip-offs: *Daily Mirror* background info for 1/4 page article FBS plus web £400; *Daily Mail* news story tip £150.

Words, per 1000: *Russian Realm* £1,416; *Sun* circa 1100 words

£1,090; *FT* magazine, all rights £357; *New Scientist* 100 words £350; *Daily Telegraph* £312.50 + **XX**; *Energy Risk* 30p a word = £300; *Repubblica* (Italy) 1500 words @ £420 for print edition only = £280; *Oxford Analytica* £225; *Oxford Analytica* £187.50; *Daily Mail* £166 **XX**.

Words, other: Rising Stars Educational Publishing editing of ten 48pp school readers, payment on publication (2 months after completion, publication now postponed for a further 3 months) £2000; *Practical Classics* 1000 words + photos, FBS plus web, £300; *Classic and Sports Car* 300 words + photos FBS plus web £200; *Oasis* (Saudi art magazine) 2 x 700-word articles £200 **XX**; *Daily Mail* 400 words, all rights £200; *Yorkshire Post* 800 words + photo, FBS plus web £170; *New Internationalist* 3500 words + photos, £115 + 50; unnamed Elsevier title, 250 words £10 **XX@!***; Wikio Experts blogging, all rights €2.50 + 13.50 **XXXX**; *Daily Telegraph* magazine 550-word back page interview £100 **XXXX**.



Trireme Award

This month's Trireme Award, for the "worst terms since I was last chained to the oars," goes to Reed-Elsevier. One LFB member reported that an (unnamed) Elsevier publication paid them a crisp tenner (or its electronic transaction equivalent) for 250 words – the same reward most weekly comics gave for published artwork on the letters page sent in by juvenile readers a couple of decades ago.

Photo © a member of the Trireme Trust (www.triremetrust.org.uk)

Children's non fiction writers unite!

WHAT CAN writers do when the medium they work in disappears? They can get together and decide what to do. NibWeb is an email network for writers of children's non-fiction (CNF), sponsored by the NUJ and Society of Authors: see www.londonfreelance.org/NibWeb for details.

This was once a thriving market – you could make a good living by writing books about a whole range of subjects, from natural history to ancient civilisations.

Then, quite suddenly, over the

last year or so, the market dried up. People who'd been making a reasonable living suddenly faced empty bank balances.

Commissions became rare, and the money was laughable. Things came to a head when one of our number reported declining a much-needed job to avoid setting a precedent of accepting £500 for nearly two weeks' work.

It was time to act. NibWeb decided to hold a meeting, in the hope of coming up with ideas for using its members' talents in new ways like

online, electronic books or different markets.

Its aim is to present ideas to publishers, whose own lack of imagination has left them in a hole.

The meeting is on **1 November**. It's from 12.30, ending at or before 5pm, at the NUJ's Headland House HQ – bring your own sandwich, but there will be tea and possibly biscuits. It's primarily for NibWeb writers, but if you work in CNF and haven't yet joined NibWeb, do come along (and join, as well).

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How much does it cost to produce ebooks?

HOW MUCH does it really cost a publisher to produce an ebook?

A new report commissioned by the NUJ and the Society of Authors looks behind the "collective wall of silence" around publishers' accounting on the real cost of producing ebooks and how much profit a publisher takes on each copy.

The *Freelance* has been asking for some time about ebook royalties. Authors sign a contract giving them royalties expressed as a percentage of the net profits, or of the retail price on each ebook sale. But that means 50 per cent, 30 per cent, 10 per cent of *what*, exactly?

The report, "Economics of ebooks: where we are now" by Tom Tivnan of *The Bookseller* estimates

that "digital conversion" of a book for print to an ebook format ends up costing about 50p per copy plus another 65p for marketing, and the costs of digital conversion are falling. And publishers need only sell around 100 editions of an ebook title to break even.

So are publishers "absolutely raking it from ebooks?" The are other factors to be considered, such as the added cost of "digital warehousing" to keep those ebook master files secure against file corruption and power surges over the coming centuries, and maintaining an ebook's compatibility with yet-to-be-discovered formats and platforms. These cost may actually outstrip the costs of file conversion per ebook.

Then there's the important difference between the "wholesale model" and "the agency model" of ebook distribution, and how it affects the author's cut, and why ebook royalty percentages are predicted to rise.

You'll have to read the report for details. Please do take the time and trouble to do so. Appropriately, it's online only, at www.londonfreelance.org/1106eboo.html

At a very concise 2300 words, it's engagingly written, and contains several very good jokes and humorous references.

And please report to the *Freelance*'s own Rate for the Job pages, (see above on this page) any ebook deals you are offered, saying whether you get per cent of gross or net.

Dublin domain

NUJ Dublin Freelance Branch has a new, redesigned website at www.dublinfreelance.org. It includes coverage of the recent Freelance Forum held in Dublin.