

# New map to ebook millions

SOME SELF-PUBLISHING writers are making six-figure incomes from ebooks, and others are earning new royalties from old copy by the same means. Happily, the tips, tricks and techniques to emulate their success are contained in a new book, published by the NUJ and available to members for free.

*Make eBooks Pay*, by NUJ vice-president Tim Dawson, is a guide to the practicalities of ebook self-publishing, as well as featuring ten case studies of authors who have made a success of this medium: "ebooks probably won't replace the paper-

and-ink variety, but around one third of all books now sold are now for eReaders", Tim told the *Freelance*.

"Unlike news, films or music, it is a digital media format for which most consumers expect to pay. It favours shorter books, which is good for long-form journalism – and the lead-times to publication are unbelievably short", he continued.

The book can be accessed in either ebook or pdf formats at [www.nuj.org.uk/make-ebooks-pay/](http://www.nuj.org.uk/make-ebooks-pay/) – you will need to register with the NUJ website as a member and get a password if you have not done so al-

ready. Writing and production of the book was funded by the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society.



## Pink'un may go dark

Journalists at the *Financial Times* voted on 26 January in favour of a 24-hour strike over what they call a "pensions robbery" by new owners Nikkei. No date had been set as the *Freelance* went to press. Watch this space and [www.nuj.org.uk](http://www.nuj.org.uk) for updates. As ever, the FT Chapel (the Union's unit of workplace-based organisation there) would appreciate it if freelancers engaged to work on any strike days found themselves unavailable. Anyone suffering hardship as a result of being unavailable should contact the Chapel.

## From zero to hero

THESE DAYS there's an onslaught of "clients" wanting us to toil for nowt. But now some union members are finding we've entered a new phase. The first offer for a given piece of work may be zero, but clients nowadays are just trying it on in hopes that freelancers who've grown used to exploitation won't even challenge such non-offers.

Here's practical encouragement, not statistical science, just enlivening examples of negotiation...

- the 1000-word magazine article – initial offer nothing, final agreed fee £300.
- the novice freelance bridging from studenthood into pro journalism has done a regular online column for zilch over several months, then says: "I can't carry on like this cos I need to eat, more or less like you do." Then they say to him "How about 150 quid?"
- the BBC radio pundit spots for which one NUJ member gets offered

nada by Radio 6 Music and says no, so they say: "Oh, all right, £50?" – and another on Radio 4 where the starting point was goose egg and the outcome 80 smackers.

...and three examples from the world of conferences and seminars, where potentially a journalist's expertise may yield a good chunk of change, though most of us probably undervalue ourselves and don't know to ask for it:

- a two-day conference, our member's asked to chair, she says "How much?", they say "We don't pay," she says "Then no," they say "Oh... 500 Euros per day?"
- a London arts seminar at a venue so prestigious the organisers feel able to offer our member absolutely *rien* (bar £60 travel exes) to work as a panel member for an hour and a half. He says "Nothing for nothing". £300 sterling persuaded him.
- Finally (with a couple of anonymising changes of detail) from the wom-

an in question: "I was approached to moderate a session at a digi-media conference... they wanted me to interview a German company boss, then run a Q&A session.

"So I said, 'What are you paying?' and they said 'There's no budget for moderators.' I said, 'You're paying for the venue and the catering, I assume you're being paid... and you're charging participants... why do you think it's OK not to pay for a really key professional person for their preparation and their work on the day?"

"My day rate for this kind of thing is £1000." She didn't expect a reply, but "two days later got an email apologising and saying please would I do it – for £1000."

This is all anecdotal but still shows it's worth dusting off those negotiatory skills. Remember: DON'T ASK DON'T GET and then ALWAYS ASK FOR MORE.

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## Making Tax Digital – not four returns a year?

WE NOW HAVE more detail on the £1.3 billion plans by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) for "Making Tax Digital."

After a Parliamentary Petition calling on the Government to "scrap plans forcing self-employed and small business to do four tax returns yearly" gathered 103,000 signatures in five weeks, the government responded at the beginning of January.

The response sought to reassure petitioners that Making Tax Digital, which was announced in the March 2015 Spending Review, would not mean "four tax returns a year," which initially seemed to be on the cards.

The self-employed will instead be expected to provide the HMRC with "quarterly updates", which will be "largely be a matter of checking

data generated from record-keeping software or apps and clicking 'send'."

Unspecified "software or apps" are mentioned, which it is claimed will make it an easier, "light-touch process," they assure us.

We still don't know the scheme will finally turn out.

So far it seems to be based on the assumption that the self-employed are all registered as companies and all do our own VAT.

It also assumes all freelancers do our accounts and banking online and we are all happy to use potentially risky internet-based "cloud accounting" systems, exposed as they are to security breaches, fraud, and to disasters involving government IT projects. Watch this space.

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HMRC's old-school analogue head office in Whitehall.

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## PLR statements up, money on its way

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