

# INDIE AUTHORS' EARNINGS 2023

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AMY THOMAS  
MICHELE BATTISTI  
HELENA SAENZ DE JUANO RIBES



CREATe

# Indie Authors' Earnings 2023

Amy Thomas, Michele Battisti and Helena Saenz De Juano Ribes\*

This report was commissioned by the Alliance of Independent Authors (ALLi) and the Self-Publishing Formula.

## Executive Summary

ALLi, the Alliance of Independent Authors, together with the Self-Publishing Formula, commissioned CREATE (the UK Copyright & Creative Economy Research Centre based at the University of Glasgow) to conduct independent research into the earnings of independent (indie, or self-publishing) authors. This report consists of a secondary analysis of data gathered by way of an online survey conducted in February and March 2023 by The Future of Publishing and SKS Advisors.

The analysis focussed on indie authors who had self-published at least one book, and who spent at least 50% of their working time on writing or self-publishing activities. We found that, from these sources alone, indie authors earned a typical income of 12,755 USD in 2022, representing an almost 50% increase since 2021. Whilst this level of income likely needs some form of supplementation from other sources to make a sustainable livelihood, we nonetheless found that indie authors earn a typically higher income (a difference of almost 50%) from writing alone when compared with authors who use traditional publishing models.

As with many creative industries, indie authors work in a 'winner-takes-all' market, with a highly unequal distribution of income: in 2022, the top 1% authors earned 31% of total revenues. This is in keeping with our expectations of how writing markets function based on previous research. However, we find that the indie writing market also overperforms in unexpected ways, particularly in diversifying and amplifying marginalised creator voices. We find a reverse gender gap, with cisgender women earning more than cisgender men (a difference of almost 20%), and

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\* Amy Thomas is a lecturer in intellectual property and information law at CREATE, University of Glasgow; Michele Battisti is a senior lecturer in economics at the Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow; Helena Saenz De Juano Ribes is a doctoral candidate at the Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow. The authors would like to thank Martin Prof. Kretschmer for his insightful comments and guidance.

a community of thriving LGBTQIA+ authors, who earn more than their straight counterparts (a difference of almost 20%). Nonetheless, we find that patterns of low pay for black authors continue to be perpetuated, and that disabled authors earn more than three times less than able-bodied authors. These findings suggest that, whilst the removal of traditional cultural gatekeepers is more enabling to some sub-groups within diverse author segments, many systematic issues continue to prevent meaningful participation and sustainability of a writing career.

The indie writing market is particularly well served for three genres: Romance, Crime/Thriller and Fantasy. Authors who write in these genres also earn a typically higher income than more generalist indie authors. Whilst we note the great benefits to amplification of diversity to non-cis gendered authors and non-straight authors, we find that members these communities tend to remain intercommunity, writing almost exclusively for LGBTQIA+ genres.

Where business strategies are concerned, we find that the indie authors are best served by lessening the barriers in distribution and communication between them and their readers. We see the highest growth in revenues for authors who utilise new business models as opposed to traditional, self-publishing routes: these include crowdfunding and patron platforms (e.g., Patreon), and income derived from sponsorships or other forms of 'influencer' income.

## **Context for the report**

The motivation behind this research is exploratory: how do literary authors fare outwith a traditional publishing model?

This question comes at a time where we see a global trend towards the de-valuing of creative labour, with earnings of primary creators decreasing across multiple creative industries.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In the UK, see: Competition and Markets Authority (2022) Music and streaming market study: update paper (Gov.uk, 26 July 2022) <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/music-and-streaming-market-study-update-paper>>; Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee (2021) Economics of music streaming (Gov.uk, 15 July 2021) <<https://committees.parliament.uk/work/646/economics-of-music-streaming/publications/>>; Intellectual Property Office (2021) Music creators' earnings in the digital era (Gov.uk, 23 September 2021) <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/music-creators-earnings-in-the-digital-era>>; Pavis, Tulti and Pye (2019) Fair Pay/Play in the UK Voice-Over Industries: A Survey of 200+ voice-overs (Zenodo, 17 July 2019) <<https://zenodo.org/record/3340920#.Y3ZOnLP2vA>>; Kretschmer, Bently, Singh and Cooper (2011) Copyright Contracts and Earnings of Visual Creators: A Survey of 5,800 British Designers, Fine Artists, Illustrators and Photographers. *CIPPM Project Report*. In Europe, see: Willekens, Siongers, Pissens and Lievens (2019) Behind the Screens: European survey on the remuneration of audiovisual authors. *FERA Report*; Europe Economics, Guibault and Salamanca (2016) Remuneration of authors of books and scientific journals, translators, journalists and visual artists for the use of their works. *A study prepared for the European Commission DG Communication Networks, Content & Technology*. In Australia, see: Australia Council for the Arts (2017) Making Art Work: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia <Australia Council, 2017> <<https://australiacouncil.gov.au/advocacy-and-research/making-art-work/>>; Giblin (n.d.) The Author's Interest (The Author's Interest, n.d.)

Indeed, at the time of writing this report, we are witnessing the largest stoppage and withdrawal of labour during the Writers Guild of America strike to improve working conditions for creators. Many of the key issues in this labour dispute are concerned with the behaviours of cultural gatekeepers and intermediaries who publish creators' work (e.g., Netflix).<sup>2</sup>

By focussing on the indie author, this report explores what happens when a creator bypasses these traditional gatekeepers, whether through disintermediation, or intermediation of a different kind. The advent of the Kindle in 2007 saw the wide uptake of direct-to-reader eBook publication, which has since promised both the subversion of expectations of how 'writing should work', but also exposes the author to new risks typically borne by a trade press (e.g., dissemination and promotion of work). As the first survey and analysis of its kind, this report explores how authors sustain themselves when they are the creative directors of their own works, with all the promise and risk that such a task entails.

## Method

**Collection:** Data were gathered via an independent, online survey commissioned by ALLi, and conducted by publishing research and strategist consultancy, SKS Advisors, overseen by publishing analysts, The Future of Publishing. The survey was circulated via email lists and social media between 26 February and 10 March 2023 and was available globally to potential respondents. No financial incentives were offered to respondents to complete the survey. A copy of the survey is included in the appendix to this report.

The survey received a total of 2,539 responses, 2,263 (89%) of which were from 'primary occupation' indie authors, being defined as authors who have self-published at least one book and who spend at least 50% of their working time on writing and self-publishing activities. We dropped two (erroneous) outlier observations for a total of 2,261 observations.

**Analysis:** The initial report published by ALLi consisted of descriptive, summary statistics giving an overview of the characteristics of indie authors.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of this report is instead to

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<<https://authorsinterest.org/>>. In Canada, see: The Writers' Union of Canada (2015) Devaluing Creators, Endangering Creativity. *The Writers' Union of Canada Project Report*. In the US, see: Yuvaraj, Giblin, Russo-Batterham and Grant (2021) US Copyright Termination Notices 1977-2020: Introducing New Datasets. *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, 19(1); Garcia (2020) Contracts and Copyright: Contemporary Musician Income Streams in O'Connor (ed) *The Oxford Handbook of Music Law and Policy*, Oxford University Press; Yuvaraj and Giblin (2019) Are contracts enough? An empirical study of author rights in Australian publishing agreements. *Melbourne University Law Review*, 44(1).

<sup>2</sup> Glynn (2023) Hollywood strike: Late night comedy shows to go dark as writers' walkout begins (BBC News, 2 May 2023) <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-65447046>>

<sup>3</sup> ALLi (2023) Author Income Survey: Media Links and Summary of Findings (ALLi, date unknown) <<https://selfpublishingadvice.org/income-survey-2023-media-links/>>

provide in-depth analysis of income factors which can be determinative in influencing self-publishing income. In brief, we investigated the specific characteristics of an author, whether demographic or professional, which could be influential in affecting their income.

As the survey enabled respondents to skip questions by design, we did not dismiss partial responses and instead considered all valid responses in our analysis. As such, the analysis presented in this report may not account for 100% of all 2,261 valid responses when we consider specific sub-sets of authors.

Nor did we apply any statistical weights to make the survey more representative of the total writing population. As with our approach in previous earnings surveys, there is inherent instability about how we define authors (especially indie authors). With this particular dataset, there was also uncertainty about who has access to a link to the survey, which was circulated widely on social media.

To ensure parity of treatment of income from respondents across different countries and who reported income in different currencies, all income reported here was calculated by a simplified exchange to USD based on the average exchange rates in 2022.<sup>4</sup>

To ensure we captured the most accurate picture of the 'typical' experience of an indie author, we calculated all annual earnings using the median. This is to account for skews in the data from 'superstar' earners which can artificially inflate the average income, usually calculated by the mean (the highest earner reported an income of 11,000,000 USD in 2022 and 4,100,000 USD in 2021 respectively).

Finally, we make comparisons throughout this report between the data present here and the findings of a series of longitudinal surveys of the broader writing population in the UK,<sup>5</sup> many of whom rely on traditional (trade) modes of publishing. Nonetheless, we caution that both populations from these respective surveys have very different characteristics that make direct and precise comparisons difficult.<sup>6</sup> As such, we make comparisons between the findings of both

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<sup>4</sup> Exchange Rates (date unknown) US Dollar (USD) to British Pound (GBP)(Exchange Rates, date unknown) <<https://www.exchangerates.org.uk/USD-GBP-exchange-rate-history.html>>

<sup>5</sup> See Thomas, Battisti and Kretschmer (2022) UK Authors' Earnings and Contracts 2023 <<https://www.create.ac.uk/project/creative-industries/2022/12/08/authors-earnings-and-contracts/>> - 21% of all primary occupation authors self-published material in the past.

<sup>6</sup> e.g., The previous report was only issued to members of a UK collecting society, whereas the present survey has global respondents. We also note that the present survey has a more detailed demographic profile and nuanced consideration of business strategies and techniques particular to the population of indie authors.

reports where this may be helpful for identifying general trends in the writing market, but find no merit or justification for an exhaustive point-by-point comparison.

## 1. Income overview

The typical income for an indie author in 2022 is approx. 12,755 USD. Whilst for most countries this income is not concurrent with a minimum wage,<sup>7</sup> we note that the survey design only captured income data derived from writing or self-publishing business *exclusively*. Many authors will usually be supported by supplementary income (a 'day job' - see section 4.3) which may be captured by a wider framing of income data in future studies.

We also note that, when comparing this typical income to our findings from the general writing population in the UK, indie authors' income from writing and publishing activities alone is higher than for authors who use traditional publication routes (following a simple exchange from median incomes of 7,000 GBP to 8,800 USD). This represents an almost 50% difference between those who exclusively identify as indie authors, versus those who work with traditional publishers.

Table 1 Median income of indie authors in USD

2022	12,754.56(1,850)
2021	8,487.6(1,844)

We also note a sizeable 50% increase in income for indie authors from 2022 from typical earnings in 2021 (approx. 8,488 USD). This increase in income is concurrent with the self-perception of indie authors, which also suggests they perceive their income as increasing year on year (almost 60% reporting that their income is 'increasing'). This is a promising trajectory, and future, longitudinal studies may confirm if this increase is sustainable and traceable over time.

Table 2 'Is your self-publishing income increasing or decreasing year on year?'

	Increasing	Staying the same	Decreasing	Don't know
All respondents	1,106	367	309	68

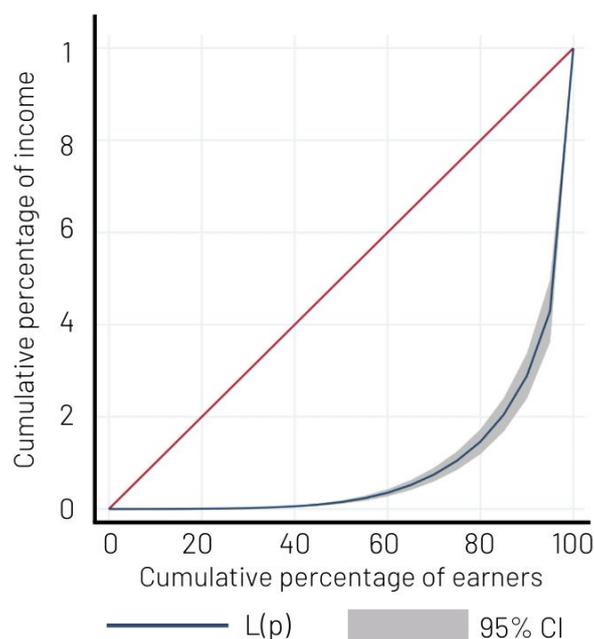
<sup>7</sup> US Department of Labour (date unknown) Minimum Wage <<https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/wages/minimumwage>> In the US, minimum wage is mandated federally at 7.25 USD per hour, amounting to 15,080 USD per annum.

## 1.1. Distribution of earnings

As with all creative industries, indie writers work in a 'winner takes all' market: inevitably, established, superstar authors with extensive networks will receive a disproportionately bigger slice of the total net worth of writing, compared to the less established, more typical life of an indie author.

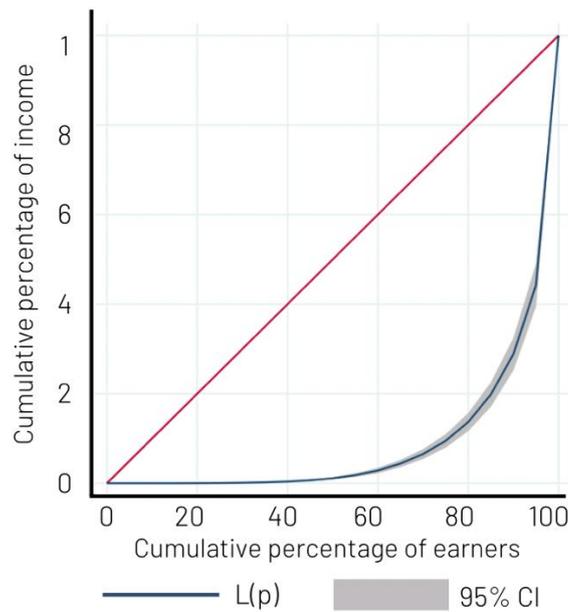
In line with our expectations of how cultural markets work, we find that, across the total indie author population, there is a highly unequal distribution of income. In 2022, the top 1% earned 1,200,000 USD (which represents the 31% of the total revenues) and the top 10% earned 190,000 USD (which represents the 71% of the total revenues). Likewise, in 2021, the top 1% earned 1,000,000 USD (which represents the 27% of the total revenues in 2021) and the top 10% 165,084 USD (which represents the 71% of the total revenues in 2021). The classic 'long tail' of income distribution is represented in the Lorenz curves in figures 1 and 2.<sup>8</sup>

Figure 1 Lorenz curve showing distribution of income in USD (2022)



<sup>8</sup> Negative values were deleted to compute the Lorenz curves.

Figure 2 Lorenz curve showing distribution of income in USD (2021)



We also used the Gini coefficient measurement to analyse inequality in income distribution,<sup>9</sup> finding the 2022 Gini coefficient in USD is 0.82 and, 0.809 in 2021. Both of these coefficients are higher than in our survey of the traditional publishing authors in the UK (stabilising around the 0.7 mark), suggesting that income is more unequally distributed for indie authors than general population. We note that this, highly unequal, distribution, is typical of cultural markets and in this sense is operating as expected.

## 2. Demographic profile

In our previous surveys of traditional publishing authors' earnings, we found significant gaps in pay based on their particular demographic group, mostly notably between the earnings of different genders and ethnicities. In theory, the self-publishing model *de-intermediarises* writing: there should be no 'gatekeeper' moderating entry to the market or discriminating arbitrarily on pay based on an author's characteristics. Perhaps more so than with the traditional publishing model, we would expect work to be valued more so on its merits, rather than by what a publisher is willing to pay, or the risk they are willing to bear, on an author from a particular demographic group. This analysis gave us an opportunity to test these assumptions in a detailed demographic profile of indie authors.

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<sup>9</sup> This is a measure of statistical inequality designed to reflect the difference in net worth between individuals. If the coefficient is close to 1 (or 100% inequality) it means one author possesses all the net worth among the sample; if the coefficient is closer to 0, then net worth is equally dispersed.

## 2.1. Age

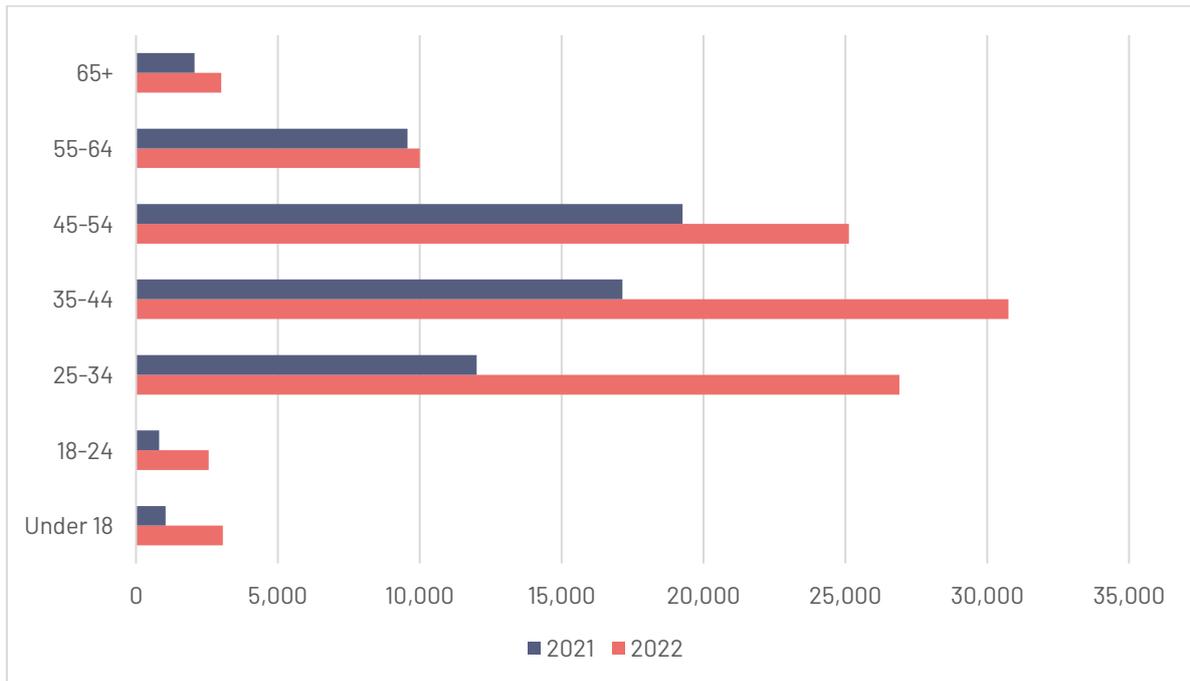
Age is an important variable which can affect self-publishing income, mostly as a proxy for establishment in the market. With digital publishing accelerating in 2007, it is also possible to estimate which (very young) authors are 'born self-published', or those that have perhaps moved into this new model.

In line with the findings of our survey of traditional publishing authors, indie authors' earnings cluster around peak working ages, namely between ages 25 – 64 (with the highest income derived between ages 35-44 at 30,752 USD, and highest increase in income between years from ages 25-34 at 124%). Income for those very young (under 18) 'born self-published' authors is very low – but we also caution that the number of respondents for this category is too small to infer to the general writing population (n=2). The 65+ category offers a more robust finding, with older (presumably many retired) writers earning a very low income compared to the general indie author population (approx. 24%).

*Table 3 Median income of indie authors by age in USD*

	Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
2022	3,060 (2)	2,560 (13)	26,908 (147)	30,752 (393)	25,130 (490)	10,000 (425)	3,000 (371)
2021	1,040 (2)	817.425 (12)	12,010.4 (146)	17,139.95 (392)	19,259.8 (489)	9,573.6 (423)	2,063.55 (371)

Figure 3 Bar chart showing median earnings in USD, by age



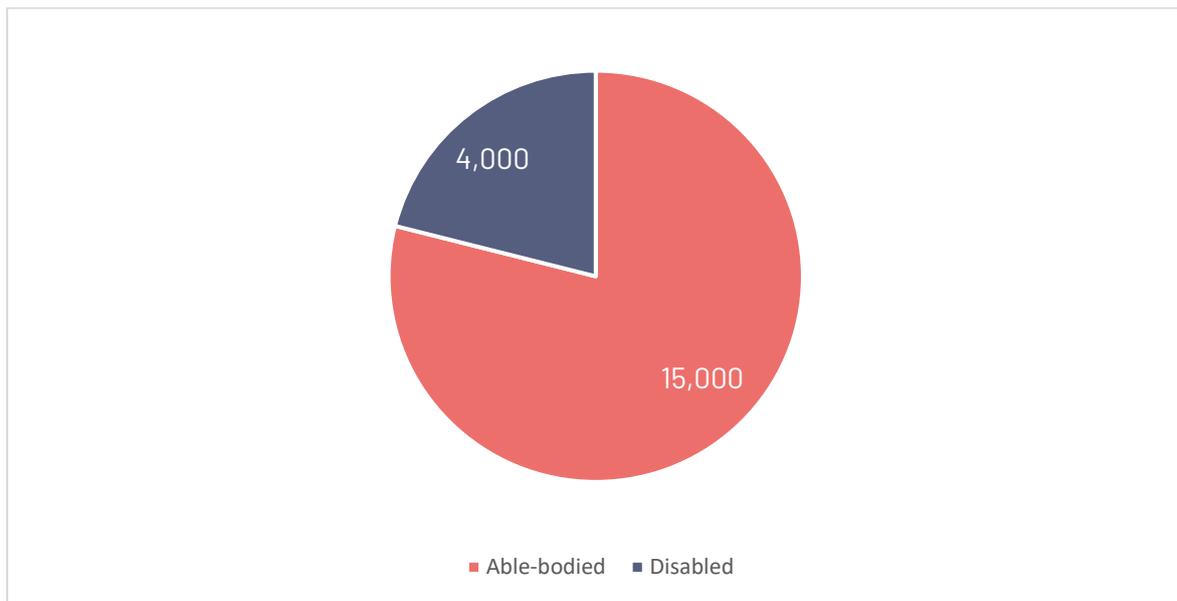
## 2.2. Disability

In previous surveys of authors who use traditional publishing models, we did not account for disability as a factor in our demographic analysis, and thus cannot make comparisons across reports. However, the findings from this survey suggest a bleak reality for disabled authors, earning only 27% (more than three times less) of the typical earnings of able-bodied authors in 2022. This may offer explanatory value also for the very low levels of income for authors in the 65+ age category, as many disabilities are acquired over time.

Table 4 Median income of indie authors by disability in USD

	No	Yes
2022	15,000 (1,637)	4,000 (205)
2021	10,000 (1,631)	2,000 (205)

Figure 4 Pie chart showing median incomes of able-bodied and disabled authors in 2022 (USD)



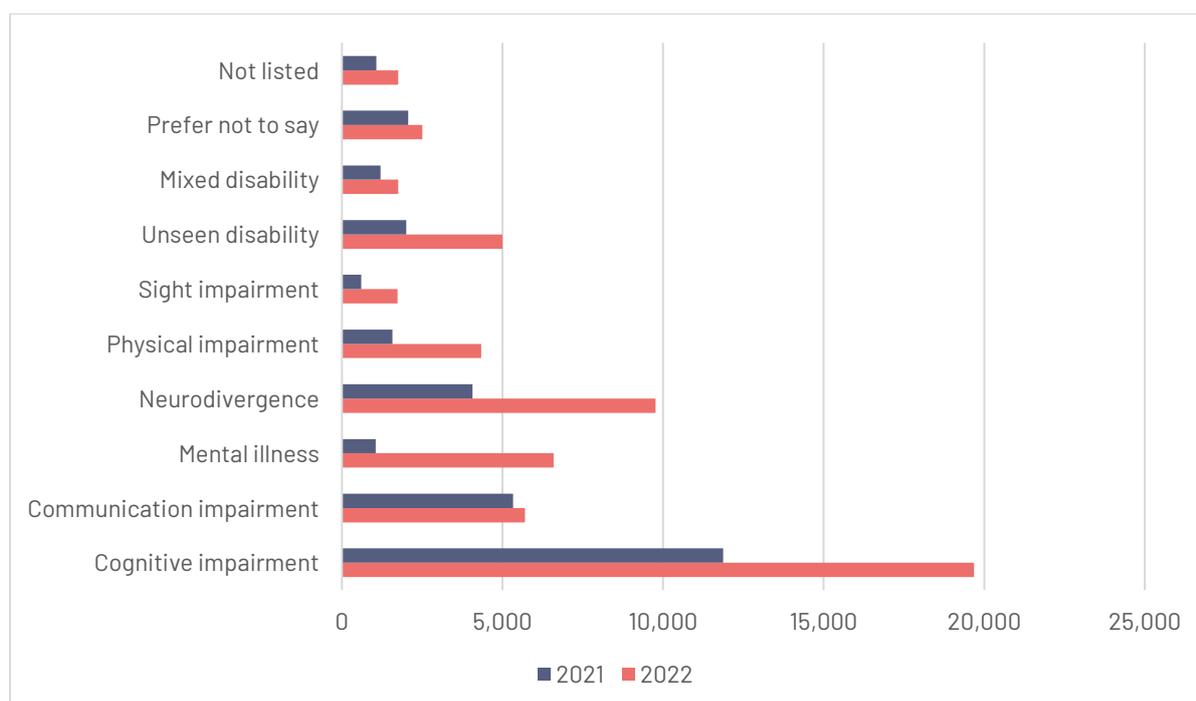
We also examined a number of sub-factors, considering whether specific types of disability were more affecting on income than others. We found that authors with sight impairments, mixed disabilities, and unlisted disabilities earn the least amongst other disabled authors (1,731.6, 1,754 and 1753.2 USD respectively), whereas authors with cognitive impairments or neurodivergences earn more than the typical author with a disability (19,683.52 and 9,769.25 USD respectively).

Further (qualitative) research will be needed to confirm why these disparities arise between sub-groups. Based on the (limited) qualitative evidence we received from authors in traditional publishing models (mainly in respect of their experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic), authors with neurodivergences reported that self-publishing and remote work was generally less stressful and more accommodating for authors with disabilities. This allowed them to write more consistently, and promote their work more effectively, than when situated in a 'traditional' setting. Nonetheless, it seems that for some disabilities, particularly sight impairment, there may be substantial barriers to access and sustainability in a writing career.

Table 5 Median income of indie authors by disability type in USD

	2022	2021
Cognitive impairment	19,683.52 (18)	11,870.67 (18)
Communication impairment	5,700 (14)	5,331.775 (14)
Mental illness	6,592.25 (54)	1,052.604 (54)
Neurodivergence	9,769.25 (68)	4,063.55 (68)
Physical impairment	4,334.4 (60)	1,575.42 (60)
Sight impairment	1,731.66 (13)	600 (13)
Unseen disability	5,000 (107)	2,000 (107)
Mixed disability	1,754 (19)	1,200 (19)
Prefer not to say	2,500 (7)	2,063.55 (7)
Not listed	1,753.2 (24)	1,075 (24)

Figure 5 Bar chart showing median earnings in USD, by disability type



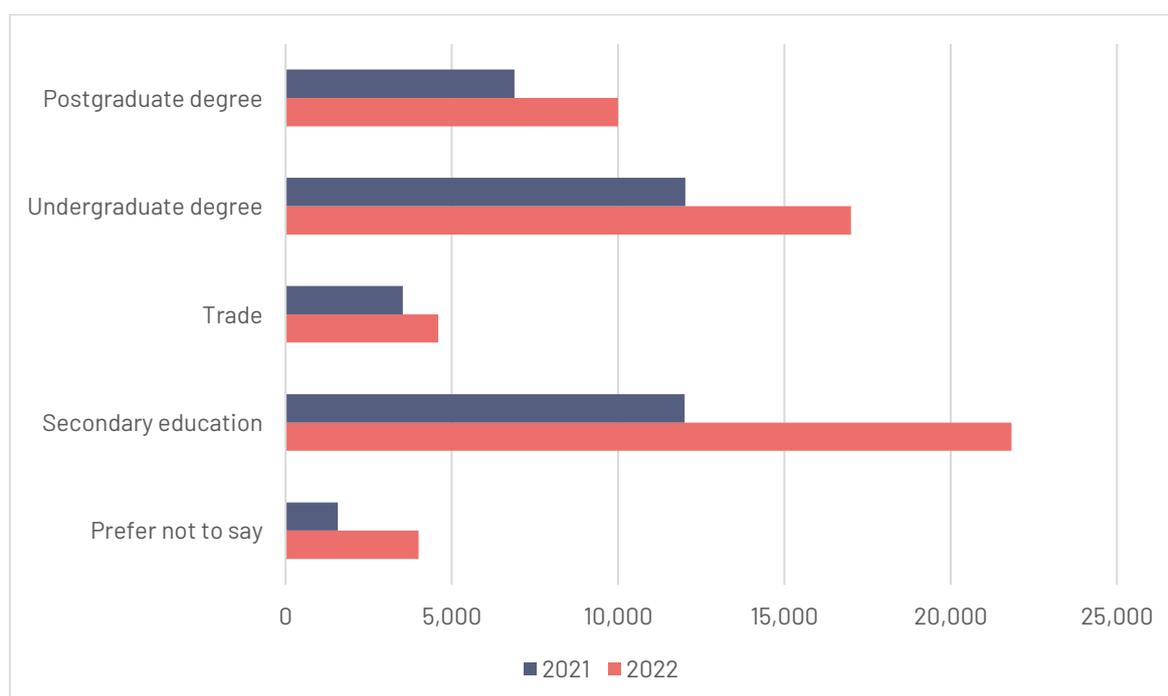
### 2.3. Education

As a general rule, authors earn more as their education level increases. However, whilst most indie authors have an undergraduate or postgraduate degree (38% + 42%), authors whose highest level of education is in secondary school receive a higher income overall (21,825 USD). We also note a drop-off in income where authors hold a postgraduate degree – decreasing from 17,000 USD for an undergraduate degree to 10,000 USD.

Table 6 Median income of indie authors by highest level of education in USD

	Prefer not to say	Secondary education	Trade	Undergraduate de	Postgraduate degree
2022	4,000 (39)	21,825 (199)	4,588 (112)	17,000 (701)	10,000 (790)
2021	1,569.35 (38)	12,000 (199)	3,521.382 (112)	12,020.8 (699)	6,878.5 (787)

Figure 6 Bar chart showing median earnings in USD, by highest level of education



We expected that the differences in income across different education levels could be explained by the genre of writing in which an author specialises, particularly if that genre requires a higher or lower degree of education (e.g., writing in a highly technical or academic discipline), which we explore in section 3.1.

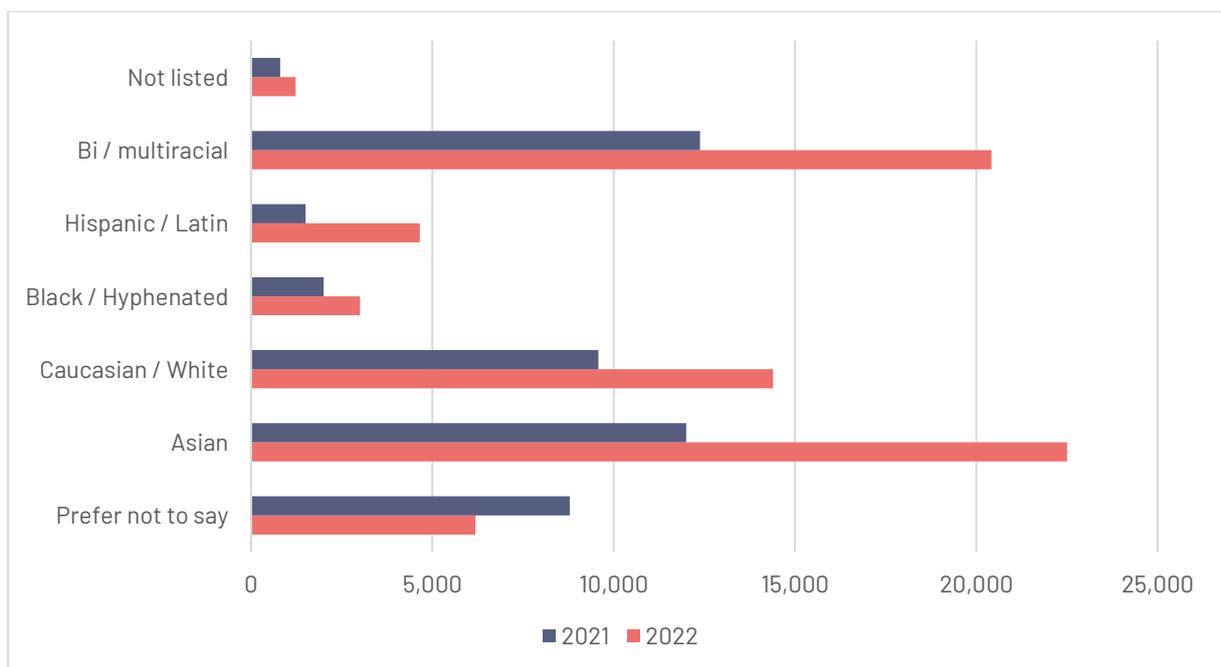
## 2.4. Ethnicity

Almost all authors from different ethnic groups have experienced an increase in earnings (with the exception of those in the 'Prefer not to say' category). Whilst we caution the low number of respondents from non-white groups, Asian and bi/multiracial authors appear to be earning a typically higher income overall (22,500 USD).

Table 7 Median income of indie authors by ethnicity in USD

	Prefer not to say	Asian	Caucasian / White	Black / Hyphenated	Hispanic / Latin	Bi / multiracial	Not listed
2022	6,184.5 (81)	22,500 (33)	14,396.28 (1587)	3,000 (59)	4,654 (25)	20,422.46 (25)	1,227.675 (30)
2021	8,783.175 (80)	12,000 (33)	9,573.6 (1583)	2,000 (59)	1,500 (25)	12,381.3 (25)	797.8 (29)

Figure 7 Bar chart showing median earnings in USD, by ethnicity



When comparing with the findings of our survey of traditional publishing authors, we find that the disparity in income between ethnic groups in the *indie population* is less severe. Nonetheless, we see a consistent trend in the typical incomes of black authors, and authors in unlisted categories, to be disproportionately low compared with other ethnic groups (3,000 and 1,227 USD respectively).

## 2.5. Gender

Unlike the population of the authors in our survey of traditional publishing models (an almost 50/50 gender split), almost 70% of indie authors are cisgender women.<sup>10</sup> We also find in the

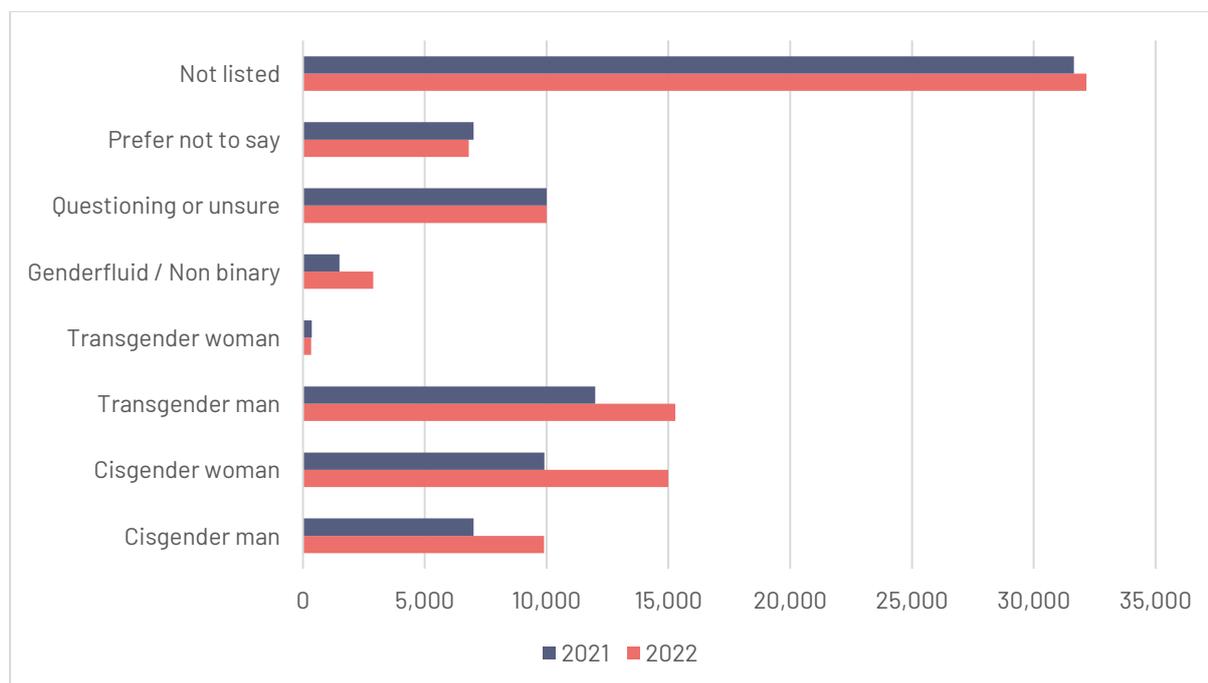
<sup>10</sup> We reclassified a number of responses that were not listed when we were able to infer from the context of the additional information that the author was 'cis'

earnings data a *reverse gender gap*, with cisgender women typically earning considerably more than cisgender men for a difference of 40.94% between these groups: this is almost a mirror reflection of the gender pay gap of 41.4% between cisgender men and cisgender women in the traditional publishing survey. This is a strong indication that indie publishing models may be more enabling, and sustainable for cisgender women, when compared with a traditional publishing route.

*Table 8 Median income of indie authors by gender in USD*

	2022	2021
Cisgender man	9,895.2 (411)	7,000 (411)
Cisgender woman	14,989.43 (1,252)	9,907.791 (1,247)
Transgender man	15,285.6 (5)	12,000 (5)
Transgender woman	340.1475 (1)	356.3063 (1)
Genderfluid / Non binary	2,881 (29)	1,500 (29)
Questioning or unsure	10,000 (5)	10,000 (5)
Prefer not to say	6,800 (98)	7,000 (98)
Not listed	32,159.4 (9)	31,641.1 (9)

Figure 8 Bar chart showing median earnings in USD, by gender identity



Whilst there are very small number of respondents for trans\*, genderfluid/non-binary, and questioning or unsure authors, typical incomes for these genders are very low when compared with cisgender counterparts. Likewise, the very number of respondents in these groups for our survey of traditional publishing authors (2, 7 and 13 respectively) makes it difficult to extrapolate these findings to the broader population of gender groups.

## 2.6. Location

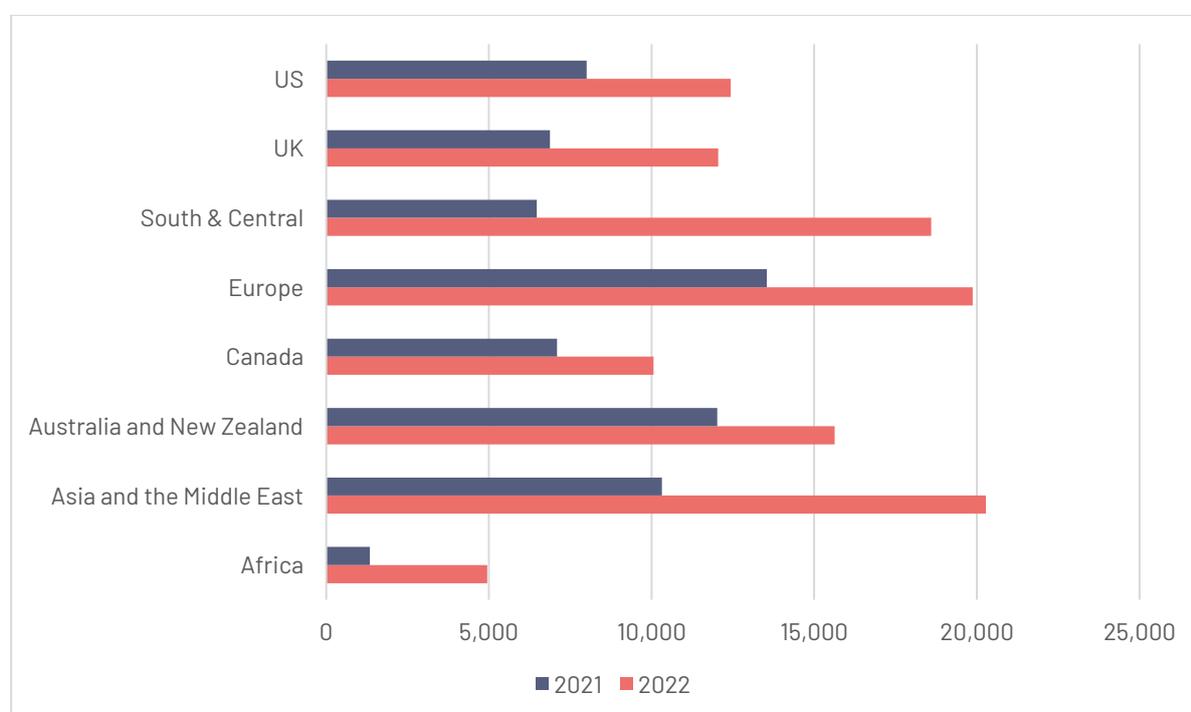
Whilst most indie authors are based in the US, higher typical incomes are evident elsewhere, notably in Asia and the Middle East (for a typical income of over 20,000 USD, cautioning on the low number of responses for this location) and closely followed by Europe (19,874 USD). Comparatively, authors from Africa earn disproportionately low income (less than 5,000 USD in 2022). This suggests that, whilst many self-publishing models are in theory borderless, there is some strategic benefit to being present in specific, geographic cultural markets.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> As we do not consider the UK as a cohesive in the survey of traditional publishing authors, we do not make a direct comparative analysis here.

Table 9 Median income of indie authors by location in USD

	Africa	Asia and the Middle East	Australia and New Zealand	Canada	Europe	South & Central	UK	US
2022	4,950 (6)	20,276.75 (22)	15,633 (152)	10,058.24 (136)	19,874.11 (146)	18,600 (6)	12,049.88 (381)	12,437 (1,001)
2021	1343.925 (6)	10,314.95 (22)	12,020.8 (152)	7,090.1 (136)	13,538.95 (146)	6,475 (6)	6,878.5 (378)	8,000 (998)

Figure 9 Bar chart showing median earnings in USD, by location



## 2.7. Sexual orientation

Straight indie authors make up the largest percentage of the overall population of this survey (79%). However, the percentage of LGBTQIA+ indie authors is higher than what is estimated in the general population (13% compared with the estimated 3.5%), making for robust comparison between these groups.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, we find that LGBTQIA+ indie authors typically earn more than other authors with other sexual orientations, including straight authors, across both years surveyed. This suggests that, to the extent that traditional publishing models ‘gatekeep’ or

<sup>12</sup> Gates (2011) How Many People are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender? (UCLA Williams Institute, April 2011) <<https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/how-many-people-lgbt/>>

moderate entry and sustainability of writing based on sexuality (whether as an attribute of the author or perhaps of the writing itself), self-publishing routes appear to be more diverse and enabling.

Table 10 Median income of indie authors by sexual orientation in USD

	Heterosexual	LGBTQIA+	Questioning or unsure	Prefer not to say	Not listed
2022	12,645.6 (1426)	15,280.1 (197)	2,881 (19)	16,000 (140)	14,000 (28)
2021	8,384.3 (1422)	9,953.896 (196)	2,200 (19)	9,230.129 (140)	17,000 (28)

Figure 10 Bar chart showing median earnings in USD, by sexual orientation



### 3. Creative direction

We accounted for differences in earnings of authors depending on the quality of their writing, which we examined by the genre of writing, and the frequency of publication. For many of these categories, due to the particular characteristics of the indie population and the survey design, there is no direct comparison possible to the traditional publication survey findings.

### 3.1. Genres

Indie authors write most frequently in Romance (27%), Fantasy/SciFi/Speculative (18%), and Crime/Thriller/Detective (15%) genres. Likewise, Romance and Crime/Thriller/Detective earnings are higher than the typical income of an indie author (38,800 and 18,893 USD respectively) with high respective increase in revenues across years (24.14% and 17.58% respectively). The highest earning genre (New Adult) is skewed by the presence of a high earner among a very low number of respondents (2) making it difficult to extrapolate this as a trend or indicative of its performance in the general indie author population.

Table 11 Median income of indie authors by genre in USD

	2022	2021
Advice & How To	30,000 (43)	20,000 (43)
Biography	795.59 (8)	220.112 (8)
Children's	3,000 (89)	2,013 (89)
Cookery & Diet	21,076 (1)	14,196 (1)
Crime/Thriller/Detective	18,893.02 (270)	11,967 (268)
Erotica	8,993.298 (10)	7,892.409 (10)
Fantasy/SciFi/Speculative	7,982 (330)	5,216 (330)
General Fiction	1,056.605 (64)	923.21 (64)
General Nonfiction	13,538.32 (54)	5,005.2 (54)
Historical Fiction	7,421.4 (129)	7,527.143 (128)
Horror	2,324 (24)	1,350 (17)
Illustrated/Photography	100 (2)	60 (2)
LGBTQ+	12,647.6 (46)	10,250 (45)
Memoir	2,473.8 (21)	1,430.5 (20)
Multimedia	17,370 (1)	22,539 (1)
Narrative Nonfiction	10,000 (13)	7,000 (13)
New Adult	145,447.6 (2)	124,754.2 (2)
Poetry	1,484.28 (11)	1,650.84 (11)
Psychology	620.696 (6)	1,245.743 (6)
Romance	38,800 (496)	25,134.04 (495)
Short/Flash Fiction Collection	525 (4)	290 (4)
Women's Fiction	9,225.6 (45)	6,878.5 (45)

Young Adult	1,686.08 (35)	687.85 (35)
Other <sup>13</sup>	10,000 (151)	8,000 (151)

Figure 11 Bar chart showing median earnings in USD, by genre (excluding New Adult)

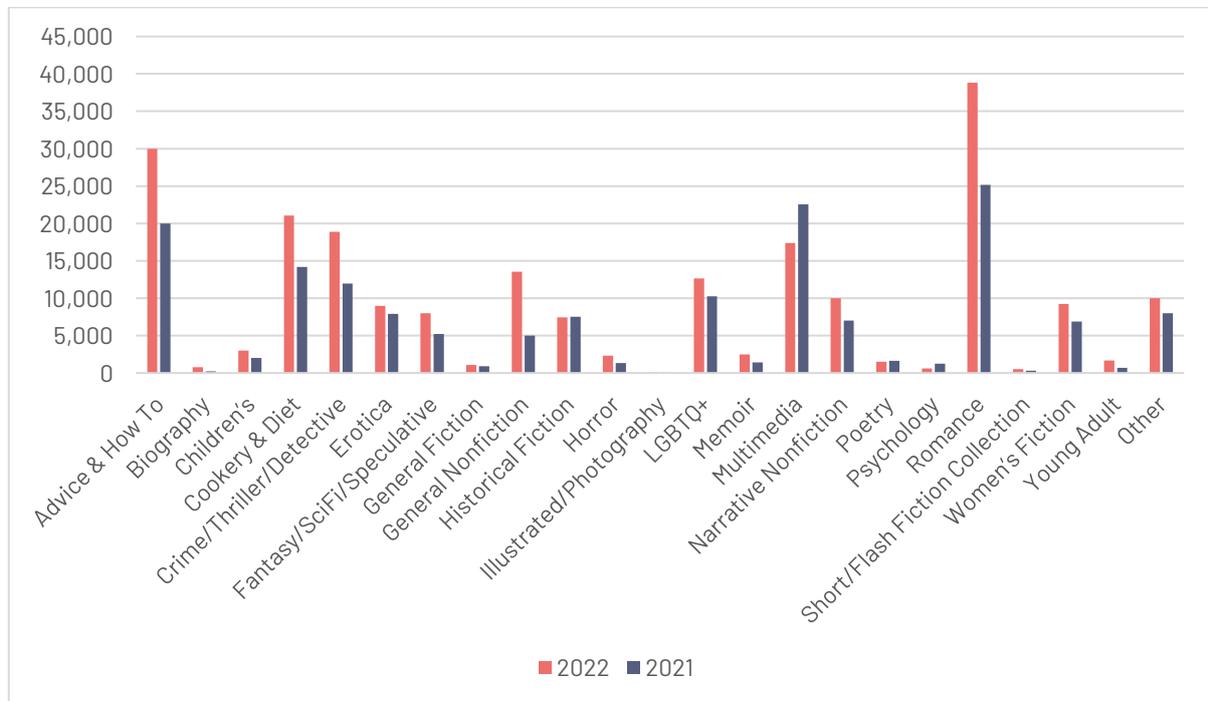


Table 12 Median growth rates by genre in USD

	Median Growth
Advice & How To	16.13% (40)
Biography	5.53% (6)
Children's	20% (78)
Cookery & Diet	48.46% (1)
Crime/Thriller/Detective	17.58% (248)
Erotica	16.19% (10)
Fantasy/SciFi/Speculative	25% (291)
General Fiction	-2.38% (55)
General Nonfiction	21.48% (49)
Historical Fiction	11.35% (113)
Horror	-18.65% (15)

<sup>13</sup> Qualitative responses included other genres such as: cosy, religious, mind/body/spirit, and urban.

Illustrated/Photography	66.67% (1)
LGBTQ+	11.84% (38)
Memoir	19.88% (19)
Multimedia	-22.93% (1)
Narrative Nonfiction	11.90% (10)
New Adult	-9.73% (2)
Poetry	-10.09% (9)
Psychology	4.01% (4)
Romance	24.14% (462)
Short/Flash Fiction Collection	50.77% (4)
Women's Fiction	24.3% (42)
Young Adult	22.86% (29)
Other	8.49% (136)

We also accounted for differences between different demographic groups within genres,<sup>14</sup> using the most popular genres (Romance, Crime/Thriller and Fantasy) as robust groups for comparative analysis. Some demographic characteristics had too few numbers of respondents to make meaningful extrapolations to the wider population (e.g., between ethnic groups and locations), or distribution of income was too skewed between groups to explore meaningful differences between genre (e.g., between disabled and able-bodied writers).

When examining gender differences between genres, we found that Romance is overwhelmingly written by cisgender women (92.7%). Despite the very small number of cisgender men writing in Romance (n=5), they appear to earn marginally more on average. Cisgender women also account for the majority of Crime/Thriller (59.26%) works, typically earning more than cisgender men.

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<sup>14</sup> See e.g., The call for sponsors for the Women's Non-Fiction Prize (Women's Prize for Fiction (2023) Seeking Sponsors for Women's Non-Fiction, <<https://www.womensprizeforfiction.co.uk/features/features/news/seeking-sponsors-for-womens-non-fiction>>

Table 13 Median income of indie authors by ethnicity, grouped by primary genres, in USD

	Romance		Crime/Thriller		Fantasy	
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Cisgender man	39,000 (5)	32,000 (5)	13,133 (90)	6,939 (90)	10,382 (120)	9,519 (120)
Cisgender woman	37,671 (456)	25,000 (455)	23,416 (158)	12,135 (156)	7,211 (174)	4,122 (174)
Transgender man	2,503 (2)	6,004 (2)	-	-	-	-
Transgender woman	-	-	-	-	-	-
Genderfluid/ No binary	2,235 (9)	1,945 (9)	1,500 (1)	50 (1)	1,175 (8)	330 (8)
Questioning or unsure	-	-	-	-	10,000 (3)	10,000 (3)
Prefer not to say	46,103 (18)	31,154 (18)	19,071 (16)	15,395 (16)	5,813 (18)	6,087 (18)
Not listed	22,080 (2)	22,821 (2)	45,857 (3)	48,142 (3)	6,400 (1)	1,600 (1)

The (albeit very low number of) trans\*, genderfluid/non-binary and questioning or unsure authors are curiously absent from these dominant genres and instead write predominantly or exclusively for the LGBTQIA+ genre. This suggests that, whilst these communities are well represented as a percentage in this market, there is a tendency towards insularity when writing for the community, by the community.

When examining the interplay between genre and sexual orientation, we again find that LGBTQIA+ are featured prominently in the Romance genre (15%) and earn almost equivalent income with straight authors (a difference between revenues of 6%).

Table 14 Median income of indie authors by sexual orientation, grouped by primary genres, in USD

	Romance		Crime/Thriller		Fantasy	
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
Heterosexual / straight	38,440 (381)	27,243 (380)	18,554 (231)	10,912 (229)	8,000 (243)	6,000 (243)
LGBTQIA+	36,192 (76)	19,630 (76)	7,430 (12)	8,313 (12)	7,000 (43)	1,500 (43)

Questioning or unsure	14,500 (6)	7,000 (6)	-	-	8,900 (4)	8,000 (4)
Prefer not to say	44,184 (26)	31,154 (26)	21,916 (22)	18,377 (22)	13,734 (28)	7,529 (28)
Not listed	43,872 (4)	60,899 (4)	45,857 (3)	48,142 (3)	2,474 (5)	650 (5)

The Crime/Thriller genre is instead more associated with older authors, regardless of gender or sexual orientation: the highest percentage of 65+ authors, when compared with Romance and Fantasy authors, write in Crime/Thriller genres (52%). Despite their presence in this genre, the rewards are not manifesting in additional income, with an overall very low median income of 4,948 USD.

Table 15 Median income of indie authors by age, grouped by primary genres, in USD

	Romance		Crime/Thriller		Fantasy	
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021
18-24	6,000 (5)	5,939 (4)	-	-	7,112 (1)	2,064 (1)
25-34	49,972 (73)	22,000 (73)	2,950 (6)	1,177 (6)	7,108 (34)	2,672 (34)
35-44	59,000 (146)	30,000 (146)	47,000 (33)	30,265 (33)	30,752 (99)	11,967 (99)
45-54	43,053 (145)	37,144 (145)	46,000 (80)	31,000 (79)	9,324 (92)	6,537 (92)
55-64	20,250 (88)	16,213 (88)	18,142 (71)	12,407 (70)	5,558 (69)	4,244 (69)
65+	9,769 (38)	6,500 (38)	4,948 (79)	4,677 (79)	1,200 (35)	400 (35)

Finally, we examined the relationship between education levels, genre and typical incomes of indie authors, following our expectations that higher levels of education would be more useful for specialist/technical topics and genres. For example, in our surveys of traditional publishing authors, we found that authors with PhDs tended to fare better than authors with lower levels of education, with a median income of 30,000 GBP per annum. However, we also found that this level of education is also usually associated with a salaried position that is writing-adjacent (e.g.,

lecturer) and resultingly a fairly prescriptive route of publication through an academic or trade press.

Due to the low numbers of authors without a higher education degree, we focussed on authors with postgraduate and undergraduate degrees for comparisons across all genres. The evidence we found on the relationship between higher income and education levels specific to genre are mixed. No authors with undergraduate degrees write Advice & How To books, which are likely to be more technical and specialist by their nature. However, Psychology, a highly technical area, has overall very low income for postgraduate degree holders (261.392 USD). In the three most popular genres (Romance, Crime/Thriller and Fantasy) both postgraduate and undergraduate degree holders perform like for like. These results would require further explanatory value in further research.

*Table 16 Median income of indie authors by highest level of education, grouped by primary genres, in USD*

	Postgraduate degree	Undergraduate degree
Advice & How To	21,632.1(18)	-
Biography	2,100(5)	247.38(1)
Children's	2,000(37)	5,551.106(38)
Cookery & Diet	-	21,076(1)
Crime/Thriller/Detective	19,454.4(117)	19,393.02(94)
Erotica	5,986.596(3)	3,092.25(1)
Fantasy/SciFi/Speculative	8,043.041(136)	7,586(143)
General Fiction	1,298.745(30)	894.5(22)
General Nonfiction	4,000(31)	24,863(16)
Historical Fiction	8,629.963(70)	8,658.3(37)
Horror	4,658.5(6)	293.1453(5)
Illustrated/Photography	200(1)	-
LGBTQ+	16,079.7(19)	4,730(21)
Memoir	2,202.9(10)	26,593.35(4)
Multimedia	17,370(1)	-
Narrative Nonfiction	7,140.352(8)	40,000(5)
New Adult	-	145,447.6(2)
Poetry	615.04(7)	130,074,2(2)
Psychology	261.392(5)	70,000(1)

Romance	41,688 (177)	45,574.5 (216)
Short/Flash Fiction Collection	-	525 (4)
Women's Fiction	5,592.25 (24)	23,845.4 (16)
Young Adult	2,500 (17)	465.5 (8)
Other <sup>15</sup>	5,364.435 (67)	18,122 (48)

### 3.2. Frequency of publication

The majority of indie authors began their publishing careers after the advent of digital indie publishing and the establishment of the Kindle eBook market in 2007 (64% clustering after 2010, and a further 24% after 2020). Authors who began self-publishing either immediately before, (1990 - 1999) or during (2000 -2009) the establishment of digital indie publishing typically earn the most (28,079 and 25,000 USD respectively). This suggests that authors who began their self-publishing career before or during the establishment of the digital eBooks market have an 'early bird' advantage by establishing themselves in less crowded eBook marketplaces.

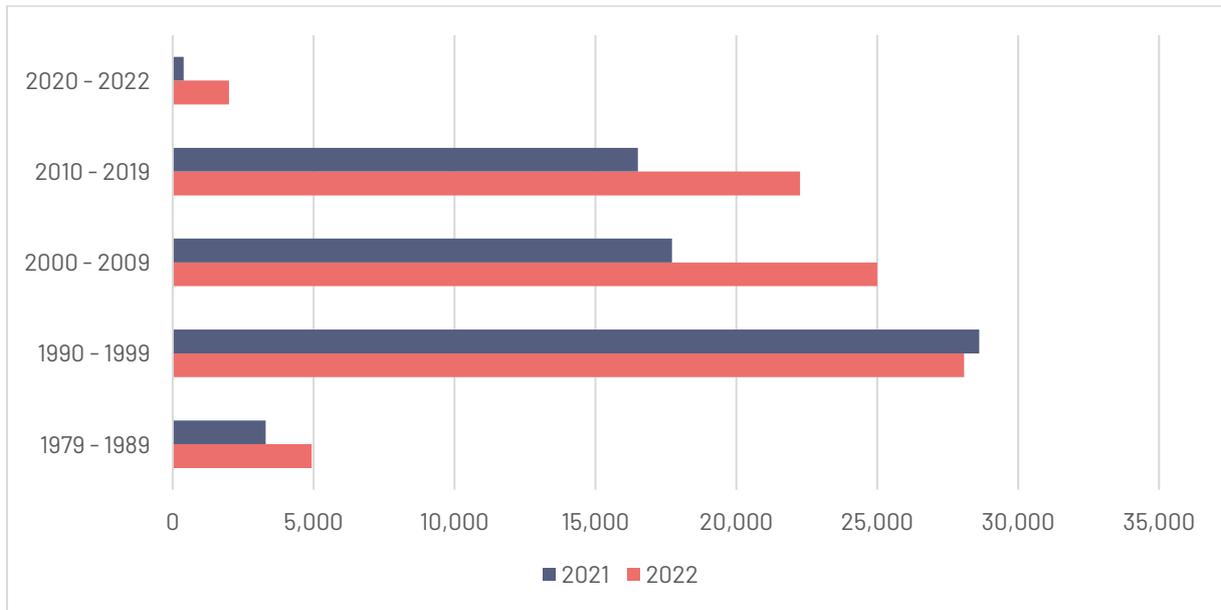
*Table 17 Median income of indie authors by year of first publication in USD*

	2022	2021
1979 - 1989 <sup>16</sup>	4,932.218 (30)	3,299.5 (30)
1990 - 1999	28,079.2 (60)	28,623 (60)
2000 - 2009	25,000 (148)	17,712.5 (148)
2010 - 2019	22,256.5 (1,175)	16,508.4 (1,174)
2020 - 2022	2,000 (437)	387.5 (432)

<sup>15</sup> Qualitative responses included other genres such as: cosy, religious, mind/body/spirit, and urban.

<sup>16</sup> Years were collected from respondents in free form but are grouped by decade to have enough number of observations for statistical analysis.

Figure 12 Bar chart showing median earnings in USD, by year of first publication

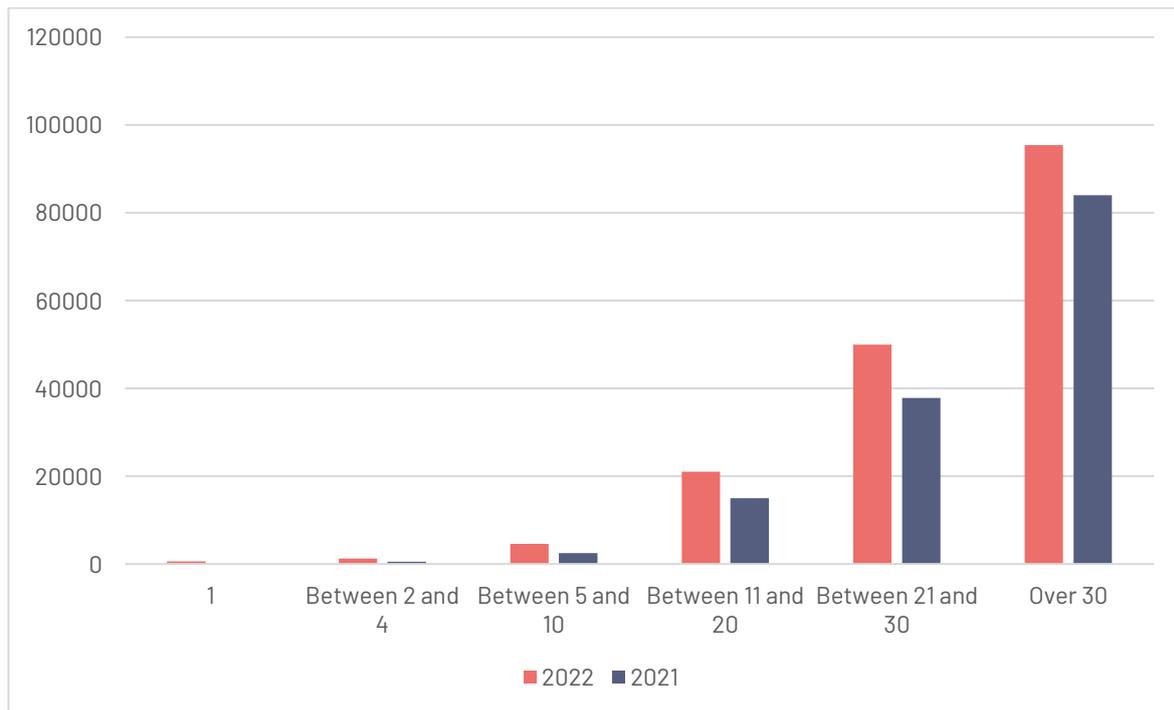


On the face of it, the sheer quantity of publications is very influential on income, with authors who have published over 30 books earning the highest typical incomes compared to those authors who publish less frequently (95,385 USD compared with e.g., just over 1,000 USD for authors who have published between 2–4 books). However, we make two cautions: first, that this is likely a cyclical relationship whereby more potential streams of revenue necessarily results in more revenue, and; second, certain genres lend themselves to more frequent publication (we found that most authors with high numbers of publications published in the Short/Flash Fiction and Erotica genres).

Table 18 Median income of indie authors by number of books published in USD

	2022	2021
1	618.45 (112)	0 (110)
2-4	1,254.35 (354)	521 (352)
5-10	4,600 (415)	2,513 (413)
11-20	21,000 (391)	15,000 (391)
21-30	50,000 (177)	37,856 (177)
Over 30	95,385 (401)	84,000 (401)

Figure 13 Bar chart showing median earnings in USD, by number of books published



#### 4. Business strategy

Whilst indie authors are fairly unique in the writing world, acting as their own *creative directors* determining the genre and pace of their publications, they are also responsible for making strategic, business decisions on how effectively exploit their work. As with our consideration of creative decision-making above, many of these categories are specific to the indie population and the survey design, and thus there are very few direct comparisons possible to the traditional publication survey findings.

##### 4.1. Business model

Whilst exclusive self-publishing is by far the most prevalent form of business model for indie authors (accounting for 50% of responses), hybrid models, utilising third-party publishers on occasion, is the most lucrative (typical earnings of 21,538 USD in 2022). Wide self-publishing, where books are distributed across multiple different platforms and aggregators, results in a typically far lower annual income, (6,800 USD) even when compared with exclusive self-publishing (19,000 USD).

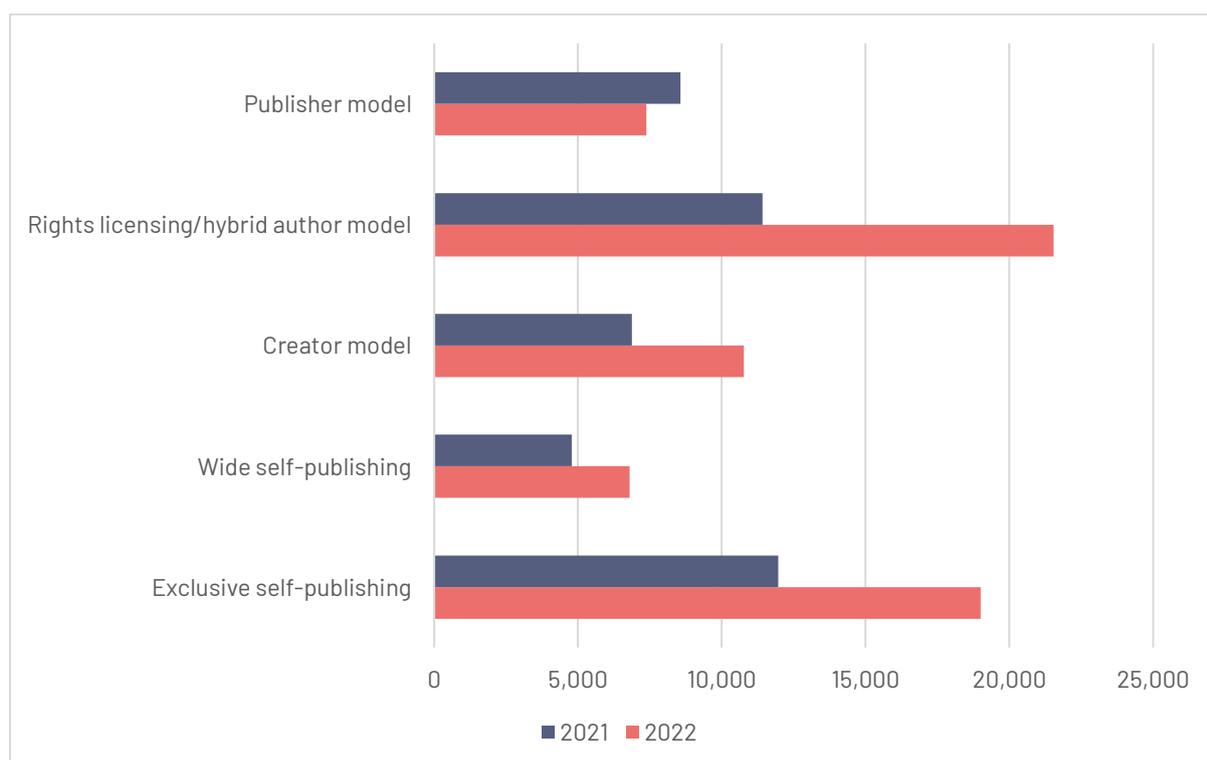
Whilst this may run counter to our expectations - that an author's work being present on as many platforms as possible would be beneficial - there appears to be an advantage to narrowly aligning oneself with a particular platform. Further evidence would be required to understand why this

phenomenon is present, but may be attributed to e.g., mastering a particular online system to most effectively exploit a work and promote its discoverability within that system.

Table 19 Median income of indie authors by business model type in USD

	2022	2021
Exclusive self-publishing	19,000 (831)	11,967 (827)
Wide self-publishing	6,800 (623)	4,786.8 (621)
Creator model	10,763.2 (231)	6,878.5 (231)
Rights licensing/hybrid author model	21,538 (122)	11,415 (122)
Publisher model	7,376.6 (43)	8,558.059 (43)

Figure 14 Bar chart showing median earnings in USD, by business model type



#### 4.2. Income generation: products

There are a number of products which may generate income for indie authors, the most common of which are eBooks and print on demand books, both of which stabilise between 14,000 and 15,000 USD in typical income. However, translations are the most lucrative income stream by some margin, with those who commission translations earning a typical income of 141,116.8 USD in 2022. Newer forms of income generation through memberships and subscriptions also

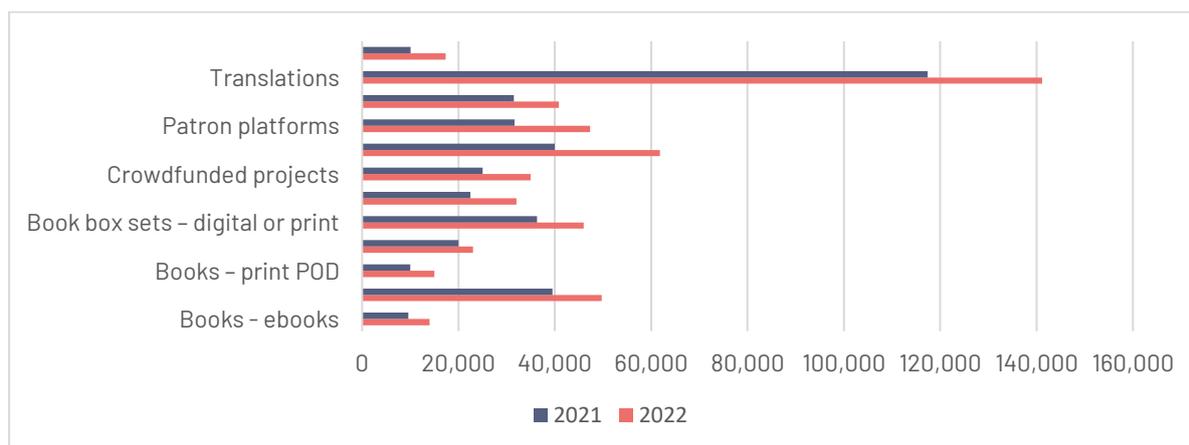
evidence increases in revenues between years than established methods of self-publishing products (55% and 50% respectively), suggesting both a willingness to test new methods of income generation, and a movement to ‘crowdfund’ income directly from readers.

Table 20 Median income of indie authors by product types in USD

	2022	2021
Books - ebooks	14,000 (1,800)	9,576.3 (1,800)
Books - audiobooks	49,724.5 (865)	39,519.5 (865)
Books - print POD	15,000 (1,661)	10,000 (1,661)
Books - offset	23,000 (106)	20,000 (106)
Book box sets - digital or print	45,987 (679)	36,318.48 (679)
Book series	32,000 (1,000)	22,477 (1,000)
Crowdfunded projects	35,000 (85)	25,000 (85)
Memberships or subscriptions - own website	61,843.76 (42)	40,000 (42)
Memberships or subscriptions - patron platforms	47,333.7 (157)	31,641.71 (157)
Merchandise	40,844 (170)	31,508.4 (170)
Translations	141,116.8 (212)	117,343 (212)
Other <sup>17</sup>	17,370 (148)	10,064.95 (148)

<sup>17</sup> This category included self-reported responses including: library lending fees, school visits, book fairs, commissions, ad revenues (from online platforms), merchandise, and NFTs.

Figure 15 Bar chart showing median earnings in USD, by product type



### 4.3. Income generation: services

Most authors take part in writing adjacent freelance work and copywriting. Yet, speaking and appearances (38,500 USD), and teaching of writing (37,000 USD) are the most lucrative services for indies. This is consistent with our findings from authors in traditional self-publishing, who regularly supplement income through added-value, writing-adjacent activities. In those earlier findings, we also found that authors' speaking and teaching services were being 'de-valued' following the Covid-19 pandemic, with online participation being expected *gratis*, compared with in-person offerings. As an important source of income for authors, parity of treatment and payment for online and offline appearances should be emphasised.

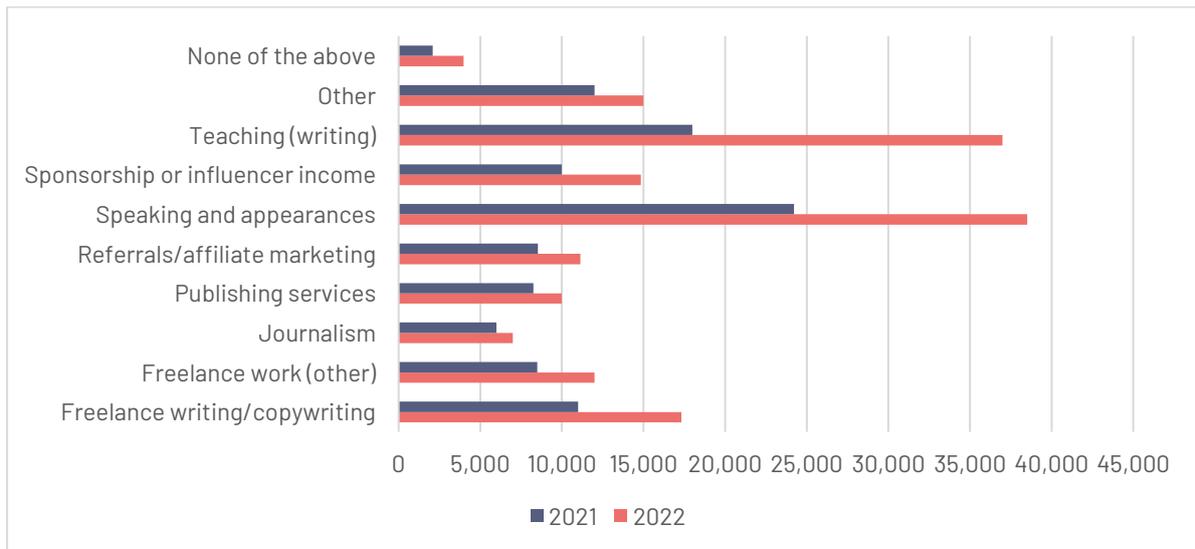
We also note the growth in income for modern income generation services, particularly sponsorship and influencer income (48%). As with crowdfunding strategies noted above, lessening the barriers between author and reader appears to have a positive effect on income.

Table 21 Median income of indie authors by service type in USD

	2022	2021
Freelance writing/copywriting	17,316.6 (1,086)	11,000 (1,086)
Freelance work (other)	12,000 (229)	8,493.8 (229)
Journalism	7,000 (165)	6,000 (165)
Publishing services	10,000 (66)	8,264.67 (66)
Referrals/affiliate marketing	11,132.1 (263)	8,529.34 (263)
Speaking and appearances	38,500 (115)	24,212.27 (115)

Sponsorship or influencer income	14,842.8 (259)	10,000 (259)
Teaching (writing)	37,000 (20)	18,000 (20)
Other	15,000 (214)	12,000 (214)
None of the above	3,979.04 (119)	2,093.775 (119)

Figure 16 Bar chart showing median earnings in USD, by service type



Journalism, by comparison, is amongst the lowest paid services (7,000 USD in 2022). Again, we find this is concurrent with the trends we found in the traditional publishing population which, despite finding a higher overall median income of 25,000 GBP, represented a drop in real terms of 23% since 2018. We expect that this is a limited, temporal effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, which was specifically disruptive to routes to journalistic earnings for travel or events-based journalism.

When we examined the qualitative answers provided by respondents to the 'Other' category, we estimate that around 99 of those authors also have 'day jobs' in addition to their self-publishing activities. This would be concurrent with our expectations of some other form of income being needed to support the, relatively low, typical income for self-publishing activities alone. Writers in this category support themselves through a diverse range of either writing, or non-writing adjacent activities, including: audio engineering, book design, consultations, ghost writing, lyric writing, script writing, streaming revenues (e.g., on Twitch), social media, secretarial work, as well as specialist trades such as psychotherapy and law.

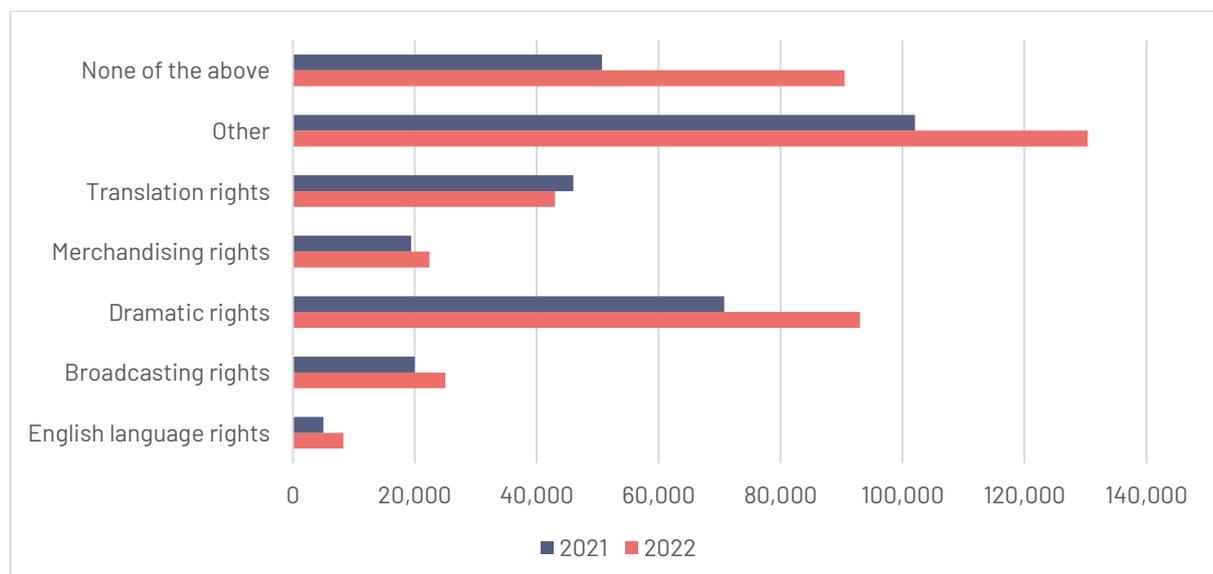
#### 4.4. Income generation: licences

Most authors derive income from English language rights licensing, with merchandising rights being both less frequently used, and less lucrative (22,416.4 USD). We found instead that the category with the highest typical income was from authors who derive income from 'Other' types of licences (130,349.1 USD). In qualitative responses to the survey, we found that the 'Other' category was predominantly comprised of audio/audiobook licencing revenue, which appears to be a particularly fast growing (28%) category of income generation.

Table 22 Median income of indie authors by licence type in USD

	2022	2021
English language rights	8,279.707 (1,483)	5,000 (1,483)
Broadcasting rights	25,000 (222)	20,000 (222)
Dramatic rights	93,000 (18)	70,768.2 (18)
Merchandising rights	22,416.4 (13)	19,376.9 (13)
Translation rights	43,000 (25)	46,000 (25)
Other	130,349.1 (179)	102,025.2 (179)
None of the above	90,500 (52)	50,712.75 (52)

Figure 17 Bar chart showing median earnings in USD, by licence type



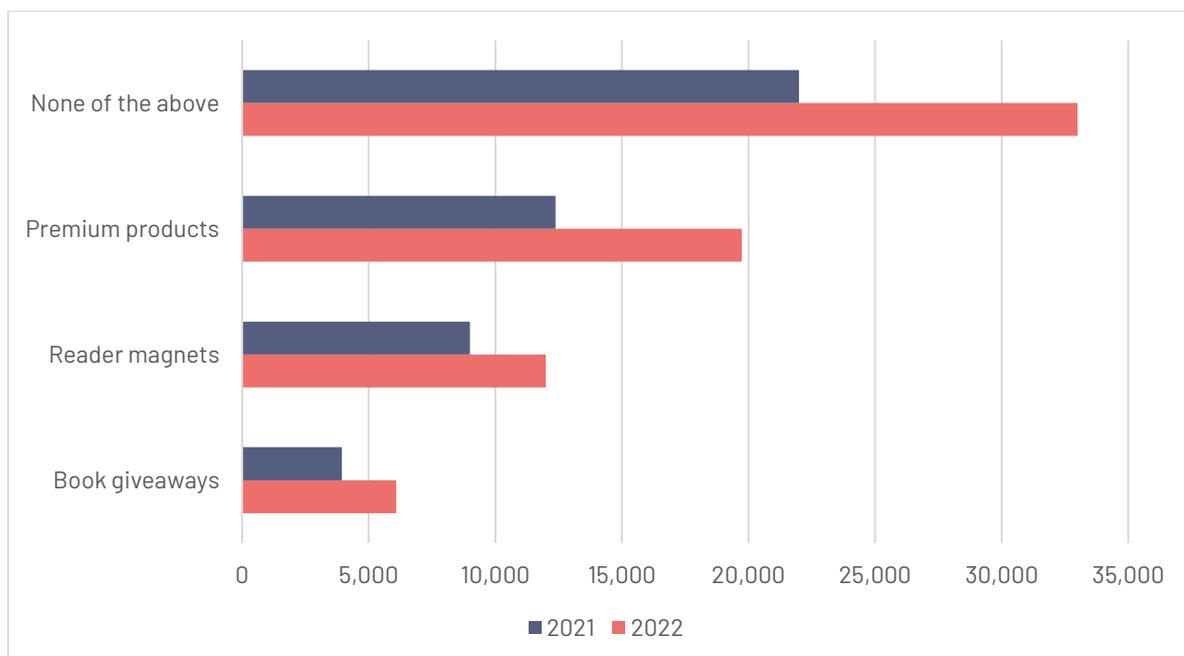
#### 4.5. Promotion of work

Without the authority of an established trade press, indie authors are often their own promoters, and rely on a number of strategies to entice readers, not including costs associated with e.g., book design or advertising materials. We found that most authors offer premium products to entice readers (e.g., exclusive merchandise, signed editions) and this is associated with a median income of 19,734 USD. Book giveaways are associated with the lowest levels of typical income (6,092.25 USD), which may be in part a by-product of foregoing a potential income generation route. Curiously, authors who earn the highest typical incomes utilise none of these 'attraction routes'; further research is needed to understand whether these are simply not used, or whether alternative, more successful strategies are employed.

Table 23 Median income of indie authors by promotion of work type in USD

	2022	2021
Book giveaways	6,092.25 (435)	3,935.5 (435)
Reader magnets	12,000 (960)	9,000 (960)
Premium products	19,734 (1,163)	12,381.3 (1,163)
None of the above	33,000 (205)	22,000 (205)

Figure 18 Bar chart showing median earnings in USD, by promotion types



## Resources

### [ALLi](#)

Global membership association for self-publishing authors.

### [ALCS](#)

A British Collective Management Organisation (CMO) that works to ensure writers are fairly compensated for any of their works that are copied, broadcast or recorded.

### [The Author's Interest](#)

An Australian Research Council Future Fellowship project which investigates the relationship between authors, copyright, and their earnings.

### CopyrightUser ([UK](#)) & ([EU](#))

An online resource aimed at making copyright law accessible to creators, media professionals, entrepreneurs, students and members of the public.

### [Self-Publishing Formula](#)

'One-stop shop' for self-publishing, including writing, marketing and selling self-published books.

## **Appendix: Survey**



## The Independent Author Income Survey

**ALLi is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to foster ethics and excellence in self-publishing. We empower authors through member advice and community, surveillance of the self-publishing sector, and advocacy for independent authors.**  
**[www.allianceindependentauthors.org](http://www.allianceindependentauthors.org)**

### **SURVEY FOCUS**

***The survey focus is on self-published authors writing in English who spend 50% or more of their working time in writing and publishing activities, so that we can make relevant comparisons with data from other, more "traditional" author surveys.***

\* 1. I have self-published at least one book and I spend at least 50% of my working time on writing and publishing activities.

Yes

No

2. I make a living as an author, earning \$20K+ a year, in the past two years.

Yes

No



Alliance of  
Independent  
Authors

## The Independent Author Income Survey

### BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

*We'd like to know a little bit about you, your writing and publishing background and genre.*

\* 3. My primary location of residence is (please select one):

- Africa
- Asia & the Middle East
- Australia & New Zealand
- Canada
- Europe
- South & Central America
- UK
- USA

\* 4. In what year did you publish for the first time? (Please view drop-down menu)

5. What is the primary genre in which you write?

- Advice & How To
- Biography
- Children's
- Cookery & Diet
- Crime/Thriller/Detective
- Erotica
- Fantasy/SciFi/Speculative
- General Fiction
- General Nonfiction
- Historical Fiction
- Horror
- Illustrated/Photography
- LGBTQ+
- Memoir
- Multimedia
- Narrative Nonfiction
- New Adult
- Poetry
- Psychology
- Romance
- Short/Flash Fiction Collection
- Women's Fiction
- Young Adult
- Other (please specify)

6. In what secondary genres do you write (please check all that apply)

- Advice & How To
- Biography
- Children's
- Cookery & Diet
- Crime/Thriller/Detective
- Erotica
- Fantasy/SciFi/Speculative
- General Fiction
- General Nonfiction
- Historical Fiction
- Horror
- Illustrated/Photography
- LGBTQ+
- Memoir
- Multimedia
- Narrative Nonfiction
- New Adult
- Poetry
- Psychology
- Romance
- Short/Flash Fiction Collection
- Women's Fiction
- Young Adult
- Other (please specify)



## The Independent Author Income Survey

### INCOME QUESTIONS

Your answers to these questions will give us much-needed data about the "dark" indie author economy.

\* 7. Is your self-publishing income increasing or decreasing year on year?

- Increasing
- Decreasing
- Staying the same
- Don't know

8. **Revenue:** What was the gross revenue (before costs) brought in by your total writing and self-publishing business in your last financial year and the year before that (two separate figures)? Please include anything that you regard as part of your writing and self-publishing business (e.g., speaking fees). Your best guess is fine. Please enter it in numeric characters only, in your local currency.

Your last financial year

The year before that

9. The local currency you entered:

- \$US
- GBP
- Euro
- \$AUS
- Other (please specify)

\* 10. **Business Models:** Which of these business models most closely matches yours?

- Exclusive Self-Publishing Model:** You publish books exclusively with one self-publishing platform/retailer, e.g., Amazon.
- Wide Self-Publishing Model:** You publish books non-exclusively with a range of self-publishing platforms and aggregators, e.g., Kobo, Apple, or aggregators such as Draft2Digital.
- Creator Model:** As well as using self-publishing platforms, you sell books and other products directly through your own website and/or other outlets, e.g.,Shopify store, Kickstarter (50%+ of business income).
- Rights Licensing/Hybrid Author Model:** As well as using self-publishing platforms and/or selling direct, you license some rights to third-party publishers, producers, and other rights buyers. (50%+ of business income)
- Publisher Model:** You publish other authors' books as well as your own (for business purposes).

\* 11. **Income Streams:** From which of the following products do you derive income?

- Books - ebooks
- Books - audiobooks
- Books - print POD
- Books - offset
- Book box sets - digital or print
- Book series
- Crowdfunded projects
- Memberships or subscriptions for readers - own website
- Memberships or subscriptions for readers - patron platforms (e.g., Patreon, Buy Me a Coffee, Memberful)
- Merchandise linked to your publications (that you have commissioned)
- Translations (that you have commissioned)
- Other (please specify)

\* 12. From which of the following services do you derive income?

- Freelance writing / copywriting
- Freelance work (other)
- Journalism - print, podcasting/radio, video/TV
- Publishing services (editing, formatting, design, etc.)
- Referrals / affiliate marketing
- Speaking and appearances
- Sponsorship or other influencer income
- Teaching writing or publishing craft
- Other (please specify)

- None of the above

\* 13. From which of the following licenses do you derive income?

- English language rights to other publishers, at home or overseas
- Broadcasting rights (TV / film)
- Dramatic rights (theatre or radio plays)
- Merchandising rights
- Translation rights
- Other (please specify)

- None of the above

\* 14. **Number of Books:** How many books have you published? (Please note: 1 book title in 3 formats (e.g. ebook, paperback and audio) should be counted as one title.)

- 1
- 2-4
- 5-10
- 11-20
- 21-30
- Over 30

\* 15. **Product Funnel:** Which of the following do you use to attract readers? (Please check all that apply)

- Book giveaways (freely given, no strings attached)
- Reader magnets (free book or other offer in exchange for sign up)
- Premium products (memberships, signed hardback editions, courses related to your book or author platform, merchandise, etc.)
- None of the above

\* 16. Do you have a will or an estate plan that covers the ongoing management of your copyrights/publishing rights beyond your lifetime?

- Yes
- No



## The Independent Author Income Survey

### DIVERSITY QUESTIONS

Anecdotal evidence indicates that self-publishing is a more accessible route to successful publication, thereby increasing diversity among higher-earning authors. Your answers to the questions below will provide us with much-needed data on this question. None are mandatory and multiple categories can be chosen. Answers here, as throughout the survey, are anonymous.

17. **Age:** What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

18. **Education:** What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Secondary education / high school
- Trade / technical / vocational training
- Undergraduate degree
- Postgraduate degree
- Prefer not to say

19. **Race:** Please select the race group (physical ancestry) with which you most closely identify:

- Asian
- Caucasian / White
- Black / Hyphenated-African / Person of Color
- Hispanic / Latino
- Bi / multiracial
- Prefer not to say
- Not listed (please specify)

20. Disability: Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Yes

No



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Authors

## The Independent Author Income Survey

21. **Disability:** Please select your challenge(s):

- Cognitive impairment
- Communicative impairment including hearing
- Mental illness
- Neurodivergence
- Physical impairment
- Sight impairment
- 'Unseen' disability (e.g., auto-immune disease, diabetes, asthma, epilepsy)
- Mixed disability or impairment
- Prefer not to say
- Not listed (please specify)

- None of the above



## The Independent Author Income Survey

22. **Gender:** Please select the gender with which you most closely identify:

- Cisgender male (assigned at birth)
- Cisgender female (assigned at birth)
- Transgender male
- Transgender female
- Genderfluid / non-binary
- Questioning or unsure
- Prefer not to say
- Not listed (please specify)

23. **Sexual orientation:** Please select the sexual orientation with which you most closely identify:

- Heterosexual / straight
- LGBTQIA+
- Questioning or unsure
- Prefer not to say
- Not listed (please specify)

Thank you for participating in our survey!

[www.allianceindependentauthors.org](http://www.allianceindependentauthors.org)



**CREATE**

**UK Copyright and Creative Economy Centre**

School of Law / University of Glasgow

10 The Square

Glasgow G12 8QQ

[www.create.ac.uk](http://www.create.ac.uk)

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