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Dear Brewster,

It should come as no surprise that Internet Archive's latest initiative—the so-called “National Emergency Library”—has struck the ire of authors everywhere. As you are well aware, there is nothing legal about your providing uncontrolled access to the books you have scanned without permission from their authors or publishers. Open Library's prior practice of providing access to only one reader at a time per copy is itself infringing of most in-copyright books. Making a massive trove of copyrighted books available for free without any restriction is outrageous. It is piracy, however much you cloak it as a social benefit.

You must know that public, school, and academic libraries have licenses and provide free access to ebooks. Not only that, since the global lockdown began in mid-March, publishers have been rushing to release more and more books under open licenses to allow teachers, parents, and students to read ebooks for free. Your National Emergency Library pretends to address a non-existent problem. It appears to be a callous and opportunistic strike at copyright with consequences reaching across the publishing industry.

At the Authors Guild, we see every day the grim reality of what it means to sacrifice years of your life to produce a book. Writing isn't the type of high-return investment you may be accustomed to, living in tech-utopia, where even your engineers make upwards of \$200,000. Do you know that the median income from writing in 2019 was \$20,300, and that most writers earned below the federal poverty line for their writing?

Your National Emergency Library doesn't single out authors for punishment: it trounces everyone who makes a living through the book trade, including many independent bookstores that have had to shutter because of Covid-19, and the booksellers who are being laid off. You are taking advantage of a worldwide catastrophe to loot foundering bookstores, authors, and publishers. You call yourself a not-for-profit and yet you are taking money out of authors' pockets at a time when most can least afford it.

As we say in [our post on the initiative](#), “IA has no rights whatsoever to these books, much less to give them away indiscriminately without consent of the publisher or author. We are shocked that the Internet Archive would use the Covid-19 epidemic as an excuse to push copyright law further out to the edges, and in doing so, harm authors, many of whom are already struggling.”

We have heard from hundreds of authors who would like you to shut down the National Emergency Library now. On behalf of our nearly 10,000 members, we ask you to immediately cease the uncontrolled digital lending provided at:
<https://archive.org/details/nationalemergencylibrary>.

Sincerely Yours.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Rasenberger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mary Rasenberger
Executive Director
The Authors Guild

cc: Douglas Preston
President
The Authors Guild