



New Harry Potter book to set postal record, UN agency says

20 July 2007 – The United Nations Universal Postal Union (UPU) announced today that tomorrow’s release of the last book in the Harry Potter series will result in the largest-ever delivery of identical books on the same day worldwide.

Over 2.4 million copies of the latest Harry Potter book will be distributed tomorrow in the United States, Canada and Great Britain, with additional copies of the German version to be delivered when released in Germany and Switzerland in October.

The agency based this estimate on surveys conducted in its Member States, emphasizing that postmen and women are the ones who deliver copies of the final novel in the Harry Potter series, entitled “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows,” which goes on sale on 21 July.

In the US, 1.8 million Harry Potter books will be delivered, 80,000 by Canada Post in Canada, while in the UK, the Royal Mail will distribute 600,000 copies, with approximately one in 43 households receiving the book.

E-commerce and the postal sector have partnered up, as most books ordered online will be shipped by post, the UPU said in a news release.

Since the release of the first of the seven-book series in 1997, e-commerce has blossomed, with the postal sector becoming increasingly prominent in the distribution chain. Globally, the number of ordinary packages sent surged 11 per cent, representing a total of 6 billion parcels, or 16 million package deliveries per day.

To fulfil all deliveries, postal operators have adopted innovative solutions. The German and Swiss postal services began distributing books shortly after midnight in 2003 and 2005, and plan to do the same this year. Employees of the Swiss Post observed that many people who had forgotten that they had ordered the book were extremely surprised to see the postman making a delivery in the middle of the night.

In addition to setting a record in deliveries around the world, the fictional wizard has been immortalized in postage stamps in France, Australia and the UK.

The UPU, based in Berne, Switzerland, is the world’s second-oldest international organization, created in 1874. The agency acts as the primary forum for cooperation between postal systems worldwide.