



Harry Potter gets special delivery

The Universal Postal Union (UPU) has surveyed its member countries regarding the distribution of the latest Harry Potter book and is pleased to convey the following information. American and British postmen and women will tomorrow distribute 2.4 million books. Their German and Swiss counterparts will distribute the German version of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows the night of 27 October, between midnight and 2 a.m. From 2004 to 2005, the global volume of ordinary parcels rose by 11%, outlining the postal sector's role as a partner of choice for e-commerce.

Berne (Switzerland), 20 July 2007

In postal delivery centres all around the world, hundreds of small parcels marked "not to be delivered before 21 July" are being heavily guarded. The content of each package is the same: the latest novel recounting the adventures of Harry Potter.

On 21 July 2007, millions of copies of the seventh and final Harry Potter novel will go on sale in bookshops and other outlets. And for those who have already placed their order by mail, phone or Internet, it is often the postman who will deliver this long-awaited book. In the United States, for example, USPS will deliver 1.8 million books on Saturday, while in the United Kingdom Royal Mail will deliver 600,000 copies; in other words, by the British operator's reckoning, one UK household in 43 will receive the book by post. Canada Post will distribute 80 000 copies. Swiss Post and France's La Poste are also planning special deliveries on 21 July. Operators are pulling out all the stops to ensure that the millions of books are delivered on time. Never before, in the history of the postal service, will postmen and women the world over have delivered so many identical books on a single day.

The postal sector is the partner of choice for e-commerce, with most articles ordered via the Internet being shipped by post. According to Amazon.com it has received more than two million orders from all over the world for this final Harry Potter book. Since the first volume hit the shelves in 1997, e-commerce has enjoyed dramatic growth, and the Post has developed an increasing role as a key link in the distribution chain. From 2004 to 2005, the global number of ordinary parcels sent domestically and internationally rose by 11%, for a total of 6 billion parcels delivered annually representing 16 millions per day.

It's unusual for so many identical articles to be delivered within such a short space of time, and some postal operators have looked for innovative delivery solutions. For example, Deutsche Post, the German operator, and Swiss Post delivered the book to impatient readers shortly after midnight in 2005 (and also in 2003 in Germany). The Swiss postmen said it was a delivery round like no other: certain customers who had forgotten ordering the book were most surprised to see the postman come calling in the middle of the night. Midnight deliveries will again be organized in

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these two countries when the German version of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows is released.

But even as Posts gear up to deliver the final chapter in the saga of Harry Potter, he has already earned his place in the world of letters: in March, June and July respectively, the French, Australian and British Posts issued postage stamps featuring the boy magician.

About the Universal Postal Union

The UPU, a United Nations specialized agency based in Berne (Switzerland), is the primary forum for cooperation between Posts. In addition to maintaining a genuinely universal network that provides modern products and services, it establishes the rules for international mail exchanges among its 191 members and makes recommendations to stimulate mail volume growth and to improve the quality of service for customers. Each year, more than five million employees process and deliver 431 billion domestic letter-post items, some 5.6 billion international items and 6 billion ordinary parcels.

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