

Harry Potter goes green with Raincoast print run

PUBLISHING | The Canadian edition of *Order of the Phoenix* will be printed on recycled paper



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VANCOUVER SUN

Harry Potter, it turns out, is a hugger of Canadian trees.

The Canadian edition of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, due out June 21, will be printed on 100-per-cent recycled paper, the largest such print run ever in Canada.

"It's one of the biggest print runs in Canada, period," said Raincoast Books publicist Tessa Vanderkop. Raincoast has ordered 935,000 copies of *Order of the Phoenix*, which at 768 pages would have consumed almost 30,000 trees — covering an area slightly larger than Stanley Park, the firm estimates.

Ironically, the Vancouver-based publisher had to buy American to do it. Canadian printers did not have the volume of 100-per-cent post-consumer, chlorine-free recycled paper in stock to do the whole job, Vanderkop said. Quebec-based Cascades Fine Papers Group worked with Raincoast to fill the order, but could not meet the deadline. (Cascades will supply the stock for some of Raincoast's fall titles.)

In the end Raincoast sourced its stock from a San Francisco company, New Leaf Paper.

The Harry Potter printing marks a milestone in a four-year campaign, said Nicole Rycroft, campaigns director at Markets Initiative, a Tofino-based envi-

ronmental agency that helped coordinate the green print run.

"There's no other book that has the profile and the leverage that Harry Potter does at this point in time," she said. "When we look back in five years' time this is going to be one of the key points in the transformation of a heavy paper-consuming industry."

According to Rycroft, similar initiatives to get book publishers to go green are taking place in six other countries, including the United States and United Kingdom.

Author J.K. Rowling has also publicly endorsed the publisher's decision. Still, the Canadian edition will be the only one of the 55 international editions of *Order of the Phoenix* printed on recycled paper.

It's not the first time Raincoast has printed on post-consumer paper. Three

years ago Markets Initiative — a joint venture of the Friends of Clayoquot Sound, Greenpeace Canada and the Sierra Club of Canada's B.C. chapter made a presentation to Raincoast managers on the benefits and practicalities of using recycled paper, and in 2001 the company made a commitment to move its business in this direction.

Today all paperbacks (including more than a million paperback *Potters* printed since 2001) and most black-and-white hard covers at Raincoast come from recycled stock. Only the colour print jobs require trees to be cut down.

The choice of paper has added between two and three per cent to the total cost of the *Order of the Phoenix* print run, Vanderkop said, but the cost won't be passed on to consumers.

"We've absorbed the cost on our end," she said, noting that the cover price in Canada will about match that — allowing for changes in exchange rates — in the U.S. and Europe.

She said she doubted the eco-friendly designation will cause more people to buy the book. It was simply a matter that the company could afford to do the right thing, a luxury few other Canadian publishers enjoy.

"We're in a lucky position to be able to make this decision," Vanderkop said. "Harry Potter has been good to us."

Formed in 1999, Markets Initiative targeted book publishers first

among several industries that consume large volumes of forest products because they were the most receptive to the environmental cause.

"Book publishers generally are very politically progressive," Rycroft said.

The greens have also got many authors on their side. Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje and Barbara Gowdy all insist on eco-friendly paper. Alice Munro reportedly demanded her publisher stop the presses and use recycled fibre.

Nonetheless, at the start of the campaign, none of the major publishers were printing on all-recycled paper.

At Markets Initiative's urging, 35 Canadian book publishers have now made formal commitments to reduce their dependence on virgin fibre. Raincoast and Toronto's McClelland & Stewart, which published Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* on "ancient forest friendly" paper, have been the leaders, Rycroft said.

Ross Hay-Roe, a paper market analyst with Equity Research Associates, doubts that many more publishers will make the switch to recycled paper as long as it's more expensive than first-edition fibre.

"I don't think the paper industry will view this as a big deal. If they've got a customer who wants recycled paper they'll make it," he said.

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