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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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UK Bestsellers of 2005 -- Harry Potter Magical...But By How Much?

The Times of London published the top 50 bestsellers of 2005. Here's [the link](#), then click on the chart image to make it bigger. (If you don't want to register for the Times of London (or any newspaper site) go to www.bugmenot.com for info on how to easily get around that.) What I love about the British book charts -- and what I hope BookSense adopts for America -- is the fact that every week, they list EXACTLY how many copies a book has sold. Some weeks, you can see a book made the Top 15 by selling, oh, 1,200 copies. Imagine if the Movie Box Office charts just listed what film was Number One, Number Two and so on, rather than telling you exactly what they grossed.

So looking at the British charts, a few things jump out. Harry Potter is number one, with 3,538,482 copies sold. Dan Brown has the next four slots, beginning of course with "The Da Vinci Code" at 2.2 million copies sold. Another quirk of the UK booksellers is that they often release mass market paperbacks at the same time as the hardcover. So Brown sold 2.2 mil copies of the paperback at 7 pounds. Meanwhile, here in the US, the mass market paperback finally comes out March 28, a mere three years (almost to the day) after the hardcover first came out. (The movie hits theaters May 19.) And the publishing industry wonders why it's in a slump.

Su Doku also owns a couple of slots, along with actor Ewan McGregor's travelogue and a clutch of books by gentle mystery author Alexander McCall Smith.

And the brilliant playwright Alan Bennett -- as beloved in the UK as perhaps Neil Simon is, in his way, here -- has already sold 300,000 copies of "Untold Stories," his second collection of autobiographical pieces, reviews, articles, diary entries and other miscellany. It just came out in October. so clearly it was found wrapped under a lot of

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