

A CASE FOR COLLABORATION:
PRODUCING AND MARKETING BLOOMSBURY
CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN THE UK, US AND GERMANY

by

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ABSTRACT

London-based Bloomsbury Publishing has recently established offices in the US and Germany and regularly collaborates with them to publish titles simultaneously in all three markets. This report examines how collaboration works within a specific area of the company, Bloomsbury Children's Books, with a particular emphasis on two titles, *Tanglewreck* and *Larklight*. The report places Bloomsbury in historical and present context and gives a sense of some of its concerns and initiatives for the future. It talks in general about the benefits of collaboration and discusses the general systems that are in place to support the practice. The report examines the international publication of these two titles, beginning with their origin, physical form and marketing treatment in the UK, then comparing and contrasting how the US and Germany have made complementary publishing and marketing decisions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

THE MOST NERVE-WRACKING part of the several-week stint I spent acting as an assistant in Bloomsbury's editorial department was trying to connect the weekly conference call between editors in Bloomsbury's London office, and its offices in New York and Berlin.

While it provides indisputable proof that I should never, ever become a switchboard operator, what I find more interesting is the fact there was an international call in the first place.

There are many things that set Bloomsbury apart from its peers in the UK publishing landscape. One of the foremost of them is the way in which the company is establishing and maintaining a publishing relationship with its offices in New York and Berlin. With the relatively recent establishment and acquisition of these offices, which operate in concert with the UK headquarters, the company's strategy is to publish a good proportion of its titles straight into the UK, the US and Germany – three of the biggest markets for books in the Western world.

Pursuing opportunities in international publishing is just one of Bloomsbury's strategies for growth. In addition to achieving a larger reach by having more sales in more markets, establishing processes and systems in international collaboration benefits Bloomsbury in other ways as well – it makes financial sense; it allows access to sought-after authors and titles, and it provides strengthened editorial relationships and enhanced expertise and perspective from more people in more areas.

At Bloomsbury, the adult and children's departments operate quite independently of each other, and international publishing is undertaken across both adult and children's departments. However, these collaborative relationships are developed, in particular, between the editorial personnel who publish children's titles for the UK, US and Germany. As the department which first established JK Rowling and *Harry Potter*, Bloomsbury Children's Books is an integral part of Bloomsbury Publishing. This division has undergone growth and expansion over the past few years, and now publishes an array of fiction, non-fiction, picture and board books to make up a

good portion of the company's publishing activity.

Any examination of growth and strategic direction for a British (or indeed any nationality) publisher with a children's publishing department should focus on the potential of the children's publishing sector. Children's books account for nearly one-quarter of book sales by volume in the UK, worth an estimated £400 million in 2005 (BML), and this sector is experiencing growth at a pace more rapid than the adult sector, so the importance of the growing children's market cannot be underscored. Indeed, increasing activity in children's publishing is another of Bloomsbury's strategies for growth and development.

This is a project report about Bloomsbury's systems of international collaboration specifically as they relate to children's publishing. The growth potential of this sector as noted above is one reason for my focus on this area; as well there is the fact that books published in all three territories now account for 75% of the joint children's lists (Bloomsbury "Annual Report 05" 10). But there is a more practical reason for the focus on international collaboration within children's publishing: the children's department was the one to which I had the most access when I was shaping the topic and thesis of my project report. The children's publishing department was the first one in which I spent time during my internship, and my internship sponsor is Sarah Odedina, Head of Children's Publishing. As I mentioned in the acknowledgements section, she has been most helpful in providing guidance and support and facilitating my access to the appropriate people in Berlin and New York who provided additional valuable insight, so it seemed a natural fit to focus on children's publishing.

With a focus on international collaboration within Bloomsbury Children's Books, this project report is structured into two parts to provide both broader and more detailed perspectives. The first section looks at the bigger-picture issues underlying collaboration – it considers Bloomsbury's publishing mandate and history, its present size and circumstances, and looks in more detail at some of its strategies for growth going forward. It looks at the market data that drive and motivate strategic international development, examines the benefits and discusses in broader terms some of

the logistics of international collaboration. This aspect of the report serves to provide a snapshot of Bloomsbury in a very specific time and place, as it is trying to attain certain goals and milestones. For students who hope to ultimately participate in publishing in a management or publisher role, it is a useful exercise to analyze and try to understand a company's position and why it makes the strategic choices that it does. It is also interesting from an operational and logistical perspective to examine the characteristics of Bloomsbury that facilitate collaboration. It is in fact these issues that I find particularly interesting and which drew me to this topic in the first place.

But a publisher is defined by more than its strategic directives, editorial personnel or publishing systems and processes: it is defined ultimately by the books it publishes. This report's second section examines international collaboration in greater detail, in the context of two particular titles published by Bloomsbury Children's Books in the UK and concomitantly in the US and Germany.

While there were a number of titles I could have chosen to illustrate Bloomsbury's strategy of acquiring world rights and publishing books in the UK, US and Germany (nearly) simultaneously, I chose to focus on two titles, *Tanglewreck* and *Larklight*, for a number of reasons. Both are lead titles on Bloomsbury's children's list; both are for readers 9 to 11 years old, and both are by acclaimed authors who, though they have published extensively before, are relatively new additions to the Bloomsbury list. Their timing was also a reason why I chose to focus on these two titles: both were lead titles in the second half of 2006, and each was at a different stage of development when I was completing my internship at Bloomsbury in the summer of 2006. *Tanglewreck* was nearing its publication, so most of the editorial, production and marketing work had already been completed; however, publicity efforts were underway; the launch event was upcoming; and there were multiple reviews and author interviews throughout the press. (More on this in the *Tanglewreck* section.) *Larklight*'s publication date was still a couple of months away, and though finished copies of the book had just been received, personnel were still in the midst of marketing, sell-in and early publicity efforts. (Again, these efforts are detailed at length in the *Larklight* section of this report.)

This paper's second section looks closely at the production, marketing and sales points

associated with the publication of *Tanglewreck* and *Larklight* in the UK, the originating market, and at how these decisions have been modified or otherwise fine-tuned by the US and German arms in order to be published in these markets. It discusses a number of factors in book production and sales – from choice of format, jacket design, or capitalizing on the author’s reputation, awards or other variables in marketing and publicity – and examines how and where they were treated differently in the UK, US and Germany.

Though it is by no means an exhaustive treatise on the differences in publishing practice within these three markets, this report’s second half is useful to students as it provides a glimpse into some of the publishing issues, trends and conventions in Germany, the US and the UK. With a unique geographical, political and cultural situation, Canadian publishers have always been influenced by trends and practices in other markets; but, for everyone, maintaining competitive advantage means keeping a watchful eye on publishing trends both in home markets and in other territories.

Readers may well wonder how my internship role at Bloomsbury relates to the focus of this report. As a British publisher, the company is naturally less familiar with SFU’s Master of Publishing program, and while many Canadian publishers have ties to the program and are familiar with the cycle of having a three-month Master of Publishing intern, there is no comparable practice at Bloomsbury. It does offer ‘work experience’ placements – generally anywhere from one week to four weeks in duration – for students, usually in the early years of their undergraduate studies, to give an introduction to publishing. Since these participants frequently have very little experience or understanding of the publishing industry, the work they are given tends to be very routine and administrative; however they are given the opportunity to sit in on meetings and in this and their general participation they learn about the context of publishing.

In the role of an intern, in light of my previous experience and the length of my stay, I was generally given more challenging tasks and assignments. However, whereas Master of Publishing students in their placements at (more cash-strapped) Canadian publishers are frequently called

upon to provide support in the form of expertise or at least an additional body, and are given specific projects on which to work during their placement, I was not given anything quite so concrete.

But a less strictly defined internship period (during which I still worked on projects and assignments in a number of different areas) allowed me the flexibility to act as an observer and to choose a topic of my own interest on which to base this report. There were any number of things I found worthy of discussion, but again due to the factors indicated above, I chose this examination of Bloomsbury's international operations in children's publishing. So while I had no specific involvement in the production of *Tanglewreck* or *Larklight*, what follows is an attempt to learn as much as I could about the details of their publication and to provide a larger context for this discussion.

Written from the (rather advantageous) perspective of an outsider allowed unique insight and access to Bloomsbury, this paper provides an overview of systems and processes that are still being developed and worked on. International collaboration is a relatively new practice for most of the departments, so cooperation is continued and ongoing. But if the company is to achieve its financial and expansionary goals and continue to stand out on the UK publishing landscape, it would do well to foster the collaborative efforts undertaken between London, New York and Berlin, as these are some of its unique strengths.

2. BLOOMSBURY: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

2.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF BLOOMSBURY

BLOOMSBURY PUBLISHING PLC is based in London and is the largest independent publisher in the UK. It was established in 1986 by Nigel Newton (who is still Chairman and Chief Executive) who two years earlier had conceived of the idea of founding “a new, independent, medium-sized publisher of books of editorial excellence and originality with high standards of design and production” that would support and publish “literary authors of the highest quality and sales potential” (Newton). For 21 years Bloomsbury has been publishing a blend of fiction and non-fiction that manages to be both literary and commercial, with some of its most notable authors including Margaret Atwood, John Irving, Joanna Trollope, Jay McInerney, Nadine Gordimer and Michael Ondaatje.

From its early days, when it solicited £1.75 million of support from four venture capital investors to come into existence, Bloomsbury’s founders have been results-focused and financially-driven: Newton “chose the ISBN prefix 747 as £747,000 was the company’s profit target in its 5-year business plan” (Newton). Nor have they shied away from assuming risk or seeking the attention of the trade: in a highly orchestrated maneuver, Newton (who worked at Sigwick & Jackson Publishers) and his three co-founders – David Reynolds of Shuckburgh Reynolds, Alan Wherry of Penguin and Liz Calder of Jonathan Cape – all resigned from their jobs on the same day and gave secret briefings to journalists from *The Bookseller*, *Publishing News*, *The Times* and *The Guardian*. The company made its presence known to the world, as “all four stories appeared on the same day and the existence of Bloomsbury was thus announced to a surprised publishing industry” in September 1986 (Newton). They had already booked a booth at Frankfurt under the name of Bloomsbury, and a week later arrived at their stand at the Book Fair without the typical artillery of a publisher; “the industry came to visit the Frankfurt stand in fascination that the five-day-old publisher had only quarter-bottles of Bollinger to offer, but no books yet” (Newton).

With similar panache, vision and, arguably, a little serendipity, Bloomsbury's founders have helped it to a number of achievements in the years since its inception. Bloomsbury became a publicly traded company in 1994, with its shares floated on the London Stock Exchange; the same year, the children's and paperback lists were established. An illustrious relationship with JK Rowling began in 1997 with the publication of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. In 1998, Bloomsbury established US operations in New York, publishing for the adult sector, while the children's list was launched in the US in the spring of 2002. The company's growth and expansion continued in the UK when it acquired A&C Black in 2000, only five years before the historic company's 200th anniversary. Expansion into Germany began in 2003, with the acquisition of Berlin Verlag, and in 2004 Walker & Co. was acquired in the US. Several other imprints have been acquired, and in 2005, all of the group's reference publishing was consolidated within A&C Black (Bloomsbury "Bloomsbury Timeline").

2.2 BLOOMSBURY TODAY

BLOOMSBURY TODAY consists of a number of divisions with expertise in publishing fiction, non-fiction and reference works and resources for adults and children. Growth, expansion and pursuing new business initiatives are key components of the company's strategy. As any public company, Bloomsbury's board and management have a strong impetus to provide shareholder value. Unlike other publishers that are in the same position, Bloomsbury is an independent entity rather than a child or subsidiary arm of a conglomerate. But it is also different because of the unique set of circumstances that have contributed to its growth and success to date. The proceeds of the *Harry Potter* phenomenon have helped make Bloomsbury what it is today, "an incredible success story for shareholders" but the series has "also saddled the company with expectations of spectacular year-on-year growth" (Edemariam).

2.3 STRATEGY FOR GROWTH

THE SEVENTH (AND LAST) of JK Rowlings' offerings will be published in July 2007, and the company anticipates another five years of new product launches – everything from the paperback edition of the final book, to complete box-set, film tie-in and audio book editions (Bloomsbury, "Annual Report 05" 4). And while backlist sales for *Harry* will continue to keep Bloomsbury in an enviable position for many years to come, once these launches are over, there will be a rather large hole in its publishing schedule.

So while the announcement of "the first 24 titles available for electronic download" (Bloomsbury, "Annual Report 05" 7) can be seen as exemplary of any publisher attempting to optimize publishing opportunities in the twenty-first century, the acquisition of reference and trade lines, as well as electronic resources, is representative of Bloomsbury "ramping up," diversifying its project and intellectual property portfolio. So is the 2005 allocation of "up to £15m" to widen the traditionally literary list to include categories in a "new publishing area in music, TV, film and sport" (Bloomsbury, "Preliminary Results...2005"). And so are ongoing efforts to grow business internationally, by creating publishing arms to allow expansion into the US and Germany. "So why is Bloomsbury being so bullish? The answer is – odd as it may seem for a publisher with the Midas touch – that it has little choice: it cannot afford to stand still" (Edemariam).

While the preceding statement may tend toward the dramatic, it is a fairly concise statement of Bloomsbury's current position. But rather than urgency, it is the opportunity that should be emphasized: at this moment, Bloomsbury is uniquely poised to use the proceeds from "one of the most significant backlists in modern publishing history" (Bloomsbury, "Annual Report 05" 4) to facilitate future strategic growth and expansion.

And, as in the past, Bloomsbury's board and management seem fixed on their goal – this time, of making a dent in American and German markets: "Newton's ambition, he says, is to be where he is in the UK – in the top five in both countries" (Edemariam).

2.3.1 MAINTAINING A STRONG CHILDREN'S LIST

“About three years ago children's books became the golden bit of many people's business, and since then an enormous number of companies have entered the fray. Far more books, more publishers in the market. More competition”
(Marks, “Interesting Times”)

ACCORDING TO A 2006 BML survey, *Books and the Consumer*, in 2005 UK children's publishing saw an 18% increase in book sales by volume over the preceding year; by contrast, adult publishing saw a 0.4% increase. Meanwhile, £400 million worth of children's sales marks a 37% increase over 2004; while adult publishing, worth £1,960 million, saw a 0.1% decrease from the previous year (BML). While, arguably, the performance of the children's sector for 2005 was inflated with the July publication of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, the contrast between the growth levels in the children's and adult sectors is significant and telling.

An evolving children's market means that there are real changes in the way publishing for children is undertaken today, compared to what it was ten, even five, years ago. Bigger children's books have led to higher sales figures and higher expectations of what is possible with a children's title:

This has fueled an optimism about what can be achieved with the right book, the right branding, and the right campaign ... Certainly, individual authors and titles are getting a much higher profile, both in terms of news stories on acquisitions with the mention of six-figure advances and high-pressure auctions, both of which were formerly an exclusive preserve of the adult market. These news stories mark the beginning of a campaign that heats up as the book nears publication. This year and last have seen an upward trend in “super lead” and “lead” titles which encourage the reviewing of a particular book across all media in any given week (Eccleshare, “Changes on the Children's Scene”).

With this description of the dynamism of children's publishing, it is easy to see how, sometimes, children's publishing is no different than modern adult publishing: event, news and hype-driven.

From the development of its children's publishing department in 1994, Bloomsbury has relied on children's publishing for a good portion of its activity. Traditionally, the company has reported its activities across its three main publishing sectors: adult, children's and reference. Table 1 shows the breakdown of revenue amongst these three sectors between 2001 and 2005.

TABLE 1: REVENUE BY DEPARTMENT (000 000)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
CHILDREN'S	£41.22	£38.15	£52.29	£40.62	£69.01
% OF TOTAL	68	56	63	48	63
ADULT	£10.62	£17.21	£18.37	£30.13	£27.47
% OF TOTAL	17	25	22	36	25
REFERENCE	£9.30	£12.66	£12.45	£13.70	£12.63
% OF TOTAL	15	19	15	16	12

SOURCE: 2002-2005 Annual Report; Preliminary 2005 Annual Report

It is interesting to note that reference publishing has stayed at a relatively constant level of activity, both in terms of revenue and in terms of its proportional contribution to total activity. And while children's publishing has been the stalwart both in terms of relative contribution and actual revenue, it is interesting to note the fluctuation depending on whether it is a "Harry Potter year" such as in 2003 and 2005. But 2004 is also interesting, because that year marked a significant leap in adult publishing revenues, with that sector narrowing the gap with the children's sector, both in terms of actual revenues and relative contribution.

It should be interesting to see whether the recent effort to diversify the adult list with music (Bruce Springsteen: *On Tour 1968-2005*), film (Nicole Kidman), sport (British boxer Amir Khan's *A Boy From Bolton: My Story*) and political (Gordon Brown's *Speeches: 1997-2006* and David Blunkett's *The Blunkett Tapes: My Life in the Bear Pit*) titles bears fruit for the adult sector in 2006 and 2007. Over the long term, it should also be interesting to see what happens to the proportional activity of the

children's and adult's sectors as new product launches in the *Harry Potter* series begin to subside.

But while both sectors face significant change, both will no doubt be expected to grow in the coming years. Children's publishing at Bloomsbury will continue to be a diverse and strategic portion of the company's activities:

Children's publishing is an area where we consider there is room for increased incremental growth and the infrastructure is being put in place through recruitment of additional staff, with the first revenue expected to be generated from our new pre-school list in the second half of 2005. We are continuing our search for strategic acquisitions for the Children's operation both in the UK and the US. The Children's division of Walker will add critical mass to the list and will provide a valuable conduit into the school and library market for our Bloomsbury list, as well as potentially providing a publishing platform for A&C Black's children's list (Bloomsbury, "Annual Report 04" 11)

As the quote points out, acquisitions such as Walker in the US are strategic for two reasons: they add critical mass to the publishing program, and they allow access to markets other than the trade. The ability to reach the school and library market – both in the UK and US – will continue to be an important variable for success.

In the UK, the demarcations are quite clearly set up between Bloomsbury Children's Books (publishing for the trade) and A&C Black (publishing for the educational and teacher-librarian market). The relatively recent acquisition of Walker in the US may prove to be a neat fit with A&C Black, and these divisions may be able to establish a collaborative relationship in much the same vein as Bloomsbury UK and Bloomsbury USA. Certainly, it could be argued, the stronger and more streamlined the relationship between international operations, the more there are opportunities for growth and expansion.

With that in mind, it is worth having a closer look at current details of operations in Germany and the US.

2.3.2 DEVELOPING INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

AN EXAMINATION OF Bloomsbury's most recent corporate documents like interim and annual reports reinforces the importance of growth in international markets. The report published in September 2005 broke down the company's interim results by geographical area for the first time ("Bloomsbury Enjoys Overseas Growth"). In recent reports, the Chairman's messages have emphasized the company's goals of improving operations and achieving growth in international markets (Bloomsbury, "Annual Report 05" 1).

Even accounting practices reflect the company's focus on its international operations: up to and including the 2003 annual report, Bloomsbury reported its financial activities in accordance with UK generally accepted accounting practice (GAAP). But as befitting an organization with an international outlook, "the Company adopted International Financial Reporting Standards (IRFS) with effect from January 2004, and the figures for 2004 and 2005 are under IFRS" (Bloomsbury, "Annual Report 05" 2)

As acquisitions continue and operations are set up on both sides of the Atlantic, budgets and financial reporting can become ever more complicated. But financial results are reported by the parent entity on a company-wide level, though there is a breakdown of each division's performance. Thus the several divisions – Adult and Children's in Bloomsbury UK, Bloomsbury USA, Berlin Verlag, and Walker & Co., as well as A&C Black and various reference imprints – have their own budgets, annual targets and expected contributions to the company.

The most recent figures point to growth in Bloomsbury's still-fledgling international operations.

According to 2006 interim results, Bloomsbury USA's sales were up 46.3% to £6.79m (2005, £4.64m). But in the first six months of 2006 Bloomsbury USA ran a loss of £0.43m (whereas in 2005, it proved marginally profitable with gains of £0.08m). However, the deficit to date is due to "continued planned investment in staff and office and to fund its expansion" and "it is expected

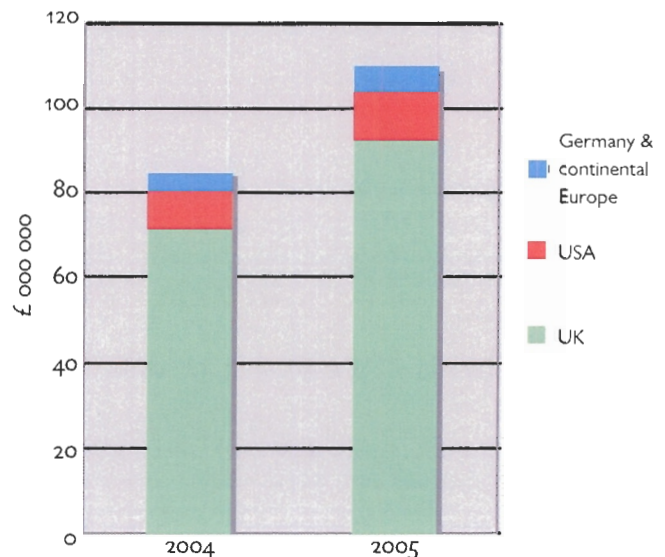
to make an operating profit for the full year” (Bloomsbury, “Interim Report 06” 5).

Berlin Verlag’s revenues for the first 6-months of 2006 increased 24.3% to £2.51m (2005, £2.02m) (Bloomsbury, “Interim Report 06” ?). And in 2005, Berlin Verlag’s operating profit was £0.64m, turned around from losses in the two years since the company was acquired by Bloomsbury (Bloomsbury, “Preliminary Results ... 2005”).

Figure 1 shows the proportion of revenues derived from Bloomsbury’s UK, US and German operations. The relative underperformance of US and German arms compared to the company as a whole is reflective of the “growing pains” associated with new acquisitions and the transition of management and a new corporate structure.

Bloomsbury’s efforts at strategic growth have focused, among other things, on creating more effective operations in Germany and the US. In Germany, for example, “the focus on the business in 2005 was to continue reducing the cost base. In January 2005 Berlin’s distribution moved to a more cost effective and efficient distributor, and we also renegotiated terms with our main printers and other suppliers, which played a significant role in improving the company’s performance” (Bloomsbury, “Annual Report 05” 14).

Meanwhile, in the US, while the editorial departments remained separate, the sales, marketing, publicity, design and production departments merged for Walker & Co. and Bloomsbury USA, building in further efficiency. As well, US operations will this year begin “using our US distributor’s large sales force for new mass-market editions of a selection of our titles” and will try



SOURCE: 2004 and 2005 Annual Reports

FIGURE 1: REVENUES IN THE UK, US AND CONTINENTAL EUROPE

to take advantage of a third-party sales force to try to build revenue from the export of titles from the US “into a significant revenue stream over time” (Bloomsbury, “Annual Report 05” 13).

While streamlining is ongoing, the prospect is for growth in the US and German operations. And while these divisions become financially more viable, the face of their book lists will also undergo change.

In its early days, for example, the majority of what Bloomsbury USA published and sold was originated in the UK. Today, the ratio is about 60/40 (60% UK-originated titles; 40% US-originated titles) and is expected to even out at about 50/50 (Odedina). For the division to be a success – in its market, and as a component of Bloomsbury – it needs to acquire titles and foster relationships of its own, not only to bring British titles to US readers. Of course, all divisions of Bloomsbury will benefit from Bloomsbury USA doing just this, because they can then offer select US-originated titles to their markets. And if titles can be originated in the US or Germany and achieve good sales in the UK, the benefits of fostering a strong publishing program in these markets will be even clearer.

Meanwhile, title listings from the most recent Berlin Verlag children’s catalogue indicate that much of the content it publishes originates in Bloomsbury’s other offices: of 29 titles listed, 21 originated with either Bloomsbury UK or US, while 8 titles were either originated or acquired by Berlin Verlag from other publishers (Bloomsbury, Kinderbucher catalogue). Again, it will be interesting to re-visit this ratio in a few years’ time, once the German operation – as well as the system of international collaboration – is more established.

But there is no question it is worth attempting an entrée into these markets. Figure 3 illustrates that the US publishing market is several times that of the UK market, while Germany, with the largest publishing market in Europe, also surpasses the UK.

In the US, the publishing market has been growing for the past several years to reach a value of USD\$115.6 billion. Book sales “form the second largest segment, maintaining a 25.5% share of the US market,” worth an estimated US\$29.5 billion in 2005 (Dataonitor, *Publishing in the US*

9/10). Moreover, the value of the entire industry is expected to increase by 15.6% between 2005 and 2010; assuming they were to maintain their current share of the overall industry, this would mean book sales worth USD\$34.1 billion in 2010 (Datamonitor, *Publishing in the US* 15). (Whether they will maintain their current share of the industry, in the face of new market realities, new media and the challenges of new technologies, is another question entirely.)

Even though it has been in decline over the past five years, the German publishing industry was worth an estimated USD\$36.4 billion in 2005, leading any other European market in this area. Book sales comprise the largest segment, responsible for 28.3% of the overall market, at a value of USD\$10.3 billion (Datamonitor, *Publishing in Germany* 8). Due to the German industry's large dependence on book sales, and a predicted downturn in this segment by 2010, it is expected that in five years' time, the publishing market will decrease in value by 0.6%, to be worth an estimated USD\$36.2 billion (Datamonitor, *Publishing in Germany* 15).

A lacklustre forecast for Germany stands in contrast to the forecast for the UK market, which is expected to grow 11.1% to USD\$34.3 billion (Datamonitor, *Publishing in the UK* 15), due in part to the fact that "book sales have managed to capture the imagination and remain profitable in the face of indirect competition from other sources of entertainment" (Datamonitor, *Publishing in the UK* 8). However, even despite a less rosy forecast, the German publishing market is still very large

TABLE 2: THE SIZE OF THE PUBLISHING MARKET IN THE UK, US AND GERMANY (USD)

	UK	US	GERMANY
TOTAL VALUE OF THE PUBLISHING MARKET IN 2005	30.9B	115.6B	36.4B
VALUE OF BOOK PUBLISHING (AS % OF TOTAL)	20.9	25.5	28.3
ESTIMATED VALUE OF BOOK PUBLISHING	6.5B	29.5B	10.3B

NOTE: Assuming a generous exchange rate (US\$:£) of 2:1, the Datamonitor estimate of the value of the UK book publishing sector exceeds that of the BMS figure cited on pages 2 and 9 (£1,960 million adult + £400 million children = approx £2.5 billion = US\$5.0 billion) by about 30%. Different definitions and methodology could result in such a discrepancy. While the BMS data could by its nature be considered a more accurate indication of market size, the Datamonitor figures offer consistent methodology with which to compare the size of UK, US and German markets, and this comparison – rather than actual market size – is primarily the point here.

SOURCE: *Publishing in the United States, Publishing in the United Kingdom, Publishing in Germany* (all Datamonitor, 2005)

– larger than that of the UK – and is expected to remain so, even if it is not growing.

Bloomsbury has the opportunity to strengthen its market share in Germany in two areas: publishing titles in German and facilitating the sale of English-language editions of Bloomsbury books there as well. In Germany, as in other European countries, consumers have been shown to have a “huge appetite for the English language” – one in seven adults say they “regularly use English to read books, magazines and newspapers” (Bohme, slide 2).

British publishers are realizing the potential of selling English-language books into the rest of Europe:

Between 2003 and 2005, the value of UK publisher exports rose by 11% overall. While this was driven, in particular, by growth in sales of school and English Language Training books, the trade sector also [saw] growth. Trade sales grew 5% overall between 2003 and 2005, with adult fiction up 12% and children’s books up 16%. The much higher exports of UK publishers’ children’s books in 2003 and 2005 compared to 2004, reflects, of course, the appearance of *Harry Potter* titles in those two years (Bohme, slide 4).

And when it comes specifically to Germany, it would appear that Germans have a higher than average appetite for English books. A survey of nine large trade publishers in the UK showed that “between 2003 and 2005, the value of sales of trade books from large UK publishers to Germany increased by 10% overall, compared to a decrease in sales to the Netherlands, and a 3% increase in sales to the rest of Europe” (Bohme, slide 7).

The acquisition of Berlin Verlag means that, with effect from 2005, it is now responsible for selling Bloomsbury English-language titles in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. And in fact, “Bloomsbury’s English language edition of *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* was number one in the *Der Spiegel* bestseller list for several weeks” in 2005 (Bloomsbury, “Annual Report 05” 14). Meanwhile, the company is aiming to make it easier for German booksellers to order Bloomsbury UK’s English books from the German warehouse, an advantage because “they can more readily order small quantities and settle in Euros” (Bloomsbury, “Annual Report 05” 14).

While it is a good strategy to make Bloomsbury UK English books available to fulfil the demand of German readers, it is equally or more important to publish and make available outstanding titles in German, particularly for the children’s market.

At Bloomsbury, books published in all three territories now account for 75% of the joint children's lists (Bloomsbury, "Annual Report 05" 10). So, in every sense, the children's departments in London, New York and Berlin, in establishing systems and fine-tuning their international collaboration, are assisting Bloomsbury in corporate growth and establishing market share in all three territories.

2.3.3 BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

ASIDE FROM the ultimate goal of building strong divisions with varied lists in the UK, US and Germany, there are a number of other benefits to publishing and cross-selling books in these markets. Having all three divisions involved in an acquisition means that they can share the cost of advances, and can put together royalty/advance figures based on the expected sale of books in all three markets. Thus, higher advances can be offered, allowing Bloomsbury to come in at a stronger position when competing for sought-after titles. The acquiring editor of whichever division is doing the acquiring will often make an offer for world rights rather than specific territorial rights, and this, in conjunction with an integrated marketing plan that shows sales and marketing roll-out in all three countries, is a huge competitive advantage for Bloomsbury.

Authors and agents have more money on the table, as well as an offer supported by a very specific international sales plan. This proposition is even more attractive to authors and agents as, because of the way Bloomsbury is structured and the rights on offer, authors and agents stand to earn straight royalties on sales in all three territories as opposed to earning diluted royalties through a sub-rights arrangement. For, frequently, when a single publisher bids for world rights and brokers these to foreign publishers, there is an additional party in the transaction, and as a result the author and agent stand to make less on royalties.

The result of being able to make a world rights bid is the ability to offer on (and hopefully get) larger books and to foster and build good relationships with authors and agents who appreciate these benefits of working with Bloomsbury.

In the sense that Bloomsbury has the ability to bid more often on world rights, and the financial resources to support these offers, it can compete with multinational publishers bidding on projects. But Bloomsbury can also work without the constraints of the multinational monoliths:

With huge advances being paid, though, it is no wonder authors' agents speak more kindly of Bloomsbury. "They use the freedom of being an independent very well," says literary agent David Godwin. "They can make very swift decisions, and publish more creatively - they don't have the bureaucracy of the big multinationals, and, unlike them, Bloomsbury has editorial people at the heart of the business (Edemariam).

The reliance on editorial input amongst its divisions is another benefit of Bloomsbury's UK-US-German operational strategy, and seen as yet another competitive advantage for the company. Multinationals tend to have their strongest links through the sales departments; and so they are dealing with finished titles rather than those in development. However, when a division is allowed participation at the editorial stage, it can help shape the finished book, making changes or additions that will be key to helping sell it in its market. With participation this early, editorial, production and sales departments in all three divisions can really get behind a title, and this support dramatically strengthens sales potential (Odedina).

2.4 LOGISTICS OF COLLABORATION

"We like to think of ourselves as one big editorial group that's stretched across several different time zones. "Will this work in the UK and Germany?" is one of the first questions an editor here will ask when evaluating a new project"
(Cecka and Blough)

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN an author and editor and the path to developing an idea through manuscript to book can often seem perilous enough. With the additional complexity of three offices, three markets, two languages, and a six-hour time difference, it is difficult to imagine how editorial involvement in this manner can be fruitful. Yet the Bloomsbury approach to sharing acquisitions, at least on the children's side, is to keep things as simple as possible.

2.4.1 GO OR NO GO: MAKING THE DECISION TO ACQUIRE

WHEN A MANUSCRIPT or proposal that may be of interest to the other branches comes in, the division considering its acquisition forwards it to the appropriate people in the other two divisions. Then comes a waiting period (depending on the urgency of the proposal in question) in which each office assesses the suitability of the proposal for their market. If two or more divisions think it is appropriate, each division puts together sales projections and costings, out of which an advance amount is drawn. Thus the total amount of the advance is calculated, based on each division's contribution. And, if all three divisions are interested, world rights will likely be bid on, and if the bid is a success, development will begin at the acquiring office, in concert with the other two offices. Notification of a successful world rights bid is also the point at which the rights department gets involved (though realistically it has probably already had some input); its task will be to take the title to fairs like Bologna or Frankfurt to sell as many foreign/translation rights as possible, and, depending on the scope of the contract, exploit other opportunities such as serialization (more relevant for adult than children's titles), film deals and other rights sales as applicable.

And if the proposal is deemed unacceptable for the other two divisions? Of course, each operation must look at the viability of publishing a book in its territory on a case by case basis. Sometimes, for example, subject matter or style that works in the US will simply not work in the UK or Germany, or else the perfect author in Britain just isn't the logical choice of author in the US. Here is where it falls to editors and personnel in each division to have knowledge and expertise of their own market, and for personnel in all divisions to acknowledge that of course there will be occasions when their partners in Germany, the UK or the US will simply be unable to make a title work for their market. So, even though the ultimate aim is to be producing more cross-market books, rejection by the other two divisions does not deter the acquiring division if it is committed to a title and convinced it will work (Odedina). It may have to revisit its figures and sales projections, juggle production specs or costings to make the acquisition viable, but this

is no different than the normal process of acquisition and negotiation between publishers, authors and agents.

Perhaps the only exception to this is with picture or illustrated books; the cost of printing and production being quite high means that the involvement of multiple divisions (or co-publishers) is often a requirement, and so Bloomsbury UK generally only embarks on a picture book project with the involvement of Bloomsbury USA and Berlin Verlag: according to an interview with Sarah Odedina in 2005, in light of the cost of picture book production, Bloomsbury UK had begun working with its US and German counterparts to get the ideas right in the first place, "...and when we do, we have a print run" (Marks, "Not a Classic, But Good Vibes").

2.4.2 HOW EDITORIAL COLLABORATION IS UNDERTAKEN

WHILE IT'S ALMOST a certainty that any picture book being produced will be undertaken in concert with Bloomsbury USA and Berlin Verlag, collaboration is not limited to picture books. And in the cases when a book is to be published in all three markets, editorial development of the manuscript is ongoing at the acquiring office while the rights department pursues rights sales. While all three divisions have the opportunity to provide editorial input, the acquiring editor maintains the primary relationship with the author. As in most publishing houses, this author-editor relationship is sacrosanct and well-respected. Editors from other divisions may have contact with the author on routine or other matters but if they have comments of an editorial nature about the project, they will direct these through the acquiring editor.

And in actual practice, when it comes to children's books acquired in the UK or US, Berlin Verlag is content to offer quite little editorial input. However, editors in the UK and US do work together quite closely, with both editors making changes to the manuscript at each stage, and then comparing notes on their edits and deciding which changes to keep. And, perhaps surprisingly, most often UK and US collaborators have a similar vision or instinct about what is needed editorially (Odedina). So this process of collaboration about the larger, more substantive editorial issues is mostly harmonious.

From a substantive edit, it is easy enough to move through a copy edit, and into typeset files. While the interior files are being finalized, ready to be shared, or in the case of the German edition, translated and typeset again, development of a jacket, subtitle, tagline, marketing points and a sales and marketing plan is also taking place. And in these aspects, there are sometimes very marked differences between the US, UK and Germany.

2.4.3 THE NITTY-GRITTY: SYSTEMS ENABLING COLLABORATION

WHILE EARLIER it was said that the general mandate when it comes to collaboration is to keep things as simple as possible, at Bloomsbury there are a number of systems in place to assist in working collaboratively with the US and Germany. Conference calls (an editorial assistant's nightmare!) happen on a weekly basis in both the adult and children's departments. These are opportunities for staff from the various offices to update each other on their activities, to run through agendas and to follow up on action points from previous calls. In addition, as in most organizations these days, email is used extensively to stay in touch. Key personnel also use bookfairs like London, Frankfurt, Bologna and BookExpo America as an opportunity to hold meetings and catch up with those from other divisions of Bloomsbury; they also hold meetings in Berlin, New York or London every few months as necessary.

There are shipments to New York and Berlin on a daily basis, so much material is transferred by internal post. Artwork and files may be sent on CD or transferred via FTP.

One of the most powerful tools enabling the exchange and sharing of information is Dianabase, Bloomsbury's repository of bibliographic data. A web-based repository accessed and edited by all departments in all the company's offices, Dianabase contains information for all books published by Bloomsbury in the UK, US and Germany. Each listing has a title information sheet (or AI) written by the editorial department, as well as marketing plans, reviews and quotes for publicity, critical paths for production, sales projections and jacket artwork. This means that people in all

offices can access at least basic and hopefully robust information about the titles to be published. (I say “at least basic” because in my limited experience using Diabase, it did seem that information for the US and German titles was less religiously updated as was information for the UK titles. An increasing focus on keeping this central database as up-to-date as possible will probably be an aspect of refining and fine-tuning collaboration.)

In terms of personnel, there are occasional exchanges between the offices, though this seems to be quite rare. However, there is certainly cross-over of expertise, particularly at the management level, and most notably at Berlin Verlag, where the joint Managing Director is someone who, before she was appointed to the post in January 2005, had held the title of Publishing Director at Bloomsbury UK since January 1987.

This has been a brief summary of how the British, American and German offices handle acquisitions, editorial development and general communication. It is instructive in getting a sense of how the overall structure and systems set up by Bloomsbury facilitate this collaboration. However, it is also useful to look specifically at the acquisition and editorial processes as they were undertaken for *Tanglewreck* and *Larklight*; these concrete examples provide additional points of discussion about the process as well as an opportunity to analyze the editorial, production, and marketing variables that do change in different territories, and reflect the particularities of three often very different markets.

3. COLLABORATION IN ACTION: TWO CASE STUDIES

3.1 TANGLEWRECK

3.1.1 ORIGINATING AND PUBLISHING IN THE UK

BLOOMSBURY PUBLISHED Jeanette Winterson's first children's book, *The King of Capri*, in 2003. Children's publishing was a significant departure for Winterson, an acclaimed and well-known writer for adults, with several award-winning titles including *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, *The Passion*, *Sexing the Cherry*, *Written on the Body* and *The Powerbook*. For her adult titles in the UK, she has worked with a number of publishers, including Pandora, Cape, Bloomsbury, Fourth Estate and Canongate.

Interestingly, Winterson's relationship with Berlin Verlag may have been what compelled her to establish a publishing relationship with Bloomsbury UK for her children's titles. Elisabeth Ruge at Berlin Verlag has published Winterson's adult titles in German, and is considered to be her German publisher; Berlin Verlag was acquired by Bloomsbury in 2003. This was enough of an affinity to convince Winterson to take a chance on Bloomsbury Children's Books UK (Odedina).

Her children's publishing relationship with Bloomsbury was established with publication of *The King of Capri*, an illustrated book which to date has been published in a range of countries including Korea, Hungary, Turkey and Japan.

Tanglewreck, a fantastic quest story set in a future where time is distorting, is Winterson's first full-length children's novel, written for 9 to 11 year-olds, a slightly older audience than *The King of Capri*. It is the second book to be published with Bloomsbury. Published in July 2006, it was one of the lead titles for Bloomsbury Children's Books, making news as early as October 2005 at Frankfurt: "At Bloomsbury, MD Sarah Odedina was delighted by the reaction to Jeanette Winterson's first children's novel, *Tanglewreck* (sold to France and Italy, and with a lot of very good coedition interest and offers)" (Marks, "A Fair of ...").

The goal for Bloomsbury, then, in publishing *Tanglewreck* was to continue to build on the

momentum and success of *The King of Capri* and to continue to exploit Winterson's reputation as an adult writer when publishing her children's books. The strategy of banking on an established adult writer is one that is being used increasingly in children's publishing, and its success is being propelled by the strength of the children's publishing landscape: it is "an elastic children's marketplace, which can find a home for adult authors and pay them grown-up sized advances backed with similarly scaled marketing plans" and in the US in 2005, "Little, Brown, for example, announced a very adult 400,000-copy first printing and \$750,000 marketing campaign for James Patterson's first YA novel, *Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment*" (Rosen, "Growing Up").

Bloomsbury's children's list is ripe with offerings from adult-turned-children's authors, including Margaret Atwood, Marjane Satrapi, and Alexander McCall Smith, who in fact "began writing for children before starting either of his two bestselling series for adults, the *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* and the *Sunday Philosophy Club*" (Rosen, "Growing Up"). Though the benefits of working with writers such as these are many, there is one factor that is the biggest compelling reason to do so: "What an adult trade writer brings to the table is a built-in audience" (Rosen, "Growing Up"). With increased activity in children's publishing – more publishers, more titles, more authors, all competing for book buyers' attention – this is critically important.

This awareness of the author's reputation played a role in the decisions made about both the production and marketing of *Tanglewreck*. One of the key sales and marketing strategies was to appeal to Winterson's "built-in audience": thus *Tanglewreck's* marketing plan includes notes for advertising to target her adult fans, and high-profile interviews and appearances to garner publicity to appeal to them as well (Bloomsbury, "AI: *Tanglewreck*"). Bloomsbury envisaged readers of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* or *Sexing the Cherry* now having children, or even grandchildren, of their own and buying *Tanglewreck* for them.

This knowledge of the buyer, coupled with the author's stature, influenced the choice of format and packaging for *Tanglewreck*. Priced at £12.99, *Tanglewreck* is a 416-page, B-format (129 x 198 mm) hardback (please refer to the Appendix, A Note on UK Formats, for clarification).

Perceptions about hardback and paperback books are now changing, as are strategies for publishing in hardback based on the current book-buying climate. According to a *Publisher's Weekly* article, one complaint of children's booksellers in the US was that publishers are creating too many hardcovers that shouldn't be: "Parents and grandparents are willing to buy hardcovers for young children, especially the books that they remember growing up. But once kids get to the "early readers" age, parents prefer paperback... We can sell *Junie B. Jones* and *The Magic Tree House* in hardcover, but we can't sell other new series for second, third or fourth graders in hardcover – even by big-name authors. Parents don't want to buy hardcovers, because kids go through them so quickly. If it's in paper, people will try it" (Rosen, "Top 10 List").

Going counter to this "conventional wisdom," Bloomsbury personnel felt strongly that *Tanglewreck* should be a hardback (Odedina). And with this particular set of factors, and a carefully plotted publication and marketing plan it would seem they made a reasonable decision.

Cover design for children's books needs to appeal both to child readers and to buyers – parents, grandparents, teachers and librarians. But *Tanglewreck* is a book that itself appeals to adult readers. Winterson sets her tale in a not-too-distant-future London, and presents an imaginative conceit – the idea of time becoming a commodity. In her exploration of space and time, she gives credit to her young readers, while providing a number of references to keep adult readers fascinated: "Winterson playfully peppers this journey with references to John Harrison, the Einstein Line, Schrödinger's cat, quantum physics, Black Holes and Egyptian deities" ("*Tanglewreck*," *Publishers Weekly*).

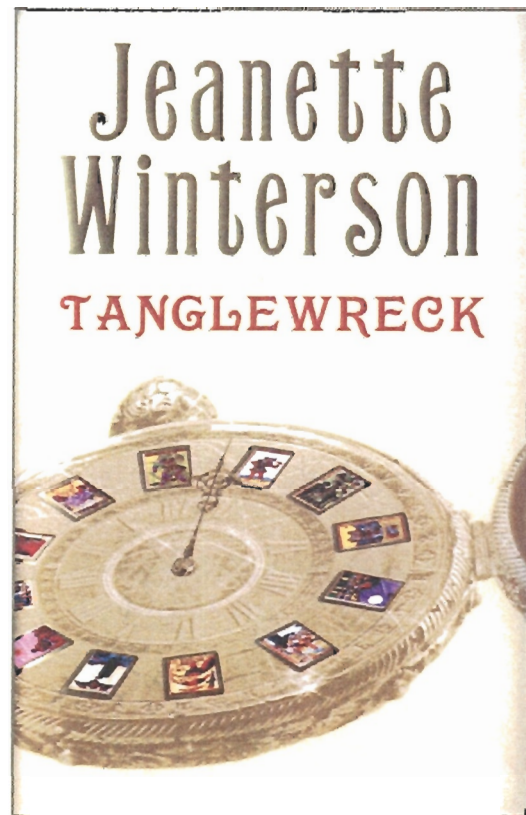


FIGURE 2: TANGLEWRECK UK JACKET

Representative of the high production values for which Bloomsbury is generally known, *Tanglewreck* is beautifully packaged with a cream cover with embossed lettering and gold-foil. Provocative imagery reflects the genre of fantasy/adventure and the subject matter of time travel, and should appeal to young readers, although the cover itself may be a little understated (though this may be my North American book bias coming out). But even if understated, the cover succeeds in speaking to an important buyer of *Tanglewreck* – the Jeanette Winterson fan. The author’s name – the most prominent element of the design – takes up the top third of the cover, dwarfing the book’s title and accompanying image. With the case of the UK edition of *Tanglewreck*, what is both the rationale for publishing and the book’s strongest selling point is nicely reflected and encapsulated on this cover.

3.1.2 TANGLEWRECK IN THE US AND GERMANY

IF YOU WERE TO stand blindfolded and handle the British, American and German versions of *Tanglewreck* they would feel quite indistinguishable. Format, size and extent remain roughly the same for the two English-language versions. The German version is also a hardback of about the same size; however, due to its translation into German, it would be slightly weightier with approximately sixty more pages than the other two editions.

Take the blindfold off, though, and three quite different cover treatments invite their readers to pick the book up.

TABLE 3: TANGLEWRECK IN THREE TERRITORIES

	UK	US	GERMANY
PUB DATE	JUL '06	AUG '06	SEPT '06
PRICE	£12.99	\$16.65	EUR16.90
FORMAT	HC	HC	HC
DIMENSIONS (MM)	129 X 198*	127 X 203	135 X 215
EXTENT	416 PP	416 PP	480 PP
STATED AGE RANGE	9-11	7-10	12 AND UP

* NOTE: in contrast to conventions in North America and Germany, the UK convention is to list dimensions as *height x width*; in this table the UK dimension has been reversed to better illustrate the relationship between the books in each territory.

Sit through a cover meeting at any publishing house where the sales, marketing and design departments rub against each other like tectonic plates and you will experience the dilemmas facing publishing - the foil and format wars that have raged throughout the last decade, or the old argument that 'books are special' against the one that says books are just a 'product', another branch of entertainment, competing with every other means of passing the time between birth and death. The designer fights for the integrity of his or her design - he or she has, after all, studied this stuff - and the sales and marketing people, [sic] fight for something that will bring the glimmer of a smile to the face of the buyer at WH Smith or Ottakar's (Kerr).

Substitute "Borders", "Barnes & Noble", "Weltbild" or "Lehmanns" for "WH Smith" and "Ottakar's" and the above statement holds true. While the conflict between artistic/design vision and sales and marketing *oomph* appears to be a universal, the "product" that results can be very different depending on the market. And in this case, Bloomsbury USA and Berlin Verlag present quite a different version of *Tanglewreck* to their respective markets.

While British, American and German partners at Bloomsbury tend to have a very similar sense of editorial mandate in developing books, when it comes to cover aesthetic, they are often quite confounded by what works in the others' markets (Odedina). Internationally, and most notably between UK and North American markets, there is a marked difference in the approach to cover design: "How fascinating it always proves to compare British jackets with American ones. Check out *Specimen Days* on amazon.com and compare it to its British equivalent. They could be different books" (Kerr).

So, as *Tanglewreck* demonstrates, when Bloomsbury publishes a title concomitantly in the UK, US and Germany, there is the opportunity to customize the cover design to make it appropriate for all. As a result, jacket design and treatment is handled separately in all three offices.

Tanglewreck's listing on the Bloomsbury USA website comes with the strapline, "A sophisticated, gothic tale about a society where time is bought and sold" (Bloomsbury USA Online Catalogue). With its very dark colours the US cover treatment reflects this emphasis on *Tanglewreck's* "gothic" tone. And on the US cover, the author's name is notably smaller, second in size and boldness to the book's title.

This aesthetic decision was made according to the conventions of publishing for the American market. Although Jeanette Winterson's work is acclaimed in the US, "in general, kids books in the US tend to have the title be the emphasis, rather than the author name. There are always exceptions to the rule, of course, but by and large the "BIG AUTHOR NAME AT THE TOP OF THE BOOK" treatment is reserved for more commercial adult titles – the John Grisham's, the Stephen King's" (Cecka and Blough).

As the US office began working with the original UK jacket artwork, the colour palette became darker, and the central image of the clock, though maintained, was manipulated. They added the tornado, lightning and horizon – all elements of the narrative – to the jacket because "one of the bits of feedback we hear quite often from our key buyers is that readers like to get a sense of narrative from the jacket images – something that gives a context for the storyline" (Cecka and Blough).

With its dark colours and very literal representation of the story on the cover, the German jacket resembles the US jacket. "We liked the English cover a lot, but felt that we needed something a bit different for our hardcover edition, especially as we have kept the original title and had to make sure the reader could associate the beautiful and mysterious house with the title right away" (Engelhardt). This also explains the addition of the subtitle on the German edition, which translates to "the house at the end of time." It was also their concern to link *Tanglewreck's* cover aesthetic with the jackets of Winterson's adult titles (Engelhardt).

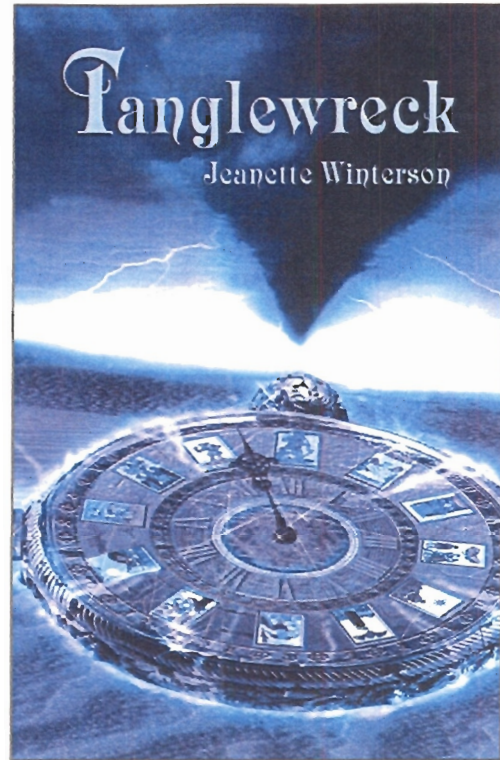


FIGURE 3: TANGLEWRECK US JACKET

The US and German editions are aligned because they both utilize much darker palettes and they present a more realistic and less iconic cover for *Tanglewreck*. And the link between the German and the US editions is to continue:

We've changed the cover treatment for the paperback edition, since we got a fantastic reaction to the German cover – the addition of the house, again, added a great narrative element of the story to the jacket look. The new British paperback cover has lots of fans here too – it was a tough decision, but in the end we went with the more 'realistic' look, if you can say that about this gothic fantasy (Cecka and Blough).

An examination of the ways in which each arm has treated the *Tanglewreck* cover sheds much light on the considerations and concerns each operation has in publishing for its market. The UK jacket of *Tanglewreck*, pared back and iconic, probably reflects the tastes and tendencies of UK buyers; while the US and German jackets tend toward realism in reflecting the story contents. In the US, this is done on the advice of key buyers; and in Germany, there is an additional concern to keep the jacket suggestive of the book's content because the impact of the English title may be lost on German readers. (Though, realistically, the title *Tanglewreck* doesn't have much meaning to English-speaking readers anyway).

But what is also significant is what emerges from this collaborative relationship. Each office has the opportunity to adapt and build upon the work of the other offices, to take snippets of inspiration where they will. In this sense they can leverage their expertise: so that they have the work of three (teams of) graphic designers, the opinions of three (teams of) editors and the know-how and advice of three (teams of)

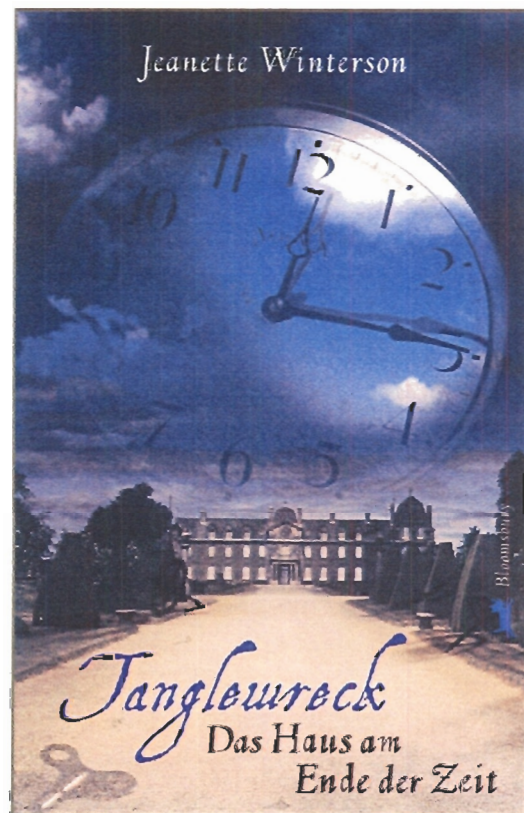


FIGURE 4: TANGLEWRECK GERMAN JACKET

marketers. Even when all three offices develop the same title in their own way, their decisions may inform and assist those working in other offices. While to a certain extent this collaboration is sometimes achieved when foreign publishers work together on co-publishing arrangements, after the sale of sub-rights, or when territorial arms of multinationals publish the same title, it is the familiarity and commonality – of ongoing and established working relationships, of all working for the same company, all roughly for the same goal – which makes it especially effective.

3.1.3 MARKETING IN THE UK

IN PUBLISHING NEWS' round-up of the best children's marketing campaigns of 2005, titles such as Justin Somper's *Vampirates* (published by Simon & Schuster) and the *Wizardology* series (published by Templar Publishing) received commendation because they featured "well-rounded and targeted publicity and marketing" (Marks, "Kids campaign review"). *Vampirates* was applauded for having "a launch event, a great website, good support from the trade, a well-organised author tour, targeted press appearances and review features. Oh, and a great adventure story to boot!" (Marks, "Kids Campaign Review").

Seemingly, one strategy for success in marketing a children's title is to have a campaign that is multi-faceted; one which takes advantage of publicity opportunities, provides an innovative web presence, and receives support and enthusiasm both from the book trade and the publisher itself.

Bloomsbury planned to hit the mark on a number of these requirements when it came to marketing *Tanglewreck* to UK readers. The marketing plan included some advertising: to the trade, to Winterson's adult fans, and to the teacher and library market (Bloomsbury, "Marketing Plan: *Tanglewreck*"). It included *Tanglewreck*'s website, at www.bloomsbury.com/tanglewreck, where potential buyers and readers can find an extract of the story, Jeanette Winterson's biography and two recent interviews, plus a selection of other review quotes. As well, there is a section for extras, where users can download an A2-size *Tanglewreck* poster.

While the *Tanglewreck* website is a comprehensive place to find plenty relating to the book,

it feels like it exists for the book's adult buyers rather than its child readers. While websites for children's titles can serve several purposes, one arguably important purpose is to act as a conduit to get information to the trade: to the buyers, whether at the supermarket level, the independent shop, or the library wholesaler. And this is where the *Tanglewreck* website's emphasis seems to be: tellingly, the first several on a list of review quotes are all from the trade – from early reviews in *Publishing News* and *The Bookseller* to a review by a specific children's bookseller (Bloomsbury, "Tanglewreck Reviews").

Tapping into the expertise and enthusiasm of knowledgeable booksellers offers clear benefits to publishers:

As retail outlets occupy a position which affords them both an overview of what's being produced and face-to-face involvement with who's supposed to be buying it, it's no surprise to find that Winstone and his colleagues are being approached by publishers for their opinions on the sales potential of what, or whoever, is being touted as The Next Big Thing. "It's something we encourage," he stresses. "It's the kind of partnership we want to develop because, as an end-user, we want books we can sell. We can offer access to sales data, on genres and trends, and we do exchanges – editors coming to bookshops and booksellers going to publishers (Marks, "Strong But Not Vintage").

Though it seems elementary to assume that publishers ought to maintain a good relationship with booksellers who have first-hand understanding of who is buying what, the reality is that this relationship is not exploited as fruitfully as it could be. Winstone continued to say that they had cooperated with two publishers to share valuable expertise and sales data in this way, and it seems surprising that only two UK publishers would have done this. And, with the changing book retailing landscape in most markets – the UK and Germany in particular – it seems even more important to foster these relationships.

While having the full support and enthusiasm of the trade was an important element of the *Tanglewreck* marketing strategy, garnering lots of publicity and review attention in the mainstream media was also critically important. The book was widely reviewed around its publication date; in addition, there were a number of "off-the-book-page" profiles and interviews with

Jeanette Winterson which added to her exposure. Many of the reviewers noted that *Tanglewreck* felt very much like *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, one of Winterson's earliest published titles. Again, the links back to her adult writing, audience and trajectory in the spotlight are never very far away.

In *Tanglewreck*'s launch event on 3 July, the book's prime audiences were again acknowledged. Booksellers, journalists, their children and other young readers were invited to board a red double-decker bus, which drove around London, eventually coming to a stop along the Thames. Jeanette Winterson then read from the opening chapter of *Tanglewreck*, including the following passage:

At six forty-five one summer morning, a red London bus was crossing Waterloo Bridge.

A group of school children, sitting at the back, were copying each other's homework and fighting, when one of them looked out of the window, across the river to Cleopatra's Needle, and saw something very strange...The dark finger of ancient Egypt was pointing towards the sky as it always did, but today the tip of the obelisk was glowing bright red, as it had when it was new and painted and glorious, four thousand years ago, in the Temple of the Sun (Winterson, p. 13).

This was a unique opportunity for adults and children alike to meet Winterson and to hear her read from the book in an intimate setting; it was a successful event, one which all participants were said to have enjoyed.

After *Tanglewreck*'s July publication, Winterson continued to do readings and publicity: one of her events was at the Edinburgh International Book Festival in August, where she drew crowds to both her adult and children's readings.

3.1.4 MARKETING IN THE US AND GERMANY

THE US AND GERMAN marketing plans point to some but not all of the tactics used in the UK. Again, the conventions of bookselling in each particular marketplace dictate what techniques are called upon in rolling out a marketing plan.

Neither Germany nor the US held any launch events for *Tanglewreck*; nor did Winterson do any appearances or readings. One reason for this is simply the cost and logistics of getting an author there, particularly when the marketing budget may be better spent on something else. In general, for books in Germany that are translations from other languages (of which there are many), author's reading tours are "a little less important" (Engelhardt).

Similarly, the US tends not to have the same kind of book festivals as Britain does, so there is less emphasis on showcasing authors at these events. For this reason, publicity tours take on a slightly different flavour than in Britain (or Canada, for that matter, where author appearances at book festivals often form an important part of publicity plans). Instead, Bloomsbury USA may "sometimes send a new author out far in advance of publication for a 'buzz tour'" in order to "get booksellers and media to meet and support the author in the early stages of publication" (Cecka and Blough).

But, because of budget constraints, this may be a very specific or targeted event; in fact, one commonly-heard gripe of independent children's booksellers in the US is that "Booking authors on tour has gotten harder, as children's book publishers have begun asking booksellers for detailed proposals, including how many books they expect to sell ... Publishers are cutting out a lot of independents who could help them hit their sales goals" (Rosen, "Top 10 List"). However, because of the sheer geographical size of the marketplace, most of the time having authors do a lot of bookstore events, particularly at smaller locations, is a less-than-realistic proposition for publishers, who might do far better to allocate their resources to creating excellent sales materials for their reps and having them hand-sell their books to buyers.

By and large, the marketing approach favoured by the US when it came to *Tanglewreck* was to have as many people as possible read the book early – over 1,500 advance reading copies were "put into the hands of booksellers, educators, librarians, reviewers, and kids" (Cecka and Blough). This resulted in a number of positive reviews, both in the consumer and educational markets.

While there was little likelihood of author events at bookshops, *Tanglewreck* still managed to

gain extra exposure at the independents; it was a Book Sense pick and was therefore included on the pamphlets, flyers and marketing materials associated with the “national marketing organization for the independent bookstores” (Cecka and Blough). That it was a Book Sense selection was one gratifying result of the push to create hype and excitement for *Tanglewreck* in the US trade.

Although there are several, arguably the most striking difference between how Bloomsbury UK and US offices undertake their marketing is that the US attaches much more importance to selling to the school and library market: “the educational marketplace is very key to us, and we spend much effort and dollars to market our books to this critical part of the market (national conventions, mailings, advertising, etc). It’s profitable when a book succeeds here – long life, low returns” (Cecka and Blough).

For its part, Germany seems to have undertaken a slightly less extensive marketing plan than either the UK or the US, as the book was less of a lead title for them. Since it is the publisher of Winterson’s adult titles, Berlin Verlag used this as a strong selling hook; they were able to convince “sales reps and the booksellers of the high literary quality of the book” and also targeted Winterson’s adult fans with news of the *Tanglewreck* publication (Engelhardt). The *Tanglewreck* page on the German website includes links to Winterson’s adult titles, as well as the opportunity to purchase them online. In addition to being a reminder of the author’s reputation, this is an additional branding tool and may also help drive backlist sales.

The German office is currently preparing material for reading groups; *Tanglewreck* is “one of the books with which we’d like to introduce the habit of reading groups in Germany” (Engelhardt). While, seemingly, reading groups are less established in the German market, this is another area in which working with peers in the UK and US is advantageous; they can lend their expertise as targeting reading groups is an established marketing strategy in both operations.

All three offices are looking forward to publication of the paperback edition, to be released in the UK in the spring/summer 2007. This will be another opportunity for marketing, and for breathing new life into the book.

3.2 LARKLIGHT

THE SECOND TITLE to be presented as a case study here is *Larklight*. *Larklight* is similar to *Tanglewreck* in that it was a lead title for Bloomsbury Children's Books in late 2006. It appeals to readers of about the same age range and is another imaginative fantasy/adventure story.

3.2.1 ORIGINATING AND PUBLISHING IN THE UK

PHILIP REEVE IS A well-known children's writer based in the UK. He is probably best known as the author of the four-part *Mortal Engines* series (known as *Hungry City Chronicles* in the US), published by Scholastic UK between 2001 and 2005. Scholastic also published another three-part group of titles by Reeve, the *Buster Bayliss* series, in 2002.

Since he began publishing books for children, Reeve has received much critical acclaim for his children's offerings: *Mortal Engines*, the first book in the so-named quartet, "was shortlisted for The Whitbread Children's Book Award and was awarded the Gold Nestle Smarties Book Prize as well as being named The Blue Peter Book of the Year 2003" (Bloomsbury, "Marketing Plan: *Larklight*"). And, most recently, Reeve was awarded the 2006 *Guardian* Children's Fiction Prize, for *A Darkling Plain*, the fourth book in the *Mortal Engines* series (Ezard).

With such a successful history of work with Scholastic, how did Reeve come to work with Bloomsbury on *Larklight*? Again, the origin of *Larklight* attests to the extreme importance of maintaining personal relationships in publishing, arguably even more so than in other industries.

With expansion of its children's division over the past several years, Bloomsbury has been creating new positions and making new hires. One personnel acquisition that made news in late 2004 was the hiring of Val Braithwaite, former Scholastic Creative Director, as Design Director (Tagholm). Braithwaite had worked with Philip Reeve while at Scholastic, and when she moved to Bloomsbury, she asked him whether he would consider doing a book with them.

Reeve agreed to publish a children's book with Bloomsbury, and, though he was unsure

about what the final product would be, he knew he wanted to create a heavily illustrated space adventure story. Because of the project's vague definition at the beginning, the strength of the relationship between Reeve and Braithwaite, and the nature of the book itself, *Larklight* is an example of a project that is highly collaborative, involving the input and participation of several participants. Reeve worked closely with Braithwaite and acquiring editor Ele Fountain to define the project more specifically.

What evolved was *Larklight*, a Victorian-inspired romp written for 9 to 11 year olds, but which is 'devilishly witty' enough (Bloomsbury, "Marketing Plan: *Larklight*") to entertain and delight adult readers almost as much: "The glory of Empire meets *Star Trek* in this space fantasy-picaresque that Edgar Rice Burroughs would have loved" ("*Larklight*" 965). *Larklight* is a beautifully packaged 416-page hardcover, priced at £12.99, with over 100 full-page and thumbnail pen-and-ink drawings throughout.

Since the book is full of illustrations, there was a fourth important person in this collaborative relationship: the illustrator. Interestingly, a book that presents Victorian pastiche in a format that is reminiscent of the books created in this period (with lots of line-drawings, elaborate chapter heads and more) begins to assume a production process and author-illustrator relationship that is very similar to one that Charles Dickens or Wilkie Collins might have maintained with their respective illustrators in the heady days of Victorian publishing.

And, as in the days of producing *Household Words*, sometimes there is conflict. In fact, the first illustrator with whom the *Larklight* team thought of working didn't prove to be a good fit. They began again with David Wyatt, who is well known for his fantastic illustrations of many enduring books for children and adults, including those by Geraldine McCraughrean, Ursula Le Guin, Phillip Pullman, and recent editions of Tolkien and Jules Verne (David Wyatt Illustration). The illustration began before the story was even completed; Reeve gave the illustrator the half-finished manuscript to get his creative juices flowing (Fountain).

Wyatt filled several pages of a sketchbook, "exploring the world of *Larklight* to find the

correct look and feel for the illustrations ... these sketches were based on conversations and snippets from the incomplete book” (Bloomsbury, *Larklight* website). And with the sketches completed, pencil roughs were drawn and superimposed against a “rough type layout” (Bloomsbury, *Larklight* website). At this point, Reeve ensured that the sketches were in line with his creative vision for the story and the work of creating the actual illustrations began.

The characteristics of the project also affected the additional production decisions made about its format and physical qualities. High quality paper and inks were chosen so that the ink of the many illustrations wouldn’t show through the pages (Fountain).

The story is chronicled by the main character Art Mumby and his sister Myrtle, so a journal format was chosen as packaging. At 180 x 141 mm, the nearly-square hardback book makes a neat little package, and the many interior illustrations and end papers are fanciful spoofs of Victorian adverts, for items such as ‘White Star Aether Cruises’ and ‘Trevithick’s Patent Gravity Generator.’ With such visual ephemera included with it, *Larklight* is a package that has been constructed to mimic the Victorian form in order to match the flavour and premise of the narrative.

The squat journal-type format lends itself well to the story and the subject matter; *Larklight*’s cover, with its rich red hues and spidery motif, also ties into the plot and the context of this Victorian-inspired story. Plus, the cover’s silver foil gives it a gift-feel; and since publication was in the fall of 2006, it was a prime Christmas gift buy. The editors and production team wanted to put a cloth cover on the book, to truly make it reminiscent of a Victorian journal; however, having a cloth cover would have required the centre image to

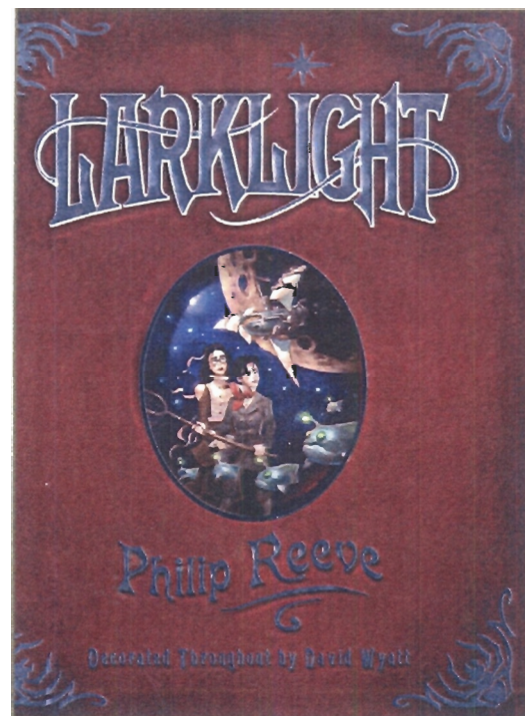


FIGURE 5: LARKLIGHT UK JACKET

be painted or pasted on, and this would have looked less attractive. Instead, they settled on a cloth-effect cover so that the centre image – so suggestive of the view from a spaceship’s porthole – could be nicely incorporated onto the jacket (Fountain).

With much competition in children’s publishing in general and fantasy in particular, it was important to get the packaging just right:

Most booksellers offer publishers kudos for one element that facilitates the selling of fantasy: dazzling cover art. ‘Many fantasies arrive with awesome covers,’ said Baily at BookPeople. ‘Publishers have definitely got it down. So often general fiction comes with lame covers that pale when they’re placed next to books with covers showing a cool dragon or a girl in a forest surrounded by fairies. We’re not supposed to judge a book by its cover, but if you’re a customer who hasn’t read that book yet, the first thing you see is the cover. And a well-packaged book is going to catch your attention (Lodge).

While *Larklight*’s physical packaging evolved to become a good complement to the story, the inspiration for the format of the book came from another series published by Bloomsbury Children’s Books. The template for the squat hardcover journal format was already established with the publication of the Angie Sage’s *Magyk* and *Flyte* titles, published in 2005 and 2006 respectively. The format worked very well for those titles; according to an article in April 2005, *Magyk* was in “the UK children’s hardback fiction bestseller charts at number one” and “number five on the adult hardback fiction chart” as well as “number one on the *New York Times* bestseller list for the last two weeks” (“Bloomsbury Children’s Sales ‘Magyk’”). While it is primarily the quality of the writing or story, and secondarily the publisher, bookseller or review buzz that propels a title into bestseller lists, an interesting or attractive format must play a role in making a book easier to pick up.

From a production perspective, copying the specifications of a previously-published format makes sense, and it also makes sense to emulate a successful format, and do some branding in the process. *Larklight*’s “climax is an absolute hoot, and leaves the door wide open for any number of sequels” (“*Larklight*,” *Publishers Weekly*). “*Larklight 2*” and “*Larklight 3*” are already on Bloomsbury’s publishing schedule for upcoming years, and while they will not be sequels *per se*, they will be

continuing adventures that include some or all of *Larklight*'s original cast of characters. The format of these books is slated to be the same as the original as well (Fountain).

From its very collaborative beginning to the creation of the physical book, *Larklight* is a project that people – from Bloomsbury's editorial and sales and marketing departments, to booksellers and the trade – have been excited about. That excitement has also extended to Bloomsbury USA and Berlin Verlag offices.

3.2.2 LARKLIGHT IN THE US AND GERMANY

Bloomsbury is supremely good at ... harnessing
their internal passion for a book to [do] good
creative work which drives sales
("That Was the ..." *Publishing News*).

ONE OF THE MANY roles of an editor is to be a book's champion, both in-house and in general. Ele Fountain's and the other project collaborators' excitement for the project was shared with other departments: the first selling point in the working marketing plan – "Fantastic! Ele has never read anything like this. Brilliant, rip-roaring" (Bloomsbury, "Marketing Plan: *Larklight*") gives voice to their enthusiasm.

Enthusiasm for *Larklight* was also shared with their editorial peers in the US and in Germany. Philip Reeve does not do proposals or précis so, at such an early stage of the project, there was only a general germ of an idea based on their discussions, but nothing to present to the US and German offices (Fountain). However, the vision for the project and the author's reputation were enough to convince people in those offices that *Larklight* would be suitable for their lists. While it is probably quite rare for a publishing department to acquire a project with so little information to work with, it does happen, particularly given the speed with which certain submissions are reviewed and considered, especially when there is a sense of urgency about them – the fear of losing an auction or not moving quickly enough to avoid having the author move to a different publisher.

But this lack of material again reiterates another advantage of Bloomsbury's working

arrangement between personnel in the UK, US and Germany. Since it is all within the same company, offices can communicate in a much less formal manner: they can bounce ideas off each other, share sales and marketing or other expertise, or present bare-bones project ideas for consideration. (Consider as a counter to this informality, for example, the procedures and formalities that are generally undertaken when publishers attempt to sell translation or co-edition rights to other publishers. To not have any material to present would be nearly inconceivable, except in the rarest of circumstances.)

In any case, despite having very little to work with, both Bloomsbury USA and Berlin Verlag shared Bloomsbury UK’s enthusiasm for *Larklight*. Whereas the three offices ended up with very different packages for *Tanglewreck*, with *Larklight* there was very little done to change the physical book when it was adopted for US and German markets. All agreed that the whole package – from its cover and endpapers to its extensive inside artwork – was brilliantly put together.

In a sense, it is logical that there were no changes to *Larklight*’s form while there were to *Tanglewreck*. The physical form and illustrations were of much importance to both author and illustrator, and, since they contribute to tone and to making the book a special package, they are integral and thus quite inseparable from the text. With *Tanglewreck*, however, it is the text that is pre-eminent, so the cover and packaging, while not completely incidental, are at least secondary.

The American edition of *Larklight* has the same jacket but has an added subtitle: “A Rousing Tale of Dauntless Pluck in the

TABLE 4: LARKLIGHT IN THREE TERRITORIES

	UK	US	GERMANY
PUB DATE	OCT '06	OCT '06	FEB '07
PRICE	£12.99	\$16.65	EUR17.95
FORMAT	HC	HC	HC
DIMENSIONS (MM)	141 X 180*	139 X 180	144 X 186
EXTENT	416 PP	250 PP	496 PP
STATED AGE RANGE	9-11	10-14	12 AND UP

* NOTE: again, the UK dimension has been reversed to better illustrate the relationship between the books in each territory.

Farthest Reaches of Space,” quite reminiscent of Victorian texts with their sometimes long and descriptive titles and subtitles. “We added the subtitle because we thought it conveyed the unique language and humor of the book, and set it apart from other titles” (Cecka and Blough). And, since the US editorial team contributed to *Larklight* from manuscript stage, there were no additional tweaks necessary.

While text-only *Tanglewreck* represents a fairly easy title to publish in German, publishing *Larklight* in German is a little more

complicated. The very fact that it is a wonderful package, with end papers and line drawings throughout, makes production more of a challenge, because in addition to the text, the English in the book’s ubiquitous line drawings must also be translated into German. For this reason there was a several-month delay from the UK and US publication in October 2006 until the German publication in February 2007.

For the same reasons discussed a few paragraphs above, the German edition (aside from being in another language) is physically much the same as its UK and US counterparts. It is a hardback, slightly larger than the other two, but roughly the same size, at 144 by 186 mm, with the same cover art and look and feel throughout. Again, as with *Tanglewreck*, translation into German has added pages so that this edition is several pages longer than that of the UK. Interestingly, on all the pre-publication material (on Dianabase and elsewhere), the German edition of *Larklight* was priced at EUR14.90; however, closer to publication date, the price was raised to EUR17.95 – presumably a reflection that the cost of translation and production of the book in German may have been more than they originally anticipated.

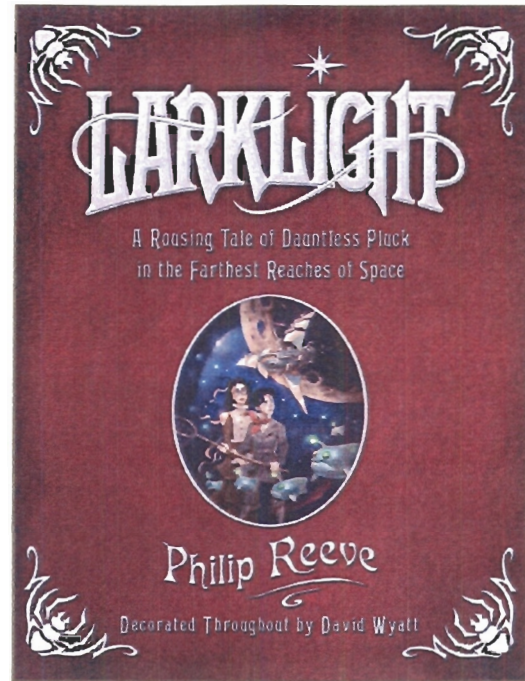


FIGURE 6: LARKLIGHT US JACKET

Unlike *Tanglewreck*, which maintained its English title for the German market, *Larklight* was literally translated into German: its title is *Lerkenlicht*. However, with the exception of the German title, the German cover is exactly the same as the UK edition.

And to the larger question: how will *Victoriana* be received in Deutschland? A detailed discussion of *Larklight*'s reception and relevance in Germany and elsewhere will be undertaken in the Marketing in the US and Germany section ahead.

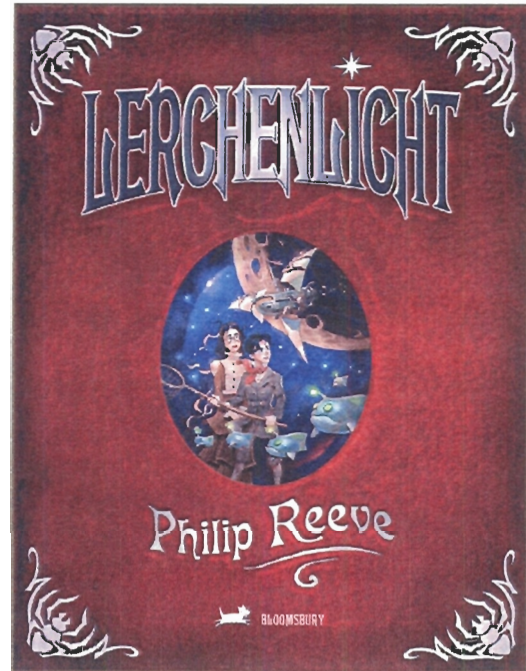


FIGURE 7: LARKLIGHT GERMAN JACKET

3.2.3 MARKETING IN THE UK

AS WITH *TANGLEWRECK*, the *Larklight* marketing plan was multi-faceted: it was tailored to take advantage of the author's reputation, to get as many people reading and talking about the book as possible, and to take advantage of its fall publication date.

Larklight has been widely reviewed in both traditional and online media, and has benefited from Reeve's existing audience – fans familiar with his *Mortal Engines* quartet. The recent announcement of his *Guardian Children's Fiction Prize* win for *A Darkling Plain*, while not directly associated with *Larklight*, will by association benefit the Bloomsbury title. Though the *Mortal Engines* series is darker and arguably more complex, there are many affinities between *A Darkling Plain* and *Larklight* that would recommend *Larklight* to readers of the earlier series. "His quartet has acquired a rare grip on the imaginations of younger readers. His stories, which hum with erudite concepts and inventions drawn largely from the past, have become bestsellers with an age group that stretches

from 10-year-olds into the early 20s” and though the following is said of *A Darkling Plain*, it could probably be said equally of *Larklight*, “the judges relished the scale of the adventure and imagination which fuels it and loved the robust and quirky humour which prevents it from becoming pompous” (Ezard).

While the publicity around his award win may mean that there are more people tempted to read *Larklight* because of the author’s repute, it will also help to convince booksellers – if they weren’t already convinced – of the quality and sales potential of *Larklight*.

In actuality, *Larklight* has been the subject of much hype and enthusiasm, even outside of Bloomsbury, for some time. As with *Tanglewreck*, the aim was to get people in the trade excited about the book first. Thus, bound proofs were created and distributed early; and the rights department’s efforts to entice foreign publishers were successful, as rights were sold to twelve foreign-language editions. (These sales would have been undertaken by the rights department at a point later than that at which the US and German offices signed on, once more finalized materials – some combination of a title information sheet, final manuscript, bound proof, jacket proof and advance quotes – would have been available to present to publishers. Again, this “formality” punctuates the different practices acceptable when dealing with colleagues within Bloomsbury and with colleagues in the greater publishing world.)

And the hype about *Larklight* continued with the April news that Warner Bros. had “preemptively acquired film rights” in a deal that was an outright sale rather than an option (McNary). The *Larklight* film, which is set to be released sometime in 2008, already has a listing on IMDb, while mention of it comes up in several places including lit, sci-fi and general blogs, as well as film industry news.

Certainly this pre-publication exposure contributes to *Larklight*’s marketing push. As a lead title published in the months prior to Christmas, it was expected to be one of the big children’s titles of the season; even in a July article, it was included among the ones to watch: “At Borders, Senior Children’s Buyer Julian Esposito feels that every publisher has had something strong to

offer this season. Like Grey, he mentions the new *Artemis Fowl* and the new Pratchett, but also includes on his 'scorcher' list the final *Lemony Snicket* from Egmont, "which will be humungous", as well as Bloomsbury's *Larklight*, the latest from Phillip [sic] Reeve, and the new Lauren Child, *Clarice Bean, Don't Look Now*, from Orchard" (Marks, "A Quality Christmas").

The push to secure Christmas sales meant that marketing over the fall concentrated on holiday trade advertising and promotions. Along with a number of pre-Christmas press ads, *Larklight* was included as a sampler in several kids' magazines. As well, the marketing department created a Victorian-style broadsheet newspaper, *The Interplanetary Clarion*, which was a fun way to introduce *Larklight* to reps, booksellers and readers, as it included book specs, author and illustrator bios, contact and order information, and more. Again, one can see the importance of using templates when it comes to publishing and marketing; the format, tone and aesthetic for *The Interplanetary Clarion* were modeled after *The Raven* newspaper that was created as part of the highly successful marketing campaign for Susanna Clarke's *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* (Bloomsbury, "Marketing Plan: *Larklight*").

For a Christmas promotion, *Larklight* was among select Bloomsbury titles to be on offer at 40% off in Bloomsbury's online bookshop (Bloomsbury Bookshop). As well, in terms of general promotion, the title was featured on the company's splash page, www.bloomsbury.com, and when users clicked through, they were taken to *Larklight*'s dedicated website.

The *Larklight* website is more dynamic and integrated than is the *Tanglewreck* site. Designed in Flash, with an accompanying musical score and sound effects, it is another excellent tool of introduction to the book. The site is modeled to look like the Aethernet Explorer, the space vehicle on which the book's characters travel. Levers, knobs and switches must be turned on in order to access the various components of the site, including a brief introduction to the story, author and illustrator information (including an interview with Philip Reeve and the description and photos of David Wyatt creating the illustrations), a book excerpt, contact information and links to purchase the book through Bloomsbury's online store.

The site is fun and interactive, as you are not sure which parts of the background image of the ship's 'control panel' are hyperlinked to enable activity. Clicking on an old-fashioned wrought-iron steering wheel causes it to rotate and to open up a viewing cubicle that, if clicked, brings up a description of a number of the interesting flora and fauna that populate Reeve's book. This is a site that children, in addition to adult buyers and booksellers, would enjoy visiting. Indeed, it is befitting of this fanciful and fun title, and perfectly in tune with the tone of the story. The interactivity, along with the animation and sound, is intimation that the world of *Larklight* is very much transferable to the screen or to other media. Again, this calls to mind the books in Angie Sage's *Septimus Heap* series (*Magyk*, *Flyte* and *Physik*), on which the *Larklight* format was based. In the US, "HarperCollins packaged Angie Sage's *Magyk*, first in the *Septimus Heap* trilogy, with a CD-ROM built into the cover, so "kids could get on their computer and explore the world" that Sage had created on the page" (Corbett 57). This is yet one of the options for marketing and interactivity that could well be explored for future iterations of *Larklight*.

Optimistic forecasts for sales during the 2006 holiday season should combine with continuing the word-of-mouth – both online and in the physical world – to build momentum for the book's hardcover sales, and will make sales potential for the follow-on paperback edition that much better.

3.2.4 MARKETING IN THE US AND GERMANY

EVEN THOUGH a marketing department works with a book at a later stage in its life cycle, the input and expertise of marketing staff helps shape the book even in its beginning stages. Sales and marketing personnel provide perspective and advice about what a book should be called and what its cover should look like, as well as when it should be published, and how it should best be positioned.

There have been questions about whether a young American (or German or Australian) reader would understand the very British references in *Larklight*. However, the force of this American

review quote quickly puts those doubts to rest: “A hilarious send-up of British Victorian adventure writing ... the book deftly parodies the prim, haughty British pride of the 19th-century, as Philip Reeve sends his child heroes off into the far reaches of the solar system to fight desperate villains” (“Autumn & Winter Preview” 10). According to the book’s editor, Bloomsbury editorial offices had no doubt that the material would be appropriate and accessible outside of the UK. Rather than adjusting the tone or content of the book, they worked to tweak the packaging: to get the presentation of the material just right, to attain the right tone in order to give people a good idea what kind of book it was. In fine-tuning the jacket, subtitle (where appropriate), shout-lines and catalogue descriptions, they called upon the expertise of personnel in editorial, marketing and export sales to make sure that what was presented was an accurate depiction of the story that would work in all territories, even “colonies” such as Canada or Australia (Fountain).

Far from being a book unappreciated by international audiences, *Larklight* has been met with much enthusiasm on both sides of the Atlantic. As was discussed with *Tanglewreck*, the school and library market is extremely important in the US, and *Larklight* has been well reviewed in *Kirkus Reviews*, *Publishers Weekly* and the *School Library Journal*. The key was to introduce the book to the trade early and distribute lots of advance copies: “it was one of our biggest giveaways at both BEA (bookselling convention) and ALA (American Libraries Association) – both shows had tens of thousands of attendees” (Cecka and Blough). As well, the *Larklight* newspaper was given away at conventions and in mailings, while advance copies were enclosed in a special boxed mailing “to several hundred industry big-mouths – both press, booksellers, and other publishing folk” (Cecka and Blough).

Booksellers were specifically targeted through trade advertising upon publication, while the independents were introduced to *Larklight* early with the result that it, like *Tanglewreck*, was selected as a Book Sense title. And, while news of the film deal is not thought to have had an effect on consumer sales, it has likely been a help to sales reps in selling the books in to booksellers.

When Googled, *Larklight* comes up with a number of website hits, including a range of reviews by individuals, amateur reviewers, and the school and trade media: it appears “the blog

coverage is a result of good word of mouth and also Philip's already extensive fan base" (Cecka and Blough). Bloomsbury USA also wanted to take advantage of online opportunities, so the marketing department did online advertising on the #1 US fantasy website. The *Larklight* website itself has been used as a sales and marketing tool by both the UK and US offices; there are links to purchase the book online for both British and American customers. From the Bloomsbury USA *Larklight* listing, there are also links to listen to an audio excerpt of the story.

At the time of writing the bulk of this paper, *Larklight* hadn't yet been published in Germany, and much of the roll-out of marketing plans had yet to be done. From a marketing perspective, the fact it is published several months after the UK and US is not a problem. (In other cases, where there is a specifically international marketing plan, or if publication is closely linked to a film release or some other timely event, this delay would probably have been avoided.) But since the film is not slated until 2008, this is not a concern.

Among the plans of the Berlin office for *Larklight*: "As a lead title, the book will get four pages in our catalogue, "special attention" by the publicity and sales department and we are planning to produce an audio teaser" (Engelhardt). While the affinities between Berlin and the UK and US are a little less strong because of the language differences, the German office can still benefit from seeing what has worked for its international counterparts, and may want to consider adapting marketing materials such as *The Interplanetary Clarion* for its market.

When asked what differentiates publishing for the German market from publishing for UK or US markets, Dorit Engelhardt from Berlin Verlag replied: "It seems to me that German customers attach more importance to an expensive, high-quality accoutrement of books, especially of hardcovers, even if they aren't – alas – always ready to pay the price for such an accoutrement. Apart from that, there are some differences in the "national taste", so to speak, re the preferred colours, typography etc." (Engelhardt). *Larklight*'s sumptuous package, both outside and inside, may especially appeal to German customers, so it will be interesting to see how the book has fared in early 2007.

4. CONCLUSION

THIS PROJECT REPORT HAS highlighted how international collaboration works within Bloomsbury Children's Books. Though it is one of many, establishing stronger international operations is one of Bloomsbury's most important strategies for development.

In my brief examination of its corporate structure, financial performance and longer-term goals, I have painted a picture of Bloomsbury in broader strokes. Its current size, structure and situation provides the backdrop and the context to everything that is undertaken in the organization – from hiring new personnel, making a new acquisition or expanding the range of titles offered, to publishing the new *Larklight* in the UK, US and Germany.

The relationship between Bloomsbury offices in Berlin, London and New York is set up to take advantage of the creative and collaborative benefits of working together. Collaboration begets shared knowledge and expertise as well as the increased efficiency that comes of maximizing these relationships. We can see evidence of this in the development of the *Tanglewreck* jacket through the UK to the US and German offices, and in the sharing of resources, inspiration and expertise, as, for example, the German office asking its UK and US counterparts for advice when developing ideas for incorporating reading groups into their marketing plans.

There are also very strong financial motives for collaboration. By utilizing economies of scale and shared contributions, budgets can reflect the savings associated with sharing the costs of advances, editorial development, typesetting and production. In a competitive publishing landscape, particularly given the rising costs of printing and producing picture or illustrated books, these savings can be of crucial importance for keeping projects within workable budgets and reasonable margins.

The leverage provided when acquiring world rights is also an advantage which cannot be overstated. In addition to providing a compelling commercial case, Bloomsbury's tendency of acquiring world rights allows it to develop goodwill amongst authors and agents, and raises the

stakes in terms of the types of projects and proposals it can bid on. For a company with a strong imperative towards growth and expansion this may mean 'toeing the line' – exploring the grey area between the overtly commercial and the quality, literary fiction and non-fiction of the type that its early acquiring editors would have signed on for. While, realistically, this is less an either/or than a grey area or sliding scale, it remains true that as Bloomsbury grows it will consider higher profile books and projects, and these will most often come at a higher cost. So pursuing an increasing proportion of world rights is, and should be, a priority for the company.

Encouraging early and ongoing involvement from all three offices also allows the sense of ownership and enthusiasm that begins with editorial and trickles through the rest of the operation. Call it championing or 'buy in' – whatever you call it, it is critical in making sure a title has every chance of sales success. If it is not understood or appreciated within the organization, it will be a very difficult 'sell' to the trade. We saw in the *Larklight* case study how internal enthusiasm for the book translated into excitement within all three offices, other co-publishers, the book trade and in cyberspace. And of course, it is hoped that this same enthusiasm translates into consumer sales.

While the greatest efficiency can be attained through cooperation and when resources and expertise are shared, the collaborative relationship between London, New York and Berlin is also flexible enough to allow each office the autonomy to make the tweaks and decisions necessary to sell the book specifically in its market. For, as we've learned, different things about format, jacket design and price elasticity provoke and compel consumers in these different markets.

Cultural differences of course play a role when it comes to packaging, presenting and selling books. There are national preferences for jacket art, illustration and typography; there are mores and conventions when it comes to book buying and selling, publicity and marketing. In these areas, the publishing decisions made by one office may seem idiosyncratic or unfathomable to the other offices. This is also something to be remembered as Bloomsbury personnel from different offices continue to work closely together, particularly as they establish new systems of communication and cooperation.

While each region may have its own particularities when it comes to publishing practice, there are yet many affinities when it comes to creating titles for British, American and German markets. After all, a good story is often one that resonates with people the world over and – whether in Berlin, New York, London, or Delhi or Tokyo – a good editor has the instinct and ability to help sculpt and shape a manuscript to make it a great story.

Another of the characteristics that unite the publishing markets in the UK, US and Germany, and elsewhere, is the uncertain future of the book industry. Things like economic prosperity or downturn, the changing retailing (and e-tailing) landscape, new technologies and challenges from other media and other forms of entertainment – all are considerations to teams of editors, marketers, sales personnel and publishers when they are creating and selling their book lists. Industry surveys and forecasts like the Datamonitor studies referred to in this paper bring this point into sharp focus.

Given the state of the industry, most forward-looking publishers are starting to consider their strategic options. As discussed in section 2.3, Strategy for Growth, Bloomsbury's other strategies for development include diversifying its publishing offering and exploring (or at least acknowledging) the opportunities inherent in digital publishing. Above all, though, it will be important to build and maintain the critical mass of the publishing program, which, with acquisitions like Walker in the US and Methuen Drama in the UK, the company is clearly doing.

While it is acquiring critical mass, the still rather modest figures for its German and US operations in its recent annual reports demonstrate that international publishing at Bloomsbury is very much a work in progress. It will take several years – or at least several publishing seasons – to refine and enhance the process.

One thing it can do to further diversify and maximise sales potential is ensure its children's publishing programs reach both the trade and the school and library market. When marketing *Tanglewreck* and *Larklight*, Bloomsbury USA focused on reaching both trade and library/educational buyers; this was not the case for Bloomsbury UK. In fact, Bloomsbury UK is trade-oriented, while

A&C Black is the parallel division that publishes a number of reference and educational imprints for the UK market. This is a case of very different realities in different markets and, in the context of our discussion, is a good argument for allowing each publishing arm the freedom to determine its own strategy when it comes to publishing, marketing and selling its books.

And, as I mentioned earlier in the report, there is still opportunity to further maximize sales growth by enhancing collaboration. A&C Black may in the future work with Walker Books in the US in much the same way that Bloomsbury UK, US and Berlin Verlag work together now – in jointly assessing acquisitions, sharing publishing costs and resources, and volunteering strategy ideas or expertise. (And indeed, it is possible that they already do). The drawback to this sort of collaboration is that publishing that is educationally focused will naturally be influenced by the national, county or state curriculum, and may be very specific to each place. So in fact where the divisions may meet would likely be in reference publishing, most likely for an adult market. While they are actually published by Bloomsbury for trade markets, the hugely bestselling Schott's *Miscellany* and Schott's *Almanac* come to mind as examples of titles approximating reference content (though they aren't) that have been published widely in the US, UK and Germany.

Making better use of the amazing resources available in the form of its bibliographic information system might be another tactic for aiding communication, information flow and efficiency within the company's various offices. And at some point, if collaboration is to continue and to adopt an even more prominent role in the company's publishing strategy, management may consider implementing a complete Content Management System, which, among other things, could aid editors in contributing to and managing manuscript versions, archive publicity clippings, marketing materials and more, and make them available to all publishing arms.

However, this would represent a fairly major investment of resources and may not be appropriate for Bloomsbury, assuming the company stays roughly the same size. For the concern is that as systems become more defined and complex, they can become brittle and then many of the characteristics that have defined Bloomsbury – its ability to be proactive (or reactive, if necessary), creative,

'organic'—become threatened. Because as reliance on 'systems' is developed, individual relationships can conversely be weakened. And I suspect that the individual relationships in place are a driving force and much of the reason why collaboration works as it does between Bloomsbury's offices in London, New York and Berlin.

Even as it streamlines its business operations, holds or expands its position in the UK, and grows in Germany and the US, it is to be hoped that Bloomsbury can maintain the agility and the charm of its independent origins. Because even though having operations in New York and Berlin might bring it to resemble a multinational, it is the company's agility and flexibility that allow collaboration to work and that confer Bloomsbury's real competitive advantage.

APPENDIX: A NOTE ON UK FORMATS

In the UK, book dimensions are stated as *height x width*, whereas in Canada and the US, they are stated as *width x height*. In Germany, as in North America, the convention is to state the dimensions as *width x height*.

As well, in the UK, there are specific names for the commonly used formats:

B FORMAT A format for paperbacks particularly favoured for non-fiction and literary fiction, normally of a trimmed size 198 x 126 mm (unsewn). This translates to approximately 5 x 7 3/4" in North America.

A FORMAT Format of mass market paperbacks, most commonly with a trimmed page size of 178 x 111 mm (unsewn). This translates to approximately 4 3/8 x 7" in North America.

ROYAL OCTAVO A book format of 234 x 156 mm (153 mm unsewn) that is very common in all sectors of the market. This translates to approximately 6 1/8 x 9 1/4" in North America.

SOURCE: Glossary of Book Trade Terminology from The Publishers Association Website, <http://www.publishers.org.uk>

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