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Is Harry Potter dead?

Not the character -- the brand. With the world abuzz, one expert says the brand is overexposed.

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By [Parija Bhatnagar](#), CNN/Money staff writer

NEW YORK(CNN/Money) - Here we go again.

The world is abuzz about another Harry Potter book -- the sixth in the series -- getting ready to make its big, splashy, media-grabbing debut to legions of Potter fans this weekend.

Not to be a downer, but after this week's release, there's just one book left before the series ends.

Pottermania is alive and well today, but has anyone thought about what happens when the series reaches its seventh-book climax?

At least one branding expert is willing to go on the record to predict the demise of the Potter brand in the next two to three years.

"I'm even more adamant about this point of view today than I was three years ago," said Martin Lindstrom, an independent global branding consultant and author of "Brand Child." "Harry Potter is headline news today because of the media blitz surrounding the new book. Six weeks later, you won't hear anything."

Lindstrom said that kids today are not as enamored by the magic of Harry Potter as they were when the author first introduced the child wizard to young and adult readers almost seven years ago.

He cited the results of a 2003-2004 global survey of 20,000 kids between the ages of 7 and 12, which he conducted along with U.K.-based market research firm Miward Brown in 18 countries.

Said Lindstrom, "When we asked kids whether they thought Harry Potter was a fading phenomenon, 69 percent said they did. I think that percentage today is probably closer to 80 percent.

"The fact is that the main concept of Harry Potter is this idea of undiscovered secrecy," he added.

But all the multimillion dollar licensing deals for Harry Potter products, the big movies and the intensive media blitz, he believes, have overexposed the brand to kids.



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"A few years from now, people will know Harry Potter because it became a huge business phenomenon in such a short period of time and not for the great story that it was," Lindstrom said.

Other industry watchers, however, disagreed with Lindstrom's views

Robert Passikoff, branding consultant with Brand Keys Consulting, said the demise of the Harry Potter brand was something that was "never going to happen.

"The Potter series has longevity," Passikoff said. "Whether or not there is life for the brand after the seventh book is not even an issue. In the same way that people go to buy Mary Poppins books, 30 years from now you will find Harry Potter on bookshelves."

Contrary to Lindstrom's critique of the overuse and overexposure of Harry Potter, Passikoff said the worldwide adoption of the story's characters and the brand itself has made it an instant classic.

"This brand resonates with consumers of all ages," Passikoff said. "It's a brand that is well-differentiated and unique. J.K. Rowlings has been very stringent with how the brand is developed. I think it's a very well-managed brand."


Lynne O'Connor, partner with branding firm Lippincott & Margulies, agreed with Passikoff.

"From my own anecdotal experience, Harry Potter is a very compelling brand," O'Connor said. "Obviously, from the point of view of licensing management, it has to be maintained wisely because there already are a wide array of Harry Potter-themed products in the market."

"The other thing to think about is the audience," she said. "If there continues to be evidence that the brand is meaningful to its current and new audiences, that means it could live long for generations to come." ■

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