1. Introduction

World Book Night is an annual celebration of reading and books which takes place on April 23. It sees passionate volunteers give hundreds of thousands of books away in their communities to share their love of reading with people who, for whatever reason, don’t read for pleasure or own books. In its fourth year World Book Night was run by The Reading Agency, and has continued to flourish. We’ve placed a greater emphasis on reaching the 35% of the adult population that doesn’t read for pleasure.1

2. Key headlines

Important facts and headlines for World Book Night 2014 include:

- 12,500 copies of 20 different books, 250,000 books in total, were printed for World Book Night 2014
- Of these, 171,702 were given away by Individuals, who each gave out a box of 18 copies of one of our titles
- Our 9,179 Individual givers collected their books from 2,453 different library and bookshop Collection Points around the UK and Ireland
- Almost 80,000 books were given away in Institutions, including prisons, schools and colleges, libraries and homeless groups. This represents nearly a third of the total number of books being given away to this audience, compared with a fifth last year

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1 Source: [Taking Part 2011/12 Adult and Child Report](http://www.gov.uk), Department for Culture Media and Sport, 2012
3. Evaluation overview

Since April 23 we’ve received a wealth of feedback from volunteers, recipients, libraries and bookshops by email and on social media, and have also carried out five surveys to assess in a more formal way the World Book Night experience of those who took part. We have retained strong levels of engagement with our database of 70,000 registered users, with an average email open rate of 40% (80% among our actual volunteer givers), compared to an industry standard of 22%. This report will summarise the feedback we’ve received along with the findings of five targeted surveys we produced and distributed:

- **Individual givers** – sent out via email to approximately 9,100 volunteers and promoted on Twitter and Facebook. Completed by 5,300 volunteer givers
- **Institutional givers** – sent out via email to approximately 900 volunteers who gifted books in their institutions. Also promoted on Twitter and Facebook. Completed by 427 volunteer givers. These two numbers, totalling over 5,700 volunteers, represent a 57% response rate and a great basis for evaluation and informing our planning for 2015
- **Recipients** – promoted in the front of the World Book Night editions and on social media. Completed by 194 recipients
- **Libraries** – sent out via email and promoted on Twitter and Facebook and to our network of contacts in UK Public Library Authorities. Completed by 170 librarians
- **Bookshops** – sent out via email and to our own contacts via the Booksellers Association and major stores. Completed by 50 booksellers.

4. Volunteer givers

**Key facts:**
- There were 12,401 applications from Individuals to be a World Book Night Giver. As always, demand outstripped supply and 9,538 were successful, 2,863 were unsuccessful. The successful applicants were the ones who best explained exactly how and where they would reach people who didn’t regularly read
- 9,179 volunteer givers chose collection points and went on to become our Individual givers. 359 people who did not choose collection points dropped out of the process
- The oldest successful volunteer giver was born in 1921, the 12 youngest were born in 1998
- Of the successful volunteer givers 79% were female and 21% were male
- 941 applications from Institutions were accepted out of 2,571 applications. Again, the successful applicants were the ones who best explained exactly how their institution could reach people who didn’t regularly read
- Applications from institutions were level with 2013, and as with individual applicants we had to reject a large number as demand outstripped supply of books. We’re confident that the demand from institutions who wish to be involved with World Book Night means we’ll continue to be better able to get books into the hands of those who don’t regularly read.

**What did our volunteer givers think of World Book Night?**

- An average of 98% of all volunteer givers rated their overall experience of being a World Book Night giver as Excellent or Good
An average of 93% of all volunteer givers felt that they were able to reach people who don’t regularly read for pleasure or own books.

An average of 97% of all volunteer givers rated general communications from World Book Night as Excellent or Good.

Who did they give their books to?

- 90% of Individual givers and 96% of Institutional givers felt that they were able to reach people who don’t regularly read for pleasure or own books.
- An average of 59% of all volunteer givers said they gave their books to teenagers or young people, a group we’d specifically encouraged volunteer givers to target this year.
- An average of 13% of all volunteer givers said they gave their books mostly to men, another group we’d specifically encouraged volunteer givers to target this year. Most, though, gave to a combination of men and women.
- 45% of Institutional givers said they gave books to adults currently engaged in learning to improve their literacy, with 11% giving specifically to those taking part in The Reading Agency’s Six Book Challenge for less confident adult readers. 49% of Individual givers and 81% of Institutional givers gave books to lapsed or non-readers in workplaces.
- 10% of Individual givers and 19% of Institutional givers gave books to homeless people.
- An average of 61% of all volunteer givers thought that suggested prompts to use or things to say when giving out books would help them get more people reading. We will consider developing such a resource for World Book Night 2015.

Volunteer givers’ own reading habits:

- An average of 43% of all volunteer givers said they read 1-2 books a month, with 32% reading 3-4 and 17% reading more than that. 30% said they mostly buy books while 17% borrow them, and 53% do a mixture of both.
- 56% of Individual givers and 41% of Institutional givers said they’d been given a World Book Night book in the past, with an average of 33% saying it had changed their reading habits. This is to be expected as we know most World Book Night volunteer givers are already regular readers.
- An average of 33% of all our volunteer givers are members of reading groups, and 29% are interested in joining one. While most weren’t registered with The Reading Agency’s Reading Groups for Everyone website, 61% said they’d like to get information about the offers, competitions and resources we have for reading groups.
- An average of 85% of all volunteer givers said that World Book Night recommending a book makes them more interested in reading it.

4.1 Individual givers

Our Individual givers gave away 18 copies of one of our 20 titles to people in their community who don’t regularly read, collecting them first from a library or bookshop in their local area. 98% of Individual givers rated their overall experience of collecting their books as Excellent or Good, saying that staff in the library or bookshop were enthusiastic about World Book Night and/or that they received great customer service. 86% of Individual givers said they intended to return to their library or bookshop Collection Point to borrow or buy books in the future.

Some fantastic feedback from our Individual givers included:
What a wonderful day, I gave my copies of Agatha Christies after the funeral to electricians, bus drivers, dustmen, delivery men, post office workers shop assistants, roadmen working on the gas mains to name a few all were in my local area. Everyone was so nice really pleased and some said they had been given books on previous book days and others who had not heard of it before were interested to hear of its origins. It’s such a wonderful privilege to be given the chance to participate. Congratulations to all who helped organise the day. – Jackie

Without exception each person I asked, who told me they hardly read much anymore, was thrilled to receive a book. They were surprised and incredulous that they were being given a new book for free. In return I received hugs and smiles. A young mother told me she often bought books for her children but never read herself anymore, she seemed genuinely excited at the thought of having a book to read for herself. – Amanda

4.2 Institutional givers

In line with The Reading Agency’s aims for World Book Night, we have continued to focus on reaching those who don’t read for pleasure both directly and through institutions. A third of the 250,000 books were gifted in institutions, compared with 1 in 5 last year.

Our successful institutions included:

- 18 Arts-based organisations
- 31 Homeless centres and hostels
- 62 Hospitals and care services
- 80 Literacy and learning support organisations
- 80 Social and supported housing projects
- 99 prisons and Young Offenders Institutions
- 153 Libraries
- 181 Schools and colleges
- 237 Other groups including youth projects, Rape Crisis Centres and other charities.

80% of Institutional givers said that World Book Night was very well received in their institution. Some lovely comments included:

Well....what an overwhelmingly success our night was!! We had over twenty people attending, tea and coffee was laid on and we sat around discussing the treasure we were offered ... Most of the women took the 59 seconds book as a starter and loved and have adapted some of their little quirky ways. The women who
took Hello mum, have said it was a powerful read and left them in tears and very emotional, which is the sign of a good book in my opinion ... Thank you so much for choosing our project to host one of your nights, it brought women together who normally avoid one another, it touched hearts and all in all the best possible outcome and end to a fantastic evening. - Sheltered Housing in Belfast

I’d like to thank the organizers for this fantastic experience. I didn’t realize, as a giver, it would make me feel so much better about myself, how smiles became contagious, conversation more animated and the gift of a single book was seen to be incredibly generous. I wish I could have had more books to distribute over the week and hope to be able to repeat this experience. – St Nick’s Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne

5. Community Book Giving

This year, for the first time, we introduced a new way to get involved in World Book Night as a Community Book Giver. We asked people to register and commit to giving at the very least a single book on April 23 which they would choose and provide, either bought new or taken from their shelves. Volunteer givers were then able to collect specially-produced bookplates and stickers from their local library or bookshop and give their book to a friend, a member of their community, or a complete stranger. What we asked is that they give their book with the aim of helping someone develop the same love of reading that they have.

We were delighted that around 2,100 people registered online. We reached out to MPs, publishers, staff at the BBC, the British Library, Yodel and members of the WI to encourage involvement on an organisational level, and we will build on this organisational model of involvement as we target new partners for 2015. We got some great encouragement from high profile celebrities and authors, including Philip Pullman and Stephen Fry, who even tweeted a plea for his followers to sign up.

As discussed above in section 8, bookshops have responded positively to Community Book Giving and the opportunity it presents. Certain libraries also felt good about it - “The Community Book Giving worked well for us and was very much appreciated by recipients. We chose a local history title to build on our sense of Community. It also provided an opportunity to engage our Library Authority in giving books, and experiencing the pleasure they bring” said Hertfordshire Library Service. However, others felt it needed more development. Derbyshire Libraries said “A great idea, however it is in its infancy and would need more time to work convincingly”, and Crosby Library commented “I know that library staff and users are a little confused by the community giver element. I’m not too sure that the message has got across clearly. Perhaps more explanation is required”.

Clearly, the concept needs further development and must become established amongst the public, book trade and libraries in order for it to work fully, but Community Book Giving received an overwhelmingly positive response, being as it is an incredibly simple and open-to-all means of becoming a World Book Night giver. We will build on this initial enthusiasm in 2015 as we further establish and integrate Community Book Giving as part of World Book Night.
6. Recipients

We produced a short survey aimed at recipients of the World Book Night books, which was promoted and incentivized with the chance to win a complete set of books, in the front of the World Book Night editions and on social media. This has so far been completed by 194 recipients, 98% of whom said that they were pleased to have been given a World Book Night title as a gift, and 83% said that receiving the book will encourage them to read more. 84% said they’d already talked to other people about the book they received.

During 2014/15 we will use a grant from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to conduct further, more comprehensive research into the impact of World Book Night on the recipients of books, measuring different levels of success in achieving the outcomes.

7. Books

Publishers were invited to submit titles for inclusion in World Book Night at a range of readability levels, and we designed a list with reluctant and less confident readers in mind. The list included four Quick Reads (shorter books aimed at less confident adult readers) two non-fiction titles and several aimed at young adults, 46% of whom don’t read for pleasure, including a bespoke collection of short stories by Roald Dahl, put together especially for World Book Night. There was also a particular emphasis on men, 42% of whom don’t read for pleasure, and our editorial committee constructed this year’s list to encourage more men to read, knowing that men are more likely to read books by other men.² All titles were oversubscribed at application stage with three in particular proving especially popular. All successful volunteer givers were allocated one of their three choices.

² Source: Taking Part 2011/12 Adult and Child Report, Department for Culture Media and Sport, 2012
An average of 44% of volunteer givers said they were ‘fairly’ satisfied with the choice of books on the list, and 57% said that the book list affects their keenness to get involved in World Book Night either ‘completely’ or ‘quite a bit’. We already know that the book list is the most important part of World Book Night so this is a reminder that we need to get it absolutely right to ensure lots of people want to take part.

Our printing partners, Clays and CPI, printed 250,000 books which were packed into sets of 18. The books were distributed to institutions and Collection Points in-kind by our delivery sponsor, Yodel, and volunteer givers collected them in the week before World Book Night from their chosen library or bookshop. As well as the text, each book contained special World Book Night material, designed to engage both the volunteer givers and recipients in the programme’s aims and benefits:

- A complete list of the 20 titles on the inside front cover
- A bookplate for volunteer givers to inscribe, including space for their library or bookshop Collection Point
- An introduction to World Book Night and The Reading Agency
- An extract at the book’s end, specially chosen by the author or publisher, with a brief introduction and blurb. 94% of volunteer givers like the idea of author or publisher recommendations appearing in the World Book Night books, and 62% were encouraged to read the recommended book
- A ‘want to read more?’ page encouraging people to join their local library and sign up to our Reading Groups for Everyone website, as well as information about Quick Reads and World Book Day. We also featured a partners & supporters acknowledgements page. 70% of volunteer givers said they read this material, showing the high levels of engagement in the programme as a whole and volunteers’ desire to find out more about other reading activity
- The inside back cover page included a different poem from one of the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award winners. 66% of volunteer givers were aware of this and responded positively to the inclusion of poetry in the books.

An average of 92% of all volunteer givers thought the overall design of the books was Excellent or Good, and 95% rated the overall print quality as Excellent or Good.

8. Libraries

World Book Night is one of the five ‘spikes’ in libraries’ Universal Reading Offer strategy, offering a demonstrable and creative role in community participation and cohesion as well as increased footfall and new members as volunteer givers come to collect their books and attend events. We have worked to build libraries’ central role in World Book Night, strengthening key relationships with partners including the Society of Chief Librarians, and have been able to bring The Reading Agency’s specialist knowledge to bear on the process to ensure continued and enhanced engagement in the library sector.

- 2,453 different libraries and bookshops in the UK and Ireland were chosen as Collection Points by our Individual givers. 1,950 were public libraries
87% of libraries who took part in the survey said they found the experience of volunteer givers collecting books from them either ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’, with many reporting that the event had brought in new customers, showing that World Book Night really does help to build reading communities.

Many libraries fed back extremely positively about their experience this year, including The Hive in Worcester, who said “This is a great annual event with a high profile and gets people interested in books and reading which is really beneficial to libraries. It plays a big role in our annual plan and outreach locally. Fabulous!” 97% said their library will consider taking part again next year as a Collection Point for volunteer givers, and 69% would like to take part again as an Institutional Giver. 73% of those who responded felt that World Book Night is beneficial to their library.

Around 50% of responding libraries said that they held an event on or around World Book Night, with most saying that upwards of 40 people attended. Events included author appearances (28%), readings (20%), competitions and quizzes (40%), as well as some highly original formats including a Sherlock Holmes evening at Nottingham Central Library and a Girls’ Night In at Pickering Library, which was one of our regional flagship events (you can read more about events in section 10).

Many libraries also acted as Institutional givers, receiving different titles to be given away in their communities. It’s clear that we need to join up institutional giving applications with events plans early on in the process, as many libraries who weren’t accepted as Institutional givers felt less able to hold events. Of those who were successful, 72% incorporated book gifting into the format. Many valued the increased emphasis on non-readers, including Southwark Libraries: “We gave out over 500 books (a mixture of WBN titles and Cityread titles) to pedestrians (and the odd cyclist) at 5 different locations in Southwark. It was a really positive experience and we felt that this year more than ever we were getting books into the hands of more occasional readers and lapsed readers.”

9. Bookshops

Booksellers also see opportunities to engage an established reading community beyond sales transactions through World Book Night, engaging new readers and gaining new customers. Many were pleased with their overall experience while offering specific areas for development. Almost half of the respondents said that around 50% of volunteer givers collecting from their bookshop were new to the store, and 91% will consider taking part next year as a Collection Point. Cole’s Books commented “Anything that promotes the reading of ‘actual’ books is good for bookshops. The idea that books give us a warm feeling and we want to share that is definitely a positive contribution made by WBN.”

- 502 of the 2,453 collection points chosen by our Individual givers were bookshops (274 Waterstones, 36 Easons, 25 Blackwell’s, 7 Foyle’s, 9 Dubray Books, 151 Independent bookshops)
- 80% of bookshops who took part in the survey said they found the experience of volunteer givers collecting books from them either Easy or Very Easy, with many reporting that the event had brought in new customers, showing that World Book Night really does help to build reading communities.

Community Book Giving (see section 9) has been popular among the trade as bookshops especially recognise opportunities for in-store promotion as volunteer givers are encouraged to buy a book to give away. Waterstones printed their own co-branded bookplates which they positioned and promoted at till-points in all stores, and several other booksellers also stocked the materials, including Foyle’s. 84% of those who responded to the survey want to receive more information on Community Book Giving and the opportunities it presents. Victoria Park Books said “I would like to see the Community Giving side of things...
encouraged”, while Edinburgh Bookshop suggested “I like the idea of people buying a book to give away - perhaps the publishers and bookshops could join together to subsidise this?” It’s clear that the success of Community Book Giving in bookshops can continue to grow and presents a significant opportunity for 2015.

10. Events

Two national flagship events were held for World Book Night 2014. At the brand new Library of Birmingham authors on this year’s World Book Night list, including Adele Parks, Matt Haig, Ben Aaronovitch and Jane Fallon, ran pop-up book clubs and took part in a panel discussion.

At the Queen Elizabeth Hall in the Southbank Centre, the second Letters Live event run by Canongate was celebrated as part of World Book Night, which included readings by Caitlin Moran, Matt Berry and Russell Brand amongst others.

The Reading Agency also supported 13 Regional Flagship library events spread across the UK, and selected libraries became the focus for World Book Night activity in their region. We worked closely with their staff to arrange author visits and to develop their proposed programmes of activity, and to generate publicity and media around their activities. Following the open pitching process, the final list of 13 venues included Norwich Millennium Library, Glasgow Mitchell Library, Manchester Central Library, The Hive in Worcester and the Verbal Arts Centre, Northern Ireland, who each held events and hosted authors.

An average of 62% of all volunteer givers said they’d like to see more events related to World Book Night throughout the year, suggesting that we should consider broadening our programme of activity celebrating reading and engaging non-readers beyond April 23.

11. Press coverage

authors Andy McNab, Adele Parks and Jane Fallon across BBC radio, including on BBC Radio 2’s Simon Mayo show and regional stations.

12. Sponsors and partners

World Book Night would not be possible without the extraordinary industry-wide coalition of publishers (including the Publishers Association), authors, agents, printers (Clays and CPI), distributors (Yodel), private donors, trusts and foundations, Arts Council England, libraries, booksellers (including Waterstones and The Booksellers Association), media partners (including the BBC and our PR agency, FMcM) and, of course, the vast numbers of volunteer givers all of whose time, funding, energy and in-kind support and help deliver the programme across the whole of the UK.

13. Volunteer development

World Book Night presents a significant and positive opportunity for volunteering among the adult and young adult population of the UK and Ireland, and taps into a deep-rooted urge to do good in one’s own community. Volunteering rates in the UK have increased since 2011 after being in decline, and in 2012-13 an estimated 19.1 million people volunteered formally – through a group, club or organisation – and 72% of the population volunteered at least once in the last year.\(^2\) Traditionally, older people volunteer more than young people, but there is evidence of a specific growth in volunteering among 16-24 year olds – from 65% in 2010-11 to 74% in 2012-13. The inspirational impact of the volunteers from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games undoubtedly helped.

We can engage directly with these positive trends when we promote World Book Night volunteering across all ages, and have a fantastic base on which to build. **79%** of Institutional givers and **58%** (an average of **69%**) were aware that The Reading Agency ran World Book Night this year, and an average of **95%** of all volunteer givers think that it’s a positive thing that a national reading charity is now behind World Book Night, with **4,173** people (**73%**) saying they’d like to be contacted about further volunteering opportunities.

We’re thrilled that we now have a specific list of people who are ready and waiting to get involved in further reading volunteering activity around the year. We’re now discussing a specific offer for these enthusiasts and will aim to engage them further in the next few months. It’s likely that we’ll ask those involved in reading groups (**33%**) to join our Reading Groups for Everyone website (**61%** said they’d like to receive more information about this), for example.


We have exciting plans for World Book Night moving forward which will be shaped and informed by the evaluation we have carried out this year. Some specific areas to develop include:

- **Resources for volunteer givers.** An average of **61%** of all volunteer givers thought that suggested prompts to use or things to say when giving out books would help them get more people reading. We will consider developing such a resource for World Book Night 2015.
- **Resources for libraries and bookshops.** The most popular suggestion for additional materials they’d like to see was bookmarks – we’ll consider developing these next year along with a range of other merchandise. It’s also clear that we need to join up

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\(^2\) Source: [Encouraging Social Action](#), Cabinet Office, November 2013
institutional giving applications with events plans early on in the process, as many libraries and bookshops who weren’t accepted as Institutional givers felt less able to hold events

- **Community Book Giving in organisations.** We reached out to MPs, publishers, staff at the BBC, the British Library, Yodel and members of the WI to encourage involvement on an organisational level in 2014, and we will build on this organisational model of involvement as we target new partners for 2015.

Key objectives for World Book Night 2015 and onwards will include:

- To build engagement with volunteers, supporting a range of year-round volunteering activity
- To grow the number of volunteers year on year
- To encourage more engagement from charities, plus libraries, bookshops and other community reading hubs, unlocking access to even more local activists
- To further extend our reach with those whose life chances we can help by inspiring them to become readers
- To carry out in-depth research into the impact of World Book Night on recipients.