

# UK box office report: 2008

Research and Statistics Unit, UK Film Council

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The 164.2m cinema admissions recorded in 2008 represented a 1.1% increase on 2007, maintaining the overall “plateau” which has been apparent since the most recent admissions peak in 2002. Gross box office revenues for the UK and Republic of Ireland were £949.5m, up 5% on 2007’s £904m. Tables 1.1 to 1.3 illustrate the story of the cinema-going year in terms of overall ticket sales.

The year started slowly, but the release of *The Spiderwick Chronicles* and *Step Up 2* boosted admissions over the Easter holiday period. Super-heroes *Iron Man* and *The Incredible Hulk* and comedies *What Happened in Vegas* and *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* all performed well in May and June but overall the box office could not match last year’s May total (when *Spider-Man 3* and the third *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie were released). Two major releases at the end of May boosted the box office – *Sex and the City* and *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*. July’s admissions were almost at the same level as July 2007’s record total as *Mamma Mia!*, *The Dark Knight* and *Hancock* attracted 21.4 million visitors to UK cinemas. This level of cinema-going was maintained into August with 20.4 million tickets sold, up 15% on 2007. In fact, the period June-August provided the best summer attendance figures since 1969 with almost 54 million admissions and the hit summer films continued to perform well into September (+10.9%). *High School Musical 3* helped to increase October admissions by almost 3% while the release of *Quantum of Solace* raised November’s admissions by 41%.

**Table 1.1 Monthly admissions, 2007-2008**

Month	2007 (million)	2008 (million)	% change on 2007
January	14.0	13.5	-3.6
February	13.9	12.9	-7.2
March	11.2	12.2	+8.9
April	10.9	9.8	-10.2
May	15.7	12.7	-19.1
June	11.2	11.8	+5.3
July	21.8	21.4	-1.9
August	17.8	20.4	+14.9
September	9.6	10.7	+10.9
October	12.3	13.0	+2.9
November	9.6	13.5	+40.8
December	14.6	12.3	-15.5
Total	162.4	164.2	+1.1

Source: CAA, Nielsen EDI

**Table 1.2 Average weekly admissions, 2007-2008**

Month	2007 weekly average (million)	2008 weekly average (million)
January	3.2	3.0
February	3.5	3.1
March	2.5	2.8
April	2.6	2.3
May	3.6	2.9
June	2.6	2.8
July	4.9	4.8
August	4.0	4.6
September	2.2	2.5
October	2.7	2.9
November	2.2	3.2
December	3.3	2.8

Source: CAA, Nielsen EDI

**Table 1.3: Monthly admissions, 2004-2008**

Month	2004 (million)	2005 (million)	2006 (million)	2007 (million)	2008 (million)
January	15.3	13.4	14.0	14.0	13.5
February	13.3	14.8	12.8	13.9	12.9
March	10.7	12.3	9.9	11.2	12.2
April	14.5	10.6	13.6	10.9	9.8
May	13.1	13.1	13.2	15.7	12.7
June	14.7	10.5	8.7	11.2	11.8
July	18.4	16.0	16.3	21.8	21.4
August	17.4	15.9	15.0	17.8	20.4
September	10.2	9.5	8.5	9.6	10.7
October	14.5	15.6	13.5	12.3	13.0
November	14.6	15.2	15.5	9.6	13.5
December	14.6	17.6	15.3	14.6	12.3

Source: CAA, Nielsen EDI

**Table 1.4: Cinema admissions by ISBA region, 2008**

Region	Admissions (million)	Admissions (%)
London	39,751,866	24.2
Midlands	23,198,696	14.1
Lancashire	18,334,182	11.2
Southern	15,323,596	9.3
Yorkshire	13,647,521	8.3
Central Scotland	12,008,555	7.3
East of England	10,855,651	6.6
Wales and West	10,839,050	6.6
North East	6,196,535	3.8
Northern Ireland	5,438,924	3.3
South West	3,876,740	2.4
Northern Scotland	3,413,436	2.1
Border	1,337,330	0.8
Total	164,222,082	100.0

Source: CAA, Nielsen EDI

In terms of box office, the musical *Mamma Mia!* became the highest grossing film of all-time at the UK box office, earning £69.2 million to beat the previous record-holder, *Titanic* (Table 1.4). Runner-up was the 22nd James Bond film, *Quantum of Solace*, which earned £51m, ahead of *The Dark Knight* (£48.7m). After a gap of almost twenty years, Harrison Ford returned in the fourth Indiana Jones film, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, in fourth place with £40.3 million. *Sex and the City*, *Hancock* and *High School Musical 3* all featured in the £20m+ bracket while animations *Wall-E*, *Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa* and *Kung Fu Panda* performed strongly.

**Table 1.5: Box office results for the top 20 films released in the UK, 2008**

	Title	Country Of origin	Box office Gross (£m)	Distributor
1	Mamma Mia!*	UK/USA	69.17	Universal
2	Quantum of Solace*	UK/USA	51.02	Sony Pictures
3	The Dark Knight	UK/USA	48.69	Warner Bros
4	Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull	USA	40.27	Paramount
5	Sex and the City	USA	26.43	Entertainment
6	Hancock	USA	24.74	Sony Pictures
7	Wall-E	USA	22.91	Disney
8	High School Musical 3*	USA	22.75	Disney
9	Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa*	USA	21.86	Paramount
10	Kung Fu Panda	USA	20.20	Paramount
11	Iron Man	USA	17.42	Paramount
12	Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian	UK/USA	11.79	Disney
13	The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor	USA	11.42	Universal
14	Sweeney Todd	UK/USA	10.97	Warner Bros
15	The Spiderwick Chronicles	USA	10.73	Paramount
16	Step Up 2	USA	10.54	Universal
17	Four Christmases	USA/Ger	10.25	Entertainment
18	Twilight*	USA	10.10	E1 Films
19	Wanted	USA	9.74	Universal
20	Juno	USA	9.74	20th Century Fox

Source: Nielsen EDI, RSU

Box office gross = cumulative gross up to 18 January 2009.

Films with an asterisk (\*) were still being exhibited on 18 January 2009.

UK and Republic of Ireland are a single "territory" for film distribution purposes.

**Table 1.5 Top 20 UK films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2008**

	Title	Country Of origin	Box office Gross (£m)	Distributor
1	Mamma Mia!*	UK/USA	69.17	Universal
2	Quantum of Solace*	UK/USA	51.02	Sony Pictures
3	The Dark Knight	UK/USA	48.69	Warner Bros
4	Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian	UK/USA	11.79	Disney
5	Sweeney Todd	UK/USA	10.97	Warner Bros
6	Hellboy 2: The Golden Army	UK/USA/Ger	7.59	Universal
7	The Duchess*	UK/Fra	7.12	Pathé
8	10,000 B.C.	UK/USA/NZ	5.76	Warner Bros
9	Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging	UK/USA	5.48	Paramount
10	Wild Child	UK/USA	5.17	Universal
11	Rocknrolla	UK/USA	5.12	Warner Bros
12	The Other Boleyn Girl	UK/USA	4.89	Universal
13	In Bruges	UK/USA/Bel	4.88	Universal
14	The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas	UK/USA	4.50	Disney
15	The Bank Job	UK/USA	4.45	Lions Gate
16	Son of Rambow	UK/Fra/Ger	4.19	Optimum
17	How to Lose Friends and Alienate People	UK	4.10	Paramount
18	Inkheart	UK/USA/Ger	3.78	Entertainment
19	Adulthood	UK	3.35	Pathé
20	Penelope	UK/USA	3.29	Momentum

Source: Nielsen EDI, RSU

Box office gross = cumulative gross up to 18 January 2009.

Films with an asterisk (\*) were still being exhibited on 18 January 2009.

UK and Republic of Ireland are a single "territory" for film distribution purposes.

The top 20 UK films released in 2008 are shown in Table 1.5. UK market share was 31%, which includes inward investment titles (i.e. financed by US studios but featuring UK cast, crew, locations, facilities, post-production and often UK source material), domestic UK films and co-productions. Six inward investment films lead the field, with *Mamma Mia!* the top rated UK film, grossing £69.2m to date. *Quantum of Solace* is second with £51m followed by *The Dark Knight*, *Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian*, *Sweeney Todd* and *Hellboy2: The Golden Army*. There were some strong performances to note from independent British films, particularly *The Bank Job*, *Son of Rambow* and *Adulthood* which grossed £3.4m.

Looking forward to 2009, the box office has had a strong start to the year with a number of award-contenders to the fore, most notably *Slumdog Millionaire* which grossed £6m from its first two weeks on release. Other forthcoming British releases include *The Boat that Rocked*, *The Young Victoria*, *The Damned United*, *Dorian Gray*, *The Wolf Man*, and *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. Other major releases set for the year include *Watchmen*, *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*, *Star Trek*, *Angels and Demons*, *Bruno*, *Night at the Museum 2*, *Terminator Salvation*, *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* and *Ice Age III*.