Kate Winslet


DER SPIEGEL 48/2009

From The Sunday Times / November 8, 2009

Kate Winslet's wow factor is worth £60m to the British economy

Among the factors that make up Kate Winslet's value is her ability to attract film-makers to Britain

John Harlow

THE Oscar-winning actress Kate Winslet is a £60m national treasure, according to an analysis of her value to Britain by economists funded by the government.

Winslet, 34, was the first actress “audited” by the UK Film Council as it seeks to put a monetary value upon the country’s creative industries.

David Steele, head of research and statistics at the UK Film Council, has developed a formula for assessing the value of a “creative person” to the economy.

Winslet was chosen as a test case for the calculation because she has a strong track record and is well known abroad. The actress has had a cultural impact well beyond the screen — Ian Callum, Jaguar’s chief designer, admitted he had had her curves in mind when thinking up the body of the XK model.

The more prosaic film council formula, which has the potential to be used to assess the value of other British stars such as Daniel Craig, the current 007, and Christian Bale will be used by diplomats and businessmen promoting the British film industry abroad.

The economic value of popular culture will make headlines at the end of this month when a group assembled by Jeremy Hunt, the shadow culture secretary, recommends ways to rekindle the spirit of creative fever once known as cool Britannia.

Last week Hunt said he was delighted by the recognition that Winslet, who won the Oscar for best actress this year for her role in The Reader, is so valuable to British culture. “I think she is an extraordinary actress, I loved her in Revolutionary Road, but also as a symbol of what Britain can offer the world,” said Hunt.

The “Winslet algorithm”, as it is jokingly becoming known in political circles, is made up of several elements.

The first is the star’s salary.
Despite her role in the blockbuster Titanic in 1997, for which she was paid about £1m, Winslet prefers to appear in cheaper art-house films.

In 2004 she made a record amount from one film, about £6m, for Finding Neverland. Steele estimates she has earned roughly £20m from films since 1995.

The second economic factor is the "production investment effect", in which a star’s high profile helps ensure the film is made in Britain.

The film council’s calculations credit her with two-thirds of the £51.6m spent on her British films, which adds £34.4m to the tally.

The rest of the money comes from three sources: first, profit generated from the “box-office chain effect”, defined as the element of a successful film that marketing firms credit directly to the actor; second, the tourism boost from Winslet films, such as Sense and Sensibility; and, finally, and more intangibly, the "general promotional effect" for Britain. “When an actor achieves international prominence, they have a general effect of boosting their country of origin that works its way through television appearances, advertising and celebrity news,” says Steele in a briefing note explaining the Winslet algorithm.

Steele said there was a second way of calculating Winslet’s worth — “brand value”. It is used to set the budget of films and sell other goods by American marketing companies.

“This is much higher at $1.8 billion [£1.1 billion], but the catch is that nearly all of this brand value belongs to the American studios that made her higher-budget films, such as Titanic.

“It’s salutary that her brand value is so much higher than her UK economic impact, but it is a byproduct of the dominance of the US film studios,” said the statistician.

Winslet was not available for comment but an associate said she was likely to find the eponymous algorithm both “flattering and very funny”.

**Britain’s highest-paid stars**

**Daniel Radcliffe**
£8.2m for Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix

**Hugh Grant**
£7.5m for Two Weeks Notice

**Kate Winslet**
£6m for Finding Neverland

**Jude Law**
£5.7m for Closer

**Daniel Craig**
£4.5m for Quantum of Solace

**Clive Owen**
£4.5m for Duplicity

**Keira Knightley**
£3m for Pirates of the Caribbean: At World’s End

*Source: IMDB/Forbes*