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**How does Widespread Copyright Violation, as
Facilitated by Networked Telecommunications, Impact
upon Artistic Practice and Industry in New Zealand?**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

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In

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Abstract:

The culture of artistic content creation is changing. Once upon a time cultural products, and the ability to dictate how they were used and consumed, could be easily controlled via virtue of the difficulty of working with analogue formats in regards to modification, mass duplication or sampling. The widespread adoption of digital technologies, and the Internet serving as a global vector of seemingly endless information exchange, has rendered these hindrances to content duplication, distribution, and manipulation irrelevant in the wake of a globally distributed network of techno-*cosmopolitan* media content consumers. With the widespread normalisation of illegal online file-sharing, consumers of entertainment can essentially source anything they desire at a non-existent cost, whilst simultaneously excluding themselves from traditional economic channels of distribution.

This research, partially presented as a documentary, investigates the opinions of artists (photographers, filmmakers, and musicians) working and living in New Zealand regarding the prevalence and impact of online copyright infringement. How has this new digital ecosphere impacted their work/practice as an artist and the industry generally? Is the fact that content gains far greater proliferation via these networks an advantage to media creators? Or does the reduction in scarcity and/or effort to obtain said art remove much of the associated value and thus the need to pay? A consumer can steal art considerably more easily now, but an artist can also source material for inspiration or reappropriation in ways largely unavailable in the past.

In what ways (and with how much success) have content creators adapted to this new paradigm? How do these viewpoints correlate with variables such as medium, time spend in the industry and level of professional/economic involvement? And, indeed, how should both the creators, and the consumers, of media content think about art in a new world where it can be digitised so easily?

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Committee Approval Statement:

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 15/01.

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