PIRACY IS NORMAL, PIRACY IS BORING:
SYSTEMIC DISRUPTION AS EVERYDAY LIFE

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Introduction

What is often called 'digital piracy' is nowadays a mundane and everyday activity. Peukert (2010, p.6) points out that millions of ordinary "good" people who would never steal a book, a CD or a DVD routinely "continue uploading and downloading". Digital sharing "is an everyday practice by millions of people, and in that sense *normal*" (p.15). As such, piracy is a commonplace disorder within the order of information capitalism; it is both created by the ubiquitous orders of information capitalism and suppressed by those orders. In the myriad points of view of its participants piracy represents an order which is implicit within contemporary life, which we will call 'pirarchy'. For non-corporate producers it constitutes a way of distributing their work which threatens their ability to survive off that work, while potentially opening previously unavailable possibilities of acquiring income or status from their products or expertise. Many corporations see it simply as a disorder which threatens their future. We assert that pirarchy is a non-resolvable part of what we have elsewhere called the 'information mess' (Marshall, Goodman & da Rimini, forthcoming).

There has been little interest in the ways that pirarchy derives from and becomes embedded in everyday social and informational life. This neglect may arise because of the illusion of privacy afforded by the software enabling pirarchy, because the drama of landmark legal cases eclipses 'daily life', because prospects of prosecution makes practitioners reluctant to share information with researchers, or finally because most theory assumes that important networks are robust while pirarchy is overtly unstable and uncertain. We attempt to describe some social characteristics of pirarchy, through consideration of the literature and news-stories about piracy, but mainly through interviews with self-identified file-sharers.

Piracy as Scandal: the official position

The flourishing of diverse modes of 'unauthorised' exchange of films, music, text and other materials over the internet by content-hungry 'peers' has been described by copyright holders as an "unspoken social plague," a "nirvana for criminals," and compared to industrial-scale counterfeiting enterprises (BASCAP, 2009; Karaganis, 2011a, *i*). Corporations argue that they are losing billions of dollars of potential revenue, and that 'digital piracy' and 'unauthorised downloading' pose a huge threat to the economy in general (BSA, 2011). Governments and corporations are exerting pressure

on Internet Service Providers to actively monitor and regulate their customers' file-sharing behaviours (Bridy, 2011; Hinze, 2010). New laws and international treaties are drafted, often cloaked in secrecy until they are leaked, becoming themselves transactions within the pirarchy and demonstrating the difficulties of information enclosure (Anderson, 2011; Weatherall, 2011). Educational campaigns warn that pirates are evil, socially inept, destroy local film industries, are associated with "drugs, child pornography, weapons, money laundering, child exploitation, fraud, and bikie gangs", and spread infection and destruction (AFACT, 2009, pp.1, 5-6). With little or no distinction between 'ordinary downloaders', fans/owners of enabling websites, and industrial-scale entrepreneurs, offenders can be prosecuted (Cheng, 2010), pay huge fines (Kravets, 2011), face extradition (Lee, 2012) or jail (Enigmax, 2012). Clearly, a massive legal and rhetorical war is being fought against pirarchy.

Despite these efforts at ordering the domain, pirarchy has proliferated, often accompanied by a politicisation and transnational mobilisation of both file-sharers and others around related issues including the right to internet access, electronic freedom, and digital privacy (Haunss, 2011, p.1). For others, pirarchy is just a humdrum taken for granted affair, as even if the corporations squash one distribution channel, people expect that another will arise, and that they will continue to download.

While surveys of unauthorised exchange concur that 'digital piracy' is growing, the means by which people acquire content are shifting. In the classic peer-to-peer (P2P) method, an "original seeder" digitises a file and then uploads a tracker (or pointer) to its location. While the tracker is stored on centralised indexing and tracker websites, the digitised file remains on the original seeder's computer. "Secondary seeders" or "peers" can then download the file by locating the tracker and using a software "client" to connect to a dynamic distributed "swarm" for that particular file. The swarm is comprised of other peers who share their bandwidth and processing power to download files in non-sequential chunks. The P2P protocol ensures that peers automatically upload chunks while they are downloading, thus cooperation is enforced on a technological level, perhaps without peers always knowing. However, people ("leechers") can disconnect from a swarm as soon as they have downloaded a file without seeding back equally. When at least one secondary peer has downloaded the complete file and remains "seeding" or "reseeding" it, the original peer no longer needs to seed again as, in theory, others keep the file alive or reanimate it upon request.

The commonest file-sharing protocol is BitTorrent (BT) with over 8 million simultaneous users and 100 million regular users worldwide. BT generates over 47% of all upstream bytes, despite two new

trends dominating both legal and illegal downstream internet traffic. These are, firstly, real time streamed entertainment, from sites such as YouTube and Vimeo and, secondly, "cyberlockers"or cloud storage sites such as DropBox, Rapidshare and the now-notorious Megaupload (Envisional 2011).

Ambiguities of the Normal Domain

The borders between piracy and everyday life in the information society are thin. Originally the purpose of the internet, apart from the intrinsic interest in building it, was to ease communication and the sharing of information (Hafner and Lyon, 1996). Sharing files was fundamental. However, almost from the outset, file-sharing broke boundaries, it was a user-driven activity which was both domestic/leisure and work related, just as Information and Communication Technology (ITC) has enabled domestic/leisure spaces to be permeated by the demands of work and vice-versa. ITC connections at home now approach or exceed the quality of workplace networks. Pirarchy needs bountiful data compression, data transmission, and the requisite software, and that is easily available. Nowadays, Internet Service Providers offer fast bandwidth and mega-gigabyte plans which ambiguously enable both legal and illegal distribution of online content. Legally available software helps people digitise and copy texts, images, CDs and DVDs, and people require this ability for their own personal, social and business use.

Well-known, financially viable sites like YouTube enable forms of file-sharing, despite their disclaimers. People can upload videos, music clips, music tracks, their own mashups (frequently based on unauthorised sampling), their own music and videos, and watch advertisements, promotional material and so on. It is perhaps necessarily ambiguous how much these sites constitute ways of distributing people's own work, how much they advertise commercially available work, and how much they serve as places where fans can promote their idols' work.

DeVoss and Porter (2006, p.179) argue that now-defunct music sharing hub Napster (a 'hybrid' P2P system with a central server from which people uploaded and downloaded files) mattered because it signalled a new "digital ethic" of text use and file distribution. Through normal use of the internet, users develop the sense that information should be available on demand and usable by the downloader as they chose. Normal experiences promote habits, thus influencing social norms of what is right or natural. Gut-feelings and ideologically-based convictions are reinforced by the sense that a multitude of others share similar positions. As one of our interviewees said, he imagined downloaders as being "people much like myself, people who embrace technology, who are busy, who don't want to actually be told when to watch things and to be bombarded with

advertising". These new social norms may conflict both with habits developed elsewhere by others, and with legal norms.

Another contributing factor, in contemporary capitalism, is that the good consumer is impulsive, aiming to own or experience *now*. Not only do marketing experts try to increase impulse purchases but, as Vohs and Faber (2007) suggest, "cash machines, shop at home television programs, and Internet shopping now render urges to act immediately and buy around the clock highly difficult to resist" (p.537). Information technology weakens the delay between desire and gaining the desired object. Vohs and Faber suggest that this contributes to increasing the "ratio of household debt to disposable income" and causing financial difficulties (p.537); it certainly creates an ambience in which delayed gratification is discouraged.

Attempts by corporations to stop piracy by technological fixes such as copy protection, 'Digital Rights Management', or by attempting to monopolise media have led to corporations adding limiting 'features', which consumers resist, and hinders their spread into new markets. Apple is successful with its online iTunes store, but customers are still forced to buy from one seller and receive only 'lossy compression' format files. Currently media corporations do not provide consumers with what they want and attempts to control piracy provide further incentives for pirarchy.

David Harvey (2005) is one of many who propose that peoples' lives increasingly reflect neoliberal imperatives (profit maximisation for an elite via privatisation of national resources and infrastructure, commodification of the 'knowledge commons', casualised 'flexible' labour, and so forth). If this is accepted, then participation in unauthorised circuits of exchange could offer some relief from the sense of continuous exploitation, loss of one's own production and value, together with what seems like endless work to get socially 'necessary' goods. Similarly, file-sharing and access to information or cultural artefacts can be necessary to perform that work, with people in many employment sectors expected to bring knowledge and social connections to the workplace developed in their own 'free' time.

Finally, in information society people are saturated with commercial media, and it becomes a mode of conversation, of mutual understanding, of storytelling, of sharing in the general cultural milieu or in specific (sub)cultural milieus. Commercialisation of cultural property both promulgates and interrupts that conversation and sharing, by providing what is necessary, but then disrupting the process of taking, or sharing, it.

Piracy is Normal

The interviews

Despite the scandal and hype about criminality, the evidence from a small number of in-depth interviews we conducted in 2011-12 with 'ordinary' Australian file-sharers aged between 20-55 years suggests that piracy is considered, by participants, not as theft, but as normal, commonplace, and unadventurous. This 'casual' attitude seems to be replicated by American and German file-sharers, according to a recent study of 'copy culture' (Karaganis, 2011b, pp. 3-4). Peukert also reports remarks similar to the ones we describe, but rather than seeing them as expressing the nature of life in our society, he understands them as evidence of 'rationalisations' or moral disengagement (2010, p.16)[1].

Our interviews reveal that so-called digital piracy has lost its 'novelty value' and is simply what people do to keep in touch, or keep current with cultural conversations and consume impulsively; all of which we have suggested may be necessary ways of maintaining status and employability in 'information society.' Digital piracy has become 'atomistic', mundane and almost withdrawn. Today's cultural exchangers are more likely to share tips with one another than actual files, further normalising the practice, and making it more of a linguistic than a technological activity, as well as distributing risk and blame, thereby making prosecution harder and even less fair.

Interviewing is a limited form of research, in that it reports what people think they do and what their conscious perceptions are, but it does not necessarily reveal actual dynamics or point to any social unconscious. The flow of the interview is also a matter of a particular moment and the ambience generated by the interaction of interviewer and interviewee. It can, if we are not careful, produce the results the interviewer is aiming for, as people accommodate themselves to each other. Hence these interviews, while being semi-structured with a series of possible questions, are open enough for the interviewee to lead the discussion in the direction they find interesting; thus revealing information we had not anticipated, and increasing the pool of questions for future interviews.

Categorising the interviewees' comments under various headings allows us to illustrate the issues discussed above.

How 'the normal' helps piracy and the unsatisfactory normal promotes piracy.

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[1] However, he also writes "Copyright might therefore have little support in the mental processes associated with our notions of right and wrong because to follow its rules causes an inherent conflict with basic norms rooted in our emotionally and intuitively grounded sense of justice" (p.20).

Our central argument is that piracy grows out of normal trends in the information society. It is not an external or marginal disorder, but is enabled by the factors which make information society possible. The most obvious factor is the presence of the internet, and the general ability to transfer, copy and store information. The user's terms for their activity seemed to be 'file-sharing' or 'downloading', which clearly refuses to distinguish between downloading copyright and non-copyright files; both are seen as equivalent.

Several interviewees mentioned that having good cheap bandwidth was essential for piracy as people expected to be able to download large files such as films or entire television series. R mentioned restricted bandwidth as an obstacle to file-sharing. E began downloading because he could purchase good bandwidth and a decent download quota. Y reported that most of his friends could get "very large amounts of quota for a very reasonable price". He had a 150 Gig limit which allowed him to get more content than he could "possibly hope to download and watch in a one-month period". Some mentioned how normal copying software and devices made ripping files and digitising information relatively straightforward. E pointed to the importance of cheap good storage, which allows accumulation of files and good modes of searching for specific items. Several others mentioned that burning CDs or portable drives helped them to share materials with non-downloaders (particularly family members, as with someone's blind mother), which may lead us to wonder how many ancillary ICT manufacturing industries profit from pirarchy. Acquiring and using software and data was an everyday part of everyone's work and creative lives. The habits of those lives depended upon freely and instantly available data, examples, and experiences. Consequently restrictions seemed an abnormal interruption.

However, this expectation of instant access meant that people talked a lot about their problems with legal transmissions. E complained about losing tracks on iTunes or losing them when transferring them to different hardware platforms and mobile devices. Frustration with local television companies was high on the list of reasons for downloading, especially the delay in getting programmes after they had first been broadcast elsewhere – which in Australia can be weeks, months, or even years later, and at odd or varying times. M talks about "the excitement of... watching it as soon as it hits the screens in the States or wherever…, rather than having to wait for whatever broadcast TV does to something and mangles it with ads and blah…". F also remarks that maybe her friends would subscribe to pay TV but didn't because there is "such a long wait often between what's being released in America and when it becomes… commercially available". Y noted that TV stations tend to muck around with their timing, and so viewers end up missing part of a show, and thus 'have' to download it to follow it. People want to watch the show as soon as it

comes out, particularly if they are discussing the show with friends and colleagues who have seen it already and might inadvertently disclose plot developments.

Sometimes the legal barriers do not make sense to users. R specifically mentioned that he wanted to watch programmes on the BBC website but this option, legal in the UK, was not possible in Australia even though the files were visible. Consequently, he downloaded and configured TOR, a "free software and open network" that helps defend people from threats to "personal freedom and privacy" by routing and encrypting/decrypting communications through a volunteer-provided and managed network of servers distributed around the world (Tor Project, n.d.). So some kind of barriers not only lead to 'piracy' but to a potentially less traceable piracy.

Comparable problems occur with free to air music broadcasts which neither deliver music on demand, nor play the particular type of music that people want to hear. This then leads to further online developments. T remarks that a particular downloading site which stores a mix of illegal files "is like a music community with sound, that shares sound files". People can upload "their own music collations for just streaming; you can share them on… all of the social networks and... there's either a link to buy or download". This site also has "established artists like Patti Smith... who are interested in sharing their music in an egalitarian kind of way". T also comments that "it's not just people leeching off the products of capitalism; it's also people who are creating and distributing, producing and distributing stuff from scratch totally outside of all available systems, who are using just making stuff in their lounge room... and then using alternative distribution for it." Creators "can really build up a huge following and a big profile". Such pirarchy opens up the possibility of an artist moving from the alternative to the mainstream. So these sites provide ways of people getting known, building celebrity and perhaps earning something in the information economy, yet not being beholden to corporations, or having their earnings diminished by others. In other words, they are normal *and* suggest the possibility of an escape from waged or contract work; they can be sites of imaginative hope, their piracy could be incidental to other forms of sharing and display[2].

What is exchanged

We can hypothesise a little more about pirarchy networks offline from the ways people share files and information with others in their daily lives. In the days before fast broadband, people directly

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[2] There is the expected degree of ambiguity here. Piolatto & Schuett (2012) argue that popular artists benefit from piracy and less well known artists suffer from it. There is, however, a long history of musicians being taken advantage of by recording companies, so the internet potentially offers a change in the balance of power between the average musician and the corporation. Most musicians earn more from live performances than from recording sales which act as advertisements for performances. The corporation is not needed as much as it was at either the recording or the distribution/promotion end. Neither does the musician have to fit in with the image the corporation requires.

exchanged files whereas today it seems that, unless they are giving something to a non-downloader, they will exchange information, recommendations, or tips. M says "I usually tell fellow downloaders about something rather than exchange as it's easier for them than transferring." Y states that in the days before good download quota, particular friends in a "cabal" would be allocated the responsibility for locating particular shows, and periodically individuals would meet up with a flash drive or portable hard drive for a "swap-over". Nowadays "it's just easier to get it yourself" and "people give you a tip of something that they feel is worth your time and effort to download". K also states that "it's mostly about just telling your friends about it or talking about it or, I don't very often burn things for anybody any more, they just go and do it themselves". On the other hand, while disposing of most material T says that she will download and keep a "certain genre of watchables" so that she can share them with others. At times she and her friends will "do lots of music sharing or movie sharing... series sharing... usually there's an exchange". While E also talks about sharing recommendations rather than "the same physical thing", he also likes to watch certain series with friends as it is "nice to go back to the start with someone else and re-watch it" while F talks about having particular friends whom "you watch one programme with". Again this indicates a pattern of normality. People do ordinarily share recommendations about programmes and music and books, or converse about particular cultural items and performances, or go and watch or listen to something with a particular subset of their acquaintances. It suggests that the offline networks of piracy are not particularly coherent and not abstractable from people's daily lives as something different. The offline ties are not particularly weak or strong compared to other ties. People who do not pirate often participate in the benefits of piracy without protest. Piracy is in these senses normal.

Motivations

The self reported motivations of pirates also express normalcy and a desire to share cultural products and to engage in work or production of cultural products; that is, they relay the much-hyped aims of information workers. When discussing how she treats other people M says "share the love, share the load – share the bandwidth" showing that she sees file-sharing in terms of friendly exchange and sharing, perhaps harking back to a nostalgia for early internet 'community' when "there was a sense of community and sharing and the internet being a resource for everyone". M also sees downloading in terms of research for her everyday work and 'creative practice'. As a student and a writer she needs access to cultural products when she needs them, not at someone else's discretion. Sometimes she just 'needs' to see what something is, or how it was done. Although she experiences no great connection to other downloaders ("I have never uploaded anything... my bit is keeping it going,") her statements do imply obligation: "I will seed something

at least until it is [a ratio of one to one]." Some things she considers to be "great" she will seed for longer. This is especially the case for things she likes that few people seed; she expresses a "sense of responsibility" to the neglected art and to the people who upload.

K also sees downloading software as related to her normal experimental art practice. "I never felt any ethical dilemma over those kind of things because I thought they all needed to be distributed because we were the ones that were working out how best to use that stuff" and her art was not primarily about making money. T states that "I was philosophically opposed to spending money on software and especially if it came from... big companies and also because I was really fucking poor and couldn't afford software but I always wanted to have everything that was available". Some of this was because T needed software for her art and also wanted access to contemporary cultural materials. Similarly E said "you could argue that any cultural material is part of the work, or some of the works in the cultural industries" and "part of the point that makes me download things is to just engage in the conversation about what it's about or to understand what the popular thing is". One of R's motivations as a musician was that he would "download ten different versions of some 1930s jazz standard I was learning and you would have this incredible compilation album with ten different artists who had done it... you would be hard pressed to do that, like who's got ten different versions of the same song in their personal collection?" So it enabled him to get music together in a way which was not possible outside of this method. Again what we see is that access to, and exchange of, cultural artefacts is considered necessary for cultural production. Consequently people don't see a problem with accessing it; especially if they cannot afford access.

Issues of purchasing and profit

M states that while she usually downloads entertainment and only some practical things, she does not get "everything for free" but occasionally buys stuff, saying "I actually own my copy of Microsoft Word". In particular she pays "for stuff that I use to earn money". In many cases if she likes a downloaded entertainment product, she claims she will also buy it. Similarly she states "I delete stuff usually after I've watched it, unless it is something I know I might like to burn and give to somebody who mightn't be a downloader". T says "I have never ever paid for a piece of software ever in my entire life" although later in the conversation this turns out not to be quite true. T also states that while she downloads music and films she buys books. "You probably can't compare, you know, writing and distributing software to writing and distributing a book, yeah, and because I am a writer too – so there is that". Elsewhere, author Del Dryden writes: "I'm a novelist who has seen decreasing royalties and increasing piracy... If you steal my work... I can't continue to produce it. It's the dismissiveness on the part of people who obviously think this is an unreasonable

attitude on the part of writers who apparently are supposed to survive on thin air and the sheer force of their own creativity" (q Gaskin, 2011). These positions encapsulate the problem: we cannot survive if everyone downloads without payment, and yet it's hard to stay in the 'cultural conversation' without downloading.

Like others T does not really need to retain viewed items, unless perhaps it is non-fiction. Y occasionally downloads a game, but "these days you can get games … legally in the comfort of your own home with applications such as Steam at reasonable prices – they often have a lot of specials on, so [I don't download much], because the availability is there and the price is reasonable". R did not purchase music digitally, but did download, and did buy hard copy books. R believes that piracy "hasn't actually influenced record sales a great deal, so the people who are doing it are those that wouldn't be buying the records" which is "opposite to the assumptions taken by people who are criticising" piracy. Moreover, "in that way it's spreading the music of people", and in any case artists don't get paid that much per disc or song anyway, most of the money goes to the company. K is accustomed to buying apps [applications] for Apple equipment and music, hoping that money paid to iTunes goes back to the artist, but surprisingly not checking. However K finds the copy protection annoying, as it hampers sharing with friends. E also believes that most of the purchase price "doesn't go to the artist, so I don't feel good about purchasing things; in a way I feel bad that, it's kind of like, I am wasting money".

So there is a political edge or rationalisation to the behaviour, but it is not pronounced. This edge could stem from a feeling that their own possibilities of contributing to 'mainstream' cultural production is marginal, even though most of the interviewees in these interviews are cultural producers. Nevertheless the main paradox here would seem to be the recognition that in the information society people need to be paid for cultural work, plus a reluctance to pay for it, and a feeling that the actual producers don't get paid much for it anyway. If there is a radicality here it is generally not pushed by our interviewees, and it is unintentional and possibly self-undermining of their own survival. Perhaps that is the most disturbing part of it, it is just a habit and people do not have to persuade themselves that they are doing the right thing, it is simply what they do.

Consumerism made free: I need it now.
The information society needs consumers, and encourages consumerism, to fund the necessary production, but if the money is siphoned away from the producers to the owners then there may not be enough money earned to keep the necessary consumption occurring. Given that turnover on speculative currency and derivatives trading dwarfed the rest of the global economy before the late

crash this siphoning seems probable (Marshall, 2007, p.5). We might also wonder if a whole society can function just by the exchange of information and art; we cannot eat information for example. File-sharing is one of the most direct displays of this cultural and economic incoherence.

Consumerism, and its legal impossibility, is widespread even amongst those who reject it. T says "I definitely wanted and needed to have all that stuff and it's so expensive". E says: "it's just good to have the library to be able to give to someone else or just have that pride of, you know, this is what I have got". Within this society accumulation is good and a matter of status, no matter how it is acquired. So consequently the ideal consumer is also impulsive to some extent, they see and they buy. E emphasises how good it is to be able to get things the moment he thinks of them: "I remember a film that I have seen and I liked or I really want to watch in the future and I just download that [now]". Similarly the usual modes of free-access products are not sufficient for this mode of being: "I prefer to be able to download it in bulk and watch it in my own time, yeah. I'm not liking the thing of subscribing to this weekly thing where I can only watch one episode". Y also remarks that "often I will download a whole season at a time because that's how I now prefer to watch my content… watch an entire season in the course of a week or two… on demand". R and T mentioned lack of money as an incentive to piracy. This is getting all the benefits of consumerism, and indeed fitting in to consumerist society, without the apparent costs, but it does have some other costs as intense accumulation can lead to overwhelm and 'data-smog' (Shenk, 1997). F says: "my friends and family talk about this feeling of exhaustion and information overload and actual stress. So we're downloading all this stuff but we don't have the time and it sometimes makes us more aware that we are time-poor". M says "I've got another hard drive full of movies I haven't watched". R says he has a lot of MP3s he has not listened to and is working his way through them. So, while it may seem necessary to have this cultural product to produce cultural product, it is quite possible that most of it never gets used, and indeed acts as a potential deferral of production as there is always an extra thing to imbibe.

Overload perhaps implies that people would not have downloaded the material if it was not there, and yet again that they might never actually listen to it or watch it. If so, then again, corporations have not lost as much as they claim (and if people cannot purchase it anyway, then there is no loss), a point often made on file-sharing forums.

Politicisation vs the humdrum
M says "I'm a pretty mainstream downloader as a middle-aged person, middle-aged professional". "I don't feel like I'm doing anything extreme or radical or anarchic or illegal... [or] unethical – and I

have a strong sense of ethics.... not radical at all, just doing my stuff". M's "whole experience of the internet has always been one of community and sharing". She does not consider that "copyright law is ethical at all times," and believes it is inevitable that the law is "going to change, it will have to change, it will change." Furthermore, because downloading is "just so incredibly easy" she does not understand "why everyone in the world doesn't do it." Piracy does not mark her self-conception, she is simply doing normal things, sharing normally. T uses "sharing sites and file-sharing on a daily basis... I've gotten to the stage I think where I just use it as a matter of course and I don't think about it very much any more" However, she is also "very interested in people who are not only kind of using those systems and creating like an alternative kind of economy". So it is both not worth thinking about and perhaps offers hope – it's a kind of humdrum millennialism.

E also frames the events by normalcy, with a hint of radicalism, declaring that "I would only see it as piracy if I was producing it into hard copy and then selling it on." Significantly, E doesn't "really see it as sharing. I think it's kind of more just tapping into culture". Hence "it feels more like... going on Wikipedia and looking up information… I think it's the same kind of thing". K was the most ideationally radical, saying "I'm actually really fascinated by how it's changed the ownership of information and the ownership of immaterial things... and how that's changed the whole landscape of exchange between people. What you get for what you pay for, what you may or may not hold in your hands, how it increases wealth and decreases wealth... it's just such a huge area… I've never seen knowledge as property". However this latter point might be nostalgic, as knowledge was rarely seen as property in general, artistic or academic life until recently. Again showing the humdrum and non-involved nature of piracy, K says "I'm pretty practical about it these days – let's just get that movie, get it quick, what's the ratio, have I given enough back yet? It doesn't have a novelty value anymore, it's just this is how I get stuff." Piracy is humdrum and boring. It is part of daily life, and its politics could be equally humdrum and even not brought into play.

Swarms

While we have argued that the social forms of piracy offline are part of the social forms of everyday life, the structures online are contingent, shifting and fluxing, yet still everyday for online. The temporary network crystallises into potential and then dissipates, just as YouTube videos may suddenly attract audiences of millions which then dissipate. As Dejean writes "the distribution of copy does not depend on a particular group of individuals" (2009, 331). Any fixed community is imagined. M talks of the "shared action, a shared action that's happening… in apartments and houses… across the world at the same time." However she does not see herself "an actual active member of community". Many people mentioned the various graphic representations of the current

swarm as important in their imagining. F says of the software client Vuze, "I used to love watching the swarm and the little pieces" and M says "it gives you that real sense of here I am, in the community". E also liked watching the little national flags that appeared in the interfaces of the P2P clients FrostWire and LimeWire. E points to the community of sharing amongst their friends and perhaps amongst specialists: "Say I was looking for an obscure French documentary on bread and then an obscure French documentary on eggs... they would probably come from the same kind of people, so I would probably have more of a sense of community there". E adds: "it's becoming so mainstream it's not so much community but just society". R has little contact with others, saying "I was never interested in talking to anyone else, I just wanted their free music (laughter)." In much the same way K says "I've never used peer-to-peer as a social network, I just use it to get things." K also thinks that the sharing has gone as the sites have become so big, and that most of the site commentary is about "geeky kind of things". T declares herself to be "just a leech" because she does not reseed most of what she downloads. However, this troubles her as "I think about that I don't contribute to that community very much – I just take a lot but you know, if there's opportunities to share then I absolutely share." In the past she shared "all the time on Napster". For K the social aspects occur in more everyday life when she talks with friends. However "I do seed back.... Because I feel like I owe it back". Even the anonymous swarm generates quite a strong sense of obligation even though people often do not act upon what they feel is a moral imperative. This supports our argument that file-sharing, via whatever means (direct download or distributed transmission) is fuelled by living the normal kind of social life demanded by the system that would make it illegal.

Conclusion

We have argued that pirarchy arises from the very nature of information society. When people have grown up viewing the internet as a 'resource for everyone' in which they 'share the love, share the load, share the bandwidth,' they become less likely to distinguish between what are defined as legal and illegal forms of content. The boundaries of enclosure of information property become fraught. What exists in the cloud and the nets is deemed to be 'public knowledge' and cultural or intellectual capital which should be available to all. As a result, a person does not need to overtly subscribe to pirate or digital commons ideologies to engage in file-sharing. The internet also furthers the kinds of long term but continually precarious social structures that we have called swarms, which join the 'peers' into anonymous functional pirarchy.

In this regime of pirarchy, P2P has transformed from a conscious edge practice to something more

intuitive, implicit, pervasive and conventionally humdrum. It is part of ordinary life furthered by the tools of work and cultural creation within information capitalism. Ease of communication, ease of replication, ease of transmission, and ordinary use of cultural items to maintain one's position in an ongoing cultural conversation or to produce artefacts for work, all imply that pirarchy will continue, and disrupt models of property which are based upon easy exclusion and difficulty of replication. If this is a radicalism, it is one whose radicalism is unintentional, emerging out of the same forces that try to shut it down; it is a disorder which arises out of information order.

Our basic theme is that an ordering leads to a disorder, which leads to another ordering, as the order's problem solving either fails to solve problems for everyone, or creates new problems for some. This continual cycle drives social-technical process. It is possible that breaking the cycle to retain an impossible order, through over regulation, could promote collapse. Each imposition of order leads to further disorder, and not necessarily in a "logical," reciprocal or linear fashion. Events in one domain can trigger responses extending across other domains, disordering processes which produces cascades of new attempts at ordering the instability, unpredictability, and volatility.

The contradictions of the system are clear: when every idea can be commodified, autonomous popular culture may become impossible. If nothing can be commodified then cultural producers may not survive without other income. Those in the pirarchy, and those opposed to it, are all trying to deal with these problems and to take advantage of system. This process may possibly generate new transnational loose, anarchic social formations with non-capitalistic ideas or practices of property. But then again it could lead to collapse and instability, or to a regime dependent on continual use of force to contain uncontainable property.

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