UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Spinning Media:

Understanding how snowboarding video producers incorporate advertising into subcultural media.

Nick Maitland

18 May 2015

A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts, in Media and Communication.
Department of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Canterbury

Contents

Cover photo taken by Peter Lovás.
The photos displayed in this thesis were obtained from published media produced by the interviewees or purchased from Dreamstime, except that which appears on page 4, which was supplied by the author.

Abstract

Snowboard media producers attempt to create subculturally relevant videos that connect with the audience. Videos provide the opportunity to report and document snowboarding activity, highlight new developments and provide visibility to prominent participants and associated businesses. Being a well-known and esteemed snowboarding participant is advantageous to being a producer, as it provides an identifiable cultural capital and implies a trustworthy 'by-riders-for-riders' philosophy. Connecting with the viewers is vital, as the audience plays a role in the distribution of videos by sharing and endorsing them through their social networks. Motivating factors in audience media sharing, also known as media spreading, include status seeking, improving credibility, personal satisfaction and personal expression.

Snowboarding was founded on anti-mainstream and anti-commercialism beliefs, which means that incorporating advertising and promotional messaging could negatively impact on audience connection. Yet, filming and producing snowboarding videos is difficult and expensive. Advertising represents an opportunity to attract funding and support to assist with production costs and, ultimately, provide profit. In order to accommodate advertising into their videos, producers are sometimes required to compromise their standards. This compromise represents a threat to audience connection. Producers believe that high quality, innovative snowboarding action footage provides the best opportunity to wow the audience. Various forms of advertising, including stealth marketing, sponsored journalism, and hybrid messaging, are often displayed in the moments between action footage shots, but advertising compromise can also affect action footage, particularly on client-funded projects. How advertising is incorporated can also depend on the industry the advertiser operates in. Alcohol brand advertising is identified as highly restrictive due to legal implications and public perceptions. Advertisers from businesses strongly related to the snowboarding subculture are more aware of their competitors' presence in videos, which can cause conflict. Ski field support can be varied, despite high levels of visibility in the videos.

Acknowledgements

Enormous thanks to Robett Hollis, Riley Bathurst and Nick Hyne for their generosity. Without their open, honest and insightful interviews this project would not have been possible. I thoroughly enjoyed finding out more about their journeys, not only as snowboarders, but as business men.

I would like to thank my primary supervisor, Dr Zita Joyce, and my secondary supervisor, Associate Professor Linda Jean Kenix for their expertise, patience and continual support throughout this project. I would also like to thank Dr Holly Thorpe for her friendship and for challenging me to give research a go and Dr Jenny Clarke for egging me on.

I would like to acknowledge the support of my employer, the University of Canterbury College of Education and, in particular, Professor Gail Gillon and Gary Downey.

Most of all, I would like to thank my wife, Carissa, for looking after our wonderful kids and freeing me up enough to work on this project.

This project has been a fascinating and personally rewarding opportunity to look at snowboarding in a totally different way. But now that it's over, I look forward to actually (hopefully) snowboarding, rather than reading, writing and thinking about it.

Nick Maitland

Chapter one - Introduction

How does a snowboarder learn to be a snowboarder? Participation in the activity itself could be the first obvious answer. The more time a participant spends on a snowboard, the better they will get. Being in an environment where there are other snowboarders, such as a ski field, will help to broaden a rider's understanding. The participant will be able to observe others as they ride down the slopes and see what tricks they perform, how they interpret the terrain and respond, and how fast they go. In addition to the physical aspects of snowboarding, the participant can also observe what other snowboarders are wearing, what gear they are riding on, how they communicate with each other, and how they communicate with non-snowboarders. These observations are beneficial to a participant, as they build an understanding of what it is to be a snowboarder, but it is an insular experience. What is happening at that specific location could be substantially different to the experience of a snowboarder on the other side of the globe. To this end, media coverage of snowboarding can help to broaden a participant's perceptions. Snowboarding-specific media can highlight innovative riding, illustrate new and interesting terrain and locations, promote products and ancillary businesses, and showcase interesting, expert and inspirational people. It is particularly important when media is participant-driven, as it can provide peer-to-peer communication and representation of the lifestyle. These forms of media often feature snowboarders who have obtained a high level of recognition and esteem within the subculture, what Bourdieu (1984) identifies as cultural capital. Additionally, some expert snowboarders have set up their own media businesses as a way to take advantage of their esteem and recognition, best represent the snowboarding community, and develop a career beyond participation in the activity itself. Funding a media business can present a need to incorporate advertising messaging in order to bring in revenue. Having cultural capital within the snowboarding community can be advantageous in attracting advertisers, yet advertising and promotional messaging can be a compromising factor in what is ultimately produced.

This thesis explores the following question: how does the incorporation of advertising affect snowboarding video production? This research aims to gain a better understanding of the pressure and compromise advertising incorporation causes to media output and quality. It also considers how advertising compromise can damage the status of the producer in the subculture. More specifically, this thesis asks how three New Zealand snowboard media producers, Robett Hollis, Nick Hyne and Riley Bathurst, use their cultural capital to create snowboarding communications while also funding their media with advertising revenue. It contends that cultural capital within the snowboarding subculture is earned through the embodied state, but only has a value through the recognition

endowed by the wider snowboarding community. Through this recognition, subcultural media producers are presented with an opportunity to create economic value from their status within the snowboarding subculture. Central to this research is the understanding that without income these media producers could not operate. They need to bring in advertising revenue in order to fund media production and remain a viable business. Therefore, to continue producing media, some advertising compromise is inevitable. Furthermore, the status of these producers is useful in distributing their media, as the audience will help spread media that they like and connect with more widely through sharing it with their social networks. Yet, given the anti-mainstream and anti-commercialism that was a founding principle of snowboarding, incorporating advertising in snowboarding media has the potential to damage both the producer's cultural capital esteem and the viewer spreading behaviour. This has the ability to negatively affect the viability of the producer's business, as well as their standing within the subculture.

Background on Snowboarding

From its inception, snowboarding was viewed as an outsider sport filled with maladjusted and disruptive vagabonds. Yet to the participants, it represented an expressive, creative and communal outlet that was free from rules and structure. It is difficult to pin point exactly who invented snowboarding and when. During the late 1970's several people were independently working on snowboard prototypes, most notably Jake Burton-Carpenter, Tom Sims and Chuck Barfoot (Thorpe, 2013), who were some of the first producers of snowboards for purchase. Burton-Carpenter started his self-named company, Burton, in 1977, with designs inspired by the 1960's sled-type snow toy, Snurfer, but more closely related to surfing and skateboarding (Burton, 2003). Snowboarding still relates to both of those sports. Additionally, as snowboarding began to grow in popularity in the 1980s, its ties to surfing and skateboarding produced a negative reception from ski fields (Thorpe, 2013). Ski fields were populated by middle-class, middle-aged, skiers and their families. The encroachment of apparently unsavoury and aggressive snowboarders caused concern and ski fields initially banned snowboarding to protect their more familiar, wealthy clientele (Humphreys, 2003). Yet, as snowboarding continued to gain popularity, more and more ski fields identified an opportunity to profit from the new market and softened their stance, allowing snowboarders to purchase lift passes (Thorpe, 2013). However, the differences between skiers and snowboarders continued to cause tension. Differentiated by age, income, fashion, attitude and etiquette, snowboarding and skiing at that time could not be less alike (Heino, 2000). To skiers, having snowboarders on their slopes seemed like finding ants on their cupcake. However, in contrast to the rigidity of traditional skiing, snowboarding offered a creative outlet based on freedom and self-

expression (Humphreys, 2003) and this proved to be attractive to youth. Snowboarding continued to grow throughout the 1980s and 1990s in opposition to the dominant ski culture (Thorpe, 2011).

Snowboarding was, in part, founded on anti-mainstream and anti-commercial principles in a similar way to the punk rock music subculture (Humphries, 2003). Freedom was also a prominent ideal. The early years of snowboarding focused on style, connecting with nature and personal expression, and the snowboarders themselves shared tight camaraderie. Snowboarders encouraged each other to express themselves and be innovative (Humphreys, 2003). Snowboarding was free from rules and structure and placed a high value on individuality, unlike more traditional sports (Heino, 2000). Thorpe (2013, p. 23) identified that "many early snowboarders subscribed to anti-establishment, do-it-yourself and countercultural philosophies." During the development of snowboarding, many snowboarders made their own clothing and adapted their snowboards, even modifying them with saws. As snowboarding grew it started to attract more attention. Initially, snowboarders objected to corporate intrusion. Humphreys (2003, p. 407) identified that most snowboarders were antagonised by corporate messaging and rejected "widespread commercial co-optation." Yet, as snowboarding continued to grow, so too did ancillary businesses and other corporations attempting to target the snowboarding subculture. Associating with action sports, like snowboarding, represented an opportunity for organisations to target a youthful audience that would otherwise be difficult to reach (Cianfrone & Zhang, 2006). Commercialisation increased the exposure to the public, meaning that action sports, such as snowboarding, were thrust into the limelight and were no longer an underground movement. Thorpe (2005, p. 77) summarises: "When television and corporate sponsors recognized the huge potential in extreme sports as a means to tap into the young male market segment, alternative activities such as skateboarding and snowboarding underwent rapid commercialization." In particular, the focus was on male participants. Thorpe (2013) notes that female snowboarders were among the early adopters of snowboarding and significant numbers of women continue to participate in snowboarding, yet commercialisation of snowboarding has been largely focused on males.

During the mid-1990s, growing commercial presence gave rise to a new opportunity for some snowboarders, the ability to make money through their association and prowess. Many expert snowboarders gained corporate sponsorship to assist with the cost of snowboarding for sustained periods of time. Some even became celebrities (Coates, Clayton, & Humberstone, 2010). In order to achieve to the best of their abilities, a snowboarder needs to spend a lot of time on the mountains. For many snowboarders, this diminishes the ability to also commit to full time employment. In

addition, to lift their profile and credibility, a snowboarder may be required to travel to various destinations, both nationally and internationally, for example to compete in competitions. Snowboarders often rely on sponsorship to support these endeavours. The level of support varies from snowboarder to snowboarder and sponsor to sponsor, but can include free or discounted gear and clothing, travel funding, wage or salary benefits, or endorsement deals. Sponsors from within the snowboard industry, for example snowboard manufacturers, will often sponsor several snowboarders, which they promote as their snowboard team. Sponsorship is usually given to snowboarders with the expectation that the sponsor will benefit from the association. The snowboarder is essentially a personification of their sponsor's marketing. Therefore, the snowboarder will likely be expected to gain visibility for the associated sponsor. This visibility can come through gaining attention on ski fields through expert riding, achieving good competition results, and gaining coverage in media through photos, videos and interviews. Due to the snowboarder's obligation to provide visibility for the sponsor, the sponsor ultimately has an amount of control over the snowboarder (Coates *et al*. 2010), who can lose money, gear and travel support if a company withdraws their sponsorship. This is an example of commercialisation within the snowboarding subculture. Formal obligations in exchange for sponsorship support can result in a loss of freedom for the snowboarder. Coates *et al*. (2010, p. 1091) explain:

> Snowboarding for money results in restrictions on the snowboarder's activities to a point where they lose control of their individuality and creativity. Meeting the rules set by employers (the sponsors) can generate pressure on the snowboarder to surrender control of their career.

Coverage in media, and in particular niche media, identified as subculture-specific media targeted towards those who identify as snowboarders, can give a snowboarder greater visibility. Snowboarders benefit from good relationships with niche media producers, in order to increase coverage and exposure and, thus, keep the sponsors happy. This is often a symbiotic relationship, particularly when the producer works within the snowboard subculture, as the producer needs talent to showcase and the snowboarder needs the increased exposure. Sponsors also benefit from good relationships with snowboarding media producers. Informally, they may be able to encourage a producer to showcase their snowboarding talent. More formally, the sponsor can support the producer with the costs of creating and capturing a video on the proviso that the sponsor's snowboarder or team is involved or the sponsor is promoted through various forms of advertising. Sponsors can even hire a producer to create and publish a client-funded production in order to ensure that coverage specifically promotes their brand and/or team. These videos are often

published through the same channels as the media producer's self-initiated projects, meaning the audience may have difficulty telling them apart. Furthermore, niche media are geared to attract more people into snowboarding, and increase the market, for example by showcasing a snowboarder performing incredible tricks in perfect conditions and at exotic locations, implying this to be possible for any participant. Coates *et al.* (2010, p. 1091) summarise this when stating:

> Snowboard magazines further depict professionals snowboarding on great snow all around the world using the best equipment or partying with friends. These images serve to attract young snowboarders to the professional lifestyle making it seem attainable. However, images hide some of the realities of being a professional snowboarder, where snowboarders are controlled by organisations who want to make a profit.

About the researcher: Participant reflections on snowboard media

Snowboard media, in particular those produced in New Zealand, have grown increasingly important to me. New Zealand online videos provide an essential connection to a subculture that I have been involved with for nearly twenty years and yet, as I grow older, find more difficult to participate in physically. Through niche snowboard media I am able to connect with the subculture and still feel like a snowboarder.

Like many snowboarders, I was first a skateboarder. In the mid-1980s a small group of my friends started riding skateboards seriously. I had played on thin, plastic skateboards before this but did little more than ride down hills before walking back up and trying to ride down from a higher point. What changed, aside from progressing both with better skateboard gear and attempting more difficult tricks, was an adoption of the skateboarding lifestyle, or at least our interpretation of it. It went beyond participation; it encompassed a style and aesthetic of its own. Personally, I was drawn to the way that skateboarding incorporated art, music, and fashion, as well as the physical feeling of skating, which was more like a freedom than a sport. There were no rules, no organised practices, no competitions, and absolutely no recognition. At the time, skateboarding was viewed with bemusement if it was recognised at all. Outside of the subculture itself, skateboarding was almost invisible.

Being a skateboarder in New Zealand meant desperation for any connection to the American skateboard scene. That seemed to be the skateboard hub of the world. Magazines, like *Thrasher*, were available but not easy to get. Some more dedicated skateboarders had organised subscriptions

through local news agents and when they brought those magazines to school it stopped time. We would pore over every photo, speculating about how the skater got into that position, how they got out, and if they 'landed it' (completed the trick). If we saw a professional skateboarder like Christian Hosoi wearing a ripped up t-shirt we went home and ripped up our t-shirts. If we read that Steve Caballero was listening to bands like 242 we went to the record shop and ordered those albums. We would dream of having a pro-model skateboard and sketch what our graphics might look like in the back of our school books.

While magazines were treasured, videos produced by American skateboard manufacturers were the ultimate prize as they displayed moving illustrations of what it was to be a skateboarder. Watching these videos was almost like being there with them; it was the closest inclusion we had experienced. They were guides to living the lifestyle of the subculture. The language, the attitude, the fashion, the style were all there for us to pore over and absorb. And we did. We watched and re-watched these videos hundreds of times. All these years later, I can almost recite Powell Peralta's 1987 video *The Search for Animal Chin* verbatim.

But videos were very rare and those who had them were protective of them. The manipulation involved to be able to take someone's video home, to loosen their grasp on it and let you take it out of their sight was as well played as a hand of poker. "Don't dub it," the owner would reinforce. Dubbing was the process of playing a video through one VHS video machine while simultaneously recording the footage on the other. It produced a reduced quality copy but was also thought by some to reduce the quality of the original copy. In addition, if the video's owner had gone through difficulty in obtaining it they were unlikely to want others obtaining copies freely and easily.
In the early 1990s snowboarding started to feature in skateboard media. I remember reading about Tony Hawk's experiences on a snowboard. In those formative days, snowboarding was captured in skateboard media as a way to skate on the snow. There was a clear relationship between skateboarding and snowboarding. There was also a clear relationship between surfing and snowboarding. As I began snowboarding in 1993 on Mt Taranaki's Manganui ski field, I remember rubbing shoulders with both skaters and surfers I knew. As the popularity grew so too did media coverage.

I was bitten by the snowboarding bug. It had everything I liked about skateboarding with the added benefit of being strapped to the board meaning that doing higher airs (jumps) was easier. There was something about being on the mountain too. It was like being on another planet. While I never

relinquished my attachment to skateboarding, snowboarding gradually grew into an all-encompassing passion. Over the next 10 years I found myself travelling around New Zealand, eventually working on Queenstown's Coronet Peak in the Terrain Park team and reaching level two as a qualified snowboard judge. There were also trips to America and Canada, which included completion of a snowboarding instructor's qualification and work on a club field in Alberta.

Media again played an integral part in connecting to the snowboard subculture. While a lot of the founding principles were relatable to skateboarding, there was still a lot to absorb, in particular the style of riding, the tricks to attempt, the parts of the mountain to ride and the features (jumps, rails, transitioned walls) to construct. Magazines were sourced and videos were dubbed. In New Zealand in the mid-1990s, magazines, such as the American *Transworld Snowboarding*, became more available. New Zealand Snowboarder, a specific NZ-focused magazine also began publication in 1993. Videos featuring predominantly American snowboarders, such as 1993's *Roadkill* by Fall Line Films, and the 1991-2000 *Totally Board* (later shortened to TB) series by Standard Films were in circulation and available for hire from some snowboarding shops. These forms of media were often created by snowboarders for snowboarders. Later in this thesis, this will be termed as niche media. But snowboarding also featured, albeit intermittently, in generalist, mass-audience focused mainstream media. Mainstream media coverage of snowboarding had the potential to upset the snowboarding community because the subculture itself was seen to be anti-mainstream, or at least unique and different from normal culture. Coverage on mainstream media could suggest acceptance into generalist life and undermine that feeling of individuality and uniqueness. From my own position as a snowboarder in the 1990s, I remember being disappointed with mainstream media coverage, not because it embraced our renegade group or attempted to cash in on the growing popularity, but because reporters attempted to cover something they knew nothing about. Initially, I would be excited about the prospect of seeing a story on snowboarding, but the coverage was often more insulting than anything. Overly basic questions posed to snowboarders and cheesey music spoilt it immediately. Then camera operators would twist and contort angles, seemingly trying to add to the action, but destroying any chance for the audience to study the action. As snowboarders, like many action sport participants, we liked to study the footage to gauge speed and height, style and control, spins and rotations, and where the athlete's hand grabbed the board. We would break this information down either to fully appreciate the difficulty or in the hope of gaining insights so that we might learn the trick ourselves. When these opportunities were destroyed, the media was basically useless to a snowboarder.

As I have gotten older my participation has dropped. Wife, kids, mortgage, work, university study; there are a lot of competing interests taking the hours in each day, not to mention the dollars in the bank. The act of snowboarding, sadly, doesn't receive as many hours as I would like it to. But I still feel like a snowboarder; I relate to the subculture, I talk about it, I advise people who want to try it. Once I became a postgraduate student in the field of media and communication I began to reflect on why I still strongly feel attached to the snowboard subculture when my actual participation rate would suggest that the relationship is loose at best. I realised that it was subculture media that kept me so attached. I wanted to find out more about these media makers, not just as snowboarding communicators in the subculture, but as media businesses having to fund their enterprises.

This research project centres on interviews with three New Zealand producers of online snowboard videos. While all three interviewees produce a variety of different media, special focus will be given to one specific video series produced by each: *Snow Show* produced by Robett Hollis, *Diaries Down Under* produced by Nick Hyne, and *The Clubbies* produced by Riley Bathurst.

Snow Show: A spotlight on the NZ snow community

Figure 1 – Screen shot from *Snow Show*.

Robett Hollis is the Director of Frontside Media, an action sport media house perhaps most well-known for the creation of websites nzsnowboard.com, nzskate.com, bikeland.com, nzmoto.com, gosurf.com and nzwakeboard.com. Each of these websites is dedicated to not only presenting and producing media, but also offers a place for the subculture to communicate. NZSnowboard.com

(2006) presents its mission statement as aiming to create a hub for all things snowboard-related throughout the New Zealand industry, to be a place where snowboarders can express their thoughts and opinions, and to promote snowboarding in a positive light. Hollis was himself an accomplished New Zealand snowboarder who achieved results both nationally and overseas. *Snow Show*, which began in 2012, is an episodic series based on the New Zealand snowboard scene, which has included episodes featuring New Zealand snowboarders in local terrain, and also in locations like Australia, for example while participating in competitions like Style Wars. *Snow Show* has featured on New Zealand television channels, such as the now defunct TVNZ channel U, while also being available on nzsnowboard.com. Fifteen episodes of the *Snow Show* were produced in 2013, often hosted by a different snowboarder, or small crew of snowboarders, each time. Some episodes offer a behind-the-scenes look at the snowboarding subculture. One example of this is an episode featuring the Terrain Park crew from The Remarkables ski field as they go about their daily responsibilities of creating and maintaining the freestyle features, such as jumps and rails. Hollis stated that his goal for *Snow Show* was the same as his view for nzsnowboard.com: to provide a fly-on- the-wall perspective of the New Zealand scene. He also wanted to give the opportunity to others to broadcast their perspective as well, which allows his media to be responsive and remain current. Hollis stated "my position is, if you have something share it with everyone. The more people who see it the better." Hollis identifies that he has a responsibility to the snowboard community and, along with producing and publishing his own media, such as *Snow Show*, he also publishes the media made by other snowboarders and producers on his website. This includes videos created by up-and-coming snowboarders, articles written by and about the snowboarding community, photos submitted by various riders, and social media feeds from related sources. Hollis will also publish the media made by his competitors. In a business sense, this could be seen as giving prominence to those who are able to take advertising revenue away from his own interests. Hollis is willingly allowing other media producers access to the audience he has established. To emerging producers this represents an opportunity to gain far more attention to their media than would be possible when creating and promoting their own communication channels. The resulting exposure could allow those producers to establish themselves and then compete with Hollis by offering his advertisers similar opportunities, perhaps at a lower cost, thus taking business from him.

***Diaries Down Under*: Hyne illustrates the Queenstown lifestyle**

Figure 2 – Screen shot from *Diaries Down Under.*

Nick Hyne is one of New Zealand's most recognisable snowboarders. A decorated competitor, particularly in the disciplines of slopestyle and big-air, and a renowned back country free rider, Hyne has a long history of appearing in snowboard media, particularly in Australasia and Japan. Hyne is the director of Diaries Down Under (established in 2008), which he describes as a boutique production company that specialises in action sports and digital marketing targeted at the youth market. The pioneering product of this production company is also titled *Diaries Down Under;* a web published episodic video series showcasing action sport from Queenstown and the surrounding areas. *Diaries Down Under* aims to be a vehicle for showcasing local snowboarding, Queenstown as a destination, and to be an attractive promotional channel for advertisers. Advertisers at the point of data collection for this project were New Zealand 100% Pure (tourism), Queenstown NZ (tourism), Air New Zealand, Element Escapes Queenstown (accommodation/tourism), Ride (snowboard equipment), Smith (equipment), Mons Royale (apparel), The World Bar (hospitality), and The North Face (apparel and equipment). Hyne is well known for his connections to the Queenstown area, and more specifically, The Remarkables ski field. Hyne was one of the first athletes included on The Remarkable's Parklife sponsored snowboard team. This series is published on the *Diaries Down Under* website, but also through a variety of other channels, including snowboarding and tourism websites, public sharing websites like Vimeo and YouTube, and has also appeared on TV through channels like C4 (NZ) and Fuel TV (Australia). Over the years the series has covered a variety of different snowboard adventures. One episode showed snowboarders camping on the mountain in

tents. In another, the snowboarders were helicoptered to a remote cabin. Sometimes international riders are followed as they gain a uniquely New Zealand snowboard experience. Other times the audience is treated to a behind-the-scenes experience where they can see how the *Diaries Down Under* team captures footage and film episodes. In addition to being a platform to publish his own media, Hyne's Dairies Down Under website also publishes Instagram feeds from connected social media members. Hyne will occasionally write a blog and publish it on the website and he also writes an e-newsletter to a members' list when there is a new development or a new video produced by *Diaries Down Under*.

***The Clubbies*: Riley Bathurst showcases the Canterbury club fields**

Figure 3 – Screen shot from *The Clubbies*.

Riley Bathurst is a media producer who predominantly works in photography and videography of action sports, yet does not exclusively work within the action sport industry; he has worked for a variety of different businesses, from retail to real estate. Within the action sport industry, Bathurst works on both his own self-initiated projects, as well as client-initiated projects. What made Bathurst a unique interviewee for this research project is that along with producing *The Clubbies* series (published in 2011), he has also worked for Robett Hollis on the *Snow Show* and Nick Hyne on *Diaries Down Under*.

The Clubbies is a web episodic video series featuring footage filmed on Canterbury club ski-fields. The series showcases talented snowboarders experiencing different club-fields, and club field members discussing the history and focus of the field. Club ski-fields are non-profit organisations run by enthusiastic club members and include Canterbury fields such as Porter Heights, Mt Olympus and Temple Basin. Bathurst notes that his inspiration to produce *The Clubbies* series was primarily driven by a desire to better represent the Canterbury club ski fields. Bathurst formed a strong connection to these club fields through years of snowboarding in the Canterbury area. Yet to many snow enthusiasts, these fields were a collection of peculiar, inaccessible ski fields that seemed hardly worth the trip. These fields were in remote areas with rustic, muddy access roads. The terrain on the fields is rough and bucolic with limited grooming. Access to the slopes themselves is often very different to the chair-lift facilities provided at corporate ski fields and often involves cheaper systems, such as T-bars, ropes and nut-cracker tows, which can be more difficult for snowboarders to use, particularly for those new to the sport. Even then, further hiking could be required to enter the best snow valleys. Bathurst aimed to create a video series that better showcased what *The Clubbies* meant to him and his friends, and to share that with the New Zealand snowboarding public. Bathurst concludes that "essentially it was just a personal project." Having formed a deep connection with the unique experiences the club fields offer, he endeavoured to showcase those experiences in his media in order to communicate them to others. Bathurst felt that if viewers could be shown these fields in a different light, where they could see terrain unlike any other New Zealand spot and the rewards that seeking a new experience could gain, then they would be more encouraged to seek the experience themselves. He feels strongly that the club ski fields have been poorly represented previously in media and sees his own media as a way to capture the positive rewards of snowboarding in the Canterbury club fields. He was confident that he and his friends could produce a series that could better showcase what these fields had to offer, but also capture the attachment many club members have to the club fields. Some members have been members most of their lives, carrying out the working bees and volunteer work that are the lifeblood for some of these fields and enable the fields to keep operating in tough seasons when snow is sparse. Each episode of *The Clubbies* interlays the snowboard action with an interview with a club stalwart and Bathurst states that using these interviews made the series unique compared to the other videos of the time. *The Clubbies* features a number of advertisers, including Chill (a promotional collaboration between many New Zealand ski fields, mainly focusing on the Canterbury club ski fields), Burton (an international snowboard brand), Yeboi (a New Zealand clothing label), littlecamerahire.co.nz, FilmInc and Riley Bathurst Design.

These three interviewees have a visible profile within the New Zealand snowboarding community. All three are talented snowboarders themselves and have been producing a variety of different media both for their own businesses and for others for several years. They are recognisable and influential within the subculture and, therefore, seen to have a valuable contribution to this research.

Outline of thesis: Chapter Summary

This thesis will proceed with the following chapters.

Chapter two: Literature Review. This chapter provides an essential background in the areas related to this research. Firstly, an overview of existing research into subcultures is provided, including a definition and some significant characteristics. The chapter progresses identifying and reflecting on more specific action sport subculture research and, where possible, research relating to the snowboarding subculture. Following this, focus will shift to incorporate action sports and media, both mainstream and niche media. Consideration will be given to how media form and transform subcultural identity, as well as discussing the importance of audience media-sharing practices as a vital distribution tool. Finally, the literature review will concentrate on the effect advertising and promotion has on media.

Chapter three: Methodology. This chapter discusses how this research was conducted. It provides a background into both qualitative and quantitative research. It will identify how both of these methods were used in a complementary form for this research. This chapter identifies the benefits of semi-structured personal interviews, which were used for data collection in this research, and outlines the interview process, key question and topics, transcribing and organisation of interviewee quotes into themed lists for reflection and comparison. Textual analysis of a sample of web-based videos created and published by each interviewee was also used for data collection and analysis, with a detailed description of this process provided in this chapter. Finally, ethical considerations and protection of the interviewees are discussed.

Chapter four: Niche media production and commitment to the snowboard subculture. This chapter discusses the interviewee responses and textual analysis results relating to subcultural audience connection and media creation. An overview of how the interviewees began creating snowboard media is provided. This helps to establish their subcultural by-riders-for-riders foundation and loyalty to their audience. Discussion then moves to creation of audience-connecting media and the importance of spreading and sharing videos as an endorsement of quality and reputation. Focus will

then shift to the ability of snowboard media to provide a platform for snowboarders to gain visibility and how that affects personal sponsorship. Then, in order to gain a full appreciation of the difficulty of creating snowboard media, the interviewees reflect on their experiences when filming. This is important, as a key component of this research is the need for audience connection in reflection of the compromising effect advertising can have on media. Gaining a deeper understanding of the filming process highlights that there are many elements that can affect media quality and successful outcomes.

Chapter five: Advertising and niche snowboard media. This chapter discusses the importance of gaining financial support for media production through the inclusion of advertising. The distinction is made between self-initiated projects and client-funded media, and the differences in creative control and freedom between the two are highlighted. The interviewee responses and textual analysis data are discussed in relation to how, and how often, advertising is incorporated into snowboard videos. Special consideration is given to two types of advertisers; ski fields and alcohol brands. Ski fields are often used for locations in snowboard media and, as a result, are often highly visible to the audience, which can have a promotional benefit. Yet, the level of support from ski fields can be inconsistent. Alcohol advertising is identified by two interviewees as highly controlled and this chapter finishes by investigating their experiences.

Chapter six: Conclusion. This chapter reviews the key elements of this research and highlights the most significant outcomes. The significances of those findings are discussed and opportunities for future research are identified. Also discussed are the limitations of this research.

This research investigates how snowboard media producers embed advertising messaging into their videos while staying true to their original vision for their productions, attempting to connect with their audience and minimalizing any potential damage to their cultural capital and standing within the subculture. In order to gain a greater understanding of the jeopardy faced by these producers it is essential to gain a greater knowledge into subcultures, action sports and snowboarding, media and subcultural communication, advertising, and Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital. The next chapter provides grounding in subcultural research. Particular prominence will be given to action sport subcultures and specifically the snowboard subculture. It is important to note the anti-mainstream and anti-corporate foundations of snowboarding and how those foundations are changing. It is also important to understand the role media plays in snowboarding, both as a source of communication and visibility, and how this differs between mainstream and niche media.

Chapter two: Literature Review

"Subcultures represent 'noise' (as opposed to sound): interference in the orderly sequence which leads from real events and phenomena to their representation in the media."
(Hebdige, 1991, p. 90)

Subcultures: background on academic research

While this research focuses specifically on the New Zealand snowboarding subculture, it is first important to understand subcultures more generally. The culture of snowboarding participation and media shared many of the characteristics of other subcultures - clusters of likeminded people who gravitate towards certain ideals or movements. Green (2001, p. 3) defines subcultures as divisions of society "embracing certain distinctive cultural elements of their own," that share a set of "identifiable beliefs, values, and means of symbolic expression." Subcultures create new meanings and associations as a reaction to and reinterpretation of mainstream culture (McArthur, 2009). The Council for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) describe subcultures as "subgroups in society who shared activities, beliefs and values that served to distinguish them from the wider class culture" (Coates, Clayton, & Humberstone, 2010, p. 1082). CCCS deduced that subcultures are subservient to the dominant culture and "constantly striving for mechanisms by which to pierce their ideological oppression and thereby create spaces within which to realise themselves as a class" (p. 84). Research into subcultures has progressed and the concepts identified by CCCS have been challenged. More recent research has focused more closely on exploring the beliefs and motivations of the subculture participants themselves. McArthur (2009) states that CCCS research focused on interpretation of a subculture by researchers who resided outside it, rather than focusing studies on the subcultural members. Researchers began capturing the experiences of participants within subcultures, most commonly within music-related subcultures (Williams 2006). Two examples included Hebdige's (1991) exploration into the mod and punk music subcultures and Thornton's (1995) investigation of the electronic club music subculture. However, subcultures are not exclusively related to music genres. Snyder (2012, p. 317) explains that, traditionally, the focus for post-subcultural researchers has been "almost exclusively on music subcultures that participants consume and build an identity around, with a requisite spectacular uniform," yet, a significant number of researchers are focused on other areas of subcultural activity, such as graffiti artists (Snyder, 2006), skateboarding (Snyder, 2012), snowboarding (Thorpe, 2011), football hooliganism (Poulton, 2013), surfing (Palmer, 2002), and online poker players (O'Leary & Carroll, 2013).

Traditional research on subcultures has also concentrated on the relationship of the subculture to the dominant culture. Subcultures were initially seen as reactions or opposition, to dominant culture. Hebdige (1991, p. 132) illustrated this when noting that subcultures are "expressive forms, but what they express is, in the last instance, a fundamental tension between those in power and those condemned to subordinate positions and second-class lives." More recently, subcultures are viewed as operating within society, rather than on the peripheries. de Burgh-Woodman and Brace-Govan (2006, p. 16) state that subcultures are pro-active, rather than passive or marginalised, and that a subculture "is simply a portion of society, a visible fragment of the greater whole." They observe that the definition of subculture can describe any "relatively normalised cultural pre-occupation with fragmented, individuated habits and praxis" (p. 16). Subcultures, therefore, are not exclusively activism based, such as punk rockers railing against mainstream society and values. They could be recreationally based, such as surfers pursuing perfect waves or snowboarders traveling to new mountain locations.

Subcultures are akin to mini societies where status and legitimacy determine hierarchy (Wheaton & Beal, 2003). Participants attempt to establish themselves within this hierarchy to illustrate validity. Donnelly (2006) notes there are a variety of different forms and levels of involvement within subcultures. Beyond the highly dedicated core members there exists "a whole range of subcultural participation and participants" (Donnelly, 2006, p. 219). Thorton's (1995) research identified values and distinctions in the club music culture between authentic and impersonate members, hip and mainstream style, and underground and mainstream media communications. Within the surfing subculture, Palmer (2002, p. 324) elaborates:

> Ranging from weekend warriors who do no training, have little skill and are content to
> infrequently subject themselves to the waves, the single tracks and the col faces of the
> great outdoors, through to hard-core practitioners who are fully assimilated into the
> argot, fashion and technical skill of their preferred discipline, the extreme sports market
> is indeed a hotchpotch of interests and expertise.

Key to creating or growing a subculture, and the classified structure within it, is dissemination of information. Communication of distinctive values and beliefs is crucial to subculture members. Media, both mainstream and those specific to the subculture, play a part in communicating a subculture's philosophy and identity. In relation to this, Hebdige (1991, p. 85) notes that "media play a crucial role in defining our experience for [participants]. They provide us with the most

available categories for classifying out the social world." For new, fringe and intermediate participants, media play an important role in subculture identification; media help define what it is to be part of a certain subcultural group and provide an opportunity to learn how to relate and act, even how to dress and how to communicate. Both print and electronic media have a considerable influence on people's adoption of subculture beliefs (Stranger, 1999).

Marginalised groups dissatisfied with mainstream media coverage, or lack of, will often create their own communication mediums, in their own way (Harcup, 2011). Mainstream media coverage of subcultures, such as snowboarding, can be sporadic and inaccurate. Hebdige (1991) identifies that media filter information on a subculture before it is disseminated. Any coverage of a subculture that is published has already been subjected to media handling. This can distort the communication both for those within the subculture and those outside it. Hebdige states that "the emergence of a spectacular subculture is invariably accompanied by a wave of hysteria in the press," (p. 92). For this reason, subcultures have become increasingly dependent on their own media in order to present more accurate and regular communications. In particular, the Internet has provided an easy-to-access platform to publish subculture media and a means for members to connect with other participants. Through search engines and the recommendations of other participants, subculture members are able to find websites, news, opinions, and videos with relative ease (Webster & Ksiazek, 2012). Subculture-related websites can create a social hub within which members can interact with each other. Puchan (2004) observes that the Internet is transforming physical communities into virtual ones and offers a vital communication line, particularly to those communities neglected by traditional forms of media. Williams (2006, p. 176), whose research centred on the straightedge subculture, a faction of the punk music scene where members abstain from drugs and alcohol, states many people "learn about straightedge online and decide to claim a personal straightedge identity. Many of them subsequently join face-to-face straightedge scenes and develop a social straightedge identity, but many others do not." Nelson (2013, p. 1163) explains that the advances in Internet media during the mid-2000s "allowed a convergence and relocation of special-interest media content. That is, websites can now serve as print magazines (with almost instant news) with video content, and furthermore be interactive via user-comment functions (to weblogs or message boards)."

Subculture audiences not only learn and connect through media; they play a vital role in its dissemination. Media sharing, or spreading, can occur in many ways, including "passing content to their social network, making a word of mouth recommendation, or posting a mash up video on

YouTube" (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013, p. 20). Certainly, the Internet aids the ability to share media. Greater connectivity and the ability to communicate easily with large, often dispersed groups of people through the Internet, for example using social media networks, means that audiences have the ability to share media with their peers quickly and with little effort. Spreading media through social media has "become a phenomenon of increasing social, economic and political importance because individuals can now participate in news production and diffusion in large global virtual communities," (Lee & Ma, 2012, p. 331). There are many motivating factors that influence audience media sharing, including status seeking, establishing or improving credibility, attempting to increase self-confidence (Lee & Ma, 2012), personal satisfaction, maintaining and strengthening social relationships, and personal expression (Goh, Ang, Chua, & Lee, 2009). While there is an assortment of reasons why audiences aspire to share media with their peers, it is important to identify that it is a choice. In this way audiences act as a filter to their social networks, choosing to share only those media that they trust and relate to (Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012, p. 331). This is an important consideration regarding subcultural communication, as it illustrates "selective exposure" (Morgan, Lampe, & Shafiq, 2013, p. 887) and the protective, possibly even biased, nature of the participants, as they choose to circulate only what they see as trustworthy and reject media that is irrelevant, negative or divisive.

In order to encourage media sharing, producers will aim to create media that are more likely to be spread by audiences. One way is to create quirky texts. Jenkins, Ford and Green (2013) identify the example of the Axe body-wash 'Clean your Balls' advertising campaign as one designed to enflame audiences into media sharing. While such campaigns can use humour or shock value to encourage sharing, Jenkins *et al*. note that a more consistent model is to first fully understand an audience, then create "content aimed at particular audiences and deliver material that provides those audiences with something unique to share with their communities" (p. 195). This is particularly pertinent in regards to subcultural media, which is often produced by those residing within the subculture in order to communicate with their community. Jenkins *et al.* (2013, p. 205) state that when media producers reside within "a community and understand its values and shared fantasies, the content they create is more likely to resonate deeply with fellow community members." A supporting, idiomatic and celebratory communication style can be easily understood by the subculture and the audience can feel motivated to share it with their social networks. Conversely, organisations that rigidly cling to their official branding ideals often avoid creating informal, open and loquacious communications because "making material that is open to interpretations leaves the control of the meaning out of their hands" thus limiting the spreadability of their messages (Jenkins

et al. 2013, p. 202). In this regard, a timesaving and potentially less costly solution could be for an organisation to pay to have promotional messages incorporated into subcultural media, as it provides the opportunity to stay true to their branding profile while appearing within media that is community connected. Jenkins *et al.* (2013, p. 299) state that "brand messages gain greater credibility if shared by someone the listener already knows and trusts." This identifies the importance of audience- focused communications through media, and, in particular, communications focused towards subcultures. In order to gain the audience's endorsement, and encourage spreading behaviour, the communication needs to be accepted as trustworthy, familiar and credible. There needs to be a genuine connection between the media producer and the audience.

Action sport subcultures

Academic research specific to the sport of snowboarding is limited. This literature review will therefore take a wider view and reference academic works spanning a variety of action sports. While each action sport is a separate subculture with its own intricacies, comparisons can be made. For example, most action sports, like snowboarding, are individualistic, require risk taking, often involve travel, and incorporate a commitment to a certain lifestyle. Additionally, certain action sports, such as skateboarding, snowboarding and surfing, can be broadly related, as they all use a board as a fundamental piece of equipment. Often, participants will engage with more than one of these sports. Action sports are usually unconventional and individual sports with reputations of high risk, danger, and freedom from structure and rules (Bennett *et al.* 2003). In addition to being described as alternative, extreme or adventure sports, they are sometimes described as more closely resembling lifestyles, rather than conventional sports, often being referred to as 'lifestyle sports' (Thorpe & Wheaton, 2011). For example, a participant will need to live close to the mountains in order to regularly snowboard. In addition, they may seek flexible employment so they are able to snowboard when conditions are perfect, or work on a ski field to be in the snow environment as often as possible. Green (2001) explains that identifying with an action sport subculture goes beyond the experience of the activity itself; it also serves as an expression of values and a demonstration of personal identity. Action sports are dynamic, adaptive and fluid (Thorpe & Wheaton, 2011) and the popularity of these sports has grown considerably over time. Cianfrone and Zhang (2006, p. 322) state "nearly 100 million people participated in action sports in 2000, and these sports have continued to escalate in popularity."

There is a growing body of academic research focusing on action sports. Coates, Clayton and Humberstone (2010, p. 1082) observe that: "Activities such as skateboarding, snowboarding and surfing hold a certain fascination for researchers, participants and spectators, at least in part because these activities are seen as different from dominant sporting forms." However, like any sporting subculture, indeed any subculture, there are likely to be "variations in the ways that values, motives, and social identity are expressed" (Green, 2001, p. 15). Despite this, many of those subscribing to an action sport subculture recognise, share and protect a shared cultural ethos. In addition, subculture values and beliefs are learned and people are socialised into the particular sport subculture. Green (2001, p. 4) observes that: "Newcomers tend to hold stereotypical images of the ways in which subcultural participants express their values through appearance and behaviour." Over time, participants who continue to dedicate themselves to the subculture develop a more informed understanding of the subtleties and nuances of their chosen action sport. Thorpe and Wheaton (2011, p. 832) explain:

> While each action sport has its own specificity, history, identity, and development patterns, many also shared characteristics, including anti-establishment, individualistic and/or do-it-yourself philosophies and subcultural styles; core members saw their culture as 'different' to the traditional rule-bound, competitive, regulated western traditional institutionalised sport cultures.

Coates, Clayton and Humberstone (2010, p. 1082) underline this when stating that action sports participants "are seen to resist mainstream sporting values by an emphasis on different rituals and behaviours, such as participant control, opposition through style and confrontational behaviour." This underlines the individualistic and anti-mainstream nature of action sports, such as snowboarding. The participants respond to the freedom from structure and governance, which provides an opportunity to be expressive and creative.

Action sport and mainstream media

Action sports have grown in popularity and, as a result, media coverage of action sports has grown as well (Bennett & Henson, 2003). Often eye-catching and displaying feats seemingly unimaginable, action sports can provide attention-grabbing stories for mainstream media. Palmer (2002, p. 324) asserts that a "sizeable media industry now promotes a tantalising range of state-of-the-art sporting exotica and [...] the adventurous nature of action sports catches the eyes and imagination of many." In the 1980s, when snowboarding started to become publicly visible, Howe (1998) identified that the

novelty factor attracted the attention of Hollywood movie producers and major product advertising campaigns, such as Wrigley's chewing gum. As a result of growing popularity, "media and consumer industries have appropriated alternative sport to sell everything from soap to Pepsi" (Wheaton & Beal, 2003, p. 156).

However, some media can struggle to understand the intricacies of action sports, as "These cinematic moments weren't showcasing snowboarding as a real sport …; it was presented more as a stunt," (Wheaton and Beal 2003, p. 64). Often action sports can be treated as curios and oddities or only get coverage on mainstream media when something devastating happens. Puchan (2004) explains that action sports, particularly the more dangerous activities, such as rock climbing, often get mainstream media coverage "on special occasions, particularly when accidents and fatalities occur or when superlatives are involved" (p. 176). Recent examples in New Zealand media illustrate this, including freestyle skier Rose Battersby breaking her back at the 2013 Winter X Games (Daly, 2013) or BMX rider Jed Mildon completing the world's first triple back flip in Taupo in 2011 (Woods, 2011).

There can be a distrust of mainstream media by subculture members. Moreover, when a subculture is based on being anti-mainstream, media attention can be unwelcome. Thornton (1995, p. 122) states, "affirming coverage of the culture is the kiss of death, while disapproving coverage can breathe longevity into what would have been the most ephemeral of fads." Misunderstandings of subcultural intricacies combined with stories packaged for broad audience appeal further strengthen that distrust. Some particularly 'mass-media friendly' action sport athletes can be turned into celebrities or household names (Coates *et al.* 2010), often with a negative impact on their subcultural status. For example, renowned professional surfer Kelly Slater was cast to play the role of a surfer in the American lifeguard television show, *Baywatch*. While this lifted Slater's profile with mainstream audiences, it alienated Slater from his surfing peers, as he was seen to be cashing in on surfing and turning his back on the underlying anti-mainstream principles of the subculture. In a video-blog published on *Surfing Magazine*'s website, Slater (2014) reflected on the experience and the damage done to his credibility, stating "when I did [*Baywatch*] I knew there were a lot of people calling me a sell out and it's totally understandable. It was just commercialising and, kind of, bastardising what the culture was for a character and that's basically why I quit. That wasn't really a fun time for me." More recently, professional skateboarder Ryan Sheckler appeared in a reality TV themed series on his life for MTV. *Life of Ryan* aimed to show what life was like for the young skateboarder, not only as an athlete, but also as he coped with the divorce of his parents and went

through normal teenage life. Again, the show helped connect Sheckler to a mainstream audience but isolated him from the skateboard subculture. Sheckler was also accused of selling out. In an online interview with Sheckler for sport media outlet ESPN, Nieratko (2010) stated that "due to his successful-yet-sappy MTV show, *Life of Ryan*, [Sheckler] is a heartthrob to a nation of television-obsessed teenyboppers. At the same time, he alienated many core skate fans." Nieratko asked Sheckler about the effect the show had on his popularity within the skateboarding subculture. Sheckler responded "when I started the show I said, 'If it gets me away from my actual skateboarding fans and gets me away from skateboarding, then I'm not going to do the show anymore.' That's why our third season was only six episodes; we cut it in half. I was, like, 'I can't do it anymore! It's going to be more detrimental to my career than positive.' We just quit. We stopped it."

The snowboarding subculture has been affected by mainstream media exposure to mass audiences. This has grown in the past two decades:

> Since it was introduced as an official Olympic sport in 1998, snowboarding has garnered widespread media attention, grown its own superstars, including Shaun White and Lindsey Jacobellis, and launched multimillion dollar industries devoted to clothing lines, snowboard designs, and a punk-like style among fans and riders (Jones & Greer 2012, p. 599).

Thorpe (2011, p. 77) notes that mass media coverage of snowboarding is often "produced by non-snowboarding journalists and producers for a mass audience with, often, little knowledge of snowboarding." This can lead to misinterpretations, as journalists will attempt to make judgements and conclusions without fully understanding the intricacies of the subculture they are reporting on. Furthermore, their reports are aimed at a mainstream audience. With this in mind, mainstream media describe and illustrate a subculture in a way that is more understandable and digestible for the audience (Howe, 1998). This is perhaps best illustrated by recent media coverage of the New Zealand snowboarding team at the Sochi Winter Olympics. A clash of differing cultures and attitudes towards competitive sports was expressed most visibly in an article written by *New Zealand Herald* sports journalist, Dana Johannsen, which inflamed the snowboard community. Johannsen (2014) wrote "not only has the team bombed spectacularly, they seem to be having a good time doing so. It's more like watching a bunch of Kiwis on an expensive skiing holiday than a bunch of top athletes representing their nation at the highest level." Johannsen described the number of snowboard

athletes competing in Sochi as indulgent; she found the assurances from team management that the athletes had been performing better in practice as bizarre, and noted that "the most notable thing a New Zealand athlete has done at the Sochi Games is attempt to pick up the Jamaican Bobsled team." This sparked vitriol in the New Zealand snowboarding subculture. A total of 183 comments were posted on *the New Zealand Herald* website before comments closed and the following warning added: 'Readers are reminded to keep their comments to a publishable standard.'

Niche media can be used as a platform to respond to negative mainstream media coverage. An article posted in response to Johannsen's piece on the *NZSnowboard.com* website attempted to capture the mood of the New Zealand snowboard subculture. Smith (2014) wrote "it's 2014 and although we've been around for a long time now, we're constantly bastardized in the mainstream and are frequently and publicly mocked for the vocabulary that we share with our board-sport brethren." Similarly, merino wool base-layer brand and NZ Olympic team sponsor, Mons Royale published an advertisement in *NZ Snowboarder magazine* (2014, issue 60) in response to Johannsen's article and in defence of the snow athletes. The advertisement displayed a Mons Royale product in a gift box addressed to Johannsen. In the text, it stated "try it on. It'll calm you down next time you're feeling a little angsty about spending 56 cents to help send 15 of the country's most talented winter sports athletes out to risk life and limb for sporting glory." The response by Mons Royale was an intriguing use of marketing, as it not only defended the subculture, but also solidified the brand as part of the subculture by acting as a 'spokesperson' on behalf of it.

Mainstream media are not inherently negative towards action sports, such as snowboarding. Rebecca "Possum" Torr, the snowboarder who rose to infamy through comments made about wishing to meet the Jamaican Bobsled team via Internet dating site, Tinder, found support from TVNZ's *Breakfast* programme. Within a month of returning to New Zealand following the Sochi games, Torr appeared on the show to defend her actions and explain snowboarding culture in relation to competition. In response to the nonchalant attitude of competitors during competition, Torr stated "it's kind of encouraged in our sport because it is an extreme sport" (Chang, 2014). Yet she explained that athletes are extremely focused, stating "I cried for like five hours after the contest. I was so gutted. I wanted to make the finals. Even though I might have looked stoked on the cameras, I was actually really angry" (Chang, 2014). In explaining her comments regarding meeting the Jamaican Bobsled team, Torr said they were meant to be 'tongue in cheek' and she was overwhelmed by the public response. "It is actually ridiculous. I can only laugh because it's actually so stupid," she stated. "I was, like, I don't want to be known as that Tinder girl. But at the same time

I was only making a joke and all you can do is laugh. I definitely did not expect that" (Chang, 2014). Torr's interview could be described as a subculture participant attempting to translate her philosophies to the mainstream culture. Smith (2014) also encouraged the snowboard community to be patient and to help those outside the subculture to understand snowboarding. He wrote "next time kooks weigh in on snowboarding, I invite you to try and engage in meaningful discussion with the intention of teaching, instead of simply exchanging expletives."

The experiences of Torr and her fellow New Zealand snowboard teammates in some ways are not new. Inclusion in the Olympics in 1998 thrust snowboarding into the mass-media spotlight. Expectations of what an Olympic athlete was, in contrast to the anti-mainstream ethos of snowboarding provided a strain on some competitors. Richards (2003), who competed in the first Olympics in the half pipe event, observed that he was "well aware that snowboarders were considered the clowns of the Olympics, young idiots unschooled in media etiquette," (p. 202). Richards describes a situation where he and fellow competitor and eventual gold medallist, Ross Powers, were interviewed on a panel by the international press, in which Powers used an expletive in response to a question about a rivalry between himself and Richards. Amused, Richards replied "well put, Ross". Richards reflected on the mass media fallout from the interview. "Unfortunately, my comment was construed as sarcasm (which it was), meant in a malicious way (which it wasn't)" (p. 202). These examples show how mainstream media can attempt to categorise snowboarding in a similar way to other Olympic sports. The 'champion vs champion' approach is at odds with the freedom of expression and communal support that exists in the subculture.

There is, however, evidence of mainstream media capturing action sports accurately, or perhaps acceptably. The *X-Games*, formally known as the *Extreme Games*, is an initiative of American sports television channel ESPN. When ESPN first created the *Extreme Games* it was met with some resistance from those within the subculture. Professional snowboarder, Richards (2003) explains: "Plenty of naysayers accused ESPN of cashing in on what we'd built up purely on the love of the sport" (p. 182). However, the *X Games* grew to be universally popular across all regions in the USA (Bennett, Sagas, & Dees, 2006). Furthermore, it is viewed with more honesty by the subculture than the Olympics. Coates, Clayton and Humberstone (2010, p. 1087) claim that "despite the fact that the *X Games* is a mainstream event created by the media, the snowboarders interviewed saw this as a better alternative to the Olympics." Yet, the embrace of mainstream culture, and indeed the financial benefits of that acceptance, has left some action sport participants concerned about a weakening of anti-commercialism beliefs. By way of illustration, in recent years major sponsors of

the *X-Games* have included the US Navy and JEEP motor vehicles. Divisions are surfacing within action sports as some embrace the opportunities mainstream crossover brings while others deride consumerism within the subculture. Skateboarders like Ryan Sheckler are praised by some for their business-like approach to their careers. Donahue (2014, p. 73) writes that "to thrive in the billion-dollar action sports business, a champion must be a businessman and a skateboarder must be a brand." He observes that Ryan Sheckler "epitomises the current state of affairs in skateboarding. Not only does a professional skateboarder have to be a hell of an athlete, but now thanks to the omnipotence of social media, he has to know how to market himself with the same kind of force and flexibility that he shows in the skate park" (p. 75). Many action sports enthusiasts are not happy with growing consumerism within the industry. Professional skateboarder of almost 30 years and media personality, Grosso (2014) expresses dismay at the adoption of corporate values in skateboarding. In episode two of series five in his regular video series, *Grosso's Love Letters to Skateboarding*, he states "if we all come from skateboarding and we're all skaters, then why are we fucking taking the thing that we love for the reason we loved it and turning it into the thing that we didn't. It should be our gig. Why do we want to become them?" Similarly, Dunsmore (2014, p. 132) derides the trend of older skateboarding participants cashing in on their esteem, influence and recognition in an autobiographical article, stating:

> I'm the older guy with a family and a mortgage to pay and I'm the guy who's looking to make a quick buck of the back of skateboarding. When the big name brands have run outta big name pull, they look for guys like me for a credible angle with the kids. I get called because I can put the pieces together. They want you repping their brands, they want you in their adverts and they want your approval. I've got the contacts and I've got the skaters [sic] trust. I can get you in front of the creative, the advertising execs and the people who want what you have. I'm skateboarding's equivalent of Judas Iscariot. I'm the one selling you out. However, you can't blame me alone for all the prostitution in skateboarding these days. It takes two to tango, as they say.

Snyder (2012) suggests a more pragmatic approach, noting that a majority of those seeking employment in organisations associated with their subcultures, or even attempting to establish ancillary businesses within the subculture, are doing so to remain connected to the activities and lifestyles they feel so passionately about. In reference to his own research on the skateboarding subculture, Snyder claims that "while some have decried subculturalists for selling out, this research shows that many people become involved in subcultures with the hope that they may be able to

have a career doing what they love to do" (p. 315). Within the New Zealand snowboarding subculture, many participants take employment in action sport retail environments, assist with snowboarding events, or work on ski fields. More entrepreneurial participants create their own clothing and equipment businesses, media production agencies, and even profit from their expertise as coaching consultants and mountain guides.

Action sport niche media

Niche media are often created in response to mainstream media avoidance or misunderstanding. Puchan (2004, p. 177) claims action sport participants have "created their own specialist media and cultural environment as mainstream media coverage is still relatively sporadic and biased," adding that the Internet is the medium that best fits the overall philosophy.

Subcultures create their own media in order to communicate across their community. These media are specific to the subculture and communicate in an acceptable style and form familiar to the audience. Ryu (2005, p. 306) explains these media engage the audience with "their choice of colloquial language and artistic illustrations" and focus "on eliciting emotion through the use of [slang]. These forms of media are generally produced by-members-for-members with "the intent of serving the needs of that subculture," (Snyder, 2006). These forms of media assimilate vital information about the subculture. Niche media build subcultures as much as they report on them (Thornton, 1995). Relating to her research on the snowboard subculture, Thorpe (2011) identifies niche media, which includes websites, sport-specific magazines and videos, as "instrumental to committed snowboarders' cultural identity" that "offer important spaces for sharing of information and communication across local and national fields" (p. 79). Niche media are particularly relied upon by beginner and intermediate participants wishing to establish themselves in a subculture, as they offer an opportunity for in-depth learning of the subculture's beliefs. Through the use of, and learning from, niche media new members can "demonstrate their cultural capital by conspicuously discussing that insider knowledge" (Wheaton & Beal, 2003, p. 162).

Action sport media is strongly visual. Before the Internet radically changed media forms, the development of action sports identities was reliant on video tapes. As former professional snowboarder Ross Rebagliati recalls, "The early videos were like primers: how to board, how to look, how to be" (2009, p. 46). As for most action sports, these videos showed not only the act of snowboarding, but the lifestyle, actions and camaraderie of those involved. Woermann (2012, p. 629) adds that visual media "enable self-observation and reflection of identity." While in the 1980s

and 1990s video tapes were expensive and often hard to come by, the Internet now provides huge amounts of viewing options, and by the early 2000s "Internet web pages were becoming increasingly popular with action sport participants" (Wheaton and Beal 2003, p. 160). To provide one example, in 2008 skateboard legend Tony Hawk launched *Shred or Die*, a website bringing together archived and new skateboard footage from Hawk's related enterprises and friends, with skate community creations uploaded by viewers. Although it didn't return a profit, Hawk persisted with the website "because the audience [was] plugged in and influential and the site itself [was] a fun, creative outlet for my gang," (Hawk, 2010, p. 108). This is an illustration of what Atton (2009, p. 284) describes as "connectedness between [producer] and audience." Hawk's website allowed the audience open access to his archives. When influential leaders within an action sport subculture, such as Hawk, produce a video, the audience absorbs every detail and dissects each trick performed in order to understand how they, too, can learn it. Woermann (2012, p. 623) explains the fascination skiing participants have when viewing a video:

> Watching a free-ski movie for the first time, one will be struck by the repetitiveness of the images: A skier in colourful, baggy clothes speeds toward a ramp; flies briefly through the air, performing wild rotations; lands—cut. The next sequence starts: another freestyler in colourful, baggy clothes; another ramp made of snow; another 3 or 4 s of swirling through the air; another hard landing—cut. The initial fascination with the athletic skill can quickly give way to the realization that these images do not cause the same fascination for the layperson. Yet watching free-ski media is without doubt attractive for members of the subculture.

Similarly, Stranger (1999) finds in a surfing example that: "Videos are watched repeatedly, either as whole programs or in fragmented snippets, as viewers search for their favourite sequences or watch short snippets as the whim and opportunity coincide. The videos lend themselves to this kind of usage, as many have no narration and consist solely of surfing sequences that are "choreographed; to contemporary music" (p. 272).

Andrews (2011), the online editor for action sport magazine Huck, questions whether the online media avalanche is undervaluing and undermining action sport media: "Today, millions of hours of footage are readily available on YouTube, and the latest [action sport] films are just an illegal download away. I can't help feeling that something intangible is being lost" (p. 92). Woermann (2012) expresses similar caution, particularly given the potential persuasiveness of online videos,

coupled with the way some videos gain a higher profile on YouTube than others: "Without any centralized decision or professional promotion process, certain videos can reach global fame and enter the repertoire of everyday pop culture, whereas most others all but disappear among the endless sea of available clips," (p. 627). This is an illustration of the subculture losing control of influence within the online realm. Such is the volume of content available online that few videos gain prominence on media sharing sites, such as YouTube. Moreover, these sharing sites are not specifically focused on one audience; instead they are open to all. Videos that receive large viewing figures are promoted and given continued visibility through recommendations to other viewers and, therefore, continue to be viewed. Other videos fall away quickly, as they do not attract the audience in the same way. In relation to an action sport subculture, this could mean videos that do not accurately showcase the subculture become popular because of something quirky that catches the attention of a mainstream audience and gains prominence. At the time of writing this research, using 'snowboarding' as a key word search on YouTube and filtering the results by view count, the third highest featured video shows a man wearing high-visibility safety clothing being towed by a four wheel drive car on a snowboard through the snowy streets of New York. The video has recorded 5.8 million views. Very few snowboarders would have had a similar experience, meaning that this could be viewed as a particularly inaccurate reflection of subcultural meaning. Mainstream audiences, and even some subculture members, could be being misled as to what snowboarding is. However, it also underlines the importance of spreadable media as a way to reach extended audiences and gain prominence from the volume of content. The audiences' endorsement and recommendation of media, such as videos on YouTube, can ultimately influence whether it will be successful or not in reaching high levels of visibility. This illustrates a bind for niche media producers. Producing targeted media for a specific and finite group could mean low viewer numbers because the audience size is small. Yet, broadening the focus of the media to incorporate bigger audiences could mean that what is being produced is no longer as relevant to the original subculture group.

Inclusion of advertising in media

Action sport niche media need advertising revenue to survive. Producing snowboarding media, for example, is an expensive undertaking. Locations are often difficult and/or expensive to access. When filming on a ski field resort, transport will be required, as well as lift access passes, and filming outside of these resort facilities may require more expensive transport, such as a helicopter.

Filming is also highly weather dependent. Snow conditions need to be at a level where the snowboarders are confident enough to attempt their tricks. Furthermore, good visibility is key to a

snowboarder being able to read the conditions. Excess cloud, fog or flat light can make this difficult. Light can also make capturing the footage difficult for the filmer, who has already had to deal with the sometimes difficult task of transporting the equipment and setting up a filming spot in the optimal place. Sudden weather changes can render all preparations useless, leaving filmers to either adapt or postpone a shoot. Thus something planned to take one day can take longer.

Advertising is a way for action sport niche media makers to pay for these production costs. Dix and Phau (2009, p. 414) describe advertising as "all promotional messages" and "all non-program content that aims to promote the interests of the sponsor." de Smet and Vanormelingen (2011, p. 2) state that advertising subsidises the production so that audiences "can consume the media content for free or for a price substantially below the cost to produce the content." The inclusion of advertising into media can adversely affect quality. In regards to snowboarding media, this could mean reductions in the quality or amount of snowboarding footage displayed. The incorporation of advertising messaging could reduce the time available to display action footage. Likewise, quality action footage that doesn't clearly display an advertiser's logo, either as a background banner on a snowboard feature or through logoed gear worn by the snowboarder, could be edited out for footage of a lesser quality that more clearly displays a logo. In regards to snowboarding manufacturer advertisers, restrictions may be imposed about which snowboarders may feature and which cannot, which may place limitations on what the producer can achieve. If the snowboarders themselves are not up to a high standard, capturing top quality action footage may be difficult.

Having established an audience, the opportunity is presented for niche media makers to monetise their efforts, or, to be put more bluntly, sell eyeballs to advertisers (Webster & Ksiazek, 2012). But this is not free money and advertisers expect value for their support. It is a symbiotic relationship where a niche media producer can fund their production and an advertiser can communicate with an established audience. But this relationship can require compromise. Erjavec (2012, p. 359) warns that dependence on advertising revenue "has a negative impact on the diversity of media content." With specific focus on subcultures, Thorpe (2011, p. 80) states that though "niche media reside closest to the culture, commercial processes also complicate their production."

Many experts are concerned at the effect advertising can have on journalism and media, particularly as the media industry is largely, and often loosely, self-regulated. Journalistic integrity of a media outlet is ultimately based on self-established principles (Watson, 1998). This can create an ethical dilemma between the commitment to the audience and commercial appeal. Commercialism can

overshadow the need for "accurate and relevant information" (Rosenberg 2008, p. 60) and can affect the "form, style and content of media products" (Van Gompel, Van den Bulck & Biltereyst, 2002, p164). More directly, Erjavec (2012, p. 359) states that "the relationship between media and their advertisers is ripe for abuse." An and Bergen (2007, p. 112) claim "scholars and journalists have viewed this sort of integration of the marketing function as a threat to quality journalism." The need for advertising revenue can result in "willingness to compromise editorial integrity" and can be demonstrated by "proactive arrangements for their advertisers, and reactive accommodation of unethical requests from advertisers," (p. 114). Of particular ethical concern is that these conversations are not publically evident. Rinallo, Basuroy, Wu, and Jeon (2013, p. 426) state that "audiences may be unaware of the underlying commercial motives and may process information differently than they would interpret a more standard advertising attempt."

How advertising is integrated into media is changing and advertisers are always looking for new tools to provide improved brand awareness and information retention. Dix and Phau (2009, p. 413) identify that "with the proliferation of advertising and new technologies, advertising and media professionals have been challenged to cut through the clutter to emerge with innovative and economical ways to communicate messages to their target audience." Promotions are often incorporated into messaging, meaning that the "line between news and advertising continues to blur" (An & Bergen, 2007, p. 118). Dix and Phau (2009) state the practice of blurring advertising into media is not a new phenomenon and has occurred on American television since the late 1940's. They state that editorial content is better remembered than conventional advertising and that blurring could include such promotional tools as "product placements, sponsored journalism, and advertiser-produced programming" (p. 415). Within snowboard videos, this can include the placement of snowboarding related gear and apparel, promotion of specific locations for snowboarding, coverage of sponsored events, and specifically funded episodes by snowboard brands and showcasing their sponsored riders. These are all common within the snowboard subculture, with many snowboarders riding specifically for a snowboarding manufacturer's team and endorsing those products.

Including advertising and promotions in media is a way for advertisers to mask messaging and subtly connect with audiences. Rinallo, Basuroy, Wu, and Jeon (2013) identify two types of advertising-influenced journalism: stealth marketing and hybrid messaging. Stealth marketing they identify as any attempt to "blur the distinction between advertising and product related media coverage" (p. 426). One type of stealth marketing is an advertorial, where an advertiser will purchase a space in

media to create and publish an advertisement that looks like content within that media. Within action sports an example of stealth marketing would be the media produced by energy drink maker, Red Bull, which publishes an action sport magazine as well as regularly producing television and Internet shows.

Rinallo, Basuroy, Wu, and Jeon, (2013) also identify hybrid messages as another form of advertising in media. They define hybrid messages as "all paid attempts to influence audiences for commercial benefits using communications that project a non-commercial character" (p. 426). Within the action sports industry the application of this practice is broad. It includes advertising and sponsorship of competitions, ski fields and resorts, participants, even social spaces such as cafés, bars and eateries.

Within action sport media, advertisements almost always show expert, sponsored participants displaying products in action, giving the impression the products are produced by-participants-for-participants. Beal and Wheaton (2003, p. 347) illustrate this with an example from the skateboard industry when stating that "many ads use the core value of participant control to appeal to skateboarders" and "manufacturers are rarely pictured in ads" unless the manufacturers themselves are skateboarders. Similarly, Ryu (2005, p. 308) states that skateboard advertisements tend not to focus specifically on products, but instead "promote a mode of behaviour." Cianfrone and Zhang (2006, p. 325) state that advertising in action sports "often appears as athlete endorsements." To give an illustration, high profile skateboarder Tony Hawk is sponsored by Quiksilver (clothing), Birdhouse (skateboards) and Nixon (watches) among others and all sponsors are advertised on his website. The resulting effect is numerous advertising logos vying for attention, most notably around the borders of the webpages, thus framing every page that a viewer can access.

Sponsorship, which is essentially reflected in product endorsement by an athlete or subculture personality, is essential to the survival of the professional action sport athlete. To use snowboarding as an example, a committed participant must fund travel, accommodation, food, hard (boards, boots etc.) and soft gear (jackets, pants, gloves etc.). The financial commitment can be enormous. Therefore, professional snowboarders rely heavily on "financial support from commercial manufacturers, filmmakers, photographers, and the like" (Humphreys, 2003, p. 418). This is the same across all action sport subcultures. Using skateboarding as an example, Snyder (2012, p. 310) explains:

The job of the professional street skateboarder is to successfully complete skateboarding tricks according to the dictates of their interests, skills and style, on urban obstacles that meet very specific criteria. These tricks are documented by videographers and photographers and are produced for the various skateboard magazines and videos. The best tricks are published in the most prestigious journals, and from these published feats, sponsorship, money, and other rewards flow.

Humphreys describes the relationship between the snowboarder and sponsor as "ultimately an employer-employee relationship" (p. 407) and the employer will require their needs to be met. In the main this will be significant exposure of their products and brand. Professional snowboarder and former Olympian Todd Richards describes gaining timely media coverage as a leverage point in contract negotiations. After featuring in two popular niche media videos, Big Jean Fantasy and Anthem, Richards (2003, p. 161) stated it was "great timing, because I was about to renegotiate my contracts for the coming winter." Videos act as a sponsor's shop-window. "An impressive four-minute segment in a video did as much for a sponsor – and for a career – as winning a major competition," states Howe (1999, p. 72).

Yet, dependency on sponsorship has an effect on the subculture at large. As advertisers and sponsors set the agenda for their athletes, more broadly they shape the subculture. Coates, Clayton, and Humberstone (2010, p. 1089) warn that "increasing control by sports media, sponsors and organizations ultimately means that athletes have less control over their labour."

The complication of incorporating advertising into media is not solely based on advertisers attempting to take control with paid placements and promotional messaging. Media producers have been known to align their products to better attract advertisers. Erjavec (2012) states that, while cases exist of advertisers threatening to withdraw advertising money in response to media they deem negative, media too apply pressure on advertisers through promises to publish positive or negative stories or indicating they will highlight competitors in future media. Yet Erjavec adds that ultimately this process offers more opportunities to advertisers. "The actual winners in this game are the advertisers, who set the media agenda with their advertising money. The actual loser is the audience, which is not informed about the problematic and questionable information this practice produces," (p. 369). This is an important point, particularly when reflecting on subcultures and niche media. When niche media appear to be aligned with particular businesses and their products, the audience may not appreciate that this alignment has occurred purely for financial reasons.

Moreover, overtly corporate messaging could cause offence and distrust within a subculture that is founded on anti-corporate ideals.

Accepting advertising: audience responses

Practices like media blurring, stealth marketing and hybrid messaging are used to advertise to the action sport subculture. The growth of action sports participation and interest has attracted increasing interest from mainstream advertisers. Cianfrone and Zhang (2006, p. 322) note that action sports provide corporations with "effective platforms to access the typically hard-to-reach consumer segment of male adolescents 12 to 24 years of age." Action sport incorporates 58 million consumers between the ages of 10 and 24 with an estimated buying power of $250 billion (Bennett & Henson 2003). Advertising to a youthful demographic has many possible benefits, the main benefit being that "the creation of awareness among young people has the potential to produce a lifetime consumer of products and services" (Bennett, Sagas, & Dees, 2006, p. 40).

But advertising is not always a welcome inclusion. This is particularly relevant to subcultures that have anti-mainstream philosophies. Advertising which is out of place or seemingly at odds with the subculture's beliefs and values can have an adverse effect on the audience. Brumbaugh (2002, p. 262) warns that "misappropriating cues special to the subculture could be perceived by members of the subculture as insensitive while having a negative impact on ad reactions." This issue has been identified within the action sport subculture. Wheaton (2003, p. 80) describes hostile reactions of windsurfers against corporate advertising, as it was perceived that these "professional organisations represented self-interested individuals who wanted to bleed their sport." Humphreys (2003, p. 407) agrees, stating the "majority of snowboarders, like participants in related activities, such as tow-in surfing and skateboarding, and music-based subcultures, such as punk, reject widespread commercial co-optation." This suggests that the rejection of corporate influence is a key component of action sport subcultures; that the basis for these subcultures is the distance they keep from normal society. Advertisers representing brands from outside of the subculture can be seen to be attempting to cash in on the growing popularity. de Burgh-Woodman and Brace-Govan (2006, p. 24) note that consumers within a subculture hold loyalty and authenticity in high regard, expecting "a level of genuine participation by brands in their activities." Consumerism itself can be rejected within some action sport subcultures. Wheaton (2003, p. 85) identifies that an "anti-materialism ethos is evident from windsurfers' attitudes towards those individuals who purchase equipment deemed beyond their proficiency, or try to demonstrate their subcultural membership or status by displaying their equipment." Such actions are unflatteringly referred to as "spend to pretend" and

highlight a hierarchy within subcultures. For new subculture members, consumerism can represent entrance into a subculture, as brands and products can "act as a signal or ticket for group membership and they contributed much to the central value of belongingness" (Quester, Beverland, & Farrelly, 2006, p. 24).

Knowing the market: Blurring through connection

One way for advertisers to increase the chance of success is to understand the subculture better. "Marketing to subcultures requires a greater level of knowledge about the consumer and their context in order to be successful," (de Burgh-Woodman & Brace-Govan 2006, p. 14). Successful marketing to snowboard, sailing and surfing communities relies on the role products play in people's lives and the social connections these could reinforce. de Burgh-Woodman & Brace-Govan (2006, p. 19) state:

> In the case of marketers wishing to market products to a specific consumer audience, such as the snow, sail and surf markets, the ability to speak with the consumer in their own language is vital in order to gain status within that market and maintain a competitive advantage over companies who do not connect as effectively with their consumers.

de Burgh-Woodman and Brace-Govan (2006) also highlight the importance of creating an affinity and authenticity with the subculture through use of language and imagery. It is advantageous to promote an advertiser's brand through the use of sponsored athletes and recognised personalities, rather than focusing on the brand image itself. In this respect, the focus of the advertising becomes the athlete and the promotional benefit to the advertiser's brand comes through the association with that athlete. This is an illustration of how the advertiser uses the athlete's cultural capital within the subculture as a promotional tool. The athlete has status within the subculture; status that the advertiser could not garner themselves without significant dedication and undertaking. It could be possible for the advertiser to attempt to gain their own cultural capital within the subculture. Prolonged effort and a specific strategic focus on increasing their standing could be beneficial. But such efforts require an outlay of cost and time and, even then, results are not guaranteed. A safer and quicker solution may be achieved by employing the skills of an intermediary. Rotfeld (2003, p. 89) claims "there is nothing inherently wrong with a firm contracting out work to other people who might possess greater empathy with a target market." This is supported by Rinallo, *et al.* (2013, p. 425) who explain that "marketers are increasingly relying on promotional practices based on the diffusion of product information by third parties that appear to be independent of advertisers."

The practice of employing an intermediary within the subculture brings an advantage back to niche media makers. They hold the access to an audience but also the ability to communicate with them on behalf of an advertiser in a manner acceptable to and understandable by that subculture. But this again complicates the media gatekeeper role. A media maker must decide for themselves which advertisers to accept, what is the appropriate form of communication and what volume of messaging to incorporate into their media. All of these decisions could compromise their media products and/or affect their connection with the audience.

Lastly, media competition can complicate the situation further still. An advertiser may choose to do business with the most malleable media producer, meaning that those who are less willing to compromise may miss out on business. Min and Kim (2012, p. 228) identify that "media compete with each other for limited resources in a community; in doing so, some survive, some die out, and others change their attributes." This can be particularly relevant to niche media outlets, such as those attached to the New Zealand snowboard industry.

Snowboarding and cultural capital

This research contends that Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital and habitus can be applied to the esteem, profile and influence that snowboard niche media producers Robett Hollis, Nick Hyne and Riley Bathurst have garnered within the New Zealand snowboard subculture. More directly, their cultural capital within the snowboarding community was achieved through application and dedication to the activity of snowboarding. Once they had reached notoriety through excellence and community connection, the opportunity to profit from their status existed. Yet, the commercialisation of attempting to do so is a direct threat to their cultural capital and has the potential to damage their status within the snowboarding subculture. Cultural capital relates to an individual's class, status and the ability to act cultured (Bourdieu, 1984). It reflects an individual's ability to distinguish themselves from others within a society through cultural knowledge, skill and accomplishment. As such, the demonstration of cultural capital enables a person to project a position of status within a social hierarchy (Turner & Edmunds, 2002). Demonstrating cultural capital includes showcasing "familiarity with relevant institutional contexts, processes, and expectations, possession of relevant intellectual and social skills," (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014, p. 196). A fine art expert, for example, could illustrate cultural capital through showcasing a proficient understanding of art history, while a music expert could explain in detail how a well-known piece was created and recorded. This highlights that cultural capital is often reliant on a recognised and specific context.

This distinction separates cultural capital from other forms of knowledge, capabilities and technical skills (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). Yet, within an identifiable context, the demonstration of cultural expertise can exercise power and taste and, by extension, influence over those who do not have the same knowledge, status and experience. Bourdieu (1984) identified cultural capital as defining a lifestyle and presenting a separation between classes, for example being seen to have taste as opposed to being without taste or 'tasteless'. Furthermore, the ability to gain cultured knowledge can be affected by social class, such as being able to attend quality schools and/or being part of a family immersed in cultured or artistic environments. While immersion in such an environment can be advantageous, cultural capital can also be gained through experience and developed through pursuit of knowledge and personal commitment to a chosen context. Here, the motivating principle for pursuit was identified by Bourdieu as habitus. Edgerton and Roberts (2014, p. 195) define habitus as "the learned set of preferences or dispositions by which a person orients to the social world. It is a system of durable, transposable, cognitive 'schemata or structures of perception, conception and action'." Habitus incorporates the values and beliefs that govern and drive an individual or group in pursuits and lifestyle. These dispositions motivate actions and practices and are aligned to culture through taste (Turner & Edmunds, 2002). When related to the snowboarding subculture, this involves the commitment and pursuit of the activity of snowboarding itself. Bourdieu (1984, p. 220) himself acknowledged the high level of personal commitment and investment in what he termed 'Californian sports', like skiing and windsurfing (which are, like snowboarding, known as action sports), where significant time, effort and cost was required for participants to gain proficiency and to prepare, use and maintain equipment. Through this commitment, effort and experience, participants can gain a level of cultural capital, not only through proficiency, but also through ritual, respect, propriety and fashion. Accumulating the required equipment to go snowboarding can involve significant cost. Traveling to a location where a person can engage in the act of snowboarding can be time consuming. Yet, habitus also encompasses the social and community-focused side of snowboarding. Trends, fashions and tastes are evident in the subculture of snowboarding. Far from being fixed, these trends change. In order to be part of the subculture, participants need to comprehend these trends and fashions and demonstrate taste. Thorpe (2013) claims that habitus affects how participants act and interact, but it also governs future actions. Essentially, participants learn through interaction with other snowboarders how to act in a snowboarder way and the "distinctive practices of a snowboarding habitus are imprinted and encoded in a socialising process that commences early during entry to the snowboarding culture," (p. 111).

In particular, this research will concentrate on one of Bourdieu's three states of cultural capital: the embodied state. Cultural capital comprises of three states: the embodied state, the objectified state, and the institutionalised state. In broad terms, the embodied state relates to the embodiment of culture through the personal investment of time and cost; the objectified state relates to the representation of culture through the creation of things, such as paintings and writings; and the institutionalised state, which includes the obtainment of recognised knowledge, such as educational degrees and diplomas, and the resulting status of such obtainment (Bourdieu, 1984). The embodied state of cultural capital is most closely aligned to habitus; the commitment and self-motivation of the individual to pursue a particular lifestyle. Thus, the embodied state of cultural capital cannot be quickly or easily obtained or bestowed to another (Bourdieu, 1984). Cultural capital through the embodied state requires recognition of obtainment or achievement; an individual can only be seen to be distinctive if others identify them to be so. It relies on hierarchical structures (Erel, 2010), for example recognition that formal education is an identifier of esteem and class. Within the snowboard subculture, this could mean cultural capital is recognised in a snowboarder who is innovative and aggressive in their riding style and/or is recognisable as an engaging personality. What is of cultural value to the members of a particular subculture or society could vary. For snowboarding, some may be supporters of progressive and technical terrain-park riding. Others could be more supportive of big mountain riding, with its steep and challenging terrain. Some could be proponents of female snowboarding. In addition, fashions and trends can also gain and lose prominence. This can make initiation into the subculture difficult for new participants. Thorpe (2013, p. 137) highlights that:

> The embodied practices of male and female snowboarders act as mechanisms that control access to the culture by selecting and rejecting new members according to both overt criteria, such as owning the latest snowboard equipment or wearing clothing from 'authentic' snowboarding brands, and covert criteria, such as demonstrations of cultural commitment and physical prowess.

While there could be differences of opinion, there is also likely to be a general consensus that certain traits, knowledge and actions have significance in identifying leaders (Throsby, 1999). This outlines the value that cultural capital has to associated individuals and groups who do not possess it. Having procured cultural capital, the opportunity exists for individuals to benefit and profit from their standing. Achieving cultural capital may not be particularly easy or quick for most people, meaning that, broadly, the value of cultural capital can be determined by the time and expense it

would take for someone to achieve the same status (Bourdieu, 1984). Those who have acquired it have an advantage and may derive value and benefit from the flow of goods and services (Throsby, 1999). In snowboarding, prominent riders have cultural capital and can attract sponsorship agreements through businesses that wish to be associated due to the riders' status within the subculture. Yet, others have gained value through their status beyond the act of snowboarding and progressed into media creation. This progression will be explored in more detail in coming chapters. It is important to note that creation of culturally significant items, for example media, art, music or buildings, can allow for the sharing of meanings and values and bind a community together (Throsby, 1999). To this end, subcultural media can be particularly important as a form of communication and expression. Media creation and production also provide a means for an individual to derive economic value from their cultural capital through selling advertising opportunities. While this presents an opportunity to attract revenue, it can also provide an issue; the incorporation of commercial messaging could be potentially damaging to the individual's cultural capital and status (Granovetter & Swedberg, 2001). In terms of the snowboarding subculture commercialisation could be at loggerheads with the founding anti-mainstream ideals.

In summary, the snowboard subculture was established with anti-mainstream and anti-corporate foundations, yet research suggests this is softening. The snowboard subculture is actively targeted by businesses, both operating inside and outside of the snowboard industry, as it is seen as a sizable market. Some snowboarders have taken advantage of this through sponsorship deals and personal endorsements. Yet, there are issues with communicating with the snowboarding audience, who are still resistant towards mainstream marketing advances. There is also evidence that mainstream media do not completely understand snowboarding. This is illustrated through coverage of the Sochi Winter Olympics and, in particular, the coverage of Rebecca Torr's Jamaican Bobsled tweet. Niche media are identified as more likely to connect with a snowboarding audience. The cultural capital of the media producer within the snowboard subculture is also seen to be beneficial. Niche media is, therefore, an attractive communication channel to advertise in, as it connects strongly with the audience. But the incorporation of advertising can place the producer in a position that requires compromise which, ultimately, could be damaging to the perceptions of the anti-corporate snowboarding audience.

Chapter three: Methodology

Research: Summary of intentions

This thesis explores the question: how does the incorporation of advertising affect snowboarding video production? This research aims to gain a better understanding of the pressure and compromise advertising incorporation can cause to media output and quality. It explores how three New Zealand snowboard media producers attempt to find a balance between incorporating advertising into their media while still creating subcultural communications that connect with the audience. It focuses on three well-known New Zealand snowboard media producers: Robett Hollis, Riley Bathurst, and Nick Hyne. These niche media producers are involved in a variety of different media, but this research predominantly focuses on one episodic web-video series per interviewee. This provides some symmetry to the research, and the creation of moving/video media includes a range of advertising and promotion. This includes logo display, product placement, stealth marketing, and hybrid messaging, in reference to the types of promotional activities highlighted in the literature review. It is noted, however, that these media producers actually operate across many different media platforms, both on their own projects and working within the projects of others. This means that the interviewees bring a rich history and multi-levelled media perspective to the research.

The interviewees were selected not only for the reputation of their media, but also because they all primarily publish on the Internet. Snowboarding is a highly visual sport and the Internet is a media platform that allows this to be illustrated successfully. As snowboarding does not feature consistently on New Zealand television, the Internet provides a platform to publish video media more regularly and is now the main platform through which the snowboarding culture is visible off the mountain. Having the interviewees all operating on a similar media platform means they shared some similar experiences when establishing their media and growing their businesses.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in conducting this research, as both brought beneficial elements to this project. Generally, researchers will choose a methodology using either qualitative or quantitative methods, although blending both can be beneficial (Cooligan, 2009). Some researchers favour the statistical data produced when using quantitative research, stating that "qualitative data are too subjective and susceptible to human error and bias in data collection and interpretation" (Cooper & Schindler, 2011, p. 158). Yet qualitative research can be more beneficial when studying behaviour as "highly controlled procedures and exact quantification" can result in gaining "only a very narrow, perhaps sometimes useless knowledge of human

behaviour and experience," (Cooligan, 2009, p. 225). Qualitative research is particularly useful when dealing with meaning and experience (Paley, 2010, Shank 2002). This research primarily focuses on capturing the experiences of the interviewees. As a result, a methodology using predominantly qualitative research was identified as most beneficial, as it allows for more in-depth exploration and discussion. Qualitative research is concerned with understanding the phenomenon from the actors' perspectives through their personal experiences (Firestone, 1987). This research uses personal interviews with each of the three identified media producers, but also uses quantitative data by way of a textual analysis to offer a factual insight into aspects such as how many times an advertiser's logo appears in a video. Blending these research methods together permits "one method to enhance the performance of the other" (Morgan, 1998, p. 365). This is a process of 'triangulation' in research, a mix of research components studying the same phenomenon (Jick, 1979, p. 604). The effectiveness of triangulation rests on the premise that the weaknesses in each single method will be compensated by the counter-balancing strengths of the other.

Researching a subculture from within

When conducting research on a subculture it can be advantageous when the researcher also identifies with that subculture as a member or participant. This gives the researcher an appropriate background to work from, and the ability to understand the nuances specific to the subculture. For example, Stranger (1999) notes that being an accredited member of more than 30 years in the surfing subculture provided crucial background for his research and the ability to gain access beyond the superficial surface. This "privileged participant observation," where the researcher is essentially allowed to look behind the curtain (Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004, p. 70), can enable trust and intimacy (Roulston, 2010; Snyder 2012). Using an appropriate communication style can allow for a deeper discussion and richer understanding of the data collected (Snyder, 2012), by interpreting "subtle communication codes," (Senda-Cook, 2012, p. 136). Qualitative research, for example personal interviews or focus groups, can allow for more self-revealing responses. Nelson (2013, p. 1153) provides more detail:

> An insider may be able to read signs within a subculture that an outsider may not. And perhaps most importantly when focusing on flippant, irreverent subcultures that are prone to mislead the outsider, the insider may have advantages such as the respect of the participants or the ability to determine whether the respondents are attempting to deceive.

Being part of the subculture and understanding its style of communication can mean the difference between recognising something significant and total bewilderment. To provide an example, one episode of Airtime, a regular short action-sport-focused television vignette produced by Frontside Media, showed a snowboarder performing tricks while dressed in a giant foam costume in the shape of the logo of fast-food restaurant Carl's Jnr. To an outsider, it may have been unclear as to whether this was affection or mockery. Furthermore, seeing someone snowboarding while dressed in such a costume could have left mainstream viewers perplexed as to what snowboarding was at all. To an insider it was more likely to be viewed as a fun and quirky way of incorporating promotion into the episode, rather than merely sampling the food with a logo visible to camera, which could look contrived, forced and unnatural. It could even have been seen as a statement about the freedom and lack of rules within snowboarding by illustrating that 'anything goes'. When I watched that episode, I was genuinely amazed that the snowboarder could perform difficult snowboard tricks while engulfed in the giant costume.

Yet residing within the subculture can also be a disadvantage. Cooper and Schindler (2011) state that the researcher needs to maintain a distance from the subject, as an existing connection to a subculture could create a predisposition, or could cause such a bias. With exploratory research, such as investigation into subcultural behaviour, it is often useful for the researcher to have "little previous experience" as it can give the opportunity to discover what the key issues are (Keegan, 2009, p. 38). The personal views and histories can cause bias, assumptions and inconsistencies. The researcher can potentially preconceive conclusions before properly assessing the data.

As I am a researcher investigating a subculture I have had a long connection with, this required ethical consideration. It required me to find a balance between analysing the experiences of New Zealand snowboard media producers without lovingly celebrating them. The advantage of being part of the subculture is the opportunity to connect with the interviewees and gather in-depth responses for a deeper understanding of their experiences. It is crucial that a researcher remains neutral and presents the findings in an unbiased fashion. My background in snowboarding was beneficial, as it assisted in convincing participants to be involved in the research project. Connecting with them as a fellow snowboarder gave me a better ability to pose questions, and I believe it made them comfortable to go into great detail about their experiences.

Personal semi-structured interviews

This research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of three snowboarding media producers. Personal interviews were identified as the best way to capture these experiences. Many researchers note that personal interviews are a useful method for collecting qualitative data, particularly in relation to cultural behaviour, to "understand particular social phenomena by developing intimate familiarity and a detailed, dense acquaintanceship" (Frey, Botan & Kreps 2000, p. 273).

To best understand social phenomena, the researcher needs to give the interviewee space to communicate their ideas. In my interviews, giving the participant more freedom provided the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences. The style of interview was semi-structured. The interviews had common themes (discussed below), yet the interviewees were given space to free-form ideas and express their thoughts. This requires constant assessment of the interviewees' responses to capture the full meaning of the responses. In this process, the interviewer is not a "passive recipient of information but needs to be active in checking what the interviewee is saying, watching for inconsistencies, encouraging fuller detail where the story is incomplete and generally keeping the research aims in mind throughout the process" (Coolican, 2009, p. 159). This includes being sensitive to non-verbal cues. Being a snowboarder is an advantage for me in this respect. Having a long history with the sport, particularly within the New Zealand scene, I was able to understand and connect with the interviewees. I was familiar with the people they were talking about, and having some camera experience, I understood some of the issues around gathering usable footage. Moreover, I was able to react to responses with follow up questions when I sensed there was more to be learnt about a situation. It is important for a researcher to explore a project as deeply as possible to gain a full and rich insight (Keegan, 2009).

As an interviewer, I employed a conversational approach to the interviews. This ensures a friendly, safe atmosphere and allows for deeper connections and more insightful dialogue. Here, I particularly followed the advice of Thorpe (2012, p. 54), a specialist in snowboard culture, who notes the qualitative interview "should be conceptualised as a context-specific social encounter in which knowledge is constructed in dialogue with participants, rather than a simple information-gathering operation." Roulston (2010) describes the romantic conception of interviewing, a method by which the interviewer is open about their personal attachment to the subculture. She states that a "romantic conceptualization of interviewing will lead the interviewer to work to establish rapport and empathic connection with the interviewee in order to produce intimate conversation between

the [interviewer] and [interviewee] in which the [interviewer] plays an active role" (p. 217). During the interviews, rapport is established through casual discussion of snowboarding, events, particular riders, and life in ski towns, such as Queenstown. With this rapport, coupled with the gracious and genuine attitudes of the interviewees themselves, three successful interviews were conducted, each of which was approximately an hour long.

After conducting the interviews, I transcribed the data for interpretation. Where similarities existed between the interviewees' responses, broad topic sheets were created where similar responses could be grouped together for further analysis. Employing a semi-structured set of interview questions, discussed in the following section, provided four themes to initially group the responses into. Often, the responses outside of these themes proved to be the most insightful. When the discussion deepened and focused on specific areas and details outside of the set themes, the information highlights those experiences as "evocative narrative accounts concerning the participants' life worlds" (Roulston, 2010, p. 218).

Contacting interviewees, information sheet/consent form and conducting the interview

To establish contact with the interviewees, I sent a short introductory email through their websites and provided a basic outline of the research project. I encouraged the interviewees to reply if they were interested in participating. All three interviewees replied and a copy of the information sheet and consent form was emailed to them. A copy of these documents is attached as Appendix 1 and 2.

The interviews were arranged over the 2013 winter season. As each of the interviewees had a hectic winter schedule, I offered to be flexible with any free time they had available and offered to meet at a location close to them or pick them up, if it made things easier. The locations for the interviews were selected to be neutral, informal, and safe environments. The first interview, with Robett Hollis, occurred in July at Westfield Mall in Riccarton, Christchurch. The second interview, with Riley Bathurst, occurred in August at Volstead Bar, also in Riccarton. The third interview, with Nick Hyne, occurred via Skype in November. For this interview both interviewer and interviewee were speaking via Skype from their homes.

Each interview was recorded and a transcript was sent to the interviewees. Interviewees were encouraged to read the transcripts and make any changes they felt necessary. Reminders were sent when transcript changes were not received. This was used to give the interviewees a second chance to make changes to their interview transcripts.

Project Ethics: Protection of interviewees

A key consideration of this research is the ethical treatment of all participants involved. The focus of research ethics must be to protect the people in the study throughout the entire research process (Tolich, 2001). It is important to remember that the centre of ethical research lies around "human wellbeing" and not to "privilege systems over people," (Beckett, 2003, p. 51). It is also critical that the research reflect an unbiased and accurate account of the findings. At the outset of this project a research proposal was sent to the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee and subsequently approved to proceed. All interviewees were presented with an information sheet and required to sign a permission form. Key aspects of this information sheet identified that the primary use of the interview data was for this Master of Arts thesis. They were also made aware that the data could be used in presentations and/or academic articles. All interviewees were sent their interview transcripts and given an opportunity to make any changes to their responses they felt necessary. A copy of the Project Information Sheet is supplied as Appendix 2.

Structure of Interviews

The interviews were semi structured. I asked a series of questions but welcomed informal discussion, and added further questions to extract more information from the interviewees. The questions focused on four areas: history with snowboarding; introduction to media, motivations and intentions; commitment to subculture; and commitment to advertisers. The interviews were between 50 and 70 minutes in duration.

Interview question guidelines:

Section one: History with snowboarding

Questions included: Why did you get into snowboarding? What hooked you into it? Where were you based/what mountains did you ride? Who did you ride with? Did you enter competitions or have sponsors? Do you still ride as much these days/what's your relationship with snowboarding now?

Section two: Introduction to media, motivations and intentions

Questions included: When did you start getting into the media side of snowboarding? Why did you start? When (and why) did you get more serious about producing media?

Section three: Commitment to subculture

Questions included: What do you want to cover in your media? What makes the cut and what doesn't? Who is it aimed at? Who features in your media? Do you try to give riders a platform to gain exposure? Are there things you won't cover?

Section four: Commitment to advertisers

Questions included: Who are your advertisers/what industries are they in? What sort of advertising do they want featured? Do they understand the snowboard audience? Do you find yourself having to be a translator or saying no to some requests? Are there times where you have to be careful with your messaging to keep advertisers happy? Have you had alcohol advertisers (and are there special considerations for these advertisers)? What level of support do you get from ski fields when filming within their boundaries?

In addition to being specifically related to the central research question for this project, these questions also attempted to match the topic areas in the literature review so that comparisons could be made. Being a snowboarder, I selected questions which I felt would allow a deeper understanding of their situation, particularly in consideration to subculture connection and issues of incorporating advertising into niche media. Given the time constraints on the interviewees not every question was asked and the semi structured nature of the interviews means some responses will not be comparable to other interviewee's responses. However, the open and supportive nature of the interviewees resulted in particularly enlightening interview data.

The interviewees could refuse to answer any questions and were given space to comment on other topics or experiences. Although I reside within the subculture, as a researcher I recognised that I do not have a background in niche media making so it was important to provide this space to freeform ideas in order to gain a richer insight into their experiences.

Textual analysis

Textual analysis of a sample of videos produced by each of the interviewees was also undertaken. The textual analysis provided empirical evidence of the amount of sponsorship and advertising featured in the videos, as well as demonstrating different types of advertising that featured, such as product placement. In this analysis I also captured the total running time for each episode, the percentage of time the activity of snowboarding featured, the number of different snowboarders that featured, the number of advertisers, the number of personal sponsors that featured, and the amount of times the ski field/location was identified. This data was used to provide indications of

commitment to the snowboard subculture, for example as an illustration of giving snowboarders the opportunity to promote their supporting sponsors. The number of advertisers (and how they feature) illustrated the commitment of the media producers to their advertisers. Ski fields are given a separate category and are viewed as a slightly different form of advertiser. Ski fields can feature prominently in snowboarding media, whether paying for advertising or not. Producers have to film their footage somewhere, and ski fields are often the most accessible location and have the best maintained terrain. Additionally, if the ski field is easily identifiable as the location it could mean, in regards to promotion, it gains the most coverage of all advertisers during the episode.

It was difficult to directly compare the videos produced by each of the interviewees as they were all somewhat different. *The Clubbies* series, for example, comprised of only three episodes from 2011. *Diaries Down Under* aims to produce five episodes each year, so it is winter focused. *Snow Show* produces twelve episodes each year. To give parity to the textual analysis, three episodes of each series were chosen for data gathering and comparison. The episodes were chosen using random sampling, via online generator Random.org.

Data Analysis

The first step of the data analysis was to measure and assess the personal interview transcripts. The data needed to be examined to determine what would be included and excluded in relation to the research question (Page and Meyer, 2000). Unlike quantitative analysis, qualitative researchers "do not use summary statistics or hypothesis tests; instead they use categories" (Blank, 2004, p. 192). The responses were grouped into themed categories matching the topic areas: history with snowboarding, introduction to media, commitment to the subculture, and commitment to advertisers. An effective analytical means of quantifying qualitative research is to isolate themes arising from data (Smith and Firth, 2011). Responses that did not match the topic areas were listed in a separate document, assessed for similarities between interviewees, and considered for relevance to the research question.

The theme for this research is exploring how the interviewees aim to produce audience connecting media while incorporating the advertising necessary to generate income. Ultimately, this project asks how advertising affects the authenticity of niche media in the experiences of these interviewees and the compromises they have experienced. This thesis has two dedicated chapters relating to the research findings; one addressing the interview participants' commitment to the subculture and one focusing on their commitment to advertisers.

In the subculture chapter, the interview data is grouped into the following themes:

- o History with snowboarding: the interviewees' connection, identity, values and beliefs;
- o Entrance into media: the interviewees' motivations for starting in media, their goals and reasons for involvement, and what they see as important in regards to communication;
- o Using media as a platform for exposure: how media can help them gain visibility within snowboarding, how they can give others the opportunity to gain visibility, difficulties in the filming process;

In the advertising chapter, the interview data is grouped into the following themes:

- o Funding production: why advertising is needed; how they create advertising-friendly media; message blurring, product placements, personal sponsors and the different types of advertising;
- o Managing advertising levels: managing exposure, balancing competing brands, setting boundaries;
- o Using advertising from alcohol brands;
- o Support from ski fields.

The grouped data is then organised in the relevant chapters in relation to the academic research highlighted in the literature review.

Chapter four: Web video production, commitment to the snowboard subculture and filming snowboarding.

"I think staying connected is probably the best way to put it, and not be useless with an injury. And probably I started thinking about the future a little bit more."
Nick Hyne

Within the snowboarding community individuals can achieve cultural capital when others recognise their dedication and accomplishment. Key to this is that the individual's cultural capital needs to be recognised and given value by the community (Throsby, 1999). A high level of cultural capital endows esteem and status on a participant, who may then become influential for their snowboarding peers. Yet, this esteem and relevance can be damaged when the individual is perceived to lose relevance to the community, or abuse their power. Snowboarding niche media producers rely on value and relevance in order to remain connected with the subculture. Primarily, these producers communicate and disseminate information throughout their community in a way that is familiar to, and so will be accepted by, the audience (Ryu, 2005). In regards to the snowboarding subculture, they can inform the audience about which participants are excelling, new developments on ski fields, competition results and highlights, weather conditions, and upcoming events. Niche media is particularly influential in establishing a subculture's identity (Thorpe, 2011). Through their snowboarding media producers can act as subcultural influencers by showcasing which styles of riding are popular, what innovative tricks are new, and which snowboarders are pushing the boundaries in new or unique ways. By extension, they can reinforce or undermine current trends, fashions or beliefs by what they choose to focus their media on, and how. These producers are helping to define the New Zealand snowboarding experience. Snowboard media is strongly visual, so the videos capture snowboarders performing tricks in a variety of environments, such as ski field slopes, terrain parks, half pipes and steep off-piste sites. Footage is sometimes slowed to enable a greater appreciation of trick difficulty or style, or to create a more dramatic and artistic effect. Media can also focus camaraderie where snowboarders support each other to encourage attempts at more difficult and challenging tricks and descents. Occasionally, media focuses on snowboard regimes, such as a rider preparing for a trip (e.g. packing or checking gear), the difficulties of travelling to the snow (e.g. long drives or airport layovers), or social activities after the day's snowboarding is complete (night life, house parties, participation in other action sports and activities). Seemingly every element of snowboarding life has been covered in snowboard media in one way or another, allowing the audience total access to subcultural self-observation of identity.

Entrance into Media: Progression from participant to media producer

Given the influential nature of subcultural media it is beneficial for researchers to explore the founding motives behind the progression from participant to producer. This offers insights into how cultural capital is achieved and sustained. Such insights can also establish the level of commitment, disposition and loyalty to the subculture by the media producer, as this relates to habitus. In order for the subculture to progress and develop, its growth needs to be documented and disseminated to influence and inspire others (Snyder, 2012). This need for communication and documentation creates opportunities for enterprising participants. It is not uncommon for action sport participants to document their own activities. Many snowboarding participants will photograph and film themselves and their friends as a means of personal reflection. Furthermore, with the considerable effort often required to get to a ski area, documenting the adventure gives the participant a souvenir of the experience. This is similar to the actions of tourists documenting their own travels. While these activities can be a starting point for many snowboard enthusiasts, the visual media focused on in this research is intended for far greater communication than sharing with friends and family. All three interviewees in this research project produce media for both national and international audiences and feature nationally, and sometimes globally, recognised snowboarders. Their media is published through a variety of channels, including their own media production websites. They produce their own initiated projects and are contracted to create media for others.

Being a subcultural participant is beneficial to making niche media (Atton, 2009). A strong background and knowledge of the subculture, as well as a passion for it, drives a producer to create media that shares their passion and connects with their audience. As a connected participant, their founding principles and loyalty to their peers motivates them to create high-quality media showcasing progressive riding. Their cultural capital and status can also help in the promotion of their media, as they are already identifiable as snowboarders. Appearing in their media implies a personal endorsement, which is likely to attract their existing fans. All three producers were established snowboarders and well connected with the snowboard subculture before they advanced into media production. They identified with the snowboard subculture and were absorbed in the lifestyle, spending whole winter seasons snowboarding in New Zealand and overseas. As participants, like many snowboarders, they began to document their adventures and activities by creating home-movie styled videos and taking photographs.

However, all three of the producers made a more formal progression to self-employed media producers through a major change to their personal situation, in particular for two who were unable

to actively ride on the mountain for a period of time. For Riley Bathurst and Nick Hyne, this was a result of injury. Snowboarders need to be physically fit in order to perform, while high speeds, spinning and flipping manoeuvres, and enormous aerial trajectories can make it a dangerous pursuit. When a snowboarder loses control, serious injury can result. Injuries, particularly those affecting the lower body, can quickly curtail a season's snowboarding, and when snowboarders often go through considerable upheaval to take up residence in a ski town, such as Queenstown or Wanaka, having the season interrupted through injury can place a snowboarder in a lonely predicament. While their friends continue snowboarding, injured snowboarders often need to find alternative ways to fill the day. More significantly, the isolation of injury requires the participant to find different ways to remain connected to the subculture. Filming and photographing snowboarding is a way for an injured participant to remain connected to the subculture. It allows the participant to continue to engage with their peers on location and provide a useful service; capturing snowboarding footage for self-observation, dissemination and reflection. This visual media is highly valued by members of the subculture and is viewed and reviewed by snowboarders as they study every detail, searching for ways to improve their own skills (Woermann, 2012).

 For Nick Hyne a serious ACL knee injury in 2006 that required surgery "was a kind of a tipping point", when he "realised that when you're injured and you can't snowboard you can't really do anything." Hyne initially chose to step away from snowboarding and involve himself in tertiary study, focusing on Japanese and Marketing. His friend, and now business partner, Ben Ryan, asked if he would be interested in fronting a web-based snowboard show called *Method TV*. Because he didn't need to physically ride a snowboard, Hyne was able to take advantage of his vast knowledge of snowboarding and his confident personality to adopt the role of episode presenter, laying the foundation for what would eventually become *Diaries Down Under*. Hyne notes that there was little planning to their initial videos. Rather, the motivation was to show a fun and enthusiastic take on New Zealand snowboarding life. Summarising the experience, Hyne states "I think we did 12 episodes in one season. We were driving from Queenstown to Snow Park just doing stupid videos and following all the events up there. I just knew that I wanted to be part of it, in a hosting role. I kind of thought 'well, if I'm hurt I can still do this.'" With the video capturing and development underway, Hyne and Ryan concentrated on gaining exposure to create and grow an audience. They found they could get visibility through contacting existing snowboarding websites and asking for their videos to be displayed: "I just approached [American snowboard website] and said 'look, if we get a series together would you guys put episodes up on your website?' and the guy came back and just said 'yeah, for sure, we'll do it. If you guys are a making a series we'll put them on our website.'"

Taking advantage of existing and established snowboard media platforms and audiences, they were able to gain visibility quickly. This gave their video series a platform so they could then attempt to source funding. Hyne went to his personal snowboard sponsors requesting financial assistance to continue to produce their videos.

Riley Bathurst had a similar experience, when a serious knee injury required him to reassess his position within the subculture and concentrate on fostering his growing filming and photographic interests. He was already photographing both wakeboarding and snowboarding, so when he was injured he took the opportunity to develop his media production skills. In 2006 he enrolled in a graphic design programme at the Design and Arts College of New Zealand. Bathurst affirms: "I never meant to work for myself. It just sort-of happened. I blew my knee out so I went to design school and did all of that. Finished design school, worked for a photographer, who taught me how to shoot professionally, and then worked for a few different companies." Like Hyne, the isolation of being injured in a ski town motivated Bathurst to look for other opportunities to stay active and connected to snowboarding. The reduced options enforced by injury impels a participant to investigate other opportunities, as Bathurst observes, "It was an easy time to focus more on shooting or on whatever else you are doing. All your friends are still snowboarding and those are the people you hang out with so you still want to go to the mountain but you can't ride. So you do something else." Initially Bathurst concentrated on photography but saw more consistent work available to videographers and editors, so he developed his skills to incorporate video media. He found that clients for video work "can give you more money for being in the mountain the same amount of days due to post-production time, stuff like that. So, yeah, [I] ended up floating that way and now I work probably more in video than I do in photos but I usually just bounce around to whatever's going on." Like Hyne, Bathurst took an opportunistic approach to media because he wanted to remain connected to snowboarding. By extension, Bathurst's photos and filming also provided a service to his friends, to review their performances through his work. As his skills developed more opportunities arose and he was able progress to the point where he was earning for his efforts.

For Robett Hollis, by contrast, it wasn't injury that spurred his media production role, but the breakdown of an existing media obligation in the mid-2000s. This encouraged him to investigate opportunities for his own media business, and established firm ideals which he would base his own media on. Through filming and photographing the activities and development of his group of friends, Hollis had been informally creating media since soon after he started snowboarding. His motivation was based simply on enjoyment and reflection, because it was fun to document their adventures

and to watch the resulting video footage afterwards: "I always felt that I wanted to film videos with me and my buddies". Self-reflection continued to challenge Hollis, as he thought about better ways to capture and display the footage and how his videos could be improved. He was also gravitating towards a presenting role. He notes "I already had that mind-set where I wanted to get this shot and I want someone to talk about it. It was like, I can ride, and I could talk, and I could edit everything out." At the same time, Hollis was gaining more profile as a snowboarder, which brought more opportunities within New Zealand snowboard media, particularly online media. He had a number of formal media responsibilities for various organisations, mainly as a featured snowboarder and presenter. This saw him juggling responsibility as not only a competitive snowboarder but also a broadcaster. Hollis describes: "I would take a competition run, turn back around, take a photo for the website, get back to the top, write a little thing. I would win the comp and then have to report on me winning it. It was really surreal". However, when one of the business relationships with a media provider broke down and left him out of pocket, Hollis had to reassess his involvement. Upon the advice of a trusted friend, he realised that he had developed the skills, and more importantly the profile and connections, to establish himself as a media producer on his own: "He goes to me 'Robett, you could do that. You know everyone, your riding is better than anyone's; you can take photos and do it. You've got your own brand now,'" explains Hollis. Hollis established NZSnowboard.com in 2006. Central to his motivation to become a media producer was the way he felt let down by his previous employer. To Hollis, it was an illustration that some businesses operating in the New Zealand snowboard scene sought only to profit from it. He was concerned that some businesses were out to exploit the sport's growing popularity:

> I was looking back at it and thinking 'hey, I'm a rider. What are you doing for the sport? What are you doing to support anyone or anything? You're not supporting events; you're not covering events. You're not putting a face to it, but here you are exploiting my sport, the sport that I love, taking all the cash and not giving a shit about it. Stuff you.' So mainly why I started it, money is important, but it was to destroy [competitor website] because in principle they didn't deserve to be getting a cent from the sport that I love.

Hollis demonstrates a strong commitment to the subculture as the founding principle for his media. Through his experiences as a participant, and later though the sense of betrayal by his former employer, Hollis has a clear set of self-regulating ideals which guide the creation of his media and motivate him to support the sport he associated to.

The initial motivation for Bathurst, Hyne and Hollis was to connect with the New Zealand snowboard subculture, react to their changing personal situations, and to document what they and their friends were doing in order to share it with a wide audience. Often the impetus to start specialist media is to create something that doesn't already exist (Puchan, 2004; Snyder, 2006). These media producers were documenting New Zealand snowboarding in a way that was not being done at the time. Making a profit was not their primary goal; much of the initial motivation came from the fun of creation and filming. It was an act of sharing communication, connecting with their peers and making a statement about what snowboarding meant to them. All three producers initially set up their media with little support, and once they were established they sought funding to make the production more sustainable. Synder (2012) identifies that participants will look to establish careers within a subculture as a way of maintaining connection and as an alternative to more conventional careers, as "many people become involved in subcultures with the hope that they may be able to have a career doing what they love to do" (p. 315). By creating media businesses, the producers in this study aimed to develop a sustainable career connected to the subculture they loved.

Commitment to the subcultural audience: By riders for riders

There is a strong connectedness between subcultural media producers and their audience. Subcultural media is often produced by those residing in the subculture themselves. In order to accurately reflect the snowboarding lifestyle, attitudes and beliefs, Hyne, Hollis and Bathurst must maintain their connection to the audience. All three producers are highly dedicated core members of the snowboarding subculture. Furthermore, all three are highly proficient snowboarders and they have all been showcased in snowboard media as participants. Hollis and Hyne, in particular, are two of New Zealand's most recognisable snowboarders, having performed successfully in national and international competitions. Both have also appeared in coaching videos and an array of different snowboard media, as snowboarders and as presenters. This makes them recognisable to the snowboard subculture as skilled participants and identifiable personalities. It establishes their status within the subculture as influential leaders. Hierarchy within subcultures is established through distinction and legitimacy (Wheaton & Beal, 2003). In snowboarding, distinction and legitimacy can be gained through prolonged achievement, innovation, progression, daring, and displaying an engaging personality. Through their long involvement with snowboarding they have developed habitus, an innate and natural understanding and interpretation of what it is to be a snowboarder. This guides and governs their decisions on how their videos should look and feel so as to best connect with the audience. The status of all three producers, and in particular Hollis and Hyne, is based on a sustained, and highly visible, level of proficiency as snowboarders and a strong

connection with the audiences through appearing in snowboard media. As a result, they are trusted leaders within the New Zealand snowboarding community and are particularly influential. Within subcultures, participants will look to leaders as influencers, guides and taste-makers on what it is to be a snowboarder. Furthermore, by continuing to appear in subcultural media, leaders, such as the producers in this research, reaffirm their position of authority by continuing to display their skill and knowledge. While Bathurst does not appear in his videos as often as the other two, he is still a recognised and accomplished snowboarder and well connected within the subculture.

The audience are particularly important to subcultural media producers as they play a vital role in sharing and endorsing media. Media sharing platforms, such as YouTube, make publishing content on the Internet open to almost everyone, which has resulted in an enormous amount of available content (Andrews, 2011). A key motivating factor for audience sharing is that the audience relate to the media and trust the media producers (Gil de Zúñiga *et al.* 2012). Hyne notes that it is essential for a producer to value the audience, as often it is the audience that helps to distribute his media. Social media provides a potentially enormous platform for media sharing. Through choosing to share or not to share, the audience acts like a filter and their endorsement can help media stand out in an already cluttered environment: "It's a hard one; distribution is a really hard one actually. The Internet is so flooded with content at the moment. If you don't have an interesting angle or something that people are really into it's really hard to get the [audience] pushing it," explained Hyne. Media is only successful if there is an audience to absorb and distribute it. Identifying with a subculture is a demonstration of personal identity and expression (Green, 2001). So too is media sharing, with expression of values, improving credibility, and maintaining social relationships identified as motivating factors in sharing (Paley & Ma, 2012; Goh, *et al.* 2009). This illustrates that there can be an attachment and personal endorsement of any media an individual chooses to share with their social networks. It is a statement of value and of personal expression, as is affiliation with a subculture. When sharing subcultural niche media, a participant is making a personal statement about who they are, what is important to them, and how they wish to be perceived. When there is disconnect between what is produced and the audience, the participant may not be inclined to spread that media as they do not wish to be seen to endorse it.

In order to best connect with the snowboard subculture, niche media producers need to capture and showcase progressive snowboarding displayed in innovative and interesting environments. The interviewees agreed that the overarching principle was that the quality of the snowboarding featured in their media should be as high as possible, as Hyne described: "Most of the time we're

just trying to do the raddest stuff we can. Usually [the audience is] going to want something that's going to have an impact." Committing to this principle would give their media the best opportunity to make a lasting impression with the audience, gain their endorsement and support, and encourage sharing. Hyne understands that the key to audience connection is engaging them with astounding snowboarding footage, because "there is a key core that you have to keep stoked to have credibility within the audience. Most of it is making stuff that looks really epic." Similarly, Bathurst states that the quality of riding was the most essential element of his media. When asked how he chose the snowboarders he works with and if he considered different demographics or genders when filming riders, he states that he is "more looking at what standard [of rider] they are, rather than if they're the right age group or the right whatever. That sort of stuff doesn't really matter, I don't think." Hollis believes that publishing and promoting the best snowboarding in New Zealand creates an added benefit in that it encourages those featured riders to grow, as well as the viewing audience. Progressive riding encourages all snowboarders to push themselves to a higher level, so that by "supplying that level of support and hyping the stuff that is doing good and supporting those guys when they're young it helps them grow."

Incorporating corporate messaging into media can complicate audience engagement. How these subcultural media producers include advertising into their media will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, however it is important to understand how these producers protect their relationship with their audience and maintain their standards. It is the audience that gives these media value and it is the audience that advertisers will pay to communicate with. But what the audience wants and what is most attractive to advertisers could be two different things, and conflict could be damaging to the audience or the advertiser, or both. Ultimately, it is likely to be most damaging to the reputation of the media producer. Media producers need to be protective of their audience, as it is the audience from which they create their value to advertisers. Producers cannot afford to alienate their audience, even if it would satisfy funding sources. This is something Hyne has considered in relation to including skiing into his snowboard media. In 2013, Hyne featured world renowned New Zealand freestyle skier Jossi Wells in an episode of *Diaries Down Under*. Traditionally, there has been tension between skiers and snowboarders, so the use of a skier in a snowboard video could be considered confrontational to some in the audience, and Hyne stated that it was "something we thought about a lot." After consideration, Hyne decided to go ahead with the episode, as Wells was a New Zealander performing at an incredibly high standard, achieving in world-wide competitions, and someone who was well-supported by the snow community. The episode also showcased Wells as a cross-over athlete, with footage displayed of him snowboarding and skateboarding, as well as

skiing. Including more skiing footage in his media could be financially beneficial to Hyne. As some of his advertisers are tourism-based, the idea of integrating skiing into his media in an ongoing fashion was likely to be attractive to them, potentially opening a new ski-based audience for tourism promotion. Hyne explains that the opportunity would be tempting, but ultimately too potentially damaging to his existing audience to include skiing on a regular basis and he sees the inclusion of Wells as a unique experience. Anything that could cause disconnection from the audience could be disastrous, as the audience is essential for media sharing. Hyne discusses that "it would be amazing to have a bit more skiing footage because we're appealing to the snow community in Australia as a whole. But as soon as we start integrating skiing into videos we take away from that core snowboarding community where a lot of the distribution comes through." Damage to the relationship with the existing snowboarding audience could have an impact on how spreadable his videos were. If the snowboarding audience had an adverse reaction to the inclusion of skiers they would be unlikely to endorse those videos by spreading them to their social networks. This example demonstrates the issues a niche media producer must consider when developing an episode. The audience is so crucial to the distribution of the videos that all ideas and themes for episodes must be considered specifically in terms of viewer impact.

Using celebrity and credibility

One reason audiences may connect with subcultural media is because they personally identify with those that appear in it. The talent of the featured snowboarders and their standing within the snowboard community mean the audience connect and relate to them. For this reason, it can be beneficial for their media when a producer has respect and status as a snowboarder within the subculture. Their recognition and reputation as participants creates a celebrity status that extends into their media. They are influential leaders within the subculture possessing what Bourdieu (1984) describes as cultural capital. For two of the interviewees, their profile in the snowboarding subculture plays a part in establishing credibility with the audience. Hollis and Hyne are arguably two of the most identifiable participants and personalities in New Zealand snowboarding. Hollis notes that his status as a snowboarder undoubtedly helped his transition into media, as "if I hadn't got that high up on the snow, I wouldn't have had anything at all." Yet Hollis also notes that his primary motivation is to publish snowboard content showcasing New Zealand snowboarders and help them gain exposure. Doing this has resulted in his own profile being promoted by extension, so that he gained recognition from other snowboarders, and "through all the presenting I had become a face. I'm not blowing my own trumpet but [before my videos] there was no physical face for snowboarding and then it was like 'oh, you're Robett.'"

The audience connect with talented snowboarders in an aspirational sense. These snowboarders push the boundaries of what is thought to be possible through progressive riding, which they hope will astound the audience. As a result, the success of media can depend on the level of riders that feature in it. The audience is not only watching because they want to see New Zealand snowboarding; they are also connecting with the snowboarders themselves. The audience becomes fans of the snowboarders featured, much the same as becoming fans of musicians or actors. Hollis states he witnessed this growth first hand since the mid-2000s, both as a featured athlete and presenter. He has also seen the audience connect with other snowboarders when he organised public launches and community engagement events, for example "we did a Welcome to Winter party in Christchurch and then one down in Wanaka and the thing that was really surreal was [the audience] get inspired by touching and seeing these pros and seeing these videos and whatever. They're like 'I want to see Will Jackways.'" Similarly, Hyne has launched various media, such as DVDs, videos, and web episodes, in Queenstown through a launch event in a supportive, sometimes sponsoring, bar or night club. He explains that he had been overwhelmed at the backing by the snow community, as they support the event and connect with the personalities involved: "We would get almost every staff member off the mountains coming, it seems. Even if it's a Thursday night. I remember one [launch] we packed the place out and there was quite a bit of hype," explains Hyne. Part of the excitement was a desire by New Zealand snowboarders to support the New Zealand snowboard scene and the development of uniquely New Zealand snowboard media. There was a genuine enthusiasm in being able to support something based within a subculture they felt so passionate about. In reference to one of the first full-length DVDs he was involved with, produced by business partner Ben Ryan, Hyne states the launch party was packed with supporters. The crowd were excited to see and support the New Zealand snowboard scene documented as "nobody had seen a movie with New Zealanders before."
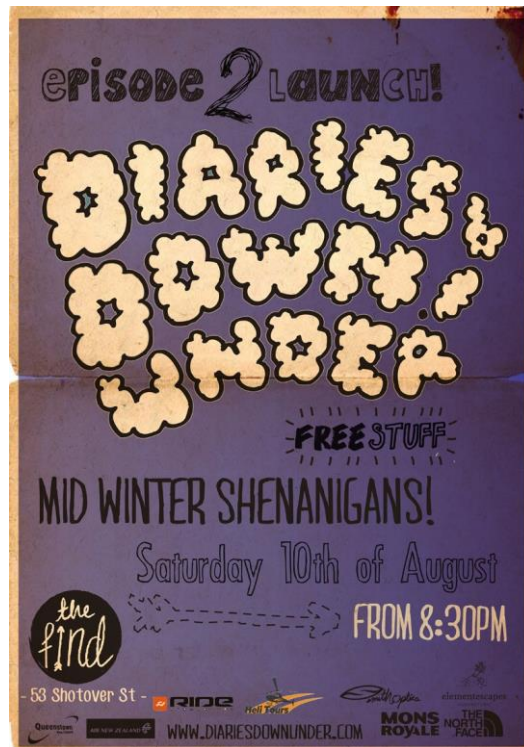
Figure 4 – A poster advertising a Dairies Down Under episode launch party

The credibility, profile and esteem of a snowboarder can be used to promote snowboard media to a bigger audience. In regards to the Internet, snowboarding media that features a rider of prominence can record significantly higher views than media that does not, as it is sought after by the viewing audience. As the audience connects with certain snowboarders, they will seek out other media in which that rider also appears. Through his many years as a well-established and recognisable snowboarder, photographer and videographer, Riley Bathurst is well connected in the snowboarding community. Bathurst has filmed with most of New Zealand's best snowboarders and often works with well-known and highly respected New Zealand snowboard veteran, Will Jackways. As a result, when Bathurst publishes videos online featuring Jackways, he is confident the video will gain a lot of attention. Bathurst explained that "as soon as you put Will Jackways on something you get a lot [of views]. I've worked with Will a lot and as soon as you put his name on something it pumps it up." Reflecting further on how status affects viewership, Bathurst highlights that when making web videos on snowboarding a media producer needs to be conscious of the level of publicity the featured athletes have. Well-known riders are likely to have an already established audience, as has been outlined, but new riders can also be beneficial to showcase, particularly as they are keen to self-promote their inclusion in a video, as Bathurst notes

There's someone that's had pretty much no media out and are skiing or snowboarding reasonably well. They're doing good but they've never been working with all the professional photographers and filmers. As soon as you put the first thing of them out, all of their friends and people that they know, you'll instantly get 500 hits from that without thinking, without it really even being that good.

This highlights that, to connect with the audience, niche media producers showcase snowboarders that are recognisable to the snowboarding community. The audience will seek and share media that features snowboarders that are familiar to them. There is also an advantage to launching media featuring an unknown snowboarder, as people connected to that snowboarder will support them by spreading those videos through their networks.

Providing visibility for snowboarders and personal sponsorship

Elite snowboarders rely on sponsorship and endorsement agreements in order to support their progression and lifestyle. Sponsorship may include payment and cost reimbursement, travel and accommodation support, ski field passes, and free or reduced price snowboarding equipment and associated fashions, such as casual clothing, watches, and shoes. Snowboarding can be an expensive activity and many committed snowboarders rely on sponsorship support. In return, sponsors expect to leverage visibility through their association with snowboarding athletes. The advantage of this visibility to sponsors is a reinforced connection to the snowboard community through the association with the snowboarder. It helps sponsors integrate their brand into the subculture; the brand is trusted because it is seen to be actively supporting snowboarding athletes and personalities. Visibility can come from their supported athletes' high placings in national and international competitions and attention gained on ski fields through exceptional ability. More likely, snowboarder visibility comes through inclusion in media, either in coverage by journalists, editors and producers, or through featuring in advertising. In regards to advertising, snowboarders are often expected to provide sponsors with photographs suitable for use in advertisements. As discussed in the literature review, some international action sport athletes have made profitable careers through sponsorship deals. For the majority of New Zealand snowboarders the advantages are more functional, providing them with essential equipment, aiding them to travel to competitions, and helping to pay living costs. Bathurst states that not many Kiwi snowboarders make a significant living from their riding, as "the New Zealand sponsorship thing is all pretty loose. There are very few people getting a lot out of it [who] have large scale commitments." Bathurst states that, despite the loose arrangement, in order to continue to receive the benefits of sponsorship, there could be a lot

of pressure on snowboarders, as they were "expected to be everywhere all the time and at least getting photos back to your sponsors and stuff, whether they're going to buy them or not. And they need to know you're going to be in this magazine and what you're doing and stuff."

Figure 5 – Snowboarder Ryan Tiene features in an episode of *Diaries Down Under*. His sponsor, DC, is prominently displayed on the base of his snowboard.

Increasingly, the responsibility is on the snowboarder to get media coverage to satisfy their commitment to their sponsors. In this respect, snowboarding media producers have the ability to provide the platform for increased exposure for the athlete. Showcasing a snowboard athlete can help to launch their career and increase their profile. Not only can this satisfy their current commitment to their sponsors but increasing exposure can help with renegotiation of sponsorship contracts and attract new sponsors for additional support, or to replace others. The interviewees were asked if they were aware that they were supporting the snowboarding community by providing a platform for sponsored snowboarders to gain or increase exposure. All responded that they were aware they were providing a platform. Bathurst, however, also states there is more opportunity to help a snowboarder when he is working on a self-initiated project as there are not the same responsibilities as there are when working on a contracted job, "particularly when you are producing something from the start, rather than just submitting to a magazine or submitting to a video series. That's when you can really give someone something new that can be different to everything else." Nick Hyne observes that because media offers such a platform for exposure, it is advantageous for snowboarders to create on-going relationships with snowboarding media producers as it can give them certainty about the up-coming winter season. Snowboarders then

have the ability to present a confirmed media schedule to their sponsors in advance. Hyne explains that "when guys like Nick Brown [professional NZ snowboarder, and Hyne's friend and long-time collaborator] go to their sponsors and they say 'what are your plans for the season?' He'll be going 'I'm going to be filming five episodes of *Diaries Down Under* which gets this much exposure.'" This gives the sponsor certainty about exposure levels for their riders who are promoting their products during the season.

While the producers are keen to help give snowboarders exposure, what can govern which snowboarders feature in media is the level of support the sponsors directly give to the cost of production. For the purpose of this research, a snowboarder's personal sponsor is not considered an advertiser in the media, unless that sponsor also provides support for the producer, either through some level of funding or assistance. Some media published by the interviewees is funded partially or exclusively by an external party, for example a snowboard manufacturer funding a media project to highlight their products and associated sponsored snowboarders. This is a way for the snowboarder's sponsors to guarantee exposure. If external organisations are paying for the media they will not only require their sponsored snowboarders to appear prominently, they are also unfavourable towards the appearance of other snowboarders who are not part of their team. As a result, a snowboarding media producer can be restricted on which snowboarders they can work with on certain projects. Riley Bathurst explained that it is a simplistic equation: "If company X is actually paying for the project they want [their snowboarders] in there in the first place," he claims. Hyne notes that, while funding is essential to the operation of his business, it can limit what he produces and who features in it, "it's pretty crazy because a lot of those people they can't ride with their friends. They have to stay with that film crew." Accepting advertising and funding can place restrictions on niche media producers and result in a loss of creative freedom.

In situations where external funders have a vested interest in media output, wishing to make sure any media produced is of high quality and, therefore represents their brand in a favourable light, good relationships can be beneficial to a media producer. Trust is an essential element and a favourable history can grant the media producer more freedom and flexibility with a project. Restrictions on who can feature can impact on the goal of capturing the best snowboarding possible, but trust and a good relationship may afford the media maker some flexibility so that they can choose to add some other snowboarders. Hyne observes that the New Zealand snowboarding scene is not big enough to segment the best riders into smaller groups based on sponsorship arrangements, as this can dilute the quality of the media created. To create video episodes that will

strongly connect with audiences, producers need the freedom to work with the best snowboarders. Uniquely, Hyne is affected twice in this arrangement, as he is both a media producer and one of the sponsored snowboarders featuring in videos. Furthermore, his personal sponsors are helping to fund his media. But such is the strength of the relationship with his sponsors, he is given a certain level of artistic freedom to create the best media possible, so that "we've been focused on getting the best riders involved and not worrying too much about [competing sponsorships]. My sponsors have been pretty understanding about it." Bathurst believes that the best videos are made when the best snowboarders are involved. Furthermore, years of working in the New Zealand snowboarding industry has meant he is well connected, and "everyone sort of knows everyone anyway. You generally don't go that far outside your circle." Through his experiences he has a solid knowledge of which snowboarders are the easiest to work with and produce the best results. In this way, Bathurst is primarily concerned with filming the best snowboarders who he is confident are likely to be able to perform the highest quality of tricks when required. Working with unknown snowboarders could mean more time filming footage and even less quality results, resulting in higher production costs and a lower standard of video. For these reasons, filming industry-funded videos can be more restricting and difficult for a producer than filming a self-initiated project with snowboarders they have experience working with.

A clearer illustration of how snowboarders can gain visibility through subcultural niche media can be seen by closely investigating a sample of the web-video episodes produced by the three interviewees.

	Snow Show	The Clubbies	Dairies Down Under
No. of different riders per episode	9	5	9
Sponsors (clearly visible - average)	15	9	16

In *The Clubbies* series, Bathurst chose to work with a small number of snowboarders (5), most of whom featured in every episode. This illustrates that the narrative of the series was about showcasing what those smaller club ski fields mean to a group of friends. It was intended as a representation of their experiences rather than a general representation of New Zealand snowboarding. However, it still featured sponsored snowboarders and was supported by some

snowboarding brands. So there were exposure advantages for both riders and sponsors. There is an average of nine clearly identifiable sponsor's logos or products per episode; of which Michael McCloy's boldly branded Analog brand snowboard pants featured most prominently. *Diaries Down Under* featured more snowboarders (9) than *The Clubbies*. Again, Hyne chose to film regularly with many of the same snowboarders, although he did often have guest riders accompany them. The snowboarders were usually some of the most identifiable snowboarders in New Zealand. Along with Hyne and Nick Brown, Jake Koia, Mitch Brown and Alex Stewart also appear in the video sample. As might be expected, having more snowboarders in each episode resulted in a higher rate of identifiable sponsors logos or products, an average of 16 viewable in each episode.

Snow Show also had a high number of different snowboarders feature over the sampled episodes (9). Had the sample size been bigger it is likely that more snowboarders would feature throughout the series than in the media produced by the other interviewees. The narrative of *Snow Show* is quite different to *The Clubbies* and *Diaries Down Under* in that it often features a different set of snowboarders from week to week, both as riders and presenters. Hollis is happy to give away a certain amount of control to others to help them gain exposure: "I'm not going to be 50 standing by a rail and being like 'hey jibber Johnny. What was that back3 on tail press?' My goal now is that I don't even want the 10 year old or 13 year old to even know who I am," states Hollis. This statement highlights an issue of relevance to the audience. If the basis for the video series is to showcase the best snowboarders of the moment in order to make an impact and have credibility with the audience, then, as he gets older, he may not be as significant as a participant. This perspective speaks to Hollis' commitment to make the best videos possible. Ultimately, it also enables Hollis to have more episodes produced of *Snow Show* each season as he can have several episodes being filmed by different people at the same time. He is enthusiastic about giving the opportunity to gain visibility to others: "We've delegated so much stuff out. All the grommies and stuff, they're like 'we're gonna do some filming' and stuff. I'm like 'yeah bro. Get up there, do damage. Get it done'. They know when they film with us we get their footage up and they take that link and email it to their sponsor and show them what they're doing." As an illustration of this, I noted an average of 15 identifiable sponsors' logos or products per episode. Giving control over to the snowboarders featured in the episodes provides the opportunity for them to self-promote, which could explain the higher average recorded. Additionally, the changing cast gives Hollis' videos a community feel, as each episode is quite different to the last.

The difficult nature of filming snowboarding

The cultural capital of snowboarding video producers hinges on the quality of the videos they produce, particularly in view of the complicated process of filming snowboarding. Audience connection and media spreading depend on producers creating engaging, even amazing, videos. The interviewees have noted that the best action footage makes it into the final edit of their videos. However, capturing high quality snowboarding footage is not an easy process. One of the most difficult elements of producing snowboarding media is capturing enough usable material. Filming a snowboarder completing a complicated trick is difficult because the athlete needs to be able to perform on cue. In addition, simply getting to the location and setting up the equipment can be difficult, and easily affected by changeable weather and light levels, as cloudy conditions make visibility difficult. The snow conditions need to be such that the snowboarder is confident in attempting a trick and it looks attractive to the viewer. Strong winds can make balancing and landing difficult for the snowboarder, as well as difficult for the camera operator to film or photograph. Hyne argues that filming snowboarding is:

Literally the hardest thing. Not only do you have to make everything look good when it isn't necessarily that great, even if you're only going up to the mountain to shoot scenic stuff, it's still reasonably hard to access and lug in gear, get the right conditions and the light, things like that. Winter especially, there's not much light. Then you have to actually land a trick. Usually we're going to want something that's going to have an impact. So it's not going to be the easiest trick necessarily.

Bathurst shares a similar view. He points out that when creating visual snowboarding media a producer can only use the footage they were able to shoot. A project may start out with a certain ideal, but the temperamental nature of weather conditions, coupled with tight time restrictions, can mean living up to that ideal is not always possible. Compromises may be required when things are not working effectively. "Everyone needs to know that, ok, this is working here and now," states Bathurst. He notes that a snowboard videographer must be adaptable. When a project requires a certain style of snowboarding or must be shot at a certain location, success can depend on the weather. With the addition of an imposing deadline, a videographer or photographer may be required to make do with what they were able to shoot. Bathurst provides the following illustration:

[Media funders] tell you that you have a [terrain park] shoot that's due on Tuesday so you have to go shoot it that day, but it's a [fresh snow] day and you've got someone that's

really good at riding [fresh snow] and you can get shots that you wouldn't get on another opportunity. That's when you'll drop down and do, not bad work, but you'll do [the terrain park shoot] that's less than what you think would be good in terms of snowboarding.

This places a media producer in a difficult position where they must choose whether to continue pursuing the project as planned or adapt to a changing situation in order to collect the best possible action footage. Fresh snow days in New Zealand are not particularly common, yet terrain parks are groomed nightly. Bathurst's example highlighted the strain a media producer can be under when having to provide a media product exactly as a paying customer has asked for when something unique is simultaneously occurring. Bathurst also provided an example of what can happen when a film maker adapts to a changing situation. He identified, on one occasion, while filming an externally funded project, changing conditions compromised the footage he was shooting. Faced with the predicament of a deteriorating situation he opted to stop what he was doing and travel to another destination where the snow and weather were reportedly better. In transit, he communicated the changes to the project funder. Bathurst states he "finished filming that and drove half way to Ohau. I knew [the funder] was [out of the country] so I gave him a text and said "I'm halfway to Ohau, filming with Will J. I'll have it to you in about a week or so." The change of plan was not well received by the funder, who required the footage to fulfil obligations of his own. Bathurst was challenged on his decision to change the conditions of the agreement. Yet, Bathurst felt strongly that it was the right decision. He decided to continue with the revised plan, deciding that if the funding was withdrawn due to the changes made he would absorb the cost personally and use the footage for his own projects. After filming concluded he did two separate edits, one with the funder's insignia included, as well as an introduction from the presenter, and a separate edit that he could use for his own purposes. On this occasion, Bathurst's instincts proved correct and, upon viewing the edit, the funder was satisfied and payment was made as agreed. Yet this highlights one of the major strains on these snowboard videographers. While capturing and publishing the best action footage possible is their primary intention, difficulties arising through changing weather can seriously impact their ability to do so. Comprise may be required, yet that compromise affects others, including those who are paying for it.

Challenges with filming snowboarders as athletes and presenters

In addition to the difficulties in capturing high quality snowboard footage in changeable and extreme environments, the abilities of the videographer to capture the footage and of the snowboarders to perform can further impact on success. The videographer must sum up the best angles and vantage

points in order to best frame a trick, person or location. This might mean the videographer must access difficult terrain in order to perfectly capture the shot. There is a rewarding sense of achievement when they are able to capture high quality footage. Hyne states that "if you do get something on film it's so rewarding because it's so hard to achieve." Bathurst identifies that the vision of the videographer is crucially important to capturing the best footage and that how the footage is captured can be as important as the activity itself. Understanding how the footage will look when edited and displayed requires visualisation from the producer. Bathurst identifies:

> It's all a big artwork to work with the rider, and how the background is going to work in
> with the rider, you know, and they can do the most amazing trick in the world and you can
> make it look shit or you can make it look awesome even if it wasn't all that good. So it's all
> just about working with everyone and the artistic vision of whatever the hell you're doing.

In addition, the ability of the snowboarder to take direction, communicate their plans and perform difficult manoeuvres on cue is vital to success. If the cameras are set on a certain feature or spot then the athlete must perform on that spot, usually attempting a trick agreed on to match the theme of the media. Failing to comply with this can make filming a time-consuming, frustrating and expensive undertaking and can compromise the quality of the video filmed. Focusing on the role of the snowboarder in filming media, Hyne highlighted the importance of working with experienced athletes and the need for clear communication and understanding. When working with an international snow athlete for an episode of *Diaries Down Under*, for example, Hyne encountered problems as he tried to direct the athlete. A lack of experience in performing for the camera made it difficult to establish a clear understanding of what trick the athlete was going to perform and where. As Hyne described, the rider "didn't quite get the concept of there's a job to be done and I need to let [the filmer] know when I'm going to do this trick, and how and why. We had a little bit of a frustrating time with him." It is difficult to execute an episode plan without compliance; however snowboarders by nature can be free spirited. A characteristic that draws participants to snowboarding, like many action sports, is the freedom from structure and rules (Bennett et al, 2003). Ultimately, a snowboard video producer needs patience and flexibility and a preparedness to adapt to changing situations. Hollis notes that with all the best intentions some media creations still do not live up to the original vision. A media producer has to accept that and, perhaps more importantly, rely on the trust developed with the audience that they will also accept that. He states "I don't give a shit if we fail, but you know that I'm trying. So even though we're smaller and we stuff up, at least I'm being pro-active and trying to do something."

On some occasions in snowboard visual media, a high profile snowboarder not only appears as a participant in the action shots of these videos; they can also be used as a presenter. This role requires them to be engaging and good communicators. In some cases the producer is taking a considerable leap of faith, as the athlete may not have had any professional training or experience in being a presenter. Bathurst notes that snowboarders and skiers can have naturally engaging characters beneficial to roles as presenters, but usually they don't have experience in talking to a camera. As a result, a videographer needs to have a certain amount of patience and be flexible in the way they use the footage collected. Moreover, it is vital to capture the footage correctly when the athlete-presenter does get it right, as they may not be able to repeat the performance in exactly the same way again. Reflecting on a particular example of this, Bathurst described attempting to work with two "amazing skiers [who] are hilariously funny on video but they are very hard to capture in the right way. They'll do things ten times, screw it up nine of them and only ever do it right once and they can't repeat it because they don't know what they're saying." This is an illustration of a clash between the producer's obligation to supply a video within a timeframe, perhaps for a paying client or for publication on a certain date, and the difficulty of filming free-spirited snow-sport participants. It places the producer in a difficult situation as they may have to either disappoint a customer by producing a lower quality video with the footage they have, or attempt to take control of the presenters and push them to be more professional.

Because of how difficult it is to access terrain, the changing weather conditions, and the abilities of both the videographer and the athlete, even with the best intentions, difficulties during the production stages can result in footage that differs from the original vision. A snowboarding media producer is required to be flexible in their approach and compromise may be required in order to produce and publish an episode by a certain date. There are numerous factors that can affect the quality of the episode and those difficulties may not be noted or appreciated by the audience. Bathurst considers that viewers are pretty tolerant of media that may be perceived as lower than expected quality because of these issues. He believes that good media makes a memorable impression, while other media goes past somewhat unnoticed. Aside from producing media, he also considers himself part of the audience and is a keen viewer of snowboard media. He pointed out that "I'll watch a lot of other snowboard media and I don't feel let down if someone doesn't make something good. But it's always really interesting to see who is going out of their way to make something good and who's just slamming something together and getting it out there." This illustrates the distinction that can be made between a really good video and something mediocre. A

good video can inspire the viewer, while something mediocre may not elicit a response, or could even annoy or anger a viewer if thought to be too low quality. What is important to the audience is to connect to the media in an aspirational sense and reflect on the snowboarding identity (Woerman, 2012). The audience sees what is happening in snowboarding media and wants to connect with it, even aspiring to recreate or participate in it. "That's what we're going for. That vicarious living," Hyne claims. He identified that the aim of *Diaries Down Under* was to make snowboard media that encouraged snowboarders to go snowboarding.

This chapter explored the progression of Nick Hyne, Riley Bathurst and Robett Hollis as they moved from being snowboard participants to media producers. This transition is important as it illustrates that they are grounded in the principles and beliefs of the snowboard subculture through years of involvement as participants. Moreover, they claim their loyalty to the subculture governs the content of their videos. They see themselves as capturing an accurate account of New Zealand snowboarding and providing a platform for snowboarders to gain visibility. Creating these videos, however, is a complicated and costly affair. Extensive travel, changing weather and the abilities of both snowboarder and producer make capturing videos difficult. Advertising is identified as a way to supplement income and the next chapter explores the how advertising is incorporated into snowboard videos and what compromises occur as the result of advertising inclusion.

Chapter five: Advertising and niche snowboard media

"I had to straight swap a shot that was better out for something that had the logo on it just because that was what they needed and they paid x amount of dollars to have the logo in every edit and stuff."
Riley Bathurst

Advertising: finding a balance between revenue and reality

Media that is successful in attracting an audience can profit from that success by incorporating paid advertising. As discussed in the previous chapter, capturing snowboarding video footage can be expensive. Accepting payment from external organisations for displaying logos and promotional messaging and/or the placement of products or services, subsidises the production costs (de Smet & Vanormelingen, 2011). Nick Hyne, Robett Hollis, and Riley Bathurst all use advertising as a way of either raising money or gaining support (accommodation, travel, access to ski fields, for example) for their productions. All three of the media producers publish much of their media online, which the audience can view without charge. Yet, accepting advertising into media can compromise what is produced. Advertising support comes with expectations from the advertisers for their branding, products and services, and logo to be prominently portrayed in a way consistent with their other promotional activities. In addition to these specific branding requirements, an advertiser may expect an amount of control over media prior to publication and is likely to object to anything that could cause controversy or have an adverse effect on their brand. Facilitating this compromise can change media from the original vision of the producer. In regards to snowboarding videos, this could mean restrictions on which locations and destinations appear. Or it might place limits on who can feature in the video and for how long. There may be a requirement for products or logos to appear a certain number of times and be easily identifiable. It might mean producers cannot use supporting music that could be interpreted as offensive and that anyone interviewed must choose their words carefully. This could be damaging to subcultural media, as it could sanitise the media in a way that does not resonate with the audience. The appearance of corporate messaging could antagonise the audience (Humphreys, 2003). Overtly corporate messaging and aggressive advertising could be interpreted as 'selling out', or it could have an effect on the perceived quality of the media leaving the audience feeling unsatisfied and looking for alternatives. Ultimately, this impacts on the producer's credibility and status within the subculture and damages their cultural capital, as they are perceived to be not as relevant or topical as before. In order to keep their credibility, media producers need to display caution and seek an ultimately acceptable level of promotion that will not damage their relationship with the audience. Yet, it may not be immediately obvious how the audience will react to advertising or how much is too much until after the advertising has appeared,

by which time it could be too late. Furthermore, the advertiser may be applying pressure to maximise their investment. A producer may only have their own gut-instinct to govern their decision making, trusting that they know their audience well enough to predict the audience's response. These decisions can force a producer to choose between making money and protecting their reputation.

As a media producer, Robett Hollis is aware of the compromising affect advertising can have on media and is also aware of the potential damage this compromise could cause. Primarily, his business needs revenue to continue to operate so revenue accumulation is important to him. As a result, Hollis states that he is eager to entertain any possible relationships with other businesses that could be mutually beneficial: "We're looking to hook up with as many different partnerships as possible to get different kinds of placements on the site, different types of placements on shows, different people creating content. Anywhere online basically to clip the ticket with it." This is particularly important in a business environment where organisations are tightening advertising and promotional budgets, as "we are at the mercy of the current economic environment." But key to the arrangement is the ability to integrate advertising into the media in a complementary way. Having laboured to establish a dedicated audience he is aware that recklessly selling space in his media could prompt an adverse reaction from that audience. A loss in trust could stop audience members watching the videos. This results in a lower number of views per video, which is a tangible way to show advertisers the size of audience they are paying to promote to. Lower view figures may impact the ability to attract further advertising revenue. Caution and consideration is required, explains Hollis:

> You have to set the bar where you don't let anything compromise your core message of what you are doing and why you are doing it. It's a very fine line, but I don't think we've ever wasted content with blah messaging to the point where people would say 'Robett's sold out.' Because as soon as we do one time, and it's like 'look at me drink this smoothie' we're done. And it's the hardest thing to do because the niche [audience] that [advertisers] want is so core and so committed. It's only one extra syllable the wrong way and you're shit. It's one logo just a bit too much to the middle and zooming in a bit too close and you're shit. They have to trust the creative control and we don't let anyone tell us what to do. We have to say 'if we're doing this, this is how we're doing this.' It's our way or the highway because we're not jeopardising our credibility from the last 10 years so you can sell more happy snacks.

Having a clear policy to unwaveringly defend media output is one solution, but the practicalities of doing so could be more difficult in practice. It is likely that compromise will be required in some advertising arrangements. Hyne explained that his aim is to produce a high-quality media product and remain loyal to his audience. Yet where Hollis takes an aggressive approach towards compromise, Hyne is more open to discussion. His guiding principal is that the episode's storyline is the most important element for his videos, so that including advertising means "just walking the fine line." Hyne, too, feels compelled to protect his videos and, by extension, his own reputation and connection with the audience. He states "It's hard. What we actually have with Diaries is an avenue to promote certain activities, but you can't make it into a commercial. You have to integrate it into the content. We'll walk a fine line between keeping the [advertisers] happy and keeping the core audience happy and keeping a good solid story together without making it seem too cheesy." While Hyne was protective of *Diaries Down Under* and its audience, he felt there were opportunities to integrate advertising and promotions into the episodes. Like Hollis, he felt the key to successfully adding advertising was finding ways to incorporate it into an episode in a way that complements the storyline. Advertising that appears to be forced in or unrelated to the storyline could be seen as unwelcome by the audience. Misplaced or overly-aggressive advertising could be interpreted by the audience as an attempt to cash in on growing popularity because subcultural audiences have an expectation that the brands that are advertising in subcultural media have a genuine connection to the activities of that subculture (de Burgh-Woodman and Brace-Govan, 2006) and because of the anti-mainstream basis of action sport subcultures (Wheaton, 2003). Unwelcome or mismatched advertising from brands viewed by the audience as unattached to the subculture could cause great offense and, ultimately, push the audience away. This represents a potentially damaging predicament to a media producer. Making an incorrect decision about incorporating an advertiser and/or doing so in the wrong way could undermine the reputation of the videos. The decision on whether to accept an advertiser is often made on how well the product or brand can be integrated into the episode. Hollis will accept an advertiser if it fits in with an episode's story line: "When [advertisers] say they would like to promote this product, I think 'how can we organically integrate that into content.' It's as simple as that because it's not about fighting it into their face. Do we lose some money by having this stance? Yes. But the value of our business stays credible by keeping it this way." This policy can cause conflict. Hollis notes that some business people could be taken aback when faced with such a blunt response.

Producing client funded media, compromise of standards, and advertising inclusion

In broad terms, the producers focused on in this thesis create two forms of snowboard media: self-initiated projects and client funded projects. *The Clubbies*, *Snow Show* and *Diaries Down Under* are self-initiated projects, as the producers created them initially as personal projects and then sourced advertising revenue to cover costs and make them profitable. Yet, all three producers are also available for hire to film and promote client funded projects, such as specific snowboard manufacturer's videos.

Figure 6 – An example of producer self-promotion during a video. Screenshot from *The Clubbies*.

Media producers have more control over self-initiated projects than those that are initiated and funded by clients and advertisers. These funded projects are an important source of income for media producers, so it is vital that the interviewees are careful to maintain a reputation for reliability in order to generate repeat business. All three producers offer media services to clients, which can include web-based media, graphic design, digital filming/editing and promotional videos. In addition to communicating to the subculture, their projects also act as a shop-window by displaying their skills to interested clients. This client-based media work can form the backbone of their business's income stream. This can also mean that self-initiated projects may make way for profitable opportunities. Bathurst explained that "in general, it's still a job. I'll sit there and work half the night because it's still a job. This week I could have gone and got shots all week because everyone has been at the mountains, but I had to be editing so I couldn't be shooting. That's just the reality of working; stuff has to be done." Competition for business increases pressure on these media producers. While production of niche snowboard media is limited, the interviewees focused on in this research are not the only producers in New Zealand. Clients and advertisers can choose between different producers and, therefore, may choose to

work with the producer who is most likely to be accommodating of their requests. The pressure of competition and the need for income may force a producer to challenge their own ideals in order to compete with others and survive (Min & Kim, 2012). Bathurst states that when he initiates his own projects he has more creative control, but when he is commissioned to produce a project initiated and funded completely by an advertiser he needs to provide exactly what they paid for. As a result, the standards he has in regards to the quality and style for his self-initiated projects may not be applied to projects exclusively funded by an external party. These projects are examples of what Dix and Phau (2009) term sponsored journalism and advertiser-produced programming. It is also termed stealth marketing by Rinallo *et al.* (2013), which is identified as any example of an organisation creating and publishing an advertisement which looks like media content. Often it is more likely that what the client (advertiser) pays for is what they get, even if the control they impose lessens the overall quality of the media produced. Explaining the distinction, Bathurst explains:

> *The Clubbies* was quite loose around sponsorship; we didn't have too many straight obligations to
> film. It was never written that we had to have 15 seconds of this logo on and five seconds of this.
> But we did for [client funded project], which I just filmed. So I was going back through and cutting
> and actually reducing the quality of the edit to make sure that I had the right number of branding
> shots in there. I had to straight swap a shot that was better out for something that had the logo on
> it just because that was what they needed and they paid x-amount of dollars to have the logo in
> every edit and stuff.

Bathurst's story of editing out a higher quality action shot for a lower quality option provides evidence that advertising and funding pressures can affect the moving shots of snowboarding. The interviewees noted, however, that this is not a common experience and that advertisers can see more value in other parts of the videos. Usually, the advertisers' logos will be displayed at the beginning and end of each episode. This gives each logo a moment of prominence without sharing the space with anything else and, ultimately, does not detract from the content. Other forms of advertising can feature during the episodes. Often the shots between the snowboarding action sequences provide the best opportunity for visibility. This is particularly evident in relation to product placement, for example by showing an advertiser's product, such as a snowboard or goggles, in use by a rider or on display during an episode. There is also the opportunity for stealth marketing, which attempts to disguise the marketing as media, and hybrid messaging, which incorporates advertising messaging into community-styled media and social spaces.

Some of the expectations an advertiser will have is that their logo and products be clearly visible in the scenes between those of snowboarding action. Unless a logo is particularly bold or the footage is significantly slowed down, it can be difficult to identify a brand, logo, message or product when an athlete is performing a trick. Such is the speed and level of movement in snowboarding; it is hard to recognise what jacket the rider is wearing, what boots they have, or what gloves they have on. Yet, the moments where the snowboarder is not moving, which includes footage of them planning, preparing and assessing conditions, mentally focusing

before performing a trick or mountain descent, relaxing on or off the mountain, or even addressing the camera as a presenter, give far more prominence to logos and products on display. These moments that Hyne referred to as lifestyle shots enable greater visibility and identification than action shots. Hyne states that, generally, when editing an episode, he is able to use any action footage he likes and that advertisers are keener on lifestyle shot inclusion, where he is able to give prominence to an advertiser with close up shots of the advertiser's product or logo:

If [a particular snowboard equipment brand] is sponsoring the series then it's good to get a close-up shot of the face because [with] goggles, there's usually quite prominent branding right on the side of the face. And other little things, like a glove sponsor. Little things like that. But if [a particular snowboard manufacturer] weren't sponsoring it we wouldn't put in a close up of someone zipping up a glove because that would annoy the other sponsors. But with action shots we just put in the best stuff.

Figure 7 - A snowboarder (Gretchen Bleiler) wears Oakley snowboarding goggles displaying the prominent and identifiable 'O' logo. Photo Daniel Huerlimann.

In regards to self-initiated productions, this illustrates a solution to embedding advertising into snowboard videos. Essentially, the action footage and advertising are separated. The producer has the freedom to feature the best action footage in the hopes of connecting with and entertaining the audience, thus encouraging distribution through spreading behaviour. In-between action shots, moments of promotional benefit, such as displayed logos or identifiable products, are edited in to satisfy advertising commitments. The producer aims to balance the two and, through creative control, publish a video befitting their reputation. However, Bathurst's reflection illustrates that the same solution and creative control does not seem to exist in client funded projects, where he has to edit out better quality action footage and replace it with lower quality shots in order to better satisfy the client. This indicates that client funded videos can potentially be more damaging to a producer's

cultural capital than self-initiated projects because more comprise could be required, which could lower the quality. Yet, compromise can still be required in self-initiated projects, as advertisers are paying for promotional exposure. Moreover, advertisers from inside the snowboarding subculture are more aware of when their competitors' logos, products and sponsored snowboarders appear in a video. A rival competitor's logo being shown more prominently than that of the paying advertiser can cause friction. Hyne encountered this with an episode of Japan Journals, another of his video series, when advertiser confronted him, asking: "is this sponsor paying because they're getting a lot of exposure? It was quite obvious in that shot that you had a clear logo on your glove and we didn't get any proper sticker placement in the episode." In order to keep advertisers and funders satisfied, producers need to be conscious of not overly promoting their competitors. The resulting compromise may mean that some high-quality footage cannot be used.

The reputation of the media producers themselves can be viewed as an endorsement of their media business. As one of New Zealand's most recognisable snowboarders and media personalities, Hyne is aware that his personal brand and reputation adds value to his media business. Hyne's value to his advertisers is his cultural capital in the snowboarding community and his ability to communicate with an audience that the advertisers themselves do not have esteem with, or are even unfamiliar with. He has kept a core set of advertisers on-board for a number of years, many of which are mainstream businesses operating outside the snowboarding subculture, and the resulting trust developed has given him freedom to incorporate advertising and promotion in ways he sees to be the best fit for the media: "You make sure you become your own brand. You have a reputation and if you're known as someone who is useless then probably you're not going to be attractive to clients. But a lot of it is just building up that rapport with everyone in the industry and basically just having a good name for yourself." With the snowboarding industry in New Zealand being relatively insular, a person's reputation and history, as a snowboarder or business owner (or both), either positive or negative, circulates quickly and can have an effect on future dealings and projects. Hyne finds that "having that endorsement helps to generate more business. There is a roll on effect where positive encounters are communicated between businesses leading to new opportunities." Similarly, Hollis states that the advertisers of products and brands within the action sport subculture choose to market through his productions because of his commitment to the sport. The advertisers understand that he is a trusted leader within the subculture and wish to be associated with him and, by extension, endorsed by him. He states that many of his advertisers wish to be associated with him because they understand his commitment to the subculture: "Do these brands want to be associated with someone who talks about corporate entities and shit? No, they want to be seen to

be promoting the sport and I've never let that falter." This reputation is paramount to the success of his media, because, as he says, "I've built it to a spot now where I don't give a shit what anyone tells me. Unless you're doing something to give back, you shouldn't exist."

Dealing with advertisers from outside the snowboarding subculture can be difficult. Advertisers wish to connect and promote to the snowboard subculture as it provides a platform to connect and raise awareness with a difficult to target demographic and helps create a long-term business-to-customer relationship (Bennett, Sagas, & Dees, 2006). These media makers are particularly crucial to mainstream advertisers, those representing brands from outside the subculture, because they require subculture media makers to act as a translator between them and the audience. Mainstream advertisers often do not have the same understanding of the subculture as businesses more strongly connected to snowboarding, such as clothing manufacturers, equipment makers, and specialty retail stores. Hollis states that dealing with mainstream brands can be difficult; particularly as the way he operates within action sport subcultures can be very different to more generally accepted, common business practices. Hollis notes that often mainstream advertisers can make assumptions immediately when meeting him. He is a young man, often dresses in jeans and a t-shirt like many action sport athletes, and communicates in an informal manner. It can be a confusing package for a mainstream brand marketing manager used to dealing with persons of similar positions in other businesses. Hollis believes that it is crucial that he asserts himself when dealing with mainstream advertisers in order to protect his brand and his media's reputation. He bases this approach on advice to always be himself and understand that his underlying power comes from being the expert: "When dealing with corporates don't change shit because they are paying you to be who you are and they want to become part of that. If you're going to swear, swear. If you're going to say that, say that. But they already know when they walk into that meeting that they don't know. We have to educate them and not feel bad about telling them they're wrong." Hollis identifies an important point. Advertisers need niche media to help them to communicate with the audience. By attempting to exert more control, an advertiser could inadvertently be distancing themselves from the audience and limit the success of their promotions (Jenkins *et al.* 2013).

Taking a closer look at the media produced by the interviewees helps to gain an understanding of the effect advertising has on their production. In the videos themselves, Dairies Down Under includes the most advertisers, significantly higher than both *Snow Show* and *The Clubbies*. *Diaries Down Under* had nine advertisers per episode, whereas *Snow Show* had three and *The Clubbies* had five.

	Snow Show	The Clubbies	Dairies Down Under
Advertisers	3	5	9

A close analysis reveals that *Diaries Down Under* also has the most mainstream advertisers (4). These advertisers were not directly related to the snowboarding subculture, like equipment manufacturers and apparel makers are. Many of these advertisers were related to the travel and tourism industries and more broadly focused on bringing holiday makers to the Queenstown Lakes area. *Snow Show* had two mainstream advertisers, one of which was related to the travel and tourism industry. *The Clubbies* included only subculture-related advertisers, including snowboard manufacturing and apparel brands, a local boutique clothing label, and the club ski fields' unified brand, Chill. All three media producers advertise their own media businesses in their productions, via logo display. This is advantageous as it showcases and self-promotes their ability to make a quality media product.

The producers that had support from mainstream advertisers seemed to include more footage and, ultimately, produce significantly longer episodes.

	Snow Show	The Clubbies	Dairies Down Under
Running time (minutes ave)	4:52	4:07	4:50
% of riding footage	37%	34%	30%

The Clubbies episodes were the shortest of the videos focused on in this research. On average The Clubbies episodes were 43 seconds shorter than *Diaries Down Under* and 45 seconds shorter than *Snow Show*. Riley Bathurst explains that *The Clubbies* series was completed with a small amount of advertising support and that the series was, essentially, a personal project. He was, therefore, required to self-fund to a certain extent. This could explain why the episodes are on average shorter. It is possible that by accepting more advertising revenue both *Diaries Down Under* and *Snow Show* had the ability to film for longer, giving the creators more footage to potentially incorporate into the episodes. However, the need to incorporate advertising into the media can detract from the percentage of snowboarding footage in each episode. The level of advertising found in *Diaries Down Under could* be responsible for the lower percentage of snowboarding action footage. More time

was dedicated to showcasing activities, businesses and landscapes around Queenstown and this reduced the amount of action footage that featured. *Snow Show* had the highest percentage of footage dedicated to snowboarding action. With different presenters and snowboarders hosting many episodes, it could be proposed that their primary goal was to showcase the hosts' own snowboarding ability as much as possible. However, there are also fewer advertisers to be integrated into *Snow Show*. The percentage of snowboarding that featured in *The Clubbies* was on average higher than *Diaries Down Under* but less than that featured in *Snow Show*. This could further illustrate Bathurst's comments about the series being a personal project about his experiences on the club ski fields with his friends in the Canterbury club ski fields. *The Clubbies* videos are unique, as they also include interviews with club members, something that also reduces the amount of time dedicated to action footage.

Media initiated advertising

Opportunistic media producers can align their media to best showcase and accommodate advertisers. Erjavec (2012) states that media producers can create advertising-friendly opportunities in order to attract increased opportunities and revenue. Furthermore, Rinallo *et al.* (2013, p. 437) state that media producers are also "likely to reward those companies that increase their advertising budgets with them by providing greater coverage and visibility." Creating a ready-made promotional vehicle for advertisers to communicate directly to a particularly defined market, such as that of a subculture, can be particularly attractive. There is an advantage for advertisers in using subculture media producers as an intermediary between them and the audience. An intermediary will be familiar with the subculture, which increases the chances of successful communication and can limit the chances of flawed marketing, which could ultimately damage their brand (Rotfeld, 2003). The media makers understand the audience and how to communicate with it. Hyne's *Diaries Down Under* series offers a ready-made solution for promotion of Queenstown-based adventure tourism and indeed has held many tourism-related advertisers for a significant period of time. As a result, Hyne's advertisers require him to have specific elements, both snow related and, more generally, tourism related, featuring prominently in his media. Many of the advertisers in this series are tourism operations and the focus for some of the episodes illustrates the opportunities offered to people in the area. Incorporating these tourism promotions into niche media is an example of hybrid messaging, where advertising themes are blended into non-commercial media (Rinallo *et al.* 2013). Hyne notes that there is more to snowboarding than just snowboarding; it's a lifestyle that incorporates social angles and other related activities. He claims that "a lot of [tourism and travel advertisers'] focus is now off-snow activities and other stuff you can do in New Zealand as part of

the whole New Zealand experience. Your day doesn't finish when the lifts close." Snowboarders often like to participate in other action sports too, and certainly a vibrant nightlife is enjoyed by many. As a result Hyne dedicates time within his media to capture more of the Queenstown lifestyle. This includes restaurants and bars, the gondola, bungee jumping, and key events such as the Winter Festival.

Erjavec (2012) claims that blurring advertising messaging into media in this way raises an ethical issue, as the audience may not be aware of the motives. Yet, Hyne believes this is beneficial to the audience, as it highlights the other opportunities in Queenstown. For example, one issue for travelling skiers and snowboarders is that weather will often dictate if a holiday is a success or not. Adverse conditions can make snowboarding and skiing difficult and unenjoyable. Ski resorts will close if the conditions are treacherous enough, meaning that tourists are unable to ski or snowboard as planned. By showcasing other activities, Hyne felt the audience could be better equipped to plan alternatives: "Weather can make or break someone's holiday over here. That's what's good about Queenstown. If there was nothing else to do, like in Australia at Jindabyne or even, I guess, in Methven, if the weather is crap then you're stuck doing nothing. But if you were in Australia and you've come over here for a week and the weather is crap, and you've got a lot of money, there's really no end to what you could do." Hyne also states that as the relationship with his tourism advertisers has progressed he has gained more freedom to promote Queenstown in his own way. His advertisers are comfortable that the best way to connect with the audience is to let Hyne and his team hold the creative control: "They kind of switched it around on us and said 'we're going to let you guys appeal to that core youth market because that's what you guys know how to do and that's what you do well.' That's an audience they find really difficult to market towards." When a niche media producer has a good relationship with their advertisers and a history of producing high-quality, successful videos, they are more likely to retain more creative control. It also indicates that through the formation of the relationship, some compromise could be required in order to achieve greater creative control later. Hyne's comments identify that a producer may be required to give away some power in the short term to gain trust and influence in order to have greater control in the future.

Ski fields: advertising, relationships and support

Ski fields often feature prominently in snowboard media. It seems simplistic to state, but the essence of snowboard media is the act of snowboarding. While participants can snowboard by hiking into the mountains, or be transported to snow locations by ski-mobile or helicopter, or on

rare occasions be opportunistic when snow falls to sea level, the most likely snow experience for snowboarders is on a ski field or resort. Resorts offer relatively easy access to well-maintained and supervised terrain for the cost of a lift ticket. Media producers are also likely to use ski fields as locations for a significant amount of their filming. Aside from the ease of accessibility and well-groomed runs, there are the snowboard specific features built for the terrain park, such as rails, boxes, and a variety of styles of jumps in various sizes. The terrain park offers an ideal location for expert snowboarders to showcase their abilities and for videographers and photographers to capture them doing it. Backcountry snowboarding, which involves steep slopes, narrow shoots and cliff drops, can sometimes be more easily (and more cheaply) accessed by tramping to out-of-bounds areas from initial access from a ski field. For these reasons often ski fields feature prominently in visual snowboard media. Yet, the commitment from ski fields to support producers seems inconsistent. A ski field can benefit from the exposure given by media. The videos produced often show some of New Zealand's best snowboarders performing daring and exciting tricks on the facilities provided by the ski field. For some viewers it is a visual illustration of what that ski field has to offer and it is likely that they will want to experience similar thrills at the same place. They may identify the location as a proving ground and wish to establish themselves there too. Or, for some others, just being at the place they know their favourite snowboarders hang out may give them a stronger connection to the subculture. As a result there can be a promotional value for a ski field to be associated with certain media and therefore there is potential for a symbiotic relationship with media makers. Bathurst had support for his series, *The Clubbies*, from the Canterbury club ski fields and claims that this was an enjoyable and relaxed experience, but also notes that he has had different experiences with other, more commercial, ski fields: "I know that there are some people that are very easy to film for because they'll let you do whatever you want. So if you're doing *The Clubbies* sometimes it's easier because the fields are so much more relaxed." Getting support from some commercial ski fields was more difficult and Bathurst illustrated this when he reflected on a recent project where he was sub-contacted by another media producer to support their project. When weather conditions made it difficult to photograph they were unable to capture everything they required. When asking for additional access on another day, the ski field was less supportive. "First day we went up to [NZ commercial ski field], it was cloudy as hell. I shot a couple of photos and that was it. Second day, cloudy as hell, got a couple of photos and a couple of shots at the end of the day. The third day we were going to try and get more, but by that point [NZ commercial ski field] were over it. We kept asking for more passes and they said 'no'."

The relationship a producer has with a ski field can determine the level of support they receive.

When a key staff member at a ski field, such as a marketing manager or communications manager, knows and trusts a producer, and sees value in their ski field appearing in media, their levels of support are likely to be positive. When the relationship is not as supportive, or no relationship exists at all, then the level of endorsement can be limited. Sometimes the media producer will receive everything they need. Other times they will receive some of what they need. Sometimes they will not receive any support at all. Hollis affirms that he has solid relationships with most of New Zealand's major commercial ski fields and this helps him create the media he wanted to create: "On a friend basis, they're all my buddies," he states, so access to those fields for himself and his supporting crew is open. Despite having such a good relationship with these ski fields, Hollis has resisted aligning with just one ski field. A formal alliance could maximise the advantages for both parties, such as more support for the video producer, and exclusive coverage for the ski field, but Hollis fears such an alignment could detract from the quality of the media produced,and reduce his independence. As it is now, "no one pays us to cover anything. We do our best stuff when we want, how we want and where there is snow to do it." Similarly, Hyne notes that, after relaxing a formal relationship with a particular commercial ski field, he enjoyed the increased freedom to be able to film at the locations which best suited the episode, rather than to create a new storyline at the same location: "So that year we didn't work with [commercial ski field] as much because it was a bit restricting. We wanted to go to like [competing commercial ski field] and [competing ski field]. So that opened up our options a lot. So now we're doing a bunch of different things."

Figure 8 – Club ski field Mt Olympus showcased in an episode of *The Clubbies*.

But not all producers enjoy such accommodating relationships with management at ski fields and others have good relationships with some, but not with others. Management at ski fields can be cautious when supporting snowboard media, particularly when they do not have a relationship with that producer. A history of bad experiences involving abuse of privileges by media can be damaging for all those looking for support afterwards. In my own time working on a New Zealand commercial ski field, I came to know a photographer with associations to a European snowboard magazine who would openly jest about being able to get free media passes as long as he remembered to bring his camera and business card, which he stored in our gear shed before going snowboarding all day. He would pick his gear up at the end of the day and head back to his accommodation never having any intention of doing any media work. The results of these encounters are damaging and result in management being more careful on subsequent occasions. Reflecting on the current environment and the difficulty in obtaining media passes to ski fields, Bathurst notes that it sometimes seems easier to just become a paying customer. By buying a season pass, he could then concentrate on participating in snowboarding and making videos when the timing and conditions were perfect, rather than having a formal obligation with ski field management: "This season [2013] I kind-of went back the other way and for the first time in a long time actually bought a pass to a mountain so I could go snowboarding because I didn't want to just go to [major NZ ski field] and ask for a media pass and then feel obliged to do something for them."

Bathurst's comments show that snowboard media producers can benefit from strong relationships with some ski fields, yet be impeded by not having established relationships with others. Having a good relationship can give the ski field confidence that the media producer is going to create something beneficial to them. Hyne notes the importance of having good relationships with ski fields for creating *Diaries Down Under*. Some of the fields he works with have been supporters of *Diaries Down Under* since the first episode was created and, prior to that, were personal sponsors for him as an athlete. However, relationships can be heavily reliant on personal connections with key staff on those ski fields, as well as the corporate direction and communication objectives of the ski field directors. These factors mean those relationships and commitments can change. Hyne explained that "the resorts are pretty supportive. [A particular commercial ski field] bent over backwards for us and even built us a special rail feature last year and they were going to build us another one after the season. [Another NZ commercial ski field] let us stay in the apartments up there, and we didn't get anything specifically built, but as far as lift access and things like that everyone sees the value in it." Other ski fields were less accommodating. Even after more than a decade as a recognised New Zealand snowboarder, who has been involved in various action sport media for almost as long, Hyne

still finds support from some ski fields to be particularly limited. This could be related to the traditional attitudes of ski field management towards snowboarding. As was outlined in the introduction chapter, snowboarders were viewed with distrust and initially banned from using ski field terrain. It was only after the realisation that it was potentially profitable to open the fields to the new and growing snowboard market that ski field management changed their position. Yet, the difficulty faced by these media producers could signal that a stereotypical distrust still exists. Hyne believes that some in senior management are focused particularly on lowering expenses and are not always convinced of the benefits that coverage in his video series could supply:

> It's a little frustrating with [a particular commercial ski field] because they are more of a corporate structure. Compared to other media outlets I think we have a really good relationship with them but at the same time I wouldn't say they bend over backwards for us. And we really do the most for them. At the same time really all we need from them is to know that we can get free access to the resort. Anything over and above that is awesome. If they decided not to give us a media pass for the resorts for whatever reason it would be extremely frustrating because then [our] options are just so much more restricted.

The producers are reliant on personal relationships with key employees on the ski field and changes to staffing can be a setback to those relationships. When a staff member leaves, the benefits of a positive, historical relationship can leave with them. The newly appointed staff member may have little understanding of who the media maker is, or what media they produce, or how valuable their audience is to the ski field. Hyne has experienced tension with a ski field through a new staff member who came from an industry unrelated to snow or tourism. The person's lack of familiarity with the New Zealand snow industry and limited understanding of the success of *Diaries Down Under* affected support levels. Hyne was able to get some free lift passes but was unable to capture all the footage he needed for his video. He found it particularly difficult to get additional support and was surprised at how dismissive the staff member was:

> I said 'thanks for the passes yesterday. Unfortunately the weather shut us down but we would like to get some more photos today.' Now we have media passes for Diaries but we have to go up to administration and get day passes every time. They won't give us a season pass. It's a little bit frustrating but we still get to go snowboarding so we're happy. But he's like 'I don't have time for your random filming assignment. I've got too much on my plate.'

I was like 'random filming assignment? It's the sixth year of *Diaries Down Under*.' It's the nature of the mountain. Weather changes everything. It's annoying when it's a pristine day and you can't go film.

There is a benefit to ski fields supporting snowboard videographers, as the locations are highly visible within the episodes. The number of times the ski field is clearly identifiable, either through a visible logo or sign, or when it is mentioned by the presenter or snowboarder in the episodes I analysed illustrates the promotional benefits gained through involvement in the video. The textual analysis demonstrates that, when a ski field is used as the primary location for an episode, it receives high and consistent coverage, particularly if the episode features a lot of snowboarding action footage on or near a rail feature, on which ski fields place fixed promotional placards. Most placards in these videos advertise the ski-field, but some display the logos of other external businesses, presumably as part of an advertising or sponsorship deal. The visibility of these logos is high in the episodes and, rather than just occurring at particular times (such as the beginning and end of the episode), they can be visible throughout.

	Snow Show	The Clubbies	Dairies Down Under
Ski field (no. times clearly identified)	18	7	4

Episode two of *Snow Show*, which featured in the sample, is a good example of this. During this episode the ski field logo was prominently displayed on a rail feature used numerous times by the snowboarders. This contributed to a count of 31 identifiable occasions where the ski field was promoted. *The Clubbies* had an average of seven identifiable ski field promotions per episode. It should be noted that the series was named after the Canterbury club ski fields and was dedicated to showcasing the experience a participant could gain by visiting those locations, so there was already a strong promotional message benefiting those ski fields.

Figure 9 - Rail features often display advertising placards (in this case Cardrona) which are highly visible when shown in snowboard media. Screen shot from *Snow Show*.

But it is important to note that while a ski field is the most likely location for an episode it is not exclusively so. Two of the three episodes of *Diaries Down Under* included in the sample featured predominantly off-piste action footage, so there was a relatively low count of occasions where a ski field was identifiable. One particular episode of *Diaries Down Under* featured only helicopter-accessible terrain. This in turn gave a promotional opportunity for the helicopter company to showcase their services. During the episode that was filmed on a ski field, 11 identifiable ski field promotions were counted.

Advertising alcohol in niche media

Alcohol advertising can be one of the most restricting forms of advertising in media for producers. Incorporating the advertising of alcohol brands into media presented unique issues for two of the media makers interviewed. Both Hyne and Hollis have accepted beer brand advertising into their snowboard videos and found that there were significant considerations unique to these products. On the surface, alcohol and tourism can be compatible. Ski and snow destinations can be full of visitors enjoying days on the snow and nights in the bars, so for alcohol companies being the brand of choice can be very beneficial. Gaining association with snowboarding through media can help to connect with the audience, as Hollis notes: "[Snowboarders] are their target audience; we are their perfect demo[graphic]. The reality of snowboarding is that everyone is a flippin mongrel."

Figure 10 – Snowboarders drinking beer after a day's snowboarding in an episode of *Diaries Down Under*.

Alcohol brand involvement in snow sports is not uncommon. As a snowboarder, one of Hollis' personal sponsors was a beer brand. Part of the arrangement was that he would have a monthly allocation of the sponsor's product - "20 dozen a month." Hollis' flatmate was also sponsored by the beer brand, "so we would get 40 dozen a month. And shit was gnarly. The Alcohol Commission stepped in at the end of the year and was like 'hey look, we don't care about you guys getting sponsored and stuff. But 40 dozen? That's just promoting drinking.'" As a snowboarder, Hollis was able to have a relaxed relationship with an alcohol sponsor, but as a business owner incorporating an alcohol brand into his media, his approach needed to be far more formal. He found the experience highly restrictive and the level of control expected by the beer brand was far greater than with other brands he had worked with. The core concern for a beer brand was where and when their product was consumed and that it was always seen to be consumed in a legal and responsible manner. Hollis states: "We had to have the gnarliest legal talks and, honestly, I had to say 'this is what we're doing. No one's drinking, we're not doing anything, you're not seeing any alcohol, and if you see the video everything is done with branding on the peripherals, it's an integration of the product with the feeling and the vibe of what they're trying to capture.'" Hollis decided that the best and safest way to promote the brand was to name the video series after the brand and connect the brand to the activity itself. He felt it was safer to focus less on the consumption of the product. Much of the footage involved taking snowmobiles into the mountains to find difficult to access spots. The snowmobiles had beer branding sign-written on the sides: "I said that in the States the

coolest thing you can do is snowmobile. There's a brand called Skidoo. Their number one product is called a Skidoo Summit. We bring them to New Zealand; document the adventures by travelling to the top of the peaks with the top riders. Literally, it's the [beer brand] Sled to the Summit series." Still, Robett had to be careful to show the riders consuming the sponsor's product responsibly. The riders could not be seen to be consuming beer while still being in control of the snowmobiles, or any other transportation: "We get the snowmobile, go shredding, it's all epic and what's the last shot? What an amazing day, the boards are coming off, the sun sets, pull off the park, so we physically haven't drunk yet and we've had a great day snowmobiling and we're not involving alcohol with the motor vehicles. We park up, beer comes out, we walk away."

Hyne has also incorporated alcohol advertising into his media, in particular in *Diaries Down Under*. Similarly, he has experienced the complicated nature of incorporating alcohol into media and the regimented control it requires. Reflecting on his experiences with an alcohol-based advertiser, Hyne states: "They gave us strict rules. They wanted someone holding a beer, but they cannot be drinking any beer before snowboarding. It has to be after snowboarding." He highlights how difficult incorporating alcohol into media can be. Not only are actions scrutinised; implied behaviour, whether intentional or not, can also be damaging.

In one shot I'm talking about, um, competitions I think, and I'm holding a beer and there's a clear label and stuff and then there's a shot of the car boot closing. I think I throw my board in and the car boot closes. Something like that. I remember the brand manager, he saw the shot of the car and just jumped out of his seat grabbing his head and going 'no ,no, no ,no.' I was like 'what have I done here?' Luckily, it went straight into credits. We weren't going to show us driving or anything.

This provides an interesting situation documenting advertisers' control over media messaging. A driver over the age of 20 years can consume one standard can of beer (330ml size and 4% alcohol) and be under the legal limits set on automobile drivers, according to the New Zealand Health Promotion Agency (2015). Legally, Hyne had not done anything wrong and, indeed, seeing skiers and snowboarders having a drink in the ski field café or bar during the day is common, as are those who chose to bring beverages up to the resort with them and consume them while placing their gear away in their cars. Yet, the brand manager was concerned that it could be interpreted as a careless attitude to driving under the influence of alcohol. More broadly, it illustrates the lengths that media producers are required to go to incorporate some advertisers into their media.

This chapter illustrates the complex nature of incorporating advertising and promotion into snowboarding niche media. The difficulty is that almost anything the producers aim their camera at can be interpreted as promoting something. The snowboarders are smothered in gear displaying logos of their sponsors and the terrain they are riding on can have prominent signage. When advertisers are paying to promote their specific products, snowboarders' and logos, they are unlikely to want to share that visibility. Often, there will be several advertisers supporting an episode or series. When the advertisers are from different industries, this may not be an issue, as the advertisers may not view each as direct competitors. But when the advertisers are from the same industry, particularly when residing within the subculture, there can be competing interests. This is exacerbated further when a paying advertiser feels that a competitor, who may not be paying anything, is getting more visibility. Additionally, some advertisers require special consideration, such as alcohol-related industries, due to legal issues and concerns of public perceptions, and ski fields, of which support seemingly varies despite featuring prominently.

Chapter six: Conclusions

"It's our way or the highway because we're not jeopardising our credibility from the last 10 years so you can sell more happy snacks."
Robett Hollis

The aim of this research is to gain a greater understanding of how the incorporation of advertising affects snowboarding video production. It highlights that there are many compromising factors in the creation of snowboard videos. Advertising is noted as a compromising factor, but other production factors, such as weather, access to snowboarding terrain and the ability of both the producer and the snowboarders featured also have the ability to impact on the overall quality of the videos produced. Through this research, a greater understanding of how these producers protect their cultural capital within the snowboarding community while also attempting to run a profitable business was gained.

Subcultural niche media producers help to communicate and disseminate information to their community. Niche media has been identified as being influential on the subculture, particularly for new and intermediate members. This form of media is often created and developed by subculture participants. This research focused on interviews with three New Zealand snowboard media producers, Robett Hollis, Nick Hyne and Riley Bathurst, specifically about their web videos. All of these producers believe that being a subcultural participant is beneficial to making their media for a variety of reasons. Each has a strong background and knowledge of the subculture, as well as a passion for it; and the thesis interprets this in relation to Bourdieu's analysis of the embodied state of cultural capital and habitus. The producers use their background and connection to the subculture as an intrinsic guide for what videos to create and how they should be presented. Each aims to produce media that shares their passion and connects with their audience. Each is a talented snowboarder and well connected with the subculture. All three interviewees produce their own self-initiated media projects, as well as producing funded media for clients, and they have more freedom and creative control over their own initiated projects then those funded completely by an external organisation.

Some subculture participants attempt to find employment, or create their own businesses within the subculture, in order to remain connected to the subculture once their participation levels change (Snyder, 2012). Remaining connected was identified by the interviewees as a contributing motivation to starting their media businesses. Moreover, their introduction to snowboard media

production grew from filming with friends as a way to capture their adventures and reflect on their development. For Hyne and Bathurst, injury provided the impetus to further develop and formalise their media activities. Filming and photographing snowboarders was a useful way to remain connected and active in the snow environments. Hollis, in contrast, learned about media development by fronting productions for others. After the breakdown of one of these relationships, he realised he had gathered the skills to go into business for himself. He identified serving the needs of the snowboard community as a governing ideal.

Being snowboarders themselves, all three interviewees stated they felt a need to be loyal to the snowboarding audience. They stated that, in order for their media to remain relevant, they needed to maintain their connection to the audience and to accurately reflect the snowboarding lifestyle, attitudes and beliefs. Again, this relates to their formed habitus through years of activity and connection with the subculture. All three interviewees had appeared in their media as snowboarding participants, thus using their cultural capital as an endorsement of their media and a way to gain leverage from their recognition. Appearing in their videos was seen to be an advantage, as it gave them additional visibility, over and above visibility gained as an expert snowboarder. Continuing to appear in subcultural media reaffirms their position of authority within the subculture. Two of the interviewees, Hyne and Hollis, regularly feature in their media as presenters; although Hollis notes that he is cutting his own appearances down to let others gain prominence. This could be an indication that, as he grows older, Hollis feels his cultural capital is diminishing and/or he is becoming less relevant as an expert snowboarder.

Members of the snowboarding audience were identified as particularly important, as they played a vital role in sharing and endorsing media through their social networks. Online media sharing platforms, such as YouTube, have given the ability to publish content widely. This has resulted in an enormous amount of snowboarding media available online. The audience practice of spreading media was identified as important in giving prominence. There are many reasons that motivate audiences to spread media, including status seeking, improving credibility, attempting to increase self-confidence, personal satisfaction, strengthen social relationships, and personal expression (Goh *et al.* 2009). The interviewees identified that showcasing progressive snowboarding displayed in innovative and interesting environments connected with the audience and encouraged media spreading. They believe that audiences personally identified with the snowboarders who appear in the videos and that these notable and talented snowboarders were also viewed as leaders. The producers identified that the success of a video can depend on the level of expertise of riders that

feature in it. Showcasing New Zealand snowboarders performing at expert levels, normally in New Zealand environments, was identified as likely to connect with the audience. On occasions, some of the videos created by the interviewees were launched in supporting bars, and they reported being overwhelmed by the public response.

The profile and credibility of the snowboarders that feature in media can be beneficial when publishing snowboard videos online. Videos that feature a rider of prominence can record significantly higher views than videos that don't. The producers believe that the audience will seek out media in which their favourite snowboarders appear. There is also an advantage to launching media that features unknown snowboarders, as people connected to those snowboarders will support them by spreading the videos through their networks.

Providing visibility through media enables snowboarders to lift their personal profiles, which helps them gain and keep sponsorship deals. Elite snowboarders rely on sponsorship and endorsement agreements in order to support their progression and lifestyle. Sponsorship may include payment and cost reimbursement, travel and accommodation support, ski field passes, and free or reduced priced snowboarding equipment and associated fashions, such as casual clothing, watches, and shoes. By increasing their visibility, snowboarders' sponsors gain increased exposure. All three interviewees acknowledged that they provided snowboarders a platform of visibility. Through *Snow Show*, Hollis even entrusted various snowboarders to produce their own episodes, which he would publish and promote. Likewise, Hollis promotes and publishes media produced by others through his nzsnowboard.com website, even those who could be considered competitors to his own business interests. This is a strong example of subculture audience focus. Showcasing the snowboarders' personal sponsors, for example when logos and branding on a rider's gear are visible to the camera, is not considered advertising, if the niche media producer does not receive payment.

There is more freedom to help, support and promote snowboarders on projects initiated by the media producer. Externally funded client-based media creation was identified in the interviews as being more restrictive. Having good relationships and a history of producing successful media can be beneficial to a media producer when producing client-funded media. Trust is an essential element and a favourable history can grant the media producer more freedom and flexibility with a project.

Producing self-initiated projects can be difficult without some financial support. As a result, advertising was often incorporated into the producers' videos. When incorporating advertising into

media, all three interviewees were cautious, citing concerns of adverse audience reaction as the main consideration. Hyne illustrated this in reference to the inclusion of skiing footage in his snowboard media. While this could potentially bring increased advertising expenditure from tourism-based advertisers, Hyne stated it would be too risky, as snowboarders and skiers have historically had a fractious relationship. Hyne did publish an episode of *Diaries Down Under* featuring world-renowned freestyle skier and Olympian, Jossi Wells, but felt comfortable enough on this occasion due to Wells' standing in New Zealand and because the footage also showed Wells' talent on a snowboard.

While this research aimed to gain a better understanding of the pressure and compromise advertising incorporation can cause to media output and quality, it is important to understand that there are many other factors that can affect quality. Capturing snowboarding footage on video is a difficult and expensive process. Getting to a location can be time-consuming and expensive. Some snowboarding spots may require helicopter access, while others maybe on or near a ski field, therefore access needs to be gained through purchase of a lift pass. Once on location, filmers may be required to tramp and traverse to distant vantage points to best capture footage. This can mean lugging heavy camera gear, and even additional lighting, over significant distances. Once in position, natural light and weather can change and ruin a day's filming. The technical abilities of the filmer and the ability of the snowboarder to perform on cue and communicate intentions can also complicate the filming process. It can be difficult for a niche media producer to live up to their own expectations and visions for a project, particularly when there is an impending deadline or publishing date. Compromises may be required and sometimes a producer will be required to change focus and film what is most readily available. Likewise, sometimes conditions can be uncharacteristically good, for example when there has been a significant fall of new snow. These are occasions where flexibility may also be required in order to make the most of the situation. Bathurst identified that when a project is client-funded and has a specific focus, such as capturing snowboarders in a terrain park setting, it is far more difficult to be reactive to changing conditions as he is required to give the client what they are paying for.

Having successfully established an audience, media producers can profit through the incorporation of paid advertising. Advertising revenue can offset the cost of capturing and publishing snowboarding media and enable niche media producers to operate profitable businesses. Advertising is particularly important to web-based media producers, as it is often the primary form of income. Yet accepting advertising can have a compromising effect and comes with the

expectation of value to the advertiser. With regards to the snowboarding subculture, and the anti-mainstream principles it was founded on, this places niche media producers in a difficult position. Overtly corporate messaging and aggressive advertising could be interpreted as 'selling out', or it could have a negative effect on the perceived quality of the media leaving the audience feeling unsatisfied and looking for different alternatives. It was identified that audiences expect advertising that features in subcultural media to be from organisations that have a legitimate connection to the subculture. Unwelcome or mismatched advertising from brands viewed by the audience as unattached to the subculture could be divisive. This causes the most damage to the producer and may result in detachment by the audience and loss of credibility.

Media producers can create advertising-friendly opportunities in order to attract customers. Their videos can be a vehicle for advertisers to communicate directly to the snowboarding subculture. Client-funded projects are an important source of income for niche media producers. These funded media projects are known by many terms in journalism circles, such as sponsored journalism, advertiser-produced programming and stealth marketing, and this practice is defined as creating and publishing advertising to look like media content. This kind of journalism raises ethical concerns, as the audience may find it difficult to differentiate between authentic journalism and advertising content. Advertising is also placed in the media producers' self-initiated projects, for example logo display and product placement. Describing how advertising affects snowboard media, the interviewees stated that it was rare for promotions to affect action footage. Snowboarding action footage (footage that shows snowboarding action in motion) moves so quickly that logos, branding and products are hard to identify. Footage that displays a stationary snowboarder, for example sitting on a chair lift or preparing their gear, gives more opportunity for advertising prominence. In such situations, producers could zoom in on logos and products, such as goggles, jackets or gloves. Another promotional opportunity is to showcase locations and destinations. This could include ski fields, bars and cafes, or other non-snowboarding activities. Hyne, who has several tourism-based advertisers supporting his media, describes these as 'lifestyle shots'. This is an example of hybrid messaging, where promotional messaging is incorporated into community-styled media. The presenter of the episode has a high-profile role in video media and, therefore, the opportunity for branding, such as a logo presented on a t-shirt or cap, can be particularly visible to audiences. As a result, an advertiser can expect to have an influence on who is presenting.

Dealing with advertisers can be difficult, whether they are from inside or outside the snowboarding subculture. The interviewees expressed that advertising could be viewed negatively by the audience.

As such, caution is required any time that advertising or promotional messaging is included in a video. Mainstream advertisers were noted as having less understanding of the subculture than businesses more strongly connected to snowboarding, such as clothing manufacturers, equipment makers, and specialty retail stores. Subculture-related businesses were more aware of when their competitors appeared in a video and so situations where multiple subculture-related businesses were advertising in the same episode had the potential to cause conflict, as it could appear that one business is more visible than another. This can place the producer in a compromising position where they need to maintain trust and protect the business relationship.

Ski fields often feature prominently in snowboard media. These resorts offer easy-to-access and well-maintained locations, including specific terrain park features such as rails, boxes, and a variety of styles of jumps. As such, ski fields are often highly visible in snowboard media, which represents a promotional advantage for ski fields supporting media production. Yet, the level of support ski fields provided varied for the interviewees. Some ski fields were identified as being more supportive than others. The arrangement was dependent on the relationship and trust that the ski field management had with niche media producers. Changes in staff in key positions could result in the producer having to re-establish the relationship and win trust all over again. This could be difficult, as new management could have different promotional plans, which may not include niche media promotion. The textual analysis revealed that, when a ski field was used as the primary location for an episode, it received high and consistent coverage, particularly if the episode featured a lot of snowboarding action footage on or near a rail feature. In one episode, *Snow Show* recorded 31 identifiable ski field promotions, mainly due to a high number of tricks performed on rail features, which displayed the ski field logo.

Alcohol advertising was identified as one of the most controlling forms of advertising that featured in snowboard media. For many visitors to a snow location, such as Queenstown, big nights in bars and nightclubs are part of the experience. Alcohol advertising in snowboarding media could be seen to be a beneficial. Yet, the interviewees identified that incorporating alcohol into media is a highly restrictive experience. The level of control expected by the beer brand was far greater than with other brands, for example alcohol could not be seen to be consumed near motor vehicles, as it could imply drinking and driving.

Significance of Findings

Niche media is influential to the audience and builds a subculture as much as it reports on it (Thornton, 1995). It is therefore valuable to understand the process niche media producers go through to collect footage to create their media and how they incorporate advertising to fund their projects. This thesis demonstrates that these snowboard media producers are committed to both their audience and the success of their media businesses. However, incorporating advertising into their media is a complex undertaking. The producers interviewed for this research stated that advertising can generate an adverse reaction from the audience and this can be damaging to their reputation, particularly as the audience plays a role in spreading the media through social networks. Appearing to compromise their media, or sell out, could cause a loss in credibility and an audience disconnection. In this respect, niche media have a lot to lose. Researchers who evaluate media output, particularly media produced for specific or niche audiences, will find this research beneficial as it provides insight into both the creative process and the funding activities.

For researchers in marketing and communication this research will provide an interesting insight into communicating with and advertising to subcultures. Yet, subcultures can have idiosyncrasies that advertisers might find difficult to understand. Furthermore, subcultures with anti-mainstream or anti-commercial foundations could view advertising negatively. This could be overcome with the use of an intermediary, such as a niche media producer who could ingratiate advertising into subcultural communication. Furthermore, appearing in the niche media may imply endorsement by the producer. These themes will be of interest to practicing marketing professionals who wish to explore marketing opportunities with action sport audiences.

For media researchers this thesis shows the effects of advertising on media in a new way. This research focuses on a niche audience and the media that operate within it. Like any business, niche media producers need to bring in revenue in order to operate successfully, yet it could be argued that niche media feel a greater level of responsibility to their audience. Also, within the action sport subculture, advertising, particularly from mainstream brands, could be seen adversely by the subculture due to foundations in anti-mainstream beliefs.

Other research methods considered for this project

Other qualitative methods could have been beneficial to this project and were considered. Ethnographic research, for example, can be a useful tool to gain further insights into action sport

subcultures (Wheaton & Beal, 2003, p. 160). The interviews could have also been supplemented with observational data (Roulston, 2010). I could have gained valuable insights by observing these media producers in the act of filming, editing and producing their media. Thornton (1995), for example, used a combination of ethnographic research, interviews and textual analysis to gather data on youth electro-music club culture. Understanding first-hand the challenges faced in creating snowboarding media would have benefited this research project. Yet, this was beyond the resources available. All three interviewees were based in either Queenstown or Wanaka, meaning there was a large physical distance between myself and the subjects. Also, filming snowboard media has an element of reactiveness to it. Filming cannot always be scheduled on certain dates; rather it relies on the best weather conditions, the availability of riders and filmers, and the support of a ski field. If any one of these elements changes so too does the filming schedule. This would make it difficult to plan an opportunity to observe filming ahead of time.

Finally, as the researcher, I am a part-time Master of Arts student who is also in fulltime employment with a young family. My personal commitments mean I am unable to travel to either Queenstown or Wanaka to attend filming sessions. However, I believe that the open and honest responses given during the in-depth interviews provided enough information to gain a rich insight into the experiences of these media makers meaning personal observation was not essential to the project.

Limitations

This research is designed to highlight the perspectives of three New Zealand snowboard media makers. It is a small sample size and it should be identified that there are other media makers operating within New Zealand and overseas.

The textual analysis looks at only three episodes from each media maker. Two of the media producers created more episodes than this. A more in-depth investigation into every episode produced could yield different data. Moreover, the topics covered in each episode can also vary greatly. One episode may show coverage from a New Zealand ski field. Another could cover backcountry snowboarding accessed by helicopter transport. Other episodes may show snowboarders in activities outside of snowboarding, such as skateboarding or surfing. Directly comparing two episodes is problematic and this means that this data makes a useful illustration for certain points in this research but should not be viewed as making an ironclad statement across all snowboard media videos. Uniqueness is a revered quality in snowboarding media.

Opportunities for future research

Future research into audience attitudes to advertising in media, and indeed how much of the advertising was absorbed, would make an ideal pairing to this research. Gaining an understanding of audience attitudes towards subcultural niche media advertising could indicate if there were ideal levels of advertising, preferable styles, and whether some media were preferred over others due to the amount of featured advertising, for example the levels of advertising in magazines compared to web video episodes.

It would also be beneficial for research to focus on the advertisers themselves. For some organisations, advertising in niche media could be one of many promotional tools employed to reach audiences. Gaining a deeper understanding into how niche media advertising fits into organisations' overall communications plans could be enlightening, particularly if the same subcultural audience is targeted in different ways through different channels, or, in the case of mainstream businesses, if it is one of several different communication initiatives giving the brand differing connections with different audiences, for example, connecting with younger audiences through associations with niche media while connecting with older audiences through national newspapers and identifying how those communications are different.

Closing reflections

I initiated this research because I am aware that snowboarding, and by extension snowboard media, is becoming more commercialised. I wanted to gain a greater understanding of how and where media output is being affected and what pressure producers are under. I found that producers are under pressure to bring in advertising revenue to fund their business, but are reluctant to compromise their media, if it could be avoided. Sometimes avoidance was not possible, at which point compromises are made and boundaries are pushed. The producers are most protective of action footage, that which shows snowboarders performing tricks. Displaying innovative snowboarding in interesting environments, they feel, is what the audience wants to see. Advertising and promotional messaging is massaged into the spaces between the action footage. This has advantages for the advertiser, as their logos and products are move visible when stationary and not attached to a snowboarder spinning and flipping 10 metres above the ground or travelling at break-neck speed. But advertisers want maximum exposure which means compromise is likely to always be an issue for producers.

It has been interesting to watch how the producers interviewed for this research have continued to develop and change their media. Rather than identify those changes, as they have occurred outside of the parameters of this project, I would instead state that they are continuing to adapt to their environment. As a snowboarder, I continue to support their media. Some of it is great, some of it good, some of it could be better. But I have gained a more detailed understating and appreciation for the processes behind creating it. For that alone this project was worth pursuing.

References

An, S., & Bergen, L. (2007). Advertiser pressure on daily newspapers: a survey of advertising sales executives. *Journal of Advertising*, *36* (2), 111-121.

Andrews, E. (2011). Better on the big screen. *Huck*, *5*, 92.

Atton, C. (2009). Why alternative journalism matters. *Journalism, 10* (3), 283-285.

Bennett, G. & Henson, R. K. (2003). Perceived status of the action sports segment among college students. *International Sports Journal 7* (1), 124 – 138.

Bennett, G., & Henson, R., K. (2003). Generation Y's perceptions of the action sports industry segment. *Journal of Sport Management, 17*, 95 – 115.

Bennett, G., Sagas, M., & Dees, W. (2006). Media preferences of action sports consumers: Differences between generation X and Y. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 15,* 40 – 49.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste. Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1998). *Practical reason: On the theory of action*. Stanford University Press.

Brumbaugh, A. M. (2002). Source and nonsource cues in advertising and their effects on the activation of cultural and subcultural knowledge on the route to persuasion. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *29* (2), 258-269.

Burton, J. (2003). Snowboarding: The essence is fun. *To the extreme: Alternative sports, inside and out*, 401 – 406.

Cianfrone, B. A., & Zhang, J. J. (2006). Differential effects of television commercials, athlete endorsements and venue signage during a televised action sports event. *Journal of Sport Management, 20,* 322-344.

Chang, C. (2014). Rebecca Possum Torr takes tinder spin video. *Breakfast, TVNZ*. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 22 March at
http://tvnz.co.nz/breakfast-news/rebecca-possum-torr-takes-tinder-spin-video-5867421

Coates, E., Clayton, B., & Humberstone, B. (2010). A battle for control: exchanges of power in the subculture of snowboarding. *Sport in Society, 7* (8), 1082 – 1101.

Coolican, H. (2009). *Research methods and statistics in psychology*. London: Hodder Education.

Copper, D. R., & Schindler, P. S. (2011). *Business Research Methods,* 11th Ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Daly, M. (2013). Injured Kiwi freeskier expected to fully recover. *Stuff.co.nz*. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 4 Sept 2013 from

http://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/other-sports/8236214/Injured-Kiwi-freeskier-expected-to-fully-recover

de Burgh-Woodman, H., & Brace-Govan, J. (2006). What's in a name? A comparative analysis of surf and snow brand personalities. *TOURISMOS: An International Multidisciplinary Refereed Journal of Tourism, 2* (1), 11-29.

de Smet, D., & Vanormelingen, S. (2011). *Advertiser Pressure on Newspaper Journalists: A Survey* (No. urn: hdl: 123456789/408751). Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

Dix, S., & Phau, I. (2009). Spotting the disguises and masquerades: Revisiting the boundary between editorial and advertising. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, *27* (3), 413-427.

Donnelly, M. (2006). Studying extreme sports: Beyond the core participants. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues, 30* (2), 219 – 224.

Dunsmore, D., M. (2014, Issue 53, Mar/Apr/May). Confessions of a professional sellout. *Manual Magazine*, p.132.

Edgerton, J D & Roberts, L. W. (2014). Cultural capital or habitus? Bourdieu and beyond in the explanation of enduring educational inequality. *Theory and Research in Education, 12* (2), 1993-220.

Erel, U. (2010). Migrating cultural capital: Bourdieu in migration studies. *Sociology*, *44*(4), 642-660.

Erjavec, K. (2012). News producers' pressures on advertisers: Production of paid news in Slovenian television programs. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 54* (1), 357 – 372

Frey, L.R., Botan, C.H & Kreps, G.L. (2000). *Investigating communication: An introduction to research methods,* 3rd Ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Gil de Zúñiga, H., Jung, N., & Valenzuela, S. (2012). Social media use for news and individuals' social capital, civic engagement and political participation. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *17* (3), 319-336.

Goh, D. H. L., Ang, R. P., Chua, A. Y., & Lee, C. S. (2009). Why we share: A study of motivations for mobile media sharing. In *Active media technology* (pp. 195-206). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Green, B., C. (2001). Leveraging subculture and identity to promote sports events. *Sport Management Review, 4*, 1 – 9.

Grosso, J. (2014, May 16). *Grosso's love letters to skateboarding – Rant and rave*. Retrieved from the World Wide Web: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bm2xapjeX6o

Hawk, T. (with Hawk, P.) (2010). *How did I get here? The assent of an unlikely CEO*. Melbourne: John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd.

Harcup, T. (2011). Alternative journalism as active citizenship. *Journalism 12 (1),* 15-31.

Hebdige, D. (1991). *Subculture: The meaning of style*. London: Routledge.

Heino, R. (2000). New Sports: What is So Punk about Snowboarding? *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, *24* (2), 176-191.

Howe, S. (1998). *(Sick) a cultural history of snowboarding*. New York: St Martin Press.

Humphreys, D. (2003). Selling out snowboarding: The alternative response to commercial co-optation. In: R. Rinehart and S. Sydor (eds). *To the Extreme: Alternative Sports, Inside and Out*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Jenkins, H., Ford, S., & Green, J. (2013). Spreadable media: Creating value and meaning in a networked culture. NYU Press.

Johannsen, D. (2014). Sochi - It's like watching Kiwis on an expensive ski holiday. *The New Zealand Herald.* Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 16 March from http://www.nzherald.co.nz/sport/news/article.cfm?c_id=4&objectid=11204998

Jones, A., & Greer, J. (2012). Go "Heavy" or Go Home: An examination of audience attitudes and their relationship to gender cues in the 2010 Olympic snowboarding coverage. *Mass Communication and Society, 15*, 598–621.

Keegan, S. (2009). Qualitative research: good decision making through understanding people, cultures and markets. London: Kogan Page.

Lee, C. S., & Ma, L. (2012). News sharing in social media: The effect of gratifications and prior experience. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, *28* (2), 331-339.

Morgan, J. S., Lampe, C., & Shafiq, M. Z. (2013, February). Is news sharing on Twitter ideologically biased? In *Proceedings of the 2013 conference on Computer supported cooperative work* (pp. 887- 896). ACM.

McArthur, J. A. (2009). Digital Subculture A Geek Meaning of Style. *Journal of Communication Inquiry, 33* (1), *58-70.*

Min, S. J., & Kim, Y. M. (2012). Choosing the right media for mobilization: Issue advocacy groups' media niches in the competitive media environment. *Mass Communication and Society*, *15* (2), 225-244.

Mons Royale Advert. (2014, Issue 60, Winter). The Monsie. *New Zealand Snowboarder*, p.33.

Nelson, W. (2013). The historical mediatization of BMX freestyle cycling. *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics, 13 (7),* 1152 – 1169.

Nieratko, C. (2010). *Checking in with Ryan Sheckler.* Retrieved 2 November, 2014 from the World Wide Web:

http://espn.go.com/action/skateboarding/news/story?page=catching-up-with-ryan-sheckler

O'Leary, K., & Carroll, C. (2013). The online poker sub-culture: Dialogues, interactions and networks. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, *29* (4), 613-630.

Paley, J. (2010). Qualitative interviewing as measurement. *Nursing Philosophy, 11*, 112 – 126.

Palmer, C. (2002). "Shit happens": The selling of risk in extreme sports. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, *13* (3), 323-336.

Puchan, H. (2004). Living 'extreme': Adventure sports, media and commercialisation. *Journal of Communication Management, 9 (*2*)*, 171 – 178.

Poulton, E. (2013). The culture of production behind the (re) production of football hooligan culture. *Continuum*, *27* (6), 770-784.

Quester, P., Beverland, M., & Farrelly, F. (2006). Brand-personal values fit and brand meanings: Exploring the role individual values play in on-going brand loyalty in extreme sports subcultures. *Advances in Consumer Research, 33*, 21 – 27.

Rebagliati, R. (2009). *Off the chain: An insider's history of snowboarding.* Vancouver: Greystone Books.

Rinallo, D., Basuroy, S., Wu, R., & Jeon, H., J. (2013). The media and their advertisers: Exploring ethical dilemmas in product coverage decisions. *Journal of Business Ethics, 114*(3), 425 – 441.

Richards, T. (with Blehm, E.) (2003). *P3: Pipes, parks and power.* New York: Harper Collins.

Rosenburg, B. (2008). *News media ownership in New Zealand.* Retrieved on 9 February, 2013 from the World Wide Web at

http://canterbury.cyberplace.org.nz/community/CAFCA/publications/Miscellaneous/mediaown.pdf

Rotfeld, H. J. (2003). Misplaced marketing: Who do you hire when the advertising audience isn't you? *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *20* (2), 87-89.

Roulston, K. (2010). Considering quality in qualitative interviewing. *Qualitative Research, 10 (*2*)*, 199 – 228.

Ryu, W. H. A. (2005). A semiotic study on the Transworld Skateboarding magazine. *Semiotica*, *2005 (*157*)*, 305-313.

Senda-Cook, S. (2012). Rugged practices: Embodying authenticity in outdoor recreation. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 98 (*2*)*, 129-152.

Shank, G. (2002). *Qualitative Research: A personal skills approach*. New Jersey: Merril Prentice Hall.

Slater, K. (2014, August 18). Kelly Slater on Baywatch and Andy Irons. *Surfing Magazine*. Retrieved from the World Wide Web:

http://www.surfingmagazine.com/video/kelly-slater-baywatch-andy-irons

Smith, J. (2014). Public Expectations: A misunderstanding of snowboarding. *NZSnowboard*. Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 2 March from

http://nzsnowboard.com/opinion-public-expectations-a-misunderstanding-of-snowboarding/

Snyder, G. J. (2006). Graffiti media and the perpetuation of an illegal subculture. *Crime Media Culture*, *2 (*1*)*, 93 – 101

Snyder, G. J. (2012). The city and the subculture career: Professional street skateboarding in LA. *Ethnography*, *13* (3), 306-329.

Stranger, M. (1999). The aesthetics of risk: A study of surfing. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 34 (*3*)*, 265 – 276.

Thornton, S. (1995). *Club cultures: Music, media and subcultural capital*. Cambridge, UK: Polity/Wesleyan University Press.

Thorpe, H. (2005). Jibbing the gender order: Females in the snowboarding culture. *Sport in Society*, *8* (1), 76-100.

Thorpe, H. (2011). *Snowboarding bodies in theory and practice.* Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.

Thorpe, H. (2011). Snowboarding bodies in theory and practice. Palgrave Macmillan.

Thorpe, H., & Wheaton, B. (2011). 'Generation X Games', Action sports and the Olympic movement: Understanding the cultural politics of incorporation. *Sociology, 45 (*5*)*, 830 – 847.

Throsby, D. (1999). Cultural capital. *Journal of cultural economics*, *23* (1-2), 3-12.

Turner, B. S., & Edmunds, J. (2002). The Distaste of Taste Bourdieu, cultural capital and the Australian postwar elite. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *2* (2), 219-239.

Van Gompel, R., Van den Bulck, H., & Biltereyst, D. (2002). Media Industries. In C. Newbold, O. Boyd-Barrett and H. Van den Bulck (Eds.), *The Media Book* (pp.162 – 211). London: Arnold.

Watson, J. (1998). *Media communication*. London: Macmillan.

Webster, J. G., & Ksiazek, T. B. (2012). The dynamics of audience fragmentation: Public attention in an age   of digital media. *Journal of communication*, *62* (1), 39-56.

Wheaton, B. (2003). Windsurfing: A subculture of commitment. In: R. Rinehart and S. Sydor (eds). *To the Extreme: Alternative Sports, Inside and Out*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Wheaton, B. & Beal, B. (2003). Keeping it real: Subcultural media and the discourses of authenticity in alternative sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport 38 (*2*)*, 155–176.

Williams, J. P. (2006). Authentic Identities Straightedge Subculture, Music, and the Internet. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *35 (*2*)*, 173-200.

Woermann, N. (2012). On the Slope is on the Screen: Prosumption, social media practices, and scopic systems in the freeskiing subculture. *American Behavioural Scientist, 56(4),* 618 – 640.

Wood, S. (2011). Kiwi's BMX feat down to hard work. *The Dominion Post.* Retrieved from the World Wide Web on 4 Sept 2013 from

http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/5071182/Kiwis-BMX-feat-down-to-hard-work

Appendices

Appendix 1

<div align="center">

**How do web video makers balance advertising pressures with authentic
subcultural communication? [Working title].**
Information Sheet

</div>

My name is Nick Maitland and I am a Master of Arts thesis student. I am researching the effect advertising has on subcultural media. The aim of this project is to investigate how New Zealand snowboard film makers balance the need for advertising revenue with creating authentic communications that connect with the subculture audience.

As a long-time snowboarder, I have found snowboarding-specific media very important in staying connected with the industry and lifestyle. As I get older I seem to rely on it more. I have also been working in marketing for the past 8 years. I know that the relationship with advertisers and sponsors can bring the need for compromise. I am fascinated by the balance that snowboard film makers must employ when running a profitable business and staying loyal to their audience, who are most often their peers. My Master of Arts thesis presents the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of what goes on behind the camera.

Your involvement in this project will be participation in an interview. The interviews will be conducted in-person, in Canterbury where possible, or using Skype when face-to-face interviews are not possible. The interviews will be moderately structured, with a series of questions being asked, yet informal discussion is welcomed. Topics covered focus on your history with snowboarding, film making motivations and intentions, commitment to subculture, and commitment to advertisers. As an interviewee you can refuse to answer any questions you are not comfortable discussing.

The interviews are estimated to last 45-60 minutes and will be recorded for transcribing (by the researcher). A copy of this transcription will be emailed to you after the interview and you will have the opportunity to add or change your responses, if necessary.

As a follow-up to this investigation, you may be asked further questions to expand on your interview responses. This can be done by email, if preferred.

In the performance of the tasks and application of the procedures there are risks that your responses could be damaging to yourself, or other individuals and organisations. As a result, the names of any individuals or organisations discussed in the interview (for examples, advertisers, sponsors, or competitors) will not be identified in the thesis or related publications to protect ongoing relationships and brands.

You may receive a copy of the project results by contacting the researcher at the conclusion of the project.

Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. If you withdraw, I will remove information relating to you provided you withdraw before 1 November 2013.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: your identity will not be made public without your prior consent. The data gathered for this research will not be released publicly and will be securely stored at the College of Arts office at the University of Canterbury for two years, at which point it will be destroyed/deleted. Only the researcher and his supervisor will have access to the data in this research project. A thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.

The project is being carried out as a requirement of the Master of Arts degree by Nick Maitland under the supervision of Dr Zita Joyce, who can be contacted at zita.joyce@canterbury.ac.nz. She will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury,

Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

If you agree to participate in the study, you are asked to complete the consent form and return either by email to nick.maitland@canterbury.ac.nz, by hand during at the conclusion of the interview or by mail to Nick Maitland, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch, 8140.

Nick Maitland

Appendix 2

How do web video makers balance advertising pressures with authentic subcultural communication? [Working title].
Consent Form for Riley Bathurst

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand what is required of me if I agree to take part in the research.

I understand that participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without penalty. Withdrawal of participation will also include the withdrawal of any information I have provided should this remain practically achievable.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher, Nick Maitland, and his supervisor, Dr Zita Joyce, and that any published or reported results will not identify the participants, without approval. I understand that a thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.

I understand that all data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form and will be destroyed after two years.

I understand the risks associated with taking part and how they will be managed.

I understand that I am able to receive a report on the findings of the study by contacting the researcher at the conclusion of the project.

I understand that I can contact the researcher Nick Maitland (nick.maitland@canterbury.ac.nz or (03) 345 8310) or supervisor, Dr Zita Joyce (zita.joyce@canterbury.ac.nz) for further information. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human- ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

NAME: …………………………………..…………….

Date ……………………………………………………

Signature:

Please complete this consent form and return either by email to nick.maitland@canterbury.ac.nz,
by hand during at the conclusion of the interview or by mail to Nick Maitland, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch, 8140.

Nick Maitland