Abstract
From her early pioneer days New Zealand is a country that founded herself on alternative principles - political, social and economic (Bennetts & Richardson, 2006). This spirit of New Zealand continues today, for New Zealand is still a country that prides itself on social justice, creative freedom, caring for the environment and quality of life style. This paper will challenge the idea of New Zealand’s maintenance of these principles, as the influence of American style Capitalism has invaded our shores, and our business practices. In particular I would like to address the destruction of creativity in our cities, under the guise of rejuvenation in Creative Capitals. This paper will take a post modern stance and use the example of Oblong Internet Café as a story of hope. This business as we will see is run through an Anarchist Kaupapa, in the city of Wellington. For anarchy at its heart promotes creativity. Creativity that is not profit driven but respects the individual’s need of autonomy and job fulfilment and care for the environment. However with any philosophy whether theoretical or at a city or business level, it is necessary adapt the model to a community and a society context. As such this story does not just describe another sectarian approach to eliminate Capitalism, that would in effect re-colonise New Zealand with another White Western European ideology, but offers a way to see fluidity and enactment to meet the needs of a New Zealand ethos. The aim of this story will be to spark debate on alternative business approaches that can lead to true business creativity in our creative capitals.

Introduction
Creative business in creative capitals is the next management fashion to hit the bookshelves. Not only is the fashion taking the business world by storm but local and national governments too. The foundation for this new move is to take arts businesses or talent from the art world and transform these most unbusiness like
ventures into profitable entities. The ultimate goal is to rejuvenate or transform cities and regions into creative capitals that attract the world’s elite workforce and travelling bourgeoisie (Ray & Anderson, 2000; Florida, 2002). This is however just one vision of how the world should be, cities of light, sound and entertainment or as critiques have also termed them carnivals of horror. For this vision of business and city development see a homogenised approach to city life that reduces diversity by exclusion of the marginalised (Esser & Hirsch, 1990). Critiques of this approach have stated it is the very diversity of city life where the social, political and economic disparities fuse, clash, reform, provide the inspiration for artists and what this current creative theory has termed “the creative sector”. Although Florida talks of tolerance being important, it is tolerance of what government and their new commercial partners decide are “good” diversity. “Bad” diversity is controlled with high levels of police and electronic surveillance, elements, such as, the poor, the homeless, mentally ill, racial minorities and yes some arts groups are eliminated. In the tourist cities of the creative capitals this diversity is not simply lost but is hunted down and eliminated by the forces of state police where cities of surveillance not creative freedom are formed (Esser & Hirsch, 1990).

Beneath this vision are other businesses that resist this capitalist insurgence on the world’s historical cities and see alternative business models. This paper will tell the story of one such business called Oblong a community run internet and activist network, in Wellington New Zealand. Although this may seem a radical concept this paper will show that since the turn of the century in our most creative capitals there has always been resistance to Capitalism which spawns creative businesses (Shorthouse, 2004). Since its early days New Zealand has politically and socially maintained a different outlook to mainstream dominating forces of British Capitalism, this continues today with New Zealand taking pride in caring for; the environment, social justice, creative freedom and quality of lifestyle. In light of this we need to question how local government nurtures creative business and does not destroy creativity and New Zealand ideals.

The paper when presented will use photography and storytelling to unravel this story of hope in a city that is being transformed into a tourist capital rather than a creative capital – a city based on consumption not creative freedom.

Creative capitals Richard Florida (2002) is promoted as the savour of modern business world. Where cultural capitals of the world are revitalised. Appropriate cities have a history of cultural activities from the arts, such as fine art, movie making, theatre etc. These cities have a high tolerance of diversity, especially alternative sexuality. An example of such city he highlights is San Francisco. These cities also have high technical expertise, which in San Francisco is its proximity to Silicon Valley where the latest technology combines with artistic outlooks and skills. Here arts businesses become transformed into commercial entities, saved from struggling existence and aided to grow through the use of creative clusters and creative incubators, these wild and untamed businesses now become productive and commercially successful taking on the world’s leaders. Another example is Weta Studios in Wellington, the city where this story is set. This famed movie production company has gained a world audience from the owner Peter Jackson’s recreation of the Tolkien trilogy Lord of the Rings.
Historically it can be shown that neither creative cities or creative clusters are new (Esser & Hirsch, 1990). What is new is the high speed exploitation of art businesses and their people, and the loss of creative spaces in these very cities. The spaces that are being lost are the very spaces that spawn the breakthroughs of true creativity. The story that Oblong will illustrate is how businesses can resist this movement and practice alternative outlooks based on anarchist rather than Capitalist principles. But first we need to look back in history to a time where there principles emerged, for anarchism and the principles of the art world developed side by side. Movements like the situationalists, the first and second Bohemia, the avant gardes, the Impressionists, the Surrealists, and of course Anarchists, all met and discussed alternative ways to mediate their lives, their work, their cities and businesses to nurture creativity rather than capitalism (Shorthouse, 2005; Fowler, 1998; Bourdieu, 1995). It was in the cafes of Europe that political debate about the position of art, politics and capitalism were discussed and alternative philosophies developed and subsequently promoted.

So what is anarchy?
Anarchy is often quoted as coming from the Greek term “anarchos”, meaning no rules. As such people have come to think of anarchy meaning literally no rules, chaos. But since the eighteenth century it has become to mean self imposed discipline, so no organised institution to dictate an individual’s behaviour, also the rejection of traditional labour practices of employment and the dominant capitalist market approach (Bragg, Keane, Kinna, & Marshall, 2006). From the eighteenth century it took on the outlook of being positive, with a focus on individual control and also on love and community. This also coincides in the ninetieth century with the formation of modernity that led to industrialisation and the coopting of society into a Capitalist led market.

A more accurate definition from anarchist theorists, which leads to a more precise understanding of what is central to the political ideology that the theory of anarchy is based on, is as follows:

“The word "anarchy" is from the Greek, prefix an (or a), meaning "not, "the want of," "the absence of, or "the lack of", plus archos, meaning "a ruler," "director", "chief," "person in charge," or "authority." Or, as Peter Kropotkin put it, Anarchism comes from the Greek words meaning "contrary to authority." Anarchism, p. 284” Anarchist FAQ, 2006, p1.

Accordingly anarchism can be seen not just to be anti state but more accurately anti hierarchy.


This means liberty should be at governmental, organisational and individual levels of society. For anarchists see that traditional forms of structure are imbued with power that eliminates human creativity, as the following quote sums up:

The man
Of virtuous soul commands not, nor obeys:
    Power, like a desolating pestilence,
Pollutes whate'er it touches, and obedience,
    Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,
For anarchists, a person cannot be free if they are subject to state or Capitalist authority. For and anarchist creativity is intrinsically linked with human liberty. How people work and the system they operate in will dictate this outcome. This idea is supported by research from Social Psychology which showed contrary to earlier studies in wider society, that in the workplace it was not personality but environment that determined a workers creativity (Amabile, 1983). Nevertheless the establishment of creativity in the workplace since the rise of the Industrial Age which was based on a Capitalist philosophy has found the changes necessary for such creativity are hard to achieve. Other authors point to the underlying power structures that Capitalism brings that are unseen and prevent this occurring. Voltairine de Cleyre (p24-24 in Glassgold (2001)) summarises how anarchism helps see these hidden powers and the current limitations they place on society and the workplace:

Anarchism . . . teaches the possibility of a society in which the needs of life may be fully supplied for all, and in which the opportunities for complete development of mind and body shall be the heritage of all . . . [It] teaches that the present unjust organisation of the production and distribution of wealth must finally be completely destroyed, and replaced by a system which will insure to each the liberty to work, without first seeking a master to whom he [or she] must surrender a tithe of his [or her] product, which will guarantee his liberty of access to the sources and means of production. . . Out of the blindly submissive, it makes the discontented; out of the unconsciously dissatisfied, it makes the consciously dissatisfied . . . Anarchism seeks to arouse the consciousness of oppression, the desire for a better society, and a sense of the necessity for unceasing warfare against capitalism and the State.

The idea of running a business under the guise of anarchy for many may seen absurd, however the ideology of archaism has been already co-opted into business. The principles of anarchism have actively been used to help the principles of sustainable business, which many businesses are using for guidance to help them form organisational strategy (Sylvan, 1993). These principles outline seven mandates, these include respecting the environment, providing creative jobs for employees, not harming human or animal life and providing a future for the next generation (Alkeson et al, 2003). These qualities have already been outlined as being important for the new creative workforce (Ray & Anderson, 2000; Brown, 2006). Furthermore anarchism itself provides an alternative format for achieving creativity in business and society. For anarchism promotes a community involvement where decisions are made as a collective. Where an individual’s self discipline allows them to work with others in the collective rather than under the control of a manager and bureaucratic rules. In this way anarchism preserves the importance of individuality. In this way creativity is preserved and not destroyed by bureaucratic drive for instrumental rationality. For an organisation seeking to be creative, anarchism provides a realistic alternative to capitalism. In recent times areas such as information and knowledge management and project management have been looking to anarchy as providing alternative ways to maintain employee creativity (Brown, 2006).

Oblong
This is where our story begins, in Cuba Street, one of the most creative streets in Wellington,. Cuba Street contains a name of historical resistance, with cafes, and interesting eclectic shops, such as Mojo guitars, Fedels Café, a street where bands
traditionally came to practice and the home of Wellington’s best inner city graffiti and street art. Oblong herself is discretely located in one of Cuba’s side streets, “Left Bank”, in an open courtyard. Oblong is currently incorporated with the Freedom Shop. The Freedom shop which is anarchist based book shop was evicted from its original premises as the land the shop was located on was co-opted by the council for the new by-pass.

Oblong is described on the Internet as:

“Oblong, another community Internet café with similarly anti-capitalist politics. Oblong also runs computer camps that cover standard stuff such as email, web design and digital photography, but with an emphasis on open source software, and also teaches much more Cuba-esque skills such as leaflet design, Indymedia and stencil-making. So amid all the design stores and cocktail bars that are popping up in Cuba St, there are a few places left that still fly the flag for radicalism and nonconformity.” Tom, p1, http://wellurban.blogspot.com/2006/01/shops-that-pass-in-night-2.html

Oblong’s History
Oblong’s history goes back three years, in its first year it was run as a ”profit making” organisation, but despite this it always have some activist tendencies even back then. A year later they wished to sell the business and three new people looked to take over. However they decided they did not want a profit focussed business but rather an organisation run as a collective that was there to support the local community. However three people were not enough and so they co-opted the help of local activists, many of who had anarchist affiliations. Training the new members took a while but things settled down and Oblong has now been running for the last two years as a non-profit organisation.

Anarchist Kaupapa
Part of the change to non-profit entailed finding a new vision for the organisation. As they were not profit focussed the word Kaupapa seemed to represent them better than organisation labels such as mission statement. This terminology was not a forced move but a natural move to find a word that represented the ethos of this community, that takes into account Maori aspects, as well as other outlooks that fight for the rights of the marginalised.

The use of the word anarchy and affiliation with anarchism also reflected at the founding time their joining with the anarchist network who provided the extra numbers required to successfully run Oblong. It also reflects other aspects such as the desire to be ant-capitalist and a non-hierarchical collective.

My Story
My story of Oblong and how I came to be involved is not as an objective observer but as an active participant in the events. How my involvement began is where this story begins…. 

My discovery of Oblong and the people that run her is as serendipitous as with any interaction with the creative community I have had since re-immersing myself in the creative community for my PhD. For it was at a hip-hop concert I had gone along to do photography for my PhD I met a group of programmers, one also a photographer. After the concert I offered to take them on a tour of Wellington graffiti, as one was
also an ex-graffiti artist and activist. On our way we passed Oblong and my new found friend explained its operation and how they needed more woman to be involved, as an IS lecturer and critical theorist I was keen to become involved.

........so a couple of weeks later I agreed to attend a meeting.......  

The first meeting was an eye opener, not only for the colourful names, such as; Strype, Jacob, Gem, Jessie, Ire, the people that run Oblong, but also seeing a meeting run that adhered so strongly to environmental and social consciousness. Having recently taught critical business theory at Massey University, seeing sustainable business practices put in action was very different in reality. Every purchasing decision was made taking care on how it could be done sustainability for the environment, even down to two headsets for a new video media computer. It turned out there are places that specialise in recycled computer parts, several options were suggested and one decided on. This continued with every issue on the agenda, where the environmental and social impact was at the forefront of every decision made. The meeting them moved to the subject of workshops, they particularly discussed the issue of running workshops for woman and how that they needed to better understand the needs of woman and what would draw them into a workshop. They discussed the need for childcare both for those attending workshops and potential new Oblong members. It was suggested that forming a woman’s only group may be the best way to access the needs of woman. They also discussed introducing a community wage based on a new government initiative for people currently working on a volunteer basis. They also said they needed a new exhibit for Oblong and I said I had one on my work on Graffiti and Public Spaces. They were enthusiastic and encouraged me to bring it in so the collective could vote if they approve of the exhibit. Lastly shifts for the coming month were also seemingly filled and juggled.

This is just a small insight into the operation of a business that’s main motivation is not profit but community service. Situated in the heart of Cuba Street, Wellington’s creative heart, there is still a place for these alternative business initiatives to be born. This provides space for people who do not have ready internet access and can benefit from free training in computer. In particular it provides training for the marginalised and provides a place to hone artistic skills for life, work and activism.

However with any community challenges arise, the most recent one was an incident that led to the questioning of the founding kaupapa this group is based on. Operating for the past two years Oblong has prided itself on a purely anarchist kaupapa. As stated in Oblongs Kaupapa (2006):

Oblong is an anarchist, anti-profit, collectively run, affordable internet café, information sharing, exhibition and workshop space. As we believe that the free flow of information is good for everyone, we aim to provide fast and reliable internet and computing services.

....later it continues on to illustrate the inclusiveness of it service....

We are entirely volunteer run and collectively owned and operated. Everyone who contributes to Oblong has an equal voice in deciding how the place is run. We aim to provide a safe, welcoming and friendly space for everyone, free from all forms of oppression and abuse.
This is the philosophy that Oblong decided would provide the model for them to build a collective and anti-capitalist organisation. However a challenge came to this model in recent times when a discussion between a member of the collective and a new member on the virtues of Capitalism as the new member subsequently resigned. Although this did not lead to a positive outcome it did open up the debate on if a purely anarchist outlook may be too strict.

As part of the next meeting it was decided that it would be good to open up debate on the Kaupapa. Issues raised were that a dominating model like Marxism, Anarchism etc, can be too sectarian. Issues raised were that this may be alienating to people coming from a non anarchist stance or with less education, the language of anarchism can be excluding. Also the popular idea of anarchists as terrorists may also put potential members off from joining. Further there were other philosophical stances people felt they affiliated with or would like also to include in this Kaupapa.

We will look at each of these issues as they were discussed.

Firstly already in this group a clash had occurred due to sectarianism, many of Oblong members were also IT workers who were well paid and this conflicted with the idea of wealth to excess. The argument was meant to be academic but became personal, the idea that some capitalism can be good, offended a member that felt anarchism was a pure way to live and any capitalism should be rejected. The person debating in no way rejected anarchism entirely and had agreed to join understanding the kaupapa. So following this resignation it was decided at a later meeting and ratified subsequently in an online discussion by the communities list server, to open up a healthy debate to see how people perceived the idea of an anarchist kaupapa and the use of the word anarchy.

The next issue discussed was the idea that the word anarchy may alienate people due to its view by the general populous as being associated with terrorism. At the meeting I raised the point that a friend who identified with the philosophy of hip-hop, which draws strength from the four elements of hip-hop and the underlying political revolutionary history of this youth culture that has given strength to the diaspora of African People. Hip-hop has strong message of resistance but also of peace. This debate came about over a cartoon called Skull Boy (see figure 1) that was going to be used as a sticker for an antiwar conference protest.
The potential member who had agreed to take part in making the art work for the protest felt this could be misunderstood as inciting terrorism, as the character had an anarchy symbol on their head. They suggested that the symbol of peace could be used to replace the anarchy sign. I used this as an example of how people could misunderstand the term anarchy but also too that there would be a need to integrate their own hip-hop philosophies, which the current Kaupapa may not be flexible enough to cope with. When I mentioned this one of the members said that often the symbol of anarchy was combined with the peace sign. Further they did have several members that were hip-hop anarchists. This helps to show how despite diverse approaches the collective of Oblong seeks to be inclusive of member’s belief systems.

Reinforcing the outlook of including alternative philosophies, one member said they affiliated more strongly with feminist theories, that embraced a diversity of approaches, drawing on the multitude of life rather than a single approach for everyone. Later they explained that some work done on social ecology draws from feminist principles and that much of the work people do is not valued as it is non profit, but for a community it often is fundamental to how it functions. These ideas have been used in American communities where the main industry had collapsed, a group of social ecology activists have worked with these people to understand the skills they had and helped the, rebuild their lives around these. What had happened was that people were locked into the capitalist model and when the model collapses these people are often unable to see away forward. This provided them a way to understand new ways to use their skills outside of this dominating model.

Another member felt strongly that the community needed to address Maori issues more – “that this business was situated on stolen Maori land”. They felt that this should be included in the kaupapa. I reflected on what he said with an anecdote of a child I had nannied. She was the five year old daughter of a diplomat, ironically her great grandfather one of the treaty signers, she was half Malaysian and looked up at me with her beautiful brown eyes and said “this is all Maori land but I need somewhere to live too”. The other member laughed and then reflected on this and
said yes perhaps it should be “this business is on stolen Maori land but we need somewhere to check our email.”

It was also discussed that perhaps the word anarchy should be not be so prominent in the kaupapa and note that some of the members are anarchists and this reflects in how Oblong is run. Again an amusing story involving pickles was used to illustrate that some of the members affiliated as pickles and were happy to discuss these ideas with new members. Such an approach they felt may be the way to still include elements of anarchism but avoid sectarianism.

From here it was decided to run a list server discussion for members to put their ideas forward. The debate alone has opened up a healthy dialogue that drew the community together at an important transition as in the next six months the Freedom Shop will be finding its own space and this opens up new opportunities for the space they occupied and with a wider philosophical outlook this creates more freedom to reinvent and invigorate Oblong. One project that is hoped to run, are workshops with an organisation called Global Education. Both are anti-capitalist. Global Education works with youth who have fallen out of mainstream education, and employs Youth Workers who use the four elements of hip-hop to educate and inspire the people they work with. It is envisaged that Oblong can run free community workshops for young graffiti artists to show them how their artistic skills can be transformed into business skills using graphic design, web design, video and photo editing. Such projects they see as important for reaching out to the margins of society.
Conclusion
I hope this brief glimpse at an alternative business approach is a story of hope. That as we consider rejuvenating our cities as creative entities we need to understand that creativity is not just about profit, that we need to nurture the cities and their people not just exploit them. That it is communities such as Oblong that provide these free spaces where people are free to create and engage with other people and often it is in these places where true breakthroughs in the arts world have taken place.

It is hoped that this paper will generate healthy discussion at this conference, that although working within in a Capitalist dominated society and economy, that some of the ideas that Oblong operate with are feasible and may be used in other forms of business small and big alike. That sustainable business is more than recycling, it includes human autonomy and creativity, working as a community and providing services for the marginalised. Furthermore this story also shows that any one way can be problematic and as they are grown from other cultures with divergent social, racial ideologies that adaptation and fluidity are in themselves strengths that the ethos of anarchy as a creative philosophy should embrace rather than reject. So that New Zealand companies represent New Zealand ethos and identity and can resist the dominant American style philosophy that is consuming the world globally.
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