



# Irresistible Forces: The Business Legacy of Napster and the Growth of the Underground Internet

*Trevor Merriden*

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## **Irresistible Forces: The Business Legacy of Napster and the Growth of the Underground Internet**

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This book is about - but not only about - Napster. The story of Napster is important in its own right, but its legacy even more so. The phenomenon that surrounds Napster has highlighted the extraordinary potential for the mass mobilisation of consumer and community power. This irresistible force - the underground Internet - has blown apart conventional models of doing business.

Merriden charts the birth of Napster and its genesis in Internet music communities. He describes in detail how big businesses felt complacent enough to ignore Napster, only to turn on it when the truth about their business models dawned. As the big companies got nasty, Bertelsmann and Thomas Middelhof broke ranks and did a deal with Napster.

The rapid spread in Napster's popularity has made many businesses sit up and notice. And it wasn't just because of the court room battles highlighted by the media every day. Some estimates put the peak number of Napster users at around 58 million. Hard to ignore the cries of the masses. Through the aftermath of those bloody court rooms, Napster has left a lasting impact on the future of e-business. This legacy affects more than music and record companies. In irresistible forces, Trevor Merriden shows how all businesses who have an interest in the Internet should pay attention. The influence on business of file sharing and peer-to-peer technology will be profound in the years ahead.

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