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Two Megaupload executives sentenced to jail

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Megaupload executives Mathias Ortmann (left) and Bram van der Kolk (right) in court during an extradition hearing in Auckland in 2015. Photo: AFP/ Michael Bradley

The police say today's sentencing of two key figures in the Megaupload case reflects years of work by investigators in New Zealand and the United States.

P. **Mathias Ortmann and Bram van der Kolk were sentenced today in the High Court in Auckland for their part in Kim Dotcom's Megaupload enterprise, which offered millions of copyrighted works online.**

They had previously pleaded guilty to charges including participating in a criminal group, causing loss by deception and conspiring to dishonestly obtain documents.

Police said Ortmann was sentenced to two years and seven months in prison and Bram van der Kolk to two years and six months.

The pair earlier fought extradition to face charges in the United States, but in May last year, in a statement from their solicitor Ortmann and van der Kolk said

(<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/466800/megaupload-pair-will-not-be-extradited-after-us-agrees-to-deal>) they had struck a deal and would face charges in New Zealand in return for the US dropping the extradition case against them.

The Megaupload site ran from 2005 to 2012, and police said that along with other associated sites, it enabled millions of songs, movies, TV shows, e-books, video games and computer programmes to be downloaded.

Detective Inspector Stuart Mills said the scale of offending was enormous. Megaupload claimed to have had 180 million registered users at the peak of its popularity and averaged 50 million visits a day.

"Megaupload was a global criminal enterprise estimated to have cost copyright holders more than half a billion dollars," Mills said.

"As one of the largest copyright fraud schemes ever seen, Megaupload operations involved the deliberate and systematic infringement of copyrighted material for financial gain.

"It exploited the work of artists, programmers, and entrepreneurs as well as the organisations and corporations that represented them."

In 2022, Megaupload founder Kim Dotcom said he would continue fighting charges against him and extradition.

The company's former marketing director Finn Batato, who had also faced charges, died in June last year (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/468971/megaupload-s-finn-batato-dies-from-cancer>).