

# Riding into research about cycle rage

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Following a highly publicised 2012 incident on a mountain bike track in Canterbury's Port Hills, a Victoria University of Wellington academic has begun conducting research into cycle rage.

Dr Mike Lloyd from Victoria's School of Social and Cultural Studies initially saw the footage of the Canterbury incident online and used it during a lecture.

However, the level of conflict in the video—which captures an escalating argument between two [mountain bike](#) riders riding at slightly different speeds—piqued Dr Lloyd's attention and he decided to do an in-depth analysis of the footage.

"It was an interesting video to analyse because the footage was available publicly and people were familiar with it because it went viral.

"I looked at the moments of interaction between the two cyclists and how the fight arose—it all eventuated from slight breaches in norms of interaction."

With the benefit of hindsight, Dr Lloyd says that if either of the riders had stopped their bike earlier it would have shortened the interaction which lead to the outburst of cycle rage, but this would also have interrupted the flow of the ride.

"The two riders in the dispute seem to display a classic masculinist one-upmanship which led to violence and perhaps the first recorded instance of mountain bike rage."

Although there has been quite a bit of research on cycling and road rage, Dr Lloyd says he knows of no published study on cycle rage between mountain bikers but he does see similarities between cycle rage and surf rage.

"Surf rage occurs when someone interrupts a ride on a specific wave but unlike a wave, mountain bike tracks do not disappear after a ride."

With both mountain biking and surfing, there are unwritten rules of etiquette and tempers rise when these rules are broken says Dr Lloyd.

"In this case, the rule that one rider invokes is 'slower riders should let

faster riders pass', but that very same rider breaks the 'ride safely' rule by tailgating. It is no simple matter how these unwritten rules are to be turned into actions"

Being a keen cyclist himself, Dr Lloyd went down south to ride the Port Hills track to gain a better understanding of what had happened in 2012. The short, fast nature of the track seems a significant factor in explaining why both [riders](#) grew frustrated over the other rider's actions.

He has also used the footage in a course on emotions to get his students thinking as he believes the issues it raises are something a lot of people can relate to.

Provided by Victoria University

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