

# For Sale: Fake McGill Degrees

By Danny FISHER, The McGill Daily

MONTREAL (CUP) -- Fake McGill University diplomas and transcripts are legally sold on the Internet to anyone with \$100 and "life experience." And they work.

FantasyDiplomas.com is one online diploma mill that brags about the authentic look of their documents.

"Fantasy Diplomas are ..... the same thickness as real university diplomas," the Web site boasts. "Transcripts are printed on genuine university security paper ..... from the same supplier as most U.S. colleges and universities."

The company maintains that its fake documents are only novelty items.

"Fantasy Diplomas are not intended to be used for unlawful misrepresentation or fraudulent purposes," the Web site warns.

According to McGill Provost and VP Academic Luc Vinet, the sale of fake diplomas is completely legal.

"This was brought to our legal counsel's attention a year ago," Vinet said. "It is not likely that what they offer would be analogous to our diplomas. If they are not reproducing our logo, they have not infringed the law."

It is only illegal to use a fake diploma, Vinet said.

"A legal violation would be if someone got the degree and claimed it is a McGill degree. But the crime is on the person," he said.

But for those who wish to live outside the law, online companies like VerificationServices.org offer to verify fake degrees to potential employers.

"Regardless of where you graduated and how you obtained your diploma, we will verify your educational documents," the VerificationServices.org Web site explains. "Once you've faxed us the diploma or transcript, we'll be able to provide a copy to any verifying party."

While FantasyDiplomas.com claims its novelty documents should not be put towards fraudulent ends, a company representative said that their diplomas sometimes land customers employment opportunities.

"We can't guarantee your diploma will be accepted by any employer," said the representative, but added, "customers who couple our printing service with the verification service have been able to

obtain better paying jobs."

Testimonials on the VerificationServices.org Web site claim that the bogus graduation verification service has been accepted by employers in the past.

"Monday I applied for that job," wrote Scott M., a fake UCLA graduate. "The interviewer said she'd have to verify my diploma. Wednesday I paid for your service, and on Thursday my new boss called to say I had the job!"

Kathleen Donovan is the head of Human Resources at Pfizer, a major U.S. pharmaceutical company. Donovan said that while a fake degree wouldn't land someone a job at Pfizer, it might work at other companies.

"At Pfizer, we have a quite thorough background service that does a thorough employment and education background check," Donovan said. "We verify degrees right with schools ... if they lied on their resumé, or used a fake degree, we would find out, and we wouldn't hire them."

"But I don't speak for every company," she added.

Acting McGill Registrar Sylvie Frank says McGill takes precautionary measures to protect against diploma and transcript fraud.

"I think that it is the responsibility of all universities to protect the value of their degrees," she said. "McGill transcripts have certain safety features. They go out on special security paper in sealed envelopes."

But according to FantasyDiplomas.com, so do their fake transcripts.

So far, McGill has not taken any legal action against diploma mills that sell fake McGill documents.

But they could, says Partick Healy, a McGill Law professor.

"There could still be all kinds of crimes there, both criminal and civil," Healy said.

In October 2002, Purdue University in Indiana sent a letter to FakeDegrees.com, another online diploma mill, demanding that the company cease producing and selling Purdue Diplomas. The company complied that day.

"If I were McGill, I would send a demand letter," Healy said.

## Panthers Secure Major Sponsor



A sure candidate for this year's playoffs, and in their first season as a part of the AUS league, the UPEI Panthers Women's Hockey Team have been actively seeking sponsorship to help cover the functioning costs of the team.

Shown here presenting the Panthers with new jerseys is Investors Group representative Debbie MacLellan

(centre), a former player with UPEI from 1974-77. Along with the jerseys, Investors Group also signed on as a game sponsor.

Accepting the new jerseys are, from left, assistant captain Ambyr Gallant, captain Penny Walsh, assistant captain Tracy Mosher, and assistant captain Maeghan Rogers.

## One more Choice Cut...

Artist: **The Ditchpigs**  
CD: **Japanese Noise Rock**  
By: Will PATE

If the gods of indie, rock and punk engaged in a bizarre love triangle, their blessed children would be The Ditchpigs. Moncton's favorite sons hit your ears with a record that's a tasteful mix of upbeat for the downtrodden. At the same time, they're still fresh enough to love what they're doing, and it shows.

They like their riffs velcro-catchy, melodies sweet with a drop of sour and their rhythm pumping like a merry jackhammer. One gets the sense that these four boys were brought together by supernatural forces far beyond our ability to understand, for the sole purpose of making quality East Coast party rock. This record belongs in your car stereo, on the way to the beach

or a night of painting the town rouge.

It's refreshing to hear a local band that doesn't stray too far into any of the trendy rock genres. If you've heard too many emo whiners, screamo freak-outs and the rat-a-tat-tat of hardcore punk beyond exhaustion, then this record is for you. Their efforts haven't gone in vain either, being recently featured on Much Music's Going Coastal. The only downside to *Japanese Noise Rock* is that it checks in at just a little under 45 minutes. But help is on the way: keep an eye out for their new record *Someone to Hate More than Yourself*. You can see them live at two venues this Saturday; an all ages show at The Boys & Girls Club around 7:00 and adults only at Baba's at 10:00.

Verdict: A well balanced and strong debut..