



ticketing mailbox <ticketing@culture.gov.uk>

Review of Consumer Protection Measures relating to Online Secondary Ticketing Platforms

1 message

To: ticketing@culture.gov.uk

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Hi,

I regularly buy tickets for sporting events & concerts so here are a few observations.

During the recent rugby world cup, you could sell tickets back to the organiser who then acted as your agent. If they were able to resell you ticket, you got 100% of your money back. Surely the legitimate agencies such as Ticketmaster could do this for a small handling fee - say 10%. The venues would prefer full venues rather than have empty seats.

London 2012 tickets were available from other European ticket suppliers for a maximum of 20% mark up. Companies such as Sportsworld are very clear about the face value, selling price & admin fees. It's then the consumers choice if they feel it's a realistic mark-up. Whilst you are paying extra, it's very transparent.

Outside many events you get the touts calling out "buy or sell tickets" with probably the greatest number outside the big equestrian events. At last years Cheltenham festival there must have been around 200 touts between the car parks & bus stop to the main entrance on the day of the Gold Cup. Some of these touts appeared to have over 100 tickets available. If this is against the T+C's of ticket purchase, why can't the police or venue security confiscate the tickets? Make it illegal to tout tickets & place more responsibility on the venue to stop it within the immediate area. If the venues or promoters were fined or risked losing their licence to hold future events, they would soon take it seriously. If the venues website clearly stated that touts would be discouraged & moved on from the sites, the touts would soon stop if there were no buyers.

The venues could do more to discourage touts by getting their security and/or local police to move on ticket touts. If there are less options for selling tickets, touts will not buy them in the first place leaving more for genuine fans. The venues should want to be full to maximise drink, food, merchandise sales. It's in their interest to discourage touts & get more people inside the venue. Also if they have accurate pre-ticket information, they can plan the amount of security/ bar staff better.

The bands or sports team themselves could do more to discourage touts on their websites. When announcing tours, most bands will promote certain agencies & probably for a commission. I don't have a problem with this but they could also discourage the secondary market. The FA do their best to discourage the secondary market but website of bands could do more – especially those aimed at the younger market where people less used to going to gigs & be more likely to try other sites. For example, Prince recently stopped tickets sales as a direct result of the secondary ticket market but would 5 seconds of Summer or One Direction do anything to discourage touts?

The venues, music/sports media & government could do more to promote fan-to-fan resale websites such as Scarlet mist who are a not-for-profit fan resale site. These are usually excellent sites who offer a free service to genuine fans who are longer able to attend for genuine reasons such as illness or a change in work patterns. however, by their not-for-profit nature, they often close down at short notice due to lack of funding. Each venue or band could recommend such a site. For example the Academy Music Group or U2 could promote or recommend such as service on their website & ticket confirmation email.

Glastonbury Festival has virtually eliminated touts by means of their registration system.. It was said beforehand that it couldn't work. However, they were determined to make it happen & it has. It was just a question of education. If a venue that creates a small village once a year can make this happen, I'm sure other venues could stop touts. The agencies will point out that it stops some fans going but I disagree. Firms like Ticketmaster, Ticket factory, Live Nation, AXS, Gigs & Tours want you to register with them anyway so they can send marketing emails.

If the agencies were serious about touts & secondary markets, they would work together to create a charter. This would not be a cartel, it would just be firms co-operating with each other in the same way that local shops ban shop lifters, pubs bans drug dealers etc. If someone is found out toutting numerous tickets, they could easily be banned from the main agencies for a period of time. Maybe the agencies need to be fined if they don't co-operate. Whilst having an ombudsman or 'oftick' may not be necessary, the big agencies seem to be more about making money than looking after the fans.

If agencies are selling VIP packages they should be clearer what the extras are in addition to the tickets. A colleague recently paid an extra £100 each for One Direction for her 2 children, which resulted in 2 slices of pizza, a programme & a drink of Coke per person in a room in the back of the venue. The package was very vague about what was offered & whilst it may not be legally inaccurate, the promotion was misleading, was not back stage & certain not quality food & drink.

However, when trying to clamp down on touts, please don't stop "legitimate" resales to family/friends/colleagues due to last minute change of circumstances. e.g. If I'm ill or need to change my work patterns at the last minute, I may want to sell a couple of tickets to friends rather than loose the money.

In summary, it needs responsibility from the 3 main organisation within the ticket "chain"

1. The initial ticket sellers
2. The Venue
3. The band, sports club, entertainer

Finally, a couple of points about postal charges. most agencies charge £3-£5 to post tickets which is acceptable. However this charge should be per order & not per tickets. theatre Group are particularly bad for this. Also why do I sometimes have to pay a charge to print out my own tickets using my own ink & paper!! this really annoys me!

Hope this helps with your review.

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