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**Kayak-Orbitz**

1 message

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**Dorian Harris** <dorian@skoosh.com>

21 October 2010 09:49

To: nelson.jung@oft.gsi.gov.uk

Cc: Sadrul Islam &lt;Sadrul.Islam@oft.gsi.gov.uk&gt;

Hi Nelson,

I hope you're well.

I realise we're due to talk on Friday anyway but, in the meantime, there was a significant development in the world of price fixing yesterday.

Our largest client for the last 5 years at least has been the U.S. price comparison site Kayak. We always knew it was a dangerous partnership because Kayak is part owned and run by one of our competitors and one of the chief proponents of rate parity, Orbitz.

Some of Kayak's disaffected staff have been telling us for the long time that Kayak is merely a puppet of Orbitz and that Orbitz will show up above other companies in the search results whether or not they're the cheapest (we have this in writing of course, I'll forward it to you). Not a great business model of course because it purports to be objective but misleads the public.

Yesterday we were sent an email notifying us that our contract would be terminated within a month. It was a very cold email for various reasons:

- 1) We spend in excess of a £1m per year advertising on Kayak and yet there was no explanation as to why the contract had ended
- 2) The email was addressed to a junior member of staff at Skoosh with the request that it should be passed to the relevant person
- 3) The month termination period was backdated by 5 days
- 4) No-one replied to our emails or calls. There's a wall of silence at Kayak.

I didn't enter this frame naively. I expected that the industry would close in around us to some extent so I'm not shocked by this move. All it tells me is that the people we're up against will go to great lengths to achieve their goal of squeezing any dissenters out of the market.

The USDOJ told me that they didn't feel a need to interfere at this stage and their position is that they will allow the market to regulate itself unless they can see otherwise. I think they're leaving it really late and, if they don't intervene soon, it will be immensely difficult to free up the market place again.

I look forward to our call tomorrow.

Cheers,

Dorian

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