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# Ticketmaster Torpedos Taylor Tour

**Natalie Schorr, Social Media Manager**

Buying concert tickets became a battle once Ticketmaster acquired its grip on the industry.

When it is time to buy tickets for an artist's tour, people have no choice but to flock to distribution giant Ticketmaster to acquire them. That is unless they want to fight for a resale ticket at an insane markup after the fact. Taylor Swift's upcoming Eras Tour was no different, and some argue it was the worst presale process yet.

It was reported that the site crashed for hours at a time, often kicking users out of the queue and displaying error messages as they entered their presale code to purchase their selected tickets. The presale codes were sent out beforehand to the fans who had registered their email in advance in hopes of being selected for the codes which operate on a lottery based system. Once they were let back in, the tickets were wiped. With this being Swift's first tour since 2018, and on the heels of three highly anticipated album releases, many fans were eager to see the pop artist on stage again.

Zoe Mason, a second-year social work and women and gender studies double major, is one of those fans. They have used Ticketmaster many times before to get tickets to many different events but this time was a much different experience for them.

"It was kind of crazy. As soon as you were clicking [the tickets] they were disappearing," Mason said.

Mason explained how difficult it was to enter the ticket buying queue this time around, saying they had to refresh multiple times before getting in line. Once she was in the queue, she spent upwards of one hour waiting to even view the ticket selection screen. When it was finally her turn, it was a very intense and stressful process to purchase them.

First-year Psychology major Sophia Flamoe described a similar purchasing experience. Unlike Mason, this was Flamoe's first time using the website to purchase tickets, and she said the experience was not user friendly.

"It was a lot of confusing information," Flamoe said. "I heard about a wait room, and I couldn't get into one when we were first doing it at 10 a.m."

Even though Flamoe and Mason were able to eventually procure tickets, both stated that the experience was stressful, time-consuming and chaotic. During the sale, Ticketmaster reported record high traffic. Some fans who waited were unable to purchase tickets at all. The situation seemed to leave fans frustrated and upset with Swift and Ticketmaster for not creating a better purchasing process for the fans since the presale messaging claimed to emphasize fan validity.



Natalie Schorr

In the aftermath of the ticket sale, Swift put out a statement via an Instagram story expressing how upset she was with Ticketmaster for not handling the situation better. Not all of her fans were satisfied with this, such as Flamoe, who felt like Swift could have said more.

"I thought [Swift's statement] came a little late, and it felt a little fake. It didn't seem like she was really addressing it the way it needed to be addressed," Flamoe said.

With all the issues Ticketmaster had during this sale, some people may wonder why Swift chose to use Ticketmaster in the first place. The reality is, there was no choice. In 2010, Ticketmaster and Live Nation, an entertainment business, merged to create a company that now controls 70% of the live event and ticketing industry. This created what Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez described as a monopoly in the entertainment industry. Assistant Professor of Economics Nick Huntington-Klein offered an assessment of what monopolies are and how they function.

"Technically it's not a monopoly unless they [control] 100%, but even if they're pretty close we would call them a monopoly anyway," Huntington-Klein said. "And Ticketmaster is nearly there as they facilitate most large scale stadium ticket sales."

Monopolies eliminate competition, which is what drives companies to improve their products. Huntington-Klein says declines in quality service in monopolies happen because there is nowhere else for the consumer to go. Antitrust laws are the government's way of preventing this behavior.

"Being a monopoly is not illegal. The actual laws that we have are laws against anti-competitive behavior," Huntington-Klein said.

Multiple lawmakers expressed concern over Ticketmaster's potentially monopolistic behavior, and want to look into the company to see if antitrust violations are occurring. Huntington-Klein believes that Ticketmaster is exhibiting anti-competitive behavior. Ticketmaster has contracts with many large event venues that say they have to use the company's ticketing services, which makes it hard for performers to use other resources.

Because of the hold that Ticketmaster has on the industry, many fans are placing the blame for the disaster on the company itself. The feeling most fans have is that they should improve their services for a more user-friendly experience, even if they never have such high demand again.

"When you have a system that has monopolized an entire industry, it's really hard to have positive feelings towards that," Mason said.

With pressure from angry fans and the U.S. government, hopefully Ticketmaster is able to improve their user experience and accessibility for their next big tour sale.