

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BEFORE THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

COMMISSIONERS: Edith Ramirez, Chairwoman
Julie Brill
Maureen K. Ohlhausen
Joshua D. Wright

_____)	
In the Matter of)	
)	
Nielsen Holdings N.V.)	Docket No. C-4439
a corporation;)	
)	
and,)	
)	
Arbitron Inc.,)	
a corporation)	
_____)	

COMPLAINT

Pursuant to the Clayton Act and the Federal Trade Commission Act (“FTC Act”), and its authority thereunder, the Federal Trade Commission (“Commission”), having reason to believe that Respondent Nielsen Holdings N.V., (“Nielsen”), a corporation subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission, has agreed to acquire Respondent Arbitron Inc. (“Arbitron”), a corporation subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission, in violation of Section 5 of the FTC Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 45, and that such acquisition, if consummated, would violate Section 7 of the Clayton Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 18, and Section 5 of the FTC Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 45, and it appearing to the Commission that a proceeding in respect thereof would be in the public interest, hereby issues its Complaint, stating its charges as follows:

I. RESPONDENTS

1. Respondent Nielsen is a corporation organized, existing, and doing business under and by virtue of the laws of the Netherlands, with its office and principal place of business located at 85 Broad Street, New York, New York 10004.

2. Respondent Nielsen is engaged in, among other things, the sale of various audience measurement services, including television and cross-platform, to content providers, advertising agencies, and advertisers.

3. Respondent Arbitron is a corporation organized, existing, and doing business under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Delaware, with its office and principal place of business located at 9705 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, Maryland, 21046-1572.

4. Respondent Arbitron is engaged in, among other things, the sale of various audience measurement services, including radio and cross-platform, to content providers, advertising agencies, and advertisers.

5. Respondents are, and at all times relevant herein have been, engaged in commerce, as “commerce” is defined in Section 1 of the Clayton Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 12, and are corporations whose businesses are in or affect commerce, as “commerce” is defined in Section 4 of the FTC Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 44.

II. THE PROPOSED ACQUISITION

6. Pursuant to an Agreement and Plan of Merger dated December 17, 2012 (the “Agreement”), Nielsen proposes to acquire Arbitron for approximately \$1.26 billion (the “Acquisition”).

III. RELEVANT MARKET

7. For the purposes of this Complaint, the relevant line of commerce in which to analyze the effects of the Acquisition is the market for national syndicated cross-platform audience measurement services.

8. For the purposes of this Complaint, the relevant geographic market in which to analyze the effects of the Acquisition is the United States.

IV. STRUCTURE OF THE MARKET

9. Cross-platform audience measurement services report the overall unduplicated audience size (i.e., reach) and frequency of exposure for programming content and advertisements across multiple media platforms, with corresponding individual audience demographic data. Advertisers use audience measurement services to determine which programming content is most likely to deliver audiences within their desired category of potential customers and use such data to make advertising campaign placement and media buying decisions. Similarly, media companies use audience measurement services to assess the value of their own advertising inventory and to inform programming decisions.

10. A national syndicated cross-platform audience measurement service is one that provides all subscribers with the same universe of data, showing the relative national audiences for various programming and advertising. Although there is no commercially available national syndicated cross-platform audience measurement service today, demand for such a service by advertisers and media companies is increasing. Nielsen and Arbitron (in partnership with comScore) have been developing their own national syndicated cross-platform audience measurement services although efforts to date have produced only custom projects or customer-sponsored beta-tests. Nielsen and Arbitron are the best-positioned firms to develop (or partner with others to develop) a national syndicated cross-platform audience measurement service because only Nielsen and Arbitron maintain large, representative panels capable of measuring television with the required individual-level demographics, the data source preferred by advertisers and media companies. Additionally, both Nielsen and Arbitron have important existing audience measurement technology assets. This makes them better positioned to develop a national syndicated cross-platform audience measurement service than companies that lack large representative panels and existing audience measurement technology assets of the quality and character of Nielsen's and Arbitron's.

V. ENTRY CONDITIONS

11. Sufficient and timely entry or expansion into the market for national syndicated cross-platform audience measurement services is unlikely to deter or counteract any anticompetitive effects created by the Acquisition. In order to compete most effectively in the provision of cross-platform audience measurement services, a firm must have access to television audience data with individual demographics. Entry would not take place in a timely manner because of the significant expense and time required to recruit a representative panel of individuals and develop the necessary technology to generate the data needed to provide the television audience measurement component of a national syndicated cross-platform audience measurement service.

VI. EFFECTS OF THE ACQUISITION

12. The effects of the Acquisition, if consummated, may be to substantially lessen competition and tend to create a monopoly in the market for national syndicated cross-platform audience measurement services in violation of Section 7 of the Clayton Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 18, and Section 5 of the FTC Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 45, by among other things:

- a. by eliminating future competition between Nielsen and Arbitron for the provision of national syndicated cross-platform audience measurement services;
- b. by increasing the likelihood that Respondent Nielsen would unilaterally exercise market power in the market for national syndicated cross-platform audience measurement services;

c. by increasing the likelihood that U.S. customers would be forced to pay higher prices for national syndicated cross-platform audience measurement services.

VII. VIOLATIONS CHARGED

13. The Agreement described in Paragraph 6 constitutes a violation of Section 5 of the FTC Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 45.

14. The Acquisition described in Paragraph 6, if consummated, would constitute a violation of Section 7 of the Clayton Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 18, and Section 5 of the FTC Act, as amended, 15 U.S.C. § 45.

WHEREFORE, THE PREMISES CONSIDERED, the Federal Trade Commission on this twenty-fourth day of February, 2014, issues its Complaint against said Respondent.

By the Commission, Commissioner Ohlhausen recused, and Commissioner Wright dissenting.

Donald S. Clark
Secretary

SEAL: