



Intelligent Investing

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## **EXPOSING CORPORATE FRAUD AND CRIME**

 QCM uncovers concealed information pertaining to catastrophic corporate malfeasance

- We collect overwhelming evidence owing to deep investigative due diligence
- Pure activist approach with element of surprise







# QCM: when we hit it hurts!

#### Reduction in Market Capitalization Following Release of Thesis

#### **Bio-on (Italian AIM)**



Market Capitalization at Release: \$1.2b

Current Value: \$0

#### Folli Follie SA (ATHEX)



Market Capitalization at Release: \$1.4b

January 2019 Value: \$0

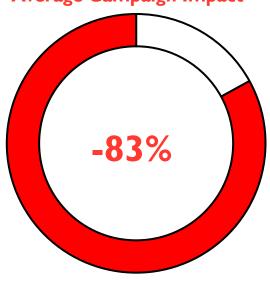
#### Globo Plc (LSE)



Market Capitalization at Release: £100m

January 2019 Value: £0

#### **Average Campaign Impact**



#### **Ability Inc (NASDAQ)**



Market Capitalization at Release: \$135m

October 2018 Value: \$11m

#### **AAC** Holdings Inc (NYSE)



Market Capitalization at Release: \$730m

October 2018 Value: \$169m

#### **Undisclosed**



Market Capitalization at Release: ~\$500m

Low Value One Year Post Release ~\$150m

#### Aphria Inc (NYSE)



Market Capitalization at Release: \$2b

Low Value Post Release: \$1.1b



## BIO-ON SPA: THE OUTCOME OF OUR LATEST CAMPAIGN...



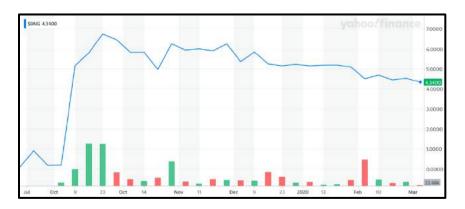


# Akazoo: You Only Live Twice!





## AKAZOO S.A. IN A NUTSHELL





- Formerly part of InternetQ
- Market Cap: \$219m\*
- Nasdaq ticker: SONG
- Industry: media
- Segment: music streaming
- Claimed Sales: \$145m
- Claimed EBITDA: \$10m



## WHAT AKAZOO WANTS YOU TO BELIEVE...

- Successful music streaming platform
- 44m registered users
- 5.5m paying subscribers
- \$140m yearly revenue
- 39% revenue growth rate







## **QCM OPINION:**

### **AKAZOO LOOKS LIKE AN ACCOUNTING SCHEME**

- Users, subscribers, revenue and profit may be profoundly overstated
- Company is a fraction of its claimed size and loss-making
- Service available only in a handful of countries (and barely used).
- We suspect round-tripping between Akazoo and foreign shell companies.
- Infrastructure is collapsing (offices closing, employees leaving in droves)
- Several key individuals may have ties with suspected frauds



We believe that Akazoo is a scheme orchestrated by management to profit while egregiously deceiving investors



### WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE

- Suspicious signs of accounting manipulation:
  - Cash inconsistencies; total lack of taxes.
- App unavailable in many core countries.
- Disappearing infrastructure
  - (undisclosed) closed offices
  - Disappearing workforce
- Suspicious related party transactions.
- Links with former frauds.
- Serious allegations by field sources.

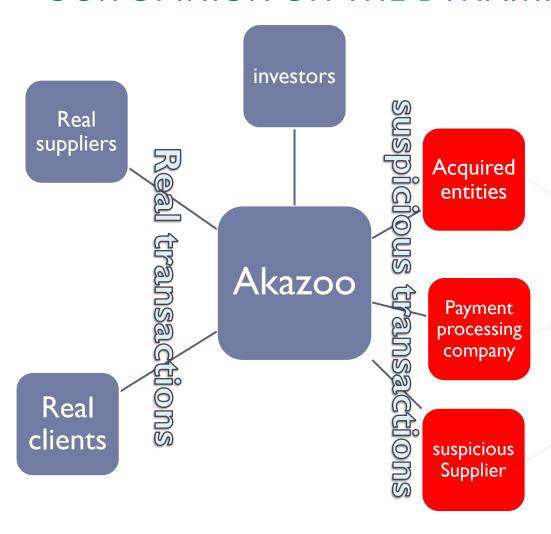


## **HISTORY**

- Founded in 2000 by **Panagiotis Dimitroupulos** as website design company (part of InternetQ).
- IPO on London AIM market in 2010
- In 2015 InternetQ acquired **R&R** using a \$17m private placement provided by **Tosca/Penta**.
- In 2016 company accused by UK blog shareprophets.com to be a suspected fraud.
- Company taken private shortly after then re-listed on NASDAQ in late 2019 through a reverse merger.
   Akazoo is currently living its second, and last life.



## OUR OPINION ON THE DYNAMICS OF THE SCHEME



We suspect that
Akazoo may have
been generating
questionable revenue
by trading with
foreign shell
companies.

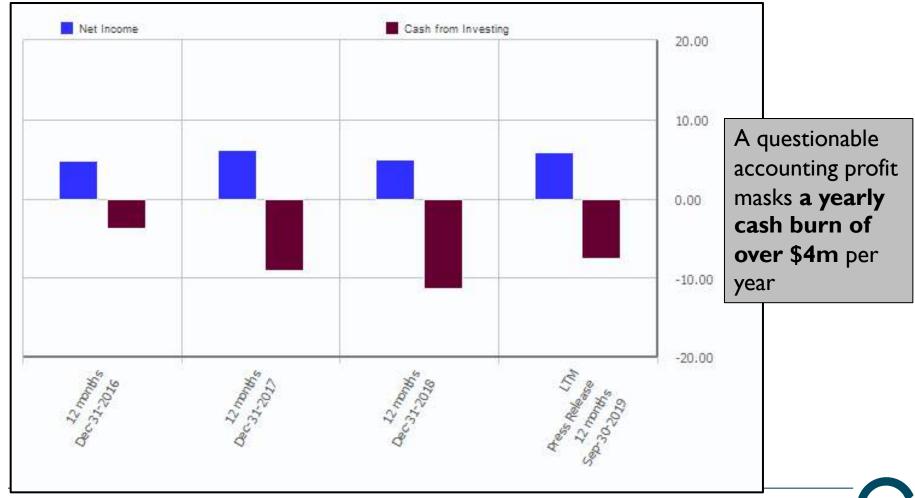
Undisclosed management control?



# The Evidence: Financial Analysis

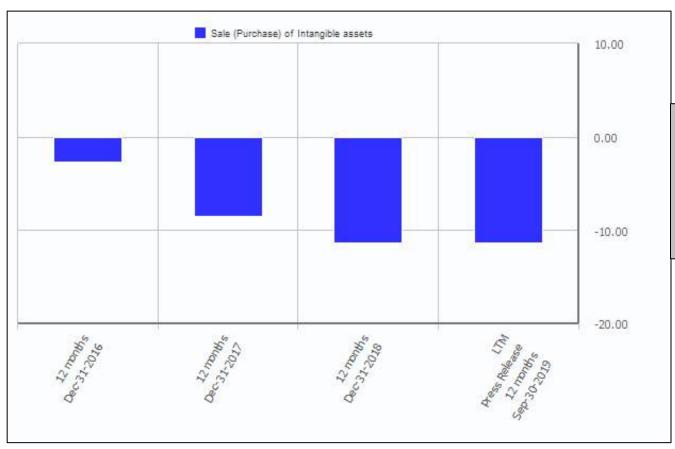
The company shows glaring accounting anomalies

# AKAZOO HAS **BURNED ALMOST \$20M** OF CASH IN 4 YEARS DESPITE CLAIMING MILLIONS OF PROFIT



www.qcmfunds.com

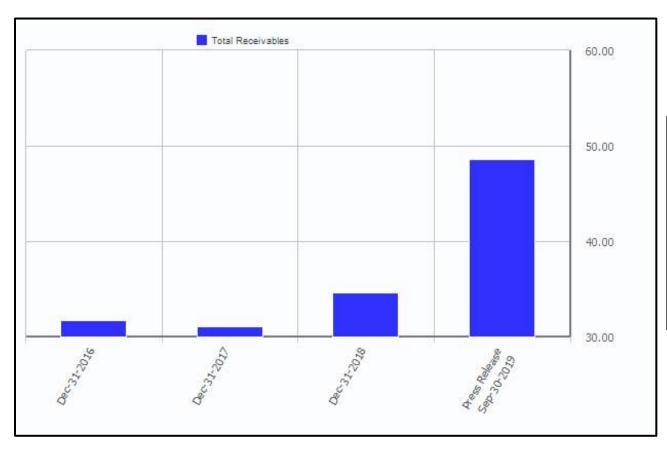
## WHERE IS ALL THE CASH GOING? INTANGIBLE ASSETS...



Akazoo claims to spend over \$10m per year in wintangible assets»...really?



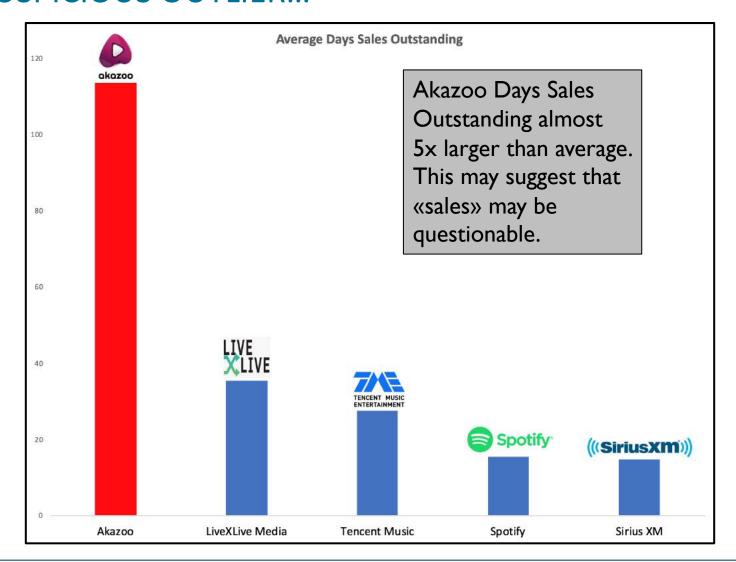
# WHY AREN'T SALES TRANSLATING INTO CASH? WE SEE LARGE AND GROWING ACCOUNT RECEIVABLES...



Akazoo sales don't translate in cash, but in unexplained, increasing account receivables...

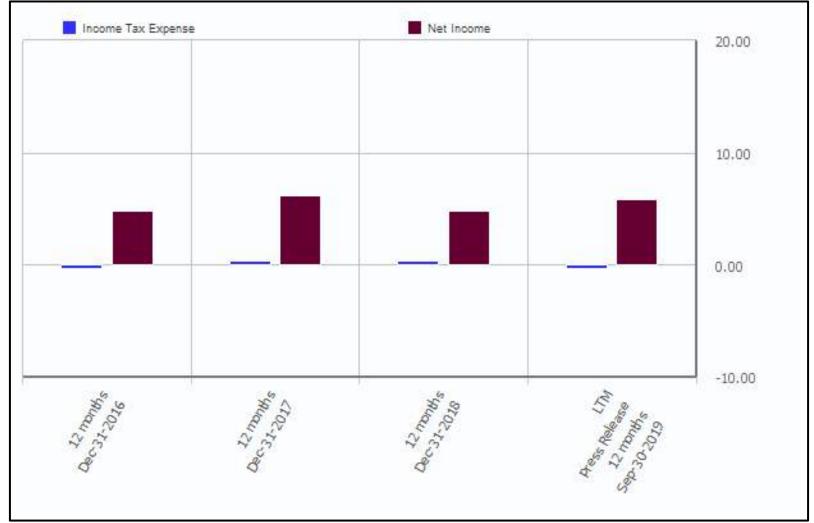


# ...OUT OF LINE WITH INDUSTRY PEERS: AKAZOO DSO ARE A SUSPICIOUS OUTLIER...





# WHY DOES AKAZOO PAY **ZERO TAXES** DESPITE CLAIMING \$22M IN PROFIT FOR THE LAST FOUR YEARS???





We use three third party tools to estimate the number of downloads of Akazoo app and traffic on its websites.

# The Evidence: numerical analysis

Akazoo's operating metrics are indicative of a **far smaller** company

# AKAZOO CLAIMS SUBSCRIBERS AND REVENUE COMPARABLE TO ITS COMPETITORS...

#### **Akazoo Compares Favorably** to Global Players



Akazoo's valuation per subscriber compares especially favorably to Developing / Emerging Market players, who are similarly profitable unlike most global players

	akazoo	TENCENT MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT(1)	Spotify	** TIDAL	PANDORA	• • DEEZER
Premium Subs (Latest Available, mm) <sup>(2)</sup>	4.3	23	87	2.1	6.8	9.0
2019E Revenue (€mm) <sup>(3)</sup>	€134	€3,383	€6,711	€103	€1,567	€300
Valuation (€mm) <sup>(4)</sup>	€413	€20,488	€18,670	€528	€2,563	>€995
Implied Valuation / Premium Sub	€96	€879	€215	€252	€377	>€111
Developing / Emerging Markets Presence	3	3	1	1	0	1
Profitable	1	<b>√</b>	×	×	×	×

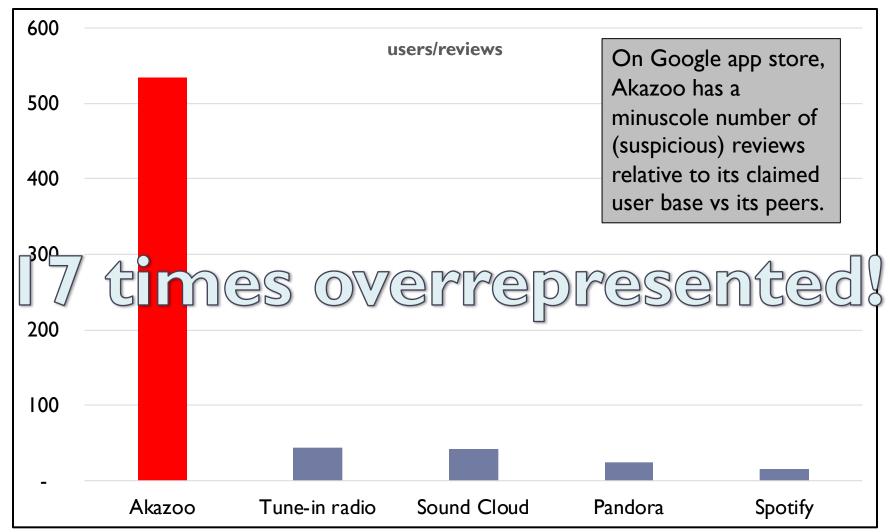


Unilikely claims appearing in Akazoo investor presentation.



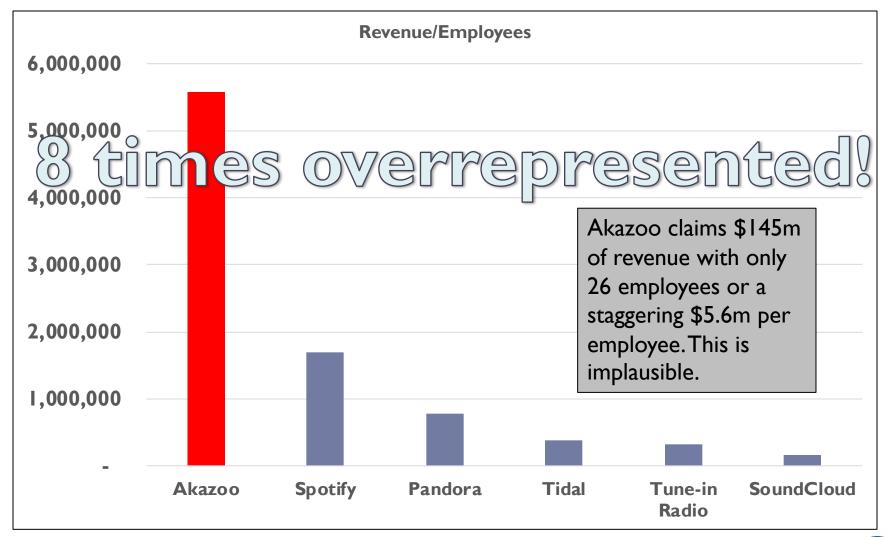
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# NUMBER OF USERS PER REVIEW: AKAZOO RATIO IS **17 TIMES** HIGHER THAN AVERAGE...



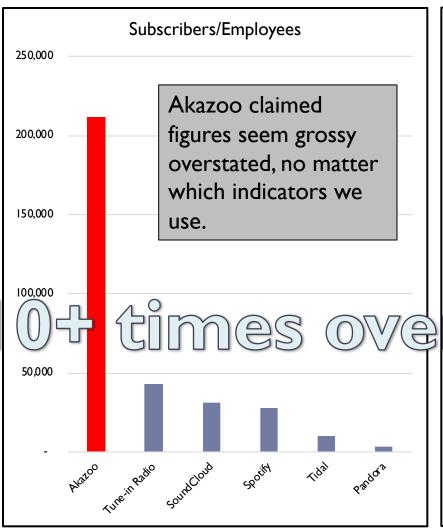


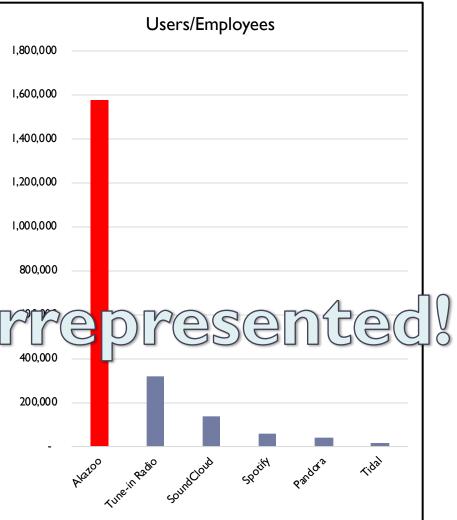
# REVENUE PER EMPLOYEE: AKAZOO RATIO IS 8X HIGHER THAN AVERAGE...





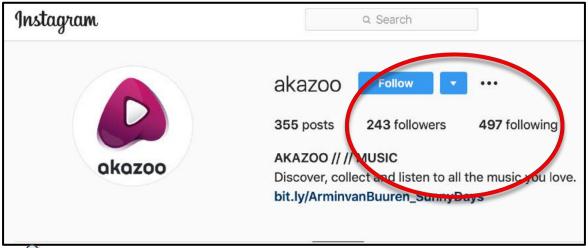
## OTHER STATISTICS TELL A SIMILAR STORY...





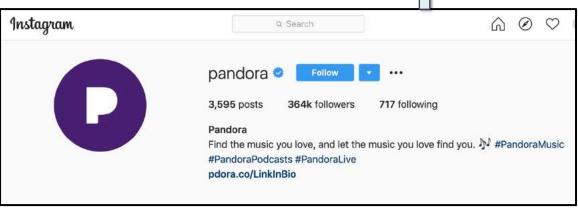


# PANDORA HAS **1500 TIMES (!)** MORE INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS THAN AKAZOO (DESPITE COMPARABLE NUMBER OF CLAIMED SUBSCRIBERS)



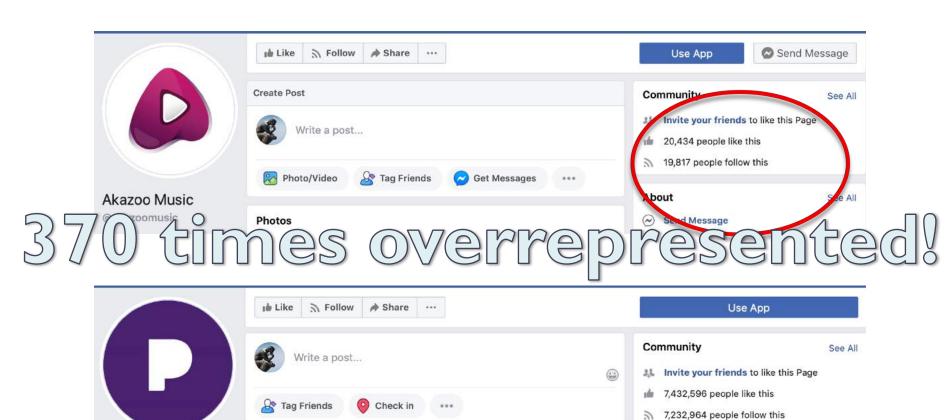
] 500

times overrepresented!





# PANDORA HAS 370 TIMES (!) MORE FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS THAN AKAZOO (DESPITE COMPARABLE NUMBER OF CLAIMED SUBSCRIBERS)





See All

About

www.pandora.com

Radio Station · Product/Service

**Posts** 

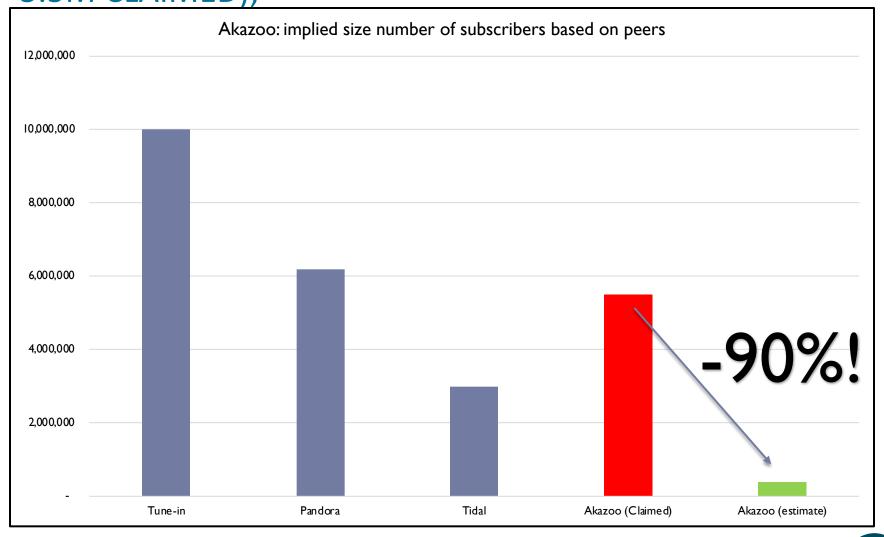
Pandora

Pandora 💿

@Pandora

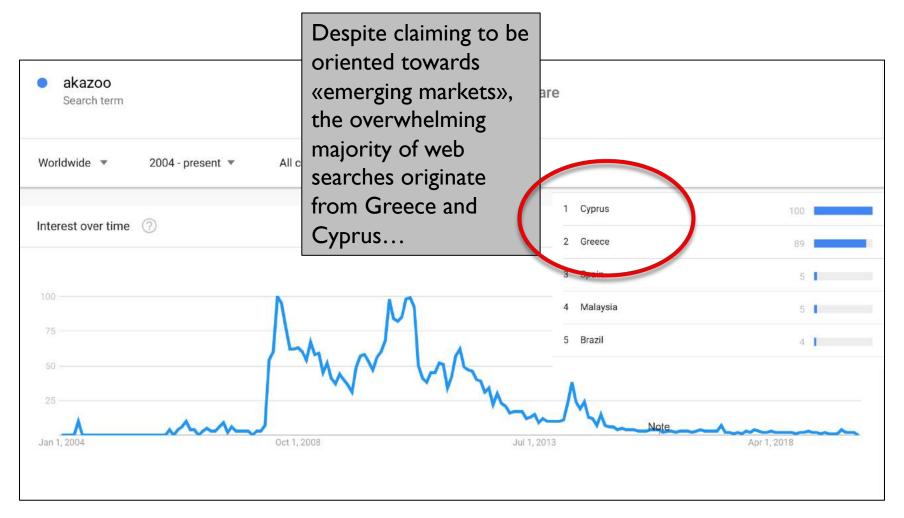
Home

# EXTRAPOLATING FROM PEER AVERAGES: AKAZOO MAY HAVE LESS THAN 400K SUBSCRIBERS (VS 5.5M CLAIMED);





# **GOOGLE TRENDS SUGGEST THAT BARELY ANYONE** SEARCHES FOR «AKAZOO» ANYMORE...



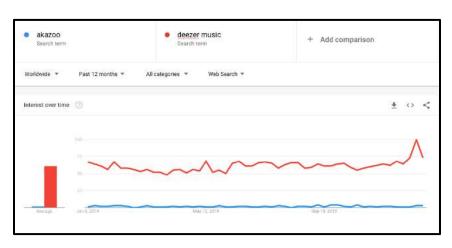


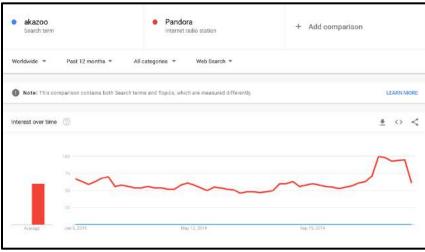
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# GOOGLE TRENDS: AKAZOO IS **VIRTUALLY UNDETECTABLE** VS. PEERS CLAIMING COMPARABLE SUBSCRIBER BASES

#### Akazoo vs Deezer

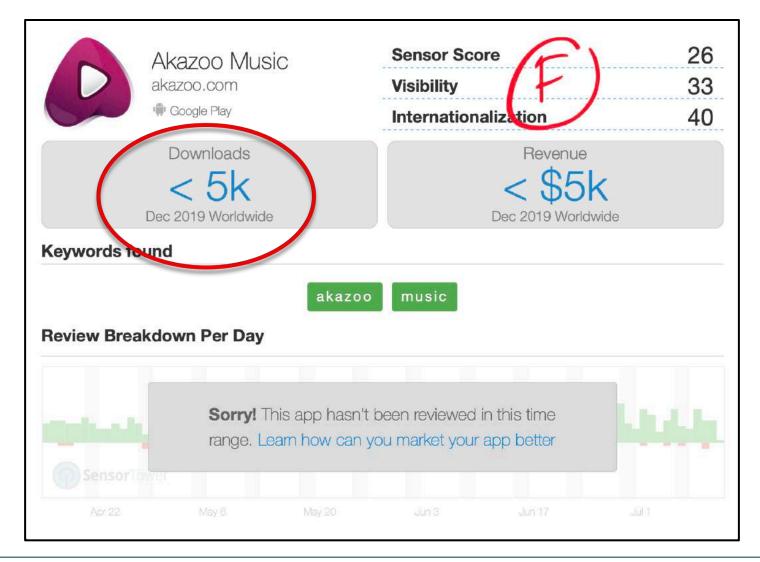
#### Akazoo vs Pandora





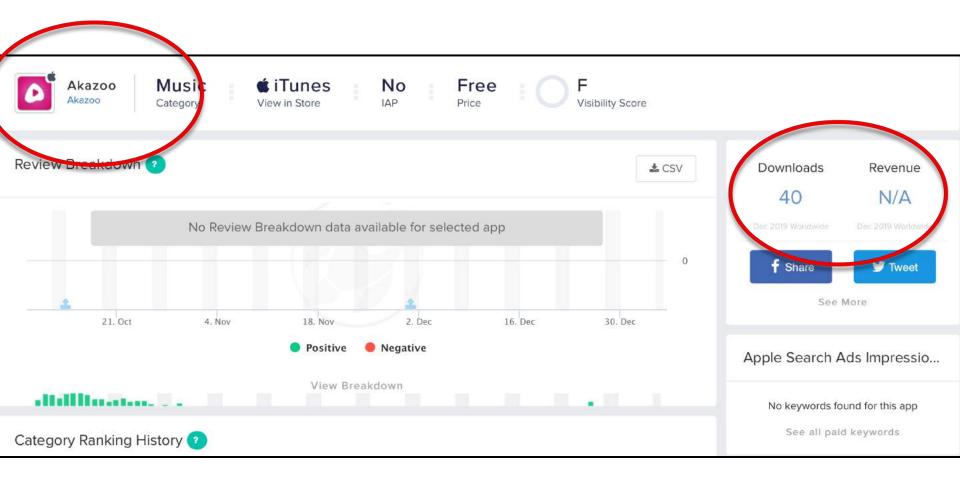


# SENSOR TOWER: AKAZOO DOWNLOADS AND REVENUE BELOW DETECTABLE THRESHOLD. GRADE: F





# MOBILE ACTION: ONLY 40 DOWNLOADS, UNDETECTABLE REVENUE (DEC 2019)



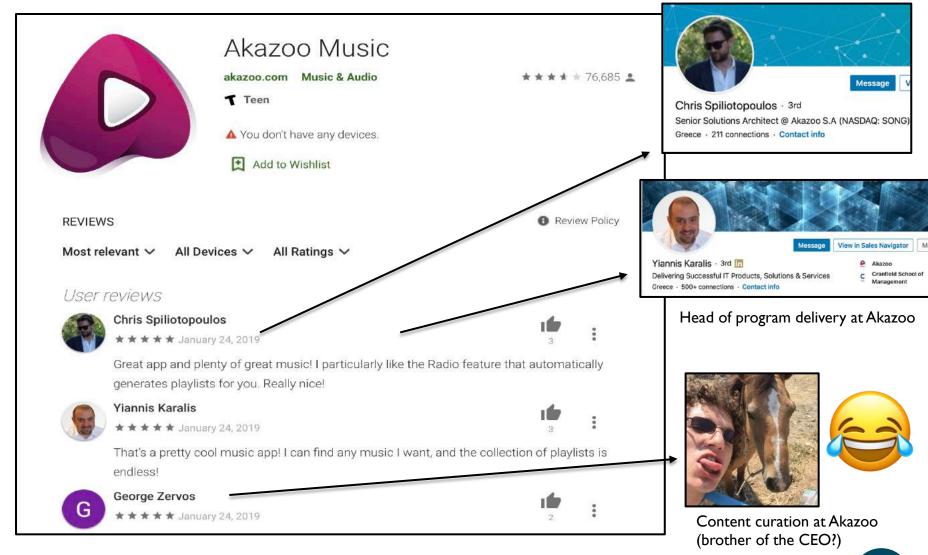


# The Evidence: app reviews

A large portion of the (very few) reviews appearing on Google apps store, have been written by Akazoo's employees, including senior management

## **CURIOUS REVIEWERS OF AKAZOO...**

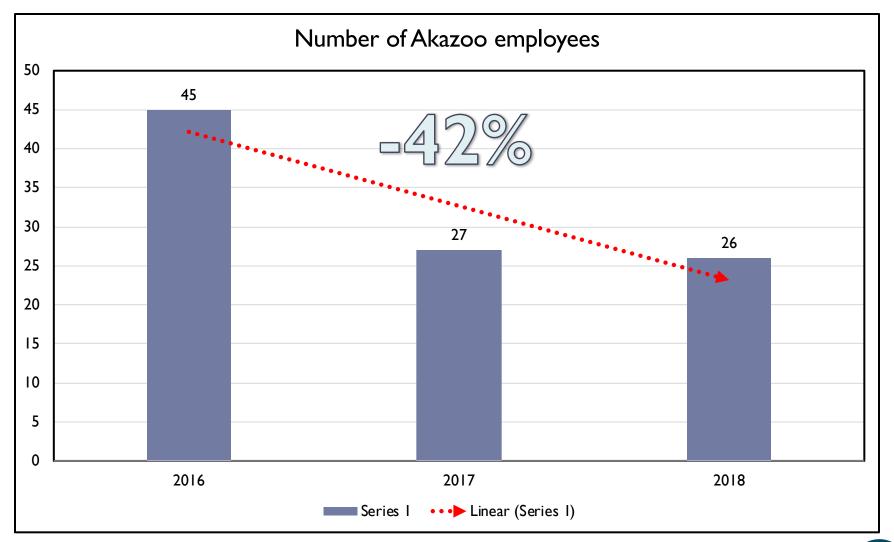
Senior solution architect at Akazoo



# The Evidence: infrastructure

Despite claiming multiple offices around the world, our field due diligence revealed that Akazoo has closed offices in most of its locations.

## EMPLOYEES ARE RAPIDLY DISAPPEARING...





Source: SEC filings

# MANY OF AKAZOO'S SUBSIDIARIES ARE LOCATED IN NON-TRANSPARENT JURISDICTIONS...

#### Subsidiaries of Registrant

Legal Name Jurisdiction of Incorporation

Music Intelligence Solutions, Inc.

Delaware, USA

Polyphonic Human Media Interface SL Spain Akazoo Spolka z.o.o. Poland

Akazoo DWC-LLC United Arab Emirates

Akazoo CY Ltd Cyprus
Akazoo SA Greece
Akazoo Ukraine Ukraine
R and R Music Ukraine Ukraine
Akazoo Ltd Mauritius

Akazoo Music Limited Republic of Ghana

Akazoo Ltd Cameroon



# AKAZOO'S MAIN OFFICE IS IN 96 KENSINGTON, LONDON. REALLY???

#### On SEC form 20-F

#### On Akazoo's website

Commission File Number: 001-39042

#### Akazoo S.A.

(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (Jurisdiction of incorporation)

19 Rue de Bitbourg L-1273, Luxembourg Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (address of principal executive offices)

> Apostolos N. Zervos Chief Executive Officer 96 Kensington High Street W8 4SG, London

#### Akazoo Limited

96 Kensington High Street, London, W8 4SG, UK

PR & Media Inquiries
pr@akazoo.com

**Investor Information** 

Investors@akazoo.com

**Content Partners** 

content@akazoo.com

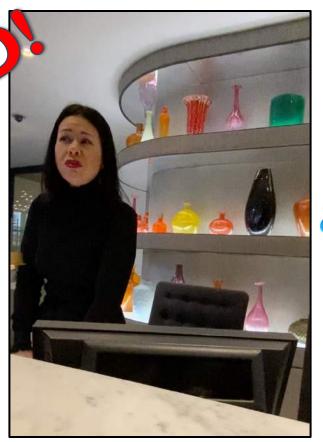


### QCM FIELD CHECK IN LONDON AT 96 KENSINGTON

#### **PAVILLION CENTER**

# Receptionist: «Akazoo left several months ago!»









#### AKAZOO REGISTERED OFFICE IN LUXEMBOURG

**Commission File Number: 001-39042** 

### Akazoo S.A.

(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (Jurisdiction of incorporation)

19 Rue de Bitbourg
L-1273, Luxembourg
Grand Duchy of Luxembourg
(address of principal executive offices)

Apostolos N. Zervos Chief Executive Officer 96 Kensington High Street W8 4SG, London



#### QCM FIELD CHECK IN LUXEMBOURG AT RUE DE BITOURG



Akazoo name does not show up anywhere at the given registered address. (we assume this address belongs to Akazoo's lawyers.)



### **R&R & INTERNETQ LONDON ADDRESSES**



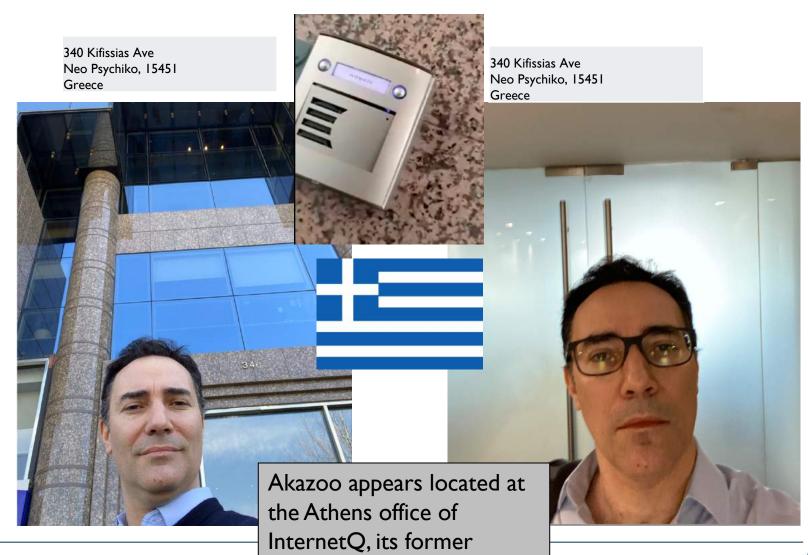
R&RIO Pentonville Rd, London InternetQ at 14 Old Queen St. - London







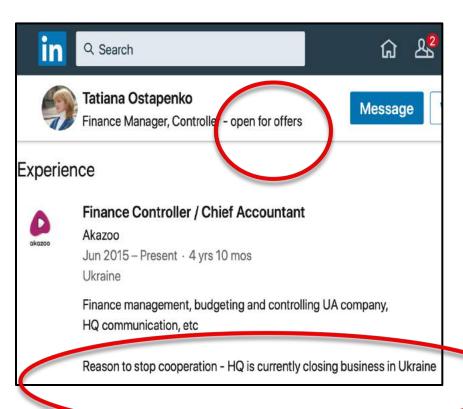
### SO WHERE EXACTLY IS AKAZOO??? IN ATHENS...



parent company.



#### AKAZOO BUSINESS IN UKRAINE...CLOSING UP!



- Akazoo's Chief
   Accountant in her
   LinkedIn profile is open
   for offers since Akazoo is
   closing business in
   Ukraine!
- According to our sources
   Akazoo/R&R has shut
   down business in both
   the UK and Ukraine.



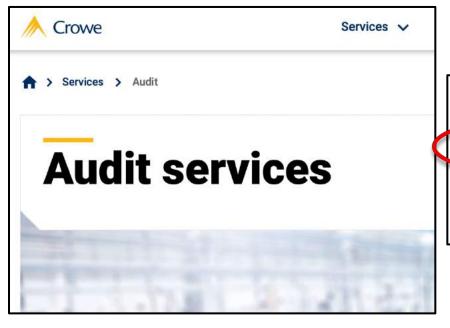




### The Evidence

In theory auditors should prevent situations such as this one from occurring. However, in practice this is not always the case

# **CROWE LLP** HAS SIGNED OFF **AKAZOO'S** FINANCIALS SINCE 2015...



We have served as the Company's auditor since 2015.

Crowe U.K. LLP

London, United Kingdom 7 June, 2019



# UNFORTUNATELY, CROWE HAS ALSO SIGNED OFF THE ACCOUNTS OF **CORPORATE RESOURCE SERVICES\*** INC...

#### Press Release

## SEC Charges Audit Firm and Suspends Accountants for Deficient Audits

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 2018-302

Washington D.C., Dec. 21, 2018 — The Securities and Exchange Commission today filed settled charges against national audit firm Crowe LLP, two of its partners, and two partners of a now-defunct audit firm for their significant failures in audits of Corporate Resource Services Inc., which went bankrupt in 2015 after the discovery of approximately \$100 million in unpaid federal payroll tax liabilities.

The SEC's order against Crowe finds that its audit team identified pervasive fraud risks in connection with its 2013 audit of Corporate Resource Services yet failed to:

- · Include procedures designed to detect the company's undisclosed payroll tax obligations;
- · Properly identify and audit the company's related-party transactions;
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to respond to these fraud risks, support recognition of revenue, and otherwise support the audit opinion;
- Evaluate substantial doubt about the company's ability to continue as a going concern;
   and
- Conduct a proper engagement quality review.

The order also finds that Crowe was not independent as a result of an ongoing direct business relationship with Corporate Resource Services. According to the order, the audit deficiencies occurred despite the involvement of Crowe's national office, which was aware of the high-risk nature of the engagement and the inability to obtain appropriate evidence. The order also finds that Crowe's engagement partner, Joseph C. Macina, and engagement quality reviewer, Kevin V. Wydra, caused Crowe's audit failures.





### THE SEC DETERMINED THAT CROWE:

- The SEC's order against Crowe finds that its audit team identified pervasive fraud risks in connection with its 2013 audit of Corporate Resource Services yet <u>failed</u> to:
- Properly identify and audit the company's related-party transactions;
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to respond to these fraud risks, support recognition of revenue, [...]
- Evaluate substantial doubt about the company's ability to continue as a going concern; and
- [...] Crowe was not independent as a result of an ongoing direct business relationship with [its client] [...] Crowe's [...] was aware of the high-risk nature of the engagement and the inability to obtain appropriate evidence.



#### **CROWE AND THE SEC - EPILOGUE**





- Crowe was fined \$1.5m to settle the charge.
- The SEC charges look to us similar to the issues we suspect are happening at Akazoo.
- The fact that Akazoo is using such an audit firm is highly suspicious to us



#### HOW CAN COMPANIES EVADE AUDITORS CHECKS?

- Main auditors typically check only the consolidated accounts.
- Akazoo subsidiaries are NOT audited by Crowe, but by little known local accountants.
- These local accountants do not have the same trustworthiness.
- We have witnessed exactly the same situation at Globo Plc and at Folli Follie.





### THE EVIDENCE

Inaccurate information about geographic reach and possible copyrights infringement

# IN HOW MANY COUNTRIES EXACTLY DOES AKAZOO SELL ITS MUSIC?

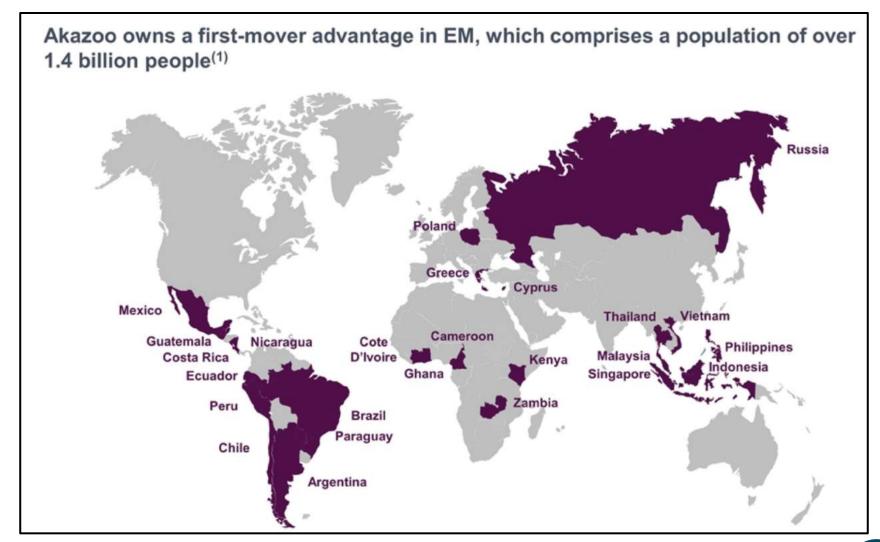
Akazoo's claims (SEC filing Form 424 (b)(3):

"Akazoo currently operates in **25 countries** throughout the world and PubCo may further expand its geographies throughout its future operations."

"Akazoo's revenue is derived primarily in emerging markets (including **Poland, Russia, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Ecuador, Brazil and Mexico**, among others).



# AKAZOO CLAIMS PRESENCE IN THESE COUNTRIES (FROM PRESENTATION TO INVESTORS)





### QCM CHECK: EVIDENCE SAYS OTHERWISE...

- QCM has attempted to open an account in dozens of countries.
- We succeeded in opening an account (using a VPN) only in Poland, Malaysia, Indonesia, Greece, Cyprus.
- For other countries we tried, including those where Akazoo claims to be active in, we received the following message:

"We would really like to be here. For now, our service is not available in your country. Please check back, you never know."



# WE COULD REGISTER ONLY IN 5 COUNTRIES (OUT OF 25 CLAIMED): WE DETECTED NO SIGNIFICANT USAGE ANYWHERE

Poland		Orange partnership no longer in place. Can regsiter, but negligible user volume*.
Russia		App exists, but cannot register.
Brazil		App exists, but cannot register.
Indonesia		App exists, can register. Negligible usage.
Malaysia	<b>(*</b>	App exists and can register, but negligible usage.
Greece, Cyrpus		Can register.
Thailand, Mexico		Can't register.



#### **QCM CHECK: MUSIC DISTRIBUTORS**

- We checked with **Sony Music**, a major music distributor to Akazoo.
- Akazoo has purchased distribution rights for only 5 (five) countries, namely:
  - · Greece, Cyprus, Poland, Ghana and Malaysia.
    - We fear that either Akazoo is lying about its geographic reach (25 countries claimed) or may be <u>breaching music copyrights</u>.

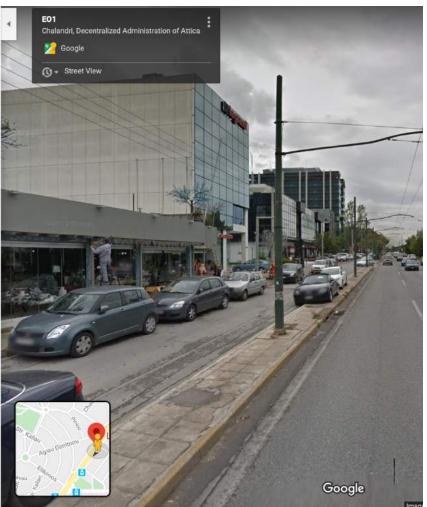


### THE EVIDENCE

Claims from field sources

### AKAZOO SUSPECTED FAKE OFFICE IN ATHENS

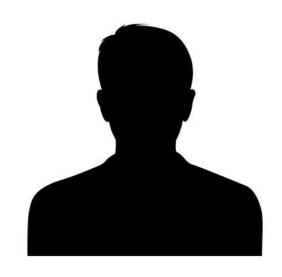






### AKAZOO MAY HAVE VIOLATED GDPR RULES

- In Greece Akazoo has a partnership whereby Viber users would have access to Akazoo music.
- This may have allowed Akazoo access to end users' contact list in their smartphones.
- Our investigation suggests that the company may have used such data to spam promotions via sms.



If true, this might be against GDPR (EU online privacy) rules



### THE EVIDENCE

Ties with former frauds

# AKAZOO: EMPLOYER OF CHOICE FOR ACTUAL AND SUSPECTED EX-FRAUDSTERS?

- A surprising number of Akazoo's employees and managers were formerly employeed at Globo Plc (a fraud exposed by QCM) and at Velti (a suspected fraud)
- Given the similarties between Globo and Akazoo, we are not suprised...

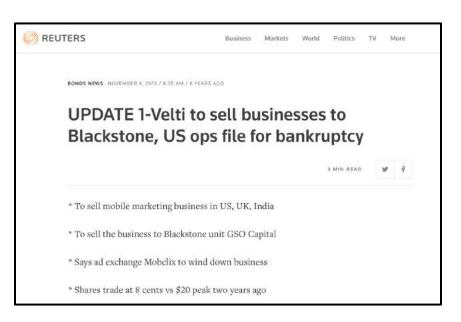




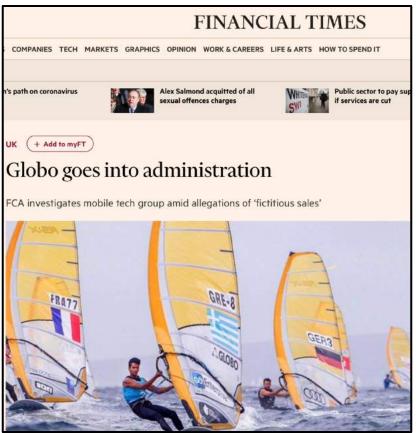


#### WILL AKAZOO END UP LIKE VELTI AND GLOBO?

#### Velti's downfall



#### Globo's downfall





### AKAZOO CEO ZERVOS IS A FORMER SENIOR MANAGER AT DISGRACED COMPANY **VELTI**



#### Apostolos N. Zervos 2nd

CEO at Akazoo

Forward thinking and sales driven digital/r builder and creative digital marketing stra-

O London, England Metropolitan Area

Current



CEO at Akazoo • 9 yrs 6 mos

#### Experience



#### CEO

Akazoo

Oct 2010-Present • 9 yrs 6 mos London, United Kingdom

#### interneto

#### **Chief Strategy Officer**

InternetQ PLC.

Oct 2010-Jul 2015 • 4 yrs 10 mos





# 23% OF AKAZOO'S WORKFORCE USED TO WORK FOR EITHER GLOBO OR VELTI\*

- 2 former Globo employees at Akazoo
- 4 former Velti employees at Akazoo



- 20 former Velti employees at InternetQ
- 4 former Velti employees at Minimob
- 3 former Globo employees at InternetQ





#### THE CURIOUS CASE OF SOLUTION SYSTEM TOUCHMEDIA

- Touchmedia (now Veoo Malaysia) is a Malaysian company related to InternetQ's CEO Panagiotis Dimitroupulos.
- Touchmedia performs «monthly billing and collection of revenues from the Malaysian Operators\*»
- We find it highly suspicious that the CEO of Akazoo's former parent company controls a payment processor in charge of billing and collection of revenues.
- Obviously this situation, if it exists today as well, may lead to conflicts of interest and enable dishonest behavior.

#### Transactions with key management personnel

I-POP Networks Pte Ltd, an entity of the Group entered into an agreement with Solution System Touchmedia Sdn Bhd (SSTM) incorporated in Malaysia and related to the Group's CEO Panagiotis Dimitropoulos, for the provision of the following services a) Monthly billing of Malaysia Operators, and b) collection of revenues from the Malaysian Operators and payment of the short code fees. The Agreement can be terminated by either party at any time with a notice of 90 days before such termination. For



#### CONCLUSIONS

- Akazoo appears to be a far smaller company that it claims to be and a rapidly shrinking one.
- Official figures show irreconciliabile discrepancies with objective data collected by QCM.
- Accounting and audit history show worriying red flags.
- Allegations of fraud and other serious breaches by a field sources.

The facts lead us to believe that Akazoo is a scheme orchestrated by management to profit while egregiously deceiving investors



#### WHAT IS LIKELY TO HAPPEN?

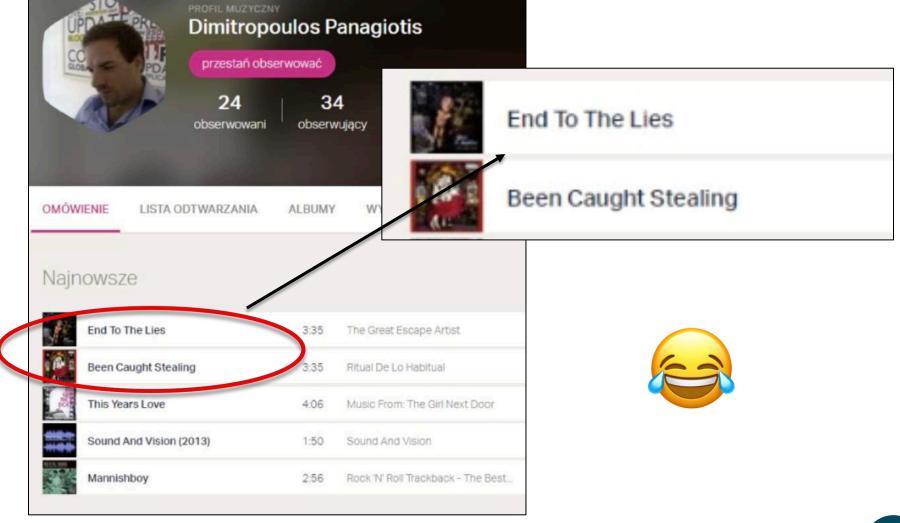
- If our allegations are correct, Akazoo's financials may prove false.
- The company may have made serious misrepresentations on official SEC filings.
- Akazoo may be simply a gross exercise of deception to investors and its equity be correspondingly worthless.
- Our target price is zero.



QCM has sent a copy of this report to the Securities and Exchange Commission



# AKAZOO FOUNDER'S **CURIOUS TASTE IN MUSIC**: TIME TO COME CLEAN DIMITRI!





# You Only Live Twice



