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WEEK 41

FRIDAY 13 OCT 2017

OPERATORS TARGETING MINORS IS 'FAKE NEWS'

National newspapers accuse gaming sites of using cartoons to lure children



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THIS WEEK

- **US casino industry worth \$3.4bn in August**
- **Macau's Golden Week picks up after slow start**
- **DraftKings continues European expansion**
- **Supreme Court reveals PASPA hearing date**
- **Guest Columnist: Seth Freedman, CEO, Be The House**
- **Guest Columnist: John Hagan, Partner, Harris Hagan**

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FRIDAY 13 OCT 2017

OPERATORS TARGETING MINORS IS 'FAKE NEWS'

National newspapers accuse gaming sites of using cartoons to lure children into gambling



The Sunday Times claims that gambling operators are using a loophole to target minors, creating games that appeal to children without necessarily breaching The Gambling Commission's terms and conditions.

The national newspaper's investigation reported that operators were luring children to gamble with their favourite cartoon and storybook characters in online betting games.

The issue raised from the inquiry concerns the fact that stakes on the aforementioned games range from 1p to £600, and can be played for free without registration or any age-verification checks. Some of the companies and games named include *Peter Pan* on the Paddy Power website, *Jack and the Beanstalk* on the 888 website and *Moon Princess* on the Casinoland website.

The industry has continued to deny such allegations, stating they have not deliberately tried to entice minors to use their games. Nonetheless, the Advertising Standards Agency has said it will investigate the claims. ▶



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THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS

\$4M

The amount donated by Sheldon Adelson and Las Vegas Sands to a relief fund for those affected by the recent mass shooting in Las Vegas

60.5%



Amount of the reduction in fines issued by Singapore gaming regulators

\$2BN

The reported market capitalisation of casino operator Genting Hong Kong



In an open letter to the Editor of *The Sunday Times*, the Gambling Commission stated: "Protecting children from being harmed or exploited by gambling is a clear priority for the Gambling Commission. Where businesses fail to protect vulnerable people, especially children, we have and will continue to take firm action."

Some believe gambling companies are to blame for the worrying statistics around underage gambling, with Dominic Lawson from the *Daily Mail* stating: "Gambling firms targeting children are just as wicked as drug pushers."

However, others believe the investigation to be a farce, with GBGC Director Warwick Bartlett commenting: "Advertising is expensive, and gambling companies measure the return of every advert that is placed against new accounts vs cost, known in the trade as customer acquisition cost. Why would a gambling company spend millions trying to entice children to gamble when at the point of sale they cannot open an account?"

"The company's KYC would block them, they cannot deposit unless they are 18+ years. This is fake news. Cartoon characters are often used instead of real people

because computer graphics are cheaper than paying for overpriced stars. Oh, and by the way they do not only appeal to children, adults like them too."

Critics of the gambling industry have decided that only children or minors enjoy fictional characters and cartoons, which simply isn't the case. "On a flight back from Las Vegas I walked down the aisle of the plane and saw thirty percent of adults watching the latest hit cartoon film *Despicable Me*," added Bartlett.

KEY POINTS

- *The Times* accuses operators of using cartoons to attract minors
- The Advertising Standards Authority has said it will investigate allegations
- Claims are widely perceived to be unfounded in the gaming industry

US CASINO INDUSTRY WORTH \$3.4BN IN AUGUST

Nevada accounts for almost 30% of total revenue figure

According to data released by the University of Las Vegas Centre for Gaming Research, the US casino industry has

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Revenue reported by South Korea's foreigner-only casino operator Paradise Co Ltd in September 2017, rising year-on-year by 34.1% compared to 2016

The factor by which the Russian Ministry of Finance proposes to increase gambling taxation for Russia's land-based and online operators



\$77,500



Fines issued to three casinos in Pennsylvania by state regulators after contraventions of state gaming rules

reached \$3.4bn in gaming revenues during the month of August. According to these latest figures, the casino sector grew 4% in Gross Gaming Revenues (GGR), compared to the same period in 2016.

The results, which exclude tribal run casinos, show that the state of Nevada remains the biggest revenue creator, contributing \$989.5m, equivalent 29% to the overall total. A bumper month in the state – rising 15% in revenue year-on-year basis – helped the national casino sector surpassing the \$3bn mark. This boost may have been due to the higher visitor numbers for the Floyd Mayweather vs Conor McGregor fight, which took place on 26 August and generated over \$70m in legal bets.

Aside from Nevada, there were big gaming win rises in Ohio, which grew 6% year-over-year to \$145.7m, while Illinois reported an 8% year-over-year gain to \$224m. Pennsylvania's gaming revenues increased by 2.5% to \$267.4m, while New Jersey's Atlantic City reported a 0.4% year-over-year drop in revenues, falling to \$244.8m.

Gaming revenues in Maryland rose dramatically in August, rising 32% year-over-year to \$137.5m, while neighbouring

state West Virginia reported a 7% drop, falling to \$44.6m. Much of this decline could be attributed to the opening of the MGM National Harbour casino earlier this year.

MACAU HITS 12% INCREASE IN VISITOR NUMBERS DURING GOLDEN WEEK

The gambling hub welcomed over 100,000 people in a single day

After the disappointing initial figures reported during the first four days of Golden Week, Macau's number of visitors has risen almost 12% in the first seven days of the eight-day Chinese holiday.

According to the data released by the territory's Public Security Police, the aggregate number of visitors between 1 October and 7 October increased 11.6% year-on-year, up to 844,522 arrivals.

Breaking down the data, the number of mainland China tourists grew 9.6% compared to the same period last year, rising to 647,352. On the other hand, the number of non-mainland visitors surpassed the mainland segment at the beginning of the festive period, posting growth of 6.8% during the first six days. ▶

50,000

The number of signatures required to force a referendum in Switzerland on the Money Gambling Act



\$575,000

Additional funds donated by Disney Worldwide Services to support a constitutional amendment aimed at preventing expansion of the casino industry in Florida. The company has already donated \$2.325m as of 30 September



33%

Year-on-year growth for Maryland's four poker rooms in September

Moreover, the number of visitors reached its climax on Saturday when it increased 60%, welcoming more than 100,000 people on that day alone. Following this rush, mainland visitors were up 82% with 75,298 arrivals.

DRAFTKINGS EXPANDS EUROPEAN FOOTPRINT

It will provide a full suite of the firm's games and competitions

DraftKings has continued its progress in global market expansion by launching its games in both Austria and Ireland earlier this week.

DraftKings' CEO, Jason Robins, said: "Sports fans in Europe are embracing the game inside the game through DraftKings' contests and content. As we looked to expand our European footprint, it was an easy choice to launch in Ireland and Austria, given their renowned passion for sports."

A full offering of DraftKings' games and competitions will be available in both the Irish and Austrian markets, including seven football leagues, NFL, MLB, NBA, CFL, NHL, Golf,

NASCAR, eSports and Mixed Martial Arts.

PASPA REVIEW DATE REVEALED

The US Supreme Court will hear the appeal on 4 December

The US Supreme Court has announced that it will hear the appeal of New Jersey officials against the validity of the 1992 Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) on 4 December.

Supreme Court Justices will review a ruling by the Philadelphia-based 3rd US Circuit Court of Appeals that an earlier 2014 New Jersey statute permitting sports betting at casinos and racetracks effectively violated PASPA.

Twenty states across the US have filed amicus briefs in support of the New Jersey appeal, calling for an end to the ban on sports betting. Other organisations such as the National Indian Gaming Association, National Collegiate Athletic Association, the NFL, the NBA, the NHL, Major League Baseball and the National Conference of State Legislatures have also voiced their support. ◀

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US REGIONALS CONTINUE RISE

US states with regional casinos continue to experience revenue rises in September, bolstered by a calendar that had an additional weekend day this year versus last.

Indiana gaming revenues rose 6.14% in September, the state's best year-over-year performance since January 2015. You can see a breakdown by state in the table on the right.

US STOCK UPDATE

Company	52-week high as of Wednesday
Boyd	\$27.80
Melco Resorts	\$24.37
Monarch Casino	\$40.67
TransAct	\$10.60
Everi	75,548
Galaxy Gaming	\$1.44

DETROIT:

	Revenue (\$m)	Year-on-year change (%)
MotorCity	\$38.442	+3.80
Greektown (JACK Entertainment)	\$27.224	+2.14
MGM Grand (MGM)	\$47.984	-1.02
Detroit total	\$113.650	+1.32

INDIANA:

NORTHERN INDIANA - CHICAGOLAND		
Horseshoe (CZR)	\$32.786	+6.94
Blue Chip (BYD)	\$12.632	+3.77
Ameristar (PNK)	\$15.794	+2.99
Majestic Star	\$9.968	-3.74
Chicagoland Total	\$71.180	+3.88
CENTRAL INDIANA - INDIANAPOLIS		
Indiana Grand (Centaur)	\$18.696	+5.64
Hoosier Park (Centaur)	\$15.794	+2.86
Indianapolis Total	\$34.490	+4.35

SOUTHEAST INDIANA - CINCINNATI		
Hollywood (PENN)	\$14.266	+12.42
Rising Star (FLL)	\$3.845	+4.58
Belterra (PNK)	\$9.285	+0.92
Southeast Indiana Total	\$27.396	+7.15
LOUISVILLE - SOUTHWEST INDIANA		
Tropicana (TPCA)	\$10.328	+14.87
French Lick	\$7.351	+13.16
Horseshoe (CZR)	\$20.563	+9.56
Louisville - Southwest total	\$38.242	+11.63
Indiana Total	\$171.308	+6.14
OHIO PROPERTIES		
Belterra Park (PNK)	\$6.993	+5.66
JACK Cincinnati (JACK Entertainment)	\$15.683	+2.65
Ohio Property Total	\$22.676	+3.56
* Cincinnati total	\$50.073	+5.50



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EiG EVENT PREVIEW

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ABOUT

As an industry, we all understand the importance of meeting consumer expectations to stay competitive. EiG steps up to the plate delivering industry professionals a chance to learn about and discuss a wide range of technological and social advancements, which can take a company's operations to the next level.

Whether it's artificial intelligence, blockchain or engaging Generation Z, EiG offers an unrivalled opportunity to learn from and network with industry leaders from both inside and outside our industry - allowing delegates to uncover true value in the latest concepts and moreover, the online gaming market.

While continuing to attract the world's leading online gaming brands and newly launched start-ups, EiG also makes a significant effort to bring operators from regional and emerging markets to reflect the expanding universe. If you are looking to take advantage of the unique platform

which facilitates high-level networking and learning for the entire iGaming ecosystem, then EiG is the event for you.

AGENDA

Working closely with the iGaming Industry Council, EiG has maintained its promise to focus on the hottest and most relevant topics this year and their show-stopping event. This year the agenda will focus on how we can bring our industry to the next level of intelligence, taking advantage of the new technology, products and concepts whilst considering what this means for our legacy systems going forward.

There will be three main conference areas at this year's EiG, each with its own unique theme. The summaries below outline each theme and the sessions that are not to be missed.

1. NEO 2027

The hunger to grow and stay competitive is something we all have in common. We all know what we want our future to look like, but bringing this

vision to life is a continual challenge for us all. The Neo 2027 Theatre will put future industry disruptors under the spotlight, not only educating you on the growth opportunities they provide but also equipping you with the knowledge to integrate with your legacy systems.

Key sessions:

Digital Transformation: Legacy Vs Overhaul

As new devices and technologies hit our shelves at an increasing rate, customer expectations change accordingly. Being in a market that has followed a similar model for 20+ years and is so heavily regulated, fully embracing the digital transformation can be an on-going challenge. This session will look at how valuable our legacy processes are, best practice for overhaul and whether the cost is worth the benefit.

Customer retention and acquisition: Beyond bonuses

As we know, offering bonuses has become the main way for operators ▶

to acquire customers. A fiercely competitive market is forcing bonuses to become larger, lowering industry margins. But what kind of customer really takes advantage of a bonus and are they still effective as they used to be? This session looks to answer those questions and explore alternative methods for acquisition.

2. LEGACY 2017

Before we can take advantage of all that the future has to offer, we must first look at what we have at present. There are many challenges associated with the industry's current systems and processes that we must tackle in order to ensure successful growth in the future. Visit our sessions on the most current of issues, enabling you to best prepare for the new generation.

Key sessions:

Responsible Gambling Tech Creating positive play:

Interacting with your consumers and technology for smart profiling going beyond compliance and creating sustainable RG methods is industry

critical, and the key lies within intelligent consumer profiling. This session will look at how technology can help us to combat this industry through player profiling and data segmentation.

3. MOMENT

Instead of looking at the larger, more industry-encapsulating issues, this theatre concentrates on the specific and technical challenges that may sometimes go under the radar. Through interactive discussions, case studies and EiG's new 'Open-Space' format they will micro-analyse key topics to help you grow one moment at a time.

Key sessions:

The 'F' Session - What risks have you taken to innovate?

During this unique session, EiG's panel will actually discuss the past experiences of moments when their risk to innovate hasn't gone to plan. Learn from other people's mishaps and use their experiences to your advantage!

Focus Hub: Opportunities in Africa

For those looking for new growth

regions that are about to open up. African regions such as Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya etc are experiencing a surge in the market that offers an exciting opportunity for online game providers. Attend this session to find out more.

NETWORKING

The event plays host to 2,000+ of online gaming's leading professionals and senior-level decision-makers from digital operators, land-based casinos, betting shops, lottery operators, social operators, gaming start-ups, regulators, consultants and many more, on a global scale.

In addition to private meeting spaces and open networking locations, attendees will be able to relax and let their hair down at the Official EiG networking party. In addition to a complimentary bar, The Official Party is open to all EiG exhibitors, sponsors, delegates and speakers. Guests must show their wristbands to gain entry, which can be collected on arrival to EiG along with your conference badge. ◀



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Q&A WITH RORY CREDLAND



RORY CREDLAND
EVENT DIRECTOR
AT CLARION
GAMING

What are you most looking forward to about EiG?

EiG brings together the who's who from the iGaming industry. It is a show that challenges the status quo and asks questions from outside the industry. Expanding on last year's theme of 'Forging Pathways to the Future', this year's theme is Generation Hybrid. Our agenda will focus on how we can bring our industry to the next level of intelligence, taking advantage of new technology, products and concepts whilst considering what this means for our legacy systems and regulation going forward. I'm excited to see the discussions that will take place at EiG around these topics and the future of our industry.

What makes EiG different from any other gaming event out there?

EiG is the leading B2B iGaming industry event completely focused on achieving excellence in online gaming. We play host to senior level decision makers from online gaming operators, online and land-based casinos, gaming start-ups, regulators, affiliates and more on a global scale.

The event provides a unique platform which encourages and facilitates networking and learning for the entire iGaming ecosystem. In 2014, EiG underwent a complete transformation, with a new proposition, positioning, event structure and pricing structure for delegates.

The three-year goal was for EiG to win back disaffected operators and become the global, high-level meeting point for the online gaming industry. We took EiG to Berlin – a city renowned for being Europe's innovation and technology hub. With a firm focus on product,

learning, information and networking, we have enjoyed three successful years in delegate and exhibitor participation, with growth averaging 25% year on year.

EiG is about freedom. The freedom to think, explore, engage and network in a way that suits our delegates. In 2017 we are looking forward to welcoming both returning and new delegates and participants, as EiG continues to be the premier event for the B2B sector of the gaming industry.

What topics do you think will be most frequently attended by delegates at the show?

The concept behind EiG this year is Generation Hybrid. With technology, virtual reality, augmented reality and blockchain opening up a whole new realm of possibilities, gaming companies are exploring how these new concepts will enable them to increase ROI. Other topics include ►

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taking a deep-dive into technology and evaluating which can best be deployed to help companies achieve their customer goals. Going beyond compliance and creating sustainable responsible gambling methods is industry-critical, and the key lies within intelligent consumer analysis – another subject covered at this year’s show.

Were there any aspects of last show that you were keen to change after feedback from attendees?

EiG prides itself on not only staying on trend but also pushing the boundaries and exploring new ways of learning. Based on feedback, this year we wanted to ensure that the content did not detract from the overall delegate experience but in fact enhanced it. Using the creative “Generation Hybrid”, we decided to split the content into four streams; The Pitch, NEO 2027, Legacy 2017 and Moment, which have their own unique purpose and conference space within the exhibition floor.

EiG has always boasted a stellar speaker line-up with senior figures from outside the industry as headliners.

This year is no different, as EiG continues to provide concrete, no-waffle insight into the future of player engagement, consumer experience and technology innovation.

Online gaming has always recognised the need to open up to other business sectors to innovate and find answers to some of its most pressing challenges. Our outside-in experts have been operating at the intersection of gaming and other sectors to apply their lifelong learning in gaming now.

What makes EiG this year bigger and better than any previous years’ event?

With innovation and technology playing a key part this year show we have a day dedicated to blockchain – understanding what the technology means for the industry and how to compete with the capabilities of blockchain casinos and sportsbooks. It is beginning to play an important part in the gaming industry and we found a lot of people still don’t quite know what it is about. The range of high-calibre blockchain speakers we have is an indication of how we value this “disruptor” in the market place over the next couple of years. ◀

“Going beyond compliance and creating sustainable responsible gambling methods is industry-critical, and the key lies within intelligent consumer analysis – another subject covered at this year’s show”

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EiG Q&A WITH GAMEART



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As an event, EiG is that special place you can visit to discover things that can challenge and change the way you think to improve your business.

What are some of the main topics you think will be discussed by attendees at EiG?

The topics will be numerous and varied, but in reality the fundamentals are the same; how as an operator can we differentiate our business' product suite to players, and how can platforms and games developers keep ahead of player interests and requirements.

What can we expect to see at the GameArt stand at EiG?

GameArt shall be showcasing our expanding games portfolio, in particular our global and local progressive jackpot games, which can be customised on a market level basis.

Our team is also on hand to discuss how to create digital gaming content from the land-based casinos which are popular at a specific local market level.

Have you got any special events or announcements planned during the show?

We have, but you'll have to come to the GameArt booth to learn more!

How has the show developed in the years that you have been attending?

EiG may not be the biggest show on the iGaming calendar, but its focus is on quality, not quantity. This has been recognised by both attendees and exhibitors and therefore lots more C-Level attendance and senior decision makers.

“As an event, EiG is that special place you can visit to discover things that can challenge and change the way you think to improve your business”



MARK MCKEOWN
SALES &
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In your opinion what is the standout theme of this year's EiG?

Ganapati will be contributing to the panels around Digital Transformation: Legacy vs. Overhaul and Innovation. We will specifically be looking at what risks you should be taking to innovate, and whether the consolidation that is happening in the gaming sector is making it less innovative as a whole and consequently what we do to combat that.

The event splits into three distinct areas, Past, Present and Future. What for you is the most important when running an online gaming company?

That is a tricky question. You clearly need to be focused on the future and looking ahead over the next 12 months to make

sure that you continue to deliver product that stands out from your competitors. In order to achieve that you have to be able to assimilate the past and the present in order to shape an innovative product offering for the future.

What does Ganapati gain from the networking opportunities on offer at EiG?

Ganapati are a relatively new supplier in the iGaming sector so it gives us a great opportunity to meet with potential customers, operators and platforms alike, and show them the great product offering we are focused on delivering. Berlin is a great place to meet

decision makers in informal settings and create long-term business partnerships that allow you to exponentially grow your business.

In your opinion what does holding the event in Berlin bring to the table?

I think EiG has really found a home in Berlin, and is returning for its fourth straight year there. With the BAC Affiliate Conference scheduled directly afterward, it is one of the busiest weeks on the iGaming calendar. Since Clarion has acquired iGaming Business, the EiG show has become a much bigger event in 2016 and we expect it to expand and grow even further this year.

“Ganapati are a relatively new supplier in the iGaming sector so it gives us a great opportunity to meet with potential customers, operators and platforms alike, and show them the great product offering we are focused on delivering”

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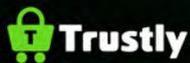


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SETH FREEDMAN BETHEHOUSE-CEO AND CO-FOUNDER

DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE
*Seth Freedman questions
the medias war on FOBT's*

In the time it takes you to read this sentence, FOBTs will have triggered another credit crunch, unleashed a killer cyclone in the Caribbean, and sparked all-out war in the Korean Peninsula. Or so the unlikely bedfellows of *The Guardian* and *Daily Mail* would have you believe, united as they are in their hysterical rage against the high street machines.

That the attacks on FOBTs in recent weeks have grown both more voluminous and more vituperative is no surprise – and *The Guardian* and *Mail* are hardly alone in championing this particular cause. Virtue signallers of the world have united in increasing fervour since they scented blood ahead of the publication of the Government's long-awaited Triennial Review, billed to belatedly take place in October after months of delay.

Campaigners, politicians, journalists *et al* have been scrambling aboard this particular bandwagon for years now, recognising first and foremost the personal benefits they can reap from being on their chosen side of the debate, despite having neither the brains nor the balls

to see the argument through to its logical conclusion.

Taking an ethical stance on gambling, as with any other societal issue, is to be admired – whether one is pro- or anti-, there is much to be said for caring enough about the welfare of others to actually bother taking a stand and making a contribution to the debate. But putting cheap point-scoring and self-promotion ahead of actually making a positive difference to others' lives? Such posturing is as contemptuous as it is counterproductive – and the manufactured FOBT debate is a case in point.

If you believe the hype, then ridding the land of the scourge of FOBTs – whether banning them outright or cutting the maximum stakes by 98% to £2 per bet – would cure society's ills overnight. Problem gamblers would rock up at their local bookie the next day, try and manically place their usual £100 bet on red or black, get turned down by the machine, shrug their shoulders and instead head to their nearest library to get stuck in to the collected works of Solzhenitsyn.

Or, and this is the bald truth that the ardent FOBT foes know but can never publicly admit, those seeking the fast and furious thrill of demented gambling will go one of two ways – online or underground – both of which can prove even faster roads to ruin than any high street. That's not to take FOBTs lightly at all, but instead to recognise quite what history shows us happens ▶

when the prohibition mob and their pitchforks get the upper hand.

No one has a quick fix for problem gambling, any more than they do for the myriad other addictions that hold many people in their vice-like grip. But campaigners taking on the FOBTs promise you exactly that – they swear they have the magic elixir to stamp out compulsive gambling, and woe betide anyone who challenges their total monopoly on the truth.

FOBTs are the ‘crack cocaine of gambling’, they cry – as if that should silence all debate on the subject. But what does the phrase actually say about those who utter it on endless repeat? Are they suggesting that other forms of betting are simply the ‘weed of gambling’ or the ‘acid of gambling’? Are they suggesting that drugs in general are ok and its pushers and users should be left to their own devices, except for the four-letter word machines which they have deemed beyond the pale? If so, where is the sense and consistency in that?

Addicts get hooked on far more than just crack cocaine and FOBTs. Billions more is hoovered up by Camelot via lottery tickets and scratchcard sales than any amount of spend at fixed-odds betting terminals, just as far more lives are damaged or destroyed by alcohol abuse than crack cocaine could ever harm. But going for the harder, more entrenched and calcified targets never appeals to the type of headline-seeking crowd-pleasers who care only about the effect their campaigning can have on their own careers, with scant regard for those

who their actions may adversely affect as a result.

None of the above is meant as an impassioned defence of FOBTs – the dangers of the machines are obvious to us all, but should not be viewed in isolation. If a sick punter wants to gamble their life away, they’ll find an outlet no matter what obstacles are placed in their path. FOBTs are today’s news, and whether or not they’re tomorrow’s chip paper, they’re the symptom, not the cause, of a nation obsessed.

For the lecturing and hectoring to come from newspapers promoting gambling through dedicated racing tips pages, incessant write-ups of lottery millionaires, trading their supposed editorial ethics for lucrative gambling adverts on the back page – not to mention from left-wing political parties taking six-figure sums from betting billionaires – smacks of rank hypocrisy indeed. To repeat, be pro-, be anti-, but be honest about your motives. To do otherwise is worse than doing nothing at all. ◀

“FOBTs are the ‘crack cocaine of gambling’, they cry – as if that should silence all debate on the subject. But what does the phrase actually say about those who utter it on endless repeat”

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JOHN HAGAN

CHAIRMAN, INDUSTRY GROUP
FOR RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

**LEADING THE CHARGE:
RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING WEEK**
*GI spoke to Hagan about the new
Responsible Gambling Week and how
the ICRG is spearheading the fight for
responsible gambling*

What is the Industry Group for Responsible Gambling?

The Industry Group for Responsible Gambling (IGRG) is an industry body comprising the five trade associations which represent all sectors of the gambling industry. Its mission is to provide a structure to better promote socially responsible gambling across all gambling sectors.

Its members include: the Association of British Bookmakers, Bacta, The Bingo Association, The National Casino Forum and the Remote Gambling Association.

IGRG members constitute 98% of the British Gambling market, representing some 640 gambling operators and 8,500 licensed premises across the gambling industry.

Why are you launching a Responsible Gambling Week?

All sectors of the UK gambling industry work day-in, day-out, to promote responsible gambling among their customers. Social responsibility is fundamental to the gambling industry's approach but this campaign is about uniting as an industry to get everyone talking about responsible gambling.

The theme for this inaugural year is "let's talk about responsible gambling". By coming together with one voice, the UK gambling industry wants to further raise awareness of responsible gambling across the whole country and start more conversations about what it means to gamble responsibly.

This initiative originated from industry, and is being driven by industry, and is also being supported by GamCare and GambleAware. The Responsible Gambling Strategy Board is also supportive. Public engagement is one of the 12 priority actions in the National Responsible Gambling Strategy.

The industry will also be raising awareness of what tools are available to help people gamble responsibly, and will be sharing information on how to access help and support, for those who need it. Having the whole industry behind Responsible Gambling Week is essential to its success.

What are the main aims for the initiative?

What makes this week so special is the industry's willingness to come together to raise awareness of responsible gambling

across the whole country, and start more conversations about what it means to gamble responsibly. It is a positive message that gives a more accurate picture of the industry and its ongoing work around social responsibility, at a time when there is so much negativity around.

We want to raise awareness amongst customers and the wider public about how to gamble responsibly, the tools that are available to keep gambling safe and fun, and where anyone can find help and support for those who need it. We will want as an industry to understand what they think responsible gambling is and what it means to them, to learn from the experience of consumers and their families to inform future policy and initiatives.

We will be aiming to engage with customers and the wider public, rather than "broadcast" messages about responsible gambling.

What can we expect to see during Responsible Gambling Week?

We are actively encouraging operators to undertake complementary initiatives during the week. Trade associations are liaising with their members and acting as the point of contact for all operators in their respective sector, to ensure consistency of message and to co-ordinate sector requirements and issues.

Posters, leaflets, banners and other information points about Responsible Gambling Week are being rolled out across the country in gambling venues, on industry websites and on social media channels, encouraging conversations about gambling responsibly.

The industry is working with GamCare and its partners to establish dedicated information points around the UK that will be available to the general public throughout the week. These Information Points will be equipped with experienced staff and information about responsible gambling. IGRG will work with the relevant operators, local authorities and local media to ensure the Information Points are well-promoted.

Many operators have expressed their support and are working with their internal teams to get the message out far and wide during the week. But I would also ask lawyers, bankers, accountants and others involved in this industry to consider what they might do to add to the national conversation.

An event will also be held in Parliament to help brief politicians on what it means to gamble responsibly and what they can do to share the message with their constituents.

Responsible Gambling Week will be rigorously and independently evaluated and, if it is the success we hope and expect it will be, we will learn any lessons and run it again in future years.

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A promotional image for the Highlander Online Slot. It features two characters, James MacLeod and Connor MacLeod, looking intensely at each other. A glowing blue sword with 'macLeod' on the hilt is positioned between them. The background is a dramatic, stormy landscape with green hills and a lightning bolt striking down. The title 'HIGHLANDER' is written in a large, stylized, blue and red font, with 'ONLINE SLOT' in a smaller, white font below it.

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