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THIS WEEK

- Columnist: Stephen Padveen on social media
- Survey reveals F2P casino player preferences
- Income Access's new social gaming hub
- Tweets of the week

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TOP STORY

NEW JERSEY LAUNCH DATE CONFIRMED

Borgata handed first licence ahead of 26 November market opening



Real-money online gaming in New Jersey will launch on 26 November, the state's Division of Gaming Enforcement have confirmed, as the Borgata Casino this week became the first in the state to receive an online gaming licence.

In a recent memo to Atlantic City casino operators, Division director David Rebuck confirmed: "Casino licensed internet gaming permit holders will be authorised to commence full internet gaming on 26 November 2013 at 9am EST." The launch date will be preceded by a five-day "soft-play" period, with invited players set to test-run a limited selection of online gaming products.

Meanwhile the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa, the venue owned by land-based operators Boyd Gaming and MGM Resorts International, have been granted the first New Jersey online gaming licence. Borgata have been officially approved to offer online casino and poker products to New Jersey residents, in partnership with internet operators BwinParty. New Jersey legislation requires any firm wishing to offer real-money online gaming to be partnered with an Atlantic City land-based casino, which has led to a spate of such link-ups involving the likes of PokerStars, **CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ▶**

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Bally Technologies and Betfair. More successful licensees will be revealed by the Division in the run-up to launch date.

The Division have also published a number of amendments to their online gaming regulations following a public comment period, relating to issues such as responsible gaming, record keeping and fund security – alterations which will become effective on 21 October. A number of additional amendments which require a further comment period are being adopted on a temporary basis as of 28 October. The full list of changes can be found here: tinyurl.com/NJgaming.

KEY POINTS

- Real-money online gaming to launch in New Jersey on 26 November
- Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa become first licensees in partnership with online operators BwinParty
- NJ regulations amended following comments period – more feedback set to follow

SOCIAL GAMING**DOUBLEDOWN SURVEY REVEALS SOCIAL CASINO PREFERENCES****Over 10,000 polled in revealing new social casino research**

In a week loaded with social gaming news, IGT-owned DoubleDown Casino have conducted a survey of over ten thousand casual gamers, with the aim of identifying what factors cause social games to become popular.

A wide selection of games was seen to be of vital importance, as well as frequently updated content for gamers seeking new forms of entertainment and facing a choice between all the different available options.

Both serious and casual gamers prioritise graphics, game variety and load times when deciding which social casino to play at, while a feeling of being in a real casino was also frequently mentioned as a desirable quality.

Gamers tend to be drawn to games they recognise from real casinos, the survey found. And bright, colourful slot games with casino sounds (e.g. the jingle of coins falling) added significantly to the players' gaming experience.

The DoubleDown social casino player survey in figures:

25% **19%**

Said social casinos were unique among social gaming options Said 'look and feel' of a real casino was of high entertainment value

31%

Said they preferred to play slot games; many were drawn to slots they recognised from real casinos

INCOME ACCESS CREATE SOCIAL GAMING NETWORK**New affiliate hub seeks to push US traffic to social sites**

Network and software firm Income Access are claiming an industry first after launching a social gaming affiliate network to connect traffic-heavy affiliates with player-hungry social gaming brands.

The new network, which has already been joined by "more than 10 of the social gaming world's biggest brands", will focus on facilitating social gaming firms' access to previously unmonetised US traffic.

Income Access CEO Nicky Senyard [pictured] said: "A number of large marketing partners have more than 10,000 US unique visitors a day but, until now, they have not been able to do anything with them due to prohibitive regulation."

If successful, the immediate outcome of the network will naturally be an influx of players into the registered social gaming brands, but it's the longer-term prospects that may have greater potential as regulated real-money gaming spreads across the US. Data will be valuable too – Income Access have already underlined their intention to analyse any crossover between real-money and social traffic.

KEY POINTS

- Income Access launch social gaming affiliate network
- Aims to help social brands monetise US traffic

INDUSTRY EVENTS**SOCIAL GAMBLING CONFERENCE RETURNS TO LONDON****Agenda includes high-level panel on slot game creation**

The second annual Social Gambling Conference heads for London next month with a series of highly relevant talks and



Conference venue Dexter House

Tweets of the week

"Late nights and early mornings.
Must be EiG week. #EIG13"
Clarion Events sales director Jason Miller [@jason_miller1]

"Portugal needs cash... announces impending gambling legislation.
Another one joins the crowd."
Gambling researcher and analyst Aideen Shortt [@AideenShortt]

"At first #EiG13 for years. Jetlag/tiredness causing twitchy eye like Pink Panther's Inspector Dreyfus."
Asia Gambling Brief's Rosalind Wade [@AsianGaming]

panel discussions scheduled across the two days. Topics on the agenda include regulation, acquisition and conversion, while one particularly eye-catching panel concerns game design. Representatives from Slingo, Williams Interactive and Arooga will come together at 3pm on Day 1 to discuss the topic of *Compelling Slot Games: Design, Theme, Math, Gamification*. The expert panel are sure to shed some welcome light on this fascinating yet under-appreciated topic.

- Social Gambling Conference takes place 6-7 November at Dexter House in London

NEWS IN BRIEF

ROUNDUP: HOLLAND; PLAYTECH; NEVADA

Plus the rest of the week's stories on **GamblingInsider.com** and the web

- The Dutch gaming regulator **Kansspelautoriteit** confirmed at EiG that they will introduce a new gaming bill in spring 2014.
- Ian Ince, formerly head of regulation at **Sportingbet**, has been appointed as **Playtech**'s new head of regulatory affairs and compliance.
- Land-based casino operators **Boyd**, **MGM** and **Golden Nugget** have each filed for extensions for their respective online poker proposals in Nevada.
- **Norway**'s government is weighing up the possibility of licensing foreign gaming firms.
- **WorldPay** and **Betable** have announced an alliance that will see WorldPay's payment processing, fraud detection and risk services integrated into Betable's RMG development platform.

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"eGaming slowly seems to arrive in the hyper-convergent world. Multi-channel distribution and mobile experience are big topics at #EiG13."
Florian Disson [[@Floydisson](#)], e-gaming consultant



**GUEST
COLUMNIST**
Why have gaming companies been slow to adopt social media?
 Stephen Padveen, social media expert

"Last year two major gaming operators experienced site crashes at the start of the football season. How did they handle this? They did little more than send out a couple of tweets saying they hoped to be back online shortly. This was set against the torrent of negative chatter on social channels, much of which came from players stating that they would be looking elsewhere to wager. This could have been mitigated with a proper social media strategy.

Why have gaming companies been slow to adopt social media as part of their business model? Many operators have failed to understand that social media has evolved far beyond a Facebook page, a Twitter presence, or some YouTube videos. Social media has become a way of doing business. As such, it requires a Social Business Plan.

In spite of legal considerations and some roadblocks put in place by companies like Facebook, social media offers numerous ways to improve the overall operational efficiency of your gaming property.

Player acquisition, conversion, retention and reactivation should be driven by an effective social media strategy. Increasing the lifetime value of your players is becoming more dependent on their perception of your ability to engage with them through social channels. Gaming operators that are accessible through multiple portals will experience continual growth in players while those that fail

to communicate through these same channels will find a gradual transition of their player base to more socially friendly sites.

Becoming a social business doesn't mean a complete change in the way you conduct your gaming operations. But it does mean that executive teams need to see social for the many benefits it offers. Look beyond the traditional concept of social media and start to build a business strategy that includes social audits, data mining, content strategy and optimisation, responsive branding and social care. Build a social sandbox that integrates your social marketing with your corporate marketing and set both against a backdrop of objectives and ROI benchmarks.

The 2013 MIT Sloan and Deloitte Social Business Survey outlined major concerns for executives when it comes to social media. Two of the most important were Strategy and Time and these are highly relevant and easily addressed by gaming operators. If you don't have a social strategy, create one. If you don't think you have enough time to execute your social media strategy effectively, stop thinking of it in terms of how much time you can devote to Facebook and start thinking of it in terms of how much more efficient your gaming business can be with an effective social business strategy.

The good news is that it's still early enough for operators to transition their businesses into highly functional and efficient social machines. But don't delay. Your players have high expectations."

Stephen Padveen is the senior partner at SocialConnX, a social media consultancy, and has over 25 years of marketing, operational and gaming experience. Stephen can be reached at steve@socialconnx.com

"I believe that social gaming is already considerably regulated through consumer regulations, so no need for more."
Gaming lawyer Giulio Coraggio [[@GiulioCoraggio](#)]

"Panelists asking the unanswerable question at #eig13. How do you make govts pro-active rather than reactive on tech issues?"
EU gambling consultant Tim McPhie [[@essexinbrussels](#)]

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