



# WEEK 44

## FRIDAY 1 NOV 2013

### THIS WEEK

- Columnist: Sam Hollis on lone working
- Casino and sport boost Playtech revenues
- Tribal Alliance announce RMG plans
- Tweets of the week

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#### TOP STORY

## DISNEY DISCONTINUE MARVEL SLOTS

Studio to phase out Marvel and Star Wars gambling games; agreements to expire within a few years



The Walt Disney Company have announced that they are to phase out Marvel and Star Wars branded slots in the US, according to a report in the *New York Times*.

The media conglomerate have owned Marvel since 2009 and bought the rights to Star Wars production company LucasFilm for \$4.05bn in 2012.

It is not confirmed if Disney will sever all Marvel and Star Wars ties to gambling on a global basis, but it would seem consistent with their family-friendly image to do so. The *New York Times* approached Marvel and a spokesperson said the company had "signed its last slot machine deal" and would shed their various licensing agreements as and when they expire.

While full confirmation that this decision affects Disney's agreements worldwide was unavailable at time of print, it seems likely that Disney would want to avoid potential criticism for phasing out slot games in the US but continuing to license games in other territories. However, it will take a few years for all the deals to expire, with casinos still able to offer the games in the meantime.

The news is potentially a blow for the likes of Playtech, who signed a multi-year

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exclusive licensing agreement with Marvel in 2009. The providers have released new Marvel titles as recently as last month.

However, it's good news for providers offering games based on DC Comics superheroes (Batman, Superman etc), notably Microgaming; as well as for IGT, who offer a series of Star Trek-themed slots which may benefit from a lack of sci-fi competition from Star Wars in future.

Disney's decision appears to be motivated, in part at least, by a desire to fight the proliferation of gambling and resort casinos in Florida. "We oppose the legislation of so-called destination resort casinos because this major expansion of gambling is inconsistent with Florida's reputation as a family-friendly destination," said Walt Disney World spokeswoman Andrea M Finger.

**KEY POINTS**

- Disney to phase out Marvel and Star Wars slot games when deals expire
- A blow to Playtech, who have a long-standing agreement with Marvel
- Disney decision thought to be partly motivated by their concerns over casino resorts in Florida

**FINANCE**

**CASINO BOOSTS PLAYTECH REVENUES**

**Q3 sport also up; poker woes continue**

Providers Playtech have reported a widely positive set of Q3 results, including significant increases in casino and sport revenues. Total revenues for the three months ended 30 September were up 13% year-on-year to €90.6m, a 1% rise on Q2.

Casino revenue, traditionally the firm's primary vertical, was up 21% to €46.8m, which also represented an increase of 1% on the previous quarter. The



training site, rose 6% to €28.5m, a 13% increase on Q2.

Sport was up 31% to €3.4m, although the figure was 26% down on the previous quarter. Playtech CEO Mor Weizer [pictured] revealed after the results announcement that five or six new licensees were set to go live with the firm's Geneity software during 2014, while some existing licensees were likely to utilise it in new markets.

Poker was down 22% to €3.2m, a 12% drop on the previous quarter, marking a continuation of the firm's struggles in the sector. Figures for H1 2013 had previously revealed a 17% year-on-year decrease.

A total of 64% of Playtech revenues for Q3 2013 came from Europe, with 25% emanating from Asia and 11% from the rest of the world, numbers which are widely stable year-on-year and when compared to the previous quarter.

Looking ahead, Playtech report that the first 27 days of Q4 2013 have produced revenue which is up over 12% year-on-year and a 5% increase on Q3. As of 30 September the firm had cash and cash equivalents of €523.2m.

**KEY POINT**

- Playtech Q3 revenues up 13% year-on-year to €90.6m

**TRIBAL GAMING**

**TRIBAL ALLIANCE TO OFFER REAL-MONEY GAMING**

**Products will be available on tribal lands**

An inter-tribal treaty known as the Tribal Internet Gaming Alliance (TIGA) has

company's other major sector, services, which as of July includes revenue from the recently-acquired PokerStrategy.com

been created to organise online gaming on tribal lands. The Alliance will "offer, regulate and promote internet gaming within the framework of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) and all applicable state and federal laws".

First ratified by the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, TIGA will accept real-money wagers from players physically present in member tribes' jurisdictions, for example a customer at a tribal casino or visitor to a tribal land. The games in question will be those categorised as 'class II' under IGRA and include slot-like bingo, traditional bingo, pull tabs and poker.

Players outside of tribal jurisdictions will be able to participate in 'fun-play' gaming, with C2Rewards identified as TIGA's preferred fun-play virtual currency platform operator.

TIGA is designed to give affiliated tribes experience of real-money wagering, handing them an advantage over non-Alliance tribes and gaming organisations yet to offer real-money services.

**KEY POINT**

- Newly-formed TIGA to offer online gaming on tribal lands

**INDUSTRY EVENTS**

**EX-APPLE MANAGER TO OFFER APP STORE INSIGHTS**

**Cory Lewis to host exclusive workshop at Game Monetization US**

A former App Store games manager is a standout speaker at next month's Game



Hilton San Francisco

Monetization USA Summit. Scheduled for 5-6 December at the Hilton San Francisco Financial District, the event covers topics such as game

**Tweets of the week**

**"PM promises a 'proper look' at FOBTs – whatever 'proper' means."**  
*Mobile solutions providers*  
*Mkodo [ @mkodo ]*

**"I propose the new ads on Twitter be capped at 140 pixels."**  
*Pechanga.net editor Victor*  
*Rocha [ @VictorRocha1 ]*

**"State of poker surely exemplified by fact that Playtech's Q3 sportsbook revenues have overtaken their poker vertical!"**  
*Industry analyst Aideen*  
*Shortt [ @AideenShortt ]*

mechanics, acquisition strategies and disruptive business models.

Ex-Apple man Cory Lewis is hosting a workshop offering insights on how to get a game featured in the App Store. The talk is for business pass holders only, although Lewis will also be speaking on a non-exclusive panel on game mechanics.

#### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### ROUNDUP: RANK; GOOGLE; BALLY

#### The rest of the week's key stories on GamblingInsider.com and the web

- The **UK Court of Appeal** ruled in favour of HM Revenue & Customs (**HMRC**) in relation to claims by **Rank Group** for overpaid VAT on certain types of amusement machines between 2002 and 2005. Rank will appeal.
- **Google** industry manager for e-gaming Chris Harrison stressed to gaming professionals that it was in their interests to make the most of **Google Plus** at a 'Think Digital' event organised by the corporation at their London HQ on Wednesday.
- **Bally** posted record Q1 revenues of \$249m on the back of their upcoming New Jersey launch with **Golden Nugget**.

#### GUEST COLUMNIST

#### "WE SHOULD ELIMINATE LONE WORKING IN BETTING SHOPS"



by **Sam Hollis**  
former betting  
shop manager

"Another week, another violent robbery in a betting shop. A Coral branch in Cardiff was the unfortunate location this time; police say the

employee – a heavily pregnant woman – was held at knife point, while the suspects got away with a measly £100.

When Ladbrokes store manager Andrew Iacovou was killed earlier this year, customers entered the shop not long after the incident, but did not notice the body behind the counter. Andrew was lone working when he was attacked with a hammer and suffered a fractured skull.

Yet, despite these horrific and tragic stories, William Hill are rolling out a single manning 'trial period' in their shops. When this trial is inevitably successful, they will follow Ladbrokes in initiating contractual policy for lone working.

Would you want your son or daughter, wife or husband, brother or sister to be in the position of spending up to five hours locked behind the counter with thousands of pounds in the safe? They are alone, isolated.

It isn't just robberies that put betting shop staff in danger. Picture the scene: it's 9.58pm and there are two customers in the shop, both playing fixed-odds betting terminals (FOBTs). The manager informs them that they've only got a few more spins of roulette before the 10pm close. One player prints off the remaining balance and leaves, the other isn't going so easily.

This machine player has lost over £1,000 on roulette in the last hour. He is angry that he is unable to win that money back. "A few more spins?" he asks. "Sorry," comes the reply.

In the heat of the moment anything could happen next, and this dialogue is all too familiar for those who have closed a betting shop on their own. Companies are putting staff under threat in search of profits.

All businesses are cost-cutting and the betting industry in particular is changing. Even managers are glorified cashiers, employed to pay people winnings from FOBTs. Why else do shops shut at 10pm on a Sunday? It is no surprise that in Ireland, where FOBTs are illegal, shops close at 6pm after the afternoon horse racing.

Senior management have realised that there is no need to pay two members of staff when one can do the job sufficiently. There are no slips to take, no jobs to do, therefore no need to have two people working.

But no member of staff should be forced to lone work if they don't want to.

Poorly paid employees have to deal with customers who lose thousands of pounds and their livelihoods in a single sitting, and no one – irrespective of age, gender or self-confidence – should be forced to work in a potentially dangerous environment. Lone workers feel extremely vulnerable.

It's time for the betting industry to change their attitude towards employees."

*Having run a successful betting shop for a major high-street bookmaker, Sam became disillusioned with the industry and increasingly concerned at what he calls its "aggressive, immoral practices". More recently he has worked for a gambling charity that helps problem gamblers. He is passionate about promoting responsible gambling*

**Want to be a guest columnist in GI Friday? Write to: editor@gamblinginsider.com**

**"The reason we struggle with insecurity is because we compare our behind-the-scenes with everyone else's highlight reel."**

*Poker TV presenter*

*Tatjana Pasalic [@tattyats]*

**"Oh dear, it's all going wrong for Rank. HMRC VAT appeal win means it must now repay £30.8m and seek leave itself to appeal to Supreme Court."**

*The Times' business reporter*

*Dominic Walsh [@walshdominic]*

**"Thought of a great potential use for bitcoins: ransom demands."**

*Poker pro Shane Schleger*

*[@ShaneSchleger]. We're pretty sure he was just thinking aloud*

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REVOLUTIONISING I-GAMING RECRUITMENT

**PPC EXECUTIVE**

**Salary: £35k. Location: London UK**  
**Contract: Full-Time.**

An industry leader is looking for a PPC executive who will be responsible for sustained growth and optimisation of all sportsbook campaigns. Not only will you manage campaigns, you will keep up to date with keyword research, landing page optimisation amongst other duties. A close relationship will be formed between yourself and the PPC Manager. The ideal candidate will have a few years 'hands on' PPC experience, preferably within the iGaming industry. Knowledge of tracking systems and analytics are essential.

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**SPORTSBOOK AFFILIATE MANAGER**

**Salary: £35k. Location: Malta**  
**Contract: Full-Time.**

Reporting directly to the Head of Affiliates, an industry giant is looking for an experienced affiliate manager to join their team. You would be responsible for the sales results for sportsbook affiliation through the company brands as well as identify top performers and develop incentive programs to reward them. At least 3 years experience is required, however sportsbook is preferred but not essential. Must be comfortable with Microsoft Excel as well as analytical packages. Fluent English must also be spoken.

Apply to [scottc@bettingjobs.com](mailto:scottc@bettingjobs.com) (+44 1355 588988) using reference GI-18393



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