



WEEK 38

FRIDAY 16 SEP 2016

THIS WEEK

- Parisian Macao opens its doors
- Amaya insider trading hearing heats up
- Panel calls for social gaming regulation
- Our eight page G2E event preview

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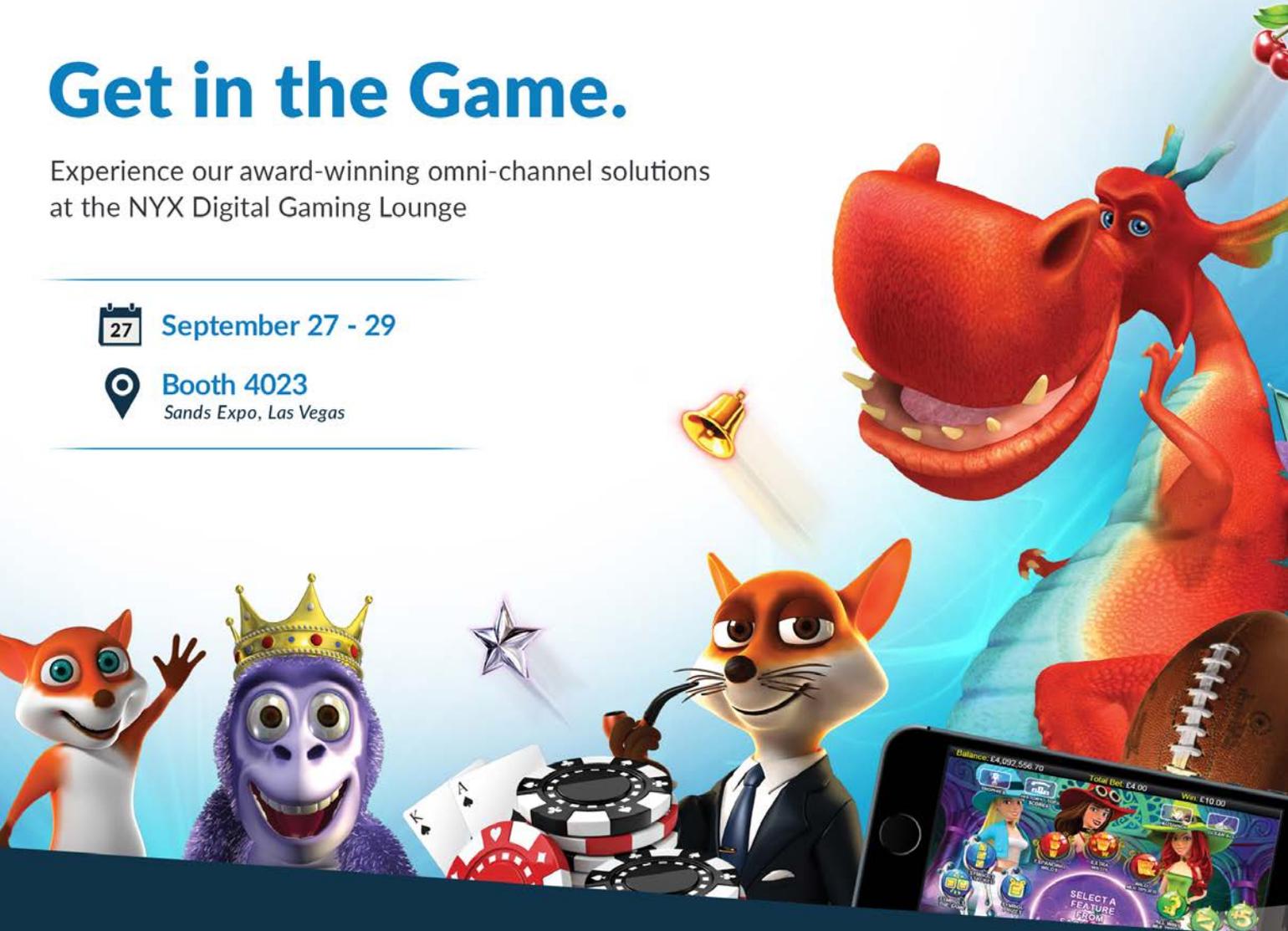


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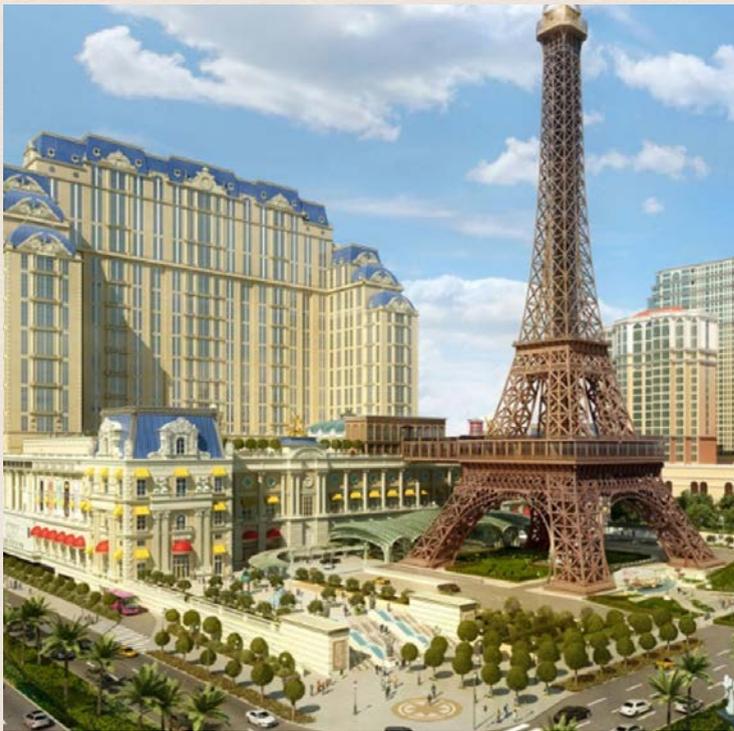
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TOP STORY

PARISIAN MACAO OFFICIALLY OPENS ITS DOORS

Sands China attempts to wake up the market; signs Macau is bouncing back



The Parisian Macao Hotel Resort became the latest Sands China casino operating in Macau when it officially opened on Tuesday.

As has been commonplace with casino openings in Macau, other forms of entertainment accompanied the opening, including pyrotechnics and a light show at the integrated resort's recreation of the Eiffel Tower. Belgian singer Lara Fabian and Hong Kong actress and pop star Karen Mok performed at the ceremony.

Opening a new casino in the special administrative region brings with it some risk at what has been a difficult time for the market, which finally ended its run of consecutive months of year-on-year casino gross revenue declines at 26, with August's result of 18.84bn patacas (£1.79bn) up 1%.

Sands China's net revenues from Macau properties went down 17% year-on-year to \$1.44bn for the second quarter of 2016, and by 12% to \$3.05bn for the six months ended 30 June.

The Sands China division of Las Vegas Sands (LVS) now operates five casinos, with Venetian Macao, Sands Cotai Central, Four Seasons Hotel Macao and Plaza and Sands Macao being the other four.

On the opening of the Parisian Macao, LVS Chairman and CEO Sheldon Adelson said: **CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ▶**

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FROM FRONT PAGE ►

“Before our very eyes, Macao is making a similar transition to the one it took Las Vegas decades to make, evolving from a destination only suited for gaming customers, to an environment which still provides a safe and reputable gaming experience, but also offers a wide variety of activities, attractions and amenities for people of all backgrounds, income levels and interests.”

Despite the problems the market has encountered, it has still seen a number of grand openings for integrated resort openings in the past year. The opening of the Parisian Macao follows the official launch of Wynn Palace in August and Melco Crown Entertainment’s Studio City casino resort last November.

According to the Macau Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau, there were 36 casinos operating in Macau in the second quarter and the number has not declined, despite the market’s recent troubles.

KEY POINTS

- The Parisian Macao officially opened on Tuesday
- This is the fifth Sands China casino to open
- This could be the injection Sands China needs

SOCIAL GAMING

TIME TO REGULATE SOCIAL GAMING SAYS PANEL

Young gamblers singled out as being “at risk” at World Regulatory Briefing conference

There was a fairly clear consensus at a panel discussion in London last week that regulation of social gaming is an important issue and that young people are an at risk gambling group. .

When addressing the issue of young gamblers at the World Regulatory Briefing: Responsible Gambling Innovation conference, Simo Dragicevic, CEO of data analytics firm BetBuddy, said: “Research tends to show that young people are more likely to self-exclude for six months or more than any other age group. It’s a one size fits all solution for a segment. You need to micro-segment, try to go a bit further

and maybe get some additional data that could help you.”

After being asked about whether the focus on young people is shifting towards unregulated verticals such as eSports and skin betting, Lee Willows, Founder and Chief Executive of the Young Gamblers Education Trust, said: “We’re not a campaign organisation, but if we were to be a campaign organisation, regulating social gaming would be absolutely critical!”

MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

FOOTBALL POOLS SALE DRAWS NEARER

Burlywood Capital in pole position for sports lottery product

Sportech has announced it has granted investment firm Burlywood Capital exclusivity regarding the sale of its Football Pools product, in a potential deal worth £97.25m.

If the deal were to be agreed and completed, then Burlywood would apply for an AIM listing for a new company that would be incorporated as a result of the Football Pools acquisition.

That new company would be chaired by Ian Hogg, who was COO of Sportech

between 2010 and 2014 and is now Chairman of gambling crowd-sourcing and crowd-funding platform GamCrowd.

Carl Lynn, Sportech CFO and Football Pools Finance Director, would keep a link with Sportech in place, as he would be a director in the new group.

Sportech bought Littlewoods Leisure, the previous operator of the Football Pools, in 2000. Revenue from the product's continuing channels for the period was £14m, down year-on-year from £14.4m and making up 29% of group revenue.

Burlywood Capital was asked for comment and is yet to respond.

SPORTS BETTING

LADBROKES AUSTRALIA ANNOUNCES NEW CEO

Paul Cherry moves up from COO

Ladbrokes has announced a change in CEO for its Australia operations, with Dean Shannon being replaced by Paul Cherry.

Shannon was said by Ladbrokes to be leaving for personal reasons, but will

remain as an advisor after serving in the position of Ladbrokes Australia CEO since September 2013.

Cherry is an internal appointment, as he will be stepping up from the role of COO, a position he took over in the same month that Shannon assumed the role of CEO.

Ladbrokes Australia's gross win improved by 57% year-on-year to AUD98.3m (£55.9m) for the first half of 2016 and improved net revenue of AUD69.9m, up by 42% and representing 6% of group net revenue.

LEGAL

AMAYA HEARING INTENSIFIES Quebec regulator put under the spotlight

An independent tribunal continued to hear the case of alleged insider trading related to associates of Amaya this week, with the lead investigator in the case claiming that there is no direct proof of privileged information being shared in phone calls prior to a number of acquisitions.

David Baazov, despite being majority shareholder, officially left his position as

CEO of the PokerStars owner in August after being charged with five charges related to insider trading, along with two other individuals and three companies. The other two individuals are Benjamin Ahdoot, a childhood friend of Baazov's, and Yoel Altman, reportedly a lender and advisor to Amaya. A total of 23 charges have been brought by Quebec financial security regulator the Autorité des marchés financiers (AMF).

The AMF's investigation is based on a report containing a list of emails, text messages and phone calls, alleging that 12 individuals used privileged information about impending Amaya acquisitions to gain CAD\$1.5m in profit over five years. It is alleged that David Baazov and his brother Josh received payments in exchange for privileged information.

Xavier Saint-Pierre said under cross examination from David Baazov's lawyer: "Circumstantial evidence shows there was a transmission of privileged information." The hearing is expected to resume in early October.



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THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS

The facts and figures that have caught our eye in the past seven days



Number of buy-ins for the world's richest online poker tournament, a \$102,000 Super High-Roller hosted by PokerStars last weekend



Number of speakers at this week's Betting on Sports Conference, being held in London



Value of the Caesars Entertainment Operating Co bankruptcy case from which retired judge Joseph Farnan resigned as mediator this month

Source: Reuters



Number of delegates in attendance at this month's KPMG Isle of Man eGaming summit



Number of point-of-sale terminals Scientific Games will provide as part of its new lottery retail technology contract with German lottery Sächsische LOTTO-GmbH

US\$40BN

The potential market value of a legalised casino industry in Japan, should this month's legislation lobbying be successful



Value of taxpayer money that will be spent on a new NFL stadium in Las Vegas

Source: Brookings Institute



The year the total volume of online gaming wagers exceeds \$1 trillion for the first time

Source: Juniper Research



Potential Year-on-Year GGR increase in Macau for September, following a strong start to the month

Source: Bernstein

G2E PREVIEW



The Global Gaming Expo, the international gaming trade show “by the industry and for the industry” and the biggest event in the North American gaming calendar, will make its return at the end of this month. Organised by Reed Exhibitions and presented by the American Gaming Association, this September’s event is the second annual G2E conference

to take place this year, following G2E Asia held in Macau in May.

The Sands Expo and Convention Centre will once more play host to G2E from 26-29 September, with the third annual Global Gaming Awards luncheon getting proceedings underway at the Venetian Palazzo Congress Center.

The show floor is the largest in the US and over 450 exhibitors will showcase their latest product offerings when the floor opens on day two, with an all new floor layout in place for this year’s incarnation of the expo. All of the industry’s biggest names will be in attendance, with the likes of Scientific Games, Aristocrat and IGT all putting the finishing touches to their stands and presentations for 2016.

The exhibition hall will open at 10am on days two, three and four, closing at 5pm on days two and three and at the earlier time of 3pm on day four.

This year’s conference sessions will begin on the first day of G2E,

opened by a discussion courtesy of Global Gaming Women on the power of being fearless. Regulation will be among the hot topics on day one, with subjects including anti-money laundering and US i-gaming on the conference agenda, while a session on the impact of technology on ways to pay to play to be chaired by GeoComply CEO Anna Sainsbury. Conferences on Indian gaming, eSports and daily fantasy sports will also feature across G2E’s four-day span.

This year’s attendees will also be able to take advantage of a rich and diverse range of networking opportunities. A welcome reception is set to take place before the start of the show and the Gaming Hall of Fame inductions are set to recognise the achievements of the industry’s leading figures. The Latin American Gaming Reception, NIGA Networking Reception and the Casino Talent Buyers Bash are among then networking events dotted throughout G2E.



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G2E PREVIEW - CONFERENCES

Education sessions will be run on all four days of this year's G2E Vegas. Here, we pick out seminars that are not to be missed on each day of the show, which runs from Monday 26 to Thursday 29 September at the Sands Expo & Convention Center.

Gathering Storm: Future of i-gaming in the US

Time: Day 1 – 10am-11am

Place: Bellini 2001 A

With the show taking place in the US, it almost goes without saying that a focus on the i-gaming legal landscape will be included in the schedule. A panel will discuss the three state markets where online gambling is regulated in the US and possible future legislation that could expand the target area for North American operators and providers. The panel includes Michael Cohen, Senior Vice President, General Counsel & Corporate Secretary for Caesars Interactive Entertainment.

Tribal Gaming Roundtable

Time: Day 2 – 11am-12pm

Place: Titian 2201 B

As any observer would know, another key theme of US gaming is tribal gaming. Ernie Stevens, Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Association, will moderate a discussion on all of the latest issues related to tribal gaming, as well as look into methods of contributing to tribal gaming. Joining Stevens will be joined by Mohegan Tribal Gaming Authority Chairman Kevin Brown. As Tribal Gaming is one of the pillars of gaming in the US, this is one of the most critical seminars at G2E.

Evaluating, Building and Operating a Social Casino

Time: Day 3 – 3.15pm-4.45pm

Place: Bellini 2001 A

This is one of the standout seminars for any casino games provider. It is of little doubt that casino gaming continues to evolve to a focus on social gaming as operators attempt to adapt

to the wants of millennial players.

The panel discussion will be held in two stages and will focus on insightful analysis of social casino gaming platforms and potential partnership opportunities that can be found in this area.

Integrity of Sports Betting

Time: Day 4 – 1.30pm-2.30pm

Place: Bellini 2003

There is plenty of discussion on this vertical in the US at the present time, with New Jersey battling against the four major sports leagues and National Collegiate Athletic Association to legalise sports betting at racetracks and casinos, as well as reports that New York is also looking into the issue.

Football fans are likely to be aware of Rick Parry, former Chief Executive of the Premier League and Liverpool and now a football consultant, who will be divulging on how data technology is used in sports-betting markets to protect the integrity of events.

G2E PREVIEW – THE GLOBAL GAMING AWARDS



This year's G2E Vegas show will be kick-started by the third annual Global Gaming Awards, which will again be hosted at the Venetian Palazzo Congress Center on Monday 26 September.

The esteemed panel of 60 independent judges have now cast their vote for the winners in 12 prestigious industry categories and the votes have been independently adjudicated by KPMG. All industry eyes will be on Vegas to see who will be announced as victors at the Awards

luncheon, scheduled for 12pm to 130pm on the first day of G2E Vegas.

MGM Resorts International enjoyed more success than any other industry operator or provider at last year's ceremony, taking the prizes of Land-Based Operator of the Year, Customer Loyalty Program of the Year for its M life program, and Responsible Business of the Year. MGM Resorts International is back among the nominees in all three categories.

As has been the case with the previous two Global Gaming Awards ceremonies, all areas of the industry will be covered, from operators to providers, to acquisition programs, to leading executives. This year's ceremony sees the introduction of a brand new category – North America Executive. This has been included to recognise the contribution to some of the industry's most influential companies from leading figures.

The standout competitor in both the land-based and digital operator and supplier fields will be rewarded, as

well as the companies that have made the most remarkable achievements in the casino and digital product fields. Meanwhile, the Digital Acquisition Program of the Year award is reserved for the strongest marketing strategies, and the Responsible Business of the Year award focuses on those that have made a difference in the community or have attempted to make the industry a safer place for players. The treatment of players is also of utmost importance in the Customer Loyalty Program of the Year award category. Innovation on both the land-based and digital sides of the industry will also be rewarded.

The ceremony is open to all G2E education attendees and Global Gaming Awards sponsors.

If you want to get up to speed with every single company and executive that appears on the list of nominees for each award, you can read the Global Gaming Awards 2016 Shortlist magazine at www.globalgamingawards.com

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G2E PREVIEW – NYX GAMING GROUP

“G2E BRINGS THE GLOBAL INDUSTRY’S DECISION MAKERS INTO ONE LOCATION”



By Kevin Vonasek

Chief Product Officer, America,
NYX Gaming Group

In your opinion what is the best aspect of G2E?

G2E brings the global industry’s decision makers into one location where operators, suppliers and vendors can engage and further their initiatives. G2E is often the location and time of year suppliers

reveal new product innovations shaping the future of our industry for years to come

What can we expect to see at your G2E stand?

Since last year, NYX has significantly grown – especially with the acquisition of OpenBet, which positions us as one of the leading end-to-end suppliers in the regulated market. NYX will be unveiling its on-property mobile and social casino products, our mobile and retail sportsbook products, our award-winning and NJ market leading digital gaming platform, our content distribution network (the OGS platform) in addition to numerous proprietary and third party content innovations we have added to our in EU and North American digital gaming.

What business are you looking to do at the show?

Primarily we are looking to obtain new partnerships with North

American brick-and-mortar casino partners as well growing our latest product distribution among our existing customer list of 200 global casino operators.

What gaming industry issues do you think will be most talked about at g2e this year?

I can only comment on our portion of the industry, that being the interactive and digital gaming space. I believe topics covered will include the recent status of potential US state-by-state regulation of i-gaming and sportsbook, the introduction of on-property mobile gaming and how social casino can be used as a superior marketing tool that also generates revenue for brick-and-mortar casinos. In US i-gaming particular I believe the conversation will continue to include new content availability and how best to optimise and improve patron acquisition within the unique market challenges of US i-gaming payments and KYC.

G2E PREVIEW - SG INTERACTIVE

“CONVERGENCE IS THE NAME OF THE GAME”



By Tom Wood
Vice President & Chief Product Officer, B2B, SG Interactive

What are you most looking forward to at this year's G2E?

As a combined company, Scientific Games is poised to have an amazing showing this year. I look forward to sharing not only our products, but also displaying the fantastic innovations from our gaming and lottery groups. Specific to SG Interactive, I'm excited to reveal some great developments

with our SG Universe product suite that will create unique opportunities for operators and empower players to explore their favourite games in new ways.

In the real money sector, we're ready to share some great innovation, new titles and interesting iterations on some of our most popular games.

What can we expect to see at your G2E stand?

This year we'll show customers enhancements to our SG Universe product suite, including new features and exciting developments that benefit both player and operator. One key addition to our portfolio is loyalty linking, which allows players to access their loyalty account information from their mobile device and even earn or spend land-based loyalty points in the casino's Play4Fun Network social casino.

We also have an extensive portfolio of real money gaming titles players are going to enjoy. Rainbow Riches Reels of Gold and Dancing in Rio themes have unique mechanics that set them apart from a typical online gaming experience.

We're showcasing some of our proven proprietary brands and some really incredible licensed titles that have been in development for quite some time. There's a lot of transformative content coming down the pipeline!

What gaming industry issues do you think will be most talked about at G2E this year?

Convergence is the name of the game – not just with mergers and acquisitions, but omni-channel strategies that include robust mobile, online, social, and land-based offerings. To succeed, casino operators have to craft a comprehensive plan to engage players on all fronts, with particular focus on mobile, so I think we'll see many new products and strategies that relate to the convergence of technology. We'll also see trends making their way from social gaming into the RMG space, like popular non-casino mobile games making their way into properties to attract new, younger players. For example, augmented and virtual reality should make a big splash after the huge success of apps like Niantic's Pokémon Go. It's an exhilarating time for mobile content.



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G2E PREVIEW – GAMBLIT GAMING

“MODERNISING CASINOS WILL CONTINUE TO BE A BIG TOPIC”



By Eric Meyerhofer
CEO of Gamblit Gaming

What can we expect to see at your G2E stand?

To begin with, we'll be showing our two core gaming machines, the Tristation and Model G with a complement of games in submission, plus some new content in the pipeline. We're really excited to bring those to

market working with lead operators focused on beginning the process of floor evolution.

We're very excited to be showing our first dealer attended felt table product. The reality is that all of the casino floor should be adapted for the changing visitor demographic, not just electronic games, so why not table games as well? We're eager to gauge table operation's view of this product and how it fits into their vision of how they want to think about floor adjustments for the younger casino patrons.

We have a very interesting construct allowing eSports to be something achievable for slot floor operations. A tangible way to monetise this wave. We refer to it as "G-Sports".

In addition to a number of other games on the booth, we have a very intriguing new technology adaptation to a gambling construct which we believe is really going to knock people's socks off. Guaranteed to draw those Millennial and Gen-X 40 players to an operator's new gaming zone.

What gaming industry issues do you think will

be most talked about at G2E this year?

On the products and market side of things, I think modernising one's casino will continue to be a big topic. There are some lead operators making those moves now and many others laying plans and putting thought into it. So I would believe many will be looking for insight into how to best plan and execute a strategy. This has been bundled up under "skill gaming", but it's much more than that.

On the product operations side, I know AGA and AGEM are working together to see how the whole industry can come together to streamline the very difficult process of bringing new products to market, and all the required overhead to supply those products. This is important work because the industry will have to be fluid to adapt with the times, and failure to do so hurts everyone. Although these kinds of topics aren't why people necessarily go to shows, the show conference can provide a good forum for these discussions.

G2E PREVIEW - INTERBLOCK

"WE'LL BRING DATA DRIVEN INNOVATION"



By John Connelly
CEO, Interblock

In your opinion what is the best thing about G2E?

This is one of the few events each year where the industry has the opportunity to quickly move the gaming sector in a new direction.

Unlike any other time of the year, G2E brings the majority of the gaming industry to one location, with the ability to create a momentum not easily achieved.

G2E is where operators continue to search for new and innovative products, which will re-energise the casino floors and deliver incremental growth.

In just three days, hundreds of millions of dollars spent on R&D will be presented to the global gaming industry, under one roof.

What can we expect to see at Interblock's G2E stand?

Data driven innovation.

We have an advantage many other large gaming companies are unable to provide: we are focused on one area of the casino floor — Electronic Table Games.

Our objective this year is to solidify this product as an incremental revenue driver to the casino. We also hope to share our experience, which indicates ETGs need to be evaluated differently than we had previously thought.

Interblock will release more than twelve new products this year to further demonstrate our commitment to providing a portfolio of ETGs capable of sustaining more than 10% of the casino floor.

Everything from new hardware designs to software applications will focus on improving hold percentages and player experiences across all demographics.

What business are you looking to accomplish at the show?

G2E is an amazing opportunity for us to invite both new and existing customers to see a complete product offering from Interblock, in a single venue.

Our product portfolio will more than double at the Show this year and the number of new markets we have opened globally will have increased by nearly 30% since the last G2E in Vegas.

We are convinced that with the right ETG innovation and focus, the business will follow

What gaming industry issues do you think will be most talked about at G2E this year?

The continued consolidation of the gaming sector will be a topic for both suppliers and operators alike.

This can be a positive or negative outcome, depending on the results of integration. The industry's ability to sustain the financial pressures being placed on each and every organization will come from our ability to find incremental growth. Cutting our way to profitability can be beneficial, but eventually you have to find ways to grow the top line.

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G2E PREVIEW - AMERICAN GAMING SYSTEMS
"WE'RE LAUNCHING
GAME-CHANGING PRODUCTS"



By Julia Boguslawski
Chief Marketing Officer, AGS

What are you most looking forward to at this year's G2E?

We're in growth mode and sharing what the new AGS has to offer is an incredibly exciting story to tell on the gaming industry's biggest stage. We always look forward to spending time with our customers and introducing new ones to our significant transformation from both our leadership and product side.

What can we expect to see at your G2E stand?

The first thing people will notice is a booth design unlike any other before - it's bold, playful, and really reflects our brand. Our

booth concept will have a clean, industrial feel with pops of bright colour - very reminiscent of a modern design studio. That's intentional because we're trying to really put the focus on our organic game design and development. We're also in a new, strategic location this year, booth #1253, which gives us greater exposure and helps elevate our brand.

Do you have any launch events planned during the show?

This G2E is historical for us because we're launching three, game-changing new products. In our slot segment the big news is the introduction of Orion, our stunning new premium cabinet featuring an incredible, never-seen-before lighting design with a 42" HD portrait monitor that's encircled by 498 game-controlled, emotive, LED lights. We've packed the first available content with high-volatility games that boast engaging graphics, sounds, and many compelling features.

On the tables side, we're unveiling our first-ever card shuffler, the Dex S, which is a single-deck, commercial-grade shuffler that features a streamlined design with

less moving parts; it's an exceptionally functional and economical shuffler. We'll also be showcasing the new white-label version of Bonus Spin. This product is really unique because it allows casinos to offer a progressive top prize, a fixed top prize, or an experience-based prize as the top award, so they can target different player segments, including the coveted Millennial demographic.

What gaming industry issues do you think will be most talked about at G2E this year?

A recurring topic with both slot and table game customers has been how to better integrate gambling in social settings that attract Millennials. I expect that this will continue to be a hot topic this year. Operators want to capitalise on this up-and-coming demographic and as a result, we're seeing a lot of interest in our white-label Bonus Spin technology, which makes the table game experience more social, more interactive, more personal, and more enticing from a prize perspective - all things Millennials look for in an entertainment experience.

GUEST COLUMN

IT'S TIME TO ENTER A NEW REALITY



By Alexandre Tomic
Co-founder,
ALEA.com

The idea of virtual reality being used in everyday life has filled the imaginations of the general public for decades, and now, with the UK consumer launch of the Oculus Rift headset scheduled for later this month and several other headsets also either launched or in the pipeline, we have finally reached the point where VR has emerged as a viable channel.

Anyone who has tried out a VR headset will know the technology offers a level of immersion far beyond standard online channels. This level of immersion has the

potential to boost engagement to never-before-seen rates, and within the hyper-competitive slots sector, where acquisition costs are soaring, engagement has never been so important.

Our recently-launched multi-player VR casino, SlotsMillion, allows players to walk around a virtual casino set in a futuristic city. Players can select an avatar and are free to explore the environment, interacting with other users and staff such as support agents. They can choose from between 40 different slots from leading suppliers, including NetEnt and Play'n GO, and experience the buzz of a big win with an explosion of 3D graphics raining down on them from specific slots.

It is so realistic that some players even experience vertigo when looking down at the city from the windows of the casino.

This is only the beginnings of a revolution in online gaming that will be every bit as profound as the way we saw the sector transform in the

years following the launch of the iPhone.

While it is true that it may take a couple of years before the adoption of VR headsets reaches critical mass, that process is now underway.

The entry point on the headsets is currently high, but as we saw with high-spec smartphones, these will reduce quickly as the technology becomes more widely accepted - both operators and providers need to react now if they want to be avoid being left behind.

Beyond the obvious novelty of VR and its potential to increase player engagement, it can also change the way operators interact with players.

Operators will employ support staff within virtual environments to help players select the slots which are best for them and present them with tailored bonuses. VR casinos will quickly become environments in which the gaming industry does business, with customers, operators and affiliates interacting freely, and staff may eventually spend more time

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inside the virtual world than users, carrying out meetings and supporting players.

Once this happens, an environment that was built for users' enjoyment will become the workplace of the industry, with us right beside the players every step of the way.

This level of personalised experience has become the basic expectation for the all-important Millennial segment that will drive the adoption of VR. Recent figures from the UK Gambling Commission have shown that 18-24-year-olds are actually gambling less than they were two years ago, so engaging with them through new technology is one way to turn the tide.

For this to work, we need to ensure that the gaming industry continues to push forward with the technology that is now available. For example, while SlotsMillion serves as the world's first VR casino, the next challenge is to create VR slots themselves.

Imagine a slot that allows a player to walk around inside, with the reels floating in front of them and different features activated depending on the player's actions and movements. This will be an entirely new proposition in terms of immersion and engagement.

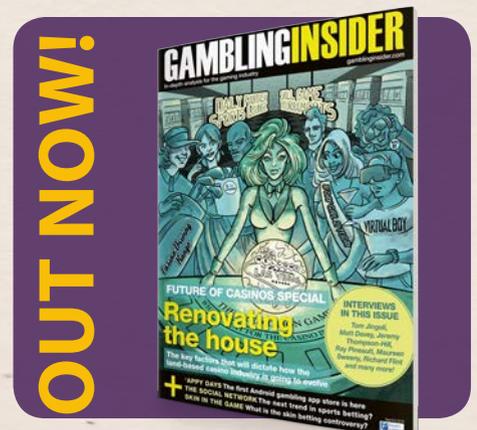
There is also huge scope to expand marketing within the virtual world. For instance, the next update for SlotsMillion will include a large screen where music, movie clips and previews of slots can be displayed to players.

Though the majority of our users are still playing in 3D due to the cost of virtual reality equipment, those who have tried SlotsMillion VR have been extremely positive about the experience. Interestingly, we are finding that it is attracting users who have not previously tried online casinos.

It is no exaggeration to say VR is the biggest opportunity we as an industry have been presented with for a decade, and it is vital that

operators, providers, affiliates and regulators work together to ensure we make the most of it.

Alexandre Tomic is co-founder of ALEA.com, the multi-award winning creator of innovative gaming experiences. Tomic has more than 10 years' experience in the betting and gaming industry, having started out as a gaming affiliate and SEO expert, before establishing ALEA.com with business partner and marketing expert Charles Gross. ALEA.com operates the world's first-ever real-money, multi-player, virtual reality casino, SlotsMillion.com



GUEST COLUMN

**ONLINE VS. RETAIL SLOTS:
LEARNING LESSONS**



By Peter Causley
*Managing Director,
Lightning Box Games*

When the latest generation of slots suppliers talk about producing multi-channel content they are effectively talking about games designed for desktop and mobile devices. They rarely, if ever, mean land-based too.

Of course, some of the longer-established providers who began life in brick-and-mortar have made the move onto people's computer screens, phones and tablets. The likes of ourselves at Lightning Box, IGT, Ainsworth, and Scientific Games successfully design content that span all three verticals. But few,

if any, of even the most celebrated online studios are yet to go the other way and make a fist of it in the world of retail.

The reason, quite simply, is that provisioning games for all three formats requires a depth of understanding and broader skill set than most companies possess, which isn't to say that they can't be effective or successful specialising in one or the other.

But the shame of it is that the different verticals are currently developing in isolation with little best practice shared between them. And as someone who started his career in land-based and now works in online and mobile too, I'd argue that there is much that can be learned from one about the other.

Quality over quantity

There are fewer more ruthless places in the world of gambling than the slot halls of a land-based casino. With limited real estate in even the biggest venues, there is

no room for underperforming games or machines.

This has led to a conservative, incremental approach to game design in some respects, with few operators or suppliers willing to take a risk being too innovative in game design. But it has ensured the production of high quality games that stand the test of time.

The same cannot be said for online casinos, where near limitless capacity has seen a proliferation of slots in the last five years. This has produced an insatiable demand for fresh content to swell games lobbies bloated by hundreds of titles, many of which the average player is never likely to chance upon let alone play.

That has resulted in some online casinos "hitting the wall" as far as effectiveness is concerned, even though they don't have the physical restraints of their land-based counterparts.

For both suppliers and operators, therefore, the priority has to be the production of quality over quantity.

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Attention to detail

There has been much talk in the online industry of late about so-called Millennials and how to cater for younger audiences coming into betting and gaming. Almost all of that has focused on their familiarity with video gaming, desire for quick-fire entertainment, and preference for the latest mobile devices.

Of course that debate is equally important in the land-based environment, where operators around the world have just as much need to attract new faces to the casino floor as they do the online lobby.

What those online lobbies have to their advantage – even on mobile devices – is the ability to offer multiple games at any one time. A player can simply deposit his money into the wallet and use it to play any number of games by clicking in and out of the lobby with minimal effort.

The vast majority of land-based machines offer only one game per cabinet however, meaning players

need to cash out and physically move to another available machine to play a game they like or to trial a new game that attracts. This has led to a certain level of tolerance of games amongst land-based players, for whom it is too much like hard work to change machines once they've deposited cash, hence they are more likely to give a game a longer trial.

Yet with shorter attention spans and a greater desire for instant gratification in not just the younger generation, this is rapidly changing. Casinos need to change with it by giving those players multiple game options at the same machine, a growing trend we are already seeing in Sydney venues.

This will require the complete re-design of many machines, of course, currently geared up to promote and facilitate the playing of a single slot. But as with the replacement of physical reels with video slots, aided by tokenisation and bill acceptors, proved, none of us can afford to stand still.

Ultimately, as players and their habits change we need to change with them. And as those habits are often society-wide, they will follow them wherever they chose to seek their entertainment. It makes sense, therefore, that we are conscious of what we can learn from each other in order to provide the most up-to-date player experience.

Peter Causley is managing director of multi-channel slots designers Lightning Box Games, which he co-founded with David Little in 2004. The studio provides gaming content for land-based, online, and social operators. Prior to Lightning Box, he spent at decade at Aristocrat where, as Jackpot products marketing manager, he helped design a host of iconic games

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