



WEEK 05

FRIDAY 3 FEB 2017

BOOKMAKERS HIT BACK

The battle continues between parliament and the bookies over the maximum stake limit on fixed-odds betting terminals.

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THIS WEEK

- **PokerStars ends Czech Republic blackout**
- **DraftKings awarded Malta skill games license**
- **Macau revenue up 3.1%**
- **Yggdrasil secures William Hill integration**
- **Guest Columnist: Adam Wilson,Bookee**



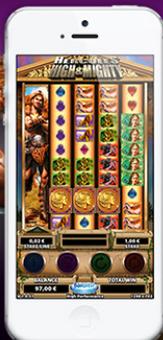
Britain's bookmakers have reacted angrily to a report from the Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBT) All Party Parliamentary Group calling for a £2 stake limit on fixed-odds betting terminals.

The Association of British Bookmakers are demanding an urgent inquiry into the report, saying it is a "deeply flawed report", funded by people that would "directly benefit if its recommendations are ever implemented".

The current maximum stake for gambling on the electronic terminals is £100, with the report stating that this figure should be slashed dramatically. Moreover, it has made further recommendations on their use, including limits on the number of machines per shop.

Ahead of the report CEO of the Association of British Bookmakers, Malcolm George comments: "The report is the view of a tiny group of anti-betting shop MPs. This group has been financed by those with interests in the casino, arcade and pub industries. We strongly believe that the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards should urgently investigate this All-Party Parliamentary Group. This group of MPs has operated in secrecy, provided no transcripts of the evidence given to their meeting and operated throughout behind closed doors away from public scrutiny."

George added that the number of betting shops that close each year is over 100 and that this report could see the beginning of the end for the High Street bookmaking industry. "Britain's bookmakers employ more than 43,000 staff and contribute over



Introducing Portrait Mode



THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS



£62.3m

Net gaming revenue of 32Red for 2016

30/04/17

Date to which mobile operator Slingo's new television and digital marketing campaign is set to run



Number of months in a row for which Macau has experienced growth

22



Number of race tracks covered by At The Races, from which Ladbrokes Coral has been told to stop streaming content online

£1bn a year in taxes. But, betting shops are already closing at the rate of more than 100 a year and if the findings of this rigged report are implemented, it could spell the beginning of the end for the High Street bookmaker."

Carolyn Harris MP, Chairwoman of the parliamentary group has dismissed the attack from the ABB, adding: "There is now a clear case for the government to substantially reduce the maximum stake which can be played on FOBTs. These machines are easily accessed in the most deprived areas, sucking money out of the pockets of families. I support a responsible gambling industry, but there is nothing responsible about how FOBTs are currently being operated."

Mark Tami MP also voted against proposal to retain the maximum stakes and prizes for FOBTs, adding: "These machines are causing major problems in our high streets and I believe the Government has a responsibility to act on this issue."

In November last year, the ABB boycotted a Commons meeting that was arranged to discuss the current UK regulatory provisions for FOBTs. Crouch deemed this

as a "missed opportunity" for the group to state its concerns regarding changes to the legislation. However, the ABB said: "We see no value in providing evidence to a group when the outcome of its inquiry has been pre-determined and it operates as little more than a kangaroo court."

Sir Robin Wales, Mayor of Newham echoed Harris' pleas, adding: "The gambling industry has consistently ignored our pleas to stop blighting our high streets with the clustering of betting shops, which bring anti-social behaviour and crime to the heart of our communities."

Although bookmakers accepted and even welcomed the review of the machines, George added: "It's very easy for the anti-gambling lobby to make strong false claims about the industry." ◀

KEY POINTS

- Parliamentary report calls for £2 stake limit on FOBTs
- The ABB are demanding an urgent inquiry into the report
- The ABB claims over 100 betting shops close each year and this report could be the end for High Street bookmaking

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17 FEB 2017

Date scheduled for the opening of the Okada Manila integrated resort

18.8%

Fall in operating income posted by Konami's gaming and systems division for the nine months ended 31 December 2016

79%

Number of betting alerts accounted for by tennis in 2016, according to ESSA



30.5%

Rise in net income recorded by Wynn Resorts for Q4

POKERSTARS ENDS BLACKOUT PERIOD IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

PokerStars is granted Czech Republic's first International License after new iGaming regulations were put in place at the beginning of the year

PokerStars has become the first licensed online casino and poker operator under the Czech Republic's new gaming regulations following the approval of Amaya Inc's 'Live Games' license. Although the country has authorised online betting since 2009, new iGaming regulations which came into effect on 1 January opened the market to foreign online poker and casino operators for the first time.

This will mark the end of a blackout period when PokerStars and other operators left the market due to the enforcement of new laws without correct licenses. Moreover, the operator is set to return to the market on PokerStars.cz "in the coming days".

The operator will offer Czech punters a wide range of poker games and tournament formats across its shared global liquidity, as well as popular

multiplayer casino games on both desktop and mobile devices.

Chief Operating Officer, Guy Templer comments: "We are very proud to be the first online casino and poker operator to be awarded a license and support the newly regulated Czech market. This underscores our commitment to supporting local regulations and obtaining local licenses wherever possible."

Currently, Amaya has licenses or operating approvals in 17 jurisdictions, with the company also applying for a sports betting license that would be offered through BetStars in the Czech Republic.

DRAFTKINGS AWARDED MALTA SKILL GAMES LICENSE

New regulatory framework license is just the beginning for DraftKings' international expansion

Daily fantasy sports giant DraftKing has just secured a new gaming licence from the Malta Gaming Authority (MGA), under a skill games regulatory framework introduced by the island nation last year.

Last year, Malta exempted DFS from requiring a gambling license. Today,

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MGA announced that its new Skill Games Regulations were now in force, and that DFS fell under its definition of “controlled skill games”.

The new amendments to the regulation introduce a series of integrity and player protection controls for operators, as well as a 5% gross gaming revenue tax. The license will allow the provider to expand its operations into other European jurisdictions, with Germany being the first, as confirmed by DraftKings Chief International Officer Jeffrey Haas.

As Malta is part of the EU, the license from the MGA allows DraftKings to enter other jurisdictions that do not specifically require licenses from their local regulators and have not prohibited the provision of fantasy sports offerings.

DraftKings has said that it hopes the international expansion will occur by offering contests in Malta and Germany during this year's Q1. “We are excited to embark on this important phase of our international expansion”, DraftKings co-founder and CEO Jason Robins commented to the Legal Sports Report. “We are pleased that Malta has recognised the need for special licensing of daily

fantasy sports and other skilled based games.

“The Malta Gaming Authority is an innovative organisation and it is clear that they have put a lot of thought and rigour into this process.”

MACAU GAMING REVENUE UP 3.1%

Although January results extend the industry's six month recovery, it falls short of growth prediction

Macau's gross gaming revenue grew only 3.1% in January to \$2.4bn.

Although casino revenue increased, extending the industry's recovery to a sixth consecutive month, it still fell short of the median 8.5% growth polled by Bloomberg.

Wynn Macau led the decline, down 2.5%, Galaxy Entertainment fell 2.3%, SJM Holdings dropped 2.4%, Sands China declined 1.3% and MGM China was down 1.6%.

With Deutsche Bank reporting last week that major hotels at Macau's new Cotai strip were fully booked this would explain the continued growth for Macau. However, it seems that Chinese visitors were mainly

visiting to go sightseeing instead of gambling.

The industry reinvented itself by adding more family-friendly resorts and attractions in a bit to draw recreational spenders and casual gamblers.

“We're looking for strong hotel bookings with rooms filled with more high-value customers than we've seen in recent history, which should lead to very strong Chinese New Year gross gaming revenue,” says Macau-based Union Gaming Group analyst Grant Govertson.

Adding: “Casino operators are bullish about their VIP and premium mass market businesses for the upcoming holiday period.”

YGGDRASIL SECURES DIRECT INTEGRATION PARTNERSHIP WITH WILLIAM HILL

After some difficult years for William Hill's digital division, this partnership will attempt to strengthen its online offering Malta-based Yggdrasil Gaming has agreed a direct integration with William Hill in the latest coup for the supplier's fast-growing Gibraltar operation.



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N5-220

William Hill will now be able to fully utilise Yggdrasil's in-game promotional tools, BOOST and social sharing tool, BRAG as well as having access to Yggdrasil's full suite of slots, including titles Joker Millions, Viking Go Berzerk and Big Blox.

After some difficult years for William Hill's digital division, this addition to the operator's casino content will certainly be seen as an attempt to strengthen its online offering.

Gaming Commercial Director at William Hill, Graeme Powrie comments: "We have been hugely impressed by Yggdrasil's commitment to innovation, and their collection of games is amongst the strongest in the casino sector. We have opted for a direct integration so we can take full advantage of the in-game promotional tools and offer our players the exceptional experience they have come to expect from William Hill."

The William Hill deal will be Yggdrasil Gaming's fourth since it established its Gibraltar office. The company was awarded a license by the Gibraltar Regulatory Authority in June 2016. Signing major gambling operators, including William Hill, and securing licenses from different

regulated jurisdictions has been an important part of the supplier's growth strategy.

At the beginning of this year, Yggdrasil also received regulatory approval to enter Italy's regulated i-gaming market, with Yggdrasil Gaming titles expecting to go live in the local market in the second quarter of the year.

Fredrik Elmqvist, CEO at Yggdrasil Gaming, adds: "William Hill is one of the most respected names in gaming, so it is obviously a huge thrill to add such a trusted and successful tier one operator to our ranks. Since gaining our Gibraltar licence six months ago, we have secured several major operators, and working with the very best in the industry is driving us forward and keeping us at the very top of our game."

NEW JERSEY STEPS CLOSER TO REGULATING DFS

The amended bill sets an increased fee of 10.5% on gross revenue

New Jersey has taken a step closer to legalising daily fantasy sports (DFS) after a state Assembly committee cleared a bill that would regulate the industry.

On Monday, the DFS bill sailed through a committee of the Assembly Tourism, Gaming and the Arts Committee by a majority of 7-0. The bill established guidelines and a tax rate for companies that operate such games in the Garden State.

The proposed legislation sets out rules to charge DFS companies a fee of 10.5% on gross revenue.

The previous legislation that began making movements last year was slightly different, imposing only a 9.25% tax rate on companies' gross revenue.

New Jersey's constitution does not allow the state Legislature to regulate "games of chance". However, former Casino Control Commission Chairman, Steven Perskie, argued that DFS contests are games of skill and thus should not be classed as gambling under the definition of the New Jersey Constitution.

It would therefore place DFS regulation under the authority of the New Jersey Legislature. Perskie stated: "While there are inherent elements of chance, success in fantasy sports tournaments is demonstrably dependent upon the exercise of analytics, research, and carefully calibrated strategy."

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AUTOMATION IS KILLING YOUR PROFITS

With operators investing significant sums in complex and comprehensive automated operating protocols, Nicholas G. Colon examines where this could be harming casinos' bottom lines.



Corporations spend billions of dollars creating magnificent resorts, complete with fabulous works of art and some of the most impressive glass and steel architecture of the modern era. The goal of these excessive luxuries is to get people in the resorts, and I assume the executives at these casinos want them to play their casino games. If I am correct it bewilders

me why the people in charge would spend so much money building and maintaining these facilities and then go ahead and implement operating protocols that save pennies in operating cost but loses millions of dollars every year in lost gaming profits. Put another way the protocols in place are counter-productive to the stated objective. Automation is an example of such a counter-productive strategy and is a prime example of the phrase penny wise but pound stupid.

The first example of how automation reduces profits is the ticket-in ticket-out (TITO) aspect of slot machines that allows players to move freely from slot machine to slot machine, or from slot machine to cash out machines on the casino floor. Before the TITO machines dominated the market, players would take their coins to the cashier, stand in line and exchange their coins for cash. Now it's just a matter inserting a ticket into the cash out machine on the way out of the casino.

A player would spend more time on machines and gamble more prior

to the introduction of TITO. Why? The reason is the predictability of human behaviour. And because I went to medical school and I have studied human behaviour both in the classroom and on the wards I am in a unique position to explain why. People are for the most part impatient. They want their needs and desires to be filled immediately. When they are done gambling they want to cash out right away and leave. The TITO and automated payout machines expedite this process. The end result is the player spends less time in the casino. For the life of me I have no clue why casinos decided to implement this. You cannot make



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money from people gambling when they are not in the casino.

In its simplest form the TITO technology reduces time value to the player, not to the extent of other aspects of operation but the loss is still measurable. If a player were to bring \$100 to casino, before TITO they would play and then take their coins to the cage and it exchange them for cash. The process would take a lot more time than to simply go to a machine and put a ticket in and get their money. If they wanted to play a few different machines the process would repeat until their funds were exhausted or they wanted to leave. The point is that 100 dollars would have more value, in time, to the player.

The impatience of players can also lead the player to gamble more. In some cases a player may choose to play out the funds rather than stand in line for several minutes to redeem a few dollars.

Never the less it took a Herculean effort to get all the game designers to agree on the technical aspects of the

TITO application. I assure you their intentions were not to benefit the player, but rather their own bottom-line. By pushing this technology under the false guise that it's what the players wanted; it insured that every major casino would upgrade their machines. That means more sales for them. These sales included both new slot machines and new cash-out machines. It's pretty easy to see why they wanted the TITO technology implemented.

replacement for an employee. At first glance a company sees savings. A machine that replaces a person, and is cheaper, is basically a no brainer move for any casino operations manager. That is until you begin to thinking how this impacts the players perception of the casino.

Casinos are social environments. It is recess for adults, and during recess you socialise. By taking the human element out of the equation the satisfaction derived from the

“In its simplest form the TITO technology reduces time value to the player, not to the extent of other aspects of the operation but the loss is still measurable”

Another example of automation killing profits is the kiosks where players can swipe their player's card and see what comps they qualify for, and ultimately redeem those comps. Companies that manufacture and sell this product, market it as a

comp is not associated with a person but a machine. The kiosk takes away any opportunity for a casino employee to attain a personal relationship with a player. Many players, especially those at local casinos tend to be older and are far

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away from their families. So it is likely that these customers are looking for someone to fill that relationship void. The casino-employee and player relationship should morph into more of a friendship. And people enjoy seeing their friends. This approach falls in line with general 80-20 rule



of business. This means 80% of your revenue is derived from 20% of your customer base. Giving a person a personalized reason for a player to return to your casino will increase the frequency at which they go to your casino. An overlooked aspect of any business is people. And this

is even more so in the entertainment industry. Think of it this way; if a company is valued at \$100 million, but if you liquidated every tangible asset that the company owns it equals \$30 million. The other \$70 million is people equity. Gaming companies need to think of people as assets not liabilities.

The last aspect of automation I will discuss that reduces the bottom line of a casino is the automated comp system. Far too many times I have been playing at a casino and had a very bad session. Over course of 30 min I may lose \$2500. When I ask for a dinner for two at the steak house or a buffet for two the response is I am sorry the computer won't let me. This begs the question why is a casino spending money on an employee that has no function? Get rid of the host and spend that \$45,000 dollars a year on player comps. Even worse is when I would win \$2500 and host would not give me a dinner comp. Here is a thought, keep the customer happy then at least you have a shot at getting the money back. As long

as a player keeps playing the house has the advantage. When you apply a penny wise approach then you get the player upset and they will leave and play somewhere else. And give back their winnings to another casino.

Vending machine gaming is the elimination of all human elements in a casino. This is not a good idea. But casino executives would love nothing more than to wholly implement this strategy. To them less employees means more revenue. If this is the case why is revenue falling? If this is the case why are less people playing casino games? If this is true why is it that the model city for casino gaming, Las Vegas, derives the majority of its revenue from non gaming sources? To make money you need to have people in the casino, implement the human element and give players what they want while they play. It worked before and it will work again.

Nicholas Colon is a the managing director of Alea Consulting Group, a casino gaming consulting firm with a player centric philosophy.

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Every online casino operator and manufacturer knows that the gaming industry has to hustle to keep up with rapidly advancing technology. It's no secret: Phones are getting thinner and screen sizes are growing, screen resolution is getting sharper, and games are becoming more sophisticated. New mechanics constantly enter the marketplace that claim to revolutionize the way we play by making use of the amazing technology available to us. But sometimes the more subtle, resourceful innovations can make the biggest impact.

Every day at SG Interactive, our production teams search for these impactful innovations. Enter full-screen portrait mode, an ingenious new way to

play that enhances a player's online gaming experience and makes games easier to enjoy. The gesture is so basic and familiar to the user – a quick turn of the hand puts the player in an immersive and captivating gameplay environment that captures the energy of a towering land-based slot game. It also makes gameplay more comfortable; players only need one hand to hold the device, spin the reels, and participate in interactive bonuses. Full-screen portrait mode games create new opportunities for engaging art that interacts with the game mechanics and makes any online gaming experience more seamless for the player. The simplicity of Portrait Mode may make it appear obvious or unexceptional, but it brings a lot of new possibilities during the development process. This has been top-of-mind at SG Interactive as we strive to bring our players new gaming innovations. Developing intriguing experiences, finding new ways to play, and iterating on existing mechanics equally motivated us in building our initial portrait mode games.

Cirque Du Soleil™ Kooza, which launched in November, recreates the mystique and excitement of Cirque Du Soleil in a captivating full-screen Portrait Mode

game that can also be played in landscape with just a tilt of the phone. Much like the acrobats that dazzle the Cirque Du Soleil stage, the game is flexible and can adapt to the player's desired orientation. It's a truly engaging licensed game that also marks a big step forward for Scientific Games: this online game launches at the same time as its land-based counterpart, so players can get their Kooza fix both on and off the casino floor.

Lucky Tree, coming this December, boasts stunning animations and artwork that lightly interact with the base game. These interactions immerse the player in the game's world and tell a uniquely enchanting story without distracting from the actual playing experience. Lucky Tree can be played in portrait or landscape mode, but it is best experienced using vertical orientation.

These three full-screen portrait mode-enabled titles form a strong line-up that will showcase the simple, beautiful power of a quick phone rotation. Full-screen portrait mode empowers the player to experience your casino's games in a new way and can revolutionise the way those games are made, played, and enjoyed.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES SHAPING THE FUTURE



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Not so long ago we talked about mobile being the platform of the future. Back in 2004 when we first started developing for mobile, the iPhone didn't exist, Nokia was the market leader in terms of units sold, and picture messaging and camera phones were exciting new capabilities. It's incredible to think how much the market has changed and advanced in such a relatively short period of time.

Soon we'll start to see mobile account for the majority of gameplay, as operators and suppliers surpass 50% mobile penetration. Astonishingly, some operators have already achieved this. Mobile deposits at LeoVegas accounted for 61% (54%) of total deposits (Q1

2016), and at Unibet in Q4 2015, mobile was 56% of gross winnings revenue. So has mobile reached its tipping point? And if mobile is now the norm, what's next?

There's been a lot of talk of late about virtual reality, and at Microgaming we were quick off the bat to experiment with it, developing prototypes such as VR Roulette. Why? Because we see VR as a technology that can allow an immersive experience unlike anything we've seen before. You can transport a player into a virtual world to play at a poker table, roulette table or in a land-based casino. The opportunities are boundless.

2016 is a pivotal year for VR. Various headsets are now available to buy or pre-order, and consumers will begin to shape how the market advances. Just like the mobile market, segmentation will occur based on the wants and needs of various consumers. For example, die-hard gamers will most likely embrace the Oculus Rift, which can provide the most stunning and powerful 3D experience. On the downside, the headset requires powerful hardware to run and has to be tethered to

a PC. The significant investment required will not appeal to all.

For the more casual player, there's the Samsung Gear, which is cable free but is only compatible with the Samsung phone, therefore limiting its reach. No doubt that's a smart ploy by the company to get people to upgrade their phones. And the most cost-effective VR device is Google Cardboard, which can be purchased online for just a few pounds. With applications readily available in the various app stores and on YouTube, content is easily accessible to casual and cost-conscious users, which should increase the appeal of such devices.

From a development and content perspective, it's important to understand what devices will appeal to which gamers. Then it is essential to develop content that is relevant and applicable, harnessing the power of the device. Content is king. Many companies are still in early development stages, but as the market builds momentum and we learn more about customer engagement,



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content should and can be targeted accordingly. For now, the market is still nascent and finding its way, but device sales in 2016 will be eye-opening.

Another exciting technology that has the potential to shake things up is augmented reality. Many will be surprised to know that the concept of AR has been around for over a century, with author L. Frank Baum mentioning the idea of an electronic display/spectacles that overlays data onto real life in 1901. Only recently has the technology made headway and it's something the Microgaming research and development team have been experimenting with for around seven years now, and having a lot of fun doing so.

Our land-based team have been using AR for sales purposes, to display land-based machines to prospective clients. If you can't bring a 6ft, weighty cabinet to a client's offices for a sales meeting, what better way to showcase the machine than through a realistic 3D model? We've also seen companies

such as Coca-Cola utilise AR when selling to retailers.

Augmented reality is a disruptive technology, a bit like 3D printing, and it does have the potential to massively enhance the world we live in. But like many technologies, we're waiting for AR to become ubiquitously available before it can be leveraged in an industry like online gaming. When this does happen, and we believe it will, AR has the potential to deliver a significantly richer gaming experience. It's an exciting prospect.

But what happens when you put the concept of AR and VR together? Microsoft HoloLens. This device cleverly combines augmented reality and virtual reality with the real world. The headset is high quality and the resolution is impressive. What's more, it's fully untethered – no wires, phones or connections to a PC required. There are certainly some challenges, such as privacy, but this technology really does thrill us. Did you see the recently released video called Hyper-Reality? This depicts a person

going about their everyday activities, such as taking the bus and going to the supermarket, but through a set of glasses her entire experience is heightened by games, adverts, communication, etc. Can you imagine a future like that?

What's become evident in the past few years is that no longer are we talking about the mobile channel as just the latest Samsung device or iPhone. It is clear that wearables are now touching on the mobile platform, if we can still call it that, and they have the potential to greatly influence the industry we operate in. Whether it be AR or VR, or something yet to be discovered, new technologies are just around the corner and we as a tech industry have to prepare for them. Mass adoption is absolutely crucial, we've seen this with mobile, and consumers will dictate the success of these new devices. But with futuristic headsets finally on sale to the public, it's only a matter of time before we see whether or not these technologies go mainstream.

FIVE SMART TIPS FOR SOCIALLY SAVVY AFFILIATES



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We live in a world that is connected like no other time in human history. Information is shared at a staggering rate. To put it into context, MBAonline.com estimates that there is enough information sent in 24 hours to fill 168 million DVD's. That includes 291 billion emails and 2 million generated blog posts. Of course, social media takes up a big chunk of that electronic exchange. How much, you may wonder? Somewhere in the region of 4.8 billion minutes are spent on Facebook alone, with 532 million status updates shared. Every. Single. Day.

Needless to say, affiliate webmasters are competing with a lot of other media and content providers to keep those faithful readers coming back for more. A highly effective tool that can be leveraged to improve reader retention is social media. When used properly, you can increase traffic and foster viral sharing. The best part? Most social media is free. But it only works if you use it correctly. Here's a few tips on making the most of your social influence:

FEED YOUR READERS

Search engines don't take too kindly to under-nourished sites, and your organic rankings will suffer for not regularly updating content. Plus, there is little reason for readers to continue to visit your site if you have nothing new to say. Let people know you have just posted a great new blog or a generous offer on your site via social media channels. If you need a little help to get the ball rolling, paid promotions for your page or sponsored posts on social media are far more cost effective than you would

think. Targeting options available on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube allows you to focus on your ideal demographic. More new views plus more uptake on your offers equals higher affiliate commissions.

GOOGLE IT

Google has cornered the market on SEM as the biggest search engine in the world. Let's not forget that the search engine giant is also the proud parent of Google+ and YouTube. As such, making sure you engage with your readers through these two channels will not just promote your new content, but gives you a few brownie points in terms of your Google SEO, improving your organic ranking. The use of relevant hashtags on each post will help bolster your relevance for keywords. Beware not to over tag; limit it to three at the most, since dozens of hashtags tend to confuse readers as to what the content is about.

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You may have noticed the trend to be “too cool for social school”. It’s a strategy used by brands or businesses whereby they do not follow or engage with their audience. It’s like a popularity contest among brands, where the goal is having millions of followers whilst following little or no other accounts themselves. Smart brands know that fostering an authentic relationship with fans can lead to a small army of social soldiers who will share messages and offers to their friends and family. Follow back your avid Twitter supporters, and thank your Facebook faithful for sharing or commenting on your posts. It will pay off in the end.

SHARING IS CARING

Unless you have a considerable amount of time to crank out unique content every day, there is no shame in sharing relevant content from other sites. In fact, some very popular sites with lots of daily traffic rarely generate unique content of their own. They simply curate items of interest

from other sites and serve it up on one handy platform. So if you do come across content that you think your readers will find interesting, feel free to share on your site and via social media as long as you give credit where credit is due.

CHANNEL YOUR FOLLOWERS

There are plenty of social media channels out there, you could literally spend all day posting on every platform. You need to decide which ones are worth your precious time. For the purposes of SEO, Google+ and YouTube are must-haves. The Facebook algorithm makes it very difficult for a brand to elbow its

way into the timeline of followers. However, once a fan has liked a few posts, your messages will find their way in front of them. Plus, there are fantastic tracking tools on Facebook that allows you to analyse your traffic. Twitter posts are listed in chronological order for free posts, so the timing of your Tweet will be crucial. A nifty hack is engaging with Twitter followers when they reply to you, which bumps your message to the top of the queue again. So keep the chatter alive. Follow these simple rules, and you should start to see the dividends pay off as your social media activity works in your favour.

“There are plenty of social media channels out there, you could literally spend all day posting to every platform. You need to work out which ones are worth your precious time”

ICE VOX

The conferences offered at ICE have received a revamp for 2017, under the name ICE VOX. Here are the sessions to look out for at this year's show.

CROSS-PLATFORM AND MULTI-CHANNEL GAMING

WHEN: TUESDAY 7 FEBRUARY

This year's Cross-Platform and Multi-Channel Gaming seminar will give critical insights into the implications of designers for those new channels – and more importantly why you can't just port your existing experiences and expect success. Looking towards devices and channels that will attract future generations and the millennials and evaluating where the customer is in terms of the quality of the betting experience

WHAT'S ON OFFER?

- Customer experience Hotseat – strategising for the great battleground of personalisation across devices
- New channels clinic – how to think about and adapt to new platforms

- Fireside Chat – two winning brands and their recipes for success in the mobile world
- Head-to-Head – is there really no time to waste in embracing VR?
- App Innovation Talking Heads – what if the gaming industry could embrace the app within the app model?

SPEAKERS: E-commerce heavyweight Brian McBride will start the session off with some of his insights into embracing change and digital transformation. In addition, the show will touch upon the importance of understanding customer behaviour, how to market towards a new demographic as well as the significance of being data driven. As well as this, Cem Miralay CCO at William Hill, Johan Styren, CEO at LeoVegas Gaming and Jesper Kärrbrink, CEO at Mr Green will also be speaking at the event.

WORLD REGULATORY BRIEFING

WHEN: TUESDAY 7 FEBRUARY

This event connects legislators, regulators, operators and suppliers, acting as the perfect way to observe and discuss the future of the gaming market, with

a regulation down approach. With emerging jurisdictions continuing to evolve, this gives gaming companies the increasingly apt opportunity to seize global expansion.

WHAT'S ON OFFER?

- How to protect the online markets from black market activity
- Data protection and management
- Responsible Gaming
- Nurturing the right online and land-based environments to force out black market activity
- Safe-guarding your organisation with implementing self-exclusion
- Global Sports betting regulation

SPEAKERS: Sharing their opinions and experience at this event will see the likes of Sarah Harrison MBE, Chief Executive of the UK Gambling Commission, Richard Schuetz, Executive Director at the Bermuda Casino Gaming Commission and more. As for networking, with breaks throughout the day as well as Happy Hour at the end of the session, there are ample opportunities for delegates to network.

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GAME DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

WHEN: WEDNESDAY 8 FEBRUARY

This year's Game Design and Development track will challenge the status quo of the innovation process in this industry. Looking at the ideas and development processes behind games and their future potential as well as looking at what the consumer wants and if their needs are being met. At this event you will also be offered the opportunity to work in creating a game which in turn will help you truly understand what it takes to create an immersive entertaining game.

WHAT'S ON OFFER?

- Design Thinking Studio - how can gaming companies adopt a more human centred design process?
- Fireside Chat – putting entertainment and UX at the centre of your design approach for the mobile games industry
- Gamification Hotseat - bringing more innovative game plat to game design and development

- Talking Heads - are casino games less attractive to future generations?
- ICE VOX Labs - 'Let's Make a Game' Workshop – a player-centric
- The game harvest - teams will synthesise their learnings and present a paper prototype to the group

SPEAKERS: Speaking at the show will be Robert Tercek, President of Milestone Entertainment, looking at the millennial demographic, evaluating what this young generation really wants to play. As well as this, expect talks from Scott Dodson, Gamification Expert as well as Mark Robinson, Founder & CEO at deltaDNA and more.

CYBERCRIME, SECURITY AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

WHEN: WEDNESDAY 8 FEBRUARY

From AML to fraud prevention, the pressures are only increasing as technology evolves and the regulatory framework develops. This interactive day will address your key challenges in an engaging and challenging

format, enabling you to face the risks head on and build a robust strategy to tackle them

WHAT'S ON OFFER?

- Regulation Clinic – update and action planning
- Fireside Chat – two leading figures and their view on rising to the challenge of money laundering as an industry
- Talking heads – payments, AML and determining sources of funds
- Hotseat – Blockchain technology – an industry disruptor
- Case study – Shifting the balance between prevention and enforcement

SPEAKERS: This show hosts some of the most well-known names in this industry, with the likes of Richard Wade, Director of Compliance and Responsible Gambling, Rank Group and Kristof Fahy, Chief Customer Officer, Ladbrokes Coral you will be sure to get a wide range of opinions surrounding cybercrime, security and regulatory compliance.

GUEST COLUMNIST:



ADAM WILSON

CO-FOUNDER OF
BOOKEE

Transforming casual betting for the millennial user

Walk down a high street in any city in the UK and you will see at least 1 betting shop, a billboard advertising free money from an online betting shop and Chris Kamara driving by on the side of a bus promoting a betting shop. This is the result of regulation.

Given that we the mighty UK are front runners, leaders of the online gambling community, the forefathers of the industry, why is that being a player in this game is simply a question of taking a generic product template and then having a shouting match to acquire customers?

Going on two years ago, my partner and I started to look at addressing this issue and specifically answer the question of how to appeal to genuine customers without gargantuan sign-up offers.

We have both been in gaming all of our working lives, he on the marketing side and I on the product side. We both enjoy a bet, in different ways; he tends to bet (and win) without emotion, on NFL; I tend to bet (and lose) with vast amounts of emotion on Tottenham. We log into our betting app, and I am not singling out any app, for each and every one is guilty of this, and we see a big banner advertising horse racing or the top of the table clash in the U21 Algeria Ligue 1. There will be customers who want the first thing they see when they log in to the app to be horses, or what's in-running, but there are a lot more people that don't, and that's a problem. We, as an industry, are guilty of putting our own desires ahead of the customers.

So this was an issue we identified, but not the only one. Betting apps are quite simply difficult to use. If you are new to betting and create an account with any bookmaker, you are expected to be competent in fractional or decimal mathematics and familiar with abbreviated betting terminology (1x2, BTTS, Scorecast). Then, crucially, there is the interface. A spreadsheet-

interface squeezed down from a desktop screen to a smart phone. Why is this the standard for the industry? Perhaps because of the technology when the first smart phone apps were being designed, perhaps not.

Being personally frustrated by the clunky user interface and spreadsheet layout offered by traditional bookies, we thought we could make something better, based on this concept of discovery and personalisation and fit for the millennial generation.

Lastly, for the purposes of this piece; discovery, or a lack of it. This for me is where betting has really fallen behind. Since the 1930s, the way that people go and place a bet has changed very little. The search based experience in a betting shop has been translated to desktop, and now mobile, but the act of searching for bets and odds remains the same.

Let's compare Unnamed Betting App (UBA) to Instagram and Facebook. I login to Facebook, I see micro-bites of content, normally Tottenham-themed and the occasional giraffe (I'm into them) – the point is I don't have to go looking for what I'm interested in, it's there. And more often than not I'll learn about things from these social media platforms; they curate content and push me what they think I'll like. If we as an industry want to appeal to a younger audience, an audience accustomed to having everything done for them, in that 60-second window where we have their short all-too-short attention, we simply must suggest content that is interesting.

We built Bookee to address a lot of these issues; we haven't solved them all yet. We have recently added in-play betting, built with the help of feedback from our customers and the early indications are really encouraging. We're looking to acquire between 40,000 and 50,000 players in the 2017, to get product/market fit as we have now proved the concept and have an Android application coming very soon.

As a start-up with a light-weight team we can build, iterate and learn and we've been doing this since June 2016. The utopia; delivering the right bet to the right user at the right time – is not in touching distance, but it's a glaring light at the end of the tunnel.

Adam Wilson is Head of Product and B2B and co-founded Bookee with partner Adam Kalmanson.

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