



# THIS WEEK

**· MOVERS & SHAKERS** 

- THE DEALMAKERS

- COLLABORATION ROUND-UP

- LEGAL ROUND-UP

· US SPORTS BETTING ROUND-UP

Lead partner

- GUEST COLUMN Ismail Vali

# WEEKOG FRIDAY 9 FEB 2024

STAKE SHIFTS INTO HIGH GEAR

# NOVOMATIC LOOKS AHEAD

### SELF-NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN



Guildhall in London hosted the F1 Stake Team and its new vehicle, the C44, on Monday. The event was marked as a re-imagining of the team with Stake now acting as the primary sponsor; however, legal issues reported in the following days saw the Stake.com logo removed from Sauber's (the team owner) site

Stake has become the primary sponsor of Sauber's F1 team, formally Alfa Romeo, relaunching under the name Stake F1 Team. The launch was celebrated on Monday at London's Guildhall, where the new neon green C44 car was unveiled to the public.

At the event, *Gambling Insider* spoke with Stake.com Co-Founder Ed Craven about the company's latest dealings with F1, and how it is balancing the world of crypto casinos with the evolving gambling landscape.

### What are the differences you've noticed between sponsoring a football team and sponsoring an F1 team?

When it comes to F1, the global aspect, the fact that you've got an event that goes from city to city all around the world is just unprecedented. I think the Premier League is also extremely global in its viewership, which is great for credibility. But I think the audience and the demographic surrounding F1 really resonates with our brand. We want to continue to push the boundaries for us and get as close as we can to this audience.

### A decade ago, crypto casinos were exceptionally rare. Now you are sponsoring an F1 team. How do you think this reflects crypto casino growth and what do you expect the future to look like?

A decade ago, crypto casinos were more or less non-existent. All crypto services, for that matter, were more or less non-existent. It was a much smaller market. I think we're very lucky we found a niche we excelled in. As you know, the sector itself grew, and so did our capacity and our resources.

Over the last couple of years, we have started to move much more heavily into traditional avenues of payments, too. Stake used to be known as just a crypto casino, but nowadays it really is just a casino and sports betting website. While we emphasise our service as far as cryptocurrency goes, the fiat market is also extremely important to us. We believe the crypto market will continue to grow and that there is a lot of room to offer a really great service.

### With the Government trying to regulate crypto trading in the same way as gambling, combined with the UK White Paper, do you think there is a future for crypto gambling in the UK? What do you think that future looks like?

I think there's a place for crypto in every business. I think it's sometimes a difficult technology to regulate, and I think there has to be an understanding and an agreement made between industry and state. That's always quite difficult to come across. But we've seen how successful and how popular crypto and gambling are when combined. I think it's only a matter of time before, and not only the UK but lots of other relatively heavily regulated markets, start to look towards it as a way of allowing customers to make payments.

But of course, I think it's going to take a bit of time. There's a lot of areas that need to be looked into and regulated and, naturally, that's not the easiest of tasks.

### **GI Verdict**

The partnership between Stake and Sauber has created a unique opportunity to reflect on the growth of online gaming, crypto or otherwise. What was an entirely new market 30 years ago (with crypto casinos in an equally infantile position just 10 years back) is now rebranding sports teams and using historic London buildings for launches.

Still, the partnership has already faced issues. Sauber removed the Stake logo from its site earlier this week following The Swiss Federal Casino Commission's proceeding against Sauber for its partnership with an operator unlicensed in the region. It is expected that Stake's logo will now no longer remain present at every race, for Sauber to remain compliant with casino advertisement rules.

So there may be some questions to come for the Stake F1 Team. However, the operator's launch is a reflection of the significance of this newest partnership.

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### TAKING STOCK

TAKING STOCK SHARE PRICES COVER FRIDAY 2 FEB 2024 TO FRIDAY 9 FEB 2024 (09:00AM GMT)



### **NOVOMATIC LOOKS AHEAD**

At ICE London 2024 – the last ICE in London before it moves to Barcelona – Novomatic held a press briefing outlining its ambitions for the year ahead.

With Gambling Insider in attendance, Thomas Graf – Greentube CEO, Zane Mersich – Novomatic UK CEO, and Thomas Schmalzer – Novomatic VP of Global Sales, all reflected on 2023 while looking ahead to 2024.

Most notable were discussions on online games being converted into land-based titles, as well as the soaring energy prices of 2023 and their impact on a heavily landbased organisation like Novomatic.

On energy prices, when asked by Gambling Insider, Mersich explained that Novomatic was hugely affected cost-wise due to the many casino and amusement machines it powers across the globe.

One statistic that stood out was that, in 2008, Novomatic held circa 3% of the UK market. In stark contrast, today the supplier holds a circa 65% UK market share. While that is naturally a sign of growth and strength, that vast number of machines does not combine too favourably with a surge in energy prices.

Graf, meanwhile, spoke to Gambling Insider about the rather unique concept of tailoring online titles for land-based success – given that the omnichannel approach is usually centred around the reverse: taking land-based titles online.

Graf stated that a number of big

companies had tried and failed in this area in the past. Novomatic aims to succeed where others couldn't.

Schmalzer, meanwhile, also discussed the concept of the V.I.P. X Lounge – a product designed for smaller spaces within casinos, demonstrating a different target market from those who have the space for huge machines on their floors.

**GI Verdict:** All in all, Novomatic's executive leadership outlined the basis of what should be another strong year for the brand. It is difficult for a company of Novomatic's size to continue to find growth, especially in core markets, but it is certainly trying via its digital ventures – and, furthermore, aiming for a 360degree approach.

It is interesting to see that no industry giant is infallible, due to the aforementioned energy prices (as well as living-wage costs, which the supplier said it is in full support of). Similarly, though, the numbers – though not new – show just how difficult it is to catch a company with as much market traction as Novomatic.

There have been those in the past who rested on their laurels – Microgaming, Playtech etc – and suffered for it years later. Novomatic, though, does not appear to be taking anything for granted, which is quite simply the key to remaining at the top table of any industry.

Just ask the likes of Flutter and bet365 on the operator side.

### THE LATEST ISSUE OF **GAMBLING INSIDER** IS OUT NOW **CLICK HERE TO VIEW**

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JORDI SENDRA CEO Alea

Sendra has been with Alea for three years, having previously held the role of COO starting in March 2021. Other roles include Managing Director of Fapp Sistemas de Aspiracion, which he held for over four and a half years.

#### KLAS WINBERG CCO Videoslots

**Winberg** has over 20 years of experience in the iGaming sector, with history in companies including Betfair, Catena and Expekt. RAMON GLIENEKE COO Alea

**Glieneke** comes to the role following his previous position as Founder & CEO of Planthia, which he held from June 2020 to September 2023. Other former roles include General Manager at Heura Foods and COO at Apartum.com.



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COMPANY	NEW PARTNER	VERTICAL
Wazdan	Betsson	iGaming
Stake	International Tennis Federation	Sports betting
Light & Wonder	bet365	iGaming
Evolution	Kiron Interactive	Retail/Online
Golden Whale Productions	Pasino.ch	iGaming
Light & Wonder	Fanatics Betting and Gaming	Payments
IGT	UAB Perlas Network	Lottery
Thunderkick	Betway	iGaming
Playtech	FashionTV Gaming Group	Live gameshow
Stake.com	Enteractive	CRM



### iGamingPlatform Core Platform <

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# Play Outside the Box

### THE WEEK IN QUOTES

"We will continue to play a leading role in supporting and growing the local economy while offering diverse amenities and unparalleled experiences to first-time and returning guests, international tourists, K-pop and K-culture fans and casino visitors."

#### Mohegan Inspire President Chen Si on plans for its South Korean branch to open a premium international visitoronly casino

"As the Super Bowl comes to Las Vegas for the first time, this year's record interest in wagering marks a full circle moment for the US gaming industry. Our priority remains getting this opportunity right by providing the consumer protections only a regulated market can guarantee and investing in responsible gambling tools, safeguards and education."

AGA President and CEO Bill Miller on the increased interest in sports betting on the Super Bowl this year



This week has seen some key collaborations within the industry as operators and suppliers seek to grow their market share with new games – and in new territories.

After recently securing the Fourth National Lottery License, which went live last week, **Allwyn** has announced a collaboration with **Instant Win Gaming** (IWG) to strengthen its content offerings. IWG is a supplier of online, instant win games to lotteries and this partnership will look to improve Allwyn's overall gaming portfolio.

This collaboration will see the operator working closely with IWG's Co-Founders, Rhydian Fisher and Simon Bucknall, to explore new opportunities in the online instant win games sector. The deal involves Allwyn acquiring a 70% stake in IWG, with funding drawn from Allwyn's existing financial resources.

Elsewhere, **WA.Technology** and **NE Group** have entered into a joint venture to launch WA Africa, expanding into African markets. The deal will aim to leverage NE group's experience in Africa, to offer customised omnichannel platforms for new ventures across the continent.

The objective of this collaboration is to provide localised platforms integrating mobile, retail and online provisions, supported by a specialised team for the African market. NE Group contributes a modular platform that combines sportsbook and casino experiences to improve user engagement and retention.

This deal is a further addition to WA.Technology's growth strategy having in recent weeks entered into a strategic partnership with LatAm Entertainment.





"The entire team are beyond excited about partnering with Light & Wonder to bring our unique content to operators worldwide. We are probably the most experienced newcomers in the industry with a great history of products under our belts and are fully intent on pushing the boundaries of iGaming in the coming years. Operators can expect innovative and high-earning products targeted at their key territories, all built on our cutting-edge Anvil framework."

#### Crucible Gaming Founder and CEO Ed Byard on its partnership with Light & Wonder

"Playing along with a streamer is a whole new way to play online casino games. This was on our roadmap, so when the opportunity with Livespins arose, things moved quickly. Bringing together the fantastic tech, processes and know-how of the team at Livespins with Evolution's huge game portfolio, we will provide Livespins immediately with unparalleled distribution power via our One Stop Shop integration. Twitch, YouTube, and other platforms have proven the popularity of live streaming while playing online casino games"

Evolution's Chief Product Officer Todd Haushalter on its acquisition of Livespins

### LEGAL ROUND-UP: LEGALISATION, INTEGRITY AND NEW TERMINOLOGY

In the US, Georgia has taken another step toward the legalisation of sports betting. **The Georgia Senate** passed Senate Bill 386 to regulate sports betting in the state. Bill 386 is now set to be considered by the Georgia House of Representatives. Currently, the only form of legal gambling is lottery and charity bingo. Senator Clint Dixon commented: "In passing SB 386, we've paved the way for responsible and regulated sports betting in Georgia. As our state evolves, it's crucial to acknowledge the existing landscape with neighbouring states already engaging in this activity."

In other regulatory news, B2B esports provider Oddin.gg has joined the **International Betting Integrity Association** (IBIA). Oddin.gg joins 50 companies and over 125 sports betting brands in the integrity monitoring body. The IBIA focuses on anti-corruption and detecting suspicious activity in regulated betting markets.

IBIA CEO Khalid Ali said: "Oddin.gg is a

leading global player in the esports betting environment and the company's decision to join IBIA reflects its desire to utilise the best integrity protection available globally for its esports betting products."

Across the pond, the **Dutch Gaming Authority** (KSA) has announced a shift in terminology after an investigation into cashback bonuses. The investigation revealed that the existing definition required clarification, leading the KSA to adopt the term 'bonus based on loss.'This redefinition is effective immediately, with previous terminology deemed by the KSA to be in conflict with the Dutch Gambling Act.

KSA Chairman René Jansen stated: "At the KSA, the interests of players are central. A safe gambling market and the prevention of gambling problems are high on our agenda. To protect players even better, we immediately clarify the definition as a basis for strict supervision. Any bonus that is in any way linked to a loss is prohibited."





# THE WEEK IN **NUMBERS**



overall gaming revenue for the state of Ohio in December 2023

# 307,000

Bets placed through DraftKings Sportsbook in Oregon alone during last year's Super Bowl





### \$905.4m Generated by the

Las Vegas Strip in December 2023

### US SPORTS BETTING ROUND-UP: SUPER BOWL, SWIFT AND SPORTSBOOKS

This week, anticipation for the upcoming Super Bowl saw a spike in the predictions for sports betting participation in the US, while a new sportsbook opened in Iowa. The **American Gaming Association** has published recent survey results estimating that 67.8 million adults in the US are expected to wager on this year's **Super Bowl**. The projected figure accounts for 26% of the adult population, revealing a 35% increase from the estimated participation during last year's game.

The **Oregon Lottery**'s DraftKings Sportsbook has introduced **Taylor Swift**themed betting options for fans due to the superstar's attendance at the upcoming game. The bets are inspired by Taylor Swift songs with options such as 'Shake It Off' and 'Wildest Dream.'

Oregon Lottery's Sports Betting Products Manager Kerry Hemphill commented on the heightened attention on this year's game: "The fanfare and celebrities at this event generate the most interest in sports betting we see all year. The 'Taylor' effect may also result in more casual sports bettors taking a chance to have fun."

This week also welcomed the launch of a new **Fanatics** sportsbook in **Iowa**. The launch marks further expansion for Fanatics Betting and Gaming after the sportsbook went live in Pennsylvania and Vermont last month. Iowa is now the 12th state where Fanatics Sportsbook is available.

Finally, **Churchill Downs** has partnered with **SAP** for the upcoming 150th **Kentucky Derby**. SAP will serve as the official technology partner for Churchill Downs Racetrack, the Kentucky Derby and Kentucky Oaks. The collaboration includes naming rights for suites and new hospitality experiences.

Bill Mudd, CDI President and COO, stated: "We are thrilled to welcome SAP as a signature partner of Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby. SAP is a tremendous global brand that supports our vision to innovate and fuel growth across our businesses."





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# \$175m

Amount Tioga Downs Casino Resort real estate assets sold to Gaming and Leisure Properties for

\$1.84bn Revenue in Q4 2023 for Wynn Resorts

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26% Of the US adult population predicted to place bets on the

Super Bowl according

to a survey by the AGA

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Global Gaming Women (GGW) held a panel and networking event at ICE London this week, presented an opportunity for multiple executives to discuss their journeys, and the issues facing women in the industry today.

Panelists included Betfred CEO Joanne Whittaker and Tornado Games COO Julia Weygandt, who discussed issues including casual sexism in the industry, the importance of mentorship and networking for women's career development, and issues concerning alcohol in sales environments. Helen Walton, COO at G.Games, spoke of her need to protect new and young women entering the industry.

"I hope they know enough that they feel safe. I hope they know they can tell me. I also hope they know when inappropriate behaviour has happened, we don't go oh okay, we'll just change over the account manager... we have had customers that we've stopped working with... because their behaviour was unacceptable," she said. The brunch concluded with an opportunity to speak with other women in attendance. Gambling Insider spoke with Tashina Lazcano, Board of Directors member for GGW and Director of Marketing and Communications for Konami Gaming, on the women that have inspired her.

Who in your career in gambling has inspired you?

Lauren Bates. She is currently President of Global Gaming Women. I've been working with her since I started years ago, and I don't think I would have put myself out there in this industry in terms of pushing my career to the next level if I didn't have encouragement from those around me. Lauren Bates is one of those people.

Many women have given me that encouragement and that nudge to go beyond my comfort zone, try new things and connect with other people, and that has made a big difference in the trajectory of my career. So if I can give a verbal nudge to any women in gaming to definitely connect with organisations like GGW to move your career forward, to connect with other likeminded people, and to find more opportunities to go deep and accelerate your career.



# **DATA CENTRE**

### NEW HAMPSHIRE GAMING REVENUE

New Hampshire has reported its gaming revenue for December 2023. The report accounts for the state's 15 casinos, which includes charity casino The Brook. Total charitable gaming revenue in the state totalled \$5.7m, up year-to-date by 24.4%. Historic horseracing, on the other hand, made \$1.9m; up a notable 217.8% from the previous year to date.

Of New Hampshire's casinos, the highest revenue for December was made by Gate City Casino, which generated \$1.2m (up 40.5% from the previous year to date). This is followed by The Brook and Chasers Poker Room, which made \$1.2m (up 23.1%) and \$1.1m (up 33.5%) respectively.

The lowest revenue maker was Aces & Eights Casino, which made \$0.01m. This is followed by Northwoods Casino and Concord Casino, which made \$0.03m (up 2.6%) and \$0.05m (down 41.1%) respectively.

Concord Casino is currently shut, set to open in six months' time from 1 January following renovation from new owners. The highest growth in revenue was recorded by Lebanon Poker Room & Casino, which was up 122.7% for December revenue of \$0.2m. This was followed by Lakes Region Casino and Dover Poker Room, which were up 98.8% (revenue of \$0.1m) and 53.9% (revenue of \$0.3m) respectively.

Concord Too did not report its earnings, while percentage changes in reveneu were not given for Wonder Casino or Aces & Eights casino. The highest reported revenue drop was reported by The River Casino & Sports Bar, earning \$0.1m for a decline of 63.1%, followed by Concord Casino, which was down 41.1%.

On the sports betting side, retail sports betting was up 149.5%, making \$1m in December 2023. Mobile sports betting made \$6.7m, though was down 15.9% from the previous year-to-date.

### NEW HAMPSHIRE GAMING REVENUE

GAMING REVENUE	FEBRUARY REVENUE (M)	CHANGE (%) YEAR-ON-YEAR
Lebanon Poker Room & Casino	\$0.20	+122.7
Lakes Region Casino (Casablanca)	\$0.10	+98.8
Dover Poker Room	\$0.30	+53.9
Gate City Casino (Del North)	\$1.20	+40.5
Chasers Poker Room (Kymalimi)	\$1.10	+33.5
Filotimo (Granite State Poker)	\$0.80	+29.5
The Brook (RMH)	\$1.20	+23.1
Ocean Gaming Casino	\$0.20	+17.5
Northwoods Casino	\$0.03	+2.6
The Lucky Moose	\$0.30	-13.7
Concord Casino (Win Win Win)	\$0.05	-41.1
The River Casino & Sports Bar	\$0.09	-63.1
Aces & Eights Casino (HBC)	\$0.01	N/A
Wonder Casino (Emerald)	\$0.20	N/A
Concord Too	nil	-100
Total Charitable gaming	\$5.70	+24.4
Historical horse racing	\$1.90	+217.8

FEBRUARY	CHANGE (%) YEAR-ON-YEAR
REVENUE (M)	
\$6.70	-15.9
\$1	+149.5
\$7.70	-8.1
\$78.80	-13.4
	\$1 <b>\$7.70</b>





Vali assesses the rise of illegal gambling in the UK and other areas of Europe, and the importance of technology in combating it

### Yield Sec: A beacon in the fight against the Great Illegal Gambling Robbery

In a rapidly evolving digital landscape, where the stakes are high, businesses across sectors face unprecedented challenges. We are currently combating the escalating risks from illegal activity against consumer industries, online, and the specific threats towards betting, gaming and lotteries across an era Yield Sec refer to as the "Great Illegal Gambling Robbery."

### The alarming rise of illegal gambling

Yield Sec's research sheds light on a concerning trend: illegal operators targeting self-excluded players and children have surged fourfold from 2021 to 2022. This doubling of the black-markets presence in 2023 now accounts for a staggering 4% of the UK's online gambling market share. The exploitation of vulnerable groups not only undermines regulatory efforts by initiatives like Gamstop but also poses a severe threat to the integrity of the entire gambling industry.

#### Yield Sec's 2024 findings on the UK market

Yield Sec's meticulous analysis of the UK market paints a vivid picture. Shockingly, 231 illegal gambling operators actively target the UK, with over 1,000 affiliates aiding in the promotion of these illicit entities. The impact is clear – illegal operations siphon off up to 4% of the UK's online gambling revenue potential, evading licensing, taxation and responsible gaming contributions.

#### **Exploitation of vulnerable groups**

Perhaps more troubling is the targeted exploitation of vulnerable groups, including children and individuals with acknowledged gambling issues. Illegal operators cunningly leverage the exclusion status of these individuals, avoiding the scrutiny faced by legal operators who could face severe penalties, investigations and potential licence revocations for marketing to these demographics.

#### Global scale of illicit gambling

On a global scale, illegal gambling activities in sports betting

alone surpass \$2tn annually, dwarfing the legal sector's profitability, commercial benefits and community contributions. The enormity of this issue underscores the urgency for collaborative efforts to address the criminal infiltration of the online gambling market.

#### Germany: The underestimated market of illegal gambling

In Germany, the online gambling landscape in 2023 was marked by a significant presence of illegal operators. A staggering 1,620 illegal gambling entities actively targeted German players, with 1,350 affiliates promoting these platforms. The GGR channelisation was 48% legal and 52% illegal. Shockingly, 16% of Germans, approximately 13.5 million people, interacted with illegal gambling, where illegal operators offered a product range 9.2 times larger than legal ones.

### Switzerland: The struggle against dominant illegal operators

Switzerland faced a unique challenge in 2023. With 547 illegal operators and 159 affiliates, the illegal market was dominant. GGR channelisation was 47% legal and 53% illegal. Alarmingly, 13% of the population, about 1.1 million people, engaged with illegal gambling. Notably, 90% of gambling affiliates in Switzerland exclusively promoted illegal brands.

#### Hungary: Overwhelmed by illegal gambling

Hungary's gambling market in 2023 was chaotic, with 244 illegal operators and 221 affiliates. The GGR channelisation was heavily skewed, with 93% illegal and only 7% legal. Around 20% of Hungarians, or 1.1 million people, interacted with illegal gambling, compounded by the entrance of numerous new illegal operators after November 2023.

#### Yield Sec's global perspective: A \$5.1trn industry

In 2021, the United Nations published a report stating that money wagered on sports betting and horseracing globally amounted to \$1.7tn. However, Yield Sec's surveillance reveals that this is not the full picture. When you factor in the illegal sports betting and horseracing turnover, along with casino and poker activities, sports and financials predictors, e-sports and illegal lotteries, the staggering figure reaches \$5.1trn. Meaning, if this illicit activity were a country, it would be the third-largest economy in the world, after the US and China.

#### The business case for cleaning up the market

The urgency to curb the great illegal gambling robbery is not just a moral imperative but a compelling business case. Addressing the illegal gambling market can unlock vast profits for legal entities, fostering wider possibilities for tax revenue, job creation and initiatives within the gambling space.

Firstly, there is unlocking profits for the legal sector in the UK. By eliminating the shadow cast by illegal gambling, legal operators stand to reclaim their lost revenue. The 4% currently siphoned off by illicit entities could be redirected towards legal businesses, bolstering their financial health and enabling further investments in tech, innovation and customer experience.



Second, it can boost tax revenue and job creation. A thriving legal gambling sector translates to increased tax revenue for governments. Legal operators contribute to public funds through licensing fees, taxes and other financial commitments. Moreover, the expansion of legal gambling operations creates job opportunities across various sectors, further fuelling economic growth.

Thirdly, it could strengthen responsible gaming initiatives. Legal operators are integral to responsible gaming initiatives such as Gamstop. Cleaning up the market empowers these initiatives to perform as intended, ensuring a safer and more secure gambling environment. By contributing to responsible gaming efforts, legal operators build trust with their customer base and the wider community.

Finally, it could safeguard the industry's reputation. Addressing the great illegal gambling robbery is not just about financial gains; it's about safeguarding the integrity and reputation of the entire industry. Legal operators, committed to transparency and ethical practices, are reminded that the integrity of the wider marketplace is dependent on eliminating the threat of illegal activity. A more discerning and responsible customer base should naturally follow.

As the gambling industry grapples with the pervasive threat of the great illegal gambling robbery, businesses like Yield Sec stand at the forefront, offering detailed data, analysis and technological solutions to mitigate these risks – "actionable intelligence" as Yield Sec refer to it. The fight against illegal gambling is not just a moral obligation but a strategic business imperative. By cleaning up the market, legal operators can unlock unprecedented profits, contribute to societal well-being, and fortify the foundation for a sustainable and thriving gambling industry.

### About Ismail Vali

Ismail Vali is the Inventor, Founder and CEO of Yield Sec. Ismail's background in product development, marketing and operations, with numerous C-level operator positions in the betting and gaming industry, coupled with his academic legal background, including a BA and MA in Law from Brasenose College, Oxford University, led to the invention of a unique solution to restrict and remove the harm caused by what has long been an endemic online industry problem: crime and its impact upon commerce, consumers and the community.



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