

# trafficology

AFFILIATE FOCUS BY GAMBLING INSIDER

MAY 2020

## INSIDE

- **PERFORMALIS FOUNDERS MIRO PAVLOV AND GALIN STEFANOV ON DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS WITH AFFILIATE MANAGERS**

- **NET GAMING EUROPE CEO ROBERT ANDERSSON'S ASPIRATIONS FOR PROFITABILITY**

- **HOW MINDWAY AI TACKLES PROBLEM GAMBLING**

- **INDUSTRY VETERAN KEVIN DALE REPORTS FROM A VIRTUAL DESERT ISLAND**

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## ACT ON INSTINCT

Industry leaders weigh the natural progression and limitations of automation



# PLAY ATTACK

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[slotv.com](https://slotv.com)



[frankcasino.com](https://frankcasino.com)



[driftcasino.com](https://driftcasino.com)



[casinosolumbus.com](https://casinosolumbus.com)

# TRAFFIC REPORT

Trafficology has partnered with data experts Casino City Press to provide insight into website and traffic trends across the gaming industry. The below is a breakdown of the top 20 affiliate programs geographically for March 2020, across all devices (desktop and mobile)



## GLOBAL

Rank	Name	Website
1	bet365 Affiliates	www.bet365affiliates.com
2	IQ Option Affiliate	affiliate.iqoption.com
3	NetHive Affiliate Program	www.nethive.com
4	eToro Partners	www.etoropartners.com
5	Pari-Match Affiliates	air.parimatch.com
6	Kindred Affiliates	www.kindredaffiliates.com
7	Betfair Partnerships	affiliates.betfair.com
8	GVC Affiliates	www.gvcaffiliates.com
9	Yahoo Fantasy Sports Affiliates	sports.yahoo.com/dailyfantasy/affiliates
10	1xBet Partners	1xpartners.com
11	betway Partners Africa	www.betwaypartnersafrica.com
12	IG Markets Partners	www.ig.com/uk/marketing-partnership
13	FDJ Affiliate Program	www.fdj.fr
14	Stoiximan.gr Affiliates	affiliates.stoiximan.gr
15	William Hill Affiliates	affiliates.williamhill.com
16	Ladbrokes Partners	www.ladbrokespartners.com
17	U-affiliates	www.uffiliates.com
18	Gamesys Group Partners	www.gamesysgrouppartners.com
19	Rabbit Affiliates	www.rabbit-affiliates.com
20	Tipico Affiliate Program	www.tipico-affiliates.com



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## AFRICA

Rank	Name	Website
1	IQ Option Affiliate	affiliate.iqoption.com
2	bet365 Affiliates	www.bet365affiliates.com
3	betway Partners Africa	www.betwaypartnersafri-ca.com
4	Bet9ja Affiliates	affiliates.bet9ja.com
5	Binary.com Affiliate Program	affiliates.binary.com
6	Sunbet Partners	www.sunbetpartners.co.za
7	1xBet Partners	1xpartners.com
8	eToro Partners	www.etoropartners.com
9	Sportingbet	www.sballiatives.com
10	IC Markets Affiliate Program	www.icmarkets.com/partner-ships/affiliate-program
11	Supa Partners	supapartners.com
12	Betmaster Partner Program	betmasterpartners.com
13	XM Partners	partners.xm.com
14	Kingfin	kingfin.com
15	HotForex Partners	www.hfalliatives.com
16	ZanziBet Affiliates	www.zanzibet.com/en/affiliates
17	ZEturf Affiliates	affiliationen.zeturf.com
18	Exness Partner	www.exness.com/partnership
19	IG Markets Partners	www.ig.com/uk/market-ing-partnership
20	FXTM Partners	www.fxtmpartners.com



## ASIA

Rank	Name	Website
1	IQ Option Affiliate	affiliate.iqoption.com
2	eToro Partners	www.etoropartners.com
3	bet365 Affiliates	www.bet365affiliates.com
4	VivaroBet Affiliates	affiliates.vivarobet.am
5	1xBet Partners	1xpartners.com
6	IG Markets Partners	www.ig.com/uk/market-ing-partnership
7	Stakes Affiliates	affiliates.stakes.com
8	XM Partners	partners.xm.com
9	TotoGaming Affiliates	totogamingaffiliates.com
10	Yahoo Fantasy Sports Affiliates	sports.yahoo.com/dailyfanta-sy/affiliates
11	Exness Partner	www.exness.com/partnership
12	BinPartner	binpartner.com
13	Binary.com Affiliate Program	affiliates.binary.com
14	Gamesys Group Partners	www.gamesysgrouppartners.com
15	Kingfin	kingfin.com
16	IC Markets Affiliate Program	www.icmarkets.com/partner-ships/affiliate-program
17	Betway Partners	www.betwaypartners.com
18	Asianconnect	www.asianconnect88.com
19	Marathon Bet Affiliate	affiliates.marathonbet.com
20	Dafabet Affiliates	www.dafabetaffiliates.com



## EUROPE

Rank	Name	Website
1	bet365 Affiliates	www.bet365affiliates.com
2	eToro Partners	www.etoropartners.com
3	Betfair Partnerships	affiliates.betfair.com
4	Pari-Match Affiliates	air.primatch.com
5	Kindred Affiliates	www.kindredaffiliates.com
6	FDJ Affiliate Program	www.fdj.fr
7	Stoiximan.gr Affiliates	affiliates.stoiximan.gr
8	IG Markets Partners	www.ig.com/uk/market-ing-partnership
9	Sisal.it Affiliate Program	affiliazioni.sisal.it
10	GVC Affiliates	www.gvcaffiliates.com
11	Marathon Bet Affiliate	affiliates.marathonbet.com
12	Tipsport Partners	www.tipsport.cz/partner
13	Tipico Affiliate Program	www.tipico-affiliates.com
14	CJ Affiliates	www.cj.com
15	William Hill Affiliates	affiliates.williamhill.com
16	Betsson Group Affiliates	www.betssongroupaffili-ates.com
17	Paddy Partners	www.paddypartners.com
18	Fortuna Affiliates	fortuna-affiliates.com
19	1xBet Partners	1xpartners.com
20	Winamax Affiliates	www.winamax.fr/en/affiliates



## LATIN AMERICA

Rank	Name	Website
1	IQ Option Affiliate	affiliate.iqoption.com
2	bet365 Affiliates	www.bet365affiliates.com
3	NetHive Affiliate Program	www.nethive.com
4	AfiliadosW	afiliadosw.co
5	Betfair Partnerships	affiliates.betfair.com
6	Binary.com Affiliate Program	affiliates.binary.com
7	Betfair Partnerships	affiliates.betfair.com
8	GVC Affiliates	www.etoropartners.com
9	Rush Affiliates	rush-affiliates.com
10	Marathon Bet Affiliate	affiliates.marathonbet.com
11	Betsson Group Affiliates	www.betssongroupaffili-ates.com
12	Betway Partners	www.betwaypartners.com
13	Stars Affiliate Club	www.starsaffiliateclub.com
14	1xBet Partners	1xpartners.com
15	BinPartner	binpartner.com
16	Partners Only	www.partnersonly.com
17	Stakes Affiliates	affiliates.stakes.com
18	Best Partners	www.bestpartners.com
19	Inkabet Affiliates	afiliados.inkabet.pe
20	IC Markets Affiliate Program	www.icmarkets.com/partner-ships/affiliate-program



Rankings are estimated using statistical data and should not be considered absolute ranking values. More than 50 complementary top lists are available on the iGamingDirectory.com website operated by Casino City Press



## NORTH AMERICA

Rank	Name	Website
1	Yahoo Fantasy Sports Affiliates	sports.yahoo.com/dailyfantasy/affiliates
2	bet365 Affiliates	www.bet365affiliates.com
3	CJ Affiliates	www.cj.com
4	DraftKings Affiliates	www.draftkings.com/affiliates
5	FanDuel Partners	www.fanduel.com/partners
6	TwinSpires Affiliates	www.twinspiresaffiliates.com
7	WPN Affiliates	www.wpnaffiliates.com
8	CommissionKings	www.commissionkings.ag
9	Best Partners	www.bestpartners.com
10	Michigan Lottery Affiliates	playonline.michiganlottery.com/affiliate
11	5Dimes Affiliate Program	affiliates.5dimes.eu
12	Buffalo Partners	www.buffalopartners.com
13	IG Markets Partners	www.ig.com/uk/marketing-partnership
14	eToro Partners	www.ETOROPARTNERS.COM
15	Rush Affiliates	rush-affiliates.com
16	U-affiliates	www.uffiliates.com
17	Nadex Affiliate	www.nadex.com/affiliates
18	Betway Partners	www.betwaypartners.com
19	Nitrogen Affiliate Program	www.nitrogensports.eu/affiliates
20	SIA	www.sportsinteraction.com/affiliate



## OCEANIA

Rank	Name	Website
1	Sportsbet.com.au Affiliates	www.sportsbetaffiliates.com.au
2	Betfair Partnerships	affiliates.betfair.com
3	BetEasy Affiliates	beteasyaffiliates.com.au
4	LadbrokesAffiliates.com.au	www.ladbrokesaffiliates.com.au
5	IG Markets Partners	www.ig.com/uk/marketing-partnership
6	eToro Partners	www.ETOROPARTNERS.COM
7	neds Affiliates	www.nedsaffiliates.com.au
8	bet365 Affiliates	www.bet365affiliates.com
9	Lottery Affiliates	www.lotteryaffiliates.com
10	Buffalo Partners	www.buffalopartners.com
11	Yahoo Fantasy Sports Affiliates	sports.yahoo.com/dailyfantasy/affiliates
12	PointsBet Affiliates	pointsbet.com/affiliates-legal
13	Kindred Affiliates	www.kindredaffiliates.com
14	PlayAmo Partners	playamopartners.com
15	IC Markets Affiliate Program	www.icmarkets.com/partnerships/affiliate-program
16	Revenue Giants	www.revenuegiants.com
17	Playup Affiliates	affiliates.playup.com
18	LuckyStar Casino Affiliates	http://affiliates.luckystar.io
19	CJ Affiliates	www.cj.com
20	Favorit Affiliates	affiliates.favorit.com.ua



Rankings are estimated using statistical data and should not be considered absolute ranking values. More than 50 complementary top lists are available on the iGamingDirectory.com website operated by Casino City Press

# AFFILIATECON VIRTUALLY LIVE HAS LANDED

**Tim Poole** previews the third edition of AffiliateCon – but the first edition of AffiliateCon Virtually Live

Viewers will be able to watch the entire AffiliateCon Virtually Live for free via YouTube on Tuesday 12 May, as some of the industry's most prestigious speakers share their views on the coronavirus pandemic, the way forward for affiliates and plenty more.

Following the postponement of AffiliateCon Sofia to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Gambling Insider* team will instead present a virtual conference covering a number of crucial topics to help affiliates and operators during these testing times. The event will be live streamed on YouTube, allowing free viewer access to some of the finest analysis the gaming industry has to offer. If you're reading this after the show has taken place, don't worry, all talks and panels will be recorded and put out on YouTube. Be sure to follow [affiliatecon.com](http://affiliatecon.com) for updates.

The AffiliateCon Virtually Live agenda will consist of seven panels, with the full provisional schedule below (times in

CEST, with BST being one hour behind):

•**10:00AM** – SEO Techniques for 2020 – **Gennadiy Vorobyov, CEO, Netpeak Bulgaria**

•**10:45AM** – Panel Discussion: How are sports betting operators and affiliates recovering from the coronavirus pandemic? – **Moderator: Tim Poole, *Gambling Insider*; Louise Agran, CMO, Racing Post; Warren Sammut, SEO Marketing Owner, Betsson Group; Alex Donohue, Director, Pressbox PR**

•**11:45AM** – Pandemics & the future: An unprecedented opportunity for esports? – **Tom Wade and Nick Pateman, Co-Founders, SickOdds**

•**12:30PM** – Panel Discussion: Regulatory challenges in 2020 – **Moderator: Tal Itzhak Ron, Tal Ron Drihem & Co, chairman and CEO; Matan Amoyal, Boiling Offers, CEO; Saulius Racevičius, ConnectPay, CEO; Assaf Stieglitz, Odds1x2 and PlayWiseCasino co-founder**

•**1:20PM** – Lunch Break + surprise performance by a famous singer

•**1:45PM** – The continued rise of virtual sports – **Martin Wachter, CEO, GoldenRace**

•**2:30PM** – Affiliate & Operator Panel: Market trends from both sides of the equation – **Moderator: Tim Poole, *Gambling Insider*; Warren Jacobs, MD, ActiveWin; Jeton Kodia, Co-Founder, Oddspedia JSC**

Israeli lawyer Tal Itzhak Ron is returning to AffiliateCon this May to headline the AffiliateCon Virtually Live conference with his famous Tal Ron All Stars Panel following his appearance in the 2018 edition in Sofia. In this exclusive digital session, Tal Ron gathers industry experts to discuss, brainstorm and share their insights for the foreseeable future of the industry. Overcoming operational challenges, regulatory and financial hurdles, and recent trends will be discussed, as well as professional tips to make your business successful. Trafficology caught up with the lawyer to ask him a few questions ahead of the panel.

**How is the pandemic currently affecting you and your business?**

**“WITHOUT GIVING AWAY ANY SPOILERS, I'LL TOUCH ON THE RECENT HOT POTATOES OCCUPYING THE INDUSTRY: HOW COVID-19 DISRUPTED THE INDUSTRY; BANKING AND COMPLIANCE TIPS; PROJECTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS, AND MORE. IN ANY CASE IT'LL BE EXCITING”  
– TAL ITZHAK RON**



As my business is a 'people business' it mainly affects 'how' we do, not 'what' we do. There's much less human interaction, though I come to my office almost every day. We have two locations in Tel Aviv so we can split our teams between them. Those who live outside Tel Aviv work mainly from home. Meetings take place by phone or video conferences; global conferences taking place this spring have gone digital/virtual and so on.

On the other hand, since we're in the 'online business,' fortunately, there's hardly any difference in the scope of our work and there's even an increase, due to the fact the majority of people in the world are at home most of the time. Many gaming and e-commerce companies (which are most of our clients) see an increase in revenues as well as in legal work. We really believe everything will be back to normal soon enough.

**What advice would you give affiliates, service providers and operators during the current climate?**

Regardless of what's happening, people must stay positive and look forward. Take the time to evaluate what you do and how you can do better; spend time with family and develop your hobbies and interests, and make plans for the future.

**What will your discussion panel be about at AffiliateCon Virtually Live?**

Without giving away any spoilers, I'll touch on the recent hot potatoes occupying the industry: how COVID-19 disrupted the industry; banking and compliance tips; projections and suggestions, and more. In any case it'll be exciting.

**Tal, (or should I say Tom?) can you tell us more about your song "Anthem (Afraid without aReason)" by Tom Campione. What are your other musical plans?**

I've been writing songs since a very early age and have been recording and producing music in SynthPop, EDM and European Disco styles in my own flavour. Tom Campione is my new artistic name! I have lots more songs on the way, as well as many international collaborations already done and waiting for release. Stay tuned!

Another key speaker at this year's event is Warren Jacobs, ActiveWin managing director and founder, a rare speaker at events who has made an exception just for AffiliateCon Virtually Live. Jacobs is a regular contributor to *Trafficology* and *Gambling Insider's* other publications, and offers a wealth of gaming experience, having held his role at ActiveWin since December 2012. Jacobs has also been involved in digital marketing for over 20 years.

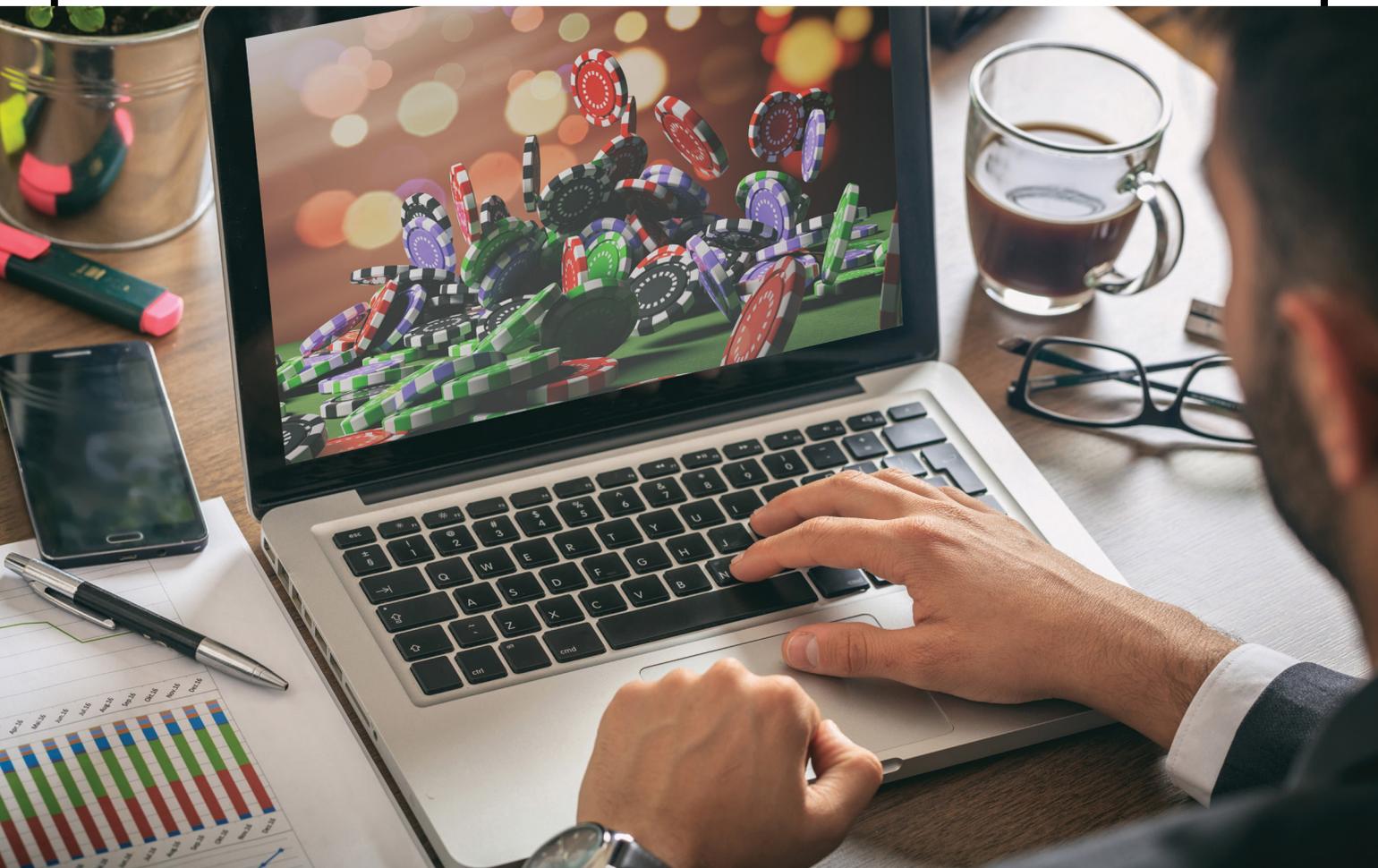
Asked what the biggest change is that he's seen in the industry during the coronavirus pandemic, Jacobs told *Trafficology*: "The greatest challenge has been sportsbook and the lack of content to drive acquisition, while also ensuring they are protecting players with responsible marketing messages."

On advice for operators and affiliates during these testing times, the ActiveWin MD said: "Operators and affiliates who ramp up their marketing and stay clearly within compliance guidelines will reap the benefits of their efforts in the long run. Keeping players safe should be the primary objective."

Jacobs will headline the final talk of the day – Affiliate & Operator Panel: Market trends from both sides of the equation. The panel will round off a day of first-rate discussion as we tackle some of the industry's most pressing issues. The *Gambling Insider* team hopes you can join us on Tuesday 12 May.

# ONLINE POKER – THE TIME TO GO ALL IN IS NOW

Poker.com marketing director **Niall O’Gribin** walks through some of the changes in the world of poker so far this century



In the last twenty or so years, the world of poker has changed dramatically. The whole gambling eco-system has evolved as technology has changed how we interact with each other, and with products and services.

Around 1997, the first online card rooms appeared, and on 1 January 1998, the first real-money online poker hand was dealt at the poker room Planet Poker. The key influencer endorsing the site was Mike “The Mad Genius of Poker” Caro.

In the early 2000s Paradise Poker launched real-money games and immediately became the world’s biggest poker site and significantly raised the bar in terms of software and game quality. The most popular game on the site was limit-hold’em, followed by seven-card stud and Omaha hi/lo, a stark contrast with today where no-limit hold’em and pot-limit Omaha dominate. However, the site did not have tournaments on offer.

At this time, US players represented 90%+ of the global online poker market. The success of these early poker brands

started a gold rush, with many startups and eventual huge successes like PartyPoker and PokerStars, and later Full-Tilt Poker, trying to replicate their success.

In the early days, players had to endure almost daily server crashes since the technology was very basic and designed to support hundreds, or maybe thousands of concurrent users.

In 2003, a 27-year old accountant named Chris Moneymaker qualified for the World Series of Poker Main Event (via a \$40 satellite tournament) and won the tournament, along with \$2,500,000. This story became a catalyst in the online poker boom, dubbed 'The Moneymaker effect'.

Poker went from smoky casino back rooms to the glitzy TV stage, as poker tournaments like the World Series of Poker and World Poker Tour began to be aired non-stop on ESPN and the Travel Channel. Under Hollywood direction, under the TV spotlights, poker characters like Phil Ivey, Phil Hellmuth Jr, Gus Hansen and Daniel Negreanu emerged to become household-names. The huge mainstream media attention helped poker take hold outside the US, including markets such as Canada, the United Kingdom, Sweden and elsewhere.

As online traffic exploded, a new breed of online professional poker player emerged. Poker players began to realise they could stay home and grind poker instead of getting a real job. The world of poker was not just about cash games anymore either. No-limit hold'em tournaments were the new game in town.

In 2006 the UIGEA (Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act) made it unlawful for Americans to play poker online and for many the dream was over. But the game never really went away. Some of the big brands died away, while some like PokerStars, Full-Tilt and Absolute Poker remained.

Now it's 2020. People have been driven indoors due to the global health emergency associated with COVID-19 and interest in poker has exploded once again, resulting in online poker traffic levels not enjoyed by the industry in years.

Just recently, American football star Tom Brady, actors Matt Damon, Ben Affleck and a host of other A-list celebrities were seen promoting and participating in a charity poker tournament on a Bitcoin-friendly online poker room, boosting the profile of the game and crypto-poker in the mainstream.

Today's poker market is dramatically different than it was just 5 or 10 years ago. Millions of poker players worldwide are playing poker for real money on the familiar downloadable apps, but also now on mobile-only poker apps such as PPPoker and PokerBros. Players on these mobile-only apps are often recruited by agents with credit, very large rakeback deals and other hooks by club operators. This model creates a lot of logistical challenges for an operator looking to compete for player acquisition.

The poker industry has become a busy and brand-confused marketplace for the consumer. In addition, players are starting to question the integrity of some sites and many mobile apps, so we believe brand and trust are at an all-time premium right now. In addition, there is something very powerful and exciting about the adoption and use of crypto-currencies in the world of poker.

*Poker.com just announced the launch of a new poker-room and poker affiliate program. Find out more at [Poker.com/affiliates](https://Poker.com/affiliates)*

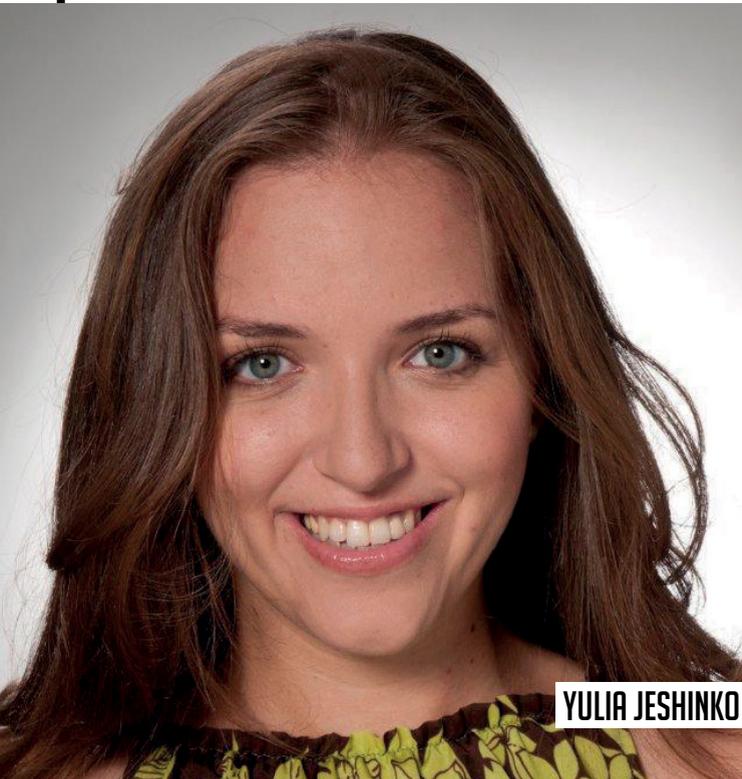
**"IN THE EARLY DAYS, PLAYERS HAD TO ENDURE ALMOST DAILY SERVER CRASHES SINCE THE TECHNOLOGY WAS VERY BASIC AND WAS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT HUNDREDS, OR MAYBE THOUSANDS OF CONCURRENT USERS"**



**DANIEL NEGREANU**

# KEEPING IT CASUAL

**Yulia Jeshinko**, consultant at Hybrid Interaction, explores the best ways to earn on casual gaming with affiliate marketing



## ALL ABOUT THE PLAYERS

Affiliates' main goal is to engage with the right segmented audience, as this can bring great opportunities for affiliates to monetise their traffic. Affiliates can achieve this through simple strategies, such as displaying unique affiliate promo codes during streams or posting affiliate links in videos and descriptions.

The casual games industry offers different ways to engage with specific audiences, and affiliate marketing allows advertisers to target niche segments of customers, especially when trying to promote game products and services. Therefore, if advertisers know who they want to target, depending on the content and channels, affiliate marketing can help draw players in a reliable and generally modest way.

## BENEFICIAL FOR BOTH SIDES

So what's the reason affiliate marketing pairs so well with the online gaming industry? It all comes down to a single word: engagement. When playing or viewing content, the end-users are entering an interactive mode, clicking, engaging and chatting. It's a breeding-ground environment for engagement, especially with relevant content. While playing or watching a streamer on Twitch or YouTube, users find themselves in a "trust" mode, which makes them more likely to engage.

But affiliates also have an advantage in this relationship. With the different affiliate programs out there, they no longer need to depend on one partner. If they join an affiliate network, they don't even need direct contact with each game advertiser. The network makes the management of both communications with advertisers and legal issues easier. Moreover, affiliates can also negotiate more beneficial terms for themselves by proving results, and can even shorten hold time, which is the time when advertisers assess the traffic quality to approve full-scaled collaboration.

Affiliate marketing can bring analysis and systematisation to game developers and other publishers, who work hard on user acquisition and analyse strictly new traffic sources. With automated features, affiliates can easily understand what's working and what isn't in real time and optimise campaigns. Also, by using an affiliate network, advertisers are not paying for clicks or views but for actual target activities carried out by real users, giving them tangible results and a more straightforward way to reach their ROI goals. With this greater flexibility, advertisers can tailor their referral programs to reward content creators and partners, drive new traffic in specific demographics with particular interests, and choose the exact traffic types, geography and pay-outs.

## TIME TO WORK

The casual games niche has high potential, but it also requires careful planning and strategy. All niches do, but all the more for this one because there are plenty of gaming sites that will most likely have similar content to yours, so you need to be creative about the content you publish on your site. Also, you need to be smart with link building and how you drive traffic

Why is becoming a gaming affiliate so vital to your affiliate marketing business? Most likely it's due to the fact that gamers and casual games companies are currently spending roughly \$110 billion a year on gaming and its products. Online casual gaming is a new, rapidly developing niche moving away from clunky PCs and expensive consoles to the mobile devices we all have in our pockets.

More people are playing now than ever before. Whether it's casual single-player games that can be played anywhere and anytime on a smartphone, or Battle Royale games such as Fortnite, where squads compete to be the last ones standing, gamers have many choices. Casual games made up 60% of revenue for the global video game market in 2019, generating \$49 billion in revenue and a profit of \$16.9 billion. The casual games market is forecast to grow 2.9% annually to hit \$56.6 billion by 2024. There's a lot of money at stake and a very large sum that has room for you to benefit.

Here, Hybrid Interaction, the iGaming CRM advisory service, breaks down the opportunities the casual games industry brings for affiliates.



to your site. Don't just bring people into the site, bring people who are interested in playing and subscribing to games.

Both affiliates and operators want to settle on the best pricing model before starting a campaign. We've compared the most-known business models in the casual gaming industry so you can pick the right model for you. In the CPM ad model (also called cost per mille), you receive a specific amount of money for every 1,000 ad impressions. The pro is the ad revenue generated by CPM is a more predictable gain as you have a good knowledge of the average page views per month. Additionally, the CPM model offers simplicity. The goal is to deliver the impressions both parties have agreed on. On the other side, the con is the amount of media ads that need to be offered to gain some value out of impressions.

CPC (cost per click) is one of the performance-based online advertisement models. In this model, you get paid for every click the advertisement receives. The pro is that the CPC model offers affiliates to collect more interactive data that can be used to sell ad inventories. The con in this model is the revenue generated by CPC is less predictable than CPM because the number of clicks received by the ads cannot be predicted.

CPA (also called cost per action) is a similar model, but it compensates the affiliate only if the ad viewer completes an action like making an in-game purchase. Cost per install (CPI) is an ad-model utilised by mobile app advertisers and the most common in the casual games industry. In this model, you get paid only if the viewer installs the app.

The pro of CPA and CPI is they give back to advertisers what they pay for, thus narrowing their risks. Hence, these models are more comfortable to sell to advertisers as compared to CPM or CPC. Effective creation of a CPA or CPI ad needs a good investment of time and resources by both sides. It leads to bonding for a much longer time and offers better revenue to affiliates (about \$3-\$10 per action). However, the con in this case is that revenue can't be predicted, and a significant amount of time and skill is

needed for making this successful. Sometimes you may even need to manage the campaigns and optimise them for better results frequently.

### PLAN OF ACTION

So now you know the target audience and known business models, it's time to make a plan and decide for yourself what, when and where you'll advertise and how you'll monetise. Try various advertising formats, creatives and audiences to check what works. If test traffic turns out to meet all requirements and conditions, continue working with the offer and check out other similar affiliate programs. If traffic quality is low, find the reason for that: it can be caused by the audience turning out to be the non-target audience, or dull creatives.

Any industry has a learning curve and casual gaming is no different. As the casual gaming industry develops, it becomes increasingly attractive for various traffic sources and affiliates. In any case, the number of top-notch traffic sources will likewise develop because new opportunities will enter the business, particularly the individuals who are well acquainted with the world of games.

These key players will have a superior outline of which audience to target and how to grab their attention, giving an open chance to offer their products or convert them into new players.

With the rapid growth seen so far, it's difficult to envision what the business could resemble in the following five to ten years, so hurry up and don't miss the opportunity casual gaming can bring to your affiliate business.

*Yulia Jeshinko is a veteran social gaming expert with over a decade of experience in game monetisation & player retention. She has led and managed dozens of projects in many of the industry's leading social gaming brands, taking business strategies and developing them from theoretical concepts into practical implementations.*

# KEEPING IN TOUCH

**Chris Sauer**, head of media relations for CashiMashi's parent company Victoria Square Limited, speaks with *Trafficology* about plans for growth and giving affiliate partners that personal touch



CHRIS SAUER

To make everyone happy. Sadly that's not always possible, but we definitely try our best. We try to make our customers happy by being in close contact, sending them emails and offering them free spins and other benefits. We try to make our partners happy as well by paying them quickly when they have their affiliate costs and when they send us their invoices.

Some of the German affiliates and streamers are in the same age group as me, so around 20 to 30, and we'll write to each other as if we've been best friends for 10 years. That's a really nice feeling when the partners are happy with the casino. If they're using the casino and have a problem, they can write to me in the middle of the night and I will try to fix this straight away.

Every customer and every partner is unique for me. If you're a partner or a customer of our casino, I'll handle you as if we are best friends for years. I try to make everyone happy and give everyone the answers.

#### **What is the business plan for the next year or so?**

We want to grow. Growing is nice but we want to do this organically. Hype is cool but when you're growing 200% a month, you can't handle it. We try to grow organically so we can handle everything. For example, if our withdrawals are taking too long, we'll try to fix this before we aim to grow more so we don't experience a flood of negatives. We try to take it step-by-step.

We've entered the German Twitch market and are trying to make this international. We're also trying to get more streamers involved with us. We currently have one of the biggest slot streamers and he's playing with our promotions. It's great because people know your brand. New partners will come up to us and say they heard about CashiMashi. That's the thing I like about growing, when the brand gets a name for itself.

#### **Which are the most exciting markets for the company right now?**

Normally Germany is the most important market for us, but a lot of countries are speaking German, so we have players in Canada who speak German and play on CashiMashi. They use the German template rather than the English one. We have deposits from the smallest islands in the world such as the Virgin Islands. It's really funny where people come from to play with us.

#### **Is the current pandemic affecting operations in any way?**

We just recognise that people are playing longer on our casino but we don't see any negative effects, really. It's the same as before the crisis.

#### **What is unique about CashiMashi's affiliate programme?**

At the moment we're trying to get more of our partners on Twitch. We're moving our focus towards social media, so Twitch, Instagram, all of these things are really important and no other casino is focusing on this as much as us. You'll see many casinos on Twitch but we're more focused on the German players.

#### **What do you think are some of the most important factors in maintaining a good relationship between operators and affiliates?**

We're in really close contact with our partners on Skype and I'll write to some of them daily. It's a really fast communication system and I think that's vital to maintain that good relationship with partners and customers.

#### **You've only been with the company since January, but what has been the biggest challenge you've faced in your time there?**

**"SOME OF THE GERMAN AFFILIATES AND STREAMERS ARE IN THE SAME AGE GROUP AS ME, SO AROUND 20 TO 30, AND WE'LL WRITE TO EACH OTHER AS IF WE'VE BEEN BEST FRIENDS FOR 10 YEARS. THAT'S A REALLY NICE FEELING WHEN THE PARTNERS ARE HAPPY WITH THE CASINO. IF THEY'RE USING THE CASINO AND HAVE A PROBLEM, THEY CAN WRITE TO ME IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT AND I'LL TRY TO FIX THIS STRAIGHT AWAY"**



# ACTIVEWINS

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# FREEDOM OVER RESTRICTIONS

Iqbal Johal speaks with BonusFinder.com MD **Fintan Costello** to find out more about the betting bonus guide, and thoughts on the Swedish market after in-house research suggests players are turning to the black market



FINTAN COSTELLO

**Can you give some background information on BonusFinder and the thinking behind it?**

We want to allow people to “Play With More” at their favourite casino, and create a way for players of all levels to find the perfect bonus that suits their playing style.

**The format is a casino and sports betting bonus guide; how popular is this type of format and what is your preferred revenue model – CPA or rev share?**

Helping people find the best bonuses is what we’re most passionate about, and as we spend every day working on the site, it’s important that we have this passion. Luckily for us, there are a lot of users who agree and have made us their go-to resource. In terms of CPA or revenue share, it’s not about any particular model, it’s about long-term win-win partnerships that matter.

**With this model, how important is engagement and personalisation with the customer, to keep them interested?**

Everything we do is player first and it’s central to our planning and development. Our competitors are just a click away so it’s crucial that we keep them engaged and help them personalise their experience as much as possible.

We offer an easy way for customers to filter through different options to quickly find what they’re looking for across all verticals, and filter offers by preferences such as exclusive offers, new bonuses or even best value for a \$10 deposit.

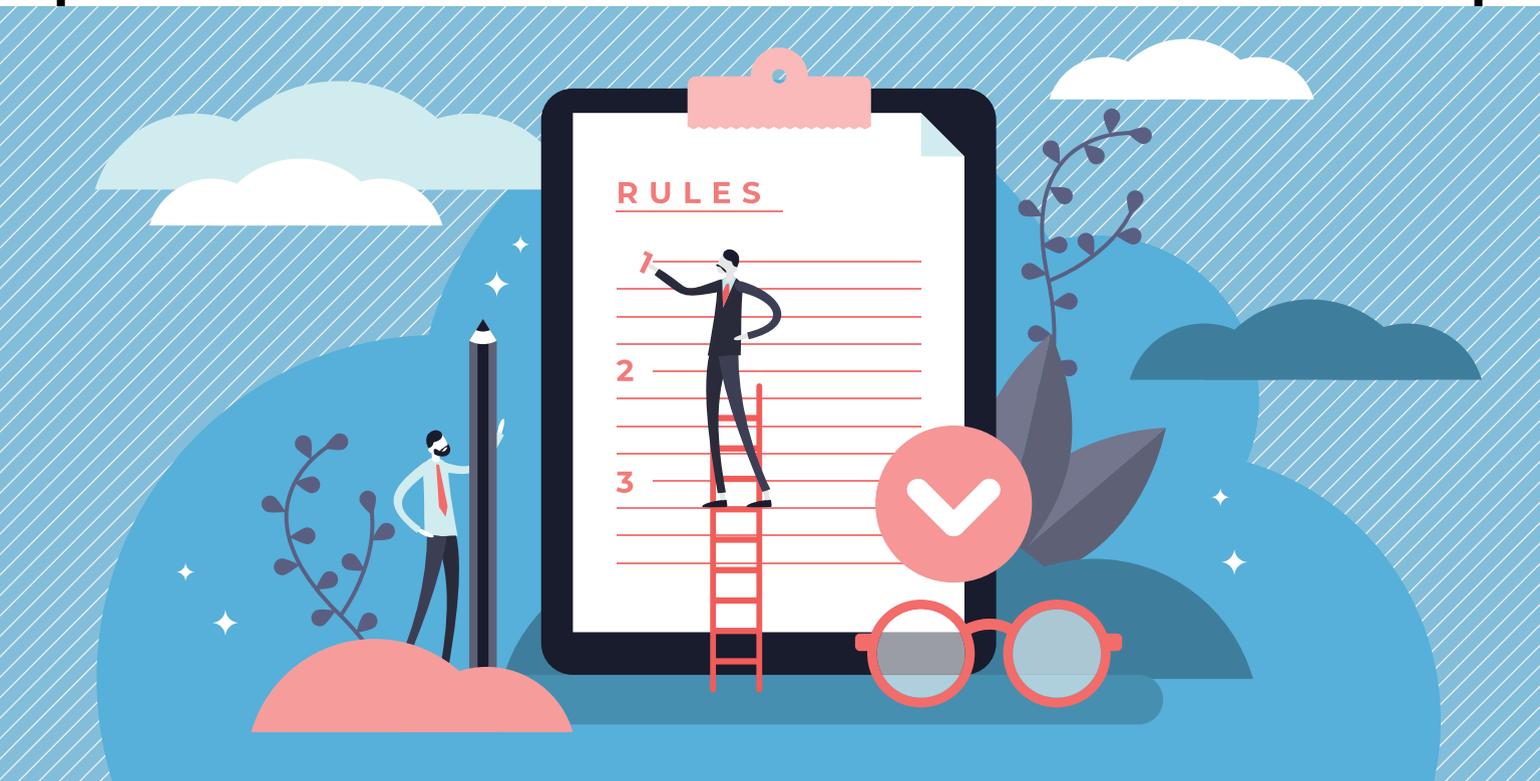
**What are your biggest challenges at the moment?**

In terms of challenges, we believe one that faces all affiliates is regulation as operators and regulators introduce even stricter ones around stakes, bonus offers and advertising. One of our core principles is a common sense approach to regulation that involves honest and open conversations between regulators, operators, affiliates and players.

**With your recent research on Swedish players turning to the black market because of heavy regulation, how important is it that the UK regulation doesn’t go down the same path?**

The problem in Sweden is mainly the one-time bonus offer. This has significantly lowered the appeal of the market and, according to our research, has led to up to 30% of online casino players searching for terms such as ‘unlicensed casino’ [casino utan licens] since the country regulated in January 2019. This reinforces the theory that aggressive restrictions on licensed operators drives players to search for, and convert to, unlicensed black-market brands.

Germany is unfortunately doing a similar thing, while in the UK, the regulator has so far only introduced reasonable measures to ensure a high level of player



protection. However, if the floated proposal of a £2 stake limit on online casino games is implemented, it will be equally detrimental.

**What exactly do you think can be done in Sweden to solve the issue around people searching for black market key words?**

The bonus and jackpot restrictions need to be lifted as this is the reason why players search for unlicensed casinos. Players want more freedom to play what they want and fewer restrictions on deposits, promotions and rewards. This is something that the licensees in the country are trying to convey to the regulator. However, they seem to be fighting a losing battle as the authorities are instead looking to introduce stricter measures around areas such as betting on particular markets.

**There's obviously a fine line between too much regulation having a damaging impact and not enough regulation leading to issues with problem gambling. What would you say the perfect middle ground would be?**

Regulators need to have the right responsible gambling measures in place to ensure players are safe and secure at all times, and once they're confident this is the case, they shouldn't be afraid to give players more choice and more freedom to play and access real money gaming entertainment – all within a fair and open, regulated framework.

**How important is automation to Bonusfinder and to affiliates in general?**

We can't speak for other affiliates but for us, automation

and scalability are at the heart of what we do. We've built our front-end and back-end system from the ground up to be fully scalable and as automated as possible. This allows us to work with a small agile team that focusses on the value-add and not the routine grunt work.

**“WE BELIEVE A CHALLENGE THAT FACES ALL AFFILIATES IS REGULATION AS OPERATORS AND REGULATORS INTRODUCE EVEN STRICTER ONES AROUND STAKES, BONUS OFFERS AND ADVERTISING. ONE OF OUR CORE PRINCIPLES IS A COMMON SENSE APPROACH THAT INVOLVES HONEST AND OPEN CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN REGULATORS, OPERATORS, AFFILIATES AND PLAYERS”**

# SEARCH IS ON FOR US SPORTS BETTING SUCCESS

Charlie Rowe, Head of Industry – iGaming at NMPi by Incubeta



CHARLIE ROWE

When the US authorities legalised sports betting last year, the world's biggest new market was created.

Though only 13 states have so far set up a legal framework for the industry, its estimated value is already \$500bn per year. As more states issue sports betting licences, and multiple new gambling businesses enter the fray, competition is bound to intensify and so it makes sense to sign up as many customers as possible, as soon as possible.

That's the experience of any sport betting marketing executive working in a mature market, such as the UK or the rest of Europe. The lesson from these more mature regions is app users will usually have one or two bookmakers they prefer but then, as the market grows, new entrants will offer increasingly generous odds and bonuses to divert customers to their platform when they next search online for odds.

These new entrants will also push up the cost of search advertising because, given pay per click (PPC) runs as an auction, the more people bidding, the higher the cost of acquiring a new customer.

This is where a savvy search marketing strategy can ensure new customers are signed up as efficiently as possible with the aid of the Google Marketing Platform. These tools have only recently been made available to the industry, now that it's been legalised. They allow sports betting companies to use smart analysis to run better targeted acquisition and retention campaigns.

## QUALITY COUNTS

In the hands of an expert, the suite of tools is very useful because they not only allow a business to bid to be seen at the top of search results, they can help them get there for less.

Appearing in top spots for sports betting searches can be expensive, particularly for popular generic search terms or keywords. It means search experts will start out by looking to bring down the cost of campaigns by improving what Google calls the quality score (QS) for a site.

This rating shows how apt Google thinks a site or ad is for a search term. The more relevant the page or ad, the less a business

has to pay to get a top paid search spot. A page that features the phrase being searched, for example, is considered more relevant than one that doesn't.

## TRACKING FOR WINNERS

Search Ads 360 (SA360) is the platform of choice to house all search ads. The biggest benefit is that it allows you to have all your engines in one place; you can work on Google and non-Google ads in the same place. It also has a much more natural integration with Google's full suite of products, which opens the doors to new channels and greater integration between them later on. Its Data Studio also has an incredibly powerful reporting dashboard.

When it comes to bid strategies, when using SA360, it can be applied at keyword level across multiple engines. This gives the marketer more flexibility and granularity to make the most of the ad spend. SA360 also allows the user to give certain conversions more weight over others by using customised formula columns and custom floodlight variables as bid strategy conversion sources.

One of the main upgrades with SA360 is the robustness of Floodlight tags (an iframe or image tag that is installed on a conversion page in the advertiser's site. When a customer lands on the page, the tag sends data about the conversion to SA360). With the ability to pull in multiple custom variables in the tag, you can obtain a much more comprehensive view of what levels of performance have been driven from the campaign. By pulling in data, such as which keywords drove which types of bet, and at what odds, it can better inform optimisations both in search and in other channels.

Utilising such platforms is where the real battleground is going to be in the booming US sports betting market. Getting a licence is one thing, attracting and retaining customers, based on their value to the company, is quite another.

Right now, there's a massive opportunity to get working on finessing a search strategy because as more states issue licences and new companies enter the market, the competition for keywords and highly valued customers is only going to intensify. There's never been a better time for current players to get a jump on rivals in a market that shows no signs of slowing down.

## Looking ahead, what do you anticipate from the affiliate sector in 2020?

When it comes to what I expect, especially for our brands and our program, we'll look at new markets for sure. This is also something other affiliates have spoken to me about and links to our multi-strategy brand. We want to increase our number of markets year-on-year, and we aim to optimise the current affiliates we have and find new strategic partners. We'll be attending the big conferences, for sure.

Again, a focus would be on the optimisation of the resources we have in terms of people and technical resources – more A/B testing and dedicated CRM campaigns for our affiliated players. We aim to increase our conversation rate and lower our churn rate, making sure affiliates want to partner with us because they'll make more money with us than anywhere else.

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maybe Malta this year or London next year.

**Stay safe and well and see you soon!**



# THE SECOND COMING

The new Net Gaming Europe CEO **Robert Andersson** explains his biggest aspirations for the comparison affiliate and how they can become profitable going forward

**You started your role as CEO of Net Gaming Europe in February. What made you decide to join and what do you hope to achieve?**

Previously I was CEO for Catena Media before going to Enlabs. I knew about NetGaming and saw that they've been struggling a little bit and I like those positions of being able to turn a business around. I felt it was an interesting time to be part of what I believe can be a proper second coming for the affiliate.

There's been a negative growth at Net Gaming for more than a year now and it's been on the decline. For me, it's a really interesting case and I have to believe I can turn things around otherwise I wouldn't

try. From the outside, I could see there was a lot to work, which is interesting when you look at the things you can do.

**What do you see as Net Gaming Europe's biggest strengths that make it stand out from a crowded affiliate market in the comparison sector?**

The biggest brand that we have is clearly poker listings. That's a really long term, long standing asset with plenty of content and it's an institution in poker so to say. That's where I think we have the biggest differentiator, that we're so strong in poker. Poker is having a bit of a surge now and we're definitely number one there.

We see the rise in online poker during this period as an opportunity and we've seen people rediscovering poker as a good form of entertainment. Now, casino is still a very big vertical for us so we shouldn't single out poker, but the big point is that poker is being revived by the fact there's no live sports and people are seeking some form of alternative entertainment at the moment.

There are a lot of comparison sites but what we can make sure we do is have the best offers and the best content. But of course it's a highly competitive landscape for sure.

**2019 saw Net Gaming take its first real step into the sports betting market, so what has the impact been with the suspension of live sport?**

Sports only amounted to 9% of our total revenue for Q1 2020. It was growing in the autumn and then of course it stopped in March. Because the figure is less than 10% we don't see the suspension of live sport having much of an impact, but of course it's a lot harder if you're a heavily focused sports affiliate. So for us, business still goes on as normal. The little drop in sports betting is compensated elsewhere, particularly with poker performing strongly.

**How big a role does automation have to play in Net Gaming's products?**

We try and automate as much as we can simply because that's the space. Some content it makes sense, like in sports where we automate articles and results, but we work with evergreen content as well, which is predominantly our background. In that sense for content, we're not super automatised but we are when it comes to everything else such as the backend, platform and DI.

I found out when joining the company there are a lot of new things on the horizon and they're starting to come into play right now.

**What has been the biggest impact caused to both Net Gaming and the affiliate space by the coronavirus and do you see any potential opportunity arising during this period?**

The biggest impact the coronavirus outbreak has had for us is the way we work as a team, which is the same for everyone. Working from home is working beautifully for us with output surprisingly higher than when we were sitting in the office. But obviously the question is how long it will last and how to maintain a good team spirit. It's the same for every industry but gambling is a good industry for working from home, which has been quite good for us.

What I think this might contribute to in the long term is a quicker conversion from offline to online in general. We still have so much of the business being offline but it's now closed down. In that sense we have a good opportunity to speed up the gradual move to online.

**What are the biggest aims for Net Gaming in the next couple of years?**

The biggest aim for us is to really start organic growth. At the moment, we're refinancing; we have a debt of around €24m (\$25.9m). For us the biggest thing is to become a profitable growth company that's debt free in the long-term, so we have more freedom of movement. We're not as bad as some of our peers but we still have

debt and we've been actively reducing it over the past year and a half. We're now down to half of what it was then, so we're aiming to clear it in two years.

**With tighter regulation coming into force across Europe, how hard is it to navigate in the different markets?**

You can see regulations are becoming stronger and stronger, and as a listed company, we want to adhere to it and do even better than that. It's just an industry and business that's really maturing at the moment, going from a little bit like the Wild West to becoming a mature and sustainable business.

It's a very interesting stage for the industry where it's been quite volatile with a lot of regulatory changes over the past couple of years. I believe it's going to still continue to happen, but in general I think in a couple of years, we'll really have a stable industry.

Tighter regulations can prove a challenge but luckily, we have our own platform that we run our sites on, and from there, it's quite easy to adhere to regulations. For example in Spain, we're only allowed to show bonuses and advertisements between 1am and 5am, and we have the possibilities to set this on an off switch, which allows us to adhere to the regulations.

We're working hard on acquiring licenses where we can. You always have to look at new markets, with the US being our main focus since our traffic has always been quite US heavy. But in the past, we've missed out on quite a bit of traffic that we cannot take at the moment.

**“I KNEW ABOUT NETGAMING AND SAW THAT THEY HAVE BEEN STRUGGLING A LITTLE BIT AND I LIKE THOSE POSITIONS OF BEING ABLE TO TURN A BUSINESS AROUND. I FELT IT WAS AN INTERESTING TIME TO BE PART OF WHAT I BELIEVE CAN BE A PROPER SECOND COMING FOR THE AFFILIATE”**

# A TIME FOR INTROSPECTION

A panel at the SBC Digital Summit looks at their own roles in trying to turn around the perceived negative image of the gambling industry, and how they can right past wrongs



## CONTRIBUTORS

### MODERATOR:

**Alexandre Tomic**, Alea.com and SlotsMillion co-founder

### SPEAKERS:

**Carolyn Harris MP**, All-Party Parliamentary Group Gambling Harms chair

**Ivan Filletti**, Gaming Malta COO

**Erik Bergman**, Great.com and Catena Media founder

**Tom Galanis**, TAG Media managing director

**AT: The gambling industry doesn't have a positive image in countries like the UK despite actions that have been taking place to change opinion. How do you see the industry behaving during the COVID-19 outbreak and are there any examples of good or bad actions during this time?**

**CH:** I'm the cuckoo in the nest today. It was my campaign that I believe neutralised the devastating consequences of FOBTs and reducing the stakes to £2. I'm on a bit of a mission to actually stop the exploitation of gamblers who

have an excessive and addictive problem with online gambling. I'm not anti-gambling despite being accused of such, nor am I an abolitionist. I firmly believe there's a place in society for sensible gambling but what I don't and will not tolerate, is when people are badly damaged and exploited to the point, in some cases, where they take their own lives because of their involvement with online gambling.

**AT: What do you think are the worst three behaviours of the gambling industry today?**

**CH:** The VIP section with bonuses and enhancements, not enough interventions to stop people from gambling when they can least afford it or are excessively gambling, and no affordability checks to make sure people are gambling what they can actually afford to gamble. I could go on, there are a lot more than three but I've given you these.

**AT: I could go on about each of those points and tell you for example that affordability is very hard to assess and, as an operator, I'd like to see the Gambling Commission doing that because they would have an overview on the accounts where the players are playing. Ivan, what would you like to add?**

**IF:** Gaming Malta is a non-profit foundation set up by the Malta government and gaming authority to promote



have huge numbers of invested shareholders who essentially invest their hard-earned money to make a profit. It's very hard for a CEO of a business to take the same approach to someone like Erik, who has stepped away from running a big affiliate business to doing something really positive on his own. It has to be a fundamental belief.

Problem gambling is clearly a horrendous thing and we as an industry must do more to combat that. However, new and existing legislation in the UK and beyond must be incredibly well conceived and must be based on objectively researched evidence, more so than the evidently subjective stories that Caroline points to and hears far too much about. But we cannot structure our industry's operating framework based on emotion.

If we do base further legislation on emotion, we would undo not only what Caroline is doing but all the great work

Malta as a gaming jurisdiction. From a jurisdiction perspective, online gaming is very important for Malta. It's one of the pillars of our economy with a lot of employees working there as well. I must say, it's been very good working with trade associations like IGEN (iGaming European Network) who are based in Malta and represent some of the biggest gaming companies based here.

We've been working extremely closely with them, coming up with initiatives whereby the industry went out on an outreach program and also helped the local community, especially the health professionals in the sector. We presented about 12,500 special surgical masks to the ministry of health, all this donated by the online gaming companies.

**EB:** I like the notion of what can the individual do when it comes to changing the reputation of the industry or taking more responsibility. Gambling is not an innately bad thing, but how we can do it in a more responsible way is how I'm spending most of my time now. My goal is to build a gambling company that I'm genuinely proud of, and where I would be most happy is when the people that are closest to me are clients because what we do is take responsibly of things.

I know very little of what the industry is doing right now because I'm trying to keep my eyes on how I can build something I feel proud of, and focus on what I can do rather than what the industry does. Whenever I end up in conversation about what the industry can do, I find myself pointing fingers and I forget my own shortcomings. I don't care what the industry does, I want to figure out what I can do, what can we five people in this call do and where we can have an impact. Saying we can change the industry with the politics that goes on is one thing but very hard to actually change.

**TG:** I agree that individually we need to take responsibility, and unless everyone in the business does that, it becomes incredibly difficult. You have multi-national businesses that

**“PROBLEM GAMBLERS ARE TOO FAR AWAY, AS IF WE’RE NOT AWARE OF THEM. IT’S LIKE WHEN CORONAVIRUS WAS IN CHINA IN THE BEGINNING AND PEOPLE THOUGHT IT WAS THE FLU AND NO-ONE CARED. SUDDENLY IT WAS KNOCKING AT THE DOOR AND EVERYONE SHUT THE AIRPORTS. WE NEED TO BE CLOSER TO THE PROBLEM AND HAVE A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE ORGANISATIONS THAT DEAL WITH ALL THE ISSUES. I WOULD LOVE TO SEE A SITUATION WHERE WE INVITE THESE STORIES AND LISTEN TO THEM AS IT WILL MAKE US MORE HUMAN”**  
– ERIK BERGMAN

operators do. In fact, it could make the situation far worse for vulnerable individuals.

**AT: Caroline, you say you're not anti-gambling, so in your view, what's the good of gambling in society? If it shouldn't be forbidden, why should we offer this service to the public?**

**CH:** I don't think any gambling platform has no place. If somebody has enjoyment and pleasure and can afford to gamble online, then they should be allowed to gamble online. I bought my first house after winning a game of bingo. I am not anti-gambling. My husband gambles every week and I've got no problem with that. What I have got a problem with is a lack of affordability checks. There'll be many ways to tell if a person can afford to gamble or not. One of them will be when they're begging an operator for bonuses. When they've spent a huge amount of money over the weekend and they've not gambled for one day and the day after, they get bombarded with incentives to gamble, very often offering them money they can only access by spending their own money, and in many ways they don't have that upfront cost so they'll find other ways of funding that.

There's a responsibility for the industry to actually know how much residual income someone actually has so they don't spend over and above. I don't believe people should be able to gamble when they're in debt. If they have to take out a loan or are in overdraft, obviously they've got a financial problem; they shouldn't be able to gamble what they've borrowed or what debt they're going into to feed an addiction.

I have always found betting companies far more agreeable and willing to work with me when I go directly to them, rather than through a trade body. It happened with the ABB over FOBTs. They put a wall up between me and the individual companies and the BGC are doing exactly the same thing.

Maybe it's not the companies on their own that need dealing with but who they have as their trade bodies because they're not serving them well. Instead of showing compassion, they throw stones and are antagonistic.

**TG:** Lets face it, the dialogue has become a diatribe on both sides. I'm not pointing the finger directly at you Caroline. The cases you point to are clearly tragic and illustrate bad practice that we need to address. However horrendous problem gambling is not hugely on the rise statistically and we're talking about a small number of cases relatively speaking. The vast proportion of customers can bet responsibly and react in a sensible way to marketing communication. Clearly much more can be done to protect those who cannot afford to gamble.

The way regulation has progressed in the UK has meant the tax operators have to pay and margins are now being squeezed. The gambling industry in the UK raised some £3bn in tax revenue last year, which equates to 3.5% of all public spending. That's not an insignificant amount of money going towards what ought to be good causes, so the industry does contribute significant amounts. That squeeze on the industry has led to individuals perhaps doing things they don't necessarily know about and end up with bad results.

**EB:** For me, what's missing in the gambling industry is a closer relationship between the actual companies and the



problems they're causing, thinking about my own personal experiences. At the start of my career, I was doing marketing for a casino and payday loans. I realised it was a great opportunity to sell payday loans to casino players. I didn't think twice about bad practices at the time. My point is I don't think the industry is innately bad, it's just we're too far away from the problems we're causing.

The more people have reached out to me, the more I felt I wanted to take more of a responsibility. I like a lot about this industry but I don't want to be a part of suicides and there might not be a way around that. At least I feel genuinely from within that I want to make a difference. It took me getting closer to the problem to do that. Problem gamblers are too far away, as if we're not aware of them. It's like when coronavirus was in China in the beginning and people thought it was the flu and no one cared. Suddenly it was knocking at the door and everyone shut the airports. We need to be closer to the problem and have a dialogue between the organisations that deal with all the issues. I would love to see a situation where we invite these stories and listen to them as it will make us more human.

**TG:** That's a great point. I've been in this industry for 15 years and it's only in the last six months or so where I've taken it upon myself to engage with problem gamblers. I thought it was vital to engage in those conversations to better understand some of the potential harm that some of my activities have no doubt caused people. In 15 years, some form of marketing communications I have organised and put there has impacted somebody negatively.

Not many people in the industry are in a position to do that but Eric and I run our own businesses and can take that approach. When you have those who are driven by the next quarter's report to maintain their share price, it makes proactively engaging with society in a positive way very difficult. There's not really the opportunity for most individuals who work in gaming to take the approach Eric and I have taken.

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# BEING MINDFUL OF PROBLEM GAMBLING

We talked to Mindway AI Founder, professor **Kim Mouridsen**, to find out more about the problem gambling technology solution, with tools GameScanner and Gamalyze now available to operators



**KIM MOURIDSEN**

**Can you provide some background information to Mindway AI and its previous work in the gaming industry?**

I'm a professor in neuroscience and I've been working with artificial intelligence for many years. In 2013, I had a collaboration with Danish operator Danske Spil, and they asked how can we use AI and neuroscience to better detect problem gambling as early as possible. We thought there's this idea, like radiologists are the best to read signs of pathology, then likewise the professionals who with work and treat problem gamblers – psychologists and researchers – are the best to spot the signs early on. The idea is using artificial intelligence to learn from experts, to learn how to do expert tasks.

In 2018, we established Mindway AI and I'd say we've already had a considerable uptake in the concept and we have also started to utilise neuroscience and AI in different ways. Some are about to go live, some are in testing phases and some are in dialogue phases but I'd say across Europe we've done a lot of concrete work and had a lot of uptake I'd say for a company as new as we are.

Part of the reason is because we've spent about five years developing the technology, so it's already there and ready to go. What we'd like to communicate is that it might sound complicated with neuroscience and AI but we want to show that our tools are actually really easy to get started with.

**The main tools Mindway AI use to help detect problem gaming are GameScanner and Gamalyze. How exactly do these tools work?**

We have a really strong technology but it only brings value when you're predicting something that makes sense. Nobody knows for sure what a problem gambler look like, we can't say immediately who they are. Operators believe those who self-exclude are the ones who have gambling problems but the issue with that is only 20% of people who self-exclude believe they're becoming addicted so it's actually a minority who use that tool for that reason.

Gamalyze is a self-testing online card gaming, where the technology behind the game analyses decision making behaviour, and advice is given to the gambler.

We know a lot about how the brain works and what addiction looks like in the brain. The way we've started to understand how the brain works to reach certain decisions is by having people participate in short tasks, where you have to make certain risky decisions, finding the balance between exploring the opportunities and exploiting whichever strategy you believe is the right one.

We're saying use these tasks from psychology so you can actually engage them in a game and re-understand what is good and bad behaviour or what's sustainable or not, then we can analyse and give the feedback to the customer, instead of a probability.

Operators need a way of communicating with the customers so usually they use a blackbox machine, which would come up with a score relating to the changing of behaviour through monitoring and it'll spit out a risk score, but it's not really telling you why you it's doing this. If a player has a high probability of being addicted, the operator needs to communicate that to the customer, which is difficult because you want to keep the customer but also protect them.

The advantage with GameScanner is it's based on expert assessment and uses a technique on why it believes the customer might be at risk. The transcript can be used in the dialogue with the end user. Operators are not just getting a number but we give an expert based guide on how to interact with the customer, which is important.

#### **How can Mindway AI use its tools to help tackle problem gambling, and is there an appetite for your technology?**

One of the only tools to deal with the change of behaviour is for operators saying we need to close your account, which is a half stop; you're either gambling or you're not gambling at all.

We're looking for a soft landing, which is where GameChanger comes in. We're going to be releasing it soon. It's a training game where you see two groups of images; one related to gambling, the other unrelated. The purpose is to only click on the non-gambling picture. You get rewarded for choosing non-related gambling images instead of gambling images in order to help control impulsivity, and it will decrease to give people a split second to work out if they want to do the next gamble. We know from other substance abuses like alcohol or drugs this is something that can actually change people's behaviour. We hope this can stop people from becoming addicted without telling them to stop gambling altogether.

We've been on the market for 18 months and the appetite has been steadily increasing over the last couple of months. They also appreciate the opportunity for operators to use something new.

However, if operators were to show the regulators it is coming up with AI technology themselves, there's still going to be bias there as it was developed in-house. If instead you can use a third party who uses experts who make the assessment themselves, then, especially today, it has an added value.

#### **How does Mindway AI currently work with affiliates? Who are your big clients and do you envisage working more with affiliates in the future?**

We work with BetterCollective who has around a 20% stake in us so we work very actively with them. Affiliate focus on problem gambling is something that's really important. Affiliates have the potential to trigger some sudden mechanism in the brain that can be very sensitive to certain individuals, and they have direct contact with the operators around the world.

I see two opportunities with affiliates: one is to help us with the dialogue between the operators that we're not already in dialogue with. Second, and more importantly, we can also work with affiliates as our solutions can be hosted on their website, signalling to their customers that they want to provide them with gambling and fun while keeping them safe.

Generally speaking the scope of the work affiliates are doing is about the volume, so they know where the heavy traffic is. One thing is they can help direct people by hosting the solution, which is important. Affiliates also have leverage with operators so together we're happy to do the affiliate business, but we also encourage the operator to employ tools like the GameScanner because that gives a more sustainable relation to the customer so together we can spot the early signs of problem gambling and help communicate that to the end user.

#### **Do you see the current climate as a worrying time in regard to problem gambling, and do you think it's vital that your tools are used now more than ever?**

Yes of course there's a worry that problem gambling could rise in the current climate of lockdown due to the coronavirus, where more players play online gambling. We know from a lot of research that the brain can become more sensitive to quick fixes. When the brain becomes stressed, some changes can motivate the behaviour where it's looking for artificial rewards and gambling can be one of them.

**“I SEE TWO OPPORTUNITIES WITH AFFILIATES: ONE IS TO HELP US WITH THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE OPERATORS THAT WE'RE NOT ALREADY IN DIALOGUE WITH. SECOND, AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE CAN ALSO WORK...”**

And the fact people are getting bored and seeking out gambling can be more serious as it can then become a self-medication if the stress becomes more severe. It can also become more unconscious in the sense as we become more stressed because we fear for our job and are anxious. On a less conscious level it means it allows people to seek these artificial rewards.

We like to believe our technology then becomes more important in terms of getting information that was currently unavailable. One lesson we can be aware of is operators need to do marketing responsibly and bear in mind people can be more sensitive than usual right now.

# A MESSAGE TO AFFILIATE MANAGERS

Performalis founders **Miro Pavlov** and **Galin Stefanov** speak to **Tim Poole** about Asian markets, the right kind of automation and relationships with affiliate managers



**Tell us all about Performalis and what you do?**

**IMP:** This company was formed after the merger of our old companies almost three years ago. Since then, we've been scaling quite fast. We're mostly in the sports betting and casino markets, with a smaller interest in finance, especially forex trading. We've been in the industry for eight to nine years already. I used to specialise in the forex niche while my business partner was in sports betting. Now we're together and things are going quite well for us.

**In the current coronavirus climate, have you found sports betting is down while casino and forex is up?**

**MP:** Yes, exactly. We're looking to be diversified but the increase in casino and forex will probably cover for 30% to 40% of the decrease in sports. It's quite a heavy decrease. We were not fully prepared for that so despite some diversification in place, we took quite a heavy hit. We'll see how the situation develops.

**GS:** Unfortunately, we didn't expect this kind of situation with the lockdown and 90% of sports events being postponed. Even we prepared to acquire more traffic because of Euro 2020 and the Olympics. But we will continue to invest more in the sports betting websites for next year, so we hope play restarts as soon as possible – hopefully the Premier League in the UK

can resume this month. Of our traffic, 90% is organic through Google. At the moment, table tennis is a big sport but we don't have much traffic from players interested in these sports because of that.

**You mention organic traffic and Google: it's a common question but, for an affiliate, what would your advice be for strong SEO and maximising your traffic?**

**MP:** In short, as long as you provide what a user searches and answer their expectations, you'll be successful in SEO.

**That sounds easy – but I guess it's not easy to actually do this in practice?**

**MP:** Actually it's not that easy because gambling is a very lucrative market so the majority of affiliates are trying to push their sites out to send people directly through affiliate links. But they're not adding value, so in those terms, Google will just not give them a chance to obtain more traffic. So we're looking to provide visitors what they want to find. There's also a psychological side, where you need to study user behaviour, marketing messages and more. It's quite a vast topic – probably a topic for a whole series of interviews.

**How's business in Asia, where you're heavily involved?**

**MP:** First we should mention we have the biggest site for the biggest game in Asia, which is baccarat. We own baccarat.net, which at the moment is in 17 languages but we're constantly adding more. We are quite big in Asia – and we're talking about the entirety of Asia. So in terms of affiliate income, we have only in the past six months started to see a major increase there, because our sites were previously fairly new. But, in percentage, let's say 20% from Asia.

Of course, if we compare some regulated markets or more mature markets, we should make much more. But all the markets in Asia are grey markets; it's very hard to find the right partners since there are so many brands that don't quite do well with affiliates. It's like the Wild West there. I don't see much improvement in the next several years.

**How are you looking to grow your business and what goals do you have within the affiliate market, setting aside the current pandemic?**

**GS:** Our main goal is to continue developing our websites. We're trying to cover different countries; in each vertical we're trying to acquire a good premium domain name, similar to baccarat.net. We have good domain names for forex, casino and bingo, so we're trying to translate these websites in different languages. Of course, we're always looking for native translators who are familiar with the topic. We're trying not to use Google translator or use people unfamiliar with the topic as it doesn't sound as natural as someone familiar with the subject.

We also want to focus on a few websites that are our premium property assets. The rest is to cover a website for sports and for casino in each country in the European market and Asian market. That's why we have more than 25 people in the company and we have everything, starting websites from scratch and doing everything in-house: design, content, coding and everything else. That's quite a big team. Some affiliates operate with only a two-people setup.

**MP:** We've really shot up and you can get the full picture from the amount of people we now have. We're looking to expand worldwide, probably everywhere outside Africa, which we'll leave for a while now. Asia, Europe, North



and South America we will focus a lot of resources, with premium and micro-niche sites. That's why we're growing our team; part of our growth is to increase our quality.

That's what Galin meant by saying we have our own designers and developers; we don't depend on anyone else. We'll soon launch two very premium names for us. One is casinoreviews.net and the other is forexbrokers.net. In both, even the affiliates in those niches will be surprised what we have for them.

**The theme of this month's *Trafficology* is automation, a growing trend within the affiliate sector. How does automation help Perfomalis as you look to achieve this growth?**

**MP:** We don't use automation in translation, but many do this with Google Translate, which is ridiculous. But automation is useful as far as things are allowed to be automated. It can work quite well. But in affiliation, you can't really automatically translate content prepared for the readers. For our marketing side, we have automated it a lot in terms of outreach and response. That can really benefit us in terms of automation. We see a lot of value in the marketing side and in the customer service and retention aspect.

**Do you have any other messages to get across based on your experience in the affiliate industry so far?**

**GS:** Regarding the affiliate managers of affiliate programs, we've been to the conferences in London for the last two years and every time we struggle with communication with affiliate managers. I hope some of them will read this interview! Our message to them is just treat affiliates well. If you don't know us and we have one website, next year we could have 20 websites with 60-70% registrations. They don't treat you with respect, but then a few months later they ask you to list their brand on your website. It's all about their attitude to affiliates. Usually, they don't understand high-quality traffic is served by affiliates. Media and Google ads are very expensive, so the most convertible traffic comes from affiliates.

**MP:** There is a saying: "Don't treat us like the place we come from. Treat us based on what we want to show you." In general, there are a few issues with affiliate managers as they're not educated enough to work in this niche. That's our main issue. If you asked us what the biggest issue affiliates face now, unless you're already more established, I would say very difficult communication levels with certain brands and certain affiliate managers. They either don't understand your business or don't understand the gambling business as a whole. They treat people differently based on where they are from, which is a serious issue. Gambling is a worldwide business.

# ADAPTING FOR THE FUTURE

Speaking at the SBC Digital Summit, Better Collective CEO & co-founder **Jesper Søgaard** talks about the importance of esports during lockdown, and transitioning to a sports media company



## COMING A LONG WAY

We started as a small company in a garage and last year we had revenue of €67m (\$73.1) and sent more than 400,000 new depositing customers to all our partners. With operations in more than nine countries and more than 400 employees, the garage company has definitely grown up.

## WORKING FROM HOME IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

We made the decision quickly that we wanted everyone

to work from home and fortunately we had a set-up across our offices that made it fairly easy to execute. Guidelines do differ in the various countries, with Sweden more relaxed to how they've approached the coronavirus lockdown to other countries. I must say, I'm quite impressed with how working from home has gone and people are actually coping extremely well with that.

## ADAPTATION TO SPORTS CANCELLATIONS

A lack of live sport is where we've seen the biggest

impact, there's no doubt about that. When you don't have any sports, what can you do? That has meant we've shifted the focus gradually. Especially esports has been a big topic for us and we're so fortunate that we acquired the largest community media site within esports, HLTV.org. On all our sides, we've been able to improve the content relating to esports but also write content relevant to casino and poker and set-up poker tournaments for our users. What has impressed me with this is in different geographies, and knowledge and communication between the different teams about how can we still provide relevant content for all our users during these tough times.

### **ESPORTS RISE AND POTENTIAL**

Esports has been a topic for quite a while for us. The way we view sports betting as a whole is we need to be relevant for users who want to place a bet. If you asked people within esports, they'd have a similar view towards any other sport. You have some athletes competing and there's a big audience that has an interest in this and naturally the audience actually likes to bet on it. For us, it's an area we've followed for quite some time and although we're aware we're not experts within esports, we know a lot about marketing. That's why we had an ambition to find the right company where we could see some strong synergies, and I really think we've found that with HLTV. The fact they're based in Denmark is another advantage for us. On the product side, they know more than we do and we can then help to grow the brand and help with the monetisation side of things.

I think esports is very big and the shift in interest from a broader audience perspective would have surely grown faster if we didn't have the coronavirus. What we've noticed from odds and data providers is that they see people who used to engage with traditional football have also to a fairly large degree engaged with esports during the absence of football. I'm quite sure that behaviour will stick. Obviously they'll start betting on football once it resumes but now they've also tried placing bets on eFifa or whichever esports they're interested in, breaking that initial barrier down.

### **TRANSITIONING TO SPORTS MEDIA**

I think becoming more media focused is a natural progression, if we start with the fundamentals of what it means to be an affiliate. What exactly is an affiliate? It's a revenue model. Affiliate marketing is a performance-based way of monetising traffic. The definition is a business model and what we're now seeing is that some products now resemble traditional sports media. In the last 12 months, we've seen progression with the type of monetisation that we do, so we now have the traditional affiliation with CPA and revenue shares. We also have subscription of tips and tips selling on some sites. We're interested in the entire map of sports betting and since we've grown as much as we have, we now have the muscle to make some acquisitions to broaden our reach. To us, it's been a natural progression where at the centre of this is about staying relevant to our users and adding value to them. By doing so, it shows we are very relevant to all our business partners.



**JESPER SØGAARD**

**“I THINK ESPORTS IS VERY BIG AND THE SHIFT IN INTEREST FROM A BROADER AUDIENCE PERSPECTIVE WOULD HAVE SURELY GROWN FASTER IF WE DIDN'T HAVE THE CORONAVIRUS. WHAT WE'VE NOTICED FROM ODDS AND DATA PROVIDERS IS THAT THEY SEE PEOPLE WHO USED TO ENGAGE WITH TRADITIONAL FOOTBALL HAVE ALSO TO A FAIRLY LARGE DEGREE ENGAGED WITH ESPORTS DURING THE ABSENCE OF FOOTBALL. I'M QUITE SURE THAT BEHAVIOUR WILL STICK”**



# PLAY HARD

While everyone is isolated at home on lockdown, **Kevin Dale**, Gaming Monitor director and Farawaysports CEO, describes what he would do if he found himself isolated in another way – on a desert island

### YOU'VE WOKEN UP AFTER BEING WASHED UP ON A DESERT ISLAND, WHAT WOULD BE THE FIRST THING YOU DO?

Put on sunscreen and dry out the mobile (if that's allowed). If not, find a source of fresh water, trying hard to remember anything from a Bear Grylls' survival videos. Without getting my hopes up too much, I'd scout around for coconut trees, fashion a fishhook and find a 'Wilson' to talk to.

### THE DESERT ISLAND HAS A TV SET, BUT NO FILMS. WHAT WOULD BE THE ONE FILM YOU TAKE FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD AND WHY?

Tough one to answer as my top 10 has a few contenders. 'Justice or courage in the face of adversity' is my favourite movie theme or plot, and is thankfully quite well served. 'Cool Hand Luke' is an oldie but goodie with Paul Newman, but 'Castaway' might serve up some tips.

### YOU'VE ALSO ONLY BROUGHT ONE NOVEL FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

I really don't get round to reading much these days other than the press, emails and reports but I do manage the odd novel when on holiday. It tends to be fairly lowbrow I'm afraid. Whilst I might once have appreciated the intricacy of a Tolstoy or an Orwell, you'd find me on the beach deckchair these days with a Clancy or a Patterson.

### WHAT WOULD BE YOUR METHOD FOR CREATING SHELTER TO SURVIVE THE NIGHTS?

I'm a qualified electrician and enjoy building stuff in my spare time, including some funky beds, light fittings and sinks. The problem is, you're only as good as your tools so I imagine something basic would have to suffice at first. Building a new man-cave from bits of scrap would be a priority.

### YOU'RE TRAPPED ON THE ISLAND WITH A DEADLY ANIMAL. WHAT ANIMAL WOULD YOU BE MOST SCARED TO SHARE YOUR ISLAND WITH AND WHY?

I wouldn't want to share my perfect bay with a man-eating shark – that would put a damper on any attempts to learn surfing. Either that or a swarm of those little jellyfish – a bit less scary but more irritating.

### AFTER MONTHS WITH ONLY COCONUTS TO EAT, YOU FIND A WASHED-UP BOX FULL OF FOOD. WHAT WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO BE IN IT?

All perfectly preserved by Deliveroo I assume. In the 'cool starter' section on top, some salt and vinegar crisps and a cold Becks. In the 'keep piping hot' section underneath, you'd find a full English breakfast, a roast lamb dinner and a chicken rogan josh. No fish thanks – think I'd have seen enough by then.

### YOU FIND A STEREO BUT NO CD. WHAT ONE ALBUM WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO LISTEN TO AND WHY?

What, no radio? No bluetooth speaker for the dried out mobile and no Spotify? It's certainly cruel and harsh this island.

### A CELEBRITY YACHT SINKS NEAR THE ISLAND. WHICH CELEBRITY DO YOU MOST WANT TO JOIN YOU ON THE ISLAND AND WHY?

Paul Merton because he makes me laugh, and we'd need a few chuckles on this 'one Deliveroo-per-three-months, no-Spotify' island.

### THE MONTHS HAVE DRAGGED ON AND FOOD SUPPLIES ARE DWINDLING, HOW ARE YOU GOING TO ESCAPE THE ISLAND?

I don't really see my chances on a raft as being any better than fishing the waters of my now coconut-free island. Mug the Deliveroo boatman if he comes back maybe?

### YOU'VE MADE IT OFF THE ISLAND. WHAT IS THE FIRST THING YOU DO?

Off to the pub with the kids, mates and the missus, if she hasn't already shacked up with someone else!





# PLAY ATTACK

PlayAttack Affiliates



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