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Marketing & affiliate focus by *Gambling Insider*

APRIL 2021

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SoftSwiss and BitBoss on the rise of blockchain

Luckbox affiliates manager Mike Bazzi on how to capitalise throughout 2021

Examining Betwinner's approach in Africa, LatAm and Ukraine

Play Hard: Ellen Learmonth

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IN WITH THE NEW

Exclusive: freshly picked Catena Media CEO Michael Daly on winds of change from the West





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TRAFFIC REPORT

Trafficology has partnered with data experts Casino City Press to provide insight into website and traffic trends across the gaming industry. In this edition, we review affiliate programmes globally for February 2021. The below is a breakdown of the top 10 sites by vertical, including overall, casino, sports and poker across mobile (phones and tablets); and overall, casino, sports and poker across desktop



OVERALL (MOBILE)

Rank	Name	Website
1	bet365 Affiliates	www.bet365affiliates.com
2	NetHive Affiliate Program	www.nethive.com
3	AfiliadosW	www.afiliadosw.co
4	eToro Partners	www.etoropartners.com
5	Euro Partners	www.europartners.com
6	betway Partners Africa	www.betwaypartnersafrica.com
7	Entain Partners	www.entainpartners.com
8	Kindred Affiliates	www.kindredaffiliates.com
9	Best Partners	www.bestpartners.com
10	Gamesys Group Partners	www.gamesysgrouppartners.com

CASINO (MOBILE)

Rank	Name	Website
1	Gamesys Group Partners	www.gamesysgrouppartners.com
2	Euro Partners	www.europartners.com
3	WinBet Affiliates	www.winbetaffiliates.bg
4	Platin Casino Affiliates	www.partners.platincasino.com
5	PlayAmo Partners	www.playamopartners.com
6	Entain Partners	www.entainpartners.com
7	Buffalo Partners	www.buffalopartners.com
8	bet365 Affiliates	www.bet365affiliates.com
9	LeoVegas Affiliate	www.leovegasaffiliates.com
10	Rank Affiliates	www.rankaffiliates.com

SPORTS (MOBILE)

Rank	Name	Website
1	NetHive Affiliate Program	www.nethive.com
2	AfiliadosW	www.afiliadosw.co
3	bet365 Affiliates	www.bet365affiliates.com
4	betway Partners Africa	www.betwaypartnersafrica.com
5	Entain Partners	www.entainpartners.com
6	Best Partners	www.bestpartners.com
7	Bovada Affiliate Program	www.bovada.lv/new-bovada-affiliate-program
8	Tipsport Partners	www.tipsport.cz/partner
9	Betway Partners	www.betwaypartners.com
10	Kindred Affiliates	www.kindredaffiliates.com

POKER (MOBILE)

Rank	Name	Website
1	Stars Affiliate Club	www.starsaffiliateclub.com
2	WPN Affiliates	www.wpnaffiliates.com
3	U-affiliates	www.uffiliates.com
4	Winamax Affiliates	www.winamax.fr/en/affiliates
5	The Spartan Poker Affiliate Program	www.thespartanpoker.com/affiliate/overview.html
6	Entain Partners	www.entainpartners.com
7	bet365 Affiliates	www.bet365affiliates.com
8	GGPartners	en.ggpoker.com/partners/affiliate-program/
9	CommissionKings	www.commissionkings.ag
10	Royal Stakes	www.royalstakes.com



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.

OVERALL (DESKTOP)

Rank	Name	Website
1	bet365 Affiliates	www.bet365affiliates.com
2	eToro Partners	www.etoropartners.com
3	Yahoo Fantasy Sports Affiliates	sports.yahoo.com/daily-fantasy/affiliates
4	Betfair Partnerships	affiliates.betfair.com
5	DraftKings Affiliates	www.draftkings.com/affiliates
6	NetHive Affiliate Program	www.nethive.com
7	Gamesys Group Partners	www.gamesysgroup-partners.com
8	Kindred Affiliates	www.kindredaffiliates.com
9	Entain Partners	www.entainpartners.com
10	AfiladosW	www.afiladosw.co

CASINO (DESKTOP)

Rank	Name	Website
1	Gamesys Group Partners	www.gamesysgroup-partners.com
2	Stakes Affiliates	affiliates.stakes.com
3	WinBet Affiliates	winbetaffiliates.bg
4	Betsson Group Affiliates	www.betsson-groupaffiliates.com
5	Platin Casino Affiliates	partners.platincasino.com
6	LeoVegas Affiliate	www.leovegasaffiliates.com
7	Videoslots Affiliate Program	partner.videoslots.com
8	Kindred Affiliates	www.kindredaffiliates.com
9	Paf Partners	www.pafpartners.com
10	Buffalo Partners	www.buffalopartners.com

SPORTS (DESKTOP)

Rank	Name	Website
1	bet365 Affiliates	www.bet365affiliates.com
2	Betfair Partnerships	affiliates.betfair.com
3	AfiladosW	www.afiladosw.co
4	NetHive Affiliate Program	www.nethive.com
5	Entain Partners	www.entainpartners.com
6	Stoiximan.gr Affiliates	affiliates.betano.com
7	Best Partners	www.bestpartners.com
8	Bovada Affiliate Program	www.bovada.lv/new-bovada-affiliate-program
9	Kindred Affiliates	www.kindredaffiliates.com
10	Tipsport Partners	www.tipsport.cz/partner

POKER (DESKTOP)

Rank	Name	Website
1	WPN Affiliates	www.wpnaffiliates.com
2	Winamax Affiliates	www.winamax.fr/en/affiliates
3	Stars Affiliate Club	www.starsaffiliateclub.com
4	Entain Partners	www.entainpartners.com
5	U-affiliates	www.uffiliates.com
6	GGPartners	en.ggpoker.com/partners/affiliate-program/
7	CommissionKings	www.commissionkings.ag
8	bet365 Affiliates	www.bet365affiliates.com
9	The Spartan Poker Affiliate Program	www.thespartanpoker.com/affiliate/overview.html
10	Natural8 Affiliates	www.affiliate.natural8.com



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THE PERSONAL TOUCH

João Vaz, Betwinner PR director, stresses the importance of communication and affiliation in igaming during the pandemic



A good example is the online gambling market in Latin America that has become strategic and is expected to grow 11.5% between 2020 and 2027. Brazil, for example, which is still in the period of regulation of online and land-based sports betting, has the possibility to see more than 500% growth by 2025 and become one of the top countries in terms of gross revenue. Brazil, therefore, presents colossal potential.

To reach those markets it's important to take advantage of the opportunities that isolation has brought, such as the need to think outside the box to remodel, and expand sportsbook and casino products. Many are reinventing themselves, developing and implementing new promotions for their platforms to make the experience of gambling more interesting, and reach a level of communication with costumers more efficiently. The important thing is not to stand still. Follow the change and be creative.

We made a bet to start with a great name in Brazilian football, to try to communicate and enter the market with an image of credibility and approximation. Despite the situation of Covid-19, we closed some significant agreements, like with Pentacampeão and ex-Real Madrid player Roberto Carlos as our ambassador in Latin America until the World Cup in Qatar next year.

During lockdown, we started looking for new opportunities and some other partnerships and sponsorships, as with Ukrainian club, Karpaty Lviv. Ukraine has recently passed its Gambling Act into law, which demonstrates the importance of online gambling regulations and the need to unify standards and regulations.

In Europe we renewed our partnership with luxury lifestyle rally, OneLife Rally. With this, we're able to communicate with other potential customers and have other affiliation channels.

In the art of communicating, it'll always be easier to reach customers with credibility and transparency, and always utilising a local voice. For example, like in Brazil, in Nigeria, Betwinner already has an office and a licence, and in an effort to try to speak globally with a more effective communication, we will have a 15-minute program on a sports radio station, Brila FM, in which we'll speak about brand and sports. Africa is a rising star in the igaming market. We're pushing to be present in other countries like Kenya, Tanzania and Ghana as well. But Nigeria can present a unique challenge as it's become the second-largest online gambling market after South Africa. Esports is among the most popular forms of gambling in Nigeria, and many football fans watch La Liga and the English Premier League as well, but the big motivation is to win online customers with communication and affiliation in a country with a tradition of retail-dominant players.

The pandemic has brought us opportunities and challenges for developing communication, learning and ideas. We gained new networks and working patterns that can help us develop products, working with teams sometimes separated by a camera or one click.

In difficult times like these, communication and the work of an industry already strong online and very technological went into overdrive, since all the networking that was in person at fairs switched formats. Sometimes at these fairs, you don't have time to network and go to conferences, but in these times of online by obligation, we've seen that content and knowledge plus networking can be done simultaneously. Returning to normal is inevitable and desirable for the events of igaming, but massification of the online presence of communication is here to stay.

One thing I believe in this industry, and it is the reality of my actual job role, is the integrating of PR with outreach; and affiliation is a proven method to increase conversion and brand awareness.

If the affiliate was mentioned in an article, sharing the article on social media or, again, on the affiliate platform with good PR guidelines and transparent communication, will help maximise these efforts, and increase product awareness and conversion.

So a good way to reach potential customers is to be clear about integrating PR with outreach, as an affiliate is a proven method to increase conversion and brand awareness.

With that clear, we can start growing because it's always exciting to enter new markets and new countries, and also develop communicational products with a local dimension fighting cultural blocks; and wanting to become an integral part of that reality, creating an adaptation of the product to the local stage.

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MORE THAN A FLASH IN THE PANDEMIC

2020 was a breakthrough year for esports betting, and affiliates can certainly capitalise in 2021, according to Luckbox affiliates manager **Mike Bazzi**

Esports has been “the next big thing” in the igaming space for what seems like forever, but last year that claim came into sharper focus, with the global pandemic thrusting the sector well and truly into the limelight.

This time last year, pretty much all forms of live entertainment were on hold, and it was esports’ time to shine, with most tournaments able to continue, albeit in an online-only format.

At Luckbox, we saw a revenue uptick of 500% during that period, and the wider igaming industry also noticed an increase in esports betting, with EveryMatrix reporting a 40-times growth and FIFA and NBA2K accounting for about 80% of that volume.

Of course, most top-level sports have thankfully been able to resume and the list of most popular sports to bet on has returned to something closer to normal. But make no mistake, esports betting isn’t just a fleeting trend.

AFFILIATES ON ALERT

For the vast majority of affiliates, esports traffic currently will be low priority, well behind the likes of sports and casino. However, times are changing.

Esports has been identified as the sport with the highest growth potential, ahead of basketball and football, while global gross gaming revenue generated from esports betting is projected to rise from \$343m to \$862m by 2024.

For affiliates interested in future-proofing their model, esports has to be the number-one consideration.

Operators are quickly realising the value of esports traffic, made up of an enviable demographic who are aged 18 to 35, well educated and with access to sizable disposable incomes. Just like sports traffic, after acquisition, esports players can be cross-sold into casino, vastly increasing lifetime value and, of course, affiliate commission.

ANOTHER KEY YEAR FOR ESPORTS

While esports proved itself to be somewhat pandemic-resistant, make no mistake: it was another of the many industries hurt by Covid-19. Hosting tournaments online is a great backup plan, but it’s by no means ideal, with fans missing from events throughout most of last year.

We were also robbed of the chance to see teams from different continents facing each other as, even online, teams need to be at least on the same continent to avoid latency that would ruin matches.

The calendar itself was also heavily disrupted, with the Dota International being the highest-profile casualty. The International 10 was due to be held in Stockholm in August with a prize pool of more than \$40m, but it had to be postponed, along with the rest of the Dota Pro Circuit.



MIKE BAZZI

This year, however, there is optimism that we’ll see fans back in arenas, The International go ahead and, generally, a more healthy esports calendar. Indeed, the Dota Pro Circuit is back up and running and the ONE Esports Singapore Major was in action, the first Dota Major for more than a year.

The CS:GO calendar already looks much stronger for 2021 than it did last year, and February’s IEM Katowice went ahead as an in-person event, while the League of Legends World Championship was held in front of a live audience in China in October.

Alongside the “big three” of CS:GO, Dota and LoL, there is a new game for fans and bettors to get excited about. Riot Games’ new title Valorant has hit the ground running and looks to have a hugely promising competitive scene, with the game publishers supporting the esports calendar.

A NEW FRONTIER

Affiliates will no doubt be aware of the developing situation in North America, with an increasing number of US states legalising gambling and Canadian lawmakers on the path to allowing single-event wagering.

This month, a legislator in Nevada introduced a bill to create the Nevada Esports Commission that would see esports events regulated in similar fashion to the Athletic Commission. Esports is hugely popular in North America and this no doubt promises to be fertile ground for operators and affiliates in the best position to pounce.

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WORK TO YOUR STRENGTHS

Speaking shortly after his appointment as Catena Media CEO, **Michael Daly** speaks with Tim Poole about settling into the new role and how a broadened perspective beyond North America, leveraging the strength of affiliates, can enable greater growth



Can you tell us about your transition into the role so far?

It's been invigorating. I've been with Catena already a couple of years running North America, but going into the global role as CEO just opens up so much more about all the other markets I only had an inkling of an understanding of in terms of all

Catena's efforts. We talked about them at the executive level but never really had time to dive into those on a weekly call with the other executives when you're really focusing on your own areas. North America obviously had lots to focus on, so it's been very exciting for me to get to know more of the managers below

the executives in the various groups around the world, just to see the depth of the team Catena has.

When we were doing this transition, we also started a transformation program, which I had been involved with, but now I'm spearheading some efforts to improve the small percentage of the business that was not essentially growing as we'd hoped. So we needed to put some focus on that and do some hard work. That's also very exciting, because the opportunity that's out there is clear, and being able to take advantage of that opportunity is what we're focusing on.

Can you expand on those particular areas that weren't meeting expectations?

It's particularly casino in Europe. Part of it was our structuring in terms of we had casino groups, and we had sports groups, and in certain markets, they're more geographically driven. If I were to use Germany as an example, we might have had two different groups running sports and casino. Does that make sense? The operators are the same.

We need to look at how we align ourselves for our customers, which are the end consumers; for the operators, which are the ones we do the business with and on behalf of; and then for our company. So how do you best align all of those elements? That's something we've been looking at, mostly focused on the casino product, but obviously that has a spider web to the rest of the organisation because of shared resources, shared teams, where they should be shared, and where they should be separated.

It's interesting to hear you talk of other markets outside North America because obviously there's a massive buzz about the US at the moment. Would it be fair to assess the US as Catena's biggest target area because you headed the US side, and now you're CEO?

I think there are two questions in there. There's North America and the US, Catena's biggest target market. It's the fastest-regulating market and biggest numbers-wise on the near-term horizon anyway. So it's probably the biggest for Catena because our operators are viewing it as the biggest, and those are the operators we serve as an affiliate. So anywhere the operators are going in mass and in power, we go to support them. That's our business.

But I don't think it means we're more focused on the US. We've been supporting that business and growth pretty well. I think if anything good came out of the global pandemic and the changes in 2020, it's the ability for us to think remotely. There were roles that were often viewed as in-office and had to be from a certain location. The CEO is the prime example of that. So as an executive on the team in North America, I thought I was essentially at the top of where I could grow in the organisation because I wasn't in Malta. North America had already been a remote team, but now remote thinking has allowed our company to change perspective. Maybe some of these things we had pre-existing thoughts about how they had to work, but 2020 has fractured those. So this is exciting for me and our teams as we grow. It opens up lots more opportunities in the organisation for everybody, because people are no longer geographically determined, and that means we can find the

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best people for the roles, regardless of where they are. So picking a US CEO for a European-based company means we can think globally and remotely, and find a blend and balance that makes a great organisation.

What are the most striking lessons you've learned since joining Catena, and has your experience changed your view about anything in particular within the affiliate market?

The lesson I've learned is affiliate is a really good business in the igaming space. I had never been associated with affiliate before joining Catena three years ago. I'd been working with platforms, operators and vendors going into various global markets with products, RGSs, gaming platforms and so on. Before, I just viewed affiliates as part of a marketing arm, never really looking at the business, but it's the most modern technology probably in the gaming space; because while we are regulated, we're less regulated in the marketing rules than, say, the platform, which has to do the gambling but it has to do the wallet transactions.

So it allows us to bring in a lot more modern technology from other industries because we can work more openly. And because we're more modern, it gives us more people we can bring in like those with SEO experience, big players outside the gaming industry, world-class journalists and all sorts of people who are in the gaming industry as well. A phrase that has been out there since I've been in the industry for the last 18 years is the gaming industry is somewhat incestuous. People went from company to company, but we didn't bring in a lot of new

talent. Catena to me is the opposite of that. So that's a lesson I learned about affiliates making really good businesses.

And on top of that, it's clear finances: it's a very clean business in terms of what your costs and revenues are, how it all inter-reacts or inter-relates. It's also high margin, and because of that, it means there's lots of opportunity for affiliates to use healthy cash flow to grow the business.

We were also seeing a lot of acquisitions at Catena, and we slowed that down to try to figure out the balance between agility and efficiency. So often you have the startups that you acquire, and those are agile, but they're not very efficient from a global perspective. Catena probably tried to make everything work the same in some of these, and that leads to efficiency for the company. But again if we go back to what's good for customers, operators and the company, we have to find a balance in efficiency and agility that makes it able to grow at the speeds of the markets, as well as grow the bottom line, which is the efficiency part.

Given the heavy focus on growing Catena's US presence, how will Catena prioritise the rest of its existing markets?

There are lots of other markets with things going on. Some people refer to Europe as the legacy business for us. I hate the term personally because I think legacy implies various things that discredit the team and the markets. Germany is re-regulating, it's going to change. However, that's a great opportunity for an affiliate.



MICHAEL DALY

“WE WERE ALSO SEEING A LOT OF ACQUISITIONS AT CATENA, AND WE SLOWED THAT DOWN TO TRY TO FIGURE OUT THE BALANCE BETWEEN AGILITY AND EFFICIENCY. SO OFTEN YOU HAVE STARTUPS THAT YOU ACQUIRE, AND THOSE ARE AGILE, BUT THEY'RE NOT VERY EFFICIENT”

The operators are going to be there again, and they're going to need marketing. Like the UK, they'll be under new marketing rules and limitations on what they can do, so they'll need every resource available.

An affiliate that can operate in that space, and operate and drive traffic effectively, becomes an even more important element. So markets like Germany and the UK are growth opportunities. At some point those markets come back and become very healthy for us, similar to how North America has in a regulated space; so Catena is able to not just run, but dominate.

Then we have lots of other markets. Latin America is a massive opportunity. I think one of the operator's CEOs said Brazil itself can be as big as the United States. That's further down the line, but, again, invest early, establish a position as an affiliate so you're ready for all the waves that come as sports and casino, and whatever other products, come online. An affiliate can invest for a relatively safe amount and see massive returns when those markets reach fruition.

As Catena Media CEO, what are your personal goals moving forward and what would you like to achieve and attain from this role?

I'll say to move forward the Catena team. We have a lot of good people. A lot of people focus on, 'Are they making the numbers or not?' The CEO doesn't make the numbers; the CEO's job is to make the organisation that makes the numbers. I want to make sure that I as the CEO am spending the right amount of time investing in our people and how we grow our teams and give them opportunities.

It's important for me to make sure I'm learning and growing; and growing your organisation and learning from them.



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THE REVOLUTION CONTINUES

Blockchain technology is quietly changing the gaming landscape, and there's no going back, according to the new SoftSwiss Game Aggregator report, and **Matthew Dickson**, CEO and co-founder of, BitBoss corporation

Away from sensationalist headlines about the price of Bitcoin, cryptocurrencies and blockchain technology are quietly changing the way global finance works. To date, the adoption of these forms has been more tortoise than hare, but we all know how that story panned out.

Having been purpose-built to handle financial transactions, blockchain technologies offer the gaming market a great deal more than just cryptocurrency acceptance at point of play. This is not to discount the change currently being seen in consumer habits, however. Demand for token betting has been growing steadily for years, and the benefit of accepting this can be a boon for operators, according to The SoftSwiss Game Aggregator report.

The company's aggregator platform currently provides more than 11,000 games from 70 studios, and has taken more than €4bn (\$4.74bn) in wagers. A key part of this growth has been the implementation of cryptocurrency payments.

The platform hosts more than 3,000 titles that, through blockchain integration, can accept token wagers, and this number is only growing. The company recently reported that cryptocurrency gambling traffic saw a threefold increase between 2019 and 2020, and that there is little sign of this slowing; although the market is currently dominated by Bitcoin, as one would expect.

"The SoftSwiss Game Aggregator supports several of the most popular cryptocurrencies, but the undoubted leader was and still is Bitcoin with a dominating 90%, and other cryptocurrencies (ETH, LTC in second and third place respectively) holding the remaining 10%. Country-wise, the SoftSwiss Game Aggregator statistics highlighted strong crypto usage all around the world, with increasing interest in Canada, Russia and Latin America."

While Bitcoin is currently the most well-known cryptocurrency – owing in no small part to recent media fascination – the true benefit of blockchain implementation in the gaming space is far greater than just allowing transactions in the latest popular form.

BitBoss CEO and co-founder Matthew Dickson has been developing blockchain gaming solutions for close to a decade, and in that time he's seen a great deal of "next big things" come and go. He believes it's crucial for operators, content creators and platform providers to fully engage with the market to separate the wheat from the chaff.

"As a company, and as a team, we have a great deal of institutional experience in blockchain and cryptocurrencies. We've seen countless projects come and go and there's too many 'next big things' to count. However, when Bitcoin SV came about, it was really a game changer for us. It was really the first blockchain that we found, after being in the space for a long time, that we could process transactions at scale, and we didn't have to worry

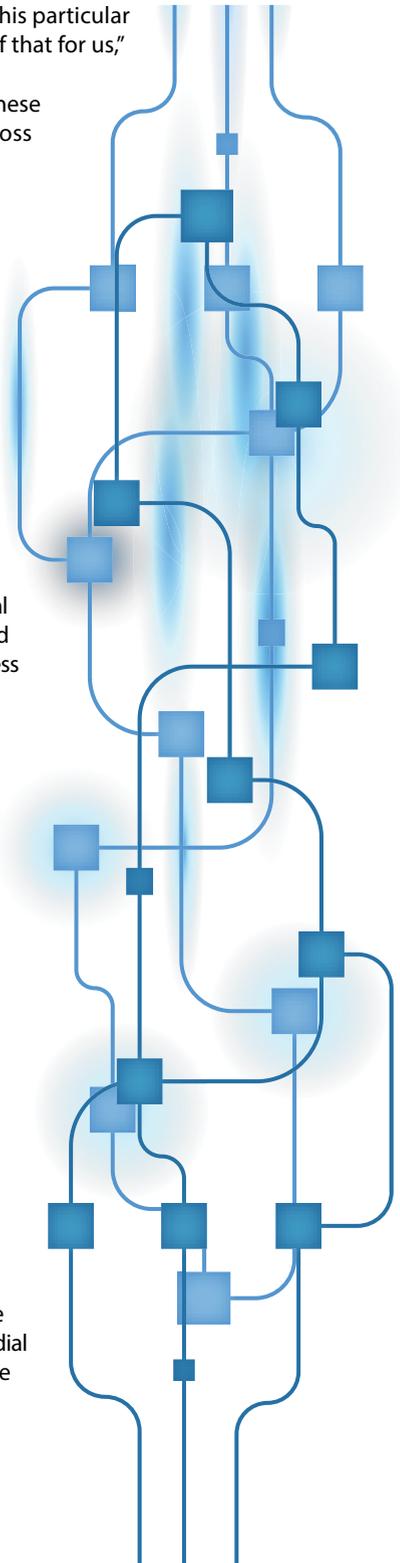
about double spend. This particular blockchain solved all of that for us," he told *Trafficology*.

The culmination of these experiences is the BitBoss Bridge Ecosystem, a next-generation transactional platform that streamlines money management throughout the online and land-based supply chains, through a secure, immutable cashless system.

The adoption of blockchain technologies within the gaming space has been a gradual one, and the time offered by this deliberate progress has enabled BitBoss to maximise its offering, Dickson commented.

"Now, after years of development, we have the most scalable, robust, blockchain gaming platform in the world right now. I say that with all sincerity," he said.

An increasing variety of wagering options will always be attractive to both player and operator, but it is the structure of blockchains themselves that provide the most meaningful benefit. With their full-chain transparency, provable fairness and non-custodial wallet applications, these



technologies enable instantaneous transactions between actors in a fully secure, mutually accountable environment that has no need for intermediaries, or additional platforms.

It is these benefits that are often the most overlooked, added Dickson.

“What we are seeing is that the large majority is missing the fact there's a confluence of transactions of transactions and money – as that is all gaming really is: a financial transaction with a packet of data.

“The problem is that the internet was designed for data transfer, not for money. Blockchain was designed for money transfer and then data was added later on, so our take on it is that if every gaming transaction is essentially a monetary transaction, why would you not choose the network that is designed specifically for money?”

The financial-centric nature of blockchain technology also has wide-ranging implications for the affiliate model. By leveraging decentralised accountancy structures, operators, affiliates and content providers can be paid their share of each wager instantaneously, and inexpensively. Each member of the supply chain has full access to the ledger, meaning complete transparency of process from the moment of transaction – the need for end-of-month invoices and waiting for payment are removed.

The SoftSwiss Game Aggregator report further addressed the end-user transactional benefits: “Perhaps one of the most important aspects for players when choosing a casino is the ability to quickly withdraw their winnings, so crypto projects do outrun fiat ones here. The second important aspect is transparency. Provably Fair is very rarely spotted in fiat casinos, but it is the gold standard for crypto casinos.

“Nevertheless, the rapidly growing popularity of cryptocurrency as a means of payment is leading to rising interest in crypto gambling, a market previously dominated by fiat. Bitcoin is no longer something exotic. So, in the coming years, we can expect to see more gaming studios supporting cryptocurrencies in their games, as well as casino operators integrating new crypto payment methods for their players,” the company added.

The assumption that blockchain technology adoption means the instant redundancy of existing server structures, many of which represent decades of investment, is not only misplaced, but is indicative of a lack of understanding of the form, according to Dickson.

He feels the immediate growth of blockchain technologies lies in improving the efficiency of existing transaction structures, not replacing entire back-office systems.

“I think it's beyond the slow emerging stage. Blockchain is into a stage where everyone that is technologically savvy gets it now. It is now a case of companies developing their business implementations on a blockchain, and finding that it is better than traditional client server architecture.

“We can see that in places like Vegas, where two thirds of all revenue is from non-gaming expenses, and there's huge potential to implement cryptocurrencies that would allow instant payments, in the way that they do credit cards. And from cutting out transaction fees in that way as a casino, you could increase your margin by 2.5%. It's a lot of money.”

Looking ahead, both Dickson and SoftSwiss agree on one salient fact: blockchain technology and cryptocurrencies will

only continue to grow within the gaming space.

“Once land-based and online operators are comfortable accepting a stable token as payment, they are going to become more receptive to turning on our online gaming platform as a service. It's a natural progression. So I think it starts with enabling people to move money first, and then the next phase is the wider adoption of a gambling platform that runs 100% on a blockchain,” Dickson said.

The gaming space is an inarguably innovative one, something that has been brought into sharp focus over the last 12 months. Issues of security, international compliance structures and fund protection have all been hot topics, and all can be solved through the implementation of blockchain technologies. That is not to say that any one platform provides a silver bullet for all market ills, however. Far from it, according to Dickson.

“Cryptocurrency and blockchains do not solve every problem in the world, I don't even think they solve that many, but what it is incredible for is financial and data transactions – and these are the transactions that gaming is built on,” he said. “Blockchain right now has been around for a long time, and it is very usable today, as we speak. The immediate future is blockchain: of that I have no doubt. People will come to accept it and use it, and once that happens, it will become clear just how incredible the benefits are. Once it is in wider use, it will become impossible to ignore. Wherever there are financial transactions, it is of benefit.

“Blockchain is here and it is here to stay. It is the future of gaming; of that there is no doubt.”

**“ONCE LAND-BASED AND ONLINE OPERATORS ARE COMFORTABLE ACCEPTING A STABLE TOKEN AS PAYMENT, THEY ARE GOING TO BECOME MORE RECEPTIVE TO TURNING ON OUR ONLINE GAMING PLATFORM AS A SERVICE. IT'S A NATURAL PROGRESSION”
- MATTHEW DICKSON**

CASINO STREAMERS: THE NEW GENERATION OF AFFILIATES

Helmet Guy, brand ambassador for PlayAttack Affiliates, speaks about the massive growth of casino streamers and what their popularity means for the future of affiliate marketing



Game streaming has exploded onto the digital scene in recent years through platforms like YouTube and Twitch, the latter of which began in 2011. Generally speaking, when people refer to streamers, they tend to think of people who play video games like Fortnite or Warzone and stream them to thousands of viewers of varying age groups on these platforms.

Streaming for casino games didn't kick-off until around 2015. As of 2021, Twitch now has specific categories for casino streaming, which is quickly becoming a new phenomenon in the gambling industry. Indeed, these streamers are the new kids on the block when it comes to affiliate marketing. Casino streaming has witnessed such massive growth, and comes with

so much potential as there is something in it for everyone. And by everyone, we mean the streamers themselves, their audiences, online casinos and affiliate programs.

The Streamers: what's in it for them?

Essentially, casino streamers are just like regular players, with the main difference being that they stream while playing and place bets on various games in an attempt to win and make money. Obviously, they don't rely on winning slot games as a primary source of income.

One of the main reasons to get into casino streaming is that unlike video game streaming, there's a low barrier to

entry. In comparison, video game streamers require endless hours of practice to hone their skills and become one of the top streamers in their field, whereas most casino games are relatively easy to learn. In other words, as long as you know what you're doing and possess a bit of charisma and an entertaining personality, viewers are bound to come and watch you play.

Moreover, streamers still require some capital to get started, as they'll need to purchase a PC that is strong enough to stream while playing, a quality microphone and a webcam. While webcams are not strictly necessary, it provides an added element to the viewers' experience by allowing them to witness the streamer's reactions in real time. This adds a sense of engagement and creates a "bond" between the streamer and an audience.

Furthermore, there are a variety of ways in which casino streamers earn their money. They need sufficient income to pursue it as a full-time profession, just like the rest of us. The primary method, similarly to regular affiliates, is through an affiliate program. Yes, many affiliate programs have realised the potential of casino streamers to the point where some now have separate affiliate programs specifically dedicated to them. This includes PlayAttack, where streamers can sign up and start streaming their favourite slot games from PlayAttack brands like SlotV, Frank Casino and Mr Bit, with the ultimate aim being to drive their audience to the brands in return for a commission.

While affiliate programs are the primary means of earning income, there are alternatives. Streamers can opt to charge

viewers a small amount to subscribe to their channel on Twitch, and they can also earn income by showing Twitch commercials now and then during streaming. Casino streaming is also an exciting pursuit for those who possess a genuine interest and passion for casino games. It's an excellent alternative to traditional affiliate marketing strategies, although it still allows individuals to do what they love in their preferred working hours.

But why and how has casino streaming gained such popularity and attracted such big audiences? And why is casino streaming so attractive to an audience?

The audience: why they tune in

Casino streaming has appeased a generation of players who are more likely to be attracted to video as a way of consuming their content, rather than long-form written pieces about where they should play. Through online casino streams, individuals feel as though they've become part of a community where they can directly interact with other audience members and the streamers themselves. There's a vital social aspect involved, so much so that people look forward to spending their time simply hanging out with others during a live stream.

Players might be unsure about how certain games work or whether they can trust an online casino brand. They might even look to learn a few tips and tricks on how they can increase their chances of winning in games like poker, for instance. In situations like these, players will seek out someone they can trust, and there's no better way of doing this than by actually witnessing someone play casino games on specific brands and seeing what they think and do in real-time.

The simple fact is streamers tend to have big personalities that their audience members resonate deeply with, causing them to keep coming back each time a streamer goes live. Now that we have established why casino streaming is attractive for streamers and their audiences, what exactly is in it for affiliate programs?

Affiliate programs: should they invest?

In a nutshell, yes. Affiliate programs are now beginning to modernise how they go about their business by reaching out to casino streamers and making them an important part of their overall strategy for driving traffic. As previously mentioned, casino streamers build communities with their audiences by making them feel welcome and part of something special. It creates the opportunity for affiliate programs to reach a different segment of players who decide where to play based on the positive things these streamers on Twitch and YouTube say about online casino brands.

So by getting streamers to sign up for your affiliate program, you're guaranteed increased brand awareness and lead generation. By adopting this approach, these potential players will be familiar with the quality of games your brands offer, the welcome bonuses, tournaments, promos and everything in between. The future of casino affiliate marketing is looking brighter than ever and casino streaming has added a fresh, modern element to what is already a gratifying experience for everyone involved.

“THERE ARE A VARIETY OF WAYS IN WHICH CASINO STREAMERS CAN EARN THEIR MONEY. THEY NEED SUFFICIENT INCOME TO PURSUE IT AS A FULL-TIME PROFESSION, JUST LIKE THE REST OF US. THE PRIMARY METHOD, SIMILARLY TO REGULAR AFFILIATES, IS THROUGH AN AFFILIATE PROGRAM”



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PLAY HARD



Affiliate management specialist **Ellen Learmonth** comments on the importance of the outdoors, the return of conferences and how German food stacks up against international competition

WE'VE BEEN IN FORMS OF LOCKDOWN FOR A YEAR NOW. HAVE YOU TAKEN UP NEW INTERESTS OR HOBBIES IN THIS TIME?

INTERESTS OR HOBBIES IN THIS TIME?

I have not taken up new interests or hobbies; the thing I changed is my environment. I have gone from living in a flat without outside space to a house with a garden. For me it is important to spend time outside and at some points during this past year, we could only go out once a day for exercise. Being stuck in an apartment was tough when the weather was nice. Now I can drink my morning coffee outside, have my lunch in the garden and read my book sitting outdoors too.

SAY THE WORLD WAS NORMAL TOMORROW. WHAT WOULD BE THE TOP THREE THINGS YOU'D DO, OR PLACES YOU'D GO?

Spending time with my family would be at the top of my list. I would visit a theatre again, with pre-theatre dinner included. I love musicals especially. Travelling makes my list too, as it would do for many people. I love exploring new countries and cities.

AS WE BECOME MORE GLOBAL, SO DO OUR FOOD TASTES. IF YOU COULD ONLY EAT ONE TYPE OF CUISINE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHAT'S THE STAR DISH?

I had to think about this. Being German I had to dig deep to understand if I could diss my home cuisine! In the end it was a close call between French and Italian. The Italian cuisine won because I love fresh pasta, antipasti, pizza. I would still have lovely fish dishes and good salami and, of course, heavenly desserts with tiramisu being the star dish.

WE'VE ALL BEEN MISSING IN-PERSON INDUSTRY EVENTS; WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVOURITE TO ATTEND SO FAR?

I have attended almost all the European conferences in the past. My favourites are London's ICE & Affiliate Conference closely followed by the Amsterdam Super Show.

WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL HOPES FOR THE INDUSTRY FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR? WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO?

I hope that we will all come out the other end of the pandemic in good health and good spirits. I cannot believe I'm saying this as I have been known to get tired of all the conferences, but I am really looking forward to the first real conference. It will be lovely to meet everyone in person again.

Ellen's experience in online marketing, with a focus on acquisition and affiliate management, spans over 20 years. She's been engaged in the igaming industry since 2006, holding roles with leading operators until she became a consultant to Golden Euro Casino in 2012. She's now also the spokeswoman for Safe Affiliate Programs, a collaboration of various gambling affiliate programs with the aim to create mutual benefits for both the programs and their affiliate partners.



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