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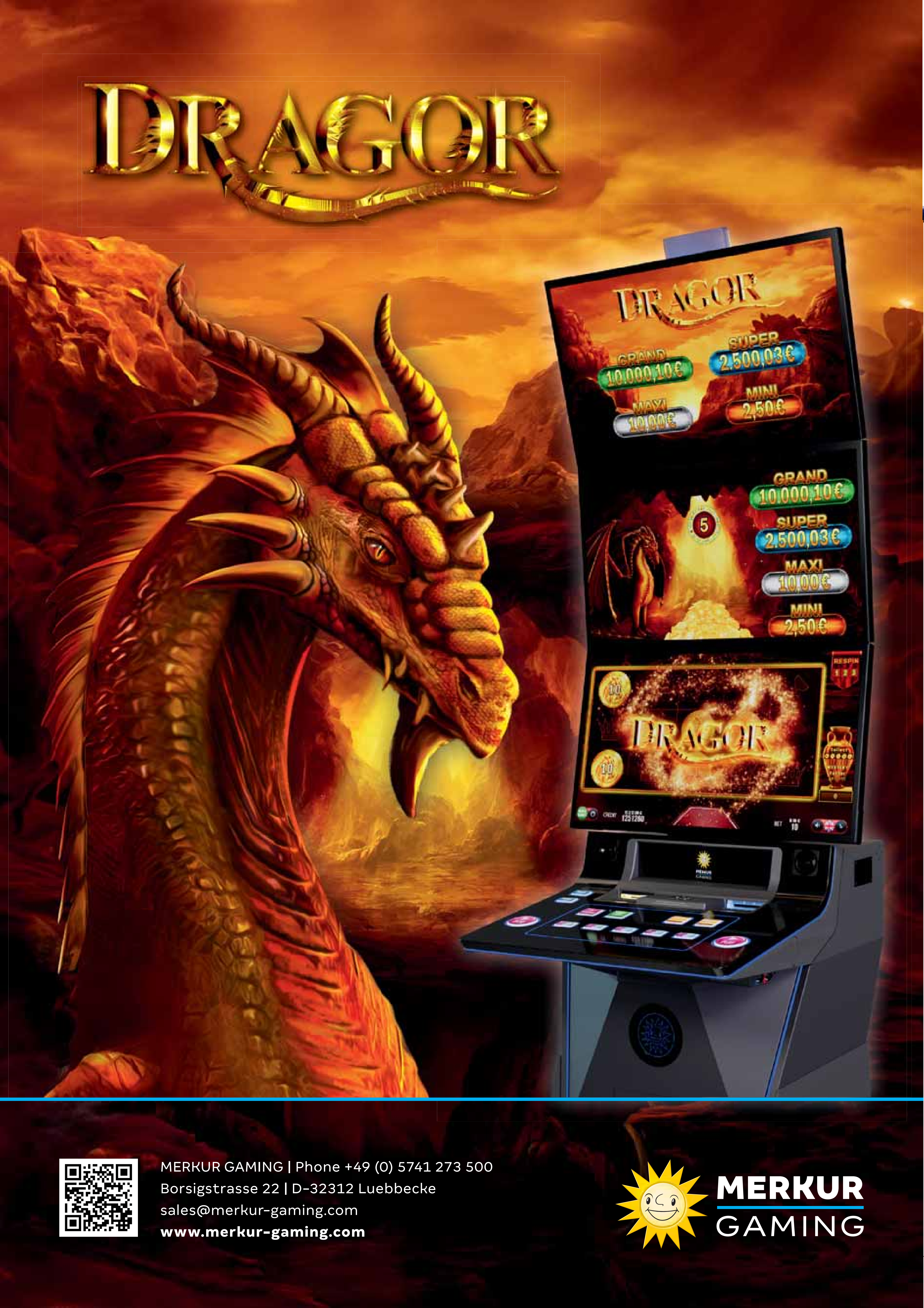

GLOBAL Gambling NEWS
CONNECTING THE GREATEST INDUSTRY IN THE WORLD

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Given that we are approaching a time for festive fun with family and friends, I thought that I would close out 2025 with a few light-hearted musings about the impact of today's ubiquitous technologies on our daily professional and personal lives…

For instance, imagine if social media closed down every day at 5:30pm, like a shop or an office. We would all be forced to meet up in person, have real conversations and be present with our families…

Take Twitter (X) for example, it used to be a cool place to hang out, but now it feels like a decaying monument to the past, somewhere to visit occasionally to watch elderly people getting into fights…

Or, perhaps more controversially, who agrees that COVID now looks like a wasted opportunity? During lockdown, the earth's climate improved, the air was cleaner, outdated work practices were uprooted and we all had time to enjoy what truly matters in life. And now it feels like a shame that none of this has really continued…

And finally, AI. Personally, I want AI to do my domestic chores, so that I have more time to be creative and productive. Not take over my creativity and productivity so that I have more time to do my domestic chores!

That said, I do believe that AI may have invented a new occupation for someone with my skills. Artificial Intelligence may 'create' (within its 'garbage-in, garbage-out' limitation), but only a human can establish a personal connection. Humanizing texts, giving them personality and turning them into a story that resonates (and sells), surely such a 'Human Content Consultant' will become a highly lucrative occupation?

Wising you all a wonderful Christmas, and a happy, healthy and successful 2026!

NICK HARDY
CONTENT DIRECTOR

Celebrating 30 years of Casino

Casino, Martin Scorsese's 1995 movie, captures the rise and fall of a Las Vegas empire, captivating audiences decades later. The film portrays the gritty underworld of casinos, with an authenticity and intensity that results in a cinematic masterpiece, and the stellar cast adds depth and gravitas to the compelling narrative.
Robert De Niro's lead character is based on a real-life operator and filming took place inside the Riviera Hotel & Casino, capturing the true essence of a casino floor.
As Las Vegas evolves into a global entertainment hub, Scorsese's Casino stands as a testament to the city's complex history and the enduring power of gripping storytelling.

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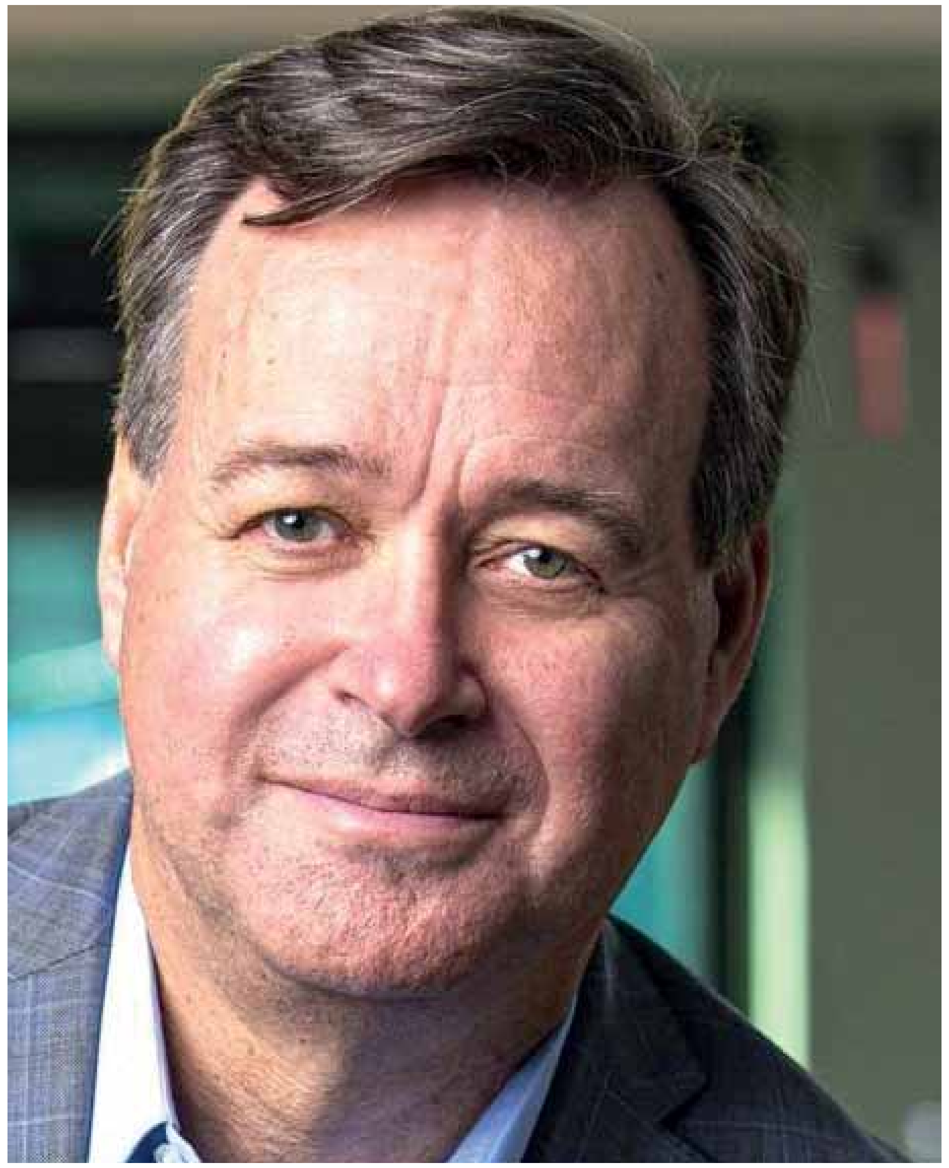
Corporate & Business: **John Sullivan jsullivan@weareggn.com** Content & Editorial: **Nick Hardy nhardy@weareggn.com**

Aristocrat returns $1.4bn to shareholders as social casino takes centre stage

Austrialia

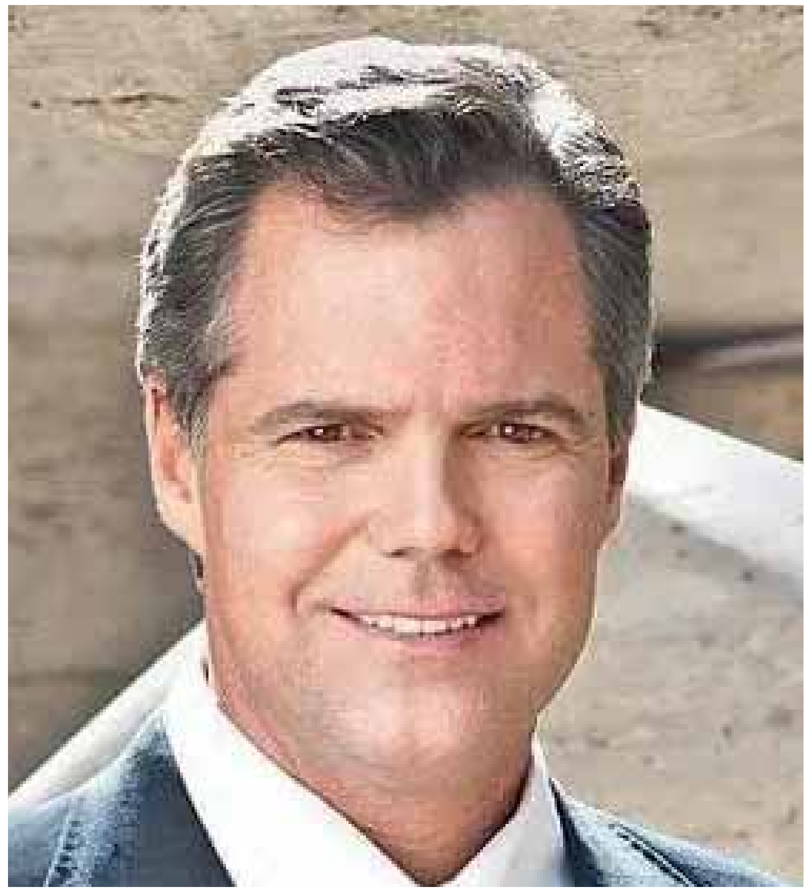
Aristocrat Leisure has returned $1.4bn to shareholders, it reported in its full year financial update, as it repositions its mobile gaming operations to focus on social casino.
The Australian-listed company completed the sale of Plarium in February, later selling Big Fish Games, marking what CEO, Trevor Croker, described as "a period of positive transition."
Going forwards into 2026, Aristocrat's Product Madness mobile operations will be concentrated entirely on social casino, ending its involvement in social casual gaming. This shift comes as the company delivered normalised net profit after tax and before amortisation of $1.6bn, up 12% on the previous year.
Trevor Croker says: "We delivered on our second half performance commitments and achieved a strong Group result for the full year, with double digit growth across most key metrics.
"This illustrates the quality of Aristocrat's portfolio and ability to grow through different operating environments while also investing for the future."
Group revenue increased 11% to $6.3bn, driven by market share gains across the portfolio and the inclusion of NeoGames for the period. EBITDA rose 16% to $2.6bn.
Strong results in outright sales included achieving 31% share in North America and 52% in Australia and New Zealand during the second half. The launch of the Baron cabinet underpinned performance, with the Spooky Link game achieving the fastest take up of any game sales in Aristocrat's history.
And Product Madness ranked No.1 in the social slots market with 21% market share, with bookings increasing 2% to $1.2bn. Direct-to-consumer revenues increased to 18% of social casino revenues in the second half, up from 16% for the full year.
Aristocrat Interactive's revenue growth reflected the full-year inclusion of NeoGames, with organic growth in iLottery and continued scaling of content.
Trevor Croker adds: "We invested significantly in technology and product and took foundational steps that will set up Aristocrat Interactive to accelerate performance, and allow us to fully utilise our content, scale and capabilities.



"Our three complementary business segments are united by a common core of great gaming content and technology, each offering exciting growth prospects. We also continue to actively pursue strategic M&A opportunities, in a disciplined and consistent manner."

Jim Murren takes Interim CEO role at GCGRA

Abu Dhabi



Abu Dhabi's General Commercial Gaming Regulatory Authority (GCGRA) is undergoing a leadership transition as Kevin Mullally steps down as CEO for personal reasons.
Jim Murren, the current Chairman, will assume the role of Interim CEO, guiding the Authority from its formative phase into operational maturity. His appointment confirms that daily operations will continue seamlessly under the executive leadership team's guidance.
In a statement, Murren highlighted Mullally's critical role in shaping the Authority, expressing gratitude for his contributions to its foundational governance and regulatory structure.
Mullally's tenure at the GCGRA was marked by the creation of the UAE's first unified commercial gaming regulatory framework, emphasizing integrity, consumer protection and international best practices. The Authority regulates a range of activities, including lottery, land-based gaming, internet gaming and sports wagering.
Mullally cited family reasons for his departure, explaining his move back to the US to spend more time with his family. He described his role at the GCGRA as a professional honour and praised his colleagues for their dedication and commitment to public service.
Murren's interim focus will be on steering the Authority towards full-scale implementation of its frameworks, ensuring continued regulatory excellence and confidence in the UAE's gaming approach.
Jim Murren said: "Kevin has played a significant role in the Authority's early development, helping to establish its core governance and regulatory structure. We thank him for his contribution and wish him continued success in his future endeavours."

France's land-based casinos resist online gambling legalisation

France

Casinos de France, the main trade body representing the country's land-based casinos, has strongly opposed any government proposals to legalise online casinos.
Recent calls to reform France's online gambling market have gained momentum, amid concerns over illegal operations.
Currently, only online sports betting, horse race betting and poker are permitted, while casino games remain prohibited.
Casinos de France estimate that permitting online casinos would produce a net annual loss of €546m for public finances, factoring in indirect costs associated with health and employment.
Grégory Rabuel, President of Casinos de France and CEO of Barrière Group, rejected AFJEL's claim that €1.2bn is lost to illegal online operators, saying: "It is a hoax and worse, it is a loss for the state.
"Destruction of local jobs, reduction of municipal budgets, the withering away of cultural life in towns and villages; I am not even mentioning the impact on the mental health of the French, which would amount to hundreds of millions in additional costs for social security."
The association further warned that a legal online casino market could trigger widespread job losses, force business closures and reduce resources for municipalities, ultimately undermining social and economic cohesion.
France currently hosts 203 casinos and seven gaming clubs in Paris, employing more than 31,000 people. The sector generates approximately €1.6bn in tax and social security contributions annually, including over €600m directed to local municipalities.
Casinos de France argue that legalising online casinos would directly reduce these revenues.
Sweden saw all its physical casinos close after online legalisation, with nearly 40% of wagers still placed on unauthorised platforms. And Switzerland has faced persistent issues with mirror sites circumventing regulatory blocks.
"Everywhere, the promise of new revenue has turned into a net loss for local communities: decreased economic activity, job losses, a surge in risky behaviour and the persistence of a thriving black market," Casinos de France stated.
Casinos de France concluded that France's land-based casino network preserves jobs, public health and municipal budgets, serving as a regulated and responsible model that online casinos cannot replicate.

Sky Bet's Malta move cuts UK tax by £55m

Malta

Sky Bet, one of the UK's largest gambling operators, has relocated its headquarters to Malta. This move, effective from this month, aims to leverage Malta's favourable tax regime, potentially reducing Sky Bet's UK tax obligations by up to £55m annually

The company has been actively recruiting in Malta since summer 2025.

The relocation involves transferring key teams and personnel from Sky Bet's Leeds office, aligning with a broader strategy to optimize operational efficiency and tax arrangements.

Earlier in the year, the company shifted significant business segments to both Gibraltar and Malta. Although the Leeds office remains operational, it is no longer the company's main headquarters.

This strategic shift is accompanied by leadership changes, with current Director-level and executive positions set for a revamp. However, no official announcements have been made regarding these leadership adjustments.

Sky Bet's parent company, Flutter Entertainment, acknowledges the tax implications but emphasizes the need for efficient operation within a competitive and evolving regulatory environment.

UK operators are subject to Corporation Tax rate of 25% for higher profit companies, along with a Remote Gaming Duty (RGD) of 21% on remote gaming profits from UK customers.

Additionally, UK-based operators may incur Gaming Duty on gross profits, with rates reaching up to 50% in higher profit brackets, and Machine Games Duty on specific betting machines.

In contrast, Malta offers a more favourable regime for iGaming companies. While Malta's Corporate Income Tax rate is nominally 35%, the full system allows for a 6/7 tax refund on distributed profits, resulting in an effective tax rate of about 5% for many companies.

Malta also imposes a 5% gaming tax, but only on GGR from players based in Malta, making it an attractive location for internationally focused gaming businesses.

New regime underway in Italy

Italy

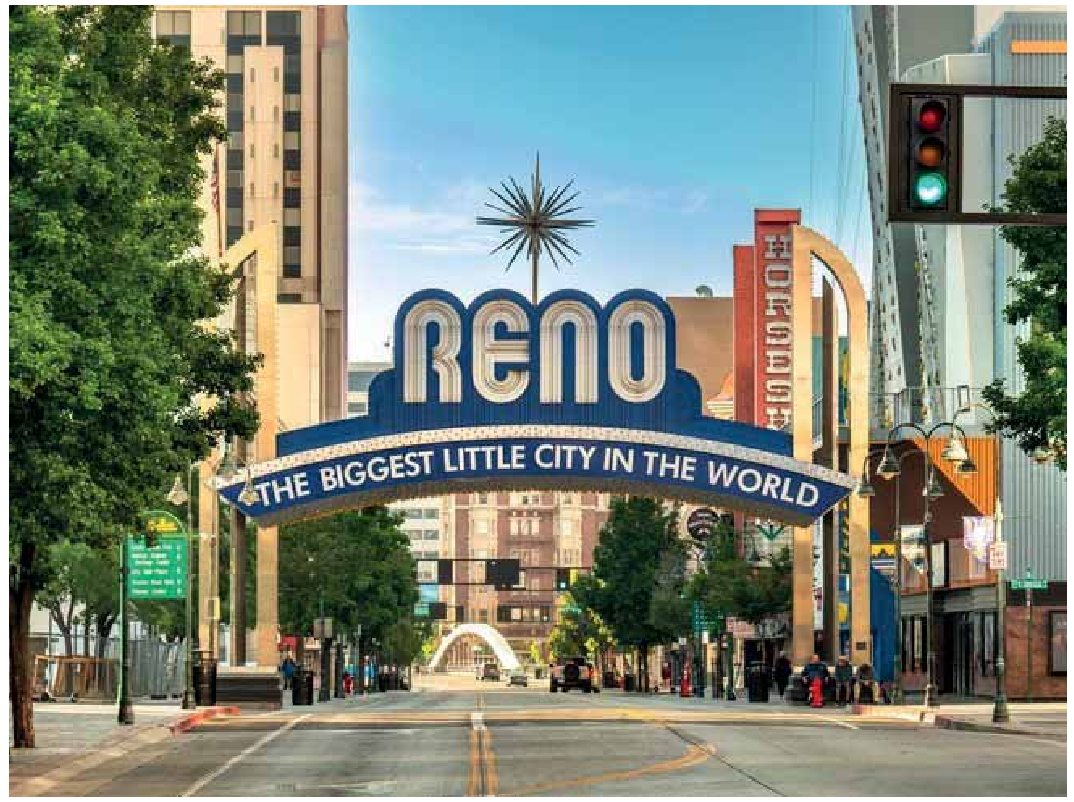
Following hot on the heels of the first SiGMA Central Europe event in its capital city of Rome, the new and revised Italian online gaming licensing regime is now live an operational, signalling the arrival of a more streamlined system for one of Europe's most important markets.

Regulator ADM (Agenzia delle Dogane e dei Monopoli) activated 52 new iGaming licences on November 13th, with hundreds of existing sites that operated as 'skins' being simultaneously shut down under the new rules. Operators can now only use a single domain for each licence, prohibiting multi-site operations.

The new licensing regime is focused on tightened compliance and stronger player safeguards, with all players required to register using Italy's SPID (Sistema Pubblico di Identità Digitale) public digital or identity system, or a recognised electronic ID card for verification.

Mandatory self-exclusion tools and spending limits also remain in place.

Each of the updated Italian licences required a €7m application fee to be paid, generating €364m, and the government will now move ahead with reforms to the land-based sector and advertising.



DraftKings & FanDuel surrender Nevada licenses

USA

On November 12th, the Nevada Gaming Control Board (NGCB) confirmed that it has accepted the surrender of licenses from sports betting giants DraftKings and FanDuel.

The NGCB's official statement reads: "Today the Nevada Gaming Control Board accepted the surrender of Flutter Entertainment PLC's Order of Registration, as well as all related licenses and approvals including those for FanDuel Sportsbooks and its license as a provider of an information service and granted administrative approval of requests for withdrawal for all active and pending applications.

"In addition, the Board granted administrative approval of requests to withdraw all pending applications submitted by DraftKings relative to its interests in sports wagering in Nevada.

"It has been made clear to the Board that Flutter Entertainment/FanDuel and DraftKings intend to engage in unlawful activities related to sports event contracts. This conduct is incompatible with their ability to participate in Nevada's gaming industry."

This statement follows the almost simultaneous announcements from Jason Robbins, Founder & CEO of DraftKings, and Peter Jackson, CEO of FanDuel owner, Flutter Entertainment, that both will be launching into the highly lucrative but somewhat controversial Prediction Market with DraftKings Predictions and FanDuel Predict, respectively.

Whilst Nevada had not yet been a sports betting market for the two industry titans, the NGCB's position regarding prediction markets has been made crystal clear.

With Nevada being one of nearly two dozen states and tribal gaming authorities that have filed federal lawsuits seeking to block prediction markets from offering sports wagering contracts in their jurisdictions, industry experts are predicting that a legal remedy may not be in place until later in 2026.

Speaking at the annual G2E convention in Las Vegas last month, AGA CEO, Bill Miller, described state and tribal gaming operations as "a system founded on a regulatory approach that upholds the public interest and looks out for consumers while giving companies the license to operate, innovate and grow."

"The free riders," he added, referring to prediction markets, "thumb their nose at this approach to gaming."

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Macau visitor numbers surge by 11% in October

Macau

Macau experienced a robust tourism boost in October, with over 3.47m visitors reported. This marks a 10.8% increase from last year, fuelled by the October Golden Week and despite Typhoon Matmo's disruptions. Data from Macau's Statistics and Census Bureau underscore the city's growing appeal.
Mainland China remains the primary source of tourists, with 2.53m arrivals, representing a 12% year-on-year increase. The Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) saw a 22.6% rise, attracting 1.32m travellers. Additional visa arrangements also contributed, with 214,368 using the 'One-Trip-per-Week' measure, 97,365 the 'Multiple-Entry' measure and 11,667 the 'Tourist Group Multi-Entry' measure.
The Greater Bay Area cities, particularly Zhuhai, which saw a 50.9% surge, bolstered Macau's tourism. Overall, arrivals from this region increased by 13.8% to 1,318,837 in October.
International tourism is on the rise, with 260,944 visitors, a 22.9% increase. Southeast Asia showed significant growth: Thailand's numbers climbed 118.5% to 26,299,

the Philippines up 15.3% with 44,863, Indonesia up 24.7% to 16,985, Malaysia up 1.8% to 16,206 and Singapore up 6.1% to 10,140.
Northeast Asia also saw gains, with South Korean visitors up 10.6% to 52,057 and Japanese arrivals up 32.1% to 12,675.
The US contributed 15,467 visitors, marking an 18.8% increase.
Same-day visits accounted for a significant portion of the growth, with over 2.10m visitors, a 17.6% rise, while overnight stays increased by 1.7% to nearly 1.37m.
The average stay remained at 1.1 days. During Golden Week, Macau saw over 1.14m visitors, indicating a strong tourism period despite early disruptions.
According to GGRAsia, Macau welcomed over 33.14m visitors in the year's first 10 months, a 14.1% increase from last year. Mainland visits reached nearly 24.11m, up 17.7%, while international arrivals rose by 13.6% to nearly 2.15m.
Projections for 2025 suggest visitor numbers could reach around 39m.

Anjouan licensing gains popularity among Europeans

Anjouan

Over the past year, the iGaming scene has witnessed a shift, with Anjouan emerging as a popular licensing option for European casino operators. The island in the Comoros is attracting attention due to rising costs and tightening regulations in places like Malta and Curacao.
Anjouan Licensing Services has been around for some time but has only recently become a significant player in iGaming. This shift began in 2024 when Curacao reformed its gaming structure, making it more expensive and stringent, leading small to mid-sized operators to consider Anjouan as a feasible alternative. The island offers lower costs, less red tape and access to the European market.
One of the most notable developments is Anjouan's introduction of the Recognition Certificate in 2025. This allows B2B providers with established European licenses to streamline their approval process in Anjouan. It rewards companies adhering to responsible gambling frameworks by expediting their licensing, thus encouraging rapid market expansion.
Anjouan's licensing framework features robust standards, including RNG certification, AML documentation and KYC policies. Despite strong regulations, the costs remain lower than those in Europe. This affordability enables smaller brands to meet international standards without exhausting their budgets.
While offshore licenses once carried a stigma, the reality is now different. Verified Anjouan licensed casinos offer fair games and smoother banking options, appealing to players seeking accessibility amidst financial regulations and affordability checks.
European operators are drawn to Anjouan for its cost efficiency and speed to market. The license supports crypto integration and appeals to privacy-conscious users. As European regulators increase enforcement against offshore casinos, Anjouan's Recognition Certificate bolsters its legitimacy.
Anjouan may not rival Malta or the UKGC yet, but in 2025, it stands as a viable alternative for European casino operators seeking agility and international focus. Anjouan's blend of speed, standards and flexibility makes it a serious contender in the global iGaming industry.

European Parliament targets illegal online gambling ads

EU

Members of the European Parliament are urging the European Commission to tackle the proliferation of illegal online gambling ads on major platforms like Meta. These ads target EU citizens, including minors, with aggressive promotions from unlicensed operators, violating regulations and evading taxes.
Yvan Verougstraete and Sandro Gozi of the European Democratic Party (EDP) submitted a parliamentary question highlighting these issues. They state that such ads ignore player protection and operate outside national and EU regulatory frameworks.
A report from Reuters indicates that Meta's internal documents project about 10% of its 2024 revenue, approximately US$16bn, may come from advertising linked to scams, including unlicensed online casinos.
Verougstraete criticises the platforms, stating: "It is unacceptable that major platforms like Meta continue to host and distribute advertising for illegal gambling operators that put minors and vulnerable people at risk.
"The DSA was designed precisely to put an end to this digital Wild West. The rules are there and now they must be enforced.
"We urge the Commission to act without delay to protect consumers and ensure fair competition in a sector where transparency and responsibility are essential."

Sandro Gozi echoes these concerns, calling for full application of the Digital Services Act (DSA): "The DSA is a cornerstone of the European model; it protects citizens, sets clear obligations for very large platforms and ensures that the digital sphere is not a law-free zone.
"If Meta or any other platform fails to comply with these obligations, the EU must use the full range of sanctions foreseen by the DSA. European law applies to everyone, and we cannot tolerate illegal practices that fuel gambling addiction by targeting those most at risk."
The MEPs await a formal response from the European Commission on addressing these issues and ensuring compliance with EU law. The EDP is part of the Renew Europe group, which, along with other major parties, forms the Parliament's main governing coalition.

Slovak Gambling Authority cracks down on illegal sponsorships

Slovak

The Slovak Gambling Office, led by new Director General, Libuša Baranová, has directed sports bodies to sever ties with unlicensed gambling entities. Baranová emphasised her office's commitment to combating illegal gambling, protecting consumers and ensuring a regulated market. Sports leagues face fines if they fail to comply with licensing laws.

Assuming her role in October, Baranová has taken charge of the Gambling Regulation Office (ÚRHH) during a period of significant leadership change. Her focus is on stabilising governance and enforcing compliance among Slovak sports leagues, which she described as a "high-visibility resource" for unlicensed gambling operators.

Baranová's directives require sports associations to eliminate any association with foreign gambling operators lacking Slovak licenses. Failure to comply could result in penalties of up to €250,000.

She warns: urging all associations to verify their marketing partners to avoid legal and financial repercussions.

This regulatory push coincides with a broader upheaval in Slovakia's gambling sector. Political tensions have arisen over attempts to overhaul the Gambling Act and centralise control of licensing. President Peter Pellegrini recently vetoed proposed amendments, citing concerns over regional autonomy and the potential for municipalities to be forced into unwanted casino establishments.

The proposed reforms, backed by Sports & Tourism Minister Rudolf Huliak, aimed to centralise oversight and enhance the role of the state-owned lottery. Despite projections of significant state revenue, Pellegrini opposed the changes as unconstitutional, stressing the importance of respecting local decisions.

Martin Bohoš, former Director General, had urged lawmakers to review the Gambling Act, highlighting a shift towards online gambling among Slovak players.

Baranová's inaugural address signals a shift towards stricter enforcement, aligning with a regional trend of tightening regulations and enhancing consumer protections. Slovakia appears poised to follow its Central European neighbours in strengthening regulatory frameworks during 2026.

UK gambling companies spend £2bn per year on advertising

UK

Last year, UK gambling firms allocated an estimated £2bn to advertising, leading to increased demands for tax hikes on the sector. This figure, from media insights group WARC, far exceeded the £1.2bn collected by the Treasury from online casinos.

British bookmakers, online casinos and slot machine companies used a mix of print, digital promotions and affiliate programs. Media sources suggest the actual figure could be even higher than reported due to challenges in tracking digital marketing spend. Consequently, the £2bn estimate may approach the £2.5bn generated from industry duties, including slot machine and sports betting taxes.

The Betting & Gaming Council (BGC) disputes WARC's estimate, claiming ad spend is closer to £1bn; less than a 2018 estimate of £1.5bn by Regulus Partners.

Meg Hillier, Chair of the Treasury Select Committee, argues the industry's vast ad spend contradicts claims of financial vulnerability, saying: "Unfortunately, the fact that we are told the existence of gambling firms is on a financial knife-edge while they simultaneously plough billions into advertising does not come as a surprise."

Alex Ballinger, a Labour MP, labelled the £2bn figure as "astronomic," suggesting firms should reduce advertising before protesting fair tax payments. Meanwhile, analyst Alun Bowden warns that cutting marketing budgets could inadvertently benefit illicit operators by allowing them a larger market share.

Will Prochaska of the Coalition to End Gambling Ads suggests firms could reduce ad spending rather than laying off employees if taxes rise. A BGC spokesperson countered that tax increases would drive consumers to unregulated markets, emphasizing that 20% of advertising focuses on safer gambling messaging.

Polymarket and Hustler Casino Live partner for poker betting

USA

Polymarket has partnered with Hustler Casino Live (HCL) to potentially introduce betting on poker stream results. This development could allow poker fans to wager on game outcomes, enhancing viewer engagement and expanding market reach.

Hustler Casino Live describe this move as "a major new partnership and the start of something huge."

This new partnership coincides with Polymarket's upcoming return to the US market, as it seeks to compete with platforms like Kalshi and online sportsbooks such as DraftKings. Its recent collaboration with the UFC highlights its aggressive expansion strategy. The company aims to differentiate itself by offering prediction markets with extremely low trading fees, appealing to price-sensitive poker players. As betting on poker results has a long tradition, this partnership could attract fans to engage more deeply with HCL's streamed games.

For HCL, the partnership offers a unique opportunity to create betting markets around its streams, potentially increasing viewership and revenue. By enabling fans to bet on outcomes, HCL can keep audiences invested longer, as bettors follow the results closely.

However, betting on live-streamed poker poses challenges, notably the risk of insider trading due to broadcast delays. Despite this, 'gambling on gamblers' remains popular, with practices like cross booking - where players book each other's wins and losses - common in both tournaments and cash games.

While traditional sportsbooks face regulatory limitations, prediction markets like Polymarket offer a legal avenue for poker betting. This partnership could pave the way for new betting opportunities, fostering a deeper connection between poker fans and the streamed content they love.

European regulators unite against illegal online gambling

Spain

Seven European gambling regulators have agreed to implement a coordinated data-sharing mechanism to combat illegal online gambling activities.
This initiative, formalised on November 12th, follows a high-level meeting in Madrid, Spain, and involves regulators from Germany, Austria, France, Great Britain, Italy, Portugal and Spain.
The regulators recognised that the digital market's borderless nature and rapid technological advancements have enabled unlicensed operators to circumvent regulatory oversight. This situation increases risks for consumers and undermines the integrity of regulated markets.
The agreement aims to enhance consumer protection and maintain the integrity of lawful gambling operations.
A significant concern highlighted by regulators is the increase in illegal advertising on social media, video platforms and affiliate networks. These practices allow unauthorised operators to target users across multiple jurisdictions, often ignoring national laws. This exposure places minors and vulnerable individuals at risk, while also eroding consumer protections.
The agreed framework includes the exchange of intelligence on illegal operators and a concerted effort to urge digital platforms to strengthen content controls. The goal is to curb unauthorized gambling promotions and share expertise on identifying, investigating and sanctioning illegal operators, thereby enhancing each jurisdiction's enforcement capabilities.
During the International Gambling Congress in Madrid on November 13th/14th, regulators from Italy, Germany, the UK and Spain publicly underscored their national challenges and emphasised the necessity for unified action against illegal online gambling. The Congress served as a platform for these nations to express their commitment to aligned efforts.
In a joint statement, the regulators characterised illegal gambling as a threat to consumer protection, public order and lawful operators, stressing that it "undermines the entire regulatory framework designed to protect the public interest."
This declaration underscores one of the most coordinated European efforts to date against cross-border illegal gambling activity, presenting a united front against unauthorized operators exploiting gaps in national enforcement.
The initiative signals a significant step towards coordinated enforcement and collaboration with digital platforms, aiming to restrict illegal advertising and protect consumers across Europe.

Korean ruling party eyes esports policy reforms

Korea

Jung Chung-rae, leader of South Korea's Democratic Party (pictured), underscored the strategic importance of the gaming and esports sector during his visit to G-STAR 2025 in Busan. At the event, he emphasized the industry's role as a key growth engine for Korea and highlighted upcoming legislative initiatives to bolster the sector.
During his tour of BEXCO at G-STAR 2025, Jung participated in the On-site Roundtable on K-GAME Future Strategies. He described the game sector as integral to Korea's economic future, citing his instrumental role in enacting the Game Industry Promotion Act two decades ago.
He recalled the challenges faced in the mid-2000s when public opinion largely dismissed esports as mere 'addiction'. Jung stated: "Back then, people insisted games were just 'addiction,' but I kept arguing this was Korea's future cash-cow industry, and we ultimately succeeded in passing the law."
Jung's long-standing advocacy for esports includes forming a National Assembly esports caucus, organising a StarCraft tournament at the National Assembly Library and aiding the launch of the MBCGame HERO team. He reflected on past proposals to integrate esports into the military's athletic programs and to encourage its recognition by the Korean Sport & Olympic Committee, noting that these initiatives have "stagnated for 20 years."
Looking ahead, Jung highlighted the forthcoming revision of the Game Industry Promotion Act, spearheaded by DPK representative Cho Seung-rae. Despite resistance from ministries like Economy and Finance regarding tax incentives, Cho remains committed to further negotiations.
Jung reiterated that esports significantly contributes to Korea's soft power, citing achievements like military service exemptions for elite players and early collaborations with China.
Jung called for continued government support to enable those in game development and esports to operate with confidence. He mentioned the Lee Jae-myung administration's interest in esports, promising ongoing engagement with the industry.

Wynn Resorts' UAE: A new casino frontier

UAE

Wynn Resorts is making a truly groundbreaking entry into the United Arab Emirates with its Wynn Al Marjan Island project in Ras Al Khaimah. Scheduled to open in early 2027, this multibillion-dollar development marks the UAE's first property licensed for commercial gambling, positioning Wynn strongly in the emerging Middle Eastern casino market.
The project is estimated to cost between US$3.9bn and $5.1bn, with Wynn contributing $1.1bn in direct equity. The majority of the funding will be sourced from $2.4bn in debt, while local partners RAK Hospitality and Al Marjan Island LLC will hold a 60% stake in the development.
The resort will feature a luxurious array of amenities, including 1,542 hotel rooms, 22 private villas, 22 restaurants and extensive casino and convention spaces.
Construction is progressing swiftly, with the resort tower expected to be completed by the end of this year. Full opening is set for early 2027, with Wynn forecasting annual GGR of $1.33bn to $1.67bn once operational. Total operating revenue is anticipated to range from $1.38bn to $1.88bn annually, with projected EBITDA margins reaching up to 43%.
By 2028, Wynn Resorts expects its overall company revenue to hit $8bn, including an additional $345m in EBITDA from the UAE property.
Looking ahead, Wynn Resorts is intensifying its marketing efforts, focusing on direct engagement and VIP patron outreach, with marketing campaigns ramping up through 2026. Analysts view this development as a potential game-changer for Wynn, paving the way for further Middle East expansions and solidifying its luxury brand stature.
As the exclusive opening window for Wynn ends, industry analysts anticipate new casino development announcements from major international gaming and hotel brands. MGM Resorts and Caesars International are frequently mentioned as likely future contenders, with both companies already developing large resorts in Dubai, albeit without casinos.

Caesars fined $7.8m for AML lapses

USA

Caesars Palace in Las Vegas must pay a $7.8m fine following Nevada Gaming Control Board (NGCB) findings of anti-money laundering (AML) lapses involving bookmaker Mathew Bowyer.
Despite internal warnings about unverifiable income, Caesars continued its association with Bowyer, leading to regulatory action.
NGCB's complaint detailed Bowyer's gambling activities at Caesars from before 2017 through January 2024.
Despite numerous due diligence checks questioning the legitimacy of his funds, Bowyer continued to gamble at Caesars properties like Caesars Palace, Harrah's Resort Southern California, and Harvey's Lake Tahoe. His name gained notoriety after accepting bets from Shohei Ohtani's former interpreter, Ippei Mizuhara, who stole millions from Ohtani to settle gambling debts. Bowyer is now jailed for operating an illegal gambling business, money laundering, and a false tax return.
Caesars repeatedly flagged Bowyer as suspicious yet continued transactions with him. In 2017 alone, he deposited over $4m. Other casinos banned him, but Caesars did not act on this information. In June 2019, an anonymous call labelled Bowyer a 'bookie', yet his account was reinstated after he provided his 2018 tax return.
By July 2021, Caesars suspended his account but lifted the suspension after receiving more tax returns. Despite ongoing risk documentation, Bowyer was only banned in January 2024, post media coverage of a federal raid on his home.
Broader scrutiny has resulted in other operators like Resorts World and MGM Resorts facing fines of $10.5m and $8.5m, respectively. Industry fines in 2025 surpassed $30mbefore Caesars' penalty.
Caesars outlined its commitment to regulatory compliance, stating, "At Caesars Entertainment, integrity and regulatory compliance are paramount."
Nevada regulators continue emphasizing AML enforcement. Caesars faces challenges, including declining Las Vegas performance and regulatory uncertainties, as Bowyer's activities prompt intensified scrutiny of AML failures in Nevada's gaming industry.

US sports betting to grow 38% by 2030

USA

The US sports betting market is projected to grow by 38% by 2030, significantly faster than Europe and Asia and 11% above the global average. In 2025, Americans are expected to bet over $77bn, with nearly one-fifth of this from the US, the fastest-growing market globally.
Since the 2018 Supreme Court decision overturning the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA), legal sports betting has expanded across the US. This has led to billions in wagers and a booming market fuelled by mobile platforms and innovations such as in-play betting and AI predictions.
Statista data indicates that North Americans will spend $23.1bn on bets in 2025, about $4.5bn less than Europeans but three times more than Australians and 2.5x more than Asians.
By 2030, US betting spending is projected to increase by $9bn, reaching $32.1bn, outpacing global growth rates.
The US market will not only experience the highest growth rates but also the most significant increase in new users, with an estimated 20m additional bettors by 2030. Comparatively, Europe will gain around 9m new users, Asia roughly 7m and Australia about 1.6m. This contributes to a global total of over 44m new bettors.
By 2030, Americans are expected to wager an additional $146.5bn, nearly $50bn more than the total from 2017 to 2025. This positions North America alongside Europe, which is projected to reach $156bn in five-year wagers. Asia and Australia trail with $53bn and $42bn, respectively.
Altogether, these regions and other emerging markets are expected to generate over $450bn in sports bets by 2030, highlighting the expansive growth and lucrative potential of the global sports betting industry.
Read the full story and statistics at: *https://betideas.com/blog/2025/11/06/u-s-sports-betting-market-to-grow-38-by-2030-twice-as-fast-as-europe-and-asian-and-11-above-the-global-average/*

Brazil's betting market boosts economy by R$3.3bn

Brazil

Brazil's newly regulated fixed-odds betting market is significantly contributing to the economy in the Northeast region. A recent study by LCA Consultores and Cruz Consulting reveals that this sector is rapidly becoming a vital economic driver, creating jobs and generating substantial tax revenue, with projections of injecting R$3.3bn into the economy.
The study, conducted in partnership with the Brazilian Institute for Responsible Gaming (IBJR) and the National Association of Games and Lotteries (ANJL), highlights the fast-growing presence of 14 active companies and 37 licensed brands. With initial investments of R$885m, the market is expected to expand further due to an economic multiplier effect, showcasing the potential for significant growth in connected industries.
Law 14.790/23 has introduced stringent regulations that have fostered a safe and compliant environment, according to André Gelfi, Co-founder & Director of the IBJR. He describes this as "a new cycle of opportunities," driven by technology and formal job creation, impacting sports, entertainment, and marketing sectors significantly.
The betting market is not just about numbers; it is about employment and specialization. The industry generates 2,000 direct and outsourced jobs and 1,100 indirect jobs in the Northeast. This includes highly specialized roles such as system developers and data specialists. The sector also employs a workforce with higher education levels at twice the regional average, offering competitive salaries significantly above the regional norm.
Fiscal contributions from the betting market are substantial. In 2025, the Northeast region is expected to contribute R$265m to the State Participation Fund and R$351m to the Municipal Participation Fund, among other taxes. ANJL president Plínio Lemos Jorge stresses that this regulation is bringing "concrete returns to society" through taxes and skilled employment.
Despite these advances, challenges remain, with an estimated 50% of betting activity still illegal. However, ongoing regulatory refinements aim to address these issues, ensuring consumer protection and market transparency.
Lemos emphasizes that regulation builds "predictability, legal certainty, and trust," essential for attracting new operators and safeguarding bettors.

Record October for Atlantic City revenues

USA

Atlantic City experienced remarkable growth in its gaming sector in October, with online gambling achieving record-breaking figures and land-based casinos also showing strong performance.

According to the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement, iGaming generated $260m, surpassing the previous high of $248m, highlighting the impact digital gambling has throughout New Jersey.

The nine casinos in Atlantic City reported $234.7m in GGR from in-person gaming, marking a 12.5% increase from October 2024. This figure is the highest for October since 2011 and even surpasses September 2025, typically a slower time for the resort. Seven of the nine casinos reported higher in-person revenue compared to the previous year, demonstrating ongoing recovery in Atlantic City's physical gaming sector.

Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa led the market with $68.4m in in-person wagering, marking a 28.2% increase. Following were Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Atlantic City at $42.4m and Ocean Casino Resort with $39.4m. Harrah's Resort Atlantic City reported $17.4m. Hard Rock and Ocean surpassed their pre-pandemic October 2019 figures. Tropicana Atlantic City and Bally's Atlantic City were exceptions, posting declines of 8.9% and 1.2%, respectively.

Including iGaming and sports betting, total revenue for casinos and affiliates reached $611m, up 22.3% from the previous year.

In-person gaming remains a core business for casinos, with iGaming and sportsbook revenues shared with external partners like technology suppliers and sportsbook operators.

FanDuel led iGaming with $60.8m, a 26.1% increase from the previous year. DraftKings and BetMGM also reported substantial wins with $48.5m and $33.2m, respectively. Borgata-based platforms, Caesars Palace Online and Hard Rock Bet were among the top earners.

Sports betting also saw significant growth, with casinos, two racetracks and their partners reporting $116.1m in revenue, nearly 50% higher than in October 2024. Total sports wagering reached $1.27bn for the month.

From January to October 2025, Atlantic City's casinos, racetracks and partners generated $5.74bn, a 10% increase over the same period last year. This combined strength solidifies Atlantic City's key role in New Jersey's entertainment and gaming economy.

Century Entertainment's profitable shift via Philippines expansion

Philippines

Century Entertainment International Holdings, listed in Hong Kong, anticipates a profit of at least HK$25m (US$3.21m) for the six-month period ending September 30th, 2025, marking a significant turnaround from a HK$11.4m (US$1.47m) loss in the same period last year.

The company attributes its profitability to three main factors. Notably, two newly established subsidiaries have played a pivotal role. One, based in Manila, Philippines, develops iGaming technologies through a joint venture with World Platinum Technologies. This collaboration contributed around HK$5m (US$643,000) in revenue in Q3 alone, demonstrating promising growth in the region.

Another key factor was the resolution of credit owed by the previous controlling shareholder and ex-CEO, Ng Man Sun. The settlement, completed in early July, allowed Century Entertainment to reverse a projected HK$30m (US$3.86m) credit loss, recorded as a one-off other income.

Additionally, the company benefited financially from ending its VIP table games business in Cambodia in April. This led to a net gain of about HK$1.1m (US$141,400) through derecognition of lease liabilities and related assets.

Despite ceasing operations in Cambodia, Century remains committed to expanding its land-based casino ventures. In July, it signed a non-binding letter of intent with a Vietnamese casino operator, indicating its ongoing interest in Southeast Asian opportunities. The integration of its iGaming platform with potential expansion in Vietnam is expected to create operational synergies. The company plans to license its gaming platforms to third-party operators, broadening its reach in the Asia-Pacific.

Century Entertainment shares are currently suspended on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, pending resolution of compliance and audit issues. The interim results for the April to September period are to be published later this month. This financial turnaround underscores the company's strategic resilience, focusing on technology and regional growth to sustain profitability.

New tax law shrinks Illinois sports betting volume

USA

Illinois' sports betting scene witnessed a notable decrease in activity in September, the first month under a new per-wager tax.

Reports from the Illinois Gaming Board (IGB) indicate a 15% decline in bets compared to the same month the previous year. This resulted in five million fewer wagers, as shared by industry groups.

The Sports Betting Alliance (SBA) of Illinois has been vocal about the immediate impact of this tax, stating: "When compared to September 2024, the September 2025 data shows that five million fewer bets were placed in Illinois, a 15% decrease."

Maura Possley, an SBA spokesperson, emphasised how the new tax drives bettors towards illegal markets: "It shows that bets plunged in Illinois after the law was put in place and is a red flag that Illinois sports fans are fleeing the legal betting market in favour of the cheaper, illegal market."

Illinois law now mandates a 25c fee per online or mobile bet for the first 20m wagers, doubling to 50c thereafter. Key operators like FanDuel and DraftKings have already reached this threshold, prompting them to pass the costs to their customers through surcharges. Some platforms, such as bet365 and Caesars, are still considering similar measures.

Despite the drop in bet numbers, the total amount wagered increased. IGB data recorded $434.5m in tier-1 handle and $782.3m in tier-2 handle this September.

Peter Jackson, Flutter CEO, explained: "As you would expect, we are seeing a reduction in the number of bets there, but increasing handle per bet."

However, concerns are mounting over the long-term effects. Maura Possley warns that high taxes might push bettors to the illegal market, which lacks oversight. And Kwame Raoul, Illinois Attorney General, has urged the US Department of Justice to address the growing illegal market issue.

In the short term, Illinois has seen significant revenue gains, collecting over $10.5m from the per-wager tax in September. Yet, the SBA cautions that these benefits may not last if bettors continue to shift to untaxed alternatives. Additional taxation proposals, like Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson's suggestion of a 10.25% city gambling tax, could further exacerbate this trend.

Old Rules in a New World: Why prediction markets cannot be ignored

Stephen A Crystal,
Founder & CEO, SCCG Management

The old rulebooks are straining under a new game; Prediction markets, once a niche experiment, are now pushing into the mainstream of the gaming industry. In a landscape built on sports bets and casino odds, they are redefining what a wager can be and forcing regulators and industry giants to confront a fast-moving shift they can't ignore.

Industry giants bet on a new game

FanDuel and DraftKings parting ways with the American Gaming Association wasn't a quiet policy disagreement, more a turning point. Their split over prediction markets signaled where the future is heading. FanDuel is preparing to launch FanDuel Predict, DraftKings is developing its own product, and both companies even surrendered their Nevada licenses rather than backdown. Walking away from the gambling capital of the world makes one thing clear - prediction markets don't fit neatly into 20th century gaming laws, and the biggest players refuse to wait for the rulebook to catch up.

Their moves are backed by serious investments. FanDuel partnered with CME Group to build a regulated event-contract marketplace, while DraftKings acquired Railbird Exchange to accelerate its entry. These are not test balloons, they are billion-dollar companies betting on a new model becoming a core part of the industry.

Regulators draw battle lines

State regulators are scrambling to assert control. Massachusetts pre-emptively banned 'Sports Event Contracts', warning operators that even outside participation could jeopardize their licenses. Nevada took a harder line, declaring that any involvement in prediction markets – anywhere - is incompatible with holding a Nevada license.

But these stances are on shaky ground. When a product is regulated federally as a commodity rather than a wager, state jurisdiction becomes murky. Other states, from New York to Ohio, have expressed concerns, but none have outlined a clear path forward.

New models blur the lines

Innovators aren't waiting. ProphetX is pursuing approval from the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to offer event contracts nationwide and avoid the state-by-state maze entirely. Polymarket, once operating in regulatory grey zones, returned to the US by acquiring a CFTC-licensed exchange, transforming from outsider to compliant operator.

Even Daily Fantasy leaders are adapting. PrizePicks became the first fantasy operator to register as a Futures Commission Merchant, positioning itself as a broker that can legally plug millions of users into CFTC-regulated prediction markets.

If customers want these products, operators plan to offer them directly rather than risk losing them to new platforms.

Adapt or lose relevance

The message is clear: prediction markets are no longer fringe; they are becoming foundational. Consumers want them, major companies are investing heavily, and federal pathways exist even when states resist. Regulators can't rely on outdated statutes to contain a shift already underway.

In today's betting world, those who cling to old rulebooks will find themselves sidelined as the game moves on without them.

SCCG Management is the leading advisory firm in the global gaming industry. Specialising in iGaming, Sports Betting, Esports and Casino Technology, SCCG draws on three decades of industry experience and an extensive international network to elevate your business. From Europe to Latin America, SCCG's strategic partnerships are your gateway to worldwide growth.

Google bans offline ads in seven African nations

Google has introduced a policy restricting offline gambling advertisements in seven African countries.
The move is part of a broader initiative affecting 35 countries globally, aiming to ensure compliance with local laws and prevent unauthorized promotion of physical gambling venues.
The updated policy, effective November 19th, 2025, outlines that offline gambling now includes "legal physical, real-world gambling activity or establishments" such as brick-and-mortar casinos and gaming parlours. This definition distinguishes offline gambling from online gambling, which operates under different certification requirements within Google's advertising framework.
In the affected African nations - Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia - advertisers must follow Google's new policy rigorously. Failure to comply could lead to disapprovals, account penalties or even suspension after repeated violations.
Beyond Africa, countries like Bulgaria, Estonia and Italy also fall under this new restriction. Despite the ban on offline ads, Google continues to allow certified iGaming advertisements, provided they adhere to Google's policies and local licensing requirements. Certification for iGaming ads requires proof of the operator's legal license to promote gambling in the targeted area.
The policy change is expected to drive operators towards alternative marketing strategies, such as local promotions and partnerships, especially in regions like North and East Africa where offline gambling is heavily regulated.
This shift reflects a global move towards tighter regulations on offline gambling advertising, aimed at consumer protection and reducing problem gambling risks.
Google's update offers clearer guidance for advertisers, helping them align with international compliance standards. This initiative not only ensures adherence to local laws but also supports a global trend of stricter control over offline gambling promotions.

Morocco aiming for 70% 5G coverage by 2030

Morocco

Morocco is advancing into the 5G era with a goal to achieve 70% nationwide 5G coverage by 2030. This initiative, part of the Digital Morocco 2030 strategy, aims to bridge the infrastructure gap, drive tech-fuelled growth, and provide high-speed connectivity across urban and rural areas.
The 5G expansion is set to benefit various sectors, including digital entertainment, where businesses and online casino users will experience improved access and performance. Many Moroccans currently engage with international gambling sites, particularly from the UK. With enhanced internet stability, features like live games and UK casino bonuses will be more accessible, relying on the robust connectivity that 5G promises.
However, deploying 5G across Morocco's diverse terrain presents significant challenges. The country's mountains, deserts, and scattered settlements complicate coverage and increase costs. Engineers are actively mapping these areas to identify where additional infrastructure is needed to avoid signal dead zones, especially in regions with limited existing infrastructure.
Financial considerations also play a crucial role in this endeavour. The costs of equipment, labour, training and long-term maintenance are substantial. To manage these expenses, Morocco has initiated a decade-long funding program. This phased approach allows for adjustments based on data and performance results throughout the rollout process.
Looking ahead, if the project adheres to its timeline, the majority of Morocco's population will have 5G access by 2030. This not only promises faster internet but also networks capable of supporting more devices and services simultaneously, paving the way for advancements in smart traffic systems and connected healthcare.
Security measures are integral to the rollout, with user data being encrypted and monitored through advanced surveillance tools. Regular software updates will be implemented to address any emerging threats, ensuring a secure and reliable 5G network for Moroccan users.

Ghana to fund sports with betting revenue

Ghana

Ghana is set to channel sports betting and lottery revenue into a National Sports Fund starting in early 2026. This move aims to address underfunding in sports and directly link gaming activity to the advancement of athletes and sports infrastructure.
The Sports Fund Bill, nearing final parliamentary approval, outlines 14 revenue streams to support the nation's athletes, infrastructure and competitions. These streams include contributions from sports betting operators, sports lotteries, corporate sponsorships, athlete transfer fees, gate receipts, athlete certification fees, commercial sports vendor income, parliamentary allocations, international grants and donations.
Sports betting operators, including major players like betPawa and SportyBet, will contribute significantly. By doing so, the rapidly growing betting market in Ghana will directly benefit national athletes and sports programs, providing a sustainable financial model for sports development.
Felix Kwakye Ofosu, Minister for Government Communications, stated that the Fund will not impose new taxes on citizens: "A proposed Bill was sent to Cabinet and approved for the establishment of a Sports Development Fund."
The Fund will leverage existing revenue streams from Ghana's expanding betting and gaming market, including sports lotteries, sponsorships and athlete transfers, thereby supporting infrastructure and minimizing public financial burdens. Ofosu adds that the Fund's financing will come "through proceeds from betting companies, sports lotteries and the transfer of athletes both within Ghana and abroad."
This initiative follows the abolition of the 10% betting winnings tax in April 2025, paving the way for gaming revenue to be redirected towards sports development.
If Parliament approves the Bill, Ghana will become one of the first African countries to explicitly link gambling revenues to national sports development. This move could establish a new framework for using the gaming sector to achieve social and economic benefits.

Nepal's Himalayan Harmony expands iGaming partnerships

Nepal

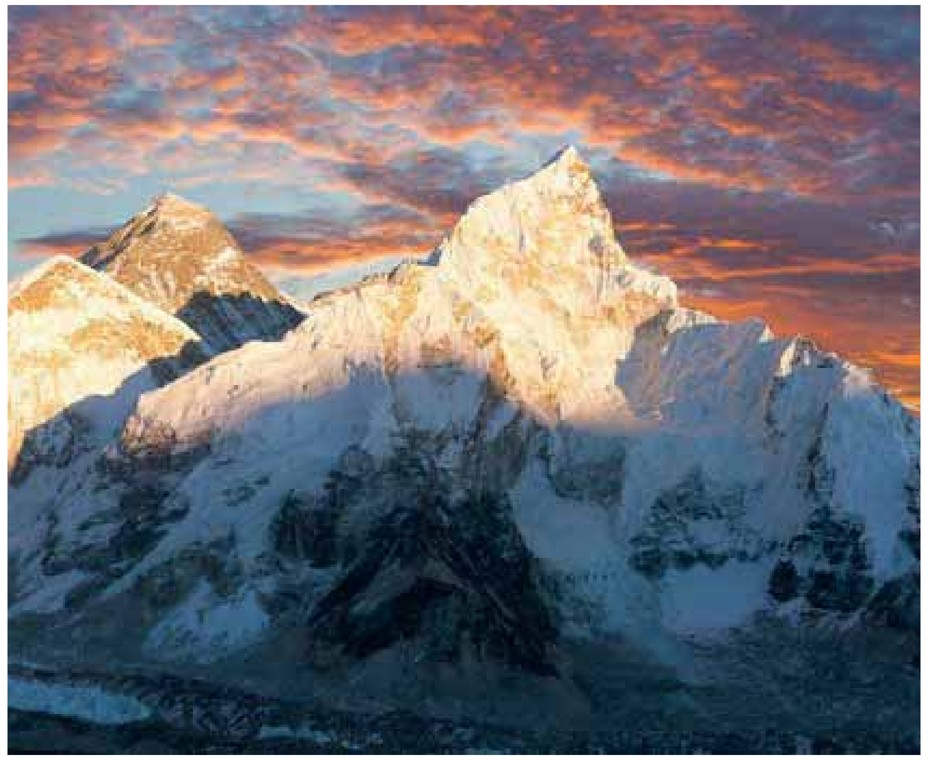
Himalayan Harmony Group, a prominent gaming community in Nepal, has announced new partnerships with key iGaming brands such as 8MBets, eSewa12, MJ88 and Magar33, aiming to enhance the gaming experience for members by providing exciting features, a user-friendly interface and unlimited bonuses.

Himalayan Harmony has established a significant presence in the Nepalese gaming industry through its commitment to reliability and safety. The newly formed partnerships with renowned platforms promise an enriched online gaming environment.

A spokesperson for the group stated: "We have partnered with popular Nepalese superstars and developed a wide range of favourite local casino games tailored to Nepali players."

The partnerships offer daily game updates, live results and exclusive offers, all within a secure framework that promotes responsible gaming. This ensures a modern and bonus-packed gaming experience for players, inviting them into a new world of entertainment.

8MBets Casino offers slots, cricket and esports, prioritising user enjoyment through a focus on safety and transparency. eSewa12 Casino provides access to trusted sports and cricket betting, along with lucrative bonuses. Magar33



Casino emphasizes user safety and convenience, making every gaming experience exciting and secure. MJ88 Casino, known for its fairness and innovation, offers a seamless gaming experience for the Nepalese market.

The Himalayan Harmony Group spokesperson adds: "Whether you are looking for real-money entertainment or seeking collaboration opportunities with Nepal's leading iGaming brands, the Himalayan Harmony Group is your gateway to success."

Liberia's new gaming license attracting global interest

Liberia

Liberia's National Lottery Authority has introduced the International Integrated Gaming License, sparking significant interest from international operators.

This new license offers regulatory approval, local banking access and compliance support, creating a robust framework for online casino operators in Liberia.

The license also provides operators with essential resources, including a verified Liberian bank account for USD and Euro Swift transfers, a dedicated AML Officer and a formal business address. Previously, these components were managed separately, often leading to prolonged processes and unreliable international banking partnerships.

The regulator states: "This integrated approach delivers what the sector has long been missing: a licence that is operationally effective from day one."

Operators from Europe and Africa are showing interest in the new offering, particularly in the integrated banking and compliance package, which simplifies entry into Liberia's gaming market.

For Liberia, the license represents an opportunity to boost tax revenue and create local employment in areas such as compliance and administration. The National Lottery Authority has generated over US$2m from gaming activities in recent years and expects this figure to rise with the entry of international brands that can now navigate the market without typical banking challenges.

To acquire the license, companies must pay a non-refundable application fee of $5,000 (€4,650). Upon approval, an issuance fee ranging from $25,000 to $50,000 (€23,250 to €46,500) is also required, based on the operation's scale. Additionally, annual renewal fees range from $10,000 to $20,000 (€9,300 to €18,600).

Approved operators must launch their operations within three months, or their licenses will be revoked.

ECA releases Yield Sec report on illegal online gambling

A new study commissioned by the European Casino Association (ECA) and conducted by Yield Sec, reveals alarming figures about the scale and growth of illegal online gambling in Europe in 2024. The analysis shows that illegal online operators now account for 71% of the European Union's online gambling market, representing an estimated €80.6bn in GGR, more than double the legal market's €33.6bn. The study identifies over 6,200 illegal gambling operators actively targeting EU consumers online, with 81m Europeans exposed to or interacting with illegal gambling services.

€20bn in Lost Tax Revenues

At an assumed EU-wide online gaming tax rate of 25%, Yield Sec estimates that illegal operators diverted more than €20bn in tax revenue away from European economies in 2024 alone; funds that should have served to support the EU in boosting the competitiveness of its industries, the skilling of its workforce or investing in research and innovation.

Erwin van Lambaart, ECA Chairman, says: "These findings confirm what the ECA has warned about for years: illegal online gambling is not a marginal issue, it is an economic and societal threat. "Every euro lost to criminal operators is a euro stolen from European citizens, from legitimate and licenced businesses and from our communities.

"We remain committed to working with European and national authorities to protect consumers, tackle such criminal activities, uphold our industry's integrity and ensure that the benefits of a well-regulated industry are not undermined by illegal operators."

Comprehensive Analysis

The report provides the most comprehensive analysis ever conducted upon Europe's online gambling ecosystem, spanning all 27 EU Member States and the legal and illegal sectors in each marketplace.

It reveals how unlicenced operators exploit online advertising channels, including those covered by the Digital Services Act (DSA), to reach vulnerable consumers, such as self-excluded and underage users. Illegal operators routinely impersonate licenced casinos by using their logos and imagery, misleading consumers and damaging the reputation of regulated businesses.

Systematic Theft of Revenue

Operating without safeguards, rules or obligations, these platforms lure players through fake bonuses, unrestricted betting limits and anonymous payments. The report underscores that this a systematic theft of revenue and abuse of regulation and consumer protections, for which EU policymakers must act decisively to protect consumers, ensure fair competition and safeguard Europe's economic and social fabric.

Ismail Vali, Founder & CEO of Yield Sec, adds: "Our approach to assessing the online gaming marketplace is unique because of our clear and rigorous methodology across all of the audience and their activity for measuring the true nature of online gambling.

"Every jurisdiction features both a legal and illegal sector. For regulators and governments alike, having a comprehensive view of the entire marketplace, both legal and illegal, is essential to design and deliver efficient, targeted policies and interventions."

The full report is available for download at *https://www.europeancasinoassociation.org*

A New Dimension:
Vision that is out of this world

Founded in 2019 in Prague, Czechia, Mancala Gaming is an established developer and provider of online slots, crash and instant games.

The studio's portfolio now consists of almost 90 games, including both traditional and innovative game mechanics, catering to both novice and established players, and growing strong partner and player audiences worldwide.

At SiGMA Central Europe in Rome, we sat down with the Mancala Gaming team, to learn more about the game that Mancala believes goes beyond anything we have seen before, a unique hybrid of their three core disciplines, slots, crash and instants.

Rocketrun: The M.A.N.K. Aliens Protocol

Mancala Gaming's latest release takes these familiar mechanics and fuses them into one seamless experience. It is fast, it is strategic and it is designed to keep every spin exciting.

A space-themed concept, the familiar rhythm of slot spins is blended with crash-inspired mechanics, as players board a precarious homemade rocket piloted by the Mancalians, a fearless crew of tiny explorers with a big mission - to change how players experience space, speed and surprises.

Pantel Spyrou, Mancala's Head of Studio, picks up the story:

"The primary objective of the Rocketrun release is to secure and maintain top line status in what is an increasingly competitive development arena.

"Mancala Gaming's core ethos is to forget about boundaries and limitations, and create games that are truly unique, and Rocketrun more than lives up to this expectation."

Spin Beyond the Stars

The Mancalians crash-style slot sees players collecting Fuel (Coin, Magnet and Laser symbols) to carry forward and influence outcomes in the secondary Crash game, a 10-stage bonus round where each choice defines the run's path, volatility and potential payout.

And this is when the real ride begins, as multipliers climb higher with every jump, but meteors can end the run at any moment. The magnets grab coins, lasers grant extra lives and players must choose whether to cash out early or risk it all, knowing that a perfect flight can reach up to 20,000x their initial bet.

Pantel Spyrou confirms: "We have unleashed our imagination with a highly interactive two-stage format that will drive engagement and support long-term player retention."

Key Game Features

- The Bonus Game is triggered by activating all middle-reel positions and collecting 10 Special symbols (Fuel symbols) in the base game
- The Bonus Game includes 10 stages, each one harder than the last
- Every completed stage awards a x2 multiplier
- Multipliers from distance travelled and stage completion stack and are added together
- Players push deeper for bigger rewards or cash out early
- During the journey, players can encounter various prizes

Bonus Mini-Features

Special symbols add strategy and surprise during the Bonus Game - Meteors ends the Bonus Game instantly and all progress is lost; a Magnet activates and collects all prizes in one journey between stages; a Laser (shield) grants one extra life to survive a meteor hit; and a coin adds its value to the Coin Collector, and at the end all collected coins are multiplied by the final multiplier.

Instant Entry Option

Players can skip base game grinding and buy instant entry into the Bonus Game with four start options:

- Classic Bonus Game, a standard bonus round with no features enabled
- Magnet Feature, starting with an active Magnet for guaranteed big coin pickup
- Laser Feature, starting with an active Laser (shield), giving one extra life against meteors
- Magnet + Laser Feature, with both boosts active right from the start

Gamification & Bonus Tools

Rocketrun: The M.A.N.K. Aliens Protocol also contains a series of gamification and bonus tools that are trigger-based and pay automatically - Free Spins, Wheel of Fortune, Treasure Chests and Golden Dragon. Triggers can be set as First Launch Trigger, Total Spins in Session Trigger, Stake Amount Trigger and Loss Trigger.

Custom tournaments can also be created with a choice of three mechanics.

Are your players ready to play with the most lovable disasters in the galaxy? With its animated cast, multi-stage gameplay and instantly recognisable theme, Rocketrun: The M.A.N.K. Aliens Protocol blends slot, crash and pick & win mechanics into one seamless experience, offering strong engagement potential and flexible promotional value across operator platforms.

Pantel Spyrou concludes: "The world of Mancala Gaming delivers reliable software, both traditional and innovative bonusing tools and exciting games that move the iGaming business to new dimensions.

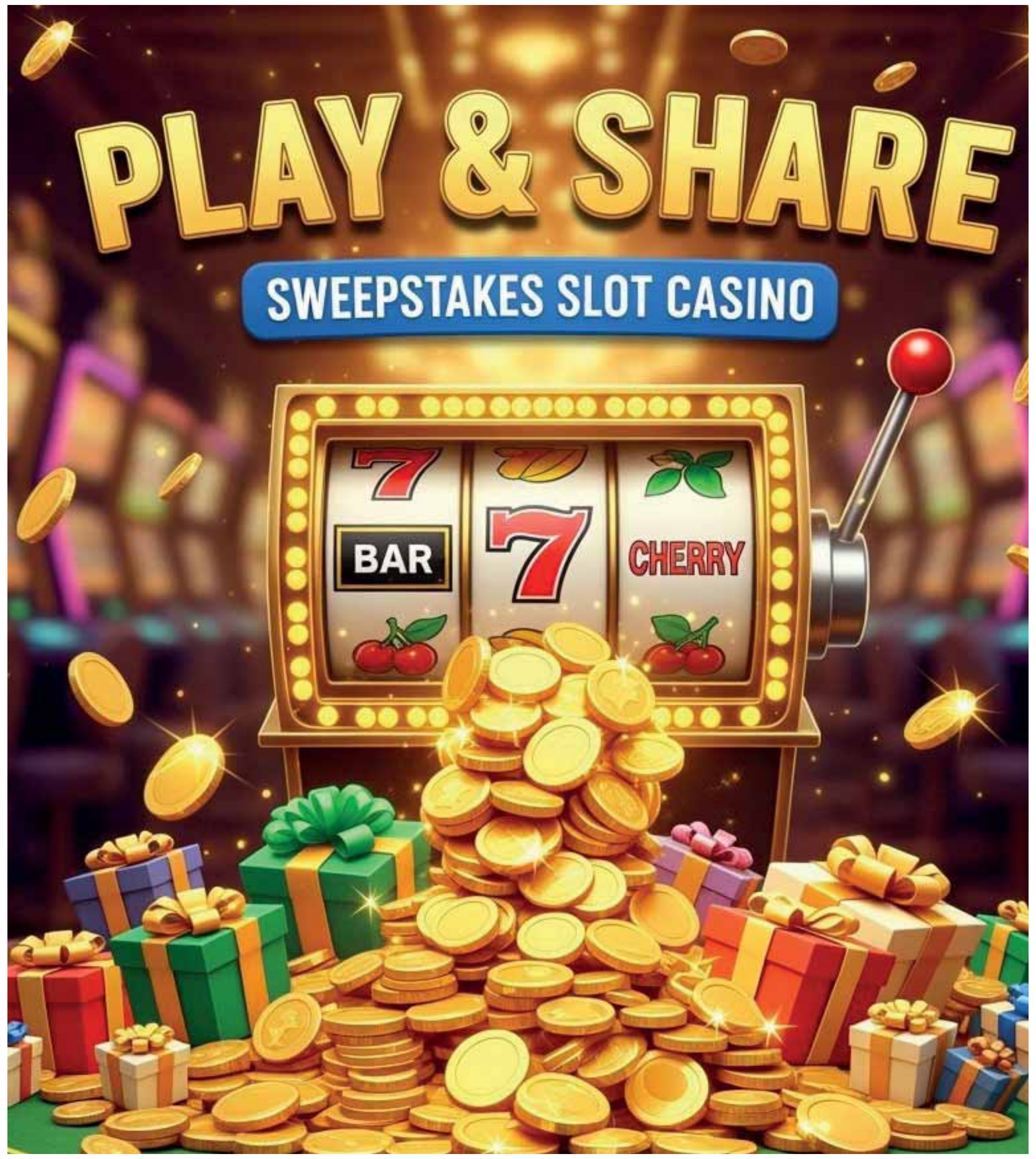
Rocketrun: The M.A.N.K. Aliens Protocol was released on November 18th.

S.W.O.T. Analysis: Sweepstakes Casinos

With US iGaming expansion stuttering, sweepstakes casinos have become one of the fastest-growing and most debated sectors in iGaming, attracting both players and investors.

In 2022, GGR from sweepstakes was estimated at around US$3bn. Just three years later, this figure is expected to leap to $11bn. With only a handful of US states currently allowing regulated online casinos, the sweepstakes model has elbowed its way to the front, providing a legal alternative that is proving attractive.

Unlike regulated casinos that require ID verification and geolocation checks, sweepstakes platforms typically allow users to start playing with just an email and phone number. They also benefit from fewer advertising restrictions. Sweepstakes companies don't pay license fees or state gaming taxes, thereby releasing funds for product development, user engagement and customer acquisition.



Fragmentation & Competition
This 'new' sector has inevitably become highly competitive. Whilst VGW, the operator behind Chumba Casino and LuckyLand Slots, once enjoyed 90% market share, this is now around 50%, as more operators enter the market. And despite the regulatory cloud on the horizon, many iGaming industry leaders are targeting the sector.
Gaming Innovation Group (GiG) launched its SweepX platform in May, featuring a dual-wallet system, prize store management and AI-powered gamification to increase user interaction, projecting that sweepstakes casinos offer a lifetime player value of up to $1,000 over two years, with typical transaction sizes ranging from $20 to $50.

Growth Meets Uncertainty
But sweepstakes casinos are also facing scrutiny. A survey by the American Gaming Association (AGA) found that 90% of respondents view sweepstakes casinos as a form of gambling, with most players using them in the hope of winning money. Whilst lawmakers question the legality of these platforms, several states have issued cease-and-desist orders.
Andrew Pascal, CEO of Playstudios, known for myVegas Slots, is proceeding cautiously, saying: "We are taking a measured and rigorous approach to scaling focused on ensuring that when we open the product to all eligible states, the experience is fully optimized and delivers on our high standards, player expectations and return on ad spend thresholds."
For the time being, the sweepstakes casino boom is reshaping the US iGaming market, offering rapid growth where regulatory gaps exist. Operators are enjoying high margins and freedom to advertise, and investors are seeing returns. But the future hinges on regulation.
As more players and money flow in, greater oversight is inevitable. But until then, the sweepstakes model remains a compelling, if controversial, opportunity.

Where to Go from Here?
The alarm bells started to ring for sweepstakes casinos at G2E 2024, with a bunch of body blows landing since. 23 US states are now legally off limits, with 17 declaring sweepstakes casinos illegal gambling, through legislative, regulatory and legal action. In a further six states, existing law presents enough legal risk for sweeps operators to self-exclude.
With the future potentially looking bleak, Howard Glaser, Global Head of Government Affairs & Legislative Counsel at Light & Wonder, recently made the poignant observation that as an industry, we should now be considering what led to this rapid rise in popularity.
Glaser argues that across the US, there is clearly strong consumer demand for online real-money gaming but scarce legal options to do so. Whilst illegal offshore casinos and unregulated sweepstakes casinos can fill this void, regulatory and enforcement action will only ever achieve short-term success. As long as consumer demand exists, well-funded bad actors will deploy technology and marketing to find new ways to exploit or evade existing gambling law, forcing regulators to once again play catch up.

An Industry Divided
Breaking this cycle by the creating a uniform approach to sweepstakes is a subject on which the industry is divided, with land-based operators with no digital footprint seeing no reason to advance an iGaming regime that is more threat than opportunity.
While both sides understandably pursue economic self-interest, the resultant stalemate enables the illegal market will find ways to profit, irrespective of debatable regulatory hurdles.
The industry as a whole would benefit from real dialogue on how to create a regulated iGaming market, with fair distribution of benefits and mitigation of risk between the digital and land-based sectors. The current situation is great news for three groups - lobbyists, lawyers and dubious operators, all of whom will continue to make hay while uncertainty and division keep their sun shining.
Consumer demand for online gambling is a horse that has long since bolted, so trying to close the stable door now makes no sense. The only logical way forwards now is for all parties, from all sectors, to come together and collectively develop a pathway to sensible, fair and legitimate online growth.
Failure to do so, by swallowing pride and accepting compromises, plays into the hands of those for whom turmoil and indecision are food and drink.

Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google's parent company, Alphabet Inc, has urged businesses not to blindly trust artificial intelligence outputs, warning that even state-of-the-art models remain prone to errors.

His comments, made during an interview with the BBC, land directly in the path of the global gambling sector, where AI is increasingly embedded in trading rooms, risk engines, casino personalisation, fraud detection and customer engagement systems.

Pichai highlights that AI tools must be used alongside other verification sources, not as a single source of truth. For operators and suppliers deploying AI-driven pricing, player-behaviour predictions, fraud alerts or RG flagging, this is a critical reminder - bad data or unchecked hallucinations can create operational, financial and regulatory exposure.

The Google chief stresses that the tension between innovation speed and safety remains high.

Google's Warning: "Don't blindly trust AI"

Nobody will be immune to Correction

Describing AI's surge as "extraordinary", despite elements of "irrationality", echoing concerns about overheated valuations and unsustainable investment cycles, Pichai warns that no company will be immune if the current AI investment boom snaps, a message that lands squarely in the middle of the global gambling industry's own AI-driven transformation.

With valuations ballooning, chip supply chains under pressure, and a $1.4tn web of AI-related deals forming, the Google chief's message is clear: a correction is possible, and when it comes, nobody escapes untouched.

> "We are moving fast… consumers are demanding it. But we must be bold and responsible at the same time."

Why this matters to global gambling

The gambling industry is among the most aggressive adopters of AI. Suppliers, platform providers and data companies are locked in their own AI arms race, one that mirrors the broader tech cycle Pichai is warning about. If the AI bubble bursts, the sectors most exposed to heavy capex, GPU-dependent infrastructure and experimental AI product lines will feel it first.

For gambling businesses reliant on cloud computing, model-training partners and high-cost data science teams, an AI pullback would tighten budgets, elongate development cycles and put pressure on suppliers that rely on sustained investment environments.

Pichai highlights Google's full-stack control of chips, models and data as key to long-term resilience. Similarly, the iGaming sector's leading suppliers are racing to build vertically integrated AI stacks of their own, meaning any turbulence in the AI market could reshape competitive dynamics across the entire value chain.

Profound long-term impact

Echoing how internet speculation in the 1990s led to the modern digital economy, Pichai expects AI to follow the same transformational path. This long-term view aligns with trends inside the gambling sector, where operators are shifting from bolted-on AI tools to integrated, full-stack AI ecosystems, powering everything from sports-betting odds engines to fraud control, affiliate optimisation, RG detection and real-time player journey automation.

The winners in a downturn will be those with robust infrastructure rather than speculative feature stacking.

Top-tier technology suppliers, such as BetConstruct, SOFTSWISS, EveryMatrix, GR8 Tech and others, are pursuing proprietary platforms, owned data pipelines, internal AI models, in-house trading, AI-driven casino tooling and omnichannel delivery systems.

As valuations swell across the gambling supply chain, Pichai's message doubles as a reality check: only those with defensible tech stacks will ride out market turbulence.

Energy demand and the cost of scalability

Pichai raises another challenge that directly affects gambling technology providers, energy demand. AI accounted for 1.5% of all global electricity usage last year, and this figure is rising sharply. For gambling suppliers scaling live casino, real-time odds feeds and AI-risk models, cost inflation could become the next major operational pain point.

Alphabet is investing £5bn in UK AI capacity alone over the next two years, including further expansion of DeepMind, an indication that Europe will remain central to the global AI ecosystem.

This is significant for the gambling sector, given Europe's dominance in regulated gaming tech and the clustering of iGaming suppliers in UK, Malta, Cyprus, Eastern Europe and the Nordics.

If Google is quietly signalling that AI will become more expensive, more energy-intensive and more regulated, then operators and suppliers should take note.

Disruption and opportunity across the workforce

Pichai describes AI as "the most profound technology humanity has developed", one that will "evolve and transition certain jobs." The gambling industry, already transformed by automation in trading rooms, CRM teams, AML/KYC processes and marketing, will face further disruption.

Businesses that thrive will be those who train teams to use AI tools rather than resist them. A Trading Analyst with AI-assisted pricing models outperforms one without. A CRM Manager with a generative-AI-driven segmentation engine outclasses traditional teams. And a Fraud Specialist enhanced by machine learning sees risks no manual system could catch.

The Warning Shot

Sundar Pichai reinforces what many C-level leaders in the gambling industry already suspect, AI investment will continue, but not all of it will survive. Suppliers and operators must focus on durable, revenue-linked AI capabilities, not hype.

Computing and energy costs are about to become major strategic considerations; regulation will tighten, particularly around model transparency; and those who learn AI will outperform those who do not. But even Google will not escape the consequences of an AI correction. And neither will gambling's tech-forward ecosystem.

The challenge for the global gambling sector is to build smart, not speculative, and ensure that when the AI tide turns, they are still standing.

Player Safety: Priority No1

The recently published International Player Safety Index - Western Europe, commissioned by 1xBet and developed with SBC, set out to understand how leading operators and regulators approach safer gambling.

The headline is clear: the goal is shared, but the rulebooks differ. Markets with mature frameworks are broadly effective, but inconsistency between jurisdictions creates gaps and uncertainty for players and licensed operators. Three themes stand out:

- Clarity & Consistency: guidance varies, making it difficult to apply one gold standard across borders without risking channel shift to unlicensed sites.
- Earlier & Smarter Intervention: real-time monitoring, timely outreach and multi-operator tools (e.g. robust self-exclusion) are where harm can be reduced most.
- Data-Led Protection: AI should be a tool, auditable, transparent and used under strong guardrails in order to personalise interventions while respecting local law and privacy.

It is the responsibility of all gambling operators, regulated or otherwise, to safeguard their customers. Ensuring that gamblers do not spend beyond their means is not only an ethical consideration, but a sensible business decision. Sustainable players are better for the bottom line than those who burn brightly but are quickly extinguished.

However, in Western Europe's deeply regulated gambling ecosystem, the precise ways in which players are protected can vary dramatically. From high impact requirements like mandatory affordability checks though to cross-operator deposit limits, there is significant variation in which measures operators choose to spend their time and money putting in place.

Methodology

The International Player Safety Index - Western Europe survey was designed to benchmark approaches to player protection and regulatory compliance across major European regulated markets, focusing on both the adequacy of regulatory frameworks and the practical measures implemented by licensed operators. Both those mandated by the regulator, and those implemented by the operators voluntarily.

The Survey and Report compare and contrast between jurisdictions, and between the opinions of regulators and operators in individual jurisdictions.

The respondents were both operators from all areas of the business and regulators from national gambling authorities. Data was collected anonymously over a two-week period, using a single questionnaire either online survey or by structured telephone interview, from the UK, Ireland, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands.

A range of parameters were measured, including effectiveness of regulation in protecting players, technologies deployed by operators for player protection, regulatory requirements in key markets, educational tools provided to players, barriers to implementing additional protection measures, regulatory clarity and guidance, cross-market comparisons and future outlook.

Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data were meticulously analysed using descriptive statistics, with market-by-market comparisons, and recurring issues and recommendations, quoted directly to provide insightful analysis.

Redefining Best Practice

The only certainty in the hunt for ideal player protection is that whatever the Gold Standard is today, it will be left behind by new advancements and expectations tomorrow.

Operators revealed what they see as the future of safer gambling in Western Europe and while there were obvious technological themes, levelling up the way in which the industry approaches its consumers is a repeated prediction.

The industry overwhelmingly points to AI as the underpinning technology that will power the future of player protection. While there are already products on the market, and internal systems at work, that deploy machine learning and artificial intelligence, operators felt that the power and range of these models would only increase. AI systems can also be used to support player identification, either to prevent fraud or to support safer gambling objectives.

Making things Personal

The second major theme is a belief that customer communications will become ever more personal as years progress and, by extension, more effective at diminishing gambling harm.

With advances in AI and data analytics, we expect tools to identify risky behaviour earlier, adapt interventions to individual player profiles and provide real-time support. Over time, this will shift responsible gaming from a reactive model to a preventive, highly tailored approach.

The industry is actively working towards a player protection model which assesses each individual customer and sets thresholds that are the most appropriate to their needs.

Note of Caution

The obvious questions to pose against this optimistic backdrop are whether regulations will permit these kinds of systems to be deployed? And whether forward-thinking authorities that encourage the use of AI to aid player protection will unwittingly create an even more fragmented framework in Western Europe where their peers are slow to catch up?

Tougher and tougher rules will inevitably push players to the black-market, operators argue, with knowledge being the problem from the regulators' side.

Conclusions

There is a genuine desire from Western European operators to run effective player protection programmes. They want players who play for entertainment - players who limit their transactions, rarely contact customer support and have low risk and low volatility. The past decade has seen too many embarrassing enforcement decisions against companies that failed to live up to the standards expected. We also live in an era when regulators are more globally aware, threatening a domino effect should shoddy safer gambling compliance come to light.

But there appear to be several factors holding the industry back from applying a universal Gold Standard of player protection, including the technological challenges of deploying systems across different jurisdictions.

However, the overriding theme suggests that operators primarily find stumbling blocks with varying regulations between different markets, and how to comply with regulations that are objectives-based, rather than offering clear guidelines.

Despite the challenges, there appears to be a concerted effort among both regulators and regulated operators to drive the gambling industry towards a more sustainable environment. But as technology improves the delivery of player protection, it is likely that the challenges presented by jurisdictional diversity, political sentiment towards the industry and conflicting rules will still need to be overcome.

Download your copy of the International Player Safety Index - Western Europe HERE

For Merkur Games, the Merkur Group business unit responsible for the B2B sector, 2025 was a year of organisational and structural changes that set the foundation for a forward-looking realignment and renewed momentum across the division.
As 2025 draws to a close, Merkur Games reflects on an extraordinary 12 months and looks forward with confidence to what lies ahead.

The year began with a major leadership transition: After nearly 38 years with the company, including 17 as Management Board Member for Sales, Jürgen Stühmeyer stepped back from operational duties on January 1st. Throughout his tenure, he shaped the success of adp Merkur GmbH with deep industry expertise and strategic foresight.

He was succeeded by Dominik Raasch, a long-standing Merkur executive, seasoned industry specialist and former Managing Director of adp Merkur; an ideal successor to guide Merkur Games into its next phase of growth.

Merkur Reflects: A look back... and ahead

ICE 2025 Barcelona

There was little time to settle in, as the Group, like the entire industry, faced another significant shift at the end of January, with ICE Totally Gaming, the industry's leading trade fair, relocating from London to Spain. The Merkur Group, accompanied by subsidiaries and strategic partners, presented itself to more than 55,000 industry professionals at the Fira Barcelona Gran Via with an extensive portfolio of advanced products.
Dominik Raasch says: "Our expectations for the first ICE in Barcelona were high. To see them exceeded so clearly was remarkable and gave both Merkur and the international industry a strong sense of confidence for the future."

Nevada License Secured

While the Merkur Group continues to rely on its strong position in Germany, expanding its international footprint remains a growing strategic priority. A major milestone in its growth strategy came in May when the Group granted its manufacturing and distribution license for the state of Nevada, gaining access to one of the world's most influential casino markets.
Raasch adds: "With our experience, consistent performance and strong product lineup, Merkur is exceptionally well positioned to establish a meaningful presence in the US gaming landscape."
As part of the licensing process, the Nevada Gaming Commission also approved the

During G2E, Raasch announced major organisational realignments within Merkur Games. The restructuring unites R&D, game design, production, product management, sales and customer service under one umbrella. Consolidating all B2B activities into a single segment enables closer collaboration, faster decision-making and a more agile response to evolving market demands.

Key Personnel Additions

In addition, two key personnel appointments will help accelerate the unit's strategic direction. Since mid-September, Günter Blümel has been driving the initiative to build an industry-leading globally oriented product organisation within the Merkur Games division. And since October 1 st, Marcel Heutmekers has strengthened the team as SVP Merkur Games International, responsible for the company's global market presence.
Dominik Raasch emphasizes: "Günter Blümel and Marcel Heutmekers are distinguished industry experts with exceptional experience in their respective fields. They will play a decisive role in further cementing Merkur's reputation as a top-tier supplier in the international gaming market."

Acquisitions & Integration

While many companies wind down toward year-end, the Merkur Group continued its momentum. After entering a technological partnership with ETG specialist Spintec in 2019 the Group has now acquired a significant stake in the Slovenia-based company.
"Spintec is a highly advanced and successful ETG provider known for exceptional quality and strong global reach," says Raasch. "This investment is a major gain for Merkur and an important step toward deeper international integration."
Alongside global expansion, the Merkur Group remains committed to its core strength: developing and manufacturing entertaining, market-tailored gaming products. With new jackpot systems such as Link Overdrive and Link Palace, the company once again delivered titles that resonated strongly with players worldwide.

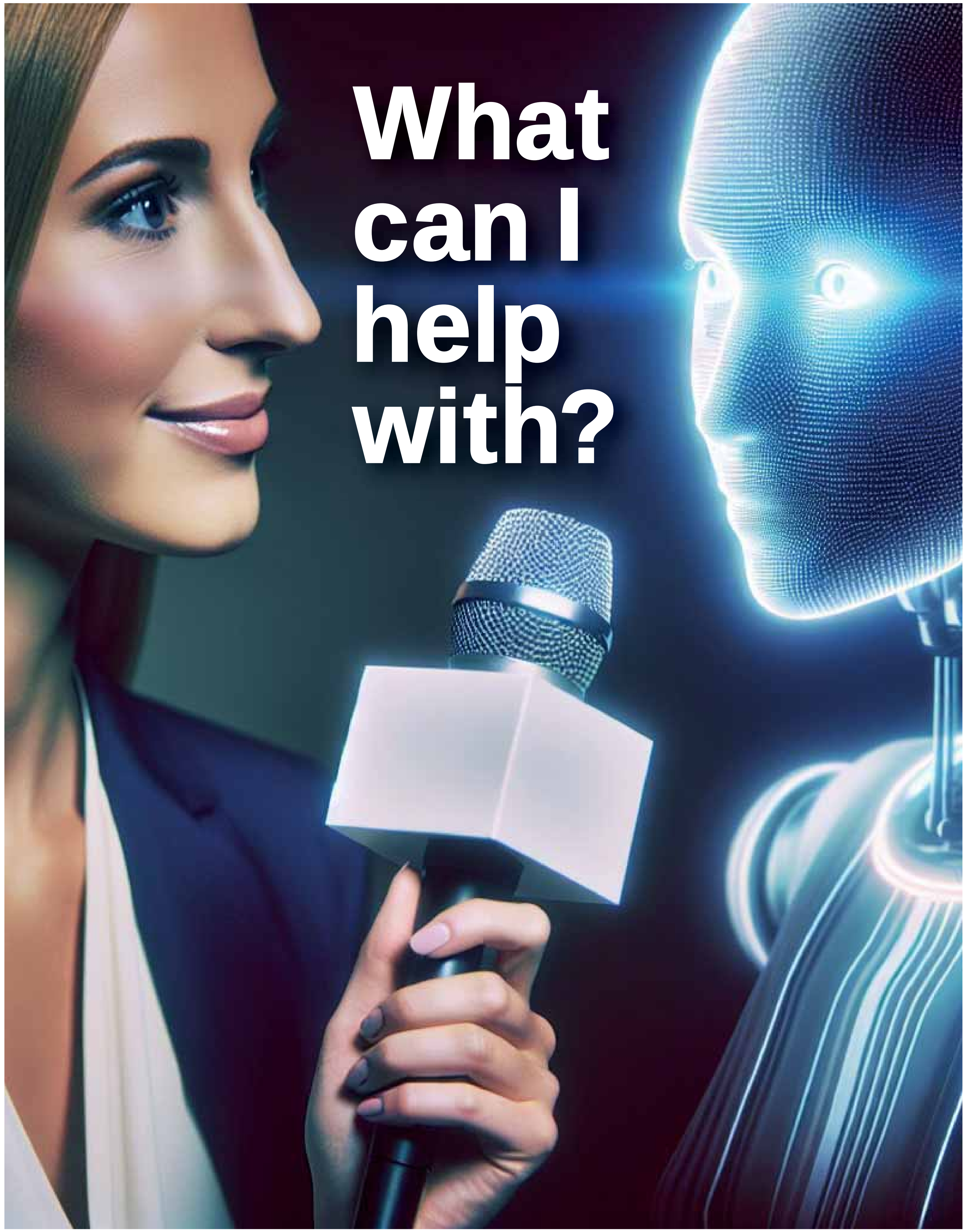
In addition, new titles from Gaming Arts, including Glory of Giza and Eternal Riches, have garnered excellent feedback from customers, both within North America and abroad.
"We focus consistently on creating gaming content that aligns with regional market requirements and captivates players across demographics. This will remain our ambition in 2026," Raasch adds.

2026: Global Growth

Few years have shaped Merkur Games as profoundly as 2025. The division laid crucial groundwork for expanding its international business and strengthening its long-term position in global gaming markets.
Dominik Raasch reflects: "Change requires effort and resilience. I am extremely grateful that the Merkur team approached each new development with openness and determination, significantly contributing to the success of our restructuring initiatives.
"And we are far from finished. With ICE 2026, we enter a new era - one that positions the Merkur Group as a company deeply rooted in its local markets while being strongly connected globally.
"At ICE 2026, the Merkur Group will present a vibrant, emotional and diverse brand experience that unites gaming, hospitality and business under a single, powerful message: Enjoy the game."

Main photo (from left): Jochen Clemens, Managing Director of Merkur Gaming US; Dominik Raasch, Management Board Member, Merkur Games; Lars Felderhoff, Chairman of the Management Board of the Merkur Group; Manfred Stoffers, Vice Chairman of the Management Board of the Merkur Group and Vice Chairman of the Foundation Board of the Gauselmann Family Foundation; Michael Gauselmann, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Merkur Group and Chairman of the Foundation Board of the Gauselmann Family Foundation; and Jürgen Stühmeyer, Member of the Supervisory Board of the Merkur Group and Member of the Foundation Board of the Gauselmann Family Foundation.

What can I help with?



The largest study to date of how people are using ChatGPT, and the first-of-its-kind view to explore how this democratized technology creates economic value through both increased productivity at work and personal benefit, has been published as a US National Bureau of Economic Research working paper by OpenAI's Economic Research team and Harvard Economist, David Deming.

The research draws on a large-scale, privacy-preserving analysis of 1.5m conversations to track how usage has evolved since ChatGPT's launch three years ago.

Given the sample size and the 700m weekly active users of ChatGPT, this is the most comprehensive study of actual consumer use of AI ever released.

While the study covers consumer plans only, the results still highlight the creation of economic value both at and outside of work.

Adoption has broadened

The findings show that consumer adoption has broadened beyond early-user groups, shrinking the gender gap in particular; that most conversations focus on everyday tasks like seeking information and practical guidance; and that usage continues to evolve in ways that create economic value through both personal and professional use. This widening adoption underscores the belief that access to AI should be treated as a basic right; a technology that people can access to unlock their potential and shape their own future.

Who is using it

Usage gaps are closing as AI becomes more democratized. As of mid-2025, ChatGPT's early gender gaps have narrowed significantly, with adoption resembling the general adult population.

In January 2024, among users with names that could be classified as either masculine or feminine, 37% had typically feminine names. By July 2025, that share had risen to 52%.

ChatGPT has also become a broadly accessible global tool, with rapid growth in low/middle-income countries. By May 2025, ChatGPT adoption growth in the lowest income countries was over 4x those in the highest income countries.

What they are using it for

Consumer usage is largely about getting everyday tasks done. 75% of conversations focus on practical guidance, seeking information and writing - with writing being the most common work task, while coding and self-expression remain niche activities. Patterns of use can also be thought of in terms of asking, doing and expressing. 49% of messages are 'asking', a growing and highly rated category that shows people value ChatGPT as an 'advisor' rather than only for task completion.

'Doing' (40% of usage, including work use) encompasses task-oriented interactions such as drafting text, planning or programming, where the model is enlisted to generate outputs or complete work.

'Expressing' (11% of usage) usually involves personal reflection, exploration and play.

How use is evolving

ChatGPT's economic impact extends to both work and personal life. Approximately 30% of consumer usage is work-related and approximately 70% is non-work, with both

categories continuing to grow, underscoring ChatGPT's dual role as both a productivity tool and a driver of value for consumers in daily life.

One way that value is created is through decision support. ChatGPT helps improve judgment and productivity, especially in knowledge-intensive jobs. And as people discover these and other benefits, usage deepens, with user cohorts increasing activity over time through improved models and new use-case discovery.

These findings from the largest study of ChatGPT consumer usage to date show not only who is using AI and what they are using it for, but also how it is creating real economic value that is increasingly central to people's work and everyday lives.

Source:** For the complete results, methodology and robustness checks, read the full Working Paper at:* ***https:www.nber.org/papers/w34255

1XBET strengthens Nigeria's sports ecosystem with 1xCup

By 2025, the global betting market is projected to surpass $150bn, demonstrating steady digitalization and a shift in communication models. The key trend is a move from direct promotion to value-driven and socially oriented initiatives.

Global brands are transitioning from sponsoring individual athletes to building infrastructure for mass and amateur sports. The main driver behind this shift is the evolution of audience expectations.

Modern players prefer brands that don't just offer products but create real value by investing in community development, education and local initiatives.

Africa & Nigeria: Potential & Context

Africa is currently the fastest-expanding betting market, showing an annual growth rate of 10-12%.
Nigeria holds a leading position, with over 60 million active users, approximately US$2bn in annual turnover, an audience that is 70% under the age of 35 and football as the key driver of activity, accounting for up to 45% of all bets.
In this context, grassroots projects involving amateur teams and local communities are becoming more than just an element of CSR. They serve as an organic positioning tool, establishing a brand not merely as a betting operator, but as a partner in social and sports development.

1xCup: Strategy & Format

1xCup, implemented by 1xBet, is a large-scale sports initiative aimed at supporting amateur football in Nigeria. The tournament consists of over 460 teams, more than 4,000 participants and thousands of offline fans. The tournament is positioned as a 'Platform of Opportunities', a space where local talent gains visibility and social support.
In 2025, 1xCup took a digital leap: tournament matches were integrated into the 1xBet platform's betting line, synchronized with SofaScore.

Impact & Analytics

1xCup 2025 has seen a 25%+ increase in brand mentions across Nigerian media during the tournament period; 15-20% growth in registrations in regions that hosted 1xCup stages; and up to 85% positive mentions, according to sentiment analysis monitoring.
The project has enabled the 1xBet brand to evolve from the image of a "betting operator" to that of a "catalyst for sports development." Growing trust from local communities has strengthened audience loyalty and provided the company with valuable social capital.

Communication Ecosystem

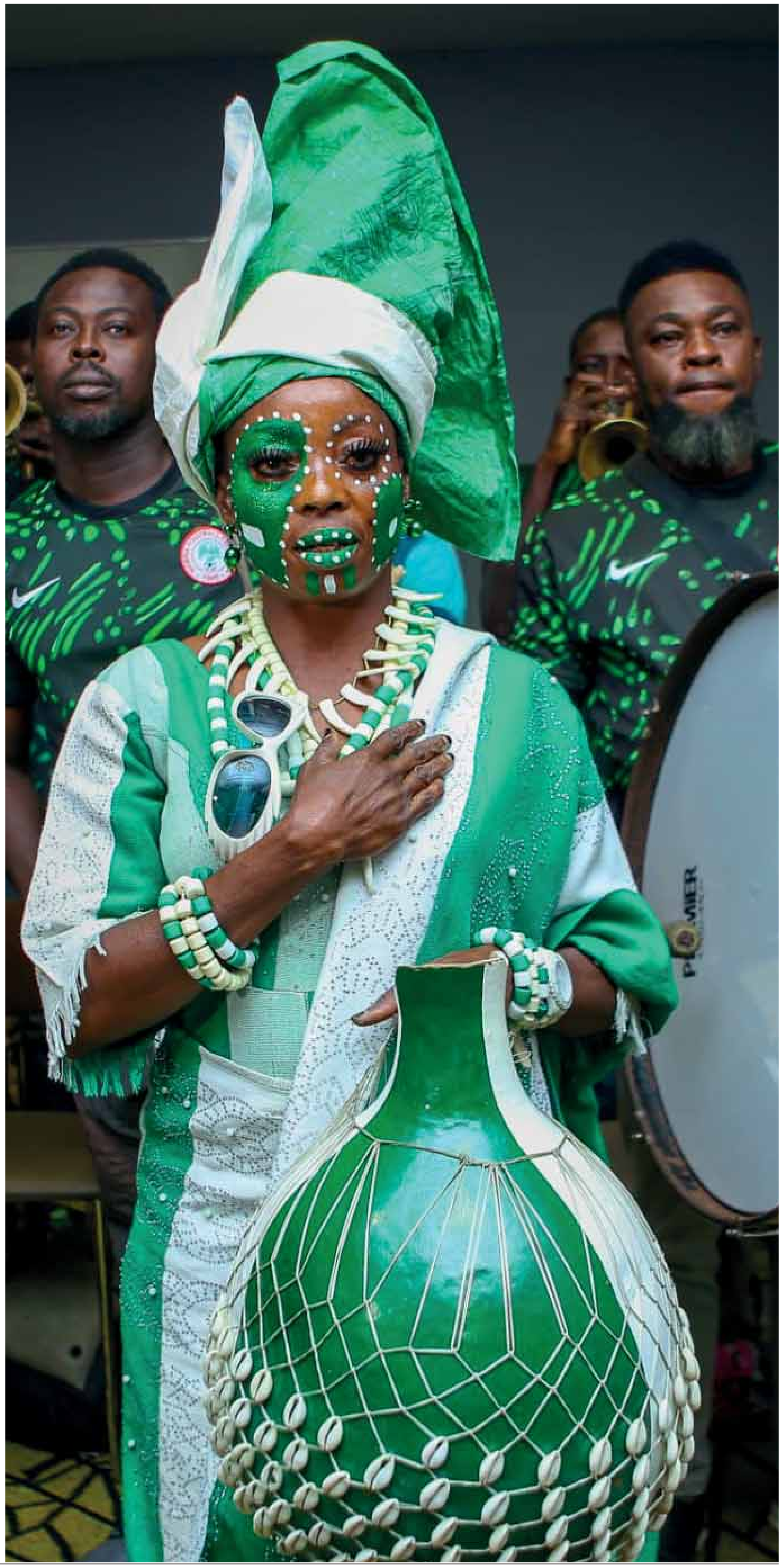
The media impact of the tournament became a distinct dimension of the project's success. Independent sports analysts and podcasters released episodes dedicated to 1xCup and 1xBet's role in developing Nigerian football. The youth audience responded especially actively, engaging in discussions around the tournament's social dimension.
The main share of online reach came from local social communities and sports groups across Instagram, X (Twitter), Facebook and TikTok. This generated additional organic coverage without direct promotion and helped strengthen the brand's reputation as a responsible player in the sports ecosystem.
Several media outlets highlighted 1xCup as an example of synergy between sport, business and social responsibility, emphasizing its contribution to shaping a "new sporting identity" for Nigeria.

Global Trends & Positioning

Support for grassroots initiatives is becoming an integral part of the leading operators' ESG strategies.
For major brands, such projects serve multiple strategic purposes - strengthening reputation through a clearly defined social mission; building a sustainable ecosystem around sports and driving engagement with betting products; reducing dependence on high-cost advertising channels; and ensuring long-term audience involvement and the growth of a loyal community.

Conclusion

The 1xCup demonstrates how a local sports initiative can become a powerful tool for strategic marketing and reputational leadership. 1xBet went beyond traditional sponsorship formats, creating a comprehensive sports ecosystem in Africa.
This approach sets 1xBet apart from the typical presence of betting companies in the African market, distinguishing itself with a scale and impact that truly rival those of many leading global brands.



Merkur Group expands alliance with Spintec

What began in 2019 as a technological partnership has now evolved into a forward-looking corporate investment: Merkur Group has acquired a significant stake in Spintec d.o.o., Slovenia-based developer and manufacturer of premium Electronic Table Games (ETGs), marking a new chapter in the companies' collaboration.
Dominik Raasch, Management Board Member, Merkur Games, says: "Spintec is a highly innovative and successful ETG specialist, distinguished above all by outstanding quality and a strong global footprint.
"This investment is a real asset for the Merkur Group and an important driver of our international growth strategy."
The success of the partnership so far has been built on the ideal combination of Spintec's state-of-the-art ETG technology and Merkur Group's reliable distribution structure, international network and long-standing customer relationships.
Raasch explains: "Our collaboration creates valuable synergies that enable us to bring these high-quality ETG solutions to a significantly broader audience.
"Building on our achievements to date and further expanding this especially successful strategic partnership was therefore the natural next step for both sides."
Spintec is among the world's leading developers, manufacturers and suppliers of ETGs. With its compact and amphitheatre gaming solutions, the company has established a strong presence in Latin and North America, Europe and large parts of Asia. This collaboration accordingly expands both Merkur Group's global reach as well as its product portfolio: "With Spintec at our side, we can offer operators an even broader range of gaming experiences, further strengthening Merkur's position as a reliable full-service gaming provider," Raasch adds.
Goran Miškulin, CEO of Spintec, also welcomes this next step in the companies' collaboration, saying: "Over the past years, we have seen just how well Merkur and Spintec complement one another. This is demonstrated especially by our cooperation with Merkur Spielbanken, where our ETG solutions are already successfully deployed in numerous Merkur casino properties.
"I am confident that this investment will allow us to exceed the results of our partnership so far and unlock additional synergies that will create value for both organisations."

Konami's Solstice voted Best New Core Cabinet

Based on poll responses gathered from Slot Directors by Eilers & Krejcik Gaming, Konami Gaming's Solstice was voted Best New Core Cabinet displayed during the 2025 G2E Las Vegas.
Solstice marked its world premiere at the event, where thousands experienced the machine and its original game library for the first time.
Steve Sutherland, CEO of Konami Gaming, says: "As a company with a hardware development approach that is precisely mindful toward market needs, Konami is pleased to be recognised by casino operators for creating the industry's best new core cabinet.
"Through its enhanced graphics, sound package, game power and attraction effects, Solstice is designed to provide the utmost entertainment experience, which we look forward to delivering to casino patrons worldwide."
According to the survey, "Operators are obviously eagerly awaiting fresh releases from this supplier that has a deep history...".
Konami's Solstice machine features innovative lighting elements stretching from the height of the topper to below the button deck, which interact with in-game features across a dynamic colour spectrum. This advanced lighting system delivers real-time visual feedback that reacts to every spin, win and bonus round.
The debut of Konami's new Solstice cabinet line is supported by an expansive pipeline of game software content, spanning licensed IP to original creations.
Tom Jingoli, President & COO, adds: "Konami's owned game studios in the US, Japan and Australia dedicated immense effort and creativity to delivering a standout library of Solstice game options, the first of which are arriving to casinos before the new year."
Gerard Crosby, SVP & Chief Games Product Officer, concludes: "Building upon innovative components of the machine itself, Solstice is backed by a highly inventive mix of game content options with fascinating bonus features, engaging animation effects and rewarding game math, for a one-of-a-kind player experience."

JetX: Proof of SmartSoft's Reliability & Innovation

Created by SmartSoft, JetX hardly needs an introduction; it is already a global favourite.

Since its debut in 2018, the game has stood as a true example of operational excellence, earning the trust and confidence of partners worldwide.

JetX isn't just a game; it is a living innovation - constantly evolving, growing and setting new standards of success.

Always Evolving & Improving
The creators of JetX always keep their finger on the pulse of their audience, ensuring the game is always evolving and improving. Every update, every feature is designed to delight users while delivering partners a product that meets the highest standards.
JetX runs with pinpoint precision, supported by 24/7 technical expertise and a zero-compromise approach to quality. Every 'flight' and every moment of gameplay is carefully optimized by SmartSoft, guaranteeing seamless performance and an exceptional experience for partners and players alike.

99% Uptime
Through proactive monitoring, real-time diagnostics and systematic testing, the company maintains 99.9% uptime, providing partners with a seamless and uninterrupted experience.
Every update and new feature undergoes a multi-layered quality assurance process, ensuring that each change meets SmartSoft's zero-compromise standards for performance.
Dedicated Account Managers maintain active communication with partners, quickly resolving issues through efficient troubleshooting.

Core Value of Progress
SmartSoft continuously optimizes its operations to support partner success, reflecting the company's core value of Progress - a commitment to improving systems, processes and experiences to drive growth and long-term results.
SmartSoft strengthens partner confidence and ensures that JetX remains not only innovative and engaging but also a reliable platform for sustainable success.

JetX - Reliable in Every Direction.

EvenBet unveils first-to-market Spins Poker

EvenBet Gaming, leading developer of online gaming software, has launched its pioneering solution, Spins Poker, the first commercially available product of its kind on the market, designed to instantly increase GGR and player engagement for bookmakers and casinos worldwide.

The Spin & Go product, which combines popular characteristics of both slot and poker verticals, has been created to overcome the prevalent issues stunting sportsbook growth. This includes a lack of betting activity between live events, considerable liquidity required to launch a poker room and complex regulatory approval processes surrounding traditional casino offerings.

Independent research from France's poker environment, where the Spins format accounted for 94% of the market's €349.5m Sit & Go GGR in 2024, illustrates the significant potential of Spins Poker to enhance operator GGR by up to €50m per annum and reduce player churn by 10%, helping counter off-peak sports betting revenue declines.

The data shows that up to 29% of sports bettors also engage with poker, and EvenBet's product is designed to cater to these player preferences with hyper-turbo five-to-seven-minute game sessions and random multiplier wins of up to 1,000x.

Online casinos are expected to benefit from increased engagement, typically higher for player-to-player than player-versus-casino games, and an added acquisition channel amid growing market competition. For EvenBet Gaming customers, acquiring a poker player costs three to six times less than a casino player, depending on the market.

Built for cross-vertical appeal and tailored for mobile users, Spins Poker stimulates engagement with the target audience to alleviate the impact of seasonal betting patterns and player churn. These KPIs can be tracked via a data analysis tool in the backend platform, revealing crucial insights about session volume, engagement and revenue uplifts.

Dmitry Starostenkov, CEO at EvenBet Gaming, says: "Bookmakers across the globe are faced with real uncertainties as a result of sports betting seasonality, and launching poker rooms or casino content as a response is not always feasible due to constraints with liquidity and infrastructure.

"For casinos, the biggest challenge is fierce competition, leading to the constant growth of CPA and lower profit margins due to the churn of these expensive players.

> "Spins Poker has been designed specifically to address these issues. With an efficient two-week integration process and a tried and tested game format, this tool has the potential to boost GGR, resulting in sustained engagement and increased customer lifetime value."

Digitain Founder honoured with Outstanding Contribution to Gaming Award

Vardges Vardanyan, Founder of the Digitain Group, has been recognised with the Outstanding Contribution to Gaming Award at SiGMA Central Europe 2025.

For over 26 years, his vision and leadership have brought remarkable value to the iGaming industry, driving innovation, setting new standards in technology and compliance and championing a culture of responsibility and integrity that continues to elevate the entire iGaming ecosystem.

Vardges Vardanyan says: "I am deeply honoured to receive this special award at the SiGMA Central Europe. This recognition is not only a personal milestone but a reflection of the dedication, innovation and integrity that highlight Digitain Group's vision.

"For over two decades, our mission has been to empower partners with technology that drives progress and responsibility across the industry. I am extremely proud of what we've built together and even more inspired by what lies ahead as we continue to evolve."

As a global B2B technology provider, Digitain Group remains dedicated to creating, delivering and enhancing advanced software solutions that empower partners worldwide. Digitain's platforms, products and services are built to provide operators across diverse markets with reliable, flexible and secure iGaming solutions.

With over 5,000 professionals and offices in Armenia, Romania, Malta and Spain, and upcoming expansion into LatAm, Digitain continues to drive forward with the same passion and purpose inspired by Mr. Vardanyan's legacy.

Galaxsys host media briefing to introduce Chicken Crash and 2026 roadmap

Galaxsys hosted an exclusive media briefing at SiGMA Central Europe, bringing together prominent media representatives and industry executives to discuss the company's latest developments, achievements and strategic plans for the coming year.

The briefing featured an in-depth presentation of Galaxsys' newly launched Chicken Crash game, highlighting its innovative concept, gameplay mechanics and creative design approach.

Game details available HERE

Attendees were also provided with an overview of the company's accomplishments over the past year and an exclusive preview of its 2026 game roadmap.

The session was moderated by Aregnaz Hakobyan, CMO of Digitain Group, and featured insights from Galaxsys' senior leadership, including Hayk Sargsyan, CEO; Vigen Safaryan, CPO; Teni Grigoryan, Chief Sales & Partner Management Officer; Levan Kavtaradze, Head of Partner Management; and Gil Soffer, CCO at Digitain Malta and former SVP of Sales & Business Development at Galaxsys.

Hayk Sargsyan, CEO of Galaxsys, commented: "I am grateful to all our media partners for their interest in the game and for their thoughtful questions, which contributed to the success of this session.

"We are proud of the progress we have made over the past year and remain fully committed to delivering innovative, high-quality gaming experiences for our partners worldwide."

The session began with questions focused on the Chicken Crash game and later shifted to broader topics, providing an opportunity to reflect on Galaxsys' achievements over the past year and share insights into the company's vision for 2026.

> "We are proud of the progress we have made over the past year and remain fully committed to delivering innovative, high-quality gaming experiences for our partners worldwide."

Introducing Red Papaya powered by Microgaming

There's a new studio in town, and it is bold and bright! Red Papaya is the flagship studio powered by Microgaming and blends creativity, features and data to craft edge-of-the-seat slot experiences that captivate players around the world.

The studio has been founded by an award-winning team with a proven track record in delivering top-performing, data-driven slots that have quickly risen to the top of the charts. When it comes to themes, features and markets, they've done it all.

Features will be an area of strong differentiation, with the studio incorporating formats such as Hold & Win, Cash Collect, Bonus Buy, Jackpot, Pot Link and Maxways into each of its titles.

And the bar for production values will be set incredibly high, with cinematic visuals, superior sound design and compelling narratives, storylines and characters.

Red Papaya's debut slot, Kong's Jungle Tower, launches in a matter of weeks, with players taken on an epic expedition where fortunes can be found hidden within a forgotten temple, hidden deep within the undergrowth. New games will launch regularly with a roadmap aimed at meeting a range of player preferences. Red Papaya will also offer exclusive launch periods with custom-branded game opportunities.

Madelein Ozok, Head of Studio, says: "We are excited to finally break cover! Red Papaya has been built on decades of industry experience, so we are ready to hit the ground running. Of course, this would not be possible without the backing of Microgaming.

"Red Papaya is all about colourful disruption via cutting edge slots that combine creativity, features and data to deliver world-class experiences that hit the mark with players spin after spin."

CT Interactive shortlisted for Most Successful Bulgarian Company Abroad

CT Interactive has been shortlisted in the Most Successful Bulgarian Company Abroad category at the Golden Spades Awards 2025, a distinction that underscores the company's dedication to delivering innovative and immersive solutions to the global iGaming industry.

The Golden Spades" Awards celebrate excellence and achievement across Bulgaria's gaming and entertainment sectors. The awards ceremony takes place on November 25th at the Hyatt Regency Sofia, bringing together the most prominent figures and companies shaping the industry's future.

CT Interactive's nomination recognises its consistent commitment to innovation, extensive and diverse game portfolio and tailored solutions that enhance both player engagement and operator success.

Monika Zlateva, CCO of CT Interactive, says: "We are honoured to be recognised as a finalist in such a competitive and prestigious category. This acknowledgment inspires us to continue pushing the boundaries of innovation and delivering exceptional experiences to our partners and players around the world."

CT Interactive continues to strengthen its global presence through strategic partnerships in key markets. With its engaging game mechanics, distinctive design and player-centric approach, the company remains committed to its mission to drive innovation and excellence within the iGaming sector.

Big Daddy receives of Swedish supplier licence

Pioneering slots studio Big Daddy Gaming has received official approval from the Swedish Gambling Authority (SGA) to secure its gaming software supplier licence, enabling the provider to bring its slots portfolio to the regulated Swedish market.

With this approval in place, the studio is now ready to bring its portfolio of completed titles to Swedish players. Big Daddy's content is built around the core philosophy Reel Fun. Real Value, a distinct game DNA that combines proven mechanics with the brand's signature humour and approachable design.

This accreditation marks an important milestone in the studio's strategy to become a trusted content partner across regulated European markets. For Big Daddy Gaming, the Swedish licence reinforces its commitment to delivering Real Value to operators through stability, compliance and consistently high-performing content.

The company is also in the process of securing its Malta Gaming Authority (MGA) licence, a key step in expanding access to multiple regulated markets through one of the industry's most established frameworks.

Big Daddy will begin supplying its content to Swedish-licensed operators in Q4 2025, with its first deals to be announced in the coming weeks.

Erland Hellstrom, CEO, says: "Securing the SGA licence is a major validation of our compliance standards and technical readiness. Sweden is an essential market in our growth strategy and securing this approval allows us to immediately begin servicing our operator partners here.

GR8 Tech delivers Heavyweight Performance

GR8 Tech stepped into SiGMA Central Europe and left the ring with the strongest sales performance on record.

Fueled by the boxing-themed Platform for Champions experience, the collaboration with Behind The Gloves and demos of ULTIM8 Sportsbook, the Heavyweight Club energy translated directly into standout sales performance.

Over three days, GR8 Tech logged 140 qualified meetings, which included sessions with existing clients that opened up new opportunities and first-time conversations with operators and potential clients. The team also closed a deal on Day 3 and advanced a high-potential MENA operator to late-stage discussions.

Sergey Ghazaryan, CRO at GR8 Tech, says: "SiGMA was incredibly successful, which confirms we are on the right track and proves how our Platform for Champions stands out in a crowded field.

"Our Heavyweight Lounge became the meeting place for operators who want to go deep on strategy, margins and market moves with purposeful, energetic, outcome-focused conversations."

GR8 Tech's Heavyweight Club philosophy is inspired by GR8 Tech's partnership with Ready To Fight by Oleksandr Usyk: Champions Create Champions. By pairing athlete-grade preparation with operator-grade technology, GR8 Tech has grown a community of operators aligned by a code: launch first, perform under pressure and compound advantage through the right partner.

More than 50 visitors participated in 15-minute pad-work sessions led by Lee McFarland, a British military veteran and iGaming consultant. The short power workouts transformed the GR8 Tech stand into a hub of energy that converted into productive business conversations.

Yevhen Krazhan, CSO at GR8 Tech, adds: "Performance is something you live, so we built an environment where attendees could experience it. "Bringing Behind The Gloves to our booth embodied the discipline and drive we build into our technology."

GR8 Tech's team left Rome with disciplined follow-through and a full calendar of next steps. The Lounge and Behind The Gloves drove high-quality conversations, and the company will continue to improve the experience for champions at future events.

1spin4win celebrates 1,000 global partnerships

1spin4win has officially passed 1,000 partners worldwide, including industry-leading operators and aggregators.

This landmark achievement solidifies the studio's reputation as a trusted name in the iGaming industry. Half of these clients, 500 brands, joined forces with 1spin4win this year alone. Among its partners are renowned operators, including crypto casinos, like 1win, LevelUP, BitStarz, GG.BET, Rox, WinSpirit, mBit, Pin-UP, 1xBet, PlayAmo and BitStarz.

The network also features major aggregators, such as SOFTSWISS, SoftGamings, EveryMatrix, BetConstruct, St8, Digitain and Infingame, among others.

Partners value 1spin4win for its expertise in classic online slot design. By leveraging 15 years of experience in the land-based industry, the provider delivers a pure gambling experience to the online space. 1spin4win boasts a rich content offering, over 180 titles and up to five monthly releases. Thanks to intuitive mechanics, minimalist visuals, compatibility with multiple currencies, including crypto and support for over 10 languages, the studio's games are suitable and accessible for all kinds of players.

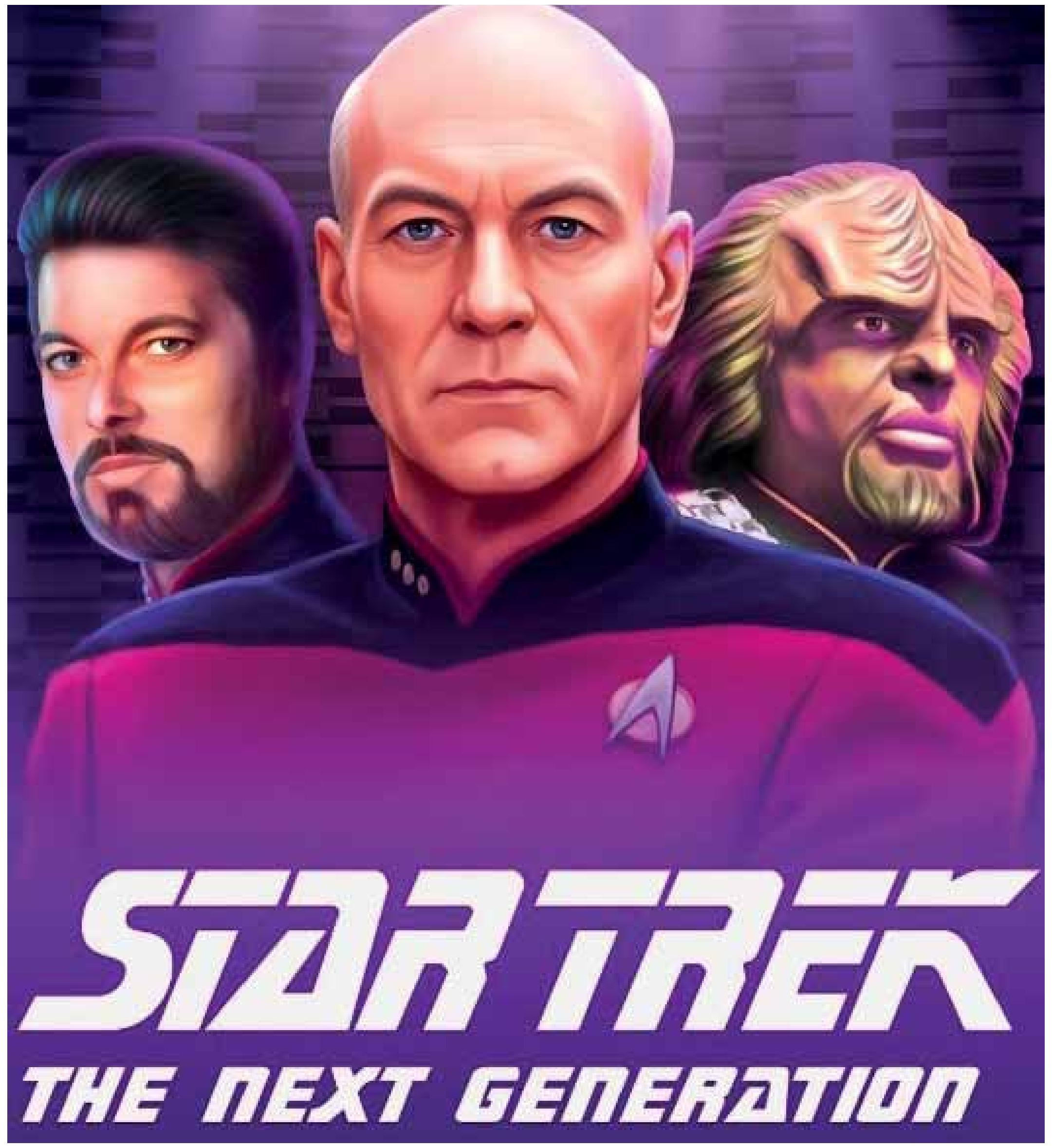
The 1,000-partnership milestone underscores 1spin4win's strong growth, highlighted by a 46% surge in total bet sum in H1 2025 vs. H1 2024, alongside a 30% increase in GGR, a 21% rise in bet count and a 20% jump in bet volume compared to H2 2024. On top of that, in H1 2025, the provider ranked among the Top 5 providers on the SOFTSWISS Game Aggregator by bet sum.

While primarily focusing on the European market, the provider is continuously strengthening its presence in Latin America and Africa. Optimized for all types of devices, the provider's titles have proven successful among mobile-first audiences in Latin America, demonstrating a 75% increase in bet count and a 54% increase in bet volume between January and August 2025.

Along with its commercial success, 1spin4win has earned significant industry recognition, receiving over 15 award nominations in 2025.

Olga Hlukhovskaya, Business Development Director at 1spin4win, says: "Earning the trust of over 1,000 partners in a competitive market is a tremendous validation of our work. It reflects the growing demand for our products and our rapid development as a company."

Explore the Galaxy with BGaming's Star Trek™: The Next Generation



BGaming boldly goes where no slot studio has gone before with the release of Star Trek™: The Next Generation.

The slot honours the legacy of the show, beaming players into a new dimension with an entertainment-first approach that will please Star Trek™ fans and newcomers alike.

Star Trek™: The Next Generation is a feature-rich adventure that captures the atmosphere and excitement of the legendary sci-fi show. Players will encounter iconic characters from the series, including Captain Jean-Luc Picard, Worf and Data. Sci-fi sound effects play as the reels spin, while intergalactic-style animations bring the action to life, immersing players in the fast-paced bonus features.

Igor Bondarenko, Product Owner of Publishing at BGaming, says: "We are massive sci-fi enthusiasts at BGaming, so it is an honour to bring one of the greatest sci-fi properties of all time to the reels with Star Trek™: The Next Generation.

"While this is a celebration of the show's legacy, the gameplay is engaging enough to attract players who have never seen the series, while also satisfying long-time Trekkies."

Fast Track, CRM platform for the iGaming industry, has announced a strategic partnership with Atomo Gaming, a leading iGaming platform provider with a strong foothold across Latin America. The collaboration will be officially unveiled at the XIX CIBELAE Congress in Asunción, Paraguay.

The partnership will combine Fast Track's AI-native CRM with Atomo Gaming's platform infrastructure. The collaboration marks Fast Track's expansion into the LatAm market and establishes a working relationship with Atomo Gaming's network of operators in the region.

Fast Track is the industry leader in providing state-of-the-art tech stacks to work with real-time data and AI, including proprietary self-learning technologies to maximise relevance for its customers.

Fast Track recently launched Fast Track AI, a natural language platform that enables users to execute campaign creation, automation and deep data analysis through conversational inputs.

Atomo Gaming is a Spain-based tech company that develops gaming platforms for online and land-based operations. The company's Alborán Platform provides multi-balance wallets, online casino and sportsbook functionality, retail integration, risk management, business intelligence and game aggregation capabilities. Operators using the platform will gain access to Fast Track's advanced CRM capabilities, including automation, analytics and AI-driven player engagement tools. The integration will enable Atomo's operator network to implement sophisticated CRM strategies through Fast Track's natural language interface.

Ramón Monrós, Co-Founder & CEO of Atomo Gaming, says: "This partnership enables operators on the Atomo platform to access advanced CRM technology that addresses the specific needs of Latin American markets.

"Fast Track's natural language capabilities allow our operators to implement player engagement strategies efficiently, supporting their growth in the region."

Simon Lidzén, Co-Founder & CEO of Fast Track, adds: "Latin America represents one of the most dynamic and exciting iGaming markets globally, together, we are bringing technology that will fundamentally change how operators engage with their players. This collaboration represents our commitment to making advanced CRM accessible to operators everywhere, empowering them to compete and succeed in their markets."

BETER licensed in Indiana and Lowa

BETER, award-winning provider of fast-betting content, live streaming and data, has continued its ambitious US expansion plans by securing the necessary approvals to launch its exclusive content in Indiana and Iowa.

These approvals, granted by the Indiana Gaming Commission (IGC) and the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission (IRGC) respectively, allow BETER to deliver Setka Cup Table Tennis content to licensed operators in both states, including live data and live streams, enabling local bettors to engage with its fast-paced content for the very first time.

Setka Cup tournaments are already live for bettors in both states via tier-1 operator bet365, which earlier this year also launched BETER's content in Colorado and New Jersey.

BETER delivers 24/7 live streaming, real-time data and hyper-accurate odds for approximately 700,000 fast-paced events each year across a range of esports and sports disciplines, offering up to 50 betting markets per event, with an average operator margin exceeding 7.5%.

Its sports portfolio features the Setka Cup Table Tennis series, the BSKT Cup Basketball League, Padel Tennis and coverage of official cricket tournaments and leagues worldwide. Its esports portfolio includes ESportsBattle tournaments, featuring eFootball, eBasketball, eHockey and eTennis.

Gal Ehrlich, CEO of BETER, says: "Securing approvals in Indiana and Iowa marks another important milestone in our expansion across the US, a market where we are already seeing strong demand for our fast-betting content, particularly the Setka Cup.

"Receiving approval from such respected regulators is a testament to the quality of our products and the dedication of our teams, especially in the areas of legal compliance, integrity and transparency.

"The US is an essential market for both operators and suppliers, particularly those committed to building their businesses within regulated environments where player safety is the top priority."

Valeriia Tarchynska, Chief Legal Officer at BETER, adds:

> "We are grateful for the support of our trusted partner, law firm BlankRome, whose guidance has been invaluable throughout this process. We will continue leveraging this knowledge to further streamline future applications as we expand into key states, including North Carolina, Arizona, Ohio and beyond.."

Endorphina expands global footprint with Slovakia market entry

Endorphina has officially entered the regulated market of Slovakia, marking the 54th jurisdiction where the company's games are now available.

This strategic milestone reinforces Endorphina's ongoing commitment to expanding its presence across established and emerging regulated iGaming markets.

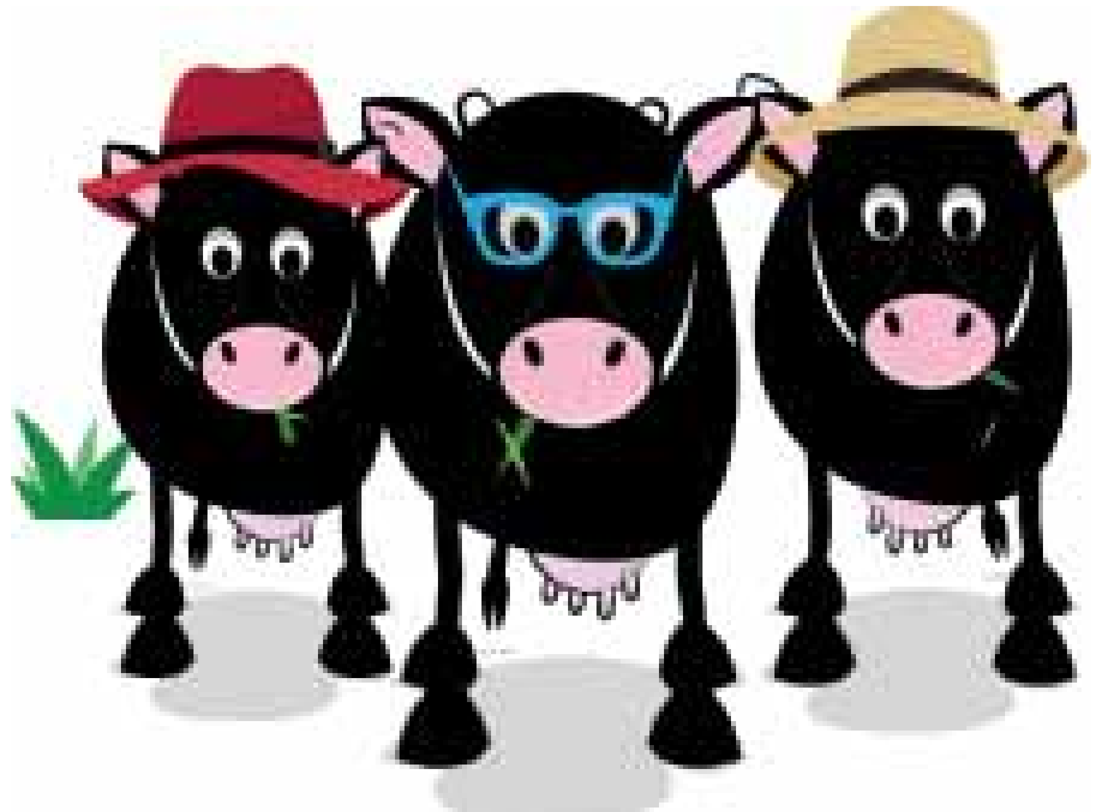
Securing access to Slovakia highlights the company's strong focus on compliance, product integrity and responsible gaming.

Endorphina's titles have successfully met all national regulatory requirements, enabling licensed operators to offer Slovak players secure, fair and engaging gaming experiences.

Endorphina's management says: "Entering the Slovak regulated market has been part of our long-term vision, and we are proud to see this plan come to life.

"With our presence now spanning 54 jurisdictions worldwide, we continue to confirm the strength of our product and our dedication to regulated growth."

Endorphina remains dedicated to delivering high-quality content that meets the evolving standards of regulated markets globally, while supporting partners with reliable, compliant and performance-driven products.



Black Cow to transition into multiplayer provider

Software development company Black Cow Technology is shifting focus to become a multiplayer content provider.

Black Cow is a renowned software company whose Single Player RGS, Jackpot Server and recently launched Multiplayer RGS are used by tier-1 operators and providers. For example, Draftkings and Interblock use its Single Players RGS while PlayJeux and Light & Wonder use its Multiplayer RGS.

Now the company is transitioning into a multiplayer game developer as demand for multiplayer content continues to rise.

Black Cow will use its powerful Multiplayer RGS to create a portfolio of next-generation multiplayer content, which will be made available to select operators in regulated markets in North America and LatAm.

The Multiplayer RGS has been built on the foundation of its proven Single Player RGS, live for more than eight years now, and is the only truly event-driven Multiplayer RGS in the market.

It can be used to build multiplayer gameplay across any game format, feature and functionality and facilitate any kind of interaction between players. This includes everything from slots and table games to crash, Plinko, lottery, live dealer, bingo and non-gambling events.

To guide Black Cow's move into multiplayer content creation, the company has made two key hires to date, including Ernie Lafky as CPO and Shelley Hannah as COO.

Ernie has been tasked with shaping the games Black Cow will offer, including how it will bring together the elements of multiplayer, gamification and social interaction, while Shelley will help steer the company's move toward a product-first model, aligning technology, operations and delivery around the creation of multiplayer gaming experiences.

Max Francis, Black Cow Founder & CEO, says: "Having empowered operators and suppliers to push boundaries and create truly great content through our Single Player RGS, Jackpot Server and our Multiplayer RGS, making the move into in-house game development was a logical next step.

"We are passionate about multiplayer games and experiences and genuinely believe it is what players will expect in the future; many actually expect it today."

N1 Puzzle Promo wraps up special challenge stage and heads for Grand Finale

The N1 Puzzle Promo is reaching its final stage, and the N1 Partners team sums up the special challenge phase, one of the most exciting milestones on the road to the Grand Finale in Barcelona.
From August 15th to November 15th, partners completed additional missions to earn three extra puzzle pieces and compete for the Pilot Course, an exclusive VR flight training kit.
To join the special challenge, N1 Puzzle Promo participants with at least one puzzle piece had to leave reviews about their experience with N1 Partners, follow the company's social media and complete a short survey. After reviewing all submissions and verifying compliance, the N1 Partners team randomly selected the lucky winner who will receive the VR set.
And the winner is the media buying team Seven Group, which has consistently shown strong performance at the top of the N1 Puzzle Promo leaderboard, holding the No.1 position for a long time and now confidently within the Top 3.
The Seven Group team say: "We love activity formats where you can not only drive traffic but also compete; it always boosts the team's motivation. "We have been on the same wavelength as N1 Partners for a long time: open communication, an active community and constant new ideas. The prize was just a nice bonus to the whole process."
Earlier this year, N1 Partners released a detailed Case Study about working with Seven Group, where the team shared how their strategy in the N1 Puzzle Promo helps them maintain top positions and grow alongside the affiliate program.
Now, the N1 Puzzle Promo is entering its final stretch, running until December 31st, 2025. Ahead are more luxury prize giveaways for top performers in the second lottery (November 30th) and the Grand Finale in January, featuring an Award Ceremony in Barcelona, where the Main Prize, a real Robinson R22 Beta II Helicopter, will find its permanent owner.
N1 Partners will reveal the first details of this spectacular celebration very soon. Expect top partners, a star headliner and a night to remember.

Jonas Groes named EveryMatrix Group Co-CEO

Jonas Groes, highly experienced technology, finance and policy leader will become Co-CEO of EveryMatrix from January 1st, 2026 alongside company Co-Founder, Ebbe Groes.
Jonas will join his brother to lead the business as it continues to scale and provide advanced turnkey platform technology to an increasing number of the world's biggest brands and lotteries.
Jonas has a long and distinguished business career including the last 10 years as Partner of EY's Nordic Consulting practice consisting of more than 1,200 people, leading high-level projects with a focus on strategy, innovation and digitalisation towards major Government and infrastructure clients.
He is a results-driven leader with extensive experience in both public and privately owned companies with strong knowledge of technology, finance and policy. He will be based in Copenhagen, Denmark, where EveryMatrix recently opened an office.
Ebbe Groes, Co-Founder & Group CEO, EveryMatrix, says: "As the company's growth continues, tripling our headcount in the last five years, and as we work with more of the largest gaming brands and lotteries, I needed to find someone who knows what it takes to scale a business and reach the ambitious targets we have for the next five years.
"Doing this means I will have more time to work on strategy and execute all the things we want to do to become a global top three tier-1 technology provider by 2030."
"To share a CEO position requires complete trust at both personal and professional level. Jonas is the perfect candidate, and I know he will go on to do amazing things at EveryMatrix."
Jonas Groes adds: "Stepping into this role at EveryMatrix alongside my brother is a dream come true. What he, Stian Hornsletten, and the rest of the team have built is nothing short of phenomenal and I have seen close hand just what it takes.

"We work well together and our differences and combined strengths complement one another."

Jason Robins named 2025 American Gambling Awards C-Suite Executive of the Year

Jason Robins, Co-Founder & CEO of DraftKings, has been named C-Suite Executive of the Year for 2025 at the American Gambling Awards.
Produced by Gambling.com, the awards honour the top companies and executives shaping the regulated US iGaming landscape and are recognised as a benchmark for excellence in the sector. Under Robins' leadership, DraftKings has navigated evolving regulations and positioned itself as an industry leader, fostering strategic thinking across teams and mentoring future leaders to drive sustained growth.
DraftKings has expanded customer-facing innovations, including enhanced live betting, player props and social features, creating more immersive and engaging experiences for sports fans.
Most recently, DraftKings has championed the adoption of AI across the organisation to boost innovation, streamline operations and enhance efficiency, embedding technology as a core driver of customer experience, scale, and creativity.
Robins has also taken significant steps to support and promote responsible play. He appointed the industry's first Chief Responsible Gaming Officer, reporting directly to him, while establishing a dedicated team of over 50 full-time professionals to drive initiatives including companywide training programs, innovative tools like My Budget Builder and My Stat Sheet, funding for evidence-based research, national ad campaigns and more.
Together, these efforts underscore DraftKings' commitment to responsible, customer-focused gaming while advancing industry-wide best practices and innovation.
Charles Gillespie, Co-founder & CEO of Gambling.com Group, said: "Congratulations to Jason Robins for winning the C-Suite Executive of the Year award. Perhaps never has a Golden Eagle trophy been more deserved.
"While the award specifically recognises Jason's achievements over the past 12 months, no executive in the industry has had a bigger impact on the shape and form of America's sports betting industry today.
"From pioneering the daily fantasy model to setting the bar in terms of what a successful de-SPAC transaction can achieve, Jason has repeatedly turned heads and set the pace in our exciting industry. Only a microscopic portion of founders go on to become U.S. public company CEOs, and few of them have made such a tremendous success of it as Jason."

SOFTSWISS' Eleni Panagiotopoulou named Best AML Professional 2025

Eleni Panagiotopoulou, Head of the Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Team at SOFTSWISS, has been named AML or MLR Professional of the Year at the Global Regulatory Awards 2025.

This award honours individuals who make exceptional contributions to compliance and responsible gambling in a demanding, ever-changing regulatory landscape. Winners are recognised for their expertise leadership, and dedication to maintaining the highest industry standards.

Eleni Panagiotopoulou says: "It is an honour to receive this award, but even more so to see AML excellence recognised on an industry stage.

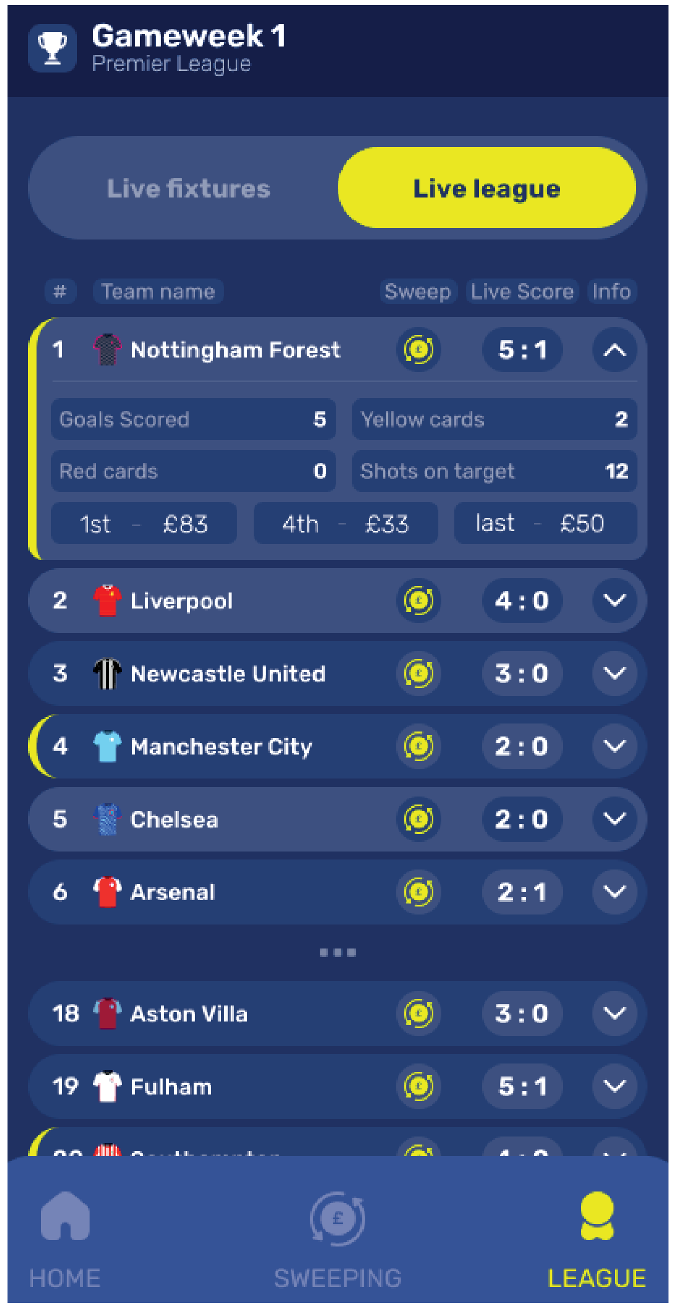
"This recognition belongs to our entire team - every analyst, every partner and every department that supports compliance as a shared responsibility. Together, we are building not just safer systems, but a stronger and more trustworthy industry."

Under Eleni's leadership, the SOFTSWISS AML team has set new benchmarks for operational efficiency and compliance integrity. Over the past year, her key achievements included strengthening the

AML function by expanding the team and increasing capacity for transaction monitoring and case reviews; driving a 75% rise in suspicious activity reports submitted, ensuring timely escalation and regulator engagement; implementing automated transaction-screening tools and real-time analytics to improve fraud detection accuracy; and representing SOFTSWISS on international panels and industry forums, promoting ethical approaches to financial crime prevention.

Eleni also managed updates to SOFTSWISS AML policies across multiple jurisdictions, such as Brazil, Peru, South Africa, Malta, Curacao, Serbia and Nigeria. She helped SOFTSWISS remain fully aligned with regulatory requirements for smooth market entry worldwide.

Her industry impact is confirmed through the delivery of more than 25 hours of AML and responsible gambling training, benefiting both SOFTSWISS employees and the broader iGaming community.



Sweepmate launches to blend thrills of sweepstakes, fantasy and trading

Sweepmate, a new real-money, pool-based gaming platform, has launched to provide a 'Sweepstake with a Twist' for UK sport fans.

Available on iOS and Android, Sweepmate blends the familiarity of a traditional sweepstake, the excitement of fantasy sports and the strategy of trading to give players a unique way to engage with events.

The app launched with Premier League predictions, with further events and sports planned in the coming months.

On Sweepmate, the Premier League table resets each week, and standings can be seen live in app, with data provided by leading data providers Sportradar.

Sweepmate's platform facilitates UKGC-licensed pool-based gameplay but does not itself act as a bookmaker or take positions on outcomes. The Prize Pool, determined by the number of entrants, is split between players who make successful predictions, with 50% awarded to the team finishing first, 20% to the team finishing fourth and 30% to the team finishing last in a given Sprint.

Another twist comes as players have the option to trade teams during the Sprint, known as "Sweeping".

Sweepmate was founded by Lloyd Bidder, Assistant Director at one of the 'Big Four' accountancy firms, and Johnny Barnes, founder of soft drinks company Soho Juice Co, a non-carbonated beverage sold across three continents.

Johnny Barnes says: "The ambition is to fill the void that DraftKings have left with a novel, original game. The format can apply across almost any sports and entertainment event, from the Euros to Eurovision!

"Sweepmate is simple: pick three teams and if they finish first, fourth or last then you win. No new teams are minted 90 minutes before kick-off so there is a great scarcity value, and you can buy or sell teams during the gameweek.

"Sweepmate is not a bookmaker as we don't set odds or take a position. Because we are a pool-based game, we want people to win, and we try to provide as much information as possible to players.

"Our goal is to create a product that keeps fans engaged right across the weekend, whether their favourite club is winning or not. It's about adding an extra layer of excitement to the Premier League and giving players a reason to stay invested in every result."

Download Sweepmate on iOS and Android.

Paysecure & Approvely partner to strengthen US payment processing and risk management

Paysecure, the leading, global payment orchestration provider, has announced a new partnership with Approvely, a payments specialist with deep expertise in processing in the US.

Paysecure's orchestration platform empowers operators with a complete toolkit for managing payments at scale, including dynamic smart routing, global connectivity, advanced reporting and a fully customisable cashier.

By integrating with and working with partners like Approvely, Paysecure gives its clients the flexibility to optimise acceptance, reduce costs and expand into new markets with confidence.

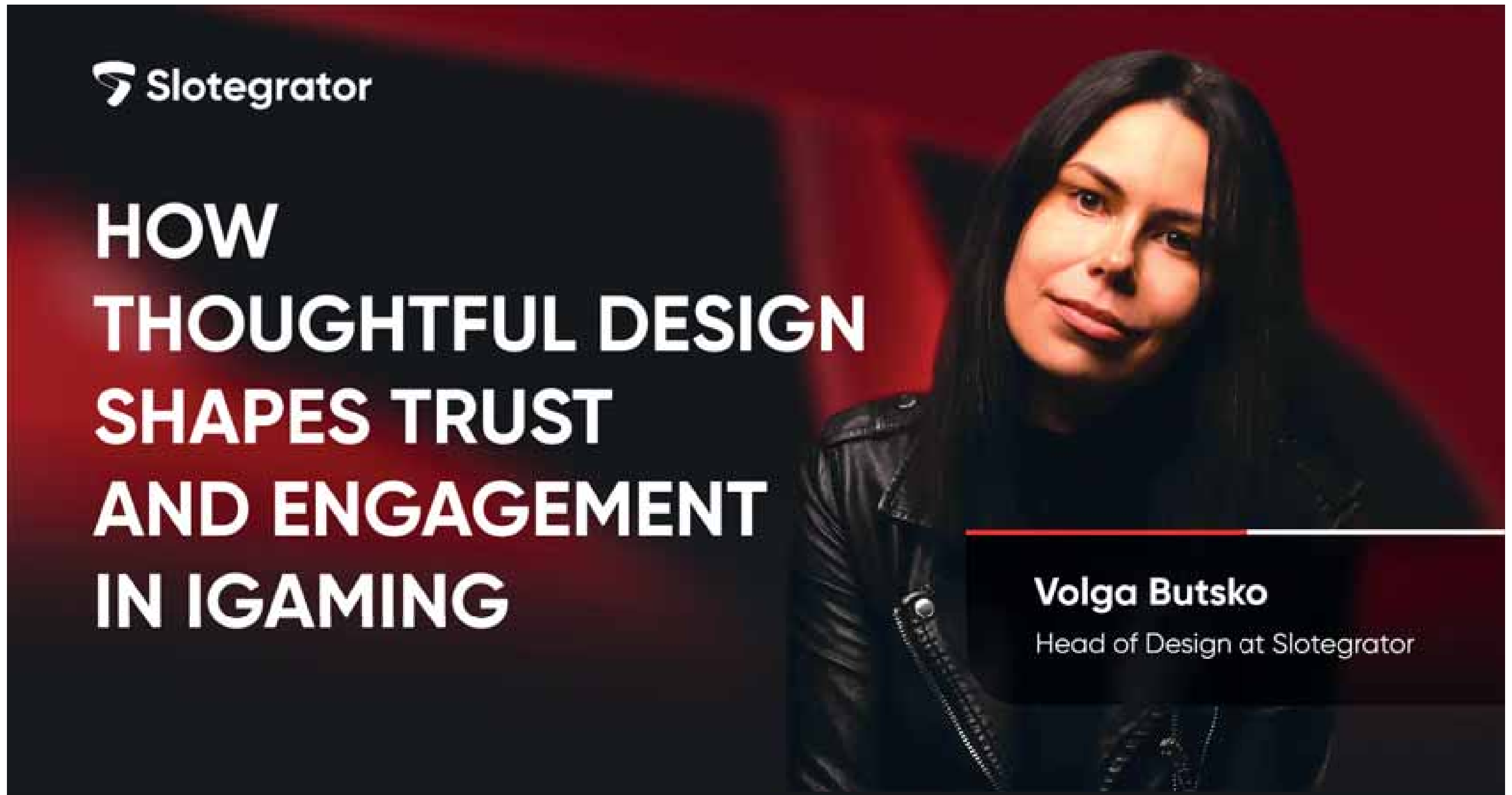
Approvely brings a comprehensive proposition for US merchants, with particular focus on fraud prevention and chargeback reduction. By leveraging a broad network of banking partners, Approvely helps businesses reduce risk exposure while ensuring reliable payment acceptance in one of the most complex and highly regulated markets.

Paysecure clients targeting the US market, particularly those with a US entity, can now access Approvely's processing capabilities as part of Paysecure's extensive connection marketplace within their orchestration platform.

The integration enhances operators' ability to process transactions with higher reliability, reduced risk and stronger protection against fraud.

"For our clients, the U.S. represents a high-value but complex market. This partnership, alongside Paysecure's extensive product suite, gives operators a reliable and flexible way to access payment processing in the U.S., while benefiting from advanced fraud prevention, dynamic smart routing, and in-depth reporting. By combining our expertise with trusted local solutions, we're helping clients expand confidently and optimise performance in one of the most challenging markets globally."

Viktoriia Degtiarova
Co-Founder and CCO, Paysecure



Design in iGaming influences player loyalty just as much as game variety or payout speed. Volga Butsko, Slotegrator's Head of Design, outlines which UX decisions shape trust, strengthen engagement and provide operators with a lasting competitive edge.

While many still associate design with visual appeal, in online casinos and sportsbooks it plays a far more strategic role. A well-crafted interface affects how players feel from the very first seconds. Those initial impressions often determine whether they continue or abandon the experience.

Design guides players through the platform, sets the tone of interaction and builds familiarity that encourages long-term retention. Over more than 13 years of product development, Slotegrator has refined a set of principles that define every interface the company creates:

The foundation is a player-centric approach, backed by prototype testing and continuous feedback.

The balance between innovation and industry tradition: keeping patterns players already trust while introducing modern visuals, micro animations and distinctive artistic styles.

Long-term value and consistency across devices, languages and cultural contexts also remain essential.

Volga Butsko says: "Design is not just about visuals; it is a way to strengthen player trust, enhance engagement and support our partners' business goals."

To explore Volga Butsko's insights in depth and to know more about the UX trends that will shape the next stage of iGaming development, read the full interview HERE (Link: https://slotegrator.pro/interview/head-of-design-on-player-trust-and-engagement/)

DATA.BET reports +79% profit growth in esports betting for Q3 2025

DATA.BET reports a significant increase in esports betting performance. These results demonstrate sustained market demand, disciplined trading operations and growing player engagement across partner platforms, leading to revenue growth.

In Q32025, esports delivered strong results across all major performance indicators. Compared to Q32024, stake volume improved by 60%, while total profit grew by 79%, supported by a 12% improvement in margin efficiency.

Player activity also strengthened, with the total number of bets placed up by 33% and multiples seeing a rise of 53%. The active player base expanded by 126% and average bet size increased by 22%, indicating higher confidence and deeper involvement from users.

Across major esports titles, performance dynamics show how player preferences and event availability shaped the quarter. CS2 maintained its position as the leading discipline, with results including a 26.7% uplift in turnover and a 55% growth in profit, while the number of bets grew moderately by 2.5%.

League of Legends demonstrated significant momentum, moving from 4th to 2nd most popular discipline, overtaking Dota 2. Turnover increased by 290%, profit by 416% and number of bets by 221%.

Rainbow Six also strengthened its position within the Top 5 disciplines due to broader coverage and regional expansion across LatAm, leading to a 126% uplift in turnover, a 504% jump in profit, a 12.4% rise in bets placed, and a 100% expansion in match coverage.

Bohdan Holovnov, Head of Esports at DATA.BET, says: "We focused on improving uptime for the most popular in-play markets, especially in late-game phases where engagement peaks.

"Another major driver was the expansion of Player Props across all top-tier disciplines, including CS2, Dota 2, League of Legends and Valorant, in both pre-match and live formats.

"In shooters, Total Deaths became a standout exclusive market, while official data coverage allowed us to expand Player Props across all tiers as well. This combination boosts both activity and margin efficiency across our clients."

Bohdan Holovnov adds: "Esports has proven its strength and reliability as a betting vertical. Quarter after quarter, we see steady engagement, growing turnover and tangible revenue impact for operators.

"We are pleased with the performance and even more excited about the momentum ahead, and we are scaling it together with our partners."

Zenith strengthens platform with INOUT Games integration

Zenith, Asia's premier iGaming platform provider and a leading B2B ecosystem enabler, has expanded its OneAPI aggregation platform with the full content portfolio from INOUT Games, further strengthening its position in the fast-growing LatAm and African markets.

The integration adds the games provider's entire selection of crash and instant win titles that has already proven highly popular with players in mobile-first regions.

Zenith's operator partners will gain direct access to a new stream of fast-paced, retention-driven content that have been gaining huge popularity with both LatAm and African players.

INOUT Games' line-up includes standout titles such as Chicken Road, Stock Tycoon and Cases, all built on HTML5 architecture and supported by Provably Fair mechanics to ensure transparency and trust across all devices.

Offering more than 10,000 games from 150 studios, the addition of INOUT Games further strengthens Zenith's position as one of the industry's fastest-growing providers. Combined with its leading distribution rates for PG Soft titles, Zenith continues to offer operators an unbeatable mix of commercial value, localisation and performance-driven content.

Gustavo Hiroshi, BDM at Zenith, says: "INOUT Games has built a strong reputation for fast, social-style gameplay that is driving engagement and retention rates in high-potential markets worldwide.

"Integrating this content gives our partners even more tools to connect with players and see sustainable growth."

Vlad Snak, CEO at INOUT Games, adds: "Zenith's OneAPI is a powerful gateway for content distribution. Partnering with them allows us to scale faster in key regulated and emerging markets, while maintaining the quality and consistency our games are known for.

"We are excited for even more operators to use our titles to deepen player engagement."

Stretch's CRAZY, AGAIN?! Mystery Freeroll returns with €10,000 Pool

Stretch Network is launching the next edition of its popular Mystery Bounty freeroll series. The CRAZY, AGAIN?! Mystery Freeroll takes place on November 27th, starting at 17:00, with a €10,000 GTD (guaranteed total) Prize Pool in tournament money, 50% of which comes from Mystery Bounties.

The tournament will be open to 5,000 players, featuring a Mystery Bounty Freezout format with no rebuys or re-entries and 8-max tables. Registration opens 24 hours before the start, and the event has a €0 buy-in, making it accessible to a wide range of players.

This follow-up edition comes after the strong participation and engagement seen during the CRAZY?! Mystery Bounty Freeroll on November 12th.

It offers players another opportunity to experience the excitement of Mystery Bounty rewards while competing in a large, free-entry tournament.

With an expanded player field and the same engaging format, the CRAZY, AGAIN?! Mystery Freeroll continues to build on Stretch Network's commitment to providing operators with tournaments that drive player engagement and retention.

Golden Boomerang League winners share their impressions

October 31st marked the conclusion of the first season of Golden Boomerang League, an affiliate tournament for sports traffic by Boomerang Partners. The company named the winners during SiGMA Central Europe in Rome - QQMedia, Apex Media and Luis Xavier. These three teams were among 68 participants who managed to generate 20+ FTDs on sports brands from Boomerang Partners' client portfolio over the two months of the tournament and reached the final draw.

Taking the top spot and winning a direct ticket to the Golden Boomerang Awards 2026, QQmedia has proven its elite status in the industry. For the team, this victory was a validation of their unique approach and a reason for a well-deserved celebration in Cyprus. Their CEO said: "The way we drive traffic is unique; nobody does it like we do, and the team's success was driven by a forward-thinking strategy that many competitors are yet to embrace.

"I think most people still live in the past... In my opinion, marketing has changed a lot. Influencers are now more powerful than major athletes or actors. This is why we are doubling down on influencer marketing."

The CEO added that the competition itself was highly motivating for the entire team. He described the Golden Boomerang League experience in one word: "Inspiring."

Luis Xavier secured an unforgettable prize, the AC Milan Experience package, including paid flight, accommodation and attendance at an AC Milan home match at San Siro Stadium in Milan, all made possible thanks to the fact that Boomerang Partners is the Official Regional Partner of AC Milan.

The CEO of Luis Xavier said: "It is not a matter of strategy. When you know you have to achieve a goal, you just do it. We only stop when it's accomplished."

For his team, this victory serves as a powerful motivator, proving that "without dedication, nothing is achieved."

Apex Media also scored the AC Milan Experience package, deepening their commitment to partnership with Boomerang Partners.

The Head of Sales at Apex Media said: "The fact that we won this competition only inspired us to continue working with Boomerang Partners, maybe even more."

The trip to Milan holds special significance for their fully remote team, serving as a powerful bonding opportunity.

Golden Boomerang League became Boomerang Partners' first affiliate tournament with focus only on sports traffic. The company continues its course toward the status of leading sports affiliate program in the industry, and it has exciting plans for 2026.

Flashscore deepens commitment to Brazilian football

Flashscore, the world's leading live scores and sports data platform, has unveiled new research into the habits of Brazilian sports fans, reinforcing its commitment to understanding and serving one of the most passionate sports communities in the world.

The study was conducted by global online data and insights company, TGM Research, gathering insights from more than 3,300 Brazilian adults who had searched for sports results online in the past month.

Deep emotional connection

The results reveal a nation that combines deep emotional connection to sport with an increasingly digital, data-driven approach to following teams, tracking matches and players.

Alexandre Vasconcellos, Flashscore Regional Manager for Brazil, says: "This survey is part of Flashscore's growing commitment to Brazil, whether we are investing in local content, partnerships and understanding what fans want.

"The research helps us ensure we are building features and communications that work for Brazilian users, whether they are checking live scores or comparing betting odds. It will guide our investments in Brazil, especially as we count down to the World Cup."

Among users familiar with multiple sports information, data and content providers, Flashscore ranked No.1 across key performance metrics, chosen by 53% as the fastest, 47% as the easiest to use and 48% as their favourite overall.

Football is at the heart

Football remains at the heart of Brazil's sporting identity - 70% of respondents said they were interested in football, with 16% saying they were only interested in football.

Only 0.3% of respondents said they had no interest in football.

The interest in non-football sports produced interesting results, with futsal (37%) more popular than tennis (31%) and esports (29%), exceeding American football (24%). Formula 1 led non-football sports at 59%, followed closely by basketball (57%) and volleyball (54%).

When asked which sport they had started following most recently, Formula 1 (17%), basketball (14%) and combat sports (13%) were the top trending sports.

Increasing appetite for betting

The study also revealed insight into Brazilian attitudes towards betting. According to the findings, 88% of bettors bet on football in the last 90 days, ahead of basketball (23%) and esports (16%), highlighting the app's deep engagement among active sports followers.

The most popular betting market was match result (58%), ahead of both teams to score (49%) and total goals (over/under) with 48%.

The typical bettor holds an average of 3.4 sportsbook accounts, reflecting a highly competitive and sophisticated market where fans value transparency, reliability and choice.

Shape the Future at ICE Barcelona

Held over the three days of January 19th to 21st, 2026, at the Fira Barcelona Gran Via, ICE Barcelona is the complete platform to drive revenues through innovative solutions, technology, valuable insights and unrivalled networking opportunities.

Bringing together solution providers and gaming professionals across all key verticals, it is safe to say that ICE has something for everyone. ICE 2026 will explore cutting-edge innovations, technological solutions, regulatory updates, exclusive networking opportunities and the insights necessary to grow your brand successfully on a global scale.

Where the World goes to do Business

Across the three days, ICE Barcelona will welcome over 65,000 industry visitors, 300+ verified regulators and 200+ expert visitors, with more than 600 global exhibitors displaying their latest products and solutions across multiple verticals.

In addition to four dedicated exhibition zones - Casino & Gaming, Sports Betting, Payments and Esports - visitors can experience the Sustainable Gambling Zone, an Esports Arena and the exciting and forward-looking Pitch ICE competition.

The Perfect Backdrop

The new home of ICE is arguably Europe's most culturally vibrant city, offering a wealth of 'Bucket List' experiences. Barcelona's rich history and artistic heritage make it a captivating cultural enthusiasts destination. Barcelona's unique urban plan, designed by Ildefons Cerdà, considered to be the founder of modern town planning, is a work of art in itself, so navigation is a gentle breeze… The Metro, buses and trams offer convenient access to all corners. Purchase a T-10 Travel Card or opt for the Hola Barcelona Travel Card for unlimited travel within specific timeframes.

Taxis are readily available throughout the city, and ride-sharing apps work perfectly.

World Class Conference Content

The ICE World Gaming Week in Barcelona will be the biggest gathering of gaming professionals ever. And in order to live up to and beyond visitor expectations, the organisers have lined up an unrivalled collection of content, including the World Regulatory Briefing, Casino Leaders' Conference, Sports Leaders' Conference, Innovating Lotteries Conference and Esports Betting Conference, plus a superb series of workshops and seminars across the duration of the event.

ICE World Gaming Forum

For the ultimate ICE experience, invest in a World Gaming Forum Pass. This is the is the largest gathering of leaders from across the global gaming ecosystem, attended by CEOs, Ministers, regulators and industry associations, all gathering to share knowledge, stimulate debate, and provide an opportunity to engage with high-level experts on policy, strategy and new technology.

Bringing together 1,200+ delegates from 79+ countries, the World Gaming Forum is the official ICE Leaders' Conference, offering the highest-level thought leadership in the industry.

SBC confirms continuing September dates for SBC Summit

SBC Events has reiterated the 2026 dates and announced the 2027 dates for its flagship SBC Summit, which recently brought together 30,000 industry professionals in Lisbon.

The global event will return to the Feira Internacional de Lisboa and the MEO Arena on September 29th to October 1st in 2026 and September 21st to 23rd in 2027.

Having secured these dates back in 2023, SBC continues to lead with consistency, ensuring the industry enjoys predictable planning and relief from scheduling bottlenecks.

Rasmus Sojmark, Founder & CEO of SBC, says: "Clarity and predictability, at least when it comes to dates, are vital. Our partners deserve to plan ahead without uncertainty.

"By setting our dates well in advance, we ensure that everyone could organise their year efficiently and contribute to a well-balanced industry event calendar. "Our 2026 dates are slightly later than usual to avoid clashing with major Jewish religious holidays taking place in mid-September in 2026 but will return to their usual timing from 2027 onwards."

SBC has been hosting its major September exhibition and conference since 2015 and has established itself as the major industry gathering after the European summer break. Relocating from Barcelona to Lisbon and rebranding as SBC Summit to mirror its global vision, has delivered exponential growth and recognition. Its reputation as the fastest-growing event in the sector is backed by numbers - the 2025 edition attracted 76.6% first-time attendees and 57.5% new companies.

Rasmus Sojmark adds: "Our focus has always been on serving the industry, not competing with it."

Set to welcome 35,000 professionals from betting, gaming, payments, marketing and tech, the 2026 edition promises to raise the bar once again.

SiGMA Group named SME of the Year at Malta Business Awards

SiGMA Group has been crowned SME of the Year at the 4th Malta Business Awards, an achievement that caps a decade-long journey from a small Maltese startup to a global events brand.

Eman Pulis, Founder of the SiGMA Group, said: "This is a great honour; we started in Malta, and we will always be in Malta. It is a success story, and I hope it inspires others to follow."

The award recognises one standout SME with between 26 and 250 employees that has demonstrated holistic improvement in areas such as growth and value added, innovation, internationalisation, digitalisation, ESGs and work-life balance.

The ceremony took place at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, drawing together leading businesses from across Malta's economy.

Organised by the Malta Chamber of SMEs and Malta Enterprise, the awards are positioned by the organisers as the largest business event held on a national level, celebrating achievements in wellbeing, innovation, sustainability and smart strategies across three broad categories.

SiGMA's win in the SME of the Year (26-250) category reflects the judging panel's focus on businesses that have evolved on several fronts at once, from commercial performance to workplace practices and digital maturity.

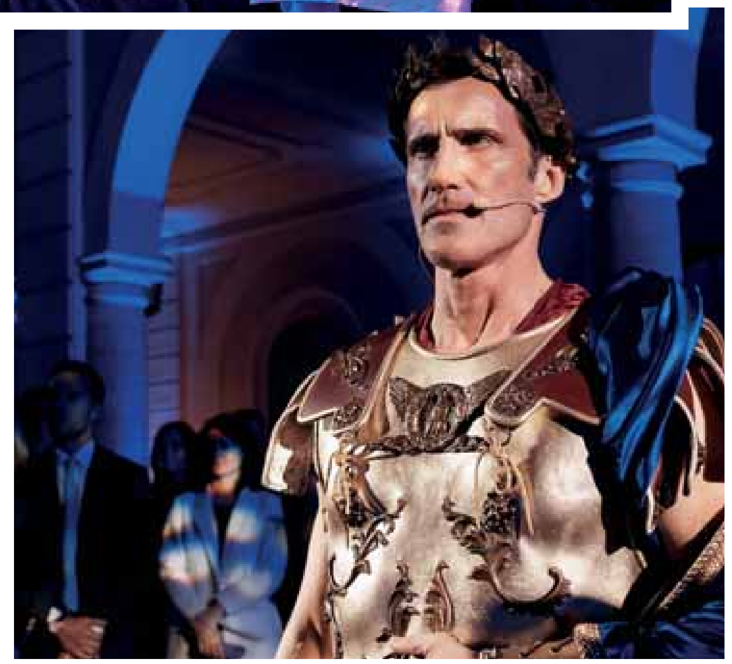
SiGMA's path to this win started more than 10 years ago in a small local office. From that base, the group has grown into a heavyweight on the international events circuit. Across 2024 and 2025, more than 131,500 delegates attended SiGMA's summits worldwide, from Dubai and São Paulo to Cape Town, Manila, Rome and Valletta, marking steady year-on-year growth.

Alongside its SME of the Year title, the group was also awarded the Silver Award for Social Impact (26+ Employees), a category designed to recognise companies that go beyond their commercial objectives to make a tangible difference in society.

The Social Impact Award celebrates initiatives that give back to communities or promote inclusion. For SiGMA, the silver recognition is a tribute to the long-term commitment of the SiGMA Foundation and its projects around the world, proof that growth and generosity can go hand in hand.

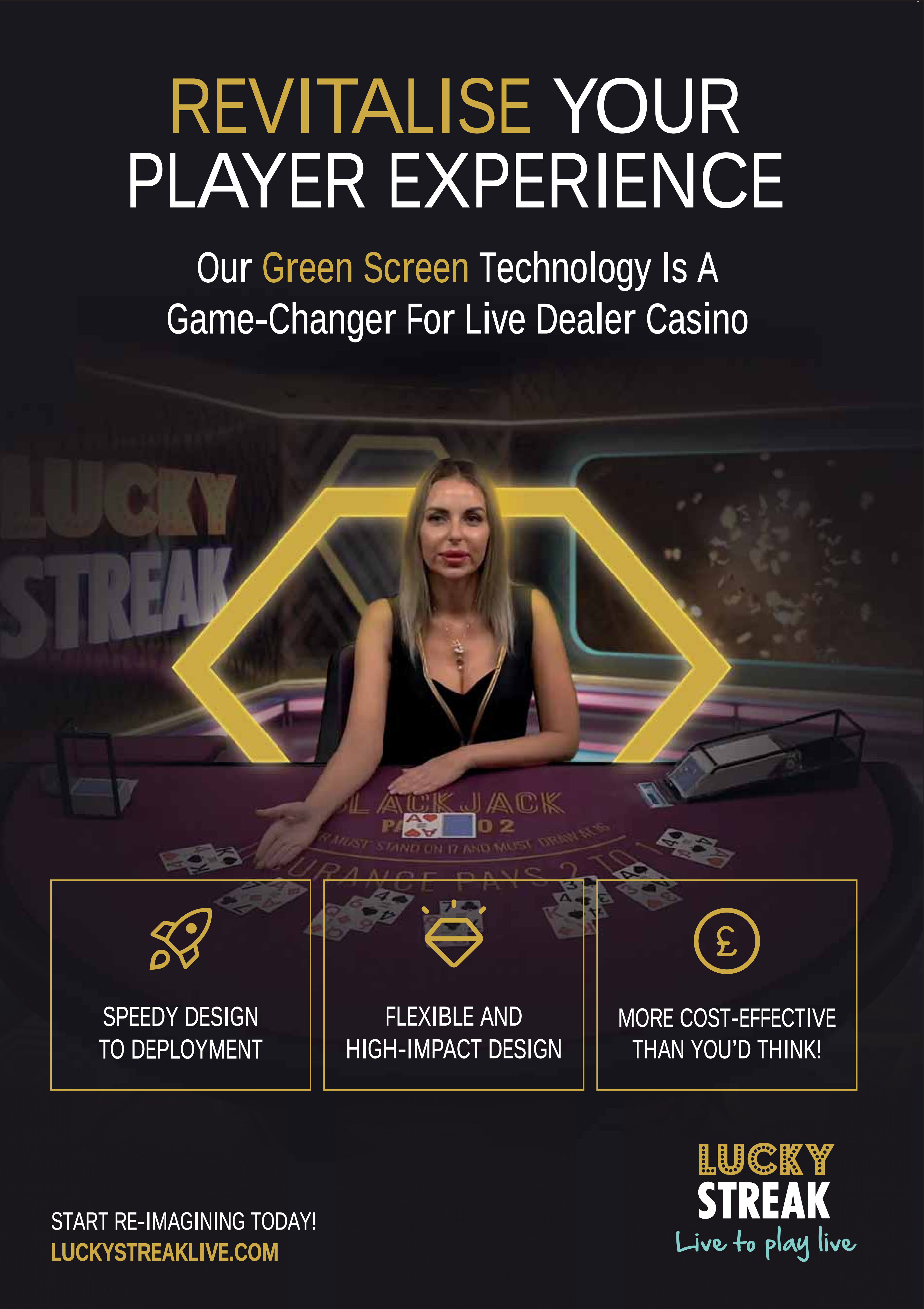
The Malta link remains central. The SiGMA Euro-Med summit has become one of the island's most high-profile fixtures, welcoming thousands of international delegates each year. With a blend of outward-looking growth and home-base loyalty shaped, the celebrations underpin Eman Pulis's message: "SiGMA's international footprint is anchored in Maltese ambition."

Rome, November 3rd,
1xBet & 1xPartners' s pectacular New Empire Party, featuring live performances from the Black-Eyed Peas and the incredible Akon



Events

Rome, November 4th
MelBet Partners & Affiliates' stunning Triumph of The Gladiators Party, featuring MMA icon, Kamaru Usman and global hitmaker, Argy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