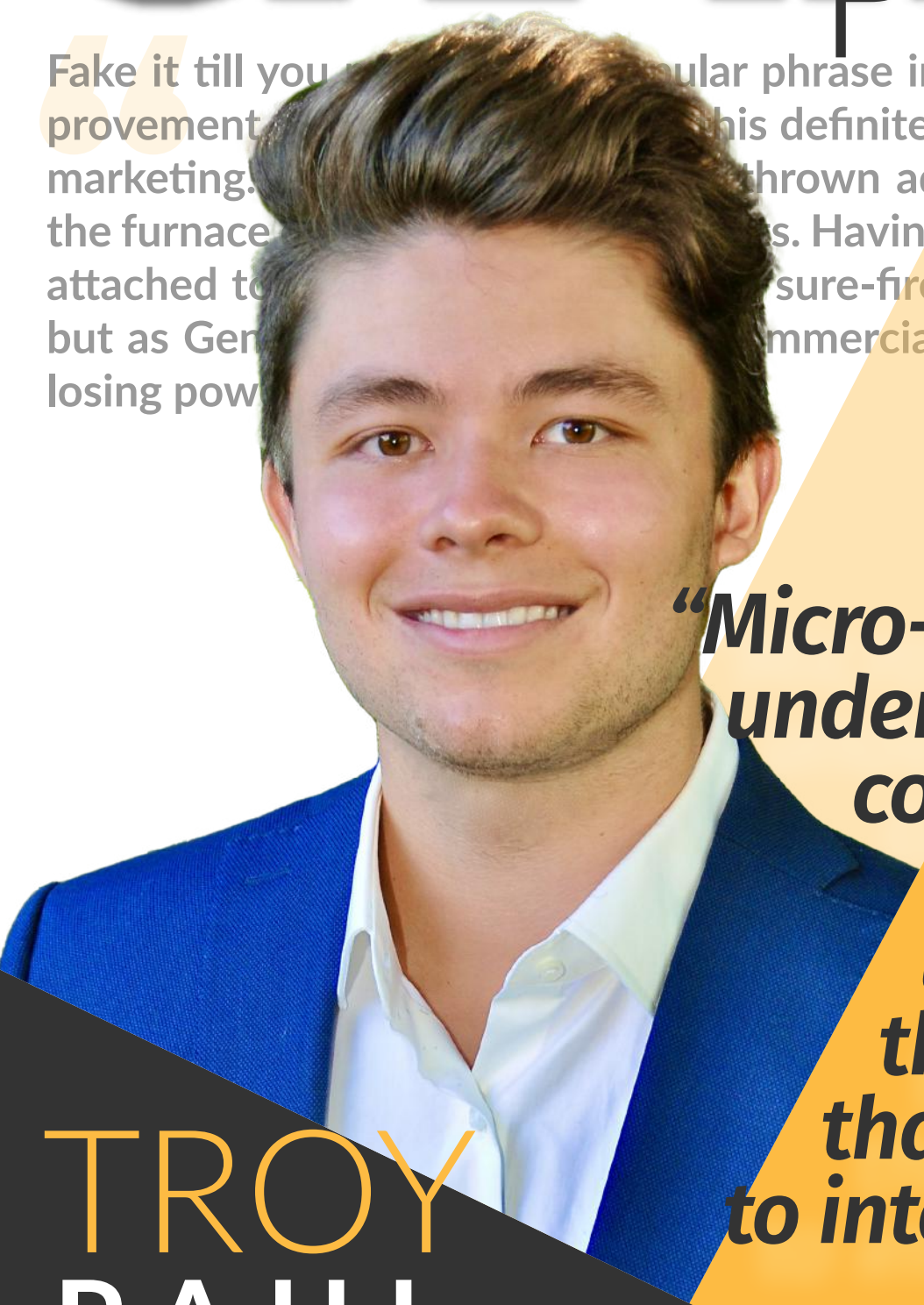
# GAMING PULSE



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***"Micro-influencers understand their communities, and they understand the products that are going to interest them"***

## TROY PAUL

*For years, brands have thrown advertising money into the furnace of celebrity endorsements. Having a big-name celebrity attached to your brand used to be a sure-fire of gaining attention, but as Gen Z emerges as a major commercial force, this is quickly losing power.*



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## Table of Contents


*Amplified roadmap and wider product offering for Gaming Realms in 2024 (EG)*
**Suki Sandhu / Gaming Realms** ..... 3

*Critial Milestones Curacao License (EG)*
**LOK / NOOGH** ..... 5

*EGBA Expresses Concern Over New Italian Decree Reorganising Online Gambling License Fees (EG)*
**Maarten Haijer / EGBA** ..... 7

*Push Gaming's 2023 report: the US, more games and new horizons (GA)*
**Fiona Hickey / Push Gaming** ..... 9

*How Web3 will transform iGaming in 2024 (EG)*
**Evgeniy Babitsyn / Bets.io** ..... 11

*The Importance of Authenticity With Micro-Influencer Marketing and Gen Z Audiences (GA)*
**Troy Paul / SGG Media** ..... 13

*Unwrapping seasonal games with Gaming Corps, Booming Games, 1X2 Network and Apparat Gaming (EG)*
**Alex Ratcliffe / Thomas Wendt / Moritz Blume / Connor Blinman** ..... 14

*BGaming celebrates impressive 2023 fuelled by streaming and customisation success (EG)*
**BGaming** ..... 17

*Maths Compliance, the key to a successful certification (EG)*
**Lorenzo Nardini / ComplianceOne** ..... 19

*BF Games – games aggregation Q&A, with Head of Account Management (EG)*
**Rok Hribar / BF Games** ..... 21

*IBIA welcomes historic vote of Brazilian sports betting law (EG)*
**Khalid Ali / IBIA** ..... 23

*A year of research, development, and growth: Slotegrator's 2023 recap (EG)*
**Ayvar Gabidullin / Yana Khaidukova / Slotegrator** ..... 25

*Maximizing ROI in iGaming: A Deep Dive into Non-Standard Geo-Targeting Through Influencer Marketing (EG)*
**Part 1 of 2 / Anna Zhukova / Famesters** ..... 27

*2024 Predictions: A Deep Dive into the Future of Tech and Gaming (GA)*
**Jonathan Power / Voxbet** ..... 31

*Partnership to Educate Minor League Players on Gambling Harm Prevention (GA)*
**MLB / EPIC Global Solutions / Entain Foundation U.S.** ..... 32

# Amplified roadmap and wider product offering for Gaming Realms in 2024

***Joining towards the end of 2023 how do you envision Gaming Realms' product offering evolving throughout 2024?***

2023 was a stellar year for Gaming Realms, and we intend to continue this momentum by amplifying our roadmap productivity with an even greater number of game releases. With increased game production and quality being at the forefront of our 2024 plans, I have spearheaded a portfolio review to broaden our scope, aiming to reach a wider audience and appeal to operators who are not yet familiar with Slingo.



This initiative has also paved the way for identifying new innovation opportunities. Slingo has established itself as a genre in its own right and developing mechanics that complement its pioneering nature will be crucial for us in 2024. By evolving the slots and bingo blend that Slingo is rooted in, we can introduce metagaming and expand upon gamification elements that we will reveal throughout the year.

***After recent successes with an array of IP-focused titles, will you be looking to continue integrating proven brands into the Slingo genre?***

Partnering with established IPs presents a multitude of advantages for Gaming Realms, our operator partners, and players alike. This win-win strategy is something we intend to further pursue in the future, however, it involves more than simply incorporating the Slingo concept into existing popular brands.

We carefully select IPs and franchise brands that empower operators to differentiate their offerings, resonate with player preferences, and complements the Slingo mechanics to create an engaging gaming experience with Slingo mechanics to create an engaging gaming experience. possess sufficient depth for game development. Whether sourced from other mediums like video games, exemplified by Slingo Tetris, television classics like Slingo Deadliest Catch Deal or No Deal, or popular slot titles such as Slingo Money Train Lobstermania, our goal extends beyond creating Slingo adaptations.We aim to expand these franchises while delivering enhanced entertainment for their passionate fan bases.

***Appealing to a broad demographic, because of the unique nature of the Slingo mechanic, do you have a prospective audience in mind for the new direction you will be taking Gaming Realms' portfolio?***

Our new trajectory steers us away from targeting a single demographic and embraces a broader approach. While the Gaming Realms portfolio already resonates with a diverse audience, we will be intensifying our localisation efforts in the new year. This will involve developing specific titles that cater to unique market preferences and player trends, reflecting our expanding presence in new jurisdictions. We are committed to honouring the individual desires and needs of players worldwide and will adapt our development processes accordingly to provide games that are created specifically for certain markets.

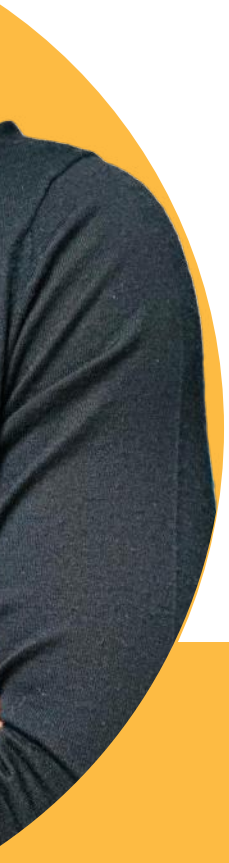
***After recently recording a 36% year-on-year rise in revenue, how do you intend to continue this success for Gaming Realms?***

We will be building upon this success by differentiating our content in regulated and burgeoning markets whilst providing new Slingo experiences to both grow and maintain markets we are already popular in. This focus on innovation will allow the brand to appeal to new players and offer existing fans new elements to enjoy. Our marketing strategy is also a key focus of our growth with campaigns across social media and television allowing us to appeal to many new players.

***Are there additional ways to evolve the Slingo concept that you have yet to create, and what do players have to look forward to?***

As a forward-thinking provider, Gaming Realms is dedicated to continuous and positive evolution. We see numerous opportunities to enhance the Slingo genre, leveraging the unique blend of slots and bingo. As both verticals continue to develop independently, we have access to a vast array of elements to further refine the Slingo concept which we can borrow from both verticals.

We recognise that ongoing evolution requires a degree of player education. To address this, we have implemented a much earlier prototyping stage, encompassing both UI/UX and game analytics, to ensure that our innovative games remain accessible and enjoyable. With streamlined onboarding, the possibilities for Slingo's evolution are limitless. Players can expect a surge of innovation, an expanded game library, and some of the most captivating gaming experiences available in the coming year.



Suki Sandhu

**CPO at Gaming Realms**

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# Critial Milestones Curacao License

*The National Ordinance for Games of Chance (LOK) has been officially submitted to Parliament and the Minister of Finance has initiated a sequence of procedures to facilitate a seamless transition from the existing framework to the new system upon the law's enactment.*

### *Licenses under the new framework (issued by NOOGH and the LOK)*

All licenses and license holders will be granted under the same rights and conditions. There is flexibility as to the corporate and license structure entities can set up with regard to their individual operations.

- Any account can have one or more licenses.
- Any UBO(s) can have one or more accounts.
- Any license can have unlimited domains.

### *Prospective renewal of Current Gaming Licenses (Master Licensees)*

From this point forward, there will be no new extensions or renewals of Master Licenses. Master Licensors will only be able to continue to operate and permit sublicensees to do so until current renewals expire, or LOK come into force, whichever happens first. On the passing of LOK or when there are no less 12 weeks of the current renewal remaining, again which ever happens first, the Master Licensor must promptly notify the GCB which sublicences remain contracted to it. After this time Master Licensors should they wish to continue operations in their own right will need to wait until LOK is implemented and apply for a license then.

### *1st January*

All license holders under the NOOGH will be allowed to use a new Digital Seal on domains of their websites. This Digital Seal will be issued by the GCB.
In addition, the GCB has the discretion to permit operators in contractual arrangements with license holders (the sublicensees) with license applicants in progress, that have satisfied the due diligence required by the GCB to offer the same Digital Seal.

A Digital Seal Policy will shortly be issued by the GCB and will require operators to include the "token" associated with each domain registered on the GCB portal to be inserted into the websites' DNS.

License holders will be responsible for actively monitoring their sub-licenses to ensure they do not employ a variant of the official Digital Seal without enforcement. The GCB will take enforcement measures against license holders found to be in violation of this policy.

### *31st March 2024*

Registration of sublicense on the GCB portal and the subsequent application for direct licenses of those sublicense operators will no longer be possible after the 31st March 2024.

The following are the scenarios based on sublicense registration and NOOGH license applications from this date:

| | Sublicence and domains registered on GCB portal | Sublicence and domains not registered on GCB portal |
|---|---|---|
| Application in progress on the GCB portal or license issued by the GCB under NOOGH | Operations continue uninterrupted under sublicense agreement until direct license is issued.<br><br>Direct license if held at the time of the LOK coming into force will be grandfathered into the new framework as a provisional license without any interruption of business operations.<br><br>Applications in progress will continue under the LOK framework and sublicense operations can continue uninterrupted. | N/A |
| No application in progress on the GCB portal and/or license issued by the GCB under NOOGH | Continue operations under current agreement with Master License holder until expiry ceases or LOK comes into force, whichever is first.<br><br>Any subsequent application to be made will be treated as a new application and not "grandfathered" at changeover from NOOGH to LOK giving rise to a risk of temporary interruption to operations in-between licenses. | Immediately cease operations under any sublicense contractual agreement from this date.<br><br>Any application to be made will be a new application and not "grandfathered" at changeover from NOOGH to LOK giving rise to a rsk of temporary interruption to operations in-between licenses. |

- Any license application from a brand new entity/applicant (i.e. not under any existing license or sublicense) under NOOGH will be processed under NOOGH, and if not yet completed at the point the LOK comes into force will have the same status as sublicensees.
- Current "sublicense" holders who receive a new direct license under the NOOGH will have their business operations transferred immediately to the GCB regulatory system and be subject to the license conditions. Any existing contractual arrangement with the master license holder is the responsibility of the two parties to that agreement without interference by the GCB.

### *Definitions*

GCB – Curacao's Gaming Control Board
GCB Portal – https://portal.gamingcontrolcuracao.org/
LOK – Incoming legislation: National Ordinance for Games of Chance
NOOGH – Current legislation: National Ordinance on Offshore Games of Hazard



# EGBA Expresses Concern Over New Italian Decree Reorganising Online Gambling License Fees



## Maarten Haijer

The European Gaming and Betting Association (EGBA) has expressed concerns over Italy's decree on online gambling.

The decree is currently being discussed by the Council of Ministers and would trigger a reorganisation of the gambling sector if passed. This would include changes to the licence fees, the introduction of a prohibitive licensing regime and additional fees. The EGBA is concerned that these would require an investigation to ensure that Italy is complying with EU law.

*Maarten Haijer, Secretary General of EGBA*, said: "The proposed increase in licensing fees is unparalleled and unheard of. It would make Italy the most expensive country in Europe to obtain an online gambling licence. Together with the other restrictions in its gambling market, such as the local advertising ban, this proposed fee hike will make Italy a closed shop for new market entrants and lead to an exodus of existing licensees. This also raises concerns on compliance with EU law. We urge the Council of Ministers to reconsider the proposal, as it will make the country's online gambling black market problem even worse, not better."

The EGBA also suggested that the new decree could raise the licence fee from €200,000 ($219,377) up to €7m despite the previous proposal rejecting a raise to €2.5m.

One of the main concerns in this regard is the prevalence of black market gambling that is available in Italy. According to the EGBA, this market is valued at over €1bn annually, with illegal sites offering no protection to players.

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# Push Gaming's 2023 report: the US, more games and new horizons

**Fiona** Hickey



*As 2023 draws to a close, Push Gaming's Director of New Business and Markets, Fiona Hickey, reflects on its recent progress on and off the reels and how the news of its acquisition has been received stateside, where the popular studio intends to make a splash.*

***With Push's much-anticipated entry into the US market looming, has this influenced the agenda of US event attendance in 2023?***

We've been diligently preparing for our US market entry for the past few years, gaining valuable insights and developing a comprehensive strategy as to our approach to the jurisdiction. With the potential of the US market being so great, it is worth taking our time and preparing for our launch accordingly.

During our pre-planning stage, we attended events like G2E Las Vegas among others where we met with regulators and gathered a broader understanding of the US gaming market so that we were sufficiently knowledgeable and informed of the market.

We've also been studying popular game concepts in both the online and the land-based market to ensure that our launch offerings will resonate with US players. By carefully considering the regulatory environment and player preferences, we have been able to develop a comprehensive plan to market that will position us for success when we begin to roll out there.

***Has the recent acquisition by MGMRI/LeoVegas furthered this agenda at all? Or is it business as usual in terms of your US debut?***

Our recent merger with MGM Resorts has significantly enhanced our US expansion strategy. The deal enables us to capitalise on BetMGM's market-leading position and introduce our globally celebrated titles to American players for the first time on one of the most prominent operators' platforms.

This will catapult our brand awareness in the US and help integrate our titles into the public zeitgeist of online slots within that market, encouraging more growth thereafter with additional operators and partners.

***Your product roadmap has been boosted by an acceleration in game launches – what impact does this have on selling Push Gaming to operators?***

We've been consistently raising the bar for our games in terms of quality and quantity over the past few years. Each

new game provides an opportunity to innovate and expand our knowledge whilst delivering new features to players.

With each successive release, we become a stronger provider and the recent uptick in these launches has amplified our already well-known inclination to innovate.

With over 60 direct integrations and partnerships with nearly all tier-one operators in the regulated markets that we are live in, we're in an incredibly strong position. Adding more award-winning games to our portfolio allows us to capitalise on this position and expand even further, both with new operators and with our existing partners.

***The big product news of 2023 was Razor Returns. Has this resulted in more interest in your content?***

Our portfolio has always garnered significant attention from both players and operators because we're constantly pushing the boundaries of slot development. We don't simply replicate trends, we add our unique touch to create something truly exceptional and this is sought out by players and proves beneficial to operators. Razor Returns was a resounding success and since its launch, it has remained a top game for our partners. Players are drawn to its mix of familiar gameplay and the evolution of a fan-favourite franchise with new additions to its mechanics, the slot has proven to be a hit since release.

As we move into 2024, we've already crafted an impressive roadmap for Q1, featuring seven games, one of which is the highly anticipated Wild Swarm 2 which we believe has the potential to be our most successful sequel yet. We also have Retro Sweets upcoming, the long-awaited sequel to Retro Tapes, which we know our partners will love. For them and ourselves, content is king and consistently delivering high-quality entertainment experiences is key to garnering more interest in our games.

***What other regions and new markets are in the pipeline for Push?***

Following our entry into Greece, Italy, and Switzerland towards the end of 2023, we plan to continue our expansion and aim to be live in Spain in Q2 next year. We will also be looking to continue our growth and expansion into Latin America, along with our much-awaited entry into the US being on the horizon. We are excited to continue to grow our business, offering our innovative games to new players around the world and providing existing Push enthusiasts with new games to enjoy. There are exciting times ahead.




# How Web3 will transform iGaming in 2024



## Evgeniy Babitsyn

The iGaming sector will be transformed by Web3 technologies. From blockchain applications to AI, NFTs and cryptocurrencies, iGaming platforms are already exploring how Web3 can not only improve their ways of working, but provide an exceptional standard of user experiences.

However, there is still a knowledge gap within the industry when it comes to understanding just how Web3 can be integrated into existing services. The discussion has been dominated by bold thinking on how Web3 will forever transform society. While this has created an exciting public discourse, it can sometimes overshadow the more practical ways that companies across all sectors can already start using Web3 to their advantage.

There are plenty of other considerations as well. These range from the limitations of certain early-stage technologies through to regulatory compliance and risk management. Hastily embracing Web3 without consideration of these issues can leave an entity exposed to a host of challenges which could undermine their relationship with their clients and services. Conversely, taking a risk averse approach which ignores Web3 will ultimately result in organizations being left behind.

Bets.io has been at the helm of research and development to understand how Web3 is revolutionizing the iGaming sector. Already, new initiatives are underway which will result in the rollout of Web3-enabled services and products throughout 2024, tailored to the needs of our clients.

Through our research, we have identified two key ways that Web3 will transform iGaming in 2024.

### *Speed, transparency and security*

The benefits of Web3 revolve around three core principles of speed, transparency and security. Collectively, these principles are directly relatable to the iGaming sector and are based on the process of decentralization i.e. where the activities of a gaming ecosystem or a gaming platform, like the ownership of gaming assets and decision-making in all aspects of gaming, are delegated away from a central authority. This leads to transparency and security advantages.

For example, smart contracts can be deployed to automate the rules and logic of particular online games, ranging from the rewards and penalties set, to the changing nature of the challenges that players face. These smart contracts act as self-executing agreements that run on a blockchain system, meaning that it is incredibly difficult for games to be manipulated or hacked by an outside party.

The use of peer-to-peer networks works in a similar way, promoting cross-play functionality and an international network of gamers. This also means less of a reliance on a centralized server or platform which could slow-down network work performance or limit certain regions and devices from connecting with other players.

### *Tailored fun for all*

Alongside the technical conversation on Web3, we should not forget the fun and engaging elements involved in iGaming and how this can be enhanced. The iGaming sector is global in nature and scope, bringing together players from a diverse collection of communities and regions. This makes the interests of players diverse. Rather than relying on one award system and one style of game, Web3 technologies allow iGaming platforms to deliver a bespoke experience for each individual player.

To understand how this would work in practice, we can consider the reward systems in place. Linking rewards with tokenization is one example of this, most prominently demonstrated through non-fungible tokens (NFTs) that directly correlate to the interests of a player. NFTs can be integrated into iGaming to create unique, tradable, and collectible items that can be won or traded between players. It creates an added value to the player and another avenue to encourage engagement.

Adaptive and tailored gameplay can also be produced through the combination of AI and blockchain data. The different gaming systems can learn from a player's behavior and preferences to adjust difficulty levels, storyline progression, and in-game events in real-time. Limits can be set and the individual can play games on a difficulty level which is tailored to their skill-level.

2024 will be a defining year for the iGaming sector, and its progress will be led by the integration and use of Web3 technologies. The success of this will depend on iGaming platforms readily exploring how Web3 can be used, with the player experience guiding all the decisions made. Bets.io is already making strides in this space and we look forward to providing future updates shortly.

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# The Importance of Authenticity With Micro-Influencer Marketing & Gen Z Audiences

Troy Paul



'Fake it till you make it' is a popular phrase in the modern self-improvement culture, but one area this definitely no longer applies is marketing.

For years, brands have thrown advertising money into the furnace of celebrity endorsements. Having a big-name celebrity attached to your brand used to be a sure-fire of gaining attention, but as Gen Z emerges as a major commercial force, this is quickly losing power.

Gen Z is a demographic that has grown up in and around digital marketing and the internet. More than generations that come before it, it understands how the world of advertising works, and it is demanding change.

The idea that a celebrity is using the same products as your everyday person no longer sells. We have more access than ever before to the lives of celebrities and athletes, and we can clearly see our favourite NFL player is not wearing that watch he promised he never took off in the adverts.

There is a demand for authenticity and for a belief that a person selling you a product is, first and foremost, upfront about the fact they are selling it and, secondly, providing a genuine endorsement of a product they use themselves.

This is where micro-influencers can step in. Micro-influencers have huge followers of people who really believe in their brand. Their interests are more niche and much more accessible than celebrities or major influencers.

As such, it is essential that a brand's values align with that of a micro-influencer. Brands should be looking for micro-influencers that share their beliefs and that have products that will align with their audience instead of just seeking out the ones with the biggest followings. A campaign for a product that is of direct interest to micro-influencers with 25,000 followers will prove to be much more profitable than randomly assigning a product to someone with 200,000 followers with no real connection to it.

Essentially, it is becoming increasingly impossible to fake in-depth knowledge or endorsement of a product. The community aspects of sports and other sectors now mean audiences are quicker than ever to spot something disingenuous and call it out. Micro-influencers, whose success relies on that strong relationship with their communities, are not going to put themselves at risk by endorsing something that does not align with their own values and beliefs.

This authenticity also applies to presentation. We've all had that experience where we're listening to a major podcast, and then, out of the blue, they just start promoting a product totally unrelated to what we are listening to. All this results in is people repeatedly hitting the skip 15 seconds button on their apps until the ad is gone.

Micro-influencers understand their communities, and they understand the products that are going to interest them. They also know how to package these products to them and how to make them appeal without ever appearing pushy or like they are over-selling.

This genuine connection between a product and its intended audience is something people would pay millions for in the past. Micro-influencers have made this affordable, ensuring an excellent ROI for companies on their advertising campaigns.

It has also proven an excellent way of levelling the playing field for small and mid-level businesses. Companies no longer need to have huge advertising budgets to reach their audiences. Gen Z is also supportive of smaller business, especially those that align with their social and political values, and micro-influencers and authentic marketing provides a way for them to connect.

One thing that is clear is that marketing is changing, and Gen Z audiences are going to continue to look for the most authentic endorsements they can find. Working with micro-influencers now allows companies to get ahead of that trend and reap all of its benefits.

# Unwrapping seasonal games with Gaming Corps, Booming Games, 1X2 Network and Apparat Gaming

*With the festive season fast upon us, we spoke with four game studios to understand the opportunities that come with Christmas slots and some of the challenges they face in developing them*

Just like the retailers and their eagerly anticipated Christmas TV ads, it's that time of year again when studios unwrap their Christmas-themed slots. These games often dominate casino game lobbies for the next few weeks, allowing operators to cash in on the festive fun.

But with such a short shelf-life, these games can be challenging to develop. They need to come with a captivating theme that stands out from the other Christmas and themed slots, combine a striking design with a big sound, and still put players on the edge of their seats with every spin.

In short, they need to deliver in the same way as any other game leaving the studio's production line would. But with such a short window of time in which to monetise these games, developers must balance the resources required to produce them with the return they will generate.

Many studios simply reskin an existing, proven game from their portfolio, but others believe they must still go through the full development cycle if they are to deliver the quality players expect. This includes Gaming Corps, whose Christmas cracker – Xmas Plinko – has just hit the market.

***Connor Blinman, Head of Games at Gaming Corps***, said: "Christmas games are hugely popular and can generate significant revenues even though they are only played for a handful of weeks. But to hit the mark with players, the game must deliver the fun, thrills and big win potential they have come to expect.

"This year, we wanted to bring some Christmas magic to the plinko format which is now hugely popular in markets across the world. We are the first Christmas-themed plinko game to hit operator lobbies, and bringing together a festive theme and soundtrack with the plinko experience was something we knew players would enjoy.

"Xmas Plinko has been through the full development cycle to ensure it provides the quality to not only meet but exceed player expectations. This includes rebuilding our plinko engine from the ground up, allowing for better game performance and delivering the best quality to players."

With Xmas Plinko, players are encouraged to jingle all the way and drop into the holiday spirit as they watch their baubles cascade down the tree and land among the presents where they have the chance to win 3,200x their stake.



The game sits at the high end of the volatility scale – because there can never be enough excitement at Christmas – and has a return to player of 97.05%.

Some studios really do get into the Christmas spirit, and that's certainly the case at Booming Games. The developer recently launched its festive title, Holly Jolly Bonanza.

You can't not feel the festive fun when firing up the reels on this five-reel, six-row slot, which is packed with enough joy to make you feel like a kid on Christmas morning. There are plenty of bonus features to unwrap, too.

This starts with a stocking filler – when a win forms, winning symbols are removed and new symbols cascade down like snow from the sky, filling the spaces and potentially forming new wins. The cascades keep coming until there are no more win combinations available.

The festivities keep going with Free Spins. These are triggered when four Scatter symbols come down the chimney and land anywhere on the reels, awarding ten Free Games. If three or more Scatters land during Free Spins, another five Free Games are awarded.



But that's not all. Random Multipliers can appear at any time during Free Spins, with a max Multiplier of up to 100x for truly Santa-sized wins. Of course, if you're name is on the naughty list and you still want to unwrap Free Spins, there's the option to Buy the Bonus.

***Moritz Blume, Director of Product at Booming Games***, said: "The holiday-themed slots, particularly those centred around Christmas, exemplify how seasonal games can significantly enhance the studio's overall performance.

"These games actively engage in various Christmas promotions, collaborating with both operators and affiliates, providing an additional boost to their performance.

"With Holly Jolly Bonanza, we have dropped several popular bonus features that appear in our other titles firstly because it makes for thrilling festive gameplay, but also so that players get a taste of what Booming Games' slots are like if they haven't played them before."

Of course, Christmas slots are just one season that studios produce games for with Halloween being another popular holiday. But there really is no limit to the imagination of studios looking to deliver games around popular events.

Apparat Gaming, the developer of slots with a German accent, launched its October Bier Frenzy title ahead of the world-famous Munich Oktoberfest which took place back in September. Again, the studio looked to deliver thrilling gameplay alongside the theme via Free Spins with a Collector mechanism in the Beer Frenzy Bonus.

This is triggered when three Scatters land anywhere on the reels. When this happens, the soundtrack of the Bavarian brass band changes to a famous Oktoberfest party song – the lyrics basically say the drunker you are, the easier it is to sing.

Free Spins are then awarded and as they play out, players collect the Beer symbols that are served onto the reels. If the player collects 40 of these symbols, an additional 10 Free Spins are awarded with any winnings from the Beer symbols Multiplied by x2, x3 or x10.



During Free Spins, players need to keep their slightly blurry eyes peeled for the Beerman as when he appears together with the Beer symbols, he drinks them all and Collects all of the values that are on the symbols.

If there is a Wild but no Beer symbols, he cheers the bar with a "Prost" and turns random symbols into Beers before collecting their values.

***Thomas Wendt, Co-founder, and Director at Apparat Gaming***, says the mechanics of the themed game are just as important as the theme itself.

"While players are often drawn to themed games around that seasonal event, they still expect to be entertaining and for the game to deliver the excitement and big-win potential they are seeking.

"That is exactly what we have done with October Bier Frenzy, paying great attention to the gameplay and in particular the Free Spins/collector feature. By doing this, we increase the longevity of the game beyond the time the Munich Oktoberfest takes place."

Themed games have been around for many years, and there's a strong appetite among players to engage with them. This presents opportunities for studios to produce seasonal slots, but they absolutely must nail the quality and experience of these games – no gimmicks, if you like.

1X2 Network is another studio that gets into the festive spirit with two games hitting operator stockings this year – Sweet Candy Christmas and Megaways Jack Frost from its Iron Dog Studio brand.

The latter is the latest instalment in the developer's Megaways Jack series, which has been a hit with players. By taking what is essentially a game franchise and launching a Christmas special, the studio believes its Christmas slot will top the charts.

It sees players venture to the North Pole where they are treated to a stunning, snowy experience packed with bonus features including winning symbols that freeze and shatter to be replaced by new ones, as well as reels that lock in place with an enchanting icy border that gradually freezes the entire reel.

If that wasn't enough, Free Spins can be triggered with players taken into an icy snowstorm where Multipliers and the Jack Frost feature come into play. Jack Frost showers the player with bonuses such as Symbol Swaps and Wilds in both Free Spins and the base game.

*Alex Ratcliffe, CPO at 1X2 Network*, said: "'Tis the season to be jolly, and what better way to get into the spirit of the season than by developing not just one but two Christmas-themed slot games.

"This year, we decided to leverage our popular Megaway Jack series by adding a Christmas game to the series. This allows us to tap into the existing popularity of the game and to deliver a fun, festive experience to players with a brand and mechanic they already know and love.

"Our other seasonal slot, Sweet Candy Christmas, is just as fun to play and combines the ever-popular Scatter Pay mechanic with the most wonderful time of the year. The candy theme set in a Winter Wonderland has one last surprise for eagle-eyed players who may recognise who is driving Santa's sleigh."



Some studios are clearly up for the challenge and enjoy the benefits of developing and launching themed games, both in the near term while they are "in season" and also in the long-term kickback in the form of stronger operator relationships and player awareness.

Of course, pick the right theme – such as this year's St Patrick's Day release Leprechaun Charms – and you can end up with a fun, themed game that can be played all year round. So, a slot game for life, not just for Christmas. "

YOUR AD COULD BE HERE



# BGaming celebrates impressive 2023 fuelled by streaming and customisation success

Popular iGaming content provider BGaming has doubled all targets for 2023 – after a stellar year featuring AI-powered slots, record streamer engagement and impressive customisation results.

BGaming has reported a 95% increase in global gaming revenue (GGR), 102% increase in bets placed, more than 80% boost in the sum of bets and launches in more than 400 new casinos. Fuelling this growth, BGaming has seen its team grow from 120 to 200 employees.

A highlight of the year was the creative studio's customisation expertise, which saw the distribution of more than 100 games, including exclusive releases like Doddy and Hadzy for Stake.com, and Betsson Plinko for Betsson. BGaming's partnership with Blaze Casino saw the operator report up to 80% growth in GGR from games analysed.

Overall, the games developer released 36 new titles, including Bone Bonanza with exciting new mathematics, Beast Band, with a random Multiplier feature, and Merge Up, which introduced unique merging mechanics. Top performers, Gemhalla, Dice Bonanza, Mice and Magic Wonder Spin and Sweet Rush Megaways™, further boosted player engagement.

BGaming's commitment to creativity and staying on trend continued, as AI contributed to 90% of the development of huge hits Alien Fruits and Wild Chicago, while a new type of game Scratch Alpaca, captured the imaginations of audiences.

After continuing global expansion, including into new regions, Greece, Romania, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Chile, Mexico and Spain, among others, BGaming also announced partnerships with the likes of Casimba Games, Playtech, Salsa Technology and Betvictor.

***Maria Ostrovtsova, CEO at BGaming***, said: *"BGaming has continued to outdo itself and grown massively throughout 2023. We faced new challenges and celebrated many unforgettable milestones.*

*"BGaming's achievement in the realm of streaming is something that stands out for us. We reached more than 16 million players each month and were awarded seventh place in Casinolytics' stats. More than 75% of all streamers worldwide have streamed our content, making us third in LatAm in terms of reach.*

***Kate Puteiko, CMO at BGaming***, said: *"This year, BGaming has been focusing on standing out in the saturated market, with so many talent studios producing engaging content.*

*"As a result, we have delivered numerous outstanding projects that have taken our studio to a new level, including our artistic collaborations at ICE London, SBC Barcelona, and SiGMA Malta, something we will continue into next year."*

BGaming continues its creative project When Art Meets Gaming next year and will attend ICE London 2024 on Stand N8-120, between 6th and 8th February 2024.

BGAMING

*BGaming is a fast-growing iGaming content provider converting gambling into gaming. Thanks to an expert team and a player-driven approach, the studio creates innovative and engaging products featured on reputable platforms and 1,000+ online casinos worldwide. BGaming is the world's first to support cryptocurrencies and offer Provably Fair games. Today the brand's portfolio includes 100+ products with HD graphics and a clear user interface for every device. The studio is also known for its brand exclusives created in partnerships with leading operators in the industry.*





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Lorenzo Nardini

# Maths Compliance, the key to a successful certification

*If you have ever undergone the certification process to enter any regulated market, you have probably encountered issues relative to Random Number Generators and the maths models of games of chance. The two parts of the certification process have most likely endangered the planned time to market.*

*In this short article, I would like to help you understand good practice and reduce these risks, by sharing some tips and best practices to follow that I have learned in my 6 years' experience as math analyst.*

## *The start*

In principle, maths requirements are only a small part of the full list of criteria that apply to a gaming technology platform, and they do not vary wildly between land based or iGaming solutions. Nevertheless, they can be quite difficult to check.

The first step in this process is typically the Random Number Generator approval. This is because, in the same way car suppliers want to first ensure that there is a functioning engine that enables the vehicle to move, game suppliers need to be able to generate unpredictable game outcomes that are fair to the players.



At first glance, the RNG can look like a scary topic preferably discussed only with a very limited audience. However, it is not necessarily the case, if you have a good understanding of the main technical standards governing this component and a team of professionals to support you.

In general, regulators want to ensure that the RNG can output unpredictable numbers without introducing any form of bias. For some markets the unpredictability requirement can be very strict, allowing only secure RNGs (known as cryptographically strong). This is where many issues can rise since RNG technology continuously evolves over time and methods that are currently deemed as secure may not necessarily be in the future. In fact, cryptographic security is a vastly researched topic in information technology and its evolution has large repercussions in many areas other than Gambling: from Finance to Healthcare, from E-commerce to Military. Fortunately, you don't need to be a crypto guru to have a well-functioning cryptographic RNG and stay ahead of time! Most operating systems have embedded cryptographically secure sources of entropy, different cryptographic RNG solutions are easily accessible, and if you want a source of true random numbers you can opt for hardware-based solutions that use the laws of physics to generate truly unpredictable events.

On the other hand, something that is not advisable is to try to develop your own RNG algorithm as this can be a very cumbersome task and independently asserting its security might take a very long time.

### *The tips for successful management of RNG certification*

What you should focus on if you want to reduce your time to market while ensuring compliance for your RNG can be summarised in the following tips.

You should probably opt from the very start for a cryptographically secure RNG, even if you are currently aiming for a market that does not require the RNG to meet this level of security. This is because, as technology is advancing, so are the requirements, and more and more countries are moving in this direction. Furthermore, once you have finally obtained a license for your target market, you might probably want to expand operations to other jurisdictions that might require a secure RNG. Already satisfying this requirement will certainly save you some valuable time! If you are unsure on what type of algorithms to consider, try to address some experts that can guide you in the right direction.
Interestingly, the most common mistakes I have noticed concern a much easier component of the RNG solution: the process of performing final outcome mapping without introducing a bias. RNGs typically produce numbers in specific binary format (32bit and 64bit are the most common cases). It is then up to you to add some functions in your code to enable to generate outcomes in a specific format. This typically includes a target range (for instance 0-36 if you want to use your RNG to give outcomes for a single-zero roulette) and the possibility to perform shuffling to output unique outcomes within a single play (as in the case of card games). These methods are prone to introducing bias and experts can assist you to avoiding these commons mistakes.
Try to set up your system architecture so that the RNG is encapsulated. This is because, once your RNG is approved and since it is such an important component of Gaming Platforms, you only want to modify it when necessary, and avoid that any change to other files nonrelated to it can trigger the recertification of this component. Ideally, once you have a secure RNG algorithm, unbiased scaling, and mapping methods and, where necessary, a dynamic monitoring feature, you should update your RNG only if disruptive technological advancements require so. A review of your RNG architecture can be performed by experts to help you maintain a compliant RNG solution. Ensure that your RNG is tested for general use. Many regulated markets require that the RNG passes statistical testing for all the possible configurations for which it is requested to generate random outcomes by he associated gaming applications. Having your RNG tested upfront for a vast variety of cases will save you from having to apply for updated RNG certifications whenever you want to release a new game.
Now that you have your RNG approved, it is time to start the certification process of the associated games.

### *The maths in Games*

A good game's maths is the differentiation between a good game and a bad game. The maths is where your company new ideas can be implemented to making more and more appealing features to attract players.

All games are unique and require passing independent testing to ensure their compliance. The standard requirements related to maths mostly concern the following aspects: minimum Return to Player (RTP) allowed, odds of specific outcomes such as the top prize, and limitations enforced by the regulator such as on the maximum possible win in a single play or maximum average loss per hour that players can expect while playing the game.

To pass these requirements you need a sound mathematical model of your game and, most importantly, very detailed and accurate documentation to ensure its reproducibility and independent verification. In my experience, insufficient/unclear information is the number one responsible for a slow math evaluation. Whether it is for inexperience or for trying to protect their intellectual property, it often happens that young suppliers do not submit accurate and complete math documentation (PAR Sheets). This irremediably results in a tedious testing process full of long email threads and JIRA tickets to address. A thorough revision of these documents before the certification commences is then recommended and it is something that my team is happy to perform.

At the same time, efficiencies can be found by allowing simultaneous testing against different markets: after all the underlying game math model is the same! In order to do that, your main thing to worry is to have performed a complete compliance research for all applicable requirements.

### *Conclusion*

The usual piece of advice is preparation; the successful certification with a quick time to market requires expertise in this area, sound maths documentation to submit to the lab and remembering that complexity isn't always good.

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# BF Games – games aggregation Q&A, with Rok Hribar, Head of Account Management

***BF Games recently launched its BF HUB aggregation platform, securing its first distribution deal with Tornado Games. Why did you decide to take this next step?***

BF HUB intends to host content from new and up-and-coming studios and will support partners in making their debut across numerous markets and help introduce their fresh and expanding portfolios to players for the first time. The idea for BF HUB first developed after a successful partnership with SYNOT Games last year. Over the last 12 months, we have continued to aggregate several game studios, including Tornado Games, which is an exciting new studio eager to boost its market position and adapt in the growing market. After a string of successes, we identified a gap in the market and decided to launch BF HUB. For our partners, connecting with BF HUB is a natural step in their commercial roadmap and we have great plans to collaborate and grow together in the future.

***What are the benefits of using a games aggregator service for iGaming operators?***

Aggregators play a dual role, both by extending the capacity of operators' integration and acting as an additional sales team, but the main benefit of an aggregator is speed. Operators normally plan their integration roadmaps carefully in advance, however there can still be a need for fresh and exciting content that they do not have the capacity to develop or execute.

BF Games and BF HUB has expanded into several new regulated markets over the last year, including obtaining a Canadian licence, and is currently licenced by 21 jurisdictions. We have increased our presence in the CIS region which enables our partners, like Tornado Games, to easily strengthen their presence.

We are not only directly integrated with many top market operators, but also established aggregators that would not usually integrate new or emerging game suppliers. We can give them a chance to get noticed.

***Why do you think there has been an increased popularity of games aggregation in recent years?***

The iGaming market is rapidly expanding and every year new countries are regulating online gaming and setting or changing legislation. In response, there are new game suppliers and operators which opens up the need for new aggregators.



# Rok Hribar

## Head of Account Management @ BF Games

Operators want to attract players by integrating with well-known, popular game suppliers, but increasingly they are recognising the benefits of new or localised content too. Content that works in one market will often gain popularity in others and become widely popular.

Instead of integrating every studio individually, operators can use one simple integration with an aggregator and focus their resources on more critical tasks on their end. At the same time, every game supplier is building its own web of contacts and connections and sees the opportunity to help other providers grow their network. In the process, they could make additional profits on top of their current network.

***For what reason did BF HUB decide to offer its services primarily to new and up-and-coming studios? What support can you offer them?***

We believe our network provides a highly-valuable service for new studios. We offer simple or reverse integration and great technical and account management support. We can also advise on newly-regulated markets and help studios navigate the obstacles in their way, and plan for future expansion.

Game suppliers should first test their product on a small-scale network so when they partner with bigger operators, they will not fail to deliver. They can gather initial feedback from us, gain knowledge of where they can improve and enhance their offering going forward. We offer a collaborative and consultative service that we hope will help our partners succeed.



# IBIA welcomes historic vote of Brazilian sports betting law

IBIA welcomes the adoption of the sports betting law by the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies. The law introduces an effective regulatory and licensing system for operators in Brazil for both sports betting and online casinos. It also includes a range of integrity measures to strengthen the fight against sports betting related match-fixing.

The law includes a requirement that sports betting operators are part of an international monitoring body; a provision that will help to ensure proper mechanisms are put in place to help protect operators, their customers, as well as sports, from potential fraud and manipulation. In addition, the ability for betting operators to suspend payments of bets for matches that are under investigation for potential corruption is important in protecting operators and deterring sports betting related fraud.

*Khalid Ali, CEO of IBIA, said*: 'This is an historic moment for sports betting in Brazil and is a major step forward in the fight against match-fixing. IBIA welcomes the adoption of specific betting integrity provisions in the law, which the association has been campaigning for since discussions on regulating sports betting began in 2018. A number of Brazilian market focused operators have already joined IBIA, and we look forward to engaging with other operators intent on offering well-protected sports betting products to Brazilian consumers via IBIA's world leading integrity network.'

IBIA is run by operators for operators, with its monitoring and alert network harnessing the collective resources and expertise of many of the world's largest regulated sports betting companies. It monitors approximately US$150bn in betting transactions on approximately 650,000 competitive sporting events globally, making it the largest monitor of its type in the world.

According to H2 Gambling Capital – the leading independent authority on global gambling market data – IBIA members already account for over 60% of the remote gambling market in Brazil.

IBIA's international monitoring and alert network will provide accurate and detailed intelligence on suspicious betting activity on Brazilian sport to betting regulators, law enforcement and sports governing bodies.

*Khalid Ali* stated: "Although the new law is a very important milestone in the fight against match-fixing, there is no room for complacency. We are committed to working more closely and sharing our expertise with the Brazilian regulatory authorities on the implementing regulation on integrity, as well as with sports and law enforcement to ensure we more effectively detect, deter and sanction sports betting related match-fixing and fraud."



Khalid Ali

Opening markets to licensed sports betting operators is key to protecting consumers and the integrity of sporting competitions from sports betting related match-fixing. Regulated sports betting markets channel consumers away from the unregulated markets where most of the issues with match-fixing and corruption arise.

*Khalid Ali* continued: "By opening-up the market to licensed sports betting operators Brazil is sending a very important message to other markets in Latin America that a dynamic and competitive regulated sports betting framework with strong integrity provisions is essential to the fight against sports betting related match-fixing."

Sports betting exists within a highly competitive international market and an overly burdensome framework of regulation and taxation will have the counterproductive, and unintended, consequence of driving sports betting customers into unregulated markets, reducing tax revenues and increasing the risk of corruption and match fixing.

Therefore, whilst IBIA welcomves the fact that the Chamber of Deputies has resisted the temptation to impose higher levels of gambling taxation, the impact of the overall tax burden and the substantial cost of the licencing fee, which remains BRL 30m, may deter investments in Brazil.


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# A year of research, development, and growth: Slotegrator's 2023 recap

*2023 was a great and productive year for Slotegrator, one full of reflection and solid research. Now it's time to look at what goals were fulfilled and what new goals Slotegrator should set.*

For Slotegrator, 2023 was a year of thorough research, deep insights, rethinking, and qualitative growth. During the year, the Slotegrator team visited key countries in its main markets (Europe, LatAm, Asia, Africa), learned all the new trends, and became convinced that it had chosen the right path and way of development.

The Slotegrator team visited many iGaming events in 2023. Among them were SiGMA Asia in the Philippines, ASEAN Gaming Summit Philippines, GAT Expo Colombia, Spice India, SAGSE Latam, Casino Beats Summit, Belgrade Future Gaming, Central European Gambling Summit 2023 (CEGS23), Romania, and SBC Summit Tbilisi. We also presented with a stand at several expos, including SiGMA Malta, SBC Summit Barcelona, SiGMA Cyprus, iGB LiVE Amsterdam, SiGMA Brazilian iGaming Summit, SiGMA Eurasia in Dubai, ICE London, and SiGMA Africa in Kenya.




***Ayvar Gabidullin, business development manager at Slotegrator,*** comments: "Expanding into key markets around the world is crucial for international gambling providers like Slotegrator, and we keep searching for new opportunities to contribute to our clients' growth."

***A quick look back at the most noteworthy events of the year:***

- 2023 was very eventful in terms of gambling market regulations. Slotegrator stayed on top of every little detail that could potentially be important for the company's clients. This year Slotegrator created and presented an interactive map with the most relevant information about the gambling laws. The map is constantly updated.

- Cutting-edge, in-demand technologies were implemented in the company's products and solutions. For example, the turnkey platform was updated with new modules and features for smoother and more optimized online casino and sportsbook management: the Casino Builder module for easy alterations of website UX, the KYC module for more efficient AI-driven player verification in compliance with regulatory requirements, the Anti-fraud module to identify suspicious behavior, the Artificial BI module for quick and effective analysis of platform metrics, the Bonus module for a quick adjustment of bonus campaigns, and other features like Progress bar, a Wheel of Fortune, and integration of ChatGPT.
- The company also reaffirmed its status as one of the pioneers of the Telegram Casino solution — this product is only becoming more and more popular due the growing popularity of portable gambling and the messaging app itself.
- Among other important trends in the iGaming industry is a focus on regulatory compliance and responsible gambling. The Slotegrator team has noticed a growing interest in ESG in the industry. Paying attention to this issue is a sign that the industry realizes the importance of safe and responsible gambling, and that it begins with leading companies like Slotegrator.
- The Slotegrator team constantly collects and updates information about new technologies, game types, payment methods, and player behavior. In an industry that evolves as fast as iGaming, relevant, up-to-date knowledge is essential — which is why the company produces so much informative material in Slotegrator Academy. In December 2023, Slotegrator released a detailed report about modern players. You can download it here, and watch a video overview at Slotegrator Academy.
- In January 2024, Slotegrator is presenting a new report with gambling trends in 2024. Sign up for the newsletter here so you don't miss it.

***In 2023, Slotegrator's solutions and services were nominated for awards in the following categories:***

- Innovation in Mobile, SBC Awards 2023
- Mobile Gaming Software Supplier, Innovation in Mobile, EGR B2B Awards 2023
- Online Casino Provider of the Year, SiGMA Awards Americas 2023
- Platform Provider of the Year, Aggregator of the Year, AffPapa iGaming Awards 2023
- Aggregator of the Year, Sigma Manila Awards | Asia 2023

The company won in the category: "Sports provider of the Year by Affpapa iGaming Awards 2023".

***Yana Khaidukova, Managing Director at Slotegrator***, says: "We had an interesting journey and we enjoyed passing every milestone of 2023. We are convinced that we are on the right path, and finally determined our goals for 2024.

We appreciate our extensive partner network, every new deal, and every new connection, as well as every insight and every development we got this year. We are looking forward to 2024, hoping it will bring us more interesting events and achievements. We wish our partners and clients growth and prosperity in the next year."

***ABOUT SLOTEGRATOR***

Since 2012, Slotegrator has been one of the iGaming industry's leading software and business solution providers for online casino and sportsbook operators.

The company's main focus is software development and support for online casino platforms, as well as the integration of game content and payment systems.

The company works with licensed game developers and offers a vast portfolio of casino content: slots, live casino games, poker, virtual sports, table games, lotteries, casual games, and data feeds for betting.

Slotegrator also provides consulting services in gambling license acquisition and business incorporation.

More information: https://slotegrator.pro/

# Maximizing ROI in iGaming: A Deep Dive into Non-Standard Geo-Targeting Through Influencer Marketing (Part 1/2)

*Here's a quick take on influencer marketing in iGaming: it's all about making waves in the digital world. Popular social media stars teaming up with iGaming brands make them not only well-known, but also more trustworthy. Influencers have got the followers, the trust, and the know-how to get people excited about gambling and betting online. In this article,* ***Anna Zhukova, Team Lead of iGaming vertical at Famesters*** *will delve deeply into smart influencer marketing strategies for this business vertical.*



***Here are some of the key components of influencer marketing for iGaming brands:***

- Engaging the Crowd: Influencers are superstars at grabbing the attention of different players – from those who play just for fun to the serious high rollers.
- Building Trust: When an influencer gives a thumbs-up to a game or a particular online casino, their followers listen. It's like having a friend recommend your favorite new game.
- Finding the Right Fit: Picking the perfect influencer is key. They need to align with what the iGaming brand is all about.
- Staying in the Lines: iGaming has got rules. Influencers need to play by them to keep things cool and compliant.
- Performance Metrics and ROI: Tracking the success of influencer campaigns through metrics like reach, engagement, and conversions is crucial. This data helps in refining strategies and ensuring a high return on investment.

In short, influencer marketing in the iGaming industry is a trust-building powerhouse: it is a nuanced and effective approach, leveraging the power of influential personalities to build brand trust, engage diverse audiences, and drive business success within a regulated framework.

And here's another great power that influences the final results of an influencer marketing campaign: geo-targeting. It's about hitting the right audience, in the right place, at the right time. Here's why you can't do iGaming marketing without geo-targeting:

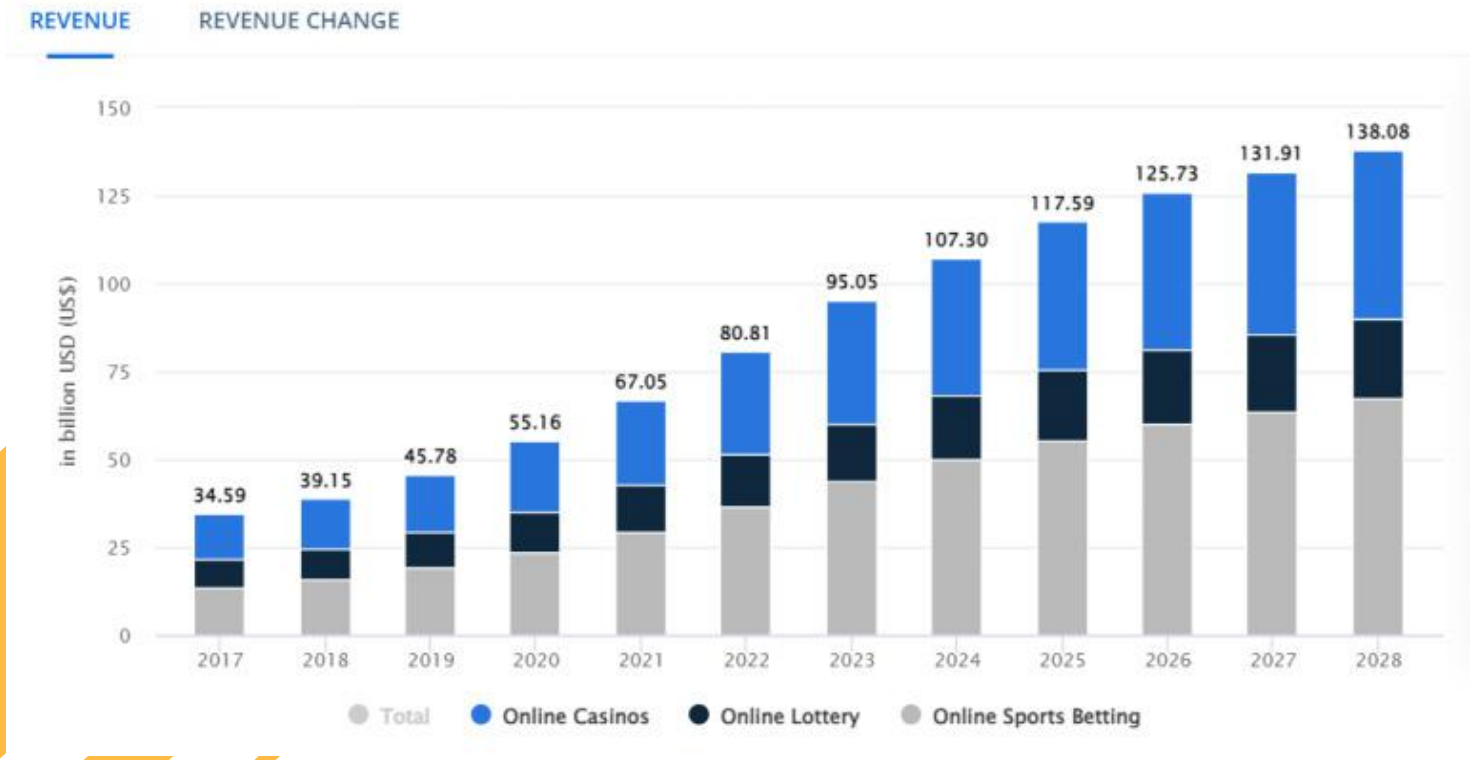
- Audience Segmentation: It's all about hitting the sweet spot with each region's unique gaming tastes and cultural vibes. Tailoring content to specific areas means more impact and appeal.

- Regulatory Compliance: Different areas, different rules. Geo-targeting keeps campaigns on the right side of the law, dodging legal headaches.Localized Content: This is where you speak their language, literally. You have to adapt to local dialects, cultural hooks, and region-favorite games to ramp up engagement and conversions.
- Cost Efficiency: It's about smart spending. Better focus your efforts where they count, avoid wasting resources, and watch your marketing budget deliver more.
- Data-Driven Decisions: You can use geo-targeting data to get the lowdown on what works where. This insight sharpens resource allocation, boosting your ROI.

### *Understanding the iGaming Industry*

The iGaming industry, encompassing online gaming and betting platforms, has witnessed exponential growth in recent years. A surge in digital technology adoption and the rise of mobile gaming have been pivotal. The industry's growth trajectory is marked by technological advancements, expanding into new markets, and an increasing acceptance of online gaming as a mainstream entertainment option. This evolution has opened doors to vast opportunities but also posed unique challenges.

According to Statista, the global iGaming market is expected to reach a revenue of more than $107 billion in 2024.




Traditional marketing methods in iGaming face several hurdles. The biggest is the evolving regulatory landscape, with different countries imposing varied restrictions on gaming advertising. Additionally, the traditional one-size-fits-all approach struggles in a market where gamers' preferences are as diverse as their geographical locations. There's also the challenge of ad fatigue, where conventional advertising methods no longer capture the audience's attention as effectively.

To navigate these challenges, the iGaming industry is turning towards more innovative, targeted, and engaging marketing strategies. Personalization and use of data analytics are becoming increasingly important. Brands are now focusing on creating more immersive and interactive marketing experiences that resonate with their audience on a deeper level.

Influencer marketing is now one of the most powerful tools in the iGaming industry. It leverages social media influencers' reach and credibility to promote betting and gambling platforms and products. This approach taps into the influencers' engaged audiences, offering a more authentic and trustworthy promotion method than traditional advertising. Influencers can create content that resonates with their followers, whether it's through live-streaming games, tutorials, or reviews, thus providing a more organic and engaging way to introduce products to potential customers.

Statistics underscore the impact of influencer marketing. For instance, 66% of marketers using it say that influencer-generated content performs equally or better than branded content. Also, on average, brands earn $5.78 for every dollar spent on influencer marketing.

Understanding the iGaming industry today means recognizing the shift towards more innovative, personalized, and influencer-driven marketing strategies. The industry's growth is paralleled by the evolution of marketing techniques, with influencer marketing standing out as a key player in engaging and expanding the iGaming audience.

## *Non-Standard Geo-Targeting*

First, you need to understand the tiers in global market segmentation. There are three of them. Understanding the economic and audience characteristics of different tiers is crucial for effective global marketing. Each tier offers unique opportunities and challenges, and selecting the right one depends on a company's budget, target audience, and industry regulations.

### *Tier-1 Countries: The Premium Market*

- Characteristics: These are the most developed countries with strong economies and a wealthy audience.
- Why They're Attractive: Businesses target these regions due to the high purchasing power of the audience. This means greater potential for sales and revenue.
- Consideration: Advertising in these countries can be quite expensive. Brands should be prepared for higher marketing costs.

### *Tier-2 Countries: The Balanced Choice*

- Characteristics: These are developing countries. Their economies are well-developed, but the audience's purchasing power isn't as high as in Tier-1 countries.
- Why They're Attractive: They're a strategic choice for businesses seeking a solvent audience without the high costs associated with Tier-1 markets.
- Ideal for Certain Industries: Tier-2 countries are particularly suitable for advertising sectors like betting, forex, and binaries, which might be restricted in Tier-1 countries.

### *Tier-3 Countries: High Reach, Low Cost*

- Characteristics: Often referred to as 'third world countries,' these nations have weaker economies and lower-income populations.
- Advantages: Advertising costs are low, allowing for broad coverage even with smaller budgets.
- Target Audience: These regions are often targeted by industries like gambling, forex, and betting. These sectors appeal to audiences seeking opportunities for 'easy' income.

Now let's take a closer look at the peculiarities of each tier and the countries in it.

## *High Costs in Tier-1 Markets: A Matter of Solvency*

- User Solvency and Payback: In Tier-1 markets, users generally have higher purchasing power, which can lead to better payback for businesses. However, this comes with its own set of challenges.
- Regulatory Hurdles: A significant issue in these markets is the stringent regulation around gambling products. While launching campaigns on platforms like Facebook may not require a license, working with influencers often does.
- Licensing Complexities: Licenses such as MGA (Malta Gaming Authority) or Curacao are necessary for simply working in European countries. However, they don't authorize advertising in these geographies and targeting users in them. Plus, obtaining advertising permissions is a very complex process.
- Influencer Marketing Challenges: Tier-1 influencers, earning well from less risky advertising options, often steer clear of gambling promotions. Finding one willing to collaborate without a license is rare.

Businesses eyeing Tier-1 markets need to be prepared for higher costs and stringent regulations, especially when incorporating influencer marketing into their strategies. While the financial returns can be significant due to the high solvency of users, navigating the regulatory and licensing requirements adds complexity.

In contrast, Tier-2 markets offer a more accessible and flexible environment for certain types of promotions, including those in the gambling sector. Transitioning from the complex landscape of Tier-1 markets, Tier-2 geographies present a different potential. The regulatory environment is typically less stringent, and the cost of marketing is more manageable compared to Tier-1.

In the next article, we will make it clearer how the countries from different tiers can be connected, what role influencers play in this, and most importantly – how exactly non-standard geo-targeting can be used to reach more solvent audiences with cost-effective strategies. Stay tuned!

Author: Anna Zhukova, Team Lead (iGaming) at Famesters

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# 2024 Predictions: A Deep Dive with Jonathan Power, MD of Voxbet, into the Future of Tech and Gaming

In an ever-evolving digital landscape, 2024 stands on the brink of groundbreaking advancements. Join us as we explore the future through the insightful lens of Jonathan Power, Managing Director of Voxbet, who brings a wealth of knowledge and foresight into the emerging trends and technologies set to redefine the tech and gaming industries. This exclusive interview delves into Power's predictions for 2024, offering a glimpse into what's next in this dynamic sector.

### *Voice betting and navigation for sportsbooks*

2024 will be the year the penny drops that sportsbooks need to be as easy to use as everything else. A sportsbook now has as many things to bet on as the internet had websites back when Google first showed everyone how much easier it would be to just type what you want, rather than navigate Yahoo's menus. "Why wasn't it always this easy," will be the question asked in gambling's own lane of ecommerce before 2024 ends.

Then, with a bet-mic potentially on every sportsbook, what will happen subsequently with the real estate this frees up? Everything. We will finally see differentiation in our industry as operators put their creative talents to work in using this space in a way that best engages their audience. Finally, my sportsbook and your sportsbook will be as different as my Spotify is from your Spotify. At Voxbet, we can't wait to see the results, as we help accelerate this near-future for the sector.

### *Legitimate machine-learning techniques and AI advance*

Voice does one thing for the customer: it simplifies their journey. However, it does something more profound for the operator: it frees space for personalisation. How that space is filled will be determined through the use of AI. They've had the data for over a decade. They've had the tools for almost as long. They've only lacked the space. A Google-style sportsbook interface creates this space and AI will populate it with tailored UI which truly recognises and understands your customer from the log-in, with an ensuing frictionless personalised journey is now an attainable reality.



Jonathan Power

### *BetBuilder & multiples (including in-play) in the ascendant*

Single-game parlays (SGPs), or BetBuilders as we know them on this side of the pond, have quickly manifested their presence in the US already where margins have almost doubled. There's a clue to the gap in the market with them, though – hardly any are in-play. As an operator's most profitable product, more must be invested in making them easier to place. Then this rising tide will also lift all the in-play boats.

BetBuilders are the fun bet of a generation. And this generation already use voice technology every day. Voice can take the BetBuilder and request-a-bet model to another level of convenience and popularity. Accordingly, speaking a BetBuilder will be the breakthrough product of 2024.

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# MLB Partners with EPIC Global Solutions and Entain Foundation U.S. to Educate Minor League Players on Gambling Harm Prevention



Major League Baseball (MLB), EPIC Global Solutions, and Entain Foundation U.S. have partnered to enhance MLB's efforts to educate players on how to prevent gambling-related harms.

EPIC Global Solutions will offer lived experience educational sessions focused on responsible gambling and mental health to Minor League players and other MLB personnel selected by MLB. Entain Foundation U.S. will provide financial and other support to facilitate the sessions delivered by EPIC Global Solutions.

"We believe that EPIC's impressive program facilitators, including an ex-minor leaguer, will communicate critical insights on gambling harm prevention in relatable and compelling ways. Our younger minor league players in particular are coming into the league at a time when mobile sports betting is an increasingly prominent part of the sports ecosystem. We want to help those players avoid gambling-related pitfalls that can derail not only their careers, but also their day-to-day lives more generally," Quest Meeks, Vice President of Sports Betting & Compliance at MLB, said.

"We are pleased to be able to support baseball to take a proactive stance on player protection against gambling-related harm through our innovative lived experience approach, sharing the stories of those who have experienced gambling disorder first hand," Ben McGregor, director of sports partnerships at EPIC Global Solutions, said.

"Working with such an iconic American institution provides a unique opportunity to not only help the players connected to every franchise, but also the wider supporter base across the country, who can learn more about the potential effects of gambling harm through the increased profile this program will generate. We thank Major League Baseball and Entain Foundation U.S. for providing this platform for wider awareness," Ben McGregor added.

"Entain Foundation U.S. is proud to support EPIC Risk Management's effort to educate the Major League Baseball community about problem gambling. We must take a preventative approach to gambling harm, particularly those involved in sports, so educating the baseball community on responsible gambling practices is a critical measure," said Martin Lycka, Entain's Senior Vice President for American Regulatory Affairs and Responsible Gambling and Trustee of Entain Foundation U.S.

The new three-way partnership expands an ongoing collaboration between EPIC Global Solutions and Entain Foundation U.S. to educate the public on gambling harm prevention. Entain Foundation U.S. sponsors information and education programs on problem gambling for professional athletes, collegiate athletes, coaches, and teams at universities nationwide and several sports organizations.

The delivery model is expected to commence in 2024, when EPIC will visit Minor League teams during Spring Training.

EPIC Global Solutions delivers ground-breaking harm prevention programs, independently accredited training, and class-leading advisory to help individuals and organizations across the highest risk sectors in the sports wagering ecosystem minimize the risks of gambling harm. Through a partnership with the Entain Foundation U.S.—Entain plc's unique non-profit subsidiary, dedicated to promoting responsible gambling and sports integrity—EPIC Global Solutions' work in U.S. sports continues to grow.

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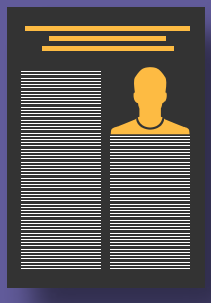
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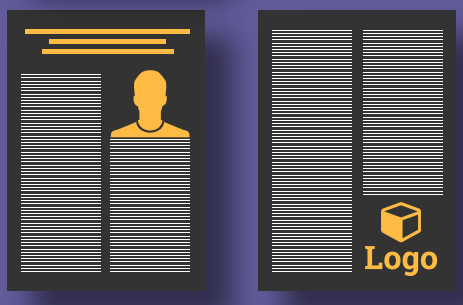
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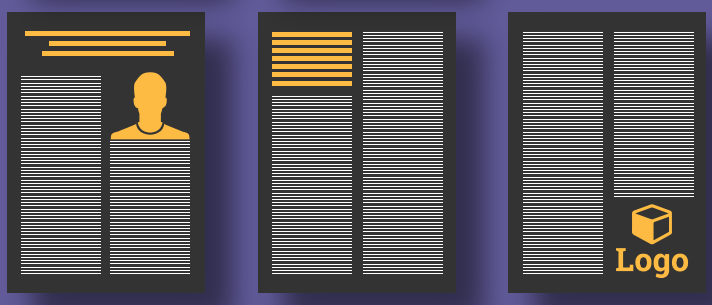
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