

GAMING INTERNATIONAL ONLINE

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Artificial intelligence (AI) has been the headline act across tech for a while now, but in iGaming it's no longer a future-facing concept – it's very much a here-and-now tool that's reshaping how we build, run and grow our businesses.

For developers, AI is accelerating everything from game design to testing. Procedural content, smarter NPC behaviour and real-time player personalisation are no longer experimental; they're becoming expected. The bar for engagement keeps rising, and AI is helping studios meet that demand without sacrificing creativity. It's not about replacing human input but enhancing it, giving teams the tools to iterate faster and deliver richer player experiences.

Operators, meanwhile, are leveraging AI to better understand player behaviour at scale. From dynamic segmentation to predictive analytics, there's a clearer picture than ever of what players want and when they want it. That translates into more relevant offers, improved retention and, ultimately, stronger lifetime value. Affiliates are also tapping into AI-driven insights to refine acquisition strategies and optimise traffic with far greater precision than ever before.

But perhaps the most important impact of AI lies in responsible gambling. As the industry faces increasing scrutiny, the ability to identify and support at-risk players has never been more critical. Machine learning models can detect subtle shifts in behaviour far earlier than traditional methods, enabling timely interventions that are both effective and proportionate. This is where innovation truly meets responsibility.

Of course, AI is not a silver bullet. It requires careful implementation, transparency and ongoing oversight. But used correctly, it offers a powerful way to balance commercial success with player protection.

In this issue, we explore these themes in depth, because the future of iGaming isn't just smarter, it's more responsible too.

Neil Mead, Editor GIO




BETBY appoints Gonzalo Navarro to drive LATAM growth

BETBY has appointed Gonzalo Navarro as Senior Business Development Manager as it expands its presence in Latin America.

Navarro joins with experience across iGaming and technology, having held commercial roles at Vibra Gaming and Control F5, where he focused on B2B sales, partnerships and regional growth.

He will work with BETBY's commercial team to strengthen operator relationships and identify new opportunities across LATAM, supporting rollout of the supplier's sportsbook offering.

Navarro said the region presents "significant opportunities" and that he aims to build long-term partnerships with operators.

Chief Commercial Officer Chris Nikolopoulos

said Navarro's market knowledge and industry network would support the company's regional expansion strategy.

The appointment forms part of BETBY's wider international growth plans, with Latin America a key focus market for sportsbook suppliers.



Digitain and AdmiralBet Serbia agree multi-product partnership



Digitain has entered a strategic partnership with AdmiralBet Serbia covering multiple products and brands within a single agreement.

The deal will see AdmiralBet integrate Digitain's sportsbook, alongside live casino content from Imagine Live, games from

Galaxsys, and the Relum aggregation platform.

All products will operate within a unified structure designed to support scalability, operational efficiency and future expansion in regulated markets.

Digitain said the agreement reflects a broader approach to delivering integrated, multi-vertical solutions to operators.

Chief Sales Officer Ani Mkrtychyan said combining multiple capabilities within one framework supports long-term growth while maintaining flexibility.

AdmiralBet Serbia said the partnership will support development across several operational areas as it strengthens its position in the local market.

The deal expands Digitain's footprint in regulated European jurisdictions.

BETBY adds eHockey, eMMA and eTeqball to Betby.Games

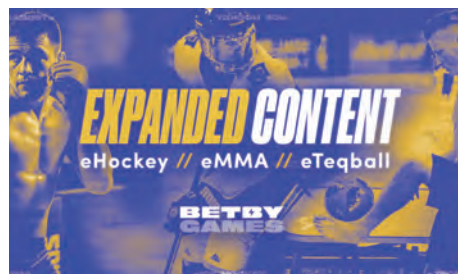
BETBY has expanded its Betby.Games portfolio with three new e-sim titles: eHockey, eMMA and eTeqball.

The additions introduce new sports verticals to the supplier's high-frequency content offering, with each title designed to deliver continuous, short-format events.

eHockey features matches based on NHL divisions, generating more than 11,000 games per month. eMMA includes themed tournaments with rapid one-round fights, producing around 15,000 events monthly.

eTeqball introduces a new discipline to the portfolio, with matches played to 12 points and around 1,800 events per month.

Head of Innovation & R&D Kirill Nekrasov



said the titles expand the range of proprietary content and support operator demand for always-on betting products.

The launch forms part of BETBY's strategy to develop in-house betting content and diversify its esports simulation offering.

BETER secures Arizona licence to expand US footprint

BETER has been granted an Event Wagering Supplier License by the Arizona Department of Gaming, marking its entry into a seventh US state.

The licence enables BETER to provide its fast-betting content, including live streams, data and odds, to licensed operators in Arizona. Its ESportsBattle tournaments and Setka Cup table tennis are now live with bet365.

BETER is also licensed in North Carolina, New Jersey, Florida, Indiana, Iowa and Colorado, as it continues to expand across the US.

CEO Gal Ehrlich said the approval supports the company's US growth strategy and reflects the quality of its offering.

Chief Legal Officer Valeriia Tarchynska added that the eight-month licensing process was among the company's most complex to date.

BETER said it is continuing to pursue approvals in additional states, including Ohio, Kentucky and Illinois.



Inspired launches three new online slots in UK and Malta

Inspired Entertainment has launched three online slots – Happy Money Hens, Golden Winner Grand Chance Super Wheel and Gold Cash Free Spins Rising Wins – across the UK and Malta.

The titles introduce a mix of mechanics, including

persistent-style features, shared prize elements and variable volatility options.

Happy Money Hens is the first release in a new series, featuring bonus-triggering mechanics linked to character features.

Golden Winner Grand Chance Super Wheel uses Player Link technology to connect players via shared prize elements and bonus features.

Gold Cash Free Spins Rising Wins builds on an existing franchise, offering players a choice between different risk profiles in the bonus round.



Million Games launches Druid's Drop via Black Cat Games

Million Games has launched Druid's Drop, a high-volatility slot developed by Black Cat Games under its Million Stars partner programme.

The game uses a 7x7 grid with cluster pays, combining cascading wins with Wild mechanics and a Free Spins feature. A central mechanic, Potion Wild, clears symbols and applies multipliers to increase win potential across consecutive cascades.

Free Spins are triggered by collecting Magic Runes, activating a bonus round where multipliers remain in place and accumulate.

The title offers an RTP of 96.26% and a maximum payout of 10,000x the stake.

Million Games said the release reflects its



approach to supporting independent studios with distribution and technology while retaining creative control.

CEO Thomas Nimstad said the game combines clear mechanics with scalable features suited to multiple markets.

Druid's Drop is available via Million Games for operator and aggregator integration.

Play'n GO reports strong performance for Book of Dead GO Collect

Play'n GO has reported strong initial performance for Book of Dead GO Collect following its release on 26 February.

The title is the latest extension of the long-running Book of Dead franchise and builds on the Rich Wilde series, which remains a core part of the



supplier's portfolio.

The company said the launch delivered high levels of player engagement, bets and gross gaming revenue across regulated markets.

Chief Marketing Officer Ebba Amred said the results demonstrate the continued relevance of established game IP when combined with updated mechanics.

The release was supported by a multi-channel campaign, including themed artwork, a physical installation and branded merchandise tied to the franchise's 10-year history.

Play'n GO said the performance reflects its focus on developing games with long-term appeal in regulated markets.

The title is now live with operators globally.

Tugi Tark partners with Narnium Solutions on player support

Tugi Tark has partnered with Narnium Solutions to provide customer support technology across its portfolio of online casino brands.

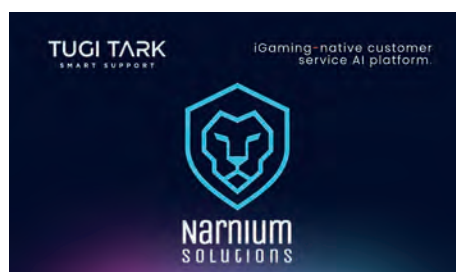
Narnium Solutions will deploy Tugi Tark's platform alongside AI-driven agents trained on iGaming support data to manage player interactions across multiple brands from a single system.

The integration enables automated handling of routine queries, with support teams managing more complex cases through a unified interface.

Narnium Solutions operates across several markets and is expanding its brand portfolio, including titles such as Lucky Mary and House of Slots.

Tugi Tark said its platform is designed to support operators managing multi-brand environments with consistent service delivery.

The partnership forms part of Narnium Solutions' strategy to scale operations while maintaining compliance and standardised player support across jurisdictions.



Sportradar expands agreement with SkillOnNet

Sportradar has expanded its global marketing agreement with SkillOnNet, becoming the operator's primary programmatic marketing partner for its casino brands.

The partnership will focus on customer acquisition and retention through digital advertising campaigns, supported by Sportradar's Marketing Cloud and reporting tools. The agreement covers 12 markets across Europe, North America and Latin America, and includes brands such as PlayOJO, PlayUZU and BacanaPlay.

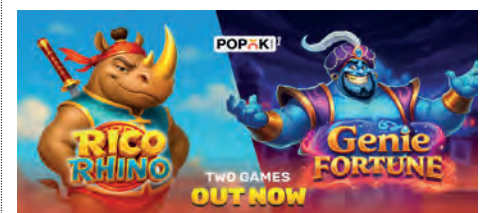
Sportradar said the expanded deal reflects the scalability of its data-driven marketing approach and its role in supporting international growth.

SkillOnNet said the partnership provides consistent campaign delivery and measurable performance across multiple regulated markets.

The collaboration builds on an existing relationship between the two companies and forms part of SkillOnNet's wider expansion strategy.



PopOK releases Genie Fortune and Rico Rhino



PopOK Gaming has launched two new slot titles, Genie Fortune and Rico Rhino, both centred on multiplier-driven gameplay.

Genie Fortune features random multipliers that can boost wins on any spin, alongside a Free Spins mode where multiple multipliers can combine. The game also includes a Sure Win Stake option, increasing the stake while guaranteeing a base game win.

Rico Rhino follows a simpler structure, with multipliers appearing during base play and enhanced during Free Spins, where they can reach up to 30x.

PopOK Gaming said the dual release expands its slot portfolio with titles focused on accessible mechanics and consistent player engagement.

Playradar launch signals a new era of iGaming as sports and casino content combine



Edo Haitin

A new era in hybrid gaming gets underway as Sportradar launches its Playradar brand, developing games combining two worlds of sports and casino together into a unique player experience. Leading Sportradar's iGaming expansion, Edo Haitin, former CEO of Playtech Live, brings more than 20 years of experience across iGaming operations, live casino development, and executive leadership. Here, he outlines the thinking behind the new approach.

The hybrid gaming concept has come about as we looked at Sportradar's existing portfolio including slots, arcade and virtual games being offered by a company that is also renowned for its sports data, technology and streaming expertise going back 25 years this year. When looking at the assets across the business, this seemed like a great combination – what if we combined the two together to create a new industry category of sports casino entertainment?

The assets, content and expertise were all

available in one place and Sportradar identified opportunities for expansion into adjacent verticals in 2025, with iGaming noted as an area where developments could be introduced. Our virtual sports portfolio and games have proved popular with operators and Playradar is well-positioned to leverage Sportradar's historical data and streaming catalogue to create a wide range of new experiences to offer in regulated markets.

Carsten Koerl, Founder and CEO of Sportradar, adds: "iGaming represents a natural and scalable extension of our business, and a strategic acceleration of our long-term growth roadmap. Playradar content is designed to provide optimized cross-sell between the worlds of sport and casinos, helping operators to increase player value and session length at a time when engagement and retention are key to operational sustainability. Our ambition is to develop content that appeals to both sports fans and casino players at the same time, moving away from the preconception that they are always different people."

A NEW EXPERIENCE

We decided to take sports videos and gamify them to engage audiences, using live and historical streaming combined with casino games to build a sports casino offering. Rather than just watch the action, players can now interact with it.

Previously, there's been no engagement on a stream but now we're enriching the stream so that it becomes a game.

This creates a whole new experience that will resonate with all age groups, the same as sport. We know that people want to consume video in their leisure time and content is king so this is about creating concepts that can be viewed at any time – it's about reusable content, delivering sustainable growth.





Another key point with this new type of content is that, because it is rooted in actual sports and their outcomes, it builds trust with players as nothing could ever be a fix. For example, we plan to develop a golf game where players anticipate where the ball will land, choosing from a series of grid squares. It's fully randomised and features historical data and video cut into 20-30 second clips. This will clearly be based on actual sports mechanics but will also be built on proven gaming mechanics.

The golf game is basically a roulette, just being delivered to players in a different way and it provides seamless interaction between the sport and gaming itself. Players can still watch some content and talk about that content by creating online communities around a certain sport.

It's also about introducing unified global betting in a very short time window. While we're already delivering assets of those sports in the sportsbook sections, the likelihood is that these new games will probably do very well for the cross-sell of these properties on other parts of the websites.

The social aspect, a sense of community that we plan to offer is a real game-changer too. Playing slots at home on your own is not necessarily achieving the best experience for many players – even though we also offer these games - but we understand that sports viewing is about community; it's about being part of something bigger and interacting with others as part of the enjoyment. We're building a live 24/7 experience centre where

“ iGaming represents a natural and scalable extension of our business, and a strategic acceleration of our long-term growth roadmap ”

players select a game and a live stream to watch and engage with simultaneously on the same screen, blending sports viewing and gaming into a new experience. In this environment, players will be able to interact with each other in real time, sharing tips, game preferences and reactions.

We're able to bring many sports such as darts, cricket, golf and so on to a wider audience who would never bet on those sports or watch the action on TV. The iGaming is



about cross-pollination back to the sports, creating greater engagement and bringing in new fans.

PREMIUM IGAMING CONTENT

Ad finally, Playradar will also offer premium iGaming content to operators. Using our existing expertise and resources, we'll develop our virtual sports portfolio even further and build a full suite of casino games, from slots and table games to arcade and crash, developed to the highest standards to give players their best iGaming experience.

I am very humbly and respectfully excited about what happened when we announced the new brand. The response from the industry, from partners, was very, very positive - our ideas, intentions, our innovation and what we want to bring resonated well with the audience. I think the need is there. Operators know that players are interested in sport casino games, in sport themes within casino games. And until today, it was very hard to produce that because you needed a whole array of data, of streams, of casino abilities and integrations and so on. Now Sportradar has seen that we can bring all this together under the Playradar brand, it will be fun for the players and an exciting proposition for the operators.

A lot of hard work lies ahead in creating an entirely new vertical but I'm looking forward to the challenge of leading a new business operation. 2026 will be busy year featuring lots of developer time, that's for sure but it will result in a portfolio of exciting new experiences to offer to operators and their players.

Leading iGaming customer support in Gibraltar: Speaking to Daisy White – European iGaming Awards 2026 Rising Star winner



After spotting a gap in the iGaming market in Gibraltar, Daisy White decided to set up an office in the territory and quickly built up a team of local people, many of whom had no prior experience. But in just 12 months Daisy had trained and was leading almost 20 people. In this interview she reflects on that quick growth and the recognition she has now been given.

GIO: Congratulations on your award win. What first got you into customer support in the iGaming industry?

Daisy White: I've always been a people person and genuinely enjoy working directly with customers. I actually started on the AI side within gaming, still focused on customer support, but from a more technical perspective. Once I noticed a gap in the market in Gibraltar, I made the move to build out teams and focus on the human side of support. What I enjoy most is how rewarding it is to see people grow in confidence, especially those who are new to the iGaming industry.

GIO: What did you find attractive about Gibraltar as a place to build your work?

DW: Being British, the fact that Gibraltar is a British overseas territory was important to me. With children, it gave me peace of mind knowing the primary language is English and the schooling system is familiar. From an iGaming perspective, it's a fantastic, tight-knit community with many well-known operators. There are also a lot of expats who have relocated for the same reasons, which makes it a very welcoming environment.

GIO: You now have a strong team around you but started out on your own. How did your work evolve as your base grew?

DW: It more than doubled very quickly. I went from focusing solely on my own role to managing a team of 10–12 agents within a month. The team was a mix of experienced professionals and those completely new to iGaming, so there were different work ethics, personalities and learning styles to manage. On top of that, we operated 24/7, there was no switch-off at 5pm, as another shift would always be starting, including overnight teams covering U.S. customers. It was intense, but incredibly rewarding. With guidance and persistence, everything eventually clicked into place. Of course, there were hurdles along the way, but that's part of the process.

GIO: You've built this with local people who had little experience in the industry. How important is creating opportunities for them?

DW: It's hugely important to me. When I first attended smaller iGaming events in Gibraltar, I often heard that most roles and higher salaries were going to people relocating from abroad, rather than locals. Personally, the opportunities I've had in Gibraltar, both professionally and for my family, have far exceeded what I might have achieved in England. That's why I wanted to ensure local people with ambition had a real opportunity to enter the industry. Customer support is a great entry point, giving exposure to players, operations and multiple brands. It not only creates career pathways but also ensures that opportunities and economic benefits stay within Gibraltar.



Daisy White receiving her Rising Star trophy at this year's European iGaming Awards

GIO: Can you share an achievement, commercial or personal, that stands out to you?

DW: Professionally, winning this award is definitely a highlight. On a personal level, being able to purchase a home in Gibraltar is something I'm incredibly proud of, something that wouldn't have been as achievable for me in England.

GIO: Many see iGaming as technology and regulation-driven. Does that make relationships and trust even more important?

DW: Absolutely, especially in customer service. Businesses invest heavily in building their platforms, but ultimately, customer support plays a huge role in player retention. If we don't deliver a strong experience, players won't return, and that directly impacts the business. Trust, understanding and consistency are essential in ensuring both players and operators feel confident in the service being provided.

GIO: How important is speed when helping customers launch, and what challenges does that bring?

DW: Speed can be critical. I've had a client ask for a full 24/7 team to be set up within 72 hours, it was intense, but we made it happen. That said, moving too quickly can mean learning on the

job after launch. Ideally, more time allows agents to fully understand back-office systems, promotions and brand tone of voice. It also ensures they feel confident when handling player queries, so they can provide immediate and accurate solutions.

GIO: Looking ahead, how do you see your business developing in Gibraltar?

DW: I want to grow at a steady, sustainable pace. It's important that as new clients come on board, we have the time to properly support both them and our agents. Maintaining a manageable workload allows us to preserve that personal, human approach to customer support, which is a key part of what we offer.

GIO: What advice would you give to others looking to build something similar?

DW: Stay persistent with your goals. If possible, start with a proof of concept, test your idea before fully committing. Seek advice from people you trust in the industry, those who will be honest with you. There will always be doubters, but it's important to stay positive, work hard, and embrace both the highs and the challenges. That persistence is what ultimately leads to success.

The problem with polarisation



Duncan Gavie

“ Denying the obvious reality that gambling can and does cause social harm is an ‘the emperor has no clothes’ type approach ”

The industry is coming under increased oversight and there is a growing expectation that gambling businesses will ensure that appropriate support services are available for the communities that they market to.

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES

Research in and around the field of gambling behaviours (both harmful and non-problematic) is rapidly accelerating. This ensures that our understanding of how to manage and minimise the negative consequences of the vastly increased access to gambling that the world has gained with the invention of the internet and smart phones is advancing daily.

A lot of progress is being made, and things can and will improve over the years to come. However, for all the positive progress that is being made, a core of distrust amongst the various stakeholders is impairing our capacity to deliver the best outcomes for the people that we all aim to support.

For us to deliver the best standards of support – and that is critical, as remote access to gambling is not going away – we need to work together. We need to understand that there are very deeply held and passionate views amongst sector participants. We need to understand that there are financial incentives that do not align well with the welfare of vulnerable people. We need to be able to hear all sides of the conversation, without trying to silence any of them, and engage everyone to support harm minimisation efforts.

This means that the industry needs to understand, and accept, that their suggestions about the best approach to harm minimisation are going to be viewed through the lens of acknowledging that their profit maximisation priorities can, and at times very evidently do, undermine the integrity of what they propose.

But it also means that the rest of us should strive to view industry recommendations

critically, but not cynically. We should subject them to reasonable and rigorous examination, without defaulting to the assumption that any suggestion the industry makes is compromised by self-interest.

It means that those of us who have not experienced gambling harm first hand should seek out, and listen to, the perspectives of those who have. And that we should work to build systems that would better support the real-world experience of those impacted by compulsive gambling disorder.

But it also means that those passionate campaigners, whose real-world experience drives them to fight for positive societal change, must temper their expectations that regulation should bend to their world view. The reality is that the proportion of consumers that experience gambling harm is small, and regulation needs to strive serve the best interests of all consumers.

WORKING TOGETHER

I would consider myself a centrist. I have friends on both sides of this conversation, and I see the positive efforts that are being made by both. But the never-ending squabbling and positioning for influence is actively harming outcomes for the people who need our support.

The two camps, whilst publicly signalling otherwise, are prone to positioning themselves to try and exclude, or ignore, the other. You’re seeing this play out in the real world in the UK right now, where the harm minimisation systems have deployed rules that create a hard wall around support services interacting with the industry, whilst the industry recently refused to recognize that their activities caused any social harm.

Both policies are extreme in their nature. Both positions are maximalist in their ideological stances. And both will hurt vulnerable people.

Restricting/discouraging cooperation with the industry may limit industry influence over support services, but it also eliminates the most effective channel that we must communicate the people that need support. The first point of contact for people experiencing problems is a gambling business.

Denying the obvious reality that gambling can and does cause social harm is an ‘the emperor has no clothes’ type approach that through its denial of the obvious, reinforces the perception that the industry cannot be trusted, and will lead to the industry not engaging with support services because they refuse to recognise the problem.

And when we don’t talk to each other, and won’t work with each other, that’s when the people we serve really lose.



Over the last few years, major strides have been made in the safer gambling space. A growing number of jurisdictions have recognised the societal damage that unchecked gambling harm can cause, and are prioritising support for harm minimisation efforts, according to Duncan Gavie, trustee and founder of safer gambling charity BetBlocker.



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ICE Research Institute scientific study to be launched at IGE Rome

The strategic partnership between ICE Barcelona and IGE Rome (14-15 April) will be centre stage with senior representatives from World Gaming – formerly Clarion Gaming – contributing their industry insight alongside the launch of the ICE Research Institute funded academic study undertaken by Milan’s Polytechnic School of Management and the institute Human Tech, part of the University Polytechnic of Valencia.



Ewa Bakun, World Gaming’s Director of Industry Relations (pictured above) will be moderating two roundtables. ‘Responsible Gaming and ESG: Towards a New Governance Model for the Sector’ will take

place at 12:45 on day one on the Innovation and Payments Stage.

On day two the focus switches to the main stage at 14:45 with a roundtable discussion entitled, ‘From control to intelligent protection: Applied neuroscience in the fight against pathological gambling’, which will also feature the launch of the ICE Research Institute funded project being undertaken by Milan’s Polytechnic School of Management and the institute Human Tech, part of the University Polytechnic of Valencia.

In an added dimension to the relationship, IGE in partnership with iGB Affiliate is launching a new content stream Affiliates Connect @ IGE with the objective of aligning the Italian market with the international gaming affiliates ecosystem. The stream will be introduced by World Gaming non-executive Chairman Michael Caselli on day two at 10:25.

Looking ahead to World Gaming’s participation in IGE Ewa Bakun said: “I am delighted that we are moving into the second

stage of our strategic partnership with some really important and tangible initiatives not least the launch of the ICE Research Institute (IRI) supported project undertaken by Milan’s Polytechnic School of Management and the institute Human Tech, part of the University Polytechnic of Valencia.

“With a working title of Assessing the Efficacy of Responsible Gambling Messaging: A Neuroscientific and Psychophysiological Approach the project uses neuroscience, as well as biometric and cognitive measurements to understand which communication strategies reduce risky gambling behaviour and which can backfire, resulting in unintended consequences.

“The ICE Research Institute (IRI) which is jointly funded by World Gaming and Fira Barcelona provides grants to scientific and academic institutions to fund research on prevention and sustainability. The results from this latest project provide a set of scientifically robust findings to inform policy recommendations and enhance industry standards.”

New BVOD deal to drive awareness of Comparasino’s Recommendation Engine

Comparasino, the online casino comparison platform, has announced a strategic three-month Broadcaster Video on Demand (BVOD) ad campaign running exclusively on ITVX, one of the UK’s leading commercial streaming services.

The campaign will see Comparasino featured across ITVX’s premium prime-time programming and hit shows. Check out the ad online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqAM4KOi3UQ>

The ad is designed to drive brand awareness by highlighting Comparasino’s unique ‘matching’ technology, which moves away from traditional, static casino lists in favour of a highly personalised search experience.

At the heart of the campaign is Comparasino’s proprietary Recommendation Engine. Developed to solve the ‘choice paralysis’ and ‘sign-up disappointment’ often



felt by players, the tool allows users to share their preferences for bonuses, payment methods, minimum deposits and more, and receive matching UKGC-licensed brands instantly.

Beyond the initial search experience showcased on screen, the platform offers a deeper level of personalisation through the Comparasino Member Zone. This free-to-join portal allows players to ‘lock in’ their preferences and list of casino matches.

As Comparasino expands its database and onboards additional casino partners, the Member Zone’s automation engine identifies new matches for the user in real-time. Members also benefit from an ‘insider’ experience, receiving first-to-market news on brand launches and access to exclusive bonus offers curated specifically for their profile.

Martyn Hannah, Co-founder and CEO of Comparasino, said: “Advertising on ITVX is a transformative step for us. For too long, the online casino search process has been a ‘one size fits all’ experience. Our mission is to humanise that journey by putting the player’s specific needs first.

“By launching this three-month campaign on a platform as prestigious as ITVX, we’re not just building brand awareness, we are showing the UK public that there is a smarter, safer and more tailored way to play.”

Responsible gambling and player protection in the age of data



By George Pace, Senior Manager Product Marketing, Team Lead at SEON.

Responsible gambling has evolved from a peripheral concern into a core requirement for iGaming operators competing in regulated markets. As digital wagering expands and player demographics shift, today's online gamblers behave very differently from bettors a decade ago. Players move seamlessly between mobile sportsbooks, online casinos, esports wagering and social-style gaming experiences.

This convergence introduces new engagement patterns and new forms of risk. Regulators are increasingly responding by demanding proactive, data-driven player protection measures, replacing the reactive approaches that dominated earlier regulatory cycles.

Across major markets, regulators now expect continuous risk assessment rather than one-off compliance checks. More than a dozen jurisdictions require real-time identification of at-risk behaviour, self-exclusion integrations and affordability-based spend monitoring as conditions for licensing. Legislative proposals such as the Betting on Our Future Act in the United States signal a stricter stance on advertising practices and protections for vulnerable audiences.

For operators, this environment creates a dual challenge. They must detect genuine at-risk gambling behaviour while also identifying malicious actors who exploit responsible gambling protections or attempt to bypass anti-money laundering (AML) controls. As a result, affordability checks, centralised monitoring systems and source-of-funds verification increasingly sit at the intersection of

responsible gambling, gambling fraud prevention and financial crime compliance.

REAL-TIME RISK DIFFERENTIATION AT SCALE

Static limits and periodic reviews struggle to keep up with modern play patterns. Real-time behavioural monitoring enables operators to track changes in session duration, volatility in bet sizes, late-night activity or rapid shifts between products and then respond with tiered interventions rather than blanket account blocks.

Predictive analytics and machine learning add another layer by identifying early-stage risk patterns across large player populations. Studies from regulators in the UK and Denmark highlight how predictive modelling and AI-powered, personalised notifications can reduce overspending and increase voluntary limit setting, without degrading the experience for low-risk players.

Today, leading operators are increasingly applying such signals to tailor interventions to each player, so that higher-risk segments receive timely safeguards. At the same time, low-risk customers experience a smooth, uninterrupted journey.

By combining device, identity, and transactional data into a unified risk view, modern architectures support earlier detection of harmful patterns, more precise messaging and fewer tools and fewer false positives that frustrate legitimate players. When operators combine segmentation (for example, green, amber and red risk tiers) with automated rule engines, they can deliver interventions that feel proportionate, explainable and consistent.

TECHNOLOGY'S EXPANDING ROLE IN PLAYER SUPPORT

The scale and complexity of responsible gambling programs now exceed what manual teams can manage on their own. Data science, AI and behavioural analytics underpin next-generation safeguards, from dynamic session monitoring to automated limits and targeted messaging. Research indicates that algorithmic identification of individuals who are likely to benefit from self-exclusion enhances program effectiveness and enables operators to reach people who may not proactively seek help.

Operators are increasingly deploying chatbots and virtual assistants to extend support reach, provide real-time education and route higher-risk cases to specialist teams. When combined with transparent governance and human oversight, those tools can shorten response times, increase the consistency of advice and ensure that at-risk players receive

timely access to resources rather than generic, low-impact prompts.

GAME AND INCENTIVE DESIGN UNDER SCRUTINY

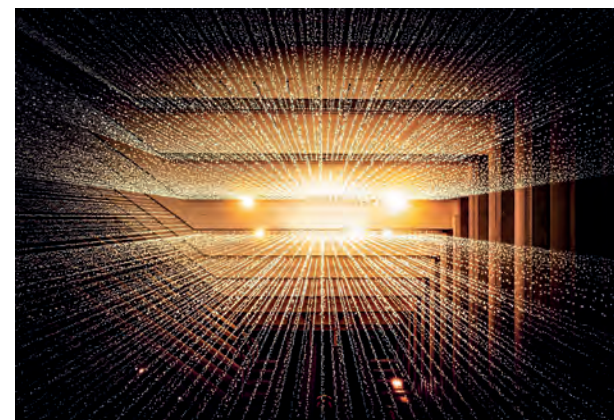
Regulators and public health advocates have shifted their attention from player behaviour alone to the design of games and the incentives they offer. Urgency-driven mechanics, opaque bonus terms, streak rewards and design features that encourage chasing losses now face closer scrutiny in mature markets, with several authorities signalling new rules around transparency and intensity.

For operators, experience-led design still matters for acquisition and retention, but it now carries a clear responsibility lens. Teams must review product roadmaps through a responsible gambling framework, considering how new mechanics influence session length, volatility and perceived control; how bonuses shape expectations; and how disclosures help players understand risks in plain language. Success increasingly depends on the ability to innovate while aligning product, compliance and marketing around clear guardrails.

TRUST AS THE ULTIMATE OUTCOME

Industry trends already show that platforms that integrate fraud, AML and responsible gambling and that lean on predictive analytics and tailored interventions, reduce enforcement risk while building more durable player relationships.

In practice, that means committing to systems that automate continuous detection, learning from complex player signals and scaling support ethically across markets. Operators that adopt this direction will deliver safer experiences, lower the long-term cost of compliance and earn a level of trust that becomes increasingly difficult to replicate in a crowded, highly scrutinised global industry.



First Look Games launches FLG Analytics – the first marketing intelligence platform built for iGaming studios

New suite of analytics tools empowers game studios to identify affiliate partners, benchmark performance versus competitors, target specific markets and monitor content, all from a single platform.

First Look Games (FLG), the data-driven iGaming marketing intelligence platform connecting game studios and affiliate publishers, has launched FLG Analytics: a comprehensive marketing intelligence suite giving game studios unprecedented visibility into how their titles are represented, reviewed and ranked across the iGaming affiliate market.

Game studios invest heavily in developing and launching titles, yet have historically had limited insight into how those games are marketed by the affiliate websites that drive a significant proportion of new depositing customers for operators.

FLG Analytics addresses this blind spot across five core modules:

- **Website Directory** – A searchable database of 1,000+ vetted iGaming affiliate publishers, filterable by country, traffic, SEO performance and keyword relevance, enabling studios to build targeted outreach strategies.

- **Studio Benchmarking** – Live competitive benchmarking across share of voice, player reach, review volume and AI-powered sentiment analysis, covering over 740 indexed studios.
 - **Game Benchmarking** – Title-level performance tracking against competitor releases, including review coverage, publisher performance and affiliate engagement.
 - **Content Monitor** – Real-time tracking of all content published about a studio’s games across the FLG publisher network, with filtering by site, game, geography and date.
 - **Instant Messaging** – A built-in channel for studios to contact verified affiliate publishers directly to establish commercial and marketing partnerships, replacing fragmented email and LinkedIn exchanges with a single, purposeful interface.
- These new product features have been developed as a result of game studio client

and publisher user feedback as First Look Games seeks to continue to deliver value to its partners as it scales its pathfinder technology platform.

Tom Galanis, CEO of TAG Media and First Look Games, comments: “Game studios spend significant resources developing world-class games, but have historically had almost no visibility into how those games are truly presented to players by the affiliate community. FLG Analytics changes that. For the first time, studios can identify the best affiliate partners, target specific markets, benchmark against competitors and track content in real time – all from one platform. We’ve built the studio-affiliate marketing intelligence layer that the iGaming industry has been sorely missing.”

BETTER AFFILIATE INTELLIGENCE

The platform now serves 1,000+ vetted publishers reaching more than 50 million casino players worldwide. The business case for better affiliate intelligence is stark: affiliates drive between 19 and 95 per cent of new depositing customers for operators depending on the market. In the UK alone – where affiliate influence is at its lowest from a percentage perspective – the slots market generates an estimated £798m annually through affiliate activity, translating to an average of £57k per slot game and in excess of £300k for top-performing titles.

Galanis adds: “Despite this, there has never been a structured way for studios to understand, evaluate and engage with affiliate publishers at scale. FLG Analytics provides that structure. Our ultimate mission is to demonstrate just how valuable individual publishers are to a game studio’s revenue performance - at a game level and in total.”

FLG Analytics is available now. Studios can book a demo at firstlookgames.com/analytics or contact the First Look Games commercial team directly.



ThrillTech’s innovative jackpot solution launches on the Tote



ThrillTech has integrated its ThrillPots jackpot solution for Tote customers which adds opt-in jackpot functionality across its digital offering and introduces player-funded jackpots alongside existing betting products, as co-founder Benjamin Bradtke explains...

First Look Games (FLG), the data-driven iGaming marketing intelligence platform connecting game studios and affiliate publishers, has launched FLG Analytics: a comprehensive marketing intelligence suite giving game studios unprecedented visibility into how their titles are represented, reviewed and ranked across the iGaming affiliate market.

ThrillTech has rolled out its ThrillPots jackpot solution with the Tote, introducing an opt-in jackpot mechanic that sits alongside the Tote’s existing gaming products.

It adds a new dimension to the Tote’s digital betting experience, allowing players to opt into player-funded jackpots alongside their usual bets, with the chance of additional winnings without changing how they already engage in gaming.

SOFTWARE-AS-A-SERVICE

ThrillPots sits as an optional software-as-a-service jackpot layer across betting and gaming environments, giving operators a way to offer pooled prizes without changing how their core products work. Players can opt in with a small additional stake. That feeds into a shared pool which builds over time and pays out when triggered.

For the Tote, this is another step in how its digital offering is developing, bringing new mechanics into a platform long shaped by its pool betting and racing heritage.

The addition of ThrillPots introduces a new engagement and monetisation layer for the Tote, giving players a straightforward way to add something extra to their bets through optional jackpot participation. The model links increased activity with pooled prize growth, creating incremental value tied directly to player participation.

ThrillTech is now live in more than 10 regulated jurisdictions, with further expansion under way. The company has also strengthened its senior team in recent months as it builds on a period of growth, with recent jackpot wins delivered through its technology, including a £1.7 million payout to a BetVictor customer, highlighting the scale of outcomes the model is capable of producing.

Ian Nicholls, Head of Gaming at the Tote, says: “The Tote has always been built around shared participation and that sense of a collective moment. What ThrillPots does sits comfortably alongside this, giving players another way to be part of something without changing how they already play.

“It feels like a natural extension of the gaming

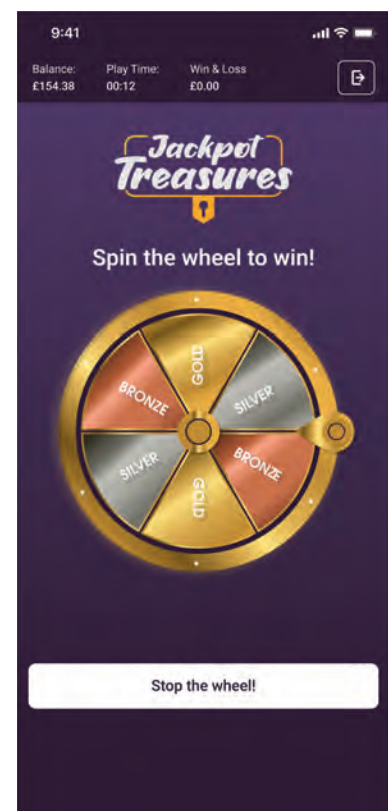
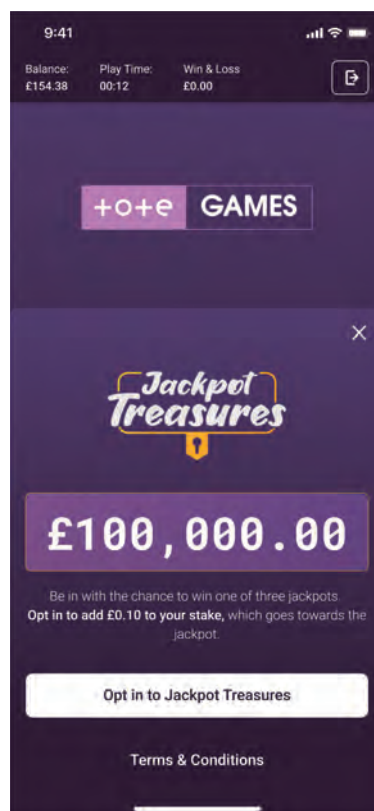
product - Big Games. Clear Rewards. Total Gaming Fun.”

Bradtke, adds: “Our focus with ThrillPots has always been on creating a flexible layer that operators can apply across their existing products. The integration with the Tote shows how that can be done in a way that supports both engagement and revenue, without requiring fundamental change to the underlying experience.”

ABOUT UK TOTE GROUP AND THRILLTECH

The UK Tote Group is the owner and steward of the Tote, the UK’s leading pool betting operator since 1928. Established to provide a safe way to bet while supporting British horseracing, the Tote continues to play a central role in the sport, offering pool betting alongside sportsbook and gaming products across digital and on-course channels.

Founded in 2023, ThrillTech develops B2B jackpot and reward software for global iGaming operators. Its products, including ThrillPots and ThrillDrops, allow operators to run jackpot and reward mechanics across multiple markets. The company holds licences from the Malta Gaming Authority, the UK Gambling Commission, Spelinspektionen, the ONJN, and in Brazil.



AI in iGaming: The operational case for voice intelligence



By Cris Kuehl, Chief Data, Information & AI Officer, Continent 8 Technologies.

Across the iGaming industry, conversations about Artificial Intelligence (AI) tend to orbit familiar themes: personalisation engines, odds optimisation, and automated marketing. Those are valuable use cases. But the conversation largely ignores the part of the business where operational cost accumulates: IT service delivery, customer support, and infrastructure management.

This is where AI can deliver the most immediate, measurable return on investment for operators, platform providers and suppliers today.

THE OPERATIONAL CHALLENGE

As operators expand into new regulated jurisdictions, launch new products, and onboard additional partners, the demand on support and service functions increases linearly. Every new market means more tickets, more voice interactions (phone calls), more after-hours coverage, and more pressure on teams that are already running at capacity.

The default response is to hire, extend shifts, and stand-up regional desks. That approach works until the cost of coverage outpaces the margin the business generates.

In a multi-jurisdictional, regulation-heavy industry, this becomes a structural barrier to sustainable growth.

This is the problem voice AI is built to solve. Not as a technology experiment, but as a direct lever on total cost of ownership.

TWO CAPABILITIES, ONE OBJECTIVE: SCALABLE, AFFORDABLE 24/7 OPERATIONS

1. Voice Virtual Agent – At Continent 8, the first capability we’re deploying is a Voice Virtual Agent: an autonomous voice-driven workflow engine embedded directly into existing service processes.

Consider a supplier running a 10-person support desk on standard business hours. The business wins a new contract that requires 24/7 coverage. Under the traditional model, that means doubling headcount, adding overnight shifts, and absorbing the recruiting, training, and retention costs that come with it.

A Voice Virtual Agent changes this model. It:

- Handles inbound voice interactions autonomously
- Follows established workflows
- Captures all required information
- Logs tickets directly into existing systems
- Routes escalations according to pre-set rules
- Operates continuously without scheduling or shift patterns

It absorbs volume spikes during major sporting events like the Super Bowl or World Cup, without emergency staffing. The

result: a 10-person desk can deliver true 24/7 service without becoming a 20-person desk.

2. Voice Copilot – The second capability is a Voice Copilot, designed to work alongside human agents in real time.

During live interactions, it:

- Listens to the conversation
- Retrieves relevant knowledge base content
- Suggests appropriate next actions
- Auto-generates call summaries and ticket documentation

The result is faster resolution, lower average handle time, and fewer documentation errors. Experienced staff handle more volume. Newer staff ramp faster. The team you already have becomes measurably more productive without adding seats.

A PRAGMATIC, GOVERNED APPROACH TO AI ADOPTION

Our approach is intentionally different. We are not asking operators to become AI developers or to build and manage their own models. We provide managed, governed capabilities embedded into existing service delivery workflows. The intelligence layer runs on infrastructure already built for regulated environments, with the compliance posture, data residency controls, and audit trails that this industry demands.

AI becomes an operational tool, not an engineering project.

THE BUSINESS IMPACT

The total cost of ownership argument is clear. Voice AI reduces the cost per interaction. It compresses the gap between current capacity and coverage requirements. It removes the linear relationship between business growth and support headcount.

For operators evaluating new market entry or suppliers bidding on contracts that require round-the-clock service, this is not a future capability. It is available, deployable, and measurable today.

The iGaming companies that treat AI as a managed operational capability will scale into new markets without proportional cost growth. The ones that wait will continue absorbing headcount increases that compress margins quarter after quarter. The technology is ready. The infrastructure exists. The question is whether your business embraces the technology.

Ready to reduce operational cost and scale your support function? Contact sales@continent8.com today.

“ The iGaming companies that treat AI as a managed operational capability will scale into new markets without proportional cost growth. ”

How Greentube is shaping the iGaming landscape



In a landscape where player expectations shift rapidly, the company's ability to understand consumer needs and react to these has become something which helps them stand out. As Greentube's Director of Global Sales and Marketing, Markus Antl observes: "Awards like this aren't just about what you launched last quarter, they're about proving that you can push the boundaries year after year."

For the NOVOMATIC Digital Gaming and Entertainment division, every release is more than a game; it's a strategic step within a carefully engineered roadmap. Greentube is consciously moving away from the notion of building isolated titles and instead embracing the creation of game ecosystems. Its development philosophy revolves around series that grow over time, allowing mechanics, visual identities, and engagement loops to develop in ways that sustain player interest well beyond the traditional lifecycle of a single product. "Players aren't just looking for a one-off experience anymore," Antl explains. "They want worlds that evolve, series that deepen, and mechanics that feel familiar yet fresh every time."

This strategy comes to life vividly in the *Piggy Prizes* series, which has become a showcase for Greentube's approach. The franchise's strong character identity and mechanics form a foundation that can be continuously refined. Each new release introduces subtle enhancements, sharper feature integrations, add features and modifiers, while preserving the charm and clarity that players associate with the brand. According to Markus Antl: "*Piggy Prizes* is a

perfect example of how we refine and develop with purpose. We evolve the experience while protecting what players already love. That balance is where real magic happens."

Winning the Best Game Developer Award at the recent European iGaming Awards which were held during ICE Barcelona speaks to far more than the success of a single standout title. It is a recognition of Greentube's long-term commitment to technological evolution, creative ambition, and disciplined product development.

A similar philosophy fuels the high-energy *Firecracker Frenzy* series. With its dynamic reel modifiers, vibrant visual design, and layered bonus mechanics, the franchise demonstrates how thoughtful feature integration can create excitement without overwhelming the player. Every instalment builds on the last, benefiting from technical refinements and performance improvements. "High-energy design only works if it's anchored in clarity," Antl notes.

"*Firecracker Frenzy* shows how the thrill can be dialled up without compromising player readability."

Greentube's approach extends beyond core gameplay to the structural engines that power long-term engagement – its jackpot ecosystems. The *Diamond Link* series, a standout performer across regulated markets, blends familiar hold & spin-style mechanics with static and progressive jackpot frameworks. Meanwhile, the *Starlight Jackpots* portfolio highlights Greentube's ambition to elevate the jackpot functionality.

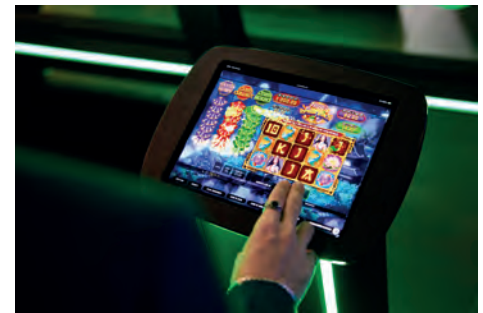
As Markus Antl puts it: "Jackpot ecosystems are one of the clearest expressions of what defines our industry. They have to be technologically robust, commercially scalable, and instantly engaging. Getting all three right is a serious achievement."

Crucially, Greentube's commitment to

COMMITMENT TO IMPROVEMENT

While Greentube continues to refine its series and jackpot architectures, the company's focus on quality remains constant. Its production pipeline emphasises robust testing, mobile-first design and compliance systems that can adapt to different regulatory environments. Each title must be ready to scale across multiple jurisdictions, with configurable RTP ranges, localised features, and more. "Quality underpins everything," Antl emphasises. "A good idea only goes so far; the execution has to be solid from day one."

improvement does not end when a game launches. The company treats release as the starting point for the next phase in which game launch performance is analysed, customers are spoken to, to gather valuable, real-world feedback and reports are created which provide key learnings for the next games. This mindset enables each title to evolve naturally in response to client feedback and player behaviour.



Looking ahead, Greentube's development roadmap prioritises deeper engagement mechanics, more branded and localised content, and the next evolution of its most successful series. The overarching goal is consistent: to build games that are instantly recognisable in quality, engineered for longevity, and capable of performing both on a local and global scale across a vast network of regulated markets.

In many ways, the Best Game Developer Award is less a milestone and more an affirmation that Greentube's strategy is resonating. Its success is the result of interdisciplinary teams who merge imagination with engineering precision, and whose dedication keeps pushing the company's creative capabilities forward. "Excellence isn't something you hit once," Antl reflects. "It's something you prove, improve, and reinforce with every release."

As the competitive landscape continues to evolve, Greentube's guiding principle remains unchanged: every title must embody the Greentube spirit of lasting player appeal through entertaining content created through gaming excellence.

N1 Insights: April's iGaming trends you shouldn't miss

April reflects changes that began taking shape in iGaming back in the first quarter but are only now becoming systemic. The market is gradually shifting away from short-term optimization toward more complex strategies, where performance sustainability, GEO diversification, and a reassessment of affiliate model efficiency play a key role. In this issue, N1 Partners experts analyse how traffic structures are evolving and which scaling approaches continue to deliver results amid increasing competition.



Part 1

1. TRAFFIC AND PERFORMANCE

1.1 Traffic sources most likely to show the highest volatility in April.

The highest volatility is expected from Facebook, TikTok, and PPC channels, as they are directly affected by changes in moderation, algorithms, and competitive activity. Additional fluctuations are anticipated in Google UAC, where auction costs traditionally increase in April due to intensified brand activity following the end of the first quarter.

1.2 Will brands shift their priorities between traffic volume and quality in April?

In April, many brands will begin shifting their focus toward traffic quality, based on first-quarter performance insights. Priority will be given to deeper metrics – from FTD to deposits and LTV – rather than simply chasing registration volume and initial conversions.

At the same time, in certain high-growth GEOs, there will still be a willingness to invest in volume in order to capture market share more quickly, even at the expense of short-term efficiency.

1.3 What will be more challenging in April: finding new scalable setups or maintaining current volumes?

Most likely, maintaining current volumes will become more challenging, especially in highly competitive GEOs. After an active first quarter, many proven setups are already overheated, while traffic costs continue to rise.

Finding new setups remains possible; however, scaling them will take more time due to increased competition and higher requirements for traffic quality.

1.4 Changes in testing strategies for new GEOs and traffic sources in April

Affiliates are likely to shift toward shorter testing cycles and reduce test budget volumes in order to adapt more quickly to changing market conditions.

“At the same time, interest in traffic source

diversification will increase: beyond the classic Facebook and Google channels, we expect a growing number of tests in alternative social platforms,” comments Vlad Chernov, Deputy Head of Affiliates at N1 Partners.

1.5 Key metrics for scaling up or cutting caps

Key metrics will continue to include CR, ROAS, ARPU, retention, and player LTV, but their role in decision-making will become even more significant. Teams will increasingly shift from evaluating “input” metrics to analyzing audience quality and long-term value.

In particular, scaling decisions will be based on early LTV signals and user behavior patterns, rather than solely on FTD volume. This will allow teams to identify underperforming setups earlier and reallocate budgets toward more sustainable traffic sources.

2. GEO PRIORITIES

2.1 GEOs that may see the highest traffic growth in April.

In April, several Tier-1 countries are expected to show the strongest growth, primarily Canada, Germany, and Australia, where demand for online gambling remains stable and major brands continue to increase their marketing budgets. Growth may also be observed in Latin America (Brazil, Peru, Chile).

At the same time, some affiliates will continue scaling in Eastern Europe and CIS countries, where competition is lower than in Tier-1 markets and it is easier to test new setups.

2.2 Will the approach to Tier-1 markets change compared to Q1 2026?

The approach to GEO selection will become more selective and pragmatic. Many teams will maintain their focus on Tier-1 markets, but with stricter ROI control amid rising traffic costs and decreasing predictability of results.

At the same time, a partial budget reallocation is expected in favor of GEOs with more favourable scaling conditions – lower competition and more affordable auction

dynamics. As a result, strategies will increasingly balance between the stability of Tier-1 markets and growth opportunities in less saturated regions.

2.3 Regions where the cost of player acquisition is expected to change the most

The most noticeable increase in CPA is expected in Tier-1 markets – primarily Canada, Germany, and Australia. In these GEOs, player acquisition costs are likely to continue rising amid intense competition and increasing pressure from large media buying teams.

“An additional factor will be the concentration of budgets after the first quarter: major players are scaling more aggressively, which overheats the auction and reduces the effectiveness of standard traffic acquisition approaches,” notes Vlad Chernov, Deputy Head of Affiliates at N1 Partners.

As a result, the entry threshold for new campaigns is rising, and achieving target metrics will require more precise optimization and stronger setups.

2.4 Key GEOs for growth at the beginning of Q2.

Key GEOs may include several Tier-1 markets such as Canada, Germany, and Australia, as well as a number of Tier-2 and Tier-3 countries, including Brazil, India, Turkey, Kazakhstan, and Chile.

These countries remain a priority for many brands due to strong purchasing power, higher player LTV, and stable demand for licensed products. Despite high competition and traffic costs, Tier-1 markets continue to attract large affiliate teams, as with proper optimization they offer the most sustainable long-term profitability.

3. AFFILIATE MARKETING DYNAMICS

3.1 How will the balance between new partners and established affiliate teams change in April?

The market will continue to consolidate around large and experienced teams that have the resources for scaling, optimization, and rapid budget reallocation. Their advantage will

strengthen due to accumulated expertise, access to data, and more stable traffic acquisition processes.

At the same time, new teams will continue to emerge; however, the barrier to entry will keep rising. Without access to unique traffic sources, technological advantages, or niche expertise, it will become increasingly difficult for them to compete with established players and reach comparable volumes.

3.2 Changes in affiliates' approach to selecting partner brands

Affiliates are increasingly shifting their focus toward non-financial factors when choosing partners – primarily brand reputation, payment reliability, and transparency of statistics. These

criteria are becoming critical amid rising risks and the instability of certain offers.

As a result, the trend toward long-term partnerships is strengthening: more teams are favouring sustainable collaboration models over short-term offers with potentially high but unpredictable payouts.

"This approach reduces operational risks and enables building a more stable long-term unit economics," says Vlad Chernov, Deputy Head of Affiliates at N1 Partners.

3.3 Types of partners that will see the most active growth in April

Media buying teams working with paid traffic will continue to grow most actively, along with content affiliates and SEO-driven projects

focused on long-term organic traffic acquisition. These models remain key due to their scalability and more predictable long-term economics.

At the same time, growth in alternative sources is accelerating – particularly influencer and Telegram traffic, which attract affiliates with help of flexibility, a lower barrier to entry, and the ability to test hypotheses more quickly.

3.4 What changes in partner behavior are likely to be most noticeable in April?

Partners will increasingly diversify their traffic sources and GEOs to reduce dependence on any single channel. More cautious scaling and deeper analysis of unit economics can also be expected, especially in light of first-quarter results.

Part 2

1. PR TRENDS

1.1 Top PR trends in April 2026.

In the second quarter, PR activity noticeably picks up: after revisiting strategies at the beginning of the year, brands start engaging more actively with media and building more structured communication. Against the backdrop of increasing competition, having a strong offer alone is no longer enough – what matters is how the brand presents itself and what it communicates.

"At the same time, formats are also evolving: traditional press releases are gradually taking a back seat, giving way to case studies, interviews, and more 'authentic' content," says Maria Bobrovskaya, Team Lead PR, Event, Production at N1 Partners.

The market is saturated, so those who deliver real value and communicate with their audience not in abstract terms, but through experience and concrete results, are the ones who win.

2. BRAND MARKETING STRATEGY

2.1 Which aspects of marketing strategy should brands focus on in April amid increasing competition?

The key focus should be on differentiation through brand positioning, not just through offer terms. In a market saturated with similar propositions, partners begin to make decisions based not only on numbers, but also on trust and stability.

This is reflected in affiliate behaviour: strong partners are more likely to work with brands that have a clear reputation and predictable processes.

2.2 What changes in marketing strategy should brands consider in April to maintain a competitive advantage?

Companies are gradually shifting their focus from short-term acquisition to long-term partner retention, strengthening efforts in content, PR, loyalty programs, and community development. This approach not only reduces dependence on a constant influx of new affiliates but also improves the quality of engagement with existing partners.

This shift is largely driven by market saturation:

acquisition costs continue to rise, while competition for active affiliates intensifies.

"In such conditions, retaining and developing the existing partner base becomes strategically more effective than aggressively acquiring new partners, especially given the increasing demands for transparency, support, and level of service," notes Maria Bobrovskaya, Team Lead PR, Event, Production at N1 Partners.

2.3 How can marketers find the right balance between short-term results and long-term brand development?

The balance is achieved through a combined strategy: performance drives immediate results, while brand communications ensure long-term stability. If a brand focuses only on short-term gains, it becomes vulnerable in a highly competitive environment.

2.4 The most effective approaches to marketing budget allocation in Q2.

In the second quarter, many companies begin reallocating budgets toward a more diversified strategy. In addition to performance channels, there is increased investment in PR activities, content marketing, and event participation.

This shift is driven by the fact that relying solely on paid traffic is becoming less stable, prompting brands to seek ways to strengthen their organic presence and build trust.

3. MARKETING CHALLENGES

3.1 What new challenges might marketing teams face at the beginning of Q2?

The key challenge remains the growing competition for partner attention, making it increasingly difficult for brands to differentiate themselves amid similar terms and offers. In an oversaturated market, standard acquisition tools are no longer delivering consistent results.

As a result, marketing teams are forced to shift their focus from purely commercial terms to building reputation, improving communication quality, and shaping overall brand perception. This includes more systematic work with content, greater transparency in interactions, and the

development of long-term relationships with partners.

3.2 Which marketing strategies may become less effective in April?

Approaches based solely on financial terms are gradually losing effectiveness. When many programs offer similar payouts, partners begin to pay attention to other factors – such as brand reputation, quality of support, and operational stability.

3.3 Will it become more difficult to attract strong partners amid the large number of affiliate programs on the market?

This is largely due to the fact that strong affiliates have already formed a stable pool of partners and have become significantly more selective when choosing new brands. Decisions are increasingly made not only based on terms, but also considering reputation, stability, and quality of interaction.

In practice, this results in a longer onboarding cycle: new programs require more time to pass the evaluation stage and build trust. As a result, partnership launches slow down, and affiliate expectations become more demanding.

3.4 What signals in April may indicate that brands should reconsider their marketing strategy?

A decline in partner engagement, weak response to new products, and lack of brand visibility in the media are key signals.

"This is due to the fact that in a highly competitive environment, even a slight drop in activity quickly impacts a brand's position," says Maria Bobrovskaya, Team Lead PR, Event, Production at N1 Partners.

A KEY SHIFT IN THE MARKET

April confirms a key shift in the iGaming market: increasing competition and rising traffic costs are driving higher demands for quality, sustainability, and a more strategic approach to marketing. Quick tactics and short-term solutions are gradually giving way to more systematic efforts – with a focus on LTV, partner retention, and traffic source diversification.

How to remove the barriers to entry for merchants to access best-in-class infrastructure

For any digital enterprise, from a startup e-commerce merchant to a massive global platform, the main hurdles to success are no longer product development but the complex, high-availability, and expensive infrastructure required for secure payments, compliance, and customer experience at scale.

The recent announcement regarding proposed increases to the Gambling Commission (GC) licensing and operating fees by the DCMS has sparked understandable concern within the industry. Particularly after the 40 per cent tax blow handed down to us from Labour's last budget.

Historically, businesses faced a difficult dilemma: Building in-house requires a costly, multi-year, six- or seven-figure upfront investment, an option only for market giants. Furthermore, the total cost included ongoing maintenance and a dedicated IT team, which can add over 20 per cent of the initial investment annually.

Alternatively, buying a gateway could mean you're locked into rigid systems that can't adapt to evolving business needs, new payment methods, rapidly changing global regulations, and stricter compliance standards.

This created an inefficient, two-tiered system: large companies were burdened by bespoke, costly, and slow-to-adapt in-house systems, while scaling firms were hobbled by systems that actively impeded their growth and adaptability.

THE TRUE CONVERSION KILLERS: A SERIES OF FRICTIONS

The actual barriers to entry are not large obstacles but a 'death by a thousand cuts', a series of deep frictions within the payment flow. For large, multi-region organisations, there isn't a single process; flows are complex, multi-party, and depend on the payment method, supplier, region, risk profile, and compliance needs. Developing and operating these flows demands profound technical expertise.

A poorly designed payment platform has significant hidden costs. First, false declines. A study revealed that 33 per cent of customers who experience a false decline permanently stop shopping with that merchant.

Secondly, to succeed globally, businesses must be hyper-local. Research from PYMNTS.com shows that 99 per cent of cross-border shoppers expect to use their preferred local payment methods. In many emerging markets, local options account for over 75 per cent of online purchases, making single-gateway systems a hard barrier to international expansion.

And third, high-compliance sectors (e.g., FOREX, crypto, investing), slow, separate Know-Your-

Customer (KYC) and Anti-Money-Laundering (AML) checks force users to wait days to fund their accounts, resulting in massive drop-off.

These systemic failures highlight the need for robust, resilient payment systems with a level of excellence rarely seen in other enterprise software. Handling 'unhappy paths', like building in failover capabilities to instantly retry soft declines or partner outages, is a critical hygiene factor, not an optional extra, especially when processing millions of transactions monthly.

THE HIGH-RISK BLUEPRINT: FROM PIPE TO ORCHESTRATION

Sectors that are global, high-volume, and customer-centric have already solved these problems. They moved beyond the concept of a single payment 'pipe' to adopt payment orchestration: an intelligent, flexible layer that sits above all individual payment partners.

This orchestration layer acts as a central exchange, removing barriers in real-time. First, smart routing instantly retries soft declines or routes the transaction to a different acquirer, saving the sale and protecting the customer experience. Second, a single API connection to the platform provides merchants access to hundreds of local payment methods, massively simplifying global expansion. And finally, it unifies the user journey by integrating Fraud prevention and AML monitoring directly into the payment flow, allowing for transaction-level verification.

REMOVING THE FINAL BARRIER: ACCESS AND COST

Orchestration technology is the clear solution. However, building a global orchestration platform still requires high-cost, specialised payment and technology talent. The final barrier remains financial and resource based. Developing such a platform is high-risk, a significant capital expense, and often diverts funds from core business functions like marketing or shareholder dividends.

The good news is that companies have made this investment. By offering its orchestration platform as a service, Paysecure for example democratises access to global payments on a low-cost basis. This approach eliminates the need for substantial capital investments and the struggle to find rare payment/technology hires.

This shift – from monolithic, costly in-house builds to scalable, modular, API-first platforms pioneered by actors like Paysecure – will redefine payment systems across all sectors. It levels the playing field, allowing businesses to redirect focus and resources to product development and customer experience.

Over the coming years, most leading organisations are expected to migrate to orchestration solutions. Even large firms with existing platforms will find it increasingly difficult to justify bespoke IT investment for non-core functions to their shareholders. New market entrants will bypass incumbents entirely by starting directly with payment orchestration services, freeing up precious capital and resources to build their business and gain market share.



Four ways to future-proof player engagement, no matter what regulators do next



By Viktoria Grygorenko, CEO of The Playa, AI-powered personalization solutions that help iGaming operators increase engagement, revenue, and ROMI by up to 25 per cent.

In the last 18 months alone, Germany tightened deposit limits, the Netherlands imposed advertising bans, and the UK upended operator economics with a Remote Gaming Duty hike to 40 per cent. When regulations shift suddenly, most operators are forced into reactive mode – cutting costs, pausing initiatives, watching margins erode. But instead of trying to predict which market will be regulated next, we can build infrastructure that handles uncertainty. That infrastructure starts with how we engage and retain players. Here are four ways to help you do so.

1. MOVE FROM SEGMENTATION TO BEHAVIOURAL PERSONALISATION

Most operators still group players by simple rules: “deposited more than \$100,” “inactive in the last 7 days.” It’s straightforward, but static segments can’t adapt quickly to changes in

player behaviour, so they don’t deliver experiences that keep players engaged longer and make your product a preferred choice.

True behavioural personalisation lets actual player behaviour guide the experience instead, so that you respond to player behaviour as it happens. For this to happen, you need three things: unified player IDs that connect every interaction across microservices, rich behavioural signals (e.g., behavioural profiling), and real-time adaptation as those patterns evolve.

2. PERSONALISE THE LOBBY

The lobby is where players decide what to play, how long to stay, and whether they’ll come back. Yet most lobbies still show identical content to everyone – featured games chosen through commercial deals, or static categories updated every few weeks, the same way for all players.

Machine learning models can analyse each player’s behavioural patterns and predict what they’re likely to engage with next, balancing relevance with variety to keep the experience fresh. We recently completed a six-month implementation of personalised lobbies for an operator across two European markets. The results: 12-16% higher turnover per user, 9-12% more active playing days, and players exploring 13-32% more games than the control group. By month five, every cohort experiencing personalized lobbies showed five to seven percentage points higher retention rates, with the effect compounding over time.

3. ACTIVATE NEW PLAYERS WITHIN 24 HOURS

There’s a common assumption that new players don’t generate enough data for effective personalisation, so the typical approach is to give everyone the same generic onboarding for the

first 30 days. But machine learning models trained specifically for iGaming can identify meaningful patterns in a player’s very first session. Someone who selects a high-volatility slot with complex bonus features is showing a different risk appetite than someone who picks a simple classic slot. How quickly they place their first bet, how they size it relative to their balance, whether they explore or default – each of these early signals reveals what kind of experience will keep that player engaged. And you can act on these signals within 24 hours.

4. DIVERSIFY ENGAGEMENT BEYOND BONUSES

If your retention strategy relies heavily on bonuses, you’re vulnerable the moment margins compress or regulations restrict promotional budgets. A useful diagnostic: look at what percentage of your users have bonus turnover above 50 per cent. The higher that share, the more of your active base may simply not be profitable for you, and the more exposed you are when promotional budgets tighten or regulators step in.

The alternative is player experience. When players trust the product – because withdrawals are smooth, terms are clear, support is responsive, and the journey feels relevant to them – they come back without needing a bonus to prompt them.

THE PATH FORWARD

These four approaches share a common foundation: they make player engagement less dependent on promotional spending and more dependent on understanding individual behaviour. Operators investing in this foundation now will adapt more easily when the next regulatory change arrives.



Harnessing the power of AI for responsible gambling: A new era of player protection

In the ever-evolving landscape of iGaming, regulatory compliance and player protection stand at the forefront of industry challenges, say the experts at Mindway AI.

As markets expand and regulations become increasingly stringent, operators must adapt swiftly to ensure adherence while safeguarding players' well-being. Mindway AI, a spin-out of Aarhus University in Denmark, is at the precipice of this transformation, converting over a decade of research in neuroscience, neuroimaging, and problem gambling into innovative, AI-driven safer gambling solutions.

AI: THE NEW FRONTIER IN RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING

Neuroimaging provides a window into the brain, allowing us to probe the biological underpinnings of both normal and problematic gambling behaviour. Drawing on insights from neuroscience and human expert assessments, we continuously refine our flagship solution, GameScanner. This technology empowers operators to implement evidence-based safer gambling solutions effectively and interact with their customers earlier.

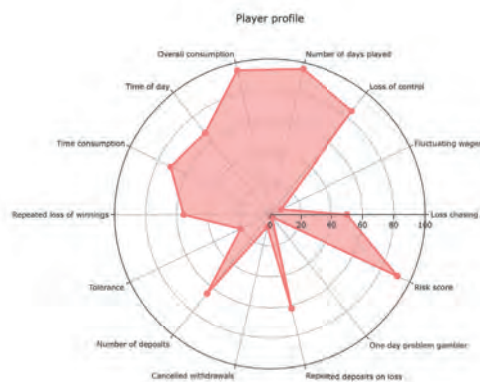
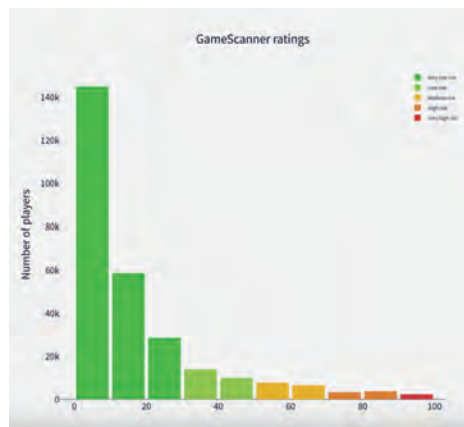
The iGaming industry is fraught with compliance complexities due to industry scrutiny and perception and the ever-changing regulatory landscape globally. As authorities worldwide introduce new policies to limit operators' activities and enhance player safety, keeping up with these regulations is critical.

AI-based solutions like GameScanner can ease this burden by providing risk assessment of an overall player base but also on an individual level, helping operators not only avoid fines and reputational damage but also ensure comprehensive regulatory adherence.

MITIGATING HUMAN ERROR AND ENHANCING EFFICIENCY

Entrusting AI solutions with compliance management can be daunting, but it significantly reduces human error – a common cause of compliance failures.

By minimising errors, operators can avoid costly mistakes that might damage their reputation and financial standing. Our GameScanner solution is renowned for its accuracy, identifying at least 87% of at-risk and problem gambling cases comparable to detections by a human expert, as tested by



GLI. This precision is no accident. At Mindway AI, we ensure our algorithms are constantly trained and updated by our human expert panel, which includes highly experienced gambling addiction experts, researchers, and psychologists. This expert panel meticulously

analyses thousands of player gambling patterns, and their insights are used to educate and continuously enhance GameScanner's algorithm. By doing so, we add a qualified human touch to our advanced, fully automated software.

Regulatory compliance is not merely about appeasing authorities; it's about fostering a culture of player safety and sustainability in gambling. As operators recognise the importance of player safety for long-term success, they are shifting their strategies to prioritise responsible gaming.

STREAMLINING DOCUMENTATION AND REPORTING

RG solutions like GameScanner simplify compliance reporting and auditing, resulting in significant time and protentional cost savings. Automation frees up valuable resources, allowing staff to focus on strategic projects. Additionally, AI tools provide comprehensive, real-time reports that enhance transparency and data accuracy – critical factors in demonstrating compliance and ensuring data integrity.

A JOURNEY OF GROWTH

Our dedication to excellence in behavioural monitoring is evident in our partnerships and milestones. Currently we are live in 65 jurisdictions and monitoring nearly 15 million active players per month.

Last October, our collaboration with Crown Resorts in Australia marked a significant milestone, our largest integration into the physical casino realm.

Recent partnerships with industry leaders such as DraftKings and PrizePicks in multiple US states, PepperMill Casino in Belgium and ATG in Sweden underscore the growing traction of our technology across multiple markets, signalling a bright future for responsible gaming.

Mindway AI remains committed to pushing boundaries in responsible gambling, leveraging the power of AI to create safer, more secure gaming environments worldwide. As we continue our journey, we are excited to shape the future of player safety, making a real difference in the industry.

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How AI is reshaping data analysis and decision-making in affiliate marketing

Affiliate marketing has always been a race for speed – who can analyse traffic faster, test new ideas, and optimise campaigns before competitors do. Over the past few years, artificial intelligence has started to change just how fast that race can be, according to the latest insights from Boomerang Partners.



Tasks that once required hours of manual analysis can now be handled much faster with the help of AI. At Boomerang Partners, working with affiliates in iGaming and online sports betting, we see how AI is already changing everyday processes – from traffic analysis to campaign optimization.

FASTER TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

One of the areas where this shift is most visible is traffic analysis. Today, affiliates deal with large volumes of data coming from multiple traffic sources, and AI tools make it much easier to process and interpret that information. Instead of manually reviewing reports and statistics, affiliates can quickly identify which channels perform well, which campaigns need adjustment, and where new opportunities may lie.

In practice, this significantly accelerates decision-making. In many cases, this can reduce the time needed to analyse traffic data by around 50-60 per cent, allowing affiliates to react to traffic changes almost in real time.

RESEARCH AND MARKET INSIGHTS

AI also simplifies research. Tasks that once involved checking multiple sources,



analysing competitors, and gathering market information can now be handled far more efficiently, giving affiliates more time to focus on strategy and campaign optimisation.

Instead of manually reviewing dozens of websites, reports, and market signals, affiliates can quickly identify relevant trends, compare competitors, and evaluate potential opportunities. This speeds up the research phase and enables teams to move from analysis to action more quickly.

FROM DATA TO PREDICTIVE INSIGHTS

Beyond affiliate workflows, the same shift is happening in analytics teams. Performance marketing has always relied on large datasets but turning that data into useful insights has traditionally required significant manual work.

Today, AI tools help automate many routine tasks. Analysts can use them to generate code, prepare datasets, and clean large volumes of data much faster than before. In practice, this can reduce routine data preparation time by 30-50 per cent. As a result, analysts can focus more on interpreting results and improving campaign performance.

Machine learning is also helping teams better understand how players behave. By analysing patterns in user activity, these models can estimate the potential long-term value of players much earlier in their lifecycle. For marketing teams, this makes it easier to prioritize budgets and optimise campaigns.

AI also helps detect anomalies in real time. Systems can continuously monitor key performance metrics and quickly highlight unusual changes in traffic or campaign performance. Instead of discovering problems hours later in reports, teams can react much faster and investigate the root cause.

AI AS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

AI is not replacing expertise in affiliate marketing – but it is changing how quickly decisions are made. Teams that can analyse data faster, test ideas more quickly, and respond to traffic changes in real time gain a clear advantage in an increasingly competitive market.

For affiliates working in iGaming and online sports betting, this shift is particularly noticeable. Campaigns are becoming more data-driven, personalisation is improving, and optimisation cycles are getting shorter. As AI tools continue to evolve, the ability to combine technology with practical industry expertise will become one of the factors separating strong teams from the rest.

All analytics and machine learning applications referenced are based on aggregated and anonymised data.

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BetGames: AI in iGaming – where is the real value?



AI continues to sit at the forefront of industry discussions, with businesses racing to explore its potential across operations. But as experimentation accelerates, so too does the risk of misdirected investment. Dr Andreas Koeberl, CEO at BetGames, explores where the real impact lies when it comes to AI.

GIO: AI continues to dominate headlines, but where is it genuinely adding value to the industry?

Andreas Koeberl: The issue with AI implementation today is that much of it is hype driven. More and more businesses are searching for ways to integrate AI because they feel it is the right thing to do, with no clear understanding of how to use it effectively or how it will impact outcomes.

The reality is that, while front-end AI appears more exciting on the surface, the majority of value with current tools remains in the back end. Its potential for optimising workflows and providing advanced data analytics can drive meaningful improvements in operational efficiency and enable informed decision-making.

GIO: There's a lot of experimentation happening across the industry – where do you think resources are currently being misallocated?

AK: We are seeing a lot of companies chasing

trends rather than outcomes. There is often a lack of big-picture thinking, with resources being poured into replicating processes or introducing AI where it is not necessarily the right solution.

Our recent research into AI live casino presenters is a perfect example of that. We trialled AI avatars; the majority of players did not really care or even notice. More importantly, there were no measurable changes – either positive or negative – across key session metrics.

There was no financial upside either, and as a result, although we have the tech ready, as long as there is no clear commercial or strategic benefit, we'll park it. If there is no discernible advantage, it raises the question: why invest time, energy and budget into it?

Unfortunately, this is the trap that many providers and operators fall into – pursuing innovations that look impressive on paper but ultimately deliver minimal genuine benefit. In short, most companies suffer from FOMO and try to find a problem for the solution rather than the inverse.

GIO: Beyond the hype, where can AI have a meaningful impact on operations?

AK: The focus must shift from novelty to impact. When it comes to product development, AI can play a significant role in speeding up prototyping, enabling teams to iterate faster, test ideas more efficiently, and move quickly from concept to execution.

There should also be a stronger emphasis on improving efficiency for partners. A prime example is BetGames' AI-powered Casino Designer, which allows operators to create bespoke studio environments in minutes rather than months.

Tools like this remove friction from the

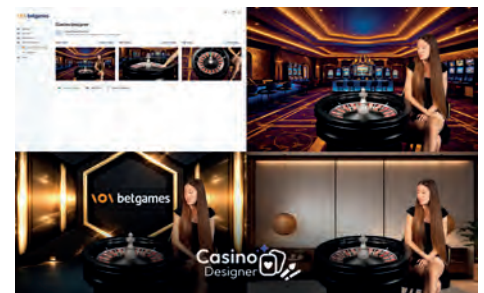
process, eliminating the need for specialist designers, lengthy approval cycles, and resource-heavy workflows, streamlining production and reducing time to market.

GIO: What will separate the businesses that successfully integrate AI from those that don't?

AK: Without a clear strategy, AI can quickly become more resource-intensive than beneficial. Every strategy needs a goal at its core. "We have to use it, otherwise we'll become obsolete" might be true in some sense, but it is not a strategy. The key is to avoid using AI for the sake of it and instead look to implement the technology only where it adds tangible value.

In the back end, this means leveraging it as a tool to drive efficiency and optimise internal processes. In the front end, it means shifting the focus away from what we can replicate with AI, and towards what we can unlock because of it.

The real opportunity lies in creating new formats and experiences that were not previously possible. Experimentation is important, but it must be guided by strategic purpose. "What does AI allow us to do or offer that wouldn't be possible without it?" is a great question to start with.



AI in iGaming: The shift from automation to interaction

For years, most uses of AI in iGaming have been invisible to the player. The technology has largely sat in the background, helping operators detect fraud, support KYC, flag risky behaviour, optimise bonusing, and improve internal decision-making. All of that is important, but it is not where the real transformation will be felt by the end user.

The next phase of AI in iGaming is not just about automation. It is about interaction. That means AI moving from being a back-office efficiency tool to becoming part of the actual player experience. In my view, this is where the category starts to become genuinely exciting.

The question is no longer, “How can AI help us run the business more efficiently?” It’s “How can AI make the betting experience more natural, more relevant, and easier to complete?”

This matters because player expectations have changed. People are increasingly used to conversational interfaces, personalised recommendations, and low-friction digital journeys in almost every part of their lives. Betting will follow the same path.

Historically, the sportsbook experience has been built around navigation. Search for an event. Open a competition. Find a market. Select an outcome. Add stake. Confirm. It works, but it often asks the user to think in the language of the product rather than in their own language.

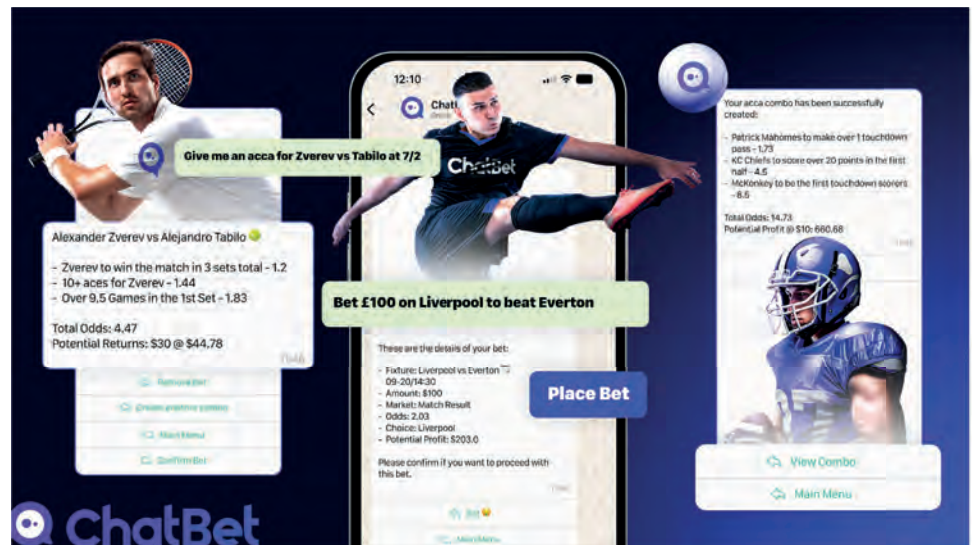
AI changes that.

A NEW INTERFACE LAYER

Instead of forcing players through menus, filters, and page flows, conversational AI allows them to express intent naturally. A user can simply say what they want, whether that is a single bet, a same-game parlay, or a more nuanced position, and the technology can translate that intent into a structured, compliant bet slip.

That is where AI stops being a feature and starts becoming a new interface layer.

The opportunity for operators is significant. If you reduce friction at the moment of intent,



you improve the likelihood of conversion. If you make the experience, feel more intuitive, you increase the chance of repeat usage. In other words, AI has the potential to improve both conversion and retention, not just internal efficiency.

This is especially relevant in a market where operators are under pressure from regulation, tax increases, rising acquisition costs, and tougher competition. The industry cannot rely

forever on more traffic, more bonuses, or more noise. Growth increasingly comes from improving the quality of interaction and the efficiency of the journey.

That is why I believe the most important AI applications in the next 12 to 24 months will be those tied to measurable business outcomes: better conversion rates, improved retention, stronger personalisation, and faster paths to action.

STRONG INFRASTRUCTURE

Of course, the foundations still matter. None of this works without strong infrastructure underneath it. Real-time pricing, market mapping, risk checks, compliance controls, and accurate execution all need to function seamlessly in the background.

The front-end experience may feel simple, but the operational layer behind it must be robust enough to support regulated, real-money environments.

The winners in this next phase of AI will not necessarily be the operators shouting loudest about innovation. They will be the ones using AI to remove genuine friction and improve real customer outcomes.

The future of AI in iGaming is not just smarter back offices. It is smarter conversations, smarter journeys, and smarter execution.

That is where the real value will be created.

When AI gets it wrong in gambling, the cost isn't a bad headline, it's potentially your licence



By Kate Chambers, founder of The Gaming Boardroom, who has been helping gambling industry leaders achieve strategic clarity and growth for over 20 years.

Two weeks ago, I handed this newsletter to Dan Stone. He wrote about QA gaps, technical debt, and the uncomfortable reality that the people best placed to spot what AI gets wrong are the ones being shown the door.

He also asked whether we're becoming busy fools. I've been thinking about that question ever since. Because in most industries, busy foolishness is expensive. In gambling, it can be existential.

Here's what I mean...

Dan's piece focused on the workforce side of this, the knowledge walking out of businesses faster than anyone is tracking it, the 24 per cent training figure that should be keeping CEOs awake, and the single individual now expected to manage multiple AI agents without understanding the roles they're replicating. All of that is real, and all of it matters.

But there's a specific dimension to this in gambling that hasn't been said clearly enough yet.

When AI gets something wrong in most

industries, the consequence is embarrassment. You pull the campaign, issue an apology, and move on. When AI gets something wrong in gambling, the consequence can be a regulatory investigation, a licence review, or a headline that follows your brand for years.

And right now, the governance frameworks inside most gambling businesses are nowhere near ready for that risk.

THE RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING PROBLEM

Start with the most obvious example. Responsible gambling messaging is not marketing copy. It is a regulatory commitment. Regulators don't just audit your policy document; they look at whether your communications demonstrate genuine human judgement in the moments that matter most.

A player showing early signs of harmful behaviour receives an AI-generated support message that missed the nuance a trained human would have caught. That isn't an efficiency saving; it's a liability. And the Gambling Commission, along with its counterparts across your regulated markets, is already paying attention to how operators are using AI in player-facing communications.

Dan noted that AI output needs checking, that the QA layer many businesses are removing is precisely the layer that catches these failures. In responsible gambling communications, that QA layer isn't optional. It's the thing that stands between you and a formal investigation.

THE AFFILIATE AND ACQUISITION PROBLEM

Affiliate and acquisition content is the part of gambling marketing most likely to be automated first. It is also the part most likely to attract regulatory scrutiny. If AI is writing the copy and the experienced people who understood the regulatory boundaries have been let go, you are one bad campaign away from a headline you cannot walk back.

Dan's sports betting analogy is worth repeating here. Some AI tools are great for in-play. Others are very much pre-match only. The problem is that most businesses deploying AI in their marketing functions don't yet know which they're dealing with. They're betting the house without checking the form.

THE TRUST DEFICIT PROBLEM

Gambling already operates under a trust deficit

with the public and with policymakers. The industry has spent years arguing, in front of parliamentary committees, in licence applications, in responsible gambling commitments, that it takes player protection seriously and that human judgement sits at the centre of how it operates.

AI-generated player communications that feel impersonal or miss the human read on distress will be weaponised by critics. Not unfairly. The industry cannot afford to hand over that ammunition.

Dan made the point that GenAI seeks the middle ground; it doesn't do differentiation or distinction well. In gambling, where your licence depends on demonstrating that your approach to player protection is considered and specific to your business, the middle ground is not good enough.

WHERE THIS ACTUALLY BELONGS

This is not a marketing department conversation. It is not a technology conversation. It is a risk-and-governance conversation, and it belongs in the boardroom.

The questions that should be on the board agenda right now are not about AI strategy in the abstract. They are specific:

- Who is accountable for AI-generated player communications before they go out?
- What is the human review process, and who owns it?
- What happens when an AI-generated communication causes a regulatory complaint?
- Do we still have the people in the business who know what good looks like, or have we let them go in the efficiency drive Dan described?

If those questions don't have clear answers inside your organisation, the efficiency you think you're gaining is being borrowed against your licence. The industry has spent years trying to build trust, but it keeps undermining it through short-term decisions. Deploying AI in player-facing communications without proper governance is the fastest way to undermine it further, and the most avoidable.

Dan asked whether we're becoming busy fools. In gambling, a busy fool with a compliance failure isn't just embarrassing.

They're a case study. What does your AI governance framework for player communications actually look like right now? And who in your organisation owns it?



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The AI systemic shift: Why infrastructure trumps productivity

As the industry races towards an automated future, we must stop treating Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a mere digital assistant and start governing it as the core engine of the modern gaming enterprise, says our industry insider, Mark McGuinness.

I come from a third-generation family steeped in the hard-nosed odds making and precision of the betting world. In my 25 years across land based and online sectors, I have seen the 'next big thing' arrive more times than I care to count.

From the first digital cabinets to the migration of the sportsbook onto the mobile phone, the cycle is always the same. Excitement precedes execution. But Artificial Intelligence (AI) feels different. It is not just another layer of software. It is a fundamental shift in the inner workings of our industry.

At a recent digital roundtable on AI in iGaming hosted by the iGaming Roundtable, a recurring theme emerged that gave me pause. We are currently obsessed with AI as a productivity tool. We talk about writing better marketing copy or speeding up customer service queries. This is a mistake.

If we only view AI through the lens of individual task efficiency, we miss the structural reality. AI is not a tool. It is a system.

THE SCALE OF THE SHIFT

The rapid growth of AI in our sector is undeniable. Recent market data suggests the AI in games market for example is set to increase by \$34.10 billion (£27.2 billion) by 2030. This growth is driven by a compound annual rate of over 40 per cent according to Technavio research in 2026.

Furthermore, operators using agentic AI systems report a 35 per cent increase in player engagement. Yet, beneath these glittering statistics lies a precarious lack of infrastructure. You cannot simply 'plug in' a Large Language Model and expect your business to transform.

As with any legacy software transition, your team requires onboarding, deep education, and consistent upskilling. Without this, your AI deployment is a house built on sand. We must shift the conversation toward a robust framework of governance.

This starts with a clear AI Policy. Before a single line of code is integrated into your tech stack, the business case must be established. How will it be used? What are the Standard

Operating Procedures (SOPs)? Most importantly, where is the human oversight?

THE ENGINEERING MINDSET

A striking observation shared during our recent industry discussions is the profile of those currently finding the greatest success with AI. The operators and providers leading the charge almost invariably come from an engineering background.

This is no coincidence. Engineers understand that AI is not a magic solution but a sophisticated iteration of Software as a Service (SaaS). They possess an inherent grasp of the rigorous processes required to create a desired workflow.

They do not see a chatbot; they see a sequence of API calls, data pipelines, and logic gates that must be meticulously mapped. For these professionals, AI is an infrastructure project that requires the same architectural discipline as building a land-based casino or a high frequency prediction trading platform.

If you lack that engineering mindset within your leadership, you will struggle to move



beyond the superficial 'productivity' stage into true systemic integration. Success is found in the engineering of the workflow, not just the code.

REGULATORY SCRUTINY AND THE UKGC

The UK Gambling Commission (UKGC) has already signalled its stance with increasing gravity. In its 2024–2027 Corporate Strategy, the regulator made it clear that while it welcomes innovation, any use of AI must be subject to appropriate human intervention, governance, and assurance.

The Commission is moving beyond mere observation and into the realm of prescriptive expectation. They are looking for 'explainability' in every algorithm. If a player is flagged or a bet is refused, the operator must be able to demonstrate the logic behind that decision.

A 'black box' excuse will not hold up in a regulatory review. The UKGC is specifically concerned with how AI interacts with the LCCP (Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice). They expect AI to be a shield for the vulnerable, not just a sword for the marketing department.

This means your AI must be trained on high quality, unbiased data to avoid discriminatory practices or the accidental targeting of at-risk individuals. If you cannot explain the "why" behind the AI, you are failing your licence.

OPERATIONAL REALITY

AI systems in iGaming are already handling 92 per cent of unusual transaction patterns for fraud detection according to Gitnux data for 2026. They are also managing 65 per cent of player queries through automated chatbots.

Most impressively, these systems can now predict problem gambling signs 48 hours earlier than manual intervention. These are not just productive tasks. They are core regulatory and operational functions that require a different level of management.

If the human staff do not understand how the underlying system reaches its conclusion, the business risks significant compliance failure. We must treat AI adoption as an engineering project, not a marketing one.

We need to move away from the 'black box' mentality and embrace a culture of transparency that mirrors the best practices of modern software development.

THE IMPLEMENTATION HIERARCHY

To navigate this, we must establish a hierarchy of implementation. It begins with Policy. You must define the ethical and operational boundaries of AI within your firm before you buy the licenses.

Then comes the Business Case. AI for the sake of AI is a cost centre. You must identify where it solves a systemic bottleneck, such as KYC verification or real time RTP monitoring. Following

this, you must build the Governance and SOPs.

There must be clear protocols for when a human must override an AI decision. Finally, you must invest in Upskilling. Your staff must move from being 'doers' to being 'editors' and 'auditors' of AI output.

This transition is perhaps the most difficult part of the process because it requires a shift in mindset as much as a shift in skill.

LEGACY AND TRUST

I have seen our industry evolve from smoke filled betting shops to state-of-the-art server rooms. The introduction of AI is simply the next chapter of that lineage. We are currently at the stage where many are enamoured by the 'magic' of the output without respecting the mechanics of the input.

But let us be clear: the winners of this era will not be those who use AI to write more emails. They will be the ones who integrate it as a governed, transparent, and human led system.

The future of iGaming is undoubtedly automated, but it must be an automation that is understood by the people running the show. If we lose the thread of human accountability, we lose the trust of our players and our regulators.

We should look at the technical reality of the current landscape. Large language models are becoming more accessible, yet the data they consume remains the most valuable asset. If your internal data is messy, your AI output will be flawed.

This is the 'garbage in, garbage out' principle that has governed computing for decades. In the context of iGaming, 'garbage out' could mean a million-pound regulatory fine or a devastating breach of AML protocols.

Therefore, the first step in any AI strategy is actually a data strategy. You must clean your house before you invite the robot in to help you manage it. This is where the engineering discipline becomes invaluable.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

The iGaming Roundtable discussions highlighted that we are currently in a 'Wild West' phase of AI experimentation. Many small to medium enterprises are rushing to adopt

third party tools without a full understanding of the security implications.

Where is your data going? Who owns the prompts? What happens if the service provider changes their terms? These are the questions of a seasoned operator. We need to approach AI with the same rigour we apply to our gaming math and our financial audits.

It is a matter of professional integrity and long-term viability. Those who succeed will be those who view these systems through the lens of process and workflow.

As we look towards 2030, the integration of AI will become invisible. It will be the wallpaper of the industry. But between now and then, there is a lot of hard work to be done in the 'engine room' of our businesses.

We need to stop talking about AI as if it is a magic wand and start talking about it as if it is a new, complex, and high stakes operating system. Only then can we truly harness its power to create a safer, more efficient, and more profitable industry for everyone involved.

MAINTAINING TRUST IN A DIGITAL WORLD

The legacy of our third-generation predecessors was built on trust and a deep understanding of the game and the maths that governed it. Our legacy will be defined by how well we maintain that trust in a digital world governed by algorithms.

The core of our industry is human psychology, risk, and entertainment. AI can enhance the delivery of these things, but it cannot replicate the nuance of a relationship or the intuition of a seasoned floor manager.

What AI will do is strip away the drudgery, allowing us to be more human, not less. But this only happens if we are the masters of the machine. If we allow the machine to run without a map, we are simply waiting for a crash.

Let us build the map first. Let us set the policy, train the people, and then, and only then, let us turn on the power. Success is not found in the software itself, but in the engineering of the workflow that surrounds it. We need to quit looking for the shortcut and start looking at the blueprint.

About the author

Mark McGuinness is an 'architect of high-impact iGaming marketing.' He is currently fractional CMO at Devilfish.com and brings over 24 years of elite digital marketing leadership to the role, advising top-tier iGaming operators across diverse regulated landscapes. He translates deep analytical power, honed from his scientific background, into breakthrough strategies for affiliate marketing, Web3, social poker, and casino gaming. McGuinness champions the game-changing integration of neuroscience and behavioural economics to skyrocket customer engagement and conversion.



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