

SELLING INTERNET GAMBLING: ADVERTISING, NEW MEDIA AND THE CONTENT OF POKER PROMOTION

**John L. McMullan, Ph.D.
Saint Mary's University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Canada B3H 3C3**

**Melissa Kervin, M.A.
Saint Mary's University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Canada B3H 3C3
© 2010**

**European Association of Gambling Studies
Vienna, Austria, September 2010.**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Melissa Kervin, M.A. Research Associate
- Saint Mary's University, Funder



“Advertising can be seen to shape and reflect reality....any advertisement might be apprehended in terms of its dramatic shape, metaphoric content, and social context, as an example of the cultural order” (Sherry, 1987).

“Thanks to the Internet, advertising might be going through....its first true paradigm shift since the advent of television half a century ago...marketers must adopt to the world of the Internet, social networks, user-generated content, blogs and broadcasts” (F.J. Perez-Latre, 2009).

“Online modes of marketing have produced a new interface between advertisements and their audiences, which have been transformed from passive or reactive to proactive audiences....audiences constitute themselves and each other rather than being there in front of a T.V. set without any interactive power over or relation to the message” (Kasapi, 2009).

INTRODUCTION

- This presentation explores gambling advertising involving internet poker sites.
- The perspective I take is that advertising is a cultural system of communication.
 - Repetition
 - Acting and staging
 - Stylization
 - Affirmation of values
 - Selling needs, desires and status
 - Promoting interaction between senders and receivers – viral advertising, mouse to mouse promotions, consumer-driven messaging, etc.
 - Making connections to wider social words – entertainment, sports, film, youthful lifestyles, etc.
- I explore the following questions in this presentation:
 - How do poker sites promote poker and try to persuade consumers?
 - What master messages do they convey?
 - What are the cultural referents that shape online gambling ads at poker websites?
 - How is the 'social media' operating as conduits for online poker advertising on gambling websites?
 - What concerns to internet web based gambling advertisements evoke for responsible gambling?

Background Internet Gambling

- Emerging Popularity
- Dramatic Competition and Convergence
- Establishment of 'Brands'
- 30 Sites in 1994; 2,296 sites in 2009
- Approximately 619 gambling providers operate in 69 different jurisdictions world wide (Casino City, 2009).
- However, many sites are clustered in Malta (338), Dutch Antilles, (297), Kahnawake Mohawk Territory (240), Gibraltar (225) and U.K. (96).
- Economic value increased from \$9.3 billion in 2004 to about \$20 billion in 2010.
- Online poker is fastest growing sector, estimated to be \$6 billion in 2011 (Goff & Garrahan, 2005; Wood & Williams, 2009).
- Indeed as of August 19, 2010 the 7 day running average for cash based online traffic at Poker Stars was 25,800 players, Full Tilt 14,200 players and Party Poker 3,600 players (PokerScout.com).



Explaining growth and popularity

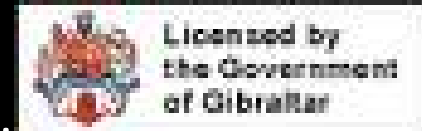
- Convenience of 24/7 play
- Opportunity and spread of volume of internet venues
- Low stakes wagering/less spending/more control
- Availability of practice sites to socialize consumers
- Anonymity of the internet environment
- Broadcasting of poker programs on cable, network and satellite stations
- Celebrity endorsements
- Advertising marketing and 'rebranding' of poker as an exciting online "experience" (Casino City, 2009; McMullan & Miller, 2008; Williams & Wood, 2007; Wood & Williams, 2009; Wood, Griffith & Parke, 2007; Kinsman, 2005; Goff & Garrahan, 2005; Ipsos Reid).



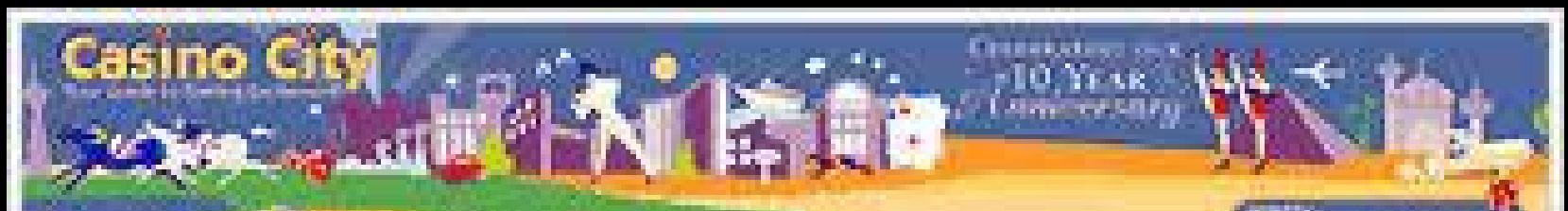
Research To Date

- Online player behaviour (eCOGRA, 2007, 2009; LaBrie et al., 2008; LaPlante et al., 2009; Nelson et al., 2008)
- Motivations for gambling online (eCOGRA, 2007; Wood & Griffiths, 2008; Wood, Griffiths & Parke, 2007; Woodruff & Gregory, 2005)
- Prevalence of online gambling (Griffiths, 2001; Ialomiteanu & Adlaf, 2002; Wardle et al., 2007)
- Problem gambling and the internet (Responsible Gambling Program of British Columbia, 2003; Slutske et al., 2003; Williams & Wood, 2007; Wood & Williams, 2009)
- Risk factors associated with online play (Griffiths, 2003; Griffiths & Wood, 2000; King, Delfabbro & Griffiths, 2010)
- Adolescent gambling and the internet (Griffiths & Wood, 2000, 2007; Derevensky & Gupta, 2007; Griffiths & Parke, 2009)
- Online crime and internet gambling (McMullan & Perrier, 2007; McMullan & Rege, 2007, 2010; Griffiths, 2010; CERT-LEXSI, 2006)
- The website environment and social responsibility measures (Griffiths & Jawad, 2008; Monaghan, 2009; Smeaton & Griffiths, 2004; Wiebe, 2006;)
- No studies of promotional advertising at website environments

Focus of Study



- Broad approach to online environment
- Examines a 15% stratified sample drawn from 472 confirmed poker sites available from Casino City Directory.
- N =71 poker sites: Malta (28), Kahnawake Mohawk Territory (13), Dutch Antilles (11), Gibraltar (8), Costa Rica and Panama (6), U.K. (3) and Other (2).
- Deployed content analysis to study web design, marketing and advertising schemes and communications styles, persuasion techniques and promoted beliefs and messages.
- Coded each poker site for 22 variables that included interface properties, customer appeals and services, player protections, colour, sound, text and image schemes, promotional materials, products and programs, the use of sponsors and celebrities, tutelage schemes, responsible gambling measures and overall thematic content.



Results of Study

1. The Poker Site As An Instrument of Friendship

- Designing Access, Appeal and Familiarity
 - 85% of sites fast, reliable and personal
 - 91% easy to navigate via home buttons (94%) site maps (61%) and software tours (7%)
 - 100% offered 24/7 support services to clients
 - 90% provided lists of frequently asked questions re registration, passwords, accounts, rakes, practice play, suspicious play, etc.
 - All but one site provided 'business contact information' for customers
 - 92% featured 'about us sections'



PARTYPOKER.com

FEEL IT

"Poker Operator of the Year 2009"
eGaming Awards

[PartyPoints](#) | [My Account](#)

Search

[Download](#) | [How to Play](#) | [About Us](#) | [Promotions](#) | [Tournaments](#) | [Tell-a-Friend](#) | [Rewards](#) | [Academy](#)

us\$100 Welcome Bonus
[Find Out More](#)

Free download

Instant Play

Reasons to join the party:

- ✓ "Poker Operator of the Year 2009" eGaming Awards
- ✓ Responsible Operator - GamCare Certified
- ✓ Licensed and Regulated
- ✓ Comprehensive range of payment methods
- ✓ 24/7 365 days a year Customer Support



Government of Gibraltar



Mike Sexton

Kara Scott

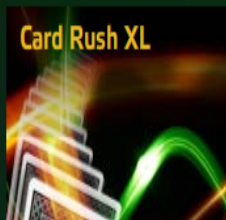
Tony G



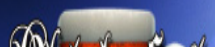
PALLADIUM
REWARDS

Earn up to
40% rakeback

Card Rush XL



The Palladium
Oktoberfest Poker
Race



Win your way to
Atlantic City



Tournaments

News

\$3000 Gtd No Limit starts at 09:15 ET

\$1000 Gtd No Limit starts at 09:30 ET

\$8000 Gtd No Limit starts at 10:00 ET

\$5000 Gtd No Limit starts at 11:15 ET

\$250 Gtd No Limit starts at 12:00 ET

\$3000 Gtd No Limit starts at 12:00 ET

\$10000 Gtd No Limit starts at 12:30 ET

\$1000 Gtd No Limit starts at 12:50 ET



FEEL IT

"Poker Operator of the Year 2009"
eGaming Awards

[PartyPoints](#) | [My Account](#)

Search

[Download](#) | [How to Play](#) | [About Us](#) | [Promotions](#) | [Tournaments](#) | [Tell-a-Friend](#) | [Rewards](#) | [Academy](#)

You are here: > [Home](#) > [24hr. Help](#) ▼ [Site Map](#)

[Site Map](#)

▶ [Site Map](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Tech FAQ](#)

[Language Setting FAQ](#)

[Pay-Pro FAQ](#)

[Download now](#)

Site Map

Content for site map page...

- [24hr. Help](#)
- [Download](#)
 - [Quick Fix](#)
- [How to Play](#)
 - [PartyAcademy](#)
 - [Poker School](#)
 - [Basic Poker Rules](#)
 - [Deck of Cards](#)
 - [Rank of Hands](#)
 - [Poker Games](#)
 - [Texas Hold'Em](#)
 - [Omaha](#)
 - [Omaha Hi/Lo](#)
 - [7 Card Stud](#)
 - [7 Card Stud Hi/Lo](#)
 - [Betting Rules](#)
 - [Buy-ins and Table Stakes](#)
 - [Glossary](#)
 - [Etiquette](#)

- 64% evinced medium to high levels of customer appeal (i.e. Poker Stars supported 23 languages, 11 payment systems and engendered a “global multicultural feel” to their consumers)
- Novel and adventurous yet familiar and reassuring spaces
- Spaces of challenge, endurance and return
- Places of connectivity
- Glocal spaces of electronic friendship



PokerStars.com
Find the Poker Star in you

Blog | PokerStars TV | Poker Tours

ONLINE NOW: 195,717 players 6,092 tournaments

Choose your language ▼

Download | How to Play Poker | Real Money | Promotions | Poker T

THE WORLD'S LARGEST POKER SITE
Home of the World Championship

Welcome to PokerStars.com where you'll find more tournaments and games than any other site, with 24/7 support, fast cashouts, deposits, fast cashouts, award-winning software, and where champions are made. You could be next. Start playing for free now.

Daniel Negreanu
4-time world poker champion and Team PokerStars Pro

PLAY POKER
CLICK HERE

English	Italiano	România
English UK	Íslenska	Slovenija
Čeština	Latviešu	Svenska
Dansk	Lietuvių	Suomi
Deutsch	Magyar	Български
Ελληνικά	Nederlands	Русский
Español	Norsk	Українська
Eesti	Polski	繁體中文
Français	Português BR	
Français FR	Português PT	

- Inspiring Security

- 90% provided privacy policies informing customers on the collection, use and storage of personal information
- All but one site posted their measures to guarantee account safety, user anonymity, and secure networks
- 83% provided basic information on game integrity, testing of RNGs and algorithms, and auditing practices (i.e. Poker NIGHT Shift insisted that their shuffler was an “unpredictable, scientifically-proven quantum-mechanical process inside a special, impregnable, hack-proof black box”
- Safe virtual attachments
- Only 50%, however, offered information about the use of poker bots, their impact on fair play, and the site’s ability or willingness to detect “non-human intelligence”.
- Less than 50% of the sites did not convey information to consumers on how they secured and transferred monetary data.
- Fully 9 of 10 sites had no announced policies to protect players from staff improprieties such as unlawfully accessing, sharing or using their personal information.



- Normalizing Action

- 92% of the sites promoted the message that poker was a natural consumer activity

- “Timeless”
 - “Placeless”
 - Eternally re-occurring
 - Locales of leisure
 - Places of destiny and fortune
 - Risk as pleasurable possibility
 - Rebranded poker = virtual excitement



2. The Poker Site As An Instrument of Promotion

- Image, Text And Transmission
 - The art of product differentiation in a 'look-alike industry'
 - Two-thirds used attractive , bright colour schemes to evoke conviviality, inspire engagement and convey an impression of pleasurable consumption that was arousing and challenging
 - Sites highly reliant on image, rather than sound or touch, to pitch their products on their web pages. Used icons (93%), signs (99%), human images (54%), banners (42%) landscapes (21%) and pop-ups (7%) to create and communicate mood, atmosphere and meaning in the perception of internet patrons
 - All but one of the 71 sites featured gambling symbols such as chips, cards, tables and logos
 - Web images were dynamic, instructive , interactive and thematic



- 11% promoted overtly sexualized images of women to send the message that poker was seductive, 11% promoted ethnic imagery to send the message that poker was a multi-cultural phenomenon with popular transnational appeal, and 10% used obvious youthful imagery to instill the impression that poker was an enchanting activity for young people to engage in at their leisure and for their pleasure. Forty-seven of the 170 human images (28%) portrayed at the 71 sites were people who appeared to be 25 years of age or younger.



- Words were used to stylize poker sites, and dynamic flashing texts (69%) rather than fixed or trailing tag lines (39%) were the preferred ways to reach customers (“Last Chance! \$210k Triple Deck), increase suspense (“Feel the Game”), promote new levels of visual intensity (Live Fast and Play Hard”) and put consumers at the centre of their buying experiences (“Get a Piece of the Action”).



- Indeed 30 poker sites (42%) (and this is an evolving trend) marketed “dialogic features” – participating newsletters, blogs, press releases and video libraries – on empowered web platforms to incite consumption and facilitate the transition from a “scopic regime” of pleasure relying on broadcasted visual representation and passive receivers to a “kinaesthetic regime” based on visual stimulation and participatory immediacy in the form of user generated content and “mouth to mouth” advertising.



- The basic idea of the new social media was to make consumers part of the website storyline and to encourage them to add authenticity to poker brands, innovate peer to peer advertising to sell gambling and create experiential depth at websites by inviting customers to “dive” into the games and “buzz” them to others (Perez-Latre, 2009; Holt, 2004; Phelps et al., 2004; Cotte & Latour, 2009; Bassary, 2009).

- Incentives and inducements

- 97% of websites used promotional sales practices to attract and retain customers.
- This took the form of “deposit bonuses” at 70% of the sites and “reload, VIP reward, bad beat, best hand and royal flush bonuses” at 25% to 33% of the sites.



- 81% featured “reward programs” to cash in points for credits based on play. Typically the longer you played the greater the points and credits cashed.



- 76% deployed “affiliate programs” to transform, consumers into sales force representatives via commissions and compensations and turn internet poker into a customer-driven product or brand.



- 83% provided “tournaments or competitions” to naturalize their brand, popularize the poker experience, and induce the belief of winning big, winning early and winning often.



- 55% offered “refer a friend” programs (\$25 to \$200) to recruit new consumers and reward sponsors.



- 23% offered “online retail”, in the form of poker accessories, electronics, clothing, gift certificates, jewelry and sports equipment to subtly associate on line poker brands with images such as glamour, and desire and to offer a ‘personal’ approach to selling that stressed consumer-centered multi-digital media communications.



- The use of sponsors (7%) and celebrities (7%) was not especially prominent except at major sites such as Poker Stars and Full Tilt Poker where they reached a wide audience. Promoting “professional” gambler status, worthy social causes, sports activities and relations, with a dose of “showmanship” provided poker marketing with “the E-Factor” (Wolf, 2000) allowing for a rich set of connections designed to improve sales, increase market share and elevate brand awareness and customer loyalty, not as easily provided by print or TV advertising (Pringle, 2004; Turner, 2004).

**MEET
MATS
SUNDIN**
IN NEW YORK



- Incentives and inducements were buttressed by images and narratives of wins, winning and winners as a dominant message at 59 of the 71 poker sites (83%). Most sites were overt in their representations of economic gain, displaying the size and type of prizes in large, bold dynamic symbols and words “win our €10,000 jackpot” “the winner takes home over \$ 8 million” or “win one of 25 packages (€7,000 each) to Las Vegas during the WSOP”.



- The signification of winning was bolstered further by the dramatization of winners both real and fictional in the form of player ranking systems and reward listings and in the form of winner consumer images and stories. At bottom, most sites used text based messaging boards and onscreen displays to track player winnings and report them to other players to convey the impressions that customers were always winners, that the next big win was imminent and that anyone could be the next big winner
- Related to the theme of wins, winnings and winners was the promoted belief that poker afforded an alternate or additional means to financial and social success (73%). This was conveyed as a replacement for a 9 to 5 job”, “overtime” in the form of “generous commissions” “fabulous bonuses” and “additional budgets”, branded “entertainment” in the form of fun-filled adventures and leisure consumption and “identity transformation “ in the form of life altering experiences such as becoming a pro player.
- These announced messages and promotional materials were circulated via the latest new media on the internet – viral advertising that was customized, ubiquitous and engaging for and with consumers, where the industry increasingly outsourced to customers to shape and carry their messages into a branded experience by getting them to dialogue and sell gambling products in multiple online contexts (Hull, 2009; Powell, 2009; Kasapi, 2009).



3. The Poker Site As A Tool of Pedagogy

- Practice Sites, Programs and Academies

- 97% mixed free play programs and up to date lessons with tutorials in “promotion designed as pedagogy” schemes
- 90% offered “free play programs” that allowed customers to play with “free” credits, get a “feel” for poker, “hone skills” “learn winning techniques”, and even “be tested by poker quizzes on line”
- 90% hosted on line “academies” [beginner, intermediate and advanced curricula] that taught the “very basic rules, hand rankings and rates” of competitive play, “the more complex and esoteric skills such as hand selection, bluffing and calculating odds” and the “top level strategies including poker math and the specifics of heads-up play”.



POKER HAND RANKINGS	
Royal Flush	10♥ J♥ Q♥ K♥ A♥
Straight Flush	4♣ 5♣ 6♣ 7♣ 8♣
Four of a Kind	K♠ K♥ K♣ K♦ 3♠
Full House	10♥ 10♠ 10♦ A♠ A♣
Flush	10♠ K♠ 2♠ 6♠ 7♠
Straight	7♣ 8♣ 9♣ 10♣ J♥
Three of a Kind	5♠ 5♥ 5♣ J♦ A♦
Two Pair	A♠ A♥ 3♣ 3♣ J♣
One Pair	Q♦ Q♥ 2♥ 8♣ 9♣

- One seventh of the sites provided separate “dot.net practice sites” where consumers were provided “free training”, enjoined to explore “video archives” to better their game, interact with, or “watch and learn” from poker pros.

Featured

Rush Poker

New Features

Getting Started

Our Software

Lobby Views

Full Tilt Poker Academy

Language Guides

Pro Chats

Poker Games

Game Types

Tournaments

Hand Rankings

Glossary

Site Rules

Full Tilt Poker Academy

Now there's a new way to Learn, Chat and Play with the pros, with the launch of [Full Tilt Poker Academy](#). Take your game to the next level at Full Tilt Poker Academy, where you can learn from the best players in the game for free.

Full Tilt Poker Academy

Preview Video

SIT-N-LEARNS

4.7MB 00:25 / 00:48





- Netiquette, argot and cultural codes
 - Equally important to the promotion of poker as pedagogy was the communication of proper online demeanor. Forty-four percent of the sites featured “etiquette tips” or/and “gaming tips”, to prospective consumers: “never insult”, “don’t stall”, “be modest if you win big”, “be a better, not a caller”, “leave your ego at the door”, and “keep notes on your opponents”.
 - 68% provided online dictionaries as tools to tutor consumers in the language and lore of poker. These included (a) glossaries of poker terms such as “all-in, flop, kicker, nuts, fourth street, fifth street”, online chat phrases such as lol (laughing out loud), yhs (your hand sucks), brb (be right back), etc; and catalogues of coded references to poker hands such as “big chick, sweet sixteen, baskin robbins, Luke Skywalker”, all of which were then translated into plain English for aspiring novices.

The screenshot shows the Everest Poker website. The header is green with the Everest Poker logo and navigation links: DOWNLOAD, HOW TO PLAY, PROMOTIONS, TOURNAMENTS, VIP, STORE, and COMMUNITY. The main content area is titled 'Poker Terminology' and includes an introduction explaining that poker terminology can be confusing for beginners. It then provides a list of terms with links to their definitions, organized in a grid. A 'Dead Blind' section is also visible at the bottom.

Everest Poker
Passionate about your game.

Contact Us | About Us | Help English

DOWNLOAD HOW TO PLAY PROMOTIONS TOURNAMENTS VIP STORE COMMUNITY

Home > How To Play > Basics > Poker Terminology

Poker Terminology

Poker terminology can be very confusing for the beginning player—and there’s a lot of it. With just a little practice, however, you’ll soon find yourself following the game with great ease. Don’t let poker terminology like “the river” and “muck” scare you off!

Since learning the language of poker is essential to becoming a better player, we recommend that novices spend some time with our poker glossary. Each term listed is common and should become part of your own poker terminology—these words will come in handy whether you’re playing online or in a circle of friends.

Please click on any of the poker terms below for an explanation.

Add-on	Burn a Card	Flop	Post Blinds	Round of Betting
All-in	Button	Fold	Pot	Satellite
Ante	Buy-in	Get Chips	Pot Limit Poker	Showdown
Bet	Call	Hand	Prize Pool	Side Pot
Bet the Pot	Check	Hand of Poker	Raise	Sit In
Betting Round	Chips	Limit Poker	Rake	Small Blind
Big Blind	Community Cards	Limits	Rank	Split Pot
Blinds	Dead Blind	Muck	Rebuy	Stack
Bluff	Dealer	No Limit Poker	Re-Raise	Stakes
Board	Feeder	Pocket Cards	River	Turn

Dead Blind
A penalty imposed if the blinds pass your position while you are sitting out from the table.

The screenshot shows the UvsPoker.com website. The header is white with the UvsPoker.com logo and navigation links: Poker, Cashier, FAQ Support, Partner, Community, and Benelux. The main content area is titled 'Poker Chat Terms' and includes an introduction explaining that many abbreviations and different words are used in chat. It then provides a list of terms with links to their definitions, organized in a grid.

ANYTIME ANYWHERE
UvSPOKER.COM

Username: Open Account
Password: Lost Password?
Login Help

Poker Cashier FAQ Support Partner Community Benelux

Poker Chat Terms Poker Movies Poker Stories Poker Hand-Nicknames UvsNews

UvSCOMMUNITY
Poker Chat Terms

ITM? GL?
LOL?? NH?
TX ? WB??

When you play poker online you have seen many abbreviations and different words in the chat, maybe just after you have won a big pot or get bad beaten....but do you know what the terms means?

We have listed the most common and most frequently terms that are used in the chat.

So get involved and get to learn the people using the chat. Chatting is not difficult, but you need to learn and be familiar with some terms that are often used.

We might have missed some good terms that you might think should be on the list. Then just send us an e-mail to info@UvsPoker.com and we will add the terms to our list.

bbl	Be back later
brb	Be right back
rva	Cap vs

- 3 of the larger poker sites [and this is surely a future trend] provided online pod-casts and video-casts that featured news, tips, and personal stories from the pros in interactive instructional formats, using really simple syndication feeds (RSS) to pull in information from diverse online spaces to make advertising entertaining and amusing and not interruptive (Perez-Latre, 2009).
- Promotion designed as pedagogy popularized poker for consumers, magnified the experience of skill in winning, encouraged a sense of belonging for new and experienced poker customers, built bonds between virtual participants, enabled a sense of shared identity and common purpose and enhanced new forms of global social networking advertising that were personal, proactive and participatory and which empowered the “consumer” as a media broadcaster in the advertising process (Ritson & Elliot, 1999).
- Messages of Mass Persuasion and Pedagogy
 - Not surprisingly, a dominant narrative prominently and repetitively conveyed at 67 of the 71 sites (94.6%) was that poker sites were knowledge-brokers and socializing agents for an emerging “culture” of online poker instilling favourable attitudes, beliefs and expected behaviours and transmitting knowledge, techniques and skill.
 - Indeed half of the websites (50.7%) transmitted the message that poker was an overt game of skill, not unlike hockey or soccer where learned confidence in one’s own abilities (i.e. betting, bluffing, role playing, learning ‘tells’, studying opponents etc.) was enough to control the outcomes of gambling in a positive manner, with few negative consequences.



4. Responsible Messaging, Self-Governance And Social Concerns

- Onsite Initiatives and Paradoxes
 - On the one hand, responsible gambling messages have become an increasing part of virtual sociality at internet poker venues
 - Three of four (73.2%) promoted responsibility statements even though they were rather parsimonious in style when compared to the fanfare surrounding incentives, allowances and endorsements.
 - All sites but one provided underage advisories such as “only 18+ icons” positioned mostly at the bottom of web pages.
 - Three of four (73.2%) promoted some form of self-help guidance about problem gambling usually in the form of contact information, and links to external agencies such as GamCare, G.A. or national Council on Problem Gambling.



- Two of three (63.4%) offered voluntary self-exclusion programs for troubled consumers.
- A few sites even provided child protection software or marketed self-assessment tools to identify and prevent underage or at risk behaviour.
- On the other hand, the corporate responsibility paradigm emphasized potential gambling problems as “individual” in nature and in need of self-governance by consumers (Campbell & Smith, 2003).
- By encouraging all consumers to ‘responsibilize’ themselves, problems associated with internet poker were not seen as the collective outcome of aggressive business sales practices transmitted by new media advertising platforms that were increasingly instantaneous (synchronous) and constant (asynchronous) at the same time, and that provided consumers with enormous supplies of products under conditions that stimulated urges and desires to buy more.
- It would seem that ‘responsibilizing consumers’ for the harms of the market via warnings, age advisories, limits, bans and the like were as much and at the same time strategies to build brand credibility around the consumption of risk as they were actual responsibility measures to address the claim that online poker is risky consumption proper (Gephart, 2001; Cosgrove, 2009).



- ## Social Concerns

- Indeed there would appear to be some links between the content of poker promotion at online sites and the reinforcement of factors that research has shown contributes to excessive at risk or problem gambling.
- ✓ The association between the presence of money, winning, chasing losses and continuous play (Leiseur, 1984; Blaszczynski, Sharpe & Walker, 2001; Reith, 2002; Griffiths & Parke, 2004; Griffiths & Barnes, 2007; Binde, 2007; Derevensky et al, 2007; 2009a; 2009b) (“Win more”, “Feel the game”, “30k guaranteed super weekdays”, “Where the little guy wins”., “Ten top winners in the last 24 hours”, “Learn by doing”, “The winner takes home over \$8 million”, “Win a Latin American poker tour prize package to one fantastic destination”, “Earn generous commissions by promoting the world’s premier online gaming attractions”).
- ✓ The association between spatial segregation, stepping out of daily life and the development of dissociative states where consumers eventually lose track of their gambling behaviour (Leiseur, 1984; Jacobs, 1988; Brown, 1993) (“Anytime, anywhere gambling”, “\$10 million main event mania”, “Fifty seat frenzy”, Live fast and Play hard”, “Play with hockey legend Mats Sundin”)
- ✓ The association between over confidence in skill and the propensity to chase losses (Lesieur, 1984; Delfabbro, 2004; Korn et al., 2005; Binde, 2007) (“Poker is a about skill” “Learn winning techniques” “Outsmart, outbet and outplay everyone else on the table and walk away with the jackpot”, “Poker is a test of skills”.

- ✓ The association between normalization of action, myth making, faulty thinking and the real probabilities of economic success and social mobility from gambling (Korn et al., 2005; Derevensky et al, 2007; 2009a; 2009b; Griffiths, 2005; Kassinovic & Schnare, 2001; Harrigan, 2007; Delfabbro et al, 2006; May et al, 2005) (“Daily cash bonuses”, “24/7 schedule”, “Play poker....regardless of time and place”, “The more you play the higher up the VIP reward ladder you go”, “Become the next poker superstar”, “Make a living playing poker online”, “Be our first online poker millionaire”).
- ✓ The association between involvement in gambling at an early age, anticipating or experiencing wins and winning and the development of adolescent problem gambling (Griffiths & Wood, 2000; Sevigny et al, 2005; Derevensky & Gupta, 2007; Griffiths & Parke, 2009; McBride & Derevensky, 2009; King, Delfabbro & Griffiths, 2010) (“Play for free poker room”, “Play for free”, “No risk way to hone your skills”, “Give the game a try, investment free”, “Use play money or play chips”, “Play now and win now”).



5. Conclusion

- This does not mean that online poker promotion directly targeted youth or problem gambling. However, there is little doubt that enticing people with the prospects of huge jackpots, attractive allowances, consumer goods, exotic holidays and 'easy' wins and prizes, showcasing top prize winners, celebrities and professionals, offering numerous bonuses, incentives, commissions and guarantees, socializing consumers through free games, practice sites, training programs and peer endorsements, and providing dubious depictions that winning at poker is likely and life changing because skill trumps chance is narrow and misleading, exploits themes that conflict with cultural values such as prudent investment, hard work and timely saving, stretches the credibility of the definitions of decent, honest and truthful when it comes to gambling advertising.
- It invites governments to consider "outlawing" private internet providers, advertisers and publishers who encourage "their" citizens to play, to play for longer, and to play beyond their means. Paradoxically however, governments who are gambling providers may have to deploy similar advertising, marketing and promotion schemes to compete in the internet gambling marketplace, which is currently dominated by private providers (Binde, 2009; 2010; McMullan & Miller, 2008; 2009; 2010; Monaghan et al., 2008; Poulin, 2006; Griffiths, 2005; Korn et al., 2005; Derevensky et al., 2007; 2009a; 2009b; Humphreys, 2010).



Thank you Questions?

**John McMullan, PhD
Saint Mary's University**

**European Association of
Gambling Studies**

**Vienna, Austria, September
2010.**



References

- Bassary, J. (2009). Advertising and new media in Powell, H., Hardy, J., Hawkin, S., & Macrury, I. (eds) (pp 174-186), *The Advertising Handbook*. London: Routledge.
- Binde, P. (2007). Selling dreams – causing nightmares? On gambling advertising and problem gambling. *Journal of Gambling Issues*, 20, 167-191.
- Binde, P. (2009). Exploring the impact of gambling advertising: An interview study of problem gamblers. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 7 (4), pp. 541-554.
- Binde, P. (2010). Truth, deception, and imagination in gambling advertising. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Blaszczynski, A., Sharpe, L. & Walker, M. (2002). The assessment of the impact if the reconfiguration on electronic gaming machines as harm minimization strategies for problem gambling: Final Report for the Gaming Industry Operators Group. Sydney, Australia: The University of Sydney.
- Brown, R. (1993). Some contributions of the study of gambling to the study of other addictions. In W. Eadington, & J.A. Cornelius (Eds.), *Gambling behaviour and problem gambling* (pp. 241-272). Reno: University of Nevada.
- Campbell, C.S., & Smith, G.J. (2003). Gambling in Canada - from vice to disease to responsibility: A negotiated history. *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, 20(1), 121-49.
- Casino City. (2009). Casino City: Your Casino Directory. Retrieved April 27, 2009 & November 10, 2009, from <http://www.casinocity.com/>
- (CERT-LEXSI) Computer Emergency Response Team - Laboratoire d'Expertise en Sécurité Informatique (2006). Online Gaming Cybercrime: CERT-LEXSI'S White Paper, July 2006.

- Cosgrove, J.F. (2009). Governing the gambling citizen: The state, consumption, and risk. in J.F. Cosgrove and T.B. Klassen (eds). *Casino State Legalized Gambling in Canada* (pp 46-66). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Cotte, J. & Latour K. (2009). Blackjack in the Kitchen: Understanding Online versus Casino Gambling. *Journal of Consumer Research*. Vol. 35. 742-758.
- Delfabbro, P. (2004). The stubborn logic of regular gamblers: Obstacles and dilemmas in cognitive gambling research. *Journal of Gambling Studies*. 20, 1-21.
- Delfabbro, P., Lahn, J., & Grabosky, P. (2006). It's not what you know, but how you use it: Statistical knowledge and adolescent problem gambling. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 22, 179-193.
- Derevensky, J.L., & Gupta, R. (2007). Internet gambling amongst adolescents: A growing concern. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 5, 93-101.
- Derevensky, J., Sklar, A., Gupta, R., Messerlian, C., Laroche, M., & Mansour, S. (2007). The effects of gambling advertisements on child and adolescent gambling attitudes and behaviors. International Centre for Youth Problems and High-Risk Behaviors McGill University. Montreal, Canada.
- Derevensky, J., Sklar, A., Gupta, R., & Messerlian, C. (2009). An empirical study examining the impact of gambling advertisements on adolescent gambling attitudes and behaviors. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*. Published online 21 April 2009.
- Derevensky, J.L., Gupta, R., Messerlian, C., & Mansour, S. (2009). The impact of gambling advertisements on child and adolescent behaviors: A qualitative analysis. McGill University.
- eCOGRA. (2007). An exploratory investigation into the attitudes and behaviours of internet casino and poker players. Retrieved November 19, 2009, from http://www.ecogra.org/Downloads/eCOGRA_Global_Online_Gambler_Report.pdf
- eCOGRA. (2009). eCOGRA Generally Accepted Practices (eGAP). Retrieved November 19, 2009, from <http://www.ecogra.org/egap.aspx?Page=1&OP=O>

- Gephart, R.B. (2001). Safe risk in Las Vegas. *Management* 4(3), 41-58.
- Goff, S., & Garrahan, M. (2005, June 27). Party Gaming looks set to be a winner. FT.com. Retrieved November 10, 2009, from <http://www.ft.com>
- Griffiths, M. (2001). Internet gambling: Preliminary results of the first U.K. prevalence study. *eGambling: The Electronic Journal of Gambling Issues*. Retrieved November 10, 2009, from http://www.camh.net/egambling/issue5/research/griffiths_article.html
- Griffiths, M. (2003). Internet gambling: Issues, concerns, and recommendations. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 6(6), 557-568.
- Griffiths, M. (2005). Does gambling advertising contribute to problem gambling? *e Community International Journal of Mental health and Addiction*, 3 (2), 15-25.
- Griffiths, M. (2010). Crime and gambling: A brief overview of gambling fraud on the internet. *Internet Journal of Criminology*, 1-7.
- Griffiths, M. & Barnes, A. (2007). Internet gambling: An online empirical study among student gamblers. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 6, 194-204.
- Griffiths, M. & Parke, J. (2004). Gambling on the Internet: Some practical advice. *Journal of Gambling Issues*. 11, 1-5.
- Griffiths, M. & Parke, J. (2009). Adolescent gambling on the Internet: A review. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 9:1.
- Griffiths, M. & Wood, R.T.A. (2007). Adolescent Internet gambling: Preliminary results of a national survey. *Education and Health*. 25, 23-27.
- Griffiths, M., & Wood, R.T.A. (2000). Risk factors in adolescence: The case of gambling, videogame playing, and the Internet. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 16(2-3), 199-225.
- Griffiths, S., & Jawad, C. (2008). Preventing problem gambling on the Internet through the use of social responsibility mechanisms. In C. Fijnault, A. Littler, & T. Spapens (Eds.), *Crime, Addiction and the Regulation of Gambling* (pp. 181-216). Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishing.

- Harrigan, K.A. (2007). Slot machine structural characteristics: Distorted player views of payback percentages. *Journal of gambling Issues* (June) 215-134.
- Holt, D. (2004). *How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Hull, J. (2009). The future of advertising and advertising agencies in Powell, H., Hardy, J., Hawkin, S., & Macrury, I. (eds) (pp 209-217). *The Advertising Handbook*. London: Routledge.
- Humphreys, A. (2010). Semiotic structure and the legitimation of consumption practices: The case of casino gambling. *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 37, October,
- Ialomiteanu, A., & Adlaf, E.M. (2002). Internet gambling among Ontario adults. *eGambling: The Electronic Journal of Gambling Issues*. Retrieved November 10, 2009, from http://www.camh.net/egambling/issue5/research/ialomiteanu_adlaf_article.html
- Ipsos-Reid. (2005). Online poker in North America: A syndicated study. Retrieved November 10, 2009, from http://www.ipsos.ca/pdf/Ipsos_OnlinePoker.pdf
- Jacobs, D. (1988). Evidence for a common dissociative-like reaction among addicts. *Journal of Gambling Behaviour*, 1(4), 27-37.
- Kasapi, E. (2009). Viral advertising: Internet entertainment and virtual sociality in Powell, H., Hardy, J., Hawkin, S. & Macrury, I. (eds) (pp 119-125), *The Advertising Handbook*. London: Routledge.
- King, D., Delfabbro, P. & Griffiths, M. (2010). The Convergence of gambling and digital media: Implications for gambling in young people. *Journal of Gambling Studies*. 26: 175-187.
- King, S.A. & Barak, A. (1999). Compulsive Internet gambling: A new form of an old clinical pathology. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 2(5): 441-456.
- Kinsman, A. (2005). *Poker on the Internet* (2nd ed.). West Sussex, UK: D & B Publishing.
- Korn, D., Hurson, T., & Reynolds, J. (2005). Commercial gambling advertising: Possible impact on youth knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behavioural intentions. Guelph: Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre.

- LaBrie, R.A., Kaplan, S.A., LaPlante, D.A., Nelson, S.E., & Shaffer, H.J. (2008). Inside the virtual casino: A prospective longitudinal study of actual Internet casino gambling. *European Journal of Public Health*, 18(4), 410-416.
- LaPlante, D.A., Kleschinsky, J.H., LaBrie, R.A., Nelson, S.E., & Shaffer, H.J. (2009). Sitting at the virtual poker table: A prospective epidemiological study of actual Internet poker gambling behavior. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 25, 711-717.
- Leiseur, H. (1984). *The chase: Career of the compulsive gambler*. Cambridge: Schenkman Books.
- May, R.K., Whelan, J.P., Meyers, A.W., & Steenbergh, T.A. (2005). Gambling-related irrational beliefs in the maintenance and modification of gambling behavior. *International Gambling Studies*, 5, 155-167.
- McBride, J., & Derevensky, J. (2009). Internet gambling behavior in a sample of online gamblers. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 7, 149-167.
- McMullan, J.L., & Miller, D. (2008). All in! The commercial advertising of offshore gambling on television. *Journal of Gambling Issues*, 22, 230-251.
- McMullan, J.L. & Miller, D. (2009). Wins, winning and winners: The commercial advertising of lottery gambling. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 25(3), 273-295.
- McMullan, J.L. & Miller, D. (2010). Advertising the “new fun-tier”: Selling casinos to consumers. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*. 8 (1), 35-50.
- McMullan, J.L. & Miller, D. (2010). Advertising gambling and responsible advertising in journal submission.
- McMullan, J.L., & Perrier, D. (2007). The security of gambling and gambling with security: Hacking, law enforcement and public policy. *International Gambling Studies*, 7(1), 43-58.
- McMullan, J.L., & Rege, A. (2007). Cyber-extortion at online gambling sites: Criminal organization and legal challenges. *Gaming Law Review*, 11(6), 648-665.
- McMullan, J.L., & Rege, A. (2010). Online crime and Internet gambling. *Journal of Gambling Issues*, 24, 54-85.

- Monaghan, S. (2009). Responsible gambling strategies for Internet gambling: The theoretical and empirical base of using pop-up messages to encourage self-awareness. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 25, 202-207.
- Monaghan, S., Derevensky, J., & Sklar, A. (2008). Impact of gambling advertisements and marketing on children and adolescents: Policy recommendations to minimize harm. *Journal of Gambling Issues*, 22, 252-274.
- Nelson, S.E., LaPlante, D.A., Peller, A.J., Schumann, A., LaBrie, R.A. & Shaffer, H.J. (2008). Real limits in the virtual world: Self-limiting behaviour of Internet gamblers. *Journal of gambling Studies*. 24, 463-477.
- Perez-Latre, F.J. (2009). Advertising fragmentation: the beginning of a new paradigm? In Powell, H., Hardy, J., Hawkin, S., & Macrury, I. (eds) (pp 34-45). *The Advertising Handbook*. London: Routledge.
- Phelps, J., Lewis, R., Mobilio, L., Perry, D. & Raman, N. (2004). Viral marketing or electronic word-of-mouth advertising: examining consumer responses and motivations to pass along email. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 44, pp 333-348.
- Poulin, C. (2006). Gambling. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 175 (10), 1208-1209..
- Powell, H., Hardy, J., Hawkin, S., & Macrury, I. (eds). *The Advertising Handbook*. London: Routledge.
- Powell, H. Celebrity in Powell, H., Hardy, J., Hawkin, S., & Macrury, I. (eds) (pp 99-108). *The Advertising Handbook*. London: Routledge.
- Pringle, H. (2004). *Celebrity Sells*. Chichester: John Wiley.
- Reith, G. (2002). *The Age of Chance: Gambling and Western Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Responsible Gambling Program of British Columbia. (2003). British Columbia Problem Gambling Prevalence Study: Final Report. Retrieved November 10, 2009, from <http://www.bcreponsiblegambling.ca/responsible/bcprob gambstudy.pdf>
- Ritson, M., & Elliott, R. (1999). The Social Uses of Advertising: An Ethnographic Study of Adolescent Advertising Audiences. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 26(3), 260-277.

- Sevigny, S., Cloutier, M., Pelletier, M. & Ladouceur, R. (2005). Internet gambling: misleading payout rates during the “demo” period. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 21, pp. 153-158.
- Sherry, J.F. (1987). Advertising as a cultural system. In J. Umiker-Sebeok (Ed.), *Marketing and semiotics: New directions in the study of signs for sale* (pp. 441-461). New York: Mouton DeGruyter.
- Slutske, W.S., Jackson, K.M., & Sher, K.J. (2003). The natural history of problem gambling from age 18 to 29. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 112(2), 263-274.
- Smeaton, M., & Griffiths, M. (2004). Internet gambling and social responsibility: An exploratory study. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 7, 49-58.
- Turner, G. (2004). *Understanding Celebrity*. London: Sage.
- Wardle, H., Sproston, K., Orford, J., Erens, R., Griffiths, M.D., Constantine, R., & Pigott, S. (2007). *British Gambling Prevalence Survey 2007*. National Centre for Social Research.
- Wiebe, J. (2006). Internet gambling safeguards: What are online gaming sites doing to protect customers? *Newslink*, Fall/Winter 2006, 4-6.
- Williams, R.J., & Wood, R.T. (2007). Internet gambling: A comprehensive review and synthesis of the literature. Report prepared for the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre, Guelph: Ontario.
- Wolf, M.J. (2000). *The Entertainment Economy*. London: Penguin.
- Wood, R.T., & Griffiths, M.D. (2008). Why Swedish people play online poker and factors that can increase or decrease trust in poker Web sites: A qualitative investigation. *Journal of Gambling Issues*, 21, 80-97.
- Wood, R.T.A., Griffiths, M.D., & Parke, J. (2007). Acquisition, development, and maintenance of online poker playing in a student sample. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 10(3), 354-361.
- Wood, R.T., & Williams, R.J. (2009). Internet gambling: Prevalence, patterns, problems and policy options. Final Report prepared for the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre, Guelph, ON.
- Woodruff, C. & Gregory, S. (2005). Profile on Internet gamblers: Betting on the future. *UNLV Gaming Research and Review Journal*. 9(1), 1-14.