

At the interface of (ir)responsible online gambling?

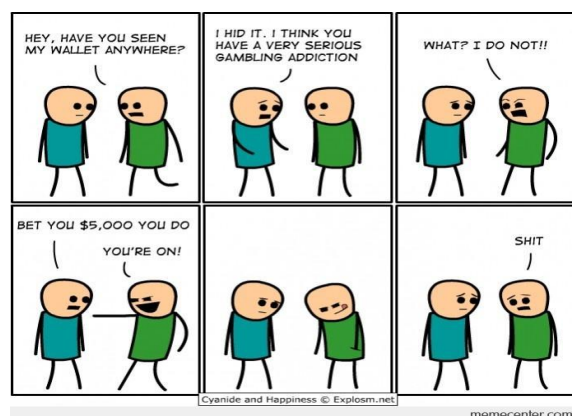
Experiences and practices of recreational and problem gamblers

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Introduction



Questions

- How is gambling part of the everyday life of recreational and problem gamblers and how they manage time and money?
- How do the practices of gamblers reflect the online responsible gambling tools or targets?

Data and method

- Two sets of interview data: recreational and problem gamblers
- Recreational gamblers
 - First Finnish online gambling games which have the possibility for in-game social interaction were opened in the year 2010
 - eBingo by Veikkaus
 - Online poker and online casino by Ray
 - Online questionnaires were created to reach the players
 - Links to online questionnaires were sent to players by the companies through their customer service
 - Aimed at the average players. Sampling of the average players were made by the companies (eBingo: N=2517; Ray: N=1500)
 - Based on the questionnaires 16 interviewees were selected for the thematic interviews
 - 8 (eBingo) + 8 (Ray)
 - 8 males + 8 females
 - 8 (pure game of chance as favorite game) + 8 (skill game as favorite game)
 - Average age 36 (41 in all the respondents)

- Problem gamblers
 - 17 interviews of problem gamblers
 - 12 men and 5 women
 - 20-70 years old
 - Different socio-economic backgrounds
 - Collected from places where problem gambling is treated
 - Had gambled different games offline and online
 - Collected January 2011-April 2012
- Method: thematic content analysis in both data sets

Results

Money and time

- There are differences in how recreational and problem gamblers regard and manage money and time in their gambling

Money: Recreational gamblers

"In which situations I play? It's like, if I go shopping and notice that there are some coins left, so I go to play. Or at night in bar, it's like okay, I have collected this much coins [change], I go to play. But it's never like that, that I would go specifically to some place to play games." - id8, Recreational gambler, female, 33-years old

Money: Recreational gamblers

- Everyday limits
 - Gambling as part of grocery shopping → change money
 - Weekly lotteries and bets: same amount every week at the same time
 - Gambling account (offline and online): earmarked money just for gambling (framed from other money)
 - Hierarchy of currencies
 - Gambling habits are adapted to the balance of the account
- Mental limits
 - Outside of everyday practices (holidays, occasional trips to casino, while traveling etc.)
 - Limits for spending and winnings
 - Easier to cross than everyday limits
- Responsible gambling tools
 - Rare

Money: Problem gamblers

"I realised it quite soon that I can't control it, because I realised, that, let's say, I have twenty euros and I'm standing in front of the gambling machine and I have promised myself that I will only put in ten euros and leave it to ten euros. And when I realise that I can't, even if I won sixty euros..." Problem gambler, female, 40-years old

Money: Problem gamblers

- Attempts to regain the control over their gambling behaviour after realising it may cause problems
- (Almost) all money is gambling money
 - Many deal with some mandatory expenditures first
 - No limits between gambling and other money
- External force: out of money
 - Either play with small stakes, or more commonly, try to get hold on more money with loans or crimes
- Setting limits on online gambling sites
 - When limits used up on one site, moved to another
- Trying to hide money from themselves
- Wanted others to take the responsibility of their money

Time: Recreational gamblers

- *"And sometimes I go to Täyspotti [casino-type gambling site], and I have 20 euros, and it's not allowed to spend any more money there." - id7, Recreational gambler, female, 58-years old*
- *"I don't intend to keep very accurate bookkeeping, but if I notice that oh-o, I have played for example bingo and stuff and I have put in pretty much in this month, so let's back off and let's just close the account for a while. [...], and it can be closed like two weeks, and let's look again after that, how things are." id9, Recreational gambler, male, 35-years old*

Time: recreational gamblers

- Gambling is essentially tied to everyday practices
- Gambling itself is an everyday practice
 - Management of time and money doesn't need reflexive thinking
- Management is **internalized** to socially acceptable practices
 - Time is managed by clocks, calendars, cultural rhythms and cycles and weekly or daily routines (point in time and duration)
 - Time is managed by money (duration of gaming session)
 - Money is managed by framing it to different currencies
 - § Duties money (rent, grocery shopping money, weekly bets)
 - § Spending money (extra money after duties)
 - § Play money (can be duties or extra)
 - In account, bets, winnings, losses
 - Domestication of money
 - § Different currencies are in hierarchical relation to each other
- Little need for responsible gambling tools

Time: Problem gamblers

"For example, this one site, I have sent them an e-mail two or three times saying that my account needs to be frozen. They don't do anything. And this other site, I don't know how I can freeze the account. There isn't the option, like this other site has, where you can freeze it for a month." Problem gambler, female, 50-years old

Time: problem gamblers

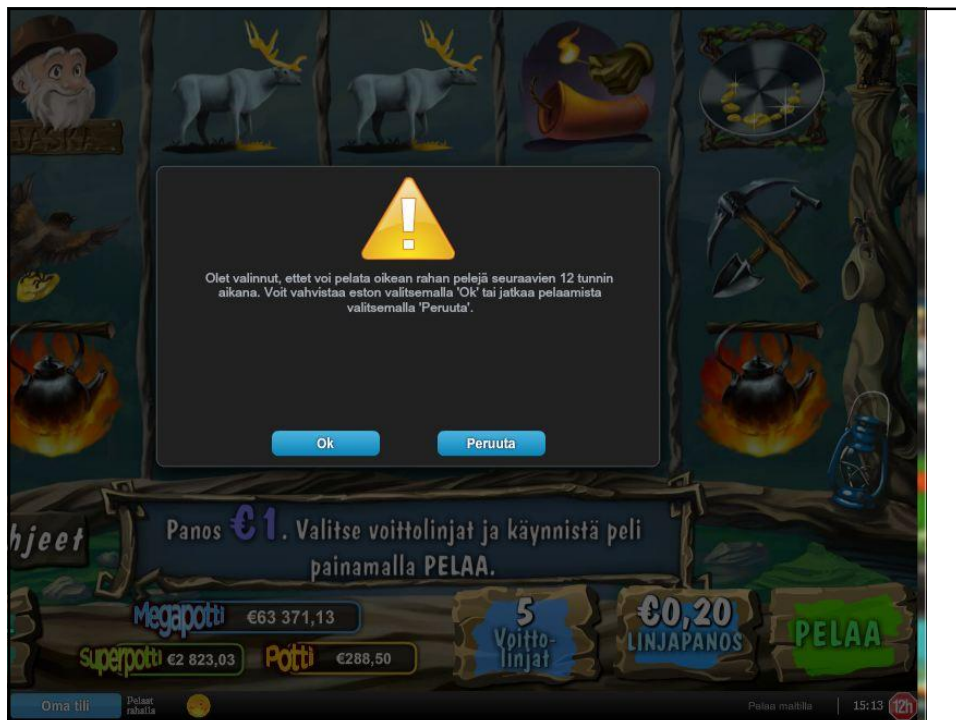
- Problem gamblers: a lot of time and thoughts is used for gambling
 - Mostly attempts to control using of money, not time used in gambling
- Attempts to self-exclude themselves from gambling venues and online sites
 - All sites did not have this kind of option, and there always was an opportunity to gamble
- Other means: installing programs to prevent gambling or avoiding situations where gambling happened
- Managing to take break from gambling: started again thinking that it was in control but was actually more drastic
 - à Many felt that it was on their own responsibility to control or quit gambling
 - à However, need for externalized forms of control

Online gambling

- There are special challenges related to online environment
- However, online environments have also some significant advantages when designing responsible gambling

Online gambling

- Threats
 - Possibility to hidden and anonymous gambling
 - No temporal limits
 - Easy money transfer
 - Bigger bets and winnings
 - Access to other sites without responsible policies
 - More addictive games?
- Possibilities
 - Identifiable players
 - Panoptic monitoring of behavior
 - Early detection and intervention
 - Personalized interventions
 - Responsible gambling tools
 - Information providing
 - Restrictive
 - Increasing social interaction
 - Social control



Conclusions

- Recreational gamblers have internalized responsible gambling practices
 - No great need for responsible gambling tools
 - Limit setting and self-exclusion options are in line with their own practices
 - Information about their own gambling help them to keep on playing recreationally
- Problem gamblers need external control that responsible gambling tools can provide
 - First, tools can make them aware of their problematic behavior
 - Later, they need to externalize the control to someone else or to available tools
 - However, too strict limits can drive away exactly those players who would need the responsible tools the most
 - There are some irresponsible operators waiting in internet

Conclusions

- à Tools and practices which help players to internalize responsible ways of gambling are the most beneficial ones in the long run
- Blaszczynski et al. (2004): the Reno model
 - “policies and practices designed to prevent and reduce potential harms associated with gambling”
 - Two principles:
 - the ultimate decision to gamble resides with the individual and represents a choice
 - to properly make this decision, individuals must have the opportunity to be informed
 - Different levels: public policy, operator and the player
- à Future questions: reflecting gamblers’ practices to existing responsible gambling tools

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THANKS!

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