Internet Gamblers in Australia: Gambling Behaviour, Gambling Problems and Comparisons with Non-Internet Gamblers

Nerilee Hing, Sally Gainsbury, Alex Blaszczynski, & Robert Wood

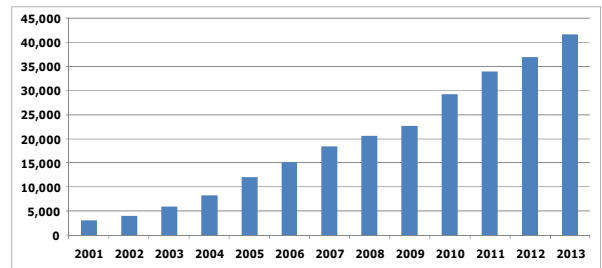The First Asia Pacific Conference on Gambling & Commercial Gaming Research

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Internet gambling expenditure is increasing globally

‣ Internet gambling represents 9% of global gambling market

*Gross Gaming yield (AUD$ million)*

Source: Gainsbury, 2012

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Key growth factors

‣ Cheap, fast broadband connections

‣ Mobile technology

‣ Increase use of and trust in sites

‣ Safe, secure online payment systems

‣ Increased marketing

‣ Bonuses and incentives

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Features of Internet gambling

‣ Accessible & convenient
‣ Solitary or social play
‣ Players create a persona
‣ High degree of customer choice
‣ Any type of level of play possible
‣ Large pool of players
‣ Competitive odds and player return
‣ Account information available
‣ Vast amount of information to guide bets

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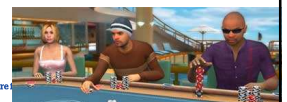
Regulation & Availability

- Interactive Gambling Act 2001 permits wagering, sports betting & lotteries, no casino, poker, EGM, bingo etc.

- > 2,600 online gambling sites, >90% accept Australian players – no prosecution of offshore sites to date

- National prevalence study led by CGER

- Prevalence? Low, especially compared to land-based gambling.

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Australian Internet gambling expenditure

Wagering $600m

Casino, bingo, EGMs $541m

Lottery, skill games?

Poker $249m

Source: Productivity Commission, 2010

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Potential concerns

- Adolescents & young adults
  ◦ Familiar with technology and Internet
  ◦ Use practice sites
  ◦ Can circumvent age restrictions

- Problem gambling
  ◦ Features may facilitate risky play
  ◦ Research suggests higher prevalence of PGs online

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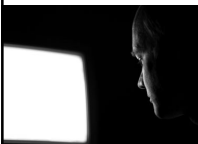
Australian Gambling Survey

Test your gambling knowledge:
▸ Click Here to take the online gambling survey

Conducted By: THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY   Southern Cross UNIVERSITY

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Australian Gambling Survey

Australian Gambling Survey - Measures

- All gambling behaviour
- Internet gambling
- Attitudes
- Knowledge and beliefs
- Problem Gambling Severity Index
- Problem gambling & help seeking
- Demographics
- Feedback

Participants

- 6,682 usable responses
- 64% total completion rate
- 86% male
- 46% married
- 59% employed full-time
- Mean age 45 years
- >50% from NSW & QLD

- 70% Internet gamblers

Internet vs. non-Internet gamblers – demographic characteristics

Internet gamblers more likely:

- Male

- Employed full-time

- Higher household income

- Married or co-habitating

- But not homogenous group

Internet vs. non-Internet gamblers – gambling behaviour

▸ Internet gamblers more likely to:
  ◦ Participate in more forms of gambling
  ◦ Gamble more frequently
  ◦ Bet on sports, races, poker and Internet casino games weekly
  ◦ Greater median expenditure for wagering

▸ Non-Internet gamblers more likely to:
  ◦ Use EGMs weekly
  ◦ Greater median expenditure for bingo and poker

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Internet gambling

▸ 50% gambling online before 2004
▸ 95% gamble online from home
▸ 84% gamble on computers
  ◦ Minority mobile gambling

▸ 60% gamble online 12-6pm
  ◦ 28% 6pm-midnight

▸ Lottery and wagering on onshore sites

▸ Electronic payment increases spend for substantial minority (19%)

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Perceived advantages of Internet gambling

1. Don't have to leave the house (55%)
2. Availability/convenience (46%)
3. No crowds (31%)
4. No unpleasant people (30%)
5. Greater privacy & anonymity (28%)
6. More physically comfortable (29%)
7. Higher payout rates (18%)

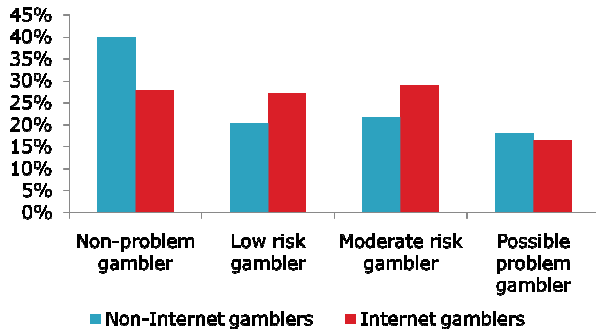**Southern Cross** University
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Perceived disadvantages of Internet gambling

1. Too convenient (30%)
2. Easier to spend more money (28%)
3. More addictive (15%)
4. Poorer social atmosphere (15%)
5. Concerns about money/deposits (12%)

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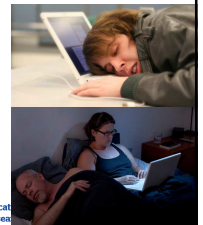
Internet vs. non-Internet gamblers – problem gambling

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Internet Problem Gamblers

- Problems related to both Internet & land-based types of gambling:
  - 1) Wagering (36% cf 25% for non-Internet gamblers)
  - 2) EGMs (18% cf 39% for non-Internet gamblers)

- Problems related more to Internet (33%) than land-based modes (26%)
- Most problems start after gambling online (62%)
- Internet PGs report disrupted sleep (48%) & eating (34%) due to online gambling
- Electronic payment → spend more (53%)
- Less likely to have sought help (15% vs 20%)

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Conclusions

- Internet gamblers not homogenous group, but somewhat different from land-based gamblers
- Internet gamblers more involved in multiple forms of gambling
- Gambling problems associated with Internet gambling, but also land-based forms
- Unique problems – disrupted sleeping & eating, electronic payment – specific problems need further investigation
- Internet gambling likely to continue to increase
- Treatment & prevention programs required

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Published paper

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