

Fact Sheet: Combating Compulsive Gambling

Compulsive Gambling is a serious concern that needs to be addressed. While the majority of people enjoy gambling on the Internet as a form of entertainment, there are some who experience problems. Regulation, combined with proper licensing, enforcement and proven safety controls, provide an excellent means to protect consumers and block compulsive gamblers from gambling online.

Experts Promote Benefit of Regulation

- "The graphical and interactive structure of the internet provides an opportunity to create informed consumers with access to a variety of information designed to encourage safe choices and discourage unsafe behavior."
– *Keith Whyte, The National Council on Problem Gambling, the national advocate for programs and services to assist problem gamblers and their families*
- "The establishment of a well-regulated industry under U.S. jurisdiction would offer far better protection against online gambling's potential social harms than outright prohibition. Combining a thoughtful regulatory scheme with education, technology tools, and support appears to be the most effective means of handling the realities and risks of online gambling in the United States."
– *Malcolm K. Sparrow, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, from the study, "Can Internet Gambling Be Effectively Regulated? Managing the Risks"*
- "[I]f the move towards more responsible operation continues to gather pace, as is increasingly observed across Europe and the rest of the world, that the continued legitimate development of the industry need not be off-set against significant increases in problematic gambling."
– *Andrew Poole, GamCare, a U.K. based charitable organization committed to addressing the social impact of gambling*

Safeguards

Regulated Internet gambling operators would offer the following safeguards to minimize compulsive gambling, currently being implemented by many Internet gambling industry-leaders:

- Track players gambling patterns and enforce controls to limit the amount of money wagered over a given time period.
- Identify and stop players whose gambling patterns seem out of the ordinary.
- Provide players with the option to set limits on the amount they deposit to their account.
- Provide players with the ability to request self-exclusion for a specific amount of time.
- Cross-check databases that may be created of individuals who choose to exclude themselves from online gambling to block access to the broader industry.
- Provide players information to encourage responsible behavior.

Research Responds to the Critics

- Credible research shows that access to Internet gambling does not lead to an increase in problematic gambling.
- The Harvard Medical School Division on Addictions, in a 2007 study "Assessing the Playing Field: A Prospective Longitudinal Study of Internet Sports Gambling Behavior," tracked the behavior and pattern of over 40,000 people who gambled on sports online and found that only one percent exhibited excessive gambling patterns.
- A 2004 report, "Internet Gambling & Addiction" also by the Harvard Medical School, found that Internet gambling could provide increased protections against problematic

gambling and that access to Internet gambling does not lead to a greater rate of gambling addiction.