



# interactive gaming **NEWS**

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## Q & A: Alan Feldman

by Emily Swoboda

Rumor has it, if the United States decides to regulate online gambling, major corporations would be looking to get a piece of the pie, according to one Las Vegas casino executive.

Alan Feldman, senior vice president of MGM Mirage, which owns 11 casinos in Las Vegas alone, said his company would have an online casino up and running within one year, and he believes that other companies would jump on board as well.

Feldman told the *San Francisco Chronicle* last week that if Frank's Internet Gambling Regulation and Enforcement Act passed, all the major entertainment companies, including Sony, Apple, Universal, Columbia, Time Warner--even Disney--would get involved in the industry.

IGN sat down with the affable Feldman to find out just how serious he was about his statements and to get his opinions on a few other topics.

**IGN:** Going on what you said in the *Chronicle* article, on what are you basing your belief that companies such as Sony, Apple, Universal, Columbia and Time Warner would get on board with online gambling should Barney Frank's bill pass?

**Feldman:** I have no direct knowledge that Apple or Sony or anyone else is going to get involved in this. What I'm trying to do in understanding where this stands is see a future in which the nexus between companies that have interactive technology or games, or great brand names, all intercept, and it is at that intersection that it becomes somewhat inevitable. I don't need to tell you there is a lot of gaming going on online, and I think I'm led to believe that Sony is already involved in some of that. But that could be my misunderstanding, not my understanding. The gambling online is clearly a different matter and obviously though millions of Americans do it, it still has this weird, obtuse legal understanding. But as it relates to companies I probably shouldn't have been so specific as to name Apple and Sony, because I'm not trying to draw them into something they may have no interest in. But I do see at some point in the future the separate roads of interactive technology, brands, entertainment and gambling online interacting, and for some companies not currently involved in gambling, they're going to find this to be a very unique and potentially profitable opportunity.

**IGN:** MGM had an online casino once before, but it was forced to shut down due to the legal uncertainty in the U.S. surrounding Internet gambling. How confident are you in Barney Frank's bill, and what would you do differently this time with an online casino?

**Feldman:** I don't like to predict the outcomes in Congress. I think you have a much better predicting the stock market--and that's hard enough. I certainly hope it passes; it's common sense. But tragically, common sense is usually the last thing to come out of Washington. So, we'll have to see.

In terms of what we would do differently, it's more than just Barney Frank's bill passing; that would be part of it. Then it would involve a state creating enabling legislation and then putting in the framework for licensing. If all of that happened--and that could be years away--the thing we would do differently is take bets from the United States, and I suppose establish ourselves in the United States instead of having set up shop in Europe. And of course those things are rather significant. It means that the millions of dollars of investment into the infrastructure and technology that goes into the establishment of a site would be invested here in the United States, not in Europe. The jobs, while it's not thousands of jobs, as it would be for a land-based casino, but they're very good, paying jobs, all very high-tech, high-paying. Those would all be here in the United States.

**IGN:** Has the American Gaming Association remarked on your comment?

**Feldman:** No, I'm not important enough for them to remark on that.

**IGN:** Are you involved in lobbying for the bill?

**Feldman:** Well, we are in the sense that anyone who asks our opinion we will share it, whether that's in the media or a member of Congress. Whenever any of us are in Washington and have meetings we will bring this up. We have not dispatched a team to hit up the Hill with a checklist of people to go see. So, it hasn't been an affirmative lobbying effort in that sense, but we're certainly not being at all shy about letting folks know how we feel about this.

**IGN:** Give me your prediction on what will happen with Internet gambling regulation in the United States.

**Feldman:** My prediction is that eventually we will find Internet gambling to be as routine as Internet banking, and I'm sure there were people who were scared to death of Internet banking. Frankly, it's a little bit foolish. The technologies to protect patrons are proven and sound and will only get even more effective and probably less expensive as we further the technology drive on the Internet. We've never believed, in this company anyway, that this is a question of if rather than when.