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The impact of partial liberalization of internet gambling: a comparison of internet and non-internet gamblers

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**Publication details**


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Interactive Gambling in Australia

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What forms of Internet gambling are legal in Australia?
What forms of Internet gambling are illegal?
Interactive gambling in Australia

~ 30-35 Australian sites
~ 2,242 sites accept play from Australia
~ 194 payment methods accepted
~ AUD$1 billion spent on offshore sites

Zero operators or sites prosecuted
Online gambling participation increasing

→ Prohibition is not effective
Why do we need to understand interactive gambling?

• Concerns & possible impacts:
  – Land-based industry
  – Increase gambling
  – Vulnerable populations
  – Increased gambling problems

• A new type of gambling?
Advantages of Internet gambling

1. Don’t have to leave the house
2. Availability/convenience
3. No crowds
4. No unpleasant people
5. Greater privacy & anonymity
6. More physically comfortable
7. Higher payout rates

Source: Gainsbury, Wood, Russell, Hing, & Blaszczynski, 2012
Disadvantages of Internet gambling

1. Too convenient
2. Easier to spend money
3. More addictive
4. Poorer social atmosphere
5. Concerns about money/deposits

Source: Gainsbury, Wood, Russell, Hing, & Blaszczynski, 2012
Research: Interactive Gambling Study

• Commissioned by Gambling Research Australia to determine interactive gambling:
  – Prevalence
  – Motivations, characteristics and behaviours
  – Game play & medium preferences

• Research team: Nerilee Hing, Sally Gainsbury, Alex Blaszczynski, Robert Wood, Alex Russell, Dan Lubman

• These findings are preliminary and not final
Interactive Gambling Study

• Nationally representative telephone survey
  – 15,006 Australian adults (18+)
• November-December, 2011

• Interactive gambler: anyone who has gambled using interactive methods in past 12 months
  – May also use land-based forms

• Land-based gambler: anyone who has gambled in past 12 months only on non-interactive forms
Prevalence of gambling in 2011

• Past-year prevalence of adult gambling: 64.26%
  – 1998/99 prevalence 82%

• Past-year prevalence of interactive gambling: 8.06%
  – 1998/99 prevalence 0.6%

Source: Interactive Gambling Study, Productivity Commission 1999
Note: Findings are preliminary and not final
National participation in gambling activities

Source: Interactive Gambling Study
Note: Findings are preliminary and not final
Participation in gambling activities 1999 vs. 2011

Source: Interactive Gambling Study; Productivity Commission, 1999
Note: Findings are preliminary and not final
Annual gambling participation

Source: Interactive Gambling Study

Note: Findings are preliminary and not final
Average proportion of each gambling activity done online

Note: For those who gambled on each form online
Low N, interpret figures with caution
Source: Interactive Gambling Study, Note: Findings are preliminary and not final
Characteristics of Interactive Gamblers

• Compared to land-based gamblers, interactive gamblers are more likely to be:
  – Male
  – Younger
  – Single or living with partner
  – University educated
  – Employed full-time or student
  – Have broadband Internet access at home & work

Source: Interactive Gambling Study
Note: Findings are preliminary and not final
Interactive gamblers

- Majority gambled online since 2009
- Computers preferred mode of interactive gambling

![Bar chart showing preferences for interactive gambling modes.

Source: Interactive Gambling Study
Note: Findings are preliminary and not final]
Interactive gamblers

- 52% prefer interactive gambling
- 48% prefer land-based gambling

Some unique problems:
- 17% increase spending due to credit cards/electronic money
- 10% sleep disruption
- 4% disrupted eating

Source: Interactive Gambling Study
Note: Findings are preliminary and not final
Prevalence of adult problem gambling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem gambler</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate risk</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low risk</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No problem</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-gambler</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Interactive Gambling Study
Note: Findings are preliminary and not final
Problem gambling among land-based and interactive gamblers

Source: Interactive Gambling Study
Note: Findings are preliminary and not final
Conclusions

• Participation in gambling is shifting in terms of what and how people gamble
• Internet gamblers are more involved in this activity
  – But not a homogeneous group
• Unique problems related to Internet gambling
• Continuing research is needed
• Policies to specifically address harms
Acknowledgments

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**Collaborators:** Nerilee Hing, Alex Russell, Alex Blaszczynski, Dan Lubman, Robert Wood

The views expressed in this presentation are solely those of the author/s. The information, views and references material in this presentation are provided solely on the basis that the audience will be responsible for making their own assessment of the information provided.
Thank you

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