EuroSlot

January 2012

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Three into one will go

When we began work on this issue of Euroslot, we earmarked half a dozen pages for our previews of January's ICE, EAG and IMA expos. The fact that we eventually had to give nearly double that space to the trifecta of gaming events is testimony not only to their sheer size, but also to the extent of innovation in the gambling and amusements markets.

It's heartening to see that the industry's suppliers, niche players as well as the big names, are not slashing too much of their R&D investment despite tough financial times. Instead, they're continuing to find new ways to help operators compete for consumer coins that are simultaneously growing scarcer and being fought for by an increasing number of alternative forms of entertainment, particularly online.

As a result of those much-bigger-than-expected show previews, by the way, we had to drop from this issue a couple of popular features – Sharon Harris's update on the U.S. market, and our survey of world regulatory news – both of which I promise will be back with guns blazing in our next edition.

Finally, our British readers may imagine they detect irony in a phrase near the beginning of this month's World Market Report, covering the UK: "entry into the eurozone is not likely in the foreseeable future". When we wrote the report this summer, that seemed a reasonable way of putting things; that it now appears to be the understatement of the year just goes to demonstrate that in business, as in politics, nothing is certain for long, and innovation in response to changing circumstances has to be a never-ending process.

Barnaby Page, editor

Events and exhibitions

5-7 March
Panyu Startoon E-Game Expo (SEM)
Venue: Guangzhou, China
Website: sem.chnam.com
Email: peterlee86@163.com

6-7 March
Annual Irish Gaming, Amusement and Casino Show
Venue: Dublin, Ireland
Website: www.gambetnews.com
Email: susan@coin-opnews.eu

9-11 March
China Guangzhou International Game & Amusement Exhibition (CIAE)
Venue: Guangzhou, China
Website: www.chinaamusement.com
Email: info1@grandeurhk.com

13-16 March
Enada
Venue: Rimini, Italy
Website: en.enada.it
Email: infovisitatori@riminifiera.it

14-16 March
Amusement Expo
Venue: Las Vegas, U.S.
Website: www.amusementexpo.org
Email: bjjaeger@wtglasgow.com

14-16 March
China Attractions Expo
Venue: Beijing, China
Website: www.caapa.org
Email: caapa@163.com

21-23 March
FER-Interazar
Venue: Madrid, Spain
Website: www.grupointerazar.com
Email: info@grupointerazar.com

17-19 April
DEAL – Dubai Entertainment, Amusement & Leisure Show
Venue: Dubai, UAE
Website: www.themeparksdubai.com
Email: jacob@iec.ae

26 April
Digital Out-of-Home Entertainment Network Association (DNA) Conference
Venue: Los Angeles, U.S.
Website: www.thestingerreport.com/dna.php
Email: kwp@thestingerreport.com

10-12 May
GTI Asia Taipei Expo
Venue: Taipei, Taiwan
Website: www.gtiexpo.com.tw
Email: gametime@taiwanslot.com.tw

16-17 May
Latin American Gaming Exhibition (ELA)
Venue: Mexico City, Mexico
Website: www.expoazar.com
Email: contacto@expoazar.com

22-24 May
G2E Asia
Venue: Macau
Website: www.g2easia.com
Email: yolinda.wong@reedexpo.com.hk

22-24 May
GEB
Venue: Belgrade, Serbia
Website: www.see-geb.com
Email: office@see-geb.com

6-8 June
Asian Attractions Expo
Venue: Hong Kong
Website: www.iaapa.org/expos
Email: jparsons@iaapa.org

11-13 June
Gaming Technology Summit
Venue: Henderson, Nevada, U.S.
Website: www.gametechsummit.com
Email: guzzardej@bnpmedia.com

9-11 October
Euro Attractions Show
Venue: Berlin, Germany
Website: www.iaapa.org/expos
Email: jparsons@iaapa.org

15 October
Eastern European Gaming Summit
Venue: Sofia, Bulgaria
Website: www.eegamingsummit.com
Email: info@eegamingsummit.com

16-18 October
Balkan Entertainment and Gaming Expo (BEGE)
Venue: Sofia, Bulgaria
Website: www.balkangamingexpo.com
Email: info@balkangamingexpo.com

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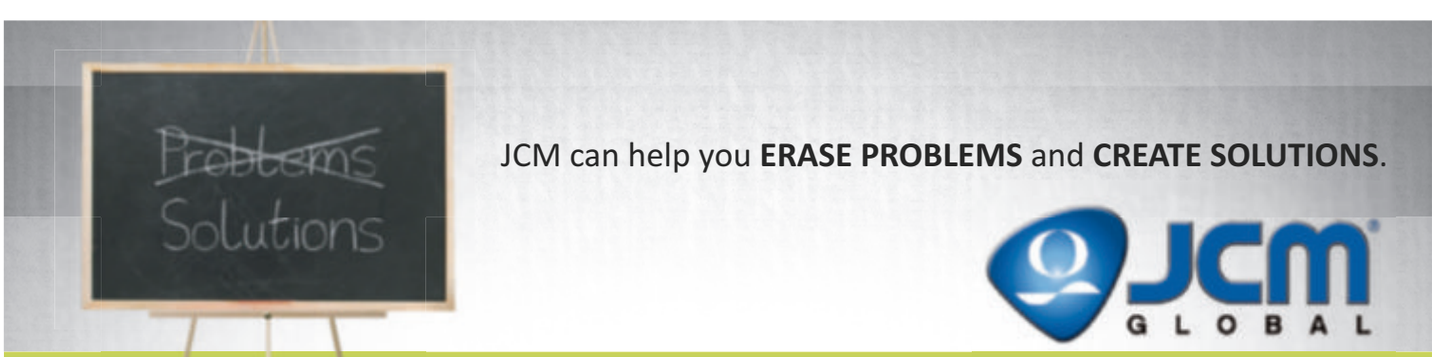

Digital plans for pubs

Sceptre Leisure is teaming up with German firm Gauselmann Group and its UK subsidiary Blueprint Gaming to develop a digital gaming system for the British pub market.

AIM-listed Sceptre, which already operates about 22,000 machines nationally, will be exclusive supplier of Gauselmann gaming hardware to UK pubs. Blueprint, meanwhile, will provide the underlying software and game content.

"The digital market in pubs within the UK has been slow to develop due to a lack of suitable product," said Sceptre. "However, the dynamics in the predominantly reel-based supply side of the market are changing, creating growing demand for digital content and in turn an opportunity for successful digital product suppliers to succeed. The Gauselmann group has first-hand experience of such an evolution, and was instrumental in managing the migration from reel-based gaming to digital in their domestic market."

Added Jürgen Stühmeyer, a Gauselmann board member: "With Sceptre's market presence, our hardware, and content from Blueprint, we believe that we can drive the progression of digital product in the UK. For some time we have been seeking the ideal partner, and we believe that with Sceptre we have acreated the right combination to lead and develop the undoubted digital opportunity in the UK pub market."

It has been speculated that the new system may be launched at the IMA and ICE expos in January, possibly via another Gauselmann subsidiary, Merkur Gaming.

Rank scoops X Factor

Rank Group is to be official gaming partner of The X Factor in Britain under a three-year deal with FremantleMedia, which manages the rights to the show's brand.

Its Mecca Bingo, Grosvenor Casinos and Bluesquare.com operations will exploit the X Factor connection through a branded online bingo game, slots and mini-games.

The deal allows Rank to use X Factor title graphics, theme music, logo and imagery in all its businesses, which will also be promoted at X Factor events.

Said Angus Nisbet, gaming director for Rank Interactive: "As the current official gaming partner of Britain's Got Talent, we are extremely pleased to be strengthening our relationship with FremantleMedia through this landmark deal for the Rank Group.

"The X Factor is one of the UK's most successful TV brands and the association with the programme will enable our brands to promote to a new audience, as well as being able to increase our customer engagement with exclusive games and money-can't-buy prizes, including tickets to The X Factor's live finals at Wembley."

Al Murray returns

JPM is following up its first Al Murray the Pub Landlord AWP with a second game for the UK Category B4 market.

It says that All Hail to the Ale will offer the same "instant player appeal and cheeky humour" as the debut title in the series, Al Murray's Big Nite Out.

Said sales and marketing director Simon McCarthy: "JPM has a long and successful history of working with licensed brands. Al Murray's Big Nite Out really captured the imagination of players. We felt that it was important to keep up the momentum with a strong follow-on game."

All Hail to the Ale is a multi-stake game, with payouts depending on stake, and is available for both sterling and euro currencies in the Linear cabinet with an optional note recycler.

Meanwhile, Spielo International USA has renewed its contract with Endemol as exclusive user of the Deal or No Deal brand in land-based gaming, and American Gaming Systems has signed an exclusive North American licensing agreement with Ripley Entertainment that will see it develop casino games based on the Ripley's Believe it or Not! brand.

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In brief...

NEWS IN BRIEF ... NEWS IN BRIEF ... NEWS IN BRIEF ... NEWS IN BRIEF ... NEWS IN BRIEF

More than 30,000 people visited the Aspers Casino in London's newly-opened Westfield Stratford City shopping centre in its first three days.

Jensigame, the supplier of gaming terminals, has established a new European headquarters in Copenhagen.

Seventy percent of British companies have a Facebook page, 62 percent a Twitter account and half a company LinkedIn page, according to a new survey by InSites Consulting. The main factor discouraging the others from developing these social media is the unclear ROI.

EC Development is to sell TransAct's Epicentral couponing system for real-time printing on slot floors. Meanwhile, TransAct is working with Walker Digital Table Systems on integrating that firm's networked table games system, Perfect Pay, with Epicentral.

All manufacturer, supplier and distributor members of the U.S. Amusement & Music Operators Association (AMOA) that have a new innovative product can get their chance for recognition at the AAMA-AMOA Amusement Expo 2012, scheduled for 14-16 March in Las Vegas. The application deadline for the 2012 AMOA Innovator Awards is 27 January.

LAI Games has launched a YouTube channel with video demonstrations of its products and footage of people playing the games. "Our customers can get a great feel for our games, even if they weren't able to see them in person at a show or open house," said marketing manager Allison Timberlake. "You can't accomplish the same thing with a static brochure."

Ghost Squad sequel from Sega

Sega Amusements has produced a sequel to its popular light-gun shooter Ghost Squad.

Operation Ghost is available in 42-inch and 55-inch models, for one or two players. New weapons, gadgets and equipment are complemented by an LED monitor surround and gun-mounted speaker.

The game is also available in the Russian language.

Asian casinos set to overtake U.S.

The U.S. will finally lose its position as the world's biggest casino market in 2013 when it is overtaken by Asia Pacific, according to a new forecast from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).

In its annual report on gaming, the firm predicts that global casino revenue will rise by a compound annual rate of 9.2 percent over the next five years, from a current $117.6bn to $182.8bn in 2015.

But the U.S. casino sector will under-perform that growth, rising just five percent annually, and as a consequence, at the end of the five-year period it will account for a significantly smaller share of the global market than it does today. Currently, about 49 percent of the global market is in the U.S.; by 2015, that will have dropped to 40 percent.

Growth in EMEA will be even slower, at 2.4 percent annually, which PwC blames partly on "the impact of adverse regulatory developments" as well as on economic conditions. EMEA has about a 14 percent share of the global market now, but in 2015 that will have dropped to ten percent.

The market share lost by the U.S. and EMEA will, predictably enough, be taken by casinos in the Asia Pacific region, where 18.3 percent annual growth will lead to a share of about 43 percent in 2015, up from around 30 percent now. Asia Pacific is predicted by PwC to overtake the U.S. as the world's biggest casino market in 2013.

Within Asia, PwC regards Macau as "the jewel in the gaming crown". But across the region, it says, gaming is being driven to new heights by economic growth, local love of gambling, the increasing number of facilities, improvements in transportation links, and lifting of regulatory burdens.

And it is not just the success in comparative terms of the Asian markets that will lead the U.S. to lose its dominance. They will actually hit American business directly. Observes PwC: "Some high-roller customers that would otherwise travel to the U.S. will be diverted by these overseas attractions. The impact will be on U.S. gaming centres like Nevada, which have a higher reliance on foreign tourists to drive revenues."

"We talk about the global economy, but this has never been more evident than in casino gaming. The turbulent global financial markets have curtailed consumer spending in some of the major markets for casino gaming. But we've seen huge growth in Asia as the affluent middle classes seek new forms of entertainment, and gaming's intense balance of risk and reward has a special appeal for many people," said Marcel Fenez, global entertainment and media leader at PwC.

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Thursday 15

Friday 16

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500 entertainment malls

The king of game companies listed on the Taiwan stock market, MacroWell OMG Digital Entertainment (OMG), and China-based HNA Group are partnering to launch a cloud-based entertainment platform, YH Youth DreamNet.

They will also build YH Entertainment Mall, a new-style entertainment business which combines the virtual and real worlds.

The partnership with OMG marks HNA Group's first penetration into the game sector, said Yu Ding, VP of HNA's subsidiary YH Entertainment, who predicted that the new business would generate RMB200m-300m (€24m-36m) in revenue in 2012 based on a conservative estimate.

Yu Ding also said that YH Entertainment would build 300 to 500 entertainment malls over ten years. Scheduled to open by the end of 2011, the first YH Entertainment Mall will be focused on indoor recreation and also offer shopping and dining. A further eight to ten YH Entertainment Malls are planned to open in 2012.

OMG chief executive Calvin Lin, meanwhile, pointed out that Taiwanese game companies have been trying to develop business in the Chinese market for more than ten years but none has succeeded. However, he believed that through co-operation with China's traditional industry, OMG could create a new business model.

Regarding the outlook for the online games industry, Lin said that although performance had been dull this year, he believed that more players would return and the worst was over. He expected to see recovery in the first or second quarter of 2012.

City of content

The city of Zhongshan in China's Guangdong province has gained good results from the policy it adopted last year of focusing on content for the game industry.

Zhongshan companies including Golden Horse, Golden Dragon and Unis showcased new products that they had independently developed at the China Zhongshan International Games & Amusement Fair 2011, with an enthusiastic reception from buyers.

As well as developing public platforms like exhibitions, the city is also aggressive in constructing industrial creative parks and bases, and encouraging enterprises to move into them to form industry clusters.

And, to cultivate talent for the game industry, Zhongshan supports creative organisations that build co-operative relations with traditional manufacturing businesses. It also encourages traditional manufacturing enterprises to outsource creative work. Such a business model has long been adopted in other industries such as lighting, home appliances and furniture.

Amusements at school

Chang Ping Elementary School in the Hsinchuang district of New Taipei City has taken advantage of unused space on its campus to install amusement facilities such as a rock climbing gym, basketball machines, a golf range and hammering machines.

The new sports and leisure area, called Chang Ping Disney, opened on 19 November and can be used by students for physical fitness training or physical education classes.

Hsin-wu Chang, principal of the Taiwanese school, said that the recreational facilities were either provided by parents or purchased by the school. They integrate physical education and leisure sports, and also include baseball equipment, table football machines, mini pool tables, and dance machines.

Chang Ping Elementary School is also planning to introduce a "moral character card" system. Every week, teachers will give the card to a student with excellent academic performance and good character, and the student holding the card can invite classmates to Chang Ping Disney outside school hours.

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UNITED KINGDOM

Population 62.7m
Under 15 10.9m
Aged 15-64 41.5m
Urban population 80 percent
Major cities London (8.6m), Birmingham (2.3m), Manchester (2.2m)
GDP per capita $34,800
Business climate The prominent role played in the UK's highly-developed economy by financial services meant that the country felt the effects of the economic downturn, although it still fared far better than the "basket case" European economies. Radical spending cuts planned by the current coalition government are also apparently having an effect on consumers' pockets. It is uncertain when strong growth will return. However, there remains considerable affluence, although averages sometimes mask regional disparities. Entry into the eurozone is not likely in the foreseeable future. The country has a healthy content-production sector which exports worldwide, and many innovative technology businesses.
Note The United Kingdom comprises England (the largest and most populous component), Scotland (with increasing autonomy and eventual full independence not an impossible prospect), Wales and Northern Ireland. The Isle of Man, Channel Islands and Gibraltar – all important bases of the online gaming industry – are not technically part of the UK and hence their regulatory framework differs. The Republic of Ireland is an entirely separate country.

The amusements sector

In 2009-10, according to regulator the Gambling Commission, the total gaming sector in the UK was worth £5.7bn (the value of the gross gaming yield, or stakes less payouts). This was down one percent on the previous year.

Eight percent of this, or £456m, came from amusement arcades. (The lion's share – 52 percent – was derived from betting, and the balance was from casinos, bingo, lotteries, and remote gambling.)

The amusement arcades sector is broken down into two categories: adult gaming centres (AGCs) and family entertainment centres (FECs), targeted at the different markets that their names suggest. At 31 March 2010, there were 612 AGCs and 274 FECs licensed. However, the revenue share of AGCs is disproportionately high, with this sector accounting for 81 percent of arcade earnings.

Both anecdotal and statistical evidence suggest that the number of arcades is decreasing sharply. In 2010, compared with 2009, there were about three percent fewer licences for adult gaming centres and 14 percent fewer for family entertainment centres. (By contrast, the number of licences for remote gambling grew by nearly 22 percent.)

Factors include the decline of seaside resorts – traditionally a popular location for arcades – although the new popularity of the "staycation" may go a little way toward reversing this decline, and of course the increasing competition from other leisure activities, including online.

Machines are divided into categories from B1 to D. By far the most common are Category B2 fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) and Category C low-stake, low-payout AWPs. In total, in March 2010 there were just under 145,000 gaming machines across Britain, with 32,000 of these falling into B2 and 51,000 into C.

As well as in amusement arcades, gaming machines are commonly found in betting shops, bingo halls, and pubs.

Also popular are SWPs, mostly offering quiz or word games. These are not regulated by the Gambling Commission although the regulator has acted in cases where it believes that machines presented as SWPs are in truth AWPs and thus should be subject to its rules.

Gaming: the big picture

The most authoritative figures on gaming in Britain come from the 2010 British Gambling Prevalence Survey, published by the regulator, the Gambling Commission.

Seventy-three percent of British people aged over 16 gambled in some way in the year preceding the survey – around 35.5m individuals. That is roughly comparable with the rate measured of 72 percent in 1999, and up on 2007's 68 percent.

Overall, gaming is on the increase among both women and men. The proportion of women taking part has grown from 65 percent in 2007 to 71 percent in 2010; for men, the figures are 71 percent in 2007 and 75 percent in 2010.

Many of those, however, had only participated in the National Lottery draw. Excluding those people from the total, 56 percent of adults took part in some form of gambling.

What they play

The National Lottery is the most popular form of gambling, played by 59 percent of all Britons. It is followed by other lotteries at 25 percent and scratch-cards at 24 percent.

Next most popular is betting on horse racing, at 16 percent. Then come slots, at 13 percent; private betting, at 11 percent; and bingo and sports betting, both at nine percent.

Casino games were played by five percent in the year prior to the survey; fixed-odds betting terminals (FOBT) were used by four percent, also the same proportion that played football pools, bet on dog racing or bet on non-sports events.

At the bottom of the table come online slot and instant-win games, played by three percent; pub or club poker, played by two percent; and spread betting, which attracted just one percent of the population.

Many forms of gaming are on the increase. Sports betting with a bookmaker on events other than horse and dog races soared, now involving nine percent of adults against three percent in 1999. Entering lotteries other than the National Lottery engaged a full 25 percent of consumers in 2010, but just eight percent in 1999.

The popularity of slots seemed to be decreasing slightly, involving 13 percent of adults against 14 percent in both 2007 and 1999. Unexpectedly, online slot and instant-win games have actually decreased in popularity since 2007 too, with involvement falling from four to three percent. The major loser, however, was football pools, down from nine percent in 1999 to four percent.

Online gaming

British gamers' activity is overwhelmingly offline. Eighty-one percent of those surveyed said they only gambled offline, while just two percent were exclusively online players. The balance, 17 percent, did both. And in no category of gaming did the number of online participants come close to exceeding the number of offline players.

Unsurprisingly, casino gaming was the form most likely to take place online, with 27 percent of those who took part doing so exclusively on the Internet, and a further 12 percent mixing Internet play with visits to bricks-and-mortar venues.

Sports betting and betting on non-sports events were also relatively popular online, with 27 and 21 percent of players respectively placing some of their bets online. However, betting on

horse and dog races was more likely to be an offline-only activity; only 12 and seven percent of participants, respectively, used online.

Twenty percent of bingo players took part online at least some of the time.

In total, 14 percent of British adults had used the Internet to gamble during the year.

Gambling patterns

Most gambling in Britain is a casual activity, with the participant committing large amounts of neither money nor time to it.

And for most people – 82 percent – their level of gambling activity remained much the same between the beginning and end of the year. Only four percent said they were gambling more, while 13 percent said they were gambling less. The principal reasons for change included having more or less money or free time, and access to gambling opportunities.

The main motives for gambling were to win large amounts of money (83 percent of those who took part), fun (78 percent) and excitement (51 percent).

Demographics of gamblers

Gambling is most common among the 44-to-64 age group, and least common among the very oldest and very youngest age groups.

Insofar as there is a typical gambler, he or she is married or divorced, white, not educated beyond GCSE (age 16) level, and employed in a lower supervisory or technical role. Those who only play for high stakes, however, are more likely to be university graduates.

Gender differences

Men are only slightly more interested in gambling than women – 75 percent of men, against 71 percent of women, had taken part during the year.

But in nearly every category men outnumbered women, most notably in playing football pools (eight percent of men against just one percent of women), sports betting (16 percent against two percent), and pub/club poker and spread betting, which were entirely male pursuits.

Sixteen percent of men played slots, against ten percent of women, and seven percent of men played FOBTs while they attracted just two percent of women.

The only categories where women were more likely to take part than men were scratch-cards (25 percent against 23 percent) and, true to cliché, bingo (12 percent against six percent).

Men also seek more variety in gambling than do women. Among people who gamble at all (rather than the general population), the men typically engage in three different activities each year, whereas women try 2.3.

Over the longer term, however, there seems to be more growth in gambling among women than among men. The proportion of women participating in 2010, 71 percent, was up on 1999's 68 percent. But the proportion of men was actually down slightly, from 76 percent to 75 percent.

Attitudes to gambling

"As in 2007," says the report, "the average view was that gambling was more harmful than beneficial and should not be encouraged."

Nevertheless, the typical respondent did believe that individuals have a right to gamble, and was opposed to prohibition, and the report says: "Comparisons with 2007 show that overall attitudes to gambling in 2010 have become more positive. Although the overall viewpoint is still somewhat negative, it is less negative than previously, indicating that attitudes are changing."

In particular, over-55s are becoming more tolerant of gambling as they themselves take part more often.

Attitudes were more positive among men, people of white ethnicity, and regular gamblers.

Problem gambling

The prevalence of problem gambling in the adult British population was estimated by one measure to have risen to 0.9 percent, having been 0.6 percent in both 1999 and 2007, with the new figure equating to around 450,000 individuals.

By another measure, however, it was 0.7 percent, or 360,000 adults. The two measures, the report suggests, "are capturing slightly different people and different types of gambling-related problems".

Problem gamblers were most likely to be male, to be younger, to smoke cigarettes, and to have parents who gambled regularly and had experienced problems with this. Asian ethnicity, unemployment and poor health were also associated with problem gambling.

Hulse to champion DV8

The Netherlands' Phil Hulst has become the new face of DV8, the bowling brand introduced by Valcke Services in August.

Hulst, 21, joins Gery Verbruggen, Wendy Kok, Nicole Sanders and Thierry Sacco as a Valcke staff player.

"I grew up with bowling and love the game," he said. "Over the years, I have made contact with the national and international bowling world so I can certainly say bowling made my life really interesting. With DV8 I want to do the best I can."

Bowling for Baku

A huge family entertainment centre under construction in the Caucasus nation of Azerbaijan will feature a 16-lane bowling alley.

Megafun, a project of developer Yeni Hayat, is located in the capital Baku (pictured) and scheduled to open in March. The 10,539-square-metre facility will also include 169 slot machines, 13 simulators, 17 rides, seven cinemas, and an ice rink.

It is expected to see thousands of visitors daily and to create as many as 20 new jobs.

Yeni Hayat, whose partners on the project included QubicaAMF and LAI Games, plans to follow it up with similar entertainment venues in Sumgayit, Nakhchivan, Ganja, Lankaran, Shamakhi, and Khachmaz.

European tour venues

The presidium of the European Tenpin Bowling Federation (ETBF) has announced the venues for the European Bowling Tour Masters 2014 and 2015.

The EBT Masters 2014, the men's and women's finals of the 2013 European Bowling Tour, will be held at Dolfijn Bowling in Tilburg, Netherlands. The one-day event will be on Monday 3 March 2014, the day after the finals of the EBT Hammer Bronzen Schietspoel Tournament 2014.

The EBT Masters 2015, the men's and women's finals of the 2014 European Bowling Tour, will be held in conjunction with the ET Brunswick Italia Challenge on Monday 29 June 2015, at Bowling Red & Black in Asti, Italy.

The top 50 men and top 50 women in each tournament of the European Bowling Tour earn ranking points, no matter which country or World Tenpin Bowling Association Zone (Europe, Asia, America) they come from.

The winner of a Platinum tournament receives 250 ranking points, the winner of a Gold tournament gets 150, the winner of a Silver tournament earns 100, and the winner of a Satellite tournament gets 50. The top 16 men and the top 16 women in the EBT ranking qualify for the Masters.

The 2012 EBT Masters, the finals of the 2012 European Bowling Tour, will held in conjunction with the 3rd Dream Bowl Palace Open in Unterföhring near Munich, Germany, on 30 April and 1 May 2012.

Belmo takes title

Australia's Jason "Belmo" Belmonte defeated Tommy Jones of the U.S. in the men's title match at the 2011 Bowling World Cup in South Africa.

Belmonte lost the first game, 259-279, but proceeded to win the next two, 247-216 and 259-236, to secure the title.

Overall, Belmonte had 765 (a 255 average) in the title match and 751 (a 250.33 average) in the semi-final, for a total of 1516. Over the six games of the stepladder final, that gave him an average of 262.66.

The Bowling World Cup, supported by QubicaAMF, was held 30 November-7 December at Northcliff Bowling Center in Johannesburg. Altogether, 81 men took competed for the title taken by Belmonte.

Polished performance

Brunswick European staff player Alessandro Silletti has bowled his way to the Polish Cup.

The 20-year-old Polish/Italian dual national, known to his peers as Alek, recorded a tournament average of more than 230 and remained undefeated through all the matches, some of them coming down to the last frame.

"Most of the matches were very tight, including the title match, where I won 446 to 443," he said.

Silletti used a new Nexus Solid ball from Brunswick, which also supplied the tournament lane pattern and its Authority22 lane maintenance system.

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JANUARY SHOWS PREVIEW

IMA
International Trade Fair
for Amusement and Vending Machines
17-20 January, Düsseldorf
www.ima-messe.com

EAG
European Amusement
& Gaming Expo
24-26 January, London
www.eagexpo.com

ICE Totally Gaming
incorporating ATEI
24-26 January, London
www.totallygaming.com/ice-2012

Crane Payment Solutions

For the first time ever at ICE, all core Crane Payment Solutions products will be showcased on one stand. At last year's ICE, following Crane's acquisition of Money Controls in December 2010, Money Controls products were still featured on a separate stand.

Among the products on display will be the Money Controls Ardac Elite and CashCode one-bill validators. The Ardac Elite is described by the company as the first and only field-proven imaging bill validator, with imaging technology and a four-way barcode reader allowing customers to insert barcode tickets in any orientation, increasing acceptance rates and user satisfaction. By simply plugging in a PDA via the USB port, an image of the last note inserted can be displayed.

Benefits of using the CashCode One include a universal design to accept all currencies; a single hardware platform to reduce support and operation costs, and flexible architecture with multiple options and configurations. The CashCode One also has sensor technology which scans both sides of the bill, optimising recognition. Its self-centring transport guides adjust automatically to perfectly align bills or barcodes of different widths, even when fed in at an angle. The CashCode One also comes with the oneCheck cash management and accountability solution.

Other products being exhibited at the stand will include Money Controls' PayLink software and hardware, which allows easy integration of payment peripherals into PC-based platforms.

WH Münzprüfer

The only German-owned producer of electronic selector equipment for the international market, WH Münzprüfer Berlin will showcase its innovative products at IMA in Düsseldorf and ICE in London.

The well-known EMP 900 series with six-way sorting will be shown in a new version with 32-bit microprocessor technology for the highest quality of coin acceptance and optimum counterfeit rejection. The new mechanical design with adaptive coin-on-a-string detection further enhances the security of this device, while velocity of coin processing has also been optimised.

A self-diagnostic function has been integrated and results can be retrieved externally at any time. The unit can be completed with options such as integrated protocol function or rim detection for even greater security.

For payout of coins, WH offers the Flexi Hopper X5. Five different versions for different applications are available, and thanks to the modular design the unit can be adjusted easily. Functionality ranges from a simple payout unit of one denomination, to a unit for mixed coins and exact payout of set amounts, to complete cash management in combination with the EMP 800.13 ccTalk coin selector, to a coin sorting and coin counting device.

Belts are available for coins up to a diameter of 40mm, which covers currencies worldwide. An integrated stirrer assures a secure payout, avoiding bridging of coins. For easy configuration the electronic board is accessible from outside.

E-Screen

E-Screen is a European distributor for touchscreen components and displays, including the latest in multitouch and large-format touchscreens from 3M, NEC and Mitsubishi

ICE will see the launch and demonstration of products such as customised winning-number displays, the E-Poster, large-format displays and touchscreens, touchscreen kiosks, and software to allow real-time and customised communication with gaming customers.

The Viper display of winning numbers and last numbers for roulette is available in 23-inch full HD, single-and double-sided. Custom logos and even complete custom bezel graphics can provide promotions and branding.

The E-Poster enables real-time communication with clients through advertisements and messages. The options available include a media player designed to play direct from a USB drive or SD card, or a full PC version using the latest Coda software enabling remote access to schedule and edit across an unlimited number of displays. The E-Poster comes in a range of sizes from 10.4-inch through to 55-inch, with interactive versions available.

Coda software is the latest development in remote control of digital media, allowing remote scheduling and control of media from one or several locations and with the ability to control an infinite quantity of screens. This system allows real-time communication to customers from any location with Internet access.

Eurocoin

Sales director Colin Veitch is eagerly anticipating ICE. "We have a great range of really noteworthy products this year, which we believe will undoubtedly make a major impact in European VLT and gaming in 2012. There is already huge interest in our European launch of the Epicentral couponing software system, and we can add to this the new 3M multitouch solution, our market-leading range of Epic printers, the new iVizion bill acceptor from JCM, and the advanced wide angle HD TFTs from Kortek."

The Epicentral system enables promotional coupons and other messages to be printed to customers while they play at slot machines. TransAct's Epic 950 thermal printer is Europe's leading VLT printer, with over 100,000 units already successfully installed by Eurocoin. The Epic 430 and Epic 880 roll printers both deliver a secure high-speed transaction receipt, operating efficiently in unattended sites, where the printers' ability to print and cut the ticket before presenting to clients eliminates service call-outs caused by player interference. The entire range of TransAct Epic printers will be available for demonstration at the Eurocoin stand.

ICE will also see the launch of brand-new touch technology from 3M that is designed to replace the traditional push button on games with a single-panel projective capacitive touchscreen TFT. The 3M technology has been specifically engineered to offer players a more intense experience. The full multi-touch solution enables ten-finger touch performance with a response time of less than ten milliseconds, and will be available for full demonstration at the Eurocoin stand.

IGT

Premiering at ICE is IGT Cloud, a casino management service solution that empowers operators to optimise their operations and engage players. The cloud computing service will supply IGT Analytics for robust reporting, and IGT Floor Manager to manage game content and allow access to the largest game library in the industry.

Meanwhile, IGT's global focus will be highlighted on its new video slot themes featuring localised and regionalised content designed for performance and player enjoyment. The firm says features such as 3D and advanced touchscreens help to meet the technology expectations of today's consumers.

Suzo-Happ

Among the products on show from Suzo-Happ will be the Celebration Topper, which interfaces into the SAS Jackpot line of the slot machine.

When the selected level of a jackpot is achieved the topper triggers a Celebration Event. This includes customisable video messages on the 15.6-inch LCD display, light pipe LEDs rising out of the top of the topper, flashing LEDs on the sides of the LCD, confetti, and loud audio. The goal of this Celebration Event is to create a new level of excitement on the gaming floor for players and stimulate more play. The Celebration Topper will be sold in multiple configurations including a unit that uses a backlit graphic panel instead of the 15.6-inch LCD.

Other recent innovations on display will include the Flow Hopper (coin payout), the Flip Card Unit (for poker machines), the RGB Handle Mechanism and a range of new buttons.

AstroSystems

AstroSystems will be at both London shows. Explained sales manager Steve Priest: "By adopting and maintaining a strategy to exhibit at these concurrent shows, we have demonstrated our support and commitment for both amusement and gaming markets. The upshot has been a significant increase in sales into the UK amusement market, especially with the Microcoin SP and QL coin acceptors, and an equally rewarding result with our gaming customers. These shows also provide us with the opportunity to focus on the specific requirements of each marketplace."

Products on display will include the GBA GV1 bill acceptor, which is a secure vault system. The unit benefits from a modular design which has the service technician in mind. It can be quickly disassembled and re-assembled whenever required and has strong audit capabilities.

Falgas Industries

Kiddie ride and amusement machine manufacturer Falgas Industries will exhibit at EAG for the first time in January.

Falgas Industries Group was started some 50 years ago by Joaquin Falgas and has expanded to become a truly global business, winning several innovation awards and exporting to more than 110 countries worldwide.

Sales director Jose J. Saus explained the thinking behind the decision to exhibit at EAG: "We're very much an export-focused company and already participate in many trade shows around the world."

EAG will see the launch of new kiddie rides and redemption products from the company, added Saus.

The biggest ever?

Visitors to ICE Totally Gaming will be part of the biggest ever online and offline gaming exhibition, according to show organisers Clarion Events. A total of 22,466 square metres of stand space has been contracted to gaming exhibitors, a record high for an edition of ICE.

Among the 400-plus exhibitors, the biggest in terms of stand size are Novomatic (with 1416 square metres), IGT Europe, Playtech, WMS, Bally Technologies, Interblock, JPM/Astro, Spielo International, Amatic Industries, Alfastreet and Merkur Gaming.

But the event's marketing communications manager Matthew Appleby added: "Although the line-up of exhibiting companies reads like a Who's Who of the gaming world, ICE Totally Gaming also attracts the startups and fledgling companies who bring a fresh perspective to gaming and who could become the big gaming brands of the future."

Talking heads

ICE organiser Clarion Events developed its creative advertising campaign for 2012 in an unorthodox way by recruiting some of its most celebrated stakeholders to do the talking.

The Talking ICE campaign, which has been run through international print and digital media, features some of gaming's most influential thought leaders, including Nick Harding, CEO of Praesepe; Simon Burridge, CEO of Virgin Games; Jim Cremin, a journalist on The Racing Post; Fabrizio Alberici, CEO of Alberici; Ron Goudsmit, chairman of the European Casino Association; Craig Churchill, senior VP of international at IGT; Peter Naessens of the Belgian Gaming Commission; Peter Gideon Bierer, executive VP of new media at IGT; and Jens Halle, managing director of Novomatic's international subsidiary Austrian Gaming Industries.

Soundnet

Soundnet is the exclusive music content provider to leading jukebox manufacturer Sound Leisure and music programmer for 15,000 public venues.

Its expertise in music also extends to video and encompasses site profiling, the sourcing of content, distribution in encrypted form and the handling of legal and compliance issues. "Our ultimate objective is to deliver content which supports our clients' businesses and delivers a healthy profit," said managing director Simon Davis.

"We are constantly in touch with 400 or so record labels and can supply new releases as soon as they are on air and often before they reach the shops. Soundnet's comprehensive management of all legal issues ensures total peace of mind for both operators and site owners."

New for EAG will be Soundnet's unlimited-access service, offering a library of 7m tracks.

New kids on the floor

Sixty-four exhibitors are making their debut at ICE Totally Gaming this year.

The UK has the largest number of first-time exhibitors with 19, followed by the U.S. (nine), Malta (five), Italy (three), and China, France, Germany, Gibraltar, India and the Philippines (two each).

Austria, Belarus, the British Virgin Islands, Canada, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Finland, Ireland, Israel, South Korea, the Netherlands, Panama, Serbia, Seychelles, Slovenia and the Ukraine all have one first-time exhibitor.

ICE learning programme

ICE is offering an array of eight conferences, summits and briefings.

They are: the fourth International Casino Conference (23 January); Combating Cybercrime (24 January); World Regulatory Briefing (24 January); The Lottery Summit (24 January); Integrating Offline and Online Gaming (25 January); CRM and Retention in Gaming (25 January); Mobile Gaming (26 January); and Monetising Social Gaming (26 January).

3M

Diversified technology company 3M promises to demonstrate one of the industry's most innovative, widest-ranging multitouch product portfolios at ICE.

New product prototypes based on 3M projected capacitive technology (3M PCT) will be showcased for the first time in Europe by 3M's Touch Systems division. These include sophisticated multitouch desktop display models specifically designed for high-fidelity touch LCD displays in sizes ranging up to 32 inches.

ICE will also be the European demonstration platform for a new range of multitouch desktop displays that offer 20 simultaneous touch events at an ultra-fast 6ms response time. The 18.5-inch 3M multitouch Display M1866PW, 21.5-inch 3M multitouch Display M2167PW and 24-inch 3M multitouch Display M2467PW will be on the stand to show how 3M's portfolio is expanding to address a broader multi-user/multitouch application environment.

Other stand demonstrations will include several 32-inch 3M multitouch Display C3266PW chassis units (offering 40 simultaneous touch events at 10ms response time) configured as gaming tables, including a cascade table.

And in addition to these, 3M will be showing its industry-standard surface capacitive technology (SCT) products, including the 3M MicroTouch System SCT3250EX (5.7-inch to 32-inch display sizes), 3M MicroTouch System SCT7650EX (for vandal-prone and rugged applications) and 3M MicroTouch Display C2234SW (with a robust metal chassis housing).

E-Service

E-Service is a company focused on supporting operators and equipment owners in ensuring that they continue to secure a return on their investment. Founded by managing director Mike Clokie eight years ago, it supports UK and European operators with replacement parts, repairs and consumables, and has Approved Service Contractor status with some of the industry's most trusted brands, including Azkoyen, 3M, Wells Gardner, Kortek, Tovis and JCM.

ShuffleMaster has also entrusted the company with its entire UK support operation.

E-Service plans to show products from its huge array of parts, along with a new range of LED lighting. New for the show will be an assortment of retro-fit kits for games originally incorporating projectors. Operators can extend the life of successful games by replacing the projectors with large TFT monitors, thereby optimising the return on their original investment.

E-Service will also be launching its 2012 catalogue at EAG, twice the size of the last version.

The A to Z of gaming

ICE Totally Gaming claims to be the only exhibition in the world which brings together the online and offline gaming worlds.

For the low-stake street gaming business, ICE provides an unusual global perspective that can't always be found at the more territory-specific events.

In the betting sector, meanwhile, visitors will see how companies are harnessing new technologies and evolving their product offering .

The event also features a raft of exhibitors whose business is bingo. Visitors will be able to see all of the latest dedicated bingo products as well as the newest gaming machines which make such an important contribution to bingo's bottom-line profits.

Many of the lottery sector's pre-eminent thought leaders also converge on ICE to debate the issues of the day with games developers and regulators. The Lottery Summit will look at how the sector can be competitive through the development of interactive, cross-channel and social strategies.

The seemingly inexorable rise of mobile gaming will also be reflected at ICE, as will online, with new online security products to protect players, new social games together with product strategies to convert social games players to online gaming platforms, and lots more from this dynamic sector.

However, ICE Totally Gaming was born out of the casino industry and this heritage is clear to see. All of the majors take a strong, high-profile presence, showing the full portfolio of product types for casinos.

Racing Post

2012 will see the return of the popular Racing Post Cafe at ICE, showcasing a wide range of products for both businesses and punters.

Racing Post Business-to-Business Services provides content for the betting industry, incorporating expert data into individual displays and publications for Websites, newspapers and localised race cards. The recently introduced 22-inch digital touchscreens will be on show and the B2B team will be on hand with information on a range of products being developed ahead of Euro 2012.

Another Racing Post division, RP Jobs, has been operating since 2004 and is now firmly established as a valuable recruitment service. The team from RP Jobs will be on hand at ICE to navigate candidates and employers through the new Website and social media features from Twitter and Facebook.

Gaming Standards Association

The Gaming Standards Association (GSA) says "it is important for us to exhibit in London because it is important that the European marketplace understand that they are just as affected by and have as much potential profit from standards as every other gaming marketplace. At ICE, we will be speaking with operators, suppliers and regulators, because each of those distinct audiences has a stake in the future of standards. Above all, each of these groups needs to understand that GSA is the only global collaborative environment where operators and suppliers can meet to identify and address common challenges in the industry, drive innovation forward and address integration and interoperability."

Apex Gaming

Historically the German AWP market has had limited choice, says Apex Germany, but it plans to change this with a major presence at the forthcoming IMA. Across a 500-square-metre stand, it will present a range of new choices for operators in Germany.

The Pinnacle upright AWP with two 22-inch monitors has been approved by the German testing board PTB. This is a major breakthrough not just for Apex Germany but indeed the entire German AWP market, the company says. Operators have immediate access to a gaming product from a leading international gaming machine manufacturer with a proven track record over many years.

The IMA 2011 saw Apex Gaming take a large stand to present its intentions to the German AWP market. "We could have taken orders non-stop if we had been certified then," recalled Johannes Weissengruber, CEO and founder of the firm. "Operators took away the clear impression that a major successful international manufacturer will be entering this market. We had many invaluable conversations with operators to understand their true requirements."

The results can be found in the new generation of Pinnacle. Innovations in both hardware and software have been introduced specially for the German AWP market. The company has also set up agreements with local distributors across Germany, and opened a 24-hour service line as well as a Web store for spare parts.

It is also breaking the German mould by offering the Pinnacle along with the Magic Classic games package for sale, in response to operator demand. Most companies in the German market only offer their machines for lease, according to Apex.

Enteraction

The British social gaming company and ICE exhibitor Enteraction is partnering with Praesepe to launch Beacon Bingo Social on Facebook in early 2012. This game represents Praesepe's first foray into the booming social gaming market, typified by games like CityVille and Slotomania, and bolsters the work the company is already doing in social media.

The new product is a more immersive version of traditional bingo, in which a collection-and-sharing game provides a replacement for the real-money win experience. Users enter rooms to play against themselves and others with the aim of building a paradise garden, occupied by Beacon's mascot Beaky. Players move to higher levels by gifting and receiving virtual goods, as well as playing the number of games required to progress.

As with most social games, Beacon Bingo Social is free to play with customers given the option of making premium purchases for virtual goods and enhanced progression.

This is the first in a line of proposed products as part of a development agreement between the two companies.

Said Chris Drake, Praesepe's interactive manager: "We operate in a fast-moving sector driven by technology, trends and changing customer tastes. Beacon Bingo Social sets the pace in terms of the social gaming phenomenon and draws on many of the community values which underpin the bingo experience and which will connect with players."

BetStone

With the release of its XGS System this year, BetStone is now able to deliver cloud-based gaming management systems and a library of over 140 games without requiring expensive local installations of servers. In addition, BetStone's portfolio of land-based games can be expanded to online and mobile through its channel partners.

BetStone's XGS, which can be accessed via the Internet from desktops and mobile devices, allows operators to retrieve data on their gaming floor without requiring a large investment in additional hardware to run applications.

Said director Avron Goss: "BetStone has effectively removed the unnecessary barrier to entry of sophisticated systems by removing the high capital expenditure typically required to install these systems. This cost-effective model now allows even the route operators with only a limited number of machines per site to access fully functional systems. Operators are now empowered to control all elements of their business without the requirement of managing expensive distributed IT services."

Advantech-Innocore

A wide range of Advantech industrial PC products will be on display at ICE

Advantech-Innocore is a full member of the Advantech corporation, now the world's largest company in industrial automation devices and computing. For customers of Advantech-Innocore, this means they now have access to the widest range of industrial and semi-industrial PC components: not just the obvious Mini-ITX, ATX and Com-Express, but also hospitality and digital signage solutions, portable and handheld battery-powered terminals and tablets, touchscreen computers, I/O modules, industrial controllers, open frame monitors, and so on.

The main focus at ICE will be the well-known DPX range of products, a family that welcomes a new addition in the E-series, the DPX-E120.

The DPX-E120 is a complete industrial computer system that is said to offer good performance and very low power requirements with the AMD G-Series embedded platform. The core of the DPX-E120 is the AMD G-series chipset, accommodating CPUs ranging from 1.2GHz single core to 1.65GHz Dual Core. The integrated AMD Radeon HD6130 provides integrated high-performance graphics for two independent displays. A full feature set of I/O, COMs and security designed specifically for gaming devices is also included.

Meanwhile, the DPX-S415 and DPX-S425 are the latest additions to the DPX-S series.

Advantech-Innocore is also introducing a new product line of compact and cost-effective semi-industrial motherboards (SIMBs) to provide rugged, dependable and quick-to-market solutions. They are suggested for customers that have have price-sensitive markets and need revision-controlled industrial-grade motherboards, but don't want to spend a fortune on over-specified technology.

Amatic Industries

Austria's Amatic Industries will be exhibiting at this year's ICE at its customary position on stand 3060.

New games that will receive their international debut at ICE include Aztec Secret, Billy`s Game, Eye of Ra, GrandX and Tweety Birds.

A new slant-top cabinet will also be premiered at ICE, along with an enhanced version of Grand Jeu 22ws Electronic Roulette with improved graphics, wider monitors, and additional player features.

VNE

Italy's VNE will show a variety of change machines ranging from notes-to-coins devices such as Compact Change up to complete VLT change machine solutions such as Super Change VLT and Queen Change.

Said general manager Lorenzo Verona: "We are the most successful supplier of change machines to the Italian market. We take great pride in what we do and support our customers throughout."

ITM Leisure

Since its formation in 2001 ITM Leisure has grown at a consistently healthy rate. The company is a high-end supplier of licensed plush, redemption products and crane graphics to the coin-op and amusement industries.

Much of ITM Leisure's product development and testing is carried out in a live arcade environment. "We have earned a reputation for knowing what works and it's important that the products not only live up to the operator's expectations, but also those of the public," said sales manager David Cope.

At EAG, ITM Leisure plans to show more than 80 percent of its range. Licensed characters created under a new agreement with Looney Tunes will feature prominently, along with releases under the Disney and Me To You brands.

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Thomas Automatics

For for the first time in nearly ten years Thomas will be on its own stand at EAG 2012.

Said sales manager Ian Fuller: "We will be launching an entirely new range for 2012 – the Thomas 8000 series – plus will show the 5001 and 5002 high-capacity change machines and will unveil a brand-new version of the extremely popular 3004."

The new 8000 range of products has been designed to allow gaming machine operators to enhance security and improve operating efficiency. The first in the series to be launched is the Thomas PayStation. Contemporary-looking and multifunctional with a touch-enabled 21-inch screen, the PayStation will allow the complete automation of hand-pay jackpots, serving as a change-giver and cash dispenser for the arcade and bingo sector.

The new suite of ThomasPay products will enable arcade operators to convert coin hopper payments to a secure ticket-out solution. Tickets can be cashed at the cash desk or via the Thomas PayStation.

The 3004 is the most popular change machine Thomas Automatics has produced, with thousands of machines in daily use worldwide. New features for the 2012 machine on display at EAG include a bank note recycler, colour display, and new electronics which will provide full auditing of the machine.

Said Fuller: "In 2011 we listened to our customers highlighting the problems of B3 jackpot payouts, hopper starvation and security risks."

Extending Thomas's change machine portfolio for 2012 will be a selection of machines from VNE. The Italian manufacturer has worked closely with Thomas Automatics to introduce a range for the UK market; these include the Mini/Token change machine. This machine has a small footprint, accepts notes and coins and has two MKIV hoppers. The machine also includes a special token program allowing it to dispense one or two tokens, plus bonus tokens.

For bulk coin changing, there will be two new machines on show, the 54 and the Super Change. The 54 allows users to change bulk coin into bank notes, via its internal coin counter. Its bank note recycler also allows notes to be changed to coins. The Super Change is a high-end bulk coin recycling machine, containing a bank note recycler, high-speed coin counter – 20 coins per second – and touchscreen.

Inspired Gaming Group

Inspired Gaming Group will focus on three key themes for ICE: server-based gaming, marketing and rewards, and platform convergence.

It will unveil Core VIP, a new bonus and reward system, at ICE for the first time. It is the latest platform innovation to come from the company, and the first and only system to allow in-game rewards for all games, even third-party titles. Inspired's Core VIP is modular so operators can take all its features or select certain functions, all of which can be integrated into current loyalty and CRM systems.

Said CEO Luke Alvarez: "Inspired is in a unique position in this industry in that we are large enough to compete with the U.S. and European gaming giants, but we are small enough to keep innovation fast-paced and technology-focused. We are a technology company at heart and will always deliver products that look great but perform even better, due to our unique SBG operating system. We're launching another industry first with our Core VIP ecosystem, which will take operators' current marketing and loyalty strategies to the next level by spanning both online and retail, and allowing in-game rewards across the entire Open SBG game library."

Visitors to the Inspired stand can also experience the firm's Inspired's Open SBG Core platform, with features including an open-source content API (Open SBG), add-ons such as marketing and rewards, and in-depth reporting for greater performance control.

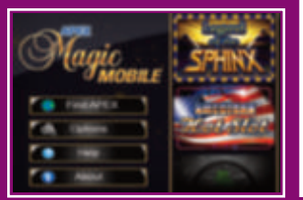
The land-based SBG platform is also adaptable to cross-platform convergence, which Inspired will be demonstrating in partnership with its sister company OpenBet. Another attraction will be Inspired's multi-platform Virtual Sports for retail, in-home broadcast, online and now mobile.

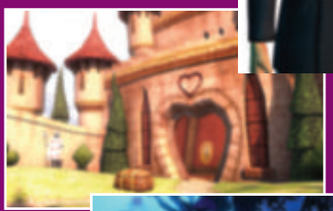
Apex Gaming

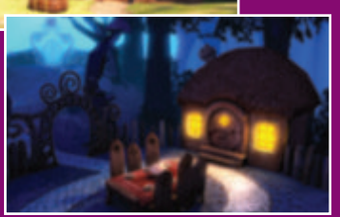
Apex Gaming will be releasing a new Multi Magic games package of 20 games. This adds to the existing games packages Multi Magic I, Multi Magic II, Multi Magic III, Magic Fruits, Hot Magic Fruits, Hot Magic Fruits XXL and Multi Magic Classic, and brings Apex's game library to 110 titles.

Apex will also use ICE to release its new 3D platform, Evolution. The first games package contains five titles: The Adventures of Captain Nemo, Legend of the Sphinx II, Wonderland, Ocean Tale 2, and Royal Fruits.

And ICE will see Apex release its for-entertainment-only mobile gaming platform. The new app has been designed to run on both Apple and Android devices. A Find Apex feature further strengthens the land-based gaming sector, by showing a range of locations nearby that offer Apex gaming machines.







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Travel to ExCel

ExCel London, EAG International Expo's home, sits in a district known as London's Eastside, now a vibrant area brimming with hotels and restaurants in addition to offering world-class shopping. The area is already benefiting from a billion-pound transport infrastructure investment, making ExCel a very easy destination for travellers.

The most fortunate visitors arriving by air will land at London City Airport. Serving 30 international destinations and with 350 flights per day, London City Airport is literally five minutes from ExCel by car or taxi and ten minutes on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR). London's other four airports are also within an acceptable travel time.

For those European visitors with easy access to Brussels or Paris, Eurostar is a good option, with 30 high-speed trains per day arriving at St. Pancras Station. Onward travel to ExCel by London Underground will take around 35 minutes.

The Docklands Light Railway is often described as one of London Eastside's main arteries and is capable of moving 36,000 passengers per hour. ExCel has three DLR stations – Royal Victoria, Custom House for ExCel and Prince Regent.

It is also readily accessible via the London Underground. The Jubilee Line connects to ExCel via the DLR.

For visitors and exhibitors from closer to home, ExCel is also easy to reach by road, with access from the M25, London's orbital motorway. The venue offers parking for 3700 cars.

JPM

After a year highlighted by strong sales growth and the development of its own entirely new gaming platform, JPM is planning an extensive presence at ICE.

Following the successful launch of Video Max Power, JPM will also be demonstrating its latest innovations in online content development via JPM Interactive (JPMi) and its proprietary Gameology platform.

Visitors to ICE will experience the latest generation of Video Max Power based on the new JPM platform using the Quixant QXi-200 all-in-one PC-based gaming controller.

Available in single or multiple units connected throughout a location, Video Max Power will be shown at ICE in dual-machine and three-machine formats.

Said sales and marketing director Simon McCarthy: "We've embarked upon an intensive games development programme for Video Max Power to satisfy demand. The Quixant technology and shift to video have also enabled JPM to leverage its huge library of successful games with the added dimension of stunning graphics.

"Video Max Power is pushing further into eastern Europe and we've identified new markets, including the United Kingdom, for the launch of locally configured product. Video Max Power perfectly meets the needs of categories B3 and B4, for which JPM has outstanding content."

Popular dual-screen games developed under JPM's Crystal brand for the Spanish market will also be on show, including Casino Loco €1,000.

TE Connectivity

TE Connectivity will show the latest Elo TouchSystems products for gaming applications at ICE.

The main highlight will be a new 22-inch gaming LED touch monitor, the 2244L, which is a wide-viewing-angle version of the recently released 2243L 22-inch open-frame monitor. There will also be a new 55-inch model in the Interactive Digital Signage (IDS) family featuring multitouch, and a small seven-inch LCD display.

The new 2244L 22-inch monitor features a high-definition display in 16:9 aspect ratio with LED backlight technology, providing true HD interactivity for the latest gaming applications. The wide viewing angle of 178 degrees both horizontally and vertically allows colours to remain sharp and graphics to retain their integrity, while the LED backlighting reduces power consumption and allows for slimmer dimensions.

The 16:9 format allows extra content on the screen and is quickly becoming preferred in casino gaming, amusement and entertainment settings.

Like the 2243L, the Elo TouchSystems 2244L monitor is available with either the innovative TE Touch Solutions APR (acoustic pulse recognition) or IntelliTouch surface acoustic wave touchscreen technology.

Also on show will be the latest product in the Interactive Digital Signage (IDS) family – the 55-inch model 5500L. This large-format touch display is useful for interactive advertising and visitor guidance in casinos and hotels and combines IntelliTouch touchscreen technology with commercial-grade, large-format LCD panels. The 5500L will be available with an optical touchscreen technology, which is designed to allow up to four simultaneous touches to be detected. No activation force is necessary. And the 5500L will also feature a LED-backlit LCD panel, making it slimmer than existing models and with narrower borders.

Another novelty is a small seven-inch LCD display – the Elo TouchSystems 0700L. The screen is typically applied as a second display, facing the customer in POS and retail environments. It can also be set up to be the main display for applications requiring a small screen, for example personal gaming screens as part of a larger interactive gaming table.

Sega Amusements Europe

Sega Amusements Europe plans to show more than 60 products at EAG, ten of them making their debut at the event.

Said general manager Justin Burke: "Sega Amusements Europe is involved with around 50 shows but EAG International Expo is really a breath of fresh air. We have found the location to be convenient, with good hotels and restaurants within walking distance. The show has been great for catching up with customers and meeting genuine new buyers

"We'll be showing new cranes and video redemption products and we're very excited about Key Master, a prize vendor which tests players' skills to the limit as they select prizes by manoeuvring a key into exactly the right spot. Key Master is very strong in the U.S. and has already generated a great deal of interest here.

"As well as our own games, we'll be showing some really innovative products from the top-class manufacturers we represent. We're expecting a great deal of interest in our new and growing merchandise range, building on the success of Victoria Cupcakes and Hello Kitty in 2011.

"As a company we're totally focused on support so our spares and customer service team will be out in force to meet customers and deal with enquiries," Burke said.

The politics of German gaming

By tradition, January's IMA trade fair is a meeting place for the industry where plans are made for the year just started, contracts are concluded and information is exchanged. But in 2012, the German and wider European political and regulatory environments are likely to dominate the discussions of visitors to Düsseldorf.

For example, Daniel Günderoth, managing director of Top Game Spielothek in Lampertheim, near the German city of Worms, said: "At IMA 2012 I expect to find new innovative gambling systems and of course practical, functional ideas for implementing the regulations announced in the State Treaty on Gambling, such as gamblers' cards and compulsory downtimes – and last but not least, interesting talks with colleagues about the problems related to the amusement tax.

"Each crisis also offers new opportunities. In future, these will lie in a stronger diversification of our company in the field of sports betting and catering chains as well as in a healthy expansion into market-oriented entertainment facilities, such as arcades with 12 devices. I could also imagine combining the areas just mentioned in a single facility."

Freddy Fischer, managing partner of MSP, said: "I expect a great deal from the exchange of views with colleagues regarding possible scenarios for the future and business inspiration on alternative concepts and ideas." In 2012, his group of companies will focus its investments on new devices with intelligent cash management for installation in hospitality establishments. "In this context we rely on our German and Netherlands industry partners and look forward to moving ahead together with these companies."

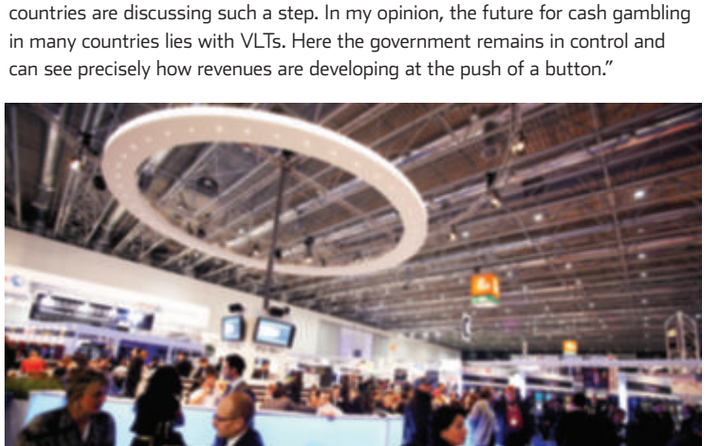
Elfriede Lauser, managing director of Gustav Lauser, will also focus on the search for new, realisable ideas on how to confront the political situation: "The exchange with colleagues will be all the more important at this trade fair. From the industry, I expect solutions and support – after all, we are all in the same boat together: the industry, wholesalers and operators."

Said Mario Hoffmeister, head of central communications at Gauselmann AG: "Basically, the industry in Germany is in a good position. Of course, the current political situation is a source of concern, but we are confident that the planned measures, some of which are totally unsuitable, will not go through. For this reason we start into 2012 with optimism – in spite of the dark clouds on the horizon."

Bally Wulff is focussed more strongly on the gastronomy sector, and this will also be evident at IMA. "With the wall-mounted version of our GameStation and the special gambling packages for hospitality establishments, such as the Action Star Solid, we have devoted particular attention to the hospitality sector, a fact which is appreciated by both gambling guests and gambling device operators. The focus of our attention, however, is on innovative gambling establishments. Our gambling packages, in particular the new Magic Cashpot, have brought movement into the market, including new market share," said Bernhard Eber of Bally Wulff Entertainment.

Volker Isenmann, a spokesman for NSM-Löwen Entertainment and its subsidiary Crown Technologies, said: "The current industry situation is largely overshadowed by the uncertainty caused by various politically-motivated legislative projects. In addition to the Amendment to the State Treaty on Gambling, individual state laws on gambling arcades that already came into effect for Berlin and Bremen and the projected state laws on gambling arcades in Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, Hessen and Schleswig-Holstein must be mentioned." His firm sees particularly interesting markets in cash gambling machines for arcades as well as for hospitality establishments.

The Austrian company Apex presents a newly-approved device at IMA for the first time. Said Udo Nickel, general sales manager for Apex Germany: "With our presence here we demonstrate the high importance we put on the German market. We believe in the future and are going to show that. Governments need money. Greece is going back to allowing cash winning devices and other countries are discussing such a step. In my opinion, the future for cash gambling in many countries lies with VLTs. Here the government remains in control and can see precisely how revenues are developing at the push of a button."



DRGT

DRGT will be exhibiting for the first time as "DRGT powered by SiP" at the forthcoming ICE.

It is only a year since DRGT announced its entrance into the international systems markets after many years of successful operations in the home market in Belgium. But the purchase of Austria's SiP in the summer has provided synergies that will allow "DRGT powered by SiP" to present a wide range of systems choices.

New at ICE will be drSMIB Arcade, for network integration of AWPs. Among the other DRGT products on display, drFast is a simple and cost-effective way to transform slots to cashless operation, using iButton or RFID card technology from DRGT.

drPulse, an option to any of DRGT's solutions, enables accounting and/or cashless on machines with no or a limited serial protocol. drTouch has been designed for video slots which have a single touchscreen monitor. When the iButton is activated, the drTouch information is displayed on the screen, giving the player complete visual control over their account.

drTouch² is DRGT's top-of-the-range solution for slot machines with two or more displays. When the iButton is activated, the drTouch² information is displayed on the lower display, while the game reels are moved to the secondary display. This gives the player complete visual control over their iButton account while allowing continued, uninterrupted gaming.

drTicket is a ticketing system that runs without a server, while drReelScreen is a way to update traditional reel-based games. Credit status, player tracking information, odometers, marketing messages and the original pay table glass can be shown on a 19-to-22-inch-wide touchscreen.

The integration of SiP made a full range of progressive and mystery jackpots available to DRGT's customers. Among these is drJackpot, which again does not require servers or controllers, and works with DRGT's drScreen and drReelScreen products, showing the jackpots on the slot monitors.

JCM Global

Making their world premiere at ICE are two new solutions from JCM, the iPro and iPro-RC bill validators, the perfect next step for those using JCM's award-winning UBA.

The iPro combines SMLED sensors with the anti-fishing technology that JCM says made UBA the most popular bill validator in Europe. Its modular design means it can quickly and easily replace an existing UBA head for instant improved performance. Other features include a sealed bill path for dust, water and light protection; dual exit sensors with anti-pullback drum device; ICB optional add-on; and a replaceable bezel holder.

iPro-RC, meanwhile, has an added recycling feature. It incorporates two large-capacity chambers holding recycled notes for instant payouts. The iPro-RC also has JCM's anti-stringing technology and a lockable, removable cash box.

ICE will also mark the premiere of JCM's new BlueWave Deluxe software uploading tool, enabling faster software upgrades.

And as well as these new products, JCM Global will also show its award-winning iVizion bill validator, which it says won every RFP that it competed for in 2011, alongside its Intelligent Cash Box (ICB) system, which helps eliminate human errors in every step of the drop process, and now offers Web

Magic Dreams

WOW is the brand-new multimedia upright cabinet that Italian casino machines manufacturer Magic Dreams will launch at its most important exhibition of the year. It will also introduce the Time Voyager Jackpot and the High Voltage series.

With Time Voyager, players jump from past to future with a unique goal: to hit the biggest jackpot of all time. The past is the starting point for their experience through the ages but only by activating the Time Machine can their performance be boosted by the future.

Time Voyager Games Library is composed of three new titles: Back to Jurassic, Back to Rome and Back to Rinascimento. Suspense, dynamic interactivity and 3D visual effects are key features.

High Voltage, meanwhile, is a standalone progressive jackpot series of three new titles with high visual and aural impact.

All High Voltage games feature 5+1 jackpot levels. Five are standalone and game-related; they can be won during a special interactive bonus. The top level, however, is common to all the titles. Thanks to SAS functionality, the machines of the series can be linked together for local or wide-area progressives.

Why ICE?

Kate Chambers, portfolio director at ICE Totally Gaming, explains what the London show has to offer.

"ICE Totally Gaming is the only exhibition that brings the online and offline gaming worlds together, which means that visitors to ICE have a unique opportunity to see at first hand the challenges, trends, technologies and opportunities impacting the entire gaming landscape," she says.

"As always, the key drivers of change will be legislation and technology – but ICE plays a broader role, enabling visitors to meet and socialise with colleagues from throughout the world, network, debate the future and leave armed with new ideas.

"ICE Totally Gaming reflects what is taking place across all of its sectors. For example, things such as Facebook's change in policy on gambling advertising have prompted new ways of thinking and new product strategies, all of which will be manifest at ICE," adds Chambers.

"Some of the big-ticket issues relate to the rising importance of tablets, HTML5 and new developments in game content across all platforms. Gaming products are of the moment; first-mover advantage is crucial, and with the pace of technological change and more importantly the speed with which game creators harness new technology, it's a case of always keeping abreast of change.

"Our aim is to build on the success of 2011, when ICE lived up to all of our expectations, recording double-digit growth and in the process breaking the 20,000 attendance figure."

GamCare

Throughout its 14-year history, registered charity GamCare has been supporting those with gambling problems, helping to raise awareness and address the issues associated with gambling addiction.

Working closely with the industry, GamCare has always been a keen participant at trade events, and EAG is an important date in the charity's calendar.

Said Teresa Tunstall, head of training and development for GamCare Trade Services: "We've always taken the view that we are affiliated to every part of the coin-op, amusement and gambling industries.

"Attending the previous EAG International Expos proved to be very productive for GamCare. We cannot carry out our work in isolation and the show provides an excellent opportunity to engage with manufacturers, operators and trade associations."

The GamCare annual conference took place in November, so EAG will deliver the perfect opportunity to discuss proceedings.

Added Tunstall: "Our current initiatives are around training and certification. No funds from our treatment work are used to support this – we charge operators on a cost-recovery basis, keeping charges to a minimum, and any small profit goes straight back into treatment. We train operators' front-line staff to identify someone who may be at risk and signpost them towards help. Staff need to be comfortable with this and good training is the key."

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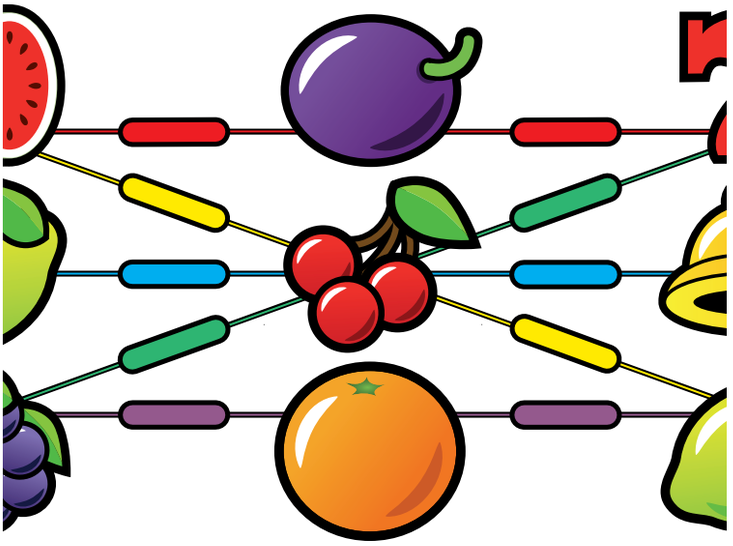

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Aristocrat Technologies

Aristocrat Technologies will take to ICE the largest number of games that it has shown in recent years.

It brought forward European release schedules for several games suited to the region's playing tastes after they received a positive response from European operators when previewed at the Las Vegas G2E event in October.

Said William Wilsnagh, managing director for Europe and Africa: "So many of the new games on show at G2E created such an impression with European operators, we've made their advanced rollout in Europe a priority.

"A great example is Reel Tube, one of two new standalone gaming categories being showcased at ICE. Offering bidirectional rotation of the reels, it allows for unique bonusing features and innovative gameplay."

Reel Tube will roll out in Europe with two distinctly different flavours: the 100-line game Mad Professor and the Ancient Egypt-inspired Pharaoh's Prize. Mad Professor's test tubes fill with liquid to build the gaming experience and help maintain excitement, while Pharaoh's Prize adds Reel Power with thematic symbols combining with revolving columns

Another first at ICE will be Aristocrat's maiden multiplay game for the European market, Wonder 4, on which up to four games can be selected for simultaneous play. Having chosen any combination from a menu of four proven performers – the 40-line Wild Splash, Reel Power games Firelight and Pompeii, and the Xtra Reel Power game Buffalo – players select their bet multiplier, which applies to wins on all the games played.

Aristocrat is also bringing a range of six-reel games to Europe, each offering 4096 ways to win. Debut titles in this category include three Xtra Reel Power games: Samurai's Honor, Wicked Winnings III and Wolf Moon.

The vast majority of Aristocrat's standalone games displayed at ICE will be available in both Viridian WS (widescreen) and Vii Slant cabinets, the latter being publicly paraded at a European show for this first time this January. Optional enhancements include Nteractiv LCD button technology and LCD toppers, for linking standalone games with XTreme Mystery.

Merkur Gaming

"We will introduce novelties for such highly developing segments of the international gaming markets as VLT and server-based gaming," said Merkur Gaming's spokesman Rolf Falke. "Success of our VLT and SBG range of products is guaranteed by the winning combination of well-founded know-how in this part of the gaming business, the advanced ADP technology and Merkur's huge library of game content."

The firm will exhibit a range of games under the umbrella brands Games Unlimited and Casinoline, designed to offer maximum diversity for international markets.

"The gripping features of our games ensure maximum player satisfaction and customer connectivity. All game packages are available in the ergonomic Slant Top cabinet as well as the latest casino-style cabinet WB5 for optimal comfort", said Peter Amling, Merkur's managing director.

Spanish visitors are expected to show an interest in the new reel-based AWP Cards West, while for the Italian market there will be a range of Comma 6a products.

As well as ICE, Merkur will also be exhibiting at IMA.

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Spielo International

Spielo International, the new entity formed by the merger of former sister companies Atronic and Spielo, will appear in its fully-integrated form at ICE for the first time in 2012.

Serving the VLT, commercial casino and AWP sectors, its line-up includes content with innovative functionalities like Episodic Gaming; new and proven content within linked, progressive, and community games; and player-tested cabinets, established core game titles, licensed brands, and systems solutions.

And its unification with i-gaming firm Gtech G2 means the two companies will be representing their combined portfolios at the show, to demonstrate how online and land-based gaming can mutually generate traffic and attract new players.

Among the products on show, Egyptian Gold is Spielo International's first progressive link using Episodic Gaming. The player can save their achieved status and reactivate it during the next play session. As they go along, the player unlocks more features and additional bet options for more action. When they reach the highest status, an additional award is randomly revealed by Tutenchamun.

Mermaid's Spell is a rapid-hit, eight-level linked progressive multi-game featuring three distinct titles – Great Reef, Magic Lagoon, and Bay of Fortune. It lets players select "enchanted symbols" for re-spins and increased chances at the progressives. Five-of-a-kind line wins trigger the corresponding progressive. Players can choose their volatility by seeking their favourite progressive level.

Spielo International has also expanded its multi-game solution Diversity with the introduction of Amazing Amber, Pure Purple, Gambling Green, and the brand-new Absolute Azure. Operators can select game suites tailored to their players' tastes.

Diversity offers up to ten games grouped into categories that can be selected by players via touchscreen. Presented on the new Oxygen cabinet, it allows players to select their preferred game types with different volatility levels.

Also at ICE will be new core games including Goldify, and the new Animal World game family, featuring the Puzzle Pay bonus. Puzzle Pay symbols turn around to display pieces of a picture, and all other reel positions will re-spin. If additional actual Puzzle Pay symbols appear after the re-spin, they too will turn around to show more pieces of the picture.

The bonus ends if there are no additional actual Puzzle Pay symbols after the re-spin or all 15 positions are turned around. Credits are awarded based on the number of pieces revealed. Titles in the Animal World family include Animal World Africa and Animal World Australia.

The firm's top-performing AWP products will be on display at the show, such as the Italy AWP Delite cabinet. This sleek dual-screen cabinet has been designed for a typical bar operation, and is manufactured and distributed by Spielo's exclusive distribution partner in Italy, Marim.

The firm's products for the Spain's AWP market will also be at ICE, including the popular multi-level progressive link Dr Cash, offered on the Harmony2 cabinet and designed especially for the Spanish Type B arcade market.

TST

TST, part of Gaming Laboratories International, says it is coming to ICE "because Europe continues to be the hotbed of the global i-gaming industry. Many jurisdictions and players across the UK and the European continent are embracing i-gaming, and TST has been at the forefront of discussions to build regulations and conduct testing to ensure the game is fair for everyone. It is important for us to exhibit in London because this is where the industry is, and it is important for them to hear the message that we have to deliver – that i-gaming can be successfully tested and regulated, and can continue to expand as a legitimate arm of the global gaming industry."

Gaming Laboratories International

Gaming Laboratories International (GLI) will be showcasing exclusive tools that help regulators and suppliers do their jobs easier, faster and more efficiently. For example, it will have the newly-released and award-winning GLI Mobile app for iPhone and iPad that enables regulators to take the lab with them anywhere.

Other GLI-exclusive tools on display will include the award-winning GLI Link, which allows suppliers to save time and money by testing devices against systems remotely; Point.Click.Transfer, which speeds time to market by enabling suppliers to transfer previously certified products into new jurisdictions with the click of a mouse; and GLIAccess, the hub where regulators and suppliers can track submissions, certifications and revocations.

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Q&A: Chris Black

Sound Leisure's managing director Chris Black has been with the family firm since he left school, and he's not bored yet

How did you first get involved with the amusements industry?
I left school in 1986 at the age of 16 and intended enrolling on a painting and decorating apprenticeship. I had always been a hands-on type of person, and that appealed to me. However, my father asked me to work for him at Sound Leisure and try some of the different skills that we had in-house, such as electronics, cabinet making, operating, manufacturing and so on.

At first I was entrusted with the most important duty in a factory, that of making 35 cups of tea and running to the sandwich shop three times a day to keep the lads happy. When I wasn't mashing tea I spent my time building vinyl mechanism baskets, polishing brass coin-mech plates and sticking the title strip numbers onto the old vinyl jukebox title racks (digital jukeboxes have really taken some of the tedious jobs away). I also spent time on the shop floor building machines alongside the majority of our current personnel.

After a year I progressed to our stores department and learned about customer support and backup. I enjoyed this but really wanted to get out on the road. As soon as I passed my driving test I was moved across to our operating division and worked seven days a week, 14 hours a day installing and servicing jukeboxes in the north of England. I really enjoyed this period and this gave me a great grounding for my next challenges, in sales and then in a management position.

My most important duty was running to the sandwich shop three times a day

Why? What attracted you to this sector?
My father had worked in the industry for as long as I can remember, at first for MAM and then setting up Sound Leisure with Eddie Moss. I remember a lot about the early days of the business: I was eight when Sound Leisure was established, and recall helping to clear out the old mill on Stafford Street on the outskirts of Leeds where we were originally based. I was always down at the factory as my mum also worked in the business. I suppose I always had a draw to it.

In our family it is not just a work thing, it's a way of life. My brother and wife also work within the business.

Do you think it has changed much since then?
Being in a sector that relies heavily on the pub trade, we have witnessed a massive change in the past 25 years. Not only has the way that the industry operates changed, so has the outlook of the nation – people are now happy to stay at home and drink and entertain themselves there.

What are the biggest positive factors for the sector right now – the drivers of growth and development?
Technology is a major positive factor. We can now offer so much more to the end user and operator than was ever possible before.

And what are the negative ones – the obstacles to growth?
The main obstacle is the changing marketplace and lack of business confidence that most people have in the sector. This is resulting in a lack of funding for a lot of customers, and that obviously has a knock-on effect.

Looking at your whole career, what do you reckon was your smartest move (large or small)?
Listening to my father and joining the business.

And your dumbest one?
Can't think of one that can be printed!

Where do you hope you'll be, professionally, in ten years' time?
Still running a family business with my brother, Mike, and possibly one of my kids.

And finally – if you'd never embarked on this career, what other line(s) of work would you have liked to pursue?
Painting and decorating, as per the first question, or possibly something to do with banking.

Curriculum vitae

Education:
1983-86 Mount Saint Mary's High School, Leeds

Career:
since 1986 at Sound Leisure his entire career; now managing director

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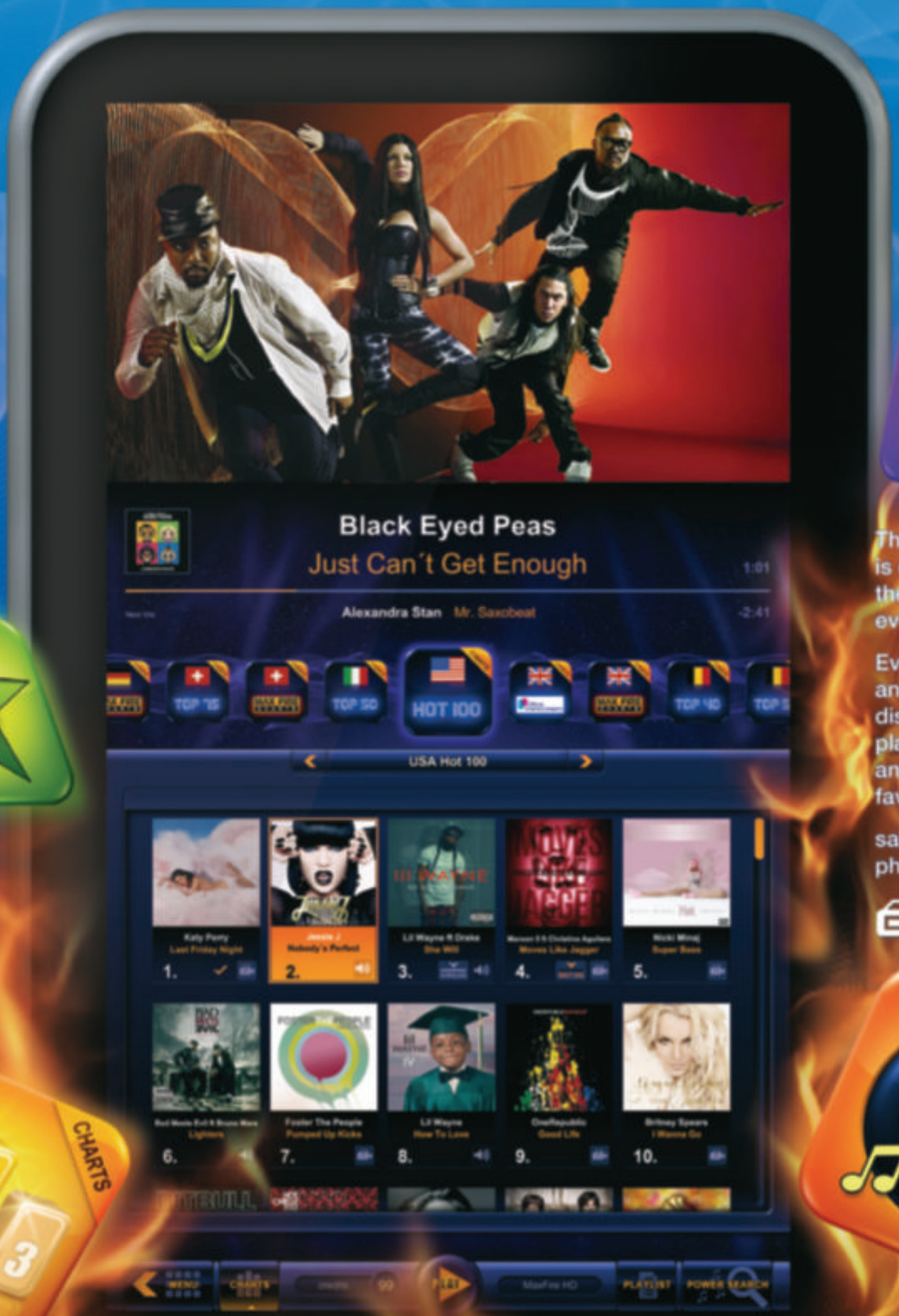

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