iNTERGAMINGi

QUESTIONS OF PROGRESS

The Technology and Innovation issue

LUCK OF THE DRAW

The lottery betting revolution

ALTERED STATES

The rise of the Balkans

CHERRY ON TOP

Interview: Cherry CEO Anders Holmgren

CASINO // BETTING // AFFILIATES // REGULATORY

The winning formula

Steve Sawyer, vice president for international strategy at Digital Element, explains how IP geolocation technology offers igaming a winning combination

O NLINE gambling is a thriving industry and global online wager value is expected to rise to a staggering $950bn by 2021, a substantial increase from $550bn last year.

Much of this growth will come from mobile channels, driven by a proliferation of smartphones and tablets, availability of low-cost data plans, and increased access to wi-fi – all of which allow consumers to gamble without location restrictions.

The expansion of the sector can also be accredited to more countries legalising online gambling, a change in attitudes due to the rise of social and sports betting, and increased availability of non-cash payment options such as credit cards and virtual currencies.

❝OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS, THE PRIORITY FOR GAMBLING SITES WILL BE TO IMPLEMENT UP-TO-DATE TECHNOLOGY TO COMPLY WITH COUNTRY-SPECIFIC JURISDICTIONAL REQUIREMENTS❞

But as the gambling market continues to grow, companies need to do more and more to stay ahead of the game. Over the next few years, the priority for gambling sites will be to implement up-to-date technology to comply with country-specific jurisdictional requirements, ensure optimum quality across devices and provide a more localised experience.

So how can companies guarantee jurisdictional control and keep up with consumer demands to ensure fair play for both users and advertisers?

A GAME OF COMBAT: TACKLING ILLEGAL GAMBLERS

The omnipresent nature of the internet means players can connect to gambling sites from all over the world.

While this provides access to a wide audience it also creates challenges for gambling sites that must ensure they hold a licence for each user's jurisdiction - allowing access to gambling where permitted and restricting where it is not. As country regulations are tightened, gamblers increasingly attempt to gain illegal access by falsifying their location or hiding behind a proxy server such as a Tor, VPN or hosting centre.

To combat the issue of illegal betting and protect the integrity of their licences, many companies are now using IP intelligence to detect suspicious activity. The technology works by determining the location of a user right

down to postcode level without them becoming personally identifiable.

Additionally, premium IP data providers can accurately determine if a user is trying to spoof their location by masking their access via a proxy, Tor, VPN or routing via a hosting centre. Users remain anonymous while gambling companies ensure compliance with data protection laws.

UPPING THE ANTE ACROSS DEVICES

With the rapid expansion of mobile betting - and users accessing gambling sites from an ever-increasing range of devices - gambling sites need to be optimised across all devices and screen types to give the best possible customer experience. IP intelligence can be used to identify mobile traffic by determining the connection type and speed, allowing the most appropriate content format to be selected for that user.

In addition this information can be used to determine the type of advertising the user is exposed to while using the site. For instance a static display ad can be shown to an on-the-go smartphone gambler who is accessing via a slow internet connection, while an interactive video can be shown to a player who is using a tablet and a faster wi-fi connection.

SCORING POINTS WITH LOCALISED CONTENT

Determining the location of a user means online gaming sites can automatically display content in their preferred language or currency, without them having to select options from a dropdown menu.

Companies will also be able to share relevant information with the player such as local sports results. In this way, IP geolocation technology helps gambling companies build more meaningful relationships with their customers and yield higher levels of trust, brand loyalty and - ultimately - revenue.

❝IP GEOLOCATION TECHNOLOGY HELPS GAMBLING COMPANIES BUILD MORE MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR CUSTOMERS AND YIELD HIGHER LEVELS OF TRUST, BRAND LOYALTY AND REVENUE❞

CREATING ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS THAT TURN UP TRUMPS

In recent years, both consumers and content providers have spoken out against the annoyance of intrusive, irrelevant ads and the detrimental effect that spamming has on potential online custom.

Gambling sites are far more likely to attract

and retain players that are served relevant ads and advertisers will also feel they have hit the jackpot as they watch their click-through rates improve.

Both gambling sites and advertisers can use IP intelligence to raise their game by combining IP data with other criteria to target customers with highly relevant and timely campaigns, share promotions based on user location and align ads with external events to make the gambling experience even more immersive and meaningful. They can also use location data to deliver personalised messaging that will drive customers into local casinos or betting shops.

In an industry that is governed by country-specific regulations, faces a constant threat of illegal use and that is evolving to accommodate gambling across a growing number of devices, IP intelligence is essential.

For gambling sites that recognise the need to deliver targeted content and advertising without annoying or identifying the user, making use of good-quality, granular, real-time IP data will be the winning move in the years to come.

Steve Sawyer is Digital Element's vice president of international strategy and is responsible for strategic development of the company's IP Intelligence and geolocation products across the Europe and Asia-Pacific regions. Sawyer has been involved in the IP Intelligence industry for more than 15 years, with substantial experience in fraud, gaming and enterprise applications. Earlier in his career, he worked on newspapers' online adoption, later moving onto online auction sites as technologies rapidly advanced before joining the IP industry in 2002.