

Debate Concludes UK Gambling Policy Proposals Driven by Government's Need for Money, Not in the Interest of Operators or Players

Software provider favours regulated markets where jurisdictions license operators serving their residents

14-05-2010 (London, UK) – GTECH G2's second Thought Leadership Seminar brought industry leaders and legal experts together this week to discuss the ramifications of proposed changes to UK gambling policies resulting from the current Remote Gaming Review. The CEOs, legal advisors and other gaming executives that attended left better prepared to voice their concerns during the government's Consultation process.

The expert panel, with moderator **Peter Wilson**, Partner, Memery Crystal, features **Simon Burridge**, CEO, Virgin Games; **Paul Bolt**, Director of Sport and Leisure at the DCMS (the key civil servant responsible for gambling); and **Nick Hawkins**, Legal Director & Company Secretary, Danoptra; and **James Hollins**, Gambling Equity Analyst, Daniel Stewart.



"It was a well informed and open debate about the Consultation proposals," said moderator Peter Wilson. "Despite what quickly appeared at the start as diametrically opposed camps of Simon Burridge, Nick Hawkins and James Hollis from the industry on the one part, and Paul Bolt representing the Government on the other, some common ground emerged.

First, there is not any specific consumer protection problem with the current licensing system that needs fixing.

Secondly, the proposals were the product of the DCMS feeling it needs to be "seen to be doing something" in the face of an ongoing erosion of an already comparatively small number of operators holding British remote licences. They are certainly not industry driven reforms.

Thirdly, an intention to require overseas operators in the EEA, white list territories or Gibraltar to apply for British licences that is intended to be enforced by a law without extra jurisdictional effect would largely be relying on operators' goodwill to apply for the necessary licences. The US experience was cited as a clear example that not all operators will fall into line. Finally, all were in agreement that, as always, tax will be the most important element. With Paul Bolt unable to advise us of the Treasury's plans (which frankly even the Treasury probably couldn't throw much light on as yet), there was, as Nick Hawkins put it, an elephant not just in the room but filling it.

No one had sufficient crystal ball reading skills to foresee whether the proposals would survive the election of a new government but there is no doubt from the main 3 parties' manifestos that remote gambling is neither high on the political agenda nor held in high regard. Paul was refreshingly spin free as a government representative and remained unflappable in the face of wide ranging criticism of the proposals, articulated well by Simon.

With Nick providing political context with his insider's view as a former Shadow Minister on gambling, and James with his finger on the pulse of the big operators, those that attended were fully equipped with arguments to make their feelings known in the ongoing Consultation. Views must be in by 18 June 2010. If there is a large enough critical response these ill thought out proposals may never see the light of day."

GTECH G2 hosted, but did not take part in the debate directly. GTECH G2 supports regulated markets where jurisdictions license operators serving the residents of that country.

GTECH G2's Thought Leadership Seminar series is part of the casino, poker, bingo and sportsbetting software company's commitment to furthering dialogue and understanding of issues and industry developments that are critical to its business partners' success.

Video highlights, photos and additional information are available at www.iGamingDebate.com.

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About GTECH G2 (www.gtechg2.com)

GTECH G2 brings together, under one brand, the combined expertise of GTECH and its extensive lottery insight with leaders in the interactive gaming world providing a complete gaming portfolio of poker, bingo, casino, sportsbetting, fully managed

services and instant games. The group includes Boss Media, a leading innovator in software and systems for Poker, Casino and Bingo entertainment; Finsoft , a leading provider of enterprise-wide real time trading solutions for the commercial sports betting industry – both interactive and retail; St Minver, a fully managed service provider of Internet games to media, lifestyle, and other brands; and Dynamite Idea, a developer of unique, innovative digital instant and side games. Consolidating combined talent and expertise into one premiere brand means that GTECH G2 can provide a flexible digital solution to all customers, large or small, wherever they may be.

About the G2 Thought Leadership Breakfast Seminar Series (www.igamingdebate.com)

As one of the world's largest igaming software and services providers GTECH G2 is proud to stimulate frank discussion and lively debate of topical issues in our industry by hosting a regular breakfast seminar series bringing igaming CEOs and their financial and legal advisors together with regulators, government officials, and igaming legal experts to share information and opinions.

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