

**Game Design: Sink or Swim**

***iGaming Business Magazine: November / December – 2009***

Are your games interesting enough to keep your players coming back for more? Or are your game themes and betting products so old and dusty that your once-loyal customers might soon run away screaming!

With the proliferation of online gaming comes a broadening of options for players, both the seasoned pros and those newly joining the market. There's just no denying it: more choices for players means more competition for operators.

Today, just being there ready to sign up new players isn't good enough. It's not just about who the operators are, but what games and betting products are being offered. If you're not able to stay ahead of the game, and keep up-to-date with fresh ideas, you're bound to lose out to your competitors.

Naturally, some tried and tested games are just too successful to even think about scrapping. You've probably got a few profitable greats like that already on your list, so keeping them in your offering is essential to maintaining the loyalty of your existing customer base.

But what about those players who haven't found their favourite game yet, or those who always need to play the next best thing? Unless you're willing to throw away money, innovative game design is more important now than ever before. When your competitor releases a great new game title, you have to fight fire with fire.

There are many new approaches to online gaming, many of which have only barely been explored. While we have already seen traditional lotteries, casino-style gaming and sportsbetting in many incarnations, other novel systems are also joining the fray.

Betting exchanges can offer players the choice to wager on far more than just sporting events. Nothing is sacred in the world of betting exchanges, with players wagering on the outcome of stock exchanges, political elections, and even television programs. The relatively lower rake on betting exchanges further entices players to spend more of their gaming budget on these websites.

Many operators are beginning to implement massive wide-area progressive jackpots, sometimes even joining the customer base of different operators. This allows for greater jackpot pools than ever before, and can even pave the way for influential partnerships between heavy-hitting operators.

At the cutting edge of online gaming, some operators are beginning to offer skill-based peer-to-peer games with unparalleled graphics and game play. These games are primarily targeted to the younger audience, with players already accustomed to the highly-sophisticated world of amusement video games. Nearly any type of video game can be adapted into a betting product, like a first-person shooter or a car race simulation.

These modern players take pride in their quick reactions, gaming experience and hand-to-eye coordination. Allowing these players to compete against one another and stake hard cash on their gaming prowess can mean big profits for operators willing to take a chance on something new. Again, keeping the rake on the lower side gives players little reason not to join.

Just as these novel approaches to online gaming are being adopted today, they move one step closer to being 'old news'. Who knows what types of never-before-seen gaming are undoubtedly in the works even as we speak.

While Accredited Testing Facilities (ATFs) around the world have their work cut out for them testing and certifying these all-new systems for live operation in regulated jurisdictions, there is no doubt that these systems will continue to hit the market creating brand new completion every day.

With so many great options available, players don't have to settle for anything less than exactly what they want. Some players who might have previously been registered on a number of different websites offering the same type of gaming might now whittle down this duplication to leave only the best of the best.

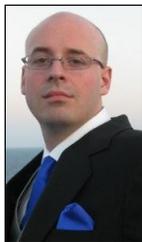
It's difficult to know whether your website will be the one to be dropped before it's too late. When new options continue to present themselves, players will continue to jump ship whenever they get bored.

This makes every operator's job a daily struggle to maintain the perfect balance between tried and tested favourites, and brand new options. Staying up-to-date with fresh ideas can be challenging, time-consuming and expensive, but not nearly as costly as falling behind!

With so many new gaming products available on the market today, many of which can be bolted onto existing websites, operators can expand their offering more easily than ever before. Some players demand this variety as a cost of their loyalty.

Player loyalty can make the difference between profits and losses. Money matters, so game design matters too!

## **Bio**



Mr. Noah Turner is the Chief Technical Officer (CTO) of Technical Systems Testing (TST), an internationally recognized Accredited Testing Facility (ATF) offering evaluation and consultation services for both the land-based (traditional / terrestrial) and Interactive gaming, lottery and Information Technology (IT) industries.

Office: +1 (604) 873-5833

Email: [nturner@tstglobal.com](mailto:nturner@tstglobal.com)

### **OFFICES:**

**Vancouver** – Suite #420, 1367 West Broadway, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, V6H 4A7 // O: +1 (604) 873-5833 // F: +1 (604) 873-1075  
**London** – Swan Centre, Fishers Lane, Chiswick, London, England, United Kingdom, W4 1RX // O: +44 (0)2087 474 956 // F: +44 (0)2087 427 967  
**Sydney** – Suite #305 / 306, 30 – 40 Harcourt Parade, Rosebery, New South Wales, Australia, 2018 // O: +61(2) 9700 7023 // F: +61(2) 9700 7024  
**Melbourne** – Level 28, 303 Collins Street, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, 3000 // O: +61 (3) 9678 9095 // F: +61 (2) 9700 7024  
**Macau** – Macau Number 39, 17F Central Plaza, 61 Avenida de Almeida Ribeiro, Macau, China // O: +853 8291 3992 // F: +853 8291 3889