

A Matter of Perspectives

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For just over a year now, the United Kingdom's gambling industry has been operating under the rules and regulations of the new ***Gambling Act***, put in place by the UK Government's own Gambling Commission.

With a full year in the rear-view mirror, how's it all working out? How far have they come, and what does it all mean for the players?

Notwithstanding a number of changes to the traditional land-based gaming market, it means that many new types of online gambling sites are now allowed to operate from the UK.

Players have to be careful when choosing their online gambling site, and the country or jurisdiction where the site is hosted does matter!

Countries with higher regulation will require their operators to comply with stricter technical standards. Operators that fail to comply with those standards risk losing their license to operate, so they need to take those requirements seriously. That means that the more rules and regulations imposed on operators, the less likely they are to try to cheat the players, either knowingly through fraud or accidentally through negligence.

The UK's Gambling Commission uses a 'risk-based' approach to enforcing their regulations. This means that any high-risk areas, where problems like game fairness and security are harder to identify, are much more strictly monitored and enforced. On the other hand, low-risk areas where issues like account history and website hotlinks are typically much easier to spot, are not watched over quite so closely by the Commission.

This approach helps to focus the Commission's time and efforts where it really counts. Just like with regular enforcement of the law, most of us are happy for police officers to focus on serious crimes, rather than writing tickets for jaywalking!

The Commission also takes time to listen to industry experts and review the existing gaming environment in other jurisdictions, both critical steps for any new regulatory body. They frequently ask experts in open forums to give them guidance on what kinds of rules and regulations to apply, and how to apply them effectively.

Through these methods the Commission has learned to apply legislation aimed to protect underage children and problem gamblers, and reduce crime. Even advertising is monitored, preventing website operators from other countries that fail to meet their strict requirements from advertising to the UK public.

Like many other gaming jurisdictions around the world, the Commission requires industry operators and software suppliers to call on Accredited Testing Facilities (ATFs) for high-risk areas. These independent laboratories have the capacity to perform impartial assessments of the entire gaming system to make sure that it complies with the Commission's more critical rules and regulations.

Although the Commission may have had a good start and a great year, there is still a long road ahead of them.

Moving forward, as the dust settles and the Commission catches their breath, they could begin working more closely with industry operators and software suppliers, helping them to better understand the technical standards they are required to meet.

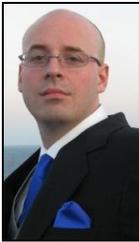
Some say that being so busy with getting everything up and running has left the Commission with little time to answer everyone's questions. Operators and suppliers are eager to seek audience with the Commission to get the information they need about allowable game designs.

Finally, as the Commission settles into their role, they could review their progress over the past year in order to fine tune their technical standards. Over time, it is hoped that this process will allow the Commission to continually re-assess where to draw the 'risk line' in the sand. A risk-based approach only works when the right elements of gaming systems are subjected to independent testing.

Overall, the Commission has proved that regulating online gambling can work in the UK, ensuring fairness to the players, and allowing operators and suppliers to do business within an appropriate framework of rules.

In the end, it means that online gambling can be fair and safe for the players, with just the right amount of regulation!

Bio



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