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Celebrating excellence

Ambi and Sportradar dominated the EGR B2B Awards 2022 after scooping three trophies each at the black-tie event spanning 42 categories, hosted by comedian and broadcaster Aurie Styla at The Brewery, London.

Kambi took home the sports betting supplier, sportsbook platform supplier and innovation in sports betting software titles, holding off fierce competition from fellow firms. For the latter accolade, the judges commended Kambi for "an outstanding year of product development" as well as "true innovation and differentiation".

Sportradar received gongs for the sports data supplier, live streaming supplier and best customer services, securing its hat-trick on the night. For the former award win, the judges congratulated the data firm for "innovative use of tech to leverage across multiple sports".

Elsewhere, Pragmatic Play secured a brace of accolades after netting the bingo supplier and casino software supplier awards.

Live casino giant Evolution was highly commended but was knocked off its perch by Vivo Gaming to secure the live casino supplier title, while Gaming Realms took home the mobile supplier award.

There were also two new categories introduced this year in the shape of employer of the year and slot supplier rising star.

Quickspin was awarded the first-ever employer of the year title, with Digitain highly commended, while AvatarUX came out on top in the slot supplier rising star category.

Commenting on the award win, Nicola Longmuir, CEO of AvatarUX, said: "This is a fantastic achievement for AvatarUX and is a true testament to the hard work and dedication of the whole team."

Meanwhile, Future Anthem CEO Leigh Nissim said it was an honour to be credited as the standout performer in the data and AI partner of the year award.

On behalf of everyone on the EGR Global team, I would like to congratulate the shortlisted companies and the winners, all of which are honoured in this special report.

Niamh Gallagher,

Group head of content

A' DS 202

Affiliate software supplier

PartnerMatrix

COLLECTORS: BIANCA MATHE, GROUP COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, AND ALEXANDER JONES, SALES MANAGER, EVERYMATRIX



Bingo supplier

Pragmatic Play

COLLECTORS: ALBERT PESCA, DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT, AND JAMES THURLOW, SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGER, PRAGMATIC PLAY



Live casino supplier

Vivo Gaming

COLLECTOR: MARTIN HODGES, MARKETING DIRECTOR, VIVO GAMING



Esports betting supplier

Pinnacle Solution

COLLECTORS: SAM WRIGHT, B2B MARKETING SPECIALIST, AND ROHINI SARDANA, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR. PINNACLE SOLUTION

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Virtual sports supplier Kiron Interactive

COLLECTOR: ROBIN HUTCHISON. DIRECTOR. SQUARE IN THE AIR



Innovation in RNG casino software

Pariplay

COLLECTOR: JOEY HURTADO, MANAGING DIRECTOR, WIZARD GAMES



Innovation in slot provision

4ThePlayer



Skill games supplier Sigma Software Group



Innovation in sports betting software

Kambi

COLLECTORS: VEENA DHESI, SVP PARTNER SUCCESS, SIMON NOY, SVP TRADING, AND TOMMASO DI CHIO, SVP REGULATORY AFFAIRS AND COMPLIANCE, KAMBI



Live streaming supplier & sports data supplier

Sportradar

COLLECTORS: ADAM AZOR, MD GLOBAL MARKETING, AND SANDY GREWAL, GLOBAL HEAD OF TALENT ACQUISITION, SPORTRADAR



Lottery supplier NeoGames

COLLECTOR: JOEY HURTADO, MANAGING DIRECTOR, WIZARD GAMES



Fantasy and DFS supplier

COLLECTORS: JON CHARD, SALES DIRECTOR, AND JAMIE MITCHELL, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, LOW6



In-play betting software Spotlight Sports Group



Aggregator platform SoftSwiss COLLECTOR: DEBBIE ROBSON, COMMERCIAL MANAGER, EGR GLOBAL



Innovation in mobile

COLLECTOR: THALUANA MUSCAT, SALES MANAGER, SWINTT



Multi-channel supplier

COLLECTOR: DAVID MCDOWELL, CEO, FSB



Sports betting supplier & sportsbook platform supplier Kambi

COLLECTORS: KAMBI TEAM

B2B AWARDS 2022 WINNER Software rising star Spribe

Software rising star *Spribe*



Acquisition and retention partner

 $\mathit{Gift} \ \& \ \mathit{Go}$

COLLECTORS: GEORGE STEAD, HEAD OF LEGAL, AND BEN ABRAHAMS, HEAD OF FINANCE, GIFT $\&\, GO$



Corporate services supplier OneComply



Data and AI partner

Future Anthem

COLLECTORS: LEIGH NISSIM, CEO AND FOUNDER, AND LAUREN ROUNCE, DIRECTOR OF SALES, FUTURE ANTHEM



IT supplier

GeoComply

COLLECTORS: SARAFINA WOLDE GABRIEL, SENIOR DIRECTOR, GLOBAL MARKETS, AND ROBIN ALEXANDER, IMPACT MANAGER, GEOCOMPLY



Recruiter of the year

Pentasia - The Conexus Group

COLLECTORS: BRUCE GAMBLE, CO-FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, KARL HARENBURG, SENIOR RECRUITMENT CONSULTANT, AND TEAM, PENTASIA - THE CONEXUS GROUP



Best customer service

Sportradar

COLLECTORS: HUW PROCTER, SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER, AND TATJANA ARTIMAVICIENE, CUSTOMER SUPPORT MANAGER, REST OF WORLD, SPORTRADAR



Marketing and PR supplier

Square in the Air
COLLECTORS: SQUARE IN THE AIR TEAM



Cryptocurrency services supplier

SolutionsHub

COLLECTOR: LUKE FISHER, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, CAPITAL INTERNATIONAL



Innovation in payments solutions

Global Payments Gaming Solutions



Services rising star

Department of Trust

COLLECTORS: MICHAEL BYRNE, COO, AND CHARLES COHEN, FOUNDER, DEPARTMENT OF TRUST



Data centre and cloud systems provider Continent 8 Technologies

COLLECTORS: DAVID BRACE, TECHNICAL ACCOUNT DIRECTOR, AIDAN REES-WILLIAMS, ACCOUNT DIRECTOR, AND JUSTIN COSNETT, CHIEF PRODUCT OFFICER, CONTINENT 8 TECHNOLOGIES



Employer of the year ***NEW***

Quickspin

COLLECTORS: QUICKSPIN TEAM



Compliance & KYC supplier 1account



Payments company

Worldpay from FIS

COLLECTORS: ALEX MORGAN-MOODIE, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF VERTICAL GROWTH, AND NICK YEATES, SENIOR RELATIONSHIP MANAGER FOR GAMING, WORLDPAY FROM FIS



Casino software supplier

Pragmatic Play

COLLECTORS: ALBERT PESCA, DIRECTOR OF ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT, AND JAMES THURLOW, SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGER, PRAGMATIC PLAY



Mobile gaming software supplier

Relax Gaming

COLLECTORS: RELAX GAMING TEAM



Mobile supplier

Gaming Realms

COLLECTOR: MOUHCINE JALILI (RIGHT), HEAD OF BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS, GAMING REALMS



Poker supplier

Playtech

COLLECTORS: WILL TALBUT, SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGER, AND MARK JONES, SAAS COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS AND RESEARCH MANAGER, PLAYTECH



White label partner White Hat Gaming

COLLECTORS: ANDY WHITWORTH, CEO, AND DANIEL LECHNER, VP SALES AND MARKETING. WHITE HAT GAMING



Slot supplier rising star ***NEW***

AvatarUX

COLLECTOR: NICOLA LONGMUIR, CEO, AVATARUX



Slot supplier

NetEnt and Red Tiger

COLLECTOR: AMY RICHES, HEAD OF MARKETING, EVOLUTION GROUP



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Lottery Supplier of the year

Featuring: PartnerMatrix

Earning client trust and industry recognition

PartnerMatrix CEO Levon Nikoghosyan examines recent shifts in the affiliate market, why the issue of security is more pressing than ever and what that means for affiliate marketing going forward

EGR Intel (EGR): How did you end up in the affiliate sector?

Levon Nikoghosyan (LN): When I started working in the igaming industry in 2013, affiliates were already becoming popular, and some brands were on their way to becoming industry giants. Casinos also were actively searching for new and more effective traffic sources. But the niche of affiliate software providers wasn't very diverse. There were a few established names but the market was missing a fresh, functional and secure affiliate system.

In 2015, together with some like-minded friends, we gathered a team of professionals and came up with an idea. Fortunately for us, the management of EveryMatrix, one of the leading igaming suppliers, liked our idea. That is how the story of Partner-Matrix began.

As is usually the case, it was pretty tough for us to find our first clients. The first step is always the hardest, but after someone uses your product and likes it, word begins to spread, people hear about your product, and more clients inevitably follow.

In just a few years, we started to get international recognition and began partnering with brands from different markets all over the world. Now you can find big names such as Riobet, FortuneJack, Dafabet, PowerCasino and Digitain, among many others, in our client list. From the very beginning, we have constantly been focusing on our clients' needs and, in some cases, trying to overdeliver on their demands.

EGR: Did PartnerMatrix have any particular highlights this year which have contributed to your win?

LN: 2022 was one of the most active years for PartnerMatrix in terms of new features and services. We recently introduced the anti-fraud intelligence tool, a system that aims to detect and prevent fraudulent actions. With the rise of scams in the affiliate industry, having the best anti-fraud tool has become mandatory for all operators. The system can now find and prevent the most common affiliate frauds, adding new modules as new threats emerge.

We have also developed special programmes for new clients, including startups and established operators, offering them our most personalised services. For example, if you're switching your affiliate system to PartnerMatrix, our team will provide a special setup and integration service, including seamless migration of your information to the new system. After undergoing many overhauls, updates and new additions, we managed to reach 200 top clients in 2022. In my opinion, all of our efforts, blood and sweat have lead to our recognition by the EGR B2B Awards.

EGR: How does PartnerMatrix understand market needs and how have they evolved over time?

LN: Let's take, for example, the moment when the Covid-19 lockdown started in early 2020. Back then, it was obvious that online gaming, and especially esports, was going to blow up in terms of popularity. Our clients would eventually want tools to promote their esports section, and to answer those needs, we started adapting the system and adding new features. That led to a win-win situation, where our clients were bringing in more traffic than their competitors and our system was becoming popular among esports providers. But since our software is always getting more updates, we try to set up the system in the most convenient way for every type of casino, their affiliate programme policy and the marketing strategies they use.

Speaking about development, affiliate marketing is now more lead-generation-oriented than it



Levon Nikoghosyan

CEO and co-founder PartnerMatrix Levon Nikoghosyan is CFO and co-founder of PartnerMatrix, part of EveryMatrix. He has worked in the igaming industry for almost 10 years and gained vast experience and knowledge in the affiliate market Since joining EveryMatrix in 2015, Nikoghosyan established PartnerMatrix and continues to lead the successful affiliate software provider, answering igaming clients' demands and offering a wide range of additional services aimed at creating and maintaining casino affiliate channels.

Featuring: PartnerMatrix



was five years ago. I remember the times when casinos were buying tons of traffic, paying affiliates per click. And nobody knew who these clickers were but, in reality, most of them were random people who accidentally clicked the ad and would probably leave the platform immediately.

Over the years, a few popular commission models were developed, with cost-per-acquisition rising at the top and gaining popularity. Today, casinos pay affiliates primarily for a tangible result: registered players who spend money or make the first deposit. The market has become more predictable since then, the game is played by established rules, and it is easier to do business based on various tools and affiliate types while considering the previous experience of other casinos.

EGR: What do you think is the most pressing topic of affiliate marketing nowadays?

LN: Security is a topic that has always been relevant and nowadays I think it's more important than ever. Frequent fraudulent activity results from huge amounts of money that has started to circulate in the industry. A casino may try to cheat an affiliate and pay fewer commissions. An affiliate can cheat the casino and try to get more commissions. The scammer can also be a third party who wants to hack into the system and withdraw the funds.

The topic of fraud is always relevant, scammers always use advanced technology to cheat casinos or

affiliates, and our primary goal as a software provider is to prevent violations at the intent stage. To achieve maximum security, we rely on our knowledge and many years of experience working with casinos and affiliates.

EGR: In what direction is both PartnerMatrix and affiliate marketing heading?

LN: Both affiliate marketing and PartnerMatrix are going in the same direction – towards transparency. Casinos and affiliates want direct access to important information and reports from trustworthy and reputable software providers. In order to stay competitive, casinos need to act fast, boost profitable channels or prevent harmful sources without delay. With the help of real-time reports, other tools and techniques, affiliate operations are becoming safer and more transparent.

Now, most casinos and affiliates are also looking for a comfortable, user-friendly interface with all reports at hand and intuitive navigation to make quick changes in the system. To provide such solutions, we need to be in touch constantly with all business sides.

Thanks to the EGR B2B Awards' recognition as affiliate software supplier of the year, we are as motivated as ever to continue putting our seven years of experience into creating transparent and equal infrastructure that connects igaming operators with the right affiliates. •

Featuring: Pragmatic Play

Pragmatic Play their cards right

Winner of both bingo supplier and casino software supplier at this year's awards, the team at Pragmatic Play list this year's main highlights and new releases, as well as revealing what industry recognition means to the team

EGR Intel (EGR): Pragmatic Play won two categories at the EGR B2B Awards 2022. What does winning mean to the business?

Pragmatic Play (PP): As a multi-product supplier, we appreciate the variety of categories that the annual EGR B2B Awards caters for. As such, we were able to showcase our latest products in the casino supplier category, covering our recent success in bingo, virtual sports, live casino and of course video slots.

Our rich offering has allowed us to strengthen relationships with operator partners and reach more audiences than ever before. Bingo has proved an exceptionally strong vertical for us. Recent additions, such as Reels Room – a slot feature room where operators can cross-sell to players and improve the overall user experience by providing them with variation in their playstyle – have enabled the vertical to gain traction over the last year.

Awards like *EGR*'s reinforce that we are on the right track with our multi-product portfolio, not only offering what players want but delivering content considered successful across the igaming sphere. We are exceptionally thankful for this industry recognition.

EGR: Why do you think Pragmatic Play earned the title of best casino software developer?

PP: Based on our commercial growth and feedback, we'd most likely say that it's the diversity and reliability of our offering. The speed with which we can deliver both volume and high-quality content, along with being in tune with our players and operators, has informed our success. In addition, we are

a truly global team with local expertise, reaching more and more players daily.

At the heart and soul of Pragmatic Play is our slot range, which boasts more than 250 titles. The company is constantly looking for new ways to launch cutting-edge content, with Gates of OlympusTM combining both a Money Collect feature and Tumbling Wins to wow players, or the expansion of our MegawaysTM portfolio.

We are always challenging ourselves to push further and set the bar even higher, continuing to create thrilling games and experiences that are not available anywhere else, as well as upping the ante on all-time fan favourites.

EGR: What do you believe have been Pragmatic Play's main highlights this year?

PP: Since the Covid-19 pandemic put a stop to events, and as we continue to emerge from this period of change, the chance to reconnect at conferences this year and go home with highly coveted titles remains a highlight for our entire team. We appreciate that the value of networking and knowledge-sharing must never be underestimated.

Sportsbook is our newest product vertical, building out a solid product backbone this year. From event creation through to bet settlement, we cover the full trading lifecycle of key sports for a competitive offer. Including custom markets, odds and risk management across thousands of sporting competitions, our access to official data maximises margins. The entire process is managed by us, ensuring an adaptable plug-and-play product for operators.

From a live casino point of view, we launched dedicated studios for 888 in March, as well as Roobet and Betway in June. We also added new languages to our popular Chroma solutions. This year has also seen the release of VIP Blackjack, Speed Blackjack, Fortune 6 and Super 8 Baccarat. That's not forgetting actioning a unique bonus, Bubble Surprise, to our live casino hit Sweet Bonanza



Pragmatic Play

Pragmatic Play is a leading content provider to the igaming and betting industry, offering a diverse multi-product portfolio. Pragmatic Play strives to create the most engaging and evocative experience for customers globally, across a range of verticals including slots, live casino, sports betting, virtual sports and bingo.

TECHNOLOGY THAT TAKES YOU FURTHER

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DRIVING DIFFERENTIATION

W W W . R E L A X - G A M I N G . C O M



Featuring: Pragmatic Play

CandyLandTM. This engaging new bonus round now joins the existing Sweet Spins and Candy Drop bonus rounds to make three in total. It gives players the chance to land 5x, 10x and 25x multipliers, while also increasing the chances to trigger the two other bonus games.

In terms of slots, we continue to deliver on our ramped-up roadmap by releasing up to six games a month, with games such as Big Bass Splash rapidly becoming a firm fan favourite. Another highlight has been the success of Spaceman. This is a crash-style game which brings a new dynamic to our portfolio, as players must cash out before the spaceman arrives at his destination.

Most recently, June saw the release of Sugar Rush. There was a real buzz internally about this slot game, and initial feedback has been truly fantastic, augmenting our commitment to deliver some top-quality experiences.

EGR: What are the latest product innovations you have been working on in live casino?

PP: Regarding live casino, the highly anticipated launch of Boom City is something we are all tremendously excited about. Months of seamless teamwork has culminated in this unique live casino addition to the market. Boom City showcases a 6x6 grid, with players placing bets across the 36 squares and wins being awarded through the roll of two dice. These can grant one of three bonus games, award an instant cash prize and enhance winnings further through a Power-Up feature where squares are randomly multiplied.

Throughout Boom City, instant cash prizes are displayed on the game grid – bronze prizes award a 1x multiplier, silver a 2x prize, and gold a 5x win, while landing on a bust symbol results in an instant loss. In addition, Boom City's array of bonus games enhances its base game, where Boom or Bust challenges players to advance through levels with incremental risk and rewards. Also present are three features – Level Up, Safe Value and Hyper Jump – which increase the multipliers on offer or aid in the progression of added levels.

These revolutionary mechanics allow players to make decisions throughout play, increasing direct player engagement. Naturally, this is a highly abridged summary of a fantastic game – there's also a Lucky Drop feature and a Dice Battle feature.

EGR: What can we expect to see from Pragmatic Play in the coming 12 months?

PP: Expect us to continue to create quality products that strongly resonate with players, and so the industry will see us deliver on an exciting elevated roadmap. This will then see some new partnerships and top-quality entertainment content reaching new audiences. Looking back at how much we have achieved this past 12 months, from a glut of awards and industry acknowledgement to phenomenal company growth, we are looking forward to where the next 12 will take us. With an exciting new roulette product due for release soon and plenty more industry firsts to follow, let's just say there is a lot of excitement around the Pragmatic hubs as we look positively to the months ahead. •

Featuring: Swintt

If you're not moving forward, you're standing still



David Mann

◆ Chief commercial officer

◆ Swintt

David Mann is chief commercial officer for Swintt, responsible for leading sales, business development and marketing functions across global markets. He has over 12 years of experience in the wider industry, specialising in B2B startups within the igaming sector. Mann has held various roles at William Hill, Betway, Spigo and Wazdan. and has built a wealth of knowledge across multiple verticals and markets

With solid year-on-year growth and long-standing commitment to creating innovative online casino content, David Mann, chief commercial officer at Swintt, celebrates the company's rise from indie studio to becoming one of the world's most sought-after software providers

o-founded by current Glitnor Group CEO David Flynn in 2019, Sweden- and Malta-licensed software studio Swintt has rapidly expanded from a boutique operation to a true igaming powerhouse. The company has amassed an impressive collection of over 120 mobile-friendly slots and live casino games while also displaying a flair for design and innovation that sets it apart from rival operators in the industry.

At the start of 2022, Swintt relocated the bulk of its 30-strong workforce to the iconic Villino Zammit building in Sliema, Malta, with its parent company, Glitnor Group, introducing a number of initiatives to help employees strike a better work/life balance. With the group producing some of its finest work in the past six months – including the record-breaking release of Aloha Spirit $XtraLock^{TM}$ – it's been a very successful move for the company.

Where tradition meets technology

One of the key elements that has set Swintt apart from the competition is the company's deep understanding of what players are looking for in an online casino game. We have always strived to make our titles accessible to as broad an audience as possible, splitting our ever-expanding portfolio of slots into two distinct categories: innovative Swintt Select releases and classic Premium Games.

Games in the first group provide the very latest in graphics and sound while introducing cutting-edge innovation such as the studio's signature $XtraWays^{TM} \ and \ XtraLock^{TM} \ mechanics. \ These$

games have been carefully developed and created with the next generation of casino players in mind, featuring evocative designs and concepts. In this category, we have recently branched out into celebrity-backed games, such as our brand-new heist-themed slot The Crown starring former professional footballer-turned-actor Vinnie Jones. It's our very first games to include bonuses spread across multiple base game locations, with multiple ways for players to win big.

Premium Games, meanwhile, evoke the design and spirit of iconic land-based casino releases by combining familiar 'fruit machine'-style symbols with simple gameplay mechanics. Many of our games include our popular 'book' free spins that feature expanding mystery symbols, which has now become an instantly identifiable hallmark of the Swintt premium catalogue, helping to promote brand awareness and player loyalty.

Our two-pronged approach to game development has helped Swintt capture the imaginations of casino customers worldwide. Swintt Select titles offer something unique to the players who seek innovative mechanics and original themes, while Premium Games have proved popular in Germany and the newly opened Dutch market where customers are used to and continue to enjoy classic land-based fruit machines.

Adding the innovative 'X' factor

Another of the group's key product differentiators is our ongoing commitment to innovation. We consistently push the boundaries of what players can expect from an online slot and always strive for new and improved user experience. No better is this encapsulated and demonstrated than in our brand's lineup of titles which include our Xtra gameplay mechanics.

Launched in July 2021, Lone Rider XtraWays™ was the first title in the Xtra series and included a pioneering pay system which allowed players to collect



lar year for Swintt, it's fair to say that the foundations for our success have been there from the very beginning. From the moment it launched, Swintt has quickly grown from rising star to industry heavyweight, all thanks to the remarkable efforts of its team and partners, without whom it simply would not have happened.

With Swintt games featuring 300+ brands in regulated jurisdictions around the world, the company has enjoyed remarkable year-on-year revenue growth and has steadily built up its team from a handful of passionate employees to one of the most dynamic igaming collectives in the industry. It's only through their continued hard work and support that the studio has been able to hit the heights it has and, for that, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to everybody involved.

Swintt would also like to thank the *EGR* judging panel for selecting us for this prestigious industry award. I speak for all of us when I say, we sincerely hope to be in the mix again for other headline categories when the 2023 shortlists are announced.

We have big plans for the future and the upcoming next 12 months, including further partnership deals and more exciting releases, and we look forward to breaking new ground. Swintt will never be a company which stands still. ◆

special XtraWaysTM symbols that increased the slot's total number of ways to win, up to (a then) industry-leading 262,144 ways. This game-changing addition proved so popular that we repeated it again in the incredibly successful Rock N Ways XtraWaysTM.

We then decided to double down on our Xtra lineup in 2022 with the launch of Aloha Spirit Xtra-Lock™, which featured a never-before-seen bonus mechanic where players could win one of four local jackpots by fusing Tiki mask symbols together. The game would go on to become Swintt's most successful release to date, recording an increase of 796% in bets placed during the first week of launch.

More recently, we have added XtraWild™, Xtra-Streak™ and XtraHold™ mechanics to our growing portfolio as we continue to take our slot offerings in exciting new directions. Not only that, but the recent development of SwinttGamify® has enabled operators to provide players with unlockable rewards and real-time tournaments to meet consumer's steadily increasing urgent demand for more engaging content.

The team that plays together, stays together

While being named the winner of the EGR B2B Awards 2022's innovation in mobile is undoubtedly the crowning achievement of what has been a stel-

Featuring: Worldpay by FIS

Staying ahead in payments



Alex Morgan-Moodie

◆ Senior director of vertical growth

◆ Worldpay by FIS Alex Morgan-Moodie joined Worldpay by FIS in September 2020 and is currently the senior director of vertical growth, focusing on gaming, Prior, he spent 11 years working for online gaming operator giant The Stars Group (now part of Flutter) in various positions within the payments, product delivery and corporate strategy functions. Morgan-Moodie uses experience of driving international e-commerce and developing key growth initiatives to lead a team of strategists and marketing experts focused on gaming payments.

Alex Morgan-Moodie, senior director of vertical growth, discusses what makes Worldpay by FIS a worthy and standout payment partner for the gaming industry

To receive any award is a great honour. But to be named *EGR*'s payments company of the year on multiple occasions is a real privilege. It's testament to Worldpay's commitment to delivering the very best payment products to the gaming industry, and the commitment of our dedicated team.

As experts in our field, we have an in-depth understanding of the industry's unique payment needs and collaborate closely with our customers to ensure we're delivering payment solutions that work for them and their players. This is why we believe Worldpay is the standout payment provider for the gaming industry.

Helping customers stay in control

As gaming regulations shift, being able to react quickly and seamlessly is the key to success. We keep ourselves well informed thanks to our close relationships with all key regulatory bodies, industry organisations and card schemes. Plus, our partnerships with hardware and software vendors, as well as industry-leading merchants across the sub-verticals, ensures we can respond rapidly when change is needed. By staying one step ahead, we're able to give our customers peace of mind and total control.

Our expertise and insights are relied on by customers and the wider industry

Our bespoke, consultant-based team is dedicated solely to gaming, and many have a background in the sector. As a result, they have first-hand experience of our customers' challenges and know what's needed to overcome them. They can advise on individual scenarios and explore the full breadth of the Worldpay platform to find the right payments fit.

Worldpay's insights aren't just relied on by our customers, but across the industry too. We're continually investing in developing our understanding of the market through the commissioning of global research. We then share the outcome of this research with the sector in the form of reports and whitepapers, furthering the industry's understanding of customer needs which in turn helps gaming brands build payment strategies that drive player trust and business success.

Worldpay's annual Global Gaming Payments Report is one such example of this commitment. It explores new trends, payment breakdowns across different regions and what's coming next in gaming. For this reason, it's a highly valued asset for senior leaders, and often used as the foundation for future business decisions. Our 2022 Global Gaming Payments Report is currently in development and will be released via our website later in the year.

Wherever our gaming merchants need to be, we're always thinking ahead for them. Our knowledge and insights are used to anticipate future trends, the shifting needs of players and changes to regulations

Alex Morgan-Moodie | Worldpay by FIS

Building relationships that last

I think a lot of us have experienced professional buyer's remorse at some stage in our lives, whether that's because the solution sold was not fit for purpose or the supplier became unresponsive once the deal was signed. But that's not our way.

At every step of a customer's journey with Worldpay, they have one consistent point of contact, onhand to advise, consult and answer every question. Right from the get-go, we work with them to establish their challenges and what they want to achieve as a business. We'll then develop the best solution, consulting on what does and doesn't work, and following through with implementation.

Once live, we continue to work with them to ensure they get the very best from their product or service. Quarterly meetings are scheduled where we'll present the results and advise on how they can be optimised going forward. We use first-class analytics, modelling and benchmarking to provide a bigger picture view of operations, drawing on our industry-leading knowledge. Worldpay treats its customers as a partner, and we're soon considered part of their team.

Making payments seamless

We know smooth payments are fundamental to online gaming. Players want a positive experience without interruption and virtually instant payouts. Merchants that can provide this to build loyalty and repeat business, and Worldpay can support this by offering a frictionless payment experience and made-to-order payment optimisation services.

We've got your back

When it comes to online gaming payment trade, disputes and security concerns are a big issue. Worldpay has the tools to provide peace of mind for businesses and players.

Our award-winning Fraudsight solution is a multilayered fraud technology that accurately predicts if a transaction is fraudulent or not using AI and algorithms that are monitored and updated regularly by our data scientist team. In addition, highly configurable rules-setting puts control in the hands of our customers. Combined, this minimises false positives, improving the player experience, increasing approval rates and protecting business. We can also provide an intelligent dispute management platform to combat chargebacks, helping to recover revenue and reducing operational costs.

Next-generation payment products

The breadth of alternative payment methods (APMs) is continually growing. Mobile wallets – such as Apple Pay and Google Pay – are now the preferred payment method for many consumers, while the case for digital currencies, including less volatile stablecoins, is improving. Whether online, in a bricks-and-mortar casino, or within a future metaverse, the gaming industry needs to embrace these APMs and meet players where they are in order



to remain competitive, and we're helping them do so by building them into our payment services. For instance, Worldpay is already an experienced card-to-crypto processor, providing services to four of the top five cryptocurrency exchanges with 100% retention since 2015.

Always one step ahead

Wherever our gaming merchants need to be, we're always thinking ahead for them. Our knowledge and insights are used to anticipate future trends, the shifting needs of players and changes to regulations.

So, whatever the next 12 months brings to gaming, we're already thinking about it, considering its impact and are coming up with a solution to smooth the way forward. Whatever challenges are thrown at our customers, they're always ready.

It is a true honour to once again to be named *EGR*'s payment company of the year 2022. We're proud that our commitment to the gaming industry is recognised and will continue to do all we can to support its future success. ◆

Featuring: NeoGames

A winning formula



Moti Malul

◆ CEO◆ NeoGames Moti Malul is CEO of NeoGames, having been with the company for 14 years. Prior to serving as CEO, Malul was EVP sales and business development and played a central role in forging relationships with customers worldwide, positioning the firm to significantly boost its ilottery and igaming growth. Before NeoGames, Malul held management positions in the telecom and internet industries, with companies such as Ericsson & Smile Media.

CEO Moti Malul reviews NeoGames' developments and achievements over the past 12 months leading to the lottery supplier's second consecutive win and why caring for customers is key to success

EGR Intel (EGR): Congratulations on winning best lottery supplier for the second year running. What does the accolade mean to NeoGames?

Moti Malul (MM): We are thrilled. This is a profound achievement for NeoGames as it solidifies our vision of being the long-term partner of choice for ilotteries worldwide, empowering them with the tools they need to create successful ilottery programmes for their players.

Winning the award for the second year is a huge honour and a testament to our mission. It's judged on commercial success in supplying online games to lotteries as well as providing high-quality and innovative products and services.

EGR: How does NeoGames achieve this in its day-to-day operations?

MM: We constantly strive to implement, enhance and customise our ilottery offering. Our complete ilottery solution – consisting of the best technology platforms out there, a strong portfolio of interactive games and a full suite of services – has dedicated teams working across each of those functions to ensure we are always at the forefront of innovation, bringing ideas from other industries in the digital world as well as from the markets and customers we support, blending players' feedback and data analytics to create the best products and solutions.

We work strategically with our customers to get their views on what would drive their programmes forward. Our lottery customers worldwide are the most successful in what they do, providing us with a unique opportunity to collect and implement ideas into our technology and games content. EGR: Have there been any specific developments in the past year that have led to your consecutive win?

MM: There have been quite a few. NeoGames Studio has expanded its customer base with five new customers in Europe and North America, releasing blockbuster game titles that topped the charts, such as Magic Winnings, Fortunes of Cleopatra and others, and launching our multi-game progressive jackpot for instant games. Our turnkey customers continued to grow and lead the market. In the US, the top three lotteries in per capita sales online and in the percentage of online sales out of turnover – Michigan, Virginia and New Hampshire – are all our customers, with an impressive lead.

NeoCube, our advanced data analytics solution, is one of the strongest tools we have launched this past year and has undoubtedly contributed to our continued success. It is at the foundation of our customers' successful ilottery programmes, providing real-time access to data insights across the entire range of their digital activities.

Another key milestone was our entry into the Latin American market. NeoGames signed a landmark agreement in Brazil with the lottery operator in Minas Gerais to launch an end-to-end ilottery and sports betting solution. And of course, we recently completed one of the most pivotal points in the company's history – our acquisition of Aspire Global and its subsidiaries, Pariplay and BtoBet.

EGR: What are your plans for the combined company following the Aspire Global acquisition?

MM: We recognised that the needs of lotteries worldwide in the digital domain have evolved and changed. Lotteries in most global markets, and you can see that clearly in Europe and in Canada, are expanding their online offering to include igaming and sports betting, opening new revenue streams and enhancing their players' experience.

This was one of the key reasons we decided to acquire Aspire Global, along with the market-lead-

Featuring: NeoGames

ing aggregator Pariplay, innovative and successful sports betting provider BtoBet, and of course Aspire Core, a true leader in igaming turnkey solutions and expertise in online gaming managed services.

What's more, we have created a powerhouse in the online gaming space with one of the broadest market-proven portfolios across ilottery, igaming and online sports betting, which positions us to increase our addressable market opportunities.

EGR: Have you found a winning formula for continued success?

MM: In my opinion, the winning formula that has guided us over the years is to find the magic combination of happy and successful customers. As a technology and service provider, there are always daily challenges to manage with our customers, and that's natural. However, the fact that we have never lost an account shows how committed we are to ensuring our customers are pleased and at the same time very successful. We chose our mission to be 'the long-term partner of choice' to our customers so our employees know this is our compass. You can only become a partner of choice if you bring true value while also being attentive and caring. And we definitely care.

EGR: What is NeoGames most proud of?

MM: We are incredibly proud of having become an innovator and global leader of ilottery solutions and services for lotteries worldwide. Our customers' success is incredible and it makes us very, very proud. Our US customers generate close to 70% share of the entire ilottery sales in the US market, which is remarkable. The superstar launch of playalberta.ca in Canada, the success of Sazka in the Czech Republic that generates close to 40% of its GGR from the online channel – that makes us proud.

And last but not least, I am extremely proud of our acquisition of Aspire Global. I believe this new igaming powerhouse will truly become a leader in the global igaming market.

EGR: How does NeoGames help lotteries provide an entertaining player experience?

MM: We help our customers provide an entertaining player experience through several pillars. The first is NeoGames Studio, which constantly innovates with new game experiences, different and unique game mechanics and new features. There is no better testament to this than player engagement levels with our games.

Another is NeoSphere, our ilottery and igaming management system. You may ask, how can a platform contribute to entertainment? For example, the real-time smart data pushed into the portals and mobile app that enable the personalisation of user experience in content, marketing and relevant promotions creates the magic.

In the North American market, where most of our customers enjoy our end-to-end solution, our targeted marketing service is one of the key drivers enabling these customers to provide their players with an entertaining and personalised player experience. Our digital marketing experts and data analytics team provide unparalleled marketing expertise for the entire lifecycle of player interactions. We do it all to create the most effective and growth-powering ilottery programmes, providing players with amazing gaming experiences.

EGR: How does NeoGames invest in innovation?

MM: Over 16 years of industry experience has equipped us to recognise the needs of the industry and respond accordingly with product, platform and game innovations. We have also significantly invested in our expertise and advanced data analytics solution, which means that we constantly perform research to predict industry trends, enabling us to stay at the forefront of innovation.

EGR: What can we expect from NeoGames over the next 12 months?

MM: We believe we are going to see expansion into new markets and new customers across all entities in our group. The fact we can enjoy parallel growth, where each of the companies in the group leverages each other's geographic footprint, product offering and services expertise, is powerful and unique. We already see the success of Pariplay in Canada, likewise taking BtoBet to Brazil, as well as helping Aspire leverage our strong position in the US to speed up their entry. And many more to come! •

Featuring: AvatarUX

Allowing concepts to shine



Niki Longmuir CEO ♦ AvatarUX Nicola Longmuir is CEO of the awardwinning AvatarUX Studios. With over 15 years of experience in the industry gained from pivotal roles with Sky Betting & Gaming, Betfair, Ladbrokes Coral, Gaming Realms and more recently Push Gaming, she plays a crucial role in expanding AvatarUX's growth and accelerating its product strategy.

Niki Longmuir, CEO of AvatarUX, talks through the studio's journey since its launch and why so much of its success is due to staying true to its core offering

A vatarUX first entered the igaming world in 2019 with our first title Lilith's Inferno, combining a fusion of artworks as befitting our international flavour and immediately exposing players to a unique graphic style in an intense, underworld slot experience. Our first foray into slots was a resounding success, before we moved into the arena we are now renowned for, our PopWins™ mechanic.

PopRocks™ saw the dawn of the PopWins™ era, and we haven't looked back since. As a concept, PopWins™ is almost remarkably simple. Every time a player spins a winning combination, the symbol 'pops' to create two new icons, creating the potential for another win. The PopWins™ sequence can generate multiple wins since the feature continues to roll if the pops keep creating new wins. With the increased popularity of cascading wins, high volatility games and 'extending the spin', PopWins™ managed to capture it all into every spin, with even base play potentially leading to huge rewards.

The potential and power of PopWinsTM was evident immediately, with PopRocksTM being a big hit. Since then, we've been able to explore other concepts, themes and ideas centred around this mechanic. When a mechanic works in the igaming industry, it inevitably has a lengthy shelf life. I have seen this with Slingo at Gaming Realms, which has taken the industry by storm, or daily jackpots, and of course MegawaysTM. When something is popular with players, it remains popular. So many of the topperforming games aren't brand new creations, but titles that have been around for years because they resonate with players.

From its first iterations, it was clear that we had created something that had the power to be a real

force for us in the space, and thus it has become the core of our offering.

Constantly improving innovation

Today, AvatarUX boasts a games portfolio of 12 Pop-WinsTM games, from the original PopRocksTM to the incredibly glamourous PiggyPopTM and the Japanese art style inspired MonkeyPopTM.

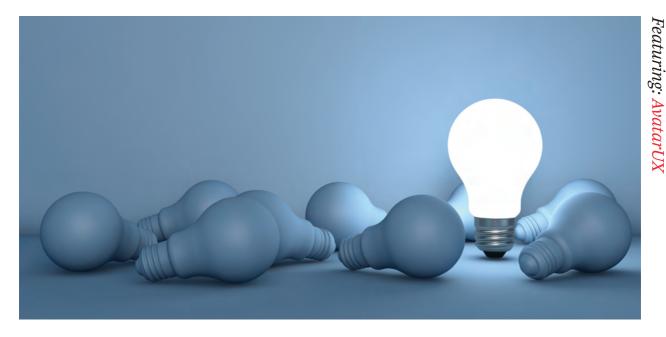
When breaking ground on a new mechanic, it is important to not get too carried away with the possibilities. Players will not necessarily be overly familiar with the way gameplay works, unlike with traditional slots or table games. WildPopsTM saw us add a serious amount of wilds to our games, while BountyPopTM saw a frozen tundra filled with expanding reels, random multipliers and bonus wheels. However, in our formative months, the game that stood out the most was CherryPopTM.

Inspired by the classic retro fruit machine genre, the title has a mass-market appeal, with it aimed to slake the thirst of players yearning to experience the return of the pop scene in the 70s and 80s, with a distinct electro twist. Accompanied by a funky soundtrack and electric animations, it immediately added a unique feel.

The 5x3 title offered the chance to grow up to 59,049 ways to win and a staggering max win of 99,846x, which saw CherryPop™ immediately become a staple for partners all over the globe, becoming a top performer for numerous operators.

While the title incorporated our exciting Pop-WinsTM mechanic, it didn't overwhelm players with too many features, it just offered a great theme, fun gameplay and ultimately the chance to hit eye-popping (pun intended!) wins.

CherryPopTM was a perfect example of not trying to do too much, and allowing what we're best at as a studio, in this case art styles and a top-tier mechanic, to shine through. We see it time and time again in the industry, be it through ultra-high volatility games, branded sequels or classic stepper slots –



the market.

to players, gather constructive feedback and create what we believe is an appealing product. We've 'gambled' on something that we believe in – the Pop-WinsTM mechanics – which was the key changing point from our first game Lilith's Inferno. We continue to build on it and evolve it with the aim to always offer new, fresh elements in our games and remain competitive. This approach is what makes us different to our competitors, and the recent EGR award as a slot supplier rising star is yet another confirmation that we stand out from the other suppliers entering

It's been an incredibly exciting time for us, and we've managed to make so many great leaps and ultimately achieve what we have so far, ie turning into an award-winning studio by staying true to ourselves. That said, we will not rest on our laurels and will continue innovating and further developing our products. We are already on the way to evolving our proprietary PopWinsTM mechanics by focusing on new permutations like MultipopTM, which will appear in our upcoming release Zombie aPOPalypseTM. And we will not stop there.

We have new mechanics in the pipeline, so players have a lot to look forward to. Regular game releases and distribution is also something we will expand on. Next year we are planning to launch more titles and target new key jurisdictions like North America for instance, with the aim to satisfy the growing player demand for our games. •

studios that excel with an element revisit it over and over again and generate strong results.

The path ahead

There is no recipe for success when it comes to games development, but our vast array of themes and features we pack into each product makes it evident that we are constantly striving to deliver the best player experience. This summer we also launched our very first sequel in our portfolio, CherryPopTM Deluxe. By building on some favourite elements from CherryPopTM, we are giving something fresh to the players who like the mechanics and the style of the original. We constantly aim to evolve our offering and enhance the player experience, be this from a sequel, original or wildly unique title. Ultimately, a game must add excitement, entertainment value and something new.

CherryPop™ Deluxe launched in June to our limited distribution of direct integration partners and it will be available on the wide network in September. In just two months it's become a top-three performing game across our entire portfolio, highlighting the value in creating exciting new sequels and adding on great features. We've not reskinned it, nor tried to overcomplicate the title, nor just whacked a new mechanic on it, but instead we paid attention to feedback and enhanced an already great title.

This is the lesson we try to incorporate with all our titles. We learnt, and are still learning, we listen

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Featuring: Vivo Gaming

The only way is up

Neil Howells, chief commercial officer at Vivo Gaming, reflects on the company's landmark *EGR* award win and discusses what exciting developments are in the pipeline for the growing studio

Winning the prestigious *EGR* live casino supplier award is going to be looked back on as a watershed moment for Vivo Gaming for years to come. Everyone has worked really hard over the last 12 months to improve our live casino offering and showcase exactly what we're capable of. This award validates all of that and so much more.

We were up against a whole host of talented studios (with some incredibly big names) nominated for the award, so to have come out above all of them is a dream come true. It's not at all lost on us that Evolution had won the live casino supplier award for 12 years in a row and, with the greatest of respect, it feels fantastic that we were the ones to break that record.

The studio's long-term mission is to help global operator brands strategically grow by offering them seamless live dealer integration, cutting-edge tools such as data feed API, customised products and promotional applications, as well as a first-class portfolio of games.

While we've been growing rapidly since the company launched in 2010, our profile has been raised a notch by winning such a prestigious award in what is an incredibly competitive field. I genuinely believe we're now in an even stronger position going forward and I, for one, can't wait to discover what's next for Vivo Gaming because the only way is up!

To date, Vivo Gaming has launched 13 premium games across more than 60 live tables, allowing our customers to offer their players European roulette, American roulette, auto roulette, blackjack, ultimate blackjack, baccarat, casino hold'em,

Caribbean stud, Dragon Tiger, Teen Patti, Sic Bo and live bingo. From early on, it was clear that to succeed we needed to have a truly international mindset and approach. Therefore, we've made it so that all the aforementioned games are streamed 24/7 in Asian, Latin American and European styles, and are available in a range of languages, making them truly accessible to a global player base.

So far, we have studios with English, Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Filipino, Mandarin, French and Turkish-speaking dealers. In addition to this, each game's UI is available in up to 27 different languages, meaning we're offering global coverage.

Hassle-free differentiation

We've been hard at work developing an array of innovative new products over the last 12 months, which have truly helped us set ourselves apart from our competitors. These products include our Chroma Key offering, CMS Lobby and Promotional Tournament tool.

Our Chroma Key solution opens doors for operators by offering them differentiation, one of the biggest challenges faced by most in today's crowded market. Chroma Key allows operators to effortlessly update their studio layout and backdrop on live casino games in just a few clicks.

This means that even the smallest operators can offer bespoke tables without having to open new ones or hire multiple dealers; they can display their own brand colours, logos, catchphrases or images using just a single table, ultimately offering maximum brand output for minimum cost.

Vivo Gaming's Chroma Key solution also allows operators to easily launch game-specific and seasonal promotions on their live casino tables with little to no hassle whatsoever.

New innovation

Looking more towards the software side of things, we've recently introduced our enhanced CMS Lobby



Neil Howells

♦ Chief commercial officer ♦ Vivo Gaming Neil Howells is the chief commercial officer for Vivo Gaming, an award-winning live dealer casino software provider for games including roulette. blackjack and baccarat. Educated in the UK. he has worked in the gaming industry for 35+ years, covering online land-based and cruise lines. His previous roles include group commercial

director for the Bombay

Group (Yolo Group) and

European operations

director for Carnival

Corporation.

Featuring: Vivo Gaming



that's designed to aid operators engage and retain customers, allowing for fully interactive inter-player chat on both desktop and mobile in landscape and portrait modes.

The CMS Lobby software also boasts a ground-breaking unlimited player feature. This means that rather than play host to just seven players (which is currently the norm for most live casino providers), we can allow an unlimited number of players into any of our live casino titles, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

One of the most highly anticipated additions to our CMS Lobby has undoubtedly been our Promotional Tournament tool. This tool is the ultimate example of gamification, creating a real sense of competition among players, significantly boosting retention by combining the most effective elements of competition, and ensuring that players have a truly unforgettable experience when playing one of Vivo Gaming's live casino games.

The Tournament tool engages customers by offering amazing prizes, displaying boosters and the potential of big wins, all the while letting them know when they are close to the top spot of a leader board in real time.

It also integrates innovative features such as a countdown timer, player rankings and real-time communication, meaning operators can ensure customers enjoy every single moment of their gameplay experience.

A bright future

So, we've had an incredibly busy 12 months developing some of the most innovative award-winning products the live casino sphere has ever seen and, to date, the reception has been beyond fantastic. We're so proud of what we've achieved so far and the future looks bright.

Over the course of the next 12 months, you can expect to see continued innovation from Vivo Gaming, as we continue to broaden our product offering in multiple markets all over the world.

We're already a major powerhouse in Latin America, with a strong footprint in countries such as Colombia, Peru and Uruguay, and we expect to build on that presence in the coming months by using data science and analytics to innovate in a way that has a tangible impact on the market.

We want to make a concerted effort to grow our brand by gaining as many certifications and licences as possible so we can offer our games in as many regulated markets as possible. We've also got a very close eye on the Asian market, where live dealer games are incredibly popular with players. We expect to make some major inroads there in the not-so-distant future.

Vivo Gaming's stock is rising rapidly and we're truly delighted to be able to showcase our incredible portfolio of games and tools. Keep a close eye on us as the year progresses as there are some incredibly exciting developments just around the corner. •

Featuring: Kiron Interactive

Virtual reality

Kiron Interactive's co-founder and co-CEO Steven Spartinos reflects on the past 12 months leading up to the virtual games provider's second consecutive *EGR* win and why the recognition will serve as a springboard for another successful year

t's been another year of continuous innovation, development and growth at Kiron Interactive and we are honoured to have won *EGR*'s virtual sports supplier 2022 award. We would like to thank the *EGR* award committee for selecting Kiron for the second consecutive year. It's an incredible accolade and one which we are extremely proud of!

The complete process of bringing our games to life – from drawing board to delivery – is only made possible by the extraordinary talent, insight, knowledge and tenacity of each and every member of the Kiron team. It's this collective dedication that allows us to get on with the job at hand of confidently delivering the products and services our operator partners expect. It's humbling to be recognised by industry peers and serves as a reminder of what an incredible team we have, and without whom none of our commercial success and the awards on the back of them would be possible.

Redefining virtual sports

The 12 months since we were last fortunate enough to be penning our thoughts for *EGR* have been tremendously busy and no less productive. The introduction of our instant-win games portfolio has been a particular highlight with four new titles launching: our cricket game Super Over and Final Over, a golf title in Up 'n' Down, as well as the exciting iGoal catering for football.

Our new games have been created using state-ofthe-art 3D animation and market-leading betting algorithms, which we believe redefine the experience of instant virtual sports, bringing a whole new style of betting on each. Developed from the ground up with online play in mind, matches are available ondemand, 24/7 and offer players the chance to bet on single or multiple games, with winnings instantly viewable. The user interface employed is intuitive and aligns perfectly with the variety of bet market selections, including quick bet options, all designed to fit the immersive nature of the gameplay, which also features live commentary as players watch the action unfold.

As a service provider in the technology industry, we constantly gather feedback from our customers and, from this, we innovate and implement changes to enhance the customer experience. This ethos has served us well and has seen us surpass a series of milestones in the last year Steven Spartinos | Kiron Interactive

Research and development

We're remarkably proud of our products and each one that we release goes through stringent product development, during which our teams collaborate and generate ideas, which leads to a meticulous design, testing and creative marketing journey.

We conduct this thorough research and development on the back of an innate understanding of the markets we're operating in, without which we wouldn't be able to maintain the exceptionally high standards that we set for ourselves and those that our customers expect of us. Part of this process and a vital aspect of creating virtual sports content is, of course, the visuals. Today, players and consumers have access to an array of cutting-edge entertainment sources via high-end devices and, as such, virtual sports content must keep pace. Our products



Steven Spartinos

- ◆ Co-founder and co-CEO
- ♦ Kiron Interactive

Steven Spartinos is co-founder and co-CEO of virtual games provider Kiron Interactive. Established in 2001, the specialist supplier now services web, mobile and landbased sportsbook and casino operators on five continents. Prior to joining the betting and gaming industry, Spartinos worked in banking and finance.

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are developed using the most advanced gaming and animation technologies, and our 51-strong virtual games portfolio wouldn't be as well received without the fantastic work our award-winning in-house animation studio puts in.

Our animation team creates beautiful animation, VFX and interactive experiences for almost any medium, specialising in creating characters and bringing them to life. Crafting a wide variety of projects for TV and film, both locally in South Africa and internationally, the team love what they do, and that passion shows in the quality of their work – a key component of the commercial success of our virtual sports content. As appealing as our visuals are, they need to be backed by class-leading mathematics and algorithms, which allow our players to play with confidence using extensive betting markets replicating those in live sports.

A fast-moving market

While Kiron is a pioneer in the industry with 21 years of experience, the market is constantly evolving and the last three or four years have seen a large push in terms of speed to market, comparable to the growth of esports. Game portfolios are growing more dynamically, in-play betting options are more readily available and more real-life elements are being presented. The development is more rapid, creating captivating games that are relative to current events and shaping the future. These have all combined to elevate virtual sports to its current position of occupying its own vertical.

It's this keen eye for our respective markets that allows for a constantly expanding customer base, and we're able to service it with a carefully tailored customer care approach. Prevalent throughout our business and technical processes, our sales approach is based on the fundamentals of providing the correct bespoke solution to an operator. This can only be achieved by understanding our customers' requirements and gaining insight into their operations. Once we gather all of this information, we provide a solution as opposed to selling a product.

Always room to grow

As a service provider in the technology industry, we constantly gather feedback from our customers and, from this, we innovate and implement changes to enhance the customer experience. This ethos has served us well and has seen us surpass a series of milestones in the last year.

Growth across Europe, Latin America and Africa



has been supported by the growth of our international team, alongside our expanding product portfolio, and we've really needed it – the return to normality for retail post-Covid has gone hand in hand with strong online growth and it's this that is setting us up perfectly for the next 12 months and beyond.

This will see us continue to develop ourselves and our products, using innovation as a byword rather than a buzzword. We will be taking that spirit to the exciting US markets while we continue to expand our business across our existing territories and strengthen our online partnerships with the introduction of more instant-win content.

While we're always looking to spread our wings with new titles, other key projects are upgrades on our football and racing games, products that have defined our company historically and will never be taken for granted.

We want to celebrate our award success with more growth as a team and use this recognition as a springboard from already robust underpinnings. We've got a lot more hard work ahead of us but we're even more confident than ever that we've got the assets at our disposal to achieve our goals. Fingers crossed we're celebrating another *EGR* win this time next year!

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Featuring: GeoComply

GeoComply wins IT supplier of the year 2022

CEO Anna Sainsbury on GeoComply being recognised for its evolution from geolocation supplier to a premier destination for anti-fraud and AML solutions

A t GeoComply, we have always valued our deep connections across the industry. To be recognised as IT supplier of the year is a great honour, especially after being awarded prizes for safer gambling provider and standout charitable efforts at last year's EGR North America Awards.

The award is a great credit to our 300+ engineers who are based all around the world, from Canada to Vietnam and Eastern Europe. Despite turbulences in the global technology ecosystem as we navigate the pandemic, they have built a truly trustworthy foundation behind our innovative products and tirelessly pursue our vision of geolocation excellence.

Additionally, our dedicated account managers, product managers and customer success teams have worked tirelessly with partners to combat an ever-changing fraud landscape. Corporate colleagues across departments lend their expertise every day to support technical pipelines and create beloved workplaces. I am very grateful for the community of talent GeoComply has been able to attract; technology is nothing without a passion for serving people.

It would be remiss not to acknowledge the trauma our Ukrainian colleagues have had to endure. The situation is extremely fluid and our teammates continue to endure unimaginable difficulties on a daily basis. Solidarity is global and we deeply appreciate partnerships from across the industry as we navigate trying times.

Landmark moment

Our journey began in 2011. GeoComply co-founder

David Briggs and I believed that if igaming in the US was going to happen legally, the ability to accurately determine the true location of a player was going to be vital. At the time, there were no commercially available products that could meet the stringent standards of regulators and the exacting needs of the real-money online gaming industry.

So, we made one. There have been so many milestones along the way: New Jersey's launch of igaming in 2013; Nevada and Delaware pooling poker liquidity in 2014; the launch of indoor geolocation with PinPoint in 2016; the fall of PASPA and the launch of sports betting in 2018. I am so proud of my team's achievement in supporting the industry at each pivotal moment in its evolution.

Via our corporate social responsibility department IMPACT, we donate our technology to organisations fighting child exploitation and supporting gender equality around the world. It is our duty as technology suppliers to ensure positive social impact and give back to our communities

Anna Sainsbury | GeoComply

We're no longer just a geolocation technology supplier. By working closely with regulators, government officials, operators and law enforcement agents, we have honed and optimised our technology to meet the unique needs of this market across anti-fraud specialisms. Our technology has become a one-stop destination for identity verification, location-based cybersecurity, anti-money laundering and anti-fraud solutions.

We partner with gaming companies in every regulated state in the US, Canada and internationally, and service over 14 million users worldwide. From BetMGM and Caesars to financial services, content



Anna Sainsbury ◆ Co-founder and

♦ GeoComply Anna Sainsbury is the co-founder and CEO of GeoComply. Headquartered in Vancouver Canada. with eight additional alobal offices. GeoComply's products ensure seamless compliance in gaming, content streaming and fintech. Alongside her innovative ventures, Sainsbury is deeply dedicated to philanthropy GeoComply's CSR division, IMPACT, directs corporate attention towards addressing some of the most difficult challenges facing women and children today. She's passionate about stopping digital child exploitation and advocating for gender equality.

Featuring: GeoComply



streaming services and other diverse companies, our technology is enabling remarkable growth stories globally.

Thanks to you, our software is installed on over 400 million devices worldwide and analyses over 10 billion transactions annually. We consistently identify new fraud risks and develop powerful solutions based on our rich industry expertise, insights and data. Today we offer a suite of highly effective and complementary technology solutions. Our identity and age-verification solution IDComply provides an industry-leading 95%+ data verification success rate. Using automated data collection, players are seamlessly onboarded while GeoComply tracks requirements in every US state to ensure compliance for clients.

GeoComply customer Mia Raffa, the chief operating officer of PlayUp USA, commented: "It's vital to our long-term strategic growth plan that we have technology and partnerships in place that allow us to scale and still be fully compliant in such a tight and heavily regulated environment. The account verification process can be cumbersome due to the needed KYC regulations. IDComply offers solutions

to ease the compliance strain during the registration process."

Facing forward

In 2021, Blackstone Growth and Atairos became our first institutional investors. Their trust and shared passion for technology is powering us to pursue new heights. That is why, in 2020, GeoComply helped establish Conscious Gaming, a non-profit organisation enhancing responsible gaming initiatives with technology.

Conscious Gaming's first solution was PlayPause, a multi-jurisdiction self-exclusion tool that elegantly solves the problem of users self-excluding with one operator, or in one state, only to continue to gamble in another. Via our corporate social responsibility department IMPACT, we donate our technology to organisations fighting child exploitation and supporting gender equality around the world.

It is our duty as technology suppliers to ensure positive social impact and give back to our communities. Thank you again to the *EGR* judges for recognising our pursuit of excellence. We hope to honour this trust each and every year. ◆

Featuring: 4ThePlayer

Innovating on fun

Andrew Porter and Chris Ash, co-founders of 4ThePlayer, winner of innovation in slot provision, talk to *EGR* about why innovation is vital to the industry and how being passionate gamers themselves has driven the business to success

EGR Intel (EGR): Congratulations on scooping the innovation in slot provision accolade. Why do you think the judges crowned 4ThePlayer the winner?

Chris Ash (CA): I think we won because we genuinely are an innovative slot provider. It might sound obvious but lots of companies claim to be innovative or doing something different but still make cookiecutter games. Every one of our games has a unique innovative twist. We are not afraid to try new innovations and push the boundaries.

Andrew Porter (AP): Our innovations always have a player- and entertainment-based rationale behind them. We want the player to have a unique experience that delivers nice wins, keeps them engaged and entertained, and with clear potential for greater wins. We can always fully justify our innovations; it comes through in the game play and is clear to explain to operators and players.

EGR: What does the win mean to the business?

CA: It helps cement what we have been saying for a few years: we are the leaders in innovation and, importantly, innovation entertainment. When casinos want to keep their players entertained with really fresh content, they know where to come.

AP: It means a lot to get the recognition of an *EGR* award, especially for innovation which is in our DNA. Beating FTSE 250 giants is very flattering too, not to mention refreshing – David versus Goliath, if you will. I would like to say thanks to my team, who matched my own passion in everything they've

done and it's deeply appreciated. We would not be where we are today without them.

EGR: What have been your key highlights from this past year?

AP: The crescendo we are experiencing in terms of our brand but also commercially. We are getting a lot of attention for all the right reasons. The games are also performing very well, which always helps.

CA: 4 Fantastic Fish, which we released recently, is proving to be our best release to date. Another highlight has been the return to face-to-face meetings. It has been an interesting few years and to grow a company without meeting in person is a challenge. We are all about seeing our customers, showing them our games first-hand and hearing their feedback. A lot of that is lost over Zoom.

EGR: What innovations does 4The Player offer the industry and why are they important?

AP: Innovation and how it drives great entertainment is a topic very close to my heart and one of the reasons I wanted to create 4The Player. This is the entertainment industry and players deserve fun for their money. Without innovation, it can become very dull playing the same features in every game over and over again.

CA: One question we always ask ourselves in development is, 'What can we do differently and where can we go one better than what's out there?'.

AP: Also, 'Why would I want to play it?' and 'What makes it fun?'.

CA: Yes, I truly believe that those questions are key to our success. We are players ourselves. It might sound odd but so many developers aren't, and they often miss really important parts of the mix because of it.



Andrew Porter

◆ CEO and co-founder

◆ 4ThePlayer

Andrew Porter is CEO
and co-founder of
4ThePlayer. He is in
the detail of everything
4ThePlayer does,
personally responsible
for product, math and
art decisions.



Chris Ash Business development director and co-founder ◆ 4ThePlayer Chris Ash is business development director and co-founder of 4ThePlayer. Prior to that, he founded Ash Gaming, which was acquired by Playtech in 2011. He is also an active angel investor and adviser to various tech and software companies

Featuring: 4ThePlayer



AP: Two good examples of our innovations are:

- BONUS†UPTM, which solves two major player frustrations: if they don't hit a bonus quickly, the potential prizes in the bonus get bigger and bigger the longer they play. After a bonus, there is an improved chance to hit the next bonus. We've used BONUS†UPTM in three Secret Cities and four Secret Pyramids both top performers.
- Big Reel Portrait Mode® is an innovative way of using the entire screen in mobile portrait play, compared to the 20% letterbox you usually see. It is featured in the majority of our games.

EGR: 4The Player talks a lot about entertainment. What do you think makes for an exciting slots game?

AP: It's the journey the player goes through in the game; it's not just playing a bonus but what happens to the player along the way, how the player experiences the potential within the game. A lot of that journey is inherent to the math, but it needs to be supported by the graphics and sounds and an accessible and inviting theme.

CA: We play a lot of games, and this is often where others fall down. The games might have amazing graphics and sounds but after a bunch of spins it all goes flat with no exciting moments. Getting this right is as much an art as it is a science.

EGR: Which marketing aspects do you take into consideration when building new games?

CA: Marketing is critical to everything we do. It's never an afterthought.

AP: Yes, right from early game concepts, we think about every aspect of the marketing, from the sales process to what the players will see.

CA: I think it's Tesla that says they have no marketing budget as their brand is the marketing. We are

similar: we do have a budget but our marketing is embedded into everything we do – our brand, philosophy, games and even the game names!

EGR: What's your approach to game design?

AP: We take a very collaborative approach to game design. We work as a team, bounce ideas around and share the stronger ideas with our customers to see what resonates.

CA: We are very lucky that we have great relationships with a wide range of customers. They play an important role in our game design process. At the end of the day, our customers know their players. We'd be mad not to listen to them!

AP: Responsible gaming is another element important to us. We are called 4ThePlayer and aim to represent and protect players' interests in all respects.

CA: Responsible gaming does not stop with game creation. We put a lot of effort into making sure the people we work with, affiliates, streamers, press, etc, all align with our views and approach. We are not about fake promotion – we want our marketing to be based on real plays and experiences.

EGR: What plans does 4ThePlayer have to expand? CA: I think we will always maintain our boutique approach and have no plans to become a factory or a monster organisation; for us, small is beautiful. We're looking to create a constant 10 games per year, each with the same meticulous attention to detail and 4ThePlayer secret maths sauce. That said, we do plan to expand our global reach. Our games can be found on Gaming Realms, Relax or Yggdrasil, which gives us a very wide distribution.

We have also progressed significantly in the US with licence applications and are currently live in New Jersey, with Michigan and Pennsylvania following soon, and more states to come. We are also closely watching every regulated market. Where it makes commercial sense and we can do it, we want to get ourselves into every possible market.

EGR: What are you going to focus on in the next year?
AP: More exciting and innovative games! With all our success comes learning, which is funnelled back into everything we do. We can now really feel it paying off and the snowball effect on our growth is exhilarating. I can't wait to see where we are in 12 months' time! ◆



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INNOVATIONS INPAMENTS SOLUTIONS



Featuring: SolutionsHub

A digital way of life – staying ahead of the game

SolutionsHub provides expertise with registering and maintaining igaming, crypto and blockchain businesses. Having been named best cryptocurrency services supplier, CEO Lee Hills outlines SolutionsHub's road to success

ur victory at the EGR B2B Awards in 2022 was the second time we had been named cryptocurrency services supplier, adding to our previous win in 2019. But this most recent triumph was undoubtedly even sweeter. Of course, it's always great to win. Lifting an award at such a prestigious event is fantastic for your company's profile and great for staff confidence and morale. In 2019, the success was a massive honour and particularly timely as we were still in the process of establishing ourselves as a go-to provider of regulatory services in what was a relatively new sector.

Fast forward to 2022 and the world is a very different place. Crypto is more prevalent, understanding is broader and competition is more fierce. The crypto industry has grown rapidly and with Web3 in many people's minds, it looks to be the future of our digital way of life. As a company at the forefront of helping legislate these technologies, we have not only had to keep up, we've needed to be ahead of the game.

I'm proud to say we've achieved this. We've grown our team, taken on more clients, worked more closely with more regulators and entered new areas of expertise. Against this backdrop, we have continued to succeed, delivering high-quality results for an increasing number of clients in an increasingly popular and very competitive sector.

The island of opportunity

One of the reasons we have been able to progress so successfully is, of course, our location. The Isle of Man is the best base for blockchain technology companies thanks to its world-class infrastructure and forward-thinking approach to regulation.

The Isle of Man government deserves credit for embracing new technologies. Digital Isle of Man's launch in 2019 of Blockchain Isle of Man, a unique hub dedicated to growing the blockchain sector on the island, is just one example of the work carried out to make the island the go-to destination for blockchain-based companies.

The Isle of Man Gambling Supervision Commission deserves a special mention also. Its open and supportive approach to new technologies is fundamental to our success and has seen the Isle of Man deliver real results for crypto and blockchain betting businesses, on time and on budget, while other jurisdictions heavily market capabilities but, as yet, have failed to deliver results.

One of the reasons we have been able to progress so successfully is, of course, our location. The Isle of Man is the best base for blockchain technology companies thanks to its world-class infrastructure and forward-thinking approach to regulation

Lee Hills | Solutions Hub

Digital Isle of Man works shoulder to shoulder with the industry to embrace technical innovation and to build a strong ecosystem to support tech enterprises and startups licensing and locating on the Isle of Man. Our latest EGR B2B award win further solidifies that the Isle of Man is the premier jurisdiction to base your blockchain and cryptocurrency businesses.

Our history and story so far

So, how did we get here? I previously worked for most of my career in the regulated fiduciary sector



Lee Hills Founder and CEO ♦ SolutionsHub Lee Hills is founder and CEO of awardwinnning Solutions Hub. He is an online gambling expert. Isle of Man Gambling Supervision Commission-approved director, and has more than 15 years' experience in fiduciary services and gaming. specialising in licence approvals and banking solutions for blockchain, cryptocurrency and gaming businesses.



where I specialised in obtaining licences for remote gambling businesses. In 2016, I started considering establishing my own advisory firm. My intention was simple; I worked for many years advising startups but never had the responsibility or control of one myself. I wanted to challenge myself, prove I could 'walk the walk' and improve my life and the life of my family. Through the support of my then-fiancée and now-wife, Zita, I decided to back myself and founded SolutionsHub in June 2016. Six years down the line, we have an amazing team, brilliant clients who have been with us from the beginning, rapidly growing customer base and revenue, and still at the forefront of everything blockchain. Stressful? Definitely. Rewarding? Exponentially.

Before that, in 2015, I was in Dubai helping businesses establish bitcoin exchanges in the Dubai Multi Commodities Centre until the treatment of their activities changed and we had to move them to different jurisdictions.

In Q4 2016, we were engaged to assist with a world-first blockchain gambling licence. Despite the many challenges, as gambling regulation and licensing experts driven by achieving what others find too difficult, we relished the challenge which resulted in the world's first blockchain gambling licence.

In 2017, we recognised an opportunity to lead the blockchain funding space by utilising the Isle of Man's uniquely flexible Designated Business Act regulations to launch AML/CFT-compliant ICOs, culminating in advising the Isle of Man's first hard-capped ICO at \$40m and numerous other successful offerings.

In 2018, we continued our work with the blockchain community by expanding our syndicate and professional services networks, helping professionalise syndicates into exempt schemes, speaking at several industry events in Europe and passing the first IOM GSC crypto audit.

In 2019, we secured the first approval for a blockchain sportsbook, a significant achievement given the complexity of the infrastructure, and are currently working to solve various banking security and operational problems for exchanges. Since then, we have enjoyed countless similar successes for clients, continued to grow our team and, I am happy to say, picked up many awards along the way.

The future is bright for SolutionsHub. Working in a dynamic and cutting-edge industry such as blockchain means fresh and exciting challenges are never far away and we are excited to continue our growth as the Isle of Man continues to lead the way as a home for cryptocurrency companies. •

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Featuring: Global Payments Gaming Solutions

Taking the easy option



Christopher Justice

♦ Global Payments Gaming Solutions Christopher Justice is president of Global Payments Gaming Solutions. A veteran leader in the world's payment and commerce industry. Justice is an accomplished leader with a demonstrated ability to build and position companies for sustainable growth and deliver innovative products that generate significant organic growth. His 25+ year career spans executive leadership roles at organisations including CenPOS. Century Payments, Ingenico, Merchant Link and First President Christopher Justice explains how Global Payments Gaming Solutions tackles and solves the challenges faced by igaming customers through its fast, smooth and secure payment options

EGR Intel (EGR): Congratulations on winning the EGR B2B award for innovation in payments solutions. Why has Global Payments excelled in the category this year? Christopher Justice (CJ): We've excelled this year because of our focus on the customer experience. Gamers have grown accustomed to mobile-based commerce experiences, regardless of whether those experiences take place in a physical or digital space. To remain competitive and adapt to the changing nature of how consumers want to do business, Global Payments provides casinos and sportsbooks with the flexibility needed to offer digital alternatives to traditional forms of funding. With us, operators can tap the tools required to overcome the traditional challenges associated with funding and disbursements in the igaming space.

EGR: What makes Global Payments' payment solutions different to competitors? What is your USP? CJ: The key difference is that we provide a focus on speed, user experience, convenience and security. Global Payments gives players the tools to fund bets electronically and receive real-time access to their balances using their 'on file' checking accounts, simplifying the account funding process from start to finish. Global Payments' VIP Lightspeed® platform powers funding and withdrawals for igaming, while VIP Preferred® e-check network allows users to effortlessly access funds from their checking account. Unlike other competitive programmes which require lengthy sign-up processes or long lag-times in depositing and accessing funds, Global Payments helps users play when they want, how they want.

EGR: Why are banking alternatives suited to the B2B community and B2C retail environment?

CJ: The security and regulatory demands on payments within the gaming industry are probably only matched by those placed on the banking industry. Global Payments is built on experience spanning over 60 years in business and 20 years in gaming. We're able to provide our customers with a heightened sense of security and convenience.

EGR: What are the biggest challenges consumers and operators face and how do you solve them?

CJ: As the igaming sector continues to grow, the biggest challenge is finding a way to make the user experience a positive interaction. To succeed in this space, operators must create a seamless gaming experience for customers at every touchpoint. Global Payments has tackled this challenge head on by leveraging an omni-channel approach to create a quicker onboarding experience for customers.

Once enrolled, Global Payments provides customers with unparalleled convenience and functionality. VIP Lightspeed® platform connects online and bricks-and-mortar gaming experiences, making account funding easy and supporting an omni-channel experience for those operators building a combined physical and digital footprint.

EGR: Does Global Payments have any products built specifically for the igaming industry?

CJ: Global Payments iGaming is our platform built specifically for the digital experience. By harnessing the flexibility and ease of Global Payments' industry-leading VIP Preferred® account network, the igaming platform offers solutions for each of the four emerging igaming verticals. For sports, Global Payments igaming powers funding and disbursement for online sports betting, while the mobile casino capabilities provide an exciting digital 'gaming floor' environment. The platform also supports ilottery services and on-premise mobile

gaming for a fully omni-channel experience. As the only omni-channel funding solution in the market, VIP Mobility delivers a seamless funding experience to customers across all mobile and online devices.

EGR: What are the most common demands of players and operators?

CJ: Speed, security, an intuitive user interface and convenience. Every time. Global Payments solves this by making it simple for users to quickly register and fund their VIP Preferred® account.

After a one-time enrollment, VIP Preferred® members have access to more than 400 North American, land-based, mobile and online gaming locations. Customers can directly transfer funds from their VIP Preferred® balance to their favourite online site and their funds move with them from one operator to the next. The blending of physical and digital properties drives higher customer satisfaction and puts more cash in play with lower risk.

EGR: Why are e-wallets the fastest growing segment for payment processing in the igaming sector? What levels of protection do they provide for players and operators?
CJ: E-wallets are growing quickly because of the familiarity and comfort level customers have with the technology. According to Worldpay's recent Global Payments Report, mobile wallets' share of global transactions jumped over 21% year over year in 2021, rising to 28.6% of global transaction value.

Additionally, users are increasingly comfortable using e-wallets for transactions outside of just loading a debit or credit card. Consumers are using their mobile wallets to store everything from concert and sporting tickets to loyalty programmes to crypto.

The downsides to e-wallets, though, is that the money ultimately lives outside the gaming ecosystem. Global Payments, however, ensures a stronger, more secure playing environment by using ledger technology instead of an e-wallet to ensure that users' funds do not have to live in a separate ecosystem. As a part of one of the world's leading payment technology companies, we can provide fast transaction times, compliance with anti-money laundering regulations and EMV-ready security.

EGR: How does Global Payments achieve a fast and seamless user experience without having to compromise on security?

CJ: Global Payments' igaming solutions deliver hardened bank-grade security to online casinos' complex gaming environments to ensure

each transaction is secure. For the individual user, Global Payments also has a casino account management service (CAMS) team, available to customers around the clock, and that assists consumers with any perceived fraudulent activity in real-time.

EGR: Are you currently working on any new innovations or using new technologies within your payment offerings? CJ: We're always innovating and looking for new ways to provide value to the gaming industry. This year, we partnered with MaximBet, owned by privately held licensed sports betting and casino operator Carousel Group, to provide a seamless funding experience to customers via their smart devices.

To create greater value and bottom-line return for VIP Preferred's products and services, Global Payments also released an enhanced version of our Partner Assist Program with Engaged Nation. The Partner Assist Program enables operators to create a branded website that offers customers daily chances to win entries in cash drawings and enter contests. The programme has revolutionised the industry by creating additional ways for operators to engage directly with consumers, ultimately building customer loyalty beyond the traditional methods common in gaming. The goal of Engaged Nation's continuous efforts is to help customers and operators maximise the value of VIP Preferred®.

EGR: What can we expect to see from Global Payments in the next 12 months and do you have any predictions for the future of payment solutions?

CJ: Looking ahead, Global Payments Gaming Solutions will continue to enhance our offerings to meet the evolving needs of customers. The future of payment solutions in the gaming industry will be one of trying to marry speed, convenience, security and compliance, with the true innovation coming on the user experience side.

In the past decade, most payment options have focused on the security and compliance side. And that is incredibly important. But too often the user experience was completely ignored. Since casino customers are the ones using these products, their satisfaction is equally important.

Looking at some of the reviews left on the app stores gives us insight into what the future of gaming payments will be. On the Apple App Store, one user commented: "VIP Mobility has completely changed the game with this mobile app! I cannot make it up. This app is so easy, even my 90-year-old grandmother uses it!" •



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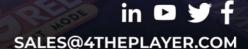






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Featuring: Spribe

Reach for the sky

Managing partner David Natroshvili discusses how Spribe's Aviator title has become one of the top-performing turbo games in the world and why operators wanting to tap the next generation of players need to act fast

EGR Intel (EGR): Congratulations on winning software rising star of the year. Can you tell us what this means to Spribe and the team behind the business?

David Natroshvili (DN): This is a milestone moment for Spribe and marks our arrival as a major online casino content provider. Of course, our games offer something a little bit different, especially so with our flagship crash game, Aviator. We have dared to be different with the games we develop and being given this award is a big pat on the back for the entire team. It's also proof that we took the right direction with our portfolio and that the dedication and hard work we have put into the business has paid off. We were up against some very stiff competition, so to come out on top makes me and the rest of the team incredibly proud of what we have achieved to date.

EGR: Can you tell us more about your flagship crash game. Aviator?

DN: Our flagship title, Aviator, in our turbo games category, is one of the most popular games in the market. Today, it is live with more than 1,500 online casino brands in core markets across Europe and beyond, including the UK and all Malta jurisdictions (we hold licences in both). Aviator is a new kind of social multiplayer casino game that features an increasing curve that can crash at any time. When the game round starts, a plane takes off and the multiplier grows. Players must cash out before the plane flies away. If they do, they win. If they don't and the plane flies away, they forfeit any accumulated winnings and their original bet.

Unlike most other gambling and casino games, this puts players in control of the outcome, and this has made it tremendously popular with all player types.

EGR: Why do you think operators should stock Aviator and other crash games?

DN: Operators are going to great lengths to engage the next generation of players and in particular the lucrative millennial and generation Y/Z demographics but, to date, the vast majority have failed to offer a truly compelling reason for these players to ditch video games in favour of online casino. This is because developing games for these players requires an entirely different approach and goes way beyond adding gamification elements to traditional slot games. Bringing in elements from video games such as missions and tasks is a step in the right direction, but to create content that really taps into their psyche requires something entirely different.

Aviator has global appeal, especially among the next generation of players that are drawn to video and mobile game formats but who also want to wager on the outcome of the game David Natroshvili | Spribe

Crash games like Aviator provide this. They combine key elements from video and mobile games with skill development and social interaction as well as the ability to place a wager and potentially win money. That they have been developed specifically for mobile, offer multiplayer gameplay and deliver rapid game rounds also make them a big hit with millennials and generation Y/Z.

EGR: Are there any markets where crash games such as Aviator are especially popular? DN: Aviator is popular in all of the markets it's avail-

able in, but in one market in particular, Africa,



David Natroshvili

Managing partner

David Natroshvili is a managing partner at Spribe, helping to lead one of the most innovative igaming providers currently disrupting the market. Founded in 2018, Spribe attracts the biggest players in the igaming sector and currently has games available through more than 1,500 operators around the globe. Previously, Natroshvili was founder and managing partner of online casino iokerbros. com, one of the fastestgrowing online casinos in Georgia.

Featuring: Spribe



where it is live with operators in jurisdictions such as South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia, Kenya and more. It is also gaining huge traction in Brazil and is also topping the charts in key European markets such as Romania and Italy. The game resonates strongly with players for many reasons, but especially because it is super lightweight and can run on almost any smartphone device without chewing through lots of data while still providing a compelling and engaging experience. This is crucial in developing markets like Africa where data costs can be incredibly high, and so too is the prevalence of legacy devices. Ultimately, Aviator has global appeal, especially among the next generation of players that are drawn to video and mobile game formats but who also want to wager on the outcome of the game.

EGR: How can operators promote Aviator to their players? Do you provide any tools to help them do this?

DN: Crash games really require a category or tab of their own, and it is also important for operators to educate players as to how they work and the experience they provide. We support our operators and help them position Aviator and our other crash games in their lobbies as well as market them to their players. As a part of this, we have developed a range of in-game promotions that operators can use to drive engagement further.

Free Bets can be used by operators to introduce players to Aviator and to allow them to become familiar with the increasing curve format. This is taken to the next level with the Rain Promo feature that adds Free Bets into the chat feature at random times. Players within the chat can then take the Free Bets by clicking 'claim'. Players can also make it 'rain' Free Bets within the chat, taking the shared experience and social interaction to new highs. Operators can manage all promotion activity from a dedicated back office where they can set parameters and more.

EGR: Aside from Aviator, what other games are included in the Spribe portfolio?

DN: Our portfolio is split into three categories: turbo games, poker and skill games. In addition to Aviator, our turbo games lobby features titles such as Mines, Dice, Goal, Fortune Wheel, Plinko and Hot Line.

Our next-generation full poker client is one of the most advanced on the market, with a state-ofthe-art-tournaments module and comprehensive management and reporting system. It also boasts modern engagement tools such as gamified missions, personalised offers and a loyalty system like no other. Our skill game titles include Backgammon, Bura and Domino, and we plan to launch our first slot games in the coming months.

EGR: What can we expect to see from Spribe over the coming months?

DN: We will keep helping operators reach for the sky with Aviator and the other games in our portfolio. The addressable audience for crash games is rising rapidly, and operators that want to engage the next generation of players need to offer these games now. Those that do will also be able to leverage the powerful first-mover advantage. We will also be adding new games to our portfolio and bringing more updates to existing games such as Aviator to ensure they continue to not only meet but exceed player expectations.

It's a really exciting time for the business, especially now that we have secured our first ever *EGR* award win. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the entire Spribe team and thank them for their passion and commitment to developing the best games in the business. I'd also like to thank the judges for recognising how we are revolutionising the online gambling industry with content that keeps players on the edge of their seats. ◆

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Featuring: Relax Gaming

The road to mobile software provision excellence

Winner of best mobile gaming software provider, Relax Gaming's CEO Simon Hammon examines what it takes to deliver the best in mobile gaming software and how the studio continues to live up to everevolving player expectations

The world of online slots has been dominated by mobile gameplay for quite some time due to the vast majority of players having a mobile device to hand most of the time. Roughly 80% of players now enjoy playing slots on these devices and we, at Relax, know a thing or two about how to entertain them.

We also know that success in the slots sector comes down to a company knowing its players' mobile preferences inside out and, more importantly, having the ability to harness this knowledge to deliver the best possible experience through mobile gaming software.

With that in mind, we've made it our mission to drive differentiation and everyone at Relax Gaming is truly honoured to have been named best mobile gaming software developer at the EGR B2B Awards 2022. If I was to examine how we, as a company, achieved this, it would start with the fact that, for us, mobile-first is not just a mindset – it is a procedural flow established from early concept and throughout the entire game design process.

Being mobile-centric

The mobile experience must always be front and centre to a developer's game design. If this is not the case, the game cannot hope to capture the player's imagination and will inevitably fall by the wayside.

In a world with so many slot titles on offer, your creation really needs to stand out in order to engage and retain your players. We've seen this time and time again in the industry and going forward with a mobile-first approach also means catering for new iterations and upgrades in technology. This means

as and when they come, and therefore the need to put a more centralised focus on maximising player experience and user interface (UI). It's one thing to have a mobile product, it is quite another to make sure that you're catering for the fragmentation and changing nature of mobile. Given how quickly the entertainment world evolves, you have to be at your best to stand out.

The maintenance of this approach is essential for improving the longevity and stickiness of a company's entire catalogue. All too often, we see suppliers launching brand new games and then forgetting about them over time as they move onto the next project. As well as constantly developing out UI, we soon hope to go one step further by simplifying key elements of our games for the benefit of the user.

Taking the launch of our first progressive jackpots mechanic, Dream Drop, as an example, it is clear to see that the mobile experience around gameplay was critical to the design. Having a front-end overlay was vital to present key information in a clear and concise way, without any intrusion to gameplay.

Of course, just because something is easy to use does not mean it is easy to create – quite the contrary. Doing so involves constantly tracking and being acutely aware of consumer behaviours. This is a key metric that can give us that all-important data that helps drive our decisions when it comes to developing and upgrading our products. It means we can make more data-driven decisions to improve customer experience such as knowing what browsers and devices our players are using, which then has a key impact on our game support and maintenance, enabling us to provide the best gameplay possible.

Along with our newer innovations, Relax Apex also significantly bolsters our mobile offering. It is designed to harmonise some of the key fragmentation elements we encounter in this sector.

As the market becomes more fragmented due to jurisdictional requirements and the complexity of operator and supplier integrations, we have to find



Simon Hammon

- ◆ CEO
- ♦ Relax Gaming

Simon Hammon is CEO at Relax Gaming, With 15 years' experience in the igaming industry. he has spent the last decade working within executive management teams with close to five of those as chief product officer for Relax Gaming. Hammon's leadership has seen the studio grow from strenath-to-strenath. launching a host of award-winning game offerings including the Temple Tumble and Money Train franchises as well as the company's first progress jackpots offering, Dream Drop.

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effective solutions to work around this. That is why we created Relax Apex, which is used in a multitude of different ways, including in connection with our flagship Dream Drop jackpot product and is an excellent example of the Apex-enabled widget. In such a changing regulatory environment as Europe, and indeed North America, we hope that we have the perfect compliance solution available to the market for years to come.

The power of people

As well as these technical innovations, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the diversity of our partners and how this has enabled Relax Gaming to achieve the momentum that it has.

Our operator distribution network has also expanded significantly as we've entered new markets and our aggregation business brings in content from more than 70 studios, which has been consistently well-received by our operators, all of whom strive to offer their players a diverse portfolio of games.

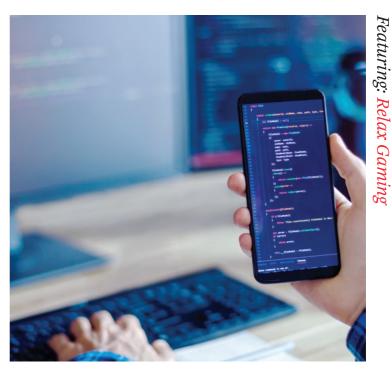
This roster has grown steadily over time, with an impressive lineup of both our Silver Bullet and Powered By partners. The diversity of our offering allows operators to complement their own strategic differentiation and localisation ambitions.

Just as our success is as a result of effectively working with a wide variety of external partners, we firmly acknowledge that our approach to delivering top-quality mobile software is not down to just one internal individual either. Instead, we harness the combined talents of many different people across the business, both within our studios and client development teams.

There is no centralised innovation team to speak of at Relax; improvement projects have been born in different areas across the business. A deeply valued mindset that we consciously work to nurture is that innovation can come from all areas of the development sphere at Relax, and it is one that has paid dividends time and time again.

It is rewarding to see product development and improvement coming from many different corners of the business. Our studios in Belgrade, Malmo and Stockholm have all brought new mobile-specific developments to the centralised Relax system, as well as keynote architectural pieces like Relax Apex, which was delivered by our Client Architect.

From a personal point of view, having been brought in as CPO four years ago to help shape and direct the casino offering from Relax, it is deeply gratifying to see these games represented so intui-



tively within the mobile sphere due to our robust gaming software capabilities. This gratification goes double too, having been appointed to the position of CEO and seeing the company become one of the key players in the gaming landscape.

The year ahead

With so many fantastic milestones this year, we look forward to another 12 months of producing some of the best games around, as well as giving players the very best experience on mobile we have to offer.

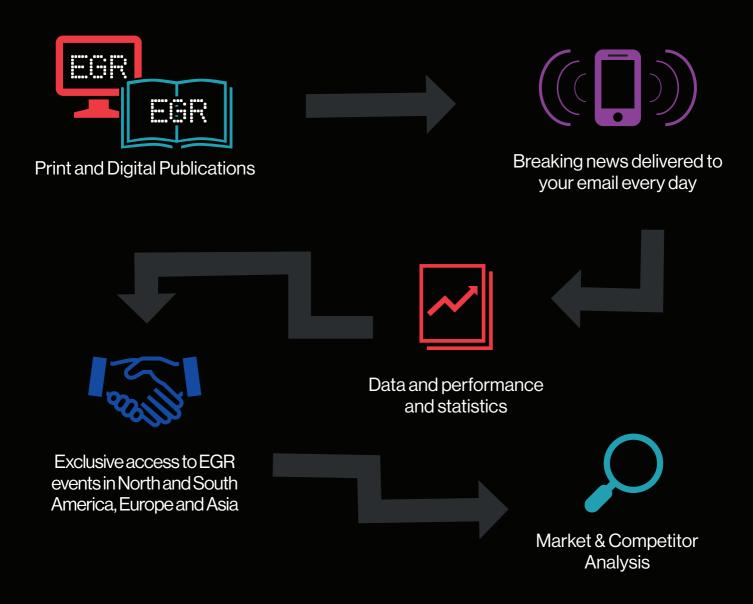
As a company, robust gaming software capabilities combined with the strategic growth of the aggregation, distribution and regulated markets has meant Relax has gone from strength to strength. We've continued to grow over the last few years, and we represent a world-class offering across all verticals. We have also tremendously grown in terms of our teams as the company is only as strong as the people who embody its mission. Likewise, our market power and brand, which is something all of us are committed to and help drive.

I believe we have such a bright future filled with global expansion, exciting new product offerings and a positive working culture. We look forward to contributing as much as we can to driving differentiation across the industry. •



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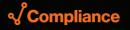












Featuring: 1account

Getting it right

Ben Keirle, CEO and founder of 1account, reflects on the company's latest award win and explains how an innovative approach to compliance and KYC are disrupting the gambling industry for the better

account provides businesses with an award-winning, secure technical solution to validate user 'know your customer' (KYC) data, such as age and identity, which usually happens during the sale or sign-up process. It's completed in real-time and with user consent via its connection to multiple third-party data sources, a number of which are exclusive to 1account, as well as its own database. The unique access means 1account has the highest verification success rates available and helps ensure compliance with all local regulations across multiple markets.

EGR Intel (EGR): Why is compliance and KYC so important in today's world?

Ben Keirle (BK): Although the real figure is probably much larger, it is thought that somewhere between 2%-5% of global GDP is laundered by criminal enterprises worldwide every year. As such, making laws to ensure this practice is as hard to do as possible is hugely important.

At its heart, KYC checks exist to prove that someone is who they claim they are, thereby preventing those trying to launder money or mask other illegal activities – terrorism being one of them – from achieving their aim.

I can't stress enough how vitally important it is to get your KYC process as robust and effective as possible. Failure to do so has dire consequences. Not only will your reputation be ruined if you're found to not have your compliance and KYC processes in place, but you could also find yourself with huge fines or even staring down the barrel of a prison sentence – it's that serious.

Our solutions deal with this right from the start of a transaction, when a new customer is being onboarded to an operator's platform. Our checks have a much higher success ratio than the industry average, providing our customers with exceptional peace of mind that their operations are protected and that they are not unwittingly giving criminals the opportunity to launder money.

EGR: What does your *EGR* award win mean for the overall business at 1account?

BK: It's a huge boost for us commercially as it demonstrates our capabilities and endorses our services to a massive audience, but also delivers valuable validation and recognition for the whole team, underlining that what we are doing here at 1 account is really special and making people take notice of us.

We are a relative newcomer to the gambling industry, having only launched in 2019 into what is, let's face it, a very competitive market dominated by established players. So, to make the kind of cutthrough we have achieved in such a short space of time from pretty much a standing start is a remarkable achievement.

EGR: What key factors do you think contributed to winning this award?

BK:I like to think that we not only bring something fresh and innovative to the compliance and KYC market, we are also raising the bar and disrupting the industry, all of which has made people stop and take notice.

In the past, compliance seemed like it was a bit of an afterthought, a tick-box exercise that people did because they had to. We've turned that on its head and made it a virtue. Our commitment to supporting other businesses to succeed during exceptionally turbulent economic conditions is second to none.

What we recognise is that a more compliant industry is a more sustainable – and by definition more profitable – industry. Our starting point for



Ben Keirle

CEO and founder 1account Launched in 2018 Ben Keirle is CEO and founder of faccount and has over 20 years' experience in both the tech and media industries First through the door at tech startups in the mobile payments and digital media spaces Keirle has now turned his entrepreneurial aptitude to KYC and AML in age-restricted markets. He is also an adviser on the Youth Access Prevention Committee.

Featuring: 1account



this is that achieving full compliance and KYC capabilities should be accessible to all operators.

That's why, in the beginning, our industry-leading solutions for KYC and identity verification were offered to operators with no charge, although since then we've had to move to a paid-for model due to the economic reality as we've grown.

It's a fact too that our solutions deliver the highest success ratios on the market, thanks to the multiple data sources we use which check every API to achieve a 2+2 match. 1account's data shows that our system enables an additional 8%-12% more players to be onboarded, which can add millions to the bottom line of operators who would otherwise not onboard that player.

The platform has enhanced AML check capabilities and we have now added Electronic Identity document validation technologies (eIDVT) for players not found on data sources, as well as the build of our own customisable risk/affordability function which will be ready for use in autumn 2022.

EGR: Can you tell us more about what 1account does away from gambling?

BK: Rather than focus on just the online gaming sector, we are able to push the boundaries by offering our proven solutions to multiple age-restricted

verticals, ensuring fast, effective and robust age and ID verification services across many industries, with learnings and best practices shared across sectors. This enables a greater degree of cross-collaboration, enabling our clients to benefit from faster than ever lookups if the consumers are already age-and ID-verified by us from a previous transaction such as those involving alcohol, vaping, tobacco or even adult content, making the online gaming process much more seamless for the operator and consumer alike.

EGR: Can you tell us about the people behind 1account?
BK: By any standard, we have formed a formidable global advisory board including gambling industry veterans Ralph Topping (former CEO of William Hill) and Simon Bazalgette (former CEO of The Jockey Club) whose career has also involved setting up highly successful digital music and racecourse media businesses.

I'll quote Ralph now, who, when asked about the potential for 1account's digital ID and age verification solutions for the on- and offline gambling industries, said: "It's a no-brainer for gambling businesses as it ensures that they are seen to be doing everything possible to be compliant and responsible in preventing underage betting while protecting vulnerable groups such as problem gamblers. It also improves the customer experience when gambling on- and offline by speeding up the KYC process, which is the cornerstone of the sector's compliance requirements. 1account can offer betting operators a solution both online and off that enables compliance for now and the future."

EGR: What's next for 1account?

BK:Well, we won't be slowing down, that's for sure! We're proud of everything we've achieved so far but we need to constantly evolve to keep up with the changing face of gambling. That means listening to our clients and partners, and working with them to ensure our product roadmap continually meets their business needs as well as those of the industry as a whole.

We're already working on some exciting additions to our product suite to help operators onboard more customers and give more insights into how to improve their businesses. And of course, we'll hopefully be winning more awards for our innovation further down the line. We have a passionate and talented team here at 1account, and we're looking forward to shaking things up for the better. •



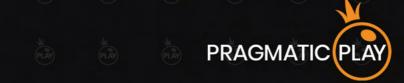
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