

Shuffling the Asia Pac

Without doubt, the mobile gambling market of the moment is the Far East. **Matti Zinder**, Head of Spin3 gives us a snapshot of the landscape...



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ASIA Pacific, like any other region in the world, should not be seen as one homogenous mass. There's great variation within it. Japan might be the content capital of the world, for example, but mobile gambling is non-existent due to very strict legislation. But then there's Macau in China, which is set to take down Vegas and become the undisputed casino capital of the world. So, yes, each area has its own issues in terms of regulation and technology. But, overall, we should be optimistic for the future.

A large part of that optimism is down to one sizeable factor: the high penetration and use of mobiles. They're a status symbol in the Far East, and increasingly replacing landlines as the preferred method of communication. And on the delivery side, GPRS coverage is excellent in most regions so the required infrastructure is in place. Couple this with high disposable income in some areas and we see a vibrant market emerging.

Nevertheless, hurdles remain. Handset fragmentation, payment processing, legislation and multiple languages all contribute to the caution. In some areas the law isn't clear either, which should not be taken lightly by any gambling

operator. They can't even offer play-for-fun casino games. As a result, Spin3 is looking to develop derivative games such as pachinko, in order to adapt to the local marketplace.

Another important area to look at with respect to the East is the payment method. Credit and debit card usage is relatively low here compared to the West. And many mobile gamblers are reluctant to pay for games using the internet or mobile bill. This is why we waited for the recent GSM Asia tradeshow to launch our OnCash concept in Asia. OnCash overcomes the Far East's payment problems by allowing consumers to purchase games with cash in physical locations and get the retailer to load the game and put credits on the device. Consumers can therefore use existing land-based casinos and hotels as an 'anchor point' for branching into mobile gambling. The merchants, meanwhile, get an extra source of revenue and a chance to extend their brand outside of a physical location.

With all its advantages, the Far East could easily overtake the UK market as the frontrunner in mobile gambling in the year ahead. Spin3 is certainly working hard to ensure it can offer an adaptable range of games and gaming platforms to be successful there.

