

Spinning for points

Land-based casinos “will eventually converge on online gaming” believes Spin3 CEO Matti Zinder, who is currently in negotiations with local operators to introduce wireless – play for points – loyalty gaming systems

IT is inevitable: The transition from land-based gaming operations into cyberspace is already underway, but it will also take its time, Matti Zinder, CEO of wireless gaming systems provider, Spin3, told Macau Business.

Land based casinos “will not [just] jump” into the online gaming arena simply because “none of them are willing put their core business in jeopardy” by launching online services; the “authorities aren’t happy about”, the executive argued.

On the other hand, Zinder is positive that “eventually they [land-based gaming operators] will converge on online gaming”. “I’m sure of it”, he reiterated.

In the mean time, Zinder disclosed that land based casino operators are “exploring possibilities using various tools” available to jump into cyberspace.

Cash versus points

Most casino games provided by Spin3 come in two ‘versions’: Playing for real (money) and playing for points – the latter is what the technology provider is marketing in Asia and more specifically, to Macau’s gaming operators. “The players are not gambling nor wagering, just playing games and collecting points. Like a ‘loyalty system’, after a playing session patrons can go back to the land-based casino and redeem the points for prizes – usually free meals, event tickets and the like”, Zinder described.

“Macau is great because it’s already a gaming hub with a lot of interest”. To Zinder, Macau has been “a very interesting place for us to meet with land-based casinos which were very interested in developing relationships with us – primarily to set up loyalty systems”. But the Israeli-born Zinder is thinking long-



term: “In the future, if [online gaming] becomes regulated we are obviously well placed to provide ‘real play’ wireless solutions”, he contended.

The company’s endgame is obviously mainland China – one of the fastest growing consumer markets in the world: “The [mainland] Chinese market is amazing but we will only enter it with ‘play-for-fun’ [games], using the games as loyalty systems plus for interaction between players and operators”, the executive elucidated.

With a current client portfolio of over 12 operators – from UK-listed 32 Red, to Ladbrokes, 777, and Unibet, just to name a few – Spin3 manly operates within the European market out of two jurisdictions, Kahnawake, Canada and from Malta. Short- and medium-term expansion plans have Asia as the prime target and include “establishing regional hosting hubs”, portended Zinder.

Asia’s the place to be

“There is huge room for mobile gaming growth in Asia” where everyone owns mobile phones. “There are more phones than personal computers (PC) or

television sets; the penetration [rate] is high, the data networks are good and in many cases better than the Internet”, argued the CEO. Arguably, phones in Asia are viewed as status symbols with heavy impetus to upgrade the handhelds – “that supports our strategy”, added Zinder. “The better the resolution and technology, the better the gaming experience”.

Mobile casinos are basically the same as online casinos, where the patron accesses the casino through the handheld instead of a PC.

Spin3 isn’t worried about a US federal ban on online gaming because it has never operated there. “Asia is a much more exciting market. The mobile usage is higher [here] than in the US and the technology and mobile phone users more advanced in this region”.

While Spin3 relies on its clients to manage jurisdictional issues, the technology provider has put in place an extra safeguard, blocking the service to any location where legal concerns might arise such as the US or Hong Kong.

Although Zinder says he does not gamble, he admits he “enjoys the technology very much” and will occasionally place a bet: “Sometimes, when I am waiting, for example in an airport, I’ll play a couple of hands of blackjack”. The CEO ‘blames’ it on the versatility of the technology. In the UK – by far the largest mobile gaming market – one large client base comes from travelling commuters.

Spin3, a division of Spiral Solutions, has partnered with Microgaming – one the world’s leading developers of online gaming solutions – to provide turnkey solutions to the mobile gaming industry. Services include dynamic wireless real and play-for-fun casino systems, flash casinos and other cutting edge interactive gaming technology.

The online gaming solutions provider supports over 1,000 handheld devices from all top manufacturers and requires only a 2G network protocol. Their best-known product is a large progressive jackpot network, made available by Microgaming, in almost 100 casinos. Prize money starts at a £ 250,000 (MOP 3.99 million; US\$ 498,000) until a patron wins the pot and resets the counter. 🎰