

UK online market set for bingo revolution

Two of the UK's largest land-based bingo operators, Mecca and Gala, are set to launch real-money bingo sites in the next few weeks.

Gala is the UK's largest land-based bingo operator with over 5 million members and a 40% market share.

Its site has been developed through a previously announced partnership with software firms Parlay Entertainment and St Enedoc.

Mecca Bingo, which is part of the Rank group, will be run by the interactive arm of Rank, Blue Square.

The debut of the two land-based giants is expected to give a massive boost to the UK online bingo market.

Mecca is also a major player in the UK with 120 land-based bingo halls and around 3 million members.

But many industry observers remain unconvinced that the key bingo demographic is comfortable with playing online.

A recent research report by investment bank Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein said the online bingo sector was unlikely to grow to represent more than 5% of the total egaming market.

However, there is no shortage of new entrants to the emerging Bingo market.

ThinkBingo, the online bingo site owned by Jersey based Independent Technology Ventures Limited, has launched a major offline advertising campaign targeted at female gamers in the UK.

"Over three million people in the UK regularly playing bingo in local halls," Dylan Schlosberg, CEO of Herotech, ThinkBingo's marketing agency, said.

"We believe fundamentally that online bingo will prove to be the biggest of the online gaming propositions as it offers mass market entertainment."