

Online

# BingoBlast

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## Bingo Goes Global... are you ready?

It wasn't that long ago that online bingo was seen as the new kid on the block. It was 1998 when the world saw its first "pay for play" online bingo site, but it was overshadowed by online sportsbooks, casino and then poker. As these other gaming sectors each grew into monster markets and then leveled off, bingo continued a steady, though unspectacular, growth. That is, until last year when online bingo started growing, and growing fast.

The UK was at the forefront of this growth. Between 2006 and 2007, the number of online bingo sites in the UK tripled. Data from the UK Gambling Commission shows that there are approximately 500,000 online players each month, double that of the previous year. At the same time, BingoPort.co.uk, reported that the UK online bingo market gained £120 million last year on £650 million of revenue.

### But what about the rest of the world?

When it comes to online bingo, Europe is ready to go. Warwick Bartlett, Chairman of Global Betting and Gaming Consultants speaking at the 2008 Bingo Summit, said that he believes that "by 2012 online bingo will account for 25 percent of the worldwide betting market and deliver profits in excess of \$2 billion."

And industry experts agree. At that same Bingo Summit, presenters discussed how the rest of the world is beginning to catch on. In the past year, the number of sites in Spain alone grew from 6 to 40. Dozens of Swedish and Danish sites have sprung up as the game is exploding across Scandinavia. According to Peter Trinz, Senior Vice President at Parlay Entertainment, markets are beginning to open up in Poland, the Netherlands, Italy and Germany, followed by more promise from parts of Eastern Europe.

With interest mounting across the globe, operators are evaluating software vendors and their products closely. They are looking for solutions that let them take advantage of this global groundswell. But Bingo's global appeal also creates some interesting challenges. Players want to chat in their own language and play in their own currency, but how do you take advantage of the liquidity when your software forces you to slice and dice by country?

### More players, more opportunities

The answer involves bringing players from around the world together, letting them play the same game but in their own language and currency.

That's where Parlay's latest generation of bingo software can help. "It's the first bingo software that's designed for a global audience, not just a single market," says Perry Malone, Parlay's Chief Technology Officer. "The foundation of Parlay5 is our enhanced internationalisation features," he says. "Clearly there is strong demand for software that simplifies the process of configuring bingo games, jackpots and chat rooms using multiple languages and currencies."

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## The Challenges of Promoting Bingo to a Wider Audience

Promoting online bingo amongst a younger generation isn't nearly as challenging as promoting it to many of the traditional club-going bingo players.

The younger crowd gets the technology instinctively. They understand how online gaming works and they're already socially interacting online. They're also comfortable submitting their personal data and credit card information over the Internet. With them, the challenge is making the offering compelling enough to overcome bingo stereotypes. But that is somewhat easier than reaching those who have played bingo all their lives, but in a totally different medium. These are the people you have to win over – the players who need convincing that online bingo delivers all the excitement, challenge and camaraderie of their favourite bingo hall!

It's a real paradox. On one hand you've got millions of young people who spend an inordinate amount of time socially interacting online, yet the vast majority have never played a game of bingo in their lives. On the other hand, you have a huge number of people who've grown up with and love bingo, yet aren't yet comfortable playing it online. The smart operator should consider ways to overcome both these barriers when devising their business and marketing plans.

At Parlay Entertainment, we're experimenting with adding more social networking features to our bingo platform to attract and retain young players. Think of it as Bingo meets Facebook. More than ever, young players want to interact with each other online, inside and outside of the bingo game. We think bingo sites of the future will include much broader community elements that keep players coming back to interact with each other – and play bingo – day after day.

Perhaps the most crucial element in attracting and retaining the younger generation of players is marketing bingo in clever and unexpected ways in order to get them in the door. The challenge is to make young people forget all those old bingo stereotypes and just give it a go. Paddy Power, for instance, has done a great job with a series of unconventional bingo ads that challenge traditional notions of who plays bingo. And

Virgin has been able to leverage its youth-oriented brand by using star-power to make its bingo offering "sexier" for its audiences.

As for reaching the traditional bingo enthusiasts, their barriers can be more difficult to overcome.

A lot of older people still aren't all that comfortable trusting the Internet when it comes to using their credit cards. This is a shame since this generation constitutes the biggest group of bingo devotees. However, wider social acceptance of all things Internet is eating away at this mistrust and one thing that has helped is the cross-over into television. TV is a medium that everyone understands and which brings along with it a sense of familiarity and trust. Once people see the shows on television, they feel more comfortable and will be more likely to register and play online.

Inventive marketing campaigns, better social interactions and getting the message to the masses all play a role in building a loyal bingo following from the twin challenges at both the young and old ends of the spectrum. Add to that entertaining games, better and more chances to win and you've got momentum that continues to build, bringing the more people to the online version of the most popular game in the world. □



## Parlay Bingo Briefs

### 1 Norsk Bingo Launches Touch Screen Bingo



Norsk Bingo AS teamed with Parlay to launch a new concept in bingo entertainment. Norsk is deploying 2,000 touch-screen tabletop kiosks in 30 bingo halls throughout Norway.

November 2008 saw Norsk Bingo launch 20 touch-screen kiosks in one of their land-based halls, using Parlay software. This is a new and innovative way for players to play Bingo online, while still in their favourite hall. All game play and access is controlled by radio frequency cards. Players access a kiosk by simply flashing the card in front of it. From there they can play Parlay Bingo using a touch screen.

Norsk plans to launch kiosks in more places soon!

### 2 Bingo Summit 2009

#### 4TH ANNUAL ONLINE BINGO SUMMIT

Parlay Entertainment, the platinum sponsor of Bingo Summit 2008, is pleased to be doing the same for the 2009 Bingo Summit, taking place June 16-17, 2009. At the 2008 event, Parlay hosted a round table Client Forum. "This gave us an opportunity to get everybody in the same room and listen to what they want." According to Perry Malone, Parlay's CTO, "Not only do clients get a chance to talk to each other, but we have an opportunity to listen to them as a group. We find out what they like, what they want to change and what new and exciting features they're looking forward to in Parlay's software."

### 3 Microgame and Parlay Team Up



Parlay Entertainment is teaming up with Italian based Poker and Sports Betting provider Microgame to launch a new Bingo network for the Italian market. Microgame is authorised by the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance to currently offer sports and poker wagering into this tightly regulated market. With the forthcoming legislative changes in Italy to allow existing Italian based bingo licensees to move online, the new network will provide these established brands with a proven solution.

### 4 Parlay Delivers More Games With Orbis



Giving players more games is something that Parlay loves to do. With the release of Parlay5, players have more Orbis Fixed Odds Games at their finger tips than ever before. In addition to the dozen games introduced in Parlay 4, Parlay5 players can now choose from 6 new 20-line slot games. Titles include: Dead Man's Chest, Pimp My Slot, Fruit Smoothie, Big Top, Funky Monkey and Odd Shaped Balls.

## Standing Out From the Bingo Crowd

With the explosion of new online bingo sites in the past twelve months, operators are starting to pay attention to what makes their site stand out from the crowd. After all, more sites may mean more choices for players, but with more choices what's going to make them spend their time – and their money – at your site?

It's time to set yourself apart from the crowd. Phil Fraser, founder and Managing Director of iLudus Consulting predicts that it will be the ability to differentiate that will set one bingo site apart from the rest. This poses a challenge for today's operators. How can you differentiate yourself when you're bound by a game that demands displaying a chat window, cards, call board, prize info and game info, within the confines of limited screen real estate? The answer, it seems, is in the software.

"In this competitive environment, we know online bingo sites must be able to differentiate themselves from each other more than ever before," says Perry Malone, Chief Technology Officer for Parlay Entertainment. At Parlay, there has been a focused effort to give Bingo operators the freedom and flexibility to develop uniquely branded sites. Malone says, "Our latest generation of bingo software, Parlay5, is revolutionary because it makes it

easy for sites to develop a unique personality that is miles apart from the competition."

In addition to offering the most room for differentiation, customisation and creative expression in the industry, Parlay's new Flash bingo interface gives players the ability to change what they see on the screen as well, giving them freedom to personalise their bingo experience like never before.

Our previous releases offered players the games they wanted and delivered a profitable and entertaining solution to operators. However, the game interface was constrained like all the other bingo software out there by the limited screen real estate, and so all the sites out there looked very similar. With Parlay5, we re-architected the user interface with the latest Flash technology. This gives you the greatest freedom available in the market to custom design the unique look and layout of your bingo interface – allowing for personalised branding, promotions and advertising.

Here are just some of the infinite customisations possible with Parlay5 that will allow you to stand apart from the bingo crowd. □



## Advertising on TV: can it work for online bingo?



In an industry that has only just taken its first baby steps, most operators have turned to online marketing techniques to achieve their target CPA's. But tried and tested affiliate marketing, viral and banner advertising only get a bingo brand so far. Narrow margins leave no opportunity for error, so why stray?

Thanks to Facebook, MySpace, Bebo and other social media, we now have endless opportunities to be innovative. But, since these come with an unknown CPA attached, few want to make the leap. As we all know, our successes are being closely watched. Competitors are waiting to jump; to match or even improve on what we do. This leaves many marketing professionals playing the waiting game...

When tried and tested is tired, and social media a bit too chancy, where do you go? The answer may be on your TV. With TV you can find low CPA's – that is, if you strike the right deal. After all, television adverts can be made rather cheaply but effectively, depending on what you want to get across. For example, at RehabBingo.com, we spend less for a 20 second TV time slot than

we do for radio ads. And TV ads are far more effective than banner adverts.

Just this past year RehabBingo ran a big promotion where players vied for the chance to win 25,000 Euro or a VW Beetle Bug. Though we promoted the event across different media, the greatest impact came from our 20 second TV spots. In fact, the event was such a success that we're doing it again this year.

In reality, bingo is as much about the brand as it is about the bingo. TV advertising adds credibility to a brand. Being on TV gives a product widespread acceptance – in other words, if it's on TV then it has to be good... well, if not good then at least remembered. Think about it this way: would you be more inclined to buy an unknown product based on a TV ad or a banner ad?

Back to the question, "why stray?". The answer is simple: If you can spend €50 – €100 and get 20 TV slots that reach audiences in the thousands, then you've just found a exciting way to promote your bingo brand! □

By Irene Gahan, Head of Marketing and Operations, RehabBingo.com

## More MiniGames from Parlay

Adding to its highly popular embedded mini-slots, Parlay is pleased to announce that it is making all of its popular side games from the ParlayGames Suite available as embedded MiniGames in Parlay5. The new format lets players enjoy the games without interrupting

their bingo play. There's no new window to launch, as the games come up inside the existing bingo game window. Embedded games have proven to be extremely popular with bingo players. □



## Parlay Software Takes Home Two Awards

Parlay Entertainment Inc. received two awards at the first-ever Online Bingo Awards presented at the 3rd Annual Bingo Summit in London, this past summer.

Parlay's ground-breaking bingo software Parlay 4 was named Best Online Bingo Software 2008, while its patent-pending side game BingoBets™ was recognised as Best Online Bingo Innovation 2008. Parlay's licensee Paddy Power also won the award for Best Newcomer 2008.

The nominees were selected by a panel of recognised industry experts and the award winners were chosen by over 200 industry delegates attending the Third Annual Online Bingo Summit.

"We are very pleased to have won these two major bingo awards. On behalf of our entire development and support team, I'd like to thank the online bingo industry for this recognition of excellence," said Perry Malone, Chief Technology Officer for Parlay Entertainment.

"We're especially proud because these awards were chosen by our industry peers who recognise that Parlay continues to blaze the trail in online bingo software innovation. It's a fantastic achievement and motivates us that much more to keep pushing the leading edge." □



2008 Online Bingo Awards



Parlay Product Manager, Deirdre Curran, accepting award for Best Online Bingo Software 2008 for Parlay4.

## Parlay-Powered Promos

### 1 Bingo Gets the Star Treatment at NetPlay



NetPlay TV, which produces BigBoxBingo, has been airing a weekly TV game show on Sky since

July 2007. The fast paced game looks and feels like other TV game shows – glittering sets, beautiful models, game show music and, now, celebrity callers. And, as of the summer of 2008, celebrity callers have added more star power to the game show. Comedian Jim Bowen and the hilarious duo Cannon and Ball are just some of the big names that viewers can now see when they tune in. Now the show gives players a chance to win instant cash prizes while interacting with the stars.

### 2 New Year? New Look for You and Paddy Power



Not only has the Paddy Power website had a funky new makeover, the folks at Paddy Power want

you to join in on the makeover fun. Play in January for the chance to win £1000 cash for the makeover of your choice. Check out the new site and win yourself a new look for 2009.

### 3 TGN Calls All Affiliates



TGN launches its new affiliates program, BingoAffiliates.com, at ICEi and CAP Euro

2009. BingoAffiliates.com features competitive bonuses and in-depth retention and reactivation programs that make it easy for affiliates to acquire and retain players. The Gaming Network is powered by Parlay Entertainment.

### 4 Capturing the Growing Spanish Market with Winzingo



Winzingo sponsored the first-ever Spanish

track for the CAP Euro 2008 conference. Peter Trinzi, Senior VP for Parlay Entertainment, said: "Winzingo's sponsorship of an exclusively Spanish conference track is a true landmark for that online bingo market. There is a massive base of bingo players in Spain, larger than in many other countries, including the UK. The Spanish online bingo sector has shown steady and solid growth and this event validates that it is quickly achieving critical mass." Winzingo is the online bingo brand for the Gaming VC organisation.

The Winzingo brand is supported by fully localised peninsula Spanish chat managers, customer service and Spanish e-commerce solutions. Winzingo also offers a Spanish white label solution.

## Bingo Goes Global... are you ready?

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Recent research and statistics back him. Bingo's appeal is growing and growing fast. Although still dominated by women, more men are getting on board with bingo. And bingo is drawing younger women, and more of them, especially online. According to The Bingo Association, nearly half of bingo players (estimated at about 8.5 million people) are under 45.

And, not only is it drawing people from all walks of life, it is attracting more interest across the globe. In the UK alone, since September 2007, the average daily player numbers across all UK focused online bingo operators has increased by about 19%.

With those kinds of statistics and software like Parlay5 to facilitate rollout across multiple countries, operators can break down barriers – effectively removing the borders – and begin to engage a worldwide audience.



It's clear that Bingo is no longer the new kid on the block. Its players, revenue and reach across the globe are proving that. The world is ready for an online bingo solution that adapts to different languages, currencies and varieties of game play. So the only question now is, are you ready? □

## Bingo News

### 1 Despite Economic Turmoil, Online Bingo Grows

During the six-month period between May and October 2008, the UK online bingo industry increased the number of active online bingo players in the UK by 80%. This increase comes despite an increasingly troubled economic climate and may surprise some. But, for those at BingoPort.co.uk – the organisation who released the figures – this figure is in line with their predictions. Their research suggests that the number of players will continue to rise into the future.

### 2 Obama Bingo

What is the new U.S. President talking about these days? Go to [www.bingobama.com](http://www.bingobama.com) and find out. Use the Obama Bingo card to click the words you hear him say during any of his speeches. Find out what he says and just how often he says it.

### 3 Global Revenues Predicted to Climb Through 2012

Despite the economic slowdown, expect double-digit annual growth in revenues for the online gaming industry through 2012. According to the PriceWaterhouseCoopers Global Entertainment and Media Outlook: 2008-2012, the online gaming industry will grow faster than other forms of gaming. According to this research, online gaming is looking at a rate of growth projected at 10.4%. This growth will be felt most strongly from 2010 on, when global economies are expected to have recovered from the current economic situation. Two key highlights from the report indicate that:

1. The UK market, which reported in at US \$2.3 billion in 2007, generated more than 4 times the revenue of the next largest market, Germany.
2. The Italian market will grow by a compound annual rate of 17.6% over this period, a number based on the issuing of new licenses for online gaming operators.

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