

# Social Media, Internet Casino Gaming and Online Gambling



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# Introduction

- ▶ **Online gambling and social media are two of the fastest-growing aspects of the Internet.** Both industries are a major part of many mobile smartphone users' everyday lifestyle. The two industries intersect in a number of ways. Simulated casino gaming draws people to social media sites, while social media acts as a perfect marketing tool for online gambling sites.
- ▶ Most churches, mosques, temples and synagogues use social media for a variety of reasons but mainly for communication, information and evangelism.
- ▶ Social media lets us connect to our loved ones, just like gambling is a form of entertainment millions of people enjoy. Fun and leisure can give way to addiction if a person loses themselves in the activities they love. Any activity becomes destructive when done to excess.

# Topics of Consideration

- ▶ The relationship between social media, social casino gaming, and internet gambling.
- ▶ Does social casino games prepare young people for real money gambling later in life?
- ▶ How people of faith can abuse social media and social gambling.
- ▶ Discuss how we can help lessen or prevent people of faith and adolescents from abusing or becoming addicted to online gambling.

# Ubiquitous

- ▶ Social media usage is one of the most popular online activities and in 2019, 79 percent of the population in the United States had a social networking profile, representing a two percent increase from the 77 percent usage reach in the previous year. This equals approximately 247 million U.S social media users in the U.S. as of 2019.
- ▶ Americans spend a large amount of their time on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Whether at work, at lunch, or at home in their leisure time, many people use social media to handle most of their interaction with old friends, new acquaintances, and family members.
- ▶ Social media increasingly drives marketing for businesses and even political candidates.

# The Relationship

- ▶ Online casinos, sportsbooks, and poker sites have official pages on Twitter and Facebook, which they use to market themselves to potential new customers.



# Facebook's Popularity



- ▶ With Facebook being one of the most popular social media platforms around, it comes as no surprise that social gambling is rife on Facebook. Statistically, 61% of all players who gamble on social media do so on Facebook.

# Popular Sites

- ▶ Many Facebook users play popular social gaming apps like Zynga, Big Fish Games, Game Show Network (GNS), and Doubledown Casino



ZYNGA POKER  
FEATURES



# The Merging

- ▶ Some of the world's biggest names in gambling have been thinking of ways to merge together gambling and social media. These two markets are capable of fueling each other's growth. With social games reaching out to approximately 290 million active players on Facebook alone, the online gambling industry can easily fuse the two together. Social media has the reach, but online gambling is where the money is at.



# Ease of Access

- ▶ Over the past decade, the use of computers and the Internet has significantly altered the gambling landscape. The gambling industry is no longer bound by brick and mortar gambling venues (e.g., casinos, racetracks). Today, access to gambling activities can be achieved with a few keystrokes on a computer. One point of access that has gained increased attention from researchers in the field of gambling studies is social media sites such as *Facebook*

- ▶ (Wohl et al. [2017](#)).



# The Attraction

Social casino games are among the most heavily advertised products on social network sites and convey the activity (i.e., gambling) as positive and glamorous (Gainsbury et al. [2015a](#)). These advertisements appear to have a significant influence on engagement with social casino games (SuperData [2016](#)).

# The Lure to Play



In part, this increased attention is because social media sites have become a popular platform for people to access online gambling venues via hyperlinks embedded in advertisements (Abarbanel et al. [2016](#)).



Social media sites also allow users to engage in free-to-play simulated gambling games through applications. These free-to-play simulated gambling games have become referred to as social casino games (Gainsbury et al. [2014](#)). There is evidence to suggest, however, that social casino game play may act as a 'gateway' to gambling for real money. (Wohl et al. [2017](#)).

# Questions and Comments

- ▶ how we can help lessen or prevent people of faith and adolescents from abusing or becoming addicted to online gambling?
- ▶ Faith community can post information on their sites about the potential abuse of Social media sites and especially social gambling potential to lead to problem gambling



# Social Casino Games Can be a Gateway to ▶ Real Gambling

# Early Exposure to Internet

- ▶ Adolescents and young adults are uniquely vulnerable to the effects of social media in particular and digital communication in general: they are at once early adopters, nearly ubiquitous users, and highly susceptible to peer influences.



# Gateway

- ▶ There is increasing evidence of simulated forms of gambling not involving money proliferating on social media, such as Facebook. These games may provide a gateway to encourage adolescents to progress to actual online gambling.





# The attraction to young people

- ▶ Given the greater accessibility, availability, and promotion of gambling, more and more youth have become attracted to the perceived excitement, entertainment, and financial freedom associated with gambling.
- ▶ Joe Cada 21 years old from Shelby Township Michigan won the 2009 World series of Poker winning 8.5 million
- ▶ He is primarily an online poker player, with more than \$500,000 in online tournament winnings at present. As of October 2016, his total live tournament winnings exceed \$10,460,000.

# Looks Exciting and Doable

- ▶ Ben Campbell (Jim Sturgess), a brilliant student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, needs some quick cash to pay his tuition bills. He joins a group of students who, under the leadership of unorthodox professor Mickey Rosa (Kevin Spacey), use their math skills to win big in Las Vegas.



# Motivators to engage

Hollingshead et al. (2016) argued that the motivations for playing social casino games likely mimic those of online gambling, including for excitement, to relieve boredom, and social motivations. In addition, they reported that some social casino gamers are motivated to engage in these games to hone their skills before playing for real money on online gambling sites.

# Perceived Practice

- ▶ *They want you to win... if you are winning on Facebook and then you see [an advertisement] on the side to go online to play at party poker you will think if I can do this for free I can do this for real and then you go to do it for real and the next thing you know you are down \$150 when you were getting Blackjack with the other one [social casino site].*



# Other Potential Motivators



- ▶ Peer pressure plays an important role in young people's initial participation to online gambling. Some first learn to gamble with friends and thereafter transitioning to online gambling as their friends were not always available.

# Incentives to gamble



- ▶ Another factor that can be a precipitant of online gambling are the incentives (e.g., sign up bonuses) offered by online gambling. Online gambling sites offer bonuses and free credits.



# Increased Risk

- ▶ The recent growth of gambling problems among youth around the world is alarming. Researchers, clinicians, educators and the public have only begun to recognize the significance of this risky adolescent behavior. With the continuous rise in gambling technology and the expansion of the gambling industry, more gambling opportunities exist today than ever before

# Vested interest

- ▶ It should be noted that some social casino games are now owned by online gambling operators who advertise their online gambling site within the social casino game, thus easing migration from social casino gaming to online gambling.
- ▶ Adolescents who engage in online gambling exhibit heightened levels of problematic gambling symptoms, making this form of gambling particularly worrisome.

# Influence to Faith Community

- ▶ Most churches, mosques, temples and synagogues use social media for a variety of reasons but mainly for communication, information and evangelism



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# Faith Connections



- ▶ Congregants can easily access the agendas and programming of their place of worship from their Facebook page.
- ▶ They can interact with other congregants for a variety of reasons.
- ▶ Social gambling games may advertise on the place of worship Facebook page or when communicating with another member there may be an advertise from a social gambling site.



- ▶ Social gambling may start off being fun, exciting, and entertaining can lead to real gambling as discussed concerning.
- ▶ The site of course want you to get the illusion that you are good because you are winning for free.

# Losing can be Painful

- ▶ However when you go to a real gambling site you may be quickly disillusioned.



# Abuses

- ▶ Social media sites and Social gambling sit both have the potential for abuse.
- ▶ Despite the widely reported positive and beneficial effects of both SNS and video games at many levels (e.g., cognitive functioning, well-being, etc.) there is also mounting evidence from several nationwide representative empirical studies demonstrating that SNS and video games can contribute to psychosocial impairments and behavioral dysfunction in a minority of users,
- ▶ Social media sites and gaming both have abuse potential

# Social Media Site Abuse



- ▶ With regard to excessive SNS use, a recent study conducted by Xanidis and Brignell ([2016](#)) in a sample of 324 social media users found that SNS addiction was a key predictor of decreased sleep quality and increased incidence of cognitive failures. Furthermore, Xanidis and Brignell ([2016](#)) noted that SNS addiction can potentiate cognitive failures due to its negative effects on sleep quality, further illustrating the key clinical and sociological importance of research related to technological addictions in educational contexts as excessive and pathological SNS and video game use can both compromise physical and mental health in a variety of contexts and age ranges.

# Gaming Potential for abuse

- ▶ At the theoretical level, video game addiction [also known as Internet gaming disorder (IGD)] is a clinical condition that comprises a behavioral pattern encompassing persistent and recurrent use of video games, leading to significant impairment or distress over a period of 12 months as indicated by endorsing five (or more) of the following nine criteria: (i) preoccupation with games; (ii) withdrawal symptoms when gaming is taken away; (iii) tolerance, resulting in the need to spend increasing amounts of time engaged in games; (iv) unsuccessful attempts to control participation in games; (v) loss of interest in previous hobbies and entertainment as a result of, and with the exception of, games; (vi) continued excessive use of games despite knowledge of psychosocial problems; (vii) deceiving family members, therapists, or others regarding the amount of gaming; (viii) use of games to escape or relieve negative moods; and (ix) jeopardizing or losing a significant relationship, job, or education or career opportunity because of participation in games ([American Psychiatric Association \[APA\], 2013](#)).

# Awareness

- ▶ The faith community need to be aware of the potential abuse of social media and social casino gambling
- ▶ Possible post warnings on Faith Community's social media page
- ▶ Educate young people of the possible abuse of social casino gambling and social media site addictions

# Prevention Ideas

- ▶ Being a follower of a religious tradition and greater religious service attendance reduced the likelihood of casino gambling and lottery play, according to several surveys found. Evangelical Protestantism had the strongest deterrent effect.
- ▶ But religious salience, or considering faith an important part of your life, was the only dimension that constrained online gambling.
- ▶ Faith's Wager: How Religion Deters Gambling *Social Science Research* volume 62 feb. 2017 pages 204-218
- ▶ Being devoted to the beliefs of one's religion (i.e., religiosity; [Esso & Dibb, 2004](#)) has been shown to be a protective factor for engaging in addictive behaviors. Indeed, a growing body of literature suggests that people who are religious are less apt to smoke or gamble ([Ellison & McFarland, 2011](#); [Hodge, Andereck, & Montoya, 2007](#); [Hoffmann, 2000](#); [Islam & Johnson, 2003](#)).

# Prevention Ideas

- ▶ Please make your members become aware of gambling fallacies.
- ▶ Religiosity may increase gambling, because people who are religious place their faith in a positive outcome on a higher power. Gamblers who are religious may feel that higher power will help maximize their success at gambling, despite the objective odds of success. In other words, people who are religious may be more susceptible to developing gambling fallacies.
- ▶ Indeed, gambling fallacies (also referred to as erroneous cognitions about gambling) have long been proposed to have an etiological role in the development and maintenance of problem gambling.
- ▶

# Beware of Fallacies

- ▶ For example, disordered gamblers are more apt to ignore statistical probabilities of gambling (e.g., base rate neglect and insensitivity to sample size) and believe that the outcomes of games of pure chance can be influenced to maximize positive outcomes.
- ▶ Your **chances of winning the Mega Millions** are a jaw-dropping 302,575,350 to 1, while the likelihood of taking home the **Powerball** jackpot is only slightly **better** at 292,201,388 to 1. The **odds of winning both** are 1 in 88 quadrillion (that's 15 zeroes), according to CNBC.

# Any Suggestions?



## Questions Comments