

China to curb online casino compulsion

In China, the government has announced that it is to institute new laws to help prevent underage and compulsive gambling. Experts predict that these laws will see companies forced to use software that screens users to ensure that adults only are accessing gambling sites.

This software could also be required to encourage players to stick to a maximum playing time of three hours per day by halving any points accrued after this length of time had passed.

The government did not announce a time frame for the proposed legislation but the scheme comes on the heels of a requirement by authorities that online gaming companies operating in the nation use a type of screening software that detects the identities of users through the use of an issued card.

There have also been campaigns encouraging players to perform exercise after three hours to reduce Internet gaming addiction across the country. According to a 2006 study by the China National Children's Center, the nation has 137 million Internet users under the age of 18 with 13 per cent, or 2.3 million, classed as online addicts.

China has also recently established the first treatment centre in the world dedicated to treating teenagers suffering from Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD), the Internet Addiction Treatment Center (IATC) in Daxing. Led by Tao Ran, a military researcher who built his career by treating heroin addicts, the clinic uses a 'tough love' approach that includes counselling, military discipline, drugs, hypnosis and mild electric shocks.