

What's next for iGaming the Americas? – SiGMA takes a virtual tour

Missed out on the SiGMA Americas Virtual summit? These are some highlights from the expert keynotes and panel discussions



After a well-attended launched first virtual foray into LatAm markets with a trilingual summit last September, „SiGMA Group“:<https://sigma.world/> has outdone itself with a 2-hour virtual event once more. The first day of the two-day summit featured a fully interactive expo hall, a live chat box feature where attendees could speak one on one with exhibitors, and direct message attendees, and panelists, and a high profile line up of speakers sharing the newest developments in online gaming making this an ideal networking, deal-making, and educational event.

Today's conference focussed on iGaming developments happening across the „United States and in

Canada“:<https://sigma.world/en/americas/>. Top industry leaders discussed topics such as responsible gaming, working with gaming affiliates, brand building in the iGaming space, working with tribal operators, and the new competitive and regulated iGaming market coming to this interior.

h3. Topics covered:

- * The transition to iGaming
- * Responsible Gaming for Online Gaming
- * New Jersey: Operators and Affiliates
- * Brand Building for iGaming Operators
- * Working with tribal operators in the U.S
- * Canada: A new competitive and Regulated iGaming market



SiGMA Americas Virtual Panel:
The transition to iGaming.

In the opening keynote, Ali Bartlett, Vice President of Government Relations, Bose Public Affairs Group spoke about the growth of iGaming in the United States following the rise of sports betting.

Bartlett notes the major milestone that was marked when sports betting became legalised in each of the states – as these states saw mobile and online operations become reality, responsible gaming initiatives started to constantly grow. Geolocation at work, age, and identity verification processes have also proved to be successful. This has created a level of comfort with legislators looking to expand into the iGaming world.

Industry partnerships and multi-state partnerships will also see a lot of opportunities as more states are moving online. Bartlett says that there could be different types of gaming coming to life as more and more opportunities are arising for various operators in the industry with ideas becoming legalised on a state-by-state basis.

“The more advancement we see in these spaces the more the industry will grow and innovate, but they’re also going to provide new revenue opportunities for states. They’re going to allow for changes to the industry landscapes and partnerships we see.”

She closes off by saying that online gaming will benefit the industry as a whole, not just the online industry, as it will also create new opportunities for brick and mortar casinos and bring a new style of player that they haven’t seen before.



SIGMA Americas Virtual Summit
Panel:
Responsible Gaming for Online
Gaming.

Another hot topic tabled by leading academics, during the summit was that of Responsible gaming. Casinos, gaming control boards, operators (such as casinos), and vendors all have social responsibility initiatives in place to maintain the integrity and fairness of their operations and to raise public awareness of gambling-related problems, such as gambling addiction.

In this panel, Stewart Groumoutis, Director eGaming of BCLC;

Elizabeth Lanza Office of Compulsive and Problem Gambling of the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board, Laura Mcallister Cox, Chief Compliance Officer at Rush Street Interactive and Seth Palansky, Vice President, Corporate Social Responsibility & Communications Conscious Gaming take on this topic to discuss it further.

Lanza says that since you can gamble from anywhere, so you should be able to self exclude from anywhere. Having a tool like Play Pause can empower the consumer, in their journey in this world of addiction. It will be difficult, but times are changing and we have to adapt quickly – most other regulators and operators would like to move forward on a nationwide self-exclusion program, especially in the iGaming world.



SiGMA Americas Virtual Summit
Panel:
New Jersey: Operators and
Affiliates.

Cox also believes in giving patrons choices. Clear choices determining how they utilise these tools is important, and right now, with multiple exclusion lists, it's confusing for the player. "How can we make that experience for that player who wants to do something affirmative, more clear and easier to pursue?"

"Sports betting patrons skew male and younger. We also have an iGaming platform and we're live in a number of states – and we see the tendency there is more 50-50 with females, and of an older age demographic. So, we're seeing a broad base of the

population entertaining themselves with our platform – but when they need that reach out, whatever is comfortable for that person should be an option.”

Cox states that individuals can change quickly, adapt, and find new, better ways to use technology to address a situation that wasn't anticipated.

“We need consistency on what data is being gathered, on the time frames that are being offered to players for self-exclusion, consistency on limits, on when and how the player comes off self-exclusion. The idea of a central system for online gambling throughout the US is a tempting concept.”

Groumoutis says that having a single view of a customer allows you to recognise gambling behaviours, such as problem gambling.

One of the things we recognise, when people are gambling in their home is that we have no idea of their environment, their current state – and on top of that people could be going through a challenging situation and feeling very lonely, this can be an extremely problematic situation.



SiGMA Americas Virtual Summit
interview: Brand Building for
iGaming Operators.

“Over the past year during the pandemic, we implemented our game sense advisors, which are player health trained onto play now – which is our online platform. You have to make sure people have the support they need, it's not just a program of

check boxes and making sure you lock them out of whatever gambling they want to be locked out of – it’s what happens after that as well. How do you support the monitoring? When the VSC expires, what are you doing to help them re enter safely and in a healthy fashion?”

What followed was a panel solely addressing the focus on New Jersey’s operators and affiliates. Benjamin Truman, COO of Media Troopers stated that coming from the European market for many years and then coming into America, you don’t experience the same regulation, the paperwork, or dealing with the American mentality and people.

Getting licences here can be very tedious “it’s not an external decision whether you get a licence or not, but whether or not that state has made it very, very difficult. A lot of states are requesting fingerprints, information that goes well beyond what most affiliates would probably feel comfortable with.”

He goes on to say that SEO companies are finding it difficult in the US as the market is still not 100% mature – it’s going to take time. Growth is there if you’re willing to stick it out.



SIGMA Americas Virtual Summit
Panel: Working with tribal operators in the U.S.

George Alafoginis Global Gaming at Facebook stresses the fact that their role in this growing industry has since 2018, been

to open up their business tools, and in this case, it's also to make the same ads that are available for other verticals, available to operators and affiliates.

Samir Bannerjee Director of Marketing at Golden Nugget Online Gaming goes on to say that the pioneers of the affiliate marketing space in the online gaming fields have always been here, they've grown tremendously over the past 6 or 7 years, but that doesn't mean there's no room for new companies coming out of Europe and the US or even people changing industries. "Lately I've noticed affiliates in the US who were in the healthcare and finance space slowly moving into the iGaming space – mostly with a focus on the sports betting side of the business."

Brand building for iGaming operators was addressed in detail in the next panel. Here Nic Sulsky, COO of PointsBet Canada said that "when you're trying to build a brand in the hyper-competitive gaming space, you really need to figure out what your key differentiator is – is it a product or is it brand?" Expanding on this the speaker stated that ideally, it's a mixture of both.



SiGMA Americas Virtual Summit
Panel:Canada: A new competitive and Regulated iGaming market.

In the next panel, speakers debated working with Tribal Operators in the US. Rebecca George Executive Director of Washington Indian Gaming Association opens up by saying that

the state and the tribes in the Americas are named as co-regulators, the tribe as the primary regulator and the state co-regulator, this a unique relationship. The other thing that IGRA laid out was that the profit from the government gaming must benefit the tribal government.

Marcus Yoder, Senior Vice President of Sales at GAN said "We're right in line with self-determination and the ability to control that data and really maintain the players, so I think if you're coming into the US you need to have that understanding."

Russell WITT, Director of Central Determinate Gaming at Incredible Technologies also goes on to say that when you truly get to understand and work with tribes you really start to see what it's all about. The companies that take the time to understand will be the successful companies. "The companies that want to come in and be transactional they'll crash and burn."

"Knowledge plus trust equals empowerment. If you get someone who really understands these markets from that standpoint, that is really going to be part of your key to success."

The last panel named Canada: A new competitive and Regulated iGaming market was regulated by Victor Bigio an Online Gaming Consultant

for the Americas. The speakers Dave Roe, Chief Operations Officer at Mazooma, Aly Lalani, Head of Marketing at BetRegal.com and Nei Erlick Chief Corporate Development Officer at Nuvei discuss all things Canada.

Neil Erlick opens up about what companies wanting to do business in Ontario or partnering with operators in Canada. He says that "Most of the names here are not startups so most of them have experience in working in the regulated markets. I think they're used to the challenges. If someone is looking at this as a challenge it's because they haven't done this

before.”

This is all relatively new. Canada needs to have an educational process to see how this will work and this is what operators are focusing on at the moment says Lalani.

When it comes to benefits Roe talks about where he and other payment companies stand when it comes to this. “From a payment provider perspective, more operators in the market obviously create more competition.”

A huge number of operators are entering the market in Canada in anticipation of the incoming regulations. Speakers agree that the licencing itself creates a trust factor.

Be sure to tune in tomorrow at the same time. Day two of our conference will put under the spotlight the latest developments happening across Latin America and will cover topics such as the impact of federalisation, and fragmentation in Latin America, the Brazil marketplace, player acquisition, and how 2020 has accelerated a new era of gaming around the same region.

SiGMA Group would like to thank all the sponsors including Neo Surf and Nuvei, our attendees, speakers, and exhibitors, and host Nicole Fields for a marked successful first day.

Join us at the same time tomorrow for day two of this SiGMA Americas virtual summit and continue exploring and meeting with exhibitors on our interactive expo hall.

h3. SiGMA Americas Virtual 2021:

Join us for day two of the SiGMA Americas Virtual show tomorrow 14th of September, 2021. Features include a fully interactive expo floor, networking chat rooms, and a high-profile lineup of panelists. Explore the „agenda“: <https://sigma.world/en/americas/> or check out who's on the „floor

plan":<https://www-old.sigma.com.mt/en/events/americas/floor-plan>.