Considerations for Implementing Self-Assessment in Online Gambling Platforms

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Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. President and CEO Rod Phillips said the move to online gambling is "exciting step in OLG's modernization." (CBC)
Questions to consider for Modernization

- Increase in prevalence of problem gambling?
  - Prevalence as high as 42% (Wood & Williams, 2007)

- Exacerbation of existing gambling problems?
  - Factors: Ease of access, Availability, E-commerce, Gambling under the influence, Underage, Solitary play, Anonymity

- Impact on vulnerable populations?
  - adolescents
  - older adults
  - women
  - aboriginals
  - Immigrants
  - concurrent

- Few gamblers are likely to seek out treatment
  (Suurvali, Hodgins, Toneatto, & Cunningham, 2008)
Research Goals

• Review problem gambling self-assessment tools for use on an internet platform.

• Explore how self-assessment tools may be promoted to increase uptake.
Two-Fold Approach

1. Literature Review:
   - Identify and evaluate problem gambling self-assessment tools

2. Qualitative study of stakeholders perspective
   - Experienced gamblers n=11 (2 Focus Groups)
   - Problem gamblers n=14 (2 Focus Groups)
   - Field experts n= 5 (out of 22 invitees)
Focus Group Methods

- Filled out SOGS, PGSI, DIGS upon arrival
- Questions covered 3 themes:
  1. Utility of Problem Gambling Self-Assessment Tools
  2. Marketing and promotion of tools
  3. Feedback following tool completion
- Shown either real or simulated poker sites to discuss location of link to self-assessment
- “Check out” exercise among Clinical group
1. Utility of Problem Gambling Self-Assessment Tools

- Limited familiarity
- Items increased their awareness of their gambling behaviours
  - Process for promoting readiness for change
    “made you think about things that maybe you never thought about, like family or how it affects relationships”
- Extreme brevity vs. Diagnostic length
- Perform an educational function
Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI)

- Trade-off between brevity & inclusion of key content
- Established cut-offs (1-4, 5-7, 8+)
- Has strong reliability
- Outperforms SOGS in sensitivity and specificity
- French and English translations
- Implemented on a number of internet platforms.
- Developed in Canada
What We Learned?

Although the tool that is selected is important, the participants (focus groups/interviews) were more passionate about how it’s used!
2. Marketing and Promotion of Tools

Marketing

- Direct & clearly visible phrasing - not responsible gambling
- Confusion about the meaning of responsible gambling and even problem gambling
- Supported use of pop-up/warning messaging
  - Messages that encourage self-reflection and awareness
  - Stories or videos of those that have experienced consequences of PG
    - Static and self-reflective risks
- Omnipresent, attention-grabbing links
  - Hidden/unclear links insincere/insensitive to problem gambling
  - attempt to avoid litigation
Recommendations for Engagement

• Self-assessment should be available and promoted, but not mandatory

• Various forms of content such as self-appraisals and information about gambling risks

• Direct yet designed to capture different types of gamblers:
  • Highly impulsive or those who have difficulty self-monitoring most receptive to self-appraisal messages (Monaghan & Blaszczynski, 2010a)
  • Highly involved gamblers may be most receptive to threatening messages (Munoz et al., 2010)
Recommendations for Onscreen Icon

• Highly visible icon at the top of the web-page
• Available at all times
• “Responsible Gambling/Gaming?”
• Self-assessment icon should be entertaining:
  • “Having Fun?”
  • “Check In”
  • “Where Are You At?”
  • “Gaming Quiz”
Play online for a chance to take part in a major casino event.
Recommendations for Pop-Up Messages

Why

• Shock value may be effective in promoting help seeking and cessation (Munoz, Chebat & Suissa, 2010)

• Better recall and increased access vs. static onscreen messages

• Self-appraisal has greater self-reported effect on thoughts and behaviours vs. generic messages. (Monaghan & Blaszczynski, 2010b)

When

• Multiple: login, after wins/losses, adding money/credits, at fixed intervals

• Recommended to appear every 15 to 30 minutes (Monaghan, 2009)
Suggestions for Pop-Ups

Take a Break!

Is your family concerned about your gambling?

Do you have enough money for rent?
3. Feedback following tool completion

- Essential that feedback be included

- Easy to understand with text descriptions providing context of score

- Promote a critical appraisal of one’s gambling behaviour

- Provide direction for obtaining help or support, if appropriate

- Comparison to norms may be helpful, particularly since internet gambling is typically a solitary activity
Your PGSI score is 6.

This represents where your score falls. Here are the explanations of the scores:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Probable life consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-risk gambler</td>
<td>A person scoring in this range may be gambling dependent and is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-27</td>
<td>experiencing a substantial level of gambling related problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate-risk gambler</td>
<td>A person scoring in this range will already be experiencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-7</td>
<td>some problem related to their gambling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-risk gambler</td>
<td>Experienced one or two minor problems related to their gambling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-problem gambler</td>
<td>Experienced no problems in the last year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The PGSI score shows whether a person's gambling should be considered a problem. High scores usually mean serious problems. The chart above is in the shape of a pyramid to show that there are more people with low scores than high scores.

Your score of 6 falls into the range of Moderate-risk gambler.

If your score indicates that you might be at risk, there are options available to you:
- Register for anonymous online tools [click here](http://www.problemgambling.ca).
- Contact the Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline 1-888-230-3505 for other resources and treatment options.
- E-mail or send the Quiz results to yourself [click here](http://www.problemgambling.ca).

[Retake Quiz](http://www.problemgambling.ca)
Providing Anonymous Support

• Feedback to include mechanisms to help persons engage with support as quickly as possible

• Direct link to CONNEX (Ontario Problem Gambling Helpline-online) may be most feasible

• Live online support with counsellors available to “chat” with the click of an onscreen icon

• List of treatment agencies available by region

• Unique aspects of the internet provide ways to break down common barriers to seeking treatment

(Suurvali, Cordingley, Hodgins, & Cunningham, 2009).
Conclusion

We hope that this study combined with future research activities, will help to change the future landscape of online gambling.

Our greatest wish is that this research will lead to the development and implementation of a responsible gambling framework to assist organizations in offering efficient, effective, and credible internet gambling activities with a reduced risk of harms associated with problem gambling.
Update

Since completing the project . . .

Welcome to PlayOLG, the future home of online gaming in Ontario. You’ll soon be able to play games online including your favourite lottery, slots and table games online, knowing your information is safe and secure.

Backed and regulated by the Government of Ontario, PlayOLG is your gateway to a whole new adventure. The countdown is on and we’re bringing excitement home, Ontario. Are you ready?

Learn more

See What’s in The Cards

Our team is hard at work making PlayOLG a fun, exciting and secure source of entertainment for Ontario. Visit us over the coming months for ongoing updates to the iGaming project and to get a sneak peek at some of the exciting features, games and promos we’re bringing to the table.
I always bet more than I can really afford to lose.

I often need to gamble with larger amounts of money to get the same feeling of excitement.

I sometimes go back to try and win back the money I lost.

I often borrow money or sell things to get gambling money.

I sometimes feel that I might have a problem with gambling.

My gambling often causes me health problems, including stress or anxiety.

People always criticize my betting or tell me that I have a gambling problem, regardless of whether or not I think it’s true.

My gambling often causes financial problems for myself or my family and friends.

I often feel guilty about the way I gamble or what happens when I gamble.
IT PAYS TO KNOW

WHOA!

You may have developed some risky playing habits. We encourage you to check out our responsible gambling tools & support to see how we can help you manage your play.

Review results
Email results
Links to resources
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The full report will be available on the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre Website on June 10

http://www.opgrc.org/content/research.php?appid=3353

http://www.opgrc.org
The full report is also available at:
http://www.homewood.org
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