

EDITORIAL

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LIVE FOREVER



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Live dealer has gone from being i-gaming’s gimmicky vanguard to an essential pillar of the industry. Here INTERGAMINGi talks to some of the sector’s game-changers.

There are more live dealer/casino services available than ever. In a consolidating market, there is always a risk of too many “me too” products - how should providers differentiate their offer?

Yes, the provision of Live casino services does appear to be heading towards this, with many “me too” suppliers emerging in the industry. Our vision at Extreme Live Gaming, however, is to become a “must have” games provider by offering a unique Live Dealer experience focused on player engagement through a presenter-led approach and the delivery of innovative and differentiated products.

We are already ahead of the field for diversity in slots crossover, gameshow versions, leaderboard and tournament functionality, as well as dynamic game information. Also, being part of the NOVOMATIC Group gives Extreme an exclusive access to NOVOMATIC’s blue chip content. Within two years of launch, Extreme is already accepted as one of the most innovative Live Dealer providers – and that reputation continues to strengthen.

Slowly but surely virtual and augmented reality technology is improving and finding its way into the i-gaming mainstream. Are these technologies a threat to “traditional” multi-camera live dealer gaming, or does VR/AR simply represent another opportunity for live casino gaming?

The application of VR/AR in the online gaming industry I believe is still in its early stages. Apart from building games that can capitalise on this, which itself is a challenge, a requirement for its mainstream acceptance is pairing with an experienced consumer and state-of-the-art gaming technology. At the moment, this is yet to be realised hence it’s premature to see VR posing as a threat to the current technology.

Having said this, the VR/AR space is definitely an area we are keeping an eye on for possible breakthroughs in the future.

What trends in live dealer gaming have you seen emerging and which are of most interest/likely to be of most influence in the long term?

An important trend and opportunity will be operators moving Live Dealer away from a tab based compartmentalised environment on their websites and integrating into mainstream front and center exposure on landing pages and sports pages etc. Unlike RNG and slots, Live Dealer has a real live person who can promote the game, the brand and other products within the operators. Crossover products such as slots and sports also play a key role in increasing the product index, adding stickiness and providing a broader game selection.

What live dealer/casino products and services do you offer and where is the growth potential for them?

Roulette, Blackjack and Baccarat are both the industry's and our main products. Both market development and product development are growth areas. We have grown from supplying one operator in April 2015 to 15 by April 2016, and now supply over 45 operators and hundreds of brands.

Having started with just one Roulette table, we now offer 18 tables with a huge range of product options such as Golden Ball and Reel Roulette, which we continue to build on. We are also expanding Live Box, our land-based casino product offering that, in turn, increases the table offering for our operators.

Extreme is constantly scanning other gaming and non-gaming industries and services for new features and product ideas. As well as the emergent gamification of products, which is already prevalent in the sector, Extreme has researched and is in the process of developing and launching a stream of new and innovative products.

Being part of NOVOMATIC has had a significant impact on Extreme's growth and development. As part of Europe's largest gaming technology company, we have exclusive access to content and brands that make Extreme unique and valuable in the Live Dealer space.

Are we "over" mobile, now? Is it just expected that *everything* must work on the go - or is there still a place for more immersive desktop play?

Mobile is now universal and all products must be made available through this medium. However, optimising Live Dealer for mobile is the challenge for providers, and Extreme, in particular, has relished in tackling this.

Our desktop and mobile offers are often very different in look and feel as we understand and customise the games, their functionality and ergonomic presentation for each device.

A desktop view in a mobile environment is simply sub-optimal, and our clients and their players demand so much more, which to date we have been delighted to deliver.

I don't think we can ever be "over" mobile, it has become fundamental to everyday life. Mobile can be improved and will continue to develop, but there will always be desktop play in our industry as the experience is more captivating on larger screens.