

EDITORIAL

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KEEPING PLAYERS CONNECTED – BOTH ON AND OFF THE CASINO FLOOR



“We developed a platform that greatly increases player engagement.”

Taking the industry spotlight this month, Georg Gubo discussed his role as chief technology officer for Greentube, the interactive division of Europe’s largest gaming machine manufacturer, NOVOMATIC.

Please could you provide a brief biography, providing insight into your background in the software/gaming industry and your responsibilities role at Greentube?

I have been working in the gaming industry for more than a decade with leading roles in R&D and project management, mainly focused on the land-based sector: casino backend systems, SMIBs, AWP software and hardware, VLT and casino. So I am a land-based kid that always had a keen interest in the online sector because of its dynamics and its forward-thinking technology. I also did a postgraduate masters a few years back where I wrote about responsible gaming and a common law framework for VLTs in Europe as a recommendation for the European Commission. For Greentube, I am the CTO and acting COO for the daily running of the business.

In 2015 Novomatic toasted record revenues of more than €2bn. How was business for Greentube last year and in the first six months of 2016? Do you have any significant company milestones to report?

Business was stable last year and is as well this year. We are in a position of leadership in the online gaming space, and a current focus is on an internal reorganization to be able to hold this position and further develop it in the future.

As the online brand for Europe’s largest gaming machine manufacturer, what has been your top priority for 2016?

Greentube is backed by NOVOMATIC’s rich heritage and market-leading technology and as the interactive unit of Europe’s largest gaming technology provider, we are multi-focused with a diverse iGaming entertainment portfolio. We provide solutions that enable land-based casinos to stay connected with their players, even when they step out of the casino. A priority for us this year, as we have been doing so successfully over the past several years, is to continue translating the NOVOMATIC classics into a seamless omni-channel solution for our customers across all devices.

In what way is Greentube bridging the land-based and online/mobile gaming space, and how has your omni-channel offering been received by operators and consumers?

Greentube develops NOVOMATIC content that is renowned throughout international markets and delivers that experience in the virtual space. We are fully engaged in the fast transition from desktop to mobile across all distribution channels. Our omni-channel approach has clearly become a priority for Greentube, and it is our goal to provide the best possible gaming experience to players, be it land-based, online, mobile or social.

The fast growth of Greentube's B2B operation directly correlates with the success of our clients. We have a profound knowledge of our clients and local markets, as well as the development of the online gaming sector. This expertise has given us the ability to provide tailor-made content and services to customers, from start-ups to well-established players in the market, and everyone in between.

Greentube counts Foxwoods among its high-profile social gaming clients. What are your expectations regarding the growth of the social gaming sector over the coming years?

Social gaming is set to grow dramatically as casinos gain a better understanding of its effectiveness as a player retention and acquisition tool. The earliest solutions in the marketplace were real-money platforms adjusted to fit in social spaces – a lot like a square peg in a round hole. That's why our Greentube Pro platform is such a game-changer as it was created for social from the ground up.

Our strategy was to be the first to offer a social gaming solution – built for the online environment – that assumes the identity and brand of the casino. We developed a platform that greatly increases player engagement and draws guests back to the casino floor. The Greentube Pro solution allows casinos to bridge the gap between a high-tech world and their land-based operations, and that makes it invaluable in the marketplace.

We are often asked: if real-money expands, will it replace social casino gaming – and our answer is that social and real-money will coexist successfully because they are two separate lines of business meant to serve two different purposes – entertainment and gambling.

How closely does Greentube work with Novomatic Gaming Industries (NGI) and/or operators when it comes to the development of new titles?

When developing new titles, NGI developers are in close collaboration with Greentube. New features requested by the game studios are implemented in a timely fashion to ensure the game's time-to-market is short. In addition, input from operations also strongly influences novoSDK development, be it for compliance requirements or features demanded by players.

The online and mobile gaming space is notoriously fast-moving. Are there any new, disruptive technologies on the horizon? What, in your opinion, is set to be the 'next big thing' for the sector?

Looking at the overall gaming and online industries, we are driven by similar trends such as VR and AR. However, since the gaming industry gets its momentum from speed and fast play, we do not think these technologies will have an immediate effect on us.

Don't get me wrong, we are investing in these areas and have some aces in our pockets there, but will take caution as to when to play our hand. Other trends clearly visible in the online and mobile gaming space include gamification, whereby gaming elements are added to casual and social games, and we are confident this will help operators reach new demographics.

Finally, what does the remainder of 2016 have in store for Greentube?

There is a lot in the pipeline at both the product- and game-level. Greentube continues to launch new content from NOVOMATIC's subsidiaries such as Mazooma Interactive Games, StakeLogic, AbZorba Games, Eurocoin Gaming and NGI. The technology provided by BlueBat Games gives us an advantage in the industry due to their advanced interactive features.