

Touchpoint

April 30, 2010

7071 Bayers Rd., Suite 319A - PO Box 2392, Halifax CRO - Halifax, NS B3J 3E4 - 902.424.0963 - Toll Free: 1.866.424.0963

Virtual Damage: Youth, the Internet, and Online Gambling

The explosion of the Internet and other technologies in recent decades has completely transformed the Canadian media landscape and, in turn, the experience of growing up in Canada. Because the explosion of the Internet developed along a similar timeline as the gambling industry in Canada (both have grown exponentially since the early 1990s), the current generation of young people are the first to grow up in a culture that has both accepted gambling as a normalized activity and is increasingly reliant on technology. Today's teens, young adults, and even children are tuned in and wired up in ways that were strictly science fiction for past generations. Every day youth are tweeting, texting,



blogging, friending, gaming, and yes - even gambling - online.

In part because they make up a large percentage of internet users, young people are also being directly targeted and groomed online to consume gambling-related products. In addition to the multitude of pay poker sites that offer free 'training' or 'practice' games to all ages, there are many children's portals that contain gambling-related games. For example, the games section of Neopets.com, a popular website with Canadian preteens, has a category called "Luck/Chance" that contains games like "The Neopian Lottery," "Dice of Destiny" and "Deserted Fairground Scratchcards." Users of the website play these games in the hope of winning virtual coins to spend on online pets they design. The "Luck/Chance" games caption reads "Nothing ventured, nothing gained - are you willing to risk it all...?"

On the international front, free gambling-related iPhone applications (some backed by gambling industry giants like Harrah's Casino Hotel) recently caught the attention of Australian Senator Nick Xenophon. Xenophon suggested that gambling-related applications for Apple's iPhone should be banned and expressed concern that by playing these downloadable games, "children can become experts on a poker machine before they are legally allowed to set eyes on a real machine."

The Nova Scotia Gaming Foundation is interested in what Nova Scotians think about youth and online gambling and invites you to take part in the latest informal website poll:

Do you believe online gambling is a relevant concern for Nova Scotia youth?

Submissions for the Student Scholarship Essay Contest are due May 28, 2010!
For more detail, visit nsgamingfoundation.org/pages/Essay-Contest.aspx

Until next time,
Jen Wheatley



Call for Peer Reviewers

The Nova Scotia Gaming Foundation seeks Peer Reviewers to assist in the evaluation of 2010/2011 Community Project grant applications.

Deadline: May 7, 2010

Peer Reviewers should have expertise in one or more of the following areas: *Gambling Addiction and Treatment, Health Promotion, Evaluation, Outcome Measurement, Performance Evaluation, and/or Knowledge of Unique Communities (Youth, Seniors, etc.)*. Experience working in volunteer community organizations is considered an asset.

About the Peer Review Process

The peer review process is designed to help the Nova Scotia Gaming Foundation (NSGF) allocate Community Project grant funding on the basis of merit, need, and relevance. After critical evaluation of applications, Peer Reviewers offer independent recommendations about the extent to which projects will positively impact the lives of individuals, families, and communities affected by problem gambling.

Peer Reviewers follow a standardized form that includes a structured rating scale, a section for reviewer comments and suggestions, and an overall rating scale.

Peer Reviewers are provided a \$150.00 honorarium for each completed evaluation form.

How to Apply

Please submit your interest in writing with a current C.V. to the Nova Scotia Gaming Foundation by Friday, May 7. On receipt of your application, an NSGF staff member will contact you. Applicants must be available to review applications between May 21 and June 11, 2010.

For more information about the Nova Scotia Gaming Foundation or to learn more about the community projects we fund, visit our website at

www.nsgamingfoundation.org.

info@nsgamingfoundation.org
902.424.0963 or toll free 866.424.0963
www.nsgamingfoundation.org

