

Social Gaming

These games involve some form of inter-communication with other players.

The key difference between social gaming and gambling is that with social gaming you cannot win a prize that is classified as money or 'money's worth'.

If you can win points or 'virtual currency' (with no real world value) on a game involving social interaction, that is classified as social gaming.

Popular social games include Candy Crush, Farmville, Zynga Poker, World of Warcraft, Words with Friends and Mafia Wars.

Key issues with social gaming

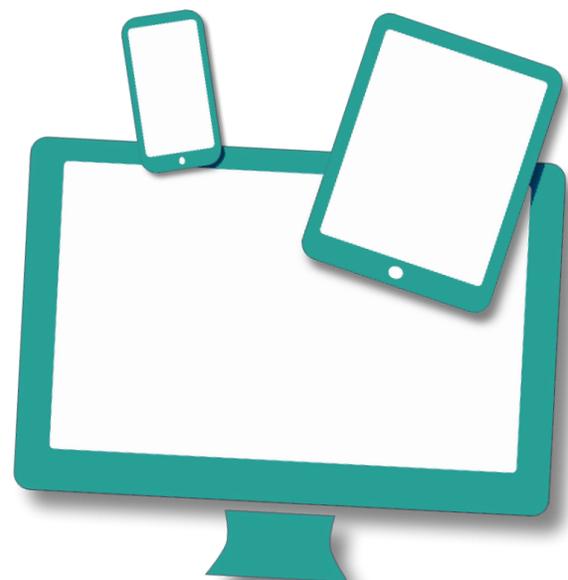
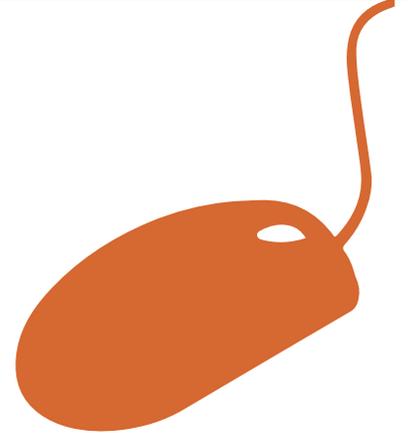
Social games are monetised; players pay money to buy lives, extra abilities, move up levels etc. As long as the monetary exchange only goes into games and not out, they remain within the classification of 'social gaming'. When players are able to extract real world value from games, this becomes gambling.

With some of the games listed above, third party websites have been created in contradiction to the terms and conditions of the original games. These websites allow players to buy and sell in-game items and currency.

The ability to sell items or currency means that they now have an intrinsic real world value that can be extracted, and this moves social games into the realms of gambling, albeit via an unofficial source.

There are also cases where people have managed to run up huge bills from purchases on social gaming.

Playing social games can also take up huge amounts of time, with some players tearing tendons in their thumbs after playing for so long, and even an MP who was so engrossed he was caught playing in Parliament.



eSports

eSports is a form of competition that takes place electronically, most often in the form of video games. Some eSports professionals make money from gaming competitively online and in packed out arenas.

eSports is a popular spectator sport, with an estimated global audience of up to 150 million people. As such it has become an attractive betting proposition.

Popular eSports Games include Defense of the Ancients (DOTA), League of Legends (LOL), Counter Strike Global Offensive (CS:GO) and Overwatch.

Key issues with eSports

eSports and betting have become more closely linked in recent times, however eSports is popular with a young demographic and many fans are under the legal age to gamble.

Though it is very difficult for under 18s to gamble on eSports in a regulated market, the fear is that they will turn to unregulated websites and peer-to-peer betting to place wagers on eSports matches.

eSports matches are also streamed for free on the web, which can also include promotion for different forms of gambling. The Gambling Commission has started to consider this issue, as well as skins betting (see below).

Skins Betting

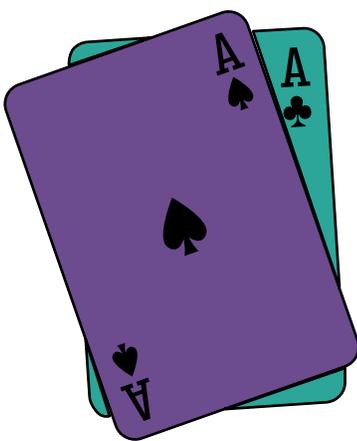
In some video games players can purchase new weapon accessories and appearances for their characters known as 'skins' with real money. Some of these skins are rare and sought-after, meaning that their value can sometimes run thousands of dollars. As a result, black market skins sites where these items can be bought and sold have begun to appear.

Popular games for skins betting include Counter Strike Global Offensive (CS:GO) and Defense of the Ancients (DOTA).

Key Issues with Skins Betting

There are some third party sites that allow players to take part in an unregulated form of betting on eSports. On these sites players can bet their 'skins' against other players on the outcome of an eSports match, then extracting their value.

These sites will likely not have any age verification in place to protect minors. As these sites are unregulated, if they act unscrupulously or a user has a complaint, there aren't any governing bodies to turn to for help. This is a particularly risky and a legal grey area.



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