



PLAYING BY OUR RULES

Is a worldwide set of gaming standards a truly attainable goal?

TRADITIONALLY, land-based gaming has commonly been a worldwide affair, with casinos in hotels and cruise ships a feature of luxury travel. Some countries are happy to cater to tourists who wish to gamble even while discouraging or prohibiting it among nationals.

Yet many different cultures have very different perspectives on gambling, meaning the legal details for operators of staying fully compliant can be very tricky waters to navigate.

The world these days may be more connected than ever, but how much cooperation is there to create a set of standards for the gaming industry that is truly international?

"There are certainly parts of regulatory standards that are universal," said Mackenzie Haugh, GLI's chief delivery officer. "Adopting universal protocols such as SAS or G2S are examples just as geolocation services.

"There are even discussions on how to handle topics more universally, such as responsible gambling, cryptocurrency and AI, to name a few - all steps in the direction of a more universal regulatory infrastructure."

Travis Foley, BMM Testlabs' executive vice president North America, concludes that each market being unique is, to some extent, inevitable. "In most cases, jurisdictions have adopted their own set of standards," he said.

"Upon reviewing all available standards for the different market segments, it can be

estimated that 85 to 95 per cent of all standards are effectively equivalent for casino gaming and wagering. All regulatory or independent technical standards are typically variations of existing standards.

"While there are industry or international standards in different areas, such as communication protocols from independent organisations, there will always be some level of uniqueness in each market.

"When it comes to standards, the most challenging area is not necessarily the standards themselves, but the interpretation of the standard. There are many areas where it may appear that one market has the same requirement as another market, but the interpretation or the intent of that standard is different."

With the basic aims and intent of so many regulatory standards being so similar, is the idea of a single, international set of standards really so far-fetched? "The number one thing that stands in the way of this is history," said Haugh. "And history has an impact in two key ways.

"First, there is motivation. Many markets are mature and have had their regulations and internal controls in place for decades. With that much time, they've built many processes and set universal expectations as to how things should run. And it runs smoothly, at least from their point of view, so why change? How does a universal standard help that mature market?

/// "NEW MARKETS WANT TO REDUCE BARRIERS TO ENTRY, SO IN A WAY, THE MORE NEW MARKETS WE ADD, THE MORE WE ARE ALL TRENDING TOWARDS A MORE UNIVERSAL STANDARD"///

Mackenzie Haugh, chief delivery officer, GLI

