



Roundtable: How to adapt a retail slot for the online market, part two

Game developers continue to offer their views on what types of games and features can make the transition from the casino floor to desktop and mobile devices.

CasinoBeats: Are there any examples of games that have proved successful in the land-based sector and have gone on to perform strongly with an online audience too?



Robert Lee, commercial director at Realistic Games.

Robert Lee, Realistic Games: In the UK market, the most successful online adaption of a land-based classic is probably Rainbow Riches. I was a games machines manager for Gala Bingo at the time of its release, and when the game was installed into a number of our key sites it blew the competition out the water as players fell in love with the cheeky leprechaun.

Other titles that have made the transition from the casino floor in recent times are also games that have been around for decades. Lucky Lady's Charm and Book of Ra are another two strong examples, but there are also games with no land-based history that have brought retail players into the online world.

Within our own portfolio, Super Graphics Upside Down, Pentagram, Hot Cross Bunnies and Aussie Adventure are just some of the titles that are evolutions from traditional slot math-models and have proven appeal among land-based customer segments.

Nikolay Illyustrov, Playson: Most of the table games are a great success both in land-based and online. But the key rules for such games are hard to change and they will not attract as many players. Most adaptations that we see on the market attempt to stand out via changes in the interface, sound design, and notifications. The most successful product to bridge the gap is of course live dealer games. Essentially, players are seeking the real casino experience without leaving their home.



Nikolay Illyustrov, game producer at Playson.

Rob Procter, Scientific Games: We've had plenty of success in the conversion of retail games to online. Dragon Spin, Legend of the Pharaohs, Jin Ji Bao Xi, Quick Hit Platinum, Raging Rhino, Rainbow Riches and 88 Fortunes are great examples. They're all consistent performers, with a solid land-based audience and an equally strong fanbase online.

David Flynn, Swintt: A great deal of operators these days are making sure they offer not only online video slots, but also games players recognise from the gaming halls, casinos, betting shops and so on. With the proliferation of online players, both those new to gaming as well as seasoned players, making sure the right content that is enjoyed by a wide audience becomes vital.

Trust also plays a part in the logic behind promoting land-based games in the online sector – if the players recognise the game and instantly grasp there are no differences then they will be more likely to trust the product and operator. Some of the largest games in the industry are built on familiar and trusted game models from the longer established land-based sector.

What is notable, is that the relative popularity of regional land-based slots online is very much driven by the stage in development of online gaming in a particular country. If you take Norway and Sweden as examples, the most popular online slots 10 years ago were akin to the popular land-based Joker slots.

These countries were well developed in terms of online gaming at that time. As audiences mature, the online games differentiate more as they appeal to a newer audience who have less experience of playing land-based slots. In contrast, consider present-day Germany

where the online titles still very much reflect the popular land-based titles, very much akin to the Nordics 10 years ago.

In this respect, we're very excited to see the imminent impact of our land-based games which are coming online for the very first time. Top performing land-based classics such as Master of Books and Fresh Fruit, popular across many European markets, have a captive audience of players eagerly looking to play their favourite and trusted content online – our partners have just as high expectations of the games as we do, and for good reason!

Jo Purvis, Blueprint Gaming: Deal or No Deal is the brand which really stands out as successful across both verticals. It was taken into the land-based retail market in massive numbers through the late 90's and into the new millennium. In the end over 30 game variants utilising the licence were created. Blueprint has been able to take this popular TV show and continue its appeal in the online market with huge success.

From the LBO environment, titles such as Eye of Horus and Fishin' Frenzy, which are popular across many parts of Europe, have also translated just as effectively to online gaming, being as attractive online as they are in shops and casinos.



Boro Brumen, games producer at Greentube.

Boro Brumen, Greentube: Some of the most popular games in our online and mobile portfolio are Novomatic land-based titles that have been converted to online slots. Our blue-chip titles such as Book of Ra deluxe, Lucky Lady's Charm deluxe and Sizzling Hot deluxe appeal to both the traditional and the next generation of players and have also been proven to stand the test of time, developing in sequels and adapting to both player needs and technological needs, such as user experience and orientation of play.

Our Cash Connection Charming Lady and the Diamond Link series are also heavily influenced by land-based game play and are very popular online. We also have examples where a game has performed very well online and as a result has been turned into a land-based title, such as Apollo God of

the Sun.

CasinoBeats: How important is it to have a retail background when developing classic games for online?

JP: Without a background in the retail sector, you cannot truly develop a successful online version. Knowing what goes into making a mechanical retail game is essential to understanding how this should be portrayed to the online world.

Our core design team grew up and cut their teeth designing retail games and have made the natural progression to the online world as the company itself has expanded and moved forward. Awareness of the nuances of how the traditional features work and draw the players is the most important aspect of designing such games.

Creating interaction with restrictions, as was the case with traditional retail machines only having flashing lights and a simple matrix text display, breeds creativity and a distinct understanding of how to make the most of very little while creating so much excitement.

NI: In general, it is hard to be a good mathematician or game designer without any experience of land-based gambling. That physical interaction provides a greater understanding of the anticipation and expectations players seek in their gambling experience.

Land based games also create triggers, which when designed and incorporated into online games, evoke a sense of nostalgia. Games with a familiar land-based experience coupled with cutting-edge design and the latest technology will always be successful.



Jo Purvis, director of marketing and relationships at Blueprint Gaming.



David Flynn, CEO of Swintt.

DF: If you are looking to provide content which has a broad appeal to both land-based and online players, then an understanding of how both sets of players enjoy games will certainly help. Many games in the market place would not be directly suitable for both formats, but this in turn leads to the opportunity of making content with a universal appeal by combining crucial elements from both sides.

Solid math will be a foundation of any successful game but sound design is also an unmistakable element especially within land-based games, so utilising the bells and triggers that build the experience offline can help drive players online and make them feel more familiar with the content on offer. Our range of land-based Swintt Premium games are

directly ported from land-based markets across Europe and offer the same experience online that players would recognise right away.

In many emerging and maturing markets worldwide, players are just starting to reach the online sector having only been exposed to classic style land-based games. Our Swintt Lite series has encapsulated the regular simplicity and accessibility of those classic games and offers it to the online sector – games with less complexity around features without impairing the experience, and to cater for certain markets small file sizes for quick loading times.

RL: Personally, I don't think it matters. Having a retail background will of course provide insight into the trends and preferences of the traditional bingo, arcade, casino and FOBT customers, but at the same time most of the innovation comes from the online space.

Ideas such as Megaways, for example, had no land-based presence initially and that concept has taken the online world by storm. Having an understanding of both environments will certainly stand you in good stead – something that, fortunately, Realistic has in abundance.

RP: It's very important to us and forms a key component of our content roadmap. Having a strong multi-channel strategy allows us to test new games that are coming out. That provides us with a whole different knowledge base when we're able to put games through the ultimate test in a different environment. If players take to a game offline, that's testing done to an extent and then we know there's a strong possibility it will work online too.



Rob Procter, content specialist director at SG Digital.

BB: A big part of our portfolio of slot products includes classic Novomatic slots that have been converted to work on all online devices, including mobile. As such, Greentube can rely on the vast experience Novomatic holds as a long-time manufacturer and operator in the international land-based gaming markets, including detailed knowledge of regional player demographics and preferences.

Likewise, players are often familiar with the titles in Greentube's portfolio from their experience with the land-based games and can therefore appreciate the additional online offer. Knowing your player is a huge advantage when creating online slots for a particular market, as we can use the data collected from the land-based operations to take proven games into our online and mobile portfolio, and develop them further based on player needs.

However, it is important to not get restrained by a retail mindset as it could lead to less freedom when creating games and therefore less innovation. That is why we at Greentube have a mix of converted titles as well as games created solely for online to ensure we appeal to as wide an audience as possible.