



## **Eyes down as online bingo becomes fastest growing sector of gambling market**

*Global online bingo to generate half a billion pounds for operators in 2013*

**London 17th March 2009:** Media analyst Screen Digest ([www.screendigest.com](http://www.screendigest.com)) today releases its benchmark study 'Bingo in the Digital Age: Global Market Assessment and Forecasts' covering the global market for bingo: both online and land-based. With growing broadband penetration, increased promotional activity, a trend towards regulatory relaxation and the current economic downturn driving demand for in-home entertainment, online bingo has become the fastest growing sector of the online gaming market and offers huge potential for further growth.

Bingo halls and venues have experienced falling attendances and declining revenues for a number of years, and in some markets the smoking ban has exacerbated the problem. Operators have responded by marketing prizes to appeal specifically to a younger audience and by investing in improving their venues for all players. Many have begun offering online bingo in a bid to attract and retain the younger market.

With operators generating over £220m of revenue in 2008 (by gross win), the UK is the largest, most mature and most competitive online bingo market. Given such intense competition, Screen Digest believes that many of the major players will expand into other markets, in particular Spain and select markets in Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America. Online bingo is particularly popular in Hispanic territories, especially Spain, where a number of UK-based operators are expected to launch services in the hope that broadband household penetration will continue to increase. In the other major European markets of Italy, France and Germany, legislation currently outlaws online bingo, but we expect 2009 to be the year it becomes a reality in Italy.

## **Recession resistant**

Despite slowing growth in the final quarter of 2008, online active player numbers increased 80 per cent between June and December last year. Financial results from key players in 2009 are expected to show that online bingo is growing at the expense of other forms of gaming. However in markets such as the UK where competition is fierce, operators will need to focus on the most successful marketing strategies to attract and retain players who are likely to become increasingly value-oriented.

## **Future outlook**

Over the next 12-18 months, media and retail brands are expected to enter the market looking to maximise revenue opportunities from their extensive customer bases. At present, five per cent of the leading 150 bingo sites are operated by retail brands and Screen Digest expects this to grow to 13 per cent by 2010 as retailers, airlines, magazines and travel companies enter the bingo market. New entrants will have to make a choice between competing in the tough but well-developed UK market or set their sights on less developed markets such as India and China with their own regulatory and cultural challenges.

Rachael Church-Sanders, author of report and Screen Digest Consultant 'Bingo in the Digital Age: Global Market Assessment and Forecasts', says: "The online bingo sector has been enjoying a period of rapid growth in the UK and other key markets, and we expect to see this trend continuing, particularly outside the mature UK market. With the global recession encouraging people to stay in for a cheaper night's entertainment, we expect more people to play bingo at home in the hope of winning ever-more enticing prizes.

We also envisage opportunities for consumer-facing brands such as supermarkets who may consider launching their own bingo sites to engage with their core customers and diversify revenue their streams. I would not be surprised to see the emergence of bingo brands based on widely recognised supermarket or consumer goods brands in the marketplace in the medium term."

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**About the report 'Bingo in the Digital Age: Global Market Assessment and Forecasts'**

The 340 page report authored by Rachael Church-Sanders is based on extensive proprietary research including data from operators, trade associations, consumer and trade media sources and government departments. It provides an invaluable market overview of the fast-moving bingo industry, both online and land-based. Dozens of senior executives from the global bingo industry were interviewed in the course of the research. The report covers all major global bingo territories including detailed analyses of all key Western and Eastern European, North American, South American and Asian bingo markets. As well as key industry revenue forecasts to 2013, local regulatory developments and profiles the key industry operators are included.

**About Screen Digest**

Screen Digest is the pre-eminent firm of industry analysts covering global media markets. Headquartered in London, with offices in New York and Monterey, California, we employ a team of 40 specialist analysts covering film, television, broadband, mobile, cinema, home entertainment and gaming. Our online services and reports provide the information and analysis that hundreds of media companies worldwide base their decisions on. Most recently we have launched Global Media Intelligence (GMI), a new service which provides research and analysis specifically for media-focused institutional investors. [www.screendigest.com](http://www.screendigest.com). To find out more, please contact Screen Digest sales [sales@screendigest.com](mailto:sales@screendigest.com) Tel: +44 (0) 20 7424 2820.