Collaboration for Supporting Digital Wellbeing & Preventing Online Gambling Harms

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RGC & RG+: All in for Safer Gambling

- **Independent, non-profit** organisation
- **35+ years** of research, prevention, education, and policy guidance
- Providing **global insights** on safer gambling
  - In-depth knowledge of leading practices across many jurisdictions
- Working with **all stakeholders**: regulators, operators, treatment providers, researchers, charities, players, and families to prevent gambling harm and reduce risks
Background

• Current prominence of **safer gambling** and **digital wellbeing**
  • Internationally
  • Time online during COVID-19
  • (Online) gambling expansion

• Prevention can best be achieved through **collaboration**
  • Relevant stakeholders concerned about **same group of high risk people**
Approach

Past 2 Years: **Researching promising collaboration approaches across digital spaces and putting them into practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>How can stakeholders build purposeful collaborations to advance the digital wellbeing of young people?</th>
<th>How does online gambling relate to digital wellbeing?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why?</strong></td>
<td>Young adults are high risk group but gaps exist in available support and knowledge across online spaces</td>
<td>Interconnections between digital wellbeing and online gambling are largely unexamined</td>
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<td><strong>How?</strong></td>
<td>One-on-one and group discussions with 33 stakeholders representing 27 organisations (Thank you!)</td>
<td>• Literature review • Online survey with adults from UK, Canada, and US</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Results</strong></td>
<td>• Guide for purposeful collaboration • Critical success factors</td>
<td>• Definition of digital wellbeing (with online gambling) • Only population-level look at digital wellbeing • First study of links between online gambling and digital wellbeing</td>
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Five Critical Success Factors

1. Centre goals around a shared definition of digital wellbeing, consolidating ambitions, and (industry) insights

2. Assemble stakeholders from across digital entertainment spaces, including young people, frontline expertise, and independent organizations

3. Outline complementary roles for the digital entertainment industry, government, and independent organizations

4. Focus activities on building relationships, generating shareable outputs, and addressing areas of need

5. Evaluate emerging digital initiatives and share learnings to maximize impacts from the front lines to policy
Defining Digital Wellbeing

**Digital wellbeing** is a **personal experience** of both the *positive* and *negative* impacts of spending time in *various* online spaces. It is fostered by **personal factors** and **design factors** that meet **psychological needs**.

Online gambling can be understood within digital wellbeing as a form of **design for pleasure** that meets psychological needs similar to those captured within digital wellbeing.
Multi-Stakeholder Approach

- Mobilises variety of knowledge, expertise, and perspectives,
- Leads to challenging of assumptions,
- Increases stakeholder understanding of issues,
- Permits problems with complex causes to be addressed,
- Provides access to data, insights, and leavers/approaches otherwise out of reach, and
- Allows for the creation of an evidence base for decision making and initiative creation.
Online Gambling & Digital Wellbeing

**Online gambling is associated with digital wellbeing.** Lower levels of digital wellbeing are associated with:

- Past year **online gambling**,
- Having **psychological needs** met by online gambling,
- More risky online gambling **beliefs and behaviours**, and
- Online gambling **harms and problems**.

**High risk groups** for low digital wellbeing AND high online gambling harms are:

- **18-24 year olds**,
- Higher level of **involvement** (i.e. time, frequency, accounts, spend),
- Lower positive **beliefs** (i.e. not at expense of other obligations), and
- Lower positive **behaviours** (i.e. setting limits, not more than planned).
More broadly, digital wellbeing initiatives should include online gambling stakeholders and goals to allow for a more holistic focus on the risks, benefits, and overall impacts of online spaces.

Prioritize design for pleasure features in digital entertainment platforms including online gambling, such as limiting unnecessary data collection, implementing user feedback features, and allowing customisation.

**Implications**

**Education programs**

Develop holistic education programs that cover risk and risk mitigation strategies across digital entertainment spaces and that are targeted at young people, their parents, teachers, and health professionals.

**Safeguards and support**

Digital entertainment platforms should create broad and tailored safeguards and tools for young people that are relevant across spaces, particularly during COVID-19 restrictions.

Industry should use its insights and resources to innovate ways to support those on their platforms in their digital wellbeing.
Implications

Culture

Cultivate a culture of **responsibility** where the wellbeing of those using their platforms is a priority within all digital entertainment industries, including approaches directed to people on their platforms as well as initiatives with external stakeholders.

Foster a culture of **evaluation and information sharing** to maximize the use of available resources and inform frontline work as well as policy.

Examples include making wellbeing the focus of staff training, performance assessments, and regulatory requirements.

Regulation

Implement evidence-based regulation that focuses on ensuring **consistency** in supports across online spaces, encouraging stakeholder **collaboration** on key topics, and outlining **safeguards**.

Such as **minimum standards** for safeguards, outlining **key topics** for sector collaboration, and encouragement to **innovate**.

Through a focus on **evidence-based** approaches, **speaking engagements**, and **sector communications**.
Thank you

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