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Alberta Gambling Research Institute

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Research reveals ... : an update on gambling research in Alberta, Vol 1, 2001-2002

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About The Alberta Gaming Research Institute

The Alberta Gaming Research Institute is a consortium of the Universities of Alberta, Calgary, and Lethbridge. Its primary purpose is to support and promote research into gaming and gambling in the province. The Institute's identified research domains include bio-psychological and health care, socio-cultural, economic, and government and industry policy and practice. The Institute aims to achieve international recognition in gaming-related research. It is coordinated by a Board of Directors working in collaboration with the Alberta Gaming Research Council. The Ministry of Alberta Gaming provides funding to the Institute.

OUR MISSION:

To significantly improve Albertans' knowledge of how gambling affects society

Your comments and queries are welcome either by e-mail abgaming@ualberta.ca or phone 780.492.2856.

Alberta Gaming Research Institute Board of Directors, 2002

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A Vital (and Virtual) Resource

IT IS A TRUISM that the heart of any academic institution is its library; traditionally, it has been the physical repository of knowledge, both old and new. The Alberta Gaming Research Institute Library plays the same essential role. But there is one important difference between the Institute library and other, more familiar libraries. "There is no *separate* library," says Institute Librarian Rhys Stevens, who is located at the University of Lethbridge. Materials purchased for the collection are housed at the libraries of the Universities of Alberta, Calgary, and Lethbridge. A liaison librarian at each of these universities assists with actual collection development and coordination.



The Institute library primarily supports academic research into all aspects of gambling, but the general public is welcome to, and indeed does, use its services. The Institute's website serves as the Library's major gateway. While the actual contents of most publications relating to gambling are not accessible directly on the site, Rhys has established comprehensive hyperlinks to the free online versions (published by the Institute as well as other groups). The website also provides instructions on how to access the physical and proprietary electronic gambling collections of the three consortium libraries.

Rhys, who has a Master's degree in Library and Information Science (Western Ontario), agrees that the library portion of the Institute website is an increasingly useful resource for those conducting research into gambling, as well as an efficient means to disseminate research findings. Future improvements – digitizing historically significant Canadian gaming reports, potential collaborative arrangements, and building a database of the growing amount of 'grey' literature relating to gambling – will further enhance this resource. ("Grey literature," notes Rhys, is "that which is produced [by] all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic formats, but which is not controlled by commercial publishers.")

"It's a challenge to keep up with all of the material that is being published on gambling these days," says Rhys. To do so, he identifies and summarizes significant gambling-related items from those received through a monitoring service of major daily newspapers and media. As well, an automated email message is sent to subscribers when new academic journal issues become available. Rhys has adapted these concepts by notifying researchers of new items and publications related to their research area. He also has access to collection development aids such as library association guides, review journals and publisher catalogues to order current publications. Finally, he relies on advice and recommendations from gambling researchers themselves. To see what's newly available, go to www.abgaminginstitute.ualberta.ca/agrilibrary/blogger.html.

As the collection grows, the Library becomes a more vital resource for anyone interested in issues related to gambling. Of course, Rhys would like to hear any ideas that people might have to improve the usefulness of the Institute website. "And feel free to contact me for any information requests that you might have!" He can be reached at rhys.stevens@uleth.ca.

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Gambling, Law Enforcement and Justice System Issues: Conference Summary

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA was the site on March 8-9, 2002 of a conference on gambling, law enforcement and justice system issues. Featuring policy makers, academia, the gambling industry, law enforcement agencies and the legal profession, the conference provided both broad overviews and in-depth analyses of gambling issues.

Mr. Ivan E. Sack, Editor, Canadian Gaming News: provided an overview of legalized gambling in Canada, including a region-by-region review of current issues. He observed that there is still little knowledge of gambling's economic impact and emphasized the importance of maintaining an arms-length relationship between regulators and operators.

Det. Insp. Larry Moodie, Ontario Provincial Police: In recent years, Ontario has allocated increased resources to fight organized crime in gambling, since illegal sports betting is a multi-billion dollar activity in North America – for every \$1 bet legally, \$152 is bet illegally. As well, of each dollar earned by bookmakers, 92 cents flows through the hands of organized crime. Internet gambling provides an ideal climate for organized crime to thrive.*

Det. Jim Rorison, Calgary Police Service: presented a detailed case study of an undercover operation to close down illegal gaming houses in Calgary and Edmonton, providing an appreciation of the amount of work required for such an operation. Because the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission has extended legal poker gambling to 22 hours per day, the need for illegal houses has almost disappeared.*

Brian Jones, Investigations, Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC), Edmonton: provided a comprehensive overview of the AGLC, including its mandate and the responsibilities of its Investigations Branch, emphasizing that integrity of gaming is the highest priority of everyone at the AGLC.*

Mr. Barry Pritchard, Casino ABS, Edmonton: As a long-time member of the casino industry, he acknowledged the occurrence of criminal activity in gaming venues and the commitment of industry to contributing to effective responses.

Sgt. R.H. (Bob) McDonald, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Edmonton: Despite the expansion of legal gaming, there is no evidence to date to suggest that illegal gambling has decreased. A study now underway, funded by the Alberta Gaming Research Institute and involving the Edmonton Police Service, is examining the relation-

ship between crime and gambling, and will provide more information on the impact gaming has on law enforcement agencies.*

Dr. Harold Wynne, Wynne Resources, Edmonton: presented the results of a 1998 research project that examined the relationship between crime and gambling. The study concluded that illegal gambling is not pervasive throughout western Canada, but is most prominent in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, and Winnipeg. He also presented an overview of the current study referred to by Sgt. McDonald (above).*

Dr. John McMullan, St. Mary's University, Halifax: presented an in-depth case study of video lottery terminal fraud, noting that the criminal technology was sophisticated and required collusion and teamwork. The results caused the Atlantic Lottery Corporation to take remedial action with its VLTs.

Mr. Peter Teasdale, Q.C., Regional Director, Alberta Justice, Edmonton: provided an overview of the Criminal Code of Canada and its interpretation as it relates to gambling, and criteria to determine what is legal and what is illegal.*

Mr. Brian Beresh, Beresh, DePoe Cunningham, Barristers, Edmonton: presented a defense lawyer's perspective of gambling and its consequences, noting in particular "the devastating personal effects on those addicted." He predicted that in the future we will see a civil action commenced "to recoup losses against not only the gambler but against the government that permits gaming devices to flourish within society."*

Dr. Colin Campbell, Department of Criminology, Douglas College, BC: presented a history of gambling and attitudes toward it in Canada from its first inclusion in the Criminal Code in 1892. He noted the evolution of perception of gambling from a "vice" to its general but provisional acceptance as a legitimate form of entertainment today. **Inspector Mike Ryan, Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia:** presented a detailed case study of "Project Enigma," involving a company legally incorporated in Delaware (listed on NASDAQ) but with all of its operations in Canada and the Caribbean. It was illegally providing North

American gamblers with betting services, was caught and fined, and remains in business today.*

Mr. Shawn York, Internet Sports and Gaming Consultant, Yorky's Sports Pix, Edmonton: provides website-based sports handicapping services for those who use online sports books, currently illegal (but popular) in Canada and the US, but legal in other jurisdictions (mainly the Caribbean). **Honourable Ron Stevens, Minister, Alberta Gaming:** provided an overview of the recent Gaming Licensing Review Policy and the significance of public consultation to its development.

Prof. Jan McMillen, University of Western Sydney, Australia: Examined similarities and differences between gambling in Australia and Canada, and what works (government regulation and control, international cooperation) and what does not (proliferation of gaming machines and venues, lack of high-level coordination and enforcement resources).*

Mr. Bo Bernhard, Department of Sociology, University of Nevada: as gambling moves into the mainstream, so will its associated descriptive pathology. A "profound parallelism" has emerged between medical terminologies associated with both mental illness and gambling addiction, giving rise to the question: if pathological gambling is in fact a medical issue, then why is it treated as a moral one? *

Dr. Henry Lesieur, Brown University/Rhode Island Hospital: presented a sociological overview of crimes and crime rates among pathological gamblers. He looked at types of crime, progression toward criminal behaviour (phases), and discussed novel treatment concepts, such as gambling courts.*

Dr. Erin Van Brunshot, Department of Sociology, University of Calgary: presented the conference wrap-up. Among the issues: what proportion of gambling activity is legal and non-problematic? What opportunities does the regulatory/legal structure create or inhibit at both structural and individual levels?*

* These presentations can be found on the Alberta Gaming Research Institute website.

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New research report available at the Institute website: Smith, G. J., & Wynne, H. J. (02/2002). *Measuring Gambling and Problem Gambling in Alberta Using the Canadian Problem Gambling Index*. Edmonton: Alberta Gaming Research Institute.

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