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Issue 7, December 2002

From the editor

Readership Survey Results

A year ago we posted a readership survey and wrote

“We want to publish an e-journal that examines the gambling issues that are of interest to you, our readers. So we would like to ask what you like, what you dislike and what changes you would like to see in the *Electronic Journal of Gambling Issues: eGambling (EJGI)*.”

We had two goals for our survey: the first was to learn what you like about the *EJGI* and what you don't like and would like changed. The second goal was to find out who are our readers and what is their involvement in gambling. Are they counsellors? Interested citizens? Someone with a gambling problem or a family member who has gambling problems? Researchers? Gaming industry staff?

Who returned the survey?

Forty-seven people responded, or 22% of our subscribers in early 2002. (Our current subscribers' list is approximately three times what it was then.) Of these, some filled in only their year of birth and gender and nothing else, but 35 people (or about 16% of subscribers at that time) offered their ideas. We are grateful that they made the effort to tell us their thoughts and feelings about the *EJGI*.

We caution that we cannot extrapolate from these results to suggest characteristics of the entire readership, but it is valuable to understand the views of those who took the time and effort to answer. (All percentages have been rounded to whole numbers and are based on these 35 who responded with comments.)

More women than men answered: 57% and 43%, respectively. The typical respondent was a 44-year-old woman who provides treatment both for people with gambling problems and for their families; about half of the respondents provide such treatment. Another one-third identified themselves as gambling researchers. About one-eighth work in government gambling policy and an equal number are

part of the gaming industry. A couple of readers (6%) identified themselves as either having a gambling problem or having a family member, colleague or friend with gambling problems. Some indicated overlapping involvements; about one-fifth work in both research and treatment, and one-tenth reported working as both treatment providers and in developing gambling policy with either the gaming industry and/or a government agency.

In assessing their responses, please remember that many gave several answers to each question. And we've reported when even one person responded; after all, there is a completely unproven folk wisdom that if one person comments about an issue, then perhaps 50 think the same but didn't take the time to speak up.

What do readers like about the *EJGI*?

Fourteen (40%) wrote that they like the ease of electronic access and nine (26%) like the up-to-date and current nature of the contents. Nine people (26%) appreciate the range of articles by both experts and by "everyday people." Five (14%) answered that they like the quality of the articles and yet another five also like that the authors are expert, well-known and credible international authors. Three people (9%) appreciate that articles are well written and easy to read. Two (6%) value it as a forum for discussion. Each of these likes was listed by only one person (3%): that the *EJGI* has theoretical articles, is provocative, has book reviews, covers relevant topics, has an attractive format, is free of cost and is Canadian-based. And last, two people (6%) listed among their likes simply that the *Electronic Journal of Gambling Issues: eGambling* exists.

What do readers dislike about the *EJGI*?

Fewer people told us what they disliked; nine (26%) left this query blank and seven (20%) wrote that they had "no answer." Four people (11%) complained that we don't publish often enough. (The editor apologizes and comments that the low number of articles submitted, and their attrition in peer-review, accounts for our slow publishing rate.) Complaints about the content included that there are not enough research articles (three respondents, or 9%) and that there are too few articles (one respondent, or 3%).

Other comments included that several articles in one issue are by the same author (one respondent) and that articles are parochial (one respondent). One person disliked seeing reprinted articles from other journals in the Opinion section. Two people complained that the Web site is cumbersome to navigate (6%), one, that it is hard-to-read; and another, that it is "ugly." Some complaints suggest that readers may have problems with their Web browsers (i.e., no Archives or back issues, no author e-mail addresses).

Each of the following comments was offered by just one person (3%): the dislike

that there are no pop-up titles with abstracts in the table of contents and no regular youth column. One person complained that there was no synopsis of letters-to-the-editor to assess what opinions are being offered. (The editor notes that, to date, all letters submitted have been published.) One person complained about access being only from the e-mail Inbox. (The editor notes that this can be solved by going to the current issue of the *EJGI* and then saving the site under Favorites or Bookmarks, depending on the browser, at the top of the screen). One person wrote: “I like everything.”

What changes do readers want in the *EJGI*?

Predictably, most of the dislikes also reappeared as requests for changes and these will not be repeated here, although we are looking into each of them.

Seven people (20%) left this section blank and four (11%) responded with “none” or “nothing.” However, the rest of the respondents offered us valuable guidance. Three (9%) asked for more hyperlinks within articles; we also want to implement this option for your convenience. Some readers asked for theme issues or articles in areas where we also want to have more input. These are: public policy discussions on gambling, gaming industry perspectives and cross-discipline issues (problem gambling and childhood trauma or sexual abuse, mental health problems, co-occurring substance abuse, suicide, family violence and gambling issues among Aboriginal peoples).

The following suggestions were made by one respondent (3%) each, although please note that one person may have made several requests. Examining the actual contents of articles, there was one plea that we be less clinical because readers may not understand the terminology used in the field. (The editor notes this would be difficult to implement; professionals within the fields of gambling research and treatment are the overwhelming majority of our readers and we have to offer them original, worthwhile and technical articles to hold their interest.) On Web site design issues, readers requested pagination and more print options (i.e., to print each article, each section, or an entire issue) and these are now available through the PDF option for each and every article that we've ever published. One reader asked for a phenomenology section and we recommend the First person accounts in each issue.

What other comments did readers have about the *EJGI*?

Seventeen people (49%) left this blank and 10 (29%) left notes saying “thank you” or offering appreciation. Two people (6%) wrote “nothing.” Two separate readers each wrote how much they enjoy the combination of articles by professionals with those by gamblers and their significant others, and the variety of contributors.

One reader looks forward to each issue, but never knows what to expect: should

we have standard columns? (The editor: We already try to fill certain standard sections — Feature, Policy, Research, Clinic, First person accounts, Reviews — but sometimes we do not have an article for each topic section. And we do want to surprise you with each issue!)

Guidance by you, our readers, in what you want and don't want to read in the EJGI will help us to make many publishing decisions. Thank you to all who took the time to respond to our readership survey.

If you have further thoughts on improving the *EJGI*, please contact the editor at phil_lange@camh.net. We plan another survey in two years to assess if we have fulfilled your expectations.

Phil Lange, Editor

E-mail: phil_lange@camh.net

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this journal do not necessarily reflect those of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

Statement of Purpose

The *Electronic Journal of Gambling Issues: eGambling (EJGI)* offers an Internet-based forum for developments in gambling-related research, policy and treatment as well as personal accounts about gambling and gambling behaviour. Through publishing peer-reviewed articles about gambling as a social phenomenon and the prevention and treatment of gambling problems, it is our aim is to help make sense of how gambling affects us all.

The *EJGI* is published by the [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health](https://camh.net) and is fully funded by the Ontario Substance Abuse Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. We welcome manuscripts submitted by researchers and clinicians, people involved in gambling as players, and family and friends of gamblers.

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Phil Lange

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