

Pajama gamblers could lose their shirts: Online gambling can be dangerously comfortable

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People who gamble from the comfort of their home tend to think they're more in control of their gambling than people who gamble in casinos, according to a new study in the *Journal of Consumer Research*.

Authors June Cotte (University of Western Ontario) and Kathryn A. Latour (University of Nevada-Las Vegas) found surprisingly little previous research on their subject: the habits and motivations of online gamblers, who contribute to a \$10 billion a year industry.

Their study found that, unlike casino gamblers, who seek thrills and social experiences, online gamblers seek the anonymity their home computers provide. "For casino gamblers, gambling provides a perceived social connection with unknown others in a sense of shared fates and temporary community. Online gamblers, on the contrary, perceive a lack of social connections in the online realm."

The researchers conducted a study of 30 Las Vegas gamblers. Ten were online gamblers and 20 were casino gamblers, and all considered themselves to be regular gamblers. The study involved in-depth interviews using visual images and collages created by the participants.

In the course of the study, the authors found significant differences in perceptions and attitudes between people who gamble in casinos and people who gamble on their home computers. Because sensations are not

as intense in online gambling, online gamblers tend to play for longer amounts of time, and they think they're more in control of their gambling, the authors found.

The authors believe that regulating online gambling may remove the excitement of doing something illicit.

"When gambling consumption moves into the home, gambling behavior becomes a part of everyday living. When not seen as reserved solely as behavior for an outing, gambling is more likely to become an insidiously integrated component of a consumer's life," the authors conclude.

Source: University of Chicago

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