

MyVegas smartphone slots lure players to Sin City

5 November 2013, by Glenn Chapman



In this file photo, people play slot machines at the Mirage Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, on November 24, 2008

PlayStudios on Tuesday blurred the line between online and real-world gambling with the release of myVegas Slots smartphone games that let players cash in on perks at Sin City casinos.

Free-to-play versions of myVegas Slots released for Apple or Android smartphones let people test their luck on virtual one-armed bandits such as those found in the Mirage, Luxor, New York New York or other MGM Resorts International properties and then use payouts to get VIP treatment in Las Vegas.

"In Las Vegas there are literally 50 tiers of service levels that few people know exist; that is the way Vegas works," said PlayStudios founder and chief executive Andrew Pascal.

"We let people engage in content that is fun, and their level of loyalty can win them the kind of access that few people get."

Troves of virtual chips can be cashed in for prizes

ranging from buffet meals to show tickets, lodging, swimming with dolphins at the Mirage, or selecting music for the dancing fountain display outside the Bellagio.

PlayStudios has tested its social casino gaming model online and boasted that 100,000 [players](#) have cashed in on more than \$10 million worth of real world rewards to date.

The [game](#)'s success has led to new partners including celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck and Cirque du Soleil, which stages an array of elaborate and alluring performances in Las Vegas.



In this file photo, people play slot machines at the Mirage Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, on November 24, 2008

MGM has been so impressed by the ability of the game to bring back old players to casinos and attract new visitors that it has ramped up resources devoted to promoting its brands in myVegas, according to executive director of corporate marketing Chris Gumiela.

"It is a big driver for us; we absolutely see more people showing up at our properties," Gumiela said. "It is not just the gambling that makes up the Las Vegas experience, it is really the other opportunities."

The myVegas game sidesteps the heavily-regulated world of gambling in the United States by paying players off with being treated like high-rollers in Las Vegas, while leaving the cash-betting games of chance to the casinos.

"We are not in the real-money gambling space, and frankly it is not in our mandate," Pascal said.

"If you want to gamble, go to Vegas. A lot of people might characterize online gaming as the Holy Grail; we don't. We think it should be left to people who understand that industry."

The online version of the game tested for less than a year already has hundreds of thousands of players at Facebook, according to PlayStudios.

California-based PlayStudios plans to make its money from players willing to pay for extra chips to level-up faster in the overarching "meta-game" that involves virtually progressing along the famed Las Vegas strip.

"Candy Crush doesn't have real places that you work through; we have MGM," Pascal said, referring to a sensationally popular color-matching game played on smartphones or tablets.

"The great thing about Las Vegas is that everybody has a romantic notion of what it stands for."

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