NOVA SCOTIA VL RESPONSIBLE GAMING FEATURES – EXPLORATORY CONCEPT TESTING
Qualitative Research Final Report
February 15, 2003

Turning Information Into Insight

NOVA SCOTIA GAMING CORPORATION
NS VL RESPONSIBLE GAMING FEATURES QUALITATIVE
FINAL REPORT- EXPLORATORY CONCEPT TESTING

PREPARED BY FOCAL RESEARCH CONSULTANTS LTD.
FEBRUARY 15, 2003

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Executive Summary

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND DESIGN

In May 2001, Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation (NSGC), through the Atlantic Lottery Corporation (ALC) began introducing new VLTs in various sites across Nova Scotia. Responsible gaming features designed to discourage excessive play were integrated into the design of the terminals. The changes introduced to the machines included new games and improved graphics, the addition of a bill acceptor and four responsible gaming features intended to assist players in managing the amount of time and money spent while playing the games. The current RGFs are comprised of:

* a permanent on-screen clock denoting time-of-day;
* a display of betting activity in cash amounts rather than credits;
* pop-up reminders of time spent playing after 60, 90 and 120 minutes of continuous play; and;
* a 5 minute cash out warning at 145 minutes of continuous play and mandatory cash out at 150 minutes.

Through quantitative research and consultation with suppliers, academics and gaming industry associates, **NSGC has identified a number of potential enhancements and modifications that may improve the effectiveness of the new responsible gaming features currently integrated into VL terminals in Nova Scotia.** Prior to proceeding with any recommendations regarding the implementation of such modifications, feedback is required to assess the concepts within the context of the player perspective. At this exploratory stage in-depth, discussion groups with key player informants offered an effective forum for obtaining feedback from those most likely to be impacted by any changes.

The Qualitative Exploratory Concept Testing consisted of 5 focus groups conducted with Regular Video Lottery Players, in Halifax (3) and Bridgewater (2), January 22 to 27, 2003. This ensured players living in both urban (n=20) and rural (n=16) areas were included in the evaluations. All participants are playing VL games at least once a month or more on a continuous basis.

Participant recruitment was based on frequency of play and level of risk for problem gambling using the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI score). There was a good mix of demographic characteristics and all players were screened according to PMRS industry standards (See Appendix B)

Overall, 36 players took part in the study with about two-thirds (n=24) classified as Non-problem Players and one-third (n=11) scoring as Problem Players.

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Sessions were designed to assist NSGC in addressing three key objectives:

1. to ensure the effectiveness of proposed features or modifications in assisting players in managing their play;
2. to ensure "entertainment value" is maintained; and
3. to provide information for assessing whether changes are required to the features.

The **primary purpose of the design** was to create a panel of key player informants that could respond spontaneously and naturally towards the concepts and proposed modifications in a non-threatening environment.

A **detailed discussion outline** was produced based on discussion with the NSGC/ALC project team and detailed briefing documents for each concept under consideration. (See Appendix C).

A **power point presentation** was prepared for in-session use as a visual aid to illustrate the concepts under consideration and assist players in evaluating the feature or modification. (See Appendix D).

Each participant completed an **independent participant evaluation questionnaire** and the CPGI measure for risk of problem gambling. (See Appendix E)

Prior to taking part in the sessions, participants signed **non-disclosure forms and consent forms for videotaping** of the sessions for research purposes only.

Concepts tested included:

- Improvements to the Onscreen Clock,
- Option to set a Time Limit,
- Play Receipt Option,
- "Know Your Limits" Tagline,
- Improvements to Pop-ups,
- Responsible Gaming Messages,
- Warning and Mandatory Cash out,
- Responsible Gaming Button Option,
- Self-Exclusion (Problem Players only)

Based on the CPGI scores the participating players were grouped into one of three player segments; No/Low Risk (n=9), Moderate Risk (n=16) and Problem

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

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Players (n=11).   For the purpose of the current report the responses were reorganized and examined by these three player segments.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

On Screen Clock

In general, the prospect of changes to make the clock more prominent was received positively by the players participating in the focus groups.

- **Place the clock in a consistent location on the screen for easy player reference regardless of familiarity with the games**. Although the majority felt this change would have no effect on how often they refer to the clock, 13 participants, largely those at Moderate Risk or problem play levels, believe they would be more likely to use the clock if they **"knew where it was always going to be"**. There would be little to no impact for players enjoyment of the games if such a change were implemented

- **Make the clock more prominent by ensuring it is bigger and brighter/distinctive from the other buttons.** In general the onscreen clock is liked but is not used often by the players primarily due to their involvement in other aspects of the game and the ease of overlooking the feature during play. Similar to response towards a consistent onscreen location making the clock more noticeable or distinctive would have no real effect on players enjoyment of the games and is perceived to facilitate player use of the feature.

- **Further testing of the flashing clock feature is advised to determine if the potential nuisance factor of the modification would negate any benefits to those most in need of having time reminders included on the machines.** Response to the clock flashing for 15 seconds at regular 15 minute intervals was more mixed. Liking of this change was low for the majority of participants with 20 of the 36 participants indicating that the flashing feature would be irritating, distracting and reduce the overall appeal of the onscreen clock. There is a possibility that such players may simply habituate to the flashing over extended playing time. Thus, the flashing may be insufficient to draw the players attention once they have become accustomed to the change. However, for those who do not necessarily lose track of time while playing the flashing may have an accumulative impact as an irritant. Conversely, players may be overreacting to the potential negative effects of the feature that, in reality, may prove to be inconsequential.

  For those players who reported losing track of time most often during play, having the clock flash was viewed as an effective way of reminding them of the passing time. These players thought it would be more likely to gain their attention over protracted periods of play than simply having the clock be larger or brighter. Therefore, additional testing is warranted before implementing or abandoning the modification.

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Setting A Time Limit Option

Players responded positively to the option of letting players set a time limit for play at the start of each play session. The vast majority in all player segments think that this is a "good idea". The inclusion of the feature was seen to address many of the concerns surrounding the relative ineffectiveness of simply providing a time-of-day clock on the screen as a tool for players in managing time spent playing the machines. The critical caveat for the majority of players was that the time limit must remain optional; players must be given the option of continuing to play once the pre-selected time had elapsed.

- **Keep the feature optional to allow players the choice of setting a time limit or electing to cash out or stop playing when the selected time has elapsed.** It is clear that the players in all sessions and risk segments do not want this to be a mandatory option. "***Players must have the choice".*** Forcing players to set a time limit or to cash out is considered too heavy-handed and has ramifications for the bar service staff and players alike.

- **Test the option under real play conditions to assess the impact of actual play behaviours on how the feature works**

- **For testing conditions, retain the current wording and time limit options (15 minutes to 60 minutes).** While a few players feel the 15 minute interval is "***too early***" this may be a more relevant option for those who frequently cash out or run the bank down to zero and thus may need more flexibility in resetting a time limit;

- **Examine technological feasibility of incorporating a "reset" button as part of the design for the feature.** This approach would bypass the inconvenience factor of continually recalculating the time whenever play was interrupted while continuing to track the total amount of time the player was involved in the games. The other players in the group liked this idea and thought it was an improvement upon the current option. (Refer to Section 3 for details)

- **Examine technological feasibility of allowing players to set a time and/or money limit (under similar assumption as the "reset button" concept).** Options which expand player ability to exercise "choice" over the option, in particular an ability to set time or money limits, were endorsed more strongly.

- **Consider the incorporation of a help screen, button, or feature that players can access as needed to obtain more information about how the feature works. Alternatively, add in another layer to the existing responsible gaming screen.** This would clarify the purpose of the concept for those who find it more difficult to understand. It may also foster greater use of the option and minimize reliance on other players, some of whom may not have correctly interpreted the function and intent of the feature.

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Receipt for Play Session

Players participating in the sessions were not as enthusiastic in their endorsement of a play receipt as was the case for the option of setting a time limit. The perceived effectiveness of the Receipt Option was lower although more than half indicated they would likely derive some benefit from the feature in managing their play. For the largest group of Players the availability of this option would have no impact on game enjoyment. Thus, the potential benefits identified warrant further testing of this concept.

- **Submit the Play Receipt Option for testing in order to evaluate how the feature will perform in a more naturalistic setting under normal (or simulated play conditions).** Players in all groups were evenly split between those feeling there was no benefit provided and those who would still find the feature at least somewhat helpful. Those who liked the receipt idea tended to be less aggressive in their support than those in opposition. Those who disliked the option really disliked it. A big issue with the receipt is the paper requirements to support the concept. Players already complain about the service and support they receive in their play venues. The issue of confidentiality was also raised. Players do not want their expenditure information to show up on the screen so in that regard the receipt is a better option.

- **Retain the "Know Your Limits – Play Responsibly" message without changes.** Players think it is clear, concise, and "***not offensive***". It is developing equity with the players and is associated positively with other "responsible campaigns" such as "***not drinking and driving***".

- **Obtain site-holder feedback to assess servicing issues, security and the nuisance factor in offering this feature.** The use and effectiveness of the receipt option will be dependent upon site-holder buy-in and player servicing. Without identifying and addressing retailer barriers, it will be difficult for players to make effective use of the option. This appears to be the case as it relates to the use of coins versus bill acceptors for the VLT's. Players report that it is difficult and in some cases almost impossible to play with coins on the new terminals. This is viewed as being due to the inconvenience and cost in handling coins for the retailer. Consequently, players encounter faulty or out-of-service coin acceptors on the terminals and lack of access to coin and service for play. Given that the new terminals are often "***temperamental***" in accepting the new $5.00 and $10.00 bills, the players feel that they are being forced towards the use of higher denominations on the new terminals.

- **Continue to offer the receipt as an optional feature.** The suggestion was made to include a "***a receipt button***" on the machine that players can press if they wish to have a record of their play. The possibility of allowing players to have a ***"reset"*** option on this feature was also brought up. Thus, Players in the current study again confirm the strong player preference for empowerment. The players support the availability of

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optional-use-features if there is any indication such an option would be of benefit to another player.

- **Consider supplementary support materials, information or services to assist players in using this feature as a tool.** Players may need assistance in using the receipt effectively to manage their play. Ignorance and, subsequently, habit may lead Players to automatically by-pass the option. This feature was also noted to have potential application as a tool for those who are trying to control their play either on their own or through more formalized problem gambling support services by providing a means for players to systematically track their time and money expenditures.

Pop-up Messages

The pop-up messages elicit very mixed responses from the players in the study depending upon their style of play and involvement levels in the game. No and Low Risk players are more supportive of the current features and most of the changes whereas the feature is less appealing to the Moderate and Problem Players. Despite the antagonisms expressed by some of these players, in reality the current pop-ups are reported to have little influence on their play or enjoyment of the games. Response is becoming (or has become) habitual with these players simply pushing the YES button and continuing the game. The fact that the pop-ups are tied to lengths of continuous play mean the play habits of many of the participants preclude their exposure to the messages. Thus, the idea of changes to make the pop-up messages more relevant to play is indicated if the intent is to introduce "breaks in play" or "reality checks". Of course, not all players want the gaming cycle to be interrupted.

- **Reconsider starting introduction of the pop-up messages at 60 minutes rather than 30 minutes if the option to set a time limit for play is to be included on the machines.** The potential overlap between use of the two features may discourage people from effectively using either RGF. Having the receipt option and time limit option triggered by cash out and running the bank down to zero eliminates the need to modify the pop-up messages to account for these behaviours. Thus, the 60 minute mark for the pop-ups will be targeting a different playing style and those who are most unlikely to be setting a time limit for their session. **Alternatively, it may be possible to explore options for the 30 minute pop-up message only to be triggered if players do not set a time limit for play.**

- **Have the pop-up message remain on the screen until the player responds.** For the players in the current study this change will have little if any effect on their behaviour since they already just push the button and go on. However, the modification was liked, has no impact on game enjoyment and may be relevant for players who are not always in attendance at the machine.

- **Ensure the onscreen clock, cash display and other relevant game information remains on the screen during the pop-up messages to**

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facilitate players decisions regarding on-going play. Again, given the speed with which players dispatch the pop-up message, it is unlikely that those taking part in this study would access such information in making an informed decision about continuing to play. For others, particularly those who either rarely see the messages or are new, less experienced players this modification may assist in the decision-making process while having no appreciable impact on the entertainment value of the machines.

- **Move up the warning message for the mandatory cash out to appear at 140 minutes instead of 145 of continuous play. This will double the amount of time players have to prepare for cashing out from 5 to 10 minutes**. Although the few players who encounter this feature do not like it, the extended grace period to make decisions about the pending cash out is considered fair and an improvement over the current situation. **"I totally hate the cash out but I guess if its going to be there anyway this change will help"**

- **Incorporate the responsible gaming messages with the pop-up reminders but also consider introducing the messages at the time the pop-up first appears rather than after the individual has elected to keep playing**. Aside from the obvious value in ensuring players are informed and aware of critical play information, the introduction of the responsible gaming message to the pop-up feature will serve two other potentially beneficial functions: 1) It will freeze the screen for 5 seconds thereby providing a minimum set break in play, interrupting the habitual and fast speed of response currently adopted by those who are seeing the pop-ups most often; 2) It will present the information before the player has made a decision rather than after, at which time the information was considered more patronizing by the players **"It just told me I have been playing for X amount of time, asked me if I wanted to continue to play, I say yes and then it gives me this little piece of information like I'm stupid or something. That's irritating"**.

Responsible Gaming Feature

In general, response by participants towards the new responsible gaming feature is very positive, suggesting this medium has potential to be a valuable resource in communicating with the player. While the primary role of the feature is perceived to be preventative, there was evidence among the participants that this information may also assist in intervention and problem resolution. Educating players about how the games work and providing practical guidelines for staying on track counters misconceptions and "erroneous beliefs" that are perpetuating risky gambling practices.

- **Consider making the Responsible Gaming Feature screens the default screen for the machines rather than an "button activated" option.**

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Participants expressed concern that players would bypass this important information source without fully realizing what they are *"missing"*. The material presented in the screens are considered to be *"things every player should know about the games"* but are unlikely to access *"without a little push in that direction"*. While various options were discussed, the preferred solution by players in the current study was to have the screens automatically come up whenever the player puts in any money or whenever the machine is not engaged in play (screen-saver). This approach was considered to have some potential impact for game enjoyment *"but as long as players are given the option of exiting to the games any irritation will be short-lived"*. Suggestions included randomly varying the order of the screens to keep the material fresh and ensure the players are getting maximum exposure to all of the information. This screen could also be used to provide players with up-dates or new material, as it is available.

- **Rework wording in Screen # 3 – Responsible Gaming Concepts: Odds and Randomness**. This screen should either be simplified and/or split into two different screens in order to make the information meaningful for the majority of players. There is currently some degree of confusion for about one-quarter of those evaluating the material. For the remaining players, the information was considered "too important" to not try to communicate the concept more clearly. (Refer to General Discussion – Responsible Gaming Feature for detailed evaluation).

- **Examine feasibility of either incorporating a HELP button feature or providing supplementary information players can be referred to for additional information or support**. There were concerns expressed that it is not reasonable nor desirable to include too much information on any one of the screens as this would diminish the likelihood of players actually reading the material. At the same time, it was also recognized that some of the concepts are complex and players may need more information than can reasonably be provided on the screen. Suggestions included a HELP button players can push for more detailed explanations or elaboration, a general information reference such as the ALC Hotline number being included on the Help Resources screen (Example : For general information or inquiries about the machine, games or responsible gaming call 1-888-XXX-XXXX), or other support materials (web-site information, player brochures)

- **Develop a voluntary self-exclusion program**. For some Problem Players this type of program is believed to offer the only viable solution for their VL gambling and therefore, warrants further development.

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For detailed information regarding each of the concepts evaluated refer to:

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Section 1 - Introduction
Section 2 - Onscreen Clock
Section 3 - Time Limit Option
Section 4 - Play Receipt Option
Section 5 - Pop-up Messages
Section 6 - Responsible Gaming Button

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION – FEBRUARY 2003
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Section

1

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND - NS VL Responsible Gaming Features Research

"The responsible gaming features [on the new video lottery terminals] are a first in North America and are intended to help discourage excessive play. They are designed to provide important reality checks and interruptions alerting players to the amount of time [and money] being spent during a specific play session."

In May 2001, Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation (NSGC), through the Atlantic Lottery Corporation (ALC) began introducing new VLTs in various sites across Nova Scotia. Over a two-year period, approximately 3,200 video lottery terminals (VLTs) were replaced with new or modified machines. Responsible gaming features designed to discourage excessive play were integrated in the design of the terminals. The features were developed after research and consultation with problem gamblers experts (Dr. Harold Wynne and Dr. Howard Schaffer), video lottery manufacturers and player focus groups. Nova Scotia was the first jurisdiction in North America to introduce this package of four responsible gaming features (RGFs) on VLTs.

The changes introduced to the machines included new games and improved graphics, the addition of a bill acceptor and four responsible gaming features intended to assist players in managing the amount of time and money spent while playing the games. The current RGFs are comprised of:

♦ a permanent on-screen clock denoting time-of-day;

♦ a display of betting activity in cash amounts rather than credits;

♦ pop-up reminders of time spent playing after 60, 90 and 120 minutes of continuous play; and;

♦ a 5 minute cash out warning at 145 minutes of continuous play and mandatory cash out at 150 minutes.

These modifications include two constant features that all players are exposed to during play on the new terminals, an on-screen clock and the display of betting activity in the form of cash rather than credits. The others are behaviour-triggered features comprised of pop-up messages and a mandatory cash out that are only activated if a player meets a certain threshold for continuous play (i.e., pop-up reminders at 60, 90 and 120 minutes, mandatory cash out warning at 145 minutes, cash out at 150 minutes.)

The responsible gaming features on the new and modified terminals in Nova Scotia are intended to assist players in managing time and money spent while they are taking part in the activity. These features were chosen based on two premises – creating breaks in play and providing important reality checks for the player. Specifically, the features are

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designed to target those individuals involved in excessive play (dollars and time spent beyond desired and/or affordable levels) while having a minimal impact for those players taking part at "responsible" or low risk levels.

An important component of the VLT Replacement Plan was an evaluation of the impact of the RGFs during the introductory period of the new terminals.

Through quantitative research (NS VL Responsible Gaming Features Research) and consultation with suppliers, academics and gaming industry associates, NSGC has identified a number of potential enhancements and modifications that may improve the effectiveness of the new responsible gaming features currently integrated into VL terminals in Nova Scotia. Prior to proceeding with any recommendations regarding the implementation of such modifications, feedback is required to assess the concepts within the context of the player perspective. At this exploratory stage in-depth discussion groups with key player informants offered an effective forum for obtaining feedback from those most likely to be impacted by any changes.

> *NSGC has identified a number of potential feature enhancements and changes that may improve the effectiveness of the RGFs but requires player feedback before proceeding further with concept development.*

Study Objectives

The purpose of the new mix of features is to provide players with important reality checks and breaks in play as well as responsible gaming information. However, it is important that any further machine modifications do not significantly affect the entertainment value of video lottery play.

Qualitative research is required to provide an opportunity to assess the potential impact of proposed improvements and product enhancements on video lottery players' attitudes, perceptions and behaviors, as well as on the entertainment value of the product. Focus group information provides valuable input into the evaluative process for the various concepts currently under consideration.

The results of the Qualitative Exploratory Concept Testing will assist NSGC in meeting the following objectives:

- to ensure the effectiveness of proposed features or modifications in assisting players in managing their play;

- to ensure "entertainment value" is maintained; and

- to provide valuable information in assessing whether changes are required to the features.

> **Study Objectives**
>
> 1. **assess the effectiveness of concept**
> 2. **evaluate impact on entertainment value**
> 3. **identify changes and recommendations**

S E C T I O N   1 :   I N T R O D U C T I O N   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

Method

There were five focus groups conducted with Regular Video Lottery Players characterized as those who play the machines at least once a month or more on a continuous basis.

NSGC wished to ensure player participants were selected based on Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI) classification of "No", "Low" and "Moderate" risk for problem gambling. However, there were concerns surrounding the use of the CPGI screen as part of the recruitment screening process. It was believed that 9 item measure comprising the CPGI screen could introduce sensitive issues at the point of interception that may potentially influence player responses towards the concepts and/or willingness to take part in the study. In order to avoid any potential bias a less contentious screening process was used to achieve the same objectives without compromising the profile of participants.

Focal has developed a confidential panel of VL players that have been pre-screened for player status and /or already have a CPGI administered score. The recruiting samples were generated using the database. For ethical reasons anyone who has stopped playing VLT's or is/was in treatment for a gambling problem was excluded from participation.

<u>Recruitment Criteria</u>

The approach adopted for the current study was to focus on the Non- Problem Regular Player base as the key group intended to derive the greatest value from the features. This approach is consistent with the NSGC/ALC's desire to assess the impact of any modifications on the entertainment aspect of play while offering features for enhanced player control. However, it was also necessary to ensure that the potential impact of the concepts had been considered within the context of Problem Gambling. Therefore, an additional group was recruited specifically comprised of self-identified problem gamblers who scored at problem gambling levels on the CPGI.

For recruiting purposes there are two primary, non-problem player groups that are most easily identified by frequency of play:

- **Frequent Regular VL Players (play VL 4+ times/month):**

  - Tend to play just as often as Problem VL Gamblers but do not invest the same level of time or money

  - Will comprise the majority of Non-problem VL Players in front of a machine at any given time and thus any perceived impact of feature modifications will be most relevant for this group

- While Frequent VL Players typically are not experiencing any difficulties with their VL play, these players are at elevated risk for developing problems and thus are a key target group for the RGF's

- These players are often a source of information and/or assistance for other players

- Internal samples generated for recruiting purposes included those identified at Low to Moderate Risk for Problem Gambling (e.g. CPGI score of 2-8)

- **Infrequent Regular VL Players (play VL 1-4 times/month):**

  - Typically tend to be profiled as more social regular players

  - They will have less exposure to the features but presumably due to less frequent and intensive playing patterns are less likely to need "reality breaks" or other machine interventions

  - Some of these infrequent players may have deliberately reduced play levels to control play

  - These players are usually more likely to be at the location for other social or entertainment activities and therefore may be more sensitive to the influence of feature changes on the entertainment aspect of play

  - Internal samples generated for recruiting purposes included those identified at No to Low Risk for Problem Gambling (e.g. CPGI score of 0-3)

All players were recruited in accordance with PMRS industry standards surrounding length of residency in Nova Scotia, occupation restrictions including NSGC, ALC and a retail video lottery site, and involvement in past focus groups. Players were also screened to exclude anyone who is "**strongly opposed to VLT's being available in the province"**. (Refer to Recruiting Screener Appendix A)

An additional advantage of using FOCAL's in-house database was the ability to deliberately include players who had taken part in the quantitative study for the NS VL Responsible Gaming Features Research conducted May 2000 to February 2001. It was hypothesized that these individuals had contributed to the recommendations identified in the quantitative study and therefore could provide informed opinions in evaluating the potential effectiveness of the proposed improvements. Thus, the sampling design incorporated a return-to-sample methodology as well as including new participants. In total 14 of the 36 participants, taking part in the focus groups had responded in the quantitative survey.

Process Design

The primary purpose of the design was to create a panel of key player informants that can respond spontaneously and naturally towards the concepts and proposed modifications in a non-threatening environment. Contrary to stereotypes of Players as loners and VL play as an isolating activity, research suggests that there is an extensive social sub-culture associated with the activity. Thus, the presence of other players stimulates discussion and may introduce pros or cons that at first glance were not considered by an individual player but could be expected to be relevant in a more naturalistic setting. However, in any group setting there is also potential for player opinions to be biased by group dynamics. To facilitate both individual and group participation throughout the sessions players completed a brief, independent questionnaire assessment for each concept prior to initiating any discussion. This allowed individuals to express personal views of each concept confidentially while gaining the added value of stimulated debate or consideration.

SESSION MATERIALS

- Discussion Outline
- Concept descriptions
- In-session Presentation
- Particpant Evaluation Questionnaire
- CPGI Risk Measurement

Session Materials

A detailed discussion outline was produced based on discussion with the NSGC/ALC project team and detailed briefing documents for each concept under consideration. (See Appendix C).

A power point presentation was prepared for in-session use as a visual aid to illustrate the concepts under consideration and assist players in evaluating the feature or modification. (See Appendix D).

Each participant completed an independent participant evaluation questionnaire and the CPGI measure for risk of problem gambling.

Prior to taking part in the sessions participants signed non-disclosure forms and consent forms for videotaping of the sessions for research purposes only.

Session Procedure

Each session was approximately 2 ½ hours in length.

Following an introductory period players were given the following instructions:

> **There are four features on the new machine that are intended to help players manage their play, in particular the amount of time and money spent while playing the games. These include:**
>
> **A permanent onscreen clock showing the time of day;**
> - **Displaying all amounts wagered and won in cash amounts rather than credits;**
> - **Pop-up messages after 60, 90 and 120 minutes of continuous play reminding players how long they have been playing and asking them if they wish to continue;**

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   1 :   I N T R O D U C T I O N   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

- **A 5 minute warning and mandatory cash-out after 145 minutes of continuous play.**

These features were designed based on research with players and video lottery. There was also a study conducted with players across Nova Scotia over the first 8 months the new terminals were introduced to see how the new features influenced people's play on the new terminals. Some of you may have participated in this research [check and extend thanks}. There were a number of possible improvements identified that might make the features more effective for players. That is why you are here today.

We need to put you to work to find out what if any changes will make the features more helpful to VL players in managing their play. We have a lot of ground to cover and limited time (21/2 hours) so we do have to stay on track and will be focusing on the specific improvements identified. There may be other things that you think would be more helpful or should be considered. I ask that you hold your comments in this regard until the end of the session. Time allowing we will discuss other ideas at that time.

There are really two parts to your evaluation

I need you to first write down your own personal impression of the concept without consulting with anyone else,
We then will discuss the information as a group so that we can consider everyone's opinion,

I also have some tools to assist you in filling in the questionnaire:

- **two sets of coloured dots (green and red). Anytime you find a change or idea you really like in the questionnaire put a green dot by it meaning you would like to see this feature included on the machines. Anytime you find a change or idea you really don't like put a red dot by it indicating you do not want such a change and it would have a negative effect on your enjoyment of the games.**
- **Highlighter. The highlighter can be used at anytime to emphasize important points but is primarily intended for use later in the evaluation so please keep it handy**

Remember there are no right or wrong answers here and everyone's contribution is valued. So let's get started.

Exploratory Concepts Tested

The concepts were presented and evaluated in the following order (Refer to Discussion Outline for detailed format Appendix C):

- **Improvements to Onscreen Clock**

  ⇒ Make the clock more prominent to players (bigger)

  ⇒ All games will display the clock in the same position on the game screen away from the other play buttons

  ⇒ To draw attention to the clock its background colours will be bright and different from other items around it or other screen buttons

  ⇒ The Clock will flash for 15 seconds every 15 minutes

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   1 :   I N T R O D U C T I O N   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

- ## Option to Set a Time Limit

  ⇒ When money is first put into the machine a pop-up message will be activated asking "Do you want to set a time limit for your play session" Yes or No

  ⇒ If No is chosen the question will disappear and the player will remain at main screen to select the game you wish to play.

  ⇒ If Yes is chosen, the player is presented with the question "How long would you like to play". There are 5 options or buttons that can be selected by the player: "15 minutes", "30 minutes", "45 minutes", "60 minutes" and "I do not want to set a time limit".

  ⇒ If the player selects "I do not want to set a time limit" the player is returned to the chooser (game selection) screen.

  ⇒ At the end of the time selected for the play session a pop-up screen will appear (partially covering the game screen) that says "Your play time has elapsed. Select a new game period or cash-out to end your play session". This time 6 options will be presented to the players , the same 5 options originally presented including a new button for "cash-out"

  ⇒ If Cash-out is chosen an auto cash-out sequence will occur and the player will be cashed out. If the player selects "I do not want to set a time limit" the player is returned to the game screen (in progress).

- ## Play Receipt Option

  ⇒ Players will be provided with an option to print a receipt for every play session, similar to an ATM receipt, it will display the amount of money spent (put into the machine out-of-pocket), the amount cashed out and the length of time spent playing (XXX minutes).

  ⇒ Every time a player lets the bank of credit run down to zero or cashes out, a screen will pop up asking the player "Would you like a Receipt for your play session? YES or NO"

  ⇒ If the player choses NO, the question will disappear,

  ⇒ If the player does not respond , the question will disappear after one minute

  ⇒ If the player chooses yes the receipt will be printed.

  ⇒ Also included on the face of the receipt will be ALC's responsible gaming message "Know Your Limits; Play Responsibly".

  ⇒ Under this message, the following disclaimer will be provided, "This information is provided to assist in managing play. It has no cash value and is not a receipt for payment."

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   1 :   I N T R O D U C T I O N   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

⇒ The receipt will be provided in addition to, and does not effect, the winning voucher.

⇒ On cash out, the cash out ticket should be printed before the receipt of play. This way players will not accidentally take the receipt of play as their cash out and leave the cash out slip for another player.

- **"Know Your Limits – Play Responsibly" Tagline evaluation**

- **Improvements to Pop-up Messages**

    ⇒ A pop–up message will be introduced at 30 minutes of play.

    ⇒ The pop-up message will remain on screen until the YES NO question is answered. The message will no longer automatically disappear after 60 seconds.

    ⇒ The on-screen clock and cash display must remain visible while pop-up reminder is on screen to enable players to make an informed decision about play continuation.

- **Responsible Gaming Messages on Pop-up Reminders**

    ⇒ The content of the pop-up messages will be maintained. If a player chooses NO, they will be cashed out immediately. If a player chooses YES, another pop-up message will appear with a responsible gaming message.

    - Gaming responsibly means playing for entertainment, not as a way to make money.

    - Understanding that each spin is random and cannot be controlled by the player is a key part of gaming responsibly.

    - Gaming responsibly means not using money for gaming that was intended for everyday expenses.

    - Gaming responsibly means setting a budget before you start to play.

    - Gaming responsibly means balancing gaming with other leisure activities.

- **Change to warning message for Mandatory Cashout**

    ⇒ The 5-minute warning will be changed to a 10-minute warning thereby appearing at 140 minutes of play instead of 145 minutes of play.

- **Responsible Gaming Button Option**

    ⇒ A responsible gaming button will be available on the chooser (game selection) screen. If the player hits the button, a series of screens will be made available for the player that can be accessed by six buttons available at the bottom of each responsible gaming screen.

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   1 :   I N T R O D U C T I O N   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

- Gaming Responsibly Screen

- Responsible Gaming Feature

- Responsible Gaming Concepts (Odds and Randomness)

- Responsible Gaming Guidelines

- Where to Get Help

- **Problem Players Only: Self-exclusion Option**

Participants VL Gambling Profile

In total there were 43 players originally recruited to take part in the exploratory concept evaluations, 41 showed and 36 individuals participated in the sessions :

- Group 1 Frequent Players Rural (Bridgewater)   (n=9)

- Group 2 Infrequent Players Rural (Bridgewater) (n=7)

- Group 3 Frequent Players Urban (HRM)   (n=7)

- Group 4 Infrequent Players Urban (HRM)   (n=7)

- Group 5 Problem Players Urban (HRM)   (n=6)

In order to assess response towards the various concepts by risk for problem gambling all participants were required to answer the nine questions comprising the CPGI Risk for Problem Gambling Score. The sum of an individual's answers over the 9 items is used to assign the participant to one of four risk segments:

CPGI Segment	Score	Number of Respondents
No Risk	0	4
Low Risk	1-2	5
Moderate Risk	3-8	16
Problem	8+	11

Based on the CPGI scores the participating players were grouped into one of three player segments; No/Low Risk (n=9), Moderate Risk (n=16) and Problem Players (n=11). For the purpose of the current report the responses were reorganized and examined by these three segments.

Overall, approximately two-thirds of participants (n=24) are classified as Non-problem Players with one-third (n=11) scoring as Problem Players. The CPGI measures are based on gambling activity that occurred over the past 12 months. Moreover there is some uncertainty as to how "Resolved Problem Players" (i.e. those

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N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   1 :   I N T R O D U C T I O N   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

who have solved their gambling problems and are continuing to engage in the activity) are accounted for when using the CPGI. Therefore, to gain additional insight as to the profile of the study participants, self reported involvement in problem gambling was examined by CGPI classification.

	CPGI SEGMENT			
	No/Low Risk	**Moderate Risk**	**Problem**	**Total**
Have you ever had a problem with your VL play spending more time or money than you should?				
<u>Never</u> Had a VL Problem	9	4	1	14
Ever a Had a VL Problem	---	12	10	22
Have you solved your problem with your VL gambling or is it still a problem for you?				
Completely Resolved	---	10	5	16
Partially Resolved	---	2	2	4
Still a Problem	---	--	2	2
TOTAL	9	16	11	36

Based on Players perceptions of their own behaviour it can be estimated that over half (n=22) of all participants have experienced difficulties at some time with the amount of time or money spent playing VLT's. Sixteen of these 22 individuals believe that they have completely solved their problems with VL gambling, with 6 reporting that they are continuing to play with varying degrees of difficulty. In could be argued that those "resolved" players (n=5) scoring as problem gamblers under the CPGI may be over-estimating their control of their problem gambling. However, it is noteworthy that 12 players only scoring at Moderate Risk report they have had problems in the past and two do not yet believe they have fully resolved their VL gambling problems.

Regardless, a significant portion of both Non-problem and Problem players in the current study have sufficient experience with time and money problems while playing VLT's to provide an informed evaluation of concepts intended to assist players in managing these two critical aspects of play. In contrast the responses of those who have not encountered any difficulties (n=14) provide balance to the assessments.

<u>**CPGI – Measures of Risk for Problem Gambling**</u>

The following table comprises The Canadian Problem Gambling Index scored items, a standard series of questions that have recently been used throughout Canada in prevalence and gaming/gambling surveys. All players participating in the current study completed the index. Responses are summarized by the three CPGI segments identified above.

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<u>Based on your gambling over the past 12 months</u> please circle how often would you have done any of the following using a scale of Never (0), Sometimes (1), Most of the Time (2) or Almost Always (3):

CPGI GAMBLING MEASURES				
	No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Have you bet more than you could really afford to lose?				
Never	7	1	0	8
Sometimes	2	14	4	20
Most of the Time	0	1	5	6
Almost Always	0	0	2	2
Have you needed to gamble with larger amounts of money to get the same feeling of excitement?				
Never	8	9	1	18
Sometimes	1	7	8	16
Most of the Time	0	0	2	2
Almost Always	---	---	---	---
When you gambled, did you go back another day to try and win back the money you lost?				
Never	7	5	0	12
Sometimes	2	10	4	16
Most of the Time	0	1	5	6
Almost Always	0	0	2	2
Have you borrowed money or sold anything to get money to gamble?				
Never	9	12	3	24
Sometimes	0	4	7	11
Most of the Time	---	---	---	---
Almost Always	0	0	1	1
Have you felt that you might have a problem with gambling?				
Never	9	4	0	13
Sometimes	0	12	4	16
Most of the Time	0	0	4	4
Almost Always	0	0	3	3
Have people criticized your betting or told you that you had a gambling problem, regardless of whether or not you thought it was true?				
Never	8	10	1	19
Sometimes	1	5	7	13
Most of the Time	0	1	2	3
Almost Always	0	0	1	1

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	No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Have you ever felt guilty about the way you gamble, or what happens when you gamble?				
Never	8	1	0	9
Sometimes	1	14	4	19
Most of the Time	0	1	2	3
Almost Always	0	0	5	5
Has gambling caused you any health problems, including stress or anxiety?				
Never	9	10	1	20
Sometimes	0	6	7	13
Most of the Time	0	0	1	1
Almost Always	0	0	2	2
Has your gambling caused any financial problems for you or your household?				
Never	9	10	1	20
Sometimes	0	6	6	12
Most of the Time	0	0	2	2
Almost Always	0	0	2	2

Based on gambling behaviours over the past 12 months the majority of players taking part in the study (28/36) **have bet more than they could afford to lose** on at least one or more occasions.   For Problem Players this overspending tends to occur more frequently but it is noteworthy that all but one of those at Moderate Risk also report sometimes spending beyond affordable limits during the last year.

Guilt about the way they gamble or what happens when they gamble was the next item endorsed most often by the study participants (27/36). Again, among the higher risk segments all but one Moderate Risk players has experience guilt over their gambling.

Chasing losses (24/36), and **feeling that one might have a problem with gambling** (23/36) also are noted by more than half of participants

About half of the players they agree that they have **needed to gamble with larger amounts of money to get the same feeling of excitement** (18**), someone else has expressed concerns** (17), and 16 report **household financial problems** and having experienced **health problems** related to gambling.

One of the more distinguishing measures among the current sample of players is the greater tendency for Problem Players to have **borrowed money and/or sold items to gamble** (8/11 Problem Players versus 4/16 Moderate Players)

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Limitations of the Study

The purpose of qualitative research is to gain knowledge and insight from exploring issues among particular individuals who have a desired set of characteristics and/or experiences. The focus group setting allows the researcher to draw out ideas, feelings experiences and other less tangible responses to issues that may be obscured or stifled by more structured methods of gathering information. The primary advantages of the process centers on the ability to reach key informants on a more complex level than is afforded by standard quantitative techniques. While the sample is selected because it is believed to be representative of the population of interest it is not intended to provide descriptive or causal information that can be <u>generalized</u> to a specific group at large. Focus group results should not be viewed as conclusive research because participants are selected as a convenience sample rather than by random probability. In the early stages of research, or when ideas, insights and feedback are being sought, qualitative research is an invaluable tool and can be used productively to refine and define issues of interest. This can yield rich, targeted information that cannot be obtained through other techniques.

The findings in the current study provide direction and augment the information gained through quantitative and other empirical research in this area. The numbers and counts presented in the report are used to illustrate the nature of the relationship between a particular "idea" and the reaction of various participants who share similar or different characteristics. This is intended to provide a standardized, summary presentation of the evaluative criteria. Readers are cautioned that results should not be considered as representative or generalizable to players at large. In those cases, where there is quantitative evidence to support the findings readers can have greater confidence in the application of the information.

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   2 :   O N S C R E E N   C L O C K   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D .
.

Section

2
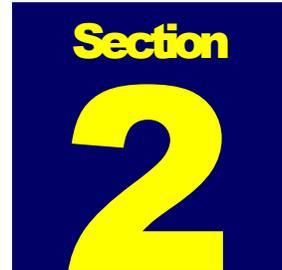
Onscreen Clock

General Use and Perceptions of Onscreen Clock Feature

Prior to discussing options to improve the effectiveness of the onscreen clock general discussion was initiated to determine current use and perceptions of the feature.

Onscreen Clock

Points of Discussion

- Do you refer to the clock when playing?

- Do you know where it is located on the screen?

- Is this feature a good idea?

- Are there any negative issues or concerns associated with having the clock on the terminals?

- Is this feature helpful to players?
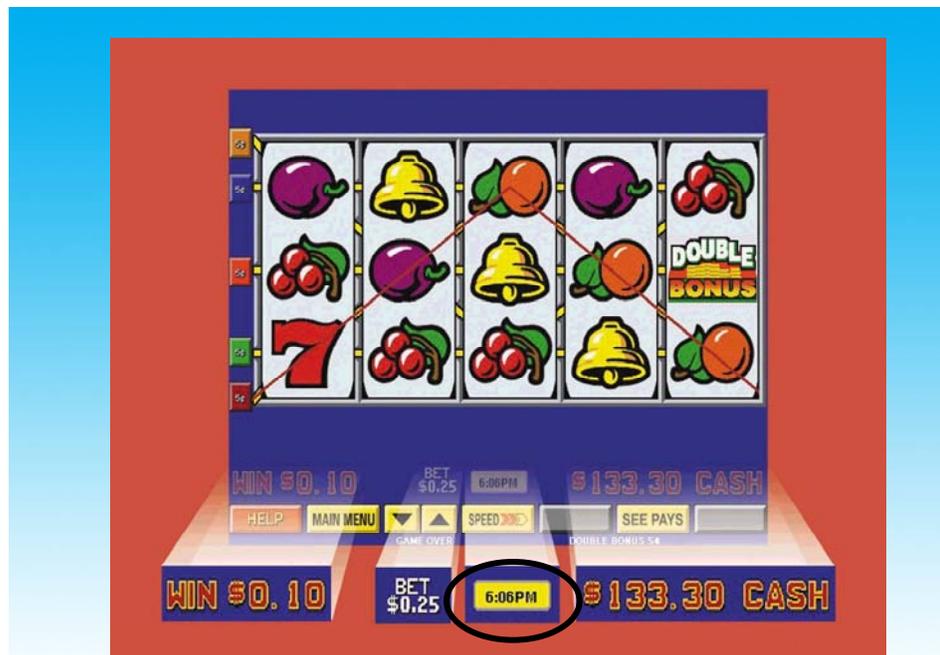
The inclusion of the onscreen clock on the new terminals was considered a reasonable addition to the machines by almost all participants although the affect of the feature in moderating play was rated as fairly benign.

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
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F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N 2 :   O N S C R E E N   C L O C K   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D .

Five of the 36 participants were unaware of the clock feature despite having played the new machines at least once a month or more over the past 18 months or so. For the remaining participants use of the clock was limited. Use tends to be primarily restricted to those occasions when the player needs to adhere to a specific time schedule and then only when other sources of "time-of-day" reference are not convenient and/or when the player remembers to use the onscreen clock. Many comments underscore the lack of prominence of the onscreen clock in gaining players attention.

> *"I don't really notice it once I'm playing"*
>
> *"I forget that it is there"*
>
> "*I only use it when I need to be somewhere"*
>
> *"I still look at my watch rather than the screen"*
>
> *"If I have my glasses on I refer to the onscreen clock but if I don't I can't see it"*

In general the onscreen clock is liked but is not used often by the players primarily due to their involvement in other aspects of the game and the ease of overlooking the feature during play. While the clock is considered a good idea and is convenient as a source for the "time-of-day" it is believed to have little affect in encouraging players to regulate time spent playing the games.

Perceptions of the current effectiveness of the onscreen clock in moderating play were less favourable. While players felt that it is a good idea to have a clock on the screen there was a fair amount of cynicism in the ability of this feature to help players manage the amount of time spent on the machines.

> *"The clock doesn't help you at all, it just lets you know the time"*
>
> *"I play to lose track of time, this clock isn't going to distract me"*
>
> *"The clock is not going to stop anyone from putting in their pay cheque"*

When participants were informed about the quantitative study results, specifically the finding that use of the onscreen clock was associated with improved tracking of time spent playing, there was some agreement that "**maybe using the clock would help some people but for most it wouldn't make any difference**". Some participants indicated that losing track of time is not necessarily the cause of problems with VLT's but rather in many cases occurs as a consequence of being involved in problem VL gambling.

Among the Frequent Players, particularly those at Moderate Risk, response was more emphatic. There was a belief expressed that **"players know how much time is being spent playing'; "losing track of time is not the problem it's the money"**. Therefore, there is limited requirement for a feature that alerts players to passing time. However, not all participants concurred with this position. Three individuals in the Frequent Player Groups who were scoring in the problem range of the CPGI disagreed during the discussion reporting that they often lose track of time while playing and therefore could benefit from a feature which draws attention to the passing time.

> *"I just tune out and don't have any idea how much time has gone by…I'm just into it ".*
>
> *"I don't intend to be there for hours and hours. Next thing I know a lot of time has gone by"*
>
> *"I'm a space cadet when I play…I've opened the bar and closed the bar"*

There were also some non-problem players who have seen others "***tune out***" or even found themselves playing longer than they had wanted especially when they were winning or caught up in the games (e.g. wins or near wins).

Regardless of an individual's personal tendency to lose track of time there was consensus that in its current configuration the on-screen clock doesn't do any harm. However, **beyond providing a convenient time-of-day reference, the clock is perceived to provide little value in terms of leading a player to "stop" or shorten their play session or as a tool for managing the length of time spent on the machines.**

Proposed Improvements to the Onscreen Clock

All participants were presented with a general description of the proposed improvements to the onscreen clock and asked to complete an independent evaluation of each concept prior to discussion.

Independent Evaluation:

How much will each change affect your:

- **Liking of feature (Like more, less, no effect)**

- **Use of the feature (Use more, less, no effect)**

- **Enjoyment of the games (Enjoy more, less, no effect)**

Proposed Improvements for the Onscreen Clock

- **Make the clock more prominent**

- **Display the clock in the same position on the game screen away from the other buttons**

- **Make background colours of the clock bright/different from other screen items/buttons)**

- **Have the clock flash for 15 seconds every 15 minutes**

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N 2 :   O N S C R E E N   C L O C K   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D .

Onscreen Clock – Improvement # 1

Onscreen Clock Concept #1

All games will display the clock in the same position on the game screen away from the other play buttons.

All games will display the clock in the same position on the game screen away from the other play buttons.			
How will this change affect:	**No/Low Risk (n=9)**	**Mod. Risk (n= 16)**	**Problem (n= 11)**	**Total (n= 36)**
Your liking of the clock feature:				
Like Less	0	0	2	2
No Effect	4	12	3	19
Like More	5	4	6	15
Your use of the clock feature:				
Use Less	0	2	1	3
No Effect	7	8	5	20
Use More	2	6	5	13
Your enjoyment of the games:				
Enjoy Less	1	1	1	3
No Effect	7	13	8	28
Enjoy More	1	2	2	5

Only two problem players indicated that a permanent, consistent screen location for the onscreen clock would detract from their liking of this feature, with almost half (15) believing such a change would improve the appeal of this feature. The Problem Players (6/11) and No/Low Risk Players (5/9) were more likely to rate this change positively, whereas those at Moderate Risk were most inclined to report the change would have no effect on their liking of the clock (12/16)

In terms of usage, only three players indicated that a permanent location for the onscreen clock would reduce their use of the feature. The majority (20/36) felt this change would have no effect on how often they refer to the clock although 13 participants, largely those at Moderate Risk (6) or problem play levels (5), believe they would be more likely to use the clock if they **"knew where it was always going to be"**.

There would be little to no impact for players enjoyment of the games if such a change was implemented (28/36: No Effect).

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Onscreen Clock – Improvement # 2

Onscreen Clock Concept # 2

To draw attention to the clock its background colours will be bright and different from other items around it or other screen buttons

To draw attention to the clock its background colours will be bright and different from other items around it or other screen buttons.			
How will this change affect:	No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Your liking of the clock feature:				
Like Less	1	2	1	4
No Effect	4	8	6	18
Like More	2	6	3	11
Your use of the clock feature:				
Use Less	0	1	1	2
No Effect	5	9	8	22
Use More	2	6	1	9
Your enjoyment of the games:				
Enjoy Less	0	1	1	2
No Effect	6	13	9	28
Enjoy More	1	1	0	2

The incorporation of different background colours and heightened brightness or intensity for the clock feature button was also evaluated favourably.

Although liking of the feature would largely remain unchanged, 11 of the 36 participants noted this enhancement would have a positive effect on their liking of the clock feature and one-quarter (9) would be more inclined to refer or use the clock during play. Similar to response towards a consistent onscreen location making the clock more noticeable or distinctive would have no real effect on players enjoyment of the games (28/36 No Effect).

> "*It would sure make it easier to find and see so I'd probably be checking it more often while I was playing*"

> "*Yah, I think this would make me see it and think hey its already such and such a time*"

> "*I hardly notice it now so yes I would get used to seeing it and using it if it was bigger, brighter more distinctive*"

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N 2 :   O N S C R E E N   C L O C K   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D .

> *"I didn't even know it was on there before. This would help make it stand out"*

Onscreen Clock – Improvement # 3

The Clock will flash for 15 seconds every 15 minutes.				
How will this change affect:	**No/Low Risk (n=9)**	**Mod. Risk (n= 16)**	**Problem n= 11)**	**Total (n= 36)**
Your liking of the clock feature:				
Like Less	4	10	6	20
No Effect	1	5	1	7
Like More	2	1	3	6
Your use of the clock feature:				
Use Less	1	3	3	7
No Effect	5	10	4	19
Use More	0	3	3	6
Your enjoyment of the games:				
Enjoy Less	1	8	5	14
No Effect	4	5	4	13
Enjoy More	1	3	1	5

Onscreen Clock Concept # 3

The clock will flash for 15 seconds, every 15 minutes.

Response to the clock flashing at regular 15 minute intervals was more negative than neutral. Liking of this change was low for the majority of participants with 20 of the 36 participants indicating that the flashing feature would be irritating, distracting and reduce the overall appeal of the onscreen clock.   In fact this particular change was red tagged by 7 participants indicating that this is a modification that the players do not want on the machines regardless of potential benefits to others.

> *"Its just one more thing happening on the screen"*

> *"That would really bug me"*

> *"Aggravating!! Too much already"*

> *"Flashing would be annoying…give you a headache"*

Overall, 18 of the participants believed the flashing time intervals would either enhance their enjoyment of the game (5) or have no real impact on their play experience (13). However, this change garnered one of the highest levels of anticipated negative impact with 14 players reporting such a feature would actively interfere with their enjoyment of the games.

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Making the clock more prominent, brighter and locating it in a consistent screen location was endorsed by the majority of all players. Conversely, the introduction of a flashing time feature at 15 minute intervals was viewed as contentious by most and helpful by only a minority of players.

Higher risk players tended to respond most negatively to the concept, with 13 of the 27 people who scored at 3+ on the CPGI indicating that the change would reduce their enjoyment. Yet among these same groups there were at least three Moderate and three Problem Players who felt that the flashing clock at 15 minute intervals would improve the likelihood of them referring to the clock. Thus despite the lack of general appeal it appears that for some of those having difficulty in keeping track of time the flashing clock will offer some assistance in drawing players attention to passing time.

> *"I would like the flashing time, more prominent colours and having the clock put in the same place. All of this would help me to keep better track of time, make me more aware of it"*

General Discussion:

What, if any, do you particularly like or dislike about the onscreen clock feature, and any of the proposed changes?

I PARTICULARLY <u>LIKE</u>:	I PARTICULARLY <u>DISLIKE</u>:
- Time Awareness - Clock more Prominent - Letting me know Time Is Up - Same position - one spot - To know the time - Bright background colour - That it's there	- Hard to notice - Not big enough - Clock Flashing - 15 Second Flash every 15 minutes (too often) - Distracting - Annoying

In general, the prospect of changes to make the clock more prominent was evaluated positively by the players participating in the focus groups. Players believe that making the clock more distinctive from the other buttons and locating it in a consistent and "***less busy***" area of the screen would improve the likelihood players would pay attention to the feature. This might make them refer to the clock more often during play, in turn leading to greater awareness of passing time especially among those who wish to maintain greater control over the length of their play session. For other players the clock would be referred to primarily when they were on a schedule or on those occasions when they were filling in time between engagements.

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A standard permanent screen location for the feature would mean players "***don't have to go looking for the clock***" especially when playing new or unfamiliar games. This may promote more habitual use of the feature "***with people getting used to seeing and using it while they are playing***".

With the exception of the clock flashing for 15 seconds at 15 minute intervals, there was little to no opposition to the other changes being incorporated. The clock would continue to be a convenient source for players to access the time-of-day and the proposed enhancements are not considered to have any appreciable impact on players enjoyment of the games while improving the usefulness of the feature.

In the case of the 15 minute flashing, most players found this idea to be annoying and distracting. Some players believe the ***"flash would throw you off"*** and may have a negative affect on people's moods and dispositions ("***want to smash the machine***"). Others thought it ***"just might end up making you leave sooner to get away from it".*** ***"Given all the activity already occurring on the screen this is just something else to give you a headache"*** The 15 minute interval was mentioned as too frequent by a few players but for at least three high risk players the timing was considered to be reasonable for cutting through to them while they were playing. In fact, for those players who reported losing track of time most often during play, having the clock flash was viewed as an effective way of reminding them of the passing time and would be more likely to gain their attention over protracted periods of play than simply having the clock be larger or brighter.

Recommendations

- **Place the clock in a consistent location on the screen for easy player reference regardless of familiarity with the games;**

- **Make the clock more prominent by ensuring it is bigger and brighter/distinctive from the other buttons;**

- **Further testing of the flashing clock feature is advised to determine if the potential nuisance factor of the modification would negate any benefits to those most in need of having time reminders included on the machines.** There is a possibility that such players may simply habituate to the flashing over extended playing time. Thus, the flashing may be insufficient to draw the players attention once they have become accustomed to the change. However, for those who do not necessarily lose track of time while playing the flashing may have an accumulative impact as an irritant. Conversely, players may be overreacting to the potential negative effects of the feature, that in reality may prove to be inconsequential.

Points of Discussion

- **Are these changes a good idea? (Pros & Cons)**

- **What if any questions pop into your head about how the on-screen clock will look or work?**

- **How useful do you think these changes will be in encouraging people to use the clock more often?**

- **Would you be likely to use the clock more often when playing?**

- **How would these changes to the clock affect your enjoyment of the games?**

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SECTION 3: TIME LIMIT OPTION – FEBRUARY 2003
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Setting a Time Limit Option

"To encourage players to consider setting a time budget for play and provide a tool for players to not only set but to stick to their desired time limits"

Description

When money is first put into the machine a pop-up message will be activated asking "Do you want to set a time limit for your play session" Yes or No

If **Yes** is chosen, the question appears "*How long would you like to play*". There are 5 options or buttons that can be selected by the player: "15 minutes", "30 minutes", "45 minutes", "60 minutes" and "I do not want to set a time limit".

At the end of the time selected for the play session a pop-up screen will appear that says *"Your play time has elapsed. Select a new game period or cash-out to end your play session".* This time 6 options will be presented to the players , including a new button for "cash-out"

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T - E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   3 :   T I M E   L I M I T   O P T I O N   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D .

		No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
The instructions for using this feature are clear and easy for players to understand. (Example question "*Do you want to set a time limit for your play session- YES or NO*")	Disagree	1	0	0	1
	Neutral	2	2	4	8
	Agree	5	14	6	25
Giving players a chance to set a time limit on the machine before they start to play is a good idea.	Disagree	0	2	1	3
	Neutral	1	1	2	4
	Agree	7	13	6	26
The time limits players can select are appropriate and do not need to be changed (15 minutes, 30 min, 45 min, 60 min)	Disagree	0	1	1	2
	Neutral	3	5	1	9
	Agree	4	8	6	18
Having this option on the machines would not interfere with my enjoyment of the games	Disagree	0	1	0	1
	Neutral	4	3	3	10
	Agree	3	12	5	20
I would use this feature on at least an occasional basis	Disagree	1	2	0	3
	Neutral	1	3	2	6
	Agree	6	10	6	22
The machine should automatically cash out the player once they have reached the time limit they set when they had started playing instead of giving them an option to continue playing.	Disagree	6	9	4	19
	Neutral	0	4	1	5
	Agree	1	2	3	6
Everyone who plays on the machines should be required to set a time limit before they start to play instead of giving players a choice of setting a time limit or not.	Disagree	6	13	5	24
	Neutral	1	1	2	4
	Agree	1	1	1	3

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   3 :   T I M E   L I M I T   O P T I O N   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D .

Points of Discussion

- Is this a good idea?

- What questions come to mind?

- Is it clear to players how the feature works. Specifically does the wording on the first screen make sense or do you think it can be improved? "Do you want to set a time limit for your play session- YES or NO"

- of the games be affected if everyone had to set a time limit before starting to play instead of making this feature optional?

- What if any changes would improve this feature?

Players responded positively to the option of letting players set a time limit for play at the start of each play session. The vast majority in all player segments think that this is a "good idea" (26/36). In particular Non-problem Players (20/24) reacted favourably with 16 of these participants reporting that they would use the feature on at least an occasional basis during play. In fact, the inclusion of the feature was seen to address many of the concerns surrounding the relative ineffectiveness of simply providing a time-of-day clock on the screen as a tool for players in managing time spent playing the machines.

> *"Now you are going somewhere. This is a good idea"*
>
> *"I play every Saturday but I can only play for one hour because I have to be somewhere [at a set time] to meet someone else. I can't be late. This would be helpful "*
>
> *"This is better than the clock cause you can actually decide how long you want to play and the machine will remind you when you reach your time. Don't have to keep checking"*

Only one individual found the onscreen instructions for the Time Limit Option difficult to understand. In further discussion, it was felt that if some players were initially confused when the option message was first encountered either experience or talking to other players would clear up any lack of understanding.

It was noted that there would be some tedium in always having to select "NO" every time the player ran the bank down to zero or cashed out. The potential benefits of having such an option available was generally considered to offset the inconvenience factor.

The critical caveat for the majority of players was that the time limit must remain optional; players must be given the option of continuing to play once the pre-selected time had elapsed. Otherwise, the feature becomes "***too controlling***". However, at least three Problem Players and two of those at Moderate Risk endorsed the idea of players being automatically cashed out when the set time limit had expired.

> *"What's the point of it if you can just keep pressing the continue to play button"*
>
> *"That's the problem…at the start of play I'm only going to be there until I've spent so much money but once I get playing everything flies out the window"*

For 15 of the 24 Non-problem Players incorporating a mandatory cash out would diminish the appeal of the feature and enjoyment of the games. This was largely driven

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   3 :   T I M E   L I M I T   O P T I O N   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D .

by a number of practical considerations such as being forced to cash out small amounts and being frustrated or irritated if they were winning at the point of cash out.

> *"It would definitely have to be optional or people would get really peeved especially if they were winning and then the machine dumped them out"*

> *"The bar staff would hate it if we were coming to them with small cash outs…it would drive everybody nuts…start a war"*

> *"bartenders would get angry cashing out slips for $1.35 or people wouldn't bother to collect on them…staff might just gather them up at the end of the night or something"*

> *"You gotta give people an option cause it depends on what is happening in the game. I'd be hot if I had so much put into the machine and it was going good and then it all got reset cause my time was up"*

Arguments that it would defeat the purpose of pre-setting a time limit if people could keep setting a new limit were countered by concerns surrounding the amounts of the cash outs. No one wants to be cashing out or redeeming small amounts of money. Any solutions for allowing people a "**grace period**" or "**chance to play out the bank**" were considered too complicated and would detract from the feature.

There was even less support for requiring all players to set a limit at the start of play instead of allowing players to bypass the option. Only 3 of 36 participants agreed that all players should have to set a time limit with 19 of the Non-problem and 6 of the Problem Players disagreeing with such a modification.

> *"Time isn't an issue for most players so this would just be an annoyance"*

> *"It just doesn't apply every time you play…depends more on how long your money lasts"*

There was discussion in all 5 groups about the possibility of setting a money rather than just a time limit **"after all its money that is really the problem right".** Setting a money limit elicited more polarized responses. For most of the non-problem players, such an option is not as likely to be used because, for the most part, these players already set and adhere to a budget for play. However these players think it is probably a good idea for those who do not set a budget or have trouble sticking to their limits.

> *"I always decide how much I'm going to spend and as soon as I go through it that's it, I'm done. If I'm up or at least double my money I cash out and stop playing"*

Points of Discussion

- **How useful is this feature in helping player to manage the amount of time/money they spend playing?**

- **Would you use this feature? If Yes, how would it affect your play?**

- **Are the option buttons appropriate? Is there are need for other time options?**

- **Do you think that it would improve the usefulness of the feature if players were forced to cash out when they reached their pre-set time limit?**

- **How would your enjoyment of the games be affected?**

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   3 :   T I M E   L I M I T   O P T I O N   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D .

> "*I spend $20.00 and once its gone so am I [done playing} but for those who just keep going this might help*"

> "*I wouldn't use it [set a money budget] but I know a lot of people who should*"

It was the higher risk and Problem Players for whom response was most divided. There appears to be concerns about private play information being displayed on the screen as well as antagonism towards VL expenditure issues in general. **"*You know how much you are spending. Its nobody else's business*".** Others felt that the money was a more relevant basis for setting a limit.

> "*Not so much the time, it's the money*"

> "*Instead of time couldn't you have money?*"

> "*How long you can play really depends on how long your money lasts*".

> "*Money is a better limit to determine cash out*"

Players reached some common ground by suggesting that the option could be expanded to allow players to set both time and money limits as they preferred. For one of the Frequent Player groups (Group 1) being able to set an amount of winnings to trigger cash out was discussed as a reasonable idea but players were not sure if it would become too complicated.

General Discussion

An optional feature that would allow players to set a time limit at the start of each play session was well-received by most players. Players like the idea of being able to pre-set a time limit both for practical reasons and/or in efforts to better manage their play. The majority believe that they would use such a feature on at least an occasional basis and the option is anticipated to have minimal impact on players enjoyment.   Even those who were less enthusiastic were not necessarily negative towards the concept. "**Better than nothing" "Still just pushing a another button to get rid of it but better than the way it is now" "I've got no problem with and probably I'd end up using it at sometime"**

The only concerns expressed tend to surround the logistics of how the feature would work once players started cashing out or running the bank down to zero. Some Players questioned whether or not these play behaviours would defeat the purpose of the feature over the long run. "**If I go down to zero, which I usually do, I'm going to have to keep setting a time but I guess I'd have to minus off time I have already played? I think it could become a hassle".** One suggestion put forward by a Problem Player (Group 5) was to incorporate a **"reset"** option on the feature. Basically, this would mean that the playtime set previously would continue to stay in

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   3 :   T I M E   L I M I T   O P T I O N   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D .

affect until the player hit a "*reset time*" button. This approach would bypass the inconvenience factor of continually recalculating the time whenever play was interrupted while continuing to track the total amount of time the player was involved in the games. The other players in the group liked this idea and thought it was an improvement upon the current option.

Whatever the configuration, it is clear that the players in all sessions and risk segments do not want this to be a mandatory option. "*Players must have the choice*". Forcing players to set a time limit or to cash out is considered too heavy-handed and has ramifications for the bar service staff and players alike. Options which expand players ability to exercise "choice" over the option, in particular an ability to set time or money limits, were endorsed more strongly.

Recommendations – Time Limit Option

- **Keep the feature optional to allow players the choice of setting a time limit or electing to cash out or stop playing when the selected time has elapsed;**

- **Test the option under real play conditions to assess the impact of actual play behaviours on how the feature works;**

- **For testing conditions, retain the current wording and time limit options (15 minutes to 60 minutes).** While a few players feel the 15 minute interval is "*too early*" this may be a more relevant option for those who frequently cash out or run the bank down to zero and thus may need more flexibility in resetting a time limit;

- **Examine technological feasibility of incorporating a "reset" button as part of the design for the feature;**

- **Examine technological feasibility of allowing players to set a time and/or money limit (under similar assumption as the "reset button" concept);**

- **Consider the incorporation of a help screen, button, or feature that players can access as needed to obtain more information about how the feature works.** Or add in another layer to the existing responsible gaming screen. This would clarify the purpose of the concept for those who find it more difficult to understand. It may also foster greater use of the option and minimizes the reliance of confused players on other players, some of whom may not have correctly interpreted the function and intent of the feature.

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   4 :   R E C E I P T   F O R   P L A Y   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D .
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Section

4

RECEIPT FOR PLAY SESSION

Description

Players will be provided with an option to print a receipt for every play session, similar to an ATM receipt. It will display the amount of money spent (put into the machine out-of-pocket), the amount cashed out and the length of time spent playing (XXX minutes).

Every time a player lets the bank run down to zero or cashes out, a screen will pop up asking the player "Would you like a Receipt for your play session? YES or NO"

If the player chooses NO, the question will disappear,

If the player does not respond , the question will disappear after one minute

If the player chooses yes the receipt will be printed.

"To remind players of how much money is being spent and better represent the outcomes of betting activity during play thereby serving as a reality check for players. This will assist players in managing the amount of money they are spending "

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Evaluation of Receipt Option

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">Ability to get a receipt for the amount of time and money spent during a particular play session so you can track how much time or money you are spending playing the games.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>No/Low Risk (n=9)</td><td>Mod. Risk (n= 16)</td><td>Problem (n= 11)</td><td>Total (n= 36)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Do you like the idea of this feature?</td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">NO</td><td>0</td><td>6</td><td>3</td><td>9</td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">SOMEWHAT</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>10</td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">YES</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>3</td><td>13</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Do you think this will be effective in helping you to manage your VL play?</td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">NO</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>4</td><td>13</td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">SOMEWHAT</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>11</td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">YES</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>0</td><td>7</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">How do you think this feature will affect your enjoyment of the games?</td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">Enjoy Less</td><td>1</td><td>6</td><td>3</td><td>10</td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">No Effect</td><td>6</td><td>8</td><td>5</td><td>19</td></tr>
<tr><td align="right">Enjoy More</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table>

Player Receipt Evaluation #1

Ability to get a receipt for the amount of time and money spent during a particular session of play:
- **Liking**
- **Usefulness**
- **Impact on enjoyment of games**

Players participating in the sessions were not as enthusiastic in their endorsement of a play receipt as was the case for the option of setting a time limit. Despite higher levels of disagreement (9/36) the majority of participants found the concept to be a least somewhat appealing (23/36). For the most part the No/Low Risk players were less antagonistic towards the idea. However, Moderate and Problem Players were evenly divided on the issue.

The perceived effectiveness of the Receipt Option was lower although more than half (18) indicated they would likely derive some benefit from the feature in managing their play.

For the largest group of Players (19) the availability of this option would have no impact on game enjoyment. This was primarily in the response to players intent to either ignore the feature, **"just push the button as quick as I could to get it over with"** or to use it out of curiousity "**I'd be curious to see what I spent after a month or so".**

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Player Receipt Evaluation #2

Requirement of having to indicate "Yes" or "No" to a receipt each time you end a session of play:
• **Liking**
• **Usefulness**
• **Impact on enjoyment of games**

The requirement of having to indicate YES or NO to a receipt every time you cash out or run your "bank" down to zero.				
	No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Do you like the idea of this feature?				
NO	2	8	4	14
SOMEWHAT	4	3	4	11
YES	2	4	0	6
Do you think this will be effective in helping you to manage your VL play?				
NO	4	8	5	17
SOMEWHAT	2	3	3	8
YES	2	3	0	5
How do you think this feature will affect your enjoyment of the games?				
Enjoy Less	0	5	3	8
No Effect	7	9	5	21
Enjoy More	1	0	0	1

Similar to the time limit option players would be required to respond to the receipt query every time they cashed out or ran the credits down to zero. In many cases the players did not necessarily view this as a negative by-product of the option. In fact, 11 participants found the feature somewhat appealing and 6 players confirmed their liking.

> *"It isn't that big of deal. Hit the button and move on"*
>
> *"It might make me think about whether I want to keep going so yes I like this"*
>
> *"I like having the option of choosing each time"*

Only 14 stated that this was categorically an unattractive feature of the Receipt concept;

> *"This is too much! Soon it will print out you went to the bathroom at 9:35, 10:54 etc."*
>
> *"Too much paper wasted, its crazy"*

While over half (17) expect to derive no benefit in managing play there were 5 players, all in the non-problem player segments, who agreed that the receipt would be of value in helping them ***"keep [their] VL play on track".*** While the feature was not considered to add much entertainment value to the games only the higher risk players

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   4 :   R E C E I P T   F O R   P L A Y   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D .

(Moderate: 5, Problem: 3) believed the necessity of responding to the receipt request would diminish their enjoyment of the games.

Player Receipt Evaluation #3

The possibility that players may have more than one receipt printed out during a single session of play:
- Liking
- Usefulness
- Impact on enjoyment of games

The fact that you might have more than one receipt printed out during a single play session (i.e. if you cash out or run down to zero before putting in more money and continuing to play).				
	No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Do you like the idea of this feature?				
NO	4	6	5	15
SOMEWHAT	2	6	3	11
YES	2	2	0	4
Do you think this will be effective in helping you to manage your VL play?				
NO	4	7	4	15
SOMEWHAT	3	3	4	10
YES	1	3	0	4
How do you think this feature will affect your enjoyment of the games?				
Enjoy Less	0	5	3	8
No Effect	7	8	4	19
Enjoy More	1	0	0	1

The possibility that players may have more than one receipt for each play session was liked slightly less often than having to respond to the request for receipt. Also, fewer participants felt that this aspect of the concept made any significant contribution to better play management. Players in all groups were evenly split between those feeling there was no benefit provided and those who would still find the feature at least somewhat helpful.   For the most part this "***inconvenience***" does not translate into a perceived reduction in entertainment value. Although about one quarter (8) of the most frequent players   (4+ times per week) report that the potential for multiple receipts per session of play would reduce their enjoyment of the games.

> *"seems like a big waste of paper to me"*
>
> *"this would be a mess! What would you do with it all"*
>
> *"might be kind of hard to keep track of all the paper and I'd end up skipping the receipt just to avoid it"*
>
> *"too bad you can't just get one total…makes it a bit trickier than I first thought"*

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   4 :   R E C E I P T   F O R   P L A Y   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D .

Know Your Limits – Play Responsibly Tagline Evaluation

Players in all session were asked "what" they thought about the slogan on the Receipt; **"Know Your Limits – Play Responsibly".**

There was some cynicism expressed as to the underlying motivations for the message.

> *"This is the governments way of appearing to be responsible"*
>
> *"Like the cigarette packs, they cause you cancer but we still sell them to you"*

Although there was agreement that *"this wouldn't stop anyone who was gambling too much"*, the slogan itself was considered to be *"inoffensive"* and generally a *"good idea"*.

> *"They have to have something and this can't hurt"*
>
> *"It's a good reminder to people"*

The actual execution of the slogan was evaluated favourably. The caution icon was viewed as appropriate and likeable. Some people associated this symbol with the "drinking and driving" campaigns which served to reinforce its message of *"be careful and responsible"*.

Players were asked for their opinions regarding changing the message to read: **"If you play, play responsibly".** This change was examined under the assumption that people may find it less patronizing than the more direct approach currently in use.

There was no one in any of the groups who felt this change would improve the message. For the most part players taking part in the evaluation felt that that the current message was more concise, to the point. Any additions would *"just clutter it up…keep it simple and straight forward"*.

> *"Shorter is better"*
>
> *"No real difference so why change it"*
>
> *"I like it the way it is. Its better"*
>
> *"It works fine [as is]"*

While most players in the group were indifferent, the current logo and message were considered a good idea and did not engender any negativity. Despite some cynicism about the purpose and value of the message, Players generally like this particular execution and felt it is appropriate and should be retained without any change. There also appears to be equity developing for this message with some players recalling it from other signage and materials.

General Discussion

What, if any, do you particularly like or dislike about the receipt for each play session feature?

I PARTICULARLY <u>LIKE</u>:	I PARTICULARLY <u>DISLIKE</u>:
- Awareness of Loss - Knowing how much won vs. lost - Option to choose Yes/No - Reality check of time & money - What amount I put in - How long and how much - Receipts - excellent tool for realization & wake-up call	- Annoyance to some players - Multiple receipts - A lot of paper - Display of play time - Coming out every time (waste) - More than 1 receipt per machine - The idea that they think I don't know what I lose each time I play.

Points of Discussion

- Is this a good idea? (Pros and Cons)

- What questions come to mind? (Any problems or concerns)

- Do you think it will be clear to players how this feature will work? "Would you like a receipt for your play session- YES or NO"

- How useful is this feature in helping player to manage the amount of time/money they spend playing?

- Would you use this feature? If Yes, how would it effect how you play?

The receipt option generated a mixed response from the players taking part in the study. Those who liked the idea tended to be less aggressive in their support than those in opposition. Those who disliked the option <u>really</u> disliked it.   It appears that much of the players antagonism towards the receipt is driven by an emphatic assertion that some players "***don't need***" and perhaps more importantly ***"don't want"*** a record of their VL expenditures. It will be recalled from the CPGI questions that almost all of those at higher risk for problem gambling, (Moderate: (15/16), Problem: 11/11), have gambled beyond affordable levels in the last year <u>and</u> have experienced guilt over their gambling.   It may be that the receipt option is evaluated as a more threatening modification by some of the players taking part in the session. Hence, the exaggerated response to the concept by a minority of the higher risk groups; ***"This sucks" "Its pretty horrible" "No one is going to use this. It shouldn't even be on there"***

Aside from a very vocal minority of detractors, there were more players taking part in the study who indicated interest in having access to information about the amount of time and money being spent. Given the strength of opposition to the concept in three of the five sessions it was often difficult for these more moderate positions to be heard. The most preferred aspects of the receipt is the ability for players to keep track of wins, losses and time spent on the machines. Despite contentions from other players "***that you know how much you are spending", "you don't need the machine to tell you that", "if you don't know what your spending then you've***

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got a problem" other group members suggested that "*its easy [for me] to lose track of how much is being spent".* The receipt is viewed as a tool the players can use to monitor what they are doing.

> *"I might be surprised by what I find out. I think I know what I'm doing but it could be a real eye-opener"*
>
> *"Could discourage people from putting in that much money again"*
>
> *"do a reality check to see what I'm really putting into those machines"*
>
> *"This is a good idea for all players to find out what they are really spending, maybe you'll be surprised too"*

However some drawbacks were associated with the current concept configuration; primarily the lack of running totals or even per session totals, and the onus placed on the individual to manage the multiple receipts. "***This is a good idea but need a better way to keep track like the players' card at the casino".*** Other suggestions consisted of including a "***a receipt button"*** on the machine that players can press if they wish to have a record of their play. This might address some of the irritants for other players surrounding the constant need to be responding to screen messages or other prompts in order to play the games.

> "***I'm here to gamble not read all those things, push all those buttons"***
>
> *"Its like you have to fill out a questionnaire before you can play"*
>
> *"It's a silly thing and would detract from the enjoyment of playing"*
>
> *"Shouldn't even be an option!"*
>
> *"It's like somebody always supervising my play"*

However, there was some speculation that players probably won't remember or get around to using the receipt button if they are not reminded or prompted to use it at the point when they are cashing-out or ***"running down to zero".***

Again, the possibility of allowing players to have a ***"reset"*** option was brought up in Group 5 (Problem Player Session). Theoretically, this feature would allow the player to continue to track expenditures over cashouts and ***"zero balances".*** It works by providing players new response options at the point a receipt is invoked (Example: The Player can currently select Yes to Receipt or No. The "reset" idea would include two more options: ***"Reset"*** which would start the feature over again, and "***Continue"*** *which would tell the machine to keep adding up the totals until Reset, Yes or No was selected.* The option could also appear anytime new money is put in the machine so that a new player could indicate 'Reset' immediately to maintain confidentiality.

Points of Discussion

- **What do you think would improve the effectiveness/usefulness of this feature?**

- **How would your enjoyment of the games be affected if every time you cash out or ran your "bank" down to zero, you would have to indicate whether or not you want a receipt for your play?**

- **What about the fact you may get more than one receipt during a single play session? Add them up, keep them or what?**

- **What if any changes would improve this feature.**

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Another big issue with the receipt is the paper requirements to support the concept. Players already complain about the ***"painful service given to VL gamblers …this thing would only make it worse"***. Players are already experiencing long waits when the machine normally runs out of paper and this option is seen to further add to the problem.

> *"you get stuck waiting for a staff/location member to get around to changing it".*
>
> *"Bar staff will hate it, it's messy"*
>
> *"I've waited for an hour to get a cash out slip".*
>
> *"You'll kill a lot of trees with this one"*

There were other issues raised about confidentiality of the information. Players do not want the information to show up on the screen so in that regard the receipt is a better option. There were some questions at to who might see your slips with joking references to spouses or partners. More seriously, players did not want others to be able to access any information about their expenditure. This is a sensitive issue for the players in these groups.

Recommendations – Play Receipt

- **Submit the Play Receipt Option for testing in order to evaluate how the feature will perform in a more naturalistic setting under normal (or simulated play conditions).**

- **Retain the "Know Your Limits – Play Responsibly" message without changes.** Players think it is clear, concise, and "not offensive". It is developing equity with the players and is associated positively with other "responsible campaigns" such as not drinking and driving.

- **Obtain site-holder feedback to assess servicing issues, security and the nuisance factor in offering this feature.** The use and effectiveness of the receipt option will be dependent upon site-holder buy-in and player servicing. Without identifying and addressing retailer barriers, it will be difficult for players to make effective use of the option. This appears to be the case as it relates to the use of coins versus bill acceptors for the VLT's. Players report that it is difficult and in some cases almost impossible to play with coins on the new terminals. This is primarily due to the inconvenience and cost in handling coins. Consequently, players encounter faulty or out-of-service coin acceptors on the terminals and lack of access to coin and service for play. Given that the new terminals are often "temperamental" in accepting the new $5.00 and $10.00 bills, the player said they are being forced towards higher denominations on the new terminals.

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- **Continue to offer the receipt as an optional feature.** Players in the current study again confirm the strong player preference for empowerment. The players reacted strongly and negatively to the mandatory versions explored. However, despite personal pre-dispositions positive or negative, the players without exception supported the availability of optional-use-features if there was any indication such an option would be of benefit to another player.

- **Consider supplementary support materials, information or services to assist players in using this feature as a tool.** Players may need assistance in using the receipt effectively to manage their play. Ignorance and then subsequently habit may lead Players to automatically by-pass the option. This feature also has potential application as a tool for those who provide problem gambling support services or player assistance by providing a means for players to systematically track their time and money expenditures.

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Section

5

POP-UP MESSAGES

"The goal of this feature is to introduce interruptions in play that alert players to passing time, heighten their awareness of time and money spent, and encourage them to evaluate the decision to continue playing."

General Use and Perceptions of Pop-up Messages

Pop-up Messages

Points of Discussion

- Have you seen any of these messages? IF YES, which ones? How often?

- Is this feature a good idea?

- Are there any negative issues or concerns associated with having the pop-up messages, mandatory cash out on the terminals?

- Is this feature helpful to players?

Prior to discussing options to improve the effectiveness of the pop-up messages general discussion was initiated to determine current use and perceptions of the feature.

Pop-up Messages

YOU HAVE BEEN PLAYING FOR 60 MINUTES, DO YOU WISH TO CONTINUE?

YES   NO

The current pop-up messages and mandatory cash out feature on the new terminals, as expected, are not a popular addition to the machines. These features tend to elicit strong responses from the players, in particular those who play most heavily and for longer periods of time. In fact, response towards the pop-up messages was strongly differentiated among the player groups.

No/Low Risk players in the study had very few opinions on the feature. They did not see them often, if at all, and the feature had no impact on their play experience. During discussion, most of these players reported only secondhand exposure to any of the latter messages. None had encountered the warning message and mandatory cash out after 145 minutes of continuous play. These players tended to think it was a good idea to have the feature on the machines ***"because even if people ignore it, it might just make them stop and think or maybe stop a little sooner"***.

For many of the Moderate, and all of the Problem players taking part in the study, the pop-up messages are a much more contentious issue. Initially almost all the players reacted negatively when the pop-up were mentioned but once actual rates of exposure were discussed it became clear that for most of the higher risk participants the messages were only activated on an occasional basis. Less than half had even saw any messages during the last month of play. In contrast, there were a distinct group of players who see the messages almost every-time they play. It is this group that responds most negatively.

> ***"I hate them, they are useless"***
>
> ***"A complete irritation"***
>
> ***"If I'm playing one for an hour or longer its likely that I'm winning and there is no way I'm going to stop because this message thing has popped up"***

No one reported having cashed out after seeing a message. Moreover, there is evidence that player response has become habitual for these individuals. In terms of the effectiveness of the feature, for most it isn't even considered much of an interruption anymore.

> ***"I don't even read it, just hit the button as fast as possible to get if off the screen and move on"***
>
> ***"Just another button to hit to get back to your game"***

For those with less exposure to the feature there is still a feeling that the pop-up message would get their attention. ***"If a message came up, I might be a bit embarrassed" "It would make me think about it for sure"***.

The pop-up messages are not popular especially with the heavier players but in general are perceived more as a nuisance than detraction from the entertainment value of the games. In terms of overall effectiveness the players with the most exposure to the feature think that the pop-ups do little, are irritating but are easy to get around (just hit the button and keep going).

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Some players were surprised to learn from others in the group that running the bank down to zero or cashing out reset the timing for the messages. Although no one reported that they had deliberately changed their playing patterns to avoid the messages, many of the high risk players noted that this was the reason they didn't see them much.

For the few players who had any experience with the mandatory cash out there was a lot of frustration and antagonism expressed about being forced to cash out. Most of the criticism centered on the belief that this practice has a deliberate effect in reducing their odds of winning or is an attempt to interfere with their game strategies and likelihood of winning.

> *"I'm just about to hit and then bam they force me out"*

> *"After putting in all that money and getting set up, they cash me out…I end up having to start over"*

Players were told that research has found seeing the 60 minute pop-up reminder was associated with small declines in the amount of time and money spent for some players. Response to this information was skeptical but, if this was the case, then almost all participants felt the feature should be retained. Otherwise the feature was considered to have minimal value; few people see it and those who are exposed on a more frequent basis have adapted fairly habitual responses therefore deriving little benefit from the interruption.

Proposed Improvements to the POP-UP Messages

All participants were presented with a general description of the proposed improvements to the pop-up messages asked to complete an independent evaluation of each concept prior to discussion.

Improvements to Pop-up Messages

- **The pop-up messages will first start to appear after 30 minutes of continuous play instead of 60 minutes.**

- **The message will remain on the screen until the YES NO question is answered (it will no longer automatically disappear after 60 seconds).**

- **The onscreen clock and cash display will remain visible while the pop-up message is on the screen so that players can make more informed decisions about continuing to play.**

- **The time between the warning and mandatory cash out will be extended from 5 minutes to 10 minutes**

Improvement #1- Having messages first start to appear after 30 minutes

Messages first start appearing after 30 minutes of continuous play instead of starting after 60 minutes.				
	No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Do you like the idea of this feature?				
NO	3	5	6	14
SOMEWHAT	5	10	4	19
YES	1	1	1	3
Do you think this will be effective in helping you to manage your VL play?				
NO	4	5	4	13
SOMEWHAT	5	9	7	21
YES	0	2	0	2
How do you think this feature will affect your enjoyment of the games?				
Enjoy Less	2	3	5	10
No Effect	7	13	6	26
Enjoy More	0	0	0	0

Pop-up Message Improvement #1

Pop-up messages first start appearing after 30 minutes rather than 60 minutes of continuous play.

Initial response to moving up the schedule for the pop-up messages to 30 minutes was cautious but supportive. Only three participants unequivocally thought this was a "good idea" with 19 of the participants somewhat in favour of the change. The majority evaluating the option also thought there would be at least some benefit in helping them to manage their play (23/36) particularly among the higher risk players (18/27).

> *"This means more people would see the messages and maybe it's a way around the [cash out and running down to zero] problem"*

> *"I don't see the messages much maybe this would interrupt my play"*

However, there were 14 players, especially those in the Moderate (5) and Problem Player groups (6), who reported strong opposition to such an adjustment. Primarily based on their experience with the current messages these players think it would make the feature even more disruptive and irritating (14), would provide little assistance to the player (13), and would make the games less enjoyable (10).

> *"This is just way too soon, 60 minutes is bad enough"*

> *"Not a good idea, too quick, will just keep interfering with the game"*

Improvement #2 – Having message remain on the screen until player responds

<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2" colspan="5">The pop-up message will remain on the screen until the Player selects YES OR NO to the question "you have been playing for XX minutes. Do you wish to continue playing?" instead of disappearing after 60 seconds if the player doesn't respond.</td>
</tr>
<tr><td></td><td>No/Low Risk (n=9)</td><td>Mod. Risk (n= 16)</td><td>Problem (n= 11)</td><td>Total (n= 36)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Do you like the idea of this feature?</td></tr>
<tr><td>NO</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>10</td></tr>
<tr><td>SOMEWHAT</td><td>5</td><td>8</td><td>5</td><td>18</td></tr>
<tr><td>YES</td><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>6</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Do you think this will be effective in helping you to manage your VL play?</td></tr>
<tr><td>NO</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>10</td></tr>
<tr><td>SOMEWHAT</td><td>5</td><td>10</td><td>6</td><td>21</td></tr>
<tr><td>YES</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">How do you think this feature will affect your enjoyment of the games?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Enjoy Less</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>6</td></tr>
<tr><td>No Effect</td><td>7</td><td>14</td><td>6</td><td>27</td></tr>
<tr><td>Enjoy More</td><td>1</td><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr>
</table>

Pop-up Message Improvement #2

Pop-up messages will stay on the screen until the player responds instead of automatically disappearing after 60 seconds if the player doesn't make a choice.

Modifying the message so it will remain on the screen until the player responds was well received by most players with the exception of those who are generally opposed to the feature. Given the fact these individuals do not want the messages to be on the machines in the first place, any changes to make them more intrusive are disliked, although not to the extent of the change to a 30 minute timing schedule.

Only a couple of participants were even aware that the current pop-ups disappear after 60 seconds. The consensus was that players hit the button so quickly once the message appears that this change will have little impact on current playing patterns.

"I didn't even know the screen disappears by itself so there you go"

"As soon as the message comes up, I hit the button and go on"

This change is anticipated to have no negative affects on game enjoyment by 29 of the 36 players taking part in the sessions and is seen to have some potential benefit by at least two-thirds of the participants

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Improvement #3 – Having game screen visible with pop-up message

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5">The on-screen clock and cash display will remain visible while the pop-up reminder is on screen in order to help players make an informed decision about continuing to play.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>No/Low Risk (n=9)</td><td>Mod. Risk (n= 16)</td><td>Problem (n= 11)</td><td>Total (n= 36)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Do you like the idea of this feature?</td></tr>
<tr><td>NO</td><td>0</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>7</td></tr>
<tr><td>SOMEWHAT</td><td>3</td><td>7</td><td>4</td><td>14</td></tr>
<tr><td>YES</td><td>3</td><td>5</td><td>3</td><td>11</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Do you think this will be effective in helping you to manage your VL play?</td></tr>
<tr><td>NO</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>4</td><td>11</td></tr>
<tr><td>SOMEWHAT</td><td>3</td><td>6</td><td>5</td><td>14</td></tr>
<tr><td>YES</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>7</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">How do you think this feature will affect your enjoyment of the games?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Enjoy Less</td><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td>No Effect</td><td>6</td><td>13</td><td>6</td><td>25</td></tr>
<tr><td>Enjoy More</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table>

Pop-up Message Improvement #3

The onscreen clock and cash display will remain visible to the player while the pop-up message is on the screen.

This change is considered to be logical and has little negative impact for any of the participants. Despite general reservations about the feature itself, ensuring players have critical game information available at the point when the message is asking them if they want to continue or not is perceived to be a **"good idea".**

Overall, this modification is rated the most favourably out of the three improvements measured. Only Problem Players (4) think it would have any negative impact on their enjoyment of the games. In two of the cases, the Problem Player specifically mentioned that diminished enjoyment of the games would not necessarily be a negative outcome.

> **"I don't like it, showing me how much I've got in the machine or whatever is going to bug me but maybe that is a good thing"**
>
> **"Maybe all this stuff will irritate me enough to stop playing"**

No one in any of the sessions mentioned that the sight of the screen might negate any value from the interruption by making the player want to go on playing. When this possibility was specifically brought to players attention it was dismissed as irrelevant given how fast players push the button.

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   5 :   P O P - U P   M E S S A G E S   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

Cash out Warning – Improvement #4

Cash out Warning Improvement #4

The time between the warning message and the mandatory cash out will be increased from 5 minutes to 10 minutes.

Although few players have any direct experience with the warning message after 145 minutes of continuous play or the mandatory cash out at the 150 minute mark, the idea of giving player a bit more time to prepare for the cash out was viewed as a reasonable adjustment. Most players are aware of some controversy about the feature, primarily through someone else, another player. For the five players who mentioned firsthand problems with the cash out, the extension of the **"grace period"** was evaluated positively and might even serve as a bit of a cooling off time.

> *"Still doesn't get rid of the cash out but at least it gives you more time to run down your credits or do whatever you want to do before you are dumped out"*

> *"This would be helpful because right now you are pissed off when the warning suddenly comes up and then you are having to cash out while you are still scrambling from the warning"*

Responsible Gaming Messages

Description

Responsible Gaming Messages

A series of responsible gaming messages have been designed for inclusion with the pop-up messages.

The current content of the pop-up messages will be maintained. If a player chooses NO, they will be cashed out immediately.

If a player chooses YES to continued play, another pop-up message will appear with a responsible gaming message.

---

1. Gaming responsibly means playing for entertainment, not as a way to make money.
2. Understanding that each spin is random and cannot be controlled by the player is a key part of gaming responsibly.
3. Gaming responsibly means not using money for gaming that was intended for everyday expenses.
4. Gaming responsibly means setting a budget before you start to play.
5. Gaming responsibly means balancing gaming with other leisure activities.
6. Near misses and near wins do not exist. The outcome of each game is determined when the play button is hit.
7. Gaming responsibly means understanding that there is no such thing as a "hot" machine. Each spin produces random results.

Players were introduced to the concept of including responsible gaming messages with the pop-up messages and then evaluated each statement on four measures:

- **Does it provide you with new information? (INFORMATIVE)**
- **Is it clear about what it means, easy to understand? (CLEAR)**
- **Is it believable? (BELIEVABLE)**
- **Is it helpful in encouraging responsible gaming? (HELPFUL)**

Message # 1 – Playing for entertainment, not as a way to make money

Message #1

Majority find this message clear and understandable (30) but are least likely to find it helpful (10), primarily due to the fact that a significant proportion are playing the games to "make money". As a result, the players are skeptical with just over half feeling it is completely believable (20).

RESPONSIBLE GAMING MESSAGES		No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Gaming responsibly means playing for entertainment, not as a way to make money.					
INFORMATIVE:	NO	3	5	3	1
	SOMEWHAT	1	3	0	4
	YES	5	8	8	21
CLEAR:	NO	0	0	1	1
	SOMEWHAT	1	3	1	5
	YES	8	13	9	30
BELIEVABLE:	NO	0	2	3	5
	SOMEWHAT	3	7	1	11
	YES	6	7	7	20
HELPFUL:	NO	1	7	4	12
	SOMEWHAT	4	6	3	13
	YES	4	2	4	10

Message # 2 – Each spin is random and can't be controlled by the player.

Message #2

No one in the groups found this statement hard to understand, with 29 of the 36 considering it to be informative. Again players are reluctant to completely agree with the accuracy of this message, although compared to the previous statement almost twice as many think this information is helpful.

RESPONSIBLE GAMING MESSAGES		No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Understanding that each spin is random and cannot be controlled by the player is a key part of gaming responsibly.					
INFORMATIVE:	NO	2	3	1	6
	SOMEWHAT	3	2	1	6
	YES	3	11	9	23
CLEAR:	NO	---	---	---	---
	SOMEWHAT	3	4	3	10
	YES	6	11	8	25
BELIEVABLE:	NO	1	3	0	4
	SOMEWHAT	2	5	4	11
	YES	5	7	7	19
HELPFUL:	NO	3	3	1	7
	SOMEWHAT	0	5	6	11
	YES	5	8	4	17

Message # 3 – Not using money for gaming that was intended for other purposes

Message #3

This message received among the highest endorsements for being informative, understandable, believable and helpful. It is consistent with what players already know and think about gambling responsibly and is perceived as an important reminder for players in gambling responsibly.

RESPONSIBLE GAMING MESSAGES		No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Gaming responsibly means not using money for gaming that was intended for everyday expenses.					
INFORMATIVE:	NO	1	3	2	6
	SOMEWHAT	0	1	0	1
	YES	7	12	9	28
CLEAR:	NO	0	1	0	1
	SOMEWHAT	0	3	1	4
	YES	9	12	10	31
BELIEVABLE:	NO	0	1	0	1
	SOMEWHAT	1	2	1	4
	YES	7	13	10	30
HELPFUL:	NO	1	3	2	6
	SOMEWHAT	1	3	3	7
	YES	7	10	6	23

Message #4

This message is more confusing for the players although two-thirds (24) felt it was clear and understandable. In some cases this information is inconsistent with what players believe about the games and thus was disturbing and challenged the players. Over half thought it was helpful information and at worse might lead players to question the fact and try to find out more about it.

Message # 4 – Near misses and near wins do not exist.

RESPONSIBLE GAMING MESSAGES		No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Near misses and near wins do not exist. The outcome of each game is determined when the play button is hit.					
INFORMATIVE:	NO	1	4	2	7
	SOMEWHAT	2	3	1	6
	YES	5	9	8	22
CLEAR:	NO	0	3	1	4
	SOMEWHAT	3	3	2	8
	YES	6	10	8	24
BELIEVABLE:	NO	1	1	1	3
	SOMEWHAT	2	6	3	11
	YES	5	9	7	21
HELPFUL:	NO	2	5	4	11
	SOMEWHAT	1	3	2	6
	YES	5	8	5	18

Message #5 – There is no such thing as a hot machine.

Message #5

This message is understandable for the players and few are completely skeptical about its validity but there was still a great deal of resistance to the statement. Some players said even though it is not supposed to be true it sure seems like there are hot and cold machines. Again as a message which challenges some players beliefs there is reluctance in considering the information to be helpful.

RESPONSIBLE GAMING MESSAGES		No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Gaming responsibly means understanding that there is no such thing as a "hot" machine. Each spin produces random results.					
INFORMATIVE:	NO	1	3	0	4
	SOMEWHAT	1	2	2	5
	YES	5	10	8	23
CLEAR:	NO	0	1	0	1
	SOMEWHAT	1	4	4	9
	YES	7	9	6	22
BELIEVABLE:	NO	0	2	0	2
	SOMEWHAT	2	3	4	9
	YES	6	10	6	22
HELPFUL:	NO	1	5	2	8
	SOMEWHAT	1	5	3	9
	YES	5	5	5	15

Message # 6 –Means setting a budget before you start to play

Message #6

Setting a Budget is the most positively evaluated statement. This message generated the highest levels of agreement for being informative (30), clear (30), believable (30) and in providing helpful information (26). In fact there were only 4 people who indicated that this information would not be helpful in promoting responsible gaming.

RESPONSIBLE GAMING MESSAGES		No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Gaming responsibly means setting a budget before you start to play.					
INFORMATIVE:	NO	1	1	0	2
	SOMEWHAT	0	1	1	2
	YES	8	13	9	30
CLEAR:	NO	---	---	---	---
	SOMEWHAT	1	1	1	3
	YES	8	13	9	30
BELIEVABLE:	NO	---	---	---	---
	SOMEWHAT	1	1	2	4
	YES	8	14	8	30
HELPFUL:	NO	0	2	2	4
	SOMEWHAT	0	1	3	4
	YES	9	12	5	26

Message # 7 – Means balancing gaming with other leisure activities

Message #7

While the majority of players participating in the evaluations found this message to be clear (21) and believable (22) there is room for improvement in the value of the information provided. Again part of this response is related to player perception of VL and that it is not always equated with leisure activities. Consequently this comparison is not relevant for all players some of whom have no other activities they engage in for recreational purposes.

RESPONSIBLE GAMING MESSAGES		No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Gaming responsibly means balancing gaming with other leisure activities.					
INFORMATIVE:	NO	3	1	2	6
	SOMEWHAT	0	5	2	7
	YES	5	9	6	20
CLEAR:	NO	1	0	1	2
	SOMEWHAT	1	6	2	9
	YES	6	8	7	21
BELIEVABLE:	NO	3	0	0	3
	SOMEWHAT	0	4	3	7
	YES	5	10	7	22
HELPFUL:	NO	2	2	2	6
	SOMEWHAT	0	5	4	9
	YES	6	8	4	18

General Discussion – Pop-up Messages

The pop-up messages elicit very mixed responses from the players in the study depending upon their style of play and involvement levels in the game. No and Low Risk players are more supportive of the current features and most of the changes. However, these players generally have less exposure to the messages at present and might react differently once they gain greater experience with the feature. Regardless, these players do not feel **"threatened"** by the proposed changes and are most likely to agree with the potential benefits afforded by these forced interruptions in play.

> *"Seem like good ideas and could make some people think about how long they have been playing"*

> *"Maybe the fact it is annoying to some people is good, they might stop playing and putting all their money into them"*

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   5 :   P O P - U P   M E S S A G E S   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

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Improvements to Pop-up Messages

Points of Discussion

- **Are these changes to the pop-up messages a good idea?**

- **What if any questions pop into your head about how the changes might work? (Pros Cons).**

- **How useful do you think these changes will be in helping people to manage the amount of time and money they are spending while playing VLT's.**

- **Do you think you would get any benefit from these reminders?**

- **How would these changes to the pop-up messages affect your enjoyment of the games?**

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Moderate and Problem Players on more divided on the issue. There is some negativity expressed simply on principal (players in general do not want interruptions to the games or to be forced to pay attention to specific details that are not related to the game itself). For those who play for protracted periods during a single session, the response is based on their experience. Despite the antagonisms expressed by some of these players, in reality the pop-ups are reported to have little influence on their play or enjoyment of the games. Response is becoming (or has become) habitual with these players simply pushing the YES button and continuing the game. The fact that the pop-ups are tied to lengths of continuous play mean the play habits of many of the participants preclude their exposure to the messages. Thus, the idea of changes to make the pop-up messages more relevant to play is indicated if the intent is to introduce "breaks in play" or "reality checks". Of course, not all players want the gaming cycle to be interrupted.

> *"I don't even see the messages anymore, I just push the button or use that time to light my cigarette".*

> *"I always run down to nothing while I'm playing or cash out anytime I'm up, so I don't see those pop-ups very often. I've never even seen the ones after an hour but I usually play about two to three hours".*

> *"I see these things almost every time I play. I don't really like them but it sure doesn't interrupt my game-just hit the button and keep playing"*

There is also evidence that the players are cynical about the purpose and intent of the feature.

> *"I guess I don't see {the pop-ups} that much but it seems so useless, like the government can say "look at all the good things we are doing for these poor players" but it doesn't really make a difference"*

> *"If they really wanted to do something they should take the bill acceptors off but they will never do that, instead they will keep putting these message on there and say its us who aren't playing responsibly"*

There were concerns noted that there will be "***too many messages coming up all over the place***". If the time limit and receipt options are included on the machines players complained that they would constantly have to be responding to some screen message and that this would interfere with the entertainment value of the games.

Some players specifically mentioned that the option to set a time limit "***would eliminate the need for the pop-up reminders because every time you went down to zero or cashed out you would have to at least think about the time***

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N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   5 :   P O P - U P   M E S S A G E S   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

before you could start playing again". This, coupled with the fact that you would also be queried as to whether or not you wanted a receipt for play, means you *"sure don't need another pop-up message saying: by the way you have now been playing for 30 minutes. Do you want to continue to play or do you want to play for the hour you set on your time limit button".*

In discussion, players recognized that the current pop-up messages linked to continuous play and the option to set a time limit linked to cash outs and running down to zero, would likely be reaching different players and unlikely to occur simultaneously. However, in light of the proposed change to speed up the introduction of the pop-up messages there are concerns that a 30 minute pop-up would lead to overlap between the two features. Almost all the regular players in the groups are typically playing for 30 minutes on at least an occasional basis. If the Time Limit Option is available then the 30 minute pop-up may not be appropriate, given that the maximum time length available under this feature is 60 minutes.

The proposed changes of **keeping the pop-up messages on the screen until players respond** and **keeping the game screen visible** (onscreen clock and cash display) were liked but were not necessarily perceived to offer a great deal of assistance to players in gaming responsibly. Players are typically responding so fast to messages that both improvements are largely irrelevant; given the automatic nature of their response they are unlikely to refer to any information since the decision to go on is already made.

The responsible gaming messages elicited a variety of reactions from the players. For some the information provided directly challenges and contradicts their beliefs about the games. This led to feelings of surprise, disbelief, embarrassment and even anger on occasion as players reviewed the information. In the end, there was consensus that this is information that players should know. Tying the messages to a "continued play" response at the time of the pop-ups was, at times grudgingly, considered reasonable. It was acknowledged that this might be the only way some people would ever get exposed to the information especially those who were most likely to need it.

> *"Well it would force me stop for a minute while the [responsible gaming message] stayed on the screen. I'm not saying that I wouldn't ignore it and light my cigarette or something while it was on the screen but maybe people would read it and learn something new"*

> *"The messages are a good idea. Problem Players aren't going to pick up a brochure and shove it into their pocket in front of everyone"*

The most common response was that these messages should be located where everyone would see them, not just with the pop-ups. The players recognized that the

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   5 :   P O P - U P   M E S S A G E S   –   F E B R U A R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

primary barrier to exposure would be getting people to "***go to the messages on their own".***

> *"We all need to know this stuff"*

> *"Put them somewhere where all players can see it, like on the idle screen when the machine is in idle mode"*

With a few minor wording changes the messages tested were considered informative, understandable, at least somewhat believable and helpful in promoting responsible gaming. It was generally conceded that seeing this information on the machine would "***make people start to think even if they didn't believe it at first".***

Recommendations – Pop-up Messages

- **Reconsider starting introduction of the pop-up messages at 60 minutes rather than 30 minutes if the option to set a time limit for play is to be included on the machines.** The potential overlap between use of the two features may discourage people from effectively using either RGF. Having the receipt option and time limit option triggered by cash out and running the bank down to zero eliminates the need to modify the pop-up messages to account for these behaviours. Thus, the 60 minute mark for the pop-ups will be targeting a different playing style and those who are most unlikely to be setting a time limit for their session. **Alternatively, it may be possible to explore options for the 30 minute pop-up message only to be triggered if players do not set a time limit for play.**

- **Have the pop-up message remain on the screen until the player responds.** For the players in the current study this change will have little if any effect on their behaviour since they already just push the button and go on. However, the modification was liked, has no impact on game enjoyment and may be relevant for players who are not always in attendance at the machine.

- **Ensure the onscreen clock, cash display and other relevant game information remains on the screen during the pop-up messages to facilitate players decisions regarding on-going play.** Again, given the speed with which players dispatch the pop-up message, it is unlikely that those taking part in this study would access such information in making an informed decision about continuing to play. For others, particularly those who either rarely see the messages or are new, less experienced players this modification may assist in the decision-making process while having no appreciable impact on the entertainment value of the machines.

- **Move up the warning message for the mandatory cash out to appear at 140 minutes instead of 145 of continuous play. This will double the**

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amount of time players have to prepare for cashing out from 5 to 10 minutes. Although the few players who encounter this feature do not like it, the extended grace period to make decisions about the pending cash out is considered fair and an improvement over the current situation. *"I totally hate the cash out but I guess if its going to be there anyway this change will help"*

- **Incorporate the responsible gaming messages with the pop-up reminders but also consider introducing the messages at the time the pop-up first appears rather than after the individual has elected to keep playing**. Aside from the obvious value in ensuring players are informed and aware of the critical play information, the introduction of the responsible gaming message to the pop-up feature will serve two other potentially beneficial functions: 1) It will freeze the screen for 5 seconds thereby providing a minimum set break in play, interrupting the habitual and fast speed of response currently adopted by those who are seeing the pop-ups most often; 2) It will present the information before the player has made a decision rather than after, at which time the information was considered more patronizing by the players *"It just told me I have been playing for X amount of time, asked me if I wanted to continue to play, I say yes and then it gives me this little piece of information like I'm stupid or something. That's irritating"*.

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   6 :   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E   –   F E B   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D .

Section

6

RESPONSIBLE GAMING FEATURE

"To provide responsible gaming information to players to assist them in making informed decisions about their play, and encourage them to set a personally relevent budget which will lead to spending time and money intended and encouraged."

The Responsible Gaming Feature Concept consists of a main introduction screen that refers players to four additional information screens:

- **Introduction Screen #1 – Gaming Responsibly**
- **Screen #2 - Responsible Gaming Features**
- **Screen # 3 – Responsible Gaming Concepts**
- **Screen # 4 - Responsible Gaming Guidelines**
- **Screen # 5 Where to Get Help**

All players participating in the study evaluated each of the four screens comprising the Responsible Gaming Button Option on the following items:

- **Amount of information presented**
- **Ease of Understanding**
- **Usefulness of the information**
- **Likelihood of reading the screen**

Description

A responsible gaming button will be available on the chooser (game selection screen).

 If the player hits the button, a series of screens will be made available for the player that can be accessed by six buttons available at the bottom of each responsible gaming screen.

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Screen # 1 – Gaming Responsibly
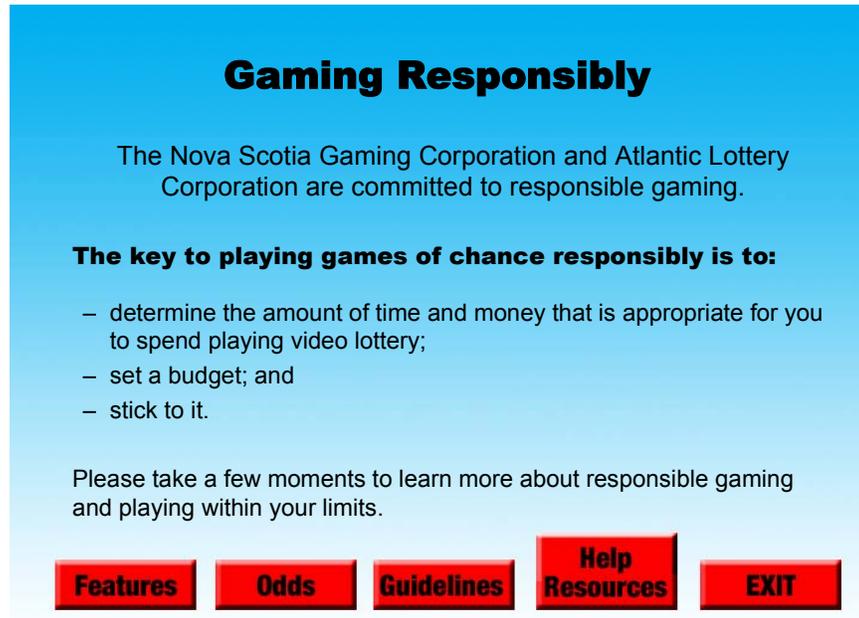
Players responded cautiously at first to the concept of the Responsible Gaming button feature but quickly warmed to the idea as they started to evaluate the first screen.

Screen #1 – Gaming Responsibly was rated positively by almost all the players. It was considered a good idea, straight forward, easy to understand and provided useful information. The only negative comments centered on the likelihood of actually getting players to access the button in the first place. It was speculated that most players might ***"check it out once out of curiousity but most wouldn't get past a quick glance before exiting to the games"*** New players were viewed as the people most likely to get any benefit from this feature and particular screen.

There were suggestions that the "***titles needed to be catchier to grab the players attention"*** and make it more relevant such as **"What Every Players Should Know Before They start to Play" "Beware".**

There were also, suggestions that this screen should be the default screen or "screen-saver on the machine. ***"Have this up on the machine as soon as players sit down so they have to see it"***

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The amount of information presented in the screen was considered just right by the majority (31) of players in all segments. Primarily the Problem Players (3) thought there was too much to read and at least two of these players felt it was difficult to understand.

Despite confusion on a few players part, almost every one in the sessions thought the information provided was at least of some benefit.

Unfortunately, about one quarter of participants indicated that they probably would not end up reading the screen. While slightly more than half (20) believe they would read it all, only 13 think they would access any of the other information options.

Screen # 1 – GAMING RESPONSIBLY				
	No/Low Risk (n=9)	**Mod. Risk (n= 16)**	**Problem (n= 11)**	**Total (n= 36)**
Amount of Information presented:				
Too Much	0	1	3	4
Just Right	9	15	7	31
Not Enough	---	---	---	---
Ease of Understanding:				
Too Hard	1	0	2	3
Just Right	8	16	9	33
Too Easy	---	---	---	---
Information provided is useful				
No	0	0	1	1
Somewhat	3	9	4	16
Yes	6	7	6	19
Would you be likely to read this screen if it was on the machine?				
No	1	5	3	9
Some of it	1	4	2	7
Yes	7	7	6	20
Would you be likely to go on by pressing any of the other buttons?				
No	2	8	2	12
Maybe	3	3	4	10
Yes	4	5	4	13

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   6 :   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E   –   F E B   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

<u>**Screen # 2 – Responsible Gaming Features**</u>

Responsible Gaming Features

The Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation and Atlantic Lottery Corporation put responsible gaming features on the VLTs to help you manage your play.

The features include:

– a clock to indicate the time of day;
– a cash display to help you play within your budget;
– pop-up reminders and a mandatory cashout to provide breaks in play;
– the ability to set a time limit for play; and
– a receipt to help you track the time and money you spend on VLTs.

Features   **Odds**   **Guidelines**   **Help Resources**   **EXIT**

Players liked the idea of having a screen that introduces the features available to players in helping to manage their play. If they were aware that this info was on the machines the vast majority would be likely to read it.

For the most part there were few problems with clarity or the amount of information being presented.

The primary complaint centered on the lack of value in the content provided. Players realized that there is limited space and do not want to see the screen "cluttered up" as this would discourage people from reading it. It was also considered important to have something that simply informs players as to what features are included. However, there were comments that it does not provide any real information about how the features work. For many players there is still some confusion about the new features and "no real sources players can go to find out more".

Screen # 2 – Responsible Gaming Features	No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Amount of Information presented:				
Too Much	0	2	2	4
Just Right	6	12	8	26
Not Enough	0	2	0	2
Ease of Understanding:				
Too Hard	1	0	2	3
Just Right	5	16	6	27
Too Easy	0	0	2	2
Information provided is useful				
No	0	1	0	1
Somewhat	3	8	4	15
Yes	4	7	6	7
Would you be likely to read this screen if it was on the machine?				
No	0	3	2	5
Some of it	2	4	2	8
Yes	4	9	6	19

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   6 :   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E   –   F E B   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

<u>**Screen #3 – Responsible Gaming Concepts**</u>

Responsible Gaming Concepts
Odds

The odds of winning at video lottery are the same each time a bet is placed. You cannot improve the odds by:

– Hitting the stop button (the games result is determined when the play button is pressed);

– Choosing a machine for its previous winnings; or

– Using tricks, strategies or methods to influence the game.

Randomness

Each time the play button is hit on a VLT, the outcome is determined by numbers created by and matched to a random number generator located within the terminal. Each time the play button is hit, a new, independent, random draw is made. Each bet placed cannot be influenced or affected by anything other than the random number generator.

| Features | Odds | Guidelines | Help Resources | EXIT |

Players in general "really like this stuff" although it was considered controversial and "a lot to take in at one time."

The amount of information was considered appropriate by most players, but almost one quarter found there was too much on the screen and/or it was difficult to understand.

Some thought that even though it is complicated, especially the randomness explanation, this more technical approach might serve to make the information appear more credible. Players then might seek out additional sources to fill in any gaps.

There were suggestions to turn this into two screens so that better explanations could be included for both. Two points that consistently required clarification for players relate to "choosing a machine for its previous winnings" and the randomness issue.

Screen # 3 – Responsible Gaming Concepts

		No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Amount of Information presented:					
	Too Much	2	3	1	6
	Just Right	7	12	10	29
	Not Enough	0	1	0	1
Ease of Understanding:					
	Too Hard	1	4	3	8
	Just Right	7	11	7	25
	Too Easy	1	0	1	2
Information provided is useful					
	No	0	1	0	1
	Somewhat	1	5	2	8
	Yes	8	10	9	27
Would you be likely to read this screen if it was on the machine?					
	No	1	4	1	6
	Some of it	2	2	2	6
	Yes	6	10	8	24

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   6 :   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E   –   F E B   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

Screen # 4 – Responsible Gaming Guidelines

Similar to the Responsible Gaming Messages for the pop-up reminders, the above guidelines generated high interest from the players. Even those who had been skeptical about the value of the Responsible Gaming Button and/or personally disinterested in the feature started to become more engaged. The previous screens had already stimulated participants interest and the Guidelines screen seemed to confirm the value of the feature.

> *"I think this is wonderful"*
>
> *"That's responsible gambling, if you can do it"*
>
> *"I'm learning things I didn't know but should have"*

There is a lot of information conveyed on the screen. Some players mentioned this might discourage **"people who should be seeing this"** from reading all of the points. However, in discussion, the participants did not want to "sacrifice" any of the points simply to make it look less intimidating. **"Everything has got to stay".**

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   6 :   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E   –   F E B   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

It is a lot of information for the players to take in. Especially when it challenges long-held beliefs and "cognitive distortions" Players have about the machines. Regardless, the vast majority found it to be "just the right amount of information" (28) and easy to understand (31). Moreover, everyone thought there was at least some benefit to the information with 26 in full agreement as to the helpfulness of the content. Only 3 participants said that they hadn't learned anything new from the screen.

Players offered few suggestions or needs for any wording changes or other modifications but this may be partially due to their preoccupation with the actual information rather than how it was presented.

Screen # 4 – Respnsible Gaming Guidelines				
	No/Low Risk (n=9)	**Mod. Risk (n= 16)**	**Problem (n= 11)**	**Total (n= 36)**
Amount of Information presented:				
Too Much	2	3	1	6
Just Right	7	12	9	28
Not Enough	---	---	---	---
Ease of Understanding:				
Too Hard	1	0	1	2
Just Right	8	14	9	31
Too Easy	---	---	---	---
Information provided is useful				
No	---	---	---	---
Somewhat	2	3	3	8
Yes	7	12	7	26
Would you be likely to read this screen if it was on the machine?				
No	2	1	1	4
Some of it	2	5	4	11
Yes	5	9	5	19
Did you learn anything new?				
No	1	2	0	3
Set a budget & stick to it	0	0	1	1
Don't chase losses	0	2	0	2
Balance gaming	0	0	1	1
Gaming is entertainment	0	1	0	1
set time limit	0	0	1	1

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   6 :   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E   –   F E B   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

Screen # 5 – Help Resources

Where to Get Help

The Problem Gambling Help Line is a confidential,
toll free service operated by professionals trained to
assist those affected by gambling.

If you would like more information about problem gambling, call:

1-888-347-8888

All calls are confidential.

| Features | Odds | Guidelines | Help Resources | EXIT |

All Players approved of the Help screen. It is a "mandatory requirement" that "must be there for those who need it". This particular version was rated highly by the participants.

The amount of information was "just right" although two higher risk players (Moderate and Problem Player) felt there needs to be more and/or different resources cited to give players more choice, "like perhaps where we can get more information or other types of help".

The version tested is easily understood and considered useful. Somewhat more surprising is the number of players who indicated that they are likely to read this screen . Only 5 participants noted that they probably would not read it. Interest is simialr among all the player groups suggesting the screen has relevance for most players not just those at greatest risk for problem gambling.

Screen # 5 – Help Resources	No/Low Risk (n=9)	Mod. Risk (n= 16)	Problem (n= 11)	Total (n= 36)
Amount of Information presented:				
Too Much	---	---	---	---
Just Right	9	14	10	33
Not Enough	0	1	1	2
Ease of Understanding:				
Too Hard	0	0	1	1
Just Right	9	14	10	33
Too Easy	0	1	0	1
Information provided is useful				
No	---	---	---	---
Somewhat	2	2	4	8
Yes	7	13	7	27
Would you be likely to read this screen if it was on the machine?				
No	1	2	2	5
Some of it	2	3	2	7
Yes	6	9	7	22

General Discussion

Overall, response towards the Responsible Gaming Feature is overwhelmingly positive. Despite a somewhat cynical start to the evaluation, players quickly became engrossed in the information content. This is by far the most preferred change evaluated during the sessions. As noted for response towards the responsible gaming messages players sometimes had an emotional reaction to the concept ranging from surprise to anger. For others, it confirmed what they already thought about the games despite what other players tell them. Thus, it serves to reinforce "responsible gaming" practices.

The primary downside to the feature was the fact that the players would be unlikely to access the button. There was a consensus that **"every one should be reading these screens before they play"**, even among those who felt that the information **"probably wouldn't help people who were already in trouble".** Players noted that the titles of the buttons would be unlikely to inspire many players to pursue the information. Curiosity was seen to be the primary driver that would motivate many players to "take a look" but the feeling was, that other than a quick cursory glance a the first few screens, most players would abandon the exercise to get back to the games.

> **"You have to force people to see this stuff and then they will get interested"**
>
> **"Put it out in their face, like when they first sit down at the screen they have to scroll through all this stuff"**
>
> **"Maybe have these screens be active whenever someone isn't playing"**
>
> **"This information could randomly come up on the screen when you first put your money in so one by one you would end up seeing them all"**

When the various player suggestions were explored the preferred approach was to have the Responsible Gaming Screens be the default screen that players would have to then exit to get to the games. It was believed that this still offered players enough choice and control while making sure that they had an opportunity to "**at least take a look a what there was".**

> **"There might be some initial complaints but over time we would get used to it and I bet there would be a lot of players talking about the stuff"**

Screen # 1- Gaming Responsibly was considered to be a good introduction to the idea of responsible gaming and provided practical, simple advice in a clear concise manner. The only complaint was it did not necessarily inspire players to **"read on".**

Responsible Gaming Button

Points of Discussion

- **Is this feature a good idea or not?**

- **Amount of information provided. Is it just right, too much, not enough? Is it too crowded?**

- **Is it easy to understand? Is the language difficult or easy to understand?**

- **What is the key take away from this screen? Did you learn anything new?**

- **What do find useful/not useful.**

- **Would you read this screen? Why is that?**

Screen # 2 – Features needs to be there to let people know what is on the machine but *"there isn't enough information for people who don't know what is going on. For example what the heck is a pop-up reminder?"*. One suggestion was to have a **Help** button for the feature that could provide people with more information if they need it. Alternatively, references to other sources could be provided if the player wants or needs additional information.

Screen # 3 – Responsible Gaming Concepts was considered to be an important screen but there were some concerns that the information may be too dense and should be broken out over two separate screens or simplified. There was some confusion for players in terms of the point "Choosing a machine for its previous winnings" and to a lessor extent for "Using tricks, strategies or methods to influence the games." Putting this into the player language or terms the players are more familiar with may help clarify the meaning.

> *"This is great stuff that people need to know"*
>
> *"Odds and randomness are difficult concepts. I think you need to have a basis of understanding before the info on the screen will be effective for the player otherwise you have got to make it simpler"*
>
> *"Randomness needs the use of more layman's terms"*
>
> *"For the randomness just say what it is simply and try not to worry so much about being politically, and technically correct: [example] Each time the button is hit, the outcome is pre-determined" (and there is nothing you can do to change that outcome)*

The most critical pieces of information on the screen are related to the stop button and the fact that players cannot influence the game outcomes. This was disturbing information for many of the players, particularly those in the higher risk segments

> *"I can't believe this is true. After all these years telling people my strategy with the stop button. I feel like a fool"*
>
> *"Is this really true? When I play I know it makes a difference. When I use the stop button I win when I don't I lose"*
>
> *"If this is true then why do they have the stop button on there? To trick us, make us spend our money faster?"*

Screen # 4 Responsible Gaming Guidelines was also controversial but well-liked by all the participants. It was seen to be of greatest value to new players but "**even us old dogs can learn some new tricks with it".** There were no changes identified with the exception that players identified the ATM's/ bank machines and bill acceptors as two "features" which make it harder to set a budget and stick to it.

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

S E C T I O N   6 :   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E   –   F E B   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D

Screen # 5 Help Resources was rated positively and preferred over the current screen saver option used to inform players about the HelpLine. A few Players thought it might be helpful if there were referrals to another source "*if they just want some specific information or something (perhaps ALC's hotline number)*".

In general, response by participants towards the new responsible gaming feature is very positive, suggesting this medium has potential to be a valuable resource in communicating with the player. While the primary role of the feature is perceived to be preventative, there was evidence among the participants that this information may also assist in intervention and problem resolution. Educating players about how the games work and providing practical guidelines for staying on track counters misconceptions and "erroneous beliefs" that are perpetuating risky gambling practices. Many of the participants, specifically Moderate and Problem Players indicated that "*all of this has given [them] cause for thought about [their} VL gambling*"

> "*I really have to re-evaluate what I have been doing*"
>
> "*This information changes a lot of things for me, its really opened my eyes*"
>
> "*Even though I don't want to believe it, it must be true or they wouldn't be able to put it on the machines, right?*"

Self exclusion Option

The idea of offering players a self-exclusion option for video lottery in Nova Scotia was briefly introduced and discussed in the Problem Players session conducted on Monday January 27, 2003. Of the six individuals participating in the group, all were extremely supportive of such an initiative and three believed that they would voluntarily participate in such a program if it were available. There were a number of questions surrounding how the option could be offered, but all the players felt this was a worthwhile concept to develop.

> "*Yah, I would really have to seriously think about that*".
>
> "*For some of us this is the only solution*"
>
> "*I see them and I just have to play them even though I don't want to and I promised I wouldn't. Its too hard to resist*"
>
> "*I've tried and tried to stop and nothing works. This is what I need*"

Recommendations - Responsible Gaming Feature

- **Consider making the Responsible Gaming Feature screens the default screen for the machines rather than an "button activated" option.** Participants expressed concern that players would bypass this important information source without fully realizing what they are **"missing".** The material presented in the screens are considered to be **"things every player should know about the games"** but are unlikely to access **"without a little push in that direction".** While various options were discussed, the preferred solution by players in the current study was to have the screens automatically come up whenever the player puts in any money or whenever the machine is not engaged in play (screen-saver). This approach was considered to have some potential impact for game enjoyment **"but as long as players are given the option of exiting to the games any irritation will be short-lived".** Suggestions included randomly varying the order of the screens to keep the material fresh and ensure the players are getting maximum exposure to all of the information. This screen could also be used to provide players with up-dates or new material as it is available.

- **Rework wording in Screen # 3 – Responsible Gaming Concepts**. This screen should either be simplified and/or split into two different screens in order to make the information meaningful for the majority of players. There is currently some degree of confusion for about one-quarter of those evaluating the material. For the remaining players, the information was considered to be "too important" to not try and communicate the concept more clearly. (Refer to General Discussion – Responsible Gaming Feature for detailed evaluation).

- **Examine feasibility of either incorporating a HELP button feature or providing supplementary information players can be referred to for additional information or support**. There were concerns expressed that it is not reasonable nor desirable to include too much information on any one of the screens as this would diminish the likelihood of players actually reading the material. At the same time it was also recognized that some of the concepts are complex and players may need more information than can reasonably be provided on the screen. Suggestions included a HELP button players can push for more detailed explanations or elaboration, a general information reference such as the ALC Hotline number being included on the Help Resources screen (Example : For general information or inquiries about the machine, games or responsible gaming call 1-888-XXX-XXXX), or other support materials (web-site information, player brochures)

- **Develop a voluntary self-exclusion program**. For some Problem Players this type of program is believed to offer the only viable solution for their VL gambling and therefore warrants further development.

NOVA SCOTIA GAMING CORPORATION
NS VL RESPONSIBLE GAMING FEATURES QUALITATIVE
FINAL REPORT- EXPLORATORY CONCEPT TESTING

APPENDIX A - FEBRUARY 2003
PREPARED BY FOCAL RESEARCH CONSULTANTS LTD.

Section

A
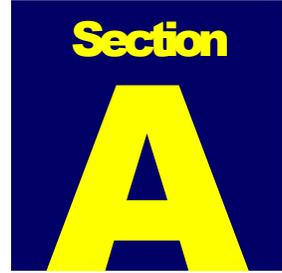
APPENDIX A

Participant Screener

NOVA SCOTIA GAMING CORPORATION
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FINAL REPORT- EXPLORATORY CONCEPT TESTING

APPENDIX B – FEBRUARY 2003
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Section

B
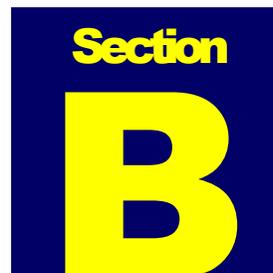
APPENDIX B

Group Compositions

N O V A   S C O T I A   G A M I N G   C O R P O R A T I O N
N S   V L   R E S P O N S I B L E   G A M I N G   F E A T U R E S   Q U A L I T A T I V E
F I N A L   R E P O R T -   E X P L O R A T O R Y   C O N C E P T   T E S T I N G

A P P E N D I X   C   –   F E B R A U R Y   2 0 0 3
P R E P A R E D   B Y   F O C A L   R E S E A R C H   C O N S U L T A N T S   L T D .

Section

C
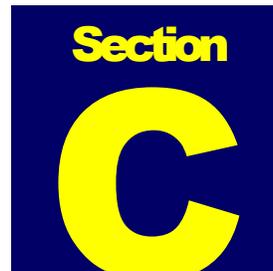
APPENDIX C

Discussion Outline

NOVA SCOTIA GAMING CORPORATION
NS VL RESPONSIBLE GAMING FEATURES QUALITATIVE
FINAL REPORT- EXPLORATORY CONCEPT TESTING

APPENDIX D – FEBRUARY 2003
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Section

D
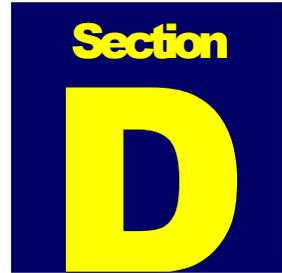
APPENDIX D

Session Presentation

Section

E
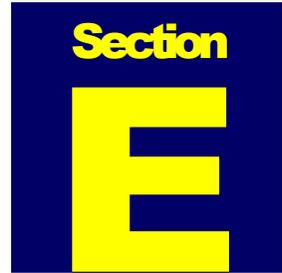
APPENDIX E

Participant Questionnaire

Section

F
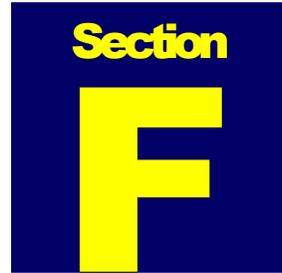
APPENDIX F

Participant Responses (Data Tables)