



From the ground up: how GSA's protocol work leveled the playing field for all

What a difference a decade makes. Ten years ago, a terrifically ambitious, loosely organized group came together to change the world. Or at least gaming's little multibillion dollar corner of it.

Think back to 10 years ago. "Sunny Came Home" was the darling of the Grammys. "Titanic" sunk, bringing in a record domestic box office haul and 11 Oscar wins. The Denver

GSA
10
YEARS[™]

Broncos, the New York Yankees and Chicago Bulls were the tops in sports. Frozen water was found on the moon, Europe converted to the Euro, and Monica Lewinski was all over the news. And in a small meeting room in the desert, the founding members of what was then called

GAMMA came together to begin to overhaul the industry.

It seems almost passé now, but at the time, manufacturers attempted to protect their market share largely through proprietary protocols. The theory was, "If we make our games and systems only talk to each other, casinos will only buy our games and systems!" The result was a cacophony of more than 30 different languages babbling across the casino floor.

Of course, theories that sound good on paper often do not work in reality, and operators were bearing the cost of expensive IT patchwork quilts across the casino floor, getting different games to talk to different systems so that the casino business could go about its, well, business.

And from an idea put forth at a World Gaming Congress and Expo seminar, the Gaming Manufacturers Association (GAMMA) was born, consisting of seven original members: Acres, Aristocrat, Bally, Mikohn, Sega, Sigma and Silicon Gaming.

The group quickly realized that without operator support, its mission would not be successful. And today, the re-named Gaming Standards Association is a global powerhouse of 72 members from all facets of the industry — manufacturers, casino operators, lottery operators and test labs, all united behind a common goal: to facilitate the identification, definition, development, promotion and implementation of open standards to enable innovation, education and communication for the benefit of the entire industry.

Since then, GSA has produced several landmark and award-winning protocols: Game-to-System (G2S), System-to-System (S2S), and Gaming Device Standard (GDS). The three

cover all facets of the electronic gaming industry from the box to the peripherals to systems.

But, most importantly, each of the standards is an open protocol. That means the standards create interoperable and affordable solutions for everyone. They also promote competition by setting up a technical playing field that is level for all market players. This means lower costs for developers, manufacturers and, ultimately, gaming operators.

The progress GSA has made in just a short 10 years has been remarkable. There were times when no one outside of GSA thought we would succeed. And honestly, there were times when we wondered ourselves. Fortunately, GSA has been consistently surrounded by individuals who have never lost sight of the goal.

Now that we are armed with the open protocols that can drive innovation, here's to the next 10 years. What an exciting decade it promises to be. [SlotManager](#)

Peter DeRaedt is president of the Gaming Standards Association. For more information, visit www.gamingstandards.com.

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