



Macau promises to be showcase for power of GSA standards

Peter DeRaedt

Table games reign supreme in Macau. The sheer number of tables there is almost overwhelming, and the amount of gaming revenue they generate is staggering. However, as the recent G2E Asia has shown us (once again), slots are becoming an increasing reality on the Cotai Strip.

IGT, WMS, GLI and others have permanent offices in Macau, and now GSA has one too. We officially opened our office June 2 in partnership with the Macao Polytechnic Institute. Under a memo of understanding, GSA and MPI opened doors to the GSA Macao Office and the MELCO Gaming Research Lab.

To clarify, MPI will act as GSA's office in Asia, and GSA will support MPI in an effort to spread the technical knowledge of GSA's gaming protocol standards to

role. Because GSA standards are universal, devices that are quickly moving into the market most likely will be based on GSA standards. For example, every major slot manufacturer is now basing new development on GSA's G2S protocol, meaning that as new devices are ordered to fill the slot areas in Macau, the likelihood that they will be G2S-based games is incredibly high. That will mean operators in Macau will have to prepare their gaming floors for the devices and systems that will power new revenue streams with more powerful games.

Be prepared for change

And therein lies the lesson for the rest of the more slot-established gaming world. What happens in Macau will serve as a guide for what will need to happen on slot floors around the world. Where

gaming industry's first look at a live installation of devices running on the G2S protocol.

What it also means is that, while

Macau may be a soon-realized installation test market, G2S is up and running in the United States. The fact is G2S has unshackled the creativity of game developers, and they have responded by developing new technologies and possibilities for game play, perfectly suited for the next generation of players who will demand more from gaming than current devices can provide.

The exact specifications of how operators need to prepare is longer than this column space allows, but it should not be viewed as a daunting experience; instead, it should be looked at as the next necessary phase in business development.

GSA has developed relationships with several technology consulting companies that are intimately familiar with G2S and the steps casinos will need to take before the games and systems can be fully functional. We would be happy to discuss the transition steps and refer operators to companies we feel are reputable and prepared to consult. GSA is also a valuable resource for operators and their IT staff members, and we have multiple educational programs to assist with transition planning.

We encourage operators to visit www.gamingstandards.com to become more familiar with the standards on which manufacturers are basing their games and systems. While there, visit our new certifications page, which allows for quick and easy browsing of lists of devices that have been independently tested and certified for operation on GSA standards.

What will happen in Macau and at Barona represents just the beginning of a tremendous new day in gaming. The trick now is to be prepared for the time when the alarm clock rings to awaken you to that new day. **SlotManager**

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students in Macao and other parts of Asia through MPI.

While the office opening marked a monumental day in the history of GSA, it was also an omen for the gaming industry. Careful observers will realize that Macau is in an incredibly fortunate situation where a perfect storm of technology is ready to unleash a wave of creative and advanced devices.

The situation is fortunate for Macau because the properties are not as heavily invested in current protocols and technical floor configurations as are, say, Las Vegas and Atlantic City. Because these gaming floors are so new, and the slot side is a fraction of the table games side, the floors are still open for rapid development and change.

That is where GSA will play a vital

Macau is fortunate to not have a long history where extensive reconfiguration will not be necessary, the rest of the world also is fortunate to have Macau serve as a trial area of sorts, where G2S devices will be installed, and the world can watch and learn.

The most important lesson, of course, has been learned already – that G2S is here, the devices are coming, and now is the time to prepare.

The time is sooner than some operators care to think. For example, WMS has begun a field trial of G2S-based devices at Barona Valley Ranch Resort & Casino in Lakeside, Calif. The beta test of WMS' WAGE-NET (Wide Area Game Enhanced Network) is the culmination of more than a decade of standards work by GSA and its member companies, and is the