

## ONLINE GAMBLING

Anyone who knows me well knows that I like to pontificate on morality, though I have no qualifications to speak of, no direct chat line with God, nor do I have any abilities that would contribute to my status as guru. However, most people delude themselves about their activities, and I merely have the ability to point out those delusions. In other words, I have an excellent hypocrisy detector.

I find gambling to be one such delusion. No matter how one tries to rationalize one's involvement in the pursuit of money through luck, it always comes down to people acting contrary to simple, undeniable facts; you can't beat the odds and the odds always favour the house. In other words, gambling is a wealth redistribution system for people who don't realize that they are bad mathematicians. Government-run gambling institutions are simply applying a tax on stupidity. If one knows this, what is the motivation for continuing to participate?

Some people would say that the money draws them, but really, if you know that you are more likely to lose, why would you take the chance? Aren't there better ways to make money, like work? At least you are guaranteed return on your investment in time. Some people say that it is just entertainment, something to pass the time. My question is, aren't there other more entertaining activities that maybe cost less? How about interacting with friends and family? How about chipping in and getting involved with one's community? And really, just how much fun is it to watch your money flow away at a much higher rate than what you earned it at?

Anyway, the point of this column is supposed to be to talk about online gambling sites that are less harmful to your PC than others. For example, [www.goldenpalacecasino.com](http://www.goldenpalacecasino.com) has traditionally installed a pile of spyware on a user's machine, presumably because they made more money on the advertising than on the gambling. The idea was, that once you were a paying customer, the advertising software would be disabled. This company is renowned for using bizarre methods to advertise its site, like paying people to tattoo themselves with their URL and buying pieces of divine toast on Ebay. I have seen some incredibly bad spyware installed by this site, but it seems that they may have cleaned things up lately. A routine check on there today yielded no direct attempts to install spyware on my PC, so it is possible that other "clean" sites like [www.pokerstars.net](http://www.pokerstars.net) and [www.partypoker.com](http://www.partypoker.com) have inspired Golden Palace. Maybe they have just realized that they make more money in the long run if they just let you play for free until you have deluded yourself enough to drop money on the table.

I get many comments from people that, unlike other games of chance like slots or blackjack, playing poker online is more skill than luck, and I do tend to agree them, at least partially. I am acquainted with a fellow that regularly finds himself at the last poker table, and he tells me that the people at the last table frequently talk about all the other suckers out there that leveraged them into the big money. The fact is, if the suckers didn't play, there would be no money to win. The system depends on your stupidity to make it successful; can you continue to delude yourself?

If you have question or comments, I can always be reached via email [sean@intrex.ca](mailto:sean@intrex.ca) or join our forums at <http://intrex.ca> for more in-depth conversations.