

LOTTERIES, PREPARE: INNOVATION IS MOVING AT A RAPID PACE

The future is here — COVID-19 has shifted how we work, shop and consume entertainment



It's no longer a question of 'if' but rather a question of 'when', and it's no longer a question of 'either/or' but a question of 'and'.

Liz Siver, General Manager of NeoPollard Interactive

Ferris Bueller probably had it right when he said, “Life moves pretty fast—if you don’t stop to look around once in a while, you could miss it.” The onset of coronavirus pandemic and global health crisis has caused a seismic shift in the way people go about their daily lives and routine activities. Tasks that used to occur in person are now increasingly done virtually, as people adhere to varying government safety orders and precautions.

“At NeoPollard Interactive (“NPI”), the pandemic has certainly accelerated the iLottery conversations we’re having with states and provinces in North America,” explained Liz Siver, General Manager of NPI, at the recent PGRI Lottery Expo: Transformed.

There are a variety of iLottery programs in market today, including full iLottery with e-Instants and draw-based games (DBGs), online subscription services (or “eSubscriptions”), DBG-only sales, and more. Ad-

ditionally, iLottery is referred to in a variety of ways within the industry, such as Online Gaming, Online Lottery, Interactive Gameplay, and iGaming. Regardless of the specific products offered online, or the terminology used, iLottery is here and it is the future.

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“The data clearly shows that they (retail and iLottery) continue to grow alongside each other; the evidence existed before the pandemic and has only been reinforced during it,” she says.

As partner to the industry’s most profitable iLottery programs, including Michigan, Virginia, New Hampshire, North Caro-

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question of ‘either/or’ but a question of ‘and’ Siver says.

Thinking of classic duos through the ages, like peanut butter and jelly, Bert and Ernie, and Sonny and Cher, Siver suggested another timeless combination—Retail and iLottery. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven that retail lottery sales and iLottery can coexist and has brought that reality into the spotlight.

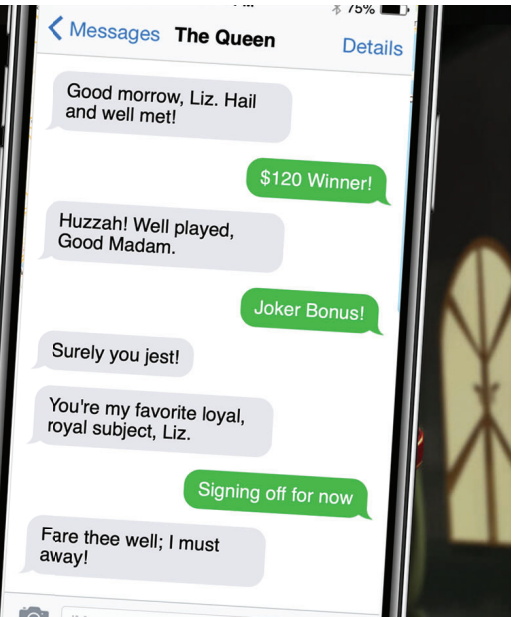
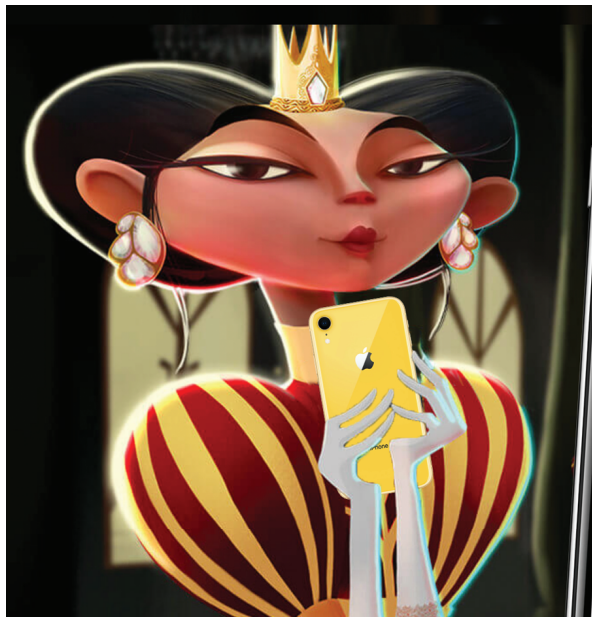
lina, and Alberta, NPI is well-versed in the implementation of omnichannel programs that have proven to successfully cross players between lottery channels. In addition to developing omnichannel programs that offer unified player experiences, another hallmark of NPI’s approach to iLottery is its commitment to providing cutting-edge, innovative, and entertaining gaming experiences to players across all demographics.

“We are delighted to say that nine out of 10 top-performing eInstant games are developed by our Game Studio. As your iLottery partner, we work hard to create a player experience which is equal to, or better than, an e-commerce experience on other online channels.”

“We take seriously our responsibility to help you, our iLottery partners, to drive revenue for the good causes you support in the face of the pandemic and changing government budgets,” said Siver. “We’re certainly hearing the necessity to drive revenue in our everyday conversations—it is critical that we all keep a door open to the future, versus building a strategy that is solely focused only on today.”

As technology evolves, players are expecting more from their iLottery experiences, which emphasizes how it is critical to understand the differences between driving a content strategy versus a product strategy. Taking cues from outside of the lottery industry, Siver draws parallels to large content providers and how their approach to personalization increases engagement with the services they offer.

Brands such as Netflix and Spotify personalize their users’ experience by suggesting relevant content that is likely to appeal to



a customer based on their behavior. This approach to personalization offers interesting prospects for iLottery and reiterates the need for lotteries to offer content that not only resonates with a variety of player preferences, but also ensures that the user experience is positive and engaging.

As Siver explained, “The e-commerce norms of today apply to the iLottery business. We need to keep simplifying the player experience by making it easier to register, to fund accounts, and to cash out.”

To enhance the user experience even further, Siver used an example of incorporating additional senses into the mechanics of a game. For example, Siver offered the concept where a player could engage with

a game by talking to characters, like the Queen of Diamonds, using voice recognition as part of the gameplay.

“Audio adds so much to the user experience. It can also add to accessibility for all players.”

In addition to bringing engaging entertainment experiences to players, NPi acutely understands the need for lotteries to have responsible gaming controls woven into their iLottery programs. Therefore, an iLottery content strategy and user experience must offer ease of use and player engagement without diminishing the focus on responsible gaming best practices.

In her concluding remarks, Siver spoke about future developments in iLottery, including the integration of artificial intelligence and augmented reality, and the importance of increasing the opportunities for multiplayer socialization in eInstant games to broaden the player base.

“Innovation in the iLottery sector is occurring regularly and the opportunities are increasing by the day,” Siver said. “NPi is excited to build upon our existing relationships, and to create new relationships to bring the best of iLottery to lotteries throughout North America.” ■

NeoPollard Interactive, based in Lansing, Michigan provides state and provincial lotteries with solutions that deliver the expertise, operational services and industry-leading technologies lotteries need in order to generate new revenue through the iLottery Channel.

