

LONDON, December 27, 2013 /PRNewswire/ --

USA: Some industry observers believe fear will grip the United States in 2014; the fear of individual states being left behind in the great online gambling race.

The situation will mimic the newly regulated markets in Europe, in which one or two dominant players emerge while the rest struggle hard just to break even.

[Bwin.party](#)

's

PartyPoker

is reportedly off to a good start in New Jersey

, but the company admits the setup costs alone amounted to between €7m and €10m in 2013. Barring an equally dominant performance by Bwin.party's casino vertical and significant growth in the state's overall market, turning that red ink to black will be a mean feat.

The money-losing operators will hang on in the hope that interstate compacts will remedy their situation. Plus both poker and casino will always be niche products compared to sports betting, which won't change for years to come.

[California](#) remains the most interesting state in play for obvious reasons. For the record, I think California *will* get its legislative act together next year. But even when California joins the online party, it will be poker-only - at least, to start - and the state's capacity to make a go of things on its own will provide little incentive for liquidity sharing with other states. Bottom line: it

will be years yet before the US online market is anything more than a loss-leader, even for its most successful operators.

ANTIGUA: 2014 will be High Noon for [the showdown between Antigua and the United States](#). Either the **US Trade Representative** (USTR) will finally honor the [near decade-old World Trade Organization \(WTO\) ruling](#) that the US stance towards Antigua's online gambling industry is anti-competitive or Antigua will make good on its WTO-authorized threat to offer [royalty-free digital downloads](#) of US intellectual property. I'll go out on a limb and say the US will offer a settlement that Antigua will find acceptable.

EUROPE: Like the clichéd police instruction to looky-loos; 'nothing to see here, folks.' Expect more of the same in the globe's most mature and tax-happy marketplace.

Despite **William Hill's** [recent assurances](#), **Gibraltar's** status as an online gambling regulatory hub will come under threat as other UK-facing companies adjust to [the UK's new gambling codes of conduct](#). As they calculate the damage posed to their bottom lines by the implementation of the point-of-consumption-tax, Gibraltar-based operators will question the wisdom of maintaining their operations on The Rock along with a now superfluous Gibraltar online gambling license.

ASIA: **Macau** casino operators will continue to find innovative workarounds to the gaming hub's constraining gaming table cap. Last year saw operators embracing [stadium-style electronic baccarat stations](#) that serve up to 100 players from a single cap-counting 'table'. In 2014, some operator will take

the next logical step by introducing

[mobile tablet live dealer baccarat](#)

within their casino walls to ensure none of their gamblers ever have to check out a neighboring casino to find a seat at the table.

[Japan](#) will issue two resort casino licenses - one going to either Sands or **MGM Resorts** (with a local partner along for the ride).

[Wynn Resorts](#)

will also apply, but

Universal Entertainment

boss

[Kazuo Okada](#)

will finally get his revenge on

Steve Wynn

by using his local influence to torpedo Wynn's bid. The second license will go to an Asian operator like Universal, Genting or

Melco Crown

. Concerns over

Caesars Entertainment

's debt load will once again eliminate it from serious contention, leading to serious calls for CEO

Gary Loveman

to atone for his blunder by stepping down.

PHILIPPINES: The other big story of 2014 in Asia will be the rise of competitors to the **First Cagayan**

regulatory jurisdiction in the

Philippines

. There are a number of competing groups vying for a piece of the online game and more are coming on-stream this year, giving operators more choice as to with whom they wish to work.

Corruption is a problem, as

Bodog Asia

saw with an illegal raid on its premises caused by

[criminal ex-staff using influence peddling to advance their misguided personal agenda](#)

. Most operators will react to the issues attacking our industry there by planning structural changes, so the core industry in the Philippines

will survive but not in its present form.

INDIA, LATIN AMERICA and AFRICA All these markets are progressing well and will continue

to grow. They are also all 'grey' and therefore almost totally being enjoyed by privately held online gaming companies (much as in Asia, currently the world's largest online market). Not much to predict here but more of the same with payments and digital marketing being the battleground.

TECHNOLOGY: After years of gathering momentum, mobile will officially become an all-star in 2014. Much of the growth to date has been due to sports betting and random number generator casino, with some UK operators reporting mobile wagering accounting for over two-fifths of sports wagers in 2013. Operators are now adapting their live dealer casino offering for the mobile space, which will significantly boost mobile wagering's appeal in the all-important Asian markets.

Mobile's growth will get an assist from payment providers, who, like **Facebook**, took a while to grasp the 'desktop = dodo' reality taking shape out in the real world but are finally getting with the program. As existing hurdles facing mobile deposits and withdrawals are lowered, gambling on the go will increasingly become the default option for bettors.

While the [Bitcoin](#) currency/commodity's value in relation to fiat currency will continue to go up and down like a DVD of *Deep Throat* on fast forward, 2014 will see some major online gambling operator take the bold step by listing Bitcoin as a routine option for deposits and withdrawals.

SEXY INNOVATIONS: Casino has been unloved in recent years from an innovation standpoint, but I know the Bodog crew are hard at work on some new games set to be unveiled in 2014 that they hope will put casino back on the map in the same way their [anonymouse tables](#) disrupted the poker industry. I suspect they are not the only ones with skunkworks projects in the casino space, so look for some new things coming here. But, obviously, even if I did know the answer to this one, I wouldn't be publishing it!

Full article can be found [here](#).

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