

First online casino to get a US gambling license turns out to be notorious UK spammer

Written by Administrator

Friday, 22 March 2013 17:47 -

888 Holdings just became the first online-only gaming company [to reportedly be approved to operate in the US](#), securing all but the final details of a license under Nevada's month-old online gambling regulations. The Gibraltar-based company hasn't operated online casinos or poker rooms in the US since 2006, when the federal law [intended to shut down internet gambling](#) was passed. However, the name may sound familiar: for the first half of the aughts, 888 engaged in some of the most aggressive spamming in the already spam-happy online gambling industry.

888 operates a large network of sites including 888bingo, 888poker, 888ladies, 888sport, Pacific Poker, Reef Club Casino, and Casino-on-Net. It also does business under the name of its subsidiary Cassava Enterprises. From around 2000 to 2007, 888 aspired to omnipresence via pop-up banner ads, email blasts, and its generous affiliate marketing program.

The company received a slew of sanctions in 2005 and 2006

Those tactics weren't unusual at the time, but 888 took things a little too far. The company received a [slew of sanctions](#) in 2005 and 2006 for, among other things, permitting its affiliates to engage in black hat practices in order to demote competitors in search engine rankings.

The International Gaming Affiliate Marketing Initiative (IGAMI) [blacklisted 888 twice](#) for "unethical affiliate practices including scraping and spamming" and "numerous instances of blog and forum spamming." Another group, CasinoAffiliatePrograms, [suspended 888's certification](#) in May 2006 and [requested that the company take steps to curb spam](#). These moves were followed by sanctions from a number of players groups. By the time 888 started to get back into good graces, at least 36 groups had [publicly condemned the company](#).

888 still has an [expensive affiliate marketing program](#), but the company says it has changed its spammy ways. There was an arms race for brand recognition back when the online gambling

First online casino to get a US gambling license turns out to be notorious UK spammer

Written by Administrator

Friday, 22 March 2013 17:47 -

industry was still fairly new, said public relations officer Andrew Benbow, but now 888 only engages in "very good targeted marketing."

"The 888 back office is generally thought of as being the best in the industry," he told *The Verge*. "It's not in the company's benefit anymore to annoy people about the brand name."

Individual states are now passing their own internet gambling laws, in spite of the fact that the legal status under federal law is still somewhat murky. Nevada was the [first state](#) to legalize internet gambling, followed by

[Delaware](#)

and

[New Jersey](#)

. An effort to legalize internet gambling nationally failed to pass before the last Congress went out of session.

Two technology companies got the first Nevada online gambling licenses [back in June](#), and a number of brick-and-mortar casinos [have also been licensed](#)

. However, 888 would be the first "online-specific" casino operator to ever receive a license in the US, said Holly Wetzel, vice president of communications at the American Gaming Association. The Nevada Gaming Control Board hasn't publicly confirmed that 888 received a license, but a source familiar with the proceedings said it seemed poised to be granted after a hearing yesterday.

"It's not in the company's benefit anymore to annoy people about the brand name."

Other online companies have been pushing hard for licenses, and 888 may have received favorable treatment because of past cooperativeness. The company [swiftly pulled out](#) of the US market in 2006 after online gambling was ostensibly outlawed under the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act, even though the US represented half its revenue at the time. By contrast, PokerStars, which was shut down by the Justice Department in an April 2011 raid on poker sites, has "

[credibility issues to overcome](#)

" in the words of one lawmaker.

First online casino to get a US gambling license turns out to be notorious UK spammer

Written by Administrator

Friday, 22 March 2013 17:47 -

888 is a publicly traded company with an \$863 million market value. It bills itself as the largest online casino in the world, and is the fifth-largest online poker network in the world according to traffic rankings compiled by [PokerScout](#). 888 plans to launch a poker site and then an online casino for players in Nevada. No timeline has been announced, but the former could come anywhere from a few weeks to a few months.

Read more <http://news.google.com/news/url?sa=t&fd=R&usg=AFQjCNGpFQp62YEc6POPB3Tel3kjUjKmw&url=http://www.theverge.com/2013/3/22/4135094/turns-out-first-online-casino-to-get-a-us-gambling-license-is-big-UK-spammer>