

# The History of Online Gambling: How Online Casinos Began

The invention of the internet has had a huge impact on many things, including gambling. Despite the fact that gambling has been around for several hundred years, online gambling only became a phenomenon in the late 90s, shortly after the internet was introduced. Since its emergence, online gambling has been making huge strides. We can safely say that the online gambling industry took the world by storm right after its introduction.

But how did it all start?

And how did the internet create the multi-billion-dollar online casino industry as we know it today? In this article, we will provide a detailed history of how online casinos came to be and talk about the companies that played a big role in the growth of this industry.



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The Beginnings of Online Gambling

One of the key events that marked the beginning of online gambling was the passage of the Free Trade and Processing Act by the island nation of Antigua and Barbuda. In 1994, the small Caribbean country began to grant licences to companies that wanted to provide online gambling services. In the same year, Microgaming was founded and created the first online casino called The Gaming Club. However, The Gaming Club did not become fully operational until 1995.

Although The Gaming Club claims to be the first establishment to offer real-money casino games online, several other companies make the same claim. However, Microgaming still remains one of the most respected software providers for the gaming industry.

Another company known since the mid-90s is CryptoLogic.

CryptoLogic owns InterCasino, a casino established in 1996. Both Microgaming and CryptoLogic have been around for so long that it is difficult to determine which of the two companies was the first in online gambling.

Fast forward to 1997, and the number of online casinos grew rapidly, with more than 200 casinos appearing online. That same year, the annual global revenue from online gambling reached \$1 billion. Since then, the industry has continued to grow exponentially, developing as fast as technology allows. At the moment, more than 100 online casinos accept Canadian players, including online casinos in Canada.

### The First Gambling Sites

Today, the internet is dotted with many gambling sites, and it is almost impossible to count them. A large number of these casino sites are new to the business. There are also casinos that have been operating for several years and are shutting down for one reason or another. However, there are gambling sites that have been around for a long time and have stood the test of time.

Some of the big names that we hear in the online gambling industry have been around since the very beginning of virtual gambling. The following brands are some of the first movers and shakers in the online gambling industry:

- William Hill Casino
  
- 888 Casino
  
- PokerStars
  
- Wanted Win Casino

- PartyPoker

## History of Gaming Software Providers

Online casinos could not exist without gaming software providers. These companies are the engine of the modern gambling industry as we know it today. Every casino has one or more suppliers that provide them with all their products. Some of these suppliers are very reputable and have been around for decades.

These casinos cannot function without software providers. You will often notice that their games are repeated on different sites. Here are some of the most well-known tech companies in the online gambling industry:


- Microgaming
- Playtech
- NetEnt
- RealTime Gaming

## Online Casinos in the Modern Age

If you're familiar with virtual casinos as they are today, you might be disappointed with the casino sites on the market in the 90s. The options available back then were very limited, and the games were not as intuitive and colourful as they are now. However, at the time, it was considered cutting-edge because it was an affordable technology.

As the market became competitive and more companies joined the fray, there was a need to improve. Game manufacturers began to

make the most of the technology and create better and more unique games. [Wanted Win Casino review](#), an online casino known for its diverse game selection, emerged as a popular choice, offering innovative titles that appealed to a wide audience. Its commitment to staying ahead of trends allowed it to thrive in the ever-evolving market.

Casino operators and game providers also benefited from this competitive environment as player lines, progressive jackpots, and multiplayer games continued to attract more customers. These companies were able to grow in popularity and make huge profits. 

## Online Gambling Regulators and Testing Companies

The state of Antigua and Barbuda was the first to start issuing licences in 1994. Two years later, the Kahnawake Gambling Commission in Quebec joined the predominantly profitable business. It didn't take long for other jurisdictions to follow. As there is no single piece of legislation that applies globally to the legality of virtual gambling, many countries have their own online gambling laws and licensing authorities that regulate their activities.

We currently have more than 10 gambling licensing authorities around the world. Casinos that operate legally usually have more than one licence from a reputable licensing authority. Online casinos usually have part of their operations within the jurisdiction where they want to obtain a licence. This means that casinos choose their location based on the gambling laws they will have to comply with.

Since online casinos rely heavily on random number generators to determine the fairness of their games, there was a need for a standard body to regulate these machines. In 2003, the Electronic and Online Gaming Regulatory Act (eCOGRA) was created, an independent and standardised body dedicated exclusively to online casino operations. Based in the United

Kingdom, it focuses on fair play, player protection, and responsible operator behaviour. If you are familiar with online casinos, you may have noticed the eCOGRA logo on the websites of most of the world's leading gaming brands, affiliates, and software providers.

## Access to Gambling for Everyone

There is no doubt that online casinos and bookmakers have made gambling more accessible. Three decades ago, you had to leave your home and make a trip to the nearest land-based casino to play games with real dealers. Now, all you need is a smartphone or a computer with internet access, and nothing is off-limits when it comes to gambling. In fact, anyone can start gambling from anywhere, as long as they have access to the internet.

Online casinos have come a long way in over 20 years. From spectacularly designed video slots that offer great entertainment with their gameplay and graphics, to live dealer games that make you feel like you're in the lobby of a traditional casino, the growth is obvious. Online casino operators are focused on using the latest technology to improve the overall quality of the virtual gaming experience. Whether you are playing on a computer or a smartphone, the gameplay is not compromised.

## The Development of Mobile Gambling

In today's world, where everything online is geared towards mobile users, it was no surprise to see mobile gambling become a big trend. Although the idea of mobile gambling was implemented almost a decade after the emergence of online gambling, it has not failed to impress the industry.

The first mobile casino software was launched in 2005 by Playtech, and it happened just as smartphones started to become mainstream. At the moment, several online casinos offer mobile websites and downloadable mobile applications designed

to make the game easier for mobile users. In the next few years, we expect to see further improvements in the overall standards of mobile gambling software and even more casinos catering to this large audience.

## Gambling Laws: Now and Then

As was the case from the beginning, gambling legislation in many countries remains largely ambiguous to this day. While some countries, such as the UAE and Qatar, make gambling illegal both in land-based and virtual casinos, European countries such as the UK and Denmark have made it fully legal to engage in any form of gambling.

For Canadians, gambling laws remain in a grey area, meaning that online gambling is not entirely illegal. The irony is that Canadian casinos can have their companies based outside of the country where gambling is completely legal, but not in Canada. You will not find any home gambling provider offering online casino products for Canadian players.

## What to Expect from the Future of Online Gambling

In addition to a multitude of casino options, there are many things available today that were not available two decades ago. Several casinos now offer impressive bonuses to both new and returning customers, there are stricter verification methods, real-time betting is available on sports betting sites, and online casino games run smoothly. In addition, live casinos have recently been introduced and have been widely accepted by bettors.

Although it may seem that the online gambling industry has reached its peak, there is reason to believe that there is still room for several developments. As long as the technology continues to evolve, there will be plenty of room for online casinos to innovate. In addition, there are still many cutting-edge ideas to be implemented in the industry.