

# Technology innovations shine amid G2E's slot machines, table games

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Big, loud, dazzling slot machines were the stars of the [Global Gaming Expo show last week](#).

New variations on table games held their own.

But it was the supporting cast of products and their technology that wowed many of the thousands of attendees who wandered the trade show, the casino industry's largest product supermarket, which ended its run Thursday at The Venetian Expo.

“As G2E has evolved over the years, the importance of technology and its integration into the entire guest experience remains the predominant evolutionary aspect of the industry,” said Brendan Bussmann, director of government affairs for Las Vegas-based Global Market Advisors. “While you can never replace the people that deliver the hospitality that the industry is built upon, technology can aid if executed properly into enhancing that experience.”

In some cases, the new technology involves merging features into a single device.

“One of the other products that was discussed by a number of attendees was the integration of slots and sports betting into one device,” Bussmann said. “As sports betting continues to expand across the country, devices like this will become more commonplace as individuals look to maximize the experience by watching a game while playing a slot or other game.”

Acres Manufacturing Co. introduced the PayAction Sports Bonus as part of its 2021 G2E lineup. The bonus uses a live sports data feed to trigger a bonus round on any slot machine connected to Acres’ Foundation casino management system.

What that means is that if you’re a fan of the Vegas Golden Knights and you note that in your player profile, you could win a special bonus on a slot machine if the Golden Knights score a goal.

“These machines will pay double whenever the Golden Knights score in an NHL game,” said Noah Acres.

The machines are programmed to produce a goal horn sound effect indicating a celebration mode — and all pays would be doubled for 90 seconds.

IGT also showed interactive technology that enables slot machine players to place sports bets while they sit in front of the slot.

## **'Biggest resonating trend'**

While sports-betting innovations were high on the list of must-see technology, companies offering cashless gaming products and digital funds transferring were also hot commodities.

“While there were several new innovations, I think the biggest resonating trend is the continued desire to advance cashless gaming,” Bussmann said.

“While the rest of the world has and continues to use cashless as some of its mainstream forms of payments, the gaming experience still has a long way to go to pay catch up, but the desire to move the industry forward is there with the advancements in technology across the board,” he said.

IGT's Resort Wallet and IGTPay products were recognized at G2E last week as “Product Innovation of the Year.” Resort Wallet enables operators to offer “carded cashless” or “cardless cashless” gaming, and in combination with IGTPay, provide players access to external funding sources such as bank and debit cards and e-wallets.

That means money from a bank account can be transferred to an electronic wallet on a smartphone and transferred directly to a slot machine via a Bluetooth connection. Transactions are verified through personal identification numbers to keep a player's funds secure.

## **Location, location, location**

Exhibitors had other technological surprises for the more than 13,000 attendees.

Lindsay Slader, managing director of gaming for GeoComply of Vancouver, British Columbia, showed her company's location verification system, growing in demand because of the rapid spread in sports wagering.

States that offer sports betting must continue to verify that someone placing a bet is within the borders of the state. "Our technology is wrapped into the mobile apps and the websites where you'd be placing your wager," Slader said.

GeoComply's system is designed to detect spoofing or any manipulation of location data.

The system includes a color-coded screen showing the location of iPhones and iPads, Android devices and any desktop computers, PCs or Macs.

Slader demonstrated a system showing data validation at the New York-New Jersey border where the locating system is so precise that it can verify a bettor's location within a tunnel beneath the Hudson River and to make sure a New York player is past the river centerline before betting in New Jersey.

Brooke Fiumara, co-CEO of Optix, a Las Vegas company founded in 2019, said her company analyzes player data that can be used to make better marketing and player development decisions.

“Optix is a casino data platform,” Fiumara said. “We take all of the data around the casino and operationalize it for slots, marketing and player development. For each one of those products, we have an artificial intelligence component that makes recommendations on how to optimize a slot floor or marketing campaigns, or make recommendations of players to contact. It takes the guesswork out of operating.”

## **‘PayPal for the casino world’**

Las Vegas-based GlobalPayments works in the digital payment world, serving more than 3 million patrons in 500 online and brick-and-mortar casinos.

“We’re all about data and cash access in the casino space,” said Justin Sprague, senior vice president of marketing for GlobalPayments. “We’re like a PayPal for the casino world.”

The company has been operating for 20 years in mobile funding and cashless transactions and has doubled down, now that casino companies are wanting more touch-free, digital payment solutions.

And some of the biggest displays on the G2E floor weren't that technological, but they were important supporting cast members for resorts.

Dennys Patir of the Germany-based Patir Casino Seating, has been attending G2E since 2005. The COVID-19 outbreak enabled him to deliver new products that protect casino guests with antibacterial materials to apply to a vast array of casino seating. They include chairs for poker, table games, slot machine and hospitality seating, dining chairs, banquet chairs, barstools, lounge chairs, sofas and sportsbook seating.

Patir said some of the sportsbook chairs are as comfortable as the entertainment room overstuffed recliner.

Certain chairs do carry a bit of technology — a wireless charger located on the arm of some of them.

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