



Promotion of offshore gambling sites by online casino reviews

What this research is about

Despite the increase in gambling opportunities, illegal online gambling remains a problem in the U.S. Illegal online gambling sites are sites that operate outside of the U.S. (i.e., offshore) and do not have a valid U.S. license. However, these sites accept bets from people living in the U.S. Some people may gamble through illegal gambling sites because they believe that these sites are legitimate and legal.

People who gamble online are responsible for verifying whether an online gambling site is legal where they live. But this is not always easy to do. Many people use online casino reviews (OCRs) to learn more about online gambling and access reviews about the quality of gambling websites. These reviews can provide incorrect or misleading information. In particular, if OCRs are affiliated with offshore gambling sites, their information can encourage people to use such sites. In this study, the researcher examined how OCRs present information about the use of offshore gambling sites in the U.S.

What the researchers did

The researcher used framing theory to help explain how OCRs present information about offshore gambling sites. Framing theory can help explain peoples' decision to use specific sites. Frames are the ways that information is selected and organized to provide meaning to events in connection with an issue. These frames are used by people to perceive, identify, and react to the issue.

The researcher collected a sample of OCRs through a Google search. The researcher combined keywords such as "the U.S.", "online", "gambling", and "reviews." The researcher then manually examined

What you need to know

Illegal online gambling sites, also known as offshore gambling sites, operate outside of the U.S. They do not have a valid U.S. license but accept bets from people living in the U.S. Online casino reviews (OCRs) linked with offshore sites are not as likely to present information accurately about the legality of such sites in the U.S. Many people use OCRs to learn more about online gambling and access reviews about the quality of gambling websites. This study examined how OCRs present information about the use of offshore gambling sites in the U.S. It analyzed 102 OCRs that were accessible from Nevada, USA. Many of these OCRs promoted offshore sites. Most OCRs that promoted offshore gambling sites (86%) discussed such sites positively. Some OCRs recommended offshore sites while explaining that online gambling is legal in the U.S. Other OCRs stated that offshore sites are legal in the U.S. Some OCRs stated that offshore gambling is justifiable because no individual in the U.S. has been arrested for online gambling. This study showed different frames and justifications that OCRs use to discuss offshore gambling sites.

the results of each search and selected OCRs that were accessible from Nevada, USA. OCRs had to either provide information about U.S. online gambling or promote an online gambling site in English. The final sample consisted of 102 OCRs.

Then, the researcher collected information on the legality of gambling sites included in the OCRs. Gambling sites were categorized as "no reviewed

site”, “legal”, “offshore”, “legal and offshore”, “legal and social casino”, or “offshore and social casino.” The researcher identified the number of total offshore sites reviewed by the OCRs, the tone towards offshore sites used by the OCRs (i.e., positive, neutral, or negative), and the types of words used to describe these sites. The researcher also identified the types of statements (i.e., frames) that the OCRs used to justify the use of offshore gambling sites.

The researcher conducted content analysis to identify patterns in the data collected. These patterns were expected to include different frames about offshore gambling sites that were presented by the OCRs.

What the researchers found

On average, the OCRs promoted 12 offshore sites. The OCRs mostly provided reviews of different online gambling sites for people in the U.S. Multiple OCRs could promote the same online gambling site.

Most gambling sites (71.6%) promoted by the OCRs were based outside of the U.S. Most OCRs that promoted offshore gambling sites (86.3%) discussed offshore sites positively. Common words used by these OCRs to describe offshore gambling sites included “best”, “top”, “safe”, and “top-rated”. The majority of OCRs that promoted legal online gambling sites (96%) did not say anything about offshore sites. Instead, these OCRs focused on explaining which gambling site is legal in which state.

The researcher also examined how the OCRs justified the use of offshore gambling sites in the U.S. The researcher found that the OCRs most often framed online gambling as something that is legal in the U.S. Some OCRs recommended offshore sites while explaining that online gambling is legal in the U.S. This makes it appear that offshore sites are legal in the U.S. Other OCRs stated that offshore sites are legal in the U.S.

Some OCRs stated that offshore gambling is justifiable because no one in the U.S. has been arrested for online gambling. Additionally, about 17.6% of the OCRs shifted the responsibility of illegal online gambling to the U.S. gambling laws. For example,

several OCRs mentioned that U.S. gambling laws are too hard to understand and too ambiguous.

About 17.6% of the OCRs promoting online casinos stated that there are no laws that ban U.S. residents from gambling online or using offshore sites. One OCR said that it is the right of offshore sites to accept U.S. customers even if U.S. laws say otherwise. Other OCRs justified using offshore sites in other ways, such as by emphasizing the legitimacy of using cryptocurrency.

How you can use this research

Policy makers can use this research to develop preventative measures for offshore gambling.

About the researchers

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Citation

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