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## The Legality Of Online Gambling

by: Adel Awwad

The legality of online gambling has been a hotly debated issue ever since the first Internet casinos opened their virtual doors in 1994. Casino gambling used to be a fairly straightforward issue; there were certain places where it was legal to gamble, such as in the state of Nevada or Atlantic City, New Jersey, and places where it was not legal to gamble. Period.

Enter Internet casinos and online gambling. Governments in most countries have had a hard time keeping up with Internet legal issues, and online gambling has been no exception. The first Internet casinos were based in places such as Barbuda and Antigua in the Caribbean, and since they were based in these places, the Free Trade and Processing Zone Act protected them. Basically, they were considered offshore casinos, which were perfectly legal. Being Internet casinos, however, people from almost anywhere in the world were able to gamble at these casinos from home, and the legalities suddenly became a cloudy issue.

It is illegal to set up an Internet casino based in the United States, but is it illegal for someone in the United States to gamble online at an Internet casino that is based where it is legal? The U.S. Wire Wager Act makes it illegal to use any electronic wire method to transmit bets or gambling winnings to any place where gambling is not allowed. The Internet is considered an electronic wire method. Yet, in this case the criminal would be the casino, and the United States can't really prosecute someone in another country. So the area remains gray. Most, if not all, Internet Casinos make each gambler who registers with them check a box that claims they have read the 'terms of use' agreement, which includes a statement that says it is the responsibility of the gambler to know their local Internet gambling laws.

Some of the countries that allow Internet casinos to set up base are Australia, South Korea, Germany, France, and some parts of Canada. More than 70 countries allow Internet gambling, with different rules and guidelines in each individual country.

The bottom line is: Internet Casinos are most likely here to stay for the long run, and as long as they are here, people are going to gamble at them. Legal or moral issues aside, Internet casinos are a fact of life, and many people find online gambling enjoyable and entertaining.

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