

Vancouver company deals poker dealers out of the game

TECHNOLOGY | Jackpot Blitz digital table could lower casino operating costs, company claims

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Technology developed by Vancouver-based **Jackpot Digital Inc.** (TSX-V:JP) aims to revolutionize the way people gamble.

Working from an idea first created by U.S. gambling company **Pokertek**, the Canadian firm, which has been developing software for the casino industry for years, has developed its own digital poker table.

The Jackpot Blitz table is completely automated. All functions associated with a poker game are replicated on an 84-inch touch screen. No dealer, cards or chips are required.

Adding to the electronic poker platform's departure from the traditional form of the game, the company announced earlier this month that it had signed a letter of intent that will allow cryptocurrencies to be used with the product.

"I think [Jackpot Blitz] has a very good chance of changing the landscape of gaming," said Jackpot Digital president and CEO **Jake Kalpakian**.

"The key is to make the game-play feel like you are playing with a real deck of cards: you can cusp



Jackpot Digital's electronic poker table dispenses with physical cards, chips and dealers | SUBMITTED

the cards, hold the cards, fold the cards, the noises – it all simulates a real poker game."

A demonstration video shows how players can swipe their fingers on the table toward themselves, causing the digital cards on the screen to flip up, replicating the real-life action of checking one's hand.

The table also emits sounds associated with live play in a casino.

Another selling point of the table is that players can perform multiple functions while waiting for a turn.

"If I am sitting out of hand, I can order my food or drinks and the menu is on the table, I could

play blackjack, I could play baccarat, I could bet on horses, I could bet on sports, I could do so many different functions," Kalpakian said.

Jackpot Blitz has received a patent and, after generating interest at the table's unveiling during the Canadian Gaming Summit in June, the company is accepting

orders for units. The table was shortlisted for the Global Gaming Awards in the land-based innovation category.

The tables, which each cost about \$25,000 to make, are manufactured at a facility in Burnaby.

According to the company, the software behind the product cost millions of dollars and 17 years to develop.

Jackpot Digital's back-end software creates reports for gaming operators to track profits and rake totals and measure industry metrics.

According to Kalpakian, the rising cost of wages and benefits for casino employees is a strong motivation for gambling operators to go digital.

"If you talk to a casino, especially smaller or mid-size guys, they can't staff a full poker staff," Kalpakian said. "It is very difficult to keep people on salary."

B.C. is home to 17 casinos and 18 community gaming centres, and more than 37,000 people are employed through B.C.'s gambling industry, according to the provincial government.

Jackpot Digital employs about 20 people at its headquarters on Granville Street in downtown Vancouver. ■