

THE BRUNS



NATIONAL NEWS

FROM UNIVERSITY NEWSROOMS ACROSS CANADA

McGill study to examine Internet gambling

Students more likely to lay bets online

by Erika Meera

MONTREAL (CUP) — Two years ago, 16-year-old Adam Maler and 20 friends made their hardcore hockey-watching habit even more interesting: they started a pool in which each participant bet \$20 on a dream team of players they draft over the Internet. At the end of the season, the person whose team had scored the most points won the pot.

Maler said he joins the yearly pool for entertainment as much as for the potential gain.

"It's not just because I can win nearly \$400. I also do it for fun and for bragging rights," he admitted.

Maler and his friends represent a growing number of minors who gamble through online casinos and sports-betting sites, both for fun and for money.

But McGill Educational and Counseling Psychology professors Jeffrey Derevensky and Rina Gupta are not sure these games are such innocent pastimes.

Derevensky and Gupta have been researching youth gambling for 11 years, and are currently working on a study that will examine youth Internet gambling and attempt to create a profile of online gamblers.

Derevensky and Gupta plan to interview 2,500 Montreal-area teens, as well as 1,000 adults. They will question their subjects through Web sites they have set up to establish how online gambling habits in teens develop into serious addictions in university-aged

adults.

Some studies have suggested that 18- to 25-year-olds have a higher rate of online gambling problems.

"Now if that's true, those problems had to come from somewhere," said Derevensky.

In past studies, it has been found that 55 per cent of youth aged 10 to 17 participate in real gambling. Of those, 13 per cent have a gambling addiction — twice the rate of adult gamblers.

Derevensky and Gupta have found that, contrary to popular opinion, money is not the only explanation for youth gambling.

"The three predominant reasons all adolescents report gambling are for the excitement it brings, for enjoyment and to win money," said a September press release on the study.

While the professors haven't yet determined how many young

people gamble over the internet for money, Derevensky said they had a fairly good idea of how many minors gamble for fun, using virtual money.

"It becomes more serious when they start to use real money," he said.

Maler admitted that gambling for cash is more of a thrill.

"Gambling is more exciting when I know I could win money," Maler said.

Gupta worries that it is becoming too easy for youth to gamble for money online.

"One of our big concerns is that you may no longer need a credit card. If a kid finds a way to circumvent that, and poses as someone else by using an online bank account instead, that's where real problems can arise," she said.

Like most students interviewed by The Daily, Jonathan Hiltz, a

science student, does not think online gambling is an issue.

"Well, I don't do it, and I don't know anyone who does. I don't think it's a big problem," he said.

But another student, who spoke on condition of anonymity, disagreed.

"Gambling is not something most people would admit to doing,"

The few statistics available on Internet gambling show that the convenience and anonymity of virtual casinos are enticing to some adults between 18 and 25.

A study conducted by Anca Ialomiteanu and Edward M. Adlaf, of the University of Toronto's Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, found that 4.4 per cent of adults between the ages of 18 and 29 gambled online in 2000.

But because Internet gambling is a relatively new phenomenon,

researchers do not yet know how many gamblers are playing excessively. One thing that is certain is that the numbers are on the rise, according to Monique Cote, a counselor with a provincial help line for online gambling.

"Over the past eight years, the number of calls we received from troubled internet gamblers has doubled," she said.

Online gambling is illegal in Canada under the Criminal code. But that doesn't stop Canadians from playing at over 2,000 foreign-based gambling Web sites.

"The Internet in general is something legislators need to look at regulating," said Gupta. "But yes, definitely, we want to make sure legislators protect kids from gambling on the internet."

Gupta and Derevensky expect to release their study's preliminary results by May 2004.

Building a genderless washroom

Renovations in McGill's Shatner Building are "much needed"

by Denise Brunson

MONTREAL (CUP) — McGill University's student society is building the campus' first gender-neutral, wheel-chair-accessible, single-unit washroom.

The washroom, which will be on the main floor of the student society's Shatner Building, is designed to allow gender-variant students and students with disabilities to "utilize the washrooms with ease and dignity," according to a SSMU press release.

Brianna Hersey, a spokesperson for the society, said the executive

chose to increase accessibility beyond the current McGill University definition to better meet the needs of its marginalized students.

"Access for able-bodied and gender-normative folks usually means what the gender normative think the gender variant need. It usually means what is perceived to be accessible," said Hersey.

"Unfortunately, to many, access is narrowly defined as a wheel-chair ramp and a wheel-chair-accessible toilet within a gender-segregated washroom. This definition of access simply doesn't reflect the reality for many students on this campus," she said.

Hersey also said this measure reflects SSMU's awareness of socially sidelined students.

Michelle Marsman, an administrator for Queer McGill,

said her organization is impressed with the proposed washroom, and is happy for the Trans-Gendered Alliance and McGill's transgendered community.

"This is a really progressive move. It's nice to know these types of things are being taken into account by our Students' Society," she said.

The Office of Students with Disabilities was also excited at the announcement of a new wheel-chair-accessible washroom.

Director Joan Wolforth said the current washrooms are not acceptable, and believes the upcoming renovations are much needed.

"The announcement is very much in line with the interest in equity issues. The previous washrooms that were there were not really suitable. The current ones were sort of

renovations of renovations, and they are not particularly up to McGill standards."

The executive does not know yet where the funds will come from.

"The financing for these washrooms is a little bit unclear right now," said Rod De Castro, VP Operations of the students' society.

"This wasn't initially part of the referendum project, but SSMU is committed to the realization of the washrooms, and we will find the money."

According to De Castro, all renovations on the main floor, including the gender-neutral, wheel-chair-accessible, single-unit washroom, will not be completed until the new year.



Photo illustration by Brendan Doyle/The Brunswickan

The possible confusion of a genderless bathroom.

Haunted House in Fredericton

by Jessie Davis

If the carnival wasn't creepy enough for you last year, the Maggie Jean Chestnut residence is hosting their third haunted house on Thursday, October 30.

With a return to a more classic haunted house theme this year, the event promises more thrills

and chills than last year.

Sarah King of the Haunted House Committee is promising that "this year will be better than ever!"

There will be two shows, a family friendly show which will run from 6:00 – 8:00 pm and an "adult" show, geared towards the university crowd, that will run

from 9:00 – 11:00 pm. Both shows will be in the Maggie Jean Chestnut residence and Renaissance College building, located downtown at 811 Charlotte Street. Admission is a donation to the Food Bank.

This annual event collects food and funds for the Fredericton Food Bank.

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