



# The State of the Online Poker Industry

Summer 2018





## The Homepage to the Poker Industry

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## Abstract

The online poker industry's return to revenue growth highlighted in the last edition of this report continued through to the end of 2017 and into 2018. Across the four largest public online poker operators, revenue grew by 5.6% last year thanks largely to the continued investment by GVC into its resurgent partypoker platform and the stabilization of online poker at The Stars Group.

The last six months have seen an explosion in live poker by online poker's largest companies with both PokerStars and partypoker announcing landmark events for 2018. Large-scale online poker tournaments also continue to grow.

Product innovation has been a key trend over the last six months, though it remains to be seen whether any operator can repeat the success of fast-fold poker and lottery-style sit and gos.

One concept expected to proliferate in the second half of 2018 is the adoption of the blind lobby. MPN and poker upstart Run It Once Poker are expected to implement the blind lobby as a default feature of their software, and PokerStars is likely to roll it out across its international online poker room following successful deployments in the European markets and India.

Regulatory headwinds are identified in this report in four major European countries. While significant market withdrawals—a black spot of 2017—are not anticipated this year, online poker companies are

preparing for rocky operating conditions in various markets.

Shared online liquidity between Spain, France and Portugal is expected to benefit more operators this year. Sweden is on course for going live with its re-regulation in January 2019, and the Netherlands is still on course with its regulatory liberalization.

Exciting opportunities are also present in Pennsylvania where online gaming licenses are expected to be issued later this year. Operators already live in New Jersey will be hoping to launch online poker in the new market, connect their player pools and compete in the MSIGA with 888/WSOP.