
Media Release

World-Leading Software Launched to Protect Nova Scotia Youth

May 29, 2009 – Halifax: As of today, fewer children in Nova Scotia will be able to gamble online. The Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation (NSGC) launched a world-first prevention program designed to help keep kids off gambling websites.

NSGC invented and developed *BetStopper*, blocking software designed to help parents protect their children from visiting gambling websites. Online casino-style gambling is illegal and unregulated in Canada, yet, it is estimated that there are more than 2,500 internet gambling sites. Research shows that Nova Scotia's youth are gambling online three times more than adults. Youth online gambling is a serious issue and NSGC is tackling it head-on with this prevention initiative.

"Youth online gambling is a real problem and *BetStopper* is a real solution," says Marie Mullally, President and CEO of NSGC. "The fact is, youth are gambling online in increasing numbers, a reality that should not be ignored. That's why we proactively developed this effective prevention tool. This world-first is another example of NSGC's commitment to social responsibility. These are unregulated gambling sites where there are no guarantees of safeguards or controls to prevent access by kids. As the steward of the industry in our Province, we couldn't sit by and let this continue."

The program was launched at the *We Love Our Children Expo*, where parents had the opportunity to see how the *BetStopper* software works and receive their own free copy for downloading on their home computers. NSGC is sponsoring the keynote speaker, Parry Aftab, security, privacy and cyberspace lawyer as well as author and child advocate, at the Expo on Friday night.

"I'm happy to be in Nova Scotia speaking on Internet Safety," said Ms. Aftab. "It is critical that parents have an open line of communication with their children and are aware of the online dangers and the tools available to keep their kids safe in the cyber world."

"It is eye-opening to learn that children are accessing illegal online gambling sites," said parent Donna Pierrynowski MacDougall. "I am pleased that the Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation is helping to protect our children by offering *BetStopper*. I know that I will be downloading it on my home computers."

NSGC developed the software in response to high rates of youth online gambling and because existing filtering software was ineffective at blocking gambling websites.

Prior to the launch of *BetStopper*, NSGC pilot-tested the software with 250 families in Nova Scotia to help determine the product's effectiveness, as well as attitudes and behaviours associated with its use. Results were extremely positive, with 92 per cent of parents finding *BetStopper* a valuable prevention tool. Parents also found that using the software motivated them to speak to their children about the risks associated with gambling, a conversation that the majority of participants did not have with their children before.

When the *BetStopper* pilot software was developed, it was 94 to 99 per cent effective at blocking gambling websites, while other existing products were only 56 to 79 per cent effective. While content blocking software like *BetStopper* is not intended to replace the supervisory role of parents, it provides an effective safeguard on their home computer, allowing them to control access to potentially harmful sites.

NSGC partnered with a software developer called InternetSafety.com to create *BetStopper*. They customized their flagship software, Safe Eyes, which was chosen as the No. 1 filtering product by *Consumer Reports*, the leading consumer testing agency in the United States. Additionally, Safe Eyes has received the Editor's Choice designation twice from *PC Magazine* as well as from *LAPTOP Magazine*.

For more information regarding *BetStopper*, or to download a free copy of the software, please visit www.nsgc.ca.



Marie Mullally, President and CEO of the Nova Scotia Gaming Corporation and Lauren Grant, 11, prepare to download the BetStopper software.

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