



## GSA protocol driving new innovative gaming products of today and tomorrow

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**W**e are living in an exciting time in the gaming industry.

Technology is advancing at a lightning pace, and we spend a lot of time talking about what the technology can do, and, frankly, it can be easy to be dazzled by it – it's just that incredible. However, what we need to be constantly mindful of is how this technology will dazzle the player, and how we will need to balance our love of technology with consumer adaptability and operator need.

At G2E 2009, the tradeshow floor was bursting with incredible new products driven by innovative technology with one primary purpose – to attract players. However, none of the new games was built using the old protocol; instead, they were built on the new, more flexible GSA protocol. This new open standard enables devices to be more technologically advanced and appealing to players.

The fact is, gaming is facing an increasingly competitive marketplace of entertainment, and as casino operators, we must be ever mindful that we are not only competing with the casino across the street, but we also are competing for

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entertainment dollars with movies, live theater, home computers, video games and more.

Before we focus on gaming, let's consider the other entertainment fields. Movies are becoming more technologically driven. James Cameron spent more than a decade creating technology for the new film "Avatar," which he has said will be the basis for the future of films. Live theater is becoming more complex. For example, "The Phantom of the Opera" was updated with more spectacle for its new Las Vegas home. New operating systems continue to evolve both home computers and the sites users surf. And video games are Internet connected, enabling the box to be more than just a game station, but

a window to a world of entertainment.

With that backdrop fresh in our minds, let's recall the games at G2E 2009. More interactive than ever, these games were geared toward the concept of player immersion, where the player will be completely involved in the game with nearly all senses – hearing incredible sound quality, seeing better graphics than ever before, literally spinning wheels on a touch screen and feeling their seats vibrate.

however, that does not necessarily mean that gaming consumers look to gaming as a safe haven or respite from the technologically advanced world around them. Instead, what it might mean is that consumers could be coming to our casinos, looking around at outdated technology, and simply moving on to the next entertainment option.

Our mission at GSA is two-fold: First, we needed to create the protocols, and

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Add to that, these devices can be networked so that we operators also can have a sensory experience of the player – we can reach out, see him, see his preferences, and touch him with offers and rewards specifically tailored to him as an individual.

But, none of these innovations can happen with the SAS protocol or on a SAS-driven casino floor. SAS has been great for the industry; however, 2010 is the year that SAS industry support will expire. That is to say, no more effort will be put into SAS, meaning that innovation from this point forward will only come from the GSA suite of protocols, namely G2S, S2S and GDS.

What this means for operators is the time for waiting is over. Now is the time to upgrade your casino floor so that you can run the devices and systems of tomorrow, because they are being created and sold today. It is the time for operators to get more actively involved in GSA, ensuring that their unique business requirements are addressed.

We have simply run out of time for waiting. Let's look at the competition – movies, live performances, computers and video games are advancing at a much faster pace than our industry is;

thanks to our international membership of suppliers and operators, we did that, and we did it very well. Thanks to incredible cooperation, invaluable feedback and field trial, the protocols are better than we initially envisioned. The second part of the mission brings us squarely to where we are today, and that is to help operators understand the importance of being prepared for the ending of SAS, and the birth of a new wave of innovation.

The recent successful opening of CityCenter proved that amazing things can happen when our industry comes together. GSA member companies rallied together to create the floor of the future. Now, operators around the world can look to CityCenter's example as a beacon of what the future can be: bright, interesting, full of innovation and driven by the next generation of protocols, not by SAS.

Which brings us full circle – to be innovative, as operators we must convert our floors to run the new protocols. At GSA, we are here to help. Log on to [www.gamingstandards.com](http://www.gamingstandards.com) anytime to get started on your future. **SlotManager**

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