

# A Content Analysis of Gambling Live Streams on Twitch

Dimitrios Avramidis<sup>1</sup>, Brett Abarbanel<sup>2</sup>, Mark R. Johnson<sup>3</sup>, Raymond Wu<sup>1</sup>, Ayush Kathuria<sup>1</sup>, and Luke Clark<sup>1</sup>

1. Centre for Gambling Research, Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver
2. International Gaming Institute, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
3. Department of Media and Communications, University of Sydney, Australia

## INTRODUCTION

- The emergence of slot streams on Twitch<sup>1</sup>, a platform that was initially dedicated to competitive video games, exemplifies the wider convergence of gaming and gambling activities<sup>2,3,4</sup>.
- In May 2021, slot streams had 47,421 average viewers, there were 6,438 total channels streaming slot machine sessions and the top channel boasted over half a million followers<sup>5</sup>.
- In mid-August, Twitch announced that sharing links and referral codes to gambling websites will be prohibited in order to prevent harm and scams<sup>6</sup>.
- In a UK survey, 4.1% of adults watched gambling content on streaming platforms (e.g, Twitch) and this was correlated with problem gambling<sup>2</sup>.

## METHODS

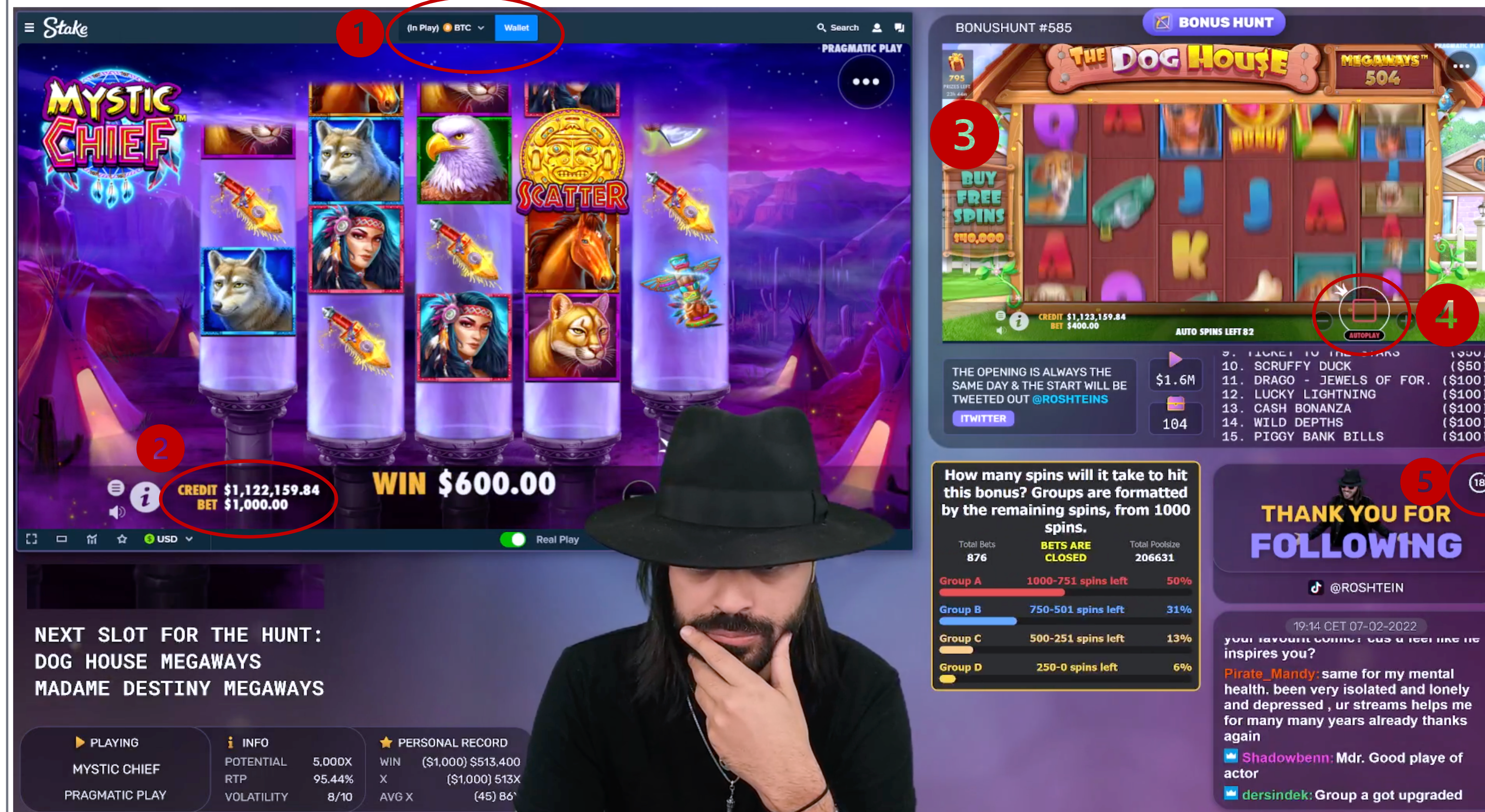
### Sample

- 20 channels
- Pre: 115 videos in June 2021
- Post: 85 videos in Oct - Dec 2021

### Procedure

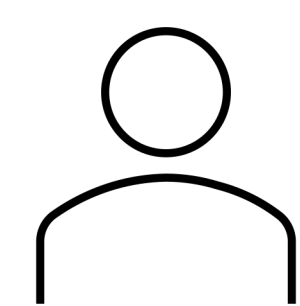
1. Developed a coding framework using content analysis.
  2. Interrater reliability.
  3. Organized our data into categories.
- Five central themes emerged from the channels and video code.

## Screenshot of gambling slot stream on Twitch



## RESULTS

### The streamers



- Most stream alone (70%)
- Mostly men (90%)
- Stream everyday (70%)
- Did not disclose their country of residence (100%)

### Affiliations and marketing



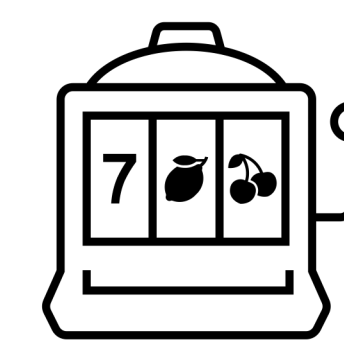
- Gambling promotions via affiliate links (Pre: 100%. Post: 16%) ↓
- Cryptocurrency (35%) ①
- Large starting balances (e.g. \$806,193.61) ②

### Responsible gambling

GambleAware®

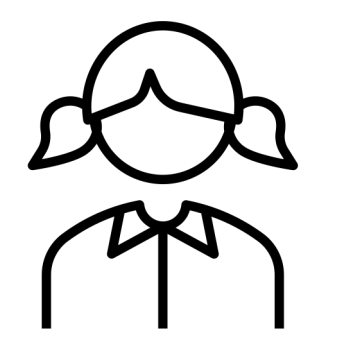
- Gamble Aware messages were common (75%)
- Alternative resources were rare

### Intense products



- Range of bet sizes include high stakes (up to \$10,000) ②
- Dual screening (25%) ③
- 'Autoplay' is standard (90%) ④
- No editing disclaimers (e.g. jackpots)
- Long 'sessions' (up to 47 hrs)

### Youth exposure



- Age recommendations (50%) ⑤
- ... but no age gating (0%)
- Emojis & exciting language in stream titles (e.g. "MASSIVE HIT ON DOGHOUSE!!!")

## DISCUSSION

- Slot streams are highly accessible and may appeal to vulnerable individuals, including youth, and individuals with gambling problems.
- The streamed gambling content is often the most intense forms of gambling; auto-play enables high speed gambling. High stakes bets are common. Thus, viewers without gambling experience are exposed to high-risk products.
- Restrictions on affiliate advertising in summer 2021 were successful, but remaining concerns around age gating and sponsorships.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Further analysis of Twitch 'Chat' content.
- Harmful parasocial relationships?
- Who watches gambling streams, and how does viewing gambling streams affect the desire to gamble? - both in people with and without prior experience of gambling & gambling problems.

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