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## US ready to gamble on e-betting ventures

*Betting apps at odds with tech downturn...*

US companies specialising in electronic betting are bucking the technology downturn, with enterprising individuals looking to steal a march in one of ecommerce's biggest growth areas.

While online gambling has proved a massive success in Europe already, one catalyst for the latest boom in the sector is the growing expectation of a nationwide legalisation of gambling in the US.

Las Vegas businessman **Fabrizzio Boccardi** is one individual who is willing to gamble on virtual betting getting the green light. He has signed up Seattle-based game developer Littech to design a handheld gambling device that will allow users to bet on anything from almost anywhere.

While Boccardi is keeping his cards close to his chest and details of the device are pretty sketchy, the *Wall Street Journal* claims he will begin marketing his invention within two years.

According to the paper, Barry Mindes, chairman of Interactive Systems, is also developing a handheld device for would-be US punters which will be based on an interactive television betting system developed by his company for German media group Kirch.

It is not clear when, or even if, gambling will be legalised across the US, but pressure is growing annually for an easing of the strict legislation governing betting.

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