

THE VIRTUAL FENCE SUPPORTING THE ROLLOUT OF ONLINE SPORTS BETTING ACROSS THE US

WHILE ONLINE AND MOBILE SPORTS BETTING is still to hit the market in West Virginia, early success for its on-site counterpart should dictate that it's not too far behind

Once online and sports betting comes to fruition in West Virginia (WV), GeoComply, the first company to secure an interim sports betting licence for the state back in August, will have built a virtual fence that mirrors the state's borders.

This will not only ensure that bets are placed by individuals within the state, but also take care of the 'geofencing' should operators choose to license a live stream for a sports event.

Customers who cross this virtual barrier will lose access to WV sportsbooks. Those heading northeast will move into Pennsylvania – another approved sports betting territory to be geofenced, but one that is lagging a little behind the early movers largely because of an effective 36 per cent tax rate.

David Briggs, the CEO for GeoComply Solutions, commented: "Effective geolocation is essential to the roll out of sports betting and online gaming in the US. Sovereignty over gaming jurisdiction is seeded to each state so that each state can choose to have all or some forms of betting, online or not.

"The only way to respect a particular state's rights is through a geolocation



system that actually works, both to enable the rights of those states that choose to go online and those that chose not to go online. This is very different to Europe where geolocation is not really a compliance focus."

"IN TERMS OF APPLYING GEOLOCATION RESTRICTIONS ON THE LIVE STREAMING OF SPORTS EVENTS, WE CAN SEE THE NEED FOR THIS CAPABILITY FROM SPORTSBOOK OPERATORS IN THE NEAR FUTURE."

Briggs also spoke about the GeoComply role in live streaming, given that any operator that wants to license the live stream of a sports event is under an obligation to 'geofence' the broadcast of

that event only to the state in which they hold a licence.

"In terms of applying geolocation restrictions on the live streaming of sports events, we can see the need for this capability from sportsbook operators in the near future," he said. "One particular area is in terms of in-place betting where sportsbook operators may negotiate the rights to stream live events on their site, to facilitate in-place betting on their platform.

"These broadcast licence agreements between sportsbook operators and leagues, teams and other broadcaster will most likely include geographical restrictions on who can access the live streams, so GeoComply's geolocation technology can ensure that the sportsbooks are abiding by their broadcast licence requirements.

"Our geolocation solutions are used around the world to ensure territorial



broadcast rights are respected and are approved by all the major Hollywood studios and the IOC. We also work with premium sports rights holders worldwide to ensure that only viewers in licensed geographical areas are able to access their live sports broadcasts over the Internet.”

Briggs concluded: “GeoComply is one of the few companies from the iGaming space to successfully cross over to the mainstream technology area with even Silicon Valley’s very biggest companies (such as Akamai, who’s CDN provides the backbone for most major OTT broadcasters) utilizing our core

“EFFECTIVE GEOLOCATION IS ESSENTIAL TO THE ROLL-OUT OF SPORTS BETTING AND ONLINE GAMING IN THE US.”

technology.”

Given that online and mobile sports betting was approved by WV lawmakers as early as March – even before the Supreme Court had reached a decision on the case New Jersey brought against PASPA, the wait for its inception is not expected to be a long one.

The ‘need for speed’ on this front was highlighted by the opening weekend of on-site sports betting in the state. The Hollywood Casino, operated by William Hill in the Charles Town Races venue owned by Penn National Gaming, saw a total of circa \$340,000 wagered on the first Saturday of the college football season.

Powered by FanDuel, the Greenbrier Resort is expected to be the next of the state’s five casinos to host a live sportsbook, followed by Delaware North properties in Nitro and Wheeling along with Mountaineer Racetrack and Casino in Chester. These two could be operational by mid to late October. ■