Bingo!

BINGO

B	I	N	G	O
11	35	4	48	13
8	23	65	5	27
45	12	7	28	33
39	19			

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Bingo!

de Nicolae Sfetcu

Published by: Nicolae Sfetcu

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Contents

Bingo

Bingo is a game of chance played with randomly drawn numbers which players match against numbers that have been pre-printed on 5x5 matrices. The matrices may be printed on paper, card stock or electronically represented and are referred to as "cards." Many versions conclude the game when the first person to achieve a specified pattern from the drawn numbers. The winner is usually required to call out the word "Bingo!", which alerts the other players and caller of a possible "win". All wins are checked for accuracy before the win is officially confirmed at which time the prize is secured and a new game is begun. In this version of bingo, players compete against one another for the prize or "jackpot".

Alternative methods of play try to increase participation by creating excitement. Since its invention in 1934, modern bingo has evolved into multiple variations, with each jurisdiction's gambling laws regulating how the game is played. There are also nearly unlimited patterns that may be specified for play. Some patterns only require one number to be matched, up to cover-all games which award the jackpot for covering an entire card and certain games award prizes to players for matching no numbers or achieving no pattern. See "Variations" for more details.

Equipment

The numbers which are called in a game of bingo, may be drawn utilizing a number of methods to randomly generating the ball call. With the expansion of computer technology in bingo, electronic random number generators are now common place in most jurisdictions. However, some jurisdictions require mechanical ball draws which may utilize a randomly shuffled deck of bingo calling cards, a mechanical ball blower that mixes ping pong balls with blown air or a cage which is turned to mix small wooden balls. All methods essentially generate a random string of numbers by which players match to their bingo cards.

Bingo cards

The most common Bingo cards are flat pieces of cardboard or disposable paper which contain 25 squares arranged in five vertical columns and five horizontal rows. Each space in the grid contains a number.

A typical Bingo game utilizes the numbers 1 through 75. The five columns of the card are labeled 'B', 'I', 'N', 'G', and 'O' from left to right. The center space is usually marked "Free" or "Free Space", and is considered automatically filled. The range of printed numbers that can appear on the card is normally restricted by column, with the 'B' column only containing numbers between 1 and 15 inclusive, the 'I' column containing only 16 through 30, 'N' containing 31 through 45, 'G' containing 46 through 60, and 'O' containing 61 through 75.

The number of all possible Bingo cards with these standard features is P(15,5) × P(15,5) × P(15,4) × P(15,5) × P(15,5) = 552,446,474,061,128,648,601,600,000 or approximately **5.52×10²⁶**.

In U-Pick'Em bingo and other variants of bingo, players are issued three 25 number cards which contain all 75 numbers that may be drawn. Players then mark which numbers they wish to play and then daub those numbers according to the numbers drawn. In addition, double-action cards have two numbers in each square.

A player wins by completing a row, column, or diagonal. The most chips one can place on a Bingo board without having a Bingo is 19, not counting the free space. In order for this

to happen, only one empty cell can reside in each row and each column, and at least one empty cell must be in each diagonal, for instance:

```
B  I  N  G  O
●  ●     ●  ●
●     ●  ●  ●
●  ●  □  ●
●  ●  ●     ●
   ●  ●  ●  ●
```

In addition to a straight line, other patterns may be considered as a valid bingo in special games. For example, in the illustration above, the 2x2 square of marked squares in the upper-right-hand corner would be considered a "postage stamp". Another common special game requires players to cover the four corners. There are several other patterns, such as a Roving 'L', which requires players to cover all B's and top or bottom row or all O's and top or bottom row. Another common pattern is a blackout, covering all 24 numbers and the free space.

Equipment

The numbers that are called in a game of bingo may be drawn utilizing a variety of methods to randomly generate the ball call. With the expansion of computer technology in bingo, electronic random number generators are now common place in most jurisdictions. However, some jurisdictions require mechanical ball draws which may utilize a randomly shuffled deck of bingo calling cards, a mechanical ball blower that mixes ping pong balls with blown air or a cage which is turned to mix small wooden balls. All methods essentially generate a random string of numbers by which players match to their bingo cards.

Culture

Single games often have multiple bingos; for example, the players first plays for a single line; after that, play goes on until a full card is called; then, play continues for a consolation full card.

Players often play multiple cards for each game; 30 is not an unusual number. Because of the large numbers of cards played by each player, most halls have the players sit at tables to which they often fasten their cards with adhesive tape. To mark cards faster the players usually use special markers called *daubers*. At commercial halls, after calling the number the caller then displays the next number on a television monitor; bingo cannot be called until that number is called aloud, however.

Bingo is often used as an instructional tool in American schools and in teaching English as a foreign language in many countries. Typically, the numbers are replaced with beginning reader words, pictures, or unsolved math problems.

Terminology

Ready/Waiting/Cased/Set/Down/Chance – When someone only needs one number in order to complete the Bingo pattern, he/she is considered to be Ready, Waiting, Cased, Set, Down or 'has a chance'.

Breaking the Bubble or "Possible" – The bubble is the minimum number of balls required to complete the Bingo pattern. This is the earliest point any player could have a valid bingo. Example: Winning pattern is 1 hard way bingo, a straight line without the free space. The minimum number of called numbers is 5 although it is not considered Breaking the Bubble or possible until 1 number in each column or 5 numbers in a single column have been called.

Jumping the Gun – One who calls bingo before having a valid bingo. The most common situation is someone calling bingo using the next number in the screen before it has been called.

Wild numbers – Many bingo halls will have certain games with a wild number. Wild numbers allow bingo players to start with multiple called numbers. Typically the first ball drawn is the determining factor.

Standard – All numbers ending with the second digit of the first number. Example: First ball is 22. All numbers ending in a 2 including B2 is considered a called number.

Forwards/backwards – All numbers beginning or ending with the wild number. Example: First ball is 22. All numbers beginning or ending with a 2 is considered a called number. If the first ball ends with an 8, 9 or 0, another number may be drawn as there are no numbers starting with a 8 or 9 and only 9 numbers starting with a zero. Some halls will also redraw a number ending with a 7 as there are only six numbers beginning with a 7.

False Alarm or Just Practicing – Term used when one calls bingo but is mistaken. This could be because of mishearing the caller or stamping the wrong number by mistake. One who calls a "falsie" genuinely believes he/she has a bingo. This is also known as a "social error." Another term used for this is a "bongo."

Hard Way Bingo – A hard-way bingo is a bingo pattern in a straight line without the use of the free space.

History

The game of bingo can be traced back to a lottery game called "Il Giuoco del Lotto d'Italia" played in Italy in c.1530. By the eighteenth century, the game had matured, and in France, playing cards, tokens, the reading out of numbers had been added to the game. In the nineteenth century, Bingo was widely used in Germany for educational purposes to teach children spelling, animal names, and multiplication tables.

Le Lotto was then subsequently created by the French in 1778. This unique lotto variation featured 27 squares in a unique layout of three rows and nine columns. The numbers within the boxes ranged from 1 through 90. Only five squares within each row contained numbers which subsequently led to the design of modern day bingo.

Hugh J. Ward standardized the modern game at carnivals in and around the Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania areas in the early 1920s. He went on to copyright "Bingo" and author the rule book on it in 1933.

The game was further popularized when at a traveling carnival near Atlanta in December 1929, toy merchandiser Edwin Lowe noticed how engaged the players were of a Beano game using Ward's rules and dried beans, a rubber stamp, and cardboard sheets. Lowe took the idea with him to 1930's New York where he introduced the game to his friends. He conducted bingo games similar to the ones he had witnessed and Ward had standardized, using dried beans, a rubber numbering stamp and card board. His friends loved the game. One theory on the origin of the name is that one of his players made bingo history when he was so excited to have won that he yelled out "Bingo" instead of "Beano." However the word was used in Great Britain since the 1770s and had migrated to the Pittsburgh region at least a generation before Lowe's 1930's claim.

The Lowe produced Bingo Game had two versions; the first a 12-card set for $1.00, the second a $2.00 set with 24 cards. Bingo was a wild success. By the 1940s Bingo games were all over the country. Lowe had many competitors he requested that they pay $1.00 a year to conduct the games and to use the name Bingo.

The business of bingo

In the US, the game is primarily staged by churches or charity organizations. Their legality and stakes vary by state regulation. In some states, bingo halls are rented out to sponsoring organizations, and such halls often run games almost every day. Church-run games, however, are normally weekly affairs held on the church premises. These games are usually played for modest stakes, although the final game of a session is frequently a *coverall* game that offers a larger jackpot prize for winning within a certain quantity of numbers called, and a *progressive* jackpot is one that may increase per session until it is won.

Commercial bingo games in the US are primarily offered by casinos (and then only in the state of Nevada), and by Native American bingo halls, which are often housed in the same location as Native American-run casinos. In Nevada, bingo is offered mainly by casinos that cater to local gamblers, and not the famous tourist resorts. They usually offer one-hour sessions, on the odd hours, i.e. 9am, 11am, 1pm etc. daily, typically from 9am thru 11pm; except Arizona Charlie's which has round the clock bingo, but still hour sessions, on the odd hour, with relatively modest stakes except for coverall jackpots. Station Casinos, a chain of locals-oriented casinos in Las Vegas, offers a special game each session, called "Jumbo" that ties all of its properties together with a large progressive jackpot.

Most Bingo parlors in Las Vegas use hand held machines on which the games are played, except the station casino, the Fiesta Casino which has paper bingo cards and no machines. Native American games are typically offered for only one or two sessions a day, and are often played for higher stakes than charity games in order to draw players from distant places. Some also offer a special progressive jackpot game that may tie together players from multiple bingo halls.

As well as bingo played in house, the larger commercial operators play some games linked by telephone across several, perhaps dozens, of their clubs. This increases the prize money, but greatly reduces the chance of winning due to the much greater number of players.

Bingo halls are sometimes linked together (as by Loto Quebec in Canada) in a network to provide alternative winning structures and bigger prizes.

Bingo is also the basis for online games sold through licensed lotteries. Tickets are sold as for other numbers games, and the players get receipts with their numbers arranged as on a regular bingo card. The daily or weekly draw is normally broadcast on television. These games offer higher prizes and are more difficult to win.

The bingo logic is frequently used on scratch card games. The numbers are pre-drawn for each card and hidden until the card is scratched. In lotteries with online networks the price is electronically confirmed to avoid fraud based on physical fixing.

In recent years bingo halls have seen a decline in attendance and revenue. In Ontario, revenue at charity bingos has declined from $250 million to $50 million in the past ten years alone. Reasons for this decline include the expansion of competing forms of entertainment, such as charity casinos, race tracks with slots, large commercial casinos, and even movie theatres. In order to compete in this competitive marketplace, bingo halls have turned to technology to stem the decline. Ontario alone has opened five eBingo centres which give players an option to play bingo on a computer, allowing them to play at their own pace. In addition, electronic bingo has managed to draw in a larger male audience. The bingo industry is now lobbying the Ontario government to expand the number of eBingo centres in hopes of seeing a rise in revenue and attendance at bingo halls.

Some gay bars and other LGBT-oriented organizations in both Canada and the United States also stage bingo events, commonly merged with a drag show and billed as "Drag Bingo" or "Drag Queen Bingo". "Drag Bingo" events were first launched in Seattle in the early 1990s as a fundraiser for local HIV/AIDS charities. They have since expanded to many other cities across North America, supporting a diverse range of charities.

Variations

U-Pick'Em bingo

A common form of bingo which allows players to mark the numbers they wish to monitor for a win. While this game closely resembles Keno, a game invented by the Chinese which predates the Han Dynasty, it is recognized as a variant of bingo and is permitted in almost all jurisdictions.

Quick Shot bingo

A game where numbers are pre-drawn and players purchase sealed bingo cards which are then matched against the pre-drawn numbers. If a specified pattern is achieved, then the player usually wins a prize according to a prize table. Some versions are played until a player achieves a top level prize and then new numbers are drawn and the game begins anew. This type of bingo may be played over days, weeks or months depending on the difficulty of achieving a top level prize.

Bonanza bingo

Typically 43 to 48 numbers are pre-drawn at the beginning of a bingo session. The numbers pre-drawn can be odd,even or the first 43 numbers that pop out the machine. Players purchase cards and mark out all even,odd or pre-drawn numbers. At a designated time, the caller asks if anyone has bingo. If no one does, the caller then draws one ball at a time until someone shout bingo. This game is sometimes played as a "progressive" game, where the jackpot increases if no one hits bingo before the desired amount of balls are called. If no one has achieved bingo before or on the desired ball count then the game is played again in another session in which the desired ball count increases by one and the jackpot is increased also. The player who hits bingo after the desired ball count does not win the jackpot but does win a consolation prize. If a player does hit bingo in the right amount of numbers then they win all the money in the jackpot. The ball count goes back to 43 after the jackpot is won and the ball count increases by one until the jackpot is won again.

Facebook bingo

Bingo on Facebook differs from traditional online or land based bingo games. Most games feature 'power-ups' which give individual players an advantage on winning the game when using such power-ups. Players can also collect, buy and share virtual items with friends on the Facebook platform. This adds to the community element which is otherwise not experience in other forms of online and land based bingo. Some great examples of Facebook bingo games are Bingo Bash, BamBam Bingo, Bingo Blitz and Bingo Island.

Horse racing bingo

Up to 15 players are randomly issued a number from 1 to 15 which corresponds with the top row of the bingo flashboard. Numbers are then drawn and the first person to have all five numbers in their column be drawn wins. This is a fast paced and exciting form of bingo typically played in fraternal organizations.

Table bingo

With the expansion of Tribal gaming across the US, there are numerous versions of bingo which now emulate the fast action of casino like table games but utilize the principals of bingo where players mark and monitor matrices cards with chips. Casino games like Roulette, Acey Duecy and Money Wheel have bingo counterparts which are permitted to be played under bingo licenses in many parts of the country.

Electronic bingo

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The advent of computer technology in bingo has blurred the lines between traditional slot machines and bingo slot machines. To the average person, bingo-based slot machines are physically indistinguishable from an RNG based slot machine typically seen in Atlantic City or Las Vegas. These devices are commonly called Class II machines, because the federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act separated bingo, including electronic and

mechanical aids, where players play against each other, from Class III slot machines, where player play against the house.

Death bingo

An inverted game where a player that gets a bingo is eliminated and knocked out of the game. The winner is the player who fills out the most spaces on their board before getting a bingo.

Bingo in Commonwealth

Bingo is a game of probability in which players mark off numbers on cards as the numbers are drawn randomly by a caller, the winner being the first person to mark off all their numbers. Bingo became increasingly more popular across the UK with more purpose-built bingo halls opened every year until 2005. Since 2005, Bingo Halls have seen a marked decline in revenues and the closure of many halls. The number of bingo clubs in Britain has dropped from nearly 600 in 2005 to under 400 as of January, 2014. These closures are blamed on high taxes, the smoking ban, and the rise in on-line gambling, amongst other things.

The game is thought to have begun in Italy in the 1500s. Bingo is believed to have migrated to France, Great Britain, and other parts of Europe in the 1700s. Players mark off numbers on a ticket as they are randomly called out, in order to achieve a winning combination. Bingo originates from the Italian lottery, *Il Gioco del Lotto d'Italia*. From Italy, the game spread to France and was known as *Le Lotto*, played by the French aristocracy. Tombola was used in nineteenth-century Germany as an educational tool to teach children multiplication tables, spelling, and even history.

Bingo played in the UK (90 ball bingo) is not to be confused with bingo played in the US (75 ball bingo), as the tickets and the calling are slightly different.

Gambling

In the UK, entering a bingo hall premises or taking part in online bingo is illegal to anyone under the age of 18 because it is regarded as gambling. According to The Rank Group, the average spend per visit to a Mecca Bingo club is £15.96, with people spending more and more money as electronic bingo becomes increasingly popular. Bingo is an area where people can suffer from problem gambling, just like any other form of gambling addiction. Bingo in the UK is regarded much more seriously as gambling rather than the old-fashioned way of playing it in a village hall or church. Bingo is now regarded as a leisure industry, thought to be worth around £1.3 billion.

Description of the game

(A typical Bingo ticket)

Strips of 6 tickets

A typical bingo ticket is shown to the right. It contains 27 spaces, arranged in nine columns by three rows. Each row contains five numbers and four blank spaces. Each column contains up to three numbers, which are arranged as follows, with some variation depending on bingo companies and/or where the game is played (e.g. hall, club or online):

- The first column contains numbers from 1 to 9 (or 10),
- The second column numbers from 10 (or 11) to 20,
- The third, 20 (or 21) to 30 and so on up until the last column, which contains numbers from 81 to 90.

Tickets are sold as strips of 6, because this allows every number from 1 to 90 to appear across all 6 tickets. This means that players are guaranteed to mark off a number every time a number is called.

Gameplay

The game is presided over by a caller, whose job it is to call out the numbers and validate winning tickets. He or she will announce the prize or prizes for each game before starting. The caller will then usually say "Eyes down" to indicate that he is about to start. He or she then begins to call numbers as they are randomly selected, either by an electronic random number generator (RNG), by drawing counters from a bag or by using balls in a mechanical draw machine. Calling may take the format of simple repetition in the framework, "Both the fives, fifty five", or "Two and three, twenty three", but some numbers have special calls due to their significance. In some independent clubs, numbers ending in a zero are described as 'blind'. So for example, thirty would be called as 'three-o blind 30' The use of blind numbers is generally restricted to independent bingo clubs, as it is not common practice in either of the largest chains of bingo club operators, Gala and Mecca bingo.

The different winning combinations are:

- **Line** – covering a horizontal line of five numbers on the ticket.
- **Two Lines** – covering any two lines on the same ticket.

- **Full House** – covering all fifteen numbers on the ticket.
  - In New Zealand in bonus (Super Housie) games, often three lines may be claimed – top, middle and bottom, usually with much larger prizes, are also played at various times throughout the session.
  - In the UK, however, it is most common for a line game to be followed directly by a two line game and a full house game, or just by a full house game.
  - In the UK's National Bingo Game only a full house game is ever played. The record payout for the national bingo game is over £1,100,000
  - In all cases, the last number called must be in the winning sequence. If a player does not stop the game in time and the caller calls out the next number the player's winning claim is often invalidated.

As each number is called, players check to see if that number appears on their tickets. If it does, they will mark it with a special marker called a "dabber" or a "dauber", shown here. When all the numbers required to win a prize have been marked off, the player shouts in order to attract the caller's attention. There are no formal rules as to what can be shouted, but most players will shout "Yes" or "Bingo". Some players may also choose to shout "Line" or "House" depending on the prize, whilst others choose to shout "house" for any win (including a line or two lines), players may use any other call to attract the caller's attention (should they wish). An official or member of staff will then come and check the claim:

- In the UK with the increasing computerisation of bingo systems, an Auto-Validate system is often used in large clubs where a 1 to 8 digit security code is read out by a member of staff and checked against the entry for that ticket on the system. This saves the club from the time-consuming exercise of reading out every number on the ticket.
- It is very unusual, even in the smallest of bingo clubs, for the numbers to be checked against the numbers generated by the caller. The only circumstances when this is done is when there is a computer error in the club that means that the Serial number or perm number of the winning ticket cannot be identified.

There will often be an interval halfway through the game. In UK bingo halls it is most common for Mechanised Cash Bingo to be played (see below).

Purchasing tickets

When players first arrive at the venue they can buy a book of tickets. Players generally buy their Main Session first, followed by any flyers such as National Bingo Game tickets, Early and Late sessions and special tickets.

In UK bingo clubs, all books are purchased from a book sales desk, located usually in the entrance of a club. Playing is divided into sessions with different books, each with a designated number of pages. In most UK bingo clubs, including all Gala and Mecca clubs,

the first session, known as either the 'Early Session' (at Mecca) or the 'First Chance' (at Gala) is a three-page book played at around 13:00 for afternoon sessions and 19:00 for evening sessions, although the actual start time can vary per club. This is followed by a break in which Mechanised Cash Bingo is played (see below). This is followed by the main session (known as the Main Event at Gala), which consists of around 11 pages of bingo with a break in the middle of around half an hour. When players purchase their tickets, almost all players purchase tickets for the main session. Some arrive earlier and purchase books for the early session. When the main session finishes, there is another break with more Mechanised Cash Bingo followed by a late session. At Mecca, the late session consists of three pages and costs £3. At gala, a link (see below) is played for the late session (known as the 'Last Chance') and consists of two pages and is free.

Linked bingo

Mainstage bingo can be played as a link, in the same way that Mechanised Cash Bingo is played as a link (see below). This allows more prize money to be offered per game. One person from one club is the caller, and his or her voice is broadcast across all clubs taking part in the link. At all Gala Bingo clubs in the UK, the 'Last Chance' is a two-page book of 6 tickets which is played across around 30 clubs. People play the game in exactly the same way as ordinary mainstage bingo, and the same game rules apply. The prize money is £100 for a line, £100 for two lines and £100 for a full house during afternoon sessions and £200 for a line, £200 for two lines and £200 for a full house during evening sessions across both pages of the book. If somebody has a claim, they are still required to shout. The host of the winning club then turns their microphone on and says 'claim in...' followed by the name of the club, which stops gameplay so that the claim can be checked.

It is sometimes necessary to have a linked game during the main session across certain clubs where the amount of ticket sales for that club has not been high enough to allow for a considerable amount of prize money. For example, during weekday afternoon sessions and Monday and Wednesday evening sessions, The Gala Bingo clubs in Aldershot, Dover, Maidstone, Nottingham St. Anne's and Wokingham link up for four pages of gameplay during the first half of Gala Bingo's Main Event. This allows them to offer better prize money to customers given the fact that the clubs are very small and don't generate enough money from book sales to offer considerable prize money.

Windfalls

Most bingo clubs offer windfalls on certain games, which allows clubs to offer significantly more prize money for a certain game without having to pay out that amount of prize money every time the game is played. Windfalls vary per club, some clubs offering more windfalls during a session of bingo than others. Some clubs charge for certain windfalls, whereas other windfalls are free. For example, the bingo bonus played at all Mecca clubs generally costs an extra £1 to play (see below). Examples are:

- Bullseye: call house in exactly 50 numbers and win an extra £50 (played at all Gala Bingo clubs in the UK)
- Double Bubble: call house on any of the numbers 11, 22, 33, 44, 55, 66, 77 or 88 and double your full house prize money (played at all Gala Bingo clubs in the UK)
- Lucky Stars: on pages of bingo where the Lucky Star game is played, each player is assigned a number from 1 to 90. This number is known as their Lucky Star. If they call house on their lucky star, then they can win an extra £1000 if playing during an afternoon session or £2000 if playing during an evening session. (played at all Gala Bingo clubs in the UK)
- Bingo Bonus: call house in a certain number of calls and win the jackpot. This is played across all Mecca Bingo clubs in the UK and the jackpot varies from £750 to £1500, depending on the club in which it is played. The number of calls in which to call house varies also, for example the Mecca Club in Beeston states that if you call house in 46 numbers or less on the bonus page, then you win an extra £1500. In Mecca Knotty Ash, if you call house in 49 numbers or less on the bingo bonus page, you win an extra £1000. In Mecca Thanet, if you call house in 47 numbers or less on the bingo bonus page, you win an extra £1000. As you can see, in some Mecca clubs it is easier to win £1000 on the bingo bonus page than others, because the number of calls required to win varies depending on the size of the club.
- Gala Bingo's High 5: (see below)

Electronic bingo

Most bingo clubs in the UK now offer electronic bingo. This allows players to purchase more than the standard 6 tickets per game, thus increasing their chances of winning. Customers purchase 'bingo packages', consisting of a certain number of tickets for each game, as well as extra flyers or special tickets such as National Bingo Game tickets. The electronic terminal on which the game is played automatically marks the numbers off the tickets when each number is called. It then orders the tickets so that the best tickets in play can be seen on the screen. This allows players to purchase a larger number of tickets than they would usually be able to handle from playing on paper. Of course, the cost of electronic bingo is proportionally higher than playing the standard 6 tickets. In order to encourage more customers to play electronic bingo, clubs usually sell 'Electronic Bingo Packages' which effectively makes the cost of each ticket better value for money. For example, if a club was selling strips of 6 for £12 for a session, which corresponds to £2 per ticket, then they may sell an Electronic Bingo Package of 24 tickets for £36; £1.50 per ticket.

The electronic board on which the tickets are played are usually black touchscreen terminals, with screens slightly larger than DVD cases. Players who use these terminals are required to use their club membership to add credit to their club 'accounts' in order to purchase bingo tickets. When a player wins, they are still required to shout. After their claim is verified, the winnings are automatically deposited into the players bingo account. This means that the staff member who verifies their claim does not need to physically provide them with their cash winnings. The electronic boards now offer many features

including Mechanised Cash Bingo (see below), in which players can play up to four boards instead of the usual two, as well as a variety of slot games and other gambling-based amusements. Players can either add credit to their bingo accounts to play these games, or spend bingo winnings. As of 2009, some larger Gala Bingo clubs have been able to offer 'Wizard Terminals', which use exactly the same software as their clubs' touchpads, but have large upright screens which people play on, and are dedicated to one section of the club, often known as the 'Wizard Area'. In June 2012, Mecca Bingo introduced, for the first time, a similar section of electronic screens to its club in Catford, as part of trial to see if they should be introduced into other clubs across the chain.

Two of the largest bingo club operators in the UK (Mecca Bingo Ltd. (part of The Rank Group plc) and Gala Bingo (Gala Coral Group Ltd.)) offer electronic bingo in most of their clubs. Electronic Bingo has become more and more popular in the UK in recent years as a means of improving the chances of a player to win, and making more profit for the club.

Online bingo

The prevalence of the online bingo games has dramatically increased the number of online gamers and many online gaming community members in the UK have started learning and participating in bingo.

Bingo for profit

Bingo is an expanding and highly profitable business, with many companies competing for the customers' money.

The largest companies with bingo halls in the United Kingdom are Mecca Bingo Ltd. (part of The Rank Group plc) and Gala Bingo (Gala Coral Group Ltd.) In Northern Ireland, one of the largest bingo club groups is the Planet Bingo Group, with seven clubs around the province.

Online bingo is also becoming increasingly popular with many different companies launching sites such as tombola.co.uk, Sun Bingo (which also owns Fabulous Bingo and jackpotjoy.com), meccabingo.com, galabingo.com, xbingo.com and many others.
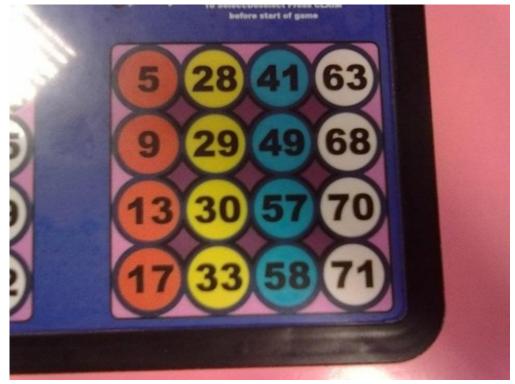
In Northern Ireland bingo clubs, where the laws governing bingo games are different from in England, Scotland and Wales, it is common, when playing "parti bingo" for the caller to announce that a position or "card" has won, and ending the game, without the participation of the person playing. This enables the customer to play more positions in hope of a better chance of winning.

Mechanised cash bingo

Mechanised cash bingo differs from paper bingo, because it is played on a bingo board that is 4x4 square, and split up into four columns of colours. The numbers are assigned the following colours:

- Numbers 1-20: red
- Numbers 21-40: yellow
- Numbers 41-60: blue
- Numbers 61-80: white

Colours are assigned to the numbers because it makes it easier to distinguish between different numbers. For example, 17 and 70 can be confused, so instead 17 becomes 'red 17' and 70 becomes 'white 70'. This means that the automated voice which calls the numbers does not need to say, for example 'one and seven, seventeen', but 'red seventeen'. This means that the numbers can be called a lot faster by the caller (usually around 1.5 seconds a number).

(A typical mechanised cash bingo board, built into the table top. Source: Arransc, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:A_bingo_80_cashline_board.jpg, CC [Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported](#) license)

In most UK bingo clubs, including most Gala Bingo clubs, mechanised cash bingo is played on a plastic board which has small windows which are used to cover up the numbers

when they are called. In all Mecca Bingo clubs, bingo cards are built into the table tops and the numbers are covered up using small plastic chips.

The company involved will then use a computer (called a stage rig controller) to automatically take a "participation fee" which is set by the operator (usually between 40% and 60%). The rest of the credit is then put into the prize pool to be played for. The customer chooses when they want to play, and insert credit into a coin slot. Almost all games cost either 50p or £1 per board. Most clubs have two possible boards to play per coin slot, known as Board A and Board B. When credit is added to play a game, the A board is automatically lit. In order to bring the B board into play, players are required to insert extra credit and press their claim buttons in order to activate their B boards. Players can also play on their electronic bingo terminals by touching each board that they wish to bring into play. On electronic boards, players can choose from an A, B, C or D board.

When a customer has a winning combination they press a claim button to stop the game. This is profitable for the operator as the games are so fast, and a huge parfee can be made in a few minutes. The prize money is then brought to their table. If someone wins on their electronic board, then the winnings are automatically deposited into their 'bingo account'. In Northern Ireland bingo clubs, where the laws governing bingo games are different from in Great Britain, it is common when playing mechanised cash bingo for the caller to announce that a position or 'card' has won, and ending the game without the participation of the person playing. In other words, clubs in Northern Ireland do not require players to press a claim button. This enables the customer to play more positions in hope of a better chance of winning.

In order to encourage more people to play, and to offer better prize money, larger bingo operators offer games which are linked with other clubs, generally known as 'the Link'. Generally, between 10 and 20 clubs will link up and play a much larger game of mechanised cash bingo, with prize money in the hundreds. One person from one club will host the game, talking to all other clubs simultaneously over their microphone system. When someone in a club wins, the host from the winning club will say 'claim in...' followed by the name of the club. For example, if there was a winner in Gala Bingo in Wavertree Park, then the host of the Wavertree Park club would immediately turn on their microphone and say 'Claim in Wavertree Park'. As of September 2011, when Gala Bingo stopped operating their own version of a national bingo game, they introduced a Mechanised Cash Bingo link known as 'Party Xtra XL'. This game is played amongst all Gala Bingo clubs in Great Britain before each Main Session, with prize money typically ranging between £4,000 and £8,000 for weekday afternoon sessions and between £10,000 and £21,000 for evening and weekend afternoon sessions. The highest amount ever won for this game was approximately £26,000, won by a single player on 17 October 2011. Most Gala clubs were exceptionally busy, because this was the date of Gala's 20th anniversary.

In November 2012, Mecca introduced its own version of Gala's National Party Xtra XL game, known as the Richest Link. Equally, all Mecca clubs in the UK link up offering prize money worth thousands of pounds. In addition to this, if a winning player claims on their

top red number, then they win the jackpot of an extra £10000 on top of their full house prize money.

Mechanised cash bingo has also allowed bingo halls to focus on the more lucrative business of bingo.

National Bingo Game

The National Bingo Game is a bingo game operated by the National Bingo Game Association since 1986 and played in some British bingo clubs. The largest National Bingo Game operator in the UK is Mecca Bingo with approximately 97 clubs participating in the game.

Gala Bingo's High 5 game

Gala Bingo withdrew from the National Bingo Game in 2008 and created their own version of the game, known as the High 5 game. The game was played immediately before the second half of each Main Event, the same time as when they would have previously played the National Bingo Game. The game was a link game across all clubs in the UK. The prizes were £1000 for a line, £2000 for two lines and £3000 for a full house. In addition to the standard full house prizes were windfalls, offering the chance to win more money. If the winning player called house on any number ending in the number 5, then they took £25000 instead of £3000. If the player called house on the number 5, then they won half of the Progressive jackpot, with the other half of the progressive jackpot being shared amongst all other members of the club in which the winning ticket was won. In September 2011, Gala ended the High 5 game. The Party Xtra XL game was then introduced (see above) and the High 5 game itself was replaced with the 'Special Ticket' (see below).

Gala Bingo's special tickets

Special tickets are named after each Gala Bingo club in which they are played. For example, the tickets are known as 'The Wavertree Special' in Gala Wavertree Park. The special tickets are played with numbers 1-80 in exactly the same format as the mechanised cash bingo (see above), but are played on paper (unless the customer is playing on an electronic terminal). It's a simple full house game with a given in-house jackpot based on the number of tickets sold. In addition the following windfalls apply:

- Call house in between 45 and 51 calls and win an extra £500
- Call house in between 41 and 44 calls and win an extra £5000
- Call house in 40 numbers or less and win an extra £20000

British bingo nicknames

In the game of bingo in the United Kingdom, callers announcing the numbers have traditionally used some nicknames to refer to particular numbers if they are drawn. The nicknames are sometimes known by the rhyming phrase 'bingo lingo' and there are rhymes for each number from 1 to 90, some of which date back many decades. In some clubs the 'bingo caller' will say the number, with the assembled players intoning the rhyme in a call and response manner, in others, the caller will say the rhyme and the players chant the number. In 2003, Butlins holiday camps introduced some more modern calls devised by a Professor of Popular Culture in an attempt to bring fresh interest to bingo.

Since the introduction of the electronic random number generator (RNG) in bingo halls in the UK, the usage of the nicknames or bingo calls above in mainstream bingo has dramatically decreased.

This is a **list of British bingo nicknames**. In the game of bingo in the United Kingdom, callers announcing the numbers have traditionally used some nicknames to refer to particular numbers if they are drawn. The nicknames are sometimes known by the rhyming phrase 'bingo lingo' and there are rhymes for each number from 1 to 90, some of which date back many decades. In some clubs, the 'bingo caller' will say the number, with the assembled players intoning the rhyme in a call and response manner, in others, the caller will say the rhyme and the players chant the number. In 2003, Butlins holiday camps introduced some more modern calls devised by a Professor of Popular Culture in an attempt to bring fresh interest to bingo.

- **Kelly's Eye**: Military slang; possibly a reference to Ned Kelly
- **One little duck**: From the resemblance of the number 2 to a duck; see '22'
- **Me and you**: Romantic rhyme
- **You and me**: Romantic rhyme
- **Tom Mix:** After Tom Mix, a star of silent era Westerns
- **Lucky**: 7 is considered a lucky number in some cultures
- **Doctor's Orders:** Number 9 was a laxative pill given out by army doctors in WWII.
- **(David's) Den**: The name refers to whoever currently resides at Number 10 Downing Street.
- **Legs**: A reference to the shape of the number resembling a pair of legs, often chicken legs specifically. The players often wolf whistle in response.
- **One dozen**: A reference to there being 12 units in one dozen.
- **Unlucky for some**: A reference to 13 being an unlucky number.
- **The Lawnmower**: The original lawnmower had a 14 inch blade.
- **Goodbye Teens**: Nineteen is the age at which people stop being teenagers.
- **Key of the Door**: The traditional age of majority.
- **Two little ducks**: The numeral 22 resembles the profile of two ducks. Response is often, "quack, quack, quack".
- **The Lord is My Shepherd**: The first words of Psalm 23 of the Old Testament

- **Two and six, half a crown**: Pre-decimalised currency in the UK.
- **Duck and a crutch**: The number 2 looks like a duck (see '2') and the number 7 looks like a crutch.
- **Two and eight, in a state**: Rhyming slang for "state".
- **Burlington Bertie**: Reference to a music hall song of the same name composed in 1900, and a more famous parody (*Burlington Bertie from Bow*) written in 1915. Burlington Bertie is 100 to 30 on the race track
- **Dirty Gertie**: Common rhyme derived from the given name Gertrude, used as a nickname for the statue La Delivrance installed in North London in 1927. The usage was reinforced by *Dirty Gertie from Bizerte*, a bawdy song sung by Allied soldiers in North Africa during the Second World War.
- **Jump and Jive**: A dance step
- **Droopy drawers**: Rhyme that refers to sagging trousers.
- **Danny La Rue**: A reference to drag entertainer Danny La Rue. Also used for other numbers ending in '2' (see '72' below).
- **Chicken vindaloo**: Introduced by Butlins in 2003.
- **Here comes Herbie**: 53 is the racing number of Herbie the VW Beetle. Players may reply "beep beep"!
- **Shotts Bus**: Refers to the former number of the bus from Glasgow to Shotts.
- **Heinz Beanz**: Refers to "Heinz 57", the "57 Varieties" slogan of the H. J. Heinz Company.
- **The Brighton Line**: Refers to the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway
- **Stop work**: A reference to the British age of mandatory retirement.
- **Trombones**: "Seventy-six Trombones" is a popular marching song, from the musical *The Music Man*.
- **Was she worth it?**: This refers to the pre-decimal price of a marriage licence in Britain, 7/6d. The players shout back "Every Penny"
- **Gandhi's Breakfast**: Imagine looking down from above on Gandhi sitting cross-legged in front of a plate or "ate nothing"
- **Stop Farting!**: The 8 is supposed to be the bottom and the 3 is the fart. Then when this is called, a player says "Who? Me?"

Bingo cards

Bingo Cards are playing cards designed to facilitate the game of Bingo in its various forms around the world.

History

In the early 1500s the people of Italy began to play a game called "Lo Gioco del Lotto d'Italia," which literally means "The lottery of Italy." The game operated very much like a modern lottery as players placed bets on the chances of certain numbers being drawn. By the 1700s, a version of Lo Gioco del Lotto d'Italia was played in France, where paper cards were first used to keep track of numbers drawn by a caller.

Before the advent of printing machines, numbers on bingo cards were either painted by hand or stamped using rubber stamps onto thick cardboard. Cards were reusable, meaning players used tokens to mark called numbers. The number of unique cards was limited as randomization had to occur by hand. Before the advent of online Bingo, cards were printed on card stock and, increasingly, disposable paper. While cardboard and paper cards are still in use, Bingo halls are turning more to "flimsies" (also called "throwaways") — a card inexpensively printed on very thin paper to overcome increasing cost — and electronic Bingo cards to overcome the difficulty with randomization.

Types of Cards

There are two types of Bingo cards. One is a 5x5 grid meant for 75-ball Bingo, which is largely played in the U.S. The other uses a 9x3 grid for U.K. style "Housie" or 90-ball Bingo.

75-ball Bingo Cards

Players use cards that feature five columns of five squares each, with every square containing a number (except the middle square, which is designated a "FREE" space). The columns are labeled "B" (numbers 1–15), "I" (numbers 16–30), "N" (numbers 31–45), "G" (numbers 46–60), and "O" (numbers 61–75).

Randomization

A popular Bingo myth claims that U.S. Bingo innovator Edwin S. Lowe contracted Columbia University professor Carl Leffler to create 6,000 random and unique Bingo cards. The effort is purported to have driven Leffler insane. Manual random permutation is an onerous and time-consuming task that limited the number of Bingo cards available for play for centuries.

The calculation of random permutations is a matter of statistics principally relying on the use of factorial calculations. In its simplest sense, the number of unique "B" columns assumes that all 15 numbers are available for the first row. That only 14 of the numbers are available for the second row (one having been consumed for the first row). And that only 13, 12, and 11 numbers are available for each of the third, fourth, and fifth rows. Thus, the number of unique "B" (and "I", "G", and "O", respectively) columns is (15*14*13*12*11) = 360,360. The combinations of the "N" column differ due to the use of the free space. Therefore, it has only (15*14*13*12) = 32,760 unique combinations. The product of the five rows (360,360^4 * 32,760) describes the total number of unique playing cards. That number is 552,446,474,061,128,648,601,600,000 simplified as 552x10^{24} or 552 septillion.

Printing a complete set of Bingo cards is impossible for all practical purposes. If one *trillion* cards could be printed each *second,* a printer would require more than seventeen thousand *years* to print just one set. However, while the number combination of each card is unique, the number of winning cards is not. If a winning game using e.g. row #3 requires the number set B10, I16, G59, and O69, there are 333,105,095,983,435,776 (333 quadrillion) winning cards. Therefore, calculation of the number of Bingo cards is more practical from the point of view of calculating the number of unique *winning* cards.

For example, in a simple one-pattern game of Bingo a winning card may be the first person to complete row #3. Because the "N" column contains a free space, the maximum number of cards that guarantee a unique winner is (15*15*15*15) = 50,625. Because the players need to only focus on row #3, the remaining numbers in rows #1, #2, #4, and #5 are statistically insignificant for purposes of game play and can be selected in any manner as long as no number is duplicated on any card.

Perhaps the most common pattern set, known as "Straight-line Bingo" is completing any of the five rows, columns, or either of the main diagonals. In this case the possibility of multiple winning cards is unavoidable because any one of twelve patterns on every card can win the game. But not all 552 septillion cards need to be in play. Any given set of numbers in a column (e.g., 15, 3, 14, 5, 12 in the "B" column) can be represented in any of 5! (for the "B", "I", "G", and "O" columns. 4! for the "N" column) or 120 different ways. These combinations are all statistically redundant. Therefore, the total number of cards can be reduced by a factor of (5!^{4} * 4!) = 4,976,640,000 for a total unique winning card set of 111,007,923,832,370,565 or 111 quadrillion. (Still impossibly enormous, but our eager printer described above would only need 1.29 days to complete the task.)

The challenge of a multiple-pattern game is selecting a winner wherein a tie is possible. The solution is to name the player who shouts "Bingo!" first, is the winner. However, it is more practical and manageable to use card sets that avoid multiple-pattern games. The single-pattern #3 row has already been mentioned, but its limited card set causes problems for the emerging online Bingo culture. Larger patterns, e.g. a diamond pattern consisting of cell positions B3, I2 and I4, N1 and N5, G2 and G4, and O3, are often used by online Bingo games to permit large number of players while ensuring only one player can win. (A unique winner is further desirable for online play where network delays and other

communication interference can unfairly affect multiple winning cards. The winner would be determined by the first person to click the "Bingo!" button (emulating the shout of "Bingo!" during a live game).) In this case the number of unique winning cards is calculated as $(15^2*(15*14)^3/2^3) = 260,465,625$ (260 million). The division by two for each of the "I", "N", and "G" columns is necessary to once again remove redundant number combinations, such as [31,#,#,#,45] and [45,#,#,#,31] in the N column.

90-ball bingo cards

In UK bingo, or Housie, cards are usually called "tickets." The cards contain three rows and nine columns. Each row contains five numbers and four blank spaces randomly distributed along the row. Numbers are apportioned by column (1–9, 10–19, 20–29, 30–39, 40–49, 50–59, 60–69, 70–79 and 80–90).

Bingo Cards and the Odds of Winning

It should be noted that creating a set of unique winning cards in no way predicts the outcome of a game. Random selection of the balls ensures Bingo's status as a game of chance. However, the odds of winning a game of Bingo has no relation to the number of Bingo cards that can be created, the number of patterns allowed, or the nature of the patterns. This is due to the fact that even if all 75 balls in a U.S. game must be called, there will always be a winner in a game of Bingo, effectively granting every card an equal chance for success. Therefore, in respect to the cards, the odds of winning are based only in the number of cards in play. If a player is playing five cards and one-hundred cards are in play, his or her odds of winning are 5:100 or 1:20. The only modification to this simple calculation comes from the method of an individual player's actions: how well they hear the caller, how effectively they can daub their cards, how quickly they can shout "Bingo!", etc. However, none of these actions are quantifiable. Therefore, it is better said that the above player's odds are "at best" 1:20 depending on how perfectly the player plays the game.

Buzzword bingo

Buzzword bingo (also known as **bullshit bingo**) is a bingo-style game where participants prepare bingo cards with buzzwords and tick them off when they are uttered during an event, such as a meeting or speech. The goal of the game is to tick off a predetermined number of words in a row and then yell "Bingo!" (or "Bullshit!").

Concept

Buzzword bingo is generally played in situations where audience members feel that the speaker, in an effort to mask a lack of actual knowledge, is relying too heavily on buzzwords rather than providing relevant details. Business meetings led by guest speakers or notable company personalities from higher up the pay scale are often viewed as a good opportunity for buzzword bingo, as the language used by these speakers often includes predictable references to arcane business concepts, which are perfect for use in the creation of buzzword bingo cards.

An important element of the game is having the courage to actually yell "Bingo!". In order to avoid the reprimands that would likely result from doing so, participants may resort to looking at one another and silently mouthing the word "Bingo". An alternate variation requires the person who has achieved bingo to raise his or her hand and use the word "Bingo" within the context of a comment or question.

Creation and popularization

Buzzword Bingo was invented in 1993 by Silicon Graphics principal scientist Tom Davis, in collaboration with Seth Katz. The concept was popularized by a Dilbert comic strip in 1994, in which the characters play during an office meeting.

One documented example occurred when Al Gore, then the Vice President of the United States, known for his liberal use of buzzwords hyping technology, spoke at MIT's 1996 graduation. Hackers had distributed bingo cards containing buzzwords to the graduating class.

In 2007, IBM created a TV advertisement centered around the concept of buzzword bingo.

The card game

Bingo is a card game named by analogy to the game bingo. The game is played with a bridge deck of 52 cards. The dealer gives each player X cards, which are held in the hand or placed face-down in front of the player. The dealer places Y cards face down in the center of the table. Typically X=Y=5.

Gameplay

A round of play consists of betting, followed by the dealer turning over one of the center cards, so that it is facing-up. Any card in a player's hand that has the same rank value as the rank of the center card just turned are now revealed and discarded. The discards can be placed face-up in front of the player.

Betting rounds continue until a player has all of the cards knocked from their hand. In analogy to regular bingo, the first player to realize their hand is empty says "bingo" and

claims the pot. If no player is knocked out after all the center cards have been revealed, then all of the players reveal their remaining cards. A winner can be determined by adding the rank values of cards remaining in the hand.

In determining value, jacks are valued at 11, queens, at 12, kings at 13, and aces at either 1 or 15, depending on whether the players have agreed that high rank wins or low rank wins. The game can also be played with cards having blackjack value, with all face cards given value of 10 and the ace having value of either 1 or 11.

Variations

In "Sixty Six Bingo" each player gets six cards and there are six common cards. Instead of betting each round, there are betting rounds before any common cards are turned over, after the first two cards are turned over, after the third and fourth cards are turned over and after the fifth and sixth cards are turned over. If no player claims the pot by being knocked out, then the pot is split between high hand and low hand. If a player's remaining cards include an ace, then it is possible to be both high hand and low hand.

Another variation gives each player five cards face down, and ten common cards are to be placed in the center of the table, face down. The dealer will turn over the first common card and call it out. If a player has the same rank in their hand, they will then discard. The dealer will continue to call out each card until all of the common cards have been turned face up. The player that is able to discard all five cards, calls bingo and wins the hand.

Keno

Keno is a lottery-like gambling game often played at modern casinos, and is also offered as a game in some state lotteries. A traditional live casino keno game uses a circular glass enclosure called a "bubble" containing 80 balls which determine the ball draw result. Each ball is imprinted with a number 1 through 80. During the ball draw, a blower pushes air into the bubble and mixes the balls. A "caller" presses a lever opening a tube, where the balls lift one at a time into a "V" shaped tube called the "rabbit ears". The caller and a "verifier" record each of 20 balls drawn, and the computerized keno system calculates all wagers based on the numbers drawn.

Players wager by marking an "S" over the "spot" choices on a blank keno ticket form with 80 numbered selection boxes (1 to 80). After all players successfully place their wagers, the casino draws 20 balls (numbers) at random. Some casinos automatically call the ball draw at preset timed intervals regardless of whether or not players are waiting to place a wager.

Each casino sets its own series of pay scale choices called "paytables". The player is paid based on how many numbers drawn match the numbers selected on the ticket and according to the paytable selected with regard to the wager amount. Players will find a wide variation of keno paytables from casino to casino and a large deviation in the house edge set for each of those paytables. Additionally, each casino typically offers many different paytables and specialty keno bets for customers to choose from, each with its own unique house edge. No two casinos' keno paytables are identical. There are several Reno and Las Vegas casinos offering as many as 20 or 30 different paytables from which the player can choose.

The house edge ranges from less than 4% to well over 35%. The typical house edge for non-slot casino games is between 0% and 5%.

History

The word "keno" has French or Latin roots (Fr. *quine* "five winning numbers", L. *quini* "five each"), but by all accounts the game originated in China. A spurious legend has it that the invention of the game saved an ancient city in time of war, and its widespread popularity helped raise funds to build the Great Wall of China. In modern China, the idea of using lotteries to fund a public institution was not accepted before the late 19th century.

Chinese lottery is not documented before 1847 when the Portuguese Government of Macao decided to grant a licence to lottery operators. According to some, results of keno games in great cities were sent to outlying villages and hamlets by carrier pigeons, resulting in its Chinese name 白鸽票 *báigē piào*, literally "white dove ticket", pronounced

baak-gap-piu in Cantonese (which the Western spelling 'pak-ah-pu' / 'pakapoo' was based on).

The Chinese played the game using sheets printed with Chinese characters, often the first 80 characters of the *Thousand Character Classic*, from which the winning characters were selected. Eventually, Chinese immigrants introduced keno to the West when they sailed across the Pacific Ocean to help build the First Transcontinental Railroad in the 19th century, where the name was Westernized into **boc hop bu** and **puck-apu**. By 1866 it had already become a widely popular gambling game in Houston, Texas, under the name 'Keno'.

Odds

Keno payouts are based on how many numbers the player chooses and how many numbers are "hit", multiplied by the proportion of the player's original wager to the "base rate" of the paytable. Typically, the more numbers a player chooses and the more numbers hit, the greater the payout, although some paytables pay for hitting a lesser number of spots. For example, it is not uncommon to see casinos paying $500 or even $1,000 for a "catch" of 0 out of 20 on a 20 spot ticket with a $5.00 wager. Payouts vary widely from casino to casino. Most casinos allow paytable wagers of between 1 and 20 numbers, but some limit the choice to only 1 through 10, 12 and 15 numbers, or "spots" as keno aficionados call the numbers selected.

The probability of a player hitting all 20 numbers on a 20 spot ticket is approximately 1 in 3.5 quintillion (1 in 3,535,316,142,212,174,336 to be exact). If every person now alive played one keno game every single second of their lives, there would be about one solid 20 jackpot-winning ticket to date. If all these possible keno tickets were laid end to end, they would span the Milky Way galaxy—and only one of them would be a winner. To this day, there are no reports of a keno player lucky enough to match all 20 numbers.

Even though it is virtually impossible to hit all 20 numbers on a 20 spot ticket, the same player would typically also get paid for hitting "catches" 0, 1, 2, 3, and 7 through 19 out of 20, often with the 17 through 19 catches paying the same as the solid 20 hit. Some of the other paying "catches" on a 20 spot ticket or any other ticket with high "solid catch" odds are in reality very possible to hit:

- **Hits: Odds**
- 0: 1 in 843.380 (0.11857057%)
- 1: 1 in 86.446 (1.15678605%)
- 2: 1 in 20.115 (4.97142576%)
- 3: 1 in 8.009 (12.48637168%)
- 4: 1 in 4.877 (20.50318987%)
- 5: 1 in 4.287 (23.32807380%)
- 6: 1 in 5.258 (19.01745147%)
- 7: 1 in 8.826 (11.32954556%)

- 8: 1 in 20.055 (4.98618021%)
- 9: 1 in 61.420 (1.62814048%)
- 10: 1 in 253.801 (0.39401000%)
- 11: 1 in 1,423.822 (0.07023351%)
- 12: 1 in 10,968.701 (0.00911685%)
- 13: 1 in 118,084.920 (0.00084685%)
- 14: 1 in 1,821,881.628 (0.00005489%)
- 15: 1 in 41,751,453.986 (0.00000240%)
- 16: 1 in 1,496,372,110.872 (0.00000007%)
- 17: 1 in 90,624,035,964.712
- 18: 1 in 10,512,388,171,906.553
- 19: 1 in 2,946,096,785,176,811.500
- 20: 1 in 3,535,316,142,212,173,800.000

Odds change significantly based on the number of spots that are picked on each ticket.

Modern keno

The ball draw occurs at the "keno booth". The ball draw is typically determined by one of four devices:

1. Traditional "Rabbit Ear" blower
2. "AKV": Automated blower in which the balls are encoded, read by a computer, then sent to a computerized keno system for processing
3. Random Number Generator: An electronic number selection device approved by gaming authorities
4. "Hand Cage": A spinning metal ball cage which rolls the numbers into a slot where they are validated by a person

"Keno runners" walk around calling, "keno!" and offer to carry players' wagers to the keno booth for processing. The keno runner is handed the wager payment and the "inside ticket" (keno wager forms filled out by the customer) and takes the wager and ticket to the keno counter for processing. The keno runner returns with an "outside" ticket, which is the official wager receipt. It is incumbent on the player to check the ticket for errors before the game ball draw is drawn. Any errors not corrected before the ball draw begins are not normally rectified and the "outside" ticket receipt governs in any disputes.

In modern keno, players are offered the option of playing multi-race keno, which books a keno ticket for a number of sequential keno races up to 1000. The races must always start on the next sequential race to be drawn. When the sequence of wagered games is finished, the player is able to redeem any winnings within the time constraints specified in the casino's rules booklet.

After picking wager numbers, recording them at the keno booth and obtaining the "keno ticket" (official wager receipt), the player watches the ball draw in progress as the spot

(number) selections light either on an electronic keno board or on a video monitor. Keno displays are typically found throughout the casino and sometimes even appear on a television channel in casino hotel rooms. Nowadays, after playing keno at a participating casino, keno players can even take their multi-race keno tickets out of the casino to watch the live ball draw or check historical draw results at [www.kenousa.com] anywhere there is a computer and an Internet connection.

In the past, a winning ticket needed to be taken to the keno booth for collection immediately after the race results were posted, and drawings usually took place approximately every five or six minutes. In days of old, if the player tried to redeem a winning ticket after the next sequential race began, the ticket was declared expired and no money was paid out even if it won. Nowadays most casinos set their "late pay" window to accommodate the player, however there is great variation in the published late pay window from casino to casino. Tickets played for 21 races or more typically offer one year for collection in most major gaming jurisdictions. Tickets played for under 21 races have a great disparity of late pay rules from casino to casino. Keno players are wise to read the rules published in the host casino's keno paybook to determine when a keno pay will expire and become uncollectible. Gaming authorities require that all pay scales and keno rules be posted in a prominent location in keno areas.

An embellishment of keno is "way" keno or "combination" keno. When playing a way or combination keno ticket, the player circles groups of numbers within the spots marked and specifies combinations of groups which combine together to make different "ways". For example, if a player marks four numbers, and circles two groups of two spots each, a combination ticket could be made in which the gambler plays one 4 spot and two 2 spots (2-2). If an additional group of two were added and circled, the player could play ways 1/6, 3/4 and 3/2 (2-2-2), which at $1.00 per way would create a $7.00 per race wager. Serious keno players use great imagination on keno tickets to make complex combinations of groups and ways with varying numbers of spots in each group.

As alternatives to traditional paytables which offer the selection of 1 to 20 spots, a number of special paytables are available and are often offered as a wager choice. For example, with the Top/Bottom paytable the keno player does not select any spots. Rather, the player is betting that the ball draw top 40 and bottom 40 ball distribution will be uneven. Top/Bottom typically begins paying on a 7/13 or 13/7 ball distribution between the top half (1 to 40) and bottom half (41 to 80) of the keno grid and the payouts increase with each higher ball draw distribution disparity. The same principle is applied for the Left/Right or Odd/Even paytables. Other specialty paytables are Top Only, Bottom Only, Left Only, Right Only, Odd Only, Even Only, Parlay, Exacta, Edge, Square, or eXtra Million, which is proprietary to XpertX Keno Systems. However the traditional 1 though 20 spot pick is by far the most popular variety of live keno.

Lottery versions of keno are now used in many National Lotteries or state licensed Lotteries around the world. The games have different formulas depending on the wanted price structure and whether the game is slow (daily or weekly), or if it is a fast game with just minutes between the draws. The drawn numbers are typically published on TV for

the slow games and on monitors at the point of sale for the fast games. A video keno machine sometimes has a greater customer edge than a traditional keno game. However, because live keno payouts are configurable at will by the host casino, some live keno paytables house hold percentages match or are even lower those for video keno machines, which almost always have fixed paytables that don't change.

Detailed mathematical analysis

The version of Keno played in Maryland serves as a case study in the precise calculation of win probabilities and expected return—the latter referring to the result to be realized in the long run from each unit invested.

In Maryland, anyone 18 or older may play keno at any of thousands of establishments that are wired with a television screen and a pink machine resembling a cash register. The player uses a pencil to complete a small slip; the attendant feeds the slip to the machine, which generates a computer-printed ticket that is protected from tampering via cryptographic hash function. Games—which are played every four minutes or so—can be viewed over the accompanying television monitor. The computer selects twenty numbers (balls) between one and eighty. The payout is calculated based upon how many numbers (balls) were chosen and how many were matched. Intriguingly, for the nine-spot and ten-spot games, there is a payout if the player fails to match any numbers—it obviously being an unusual event for none of nine or ten selected numbers (balls) to match any of the twenty "dealt," so to speak, from the pool of eighty.

One finds that the best game for the player is the three-spot game, which realizes an expected return of approximately 62 cents for every dollar invested, or approximately a 38% loss. The seven-spot game ranks close behind, returning just over 60 cents per dollar. Perhaps not surprisingly, despite the astonishingly high payoff for strong performance, the ten-spot game is by far the poorest from the player's perspective.

Loteria

Lotería is a Mexican game of chance, similar to bingo, but using images on a deck of cards instead of plain numbers on ping pong balls. Every image has a name and an assigned number, but the number is usually ignored. Each player has at least one *tabla*, a board with a randomly created 4 x 4 grid of pictures with their corresponding name and number. Players choose what *tabla* they want to play with, from a variety of previously created *tablas*. Each one presents a different selection of images.

Lotería is the Spanish word for lottery. The deck is composed of a set of 54 different images, each one in a card. To start the game, the caller (*cantor*, or singer) randomly selects a card from the deck and announces it to the players by its name, sometimes using a riddle or humorous patter instead of reading the card name. The players with a matching pictogram on their board mark it off with a chip or other kind of marker (many Mexican people traditionally use small rocks, crown corks or pinto beans as markers). The first player with four chips in a horizontal, vertical or diagonal row, squared pattern,any other previously specified pattern, or fills the *tabla* first shouts "¡Lotería!" (Lottery!) or "¡Buenas!" (Good!) and is the winner.

History

The origin of lottery can be traced far back in history. The game originated in Italy in the 15th century and was brought to New Spain (Mexico) in 1769. In the beginning, *lotería* was a hobby of the upper classes, but eventually it became a tradition at Mexican fairs.

The most famous maker of the card sets nowadays is *Pasatiempos Gallo, S.A. de C.V.*, headquartered in the city of Santiago de Querétaro, (operating as Don Clemente, Inc. in the United States), which began publishing the game in 1887 when Don Clemente Jacques started to produce the cards. The current images have become iconic in Mexican culture, as well as gaining popularity in the US and some European countries.

Prize Bingo

Prize Bingo is a game derived from standard Bingo games which is particularly popular in UK seaside resorts. Rather than winning cash prizes as per normal bingo, Prize Bingo instead offers points to the winner of each game which can be redeemed in a dedicated shop near to or within the Prize Bingo area although some games reward players with free games or tokens.

Prize Bingo is usually found in UK amusement arcades, particularly in seaside resorts such as Blackpool. Essentially, a prize bingo installation is a set of linked slot machines.

Early forms of prize bingo had a 'ball machine' - this mixed up colour-coded balls with each number on and the machine would release numbers when a button was pressed, these would be announced by the caller and put aside, being returned to the 'pool' when the game had finished, usually via some kind of mechanical device. However, in the last few decades, these installations (if they are still open) have been converted to electronic operation, with most systems now being controlled by some kind of computer. This has many benefits over traditional methods, including less electromechanical equipment to service, and more importantly, the opportunity for faster games, with the winner being automatically verified by computer, rather than having to shout their numbers out for the caller to check. This article is mainly concerned with the modern electronic systems.

How to play

The game is usually played via dedicated consoles connected to a central console where the Caller sits. Players can join a game by inserting coins into the slot on their console. Every console has a different order of numbers. Numbers are generated at random and The Caller reads them out. Most UK Prize Bingo installations have 75 numbers spread out across three different cards. The standard stake (usually 20p) enables two cards to be played while an extra 10p enables the third (usually gold) card to be played as well, increasing the chance of winning. If a player has activated all three cards, they have every number on one of the cards.

The aim varies depending on the individual establishment and the caller. Often, the aim is to cross off five numbers in a line on the same card diagonally, horizontally or vertically OR to cross off the four corner squares on the same card. Some games may be a certain type of line only or no corner squares. Bonus games are also played sometimes where if you create a line in a certain position, you win a special prize. If there are not many players then the caller may decide to play a full-house game instead of a line. This takes longer and thus means less payout for the operator. Often, these settings are designed to be 'foolproof' so the prize amount, bonuses and game types are automatically selected by the computer (which can be configured by the arcade managers for optimum financial gain) depending on the number of players and how many credits remain on the player's

machines. The caller usually just has to literally call the numbers and press a button to advance the numbers.

While the consoles are fitted with sliders for players to cover up the numbers being read, unlike most derivatives of Bingo, Prize Bingo is usually configured so that the computer detects as soon as somebody has a winning combination and ends the game automatically, without the need for any intervention from the player. If more than one player has a winning combination, the prize is shared. Some games though require the player to press a button when they have a claim and only then will the computer check it and end the game (or reject it if the player has made a mistake).

As well as being announced verbally, most prize bingo establishments feature a TV monitor or several that shows the last called number and how many numbers have been called. In addition to this, the consoles often have a small LED display that shows this information when a game is in progress or the number of remaining credits when there is no game in progress.

Prize bingo establishments also usually feature a 'floorwalker', whose job it is to supply change, deal with machine malfunctions and sometimes to offer hospitality, such as refreshments with the aim of encouraging customers to keep playing. Some arcades also give out 'free play' vouchers, these are nearly always only valid after a certain time - again, these are intended to get customers to return.

Prizes

The majority of prize bingo setups automatically release a 'token' (a round metal coin) into the player's winnings tray when they have made a valid win. The number of tokens won each time depends on how many people were playing and which card had the winning line ('Gold cards' typically pay double the wins of an ordinary card). These tokens can be collected and redeemed for prizes in the bingo hall's prize shop or put back into the machine as credits, although it is rare for them to have any monetary value.

Bingo number slang

As Prize Bingo is mainly played for fun unlike more serious forms of bingo, slang names for numbers are commomly used. On a Prize Bingo board, the numbers are usually colour-coded:

- 1 - 15: Red
- 16 - 30: Yellow
- 31 - 45: Blue
- 46 - 60: White
- 61 - 75: Green

The caller usually reads out the colour then the number, i.e. "Red on its own number 1", "Green seven and five seventy five", "Yellow two and four, a Duck At The Door"

Odds of winning

With Prize Bingo, somebody is guaranteed to win every game. While some establishments will not operate Prize Bingo until a certain number of people are there, the more people are playing, the less chance you have of winning. It is a random game of luck with no skill involved, however players can increase their chances of winning by playing more cards, such as the 'gold card' available on many setups.

The most common type of prize bingo operating software allows the caller to appear to 'shuffle' the numbers. Random numbers flash up on the screen. Whether this actually randomises the numbers or just encourages customers to think that they may have more luck with the 'new' numbers is unknown.

Known Prize Bingo locations

United Kingdom

While prize bingo a part of the traditional British seaside holiday, the number of places it can be played is declining. It is often more profitable for amusement arcades to replace prize bingo installations with high-jackpot fruit machines. None are known to exist south of Great Yarmouth except in Dawlish, Devon. The prize bingo hall in Clarence Pier, Southsea, Hampshire has closed and so have several others. Blackpool, one of the more successful seaside resorts still has several arcades with prize bingo. Some of these are only open during the summer months while others are open all year. Most of the arcades in Southend on Sea once had a prize bingo area but now only one remains, a manual setup, in Happydrome at the Kursal end of the 'Golden Mile'.

Scratchcard

A **scratchcard** (called a **scratch off**, **scratch ticket**, **scratcher**, **scratchie**, **scratch-it**, **scratch game**, **scratch-and-win**, **instant game** or **instant lottery** in different places) is a small card, often made of thin paper-based card for competitions and plastic to conceal PINs, where one or more areas contain concealed information which can be revealed by scratching off an opaque covering.

Applications include cards sold for gambling (especially lottery games and quizzes), free-of-charge cards for quizzes, fraudulent free cards encouraging calls to premium rate phone services, and to conceal confidential information such as PINs for telephone calling cards and other prepaid services.

In some cases the entire scratchable area needs to be scratched to see whether a prize has been won—the card is printed either to be a winner or not—or to reveal the secret code; the result does not depend upon what portions are scratched off. In other cases, some but not all areas have to be scratched; this may apply in a quiz, where the area corresponding to the right answer is scratched, or in some gambling applications where, depending on which areas are scratched, the card wins or loses. In these cases the card becomes invalid if too many areas are scratched. After losing one can scratch all areas to see if, how, and what one could have won with this card.

Technology

The scratchcard itself is simple: a card made of paper-based card, or plastic, with hidden information printed on it, covered by an opaque substance (usually latex) that can be scratched off relatively easily, while resistant to normal abrasion.

Origins

The original game tickets were produced using manual randomization techniques. In 1974 the American company Scientific Games Corporation led by scientist John Koza and retail promotions specialist Daniel Bower produced the first computer-generated instant lottery game. In 1987, Astro-Med, Inc. of West Warwick, Rhode Island, received the U.S. Patent for the instant scratch-off lottery ticket.

Simple prize scratch cards require the player, for example, to scratch off three (or more) areas hiding numbers, symbols, etc. If all the items revealed are the same, a prize has been won. More complicated scratchcards have several different ways to win on one card. Other scratchcards involve matching symbols, pictures or words, or are adaptations of popular (card-)games such as blackjack, poker or Monopoly. Games are also tied to popular themes such as Harley Davidson, Major League Baseball, NASCAR, the National Hockey League, Marvel Comics and FIFA World Cup.

There are currently two major manufacturers of game tickets: Scientific Games Corporation, with production facilities in the USA, Chile, UK, Germany, Canada, Brazil and Australia; and Pollard Banknote, with production facilities in the USA and Canada. There are several other smaller manufacturers in North America, Europe and Asia.

Popularity

Scratchcards are a very popular form of gambling due to their low cost and the opportunity to win instantly, as opposed to waiting for a drawing like many lotteries. There is a trend towards more expensive scratchcards (20-30 USD) that have prizes in the millions of dollars. However, many such "instant" tickets sold in the US, especially in Massachusetts and New York, do not pay top prizes "instantly," but rather over many years, with no cash option.

The popularity of lottery scratchcards has been increasing at a greater rate than any other form of lottery.

Predictability

In the 21st century there have been attempts to increase the odds on finding a prize-winning card based on statistics, by tracking the amount of prize money won and cards sold to calculate accurate current odds. There have been a number of instances where a series of cards are still available although all major prizes have been won. Some lotteries

make this information available to all free of charge to help promote their games This reduces the mathematical expectation of a win for the remaining cards; the return on investment becomes much worse. Hypothetically, large early payouts may exceed ultimate sales before expiration of the game card series. However, the low odds of winning - typically from less than 1 in 5 to about 1 in 2.5 - and players who buy cards unaware of the low return, offset these losses, so the lottery still makes a profit.

Second-chance sweepstakes

Many state lotteries also run a second-chance sweepstakes in conjunction with the retail sale of state lottery scratch cards in an effort to increase consumer demand for scratch cards and to help control the litter problems associated with the improper disposal of non-winning lottery tickets. As lottery tickets and scratch cards are considered in the United States to be bearer instruments under the Uniform Commercial Code, these scratch card promotions can be entered with non-winning tickets that are picked up as litter.

However, the details associated with actually winning a second-chance lottery scratcher (at least as it pertains to California) have not been defined or elaborated in any meaningful, useful, or clearly understood way.

Break opens

Break Opens, also known as *breakopens*, *break open cards*, *strip tickets*, *nevada tickets* or in some Bingo Halls as "pickles" are lottery or bingo cards on which there are concealed letters, numbers, or symbols that have been predetermined as winners. The cards are often made of cardboard and contain perforated cover window tabs, behind which the combinations are printed. The purchaser must "break open" the card, or pull up the pull-tabs, to see the information printed within, and then must confirm with winning combinations printed on the back of the card, various cards may have come from the printer highlighted as winning under the tabs. The winning combination will be highlighted, making the identification of winning tickets easier.

Online gambling scratchcards

By around 2010 online versions of virtual "scratchcard" (not physical cards) gambling games which utilized Macromedia Flash and Java to simulate scratching a card on a computer were available. Virtual cards could be bought, and prizes collected, over an Internet connection.

Fraudulent practices

A widespread misuse of scratchcards is the free-of-charge distribution of cards offering a range of prizes, ranging from extremely low-value to very desirable; for example from time-limited discount vouchers redeemable only through a specified agent to cars. Cards

always reveal that a prize has been won, but the nature and value of the prize can only be determined by phoning a premium rate telephone claim line costing a significant sum per minute. Calls to this number are designed by the promoter always to take several minutes, and the prize won is, in reality, always of far less value than the cost of the call, and usually not worth claiming. Regulatory authorities for telephone services have been taking action against such schemes, issuing warnings and large fines.

Cards hiding confidential information

Scratchcards are a method of distributing confidential information, with no element of chance or skill. A common example is the phone card sold for a price which provides specified phone call usage. The card itself, unlike, a credit card, has no function in itself; it is simply a vehicle to inform the purchaser confidentially of the PIN required to make the phone calls paid for.

Online bingo

Online bingo is the game of bingo (US|UK) played on the Internet. It is estimated that the global gross gaming yield of bingo (excluding the United States) was US$500 million in 2006, and it is forecasted to grow to $1 billion by 2010.

Unlike balls used in regular bingo halls, online bingo sites use a random number generator. Most bingo halls also offer links to online poker and casino offerings as the patrons are often in the target market. One notable feature of online bingo is the chat functionality. Bingo sites strive to foster a sense of community and interaction between players as this helps customer retention.

Main types of bingo games

There are four main types of bingo played around the world. In live North American bingo halls, they typically play the 75-ball version of bingo on a 5x5 card with the center square usually marked 'free'. The letters B-I-N-G-O typically sit atop the 75 ball bingo card and they correspond with each of the five columns found on the bingo card.

The desired pattern which players aim to achieve in 75 ball can vary dramatically, from a simple single line to more complicated themed patterns. The aim of the game, however, is always the same: to mark off the numbers to achieve the desired pattern. Speed Bingo is a variation played exactly the same, but numbers are simply called much quicker.

In the UK, parts of Europe, Australia and parts of South America they play a 90-ball game, marked on a 9x3 card. Both types of bingo are prominent online. In 90-ball bingo, each card has three horizontal lines and nine columns. Each line contains five numbers, meaning each card has 15 numbers. The first column contains numbers from 1-9, the second column contains numbers from 10-19, the third column contains numbers from 20-29, all the way through to the final column which contains numbers from 80-90.

A game of 90 ball bingo will normally be played in three stages: one line, two lines and full house. In a "one line" game players need to mark a complete horizontal line across one card (i.e., 5 numbers marked). The aim of a 'two lines' game is to complete any two marked lines horizontally across one card (i.e., 10 numbers marked). Finally a "full house" means all the numbers marked off on one card (all 15 numbers), as in a regular coverall game. The prize split differs for each stage of the game. The prize will be shared equally among the winners if there is more than one. The full house is always the largest prize in any one game.

A third type of bingo game is a rather quick game of bingo. It is played with 30 balls, numbered one through thirty and appropriately known as 30 ball bingo or speed bingo. The 30 ball bingo game utilizes a 3 × 3 card and the object of the game is to be the first

bingo player to "fill" his or her card, which requires all nine numbers on your card to match the numbers that have been called out.

The fourth main type of bingo game is 80 ball bingo, which is a hybrid between the 75 ball bingo rules and 90 ball bingo rules. The bingo cards are 4x4, thus they contain 16 numbers. Prizes are awarded in 80 ball bingo vary, depending on the game played. Some of the ways to win 80 ball bingo include being the first player to complete an entire line on their bingo card. The "line" can be horizontal, diagonal, or vertical. Getting "four corners" also constitutes a win in some 80 ball bingo games, whilst other games require multiple lines (1 or two lines), and still others require a full house.

History

One of the earliest known online bingo games, launched in 1996, was a free bingo game called "Bingo Zone". To play, members had to provide demographic information; in turn, members would receive targeted ads based on the demographics provided. Another early pioneer for free online bingo was Uproar, which launched Bingo Blitz in 1998.

Getting started

Some operators require players to download free software to play their games. Other operators use JavaScript or Adobe Flash based games that allow you to play immediately online after registering a player account.

Most sites accept a standard range of e-wallet funding options. Sites often provide a number of incentives to deposit, including matching bonuses where the site will reward depositing players by matching a percentage of their deposit.

In 2006, the US government passed UIGEA Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act of 2006 which stopped banks' ability to process credit cards for US citizens. The laws prevent US based payment providers from taking payments for online gaming.

Playing

Playing bingo online, players can make use of optional features which make playing the game easier, such as auto-daub. Auto-daub automatically marks off the numbers on cards as they are called, so players don't have to. Most software providers support other gaming features as "Best Card Sorting" and "Best Card Highlighting" where players cards are sorted and highlighted by closest to bingo.

There is variety among the different kinds of bingo games that can be played. For example, some inexpensive game rooms appeal to the player who may want to play for as little as 3 cents or 3 pence per card ; some bingo games only allow players to purchase the same amount of cards so they are not competing against the "high rollers" out there who buy many cards for the same game.

Chat

Whereas in land-based bingo talking is strictly forbidden during a game, it is actively encouraged in online bingo. Chat functions as an effective retention tool, aimed especially at the predominantly female audience.

It is customary for players to congratulate winning players with comments like "WTG," or "Way To Go". Much like instant messaging, online bingo chat communities have their own acronyms which are often used in place of often repeated sentences.

CM stands for "chat monitor". (This can also stand for chat moderator; in some other sites you may have "CH" which stands for chat host.) The CM works for the bingo site as the host of a chat room and plays a role in welcoming players and creating a friendly and communal atmosphere in the room. This includes, but is not limited to, congratulating players when they win a game as well as playing chat games in-between bingo. Most sites have a chat protocol known as chat etiquette or chatiquette.

Bingo networks

There are a number of sites that will have the same promotions, similar graphics, the same bingo rooms and the same CMs. This occurs because they are part of a bingo "network". In simple terms, this means a number of different sites (or "front ends") are playing with the same numbers for the same jackpot (i.e., the same back end). Multiple sites act as doorways to a single game, leading to larger pools of players in chat rooms and more sizable pots to win, in an arrangement known as White Label Gaming. While the bingo software is the same, the brand owners are responsible for the look and feel of the site, together with any promotions they wish to offer. This is an important feature of online bingo in that it is critical that any site have enough players to have a decent sized game. Hence, the bingo network "shares" players. Some operators choose not to pool their players together and because they segregate their players, they operate on a stand-alone network, which again can be via "white label" (Brigend Limited is the most commonly used stand-alone white label software) or can be done through the use of proprietary software.

Online bingo in the UK

Bingo is a popular leisure activity for people in the UK. More than 3 million people now play online bingo in the UK. The UK market has seen an influx in big brand names launching bingo games on their already established websites in addition to a number established land based operators including Mecca and Gala also entering the market. More recently "charity bingo" has become established.

Mobile Bingo

Gambling on mobile devices has seen rapid growth during 2011-13. Rank Group, the company behind Mecca Bingo has seen strong growth in mobile revenues with mobile accounting for 6% of their interactive divisional revenues in 2011. Mobile bingo products have been cited as particularly difficult to produce due to the difficulty of integrating social and chat functions which are seen as important to the gaming experience.

Facebook Bingo

Bingo on Facebook differs from traditional online or land based bingo games. Most games feature 'power-ups' which give individual players an advantage on winning the game when using such power-ups. Players can also collect, buy and share virtual items with friends on the Facebook platform. This adds to the community element which is otherwise not experience in other forms of online and land based bingo. Some great examples of Facebook bingo games are BamBam Bingo, Bingo Blitz and Bingo Island.

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