1. **Neil Allen**

2. **MSc in Management of Information Systems**

3. **Evolution of the Online Poker Ecosystem**

4. **Paula Roberts**

5. **2013**

6. **Abstract**

Online Poker is a pastime consisting of people playing poker over the internet using computers and in recent years using hand held devices such as tablets and smart phones. In this Dissertation literature was reviewed to provide an overview of the evolution of the Online Poker product concentrating on software and game design, as well as the demographics of the different type of players involved in the Online Poker ecosystem. This literature review was then extended to include existing Game Design theories used in the industries of Casual, Social and Educational games. The Dissertation discusses the possibility that these theories could be implemented to improve the Online Poker Product.

The Dissertation investigates the perceptions of professionals working in the Online Poker industry in regards to the design of the Online Poker product. The research involved two studies and the data was collected using a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative data. Interviews were used for three senior managers working in the Online Poker industry and a survey method for other staff working in the Online Poker Industry.

The Dissertation concludes that the Online Poker product excludes some of the recommended design values found in existing Game Design theories from the industries of Casual, Social and Educational games. Participants in the research acknowledged that different player demographics are recognized within their industry, but that there is no tailoring of the product for these different demographics of players. The research also highlights that even if Game Design specialists are present in an Online Poker company, decisions regarding product design and updates will typically be made by senior management.

A proposed Online Poker Ecosystem was created from reviewed literature. This Online Poker Ecosystem was then developed and improved upon during the course of the research. Based upon the findings of the research, this Online Poker Ecosystem was proposed with different software products offered to each player according to which poker player demographic the player belongs to.