



# Coinslot

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INTERNATIONAL

## A truly international audience helps last London ICE smash all the records

For three days this week London once again became the undisputed epicentre of the gaming world, with thousands of delegates and 811 exhibitors making their way to ICE from more than 165 countries, delivering record attendance numbers for the show's last hurrah in the UK.

More than 32,000 people visited the ExCeL on the first day alone, while second day numbers were even higher, up an estimated 15-20 percent on 2023, with well over half (58 percent) of those attending doing so as representatives of international businesses.

"This week has demonstrated the huge global appeal of ICE, which reaches into every corner of the world," said Stuart Hunter, MD at organiser Clarion Gaming. "Our first attendance topped 32,000, smashing all records, with the previous highest of 27,000 set last year."

"The mood and atmosphere has been incredibly positive as the industry absorbs

EXHIBITIONS

The final ICE to take place in the UK went out on a stupendous high this week, with record visitor numbers - likely to be well into the 40,000s - turning out to bid a fond farewell to London. Drawing to a close 33 years on UK soil, the highest ever number of exhibitors and visitors made sure they put on the greatest show the gaming and gambling industry has ever seen.



the array of world-class ideas, new technologies, many thousands of product launches and business opportunities available at what is the world's most popular gaming event."

Those visiting ICE from major tourist cities around the world may have recognised the experience of navigating the bustling

aisles between stands this year, with thousands of people making the most of the hugely diverse range of exhibitors on offer.

Though 45 percent of those visiting were doing so for the first time, 95 percent of all attendees had a key role in the decision making process at their respective businesses.

Commenting on the next steps for ICE, Hunter expressed his thanks to ExCeL for being "an important part of our success," but added "our focus now switches to Barcelona and the opportunity the move to Fira Barcelona will deliver as ICE and iGB Affiliate open a new chapter in their development."

## World's gaming industry bids farewell to London

After a tenure spanning four decades, from its birth as a handful of stands at Bacta's Olympia show in 1991 to the global behemoth it is today, the world's gaming and gambling industry will be moving the largest ever trade exhibition away from London.

Hola Barcelona, here we come. And what an event the city of modernism will be getting: ICE 2024 signed off with what will almost certainly be a world record visitor figure for a gaming and gambling event.

Official figures have yet to be released but expect at least a 20 percent rise on last year's record of 40,000 plus. And that might well be a modest guess.

It was a vote by the exhibitors that led to the switch to mainland Europe - prompted by the physical reality that there is no more room at the inn: ExCeL simply cannot accommodate another growth spurt in the evolution of ICE - and so the greatest show on earth, is off to Barca.

And with it goes over 800 exhibitors and an economic driver that has popped the eyes out of the sockets of the Spanish city's authorities and organisers. One estimate, an industry analyst said, was "possibly 100-150,000 hotel nights in February for the city. And I couldn't even start to estimate the boost to Barcelona's

hospitality industry in that lean winter month for tourism."

All of which explains why Barcelona's authorities are laying down the proverbial red carpet - a lesson perhaps for the mayor of London who will learn the hard way that London's streets will certainly not be paved with gold from 2025 onwards.

ICE has become a crown jewel - not just for trading within the industry, but also for the host city. London, a top tier international capital, will undoubtedly recover economically from the move, but boy will it miss the energy and innovation driven by ICE. And with it - possibly, probably? - the standing of the UK as a country on the global gaming and gambling stage.

What this means to organisations like the Gambling Commission who have been able to dine out on the quality of ICE in raising its own status - we can only guess. But that status, now that the regulator is no longer overseer of the host country welcoming the world's regulators to a stunning event, will shift - and most likely downward.

The global gaming industry leaves London much stronger and much more optimistic and inspired; London, though, bids farewell with a lot less sparkle for the years ahead.

## UK's coin-op contingent conquer last London calling

The UK gaming businesses attending ICE 2024 made the most of the expo's last year in London, describing it as "busy", "productive", "incredible" and "always worth attending".

The domestic market leaders including Electrocoin, Inspired, Merkur, Novomatic Games UK, Reflex Gaming, as well as pioneering newbies such as S Gaming, all enjoyed packed stands, with plenty of operators from the gaming and amusements industry making their way to London's ExCeL for a thrilling three days.

At the same time, the GBG High Street Hub was extremely popular, with its 'Ask the Experts' sessions and its progressive reaching out policy to licensing authorities paying off for the Gambling Business Group. Circa 30 licensing officers were

given an eye opening perspective on the industry as ICE shone a light on SR as well as innovation.

ICE London also hosted a speech from Andrew Rhodes at the Consumer Protection Zone, whilst ICE Vox - the event's panel discussion program - included familiar names such as MP Carolyn Harris, chair of the Gambling Related Harm All Party Parliamentary Group, Simon Thomas, owner of the Hippodrome Casino, and the Gambling Commission's Tim Miller.

The packed event schedule included presentations on growth markets, allyship meet-ups such as 'Celebrating People of Colour' and 'Celebrating Pride', and visits from several high profile former and current athletes, such as footballers Luis Figo and Michel Salgado, and Alex Periera, the current UFC Light Heavyweight Champion.