



Get the facts to know the way to go.

Warning signs you may be playing on, or operating, an illegal Social Gaming website in Washington State:

- There is no way to play for free.
- The prize can be sold or redeemed for “real” money.
- Players must:
 - Pay “real” money to play.
 - Give banking information to collect a prize.
 - Call to start play.
 - Disclose personal information, such as a credit card number, social security number, etc.



Washington State Gambling Commission

Who We Are

- The Commission was created in 1973 to regulate and control authorized and illegal gambling activities (RCW 9.46).
- We are a law enforcement, regulatory and licensing agency.

What We Do

- We license and regulate all authorized gambling in the state, except for horse racing and the State Lottery.
- We investigate and control unauthorized and illegal gambling activities.

Our Mission

Protect the Public By Ensuring That Gambling is Legal and Honest.

Learn more about us at wsgc.wa.gov



This brochure gives general guidance.

You should contact an attorney if you have questions or are unsure whether a game has the **3 elements** of gambling.

You may also contact us at:

(360) 486-3463

(800) 345-2529, ext. 3463

FAX (360) 486-3631

E-mail: AskUs@wsgc.wa.gov

Mail: P.O. Box 42400, Olympia, WA 98504-2400

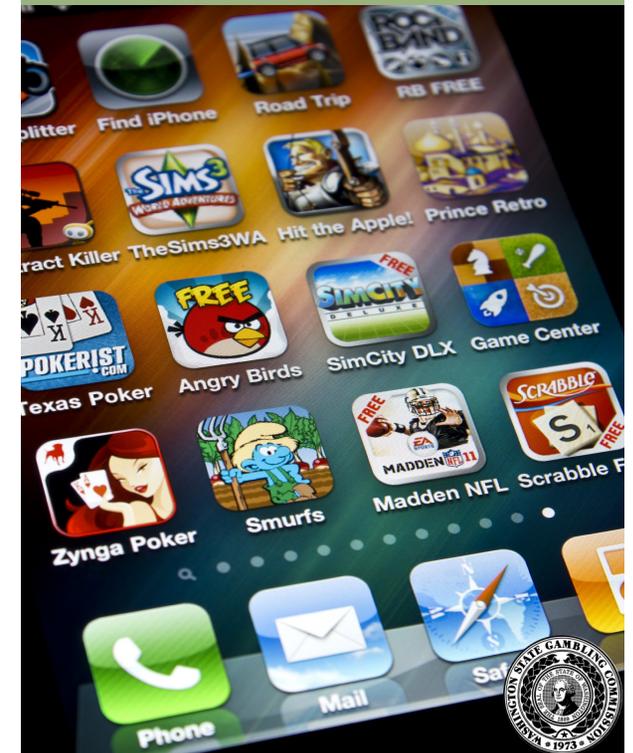
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Online Social Gaming

When is it legal? What to Consider

Let's play a game



What is Social Gaming?

The Oxford dictionary defines **Social Gaming** as the activity or practice of playing an online game on a social media platform, with a major emphasis on friends and community involvement.

Social Gaming ranges from tending a farm to playing a soldier in combat. Ideas for new games are constantly thought up. Some popular social games involve:

- Role playing;
- Adventure;
- Arcade style games; and
- Casino style games.

Social Gaming is growing at an unprecedented rate and with it comes questions. This brochure gives general guidance to help you determine if you are playing on, or operating, a legal Social Gaming website in Washington State.

"Real" money = Legal tender, U.S. Currency.



Is Social Gaming Legal in Washington?

Social Gaming is legal in Washington State if no gambling takes place.

What is Gambling?

Gambling involves **3 elements**:

1. Prize;
2. Consideration (something of value, wager, fee to play); and
3. Chance.

Legal: If one of the **3 elements** of gambling is removed, the game is not gambling.

Things to keep in mind, to keep it legal:

- There must be a way to play for free.
- If "real" money can be used to enhance or extend play, there must be no prize.

Illegal: If a Social Game has the **3 elements** of gambling, it is illegal and cannot be played, or operated, in Washington State. It is illegal to solicit Washington residents to play illegal Social Games.

Website's Rules of Play:

- If you are thinking about participating in a Social Game, read the website's Rules or Terms of Use to determine if one of the **3 elements** of gambling is removed.
- Website operators should clearly state in their Rules that virtual money, points, and other items cannot be sold or redeemed for "real" money or prizes.

Washington State law defines gambling as:

"staking or risking something of value upon the outcome of a contest of chance or a future contingent event not under the person's control or influence, upon an agreement or understanding that the person or someone else will receive something of value in the event of a certain outcome." (RCW 9.46.0237)



No Prize = No Gambling = OK To Play

Buying virtual money:

Many Social Gaming websites give free virtual money to begin play, with an option to buy more virtual money with "real" money to continue play. All play uses this virtual money.



Legal Social Gaming websites will not let players cash in their virtual winnings or points for "real" money or prizes.



Because there is no prize, these games are **not** gambling. However, if the virtual money can be sold or redeemed for "real" money or a prize, the game is illegal.

Buying virtual prizes, avatars & tools:

If a player spends "real" money for a virtual prize, avatar or tool to assist with game play and these items cannot be sold or redeemed for "real" money or a prize, it's **not** gambling.



For example, let's say a player uses "real" money to purchase a key to open a chest containing a rare item that the player's character can use to advance their position in the game.

Even though "real" money is used to buy a key to get a rare item, neither the key or rare item have any real-world value because they cannot be sold or redeemed for "real" money. Because there is no prize, it's **not** gambling.