

In-Game Business and the Problem of Gambling: Legal Analysis of Loot Boxes from the Perspective of Iranian Law

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Abstract : The possibility of trading in-game items for real money provides a high economic capacity for online games and turns them into a business model. Nowadays, the market for in-game item purchases and microtransactions or micropayments has been growing increasingly. Since the market should be legal, lawyers and lawmakers around the world have expressed concerns over the legality of online gaming and in-game transactions. The issue is highlighted by the recent emergence of an in-game business model in the name of loot boxes. Similarities between loot boxes gaming and gambling features activities have started a legal debate as to whether loot boxes constitute a form of gambling or whether the game's use of loot boxes should be considered gambling. Hence, based on the relationship between loot boxes purchasing and problem gambling, the paper investigates the legal effect of the newly emergent phenomenon of loot boxes on online games from the perspective of Iranian law.

Keywords : serious games, loot boxes, online gambling, in-game purchase, virtual items

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