

INTERVIEWS

Red Lines and Grey Areas

An afternoon in Marbella with Dima Dimants

Dima Dimants has spent more than twenty years in iGaming, built a company, and turned LinkedIn into a personal talk show. Over a coffee that went cold fast, he was asked to defend the industry's grey areas — and spent an hour arguing himself into a corner instead.

INTERVIEW BY DIMA DIMANTS, IN MARBELLA

Yes — interviewer and subject share a name. No relation, as far as either of them can tell.

It's late afternoon in Marbella, still too hot for September. Dima Dimants is sitting with a coffee. He runs an iGaming company, has a three-year-old, another kid arriving within weeks and, judging by his recent output on LinkedIn and in iGaming media, apparently still has too much free time.

He has been in gambling for more than 20 years. Long enough, presumably, to know where the industry's red lines are.

Turns out he doesn't.

INTERVIEWER *Hi Dima, time for your first interview ever?*

DIMA Yeah, it's about time. I mean, LinkedIn has been full this year of my creative ideas and weird humour.

INTERVIEWER *And apparently that wasn't enough exposure.*

DIMA Apparently not, haha.

INTERVIEWER *Yeah, yet this one won't be about that. The thing is, we noticed your comments on LinkedIn about some controversial online casino campaigns.*

DIMA Really? Not sure I remember. I post and comment so much. Who was that about? What did I post again?

INTERVIEWER *Well, it was under a top list of campaigns that have crossed the line. Would you say that some crypto casinos are actually crossing the line — or simply exploiting the fact that iGaming has never agreed on where that line is?*

He takes a sip of coffee.

DIMA Ah, right. Well, my stance here is quite simple.

As long as there is no applicable authority legally stopping actors from doing what they do, it's up to everyone, on both the B2B and B2C sides, to decide what they think about those actions — and act accordingly.

I mean, we live in a free world. For now, I guess.

INTERVIEWER *That's becoming a surprisingly necessary disclaimer.*

DIMA Haha. Exactly.

But that's the point. We should be fine with expressing our opinions and deciding whether or not to collaborate with the companies or people behind certain brands.

Same with the players — they decide where to play.

What I react to in my social media posts is a bit different. It's B2B throughout the supply chain.

For now, we focus a lot on the operators. Why should they always be the ones to blame?

I advocate for a higher level of transparency within the industry. As it stands, it's not always easy to spot who's who, let's put it this way.

INTERVIEWER *That's one part of the problem. How do you even know who crossed the red line when you don't know who's behind the brand?*

DIMA Actually, funny thing: the ones people are talking about these days are quite transparent about who they are.

INTERVIEWER *OK, so what's the other part of the problem?*

DIMA The absence of those red lines means B2B vendors with an ethical stance lose out to competitors.

At the moment, iGaming isn't homogeneous.

As one prominent industry leader put it on a podcast some time ago, it's "50 shades of grey".

There is no Global Association of iGaming you can turn to and ask: "Is this acceptable?"

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INTERVIEWER *Sounds like a business opportunity.*

DIMA Not for me, thanks.

INTERVIEWER *But do you actually want someone deciding what's acceptable for the whole industry?*

DIMA God, no. That's not really my point.

I would much rather have transparency than some global moral police. If you know who's behind a company, what they do and who they work with, you can draw your own lines. So can I. So can everyone else.

There are independent actors that help glue the industry together and could theoretically take the initiative. Don't want to mention any names here — I'm all for integrity.

INTERVIEWER *Very diplomatic.*

DIMA I'm learning.

But seriously, why the hell would they want to take that responsibility? Their business models naturally depend on inclusion and maximising participation. I totally understand them.

So, all in all, the landscape makes it challenging to thrive in iGaming if you draw too many red lines for yourself while your competitors don't.

INTERVIEWER *Yet surely companies think about these things when choosing partners?*

DIMA It's tough. My gut feeling is that around 90% don't care and have never even thought about this. We don't care, I think — yet I'm also forced not to care, really.

INTERVIEWER *Forced not to care?*

DIMA To an extent, yes.

It's a small industry. If I applied every personal red line to every company, owner, employee and business relationship connected to something I disagree with, I'd probably end up doing business with myself.

And I'm not even sure I'd pass my own due diligence, haha.

"If I applied every personal red line to every business relationship connected to something I disagree with, I'd probably end up doing business with myself."



Dima Dimants, mid-thought, Marbella.

INTERVIEWER *Some relatively new casino brands have made provocation part of their identity. They seem to cook up something tasty every week — and it goes viral. Is that sustainable marketing, or does shock eventually stop being shocking?*

He smiles.

DIMA Tasty, you say? Well, plenty of people in the industry wouldn't touch it with a... what's the word... In Swedish it's *tång*. Thong? Nah, let's check with ChatGPT...

A few moments later.

DIMA Ten-foot pole. Wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole. That's the English version of this, haha.

INTERVIEWER *I walked right into that one.*

DIMA You did.

Jokes aside, there is no clear line, so the sky is the limit.

I have zero insight into their ROI from these PR activities. But if they eventually feel the need to keep raising the bar to get the same attention, that might actually end up creating some of the lines that don't exist today.

INTERVIEWER *Who creates them? The industry?*

DIMA The industry, regulators, politicians, public opinion — who knows?

At the moment, I think plenty of people in our industry publicly care about certain things considerably more than they seem to care about them in practice.

INTERVIEWER *Meaning?*

DIMA People complain publicly. Then they like the content, go to the same parties, work with the same people and companies, whatever.

The risk is that eventually they will be the ones complaining most about where things have ended up.

But that's hardly unique to iGaming.

It's more a reflection of the general state of the world we live in.

INTERVIEWER *You sound more worried about what happens outside the industry.*

DIMA I am.

What I am worried about is the global stage. Campaigns like this could make us as an industry stick our necks out a bit too much.

Just consider what's happening with prediction markets, with some powerful figures openly stating that the betting industry is working against prediction markets "to protect its market-leading

position”. That was in the media last week. Want me to send you a link?

The whole iGaming industry could find itself in a similar position.

INTERVIEWER *You really think casino marketing could eventually lead to something that big?*

DIMA Not one campaign, obviously.

My thought might sound surreal to you today, yet it might not in a few years.

Gambling is very easy to use to score political points. And it might provide enough justification to implement certain — even global — measures that go far beyond iGaming in terms of limiting our privacy and freedom of choice.

“Gambling is very easy to use to score political points.”

INTERVIEWER *That’s quite a jump.*

DIMA It is. I’m speculating.

But the point is that if parts of the industry stick their necks out too far, we might eventually invite political intervention that makes everyone’s lives considerably harder. Maybe in five years you can replay this and laugh at me.

INTERVIEWER *Or tell everyone you predicted it.*

DIMA Well, you wouldn’t imagine how many things I’ve predicted well in advance throughout all those 20 years in the industry. I’m a good iGaming Observer, just a bit

stuck in the iGaming room, trying to bring it some air, as AI has blocked all the exit options for me.

INTERVIEWER *Do you think this trend within the online casino world is simply proving the old rule that bad publicity is still publicity?*

DIMA Honestly, looking at the world today, I’m not even sure it’s bad publicity at the B2C level anymore. Maybe it’s my age and me becoming grumpy, but I suspect you need to be at least 35+ to automatically classify this kind of publicity as “bad”.

INTERVIEWER *You’re 44. You’re allowed to be grumpy.*

DIMA Thank you. Yeah, who am I to tell?

INTERVIEWER *If every casino copied this approach tomorrow, would the strategy still work?*



The conversation, a few coffees in.

DIMA Probably not in the same way. If everyone does it, being provocative stops being a differentiator.

But I've already seen others moving in a similar direction. Furthermore, is it really that controversial with Bonnie Blue? Haven't you seen branded adult movies? They are way more graphic.

I do my research. I'm an iGaming Observer — no weird ad gets past me, haha.

In some African and Asian countries, the creativity of certain ads has been quite insane for some time. And inserting a watermark of your brand throughout a kids' movie on pirate platforms — isn't that more controversial than showing a drunk boxing star for a few minutes?

INTERVIEWER *And where do you personally draw the line between player autonomy and operator responsibility?*

DIMA Being quite libertarian, I'm generally in favour of player autonomy and freedom of choice.

At the same time, I think both operators and states have a responsibility to protect players showing genuinely risky behavioural patterns.

With AI and the amount of behavioural data operators already have, identifying those patterns should increasingly be possible. The same goes for marketing patterns that could trigger those risky behaviours.

It's really not rocket science, and should take months. Yet with state efficiency it might take decades. Some people believe that there are lobbies. I've lived long enough to be fairly certain that a lot of it is simply about how freaking slow governments are.

INTERVIEWER *Hang on. You've spent half the interview telling me there is no clear line. Now you're saying there is one?*

DIMA Yes, but we're talking about two different things.

I'm not interested in deciding whether an ad is morally acceptable for everyone. That's subjective. If the data shows that a player is developing genuinely harmful behavioural patterns, that's different. That's an actual problem you can identify.

INTERVIEWER *And who gets to decide when it becomes an actual problem?*

DIMA I'm happy to let AI determine it. I'm pretty certain it will eventually be better at identifying those patterns than a human making the decision manually.

The rest is normally covered by the mechanics of marketing, where different target groups increasingly get what they "want".

So what happens on the marketing side isn't really for me to judge. I'm neither a saint nor a judge.

The only area that is of clear interest to me is iGaming B2B. And B2B is actually a bit funny.

"I'm happy to let AI determine it. I'm pretty certain it will eventually be better at this than a human making the decision manually."

INTERVIEWER *How so?*

DIMA Because in many cases we're customers too.

We buy services from each other all the time. And customers sometimes complain. That's normal. That's how services get better. That's how life works.

But at the same time, those customers are also B2B suppliers themselves. We all share the same ecosystem.



Making a point about B2B transparency.

INTERVIEWER *So people are afraid to complain?*

DIMA I wouldn't necessarily say afraid. It's just easier to stay silent.

It's often word against word. You complain publicly about someone's service today, and tomorrow somebody can complain about yours.

Plus, maybe you simply want your competitors to learn from their own mistakes. Why give them free consulting? Haha.

INTERVIEWER *That's not particularly altruistic.*

DIMA Business is business.

But seriously, on the B2B side, I strongly believe in fair competition, reasonably equal conditions and enough transparency for the market to function properly.

So from that perspective, I don't particularly care which company does what. We all have to run our own race.

For my personal brand, I've made a decision to focus on what I call iGaming meta — observing, analysing and commenting on how the iGaming industry itself works, communicates and sees itself. Without dropping names.

INTERVIEWER *Yet everyone knows everyone in iGaming.*

DIMA Exactly. And that's where it gets complicated.

I keep seeing my iGaming friends liking content from — and continuing to cooperate with — people and companies who have clearly been doing bad things to other great industry peers.

INTERVIEWER *And you don't think they should stop?*

He thinks about this one for a moment.

DIMA That's the thing. What are you going to do?

Keep a blacklist of everyone who has ever done something bad to someone you like?

You have to learn to play along.

The easiest approach is probably to go for quantity in your relationships, and then

simply not have enough operating space in your brain to think about all those things.

INTERVIEWER *Is that how you ended up with 30,000 LinkedIn connections?*

DIMA Let's call it a coping mechanism.

Again, if there were some legitimate industry-wide authority, that would change the discussion.

But right now that's basically a utopian idea. The only informal mechanism available is some form of industry cancel culture — and I'm not a huge fan of that either.

INTERVIEWER *Are traditional gambling brands genuinely more responsible than crypto-focused brands — or simply better at looking respectable?*

DIMA Again, there is no global definition of “responsible”.

Who gets to define it? Curaçao? Anjouan? Malta? An industry conference? iGaming media sites? iGaming media personalities on LinkedIn?

INTERVIEWER *Dima Dimants?*

DIMA God, no. Please don't give me that job. You seem to be into that thing throughout the interview, man. Can you please stop? So, back to the question. What was it again?

INTERVIEWER *Traditional gambling brands...*

DIMA Ah, yeah. Well, regulated local markets are different, if that's how you define “traditional” here.

There, the regulator establishes the framework, and if you choose to operate in that market, you accept its rules and expectations within geographic boundaries

that have to be effectively protected by the licensing authority.

INTERVIEWER *So regulated means responsible?*

DIMA Not necessarily.

To be frank, I don't think regulators always do that job particularly well.

Regulation shouldn't only impose obligations on licensed operators. Protecting the regulated market and its geographic boundaries should be part of the deal as well.

INTERVIEWER *So there's responsibility on both sides?*

DIMA Exactly.

If you tell licensed operators, “Here are the rules, follow them,” then protecting that regulated market is part of what they should get in return.

Outside of that, “responsible” often becomes subjective.

And being better at looking respectable isn't necessarily the same thing as actually being more responsible.

“Being better at looking respectable isn't necessarily the same thing as actually being more responsible.”

The coffee is long gone by this point. Dima is a bit unhappy with the interview topics, and looks more and more like Robert Downey Jr. does when it's not his best day...

INTERVIEWER *Thanks, Dima. That was a cool one. You should do more interviews.*

DIMA Well, probably I should. Hard to find time combining parenting, LinkedIn activity and running a small content agency. You know how tough it is these days for content agencies to convince everyone that you still have to pay humans to vet all the written stuff and translations, and make sure you actually create great things, by the way?

INTERVIEWER *You can complain about this in your next interview. This would be a paid one.*

DIMA Right. Let me sell some backlinks and get back to you. Those link-building platforms suck, so we keep doing it all manually.

INTERVIEWER *Tough life. I'll email you my bank account number.*

DIMA Deal.



The coffee, long gone, by the end of the interview.