

“When you find the GPWA, you’re in the right place.”

How long have you been working in the industry? More than two years. I started the day after Christmas 2007.

What first drew you to the business? Like every student without a full-time job, I needed some “easy money.” I looked for a good roulette strategy to win in online casinos and I found a Web site explaining how to win thousands of dollars per day, 100 percent guaranteed. I won about \$500 in two hours, then I lost \$200 in one second. I thought something was wrong with that strategy, and after a few hours I figured out this scammer was using the “Martingale” betting system just to earn commissions from players’ losses. That’s how I discovered the affiliate world. I decided to make this world better.

What do you like about the industry? I like gambling; it’s easy to develop and write about something you like. The competition is now in SEO; I’m a professional SEO consultant and I have an advantage over some of the other affiliates. Last but not least, gaming conferences are great; you get to know hundreds of people and you visit cool cities.

What don’t you like? I don’t like the unethical methods a lot of “webmasters” use to get high positions in search engine results and to earn money. In an ideal world, such persons shouldn’t exist.

What surprised you most? The number of online casinos opened over the last two years. Every day I receive e-mails from new operators to promote their brands. I’ve been also surprised by the level of competition in this market.

What is the current status of Italian efforts to regulate offshore online gaming?

What is the latest information you have? The Italian government is regulating online gaming sites for “fair gaming” purposes.

They started with poker and sportsbooks, and now they’re also planning to regulate bingo and casinos. I’m not aware of any official timeline, but some say they will sell licenses starting in September. It seems they will sell licenses for hundreds of thousands of euros and will tax affiliates and operators. I don’t think they care very much about fair gaming, but I hope regulation will clarify all the problems for Italian affiliates.

What prompted you to join the GPWA, and how has it helped you so far? After the roulette scam, I learned I couldn’t trust everyone. So I looked for information about an affiliate program I was starting to work with and I found the GPWA. At first the GPWA helped me to choose which affiliate programs to trust. Then I started participating in the forums and I discovered how big and complex this industry is. GPWA and private forums helped me to improve my marketing skills and, best of all, to get to know some very good webmasters and make some very good friends. To summarize in a sentence: When you find the GPWA, you’re in the right place.

What keywords do you find are bringing people to your site? What kind of work did you do to boost casino2k’s popularity in search engines? Until September 2009 my Web sites had a lot of visitors from keywords like “free bonuses,” “free games,” etc. Tons of visitors, no earnings. Since October 2009 my rankings have been boosted for the most competitive keywords like “online casino,” “casino bonus,” “games strategies,” etc. More visitors, higher conversion rates, visitors participating in discussion boards and spending hours on the Web site. I focused on SEO and decided to update my Web site every day. I think Google has flagged casino2k as an authority Web site and my rankings (and earnings) have suddenly improved.

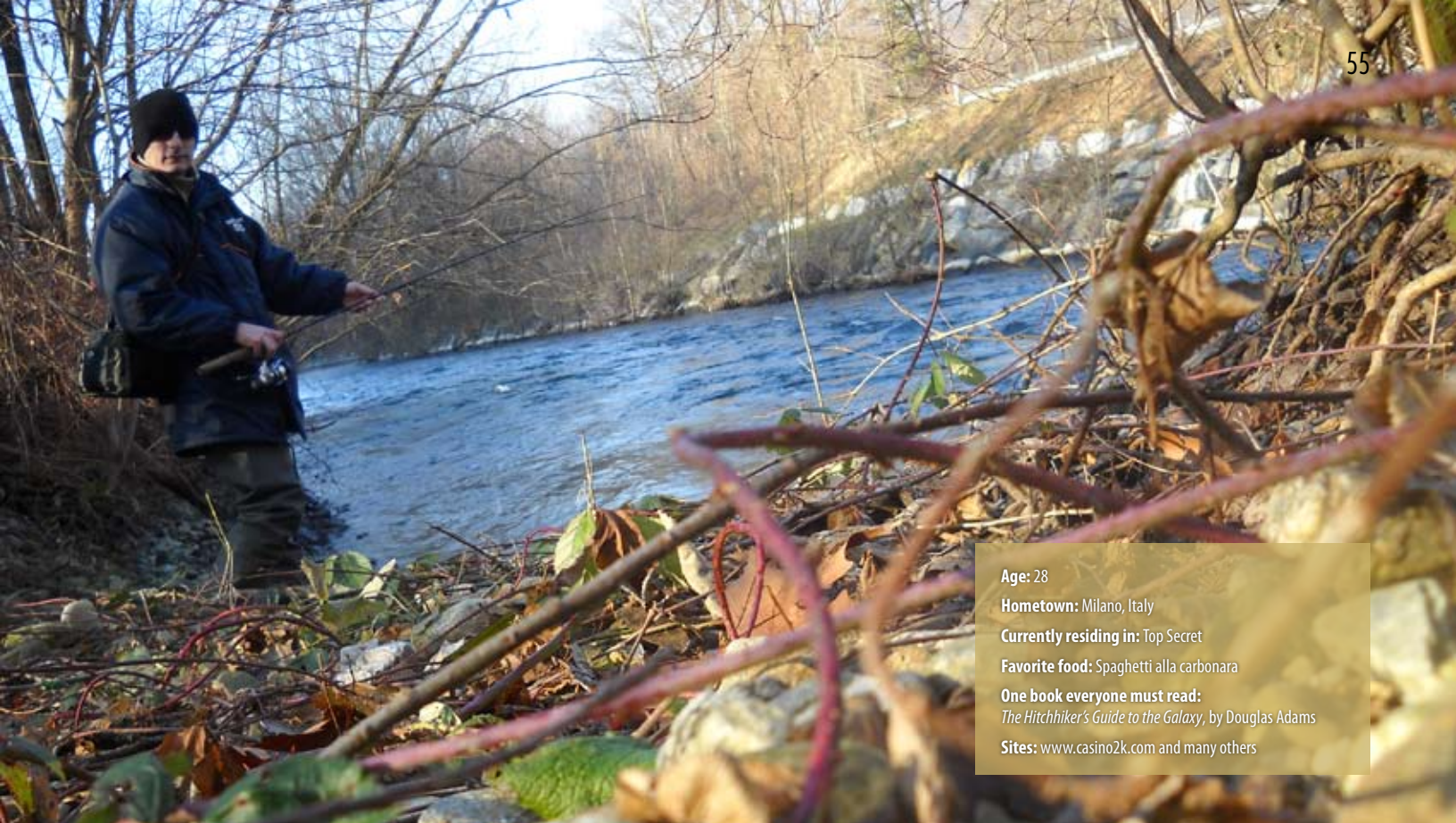
One of your employees (Casino2k.Member) was recently approved as a GPWA member. On his membership application he indicated that his name was “John Luke” but he introduced himself as “Stefano” on the message boards. Can you clarify this situation for everyone? His name is not John Luke; he’s called Stefano. He presented himself with another name for anonymity because of the unclear law regulating online gaming in Italy.

How do your family and friends feel about how you make your living? My family is not aware I own gambling Web sites. Only a few people know about my life as an affiliate and they have no problems with that because they know I talk about gambling in an ethical way.

Your GPWA profile lists you as a student. Are you still attending university? If so, do you plan to stay in the affiliate business once you are finished? I missed a few exams needed to graduate, but I’m spending 99 percent of the time working so it’s difficult to complete them. I’ve also opened an SEO agency because I feel the affiliate world is very unstable; your earnings could suddenly drop. Anyway, I’ll try to go on with both projects and, hopefully, I’ll graduate too at some point!

How long do you give yourself for responding to e-mail? And what e-mail management tips can you offer? I check my e-mail every five minutes, but I respond immediately only to urgent e-mail. Nonimportant e-mail is put on my to-do list. Don’t waste time replying to spam link exchange e-mail or to affiliate operators you don’t want to work with. Don’t waste time with webmail: configure e-mail clients like Thunderbird to manage all your e-mail accounts.

How do you manage your “to-do” lists? Do you use any special software to help you out? I started with a plain text to-do list using a simple text editor, then it suddenly reached about 100 entries and I decided to give up. Now I use a simple tool for Linux (yeah, I’m a Linux geek) called GToDo. It helps a lot with managing



Age: 28

Hometown: Milano, Italy

Currently residing in: Top Secret

Favorite food: Spaghetti alla carbonara

One book everyone must read:

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, by Douglas Adams

Sites: www.casino2k.com and many others

tasks, priorities, timelines and it notifies you when the task is due. Using a good to-do list software application helps a lot in improving productivity.

Who do you think is going to win the World Cup this summer? And why? I bet € 100 on Italy because I hope it happens, and because the odds are really interesting. England has a good chance of winning; they're very strong and they have one of the best and smartest football managers: Fabio Capello.

If you could sit down to dinner with any five people, living or dead, who would they be, and why? I'd love to have a dinner with five fantastic girls, preferably alive...just kidding lol. It would be interesting having a dinner with Nicole Kidman, just to check if she is as cute as I've always seen in her movies; Gianni Agnelli, to talk about business and make money with him; Plato, because you can't avoid talking about philosophy with a glass of wine; Roberto Baggio, because he has been one of the greatest soccer players in the world; and Michael Schumacher, just for driving me home after dinner.

When you need to get as far away from work as possible, where do you go? I go fishing in small mountain creeks: nobody around, no noise, just the sounds of nature.

If you had to pick five keys to success as an affiliate, what would they be, and why?

1. Do not copy; always write original and useful content so your visitors will read it and spend time on the Web site. Then they will definitely come back and trust you.
2. Love your job, understand the gambling world, play and understand the games, do it for fun and with passion and you will achieve great results.
3. Never give up when confronted with problems and loss of positions in search results, traffic and earnings; try to understand the problems and fix them. Only by facing up to problems can you learn and improve your skills.
4. Analyze details. Never be satisfied with what you have done. Study and analyze everything on your Web site: taking care of details can be crucial to success.
5. Outsource time-consuming tasks with low value, and also look for good copywriters and organize their work.

If you were starring in a movie, who would you want to play your romantic interest? The movie would be "Titanic," and for sure I'd perform better than Leonardo DiCaprio. Who would I want with me? It depends on how the dinner with Nicole Kidman turns out....

If you were "stuck" in a city due to travel restrictions, would you be the person who did everything humanly possible to get back home? Or would you be the person who took some time to go exploring and smell the flowers? I love traveling around and I love adventures. Once when I was in Venice with my girlfriend there was a strike. We couldn't find a cheap hotel so we slept for two nights in a churchyard. So romantic—except for the rats swimming in the Grand Canal and eating everything they could find!

What are three things that nobody knows about you?

1. I'm an affiliate.
2. I never wake up before 11:30 a.m.
3. I've watched an Italian soap opera for years. What a shame that only females admit to watching it!