

John van Schaijk, Technical Director, GLI Europe

John van Schaijk joined GLI Europe as Technical Director in January 2012. With more than 20 years of experience in the gaming industry Van Schaijk formerly served as Director of Product Management for WMS Gaming in Spain. Previously, he was with Orion Gaming as Product Manager and as Product Development Manager. When WMS acquired Orion in 2006, Van Schaijk remained responsible for the Orion product line and developed and launched new platforms and themes for the company. As Technical Director, John oversees engineering in GLI Europe's labs, along with GLI's contribution with Versipet and the Justice Department for the Dutch market.

Delivering fast, flexible and efficient working practices



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GLI Europe's Technical Director ensures the full resources of GLI are shared between a team of technical experts that span across Spain, Italy, South Africa and Holland, each delivering localised solutions with global scale

By his own admission, John van Schaijk has been in the gaming industry "a long time," a history that began in 1987 when John joined the Netherlands-based gaming company, Erel Games. Originally involved in games development, John found his forte was in both product management and latterly, international sales. In 1999, John moved to another Dutch games house, Orion Gaming, where he led the product development department and R&D for seven years before the company was eventually acquired by WMS Gaming. In the hands of its US owners, John worked with Orion and WMS to integrate the two platforms before moving into another product management role, working for WMS from the company's Barcelona-based European hub.

It was a call from then GLI Europe Managing Director, Phillip Barrow, to join the team as Technical Director that persuaded John back to the Netherlands, though he still calls Barcelona home and regularly commutes between Italy, South Africa, Spain and Holland to oversee the technical operations of GLI Europe.

"On a day to day basis, I run the technical engineering department for each of the GLI Europe offices, though in fact it's the technical managers who are hands-on within each location," explains John. "My role is to ensure each team is working effectively and

efficiently, sharing and dividing the workload and putting resources where they are most needed."

Weekly operational meetings with each technical team ensures that GLI continues to meet the expectations of its global client base. Splitting the overall workload between each office, as opposed to dedicated regional offices solely working upon local or regional case loads, has produced huge gains for GLI and its clients. "Spreading our workload across multiple offices has improved our efficiency, speeded up the entire process and spread the risk," states John. "By risk I mean that we now have universal expertise across each and every office. We don't have dedicated teams for land-based and i-gaming or any market sector, we train our engineers so that they are experts in all fields. I oversee a team of over 100 engineers in Spain, Italy, South Africa and Holland. I can call on any team, and any individual within that team, to work on any project at any time, knowing that we have the capability in place to answer that call."

The need to create these fast, flexible and efficient working practices to service both existing and new clients is borne from a desire to seize the raw opportunities John and his teams see developing across all sectors of the business. "There are always new jurisdictions opening, especially in i-gaming

right now," describes John. "When I started here at GLI, our workload was skewed 20 per cent towards i-gaming and 80 per cent was land based. However, in the last year, the balance is now 50/50. Is that because land-based has slowed or fallen back? No - it's because i-gaming has accelerated to match it. If you look at the opening of new jurisdictions in the last few years, Spain, Denmark, Romania and now Portugal, we see all those opportunities in combination with ISS (Information Security Services) and our increasing work in the lotteries sectors, which means that there's still massive opportunities for the growth of GLI Europe. i-gaming has shown that technology is driving the gaming sector right now and we're seeing ever increasing product complexity as a result. This level of complexity means that rather than just engaging with a client at the end of the product development cycle, we're supporting clients at the outset, conducting workshops and looking at new developments both in terms of technology and regulation. We see lots of great products that won't launch because they were created in isolation. At GLI, we bring our expertise to the process at the earliest possible stage to help our clients get to where they want to go."

Having regional teams working seamlessly together on complex multi-national projects is testament to the management skills of the GLI Europe team, though they do get a little help

from technology here too. The implementation of IIRA, a networking software solution referenced across the interviews we conducted with GLI, has enabled the technical teams and their clients to keep abreast of the approvals procedure at every single stage of the process. John explains: "We implemented IIRA a little over two years ago. Before then, if a client presented us with a product we would run our tests and revert with any issues via a phone call or email. IIRA changed all that."

IIRA is fundamentally a job tracking system that's networked between the client and each of the different teams within GLI working on the project. Comments can be added and tracked by each member of the network, whether that's the compliance team, the client or the technical managers - every touch point is tracked, logged and can be viewed in real-time. It's a brilliant, transparent and efficient way to manage the approvals process and is just one of the tools GLI uses to involve clients at every stage, as communication is such an important part of the path through the certification process. "Another tool we use is called Evoluton, which, in a nutshell, allows us to easily transfer clients between jurisdictions," explains John. "If, for example, we test a product for the first time in the US, but the ultimate plan is to progress to Europe, to Holland, Switzerland and Sweden, then we run the test script for those jurisdictions, automating the approvals process.

It's another example of the added value service clients receive when they use GLI as their test lab."

In a price-sensitive, highly competitive market, product testing is a balance between value-for-money and value-added services. Getting the balance right is key for GLI in providing realistic expectations and meeting them.

In dealing with long-term clients, the boundaries are known to all parties and GLI has relationships with some of the biggest names in gaming going back decades, but working with new clients is both tricky and exciting. "The first time is always the most complicated part," agrees John. "You're looking to figure out not only the product, but understand the inner workings of the organisation. To achieve this, you need that connection to the client to be very quick in providing answers and adept in determining the priorities. It's especially important in the gaming sector, which is very fast moving and dynamic, whereby priorities are changing overnight to reflect the real-time opportunities in the marketplace. We recently refitted our account staff, changing their titles to client services managers, reflecting the fact that the role is more than simply selling. It's about establishing a relationship with the client, understanding their business inside and out to ensure we manage the product certification process very precisely, because when we



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accurately understand the scope of their ambitions for their product from the outset, everything runs faster and more smoothly."

Keeping track of the ever changing tech-landscape is a considerable challenge not only for games developers, but also for the GLI team that ultimately has to test and approve those games. As the technical director, John and his team must ensure they're completely 'au fait' with every aspect of the legislative technical envelope and appreciate how games developers are attempting to push and pull it in every direction. Logistically, that's a big challenge as the team has to balance their workload with the practical aspects of continuous and in-depth technical training. "We conduct a great deal of internal training," explains John. "When we appoint engineers we assign a mentor to each new engineer to ensure they're learning from an experienced professional. Specific certification requires dedicated courses and qualifications, which enables us to test the latest equipment and new technology. At GLI, we don't just create specialists, but rather highly skilled generalists who can turn their hands to any type of testing requirement, whether that's land-based, mobile or online."

John describes the shift to a multi-tasking technical

skills requirement as one that initially took GLI's Technical Managers out of their "comfort zones." In the past, GLI had sought to create dedicated teams for land-based and specific teams for i-gaming, but it proved an unproductive strategy. "When you dedicate teams to a specific aspect of the business, there will always be times when you need extra resources to cope with demand, as well as quieter times," explains John. "It's my responsibility to keep everyone busy - all the time. Creating localised teams capable of dealing with all aspects of the gaming spectrum also means that we're not asking clients to ship machines around the world because their local lab doesn't cater for their specific requirements. Our aim is to be as responsive and flexible as possible to the needs of our clients."

The opening of new markets is one of the key areas in which GLI is helping its clients significantly accelerate product approvals. Where in the past both GLI and its clients would assemble at the start line, waiting for the moment government agencies would release their regulations, GLI has since shifted the starting blocks to ensure clients benefit from a rolling-start. Pre-compliance testing allows clients to be tested against draft regulations in preparation for the official launch of new regulations. "When Portugal released its draft i-gaming regulations we

conducted pre-compliance for clients looking to enter that market," describes John. "During this process we work closely with Dennis and his team to lock-down the draft and anticipate the changes needed to prepare our clients to enter the new market much more quickly."

Regulators can and do make changes between the draft and the final regulations, but the benefits of pre-compliance as balanced against these 'tweaks' have proved themselves to be advantageous for clients looking to gain first-mover status. The close cooperation and working relationship that GLI Europe enjoys with regulators across the continent is a major factor in the success of pre-compliance, with GLI actively involved in the drafting process, providing expert advice and global gaming experience directly to the regulators. "Clients understand that they have a series of regulatory hurdles they need to clear, but time is always a limiting factor in the equation," states John. "Both land-based and i-gaming clients appreciate this is a highly collaborative process between all parties, but that working with GLI and the standards we have pioneered, helps everyone in the development of new products for new jurisdictions."

There's something refreshingly 'old-school' about the manner in which GLI Europe conducts its business. While the drive to maintain the highest levels of technological expertise and knowledge weave their way through every aspect of the business, the tactile nature of client contact and its hands-on approach to servicing that relationship is something of which John van Schaijk is very obviously proud. "I push really hard with my clients to ensure that everyone involved with our clients picks up the phone and speaks to them directly, or gets on a plane and meets face-to-face," states John. "At every exhibition we schedule meetings with clients to reinforce that connection with their business and understand the nuances that you can't read in an email. We place huge stock on direct contact with our clients and we spend a lot of time face-to-face and on the phone helping them understand our approach to the testing process. We explain and we listen. If the client offers a better suggestion, we shift and move in that direction. It's the same level of collaboration within GLI too. We have amazing resources, from the huge compliance department here in Holland to the massive support infrastructure in the US, none of the other test labs have that level of expertise across

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475 jurisdictions worldwide. The level of support we can bring to bear on any project is the defining difference when you work with GLI. If our clients need support, or if internally our engineers need vital information, we have a global 24/7 infrastructure that ensures each project is efficiently handled and made market-ready across global jurisdictions."

Listening to the Technical Managers describe their day-to-day work with clients you quickly appreciate that they act as extensions of the developer's own team, discussing every aspect of the product roadmap to ensure maximum efficiency both in the short and long-term. Near-term aspirations might be local market compliance, but what about approval in multiple jurisdictions? "I always ask our clients, do you have a road map?" says John. "If we understand the direction of travel we have a much greater appreciation of the issues our clients will be facing in the future. In which case, I can assign engineering resources appropriately, whether that's two, three or four engineers from the outset or a spread of resources over a sustained period, that's where GLI can really help get our client's products across the line. Smaller labs can help you to a limited extent in the short-term, but if you have a long-term strategy, the safest route is with GLI."

The greatest part of John's job, and that of his team, is receiving positive feedback from satisfied clients. GLI's internal Intranet is the posting board for such comments, with clients encouraged to share their experiences, both good and bad, as part of the continual learning process embraced by GLI. "We want all our clients, new and old, to be comfortable working with us," says John. "We want to partner with our clients, to get their product over the line, but sometimes it's not so easy. Often the scope of the project means that the hurdles are really high - but that's the part that makes things the most worthwhile. When you've brought a project back on track and you get a call or an email to thank you for all the hard work. You live for that moment. It is the reason why we put so much effort into everything we do. Every one of those messages is testimony to the dedicated service we offer to our clients at GLI."

Supplier News

The Netherlands – Trisigma appoints John van Schaijk to its management

By [Phil Martin](#) - 25 February 2019 11:20 AM - Last updated on 25 February 2019 11:20 AM

John van Schaijk has joined Trisigma as Technical Manager for the gaming test lab in the company's Dutch Head Office.

Mr. van Schaijk is a highly skilled gaming expert with over 25 years experience in leading innovative development gaming organisations in a global environment at fast growing private held and public traded companies. He brings a wealth of experience in management positions in various companies.

John van Schaijk commented: "I am excited to be joining Trisigma and look forward to working with Rob and Frank and the team in the Netherlands to expand their business globally. I was immediately impressed by the professionalism, innovation, efficiency and quality of Trisigma."

Rob Hubregtse and Frank Otte, founders and owners of Trisigma, said: "John brings a wealth of experience to Trisigma as well as a pleasant and professional attitude that fits perfect in the Trisigma organisation. We are proud to welcome John van Schaijk to our team. We are confident that he will be of great value in further extending our Trisigma services to the gaming industry and regulators with our offices and labs in The Netherlands and Spain."

