

# Cultural Daily

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## How Social Media Turns Gambling into Cultural Currency

Our Friends · Saturday, June 7th, 2025

Every minute, 165,000 people place bets on a simple game called **Aviator**. That's nearly three bets every second, with over 10,000 happening simultaneously at any given moment. These aren't your typical casino-goers in smoky back rooms—they're part of a digital social community that's redefined what gambling means in our connected world.

Something fascinating has happened over the past few years. What we once considered a private, often secretive activity has become social currency. When 1 in 20 UK Twitter users follow gambling content, and platforms like TikTok showcase influencers with hundreds of thousands of followers celebrating wins, we're witnessing more than marketing evolution<sup>1</sup>. We're seeing gambling transform into a form of digital belonging.

This shift doesn't happen by accident. Social media has fundamentally changed how we experience risk, community, and status. Through examining this transformation—from shared experiences that feel less like gambling to algorithms that shape our cultural norms—we'll explore how platforms have turned betting into something that looks remarkably like social networking. The implications reach far beyond any single game or platform.

### When Everyone's Betting, Nobody's Gambling

The brilliance of a game like Aviator which has 10 million monthly players is largely in its community-oriented approach. Unlike traditional gambling, where you are left with your choices in isolation, Aviator allows for "group bets" whereby wins are celebrations shared. Their philosophy? "When one wins, we all win." This simple shift transforms individual risk into collective experience.

Consider how this changes the psychology. You're not alone making a risky decision—you're part of a community where success feels inevitable and losses feel shared. TikTok gambling influencers have capitalized on this brilliantly. Lady Luck HQ's 271,000 followers don't just watch gambling content; they participate in a lifestyle that feels aspirational rather than dangerous.

The numbers tell the story. Combined gambling TikTok accounts reach roughly 1 million followers, creating communities larger than many cities. These aren't passive audiences—they're engaged participants in what feels more like a social movement than a gambling platform. Actually, that's exactly what makes this transformation so powerful.

When SPRIBE, Aviator's developer, talks about "connecting with players and getting them

excited,” they’re not describing traditional gambling promotion. They’re building social experiences where the game becomes secondary to the community it creates. This approach has redefined how an entire generation thinks about risk and reward.

## The Algorithm Knows What You Want Before You Do

Once you interact with any betting-related post, the algorithm takes note and begins curating a feed that brings you deeper into this entertainment ecosystem.

Recent **UK Gambling Commission** research found that young people are “surprised at the nature and regularity of gambling exposure” in their curated feeds. They’re not actively seeking this content; it’s discovering them through engagement-based distribution that’s proven incredibly effective for platforms. The ROI from influencer marketing in gambling? An impressive \$5.78 for every \$1.

This establishes something researchers refer to as “social proof” – if your feed is constantly filled with content from people interested in the same thing as you, it starts to reinforce an idea that this activity is a “culture” within a community. The algorithm doesn’t differentiate between entertainment and influence, it just amplifies what has true engagement, and keeps people engaged with content that is entertaining to them.

It’s interesting to think about how memes have evolved into cultural bridges. We have seen research with individuals (18-40 years) where gambling meme-based communities are developed based on shared experiences that create relatable inside jokes. These are not cautionary tales – these are cultural signposts that enable people to feel less isolated and connected to others that get it.

This leads to a cultural shift, brokering community in a space and manner that was impossible before social media platforms created new definitions for culture around entertainment.

## Posting Your Wins

Social media has turned gambling into performance art. Czech Republic studies from 2024 found that people now integrate gambling into their daily social media routines—waking up to check notifications, sharing wins, participating in gambling-related conversations throughout their day.

This represents a fundamental shift from gambling as private activity to gambling as social currency. In Kenya, where Aviator has become particularly popular, influencers share screenshots of five-figure wins on Instagram and TikTok, creating aspirational content that feels more like lifestyle promotion than gambling advertising.

Consider the broader cultural implications. Australian research shows 39% of adults now gamble at least monthly. This suggests that social media’s influence is considerable.

The transformation isn’t just about individual choices—it’s about how social networks create new norms around risk-taking behaviors. Higher-risk gamblers tend to have more interconnected social networks, making it difficult to step outside these cultural bubbles once they’re established.

## The New Social Contract

We're noticing a transformation of traditionally private risk-taking into public social currency. This extends far beyond gambling into how social media reshapes cultural attitudes toward any behavior that can be gamified, shared, and monetized through engagement.

The three elements we've explored—community formation, algorithmic amplification, and social performance—work together to create new cultural norms. Knowing these mechanisms doesn't mean judging them by a goodness rating; it means understanding how they work so that we can interact with the digital culture more consciously.

What is especially interesting about this transformation is the speed and scale. Cultural shifts, traditionally, happen over generations. Social media compresses this timeline into months or years, creating new shared understandings of risk, reward, and social belonging at unprecedented pace.

The key insight here isn't that gambling has become more accessible—it's that social media has made risk-taking behaviors feel like social participation. We can expect this pattern to repeat for other activities as platforms continue to innovate ways to translate individual decisions into community experiences.

Perhaps most importantly, understanding gambling's evolution into social currency provides the tools for users and policymakers to make informed choices about participation in digital culture. When we have awareness around the mechanisms that reinforce our cultural attitudes, we can choose to engage the same digital culture with intention instead of automaton.

*Photo at top: Afta Putta Gunawan via Pexels*

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