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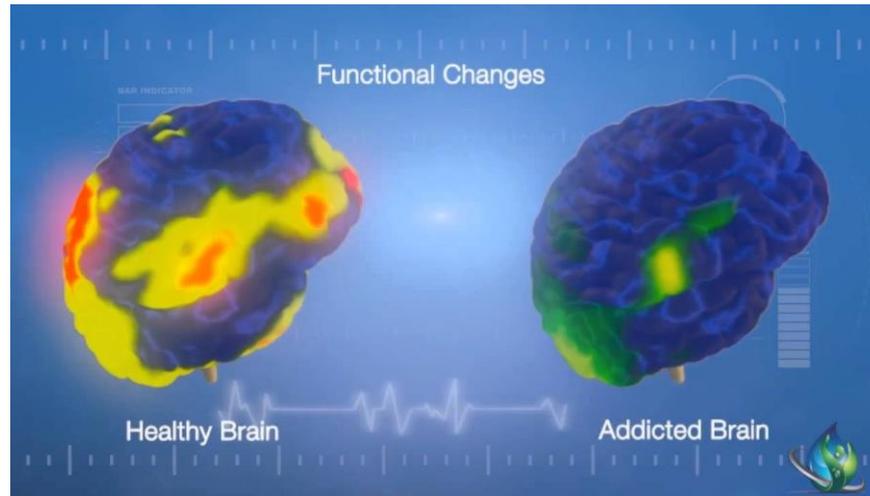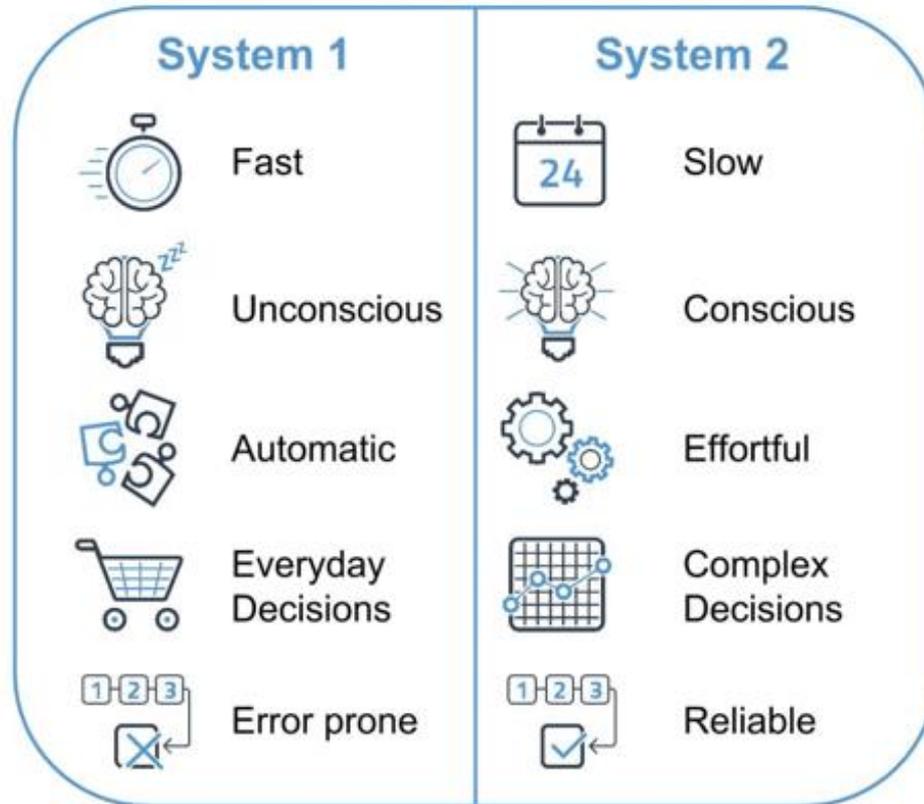
Normative messaging trial with problem players

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Addiction is very powerful

- Addictive substances and behaviours intensely activate brain **pathways of reward** and reinforcement, many of which involve the neurotransmitter **dopamine**

- Dopamine changes the brain on a **cellular level**, commanding the brain to **"do it again"**

- **Craving increases**, as **the body adapts** to the reward' presence

Functional Changes

Healthy Brain — Addicted Brain

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	System 1		System 2
	Fast		Slow
	Unconscious		Conscious
	Automatic		Effortful
	Everyday Decisions		Complex Decisions
	Error prone		Reliable

Current thinking on problem play interventions targets mainly System 2 of the brain

Habits/addiction governed by System 1, so interventions should primarily target System 1

SYSTEM 1
- **Emotional** and **instinctive** decision making - deeply rooted in our brain, require no cognitive effort
- Strong **incentives** – addiction is very powerful
- **System 1** activated – System 1 is very powerful
- Limited **cognitive resources**
- Limited **attention**
- System 1 interventions have been proven **successful** in other industries
- And there is some preliminary evidence that it might be proven successful in the **gambling** industry as well

SYSTEM 2
- Rely on **conscious, self-reflective** behavior
- Most common types of **RG intervention** are linked to System 2, for example:
- **Self-exclusion programs** - a pre-commitment intervention
- **Setting gambling limits** – in a non-emotional state
- **Cognitive distortions correction** – requires rational thought
- **Education & Information** – conscious and considered

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Therefore, among the most successful System 1 interventions are messages that highlight social norms – what others are doing.

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# Social norms interventions produce positive effects
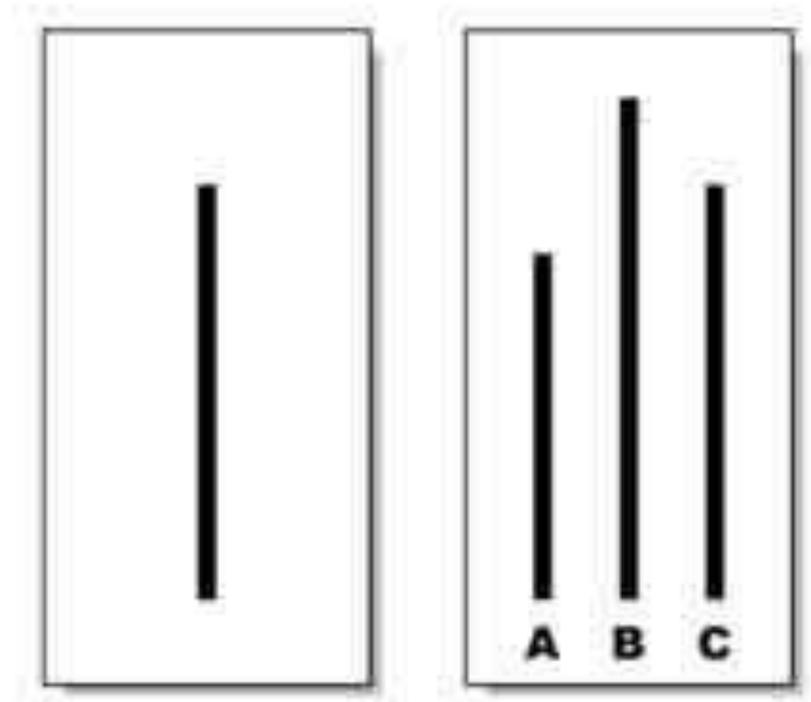
- Information on social norms were shown to induce people to:
    - conserve **energy** (through re-use of hotel towels, Goldstein et al, 2008)
    - **vote** (Gerber & Rogers, 2009)
    - stop **littering** (Cialdini et al, 1990)
    - increase **seatbelt use** (Perkins & Linkenbach, 2004)
    - reduce **smoking** (Hancock & Henry, 2003)
    - reduce **drinking and driving** (Hellstrom, 2004)
    - promote **abstinence and moderate drinking** among college/university students (Haines & Spear, 1996)
    - reduce **HIV risk behaviours** (Chernoff & Davison, 2005)

- **Guests more likely** to recycle their towels
- The effect even stronger when the social norm mentions *"75% of your fellow guests have participated in our reuse and recycle program. If you would like to join your fellow guests please reuse your towels"*

Here's how you compare to neighbors

Last bill

You — 402 kWh*

Efficient neighbors — 465 kWh

Average neighbors — 602 kWh
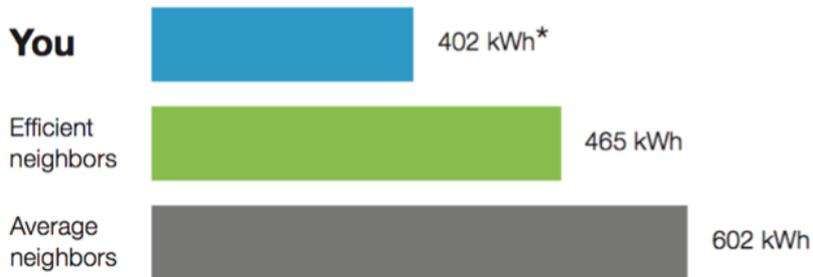
😀 **Great**

🙂 Good

😐 Using more than average

- **Schultz et al (2007)** gave residents **information about their energy use and how it compared to their neighbors**
- **High spenders became more conservative**

Normative feedback has been tested in the gambling industry

- Variety of timeframes, immediacy of feedback, design of message and measurement of impact
- Some used personalised feedback, and some used normative feedback, or both
- Varying degrees of effectiveness, but most studies showed impacts on:
  - Number of days gambled
  - Perception of gambling frequency norms
  - Lower levels of risk-taking
  - Recucing perceived norms for quantities lost and won,
  - Lower problem gambling score

- **Auer & Griffiths (2015)**
  - "*We would like to inform you, that you have just played 1,000 slot games. **Only a few people play more than 1,000 slot games**. The chance of winning does not increase with the duration of the session. Taking a break often helps, and you can choose the duration of the break*"

- All studies except Auer & Griffiths relied on self-reported impacts

Sources: Cunningham et al (2009); Cunningham et al (2012); Larimer et al (2012); Celio & Lisman (2014); Neighbors et al. (2015); Auer & Griffiths (2015)

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Social norms trial at Camelot

- Email messages varied on:
  - <u>Type</u>: Personalized & Normative vs. Normative only
  - <u>Tone</u>: Negative vs. Positive
  - <u>Direction</u>: Tell vs. Suggest

- Sample was segmented by:
  - <u>Severity of problem play with IWGs</u>: As identified by our analytics modes (four groups)
  - <u>Control groups</u>: Were treated as healthy players and didn't receive any interventions

We've noticed that you're spending a lot more than the average GameStore player. Sometimes it can be helpful to compare your spend with others.
The average GameStore player deposits £10 into their wallet per week.
Maybe it's time to review your **spend and play limits in your account?** You can do this at any time.

We want to make sure that playing GameStore is always fun. To check how much you're spending, it's always a good for players to compare their weekly spend with others.
Did you know on average GameStore player deposits £10 into their account per week?
If you haven't already, please **set spend and play limits in your account.**

Results: Social Norms message reduced play significantly

Player Group	Intervention	Effect (Decrease in play)
Group 1	Email P/N; Negative; Suggest; Spend and play	Significant ** (greatest)
	Email P/N + NoComms	Significant **
	Control	
Group 2	Email N; Positive; Tell; Spend and play	Significant **
	Email N + NoComms	Significant **
	Control	
Group 3	Email N; Negative; Suggest; Spend soft	Significant **
	Email N + NoComms	Significant **
	Control	
Group 4	Email P/N; Positive; Tell; Spend	Significant **
	Email P/N + NoComms	Significant ** (least)
	Control	

- No comms had no real impact
- Control group did self-regulate
- All the interventions were more effective than the control
- 'Worst' players responded to more negative messages that gave both personalised and normative feedback
- Phase 2 involved adjusting the content slightly and getting to the 'best' wording
- Most effective intervention saw a 16% reduction in "played since" vs control

P = personalized feedback
N = normative feedback
NoComms = no marketing communications

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QUESTIONS?

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