

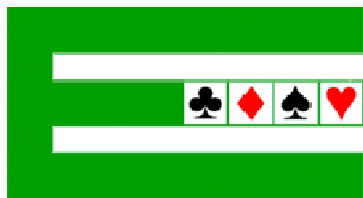
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INTERNET BRIDGE

A WINNING COMBINATION ?

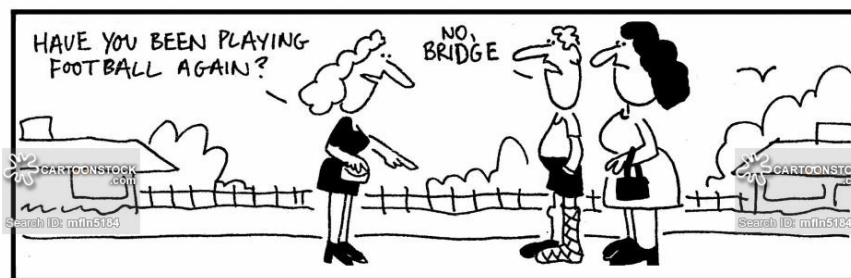
SOME RECENT INITIATIVES

By Marc De Pauw, EBL 1st Vice President



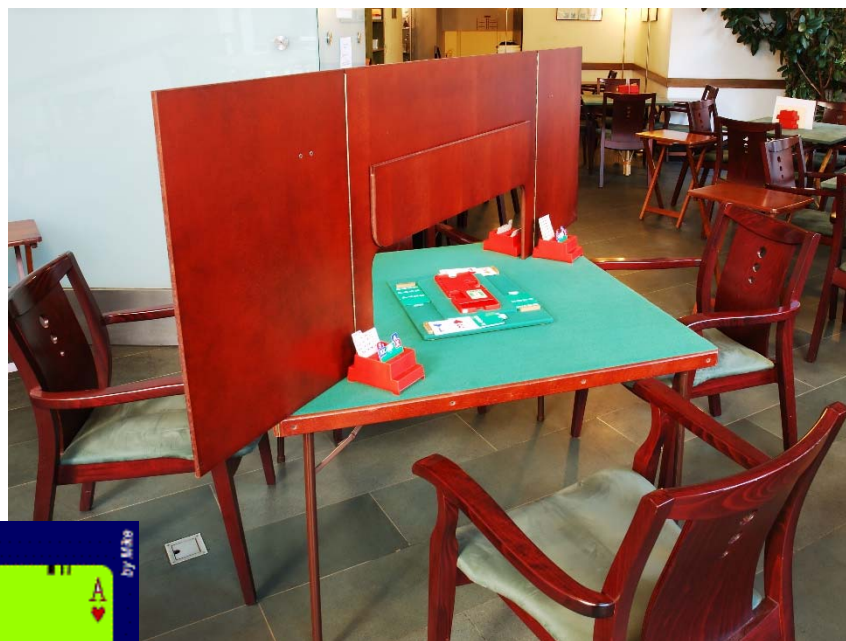
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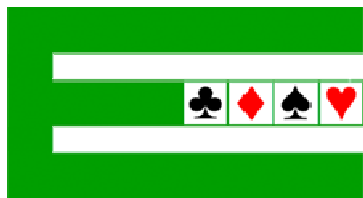
The game of bridge as we used to know it, with the traditional ingredients:



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TODAY: the traditional game of bridge is still « alive and kicking » adding some new elements to the traditional ingredients. Central topic: make the game « cleaner ». Changes still to come ...





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Over the last 30 years: rise of a new medium, the INTERNET, with some applications in BRIDGE

Rather chaotic and organic growth with several PROVIDERS and FORMATS of the game. Some of the providers:



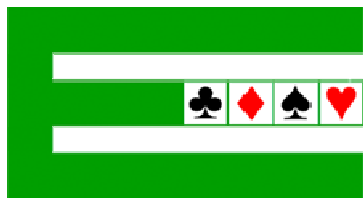
Internet Bridge Club
www.swangames.com



European Bridge League



2018 - BELFAST

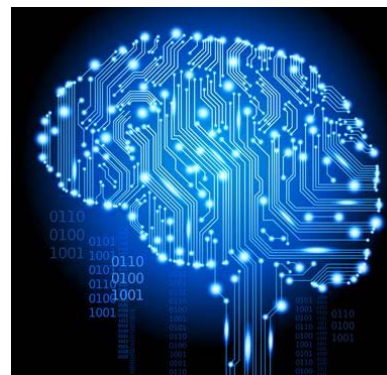


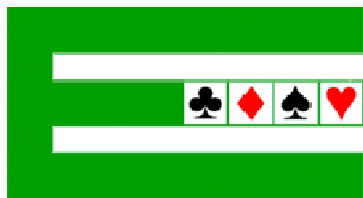
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Various FORMATS are being offered:

- The Internet as a platform for online play with and between physical players. Various sub-formats offered by the Providers.
- Simultaneous bridge competitions using the Internet as a platform.
- Online bridge using robot software (from 1 to 3 robots).

Essential for all forms of Internet Bridge
= the development of bridge software
(computer brain).





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BRIDGE SOFTWARE

1989: first confrontation of bridge programs

1996: ACBL World Championships Computer Bridge

1997: 1st Computer Championship – Albuquerque, New Mexico

2017: 21st World Computer Bridge Championships – Lyon, France

Over the years, many programs have tried to prove the best.

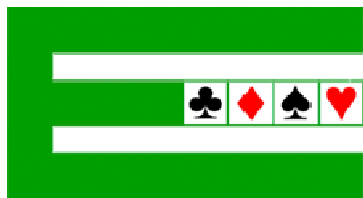
The most succesful : JACK – Wbridge5 – RoboBridge – Bridge Baron.

High quality software is a basic condition for computer bridge.

A big thanks to:

AI LEVY





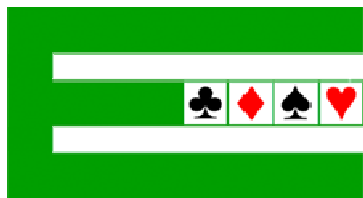
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STRATEGY TOWARD ONLINE BRIDGE: support / tolerate / kill ?

SPECIFIC ADVANTAGES LINKED TO THE ONLINE BRIDGE:

- Play bridge anytime, anywhere = reaching another audience !
- Play at your level.
- Kibitz the pros to improve your game.
- Participate/Organize online tournaments.
- For the bridge organizations: a way of earning income.

SUPPORT online bridge because of its' **complementarity** to the physical, traditional bridge formats.

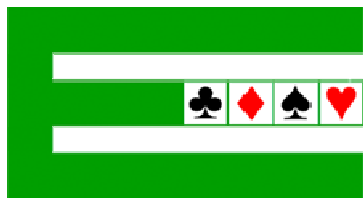


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Several NBOs / Zonal Organizations have set a online bridge formats, collaborating with Providers:

- ACBL BBO / OK Bridge / Swan - ACBL masterpoints
- NBB Stepbridge / Berry's Internet Club
- EBU Funbridge – EBU masterpoints
- FFB
- CCBA Ourgame
-

To be defined : a strategy for the EBL and for those European NBOs not yet offering own formats / rewards for internet bridge.



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INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE WBF:

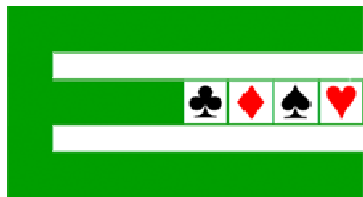


13 - 19 November, 2017

**WBF
ONLINE WOMEN
BRIDGE FESTIVAL**

[Click here for details](#)



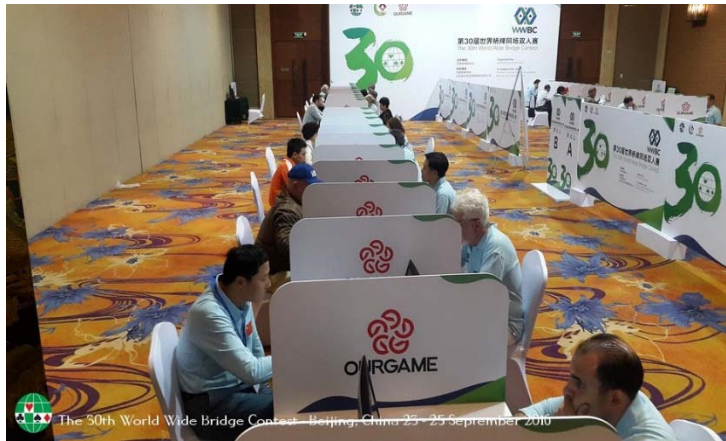


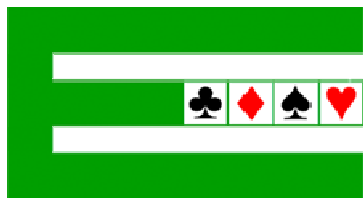
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WORLD WIDE BRIDGE CONTEST (WWBC)

- During many years organized as a simultaneous contest, (physical) pairs playing – in clubs - pre-duplicated hands. 4 Contests/year organized by Anna Gudge and her team. A successful formula for many years, both for WBF and the EBL.
- In 2016 start of a new format in collaboration between the WBF and Ourgame (4 year contract).
- 2018: 40 pairs qualified for a final round in China
 - 24 pairs selected out of 8 qualifying simultaneous contests organized between March and June – specific criteria (5 continents present, etc...)
 - all expenses (travel / accommodation / meals) paid + prize money
 - 16 Chinese pairs (online bridge & 4 wild cards)

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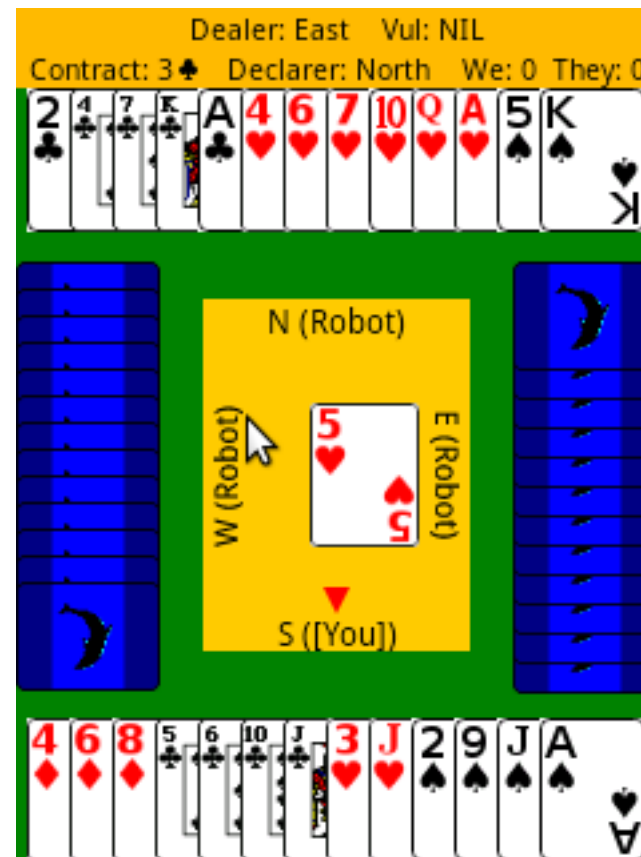


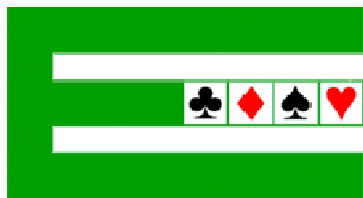


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WBF ROBOT TOURNAMENTS

Official launch on February 1st 2018





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ROBOT GAMES

Agreements made with 3 providers: BBO / Funbridge / Ourgame

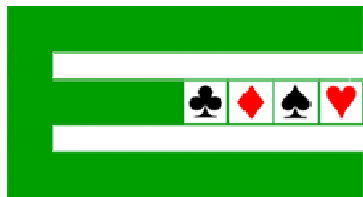
The format(s): starting with short sessions (12 boards / day) – will evolve.

Pricing.

Main incentive: WBF Masterpoints – WBF ranking based on Robot MP
Top players receive WBF MP

Revenue sharing model:

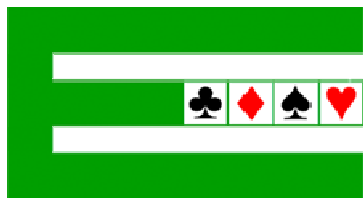
- Between the WBF and the providers
- Between the WBF, the Zones and the NBOs (50/25/25)



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CONSIDERATIONS

- The online / internet / robot bridge games are there to stay. How should we (the NBOs and the EBL) organize ourselves in order to maximize the benefits ?
- Today's growth of the online bridge looks quite chaotic and is perhaps not as appealing to the players as it might be.
- Answering the main question « what is our USP ? » looks necessary.
- The masterpoints as a main point of attraction.
- Better organize / harmonize the system(s) of masterpoints ?
- Offer integration possibilities to smaller NBOs who do not have the capacity to organize an own online bridge system ?
- Create win-wins
- Towards a universal system of masterpoints – allowing for several levels ?



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THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

