

Epoxy.ai, a Philadelphia tech start-up, aims to sync TV watching with sports betting

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Chris Reynolds and Jason Angelides developed the gizmo on the TV remote that brought deep-dive sports stats—tracking game momentum and player statistics—to millions of Xfinity subscribers.

Now, less than two years after leaving executive jobs at Comcast Corp., they want a piece of the online sports betting action.

Reynolds and Angelides have launched a start-up, Epoxy.ai, in Berwyn, Pennsylvania, that aims to personalize the betting experience for 75 million [sports fans](#) who experts say could place more than \$20 billion a year in wagers as more states legalize online sports betting.

Epoxy's first idea: to use the microphone on a [mobile phone](#) to determine what game a sports fan is watching and to synchronize the game on the television with a recommended bet. Reynolds said that a sports bettor would agree to the synchronization through the terms of service of the company that licenses Epoxy's technology. Epoxy's first customer is betParx, which is a sister company to Parx Casino.

"Amazon, Instagram, Spotify, those businesses are built on knowing who you are, and putting the right things in front of you," Angelides said. "It's an expectation and the [sports media](#) and gaming industry, while they recognize the need for that type of experience, they struggle to support that for a variety of reasons. One, because they're extremely thinly spread technologically because they're rolling out across states. Number two, they're not technology companies."

Too early for innovation?

In May 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court repealed the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act, paving the way for the gold rush of online sports betting. Pennsylvania, New Jersey and 21 other states have legalized online sports betting. Pennsylvania sports fans placed more than \$6 billion in online wagers in the last year.

Experts believe that the national volume of online sports betting, or the "handle," will grow to \$25 billion to \$30 billion a year as more states legalize online sports wagering.

Chris Grove, a co-founding partner at Acies Investments, a venture fund for sports, gambling and technology start-ups in Las Vegas, called Epoxy's founders "very talented."

Comcast buys OneTwoSee sports info service

But Grove believes that sports books have more immediate issues to resolve before they think about the innovation that Epoxy offers, including launching sports books in new states, registering sports bettors more efficiently and handling deposits.

"It's easy to be overly optimistic about the pace of innovation in regulated sports betting," Grove said. "It's kind of like talking about putting solar panels on the roof before you put the roof on."

Ready for some football?

Greenwood Gaming and Entertainment, which owns Parx Casino in Bensalem, is taking an early run with Epoxy under the leadership of Matthew Cullen, who was hired four years ago. He heads Greenwood's 100-person digital gambling operation that includes overseeing the company's online sports betting in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and

Michigan. Cullen expects to expand sports betting to an additional three states. Parx handled \$147 million in online sports bets between last July and April, according to figures from the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board.

"Personalization is the next big thing," Cullen said, because "people are going to want to bet on what they bet in the past, or what they like, or what they like to watch." But, Cullen added, echoing Grove, "it's still early days."

Cullen's team will measure whether Epoxy leads to higher retention of bettors, affects the amount of money a bettor bets, and leads to higher engagement time on betParx.

The NFL football season drives television sales and ratings and, figures indicate, online sports betting. Pennsylvania online sports wagering jumped 65%, to \$527 million, from August to September 2021, gaming board data show. September is the start of the NFL season. The month with the highest dollar volume in online sports wagering in Pennsylvania was January, the month of NFL playoffs, with \$737 million in bets.

Cullen said the plan was for the Epoxy app to launch on the betParx betting app for the NFL season.

Angelides said Epoxy would be ready. "It's what we're doing. Sports waits for no one. The game must go on."

As to whether sports bettors would be comfortable with a mobile phone microphone that listens to them, Angelides said that Epoxy's research shows that more than 90% of core and casual bettors report they "like it when the products they use tailor the content to them so it's easier to find what they want and discover new things."

From high-rise to start-up

Reynolds, 47, and Angelides, 54, have settled into post-Comcast life. At the media and telecom giant, they worked out of the 37th floor of the technology tower, Philadelphia's tallest building.

Now, they rent the second floor of a quaint office building on the eastbound side of SEPTA's Berwyn train station. It's an easy commute for Epoxy's employees who live in Philadelphia. The start-up employs 12, mostly a crew who followed Reynolds and Angelides from Comcast. The firm also uses six contractors.

Angelides said the plan over time is for 20 to 30 full-time employees.

Epoxy hopes to raise \$7 million to \$10 million in venture capital this summer, and it has filed for patents on their technology through Philadelphia law firm Morgan Lewis. The co-founders see Epoxy's technology as offering three services: synchronization between the TV viewing and bets, visualization of sports data, and bet recommendations.

Angelides and Reynolds met in the 1990s at Traffic.com in Chesterbrook, a real-time traffic information service for radio and television stations. Traffic.com, bought by Nokia, took traffic data from road and highway sensors and sold it to television and radio stations. The business taught Angelides and Reynolds the importance of packaging real-time information for audiences.

OneTwoSee

At Traffic.com, they thought of other areas where real-time information could be valuable. It was in the early days of mobile phone apps. When the pair realized that sports fans were always looking up sports stats on

their phones, they developed a business to access and visualize box-score sports data in real time. Fans could consume the data as they watched games.

"The idea was that if you were a sports fan and you were sitting there and you were watching the game and a player comes up and you don't know who he is or what his stats are. How many home runs he has? What's going to happen next? What's the most likely outcome? You got to go through looking through box scores? It was a nightmare," Angelides said.

In late 2011, Angelides and Reynolds launched OneTwoSee to provide sports data instantly. It was their first start-up. Over time, OneTwoSee developed the platform to display up-to-the-minute sports stats on cable television and integrated the service into Comcast's X1 platform. Comcast viewed the sports data—accessed through a button on the TV remote—as a way to make its huge investment into sports rights more engaging for its subscribers. In 2016, Comcast bought OneTwoSee for an undisclosed price.

Inside Comcast, the OneTwoSee team stuck together and helped to deepen the sports platform for the Olympic games.

Reynolds and Angelides said they had a great experience at Comcast and they left on good terms. But they were restless and viewed online sports betting as the next big thing.

Angelides gave notice to Comcast that he was leaving in November 2020. Reynolds did the same in mid-2021. Of his decision to leave Comcast, Reynolds said that "once you start building stuff, it's hard not to do it."

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