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The Future of Game Indexing: A Data-Driven Evolution

For decades, game indexing has helped lotteries evaluate instant product performance and build stronger product portfolios. It does this by comparing a game's sales against a defined group of similar games to determine its relative performance. Those results help guide product selection, launch planning, and overall portfolio management, but they don't always tell the whole story of how a game stacks up to the overall portfolio.

The instant ticket business is evolving. Today's portfolios are more complex, high-price-point games are more common, and products vary widely by play style, theme, and season. As a result, traditional indexing methods no longer provide the complete picture they once did. A simple above-average or below-average measure cannot fully capture a game's contribution to portfolio performance. To make more informed product decisions, lotteries need indexing that reflects today's market realities.

The History of Game Indexing

Indexing has been used for decades to evaluate instant games. More than 20 years ago, Scientific Games introduced static and fiscal indexes as part of its *MAP* (Marketing Analysis Planning) platform. These indexes provided a consistent benchmark for performance and a simple framework for evaluating game strength as above- or below-average relative to comparable products.

Current Game Indexes

Fiscal

- Compares against games:
- At the same price point
 - Launched in the same jurisdiction
 - Launched in the same fiscal year

Static

- Compares against games:
- At the same price point
 - Launched in the same jurisdiction
 - All historical launches

They also gave teams a common language for discussing performance, identifying strong games, and recognizing underperforming products. Over time, however, those traditional comparison groups have become less reliable.

Pitfalls of Current Indexing



The value of any index depends on the quality of its comparison group. When games are compared to products that aren't truly comparable, the results can be misleading, making it more difficult to accurately evaluate performance and optimize the portfolio. In addition, performance should also be viewed against the goals of a particular product. Just because a game sells below average does not automatically mean that it performed below its objectives.

One challenge is that data sets can be too small. This is especially true for higher-price-point games, where only one or two products may launch in a given year. With so few comparable games, the index often defaults to a value of 100, providing little meaningful or actionable information.

In other cases, comparison sets are too large. For example, a static index compares every game within the same jurisdiction and price point, even though those games may have launched under very different market conditions.

Game type also matters. Extended play games and non-extended play games can and should perform very differently. Additionally, holiday games can skew results because their seasonal appeal creates a different sales pattern. When fundamentally different products are grouped together, the resulting index does not accurately reflect a game's true contribution to the portfolio.

Seasonality is a reality in our industry, and you don't need a hyper-inflated index to tell you that games launched during your lottery's busiest selling season do well. Indexes can also fluctuate throughout the year, making performance hard to evaluate until after the final launch of the fiscal year and enough sales weeks have passed.

Transforming Game Indexing for Today's Game Portfolios

The next evolution of game indexing is designed to provide a more consistent, comprehensive, and reliable way to evaluate instant product performance. Rather than relying on broad or static comparison groups, the new approach uses more relevant benchmarks that better reflect today's game portfolios and market

conditions.

At the foundation of this framework is Scientific Games' new stock index methodology. The stock index uses the average cumulative sales for a game's first 16 weeks, regardless of percent sold, and compares each game only to products launched before it. This creates a more stable and meaningful benchmark while eliminating the need to wait until the end of the fiscal year to evaluate performance.

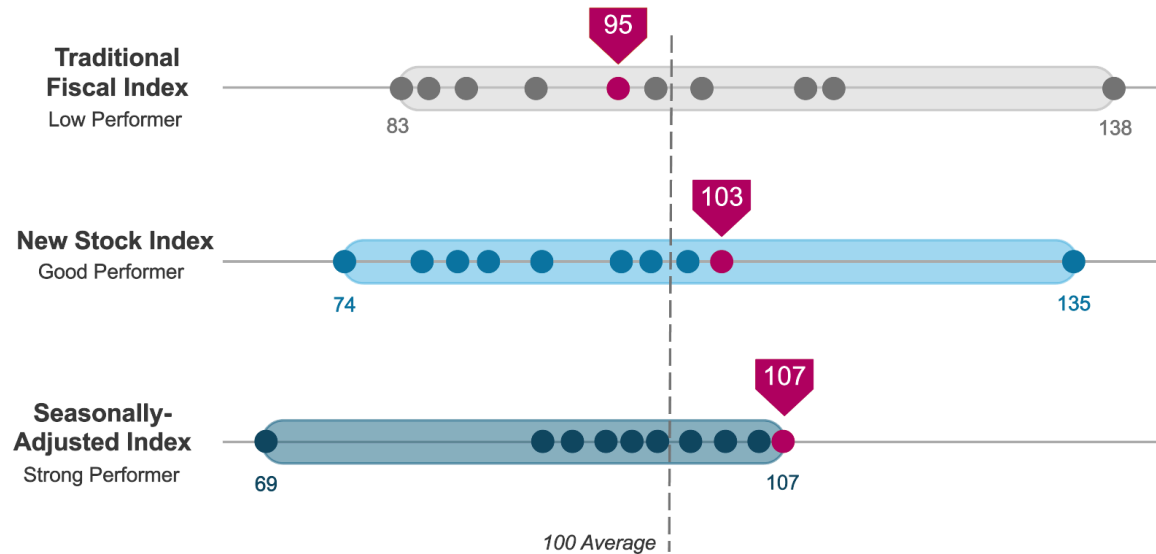


The stock index compares each game to the previous 12 launches within the same jurisdiction and price point, representing at least one year—but no more than three years—of product history. For base games, the comparison uses the most recent sales data rather than only the original launch date to better reflect current performance.

Building on the stock index, additional indexes provide a significantly more complete view of game performance. The group below takes into consideration important factors that should be considered in valuing a game's performance:

- **Category** indexes compare games within more relevant groups, such as extended play, holiday, and higher-price-point games of \$20 or more.
- **Seasonally-adjusted** indexes account for predictable seasonal sales patterns.
- **Trend-adjusted** indexes reflect broader price-point performance trends.

The following example shows how a game's evaluation can change as indexing becomes more precise. Using the traditional fiscal index, the game receives a score of 95, indicating below-average performance. Narrowing the comparison group with the new stock index improves the assessment, while the seasonally adjusted index further accounts for seasonal sales patterns, increasing the score to 107. The result is a more accurate representation of the game's true performance and value within the portfolio.



Final Word

As instant game portfolios continue to evolve, so must the tools used to evaluate them. More precise indexing provides lotteries with a clearer understanding of game performance, enabling smarter portfolio decisions in an increasingly complex marketplace. However, an index alone cannot completely evaluate a game's performance. It is up to the product managers to define the goals of a particular game and use that judgment together with the new tools to fairly assess a game. The ultimate goal is to build the best portfolio, not merely optimize individual games, and indexing is just one tool to help lotteries do that.

Jacob Kreider, Scientific Games' Senior Director of Data Products & Analytics, believes modernizing game indexing means using more relevant comparisons that reflect how games actually perform today. "The result is clearer performance evaluation, better-optimized instant game portfolios, and ultimately higher returns to the good causes that lotteries support."

How could we simplify the shift to this new indexing methodology?

Your feedback will help us make the transition as seamless as possible.



View current MAP FY Index and New Indexes side-by-side

Decide if one index makes sense as the new "standard"

Clear guidance on when to use each new index

Continued access to custom indexing tools

Other: I'll reply to this email with my suggestion

Click above to cast your vote.

Interested in learning more? Join Haley Bobo at the NASPL Professional Development Seminar, July 27–30, 2026, in Seattle, Washington, for an in-depth look at the future of game indexing and portfolio optimization.

Data in Motion Contributors



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