

S2S Basics

ABOUT S2S

What is S2S?

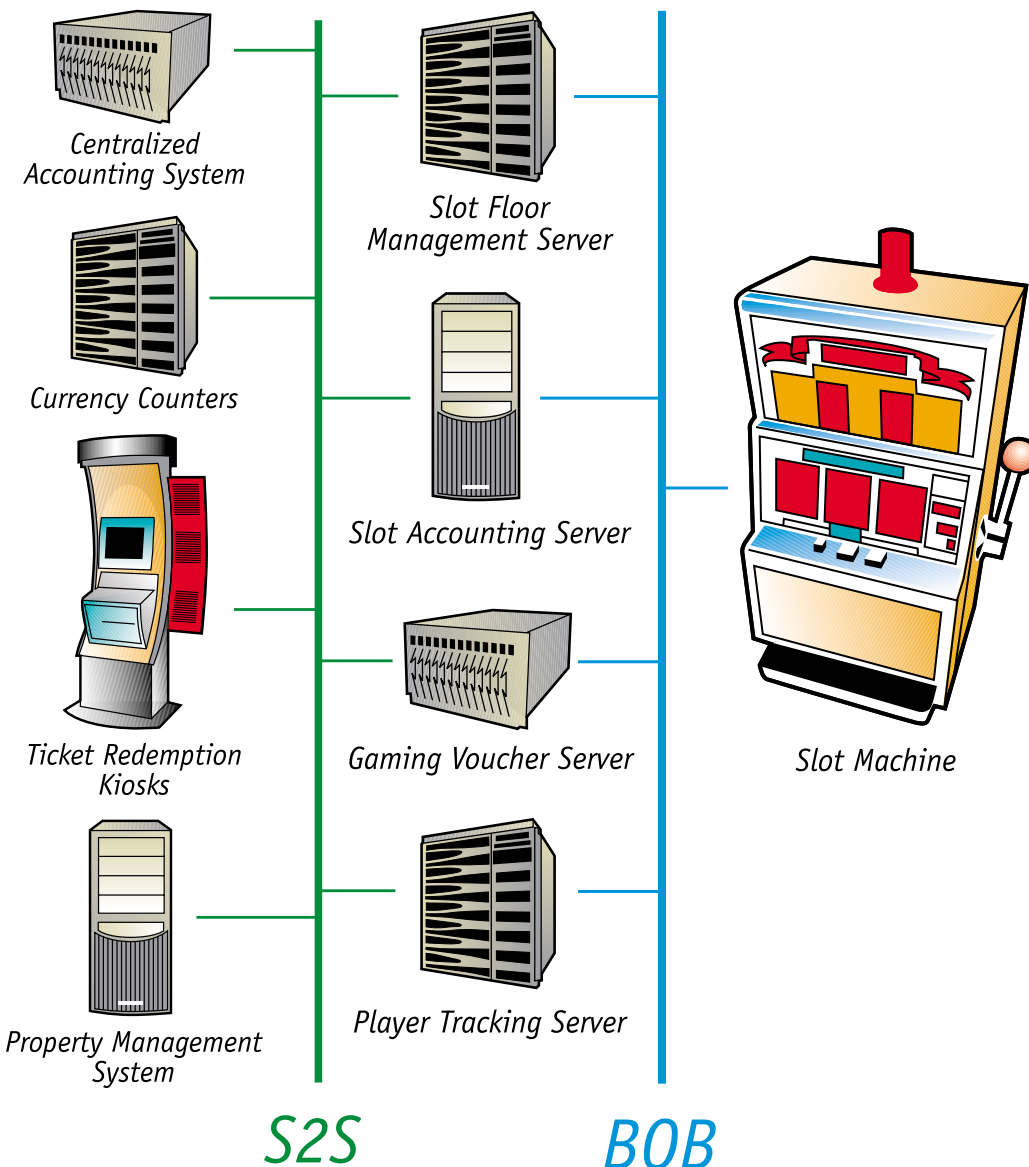
System-to-System, or S2S, is a standardized communication protocol that enables casino operators to link their various casino management systems together, and to easily connect them to hospitality and POS systems as well.

What technologies does S2S use?

S2S is based on commonly available computer technologies – TCP/IP, XML, SOAP and Ethernet. The use of these technologies enable gaming operators and system providers to use off-the-shelf network equipment and software tools, rather than building custom interfaces to connect systems.

How was it developed?

S2S wasn't developed by a single company. It was the result of years of collaborative work between worldwide gaming manufacturers, suppliers, operators and regulators. They are all members of the Gaming Standards Association (GSA), the international gaming trade association that facilitates the development of open standards in the industry.



A PRIMER ON GAMING STANDARDS

Open standards help create interoperable and affordable solutions for everyone. They also promote competition by setting up a technical playing field that is level for all market players. This means lower costs for developers, manufacturers, and ultimately gaming operators.

Why open vs. proprietary?

Proprietary protocols have resulted in more than 30 different "languages" required to allow various types of gaming equipment to function properly and communicate with each other. In many cases, communication between machines and management systems is impossible. Open standards will enable gaming operators to have more valuable information to run the business, to increase operations efficiency and to ensure innovations that will change the face of the gaming industry.

GSA open standards are developed by many different groups – manufacturers, operators, regulators, and suppliers. The resulting standard is a cross-pollination of ideas, a much richer protocol than can be developed by a single company, alone.

How can gaming operators be more involved?

Become a member of GSA, and let your voice be heard. Help to shape the future of the industry. Let your system and gaming manufacturers know that you want the capabilities and innovation that open standards provide.





WHAT GAMING OPERATORS SAY ABOUT S2S

How do you see S2S changing the way you do business?

S2S is definitely an operator win. Our various casino management systems will be able to share information in a more consistent manner. For example, our player tracking system will communicate with our slot floor system using a standard protocol, which will become common for all system providers. A common language will allow developers to focus on delivering content rather than creating a new interface for every system they connect to. With S2S, systems will all be talking the same language. Another benefit of S2S is that casino management systems will talk with the hospitality and POS systems. The big win for operators is that S2S will enable us to measure real time patron activities – table games as well as slots, hotel, food and beverage.

For example?

Right now, we don't really know what we're spending to keep a customer. For example, how many times are we comping him into the hotel or into the restaurant? And what is the customer spending with us in the hotel, our restaurants and shops? For the first time, having access to data from multiple systems and applications gives us the true value of the customer.

You mentioned that with S2S, all systems will be talking the same language.

That's right. Interfaces have always been the bane of our existence, and that of system and equipment developers as well. Developers spend countless man-hours engineering compatibility and developing interfaces. Our IT staff spends multiple hours every day working with as many as 30 different protocols.

Let's take the example of a ticket redemption kiosk manufacturer. With S2S, the kiosk manufacturer will write the interface using standard protocols, and that kiosk system will then work with any slot floor management system. For the operator, S2S will enable a plug-and-play world, just like we see in the telecommunications industry or in consumer products, so that any manufacturer's kiosk will seamlessly work in our property.

Other compelling reasons to adopt S2S?

Two words: the pit. We're getting better at tracking slot business, but the pit has always been neglected. We're beginning to see exciting new applications that will enable operators to track table business with the same accuracy as is done at the slots. With S2S, valuable patron information from these new table tracking systems will be automatically entered into the master patron system along with data from the slot, hospitality and P.O.S. systems. All of this information will give us a more comprehensive view of our business.

What does the future look like with S2S?

We'll see reduced operating costs and more efficiency from our IT and accounting staffs. Consolidation of accounting information across systems, servers and applications will be more efficient. And we'll have more and better patron information to make informed business decisions.

We see our transition costs decreasing. For example, if we change out a food and beverage system, we won't have to spend valuable time and resources figuring out how the new system talks to the existing systems as they're all speaking the same language.

Because gaming and system manufacturers will no longer have to develop a variety of interfaces, we should see faster development time and exciting new applications. And from the customer side, new, integrated applications will enable a patron to do business seamlessly in any part of the casino, hotel, restaurants or shops.

S2S and other industry standards being developed offer an exciting future for this industry and potentially, a healthier bottom line for gaming operators.

As a gaming operator, how do you reap the benefits of S2S?

You say to your gaming and systems manufacturers, "Here are some capabilities I want to be able to implement on my gaming floor and in my back-of-the-house systems. You are my developer, and if you want to continue in that role, you need to implement S2S." It's that simple.

GSA TOOLKITS

What: Development suites that enable system and game manufacturers to implement standards quickly and successfully.

Why: Manufacturers will have a higher degree of confidence that the game and the system will communicate properly from the moment of installation.

How: Simulators, testers and developer's notes enable developers and manufacturers to test interoperability, simulate communications and test the protocol implementation in real-world circumstances.

Where: GSA is in the process of developing Standards Toolkits. The BOB simulators are currently available at www.gamingstandards.com.

About GSA

The **Gaming Standards Association** (GSA) was established in 1998 to set and support industry-wide interface standards designed for the gaming industry. International in scope, GSA is a non-profit corporation headquartered in Fremont, California and led by a Board of Directors that represents a voting membership of more than 70 corporate members worldwide.

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