

# BBO chief looks forward

“I’m happy that face-to-face bridge is coming back,” says Olivier Comte, the CEO of 52 Entertainment, the parent company of Bridge Base Online, FunBridge, Bridge Baron and Master Point Press, among others. Comte, who is attending the Fall NABC in Austin, met with ACBL officials to discuss the role online platforms will play in the future of the game, as well as new concepts that 52 Entertainment is planning.

Although the ACBL Board and management are grateful that online bridge provided an outlet for safe, sanctioned duplicate bridge throughout 2020 and 2021, there is tremendous concern that brick-and-mortar clubs will continue to experience low attendance for the near future, not only from COVID-related issues, but also from players who have grown accustomed to the convenience of online play compared to face-to-face contests, thereby curtailing their live play.

Comte is sensitive to these concerns. “Face-to-face is key, because bridge is a social game. The more live bridge, the better. I strongly believe that live club play is critical to the health of bridge. The future of the game, however, is a combination of face-to-face and online play, and each community must decide how they want to balance the two. For me, there is no fight between them; both can exist together.”

Comte is enjoying some live bridge himself while in Austin. Playing with Jose Damiani, former president of the World Bridge Federation, he won the Saturday afternoon side game.

But other issues besides online play are focusing Comte’s attention.

“Bridge education is key to the development of the next generation of players, and 52



Entertainment treats education as an opportunity for investment. Content acquisition is paramount for us, as players are hungry for fresh information,” he says.

To that end, 52 Entertainment has been the driving force behind BRIDGERAMA+, their online magazine.

“Our goal is to produce a quality magazine with excellent content. We’re not concerned about the publication making money at the present, so BRIDGERAMA+ is currently free. But the passion that players have about our game demands that a nice magazine exists as a vehicle to express it.”

Players can check out the latest issue for themselves online at [kiosque.lebridgeur.com/](https://kiosque.lebridgeur.com/).

Comte’s plan is to create slightly different

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## Comte

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versions of the magazine for various audiences around the world.

“We want to understand the needs of various communities, so our goal is to attract the best writers from different locations. There will likely be more North American-based content, as the ACBL is the largest member organization in the world. And for now, it’s free. My plan is find a way to give it to BBO customers for free going forward.”

Perhaps the most ambitious goal for Comte is the plan to launch a global learning platform that his company has dubbed “Aristotle.”

“We are expending significant energy and resources to create an educational platform for teachers and students. One of its chief features will be video options for online classes,” Comte says. The aim is for the project to be operational by the summer of 2022.

Yet another goal for 52 Entertainment is to revamp the existing vugraph presentations.

“Vugraph is an important BBO tool, but we’re aiming for a more modern look. But in addition to more video and other features, we’re aiming at a new business model for vugraph, too. We want to keep an existing, free vugraph, but also offer a premium vugraph show via a fee. Our plan is to pay organizers for running the vugraph presentations, but to also pay a fee to players featured on those presentations. This idea is to provide a motivation for everyone involved to use vugraph.”

And if those weren’t enough projects to keep him busy, Comte wants to see an expanded use of video in online games.

“We want to make video available not only for virtual club games, but also for private tables. This is a feature everyone should be able to enjoy on BBO.”

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