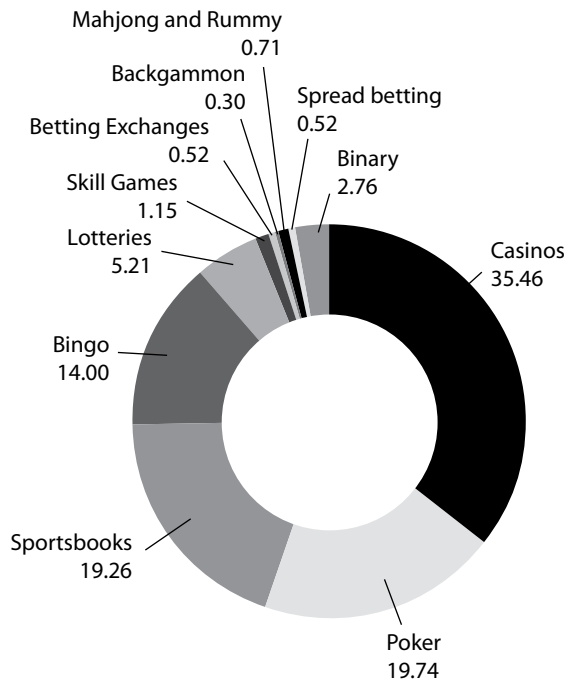**Gaming sites by genre, March 2013**

Source: Casino City Online

1.3 The History of Online Poker

Free poker online was played as early as the late 1990s although Planet Poker was the first online poker site to offer real money games. The first online real money poker game took place on 1 January 1998 when Planet Poker became the first online poker room. Its idea was to try to replicate the land-based casino experience online – as was evident in its marketing material: "Planet Poker is a great way to enjoy the cardroom experience without the inconvenience of travel, second-hand smoke or intimidating patrons." Rival company Paradise Poker dominated the market as 2000 drew to a close and at that time the next of the big names made its debut when UltimateBet was set up jointly by software firm ieLogic.

In 2001, PartyPoker came up with the PartyPoker.com Million. The site launched with a blaze of publicity in the US in the summer of 2001 with its host, and the firm's poker consultant, Mike Sexton, proudly proclaiming: "The poker world is entering a new age and the PartyPoker.com Million is the first step. It's the first $1,000,000 guaranteed tournament by any online poker site."

Just a few months later another online poker site made its first tentative steps into the online world. PokerStars.com launched in October 2001 with the intention of becoming the home of online tournament play.

Online poker exploded in 2002 when poker hit mainstream television in the US. The World Poker Tour debuted on the Travel Channel in March of 2003, and became the highest rating show in Travel Channel's history. The World Series of Poker (WSOP) also received a lot of coverage from ESPN. In 2003, over 800 players participated in the No Limit Hold'em main event at the WSOP, the largest turn out ever, and internet play contributed to this record. That record would soon be broken with the WSOP