

## Nothing really equates to the Longitude experience

*By Alan Aitken, 14 January 2015 - South China Morning Post*

And then there's Longitude – as Hong Kong, quietly, takes the step on Sunday that will change horse-race betting forever.

Longitude has been here since the reintroduction of the Quartet, a year ago this weekend, but its single-pool wagering technology has not really been touched. Yes, that technology was how a Quartet punter, choosing the first four finishers, in order, was able to get a real-time dividend for any of the 24,024 combinations in a 14-horse field.

But, when the Quartet and First Four merge and produce different dividends from the common pool on Sunday, it will be single-pool wagering in the way it was intended.

Since Quartet betting arrived, the bet type has turned over HK\$1.56 billion on two races a meeting, while First Fours on every race in the same period held HK\$1.7 billion. Now those figures added will theoretically form the pool for both bet types, although how the Quartet hold changes when it is on every race is still to be seen.

The punter will notice no difference placing a bet, will still see a clear dividend and present a winning ticket to get paid that figure without ever needing to know the mechanism.

The Quartet wagers are deconstructed into component parts – the amounts placed on any runner to run first in a combination, or second or third or fourth – then rebuilt into dividends for both bets.

This invisible process might seem like something clever, like a revolutionary spark plug in your car that makes a difference you'll never see, understand or care about.

Down the track, that will change. Punters will see the difference affecting them when, one day – perhaps quite soon – they can put all the late movers on one ticket and only care that one wins – the Longitude engine can recalculate, at light speed, how the wager is distributed so that any of your runners winning returns you the same amount. And the punter can be the only person on earth having that bet in that race and there will still be a dividend for its success.

The revolution is here, even if it is very quiet.