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(54) **SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR BULK WAGERING WITH REMOTE VIEWING**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Certain embodiments provide systems and methods for bulk game play a gaming environment. Certain embodiments allow a player to place a bulk play wager in a gaming environment. Certain embodiments generate game play results in accordance with the bulk play wager. Certain embodiments generate an identification of the game play results. Certain embodiments provide the game play results for later replay based on the identification.

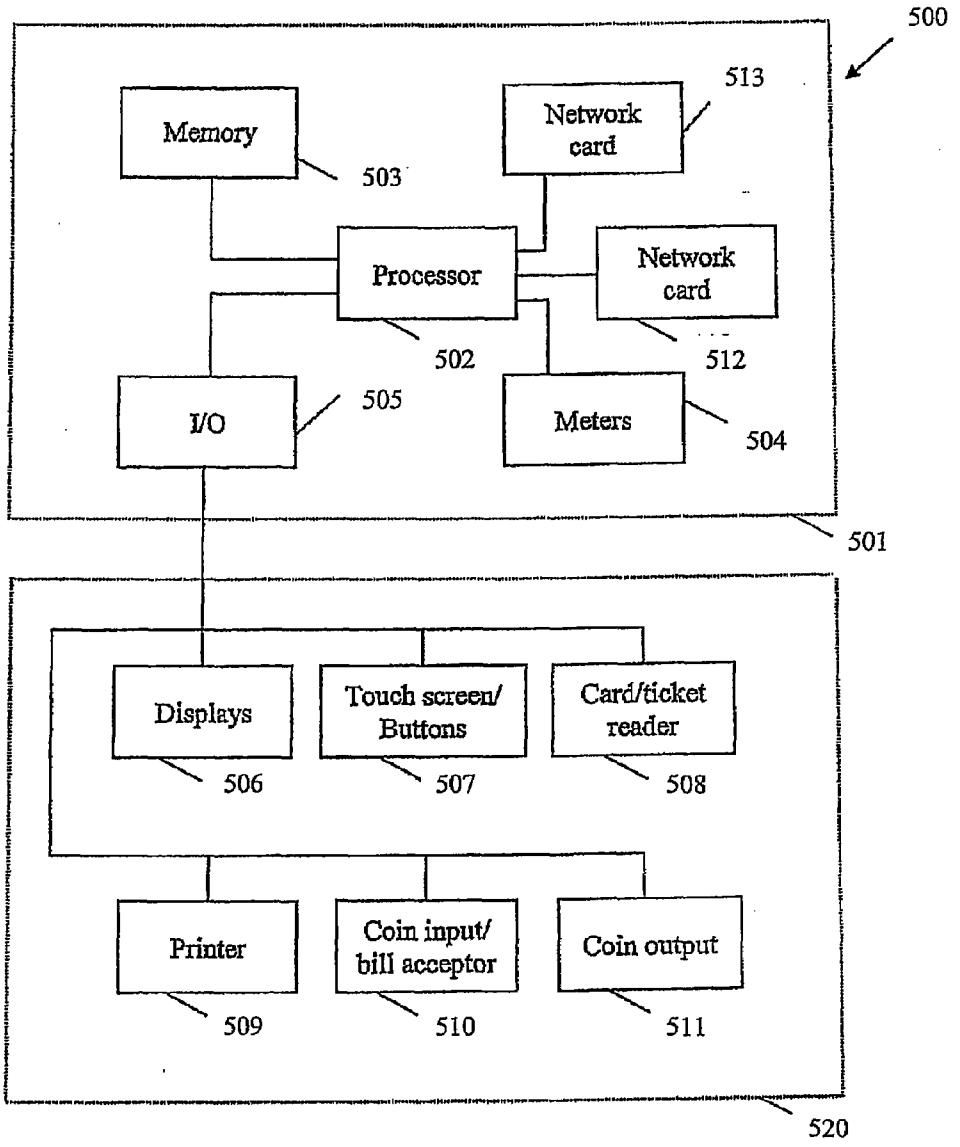


FIG. 1

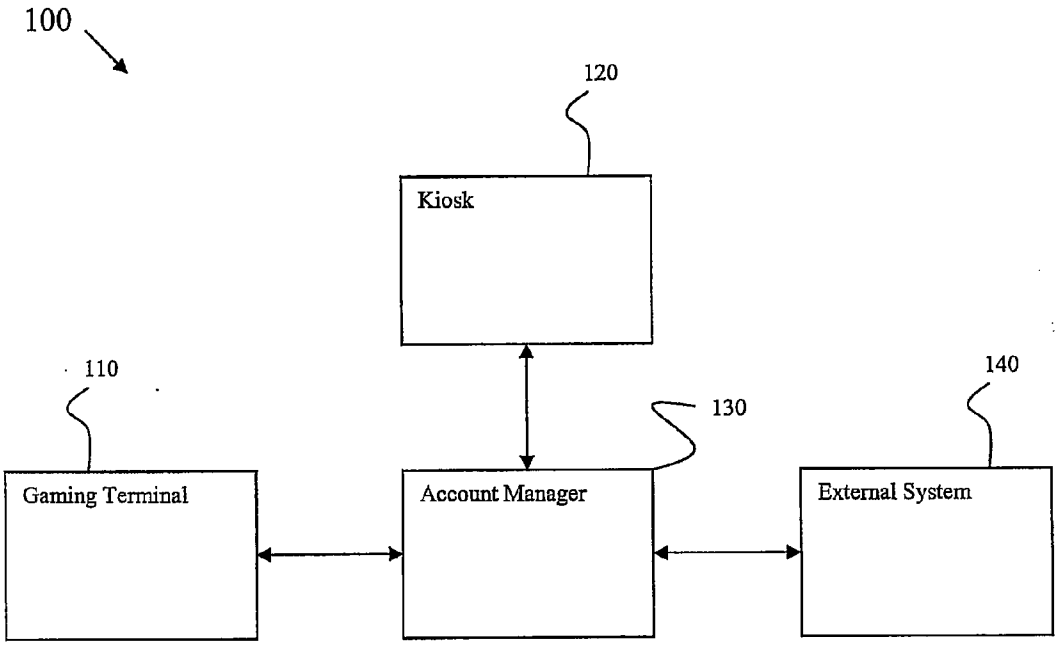

100
120
Kiosk
110
130
140
Gaming Terminal
Account Manager
External System

FIG. 2

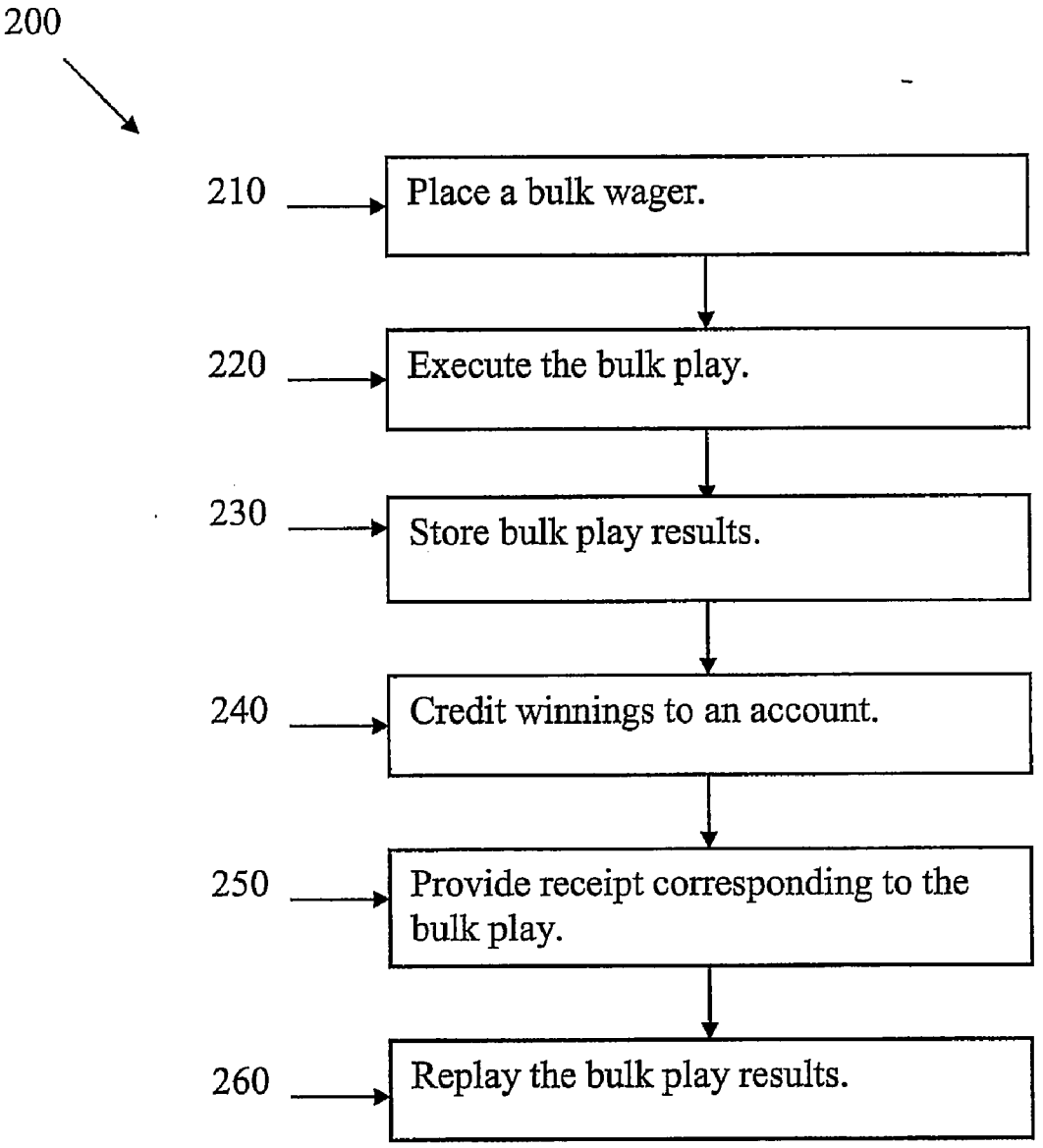

200
210
Place a bulk wager.
220
Execute the bulk play.
230
Store bulk play results.
240
Credit winnings to an account.
250
Provide receipt corresponding to the bulk play.
260
Replay the bulk play results.

Figure 3

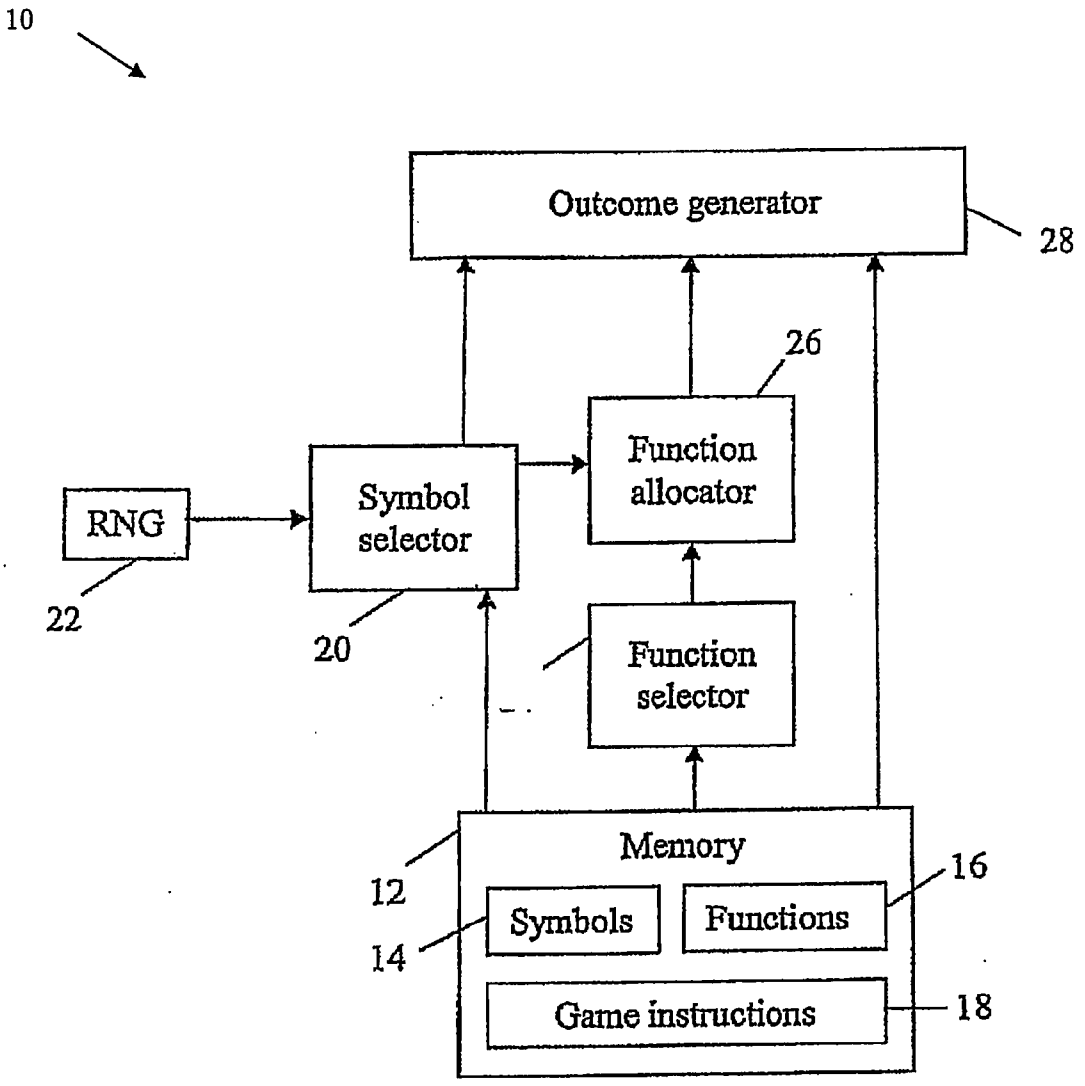

10
Outcome generator
28
26
Function allocator
RNG
Symbol selector
22
20
Function selector
Memory
12
16
Symbols
Functions
14
Game instructions
18

Figure 4

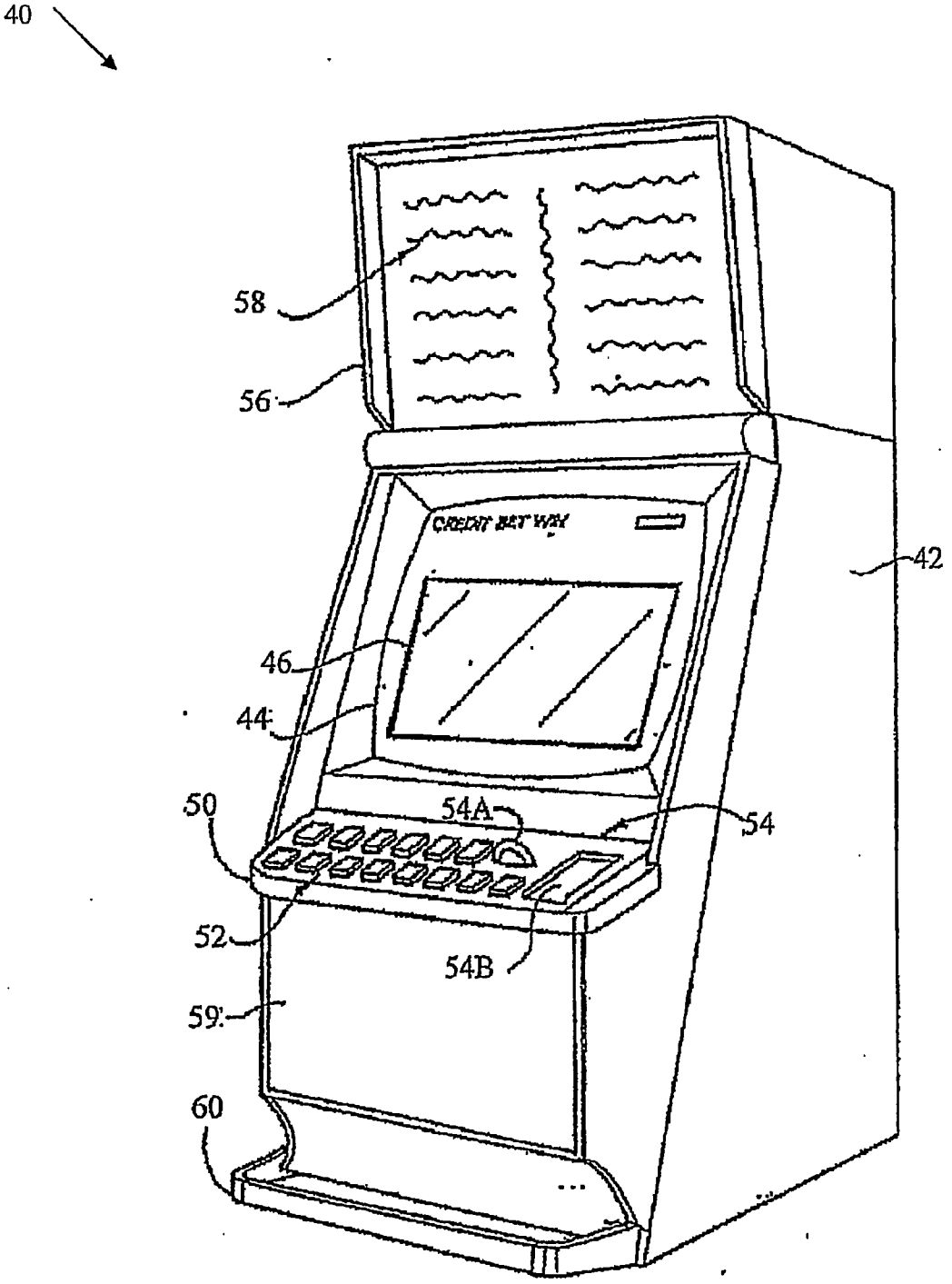


Figure 5

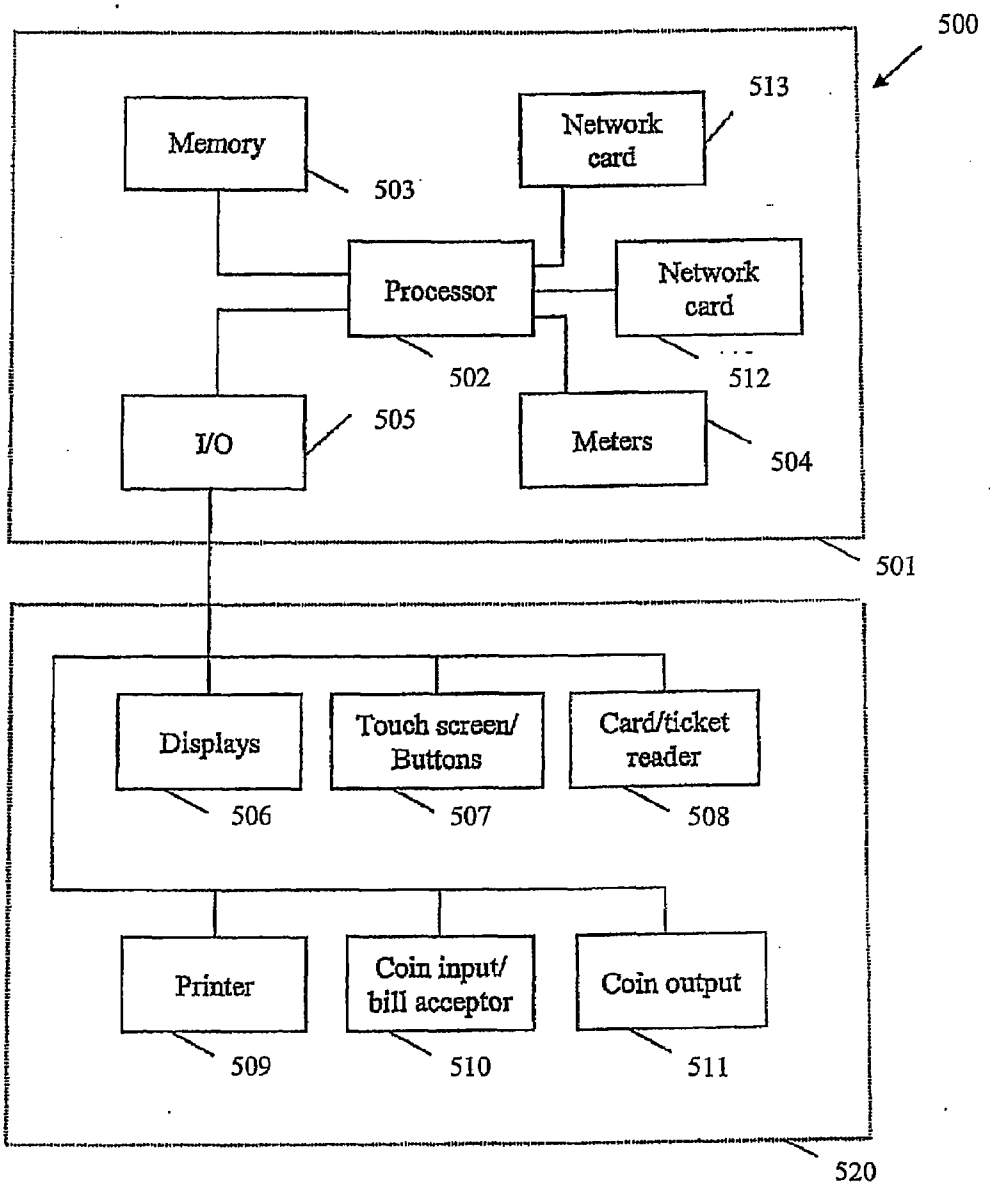

500
513
Memory
503
Network card
Processor
Network card
502
512
I/O
505
Meters
504
501
Displays
Touch screen/ Buttons
Card/ticket reader
506
507
508
Printer
Coin input/ bill acceptor
Coin output
509
510
511
520

Figure 6

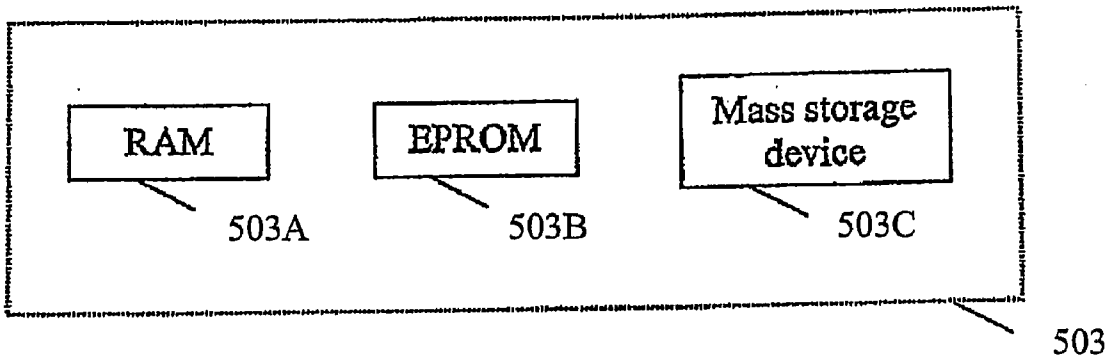
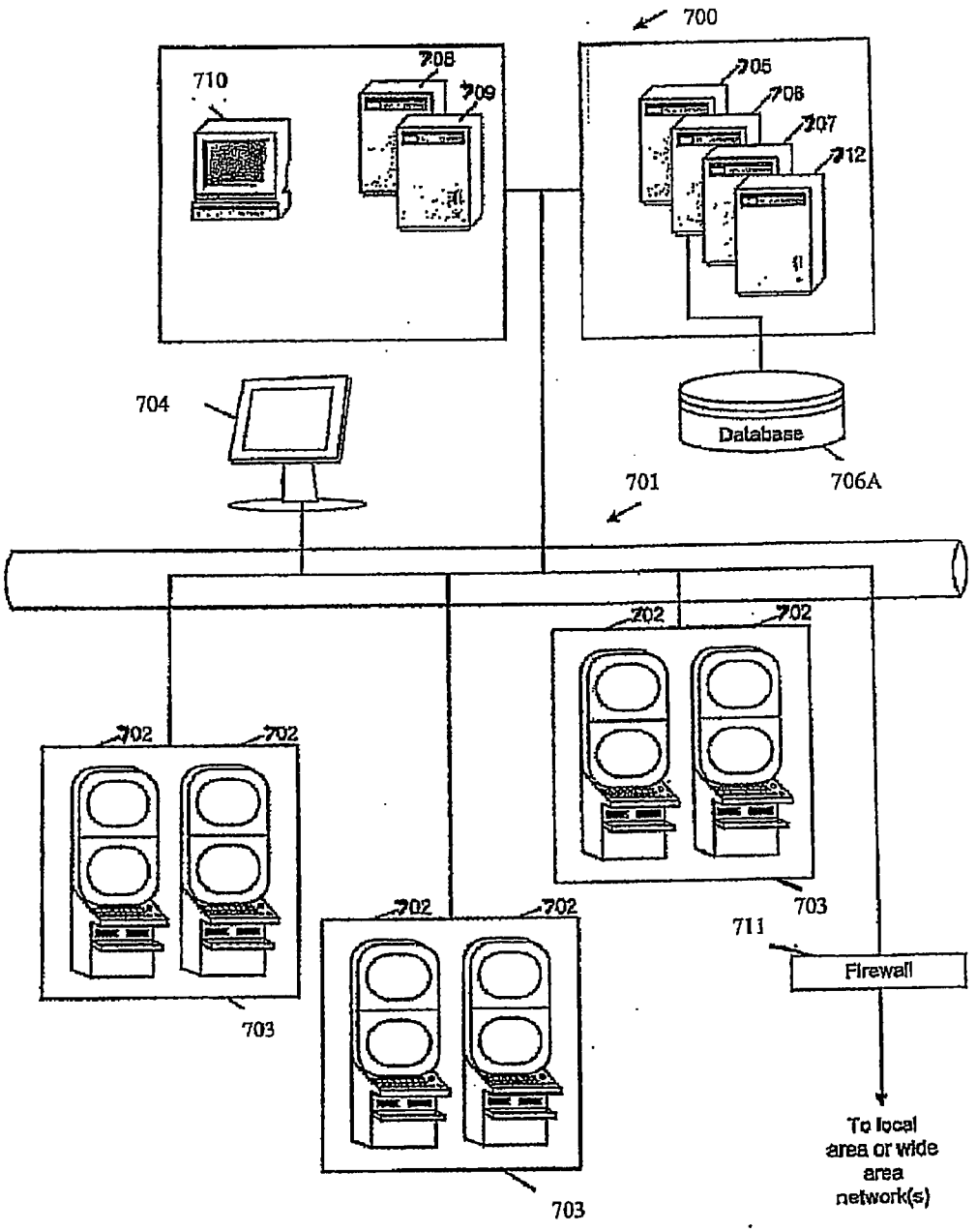


Figure 7


700
710
708
709
705
708
707
712
704
Database
706A
701
702
702
702
702
702
702
703
703
711
Firewall
To local area or wide area network(s)

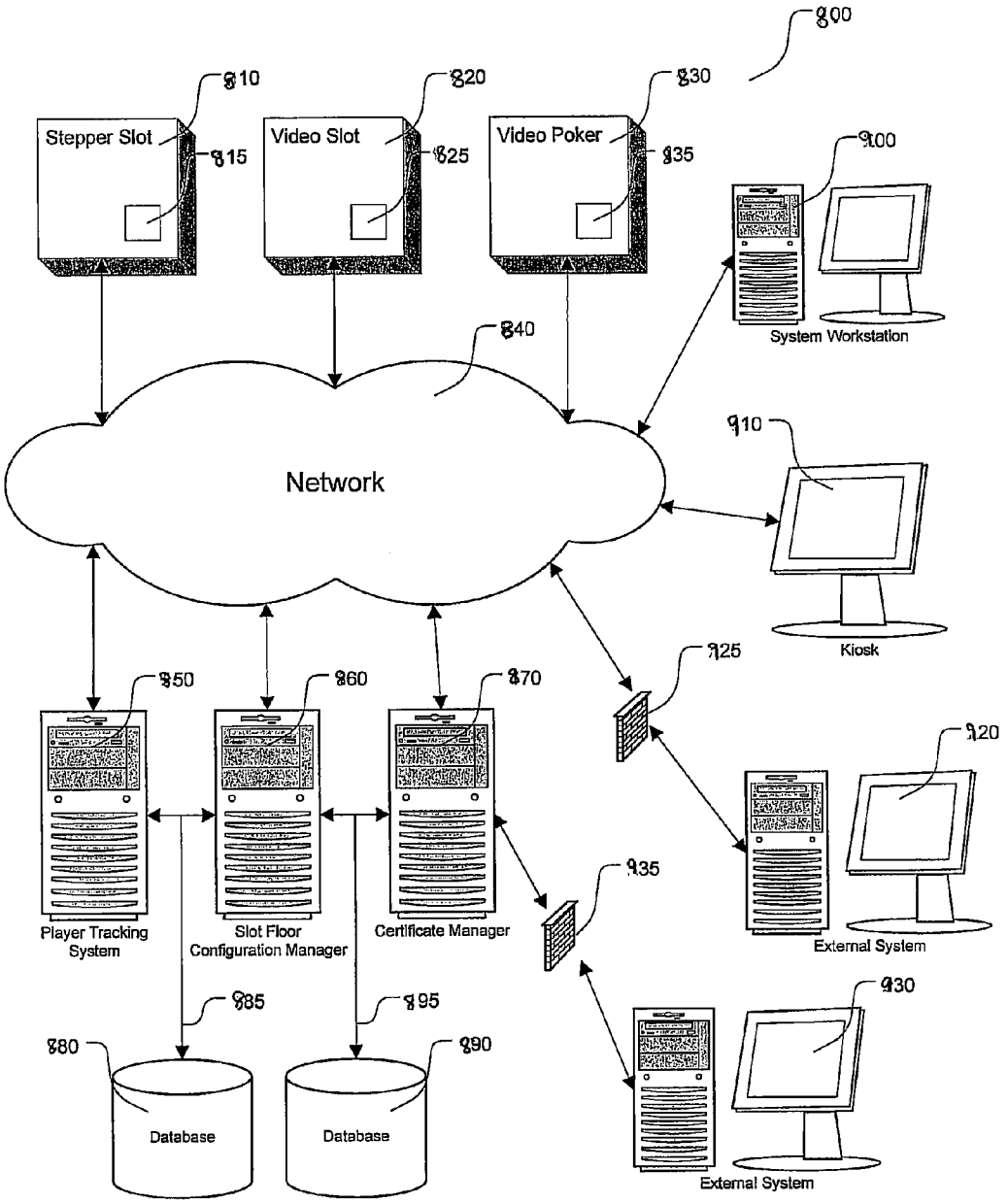

800
810
820
830
Stepper Slot
815
Video Slot
825
Video Poker
835
900
System Workstation
840
Network
910
Kiosk
850
860
870
925
920
Player Tracking System
Slot Floor Configuration Manager
Certificate Manager
935
External System
885
895
930
880
890
Database
Database
External System

Figure 8

SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR BULK WAGERING WITH REMOTE VIEWING

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is related to, and claims the benefit of, Provisional Application No. 60/865,552, filed on Nov. 13, 2006, and entitled "Systems and Methods for Bulk Wagering with Remote Viewing." The foregoing application is herein incorporated by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This invention relates to bulk wagering, and more particularly relates to systems and methods for bulk wagering with remote viewing in a gaming environment.

[0003] In certain jurisdictions, gambling is illegal outside a casino or other similar gaming environment. Additionally, in certain jurisdictions, even casino gambling is illegal. Thus, systems and methods allowing gaming while accommodating a wide variety of jurisdictions and laws would be highly desirable.

[0004] Additionally, potential game players may not have sufficient time available to play a desired number of games. Potential players may simply be passing through a gaming establishment. Players may have their game play interrupted for meals, shows, etc. Players may wish to continue their gaming experience after they return home. Thus, systems and methods allowing expedited game play would be highly desirable.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] Certain embodiments provide systems and methods for bulk game play a gaming environment. Certain embodiments allow a player to place a bulk play wager in a gaming environment. Certain embodiments generate game play results in accordance with the bulk play wager. Certain embodiments generate an identification of the game play results. Certain embodiments provide the game play results for later replay based on the identification.

[0006] Certain embodiments provide a method for bulk play in a gaming environment. The method includes allowing a player to place a bulk play wager with a gaming device in a gaming environment. The method also includes generating game play results in accordance with the bulk play wager without displaying the game play results to the player at the gaming device as the game play results are being generated. For example, at a gaming machine or terminal in a casino, the player may place a bulk wager of $100 to play 100 spins of the game. A processor produces game results in response to the bulk wager and stores data representing the results and any net win the player may have in a data structure for future replay by the player at, for example, their home computer. The method further includes providing an identification of the game play results for later use by the player. Additionally, the method includes storing the game play results for later replay based on the identification.

[0007] In certain embodiments, the method includes crediting winnings from the game player results to an account associated with the player, for example.

[0008] Certain embodiments provide a gaming system facilitating bulk wagering, game play generation, and later replay. The system includes a gaming device or terminal allowing a player to place a bulk play wager for bulk play and later replay of at least one game. The gaming device or terminal generates game play results via the gaming device in accordance with the bulk play wager without displaying the game play results to the player at the gaming device as the game play results are being generated. The system also includes an identification of the game play results. The identification is generated by the gaming device or a peripheral associated with the gaming device to identify the game play results for later use by the player. The gaming device stores the game play results for later replay based on the identification.

[0009] Certain embodiments include a remote viewer adapted to replay the game play results for the player, for example.

[0010] In certain embodiments, the bulk play wager includes a number of plays of one or more specified games and a wager amount to be spent on the plays.

[0011] Certain embodiments provide a computer readable medium having a set of instructions for execution on a computer. The set of instructions includes an input module accepting a bulk play wager by a player. The set of instructions further includes a processing module generating game play results in accordance with the bulk play wager without displaying the game play results to the player. The set of instructions also includes an outcomes module providing an identification of the game play results for later use by the player. The processing module stores the game play results for later replay based on the identification and verifies player authorization to replay the game play results based on access by the player using the identification. Additionally, the processing module replays at least a portion of the game play results based on the identification.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] FIG. **1** illustrates a gaming system providing bulk play wagering in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0013] FIG. **2** illustrates a flow diagram for a method for bulk play wagering in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0014] FIG. **3** shows a gaming system arranged to implement a probabilistic game of the type wherein several symbols from a set of symbols are randomly displayed and a game outcome is determined on the basis of the displayed symbols.

[0015] FIG. **4** illustrates a gaming system in the form of a stand alone gaming machine.

[0016] FIG. **5** shows a block diagram of operative components of a typical gaming machine which may be the same as or different to the gaming machine shown in FIG. **4**.

[0017] FIG. **6** shows a block diagram of the main components of an exemplary memory.

[0018] FIG. **7** shows a gaming system in accordance with an alternative embodiment.

[0019] FIG. **8** illustrates a casino network system used in conjunction with an embodiment of the present invention.

[0020] The foregoing summary, as well as the following detailed description of certain embodiments of the present invention, will be better understood when read in conjunction with the appended drawings. For the purpose of illustrating the invention, certain embodiments are shown in the drawings. It should be understood, however, that the present

invention is not limited to the arrangements and instrumentality shown in the attached drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0021] Certain embodiments allow a player to make a bulk play wager at a gaming location, such as a casino or kiosk located in an authorized location such as a casino. The bulk play wager may include a wager amount to be spent on a number of plays of one or more games. For example, a player at a casino makes a bulk play wager of $100 on a Queen of the Nile slot machine at max bet for a selected X number of spins such as 50 spins. At the time of the bulk play wager, a number of plays of the specified game(s) are run according to the amount of the wager. For example, the system runs the X spins. Data representing the plays and pays for winning outcomes are stored with respect to the player at a data structure. For example, the data is stored in a player account, such as a personal banker or player tracking/loyalty account. The player is provided with a reference to the bulk play, such as a stub, reference number, data and time, player card number, personal identification number or a reference is transmitted to a player device such as a cell phone, PDA or the player's home computer or the like. Thus, the wager, wins and losses occur in the gaming environment. Inasmuch as a processor could process the plays in a very short time the player may make his bulk wager and receive his corresponding play identification "stub" in just a few moments. All of the wagering and pays would then have taken place in a regulated environment with the player being given the opportunity to view the individual or selected plays at a later time and from a remote location. For example, the player can later access a website, interface program and/or other results review program to view the stored outcomes on a remote device.

[0022] FIG. **1** illustrates a gaming system **100** providing bulk play wagering in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The system **100** includes a gaming terminal **110**, a kiosk **120**, an account manager **130** and an external system **140**. The components of the gaming system **100** may be implemented separately and/or in various combinations in hardware, software and/or firmware, for example.

[0023] A gaming device, such as the gaming terminal **110**, kiosk **120** and/or external system **140** may be used to place a bulk play wager, for example. At the gaming terminal **110**, kiosk **120** and/or external system **140**, a player can make a selection to make a bulk wager to play one or more gaming terminals **110** and/or server-based games, for example. In certain embodiments, games are allowed for bulk play if no intra-game decisions are made by the player (e.g., bonus round outcomes are randomly selected). In other embodiments games may include intra-game decisions which are made by the controlling processor according to a predetermined strategy. For example, a player could make a bulk wager on a video Poker game and the hold/discard strategy would be predetermined according to, for example, one or more best play strategy(s) exercised by the processor. In certain embodiments, the external system **140** may include a web browser, for example, enabling a player to place a bulk play wager via a website.

[0024] The gaming terminal **110** may include a slot machine, a video Poker machine, and/or other electronic gaming machine.

[0025] For example, a player selects a bulk wager option and wagers $100 to play 50 games (at a maximum wager per game) of a configured Queen of the Nile Hyperlink® game. The wager may be placed using cash, credits, promotional credits, credits from a Personal Banker® or other financial account, etc. The account manager **130** may facilitate maintenance of one or more accounts based on the wager. Upon acceptance of the bulk wager, the gaming terminal **110** or server runs 50 spins of the game and stores the individual outcomes and wins in the player's established or assigned account, for example. The account may be centrally stored, locally stored and/or implemented on a card, such as a smart card or magnetic strip card, for example.

[0026] In certain embodiments, account information may be monitored and/or stored by the account manager **130** in conjunction with a player loyalty system, a slot and player accounting systems such as Aristocrat's OASIS Casino Management system and/or the system described in co-pending application Ser. No. 11/459,232, and the like.

[0027] After accumulating the outcomes, the player is given a reference, such as a slip, coupon, card, number and/or other reference. The reference may be a physical slip. In another embodiment the reference (or results) may be sent directly to the player's personal computer, cellular telephone, PDA or other device. From another location, such as home or the office, the player can access a website or other interface, for example, such as via external system **140**, to retrieve and play the stored bulk plays. The individual or selected (e.g. winning) plays may be replayed at the player's computer, personal digital assistant, television, phone, and/or other remote viewer. The player is able to make the bulk wager and receive wins in the regulated environment of a casino. The player merely "replays" the games from a remote location.

[0028] Video or other multimedia presentations may be played to the user while viewing the replay of the games to enhance the entertainment experience. As another alternative, a self-contained binary may be executed to provide replay to the user.

[0029] In certain embodiments, the system may be configured or selected by the player to skip losing outcomes and only play winning outcomes, for example. For example, the player only sees and replays the hands/spins that he or she won. In certain embodiments, promotional materials and/or messages may be displayed during replay of the outcomes such as advertising for the casino where the player made the wager.

[0030] The player may then collect the winnings from his or her account in a variety of ways, such as collecting at a casino, electronic funds transfer, and/or the like. For example, a player's Personal Banker® account, credit card, bank account, player loyalty account, casino/hotel account, etc., may be credited for the winnings. In certain embodiments, such an account may be credited with winnings immediately following game execution at the casino and prior to the player's viewing of the results. In an alternative embodiment, winnings may be credit to an account at the time of actual game execution but not released to the player until the results have been replayed and acknowledged by the player.

[0031] At a kiosk **120** the player may also be able to place a bulk wager. For example, at a kiosk at the casino, the player may choose to play 50 hands of video Poker at a maximum wager per hand. The player inputs the funds for

the bulk wager such as cash, credit, or funds transferred from an electronic account at the casino. A processor for the system accesses the video Poker game library and processes 50 hands, using draw/hold rules according to one or more stored strategies which are known in the art, to render 50 outcomes. The outcomes are stored in a data structure and any win(s) or the net win or remaining funds from the bulk wager are loaded to the player's electronic account at the account manager **130** at the casino This play of the hands may appear to the player to be almost instantaneous. The kiosk then provides the player with a ticket or receipt indicating the casino, date and time, amount of the wager and the like along with a reference number. The player from a remote location such as when the player gets home, can use their computer to access the casino and get access to the player's account to call up replay of the 50 games (or just the winners). The replay will show the play of each hand, the outcome and the increase/decrease in credits. At the end of the 50 plays the player will be informed how much money remains from their original bulk wager and that those funds have been parked to the player's casino account.

[0032] During the replay of the hands, advertising or other information may be provided to the player by the casino to develop player loyalty, advertise casino goods and services and entice the player to return.

[0033] FIG. **2** illustrates a flow diagram for a method **200** for bulk play wagering in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. At step **210**, a player places a bulk play wager at an authorized station. For example, a player places a bulk play wager at a gaming kiosk or other station in a casino. At step **220**, the bulk play is executed. For example, a gaming server in communication with the kiosk or station executes a selected number of plays of a game in correspondence with the bulk play wager amount. At step **230**, bulk play results are stored. For example, bulk play results are stored in a memory, such as a card, a server, a database, etc. At step **240**, winnings are credited to an account. For example, winnings from the bulk play are added to a player account and/or other credit/financial account. In certain embodiments, winnings may be divided among multiple accounts and/or credit meters, for example.

[0034] At step **250**, a receipt corresponding to the bulk play is given to the player. For example, a ticket with a code identifying the bulk play record stored on the gaming server is printed for the player at the kiosk. A ticket or card may be generated including a bar code, magnetic strip, memory chip, etc., containing bulk game play results, a bulk play access code, computer instructions for execution and/or replay of the bulk game play, and/or processing power to facilitate bulk game replay, for example.

[0035] At step **260**, bulk play results are replayed for the player. For example, the player accesses a gaming website from a home computer and enters the code on his or her ticket. The player's bulk play results are made available to the player for replay via a web browser or other application, for example. In certain embodiments, the player may choose which plays to replay (e.g., only winning plays, a certain number of plays, etc.).

[0036] In certain embodiments, the player may choose from multiple games and/or set of games for replay. In certain embodiments, the player may choose to replay portions of one or more games over time. For example, a player may select to replay certain hands of a game at one time and then play additional hands in a later viewing. As another example, a player may select to replay one of a plurality of games in a first viewing and another of a plurality of games in a second viewing.

[0037] Certain embodiments may be used and/or implemented in conjunction with a variety of gaming systems and/or environments. For example, referring to FIG. **3**, certain embodiments described may be used in conjunction with game play and operation of a gaming system **10**. The gaming system **10** includes a memory **12** arranged to store symbols data **14** indicative of a plurality of symbols for subsequent display to a player, function data **16** indicative of one or more functions allocatable to the symbols, and game instruction data **18** indicative of game instructions usable by the gaming machine **10** to control operation of the game.

[0038] The gaming system **10** also includes a symbol selector **20** which is arranged to select several symbols for display to a player and in some game circumstances to select one or more symbol to which a function is to be allocated. In this example, the selection carried out by the symbol selector **20** is made using a random number generator **22**.

[0039] It will be appreciated that the random number generator **22** may be of a type which is arranged to generate pseudo random numbers based on a seed number, and that in this specification the term "random" will be understood accordingly to mean truly random or pseudo random.

[0040] The gaming system **10** also includes a function selector **24** arranged to select one or more functions for allocation to one or more symbols selected during the special game circumstances, and a function allocator **26** arranged to allocate the or each function selected by the function selector **24** to one or more symbols selected during the special game circumstances. The function selector **24** may be arranged to randomly select a function or to select a function on the basis of a predefined rule.

[0041] The gaming system **10** also includes an outcome generator **28** which in accordance with the game instructions **18** determines game outcomes based on the symbols selected for display to a player by the symbol selector **20**, and on the basis of the function(s) allocated to one or more selected symbols, if any.

[0042] In the embodiments described below, the symbol selector **20**, the function selector **24**, the function allocator **26**, and the outcome generator **28** are at least partly implemented using a microprocessor, although it will be understood that other implementations are envisioned.

[0043] The gaming system **10** can take a number of different forms. For example, a gaming system may refer to a slot machine, a video poker machine, or other electronic gaming machine.

[0044] In a first form, a stand alone gaming machine or kiosk is provided wherein all or most components required for implementing the game are present.

[0045] In a second form, a distributed architecture is provided wherein some of the components required for implementing the game are present in a player operable gaming machine or kiosk and some of the components required for implementing the game are located remotely relative to the gaming machine/kiosk. For example, a "thick client" architecture may be used wherein part of the game is executed on a player operable gaming machine and part of the game is executed remotely, such as by a gaming server; or a "thin client" architecture may be used wherein most of the game is executed remotely such as by a gaming server and a player operable gaming machine is used only to

display audible and/or visible gaming information to the player and receive gaming inputs from the player.

[0046] However, it will be understood that other arrangements are envisioned. For example, an architecture may be provided wherein a gaming machine or kiosk is networked to a gaming server and the respective functions of the gaming machine and the gaming server are selectively modifiable. For example, the gaming system may operate in stand alone gaming machine mode, "thick client" mode or "thin client" mode depending on the game being played, operating conditions, and so on. Other variations will be apparent to persons skilled in the art.

[0047] A gaming system in the form of a stand alone gaming machine **40** is illustrated in FIG. **4**. The gaming machine **40** includes a console **42** having a display **44** on which is displayed representations of a game **46** that can be played by a player. A mid-trim **50** of the gaming machine **40** houses a bank of buttons **52** for enabling a player to interact with the gaming machine, in particular during game play. The mid-trim **50** also houses a credit input mechanism **54** which in this example includes a coin input chute **54**A and a bill collector **54**B. Other credit input mechanisms may also be employed, for example, a card reader for reading a smart card, debit card or credit card. A reading device may also be provided for the purpose of reading a player tracking device, for example as part of a loyalty program. The player tracking device may be in the form of a card, flash drive or any other portable storage medium capable of being read by the reading device.

[0048] A top box **56** may carry artwork **58**, including for example pay tables and details of bonus awards and other information or images relating to the game. Further artwork and/or information may be provided on a front panel **59** of the console **42**. A coin tray **60** is mounted beneath the front panel **59** for dispensing cash payouts from the gaming machine **40**.

[0049] The display **44** is in the form of a video display unit, particularly a cathode ray tube screen device. Alternatively, the display **44** may be a liquid crystal display, plasma screen, any other suitable video display unit. The top box **56** may also include a display, for example a video display unit, which may be of the same type as the display **44**, or of a different type.

[0050] The display **44** in this example is arranged to display representations of several reels, each reel of which has several associated symbols. Typically 3, 4 or 5 reels are provided. During operation of the game, the reels first appear to rotate then stop with typically three symbols visible on each reel. Game outcomes are determined on the basis of the visible symbols together with any special functions associated with the symbols.

[0051] It will be understood that instead of providing a video display unit which displays representations of reels, actual reels may be used. Such gaming machines including actual rotatable reels are commonly termed stepper machines.

[0052] FIG. **5** shows a block diagram of operative components of a typical gaming machine **500** which may be the same as or different to the gaming machine shown in FIG. **4**.

[0053] The gaming machine **500** includes a game controller **501** having a processor **502**. Instructions and data to control operation of the processor **502** in accordance with the present invention are stored in a memory **503** which is in data communication with the processor **502**.

[0054] Typically, the gaming machine **500** will include both volatile and non-volatile memory and more than one of each type of memory, with such memories being collectively represented by the memory **503**.

[0055] FIG. **6** shows a block diagram of the main components of an exemplary memory **503**. The memory **503** includes RAM **503**A, EPROM **503**B and a mass storage device **503**C. The RAM **503**A typically temporarily holds program files for execution by the processor **502** and related data. The EPROM **503**B may be a boot ROM device and/or may contain some system or game related code. The mass storage device **503**C is typically used to store game programs, the integrity of which may be verified and/or authenticated by the processor **502** using protected code from the EPROM **503**B or elsewhere.

[0056] The gaming machine has hardware meters **504** for purposes including ensuring regulatory compliance and monitoring player credit, an input/output (I/O) interface **505** for communicating with a player interface **520** of the gaming machine **500**, the player interface **520** having several peripheral devices. The input/output interface **505** and/or the peripheral devices may be intelligent devices with their own memory for storing associated instructions and data for use with the input/output interface or the peripheral devices. A random number generator module **513** generates random numbers for use by the processor **502**.

[0057] In the example shown in FIG. **5**, the peripheral devices that communicate with the game controller **501** comprise one or more displays **506**, a touch screen and/or bank of buttons **507**, a card and/or ticket reader **508**, a printer **509**, a bill acceptor and/or coin input mechanism **510** and a coin output mechanism **511**. Additional hardware may be included as part of the gaming machine **500**, or hardware may be omitted as required for the specific implementation.

[0058] In addition, the gaming machine **500** may include a communications interface, for example a network card **512**. The network card may, for example, send status information, accounting information or other information to a central controller, server or database and receive data or commands from the central controller, server or database.

[0059] It is also possible for the operative components of the gaming machine **500** to be distributed, for example input/output devices **506**, **507**, **508**, **509**, **510**, **511** may be provided remotely from the game controller **501**.

[0060] FIG. **7** shows a gaming system **700** in accordance with an alternative embodiment. The gaming system **700** includes a network **701**, which for example may be an Ethernet network, a LAN or a WAN. In this example, three banks **703** of two gaming machines **702** are connected to the network **701**. The gaming machines **702** provide a player operable interface and may be the same as the gaming machines **40**, **500** shown in FIGS. **4** and **5**, or may have simplified functionality depending on the requirements for implementing game play. While banks **703** of two gaming machines are illustrated in FIG. **7**, banks of one, three or more gaming machines are also envisioned.

[0061] One or more displays **704** may also be connected to the network **701**. The displays **704** may, for example, be associated with one or more banks **703** of gaming machines. The displays **704** may be used to display representations associated with game play on the gaming machines **702**,

and/or used to display other representations, for example promotional or informational material.

[0062] In a thick client embodiment, a game server **705** implements part of the game played by a player using a gaming machine **702** and the gaming machine **702** implements part of the game. With this embodiment, as both the game server **705** and the gaming machine **702** implement part of the game, they collectively provide a game controller. A database management server **706** may manage storage of game programs and associated data for downloading or access by the gaming devices **702** in a database **706**A. Typically, if the gaming system enables players to participate in a Jackpot game, a Jackpot server **707** will be provided to monitor and carry out the Jackpot game.

[0063] In a thin client embodiment, the game server **705** implements most or all of the game played by a player using a gaming machine **702** and the gaming machine **702** essentially provides only the player interface. With this embodiment, the game server **705** provides the game controller. The gaming machine will receive player instructions, and pass the instructions to the game server which will process them and return game play outcomes to the gaming machine for display. In a thin client embodiment, the gaming machines could be computer terminals, e.g. PCs running software that provides a player interface operable using standard computer input and output components.

[0064] Servers may also be provided to assist in the administration of the gaming system **700**, including for example a gaming floor management server **708** and a licensing server **709** to monitor the use of licenses relating to particular games. An administrator terminal **710** is provided to allow an administrator to monitor the network **701** and the devices connected to the network.

[0065] The gaming system **700** may communicate with other gaming systems, other local networks such as a corporate network, and/or a wide area network such as the Internet, for example through a firewall **711**.

[0066] Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that in accordance with known techniques, functionality at the server side of the network may be distributed over a plurality of different computers. For example, elements may be run as a single "engine" on one server or a separate server may be provided. For example, the game server **705** could run a random number generator engine. Alternatively, a separate random number generator server could be provided.

[0067] Referring to FIG. **8**, an exemplary casino network system **800** includes a plurality of gaming terminals **810**, **820**, and **830** interconnected through network **840** to a slot accounting and/or player tracking system **850** (hereinafter collectively referring to as a player tracking system), slot floor configuration manager **860** and certificate manager **870**. It should be understood that, while the present description refers to gaming terminals as "slot machines", that gaming tables such as Blackjack, Pai Gow, Baccarat, multi-terminal gaming machines such as multi-terminal roulette, Sik Bo, Poker, dice games, and others may also be included. As an example, a gaming table layout may be embodied as a video display, and reconfiguration may be of a type to reconfigure the video layout to change the game to be played at the table, bonus features, minimum and maximum bets and the like. Thus gaming terminal as used herein includes gaming tables as well. It should also be understood that configuration or reconfiguration of a gaming terminal includes both an initial configuration and subsequent reconfiguration of the gaming terminal to download and/or otherwise provide (e.g., server-based) a game and/or other functionality to a player at the terminal.

[0068] Player tracking system **850** and slot floor configuration manager **860** are connected to database server **880** via a communication link **885**, which may be integrated with or separate from the network **840**. Slot floor configuration manager **860** and certificate manager **870** are connected to game database server **890** via a communication link **895** which may be integrated with or separate from network **840**. In an embodiment, the casino network system **800** may be implemented in another gaming environment, such as a hotel, restaurant, theater, store, airport or other venue having one or more gaming systems.

[0069] System **800** also includes a system workstation **900**, connected to network **840**. In addition, one or more self-service kiosks **910**, and/or one or more external systems **920** may be connected to network **840**. External system **920** is connected to network **840** through firewall **925**, and may include a player workstation in a hotel room or other location external to the casino, for example. One or more kiosks **910** may be used to facilitate operations such as bulk wagering, slot ticket redemption, player card point redemption, change and/or currency dispensation, promotion redemption and/or issuance, advertising, information, event and/or dining reservations and/or ticketing, etc. For example, one or more kiosks **910** and/or external systems **920** may used to purchase and/or view sports scores, news, game announcements, weather, flight information, show times, specials, reward tickets, prize tickets, coupons, airline or show tickets, reservation confirmation, or other information, for example. Additionally a player may be able to locate his or her favorite games on the casino floor, restaurants or other facilities and/or services at a kiosk **910**.

[0070] Gaming terminals **810**, **820**, and **830** include communications interfaces (CI) **815**, **825**, and **835** respectively, which communicate with network **840**. In other embodiments, CI **815**, **825**, and **835** may instead communicate with player tracking system **850** via other system and/or method, such as a serial communications protocol. In an embodiment, CI **815**, **825**, and **835** may be integrated into a game controller for gaming terminals **810**, **820**, and **830**. Certain embodiments of a CI are described in more detail below.

[0071] Player tracking system **850** collects data from CI **815**, **825**, and **835** for purposes of slot accounting, monitoring and security, and player tracking as is well known in the art. Player tracking system **850** processes and stores said data in database **880**. Additional information regarding slot accounting and player tracking is described in more detail below.

[0072] Slot floor configuration manager **860** receives information relevant to slot floor configuration management from player tracking system **850** and database **880**. For example, slot floor configuration manager **860** may include an interface to player tracking system **850** to facilitate transfer of information between manager **860** and tracking system **850**. In an embodiment, slot floor configuration manager **860** receives information from a database separate from database **880** used by player tracking system **850**. In an embodiment, slot floor configuration manager **860** may receive floor configuration information independent of player tracking system **850**. Slot floor configuration manager **860** also may receive information directly from gaming terminals **810**, **820**, **830**. Gaming terminals **810**, **820**, **830**

may be connected to slot floor configuration manager **860** and/or player tracking system **850** via separate networks or a common network, such as an Ethernet.

[0073] Slot floor configuration manager **860** processes information to determine and/or suggest configurations of gaming terminals on a gaming floor, such as a casino floor. Slot manager **860** reviews, adjusts, and approves suggested floor configurations via system workstation **900**. In an embodiment, players may be provided with an ability to select desired games to be played or downloaded to a terminal via CI **815**, **825**, and **835** and/or gaming terminal **810**, **820**, and **830**. Players may also review game information or update their profiles via kiosk **910** or external system **920**, for example. In another embodiment the casino may have the authority to "push" selected games to gaming terminals **810**, **820** and **830** and the player has no ability to select or override the selection. In another embodiment both the casino and the player have the ability to select fro the available games.

[0074] System **800** may also include external system **930**, which is connected to certificate manager **870** via a dedicated, secure, communications link via firewall **935**, for example. External system **930** may be a workstation in a gaming regulator's office, for example. In one embodiment, gaming regulators may monitor and manage game certificates on certificate manager **870** via external system **930**. Unless required by a particular jurisdiction, the certificate manager **870** and associated equipment and functions may not be required.

[0075] Certificate manager **870** is configured to allow access to games to be controlled for a given gaming environment, such as governmental regulators or gaming operators acting in compliance with gaming regulations. The certificate manager **870** may work with a certificate database to control access to the game(s) being played. For example, the certificate database may include encoded and encrypted digital certificates or other authentication/license indicators that tie to games in the game database on a one-to-one basis. In an embodiment, due to the nature of the games and gaming terminals, a game may not be played unless a valid certificate for that game exists in the certificate database. In an embodiment, a certificate is also mated to a venue, such as a casino or other gaming environment, so that a game may not be played at another venue even if the game and certificate were electronically duplicated and moved to another venue.

[0076] In an embodiment, a certificate may also be mated to a binary image of a game file, such that a game may not be played if the binary image is modified. If a modification or update of a game image is a result of an authorized action, a new certificate may be issued by a regulator before the game may be played. Games lacking a valid certificate may be handled differently in a player's game catalog interface. In an embodiment, games lacking a valid certificate may be excluded from a player selection interface altogether. In an alternate embodiment, games lacking a valid certificate may be excluded from certain portions of a player catalog and/or visibly marked with an appropriate descriptive phrase such as "Pending approval for play in this casino".

[0077] In an embodiment, certificates may be implemented such that the number of concurrently playing games of a given title may be limited by regulators or a game provider, for example. In an embodiment, certificates may be implemented such that a number of concurrently playing games from a given game provider is similarly limited. In an embodiment, the certificate database may be implemented to facilitate a total number of games being concurrently played at a given venue, if regulations enforce such a limit, for example.

[0078] In an embodiment, regulators have access to the certificate database, either through an interface local to a gaming environment or through a remote interface such as a web-based interface through a dedicated and encrypted network link between the venue and the regulator. Through this interface, the regulator may manage the certificate database to approve games for play or similarly revoke approval of games, for example.

[0079] Thus, certain embodiments provide an improved system and method for configuration of gaming terminals in a gaming environment. Certain embodiments provide a system and method that allow customization and dynamic modification by an operator. Certain embodiments provide improved reconfiguration of gaming terminals in gaming environment to offer a variety of games and/or other options to players. Additionally, certain embodiments improve security, regulation and reliability of gaming terminals and access to games by players. Certain embodiments monitor game play, player response, and configuration changes to affect configuration of a gaming environment. Certain embodiments provide an improved player experience through selectable games, feedback, and/or other preferences, for example. Certain embodiments allow progressive, mystery, bonusing and other gaming content to be added to gaming terminals. Certain embodiments allow an operator to manage sign or display content and configuration, as well as gaming terminal software and firmware content and configuration. Thus, certain embodiments allow adaptable control and configuration of a gaming environment.

[0080] The components, elements, and/or functionality of the system(s) described above may be implemented alone or in combination in various forms in hardware, firmware, and/or as a set of instructions in software, for example. Certain embodiments may be provided as a set of instructions residing on a computer-readable medium, such as a memory or hard disk, for execution on a general purpose computer or other processing device.

[0081] Several embodiments are described above with reference to drawings. These drawings illustrate certain details of specific embodiments that implement the systems and methods and programs of the present invention. However, describing the invention with drawings should not be construed as imposing on the invention any limitations associated with features shown in the drawings. The present invention contemplates methods, systems and program products on any machine-readable media for accomplishing its operations. As noted above, the embodiments of the present invention may be implemented using an existing computer processor, or by a special purpose computer processor incorporated for this or another purpose or by a hardwired system.

[0082] As noted above, certain embodiments within the scope of the present invention include program products comprising machine-readable media for carrying or having machine-executable instructions or data structures stored thereon. Such machine-readable media can be any available media that can be accessed by a general purpose or special purpose computer or other machine with a processor. By way of example, such machine-readable media may com-

prise RAM, ROM, PROM, EPROM, EEPROM, Flash, CD-ROM or other optical disk storage, magnetic disk storage or other magnetic storage devices, or any other medium which can be used to carry or store desired program code in the form of machine-executable instructions or data structures and which can be accessed by a general purpose or special purpose computer or other machine with a processor. When information is transferred or provided over a network or another communications connection (either hardwired, wireless, or a combination of hardwired or wireless) to a machine, the machine properly views the connection as a machine-readable medium. Thus, any such a connection is properly termed a machine-readable medium. Combinations of the above are also included within the scope of machine-readable media. Machine-executable instructions comprise, for example, instructions and data which cause a general purpose computer, special purpose computer, or special purpose processing machines to perform a certain function or group of functions.

[0083] Certain embodiments of the invention are described in the general context of method steps which may be implemented in one embodiment by a program product including machine-executable instructions, such as program code, for example in the form of program modules executed by machines in networked environments. Generally, program modules include routines, programs, objects, components, data structures, etc., that perform particular tasks or implement particular abstract data types. Machine-executable instructions, associated data structures, and program modules represent examples of program code for executing steps of the methods disclosed herein. The particular sequence of such executable instructions or associated data structures represent examples of corresponding acts for implementing the functions described in such steps.

[0084] Certain embodiments of the present invention may be practiced in a networked environment using logical connections to one or more remote computers having processors. Logical connections may include a local area network (LAN) and a wide area network (WAN) that are presented here by way of example and not limitation. Such networking environments are commonplace in office-wide or enterprise-wide computer networks, intranets and the Internet and may use a wide variety of different communication protocols. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that such network computing environments will typically encompass many types of computer system configurations, including personal computers, hand-held devices, multiprocessor systems, microprocessor-based or programmable consumer electronics, network PCs, minicomputers, mainframe computers, and the like. Embodiments of the invention may also be practiced in distributed computing environments where tasks are performed by local and remote processing devices that are linked (either by hardwired links, wireless links, or by a combination of hardwired or wireless links) through a communications network. In a distributed computing environment, program modules may be located in both local and remote memory storage devices.

[0085] An exemplary system for implementing the overall system or portions of certain embodiments of the invention might include a general purpose computing device in the form of a computer, including a processing unit, a system memory, and a system bus that couples various system components including the system memory to the processing unit. The system memory may include read only memory (ROM) and random access memory (RAM). The computer may also include a magnetic hard disk drive for reading from and writing to a magnetic hard disk, a magnetic disk drive for reading from or writing to a removable magnetic disk, and an optical disk drive for reading from or writing to a removable optical disk such as a CD ROM or other optical media. The drives and their associated machine-readable media provide nonvolatile storage of machine-executable instructions, data structures, program modules and other data for the computer.

[0086] The foregoing description of embodiments of the invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise form disclosed, and modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teachings or may be acquired from practice of the invention. The embodiments were chosen and described in order to explain the principals of the invention and its practical application to enable one skilled in the art to utilize the invention in various embodiments and with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

[0087] Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the embodiments disclosed herein may be applied to the formation of a variety of gaming systems. Certain features of the embodiments of the claimed subject matter have been illustrated as described herein; however, many modifications, substitutions, changes and equivalents will now occur to those skilled in the art. Additionally, while several functional blocks and relations between them have been described in detail, it is contemplated by those of skill in the art that several of the operations may be performed without the use of the others, or additional functions or relationships between functions may be established and still be in accordance with the claimed subject matter. It is, therefore, to be understood that the appended claims are intended to cover all such modifications and changes as fall within the true spirit of the embodiments of the claimed subject matter.

[0088] Where the bulk wagering game includes player decisions such as video Poker or a slot machine game where the player must make choices such as selections in a bonus game, the games for bulk wagering may be reconfigured such as by configuring the processor to implement decisions according to one or more stored strategies. Where available such as where the player must make selections in a bonus game, the game may be reconfigured to randomly make such selections for implementation of the present invention.

[0089] While certain embodiments of the present invention have been described, it should be understood that these embodiments are subject to many modifications and changes without departing from the spirit and scope of the appended claims. For example, it will be understood that the invention disclosed and defined in this specification extends to all alternative combinations of two or more of the individual features mentioned or evident from the text or drawings. All of these different combinations constitute various alternative aspects of the invention. It will also be understood that the term "comprises" (or its grammatical variants) as used in this specification is equivalent to the term "includes" and should not be taken as excluding the presence of other elements or features.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for bulk play in a gaming environment, said method comprising:

allowing a player to place a bulk play wager with a gaming device in a gaming environment;

generating game play results via said gaming device in accordance with said bulk play wager without displaying said game play results to the player at said gaming device as said game play results are being generated;

providing an identification of said game play results for later use by the player; and

storing said game play results for later replay based on said identification.

2. The method of claim **1**, wherein said gaming device comprises at least one of a kiosk, an electronic gaming machine, and a wireless device.

3. The method of claim **1**, wherein said identification comprises at least one of a bar code, a magnetic strip, a passcode to remotely stored data, a binary executable, and electronic data representing the game play results.

4. The method of claim **1**, further comprising replaying said game play results for said player at a remote viewer.

5. The method of claim **4**, wherein said player selects all or a subset of said game play results to replay via said remote viewer.

6. The method of claim **4**, wherein said remote viewer comprises a web browser and said player accesses said game play results for replay via a website using said identification.

7. The method of claim **4**, wherein said remote viewer comprises at least one of a personal computer, a personal digital assistant, a television, a phone, and a kiosk.

8. The method of claim **1**, further comprising crediting winnings from said game play results to an account associated with said player.

9. The method of claim **8**, wherein said account comprises at least one of a bank account, a player loyalty account, a casino account, a hotel account, and a credit card account.

10. The method of claim **8**, wherein said winnings are not credited to said account until said game play results have been replayed by said player.

11. The method of claim **1**, wherein said bulk play wager comprises a number of plays of one or more specified games and a wager amount to be spent on the plays.

12. A gaming system facilitating bulk wagering, game play generation, and later replay, said system comprising:

a gaming device allowing a player to place a bulk play wager for bulk play and later replay of at least one game, said gaming device generating game play results via said gaming device in accordance with said bulk play wager without displaying said game play results to the player at said gaming device as said game play results are being generated; and

an identification of said game play results, said identification generated by said gaming device or a peripheral associated with said gaming device to identify said game play results for later use by the player,

wherein said gaming device stores said game play results for later replay based on said identification.

13. The system of claim **12**, wherein said gaming device comprises at least one of a kiosk, an electronic gaming machine, and a wireless device.

14. The system of claim **12**, wherein said identification comprises at least one of a bar code, a magnetic strip, a passcode to remotely stored data, a binary executable, and electronic data representing the game play results.

15. The system of claim **12**, further comprising a remote viewer adapted to replay said game play results for said player.

16. The system of claim **15**, wherein said player selects all or a subset of said game play results to replay via said remote viewer.

17. The system of claim **15**, wherein said remote viewer comprises a web browser and wherein said player accesses said game play results for replay via a website using said identification.

18. The system of claim **15**, wherein said remote viewer comprises at least one of a personal computer, a personal digital assistant, a television, a phone, and a gaming device.

19. The system of claim **12**, wherein said gaming device credits winnings from said game play results to an account associated with said player.

20. The system of claim **19**, wherein said account comprises at least one of a bank account, a player loyalty account, a casino account, a hotel account, and a credit card account.

21. The system of claim **19**, wherein said winnings are not credited to said account until said game play results have been replayed by said player.

22. The system of claim **12**, wherein said bulk play wager comprises a number of plays of one or more specified games and a wager amount to be spent on the plays.

23. The system of claim **12**, wherein said gaming device stores said game play results at least one of a) in said identification, b) at a server accessible via a website, and c) at a server accessible via a gaming device.

24. The system of claim **12**, wherein said gaming device allows said player to place said bulk play wager remotely via a website.

25. A computer readable medium having a set of instructions for execution on a computer, said set of instructions comprising:

an input module accepting a bulk play wager by a player;

a processing module generating game play results in accordance with said bulk play wager without displaying said game play results to the player; and

an outcomes module providing an identification of said game play results for later use by the player,

wherein said processing module stores said game play results for later replay based on said identification and verifies player authorization to replay said game play results based on access by the player using said identification, and wherein said processing module replays at least a portion of said game play results based on said identification.

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