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(54) **GAMING SYSTEM AND A METHOD OF GAMING**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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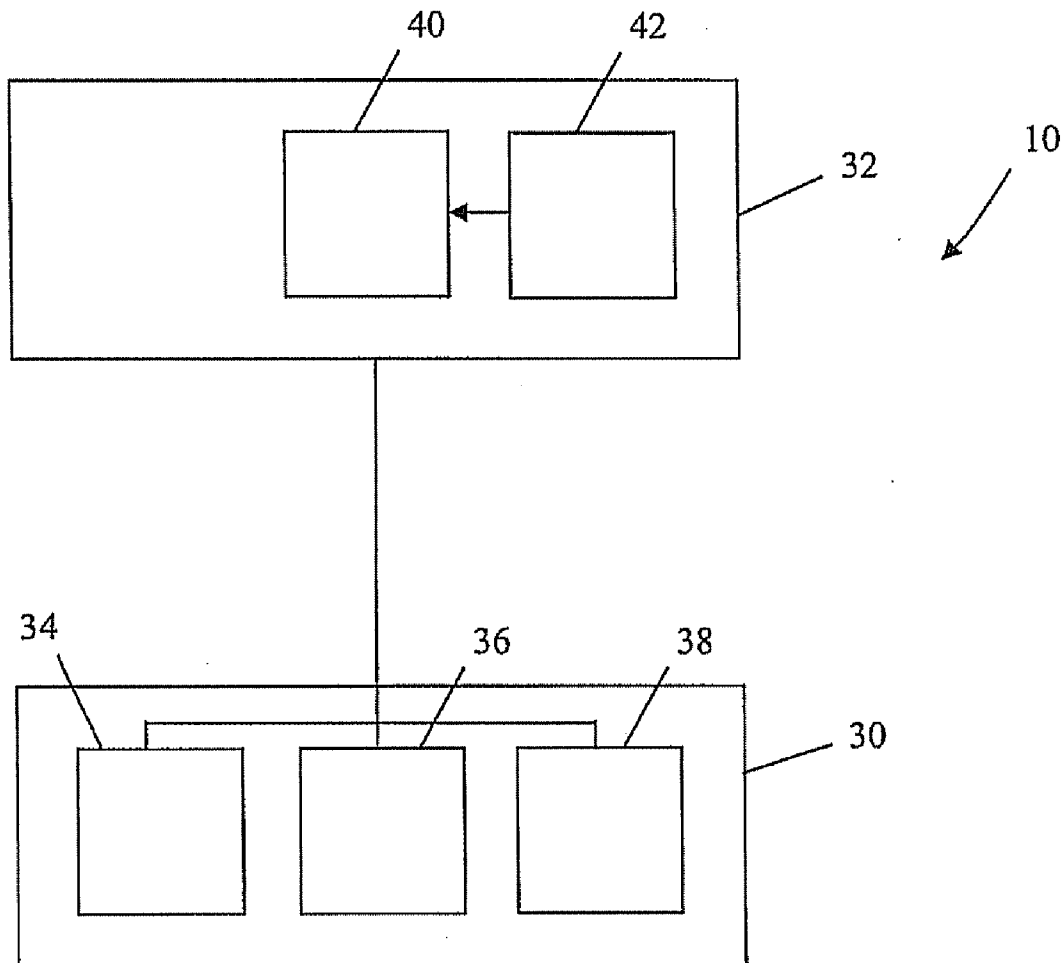
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A gaming system is disclosed that comprises a plurality of spinnable reels, each reel comprising a plurality of selectable symbols corresponding to respective reel stopping positions, and a symbol selector arranged to select a stopping position for each reel and thereby select at least one symbol from each reel. A reel controller is arranged to control spinning and stopping of the reels according to the selected reel stopping positions, and a player input device is arranged to facilitate reception of a reel stopping instruction from a player. The reel controller is arranged to stop a rightmost spinning reel in response to reception of the reel stopping instruction.

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/434,604, filed on Jan. 20, 2011.



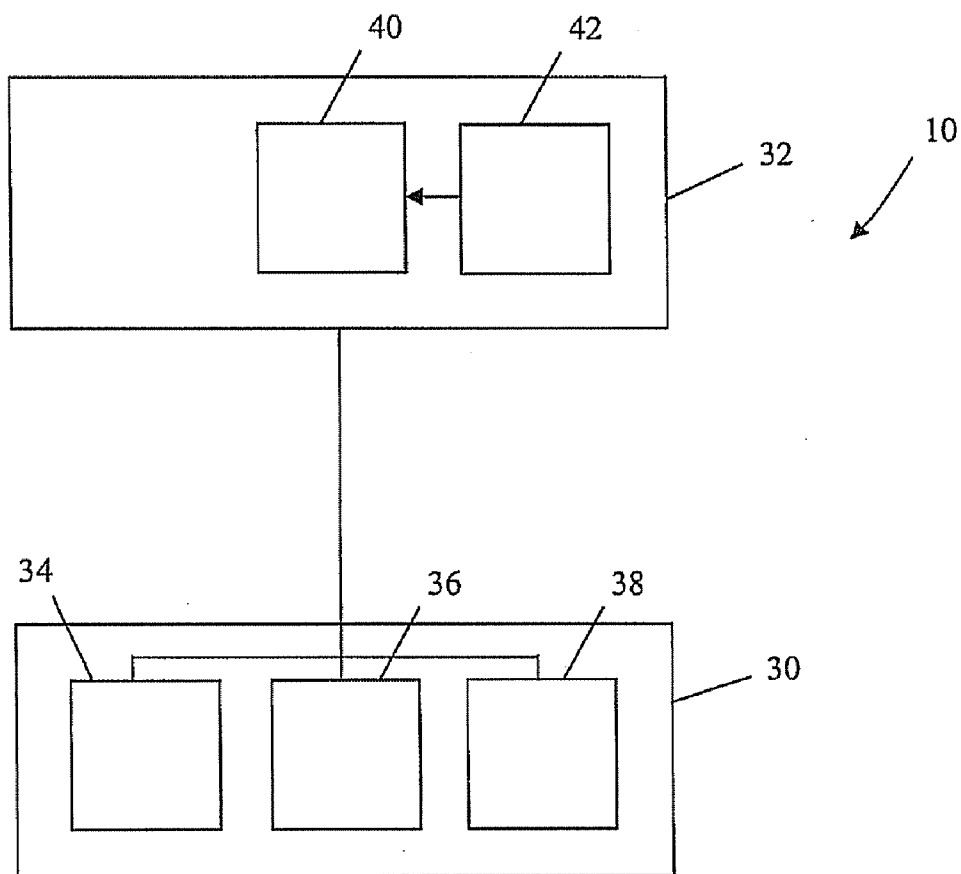


Fig. 1

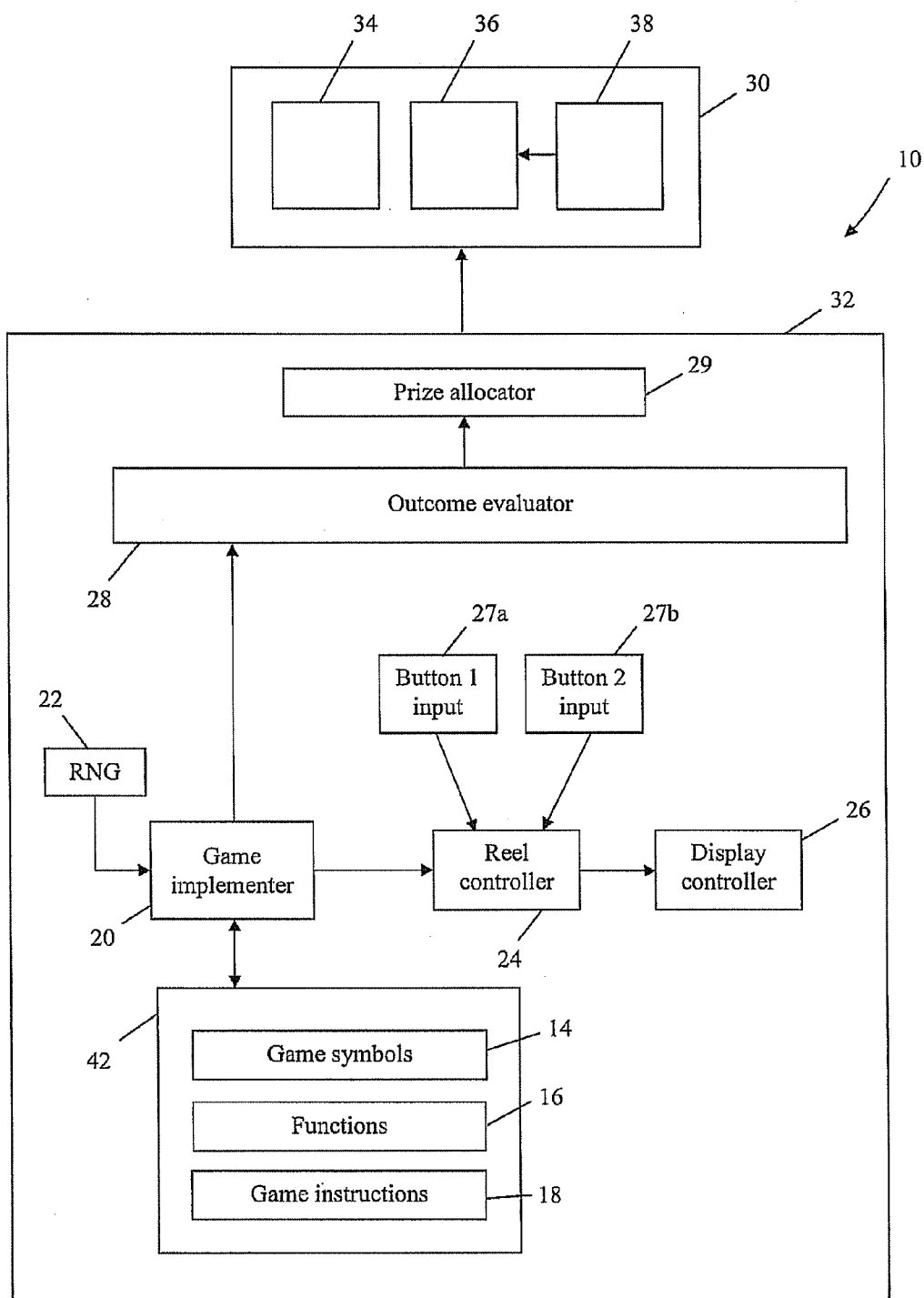


Fig. 2

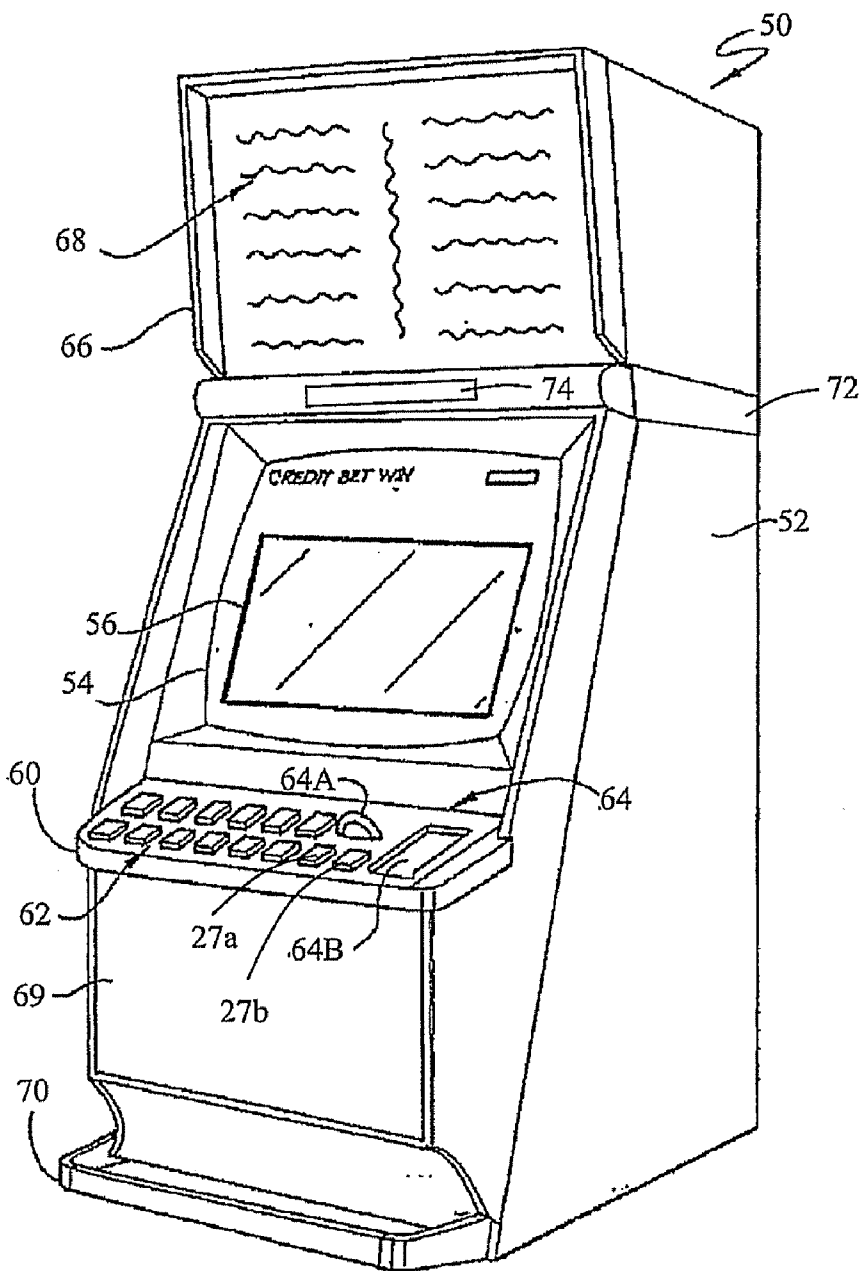


Fig. 3

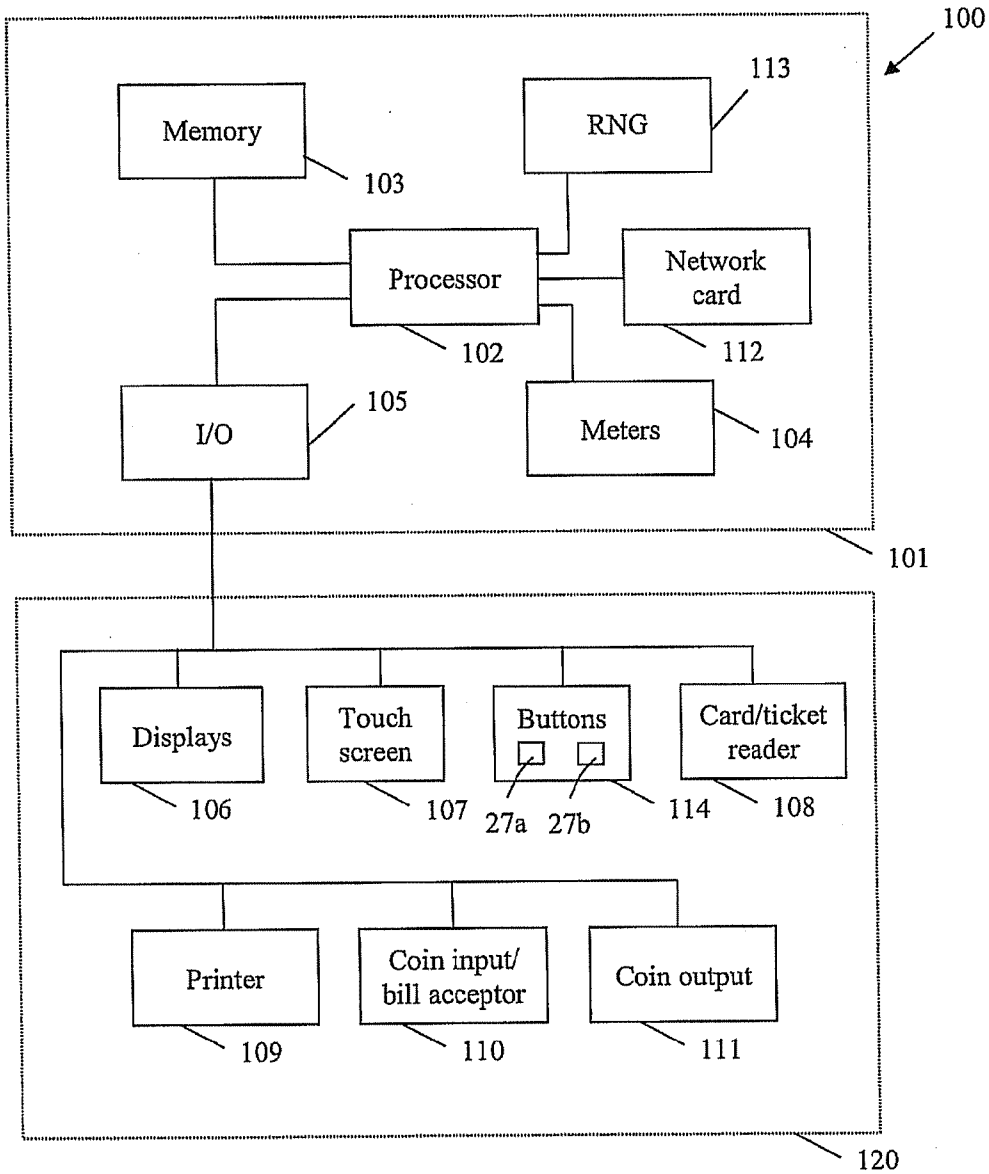


Fig. 4

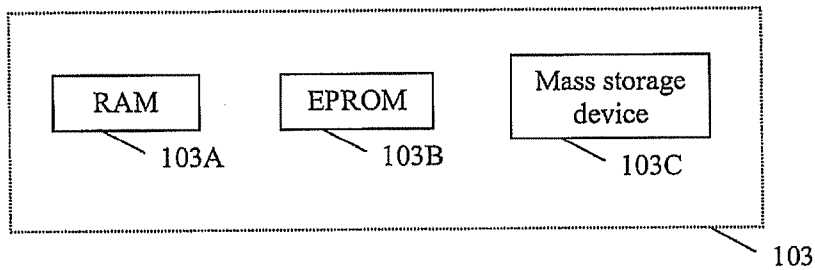


Fig. 5

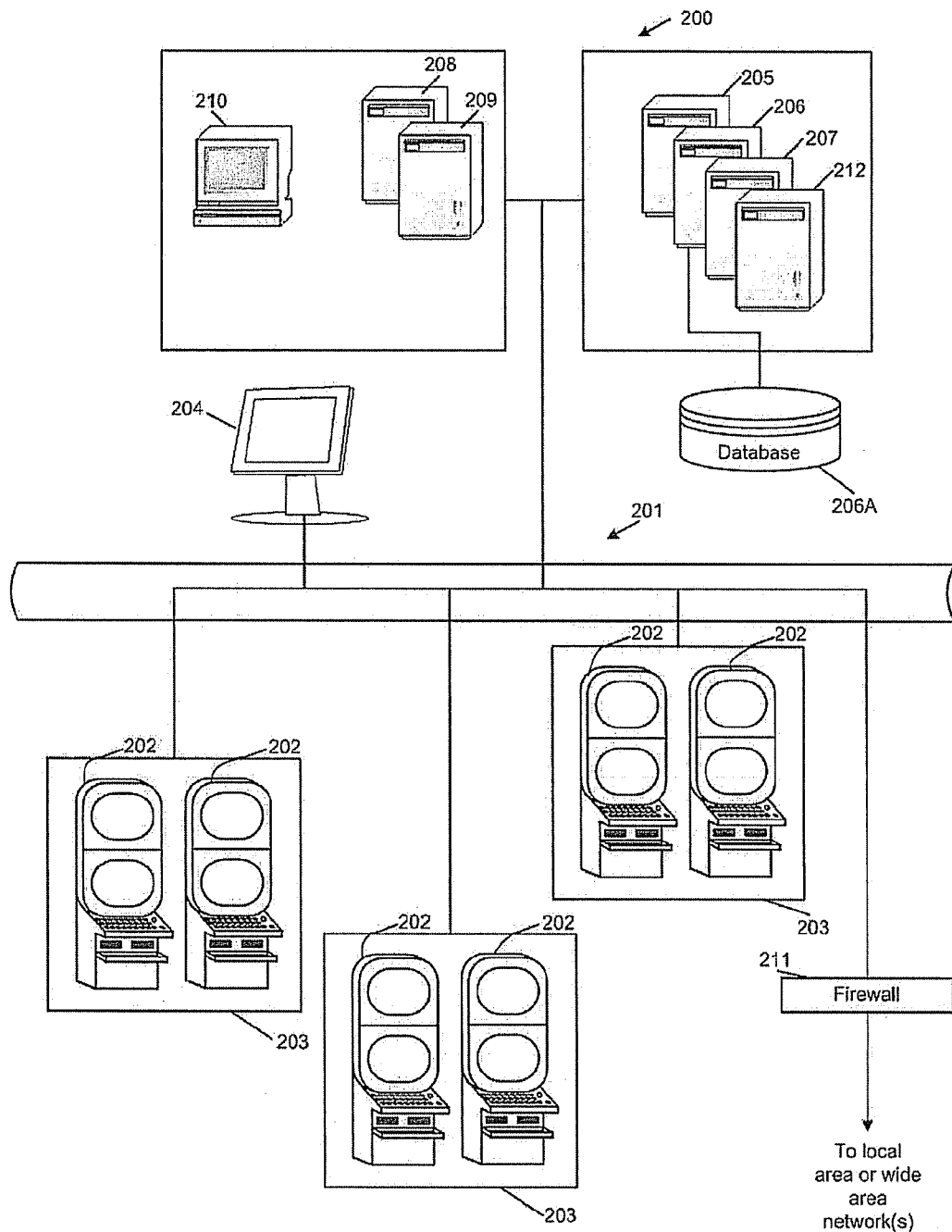


Fig. 6

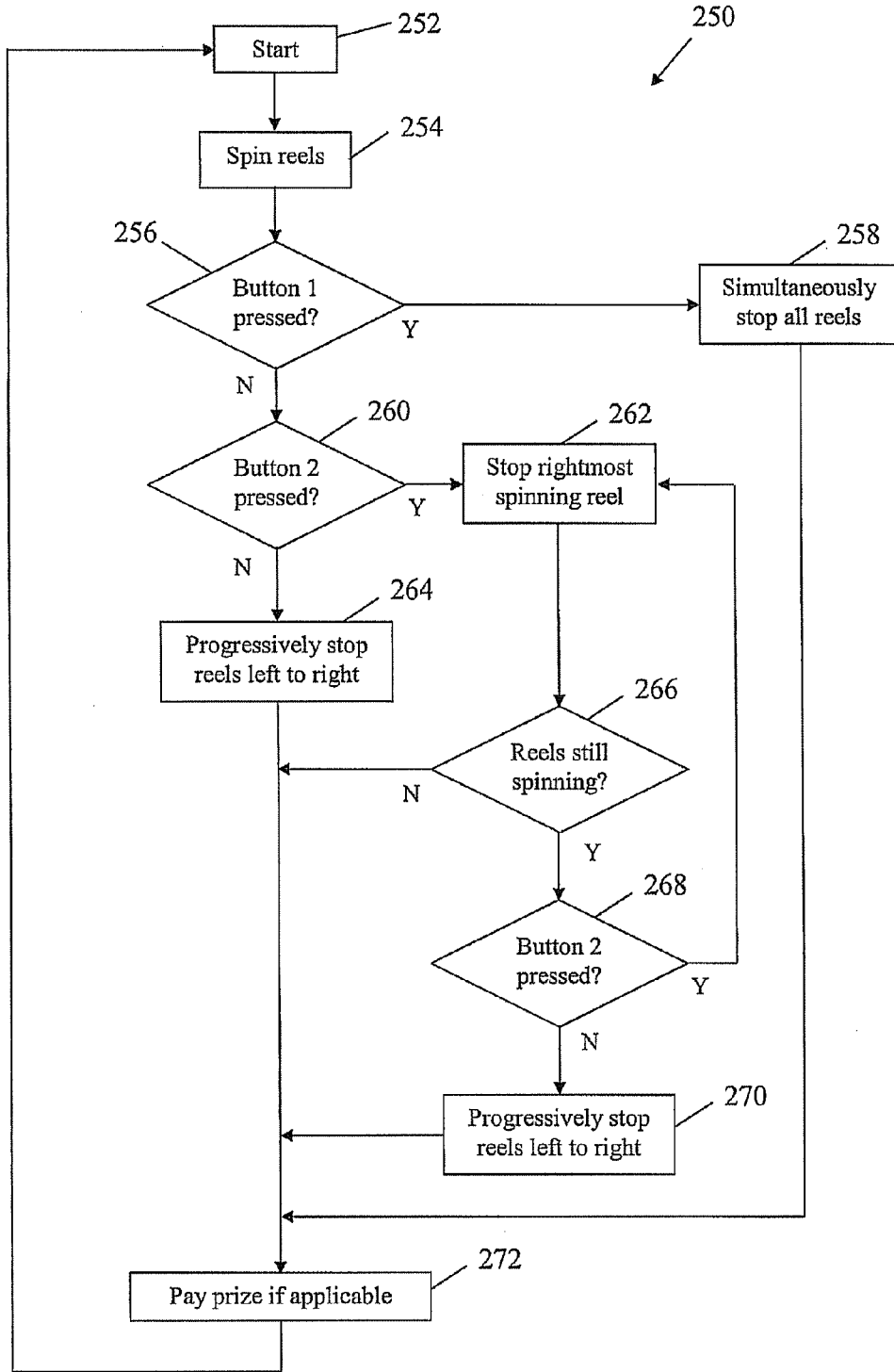


Fig. 7

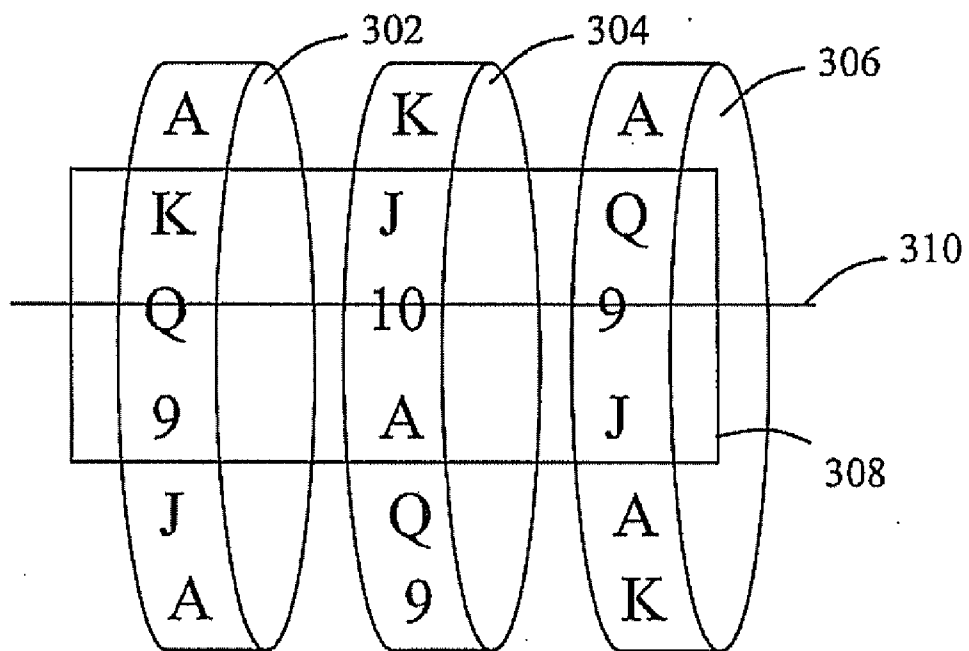


Fig. 8

GAMING SYSTEM AND A METHOD OF GAMING

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a non-provisional of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/434,604 having a filing date of Jan. 20, 2011, which is also incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0002] [Not Applicable]

MICROFICHE/COPYRIGHT REFERENCE

[0003] [Not Applicable]

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The present invention relates to a gaming system and to a method of gaming.

[0005] It is known to provide a gaming system which comprises a game controller arranged to randomly display several symbols from a predetermined set of symbols and to determine a game outcome such as a game win based on the displayed symbols. Such gaming systems may commonly be implemented as a stepper machine provided with reels with each reel carrying several symbols of the set, or a video machine wherein selected symbols are displayed on virtual reels on a graphical display device.

[0006] In a conventional gaming system, the reels are generally spun and controlled so that the reels stop in a sequence commencing with a leftmost reel and ending with a rightmost reel. With such a gaming system, the rightmost reel will typically spin 3 or more revolutions more than the leftmost reel. This process is desirable for some games, but for games with a large number of free spins, this can be very time consuming and tedious for a player.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] In accordance with a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a gaming system comprising:

[0008] a plurality of spinnable reels, each reel comprising a plurality of selectable symbols corresponding to respective reel stopping positions;

[0009] a symbol selector arranged to select a stopping position for each reel and thereby select at least one symbol from each reel;

[0010] a reel controller arranged to control spinning and stopping of the reels according to the selected reel stopping positions; and

[0011] a player input device arranged to facilitate reception of a reel stopping instruction from a player;

[0012] the reel controller being arranged to stop a rightmost spinning reel in response to reception of the reel stopping instruction.

[0013] In one embodiment, the reel controller is arranged to cause the reels to stop in a left to right stopping sequence if a reel stopping instruction is not received from a player within a defined first time period.

[0014] In one embodiment, the reel controller is arranged to stop a rightmost spinning reel each time a reel stopping instruction is received from a player.

[0015] In one embodiment, if a reel stopping instruction is received from a player and no subsequent reel stopping instruction is received from the player within a defined second time period, the reel controller may be arranged to stop the remaining spinning reels automatically in a defined sequence.

[0016] In one embodiment, the defined sequence is a left to right stopping sequence.

[0017] In an alternative embodiment, the defined sequence is a right to left stopping sequence.

[0018] In one embodiment, the gaming system comprises first and second player input devices, the first player input device being arranged to facilitate reception of a first reel stopping instruction from a player, and the second player input device being arranged to facilitate reception of a second reel stopping instruction from a player;

[0019] wherein the reel controller is arranged to stop a rightmost spinning reel in response to reception of the first reel stopping instruction, and the reel controller is arranged to stop all spinning reels substantially simultaneously in response to reception of the second reel stopping instruction.

[0020] In one embodiment, the reels are virtual reels represented on a display.

[0021] In an alternative embodiment, the reels are physical reels.

[0022] In one embodiment, the gaming system is arranged to implement a base game and in response to a trigger condition to implement a feature game different to the base game.

[0023] The trigger condition may be display of at least one trigger symbol, such as a wild symbol. Alternatively, the trigger condition may be display of a particular combination of trigger symbols such as scattered predefined symbols or a particular combination of adjacently disposed symbols along a win line.

[0024] The gaming system may be implemented as a stand alone gaming machine or across a network.

[0025] In accordance with a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of gaming comprising:

[0026] providing a plurality of spinnable reels, each reel comprising a plurality of selectable symbols corresponding to respective reel stopping positions;

[0027] selecting a stopping position for each reel and thereby at least one symbol from each reel;

[0028] facilitating reception of a reel stopping instruction from a player; and

[0029] stopping a rightmost spinning reel in response to reception of the reel stopping instruction.

[0030] In accordance with a third aspect of the present invention, there is provided a computer program arranged when loaded into a computer to instruct the computer to operate in accordance with a gaming system according to the first aspect of the present invention.

[0031] In accordance with a fourth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a computer readable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein for causing a computer to operate in accordance with a gaming system according to the first aspect of the present invention.

[0032] In accordance with a fifth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a data signal having computer readable program code embodied therein for causing a com-

puter to operate in accordance with a gaming system according to the first aspect of the present invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0033] The present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0034] FIG. 1 is a schematic block diagram of core components of a gaming system in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

[0035] FIG. 2 is a schematic block diagram of functional components of a gaming system in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

[0036] FIG. 3 is a diagrammatic representation of a gaming system in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention with the gaming system implemented in the form of a stand alone gaming machine;

[0037] FIG. 4 is a schematic block diagram of operative components of the gaming machine shown in FIG. 3;

[0038] FIG. 5 is a schematic block diagram of components of a memory of the gaming machine shown in FIG. 3;

[0039] FIG. 6 is a schematic diagram of a gaming system in accordance with an alternative embodiment of the present invention with the gaming system implemented over a network;

[0040] FIG. 7 is a flow diagram illustrating a method of gaming in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention; and

[0041] FIG. 8 is a diagrammatic representation of reels of a gaming system showing symbols displayed in a display area after selection of symbols during implementation of a game.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0042] Referring to the drawings, there is shown a schematic block diagram of a gaming system **10** arranged to implement a probabilistic game, in this example 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. With some such probabilistic games, the set of symbols include standard symbols and function symbols, and the game outcome is determined on the basis of the displayed standard symbols and the function associated with any displayed function symbol. For example, standard symbols may resemble fruit such as apples, pears and bananas with a win outcome being determined when a predetermined number of the same fruit appear on a display in the same win line, scattered, and so on. The function associated with a function symbol may be for example a wild function wherein display of the function symbol is treated during consideration of the game outcome as any of the standard symbols. A function symbol may be represented as the word "WILD", a star, or by any other suitable word or symbol. Other functions are also envisaged such as scatter functions, multiplier functions, repeat win functions, jackpot functions and feature commencement functions. The available win lines may be fixed, may be determined on the basis of the bet placed, or may be selectable by a player.

[0043] This type of game often also comprises a base game mode and a special game mode, with special game mode being triggered when a specific trigger condition occurs during base game mode. For example, base game mode may implement a base game wherein a plurality of symbols are

selected for use in determining game outcomes from a set of symbols, and special game mode may implement a feature game with the feature game being triggered when a particular symbol or combination of symbols is displayed.

[0044] In a conventional gaming system having a plurality of spinnable symbol bearing reels, the reels are generally spun and controlled so that the reels stop in a sequence commencing with a leftmost reel and ending with a rightmost reel. In one such gaming system, all reels initially spin in a downward direction, and after at least one complete reel revolution the leftmost first reel stops. After at least one more revolution, the next reel to the right, the second reel, stops, and similarly after a further revolution, the next reel to the right, the third reel, stops, and so on. In a gaming system having 3 reels, the third reel will spin typically 3 or more revolutions more than the first reel. This process is generally desirable for base games, but for games with a large number of free spins, this can be very time consuming and tedious for a player.

[0045] The present gaming system operates such that, at least during a portion of a game implemented by the gaming system, a player is provided with the option of either controlling the reels so that the reels stop in a conventional manner, that is progressively left to right, or so that the reels stop simultaneously, or so that the reels stop under control of the player progressively from right to left.

[0046] One example of selecting symbols is for a symbol selector to select symbols for display by selecting a reel stopping position. For this purpose, it is known to use a probability table stored in memory so as to vary the odds of a particular stop position being selected. Other techniques can be used to control the odds of particular outcomes occurring to thereby control the return to player of the game.

[0047] Referring to FIG. 1, a schematic diagram of core components of a gaming system **10** is shown. The core components comprise a player interface **30** and a game controller **32**. The player interface **30** is arranged to enable interaction between a player and the gaming system and for this purpose includes input/output components required for the player to enter instructions and play the game.

[0048] Components of the player interface **30** may vary but will typically include a credit mechanism **34** to enable a player to input credits and receive payouts, one or more displays **36** which may comprise a touch screen, and a game play mechanism **38** arranged to enable a player to input game playing instructions.

[0049] The game controller **32** is in data communication with the player interface **30** and typically includes a processor **40** arranged to process game play instructions and output game player outcomes to the display **36**. Typically, the game play instructions are stored as program code in a memory **42** that can also be hardwired. It will be understood that in this specification the term "processor" is used to refer generically to any device that can process game play instructions and may include a microprocessor, microcontroller, programmable logic device or any computational device such as a personal computer or a server.

[0050] A functional diagram illustrating operative components of the game controller **32** is shown in FIG. 2.

[0051] The memory **42** is arranged to store symbols data **14** indicative of a plurality of symbols for use during implementation of a base game and optionally during a feature game, function data **16** indicative of one or more functions allocatable to the symbols, and game instruction data **18** usable by the gaming system **10** to control operation of the game.

[0052] The game controller 32 includes a game implementer 20 which is arranged to implement a game, including selection of several symbols from the stored symbols 14 for display to a player. In this example, the selection of symbols carried out by the game implementer 20 is made using a random number generator 22. The game implementer 20 may also be arranged to select and allocate one or more functions to one or more symbols. Such functions include a wild function, a scatter function, or any other function which may be applied to a symbol or to the game.

[0053] 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.

[0054] In the present example, the gaming system 10 may be arranged to implement a single game, or the gaming system may be operable in normal game mode wherein a base game is implemented and special game mode wherein a feature game is implemented. Special game mode may be arranged to commence based on occurrence of a trigger condition.

[0055] The game controller 32 also comprises a reel controller 24 arranged to control reel positions and reel movement. The reel controller 24 communicates with a display controller 26 arranged to control the display 36 and, in response to instructions from the game implementer 20, the reel controller 24 in association with the display controller 26 causes the reels to spin and stop either in a conventional manner, to stop simultaneously, or to stop progressively from right to left.

[0056] In this example, the reel controller 24 is arranged to implement a reel stopping regime based on whether a player input is received and the type of player input received. For example, in one embodiment, if no player input is received during a defined period whilst the reels are spinning, the reel controller 24 may be arranged to cause the reels to stop in a conventional manner progressively from left to right; if a first player input is received, for example by pressing a first game control button 27a, the reel controller 24 may be arranged to cause the reels to stop simultaneously; and if a second player input is received, for example by pressing a second game control button 27b, the reel controller 24 may be arranged to cause the reels to stop progressively from right to left. In one variation, the game controller 24 may be arranged to cause the rightmost spinning reel to stop each time the second game control button 27b is pressed so that the player has a degree of control over the timing of the right to left stopping sequence. With this variation, after the second game control button 27b has been pressed and the rightmost reel caused to stop, the game controller 24 may be arranged to stop the next rightmost spinning reel automatically if the second game control button 27b is not pressed by the player within a defined period.

[0057] The game controller 32 also comprises an outcome evaluator 28 which in accordance with the game instructions 18 determines game outcomes, in this example based on the symbols selected for display to a player by the symbol selector 20, and a prize allocator 29 arranged to allocate prizes based on the game outcomes.

[0058] In the embodiments described below, the game implementer 20, the reel controller 24, and the outcome evaluator 28 are at least partly implemented using the processor 40 and associated software, although it will be understood that other implementations are envisaged.

[0059] The gaming system 10 can take a number of different forms.

[0060] In a first form, a stand alone gaming machine is provided wherein all or most components required for implementing the game are present in a player operable gaming machine.

[0061] 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 and some of the components required for implementing the game are located remotely relative to the gaming machine. 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 play audible and/or display visible gaming information to the player and receive gaming inputs from the player.

[0062] However, it will be understood that other arrangements are envisaged. For example, an architecture may be provided wherein a gaming machine 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.

[0063] A gaming system in the form of a stand alone gaming machine 50 is illustrated in FIG. 3. The gaming machine 50 includes a console 52 having a display 54 on which is displayed representations of a game 56 that can be played by a player. A mid-trim 60 of the gaming machine 50 houses a bank of buttons 62, including the first and second player game control buttons 27a, 27b, for enabling a player to interact with the gaming machine, in particular during gameplay. The mid-trim 60 also houses a credit input mechanism 64 which in this example includes a coin input chute 64A and a bill collector 64B. Other credit input mechanisms may also be employed, for example, a card reader for reading a smart card, debit card or credit card.

[0064] A top box 66 may carry artwork 68, 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 69 of the console 52. A coin tray 70 is mounted beneath the front panel 69 for dispensing cash payouts from the gaming machine 50.

[0065] The display 54 is in the form of a video display unit, particularly a cathode ray tube screen device. Alternatively, the display 54 may be a liquid crystal display, plasma screen, or any other suitable video display unit. The top box 66 may also include a display, for example a video display unit, which may be of the same type as the display 54, or of a different type.

[0066] The display 54 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 spin then stop with typically three symbols visible on each reel.

[0067] A player marketing module (PMM) 72 having a display 4 is connected to the gaming machine 10. The main purpose of the PMM 72 is to allow the player to interact with

a player loyalty system. The PMM has a magnetic card reader for the purpose of reading a player tracking device, for example as part of a loyalty program. However other reading devices may be employed and 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. In this example, the PMM 72 is a Sentinel III device produced by Aristocrat Technologies Pty Ltd.

[0068] FIG. 4 shows a block diagram of operative components of a typical gaming machine 100 which may be the same as or different to the gaming machine shown in FIG. 3.

[0069] The gaming machine 100 includes a game controller 101 having a processor 102. Instructions and data to control operation of the processor 102 in accordance with the present invention are stored in a memory 103 which is in data communication with the processor 102.

[0070] Typically, the gaming machine 100 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 103.

[0071] FIG. 5 shows a block diagram of the main components of an exemplary memory 103. The memory 103 includes RAM 103A, EPROM 103B and a mass storage device 103C. The RAM 103A typically temporarily holds program files for execution by the processor 102 and related data. The EPROM 103B may be a boot ROM device and/or may contain some system or game related code. The mass storage device 103C is typically used to store game programs, the integrity of which may be verified and/or authenticated by the processor 102 using protected code from the EPROM 103B or elsewhere.

[0072] The gaming machine has hardware meters 104 for purposes including ensuring regulatory compliance and monitoring player credit, an input/output (I/O) interface 105 for communicating with a player interface 120 of the gaming machine 100, the player interface 120 having several peripheral devices. The input/output interface 105 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 113 generates random numbers for use by the processor 102.

[0073] In the example shown in FIG. 4, the peripheral devices that communicate with the game controller 101 comprise one or more displays 106; a touch screen 107; a bank of buttons 114, including the first and second game control buttons 27a, 27b; a card and/or ticket reader 108; a printer 109; a bill acceptor and/or coin input mechanism 110; and a coin output mechanism 111. Additional hardware may be included as part of the gaming machine 100, or hardware may be omitted as required for the specific implementation.

[0074] In addition, the gaming machine 100 may include a communications interface, for example a network card 112. 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.

[0075] It is also possible for the operative components of the gaming machine 100 to be distributed, for example input/output devices 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111 may be provided remotely from the game controller 101.

[0076] FIG. 6 shows a gaming system 200 in accordance with an alternative embodiment. The gaming system 200 includes a network 201, which for example may be an Ether-

net network, a LAN or a WAN. In this example, three banks 203 of two gaming machines 202 are connected to the network 201. The gaming machines 202 provide a player operable interface and may be the same as the gaming machines 40, 100 shown in FIGS. 3 and 4, or may have simplified functionality depending on the requirements for implementing game play. While banks 203 of two gaming machines are illustrated in FIG. 6, banks of one, three or more gaming machines are also envisaged.

[0077] One or more displays 204 may also be connected to the network 201. The displays 204 may, for example, be associated with one or more banks 203 of gaming machines. The displays 204 may be used to display representations associated with game play on the gaming machines 202, and/or used to display other representations, for example promotional or informational material.

[0078] In a thick client embodiment, a game server 205 implements part of the game played by a player using a gaming machine 202 and the gaming machine 202 implements part of the game. With this embodiment, as both the game server 205 and the gaming machine 202 implement part of the game, they collectively provide a game controller. A database management server 206 may manage storage of game programs and associated data for downloading or access by the gaming devices 202 in a database 206A. Typically, if the gaming system enables players to participate in a Jackpot game, a Jackpot server 207 will be provided to monitor and carry out the Jackpot game.

[0079] In a variation of the above thick client embodiment, the gaming machine 202 may implement the game, with the game server 205 functioning merely to serve data indicative of a game to the gaming machine 202 for implementation.

[0080] With this implementation, a data signal containing a computer program usable by the client terminal to implement the gaming system may be transferred from the game server to the client terminal, for example in response to a request by the client terminal.

[0081] In a thin client embodiment, the game server 205 implements most or all of the game played by a player using a gaming machine 202 and the gaming machine 202 essentially provides only the player interface. With this embodiment, the game server 205 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.

[0082] Servers are also typically provided to assist in the administration of the gaming system 200, including for example a gaming floor management server 208 and a licensing server 209 to monitor the use of licenses relating to particular games. An administrator terminal 210 is provided to allow an administrator to monitor the network 201 and the devices connected to the network.

[0083] The gaming system 200 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 211.

[0084] A loyalty program server 212 may also be provided.

[0085] 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 205 could run a random number generator engine. Alternatively, a separate random number generator server could be provided.

[0086] Examples of specific implementations of the gaming system will now be described with reference to FIGS. 7 and 8. FIG. 7 shows a flow diagram 250 which illustrates steps 252 to 272 of a method of gaming implemented by the gaming system.

[0087] The game implemented by the gaming system is of a type including multiple spinnable reels, which may be physical reels or virtual reels, with each reel having a plurality of symbols and optionally one or more function symbols. Win outcomes are determined on the basis of the symbols visible when the reels stop rotating, and in this example three symbols are displayed on each reel at any time. A win outcome may occur based on display of the same symbol along normal win lines which may extend horizontally, diagonally, or in any other predefined continuous line. A win outcome may also occur based on display of multiple scattered symbols at any display location. A win outcome may also occur on the basis of one or more standard symbols in combination with at least one function symbol having an assigned function. For example a function symbol may correspond to a wild function, a scatter function, a multiply function, a repeat win function, and so on.

[0088] In the present example, 3 reels 302, 304, 306 are provided and during a feature game symbols are selected and displayed on first 302, second 304 and third 306 reels respectively in a display area 308. In this example, the symbols are selected by selecting reel stopping positions corresponding to a central display line 310 with the reel controller 24 being arranged to cooperate with the display controller 26 so as to spin the reels and stop the reels at stop positions such that the selected symbols are shown on the central display line 310.

[0089] The reel controller 24 is arranged to cooperate with a display controller 26 so as to provide a player with a degree of control over the particular procedure used to stop the reels 302, 304, 306, and in particular to control stopping times of rightmost reels that, with conventional reel stopping schemes, would ordinarily stop last.

[0090] In the present example, during implementation of a game the first, second and third reels 302, 304, 306 spin 254 and if no game control buttons are pressed by a player during a defined period of time the reel controller 24 causes the reels to stop in a generally conventional manner in a left to right sequence 264.

[0091] If a player presses a first game control button 27a during the defined time period after the reels start to spin, the reel controller 24 causes the reels to stop simultaneously 258.

[0092] If a player does not press the first game control button 27a but instead presses a second game control button 27b during the defined time period after the reels start to spin, the reel controller 24 causes the rightmost reel to stop 262. If the second game control button 27b is subsequently pressed before expiration of a defined time period, the next rightmost spinning reel stops, and so on until no more reels are spinning. If the second game control button 27b is pressed once to cause the rightmost reel to stop spinning but is not subsequently pressed within a defined time period, the reel controller 24 causes the reels to stop automatically in a left to right sequence 270 with defined time periods between each reel stop.

[0093] As an alternative to causing the reels to stop automatically in a left to right sequence 264 if the second game control button 27b is pressed once but is not subsequently pressed within a defined time period, the reel controller 24 may cause the reels to stop automatically in a right to left sequence with defined time periods between each reel stop.

[0094] The first game control button 27a may be a dedicated button usable to implement a ‘slammed win’ whereby all reels stop quickly and simultaneously.

[0095] The second game control button 27b may be the same button used by a player to commence implementation of a game, or a different button dedicated to control of reel stopping in a rightmost to leftmost sequence.

[0096] After all reels have stopped spinning, the symbols displayed in the display area 308 are then evaluated 272 by the outcome evaluator 28 and a prize paid if applicable.

[0097] It will be understood that with the present gaming system, irrespective of particular reel stopping sequence used, the outcome is the same in that the symbols to be displayed in the display area 308 are pre-selected by a symbol selector and do not change based, for example, on the number of reel spins. The present reel stopping arrangements provide a player with a degree of control over the reel stopping sequences so that that player may be presented with control over the appearance of the game, and in particular over the time taken to stop all reels.

[0098] It will also be understood that the gaming system may be arranged such that a ‘slammed win’ may still be activated even though the second game control button 27b has already been pressed at least once. With this variation, at least one rightmost reel will have already stopped spinning and activation of the second game control button 27b causes the remaining spinning reels to stop quickly and simultaneously.

[0099] While the above example is described in relation to a video implementation of a spinning reel type probabilistic game wherein virtual reels are shown on a display, it will be understood that other variations are possible. For example, the reels may be physical reels controlled by one or more stepper motors.

[0100] In the claims of this application and in the description of the invention, except where the context requires otherwise due to express language or necessary implication, the words “comprise” or variations such as “comprises” or “comprising” are used in an inclusive sense, i.e. to specify the presence of the stated features but not to preclude the presence or addition of further features in various embodiments of the invention.

[0101] Modifications and variations as would be apparent to a skilled addressee are deemed to be within the scope of the present invention.

1. A gaming system comprising:

- a plurality of spinnable reels, each reel comprising a plurality of selectable symbols corresponding to respective reel stopping positions;
- a symbol selector arranged to select a stopping position for each reel and thereby select at least one symbol from each reel;
- a reel controller arranged to control spinning and stopping of the reels according to the selected reel stopping positions; and
- a player input device arranged to facilitate reception of a reel stopping instruction from a player;

the reel controller being arranged to stop a rightmost spinning reel in response to reception of the reel stopping instruction.

2. The gaming system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the reel controller is arranged to cause the reels to stop in a left to right stopping sequence if a reel stopping instruction is not received from a player within a defined first time period.

3. The gaming system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the reel controller is arranged to stop a rightmost spinning reel each time a reel stopping instruction is received from a player.

4. The gaming system as claimed in claim 1, wherein if a reel stopping instruction is received from a player and no subsequent reel stopping instruction is received from the player within a defined second time period, the reel controller is arranged to stop the remaining spinning reels automatically in a defined sequence.

5. The gaming system as claimed in claim 4, wherein the defined sequence is a left to right stopping sequence.

6. The gaming system as claimed in claim 4, wherein the defined sequence is a right to left stopping sequence.

7. The gaming system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the gaming system comprises first and second player input devices, the first player input device being arranged to facilitate reception of a first reel stopping instruction from a player, and the second player input device being arranged to facilitate reception of a second reel stopping instruction from a player; wherein the reel controller is arranged to stop a rightmost spinning reel in response to reception of the first reel stopping instruction, and the reel controller is arranged to stop all spinning reels substantially simultaneously in response to reception of the second reel stopping instruction.

8. The gaming system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the reels are virtual reels represented on a display.

9. The gaming system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the reels are physical reels.

10. The gaming system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the gaming system is arranged to implement a base game and in response to a trigger condition to implement a feature game different to the base game.

11. The gaming system as claimed in claim 10, wherein the trigger condition comprises display of at least one trigger symbol.

12. The gaming system as claimed in claim 10, wherein the trigger condition comprises display of a particular combination of trigger symbols.

13. The gaming system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the gaming system is implemented as a stand alone gaming machine or across a network.

14. A method of gaming comprising:
 providing a plurality of spinnable reels, each reel comprising a plurality of selectable symbols corresponding to respective reel stopping positions;
 selecting a stopping position for each reel and thereby at least one symbol from each reel;
 facilitating reception of a reel stopping instruction from a player; and
 stopping a rightmost spinning reel in response to reception of the reel stopping instruction.

15. The method as claimed in claim 14, comprising stopping the reels in a left to right stopping sequence if a reel stopping instruction is not received from a player within a defined first time period.

16. The method as claimed in claim 14, comprising stopping a rightmost spinning reel each time a reel stopping instruction is received from a player.

17. The method as claimed in claim 14, comprising stopping the remaining spinning reels automatically in a defined sequence if a reel stopping instruction is received from a player and no subsequent reel stopping instruction is received from the player within a defined second time period.

18. The method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the defined sequence is a left to right stopping sequence.

19. The method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the defined sequence is a right to left stopping sequence.

20. The method as claimed in claim 14, comprising:
 providing first and second player input devices, the first player input device being arranged to facilitate reception of a first reel stopping instruction from a player, and the second player input device being arranged to facilitate reception of a second reel stopping instruction from a player;
 stopping a rightmost spinning reel in response to reception of the first reel stopping instruction; and
 stopping all spinning reels substantially simultaneously in response to reception of the second reel stopping instruction.

21. The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the reels are virtual reels represented on a display.

22. The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the reels are physical reels.

23. The method as claimed in claim 14, comprising implementing a base game and in response to a trigger condition to implement a feature game different to the base game.

24. The method as claimed in claim 23, wherein the trigger condition comprises display of at least one trigger symbol.

25. The method as claimed in claim 23, wherein the trigger condition comprises display of a particular combination of trigger symbols.

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