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(54) **TRIVIA GAME**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method for playing a trivia game comprising the steps of compiling a general pool of trivia questions; arranging a game with a plurality of players connected over a computer network; receiving an entry fee from a plurality of players connected over a computer network; and assigning a starting point total for each player; presenting a sequence of at least 20 trivia questions. Each question is presented by: presenting the topic for the question; setting point wager limits; receiving a point wager from a plurality of players connected over a computer network; presenting multiple choice answers having at least one correct answer; adding wagered points for correct answers, and decaying points earnable for a question over time; subtracting wagered points for incorrect answers; increasing point wager limits; calculating ending point totals for each player to determine the winner; and pooling the entry fees to award a portion of the entry fees to the winner.

TRIVIA GAME

DISCUSSION OF RELATED ART

[0001] Trivia games have been widely popular since the early days of radio and television. They are educational as well as entertaining. These trivia games can be adapted for educational use. For example in U.S. Pat. No. 4,090,717 issued to Roetti, a question such as "What color is an ermine's fur in winter?" requires the proper answer as well as proper citation of an encyclopedia within a set time.

[0002] The keeping of score also varies between the board game path as shown in U.S. Pat. No. 5,083,794 to Santagata or the wagering system of other games. Sometimes score is segmented into different stages. A wide variety of methods for playing trivia games have been invented such as that shown in U.S. Pat. No. 6,752,396 issued to Smith which has a normal round and a speed round with time controls. U.S. Pat. No. 6,070,874 to Ivers and U.S. Pat. No. 6,471,207 to Schlaifer provides a question and answer with assigned odds for each question so that the participants can wager on whether the responding player answers correctly. Other trivia games allow partial credit such as U.S. Pat. No. 5,660,389 to Freda III that gives history questions with all answers in the form of the calendar year. Therefore, there are a wide variety of methods of tracking performance and progress within the game.

[0003] A wide variety of topics range from entertainment, sports and literature. U.S. Pat. No. 6,761,358 to Hallet shows a trivia system having points related to correct identification of works and actors appearing in the works. U.S. Pat. No. 6,145,839 to Katison shows a movie game method and apparatus that is played by a plurality of playing cards with actor and movie association. Sometimes particular trivia games focus more narrowly in subject matter, such as Star Trek trivia games such as the one shown in U.S. Pat. No. 4,907,808 issued to Turner. U.S. Pat. No. 5,735,522 to Sausa requires the skill of relating a quote with the year of the quote. Geography games shown in U.S. Pat. No. 4,674,752 to Brothers and U.S. Pat. No. 5,580,252 to Mc Crady provide an educational opportunity for learning state or territory trivia. Also, association of products with commercial slogans and trademarks has also been suggested in U.S. Pat. No. 5,048,842 to Proctor. Perhaps there will be a trivia game associating inventors with their inventions, or famous patent applications with patent agents. Thus, a wide variety of subject matter can be used for entertaining trivia depending upon one's point of view as to what constitutes entertaining trivia matter.

[0004] The game equipment and game board if any also varies widely. Some games use dice with one or more tracks or paths having discreet positions. Some games use points, tokens or money. Some games use spatial positioning of the game pieces. Some games are implemented electronically via the Internet, by networked computer systems, by paper and pencil, or by a gaming board with game pieces. Other games may have a themed mechanical toy assemblage that tracks progress and performance.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0005] The present invention is to be played over the Internet in real-time against multiple opponents on a game

site. The winner of the game receives a certain amount of money depending upon how many people play that particular game. The game uses categories of trivia questions including but not limited to: sports, general trivia and entertainment. The game format is a cyclical timed system. Each player is given a password and a time block to log into their multiplayer game. The password allows a user to access his or her account in conjunction with a user name. Regarding the free multiplayer demo, a password or user name may not be necessary. Each game can accommodate up to 100 people and is played live when the game session begins. The game session comprises a total of 22 questions, 25 in the event of an overtime, asked over approximately a 10-minute period. Each person is given 10,000 points at the beginning of the game. They wager these points after being shown the topic asked. For example if baseball is a topic in sports the screen may ask:

[0006] How much would player like to wager on this topic? BASEBALL

●100 points ●300 points ●500 points

[0007] Here, the player can wager 100, 300 or 500 points. The player would then choose the wager amount and the question is then asked. The player has 8 seconds to answer the question, but the amount of points they would earn would decay over time. For example, if the player answers within 4 seconds, they get the full amount of the wager. If they answer after 4 seconds have lapsed, their points will decrease over time. If they are incorrect, they lose the full amount of the wager. On the right or left side of the game board is a leader board, telling each player their position in the game and who the top 10 players are at the time. As the game progresses, they are allowed to wager more points. If they make it to the last two questions, they are allowed to wager their full amount of points. If the player runs out of points before the 22 questions have been asked then they will have lost the game. The winner of the game is the one with the most points in the end. The winning player wins the money prize. Players contribute an entry fee, which is pooled to form the money prize.

[0008] The game will always keep a data history that is a person's individual performance history as they continue to play. They will be able to see the questions they got right vs. those they got wrong. They will be able to see total earnings, and they will be able to see their average as compared to others who have played.

Game Format

[0009] The operation of the system is by software and is preferably a game written in asp, net, cgi, Javascript, HTML and/or Flash that runs on the Internet. It incorporates thousands of batch questions into a format for a real-time trivia game every 15 minutes where multiple players can compete simultaneously from all parts of the world. The game optionally incorporates a message board and instant messaging, so players can discuss the game and other topics before and after each game.

[0010] The game has 22 questions. A full game takes approximately 10 minutes to play and with a constant stream of questions to answer and wagering decisions. A wagering screen will appear in which each player will have 10 seconds to place his or her wager. The category of the upcoming question will also be displayed.

[0011] Next, the question screen pops up. Each player has approximately 7 seconds to read the question, although that is subject to change.

[0012] After each player has time to read the question, four answer choices will appear beneath the question. There will be three wrong answers and one correct answer. Each player tries to choose the best answer within the next 5 seconds. The player clicks the button that corresponds to the answer or presses 1, 2, 3 or 4 on the keypad to choose. But a player must choose quickly! The longer it takes to answer the question, the fewer points are awarded.

[0013] The next screen shows the correct answer from the last question along with the player's points won. The next screen is the wagering screen for the upcoming question. It will also show the correct answer from the last question. Each player's statistics for the current game will be updated after each question. These include the percentage of correct answers, average response time, average points, average wager and total points. The leader board will also be updated, which allows players to see how a player stacks up against other players. The leader board can also help a player decide how to wager on the next question. If a player is far behind, that player might want to wager more points to catch up. Also, players must pay attention to the category of the next question to determine their wager.

[0014] If a player finishes a question early, they will have to wait because all the players in the game have the same time frame. Although all players use the same timing, and are similarly constrained, the users see their own local time zones so that the local time zone is displayed to the user.

[0015] At the end of 22 questions, the final leader board will be displayed along with the player's final statistics for that game. If players are playing the Multiplayer Challenge and finish in first place, the amount won will be credited to the winner's account in the form of credits. Any Qbucks accumulated will also be added to player account. Players can cash out their credits at any time and the money will be deposited into their player bank account or EFT account such as a PayPal, Neteller or a check will be mailed from BJEALLC. Each player will have the option to have player stats e-mailed to the player, which is stored on the computer system. Players will be able to access player cumulative stats from a player's entire history of games played on the 'My Account' page.

Wagering

[0016] In all games, players start off with 10,000 points to play with. These points will be for one game only because points do not carry over to future games. For the first 10 questions of any game each player will be given the option of selecting 100, 300, or 500 points to wager on the upcoming question. Each player will know the category of the next question and can base a wager on knowledge of that subject (i.e. Football, Baseball, Miscellaneous etc.) As questions pass the player will be given more wagering options. Questions eleven to twenty will have a 1,000-point wagering option. For the last two questions, 21 and 22, up to 25 in the event of an overtime, the player will also have the opportunity to manually choose any wager amount using a slider labeled "Bet the Farm," which lets a player quickly bet all player remaining points or any other amount in increments of 100. That way, players who are lower in points can take

a larger risk to place higher on the leader board. If a player runs out of points, the player will have lost the game.

Qbucks and Credits

[0017] Qbucks is a special term created by the inventor to refer to reward points for buying credits, playing the game or telling their friends about the trivia game service. Qbucks can be redeemed for entry fee free buy-ins to pay games. Credits are used to pay for entry fees.

[0018] A player can win Qbucks in three different ways.

[0019] 1) Tell a friend—Player gets 250 Qbucks just for referring new players to the game.

[0020] 2) Placing 2nd in a multiplayer challenge game gets the Q Buck equivalent of the games buy in value.

[0021] 3) Purchasing incentives—Purchase a certain amount of credits at a time to receive Qbucks.

[0022] The best mode is currently:

[0023] Purchase and play 50 credits=250 Qbucks

[0024] Purchase and play 100 credits=500 Qbucks

[0025] Purchase and play 200 credits=1000 Qbucks

[0026] Players must play all of the credits purchased to receive the Qbucks. Players will see the Qbucks in their Pending Qbucks, but they will not be real Qbucks until they play all credits purchased. Qbucks can be used to purchase games where 500 Qbucks=1 free \$5 game, 1000=1 free \$10 game and points are earned through various ways mentioned. If a player refers 2 friends, the friends purchase and play 20 credits, the player will receive 500 Qbucks that the player can use to purchase a 5 credit game. One credit equals one US dollar. Five credits can be applied toward a \$5 game entry fee. Qbucks will have a value of \$0.01, which is one penny, but they cannot be redeemed for cash value only to purchase games.

[0027] Players will have the option to buy into a \$5, \$10, \$25, \$50 or \$100 game using the entry fee paid by electronic fund transfer. Each time block, such as that of 9 p.m. will have identical games for the \$5, \$10, \$25 etc. Users will only be able to be registered for one game at each time block, either \$5, \$10, \$25 etc. so they could register for a \$5 game at 9 p.m., then a \$10 game at 9:15 p.m., if they wish, but not both \$5 and \$10 simultaneously.

[0028] When a user purchases 100 credits, they will be charged \$ 100. They must use those 100 credits to participate in games before cashing out to receive the 500 Qbucks.

[0029] Winnings will be added to winning player's credits. If a winner wins \$300, it would then become 300 credits and the winner would then be able to use those credits to play another game or to "cash out". Winning credits will not be awarded to 2nd and 3rd place players, only Qbucks will be awarded to the 2nd place winner, and will be a Qbuck equivalent to the games buy in value.

Game Types for Three Types of Games

[0030] 1. Free Single Player Demo: This is for the player who is new to the game and wants to become familiar with the way it works. After playing this once or twice, the player can be ready to move on to the next level.

[0031] 2. Free Multiplayer Demo: This game has most of the features of the Multiplayer Challenge. These game sessions are available all day long and start as soon as 10 players sign up. Once a quiz session gets to 10 players, it will start automatically. The game is free and the winner does not receive a prize—except the satisfaction that comes with being a winner! These games are a good way to familiarize the player with the competitive aspect of the game and to decide whether the player is ready to compete for money—or needs some more time to hone skills in the minors. These games can feature the same questions asked in the previous night's Multiplayer Challenge games.

[0032] 3. Multiplayer Challenge: This fast-paced, high adrenaline and fun contest lets the player compete against other trivia buffs from around the world for real money prizes. A new game starts every 15 minutes between 8 pm and 12:30 a.m. EST (7 pm-11:30 pm CST, 6-10:30 p.m. MST, 5-9:30 p.m. PST). Game times are subject to change. There are three categories of games: entertainment (music, TV, arts, drama, pop culture etc.), sports (football, basketball, baseball, hockey, boxing, etc.), and general (politics, history, grammar, sports, entertainment, etc.). There are a variety of entry fee buy-in ranges: \$5, \$10, \$25, \$50 and \$100. The \$5 and \$10 games have a minimum of 10 players. The \$25, \$50 and \$100 games have a minimum of four players. All games have a maximum of 100 players. A new game is available every 15 minutes. Registration cuts off 1 minute prior to the start of the game. A player can sign up for games up to one week in advance to reserve a spot. If the game the player wants is full, a new game is automatically generated after 100 players sign up for a particular time slot. As long as the minimum amount of players sign up for the new game, a player can always play at the time that is most convenient and the money level that is most comfortable for that player.

Game Administration

[0033] On games with money entry fees, a player will log in before game the interface and would register for the quiz session by clicking the sign-up text on the interface. For example, if a player had already registered and paid an entry fee for a game of Sports for the 9 p.m. time block, then player will be prompted to log in when the player clicks the multiplayer challenge button. Game sessions can be set to start automatically with the countdown shown, provided at least 10 users are logged in (four for the higher money levels). A player user cannot log in for their 9 p.m. block game at 8 p.m. They may, however, log in 15 minutes before their quiz session. If at 9 p.m. there are not enough participating player users, the players will be credited the \$5, \$10 \$25 etc. entry fee and notified by e-mail if possible. Emails can be sent 15 minutes prior to the game start time. A paid user for that game cannot log in after the game has started. The user must be ready at the given time, or they will forfeit the game and lose their credits.

[0034] The games for a given time are identical for all money levels (\$5, \$10, \$25 etc.) in regards to the questions asked, however they will be different sets of people playing each other. When user tries to register for a game they will

be prompted to use either Qbucks or credits. If they do not have enough they will be notified and prompted to buy more credits.

Game Interface

[0035] The screen is shown in a web browser format allowing a display of a variety of elements including a game session calendar. The game calendar is preferably weekly displaying one or more weeks and scrolling such that for example if a game were to begin on Friday, and Friday comes, it will be on the left, and next Thursday will be on the far right. The game calendar has a sign-up button for all time blocks in each day. A user clicks the time block he or she wants. The current time is listed on the interface screen according to the player's local time zone. The list indicates with color codes as to which slots have already passed. Games with brackets have passed. On the interface, there will be an indication as to the total amount a user could win in a time block (# userxeither \$5 game or the \$10 game, etc)×0.6. Users will know how much they can win if they place 1st, 2nd place winners receive the Qbucks equivalent of the games buy in value (500 Qbucks for a 2nd place finisher in a 5 credit game).

[0036] Once a user clicks on a sign-up, after entering all necessary details, a confirmation email will be sent to the email account associated with the players RoomQ22 account. RoomQ22 is a sample name of a website or company hosting the trivia game. On paid wager games, a player need not login to the quiz to play the games if the player is already logged in.

[0037] The database of questions is preferably maintained in six columns. The trivia administrator can maintain quizzes in database format where Column 1 is the question, Columns 2-5 are the answers, Column 6 is a number 1-4 that is referencing the column that represents the correct answer (a number 1 here would mean that column 2 is the correct answer, number 2 means column 3 is the correct answer, etc).

[0038] After the user logs in, they will be directed to the "Buy Credits" interface. The user interface also includes the following buttons "Home", "My Account", "How to Play", "Single-Player Demo", "Multiplayer Demo", and "Game Room".

[0039] The "Home" button directs the user to the intro page that they first see when visiting Room Q22. "My Account" button directs the user to a login screen if they are not logged in as a current player. If the player has logged in it will direct them to a page that contains an average of their stats of all pay games, the players current Credits, Qbucks, Pending Qbucks, and the current games that they are registered for.

[0040] "How to Play" button will direct the player to a screen with the directions about the game.

[0041] "Single-Player Demo" button will direct the player to a game selection interface for our single player demos as discussed previously.

[0042] "Multi-Player Demo" button will direct the player to a game selection interface for our multiplayer demos as discussed previously.

[0043] "Game Room" button takes the player to a game selection interface that includes the games category, day of

the week, credit value, and time block, including the number of players registered for those certain games and the total winnings possible.

1. A method for playing a trivia game comprising the steps of:

- a. compiling a general pool of trivia questions;
- b. arranging a game with a plurality of players connected over a computer network;
- c. receiving an entry fee from a plurality of players connected over a computer network;
- d. assigning a starting point total for each player;
- e. presenting a sequence of at least 20 trivia questions, wherein each question is presented by:
 - i. presenting the topic for the question;
 - ii. setting point wager limits;
 - iii. receiving a point wager from a plurality of players connected over a computer network;
 - iv. presenting multiple choice answers having at least one correct answer;
 - v. adding wagered points for correct answers, and decaying points earnable for a question over time;
 - vi. subtracting wagered points for incorrect answers;
 - vii. increasing point wager limits;
- f. calculating ending point totals for each player to determine the winner;
- g. pooling the entry fees to award a portion of the entry fees to the winner.

2. The method for playing a trivia game of claim 1, further comprising the step of awarding reward points.

3. The method for playing a trivia game of claim 1, wherein the sequence has 22 trivia questions.

4. The method for playing a trivia game of claim 1, wherein players have approximately 7 seconds to read the question before answering.

5. The method for playing a trivia game of claim 1, wherein players have approximately 10 seconds to place their wager.

6. The method for playing a trivia game of claim 1, wherein players have approximately 5 seconds to choose the best answer.

7. The method for playing a trivia game of claim 1, wherein the sequence has 22 trivia questions, wherein players have approximately 7 seconds to read the question before answering, wherein players have approximately 10 seconds to place their wager, and wherein players have approximately 5 seconds to choose the best answer.

8. A method for playing a real time trivia game comprising the steps of:

- a. compiling a general pool of trivia questions;
- b. arranging a game with a plurality of players connected over the internet;
- c. receiving an entry fee from a plurality of players connected over the internet;
- d. assigning a starting point total for each player;

e. presenting a sequence of at least 20 trivia questions, wherein each question is presented by:

- i. presenting the topic for the question;
 - ii. setting point wager limits;
 - iii. receiving a point wager from a plurality of players connected over the internet;
 - iv. presenting multiple choice answers having at least one correct answer;
 - v. adding wagered points for correct answers, and decaying points earnable for a question after about 4 seconds;
 - vi. subtracting wagered points for incorrect answers;
 - vii. increasing point wager limits up to a maximum of all points held by a player;
- f. calculating ending point totals for each player to determine the winner;
- g. pooling the entry fees to award a portion of the entry fees to the winner.

9. The method for playing a real time trivia game of claim 8, further comprising the step of awarding reward points.

10. The method for playing a real time trivia game of claim 8, wherein the sequence has 22 trivia questions.

11. The method for playing a real time trivia game of claim 8, wherein players have approximately 7 seconds to read the question before answering.

12. The method for playing a real time trivia game of claim 8, wherein players have approximately 10 seconds to place their wager.

13. The method for playing a real time trivia game of claim 8, wherein players have approximately 5 seconds to choose the best answer.

14. The method for playing a real time trivia game of claim 8, wherein the sequence has 22 trivia questions, wherein players have approximately 7 seconds to read the question before answering, wherein players have approximately 10 seconds to place their wager, and wherein players have approximately 5 seconds to choose the best answer.

15. A method for playing a real time trivia game comprising the steps of:

- a. compiling a general pool of trivia questions;
- b. arranging a game with a plurality of players connected over the internet;
- c. assigning a starting point total for each player;
- d. presenting a sequence of at least 22 trivia questions, wherein each question is presented by:
 - i. presenting the topic for the question;
 - ii. setting point wager limits;
 - iii. receiving a point wager from a plurality of players connected over the internet;
 - iv. presenting multiple choice answers having at least one correct answer;
 - v. adding wagered points for correct answers, and decaying points earnable for a question after about 4 seconds;
 - vi. subtracting wagered points for incorrect answers;

- vii. increasing point wager limits up to a maximum of all points held by a player for the last two questions;
 - e. calculating ending point totals for each player to determine the winner.
- 16.** The method for playing a real time trivia game of claim 15, further comprising the step of awarding reward points.
- 17.** The method for playing a real time trivia game of claim 15, wherein the sequence has 22 trivia questions.
- 18.** The method for playing a real time trivia game of claim 15, wherein players have approximately 10 seconds to place their wager.

19. The method for playing a real time trivia game of claim 15, wherein players have approximately 5 seconds to choose the best answer.

20. The method for playing a real time trivia game of claim 15, wherein the sequence has 22 trivia questions, wherein players have approximately 7 seconds to read the question before answering, wherein players have approximately 10 seconds to place their wager, and wherein players have approximately 5 seconds to choose the best answer.

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