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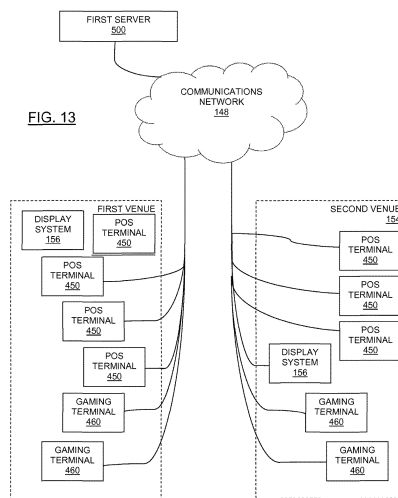
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(56) Documents Cited:
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US 6634550 B1 **US 20100267438 A1**
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(58) Field of Search:
 INT CL **G06Q, G07F**
 Other: **WPI, EPODOC**

(54) Title of the Invention: **Game entry**
 Abstract Title: **Store-based apparatus**

(57) Store-based apparatus comprises at least one Point-of-Sale (PoS) terminal for processing the purchase of items and at least one separate gaming terminal for determining that a game can be entered based on a piece of information submitted by a customer and playing a game based on the result of the determining. The piece of information may be a customer identifier, a voucher identifier, an item identifier, machine readable data, a code, an indication that points are available for redemption, and a number of redeemable points on a customer card. The PoS terminals and gaming terminals may be connected to a server. When a customer purchases items, the PoS terminal or server checks to determine whether the purchased items are on promotion. If yes, then game credits are assigned to the customer, such as by linking to a customer account via a loyalty card, or via bar-coded voucher, etc. The customer then goes to the gaming terminal and scans their loyalty card, voucher or product, etc. The received information is validated and customer identity may be authenticated and a game entry is conducted. The server may then communicate the game result to the customer via the gaming terminal.



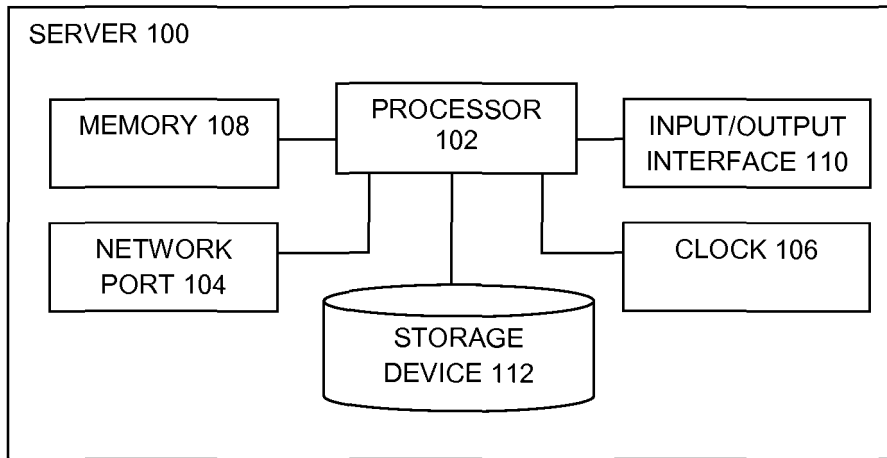


FIG. 1

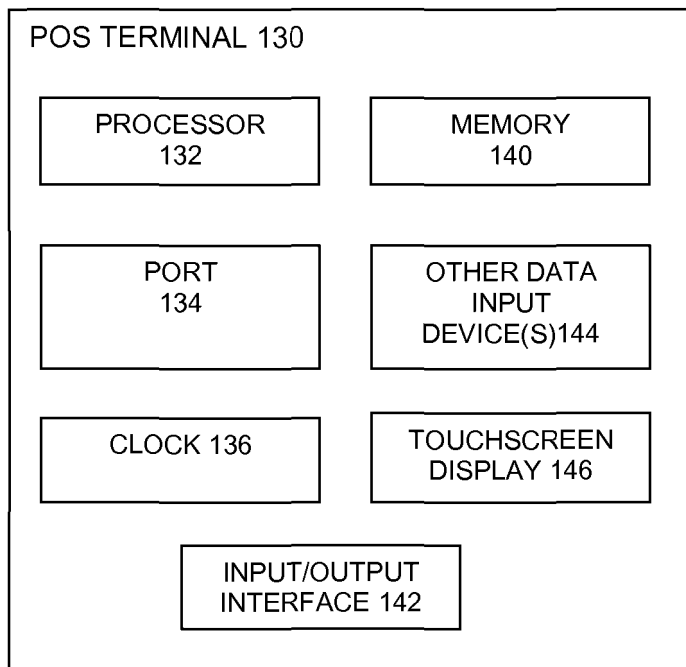


FIG. 2

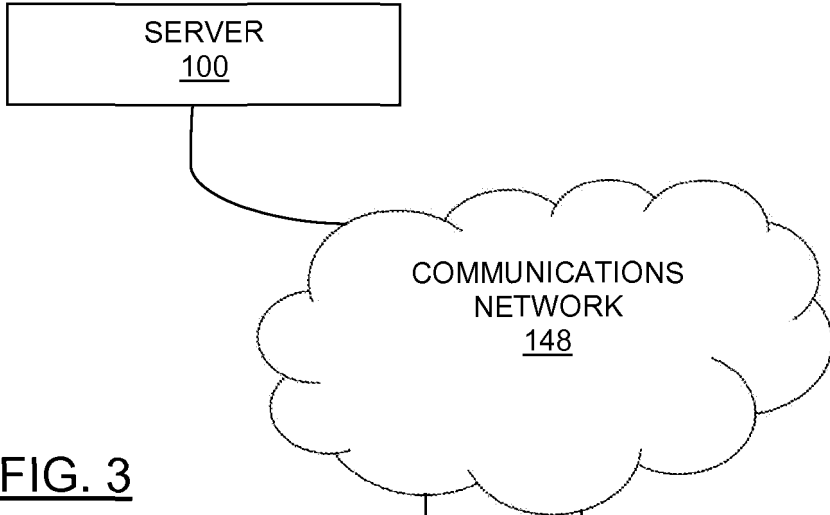
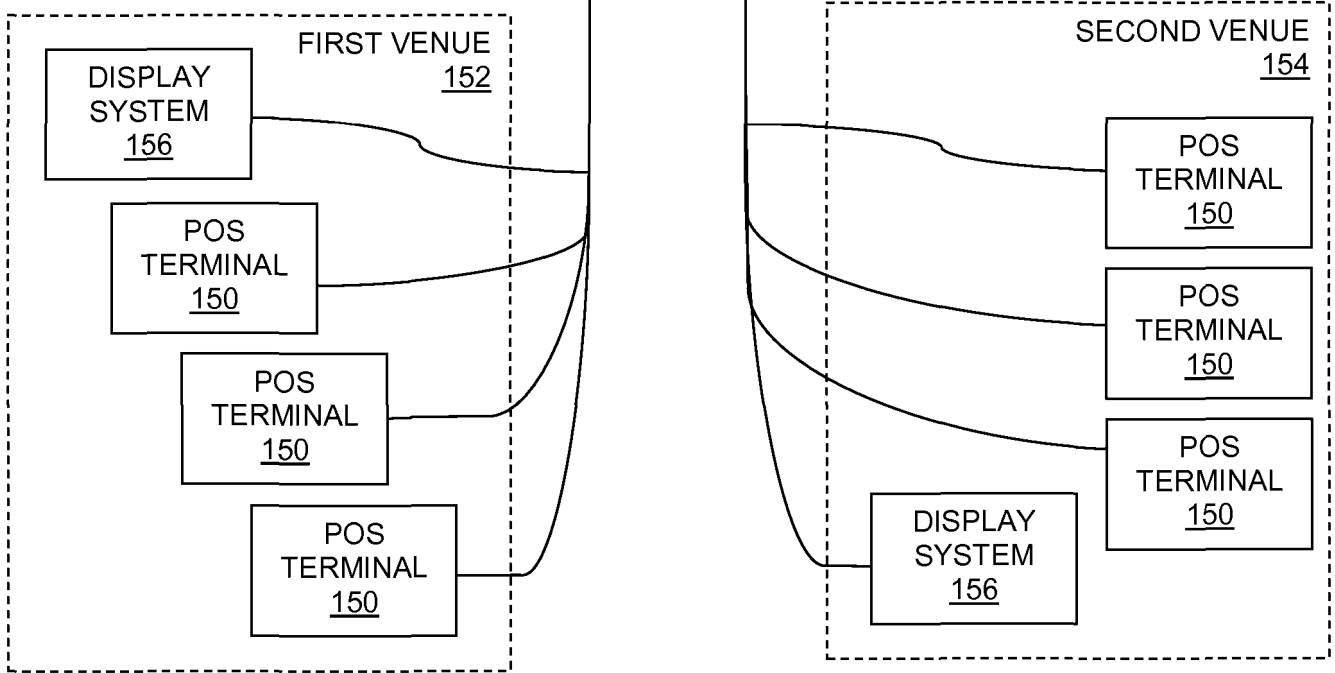


FIG. 3



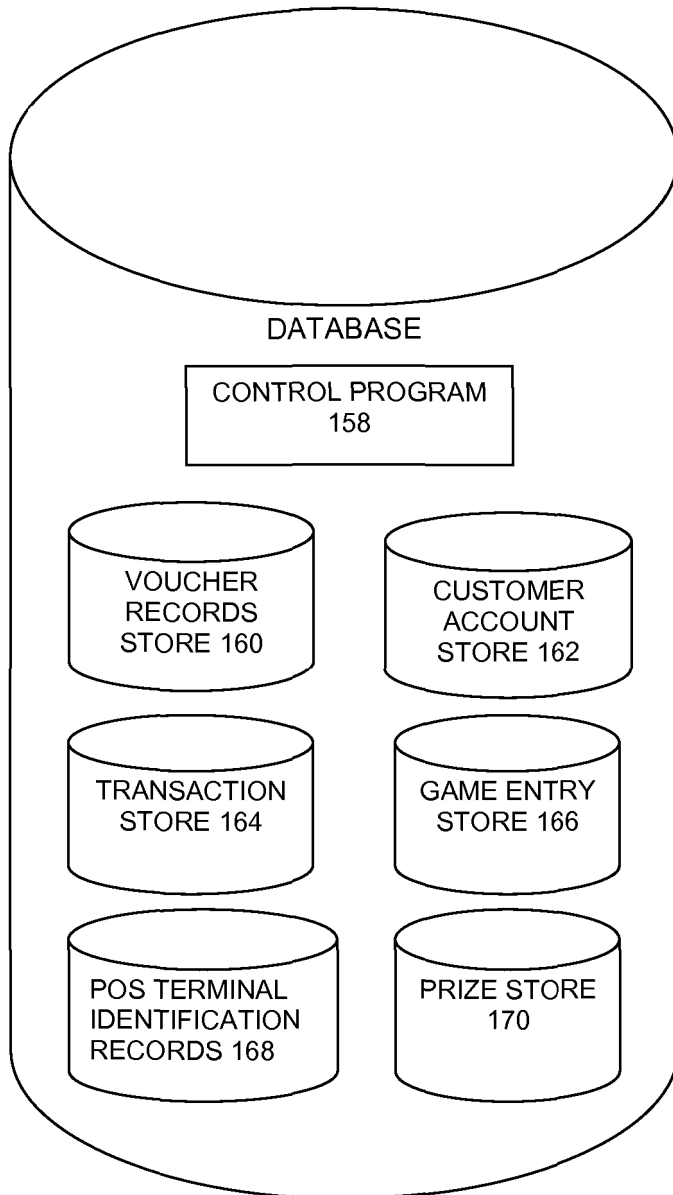
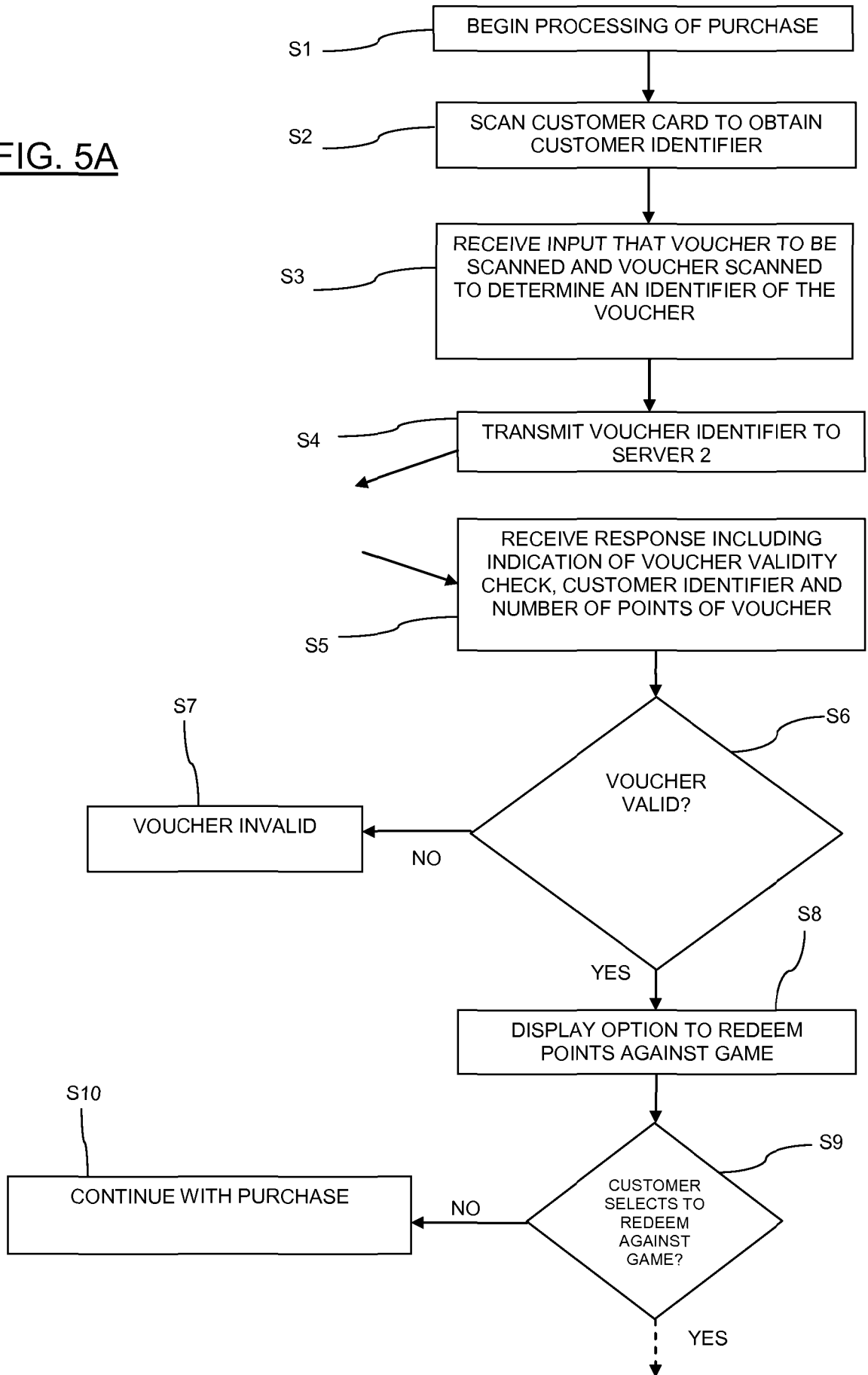


FIG. 4

FIG. 5A



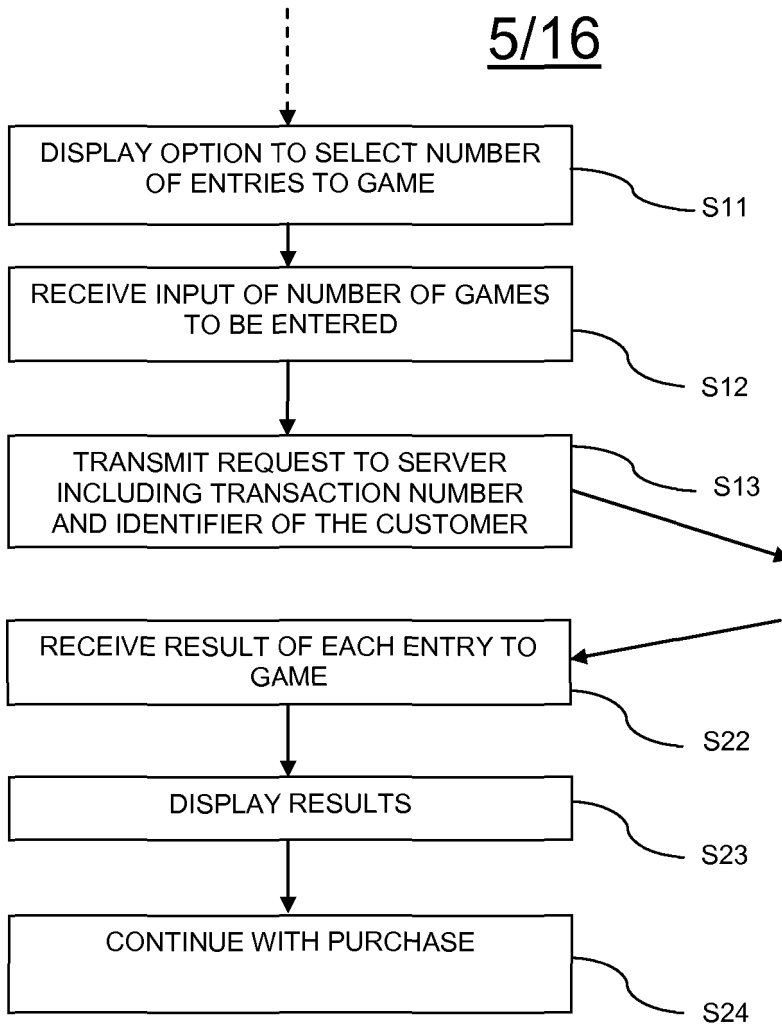
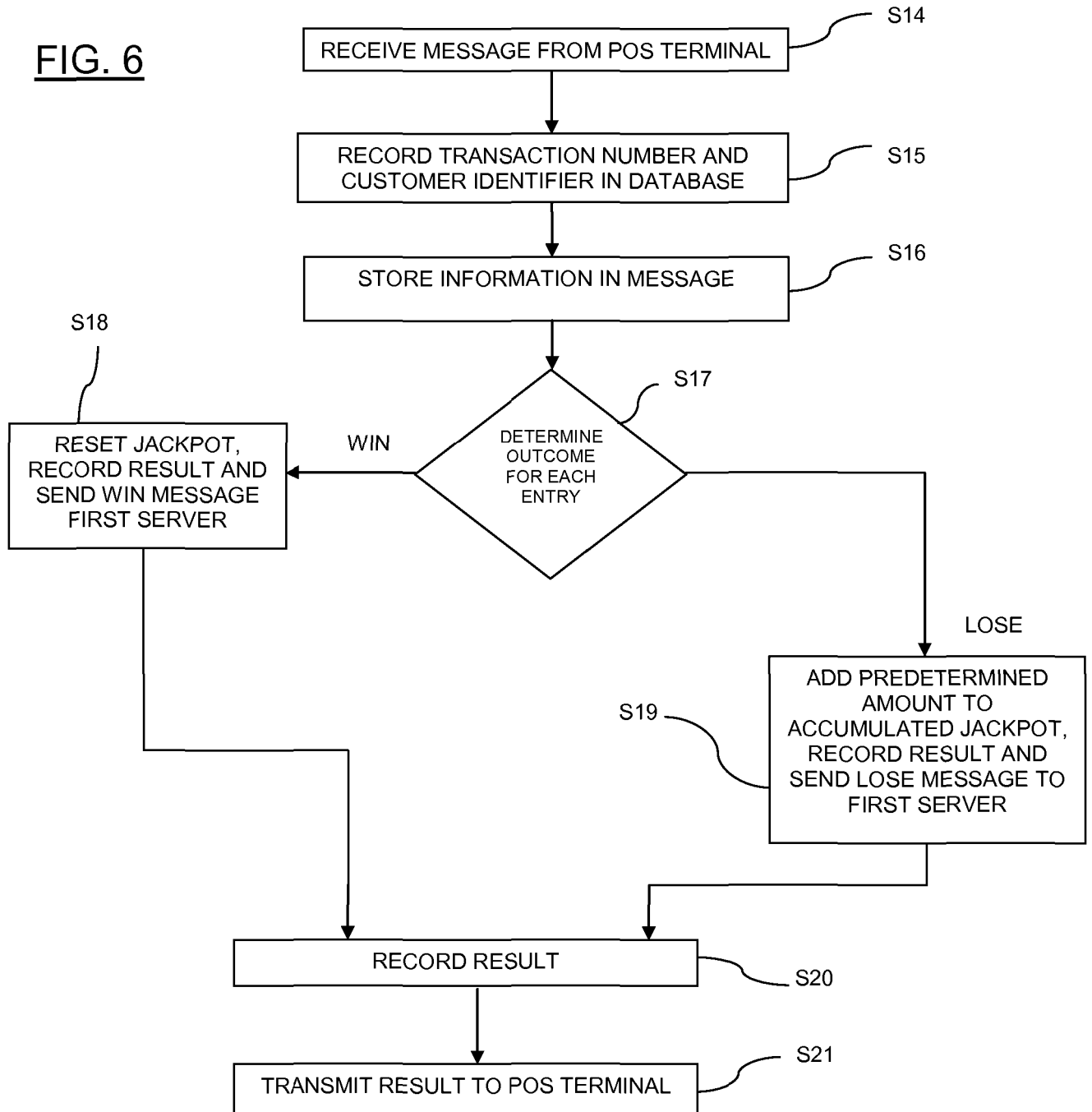


FIG. 5B

FIG. 6



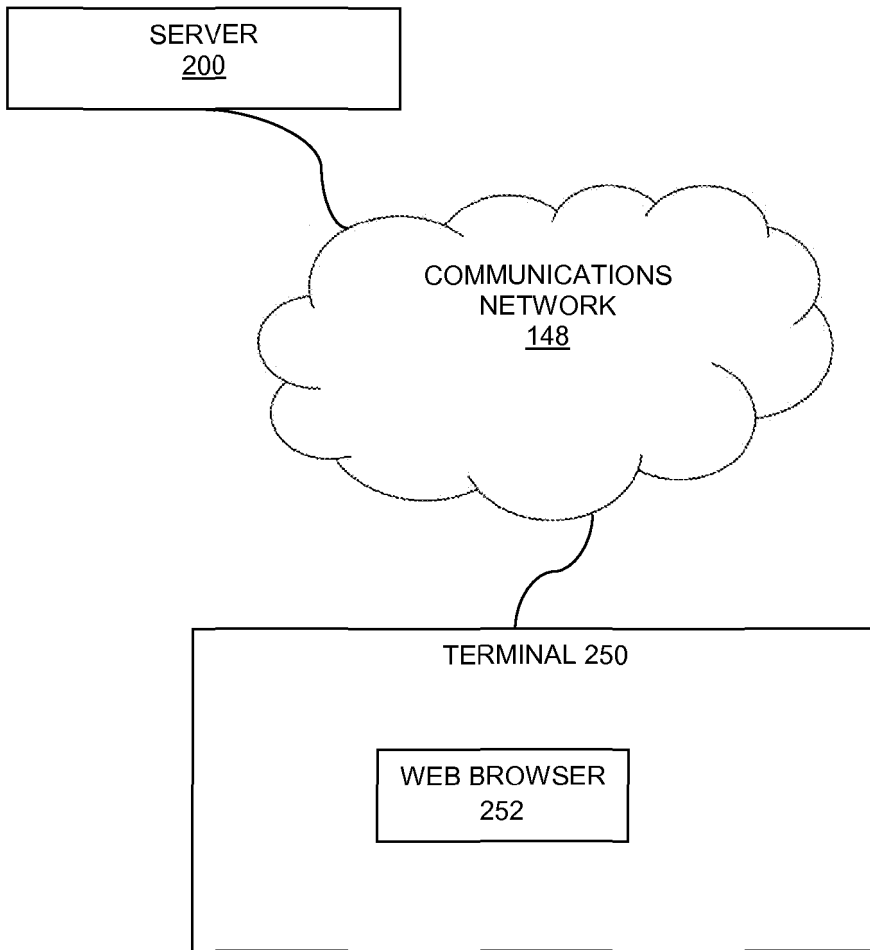
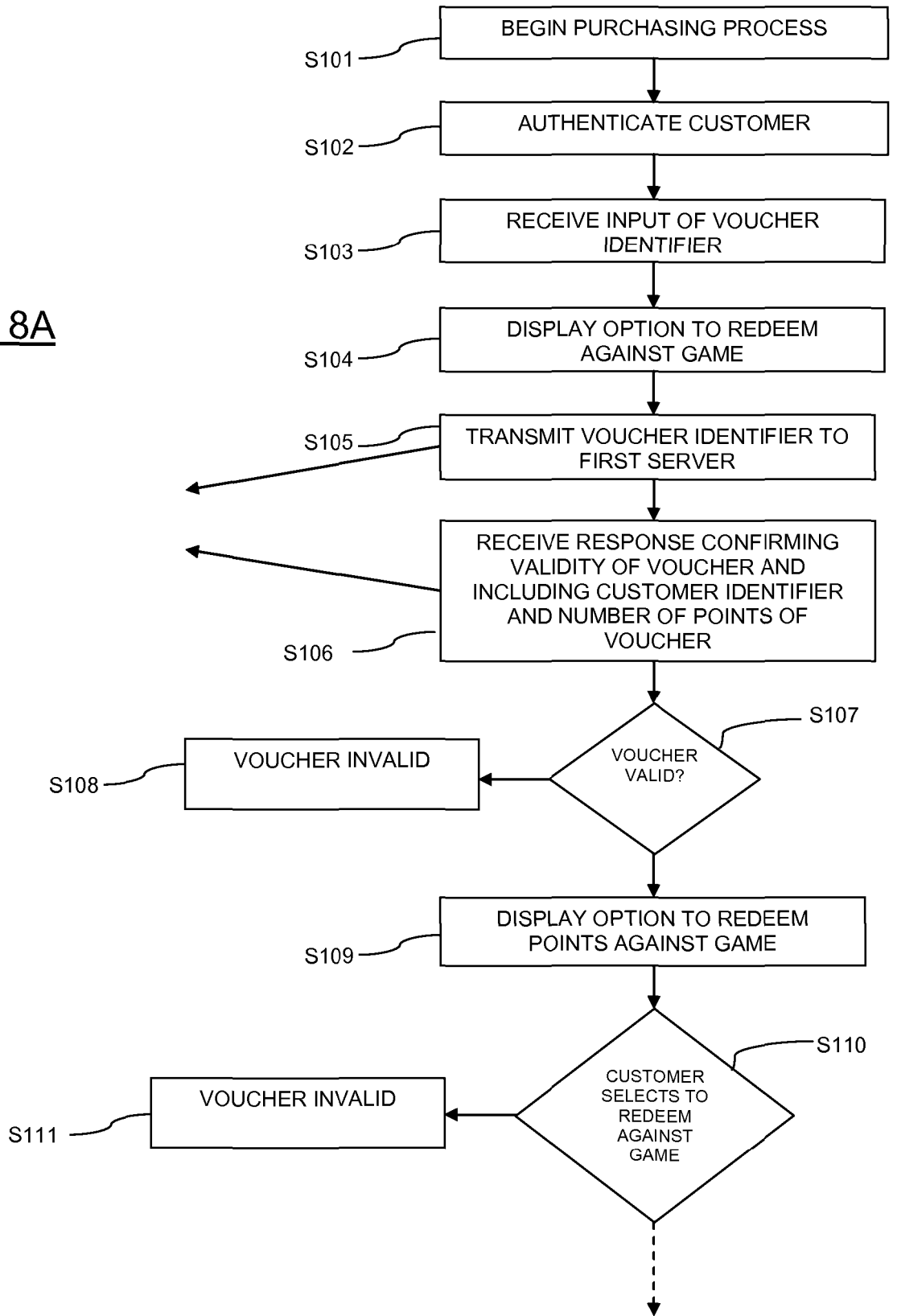


FIG. 7

FIG. 8A



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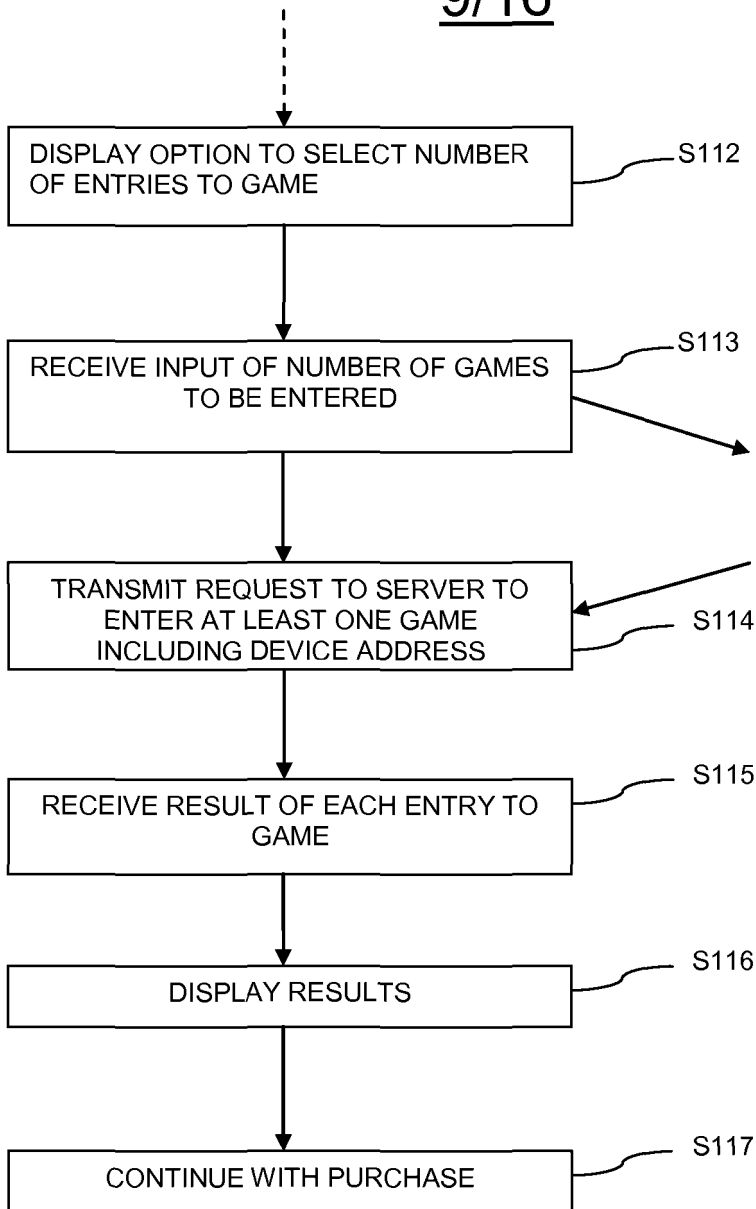


FIG. 8B

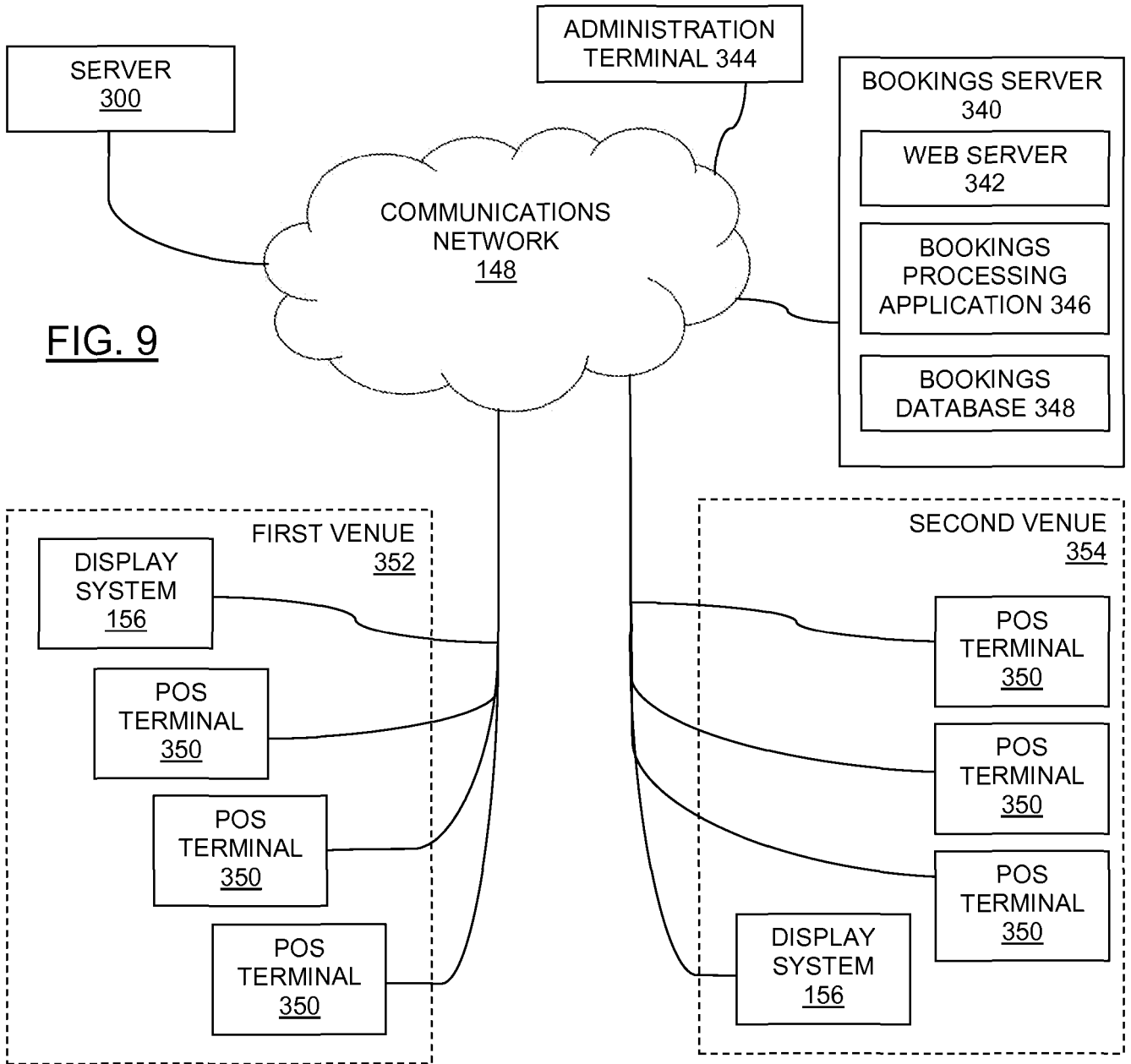
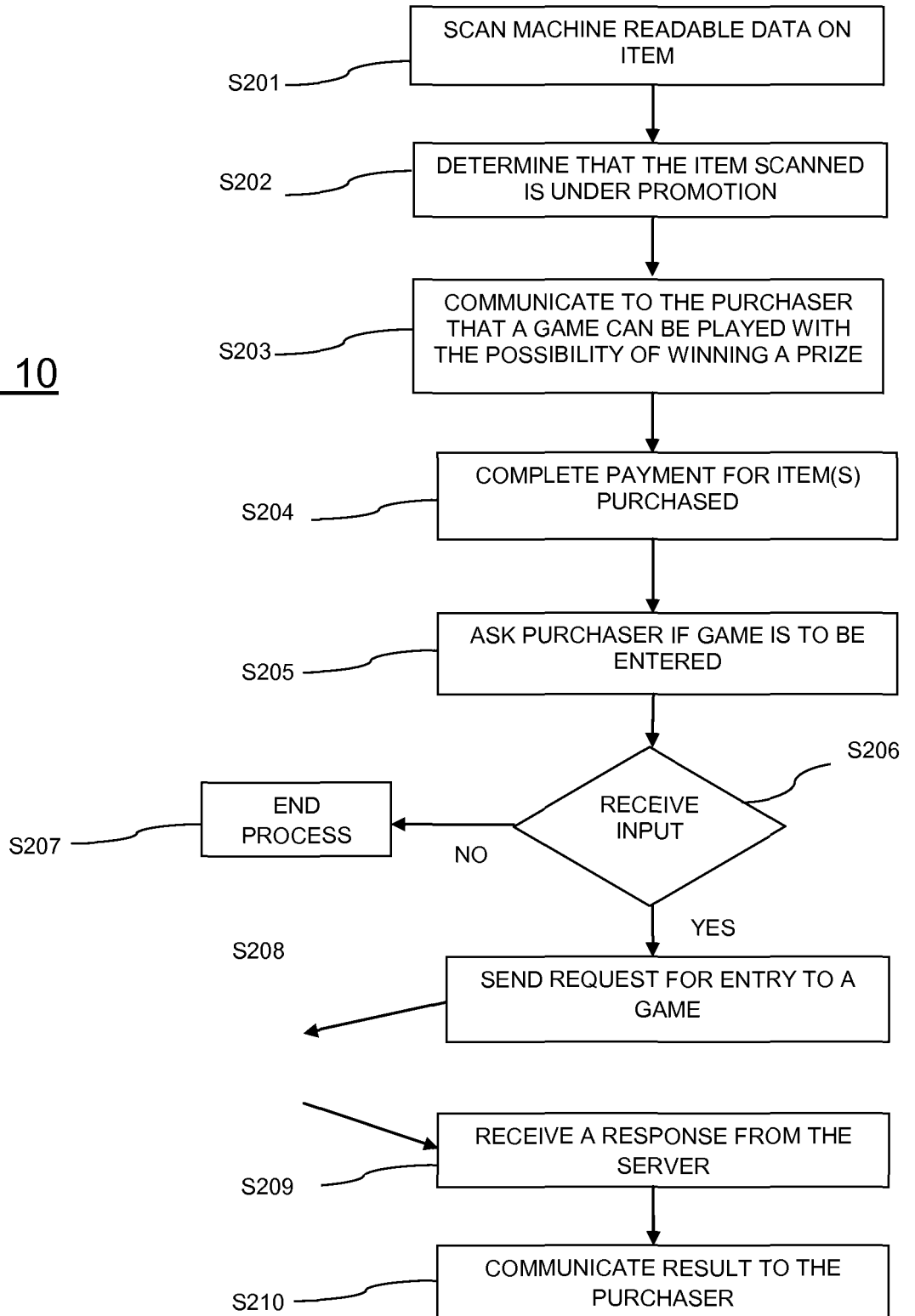


FIG. 10



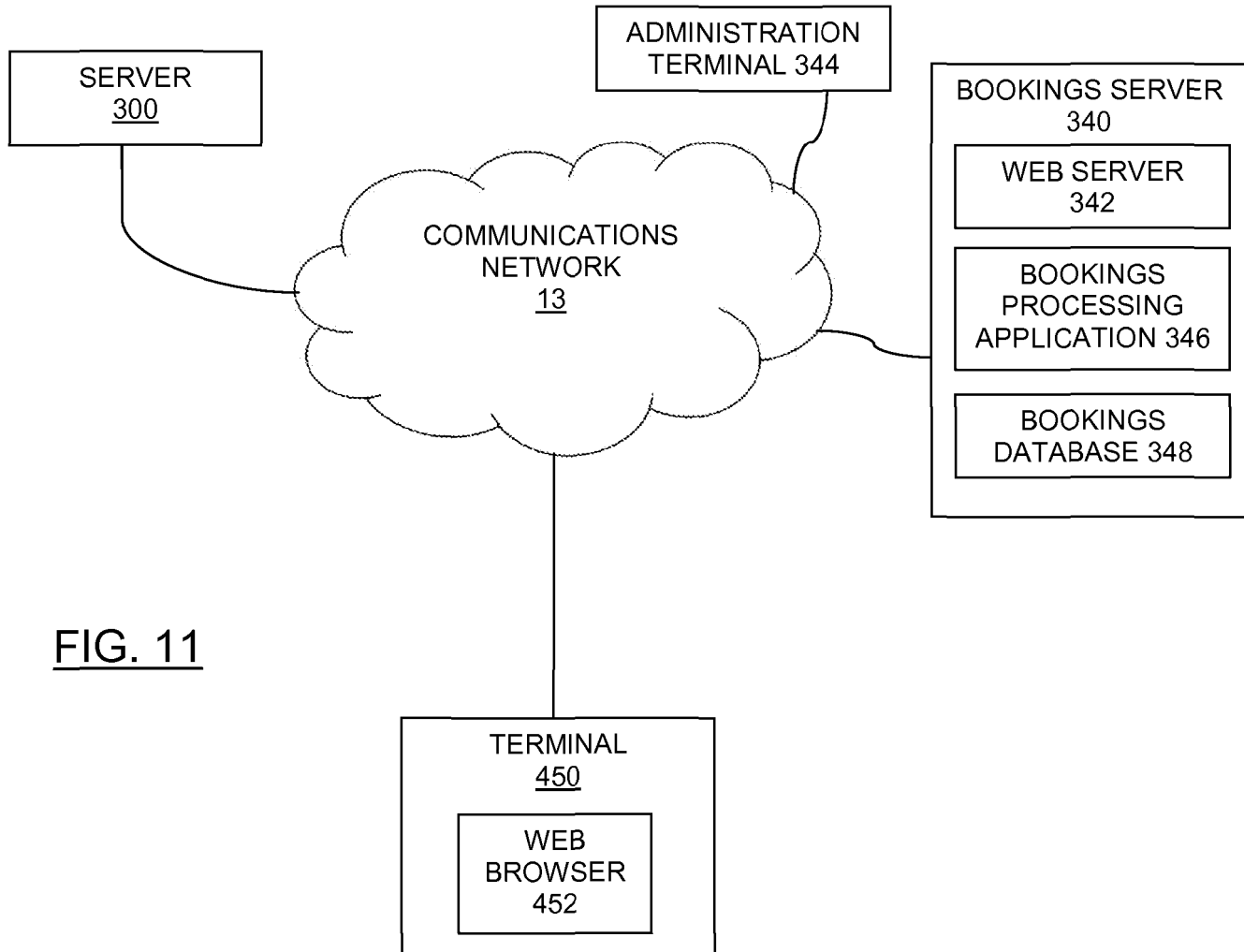


FIG. 11

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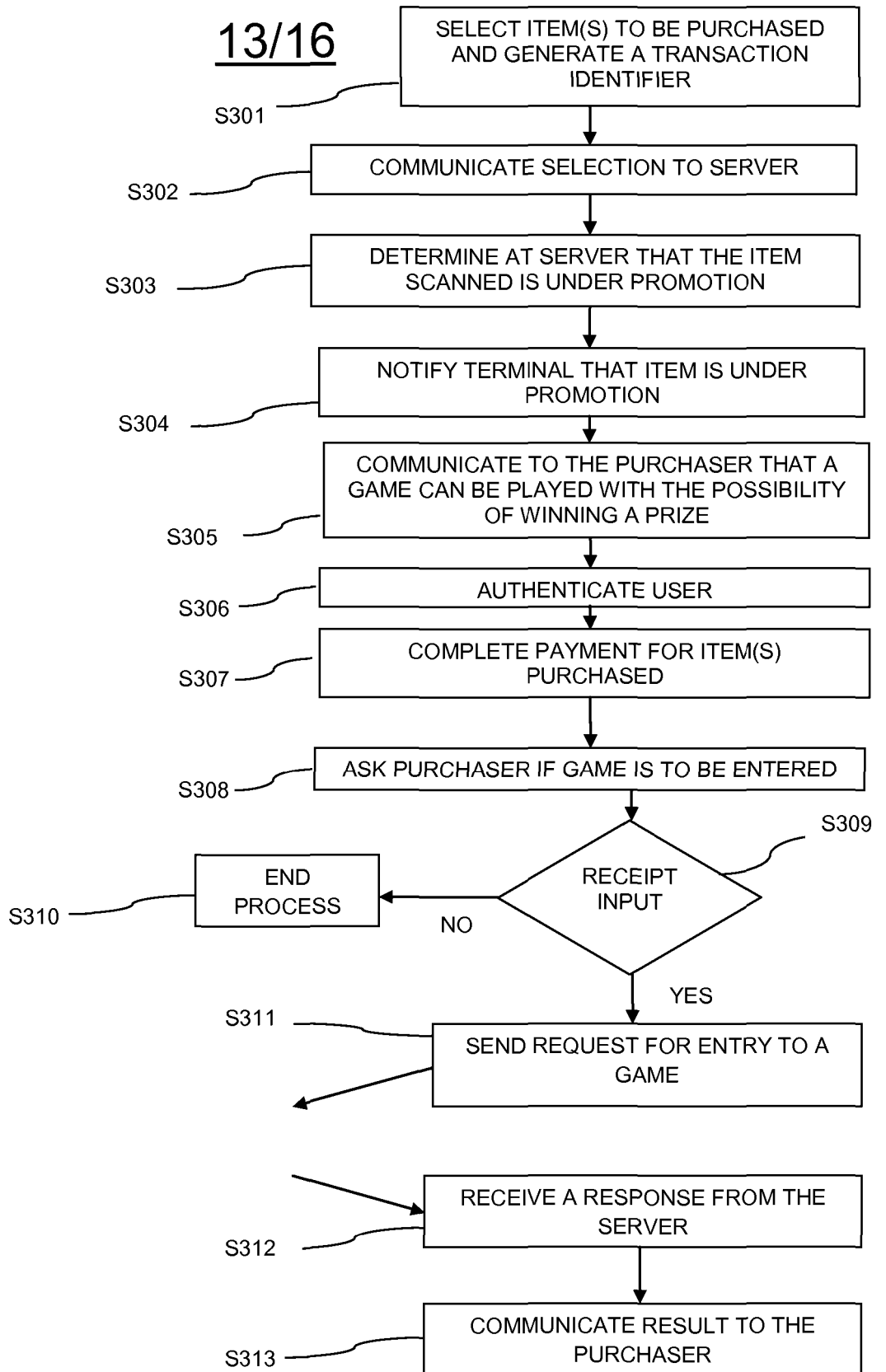
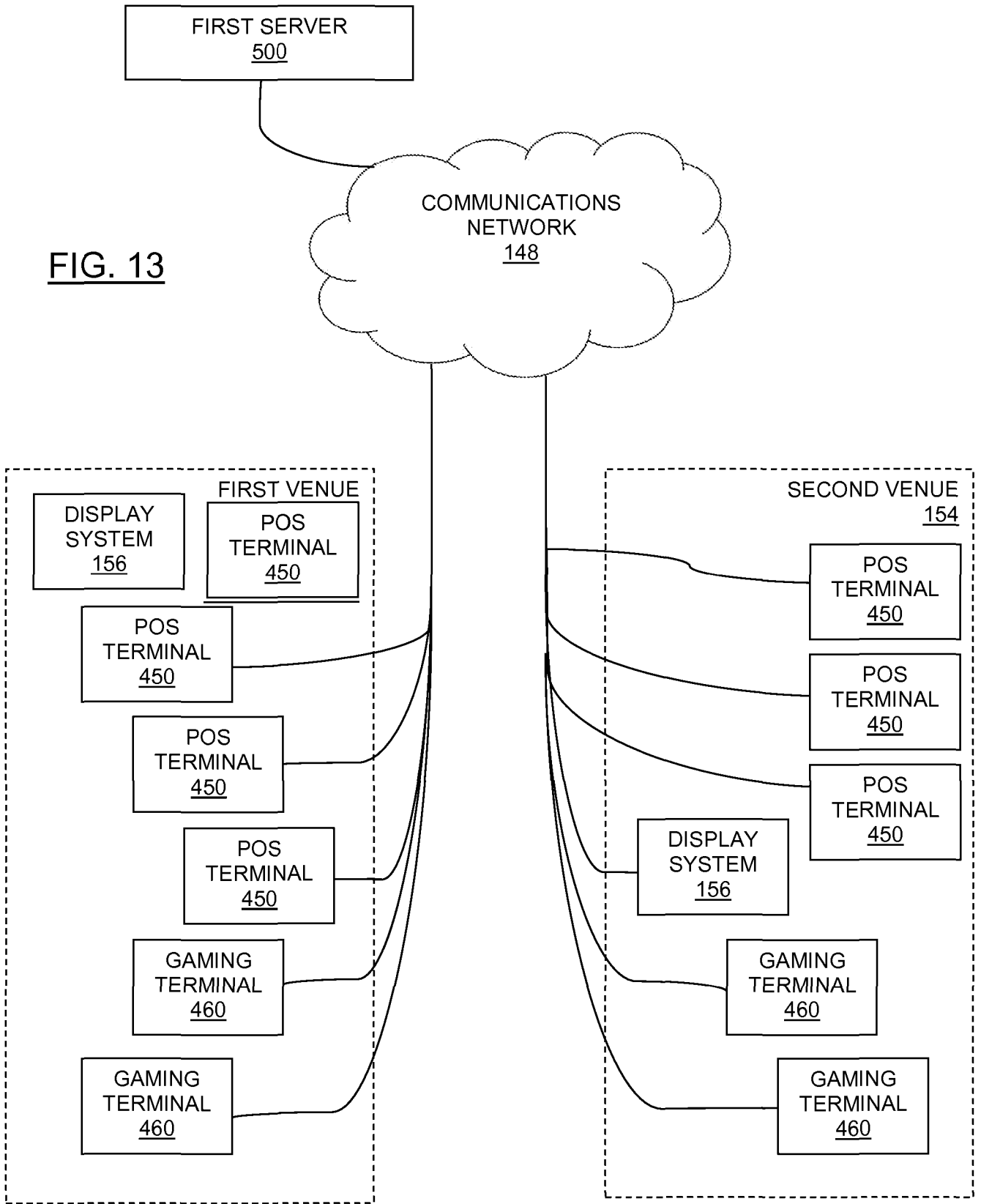


FIG. 12

FIG. 13



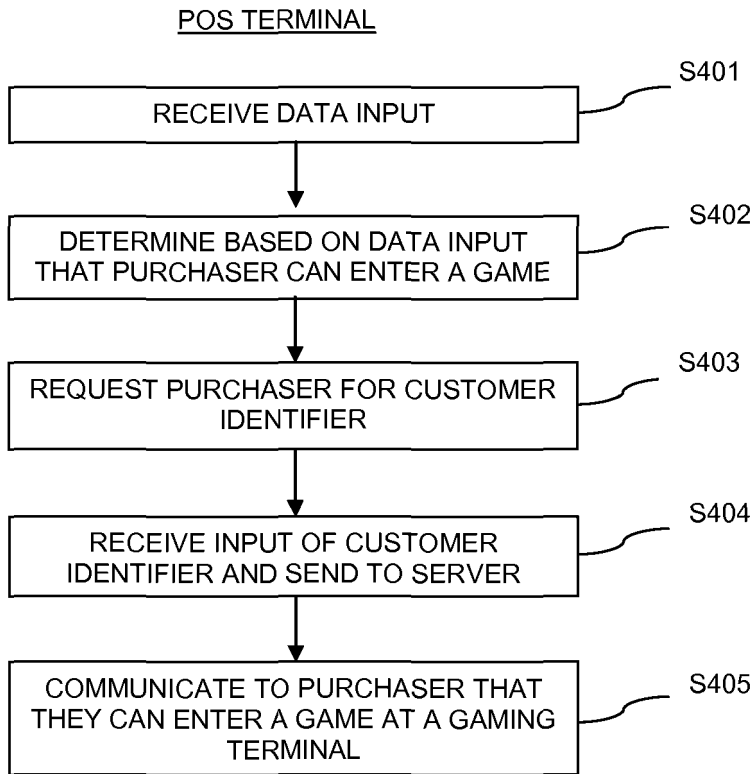
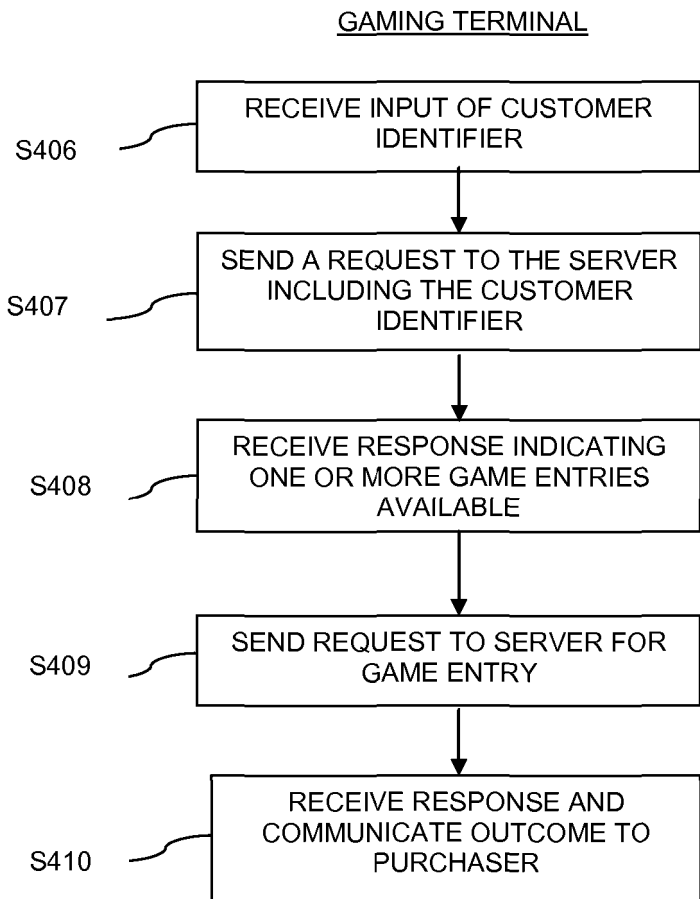


FIG. 14

FIG. 15



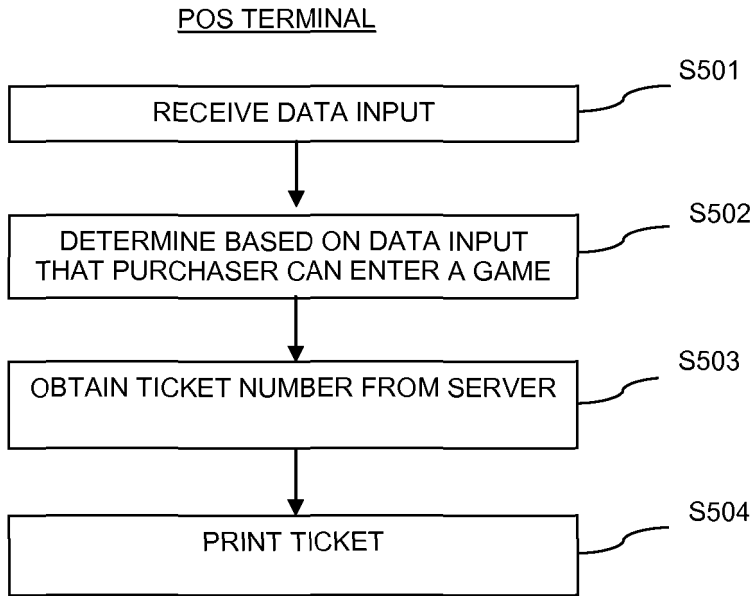
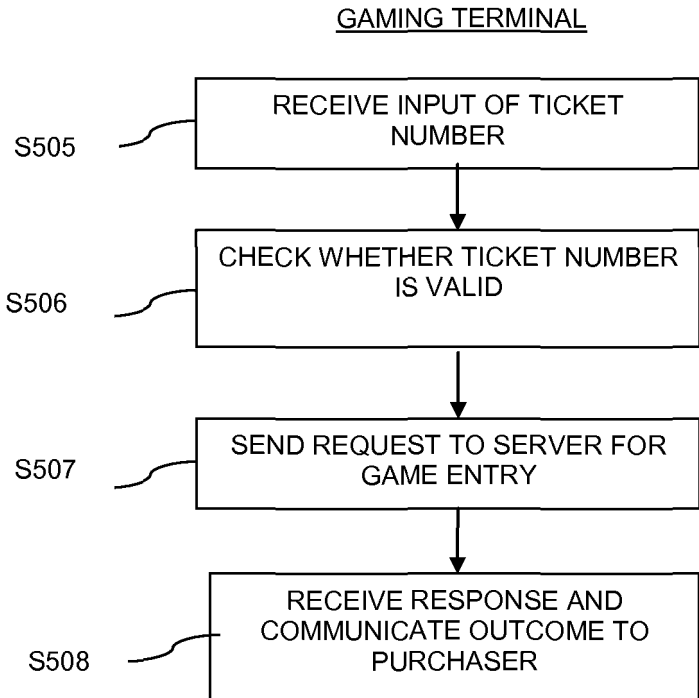


FIG. 16

FIG. 17



GAME ENTRY

Field of the Invention

5 The invention relates to apparatus for use in a points redemption system. The invention also relates to apparatus for managing item promotion reservation. The invention further relates to related methods and computer programs.

Background

10

Generally, retailers and other vendors seek to attract and retain customers in a number of ways. A customer loyalty programme is a useful tool for companies, for example supermarkets, to attract, retain and gather information on customers. As such customer loyalty programmes are used by many companies. In such
15 programmes, a customer typically acquires points and may redeem the points against a company's products or services. The cost to many companies of implementation of such a programme is high. It is an object of aspects of the present invention to reduce that cost.

20

Many companies promote particular products using various forms of advertising. The promotion may involve incentivising customers to buy a product by informing them that by purchasing the product there is the possibility of winning a prize. The customer may be informed of whether a prize has been won or whether the customer has an entry to a prize draw by text on the interior of a product's wrapping.

25

Alternatively, the product's wrapping may include a code, on the interior or exterior, with details of a website at which to enter the code or a number to text to gain entry to a draw. After the customer enters or texts the code, he or she is informed of whether a prize has been won. It is an object of aspects of the present invention to provide an improved possibility for such product promotion.

30

Various systems for use in retail stores are known. US2009/0224037A1 disclosed a system including a central controller and a plurality of point-of-sale terminals. A shopper selects one or more products to purchase and brings the products to a point-of-sale terminal. A customer identifying code is then entered into the point-of-sale
35 terminal using a shopper identification card. The central controller then determines an outcome selected by a random or pseudo-random process from among a plurality of possible outcomes. The outcome may be a cash prize or a product that the

shopper has not selected for purchase. Such a system does not allow for such product promotion.

5 US 6634550B1 discloses a system including a central controller and a plurality of point-of-sale terminals. A customer selects one or more products to purchase. A customer identifying code is entered into the terminal. Product identifying codes are entered and received by a point-of-sale terminal. A game display is then presented and an outcome is determined from among a number of possible outcomes. The determined outcome is selected from a number of possible outcomes using a random
10 or pseudo-random process. The game display may only be provided for customers who purchase certain products. Disadvantageously, the system would typically result in longer waiting time for paying in retail stores.

15 It is an object of the present invention to address issues in the above mentioned systems and generally to provide improved item purchasing systems.

Summary of the Invention

20 According to a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a terminal configured to enable a user to redeem customer loyalty points against entry to a game. The terminal may be for a use in a point redemption system and comprise data input means for receiving input, initiated by a user, of an indication that at least one point is to be redeemed against entry to a game, sending means for sending, responsive to the determining, a request to the server means, the request including
25 an indication that a game is to be entered and an identifier of the terminal, and receiving means for receiving information indicative of an outcome of the game and communicating the outcome to the user.

30 Advantageously, the vendor can provide a customer loyalty programme in which points can be redeemed. The purchaser may have an option to redeem the points against entry to a game instead of goods or services. Typically redemption of points against games would cost the vendor less than redemption against goods or services.

35 The terminal may be a point-of-sale terminal configured for purchase of items by a purchaser, for example in a retail store such as a supermarket. The PoS terminal

may be self-service terminal. The identifier of the terminal may be the internet protocol (IP) address or the like.

5 The at least one data input means may be configured to receive input of data identifying or associated with a number of points redeemable. For example, the data input means may be configured to read a voucher presented by the purchaser. The data input means may be configured as a chip reader and the data input by reading of data from the chip may identify points residing in a customer account registered to the purchaser.

10 The at least one data input means may be configured to receive input of a voucher identifier, wherein each electronic terminal comprises determining means for determining the number of points redeemable based on the voucher identifier. The voucher identifier may include an indication of the number of points redeemable.
15 Alternatively, the determining means may determine the number of points by sending a message including the voucher identifier to the server means, the server means determining the number of points based on information in a voucher records store, and the server means sending a value indicative of the number of points to the terminal.

20 The at least one data input means may be configured to read data on a medium attached to items to be purchased, said data comprising an identifier of the particular item. For example, the data reader may be configured for reading a bar code on an item to be purchased or on a paper or electronic voucher.

25 The at least one data input means may be configured to receive input, initiated by the purchaser, of information identifying a customer, and said sending means is arranged to send to the server means, together with said indication and the terminal identifier, the information identifying the customer. Additionally or alternatively to the
30 information identifying a customer, the information may identify a customer account. These may allow points associated with a customer account to be debited from that account on redemption against one or more items. Advantageously, in the event that a game is won, a degree of authentication of the winner can be achieved. The information identifying a customer account may comprise information identifying the
35 purchaser.

The data input means may comprise a card reader, wherein said customer identifying information is stored on a card readable by said card reader means.

5 The at least one data input means may comprise a user interface, for example a keypad. Each user interface comprises at least a touch screen display and a controller operable by the purchaser to control play of the at least one game. The voucher identifier may be input by a purchaser using the keypad. Information identifying the customer or the customer account may be entered using the keypad.

10 There may be further provided apparatus for a points redemption system for a customer loyalty programme, comprising a server means connected to a communications network, and a plurality of electronic terminals, each in accordance with the above description. The server means may be arranged, responsive to the request, to determine an outcome of the game and to send information indicative of
15 the outcome to the terminal identified by the terminal identifier for the terminal to receive and communicate to the purchaser.

The apparatus may further comprise a plurality of display systems connected to the communications network, wherein the server means is configured to cause
20 advertising of the at least one prize on the display systems.

The server means may be configured to send to the display system information indicating that the game can be entered on redemption of points, and the display system may be configured to receive and to advertise said information.
25

The server means may be configured to send to the terminal information indicating that a game can be entered by redemption of points. In this case, the terminal may be configured to receive said information and advertise said information to the user.

30 Each terminal may be configured to generate a transaction identifier for the process of purchasing the at least one item, wherein the request includes the at least one transaction identifier, and the server means stores the at least one transaction identifier with a corresponding game entry identifier.

35 The apparatus may further comprise a plurality of further terminals configured to handle purchase of items. In this case, each further terminal is configured to provide a voucher to the purchaser in exchange for redemption of points, and the data input

to the terminal indicating that a game is to be entered comprises information readable from the voucher.

5 The server means may include a prize store including information indicative of at least one prize. In this case, the determining an outcome of the game comprises determining if the purchaser has won a prize.

10 The server means may include a game records store and recording means for recording, responsive to the server means determining that the purchaser has won a prize, in the game records store at least that said prize is won. The at least one prize may comprise a jackpot and the information indicative of the at least one prize comprises a jackpot value. The jackpot may be a progressive jackpot, and the server means may include jackpot update means for incrementing of the jackpot value in the prize store each time the server means determines that the outcome of a game is a
15 lose.

According to a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of redeeming points by a purchaser at an electronic terminal receiving input, initiated by a customer, at the terminal of an indication that at least one point is to be redeemed
20 against entry to a game, sending, responsive to the receiving, a request to the server means, the request including an indication that a game is to be entered and an identifier of the terminal; and, receiving, at the terminal, information indicative of an outcome of the game and communicating the outcome to the purchaser.

25 There is further provided a computer program comprising computer program code means adapted to perform all the steps of the aforementioned method when said program is run on a processing apparatus. The computer program may be embodied on a computer readable storage medium.

30 According to a third aspect of the present invention, there is provided apparatus for use in a points redemption system for a customer loyalty system, comprising receiving means for receiving a request initiated at a terminal, the request including an indication that at least one game is to be entered, an identifier of the terminal and information regarding a number of points to be redeemed, determining means for
35 determining an outcome of the game; recording means for recording a number of points redeemed and an outcome of the game; and sending means for sending

information indicative of the outcome to the terminal identified by the terminal identifier so that the terminal can communicate the outcome to the purchaser.

5 According to a fourth aspect of the present invention, there is provided method of redeeming points in a customer loyalty system, comprising receiving a request initiated at a terminal, the request including an indication that at least one game is to be entered, an identifier of the terminal and information regarding a number of points to be redeemed, determining an outcome of the game, recording a number of points redeemed and an outcome of the game; and sending information indicative of the
10 outcome to the terminal identified by the terminal identifier so that the terminal can communicate the outcome to the purchaser

According to a fifth aspect of the present invention, there is provided apparatus for managing item promotion reservation, comprising a server means connected to a
15 communications network, the server means being configured for handling requests for item promotion reservations initiated at terminals at a plurality of entities, wherein the server means is configured for controlling advertising of items at at least one different entity based on item promotion reservations.

20 Advantageously, purchase of a particular item(s) can be incentivised by providing the purchaser with entry to a game on purchase of the particular item. Also, a first entity (for example a manufacturer) can arrange product promotion at a second entity (for example a retailer such as a supermarket) in an automated or partially automated manner. This reduces work required at both entities. According to a sixth aspect of
25 the present invention, there is provided a method of managing item promotion reservation, comprising handling requests for item promotion reservations initiated at terminals at a plurality of entities, and controlling advertising of items at at least one different entity based on the item promotion reservations.

30 According to a seventh aspect of the present invention, there is provided apparatus for use with an item purchasing system, comprising a plurality of electronic first terminals connected to a communications network, and at least one second terminals connected to the communications network, wherein each first terminal comprises data input means for receiving input of data initiated by a customer, means for
35 determining to provide a voucher in response to the data input, means for providing said voucher to the customer; and the or each second terminal comprises means for receiving input of information identifying said voucher, means for processing at least

one entry to a game in dependence on said information to determine an outcome, and means for communicating the outcome of the at least one game to the customer. Advantageously, queues arising from additional time spent by purchases at PoS terminals to enter games is avoided.

5

According to an eighth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method comprising a plurality of electronic first terminals connected to a communications network; and at least one second terminals connected to the communications network, wherein each first terminal comprises data input means for receiving input of data initiated by a customer, means for determining to provide a voucher in response to the data input, means for providing said voucher to the customer, and the or each second terminal comprises means for receiving input of information identifying said voucher, means for processing at least one entry to a game in dependence on said information to determine an outcome, and means for communicating the outcome of the at least one game to the customer.

10

15

Further aspects of the present invention are set out in the dependent claims.

Brief Description of Drawings

Embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

20

Figure 1 is a schematic diagram of hardware elements of a server in accordance with embodiments of the present invention;

25

Figure 2 is a schematic diagram of hardware elements at a point-of-sale terminal in accordance with embodiments of the invention;

Figure 3 is a schematic diagram of a points redemption system for a store in accordance with embodiments of the invention;

Figure 4 is a schematic diagram of the data provided in a database at the server;

30

Figures 5A and 5B are flow diagrams indicating steps at the point-of-sale terminal in a process of redeeming points against a game;

Figure 6 is a flow diagram indicating steps at a server in the process of redeeming points against a game;

35

Figure 7 is a schematic diagram of a points redemption system in accordance with other embodiments of the present invention, wherein the points are redeemed in an internet purchase;

Figures 8A and 8B are flow diagrams indicating steps at the terminal in a process of redeeming points against a game in accordance with the other embodiment;

5 Figure 9 is a schematic diagram of a product promotion system in accordance with embodiments of the invention;

Figure 10 is a flow diagram indicating steps at a PoS terminal in a process of buying a promoted product;

Figure 11 is a schematic diagram of a product promotion system in accordance with other embodiments of the invention;

10 Figure 12 is flow diagram indicating steps at a user terminal in a process of buying a promoted product; and

Figure 13 is a schematic diagram of a system, which may be implemented in a product promotion or a points redemption system, comprising separate point of sale and gaming terminals.

15

Detailed Description of Embodiments

Like elements and steps are denoted by like reference numerals throughout. Titles in the following are not to be interpreted as limiting.

20 Embodiments of the invention will be described implemented as points redemption systems or product promotion systems, or terminals and servers relating thereto, although in other embodiments such systems may be integrated. These systems can be implemented in apparatus including electronic point-of-sale (PoS) terminals in which operation of the system is initiated by a purchaser at a one of the PoS
25 terminals, and/or in apparatus including user terminals operable by a purchaser. The user terminals may be conventional computers and, in use, are connected to a communications network and typically run a web browser. Embodiments of the invention are not limited to any particular number of terminals. In each case a server arrangement is connected to the terminals (that is, the PoS terminals or the user
30 terminals) over a communications network.

In the embodiments described below, the communications network is the internet. However, the invention is not limited by the kind of communications network. The communications network may comprise more than one kind of network. For
35 example, terminals could be connected to a local area network (LAN), which is connected to the internet.

Connections between the server arrangement and the terminals, and between servers in the server arrangement, are secure and can be implemented, for example, by using the secure socket layer (SSL) or by implementing a virtual private network (VPN) between the elements.

5

The server arrangement is in the form of a server. Turning to Figure 1, the hardware components of the server, indicated at 100, comprise a first processor 102, one or more network ports 104, an internal clock 106 which controls the timing of operations performed by the processor 102, a memory 108, an input/output interface 110 and a mass storage device 112. The components are operatively coupled via a local interface (not shown), which can be, for example, one or more buses or other wired or wireless connections.

10

It should be understood that the server arrangement may be in the form of a plurality of networked servers. It may be desirable for the server arrangement to be formed of at least two servers each connected to the communications network and capable of communicating with each other thereover. In particular, applications running on such servers may be operated by separate entities which each provide different aspects of the possible systems. This is described in greater detail below.

15

20

The processor 102 can be custom made or be a commercially available processor or central processing unit (CPU), or generally any device for executing software instructions. The network port 104 enables communication via the communications network. The memory 108 can include any one of a combination of volatile memory elements (e.g. random access memory elements (RAM, such as DRAM, SRAM, SDRAM, etc)) and non-volatile memory elements (such as ROM) to provide fixed and working data storage for the processor. The input/output interface 110 may connect, for example, to an operator terminal (not shown). Alternatively, input/output interfaces may be absent. The mass storage device 112 can be integral to the server 100, or external. The mass storage device 112 stores information and software, including databases/stores and a control application.

25

30

The control application is implemented by suitable computer program code (not shown) stored on the mass storage device 112 or memory 108, and which, when executed by the processor, causes the server 100 to provide the functionality described herein, particularly any one of the methods ascribed to the server 100 described herein.

35

The processor 102 can be a single processor or a number of networked processor networked by any conventional communications network. The control application can be in the form of one or several modules providing aspects of the functionality of the server 100. Alternatively, the control application can be implemented in dedicated processing equipment or a mixture of dedicated hardware and software.

The storage device 112 stores the control application and databases/stores. The databases and their potential use and structure will be described in greater detail below. As would be understood by the person skilled in the art, the schematic illustrations and accompanying descriptions of the databases are exemplary arrangements for storing information. A number of other arrangements may be employed. Not all of the databases/stores will be used or needed in every embodiment.

The server is also referenced with numbers 200, 300, 400 and 500 in the following embodiments. It should be understood however that such servers may comprise the same hardware as the server described at 100. The software may also comprise the same elements, but be modified in a manner that will be clear in the context to provide the functionality of the particular embodiment(s).

Embodiments in Stores

In embodiments of the invention in which the terminals comprise PoS terminals, the PoS terminals are grouped into groups. The groups of PoS terminals may be located in respective venues. For example, the PoS terminals in one group may be located in a store belonging to an entity and the PoS terminals in another group may be located in another store belonging to the entity. The embodiments are not limited to any particular number or groups or venues. The venues, for example, might be retail stores such as supermarkets. A venue may only have a single PoS terminal, for example, if the store is small.

Figure 2 indicates components of the architecture of a typical PoS terminal 130. Each PoS terminal 130 may be implemented with a conventional architecture, including components such as a processor 132 that is in communication with one or more network ports 134, an internal clock 136 which controls the timing of operations performed by the processor 138, a memory 140, and an input/output interface 142

connected to a touchscreen display 144 and typically at least one other data input device 144. Stored in either the memory 140 or a local mass storage device (not shown) is a software application for controlling operation of the PoS terminal 130. The components are operatively coupled via a local interface (not shown), which can be, for example, one or more buses or other wired or wireless connections. The memory 140 can include any one of combination of volatile memory elements (e.g. random access memory elements (RAM, such as DRAM, SRAM, SDRAM, etc)) and non-volatile memory elements (such as ROM) to provide fixed and working data storage for the processor 132.

10

Typically, the at least one data input device includes a machine readable data reader for reading machine readable data from items to be purchased, for example a barcode scanner. The machine readable data comprises an identifier of the item and the PoS terminal is configured so that the customer is charged appropriately for the item and typically to notify a stock control server (not shown) of the purchase.

15

The data reader may also be configured to read data from vouchers and customer loyalty cards, although alternatively another one or more data input device may be provided for this purpose. The data input device may also input a payment card reader. This may also be configured to read from customer loyalty cards.

20

The software application is implemented by suitable computer program code (not shown) stored in the memory 140 and which, when executed by the processor 132, causes the PoS terminal to provide the functionality described herein. In the embodiments described below, the PoS terminals are self service checkouts, but alternatively the checkouts may be operated by a checkout assistant.

25

The PoS terminal's software application can be in the form of one or several modules providing aspects of the functionality of the PoS terminal 130. Alternatively, the PoS software application can be implemented in dedicated processing equipment or a mixture of dedicated hardware and software.

30

The terminal is also referenced with numbers 150, 250, 350, 450 and 550 in the following embodiments. It should be understood however that such terminals may comprise the same hardware as the server described at 130. The software may also comprise the same elements, but be modified in a manner that will be clear in the context to provide the functionality of the particular embodiment(s).

35

Display systems are preferably located in each of the venues and operate under the control of the server 100 communicating over the communications network. Each display system includes processing apparatus, a network interface, a screen and optionally a speaker and optionally peripheral LED lights. The display system is for informing persons in the venue of information relating to the game(s) and prize(s), for example to advertise that a game may be entered and how this is done. The server 100 provides control of content to be displayed to the display systems and each display system is configured to play such content. The display systems are indicated at 156 throughout in the description below of the embodiments.

In embodiments, the terminal 130 may include a second display connected to the input/output interface 142. The second display may be used to display the outcome of a game. This is particularly advantageous where the terminal is operated by a checkout assistant.

Optionally, a person may receive a notification on a mobile device (for example a smartphone, PDA, tablet, etc) when entering a store regarding current promotions or of prizes available in exchange for points. This may be achieved, for example, by the person holding their mobile device near a near field communications (NFC) communications terminal.

Customer Loyalty Programmes

Many entities use customer loyalty programmes, in which a customer is registered with a programme and has a customer account. Customer loyalty programmes can be used in relation to online purchases at user terminals running a web browser or purchases at PoS terminals in stores.

The customer loyalty programme may be administered by the entity itself. In this case, when a customer purchases from the entity, points are assigned to the customer's customer account for redemption against purchases from the entity by the customer. Instead, such a customer loyalty programme may be administered by a third party. Alternatively, a customer loyalty programme may be used by a number of entities collectively, and be administered by a third party, for example the Nectar® customer loyalty programme in the UK. In this case, when a customer purchases

from any of the entities using the programme, points are assigned to the customer's customer account. The points can typically be redeemed against purchases from any of the entities by the customer. Points may be accepted against purchases from entities who are not part of the loyalty programme; some entities do not issue points, but redeem points awarded by another entity.

There exist online points exchange websites allowing transfer of points from numerous worldwide loyalty programmes to others, or even transfer and/or exchange of points between owners of points.

In each case, points can be accumulated over multiple purchases of items from the entity or entities. Points are typically assigned in dependence on the amount of money spent and/or the particular items bought. The term "items" as used herein is to be understood as meaning "goods and/or services". "Services" includes subscriptions. References to an "entity" herein are to be understood as references to an entity or a group of entities using the same customer loyalty programme, unless the context indicates otherwise.

Customer loyalty programmes can be implemented in various ways. Many programmes involve each customer who has registered with the programme being given a customer card having a unique card identifier which is associated with the customer and/or a customer account. Such cards may be known as, for example, loyalty cards, rewards card, points cards, discount cards or club cards. At the PoS terminal, the card identifier can typically be read from a bar code or magnetic stripe, or from a chip located in the card.

In some customer loyalty systems, virtual cards are used with or instead of physical cards. Such virtual cards are stored on a mobile device such as a smartphone that is read by a scanner at the PoS terminal configured to read the phone display

In some customer loyalty schemes, the card holder receives vouchers, for example by post or email, to enable redemption of at least some of the points they have accumulated. The vouchers can be redeemed against items in the entity's stores or reduce a price paid by an amount assigned to the value of the points redeemed.

Online Embodiments

In embodiments of the invention in which the terminals are or include user terminals running a web browser, each user terminal includes a user interface, a processor, a memory and a display. A suitable user interface may be a physical keyboard and cursor control and/or a touch screen, et cetera. The terminal can be, for example, a personal computer or laptop, a tablet computer or other mobile device. The web browser is implemented by suitable computer program code (not shown) stored in the memory (for example a hard disc) which, when executed by the processor, enables a user to interface with the internet in the conventional way.

The server 100 is configured to send the information relating to the game(s) and prize(s) to the user terminals so that the information may be communicated to the user. For example, the game and how to enter may be advertised in a portion of the display. For example, on checkout pages of a website, on which payment is effected for the goods or services selected, or other pages, there may be a virtual PoS with all the same user interfaces and displays for product promotion or game play against redeemed points as might be found at a PoS terminal in a physical store in accordance with embodiments.

Possible Games

In embodiments described below, a game may be entered at a terminal. The game may be a draw. In some of these embodiments, the game is a progressive jackpot draw, although the invention is not limited to such. For example, points may instead be redeemed against entry to another kind of prize or jackpot draw, or to another kind of game. The game is not limited to any particular kind, except it should have an outcome.

In a progressive jackpot gaming system, terminals are linked together to allow users to compete for a common aware or “progressive jackpot”. The jackpot grows rapidly because multiple users are contributing to the jackpot at contemporaneously. The value of the progressive jackpot is incremented by a small amount each time a game is played. When a game is won, the progressive jackpot is awarded to the user obtaining the winning outcome and the jackpot value is reset to a predetermined amount, which may be zero or above.

Game processing software is provided to process entries to games. Each game entry is processed to determine whether a prize is won. The prize may be one of a

number of available prizes. For example, a database at a server on which the game processing software runs may include a list of prizes. Examples of possible prizes include: a car; a sum (e.g. £10,000) available weekly; the scanned and purchases in the previous transaction is free – if the purchase is complete, a refund will be given and if the purchase is not complete payment will not be requested at the payment stage; a jackpot; a progressive jackpot; and a particular product.

The software can be configured to randomly or pseudo-randomly determine whether a prize is won, and may weight in favour of winning a particular prize(s) from the list, such as a lower value prize.

Where the prize or one of the prizes is a progressive jackpot, there are various ways that an outcome can be determined by the game processing software and that the progressive jackpot functionality can be implemented. Such ways are known to persons skilled in the art.

For example, a progressive jackpot system may be implemented using a so-called “secret” progressive jackpot. In such a system, the game processing software predetermines a jackpot value and when a game entry causes the progressive jackpot to reach that unknown value the progressive jackpot is won. In such a system, the game processing software, using a random number generator, establishes a jackpot win amount between a maximum and minimum values. A minimum value for the progressive jackpot is also established. At each increment, the controller compares the new jackpot value with the previously established jackpot-win value. If the new value is less than a jackpot-win value, the controller merely updates the jackpot value. When an increment to the current jackpot value causes the value to reach or become equal to the predetermined jackpot-win value, the progressive jackpot is won.

A progressive jackpot system may also be implemented in a manner such that the software determines whether at least one pay off criterion is satisfied. For example, such a criterion may include a predetermined jackpot value being reached, or a certain date and time being passed, or a number of game plays since last resetting of the jackpot being reached. The progressive jackpot can only be one if the at least one pay off criterion is met.

Where a plurality of prizes are provided, the software may provide weighting to make winning of certain prizes more probably than winning of others.

Other ways of implementing a progressive jackpot system are known. For example, implementation of particular progressive jackpot functionality at a server can be understood from US2008/0161105A1 published on 3 July 2008 under the title “Progressive Jackpot Gaming Systems and Methods” in the name of Cadillac Jack, Inc.

10 Points Redemption System

Embodiments of the invention will now be described wherein the points redemption system is implemented. The purchaser can redeem points against one or more games.

15

First, apparatus for a points redemption system in which the terminals are PoS terminals is described. Referring to Figure 3, the points redemption system includes the server 100 connected to electronic point-of-sale (PoS) terminals, indicated at 150 and such as described above, via the communications network 148. The PoS terminals 150 are grouped into a first group 152 and a second group 154.

20

The first group 152 of PoS terminals 150 and the second group 152 of PoS terminals 150 are located in first and second venues, respectively. At least one display system, indicated at 156, is located in each of the venues and connected to the communications network 148.

25

The display system 156 is configured to display information under the control of the server 100. The display system 156 receives indications of the current amount of the progressive jackpot from the server 100 and displays the current amount of the progressive jackpot on the screen for people to view. The display system 156 may also receive content from the server 100 to advertise that points can be redeemed against entry to a prize draw.

30

The functionality of the server 100 includes processing of requests from the PoS terminals 150 to redeem points against entries to the progressive jackpot draw and to communicate with the PoS terminals 150 and the display systems 156.

35

As indicated in Figure 4, the software and information stored on the storage device 112 include some or all of the following: the control program, indicated at 158, for operating the server 100; a voucher record store 160 for storing information about vouchers; a customer account store 162 for storing information about one or more customers and details of the customer; a transactions store 164 for storing information related to transactions handled by the system; a game entry store 166 for storing information about games entered; PoS terminal identification records 168; and a prize store 170.

10 The server 100 may be configured to handle in part or wholly the customer loyalty programme. In some embodiments, the customer loyalty programme may be implemented entirely elsewhere in which case, an interface is preferably (but not essentially) provided between the server 100 and other servers on which the programme is implemented. Also, the server 100 may be configured to handle in part or wholly the process of purchasing an item. In this case, a product database is present on the storage device 112 for storing information about products sold by the entity under the control of the server 100.

The voucher record store 160 stores therein at least some of: an identifier of each voucher issued; an expiry date for each voucher; an indication of whether each voucher has been used; optionally, if used, an identifier of the transaction that the voucher was used in; optionally type of product that the voucher can be redeemed against; a number of points associated with the voucher; and an identifier of the customer account for which the voucher was issued.

25 The game entry store 166 stores a record for each game entered with a game entry identifier, the associated transaction identifier, the number of points redeemed for the game entry, a customer account identifier, a terminal identifier of the terminal from which the request to enter a game(s) was received, and an outcome for each game. Embodiments require less information, but more is desirable for fraud prevention.

The PoS identification records 168 contain a record of an identifier of each PoS terminal 150, together with information on its physical location. This information can be used, together with the information in the game entry store 166, to aid fraud prevention.

In this embodiment, the prize is a progressive jackpot and the prize store includes a value for this prize. The prize value store includes a record of updates to the value of the progressive jackpot. In other embodiments, the prize store lists the prize(s) available to be won.

5

In this embodiment, a voucher suitable for use in the points redemption system comprises machine-readable data (for example a bar code). The customer may have received the voucher in paper form by post or in an electronic form for printing, for example. Alternatively the voucher may be sent to the purchaser electronically and presented on to the data reader on a mobile device. The machine-readable data includes a unique identifier of the voucher.

10

15

Typically, the terms of a points redemption programme allow points to be redeemed only by the customer to whom they were given. Thus, although not essential to the present invention, the points redemption system preferably includes means for preventing fraud. Thus, vouchers are typically used in conjunction with a customer card associated with a particular customer and that customer's customer account. The card includes machine readable data including a unique identifier of the card, for example on a magnetic strip or in a chip. The identity of the customer account to which the voucher was issued can be identified from the voucher identifier using the voucher record store at the server 100. The identity of the customer account associated with the customer card can be identified from the unique card identifier. If the identities of the customer account match, a degree of authentication is achieved. Age verification may be desirable and or necessary and indeed many loyalty cards require the adult age of 18 years as a condition of issue. This may assist in any controls required in some jurisdictions to prevent what may be considered gambling by minors.

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Operation of the points redemption system will now be described. A purchaser brings selected items to a PoS terminal 150 and begins the purchasing process (step S1). During the purchasing process, an identifier of the customer account of the purchaser is read from the customer card (not shown) at the PoS terminal 150 in a step S2 using the data reader 144.

35

The purchaser has an option to redeem vouchers and selects this option at the PoS terminal 150 using the touch screen display 146. The purchaser then scans the

voucher using the data reader 144. The PoS terminal 150 thereby receives input of a voucher identifier (step S3).

5 The PoS terminal 150 then sends at step S4 the voucher identifier, the customer account identifier read from the customer card and the transaction identifier to the server 100. The server 100 determines (step not shown) based on the voucher identifier using the voucher record store 160:

- whether voucher is valid, that is, not already used or expired;
- the maximum number of points that can be redeemed using the voucher;
- 10 • optionally a type of item against which the points can be redeemed; and
- a customer account identifier.

In addition, the server 100 is configured to maintain a record in the game entry store 166 relating to the outcomes of the games.

15

The server 100 checks whether the customer account identifier associated with the voucher identifier is the same as the customer account identifier read from the customer card. The server 100 then transmits a message including the determined information and a result of the voucher validity check to the PoS terminal 150 and updates the voucher record store to indicate that the voucher is used with an identification of the transaction identifier. The PoS terminal 150 receives the message at step S5. At step S6, the PoS terminal 150 checks whether the voucher is valid based on the information in the received message. If the voucher is invalid, due to the customer account identifiers not matching or the voucher having already
20 been used or having expired, the PoS terminal 150 indicates such to the purchaser at
25 step S7.

If the voucher is valid, the PoS terminal 150 then displays on the touchscreen display at step S8 to the purchaser an option to redeem some or all of the points against one
30 or more entries to the jackpot draw. The PoS terminal 150 receives input from the purchaser of a selection. If the PoS terminal 150 determines, at step S9, based on input that the purchaser does not wish to take this option, the purchase continues in the conventional way (step S10). If the PoS terminal 150 determines, at step S9, based on input that the purchaser selects to redeem some or all of the points against
35 one or more entries, an option is then displayed on the display requesting the purchaser to select the number of entries (step S11). The user selects to enter one

or more games and the PoS terminal 150 receives input from the purchaser of the number of entries at step S12. In alternative implementations, the purchaser can enter games in separate steps, each game being entered after the result of entry of a previous game is known.

5

The PoS terminal 150 then transmits at step S13 to the server 100 a message including a request for a number of entries to the jackpot draw, the transaction number, the customer account identifier, the identifier of the PoS terminal 14, and the number of points redeemed. The server 100 receives the message generated at step
10 S14, and generates an identifier for each entry and records at step S15 the information in the request in the game entry store 166 alongside the respective game entry identifier.

The server 100 then determines at step S16, for each game entered, whether the
15 purchaser has won the accumulated jackpot using a random or pseudo-random number generator in accordance with techniques known to persons skilled in the art. For each entry for which a “lose” is determined, the server 100, at step S17, adds a predetermined amount of money to the jackpot value in the prize store 170 and updates the game entry database 166 to indicate the result. If at step S19 it is
20 determined that an entry has won the game, the server 100 records the win in the game entry database 166, and resets the value of the jackpot available to win to a predetermined amount, all at step S18.

The PoS terminal 150 receives the message at step S22 and displays at step S23
25 the result for the purchaser to view. The PoS terminal 150 may display instructions on how to claim the accumulated jackpot. The instructions may be printed on a receipt for the purchaser with instructions on how to claim the jackpot.

The purchaser then continues with the purchasing process (step S24), paying for the
30 items to be purchased in the conventional way. In other embodiments, purchasing may have to be completed before a game is entered or the result of game/draw may be displayed/printed out only after payment is completed.

It will appreciated by the skilled person that the points redemption system could be
35 designed such that less information is transmitted and retained by the server 100. However, more than the minimum amount of information is preferably retained by the server 100 to guard against fraud.

Optionally, each PoS terminal 150 includes a user interface, for example a touchscreen, separate to the user interface used for the purchasing process. The touchscreen is enables a purchaser to enter a game after the purchasing process is complete. Build up of queues/lines of people waiting to use a PoS terminal to process purchase of items is thus avoided.

The order of some of the steps can be changed. For example, steps S2 and S3 can be reversed. Also, in a simplified alternative embodiment, the customer account need not be identified. Vouchers could simply be redeemed against entry to games. In this case, if a prize was won for an entry, a printout might be provided at the PoS terminal 150, which could be exchanged for the prize won.

In a modification, the purchaser inputs other information to the PoS terminal 150 identifying him or her or enabling identification of the respective customer account. For example, the purchaser may have payment card (for example a credit or debit card) identifying the purchaser thereon, which is read by the PoS terminal 150 during the purchasing process. The server 100 is in this case configured to determine the *customer account identifier using the other information*. As another example, payment may be made using an appropriately configured mobile device.

In an alternative example embodiment, the purchaser may have a customer card having a unique identification number, which is read by the PoS terminal 150 during the purchasing process. The purchaser has an account with which the customer card is registered and the PoS terminal 150 can communicate with a server, which may be the server 100, having an account store storing the account information, to obtain the identity of the purchaser.

In another example embodiment of the invention, a card may include data storage means which can be read from and written to by an interface at the PoS terminal 150. Instead of a voucher being scanned at step S3, a number of points available for redemption can be read in step S2 together with a customer account identifier. Steps S3 to S7 are omitted.

In the embodiments described, the purchaser is the customer and has a respective customer account. However, a customer may be an entity having a customer account, and one or more persons (purchasers) may have a customer card having a

unique identifier associated with the customer account. In this case a purchaser entering a game may be deemed to be playing on behalf of the entity. Alternatively, one or more persons may share a customer account. In these cases, there may be further rules about who may claim prizes.

5

Additionally or alternatively to selling in stores, points may be acquired by and/or redeemed against online purchase of items, that is, the purchasing process takes place online rather than in a store. An embodiment of the invention will now be described, which can be implemented with or separate from the above described

10 embodiments, in which points can be redeemed online against entry to games.

As indicated in Figure 8, the system includes a user terminal 250 configured for internet access, as has been described above.

15 The server 100 includes a web server and is configured to enable a purchaser at the user terminal 250 to use points in a customer account and/or to use vouchers against purchase of items. The web browser 252 at the user terminal 250 interfaces with the server 100 for generation of appropriate Internet pages. Static web pages and the web page templates are provided in a static web page and templates store (not

20 shown) associated with the server 100.

Vouchers to be redeemed online typically include a voucher identifier in a form allowing copying, for example alphanumeric. The vouchers can be physical, for example paper, or in an electronic form.

25

Operation of the points redemption system will now be described, with reference to Figures 9A and 9B, which indicate steps that take place at the user terminal 250. The customer has a pre-registered customer account. Initially, the purchaser begins the purchasing process (step S101), that is, selects items to be bought or to redeem

30 points against, and a transaction identifier is generated. Before completing the purchasing process, the purchaser authenticates at step S102 him or herself by entering a login and password. The server 100 or another server is configured to handle authentication of the purchaser for the customer account.

35 The purchaser then proceeds with the purchasing process. In the purchasing process, the user terminal 250 displays to the purchaser an option to input a voucher identifier. If the purchaser selects the option to enter a voucher, the user terminal

250 receives input of an identifier of the voucher from the purchaser at step S103. If the purchaser does not take this option, the purchase continues in the conventional way.

5 Where input of a voucher identifier is received from the purchaser at step S104, the user terminal 250 transmits the voucher identifier and the transaction identifier to the server 100 in a message at step S105. The server 100 receives the message and determines the number of points that can be redeemed against the voucher. The server 100 also determines whether the voucher is valid using the voucher record
10 store 160 based on the expiry date of the customer account. The server 100 then transmits a response including the determined information to the terminal 250 and, if the voucher is valid, updates the voucher record store 160 to indicate that the voucher is used.

15 Steps S107 to S114 are respectively the same as steps S6 to S13 and steps S114 to S117 are the same as steps S22 to S24, the user terminal 250 being in place of the PoS terminal 150 and an address of the user terminal 250 replacing the terminal identifier.

20 Steps (S14 to S21) at the server 100 are performed as described with reference to Figure 7.

It will be appreciated that various modifications could be made to the online embodiment described above.

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While in the embodiments and modified embodiments described above, the server arrangement is configured to enable entry to a game wherein the possibility exists of winning an accumulated jackpot, it will be appreciated that instead, vouchers or points may be redeemed against play of other kinds of game. For example, a virtual
30 scratch card game may be played with a predetermined prize(s) available for win. Different predetermined amounts of jackpot may be available.

Optionally, the server 100 sends a message to a pre-registered email address of the user of the outcome of the games.

35

In a modification to the online embodiment described, the purchaser does not enter a voucher, but selects to redeem points in the customer account against entries to

games. In this case, the server 100 modifies the balance of points accordingly in the customer account when points are redeemed against a game.

5 It is envisaged that points are given to customers without charge and cannot be exchanged for cash and can typically only be redeemed in stores operated by one or more predetermined entities. However, if customers are charged for points, it may be necessary to comply with gambling regulations, depending on jurisdiction.

10 As mentioned above, the server may be a server arrangement comprising more than one server. It may be desirable for the server arrangement to comprise two parts (each being at least one server comprising such hardware as described above in relation to the server) so that a third party can provide and maintain the prize determining functionally. In such case, where the server arrangement comprises first and second servers each having respective control programs and databases/store,
15 the first and second servers communicate with regard to determining whether a game entry wins and with regard to jackpot value. Such communication may include steps as follows: when the first server receives a request for game entry, it sends a message to a second (gaming) server to request processing of a game. The second server receives the message at from the first server and stores in its own game entry
20 database on its respective data storage device a record of the game entry identifiers, the associated customer account identifier and an indication of points redeemed. The second server then processes the game entry to determine whether a progressive jackpot (or other prize) is won. If not won, the second server sends to the first server a lose message including an identifier of the entry and an indication that
25 the entry has not won. The second server also updates the game entry records store to indicate the result and updates the progressive jackpot appropriately. If an entry wins the game, the second server sends a win message to the server 100 including the game entry identifier and an indication that the entry has won, records the win in at its game entry store, and resets the value of the jackpot available to win to a predetermined amount. The first server, in response to its sending of the entry
30 message, receives a response in the form of the win or lose message. In either case, if the server records the result in the game entry store and sends a message to the PoS terminal 150, including an indication of the result. Thus, the second server maintains a record of the number of points redeemed. A third party administering the
35 second server may provide the progressive jackpot. The second server preferably determines at intervals a fee due the third party at least in part in dependence on the number of points redeemed against entries to the jackpot.

One or more other parties may own and license rights to the administrator of the second server 8 (the entity, a provider of a customer loyalty programme, or a third party). In this case, the second server 8 preferably determines at intervals a fee due the one or more other parties at least in part in dependence on the number of points redeemed against entries to the jackpot.

Embodiments of the points redemption system result in various advantages. Game entry provides entertainment. The possibility of winning a prize provides excitement, as may winning a prize. The possibility of winning an enormous progressive jackpot provides an in-store attraction.

Where the prize is a progressive jackpot, very large jackpot prizes may become available, in dependence on how the probability of winning is configured. This is due to the linking together of many (thousands) of checkouts located in multiple stores allowing for the pooling of millions of 'game' plays and all automatically at checkouts.

The points redemption system may be configured in stores to allow game entry at self-service checkout terminals and not terminals with a checkout assistance, thereby to encourage shoppers to use self-service checkouts, thereby saving the store on salary cost.

The points redemption system may encourage customer loyalty. Customer may thus visit a store implementing the points redemption system more frequently.

The points redemption system may bring publicity to a store chain, both at launch and also ongoing publicity at each time a progressive jackpot is won.

By redeeming points on game entry, customers do not redeem their vouchers against other items, thereby saving stores money.

Product Promotion System

Other embodiments of the invention relate to a product promotion system. The product promotion system can be (but is not necessarily) implemented independently of a customer loyalty system and is described as such. In embodiments, the product promotion system may be implemented for use by a purchaser at a PoS terminal in a

store, and/or at a user terminal in association with online item purchase. The implementation for use by a purchaser at a PoS terminal is described first.

5 The PoS terminal is configured to determine in dependence on an item identifier whether purchase of the item includes an entry to a game such as described above. The PoS terminal may communicate with a server arrangement, which may process the game entry, and receive an outcome of the game from the server arrangement.

10 The product promotion system includes an administration terminal to allow an item promoter to arrange a promotion for an item. Advertising of the item and of the possibility of winning a prize by purchasing the item would take place on display systems in the first and second venues. The item promoter may be the manufacturer of the item.

15 Referring to Figure 9, the product promotion system includes the server arrangement in the form of a server 300 connected to the communications network 13. Electronic point-of-sale (PoS) terminals 350 and display systems 156 are connected to the communications network 13. The PoS terminals 350 are grouped into a first group 352 and a second group 354. The first group 352 of PoS terminals 350 and the
20 second group 354 of PoS terminals 350 are located in first and second venues, respectively. At least one display system 156, as described above is located in each of the venues and connected to the communications network 148. The server 300 is configured to process requests to enter games and to communicate with the PoS terminals 350.

25 A bookings server 340, including a web server 342, and the administration terminal 344, including a web browser, are connected to the communications network 148. The administration terminal 344 may be any kind of terminal running a web browser to provide internet access to an item promoter. Although only a single administrator
30 terminal 344 is shown, an item promoter would typically be able to arrange item promotion at any internet connected terminal running a web browser. In another embodiment, a dedicated software application is installed on the administrator terminal and interfaces with the bookings control application. In this case the item promoter can arrange item promotion using this software application.

35 The bookings server 340 is configured to enable the item promoter to arrange item promotion. A web browser at the administration terminal 344 interfaces with the

bookings server 340 for generation of appropriate Internet pages at the administration terminal 344. Static web pages and the web page templates are provided in a static web page and templates store (not shown) associated with the web server 342.

5

The bookings server 340 includes a bookings processing application 346 and a bookings database 348. The bookings processing application 346 is implemented by suitable computer program code (not shown) stored in a suitable storage medium (for example a hard disc) and which, when executed by suitable processing apparatus (not shown), causes bookings server 340 to provide the functionality described herein. The bookings processing application 346 can be a single processing apparatus or a number of networked processing apparatuses networked by any conventional communications network. The bookings processing application can comprise a single module or a number of modules.

10

The bookings database 348 contains information on promotions, for example and not limited to, dates and times of promotions, items to be promoted, stores in which promotions are to take place, content relating to advertising of the promotion, information identifying the item promoter, authentication information for authenticating item promoters.

15

An item promoter can make reservations on the bookings server 340 using the administration terminal 344 for the promotion of one or more items. This involves the item promoter inputting information regarding the promotion. This typically involve checking availability of time slots over which advertising for an item can be displayed on the display system. The item promoter then inputs dates of the promotion and the item(s) to be promoted. Optionally, the item promoter may select stores to be targeted based on particular characteristics of the stores. For example the item promoter may select to target stores in a particular region(s), specific stores, out-of-town stores, stores associated with petrol (gas) stations, stores having a particular department such as a clothing department, et cetera. Optionally, the administrator may select particular days of week in which promotion is to take place. Optionally, over the period(s) selected for promotion, the item promoter may select hours of day in which promotion is to take place.

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The item promoter may also be able to stipulate that promotional content will be displayed on display systems on particular aisles in stores, and/or at entrances to aisles.

- 5 It will be appreciated that there are many criteria relating to a promotion that the item promoter may select or input.

The item promoter may upload content to the bookings server 340 using the administration terminal 344. The content is for display on the display systems 156
10 over the reserved periods. The content may include graphics, video and/or audio. The bookings server 340 may include a template into which the content can be inserted. The item promoter may also upload content for display on PoS terminals 356 during purchase and game entry.

15 The data input by the item promoter is recorded in the bookings database 348 at the bookings server 356. The bookings server 340 controls the display systems in dependence on the data in the bookings database. The bookings server 340 also sends updates to the PoS terminal 350 such that each PoS terminal 350 has a stored up-to-date list of the items being promoted.

20 The bookings database 348 preferably also includes a statistical information store for information relating to a particular promotion. The item promoter may then view data relating to the promotion to assess the success of the promotion. The data may include one, some of all of the following: number of sales, number of sales over
25 particular time periods, comparison of sales over the promotion period with sales over a non-promotion period, sales by kind of prize offered; any or all the aforesaid information by store or region, information on types of shopper who have bought a product (the types being prescribed by the customer loyalty system), information on shopper behaviour in response to promotions. This allows item promoters to build up
30 information so that criteria of future promotions can be set for good benefit from a promotion. It allows item promoters to determine the value of the product promotion system. The data may be viewed substantially in real time. The item promoter may be able to access information on the prizes that have been won in real-time.

35 The PoS terminal 350 is configured to determine when an item whose item identifier has been read by the terminal 350 is under promotion by checking against the list of items under promotion. Referring to Figure 10, steps in the game entry process are

now described. The PoS terminal 350 is a self-service PoS terminal, although in other embodiments a checkout assistant may be between the customer and the PoS terminal 350. First, at step S201, the customer scans the machine readable data (e.g. barcode) on an item for which a promotion is in place during the purchasing process. At step S202, the PoS terminal 350 determines, using the stored list, that the item scanned is an item being promoted. In response to the determination, the PoS terminal 350 then communicates to the customer in step S203 that, after payment has been received, a game can be played with the possibility of winning a prize.

10 The customer completes payment in step S204. The PoS terminal 350 then communicates in step S205 a request to the customer for confirmation that a game is to be entered relating to the promoted item purchased. The customer, using the user interface, for example in the form of a touchscreen display, at the PoS terminal, either accepts or declines (or takes no action, which is deemed to be declining) at step S206. If the customer declines, the PoS terminal 350 ends the game entry process (step S207). If the customer indicates that a game is to be entered, the PoS terminal 350 transmits at step S208 a request to the server 350 for entry to a game. The request includes a terminal identifier, an indication that a game is to be entered and a transaction identifier. Where the purchaser is a registered customer having a customer loyalty card, a customer account identifier from the card is also transmitted. The request may include further information, for example the identity of the item promoted that has been purchased.

25 The server 300 then perform the steps S14 to S21 described above. At step 15, the server 300 may additionally determine using an item identifier of an item under promotion an identifier for the item promoter and/or a code for the promotion, and store the additional information in the game entry store 166. The PoS terminal 350 receives a response from the server 300 at step S209 and communicates the result to the customer at step S210 by means of the touchscreen display. If the result is that the customer has won a prize, the PoS terminal 350 may display instructions on how to claim the prize. The instructions may be printed on a receipt for the purchaser with instructions on how to claim a prize.

35 It will be appreciated by the person skilled in the art that, rather than items to be purchased having machine readable item identifiers affixed to them and the identifiers being read by a PoS terminal, the items could have RFID tags attached

thereto. In this case, the server controlling the tag system would detect when a promoted item has been paid for and enable a purchaser to enter a game in the manner described above.

5 Additionally or alternatively to in stores, the product promotion system may be implemented for online advertising and purchasing. The purchasing process takes place online rather than in a store. Another embodiment of the invention will now be described.

10 The item promoter may reserve at the booking server 340 using the administration terminal 344 for an item to be promoted over particular time periods, as described above. The item promoter may upload content, as described above.

Referring to Figure 11, online product promotion system includes the servers 300,
15 administration terminal 344 and bookings server 340, each as already described and connected to the communications network 148. It should be understood that server 400 is the same as server 300, but modified for online product promotion, additionally or alternatively. The system also includes a user terminal 450 connected to the
20 communications network 148, at which a purchaser can purchase items via an entity's website. Promoted items may be advertised on the entity's website over a period(s) reserved by the item promoter. The item promoter may upload content to the bookings server for such advertising.

Operation of the prize promotion system will now be described, with reference to
25 Figure 12, which indicate steps that take place. Initially, the purchaser begins the purchasing process (step S301), that is, selects using the user interface items to be bought or to redeem points against, and a transaction identifier is generated. On selection of each item, the terminal communicates the selection to the server 400 at step S302. The server 400 checks on a list thereat whether the item is under
30 promotion at step S303. When an item is selected that is under promotion, the server 400 sends a message to the terminal 450 indicating this (step S304). The user terminal 450 receives the message at step S305 and communicates that this to the purchaser, for example, by display of suitable text on the terminal's screen.

35 Although not essential, the purchaser preferably has a pre-registered customer account. Before completing the purchasing process, the purchaser authenticates at step S306 him or herself, for example by entering a login and password, although

authentication in other ways is possible. The server 400 or another server is configured to handle authentication of the purchaser for the customer account. Alternatively, the purchaser can authenticate him or herself before or between selection of items to be purchased.

5

The customer completes payment in step S307. The user terminal 450 then communicates in step S308 a request to the customer for confirmation that a game is to be entered relating to the promoted item purchased. The customer, using the user interface, either provides confirmation or declines (or takes no action, which is deemed to be declining) at step S309. If the customer declines, the terminal 450 ends the game entry process (step310). If the customer indicates that a game is to be entered, the user terminal 450 transmits at step S311 a request to the server 300 for entry to a game. The request includes a terminal identifier, an indication that a game is to be entered and a transaction identifier. The request may include further information, as described above in relation to the embodiments in stores.

The server 400 then performs the steps S14 to S21 described above. The terminal 314 receives a response from the server 400 at step S312 and communicates the result to the customer at step S313 by means of the touchscreen display. If the result is that the customer has won a prize, the terminal 450 may display instructions on how to claim the prize. Alternatively, provided the purchaser has entered an email address or is a registered customer, where an email address is stored at the first server corresponding to the customer account, the server 400 sends an email to the purchaser with instructions on how to claim the prize.

25

There are various advantages associated with embodiments of the product promotion system. In embodiments, pre-planning and implementation of the factory production of large quantities of packaging of products specified designed to indicate that a product is under promotion is not required by manufacturers. Also, an indication of a "win" does not have to be printed on packaging. High cost savings can be obtained.

In embodiments, lead time in effecting a product promotion can be much reduced, since the promotion can be arranged electronically without need for manufacture/printing of special packaging and its distribution. In particular, there is no need for secure distribution of winning 'packs' to ensure even spread across stores across a country while at the same time keeping location of winning

packs secret even from employees. Promotions can be shorter and more frequent, at lower costs.

5 In embodiments, there is no need for manufacturers to maintain prize draw offices with staff to handle mailed in winning vouchers or tokens or deal with winning code numbers and then later to hold a fair draw that is transparent and demonstrably so to the public, as may be done conventionally.

10 In embodiments, need for the offering sale of the promotion packs at every store in the country to match the nationwide TV advertising announcing the promotion and prizes is prevented, since stores can be selected one by one or in regions of a country.

15 In embodiments, need is removed to offer the promotion for a pre-planned number of days or weeks or months with the attendant quantity of sufficient production of promotion packs distributed in time. Accordingly, logistical and time sensitive activity is reduced because promotions are simply booked through the website quickly and simply, such that a product promotion can be run when required, for a chosen duration, at selected stores.

20 In embodiments, TV advertising (or via various other media) is not required as in-store displays replace that at the point of decision making while shopping. This also allows small manufactures to offer promotion. In particular, a promotion does not have to run until all specially marked packing is sold out. This in turn allows for the first time various 'test' promotions at very little cost and also the entry of very small manufacturers who cannot mount nationwide promotions and/or do not have nationwide distribution. Promotions can be very much localised with local producers promoting economically (for example).

30 The need for shoppers to look for, read and understand how to avail themselves of prizes, and then to follow through if they win a prize by having to mail in or phone in or text message in to the manufacturer's prize office with their winning token/voucher/code etc., is avoided. Conventionally, if a product promotion involves a physical prize draw, there is considerable delay in carrying out the draw, and for notification and prize receipt.

35

Shoppers do not have to remember that a promotion is on. They are informed in store or online.

The awarding of prizes is fast and automatic.

5

In embodiments, the game entry process is entertaining and that and the associated anticipation provide excitement.

Conventionally, a shopper may only find out later on removing packaging and reading the interior of packaging that they have won.

10

If a shopper wins in a store, it is good publicity for the store. The win may be advertised in real-time to others in the store.

In embodiments, entities operating/owning stores may charge manufacturers for a promotion. Thus the owners/operators would have another revenue stream. Manufacturers may nevertheless save on cost, since packaging need not be modified, and advertising need not be paid for through other media. There is also *considerable additional ease and flexibility for manufacturers.*

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Separate PoS and Game Entry Terminals in Stores

In alternative embodiments the points redemption system and/or product promotion system may be adapted so that game entry takes place at separate gaming terminals. In these embodiments, at least one gaming terminal other than PoS terminals may be provided in a store. Such gaming terminals are indicated in Figure 13 at 460.

25

There are a number of possible implementations. An embodiment will now be described with reference to Figures 14 and 15. During the purchasing process, a PoS terminal 450 receive input of data (step S401) and determines based on the data that the purchaser can enter a game at step S402.

30

The data input may be an item identifier of an item that is under promotion. Thus, the product promotion system described above can be implemented using separate PoS and gaming terminals.

35

Alternatively, the data input may be several item identifiers and the terminal determines that the value of the items exceeded a predetermined value. Thus, if the purchaser spends a predetermined amount, the purchaser will receive an opportunity to enter a game. Alternatively, for every predetermined amount that the purchaser spends, the purchaser will receive an opportunity to enter a game. Alternatively, the purchaser may receive the opportunity to enter a game simply for having purchased an item.

At step S403, the terminal 450 communicates a request to the purchaser to input a customer identifier. At step S404, the terminal 450 receives input of the customer identifier, for example as a consequence of the user scanning a customer loyalty card, and transmits the customer identifier to the server 500. The server 500 then records in association with the customer identifier that the customer may enter a game. The server 500 may record this using a counter associated with the customer identifier, so that the server 500 can record a particular number of games that can be entered by the customer.

At step S405, the terminal 450 communicates to the customer that he or she can enter a game at one of the gaming terminals 460.

Then the customer goes to a gaming terminal and inputs the customer identifier to the terminal 450 at step S406. The terminal 450 then sends a request to the server 500 including the customer identifier at step S407. The server 500 checks its records associated with the customer identifier to determine whether the customer has the right to enter a game and optionally the number of games that can be entered.

Provided at least one game is available for the customer to enter, the server 500 sends a response to the terminal 460 indicating that the user can enter a game and optionally the number of games that can be entered. The terminal 450 receives the response at step S408. The terminal 460 communicates to the purchaser that a game can be entered and if appropriate the number of games that can be entered. The terminal then receives input from the purchaser that the purchaser wishes to enter a game and processes the game.

The game terminal processes the game at steps S409 and S410. Processing the game entry involves sending a request to a server for game entry with an address of the terminal and the steps of S14 to S21 above. In an alternative embodiment, steps

S409 and S410 include the steps of sending a request to the server 500, the server 500 determining an outcome using a random or pseudo-random process and a list of prizes in a prize store to determine whether the purchaser wins a one of the listed prize, and sending a result of the determining to the PoS terminal 450. In another
5 embodiment, the gaming terminal 460 is itself configured to determine the outcome to a game (without recourse to the server). In this case, the gaming terminal may contain prizes or be configured so that small monetary prizes may be won. Steps S409 and S410 therefore do not necessarily require sending and receiving of information from the server 500, but instead the gaming terminal S460 determines an
10 outcome of the game and communicates it to the purchaser.

In alternative embodiments, steps S501 and S502 are like S401 and S402. If the PoS terminal 450 determines at step S402 that the purchaser can enter a game, the PoS terminal 450 sends a request to the server 500 for a ticket number and receives a
15 ticket number in response at step S503. Optionally, the PoS terminal 450 may first ask the purchaser if he or she would like to enter a game and if the purchaser selects to enter a game, obtain the ticket number. The PoS terminal 450 then prints the ticket number for the purchaser at step S504. Alternatively, the PoS terminal may
otherwise communicate the ticket number to the purchaser.

20

It is not essential for the ticket number to be in a numeric form. The ticket number printed could be any kind of machine readable data. The ticket number or machine readable data enabling game entry may be on a receipt.

25 In an embodiment, the server may, instead of sending the ticket number to the PoS terminal 450, send a message to a mobile device of the purchaser comprising a ticket number or machine readable data.

The purchaser then goes to the gaming terminal 460 and inputs the ticket number at
30 step S505. The terminal 460 may include a reader for reading machine readable data from a ticket or a mobile device. Alternatively, the terminal 460 may include an interface to enable the user to enter the ticket number.

The gaming terminal 460 then checks whether the ticket number is valid in
35 dependence on whether one or more criteria are met. For example, a criterion may be the ticket has not expired.

A ticket may be designated for use by a particular customer. In this case it is necessary to authenticate the customer. This can be achieved using a customer loyalty card or a payment card, for example. Thus, before or after inputting the ticket identifier to the gaming terminal, the customer inputs a customer identifier, for example using the customer's customer loyalty card. The gaming terminal then sends a request including the ticket identifier and the customer identifier to the server 500 and the server 500 determines whether in its records the ticket identifier and the customer identifier are associated. If so, the server 500 sends an indication to the gaming terminal 460 that the customer is authorised to enter a game using the ticket identifier.

Steps S507 and S508 are like steps S409 and S410.

A gaming terminal then determines based on information on the ticket that at least one game is to be entered, and causes processing at the server of the or each game accordingly to determine an outcome. The gaming terminal is configured to receive the outcome and communicate the outcome to the purchaser.

In embodiments for stores in which at least one gaming terminal is provided for game entry (described above), the at least one gaming terminal may be configured to allow a game entry(s) in response to input of information on a receipt issued by a PoS terminal at that store on that day. Alternatively, the at least one gaming terminal may be configured to allow a game entry(s) to any person having a customer loyalty card, in response to input of an identifier of such a card. Alternatively, a ticket can be obtained elsewhere that can be read by the gaming terminal, for example, by in a newspaper. The ticket may alternatively be on product packaging.

In another embodiment, where the customer has a customer account and has identified the account, for example using a customer loyalty card, a points for game entry may be stored at the server in association with the customer's account. The purchaser then identifies the customer account to a one of the gaming terminals, for example using the customer loyalty card. The gaming terminal 460 then determines based on the customer account identifier that at least one token is associated with the customer account and displays a request to the purchaser for confirmation to enter a game(s). The gaming terminal 550 then sends a request to the server 550 including an indication that a game is to be entered and an identifier of the terminal. The request may include an identifier of the purchaser. The server then processes

the or each game accordingly to determine an outcome. The other terminal is configured to receive the outcome and communicate the outcome to the purchaser.

General Remarks

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In embodiments, the functionality required for in store and/or online retailing, a customer loyalty program if appropriate, and game entry may be provided at different servers.

10 The exemplary embodiments described above indicate that the present invention may be applied in a store, for example a supermarket. Embodiments of the present invention may also be applied in other types of physical store, including hardware stores and home centres, clothing stores, drug stores, department stores, restaurants of various types, bars and vending machines. Embodiments may also be
15 implemented in customer loyalty systems of financial service companies for example credit card issuers which award points. Air miles may also be redeemed against entry to games.

It should be understood that in all of the above embodiments order of steps may be
20 *changed so that a purchaser can enter a game before payment is complete or after payment. However, if a game is entered before payment is complete, the outcome should not be communicated to the purchaser before payment is complete.*

In embodiments, persons in a store may enter games without need for redemption of
25 points or to purchase a particular item over a predetermined time period or need for a ticket. Advantageously, this may attract people to stores. In an embodiment, to prevent people who are not customers of a store from entering games over such a time period, a terminal (in online or in store embodiments) may be configured to enable any purchaser of items to enter a game, or to allow any person to enter a
30 game if at least one predetermined criterion is met. For example, the predetermined criterion may be that a minimum amount of money is spent. Alternatively, a person may be able to enter a game(s) simply by swiping a loyalty card during a predetermined period, whether purchasing items or not. There is preferably a limit to the number of game entries allowed per person during such a set time period, or over
35 another time period, for example per month.

In an aspect of the invention, there is provided apparatus for a game entry system for location in a store, comprising handling means for handling purchase of items, and game entry means for a person to enter at least one game for which a prize is available and communicate an outcome of the at least one game to the person.

5

The handling means and the game entry means may be provided in an appropriately configured terminal connected to the internet. Alternatively, the handling means and the game entry means may be provided in a PoS terminal in a store. Alternatively, the handling means may be provided in a PoS terminal located in a store and the game entry means may be provided in another, separate terminal located in the same store. In this case, the PoS terminal may be configured, in response to a purchase, to provide a receipt or a ticket or the like having data thereon indicating that at least one entry to a game is permitted, and the other terminal may be consider to read said data, determine whether game entry is permitted and cause processing of at least one entry to a game in dependence on a result of said determination, and communicate an outcome of said at least one entry. In each case, the prize may be a jackpot, optionally a progressive jackpot. There may be provided a plurality of terminals and, in some embodiments, other terminals.

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In an aspect of the invention, there is provided a method comprising: receiving an input at a terminal identifying an item to be purchased; determining that the item is under promotion; enabling entry to a draw for which a progressive jackpot prize is available; and communicating the outcome of the draw to the customer. The terminal may be a PoS terminal in accordance with description above, for a store such as a retail store, or may be a terminal enabling online shopping.

25

In another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method comprising: receiving at an electronic terminal input of information indicating that points are to be redeemed against a game for which a prize is available; processing the game to determine an outcome; and communicating to the customer the outcome of the game (at the terminal or another terminal).

30

In another aspect of the invention, there is provided apparatus for sharing a prize promotion system or a points redemption system between entities each having an online store at which users can buy items from the entity, the apparatus comprising a server for receiving requests to enter games from the entities, processing each of the requests to determine an outcome, and sending a response indicating the outcome

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to the entity from which the request was received. The outcome may be that a prize is won. In the case that a prize is won, the cost of the prize is preferably shared amongst the entities. The cost may be shared in proportion to the number of requests that the server processes from each entity. The prize may be a jackpot, preferably a progressive jackpot. The requests to enter games may be sent from a plurality of server means each hosting a one of the entity's online stores. In the case of a points redemption system, the requests may be sent to the server when user chooses to redeem points against entry to a game. In the case of a product promotion system, the requests may be sent to the server when a user purchases a promoted item. For example, a server means determines that a promoted item is being purchased and invites the user to enter a game accordingly.

In another aspect, there is provided in a (physical) store a gaming terminal configured to: receive input of a piece of information; determine based on the piece of information that a game is to be entered; process an entry to a game accordingly to generate an outcome; and communicate the outcome to the user. The processing of the entry may include sending a request to a server including an identifier of the gaming terminal, which determines the outcome and sends information indicative of the outcome to the gaming terminal. The determining based on the piece of information may comprise determining based on a information on a voucher (electronic or physical), a customer identifier, a product packaging, or a code entered by the user.

The terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to be limiting of the invention. It will be further understood that the terms "comprises" and/or "comprising," when used in this specification, specify the presence of stated features, integers, steps, operations, elements, and/or components, but do not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integers, steps, operations, elements, components, and/or groups thereof. The term "for" is be understood as meaning "suitable for" unless the context indicates otherwise.

The applicant hereby discloses in isolation each individual feature or step described herein and any combination of two or more such features, to the extent that such features or steps or combinations of features and/or steps are capable of being carried out based on the present specification as a whole in the light of the common general knowledge of a person skilled in the art, irrespective of whether such

features or steps or combinations of features and/or steps solve any problems disclosed herein, and without limitation to the scope of the claims. The applicant indicates that aspects of the present invention may consist of any such individual feature or step or combination of features and/or steps. In view of the foregoing
5 description it will be evident to a person skilled in the art that various modifications may be made within the scope of the invention.

CLAIMS

1. Apparatus for use in a points redemption system in relation to a customer loyalty programme, the apparatus comprising:
5 at least one data input means for receiving input, initiated by a user, of an indication that at least one point is to be redeemed against entry to a game;
 sending means for sending a request to a server means, the request including an indication that a game is to be entered and an identifier of a terminal comprising the sending means; and
10 means for receiving information indicative of an outcome of the game and communicating the outcome to the user.

2. Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the at least one data input means is configured to receive input of data associated with a number of points redeemable.
15

3. Apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the at least one data input means is configured to receive input of a voucher identifier, wherein the apparatus further comprises determining means for determining the number of points redeemable based on the voucher identifier.
20

4. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the at least one data input means is configured to read data on a medium attached to items to be purchased, said data comprising an identifier of the particular item.

- 25 5. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the at least one data input means is configured to receive input, initiated by the user, of information identifying a customer, and said sending means is arranged to send to the server means, together with said indication and the terminal identifier, the information identifying the customer.
30

6. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, further comprising a user interface comprising the at least one data input means, wherein the user interface enables a user to purchase at least one item.

- 35 7. A terminal comprising the apparatus of any one of the preceding claims.

8. A terminal according to claim 7, wherein the terminal is a point-of-sale terminal for a retail store configured for purchase of items by a purchaser.

9. A terminal according to claim 7, wherein the terminal includes:

5 a web browser implemented in code stored in a memory, wherein the user can use said web browser when running on a processor to access an online store to purchaser items,

a user interface including said at least one data input means and means for communicating the outcome of the game, and

10 a network interface comprising said sending means and said means for receiving.

10. Apparatus for a points redemption system for a customer loyalty programme, comprising:

15 a server means connected to a communications network; and

a plurality of electronic terminals, each as claimed in any one of claims 7 to 9, and connected to the communications network, wherein the server means is arranged, responsive to the request, to determine an outcome of the game and to send information indicative of the outcome to the terminal identified by the terminal
20 identifier for the terminal to receive and communicate to the purchaser.

11. Apparatus according to claim 10, further comprising a plurality of display systems connected to the communications network, wherein the server means is configured to cause advertising of the at least one prize on the display systems.

25

12. Apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the server means is configured to send to the display system information indicating that the game can be entered on redemption of points, and the display system is configured to receive and to advertise said information.

30

13. Apparatus according to any one of claims 10, wherein the server means is configured to send to each terminal information indicating that a game can be entered by redemption of points, wherein the terminal is configured to receive said information and advertise said information to the user.

35

14. Apparatus according to any one of the claims 10 to 13, wherein each terminal is configured to generate a transaction identifier for the process of purchasing at least

one item, wherein the request includes the at least one transaction identifier, and the server means is configured to store the at least one transaction identifier with a corresponding game entry identifier.

5 15. Apparatus including the apparatus of any one of claims 1 to 6, comprising a set of first terminals and at least one second terminal,

wherein each first terminal comprises the at least one data input means for receiving input, initiated by a user, of an indication that at least one point is to be redeemed against entry to a game, and wherein each first terminal is configured to
10 enable the user to enter the game at a second terminal;

wherein the or each second terminal comprises a input means for receiving input of an identifier and the sending means for sending, further to receiving input of the identifier by the user, a request to the server means, the request including an indication that a game is to be entered and an identifier of the second terminal, and
15 the means for receiving information indicative of an outcome of the game and communicating the outcome to the user.

16. Apparatus according to claim 15, wherein each first terminal is configured to enable the user to enter the game at a second terminal by providing the user with a
20 ticket having an identifier thereon, and wherein the input means of the second terminal is configured to receive input of the identifier.

17. Apparatus according to claim 15 or claim 16, wherein each first terminal is configured to generate a transaction identifier for the process of purchasing at least
25 one item, wherein the request includes the at least one transaction identifier, and the server means is configured to store the at least one transaction identifier with a corresponding game entry identifier.

18. Apparatus according to any one of claims 10 to 17, wherein the server
30 means includes a prize store including information indicative of at least one prize, wherein the determining an outcome of the game comprises determining if the purchaser has won a prize.

19. Apparatus according to any one of claims 10 to 18, wherein the server means
35 includes a game records store and recording means for recording, responsive to the server means determining that the purchaser has won a prize, in the game records store at least that said prize is won.

20. Apparatus according to any one of claims 10 to 19, wherein the at least one prize comprises a jackpot and the information indicative of the at least one prize comprises a jackpot value.

5

21. Apparatus according to claim 20, wherein jackpot is a progressive jackpot, and the server means includes jackpot update means for incrementing of the jackpot value in the prize store each time the server means determines that the outcome of a game is a lose.

10

22. A method of redeeming points by a user in relation to a customer loyalty programme:

receiving input, initiated by a user, at a terminal of an indication that at least one point is to be redeemed against entry to a game;

15

sending, responsive to the receiving, a request to the server means, the request including an indication that a game is to be entered and an identifier of a (the or another) terminal operated by or for the user; and

receiving, at the terminal operated by or for the user, information indicative of an outcome of the game and communicating the outcome to the user.

20

23. A method according to claim 22, further comprising receiving input at the terminal of data associated with a number of points redeemable.

25

24. A method according to claim 23, further comprising receiving input at the terminal of a voucher identifier and determining at the terminal the number of points redeemable based on the voucher identifier.

30

25. A method according to any one of claims 22 to 24, further comprising processing at the terminal items to be purchased by the user, including reading data on a medium attached to items to be purchased, said data comprising an identifier of the particular item.

35

26. A method according to any one of claims 22 to 25, further comprising receiving input, initiated by the user, of information identifying a customer account, and sending to the server means, together with said indication and the terminal identifier, the information identifying the customer account.

27. A method according to any one of claims 22 to 26, further comprising enabling, at the terminal, the user to purchase at least one item using a user interface comprising data input means.

5 28. A method according to claim 27, wherein the terminal is a point-of-sale terminal for a retail store configured for purchase of items by the user.

29. A method according to claim 26, further comprising accessing by the user of an online store for purchase of items.

10

30. A method according to any one of claims 22 to 26, further comprising:
receiving the request at the server means;
responsive to the request, determining at the server means an outcome of the game;

15

sending information indicative of the outcome to the terminal identified by the terminal identifier for receipt at the terminal of the information indicative of the outcome and communication of the outcome to the user.

20

31. A method according to any one of claims 22 to 30, further comprising causing advertising of the at least one prize on a plurality of display systems.

25

32. A method according to any one of claims 22 to 31, further comprising sending to the display systems information indicating that the game can be entered on redemption of points, and receiving and advertising said information at the display systems.

30

33. A method according to any one of claims 22 to 32, further comprising sending to the terminals information indicating that a game can be entered by redemption of points, wherein the terminal is configured to receive said information and advertise said information to the user at a display thereof.

35

34. A method according to any one of claims 22 to 33, further comprising generating at the terminal a transaction identifier for the process of purchasing at least one item, wherein the request includes the at least one transaction identifier, and storing at the server means the at least one transaction identifier with a corresponding game entry identifier.

35. A method according to any one of claims 22 to 33, comprising,
at the terminal, receiving input, initiated by a user, of an indication that at least one point is to be redeemed against entry to a game, and enabling the user to enter the game at a second terminal;

5 at the other terminal, receiving input of an identifier and sending, further to receiving input of the identifier by the user, a request to the server means, the request including an indication that a game is to be entered and an identifier of the second terminal, and receiving information indicative of an outcome of the game and communicating the outcome to the user.

10

36. A method according to any one of claims 22 to 35, further comprising enabling the user to enter the game at the other terminal by providing the user with a ticket having an identifier thereon, and further comprising receiving input of the identifier at the other terminal.

15

37. A method according to any one of claims 22 to 36, wherein determining an outcome of the game comprises determining at the server means if the purchaser has won a prize listed in a prize store.

20

38. A method according to any one of claims 22 to 37, wherein responsive to the server means determining that the purchaser has won a prize, recording in the game records store at least that said prize is won.

25

39. A method according to any one of claims 22 to 38, wherein the at least one prize comprises a jackpot and the information indicative of the at least one prize comprises a jackpot value.

30

40. A method according to any one of claims 22 to 39, wherein jackpot is a progressive jackpot, further comprising incrementing the jackpot value in the prize store each time the server means determines that the outcome of a game is a lose.

41. A computer program comprising computer program code means adapted to perform all the steps of claim 22 to 40 when said program is run on a processing apparatus.

35

42. A computer program as claimed in claim 41 embodied on a computer readable storage medium.

43. Apparatus for use in a points redemption system for a customer loyalty program, configured to carry out the steps of the methods of any one of claims 22 to 40.

5 44. Apparatus for use in a points redemption system for a customer loyalty system and/or a product promotion system, comprising:

receiving means for receiving a request initiated at a terminal by a user, the request including an indication that at least one game is to be entered and an identifier of the terminal;

10 determining means for determining an outcome of the game;

recording means for recording the outcome of the game; and

sending means for sending information indicative of the outcome to the terminal identified by the terminal identifier so that the terminal can communicate the outcome to the user.

15

45. Apparatus according to claim 44, wherein the receiving means is configured to receive requests from first terminals initiated by users, each request indicating that the respective user has selected to enter a game, further comprising means for enabling the user to enter the game at a second terminal, wherein the request including an indication that at least one game is to be entered is received from a second terminal and the information indicative of the outcome is sent to the second terminal so that the second terminal can communicate the outcome to the user.

20

46. Apparatus according to claim 45, wherein the enabling entry comprising instructing the first terminal to provide to the user an identifier, wherein the request received from the second terminal includes the identifier, such that the apparatus can match the user sending the request at the first terminal with the user entering the game at the second terminal.

25

47. Apparatus according to claim 44, wherein the receiving means is configured to receive such requests from a plurality of such terminals, wherein the determining means is configured to determine an outcome for each game, wherein the recording means is configured to record the outcome of each game, and the sending means is configured to send information indicative of the outcome of each game to the respective terminal so that the terminal can communicate the outcome to the user.

30
35

48. Apparatus for a points redemption system in accordance with any one of claims 44 to claim 47, wherein each request includes an indication of the number of points redeemed and the recording means is configured to record the number of points redeemed.

5

49. Apparatus according to any one of claims 44 to 48, wherein the requests to enter games are initiated at a plurality of terminals, each allowing a user access to an online store, wherein the online store is configured to allow a user to redeem points against entry to games and/or to purchase products under promotion to gain an entry to a game.

10

50. Apparatus according to claim 49, wherein the requests are received from terminals operating online stores belonging to a plurality of different entities, wherein the determining means is operated by third party entity.

15

51. Apparatus according to any one of claims 44 to 50, further comprising means for causing advertising of the at least one prize on a plurality of display systems in at least one retail store.

20

52. Apparatus according to any one of claims 44 to 51, wherein the apparatus includes a prize store including information indicative of at least one prize, wherein the determining an outcome of the game comprises determining if the purchaser has won a prize.

25

53. Apparatus according to claim 52, further comprising a game records store and recording means for recording, responsive to the server means determining that the purchaser has won a prize, in the game records store at least that said prize is won.

30

54. Apparatus according to claim 53, wherein the at least one prize comprises a jackpot and the information indicative of the at least one prize comprises a jackpot value.

35

55. Apparatus according to claim 54, wherein the jackpot is a progressive jackpot, further comprising jackpot update means for incrementing of the jackpot value in the prize store each time the determining means determines that the outcome of a game is a lose.

56. A method of redeeming points in a customer loyalty system or for a product promotion system, comprising:

receiving a request initiated at a terminal, the request including an indication that at least one game is to be entered and an identifier of the terminal;

determining an outcome of the game;

recording an outcome of the game; and

10 sending information indicative of the outcome to the terminal identified by the terminal identifier so that the terminal can communicate the outcome to the purchaser.

57. A method according to claim 56, further comprising:

15 receiving a plurality of requests from a plurality of first terminals, each request being initiated by a user of a one of the first terminals, each request indicating that the respective user has selected to enter a game,

enabling the user to enter the game at at least one second terminal,

20 receiving a plurality of requests at the at least one second terminal, each request including an indication that at least one game is to be entered and

30 sending information indicative of the outcome to the second terminal from which the request was received so that the second terminal can communicate the outcome to the user.

25 58. A method according to claim 57, wherein the enabling the user to enter the game comprises instructing the first terminal to provide to the user an identifier, wherein the request received from the second terminal includes the identifier, and

30 matching the user who sent the request at the first terminal with the user who initiated sending of the request including an indication that a game is to be entered at the second terminal.

59. A method according to claim 56, comprising:

35 receiving a plurality of such requests from a plurality of terminals, each request being initiated by a user of a one of the terminals, each request including an indication that a game is to be entered,

determining an outcome for each game,

recording the outcome of each game, and

sending information indicative of the outcome of each game to the respective terminal so that the terminal can communicate the outcome to the user.

5 60. A method in accordance with any one of claims 56 to claim 59, wherein each request includes an indication of the number of points redeemed and further comprising recording the number of points redeemed.

10 61. A method according to any one of claims 56 to 59, wherein the requests to enter games are initiated at a plurality of terminals, each allowing a user access to an online store, further comprising enabling at the online store a user to redeem points against entry to games and/or to purchase products under promotion to gain an entry to a game.

15 62. A method according to claim 61, wherein the requests are received from terminals operating online stores belonging to a plurality of different entities, wherein the determining is performed by third party entity.

20 63. A method according to any one of claims 56 to 62, further comprising causing advertising of the at least one prize on a plurality of display systems in at least one retail store.

25 64. A method according to any one of claims 56 to 63, wherein the apparatus includes a prize store including information indicative of at least one prize, wherein determining an outcome of the game comprises determining if the purchaser has won a prize.

30 65. A method according to claim 64, further comprising a game records store and recording means for recording, responsive to the server means determining that the purchaser has won a prize, and recording in the game records store at least that said prize is won.

35 66. A method according to claim 65, wherein the at least one prize comprises a jackpot and the information indicative of the at least one prize comprises a jackpot value.

67. A method according to claim 66 wherein the jackpot is a progressive jackpot, further comprising updating of the jackpot value in the prize store each time the determining means determines that the outcome of a game is a lose.

5 68. A computer program comprising computer program code means adapted to perform all the steps of claim 56 to 67 when said program is run on a processing apparatus.

10 69. A computer program as claimed in claim 68 embodied on a computer readable storage medium.

70. Apparatus for managing item promotion reservation, comprising:
a server means for connection to a communications network, the server means being configured for handling requests for item promotion reservations for receipt from terminals initiated at terminals at a plurality of entities, wherein the server means is configured for controlling promotion of items at at least one store of a different entity based on item promotion reservations.

15

20 71. Apparatus according to claim 70, wherein the at least one store comprises an online store and/or physical stores.

72. Apparatus according to claim 70 or claim 71, wherein the controlling promotion comprises controlling advertising of an item at the at least one store.

25 73. Apparatus according to claim 70 to 72, wherein the advertising includes advertising that a reward will be offered if an advertised item is purchased.

30 74. Apparatus according to claim 73, wherein the requests regarding item promotion reservations comprise information indicative of the reward to be offered.

75. Apparatus according to claim 74, wherein the reward is that a game can be entered if the advertised item is purchased.

35 76. Apparatus according to claim 75, wherein the at least one game comprises a prize draw such as for a jackpot, for example a progressive jackpot.

77. Apparatus according to any one of the claims 70 to 77, wherein the server means comprises a bookings database, the bookings database comprising means for storing at least one of:

5 information indicative of time periods over which advertising of an item takes place;

content for use in advertising of an item;

information indicative of stores in which advertising is to take place;

10 information identifying at least one reward that will be offered if a particular advertised item is purchased, preferably wherein the reward is entry to a game;

information identifying stores in which an item is to be promoted by characteristic of the stores; and

information identifying at least one product to be promoted.

78. Apparatus according to claim 77, wherein the information stored is received in the request from the terminals in accordance with predetermined criteria.

79. Apparatus according to any one of the claims 70 to 78, wherein the server means is configured so that content can be uploaded from a one of the terminals to the server means and stored on a computer readable storage medium thereat.

80. Apparatus according to any one of the claims 70 to 79 wherein the server means is configured to control promotion of items at at least one internet-connected terminal at which the item can be purchased via an online store.

81. Apparatus according to any one of the claims 70 to 80, wherein the server means is configured to control advertising at at least one display system in at least one physical store.

82. Apparatus according to any one of claims 70 to 81, further comprising a payment interface for access by the plurality of entities at the respective terminals.

83. Apparatus according to any one of claims 70 to 82, further comprising a plurality of said display systems located in a plurality of stores and connected to the communications network, wherein each display system is configured for advertising of items under the control of the server means.

84. Apparatus according to any one of the claims 70 to 83, wherein the server means is connected to the communications network, further comprising a plurality of point-of-sale (PoS) terminals connected to the communications network, wherein each PoS terminal is configured:

- 5 to send, in response to purchase of a promoted item by a purchaser, a request, the request including an indication that a game is to be entered, an identifier of the terminal and information identifying the item purchased,
 to receive information indicative of the outcome, and
 to communicate the outcome to the customer.

10

85. Apparatus according to any one of the claims 70 to 84, further comprising a plurality of internet-connected user terminals enabling purchase of items via an online store, wherein each user terminal is configured:

- to send, in response to purchase of a promoted item by a purchaser, a
15 request, the request including an indication that a game is to be entered, an identifier of the terminal and information identifying the item purchased,
 to receive information indicative of the outcome, and
 to communicate the outcome to the customer.

20 86. Apparatus according to any one of the claims 70 to 85, further comprising a plurality of terminals each operable by one of the plurality of entities, comprising means for inputting information relating to item promotion reservation in dependence on predetermined criteria, and sending the requests regarding item promotion reservation to the server means.

25

87. Apparatus according to any one of the claims 70 to 85, further comprising receiving requests regarding availability of time periods for product promotion, determining availability and sending a response to the terminals.

30 88. A method of managing item promotion reservation for stores, comprising:
 handling requests for item promotion reservations initiated at terminals at a plurality of entities; and
 controlling promotion of items at at least one different entity based on the item promotion reservations.

35

89. A method according to claim 88, wherein the stores comprises an online store and/or physical stores.

90. A method according to claim 88 or claim 89, wherein the controlling promotion comprises controlling advertising of an item at the at least one store.

5 91. A method according to any one of claims 88 to 90, wherein the advertising includes advertising that a reward will be offered if an advertised item is purchased.

92. A method according to claim 91, wherein some of the requests regarding item promotion reservations comprise information indicative of the reward to be offered.

10

93. A method according to claim 92, wherein the reward is that a game can be entered if the advertised item is purchased.

15 94. A method according to claim 93, wherein the at least one game comprises a prize draw.

95. A method according to any one of claims 88 to 94, wherein the server comprises a bookings database, the bookings database comprising means for storing at least one of:

20 information indicative of time periods over which advertising of an item takes place;

content for use in advertising of an item;

information indicative of stores in which advertising is to take place;

25 information identifying at least one reward that will be offered if a particular advertised item is purchased, preferably wherein the reward is entry to a game;

information identifying stores in which an item is to be promoted by characteristic of the stores; and

information identifying at least one product to be promoted.

30 96. A method according to any one of claims 88 to 95, further comprising enabling upload of content to the server means and, when content is received at the server means, storing said content thereat.

35 97. A method according to any one of claims 88 to 95, further comprising controlling advertising of items at at least one internet-connected terminal at which the item can be purchased via an online store.

98. A method according to any one of claims 88 to 95, further comprising controlling advertising at at least one display system in at least one store.

5 99. A method according to claim 98, further comprising advertising of items under the control of the server means at a plurality of display system locating in a plurality of stores and connected to the communications network.

10 100. A method according to any one of claims 88 to 99, further comprising, at at least one plurality of point-of-sale (PoS) terminals connected to the communications network:

15 sending, in response to purchase of an advertised item by a purchaser, a request, the request including an indication that a game is to be entered, an identifier of the terminal and information identifying the item purchased,
receiving information indicative of the outcome, and
communicating the outcome to the customer.

101. A method according to any one of claims 88 to 100, further comprising, at a plurality of internet-connected user terminals enabling purchase of items via an online store:

20 sending, in response to purchase of an advertised item by a purchaser, a request, the request including an indication that a game is to be entered, an identifier of the terminal and information identifying the item purchased,
receiving information indicative of the outcome, and
communicating the outcome to the customer.

25 102. A method according to any one of claims 88 to 101, further comprising, at each of a plurality of terminals each operable by one of the plurality of entities, inputting information relating to item promotion reservation in dependence on predetermined criteria, and sending the requests regarding item promotion reservation to the server means.

103. A method according to any one of claims 88 to 102, further comprising receiving requests regarding availability of time periods for product promotion, determining availability and sending a response to the terminals.

35

104. A computer program comprising computer program code means adapted to perform all the steps of claim 88 to 103 when said program is run on a processing apparatus.

5 105. A computer program as claimed in claim 104 embodied on a computer readable storage medium.

106. Apparatus for use in a store, comprising:

at least one PoS terminal for processing purchase of items; and

10 at least one separate gaming terminal for determining, in response to input by a user of a piece of information, that a game can be entered based on the piece of information, and handling a game entry based on a result of the determining.

107. Apparatus according to claim 106, wherein the at least one separate gaming terminal is not a PoS terminal.

108. Apparatus according to claim 106 or 107, wherein the piece of information comprises:

a customer identifier or a customer account identifier;

20 a voucher identifier;

an item identifier on item packaging;

machine readable data for example on paper or in electronic form;

a code;

an indication that points are available for redemption; and

25 a number of redeemable points stored on a customer card.

109. Apparatus according to any one of claims 106 to 108, wherein the gaming terminal comprises a machine readable data reader for receiving input of said piece of information.

30

110. Apparatus according to any one of claims 106 to 109, wherein the gaming terminal comprises a user interface for receiving from the user input of said piece of information.

35 111. Apparatus according to claim 106 to 110, wherein the at least one gaming terminal is connected to a communications network, the apparatus further comprising a server means connected to the communications network, wherein the

at least one gaming terminal and the server means process entry to games initiated at the gaming terminal to generate an outcome, and the respective gaming terminal communicates the outcome to the user.

5 112. Apparatus according to any one of claims 106 to 111, wherein the PoS terminal is configured, in response to at least one predetermined criterion being met, to grant the user an option to enter a game, wherein the PoS terminal notifies a (or the) server means that the option is granted and in response thereto the server means records in a store information relating to the option, wherein the determining
10 that a game can be entered based on the piece of information comprises determining that the input piece of information and the information relating to the option are associated.

113. Apparatus according to claim 112, wherein the PoS terminal determines that
15 a criterion for at least one game entry is met if a user purchases a predetermined threshold value of items.

114. Apparatus according to claim 112 or 113 wherein the PoS terminal determines that a criterion for at least one game entry is met if the PoS terminal
20 determines that the user has bought an item that is under promotion.

115. Apparatus according to claim 112 to 114, wherein the PoS terminal determines that a criterion for at least one game entry is met if the points associated with items bought total a predetermined amount, and if the customer selects to
25 redeem the points against entry to a game.

116. Apparatus according to any one of claims 112 to 115, wherein the PoS terminal determines that at least one criterion for at least one game entry are met if the PoS terminal determines that points belonging to the customer are available for
30 redemption and receives input from the user indicating that the user wishes to redeem them.

117. Apparatus according to any one of claims 106 to 116, wherein the piece of information comprises an indication that at least one point is to be redeemed,
35 wherein determining that a game can be entered based on the piece of information comprises determining that points belonging to the customer can be redeemed against game entry.

118. Apparatus according to claim 112 to 117, wherein the PoS terminal is configured to receive input of a customer identifier and to send, in response to the predetermined criterion being met, to a server means in a request the customer
5 identifier and an indication that at least one game can be entered to the server means, wherein the server means is configured to receive the request and store in association with the customer account identified by the customer identifier an indication that a user can enter at least one game, whereby an input of the customer
10 identifier at a gaming terminal, the gaming terminal determines by communication with the server means that at least one game can be entered using the customer identifier.

119. Apparatus according to claim 112 to 118 wherein, in response to the predetermined criterion being met, the PoS terminal is configured to send to a server
15 means a request for a ticket identifier, wherein the server means is configured to generate a ticket identifier, to store the ticket identifier and to send a response to the PoS terminal including the ticket identifier, wherein the PoS terminal is configured to communicate the ticket identifier to the user.

120. Apparatus according to claim 119, wherein the PoS terminal is configured to print a ticket with the ticket identifier thereon, wherein the gaming terminal comprises
20 means to read said ticket identifier and determine, based on said identifier, to allow game entry.

121. Apparatus according to claim 106 to 120, wherein the input piece of information is valid for a particular customer, wherein the gaming terminal is
25 configured to check that the user is authorised to enter a game using the piece of information by requesting and receiving input of a customer identifier, sending a request to the server means including the piece of information and the customer
30 identifier, wherein the server is configured to determine whether the piece of information is associated with the customer identifier and, if so, to deem the user authorised.

122. Apparatus according to any one of claims 106 to 121, further comprising a
35 plurality of display systems connected to the communications network, wherein the server means is configured to cause advertising of at least one prize which can be won by entry to the game on the display systems.

123. Apparatus according to claim 122, wherein the server means is configured to send to the display system information indicating that the game can be entered on redemption of points or on purchase of a particular item, and the display system is
5 configured to receive and to advertise said information.

124. Apparatus according to any one of claims 106 to 123, wherein the server means includes a prize store including information indicative of at least one prize, wherein handling a game entry comprises determining if the purchaser has won a
10 prize.

125. Apparatus according to any one of claims 106 to 124, wherein the server means includes a game records store and recording means for recording, responsive to the server means determining that the purchaser has won a prize, in the game records store at least that said prize is won.
15

126. Apparatus according to any one of claims 106 to 124, wherein the at least one prize comprises a jackpot and the information indicative of the at least one prize comprises a jackpot value.
20

127. Apparatus according to claim 125, wherein jackpot is a progressive jackpot, and the server means includes jackpot update means for incrementing of the jackpot value in the prize store each time the server means determines that the outcome of a game is a lose.
25

128. A method in a gaming terminal in a store having at least one separate PoS terminal for processing purchase of items, comprising:

determining, in response to input by a user of a piece of information, that a game can be entered based on the piece of information; and
30

handling a game entry based on a result of the determining.

129. A method according to claim 128, wherein the at least one separate gaming terminal is not a PoS terminal.

130. A method according to claim 128 or claims 129, wherein the piece of information comprises:

a customer identifier or a customer account identifier;

a voucher identifier;
an item identifier on item packaging;
machine readable data for example on paper or in electronic form;
a code;
5 an indication that points are available for redemption; and
a number of redeemable points stored on a customer card.

131. A method according to any one of claims 128 to 130, comprising receiving
input of said piece of information at the gaming terminal.

10

132. A method according to any one of claims 128 to 131, further comprising
receiving from the user input of said piece of information at a user interface of the
gaming terminal.

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133. A method according to claim 128 to 132, wherein the at least one gaming
terminal is connected to a communications network, the apparatus further
comprising a server means connected to the communications network, further
comprising processing entry to games by the at least one gaming terminal and the
server means to generate an outcome, and the gaming terminal communicating the
20 outcome to the user.

20

134. A method according to any one of claims 128 to 133, further comprising:
determining whether at least one predetermined criterion is met;
if the at least one predetermined criterion is met, granting the user an option

25

to enter a game;

notifying by the PoS terminal a (or the) server means that the option is
granted;

30

in response thereto records by the server means in a store information
relating to the option, wherein the determining that a game can be entered based on
the piece of information comprises determining that the input piece of information and
the information relating to the option are associated.

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135. A method according to any one of claims 128 to 134, wherein the PoS
terminal determines that a criterion for at least one game entry is met if a user
purchases a predetermined threshold value of items.

136. A method according to any one of claims 128 to 135, wherein the PoS terminal determines that a criterion for at least one game entry is met if the PoS terminal determines that the user has bought an item that is under promotion.

5 137. A method according to any one of claims 128 to 136, wherein the PoS terminal determines that a criterion for at least one game entry is met if the points associated with items bought total a predetermined amount, and if the customer selects to redeem the points against entry to a game.

10 138. A method according to any one of claims 128 to 137, wherein the PoS terminal determines that at least one criterion for at least one game entry is met if the PoS terminal determines that points belonging to the customer are available for redemption and receives input from the user indicating that the user wishes to redeem them.

15 139. A method according to any one of claims 128 to 138, wherein the piece of information comprises an indication that at least one point is to be redeemed, wherein determining that a game can be entered based on the piece of information comprises *determining that points belonging to the customer can be redeemed*
20 against game entry.

140. A method according to any one of claims 128 to 139, wherein the PoS terminal is configured to receive input of a customer identifier and to send, in response to the predetermined criterion being met, to a server means in a request
25 the customer identifier and an indication that at least one game can be entered to the server means, wherein the server means is configured to receive the request and store in association with the customer account identified by the customer identifier an indication that a user can enter at least one game, whereby an input of the customer identifier at a gaming terminal, the gaming terminal determines by communication
30 with the server means that at least one game can be entered using the customer identifier.

141. A method according to any one of claims 128 to 140 further comprising:
in response to the predetermined criterion being met, the PoS terminal sends
35 to a server means a request for a ticket identifier;
the server means generates a ticket identifier, stores the ticket identifier and sends a response to the PoS terminal including the ticket identifier, and

the PoS terminal communicates the ticket identifier to the user.

141. A method according to claim 140, further comprising:

the PoS terminal printing a ticket with the ticket identifier thereon, and
5 the gaming terminal reading said ticket identifier and determining, based on said identifier, to allow game entry.

142. A method according to any one of claims 128 to 141, wherein the input piece of information is valid for a particular customer, further comprising:

10 the gaming terminal checking that the user is authorised to enter a game using the piece of information by requesting and receiving input of a customer identifier, sending a request to the server means including the piece of information and the customer identifier; and
the server means determining whether the piece of information is associated
15 with the customer identifier and, if so, to deem the user authorised.

143. A method according to any one of claims 128 to 142, wherein a plurality of display systems are connected to the communications network, further comprising
the server means causing advertising of at least one prize which can be won by entry
20 to the game on the display systems.

144. A method according to claim 143, wherein the server means sends to the display system information indicating that the game can be entered on redemption of points or on purchase of a particular item, and the display system receives and
25 advertises said information.

145. A method according to any one of claims 128 to 144, wherein the server means includes a prize store including information indicative of at least one prize, wherein handling a game entry comprises determining if the purchaser has won a
30 prize.

146. A method according to any one of claims 128 to 145, wherein the server means includes a game records store, the method further comprising:
recording, responsive to the server means determining that the purchaser has
35 won a prize, in the game records store at least that said prize is won.

147. A method according to claim 146, wherein the at least one prize comprises a jackpot and the information indicative of the at least one prize comprises a jackpot value.

5 148. A method according to any one of claims 128 to 147, wherein jackpot is a progressive jackpot, the method further comprising incrementing the jackpot value in the prize store each time the server means determines that the outcome of a game is a lose.

10 149. A computer program comprising computer program code for carrying out the method any one of claims 128 to 147 when executed by processing means.

150. A computer program according to claim 149 embodied on a computer readable storage medium.

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Amendments to the claims have been filed as follows:

CLAIMS

1. Apparatus in a store, comprising:

5 at least one PoS terminal for processing purchase of items; and
 at least one separate gaming terminal for determining, in response to
input by a user of a piece of information, that a game can be entered based on the
piece of information, and handling a game entry based on a result of the determining.

10 2. Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the at least one separate gaming
terminal is not a PoS terminal.

3. Apparatus according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the piece of information
comprises:

15 a customer identifier or a customer account identifier;
 a voucher identifier;
 an item identifier on item packaging;
 machine readable data for example on paper or in electronic form;
 a code;
20 an indication that points are available for redemption; and
 a number of redeemable points stored on a customer card.

4. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the gaming
terminal comprises a machine readable data reader for receiving input of said piece
25 of information.

5. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the gaming
terminal comprises a user interface for receiving from the user input of said piece of
information.

30 6. Apparatus according to the preceding claims, wherein the at least one gaming
terminal is connected to a communications network , the apparatus further
comprising a server means connected to the communications network, wherein the
at least one gaming terminal and the server means process entry to games initiated
35 at the gaming terminal to generate an outcome, and the respective gaming terminal
communicates the outcome to the user.

20 06 12

7. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the PoS terminal is configured, in response to at least one predetermined criterion being met, to grant the user an option to enter a game, wherein the PoS terminal notifies a (or the) server means that the option is granted and in response thereto the server means records in a store information relating to the option, wherein the determining that a game can be entered based on the piece of information comprises determining that the input piece of information and the information relating to the option are associated.

8. Apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the PoS terminal determines that a criterion for at least one game entry is met if a user purchases a predetermined threshold value of items.

9. Apparatus according to claim 7 or 8 wherein the PoS terminal determines that a criterion for at least one game entry is met if the PoS terminal determines that the user has bought an item that is under promotion.

10. Apparatus according to claim 7 to 9, wherein the PoS terminal determines that a criterion for at least one game entry is met if the points associated with items bought total a predetermined amount, and if the customer selects to redeem the points against entry to a game.

11. Apparatus according to any one of claims 7 to 9, wherein the PoS terminal determines that at least one criterion for at least one game entry are met if the PoS terminal determines that points belonging to the customer are available for redemption and receives input from the user indicating that the user wishes to redeem them.

12. Apparatus according to any one of claims 7 to 10, wherein the piece of information comprises an indication that at least one point is to be redeemed, wherein determining that a game can be entered based on the piece of information comprises determining that points belonging to the customer can be redeemed against game entry.

13. Apparatus according to claim 7 to 11, wherein the PoS terminal is configured to receive input of a customer identifier and to send, in response to the predetermined criterion being met, to a server means in a request the customer

identifier and an indication that at least one game can be entered to the server means, wherein the server means is configured to receive the request and store in association with the customer account identified by the customer identifier an indication that a user can enter at least one game, whereby an input of the customer
5 identifier at a gaming terminal, the gaming terminal determines by communication with the server means that at least one game can be entered using the customer identifier.

14. Apparatus according to claim 7 to 13 wherein, in response to the
10 predetermined criterion being met, the PoS terminal is configured to send to a server means a request for a ticket identifier, wherein the server means is configured to generate a ticket identifier, to store the ticket identifier and to send a response to the PoS terminal including the ticket identifier, wherein the PoS terminal is configured to communicate the ticket identifier to the user.

15. Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the PoS terminal is configured to
15 print a ticket with the ticket identifier thereon, wherein the gaming terminal comprises means to read said ticket identifier and determine, based on said identifier, to allow game entry.

16. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the input
20 piece of information is valid for a particular customer, wherein the gaming terminal is configured to check that the user is authorised to enter a game using the piece of information by requesting and receiving input of a customer identifier, sending a
25 request to the server means including the piece of information and the customer identifier, wherein the server is configured to determine whether the piece of information is associated with the customer identifier and, if so, to deem the user authorised.

17. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, further comprising a
30 plurality of display systems connected to the communications network, wherein the server means is configured to cause advertising of at least one prize which can be won by entry to the game on the display systems.

18. Apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the server means is configured to
35 send to the display system information indicating that the game can be entered on

redemption of points or on purchase of a particular item, and the display system is configured to receive and to advertise said information.

19. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the server means includes a prize store including information indicative of at least one prize, wherein handling a game entry comprises determining if the purchaser has won a prize.

20. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the server means includes a game records store and recording means for recording, responsive to the server means determining that the purchaser has won a prize, in the game records store at least that said prize is won.

21. Apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the at least one prize comprises a jackpot and the information indicative of the at least one prize comprises a jackpot value.

22. Apparatus according to claim 21, wherein jackpot is a progressive jackpot, and the server means includes jackpot update means for incrementing of the jackpot value in the prize store each time the server means determines that the outcome of a game is a lose.

23. A method in a gaming terminal in a store having at least one separate PoS terminal for processing purchase of items, comprising:

25 determining, in response to input by a user of a piece of information, that a game can be entered based on the piece of information; and
handling a game entry based on a result of the determining.

24. A method according to claim 23, wherein the at least one separate gaming terminal is not a PoS terminal.

25. A method according to claim 23 or claim 24, wherein the piece of information comprises:

35 a customer identifier or a customer account identifier;
a voucher identifier;
an item identifier on item packaging;
machine readable data for example on paper or in electronic form;

a code;
an indication that points are available for redemption; and
a number of redeemable points stored on a customer card.

5

26. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 25, comprising receiving input of said piece of information at the gaming terminal.

10 27. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 26, further comprising receiving from the user input of said piece of information at a user interface of the gaming terminal.

15 28. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 27, wherein the at least one gaming terminal is connected to a communications network, the apparatus further comprising a server means connected to the communications network, further comprising processing entry to games by the at least one gaming terminal and the server means to generate an outcome, and the gaming terminal communicating the outcome to the user.

20 29. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 28, further comprising:
determining whether at least one predetermined criterion is met;
if the at least one predetermined criterion is met, granting the user an option to enter a game;
notifying by the PoS terminal a (or the) server means that the option is
25 granted;
in response thereto recording by the server means in a store information relating to the option, wherein the determining that a game can be entered based on the piece of information comprises determining that the input piece of information and the information relating to the option are associated.

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30. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 29, wherein the PoS terminal determines that a criterion for at least one game entry is met if a user purchases a predetermined threshold value of items.

35 31. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 30, wherein the PoS terminal determines that a criterion for at least one game entry is met if the PoS terminal determines that the user has bought an item that is under promotion.

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32. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 31, wherein the PoS terminal determines that a criterion for at least one game entry is met if the points associated with items bought total a predetermined amount, and if the customer selects to
5 redeem the points against entry to a game.

33. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 32, wherein the PoS terminal determines that at least one criterion for at least one game entry is met if the PoS terminal determines that points belonging to the customer are available for
10 redemption and receives input from the user indicating that the user wishes to redeem them.

34. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 33, wherein the piece of information comprises an indication that at least one point is to be redeemed,
15 wherein determining that a game can be entered based on the piece of information comprises determining that points belonging to the customer can be redeemed against game entry.

35. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 34, wherein the PoS terminal
20 is configured to receive input of a customer identifier and to send, in response to the predetermined criterion being met, to a server means in a request the customer identifier and an indication that at least one game can be entered to the server means, wherein the server means is configured to receive the request and store in association with the customer account identified by the customer identifier an
25 indication that a user can enter at least one game, whereby an input of the customer identifier at a gaming terminal, the gaming terminal determines by communication with the server means that at least one game can be entered using the customer identifier.

30 36. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 35 further comprising:
in response to the predetermined criterion being met, the PoS terminal sends to a server means a request for a ticket identifier;
the server means generates a ticket identifier, stores the ticket identifier and sends a response to the PoS terminal including the ticket identifier, and
35 the PoS terminal communicates the ticket identifier to the user.

37. A method according to claim 36, further comprising:

the PoS terminal printing a ticket with the ticket identifier thereon, and the gaming terminal reading said ticket identifier and determining, based on said identifier, to allow game entry.

5 38. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 37, wherein the input piece of information is valid for a particular customer, further comprising:

the gaming terminal checking that the user is authorised to enter a game using the piece of information by requesting and receiving input of a customer identifier, sending a request to the server means including the piece of information and the customer identifier; and

10 the server means determining whether the piece of information is associated with the customer identifier and, if so, to deem the user authorised.

15 39. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 38, wherein a plurality of display systems are connected to the communications network, further comprising the server means causing advertising of at least one prize which can be won by entry to the game on the display systems.

20 40. A method according to claim 39, wherein the server means sends to the display system information indicating that the game can be entered on redemption of points or on purchase of a particular item, and the display system receives and advertises said information.

25 41. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 40, wherein the server means includes a prize store including information indicative of at least one prize, wherein handling a game entry comprises determining if the purchaser has won a prize.

42. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 41, wherein the server means includes a game records store, the method further comprising:

30 recording, responsive to the server means determining that the purchaser has won a prize, in the game records store at least that said prize is won.

35 43. A method according to claim 42, wherein the at least one prize comprises a jackpot and the information indicative of the at least one prize comprises a jackpot value.

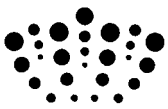
44. A method according to any one of claims 23 to 43, wherein jackpot is a progressive jackpot, the method further comprising incrementing the jackpot value in the prize store each time the server means determines that the outcome of a game is a lose.

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45. A computer program comprising computer program code for carrying out the method any one of claims 23 to 44 when executed by processing means.

46. A computer program according to claim 45 embodied on a computer readable
10 storage medium.

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Application No: GB1209031.2
Claims searched: 1 to 46

Examiner: Mr Andrew Hole
Date of search: 23 July 2012

Patents Act 1977: Search Report under Section 17

Documents considered to be relevant:

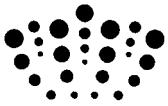
Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance
X	1 to 46.	WO 96/18174 A1 (HENWOOD et al.) Please see whole document, noting page 6, line 6 to end in particular.
X	1 to 46	WO 00/05668 A1 (NEOMEDIA) Please see whole document, noting page 5, line 6 to page 7, line 14 in particular.
X	1 to 46.	US 6634550 B1 (WALKER et al.) Please see whole document noting paragraphs 74-75 & 84-112 in particular.
X	1 to 46.	US 2010/0120520 A1 (ROEMER et al.) Please see whole document, noting paragraphs 12 to 44 in particular.
X	1 to 46.	US 2010/0267438 A1 (WILLIAMS et al.) Please see whole document, noting paragraphs 30-54 in particular.
X	1 to 46.	GB 2460298 A (NTF GROUP) Please see whole document noting page 3, line 19 to end of description.
X	1, 23 and 45 at least.	GB 1391060 A (BELL FRUIT) Please see whole document.
A	-	US 2008/0139306 A1 (LUTNICK et al.) Please see whole document, noting Fig 1 and paragraphs 117-125 in particular.

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Field of Search:

Search of GB, EP, WO & US patent documents classified in the following areas of the UKC^X :



Worldwide search of patent documents classified in the following areas of the IPC

G06Q; G07F

The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report

WPI, EPODOC

International Classification:

Subclass	Subgroup	Valid From
G06Q	0030/02	01/01/2012