

[0174] In certain embodiments, a mechanical reel can be simulated by projecting onto a non-spinning curved screen a video recording of all or a portion of an actual spinning mechanical reel(s). For example, a rear projection configuration, such as the one illustrated in FIG. 3, can be used in which a projection surface or screen (e.g. transparent layer 150) has a radius of curvature similar to the radius of curvature of a mechanical reel. A projection device can be used to project the video onto the curved projection surface. The projection surface can be a single screen onto which a single projection device can be used to display multiple simulated mechanical reels. A single projection device or multiple projection devices can also be used to project video(s) onto multiple screens to represent the reels of a mechanical slots game. In certain embodiments, video recordings of three or five mechanical reels in various modes, including cocking, releasing, spinning forward and stopping, can be projected onto a single screen. The different modes can include various amounts of wobble, forward spinning, back spinning, or side-to-side movement that would be expected from the various modes of mechanical reel operation.

[0175] The projection of the video of mechanical reels spinning can be initiated by a player pressing an input device. The projected video then displays the spinning of the reels for either a predetermined period or until the player presses an input device to stop projection of spinning mechanical reels. In one embodiment, the video of the mechanical reels can be recorded in a high-definition format and include portions of the background of the gaming cabinet used for recording the various modes of mechanical reel operation. In another embodiment, a portion of the video of the mechanical reels operation modes is projected onto the projection surface. For example, the two vertical edges of each mechanical reel and the area between the vertical edges of adjacent mechanical reels can be projected onto the projection surface. In one embodiment, the video recorded for a mechanical reel can have a total width of approximately 4 inches with a left vertical edge subarea less than 0.25 inches wide, a middle symbol subarea that is 3.5 inches wide and a right vertical edge subarea less than 0.25 inches wide. The middle symbol subarea can be replaced with a blue-screen, that is, a monochromatic background that can be replaced with a different image. Artistic renditions of symbols that are randomly generated by a computer can then replace the blue-screen in the middle symbol subarea. In one embodiment, rather than creating a blue-screen, the middle symbol subarea from a video of mechanical reel(s) can be overlaid with computer-generated symbols. In another embodiment, a video of a mechanical reel(s) can be recorded in which the reel strips are blank, that is, without symbols. The artistic rendering of computer-generated symbols can then be superimposed onto the area typically occupied by symbols and projected onto the screen along with the video of the mechanical reel.

[0176] In certain embodiments, a gaming machine for playing a wagering game is contemplated that includes a housing having a display region, a rotatable layer in the shape of a cylinder, a symbol development station located adjacent to the rotatable layer, and a symbol removal station located adjacent to the rotatable layer. The rotatable layer can be made of electronic paper and rotate through the display region. The symbol development station can electronically interact with the rotatable layer to cause symbols

to appear on the layer. The symbol removal station can electronically interact with the rotatable layer to cause symbols to disappear from the layer. The symbol development station can further be located prior to the display region in the direction of movement of the rotatable layer, and the symbol removal station can be located after the display region in the direction of movement of the rotatable layer. The symbol development station can also create a set of symbols that are used for a plurality of wagering game sessions without being removed by the symbol removal station. The symbol development station can create symbols on each revolution of the electronic paper and the symbol removal station can remove the symbols. The symbol removal station can remove symbols on each revolution of the electronic paper.

[0177] In certain embodiments, a gaming machine for playing a wagering game is contemplated that includes a housing having a display region, a controller for conducting the wagering game, a video display coupled to the controller, and an audio system for broadcasting simulated reel sounds associated with movement of mechanical reels. The video display can simulate mechanical reels of a slot machine in the display region and display images of a plurality of symbols that indicate a randomly selected outcome of the wagering game. The plurality of symbols can undergo movement through the display region. The simulated reel sounds can be coordinated with the movement of the plurality of images through the display region. The simulated reel sounds can include a first decreasing sound level associated with the stopping of one of the simulated mechanical reels and a second decreasing sound level associated with the stopping of a second one of the simulated mechanical reels. The simulated reel sounds can also include an increasing sound level associated with increasing movement of mechanical reels. The gaming machine can further include a reel-input device in which a player has control over a movement of one of the simulated reels. Simulated reel sounds can also be altered in response to an input to the reel-input device. One of the simulated reels can be displayed with a slower movement in response to the input. The gaming machine can also include a position sensor to indicate the position of a player. The sound level of the simulated reel sounds can change based on the position of a player.

[0178] In certain embodiments, a gaming machine is contemplated that includes a housing having a display region and a mechanical device for moving symbols through the display region. The mechanical device can include a first reel strip length having a first group of permanently affixed symbols for playing a first game and a second reel strip length having a second group of permanently affixed symbols for playing a second game. The second reel strip length may not be visible during the first game as the first reel strip length moves through the display region. The mechanical device can also include an outer circumference on which the first reel strip is located. The mechanical device can rotate to move the symbols through the display region. The second reel strip can be located within the outer circumference. The mechanical device can further include a roll within the outer circumference with a second reel strip length positioned around the roll. The mechanical device can also include a plurality of rolls within the outer circumference around which multiple reel strip lengths are positioned. The mechanical device can also include a motor for remov-