

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0026] The foregoing and other advantages of the invention will become apparent upon reading the following description of the preferred embodiments and upon reference to the drawings in which:

[0027] FIG. 1 is a schematic of a conventional, prior art electronic gaming machine;

[0028] FIG. 2 is a schematic diagram of a preferred configuration of a gaming device according to the present invention;

[0029] FIG. 3 is a block diagram of an exemplary architecture of a gaming device according to the present invention;

[0030] FIGS. 4A-4C are schematic diagrams illustrating various gaming window configurations for gaming devices according to the present invention;

[0031] FIGS. 4D-4F are schematic diagrams illustrating the present invention in various networked configurations and including various gaming window configurations for use in the networked configurations;

[0032] FIG. 5 is a schematic diagram of a gaming machine configuration according to the present invention wherein the gaming machine is linked to a web-based device through a network; and

[0033] FIG. 6 is a schematic diagram of a [multi-player] multiplayer gaming machine configuration according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0034] Generally, the present invention provides new and enhanced gaming machines and methods of using such gaming machines. While the invention is described in terms of certain specific embodiments, it is by no means so limited. Numerous specific details of these embodiments are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. It will be apparent, however, that the present invention may be practiced without limitation to many of the specific details presented herein.

[0035] The present invention may be characterized as a gaming system which allows players to concurrently play multiple games on a single display screen. As used herein, the terms ["gaming"], "gaming," "gaming devices" and "gaming machines" are used to indicate that some form of wagering may be involved[,] and that players may make wagers of value, whether actual currency or some currency equivalent, e.g., token or credit.

[0036] As used herein, the term "independently operable" as applied to play of a plurality of games according to the present invention does not exclude one or more games enabling play of one or more other games, or outcomes or partial outcomes of one or more games interacting with outcomes or partial outcomes of one or more other games to, for example, provide an enhanced award or jackpot, a potential for such enhanced award or jackpot, or even to provide an award in a subsequent game related in part to an outcome or partial outcome of a prior game. Instead, "independently operable" merely refers to a game architecture

wherein, once a game is in play, the play proceeds to an outcome which, during play, is unaffected by play or an outcome of another game. The outcome, however, of an individual game may be modified by subsequent interaction with another game.

[0037] A first embodiment of the invention is described in relation to the illustration in FIG. 2. FIG. 2 shows a perspective view of a gaming machine 70 having a single display screen 72 supported by an exterior housing 74. Single display screen 72 may typically comprise a high resolution cathode ray tube (CRT) display, although other types of displays such as liquid crystal displays (LCDs), plasma displays, field emission displays (FEDs), digital micro-mirror displays, LCD touch screens, etc.[.] are also contemplated for use with the invention. Single display screen 72 is a physically contiguous screen of a size that allows the simultaneous display of [a] multiple games of chance, and thus may be configured to be relatively larger than the display screen of most conventional gaming machines. Preferably, single display screen 72 is a high resolution screen configured for graphics intensive viewing. By "high resolution" it is meant that the screen has a pixel count of about 90 pixels per square inch or greater. Preferably, single display screen 72 may have a pixel count ranging from about 100 to about 200 pixels per square inch[,] or higher.

[0038] The exterior housing 74 of gaming machine 70 is configured with a console 75 having a variety of player input devices 76 thereon which relate to the operation and display configuration of gaming machine 70 in the conduct of a variety of games of chance. Such player input devices 76 may include, for example, game selection buttons 77, play buttons 78, wagering buttons 79, master start button 80, and keyboard 81, as well as other types of devices allowing the gaming machine user to select various games and/or game options. The player input devices 76 may also include other separate player input devices (generically indicated by reference character 76), such as a mouse, touchpad, joystick, rollerball, keypad, or other mechanical or electrical, electronic, magnetic or optical switching or control elements, to facilitate player interaction with gaming machine 70. Single display screen 72 may have a plurality of touch sensitive locations thereon (not shown) as an alternate means for operating and interacting with gaming machine 70 (see U.S. Pat. No. 5,951,397 to Dickinson, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference herein).

[0039] Gaming machine 70 also includes one or more wagering input components 82 of known types, such as a coin acceptor/validator, bill acceptor/validator, and a credit card/debit card/smart card reader, to permit a player to activate and wager on various games of chance to be played. One or more credit meters 84 are also provided to keep track of currency available for wagering. The credit meters 84 may be electronically displayed on a portion of the single screen display 72[,] or incorporated in an appropriate but separate area on exterior housing 74 as shown. A wager indicator (not shown) is provided in an area of gaming machine 70 clearly visible to a player. A coin tray 86 or other payout component as is known in the art is also included as an element of gaming machine 70. Of course, information relating to the play of the gaming device, such as game play instructions and thematic information, may be displayed on one or more exterior surfaces of gaming machine 70. Vari-