

game according to the first game theme. In some embodiments, at least one configurable surface of the gaming machine comprises electronic paper. After receiving an indication to change the game display, the gaming machine may stop presenting a first game theme display and to start presenting a second game theme display. The gaming machine may be configured for providing (or at least offering) a wagering game according to the second game theme.

[0023] The gaming machine may be configured to cooperate with at least one other gaming machine to provide wagering games as group wagering games. In some such embodiments, a user interface of the gaming machine is configured to receive a request to provide the group wagering games.

[0024] The invention also provides various gaming methods. One such method includes the following steps: receiving a first indication for a first plurality of gaming machines to stop executing a first game theme and stop displaying a first game theme skin; controlling the first plurality of gaming machines to stop executing the first game theme and stop displaying the first game theme skin; receiving a second indication for the first plurality of gaming machines to start executing a second game theme and start displaying a second game theme skin; and controlling the first plurality of gaming machines start executing the second game theme and start displaying the second game theme skin. The controlling steps may involve controlling surfaces of the first plurality of gaming machines to alter their appearances.

[0025] The controlling steps may comprise rearranging patterns of electrical charges on configurable surfaces, e.g., of the first plurality of gaming machines. Some such methods involve controlling electronic paper disposed on surfaces of the first plurality of gaming machines. The receiving steps may involve receiving instructions from a gaming establishment operator and/or from a server.

[0026] The method may also involve these steps: receiving a third indication to change a first environment of the first plurality of gaming machines from a first game theme environment to a second game theme environment; and changing the first environment from a first game theme environment to a second game theme environment. The step of changing the display may involve, e.g., changing a projected light display and/or changing a configurable surface display (such as an electronic paper display). The method may also involve changing an audio environment from first game theme sounds to second game theme sounds.

[0027] The method may also include these steps: receiving a third indication for a second plurality of gaming machines to stop executing a third game theme and stop displaying a third game theme skin; controlling the second plurality of gaming machines to stop executing the third game theme and stop displaying the third game theme skin; receiving a fourth indication for the second plurality of gaming machines to start executing a fourth game theme and start displaying a fourth game theme skin; and controlling the second plurality of gaming machines to start executing the fourth game theme and start displaying the fourth game theme skin.

[0028] The method may also involve these steps: receiving a fifth indication to change a second environment of the second plurality of gaming machines from a third game

theme environment to a fourth game theme environment; and changing the second environment from the third game theme environment to the fourth game theme environment. The first environment may or may not be proximate the second environment.

[0029] The invention also provides various other methods and devices for creating and controlling gaming environments. One such device is a gaming environment controller that is configured for determining that a first plurality of gaming machines will stop executing a first game theme and start executing a second game theme. The gaming environment controller may also be configured for changing an audio environment from a first game theme environment to a second game theme environment.

[0030] The gaming environment controller is also configured for changing a first display at or near the first plurality of gaming machines from a first game theme display to a second game theme display. The displays may be controlled via a light projection system and/or configurable surfaces, e.g., one or more display screens, one or more electronic paper surfaces, etc. The display may comprise a wall display, a ceiling display and/or a floor display.

[0031] The display may be an integrated display spanning multiple surfaces. In some such implementations, the gaming environment controller can cause a single image to span multiple surfaces of the integrated display and/or cause images to move across multiple surfaces of the integrated display. The multiple surfaces may comprise at least one wall surface, at least one floor surface and/or at least one ceiling surface.

[0032] Some embodiments of the invention apply to table games, which may be stand-alone or networked table games. One such embodiment provides a table for providing table games. The table includes the following elements: a support structure; at least one logic device; means for receiving an indication regarding a table game theme and providing the indication to at least one logic device; and a configurable display surface on the support structure for displaying information necessary for playing a table game according to instructions from the logic device.

[0033] The receiving means may comprise, e.g., a network interface and/or a user interface. In some preferred implementations of the table, the configurable display surface comprises electronic paper.

[0034] The present invention provides hardware (such as gaming machines, network devices and components of such devices) that is configured to perform the methods of the invention, as well as software to control devices to perform these and other methods.

[0035] These and other features of the present invention will be presented in more detail in the following detailed description of the invention and the associated figures.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0036] FIG. 1 illustrates in perspective view an exemplary gaming machine.

[0037] FIG. 2 illustrates in perspective view an alternative gaming machine according to one embodiment of the present invention.