

[0038] FIG. 3 illustrates a block diagram of an exemplary electronic component infrastructure for generating and controlling video displays in a gaming machine according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0039] FIG. 4 illustrates a block diagram of an exemplary configurable surface unit according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0040] FIG. 5 illustrates a block diagram of an exemplary gaming machine network for providing networked configurable surfaces according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0041] FIG. 6 illustrates a block diagram of an alternative exemplary gaming machine network for providing networked configurable surfaces according to another embodiment of the present invention.

[0042] FIG. 7 is a cross-section of electronic paper.

[0043] FIGS. 8A and 8B are schematic diagrams that illustrate control systems for two general types of electronic paper that may be used for some configurable surfaces of the present invention.

[0044] FIG. 8C is a cutaway view of “tiled” configurable surfaces according to one implementation of the invention.

[0045] FIG. 9 illustrates one bank of networked player stations and an exemplary system for controlling a local display environment according to some implementations of the invention.

[0046] FIG. 10 is a flow chart that outlines some methods of the invention for changing game themes and related displays.

[0047] FIG. 11 illustrates a configurable gaming table according to one implementation of the invention.

[0048] FIG. 12 illustrates one example of a network topology for implementing some aspects of the present invention.

[0049] FIG. 13 is a block diagram that illustrates a simplified network topology for some implementations of an Arbiter.

[0050] FIG. 14 illustrates a gaming machine and a gaming network that may be configured according to some aspects of the invention.

[0051] FIG. 15 illustrates a network device that may be configured according to some aspects of the invention.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0052] In this application, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. For example, in the following detailed description, references are made to the accompanying drawings, which form a part of the description and in which are shown, by way of illustration, specific embodiments of the present invention. Although these embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable one skilled in the art to practice the invention, it is understood that these examples are not limiting. The present invention may be practiced without some or all of these specific details. In other instances, well known process steps have not been described in detail in order not to obscure the present invention. Other

applications are possible, such that the following examples should not be taken as definitive or limiting either in scope or setting. Other embodiments may be used and changes may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Although the following discussion and illustrative examples are directed primarily to casino and gaming machine display devices and systems, it should be borne in mind that these and other similar devices and systems can also be applied and used in other types of establishments, venues and devices.

[0053] Continuing with the illustrative example of devices and methods employed within a casino or other gaming establishment, an exemplary gaming machine is illustrated in perspective view in FIG. 1. Gaming machine 10, which is a gaming device that is generally adapted for accepting wagers and granting monetary awards, includes main cabinet 12, which generally surrounds the machine interior (not shown) and is viewable by users. Main cabinet 12 includes a main door 20 on the front of the machine, which opens to provide access to the interior of the machine. Attached to the main door are typically one or more player-input switches or buttons 21, one or more money or credit acceptors, such as a coin acceptor 22, and a bill or ticket validator 23, a coin tray 24, and a belly glass 25. Viewable through main door 20 is a primary video display monitor 26 and one or more informational side panels or side panel glasses 27. The primary video display monitor 26 can generally be used for presenting a main game and other pertinent information, and will typically be a CRT, high resolution flat-panel LCD, plasma/LED display or other conventional electronically controlled video monitor.

[0054] Top box 11, which typically rests atop of the main cabinet 12, may contain a ticket printer 28, a keypad 29, one or more additional displays 30, a card reader 31, one or more speakers 32, and a top glass 33. In addition, top box 11 may also contain items situated within the top glass 33, such as one or more cameras 34, and one or more secondary video display monitors 35, which can generally be used for presenting a secondary or bonus game, ancillary information, pay tables, artwork and/or advertisements, and which may also be a CRT, high resolution flat-panel LCD, plasma/LED display or other conventional electronically controlled video monitor. One example of a use and description for a secondary or additional display associated with a gaming machine is disclosed in commonly assigned U.S. Pat. No. 6,315,666 to Mastera, et al., entitled “Gaming Machines Having Secondary Display for Providing Video Content,” which patent is incorporated herein in its entirety and for all purposes. While the foregoing example places various gaming machine items and peripherals in specific locations for purposes of illustration, it is generally understood that all illustrated items may not be present on every gaming machine, that all such items can be located in different places on or about the machine, and that other items and peripherals, such as a top box diorama, for example, can also be present.

[0055] With reference to FIG. 2, an alternative gaming machine according to one embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in perspective view. Similar to the previous gaming machine 10 of FIG. 1, alternative gaming machine 50 is also a gaming device that is generally adapted for accepting wagers and granting monetary awards. Although alternative gaming machine 50 is generally more box-like