tates modifications to the existing game or conversions to new games. For example, to modify a game to accept a different coin denomination as a minimum wager (e.g., 5 cent, 25 cent, $1, $2, and $5), it is preferable to modify the theoretical payback percentage of the game. This is easily done without additional equipment by modifying the math tables in system memory and the distribution of reel symbols on the animated reels **16**, **18**, and **20**. If the slot machine **10** had mechanical reels, one would need to change the mechanical reels or at least the physical reel strips to reflect the modified payback percentage. The new coin denomination is easily shown in the transmissive window **52** of the flat panel **14**.

[**0032**] While the present invention has been described with reference to one or more particular embodiments, those skilled in the art will recognize that many changes may be made thereto without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. For example, instead of the three transmissive windows **40**, **42**, and **44** revealing the respective animated reels **16**, **18**, and **20**, the three windows may be combined to form a single extra large window. This is done by eliminating the non-transmissive areas of the flat panel **14** between the windows **40** and **42** and between the windows **42** and **44**. During the basic slot game, the portions of the video display **12** between the reels **16** and **18** and between the reels **18** and **20** are darkened to effectively isolate the three reels from each other and make them appear like mechanical reels. During the bonus game, the extra large window in the flat panel **14** allows for a greater portion of the video display **12** to be utilized for depicting bonus game graphics. Each of these embodiments and obvious variations thereof is contemplated as falling within the spirit and scope of the claimed invention, which is set forth in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A hybrid slot machine controlled by a processor in response to a wager, comprising:

a video display for depicting a plurality of symbol-bearing reels that are rotated and stopped to place symbols on the reels in visual association with at least one pay line; and

a generally flat panel mounted over the video display and forming one or more transmissive reel windows overlying and revealing the respective reels.

2. The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the panel is imprinted with non-transmissive or low transmissive material encompassing and forming the transmissive reel windows.

3. The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the panel is a liquid crystal display (LCD).

4. The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the panel is a suspended particle device (SPD).

5. The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the video display depicts a plurality of credit meters, the panel including a plurality of transmissive credit meter windows overlying and revealing the respective credit meters.

6. The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the video display depicts a coin denomination corresponding to a minimum value of the wager, the panel including a transmissive coin denomination window overlying and revealing the coin denomination.

7. The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the transmissive reel windows are transparent or translucent.

8. The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the panel includes a non-transmissive portion encompassing the transmissive reel windows so as to isolate the reels from each other.

9. The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the panel is comprised of glass or plastic.

10. The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the panel includes graphics showing the at least one pay line.

11. The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the transmissive reel windows are respective solid portions of the panel.

12. The slot machine of claim 1, wherein the transmissive reel windows are respective openings in the panel.

13. A method of manufacturing a hybrid slot machine to be controlled by a processor in response to a wager, comprising:

providing a video display for depicting a plurality of symbol-bearing reels that are rotated and stopped to place symbols on the reels in visual association with at least one pay line; and

mounting a generally flat panel over the video display, the panel forming one or more transmissive reel windows overlying and revealing the respective reels.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the panel is imprinted with non-transmissive or low transmissive material encompassing and forming the transmissive reel windows.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the panel is a liquid crystal display.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein the panel is a suspended particles device (SPD) display.

17. The method of claim 13, wherein the video display depicts a plurality of credit meters, the panel including a plurality of transmissive credit meter windows overlying and revealing the respective credit meters.

18. The method of claim 13, wherein the video display depicts a coin denomination corresponding to a minimum value of the wager, the panel including a transmissive coin denomination window overlying and revealing the coin denomination.

19. The method of claim 13, wherein the transmissive reel windows are transparent or translucent.

20. The method of claim 13, wherein the panel includes a non-transmissive portion encompassing the transmissive reel windows so as to isolate the reels from each other.

21. The method of claim 13, wherein the panel is comprised of glass or plastic.

22. The method of claim 13, wherein the panel includes graphics showing the at least one pay line.

23. The method of claim 13, wherein the transmissive reel windows are respective solid portions of the panel.

24. The method of claim 13, wherein the transmissive reel windows are respective openings in the panel.

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