

machine **200** (or another device) can receive the data on the telephone line and use an infrared transmitter to convert the data to an infrared signal. An infrared detector can receive the data carried in the infrared signal and place the data on a system bus for processor **205**. The system bus carries the data to main memory, from which processor **205** retrieves and executes the instructions. The instructions received by main memory may optionally be stored in data storage device **215** either before or after execution by processor **405**. In addition, instructions may be received via communications port **210** as electrical, electromagnetic or optical signals, which are exemplary forms of carrier waves that carry data streams representing various types of information. Thus, the slot machine **200** may obtain instructions in the form of a carrier wave.

[**0046**] The data storage device **215** also stores databases which store data accessible by the processor **205** and for use in performing the process steps described herein. The data storage device **215** stores (i) the indicia database **225**, and (ii) the surface locations database **230**. Each of these databases is described in detail below. Additional or different databases may be used. The data stored in these databases may instead be stored in a single database or in a location different from the slot machine.

[**0047**] Note that, although databases **225** and database **230** are described as being stored in a slot machine **200**, in other embodiments of the present invention some or all of these databases (or some or all of the data stores therein) may be partially or wholly stored in another device, such as a controller that controls a plurality of slot machines or a casino server. In one or more embodiments, there may be whole or partial duplication of data that is stored in a database of slot machine **200** and a database of another device.

[**0048**] The processor **205** may also be in communication with one or more input devices **235** and one or more output devices **240**.

[**0049**] Examples of input devices include: (i) a button; (ii) a touch screen; (iii) a handle; (iv) a player tracking card device, which performs functions related to player tracking cards, such as reading player tracking cards and communicating information read from such cards to the processor **205** (typically, information read from such cards includes unique player identifiers, such as a sequence of digits or a sequence of alphanumeric characters); (v) a ticket reader, which is capable of reading tickets and particularly indicia registered on tickets and like material; and (vi) a credit card reader which generally allows a card such as a credit card or debit card to be inserted therewithin and information to be read therefrom.

[**0050**] Examples of output devices include: (i) a cash dispenser, which dispenses coins and/or bills to players that have requested to have funds be dispensed; (ii) a ticket printer, which may be commanded to print onto a substrate, such as paper or other material; and (iii) a display screen, such as a liquid crystal display, a plasma display and a video display monitor (e.g., for displaying information such as payout schedules and instructions for playing the game).

[**0051**] Processor **205** is also in communication with a plurality of reel assemblies **245**, **250**, and **255**. Although three reel assemblies are shown, any number of reel assem-

blies may be used. A reel assembly may comprise a reel and other components related to operation of the reel. For example, one or more of the following may comprise a reel assembly: (i) one or more components for moving the reel (e.g., a stepper motor and/or a power supply), (ii) one or more components for tracking the surface locations of the reel (e.g., an index wheel and/or a reel position detector), and (iii) a component for stopping the reel (e.g., an index arm and an index arm controller). A reel is a cylindrical surface that typically rotates about an axis and on the outer periphery of which are typically displayed indicia that define an outcome for a game. A typical shape of a reel is described in more detail with respect to **FIG. 3A**, below.

[**0052**] In some embodiments, the slot machine **200** may comprise components in addition to those depicted in **FIG. 2**. For example, in embodiments where payment is received and/or dispensed by the slot machine **200**, the processor **205** may also be in communication with a payment system (not shown). The payment system may be a component of the slot machine **200**. The payment system may comprise a device capable of accepting payment from a player (e.g., a bet or initiation of a balance) and/or providing payment to a player (e.g., a payout). Payment is not limited to money, but may also include other types of consideration, including products, services, and alternate currencies.

[**0053**] Exemplary methods of accepting payment by a payment system of slot machine **400** include (i) receiving hard currency (i.e., coins or bills), and accordingly the payment system may comprise a coin or bill acceptor; (ii) receiving an alternate currency (e.g., a paper cashless gaming voucher, a coupon, a non-negotiable token), and accordingly the payment system may comprise a bar code reader or other sensing means; (iii) receiving a payment identifier (e.g., a credit card number, a debit card number, a player tracking card number) and debiting the account identified by the payment identifier; and (iv) determining that a player has performed a value-added activity.

[**0054**] In one or more embodiments, the slot machine **200** may be operable to output a benefit to a player. In such embodiments, the processor **205** may also be operable to communicate with a benefit output device (not shown). The benefit output device may be a component of slot machine **200**. The benefit output device may comprise one or more devices for outputting a benefit to a player of the slot machine. For example, in one embodiment the slot machine **200** may provide coins and/or tokens as a benefit. In another example, the slot machine **200** may provide a receipt or other document on which there is printed an indication of a benefit (e.g., a cashless gaming receipt that has printed thereon a monetary value, which is redeemable for cash in the amount of the monetary value). In yet another example, the slot machine **200** may provide electronic credits as a benefit (which, e.g., may be subsequently converted to coins and/or tokens and dispensed from a hopper into a coin tray). In yet another example, the slot machine **200** may credit a monetary amount to a financial account associated with a player as a benefit provided to a player. The financial account may be, for example, a credit card account, a debit account, a charge account, a checking account, or a casino account. In such an embodiment the benefit output device may comprise a device for communicating with a server on which the financial account is maintained.