

reel might stop in such a way that an indicium is not centered along a payline of the slot machine, which may or may not be desirable.

[0174] In one embodiment, the present invention allows for a unique interaction between the motion of a reel and the animated motion of indicia displayed on the reel. An indicium representing a cartoon character may, for example, appear to be running counter to the motion of the reel. Thus, if the portion of a reel in view of a player is moving upwards, then the cartoon character displayed on the one or more display devices of the reel may appear to be "running" downwards. The situation is analogous to a person trying to run down an up-escalator. Thus, even as a reel rotates, the indicium displayed may appear to remain in view of the player. However, eventually the character may "tire" from the effort, and be swept upward with the rotation of the reel. An indicium or cartoon character may also "jump" from a first reel to a second reel. The second reel might be moving at a different speed than the first reel, in which case the character might be carried away at a different speed than that at which he entered the player's field of view.

[0175] In one or more embodiments, a display device may maintain a static image when viewed by the player. However, each display device may display an image which is the succeeding frame in an animation or video sequence to the last image seen by the player. For example, a first display device to be displayed at a particular viewing perspective (e.g., crossing the payline of the slot machine) shows a bird with its wings pointed downwards. A second display device to be displayed at the same viewing perspective may show the same bird but with its wings pointed horizontally. A third display device to be displayed at the particular viewing perspective may show the same bird with its wings pointing upwards. Therefore, even though each display device has displayed only a static image, the physical spinning of the reel allows the player to view the static images in rapid succession, making for the appearance of a single animated image of a bird flapping its wings. Furthermore, when each display device is not in view of the player, the display device may change its image to allow for the continuity of the animation sequence beyond a complete rotation of the reel. Note that, in this embodiment, the image displayed on a particular display device may be revealed once the display device is positioned at the particular viewing perspective (e.g., once the display device is crossing or about to cross the payline of the slot machine). This would enhance the player's perception of the image as moving at the particular viewing perspective without being distracted by the motion of the reel. Alternatively, to focus the player's attention on the image being displayed at the particular viewing perspective (e.g., the image being displayed along the payline), the image may be displayed before it reaches the viewing perspective but may be enhanced once it reaches the viewing perspective. For example, the brightness of the image may be enhanced or the background of the display on which the image is displayed may be dimmed at substantially the time that the image is displayed at the particular viewing perspective.

[0176] Various embodiments of the present invention provide many of the advantages of video slot machines. For example, when the physical reels of the present invention are not in motion, the one or more display devices in view of the player or the portion of the single display device in view of

the player may be operable to: (i) display pay tables; (ii) display one or more credit balances; (iii) display instructional screens or messages; (iv) display data associated with a bonus round (e.g., the bonus round may consist of a video or animated sequence); (v) display a demonstration (e.g., of winning outcomes); and/or (vi) display marketing offers.

[0177] Marketing offers may, in particular, result in a major new source of revenue for a casino. For example, a casino might sell products to a player using marketing offers, or a casino may receive money from third party merchants who are allowed to market to players using the casino's slot machines. Another possibility is that third party merchants transfer money directly to the player in return for player commitments. The player is then likely to use money he has received from the marketer to continue gambling. It is anticipated that many players who use slot machines of the present invention are players who had previously been attracted to mechanical reel slot machines. Thus, players using slot machines of the present invention provide a new revenue opportunity since they otherwise might not have exposure to slot machines with display screens for presenting marketing offers.

[0178] The one or more display devices of one or more reels may further be operable to display movies, live broadcasts, or television shows. Moreover, the one or more display devices of one or more reels may further be operable to show pictures of other players who form a team with the player. Commonly-owned, copending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/414,934, filed Apr. 15, 2002 and entitled METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR LINKED PLAY GAMING WITH COMBINED OUTCOMES AND SHARED INDICIA, describes various systems and methods in which players of slot machine can form teams. The entirety of this application is incorporated by reference herein for all purposes.

[0179] In one or more embodiments, a processor of the slot machine (e.g., processor **205** or reel processor **355**) may, for example, measure (e.g., while the reels of the slot machine are in motion) the rate at which the one or more display devices or surface locations of the one or more display devices are disappearing from the player's view. The processor may then direct the display devices or surface locations appearing in view to assume the images displayed on the disappearing display devices. The image transfer may occur at the same rate at which display devices are disappearing from view. In some instances, a display device, which is in motion, must constantly update its own image so as to make the image appear stationary from the player's point of view. If, for example, the display device is moving downwards at a rate of 100 pixel-lengths per second, then the image must be shifted upwards relative to the display device at 100 pixel-lengths per second. If the image is refreshed 100 times per second, then the image must shift upwards by one pixel every time the image is refreshed.

[0180] In one or more embodiments, indicia of the present invention may change their appearance. For example, when an indicium representing a diamond appears in a player's view, the diamond may appear to shimmer as though in front of a bright light. In another example, when an indicium representing a face appears in the player's view, the face may appear to "wink" at the player.

[0181] In one or more embodiments, the one or more display devices of a single reel or display devices of multiple