

issuance of the ticket voucher, redemption instructions and restrictions, a description of an award, and any other information that may be necessary or desirable. Different types of ticket vouchers **60** could be used, such as bonus ticket vouchers, cash-redemption ticket vouchers, casino chip ticket vouchers, extra game play ticket vouchers, merchandise ticket vouchers, restaurant ticket vouchers, show ticket vouchers, etc. The ticket vouchers **60** could be printed with an optically readable material such as ink, or data on the ticket vouchers **60** could be magnetically encoded. The ticket reader/printer **56** may be provided with the ability to both read and print ticket vouchers **60**, or it may be provided with the ability to only read or only print or encode ticket vouchers **60**. In the latter case, for example, some of the gaming units **20** may have ticket printers **56** that may be used to print ticket vouchers **60**, which could then be used by a player in other gaming units **20** that have ticket readers **56**.

[0045] If provided, the card reader **58** may include any type of card reading device, such as a magnetic card reader or an optical card reader, and may be used to read data from a card offered by a player, such as a credit card or a player tracking card. If provided for player tracking purposes, the card reader **58** may be used to read data from, and/or write data to, player tracking cards that are capable of storing data representing the identity of a player, the identity of a casino, the player's gaming habits, etc.

[0046] The gaming unit **20** may include one or more audio speakers **62**, a coin payout tray **64**, an input control panel **66**, and one or more color video display units **68**, **69**, **70** for displaying images relating to the game or games provided by the gaming unit **20**. The display units **68**, **69**, **70** may be a top-box display **68**, a main player display **69**, and a belly glass display **70**. The size, shape and number of display units **68**, **69**, **70** may vary. Some display units may be three-dimensional display units **68**, **69**, as explained further below, whereas others may be two-dimensional display units **70**. In one example, the gaming machine **20** may only have one three-dimensional display unit for the entire gaming machine. Though FIG. 2 is shown to include a three-dimensional display unit for the top-box display **68** and the main player display **69**, and a two-dimensional display for the belly glass display **70**, those of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that each display unit **68**, **69**, **70** may each be a three-dimensional display or a two-dimensional display. Each display unit **68**, **69**, **70** may display animated or static video images. The audio speakers **62** may generate audio representing sounds such as the noise of spinning slot machine reels, a dealer's voice, music, announcements or any other audio related to a casino game. The input control panel **66** may be provided with a plurality of pushbuttons, touch-sensitive areas or motion-sensitive areas that may be pressed or motioned to by a player to select games, make wagers, make gaming decisions, etc.

[0047] FIG. 2A illustrates one possible embodiment of the control panel **66**, which may be used where the gaming unit **20** is a slot machine having a plurality of mechanical or "virtual" reels. Referring to FIG. 2A, the control panel **66** may include a "See Pays" button **72** that, when activated, causes one or more of the display units **68**, **69**, **70** to generate one or more display screens showing the odds or payout information for the game or games provided by the gaming unit **20**. As used herein, the term "button" is intended to

encompass any device that allows a player to make an input, such as an input device that must be depressed to make an input selection or a display area that a player may simply touch. The control panel **66** may include a "Cash Out" button **74** that may be activated when a player decides to terminate play on the gaming unit **20**, in which case the gaming unit **20** may return value to the player, such as by returning a number of coins to the player via the payout tray **64**.

[0048] If the gaming unit **20** provides a slots game having a plurality of reels and a plurality of paylines which define winning combinations of reel symbols, the control panel **66** may be provided with a plurality of selection buttons **76**, each of which allows the player to select a different number of paylines prior to spinning the reels. For example, five buttons **76** may be provided, each of which may allow a player to select one, three, five, seven or nine paylines.

[0049] If the gaming unit **20** provides a slots game having a plurality of reels, the control panel **66** may be provided with a plurality of selection buttons **78** each of which allows a player to specify a wager amount for each payline selected. For example, if the smallest wager accepted by the gaming unit **20** is a quarter (\$0.25), the gaming unit **20** may be provided with five selection buttons **78**, each of which may allow a player to select one, two, three, four or five quarters to wager for each payline selected. In that case, if a player were to activate the "5" button **76** (meaning that five paylines were to be played on the next spin of the reels) and then activate the "3" button **78** (meaning that three coins per payline were to be wagered), the total wager would be \$3.75 (assuming the minimum bet was \$0.25).

[0050] The control panel **66** may include a "Max Bet" button **80** to allow a player to make the maximum wager allowable for a game. In the above example, where up to nine paylines were provided and up to five quarters could be wagered for each payline selected, the maximum wager would be 45 quarters, or \$11.25. The control panel **66** may include a spin button **82** to allow the player to initiate spinning of the reels of a slots game after a wager has been made.

[0051] In FIG. 2A, a rectangle is shown around the buttons **72**, **74**, **76**, **78**, **80**, **82**. It should be understood that that rectangle simply designates, for ease of reference, an area in which the buttons **72**, **74**, **76**, **78**, **80**, **82** may be located. Consequently, the term "control panel" should not be construed to imply that a panel or plate separate from the housing **50** of the gaming unit **20** is required, and the term "control panel" may encompass a plurality or grouping of player activatable buttons.

[0052] Although one possible control panel **66** is described above, it should be understood that different buttons could be utilized in the control panel **66**, and that the particular buttons used may depend on the game or games that could be played on the gaming unit **20**. Although the control panel **66** is shown to be separate from the display units **68**, **69**, **70**, it should be understood that the control panel **66** could be generated by one or more of the display units **68**, **69**, **70**. In that case, each of the buttons of the control panel **66** could be a colored area generated by one or more of the display units **68**, **69**, **70**, and some type of mechanism may be associated with the display units **68**, **69**, **70** to detect when each of the buttons was touched, such as