

visible, or what portions of the interior video display device are visible. For example, window portions of the intermediate video display device may be left transparent to permit viewing of a select number video reels arranged behind the light valve.

[0109] In another embodiment, the outer video display device completely blocks out the interior video display device, where the outermost video display device is now solely visible and used for game presentation. The gaming machine now resembles a conventional gaming machine that only includes a single LCD panel. The gaming machine may then respond to digital controls to switch between a reel game, a multi-layer/multi-display game, and a simple one-panel LCD game. Other uses of the layered displays are possible and contemplated.

[0110] Gaming machine **10** uses the layered video display devices **18** to show visual information on the different screens that a player can simultaneously see. Additional sample game presentations and uses of the layered video display devices will now be discussed.

[0111] In another specific example, the gaming machine generates a game image on a distal video display device and a flashing translucent image on a proximate video display device. The game could for example, be reels or one or more wheels, and a flashing image on the proximate display could be a translucent line that indicates the payline(s) on the reels. Since some games permit multiple paylines based on the person's wager, this permits the game to show multiple paylines responsive to the person's actions. Alternatively, the proximate display may show a symbol or message that provides a player with helpful information such as a hint for playing the game. Notably, each of these examples allows the person to play the game while viewing the flashing image without having to change his or her line of sight or having to independently find such information from another portion of the gaming machine.

[0112] In one embodiment, the gaming machine presents different game types on the layered video display devices. For example, the interior and backmost video display device may output a main game with reels **125** while a proximate video display device shows a bonus game or progressive game. The bonus game or progressive game may result from playing the main game. Again, this permits the player to play the game while viewing a flashing bonus image without having to change his or her line of sight or having to independently find such information from another portion of the gaming machine.

[0113] Visual information on each of the distal screens remains visible as long as there are transparent or semi-transparent portions on the proximate screens that permit a user to see through these portions. Transparent portions may be selectively designed and timely activated according to game design, and changed according to game play. For example, if a game designer wants a person to focus on a bonus game on the front screen, they can use an intermediate light valve to black out a distal reel game.

[0114] In one embodiment, the layered video display devices are all-digital and permit reconfiguration in real time. This permits new or different games to be downloaded onto a gaming machine, and reconfiguration of the three video display devices to present a new or different game using any combination of the video display devices. Game aspects changed in this manner may include: reel symbols, the payable, the game theme, wager denominations, glass plate

video data, reel strips, etc. For a casino, or other gaming establishment, this permits a single gaming machine to offer multiple games without the need for gaming machine maintenance or replacement when a new game is desired by casino management or customer demand. On one day, the gaming machine may offer games using all the layered video display devices. The next day, the same gaming machine may offer a game that only uses an outer LCD panel and touchscreen, where a shutter (or other technology on front display) blocks out the back video display devices. Some other subset of the layered displays may also be used. This permits dual-dynamic video display device reconfiguration and/or game reconfiguration, at will, by downloading commands to the gaming machine that determine a) what game(s) is played, and b) what video display device(s) is used. For example, this allows the same gaming machine to run a reel game one day and a video poker game another day that uses some subset of the video display devices.

[0115] This reconfiguration of video display devices used and games also enables new uses for gaming machines. Traditionally, a casino or other gaming establishment purchased a gaming machine and offered games only according to its display capabilities. If a casino purchased **250** gaming machines that only had LCD panels, and then later decided they wanted to implement reel games or other games that required more than an LCD panel, they were forced to purchase new gaming machines. Gaming machine **10**, however, solves this problem for a casino. Accordingly, gaming machines as described herein permit a gaming establishment to switch the number of video display devices used by a gaming machine to display a game.

[0116] One business advantage of this dual-dynamic display device reconfiguration and/or game reconfiguration is navigating gaming regulations imposed by different jurisdictions, which often change over time. First, each jurisdiction imposes its own set of rules on what games are locally permissible. Second, gaming regulators in each jurisdiction often change the local rules. This is particularly common for new gaming regulators and jurisdictions allowing casinos for the first time. The new gaming regulators may only permit class 2 games at first (e.g., bingo) and later permit class 3 games (video poker and reel games, one year later). Gaming machine **10** allows a casino in this jurisdiction to adapt, instantly, to a regulations change with a) new games and b) new display device arrangements that were already on gaming machine **10** but not previously used. Thus, when some jurisdictions limit the number and types of games that can be played, gaming machines described herein allow a casino to switch games—on the fly without significant gaming machine maintenance or downtime in the casino—when jurisdiction rules change.

[0117] Additionally, the enhanced utility and regulatory acceptance of a viable stepper simulation using video in lieu of mechanical reels permits mechanical-simulated games in new environments. Some jurisdictions do not permit the use of actual mechanical reel machines but do allow all forms of video-based gaming machines, which permits embodiments described herein to service mechanical reel customers in these jurisdictions.

[0118] One of the video display devices in a layered arrangement may also output live video such as television or a movie (or parts of either). For example, the television or movie video may be output on a rear display while a game is played on a proximate display. This permits a person to watch