

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR SAVING STATUS OF PAUSED GAME OF CHANCE

REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of application Ser. No. 09/538,934, filed Mar. 31, 2000.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates generally to games of chance and, more particularly, to a system and method for storing the status of a paused game of chance at a central database linked to and remote from a gaming machine.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Gaming machines, such as slot machines, video poker machines and the like, have been a cornerstone of the gaming industry for several years. Generally, the popularity of such machines with players is dependent on the likelihood (or perceived likelihood) of winning money at the machine and the intrinsic entertainment value of the machine relative to other available gaming options. Where the available gaming options include a number of competing machines and the expectation of winning on each machine is roughly the same (or believed to be the same), players are most likely to be attracted to the most entertaining and exciting of the machines. Shrewd operators consequently strive to employ the most entertaining and exciting machines available because such machines attract frequent play and hence increase profitability to the operators. Traditional gaming machines use mechanical slot reels or video depictions of such reels to display games and outcomes to players. Further, many traditional gaming machines use simulations of standard casino games such as cards, dice, bingo and the like to attract players. These traditional machines may become repetitive over time, and it is believed that more innovative displays and gameplay features will find success by offering players an interesting and exciting alternative to traditional games. Accordingly, in the competitive gaming machine industry, there is a continuing need for gaming machine manufacturers to produce new types of games, or enhancements to existing games, which will attract frequent play by enhancing the entertainment value and excitement associated with the game. In particular, there is a need for engaging and entertaining games that can hold a player's interest more than existing games. The present invention is directed to satisfying this need.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, a game of chance involving a progression of events is conducted on one or more gaming machines. After receiving a wager from a player at a gaming machine, play of the game is initiated. If the game is paused, the status of the paused game is stored at a central database linked to and remote from the gaming machine. This game status is associated with a personal identifier of the player. To continue play of the game beginning from a point at which the game was paused, the personal identifier is provided to the central database via the same or another gaming machine and the game status associated with the personal identifier is retrieved from the central database.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] The foregoing and other advantages of the invention will become apparent upon reading the following detailed description and upon reference to the drawings in which:

[0006] **FIG. 1** is a perspective view of a gaming machine embodying the present invention;

[0007] **FIG. 2** is a block diagram of a control system suitable for operating the gaming machine in **FIG. 1**;

[0008] **FIGS. 3a** and **3b** are display screen captures associated with a boxing game that is played on the gaming machine in **FIG. 1**;

[0009] **FIGS. 4a** and **4b** are display screen captures associated with a football game that is played on the gaming machine in **FIG. 1**;

[0010] **FIG. 5** is a perspective view of a gaming machine for playing one embodiment of the present invention; and

[0011] **FIG. 6** is a schematic diagram of a system for linking multiple gaming machines to a central host computer.

[0012] While the invention is susceptible to various modifications and alternative forms, specific embodiments have been shown by way of example in the drawings and will be described in detail herein. However, it should be understood that the invention is not intended to be limited to the particular forms disclosed. Rather, the invention is to cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

DESCRIPTION OF SPECIFIC EMBODIMENTS

[0013] Turning now to the drawings and referring initially to **FIG. 1**, there is depicted a video gaming machine **10** that may be used to implement a game according to the present invention. The gaming machine **10** includes a large bonnet-top cabinet **12** containing two video displays **14** and **16**. Each of the video displays **14** and **16** may comprise a dot matrix, CRT, LED, LCD, electro-luminescent display or generally any type of video displays known in the art. One or both of the video displays **14** and **16** may incorporate a touch-screen input device. In the illustrated embodiment, the gaming machine **10** is an "upright" version in which the video displays **14** and **16** are oriented vertically relative to the player. It will be appreciated, however, that any of several other models of gaming machines are within the scope of the present invention including, for example, a single video display and more than two video displays. Furthermore, a "slant-top" version containing the video display(s) that is slanted at about a thirty-degree angle toward the player may be used.

[0014] In one embodiment, the gaming machine **10** is operable to play a game entitled RINGSIDE CHAMP™ having a boxing theme. In another embodiment, the gaming machine **10** is operable to play a game having a football theme. In alternative embodiments, the gaming machine **10** may provide different games and/or any of several alternative game themes. The RINGSIDE CHAMP™ game features a basic game with player selected events in the form of