

more gaming machines is illustrated in block diagram format. Exemplary gaming system **50** has one or more gaming machines, various communication items, and a number of host-side components and devices adapted for use within a gaming environment. As shown, one or more gaming machines **10** adapted for use in gaming system **50** can be in a plurality of locations, such as in banks on a casino floor or standing alone at a smaller non-gaming establishment, as desired. Common bus **51** can connect one or more gaming machines or devices to a number of networked devices on the gaming system **50**, such as, for example, a general-purpose server **60**, one or more special-purpose servers **61**, a sub-network of peripheral devices **80**, and/or a database **70**.

[0039] A general-purpose server **60** may be one that is already present within a casino or other establishment for one or more other purposes beyond any monitoring or administering involving gaming machines. Functions for such a general-purpose server can include other general and game specific accounting functions, payroll functions, general Internet and e-mail capabilities, switchboard communications, and reservations and other hotel and restaurant operations, as well as other assorted general establishment record keeping and operations. In some cases, specific gaming related functions such as cashless gaming, downloadable gaming, player tracking, remote game administration, video or other data transmission, or other types of functions may also be associated with or performed by such a general-purpose server. For example, such a server may contain various programs related to cashless gaming administration, player tracking operations, specific player account administration, remote game play administration, remote game player verification, remote gaming administration, downloadable gaming administration, and/or visual image or video data storage, transfer and distribution, and may also be linked to one or more gaming machines, in some cases forming a network that includes all or many of the gaming devices and/or machines within the establishment. Communications can then be exchanged from each adapted gaming machine to one or more related programs or modules on the general-purpose server.

[0040] In one embodiment, gaming system **50** contains one or more special-purpose servers that can be used for various functions relating to the provision of cashless gaming and gaming machine administration and operation under the present methods and systems. Such a special-purpose server or servers could include, for example, a cashless gaming server, a player verification server, a general game server, a downloadable games server, a specialized accounting server, and/or a visual image or video distribution server, among others. Of course, these functions may all be combined onto a single specialized server. Such additional special-purpose servers are desirable for a variety of reasons, such as, for example, to lessen the burden on an existing general-purpose server or to isolate or wall off some or all gaming machine administration and operations data and functions from the general-purpose server and thereby increase security and limit the possible modes of access to such operations and information.

[0041] Alternatively, exemplary gaming system **50** can be isolated from any other network at the establishment, such that a general-purpose server **60** is essentially impractical and unnecessary. Under either embodiment of an isolated or shared network, one or more of the special-purpose servers are preferably connected to sub-network **80**, which might be, for example, a cashier station or terminal. Peripheral devices

in this sub-network may include, for example, one or more video displays **81**, one or more user terminals **82**, one or more printers **83**, and one or more other input devices **84**, such as a ticket validator or other security identifier, among others. Similarly, under either embodiment of an isolated or shared network, at least the specialized server **61** or another similar component within a general-purpose server **60** also preferably includes a connection to a database or other suitable storage medium **70**. Database **70** is preferably adapted to store many or all files containing pertinent data or information for a particular purpose, such as, for example, data regarding visual image data, video clips, other displayable items, and/or related data, among other potential items. Files, data and other information on database **70** can be stored for backup purposes, and are preferably accessible at one or more system locations, such as at a general-purpose server **60**, a special purpose server **61** and/or a cashier station or other sub-network location **80**, as desired.

[0042] In some embodiments, one or both of general-purpose server **60** and special purpose server **61** can be adapted to download various games and/or to transmit video or display signals to one or more gaming machines **10**. Such downloaded games can include reel-based slots type games. Such downloads of games or transmission of video or display signals can occur based on a request or command from a player or a casino operator, or can take place in an automated fashion by system **50**, such as via a particular prompt or trigger. In the event that display signals are transmitted, such display signals may include one or more signals intended for use on a multi-layer display.

[0043] While gaming system **50** can be a system that is specially designed and created new for use in a casino or gaming establishment, it is also possible that many items in this system can be taken or adopted from an existing gaming system. For example, gaming system **50** could represent an existing cashless gaming system to which one or more of the inventive components or controller arrangements are added, such as controllers, storage media, and/or other components that may be associated with a dynamic display system adapted for use across multiple gaming machines and devices. In addition to new hardware, new functionality via new software, modules, updates or otherwise can be provided to an existing database **70**, specialized server **61** and/or general-purpose server **60**, as desired. Other modifications to an existing system may also be necessary, as might be readily appreciated.

Automatic Blanking of Display Screens

[0044] As noted above, one problem that can be encountered with a typical multi-layer display is the difficulty in viewing anything on the combined overall visual presentation whenever the first, second and/or additional graphical or visual displays on each of the individual screens are not coordinated, or do not otherwise readily permit the view of displays on each screen. That is, whenever even one of the display screens within a stack of multi-layered display screens presents its own images without regard to what might be on any of the other display screens, it can be difficult or impossible to view anything at all, particularly where one of the colliding or conflicting images or regions is dark. Such conflicts can arise during a boot, start-up or diagnostics process on the overall device housing or using the multi-layer display, particularly where displays are automated in firmware during such a boot process.