

reel symbol **194** is preferably not an entire blur, but rather can contain various details and elements that would be readily perceptible to a viewer who is experiencing this visual phenomenon with respect to this particular symbol. As such, a player viewing a virtual reel full of blurred reel symbols in motion will likely be able to know which of these particular reel symbols was last seen upon blinking or turning away from the display. In this case, the viewer would know that the "Double Diamond" reel symbol was last seen.

[0074] Upon a gaming reel reconfiguration as generally described herein, static reel symbol **94** of FIG. 6A is replaced with its corresponding blurred reel symbol **194** of FIG. 6B. Such a blurred reel symbol **194** can be one that is stored on an associated memory device and recalled for this use, or can be generated on the fly by an associated reel blur generator. A further reconfiguration can involve blurred reel symbol **194** being replaced by static reel symbol **94**, such as when a subject moving reel is being transitioned back to a static reel.

[0075] As applied to vertically moving reel symbols specifically, such as the "Double Diamond" reel symbol of this example, the use of a directional blurring process to emulate the movement or rotation of such reel symbols will typically result in more blurring about the top and bottom of the reel symbols than on the sides. Of course, in instances where reels might be moving horizontally, then the opposite would be true. Other directions of rotation may also be used for a given reel or set of reels, and it will be readily appreciated that any directional blur to be introduced with respect to any reel symbols or other images for such reels shall generally be in the direction of rotation or movement. In fact, a more accurate portrayal of directional blur can usually be had where there is more blur at the trailing edge of a moving object. In the case of a reel symbol that is vertically rotating from top to bottom, this would tend to result in an intentionally blurred reel symbol with the most blur along the top edge, a significant amount of blur along the bottom edge, and relatively little or no blur along the left and right side edges.

[0076] As will be readily appreciated, numerous variations, features and details can be practiced with respect to the deliberate blurring of reel symbols. One such variation or feature can include altering the size or scale of a blurred reel symbol, such as to stretch or otherwise expand the size of the blurred reel symbol in a direction of the rotation of its respective rotating reel. Stretching or expansion may also be made in other directions, as may be desired. In many embodiments, however, the size of a typical substitute blurred reel symbol is the same as its corresponding reel symbol in a direction that is perpendicular to the direction of rotation of its respective simulated rotating reel. That is to say, a typical blurred reel symbol on a vertically rotating virtual reel can be stretched such that it extends about to or beyond the top and bottom edges of its respective reel stop, but not stretched or resized at all in a horizontal direction across its reel stop.

[0077] Another variation or feature can be to change or adjust the opacity of various blurred reel symbols with respect to their corresponding static reel symbols. In this manner, the various colors of the blurred reel symbols can be made "softer" in appearance for the simulated spinning motion of their respective reels. This can involve the "smearing" or melding of white or brighter colors into darker colors, so as to reduce the amount of flashing or flicker that is experienced when the blurred reel symbols are displayed in rapid motion. Such an opacity adjustment can also be a result of the foregoing stretching and/or potential interlacing or blending of

blurred reel symbols at their edges. As will be readily appreciated, one favorable result of such a stretching of blurred reel symbols is the significant reduction or elimination of white or bright spaces between reel symbols. Again, such a feature serves to reduce the amount of flashing or flicker that tends to fatigue the eyes of players or viewers.

[0078] Still another variation or feature can be to adjust the apparent sequence speeds and/or acceleration rates at which the reel or reels appear to be rotating on the associated display. As will be readily appreciated, the rate at which virtual reels accelerate and the ultimate speeds at which they rotate can have a significant effect on the perceptions of players and viewers. Appropriate rates of acceleration and top rotational speeds for virtual reels can vary depending on the colors, types, sizes and relative spacings of the reel symbols used, among other factors. The use of blank reel stops or symbols may also affect what is optimal with respect to the rotational speeds and blurring of the actual visual reel symbols.

[0079] While in motion, the period of time taken for a given reel stop to pass through a given point can be any of a wide variety of elapsed time periods. In some embodiments involving a wide variety of reel symbols, it is thought that a suitable time for the elapsed time for one reel stop to pass through a given point on a display device can range from about 35 to 100 milliseconds. Such a reel stop can vary in size, although it is typical to have all reel stops be roughly the same size, and typical to have about 17 reel stops per reel, although other numbers may also be used. In many such embodiments, the elapsed time for a given reel stop to pass through a given point on a display device can range more specifically from about 50 to 60 milliseconds. Still further, the elapsed time for such a reel stop to pass through a given point can be about 57 milliseconds for many common or simple reel symbols. Of course, many elapsed time periods outside of the range of 35 to 100 milliseconds may also be applied.

[0080] As a result of implementing one or more of the foregoing features, the overall eye strain and/or fatigue that can accompany the simulation of rotating reels using blurred reel symbols can be significantly reduced or eliminated. Thus, the resulting moving reel presentation can be more appealing to many players.

[0081] In some embodiments, the use of blurred reel symbols can involve the manual design creation of blurred reel symbols that resemble corresponding existing static reel symbols, such as by graphic design individuals or staff. In other embodiments, this can involve the automated creation of such blurred reel symbols. For example, specialized reel blur generator **145** can be adapted to take existing static reel symbols from an existing virtual reel strip, and blur those reel symbols in an automated fashion according to one or more input parameters in order to create the corresponding blurred reel symbols. Such parameters could include, for example, various color, opacity, stretching, repeat symbol amounts, repeat symbol spacing and reel speeds, among other blurred reel symbol and virtual reel creation factors. Under either the manual or automated creation of blurred reel symbols, such blurred reel symbols could be stored at an associated memory for later recall and use.

[0082] As one particular example, where it is desired to stretch a blurred reel symbol so that its vertical length doubles or otherwise increases in size, the symbol script for that blurred reel symbol can be altered on whatever scale or scales might be needed. Such a change might involve adding a particular line or lines of code to existing code for a reel