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(54) **REEL SYMBOL RESIZING FOR REEL BASED GAMING MACHINES**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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Gaming machines, systems and methods for sizing or resizing visible reel symbols are disclosed. Gaming machines include an exterior housing, master gaming controller, display device and mechanical or virtual reels. Reels include a plurality of reel stops, each containing a visible reel symbol or a blank or ghost region. Visible reel symbols are expanded into adjacent reel stops, which can be ghosts or blank reel stops, such that blank areas are reduced. A reel configurator sizes or resizes the visible reel symbols, which reel configurator can be located at a remote host or within the gaming machine itself. A remote host can provide downloadable virtual reel strips and visible reel symbols to gaming machines within a system including processor-based machines. Resizing of visible reel symbols can involve stretching the symbols in a direction that extends into one or both reel stops adjacent to the reel stop containing the stretched reel symbol.

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