all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0021] In the following detailed description of exemplary embodiments of the invention, reference is made to the accompanying drawings which form a part hereof, and in which is shown by way of illustration specific exemplary embodiments in which the invention may be practiced. These embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention, and it is to be understood that other embodiments may be utilized and that logical, mechanical, electrical and other changes may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention.

[0022] Some portions of the detailed descriptions which follow are presented in terms of algorithms and symbolic representations of operations on data bits within a computer memory. These algorithmic descriptions and representations are the ways used by those skilled in the data processing arts to most effectively convey the substance of their work to others skilled in the art. An algorithm is here, and generally, conceived to be a self-consistent sequence of steps leading to a desired result. The steps are those requiring physical manipulations of physical quantities. Usually, though not necessarily, these quantities take the form of electrical or magnetic signals capable of being stored, transferred, combined, compared, and otherwise manipulated. It has proven convenient at times, principally for reasons of common usage, to refer to these signals as bits, values, elements, symbols, characters, terms, numbers, or the like. It should be borne in mind, however, that all of these and similar terms are to be associated with the appropriate physical quantities and are merely convenient labels applied to these quantities. Unless specifically stated otherwise as apparent from the following discussions, terms such as "processing" or "computing" or "calculating" or "determining" or "displaying" or the like, refer to the action and processes of a computer system, or similar computing device, that manipulates and transforms data represented as physical (e.g., electronic) quantities within the computer system's registers and memories into other data similarly represented as physical quantities within the computer system memories or registers or other such information storage, transmission or display devices.

[0023] In the Figures, the same reference number is used throughout to refer to an identical component which appears in multiple Figures. Signals and connections may be referred to by the same reference number or label, and the actual meaning will be clear from its use in the context of the description.

[0024] The following detailed description is, therefore, not to be taken in a limiting sense, and the scope of the present invention is defined only by the appended claims.

[0025] **FIG. 1***a* illustrates an exemplary gaming machine **100** in which embodiments of the invention may be implemented. In some embodiments, gaming machine **100** is operable to conduct a wagering game. These wagering games may include reel based wagering games such as mechanical or video slots, card based games such as video poker, or other types of wagering games such as video keno, video bingo or a video dice game (e.g. a Yahtzee® like dice game). If based in video, the gaming machine **100** includes a video display **112** such as a cathode ray tube (CRT), liquid crystal display (LCD), plasma, or other type of video display known in the art. In the illustrated embodiment, the gaming machine **100** is an "upright" version in which the display **112** is oriented vertically relative to a player. Alternatively, the gaming machine may be a "slant-top" version in which the display **112** is slanted at about a thirty-degree angle toward the player.

[0026] The gaming machine **100** includes a plurality of possible credit receiving mechanisms **114** for receiving credits to be used for placing wagers in the game. The credit receiving mechanisms **114** may, for example, include a coin acceptor, a bill acceptor, a ticket reader, and a card reader. The bill acceptor and the ticket reader may be combined into a single unit. The card reader may, for example, accept magnetic cards and smart (chip) cards coded with money or designating an account containing money.

[0027] In some embodiments, the gaming machine **100** includes a user interface comprising a plurality of push-buttons **116**, and other possible devices. The plurality of push-buttons **116** may, for example, include one or more "bet" buttons for wagering, a "play" button for commencing play, a "collect" button for cashing out, a help" button for viewing a help screen, a "pay table" button for viewing the pay table(s), and a "call attendant" button for calling an attendant. Additional game specific buttons may be provided to facilitate play of the specific game executed on the machine. A touch screen may define touch keys for implementing many of the same functions as the push-buttons. Additionally, in the case of video poker, the touch screen may implement a card identification function to indicate which cards a player desires to keep for the next round. Other possible user interface devices include a keyboard and a pointing device such as a mouse or trackball.

[0028] In some embodiments, gaming machine **100** includes a top box **40**. Top box **40** may contain a video display, a mechanical display, or a diorama display that supplements display **112**. For example, the display in top box **40** may be a wheel such as a rotating wheel, mechanical dice, a board for a board game, or other such display.

[0029] A processor controls operation of the gaming machine **100**. In response to receiving a wager and a command to initiate play, the processor randomly selects a game outcome from a plurality of possible outcomes and causes the display **112** to depict indicia representative of the selected game outcome. In the case of slots for example mechanical or simulated slot reels are rotated and stopped to place symbols on the reels in visual association with one or more pay lines. If the selected outcome is one of the winning outcomes defined by a pay table, the CPU awards the player with a number of credits associated with the winning outcome.

[0030] In some embodiments, gaming machine **100** may include signage **120**. Signage **120** may be a transmissive LCD device capable of displaying advertising, gaming information (e.g. type of game, denomination of game etc.) or other information to a player or potential player. Because portions of a transmissive LCD may be transparent or semi-transparent, the signage need not fully obstruct views beyond the gaming machine **100**.