

may include one or more buttons, switches, joysticks, levers, pull-down handles, trackballs, voice-activated input, or any other user input system or mechanism that allows the user to participate in the particular gaming activity. The user input **1406** allows the user to enter coins or otherwise obtain credits through vouchers, tokens, credit cards, etc. Various mechanisms for entering such vouchers, tokens, credit cards, coins, point tickets, etc. are known in the art. For example, coin/token input mechanisms, card readers, credit card readers, smart card readers, punch card readers, and other mechanisms may be used to enter wagers. The user input may include a plurality of buttons **1408**, which allow the user to initiate the multi-symbol play and dynamic payline play in accordance with the invention, enter a number of credits to play, identify the number of paylines in which to participate, cash out, automatically bet the maximum amount of paylines, etc. It should be recognized that a wide variety of other user interface options are available for use in connection with the present invention, including pressing a button on a gaming machine, touching a segment of a touch-screen, entering text, entering voice commands, or other known user entry methodology.

[**0088**] Referring briefly to **FIG. 15**, a more particular embodiment of a user interface for a slot machine **1500** is illustrated. The display area **1502** provides a display of the gaming activity in accordance with the invention. A number of information display segments **1504**, **1506**, **1508**, **1510**, **1512** display information such as the accumulated credits, paylines played, amount wagered, total wager, and amount paid respectively. Selection of a button causes an action associated with that button. For example, selection of button **1514** allows the participant to collect the amount associated with the credit accumulation. Pressing button **1516** provides the participant with help information, and pressing button **1518** displays a pay table to the participant. Pressing button **1520** allows the user to identify the number of paylines selected, and button **1522** allows the user to indicate what the bet is per line. Pressing button **1524** spins the reels, and pressing button **1526** automatically wagers the maximum bet. Other user input mechanisms, such as touch screens, audio command input, joysticks, text entry, etc. can be used to identify user input parameters. Another type of input (not shown) for a participant to enter is to identify which one or more symbols are to be played in the mode where a predetermined number of adjacent symbols results in a winning dynamically-generated payline.

[**0089**] Returning now to **FIG. 14**, the display device **1404** includes a display screen **1410**. The display device may take on a variety of forms depending on what type of presentation is to be provided. For example, a slot game area **1420** is provided where the slot gaming activity in accordance with the invention is displayed. In this example, the slot gaming activity provides a 5x3 display segment grid, where each display segment includes four display subsegments. Any number of paylines may be associated with the grid in game area **1420**. In this example, the display screen is a video display screen. The video display screen may be implemented in a variety of manners, including electronically represented with outputs shown on conventional electronic displays, such as a liquid crystal displays (LCD), dot matrix, plasma, CRT, LED, electro-luminescent display, or generally any type of video display known in the art.

[**0090**] Also associated with the display device **1404** is an optional winning guide area **1412**, where information associated with the potential winning symbol combinations of the standard slot game activity may be presented. This area may also provide an indication of the requisite symbols, symbol combinations, symbol locations, etc. that result in winning payouts to the participant. This information may be part of the display screen **1410**, or alternatively may be separate from the display screen **1410** and provided directly on a portion of the display device **1404** structure itself. For example, a backlit colored panel may be used as the winning guide area **1412**. Further, this information may be provided on an entirely separate display screen (not shown).

[**0091**] It should be recognized that various manners of displaying the various paylines and payline results may be used in connection with the invention. For example, the paylines can be visualized by the participant for embodiments such as those shown in **FIG. 3**. Other embodiments include highlighting particular display subsegments to indicate which of the display subsegments is currently viewed as the display segment. Other visual cues may also be used, such as lines drawn through the various paylines, highlighted borders or backlighting, etc., and the invention is not limited to any particular manner of presenting paylines.

[**0092**] One particular embodiment includes individually presenting each winning payline resulting from the multi-symbol display segments. An example of such an embodiment is shown in **FIG. 16**, which includes **FIGS. 16A, 16B, 16C, 16D, and 16E**. The display grid **1600** shown in **FIG. 16A** represents a multi-symbol display grid as previously described. In this embodiment, there are four display subsegments for each display segment. More particularly, display segment **1602** includes display subsegments **1610, 1612, 1614, and 1616**. Similarly, display segment **1604** includes display subsegments **1618, 1620, 1622, and 1624**, and display segment **1606** includes display subsegments **1626, 1628, 1630, and 1632**. Assuming that three consecutive display segments each have a particular symbol which provides a winning symbol combination. For example, as shown in **FIG. 16A**, display subsegments **1610, 1622, and 1632** each present a symbol "O" in display segments **1602, 1604, 1606** respectively. In this example, this is a winning symbol combination, as three consecutive display segments include a display subsegment having the symbol "O." In accordance with one embodiment of the invention, this winning symbol combination is presented as an individual payline of three "O" symbols, as shown in **FIG. 16B**. The display grid **1600** of **FIG. 16A** is converted to the display grid **1650** of **FIG. 16B**, or alternatively the display grid **1650** can be shown on an entirely separate display screen. As seen on display grid **1650** of **FIG. 16B**, the winning symbol combination of "O" symbols is displayed as display segments **1652, 1654, 1656** shown in **FIG. 16B**. Other winning symbol combinations are similarly shown. For example, the display grid **1660** shown in **FIG. 16C** shows the winning combination of "X" symbols in display segments **1662, 1664, and 1666**, which results from the original spin result shown in display subsegments **1612, 1624, and 1630** of display grid **1600**. Similarly, the display grid **1670** shown in **FIG. 16D** shows the winning combination of "C" symbols in display segments **1672, 1674, and 1676**, which results from the original spin result shown in display subsegments **1614, 1620, and 1626** of display grid **1600**. Finally, the display grid **1680** shown in **FIG. 16E** shows the winning