

input interface devices include a keyboard, a mouse, a microphone, a touch pad, a touch screen, voice-recognition system, etc.

[0098] The computing arrangement 1700 may be connected to other computing devices or gaming machines, such as via a network. The computing arrangement 1700 may be connected to a network server 1728 in an intranet or local network configuration. The computer may further be part of a larger network configuration as in a global area network (GAN) such as the Internet. In such a case, the computer accesses one or more web servers 1730 via the Internet 1732.

[0099] Other components directed to slot machine implementations include manners of gaming participant payment, and gaming machine payout. For example, a slot machine including the computing arrangement 1700 may also include a hopper controller 1742 to determine the amount of payout to be provided to the participant. The hopper controller may be integrally implemented with the processor 1702, or alternatively as a separate hopper controller 1742. A hopper 1744 may also be provided in slot machine embodiments, where the hopper serves as the mechanism holding the coins/tokens of the machine. The wager input module 1746 represents any mechanism for accepting coins, tokens, coupons, bills, credit cards, smart cards, membership cards, etc. for which a participant inputs a wager amount.

[0100] Using the foregoing specification, the invention may be implemented as a machine, process, or article of manufacture by using standard programming and/or engineering techniques to produce programming software, firmware, hardware or any combination thereof.

[0101] Any resulting program(s), having computer-readable program code, may be embodied within one or more computer-usable media such as memory devices or transmitting devices, thereby making a computer program product or article of manufacture according to the invention. As such, the terms "article of manufacture" and "computer program product" as used herein are intended to encompass a computer program existent (permanently, temporarily, or transitorily) on any computer-usable medium such as on any memory device or in any transmitting device.

[0102] One skilled in the art of computer science from the description provided herein will be able to combine the software created as described with appropriate general purpose or special purpose computer hardware to create a computer system and/or computer subcomponents embodying the invention, and to create a computer system and/or computer subcomponents for carrying out methods of the invention.

[0103] The foregoing description of the exemplary embodiment of the invention has been presented for the purposes of illustration and description. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise form disclosed. Many modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teaching. For example, the present invention is not limited to what is traditionally known as "slot machines." Also, while the illustrated embodiments have been described in large part in connection with a "slot machine," other gaming systems and concepts are also within the scope of the invention, such as video poker games, card games, lotteries, and other casino events imple-

menting a video screen. For example, a video poker game may utilize the present invention to provide multiple cards at each standard card display segment. It is thus intended that the scope of the invention be limited not with this detailed description, but rather by the claims appended hereto.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for facilitating participation in a slot game, comprising:

presenting a plurality of display segments;

presenting a plurality of display subsegments in at least one of the display segments, wherein each of the display subsegments presents a subsegment symbol independently of the other display subsegments in its respective display segment; and

creating paylines from a plurality of the display segments, wherein at least one of the subsegment symbols of at least one of the display subsegments is independently used in formulating payout results for the paylines in which the at least one of the display segments is affiliated.

2. The method as in claim 1, wherein creating paylines comprises creating paylines of display segments at predetermined locations, wherein a plurality of the payout results are formulated for the paylines associated with at least one display segment having a plurality of the display subsegments.

3. The method as in claim 1, wherein creating paylines comprises dynamically generating the paylines as a result of corresponding symbols occurring in a predetermined number of adjacent display segments.

4. The method as in claim 3, wherein dynamically generating the paylines comprises determining whether each of the adjacent display segments includes the corresponding symbol in either the display segment or in at least one of the display subsegments of the display segment.

5. The method as in claim 1, further comprising dynamically creating auxiliary paylines having no predetermined arrangement, formulated from corresponding symbols occurring in a predetermined number of adjacent display subsegments and/or the display segments.

6. The method as in claim 1, wherein presenting a plurality of display subsegments and creating paylines from a plurality of the display segments is effected in a standard mode of the slot game.

7. The method as in claim 1, wherein presenting a plurality of display subsegments and creating paylines from a plurality of the display segments is effected in a bonus mode of the slot game.

8. The method as in claim 1, wherein presenting a plurality of display segments comprises presenting the plurality of display segments via a video display.

9. The method as in claim 1, wherein presenting a plurality of display segments comprises presenting the plurality of display segments via a mechanical reel display.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising enabling each of the presented subsegment symbols of each of the display subsegments to be used only once in creating paylines for a particular presentation of display segments.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising enabling each of the presented subsegment symbols of each of the