

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of an embodiment of a gaming system in accordance with the invention;

[0013] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of an embodiment of one of the gaming units shown schematically in FIG. 1;

[0014] FIG. 2A illustrates an embodiment of a control panel for a gaming unit;

[0015] FIG. 3 is an exploded perspective view of an embodiment of a transparent panel, a light valve, and a plurality of mechanically rotatable slot reels;

[0016] FIG. 4 is an exemplary schematic diagram of a light valve;

[0017] FIG. 5 is a block diagram of the electronic components of the gaming unit of FIG. 2;

[0018] FIG. 6 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a main routine that may be performed during operation of one or more of the gaming units;

[0019] FIG. 7 is a flowchart of an alternative embodiment of a main routine that may be performed during operation of one or more of the gaming units;

[0020] FIG. 8 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a light valve control routine that may be performed during operation of the gaming units;

[0021] FIGS. 9A and B are illustrations of the visual results of the light valve control routine of FIG. 8;

[0022] FIG. 10 is a flowchart of an alternative embodiment of a light valve control routine that may be performed during operation of the gaming units;

[0023] FIG. 11 is an illustration of an embodiment of a visual display that may be displayed during performance of the video poker routine of FIG. 13;

[0024] FIG. 12 is an illustration of an embodiment of a visual display that may be displayed during performance of the video blackjack routine of FIG. 14;

[0025] FIG. 13 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a video poker routine that may be performed by one or more of the gaming units;

[0026] FIG. 14 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a video blackjack routine that may be performed by one or more of the gaming units;

[0027] FIG. 15 is an illustration of an embodiment of a visual display that may be displayed during performance of the slots routine of FIG. 17;

[0028] FIG. 16 is an illustration of an embodiment of a visual display that may be displayed during performance of the video keno routine of FIG. 18;

[0029] FIG. 17 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a slots routine that may be performed by one or more of the gaming units;

[0030] FIG. 18 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a video keno routine that may be performed by one or more of the gaming units;

[0031] FIG. 19 is an illustration of an embodiment of a visual display that may be displayed during performance of the video bingo routine of FIG. 20; and

[0032] FIG. 20 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a video bingo routine that may be performed by one or more of the gaming units.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF VARIOUS EMBODIMENTS

[0033] Although the following text sets forth a detailed description of numerous different embodiments of the invention, it should be understood that the legal scope of the invention is defined by the words of the claims set forth at the end of this patent. The detailed description is to be construed as exemplary only and does not describe every possible embodiment of the invention since describing every possible embodiment would be impractical, if not impossible. Numerous alternative embodiments could be implemented, using either current technology or technology developed after the filing date of this patent, which would still fall within the scope of the claims defining the invention.

[0034] It should also be understood that, unless a term is expressly defined in this patent using the sentence "As used herein, the term '_____' is hereby defined to mean . . ." or a similar sentence, there is no intent to limit the meaning of that term, either expressly or by implication, beyond its plain or ordinary meaning, and such term should not be interpreted to be limited in scope based on any statement made in any section of this patent (other than the language of the claims). To the extent that any term recited in the claims at the end of this patent is referred to in this patent in a manner consistent with a single meaning, that is done for sake of clarity only so as to not confuse the reader, and it is not intended that such claim term be limited, by implication or otherwise, to that single meaning. Finally, unless a claim element is defined by reciting the word "means" and a function without the recital of any structure, it is not intended that the scope of any claim element be interpreted based on the application of 35 U.S.C. §112, sixth paragraph.

[0035] FIG. 1 illustrates one possible embodiment of a casino gaming system 10 in accordance with the invention. Referring to FIG. 1, the casino gaming system 10 may include a first group or network 12 of casino gaming units 20 operatively coupled to a network computer 22 via a network data link or bus 24. The casino gaming system 10 may include a second group or network 26 of casino gaming units 30 operatively coupled to a network computer 32 via a network data link or bus 34. The first and second gaming networks 12, 26 may be operatively coupled to each other via a network 40, which may comprise, for example, the Internet, a wide area network (WAN), or a local area network (LAN) via a first network link 42 and a second network link 44.

[0036] The first network 12 of gaming units 20 may be provided in a first casino, and the second network 26 of gaming units 30 may be provided in a second casino located in a separate geographic location than the first casino. For example, the two casinos may be located in different areas of the same city, or they may be located in different states. The network 40 may include a plurality of network computers or server computers (not shown), each of which may