VIDEO GAME ENVIRONMENT

BACKGROUND

[0001] Video games which are accessible to multiple players via a server are well known. For example, hundreds of thousands of players access games known as massive multi player online games (MMOGs). Players of these games customarily access a game repeatedly (for durations typically ranging from a few minutes to several days) over given period of time, which may be days, weeks, months or even years. The games are often constructed such that players pay a periodic subscription price (e.g., $15 per month) rather than, or in addition to, paying a one time purchase price for the game. Often, though not necessarily, these games have no ultimate "winner" or "winning goal," but instead attempt to create an enjoyable playing environment and a strong player community.

[0002] It would be advantageous to provide improved methods and apparatus for increasing the enjoyment and/or longevity of video games.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0003] FIG. **1** provides an exemplary system **100** according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0004] FIG. **2** provides an exemplary system **200** according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0005] FIG. **3** provides an exemplary system **300** according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0006] FIG. **4** provides an exemplary system **400** according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0007] FIG. **5** provides an exemplary system **500** according to one embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0008] Definitions

[0009] Real Cash or Real Currency-money that has a real world value.

[0010] Virtual Cash or Virtual Currency-money that has a value in a virtual environment

[0011] Character Credit Score—the score given to a player based on his virtual financial behavior in a virtual environment.

[0012] Virtual Raw Material—items in a virtual environment that are inherent to the environment and that exist without virtual labor being applied to them. Virtual Raw Materials may include objects made up of two or more other Virtual Raw Materials.

[0013] Virtual Buy Order—an order to purchase a virtual item or attribute. The order can be placed on an inter or intra game environment exchange.

[0014] Virtual Sell Order—an order to sell a virtual item or attribute. The order can be placed on an inter or intra game environment exchange.

[0015] Virtual Bid Price—the price for a virtual item or attribute that is specified by a virtual buy order.

[0016] Virtual Ask Price—the price for a virtual item or attribute that is specified by a virtual sell order.

[0017] Virtual Blueprints—virtual designs for virtual items that include information such as dimensions, materials, skills, and other virtual items or attributes that are required to assemble a virtual item specified by the blueprint. Virtual Blueprints may define virtual objects, and/or business methods, business processes, software, games, and/or definitions to create any or all of the foregoing.

[0018] Virtual Blueprint Patent—shall mean a virtual patent number assigned to a virtual blueprint

[0019] Digital Image—a virtual image that is static or moving that can be seen in a virtual game environment

[0020] Digital Song—a song that can be purchased and played in a game environment

[0021] Digital Copyright—a proof of ownership that is attached to a digital image or digital song in a game environment

[0022] In Game Patent Office—an entity in a game environment where blueprints and/or copyrights can be registered to indicate the inventor of the blueprint or copyright

[0023] Digital Patent—the registration of a virtual blueprint with a virtual patent office

[0024] Virtual IPO—the registering of a virtual asset on a virtual exchange whereby shares of the asset can be traded between characters and players

[0025] Virtual Business—an asset in a game environment that produces virtual revenues and potentially virtual profits.

[0026] Virtual Stock—a unit of ownership of a virtual business, asset, or other game attribute

[0027] The term "product" means any machine, manufacture and/or composition of matter, unless expressly specified otherwise.

[0028] The term "process" means any process, algorithm, method or the like, unless expressly specified otherwise.

[0029] Each process (whether called a method, algorithm or otherwise) inherently includes one or more steps, and therefore all references to a "step" or "steps" of a process have an inherent antecedent basis in the mere recitation of the term 'process' or a like term. Accordingly, any reference in a claim to a 'step' or 'steps' of a process has sufficient antecedent basis.

[0030] The terms "an embodiment", "embodiment", "embodiments", "the embodiment", "the embodiments", "one or more embodiments", "some embodiments", "certain embodiments", "one embodiment", "another embodiment" and the like mean "one or more (but not all) embodiments of the disclosed invention(s)", unless expressly specified otherwise.

[0031] The term "variation" of an invention means an embodiment of the invention, unless expressly specified otherwise.

[0032] A reference to "another embodiment" in describing an embodiment does not imply that the referenced embodiment is mutually exclusive with another embodiment (e.g., an embodiment described before the referenced embodiment), unless expressly specified otherwise.

[0033] The terms "including", "comprising" and variations thereof mean "including but not limited to", unless expressly specified otherwise.

[0034] The term "consisting of" and variations thereof mean "including and limited to", unless expressly specified otherwise.

[0035] The terms "a", "an" and "the" mean "one or more", unless expressly specified otherwise.

[0036] The term "plurality" means "two or more", unless expressly specified otherwise.

[0037] The term "herein" means "in this patent application, including anything which may be incorporated by reference", unless expressly specified otherwise.