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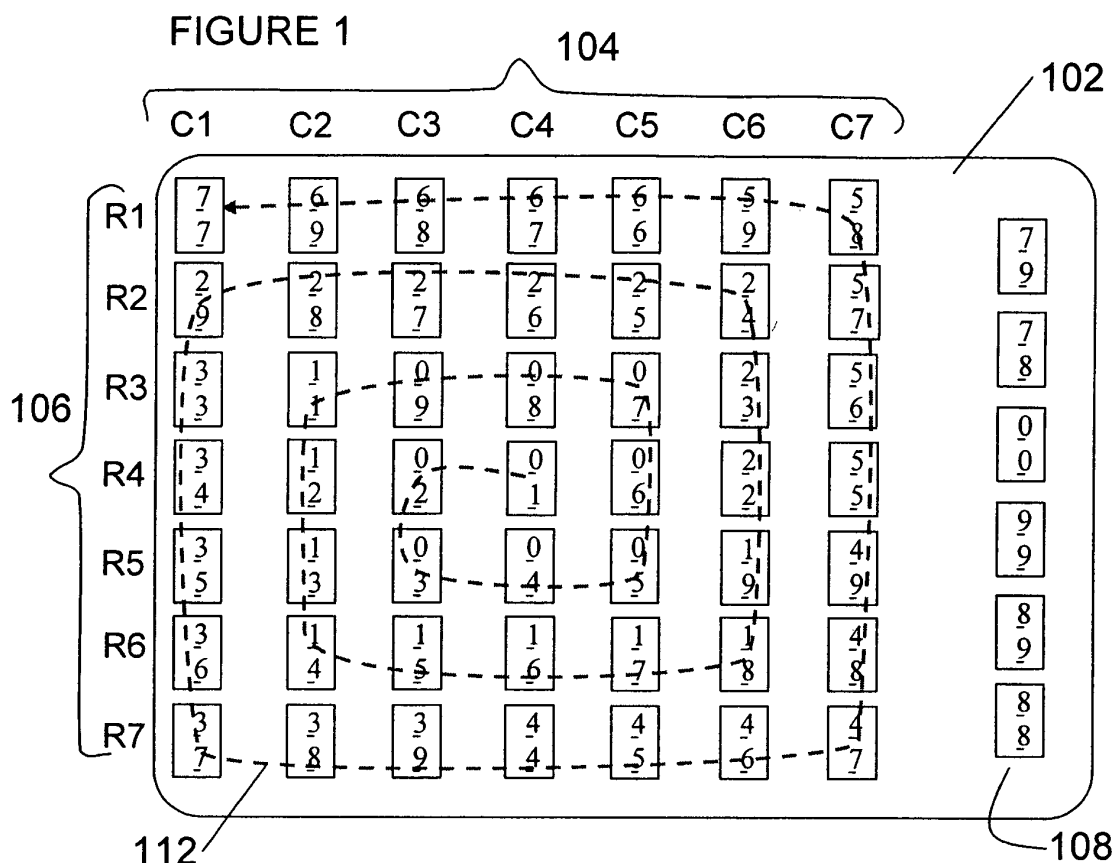
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(54) **An electronic gaming machine game and an electronic gaming method**

(57) An electronic gaming machine game includes a display 102 including a first plurality of tokens 104, the game including the random or pseudo-random selection

of a second plurality of tokens 108 from within the first plurality of tokens. Preferably, the tokens represent dominos and are programmed to change appearance during play to reveal a winning combination.



Description

Field of the invention

[0001] This invention relates to an electronic gaming system game, a method of implementing such a game and an arrangement for implementing the game.

Background of the invention

[0002] In a standard electronic slot machine game, images representing cards or other tokens are displayed on a screen and caused to appear to roll on virtual reels. Generally there 5 virtual reels, and 3 rows of tokens are displayed.

[0003] Reel type electronic gaming machines (EGMs) are prohibited in some jurisdictions.

[0004] Any reference herein to known prior art does not, unless the contrary indication appears, constitute an admission that such prior art is commonly known by those skilled in the art to which the invention relates, at the priority date of this application.

Summary of the invention

[0005] In this specification, the term "flipped" will be used to refer to a token which has been selected by the random selection process to make that token a potential contributor to a prize result. The term "flipped" is used as some of the embodiments refer to a game which uses tokens representing dominoes. The concept of falling dominoes can be used to illustrate a change in the status of a token. During a game in which dominoes are used as the tokens, the randomly selected dominoes can be considered as fallen dominoes. By way of example, these can be represented on the display as blank tiles. Alternatively, the selected tokens can be "removed" from the display. A hidden image can be revealed behind the selected tokens. However, tokens representing other items may also be used without departing from the spirit of the invention. For example, the tokens may be balloons and they may be selected by bursting. Other options for the tokens include crackers, bombs, or keno balls which can also burst when selected. The invention is applicable to the selection of a number of tokens from a plurality of tokens. However, in the description, the term "flipped" should be understood to encompass the various methods of indicating selection of a token.

[0006] In one embodiment the invention provides a display including plurality of tokens, and a game involves the random or pseudo-random selection of a second plurality of the tokens.

[0007] The selected tokens can be a subset of the first plurality of tokens selected on the basis of a characteristic of the tokens.

[0008] The characteristic can be a colour.

[0009] The subset can be a number.

[0010] The tokens which are selected can be removed

from the display.

[0011] The tokens which are selected can be altered to provide a distinct visual appearance to distinguish them from the tokens which were not selected.

[0012] The flipped tokens can form a pattern.

[0013] The unflipped tokens can form a pattern.

[0014] The prize can be determined by the pattern of the flipped tokens.

[0015] The tokens can be displayed on a screen in a matrix.

[0016] The matrix can be a first row and column array.

[0017] The tokens can represent dominos.

[0018] The display can be arranged so that the tokens appear to fall.

[0019] The tokens can fall in sequence during the play period, and the randomly chosen tokens can remain fallen while the other tokens revert to the upright orientation to show the result of the game.

[0020] The tokens can fall in sequence during the play period, and the randomly chosen tokens can remain upright while the other tokens remain fallen.

[0021] The tokens can start to fall at the centre of the array and fall to an adjacent domino [left, right, up, down, diagonal upper left, diagonal upper right, diagonal lower left, diagonal lower right].

[0022] The tokens can start to fall at a corner and fall sequentially.

[0023] The tokens can start to fall at random point and fall to an adjacent token.

[0024] The tokens can be balloons.

[0025] At the commencement of a game, all tokens are displayed on the screen.

[0026] The first plurality of tokens in the array includes 49 tokens.

[0027] The tokens can be arranged in a 7*7 array.

[0028] A winning combination can comprise at least 3 flipped tokens in sequence in a row.

[0029] A winning combination can comprise at least 3 flipped tokens in sequence in a column.

[0030] A winning combination can comprise 7 flipped tokens in sequence in a row

[0031] A winning combination can comprise 7 flipped tokens in sequence in a column

[0032] The third plurality of tokens not in the array serve as prize multipliers.

[0033] There can be 6 prize multiplier tokens.

[0034] The multiplier tokens can be arranged in a multiplier array.

[0035] The multiplier can be determined by the number of multiplier tokens flipped in the multiplier array.

[0036] The multiplier can be determined by the number of sequential multiplier tokens flipped.

[0037] In a game, more tokens can be flipped than the number required for a prize.

[0038] 15 tokens can be flipped in a game.

[0039] The tokens in the first array can be "shuffled" before the random selection process.

[0040] A prize can be awarded when a hidden image

is uncovered.

[0041] The image is behind two or more tokens.

[0042] There can be two or more hidden images.

[0043] The invention also provides a method of implementing a game on an electronic gaming machine including the steps of:

displaying a first plurality of tokens;

randomly or pseudo-randomly selecting a second plurality of said tokens;

comparing the selected tokens against one or more prize results;

awarding a prize when at least some of the selected tokens match a prize result.

[0044] The invention can be implemented on an electronic gaming machine programmed to implement the above method to produce the various game options described herein.

Brief description of the drawings

[0045] An embodiment or embodiments of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0046] Figure 1 represents a screen display showing an array of dominos according to an embodiment of the invention;

[0047] Figure 2 represents an array of dominos with a first winning selection;

[0048] Figure 3 represents an array of dominos with a second winning selection;

[0049] Figures 4, 5, and 6 illustrate additional methods of awarding prizes according to a further embodiment of the invention;

[0050] Figure 7 illustrates an electronic gaming machine adapted to implement the invention; and

[0051] Figure 8 is a pictorial illustration of falling tokens.

Detailed description of the embodiment or embodiments

[0052] Referring to Figure 1, a screen 102 displays a number of tokens 110 representing dominos. A set of dominos includes a tile which is blank on one side and carries two sets of dots on the other side, the number of dots in each set representing that number. The values of the sets of dots can range from 0 to 9. Thus there can be 55 different tiles ranging from 0/0 to 9/9. In an electronic display, the tokens can display either the dots or the actual numbers.

[0053] In the embodiment illustrated in the display in Figure 1, the dominos are arranged in a spiral starting from 0/1 in the centre and spiralling out along dotted line 112 to 7/7 to form a 7*7 array. The columns have been

labelled C1 to C7 and the rows are labelled R1 to R7. The remaining tiles are shown arranged in a separate column 108. However, the tokens can be arranged in any suitable arrangement, including a pseudo random or random sequence arrangement.

[0054] The array of 7*7 tokens includes 49 tokens. As a set of dominos contains 55 tiles, there are thus 6 additional tokens. As shown in Figure 1, the additional 6 tokens are arranged in a column 108 to the right of the main array.

[0055] These additional tokens can be utilized to provide additional game features. For example, the additional tokens can be used as prize multipliers. Thus, if 3 of the additional tokens in column 108 are flipped during a game, the result can be a prize multiplier of 2, while if 4 of the additional tokens flip, the multiplier can be 3. Similarly, 5 additional tiles in column 108 being flipped could provide a multiplier of 5, and flipping 6 additional tiles could provide a multiplier of 10.

[0056] In one embodiment, when a game is played, 15 dominos can be selected at random and the screen display of each selected token flipped or turned. If the flipped tokens form a prize winning sequence, the player wins the corresponding prize.

[0057] A prize winning play is predetermined to include, for example, a sequence of four or more flipped tokens. Larger prizes can be awarded for longer sequences of flipped tokens, up to an entire row of 7 tokens. Thus, in Figure 2, all the tokens on row R4 have been flipped. R4, being the central row, is the default prize row.

[0058] As shown in Figure 2, all the tokens in row R4 have been flipped, and all the tokens in column 108 have been flipped. Thus, where column 108 acts as the multiplier, the maximum multiplier would apply as all the tokens in column 108 have been flipped. This multiplier would be applied to the prize won due to all the tokens in row R4 being flipped.

[0059] In addition, tokens corresponding to R1C2 and R6C5 have also been flipped. However, these two tokens may not be associated with a prize award as they are isolated tokens.

[0060] Figure 3 shows another representative result with 15 tokens selected. In this case tokens R2[C1, C2], R3[C3, C4, C6], R4[C4, C5, C6, C7], R5[C4, C6], R6[C2], and R7[C4] have been selected in the main array, and tokens 1 and 5 in column 108 have been selected.

[0061] If only one row is being played, this will be the default row R4. In this case, 4 tokens R4[C4, C5, C6, C7] have been selected. If 4 sequential tokens equate to a prize then this will be a prize winning result.

[0062] As only two tokens are flipped in column 108, there is no multiplier, as multipliers are assumed for this example to have been set to start at 3 tokens in the multiplier column 108.

[0063] A player can choose to play more than one row and one or more columns. The order in which the lines are "purchased" can be: - R4, C4, R1, C1, R7, C7, R3, C3, R5, C5, R2, C2, R6, C6. Thus by wagering one unit,

the player can win only if the default prize line, in this case R4, contains a prize winning sequence. By wagering 2 units, the player can win if either R4 or C4 contains a prize winning sequence. By wagering 5 units, a player may play 6 lines. By wagering 10 units a player may play 10 lines, a line being either a row or a column. By wagering 25 units, a player may play 14 lines.

[0064] Figures 4, 5, and 6 illustrate additional methods of awarding prizes according to a further embodiment of the invention. A "scatter prize" may be provided by having an image or prize logo which is revealed as the tokens in that part of the array above the scatter prize fall.

The prize is only awarded if all the tokens, e.g., 4 tokens, "covering" the scatter prize fall, but if one or more of the covering tokens fall, part of the scatter prize is revealed, to provide a "near miss" element.

[0065] The scatter prize can be multiplied by the number of units wagered by the player.

[0066] In Figure 4, scatter prizes are located under the blocks of 4 tokens 402, 404, 406, and 408, located at the corners of the main array.

[0067] There can be more than one scatter prize. For example, in Figure 5 there are four 2*2 token scatter prizes 502, 504, 506, 508, one at each corner, and a 3*3 scatter prize 510 at the centre of the array. The scatter prize values can be awarded in inverse proportion to the probability of the particular scatter prize being uncovered. For example, a 2*2 scatter prize 504 in the upper right corner may have a prize value of 10 units, a 2*2 scatter prize 502 in the upper left corner of the array may provide a prize of 15 units, a 2*2 scatter prize 508 in the bottom left corner may provide a prize of 35 units, and a 2*2 scatter prize 506 in the lower right corner of the array may pay 50 units, while a 3*3 scatter prize 510 in the middle of the array may pay 1000 units. The 3*3 scatter prize in 510 the centre may be a jackpot size bonus prize as the probability of a larger block of tokens being flipped can be sufficiently small to ensure that it rarely occurs.

[0068] Where the tokens are dominos, the array of tokens can be arranged so that all the absolute pairs [1/1], [2/2], up to [9/9], except [0/0], are in the central 3*3 sub-array. The absolute pairs can be provided with the least probability of being selected.

[0069] The probability of each tile being selected can be weighted individually. For example, the selection software may be designed so that there is a range of probabilities for various subsets of tokens. This can be exemplified by postulating a set of numbers including 4 subsets of numbers of decreasing probability. The numbers in the first subset appear 4 times in the overall set, the numbers of the next most common subset appear 3 times, those of the next subset appear twice, and those in the least probable subset appear only once. The selection can then be made by random selection from within such a set. This example is illustrative of a method of weighting the tokens. For example, the tokens could be numbered 1 to 55. However, there are various means of weighting selection of individual tokens.

[0070] One method of choosing the tokens is to randomly select a subset of the symbols or numbers displayed on the face of the tokens and then each token displaying that member of that subset as part of their representation is flipped. The subset can be any suitable characteristic of the tokens, for example, the colour of the token, or a number on the token. In one embodiment, a digit between 0 and 9 may be selected, and each domino token with the digit on its face will be flipped.

[0071] A further method of awarding a prize can be for some of the unflipped tokens to form a predetermined pattern. The faces some of the tokens may form part of a prize image. If all the tokens forming the image remain unflipped, the prize is awarded.

[0072] The selection of a token can be indicated in various ways. in the case where the tokens are dominos, the dominos can be flipped by causing the domino to appear to be subject to rotation about an axis in the plane of the screen, rotation about an axis perpendicular to the screen, or rotation about an axis inclined at an angle to the plane of the screen. The token can be subject to apparent rotation about more than one axis. In the case of a vertical domino displayed with its major surface area in the plane of the screen, 90° rotation about a vertical axis in the plane of the screen will result in the thickness dimension of the domino being displayed along the height of the domino.

[0073] Again starting from the vertical orientation of the major area, rotation about a horizontal axis in the plane of the screen will result in the thickness dimension being displayed along the width of the domino. In this case, the domino can be made to appear to fall into or out of the screen.

[0074] Similarly, rotation about an axis perpendicular to the plane of the screen can create the effect of the domino toppling to the side.

[0075] In the case where the dominos are displayed at a skew angle, they can be made to appear to fall at an angle apparently perpendicular to the transverse direction of the domino.

[0076] Figure 8 shows three tokens 802, 804, 806 arranged to appear to be at an angle to the plane of the screen. The plane of the screen is defined by the XY coordinates 812, 814. Line 810 represents the perpendicular to the major face of token 802. Token 802 can thus be made to topple along the dotted arrow 816. Token 804 is within the arc of curve 816 and will be "struck" by token 802 so the cascading fall of tokens can be simulated. When token 802 "strikes" token 804, an appropriate "click" sound can be produced.

[0077] Player participation can be enhanced in a number of ways. For example, the player can choose a subset of tokens before the commencement of a game, and a prize is awarded if the subset chosen by the player is flipped.

[0078] A further feature is that a hidden image can change its position and /or the image displayed.

[0079] Another form of prize award is the award of free

games. Figure 6 includes additional free game prizes if any one pair of the centre two tokens, 650, 652; 654, 656; 658, 660; 662, 664, along each edge in the outer and next inner ring are flipped. If all 4 pairs are flipped, the prize could be 100 free games, if 3 pairs are flipped, the prize can be 15 free games, if 2 pairs are flipped the prize can be 5 free games, and if 1 pair is flipped, 2 free games can be awarded.

[0080] The free games can also be multiplied in accordance with the number of tokens flipped in the additional column 108.

[0081] A further feature which can be implemented is the drawing of additional tokens in response to a particular event, for example, when a specific "underlying" image is revealed or a particular pattern of tokens is flipped. This feature increases the probability of a prize winning play.

[0082] Alternatively, a random mechanism can be used to cause additional tokens to flip.

[0083] A further feature is the provision of an option for the player to "lock in" tokens which flipped in a previous game for one or more subsequent games.

[0084] Figure 7 illustrates an electronic gaming machine (EGM) 700 on which the game can be implemented. The EGM 700 includes a display screen 702 and associated electronics 704 which may include display controls and either a "dumb" terminal or a processor with associated memory to implement the game. The EGM 700 may be connected to a central management system 708 via a communications link, which may include a communication network 706. The central management system can be used to update game software on the EGM. It can also maintain audit and other information relating to operation of the EGM. Several EGMs can be connected to the central control via communication links.

[0085] Where ever it is used, the word "comprising" is to be understood in its "open" sense, that is, in the sense of "including", and thus not limited to its "closed" sense, that is the sense of "consisting only of". A corresponding meaning is to be attributed to the corresponding words "comprise", "comprised" and "comprises" where they appear.

[0086] It will be understood that the invention disclosed and defined herein extends to all alternative combinations of the individual features mentioned or evident from the text. All of these different combinations constitute various alternative aspects of the invention.

[0087] While particular embodiments of this invention have been described, it will be evident to those skilled in the art that the present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from the essential characteristics thereof. The present embodiments and examples are therefore to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive, and all modifications which would be obvious to those skilled in the art are therefore intended to be embraced therein.

Claims

1. An electronic gaming machine game including a display including a first plurality of tokens, the game including the random or pseudo-random selection of a second plurality of tokens from within the first plurality of tokens.
2. A game as claimed in claim 1, wherein a winning result is achieved when the pattern of the selected tokens matches one of one or more prize patterns.
3. A game as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the tokens which are selected are altered to provide a distinct visual appearance to distinguish them from the tokens which were not selected.
4. A game as claimed in claim 1, wherein the prize is determined by a pattern of flipped tokens.
5. A game as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the tokens are displayed on a screen in a matrix.
6. A game as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the tokens represent dominos.
7. A game as claimed in claim 6, wherein the display is arranged so that the tokens appear to fall.
8. A game as claimed in claim 7, wherein the tokens appear to fall in sequence during the play period, and the randomly chosen tokens remain fallen while the other tokens revert to the upright orientation so that the fallen tokens show the result of the game.
9. A game as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the tokens can be arranged in a 7*7 array.
10. A game as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein a winning combination includes at least 3 flipped tokens in sequence in a row.
11. A game as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein a winning combination includes at least 3 flipped tokens in sequence in a column.
12. A game as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, including a third plurality of tokens not in the first array, wherein the third plurality of tokens serve as prize multiplier tokens.
13. A game as claimed in claim 12, wherein the multiplier tokens are arranged in a multiplier array.
14. A game as claimed in claim 12, wherein there are 6

prize multiplier tokens.

15. A game as claimed in any one of claims 12 to 14, wherein the multiplier is determined by the number of multiplier tokens flipped in the multiplier array. 5
16. A game as claimed in any one of claims 12 to 14, wherein the multiplier is determined by the number of sequential multiplier tokens flipped. 10
17. A game as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein, in a game, more tokens are selected than the number required for a prize.
18. A game as claimed in claim 17, wherein 15 tokens are flipped in a game. 15
19. A game as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein, in a game, the tokens in the first array are shuffled before the random selection process. 20
20. A game as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein a prize is awarded when a hidden image is revealed by the selection of one or more tokens. 25
21. A game as claimed in claim 20, wherein the image is revealed when two or more tokens are selected. 30
22. A game as claimed in claim 20 or 21, wherein there are two or more hidden images.
23. A method of implementing a game on an electronic gaming machine including the steps of: 35
 - displaying a first plurality of tokens;
 - randomly or pseudo-randomly selecting a second plurality of said tokens;
 - comparing the selected tokens against one or more prize results; 40
 - awarding a prize when at least some of the selected tokens match a prize result.
24. An electronic gaming machine programmed to implement the method of claim 23. 45
25. An electronic gaming machine including a game as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 22. 50
26. A method of playing a game as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 22.

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FIGURE 1

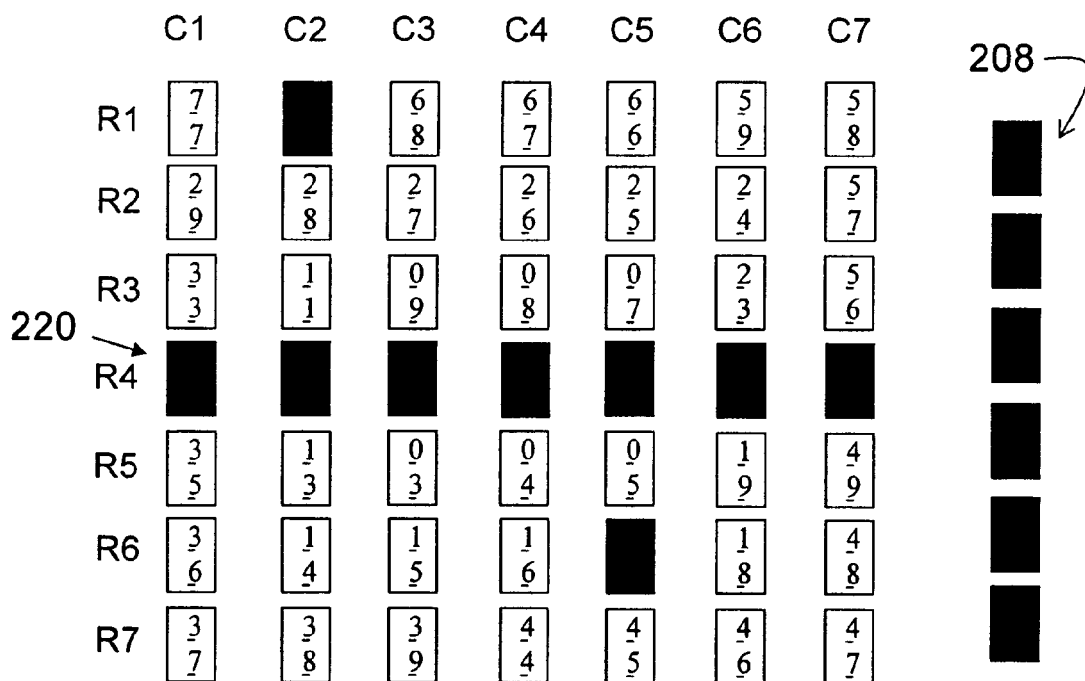
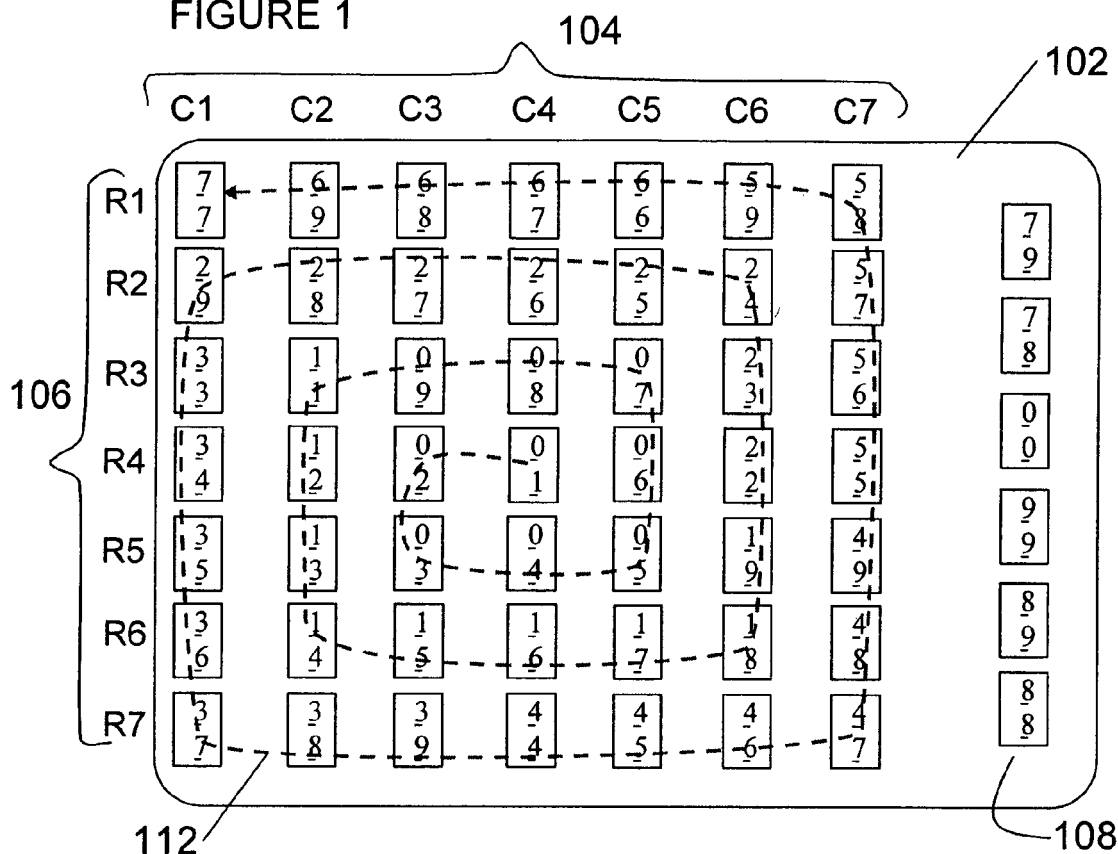


FIGURE 2

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	
R1	<div>7 7</div>	<div>6 9</div>	<div>6 8</div>	<div>6 7</div>	<div>6 6</div>	<div>5 9</div>	<div>5 8</div>	
R2	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div>2 7</div>	<div>2 6</div>	<div>2 5</div>	<div>2 4</div>	<div>5 7</div>	<div></div>
R3	<div>3 3</div>	<div>1 1</div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div>0 7</div>	<div></div>	<div>5 6</div>	<div>7 8</div>
R4	<div>3 4</div>	<div>1 2</div>	<div>0 2</div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div>0 0</div>
R5	<div>3 5</div>	<div>1 3</div>	<div>0 3</div>	<div></div>	<div>0 5</div>	<div></div>	<div>4 9</div>	<div>9 9</div>
R6	<div>3 6</div>	<div></div>	<div>1 5</div>	<div>1 6</div>	<div>1 7</div>	<div>1 8</div>	<div>4 8</div>	<div></div>
R7	<div>3 7</div>	<div>3 8</div>	<div>3 9</div>	<div></div>	<div>4 5</div>	<div>4 6</div>	<div>4 7</div>	<div>8 8</div>

FIGURE 3

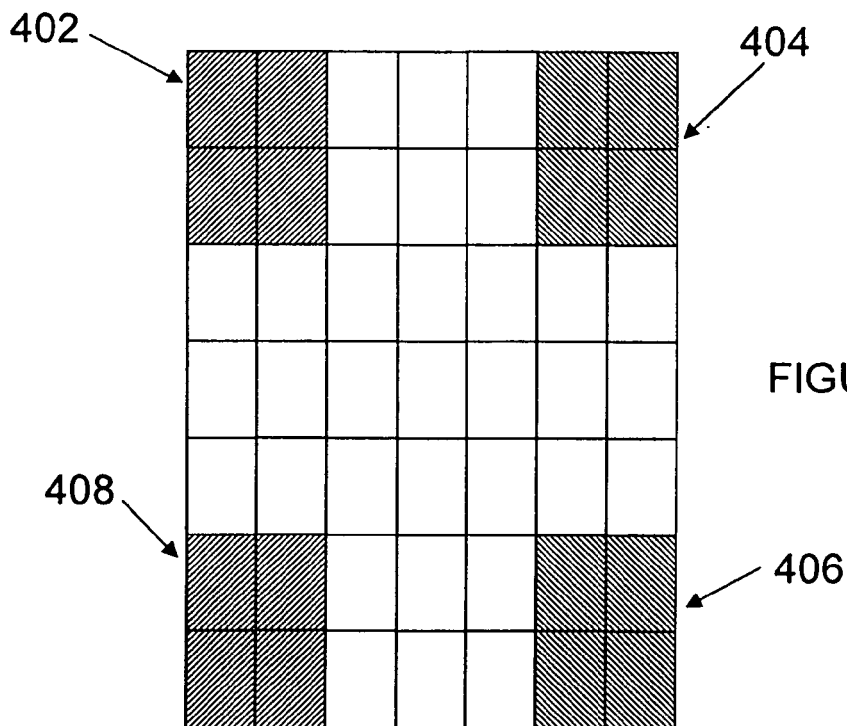
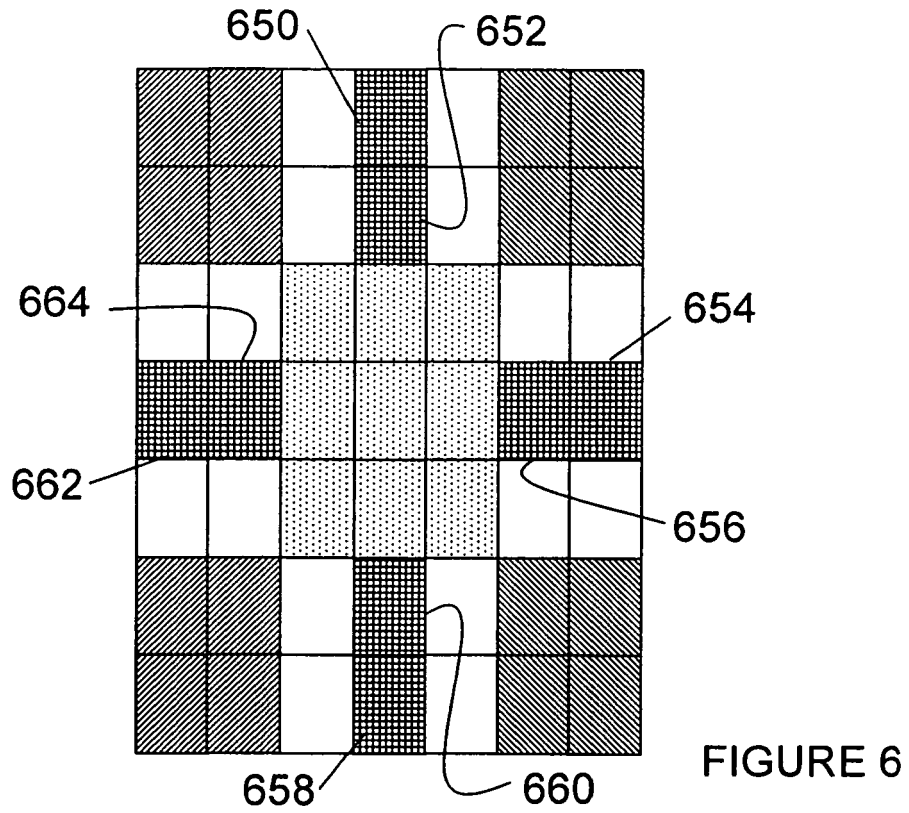
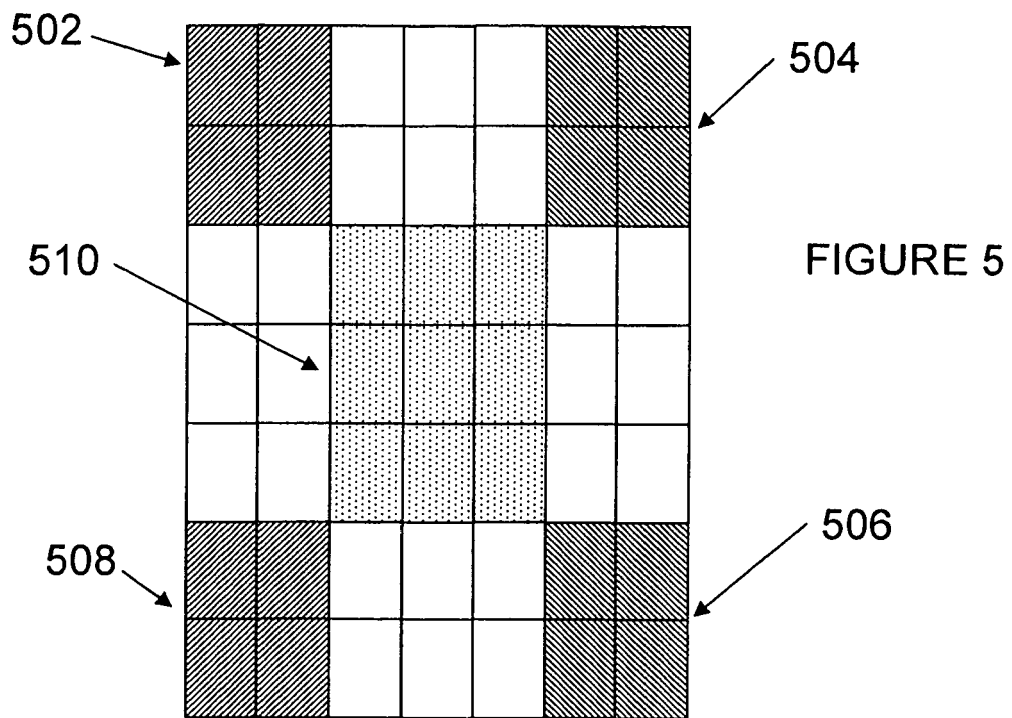


FIGURE 4



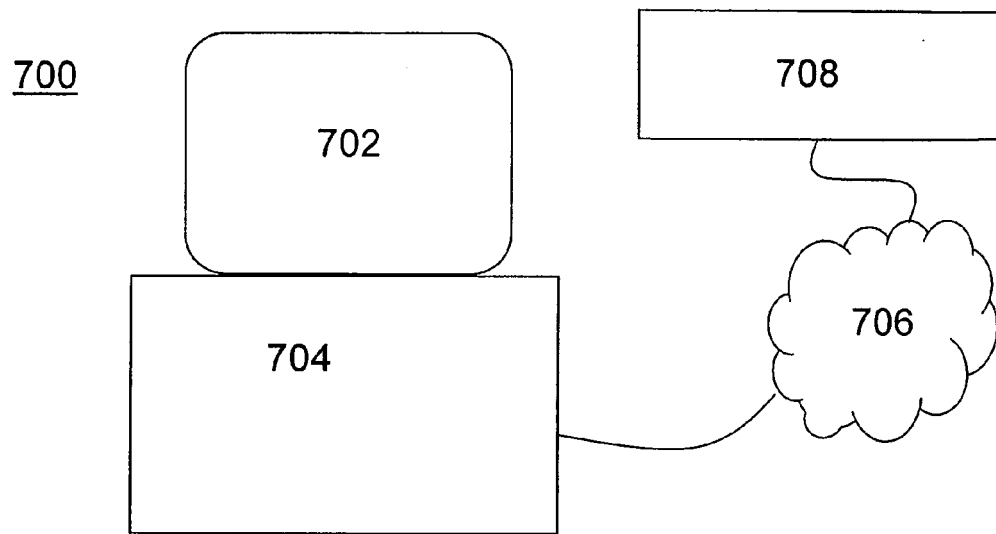


FIGURE 7

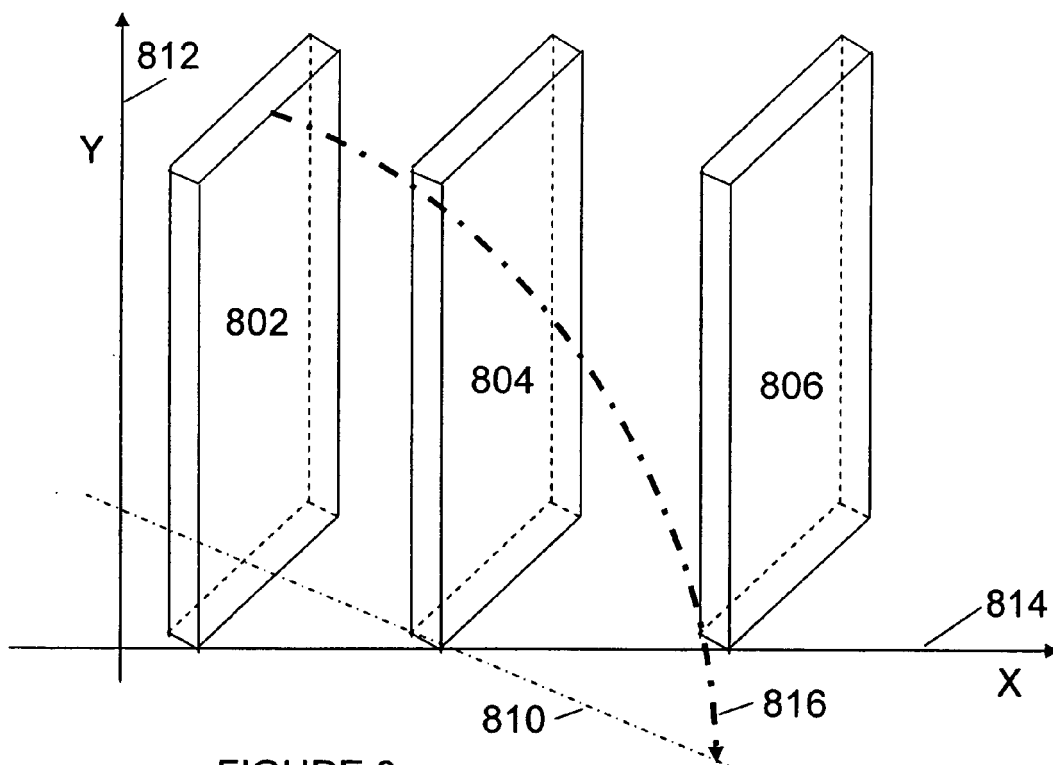


FIGURE 8



European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
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EPO FORM 1503 03.82 (P04C01)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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EP 06 25 5128

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
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