



(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**

(43) Date of publication:
10.06.2009 Bulletin 2009/24

(51) Int Cl.:
G07F 17/32 (2006.01)

(21) Application number: **08252477.8**

(22) Date of filing: **21.07.2008**

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MT NL NO PL PT RO SE SI SK TR
Designated Extension States:
AL BA MK RS

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Remarks:

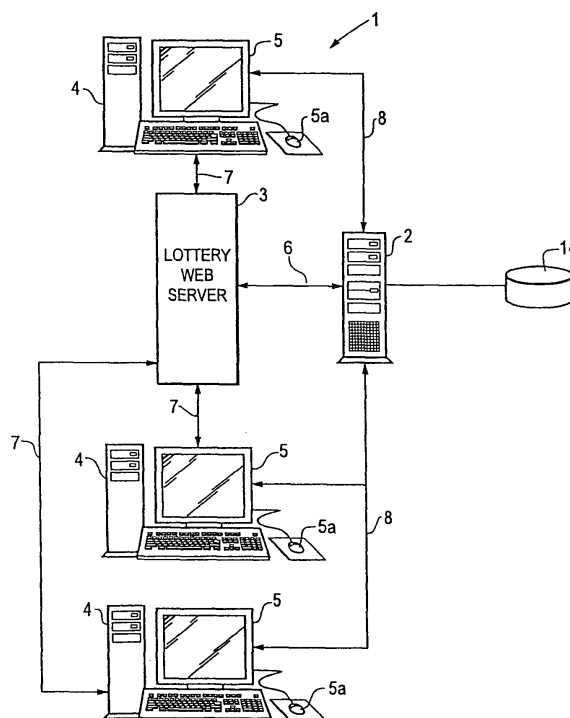
Claims 17 to 52 are deemed to be abandoned due to non-payment of the claims fees (Rule 45(3) EPC).

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(54) **Pre-paid game cards and lottery tickets providing access to online electronic games**

(57) A ticket or game card contains information such as a number, code or password by which a player accesses an electronic wager game on a web site using a computer. The ticket is associated with some quantum of credit (non-cashable or cashable) which the player uses to play turns of the game. The game has a pay table that includes losing results, intermediate results in which the player wins additional non-cashable resources (such as additional spins or additional non-cashable credit) and winning results in which the player wins credit redeemable for cash. The winning results can be directly converted to cash on a one to one basis, or converted to cash value by means of a second pay table. The systems and methods can be used to implement a lottery in which case the ticket is a lottery ticket. Alternatively, a player purchases the card and then proceeds to play at a land-based or online casino.

Fig. 1



Description**BACKGROUND**

[0001] This invention is related to the field of methods and systems for providing access to electronic wager games, such as video slots, video blackjack, roulette, video poker and the like. This invention is also related to the field of methods and systems for administering a lottery. Unlike a conventional lottery featuring instant win scratch tickets or participation in a prize draw, lotteries in accordance with this disclosure feature a ticket which provides a player with access to an electronic wager game which is played over a computer network. The player plays with non-cashable or cashable resources (credit) proportional to the value of the lottery ticket.

[0002] Instant-win lottery scratch cards are well known in the United States and elsewhere. Such scratch cards are issued by an authorized lottery operator and are generally made available through a plurality of distribution facilities, such as vending machines, convenience stores, and other outlets. Each scratch card includes an array of randomly-arranged concealed symbols that are revealed by a player after purchase of the card. If the revealed symbols on the card contain a winning combination of symbols, the player wins a prize according to a pay table. The player may redeem smaller prizes in the pay table directly from the distribution outlet, while bigger prizes in the pay table are usually paid to players by the lottery operator.

[0003] Such lottery scratch cards must have a profit margin that is sufficient to remunerate various parties with an interest in the lottery, namely the players, the lottery operator, the distributors of the tickets, and any charitable beneficiaries of the lottery.

[0004] It is desirable to provide a player with a more entertaining way of arriving at a combination of symbols to compare against the pay table, other than by revealing an array of concealed symbols on a scratch card.

[0005] As will be described below, in accordance with one feature of this disclosure a lottery ticket (or game card) provides the player with access to an electronic wager game which is played over a computer network and accessed at a web site operated by the lottery operator. The electronic wager game may take the form of video slots, video poker or other wager game, in which a combination of symbols or playing cards is randomly generated by a gaming server in a manner which is well known in the art. The player plays the game on a personal computer or other computing device. The player is able to cash out any prizes won from playing the wager game.

[0006] Traditional video slots and video poker games typically have payouts to players thereof of between 95 and 98% or, equivalently, a profit margin of between 2 and 5%. This margin is too low to be shared equitably amongst the other various interested parties in a lottery based on such games, the reason being there are too many entities involved in the lottery infrastructure which must be paid from the profit margin. Accordingly, a method is needed for reducing the player payout in order to enable such a lottery to be economically viable, without adversely affecting the player experience while playing the game. Aspects of this invention address this need.

[0007] The use of a computer to play wager games offered by an online casino is also known in the art and described in the patent literature. See, for example, U.S. Patent publications 2007/0093297 and 2006/10287097. A player who wishes to place real-money wagers on game play at an online casino is first required to register and to create an account at the online casino. The player is then required to pre-fund the account by purchasing credit. The player is able to redeem all or part of a non-zero credit balance for money at any stage.

[0008] There is a need to simplify the process a player must follow in order to place real-money wagers at an online casino by eliminating the registration and account-creation requirements. This can be achieved through the use of the pre-paid gaming cards or tickets and by having the online casino operator provide electronic wager games that are accessed by means of the pre-paid gaming cards as described herein.

SUMMARY

[0009] This disclosure features methods of providing access to wager games, and lottery and game playing systems, that will provide profit margins for game proprietors, such as lottery operators and online casinos, that are far greater than the 2-5 % profit margin that is typically realized, yet still result in a good gaming experience for the player. Thus, the features of this disclosure overcome the difficulties presented in the prior art and enable a new method for providing access to wager games, such as games played in accordance with a lottery, that is particularly suitable when a higher level of profit margin is necessary in order to satisfy the revenue requirements for all the parties participating in the operation of the game (e.g., the state, the distributors of tickets, the providers of the wager game software, charities associated with the lottery, and still others).

[0010] Access to the wager game is facilitated by means of a pre-paid game card or ticket. The ticket may take the form of a physical ticket, such as a scratch card, which is vended in the usual fashion. Alternatively, the ticket may take the form of an electronic ticket that is purchased or accessed online. The ticket contains information, such as a code, ticket number or other data, which is used to obtain access to the wager game using a computer in the manner to be

described below. The ticket is purchased for value, i.e., cash, at a vending machine or convenience store or other outlet, or purchased online, e.g., using a credit card. The ticket is associated with a value of non-cashable "resources" with which to make wagers in play of the electronic wager game. For example, the ticket can be purchased for \$10 and \$10 in non-cashable resources is available to play the wager games. Generally, the amount paid for the ticket will be commensurate with the amount of non-cashable resources that is available to the player.

[0011] The non-cashable resource can consist of either one of: a) a number of "transactions", e.g., "free spins" or hands of play, in which the amount of the wager is fixed (e.g. at \$1 or a predetermined number of coins having an assigned value); and b) a quantity of non-cashable credit, which the player may wager and in which the amount of the wager is not fixed, i.e., can vary depending on the whim of the player. If the resource is a number of transactions, the number will depend on the amount paid for the lottery ticket or game card. For example, if the player spends \$10 for the ticket, 20 free spins of a slot machine are awarded to the player. If the player spends \$20 for the ticket, the player is awarded 40 free spins. If the resource is a quantity of non-cashable credit, the quantity will also depend on the value exchanged for the ticket. For example, if the player spends \$10 for the ticket, the player has say 1,000 units of credit to play the game. If the player spends \$100 for the ticket, the player has 10,000 units of credit.

[0012] The player utilizes the non-cashable resources to play turns of the electronic wager game. The result or outcome of each turn of the game is reflected in the pay table for the game, and is either:

- 1) a loss of the player's wager;
- 2) an intermediate outcome in which the player wins more non-cashable resource, e.g., more free spins at a fixed wager, or more non-cashable credit; or
- 3) successful outcome in which the player wins a prize (credit) that is redeemable for cash according to standard payout procedures, either directly, or by means of a second pay table converting the credit to cash.

[0013] It is envisaged that intermediate outcomes 2) would correspond to lower-level wins on the pay table of the game, while successful outcomes 3) would correspond to higher-level wins on the pay table.

[0014] The player cannot redeem any non-cashable resource other than by using it to play the game. By having lower-level wins on the pay table paid out in a non-cashable resource, the cash payout made to players is reduced while still providing players with the perception of winning by means of intermediate outcomes on the pay table.

[0015] In one aspect of the present disclosure, a method is provided for managing access to a wager game. The method includes the steps of providing a facility (e.g., kiosk, vending machine, computer or other device or system) for issuing a ticket to a player in exchange for value. The ticket can be in paper or electronic form and may take the form of a lottery ticket. The ticket contains information for use in providing the player with access to an electronic wager game using a computing device functioning as a gaming terminal. The information may take the form of a unique ticket number, password, a bar code, an alphanumeric code, or other data or information which is used to gain access to the wager game. The ticket is further associated with non-cashable resources with which the player may play one or more turns of play of the electronic wager game. Such resources may take the form of multiple turns of play at a fixed wager amount, or an amount of credit which may be used to play the game, in which the amount wagered per turn can be varied.

[0016] In one embodiment, the method includes providing a web server receiving a datagram from the gaming terminal associated with the player, the datagram containing the information contained in the ticket and responsively granting access to the electronic wager game. For example, the player uses the gaming terminal to access a web site hosted on the web server. The player is prompted to enter the code or ticket number presented on the ticket and a datagram containing that code or ticket number is sent to the web server. If the ticket number is an authorized number, the player is provided with access to the wager game. For example, the server sends a web page to the gaming terminal presenting a menu of available wager games which are available for play using the resources associated with the ticket.

[0017] In one aspect, the wager game has a pay table associated with a turn of play. As noted above, the pay table includes outcomes for each turn of play of the game of at least three types: 1) a first type of outcome in which the player loses their wager on that turn of the game; 2) a second type of outcome in which the player wins additional non-cashable resources, such as additional spins, hands of cards or credit to make additional wagers; and 3) a third type of outcome in which the player wins a credit which is redeemable for money, either directly or through use of a second pay table. The pay table will typically structure the three outcomes depending on the probabilities of a successful outcome of the game, taking advantage of the statistics of the game, and the profit margin the game proprietor seeks to maintain for the game.

[0018] In a game with this type of pay table, the method may also include the step of providing a client application for generating displays on a display on the gaming terminal. The displays includes a display comprising at least one of the following elements: 1) a first element displaying the current balance of credit, if any, redeemable for money, won in a previous turn of play; and 2) a second element displaying the non-cashable resources, if any, which were won in the previous turn of play. The display may also include an additional element comprising a display of the total amount of remaining non-cashable resources available to the player.

[0019] In another aspect, a method is disclosed for managing access to a wager game. The method includes the step of providing a facility for issuing a ticket to a player in exchange for value. The ticket contains information for use in providing the player with access to an electronic wager game using a computing device functioning as a gaming terminal. The ticket is further associated with cashable resources with which the player may play one or more turns of the electronic wager game. Whereas in the previously described embodiments the ticket is associated with non-cashable resources (the player cannot directly cash out the resources and must win cashable credit from playing the game in order to win money), in this embodiment the player plays with cashable credit. However, in accordance with one aspect of this embodiment, the player may not withdraw the cashable resources for money until a predetermined playthrough requirement has been achieved. In one possible embodiment, the predetermined playthrough requirement is met when the player has lost at least one half of the cashable resources associated with the ticket. In another embodiment, the predetermined playthrough requirement P is determined as C multiplied by V/M , where C is a number between 0.1 and 1.0, V comprises the value exchanged for the ticket and M comprises the game margin for the electronic wager game.

[0020] In another aspect, the invention contemplates an improvement to a gaming apparatus comprising a memory storing data for processing by a gaming terminal. The improvement comprises storing in the memory an electronic file containing data representing a pay table for an electronic wager game for display on the display of the gaming terminal. The pay table includes outcomes for each turn of play of the game of at least three types: 1) a first type of outcome in which the player loses their wager; 2) a second type of outcome in which the player wins non-cashable resources with which to play additional turns of play of the game in a normal mode of play of the game; and 3) a third type of outcome in which the player wins a credit which is redeemable for money, either directly or through a second pay table.

[0021] In any of the above embodiments, the electronic wager game may take a variety of forms. In one form, the game is selected from the group of games consisting of a slots-type game, a roulette-type game, and a poker-type game.

[0022] In still another aspect, a system is disclosed for administering a lottery. The system includes one or more facilities (e.g., kiosks, vending machines, computer system) issuing a ticket to a player in exchange for value, the ticket containing information for use in providing the player with access to an electronic wager game using an electronic gaming terminal (e.g., computer) over a computer network. The ticket is further associated with non-cashable resources with which the player may play one or more turns of the electronic wager game. The system further includes a web server receiving a datagram from the electronic gaming terminal containing the information contained on the ticket and thereby providing access to the electronic wager game. The system further includes a gaming server in communication over a computer network with the web server and the electronic gaming terminal. The gaming server generates datagrams associated with results of play of turns of the electronic wager game, and sends the datagrams containing the results of play to the terminals for display.

[0023] In still another aspect, a gaming system is disclosed comprising one or more electronic gaming devices for play of an electronic wager game, the wager game having a pay table, a facility for issuing a ticket to a player containing an amount of non-cashable resources for use in playing the wager game in exchange for value; and wherein the wager game is associated with a pay table which includes outcomes for each turn of play of the game of at least three types, the turns of play comprising turns of play using the non-cashable resources: 1) a first type of outcome in which the player loses their wager on that turn of the game; 2) a second type of outcome in which the player wins additional non-cashable resources with which to play additional turns of the electronic wager game; and 3) a third type of outcome in which the player wins a credit which is redeemable for money either directly or through use of a second pay table.

[0024] Additionally, the present invention contemplates a gaming card or ticket which includes a field on the ticket containing information (e.g., number, password, code, etc.) for use in providing the player with access to an electronic wager game using a computing device functioning as a gaming terminal. The ticket is associated with non-cashable resources with which the player may play one or more turns of play of the electronic wager game. The ticket may be in paper or electronic format. In one possible embodiment the ticket is a lottery scratch-type ticket and wherein the information allowing access to the game (e.g., ticket number, authorization code, password, etc.) is revealed upon scratching a covering obscuring the information.

[0025] In addition to the exemplary aspects and embodiments described above, further aspects and embodiments will become apparent by reference to the drawings and by study of the following detailed description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0026] Exemplary embodiments are illustrated in the drawings. It is intended that the embodiments and Figures disclosed herein are to be considered illustrative rather than restrictive.

Figure 1 is an illustration of a gaming environment in which remote gaming terminals such as computers communicate with a lottery web server and a central gaming server over a computer network. Embodiments of this invention are suitable for implementation in the environment of Figure 1. The invention can also be implemented on other environments, such as in a land-based casino or an online casino.

Figure 2 is a screen shot displayed on a gaming terminal when the player accesses a web site of a lottery or game provider in accordance with one embodiment of this disclosure. The player is prompted to enter a ticket number in order to access the games provided at the web site, whereupon validation of the ticket number the player is presented with a menu of one or more games it may play with non-cashable resources associated with the ticket.

Figure 3 is a screen shot displayed on a gaming terminal when the player has entered the ticket number in the screen of Figure 2 and selected a video slots game to play from a menu of available games. The screen shot includes a display of a pay table in accordance with one aspect of the invention. Note that the pay table includes three types of outcome of play: 1) the player loses their wager on that turn of the game (inherent considering all the possible outcomes from a spin of the slot machine reels which do not result in one of the illustrated winning results); 2) an intermediate outcome in which the player wins additional non-cashable resources with which to play additional turns of the electronic wager game (the bottom six winning results which have as an award free spins); and 3) a winning outcome in which the player wins a credit which is redeemable for cash (indicated by the top two results, with awards of \$ 300 and \$ 150), either directly as in the case of Figure 3 or indirectly by means of a second pay table.

Figure 4 is a screen shot displayed on the gaming terminal after one turn of the game of Figure 3. In this instance, the left hand slot machine reel indicates the player has a Cherry, which results in an award of 2 free spins.

Figure 5 is a screen shot when the player has entered the ticket number in the screen of Figure 2 and selected a different video slots game to play from a menu of available games.

Figure 6 is a screen shot after one turn of the game of Figure 5. The player won \$ 24 by virtue of the five Kings in one of the 15 available pay lines and three free spins (four Cherries in another pay line, comprising two Cherry symbols and two Cash Splash symbols, which are wild).

Figure 7 is a screen shot showing the pay table for the game of Figures 5 and 6, the pay table having three types of outcomes: losing outcome (inherent), outcomes in which the player wins non-cashable resources (free spins) and outcomes in which the player wins cash.

Figure 8 is a screen shot that is displayed when the player has entered the ticket number in the screen of Figure 2 and selected a third type electronic game to play from a menu of available games. The game includes a feature in which the player is given non-cashable resources in the form of credit to play with. Winning results redeemable for cash are added to a "Win Box." Wins in the "Win Box" are converted to cash in accordance with a second pay table.

Figure 9 is a screen shot showing the results after one turn of play of the game of Figure 8.

Figure 10 is a screen shot showing the results of play after a second turn of play of the game of Figure 8, in which the player won 18 units of cashable credit. The cashable credit is reflected in the "Win Box."

Figure 11 is a screen shot after the conclusion of play showing the total cash winnings (conversion of Win Box credit into cash by means of the second pay table.)

Figure 12 is a screen shot showing the second pay table converting Win Box credit to cash.

Figure 13 is an illustration of a conventional lottery ticket vending device for dispensing lottery tickets providing access to the games of this disclosure in exchange for cash.

Figure 14 is an illustration of an example of a lottery or game card ticket providing a scratch area which reveals information for gaining access to an electronic game room on a computer network using the access features of Figure 2. The value indicated on the lottery ticket (\$10) is converted to non-cashable resources to play the wager games.

Figure 15 is a screen shot of an electronic message containing a virtual lottery ticket or game card providing access information to an electronic game room, accessed with the features of Figure 2.

Figure 16 shows an example of a further embodiment, e.g., a casino, where the game cards can be sold and used to provide access to electronic wager games.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED AND ALTERNATIVE EMBODIMENTS

Overview

[0027] Aspects for this invention are particularly suited for use in the context of playing of wager games. The preferred embodiments will be described below in conjunction with the play of a wager game associated with a lottery over a computer network. The invention is not limited to a lottery scenario as will be appreciated by the following discussion. All questions concerning scope of the invention are to be answered by reference to the appended claims.

[0028] As one example of how the invention may be implemented, a player purchases a lottery ticket for cash. The ticket includes a code or password which allows the player to log into a web site operated by a lottery operator using a general purpose computer. The lottery ticket is associated some value of credit (e.g., \$10) which can be used to play wager games that are accessed at the web site. The value exchanged for the ticket can be coded into the ticket number at the time of purchase or associated with the ticket in some other manner. The credit that is available to the player can take the form of non-cashable resources, or cashable resources, as will be explained in the following discussion.

[0029] Referring to Figure 1, a system suitable for implementing a lottery in accordance with this disclosure is indicated generally by reference numeral (1). The system (1) includes a central gaming server (2), and a portal (3) in the form of web server on the World Wide Web of the Internet which hosts a game playing web site. The portal (3) is managed by the game proprietor, e.g., the lottery operator. For convenience, embodiments of the invention will be described with particular reference to one such portal (3). Other portals operated by other lottery operators or online casinos may be present. The system also includes facilities for issuing lottery tickets (not shown in Figure 1), which are described later in conjunction with Figures 13-15.

[0030] The portal or web server (3) is accessible by a player (not shown) through a player gaming terminal (4) in the form of an Internet-enabled computer having a display monitor (5) and an associated pointing device (5a) such as a mouse or, alternatively, a touchpad. In this embodiment, web server (3) is shown as having three computer gaming terminals (4) logically connected thereto. It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the web server (3) can be logically connected to any desired number of such computer gaming terminals (4) simultaneously, which number is physically limited only by considerations of processing power and Internet access bandwidth.

[0031] The gaming server (2) functions to receive datagrams containing amounts wagered and gaming action, such as activation of a "spin" icon, from the gaming terminals (4). The server (2) also functions to generate random outcomes for turns of play of the electronic wager games played by the terminals (4). It also functions to generate datagrams containing such outcomes and transmits the datagrams to the terminals (4).

[0032] The web server (3) and the terminals (4) are capable of communicating with each other by means of an open communication network (7) that is, in this embodiment, the Internet. The Internet is represented in Figure 1 as separate logical communication networks (6, 7, 8). The particular networking topology used and presence of intermediate networks or switching equipment is not important, and may make use of intervening communications networks such as the public switched telephone network, cable networks, cellular wireless networks, WiFi, WiMax, etc.

[0033] The gaming server (2) is associated with a database (14). The database (14) maintains a credit account balance for each player who participates in a game offered by the web server (3). In the illustrated embodiment, therefore, if players are participating in the game from each one of the gaming terminals or workstations (4), the database (14) has one player credit account associated with each of the player gaming terminals or workstations (4). The credit account maintained in the database (14) maintains a balance of non-cashable credit available to the player, any credits redeemable for cash, and cash amounts, if any, due the player from winning results of play. The database (14) also stores valid ticket numbers (or valid access codes or other data) and the amount of non-cashable credit that associated with each lottery ticket. The database (14) is used to authenticate the tickets when the players log onto the web site (3) using the features of Figure 2.

[0034] Players at the gaming terminals (4) use a web browser to access the web site hosted by the web server (3) and view the available games for play, such as slots, poker, Black Jack, Roulette and other games. Each of the available games has a corresponding web application that includes display tools for displaying on the user interface display (5) gaming symbols (e.g., slot machine reels, cards, Roulette wheels, etc.), displaying gaming controls by which the player can place wagers, spin the reels, etc., and displaying the results of play. The application also includes gaming logic for facilitating the execution of a turn of a game, and communications facilities for communicating player actions using the user interface to the central gaming server (2), and receiving datagrams from the gaming server containing results of play. The data representing results of play are translated to graphical symbols which are presented on the user interface display (5). Further details are known in the art and described in the patent literature, see e.g., U.S. application serial no. 10/540,744 filed September 23, 2005.

[0035] Each gaming terminal (4) may take the form of a conventional personal computer operating under a Windows XP, ME, 2000 or other operating system, which is well known and commercially available from Microsoft Corporation of Redmond, Washington, or other operating system such as provided by Apple Computer or a Linux operating system. The gaming terminal (4) may also take the form of an Internet-enabled portable computing device such as a personal digital assistant, iPhone or the like, or cellular telephone.

[0036] A stored program in the gaming server (2) maintains a dynamic register (not shown) in a database of all ticket codes giving rise to active player participation in any instances of the available games from time to time. The dynamic register also contains data representative of an instance of the game in which the player is participating and state information as to the status of game play at each terminal (4). The gaming server (2) operates, for example, under the Windows NT operating system.

[0037] The web application (not shown) executing in a client gaming terminal (4) and the corresponding stored server program executing in the gaming server (2) will be referred to, for convenience, as a client process and a server process, respectively. The server process generates one or more random events that determine the outcome of turns of the game, such as determining the outcomes of spins of the slot machine reels in the various slots games of the participating players. The client process of any particular gaming terminal (4) obtains the generated random events from the gaming server (2) along the communication network (8) and displays them on the display monitor (5) of the terminal in an intelligible manner as a simulated game outcome, such as, for example, by causing the player's set of slots reels to spin

and to come to rest at a position corresponding to the random event generated by the gaming server (2).

[0038] In use, a player wishing to participate in a wager game uses a terminal (4) to access the web server (3). The player will have first purchased one of the pre-paid game cards or lottery tickets for cash. The ticket includes preferably includes (1) a card number, password, bar code, alphanumeric code, or other information or data which is used to access the games (and thereby prevent unauthorized access), and (2) the address (URL) of the web server (3) indicating where player may access the games. The tickets and the manner of purchasing them will be described in further detail later in conjunction with Figures 13-16.

[0039] When the player navigates using their web browser to the web site hosted by web server (3), a message is displayed on the display (5). See Figure 2. In this example, the message (20) prompts the player to enter the ticket number presented on the lottery ticket. The player places their cursor over a box (22) and types in the ticket number, and then clicks on an OK icon (24). A datagram is then sent to the web server (3) (Figure 1) and the ticket number entered by the player is checked against the database 14 (Figure 1) to see if it is a valid number and has not been used before to gain access to the web site. If the number is valid, a web page is served to the terminal (4) containing a menu of available games to play. Obviously, other security precautions may be present to prevent unauthorized access to the wager games.

[0040] The ticket number is associated with a value of non-cashable credit that is available play. Information pertaining to the validated ticket, including their network address of the terminal (4), any network care-of address, available credit, etc. is furnished from the web server (3) to the gaming server (2) and the gaming server commences to communicate with the player's terminal (4).

[0041] The website hosted by the web server (3) may be provisioned as a virtual slots room where video slots is the only game available to players. Alternatively, and more preferably, the website may provide a plurality of different types of games in order to satisfy the preferences of a variety of players.

Embodiments with non-cashable resources in the form of free spins

[0042] As noted above, the games that are accessed as described above can be structured in a manner in which a player is given non-cashable resources in the form of a number of transactions with a fixed wager amount. This embodiment will be described in conjunction with Figure 3-7.

[0043] Figure 3 is a screen shot displayed on the display (5) when the player has entered a valid ticket number in the screen of Figure 2 and then proceeded to select a video slots game to play from a menu of available games. The screen shot shows the reels (30) of a three-reel slot machine. The display includes a pay table (32). Note that the pay table (30) includes three types of outcome of play. The first type is a losing outcome, i.e., player loses their wager on that instance of the game. This is inherent in the pay table by virtue of the game including many possible outcomes from a spin of the slot machine reels which do not result in one of the illustrated winning results.

[0044] A second type of outcome is an intermediate outcome indicated at (34) in which the player wins additional non-cashable resources with which to play additional turns of the game. In this example, the bottom six winning results have an award of free spins.

[0045] The third type of outcome is a winning outcome (36) in which the player wins a credit which is redeemable for money (indicated by the top two results, with awards of \$ 300 and \$ 150). In this embodiment the winning outcomes 36 are available to the player directly, without reference to a secondary pay table and with no play through requirement. The outcomes (36) also include a jackpot field (38) which shows the jackpot that is awarded in the event that the player achieves three Cash Splash symbols. The jackpot can be a progressive jackpot funded from a portion of the ticket revenue. In one example, the winning cash outcomes can be redeemed immediately by the player exiting the game. In this event, they cannot re-enter the game room and play additional games. Alternatively, they can continue to play until all their resources are spent and then cash out their winnings, if any.

[0046] Suppose a player buys a prepaid game card or lottery ticket for \$10. Of the purchase price, consider the situation where an average of \$5 needs to be returned to the player, \$3 must go to the lottery operator or holder of the gaming license, while the remaining \$2 must be divided between the distributor and a software provider who provides entertainment to the player. This enhanced profit margin is enabled by virtue of replacing the intermediate outcomes (elements (34) of the pay table) with awards of free spins instead of awards of cash, as would typically be the case in a prior art scenario.

[0047] In the embodiment of Figure 3, the \$10 paid for the lottery ticket entitles the player to 20 "free" spins of the video slots game. The game has a pay table (32) in which higher paying prizes can be redeemed for cash (portion of the pay table indicated at (36)), while lower-paying prizes (indicated by the portion of the pay table (34)) constitute more free spins of the game.

[0048] The player executes a spin by clicking on the SPIN icon (40). A datagram is sent to the gaming server (2) indicating the activation of the icon and the gaming server returns a datagram containing a random result for spinning of the three reels 30.

[0049] The game display of Figure 3 features elements providing counters for the player's convenience:

- a) a SPINS element (42) - shows the total number of free spins remaining;
- b) a CASH ACCOUNT element (44) - showing the total amount that the player can redeem for monetary value, in this case directly without reference to a second pay table;
- c) a CASH WON element (46) - showing the amount of cash, if any, won on the most recent free spin of the game;
- d) a SPINS WON element (48) - showing the number of additional free spins, if any, won on the most recent free spin of the game.

[0050] In one embodiment, the player may redeem the CASH ACCOUNT for monetary value at any time or, alternatively, only when all the free spins have been utilized. The pay table (32) is designed such that the lower-paying symbols do not provide the player with an infinite number of free spins, thereby ensuring that the game has a finite duration.

[0051] As a variation, the top-paying prize indicated by the jackpot field (38) may be a progressive jackpot prize, which means that a portion of the \$5 that is paid out on average to the player, say \$0.50 is used to fund the progressive jackpot, while the average player cash payout reduces to \$4.50.

[0052] The player continues to execute spins by activating the spin icon (40) until they have exhausted all the spins they were initially furnished with plus and spins won in previous turns of play and the spin count (42) is zero. The player then receives a cash award as indicated by the cash account field (44).

[0053] Figure 4 is a screen shot displayed on the gaming terminal after one turn of the game of Figure 3. In this turn, the left hand slot machine reel indicates the player has a Cherry symbol, which results in an award of 2 free spins according to entry (34A) in the pay table (32). The spins that were won in the last turn of play, if any, are reflected in the field (48) and current tally of available spins (21) is reflected in the spins field (42). Had this turn resulted in three sevens, field 44 would indicate a balance of \$ 300.

[0054] Figure 5 is a screen shot displayed on a gaming terminal when it has entered a valid ticket number in the screen of Figure 2, and then selected a different video slots game to play from a menu of available games. This game features fifteen different pay lines consisting of combinations of the symbols displayed going across the field from one side to the other. The pay table for the game is shown in Figure 7. The game features the same fields (42), (44), (46) and (48) as shown in Figure 3 and a spin icon (40) to activate one turn of the game.

[0055] Figure 6 is a screen shot displayed on the gaming terminal after one turn of the game of Figure 5. The player won \$24 by virtue of the five Kings in pay line (60A) and three free spins in pay line (60B) (four Cherries, formed by two Cherry symbols and two wild Cash Splash symbols). The cash winnings for that turn are shown in CASH WON field (46), the total amount won thus far is shown in the CASH ACCOUNT Field (44) and the free spins won are shown in the SPINS WON field (48).

[0056] Figure 7 is a screenshot showing the pay table (32) for the game of Figures 5 and 6. The pay table has three types of outcomes - losing outcome (inherent, all possible results which are not specifically illustrated in the pay table (32)), outcomes in which the player wins non-cashable resources (free spins) indicated at (34) and outcomes in which the player wins cash, indicated at (36).

[0057] Note that the spins that are awarded as an intermediate winning result are played in the normal mode of play. The game does not enter a special "bonus mode" when executing such spins.

[0058] The concepts described in accordance with the embodiments of Figures 3-7 can be extended to other electronic wager games, such as Roulette, Blackjack, Poker, etc.

Embodiment with non-cashable resources as credit with variable wager amounts

[0059] Whereas the games of Figures 3-7 feature non-cashable resources in the form of a predetermined number of transactions (spins) of the game with the wager amount fixed, other embodiments are contemplated in which the non-cashable resources take the form of credit which is usable to play one or more turns of play of the game and the player can adjust the amount of the wager per turn.

[0060] Figure 8 is a screen shot that is displayed when the player has entered the ticket number in the screen of Figure 2 and selected a third type electronic game to play from a menu of available games. The game includes a feature in which the player is given credit to play with which is reflected in a credit field or box (100). The credit is represented by 200 coins, which may correspond to a value of say \$10. The display also includes a display of a full range of wager control icons (102) with which the player can adjust the number of pay lines they wish to play, select the number of coins to wager on a turn of the game, and a MAX BET icon in which the player may place the selected number of coins (in this case five coins) on all of the selected pay lines (in this instance nine pay lines). The display also includes the SPIN icon (40) which results in a turn of play. When the player clicks on SPIN (40) the five by three array of symbols spin and come to rest in a randomly selected pattern. The game has pay lines similar to the configuration of Figure 5.

[0061] The game of Figure 8 will feature a pay table (not shown) that includes results in which the wager was lost,

intermediate results which increase the size of the non-cashable resource (credit or coins in this instance) and results that are redeemable for cash. In this case, winning results redeemable for cash take the form of cashable credits that are reflected in a separate WIN BOX field (106). At the conclusion of play (no coins remaining in the coins field (100)), the Wins in the "WIN BOX" are converted to cash in accordance with a second pay table indicated in field (108).

[0062] Figure 9 is a screen shot showing the results after one turn of play of the game of Figure 8. The player wagered 5 coins on 9 pay lines (45 coins total wagered), and did not receive any winning results at all. The coins field (100) indicates a balance of 155 coins available for play.

[0063] Figure 10 is a screen shot showing the results of play after a second turn of play of the game of Figure 8. The turn resulted in a pair of "scatter rams" (110) which flash on and off with animation effects (lightning) to indicate to the player that a winning result was achieved. According to the pay table for the game the player wins 18 units of credit which is redeemable for cash in accordance with the second pay table (108). The value of the win is reflected in the "Win Box" field (106). The coins field (100) deducted an additional 45 coins from the previous balance for that turn of play, showing a new coin balance of 110 coins. The play continues until all the non-cashable credit indicated in the field (100) has been exhausted.

[0064] Figure 11 is a screen shot after the conclusion of play showing a message indicating the total cash winnings (\$1). This amount is determined by conversion of Win Box credit (36 total credits indicated in field (106)) into cash by means of the second pay table (108). The second pay table (108) is not entirely displayed in Figure 11 but is viewable by clicking the "show in window" icon (112). Figure 12 is a screen shot showing the second pay table (108) which converts Win Box credit to cash. The second pay table (108) can take a variety of forms depending on how the game is structured and the payouts that are available. As another example of a second pay table (108), consider the following table

WIN BOX Total	Cash Prize
10,001 and up	\$25,000
1,501-10,000	\$5,000
1,001-1,500	\$1,000
801-1000	\$500
501-800	\$100
201-500	\$10
101 to 200	\$5
0 to 100	\$0

[0065] In a variation on this embodiment, the game can be structured such that winning results of cash are awarded to the player without reference to a second pay table. The winning results of cash would be reflected in a "cash won" element on the screen display. The player can then cash out and end play of the game either as soon as they win cash, or alternatively after they have exhausted the non-cashable credit (coins).

[0066] Note that in the previously described embodiments the cash winnings are segregated from the playing credit. It would behoove the player to continue to play until all their non-cashable credit has been exhausted since as long as they can continue to play they can in theory win again.

[0067] Thus, the player may redeem the Win Box credit at any time or, alternatively only when all the game credit ("coins" in field (100)) has been utilized. The pay table for the game of Figure 10 is designed such that the lower-paying results do not provide the player with an infinite supply of game credit, thereby ensuring that the game has a finite duration.

[0068] As a variation, the top-paying prize may be a progressive jackpot prize, which means that a portion of the \$5 that is paid out on average to the player, say \$0.50 is used to fund the progressive jackpot, while the average player cash payout reduces to \$4.50. For example, the game of Figure 8 could have a jackpot in the millions of dollars similar to the jackpot shown in field (38) in the game of Figure 7. In this embodiment no reference is made to a secondary pay table if they win the jackpot.

[0069] It is desirable to allow the player to choose one of a number of different games with which to make use of the non-cashable game credits (e.g., 2,000 to start for a \$10 lottery ticket). Suppose the player can choose either one of games A and B, which have different pay tables and probabilities of winning. In order not to prejudice the player in any way, the stated objective can be achieved by:

- a.) having a common secondary pay table (108) converting cashable credit to cash that applies to both games, and compensating for the different game probabilities by awarding a different quantity of cashable credits depending on the particular game that the player chooses to play; or
- b.) awarding the player the same number of cashable credits, irrespective of game choice, and compensating for the different game probabilities by having a different secondary pay table (108) for each game.

Embodiment with play of cashable resources

[0070] A further embodiment of the present disclosure is one in which the player is provided with cashable credit to play the games. In this embodiment, their cash winnings may or may not be sequestered from the credit that is used play the games.

[0071] Consider for example the player purchases a game card or lottery ticket for \$10. The player is then provided with \$10 of credit, which the player can utilize to play the electronic wager game. The player is prevented from cashing out the credit balance until a predetermined play-through requirement has been achieved on the game. In one embodiment the player is not permitted to cash out until the player has lost at least one half of the amount of credit they started with. In other embodiments, the player is prevented from cashing out until a play through requirement P has been reached. P is determined as C multiplied by V/M, where C is a number between 0.1 and 1.0, V comprises the value exchanged for the ticket (initial bankroll) and M comprises the game margin for the electronic wager game. C may be 0.5 in one specific embodiment.

[0072] A theoretical basis for this solution is the following. Suppose the player wagers his entire credit balance of \$10 on a game having a 95% payout (i.e. a 5% game margin), and continues to do so repeatedly. On average, the player will lose 5% of his initial bankroll on each turn of the game, i.e. the player will, on average, lose an amount equal to his initial bankroll in 20 turns of the game, that is, a total playthrough of $20 * \$10 = \200 . In general, therefore, the play through required for the player to lose his entire initial bankroll is given by equation (1):

$$(1) \quad \text{Playthrough } P = \text{Initial Bankroll ("V") / Game Margin ("M")}$$

$$= \$10 / 0.05 = \$200$$

[0073] However, it is advantageous to allow the player to cash out with some fraction of his initial bankroll (a constant "C" which is between 0.1 and 1). As one example, it is desirable to ensure that the player, on average, can exit the game with half of his initial bankroll, that is, a \$5 payout if the player was initially given \$ 10 to wager with. In this scenario, C = 0.5 and the Playthrough requirement $P = 0.5 * \$10 / 0.05 = \100 . Thus, a playthrough requirement of \$100 is set for the game, whereupon after reaching this playthrough requirement the player's credit balance becomes immediately cashable.

[0074] A play through requirement of \$ 100 means that the player is required to make \$ 100 in wagers, collectively. The individual wagers can be of varying sizes. For example, \$ 100 in playthrough is achieved by five \$10 wagers, four \$5 wagers, and fifteen \$ 2 wagers, or some other combination of wagers that total up to \$ 100 in wagers.

[0075] It is envisaged that the player will be notified on the game display when the playthrough requirement has been achieved and they can cash out.

Facilities for issuing tickets and game cards

[0076] A variety of formats and instrumentalities may be used to issue the tickets (game cards) as described herein. Several possible examples will now be described in conjunction with Figures 13-16 and will be described in this section.

[0077] Figure 13 shows a conventional lottery ticket vending machine (200) of the type generally known. The machine (200) includes a user interface (210) which prompts the person to insert a credit card or cash and to indicate the value in lottery tickets they wish to purchase. In this example all tickets issued by the machine have a fixed value (e.g., \$ 1.00) and are previously manufactured and loaded into the machine. After receiving the money from the purchaser the machine (200) vends the ticket (200). The ticket includes a scratch area (222) which is scratched off to reveal a ticket number and the web site address where the player is to go to play the game. If the player purchases say \$10 in tickets, the vending machine (200) vends ten \$1 tickets. Alternatively, the vending machine is provided with tickets with different face values, e.g., \$1 tickets, \$10 tickets, and \$50 tickets and vends combinations of these tickets in accordance with the amount purchased by the player.

[0078] An example of a ticket (220) is shown in Figure 14. The ticket (220) includes the scratch area (222) which is scratched to reveal a ticket number (226) and a password (228), both of which are used to gain access to the games. Alternatively, the ticket just includes a ticket number and no password. The ticket includes the web site address where the games are available as indicated at (230). The ticket includes a field (224) which indicates the amount of credit available to play. In this instance, the ticket is a \$10 ticket and the player is given \$10 in non-cashable credit (or alternatively cashable credit) to play with, depending on the type of games that are provided by the operator.

[0079] The tickets can also be purchased online. For example, the player goes to a web site and uses a credit card to purchase say \$100 in lottery tickets. The web site is associated with a ticket distributing facility in the form of a computer

system which generates electronic lottery tickets and sends the tickets to the purchaser via an electronic message such as an email or SMS message. A message containing the ticket is sent to the purchaser. Figure 15 depicts an example of an electronic ticket (302) which is part of the content of an email message (300) which is sent by the computer system to the player ("Pete"). The electronic lottery ticket (300) includes a field (304) which includes the value of the ticket (\$100 in this instance), a ticket number field (306) and a field (308) containing the web site where the games are available. The player navigates to the web site indicated in the field (308) and the screen of Figure 2 is presented. The player enters the ticket number presented in the field (306) and starts playing as described above.

[0080] Other types of systems can be used to generate electronic tickets. In one example, a web server generates a web page containing a ticket and serves the web page to a player's computer. The player can print out the ticket. Alternatively, the web page contains a link to the game web site and the player cuts and pastes the ticket number into the ticket number field of Figure 2. Still other approaches are possible and within the ability of persons skilled in the art in view of this discussion. As will be appreciated, the term "ticket" is intended to be interpreted broadly to cover any device (whether in electronic or tangible form) which provides a means for access to a wager game as described herein.

[0081] Figure 16 is an illustration of an embodiment in which a casino or other enterprise (400) includes desk or window (402) where a player goes in person to purchase a game card or lottery ticket (404) in accordance with the features of this disclosure. The persons at the desk (402) take the player's money and give the player a ticket containing a number. The ticket (404) in this instance may contain a bar code as the information or data granting access to the wager game. The player takes the ticket to a gaming terminal (410), and inserts the ticket (404) into a bar code reader attached to the terminal (410). When the bar code is read and validated, the machine grants access to the wager game(s) offered on the terminal. The gaming terminal (410), e.g., a video slots machine or other electronic gaming device, is connected to a computer network (406). A gaming server (408) is also connected to the network (406) and serves to function as the gaming server (2) described previously. The gaming server (408) serves other gaming terminals that are present in the facility (400) and located on the network (406). In an alternative embodiment, the ticket (404) includes a ticket number and the terminal (410) includes a display (412) prompting the user to enter their ticket number to play. The terminal (410) includes user interface features to enter the number, either a keyboard and mouse or a touch sensitive display. In this example the terminal (410) includes a slot machine lever (414) which is pulled to initiate a turn of play of a slots type game.

[0082] The principles of the embodiment of Figure 16 are also applicable to an electronic, online casino. The player logs onto the online casino, purchases a ticket for say \$10 from the casino (or from some other source), and is awarded \$10 in cashable or non-cashable resources with which to play electronic wager games offered by the online casino. This approach simplifies the process a player must follow in order to place real-money wagers at an online casino by eliminating the registration and account-creation requirements. In particular, the use of pre-paid gaming cards allows the online casino operator to allow holders of such tickets to play and only go through more cumbersome processes of registration and account creation steps in the event the player wins cash. Players who play but do not win any cash do not need to be registered or have accounts created, other than the relatively simple process of vending the ticket to the player in the first instance.

[0083] In still another possible embodiment, the pre-paid game cards or lottery tickets can be used in connection with a mobile phone which is configured as a game playing terminal. In this embodiment, the player goes online to purchase a lottery ticket and the ticket is emailed to the player as an element in an SMS message or other type of message format. The player then uses the access information contained in the SMS message to access a lottery web site to play the games, as explained above.

[0084] As another example, a player with an SMS phone purchases a pre-paid game ticket via a distribution facility (e.g., online) and the proprietor of the game sends an SMS message containing the ticket to the player's phone. The ticket includes a bar code which is in turn displayable on the screen display of the mobile phone. The player presents the screen of the phone showing the bar code to a gaming terminal of the proprietor, such as the terminal (410) shown in Figure 16. The bar code is verified and the player proceeds to access the games presented on the gaming terminal (410) of Figure 16.

Further considerations regarding lotteries

[0085] The above-described lottery embodiments have used a gaming server (2) to generate random events on which game outcomes are based, as and when necessary. There are several alternatives to how the gaming server (2) may be configured which are particularly applicable in the lottery embodiments.

[0086] These alternatives stem from an appreciation that lottery operators require some certainty about what their maximum payout exposure will be. If the play associated with every ticket is handled in a truly random manner, it would be possible, at least in theory, for the lottery jackpot to be awarded more than once. For this reason, in some prior art lotteries, physical lottery tickets are produced with a predetermined number of them being winning cards and with a predetermined distribution of prizes, i.e., the lottery outcomes are generated in advance. It is desirable to have lottery prizes in accordance with this disclosure also determined in advance, in order to bring certainty to the maximum payout

exposure, e.g., eliminating the possibility of multiple winners of the jackpot and the possibility that the sum of lesser, intermediate winning results also exceeding the maximum payout exposure.

[0087] Control over lottery prize distribution, such that it meets a predetermined distribution expected by the lottery proprietor, can be achieved in at least two ways.

[0088] Firstly, a finite number of the tickets (e.g., those having particular ticket numbers or particular bar codes) are associated with prizes according to a predetermined prize distribution, and the remaining ticket numbers do not result in any wins for the players. This identification of winning and losing tickets is determined in the lottery system in advance of any play by a player holding the ticket. The player holding a ticket will not know whether theirs is one of the "lucky tickets" (a ticket earmarked for payment of a prize according to the prize distribution for the lottery) until they play. If they have one of the "lucky tickets", the results for turns of the game are not truly randomly generated by the gaming server, but rather are results which are generated in a manner to meet the prize distribution objectives of the lottery. As an example of implementation of this feature, when a player holding a lottery ticket having a number which is designated to not have winning results logs into the lottery web server (3), the ticket number is checked against the database (14) and it is determined that it is not a winning ticket. That fact is forwarded from the web server (3) to the gaming server (2). The gaming server (2) generates results for turns of the game that are selected from a bin of results containing losing results and sends such losing results to the gaming terminal. Conversely, in the event that a player logs in with a ticket number which is associated in the database (14) as being a winning ticket, that fact is forwarded to the gaming server (2) and the gaming server (2) selects winning results according to a predetermined prize distribution schedule for such ticket and sends such results to the player's terminal. The winning results are sent in accordance with the profile or algorithm for prize distribution. The game server may mix in some losing results in addition to winning results to maintain player interest.

[0089] Alternatively, for each winning ticket number, the gaming server randomly selects the prize to be awarded to that ticket number from a finite pool or bin of prizes (without replacement). The gaming server may also mix in some losing results with the winning results to maintain player interest.

[0090] The following characterizing clauses are offered for further support and description of preferred embodiments of the disclosed inventions.

1. A method for managing access to a wager game, comprising:

providing a facility for issuing a ticket (220/302/404) to a player in exchange for value (Figures 13-16), the ticket containing information (226/228/306) for use in providing the player with access to an electronic wager game (Figures 3-12) using a computing device functioning as a gaming terminal (4, 410), wherein the ticket is further associated with non-cashable resources (42, 100) with which the player may play one or more turns of play of the electronic wager game.

2. The method of clause 1, further comprising

providing a web server (3) receiving a datagram from the gaming terminal (4) associated with the player, the datagram containing the information (226/228/306) contained in the ticket and responsively granting access to the electronic wager game.

3. The method of clause 1 or clause 2, wherein the ticket (220/302/404) comprises a lottery ticket.

4. The method of clause 1, 2 or 3, wherein the ticket is in electronic form (Figure 15).

5. The method of clause 1, 2, 3, or 4, wherein the method further comprises the step of providing in the wager game a pay table (32)(Figures 4, 7) associated with a turn of play of the electronic wager game in which the player makes a wager using the non-cashable resources associated with the ticket, and wherein the pay table includes outcomes for each turn of play of the game of at least three types:

- 1) a first type of outcome in which the player loses their wager on that turn of the game (inherent from the pay tables of Figures 3, 7);
- 2) a second type of outcome (34, Figures 3, 7) in which the player wins additional non-cashable resources with which to play additional turns of the electronic wager game; and
- 3) a third type of outcome (36, Figures 3, 7) in which the player wins a credit which is redeemable for money either directly or through use of a second pay table (108, Figure 12).

6. The method of clause 5, wherein the method further comprises the steps of:

providing a client application for generating displays on a display on the gaming terminal (4), wherein the displays

includes a display comprising at least one of the following elements:

- 1) a first element (46 in Figure 3, 105 in Figure 10) displaying the current balance of credit, if any, won in accordance with the third type of outcome in previous turn of play of the electronic wager game; and
- 2) a second element (48, Figure 3) displaying the non-cashable resources, if any, which were won on the previous turn of the game in accordance with the second type of outcome.

7. The method of clause 6, wherein the display further includes an additional element comprising a display (42 in Figure 3, 100 in Figure 9) of the total amount of remaining non-cashable credit available to the player.

8. The method of clause 5, 6 or 7 wherein the credit redeemable for money is available to the player immediately after an outcome of the third kind occurs.

9. The method of clause 5, 6, 7, or 8 wherein the information (226/228/306) is used to provide access to an electronic wager game played over a computer network (6, 7 8 in Figure 1, 406 in Figure 16), and wherein the non-cashable resources are useable to play instances of a plurality of different electronic wager games over the computer network, and wherein each of the different electronic wager games has a pay table having the first, second and third types of outcomes as recited in clause 5 (see Figures 3 and 7).

10. The method of clause 9, wherein at least one of the electronic wager games is selected from the group of games consisting of a slots-type game, a roulette-type game, and a poker-type game.

11. The method of any of clauses 1-10, wherein the non-cashable resources comprises a resource selected from the group of resources consisting of a) a predetermined number of turns of play of the electronic wager game with a fixed wager amount per turn of play (Figures 3-7) and b) a predetermined quantity of non-cashable credit available for play in which the wager amount per turn of play is not fixed (Figures 9 and 10).

12. The method of any of clauses 5-10, wherein the credit, if any, won by a player in accordance the third type of outcome in the pay table is convertible into money by means of a second pay table 108 (Figures 9-12).

13. The method of clause 12, wherein the non-cashable resources are useable to play instances of a plurality of different electronic wager games, wherein each of the different electronic wager games has a pay table having the first, second and third types of outcomes as recited in clause 5 (Figures 3 and 7), and wherein each of the plurality of different electronic wager games has a different second pay table (108) for converting credit won by a player in accordance with the third type of outcome into money.

14. The method of clause 12, wherein the non-cashable resources are useable to play instances of a plurality of different electronic wager games, wherein each of the different electronic wager games have a pay table having the first, second and third types of outcomes as recited in clause 5, and wherein each of the plurality of different electronic wager games uses the same second pay table (108) for converting credit won by a player in accordance with the third type of outcome into money.

15. A method for managing access to a wager game, comprising:

providing a facility for issuing a ticket (220/302/404) to a player in exchange for value (Figures 13-16), the ticket containing information (226/228/306) for use in providing the player with access to an electronic wager game using a computing device functioning as a gaming terminal (4),

wherein the ticket is further associated with cashable resources with which the player may play one or more instances of the electronic wager game (see section above describing play with cashable resources)

16. The method of clause 15, wherein the player may not withdraw the cashable resources for money until a predetermined playthrough requirement has been achieved.

17. The method of clause 16, wherein the predetermined playthrough requirement is met when the player has lost at least half of the cashable resources associated with the ticket.

18. The method of clause 17, wherein the predetermined playthrough requirement P is determined as $C \times V/M$, where C is a number between 0.1 and 1.0, V comprises the value exchanged for the ticket and M comprises the game margin for the electronic wager game.

19. Gaming apparatus comprising a memory storing data for processing by a gaming terminal (4), the improvement comprising:

the memory (resident in the terminal (4), e.g., hard disk memory) storing an electronic file containing data representing a pay table (32 in Figures 3 and 7) for an electronic wager game for display on the display (5) of the gaming terminal (4), wherein the pay table includes outcomes for each turn of play of the game of at least three types:

- 1) a first type of outcome in which the player loses their wager on that instance of the game;

- 2) a second type of outcome (34) in which the player wins non-cashable resources with which to play additional turns of the electronic wager game in a normal mode of play of the game; and
- 3) a third type of outcome (36, 38) in which the player wins a credit which is redeemable for money, either directly or through a second pay table (108).

20. The apparatus of clause 19, wherein the memory further stores a client application for display on the gaming terminal, wherein the display includes at least one of the following elements:

- 1) an element (46 in Figure 3, 105 Figure 10) displaying the current balance of credit, if any, won in accordance with the third type of outcome in previous turn of play of the electronic wager game; and
- 2) an element (48, Figure 3) displaying the non-cashable resources, if any, which were won on the previous turn of the game in accordance with the second type of outcome.

21. The apparatus of clause 20, wherein the display further includes an additional element (42, 100) comprising a display of the total amount of remaining non-cashable credit available to the player.

22. The apparatus of clause 19, 20 or 21, wherein the electronic wager game comprises a game selected from the group of games consisting of a slots-type game, a roulette-type game, and a poker-type game.

23. The apparatus of clause 19, 20, 21 or 22, wherein the gaming terminal (4) comprises a general purpose computer.

24. A system (Figure 1) for administering a lottery, comprising, in combination:

one or more facilities (Figures 13-16) for issuing a ticket to a player in exchange for value, the ticket containing information for use in providing the player with access to an electronic wager game using an electronic gaming terminal (4, 410) over a computer network (6, 7, 8, 406), wherein the ticket is further associated with non-cashable resources with which the player may play one or more instances of the electronic wager game;

a web server (3) receiving a datagram from the electronic gaming terminal (3) containing the information contained on the ticket and thereby providing access to the electronic wager game; and

a gaming server (2, 408) in communication over a computer network with the web server (3) and the electronic gaming terminal (4, 410) generating datagrams associated with results of play of turns of the electronic wager game and sending the datagrams to the electronic gaming terminals.

25. The system of clause 24, wherein the one or more facilities (Figures 13-16) issue physical lottery tickets (220) containing the information.

26. The system of clause 24, wherein the one or more facilities comprises a computer generating an electronic ticket (Figure 15) containing the information.

27. The system of clause 24, wherein the web server (3) provides access to an electronic wager game having a pay table (32, Figures 3, 7) associated with a turn of play of the electronic wager game in which the player makes a wager of the non-cashable resources associated with the ticket, and wherein the pay table includes outcomes for each turn of play of the game of at least three types:

- 1) a first type of outcome in which the player loses their wager on that turn of the game;
- 2) a second type of outcome in which the player wins additional non-cashable resources with which to play additional turns of the electronic wager game; and
- 3) a third type of outcome in which the player wins a credit which is redeemable for money either directly or through use of a second pay table (108).

28. The system of clause 27, wherein the web server (3) provides a facility for downloading a client application to the electronic gaming terminal (4), the client application including code for generating a display on the gaming terminal containing at least one of the following elements:

- 1) an element displaying the current balance of credit, if any, won in accordance with the third type of outcome in previous turn of play of the electronic wager game; and
- 2) an element displaying the non-cashable resources, if any, which were won in the previous turn of the game in accordance with the second type of outcome.

29. The system of clause 28, wherein the display further includes an additional element comprising a display of the total amount of remaining non-cashable credit available to the player.

30. The system of any of clauses 27-29, wherein the credit redeemable for money is available to the player immediately after an outcome of the third kind occurs.

31. The system of any of clauses 27-30, wherein the web server (3) provides access to a plurality of different electronic wager games and wherein the non-cashable resources are useable to play turns of play of the plurality of different electronic wager games, and wherein each of the different electronic wager games has a pay table (32) having the first, second and third types of outcomes as recited in clause 27.

32. The system of any of clauses 24-31, wherein at least one of the electronic wager games is selected from the group of games consisting of a slots-type game, a roulette-type game, and a poker-type game.

33. The system of any of clauses 24-32, wherein the non-cashable resources comprises a resource selected from the group of resources consisting of a) a predetermined number of turns of play of the electronic wager game with a fixed wager amount per turn of play (Figures 3, 7) and b) a predetermined quantity of non-cashable credit available for play in which the wager amount per turn of play is not fixed (Figures 8,9).

34. The system of any of clauses 27-29, wherein the credit, if any, won by a player in accordance the third type of outcome in the pay table is convertible into money by means of a second pay table (108).

35. The system of clause 27, wherein the non-cashable resources are useable to play turns of a plurality of different electronic wager games, wherein each of the different electronic wager games have a pay table (32) having the first, second and third types of outcomes as recited in clause 27, and wherein each of the plurality of different electronic wager games has a different second pay table (108) for converting credit won by a player in accordance with the third type of outcome into money.

36. The system of clause 27, wherein the non-cashable resources are useable to play turns of a plurality of different electronic wager games, wherein each of the different electronic wager games have a pay table (32) having the first, second and third types of outcomes as recited in claim 27, and wherein each of the plurality of different electronic wager games uses the same second pay table (108) for converting credit won by a player in accordance with the third type of outcome into money.

37. A gaming system (Figures 1, 16) comprising:

one or more electronic gaming devices (4, 410) for play of an electronic wager game, the wager game having a pay table,

a facility (Figures 13-16) for issuing a ticket to a player containing an amount of non-cashable resources for use in playing the wager game in exchange for value; and

wherein the wager game is associated with a pay table (32) which includes outcomes for each turn of play of the game of at least three types, the turns of play comprising turns of play using the non-cashable resources:

1) a first type of outcome in which the player loses their wager on that turn of the game;

2) a second type of outcome (34) in which the player wins additional non-cashable resources with which to play additional turns of the electronic wager game; and

3) a third type of outcome (36, 38) in which the player wins a credit which is redeemable for money either directly or through use of a second pay table.

38. The gaming system of clause 37, wherein the gaming terminal (3, 410) includes a display at least one of the following elements:

1) an element displaying the current balance of credit, if any, won in accordance with the third type of outcome in previous turn of play of the electronic wager game; and

2) an element displaying the non-cashable resources, if any, which were won in the previous turn of the game in accordance with the second type of outcome.

39. The gaming system of clause 38, wherein the display further includes an additional element comprising a display of the total amount of remaining non-cashable credit available to the player.

40. The gaming system of clause 37, wherein the credit redeemable for money is available to the player immediately after an outcome of the third kind occurs.

41. The gaming system of clause 37, wherein the gaming terminal (3, 410) provides access to a plurality of different electronic wager games and wherein the non-cashable resources are useable to play turns of play of the plurality of different electronic wager games, and wherein each of the different electronic wager games has a pay table (32) having the first, second and third types of outcomes as recited in clause 36.

42. The gaming system of any of clauses 37-41, wherein at least one of the electronic wager games is selected from the group of games consisting of a slots-type game, a roulette-type game, and a poker-type game.

43. The gaming system of clause 37, wherein the non-cashable resources comprises a resource selected from the group of resources consisting of a) a predetermined number of turns of play of the electronic wager game with a fixed wager amount per turn of play and b) a predetermined quantity of non-cashable credit available for play in

which the wager amount per turn of play is not fixed.

44. The gaming system of clause 37, wherein the gaming system is incorporated into a casino 400 (Figure 16).

45. A gaming ticket (220, 302, 404), comprising:

a field (226, 228, 306) on the ticket containing information for use in providing the player with access to an electronic wager game using a computing device functioning as a gaming terminal, wherein the ticket is further associated with cashable resources (e.g., a number of spins 42, or award of credit 100) with which the player may play one or more turns of play of the electronic wager game.

46. The ticket (220, 302, 404) of clause 45, wherein the ticket is embodied in a lottery ticket.

47. The ticket (220, 302, 404) of clause 45, wherein the ticket is a scratch-type ticket and wherein the information is revealed upon scratching a covering obscuring the information (Figure 13, 14).

48. The ticket of clause 45, wherein the ticket comprises an electronic ticket (Figure 15, ticket 302).

49. The ticket of any one of clauses 45-48, wherein the resources comprise non-cashable resources.

50. The system of any of clauses 24-36, wherein each ticket issued from the one or more facilities is further identified in the system as either a winning ticket or a losing ticket in advance of any play by a player holding such ticket, and in the event that the ticket is identified in the system as a winning ticket the gaming server generates results of turns of play which are winning results and in the event that the ticket is identified in the system as a losing ticket the gaming server generates results of turns of play which are losing results.

51. The system of clause 50, wherein in the event that the ticket is identified in the system as a winning ticket the winning results are randomly selected from a pool of winning results.

52. The system of clause 50, wherein in the event that the ticket is identified in the system as a winning ticket the gaming server selects winning results according to a predetermined prize distribution schedule for such ticket.

[0091] While a number of exemplary aspects and embodiments have been discussed above, those of skill in the art will recognize certain modifications, permutations, additions and sub-combinations thereof are also present in the disclosure. It is therefore intended that the following appended claims and claims hereafter introduced are interpreted to include all such modifications, permutations, additions and sub-combinations as are within their true scope.

Claims

1. A system for administering a lottery, comprising, in combination:

one or more facilities for issuing a ticket to a player in exchange for value, the ticket containing information for use in providing the player with access to an electronic wager game using an electronic gaming terminal over a computer network, wherein the ticket is further associated with non-cashable resources with which the player may play one or more instances of the electronic wager game;

a web server receiving a datagram from the electronic gaming terminal containing the information contained on the ticket and thereby providing access to the electronic wager game; and

a gaming server in communication over a computer network with the web server and the electronic gaming terminal generating datagrams associated with results of play of turns of the electronic wager game and sending the datagrams to the electronic gaming terminals.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the one or more facilities issue physical lottery tickets containing the information.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the one or more facilities comprises a computer generating an electronic ticket containing the information.

4. The system of claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein the web server provides access to an electronic wager game having a pay table associated with a turn of play of the electronic wager game in which the player makes a wager of the non-cashable resources associated with the ticket, and wherein the pay table includes outcomes for each turn of play of the game of at least three types:

1) a first type of outcome in which the player loses their wager on that turn of the game;

2) a second type of outcome in which the player wins additional non-cashable resources with which to play additional turns of the electronic wager game; and

3) a third type of outcome in which the player wins a credit which is redeemable for money either directly or

through use of a second pay table.

- 5 5. The system of claim 4, wherein the web server provides a facility for downloading a client application to the electronic gaming terminal, the client application including code for generating a display on the gaming terminal containing at least one of the following elements:

- 10 1) an element displaying the current balance of credit, if any, won in accordance with the third type of outcome in previous turn of play of the electronic wager game; and
 2) an element displaying the non-cashable resources, if any, which were won in the previous turn of the game in accordance with the second type of outcome.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein the display further includes an additional element comprising a display of the total amount of remaining non-cashable credit available to the player.

- 15 7. The system of claim 4, wherein the credit redeemable for money is available to the player immediately after an outcome of the third kind occurs.

- 20 8. The system of claim 4, wherein the web server provides access to a plurality of different electronic wager games and wherein the non-cashable resources are useable to play turns of play of the plurality of different electronic wager games, and wherein each of the different electronic wager games has a pay table having the first, second and third types of outcomes as recited in claim 4.

- 25 9. The system of claim 8, wherein at least one of the electronic wager games is selected from the group of games consisting of a slots-type game, a roulette-type game, and a poker-type game.

- 30 10. The system of any preceding claim, wherein the non-cashable resources comprises a resource selected from the group of resources consisting of a) a predetermined number of turns of play of the electronic wager game with a fixed wager amount per turn of play and b) a predetermined quantity of non-cashable credit available for play in which the wager amount per turn of play is not fixed.

- 35 11. The system of claim 4, wherein the credit, if any, won by a player in accordance the third type of outcome in the pay table is convertible into money by means of a second pay table.

- 40 12. The system of claim 4, wherein the non-cashable resources are useable to play turns of a plurality of different electronic wager games, wherein each of the different electronic wager games have a pay table having the first, second and third types of outcomes as recited in claim 4, and wherein each of the plurality of different electronic wager games has a different second pay table for converting credit won by a player in accordance with the third type of outcome into money.

- 45 13. The system of claim 4, wherein the non-cashable resources are useable to play turns of a plurality of different electronic wager games, wherein each of the different electronic wager games have a pay table having the first, second and third types of outcomes as recited in claim 4, and wherein each of the plurality of different electronic wager games uses the same second pay table for converting credit won by a player in accordance with the third type of outcome into money.

- 50 14. The system of any preceding claim, wherein each ticket issued from the one or more facilities is further identified in the system as either a winning ticket or a losing ticket in advance of any play by a player holding such ticket, and in the event that the ticket is identified in the system as a winning ticket the gaming server generates results of turns of play which are winning results and in the event that the ticket is identified in the system as a losing ticket the gaming server generates results of turns of play which are losing results.

- 55 15. The system of claim 14, wherein in the event that the ticket is identified in the system as a winning ticket the winning results are randomly selected from a pool of winning results.

16. The system of claim 14 or 15, wherein in the event that the ticket is identified in the system as a winning ticket the gaming server selects winning results according to a predetermined prize distribution schedule for such ticket.

17. A gaming system comprising:

one or more electronic gaming devices for play of an electronic wager game, the wager game having a pay table, a facility for issuing a ticket to a player containing an amount of non-cashable resources for use in playing the wager game in exchange for value; and
 wherein the wager game is associated with a pay table which includes outcomes for each turn of play of the game of at least three types, the turns of play comprising turns of play using the non-cashable resources:

- 1) a first type of outcome in which the player loses their wager on that turn of the game;
- 2) a second type of outcome in which the player wins additional non-cashable resources with which to play additional turns of the electronic wager game; and
- 3) a third type of outcome in which the player wins a credit which is redeemable for money either directly or through use of a second pay table.

18. The gaming system of claim 17, wherein the gaming terminal includes a display having at least one of the following elements:

- 1) an element displaying the current balance of credit, if any, won in accordance with the third type of outcome in previous turn of play of the electronic wager game; and
- 2) an element displaying the non-cashable resources, if any, which were won in the previous turn of the game in accordance with the second type of outcome.

19. The gaming system of claim 18, wherein the display further includes an additional element comprising a display of the total amount of remaining non-cashable credit available to the player.

20. The gaming system of claim 17, 18 or 19, wherein the credit redeemable for money is available to the player immediately after an outcome of the third kind occurs.

21. The gaming system of claims 17-20, wherein the gaming terminal accesses a plurality of different electronic wager games and wherein the non-cashable resources are useable to play turns of play of the plurality of different electronic wager games, and wherein each of the different electronic wager games has a pay table having the first, second and third types of outcomes as recited in claim 17.

22. The gaming system of claims 17-21, wherein at least one of the electronic wager games is selected from the group of games consisting of a slots-type game, a roulette-type game, and a poker-type game.

23. The gaming system of claims 17-22, wherein the non-cashable resources comprises a resource selected from the group of resources consisting of a) a predetermined number of turns of play of the electronic wager game with a fixed wager amount per turn of play and b) a predetermined quantity of non-cashable credit available for play in which the wager amount per turn of play is not fixed.

24. The gaming system of claims 17-23, wherein the gaming system is incorporated into a casino.

25. A gaming ticket, comprising:

a field on the ticket containing information for use in providing the player with access to an electronic wager game using a computing device functioning as a gaming terminal, wherein the ticket is further associated with resources with which the player may play one or more turns of play of the electronic wager game.

26. The ticket of claim 25, wherein the ticket is embodied in a lottery ticket.

27. The ticket of claim 25 or 26, wherein the ticket is a scratch-type ticket and wherein the information is revealed upon scratching a covering obscuring the information.

28. The ticket of claims 25 or 26, wherein the ticket comprises an electronic ticket.

29. The ticket of claims 25-28, wherein the resources are non-cashable.

30. Gaming apparatus comprising a memory storing data for processing by a gaming terminal, the improvement com-

prising:

the memory storing an electronic file containing data representing a pay table for an electronic wager game for display on the display of the gaming terminal,
 wherein the pay table includes outcomes for each turn of play of the game of at least three types:

- 1) a first type of outcome in which the player loses their wager on that instance of the game;
- 2) a second type of outcome in which the player wins non-cashable resources with which to play additional turns of the electronic wager game in a normal mode of play of the game; and
- 3) a third type of outcome in which the player wins a credit which is redeemable for money, either directly or through a second pay table.

31. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the memory further stores a client application for display on the gaming terminal, wherein the display includes at least one of the following elements:

- 1) an element displaying the current balance of credit, if any, won in accordance with the third type of outcome in previous turn of play of the electronic wager game; and
- 2) an element displaying the non-cashable resources, if any, which were won on the previous turn of the game in accordance with the second type of outcome.

32. The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the display further includes an additional element comprising a display of the total amount of remaining non-cashable credit available to the player.

33. The apparatus of claim 30, 31 or 32, wherein the electronic wager game comprises a game selected from the group of games consisting of a slots-type game, a roulette-type game, and a poker-type game.

34. The apparatus of claim 30-33, wherein the gaming terminal comprises a general purpose computer.

35. A method for managing access to a wager game, comprising:

providing a facility for issuing a ticket to a player in exchange for value, the ticket containing information for use in providing the player with access to an electronic wager game using a computing device functioning as a gaming terminal,
 wherein the ticket is further associated with non-cashable resources with which the player may play one or more turns of play of the electronic wager game.

36. The method of claim 35, further comprising

providing a server receiving a datagram from the gaming terminal associated with the player, the datagram containing the information contained in the ticket and responsively granting access to the electronic wager game.

37. The method of claim 35 or 36, wherein the ticket comprises a lottery ticket.

38. The method of claim 35, 36 or 37, wherein the ticket is in electronic form.

39. The method of claims 35-38, wherein the method further comprises the step of providing in the wager game a pay table associated with a turn of play of the electronic wager game in which the player makes a wager using the non-cashable resources associated with the ticket, and wherein the pay table includes outcomes for each turn of play of the game of at least three types:

- 1) a first type of outcome in which the player loses their wager on that turn of the game;
- 2) a second type of outcome in which the player wins additional non-cashable resources with which to play additional turns of the electronic wager game; and
- 3) a third type of outcome in which the player wins a credit which is redeemable for money either directly or through use of a second pay table.

40. The method of claim 39, wherein the method further comprises the steps of:

providing a client application for generating displays on a display on the gaming terminal, the client application of the electronic wager game on a gaming terminal used by the player, wherein the displays includes a display comprising at least one of the following elements:

- 5 1) a first element displaying the current balance of credit, if any, won in accordance with the third type of outcome in previous turn of play of the electronic wager game; and
- 2) a second element displaying the non-cashable resources, if any, which were won on the previous turn of the game in accordance with the second type of outcome.
- 10 41. The method of claim 40, wherein the display further includes an additional element comprising a display of the total amount of remaining non-cashable credit available to the player.
42. The method of claim 39, wherein the credit redeemable for money is available to the player immediately after an outcome of the third kind occurs.
- 15 43. The method of claim 39, wherein the information is used to provide access to an electronic wager game played over a computer network, and wherein the non-cashable resources are useable to play turns of a plurality of different electronic wager games over the computer network, and wherein each of the different electronic wager games has a pay table having the first, second and third types of outcomes as recited in claim 39.
- 20 44. The method of claim 43, wherein at least one of the electronic wager games is selected from the group of games consisting of a slots-type game, a roulette-type game, and a poker-type game.
45. The method of claims 35-44, wherein the non-cashable resources comprises a resource selected from the group of resources consisting of a) a predetermined number of turns of play of the electronic wager game with a fixed wager amount per turn of play and b) a predetermined quantity of non-cashable credit available for play in which the wager amount per turn of play is not fixed.
- 25 46. The method of claim 39, wherein the credit, if any, won by a player in accordance the third type of outcome in the pay table is convertible into money by means of a second pay table.
- 30 47. The method of claim 46, wherein the non-cashable resources are useable to play turns of a plurality of different electronic wager games, wherein each of the different electronic wager games have a pay table having the first, second and third types of outcomes as recited in claim 39, and wherein each of the plurality of different electronic wager games has a different second pay table for converting credit won by a player in accordance with the third type of outcome into money.
- 35 48. The method of claim 46, wherein the non-cashable resources are useable to play turns of a plurality of different electronic wager games, wherein each of the different electronic wager games have a pay table having the first, second and third types of outcomes as recited in claim 39, and wherein each of the plurality of different electronic wager games uses the same second pay table for converting credit won by a player in accordance with the third type of outcome into money.
- 40 49. A method for managing access to a wager game, comprising:
- 45 providing a facility for issuing a ticket to a player in exchange for value, the ticket containing information for use in providing the player with access to an electronic wager game using a computing device functioning as a gaming terminal, wherein the ticket is further associated with cashable resources with which the player may play one or more instances of the electronic wager game.
- 50 50. The method of claim 49, wherein the player may not withdraw the cashable resources for money until a predetermined playthrough requirement has been achieved.
51. The method of claim 50, wherein the predetermined playthrough requirement is met when the player has lost at least half of the cashable resources associated with the ticket.
- 55 52. The method of claim 51, wherein the predetermined playthrough requirement P is determined as $C \times \frac{V}{M}$, where C is a number between 0.1 and 1.0, V comprises the value exchanged for the ticket and M comprises

the game margin for the electronic wager game.

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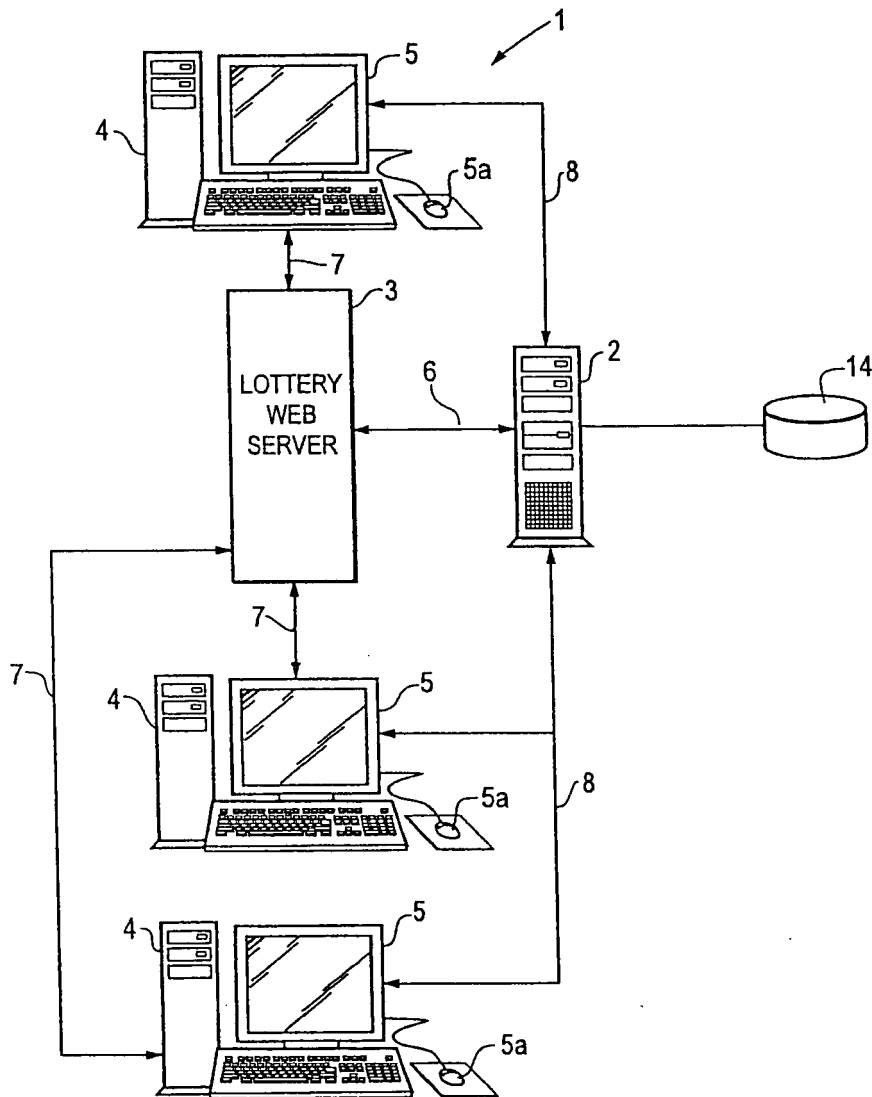
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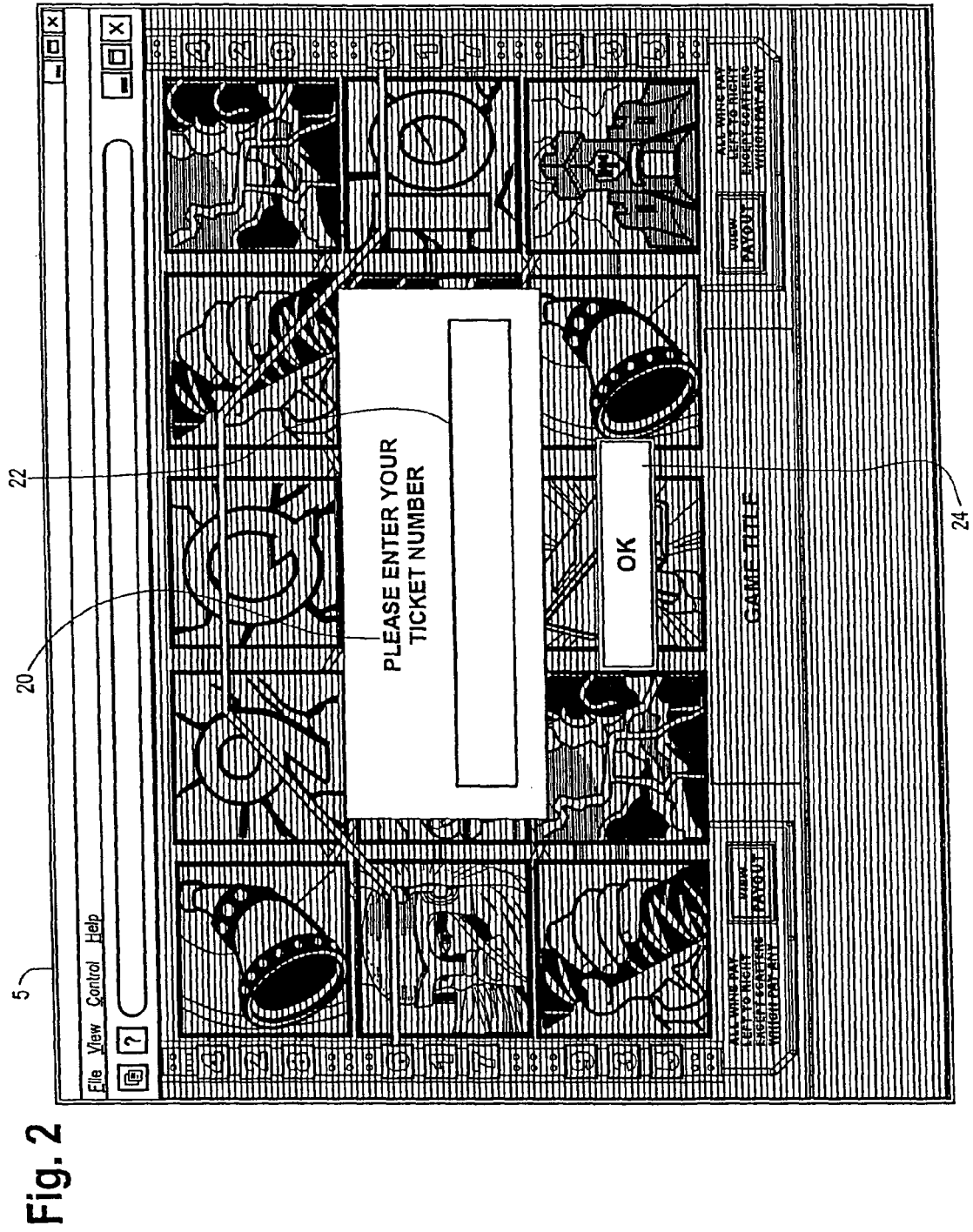
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Fig. 1





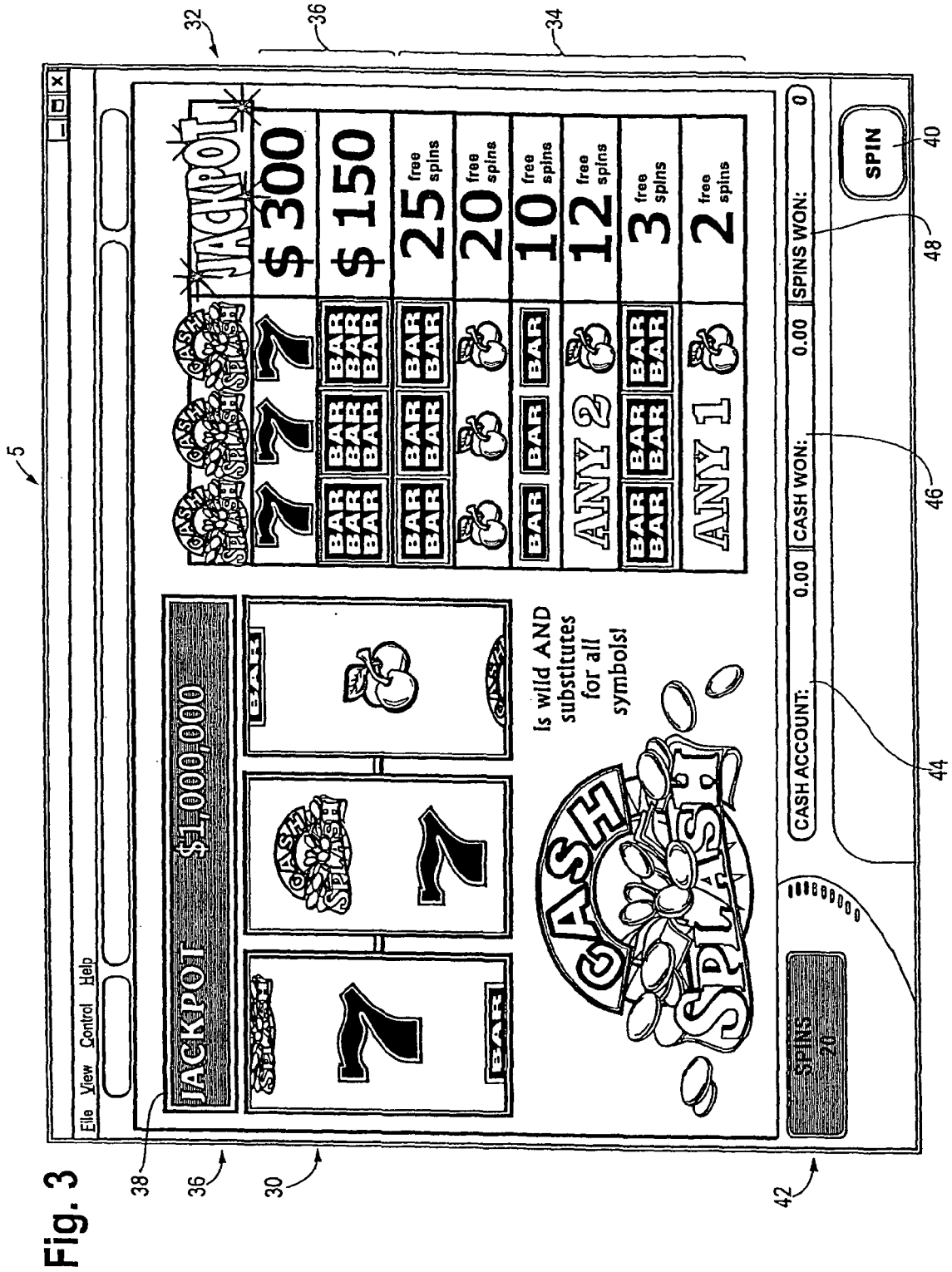


Fig. 4

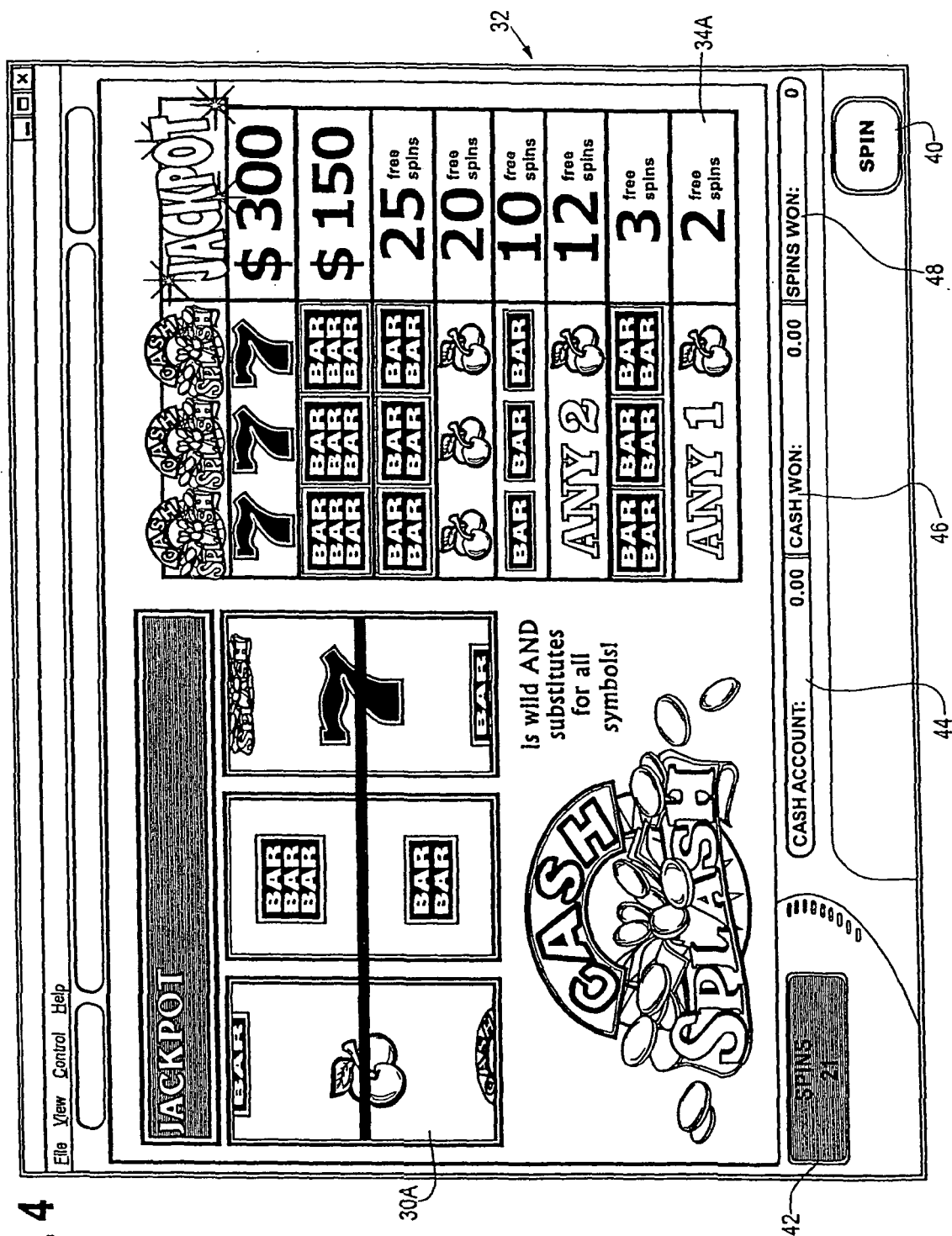
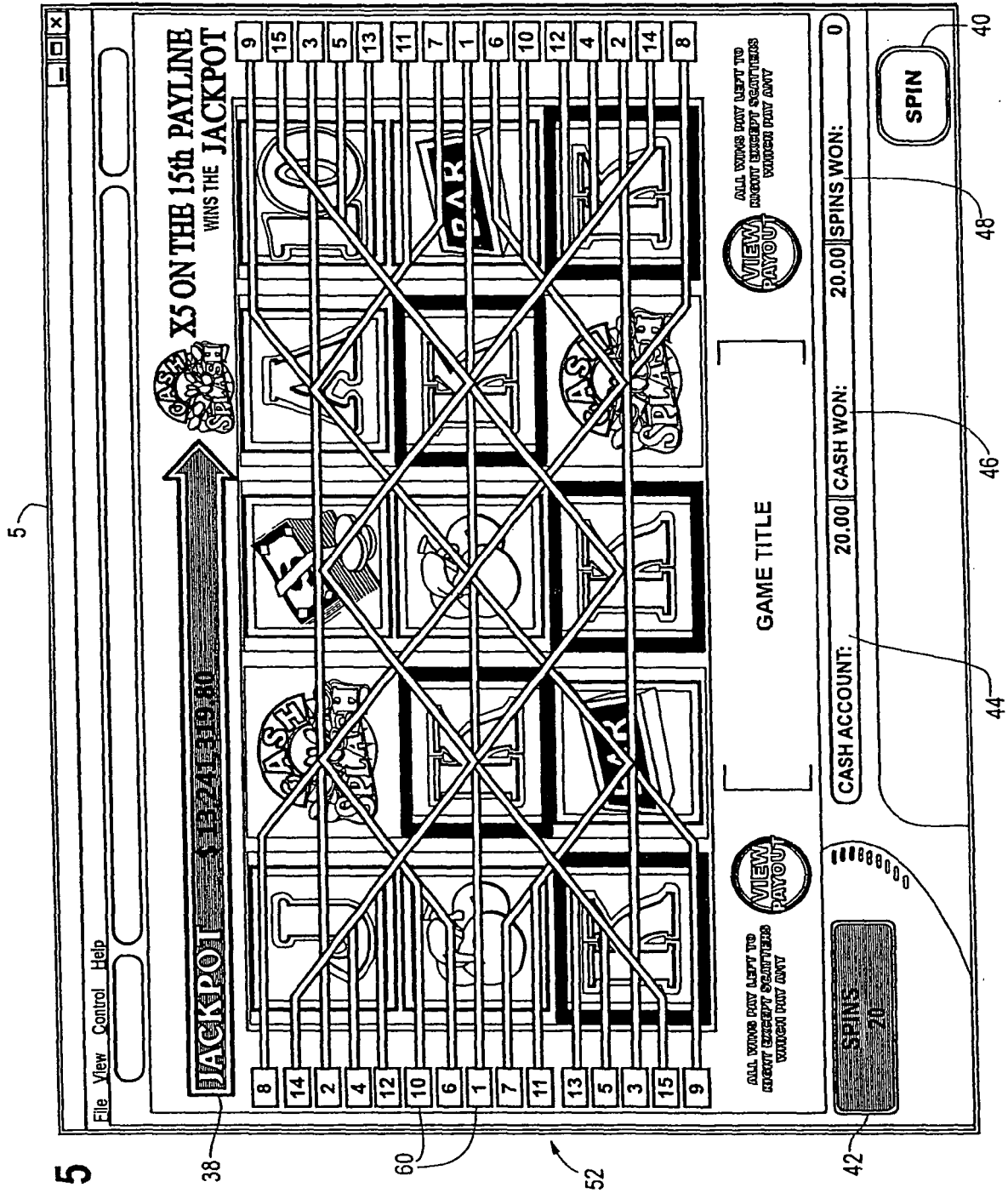
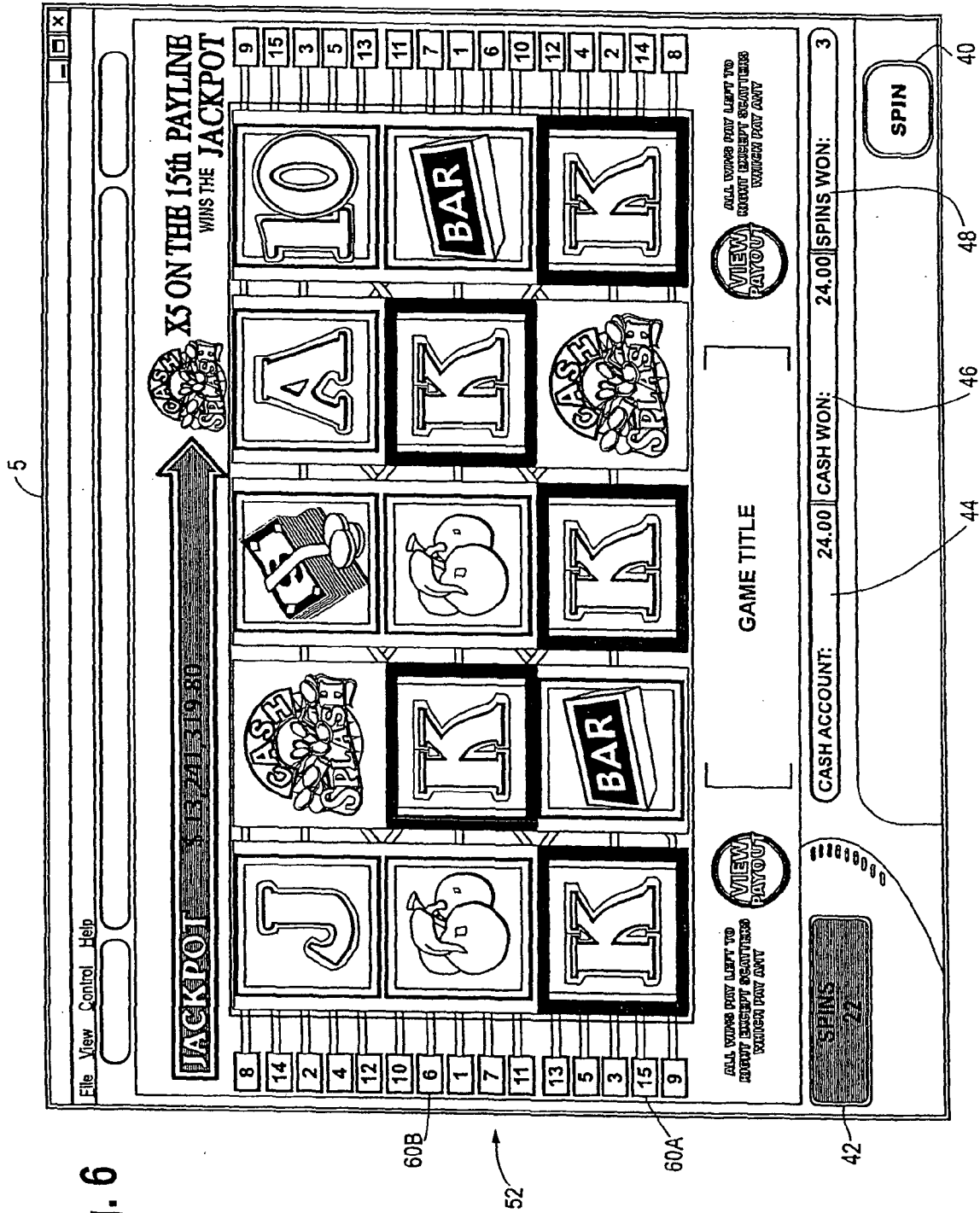


Fig. 5





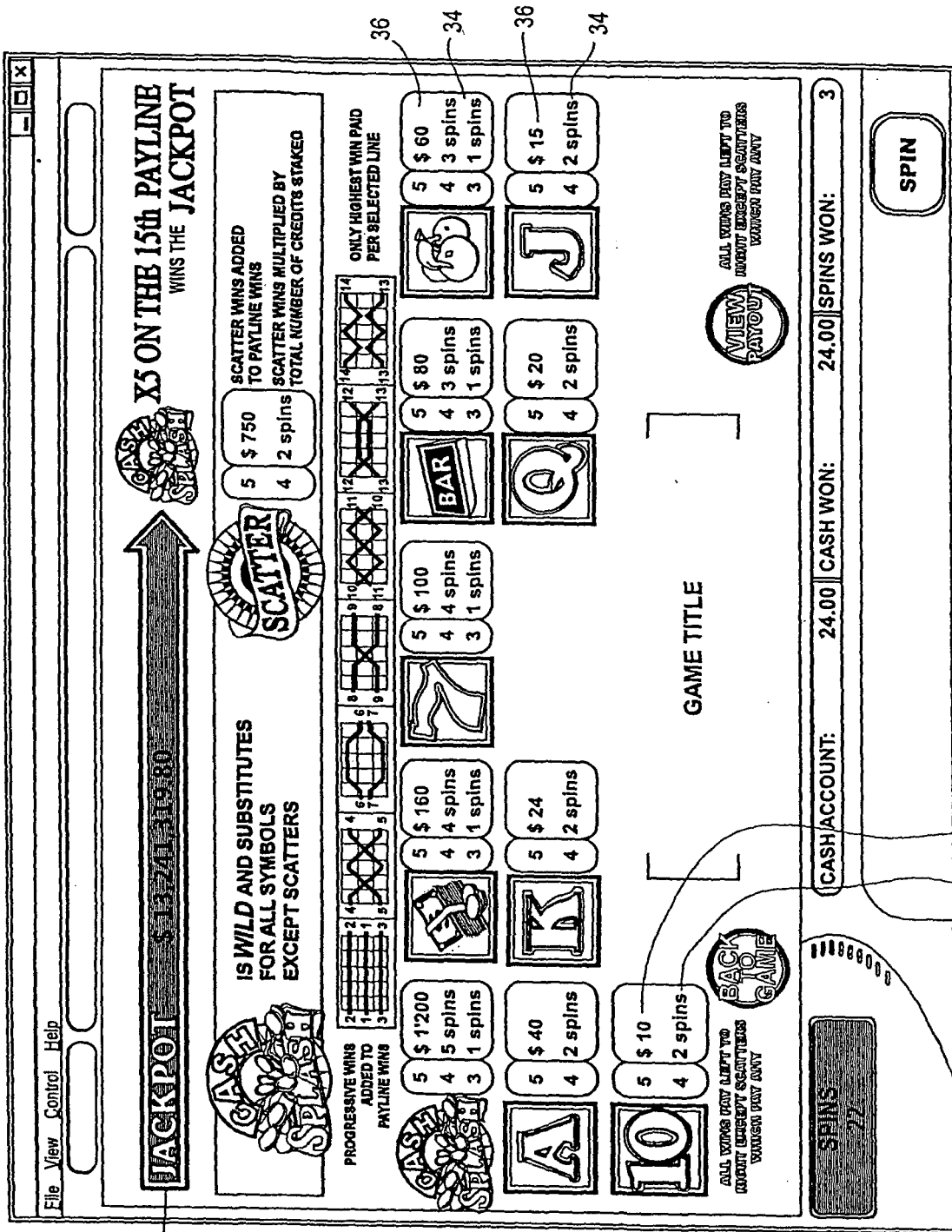


Fig. 7

Fig. 8

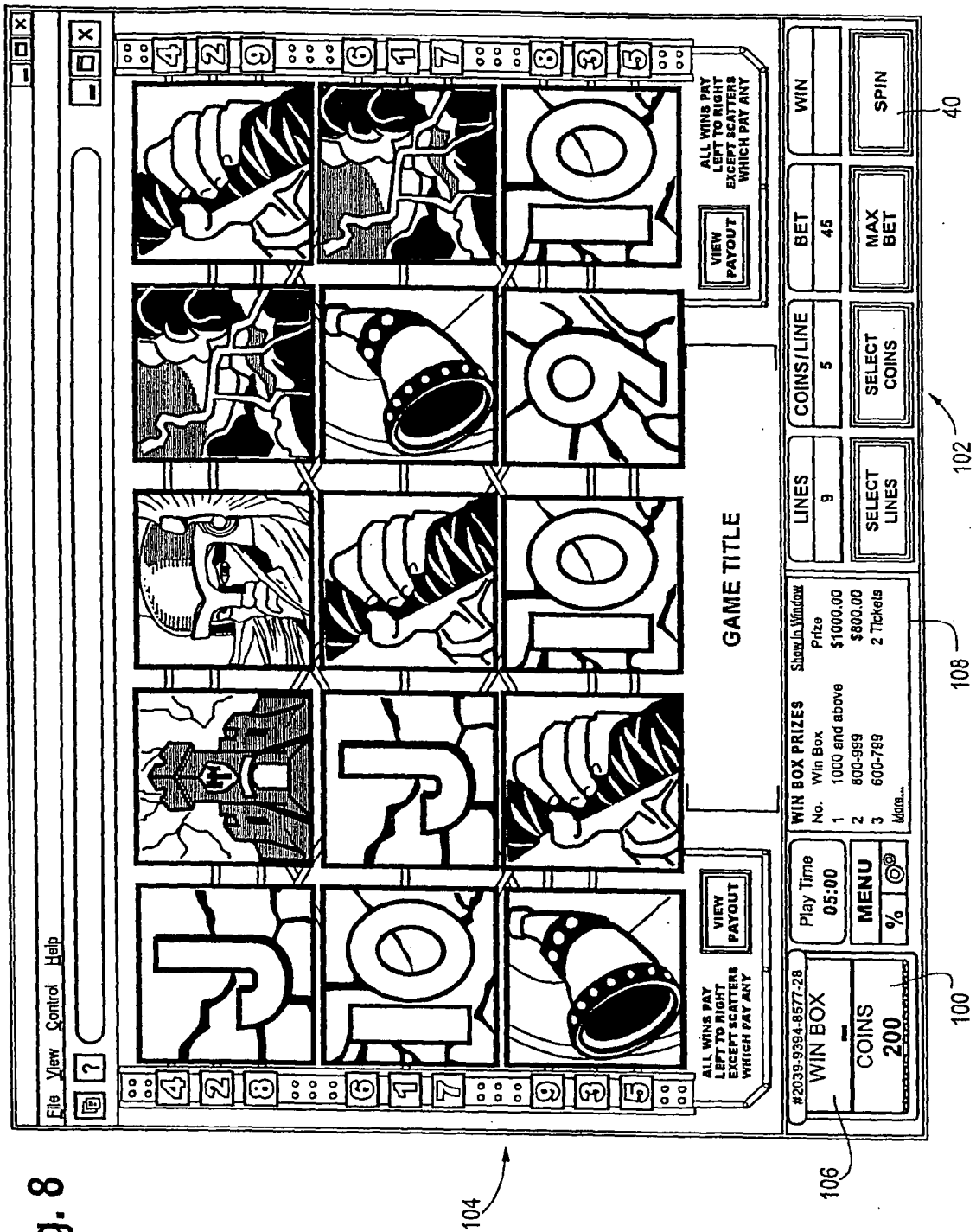


Fig. 9

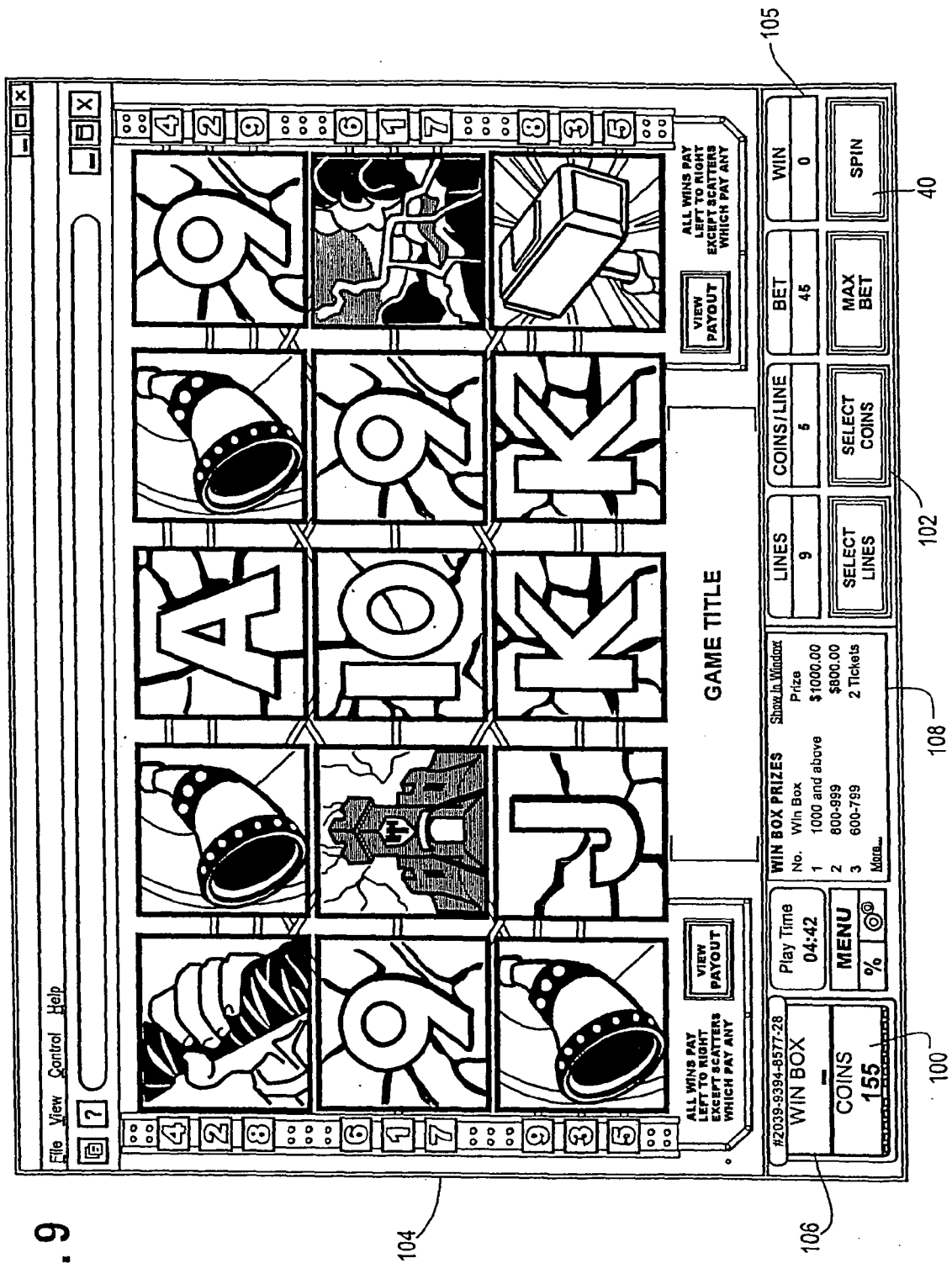


Fig. 10

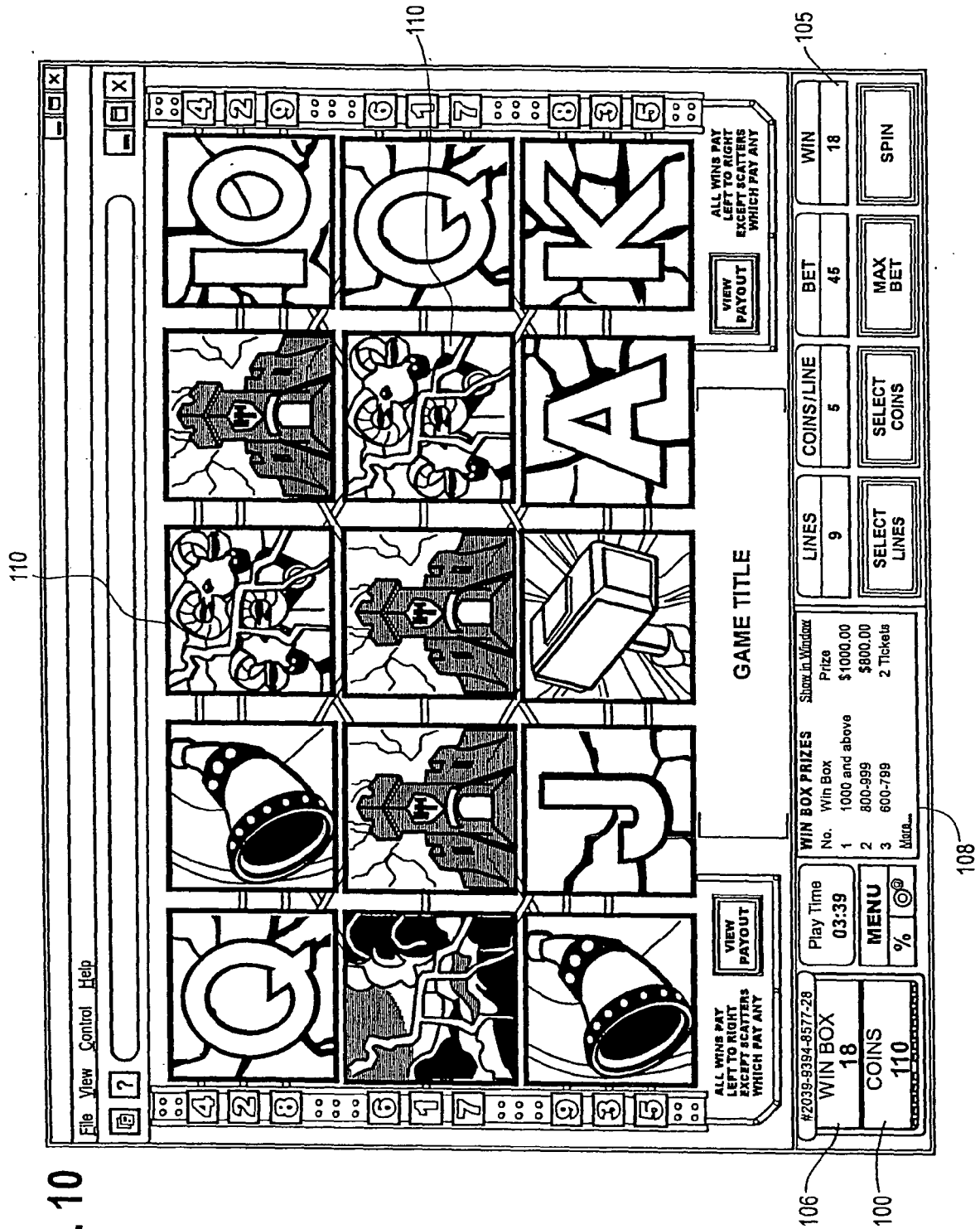


Fig. 11

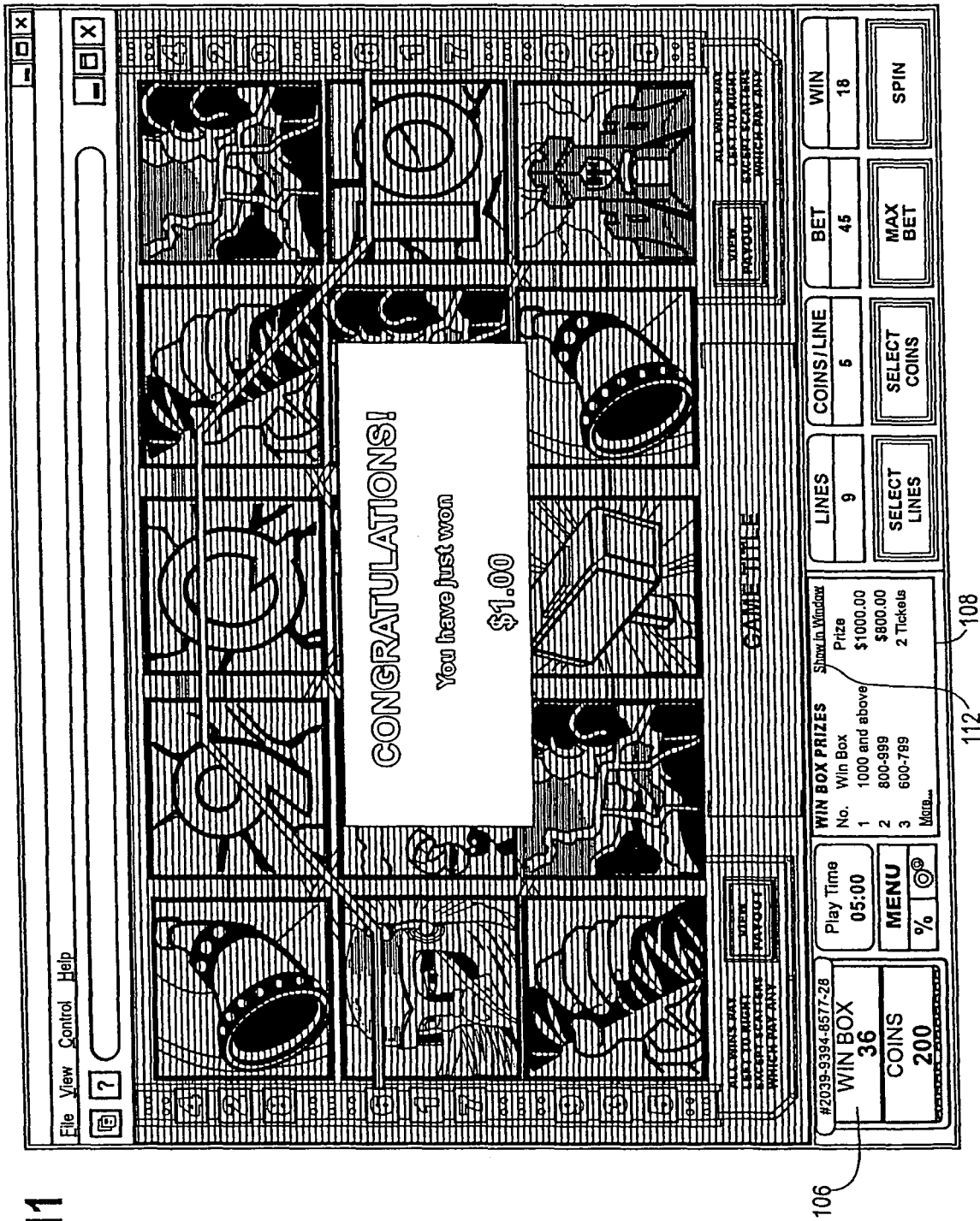


Fig. 12

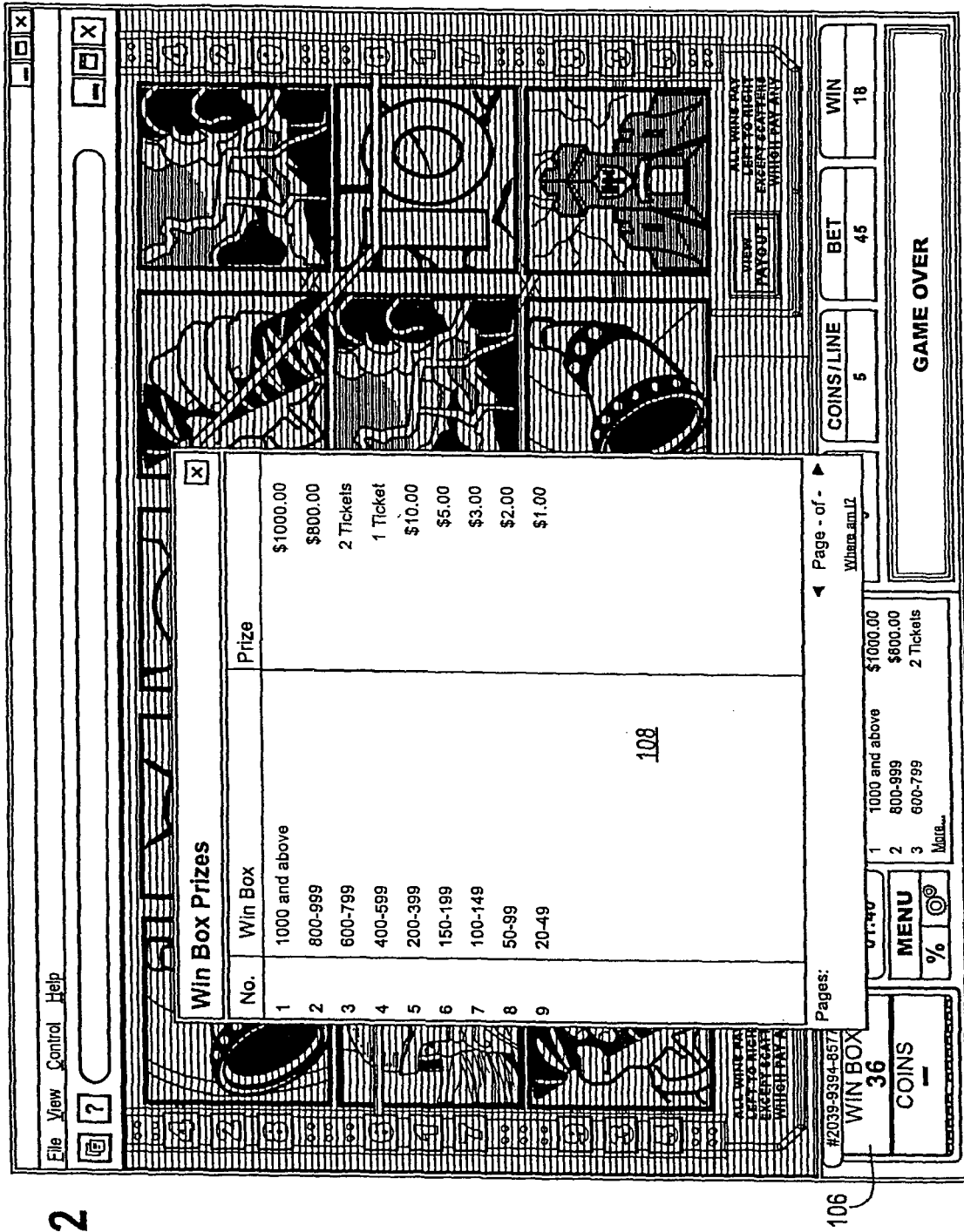


Fig. 13

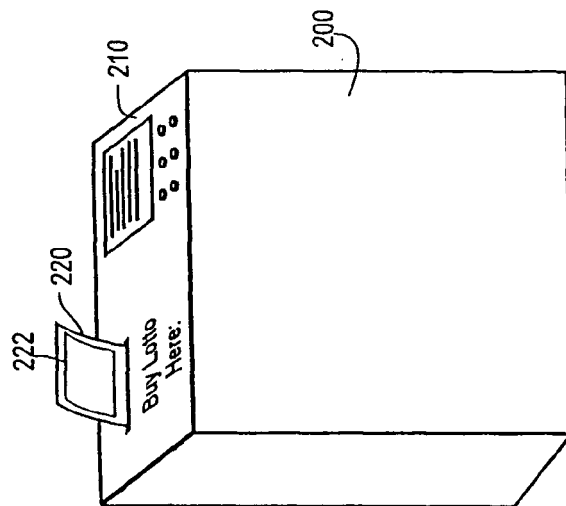


Fig. 14

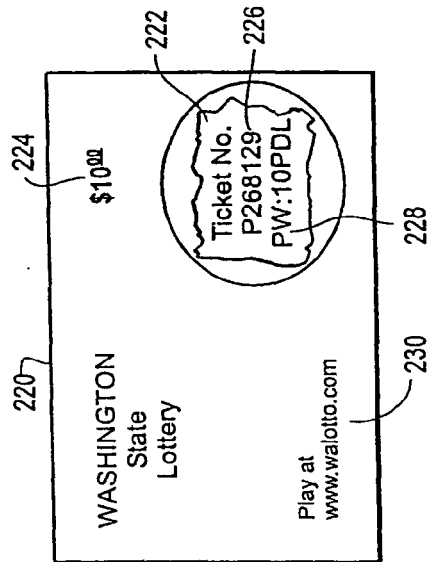


Fig. 15

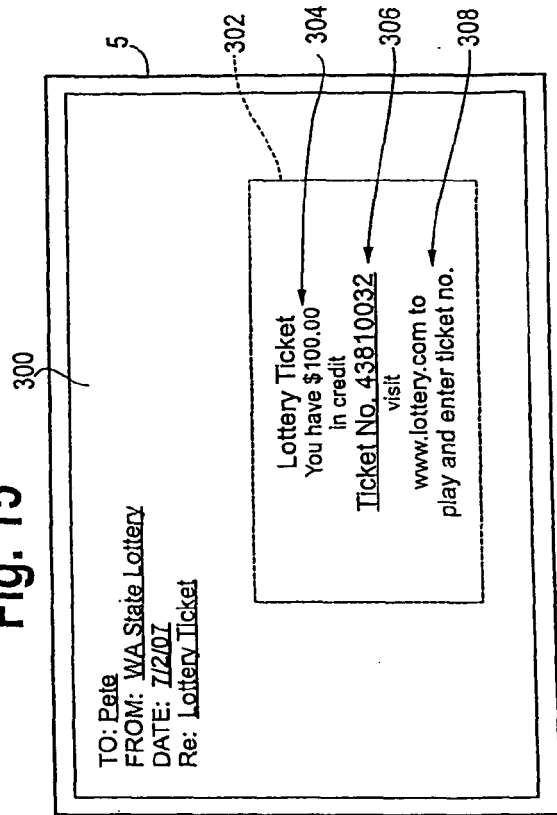
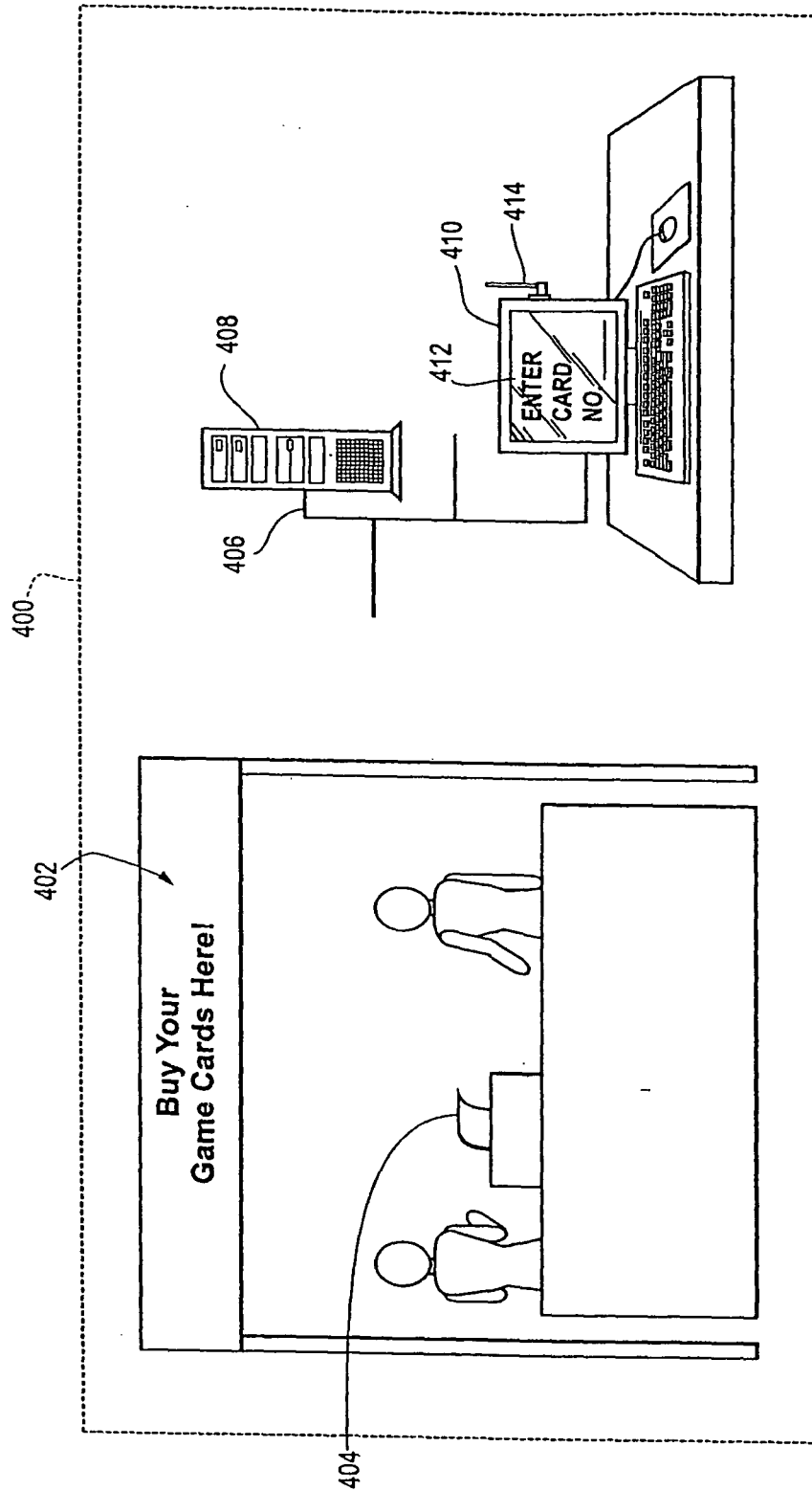


Fig. 16



REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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