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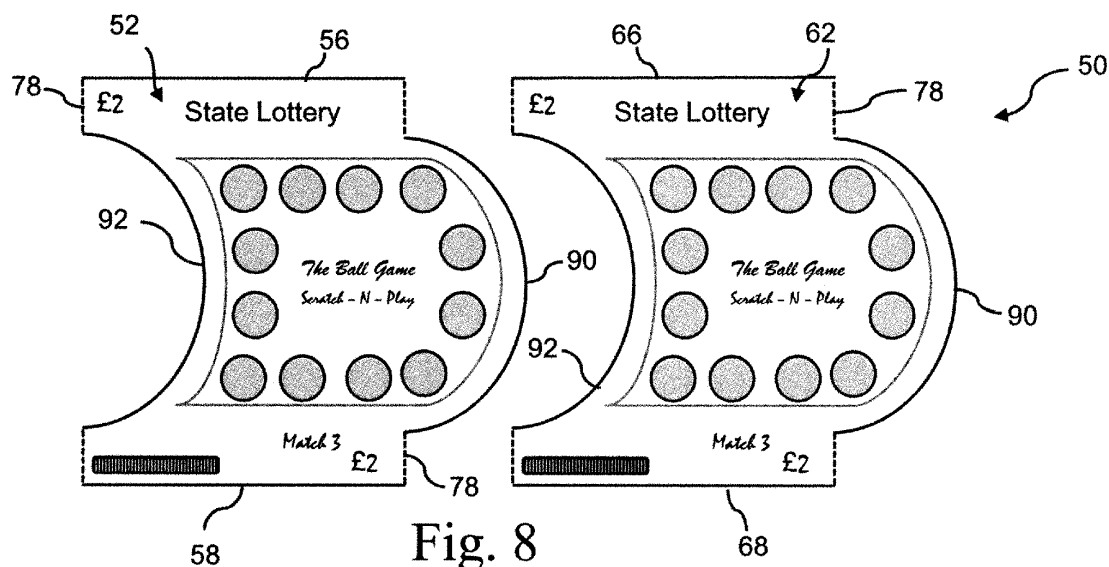
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(54) **An array of interconnected lottery tickets**

(57) An array of interconnected lottery tickets includes a first lottery ticket and a second lottery ticket connected to the first lottery ticket along a common side edge. The common side edge has a connected, manually

detachable region that holds the first and second lottery tickets in an interconnected configuration, and a completely disconnected region.



Description

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present subject matter relates generally to lottery tickets, and more particularly to unique configurations of interconnected lottery tickets, such as strips of instant scratch-off lottery tickets.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Lottery games have become a time honored method of raising revenue for state and federal governments the world over. Traditional scratch-off and on-line games have evolved over decades, supplying increasing revenue year after year. Instant scratch-off lottery tickets ("scratch-off tickets") are a popular and significant portion of the overall lottery ticket market. Referring to the prior art views of Figs. 1 and 2, conventional scratch-off tickets 10 are typically mass produced in fan-folded stacks 12 (also referred to as "packs" or "books") or rolls of interconnected tickets 10, wherein a common perforated or otherwise weakened line 20 separates individual adjacent tickets. The common edge 20 extends perpendicular to the top side 22 and bottom side 24 of each ticket 10. The tickets 10 include any manner of indicia and graphics 14, as well as a play area 16 wherein one or more scratch-off symbols 18 are covered with a scratch-off coating.

[0003] Although lottery ticket producers are continuously designing new games with appealing and enticing game themes, indicia, and graphics to vary the gaming experience for consumers, the overall square or rectangular shape of tickets defined by the common side edges 20, top side 22, and bottom side 24 has remained virtually unchanged. The overall shape of the tickets has not contributed to enhancing the ticket appearance or appeal to existing or new players.

[0004] The lottery ticket industry would benefit from interconnected lottery ticket designs that incorporate the side edges of the tickets into the game theme and indicia without adversely affecting a vendor's ability to quickly separate and distribute the tickets. Tickets with non-straight side edges could be designed to complement the game theme or otherwise provide uniquely shaped tickets that consumers may find more appealing as compared to conventional ticket shapes.

SUMMARY

[0005] Objects and advantages of the invention will be set forth in part in the following description, or may be obvious from the description, or may be learned through practice of the invention.

[0006] In accordance with aspects of the invention, an array of interconnected lottery tickets is provided in a unique interconnected side edge configuration. The lottery tickets may be, for example, instant scratch-off tickets, or any other type of interconnected lottery ticket. The

tickets may be mass produced and provided for sale and distribution in the form of rolls or accordion folded stacks. It should be appreciated that the particular type of game implemented by the lottery tickets, game theme, indicia, prize structure, and other game-dependent features are not limiting features of the ticket arrays according to the invention.

[0007] The ticket array includes a first lottery ticket, and a second lottery ticket connected to the first lottery ticket along a common side edge. Multiple first and second tickets may be interconnected in a strip. The common side edge is defined by a connected, manually detachable region that holds the first and second lottery tickets in an interconnected, manually detachable configuration, and a completely disconnected region wherein the tickets are completely separated and detached. Thus, to separate the tickets, a vendor simply detaches the common side edge at the detachable regions. The disconnected region does not structurally interconnect the tickets.

[0008] The detachable region may be variously defined. For example the detachable region may be one or more perforated regions, scored regions, or any other known type of structurally weakened section(s) that allow for manual separation of the lottery tickets along the detachable region.

[0009] Likewise, the disconnected region may be variously defined. In one embodiment, the disconnected region is defined by a die-cut or laser-cut section of the common side edge. Any other method may be used to define the completely disconnected region.

[0010] In a particular embodiment, the disconnected region is a center region flanked at opposite ends by structurally weakened sections, such as perforated sections.

[0011] In certain embodiments, the center region has a multi-directional edge profile in that it has a shape other than a straight line, such as a wavy or sinusoidal profile, or a saw-tooth profile. In some embodiments, the multi-directional profile may cross a longitudinal axis between perforated end sections. With this configuration, at least one edge portion of the first lottery ticket crosses the longitudinal axis toward the second lottery ticket, and at least one edge portion of the second lottery ticket crosses the longitudinal axis toward the first lottery ticket. It should be appreciated that, with this embodiment, the common side edge may take on any manner of non-straight profile that is incorporated into the lottery ticket game theme. For example, the game theme may relate to sports games played with balls, and the common side edge may have rounded sections that correspond to balls depicted in the game theme graphics printed on the face of the ticket.

[0012] In other embodiments, the center region may have a multi-directional profile, such as a wavy, sinusoidal, or saw-tooth profile that does not cross the longitudinal axis between the structurally weakened sections. This embodiment may result in adjacent tickets having distinctly different side edge profiles. In other words, the first lottery ticket would have a completely different ap-

pearance than the interconnected second lottery ticket.

[0013] The interconnected lottery tickets may be aligned or inverted. In one embodiment, the first and second lottery tickets are inverted relative to each other (rotated 180 degrees) such that the common side edge defines the right-hand side of each of the first and second lottery tickets or the left-hand side of each of the first and second lottery tickets. With this embodiment, each of the first and second lottery tickets has a second side edge opposite from the common side edge, and the array may include an additional lottery ticket completely detachably connected to each of the second side edges along an entire length of each second side edge. This pattern of interconnected tickets may repeat for the entire stack or roll of tickets.

[0014] In an alternate embodiment, the first and second lottery tickets are aligned such that the common side edge defines a left-hand or a right-hand side of the first lottery ticket and an opposite respective right-hand or left-hand side of the second lottery ticket.

[0015] In certain embodiments, the first and second lottery tickets may have the same left-hand side profile and the same right-hand side profile. However, in other embodiments, the first and second lottery tickets may have a different left-hand side profile and a different right-hand side profile. For example, the center disconnected region may have a multi-directional profile that does not cross a longitudinal axis between structurally weakened end sections such that portions or an entirety of the center disconnected region defines a lateral extension section along the common side edge of the first lottery ticket and a lateral indent section along the common side edge of the second lottery ticket. In this embodiment, the tickets may have completely different game themes and graphics that incorporate the lateral extension and indent sections.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0016]

- Fig. 1** is side view of a prior art stack configuration of accordion-folded interconnected lottery tickets;
- Fig. 2** is front face view of a prior art strip of interconnected lottery tickets;
- Fig. 3** is a front face view of a strip of interconnected lottery tickets in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;
- Fig. 4** is a front face view of the lottery tickets of Fig. 3 in a disconnected state;
- Fig. 5** is a front face view of a strip of interconnected lottery tickets in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 6 is a front face view of the lottery tickets of Fig. 5 in a disconnected state;

Fig. 7 is a front face view of a strip of interconnected lottery tickets in accordance with still a different embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 8 is a front face view of the lottery tickets of Fig. 7 in a disconnected state;

Fig. 9 is a front face view of a strip of interconnected lottery tickets in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention; and

Fig. 10 is a front face view of a strip of interconnected lottery tickets in accordance with still a different embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0017] Reference will now be made to one or more embodiments of the system and methodology of the invention as illustrated in the figures. It should be appreciated that each embodiment is presented by way of explanation of aspects of the invention, and is not meant as a limitation of the invention. For example, features illustrated or described as part of one embodiment may be used with another embodiment to yield still a further embodiment. It is intended that the invention include these and other modifications that come within the scope and spirit of the invention.

[0018] Referring to Figs. 3 and 4, an embodiment of an array 50 of interconnected lottery tickets is depicted in accordance with aspects of the invention. It should be appreciated that the invention is not limited to any particular type of lottery ticket and, in the illustrated embodiment, includes instant scratch-off tickets for illustrative purposes only. The scratch-off tickets may include any manner of indicia or graphics that reflect the game theme or other aspects of the lottery game, as well as a play area with scratch-off symbols as discussed above with respect to Figs. 1 and 2. The tickets may be mass produced and provided for sale and distribution in the form of rolls or fan-folded stacks, as depicted in Fig. 1. The tickets may also be cut into single tickets, pairs of tickets, or multiple numbers of tickets in strips.

[0019] Still referring to Figs. 3 and 4, the ticket array 50 in this particular embodiment includes a first lottery ticket 52 and a second lottery ticket 62. The tickets 52 and 62 are connected together along a common side edge 72. A series or repeating pattern of the first lottery tickets 52 and second lottery tickets 62 may be provided in an interconnected strip, as depicted in Fig. 3. Each of the first lottery tickets 52 has a top edge or side 56 and an opposite bottom edge or side 58. Likewise, each of the second lottery tickets has top edge or side 66 and an opposite bottom edge or side 68. Each of the lottery tickets 52, 62, has a side edge opposite to the common side

edge 72. For example, the lottery tickets 52 have a left-side edge 54 and the lottery tickets 62 also have a left-side edge 64.

[0020] The common side edge 72 is defined by a connected, manually detachable region 74 that holds the first and second lottery tickets 52, 62 in an interconnected, detachable configuration. This detachable region 74 may be defined by a single section, or multiple sections as depicted in the embodiment of Figs. 3 and 4. The detachable region or multiple sections 74 may be variously defined in accordance with the scope and spirit of the invention. In a preferred embodiment, the detachable regions 74 are defined by perforated sections 78. In alternative embodiments, the detachable region 74 may be defined by any conventional means of providing a structurally weakened line in the substrate of the lottery tickets that allows for relatively easy manual separation of the tickets along the weakened section. The weakened sections may be defined, for example, by a score line, an adhesive provided between previously separated sections of the ticket, or any other manner of providing a connected yet manually detachable region that holds the first and second lottery tickets 52, 62 in an interconnected state.

[0021] The common side edge 72 includes a substantially completely separated and detached region 76 wherein the tickets are separated and detached from each other within this region. In the embodiment depicted in Figs. 3 and 4, the disconnected region 76 is defined between flanking opposite end detachable regions 74 (e.g., perforated sections 78). Thus, between the detachable regions 74, the tickets are completely separated along the common side edge 72 such that essentially the only structure interconnecting the tickets are the perforated end sections 78 that extend to the top and bottom side edges of the tickets 52, 62. It is contemplated within the scope of the invention that the disconnected region 76 may include tiny connecting points to hold the ticket parts together during production, transit, and prior to sale at the retail location. For example, these connecting points may take up less than 25%, or less than 10%, or less than 5% of the total length of the disconnected region 76.

[0022] The disconnected region 76 may be defined by any suitable means. For example, in a particular embodiment, the disconnected region 76 is die-cut along the common side edge 72 by a die cutter having a desired profile. In alternative embodiments, the disconnected region 76 may be laser-cut, blade-cut, etc. It should be appreciated that the particular means of separating the tickets along the disconnected region 76 of the common side edge 72 is not a limiting factor of the invention. With the common side edge configuration illustrated in Figs. 3 and 4, a vendor simply detaches the common side edge at the detachable regions 74 in order to separate and distribute the tickets.

[0023] Still referring to the embodiment of Figs. 3 and 4, the disconnected region 76 is a center region that is

flanked at opposite ends by the structurally weakened and detachable regions 74 (in this case, the perforated sections 78). The center disconnected region 76 has a multi-directional edge profile that crosses a longitudinal axis 82 of the perforated sections 78. In this manner, at least one edge portion 84 of a first lottery ticket 52 crosses the longitudinal axis 82 towards the second lottery ticket 62. Likewise, at least one edge portion 86 of the second lottery ticket 62 crosses the longitudinal axis 82 towards the first lottery ticket 52. The multi-directional edge profile may be variously configured and essentially encompasses any type of non-straight line profile. For example, in the illustrated embodiment, this profile is defined by a wavy or sinusoidal profile that is used to enhance or incorporate the game theme indicia and graphics printed on a front face of each of the lottery tickets. For example, in the embodiment of Figs. 3 and 4, the game indicia and graphics relate to a "heart" themed lottery ticket that may be marketed, for example, during the Valentine's Day holiday season. The heart depicted on each of the lottery tickets is incorporated into the side edge portions 84, 86 of the respective tickets, as can be particularly appreciated from Fig. 4. Thus, the multi-directional edge profile provides a unique and appealing edge profile to the tickets as compared to a straight, perpendicular side edge between the top and bottom sides of the tickets.

[0024] In an alternative embodiment, the multi-directional profile may incorporate a saw-tooth configuration wherein the side edge portion 84 of a first lottery ticket 52 extends beyond the longitudinal axis 82 towards the adjacent second lottery ticket 62. Likewise, an alternate edge portion on the lottery ticket 62 may extend past the axis 82 towards the first ticket 52. It should be appreciated that the invention is not limited to any particular configuration of a multi-directional side edge profile along the disconnected region 76 of the common side edge 72.

[0025] Still referring to Figs. 3 and 4, it can be appreciated that, in this particular embodiment, the first and second lottery tickets 52, 62 are inverted relative to each other. In this manner, the common side edge 72 defines the right-hand side of each respective ticket 52, 62 (or the left-hand side of each of the tickets depending on the inverted orientation of the respective tickets 52, 62). Each of the tickets 52, 62 has an opposite left-hand side edge 80 defined by a straight perforated line that extends perpendicular to the top and bottom sides of each ticket. Referring to Fig. 3, a repeating pattern of the tickets 52, 62 may be provided wherein an additional lottery ticket is attached to each of the second side edges 80.

[0026] In the embodiment depicted in Figs. 5 and 6, the respective tickets 52, 62 are aligned (as compared to the inverted configuration of Figs. 3 and 4) such that the common side edge 72 defines the right-hand edge of the first lottery ticket 52 and the left-hand edge of the second lottery ticket 62. The disconnected region 76 is a center region between flanking perforated sections 78 and may be defined as a multi-directional profile that crosses the axis 82 extending between the perforated

sections 78 such that a lateral extension 90 is defined on each of the side edges, as well as a lateral indentation 92. The lateral extensions 90 and indentations 92 may be incorporated in the game theme and graphics of each lottery ticket. For example, in the embodiment of Figs. 5 and 6, the lateral extensions 90 and indentations 92 compliment the ball theme and graphics of each ticket. Thus, in the embodiment of Figs. 5 and 6, the left-hand and right-hand side edges of each lottery ticket 52 and 62 incorporate side edge extensions 84, 86 that define a lateral extension 90 on one ticket and a lateral indentation 92 on the adjacent ticket, as can be particularly appreciated from Fig. 6.

[0027] In the embodiment of Figs. 5 and 6, each lottery ticket 52, 62 has the same left-hand side profile and the same right-hand side profile, as is particularly appreciated from the view of Fig. 6.

[0028] Figs. 7 and 8 depict an embodiment wherein the common side edge 72 is defined by a center disconnected region 76 flanked by opposite perforated sections 78. In this particular embodiment, the disconnected region 76 extends from the axis 82 towards the adjacent ticket without crossing back over the axis 82. This unique configuration provides a lateral extension 90 on the right-hand side of each ticket that extends into a lateral indentation 92 on the left-hand side of the adjacent ticket, which provides a distinctly different appearance as compared to the tickets of Fig. 6.

[0029] As with the embodiment of Figs. 5 and 6, the embodiment of Figs. 7 and 8 provide tickets 52, 62 having the same left-hand profile and the same right-hand profile.

[0030] Fig. 9 depicts an alternative embodiment wherein the disconnected region 76 is flanked by perforated sections 78. However, in this embodiment, the disconnected region 76 along the right and left-hand side edges of the center ticket 62 extends laterally outward into the adjacent tickets 52, thereby defining a lateral indentation 92 in the adjacent tickets 52. With this particular configuration, the center ticket 62 has a left-hand and right-hand side profile that is different from the left-hand and right-hand profiles of the adjacent tickets 52. In other words, the tickets 52 have an overall hourglass shape, whereas the ticket 62 has an overall laterally expanded center region. This particular configuration allows for alternating tickets of completely different size, edge profiles, theme, and graphics, as depicted in Fig. 9.

[0031] Fig. 10 depicts an embodiment that is similar to Fig. 9 wherein the center disconnected region 76 is flanked by perforated sections 78. In this embodiment, however, the disconnected region 76 has a multi-directional profile that does not cross the longitudinal axis 82 of the perforated sections 78 and defines multiple lateral extensions 90 along the left and right-hand side edges of tickets 52 and multiple lateral indentation sections 92 along the left and right-hand side edges of the center ticket 62. As with the embodiment of Fig. 9, the center ticket 62 has left and right-hand side edges that are dif-

ferent from the left and right-hand side edges of the adjacent tickets 52. These different tickets may have the same or different game themes and indicia, as described above.

[0032] It should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that various modifications and variations may be made present invention without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. It is intended that the present invention include such modifications and variations as come within the scope of the appended claims.

Claims

1. An array of interconnected lottery tickets, comprising:
 - a first lottery ticket;
 - a second lottery ticket connected to said first lottery ticket along a common side edge; and
 - wherein said common side edge comprises a connected, manually detachable region that holds said first and second lottery tickets in an interconnected configuration, and a substantially completely disconnected region.
2. The array of interconnected lottery tickets as in claim 1, wherein said detachable region comprises one or more structurally weakened sections that allow for manual separation of said lottery tickets.
3. The array of interconnected lottery tickets as in claim 2, wherein said disconnected region is a center region flanked at opposite ends by said structurally weakened sections.
4. The array of interconnected lottery tickets as in claim 3, wherein said structurally weakened sections comprise perforated sections.
5. The array of interconnected lottery tickets as in claim 4, wherein said center region has a multi-directional edge profile that crosses a longitudinal axis between said perforated sections such that at least one edge portion of said first lottery ticket crosses said longitudinal axis toward said second lottery ticket, and at least one edge portion of said second lottery ticket crosses said longitudinal axis toward said first lottery ticket.
6. The array of interconnected lottery tickets as in claim 5, wherein said multi-directional profile comprises a wavy or sinusoidal profile.
7. The array of interconnected lottery tickets as in claim 5, wherein each of said first and second lottery tickets comprises game-theme indicia and graphics printed on a front face thereof that extend onto said edge

portions of each of said first and second lottery tickets.

8. The array of interconnected lottery tickets as in claim 7, wherein said first and second lottery tickets are inverted relative to each other such that said common side edge defines the right-hand side of each of said first and second lottery tickets or the left-hand side of each of said first and second lottery tickets. 5
10
9. The array of interconnected lottery tickets as in claim 8, wherein each of said first and second lottery tickets has a second side edge opposite from said common side edge, and further comprising an additional lottery ticket completely detachably connected to each said second side edge along an entire length of each said second side edge. 15
10. The array of interconnected lottery tickets as in claim 7, wherein said first and second lottery tickets are aligned such that said common side edge defines a left-hand or a right-hand side of said first lottery ticket and an opposite respective right-hand or left-hand side of said second lottery ticket. 20
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11. The array of interconnected lottery tickets as in claim 3, wherein said first and second lottery tickets have the same left-hand side profile and the same right-hand side profile. 30
12. The array of interconnected lottery tickets as in claim 3, wherein said first and second lottery tickets have a different left-hand side profile and a different right-hand side profile. 35
13. The array of interconnected lottery tickets as in claim 12, wherein said center disconnected region comprises a multi-directional profile that does not cross a longitudinal axis between said structurally weakened sections such that an entirety of said center disconnected region defines a lateral extension section along said common side edge of said first lottery ticket and a lateral indent section along said common side edge of said second lottery ticket. 40
45
14. The array of interconnected lottery tickets as in claim 4, wherein said center disconnected region comprises a multi-directional profile that does not cross a longitudinal axis between said structurally weakened sections. 50
15. The array of interconnected lottery tickets as in claim 14, wherein multiple portions of said center region define multiple lateral extension sections along said common side edge of said first lottery ticket and multiple lateral indent sections along said common side edge of said second lottery ticket. 55

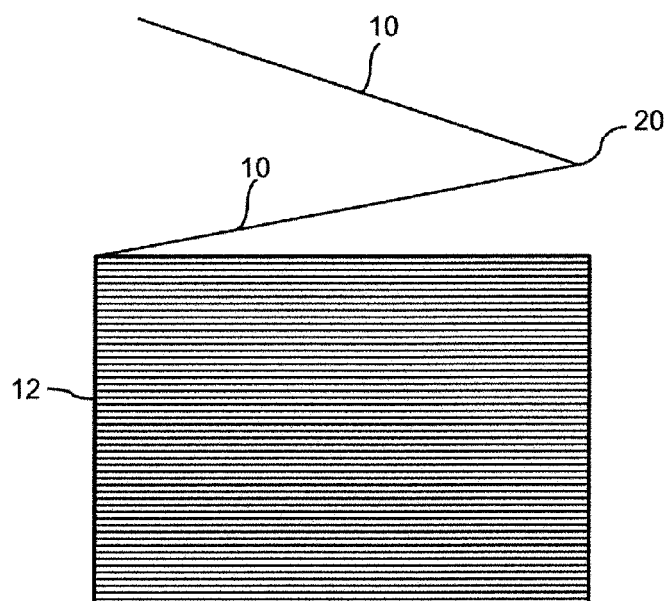


Fig. 1
-Prior Art-

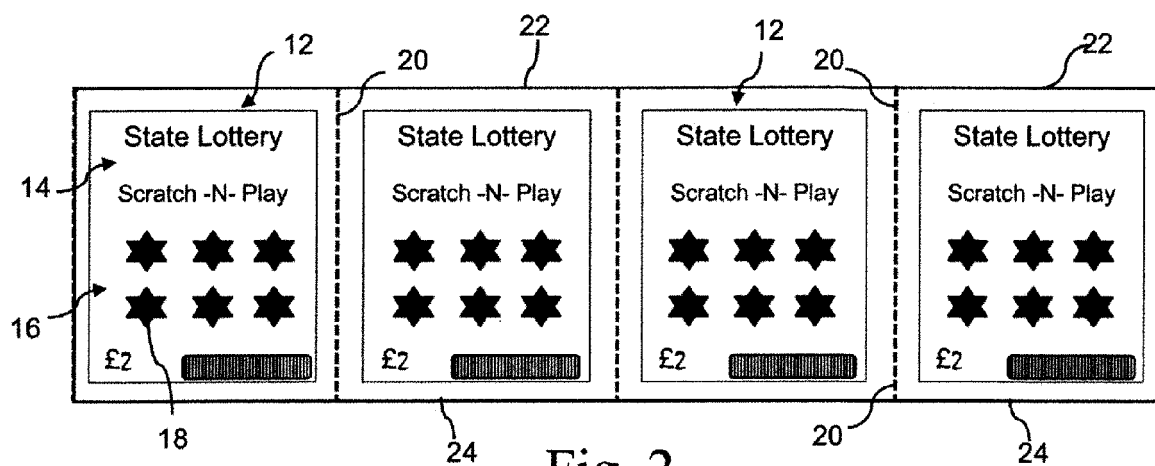


Fig. 2
-Prior Art-

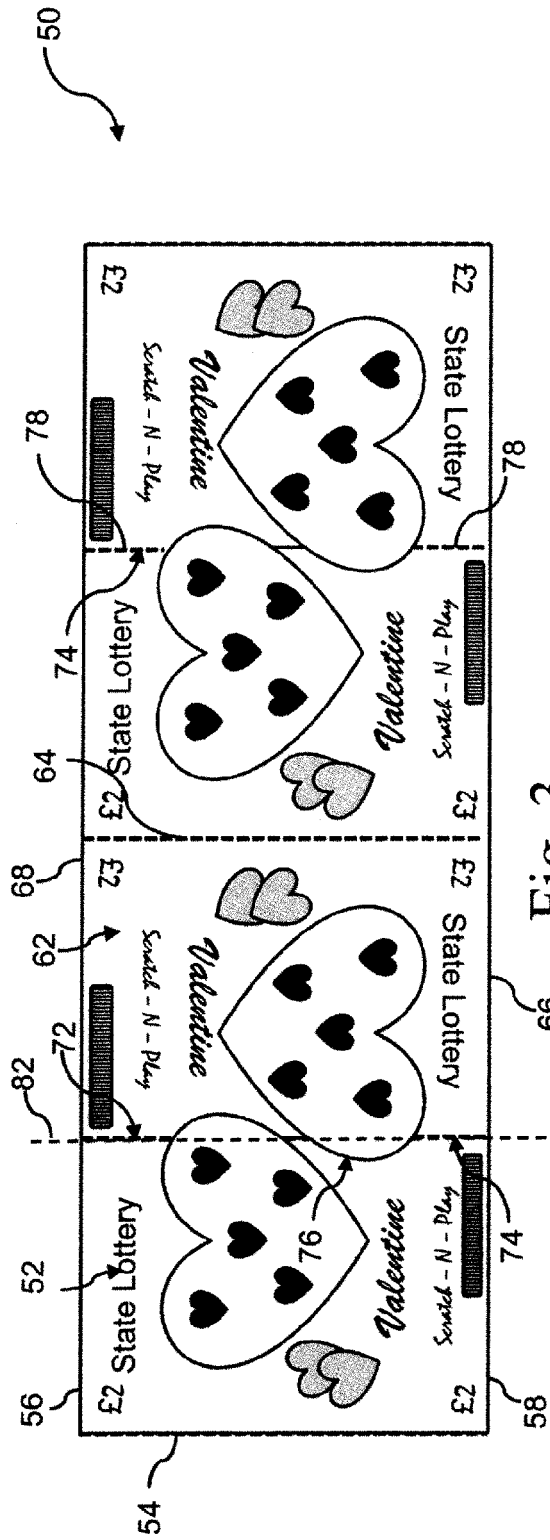


Fig. 3

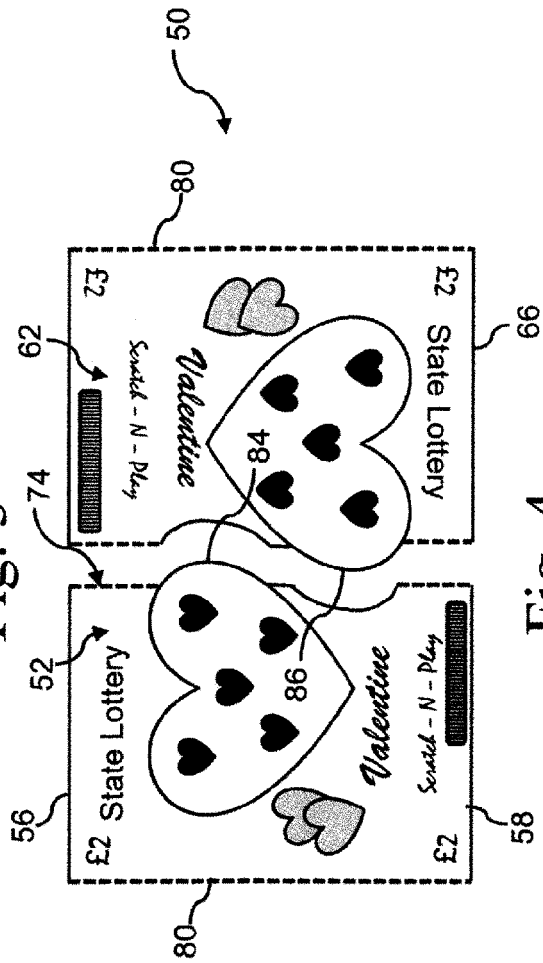
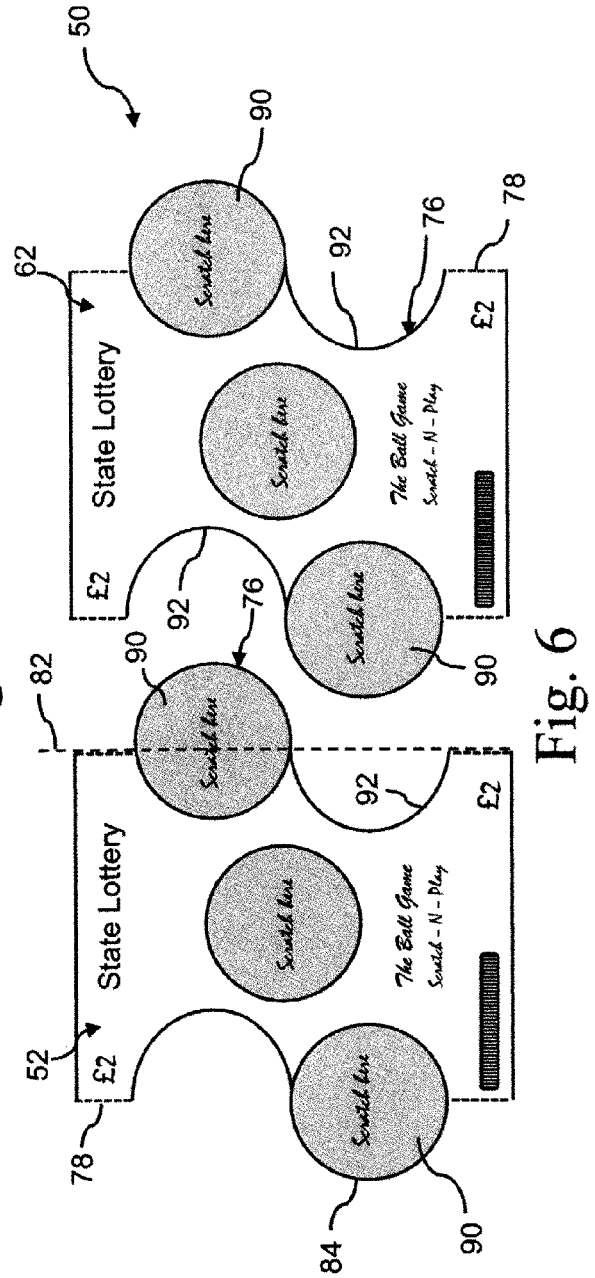
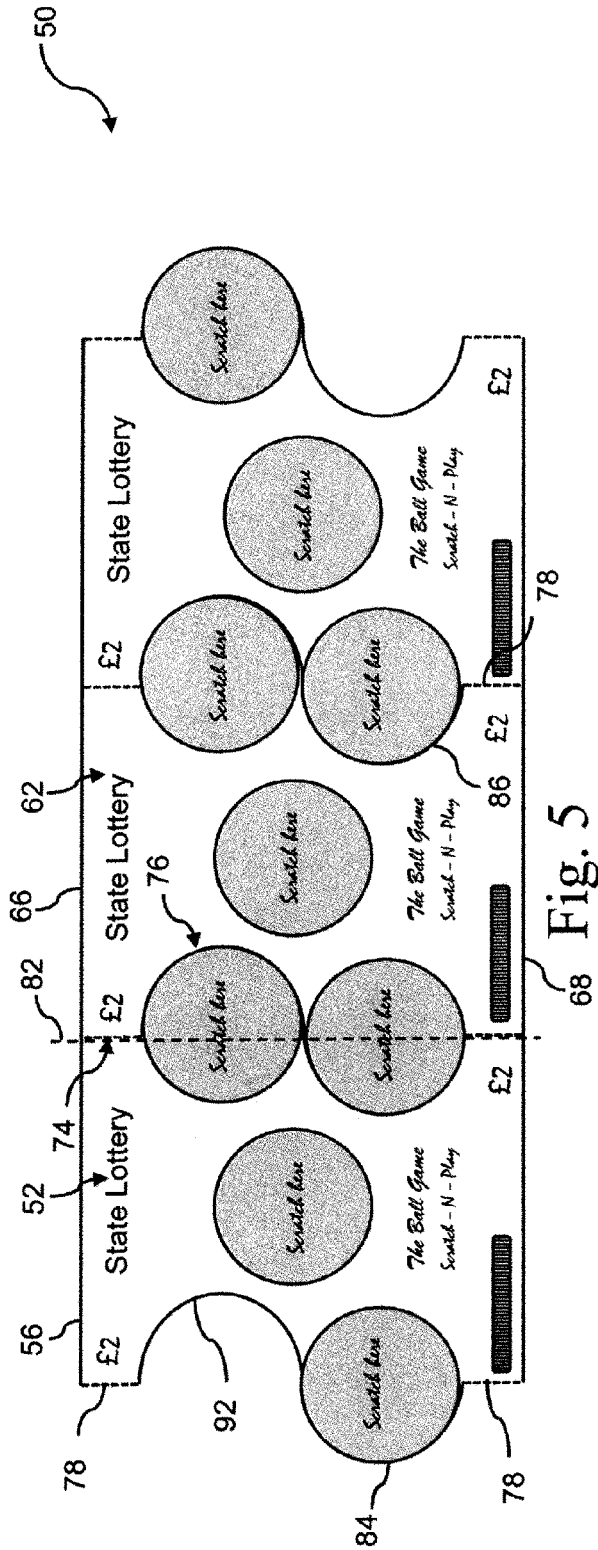
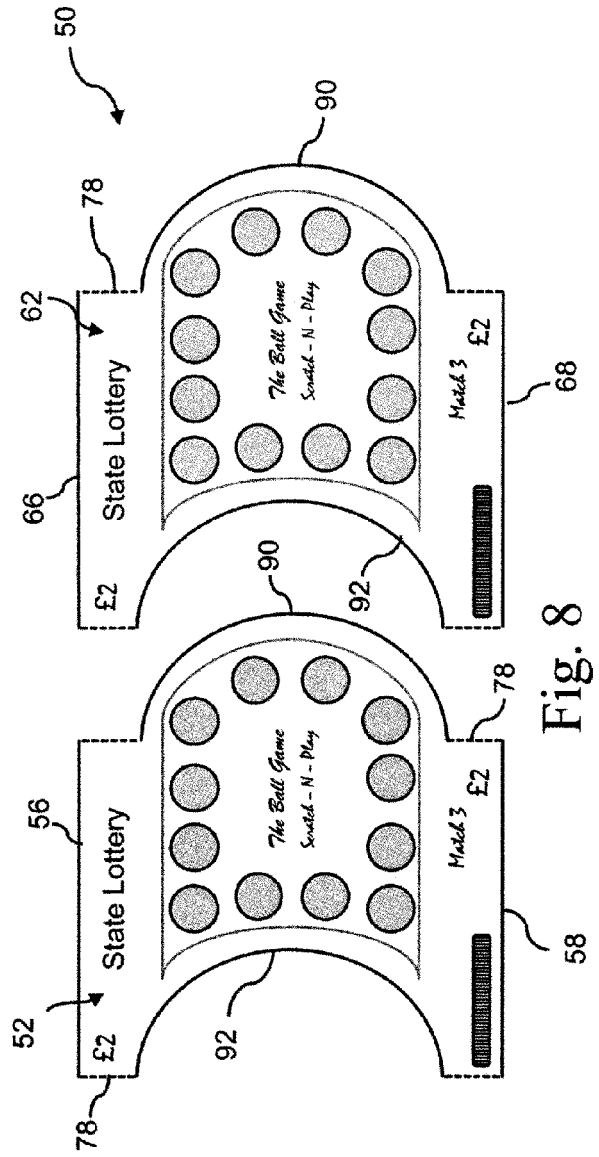
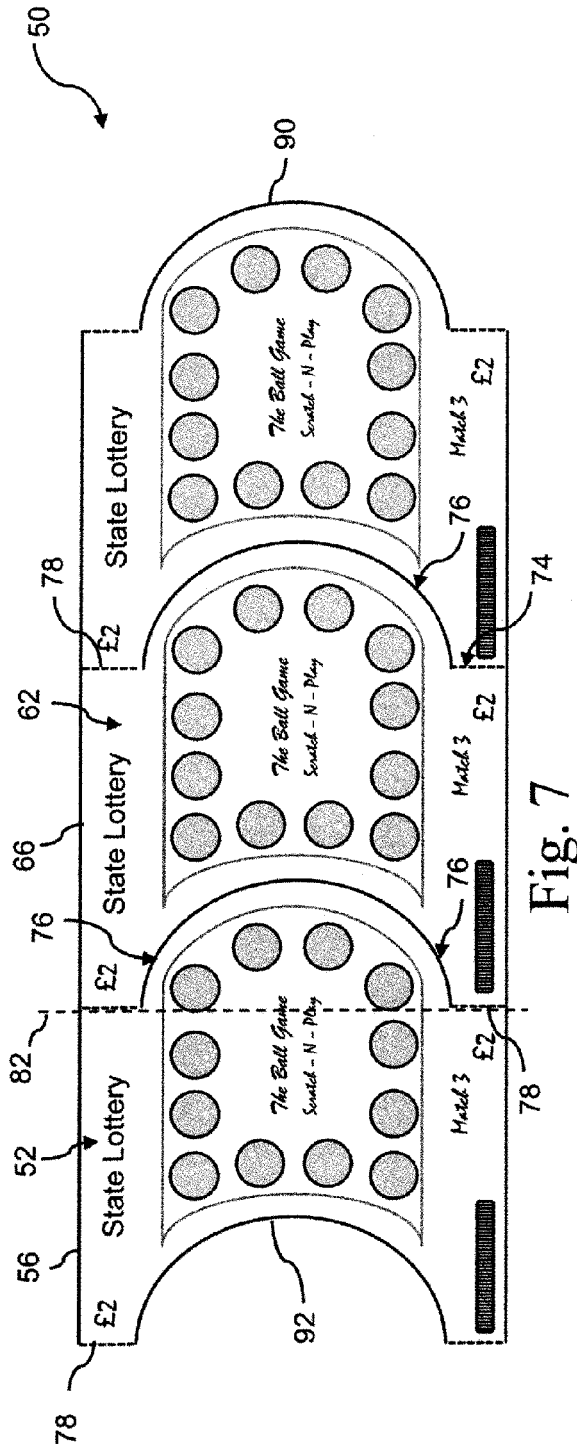


Fig. 4





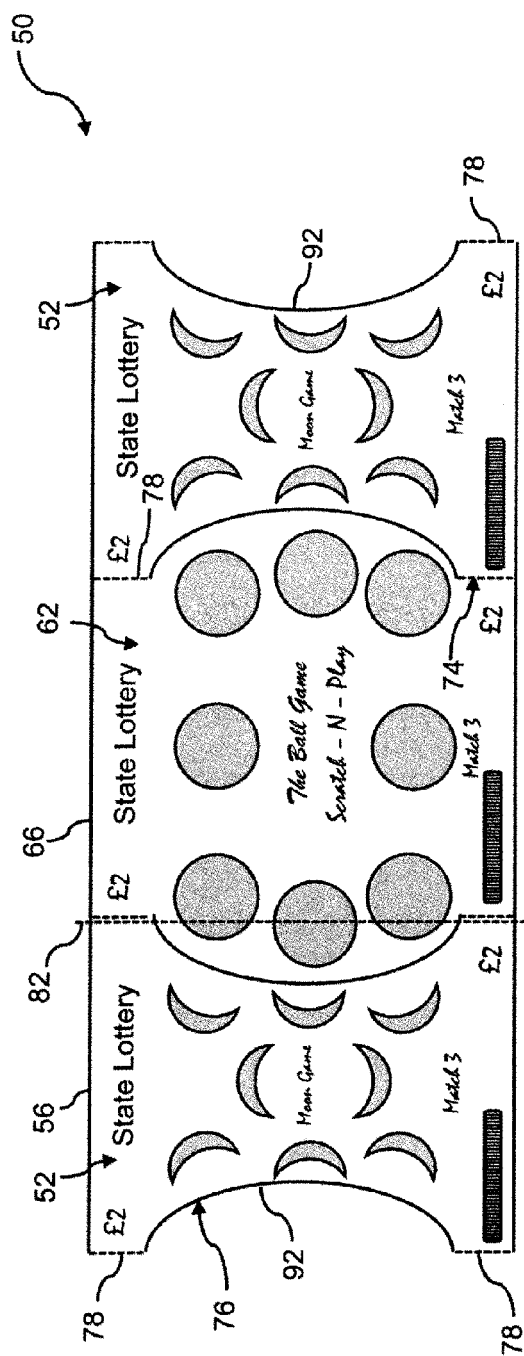


Fig. 9

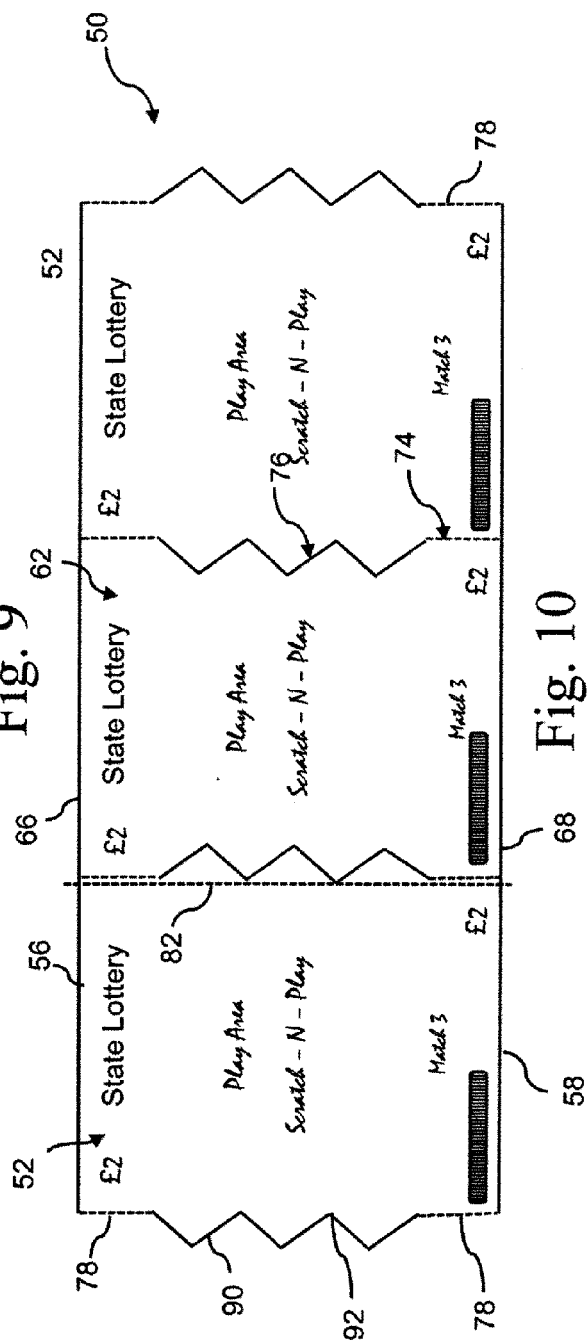


Fig. 10



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 13 17 9957

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
A	GB 2 133 993 A (SCHWEGLER KARL AG) 8 August 1984 (1984-08-08) * claims 1-10; figures 1-4 *	1-15	INV. A63F3/06
A	WO 2007/061320 A1 (PHILLIP FICKLING DIMENSIONAL D [NZ]; FICKLING PHILLIP LYN [NZ]) 31 May 2007 (2007-05-31) * claims 1-16; figures 1-15 *	1-15	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 11 November 2013	Examiner Shmonin, Vladimir
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 13 17 9957

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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11-11-2013

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