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(54) GAMING SYSTEM AND GAME CONTROLLER

(57) A game controller comprising: a plurality of random result generators, whereby a separate game is playable using each one of the random result generators; and a game play coordinator adapted to, when two or more games are selected for play by a player, for each selected

game, trigger the random result generator used for the relevant game to generate a random result for the game, such that two or more games are simultaneously playable by the player.

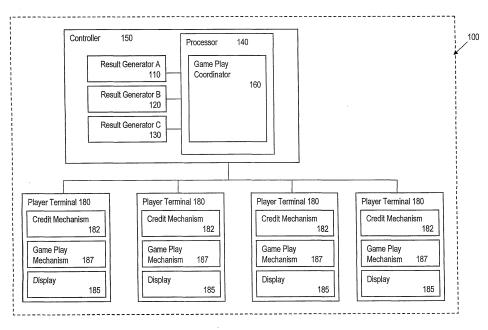


Figure 1

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Field of the Invention

[0001] The present invention relates to gaming systems and game controllers therefore, in particular to game systems having multiple player terminals.

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Background

[0002] Game systems having multiple player terminals to enable more than one player to simultaneously participate in a game are known. Known multi terminal game systems comprise a plurality of player terminals in data communication with a single game controller having a random result generator for generating a random result on which game outcomes are based.

[0003] There is a need for an alternative multi terminal game system in order to maintain or increase player interest and enjoyment.

Summary of Invention

[0004] According to one aspect there is provided a game controller comprising:

a plurality of random result generators, whereby a separate game is playable using each one of the random result generators; and

a game play coordinator adapted to, when two or more games are selected for play by a player, for each selected game, trigger the random result generator used for the relevant game to generate a random result for the game, such that two or more games are simultaneously playable by the player.

[0005] According to another aspect there is provided a game system comprising:

one or more player terminals operable by players to enter game play instructions to select and play one or more playable games; and a game controller comprising:

a plurality of random result generators, whereby a separate game is playable using each one of the random result generators; and

a game play coordinator adapted to, when two or more games are selected for play by a player, for each selected game, trigger the random result generator used for the relevant game to generate a random result for the game, such that two or more games are simultaneously playable by the player.

[0006] An embodiment of the game controller further comprises a terminal exchange adapted to connect a plurality of player terminals to the game coordinator each

player terminal operable by a player to enter game play instructions to select and play one or more of the playable games.

[0007] An embodiment further comprises a memory module storing one or more sets of game rules, each set of game rules being for a game playable using one of the random result generators. In this embodiment each random result generator can be associated with a set of game rules, such that a different game is played using each random result generator.

[0008] In an embodiment a different random result generation process is used by each random result generator. At least one random result generator can be a mechanical random result generator. In an embodiment each random result generator is a mechanical random result generator. For example a mechanical random result generator can be a roulette wheel, a card dealer, a dice roller, a coin toss or a spinning reel apparatus.

[0009] In an embodiment the game controller further comprises an outcome evaluator adapted to, for each game, apply game rules for the game and received game play instructions for each player of the game to a generated random result for the game to evaluate a game outcome for each player of the game.

[0010] In an embodiment of the game system each player terminal comprises:

a credit input mechanism for receiving a wager placed by a player;

a game play mechanism for use by the player to input game play instructions for each of one or more games playable simultaneously, and

a display adapted to simultaneously display game outcomes for each game played.

[0011] In an alternative embodiment each player terminal further comprises a processor adapted to evaluate game outcomes for the player by processing, for each game played by the player, a generated random result for the game and the player's game play instructions in accordance with game rules.

[0012] Game play instructions can include wager data including a wager amount allocated by the player against each game played.

[0013] According to another aspect there is provided a method of gaming comprising the steps of:

receiving game play instructions for one or more simultaneously playable games from one or more of a plurality of players;

generating a random result simultaneously for each playable game for which game play instructions are received; and

evaluating game outcomes for each player by, for each game, based on game rules for the game and game play instructions for each player of the game to the generated random result for the game.

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[0014] According to another aspect there is provided computer program code which when executed causes a computer to implement a computer implemented gaming method as described above.

[0015] In an embodiment each game is playable using one of a plurality of mechanical random result generators and the step of generating a random result for each playable game comprises triggering the random result generator used for the game such to generate a random result for the game.

[0016] An embodiment further comprises the step of displaying game outcomes to each player for each game played by the player simultaneously.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0017] An embodiment, incorporating all aspects of the invention, will now be described by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings in which

Figure 1 illustrates an embodiment of a multiple game, multiple player terminal game system,

Figure 2 illustrates an embodiment of a game controller for a multiple game, multiple player terminal system

Figure 3 illustrates a game play process for a multiple game, multiple player terminal system.

Description

[0018] The present invention relates to a game controller and multi terminal game system adapted for the simultaneous play of more than one game by each player by using more than one random result generator. At any one time all players of the game system can play more than one game, each game using a separate random result generation process which can run simultaneously. [0019] In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 1 the multi terminal gaming system 100 comprises a controller 150 which is in data communication with one or more of player terminals 180. The controller 150 includes a plurality of random result generators 110, 120 130, and a game play coordinator 160. Each of the random result generators 110, 120 130 is used to play a separate game. Each player enters game play instructions to play one or more games using a player terminal 180.

[0020] Game play instructions received from each player can include instructions to play more than one game, each game being played using one of the random result generators. The game play coordinator 160 is adapted to, when multiple games are played, trigger the random result generator used for the game to generate a random result. Each random result generator generates a random result for a game playable by all the players, and the random result generators can all be operable at the same time to concurrently generate a result for

their respective game. Thus, each player can play two or more games simultaneously, wherein one game is played using each random result generator.

[0021] The game play coordinator 160 determines, from the received game play instructions, which games are selected by players and appropriately triggers the random result generators. If a game is not selected for play by any players then the triggering of the random result generator for that game may be omitted. The game play coordinator may also control aspects of game play such as time periods in which players are able to place bets for each game, these time periods may vary from game to game. Triggering timing of each random result generator may be based on betting period timing, time required for result generation, or the total time period required for execution of a round of the game.

[0022] All random result generators may be triggered to start result generation at the same time or at different times. However, as each random result generator operates independently of the others all may be executing result generations simultaneously. For example, where one random result generator is a roulette wheel, having a relatively long random result generation time, and another is a coin toss device, having a relatively short random result generation time, several rounds of the coin toss game may be executed during a single round of the roulette game. Thus the coin toss game may be played at a faster rate than the roulette game. Alternatively, each game may be played at the same rate which the result generation for each game triggered to initiate result generation at the same time, as the random result is generated in a shorter time for the coin toss game than the roulette game, the round of the coin toss game can be completed while waiting for the result of the roulette game. The player will get the result of the coin toss game first, then the roulette game before bets are placed again for the next round of both games.

[0023] The game play coordinator 160 may be implemented as a function of a processor 140. For example, the game play coordinator may be implemented as a software program or set of instructions executable by the processor to receive game play instructions from the player terminals, and in response to the game play instructions, received from one or more players, determine the required random result generators to play the games selected by the players, and trigger random result generation by each required random result generator. The game play coordinator can receive result data from each random result generator and forward the appropriate result data to each player based on each player's instructions. Herein the term "processor" is used to refer generically to any device that can process instructions and may include: a microprocessor, microcontroller, application specific device, programmable logic device or other computational device, a general purpose computer (e.g. a PC) or a server. Alternatively, the game play coordinator 160 may be implemented using hardware circuits designed to trigger the result generation on selected ran-

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dom result generators in response to player instructions input via the player terminals. For example, hardwired circuits, application specific integrated circuits (ASICs) or programmable hardware such as field programmable gate arrays (FPGAs) may be used to implement the game play coordinator. Embodiments of the game play coordinator implemented using any combination of hardware, firmware and software executed using a processor are envisaged.

[0024] Each of the player terminals 180 includes the components required for a player to enter game play instructions which can include wagers to play the games. Each player terminal can include a credit mechanism 182 to enable a player to input credits and receive payouts, a player input mechanism 187 to enable a player enter game play instructions and a display 185 or other output mechanism for displaying game information and outcomes to the player for each game being played.

[0025] The credit mechanism 182 may a coin or token input chute or bill collector and matching dispenser, or alternatively a card reader for reading a smart card, debit card or credit card. A reading device may also be provided for the purpose of reading a player tracking device, for example as part of a loyalty program. The player tracking device may be in the form of a card, flash drive or any other portable storage medium capable of being read by the reading device.

[0026] The player input mechanism 187 can be any suitable form of user input mechanism which enables a player to select which available games to play and input game play instructions for each of the selected games. For example the player input mechanism may comprise a bank of buttons for enabling a player to interact with the gaming system, a key board or keypad, switches, touch screens etc. The player input mechanism may include a plurality of input mechanisms or interfaces, for example one or more banks of buttons and one or more touch screens etc. The player terminal may have different input mechanism associated with each game playable or the same input mechanisms may be used for one or more playable games. The configuration of the player input mechanism can be varied for different embodiments to be adapted to any form suitable for the games provided in the system. The system is adapted to enable a player to select and play simultaneously one or more of the playable games. Game play instructions input by each play can include a selection of which games to play, wagered amounts for each selected game, bet instructions etc.

[0027] The display 185 and/or other output mechanism may be a video display unit, such as a cathode ray tube screen device, a liquid crystal display, plasma screen, any other suitable video display unit. A player terminal may be provided with more than one display unit or output mechanism for example a player terminal may be provided with a screen type display and other forms of output mechanisms such as series of lights or a panel of selectively illuminated symbols or buttons. The player terminal

can also be provided with audio outputs such as speakers. Different game information may be communicated by each display and/or output mechanism. The player terminal can be adapted for simultaneous display of game information for each of the different games, to enable a player to simultaneously play and view the outcomes of more than one game. Where the display comprises a single screen type device, game data of different games may be simultaneously displayed in separate areas of the screen. The display may be adapted to dynamically allocate screen areas for each game based on the number of games selected for play by the player. Alternatively, a player terminal may display game information for different games using different displays or output mechanisms. For example, an outcome for one game may be displayed on a screen, while outcomes for another game is simultaneously displayed using a flashing light.

[0028] An embodiment of a game controller 200 is illustrated in Figure 2. The game controller comprises: three random number generators 210, 220, 230; a game coordinator 290; a terminal exchange 260 for receiving game play instructions from player terminals 180a-n; an outcome evaluator 295; memory 270 for storing game rules 215, 225, 235 and player data 265; and meters 250 for regulatory monitoring of the controller. In this embodiment the game coordinator 290, outcome evaluator 295, and terminal exchange 260 are all implemented as functions of a game controller processor 240. For example, each of the game coordinator 290, terminal exchange 260 and outcome evaluator may comprise sets instructions, software subroutines, or firmware instructions executable by the controller processor. However, alternative configurations are envisaged. For example the terminal exchange 260 may be implemented as an independent server or communication hub; the game coordinator may be implemented using independent dedicated hardware and firmware; and the outcome evaluator may be implemented using programmable logic.

[0029] This embodiment of the game controller 200 includes three random result generators, a roulette wheel 210, a card dealer 220 and a dice roller 230. These random result generators 210, 220, 330 are all mechanical random result generators, using physical processes, spinning a roulette wheel, shuffling and dealing cards, and rolling dice to generate a random result. Other mechanical random result generators are also envisaged, such as spinning reels, numbered ball selectors, coin toss mechanisms etc.

[0030] Mechanical random result generators can be interesting and entertaining for player to watch. In addition to being entertaining for some players, mechanical random result generators have the advantage that they each operate in total independence of each other, so they can all be operating simultaneously to generate random results for their respective game. Further each mechanical random result generator can have independent regulatory approval. This can have advantages for obtaining

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regulatory approval and ongoing monitoring of the multiple player, multiple game system.

[0031] Alternatively each random result generator may be an electronic random number generator either hardwired or hard-coded to generate random numbers or a processor executing software to generate random numbers. The plurality of random result generators provided in the controller may include combinations of different types of mechanical and electronic random result generators. The number of random result generators may be varied to offer more or less games depending on the configuration desired by the game operator which may vary, for example based on the size of the casino or gaming venue, number of patrons and popularity of the game system

[0032] The game controller may include one or more sets of game play rules each set being for a game played using one of the random result generators. In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 2 a set of game rules 215, 225, 235 is provided and stored in memory 270 for each random result generator 210, 220, 230. For example, the game rules 215 associated with the roulette wheel random result generator 210 are for playing a roulette game, the game rules 225 associated with the card dealer random result generator 220 can be for playing a baccarat game, and the game rules 235 associated with the dice roller random number generator can be for playing an Asian style dice game known as SIC BO. The game rules associated with each random result generator are appropriate for a game which uses the type of random result produced. Different games may be played using the same type of random result generator. For example, a game controller may have two dice roller type random result generators, one associated with a set of game rules to play an Asian style dice game, and another associated with a set of game rules to play a European style dice game. Thus two different dice games can be played, with each one using a different random result generator. Similarly, a game controller having two card dealers may enable Baccarat and Black Jack games to be played.

[0033] Alternatively a set of game rules may be associated with more than one random result generator to play a game using that processor. For example, in an embodiment of the invention having two random result generators of the same type, such as two roulette wheels, one set of game rules may be associated with each of these random result generators as they are each being used to play separate instances of the same game, roulette.

[0034] Game outcomes are evaluated by the game outcome evaluator 295 for each game based on game rules associated with the random result generator for the game, a generated random result and game play instructions for each player of the game and output to each player terminal 180. Game play rules 215, 225, 235 for each game can be stored in a memory module 270 as illustrated and read by the outcome evaluator for evaluating the result for each player. The outcome generator

may be dedicated to only one game, for example Baccarat, and usable only with a compatible random result generator such as a mechanical card dealer or a processor running a software card dealer simulator. The generated random result and game play instructions for each player of the game are input to the outcome evaluator for processing to determine game outcomes for each player. In an embodiment a dedicated outcome evaluator is provided associated with each random result generator. In this embodiment the game coordinator directs the game play instructions from each player to the outcome evaluator for the game, as well as instructions to trigger the random result generation for each game.

[0035] In the illustrated embodiment the game rules 215, 225, 235 are stored in memory 270. However, alternative embodiments where game rules are hard wired or hard coded for each game are also envisaged. For example, game rules for each game can be provided using hardware, electronically programmable memory (EPROM) chips, programmable logic devices or coded into software routines or firmware instructions. The device or routine for each game can be adapted to transform a result generated by a compatible random result generator and player instructions for one or more players into one or more game outcomes for each player.

[0036] In an alternative embodiment, each player terminal 180 includes an outcome evaluator adapted to evaluate the outcome for the player from a random result and associated game rule information output by the controller 150 for each game being played. In this embodiment a terminal exchange may be adapted to coordinate the output, to each player terminal involved in a game, of the random result generated and appropriate game rules for the game to enable the player terminal outcome evaluator to determine the result for the player. For example, a player terminal processor may be provided with one or more sets of outcome evaluation instructions. which are executed in response to receiving result data from the terminal exchange to transform the result data into a game outcome for the player based on the player's game play instructions.

[0037] In an alternative embodiment, game rules for each game may be stored in the player terminal, say in a memory module of the processor or coded in hardware or firmware of the player terminal. In this embodiment game play instructions input by the player can be stored in a player terminal memory module. Random result information for a game is output to the player terminal, and the player terminal outcome evaluator evaluates outcomes for the player of the terminal based on the random result information, stored game rules, and game play instructions. The random result information can include a game identifier as well as a random result for the game instance. The outcome evaluator may also be adapted to control the operation of displays or other output mechanisms used to communication the game outcome to the player.

[0038] A game play process for an embodiment of the

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multiple game, multiple player terminal system is illustrated in Figure 3. A betting interval opens 310 and players at each terminal can select and enter game play instructions 315 to play one or more of the available games during the betting interval. The betting interval closes 320 and the game coordinator determines which games have been selected for play 330. The result generation for any games which have not been selected can be bypassed. [0039] The generation of random results for each playable game is performed in parallel by each of the random result generators. If a game has been selected for play 340, 350, 360 then the game coordinator triggers the respective result generator to generate a result 342, 352, 362. The generated results are read 344, 354, 364 and, for embodiments where the game controller includes an outcome evaluator, outcomes for each game are evaluated 346, 356, 366 based on the random result and each player's game play instructions for the game in accordance with the game rules. The game outcomes for each player are then provided to each player's respective player terminal for display simultaneously. Thus each player can simultaneously play and view the outcomes of each

[0040] In an alternative embodiment where each player terminal includes an outcome evaluator, the generated random result for each game can be output to each player terminal and the outcome evaluator of each respective player terminal determines the outcomes for the player of the terminal.

[0041] In the claims which follow and in the preceding description, except where the context requires otherwise due to express language or necessary implication, the word "comprise" or variations such as "comprises" or "comprising" is used in an inclusive sense, i.e. to specify the presence of the stated features but not to preclude the presence or addition of further features in various embodiments of the invention.

[0042] The following is a non-exhaustive list of numbered aspects which may be claimed:

1. A game controller comprising:

a plurality of random result generators, whereby a separate game is playable using each one of the random result generators; and a game play coordinator adapted to, when two or more games are selected for play by a player, for each selected game, trigger the random result generator used for the relevant game to generate a random result for the game, such that two or more games are simultaneously playable by the player.

2. A game controller as in aspect 1 further comprising a terminal exchange adapted to connect a plurality of player terminals to the game coordinator each player terminal operable by a player to enter game play instructions to select and play one or more of

the playable games.

- 3. A game controller as in aspect 1 further comprising a memory module storing one or more sets of game rules, each set of game rules being for a game playable using one of the random result generators.
- 4. A game controller as in aspect 3 wherein each random result generator is associated with a set of game rules, such that a different game is played using each random result generator.
- 5. A game controller as in aspect 1 wherein a different random result generation process is used by each random result generator.
- 6. A game controller as in aspect 1 wherein at least one random result generator is a mechanical random result generator.
- 7. A game controller as in aspect 6 wherein each random result generator is a mechanical random result generator.
- 8. A game controller as in aspect 6 wherein a mechanical random result generator is a roulette wheel, a card dealer, a dice roller, a coin toss or a spinning reel apparatus.
- 9. A game controller as in aspect 3 further comprising an outcome evaluator adapted to, for each game, apply game rules for the game and received game play instructions for each player of the game to a generated random result for the game to evaluate a game outcome for each player of the game.
- 10. A game system comprising:

one or more player terminals operable by players to enter game play instructions to select and play one or more playable games; and a game controller comprising:

a plurality of random result generators, whereby a separate game is playable using each one of the random result generators; and

a game play coordinator adapted to, when two or more games are selected for play by a player, for each selected game, trigger the random result generator used for the relevant game to generate a random result for the game, such that two or more games are simultaneously playable by the player.

11. A game system as in aspect 10 wherein each player terminal comprises:

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a credit input mechanism for receiving a wager placed by a player;

a game play mechanism for use by the player to input game play instructions for each of one or more games playable simultaneously, and a display adapted to simultaneously display game outcomes for each game played.

- 12. A game system as in aspect 10 further comprising a terminal exchange adapted to connect a plurality of player terminals to the game coordinator.
- 13. A game system as in aspect 10 further comprising a memory storing one or more sets of game rules, each set of game rules being for a game playable using one of the random result generators.
- 14. A game system as in aspect 13 wherein each random result generator is associated with a set of game rules, such that a different game is played using each random result generator.
- 15. A game system as in aspect 14 wherein a different random result generation process is used by each random result generator.
- 16. A game system as in aspect 10 wherein at least one random result generator is a mechanical random result generator.
- 17. A game system as in aspect 16 wherein each random result generator is a mechanical random result generator.
- 18. A game system as in aspect 16 wherein a mechanical random result generator is a roulette wheel, a card dealer, a dice roller or a spinning reel apparatus.
- 19. A game system as in aspect 13 wherein the game controller further comprises an outcome evaluator adapted to, for each game, apply game rules for the game and game play instructions for each player of the game to a generated random result for the game to evaluate a game outcome for each player of the game.
- 20. A game system as in aspect 11 wherein each player terminal further comprises a processor adapted to evaluate game outcomes for the player by processing, for each game played by the player, a generated random result for the game and the player's game play instructions in accordance with game rules.
- 21. A game system as in aspect 10 wherein game play instructions include wager data including a wager amount allocated by the player against each

game played.

22. A method of gaming comprising the steps of:

receiving game play instructions for one or more simultaneously playable games from one or more of a plurality of players; generating a random result simultaneously for each playable game for which game play instructions are received; and evaluating game outcomes for each player by, for each game, based on game rules for the game and game play instructions for each player of the game to the generated random result for the game.

- 23. A method as in aspect 22 wherein each game is playable using one of a plurality of mechanical random result generators and the step of generating a random result for each playable game comprises triggering the random result generator used for the game such to generate a random result for the game.
- 24. A method as in aspect 22 further comprising the step of displaying the game outcomes to each player for each game played by the player simultaneously.
- 25. Computer program code which when executed causes a computer to implement a computer implemented gaming method as in aspect 22.
- 26. Computer program code as in aspect 25 wherein each game is playable using one of a plurality of mechanical random result generators and the step of controlling generation of a random result for each playable game comprises triggering the random result generator used for the game to generate a random result for the game.
- 27. Computer program code as in aspect 25 further comprising instructions controlling, for each player, simultaneous display of game outcomes of two or more games played simultaneously by the player.

Claims

1. A game controller comprising:

a plurality of different random result generators, each of the plurality of different random result generators comprising a mechanical physical random result generator selected from the group comprising a) dealing of playing cards to generate a playing card random result, b) rolling dice to generate a dice game random result, and c) a roulette wheel to generate a roulette game random result, whereby a separate game is playa-

ble using each one of the random result generators; and

a game play coordinator adapted to, when two or more games are selected for play by a player, for each selected game, trigger the mechanical physical random result generator used for the relevant game to generate a random result for each game, such that two or more different games are simultaneously playable by the player.

- 2. A game controller as claimed in claim 1 comprising a terminal exchange adapted to connect a plurality of player terminals to the game coordinator each player terminal operable by a player to enter game play instructions to select and play one or more of the playable games.
- 3. A game controller as claimed in claim 1 wherein the game play coordinator is adapted to receive game play instructions from one or more player terminals for games selected by respective players, determine which games are selected by the respective players and trigger the mechanical physical random result generators of the selected games, wherein if a game is not selected for play the triggering of the mechanical physical random result generator for that game is omitted.
- **4.** A game controller as claimed in claim 1, wherein the mechanical physical random result generators are triggered to start at different times.
- 5. A game controller as claimed in claim 1 wherein the game play coordinator is adapted to receive game play instructions from one or more player terminals for games selected by respective players and to control time periods in which the respective players are able to place bets for each game.
- 6. A game controller as claimed in claim 1 further comprising multiple memory modules, each memory module storing one or more sets of game rules for distinct ones of the different random result generators comprising mechanical physical random result generator selected from the group comprising a), b) and c), each set of game rules being for a different game playable using one of the random result generators.
- 7. A game controller as claimed in claim 6 wherein each random result generator is associated with a set of game rules, such that a different game is played using each mechanical random result generator.
- **8.** A game controller as claimed in claim 6 further comprising an outcome evaluator adapted to, for each game by the different ones of the different random

result generators, apply game rules for the game and received game play instructions for each player of the game to a generated random result for the game to evaluate a game outcome for each player of the game.

9. A game system comprising:

one or more player terminals operable by players to enter game play instructions to select and play one or more playable games; and a game controller according to claim 1.

10. A game system as claimed in claim 9 wherein each player terminal comprises:

a credit input mechanism for receiving a wager placed by a player;

a game play mechanism for use by the player to input game play instructions for each of one or more games playable simultaneously, and a display adapted to simultaneously display game outcomes for each game played.

- 11. A game system as claimed in claim 9 further comprising a memory storing one or more sets of game rules, each set of game rules being for a game playable using one of the random result generators.
- 12. A game system as claimed in claim 11 wherein each random result generator is associated with a set of game rules, such that a different game is played using each random result generator.
- 35 13. A game system as claimed in claim 11 wherein the game controller further comprises an outcome evaluator adapted to, for each game, apply game rules for the game and game play instructions for each player of the game to a generated random result for the game to evaluate a game outcome for each player of the game.
 - 14. A game system as claimed in claim 10 wherein each player terminal further comprises a processor adapted to evaluate game outcomes for the player by processing, for each game played by the player, a generated random result for the game and the player's game play instructions in accordance with game rules.
 - **15.** A game system as claimed in claim 9 wherein game play instructions include wager data including a wager amount allocated by the player against each game played.

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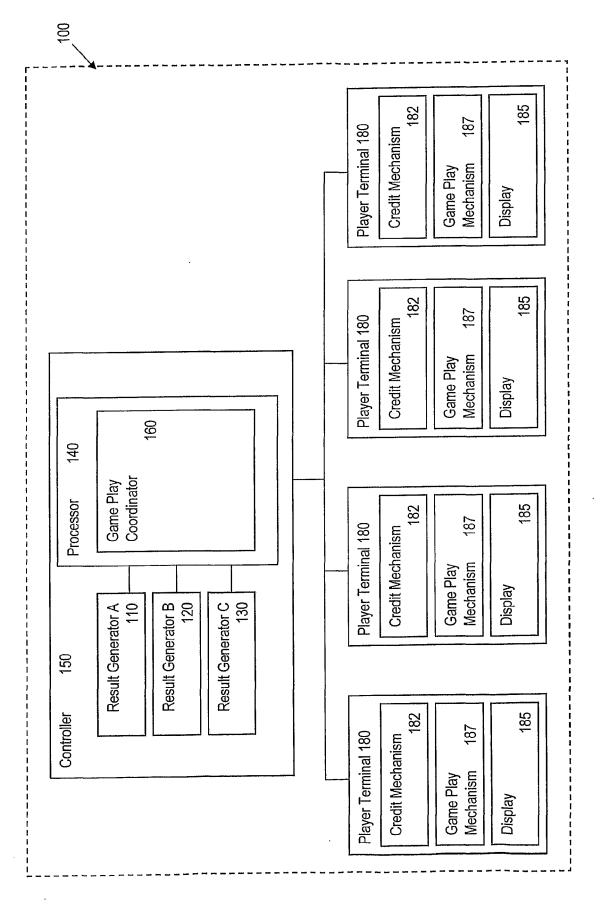
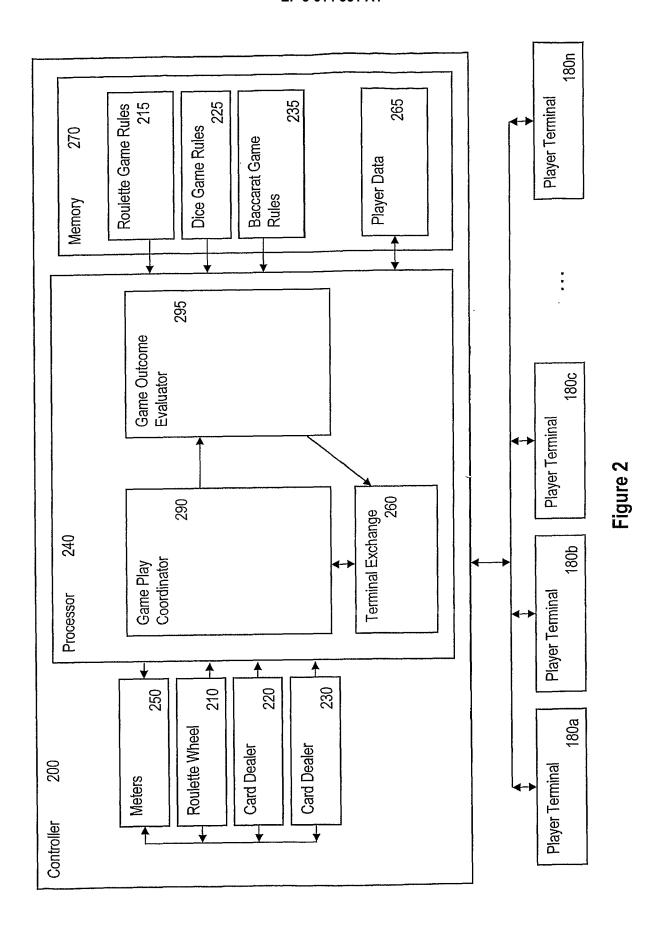
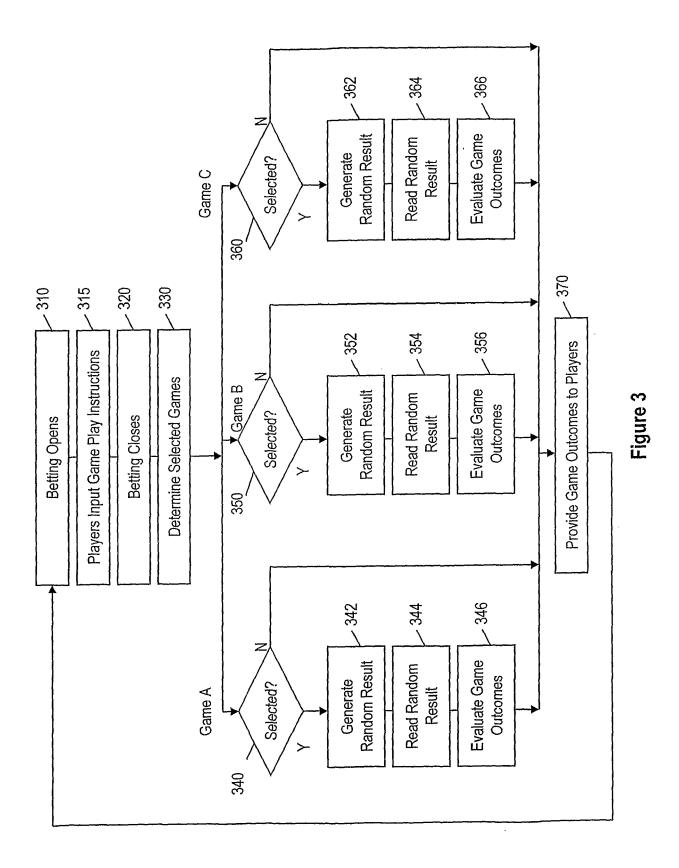


Figure 1







EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number EP 19 18 4466

CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)

G07F17/32

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Category	DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE DELEVANT				
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