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Abstract

A method of gaming comprising cycling through an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards incrementing each incrementable award which can be awarded in a subsequent cycle after the corresponding award display position has been cycled through in a current cycle stopping the cycling at one of the award display positions, andmaking the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

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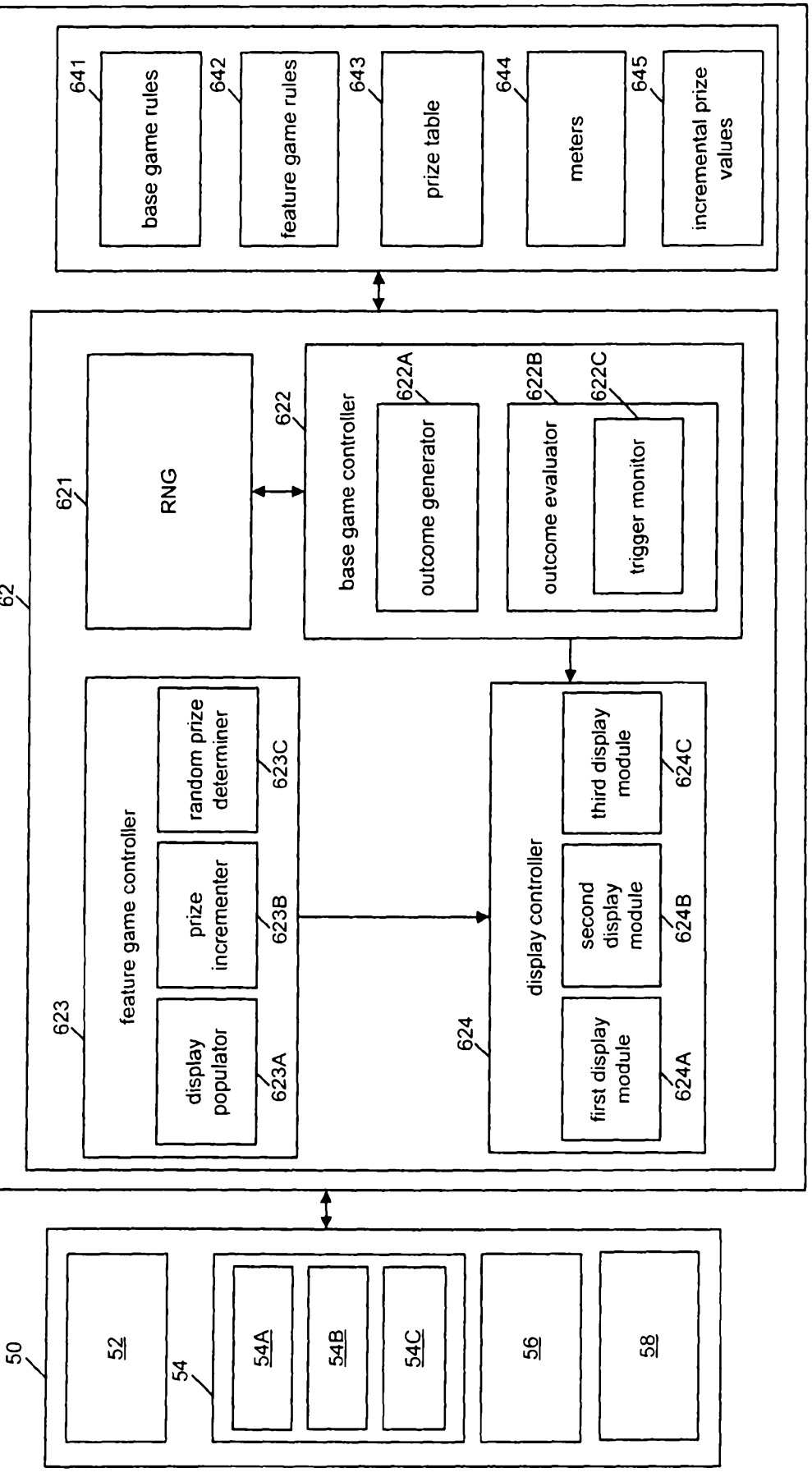

Figure 6

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COMPLETE SPECIFICATION

Standard Patent

Applicant:

Aristocrat Technologies Australia Pty Limited

Invention Title:

A GAMING SYSTEM AND METHOD OF GAMING

The following statement is a full description of this invention, including the best method for performing it known to me/us:

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Title

A METHOD OF GAMING, A GAME CONTROLLER, AND A GAMING SYSTEM

Related Application

This application is a divisional application of Australian application no. 2009233615, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

Field

The invention relates to a method of gaming, a game controller, and a gaming system.

Background

There are many types of awards and ways of making them in existing gaming systems, nevertheless there is a continuing need for alternative gaming systems in order to maintain or increase player enjoyment.

Summary

In a first aspect, there is provided a method of gaming in a gaming system, comprising:

cycling through an award display on a display of the gaming system, the award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order on the display, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards;

incrementing each incrementable award which can be awarded in a subsequent cycle after the corresponding award display position has been cycled through in a current cycle;

stopping the cycling at one of the award display

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positions on the display; and

making the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

In an embodiment, at least one of the awards has a plurality of levels and incrementing the award comprises progressing to the next level.

In an embodiment, the award of at least one of the plurality of levels includes conducting a random determination to determine a size of a prize to be awarded.

In an embodiment, the award of a plurality of the levels includes conducting a random determination corresponding to the awarded level to determine a size of a prize to be awarded.

In an embodiment, the method comprises displaying the current level in an additional award display for at least some of the plurality levels.

In an embodiment, the method comprises displaying each award display position as a segment of a circle such that the award display has the appearance of a wheel.

In an embodiment, the method comprises displaying the award display on a video display.

In an embodiment, the additional display comprises a ladder of at least a subset of the levels such that displaying the current level in the additional award display comprises indicating the current level of the ladder.

In an embodiment, the additional display is a physical display.

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In an embodiment, the method comprises incrementing at least one of the awards by an amount corresponding to the initial amount of the award each time the award is incremented.

In an embodiment, the method comprises selecting at least one of the awards and populating the award display based on the selected awards.

In an embodiment, the method comprises:

providing an award selection display to a player comprising a plurality of user selectable objects associated with awards, the association with the award not being displayed;

receiving a player selection of an object; and

populating one of the award display positions with the award associated with the selected object.

In an embodiment, the method comprises populating all but one of the award display positions with the selected awards and populating the final award display position with the award having a plurality of predefined levels and incrementing the award comprises progressing to the next predefined level.

In an embodiment, one of the selected awards is an indirectly incrementable award in that the award itself is not incremented but it results in an award of the incrementable award having a plurality of levels.

In an embodiment, the method comprises cycling through the award display by displaying relative movement between an indicator and the award display positions, such that a current award display position is the award display position indicated by the indicator.

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In an embodiment, the method comprises determining where to stop the cycling by randomly selecting the amount by which the indicator will cycle relative to the award display.

In an embodiment, the method comprises moving the indicator relative to the award display.

In an embodiment, the method comprises moving the award display relative to the indicator.

In a second aspect, there is provided a gaming system comprising:

a display; and

a game controller arranged to:

control the display to display an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards;

control the display to display cycling through the award display;

increment each incrementable award which can be awarded in a subsequent cycle after the corresponding award display position has been cycled through in a current cycle;

stop the cycling at one of the award display positions; and

make the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

In an embodiment, at least one of the awards has a plurality of levels and incrementing the award comprises progressing to the next level.

In an embodiment, an additional award display for displaying the current level for at least some of the

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plurality levels.

In an embodiment, the display for displaying the award display is a video display.

In an embodiment, the additional display is a physical display.

In an embodiment, the display is a secondary display, the gaming system further comprises a primary display and the game controller is arranged conducting a base game on the primary display and display the award display on the secondary display in response to a trigger condition being met during play of the base game.

In a third aspect, there is provided a game controller for a gaming system, the game controller arranged to:

control a display to display an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards;

control the display to display cycling through the award display;

increment each incrementable award which can be awarded in a subsequent cycle after the corresponding award display position has been cycled through in a current cycle;

stop the cycling with at one of the award display positions; and

make the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

In a fourth aspect, there is provided an electronic gaming machine comprising:

a cabinet;

at least one input device mounted to the cabinet and

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operable to place a wager and initiate a play of a game;

a display mounted to the cabinet; and

a game controller operably connected to the display and the input device, the game controller disposed within the cabinet, the game controller comprising a processor and a memory storing instructions which when executed by the processor cause the game controller to:

control the display to display an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards;

control the display to display cycling through the award display;

increment each incrementable award which can be awarded in a subsequent cycle after the corresponding award display position has been cycled through in a current cycle;

stop the cycling at one of the award display positions; and

make the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

In a fifth aspect, there is provided a gaming system comprising:

means for controlling a display to display an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards;

means for controlling the display to display cycling through the award display;

means for incrementing each incrementable award which can be awarded in a subsequent cycle after the corresponding award display position has been cycled through in a current cycle;

means for stopping the cycling at one of the award

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display positions; and

means for making the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

In a sixth aspect, there is provided a method of gaming comprising:

cycling through an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards and wherein at least one of the incrementable awards has a plurality of levels;

incrementing the at least one award with a plurality of levels while it can be awarded in a subsequent cycle by progressing to the next level;

stopping the cycling at one of the award display positions; and

making the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

In an embodiment, the award of at least one of the plurality of levels includes conducting a random determination to determine a size of a prize to be awarded.

In an embodiment, the award of a plurality of the levels includes conducting a random determination corresponding to the awarded level to determine a size of a prize to be awarded.

In a seventh aspect, there is provided a gaming system comprising:

a display; and

a game controller arranged to:

control the display to cycle through an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, at least some of the

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display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards and wherein at least one of the incrementable awards has a plurality of levels;

increment the at least one award having a plurality of levels while it can be awarded in a subsequent cycle by progressing to the next level;

stop the cycling with at one of the award display positions; and

make the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

In an eighth aspect, there is provided a game controller for a gaming system, the game controller arranged to:

control a display to cycle through an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards and wherein at least one of the incrementable awards has a plurality of levels;

increment the at least one award having a plurality of levels while it can be awarded in a subsequent cycle by progressing to the next level;

stop the cycling at one of the award display positions; and

make the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

In a ninth aspect, there is provided a method of gaming comprising:

cycling through an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, each award display position corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of awards and wherein at least one of the awards includes conducting a random determination to determine a size of a prize to be awarded;

stopping the cycling at one of the award display

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positions; and

making the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

In an embodiment, the method comprises cycling through the award display by displaying relative movement between an indicator and the award display positions, such that a current award display position is the award display position indicated by the indicator.

In a tenth aspect, there is provided a gaming system comprising:

a display; and

a game controller arranged to:

control the display to cycle through an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, each award display position corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of awards and wherein at least one of the awards includes conducting a random determination to determine a size of a prize to be awarded;

stop the cycling at one of the award display positions; and

make the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

In an eleventh aspect, there is provided a game controller for a gaming system, the game controller arranged to:

control the display to cycle through an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, each award display position corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of awards and wherein at least one of the awards includes conducting a random determination to determine a size of a prize to be awarded;

stop the cycling with the indicator indicating one of the award display positions; and

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make the award corresponding to the award display at which the cycling is stopped.

In a twelfth aspect, there is provided computer program code which when executed implements one or more of the above methods.

In a thirteenth aspect, there is provided a tangible computer readable medium comprising the above program code.

In a fourteenth aspect, there is provided transmitting the above program code.

Brief Description of Drawings

An exemplary embodiment of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a block diagram of the core components of a gaming system;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of a stand alone gaming machine;

Figure 3 is a block diagram of the functional components of a gaming machine;

Figure 4 is a schematic diagram of the functional components of a memory;

Figure 5 is a schematic diagram of a network gaming system;

Figure 6 is a further block diagram of a gaming system;

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Figure 7 is a flow chart of an embodiment; and

Figure 8 is a perspective view of another stand alone gaming machine.

Detailed Description

Referring to the drawings, there is shown a gaming system having a game controller arranged to implement a game having a number of aspects which are combined in some embodiments. In one aspect, the game involves cycling through an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order. For example, by displaying relative movement between an indicator and the award display positions, at least some of the display positions corresponding to incrementable awards which are

incremented after the corresponding award display position has been cycled through. An award is made by

stopping the cycling at one of the award display positions and making that award.

In another aspect, there is at least one incrementable award which has a plurality of levels and the increment is made by progressing to the next level. Advatangeously this aspect may be used in conjunction with the above aspect where other awards also increment but it may also be used in combination with non-incrementing awards.

In another aspect, at least one of the awards which is cycled through includes conducting a random determination to determine a size of a prize to be awarded. Again, this may advantageously be combined with one or both of the above aspects or employed independently.

General construction of gaming system

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The gaming system can take a number of different forms. In a first form, a stand alone gaming machine is provided wherein all or most components required for implementing the game are present in a player operable gaming machine.

In a second form, a distributed architecture is provided wherein some of the components required for implementing the game are present in a player operable gaming machine and some of the components required for implementing the game are located remotely relative to the gaming machine. For example, a "thick client" architecture may be used wherein part of the game is executed on a player operable gaming machine and part of the game is executed remotely, such as by a gaming server; or a "thin client" architecture may be used wherein most of the game is executed remotely such as by a gaming server and a player operable gaming machine is used only to display audible and/or visible gaming information to the player and receive gaming inputs from the player.

However, it will be understood that other arrangements are envisaged. For example, an architecture may be provided wherein a gaming machine is networked to a gaming server and the respective functions of the gaming machine and the gaming server are selectively modifiable. For example, the gaming system may operate in stand alone gaming machine mode, "thick client" mode or "thin client" mode depending on the game being played, operating conditions, and so on. Other variations will be apparent to persons skilled in the art.

Irrespective of the form, the gaming system has several core components. At the broadest level, the core components are a player interface 50 and a game controller 60 as illustrated in Figure 1. The player interface is arranged to enable manual interaction between a player and the gaming system and for this purpose includes the

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input/output components required for the player to enter instructions to play the game and observe the game outcomes.

Components of the player interface may vary from embodiment to embodiment but will typically include a credit mechanism 52 to enable a player to input credits and receive payouts, one or more displays 54, a game play mechanism 56 including one or more input devices that enable a player to input game play instructions (e.g. to place a wager), and one or more speakers 58.

The game controller 60 is in data communication with the player interface and typically includes a processor 62 that processes the game play instructions in accordance with game play rules and outputs game play outcomes to the display. Typically, the game play rules are stored as program code in a memory 64 but can also be hardwired. Herein the term "processor" is used to refer generically to any device that can process game play instructions in accordance with game play rules and may include: a microprocessor, microcontroller, programmable logic device or other computational device, a general purpose computer (e.g. a PC) or a server.

A gaming system in the form of a stand alone gaming machine 10 is illustrated in Figure 2. The gaming machine 10 includes a console 12 having a display 14 on which are displayed representations of a game 16 that can be played by a player. A mid-trim 20 of the gaming machine 10 houses a bank of buttons 22 for enabling a player to interact with the gaming machine, in particular during game play. The mid-trim 20 also houses a credit input mechanism 24 which in this example includes a coin input chute 24A and a bill collector 24B. Other credit input mechanisms may also be employed, for example, a card reader for reading a smart card, debit card or credit

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card. Other gaming machines may configure for ticket in such that they have a ticket reader for reading tickets having a value and crediting the player based on the face value of the ticker. A player marketing module (not shown) having 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. In some embodiments, the player marketing module may provide an additional credit mechanism, either by transferring credits to the gaming machine from credits stored on the player tracking device or by transferring credits from a player account in data communication with the player marketing module.

A top box 26 may carry artwork 28, including for example pay tables and details of bonus awards and other information or images relating to the game. Further artwork and/or information may be provided on a front panel 29 of the console 12. A coin tray 30 is mounted beneath the front panel 29 for dispensing cash payouts from the gaming machine 10.

The display 14 shown in Figure 2 is in the form of a video display unit, particularly a cathode ray tube screen device. Alternatively, the display 14 may be a liquid crystal display, plasma screen, any other suitable video display unit, or the visible portion of an electromechanical device. The top box 26 may also include a display, for example a video display unit, which may be of the same type as the display 14, or of a different type.

Figure 3 shows a block diagram of operative components of a typical gaming machine which may be the same as or different to the gaming machine of Figure 2.

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The gaming machine 100 includes a game controller 101 having a processor 102 mounted on a circuit board. Instructions and data to control operation of the processor 102 are stored in a memory 103, which is in data communication with the processor 102. Typically, the gaming machine 100 will include both volatile and non-volatile memory and more than one of each type of memory, with such memories being collectively represented by the memory 103.

The gaming machine has hardware meters 104 for purposes including ensuring regulatory compliance and monitoring player credit, an input/output (I/O) interface 105 for communicating with peripheral devices of the gaming machine 100. The input/output interface 105 and/or the peripheral devices may be intelligent devices with their own memory for storing associated instructions and data for use with the input/output interface or the peripheral devices. A random number generator module 113 generates random numbers for use by the processor 102. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the reference to random numbers includes pseudo-random numbers.

In the example shown in Figure 3, a player interface 120 includes peripheral devices that communicate with the game controller 101 including one or more displays 106, a touch screen and/or buttons 107 (which provide a game play mechanism), a card and/or ticket reader 108, a printer 109, a bill acceptor and/or coin input mechanism 110 and a coin output mechanism 111. Additional hardware may be included as part of the gaming machine 100, or hardware may be omitted as required for the specific implementation. For example, while buttons or touch screens are typically used in gaming machines to allow a player to place a wager and initiate a play of a game any input device that enables the player to input game play

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instructions may be used. For example, in some gaming machines a mechanical handle is used to initiate a play of the game.

In addition, the gaming machine 100 may include a communications interface, for example a network card 112. The network card may, for example, send status information, accounting information or other information to a bonus controller, central controller, server or database and receive data or commands from the bonus controller, central controller, server or database. In embodiments employing a player marketing module, communications over a network may be via player marketing module - i.e. the player marketing module may be in data communication with one or more of the above devices and communicate with it on behalf of the gaming machine.

Figure 4 shows a block diagram of the main components of an exemplary memory 103. The memory 103 includes RAM 103A, EPROM 103B and a mass storage device 103C. The RAM 103A typically temporarily holds program files for execution by the processor 102 and related data. The EPROM 103B may be a boot ROM device and/or may contain some system or game related code. The mass storage device 103C is typically used to store game programs, the integrity of which may be verified and/or authenticated by the processor 102 using protected code from the EPROM 103B or elsewhere.

It is also possible for the operative components of the gaming machine 100 to be distributed, for example input/output devices 106,107,108,109,110,111 to be provided remotely from the game controller 101.

Figure 5 shows a gaming system 200 in accordance with an alternative embodiment. The gaming system 200 includes a network 201, which for example may be an Ethernet network.

Gaming machines 202, shown arranged in three banks 203 of two gaming machines 202 in Figure 5, are connected to the network 201. The gaming machines 202 provide a player operable interface and may be the same as the gaming machines 10,100 shown in Figures 2 and 3, or may have simplified functionality depending on the requirements for implementing game play. While banks 203 of two gaming machines are illustrated in Figure 5, banks of one, three or more gaming machines are also envisaged.

One or more displays 204 may also be connected to the network 201. For example, the displays 204 may be associated with one or more banks 203 of gaming machines. The displays 204 may be used to display representations associated with game play on the gaming machines 202, and/or used to display other representations, for example promotional or informational material.

In a thick client embodiment, game server 205 implements part of the game played by a player using a gaming machine 202 and the gaming machine 202 implements part of the game. With this embodiment, as both the game server and the gaming device implement part of the game, they collectively provide a game controller. A database management server 206 may manage storage of game programs and associated data for downloading or access by the gaming devices 202 in a database 206A. Typically, if the gaming system enables players to participate in a Jackpot game, a Jackpot server 207 will be provided to perform accounting functions for the Jackpot game. A loyalty program server 212 may also be provided.

In a thin client embodiment, game server 205 implements most or all of the game played by a player using a gaming machine 202 and the gaming machine 202 essentially provides only the player interface. With this embodiment, the game server 205 provides the game controller. The

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gaming machine will receive player instructions, pass these to the game server which will process them and return game play outcomes to the gaming machine for display. In a thin client embodiment, the gaming machines could be computer terminals, e.g. PCs running software that provides a player interface operable using standard computer input and output components. Other client/server configurations are possible, and further details of a client/server architecture can be found in WO 2006/052213 and PCT/SE2006/000559, the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference.

Servers are also typically provided to assist in the administration of the gaming network 200, including for example a gaming floor management server 208, and a licensing server 209 to monitor the use of licenses relating to particular games. An administrator terminal 210 is provided to allow an administrator to run the network 201 and the devices connected to the network.

The gaming system 200 may communicate with other gaming systems, other local networks, for example a corporate network, and/or a wide area network such as the Internet, for example through a firewall 211.

Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that in accordance with known techniques, functionality at the server side of the network may be distributed over a plurality of different computers. For example, elements may be run as a single "engine" on one server or a separate server may be provided. For example, the game server 205 could run a random generator engine. Alternatively, a separate random number generator server could be provided. Further, persons skilled in the art will appreciate that a plurality of game servers could be provided to run different games or a single game server may run a plurality of different games as required by the

terminals.

Further detail of gaming system

The player operates the game play mechanism 56 to specify a wager and hence the win entitlement which will be evaluated for this play of the game and initiates a play of the game. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that a player's win entitlement will vary from game to game dependent on player selections. In most spinning reel games, it is typical for the player's entitlement to be affected by the amount they wager and selections they make (i.e. the nature of the wager). For example, a player's win entitlement may be based on how many lines they play in each game - e.g. a minimum of one line up to the maximum number of lines allowed by the game (noting that not all permutations of win lines may be available for selection) and how much they wager per line. Such win lines are typically formed by a combination of symbol display positions, one from each reel, the symbol display positions being located relative to one another such that they form a line.

In many games, the player's win entitlement is not strictly limited to the lines they have selected, for example, "scatter" pays are awarded independently of a players selection of pay lines and are an inherent part of the win entitlement.

Persons skilled in the art, will appreciate that in other embodiments, the player may obtain a win entitlement by selecting a number of reels to play and an amount to wager per reel. Such games are marketed under the trade name "Reel Power" by Aristocrat Leisure Industries Pty Ltd. The selection of the reel means that each displayed symbol of the reel can be substituted for a symbol at one or more designated display positions. In other words, all symbols

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displayed at symbol display positions corresponding to a selected reel can be used to form symbol combinations with symbols displayed at a designated, symbol display positions of the other reels. For example, if there are five reels and three symbol display positions for each reel such that the symbol display positions comprise three rows of five symbol display positions, the symbols displayed in the centre row are used for non-selected reels. As a result, the total number of ways to win is determined by multiplying the number of active display positions of each reels, the active display positions being all display positions of each selected reel and the designated display position of the non-selected reels. As a result for five reels and fifteen display positions there are 243 ways to win.

In other embodiments a player win entitlement may be affected by purchasing access to particular pay tables - e.g. a first bet amount entitles the player to wins including cherries and a second amount entitles them to wins including plums.

In Figure 6, the processor 62 of game controller 60 is shown implementing a number of modules based on program code and data stored in memory 64. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that various of the modules could be implemented in some other way, for example by a dedicated circuit.

These modules include a base game controller 622 having an outcome generator 622A which operates in response to the player's operation of game play mechanism 56 to place a wager and initiate a play of the game and generates a game outcome in accordance with base game rules 641 which will then be evaluated by award evaluator 622B in accordance with prize table 642. For example, in a spinning reel game by selecting symbols for display from a plurality of

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symbol sets corresponding to respective ones of a plurality of spinning reels. The game outcome of the base game, is then advised to the display controller 624, the first display module 624A of which causes it to be displayed on a first video display 54A, for example by displaying the selected symbols of each reel at a set of display positions. The game evaluation is also displayed by the first display module 624A.

The base game is a part of the game which is carried out each time the player makes a wager, typically irrespective of the wager, whereas the feature game will only be carried out when a trigger condition is met.

Accordingly, the base game controller also includes a trigger monitor 622C for determining whether a trigger condition has been met in respect of the game outcome, for example a specific combination of symbols.

In other embodiments, the trigger event may be, occurrence of a specific symbol in the game, purchased, be caused by another connected system, based on turnover etc. When the feature game is triggered control passes to the feature game controller 623.

Referring to Figure 8 there is shown a stand alone electronic gaming machine 800 for implementing such a gaming system. The gaming machine 800 comprises generally a cabinet 810 within which are mounted a first display 830 and a second display 840 and to the top of which is mounted a third display 850. The first and second displays 830, 840 are video displays whose content can be varied. The third display 850 is a physical display having six segments 851 to 856 which can lit up to indicate a current prize level.

The displays of the example shown in Figure 8 can be

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understood as corresponding to the first display 54A (display 830) the second display 54B (display 840) and the third display 54C (display 850) described in Figure 6.

The first stage of the feature game once it is triggered is for the display populator 623A to populate the wheel of prizes 847 shown in display area 840 in Figure 8 with a plurality of prizes. In this respect, the top award display position 841 of the wheel is predetermined and contains within it four different prize levels 842, 843, 844, 845. The top one of these prize levels 845 is illuminated to show that it is the current prize. These four prize levels subsequently lead onto the fifth to tenth prize level shown in the physical display 850 - i.e. prize levels 851 to 856 such that the order of prize levels is level runs from first level 842 to fourth level 845 and then from fifth level 851 to tenth level 856, such that there is provided a ladder display of prizes incrementing levels across two displays and in particularly across a video display 840 and a physical display 850.

The remaining segments of the wheel are populated by a player selecting various of the fire work objects shown in display 830. In this respect, display 830 incorporates a touch screen which forms of the part of the game play mechanism 56. The player touches various of the fire works and each one is animated as moving from the first display 830 to the second display 840 and landing in one of the prize award positions, typically moving clockwise from the level display position 841 until all the award display positions are filled. The prizes are award amounts in credits or an additional award referred to as the "hit the heights" award which corresponds to an award of one of the levels. As each firework is touched, it revels the prize which is to be awarded and then moves to the wheel.

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Accordingly, in the examples as illustrated in order to populate the display, each of the fireworks has an initial credit prize between 5 and 400 credits multiplied by the bet multiplier or there is a hit the heights symbol which corresponds to an award of the prize level. Accordingly these positions are populated by the display populator 623A in response to the player's operation of the game play mechanism 56. If the player does not make selections within a defined time period the display populator 623A automatically selects at random a set of fireworks and hence their prizes to populate the wheel display 840.

Once the display 840 has been populated, the feature game controller begins cycling through the awards by displaying a chaser light which moves around the outside circumference of the wheel. A person skilled in the art will appreciate that it would also be possible to display the wheel as moving relative to an indicator. Accordingly, in this embodiment the chaser light provides an indicator to show the current prize. Each time the award display 840 cycles through the current award, the award is incremented if it is incrementable. In the example, the "hit the heights" prize 846 remains the same and is not incremented itself but is indirectly incremented by incrementation of the level prize 841. Accordingly, various of the prizes will increment under control of the prize incrementer 623B based on the feature game rules 642. In the example, this involves the prize increasing by the initial amount each time it is cycled through. For example, if the prize was originally 400 credits will increment from 400 to 800 to 1200 credits etc. The current prizes are stored as incremental prize value 645 the prize involving the levels 841 increments differently. In that prize, it increments by progressing to the next level.

The second display module 624B of the display controller

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controls the second display 840 to update the prizes and/or the levels as the indicator chaser lights pass through the various positions to show that the award display is cycled through the various positions. If the ladder of prizes progresses beyond the fourth level 845, the third display module 624C of the display controller 624 lights up the fifth level 851 of the ladder of prizes display. The third display module 624C continues to the light up the relevant level as the prizes continue to increment.

The feature game controller 623 employs a random number generator 621 to determine when the cycling of the award display will stop. When the cycling is stopped, the award which is indicated by the chaser lights 847 is the current award is made to the player. Accordingly, in respect of the credit awards this will involve an award of the amount of credits currently shown and stored as incremental prize value data 645. This will be transferred to the win meter and then ultimately to the credit meter when the player indicates that they wish to take the prize and/or initiates another play of the game. If the prize is of one of the levels, a further sequence commences. For each of levels 1 to 4, there are defined prizes which are determined as a fixed number of credits multiplied by a bet multiplier. The bet multiplier is derived from the amount bet by the player in the base game. For example, level 1 may be 100 credits, level 2 may be 200 credits, and level 3 was 300 credits and level 4 is 100 credits, each multiplied by the bet multiplier.

In the embodiment, each of levels 5 to 10 involve some form of random determination to determine the size of the prize which is to be awarded. In level 5, a number of firework burst prizes involving a firework shown is exploding on the second display 840 are provided; each will take a value between 5 and 100 credits. Similarly,

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at level 6 there will be prizes between 10 and 200 credits. At level 7, prizes between 15 and 300 credits at level 8 prizes between 20 and 400 credits and at level 9 prizes between 25 and 100 credits.

At level 10, all of the awards at the preceding levels are made such that there will be a variance between 5 and 500 credits, that is, there will be more firework prizes revealed at this level hence, although some of the prizes are of lower value than at level 9 the total prize which is awarded will average over time as greater, providing a higher return to player.

The size of these awards are determined by random prize determiner 623C and accordance with the rules of the feature game 642 using the random number generator 621.

The method 700 of the embodiment as it applies to a triggered feature game is shown in Figure 7. After the feature game is triggered 705, the method involves populating 710 the award display and beginning to cycle 720 through the awards. The method involves determining whether a cycle through award has level 730. When it does have levels, a level incrementing step 740 is performed such that the method involves progressing through levels. In the embodiment shown in relation to Figures 6 and 8 this involves determining whether all levels on the wheel display have been incremented 741 and if the answer is no incrementing a level on the wheels 742 otherwise it involves incrementing a level on the ladder display 850.

When the prize award doesn't have levels it is determined 750 whether it has a prize value and if it is has a prize value this is incremented by the initial amounts 760. If it doesn't have a prize value such as "hit the heights" prize which relates to an award of the level prize, this step is bypassed. The method then involves stopping

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cycling 770 and making the indicated award 780.

While, in the embodiment the cycling award display advantageously occurs in a feature game, it need not necessarily occur in this context.

In some embodiments, an eligibility criteria may be applied for the player to be eligible for the feature game, for example that the player has made a certain sized wager, made an ante bet, selected all win lines, played sufficient games, or the player is a member of a loyalty program.

Further aspects of the method will be apparent from the above description of the gaming system. Persons skilled in the art will also appreciate that the method could be embodied in program code. The program code could be supplied in a number of ways, for example on a computer readable storage medium, such as a disc or a memory (for example, that could replace part of memory 103) or as a data signal (for example, by transmitting it from a server).

It will be understood to persons skilled in the art of the invention that many modifications may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention, in particular it will be apparent that certain features of embodiments of the invention can be employed to form further embodiments or need not be employed in all embodiments.

It is to be understood that, if any prior art is referred to herein, such reference does not constitute an admission that the prior art forms a part of the common general knowledge in the art in any country.

In the claims which follow and in the preceding

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description of the invention, 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.

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CLAIMS:

1. A method of gaming in a gaming system, comprising:

cycling through an award display on a display of the gaming system, the award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order on the display, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards;

incrementing each incrementable award which can be awarded in a subsequent cycle after the corresponding award display position has been cycled through in a current cycle;

stopping the cycling at one of the award display positions on the display; and

making the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one of the awards has a plurality of levels and incrementing the award comprises progressing to the next level.

3. A method as claimed in claim 2, wherein the award of at least one of the plurality of levels includes conducting a random determination to determine a size of a prize to be awarded.

4. A method as claimed in claim 3, wherein the award of a plurality of the levels includes conducting a random determination corresponding to the awarded level to determine a size of a prize to be awarded.

5. A method as claimed in any one of claims 2 to 4, comprising displaying the current level in an additional award display for at least some of the plurality levels.

6. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5,

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comprising displaying each award display position as a segment of a circle such that the award display has the appearance of a wheel.

7. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, comprising displaying the award display on a video display.

8. A method as claimed in claim 6 or claim 7 when dependent on claim 5, wherein the additional display comprises a ladder of at least a subset of the levels such that displaying the current level in the additional award display comprises indicating the current level of the ladder.

9. A method as claimed in any one of claims 6 to 8, wherein the additional display is a physical display.

10. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 9, comprising incrementing at least one of the awards by an amount corresponding to the initial amount of the award each time the award is incremented.

11. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 10, comprising selecting at least one of the awards and populating the award display based on the selected awards.

12. A method as claimed in claim 11, comprising:

providing an award selection display to a player comprising a plurality of user selectable objects associated with awards, the association with the award not being displayed;

receiving a player selection of an object; and

populating one of the award display positions with the award associated with the selected object.

13. A method as claimed in claim 11 or claim 12 when

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dependent on claim 2, comprising populating all but one of the award display positions with the selected awards and populating the final award display position with the award having a plurality of predefined levels and incrementing the award comprises progressing to the next predefined level.

14. A method as claimed in claim 13, wherein one of the selected awards is an indirectly incrementable award in that the award itself is not incremented but it results in an award of the incrementable award having a plurality of levels.

15. A method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 14, comprising cycling through the award display by displaying relative movement between an indicator and the award display positions, such that a current award display position is the award display position indicated by the indicator.

16. A method as claimed in claim 15, comprising determining where to stop the cycling by randomly selecting the amount by which the indicator will cycle relative to the award display.

17. A method as claimed in claim 15 or claim 16, comprising moving the indicator relative to the award display.

18. A method as claimed in claim 15 or claim 16, comprising moving the award display relative to the indicator.

19. A gaming system comprising:
a display; and
a game controller arranged to:
control the display to display an award display

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formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards;

control the display to display cycling through the award display;

increment each incrementable award which can be awarded in a subsequent cycle after the corresponding award display position has been cycled through in a current cycle;

stop the cycling at one of the award display positions; and

make the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

20. A gaming system as claimed in claim 19, wherein at least one of the awards has a plurality of levels and incrementing the award comprises progressing to the next level.

21. A gaming system as claimed in claim 20, comprising an additional award display for displaying the current level for at least some of the plurality levels.

22. A gaming system as claimed any one of claims 19 to 21, wherein the display for displaying the award display is a video display.

23. A gaming system as claimed in claim 21 or claim 22, wherein the additional display is a physical display.

24. A gaming system as claimed in any one of claims 19 to 23, wherein the display is a secondary display, the gaming system further comprises a primary display and the game controller is arranged conducting a base game on the primary display and display the award display on the secondary display in response to a trigger condition being

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met during play of the base game.

25. A game controller for a gaming system, the game controller arranged to:

control a display to display an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards;

control the display to display cycling through the award display;

increment each incrementable award which can be awarded in a subsequent cycle after the corresponding award display position has been cycled through in a current cycle;

stop the cycling with at one of the award display positions; and

make the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

26. An electronic gaming machine comprising:

a cabinet;

at least one input device mounted to the cabinet and operable to place a wager and initiate a play of a game;

a display mounted to the cabinet; and

a game controller operably connected to the display and the input device, the game controller disposed within the cabinet, the game controller comprising a processor and a memory storing instructions which when executed by the processor cause the game controller to:

control the display to display an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards;

control the display to display cycling through the award display;

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increment each incrementable award which can be awarded in a subsequent cycle after the corresponding award display position has been cycled through in a current cycle;

stop the cycling at one of the award display positions; and

make the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

27. A gaming system comprising:

means for controlling a display to display an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards;

means for controlling the display to display cycling through the award display;

means for incrementing each incrementable award which can be awarded in a subsequent cycle after the corresponding award display position has been cycled through in a current cycle;

means for stopping the cycling at one of the award display positions; and

means for making the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

28. A method of gaming comprising:

cycling through an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards and wherein at least one of the incrementable awards has a plurality of levels;

incrementing the at least one award with a plurality of levels while it can be awarded in a subsequent cycle by progressing to the next level;

stopping the cycling at one of the award display

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positions; and

making the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

29. A method as claimed in claim 28, wherein the award of at least one of the plurality of levels includes conducting a random determination to determine a size of a prize to be awarded.

30. A method as claimed in claim 29, wherein the award of a plurality of the levels includes conducting a random determination corresponding to the awarded level to determine a size of a prize to be awarded.

31. A gaming system comprising:

a display; and

a game controller arranged to:

control the display to cycle through an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of incrementable awards and wherein at least one of the incrementable awards has a plurality of levels;

increment the at least one award having a plurality of levels while it can be awarded in a subsequent cycle by progressing to the next level;

stop the cycling with at one of the award display positions; and

make the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

32. A game controller for a gaming system, the game controller arranged to:

control a display to cycle through an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, at least some of the display positions corresponding to a respective one of a plurality

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of incrementable awards and wherein at least one of the incrementable awards has a plurality of levels;

increment the at least one award having a plurality of levels while it can be awarded in a subsequent cycle by progressing to the next level;

stop the cycling at one of the award display positions; and

make the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

33. A method of gaming comprising:

cycling through an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, each award display position corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of awards and wherein at least one of the awards includes conducting a random determination to determine a size of a prize to be awarded;

stopping the cycling at one of the award display positions; and

making the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

34. A method as claimed in claim 33, comprising cycling through the award display by displaying relative movement between an indicator and the award display positions, such that a current award display position is the award display position indicated by the indicator.

35. A gaming system comprising:

a display; and

a game controller arranged to:

control the display to cycle through an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, each award display position corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of awards and wherein at least one of the awards includes

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conducting a random determination to determine a size of a prize to be awarded;

stop the cycling at one of the award display positions; and

make the award corresponding to the award display position at which the cycling is stopped.

36. A game controller for a gaming system, the game controller arranged to:

control the display to cycle through an award display formed of a plurality of award display positions arranged in a defined cyclical order, each award display position corresponding to a respective one of a plurality of awards and wherein at least one of the awards includes conducting a random determination to determine a size of a prize to be awarded;

stop the cycling with the indicator indicating one of the award display positions; and

make the award corresponding to the award display at which the cycling is stopped.

37. Computer program code which when executed implements the method of any one of claims 1 to 18, 28 to 30, 33 or 34.

38. A tangible computer readable medium comprising the computer program code of claim 37.

39. Transmitting the computer program code of claim 37.

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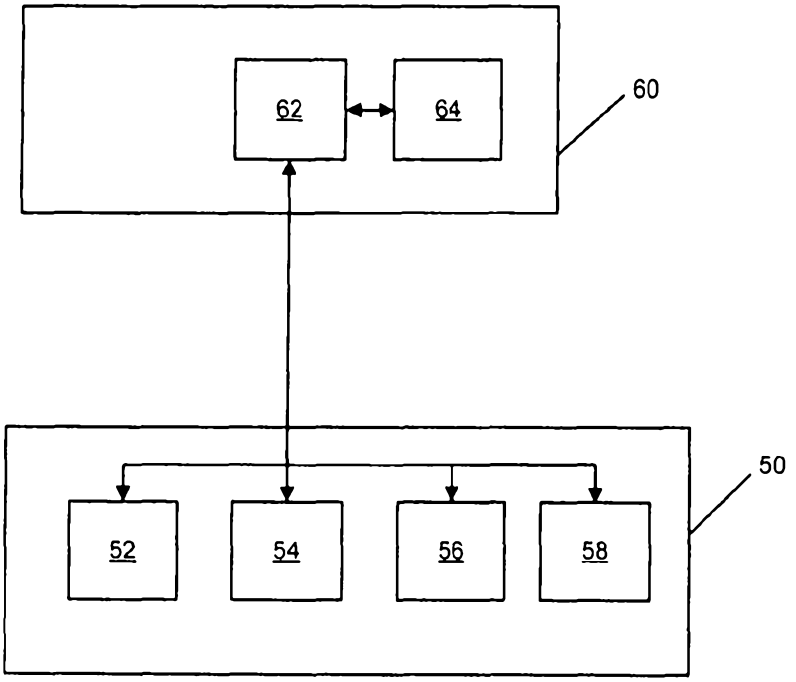

Figure 1

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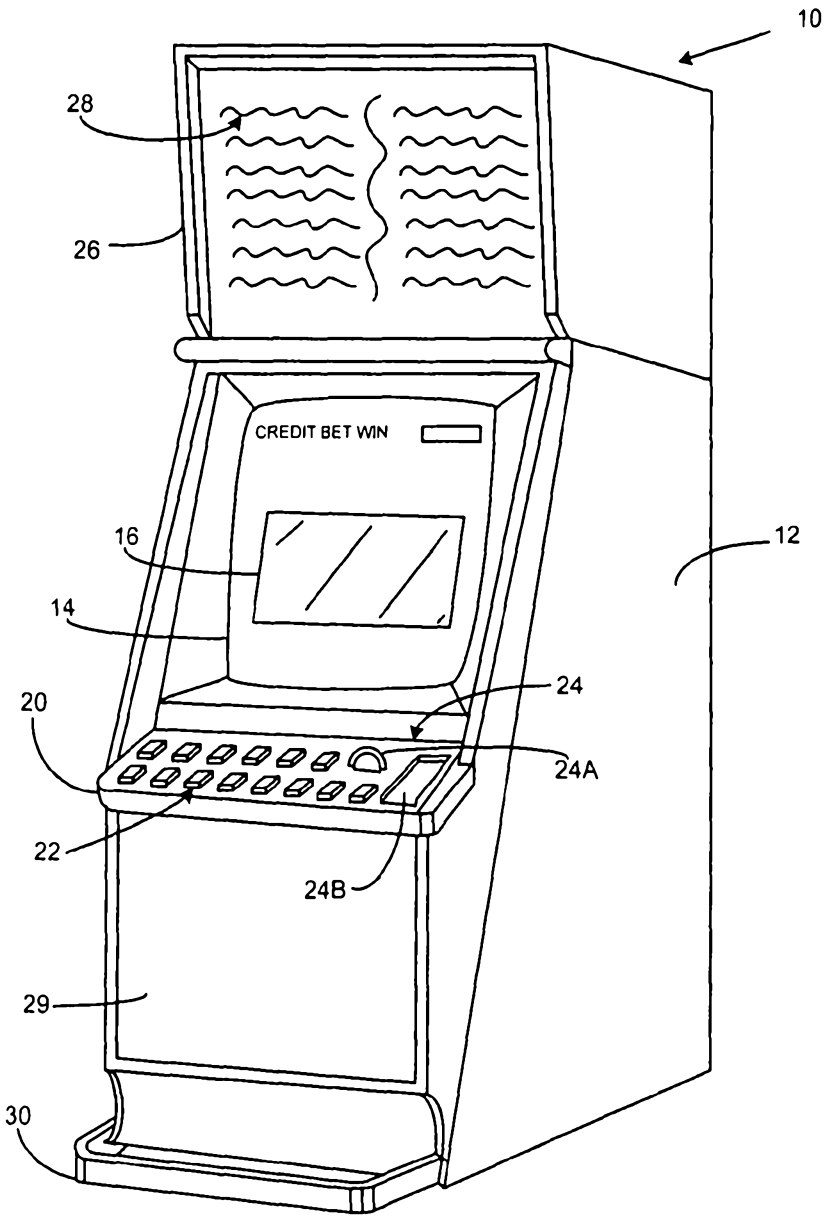

Figure 2

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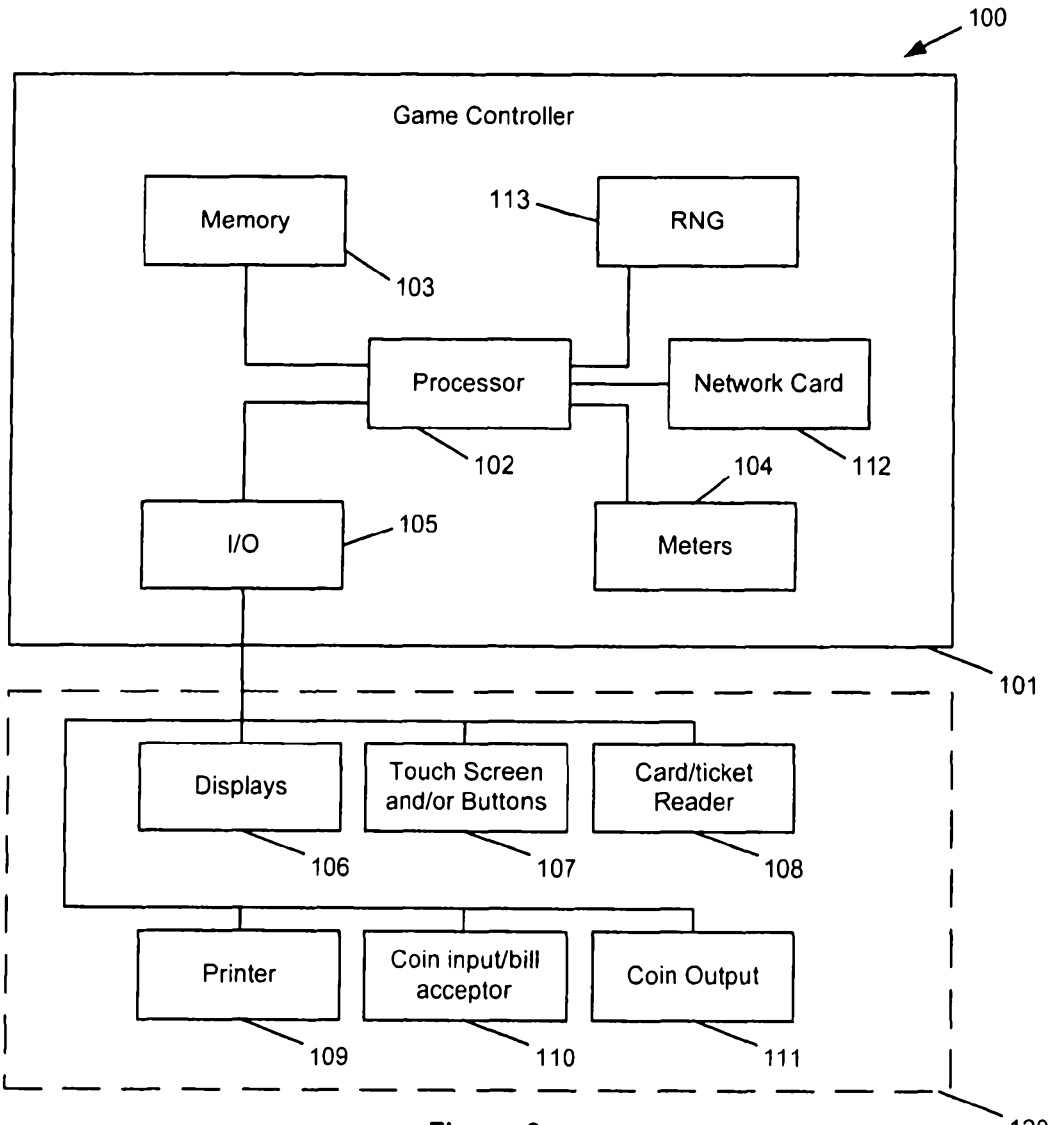

Figure 3

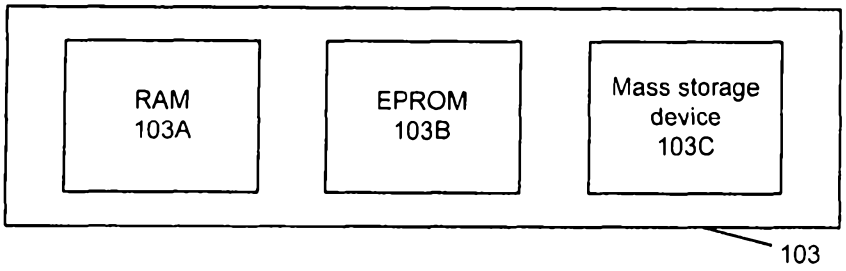

Figure 4

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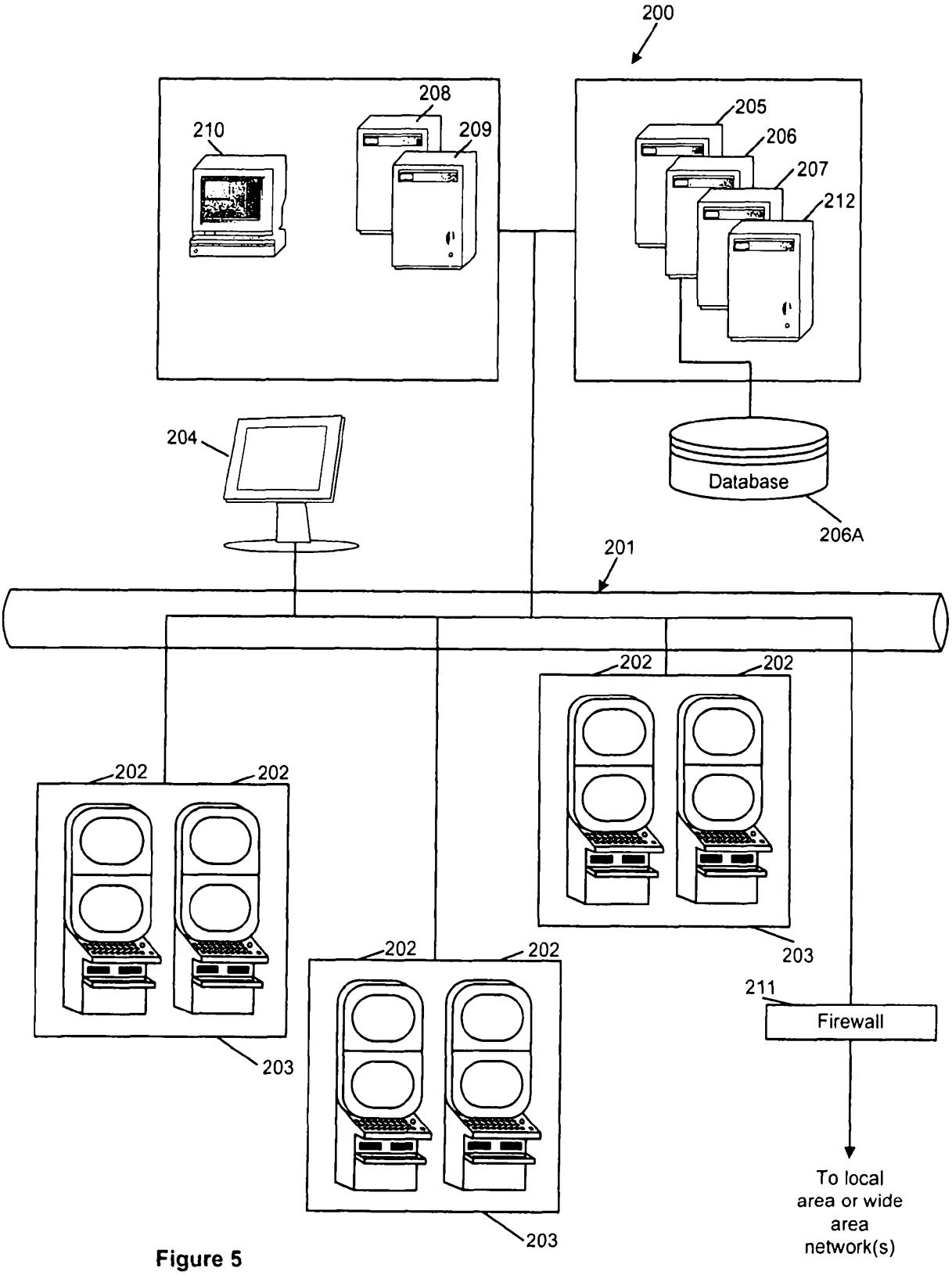

Figure 5

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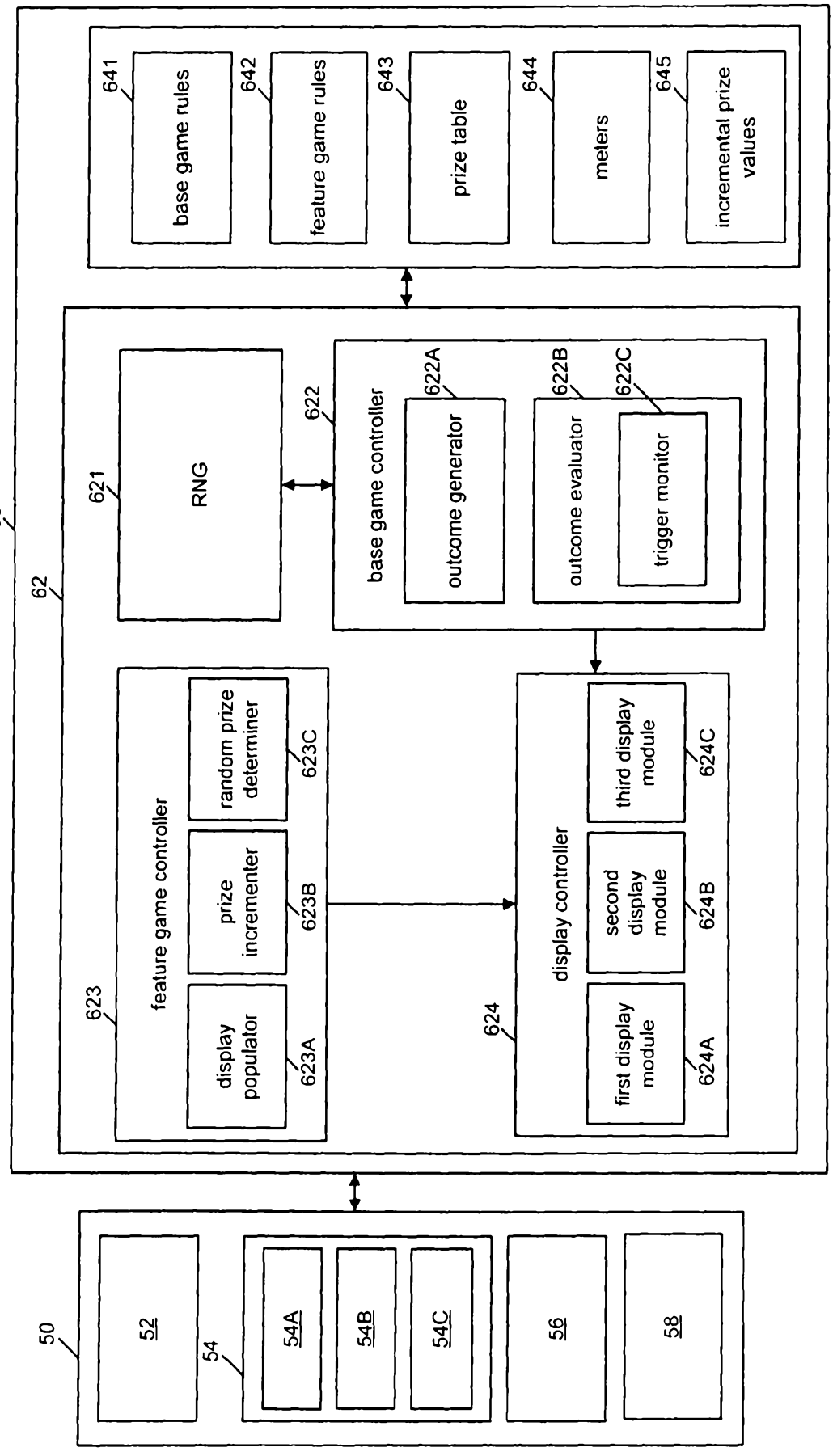

Figure 6

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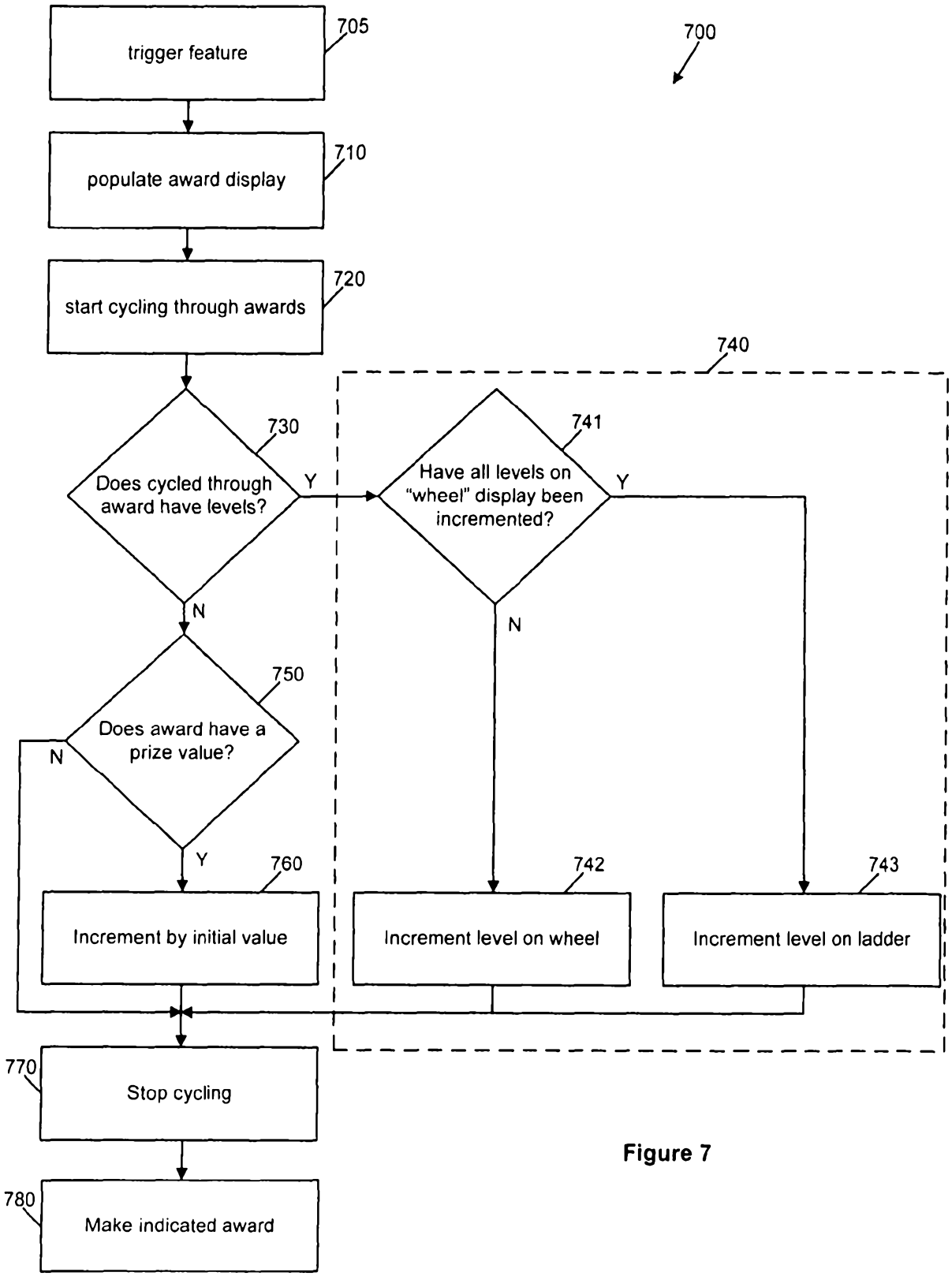

Figure 7

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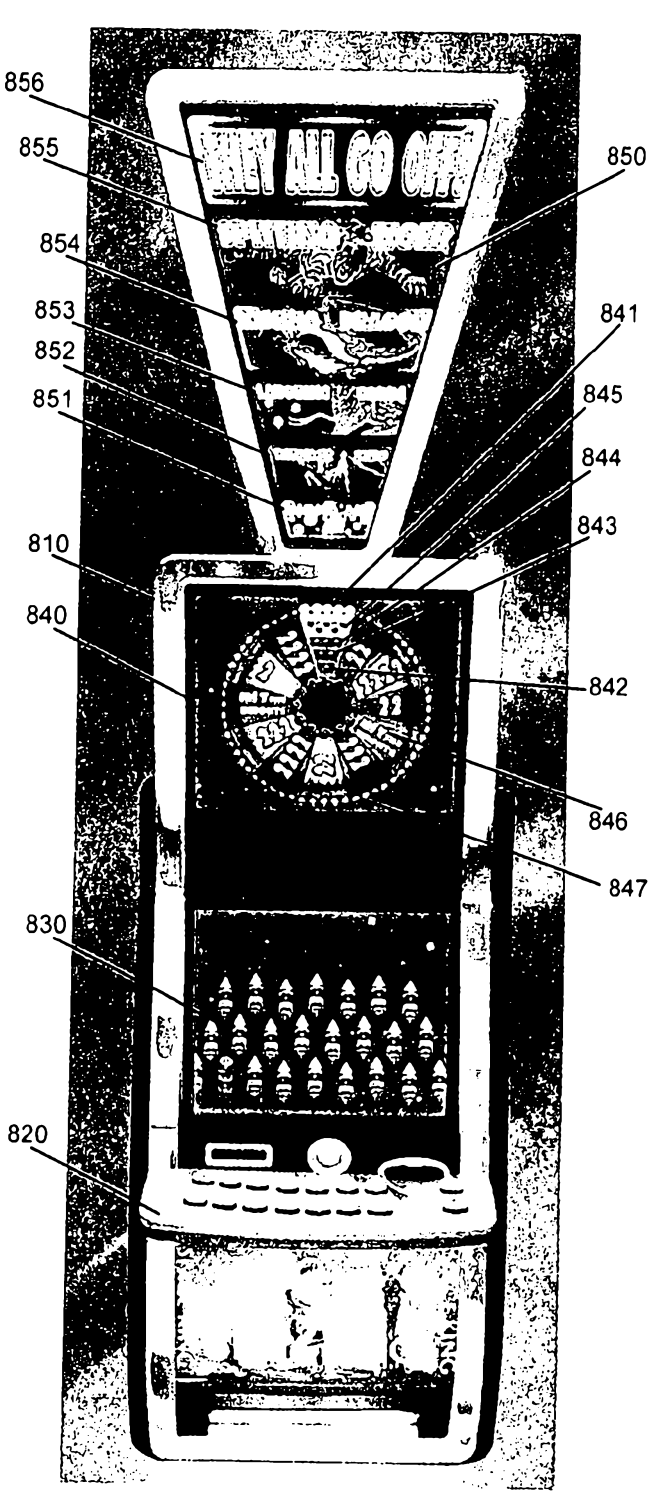

Figure 8