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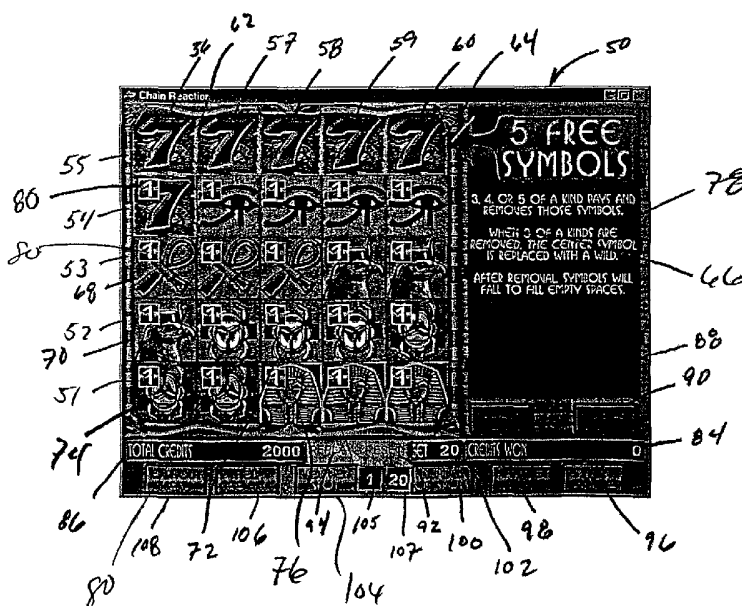
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: CHAIN REACTION GAME



(57) Abstract: A game (50), gaming machine apparatus and game method wherein game elements are assigned to a matrix of game element locations. Play is initiated by evaluating the game elements for predetermined transformative conditions, such as a match of game elements. If a transformative condition is found, the game elements are transformed with at least one being removed from the matrix. The remaining game elements are moved, if permitted, according to a movement methodology. The steps of evaluating, transforming, removing, and moving the remaining game elements are repeated so long as a transformation is subsequently available for continued gameplay.

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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US03/27103

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) : A63F 9/24
US CL : 463/20

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
U.S. : 463/20, 9, 16, 11, 17-19; 273/138.1, 139, 143R, 138.3, 307

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched
none

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
EAST, search terms: chain, reaction, game, transform, change, wild

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category * | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| X, P ----- Y, P | US 2003/0157981 A1 (MARKS et al.) 21 August 2003 (21.08.2003), entire document. | 1-4, 12-15, 52, 53, 55, 60, 61, 70, 74 |
| Y, P | US 2003/0054874 A1 (KAMINKOW) 20 March 2003 (20.03.2003), paragraphs 14, 43, 55, 85-86. | 5, 6, 16, 17, 54, 59 5, 6, 16, 17, 54, 59 |
| A | US 6,311,976 B1 (YOSELOFF et al.) 06 November 2001, entire document. | 1-6, 12-17, 52-55, 59-61, 70, 74 |

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

01 March 2004 (01.03.2004)

Date of mailing of the international search report

15 MAR 2004

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US03/27103

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of Item 1 of first sheet)

This international report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. Claim Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. Claim Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

3. Claim Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of Item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:
Please See Continuation Sheet

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.: 1-6, 12-17, 52-55, 59-61, 70 and 74

Remark on Protest The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
 No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

BOX II. OBSERVATIONS WHERE UNITY OF INVENTION IS LACKING

This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1. In order for all inventions to be examined, the appropriate additional examination fees must be paid.

Group I, claim(s) 1-65 and 70-74, drawn to a method for playing a game, and a video gaming machine.

Group II, claim(s) 66-69, drawn to a bonus for a game.

This application contains claims directed to more than one species of the generic invention labeled as Group I. These species are deemed to lack unity of invention because they are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

In order for more than one species to be examined, the appropriate additional examination fees must be paid. The species are as follows:

- a) Method of playing a game
- b) Method of playing a wagering game with payouts
- c) A game including a bonus

The claims are deemed to correspond to the species listed above in the following manner:

- a) Method of playing a game (1-6, 12-17, 52-55, 59-61, 70 and 74).
- b) Method of playing a wagering game with payouts (1/7-11, 1/26, 12/18-22, 12/27, 23-51, 52/56-58 and 71-73).
- c) A game including a bonus (52/62-65).

The following claim(s) are generic: 1, 12 and 52.

This International Searching Authority considers that the international application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention (Rules 13.1, 13.2, and 13.3) for the reasons indicated below:

The inventions listed as Groups I and II do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: The special technical feature of Group one is a method of playing a base game involving a matrix with game elements that are randomly assigned and transformed. The special technical feature of Group two is a bonus game that is capable of being played on any gaming machine with a variety of base games.

The species listed above do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, the species lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: Species a) has the special technical feature of A method of playing a base game. Species b) has the special technical feature of playing a wagering game with payouts. Species c) has the special technical feature of a bonus game. Consequently, the special technical feature of all three species is different.