

(19) **DANMARK**

(10) **DK/EP 2433269 T3**



(12) **Oversættelse af  
europæisk patentskrift**

Patent- og  
Varemærkestyrelsen

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- (51) Int.Cl.: **G 07 C 15/00 (2006.01)**
- (45) Oversættelsen bekendtgjort den: **2019-12-02**
- (80) Dato for Den Europæiske Patentmyndigheds bekendtgørelse om meddelelse af patentet: **2019-10-02**
- (86) Europæisk ansøgning nr.: **10721710.1**
- (86) Europæisk indleveringsdag: **2010-05-18**
- (87) Den europæiske ansøgnings publiceringsdag: **2012-03-28**
- (86) International ansøgning nr.: **EP2010003034**
- (87) Internationalt publikationsnr.: **WO2010133340**
- (30) Prioritet: **2009-05-18 DE 202009007113 U**
- (84) Designerede stater: **AL AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MK MT NL NO PL PT RO SE SI SK SM TR**
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- (54) Benævnelse: **ELEKTRONISK SPILANORDNING**
- (56) Fremdragne publikationer:  
**WO-A1-01/48712**  
**DE-A1- 19 502 613**  
**US-A- 6 024 640**  
**US-A1- 2003 162 588**  
**US-A1- 2006 223 618**



**DESCRIPTION**

[001] The present invention relates to an electronic gaming machine, in particular a lottery gaming machine, having a game server for controlling the game to which at least one gaming apparatus can be connected, wherein the game server has at least one game ticket block, preferably an electronic game ticket block, including a plurality of preferably electronic game tickets which are each individually characterized by a winning number combination, wherein the at least one gaming apparatus can be connected to a credit store associated with it which can be loaded by an input apparatus and including a ticket purchasing apparatus for purchasing a game ticket while reducing the credit stored in the credit store.

[002] Lottery gaming machines are known in various forms, also in electronic embodiments. Lottery gaming apparatus are shown, for example, in documents DE 295 16 968 U1 or US 5,119,295. EP 0 639 998 also shows a similar gaming apparatus. WO 01/48712 shows a lottery game apparatus in which tickets can be downloaded from a server for use on a game machine for a payout. Lottery winnings are credited to a creditor's credit card attributed to the user. The US 2003/0162588 shows a game device, which has credit and win meter. The document US 2006/0223618 shows a lottery game system in which a game ticket for different plays can be validated. Furthermore, document US Pat. No. 6,024,640 A shows an offline lottery system which generates game results associated with the purchase of tickets and stores them at a terminal at which the tickets can be redeemed.

[003] In the case of the named DE 295 16 968 U1, the lottery gaming machine is, however, limited to reading in a gaming ticket completed in writing by a scanner, to paying a stake in the form of cash or cashlessly by plastic money by a money input apparatus and to conversely paying out at least smaller winning amounts. The incentive to play and the entertainment value of the apparatus are, however, very limited. On the other hand, the data management, the determination of the winning lottery tickets and the display and paying out of the winnings are complicated since as a rule for this purpose the data read in by scanner have to be transformed, the winning numbers or symbols have to be checked separately and associated with the tickets or players and the paying out can optionally only be made with a long time delay.

[004] It is therefore the underlying object of the present invention to provide an improved gaming machine of the named type which avoids disadvantages of the prior art and further develops said prior art in an advantageous manner. A draw of lottery winnings should preferably be achieved which is simple to process from a technical data aspect and has a high security against abuse while realizing a high incentive to play and a high entertainment value.

[005] This object is achieved in accordance with the invention by an electronic gaming machine in accordance with claim 1. Preferred embodiments of the invention are the subject of the dependent claims.

[006] It is therefore proposed to feed a gaming device provided at the gaming apparatus from different credit stores and winnings stores and in so doing optionally to use the same data of only one game ticket as the basis over a plurality of game rounds - depending on the course of the game. On the one hand, an improved, simplified data storage and data transfer is achieved with a nevertheless high incentive to play, wherein the gaming apparatus at which the draw of the winnings can be carried out can advantageously be indirectly or directly connected to a central game server in which the winning numbers or symbols associated with a game ticket to be purchased are stored. On the other hand, the development of a player's already used stake and his winnings made is displayed more clearly for the player. In accordance with the invention, the at least one gaming machine has a gaming device which can be actuated in dependence on a course of a game while using as the basis the data of the same game ticket in a plurality of game rounds from the credit store and then from a winnings store. If winnings are made in the first game, which can be started by and/or after purchasing a game ticket, a game round can again be started by staking these winnings or a portion thereof - in particular without reducing the credit in the credit store - while using as the basis the data of the same game ticket, whereby the data management is simplified without this having to be achieved by losses in the incentive to play. If winnings are again made in this respect or initial winnings are not used up, further game rounds can optionally be started from the winnings store, with the initially purchased game ticket or the winning symbols associated with it being able to be used further. If, in contrast, a loss is made in the first game round or if the initial winnings are lost in the further rounds, a further game ticket can be purchased while reducing the credit store and its new winning symbols are then used as the basis for the further game.

[007] The gaming device, which can be actuated after and/or by the purchase of a game ticket held by the game server and which can be connected to a winnings store for storing winnings as well as to a display apparatus for displaying winnings, is advantageously  
5 designed such that it can only be actuated again on the basis of the same game ticket on achieving a win.

[008] In this respect, the gaming device is advantageously connectable to a winning symbol generator for allocating a winning symbol combination, with a win control  
10 apparatus being provided for the automatic comparison of the allocated winning symbol combination with the winning symbol combination of the purchased game ticket and decreasing, increasing, locking and/or releasing the winnings stored in the winnings store by the first gaming device in dependence on the comparison of the winning symbols. If  
15 the gaming device is actuated after or by the purchase of a winning ticket, the gaming device writes any winnings achieved to the named winnings store. If, however, the credit released from the credit store for the purchase of the game ticket and thus activated for the game is wholly or partly lost by the gaming device, no winnings or only reduced winnings are naturally stored in the named winnings store so that a further game round using the purchased game ticket is blocked or is only made possible with a lower stake. If,  
20 however, winnings are stored and/or generated in the named winnings store by the gaming device, the gaming device is again activated for the already used game ticket so that the named gaming device can again be brought into interaction with the winning symbol generator to generate a winning symbol combination with reference to which the win control device increases, decreases, blocks, deletes and/or activates the winnings  
25 value stored in the winnings store. Alternatively, to simplify the data transfer, a plurality of winning symbol combinations can advantageously also already be input by the winning symbol generator in the first game and are then usable for the optionally activated further game rounds on the basis of the same game ticket for determining the result of the game in the further games activated from the winnings store.

30 [009] In this respect, in an advantageous further development of the invention, the gaming device of the gaming apparatus can be designed differently, can in particular be controlled in different manners, with it having different control elements and/or being able to have a different display apparatus. The gaming device can in particular be designed as a

reel gaming unit which can be controlled by a random generator and/or by a manually actuable control apparatus, in particular such that the stopping of the rotating reels is effected automatically in a randomly controlled manner and/or can be triggered solely or additionally by manual actuation of a brake or the like. The gaming device can, in a further development of the invention, also be designed as a lottery gaming unit, in particular as a ticket gaming unit, which is preferably actuable by a manual input apparatus, optionally alternatively or additionally also able to be set into motion automatically, in particular in dependence on a writing of the winnings store of the first gaming device.

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[0010] In a further development of the invention, the gaming device can also have a plurality of differently designed gaming units which can be actuated in different game rounds and/or are connected either only to the credit store or only to the winnings store such that different gaming units can be used for playing different game rounds.

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[0011] The winning symbol generator and the win control apparatus are provided in a decentralized manner at the gaming apparatus itself, which admittedly makes manipulations directly at the gaming apparatus easier, but on the other hand, so-to-say, prevents a large central manipulation for a plurality of gaming apparatus, in particular when a player making manipulation attempts does not know in which gaming apparatus these components are accommodated and/or when each gaming apparatus has its own winning symbol generator and/or its own win control apparatus.

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[0012] The communication between the gaming apparatus and the previously named game server at which the game tickets are held can generally be of different designs. In accordance with an advantageous embodiment of the invention, the at least one gaming apparatus can be directly connected to the central game server, preferably via a remote data connection so that the game server can be held at any desired location independently of the installation location of the gaming apparatus.

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[0013] In a preferred further development of the invention, the at least one gaming apparatus can also only be indirectly connected to the central game server and/or can buy a game ticket held and/or generated by the central game server and can read in the winning symbol combination associated therewith. A group server to which the

gaming apparatus is connected, preferably via a local network or a local network line, can in particular be interposed between the at least one gaming apparatus and the named game server. The named group server itself can in turn be connected to the central game server via a remote data line, optionally also in combination with further group servers via a global network or a network line. In a further development of the invention, the group server can be installed in a casino or at a gambling site in which a plurality of gaming apparatus are connected to the named group server. The group server can in turn then communicate with the central game server which is, for example, held by a gaming apparatus manufacturer at a location separate from the casino.

10

[0014] If a master game server and a group server which is a slave thereof are present, the memory structures in the different servers can advantageously be of different designs. The memory structure in which the game tickets and the winning symbol combinations associated with them are stored can in particular have different characteristics.

15

[0015] In a further development of the invention, the game server can hold, in one or more lottery ticket stores, a plurality of game ticket series which each include a plurality of game ticket blocks, preferably electronic game ticket blocks, which in turn include a respective plurality of different game tickets, preferably electronic game tickets, with which a respective winning symbol combination is associated.

20

[0016] When an interposed group server is used, a game ticket block distributor is advantageously provided which selects a respective game ticket block from the game series which are stored in the master game server and associates them with a local group server so that only one game ticket block is held in this local group server from each of the game ticket series of the master game server and the gaming apparatus connected at the local group servers can then download their game tickets from them. In a further development of the invention, a plurality of game ticket blocks can be held electronically in the local group server which, however, originate from different game ticket series which are held in the master game server.

25

30

[0017] The required number of held winning number combinations can be reduced while still ensuring a sufficiently long and intense game operation in a casino by such a structuring of the game ticket storage on different servers and by the association of the game

ticket blocks from different series with a local server. In addition, the determination of whether a win is present or not can be streamlined in time since the number of winning symbol combinations to be compared can be reduced.

5 [0018] The configuration of the previously described game rounds which can be activated by a stake from the winnings store can generally differ with respect to the actuation and procedure control. In accordance with an advantageous embodiment of the invention, after the making of a win, the gaming device can only permit one additional game round or, alternatively, also a plurality of game rounds with which further wins correlated with  
10 the winning symbol combination of an already purchased game ticket can be drawn. In a further development of the invention, the gaming device has for this purpose a game round control means for controlling the number of game rounds which can be activated by a win from the first game device, with the named game round control means advantageously being able to work in dependence on different input signals. The number of game rounds  
15 can in particular be controlled in dependence on the number of purchased game tickets and/or in dependence on the credit held in the credit store and/or in dependence on the winnings stored in the winnings store. The named game control means can advantageously simultaneously take account of at least two of the named parameters and automatically determine the number of possible game rounds in dependence hereon.

20 [0019] In a further development of the invention, the gaming apparatus furthermore has, alternatively or additionally to the named game round control means, a stake control means for controlling the winnings of the first gaming device staked for a game of the second gaming device. This stake control means preferably has a manual input button  
25 which allows a manual determination of the amount of the stake. Alternatively or additionally, the input control means can also have a stake control module which can be controlled by the previously named game round control means in order automatically to increase the stake in dependence on the number of determined game rounds for the same game ticket, in particular such that an ever higher portion of the game winnings of the  
30 gaming device stored in the winnings stores is staked with further game rounds.

[0020] The invention will be explained in more detail in the following with reference to a preferred embodiment and associated drawings. There are shown in the drawings:

Fig. 1: a schematic representation of an electronic gaming machine having a



plurality of gaming apparatus, a local group server and a central game server higher ranking than it:

Fig. 2: a schematic representation of the electronic gaming machine similar to  
5 Fig. 1 in a design in accordance with which a plurality of local group servers are connected to a central game server, with in turn a plurality of gaming apparatus being connected to each local group server; and

Fig. 3: a sectional view of one of the gaming apparatus from the preceding  
10 Figures which shows the display apparatus of the first gaming device and the display apparatus of the second gaming device.

[0021] In the embodiment drawn in Fig. 1, the gaming machine 1 includes a central game  
server 2 which has a central database 3 or storage device in which a plurality of game  
15 ticket series 1, 2 ... n are stored of which each includes a plurality of game ticket blocks a, b ... n. Each of these game ticket blocks a, b ... n includes a plurality of electronic game tickets aa, bb, cc ... nn. A winning symbol combination which is held and/or generated in the named game server 2 is associated with each of these electronic game tickets aa, bb, cc ... nn. In this respect, at least within one game ticket block a, b, c ... n, all collected game  
20 tickets aa, bb, cc ... nn can advantageously be provided with an individual winning symbol combination, with this, however, not being an absolute requirement.

[0022] A plurality of local group servers 4 can be connected to the game server 2,  
preferably via a remote data line, and/or a remote data transfer channel and/or the network  
25 line of a global network. As Fig. 1 shows, only one single local group server 4 can also be connected to the game server 2, whereas in accordance with Fig. 2 a plurality of such local group servers 4 are connected to the game server 2.

[0023] The local group server 4 in this respect includes a local data store whose contents  
30 can be changed by communication with the master game server 2. A set of game ticket blocks can in particular be associated with the local group server 4 by a game ticket distributor which is advantageously accommodated in the central game server 2, with three different game ticket blocks a, b, c which originate from different game ticket series which are held in the master game server 2 being associated with the local group server 4 in the

embodiment in accordance with Fig. 1. As Fig. 1 shows, the electronically formed game ticket blocks a, b and c in the local group server 4 are each provided with a plurality of game tickets aa, bb, cc ... nn.

5 [0024] A plurality of gaming apparatus 5 designed as stand-alone apparatus are connected via local network lines to the local group server 4, for example in a casino or in a gambling site, so that each gaming apparatus 5 can buy game tickets from the store of game tickets aa, bb, cc ... nn stored on the group server 4.

10 [0025] A gaming machine 5 for this purpose has, in accordance with the drawn embodiment, a credit store 6 which can be loaded, for example, by inserting coins or bills or alternatively by the input of plastic money or also jetons or winning tickets or credit tickets. If the credit store 6 is sufficiently filled, a game ticket can be bought from the group server 4 at the respective gaming apparatus 5 via a purchase button 7, with its  
15 winning symbol combination advantageously being downloaded and buffered in a storage module of the gaming apparatus 5.

[0026] A gaming device 8 of the gaming apparatus 5 is set in motion by buying a game ticket or also by subsequent actuation of a start button, said gaming device being  
20 designed as a reel gaming unit 9 in the drawn embodiment. As Fig. 3 shows, the reel gaming unit 6 includes a reel display device 10 which is divided in the embodiment shown into a plurality of rows and columns and can be designed in the form of mechanical reels, but preferably also in the form of a display for the electronic display of the gaming reels.

25 [0027] The gaming reels which are shown on the reel display unit 10 can be stopped or their stopping procedure can be influenced by a random generator and/or by a manually actuatable stop button.

[0028] If winnings are made on actuating the reel gaming unit 9, they are written into a  
30 winnings store 11 in dependence on which at least one further game round can be activated without buying a new game ticket by a controller connected to the gaming devices 8, in particular by staking at least a portion of the winnings from the winnings store 11. In the drawn embodiment, in this respect the winning symbol combination or game ticket number is displayed in a winning symbol field 15 and the status of the credit

store 6 is displayed in a credit field 12. The number of the extra rounds played and/or actuable from the winnings store are displayed in a game round field 13, with the winnings made being able to be displayed in a winnings field 20 and the stake in a stake field 21.

5

[0029] In the drawn embodiment, the gaming device 8 is actuable by a manual actuation apparatus 17 which can, for example, be formed as a touch screen, for example such that the displayed game rounds are touched by a finger to start a game round.

10 [0030] If the gaming device 8 is actuated, a winning symbol generator 18 is controlled to generate a winning symbol combination. In the Fig. 2, the winning symbol generator 18 is accommodated in the master game server 2, however, according to the invention the winning symbol generator 18 is accommodated in the gaming apparatus 5.

15 [0031] The winning symbol combination generated by the winning symbol generator 18 is read in by the gaming apparatus 5 and compared there by a win control device 19 with the winning symbol combination associated with the purchased game ticket. If the lottery number of the purchased game ticket was drawn, the winnings store 11 or its contents are increased or multiplied accordingly. If, however, a "blank" is drawn, the game round  
20 display 16 is decreased and the winnings held in the winnings store 11 are decreased or deleted. It is understood that the game round display is also accordingly decreased in the case of a win.

[0032] After making a win, it, or a portion thereof, can be consumed from the winnings  
25 store 11 by various extra chances, whereby wins can again be made. This can be done in one or more additional game rounds, which takes place on the basis of the already purchased game ticket.

[0033] If the activated number of game rounds is decreased to zero or played out, a new  
30 game ticket has to be bought to be able to play again.

**PATENTKRAV**

1. Elektronisk spilordination, især lotteriapparat, med en spilserver (2) til styring af spillet, som har mindst en, helst elektronisk, spil kuponblok (a, b, c ... n) omfattende et flertal af helst elektroniske spil kuponer (aa, bb, cc ... nn), som hver især er tildelt en
- 5 gevinstsymbolkombination, derudover med mindst et spilapparat (5), hvortil spilserveren (2) kan forbindes direkte eller indirekte, og med en kredithukommelse (6) og en gevinsthukommelse (11) associeret med spilapparatet, hvor spilapparatet (5) har en indgangsordination, via hvilken kredithukommelsen (6) kan indlæses, en kuponkøbeanordning (7) til køb af en spil kupon med en gevinstsymbolkombination, mens kreditten gemt i
- 10 kredithukommelsen (6) reduceres, og en gevinstspilordination (8), som er forbundet med en gevinstsymbolgenerator (18) tilvejebragt ved spilapparatet (5) til generering af en gevinstsymbolkombination, til en gevinststyreanordning (19) ligeledes tilvejebragt ved spilapparatet (5) til sammenligning af gevinstsymbolkombinationen genereret af gevinstsymbolgeneratoren (18) med gevinstsymbolkombinationen på spil kuponen samt med
- 15 gevinsthukommelsen (11) for at gemme gevinster bestemt afhængigt af sammenligningen, hvor spilapparatet (5) er konfigureret til at
- reducere kredithukommelsen (6) ved køb af en spil kupon,
  - tillade gentaget betjening af gevinstspilordinationen (8) i en anden spilrunde med samme spil kupon, hvis der i første spilrunde er opnået gevinst med nævnte spil kupon,
- 20
- generere en første gevinstsymbolkombination ved hjælp af gevinstsymbolgeneratoren (18) i en første spilrunde og tilføre den til gevinstspilordinationen (8) og sammenligne den med gevinstsymbolkombinationen på spil kuponen ved hjælp af gevinststyreanordningen (19) og øge gevinsthukommelsen (11), hvis der opnås gevinst, og
  - generere en anden gevinstsymbolkombination ved hjælp af
- 25 gevinstsymbolgeneratoren (18) i en anden spilrunde, mens gevinsthukommelsen (11) reduceres, og tilføre nævnte anden gevinstsymbolkombination til gevinstspilordinationen (8) og sammenligne den med gevinstsymbolkombinationen på nævnte spil kupon ved hjælp af gevinststyreanordningen (19) og øge gevinsthukommelsen (11), hvis der opnås gevinst,
- således at gevinstspilordinationen (8) kun kan betjenes en gang, mens dataene fra
- 30 samme spil kupon bruges som basis med kredit fra kredithukommelsen (6), og dataene fra samme spil kupon kan bruges flere gange kun som basis, mens gevinsthukommelsen (11) reduceres.

2. Spilanordning ifølge foregående krav, hvor spilanordningen (8) er konstrueret som valespilenhed (9), som kan styres af en tilfældighedsgenerator og/eller af en styreanordning, som kan betjenes manuelt.
3. Spilanordning ifølge et af foregående krav, hvor gevinstspilanordningen (8) har et flertal af forskelligt konstruerede spilenheder, som kan betjenes i forskellige spilrunder og/eller kan forbindes enten kun med kredithukommelsen (6) eller kun med gevinsthukommelsen (11), således at forskellige spilenheder kan bruges til at spille forskellige spilrunder.
4. Spilanordning ifølge et af foregående krav, hvor mindst et spilapparat (5) er forbundet direkte med spilsserveren (2) helst via en fjern dataledning.
5. Spilanordning ifølge et af kravene 1 til 3, hvor det mindst ene spilapparat (5) er forbundet indirekte med spilsserveren (2), mens en lokal gruppeserver (4) mellemkobles.
6. Spilanordning ifølge foregående krav, hvor det mindst ene spilapparat (5) ved hjælp af en lokal netværksledning er forbundet med gruppeserveren (4), som er forbundet med spilsserveren (2) via en fjern dataledning og/eller netværksledning i et globalt netværk.
7. Spilanordning ifølge et af foregående krav, hvor spilsserveren (2) i en eller flere lotterikuponhukommelser har et flertal af spil kuponserier hver især med et flertal af helst elektroniske spil kuponblokke (a, b, c ... n), som igen omfatter et flertal af helst elektroniske spil kuponer (aa, bb, cc ... nn).
8. Spilanordning ifølge foregående krav kombineret med krav 5 eller 6, hvor en spil kupon distributor tilvejebringes for at associere spil kuponer fra spilsserveren (2) med en eller flere gruppeservere (4), således at, i en gruppeserver (4), gemmes og/eller holdes kun en spil kupon blok (a, b, c ... n) omfattende et flertal af spil kuponer (aa, bb, cc ... nn) fra hver spil kuponserie.
9. Spilanordning ifølge et af foregående krav, hvor mindst et spilapparat (5) har separate visningsanordninger (10; 14, 15, 16) for kreditten gemt i kredithukommelsen (8) og for gevinster gemt i gevinsthukommelsen (11).
10. Spilanordning ifølge et af foregående krav, hvor gevinstspilanordningen (8) har en indsatsstyreanordning til styring af gevinster indstillet for et spil i den anden spilrunde eller for hver yderligere spilrunde, hvor helst den nævnte indsatsstyreanordning har en manuel indtastningsknap og/eller et indsatsstyremodul, som kan styres af spilrundestyreanordningen til automatisk forøgelse af indsatsen afhængigt af antallet af aktiverede spilrunder, som kan forsynes fra gevinsthukommelsen (11).

Fig. 1

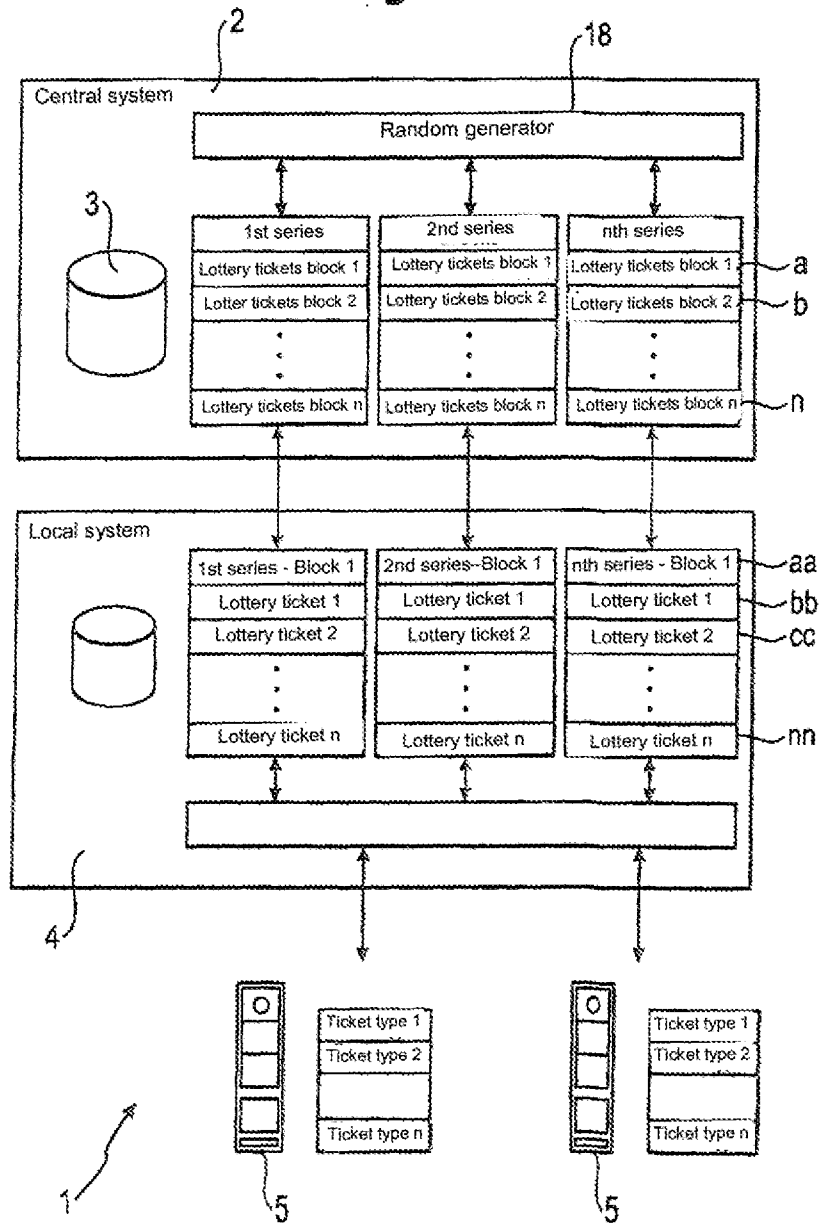


Fig. 2

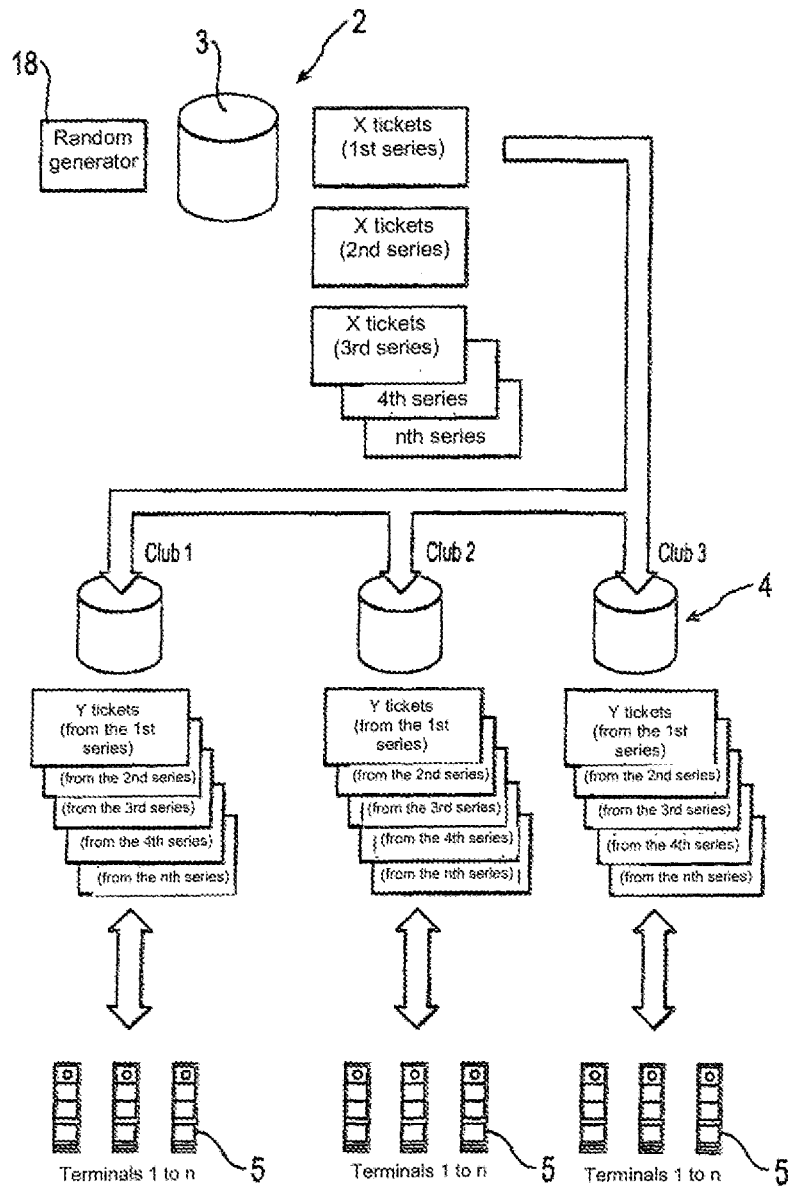


Fig. 3

