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(54) **METHOD OF GAMING, A GAMING SYSTEM AND A GAME CONTROLLER**

(76) Inventor: **William George Cormack**, Dural (AU)

Correspondence Address:
MCANDREWS HELD & MALLOY, LTD
500 WEST MADISON STREET, SUITE 3400
CHICAGO, IL 60661

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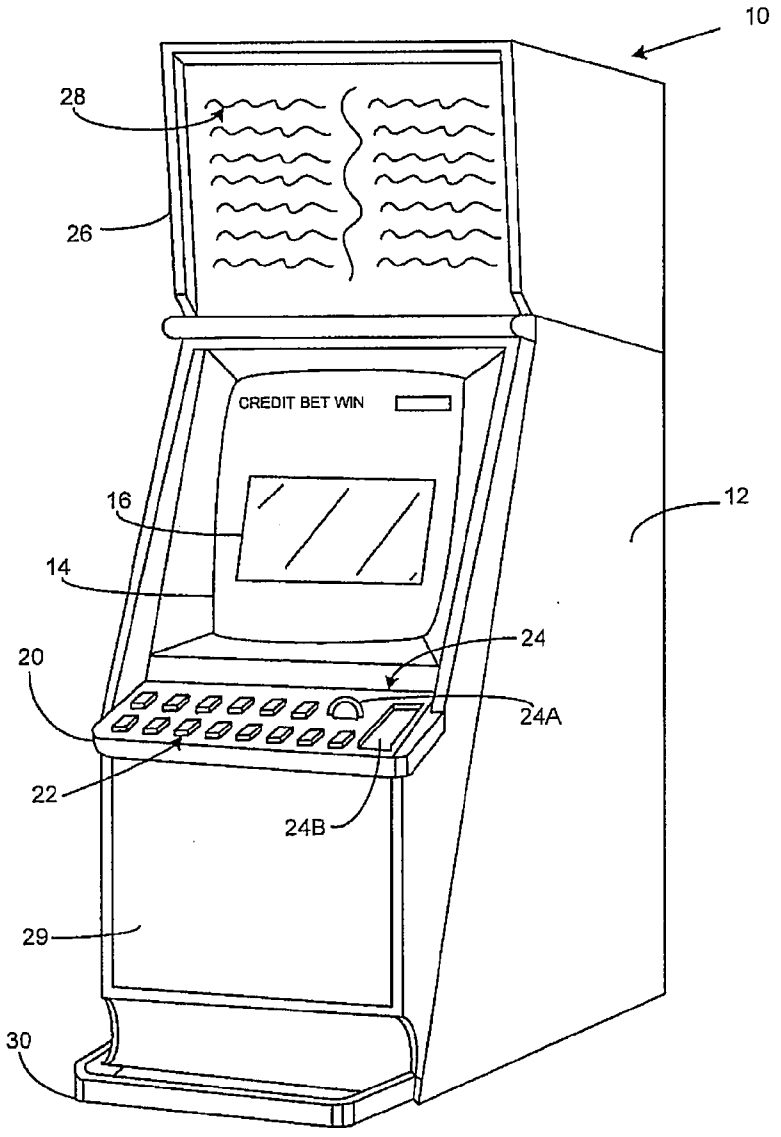
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method of gaming includes: receiving an initiate play instruction from a player selected from a plurality of initiate play instructions; generating a game outcome in response to receipt of the initiate play instruction, generation of the game outcome including selecting a plurality of symbols for display in a set of display positions corresponding to a plurality of spinning reels set side by side; and evaluating the game outcome by evaluating the symbols at least two different combinations of display positions in accordance with at least one game rule, each combination consisting of one display position from each reel and the same evaluation being performed irrespective of the received initiate play instruction.



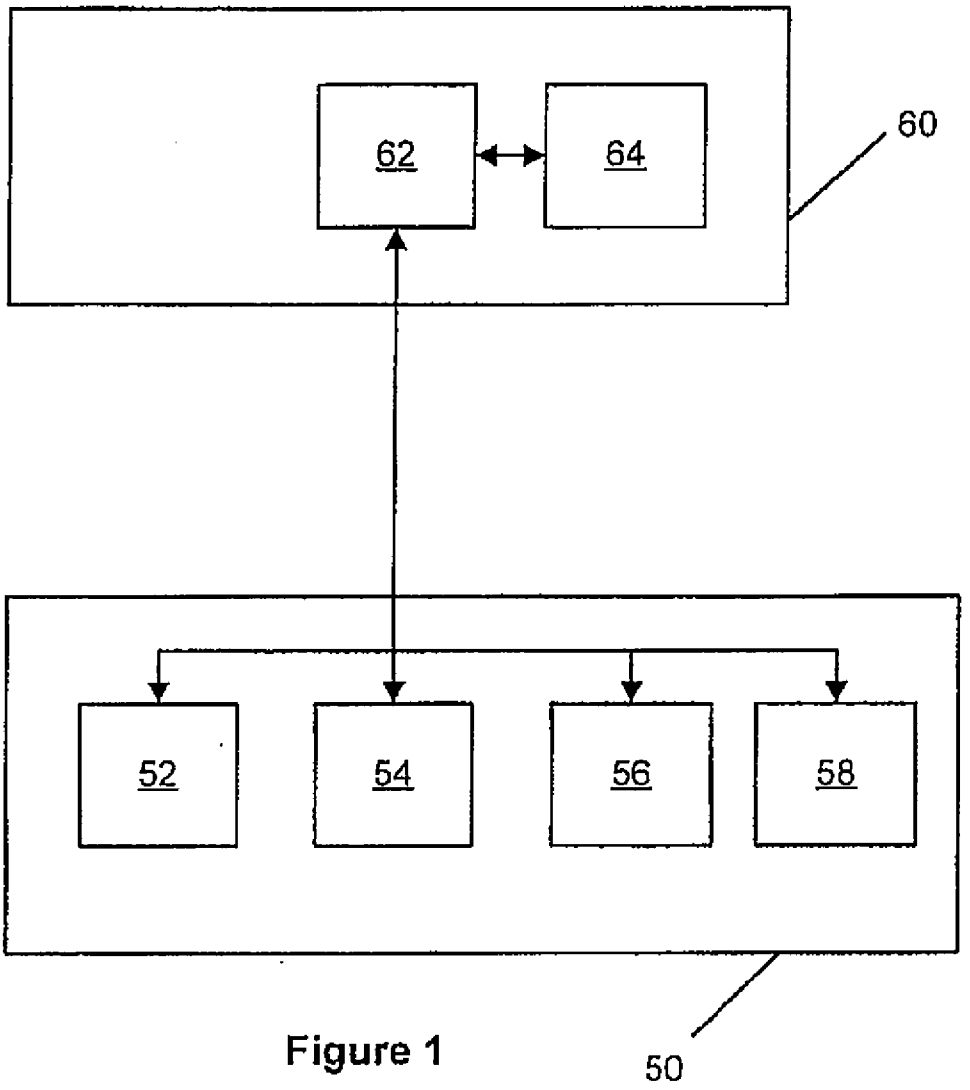


Figure 1

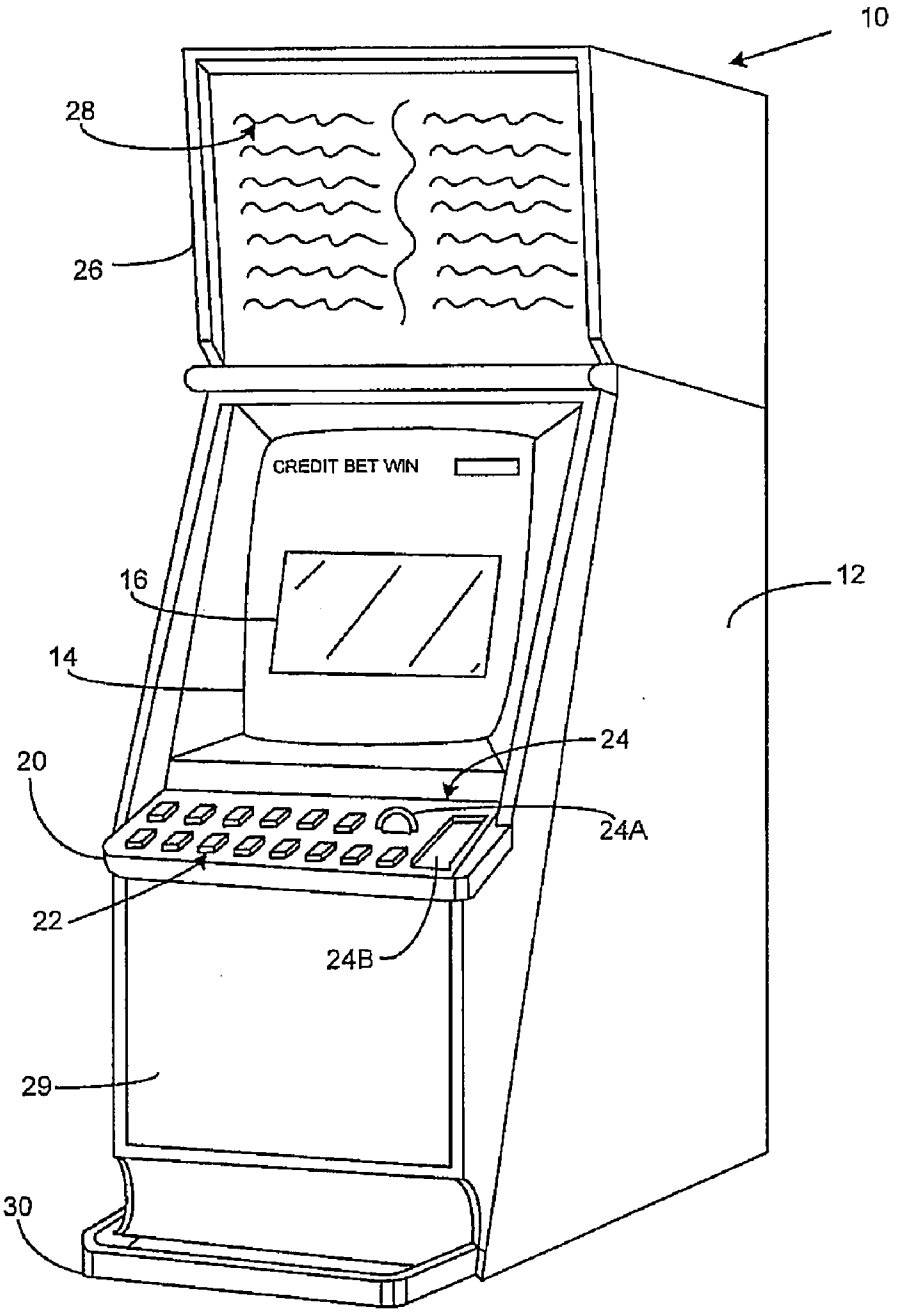


Figure 2

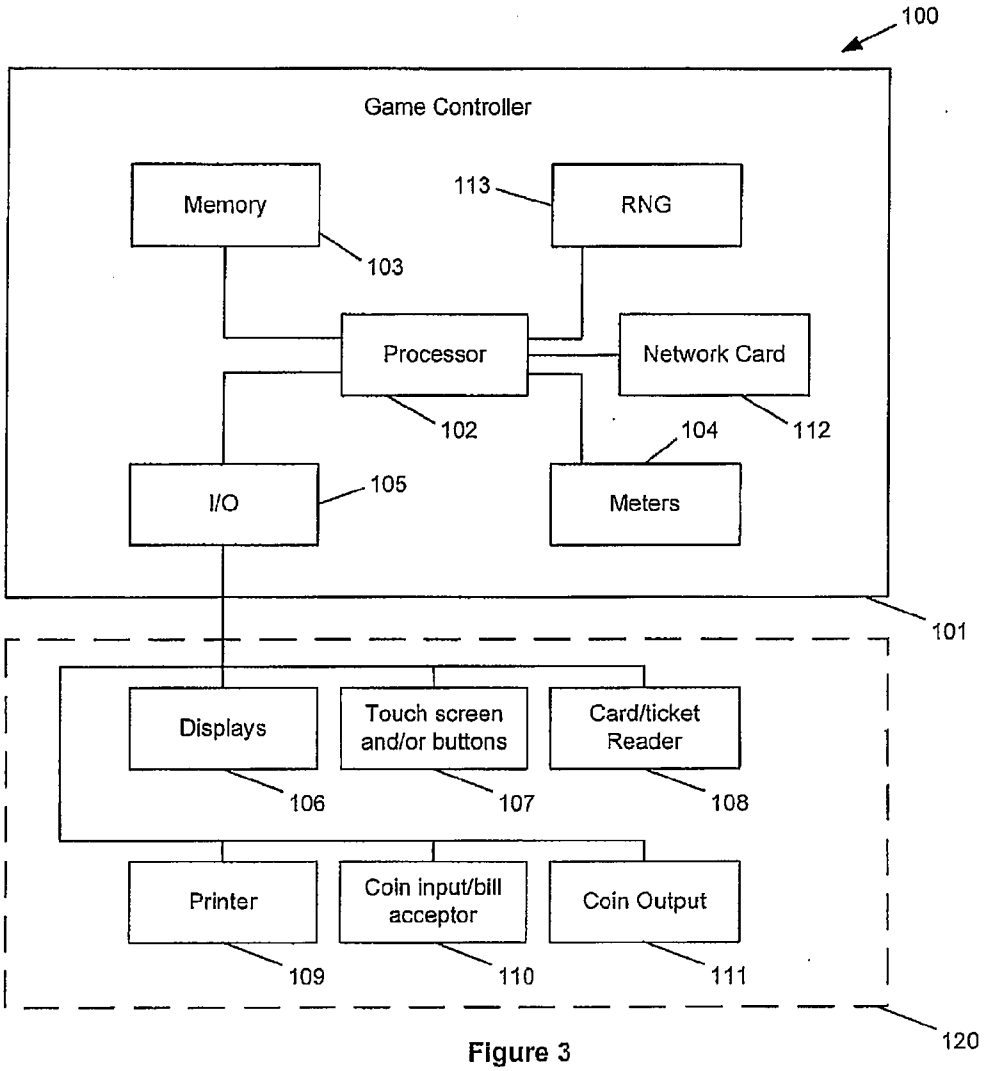


Figure 3

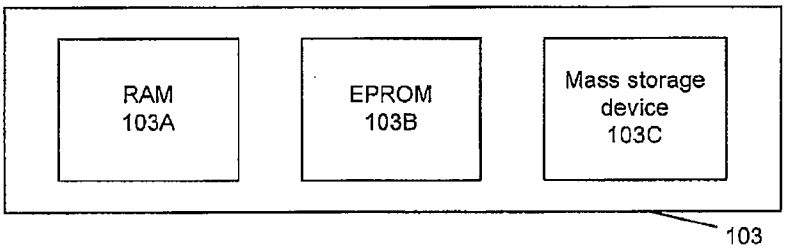


Figure 4

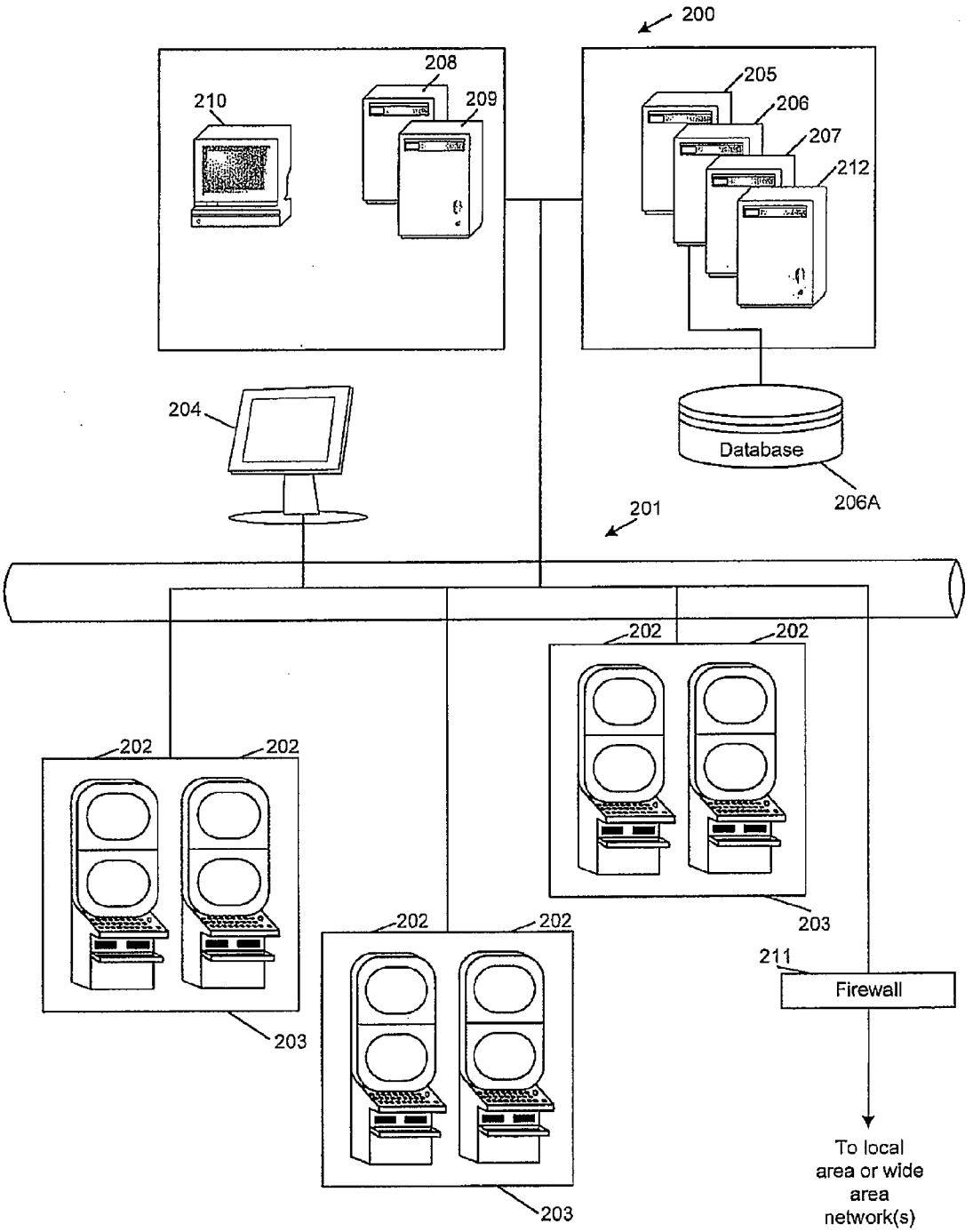

200
208
210
209
205
206
207
212
204
Database
206A
201
202
202
202
202
202
202
203
203
211
Firewall
To local area or wide area network(s)

Figure 5

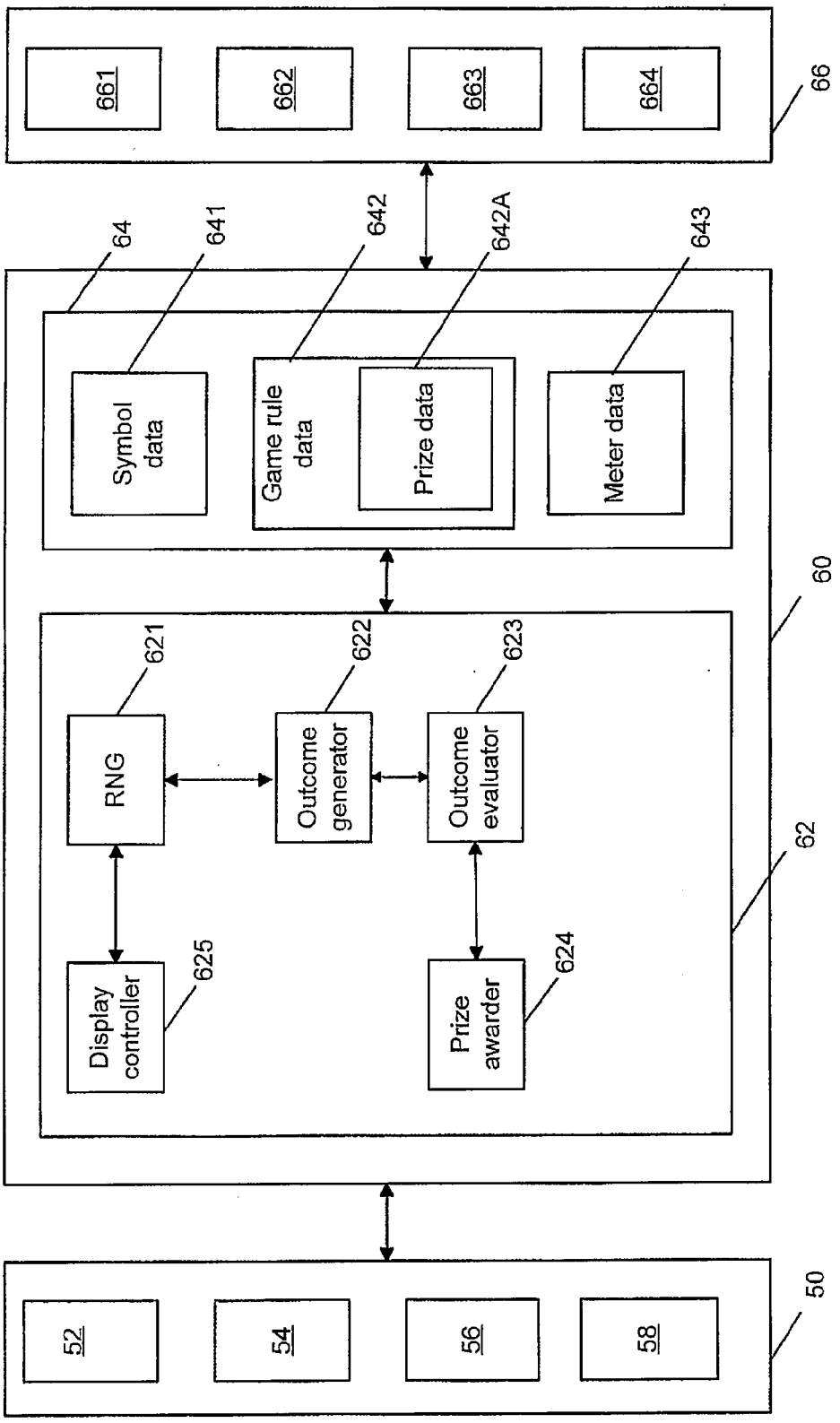

661
662
663
664
66
64
641
642
642A
643
Symbol data
Game rule data
Prize data
Meter data
60
621
622
623
RNG
Outcome generator
Outcome evaluator
62
625
624
Display controller
Prize awarder
52
54
56
58
50

Figure 6

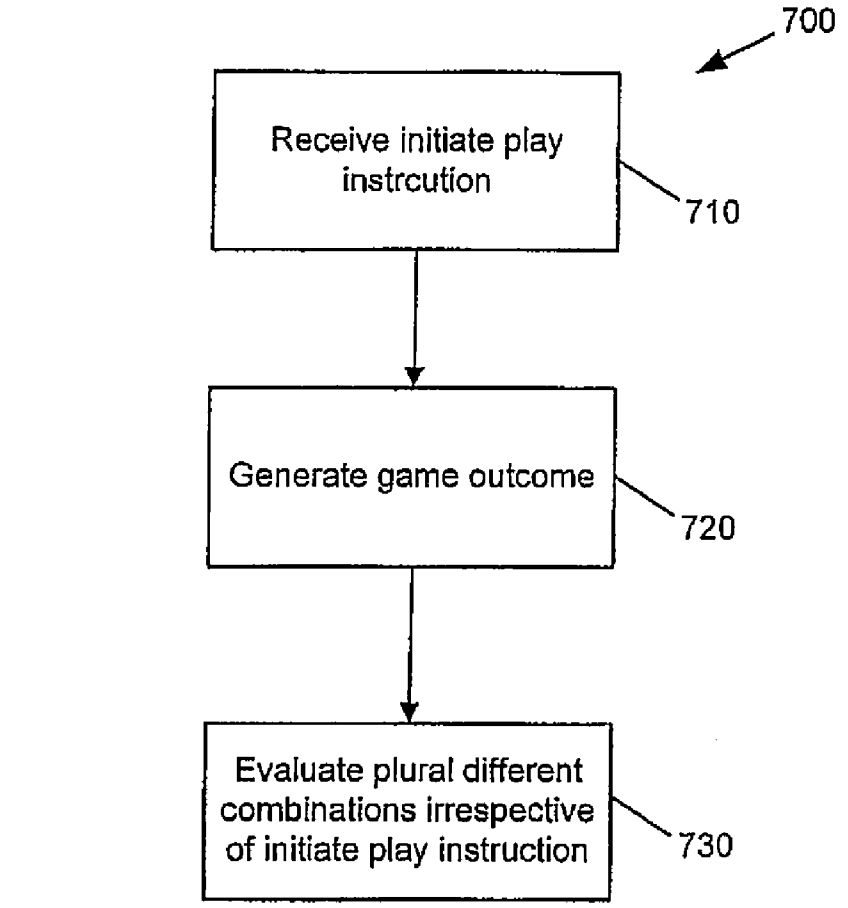


Figure 7

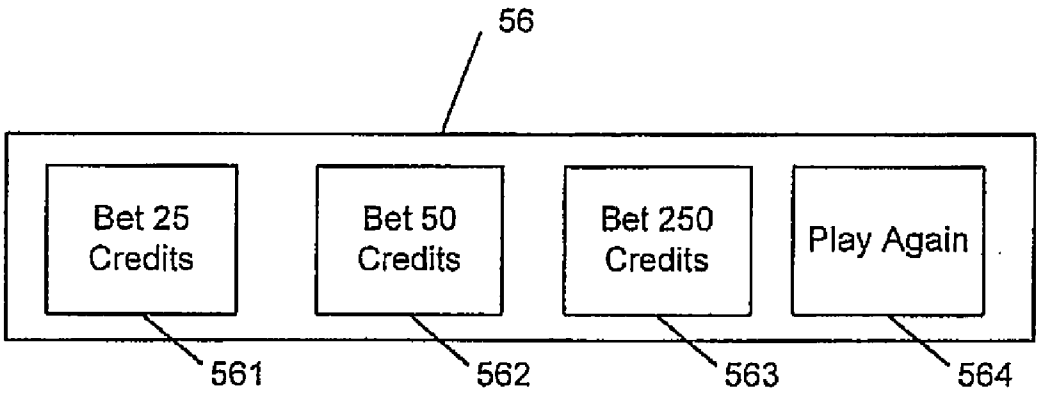


Figure 8

METHOD OF GAMING, A GAMING SYSTEM AND A GAME CONTROLLER

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] The present application relates to, and claims the benefit of priority from an Australian Patent Application filed on Mar. 14, 2008, entitled "A Method of Gaming, A Gaming System, and a Game Controller," with inventor William George Cormack, which is herein incorporated by reference in its entirety.

FIELD

[0002] The invention relates to a method of gaming, a gaming system and a game controller.

BACKGROUND

[0003] In current gaming machines a player is required to specify the amount bet per line and the number of play lines the player wants to play, or in some games, the number of reels the player wants to play.

[0004] While such gaming systems provide users with enjoyment, a need exists for alternative gaming systems in order to maintain or increase player enjoyment.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] In a first aspect, the invention provides a method of gaming comprising:

[0006] receiving an initiate play instruction from a player selected from a plurality of initiate play instructions;

[0007] generating a game outcome in response to receipt of the initiate play instruction, generation of the game outcome including selecting a plurality of symbols for display in a set of display positions corresponding to a plurality of spinning reels set side by side; and

[0008] evaluating the game outcome by evaluating the symbols at least two different combinations of display positions in accordance with at least one game rule, each combination consisting of one display position from each reel and the same evaluation being performed irrespective of the received initiate play instruction.

[0009] In an embodiment, the method comprises determining whether the symbols at one or more of the at least two different combinations of symbol positions correspond to a winning outcome entitling the player to an award.

[0010] In an embodiment, the method comprises determining whether the symbols at one or more of the at least two different combinations of symbol positions correspond to a feature game trigger.

[0011] In an embodiment, the method comprises evaluating the symbols at the display positions to determine whether a plurality of symbols corresponds to a scattered winning outcome entitling the player to an award.

[0012] In an embodiment, the method comprises evaluating the symbols at the display positions to determine whether a plurality of symbols corresponds to a feature game trigger.

[0013] In an embodiment, the method comprises conducting any triggered feature game and evaluating the feature game to determine whether the feature game corresponds to one or more winning outcomes entitling the player to an award.

[0014] In an embodiment, the method comprises making an award to which the player has become entitled.

[0015] In an embodiment, the method comprises allowing the player to gamble any award prior to making the award and determining whether to modify the award based on the outcome of the gamble.

[0016] In an embodiment, individual ones of the initiate play instructions vary from other initiate play instructions solely by a bet amount.

[0017] In an embodiment, the method comprises determining the quantum of each award to which the player becomes entitled based on the initiate play instruction.

[0018] In an embodiment, each one of the at least two combinations of display positions corresponds to a win line.

[0019] In an embodiment, each one of the at least two combinations of display positions is derived by combining selected display positions of a plurality of reels.

[0020] In an embodiment, the selected display positions are derived from selected reels.

[0021] In an embodiment, the method comprises comprising evaluating all symbol combinations available for the game.

[0022] In an embodiment, the method comprises evaluating all the win lines.

[0023] In an embodiment, the method comprises evaluating all symbol combinations derived from selection of all the reels.

[0024] In an embodiment, the method comprises comprising an operator setting a number of combinations of symbols to be evaluated.

[0025] In a second aspect, the invention provides a game controller for a gaming system, the game controller arranged to:

[0026] receive an initiate play instruction from a player selected from a plurality of initiate play instructions;

[0027] generate a game outcome in response to receipt of the initiate play instruction, generation of the game outcome including selecting a plurality of symbols for display in a set of display positions corresponding to a plurality of spinning reels set side by side; and

[0028] evaluate the game outcome by evaluating the symbols at least two different combinations of display positions in accordance with at least one game rule, each combination consisting of one display position from each reel and the same evaluation being performed irrespective of the received initiate play instruction.

[0029] In an embodiment, the game controller comprises an outcome generator for generating the game outcome.

[0030] In an embodiment, the game controller comprises an outcome evaluator for evaluating the game outcome.

[0031] In an embodiment, the game controller is constituted, at least in part, by a processor executing program code stored in a memory.

[0032] In a third aspect, the invention provides gaming system comprising:

[0033] a player interface comprising:

[0034] a display; and

[0035] a game play mechanism operable by the player to select one initiate play instruction from a plurality of possible initiate play instructions; and

[0036] a game controller arranged to:

[0037] receive the initiate play instruction;

[0038] generate a game outcome in response to receipt of the initiate play instruction, generation of the game outcome including selecting a plurality of symbols for

display on the display in a set of display positions corresponding to a plurality of spinning reels set side by side; and

[0039] evaluate the game outcome by evaluating the symbols at least two different combinations of display positions in accordance with at least one game rule, each combination consisting of one display position from each reel and the same evaluation being performed irrespective of the received initiate play instruction.

[0040] In an embodiment, the gaming system comprises an operator interface operable to specify a number of different combinations of display positions to be evaluated.

[0041] In a fourth aspect, the invention provides computer program code which when executed implements the above method.

[0042] In a fifth aspect, the invention provides a computer readable medium comprising the above program code.

[0043] In a sixth aspect, the invention provides a data signal comprising the above program code.

[0044] In a seventh aspect, the invention provides a method of transmitting or receiving the above program code.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0045] One or more exemplary embodiments of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

[0046] FIG. **1** is a block diagram of the core components of a gaming system;

[0047] FIG. **2** is a perspective view of a stand alone gaming machine;

[0048] FIG. **3** is a block diagram of the functional components of a gaming machine;

[0049] FIG. **4** is a schematic diagram of the functional components of a memory;

[0050] FIG. **5** is a schematic diagram of a network gaming system;

[0051] FIG. **6** is a further block diagram of a gaming system;

[0052] FIG. **7** is a flow chart of an embodiment; and

[0053] FIG. **8** is an exemplary game play mechanism.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0054] Referring to the drawings, there is shown a gaming system having a game controller arranged to implement a game wherein the same plurality of combinations of symbol positions are evaluated irrespective of the bet placed by the player. As a result, in embodiments where the game involves win lines, the same number of win lines is always evaluated irrespective of the bet.

[0055] General Construction of Gaming System

[0056] 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.

[0057] 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.

[0058] 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.

[0059] Irrespective of the form, the gaming system comprises several core components. At the broadest level, the core components are a player interface **50** and a game controller **60** as illustrated in FIG. **1**. The player interface is arranged to enable manual interaction between a player and the gaming system and for this purpose includes the input/output components required for the player to enter instructions and play the game.

[0060] 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** that enables a player to input game play instructions (e.g. to place bets), and one or more speakers **58**.

[0061] 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 instructions 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.

[0062] A gaming system in the form of a stand alone gaming machine **10** is illustrated in FIG. **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 **24**A and a bill collector **24**B. Other credit input mechanisms may also be employed, for example, a card reader for reading a smart card, debit card or credit card. 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.

[0063] 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**.

[0064] The display **14** shown in FIG. **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.

[0065] FIG. **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 FIG. **2**.

[0066] The gaming machine **100** includes a game controller **101** having a processor **102**. 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**.

[0067] 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.

[0068] In the example shown in FIG. **3**, a player interface **120** includes peripheral devices that communicate with the game controller **101** comprise one or more displays **106**, a touch screen and/or buttons **107**, 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.

[0069] 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 central controller, server or database and receive data or commands from the central controller, server or database.

[0070] FIG. **4** shows a block diagram of the main components of an exemplary memory **103**. The memory **103** includes RAM **103**A, EPROM **103**B and a mass storage device **103**C. The RAM **103**A typically temporarily holds program files for execution by the processor **102** and related data. The EPROM **103**B may be a boot ROM device and/or may contain some system or game related code. The mass storage device **103**C 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 **103**B or elsewhere.

[0071] 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**.

[0072] FIG. **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 FIG. **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 FIGS. **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 FIG. **5**, banks of one, three or more gaming machines are also envisaged.

[0073] 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.

[0074] 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 **206**A. 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.

[0075] 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 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.

[0076] 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.

[0077] 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**.

[0078] 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.

[0079] Further Detail of Gaming System

[0080] Referring to FIG. **6**, the player operates game play mechanism **56** to input an initiate play instruction selected from one of a plurality of available initiate play instructions. As described above, the game play mechanism can be in the form of a touch screen and/or buttons. In the embodiment, irrespective of the initiate play instruction that is entered the outcome evaluator **623** evaluates the same plurality of combinations of display positions in accordance with at least one game rule **642**.

[0081] In one embodiment, the outcome evaluator **623** will evaluate a plurality of win lines specified by game rule data **641**. FIG. **8** shows an example of a game play mechanism **56** for such an embodiment. In this example, there are 25 win lines evaluated. A player can choose between four different initiate play instructions by pressing (or touching in a touch screen embodiment) one of buttons **561**,**562**,**563**,**564**. Button **561** corresponds to a bet of 25 credits, button **562** corresponds to a bet of 50 credits and button **563** corresponds to a bet of 250 credits. "Play Again" button **564** may be employed to initiate play using the previously placed bet again.

[0082] The outcome generator **622** operates in response to the player's operation of game play mechanism **56** to generate a game outcome which will then be evaluated by outcome evaluator **623**. The outcome generator forms the game outcome by employing random number generator **621** to randomly select symbols from a set of symbols specified by symbol data **641**. The selected symbols are advised to the display controller **625** which causes them to be displayed on display **54** at a set of display positions. Outcome generator **622** selects symbols for display from a plurality of symbol sets corresponding to respective ones of a plurality of spinning reels. Thus, the symbol sets **641** specify a sequence of symbols for each reel such that the outcome generator **622** can, in one example, select symbols for display by selecting a stopping position in the sequence. In one example, three symbols of each of five reels may be displayed such that symbols are displayed at fifteen display positions on display **54**. To obtain a desired return to player, a probability table having weighted outcomes is typically employed when selecting the symbols.

[0083] Outcome evaluator **623** evaluates each of the plurality of win lines to determine which, if any, of the win lines corresponds to a winning combination specified in the prize data **642**A based on game rules. For example, the game rules may specify that all combinations are evaluated left to right or can be evaluated right to left or both. Depending on the specific rules of the game implemented by the embodiment, the outcome evaluator may evaluate the win lines to determine whether they provide a trigger for a feature (or secondary) game.

[0084] The outcome evaluator **623** may also make additional evaluations known in the art, for example "scatters" where a player is awarded a prize or a feature game for a designated number of symbols, irrespective of whether they are on a win line. By way of example, the feature game may be a series of free games, in which case outcome evaluator **623** triggers outcome generator **622** to carry out a series of free games and outcome evaluator **623** evaluates each of these games to determine any awards to be made. Prize awarder **624** determines the quantum of the award to be made from the initiate play instruction (e.g. based on the size of the bet) and the prizes are accumulated to a win meter stored as meter data **643**. Once all outcomes have been generated and a further game play instruction is required before any further play can occur, credits are transferred to a credit meter in meter data **643**. In embodiments, where a gamble feature is offered it may be possible, for example to seek to double the accumulated win at the risk of losing it. In such embodiments, it may be necessary for a player to operate the game play mechanism **56** to indicate they want to take an accumulated win or to initiate a further play of the game before credits are transferred from the win meter to the credit meter.

[0085] Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that win lines are formed by a combination of displayed symbol positions, one from each reel, the symbol positions being located relative to one another such that they form a line. Examples of win lines are given in Australian patent 684195 owned by Aristocrat Technologies Australia Pty. Ltd.

[0086] FIG. **6** shows an operator interface **66** which is deployed in some embodiments to enable the operator of the venue at which the game can be played to configure the number of lines which constitute the plurality of win lines. In this example, the operator can select between 4 options, **661**, **662**,**663**,**664** corresponding to different numbers of a plurality of win lines offerable under the game rules **642**. For example, 6, 9, 15 or a maximum of 25 lines. In such embodiments, the game rules **641** may default to the maximum number of lines offerable under the game rules. In such embodiments, it may be desirable for the game play mechanism to be provided by touch screen buttons to make it easy to change the text displayed to each player on the buttons.

[0087] In the above description it will be appreciated that the various of the above functional modules are implemented by processor **62** executing code stored in memory **64**. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that other embodiments are possible including dedicated circuits.

[0088] Persons skilled in the art, will appreciate that in other embodiments, the outcome evaluator may evaluate symbol combinations in a different way. For example, in the manner in which outcomes are evaluated in games marketed under the trade name "Reel Power" by Aristocrat Leisure Industries Pty Ltd and described in U.S. Pat. No. 6,093,102. In such games symbol combinations are made by forming combinations from each selected reel by combining it with all the selected positions of other reels. In other words, all symbol positions of a selected reel can be used to form symbol combinations with designated, symbol display positions of other reels. This means that in embodiments where there are three symbols displayed for each reel and five reels, there are 243 different symbol combinations (35) to be evaluated by the outcome evaluator (also known as "ways" to win). Thus in this embodiment, the game rules **641** may specify for example the evaluation of 2, 3, 4 or 5 reels irrespective of the game play instruction. This may be configurable by the operator in the manner described above.

[0089] The method **700** is summarised in FIG. **7** and involves receiving **710** an initiate game play instruction, generating **720** a game outcome, and evaluating **730** plural different combination of symbol positions irrespective of the initiate play instruction.

[0090] Persons skilled in the art will also appreciate that the method of the embodiment could be embodied in program code. The program code could be supplied in a number of ways, for example on a computer readable 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 downloading it from a server which results in the program code being transmitted from the server to a gaming machine or computer which receives it).

[0091] 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.

[0092] It is to be understood that, if any prior art publication is referred to herein, such reference does not constitute an admission that the publication forms a part of the common general knowledge in the art, in Australia or any other country.

[0093] In the claims which follow and in the preceding 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.

I claim:

1. A method of gaming comprising:

receiving an initiate play instruction from a player selected from a plurality of initiate play instructions;

generating a game outcome in response to receipt of the initiate play instruction, generation of the game outcome including selecting a plurality of symbols for display in a set of display positions corresponding to a plurality of spinning reels set side by side; and

evaluating the game outcome by evaluating the symbols at least two different combinations of display positions in accordance with at least one game rule, each combination consisting of one display position from each reel and the same evaluation being performed irrespective of the received initiate play instruction.

2. A method as claimed in claim **1**, comprising determining whether the symbols at one or more of the at least two different combinations of symbol positions correspond to a winning outcome entitling the player to an award.

3. A method as claimed in claim **1**, comprising determining whether the symbols at one or more of the at least two different combinations of symbol positions correspond to a feature game trigger.

4. A method as claimed in claim **1**, further comprising evaluating the symbols at the display positions to determine whether a plurality of symbols corresponds to a scattered winning outcome entitling the player to an award.

5. A method as claimed in claim **1**, further comprising evaluating the symbols at the display positions to determine whether a plurality of symbols corresponds to a feature game trigger.

7. A method as claimed in claim **3**, comprising conducting any triggered feature game and evaluating the feature game to determine whether the feature game corresponds to one or more winning outcomes entitling the player to an award.

8. A method as claimed in claim **2**, comprising making an award to which the player has become entitled.

9. A method as claimed in claim **8**, comprising allowing the player to gamble any award prior to making the award and determining whether to modify the award based on the outcome of the gamble.

10. A method as claimed in claim **1**, wherein individual ones of the initiate play instructions vary from other initiate play instructions solely by a bet amount.

11. A method as claimed in claim **10** comprising determining the quantum of each award to which the player becomes entitled based on the initiate play instruction.

12. A method as claimed in claim **1** wherein each one of the at least two combinations of display positions corresponds to a win line.

13. A method as claimed in claim **1** wherein each one of the at least two combinations of display positions is derived by combining selected display positions of a plurality of reels.

14. A method as claimed in claim **13**, wherein the selected display positions are derived from selected reels.

15. A method as claimed in claim **1**, comprising evaluating all symbol combinations available for the game.

16. A method as claimed in claim **15** comprising evaluating all the win lines.

17. A method as claimed in claim **15** comprising evaluating all symbol combinations derived from selection of all the reels.

18. A method as claimed in claim **1**, comprising an operator setting a number of combinations to be evaluated.

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

receive an initiate play instruction from a player selected from a plurality of initiate play instructions;

generate a game outcome in response to receipt of the initiate play instruction, generation of the game outcome including selecting a plurality of symbols for display in a set of display positions corresponding to a plurality of spinning reels set side by side; and

evaluate the game outcome by evaluating the symbols at least two different combinations of display positions in accordance with at least one game rule, each combination consisting of one display position from each reel and the same evaluation being performed irrespective of the received initiate play instruction.

20. A game controller as claimed in claim **19**, comprising an outcome generator for generating the game outcome.

21. A game controller as claimed in claim **19**, comprising an outcome evaluator for evaluating the game outcome.

22. A game controller as claimed in claim **18** constituted, at least in part, by a processor executing program code stored in a memory.

23. A gaming system comprising:

a player interface comprising:

a display; and

a game play mechanism operable by the player to select one initiate play instruction from a plurality of possible initiate play instructions; and

a game controller arranged to:

receive the initiate play instruction;

generate a game outcome in response to receipt of the initiate play instruction, generation of the game outcome including selecting a plurality of symbols for display on the display in a set of display positions corresponding to a plurality of spinning reels set side by side; and

evaluate the game outcome by evaluating the symbols at least two different combinations of display positions in accordance with at least one game rule, each combination consisting of one display position from each

reel and the same evaluation being performed irrespective of the received initiate play instruction.

24. A gaming system as claimed in claim **23** comprising an operator interface operable to specify a number of different combinations of display positions to be evaluated.

26. A computer readable medium including a set of instructions executable on a computer, said set of instructions comprising:

an initiate routine receiving an initiate play instruction from a player selected from a plurality of initiate play instructions;

an outcome generation routine generating a game outcome in response to receipt of the initiate play instruction, generation of the game outcome including selecting a plurality of symbols for display in a set of display positions corresponding to a plurality of spinning reels set side by side; and

an evaluation routine evaluating the game outcome by evaluating the symbols at at least two different combinations of display positions in accordance with at least one game rule, each combination consisting of one display position from each reel and the same evaluation being performed irrespective of the received initiate play instruction.

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