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(54) **Title:** NETWORKED GAME CHALLENGE SYSTEM

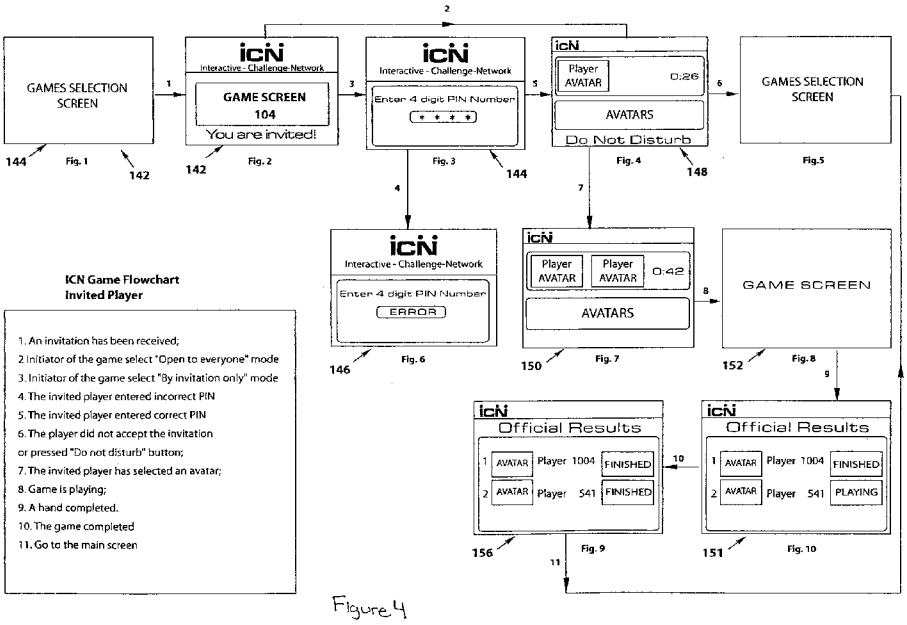


Figure 4

(57) **Abstract:** The networked game system uses a local area network to allow multi-player competition between terminals in real time. The game software of each terminal allows that terminal to act as the communication server if that terminal initiates an invitation to play in a networked mode. In a preferred aspect the game software allows an initiating player to send an open invitation or a restricted invitation that requires a PIN to respond. In a different aspect each terminal includes a player activated Do Not Disturb feature if the player does not want to receive invitations.

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# TITLE: NETWORKED GAME CHALLENGE SYSTEM

## FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to a local area network game system. In a preferred aspect of the invention the local area network game system allows different terminals to act as a server for particular game communications.

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Amusement arcade games have the ability to connect to various networks and communicate with a local or remote server to implement various game functions including game result reporting, game set-up procedures, game downloading, tournament management, and other functions. Many of the prior art terminals have a telephone dial up capability for communicating with the server on an occasional or preprogrammed basis. Often these preprogrammed sessions are carried out after normal business hours and often during the very early morning. In other arrangements, the server is online and always available.

It is also known to provide a local connection between game terminals at a particular premise to allow head to head competition between players. This is certainly a desirable feature, however, it typically requires the players to organize themselves for this particular competition and the number of networked terminals may be limited.

It is known in casino environments to have various dedicated terminals for carrying out multi-player tournaments over a very short time. In these systems, each player competes at a terminal at the same time.

It is also known to implement using an individual terminal or a series of networked terminals, a high score tournament having a duration of several weeks or months and may include a series of rounds.

Traditional amusement games terminals are normally located in an arcade type premise or perhaps a gambling casino environment. In contrast, some amusement terminals are located in other environments such as restaurants and bars. Many of the games provided on the terminals are designed for intuitive play and the games are of a short duration. To a significant extent, the games provide entertainment value. It has become more and more desirable to have player to player competitive games available to increase competition and interest.

In some sophisticated environments, game terminals are connected to the INTERNET or other wide area networks to allow communication with a host of terminals located in remote locations. The cost to operate these global type systems can be a deterrent.

The present invention and terminal allows effective networking between terminals in a local environment and using a local area network. The arrangement is cost effective to operate and allows game terminals in non adjacent areas to be available for multi-player competition or cooperation.

Such a system that operates on a local area network allows the operator to carry out multi-player games in a cost effective manner.

The present invention also allows an individual player to organize and control play of a network game of their choice in a multi-player mode.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In a game system according to the present invention, the system includes a series of networked game terminals where each game terminal has a display and includes a series of games with at least some of the games being playable in a network mode by two or more players at different network terminals. The terminals include a player selected notice function for sending a communication to at least some of said networked terminals of an invitation to play a game in a network mode.

In a preferred aspect of the invention, the series of networked terminals are connected by a local area computer network.

In a further aspect of the invention, the networked terminals are networked over an ETHERNET network.

According to a different aspect of the invention, at least some of the networked games allow both real players at networked terminals and computer simulated players to compete in the networked games.

In a further aspect of the invention, at least some of the networked games include poker games and up to six real players can participate at different networked terminals.

In a further aspect of the invention, each networked game includes an indication on said display or access to a menu of invitations that have been received for possible participation in a networked game.

In a further aspect of the invention, each terminal includes an indication display on the display of the receipt of an invitation.

In a different aspect of the invention, each invitation includes a programmed time period after which the invitation is automatically withdrawn. With this arrangement, management of invitations by individual networked terminals is simplified as invitations expire after a predetermined time duration and are essentially self clearing.

In yet a further aspect of the invention, each terminal includes a player initiated action to withhold the display of invitations received. This feature allows a player to operate the terminal in a private mode where general invitations from other terminals are withheld or suppressed. Some players may not wish to be interrupted by the receipt of invitations, or may merely decide that he is not interested in multi-player game participation.

In a game system according to the present invention, a series of networked game terminals cooperate to allow game play on each individual terminal or game play in a network mode between terminals. Each game terminal has a series of games with at least some of the games being playable in the network mode by two or more players at different terminals. Each of the terminals includes a player selected function to send a communication to other terminals of a desire to play a game in the network mode and the ability to respond to such communications. Each of the game terminals include a normal function where notice of opportunity to participate in a networked game is actively communicated to a player of the terminal and a player selected private function where notice of the opportunity to participate in a networked game is not actively communicated to a player of the terminal.

In a different aspect of the invention, each terminal tracks notices of opportunities communicated in

a networked game and remove any notices where the opportunity to play has terminated.

In a further aspect of the invention, each game terminal automatically removes an opportunity to participate in a networked game upon expiry of a certain time period.

In a different aspect of the invention, upon commencement of at least some networked games where it is still possible for the players to join in play of the networked game, a different notice is sent to the networked terminals that allows a potential multi game player to indicate a desire to join the multi-player game at a subsequent point in time.

In a further aspect of the invention, each terminal of the game system allows a player to send notice of a desire to join play of an active networked game where game play has already commenced.

In a different aspect of the invention, each terminal of the game system includes an indication of active networked games where additional players are welcome to join the game at a suitable point in time.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Preferred embodiments of the invention are shown in the drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a schematic overview of a prior art networked game system where the terminals each communicate with a communication server;

Figure 2 is a schematic overview of the networked game system of the present invention;

Figure 3 is a layout of a series of screen shots illustrating the steps of a master player (inviting

player) in issuing and processing an invitation for a network challenge game;

Figure 4 is a layout of a series of shots of an invited player responding to an invitation;

Figure 5 is a screen shot that includes a terminal display indicating that other machines on the network are capable of playing in a network mode;

Figure 6 is the screen shot presented to a player who has indicated that he wishes to initiate a networked game;

Figure 7 is a screen shot where the player has indicated he wishes to create a networked game available to other players by invitation only;

Figure 8 is a screen shot of a game terminal that has received an invitation;

Figure 9 is a screen shot of the game initiator indicating any players who have desired to join;

Figure 10 is a screen shot that is provided on each terminal of the networked game showing the result by player;

Figure 11 is a screen shot of an invitation being received by a player; and

Figure 12 is a screen shot of an invitation received by a player who has activated the DO NOT DISTURB feature.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The prior art networked game system 2 of Figure 1 includes a number of terminals 4 that communicate with a server 6 over a wide area network generally indicated as 8. The communication server 6 controls the communication between the individual game terminals 4 and these game terminals can be located in a host of different locations. This system operates well for many competitive game providers where multi-player game play is encouraged, and often promoted, particularly through the use of tournaments. Such tournaments can have

significant prizes which further encourages play. The more expensive the prizes, the longer the duration of the tournament and/or the larger the number of terminals that are participating in such tournaments. These tournaments are often run over a one month period and can include multiple rounds.

With the game system of Figure 1, each of the game terminals has the capability to communicate with the game server 6 and such a system has a significant operating cost due to significant communication costs.

In contrast, Figure 2 shows an example of the present networked game system 9 where the game terminals 10 are in communication with each other using a local area ETHERNET network 12 through a hardwired arrangement or a wireless arrangement. The game terminals 10 communicate with each other over the local network 12 in the same manner as personal computers. It can be appreciated that the game terminals are computers having processors and memory generally corresponding with personal computing devices and use the same type of communication protocol. The local area network 12 shown in Figure 2 is easily implemented in different environments including restaurant and bar environments.

The individual patrons or players may wish to play games in a non-network mode for their own enjoyment. Thus, the game terminals are capable of independent play where the player plays against the computer or plays against a second or additional players who use the same terminal.

Other players may wish to play in a network game mode that allows multiple players at different terminals to play against one another in a multi-player mode. There are a number of known multi-player networked game structures including independent multi-player games where for example, all players receive the identical settings.

This may be a card game where each player is given the same initial hand for example a solitaire game. Each player plays the game and receives a score which can be based on performance and/or time. In these games, there is no real interaction between players. The moves of each player are independent of the moves of other players. The following data is most likely communicated to the terminals of other players; current score, final score, end of the game, and final standings. This data is typically available at each terminal by posting to a Hall of Fame, or ranking type table.

Networked games also include games that are turn by turn games conducted by a group of players. In these games, there is an order or sequence that is followed with players inputting their move in accordance with the sequence. There are interactions between the players and one player's move typically affects the subsequent moves of other players. No real time communication occurs with these games. With each turn, the essential information about the move is broadcast to all participating parties. Examples of these types of games include checkers, and card games such as poker games. In these types of games, one of the game terminals will act as a master or "host terminal" and communicates the correct information to the other terminals. Various arrangements for determining the "host terminal" are known and can be used. With this arrangement there is no requirement of a dedicated server or a predetermined default server terminal.

Networked games can also include real time games. With these games there is no predefined order of moves and a wide variety of input data and possible responses occur in a time related manner. Such games include air hockey, and auto racing, etc. These types of games create a challenging requirement due to the speed of communication and processing of game messages between the

networked terminals. Player to player real time competition occurs.

Any of the above described networked game types can be used with the present system.

In order to implement the present game system, each terminal includes software that allows a player to issue a notice or desire to commence a networked game. The particular player's terminal will initially act as the host when the player has completed a certain number of steps. In some cases, the notice will be a challenge to other players available on the network. The software of each terminal preferably allows any terminal to act as a host terminal.

Figure 3 shows a series 100 of connected screen shots that an initiating player would be presented with in initiating and playing a multi-player network game. Screen shot 102 shows a selected ICN game. When an initiating player presses active button 52, screen shot 104 is displayed on the terminal. Pressing active button 54(By Invitation Only), the screen shot 106 is displayed and the player enters a PIN necessary for other players to enter in order to respond to the invitation the invitation. If the initiating player incorrectly enters a PIN screen shot 108 is produced and the player can reenter a PIN.

If a correct PIN is entered the initiating is taken to screen shot 110 where the initiating player selects his avatar. Once the avatar has been selected it is shown in screen shot 112 as avatar 114. Screen shot 116 indicates one further player, avatar 118, has accepted the invitation. In screen shot 120 the particular network is commenced with the two players.

The results of the networked game are shown in screen shot 122 and these results are communicated to other terminals as indicated by screen shot 124.

Screen shot 126 occurs if no one accepts the invitation and allows a player to play a non multi-player game.

If the initiating player at screen shot 104 selects active button 56 (Open to Everyone), screen shot 110 is produced and the PIN steps are eliminated.

From Figure 3 it can be appreciated, that an initiating player can send invitations as either a broadcast open to all or for a limited response by players who know the particular PIN.

In Figure 4, a series of screen shots 140 are shown that a player responding to an invitation would encounter. In screen shot 142 the player has selected a mult-player networked game where an initiating player has sent invitations. By choosing IChallengeN button 144 he is presented with the received invitation shown in screen shot 146. If the invitation requires a PIN to respond the receiving player is taken to screen shot 144 to enter the correct PIN. If the entered PIN is incorrect screen shot 146 is produced and the player can re-enter etc. If the correct PIN is entered screen shot 148 is produced where the invited player selects his avatar. If the invitation is open to everyone the player goes from screen shot 142 directly to 148.

Screen shot 150 shows two players for the game. The networked game with the two players is started in screen shot 152 and results shown in 154. All terminals can receive an update for a Hall of Fame type summary as indicated by screen shot 156.

Further details of the system are set out in the larger screen shots of Figures 5 through 10.

The screen shot 50 of Figure 5 includes a scrollable list 51 of games that are available for play. The first game Texas Hold'em has been initially selected and displayed to the right of the list 51. Some of the games in the list, in the upper left corner, include the designation ICN that stands for INTERATIVE CHALLENGE NETWORK. This designation indicates that the game can be played in a multi-player network mode. The screen shot includes the active button 52 that when selected by the player will allow him to initiate a challenge invitation to other players. Active button 52 will not be present if a non-networked game is selected. If the player selects the active button 52 the game terminal produces the screen shot of figure 6. If the player only wants to play the game in a non-networked mode he would press active button 53 labeled 'PLAY'.

If the initiating player has indicated that he wishes to play in the challenge mode by selecting active button 52 he is presented with the initial set-up screen of Figure 6. Two options are available, namely 'By Invitation Only' indicated as 54 or 'Open to Everyone', indicated as 55. In some cases, players may have pre-arranged with friends to participate in a limited networked game. The 'By Invitation Only' feature allows the initiating player to send invitations that require a password or PIN to be entered for a receiving terminal to accept the invitation to join the networked game. In this way, only players who know the PIN can join the game. This can be a desirable feature as the group of friends may wish to participate without an outside unknown player, for example, merely to limit or predetermine the skill levels. In other cases, a player may merely wish to participate and thus, would use the 'Open to Everyone' option 55. The 'Open to Everyone'

option does not require a password or PIN to accept the invitation and join the multi-player network game.

In the screen shot 56 of Figure 7, the initiating player enters the password or PIN using the displayed numeric keypad. When a terminal receives an invitation with a password, it will require a player that wishes to accept the invitation, to enter the correct PIN. Only invitations where the PIN has been correctly entered will be returned to the terminal of the initiating player. This allows the initiating player to basically customize the multi-player networked game that he wishes to organize by being able to limit the players that are capable of responding to the invitation.

The screen shot 58 of Figure 8 allows a player to access an invitation received by the terminal. This invitation may only be presented if the game is in an idle state or non-game functioning state, or there may be a small discrete indication in part of the screen to indicate to the player that an invitation has been received. If the invitation includes a PIN, the answer by the player will only be communicated after the PIN has been correctly entered. Each of these invitations which are sent to the terminals using the network, include a built in time notice that effectively expires and allows the invitation to be automatically removed. This provides a simplified clearing function that automatically occurs on the individual terminals without further communications therebetween.

Figure 9 shows a screen shot 60 of the 'master or host' terminal of the player that has initiated the possible multi-player game. The screen shot provides an indication 62 of two players who are ready to join the game. The initiating player may decide to commence the game once a certain number of players have indicated they wish to participate or he may wish to temporarily delay

this decision in the hope of receiving additional responses from other players. The screen shot of Figure 9 also allows the initiating player to enter an input to commence the networked game.

Most of these multi-player network games allow players to play against each other and/or include additional computer generated players to participate in the network game. This type of arrangement is also valuable in a poker type game where the game is more interesting when more players are involved. Such additional features or options can be available for the initiating player to structure the particular network game.

Once the network game has been started, the initiating player's terminal effectively acts as host, and controls the communications and instructions to the other terminals. As can be appreciated, each of the terminals includes an IP address and other indications for effective communication therebetween. In addition, as is common, the individual players can create their own name and preferably, can select from a number of avatars available to them as shown in Figure 9. Default names are also available.

Figure 10 shows a screen shot of the results of a two player network game. This summary results would be available and displayed on all participating terminals.

One of the desirable features of the present invention is the capability of each network terminal to activate a "Do Not Disturb" feature 200 as shown in the invitations 201 and 202 of Figures 11 and 12. This feature allows the networked terminal to be isolated from the network or at least from any invitation communications that could be disruptive to the particular player at that terminal. Broadcast invitations and other

type challenges are not displayed if the 'Do Not Disturb' function is selected as shown in Figure 12. Received invitations may be maintained in a user selected menu for later review if so desired. This allows the terminal to be operated in a private mode without any disruptive influences from other networked terminals and player communications.

The invitations 201 and 202 each include time window 204 showing the time remaining in the invitation before the game starts or the invitation expires.

In invitation 201, the player at the receiving terminal has not activated the 'DO NOT DISTURB' feature. If the player wishes to accept this invitation, he merely chooses a particular avatar from the available avatars 2006. If the player wants to decline the invitation, he touches the "X" button 208. In invitation 201, the player indicated by the avatar 210, the tiger, has issued the challenge for the game "Pyramid Runs" indicated at 212.

In the invitation 202 of Figure 12, the player has activated the 'DO NOT DISTURB' feature 200. The 'C' of 'ICN' at the top left corner of the screen has been reversed and the status of the 'DO NOT DISTURB' button 200 has changed state. This change in state can be a change in color or position or appearance or other suitable designation. The player after activating the 'DO NOT DISTURB' feature may close the invitation 202 using "X" button 208. Further invitations will be suppressed until the player removes this feature and/or the terminal returns to a non engaged state or idle mode, i.e., the current player has stopped playing and the terminal is available for play.

Although various preferred embodiments of the present invention have been described herein in detail, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, that variations may be made thereto without departing from the spirit of the invention or the scope of the appended claims.

THE EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION IN WHICH AN EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OR PRIVILEGE IS CLAIMED ARE DEFINED AS FOLLOWS:

1. In a game system having a series of networked game terminals, each game terminal having a display and including a series of games with at least some of said games being playable in a networked mode by two or more players at different networked terminals, and wherein said terminals include a player selected notice function for sending a communication to at least some of said networked terminals of an invitation to play a game in a networked mode.

2. In a game system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said series of networked terminals are connected by a local area computer network.

3. In a game system as claimed in claim 1 wherein said networked terminals are networked over an Ethernet network.

4. In a game system as claimed in claim 1 wherein at least some of said networked games allow both real players at networked terminals and computer simulated players to compete in said networked games.

5. In a game system as claimed in claim 4 wherein at least some of said networked games include poker games and up to 6 real players can participate at different networked terminals.

6. In a game system as claimed in claim 5 wherein each networked game includes an indication on said display or access to a menu of invitations that have been received for possible participation in a networked game.

7. In a game system as claimed in claim 6 wherein each terminal upon commencement of a networked game

withdraws any invitations that are no longer available for participation.

8. In a game system as claimed in claim 1 wherein each terminal includes an indication displayed on said display of the receipt of an invitation.

9. In a game system as claimed in claim 8 wherein each terminal includes a player initiated action to withhold the display of invitations received.

10. In a game system as claimed in claim 9 wherein said player initiated action is activating a Do Not Disturb function of the terminal.

11. In a game system comprising a series of networked terminals that cooperate to allow game play on each individual terminal or game play in a networked mode between said terminals; each game terminal having a series of games with at least some of said games being playable in said networked mode by two or more players at different terminals, each of said terminals including a player selected function to send a communication to other terminals of a desire to play a game in said networked mode; each of said terminals including a normal function where notice of an opportunity to participate in a networked game is actively communicated to a player of the terminal and a private function where notice of the opportunity to participate in a networked game is not actively communicated to a player of the terminal.

12. In a game system as claimed in claim 11 wherein each networked terminal in said private function allows the player to select an option to view notices of opportunities to participate in a networked game.

13. In a game system as claimed in claim 12 wherein each terminal tracks notices of opportunities to compete

in a networked game and removes any notices where the opportunity to play has terminated.

14. In a game system as claimed in claim 13 wherein upon commencement of at least some networked games where it is still possible for further players to join in play of the networked game a different notice is sent to said terminals.

15. In a game system as claimed in claim 14 wherein said different notice includes an indication that the networked game has already commenced.

16. In a game system as claimed in claim 15 wherein each terminal allows a player to send notice of a desire to join play of an active networked game where play has already commenced.

17. In a game system as claimed in claim 16 wherein notice of a player's desire to join an active game is provided to a terminal of an active networked game at predetermined intervals appropriate for a new play to join the active networked game.

18. In a game system as claimed in claim 1 wherein a terminal that sends a communication of an invitation to play in a networked game acts as a server for the networked game.

19. In a game system as claimed in claim 11 wherein a terminal that sends a communication of an invitation to play in a networked game acts as a server for the networked game.

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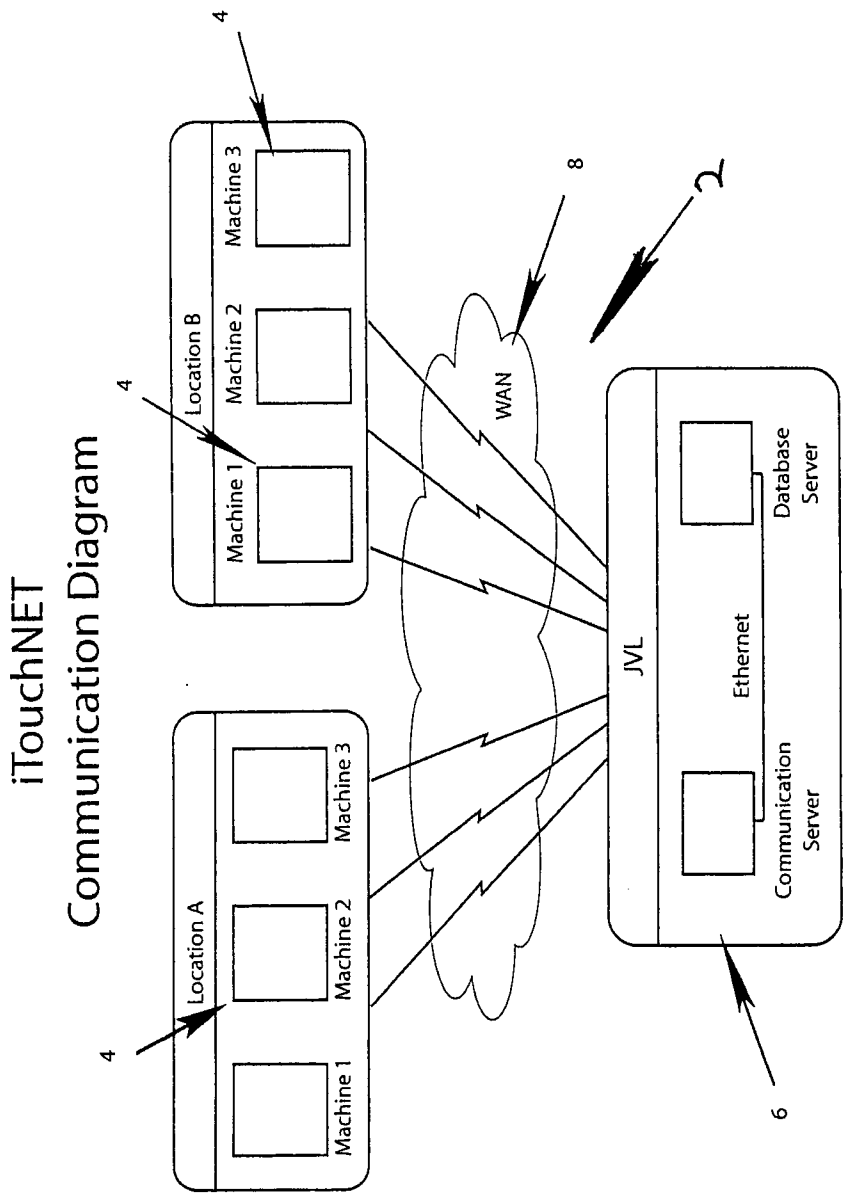


Figure1 (Prior Art)

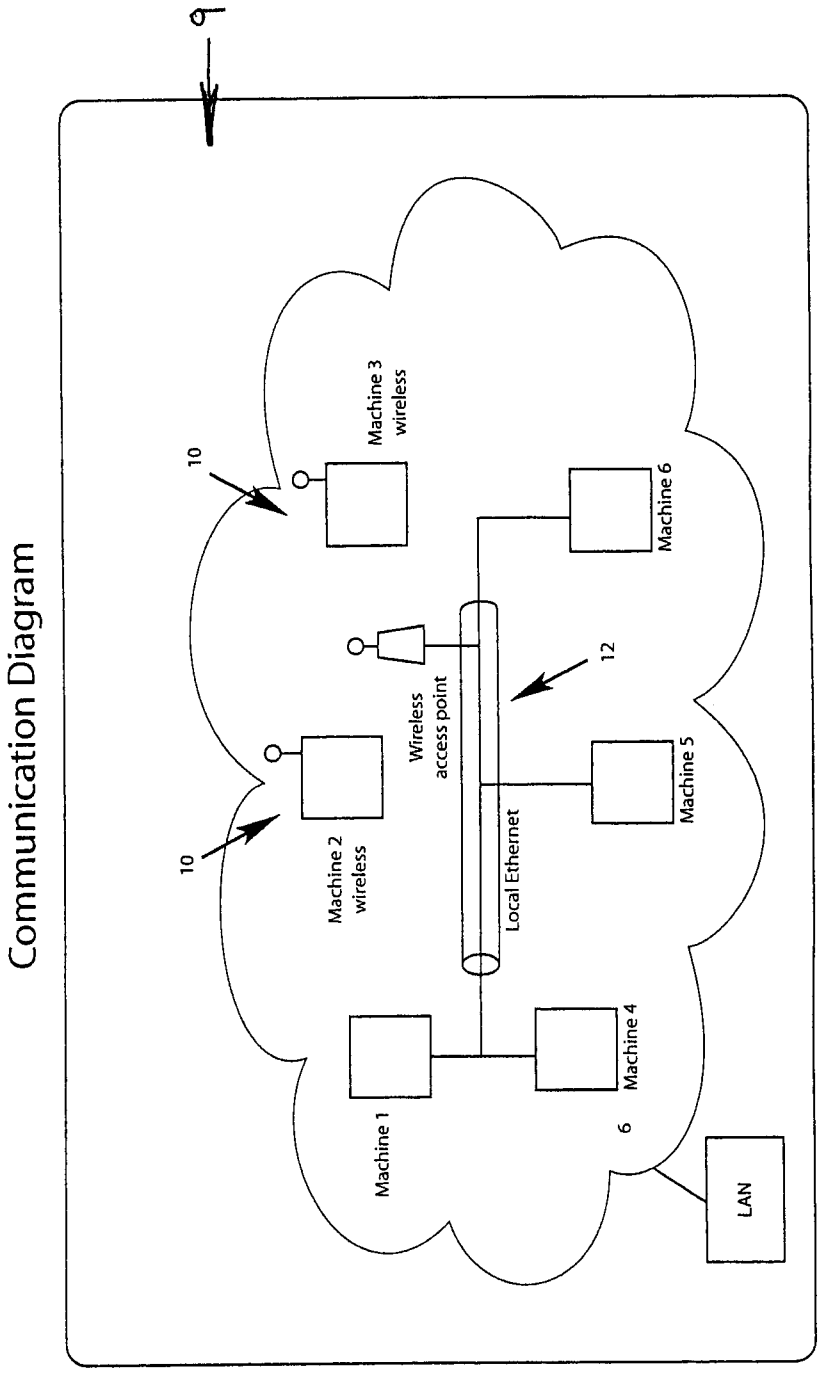
ICN
Communication Diagram
9
10
10
Machine 3
wireless
Machine 6
Wireless
access point
12
Machine 2
wireless
Machine 5
Local Ethernet
Machine 1
Machine 4
6
LAN

Figure 2

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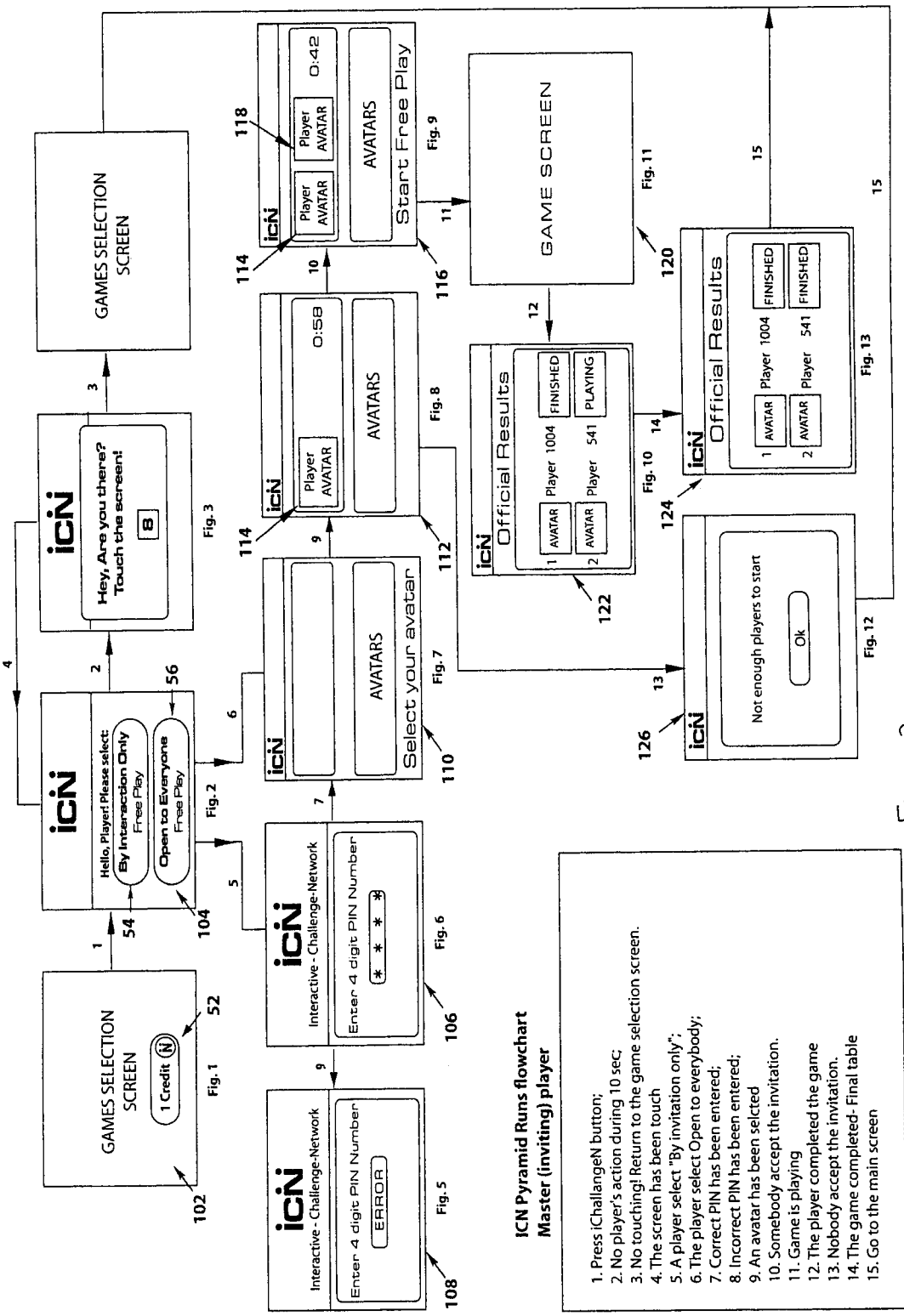
GAMES SELECTION SCREEN
1 Credit
Hello, Player! Please select:
By Interaction Only
Free Play
Open to Everyone
Free Play
Hey, Are you there? Touch the screen!
Interactive - Challenge-Network
Enter 4 digit PIN Number
ERROR
Enter 4 digit PIN Number
AVATARS
Select your avatar
Player AVATAR
0:58
0:42
Start Free Play
Official Results
AVATAR
Player 1004
FINISHED
Player 541
PLAYING
GAME SCREEN
Not enough players to start
Ok
ICN Pyramid Runs flowchart
Master (inviting) player
1. Press iChallangeN button;
2. No player's action during 10 sec;
3. No touching! Return to the game selection screen.
4. The screen has been touch
5. A player select "By invitation only";
6. The player select Open to everybody;
7. Correct PIN has been entered;
8. Incorrect PIN has been entered;
9. An avatar has been selcted
10. Somebody accept the invitation.
11. Game is playing
12. The player completed the game
13. Nobody accept the invitation.
14. The game completed- Final table
15. Go to the main screen

Figure 3

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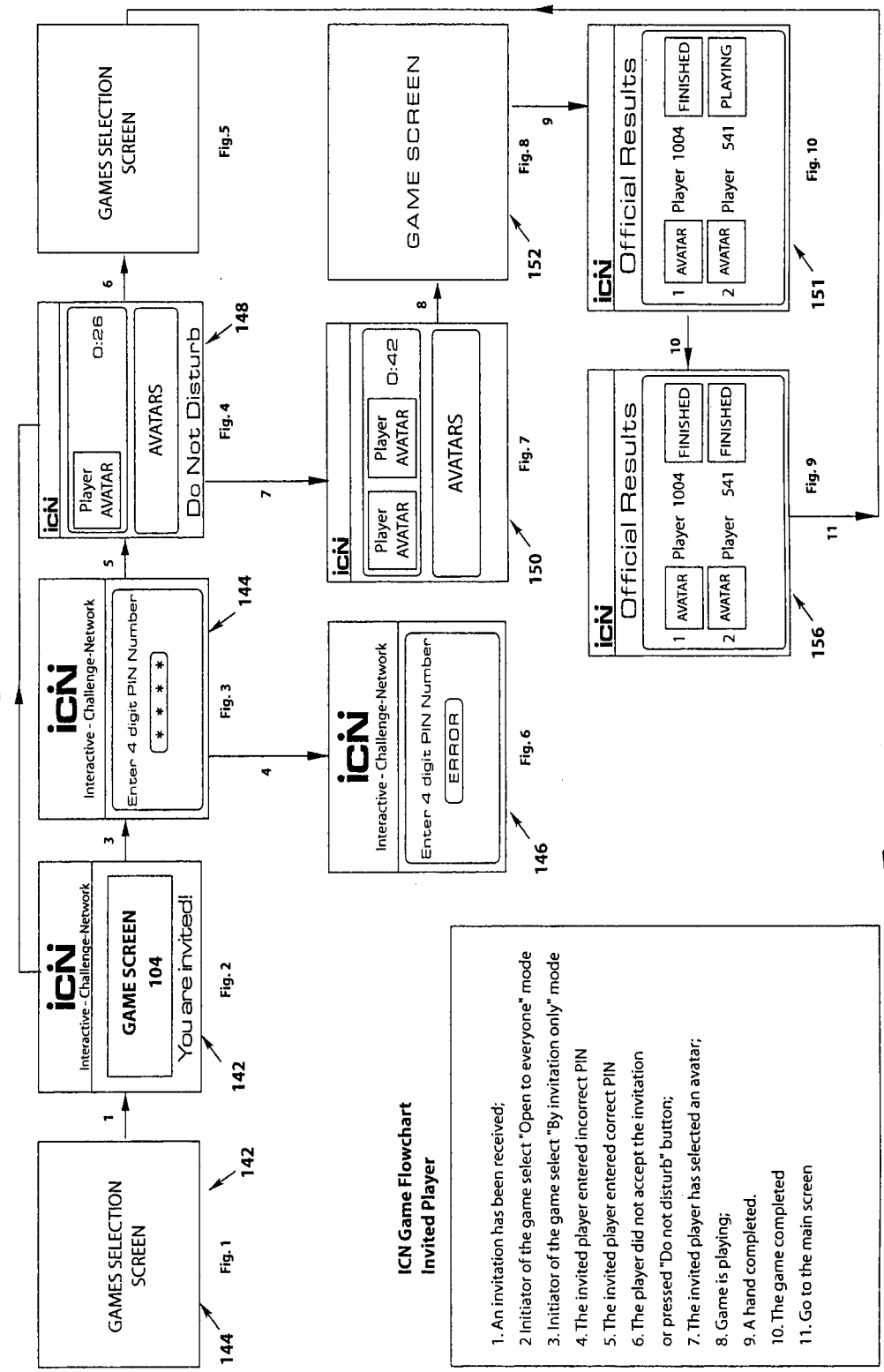
GAMES SELECTION SCREEN
144
Fig. 1
142
1
icn
Interactive - Challenge-Network
GAME SCREEN
104
You are invited!
142
Fig. 2
2
3
icn
Interactive - Challenge-Network
Enter 4 digit PIN Number
* * * *
Fig. 3
144
4
icn
Interactive - Challenge-Network
Enter 4 digit PIN Number
ERROR
146
Fig. 6
5
icn
Player AVATAR
0:26
AVATARS
Do Not Disturb
Fig. 4
148
6
GAMES SELECTION SCREEN
Fig. 5
7
icn
Player AVATAR
Player AVATAR
0:42
AVATARS
150
Fig. 7
8
GAME SCREEN
152
Fig. 8
9
icn
Official Results
1 AVATAR Player 1004 FINISHED
2 AVATAR Player 541 FINISHED
156
Fig. 9
10
icn
Official Results
1 AVATAR Player 1004 FINISHED
2 AVATAR Player 541 PLAYING
151
Fig. 10
11
ICN Game Flowchart
Invited Player
1. An invitation has been received;
2 Initiator of the game select "Open to everyone" mode
3. Initiator of the game select "By invitation only" mode
4. The invited player entered incorrect PIN
5. The invited player entered correct PIN
6. The player did not accept the invitation
or pressed "Do not disturb" button;
7. The invited player has selected an avatar;
8. Game is playing;
9. A hand completed.
10. The game completed
11. Go to the main screen

Figure 4

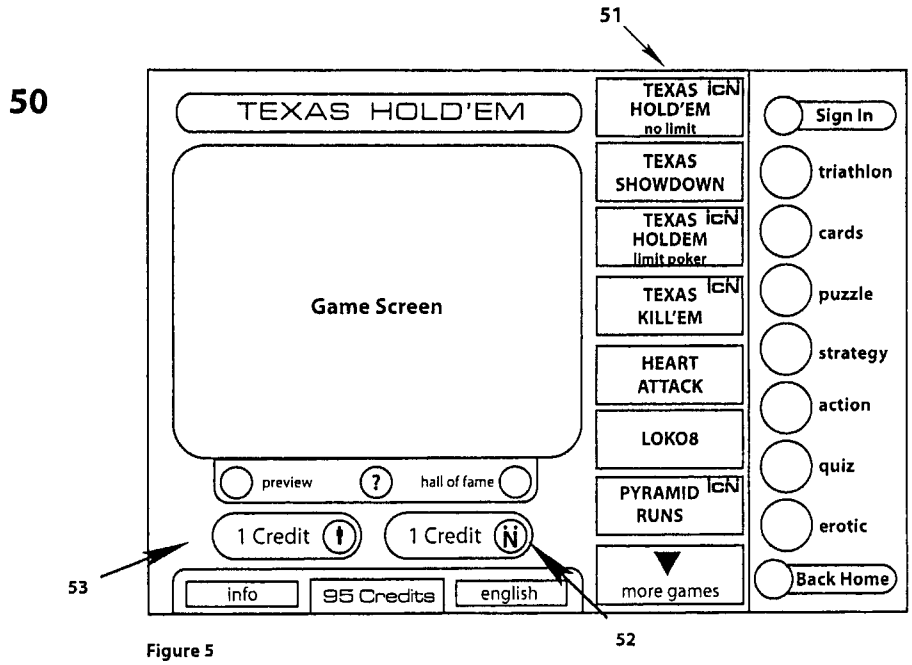


Figure 5

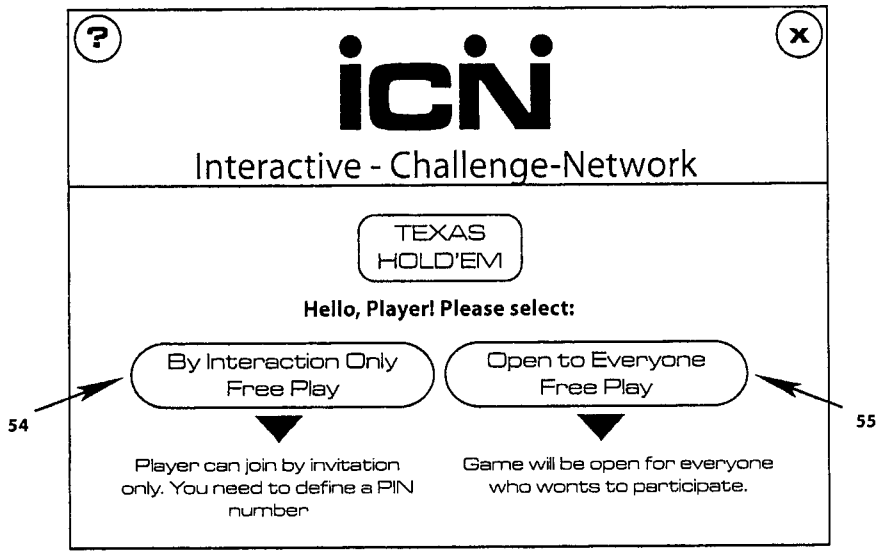


Figure 6

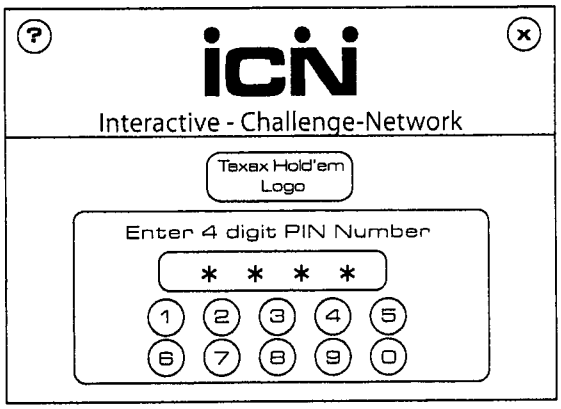


Figure 7


Figure 8

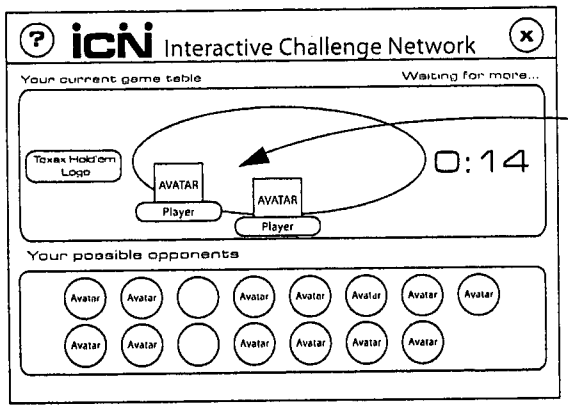


Figure 9

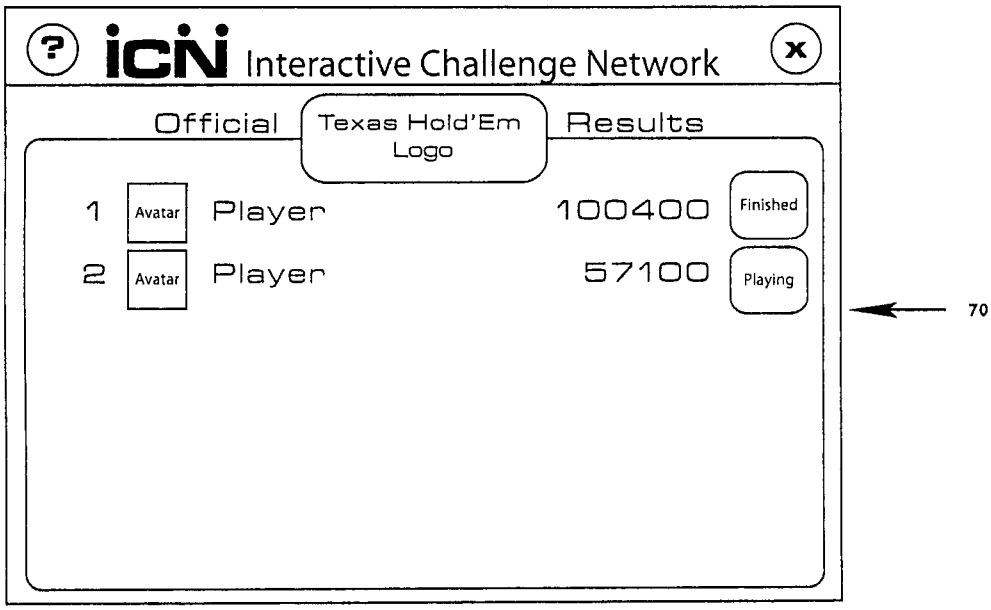
?
iCN Interactive Challenge Network
x
Official
Texas Hold'Em Logo
Results
1
Avatar
Player
100400
Finished
2
Avatar
Player
57100
Playing
70

Figure 10

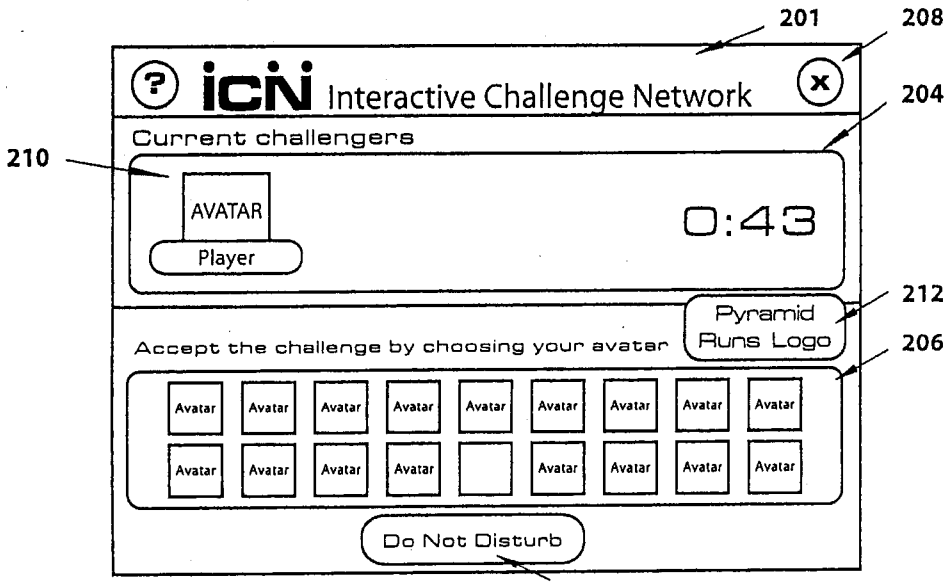


Figure 11

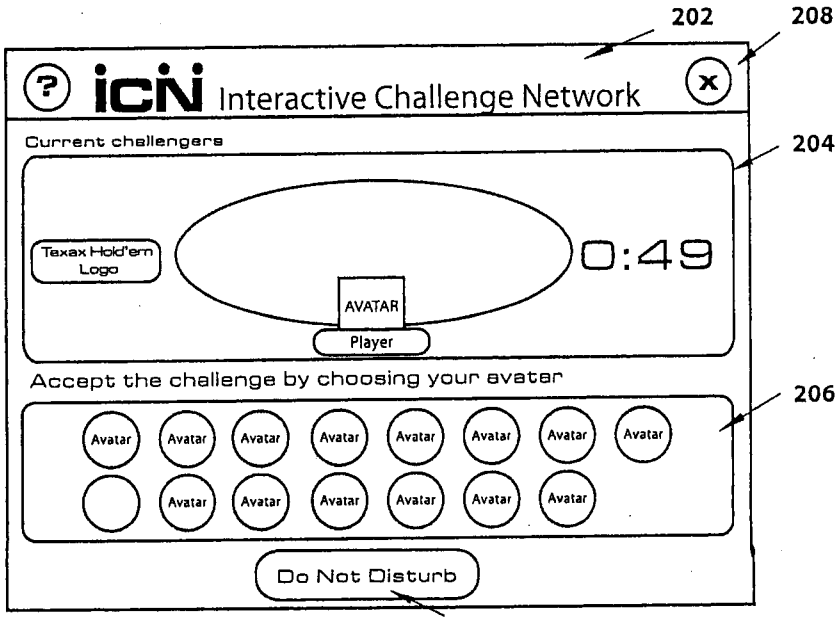


Figure 12

**INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT**

International application No.
PCT/CA2008/000431

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC: ***A63F 13/12*** (2006.01) , ***A63F 1/00*** (2006.01)
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)
IPC: ***A63F 13/12*** (2006.01) , ***A63F 1/00*** (2006.01)

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic database(s) consulted during the international search (name of database(s) and, where practicable, search terms used)
USPTO WEST, Canadian Patents Database, Google: game/gaming, machine/terminal, network, invite/invitation/join, do not disturb/private, tournament.

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

| Category* | Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages | Relevant to claim No. |
|---|---|---|
| X<br>Y | CA 2,259,197 C (PASCAL ET AL.)<br>20 September 2005 (20-09-2005)<br>entire document | 1 to 9 and 18<br>10 to 17 and 19 |
| Y | US 6,039,648 (GUINN ET AL.)<br>21 March 2000 (21-03-2000)<br>column 7, lines 1 to 9<br>column 8, lines 1 to 3<br>Figure 4 | 10 to 17 and 19 |
| A | US 6,309,299 B1 (WEISS)<br>30 October 2001 (30-10-2001)<br>entire document | 1 to 19 |

] Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. [X] 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

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"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 | Date of mailing of the international search report |
|---|---|
| 09 June 2008 (09-06-2008) | 27 June 2008 (27-06-2008) |

| Name and mailing address of the ISA/CA | Authorized officer |
|---|---|
| Canadian Intellectual Property Office<br>Place du Portage I, C114 - 1st Floor, Box PCT<br>50 Victoria Street<br>Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0C9<br>Facsimile No.: 001-819-953-2476 | Tara Derickx 819- 997-4502 |

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International application No.
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