A method of gaming including conducting a game having a prize, receiving wagers, deriving from the wagers contributions towards funding the game, and incrementing a probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions.
Figure 1
To local area of Wide area network(s)
METHOD OF GAMING, A GAME CONTROLLER AND A PRIZE CONTROLLER

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to Australian Provisional Application No. 2009905473, having a filing date of Nov. 9, 2009, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0002] [Not Applicable]

MICROFICHE/COPYRIGHT REFERENCE

[0003] [Not Applicable]

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The present invention relates to a method of gaming, a gaming system and a prize controller.

[0005] Current electronic gaming machines allow a player to place a wager or bet, in return for which a play of a game is conducted. In addition, many gaming machines may participate in a progressive jackpot. Typically, a portion of turnover from each gaming machine is forwarded to a jackpot controller as a contribution to the progressive jackpot. That is, part of each wager goes towards incrementing the jackpot. The technique can also be extended to a so-called wide area jackpot where gaming machines from a number of different venues contribute to the jackpot.

[0006] While such gaming systems provide users with enjoyment, a need exists for alternative gaming systems in order to maintain or increase player enjoyment.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] In a first aspect, the invention provides a method of gaming comprising:

[0008] conducting a game having a prize;

[0009] receiving wagers;

[0010] deriving from the wagers contributions towards funding the game; and

[0011] incrementing a probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions.

[0012] In an embodiment the contributions are a designated percentage of the wagers.

[0013] In an embodiment the method further comprises incrementing the probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions and a value of the prize.

[0014] In an embodiment the method further comprises obtaining an initial probability of awarding the prize.

[0015] In an embodiment the method further comprises obtaining the initial probability of awarding the prize based on a cash cycle of the contributions.

[0016] In an embodiment the method further comprises obtaining the initial probability of awarding the prize based on the cash cycle and a value of a wager in the game.

[0017] In an embodiment the method further comprises incrementing the initial probability of awarding the prize.

[0018] In an embodiment the method further comprises obtaining a subsequent initial probability of awarding a subsequent prize after awarding the prize.

[0019] In an embodiment the method further comprises obtaining a value of the prize based on an obtained percentage of the cash cycle.

[0020] In an embodiment the prize is a progressive jackpot which increments.

[0021] In an embodiment the method further comprises incrementing the progressive jackpot based on a first designated percentage of the wagers and incrementing the probability of awarding the jackpot based on a second designated percentage of the wagers.

[0022] In a second aspect, the invention provides a gaming system comprising:

[0023] a plurality of gaming devices; and

[0024] a prize controller in data communication with the plurality of gaming devices, the prize controller arranged to:

[0025] receive contributions towards funding a prize derived from wagers in games played with the gaming devices; and

[0026] increment a probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions.

[0027] In an embodiment the gaming system awards the prize.

[0028] In an embodiment the prize controller awards the prize.

[0029] In a third aspect, the invention provides a prize controller arranged to:

[0030] receive contributions towards funding a prize derived from wagers in games played with at least one gaming device; and

[0031] increment a probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions.

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

[0033] means for conducting a game having a prize;

[0034] means for receiving wagers;

[0035] means for deriving from the wagers contributions towards funding the game; and

[0036] means for incrementing a probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions.

[0037] In a fifth aspect, the invention provides a gaming system comprising:

[0038] a plurality of gaming devices, each gaming device comprising a cabinet, a display mounted within the cabinet, and a game play mechanism mounted to the cabinet incorporating at least one input device, the game play mechanism operable by a player to place wagers in games, and each gaming device being in data communication with a prize controller comprising a processor and a memory storing game control instructions which enable the prize controller to operate in response to operation of the game play mechanism, the prize controller arranged to:

[0039] receive contributions towards funding a prize derived from wagers in the games played with the gaming devices; and

[0040] increment a probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions.

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

[0042] In a seventh aspect, the invention provides a tangible computer readable medium comprising the above program code.
In an eighth aspect, the invention provides transmitting or receiving the above program code.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS**

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

- FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a gaming system with a plurality of gaming devices and a prize controller;
- FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a stand alone gaming machine;
- FIG. 3 is a block diagram of the functional components of a gaming machine;
- FIG. 4 is a schematic diagram of the functional components of a memory;
- FIG. 5 is a schematic diagram of a network gaming system;
- FIG. 6 is a block diagram of a gaming system;
- FIG. 7 is a block diagram of an embodiment;
- FIG. 8 is a flow chart of an embodiment; and
- FIG. 9 is a further flow chart of an embodiment.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION**

Referring to the drawings, there is shown a gaming method, and a gaming system and prize controller arranged to implement the method. The method comprising the steps of conducting a game having a prize, receiving wagers for the game, deriving from the wagers contributions towards funding the game and incrementing a probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions.

**Overview of Exemplary Gaming System**

FIG. 1 shows an exemplary gaming system where a prize controller is in data communication over a network, such as an Ethernet, with a bank of five gaming devices, a processor, a network card, a display card, and a memory. The prize controller is arranged to communicate with the gaming devices to receive contributions towards funding a prize derived from wagers in a game provided by at least one of the gaming devices. The prize controller is further arranged to increment a probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions.

**Gaming Devices**

Gaming devices capable of participating in the method of gaming of the embodiment can include any suitable form including stand alone gaming machines and server based gaming terminals.

A gaming device in the form of a stand alone gaming machine illustrated in FIG. 2. The gaming machine includes a console having a display on which are displayed representations of a game that can be played by a player. A mid-trim of the gaming machine houses a bank of buttons for enabling a player to interact with the gaming machine, in particular during play. The mid-trim also houses a credit input mechanism which in this example includes a coin input chute and a bill collector. Other credit input mechanisms may also be employed, for example, a card reader for reading a smart card, debit card or credit card. Other gaming machines may be configured for ticket in that they have a ticket reader for reading tickets having a value and crediting the player based on the face value of the ticket. A player marketing module (not shown) having a ticket reader 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阅读 device. In some embodiments, the player marketing module may provide an additional credit mechanism, either by transferring credits to the gaming machine from credits stored on the player tracking device or by transferring credits from a player account in data communication with the player marketing module.

A top box may carry artwork, 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 of the console. A coin tray is mounted beneath the front panel for dispensing cash payoffs from the gaming machine. The display in the form of a video display unit, particularly a cathode ray tube screen device. Alternatively, the display 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 may also include a display, for example a video display unit, which may be of the same type as the display, or of a different type.

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

The gaming machine includes a game controller having a processor mounted on a circuit board. Instructions and data to control operation of the processor are stored in a memory which is in data communication with the processor. Typically, the gaming machine 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.

The gaming machine has hardware meters for purposes including ensuring regulatory compliance and monitoring player credit, an input/output (I/O) interface for communicating with peripheral devices of the gaming machine. The input/output interface 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 generates random numbers for use by the processor. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the reference to random numbers includes pseudo-random numbers.

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

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

[0065] FIG. 4 shows a block diagram of the main components of an exemplary memory 103. The memory 103 includes RAM 103A, EROM 103B and a mass storage device 103C. The RAM 103A typically temporarily holds program files for execution by the processor 102 and related data. The EROM 103B may be a boot ROM device and/or may contain some system or game related code. The mass storage device 103C is typically used to store game programs, the integrity of which may be verified and/or authenticated by the processor 102 using protected code from the EROM 103B or elsewhere.

[0066] 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.

[0067] In a client server architecture a gaming device is provided by a gaming client and game server (and optionally other gaming network components). A gaming client has a similar outward appearance to gaming machine 10 but the game server implements most or all of the game and as such acts as the game controller while the terminal operated by the player essentially provides only the player interface. The gaming terminal receives player instructions, pass these to the game server which will process them and return game play outcomes to the gaming machine for display. Further details of a client/server gaming architecture can be found in WO 2006/052213 and PCT/SE2006/000559, the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference. In such an embodiment, a game controller can be provided, for example, by a dedicated server in data communication with the server computer.

[0068] FIG. 5 shows that a gaming device may be connected within a gaming network 200 which provides additional and/or enhanced functionality. The gaming network 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. While banks 203 of two gaming machines are illustrated in FIG. 5, banks of one, three or more gaming machines are also envisaged.

[0069] 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.

[0070] A game controller can be provided within such a network 200 by game server 205, such that a game server may implement a game for a plurality of different banks of gaming machines rather than a specific controller being provided for each gaming machine or for each bank of gaming machines.

[0071] A database management server 206 may manage storage of game programs and associated data for downloading or access by the gaming devices 202 in a database 206A. Typically, if the gaming system enables players to participate in a Jackpot game, a Jackpot server 207 will be provided to perform accounting functions for the Jackpot game. A loyalty program server 212 may also be provided.

[0072] 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.

[0073] The gaming network 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.

[0074] Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that in accordance with known techniques, functionality at the server side of the network may be distributed over a plurality of different computers. For example, elements may be run as a single “engine” on one server or a separate server may be provided. For example, the game server 205 could run a random generator engine. Alternatively, a separate random number generator server could be provided. Further, persons skilled in the art will appreciate that a plurality of game servers could be provided to run different games or a single game server may run a plurality of different games as required by the terminals.

Further Detail of Gaming System

[0075] Referring now to FIGS. 6 and 7, it can be seen that the constitution of the prize controller 150 is similar to that of the gaming machine illustrated in relation to FIGS. 2 to 4 in that it is a game controller with a processor 151 arranged to implement program code stored in memory 152. Also, the prize controller 150 has a communication interface 153 which is designed to enable the processor 151 to communicate with each of the gaming devices 10A to 10E across the network 2.

[0076] Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the implementation of the prize controller 150 is analogous to the implementation of bonus controllers in existing gaming systems and reference may be made to such bonus controllers for further details of implementation. However, persons skilled in the art will appreciate that in the case where the above described method of gaming is implemented on a stand alone gaming machine, such as the type illustrated in FIG. 2, the game controller 101 also implements the functions of the prize controller 150.

[0077] In an embodiment, the processor 151 of the prize controller 150 implements a number of modules, shown in FIG. 7, based on program code and data stored in memory 152. The processor 151 implements a contributions handler 720 to receive contributions designated towards funding a prize derived from wagers in a game provided by at least one of the gaming devices. The processor 151 also implements a probability incrementer 721 to increment a probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions. In addition, the processor 151 implements an award handler 722 to award the prize to the respective gaming device. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that several of the modules could be imple-
mented in some other way, for example by a dedicated circuit, or on a server remote from the prize controller 150.

[0078] In the embodiment shown in Fig. 7, a player of the gaming device 10A operates game play mechanism 116A to make a selection and input game instructions, selected from a plurality of available instructions displayed to the player on display 106A, to the game controller 101A to conduct a game having a prize. In this embodiment, the prize is referred to as a jackpot where a number of gaming devices contribute towards funding the jackpot and games are played in response to wagers placed at respective gaming devices in respective games. In another embodiment, the prize may increase to provide a progressive jackpot.

[0079] As described above, the game play mechanism 116A can be in the form of a touch screen and/or buttons. In addition, the player may also operate credit mechanism 117A to input a wager, or a number of credits, so that the player can operate the game play mechanism 116A to input a wager as game instructions for a game. The game controller 101A then executes program code stored as game rules 642 in memory 103A to generate outcomes of the game in response to the operation of the game play mechanism 116A. This may be achieved using an outcome generator 622 to generate the game outcomes which are then evaluated by an outcome evaluator 623 for the gaming device 10A. In addition to conducting the game, the game controller 101A derives from the wagers contributions towards funding the game and the jackpot at a contributions module 625. Persons skilled in the art will also appreciate that these modules may be incorporated into the game controller 101A or on a server remote from the gaming device 10A.

[0080] In the embodiment shown in Fig. 7, data representing the derived contributions designated towards funding the jackpot is forwarded to the contributions handler 720 via the communication interface 153 and stored in the memory 152. The probability incrementer 721 then increments a probability of awarding the jackpot based on these contributions if the jackpot is not determined to be won by the award handler 722.

[0081] In this embodiment, the processor 151 executes program code stored in memory 152 to repeatedly conduct random trials, for each contribution it receives, using a random number generator 723, the current probability of awarding the jackpot and the size of the contribution, to determine whether the jackpot is to be awarded. In this case, the award handler 722 communicates data via the data communication interface 153 over the network to all participating gaming devices 10A to 10E advising that the jackpot has been awarded. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the award handler 722 also communicates data to the gaming device where the jackpot is to be awarded so that it can make the award of the jackpot to the respective player. In an alternative embodiment, the prize controller may provide the current probability to each gaming device so that it can conduct a local random trial. In an alternative embodiment, the Jackpot may be awarded based on an occurrence of a generated game outcome corresponding to a designated game event. For example, the game event may be designated as five aces displayed in a reel type game. In this embodiment, persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the occurrence of the designated game event may be determined locally by the outcome evaluator 623 at each gaming device. For example, the gaming device 10A may adjust a probability table for the designated game event such that the outcome generator 622 communicates with the random number generator 621, with reference to the current probability of awarding the jackpot, to generate the game outcome. In any case, the prize controller 150 updates the memory 152 once a jackpot has been awarded and the probability of awarding the jackpot is reset.

[0082] In one example, one type of game played with the gaming device 10A, conducted by the game controller 101A, is a typical spinning reel game. In another example, the game played is a poker game. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that different types of games may be played with different gaming devices at the same time. For example, gaming device 10A may be conducting a spinning reel game whilst gaming device 10B is conducting a poker game, and both gaming devices make contributions towards the jackpot. In this example, the Jackpot is a random trial and is conducted based on contributions irrespective of the type of game played. Persons skilled in art will appreciate that in addition to the jackpot, the games may result in other awards based on the players win entitlement. It is typical for the player’s win entitlement to be affected by the amount they wager and selections they make (i.e. the nature of the wager). For example, a player’s win entitlement may be based on how many lines they select to play in the game, such as a minimum of one line up to the maximum number of lines allowed by the game (noting that all permutations of win lines may be available for selection). Such win or pay lines are typically formed by a combination of symbol display positions, one from each reel or column, the symbol display positions being located relative to one another such that they form a line.

[0083] In addition, in many games the player’s win entitlement is not strictly limited to the lines they have selected, for example, “scatter” pays are awarded independently of a player’s selection of pay lines and are an inherent part of the win entitlement. Also, persons skilled in the art will also appreciate that win entitlements may not be specific to each gaming device and certain win entitlements may be available for all gaming devices eligible to participate in the jackpot.

[0084] In the example of a spinning reel game, the game controller 101A includes an outcome generator 622 which obtains symbols specified by stored symbol data 641 using a random number generator 621 and advises them to a display controller 624 which causes them to be displayed on display 106A at symbol display positions. These symbol display positions are evaluated by an outcome evaluator 623 against specified game rules to determine if a game event corresponding to the player being awarded a win entitlement, or the jackpot (in one embodiment), has occurred. Further, the game rules may specify whether the player is eligible to be awarded the jackpot. It is to be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the player of a gaming device may require to qualify to be awarded the jackpot by an eligibility criterion, such as wagering the maximum credits available in a game or placing an ante bet in the game.

[0085] In an embodiment, wagers input by the game play mechanism 116A for a game are received by the contributions module 625 to derive contributions towards funding the game, any win entitlements of the game, and funding the jackpot. For example, the game rules 642 may specify that a designated percentage of the received wagers is to contribute towards the jackpot, e.g. 1% of each wagered $1 is to form a contribution to the jackpot. Data representing the contributions is communicated to the contributions handler 720 which collates contributions data from a number of gaming devices 10A to 10E for incrementing the probability of awarding the jackpot at the probability incrementer 721 and determining
whether to award the jackpot. Thus, in the example, when a $1 wager is received, the probability of being awarded the jackpot is incremented by the probability incrementer 721 based on 0.01 and a value of the jackpot. If the value of the jackpot is $10000, the probability incrementer 721 increments the jackpot by 0.01 x 1/10000 (0.00001) for each $1 wagered. In addition, the probability incrementer 721 advises the memory 153 and subsequently the award handler 722 of the current probability so that it can affect the random trials conducted to determine whether to award the jackpot.

Furthermore, the jackpot may be awarded to a player of a gaming device once in a cash cycle, where the cash cycle is the total turnover or amount wagered by all participating gaming devices until the jackpot is awarded. That is, using the above example, players of participating gaming devices can place wagers to attempt to win individual win entitlements in respective games in addition to the jackpot (provided they are eligible) and these wagers, or a portion thereof, form turnover which is then used to determine the current probability of being awarded the jackpot. For example, the game rules 642 may specify that the jackpot is to be awarded once in every $10000 wagered thus the initial probability of awarding the jackpot is 1/$10000 (0.0001) and the value of the jackpot may be obtained from a designated percentage of the cash cycle, for example the jackpot may set at 10% of the cash cycle ($1000). It can be seen that as the turnover increases in value to $10000, the probability of awarding the jackpot is incrementally increased. Also, the current value of the turnover and the value of the jackpot may be stored in meter data 643 and prize data 642.

As stated above, the jackpot may be a progressive jackpot which increments. In this case, a first designated percentage of the contributions, derived from wagers by the contributions module 625 and forwarded as data to the contributions handler 720, is used to increment the probability of awarding the progressive jackpot and a second designated percentage, also derived from wagers by the contributions module 625 and forwarded as data to the contributions handler 720, is used to increment the value of the progressive jackpot.

In the example, the initial probability of awarding the jackpot is 0.0001 and the value of the jackpot is $1000. The probability incrementer 721 may then increment the probability of awarding the jackpot based on the derived contributions (0.01 of $1 wagered) and thus increments the probability by 0.01/$1000 (0.00001) so that the probability of being awarded the jackpot is now 0.00011, and so on until the award handler 722 determines, from a conducted random trial, to award the jackpot in response to a game played by a gaming device. Once the jackpot is awarded, the turnover is reset and the probability of being awarded the jackpot reverts back to 0.0001. If, for example, the turnover from the gaming devices 10A to 10E is at $5000 since the last jackpot was awarded, 0.01 x $5000 (50) of this amount was derived as contributions towards funding the jackpot, i.e. increasing the probability of the jackpot being awarded, and the current probability of awarding the jackpot is now at 50/$1000 (0.05). If a player of one gaming device 10A places a $2 wager in a game, the contributions module 625 derives 0.01 x $2 (0.02) towards the jackpot and communicates this to the contributions handler 720 which, in turn, communicates this to the probability incrementer 721 which then increments the probability of awarding the jackpot by 0.02/$10000 (0.00002).

Thus, the probability of the player being awarded the jackpot in the game after the $2 wager is 0.05002.

The above example can be explained by the equations below.

A probability increment can be determined by the following equation:

\[ p = \frac{ib}{S} \]

\[ p \] represents the increment probability
\[ i \] represents the percentage of the wager forming the contribution
\[ b \] represents the value of a wager in a game
\[ S \] represents the value of the initial jackpot

The current probability of being awarded the jackpot in a game can be determined by the following equation:

\[ p = \frac{b}{c} + \frac{ib}{S} \]

\[ p \] represents the current probability of being awarded the jackpot
\[ b \] represents the value of a wager in a game
\[ c \] represents the cash cycle
\[ i \] represents the percentage of the wager forming the contribution

B represents the value of turnover up to the current game
\[ S \] represents the value of the initial jackpot

A method of gaming is also summarised in FIGS. 8 and 9. The method 800 comprises conducting 810 a game having a prize, receiving 820 wagers, deriving 830 from the wagers contributions towards funding the game and incrementing 840 a probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions. The method 900 of FIG. 9 also includes the above steps of conducting 910 a game, receiving 920 wagers and deriving 930 from the wagers contributions towards funding the game. However, the method 900 further includes obtaining 940 an initial probability of awarding the prize based on a cash cycle and the step of incrementing 950 the initial probability of awarding the prize until the prize is awarded.

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

It will be understood to persons skilled in the art of the invention that many modifications may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention, in particular it will be apparent that certain features of embodiments of the invention can be employed to form further embodiments.

For example, the prize controller 150 is shown in FIG. 1 as a separate entity to the gaming devices 10. In an alternative embodiment, it could be provided by one of the gaming devices incorporating a server module arranged to
implement the prize controller in the manner described in Australian patent application 2008205413 filed 13 Aug. 2008.

[0106] It is to be understood that, if any prior art is referred to herein, such reference does not constitute an admission that the prior art forms a part of the common general knowledge in the art in any country.

[0107] 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 “comprises” or variations such as “comprise” 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.

1. A method of gaming comprising:
   conducting a game having a prize;
   receiving wagers;
   deriving from the wagers contributions towards funding the game; and
   incrementing a probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions.

2. A method of gaming as claimed in claim 1 wherein the contributions are a designated percentage of the wagers.

3. A method of gaming as claimed in claim 2 further comprising incrementing the probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions and a value of the prize.

4. A method of gaming as claimed in claim 1 further comprising obtaining an initial probability of awarding the prize.

5. A method of gaming as claimed in claim 4 further comprising obtaining the initial probability of awarding the prize based on a cash cycle of the wagers.

6. A method of gaming as claimed in claim 5 further comprising obtaining the initial probability of awarding the prize based on the cash cycle and a value of a wager in the game.

7. A method of gaming as claimed in claim 4 further comprising incrementing the initial probability of awarding the prize.

8. A method of gaming as claimed in claim 1 further comprising obtaining a subsequent initial probability of awarding a subsequent prize after awarding the prize.

9. A method of gaming as claimed in claim 5 further comprising obtaining a value of the prize based on an obtained percentage of the cash cycle.

10. A method of gaming as claimed in claim 1 wherein the prize is a progressive jackpot which increments.

11. A method of gaming as claimed in claim 10 further comprising incrementing the progressive jackpot based on a first designated percentage of the wagers and incrementing the probability of awarding the jackpot based on a second designated percentage of the wagers.

12. A gaming system comprising:
   a plurality of gaming devices; and
   a prize controller in data communication with the plurality of gaming devices, the prize controller arranged to:
   receive contributions towards funding a prize derived from wagers in games played with the gaming devices; and
   increment a probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions.

13. A gaming system as claimed in claim 12 wherein the gaming system awards the prize.

14. A gaming system as claimed in claim 13 wherein the prize controller awards the prize.

15. A prize controller arranged to:
   receive contributions towards funding a prize derived from wagers in games played with at least one gaming device; and
   increment a probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions.

16. A gaming system comprising:
   means for conducting a game having a prize;
   means for receiving wagers;
   means for deriving from the wagers contributions towards funding the game; and
   means for incrementing a probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions.

17. A gaming system comprising:
   a plurality of gaming devices, each gaming device comprising a cabinet, a display mounted within the cabinet, and a game play mechanism mounted to the cabinet incorporating at least one input device, the game play mechanism operable by a player to place wagers in games, and each gaming device being in data communication with a prize controller comprising a processor and a memory storing game control instructions which enable the prize controller to operate, the prize controller arranged to:
   receive contributions towards funding a prize derived from wagers in the games played with the gaming devices; and
   increment a probability of awarding the prize based on the contributions.

18. A method of gaming as claimed in claim 1, further comprising computer program code.

19. A method of gaming as claimed in claim 18, further comprising storing the computer program code in a tangible computer readable medium.

20. A method of gaming as claimed in claim 19, further comprising transmitting or receiving the program code.

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