SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR GAMING FROM AN OFF-SITE LOCATION

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ABSTRACT

Exemplary systems and methods allow a patron to play games from an off-site location via an online network. For example, a server may receive, from a client terminal, a purchase request for a plurality of wagers from a patron before a game play has begun. The server may determine the results of the plurality of wagers and store the results in a database before the game play has begun. Then, the server may adjust an account of the player based on the results before the game play has begun, and send the results to the client terminal before the game play has begun, in response to a request to reveal the results. Additionally, exemplary systems and methods allow a patron to play games using variable pay tables based on denomination amounts, number of wagers, amounts of previous wagers. Such systems and methods may, for example, establish a plurality of denomination levels and corresponding pay tables such that odds of winning increase as the denomination value increases.
FIG. 3

PRIVATE NETWORK

EXISTING GAMING SYSTEM

SERVER

PUBLIC NETWORK

SERVICE CLIENT TERMINAL

ON-SITE CLIENT TERMINAL

OFF-SITE CLIENT TERMINAL
CEN TERMINAL RECEIVES PATRON LOGON INFORMATION

CLIENT TERMINAL SENDS "LOGON" MESSAGE TO SERVER

NO

VALID PATRON?

YES

CLIENT TERMINAL DISPLAYS SELECTION MENU

CLIENT TERMINAL RECEIVES PATRON SELECTION INFORMATION (e.g., PURCHASE AMOUNT AND DENOMINATION VALUE)

CLIENT TERMINAL SENDS PATRON SELECTION INFORMATION TO SERVER

CLIENT TERMINAL RECEIVES PATRON SELECTION FOR THE OPTION TO PURCHASE WAGERS AND SENDS WAGER PURCHASE REQUEST MESSAGE TO SERVER

SEND ACKNOWLEDGMENT MESSAGE TO CLIENT TERMINAL AND REQUEST SELECTION INFORMATION

CONT'D FROM 6B

CONT'D FROM 6B

CONT'D ON 6B

FIG. 6A
CLIENT TERMINAL RECEIVES PATRON LOGON INFORMATION

CLIENT TERMINAL SENDS “LOGON” MESSAGE TO SERVER

VALID PATRON?

NO

YES

CLIENT TERMINAL DISPLAYS SELECTION MENU

PATRON SELECTS AND PLAYS GAMES

CLIENT TERMINAL SENDS LOGOFF MESSAGE TO SERVER

CONT'D ON 7B

FIG. 7A
CONT'D FROM 7A

714
DOES PATRON HAVE POSITIVE ACCOUNT BALANCE?

NO

YES

SEND PATRON'S ACCOUNT BALANCE AND PATRON IDENTIFIER TO SERVER 108

716

DEBIT PATRON ACCOUNT FOR PURCHASE AMOUNT

718

APPLY WAGER POOL TOWARDS ADDITIONAL WAGERS

723

DETERMINE RESULT FOR EACH WAGER AND STORE RESULT IN DATABASE.

720

IS WAGER POOL EQUAL TO ZERO?

NO

YES

724
DONE

FIG. 7B
CLIENT TERMINAL RECEIVES PATRON LOGON INFORMATION

CLIENT TERMINAL SENDS "LOGON" MESSAGE TO SERVER

VALID PATRON?

YES

CLIENT TERMINAL DISPLAYS SELECTION MENU

CLIENT TERMINAL RECEIVES PATRON SELECTION FOR ANOTHER OPTION AND SENDS REQUEST TO SERVER

CLIENT TERMINAL RECEIVES ACCOUNT BALANCE, AND DISPLAYS ACCOUNT BALANCE

NO

FIG. 8A
CLIENT TERMINAL RECEIVES SELECTION FOR A REVEAL METHOD

CLIENT TERMINAL DISPLAYS RESULT OF REVEAL AND UPDATED ACCOUNT BALANCE

CLIENT TERMINAL NOTIFIES PATRON THAT THERE ARE NO ADDITIONAL UNREVEALED WAGERS

ARE THERE ANY ADDITIONAL UNREVEALED WAGERS?

CONTINUE TO REVEAL?

FIG. 8B
Client Terminal Receives Purchase Request for a Wager

Wagering Component Associates Denomination Value with the Wager

Wagering Component Determines a Pay Table for the Wager

Wagering Component Determines Result of the Wager Based on Pay Table

End

FIG. 9
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Pay Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 ¢</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ¢</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIG. 10**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Pay Table 1</th>
<th>Pay Table 2</th>
<th>Pay Table 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>20 to 1</td>
<td>25 to 1</td>
<td>100 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>15 to 1</td>
<td>24 to 1</td>
<td>60 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 ¢</td>
<td>10 to 1</td>
<td>12 to 1</td>
<td>20 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 ¢</td>
<td>3 to 1</td>
<td>5 to 1</td>
<td>7 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ¢</td>
<td>2 to 1</td>
<td>3 to 1</td>
<td>5 to 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 to 1</td>
<td>1 to 1</td>
<td>1 to 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIG. 11**
SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR GAMING FROM AN OFF-SITE LOCATION

RELATED APPLICATIONS


FIELD

[0002] The present invention relates generally to gaming, and more particularly, to a system, method, and article of manufacture for providing patrons with the ability to play games from an off-site location.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Gaming facilities (e.g., casinos) operate in a highly competitive environment. To maximize revenues, these facilities try to attract new and repeat patrons by making patrons feel welcome and appreciated. For example, these facilities often offer patrons a wide variety of amenities and services other than gaming, such as restaurants and valet services, and entertainment options like concerts and theater events. Moreover, successful gaming facilities must continually update the games, amenities, and services that they offer patrons in order to remain competitive.

[0004] New entrants to the gaming industry face even more difficulty. For example, enormous amounts of capitol are necessary to fund the design and development of a new gaming facility. These problems prevent non-gaming type hospitality facilities, such as hotels, motels, amusement parks, theme parks, and resorts, and retail facilities, such as grocery stores and gas stations, from entering the gaming industry.

[0005] One way for both gaming facilities to increase revenues and for non-gaming facilities to enter into the gaming industry would be for each to provide patrons with the ability to play from an off-site location (e.g., from home) via an online network (e.g., the Internet). These facilities, however, face many problems associated with providing off-site gaming over an online network.

[0006] One problem is that patrons do not have confidence in the security of the online networks, such as the Internet, and thus, are hesitant to provide personal information or to purchase wagers over online networks. Another problem is that gaming via online networks, such as the Internet, is not legal in many places. Therefore, these facilities may not be able to provide their patrons with such an ability.

SUMMARY

[0007] A gaming method consistent with the present invention may include receiving, at a server, a purchase request for a plurality of wagers from a patron at a client terminal before a game play has begun; determining, at the server, results of the plurality of wagers before the game play has begun; storing, at the server, the results of the plurality of wagers in a database before the game play has begun; adjusting, at the server, an account of the player based on the results of the plurality of wagers before the game play has begun; and sending, from the server, the results of the plurality of wagers to the client terminal before the game play has begun, in response to a request received at the server to reveal the results of the plurality of wagers.

[0008] Another gaming method consistent with the present invention may include receiving, at a server, a patron identifier identifying a patron from a client terminal before a game play has begun; receiving, at the server, a purchase request for at least one wager from the first client terminal before the game play has begun; debiting, at the server, an account balance of a patron account corresponding to the received patron identifier based on the received purchase request; determining, at the server, a result of the at least one wager before the game play has begun; storing, at the server, the result of the at least one wager in a database before the game play has begun; adjusting, at the server, the account balance of the patron account based on the result of the at least one wager before the game play has begun; and sending, from the server, to a second client terminal, the result of the at least one wager before the game play has begun in response to the patron identifier identifying the patron and a request received at the server to reveal the results of the at least one wager without the game play.

[0009] A gaming system consistent with the present invention may include a plurality of client terminals, each including: means for receiving from a patron, a patron identifier identifying the patron and a purchase request for a plurality of wagers before a game play has begun; and means for transmitting the patron identifier and the purchase request before the game play has begun; and a server, connected to each of the plurality of client terminals, and including: means for receiving, from the plurality of client terminals, the patron identifier and the purchase request before the game play has begun, means for debiting the patron account corresponding to the patron identifier in response to the purchase request before the game play has begun, means for determining results of the plurality of wagers before the game play has begun, means for adjusting the patron account based on the results of the plurality of wagers before the game play has begun, means for storing the results of the plurality of wagers before the game play has begun; and means for sending, to the client terminals, the result of the plurality of wagers before the game play has begun, in response to the patron identifier identifying the patron and a request received at the server to reveal the results of the plurality of wagers without the game play.

[0010] Another gaming system consistent with the present invention may include a plurality of client terminals, each including an identification component for receiving, from a patron, a patron identifier identifying the patron before a game play has begun, an output device for displaying a selection menu including an option to purchase a plurality of wagers, an input device for receiving, from the patron, a purchase request for a plurality of wagers before the game play has begun, and a first communications device for transmitting the patron identifier and the purchase request before the game play has begun; and a server, connected to each of the plurality of client terminals, and including: a second communications device for receiving, from the plurality of client terminals, the patron identifier and the purchase request before the game play has begun, a communications component for debiting the patron account corresponding to the patron identifier in response to the purchase request before
the game play has begun, a wagering component for deter-
miming the results of the plurality of wagers before the game play has begun, an adjusting component for adjusting the patron account based on the results of the plurality of wagers before the game play has begun, a database for storing the results of the plurality of wagers before the game play has begun, and a transmitter for sending, to the client terminals, the result of the plurality of wagers during the game play.

[0011] Another gaming system consistent with the present invention may include a plurality of on-site client terminals for receiving wager purchase requests before a game play has begun, determining the results of the purchased wagers before the game play has begun, adjusting player accounts based on the results of the purchased wagers before the game play has begun, and storing the results of the purchased wagers before the game play has begun; and a plurality of off-site client terminals, connected to the server via an online network, for receiving the results of the purchased wagers from the server during the game play.

[0012] Another gaming method consistent with the present invention may include receiving, at a server, a patron identifier identifying a patron from a first client terminal before a game play has begun; receiving, at the server, a purchase request for a plurality of wagers from the first client terminal before the game play has begun; debiting, at the server, an account balance of a patron account corresponding to the received patron identifier based on the received purchase request; determining, at the server, results of the plurality of wagers before the game play has begun; adjusting, at the server, the account balance of the patron account based on the results of the plurality of wagers before the game play has begun; storing, at the server, the results of the plurality of wagers in a database before the game play has begun; sending, from the server, the results of the plurality of wagers to a second client terminal, during the game play.

[0013] A server connected to a plurality of client terminals in a gaming system consistent with the present invention may include means for receiving, from a patron at a first client terminal, a purchase request for at least one wager before a game play has begun; means for determining a result of the at least one wager before a game play has begun; means for adjusting an account balance of the patron based on the result of the at least one wager before the game play has begun; means for storing the result of the at least one wager before the game play has begun; and means for sending the result of the at least one wager to a second client terminal during the game play.

[0014] Another server connected to a plurality of client terminals in a gaming system consistent with the present invention may include a communications device for receiving, from a patron at a client terminal, a purchase request for a plurality of wagers before a game play has begun; a wagering component for determining results of the plurality of wagers before the game play has begun; an adjusting component for adjusting an account balance of the patron based on the results of the plurality of wagers before the game play has begun; a database for storing the results of the plurality of wagers before the game play has begun; and a sending component for sending the results of the plurality of wagers to the client terminal during the game play.

[0015] Another gaming method consistent with the present invention may include receiving, at a server, a purchase request for at least one wager from a first client terminal before a game play has begun; determining, at the server, results of the at least one wager before the game play has begun; updating, at the server, a patron account balance according to the results of the at least one wager before the game play has begun; storing, at the server, the results of the at least one wager in a database before the game play has begun; receiving, at the server, a request from a second client terminal to reveal the results of the at least one wager without the game play; and sending, from the server, the results of the at least one wager to the second client terminal.

[0016] Another gaming method consistent with the present invention may include receiving, at a server, a purchase request for at least one wager from a player at a first client terminal before a game play has begun; determining, at the server, a result of the at least one wager before the game play has begun; storing, at the server, the result in a database before the game play has begun; adjusting, at the server, an account of the player based on the result before the game play has begun; receiving, at the server, a request to reveal the result; sending, from the server, the result to a second client terminal; and displaying the result at the second client terminal after a predetermined period of time from the sending of the result.

[0017] Another gaming system consistent with the present invention may include receiving, at a server, a purchase request for at least one wager from a player at a first client terminal before a game play has begun; determining, at the server, a result of the at least one wager before the game play has begun; storing, at the server, the result in a database before the game play has begun; sending, at the server, a request to reveal the result; sending, from the server, the result to a second client terminal; and displaying the result at the second client terminal after a predetermined period of time from the sending of the result.

[0018] Another gaming method consistent with the present invention may include receiving a purchase request for a wager from a player at a first client terminal before a game play has begun; associating a purchase amount with the wager; determining a pay table based on the purchase amount; determining a result of the wager based on the determined pay table before the game play has begun; receiving a request to reveal the result; and sending the result to a second client terminal.

[0019] Another gaming method consistent with the present invention may include receiving a purchase request for a wager from a player at a first client terminal before a game play has begun; associating a denomination value with the wager; determining a pay table for the wager based on the denomination value; determining a result of the wager based on the determined pay table before the game play has begun; receiving a request to reveal the result; and sending the result to a second client terminal in response to the request to reveal the result.

[0020] Another gaming method consistent with the present invention may include receiving a redemption request from a player to redeem a prize amount from a previously-placed wager; receiving a purchase request from the player to use at least some of the prize amount to place a new wager; determining a previous pay table used to determine the prize amount from the previously-placed wager; selecting a new pay table for the new wager such that the new pay table has better odds of winning than the previous pay table; determining a result of the new wager using the new pay table before
game play has begun; receiving a request to reveal the result; and sending the result to a client terminal in response to the request to reveal the result.

[0021] Another gaming method consistent with the present invention may include receiving a purchase request for a plurality of wagers from a player at a first client terminal before a game play has begun; associating a first denomination value with the plurality of wagers; determining a pay table based on the first denomination value; determining results of the plurality of wagers based on the pay table before the game play has begun; receiving, from a second client terminal, a request to reveal modified results, wherein the request includes a second denomination value greater than the first denomination value; dividing the second denomination value by the first denomination value to determine a number of modified results; aggregating, at the server, the number of modified results into a total prize; and sending, from the server, the total prize to the second client terminal in response to the request to reveal the modified results.

[0022] Another gaming method consistent with the present invention may include receiving a redemption request from a player to redeem a prize amount from a previously-placed wager; receiving a purchase request from the player to use at least some of the prize amount to place a new wager; determining a result of the new wager before game play has begun; receiving a request to reveal the result; and sending the result to a client terminal in response to the request to reveal the result.

[0023] It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed description are exemplary and explanatory only and are not restrictive of the invention, as claimed.

[0024] The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, illustrate one or more embodiments consistent with the invention and together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0025] The accompanying drawings are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification and, together with the description, explain the principles of the invention. In the drawings,

[0026] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of an exemplary gaming system consistent with the present invention;
[0027] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of another exemplary gaming system consistent with the present invention;
[0028] FIG. 3 is a block diagram of another exemplary gaming system consistent with the present invention;
[0029] FIG. 4 is a block diagram of an exemplary client terminal consistent with the present invention;
[0030] FIG. 5 is a block diagram of an exemplary server consistent with the present invention;
[0031] FIGS. 6-8 are flow diagrams of an exemplary method of operating a system consistent with the present invention;
[0032] FIG. 9 is a flow diagram of an exemplary method of determining a result based on a pay table;
[0033] FIG. 10 is an exemplary denomination correspondence table; and
[0034] FIG. 11 is an exemplary prize table.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

[0035] Reference will now be made in detail to the present exemplary embodiments of the invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Wherever possible, the same reference numbers will be used throughout the drawings to refer to the same or like parts.

[0036] Systems, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention allow a patron to play games from an off-site location (e.g., patron's home) via an online network (e.g., the Internet). For example, systems, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention may assign a unique patron identifier (e.g., account number) or a sending device (such as a magnetic card or a transmitter) with a unique patron identifier to each patron. The patron may use the patron identifier or the sending device to log onto a client terminal located at a facility, such as a hospitality facility or a retail facility. To provide security, the patron may also be required to, for example, enter a preestablished personal identification number (PIN) or use biometric authentication.

[0037] After logging onto the client terminal, the patron may use an input device at the client terminal to enter a request to purchase at least one wager. The client terminal may then send a wager purchase request to a server. The term wager, as used in this application, refers to playing one game (e.g., one pull on a slot machine type game). As part of the purchase request, the patron may be required to specify selection information, such as a purchase amount, number of wagers, or a denomination value for each wager. After the server receives the request, it debits the account balance corresponding to the patron's account based on the request, for example, by subtracting the purchase amount from the patron's account balance. Then, the server immediately determines the result of each wager by using one of a number of different known methods and stores the result of each wager in a transaction history file corresponding to the patron's account.

[0038] Once the results of the wagers have been determined and stored by the server on-site, the patron may use an off-site client terminal, such as a computer located at the patron's home, to reveal the results of the wagers. The off-site client terminal connects to the on-site server via a public network, such as the Internet. The server identifies the proper patron account and transaction history file through receipt of the patron identifier. To provide additional security, the patron may be required to enter authentication information, such as a preestablished PIN, or use biometric authentication. The results of the wagers may be revealed to the patron by using a reveal component, such as a blackjack, a keno, or a slot machine type (e.g. spinning reel or multi-line) graphical user interface application, which may be stored on the off-site client terminal. The server may send the result of each wager to the reveal component, which may in turn display a different graphical user interface depending on whether the result was a win or a loss. The patron may continue to reveal the remaining wagers or stop playing at any time. After the patron has finished playing, the patron may go back to the facility to collect his or her account balance, which may be adjusted by an amount reflecting any money won or lost by the patron when he or she revealed any wagers.

[0039] Systems, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention receive wager purchase requests from patrons at the facility, determine the results of the wagers at the facility, but may reveal the results of the
wagers at a location other than at the facility. Furthermore, the results may be stored in the patron’s account and revealed by the patron at the facility.

[0040] The foregoing and the following examples are intended to be illustrative of the features of the present invention as opposed to limiting it in any manner. Moreover, systems, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention are not limited to any particular facility or patron. A facility may include, but is not limited to, a hospitality facility (e.g., gaming facilities, hotels, motels, amusement parks, theme parks, and resorts) and a retail facility (e.g., grocery stores and gas stations). A patron may include, but is not limited to, a guest or customer of the facility.

[0041] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of an exemplary gaming system 100 consistent with the present invention. As shown, system 100 may include one or more on-site client terminals 102a-102n, one or more service client terminals 104a-104n, one or more off-site client terminals 106a-106n, and a server 108, which are interconnected by a network 110. In the following description, a single on-site client terminal, a single service client terminal, and a single off-site client terminal are referred to as on-site client terminal 102, service client terminal 104, and off-site client terminal 106, respectively. Moreover, on-site client terminals 102a-102n, service client terminals 104a-104n, and off-site client terminals 106a-106n are collectively referred to as client terminals. On-site client terminal 102 may be a computer or a similar device that may receive or retrieve patron identifiers (e.g., account numbers), receive requests from patrons, display information to patrons, and communicate with server 108. On-site client terminal 102, a patron may, for example, purchase wagers or perform other tasks, such as play traditional on-site games, locate other patrons, or communicate with other patrons in the facility. On-site client terminals 102a-102n may be located throughout the facility.

[0042] In one embodiment, a patron may use on-site client terminal 102 to reveal the results of previously purchased wagers. For example, if the facility is a casino, on-site client terminal 102 may be located at a restaurant in the casino or the patron’s hotel room so that the patron can reveal results of previously purchased wagers in a location other than the casino floor. Of course, systems, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention may also allow a patron to reveal the results of previously purchased wagers at a client terminal on the casino floor.

[0043] In one embodiment, on-site client terminals 102a-102n may be the player terminals or kiosk terminals disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/488,556 (“556 application”), filed Jan. 21, 2000; the player terminals disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 08/877,375 (“375 application”), filed Jun. 17, 1997; now U.S. Pat. No. 6,280,328, or U.S. Pat. No. 5,674,128 (“128 patent”); the patron client terminals disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/689,842 (“842 application”), filed Oct. 13, 2000; or the patron client terminals disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/689,841 (“841 application”), filed Oct. 13, 2000. The contents of all the aforesaid applications are hereby incorporated by reference. Alternatively, on-site client terminals 102a-102n may be combined with the player terminals, kiosk terminals, or patron client terminals disclosed in the aforesaid applications. In still another embodiment, on-site client terminals 102a-102n may be used to accomplish tasks performed by the player terminals, kiosk terminals, or patron client terminals disclosed in the aforesaid applications. For example, a patron may use on-site client terminals 102a-102n to communicate or locate other patrons of the facility, including the patrons that may be on-site and the patrons that may be off-site, for example, the patrons that may be using off-site client terminals 106a-106n to play games.

[0044] As shown in FIG. 1, systems, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention also may include one or more service client terminals 104a-104n. Service client terminal 104 may be a computer or a similar device that may be used to accomplish administrative and management tasks, such as opening accounts for patrons or generating various internal reports. Generally, service client terminals 104a-104n may be used only by personnel at the facility.

[0045] In one embodiment, a patron may purchase wagers at service client terminals 104a-104n. In another embodiment, a patron may establish an account for another person (e.g., friend or family member) and purchase wagers for the account as a gift. Alternatively, if the person already has an account with the facility, the patron may simply purchase wagers for the account. In this situation, the patron also would need to provide information (e.g., patron name or patron identifier) that identifies the person’s account.

[0046] In another embodiment, a patron may reveal the results of the purchased wagers at service client terminal 104. For example, if a patron prefers to receive the total amount won or lost after processing of all of the purchased wagers rather than reveal the results one at a time, the patron may ask a clerk at service client terminal 104 for that information.

[0047] In one embodiment, service client terminals 104a-104n may be the service-client stations, customer service stations, the cashier stations, or the management and reporting stations disclosed in the ‘556 application; the cashier station or the customer service station disclosed in the ‘375 application and the ‘128 patent; the service client terminals disclosed in the ‘842 application; and the client terminals disclosed in the ‘841 application. Alternatively, the service client terminals 104a-104n may be combined with a system that includes the service-client stations, customer service stations, the cashier stations, the management and reporting stations, or service client terminals disclosed in the aforesaid applications. In still another embodiment, the service client terminals 104a-104n may be used to accomplish the tasks performed by the service-client stations, customer service station, the cashier station, the management and reporting station, or the service client terminals disclosed in the aforesaid applications. For example, service client terminals 104a-104n may communicate with server 108 to transmit new software and software upgrades to on-site client terminals 102a-102n and to remotely reconfigure these client terminals.

[0048] As shown in FIG. 1, systems, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention also may include one or more off-site client terminals 106a-106n. Off-site client terminal 106 may be a computer or a similar device. Off-site client terminals 106a-106n are located outside of the facility, for example, at a patron’s home. Using an off-site client terminal 106, a patron may reveal the results of previously purchased wagers or perform other tasks, such as communicating or locating other patrons at a facility or other patrons who may be logged onto other off-site client terminals 102a-102n. In one embodiment, the off-site client terminal 106 may also be used to purchase wagers.

[0049] As shown in FIG. 1, systems, methods, and articles of manufacture also may include server 108. Server 108 may
be a computer or a similar device that maintains and controls on-site client terminals 102a-102n, service client terminals 104a-104n, and off-site client terminals 106a-106n. In addition, server 108 may receive a wager purchase request, debit a patron’s account balance based on the purchase request, determine the results of each wager, store the results of each wager in a transaction history file corresponding to the patron’s account, or receive and process wager reveal requests. In an alternative embodiment, server 108 may send wager purchase or reveal requests to another server or system for processing.

[0050] Server 108 may include a database for storing patron account files for each patron. Each patron account file may include, for example, the patron’s identifier (e.g., account number), the patron’s identification information (e.g., name, address, or date of birth), the patron’s preference information (e.g., preferred beverage, snack, language, restaurant, or golf course), and a transaction history file for storing the results of purchased wagers.

[0051] Server 108 may be located in a secured area of the facility, accessible by authorized personnel only. In the embodiment of FIG. 1, only one server 108 is shown. As the size of system 100 grows, however, additional servers may be added. These additional servers may assist with load balancing. Moreover, some servers may be used for on-site requests and others may be used for off-site requests. For example, some servers may be used to process wager purchase and reveal requests that are received from on-site client terminals 102a-102n, and others may be used to process wager purchase and reveal requests that are received from off-site client terminals 106a-106n.

[0052] In one embodiment, server 108 may be the transaction processor subsystem disclosed in the ‘556 application, or the central control network disclosed in the ‘375 application or the ‘128 patent. Alternatively, server 108 may be combined with a system that includes the amenities server or transaction processor subsystem disclosed in the ‘556 application; the central control network, the games server, or the terminal server disclosed in the ‘375 application or the ‘128 patent; or server 110 disclosed in the ‘842 application. In still another embodiment, server 108 may be used to accomplish tasks performed by the amenities server or transaction processor subsystem disclosed in the ‘556 application; the central control network, the games server, or the terminal server disclosed in the ‘375 application or the ‘128 patent; or server 110 disclosed in the ‘842 application. For example, server 108 may assist a patron in locating other patrons or communicating with other patrons.

[0053] Network 110 may be a single or a combination of any type of computer network, such as a Local Area Network (LAN) or a Wide Area Network (WAN). For example, network 110 may comprise an Ethernet network operating according to the IEEE 802.3 standard. In addition, network 110 may be a combination of public (e.g., Internet) and private networks. For example, as shown in FIG. 2, network 110 may include a public network 204 (e.g., Internet) and a private network 202 (e.g., a LAN). The other components shown in FIG. 2 are similar to the components shown in FIG. 1 and thus, will not be described in further detail. Moreover, in one embodiment, network 110 may be a combination of virtual LANs.

[0054] Other system and network configurations will be apparent to those skilled in the art from the foregoing and following description, and thus, are also within the scope of the present invention. For example, as shown in FIG. 3, systems, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention may be combined with an existing gaming system 302. The existing gaming system 302 may be any gaming system, such as the video game system disclosed in the ’556 application or the cashless gaming system disclosed in the ’375 application or the ’128 patent.

[0055] In this example, a patron may use a client terminal that exists in the existing gaming system 302 or system 100 to send a wager purchase request to the existing gaming system 302. Upon receiving the wager purchase request, the existing gaming system 302 may forward the request to server 108 along with the patron’s patron identifier. The request may include, for example, the purchase amount. Server 108 may receive the request and the patron identifier. Server 108 may then determine the number of wagers that may be purchased based on the request, for example, using the purchase amount. Next, server 108 may determine the result of each wager and store the result of each wager in the transaction history file corresponding to the received patron identifier. After the results have been stored, the patron may use a client terminal 102 or an off-site client terminal 106 to reveal the results of the purchased wagers. In an alternative embodiment, the wager purchase request may be automatically generated whenever the patron logs off the client terminal in existing system 302. In this embodiment, the existing system 302 may send the patron’s account balance, which may be used as the purchase amount, the wager purchase request, and the patron identifier to server 108.

[0056] One skilled in the art would appreciate that systems, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention also may be implemented either singly or in combination with the inventions disclosed in the ’556 application, ’375 application, ’128 patent, ’842 application, or ’841 application.

[0057] While the components of FIGS. 1-3 are shown as logical devices, one skilled in the art would readily understand that each is associated with a respective physical device. For example, as described in the foregoing description, server 108 may be a physical device, such as a computer. Also, it will be known to those skilled in the art that the components of system 100 may use a single or a combination of protocols and technologies to communicate with each other. For example, server 108 and client terminals may use HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP) and Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) for transport and HyperText Markup Language (HTML) for presenting information to patrons.

[0058] In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, a patron wishing to use system 100 may establish a patron account for storage in server 108. This account may be established, for example, at a service client terminal 104, which may be located, for example, at the front desk of a hotel. In one embodiment, the service client terminal 104 may be operated by an employee of the facility. In another embodiment, the service client terminal 104 may be unmanned, obtaining information from a patron through a series of interactive menus. To establish an account, the patron may need to provide some identifier information (e.g., name, address, or date of birth) and preference information (e.g., preferred beverage, snack, language, restaurant, or golf course). Once the patron provides the requested information, service client terminal 104 sends the information to server 108, which in turn establishes a patron account file for the patron and issues the
patron a unique patron identifier. A patron identifier may include letters, numbers, or a combination of both. In addition, during account establishment, the patron may be asked to select a personal identification number (“PIN”) via an input device, such as a keypad.

In another embodiment, the patron identifier may include letters, numbers, or a combination of both. In addition, during account establishment, the patron may be asked to select a personal identification number (“PIN”) via an input device, such as a keypad.

The sending device may be a magnetic card, a smart card, a credit card, a debit card, a radio frequency transmitter, an infrared frequency transmitter, a magnetic device, or a similar device that can store a patron identifier. In addition, the sending device may comprise jewelry (such as a watch, a pin, a bracelet, a tie clip, or a belt buckle) with a transmitter or some other promotional item (such as a key fob) with a transmitter. In one embodiment, sending device may transmit a patron identifier to, for example, an identification component of the client terminals.

For some types of sending devices, a number preassigned to the sending device may be used as the unique patron identifier and thus, server 108 need not generate a patron identifier. For example, if the sending device is a credit card or a debit card, the account number imprinted on the credit card or debit card may be used as the patron identifier.

In another embodiment, the patron’s identifier information and preference information could be sent to the system 100 before the patron arrives at the facility, for example, via the Internet, so that the patron’s account would be ready when the patron arrived at the facility.

FIG. 4 is a block diagram of an exemplary on-site client terminal 102 consistent with the present invention. As shown, on-site client terminal 102 may include an attract component 402, a reveal component 404, an identification component 406, a browser 408, a communications device 410, an input device 412, an output device 414, an audio device/speaker 416, processor and memory 418, or other software and data storage 420.

Attract component 402 may comprise a software application for displaying attract mode graphics to attract a patron to on-site client terminal 102.

Reveal component 404 may comprise a software application running electronic games, such as keno, black jack, or a slot machine type (e.g., spinning reel or a multi-line reveal) game. A patron may use the reveal component 404 to reveal the results of previously purchased wagers. The server 108 may send the result of each wager to the reveal component 404 and depending on the result, the reveal component may display a particular graphical user interface indicating a win or a loss. For example, if the result of a wager is a win in the amount of $1 and the patron is playing a “spinning fruit” game, which is a type of a spinning reel game, the reveal component 404 may display a graphical user interface (e.g., three apples) that indicates a win amount of $1. On the other hand, if the patron won 50 $, the reveal component 404 may display a graphical user interface (e.g., two apples and one orange) that indicates a win amount of 50 $.

Identification component 406 may be a combination of software or hardware and assists a patron in logging onto a client terminal. In one embodiment, the identification component 406 may include a receiving device and a software driver to support the receiving device. The receiving device may include a magnetic card reader, a smart card reader, a radio frequency receiver, an infrared frequency receiver, a magnetic device detector, or any similar device known to those skilled in the art that retrieves or receives patron identifier information. The type of sending device may dictate the type of receiving device.

In another embodiment, the identification component 406 may include a biometric authentication device, such as a fingerprint scanner, to biometrically authenticate the patron. In still another embodiment, identification component 406 may be a software application that interacts with server 108 to authenticate the identity of the patron. For example, identification component 406 may interact with server 108 to prompt a patron for information, such as patron’s social security number or date of birth, which uniquely identifies the patron. The identification component 406 may send the information to server 108, which may compare the information with the information stored in patron’s account file to authenticate the patron’s identity. It will be apparent to one skilled in the art that systems, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention are not limited to the above described authentication methods.

Browser 408 may include a conventional software application, such as NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR or INTERNET EXPLORER, for issuing HTTP requests to the server 108. For example, browser 408 may request a specific web page or asks the server 108 to perform a database query. Browser 408 also may read HTML codes embedded in the web pages received from the server 108 to determine how, where, and in what colors and fonts the elements on the web pages must be displayed. In one embodiment, instead of using the reveal component 404, a patron may use browser 408 to reveal the results of previously purchased wagers. In still another embodiment, a patron may use browser 408 in combination with reveal component 404 to reveal the results of previously purchased wagers.

Communications device 410 may include an interface device that transmits information from the on-site client terminal 102 to network 110 and receives information that is addressed to on-site client terminal 102 from network 110. For example, communications device 410 may be a network interface card or a modem. In one embodiment, when sending information, communications device 410 may break the information into packets that are sent across a TCP/IP network 110 to the server 108. In addition, communications device 410 may check for errors in transmission using, for example, cyclical redundancy check (“CRC”).

Input device 412 may include a device that is used for receiving input from a patron. For example, input device 412 may include a keyboard, a keypad, or a pointing device (e.g., a mouse or a trackball). A keypad may comprise a conventional alphanumeric or numeric key entry device. An input device may not be necessary, however, because the patron may be able to use output device 414, for example, if the output device 414 includes a touch screen.

Output device 414 may include a device that displays information to users or receives inputs from users. For example, output device 414 may comprise a conventional touch screen video monitor for displaying video graphics and receiving patron inputs, such as a PIN. A touch screen may not be necessary, however, since patron inputs can be made through an input device 412.
On-site client terminal 102 also may include an audio device/speaker module 416 that comprises a conventional audio card, amplifier, or speaker for presenting audio. In addition, on-site client terminal 102 also may include processor or memory 418. The memory may include ROM (Read Only Memory) or RAM (Random Access Memory). The processor may control the components of client terminal 102 and assist in processing requests received from components. Furthermore, on-site client terminal 102 may include other software and data storage 420, such as an operating system.

It will be apparent to one skilled in the art that on-site client terminal 102 may include some or all of the components shown in FIG. 4. For example, in a facility that does not want patrons to have the ability to reveal the results of previously purchased wagers on-site, the on-site client terminals 102a-102z may not include the reveal component 404. Moreover, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that on-site client terminal 102 may include additional components not shown in FIG. 4. For example, client terminal 104 may include a printer device to print, for example, information received from the server 108. In addition, on-site client terminal 102 also may include head phones, for example, to listen to messages, and text-to-speech or speech-to-text conversion software, respectively, to listen to received messages or to send messages.

Furthermore, although not shown, the service client terminal 104 and the off-site client terminal 106 also may include some or all of the components that are included in the on-site client terminal 102 shown in FIG. 4. In one embodiment, service client terminal 104 also may include a device that can write to the sending device. For example, if the sending device is a magnetic card, service client terminal 104 may include a magnetic card issuance system like the one disclosed in the ’556 patent application. Service client terminal 104 also may include a scanning device for scanning and storing a patron’s signature or photograph or scanning a patron’s drivers license. In another embodiment, service client terminal 104 may include recognition software to detect the patron’s identifier information, such as name, address, or date of birth, from the patron’s drivers license.

FIG. 5 is a block diagram of an exemplary server 108 consistent with the present invention. As shown, server 108 may include a communications component 502, a transaction component 504, a wagering component 506, and a database 508. Communications component 502 may include a combination of software and hardware devices, such as a web server and a network interface card. Communications component 502 may receive messages from and send messages to client terminals. Communications component 502 may identify a patron by comparing, for example, the patron’s patron identifier to the patron account and then, authenticating the patron by comparing, for example, the patron’s PIN, to the patron account. Communications component 502 also may decode, decrypt, and error check messages received from client terminals. It also may encode and encrypt messages to client terminals.

Communications component 502 also may act as an interface between the client terminals and the other components of the server 108. In one embodiment, communications component 502 may send messages, such as wager purchase and reveal requests, to the transaction component 504 or wagering component 506 for further processing. In another embodiment, communications component 502 may retrieve results of previously purchased wagers from database 508 and send these results to the client terminals. Although not shown, communications component 502 may include a database interface for writing information into and retrieving information from database 508. In still another embodiment, the communications component may determine if the patron account has sufficient balance to purchase wagers and if it does have sufficient balance, may debit the patron’s account for the purchase amount and then, send the request to wagering component 506 for further processing. If the patron’s account does not have sufficient balance, the communications component 502 may send a message to the client terminal for display to the patron notifying the patron that the patron has insufficient funds.

Transaction component 504 may receive requests from communications component 502 and may forward the requests to wagering component 506. Transaction component 504 generally tracks all transactions being processed by server 108 and may be used in conjunction with service client terminal 104 to generate reports, such as authentication failures or usage reports.

Wagering component 506 receives wager purchase requests from transaction component 504 or communications component 502. In addition, wagering component 506 may process the wager purchase request or send the request to another component or server for processing. To process a wager purchase request, the wagering component may calculate the number of wagers if the number was not specified by the patron or if the patron just specified the purchase amount. The number of wagers may be calculated, for example, by dividing the purchase amount by the denomination value.

Examples include using electronically controlled random number generators or using pre-defined yet shuffled outcome values (e.g., random multipliers). As an example, if pre-defined yet shuffled outcome values, such as random multipliers, are used, and if a patron purchases ten wagers, the result of each of the ten wagers may be calculated by multiplying the denomination value of each wager by the corresponding random multiplier, as shown in Table 1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wager No.</th>
<th>Denomination Value</th>
<th>Random Multiplier</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>$2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>$1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In another embodiment, wagering component 506 may include some or all of the components of the manufacturing server disclosed in the ’556 application or may interact with the manufacturing server to request a number of scratch tick-
ets equivalent to the number of wagers requested by a patron and then, determine the results of each of the scratch tickets.

[0081] Server 108 also may include a database 508. Database 508 stores patron account files, each patron account file including a patron identifier and a transaction history file. As the wagering component 506 determines the result of each wager, it stores the result in the appropriate transaction history file in database 508 so that the results can later be revealed using the transaction history file. Database 508 may also store graphical menus and other multimedia information.

[0082] Although not shown, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that server 108 may include other components, such as an output device (e.g., printer), input device (e.g., keyboard and pointing device), network operating system, and a database server. The network operating system may include a conventional network operating system, such as WINDOWS NT SERVER. The network operating system may process requests from client terminals, monitor network hardware and software, coordinate communication in the network, and provide transaction security. The database server may build and maintain database 508. In addition, the database server may retrieve from database 508 patron account information, graphical menus, and other multimedia information to respond to requests from the client terminals. Furthermore, the database server may be a SQL (Structured Query Language) server.

[0083] FIGS. 6-7 are flow diagrams of an exemplary method of operating a system consistent with the present invention. In the exemplary method of FIGS. 6-7, it is assumed that the patron already has established an account with system 100. Moreover, in the following description, the use of the term client terminal includes both on-site client terminal 102 and off-site client terminal 106.

[0084] The patron may log on at the client terminal by entering logon information such as his/her patron identifier (step 602). The client terminal may then send a “logon” message, including the patron identifier, to server 108 (step 604). Although not shown in FIG. 6, if the client terminal is not connected to server 108, a connection may be established, for example, by using the communications device 410 (e.g., modem). The server 108 receives the “logon” message and may then determine whether the patron identifier corresponds to an established patron account and may also retrieve the account file corresponding to the patron identifier from database 508 (step 606).

[0085] The method by which the patron enters the logon information may vary depending on the sending device and receiving device. For example, if the sending device is an infrared or radio frequency transmitter, the patron may need to take any action to enter the logon information as long as the transmitter can communicate with a receiver. On the other hand, if the sending device is a magnetic card, the patron may need to insert the card into a receiving device, such as a card reader, to log onto the client terminal. Alternatively, if sending and receiving devices are not used, the patron may be required to enter, for example, his or her patron identifier.

[0086] Although not shown in FIG. 6, in response to the logon message from the client terminal, server 108 may send to the client terminal an authentication message requiring the patron to authenticate his or her identity, for example, a biometric device such as a fingerprint scanner. In another embodiment, if the patron selected a PIN during account establishment, the patron may need to enter the PIN to log onto the client terminal and authenticate his or her identity.

Alternatively, the patron may be required to provide other information, such as social security number, to authenticate his or her identity. These and other authentication methods will be apparent to those skilled in the art from the foregoing description and, thus, are also within the scope of the present invention.

[0087] Although not shown in FIG. 6, the client terminal sends the authentication information that the patron provided or the client terminal retrieved from a sending device to server 108. Next, server 108 compares this information to the information stored in the patron’s account file to authenticate the identity of the patron.

[0088] If the logon information and authentication information sent by the client terminal match the information in database 508, the server sends a selection menu to the client terminal for display to the patron (steps 606 and 608). On the other hand, if the information is not correct, the patron may be asked to provide logon or authentication information again (steps 602, 604, 606). It will be apparent to one skilled in the art that a patron only may be given a selected number of attempts to log onto the client terminal and that the patron may be asked to contact a person affiliated with the facility after a few unsuccessful attempts.

[0089] After the client terminal displays the selection menu, the client terminal may receive, from the patron, a selection for the option to purchase wagers (step 630). In response, the client terminal may send a wager purchase request message to server 108 (step 630). Server 108 may send an acknowledge message to the client terminal, requesting additional information concerning the purchase of the wager (step 632). Although not shown, the client terminal may then prompt the patron to enter selection information. The selection information may include a purchase amount, a denomination value, or number of wagers that the patron desires to purchase.

[0090] Next, the client terminal receives, from the patron, selection information (step 610). The purchase amount is the total amount of money that the patron wants to spend on wagers and the denomination value is the value of each wager. For example, if a patron wants to buy $10 worth of $1 wagers, the purchase amount would be $10 and the denomination value would be $1.

[0091] In one embodiment, the patron may be required to only submit a purchase amount. In this embodiment, server 108 may either use a denomination value specified by the facility or use the patron’s normal wager amount as the denomination value. The normal wager amount, for example, may be the average denomination value of a patron’s previous wagers and may be stored in database 508 along with the patron’s other preference information. In another embodiment, if the patron is required to only submit a denomination value and number of wagers that the patron desires to purchase, the purchase amount may be calculated by multiplying the denomination value by the number of wagers that the patron desires to purchase. In still another embodiment, the server 108 may ignore the denomination value, if any, provided by the patron and use a low denomination value, such as 5 ¢. By using a low denomination value, systems, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention allow the patron to vary the denomination value when revealing the results. This embodiment will be further described in detail along with the reveal process shown in FIG. 8.
The client terminal may send the patron selection information to server 108 (step 611). Next, server 108 determines whether the patron’s account balance can cover the patron selection (step 612). If the patron’s account balance cannot cover the patron selection, server 108 may send an “insufficient funds message” to the client terminal (step 612). The client terminal may then display a message to the patron (indicating, for example, that the purchase amount exceeds the patron’s account balance) and prompts the patron to enter a new selection or logoff (step 614). If the patron elects to logoff, the purchasing process is complete (steps 614 and 628). Conversely, if the patron elects to enter a new selection, the client terminal sends the new selection information to server 108 (steps 614, 610, and 611). Systems, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the invention may also allow the patron to deposit more funds into his or her account to cover the difference between the patron’s account balance and selection.

On the other hand, if the patron account balance covers the patron selection, the client terminal may prompt the patron to confirm his or her selection (step 616). If the patron does not confirm, the patron may either logoff or return to the selection menu (steps 618 and 620). If the patron desires to logoff, the client terminal sends a logoff message to server 108 (steps 620 and 628). On the other hand, if the patron does not wish to logoff, the client terminal may display the selection menu (steps 620 and 608). It will be apparent to one skilled in the art that systems, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention need not give patrons the option of confirming their selections after entry of the patron selection.

After determining and storing the result of the ten mandatory wagers, the server 108 determines whether the wager pool is equal to zero (step 626). The wager pool is a sum of the results of the mandatory wagers. Until the wager pool is zero, the server 108 may apply the wager pool towards additional wagers, determine the result of these wagers, and store the results in the database (steps 627, 624, and 626).

In the above example, after determining and storing the result of each mandatory wager, the wager pool is equal to $7. Therefore, in this example, the server 108 would apply the wager pool towards additional seven wagers at $1 each until the wager pool equals zero (step 627, 624, and 626). Moreover, each time the server 108 repeats steps 627, 624, and 626, it adds the results of the wagers to the end of the transaction history file, as shown in Table 3. After determining and storing the result of the seven additional wagers, the server 108 determines whether the wager pool is equal to zero (step 626). The wager pool is a sum of the results of the seven additional wagers. Until the wager pool equals zero, the server 108 may apply the wager pool towards additional wagers, determine the results of these wagers, and store the results in the database (steps 627, 624, and 626). As shown in Table 3, the new wager pool would be the sum of the results of the last seven wagers, which equals $4. Since the wager pool is not equal to zero, server 108 may repeat steps 627, 624, and 626.

Once the wager pool equals zero, the iterative process of determining the result of a wager, storing the result, and adjusting the wager pool is complete (step 628). Although not shown, server 108 may now send a message to the client terminal notifying the patron that the purchasing process is complete. Moreover, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that the wager purchase process may be asynchronous. Specifically, once the patron confirms the selection information (step 618), the patron may continue to perform other tasks at the client terminal.

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wager No.</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wager No.</th>
<th>Result</th>
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</tr>
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<td>$1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moreover, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that several modifications may be made to the process shown in FIG. 6 without departing from the scope of the present invention. For example, FIG. 7 is similar to FIG. 6 except that this process applies to a system that includes multiple servers or is combined with an existing system 302, as shown in FIG. 3. Since FIG. 7 is similar to FIG. 6, only the steps that are different will be explained now. After a patron logs onto a client terminal (steps 702, 704, and 706), the patron may be presented with a selection menu (step 708). The patron may select and play games using the existing system (step 710). After the patron is done playing games, the patron logs off and the client terminal sends a logoff message to the additional server or the existing system 302 (step 712). Upon receiving a logoff message from the client terminal, the additional server or the existing system 302 determines whether the patron has a positive account balance (step 714). If the patron does not have a positive account balance, the process is complete (step 724).

Moreover, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that several modifications may be made to the process shown in FIG. 6 without departing from the scope of the present invention. For example, FIG. 7 is similar to FIG. 6 except that this process applies to a system that includes multiple servers or is combined with an existing system 302, as shown in FIG. 3. Since FIG. 7 is similar to FIG. 6, only the steps that are different will be explained now. After a patron logs onto a client terminal (steps 702, 704, and 706), the patron may be presented with a selection menu (step 708). The patron may select and play games using the existing system (step 710). After the patron is done playing games, the patron logs off and the client terminal sends a logoff message to the additional server or the existing system 302 (step 712). Upon receiving a logoff message from the client terminal, the additional server or the existing system 302 determines whether the patron has a positive account balance (step 714). If the patron does not have a positive account balance, the process is complete (step 724).

On the other hand, if the patron does have a positive account balance (step 714), the additional server or the existing system 302 debits the patron’s account balance and sends the patron’s account balance along with the patron’s identifier to server 108 (steps 716 and 718). In one embodiment, the additional server or the existing system 302 may also send a desired denomination value. Again, the denomination value may be a value that is preset by the facility, based on patron preference, or may be based on the patron’s normal wager amount. The server 108 determines the number of mandatory wagers that may be purchased using the account balance, determines results for each wager, and stores the results in a transaction file corresponding to the patron’s account file (steps 718, 720, and 722). The rest of the process (steps 723, 720, and 722) is similar to the process (steps 627, 624, and 626) shown in FIG. 6, and thus can be understood by reference to FIG. 6.

Although not shown in FIG. 7, before or after the patron logs off, the client terminal may prompt the patron to elect whether the patron desires to use his or her remaining balance to purchase wagers. Alternatively, when opening his or her account, the patron may be required to sign a statement giving the facility the authority to automatically use the patron’s balance to purchase wagers.

In addition, the process in FIGS. 6 and 7 may be modified by removing the steps of continuing to apply the wager pool towards additional wagers until the wager pool equals zero (steps 626 and 627). Alternatively, systems, methods, and articles of manufacture consistent with the present invention may allow the patron to request that the server 108 perform these steps after the client terminal reveals the results of the originally purchased wagers. Other such modifications will be apparent to one skilled in the art and are also within the scope of the present invention.

After completion of the process in FIGS. 6 and 7, the patron has several options. One option is that if the step of applying the wager pool towards additional wagers was removed from the processes described in FIGS. 6 and 7, the patron may go to a service client terminal 104 to get the results, for example, the wager pool. In another embodiment, the patron may use either a client terminal 102 or an off-site client terminal 106 to reveal the results of the purchased wagers. The process of revealing the results of these wagers will be described now in detail by referring to FIG. 8. Again, in the following description, the use of the term client terminal includes both on-site client terminal 102 and off-site client terminal 106.

As shown in FIG. 8, the patron may log on at a client terminal by entering token information such as his/her patron identifier (step 802). Steps 802, 804, and 806 are similar to steps 602, 604, and 606, and thus, will not be further described in detail. If the logon information and authentication information sent by the client terminal match the information in database 108, the server sends a selection menu to the client terminal for display to the patron (steps 806 and 808). Alternatively, the reveal component 404 may include a selection menu, which may be displayed to the patron.

The patron may select, for example, the “Reveal Results” option from the selection menu. The client terminal may receive patron selection for the “Reveal Results” option and send a reveal request to server 108 (step 810). Server 108 receives the request, retrieves the patron’s account balance, and sends the account balance to the client terminal. The client terminal in turn displays the account balance to the patron. In addition, although not shown, the client terminal may also display various reveal methods. The reveal methods may be the various games that are part of the reveal component or may be games displayed by server 108, for example, via servlets and java applets. Next, the client terminal receives a selection for a reveal method from the patron (step 814). Once the patron selects the reveal method (step 814), the client terminal sends a request to server 108 for the result of the first unrevealed wager (not shown). The server retrieves the result of the first unrevealed wager from the transaction history file corresponding to the patron’s account and sends the result to the reveal component 404 (not shown).

Depending on the result, the reveal component 404 may display a particular graphical user interface indicating a win or a loss and an updated account balance if it was a win (step 816). For example, if the result of a wager was a win in the amount of $1 and the patron is playing a “spinning fruit” game, the reveal component 404 may display the graphical user interface (e.g., three apples) that indicates a win amount of $1. On the other hand, if the patron won 50¢, the reveal component 404 may display the combination (e.g., two apples and one orange) that indicates a win amount of 50¢.

On the other hand, instead of sending the result to the reveal component 404, the server may send a particular graphical user interface to a client terminal for display to a user depending on the game and whether the result of the wager was a win or a loss (step 816), for example, by using servlets and Java applets.
In addition, the server also may send an updated account balance to the client terminal for display to the patron (step 816). In another embodiment, the client terminal may just update the account balance based on the result and display it to the patron (step 816). Moreover, although not shown, the server 108 may flag the particular wager in the transaction history file to indicate that the wager has been revealed.

In another embodiment, in addition to selecting a reveal method, the patron may be given the option of selecting a denomination value for each wager (step 814). This denomination value may be equal to or less than the denomination value specified by the patron when the patron purchased the wagers. Several methods may be used to allow patrons to change the denomination value when revealing the results. For example, when determining the results of the wagers, server 108 may ignore the denomination value, if any, specified by the patron and instead use wagers that have a low value, for example, 5¢. By using a low denomination value when determining the results of the wagers, the patron may be able to vary the denomination value when revealing the results. For example, while a patron might specify a denomination value of $1 when purchasing wagers, the server 108 may ignore this selection and instead determine the results of the wagers with a denomination value of 25¢. Then, during the reveal process, if the patron specifies a first denomination value of $1.50, the server may aggregate the result of the first six 25¢ wagers to determine the result of a $1.50 wager. Later, if the patron specifies a second denomination value of 50¢, the server may aggregate the result of the first two wagers to determine the result of a 50¢ wager. These and other methods will be apparent to one skilled in the art from the following and foregoing description and thus, are also within the scope of the present invention.

Next, the server 108 determines whether there are any additional unrevealed wagers (step 818), for example, by examining the transaction history file. If there are additional unrevealed wagers, the patron may be given the option of revealing these wagers (step 822). If the patron does want to reveal these unrevealed wagers, the reveal process is repeated.

On the other hand, if the server determines that there are no additional unrevealed wagers, the server 108 may send a message to the client terminal for display to the patron notifying the patron that there are no more unrevealed wagers (steps 818 and 820).

If the patron does want to stop revealing or if the server has determined that there are no additional unrevealed wagers, the server may display the selection menu again (steps 822, 818, 820, and 808). Then, the patron may select other options, such as logout (step 824). The server completes the patron request and the process is complete (step 828).

In one embodiment, other options that may be available to the patron (step 824) include buying additional wagers. In another embodiment, in step 824, the patron may be able to locate other patrons or communicate with other patrons. In still another embodiment, in step 824, if a facility awards complimentary points to a patron for playing games, the patron may be able to check the total number of complimentary points that he or she has earned or use these complimentary points to obtain items offered by the facility, for example. In addition to using complimentary points to obtain items, the patron also may be able to purchase other items.

After completing the process in FIG. 8, if the patron has any unrevealed wagers, the patron may log onto a client terminal to reveal the results of these wagers and repeat the process shown in FIG. 8. In another embodiment, the patron may go back to the facility and continue to reveal results using on-site client terminal 102. In still another embodiment, the patron may go back to the facility and log onto the on-site client terminal 102, for example, to play traditional games. In this embodiment, the client terminal may send a logon message to server 108. Upon receiving the logon message, server 108 may erase the unrevealed wagers and add the money applied towards the unrevealed wagers, and the wager pool to the patron’s account balance. Then, the patron may use this updated account balance to, for example, play traditional games. Alternatively, the patron may go to service client terminal 104 and request that the patron’s unrevealed wagers be erased and request a refund of the money that was applied towards the unrevealed wagers, wager pool, and or any of his account balance. In the latter two embodiments, when erasing the unrevealed wagers, the server 108 may record the results of these unrevealed wagers in the patron account file and apply these results to wagers that the patron purchases in the future. Other such methods will be apparent to those skilled in the art from the foregoing and following description and thus, are within the scope of the present invention. For example, the patron may not choose to reveal results and may return to the facility and request a refund. Alternatively, the patron could come back to the facility and may want to use the money applied towards the unrevealed wagers to play traditional games.

FIG. 9 is a flow diagram of an exemplary method of determining a result based on a pay table. A client terminal receives a purchase request for a wager from a player before game play has begun (step 910). Wagering component 506 associates a denomination value with the wager (step 920). In one embodiment, the client terminal receives information from the patron as part of the purchase request, and wagering component 506 may use the information to find the denomination value. For example, as described in the foregoing description, as part of the purchase request, the patron may be required to specify selection information, such as a purchase amount, number of wagers, or a denomination value for each wager.

In one embodiment, the patron may only submit a purchase amount. In this embodiment, or if a denomination value is not otherwise submitted by the patron, wagering component 506 may use a denomination value specified by the facility, the patron’s normal wager amount, a randomly-determined denomination amount, etc. as the denomination value. The normal wager amount, for example, may be the average denomination value of a patron’s previous wagers and may be stored in database 508 along with the patron’s other preference information.

In yet another embodiment, the patron may submit only a purchase amount and a number of wagers, and the denomination value may be calculated, for example, by dividing the number of wagers by the purchase amount. For example, the patron may specify a $250 purchase amount and select 250 wagers, which allows wagering component 506 to calculate a denomination value of $1.00 per wager. Selecting a $500 purchase amount and 250 wagers allows wagering component 506 to calculate a denomination value of $2.00 per wager.

In still another embodiment, wagering component 506 may ‘ignore’ the denomination value, if any, provided by the patron and use a low denomination value, such as 1¢ or 5
When a low denomination value is used, the patron may vary the denomination value when revealing the results, for example by choosing any multiple of the denomination value (e.g., 10¢, 20¢, 30¢, etc.) up to the total purchase amount.

Next, wagering component 506 determines a pay table for the wager (step 930). In certain embodiments, the chosen pay table may be determined based on the denomination value. In other embodiments, the pay table may be chosen based on the purchase amount, number of wagers, player information, or it may be chosen at random. FIG. 10 illustrates a denomination correspondence table 900 that wagering component 506 may use to determine the pay table for the wager. The denomination correspondence table in FIG. 10 is merely for illustration. A skilled artisan will appreciate that many other means and methods may be used to determine a pay table for a wager.

In FIG. 10, the first column ("Denomination") contains denomination amounts that may be associated with a player’s wager. The second column ("Pay Table") includes pay tables that may be associated with the denomination amounts of the first column. For example, Pay Table 1 may be associated with a $1.00 denomination amount, Pay Table 2 may be associated with a 50¢ denomination amount, and Pay Table 3 may be associated with a 5¢ denomination amount. A skilled artisan will appreciate that many other combinations of pay tables and denomination amounts are possible.

After associating the pay table with the wager, wagering component 506 determines a result of the wager based on the chosen pay table (step 940). In one embodiment, wagering component 506 may use a prize table containing various pay tables to determine the result of the wager. FIG. 11 illustrates an exemplary prize table 902. The Result column of prize table 902 contains various amounts which may be won based on a patron’s wager. The rows in each pay table of prize table 902 contain a player's odds of winning the correspondence amount. Prize table 902 is merely for illustration. A skilled artisan will recognize that a variety of pay tables, prize tables, odds, etc. may be used.

In one exemplary embodiment, various players, such as Patron A, B, and C, may have their wagers associated with corresponding pay tables according to denomination correspondence table 900. For example, if Patron A chose a denomination value of $1.00, then Pay Table 1 would apply, according to denomination correspondence table 900. Using Pay Table 1, Patron A has a 2 to 1 chance of winning 5¢, a 3 to 1 chance of winning 10¢, and so on. If another player, Patron B, chose a denomination value of 50¢, then Pay Table 2 would apply, according to denomination correspondence table 900. Patron B has only a 3 to 1 chance of winning 5¢, a 5 to 1 chance of winning 10¢, and so on. If a third player, Patron C, chose a denomination value of 5¢, Pay Table 3 would apply, according to denomination correspondence table 900. Patron C has only a 5 to 1 chance of winning 5¢, a 7 to 1 chance of winning 10¢, and so on.

In this exemplary embodiment, Pay Table 1 (corresponding to a $1 wager, according to denomination correspondence table 900) contains better odds of winning than Pay Tables 2 and 3 (corresponding to wagers of 50¢ and 5¢, respectively, according to denomination correspondence table 900). As shown in accordance to denomination correspondence table 900 and prize table 902, Patron A has a better chance of winning any amount than Patrons B or C, because Patron A’s wager is associated with a higher denomination value ($1.00), which in turn is associated a pay table with better odds (Pay Table 1). In the embodiment described above, the odds of winning increase as the denomination value increases. In another embodiment, the odds of winning may increase as the number of wagers increases or decreases. Other odds determinations may also be used consistent with the present invention. Furthermore, a skilled artisan will appreciate that denomination correspondence table 900 may be combined with prize table 902 or prize table 902 may be separated into several pay tables.

In certain embodiments, once the patron reveals the results of the wagers using the off-site client terminal, the patron may use an input device at the off-site client terminal to enter a request to purchase at least one wager using winnings from previous wagers. The off-site client terminal may then send a wager purchase request to server 108.

To encourage such additional wagers, a patron making a purchase following redemption of a previous wager may have results determined from a pay table with better odds. For example, if Patron B (who originally chose a wager amount of 50¢, corresponding to Pay Table 2, according to denomination correspondence table 900) decides to make a purchase request for a second wager following redemption of a first wager, Patron B may have results for the second wager determined from Pay Table 1 instead of Pay Table 2. For example, in Patron B’s first wager described above, Patron B’s results were determined from Pay Table 2. Patron B had only a 3 to 1 chance of winning 5¢, a 5 to 1 chance of winning 10¢, and so on. If Patron B decides to make a purchase request following redemption of that first wager, Patron B’s results may be determined from Pay Table 1. Patron B’s chances of winning will therefore improve for the subsequent wager: Patron B will have a 2 to 1 chance of winning 5¢, a 3 to 1 chance of winning 10¢, and so on, according to Pay Table 1. In the embodiment described above, the odds of winning may increase as the number of purchase requests from a player increases. In other embodiments, a player may be rewarded for wagering higher amounts of money, or for wagering more frequently, by obtaining a pay table with better odds.

As described in the foregoing description, once the results of the wagers have been determined and stored by the server on-site, the patron may use an off-site client terminal, such as a computer located at the patron’s home, to reveal the results of the wagers. The off-site client terminal connects to the on-site server via a public network, such as the Internet. The off-site client terminal may consist of a mobile phone, personal digital assistant (PDA), personal computer (PC), laptop, handheld device, or any other device that may receive information and reveal results.

In certain other embodiments, results may be determined and displayed based on continuing events. For example, a player may begin seeing completed results as the results (e.g., keno draws) became final, while the results remain behind total outcome completions. In another example, individual results may differ for two players with the same outcome, or for a player with the same outcome in different game plays. For example, each player may ultimately win $5.00 on an $8.00 initial wager. As shown in Table 4, players may see different scenarios during game play, while the end result is the same ($5.00) win.
TABLE 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario 1 (Total Bet: $8)</th>
<th>Scenario 2 (Total Bet: $8)</th>
<th>Scenario 3 (Total Bet: $8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bet 1; Win 1</td>
<td>Bet 1; Win 1</td>
<td>Bet 1; Win 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet 1; Win 0</td>
<td>Bet 1; Win 1</td>
<td>Bet 1; Win 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet 1; Win 1</td>
<td>Bet 1; Win 1</td>
<td>Bet 1; Win 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet 1; Win 1</td>
<td>Bet 1; Win 0</td>
<td>Bet 1; Win 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet 1; Win 0</td>
<td>Bet 1; Win 0</td>
<td>Bet 1; Win 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonus Round: (none)</td>
<td>Bonus Round: (none)</td>
<td>Bonus Round:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet 0; Win 5</td>
<td>Bet 0; Win 5</td>
<td>Bet 0; Win 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Win: $5

The above-noted features, other aspects, and principles of the present invention may be implemented in various system or network configurations to provide automated and computational tools to provide a patron with the ability to play from an off-site location. Such configurations and applications may be specially constructed for performing the various processes and operations of the invention or they may include a general purpose computer or computing platform selectively activated or reconfigured by program code to provide the necessary functionality. The processes disclosed herein are not inherently related to any particular computer or other apparatus, and may be implemented by a suitable combination of hardware, software, or firmware. For example, various general purpose machines may be used with programs written in accordance with teachings of the invention, or it may be more convenient to construct a specialized apparatus or system to perform the required methods and techniques.

The present invention also relates to computer-readable media that include program instruction or program code for performing various computer-implemented operations based on the methods and processes of the invention. The media and program instructions may be those specially designed and constructed for the purposes of the invention, or they may be of the kind well-known and available to those having skill in the computer software arts. The media may take many forms including, but not limited to, non-volatile media, volatile media, and transmission media. Non-volatile media includes, for example, optical or magnetic disks. Volatile media includes, for example, dynamic memory. Transmission media includes, for example, coaxial cables, copper wire, and fiber optics. Transmission media can also take the form of acoustic or light waves, such as those generated during radio-wave and infra-red data communications. Examples of program instructions include both machine code, such as produced by compiler, and files containing a high level code that can be executed by the computer using an interpreter.

Moreover, other embodiments of the invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art from consideration of the specification and practice of the invention disclosed herein. It is intended that the specification and examples be considered as exemplary only, with a true scope and spirit of the invention being indicated by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A gaming method, comprising:
   receiving, at a server, a purchase request for at least one wager from a player at a first client terminal before a game play has begun;
   determining, at the server, a result of the at least one wager before the game play has begun;
   adjusting, at the server, an account of the player based on the result before the game play has begun;
   receiving, at the server, a request to reveal the result; and
   sending, from the server, after a predetermined period of time from receipt of the request to reveal the result, the result to a second client terminal.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the second client terminal is one of a group of devices consisting of:
   a mobile phone, a handheld device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, and a home computer.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein determining comprises one of:
   retrieving the result from a pre-generated group of outcomes, randomly generating the result, and drawing the result from a lottery.

4. A gaming method, comprising:
   receiving, at a server, a purchase request for at least one wager from a player at a first client terminal before a game play has begun;
   determining, at the server, a result of the at least one wager before the game play has begun;
   storing, at the server, the result in a database before the game play has begun;
   adjusting, at the server, an account of the player based on the result before the game play has begun;
   receiving, at the server, a request to reveal the result; and
   sending, from the server, after a predetermined period of time from receipt of the request to reveal the result, the result to a second client terminal.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the second client terminal is one of a group of devices consisting of:
   a mobile phone, a handheld device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, and a home computer.

6. The method of claim 4, wherein determining comprises one of:
   retrieving the result from a pre-generated group of outcomes, randomly generating the result, and drawing the result from a lottery.
a mobile phone, a handheld device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, and a home computer.

13. The method of claim 7, wherein determining comprises one of: retrieving the result from a pre-generated group of outcomes, randomly generating the result, and drawing the result from a lottery.

14. A gaming method, comprising:
   receiving a purchase request for a wager from a player at a first client terminal before a game play has begun;
   determining a pay table for the wager based on the denomination value;
   determining a result of the wager based on the determined pay table before the game play has begun;
   receiving a request to reveal the result; and
   sending the result to a second client terminal in response to the request to reveal the result.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising:
   establishing a plurality of denomination levels and corresponding pay tables such that odds of winning increase as the denomination value increases.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the purchase request includes the denomination value.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein associating further comprises:
   selecting a predetermined denomination value.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein associating further comprises:
   using a denomination value selected by the player.

19. The method of claim 14, wherein associating further comprises:
   calculating the denomination value using the player’s previous denomination values.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein calculating further comprises:
   calculating an average denomination value using the player’s previous denomination values.

21. The method of claim 14, wherein the second client terminal is one of a group of devices consisting of:
   a mobile phone, a handheld device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, and a home computer.

22. The method of claim 14, wherein determining comprises one of: retrieving the result from a pre-generated group of outcomes, randomly generating the result, and drawing the result from a lottery.

23. A gaming method, comprising:
   receiving a redemption request from a player to redeem a prize amount from a previously-placed wager;
   receiving a purchase request from the player to use at least some of the prize amount to place a new wager;
   determining a previous pay table used to determine the prize amount from the previously-placed wager;
   selecting a new pay table for the new wager such that the new pay table has better odds of winning than the previous pay table;
   determining a result of the new wager using the new pay table before game play has begun;
   receiving a request to reveal the result; and
   sending the result to a client terminal in response to the request to reveal the result.

24. The method of claim 23, further comprising:
   establishing a plurality of pay tables such that odds of winning increase as the number of redemption requests increases.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein the client terminal is one of a group of devices consisting of:
   a mobile phone, a handheld device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, and a home computer.

26. The method of claim 23, wherein determining comprises one of: retrieving the result from a pre-generated group of outcomes, randomly generating the result, and drawing the result from a lottery.

27. A gaming method, comprising:
   receiving a purchase request for a plurality of wagers from a player at a first client terminal before a game play has begun;
   associating a first denomination value with the plurality of wagers;
   determining a pay table based on the first denomination value;
   determining results of the plurality of wagers based on the pay table before the game play has begun;
   receiving, from a second client terminal, a request to reveal modified results, wherein the request includes a second denomination value greater than the first denomination value;
   dividing the second denomination value by the first denomination value to determine a number of modified results;
   aggregating, at the server, the number of modified results into a total prize; and
   sending, from the server, the total prize to the second client terminal in response to the request to reveal the modified results.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the second client terminal is one of a group of devices consisting of:
   a mobile phone, a handheld device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, and a home computer.

29. The method of claim 27, wherein determining comprises one of: retrieving the results from a pre-generated group of outcomes, randomly generating the results, and drawing the results from a lottery.

30. A gaming method, comprising:
   receiving a redemption request from a player to redeem a prize amount from a previously-placed wager;
   receiving a purchase request from the player to use at least some of the prize amount to place a new wager;
   determining a result of the new wager before game play has begun;
   receiving a request to reveal the result; and
   sending the result to a client terminal in response to the request to reveal the result.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein the client terminal is one of a group of devices consisting of:
   a mobile phone, a handheld device, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, and a home computer.

32. The method of claim 30, wherein determining comprises one of: retrieving the result from a pre-generated group of outcomes, randomly generating the result, and drawing the result from a lottery.

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