ABSTRACT
This invention is a computerized video game machine having a finite number of outcomes embodied in a computer readable tab cartridge that must be replenished after the total number of outcomes is exhausted. As each player plays the game, the number tabs playable is reduced by one and the play tab is analyzed as to whether it is a winning tab or not. If the tab is a winning tab then the symbols of the tab are compared to a look-up table to determine the pay-out which is then provided to the player. Once the tab is exhausted the machine is no longer operable until the tab cartridges are recharged. The tab cartridges are recharged by electronic means by entering a reset code through input means such as touching buttons. Once the tab has been recharged then the machine will be able to be operable having the same number of tabs before the tabs were exhausted through play.
Fig. 3

Start

Access Menu Screen

Valid Access Code?

Yes

Select Tab Cartridge Access

Valid Tab Code?

Yes

Change Tab Code?

Yes

Change Tab Code and Update Database

Stop

No

No

Master Code Entered?

Yes

Reset Tab Count to Initial Number (Re-Fill)

No

Change Tab Code?

Yes

No
Fig. 4

Start

Display Selections

Player Selects Game to Play

Player Plays Game

No Credits

Sufficient Credits?

Yes

Game Played Tab count Reduced By One

Compare Outcome with Pay Tables

Increase Credits with Associated Amount

Match Pay Tables?

Yes

Reduce Credit by Pay Amount

No Games Remaining

No

No

Tabs Exhausted?

Yes

No
COMPUTERIZED GAMING MACHINE WITH FINITE OUTCOMES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to computerized video gaming machines, and more particularly to a gaming machine with a game that has a finite number of game outcomes embodied in a computer readable tab cartridge that must be replenished after the number of games and respective game outcomes are exhausted.

[0002] This application claims priority based upon provisional patent application Ser. No. 60/22,758.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] It has been long known that a certain segment of society enjoys playing games of skill or chance. Common games are poker, blackjack, roulette, and bingo. Particularly, churches and other charitable organizations have adopted the use of bingo in order to raise money for their charitable organization. One form of bingo which has been adopted to benefit the charitable organization has been referred to as “pull-tabs.” Originally, these games involved a paper ticket with perforated or dye coat tabs on the ticket which are pulled off the ticket to reveal either matching graphics or dollar amounts to claim their results. These tabs have come in three, five, or six game windows and vary in each of their themes. The games are sold in sets or deals, are factory sealed, and given unique serial numbers. The prices of an individual ticket can range to $0.50 to over $1000. Each set contains a form number which associates the set with the number of cards in this set, how much money is collected from a sale of all the tickets, and the finite payout in profits if all the game cards are sold. For example, one set may have 2000 cards, cost $0.25 per card, and payout 33% of the money received. Therefore, selling all 2000 cards at $0.25 would bring in revenues of $500 while paying out 33% would require the dispersement of $165 in winnings so that the operator would realize a profit of $335. With this said, the charitable organization operating these cards would be insured this profit if it were able to sell all the cards. The card manufacturer derives its income from the selling of the sets while the charitable organization derives its income from the selling of the cards.

[0004] As this market has matured, these games can be embodied into computerized video games and would see a large growth in popularity. In fact, the nature of this invention is an embodiment of the three window pull-tab game into a computerized forum in a video game format. This format allows for the operator to substantially automate the playing of a pull-tab game and greatly increase the efficiency over the paper pull-tab cards. This allows for the player to play games more quickly which increases the revenues to the charitable organization.

[0005] Critical to the ability for the charitable organization to realize revenues is the fact that a set of pull-tabs is finite and the outcomes within the set are predetermined. For example, a set may have 2000 plays, have a 33% payout, with a win ratio of 1:12 cards. With traditional paper sets, insuring that the plays are finite is elementary since each set contains a fixed number of cards. Since a computer does not have physical cards, but logical or virtual cards, the ability to have a finite list is more problematic. The computer program maintains a list of possible plays and when the player plays the game, those outcomes are removed from the list. Therefore, the number of plays left in the list is produced by one and the results in that particular play are determined. The problem for which considerable attention need be given is how to recharge the list of plays once the list has been exhausted.

[0006] In particular, a gaming machine in which the vendor of the game is able to receive repeated income from the repeated playing of a finite number of outcomes in a game cartridge is a problem which needs to be addressed.

[0007] Accordingly, an object of the present invention is to provide a game machine with a game having a predetermined number and amount of winnings paid out so that the game is fair to all concerned.

[0008] Another object is to provide a gaming machine having a cartridge containing a finite number of plays so that the game is inoperable when the cartridge is exhausted.

[0009] Yet another object of this invention is to provide a predetermined number of games with a finite total award amount. Which is easily replenished once all games are exhausted.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] The above objectives are accomplished according to the invention by providing a computerized gaming machine allowing a customer to play a predetermined number of games with a finite number of outcomes comprising a cabinet, video display, a computer, and a computer readable medium carried within said cabinet. An input controller in communication with the computer readable medium allows information to be entered and received by the computer readable medium. A tab cartridge included with the computer readable medium and a set of computer readable instructions embodied with the computer readable medium allows for selecting a tab record from the tab cartridge, providing the associated game of the tab record to the customer via the video display; reporting the award of the outcome of the game to the customer, and removing the tab record from the tab cartridge so that no games can be played once the tab records are fully depleted from the tab cartridge. Once depleted, no more games will be implemented until the cartridge has been replenished. This machine also contains reset instructions for replenishing the tab cartridge with a predetermined number of tab records so that an exhausted tab cartridge may be further played. One method of replenishment comprises entering of a reset request which resets the predetermined number of games in the game cartridge once the request is entered in the computer readable medium and a reset code contained within the computer readable medium matches the request request. In a preferred embodiment, a slot is connected to the computer for receiving a reset key which is received in the slot to reset the tab cartridge. The computer program which resides on the computer readable medium includes the game cartridge embodied in the computer readable medium having a predetermined number of game outcomes representing different levels of money from 0 to a predetermined payout. Deletion instructions are included in the computer instructions for deleting the predetermined pull-tab outcome as each outcome is obtained by a player. Termination instructions are embodied in the computer readable medium that terminates
the play of the game when each of the tab records are depleted from the tab cartridge. Reset instructions are also contained within the computer readable medium for replenishing the tab records, and associated games and outcomes of the tab cartridge so that the games can resume play. The method of playing the game is provided by providing a game outcome cartridge embodied in a computer readable medium which contains a predetermined number of game outcomes for the programs to run on the computer. The next step is to operate the computer readable instructions till a predetermined number of games are played and the cartridge depleted. The tab cartridge is then reset after a predetermined number of games outcomes have been depleted so that the games may be played again. The game outcomes can be programmed so that the finite game outcomes of a tab cartridge can be varied to allow for modification of the total game awards of a tab cartridge.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] The construction designed to carry out the invention will hereinafter be described, together with other features thereof.

[0012] The invention will be more readily understood from a reading of the following specification and by reference to the accompanying drawings forming a part thereof, wherein an example of the invention is shown and wherein:

[0013] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a video gaming machine incorporating a finite outcome game according to the invention;

[0014] FIG. 2 is a diagram of the computer hardware residing in a video gaming machine according to the invention;

[0015] FIG. 3 is a flowchart of a computer program for a finite outcome video game according to the invention; and

[0016] FIG. 4 is another flowchart of the computer program according to the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0017] Referring now to FIG. 1, a video gaming machine designated generally as A, is shown. Gaming machine A consists of a touch screen 10, a bill acceptor 12 connected to an input controller 15, buttons 14 serving as an input means and connected to input controller 15, and a coin tray 16. Also contained within the cabinet of video game A is a processing unit 18 contained in a computer 19. Processing unit 18 contains a computer readable medium having computer readable code which may be embodied on media such as EEPROM, ROM, hard drives or CD ROMs. This computer medium contains the software which is designed to provide functionality and to operate the hardware associated with the video game. The particular components of the video are described in more detail and shown in FIG. 2.

[0018] FIG. 2 illustrates a CPU or other processing unit 20 contained within the hardware video game A and computer 19. The computer also contains computer readable medium. One aspect of the software, which resides in computer 19 on the computer readable medium, includes the tab cartridges and pay tables designated 22 and 24 respectively. Tab cartridge 22 contains a finite list of plays or tabs which are illustrated in FIG. 2 as 22. In the present invention the tab cartridge is a logical cartridge embodied in computer readable medium for storing a finite number of tabs. Tab cartridge 22 contains individual plays or tabs 22a, 22b, 22c, each representing one play of the game. Each play is a 3 by 3 grid having a plurality of images designated as 28 so that a single play would have 9 images in the tab. When the player wishes to play the game, the CPU selects a tab from the tab cartridge and covers the three rows so that they are not visible to the player but the coverings are visible on the touch screen 30. The player then can have each row uncovered to reveal the individual windows 28 of the tab since the images 28 can be similar or different. If the images are similar and there are three in a row, the tab is considered a winner. Once the tab is considered a winner, the matching images of the tab are used to determine the amount or credits the player has won.

| TABLE B |
| SAMPLE PAY TABLE |
| PAY | |
| 1 | Three Big Diamonds $2,000.00 |
| 2 | Three Bars $1,000.00 |
| 3 | Three Emeralds $500.00 |
| 4 | Three Rubies $250.00 |
| 5 | Three Small Diamond Sets $100.00 |
| 6 | Three Quartz $25.00 |
| 7 | Three Pearls $10.00 |
| 8 | Three Onyx $5.00 |
| 9 | Three Gold Nuggets $2.00 |
| 10 | Three Silver Nuggets $1.00 |

[0019] Referring to the sample pay table B above, it can be seen that three big diamonds displayed in pay tab 22 in a row, either vertically, horizontally, or, diagonally would provide $2,000.00 to the player. Additionally, three bars in a row would provide $1,000.00 to the player. The above pay table is used for example only as a wide variety of winning combinations as well as pay-outs could be utilized. The software residing, in computer 19 and analyzes the tab which has recently been played and uses the pay table to determine the credits the player has one. Once the tab has been played, it is removed from tab cartridge 22 so that it no longer may be played and the number of tabs in tab cartridge 22 is reduced by one.

[0020] For the player to play, sufficient credits need exist on the video game. Therefore a bill and coin receiver 32 is provided on the video game to receive funds or credits from the player. The bill receiver is connected to the CPU or processor so that the software contained in the computer readable medium can track the number of credits which the player has entered into the video game. As well as tracking credits, the software has the ability to perform accounting and statistical functions such as the number of games played, the number of credits received, the number of credits paid out, the number of tabs remaining in the tab cartridge, the percentage that has been paid out to that has been received, the number of tabs remaining in the tab cartridge, and other such financial, statistical, or, accounting functions. Printer 34 is also connected to processor 18 and allows for a hard copy of the statistics to be provided to the operator of the machine. In the event that credits are used instead of monetary funds in order to play the game the printer can
provide a copy of the printout of the number of credits the user has won. So that the operator of the game can covert these credits into funds.

[0021] In addition to the sample pay table B, a quantity table C is also included with the software contained in computer 19. The purpose of the quantity table is to assure that a finite amount of credits or dollars are paid out for a tab cartridge 22. Following is a table illustrating the quantity, the corresponding row of the pay table, and the dollar equivalent for the quantity and row for the pay table. For example, quantity 1 of row 1 shows a dollar amount of $2000.00. This means that there is one occurrence of three big diamonds from row 1 of the sample pay table in the tab cartridge 22. Therefore, the single quantity of row 1 would pay out $2000.00. By way of further example, there is a quantity of 2 of row 2, three bars, so that two pay-outs of $1000.00 each exist in the tab cartridge 22. Therefore, the total payout for row 2 sample pay table is $2000.00. Following this method through the quantity row table, it can be seen that tab cartridge 22 contains a little over 100 winning combinations of the ten rows in the sample pay table for a total payout of $7,150.00. Therefore the tab cartridge 22 is guaranteed to pay out $7,150.00 if the tab cartridge is exhausted thru playing. In order to have the operator of the video game make a profit on the machine, tab cartridge 22 may very well contain 10,000 possible tabs. If each tab requires one dollar to play, then it would cost a player $10,000.00 to exhaust the tabs in tab cartridge 22. If you know the payout is guaranteed to be $7,150.00, then the operator makes a profit of $2,850.00 per tab cartridge. Many states in the nation have laws which allow this type of video games to be used for charity and fund raising events since it is a fixed, known income amount to be paid to the operator of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
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<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[0022] Another advantage of the system having finite tabs is that a charge can be maintained to replenish the tab cartridge 22 allowing the manufacturer of the tab cartridge to realize a profit.

[0023] FIG. 3 illustrates the process and functionality for recharging the tab cartridge in further detail. When a operator or manufacturer wishes to recharge the tab cartridge contained in computer readable code, the operator or manufacturer begins at step 36. The operator accesses the menu screen at step 38 and enters, through touch screen input or other means, an access code to the menu screen at step 40. If the access code is invalid, then the operator proceeds to select the tab cartridge to access functionality of the software on processor 18. If the valid tab code is not entered the process is then stopped. If a valid processor code is entered, the software and processor 18 determine whether it is a master code in step 44. If step 46 is a master code, then the operator or manufacturer has the ability to change the tab code in step 48. If tab code is changed, then the changed code is updated in a database on a computer readable medium by processor 18 and stored through computer 19 for future reference in step 50. If the master code is not entered at step 48, then the tab count is set to the initial number and the tab cartridge contains the same number of tabs as when originally initialized so that a second set of tab cartridges will again generate a fixed number of outcomes and payouts. When the tab is reset in step 52, the ability to enter a master code allows for an operator to change the tab code so that an individual may not continually reset the tab count to the initial number in step 52 by knowing only one tab code. The operator can change the tab code each and every time the tab cartridge is reset. This allows the manufacturer to telephone the tab code to the operator and subsequent to the exhaustion of the second tab cartridge, the manufacturer can change the tab code so the operator will once again have to contact the manufacturer for the third run through the tab cartridge.

[0024] Referring now to FIG. 4, the process for depleting the tabs is further illustrated. The player is displayed a selection of games in which the player may wish to play in step 56. Once the player sees the list, then the player can select the game to play in step 58. Player can then play the game in step 60 and if sufficient credits exist as checked in step 62, then the tabs selected by computer program is displayed in step 64. If the credits are not sufficient, then the player is informed that the there are no sufficient credits and is returned to an earlier display section in step 66. Once the game is played and the tab is reduced by one, the tab selector is compared to the pay tables in step 68. If a match in the pay tables is determined step 70 then the credits for the player increase in step 72 by comparing the tab with the pay table as illustrated above. If the selection does not match one in the pay table then the credits of the player are reduced by credit amount in step 74 and the program checks to see whether the tabs have been exhausted in step 78. If the tabs have not been exhausted, the player can play another game and return to step 60. Otherwise, there are no games remaining as indicated in step 80 and the player is sent back to an earlier game selection so that the player may enter more credits.

[0025] While a preferred embodiment of the invention has been described using specific terms, such description is for illustrative purposes only, and it is to be understood that changes and variations may be made without departing from the spirit or scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is:
1. A computerized gaming machine for allowing a customer to play a predetermined number of games with a finite number of outcomes comprising:
a cabinet;
a video display carried by said cabinet;
a computer readable medium carried within said cabinet in communication with said video display;
an input controller in communication with said computer readable medium for receiving input from the customer and communicating said input to said computer medium;

a tab cartridge embodied in said computer readable medium containing a predetermined number of individual tab records associated with a game, each of said games having an associated award outcome; and,
a set of computer readable instructions embodied in said computer readable medium for, when executed by a processor, performing the tasks of selecting a tab record from said tab cartridge, providing the associated game of the tab record to the customer via said video display, reporting the award outcome of the game to the customer, and removing the tab record from said tab cartridge so that no games can be played once the tab records are fully depleted from said tab cartridge.

2. The machine of claim 1 wherein said set of computer readable instructions includes reset instructions for replenishing said tab cartridge with a predetermined number of tab records so that an exhausted tab cartridge may be further played.

3. The machine of claim 2 including: and,
a reset code embodied within said tab cartridge;
said set of reset instructions includes instructions for receiving a reset request via said input controller, comparing said reset request with said reset code, and replenishing said tab cartridge according to said reset request if said reset request matches said reset code.

4. The machine of claim 2 including:
a slot reader in communication with said computer readable medium;
a reset code embodied within said tab cartridge; and
said set of reset instructions includes instructions for receiving a reset request according to a reset key having an id code received by said slot reader so that said tab cartridge is replenished according to said id code and said reset code matching.

5. The machine of claim 1 including:
a pay table embodied in said computer readable medium having individual pay records, with each of said pay records associated with at least one of said tab records;
a tab identification contained within said pay record;
an award information contained within said pay record; and
said set of computer readable instructions embodied in said computer readable medium including instructions for retrieving an associated pay record from said pay table according to tab record played and determining the award outcome according to said retrieved pay record.

6. The machine of claim 1 including:
a plurality of windows contained with the computer readable medium having game images, said game images are revealed to the customer when the customer plays the game; and
said set of computer readable instructions contains instructions for revealing said game images to the customer so that the customer is provided with the game images associated with the reported game outcome.

7. The machine of claim 1 including a predetermined total payout amount associated with said tab cartridge so that when said tab cartridge is exhausted, a finite total award outcome amount has been reported to the customers.

8. A computerized pull tab game program for use with a video gaming machine having a video display, a computer having a computer readable medium, an input controller in communication with the computer readable medium, and computer readable game instructions embodied in the computer readable medium for implementing a prescribed game, wherein said computer readable game instructions comprise:
a tab cartridge embodied in said computer readable medium containing a predetermined number of tab records associated with a predetermined number of games, each game having an associated game outcome representing different levels of winning ranging from zero to predetermined win pay-outs;
deletion instructions for deleting each of the tab records of a game as said game is played by a player;
termination instructions for terminating the play of said computer readable game instructions once all of said tab records are depleted from said tab cartridge; and
reset instructions responsive to a reset code received by said computer readable medium for replenishing said tab records of said tab cartridge so that said computer readable game instructions can be resumed after said tabs have been replenished.

9. The system of claim 8 wherein said game outcomes are in the form of credit receipts.

10. The system of claim 8 wherein said game outcomes are in the form of monies.

11. The system of claim 10 including providing a predetermined total payout amount associated with said tab cartridge so that when said tab cartridge is exhausted, a finite total monies award amount has been reported to the customers.

12. The system of claim 9 including providing a predetermined total payout amount associated with said tab cartridge so that when said tab cartridge is exhausted, a finite total credit receipt award amount has been reported to the customers.

13. A computerized method for a gaming machine of the type having a cabinet, a video display disposed within the cabinet, a computer readable medium, an input controller included in the computer, and a game program for allowing a customer to play a game embodied in the computer readable medium, said method comprising:

providing a tab cartridge embodied in said computer readable medium which contains a predetermined number of tabs having an associated game, each of said games having a predetermined outcome for that game;
operating said game program according to a play request of the customer allowing the customer to play a game;
providing said game outcome associated with said game played by the customer;
removing said tab associated with said played game from said tab cartridge;
receiving a reset code; and
resetting said tab cartridge responsive to said reset code
after all of said tabs have been depleted so that said
game program may be played again until said tabs are
once again exhausted from said tab cartridge.
14. Computerized gaming machine for allowing the cus-
tomer to play a predetermined number of games with finite
number of outcomes comprising:
a computer readable medium;
a tab cartridge embodied inside computer readable
medium containing a predetermined number of tab
records representing the number of times a particular
game can be played;
a set of predetermined outcomes embodied in said com-
puter readable medium and associated with said tab
records of said tab cartridge so that a particular play of
the game has a particular game outcome; and
a set of computer readable instructions embodied inside
computer readable medium for, when executed by a
processor, performing the tasks of presenting a game to
be played to the customer, receiving input for playing
the game from the customer, displaying the game
outcome associated with the game played to the cus-
tomer, and deleting the tab record from said tab car-
tridge so that no games can be played once the tab
records are fully depleted from said game cartridge.
15. The machine of claim 14 when said set of computer
readable instructions includes reset instructions for repleni-
shing said tab cartridge with a predetermined number of tab
records so that an exhausted tab cartridge may be further
played.

16. The machine of claim 14 including:
a reset code embodied within said computer readable
medium; and,
a set of reset instructions including said computer read-
able medium for receiving reset requests, comparing
said reset requests with said reset code, and repleni-
shing said tab cartridge according to said reset request if
said reset request matches said reset code.
17. The machine of claim 14 wherein said game outcomes
are in the form of credit receipts.
18. The system of claim 17 including providing a prede-
termined total payout amount associated with said tab car-
tridge so that when said tab cartridge is exhausted, a finite
total credit receipt award amount has been reported to the
customers.
19. The machine of claim 14 wherein said game outcomes
are in the form of monies.
20. The system of claim 19 including providing a prede-
termined total payout amount associated with said tab car-
tridge so that when said tab cartridge is exhausted, a finite
total monies award amount has been reported to the cus-
tomers.
21. The system of claim 14 wherein the set of computer
readable instruction contains instructions for allowing the
game outcomes associated with a played game to be modi-
fied so that a finite total game outcome award can be
controlled.

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