A gaming system for use with a media player and one or more output devices, where the media player is configured to receive user signals, to read and execute information from a game medium, and to present portions of the information on the one or more output devices. The gaming system includes a game medium having information readable by the media player that, when executed, causes the media player to produce a game having a plurality of scenes, wherein each scene causes the media player to selectively respond to the reception of user signals. The gaming system also includes a remote unit operable by one or more users. The remote unit includes a controller, a transmitter coupled to the controller, a first button coupled to the controller, and a second button coupled to the controller. The controller is configured to selectively operate in a first mode that causes the transmitter to transmit a user signal upon actuation of either the first or second buttons, and a second mode that causes the transmitter to transmit a user signal upon actuation of the first button, and to transmit no user signal upon actuation of the second button.
PRESENTABLE INFORMATION

PLURALITY OF SCRIPTS THAT CAUSE THE MEDIA PLAYER TO RESPOND TO THE OCCURRENCE OF AN EVENT BY:

STORING VALUES IN THE MEMORY

MODIFYING VALUES IN THE MEMORY

PERFORMING CALCULATIONS BASED ON VALUES STORED IN THE MEMORY

MODIFYING THE PRESENTABLE INFORMATION BASED ON VALUES STORED IN THE MEMORY

READING AND PRODUCING ANOTHER SCENE

SCENE 102a

SCENE 102b

SCENE 102c

SCENE 102d
Fig. 3

PRESENTABLE INFORMATION

SCRIPT THAT CAUSES THE MEDIA PLAYER TO RESPOND TO ONE OR MORE SIGNALS CORRESPONDING TO PLAYER A (e.g., SIGNAL A AND/OR OTHER SIGNALS) BY READING AND PRESENTING SCENE 208

PRESENTABLE INFORMATION

SCRIPT THAT CAUSES THE MEDIA PLAYER TO RESPOND TO SIGNAL A BY READING AND PRESENTING SCENE 204

PRESENTABLE INFORMATION

SCRIPT THAT CAUSES THE MEDIA PLAYERS TO RESPOND TO ONE OR MORE SIGNALS CORRESPONDING TO PLAYER B (e.g., SIGNAL B AND/OR OTHER SIGNALS) BY READING AND PRESENTING SCENE 208

SCENE 204

SCRIPT THAT CAUSES THE MEDIA PLAYER TO RESPOND TO SIGNAL B BY READING AND PRESENTING SCENE 208

SCENE 202

SCENE 206

SCENE 208
Fig. 6

Fig. 8A

QUESTION #1: PLAYERS 1-3, "BUZZ IN" WHEN YOU WOULD LIKE TO ATTEMPT TO ANSWER THE QUESTION.

WHO WAS THE ONLY U.S. PRESIDENT IN HISTORY TO RESIGN HIS OFFICE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>PLAYER 1</th>
<th>PLAYER 2</th>
<th>PLAYER 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-100</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TIMER
PLAYERS 1-3, YOU HAVE 4 SECONDS REMAINING TO "BUZZ IN"
Fig. 7

1. NEW GAME OR GAME ROUND BEGINS
2. PUZZLE SCENE PRODUCED
3. SCENE PRODUCED THAT PRESENTS THE CORRECT SOLUTION
4. PREDETERMINED AMOUNT OF TIME PASSES WITHOUT MEDIA PLAYER RECEIVING A "BUZZ IN" SIGNAL
5. MEDIA PLAYER RECEIVES A "BUZZ IN" SIGNAL FROM THE NTH PLAYER BEFORE THE PASSAGE OF A PREDETERMINED AMOUNT OF TIME
6. ONE OR MORE SOLUTION SCENES PRODUCED
7. NTH PLAYER INTERACTS WITH THE ONE OR MORE SOLUTION SCENES
8. NTH PLAYER'S SCORE CHANGES TO REFLECT THEIR PERFORMANCE DURING THE ONE OR MORE SOLUTION SCENES
9. HAS A GAME OBJECTIVE BEEN ACHIEVED?
10. GAME OR GAME ROUND ENDS
**Fig. 8B**

**QUESTION #1:** TIME HAS EXPIRED. THE CORRECT ANSWER IS RICHARD M. NIXON.

**Fig. 9**

**QUESTION #1:** PLAYERS 1-3, LISTEN TO THE QUESTION AND "BUZZ IN" WHEN YOU WOULD LIKE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION. THE FIRST PLAYER TO "BUZZ IN" MAY SELECT AN ANSWER FROM THE FOLLOWING:

A. JOHN F. KENNEDY
B. RONALD W. REAGAN
C. RICHARD M. NIXON
D. WILLIAM H. TAFT

**Fig. 10A**

**QUESTION #1:** PLAYERS 2 "BUZZED IN," AND MAY SELECT ONE OF THE ANSWERS FROM THE FOLLOWING:

A. JOHN F. KENNEDY
B. RONALD W. REAGAN
C. RICHARD M. NIXON
D. WILLIAM H. TAFT

**SCORE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLAYER 1</th>
<th>PLAYER 2</th>
<th>PLAYER 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>-100</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TIMER**

PLAYERS 2, YOU HAVE 2 SECONDS REMAINING TO SELECT AN ANSWER.
Fig. 10B

QUESTION #1: PLAYER 2 HAS RUN OUT OF TIME AND LOSES 100 POINTS. THE CORRECT ANSWER IS RICHARD M. NIXON.

PROCEED TO THE NEXT QUESTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>PLAYER 1</th>
<th>PLAYER 2</th>
<th>PLAYER 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>-200</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 10C

QUESTION #1: CONGRATULATIONS! PLAYER 2 CORRECTLY SELECTED RICHARD M. NIXON, AND HAS EARNED 100 POINTS.

PROCEED TO THE NEXT QUESTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>PLAYER 1</th>
<th>PLAYER 2</th>
<th>PLAYER 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 11A

QUESTION #1: PLAYER 2 "BUZZED IN," AND MUST PROVIDE AN ANSWER BEFORE THE TIMER RUNS OUT.

WHO WAS THE ONLY U.S. PRESIDENT IN HISTORY TO RESIGN HIS OFFICE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCORE</th>
<th>PLAYER 1</th>
<th>PLAYER 2</th>
<th>PLAYER 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>-100</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TIMER

PLAYER 2, YOU HAVE 3 SECONDS REMAINING TO SELECT AN ANSWER.
Fig. 11B

QUESTION #1: TIME IS UP. THE CORRECT ANSWER IS RICHARD M. NIXON. PLAYER 2, PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER OR NOT YOU PROVIDED THE CORRECT ANSWER.

YES
NO

SCORE
PLAYER 1
PLAYER 2
PLAYER 3
100
-100
300

Fig. 11C

QUESTION #1: PLAYER 2 INDICATED THAT THEY PROVIDED THE CORRECT ANSWER, AND HAS BEEN AWARDED 100 POINTS.

PROCEED TO THE NEXT QUESTION

SCORE
PLAYER 1
PLAYER 2
PLAYER 3
100
0
300
GAMING SYSTEM
CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION


BACKGROUND

[0002] A popular format of games is the “video game,” in which a player interacts with a system having a video display. While video games are popular, they can be expensive. Arcades and other commercial establishments provide such games on a pay-to-play basis, so that a user must continually pay to play the game. Home gaming consoles are manufactured and sold to consumers who wish to enjoy unlimited usage of compatible video games at home. However, such consoles and their compatible games are typically quite expensive. Therefore, many consumers are attracted to games that may be played on their existing home media players without the need for a separate gaming console that may only be used with compatible games.

[0003] Some commercially available gaming systems may be used in conjunction with a consumer's home media player, such as a digital video disc (“DVD”) player, to create a home entertainment system. Examples of gaming systems are found in: EP 1,400,267; WO 2004/010389; WO 2004/081765; U.S. Patent Application Nos. 2004/0048642; 2004/0054826; 2004/0140997; and 2004/0140998; and U.S. Pat. No. 5,219,291. the disclosures of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety for all purposes.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0004] FIG. 1 shows a block diagram of an entertainment system, including a media player, a game display, and a gaming system.

[0005] FIG. 2 shows a block diagram of an embodiment of a gaming system stored on a game medium of the gaming system shown in FIG. 1.

[0006] FIG. 3 shows a block diagram of an embodiment of the game information shown in FIG. 2.

[0007] FIG. 4 shows a block diagram of an embodiment of the remote unit of the gaming system shown in FIG. 1.

[0008] FIG. 5 shows a block diagram of another embodiment of the remote unit of the gaming system shown in FIG. 1.

[0009] FIG. 6 shows a block diagram of yet another embodiment of the remote unit of the gaming system shown in FIG. 1.

[0010] FIG. 7 shows a flow chart showing a method of playing a multiplayer game.

[0011] FIG. 8A shows a screen shot of presentable information associated with an embodiment of a puzzle scene.

[0012] FIG. 8B shows a screen shot of presentable information associated with an embodiment of a default scene presented upon the passage of a predetermined amount of time after presentation of the information shown in FIG. 8A.

[0013] FIG. 9 shows a screen shot of presentable information associated with another embodiment of a puzzle scene.

[0014] FIGS. 10A-C show screen shots of presentable information associated with an embodiment of the one or more solution scenes.

[0015] FIGS. 11A-C show screen shots of presentable information associated with another embodiment of the one or more solution scenes.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0016] FIG. 1 shows a block diagram of an entertainment system 10. The entertainment system may include: a media player 12; one or more output devices 14; and a gaming system 16, including a game medium 18 and one or more remote units 20 (also referred to as “remote controls”). The media player may include any device for reading and executing (i.e. processing) information from the game medium, receiving and responding to user signals from the one or more remote units, and transmitting portions of the information to the one or more output devices. Each of the one or more output devices may include any device for receiving information transmitted by the media player, and presenting video, audio and/or other types of perceivable/detectable signals that correspond to the received information. The game medium may include any device for storing information that causes the media player to produce a game when read and/or executed (i.e. processed) by the media player. Each of the one or more remote units may include any device that enables a user to transmit user signals to the media player. The particular embodiments of the entertainment system described below should not be considered as limiting, but rather as providing illustrative examples of the numerous possible configurations and features of the entertainment system.

[0017] A. The Media Player

[0018] The media player may include any device for reading and executing information from the game medium, receiving and responding to user signals from the one or more remote units, and transmitting portions of the information to the one or more output devices. Specifically, the media player 12 may include a processor 22, a reader 24, a memory 26, and a receiver 28. The processor may be configured to execute information read by the reader, transmit information to (i.e. present information on) the game display, access and/or modify values stored in the memory, and process signals received by the receiver. The reader (e.g. an optical reader, such as a laser, or some other form of data reader) may be configured to read data stored on a game
The memory may include random access memory (“RAM”), and may be configured to store game variables. The receiver may be configured to receive signals transmitted by one or more remote units, such as infrared signals (“IR signals”), radio-frequency signals (“RF signals”) or any other type of suitable wireless or wired signal.

[0019] The media player 12 may be configured with varying amounts of RAM. For example, the media player may include a typical gaming console, such as a pay-to-play arcade gaming device, a personal computer, or a home gaming console, or a hand-held gaming device. Typical gaming consoles generally include sufficient RAM for storing the large amounts of game information required to play most video games. The media player may also include a conventional DVD player, which, in contrast to typical gaming consoles, is not specifically configured to play video games that require large amounts of RAM. Rather, conventional DVD players are configured with the minimum amount of resources needed to play encoded audio and video content that does not require large amounts of RAM. Conventional DVD players therefore generally include a minimal amount of RAM that enables the DVD player to use the menuing features encoded on some DVDs, to play one of several possible audio tracks, and to display one of several possible subtitles, etc. Most conventional DVD players, as the term is used in this disclosure, generally include less than about 1 kilobyte (1,024 bytes, or 8,192 bits) of onboard memory. Accordingly, some embodiments of the entertainment system may include media that uses the minimal amount of a conventional DVD player’s onboard RAM memory to store game variables (e.g. information related to the progress of a game), which in turn may be used to control game flow.

[0020] B. The Output Device(s)

[0021] Each of the one or more output devices 14 may include any device that receives information transmitted by the media player 12, and presents video, audio and/or other types of perceivable/detectable signals corresponding to the received information. The one or more output devices may include a display screen 30, an audio system 32, and/or an auxiliary device 34. Each of the one or more output devices may be coupled to the media player in any manner known in the art. The display screen may include a cathode ray tube (“CRT”), plasma, liquid crystal display (“LCD”) or light emitting diode (“LED”) screens, or any other suitable display screens for presenting video signals. The audio system may include the built-in speakers of the display screen, a stand-alone audio system having an amplifier/receiver and speakers, and/or any other suitable audio system for presenting audio signals. The auxiliary device may include any device for generating signals detectable by some type of receiver, such as IR or other light signals, RF or other audio signals, etc.

[0022] The one or more output devices 14 may function as a signal generator operably attached to the media player 12. Specifically, one or more of the display screen 30, audio system 32, and/or auxiliary device 34 may be used by the media player 12 to generate and transmit signals, hereinafter referred to as generated signals GS, to one or more remote units 20. As discussed below, some remote units 20 may include a receiver 46 for receiving generated signals GS. These remote controls may, in turn, be configured to respond to the reception of generated signals GS, where a specific signal may cause a specific response. Consequently, the media player may be configured during game play to periodically transmit generated signals GS via one or more output devices. The generated signals may correspond to information stored in the memory 18 of the media player.

[0023] C. The Gaming System

[0024] 1. The Game Medium

[0025] The game medium 18 may include any device for storing information readable and/or executable by the media player. The game medium may include floppy discs, cartridges, SmartCards, compact discs (“CDs”), digital video discs (“DVDs”), or any other suitable data storage device containing data readable by the media player. The information stored on the game medium, when read and executed by the media player, may cause the media player to produce a game, and to selectively respond to user signals transmitted by a remote unit 20 and received by the media player 12.

[0026] FIG. 2 generally shows aspects of game information 100 stored on game medium 18. The game information may include a plurality of scenes, such as scenes 102a-d. While only four scenes are shown in FIG. 2, the game information may include any number of scenes. Each scene may include presentable information 104, corresponding to audio, video, and/or other types of perceivable/detectable signals. When a scene is produced by the media player 12, the scene’s presentable information may be read by the reader 24, processed and transmitted by the processor 22, and presented with at least one of the one or more output devices 14. Each scene may also include one or more sets of instructions, hereinafter referred to as “scripts,” that correspond to the scene’s presentable information, and that are executed by the processor 22 when read by the reader 24. When a scene is produced, the scene’s scripts may cause the media player to selectively respond to the occurrence of specific events, such as the reception of a user signal transmitted by a remote unit and received by the media player, the passage of a predetermined amount of time, the achievement of a predetermined game objective, etc. For example, scripts may cause the media player to respond to the occurrence of an event, such as by: storing values in the memory of the media player 106; modifying values stored in the memory of the media player 108; performing calculations based on values stored in the memory of the media player’s memory 110; modifying the presentable information based on values stored in the memory of the media player 112; and/or reading and producing another scene 114.

[0027] The scenes may be used to control and/or record the progress of a game. Initially, production of a scene may cause the media player to read and transmit the presentable information associated with that scene to the output device(s). As indicated above, the presentable information may in part be modified based on one or more values stored in the memory of the media player, such as by including additional presentable information corresponding to the progress of the game, to variable interactive elements, etc. Scripts associated with the scene may cause the media player to dynamically respond to the occurrence of one or more events. For example, a first scene’s scripts may cause the media player to produce a second scene upon the reception of signal A, a third scene upon the reception of
signal B, a fourth scene upon the passage of a predetermined amount of time, and/or a fifth scene upon the achievement of a game objective. As yet another example, a scene may include scripts that cause the media player to use values stored in its memory to perform a first set of calculations upon the reception of signal A, or a second set of calculations upon the reception of signal B, whereby the results of those calculations may be used to modify values stored in the media player’s memory. Finally, some scenes may include scripts that cause the media player to periodically use the game display 14 to transmit generated signals GS, as discussed above. The particular generated signal GS transmitted by the game display may depend in part on game variables stored in the media player’s memory, and may include information related to the progress of the game (e.g. the current score, the current game round, etc.). These examples are intended to be illustrative, and in no way constrain the possible combinations of scripts that any particular scene may include.

Some scenes may specifically cause the media player to disregard the reception of certain user signals. As discussed below, some user signals may be associated with a specific player or team (i.e. signal A may be associated with player A, while signal B may be associated with player B). Also as discussed below, some gaming systems may “lock out” one or more players for predetermined portions of game play (i.e. locked out players may be unable to interact with a game for a predetermined amount of time). One way of accomplishing this is to provide a game medium with: (a) scenes having scripts that cause the media player to respond to the reception of certain user signals associated with all of the players; and (b) other scenes having scripts that cause the media player to respond to the reception of user signals associated with one player, but lacking scripts that cause the media player to respond to the reception of user signals associated with the other players (i.e. scenes that cause the media player to disregard the reception of user signals associated with the other players). This concept is illustrated in FIG. 3, which shows game information including scenes 202, 204, 206, and 208.

Some scenes may cause the media player to respond to the reception of user signals associated with all of the players. For example, scene 202 shown in FIG. 3 may at least include presentable information 202a, and scripts 202b and 202c. The presentable information 202a may be read by the media player and presented on the output device(s), whereby players A and B may both be prompted to actuate buttons on one or more remote units to interact with the game. Script 202b may cause the media player to respond to the reception of a signal A (associated with a player A), such as by producing scene 204. Likewise, script 202c may cause the media player to respond to the reception of a signal B (associated with a player B), such as by producing scene 206.

Scene 204 may cause the media player to respond to the reception of user signals associated with player A, but to disregard the reception of remote control signals associated with player B. For example, scene 204 may include presentable information 204a and script 204b. The presentable information 204a may be read by the media player and presented on the output device(s), whereby player A alone may be prompted to interact with the scene. Script 204b may cause the media player to respond to the reception of one or more user signals associated with player A (e.g. signal A and/or other signals), such as by producing scene 208. Scene 204 may, however, lack scripts that cause the media player to respond to one or more, or even all, of the user signals associated with player B (e.g. signal B and/or other signals). Scene 204 may therefore specifically cause the media player to disregard the reception of one or more of the user signals associated with player B, and player B may be partially or completely “locked out” of game play for at least the duration of the scene.

Scene 206 may cause the media player to respond to the reception of user signals associated with player B, but to disregard the reception of user signals associated with player A. For example, scene 206 may include presentable information 206a and script 206b. The presentable information 206a may be read by the media player and presented on the output device(s), whereby player B alone may be prompted to interact with the scene. Script 206b may cause the media player to respond to the reception of one or more user signals associated with player B (e.g. signal B and/or other signals), such as by producing scene 208. Scene 206 may, however, lack scripts that cause the media player to respond to one or more, or even all, of the user signals associated with player A (e.g. signal A and/or other signals). Scene 206 may therefore specifically cause the media player to disregard the reception of one or more of the user signals associated with player A, and player A may be partially or completely “locked out” of game play for at least the duration of the scene.

Scene 208 may be substantially similar to scene 202, in that it may cause the media player to respond to the reception of user signals associated with all of the players.

2. The Remote Unit(s)

As indicated above, the gaming system 16 may include one or more remote units 20, each of which may include any device that enables one or more users to interact with the game produced by the media player 12 upon reading and executing the information stored on the game medium 18. As shown in FIG. 1, each remote unit may include a housing 36, a controller 39, a transmitter 42, a control pad 44 having one or more buttons (i.e. inputs), a receiver 46, and/or one or more display devices 48 and 50.

The controller 39 may include a memory 38 and a processor 40. The memory may store information that is readable by the processor 40, and that configures the processor to respond to inputs by providing pre-programmed outputs. Specifically, upon receiving an input, the processor may access the information stored in the memory to determine how to respond. The information stored in the memory and/or the memory itself may be variable so as to change the manner in which the processor, and therefore the controller, is configured. The memory may include RAM and/or read-only memory (“ROM”). Some memory may be fixedly attached to the processor, while some memory may be removable and/or insertable (e.g. floppy discs, cartridges, SmartCards, CDs, DVDs, etc.). The processor may save/modify information in the memory, such as by downloading/inputting data into the memory from a source external to the remote control(s) 20. For example, one or more signals, such as a generated signal GS, may be received by the receiver 46, processed by the processor 40, and saved into the memory 38 by the processor. The information saved into the
memory may, in turn, reconfigure the processor, and thus the controller. Some of the information saved in the memory may also be displayed by the controller on the one or more display devices 48 and 50.

[0036] The controller 39 may cause the transmitter 42 to transmit different signals upon actuation of different buttons on the control pad 44. Each button may thereby be “programmed” to cause the transmitter to transmit a specific wireless signal. For example, if the media player is a conventional DVD player, each button may be programmed to cause the transmitter to transmit a specific signal receivable by a conventional DVD player, such as “Up,” “Down,” “Left,” “Right,” “Enter,” “Menu,” “Fast Forward,” “Rewind,” and/or various number signals, etc.

[0037] The controller 39 may be configured to selectively operate in one or more modes. In some modes, each button on the control pad 44 may be programmed by the controller to cause the transmission of a specific signal. In other modes, each button may be programmed by the controller to cause the transmission of a different specific signal. Changing the controller’s mode may thereby reprogram a particular button by changing the signal transmitted by the transmitter upon actuation of that button. For example, the controller may be configured to selectively operate in: a first mode that causes the transmitter to transmit a first signal upon actuation of a button; a second mode that causes the transmitter to transmit a second signal upon actuation of the button; a third mode that causes the transmitter not to transmit a signal upon actuation of the button, etc.

[0038] The controller 39 may be configured to change modes upon the occurrence of an event. More than one event may cause a controller operating in a particular mode to change to another mode, such as the actuation of one or more of the buttons on the control pad 44, the passage of time, the reception of a signal (e.g., generated signals GS) by the receiver 46, etc. Controllers operating in some modes may be configured to change modes upon the occurrence of some events, while controllers functioning in other modes may be configured to change modes upon the occurrence of other events. For example, the controller may be configured to change: from a first mode to a second mode upon the actuation of a first button; and from the second mode back to the first mode upon actuation of a second button or upon the reception of a generated signal GS.

[0039] The controller 39 may be configured to cause the transmitter 42 to transmit signals, and/or change modes, in manners that coordinate with the game being produced by the media player 12 upon reading and executing the information stored on the game medium 18. Specifically, the game medium may contain information that appropriately causes the media player 12 to respond to user signals transmitted by the gaming system’s remote unit(s). The remote unit(s) may be game specific, whereby only a single game medium stores information that appropriately causes the media player to respond to the remote unit(s) user signals. Alternatively, the remote unit(s) may be usable with a plurality of game media, whereby each game medium stores information that appropriately causes the media player to respond to the remote unit(s) user signals. The data stored in the remote unit(s) memory may be variable (such as by providing specific removable memory that stores data corresponding to game information stored on specific game medium), so as to enable a user to reconfigure the remote unit(s) for use with a plurality of game media.

[0040] The controller 39 of some remote unit(s) 20 may be configured to change modes in a manner that “locks out” one or more players for predetermined portions of a game. As discussed above, the controller may be configured to change modes upon the occurrence of an event (such as the actuation of a button, the passage of a predetermined amount of time, or the reception of a signal, etc.). Also as discussed above, the controller may be configured to change modes in manners that are consistent with the game produced by the media player 12 upon reading and executing the information stored on the game medium 18. At some point during a game, an event may occur that causes the controller to change modes in a manner that reprograms some or all of the buttons on the remote unit(s), so that the transmitter transmits signals upon the actuation of buttons associated with some players, and transmits no signals upon the actuation of buttons associated with other players. The other players may thereby be “locked out” of game play for a predetermined amount of time, such as until the controller changes modes at least one more time. During a subsequent portion of game play, an event may occur that causes the controller to change modes in a manner that reprograms some or all of the buttons on the remote unit(s), so that the transmitter transmits signals upon the actuation of buttons associated with all of the players. The buttons may thereby be reprogrammed such that none of the players are “locked out” of game play.

[0041] For example, the remote unit may include a button A associated with a player A, and a button B associated with a player B. The remote unit’s controller may be configured to selectively operate in: a first mode that causes the transmitter to transmit a signal A upon actuation of button A, and a signal B upon actuation of button B; and a second mode that causes the transmitter to transmit signal A upon actuation of button A but does not cause the transmitter to transmit any signal upon actuation of the button B. The controller may also be configured to change from the first mode to the second mode upon the occurrence of an event (e.g., the actuation of button A or some other button, the reception of a signal by the receiver 46, etc.), where the event is coordinated with a predetermined portion of the game (e.g., the production of a scene having presentable information that prompts player A to cause the event that in turn causes the mode change). The controller may be configured to change from the second mode back to the first mode upon the occurrence of another event (e.g., the actuation of a reset or other button, the reception of a generated signal GS by the receiver 46, etc.).

[0042] Each remote unit 20 may be a remote control for use with a particular type of media player. For example, each remote unit may be a wireless remote control for use with a DVD player. Each remote control may be a universal remote control, having a controller 39 that is reconfigurable for use with one of a plurality of media players. For example, the memory 38 may store data that configures the controller 39 to function in a plurality of selectable modes. Selection of a particular mode, such as by entering a code associated with a particular type of media player, may reconfigure the controller to cause the transmitter to transmit signals that are receivable by the particular type of media player upon actuation of the buttons. Alternatively or additionally, each button on the universal remote control(s) may be individual-
ally programmable so as to cause the transmitter to transmit signals receivable by a particular type of media player. For example, each button may be individually programmed by: (1) selecting a programming mode; (2) selecting a button to program; (3) receiving at the receiver 46 a wireless signal transmitted by another remote control (such as the remote control associated with a particular type of media player); and (4) storing the received signal in the controller’s memory. The controller may thereafter be configured to cause the transmitter to transmit the received signal upon actuation of the selected button. As another example, the memory of the universal remote control(s) may include data that permits a user to program each button individually by: (1) selecting a programming mode; (2) selecting a button to program, whereby the controller automatically causes the transmitter to transmit a series of different signals until a signal corresponding to a particular media player is identified; and (3) storing the identified signal in the memory. The controller may thereafter be configured to cause the transmitter to transmit the identified signal upon actuation of the selected button.

The controller 39 may be configured to cause the one or more display devices 48 and 50 to display information stored in the memory 38. As indicated above, the controller’s processor 40 may save/modify data in the controller’s memory 38, such as data received by the receiver 46. Some data may configure the controller to display information on the display devices. This information may be related to the progress of the game, as discussed in more detail below.

The transmitter 42 may include any device operably coupled to the controller for transmitting signals. The transmitter may include a light emitting diode (“LED”) for transmitting one or more IR signals S, but may also include any other type of suitable transmitter.

Each of the buttons (i.e., inputs) on the control pad 44 may correspond to a specific game action. As discussed above, each button may be “programmed” to cause the transmitter 42 to transmit a specific wireless signal, such as “Up,” “Down,” “Left,” “Right,” “Enter,” “Memo,” etc. Also as discussed above, the game medium 18 may include information readable by the media player 12 that, when executed, causes the media player to produce a game having a plurality of scenes, where each scene may include one or more scripts that cause the media player to respond in a specific manner to the reception of a specific signal. The remote unit(s)’ buttons may therefore be programmed in a manner that corresponds to specific game actions based on a particular scene’s scripts configuring the media player to respond. As discussed below, different buttons may correspond to the same game actions performed by different players. Different buttons may correspond: (1) to the same game actions performed by different players; (2) to different game actions performed by different players; or (3) to different game actions performed by the same player.

Different buttons may correspond to the same game actions performed by different players. For example, a first button may be programmed to cause the transmitter to transmit an “Enter” signal corresponding to a “player A game action A” signal. A second button may be programmed to cause the transmitter to transmit a “Menu” signal, corresponding to a “player B game action A” signal. Some information stored on the game medium, when executed, may cause the media player to produce an interactive scene. The interactive scene may cause the media player to respond to the reception of the “Enter” signal in a manner corresponding to “player A” performing “game action A,” or to respond to the reception of the “Menu” signal in a manner corresponding to “player B” performing “game action A.” Each of these buttons may therefore correspond to the same game action performed by a different player.
and/or to change the mode of the remote unit’s controller (e.g., the controller 39 may be configured to change to a base mode form a non-base mode upon actuation of the reset button). These buttons are merely illustrative. More or fewer buttons may be included that correspond to other common game actions. Further, the buttons discussed above may include any type of button, switch, input, dial, or equivalent structure for receiving user input.

[0050] The receiver 46 may include any device operably coupled to the controller 39 for receiving signals from a source external to the remote unit 20. The receiver may be configured to receive IR or other light signals, RF or other audio signals, or any other suitable signal transmittable from an external source. For example, the receiver may include a microphone for detecting audible signals produced by the speakers of audio system 32. The receiver may be operably attached to the remote unit’s controller 39. As indicated above, the controller may be configured to respond to the occurrence of an event, such as the reception of a particular signal at the receiver. This response may include saving/modifying information in the controller’s memory 38, changing modes, etc. For example, the remote unit may be a universal remote control, where the controller 39 is configured to respond to another remote control’s signal by storing information in the memory. This information may be in turn reconfigured the remote control to be a universal remote control. The controller 39 may also be configured to store information contained in one or more feedback signals (“GS”) received by the receiver.

[0051] The display devices 48 and 50 may include any device operably coupled to the controller 39 for displaying information stored in the controller’s memory 38. The display devices may include CRTs, LCDs, LEDs, and/or any other type of suitable device for visually displaying information. The display devices may be analog or digital. Some display devices may be configured to display information that corresponds to a specific player or team. Some display devices may display information related to the progress of the game (e.g. the current score, round, number of players, etc.).

[0052] FIG. 4 shows an embodiment of remote units(s) 20, including a first remote unit 320a associated with a first player, and a second remote unit 320b associated with a second player. More or fewer remote units may be provided. As discussed above, each remote unit may include: a housing 336a-b; a controller 339a, b with a memory 338a, b and a processor 340a, b; a transmitter 342a,b for transmitting a signal 344a,b; a control pad 344a,b having a plurality of buttons; a receiver 346a,b, and/or a display device 348 and 350. Each of these structures may be configured in substantially the same manner as generally indicated above, and as further described below.

[0053] The remote units shown in FIG. 4 may include buttons corresponding to specific game actions. The first remote unit 320a may include: a first “buzz in” button 352 for transmitting a “buzz in” signal associated with the first player; one or more navigational buttons 356a-364a; Boolean buttons 366a and 368a; and/or a reset button 370a. The second remote unit 320b may include: a second “buzz in” button 354 for transmitting a “buzz in” signal associated with the second player; one or more navigational buttons 356b-364b; Boolean buttons 366b and 368b; and/or a reset button 370b. The “buzz in” buttons may each be programmed to cause their respective transmitters to produce a different user signal so as to enable the game to determine which player transmitted the signal. Each navigation button, Boolean button and/or reset button may be programmed to cause their respective transmitters to produce the same user signals as its counterpart on the opposite remote unit.

[0054] FIG. 5 shows an embodiment 420 of the remote unit 20. The remote unit 420 may include a base unit 436 including: a controller 439 having a memory 438 and a processor 440; a transmitter 442 for transmitting a signal 5; a receiver 446; one or more display devices 448 and 450; and/or a reset button 470. The remote unit may also include one or more control pads, such as a handheld control units 444a and 444b, operably attached to the base unit. The first handheld control unit 444a and display device 448 may correspond to a first player or team, while the second handheld control unit 444b and display device 450 may correspond to a second player or team. More or fewer handheld control units and/or display devices may be provided. Each of these structures may be configured in substantially the same manner as generally indicated above, and as further described below.

[0055] Each handheld control unit shown in FIG. 5 may include buttons corresponding to specific game actions. The first handheld control unit 444a may include: a first “buzz in” button 452 for transmitting a “buzz in” signal associated with a first player; one or more navigational buttons 456a-464a; and/or Boolean buttons 466a and 468a. The second handheld control unit 444b may include a second “buzz in” button 454 for transmitting a “buzz in” signal associated with a second player; one or more navigational buttons 456b-464b; and/or Boolean buttons 466b and 468b. The “buzz in” buttons may each be programmed to cause the transmitter 442 to produce a different user signal so as to enable the game to determine which player transmitted the signal. However, each navigation button and Boolean button may be programmed to cause the transmitter to produce the same user signal as its counterpart on the opposite handheld control unit.

[0056] Because remote unit 420 may include a common controller 439 and transmitter 442 for each of the handheld control units 444a, b, the functionality of the handheld control units may be interrelated. As discussed above, the controller 439 may be configured to selectively operate in a plurality of modes, and to change modes upon the occurrence of an event. A particular mode change, affected by the occurrence of an event (such as actuating a “buzz in” button, or other button), may affect a change in the programming of some or all of the buttons on either one or both of the handheld control units. For example, actuating a button on handheld control unit 444a may cause the controller 439 to change from a first mode to a second mode, whereby some or all of the buttons on control pad 444b are reprogrammed. Likewise, pressing reset button 470 may cause the controller to change to a base mode from a non-base mode. Mode changes may also be used to “lock out” one or more players for predetermined portions of a game, as discussed both above and below.

[0057] FIG. 6 shows an embodiment 520 of the remote unit 20. The remote unit 520 may include: a housing 536; a controller 539 having a memory 538 and a processor 540; a
transmitter 542 for transmitting a signal S; a control pad 544; a receiver 546; and/or one or more display devices 548 and 550. Display device 548 may correspond to a first player or team, while display device 550 may correspond to a second player or team. More or fewer display devices may be provided. Each of these structures may be configured in substantially the same manner as generally indicated above, and as discussed further below.

[0058] The control pad 544 shown in FIG. 6 may include buttons corresponding to specific game actions. The control pad may include a first “buzz in” button 552 for transmitting a “buzz in” signal associated with a first player; a second “buzz in” button 554 for transmitting a “buzz in” signal associated with a second player; one or more navigational buttons 556-564; Boolean buttons 566 and 568; and/or a reset button 570. More or fewer “buzz in” buttons may be provided. The “buzz in” buttons may each be programmed to cause the transmitter 542 to produce a different user signal so as to enable the game to determine which player transmitted the signal.

[0059] Because the remote unit 520 may include a common controller 539, transmitter 542, and control pad 544, the functionality of the control pad’s buttons may be interrelated. As discussed above, the controller 539 may be configured to selectively operate in a plurality of modes, and to change modes upon the occurrence of an event. A particular mode change caused by the occurrence of an event (such as actuating one of the “buzz in” buttons), may affect a change in the programming of some or all of the buttons on the control pad (such as the other “buzz in” button). Likewise, pressing the reset button 570 may cause the controller to change to a base mode from a non-base mode. Mode changes may also be used to “lock out” one or more players for predetermined portions of a game, as discussed both above and below.

[0060] 3. Games

[0061] Gaming system 16 may enable one or more users to play various games. Variations may be effected by: providing different game media 18 that each store different information; by changing the information stored on a particular game medium 18; or by changing the configurations of the remote unit(s) 20. Specifically, the game information and/or remote units may each be varied as described in detail above.

[0062] Multiplayer games may be played using the various embodiments of gaming system 16. As generally shown in FIG. 7, the gaming system may be used to play a game 600 with N players, where each of the players is provided with a “buzz in” button. At some point after a new game or game round has begun 602, the media player may read and execute information on the game medium, whereby the media player may produce a puzzle scene 604 that at least causes the media player to present information on one or more output devices, including a solvable puzzle. The players may be instructed to actuate their “buzz in” button if they want to attempt to solve the puzzle. Actuation of a “buzz in” button by one of the players may cause a remote unit’s transmitter to transmit a user signal, corresponding to a “buzz in” signal, which is received by the media player. If a predetermined amount of time passes after presentation of the puzzle without the media player receiving a “buzz in” signal 606, then the puzzle scene may cause the media player: to first respond by producing a default scene that at least causes the media player to present the correct solution on one or more output devices; and to next produce a new puzzle scene 604, either automatically, or in response to one or more events. However, if the media player receives a “buzz in” signal from an Nth player before the passage of a predetermined amount of time 610, then the puzzle scene may cause the media player to respond by producing one or more corresponding solution scenes 612. The Nth player may then use user signals to interact with the one or more solution scenes 614. After interacting with the one or more solution scenes, the Nth player’s score may change to reflect their performance during the one or more solution scenes 616. Information stored on the game medium, when executed, may also cause the media player to determine whether a game objective has been achieved 618. If so, the game or game round may end 620. If not, then either the same, or a new puzzle scene may be produced by the media player 604.

[0063] The game 600 may provide the players with a gaming environment (e.g. a game show with a virtual game show host, player’s turns, a scoring scheme, game rounds, and/or other game-related information) and a plurality of interactive scenes. As described above, production of each scene by the media player may cause the media player to present information on one or more output devices, including information that prompts the players to provide input via user signals. Each scene may also include one or more scripts that cause the media player to respond to the occurrence of one or more events (e.g. the reception of user signals, the passage of time, etc.) thereby causing the game to progress. Scripts may also cause the media player to record the progress of the game (e.g. the score, the current round of the game, which player’s turn it is, the status of variable elements, or any other game-related information) by storing game variables in the media player’s memory.

[0064] Upon using the media player to read the information stored on the game medium, a new game or game round may be begun 602. At the beginning of some games, players may be required to properly configure the gaming system. For example, the game information stored on the game medium may include one or more set-up scenes that prompt the players to enter initial game variables, such as the total number of players, the type of game, the difficulty level for each or all of the players, etc. Scripts associated with the set-up scenes may cause the media player to store these game variables in the media player’s memory, whereby the values may be used to control the flow of the game. At the beginning of some games, players may also be required to properly configure the remote unit(s). For example, some games may use remote unit(s) with controllers that selectively operate in more than one mode. These remote unit(s) generally must be coordinated, or synchronized, with the scenes being produced by the media player so that the remote unit(s) is operating in the proper mode during the correct scenes. Therefore, the game may be configured to cause the occurrence of an event that sets the remote unit’s controller to the correct starting mode during the correct portion of the game. For example, the media player may produce a scene that causes the media player to present information on one or more output devices that prompts the players to press a button (e.g. the reset button), which in turn resets the mode of the remote unit’s controller. Alternatively or additionally, the media player may produce a scene that causes the media player to generate a signal GS with one or
more output devices, which in turn resets the mode of the remote unit’s controller upon reception of the generated signal GS by the remote unit’s receiver.

[0065] The game 600 may include the production of a puzzle scene 604 by the media player. In order to select a particular puzzle scene for production, the game information stored on the game medium may cause the media player to randomly or deliberately select from a plurality of puzzle scenes stored on the game medium. Production of each puzzle scene may also be preceded by production of another scene that prompts one or more of the players to select a category, a difficulty level, a point value, or some other variable element that provides for variable structure to the game. The particular puzzle scene selected for production may cause the media player to present information on the one or more output devices, such as is shown in FIGS. 8 and 9.

[0066] FIG. 8 shows the presentable information 700 associated with a puzzle scene that causes the media player to provide N players with a limited amount of time to compete for a chance to solve a puzzle. As shown in FIG. 8A, the presentable information may include: a solvable puzzle 702; one or more instructions 704; a timer 706; and/or a scoreboard 708. The solvable puzzle may include a trivia question (presented in multiple-choice, complete-answer and/or true/false formats), a matching game, a spatial game, a charade, a game show question, or any other type of puzzle. The instructions may prompt the players to “buzz in” when they would like to attempt to solve the puzzle. The timer may reflect the amount of time remaining for one of the players to “buzz in.” The scoreboard may include the current score for each player, as is stored in the memory of the media player.

[0067] The presentable information shown in FIG. 8A may be associated with scripts that cause the media player to respond to the first of: the passage of a predetermined amount of time, or the reception of a “buzz in” signal from one of the players. If a predetermined amount of time (as indicated by the timer 706) passes without the media player receiving a “buzz in” signal, then the puzzle scene may cause the media player to respond by producing a default scene that causes the media player to present information 710, as shown in FIG. 8B. However, if the media player receives a “buzz in” signal from an Nth player before the passage of a predetermined amount of time, then the media player may respond by producing one or more solution scenes, as discussed below. Further, because each player’s “buzz in” button may be programmed to cause the remote unit’s transmitter to produce a distinct user signal (yet corresponding to the same game action), the scripts may “recognize” which player was the first to “buzz in.”

[0068] The default scene produced upon the passage of a predetermined amount of time without the media player receiving a “buzz in” signal, may include presentable information 710, as shown in FIG. 8B. The presentable information may include the correct solution to the puzzle 712, and/or a scoreboard 714 showing the current score. The presentable information also may prompt the players to send one or more user signals corresponding to an indication that they are ready to interact with the next puzzle scene 716. For example, one of the players may press a reset button, an enter button, a “buzz in” button, a menu button, or any other button designated to send the appropriate signal indicating that the players are ready to proceed.

[0069] FIG. 9 shows the presentable information 800 associated with a puzzle scene that causes the media player to sequentially present a plurality of solutions/answers to N players before presenting a corresponding puzzle/question. Specifically, the presentable information 800 may include instructions 802; a scoreboard 804; and one or more solutions/answers 806. The instructions may prompt the players to “buzz in” when they would like to attempt to solve the puzzle/question, which is not immediately disclosed upon production of the puzzle scene. The scoreboard may include the current score for each player, as is stored in the memory of the media player. The one or more solutions/answers may include at least one correct solution/answer to the as of yet undisclosed puzzle/question. Each of the solutions/answers may be displayed in the form of a readable text, a video clip, an audio clip, and/or a picture. After the solutions/answers are displayed, the puzzle scene may then cause the media player to present the corresponding puzzle, such as in the form of a “voice over,” or a progressively presented text, drawing, picture, etc. At any time after the answers have been displayed, such as before, during, or after presentation of the puzzle/question, an Nth player may transmit a “buzz in” signal indicating they would like to attempt to select the correct solution/answer.

[0070] The presentable information shown in FIG. 9 may be associated with scripts that cause the media player to respond to the reception of the “buzz in” signal by producing one or more solution scenes that enable the Nth player to select a solution/answer. These scripts may cause the media player to immediately respond to the reception of the “buzz in” signal, whereby presentment of the puzzle/question may be interrupted. The extent to which the puzzle/question is presented therefore may depend on when the “buzz in” signal is received during production of the puzzle scene. If the “buzz in” signal is received before presentment of the puzzle/question, the puzzle scene’s scripts may cause the media player to prevent any of the puzzle/question from being presented. If the “buzz in” signal is received during presentment of the puzzle/question, the puzzle scene’s scripts may cause the media player to prevent the remaining unidentified portion of the puzzle/question from being presented. Therefore, the risk of “buzzing in” too early is that the puzzle scene may not have caused the media player to completely produce the puzzle/question, and the nature of the complete puzzle/question may not be apparent based on the solutions/answers shown.

[0071] FIGS. 10-11 show screen shots of presentable information associated with various embodiments of the one or more solution scenes. Each of the one or more solution scenes may correspond to the preceding puzzle scene, and may be specific to the player that “buzzed in” (i.e. the Nth player). Each of the one or more solution scenes may include presentable information, and one or more scripts that enable the Nth player to use the remote unit to provide a solution to the puzzle. Specifically, the solution scenes may cause the media player to selectively respond to some or all of the user signals received from the Nth player. Some solution scenes may also include scripts that cause the media player to determine whether the Nth player selected the correct solu-
tion; to perform calculations; to store information in the memory of the media player; to produce other scenes; and/or to generate signals GS.

[0072] FIG. 10 shows presentable information 900, 908a and 908b associated with solution scenes that enable the Nth player to select a solution to the puzzle with user signals. FIG. 10A shows the presentable information 900 associated with a first solution scene that, when presented on one or more output devices, directs the Nth player to select a solution from a plurality of selectable solutions 902, at least one of which is a correct solution. The Nth player may then transmit user signals corresponding to a selection of one of the plurality of solutions, such as by pressing directional arrow keys to highlight the desired answer, and/or an enter button to execute the selection. For puzzles having two correct answers, such as true/false questions, the first solution scene’s presentable information may direct the Nth player to directly enter a solution to a question by pressing a Boolean key (i.e. a yes/false button or a no/false button). The presentable information also may include a timer 904 that reflects the amount of time remaining for the Nth player to select an answer, and/or a scoreboard 906 that includes the current score for each player, as is stored in the memory of the media player.

[0073] The first solution scene shown in FIG. 10A may be associated with scripts that cause the media player to respond to the first of: the passage of a predetermined amount of time; or the reception of one or more signals from the Nth player corresponding to a selection of a solution. Specifically, if a predetermined amount of time (as indicated by the timer 904) passes without the media player receiving the Nth player’s selection, then one or more scripts associated with the first solution scene may cause the media player to respond by producing a second solution scene having presentable information 908a, as shown in FIG. 10B. However, if the media player receives a selection signal from the Nth player before the passage of a predetermined amount of time, then one or more scripts may cause the media player to respond by producing a second solution scene having presentable information 908b, as shown in FIG. 10C. The first solution scene may also include scripts that cause the media player to determine whether the solution selected by the Nth player is the correct solution. For example, if a solution was not selected before the passage of a predetermined amount of time, one or more scripts may cause the media player to determine that the Nth player failed to select the correct solution. Finally, the first solution scene may include scripts that cause the media player to adjust (i.e. recalculate) the Nth player’s score based on the correctness of the answer, and the Nth players previous score. The Nth player’s adjusted score in turn may be stored in the media player’s memory.

[0074] The second solution scene(s) may cause the media player to present information, such as information 908a and 908b shown in FIGS. 10B and 10C, on one or more output devices. The information associated with the second solution scenes may provide an indication of how the Nth player’s performed during the first solution scene 910a and 910b, and/or a scoreboard 912a and 912b showing the current score. The information associated with the second solution scenes also may prompt the Nth player, or any of the other player, to send one or more user signals indicating that the players are ready to interact with the next puzzle scene. For example, one or more of the players may press a reset button, an enter button, a “buzz in” button, a menu button, or any other button designated to send the appropriate signal indicating the players are ready to proceed.

[0075] FIG. 11 shows presentable information 1000, 1008 and 1016 associated with solution scenes that enable the Nth player to indicate whether or not they correctly wrote, spoke or otherwise expressed the solution to the puzzle. FIG. 11A shows the presentable information 1000 associated with a first solution scene that includes directions 1002 for the Nth player to provide (i.e. write, speak, sign, charade, etc.) an answer without sending a signal to the media player. The presentable information may also include a timer 1004 that reflects the amount of time remaining for the Nth player to provide an answer, and/or a scoreboard 1006 that includes the current score for each player, as is stored in the memory of the media player. The first solution scene may also include scripts that cause the media player to respond to the passage of a predetermined amount of time (as shown by the timer 1004) by presenting a second solution scene.

[0076] FIG. 11B shows the presentable information 1008 associated with a second solution scene. The presentable information may include an indication of the correct answer 1010, one or more selectable responses 1012 for indicating whether the Nth player provided the correct answer, and/or a scoreboard 1014. The Nth player may use user signals to indicate the correctness of their solution, such as by pressing directional arrow keys and an enter button, by pressing an appropriate Boolean key, etc. The second solution scene may include scripts that cause the media player to respond to the Nth player’s indication of whether they provided the correct solution: present a third solution scene; and/or by recalculating the Nth player’s score based on their previous score. The Nth player’s recalculated score in turn may be stored in the media player’s memory.

[0077] FIG. 11C shows the presentable information 1016 associated with a third solution scene. The presentable information may include an indication of the Nth player’s performance 1018, and/or a scoreboard 1020 showing the current score. The third solution scene’s presentable information also may prompt the Nth player, or any of the other player, to send one or more user signals indicating that the players are ready to interact with the next puzzle scene. For example, one or more of the players may press a reset button, an enter button, a “buzz in” button, a menu button, or any other button designated to send the appropriate signal indicating the players are ready to proceed.

[0078] Referring generally to FIG. 7, after the Nth player interacts with the one or more solution scenes 614, and their score has changed to reflect their performance 616, one or more scripts may be read and executed by the media player that cause the media player to determine whether any game objective has been achieved 618. If so, the game or game round may end 616, and a new game or game round optionally may be begun 602. If not, then the media player may produce a new puzzle scene 604. The game objectives may be based on the amount of time the game has been played, the number of puzzles that have been presented, the score of the players, etc., as indicated by the game variables stored in the media player’s memory. Further, one or more scripts may be read and executed that cause the media player to transmit generated signals GS via the output device(s).
The generated signals may include information related to the progress of the game (e.g. the current score, the game round, etc.), as indicated by variables stored in the media player’s memory. As described above, these generated signals may be received by the remote unit’s receiver, whereby the information may be stored in the remote unit’s memory, and/or displayed on the remote unit’s display devices.

In some games, if a player incorrectly attempts to solve a puzzle or answer a question, the remaining players may be provided with an opportunity to “buzz in” and “steal” the puzzle or question (i.e. to correctly solve the puzzle). For example, if a first player “buzzes in” and incorrectly attempts to answer a question, a solution scene may indicate that the first player’s answer was incorrect, and may re-calculate and store the first player’s new score, as described above. A solution scene may also prompt one or more of the players to transmit a signal indicating that the remaining players other than the first player are ready to “buzz in” and “steal” the puzzle. The previously presented puzzle scene may then be re-presented for the benefit of all of the players other than the first player.

Some games may periodically “lock out” one or more players. As described above, some scenes, when executed, may cause the media player to disregard the reception of one or more user signals. For example, puzzle scenes may cause the media player to respond to the reception of every player’s “buzz in” signal, while solution scenes may cause the media player to only respond to the reception of signals from the player that “buzzed in.” Also as described above, some remote unit’s controllers may be configured to change modes upon the actuation of a button, such as the “buzz in” button. For example, the remote unit’s controller may be configured to selectively operate in: a first mode that causes the remote unit’s transmitter to transmit “buzz in” signals associated with all of the players; and a second mode that enables the player that “buzzed in” to transmit signals, but which prevents the remaining players from transmitting signals. The gaming system may be configured to cause the remote unit to function in the first mode during the puzzle scenes, and to change to the second mode upon actuation of the first “buzz in” button to be actuated during production of the puzzle scene. The remaining players may thereby be “locked out” of game play until the occurrence of a “mode resetting” event (i.e. actuation of a button, such as a reset button, the passage of a predetermined amount of time, and/or the reception of a generated signal (GS, etc.). The “mode resetting” event may occur at a time that correlates with the end of the solution scene, or the presentment of the next puzzle scene.

Some games may include interactive scenes that are sequentially presented to each player, such that each player is provided with their own turn. As game play proceeds, the occurrence of various events may cause the remote unit’s controller to change modes in a manner that facilitates the sequential nature of game play. For example, players that are waiting for their turn may be “locked out,” or may only be able to send limited signals until it is their turn to interact with the game.

It is believed that this disclosure encompasses multiple distinct inventions with independent utility. While each of these inventions has been described in its best mode, numerous variations are contemplated. All novel and non-obvious combinations and subcombinations of the described and/or illustrated elements, features, functions, and properties should be recognized as being included within the scope of this disclosure. Applicant reserves the right to claim one or more of the inventions in any application related to this disclosure. Where the disclosure or claims recite “a,” “an” first,” or “another” element, or the equivalent thereof, they should be interpreted to include one or more such elements, neither requiring nor excluding two or more such elements.

I claim:
1. A gaming system for use with a media player and one or more output devices, wherein the media player is configured to receive user signals, to read and execute information from a game medium, and to present portions of the information on the one or more output devices, the gaming system comprising:
   a game medium having information readable by the media player that, when executed, causes the media player to produce a game having a plurality of scenes, wherein each scene causes the media player to selectively respond to the reception of user signals;
   a remote unit operable by one or more users, including:
   a controller;
   a transmitter coupled to the controller;
   a first button coupled to the controller; and
   a second button coupled to the controller;
wherein the controller is configured to selectively operate in:
   a first mode that causes the transmitter to transmit a user signal upon actuation of either the first or second buttons; and
   a second mode that causes the transmitter to transmit a user signal upon actuation of the first button, and to transmit no user signal upon actuation of the second button.
2. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein the media player is a digital video disc player, the remote unit is a remote control for use with the digital video disc player, and the game medium is a digital video disc.
3. The gaming system of claim 2, wherein the remote control is a universal remote control programmable for use with a plurality of digital video disc players.
4. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein:
   the first button is associated with a first user; and
   the second button is associated with a second user.
5. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein:
   actuation of the first button causes the transmitter to transmit a first user signal when the controller is operating in the first mode; and
   actuation of the second button causes the transmitter to transmit a second user signal when the controller is operating in the first mode.
6. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein the transmitter transmits the same user signal upon actuation of the first button when the controller is operating in either the first or the second mode.
7. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein:

actuation of the first button causes the transmitter to transmit a first user signal when the controller is operating in the first mode; and

actuation of the first button causes the transmitter to transmit a second user signal when the controller is operating in the second mode.

8. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein the controller is configured to change from the first mode to the second mode upon the occurrence of a first event during a first predetermined portion of the game.

9. The gaming system of claim 8, wherein the first event includes the actuation of the first button.

10. The gaming system of claim 9, wherein:

the remote unit further comprises a receiver coupled to the controller, and configured to receive one or more generated signals transmitted by at least one of the one or more output devices; and

the first event includes the reception of a generated signal by the receiver.

11. The gaming system of claim 8, wherein the controller is configured to change from the second mode to the first mode upon the occurrence of a second event during a second predetermined portion of the game.

12. The gaming system of claim 11, wherein the remote unit further comprises a reset button coupled to the controller, and wherein the second event includes the actuation of the reset button.

13. The gaming system of claim 11, wherein:

the remote unit further comprises a receiver coupled to the controller, and configured to receive one or more generated signals transmitted by at least one of the one or more output devices; and

the second event includes the reception of a generated signal by the receiver.

14. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein the remote unit further comprises a receiver coupled to the controller and configured to receive one or more generated signals transmitted by at least one of the one or more output devices.

15. The gaming system of claim 14, wherein:

at least one of the one or more generated signals includes information related to the progress of the game;

the remote control further includes a display device coupled to the controller; and

the controller is configured to cause the display device to visually display the information related to the progress of the game upon reception of the generated signal by the receiver.

16. The gaming system of claim 15, wherein the information related to the progress of the game includes a score of the game.

17. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein the remote unit further includes a display device coupled to the controller, the controller being configured to cause the display device to visually display information related to the progress of the game.

18. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein the remote control further comprises:

a base unit for housing the controller and the transmitter;

a first handheld control unit associated with a first user and including the first button; and

a second handheld control unit associated with a second user and including the second button;

wherein each of the first and second handheld control units is manually moveable relative to the base unit.

19. The gaming system of claim 18, wherein the first handheld control unit includes one or more buttons other than the first button, and the second handheld control unit includes one or more buttons other than the second button.

20. A method of playing a game having a plurality of scenes, comprising:

producing a first scene with a media player, wherein the first scene causes the media player to present first information to a plurality of players on one or more output devices coupled to the media player, and wherein one or more buttons on a remote unit are associated with each player;

one or more of the plurality of players each actuating an associated button during production of the first scene;

transmitting a first signal from the remote unit to the media player in response to the actuation of the first button to be actuated during production of the first scene;

receiving the first signal at the media player during production of the first scene;

producing a second scene with the media player in response to the received first signal, whereby second information is presented on at least one of the one or more output devices;

one or more of the plurality of players each actuating an associated button during production of the second scene;

transmitting a second signal from the remote unit to the media player if the button actuated during production of the second scene is a button associated with the player that is associated with the first button; and

transmitting no signal from the remote unit if the button actuated during production of the second scene is a button associated with any player other than the player that is associated with the first button.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the media player is a digital video disc player, and the remote unit is a remote control for use with the digital video disc player.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein the remote control is a universal remote control programmable for use with a plurality of digital video disc players.

23. The method of claim 20, wherein the first information includes a solvable puzzle, and the second information includes a plurality of selectable solutions, at least one of which is a correct solution to the puzzle.

24. The method of claim 23, further comprising:

the player associated with the first button actuating at least one of their one or more associated buttons during production of the second scene;

transmitting a signal from the remote unit to the media player for each button actuated, during production of the second scene, by the player associated with the first
button, wherein at least one of the transmitted signals is a selection signal that corresponds to a selection of a solution from the plurality of solutions;

receiving each signal transmitted during the second scene at the media player; and

producing a third scene with the media player in response to the selection signal, whereby third information is presented on at least one of the one or more output devices indicating whether the selected solution is a correct solution to the puzzle.

25. The method of claim 24, further comprising:

transmitting a generated signal from at least one of the one or more output devices to the remote unit at some time during production of the third scene, wherein the generated signal includes information related to the progress of the game;

receiving the generated signal at the remote unit; and

displaying the information related to the progress of the game on a display device on the remote unit.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein the information related to the progress of the game includes a score of the game.

27. The method of claim 23, further comprising:

one of the plurality of players actuating a button during production of the third scene;

transmitting a signal from the remote unit to the media player in response to the actuation of the button during production of the third scene;

receiving the transmitted signal at the media player during production of the third scene;

producing a fourth scene with the media player in response to the signal received during production of the third scene, whereby a solvable puzzle is presented on the output device;

one or more of the plurality of players each actuating an associated button during production of the fourth scene;

transmitting a signal from the remote unit to the media player in response to the actuation of the first button to be actuated during production of the fourth scene.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the button actuated during production of the third scene is a reset button.

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