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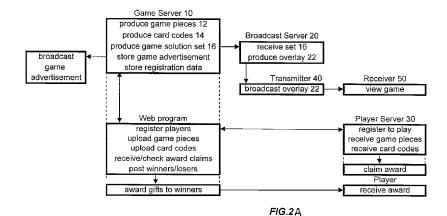
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#### (54) Title: METHOD FOR ATTRACTING VIEWERS TO BROADCASTS



(57) Abstract: A method for attracting viewer attention to broadcast transmissions using gaming by registering players on a Web site, displaying a transmitted show on a screen of a receiver, overlaying a portion of the receiver screen with a gaming animation, presenting a winning solution as a portion of the gaming animation on the receiver screen, identifying players on the Web site who have winning game pieces, and presenting awards to winner who request awards.



#### TITLE

#### Method for Attracting Viewers to Broadcasts

#### CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

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[001] This is an international patent application filed in the United States Patent and Trademark Office under the Patent Cooperation Treaty and claims filing date priority to a US provisional patent application having US Serial No. 61278314, and an official filing date of 5 October 2009 and which is incorporated in its entirety herein by reference.

#### BACKGROUND

[002] This disclosure relates generally to methods in the fields of gaming and broadcasting, and more particularly to a method and system capable of combining gaming with broadcasting to attract viewer patronage and loyalty to a broadcast or to a broadcast for streaming video station. Broadcasting, in general, relies on the attention of a viewing audience, and in commercial broadcasting such as commercial television, it especially relies on the attention of viewers to commercial messages. It is important to product and service providers, who pay for television programming, to find ways of improving viewer attention, comprehension and motivation related to their messages. However, commercial television broadcasting today shares the viewing public with non-commercial television broadcasting, Internet broadcasting, video streaming, video rentals and sales, cellular network broadcasting and other related alternatives. Also, with the general use of television program recorders viewers have the ability to, and often do, disregard commercial segments. Therefore, a means for attracting viewer attention to commercial messages is critically important to this industry, and a means for building repeat viewer loyalty is especially valuable. The prior art addresses this need in US 5941772, US 2008/0189175, US 6266813; US 11364793, US

5916024, US 5697844, while the currently described apparatus and method improves on the state of the art.

#### **SUMMARY**

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[003] The presently described information system comprises certain elements including a game server, a broadcast server, a player server, a transmitter, and a receiver. These elements may be interconnected for information transfer from one of the elements to another one of the elements through a communication medium as will be described and illustrated herein.

[004] The above apparatus may by interconnected for electronic information exchange, under the presently described method, however, other means of communication and interchange may be used in certain aspects of the method. The above described elements operate to offer to a game playing procedure or method.

[005] The presently described game play method is intended to improve viewer attention to transmitted commercial messages or shows such as newscasts by introducing an on-screen game during the show or commercial segment; the game taking up only a portion of the viewer's screen, that is, both images appear simultaneously on the same receiver screen as is well known and usually referred to by the term "split screen." Alternatively, the game play portion of the screen may be an overlay, as is also very well known in the related field. Potential rewards are offered to viewers who participate in the game play. A viewer who wishes to participate registers at a specific Internet web site that is operated by the host's game server. A player, that is, a viewer who has registered to play a game, receives a game piece such as a Bingo card and a related validation code and is able to print the game pieces and codes, or store them on their server for reference. Alternately, a game piece and validation code may be mailed to a player using the postal system or similar means. In preparation for telecasting or streaming the game play, game information is delivered by the

host to a broadcast server. At an announced time, during a commercial or in a television show presentation, the game play overlay is broadcasted so as to appear on screen, and players are thereby able to determine if they are a winner or not. Each winner claims the win by entering the validation code at the same specific Internet site.

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[006] One objective of the present invention includes improving viewer attention to commercial messages or programs. A further objective is to acquire demographic data related to a broadcast viewing audience. Another objective is to improve viewer awareness of the benefits of new products and services and new features or capabilities of well-known products and services by maintaining viewer attention to a commercial segment while also involved in the game play. A still further objective is to expand a specific broadcast viewing audience.

[007] The details of one or more embodiments of these concepts are set forth in the accompanying drawings and the description below. Other features, objects, and advantages of these concepts will be apparent from the description and drawings, and from the claims.

#### DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

20 [008] Figure 1 is an example block diagram of the presently described system;

[009] Figure 2A is an example block diagram defining a process method of the present disclosure;

[0010] Figure 2B is an example block diagram defining a further process method of the present disclosure;

[0011] Figure 3 is a screen shot of an example new player game registration presentation;

[0012] Figure 4 is a screen shot of an example game piece indicia and validation code presentation;

[0013] Figure 5 is a screen shot of an example broadcast segment showing a game overlay presentation;

[0014] Figure 6 is a screen shot of an example claim presentation;

[0015] Figure 7 is a screen shot of an example win confirmation presentation; and

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[0016] Figure 8 is a screen shot of an example win-declined presentation.

[0017] Like reference symbols in the various drawings indicate like elements.

#### **DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

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[0018] The presently described system and method improves viewer attention to broadcasts, generates viewer loyalty to a television station or other transmitter or show, and provides related advantages. However, although the present system and method, at least initially, may be applied in the field of public and private broadcasting, the procedures used may also be applied in ways not related to broadcasting as well. The term "broadcast" and related terms as used herein, relates to television broadcasting and video streaming and may relate also to other types of mass media information transfer, as for instance the recording and later playback of broadcast or streamed video content. As related to the system of the present disclosure, such broadcasting may be viewed on the screen of a television set, a computer, a hand held device or other related apparatus, and all such receiving and displaying apparatus shall be referred to herein by the term "receiver." The content of such broadcasting, in the present disclosure, may include video information alone, audio information alone, or video plus related audio information together. Such content may, for example, be a traditional

television program such as a sitcom, newscast, or sporting event, or it may be a short or long-form commercial message or any other broadcast content whatever. Broadcast content shall be referred to herein simply by the term "show." The show is transmitted by any means now known or in the future may be developed and includes at least standard television broadcasting stations and studios, sources of streaming video, and recorders that may be used to retransmit or replay material previously broadcast and or recorded. All such sources of show transmissions are referred to herein by the term "transmitter." In light of the preceding usage rules herein, one may say that a show is being broadcasted by a transmitter and viewed on a receiver.

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[0019] In one example shown in Fig. 1, the previously stated and presently described information system 5, comprises: a game server 10, a broadcast server 20, a player server 30, a transmitter 40 and a receiver 50. In this writing, singular usage shall also mean plural and plural usage shall also include singular. Some of these apparatus will be interconnected for information transfer with others of these apparatus through a communication medium 60. In other examples some of the above named apparatus may be combined, as for instance, the player server 30 and the receiver 50 may be a single apparatus that is capable of functionally performing both roles, that is, carrying out the functions of both the player server 30 and receiver 50. In other examples some of the functions of the named apparatus may be carried out by two or more separate functional devices. An example of this is transmitter 40 whose function may be carried out by a first device for receiving and uploading a television show feed, a second device which digitizes the feed, and a third device which delivers the feed to a carrier signal and transmits it to the air waves, cable or satellite. Therefore, it should be realized that elements 10-60 are functional representations which may be realized through many different and distinct manifestations of hardware apparatus. Clearly, a hardware apparatus structure is required since the method steps of this disclosure cannot be carried out by mental steps alone. The communication medium 60 may include the Internet, the traditional international telephone system, cellular networks, local area networks, other wide area networks, and combinations of these as well as other communication media not

addressed here. The communication medium **60** may also include known postal and package delivery systems.

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[0020] In this description, the term "server" shall mean any digital data processor device capable of operating in accordance with generally well known computer protocols and capabilities. A server, in the meaning of this disclosure, may be an industrial grade, high speed data processor, a so-called "desk-top" or "lap-top" computer, a hand-held portable computer such as a so-called "personal assistant,' or "smart-phone," or any other digital signal processor, large or small. Each server has a digital processor, a memory device, an input device such as a keyboard, mouse, etc., and an output device such as a printer, a display screen, etc. Each server may also have the appropriate hardware and software necessary for it to interface with the communication medium 60, and such interfacing is well known in the field of this disclosure. In addition to the foregoing, each of the servers 10, 20 and 30 shown in Fig. 2A, has a unique software program that enables it to provide specialty functions necessary to carry out at least a portion of the method of this disclosure, as will be demonstrated herein.

[0021] Referring again to Fig. 2A, the game server 10 operates a Web site program available to the general public via the Internet. Additionally, the unique software program of server 10, see Fig 2B, produces game pieces 12, card codes 14 and game solution data 16 all of which are stored by server 10. Additionally, game server 10 stores and produces a game advertisement that can be broadcasted in promoting the game and which is shown at the left in Fig. 2A.

[0022] Fig. 2A also shows player server 30 which is used by players to register on the Web site as shown in Fig. 3 where they may download the game piece 12 and card code 14 shown in Fig. 4.

[0023] Broadcast server 20 receives the game solution set 16 from server 10 and produces overlay 22, a presentation of which is shown in Fig. 5 overlaying a show 24. Broadcast server 20 transfers the overlay with solution 22 with solution 16 to transmitter 40 for broadcasting. A player will refer to receiver 50, shown in Fig. 2A to view the game.

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[0024] Fig. 5 shows the image of a show 24 with the game overlay 22 at the bottom of the screen. In this figure we see a representation of a Bingo game solution being presented. As in the traditional game Bingo, this representation presents a number of bingo balls each having a letter, one of the letters in the word "bingo," plus a number. In Fig. 5, the first of the balls is shown moving onto screen and has the indicia "B 3." When a viewer sees this ball indicia he/she will search his/her game piece for that letter-number combination, and if found will mark that square on their bingo game piece. The rules of each Bingo game may be the same, i.e., any five squares across, down or on the major diagonals, when marked, will constitute a win. Alternately, a selected Bingo game may designate other sequences as a win, such as when all of the squares of the game piece are marked, or when all the squares around the four edge of the game piece, etc. Such changes to the game format are considered to be part of the solution that is selected by server 10 and transmitted to server 20.

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[0025] In Fig. 4 we see that more than one game piece 12 and related validation card code 14 may be issued to a single registered player. In this example, the game of Bingo is used as an example, but it should be realized that a very wide array of other games may be applied in the present method, as for instance poker, slot machine type games, lottery type games, Battleship(r), Monopoly(r), and Scrabble(r) and others.

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[0026] In the example shown in Fig. 5, the game overlay 22 appears at the bottom of the show screen 24. However, the game overlay 22 may appear at other locations on the screen including in more than one location. The game overlay 22, wherever it is positioned on the display screen of receiver 50, may fully or partially eclipse the show feed portion, that is, the

overlay 22 may be somewhat transparent. It is not necessarily intended that the show 24 will halt during the period of time when the game overlay 22 is active on screen. Typically, the game overlay 22 will play with a commercial message, and the message will continue while the game overlay 22 is active. However, the commercial message may be a still image that is visible while the game overlay portion 22 is active. This may be commercially beneficial since the complete game solution may be designed to materialize over a period of time, for instance 30 seconds. During this 30 seconds the viewer will also pay attention to the commercial message, a result which may not otherwise occur. In the above Bingo example, such a stretch-out of time is easily achieved by having the bingo balls appear on screen one at a time with some time space between the appearance of each of the balls.

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[0027] Game server 10, in generating the game pieces 12 and card codes 14, also selects the game solution set 16; in this case the bingo letter-numeral combinations that are winners, of which there may be one, several or many. The game pieces 12 will include one or more winner game pieces 12 and the remainder will be loser game pieces 12. Fig. 2B shows an example sequence of steps that the operational program of server 10 may use to populate the game overlay 22, and the game pieces 12 and card codes 14. Initially, a number of winners X is determined. This most likely will depend on the cost of each winning award and the award revenue available. Next, X unique winning sequences (a set) are selected using a random number generator or similar engine. In the case of the game of Bingo, the rules of Bingo will be applied in order to generate a satisfactory set where each sequence will fulfill the a valid Bingo win. For other games, the local game rules will dictate what a winning set will comprise. Since each winning sequence requires a corresponding card code (validation code) 14, such codes are generated at this time and assigned to their respective game piece 14 as shown in Fig. 4. Next, the winning sequences are forwarded to broadcast server 20 which incorporates them into the game overlay(s) 22. The overlay may be still, sequenced, animated, or a combination of these. The overlay 22 may be presented while the show 24 continues, as said, or during a show pause.

[0028] X winner game pieces are populated with the X winning sequences with the remainder of these game pieces populated with non-winning data. Next, a large number, Y, of close loser game pieces are populated. These sequences are not winners, but are only one or a few pieces of data off of a win. As players register to play a game, the winning and loosing game pieces 12 are distributed by transfer from game server 10 to the player's player servers 30.

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[0029] At the conclusion of the presentation of the game overlay 22 on a show 24, the players, using player servers 30 post award claims on the Web program site as shown in Fig. 6. This is completed by entering the card code 14 of a winner game piece 12 which is printed on the game piece, see Fig. 4. Immediately, the Web program at game server 10 determines if the player's claim to an award is valid by comparing the code typed into the screen of Fig. 6, with the full set of valid card codes which are stored in memory at server 10. Figs. 7 and 8 show the screens that are presented as a result of the outcome of this comparison routine.

[0030] For valid wins, game server 10 acts to fulfill awards directly or through a fulfillment house.

[0031] The present method, an example approach may use three servers 10, 20, 30 for attracting viewer attention to a broadcast transmission using gaming steps. In this procedure, a first server 10 generates a plurality of game pieces 12 (Fig. 4) for playing a game, wherein at least one of the game pieces 12 has a winning game solution thereon. Data defining the winning game solution is transferred from the first server 10 to a second server 20. In the first server 10, a plurality of individuals for playing the game are registered and the game pieces b are transferred to the individuals generally to a plurality of third servers 30 operated by the individuals. The second server 20, incorporates the winning solution into a video game overlay presentation 22. The video game overlay presentation 22 is superimposed onto a show 24 and transmitted for viewing on a screen of a receiver available for viewing

by the individuals. A means for rewarding the at least one of the individuals who has the one of the game pieces 12 with the winning game solution when requested by the individual.

[0032] A number of embodiments have been described. Nevertheless, it will be understood that various modifications may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of this disclosure. Accordingly, other embodiments are within the scope of the following claims.

#### WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

Claim 1. A method using three servers for attracting viewer attention to a broadcast transmission using gaming steps, the method comprising:

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in a first server, generating a plurality of game pieces for playing a game, one of the game pieces having a winning game solution thereon;

transferring data defining the winning game solution from the first server to a second server;

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in the first server, registering a plurality of individuals for playing the game and transferring the plurality of game pieces to a plurality of third servers operated by the individuals;

using the second server, incorporating the winning solution into a video game overlay presentation;

transmitting the video game overlay presentation superimposed onto a show for viewing on a screen of a receiver available for viewing by the individuals; and

providing a means for rewarding one of the individuals having the one of the game pieces with the winning game solution upon request by the individual.

Claim 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising presenting the video game overlay presentation of the winning solution in a time sequence thereby allowing the individuals to take cognizance of the show.

Claim 3. The method of claim 1 further comprising presenting the video game overlay presentation during an active commercial message.

Claim 4. The method of claim 1 further comprising presenting the video game overlay presentation during a halted commercial message.

- Claim 5. The method of claim 1 further comprising presenting the video game overlay presentation during a non-commercial active program.
- Claim 6. The method of claim 1 further comprising presenting the video game overlay presentation during a non-commercial halted program.
- Claim 7. The method of claim 1 further comprising presenting the video game overlay presentation as representing at least one of: the game of poker, slot machine games, the game of Bingo, lottery games, the game of Battleship(r), the game of Monopoly(r), and the game of Scrabble(r).

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AMENDED CLAIMS received by the International Bureau on 4 February 2011 (04.02.2011).

Claim 1. A method using three servers for attracting viewer attention to a broadcast

transmission using gaming steps, the method comprising:

in a first server, generating a plurality of game pieces for playing a game, one of the

game pieces having a winning game solution thereon;

transferring data defining the winning game solution from the first server to a second

scrvcr;

in the first server, registering a plurality of individuals for playing the game and

transferring the plurality of game pieces to a plurality of third servers operated by the

individuals;

using the second server, incorporating the winning solution into a video game overlay

presentation;

transmitting the video game overlay presentation superimposed onto a show for viewing

on a screen of a receiver available for viewing by the individuals; and

providing a means for rewarding one of the individuals having the one of the game pieces

with the winning game solution upon request by the individual.

Claim 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising presenting the video game overlay

presentation of the winning solution in a time sequence thereby allowing the individuals

to take cognizance of the show.

Claim 3. The method of claim 1 further comprising presenting the video game overlay

presentation during an active commercial message.

Claim 4. The method of claim 1 further comprising presenting the video game overlay presentation during a halted commercial message.

Claim 5. The method of claim 1 further comprising presenting the video game overlay presentation during a non-commercial active program.

Claim 6. The method of claim 1 further comprising presenting the video game overlay presentation during a non-commercial halted program.

Claim 7. The method of claim 1 further comprising presenting the video game overlay presentation as representing at least one of: the game of poker, slot machine games, the game of Bingo, lottery games, the game of Battleship(r), the game of Monopoly(r), and the game of Scrabble(r).

Claim 8. A method of assuring viewer attention to a broadcast program received on viewer screens, the method comprising:

generating a plurality of game pieces, each of the game pieces having a unique game indicia thereon, the game indicia associated with gaming steps, of a game having a winning solution;

configuring one of the game indicia with the winning solution;

distributing the game pieces to players of the game;

presenting the winning solution of the garning steps as an overlay superimposed on the broadcast program on each of the viewer screens, wherein the overlay is positioned on one portion of each of the viewer screens and the broadcast program is clearly visible only on a second and separate portion of each of the viewer screens, wherein the players are able to view the gaming steps simultaneously with the broadcast program, wherein a subject of the broadcast program and a subject of the game are not related; and

rewarding a player having the game piece with the winning solution.

Claim 9. The method of claim 8 further comprising presenting the winning solution by revealing portions of the winning solution in a sequence.

Claim 10. The method of claim 8 further comprising presenting the broadcast program as a commercial message.

Claim 11. The method of claim 10 further comprising presenting the commercial message as a still image.

Claim 12. The method of claim 8 further comprising presenting the broadcast program as a non-commercial program.

Claim 13. The method of claim 12 further comprising halting the broadcast program during presentation of the gaming steps.

Claim 14. The method of claim 8 wherein the gaming steps are associated with at least one of: the game of poker, a slot machine game, the game of Bingo, a lottery game, the game of Battleship(r), the game of Monopoly(r), and the game of Scrabble(r).

#### Statement under Article 19(1) Rule 46.4

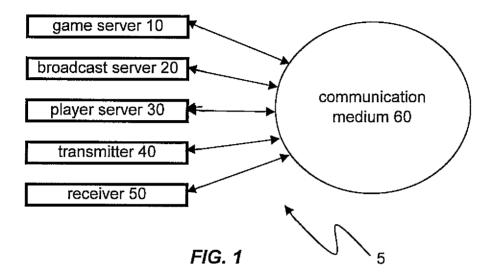
Originally filed claims 1-7 are unchanged, while claims 8-14 are new claims entered into this international application by this amendment. Claims 8-14 are similar to claims 1-7 respectively but rewritten to provide an improved broader set of claims to more clearly distinguish over the Okada et al reference as described below.

Okada et al discloses that game information and advertising information are prepared for transmitting to a terminal and that a game element of the game information is changed into an advertising information on the terminal screen. Game wins are determined by the display of predetermined advertising information on the terminal screen. Okada et al gives an example of a slot machine game wherein slot machine drums, the game elements, display advertising information. Okada et al therefore does not distinguish between the advertisement information and the game information since they are one and the same or may be changed from one to the other. This approach directs the attention of the players to the advertisement because the game contains elements of the advertisement. This has the drawback to the players in that are forced to receive the intended commercial message if they are to play the game.

Claim 1 and new claim 8 of the application, in contrast, disclose that the game and the program (or advertisement), are viewed by the players side-by-side on the screen, so that the players may ignore any program elements and may therefore feel free from the forced commercial message imposition of Okada et al.

Claim 1 and new claim 8 of the application, also disclose that the game steps produce a winning solution in a sequenced, time delayed, manner thereby giving players time to view the program or advertisement of their own accord, or not at all. The fact that the players are not forced to view advertising elements while playing the game results in a more relaxed atmosphere so that players do not feel confronted with the commercial message being forced on them.

As disclosed in the preferred embodiment of the methods presented by Okada et al the game is interactive with a player making selections that determine the outcome of the game and a winner or loser. In claims 1 and 8 of the application, it is disclosed that the game is not interactive in any sense, in that the players do not affect the outcome of the game or the winners or losers. Thus, the Okada et al method is wholly distinct from the method of the application. Therefore, claims 1 and 8 present novel matter and define an inventive step and industrial applicability. Although Heath discloses certain features found in common with those of claims 4-6, and also 11-13, the fact that claims 1 and 8 present novel and non-obvious inventive elements, the dependent claims 2-7 and 9-14 do as well for at least the same reasons.



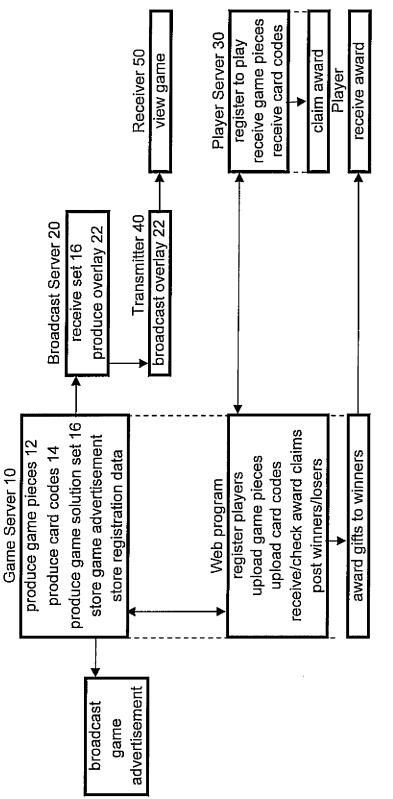


FIG.24

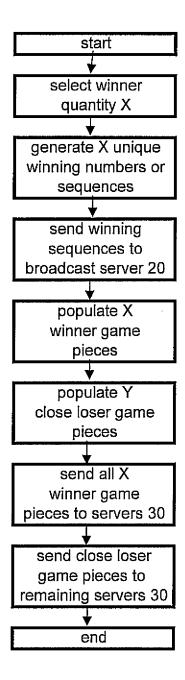


FIG. 2B

# Affernoon Bings IM (B) (A) (C) (C)

### New Player Registration Demo Only

Registering to play Afternoon Bingo is fast and easy. Fill in all the fields below.

- Upon completion of this form you will receive a confirmation email.
- You are NOT officially registered until you click on the link in your confirmation email.
- All fields are required.
- Click here for complete rules.

First Name	Jared
Last Name	Doe
Birthday (MM/DD/YYYY)	1/1/1940
Street Address	123 Nowhere St.
	:
City	Unknown
State	CA
Zìp	92846
Phone Number	714-555-1212
Email Address	jared@lifecarrot.com
Re-enter Email	jared@lifecarrot.com
	Register Now

Your Afternooon Bingo cards are sent to the email address registered above by 10AM of the day when the game is played. Validated winners will receive their checks at the address registered above.







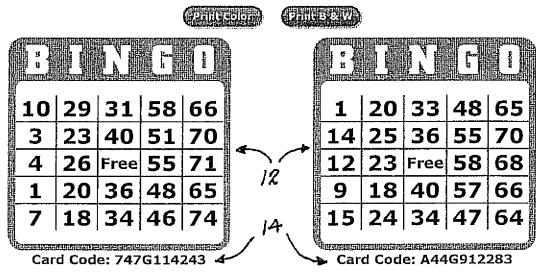
## Your Bingo Cards 9/30/10 Demo Only

#### Below are your Afternooon Bingo cards for Thursday, September 30, 2010

Tune in to Channel X at 12:30 PM on 09/30/2010 to play this game.

If you think you've won, visit http://www.tvscratchgames.com/BasicDemo2/, click the "I Think I Won!" tab, and enter your winning Card Code, no later than  $6:00 \ PM$  on 09/30/2010.

Player Tip: The on-air bingo balls appear quickly. It's a good idea to write the ball numbers down and then mark your cards.



Enter your winning Card Code no later than 6:00 PM on 09/30/2010.



Fig. 4

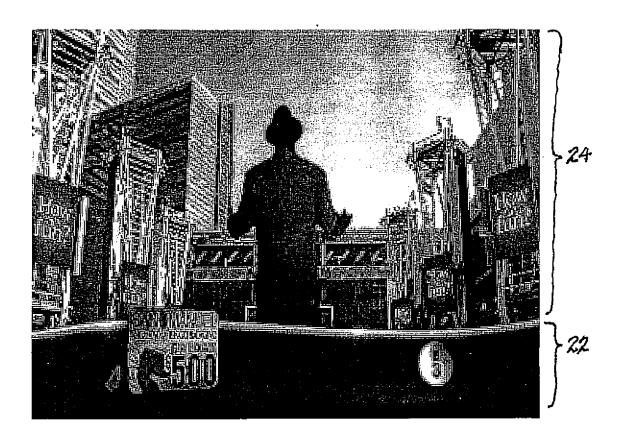


Fig. 5

# Afternoon Birgo TM BOOK (G) (o)

## I Think I Won! Demo Only

Below is the "I Think I Won!" form for the game played on Thursday, September 30, 2010. To see if you're a winner, enter your winning Card Code below.

Enter the code at the bottom of your card to see if you're a winner:

XYZ Sponsor



Fig. 6

# Afternoon Birgo M (B) (D) (N (C) (e)

### Congratulations! Demo Only

#### Congratulations!

A check for \$100.00 would have been mailed (if this weren't a demo) to:

Jared Doe a'lksjdfl'kjas'dfklj apt 86 9g, ca 92845 CONGRATULATIONS!



Expect your check within 14 days.

<u>Click here</u> is address is not correct. <u>Click here</u> to contact us.





# Afternoon Biggo TM (B) (I) (L) (G) (O)

### Play Again! Demo Only

The card you entered "54AG51B293" is not a winning Card Code. If you think you've made a mistake, you can try re-entering the code by clicking the "I Think I Won!" tab.

Look for your next game card email to play again!





Fig. 8

#### INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No. PCT/US2010/051480

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IPC(8) - A63F 13/00 (2010.01) USPC - 463/42 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC				
B. FIEL	DS SEARCHED		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC(8) - A63F 9/24, 13/00 (2010.01) USPC - 463/42, 43; 725/34				
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched				
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) PatBase, MicroPatent, Google Scholar				
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT				
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where a	Relevant to claim No.		
X  Y	US 6,790,142 B2 (OKADA et al) 14 September 2004 (14.09.2004) entire document		1-3, 7  4-6	
Υ	US 2008/0263583 A1 (HEATH) 23 October 2008 (23.1	10.2008) entire document	4-6	
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* Special categories of cited documents: "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority				
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