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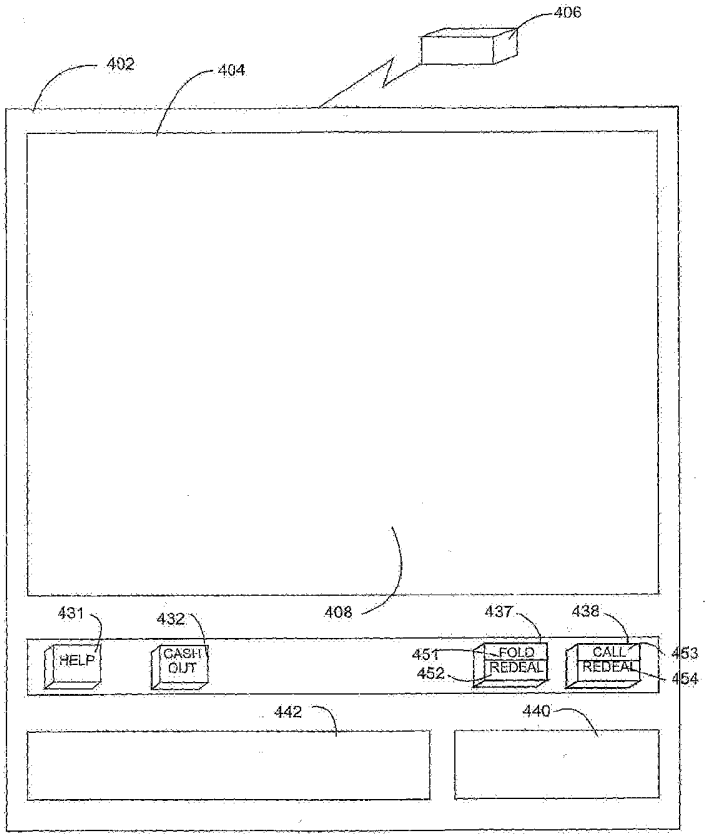

(57) Abstract: The device and method of the present invention configures a gaming device so that an input device receiving input in one game state to be interpreted and applied according to one input state is reconfigured so that input received in a different game state is interpreted and applied according to a different input state. In an optional embodiment, multiple different input devices may be reconfigured to provide the same input in one or more game states. Also in optional embodiment, a set of input devices of a cardinality in one game state may be reconfigured into a set of input devices of different cardinality in another game state.

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DEVICE AND METHOD FOR A DYNAMICALLY CONFIGURABLE USER INTERFACE IN A GAME OF CHANCE

Related Application Data

The present application claims the priority of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/677,513, entitled "Device and Method for User Interface in Games of Chance," filed May 3, 2005 by Applicant herein.

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to electronic gaming systems and devices. More particularly, the present invention is a method and system in which an input interface is reconfigurable to a primary input during the course of a game, thereby allowing players to input certain selections faster and easier.

Background of the Invention

User interface is a critical component to the success of an electronic gaming system. There are two major factors that come into play. A player may be unlikely to even play a game whose user interface is too confusing. Similarly, a confusing experience, though overcome, may still leave the player feeling insecure. Another factor is one of ergonomics. The more effort and movement required by a player to continue playing, the more likely such a player will end their play session early.

There are some techniques used in electronic gaming systems to address these user interface concerns. One such technique would be to put user control buttons close to one another to minimize the amount of hand or pointer movement

the player has to make to move between the last selection and the next one. Another technique is to somehow brighten, color or highlight buttons that the game designer wishes to encourage the player to notice and use. Another technique is to place the most important button in the most convenient place relative to the other buttons. For an electronic game with a touch-screen interface, this often would be the right-most position closest to the player's right hand.

These techniques, however, are limited or made more difficult by the fact that the relative use of game buttons often changes as the game progresses through multiple game states. For example, the game buttons to control initial wagers may be essential prior to the start of a game, but unused after the play commences. The Hold/Discard game buttons in a draw poker game are not needed until after wagering completes, but then become essential.

In order to take such variability of importance into account, one technique would be to employ reconfigurable game buttons where the function and labeling of a given game button may be altered as the phase of the game changes. For example, a game may continually offer the most-used or most desirable function at the right edge of the control bar at the bottom of the screen, with such game button displayed in a distinct bright color such as gold.

In a game like Three Card Poker, the rightmost game button would change function and label based on the step of the game. After a game has been played, and before the next game is begun, this game button functions as REBET. Once a bet is placed, the game button becomes DEAL. Once the deal begins and the player must make play decisions, the game button is PLAY. Other play decision game buttons, such as FOLD, are placed proximal to the REBET/DEAL/PLAY game button to reduce the distance between such game buttons as are typically used in sequence,

and hence the effort required for the player to move his cursor from where it originally was (typically over the DEAL game button when the game is started) to where it needs to be for the player to input the desired selection.

Usually, the last game button input a player makes in the Three Card Poker game is either FOLD or PLAY. If the player last chose PLAY, then the cursor will already be positioned for to click REBET without being moved. If the player has reason to believe that the cursor has not moved since clicking PLAY, the player does not even need to look at the position of the cursor to know it is properly placed to click the next game button. If the player last chose FOLD, the player will have to move the cursor to be positioned to subsequently click the rightmost game button (REBET) to continue play. The distance to move the cursor will, however, be minimized.

As the exigencies of the game vary from game step to game step, the expected sequence of game buttons to be selected may vary. Thus in order to continue to improve the ergonomic efficiency of a game by minimizing cursor movement or effort required for user input selection, it can be seen that there is a need in the art for a method and device which include an input device that is reconfigurable throughout the play of a game to ease the selection of game options by a player. Furthermore, as the number of relevant game buttons may vary between game states, in implementations where it is technically feasible, there is a need to be able to reconfigure one set of game buttons to a second set of game buttons of unlike cardinality, e.g. 1-to-n or n-to-1.

The discussion of documents, acts, materials, devices, articles and the like is included in this specification solely for the purpose of providing a context for the present invention. It is not suggested or represented that any or all of these matters formed part of the prior art base or were common general knowledge in the field relevant to the present invention as it existed before the priority date of each claim of this application.

2006243628 12 Sep 2011

Summary of the Invention

According to one aspect of the invention there is provided a gaming device comprising:

an electronic display;

at least two input devices configued to receive user input, the at least two input devices including a first input device and a second input device; and

a processor configured to communicate with the display and the at least two input devices, the processor configured to execute instructions to conduct a game of chance having at least two game states that occur during the game of chance and the at least two input devices configured to reconfigure between at least two different input states,

wherein the game of chance is a card game, and wherein the at least two game states include at least one of a prewager game state, a predeal game state, a game play game state, and a post-play game state,

wherein each input state is correlated to a game state such that user input received at one of the at least two input devices in a game state is interpreted by the processor according to the input state correlated to that game state,

wherein the first input device and the second input device are configured such that

(a) in at least one game state, the first input device and the second input device are correlated to the same input state such that user input received at the first input device and the second input device is interpreted as the same user input by the processor, and

(b) in at least one other game state, the first input device and the second input device are correlated to different input states such that user input received at either the first input device or the second input device is interpreted as different user input by the processor;

wherein the first input device is configured with one or more visible attributes associated with each input state, and wherein the first input device is adapted to alter its visible attributes to indicate the input state for which the first input device is configured.

According to another aspect of the invention there is provided a method for conducting a game of chance having a plurality of game states comprising:

providing a first input device and a second input device configured to receive user input;

defining at least two different input states, each input state associated with different effects in the game of chance;

correlating each input state to at least one game state that occurs during the game of chance;

conducting the game of chance;

receiving user input from the first or second input device during the game of chance, the user input effecting the game of chance according to the effect associated with the input state correlated to the game state at the point when the user input is received, such that user input received at the first or second input device during game states correlated to different input states effects the game of chance differently , wherein the game of chance is a card game, and wherein the game states include at least one of a prewager game state, a predeal game state, a game play game state, and a post-play game state;

configuring the first input device and the second input device such that (a) in at least one game state, the first input device and the second input device are correlated to the same input state such that user input received at the first input device and the second input device is interpreted as the same user input by the processor and (b) in at least one other game state, the first input device and the second input device are correlated to different input states such that user input received at the first input device and the second input device is interpreted as different user input by the processor;

associating one or more visible attributes of the first input device with each input state; and

altering visible attributes of the first input device to indicate the input state for which the first input device is configured.

The present invention is a method for dynamically reconfiguring an input device for different input states depending upon game state. The present invention also includes a device with one or more reconfigurable input devices. According to the present invention, a single input device can have different effects during the course of a game. That is, according to the present invention, an input device may be dynamically reconfigured for different input states to provide different input to a game depending upon the game state of a game of chance when the input device is actuated.

According to an optional embodiment of the present invention, a gaming device for conducting a game of chance with multiple game states includes an electronic display, an input device receiving user input, and a processor in communication with the display and the input device. The processor is adapted to execute instructions to conduct a game having at least two game states. Two or more input states are correlated to different game states and the input device is adapted to reconfigure between the different input states. In this manner, user input received at the input device in a game state is interpreted by the processor according to the input state associated with that game state. More specifically, user input received at the input device in one game state is interpreted by the processor according to the input state associated with that one game state, whereas user input received at the input device in a different game state is interpreted by the processor according to the input state associated with that different game state. It is noted that the present invention may include multiple input devices, with each the input device adapted to reconfigure between or among different input states correlated to different game states.

For example, in one optional embodiment, a gaming device conducts at least one game of chance having a plurality of game states. The gaming device includes at least one input device receiving user input communicating with a processor.

The input device has at least one input button adapted to dynamically reconfigure between at least two different input states. The input device may include mechanical buttons, display buttons, or the like. In one optional embodiment including mechanical buttons, the mechanical buttons may include indicia for each input state and an illumination device for each indicia. In such an optional embodiment, the processor is adapted to selectively illuminate indicia for an input state correlated to a game state during the game of chance.

In another optional embodiment, the input device may include at least one display button at the display. In such an optional embodiment, the data structure may store a display button image for each input state and the processor directs the display of a display button for an input state correlated to a game state during the game of chance. The display buttons could take many different forms. In one optional embodiment, the display button image for each input state is substantially the same dimensions when displayed on the display. In another optional embodiment, the data structure stores at least one large display button image and at least two small display button images that are substantially the same dimensions as the large display button image when displayed simultaneously adjacent to one another on the display.

As noted above, a processor is in communication with the one input device(s) and a data structure communicating with the processor. The data structure stores correlations between the input states and the game states and instructions executable by the processor to conduct the game of chance. User input received at

the input device at one game state of the game of chance is interpreted by the processor according to an input state correlated to that game state and user input received at the input device at a different game state of the game of chance is interpreted by the processor according to an input state correlated to that different game state.

In an optional embodiment, the processor is remote from the input device. In such an optional embodiment, the input device is in communication with a terminal processor. The terminal processor communicates with a terminal communication device which, in turn, communicates with a host communication device. Optionally, the terminal communication device and host communication device communicate through a computer network, such as a local area network ("LAN"), wide area network ("WAN"), or Internet. The processor communicates with the host communication device.

The present invention also includes a method. According to an embodiment of the present invention, a method for conducting a game of chance having a plurality of game states includes providing an input device receiving user input. At least two different input states are defined with each input state associated with different effects in the game of chance. Each input state is correlated to at least one game state in the game of chance. The game of chance is conducted. User input is received at the input device during the game of chance. The user input effects the game of chance according to the effect associated with the input state correlated to the game state at the point when the user input is received. In this manner, user input received at the input device during game states correlated to different input states effects the game of chance differently.

The input device could take many different forms. In one optional embodiment, the input device is a mechanical button including indicia for each input state. In such an optional embodiment, the method further includes selectively illuminating indicia for an input state correlated to a game state during the game of chance.

In another optional embodiment, the input device is a display button. In such an optional embodiment, the method further includes storing a display button image for each input state. A display button image is displayed for an input state correlated to a game state during the game of chance. Optionally, the display button image for each input state is substantially the same dimensions when displayed on the display. In another optional embodiment, at least one of the display button images is a large display button image and at least two of the display button images are small display button images that are substantially the same dimensions as the large display button image when displayed simultaneously adjacent to one another on the display.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 shows a state diagram of a game state transition from a single input state to a multiple inputs state according to an optional embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 shows a state diagram of a game state transition from a multiple inputs state to a single input state according to an optional embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3A shows a game button configuration associated with a state according to an optional embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3B shows a game button configuration associated with a different state of the game buttons of FIG. 3A;

FIG. 3C shows a game button configuration associated with a different state of the game buttons of FIG. 3A;

FIG. 4 shows a front view of a game device according to an optional embodiment of the present invention with mechanical game buttons showing multiple states;

FIG. 5 shows a front view of a game device according to the optional embodiment of FIG. 4 with mechanical game buttons in a game state;

FIG. 6 shows a front view of a game device according to the optional embodiment of FIG. 4 with mechanical game buttons in an alternate game state;

FIG. 7 shows a front view of a game device according to an optional embodiment of the invention with mechanical and display game buttons in a game state;

FIG. 8 shows a front view of a game device according to the optional embodiment of FIG. 7 with mechanical and display game buttons in an alternate game state.

Description

Reference is now made to the figures wherein like parts are referred to by like numerals throughout. The present invention is a device and method for reconfiguring an input device according to the step of a game being played. It is noted that the present invention could be directed for use with any game and the examples given below should not be construed as limiting. It is also noted that the present invention encompasses any form of input device including the display and

buttons illustrated in the figures, as well as any other form of input device including, but not limited to, mechanical button, display button, touchscreen, controllers, mice, keypads, keyboards, pointers, joysticks, or any other device receiving input from a user.

The present invention is a method and device directed for use for any game of chance having at least two game states. It is noted that the game states may be defined in any manner. At least two input states are defined and correlated to game states. Input states define how input received at an input device is to be interpreted in the game of chance at the correlated game state. Thus, as each game state is reached, the input state associated with that game state is enabled and the input device may be reconfigured so that the input called for in the input state are prompted.

According to the present invention, the input device is reconfigured to receive input during the multiple steps of a game, using a single input device or instrumentation for multiple distinct input purposes or effects throughout the course of a game. More specifically, an input device is adapted to reconfigure between at least two different input states. Each input state is correlated to a game state. In this manner, user input received at the input device in any game state is interpreted according to the input state associated with that game state. Thus, user input received at the input device in one game state is interpreted according to the input state associated with that one game state, whereas user input received at the input device in a different game state is interpreted according to the input state associated with that different game state.

For example, when playing a card game offering the player two or more play choices, such as in the case of Three Card Poker having a FOLD or PLAY input

during the play of a hand, and at least one wager input prior to commencement of the play of the hand, each step of play would reconfigure at least one input game button to facilitate the entry of such player's choice or choices as may be associated with the step in progress. As shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, in optional embodiments where it is technically feasible, the reconfiguration may redefine a set of *n* game buttons as a set of *m* game buttons, where *n* is unequal to *m*.

In such an implementation, illustrated in FIGS. 7 and 8 and discussed in greater detail later, an interface for Three Card Poker incorporating the present invention could include reconfiguring mechanical game buttons 737, 738 used for selection of a FOLD 737 or PLAY 738 selection at a game state during the play of a hand (shown in FIG. 7) into mechanical game buttons 737, 738 used for selection of a REBET 737, 738 selection at a game state following completion of the play of a hand (shown in FIG. 8). Similarly, FIGS. 7 and 8 illustrate an optional embodiment in which display game buttons 727, 728 used for selection of a FOLD 727 or PLAY 738 selection at a game state during the play of a hand are reconfigured to a single display game button 827 used for selection of a REBET 827 selection at a game state following completion of the play of a hand. In this manner, the player could effect a FOLD or PLAY input during the game and a REBET input after the game without repositioning his finger or pointing device. In an alternate optional embodiment, the reconfiguration could effectuate a REDEAL input which would activate a new game using the same wager as the prior game, combining a REBET and a DEAL input. In an alternate optional embodiment, such as in jurisdictions which require the player to actively collect any prize awarded to them, the input after an award event could be reconfigured to permit a COLLECT input.

It is noted that the present invention could be applied to any input device, whether that input device is mechanical, electronic, or any other type of input device. Thus, even though FIGS. 4 – 6 illustrate an optional embodiment in which the input device includes mechanical buttons, and FIGS. 7 and 8 illustrate an optional embodiment in which the input device includes mechanical buttons and display buttons, it is contemplated that other types of inputs could be used in the present invention, including, specifically, an optional embodiment using only display buttons.

Referring specifically to FIGS. 4–6, the present invention could be applied to a gaming device having mechanical game buttons that have indicia to identify the input state and an illumination device, such as a lamp, light, light emitting diode ("LED"), or the like, to illuminate or highlight the indicia corresponding to the input state at that particular game state. That is, as illustrated in FIGS. 5 and 6, the input device could include one or more mechanical buttons with different indicia (text areas in this example) that can be independently lighted or highlighted to reflect the reconfiguration of the input device.

In alternate embodiments, not shown, a mechanical game button may change its display of indicia, or of illumination of indicia, under computer control. Similarly, in an alternate optional embodiment (not shown), the color of a mechanical game button may be changed to reflect a reconfiguration of input options. In yet another optional embodiment (not shown), the reconfiguration status of mechanical game buttons may be indicated on a display device in such a way that the player may readily determine the purpose and effect of such game buttons. Optionally, the display area may be proximal to the game buttons. It is contemplated that an embodiment may include two or more input devices, such as multiple game

buttons, which share a similar text or display to indicate that any of these input devices could provide the same input. Such implementation may be effective for implementations utilizing, for example, a PC connected to a server or the Internet for execution of a gaming event which employs remote processing or other interface.

FIG. 1 illustrates a state diagram of a game state transition from a single input state 101 to a multiple input state 102 according to an optional embodiment of the present invention. In this optional embodiment, the input game button could be reconfigurable between utilization for a single input and utilization for multiple inputs. For example, in one optional embodiment, a single input game button could be reconfigurable to cover the size and space of multiple input game buttons and *vice versa*. After the transition, the reconfigurable input game button may be replaced by a plurality of input game buttons. FIG. 2 shows a state diagram of a game state transition from a multiple input state 201 to a single input state 202 according to another optional embodiment. It is noted that the game states, and the corresponding input states, may be cyclical, i.e. cycle between or among two or more states, or may be non-cyclical, i.e. linear, branching, or the like, depending upon the game of chance.

Turning to FIGS. 3A–3C, an optional embodiment of dynamic reconfiguration of an input device, in this case display buttons, to provide input appropriate to several different game states illustrated. Within each such state user an input device in the form of a display button panel 301 associated with that state are displayed. This embodiment includes a prewager state (shown in FIG. 3A), a predeal state (shown in FIG. 3B), and a game play state (shown in FIG. 3C). Each of the states features a Help game button 305 in a fixed location. Thus, in this optional embodiment, the Help game button 305 undergoes no reconfiguration. In the

prewager state of FIG. 3A, there is a reconfigurable REBET game button 307, which occupies an area substantially equivalent to the area occupied by multiple input game buttons, i.e. a FOLD game button 327 and PLAY game button 328, in FIG. 3C. The prewager state of FIG. 3A also includes two smaller input game buttons, HELP 305 and BET 1 306. In this example, according to the underlying game of chance, the BET 1 game button 306 is only used in the prewager state of FIG. 3A, and reconfigures in the other two states shown in FIGS. 3B and 3C to provide no function or effect in those game states.

Continuing with the example, the predeal state of FIG. 3B has a DEAL game button 317 as well as a HELP game button 305. The HELP game button 305 is carried over from the prewager state shown in FIG. 3A, and the DEAL game button 317 in the predeal state of FIG. 3B is a reconfiguration of the REBET game buttons 307 in the prewager state shown in FIG. 3A and occupies the same location. Optionally, as illustrated, the reconfigurable REBET game button 307and DEAL game button 317 may be displayed in a highlighted form to be more noticeable to the player.

In the optional embodiment illustrated, the location allocated to the REBET game button 307 in the prewager state of FIG. 3A and the DEAL game button 317 in the predeal state of FIG. 3B is reconfigured in the game play state of FIG. 3C as two game buttons, a FOLD game button 327 and a PLAY game button 328, along with the HELP game button 305 which is not reconfigured between game states. That is, the HELP game button 305 is carried over through each game state in this example. The FOLD game button 327 and the PLAY game button 328 of the game play state of FIG. 3C together occupy the same space as the REBET game button 307 of the prewager state of FIG. 3A or the DEAL game button 317 of the predeal state of FIG.

3B. It should be noted that, while FIGS. 3A–3C show the reconfigured game buttons occupying the same size and shape in each reconfiguration, this limitation is not necessary to this invention and the reconfigured game buttons could occupy larger, smaller, or differently-shaped areas in each reconfiguration while remaining within the scope and spirit of this invention.

The game illustrated in FIGS. 4–6 includes two game states, a predeal state, which includes wager information, and a game play state. FIG. 4 illustrates an optional embodiment consisting of a gaming device 402 comprising a processor 406, a display 404, optionally a video display, an input device comprising a mechanical game button panel 430, and one or more areas for identifying other game information such as wagers 440 placed and awards 442 collected. It is noted that in this optional embodiment, the input device communicates with the data processor 406 and the data processor 406 interprets user input received at the input device depending upon game state, as described in greater detail below. In an optional embodiment, the processor 406 may be in communication with a data structure storing instructions for the conduct of the game of chance along with the input states correlated with game states. In this manner, when a game state is reached, the appropriate input state is used by the processor 406 to interpret user input received at the input device.

The mechanical game button panel 430 may include non-reconfigurable input game buttons 431, 432, i.e. game buttons that do not have different input states depending upon game state, in addition to reconfigurable input game buttons 437, 438, i.e. game buttons that do have different input states depending upon game state. In this optional example, one portion 451, 453 of the reconfigurable game buttons 437, 438 display visual attributes, in this case indicia, associated with a predeal

game state while another portion 452, 454 of the reconfigurable game buttons 437, 438 display indicia associated with a different post-play game state. In one embodiment, there is includes no special lighting in or on the mechanical game buttons 437 438 to indicate the configuration status of the game buttons. In such an optional embodiment, the input state could be determined by the player based upon game context or indicated by messaging in the game display area 408. In an other optional embodiment, the portion of the game buttons 437 with the visual attribute, e.g. indicia, color, graphic, or the like, identifying the input state is illuminated, highlighted, or otherwise signified during each game state associated with that input state.

Thus, in the optional embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 5 and 6, each reconfigurable game button 437, 438 includes an illumination device, or other illumination means, to highlight the indicia identifying the input state 551, 553, 652, 654 enabled for that game state. Specifically, in the example of FIG. 5, the text indicating the input state of game button 437 for FOLD 551 is highlighted and the text indicating the input state of game button 438 for CALL 553 is highlighted while the disabled REDEAL 452, 454 input states of the game buttons 437, 438 are dimmed or unilluminated. In FIG. 6 the text indicating the input state of both game buttons 437, 438 for REDEAL 652, 654 are highlighted while the disabled FOLD 451 and CALL 453 input states of the game buttons 437, 438 are dimmed or unilluminated.

In this example, the game state of FIG. 6 includes redundant game buttons 437, 438, that is, game buttons that are correlated to the same input state. In other words, at the game state of FIG. 6, user input received at either game button 437, 438 would be interpreted as the same user input, a REDEAL in this example. This

is contrasted from the preceding game state of FIG. 5 where the game buttons 437, 428 are correlated to different input states so that user input received at the game buttons 437, 438 would be interpreted as different user input, a FOLD or a CALL, respectively, in this example. It is noted that each of these game state-input state correlations could be used separately or together within the scope of the present invention.

It is also noted that in this example, the game state of FIG. 6 occurs between games whereas the game state of FIG. 5 occurs during a game. It is contemplated that game states at any point during the conduct of a game of chance, or a series of games of chance, and the input states may similarly receive user input during conduct of a game of chance, or between games of chance.

An alternate optional embodiment is illustrated in FIGS. 7 and 8 that includes reconfigurable mechanical game buttons 737, 738 and reconfigurable display game buttons 727, 728, 827 such as mouse fields, touchscreen buttons, or other displayed, rather than physical, buttons. In this optional embodiment the display area 704 may include an area 708 in which to display standard video game information and a display button panel 720 for the display and operation of reconfigurable display game buttons 727, 728, 827. In the optional embodiment illustrated, such display game buttons 727, 728, 827 are part of the input device and receive input directly by the player such as by touch, a mouse, a pointer, or other input. In alternate optional embodiments (not shown), such display game buttons might be for display only with the corresponding mechanical game buttons being the sole input device. In the optional embodiment illustrated, non-reconfigurable display game buttons 721, 722, i.e. game buttons that do not change input states depending upon game state, may be displayed along with the reconfigurable display

game buttons 727, 728, 827. In alternate optional embodiments, more, or less, display game buttons may be utilized, and such game buttons may include only reconfigurable display game buttons, only non-reconfigurable display game buttons, or both.

Turning to the optional embodiment of FIG. 7, a game state associated with FOLD and CALL input states are enabled. Thus, in the game state of FIG. 7, the FOLD game button 727 and the CALL game button 728 are displayed and actuating the FOLD button 727 or CALL button 728 would be interpreted in accord with those input states. In FIG. 8 a different game state is illustrated in which the FOLD button 727 and CALL button 728 has been reconfigured as a REDEAL game button 827. This REDEAL game button 827 occupies the same screen area in the game state of FIG. 8 as would be occupied by both the FOLD game button 727 and the CALL game button 728 in the game state of FIG. 7. In alternate optional embodiments, the REDEAL game button 827 may be displayed to occupy the area of only the FOLD game button 727 or the CALL game button 728, or may occupy a totally different area instead. Such variation is within the spirit and scope of the invention being described.

While certain embodiments of the present invention have been shown and described it is to be understood that the present invention is subject to many modifications and changes without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention presented herein.

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THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. A gaming device comprising:

an electronic display;

at least two input devices configured to receive user input, the at least two input devices including a first input device and a second input device; and

a processor configured to communicate with the display and the at least two input devices, the processor configured to execute instructions to conduct a game of chance having at least two game states that occur during the game of chance and the at least two input devices configured to reconfigure between at least two different input states,

wherein the game of chance is a card game, and wherein the at least two game states include at least one of a prewager game state, a predeal game state, a game play game state, and a post-play game state,

wherein each input state is correlated to a game state such that user input received at one of the at least two input devices in a game state is interpreted by the processor according to the input state correlated to that game state,

wherein the first input device and the second input device are configured such that

(a) in at least one game state, the first input device and the second input device are correlated to the same input state such that user input received at the first input device and the second input device is interpreted as the same user input by the processor, and

(b) in at least one other game state, the first input device and the second input device are correlated to different input states such that user input received at either the first input device or the second input device is interpreted as different user input by the processor;

wherein the first input device is configured with one or more visible attributes associated with each input state, and wherein the first input device is adapted to alter its visible attributes to indicate the input state for which the first input device is configured.

2. The gaming device of claim 1, further comprising:

a data structure storing instructions to conduct a game of chance having at least two game states and at least two different input states, wherein the processor is configured to communicate with the data structure.

3. The gaming device of claim 1, further comprising:

a data structure configured to communicate with the processor, the data structure storing correlations between the input states and the game states.

4. The gaming device of any one of the preceding claims wherein the second input device includes at least one mechanical button.

5. The gaming device of claim 4 wherein the mechanical button includes indicia for each input state and an illumination device for each indicia, the processor adapted to selectively illuminate indicia for an input state correlated to a game state during the game of chance.

6. The gaming device of claim 2 or 3 wherein the second input device includes at least one display button at the display.

7. The gaming device of claim 7 when dependent on claim 3 wherein the data structure stores a display button image for each input state, the processor adapted to display a display button for an input state correlated to a game state during the game of chance.

8. The gaming device of claim 7 wherein the display button image for each input state is substantially the same dimensions when displayed on the display.

9. The gaming device of claim 7 or 8 wherein the data structure stores at least one large display button image and at least two small display button images that are substantially the same dimensions as the large display button image when displayed simultaneously adjacent to one another on the display.

10. The gaming device of any one of the preceding claims further comprising:

a terminal processor configured to communicate with the first input device;

a terminal communication device configured to communicate with the terminal processor; and

a host communication device configured to communicate with the terminal communication device and the processor, such that the first input device is remote from the processor.

11. The gaming device of claim 10 wherein the host communication device and the terminal communication device are configured to communicate through a computer network.

12. A method for conducting a game of chance having a plurality of game states comprising:

providing a first input device and a second input device configured to receive user input;

defining at least two different input states, each input state associated with different effects in the game of chance;

correlating each input state to at least one game state that occurs during the game of chance;

conducting the game of chance;

receiving user input from the first or second input device during the game of chance, the user input effecting the game of chance according to the effect associated with the input state correlated to the game state at the point when the user input is received, such that user input received at the first or second input device during game states correlated to different input states effects the game of chance differently , wherein the game of chance is a card game, and wherein the game states include at least one of a prewager game state, a predeal game state, a game play game state, and a post-play game state;

configuring the first input device and the second input device such that (a) in at least one game state, the first input device and the second input device are

correlated to the same input state such that user input received at the first input device and the second input device is interpreted as the same user input by the processor and (b) in at least one other game state, the first input device and the second input device are correlated to different input states such that user input received at the first input device and the second input device is interpreted as different user input by the processor;

associating one or more visible attributes of the first input device with each input state; and

altering visible attributes of the first input device to indicate the input state for which the first input device is configured.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein the second input device is a mechanical button including indicia for each input state, the method further comprising selectively illuminating indicia for an input state correlated to a game state during the game of chance.

14. The method of claim 12 wherein the second input device is a display button, the method further comprising:

storing a display button image for each input state; and

displaying a display button image for an input state correlated to a game state during the game of chance.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the display button image for each input state is substantially the same dimensions when displayed on the display.

16. The method of claim 14 wherein at least one of the display button images is a large display button image and at least two of the display button images are small display button images that are substantially the same dimensions as the large display button image when displayed simultaneously adjacent to one another on the display.

17. A gaming device substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to

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any one of the embodiments shown in the drawings.

18. A method substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to any one of the embodiments shown in the drawings.

5

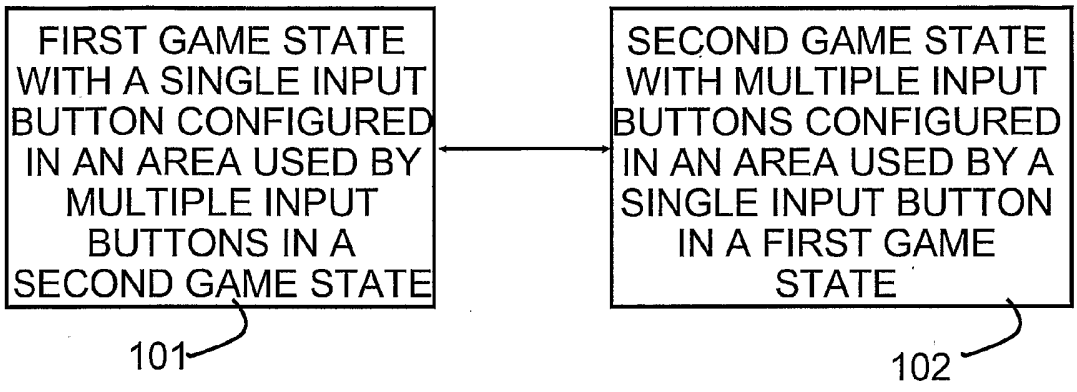
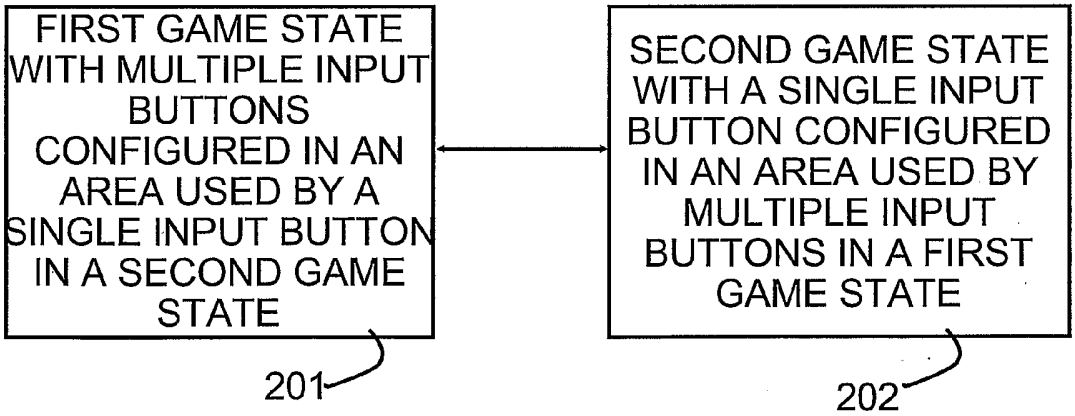

FIRST GAME STATE WITH A SINGLE INPUT BUTTON CONFIGURED IN AN AREA USED BY MULTIPLE INPUT BUTTONS IN A SECOND GAME STATE
101
SECOND GAME STATE WITH MULTIPLE INPUT BUTTONS CONFIGURED IN AN AREA USED BY A SINGLE INPUT BUTTON IN A FIRST GAME STATE
102

FIG. 1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201
SECOND GAME STATE WITH A SINGLE INPUT BUTTON CONFIGURED IN AN AREA USED BY MULTIPLE INPUT BUTTONS IN A FIRST GAME STATE
202

FIG. 2

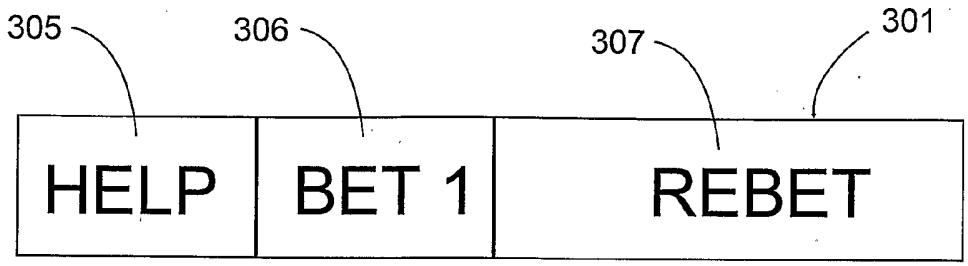


FIG. 3A

FIG. 3B

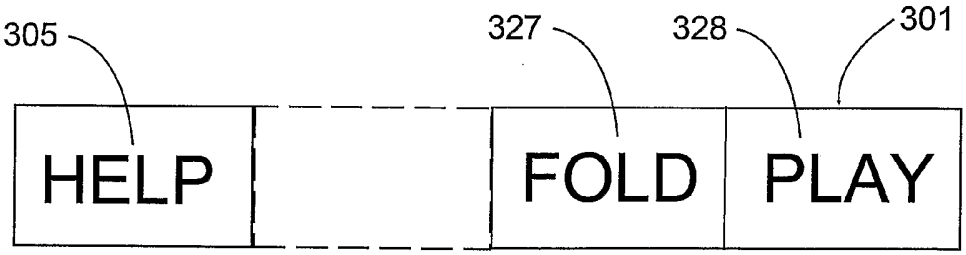
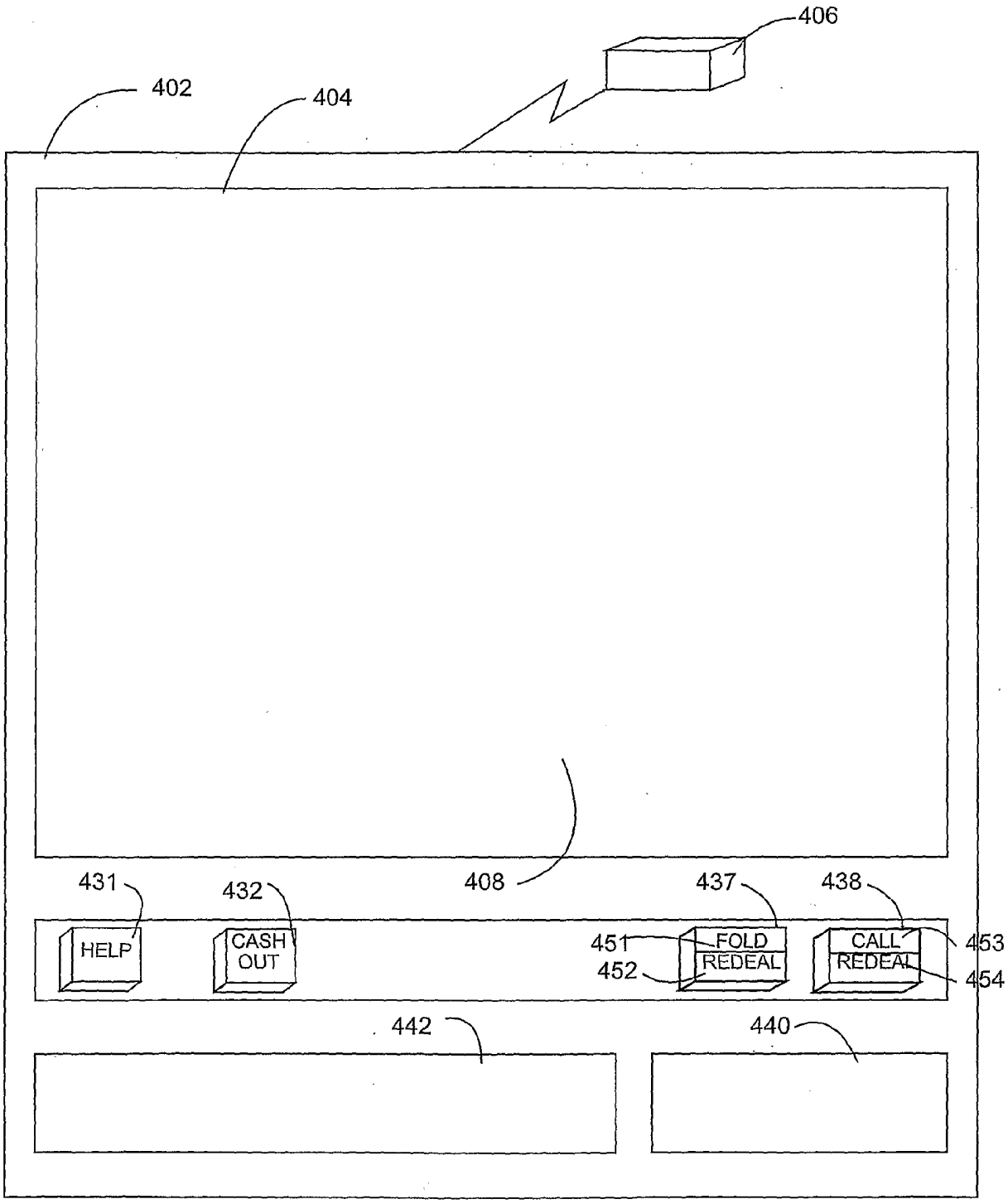


FIG. 3C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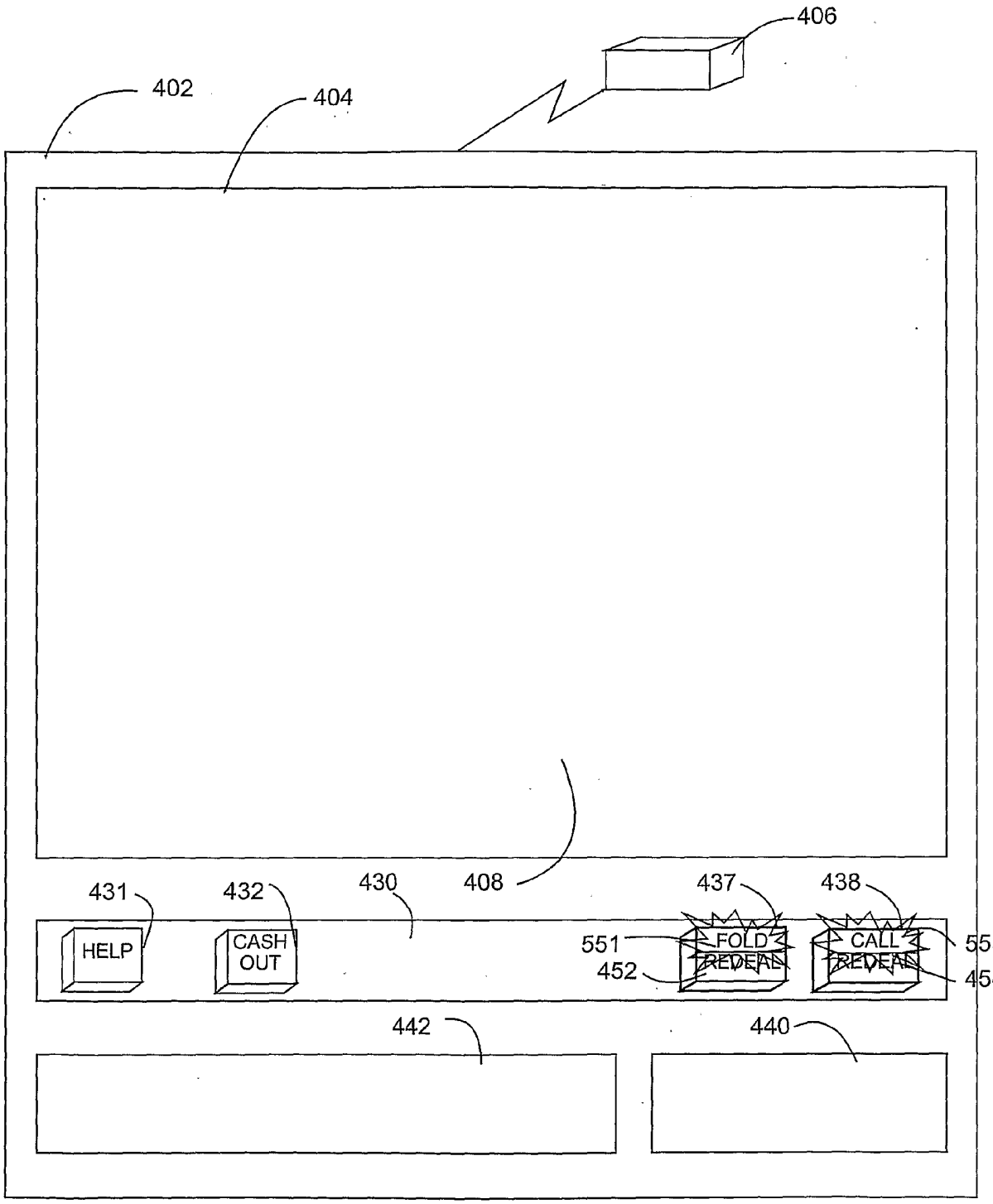
402
404
408
431
432
437
438
HELP
CASH OUT
451
452
FOLD
REDEAL
CALL
REDEAL
453
454
442
440

FIG. 4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402
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408
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437
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HELP
CASH OUT
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452
FOLD REVEAL
CALL REVEAL
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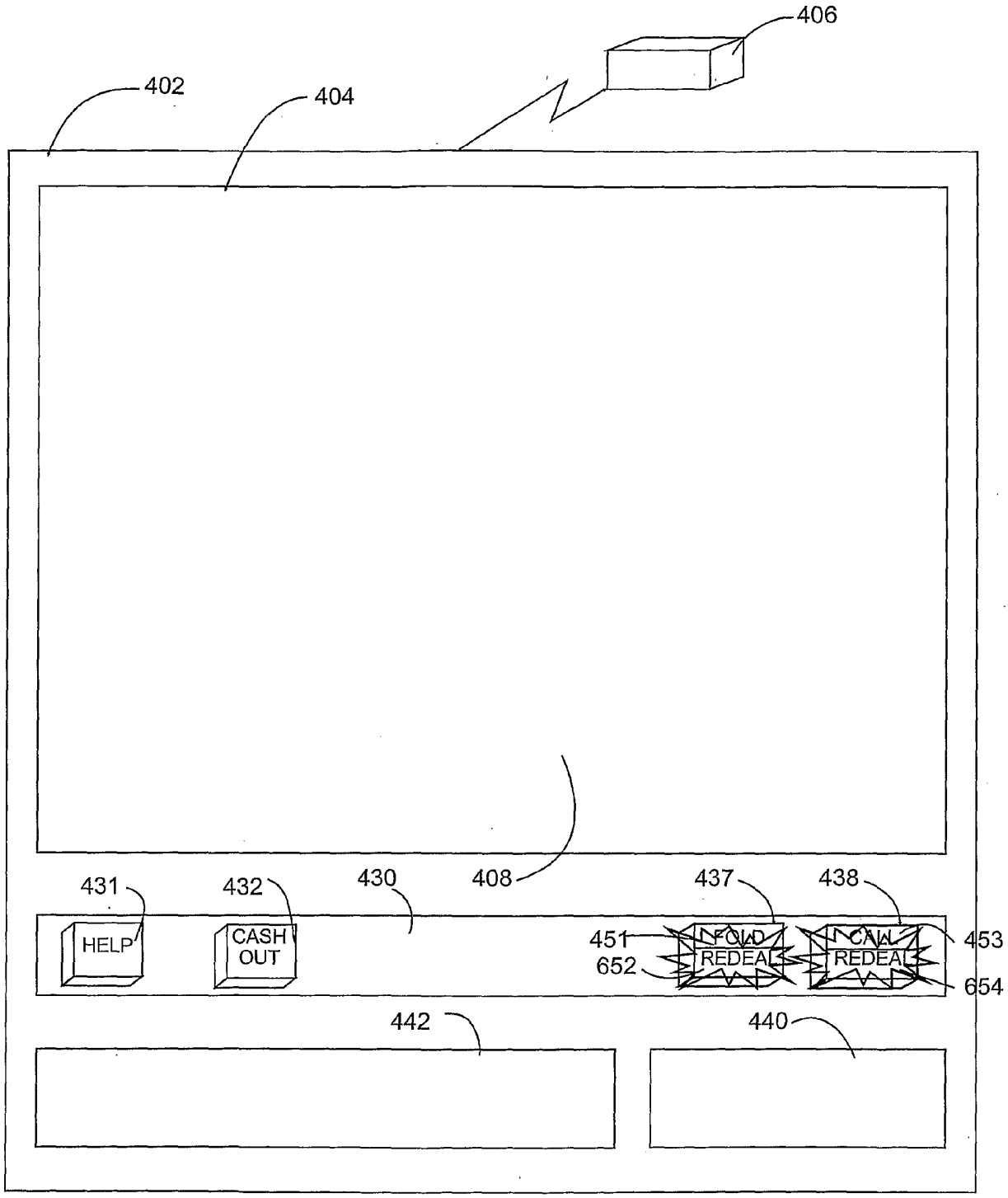
454
442
440

FIG. 5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HELP
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652
FOLD
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CALL
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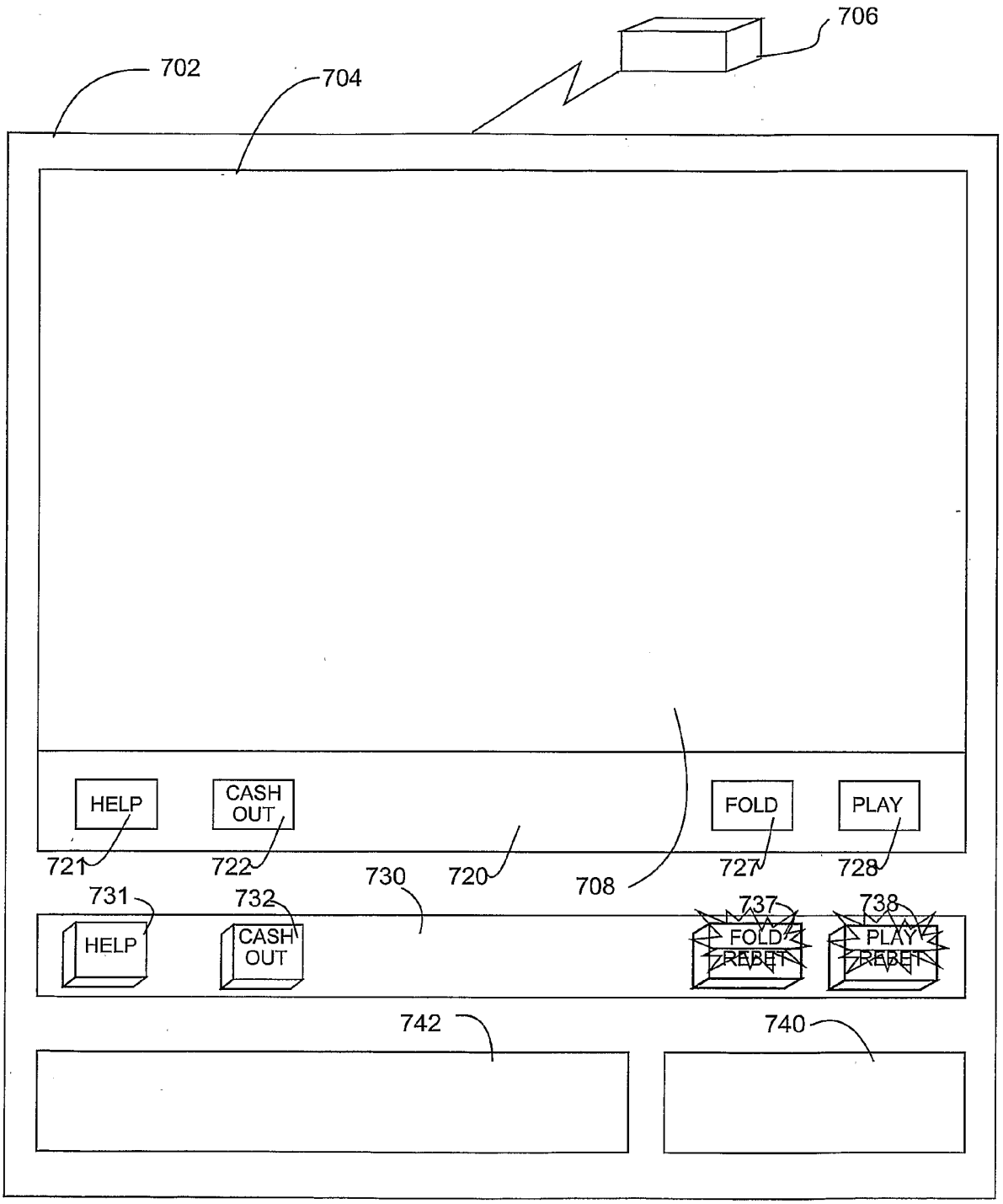
453
654
442
440

FIG. 6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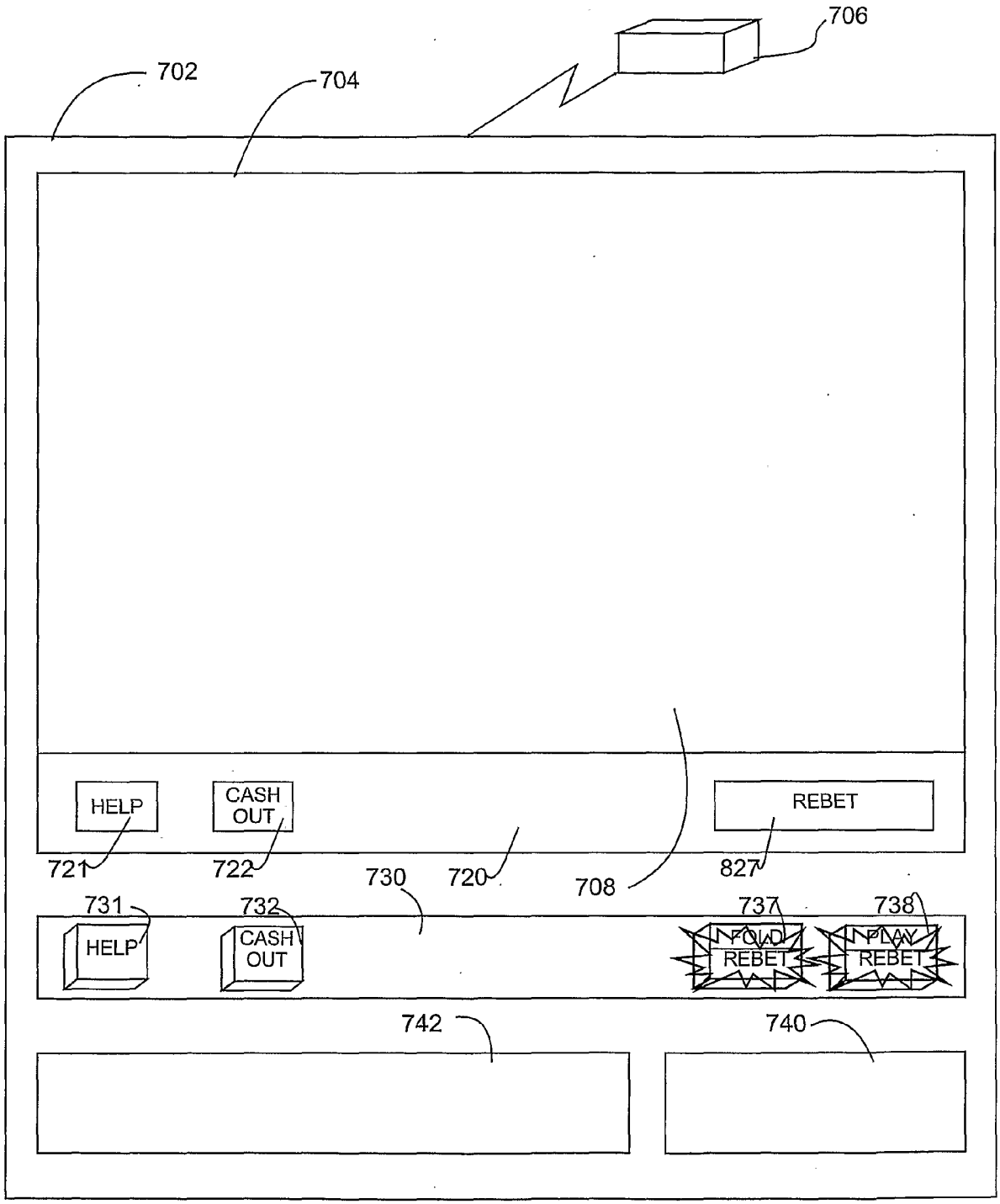
REBET
PLAY
REBET
742
740

FIG. 7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CASH OUT
REBET
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720
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827
731
732
737
738
HELP
CASH OUT
FOLD
REBET
PLAY
REBET
742
740

FIG. 8