A method of playing via a processing system a game of chance providing networking opportunities for players playing the game. A gaming environment is created to allow the players playing the game to compete with one another for a chance to win a prize. Each player playing the game is required to partner up with at least one partner from among the players playing the game as a condition for each player to become an eligible winner of the game to win the prize. A prize winner is selected via from among the players playing the game that have partnered up with the at least one partner. The selected prize winner is required to share a prize won by the selected prize winner with the at least one partner of the selected prize winner as a condition for the selected prize winner to receive the prize, thereby offering each player playing the game a chance to receive a share of the prize won either as a player selected as the prize winner or as the at least one partner of the prize winner.
CREATION OF GAMING ENVIRONMENT

SEARCH FOR PARTNERS

APPROACH AND INTRODUCTION

PLAYER / PARTNER NETWORKING

IDENTIFICATION OF FIRST IMPRESSIONS

WINNER SELECTION

PRIZE PARTNER SELECTION

PRIZE SELECTION

PRIZE DISTRIBUTION

FIG. 1
CONGRATULATIONS!!!

<<INSERT NAME OF MAIDEN>>

YOU ARE A

MAIDEN

<<INSERT NAME OF GAME SPONSOR>>

RSVP

www.knightsandmaidens.com

By invitation only – Places are limited – Book early to avoid disappointment

FIG. 2
<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NAME:</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PHONE:</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HAIR:</td>
<td>BLOND</td>
<td>BRUNETTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EYES:</td>
<td>BLUE</td>
<td>BROWN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DATE:</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>LOOKS:</td>
<td>HOT</td>
<td>COOL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STYLE:</td>
<td>TOUGH</td>
<td>SERIOUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CLICK:</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

**FIG. 4**
510 CONTACT WITH PROSPECTIVE PLAYER

520 LIVE PLAYER?

540 RECEIPT OF INFORMATION FROM LIVE PLAYER

550 COLLECTION OF PLAYER FEE

560 DELIVERY OF PASSPORT AND TICKETS INCLUDING FIRST IMPRESSION SECTIONS

570 ASSURANCE OF AVAILABILITY OF PRIZES

500

515 ADS/INVITATIONS

530 RECEIPT OF INFORMATION FROM REMOTE PLAYER

FIG. 5
FIG. 6A

600A

610 OPENING SEQUENCE

620 VENUE TOUR

630 VENUE/CROWD TOUR

640 LIVE ACTION

642 GAME PLAYED AT PUBLIC GATHERING WHERE PLAYERS DIRECTLY INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER
FIG. 6B

OPENING SEQUENCE

VENUE TOUR

VENUE/CROWD TOUR

LIVE ACTION

GAME PLAYED AT PUBLIC GATHERING WHERE SOME OR ALL PLAYERS INDIRECTLY INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER
TECHNIQUES FOR INCENTIVIZED NETWORKING

BACKGROUND

I. Field

The present disclosure relates generally to the field of entertainment and, more specifically, to techniques for playing a game of chance providing networking opportunities for large groups of players.

II. Background Information

At entertaining public gatherings, whether business or social, many participants find it difficult to approach and interact with one another, even with individuals they know or have met in the past. For example, a participant may lack certain networking skills, be nervous about approaching other participants or starting a conversation, or be concerned about rejection.

On many occasions, it is also difficult for the participants of live or online public gatherings to establish a balance between their desire for a need to network with particular individuals of personal or business interest and a risk of engaging themselves in confusing or harassing situations. In addition, underlying purposes of some of the public gatherings, when they are explicitly announced or advertised, may also lead to additional confusions between some groups of prospective participants, as well as reluctance to take part in the gathering. Such considerations are applicable to a broad range of public gatherings, including many social, business, professional, dating, and entertainment events.

Games and, specifically, games of chance are forms of entertainment that allow the players to naturally participate together in a gaming environment of a particular game. However, such games often create conditions for competitive rather than entertaining relationships between the participating players. Since during the game the players play against one another, they may have little or no opportunity or excuse for networking or partnering. Moreover, a competitive nature of these games may actually make it more difficult for the players interested in social or business interactions to introduce themselves to one another or interact because such a behavior would contradict or appear contradictory to their personal game-dictated goals of being individually successful (i.e., winning) players.

Therefore, despite the considerable efforts in the art devoted to techniques for using the games of chance for providing networking opportunities for their respective players, further improvements would be desirable.

SUMMARY

Techniques for playing a game of chance providing networking opportunities for large groups of players are described herein.

In one aspect, the disclosure provides a method of playing a game of chance providing networking opportunities for players playing the game. In an embodiment, to qualify for a prize to be awarded to a winner of the game, a player should have one or more partners chosen from the players playing the game, and the winner should share the prize with his/her prize partner. Rules of the game promote networking between the players in a form of a chance of winning the prize as an incentive for the players to communicate with one another and form alliances based on a plurality of personal or business-related interests. A partner is chosen by the respective player or, based on the player’s information, by a game computer. The game may be played in live or virtual environments (for example, online) by one or more groups of on-site or remote players.

In another aspect, the disclosure provides a system adapted for facilitating the game of chance.

In yet another aspect, the disclosure provides a computer program product including a computer readable medium having instructions for causing a computer to execute the method of playing a game of chance.

Various other aspects and embodiments of the disclosure are described in further detail below.

The Summary is neither intended nor should it be construed as being representative of the full extent and scope of the present disclosure, which these and additional aspects will become more readily apparent from the detailed description, particularly when taken together with the appended drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 shows a flow diagram of a method of playing a game of chance providing networking opportunities for players playing the game.

FIG. 2 shows an exemplary embodiment of a Passport identifying a player playing the game of FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 shows an exemplary embodiment of a player's ticket for playing the game of FIG. 1.

FIG. 4 shows an exemplary embodiment of a First Impressions section disposed on a back of the player's ticket used in the game of FIG. 1.

FIG. 5 shows a flow diagram of a method of creating a gaming environment for playing the game of FIG. 1.

FIGS. 6A-6B show flow diagrams of methods of developing televised versions of gaming environments for playing the game of FIG. 1.

FIG. 7 shows a high-level block diagram of an exemplary system adapted for executing portions of the methods of FIGS. 1, 5 and 6A-6B.

To facilitate understanding, identical reference numerals have been used, where possible, to designate identical elements that are common to the figures, except that suffixes may be added, when appropriate, to differentiate such elements. The images in the drawings are simplified for illustrative purposes and are not depicted to scale. It is contemplated that features or steps of one embodiment may be beneficially incorporated in other embodiments without further recitation.

The appended drawings illustrate exemplary embodiments of the disclosure and, as such, should not be considered as limiting the scope of the disclosure that may admit to other equally effective embodiments.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The term “exemplary” is used herein to mean “serving as an example, instance, or illustration.” Any embodiment or design described herein as “exemplary” is not necessarily to be construed as preferred or advantageous over other embodiments or designs.

Referring to the figures, FIG. 1 depicts a flow diagram of a method 100 of playing a game of chance providing networking opportunities for large groups of players in accordance with one embodiment of the present disclosure.
At step 110, a sponsor or, alternatively, a producer of a game of chance creates a gaming environment adapted for supporting execution of the game. The sponsor or producer may be a private, corporate or public entity, and the gaming environment generally includes various physical, communications, and computing means needed for playing the game in a particular setting, such as a public gathering, online, or a combination thereof. In further embodiments, portions of the game may be implemented as elements of board games. Hereinafter, the terms “sponsor” and “producer” and the terms “game” and “game of chance” are used interchangeably, respectively.

In embodiments, the created gaming environment is used to promote social or business networking between the players in a form of participation in the game of chance that requires a winner to share his/her prize with a prize partner selected from the players playing the game. The need for a player to have a partner or be a partner of another player to qualify for the prize develops an incentive element for networking (i.e., communications) among the players in a context of a common goal of winning the prize. Herein the term “prize” is broadly used in reference to any incentive for the players to partner up and communicate to one another. During the game, in the pursuit of such a common goal, the players are encouraged to approach one another, introduce themselves, start conversations, and/or reach agreements.

The players may be motivated to get together and establish mutually beneficial alliances based on a plurality of personal or business-related interests, including professional or career consideration, personal attraction and dating situations, and a desire to develop a particular form of a personal or professional relationship, among other reasons. Joint participation in the game creates an environment of incentivized networking where the players are offered multiple opportunities for searching, selecting, and interacting with individuals of interest in a context of an invitation to become their partners, as discussed below in reference to steps 120, 130, and 140.

The sponsor determines or approves rules of the game and appoints a person or persons (collectively referred to herein as an “Organizer”) responsible for implementation of the rules and administering game procedures. In some embodiments, the sponsor or the Organizer further appoints one or more judges, i.e., individuals responsible for administering specific portions of the game procedures.

Generally, such a game is provided with a name that reflects networking aspects of the game and reflects interests of a particular player's populace, such as social interactions, dating motivations, interest in establishing professional contacts, and the like. Some illustrative examples of the names include “Partner Up to Party”, “Knights and Maidens”, “ROMEOs and JULIETs”, “Entrepreneurs and Investors”, “Sellers and Buyers”, “Studs and Stunners” and the like. Hereinafter, “Knights and Maidens” is illustratively used as a name of the game(s) discussed in reference to FIGS. 1-5, 6A-6B and 7.

In one embodiment, to facilitate contacts and interactions between the players, each player is issued, in a physical or virtual domain or both, a game-tailored player's ID (referred hereafter as a “Passport”) and a personalized player's book of tickets including invitation forms for other players to become a player's partner, such tickets also featuring First Impressions sections disposed on the back of Parts 1 and 2 (discussed in reference to FIG. 3) of the tickets.

The Passport and the book of tickets having the First Impressions sections are issued to each player who has paid a game participation fee or for whom the fee was waived by the Organizer or paid by an entity financing a gaming event. Players playing, at least temporarily, the game online or from a remote location are provided with communication links that allow them to pay the fees and obtain access to their “virtual” IDs, books of tickets, and individual tickets, including their First Impressions sections. For example, such players may be provided with website/email addresses or phone numbers of the gaming event.

Hereinafter, contents of the Passport, book of tickets, and First Impressions sections are described, unless stated otherwise, in reference to their physical (i.e., paper) versions, which are provided to players playing the game in a physical domain, for example, at a party. However, a player may exercise the same features and functions by using the virtual Passport, book of tickets, and First Impressions sections in a combination with a communication device such as a cellular phone (e.g., voice/text/video-enabled cellular phone having a built-in still or video camera), a wireless or wired personal digital assistant (PDA) or a computer, a digital still or video camera, or a combination thereof. Hereinafter, such player’s communication devices are collectively referred to as “means of communications”.

Referring to FIG. 2, in one embodiment, a Passport 200 is a document (or, alternatively, a computer or audio form or a video recording) comprising pre-printed fields 210, 230, 240, and 260 and player-identifying (i.e., personalized) fields 220 and 250.

The pre-printed fields 210, 230, 240, and 260 generally include game-related information, notices, or announcements. Correspondingly, the player-identifying fields 220 and 250 are allocated for a name of a player (for example, John Joe or Ann Smith) and description of a playing status of the player (as depicted, “Maiden” or, alternatively (not shown), “KNIGHT”), and the field 250 contains a name of the sponsor of the Maiden (for example, XYZ Inc.).

In alternate embodiments, the Passport 200 may comprise only a portion of such pre-printed or personalized fields, as well as include additional fields (for example, fields containing a player's picture or a sponsor's logo or indicia). During the game played in a live gaming environment, a player should assure that his/her Passport is visible to other players.

Referring to FIG. 3, in one embodiment, the book of tickets comprises a plurality of tickets 300 (or, alternatively, computer or audio forms or a video recording) each having a first portion 310 and a second portion 330. Together, the portions 310 and 330 constitute a ticket for playing the game and correspond to one chance of winning a prize. A number of tickets 300 in the book of tickets for each game is determined by the Organizer of a particular gaming event and, generally, is in a range from 4 to 10 (e.g., 6 tickets).

In a printed version of the book of tickets, the second portions 330 are detachably connected to the bonded together first portions 310 (illustratively, the portions 310 and 330 are separated by a perforation 302). During the game, the player detaches and forwards the second portion 330 to a partner, as discussed below in reference to step 130.

The Passport 200 may also be provided with a holder (not shown) for keeping or assembling the Parts 1 or 2 of the respective tickets, for example, Parts 1 of the tickets presented by the player (e.g., Maiden) to her partners and
Parts 2 of the tickets received by the owner of the holder (i.e., Maiden) from other players as a confirmation of the partnerships with those players. Optionally, such a holder may also be adapted for storing small portable storage devices (e.g., memory cards), player’s notes, and the like. Additionally or alternatively, the book of tickets may be provided with a section (not shown) adapted for storing portions 330 of tickets received from other players who invited an owner of the book of tickets to become their partner.

In some embodiments, a cover of the holder or book of tickets contains, physically or electronically, one or more multiple-choice questions 304 (shown in phantom) that, if answered correctly, may allow the owner of the book of tickets to qualify for entrance to the game or some prizes (for example, a question “Who was known as ‘The Latin Lover’?” and answers <(1) Casablanca>, <(2) Kilimanjaro>, <(3) Casanova>). Such multiple-choice questions may be the same for all players or, alternatively, randomly selected for at least a portion of the players.

In the depicted embodiment, the first portion 310 of the ticket 300 comprises pre-printed fields 312-317 and player-identifying (i.e., personalized) fields 320-322. The field 312 is allocated for a name of the game, and the field 313 identifies the portion 310 of a particular ticket 300 (illustratively, the ticket No. 1) as a Part 1 of that ticket. The fields 314 and 315 include game-related instructions to the player, and the fields 316 and 317 contain the player’s promise to share with the prize partner a prize won by the player (field 316) and the agreed player’s portion, in percent, of the prize (field 317). A field 320 is provided for a player’s prize draw number (i.e., player’s ID), and a field 321 is provided for the partner’s photograph. A field 322 is allocated for keywords (illustratively, “We happened to meet today”) that, during the game, are chosen by the player and the partner who receives from the player the second portion 330 of the ticket. Generally, the prize draw number is a unique alphanumeric combination that, in some embodiments, may comprise portions of a player’s phone number or name. The entire book of tickets (e.g., all 6 tickets) uniquely share the same prize draw number. All of the partners have a potential stake in any prize won with that prize draw number if they get picked as a prize partner.

Correspondingly, the second portion 330 of the ticket 300 comprises pre-printed fields 332-337 and player-identifying (i.e., personalized) fields 340-342. Contents of the fields 332 and 340 are the same as ones of the fields 312 and 320, respectively, whereas the field 333 identifies the portion 330 as a Part 2 of a particular ticket 300 (as depicted, ticket No. 1). The fields 334 and 335 include game-related instructions to the prize partner, and the fields 336 and 337 contain the player’s promise to share with the partner the prize won by the player (field 336) and the agreed partner’s portion, in percent, of the prize (field 337). The field 341 is provided for the player’s photograph so that the partner can take away a photo of the player that presented that ticket’s Part 2, and the field 342 is allocated for the keywords chosen by the player and the partner.

In alternate embodiments, each of the portions 310 and 330 may have additional pre-printed fields or only portions of the abovementioned fields.

Referring to FIG. 4, in one exemplary embodiment, a printed version of a First Impressions section 400 is disposed on the back of the Parts 310 and 330 of the ticket 300 and comprises a plurality of pre-printed fields (illustratively, fields 401-409) having check boxes 411, information regions 412, or both.

In the depicted embodiment, the field 401 contains a text (as shown) or image identifying the First Impressions section 400, whereas the fields 402-409 allow a player to keep, in an organized format, records about his/her partner. The pre-printed content of the fields 404-409 is selected by the Organizer of a gaming event. Generally, the content is in coordination with a networking aspect of the game being played, as well as motivations or interests of the player’s populace. For example, at a business event one or more of the fields 401-409 may contain information relating to business skills including, but not limited to, marketing, finance, management, creative, legal, etc. In alternate embodiments, the First Impressions section 400 may be provided and executed in computer or audio form or substituted by a player’s video or audio recordings.

At step 120, when the game is played in a live gaming environment where direct interactions between the players are possible, a player mixes up and mingles with other players in a search for individuals of his/her particular interest as prospective partners. A mutual need in a partner to qualify for a prize encourages the players to communicate with one another and transforms a burden of approaching a stranger and striking with him/her a conversation into a naturally entertaining element of incentivized networking.

In alternate embodiments, the gaming environment may not allow for such a search, for example, when at least some of the players are remote (i.e., off-site) players or players sitting at a theater, a stadium, and the like. In such gaming environments, based on information derived for the players’ Passports and tickets and using a set of criteria pre-defined by the Organizer or, alternatively, the judges, a player is offered or appointed two or more partners.

Generally, the respective determinations and information exchanges may be performed or controlled using a game computer (for example, game computer 710 discussed in reference to FIG. 7 below). During the game, the game computer administers execution of rules of the game and facilitates and monitors game-related communications between the players and between the players and the Organizer or judges.

In some embodiments, the player may choose particular partners from a group of the candidates suggested by the game computer, however, to participate in the game, the player should choose at least one partner. For example, a search and match engine executed by the game computer can randomly allocate one or more partners to the player based on preselected search criteria.

In yet another embodiment, a game can be played simultaneously in the live and virtual gaming environments (i.e., live/virtual gaming environment) by at least two groups of players. In this embodiment, a player playing in a live gaming environment may also be offered or appointed by the game computer, Organizer or judges one or more partners chosen from a group of the remote players playing the game in a virtual gaming environment, as well as remote players may also be suggested partners selected from a group of the on-site players.

During the game, in a preferred embodiment communications between the players and the game computer, Organizer, and judges are performed using a voice/text/video-enabled cellular phone or, alternatively, other respec-
active means of communications. In some embodiments, the game computer may perform some or all functions of the Organizer and/or judges.

At step 130, in the live gaming environment, a player approaches another player whom he/she selects as a prospective partner, introduces him/herself to that player, invites the player to become his/her partner, and forwards to the player the Part 2 of the respective ticket 300, complete with the First Impressions section on the back of the ticket’s Part 2. Accordingly, when the game is played in the virtual or live/virtual gaming environment, a prospective partner may be provided with the Part 2 of a ticket 300 of the other player electronically, by the game computer via the respective means of communications.

The rules of the game require that a player always accepts an invitation from the other player to become his/her partner and provides that player with information required for entering in the Part 1 of the player’s ticket.

At step 140, the player and the partner complete, together, the keyword section 314 of Part 1 and copy it to section 334 of the Part 2 of the player’s ticket. In particular, the player and partner select and enter in the fields 322 and 342 agreed upon keywords, and the partner provides his/her photograph for the field 321, so that the player has a record of what the partner looks like. These interactions may involve operations performed in either physical or virtual domains or both.

For example, the keywords may be entered manually, then pictures of the partner and, optionally, the Parts 1 and 2 of the ticket can be taken using a camera in the player’s or partner’s cellular phone, and, using the cellular phone, transmitted to the game computer. Alternatively, in the live gaming environment, the filled out Parts 1 and 2 are forwarded to the Organizer or judges. The seeking out of a partner and getting the participants to interact and fill in the keywords as described above is akin to a keen autograph hunter getting that sought after signature.

At step 150, after submitting the Parts 1 and 2 of the ticket 300, the player and the partner are offered time for socializing and/or conversing on subjects of their interests and or motivations, and then each of them is asked to complete, together or separately, the First Impressions sections 400 of the ticket 300. During or after the game, the First Impressions section may be signed by the user and handed over to the organizer or the organizer as brief records of interactions that took place in the game. The First Impressions section can also be accomplished by using a video camera in both the player’s cellular phone and the video camera in the partner’s cellular phone.

Upon completion of the First Impressions section 400, the player and partner are asked to separate temporarily to allow each of them to mingle with other players and search for other suitable partners, thus repeating the steps 120, 130, 140, and 150, as shown with a link 151.

To qualify for a prize, the rules of the game require that a player has at least one partner, as well as may limit a number of the partners, for example, to a number of the tickets 300 in the player’s book of tickets (e.g., ten tickets or less). As such, each player is offered a chance to win a prize or as a prize partner of the player who won the prize.

At step 160, a winner (i.e., player who won the prize) is chosen from the players playing the game and who has adhered to the rules of the game. The winner may be chosen, for example, by the picking out of a ticket from a lottery or a raffle type box filled with the covers of all the players’ books of tickets containing the book’s Prize Draw Number. Alternatively, the winner may be chosen by the Organizer, judges, or general public being present at the gaming event. In embodiments, the winner may be chosen using, for example, a prize draw based on the player’s prize draw number located in the fields 320 and 340 of the player’s ticket 300.

In another embodiment, the winner may be chosen by a game computer via a prize draw number generator. The prize draw numbers located in the fields 320 and 340 of the player’s ticket 300 are randomly generated by the game computer and printed on the tickets. These numbers are then used by the game computer to randomly select the winner. In yet another embodiment, mobile phone numbers of players playing the game are stored in the game computer and then used by the prize draw number generator to randomly select a winner based on a randomly selected mobile phone number.

Alternatively or additionally, the prize may be awarded based on the player’s answer on the multiple-choice question placed, physically or electronically, on the cover of the player’s book of tickets. In yet another embodiment, two or more candidate winners or their partners may be offered to answer additional questions asked by the game computer, Organizer, judges, or general public. In another embodiment, the game computer, Organizer, judges, or general public may ask candidate winners or their partners to answer additional questions, make jokes, or practice entertaining performances.

Depending on a type of the gaming environment, the winner and the winner’s prize partner may be announced and, consequently, invited to participate in prize selection and distribution events taking place in a physical domain or, using the respective means of communication, in a virtual domain, or both.

At step 160, the prize or, alternatively, a choice to choose from several prizes is announced and offered to the winner, and the winner chooses the prize. Generally, prizes may include various goods, cars, pre-paid vacations for two, and the like, or cash values thereof. In alternate embodiments, depending on a composition of the players’ populace, the prizes may also be offered in a form of other incentive elements, such as business or investment opportunities, job offers, scholarships, participation in or tickets to particular events, lottery tickets, and the like.

At step 165, the winner of the prize chooses a prize partner from his/her partners in the game. The winner and the prize partner decide if they are going to share the prize or its cash equivalent and, alternatively, if they are going to go on from this point in the game together or go their separate ways.

At step 170, the prize winner and the prize partner participate in a prize distribution event. To qualify for the prize, a partner may be required to be present, physically or via the means of communications, at the prize distribution event.

If the winner has two or more partners, the prize partner that shares the prize with the winner may be chosen by the winner, game computer, Organizer, judges, or general public.

A winner having no partner or a winner whose partner is absent at the prize distribution event is disqualified. In such situations, the method 100 returns to step 160 (shown in phantom, using a link 181) to determine another winner.

During the game, portions of the game may be displayed on a display available for viewing by the players or
In some embodiments, the caller is offered a fee schedule based on a number of tickets included in his/her book of tickets.

At step 560, the personalized player’s Passport book of tickets complete with First Impressions sections are forwarded to the caller electronically, by mail, or both, and the caller is registered as a player in the respective game event.

At step 560, to assure fiscal legitimacy of the game, the producer’s office deposits in an escrow account an amount equal to or exceeding a cash value of the prize(s) intended for distribution during the game. This is also available as a cash alternative for the winner and the prize partner in case they prefer to take the cash instead of the prize.

FIGS. 6A and 6B depict methods 600A and 600B, respectively, of developing televised versions of gaming environments for playing the game of FIG. 1 in accordance with one embodiment of the present disclosure.

The methods 600A and 600B start at step 610 where an opening sequence is presented to viewers of the respective television program, for example, a program entitled “Knights and Maidens”. In particular, the opening sequence may include video clips depicting portions of steps 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, 160, 170, 180 and others not included here of the method 100 or portions of steps 510, 530, 540, 550, 560, or 570 of the method 500, as well as video clips depicting random scenes recorded during preceding “Knights and Maidens” gaming events.

At step 620, a venue tour sequence depicting players and/or spectators assembling for the game, and the playing grounds (for example, a half stage, a theater, and the like) are shown.

At step 630, broadcasted video clips include images of some on-site or remote players, spectators, or viewers being interviewed on game-related subjects, such as their motivation, interest in opportunities of winning a particular prize or networking with particular individuals, and the like.

At step 640, video clips include recordings of the Organizer and judges being introduced to the players, spectators, or viewers, and scenes of announcing rules of the game and prizes. The video clips also include recordings of scenes of the game played in live, virtual, or live virtual gaming environments.

In the method 600A, referring to box 642, the game is played at a public gathering. Here all players can directly communicate with one another (for example, at a stage or hall). Therefore, such a game may be played by on-site players only.

In the method 600B, referring to box 644, the game is played at a public gathering where some players can communicate with one another both directly and indirectly, while other players can communicate with one another only indirectly (for example, at a stadium, theater, or online). Such a game may be played by both on-site and remote players or remote players only.

In exemplary embodiments, portions of the methods 100, 500, or 600A-600B may be implemented in hardware, software, firmware, or any combination thereof in a form of a computer program product comprising computer-executable instructions. When implemented in software, the computer program product may be stored on or transmitted using a computer-readable medium adapted for storing the computer-executable instructions, as well as transferring the computer program product from one computer to another.
The term "computer storage medium" refers herein to any medium adapted for storing the instructions that cause the computer to execute the method. By way of example, and not limitation, the computer storage medium may comprise solid-state memory devices, including electronic memory devices (e.g., RAM, ROM, EEPROM, and the like), optical memory devices (e.g., compact discs (CD), digital versatile discs (DVD), and the like), or magnetic memory devices (e.g., hard drives, flash drives, tape drives, and the like), or other memory devices adapted to store the computer program product, or a combination of such memory devices.

The term "computer communication medium" refers herein to any physical interface adapted to transmit the computer program product from one place to another using for example, a modulated carrier wave, an optical signal, a DC or AC current, and the like means. By way of example, and not limitation, the computer communication medium may comprise twisted wire pairs, printed or flat cables, coaxial cables, fiber-optic cables, digital subscriber lines (DSL), or other wired, wireless, or optical serial or parallel interfaces, or a combination thereof.

FIG. 7 depicts a high-level block diagram of an exemplary system 700 adapted for performing portions of the methods of FIGS. 1, 5, and 6A-6B in accordance with one embodiment of the present disclosure.

In the depicted embodiment, the system 700 illustratively comprises a game computer 710, a display 720, one or more communication devices 750 available to the Organizer or judges, a printer 760 for printing the player's Passports and tickets, and, collectively, pluralities 730 and 740 of player's mobile and wired communication devices, respectively.

The display 720 is operated by the game computer 710 and, during the game, displays scenes of the gaming environment corresponding to respective method steps of the methods of FIGS. 1, 5, and 6A-6B. The players' mobile and wired devices 730 and 740 are coupled to the game computer 710 via bi-directional communication links 732 and 742 provided by the producer of the game. Alternatively or additionally, on-site and remote players can also communicate to the Organizer or judges via communication bi-directional links 734 and 744. The printer 760 is coupled to the game computer 710 and adapted for printing the player's Passports and tickets, incorporating the First Impressions sections, using player's information stored in the game computer 710 or, alternatively, a database 770 (shown in phantom) of the producer's office, as discussed above in reference to FIG. 5.

Thus, the present disclosure provides techniques for playing a game of chance providing networking opportunities for large groups of players by facilitating contacts and interactions between the players. The techniques create and use a gaming environment to promote social or business networking between players of the game of chance in a form of participation in the game of chance that requires a winner to share his/her prize with a prize partner selected from the players playing the game. The need for a player to have a partner or be a partner of another player to qualify for the prize develops an incentive element for networking (i.e., communications) among the players in a context of a common goal of winning the prize. During the game, in the pursuit of such a common goal, the players are encouraged to approach one another, introduce themselves, start conversations, and/or reach agreements.

The techniques described herein motivate the players to get together and establish mutually beneficial alliances based on a plurality of personal or business-related interests, including professional or career consideration, personal attraction and dating situations, and a desire to develop a particular form of a personal or professional relationship, among other reasons. Joint participation in the game creates an environment of incentivized networking where the players are offered multiple opportunities for searching, selecting, and interacting with individuals of interest in a context of an invitation to become their partners. These techniques allow players to mix up and mingle with other players in a search for individuals of his/her particular interest as prospective partners. The mutual need in a partner to qualify for a prize encourages the players to communicate with one another and transforms a burden of approaching a stranger and striking a conversation into a naturally entertaining element of incentivized networking.

The previous description of the disclosure is provided to enable any person skilled in the art to make or use the disclosure. Various modifications to the disclosure will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, and the generic principles defined herein may be applied to other variations without departing from the spirit or scope of the disclosure. Thus, the disclosure is not intended to be limited to the examples described herein but is to be accorded the widest scope consistent with the principles and novel features disclosed herein.

1. A method of playing via a processing system a game of chance providing networking opportunities for players playing the game, the method comprising:
   - creating via the processing system a gaming environment allowing the players playing the game to compete with one another for a chance to win a prize;
   - requiring each player playing the game to partner up via the processing system with at least one partner from among the players playing the game as a condition for each player to become an eligible winner of the game to win the prize;
   - selecting via the processing system a prize winner from among the players playing the game that have partnered up with the at least one partner; and
   - requiring the selected prize winner to share a prize won by the selected prize winner with the at least one partner of the selected prize winner as a condition for the selected prize winner to receive the prize, thereby offering each player playing the game a chance to receive a share of the prize won either as a player selected as the prize winner or as the at least one partner of the prize winner.

2. A method according to claim 1: further comprising:
   - playing the game via the processing system at a public gathering, online, or a combination thereof.

3. A method according to claim 1: further comprising:
   - allowing via the processing system a player playing the game, an organizer of the game, at least one judge appointed by the organizer, or a matchmaking computer program to choose the at least one partner for each participant.

4. A method according to claim 1: further comprising:
   - requesting, via the processing system, each player to provide player-identifying information to the at least one partner; and
   - requesting, via the processing system, each player to accept one or more invitations to become the at least one partner.
5. A computer program product including a non-transitory computer readable medium having instructions for causing a computer for playing a game of chance providing networking opportunities for players playing the game to execute a method, comprising:

creating a gaming environment allowing the players playing the game to compete with one another for a chance to win a prize;
requiring each player playing the game to partner up with at least one partner from among the players playing the game as a condition for each player to become an eligible winner of the game to win the prize;
selecting a prize winner from among the players playing the game that have partnered up with the at least one partner; and
requiring the selected prize winner to share a prize won by the selected prize winner with the at least one partner as a condition for the selected prize winner to receive the prize, thereby offering each player playing the game a chance to receive a share of the prize won either as a player selected as the prize winner or as the at least one partner of the prize winner.

6. A computer program product according to claim 5; wherein the non-transitory computer readable medium has instructions for further causing the computer to execute the method comprising: facilitating access to means for playing the game at a public gathering, online, or a combination thereof.

7. A computer program product according to claim 5; wherein the non-transitory computer readable medium has instructions for further causing the computer to execute the method comprising:

allowing one or more of the players playing the game, an organizer of the game, at least one judge appointed by the organizer, or a matchmaking computer program to choose the corresponding at least one partner for each player playing the game; and
requesting each player playing the game to provide player-identifying information to the corresponding at least one partner.

8. A system for playing a game of chance providing networking opportunities for players playing the game, the system comprising:

a game computer adapted to administer execution of rules of the game played, the rules including (i) requiring the creation of a gaming environment allowing the players playing the game to compete with one another for a chance to win a prize, (ii) requiring each player playing the game to partner up with at least one partner from among the players playing the game as a condition for each player to become an eligible winner of the game to win the prize, (iii) selecting a prize winner from among the players playing the game that have partnered up with the at least one partner, (v) and requiring the selected prize winner to share a prize won by the selected prize winner with the at least one partner of the selected prize winner as a condition for the selected prize winner to receive the prize, thereby offering each player playing the game a chance to receive a share of the prize won either as a player selected as the prize winner or as the at least one partner of the prize winner; and a display operable by the game computer and adapted for displaying portions of the game.

9. A system according to claim 8; wherein the game computer is further adapted to execute the rules that include:

the at least one partner is chosen by a player playing the game, an organizer of the game, at least one judge appointed by the organizer, or a matchmaking computer program; and
each of the players is requested to provide portions of game-related data to the at least one partner.

10. A system according to claim 8; further comprising means for providing the players with a player’s ID and a player’s book of tickets including invitations for other players to become the at least one partner.

11. A method of playing via a processing system a game of chance providing networking opportunities for participants of the game, the method comprising:

creating via the processing system a gaming environment that allows each game participant an opportunity to participate in the game both as an active player that actively participates in the game and as a partner of at least one of the other active players, wherein during participation as a partner the participant does not actively participate in the game;
requiring each active player of the game to partner up via the processing system with at least one partner selected from among the other participants of the game;
selecting via the processing system a prize winner from among the active players of the game that have partnered up with the at least one partner; and
requiring the selected prize winner to share a prize won by the selected prize winner with the at least one partner of the selected prize winner as a condition for the selected prize winner to receive the prize.

12. A method according to claim 11; further comprising: playing the game via the processing system at a public gathering, online, or a combination thereof.

13. A method according to claim 11; further comprising: allowing via the processing system the active player of the game, an organizer of the game, at least one judge appointed by the organizer, or a matchmaking computer program to choose the at least one partner for each active player.

14. A method according to claim 11; further comprising: requesting, via the processing system, each active player to provide player-identifying information to the at least one partner; and requesting, via the processing system, each active player to accept one or more invitations to become the at least one partner.

15. A computer program product including a non-transitory computer readable medium having instructions for causing a computer for playing a game of chance providing networking opportunities for participants of the game to execute a method, comprising:

creating via the processing system a gaming environment that allows each game participant an opportunity to participate in the game both as an active player that actively participates in the game and as a partner of at least one of the other active players, wherein during participation as a partner the participant does not actively participate in the game;
requiring each active player of the game to partner up via the processing system with at least one partner selected from among the other participants of the game;
selecting via the processing system a prize winner from among the active players of the game that have partnered up with the at least one partner; and
requiring the selected prize winner to share a prize won by the selected prize winner with the at least one partner of the selected prize winner as a condition for the selected prize winner to receive the prize.

16. A computer program product according to claim 15; wherein the non-transitory computer readable medium has instructions for further causing the computer to execute the method comprising: facilitating access to means for playing the game at a public gathering, online, or a combination thereof.

17. A computer program product according to claim 15; wherein the non-transitory computer readable medium has instructions for further causing the computer to execute the method comprising:
allowing one or more of the active players of the game, an organizer of the game, at least one judge appointed by the organizer, or a matchmaking computer program to choose the corresponding at least one partner for each active player of the game; and
requesting each active player of the game to provide player-identifying information to the corresponding at least one partner.

18. A system for playing a game of chance providing networking opportunities for participants of the game, the system comprising:

a game computer adapted to administer execution of rules of the game played, the rules including (i) creating via the processing system a gaming environment that allows each game participant an opportunity to participate in the game both as an active player that actively participates in the game and as a partner of at least one of the other active players, wherein during participation as a partner the participant does not actively participate in the game, (ii) requiring each active player of the game to partner up via the processing system with at least one partner selected from among the other participants of the game, (iii) selecting via the processing system a prize winner from among the active players of the game that have partnered up with the at least one partner, and (iv) requiring the selected prize winner to share a prize won by the selected prize winner with the at least one partner of the selected prize winner as a condition for the selected prize winner to receive the prize; and
a display operable by the game computer and adapted for displaying portions of the game.

19. A system according to claim 18; wherein the game computer is further adapted to execute the rules that include: the at least one partner is chosen by an active player of the game, an organizer of the game, at least one judge appointed by the organizer, or a matchmaking computer program; and
each of the active players is requested to provide portions of game-related data to the at least one partner.

20. A system according to claim 18; further comprising means for providing the active players with a player’s ID and a player’s book of tickets including invitations for other participants of the game to become the at least one partner.

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