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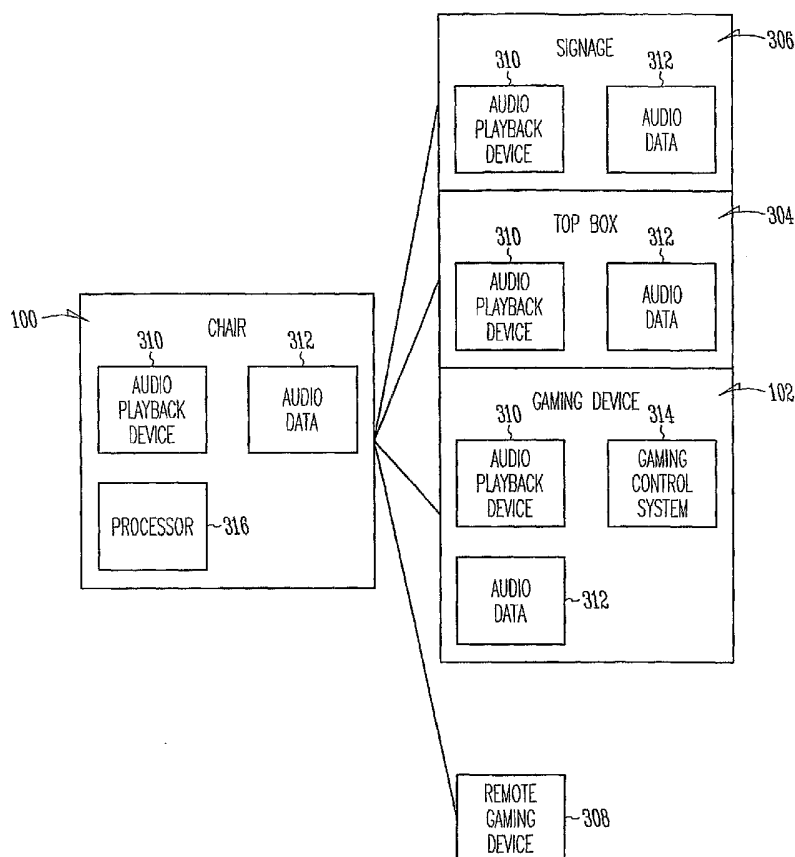
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(54) Title: GAMING DEVICE WITH ATTACHED AUDIO-CAPABLE CHAIR



(57) Abstract: A gaming system includes a chair communicably coupled to a gaming device. The chair includes an audio playback device operable to receive audio playback commands. The audio playback commands may be received from a gaming device physically attached to the chair, a remote gaming device, or from a network interface communicably coupling the chair to a gaming establishment audio system, a player tracking system, or other gaming establishment system. Additionally, the chair may include an audio data storage device. Audio data from the storage device may be played through speakers on the chair, audio output devices on a gaming device, or audio output devices on a peripheral attached to the gaming device such as a top box or signage peripheral.



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GAMING DEVICE WITH ATTACHED AUDIO-CAPABLE CHAIR

Cross-reference to Related Applications

5 This application is related to United States Provisional Patent Application serial no. 60/575,604, entitled "SPEAKER SYSTEM FOR A GAMING MACHINE" (Attorney Docket 1842.066PRV) and is also related to United States Provisional Patent Application serial no. 60/575,605, entitled "CHAIR INTERCONNECTION FOR A GAMING MACHINE" (Attorney Docket
10 1842.067PRV), both filed on May 28, 2004.

Field

 The invention relates generally to gaming devices, and more specifically to gaming devices with attached audio capable chairs.

Background

15 A wide variety of gaming devices are now available to game players and to gaming establishment operators in computerized form, from slot machines to games that are traditionally played live such as poker and blackjack. Computerized video game systems must provide sufficient feedback to the game player to make the game fun to play, and they must provide a gaming experience
20 that is at least as attractive as the older mechanical gaming machine experience to the gamer, to ensure success in a competitive gaming market.

 Many computer elements have been employed in gaming systems, from computerized animation to playing prerecorded sounds through a gaming system's speakers. For example, these sounds are loaded within the
25 computerized gaming machine and played through speakers to supplement and enhance the wagering game experience. However, past gaming systems have typically been limited those having speakers and audio content provided on the gaming device itself. As a result, there is a need to increase the player's gaming experience by providing increased audio capabilities for gaming machines.

Summary

The above-mentioned shortcomings, disadvantages and problems are addressed by the present invention, which will be understood by reading and studying the following specification.

5 In one aspect a gaming system includes a chair communicably coupled to a gaming device. The chair includes an audio playback device operable to receive audio playback commands. The audio playback commands may be received from a gaming device physically attached to the chair, a remote gaming device, or from a network interface communicably coupling the chair to a
10 gaming establishment audio system, a player tracking system, or other gaming establishment system.

 In a further aspect of the gaming system, the chair includes an audio data storage device. Audio data from the storage device may be played through speakers on the chair, audio output devices on a gaming device, or audio output
15 devices on a peripheral attached to the gaming device such as a top box or signage peripheral.

 The inventive subject matter includes systems and methods of varying scope. In addition to the aspects and advantages of the present invention described in this summary, further aspects and advantages of the embodiments of
20 the invention will become apparent by reference to the drawings and by reading the detailed description that follows.

Brief Description of the Drawings

 Figure 1 shows the general environment for a gaming system according to one embodiment.

25 Figure 2 shows a schematic representation of components of an audio subsystem, in accordance with one embodiment.

 Figure 3 is a block diagram of components included in a gaming system according to embodiments of the invention.

Figure 4 is a block diagram of components included in a networked gaming system according to embodiments of the invention.

Figure 5 is a flowchart illustrating a method for operating a gaming system in accordance with embodiments of the invention.

5

Detailed Description

In the following detailed description of exemplary embodiments of the invention, reference is made to the accompanying drawings which form a part hereof, and in which is shown by way of illustration specific exemplary embodiments in which the invention may be practiced. These embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention, and it is to be understood that other embodiments may be utilized and that logical, mechanical, electrical and other changes may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention.

Some portions of the detailed descriptions which follow are presented in terms of algorithms and symbolic representations of operations on data bits within a computer memory. These algorithmic descriptions and representations are the ways used by those skilled in the data processing arts to most effectively convey the substance of their work to others skilled in the art. An algorithm is here, and generally, conceived to be a self-consistent sequence of steps leading to a desired result. The steps are those requiring physical manipulations of physical quantities. Usually, though not necessarily, these quantities take the form of electrical or magnetic signals capable of being stored, transferred, combined, compared, and otherwise manipulated. It has proven convenient at times, principally for reasons of common usage, to refer to these signals as bits, values, elements, symbols, characters, terms, numbers, or the like. It should be borne in mind, however, that all of these and similar terms are to be associated with the appropriate physical quantities and are merely convenient labels applied to these quantities. Unless specifically stated otherwise as apparent from the following discussions, terms such as “processing” or “computing” or “calculating” or

“determining” or “displaying” or the like, refer to the action and processes of a computer system, or similar computing device, that manipulates and transforms data represented as physical (e.g., electronic) quantities within the computer system’s registers and memories into other data similarly represented as physical quantities within the computer system memories or registers or other such information storage, transmission or display devices.

In the Figures, the same reference number is used throughout to refer to an identical component which appears in multiple Figures. Signals and connections may be referred to by the same reference number or label, and the actual meaning will be clear from its use in the context of the description.

The description of the various embodiments is to be construed as exemplary only and does not describe every possible instance of the invention. Numerous alternatives could be implemented, using combinations of current or future technologies, which would still fall within the scope of the claims. The present invention is directed to a audio-capable chair for use with a gaming device.

The following detailed description is, therefore, not to be taken in a limiting sense, and the scope of the present invention is defined only by the appended claims.

Figure 1 shows the general environment for a gaming system incorporating embodiments of the invention. In this example, the system includes chair 100 capable of being electrically and mechanically coupled to a gaming device 102. In some embodiments, gaming device 102 is operable to conduct a wagering game. These wagering games may include reel based games such as video or mechanical slot machine games, card based games such as video poker, video dice games (e.g. a Yahtzee® like dice game) or other types of wagering games typical in the gaming industry. If based in video, the gaming device 102 includes a video display such as a cathode ray tube (CRT), liquid crystal display (LCD), plasma, or other type of video display known in the art. In

some embodiments, a touch screen overlies the display. In the some
embodiments, the gaming device 102 is an "upright" version in which the display
is oriented vertically relative to a player. Alternatively, the gaming device may
be a "slant-top" version in which the display is slanted at about a thirty-degree
5 angle toward the player. In further embodiments, the gaming device may be a
table-top gaming device in which the display is substantially horizontal. In some
embodiments, chair 100 is coupled to the gaming machine via a sled or base 104.

The system further includes a speaker package 110 incorporated into
chair 100 and coupled via an electrical connection to gaming device 102.
10 Gaming device 102 includes hardware and software control systems and
produces sound signals which are delivered to speaker package 110. Speaker
package 110 provides sound effects, game noises, and other audio effects from
gaming device 102. In one example, an electrical connection 112 runs through
base 104 from machine 102 to speaker package 110 in the chair.

15 Chair 100 generally includes a back 120 and a seat 125. The chair may
be swivel mounted to a seat post 130. Seat post 130 is at least partially hollow to
allow connection 112 to run through the post. An access panel 135 can be
provided in the seat post 130 to allow access to connection 112 to allow a user to
connect wires running from speaker package 110 to a circuit board connection in
20 base 104. Base 104 is removably connectable to gaming device 102, both
mechanically and electrically. This allows for easier installation and
maintenance than a permanent connection.

Figure 2 shows a schematic representation of components of an audio
subsystem 200, in accordance with one embodiment. For example, audio data
25 resides on CompactFlash media used for holding the game code and inserted into
a receptacle for the media located on a circuit board 202. The game software
running on circuit board 202 is responsible for determining when to play certain
sounds and for the mixing of the sounds. The mixed digital audio is then output
via a USB port 204 located on the circuit board. The audio data transmitted over

the USB bus consists of four discrete audio channels (2 stereo channels). A USB streaming audio circuit board 206 receives the audio data and splits it into two separate stereo outputs (the outputs can be line level or digital (S/PDIF). These outputs are routed to two audio amplifier modules 208 and 210, – one
5 amplifier is for front speakers 212 (speakers located in machine 102) and amplifier 210 is for rear speakers 214 (speakers located in chair 100).

The amplified audio to chair 100 is taken from two separate connectors – one connector provides for the audio for the left and right speakers and one provides the audio for a subwoofer, for example. These outputs are bundled in a
10 cable 220 along with SPN serial communications and power. The serial communications and power are provided to the chair for components such as a display 222. Display can be a lit sign, a video display, or other component that could be located on the back of the chair. These connections go to a connector 230 fixed to the cabinet of game device 102 which mates with a connector 232
15 on base 104 of the chair. The corresponding connector 232 on base 104 includes a short wire harness connected to the connector that plugs into a connector on a circuit board 240 that runs almost the entire length of the chair base 104, ending below the chair post.

Figure 3 is a block diagram of components included in a gaming system
20 according to embodiments of the invention. In some embodiments, the system includes chair 100 and a gaming device 102. In alternative embodiments, the system may include remote gaming device 308.

Chair 100 may include audio playback device 310. In one embodiment, audio playback device 310 comprises a sound card device capable of receiving
25 audio signals (either analog or digital) and playback commands, and further capable of providing output to speakers 214. In alternative embodiments, audio playback device 310 may be a CD player, a DVD player or an MPEG player.

In alternative embodiments, chair 100 includes audio data storage device 312. Audio data storage 312 may be included instead of or in addition to audio

playback device 310. Audio data storage 312 is capable of storing data in compressed or uncompressed format, and may store digital or analog audio data.

In varying embodiments audio data storage 312 may comprise RAM, ROM, EPROM, flash memory, compact flash memory, hard drive, CD ROM, DVD
5 ROM, tape storage, or any other storage media capable of storing digital or analog audio data.

In further alternative embodiments, chair 100 may include a processor 316. Processor 316 may be part of a control system capable of controlling the operation of audio playback device 310 and/or audio data storage 312.

10 Gaming device 102 includes a gaming control system 314 that controls the operation of gaming device 102. For example, gaming control system 314 typically has hardware and software to manage game play, receive input from buttons, coin acceptors, bill acceptors, ticket readers, and provide output to displays or reels included in gaming device 102. In some embodiments, game
15 control system 314 may be incorporated on circuit board 202 (Figure 2).

In some embodiments, gaming device 102 includes a top box 304. Top box 304 may contain a video display, a mechanical display, or a diorama display that supplements a primary display for gaming device 102. For example, the display in top box 304 may be a wheel such as a rotating wheel, mechanical dice,
20 a board for a board game, or other such display.

In some embodiments, gaming device 102 may include signage 306. Signage 306 may be a display device capable of displaying advertising, gaming information (e.g. type of game, denomination of game etc.) or other information to a player or potential player.

25 Gaming device 102, top box 304 and/or signage 306 may include an audio playback device 310. Like chair 100, the audio playback device on gaming machine 102, top box 304 and/or signage 306 may be a sound card device capable of receiving audio signals (either analog or digital) and playback commands, and further capable of providing audio output. In alternative

embodiments, audio playback device 310 may be a CD player, a DVD player or an MPEG player.

Also, gaming device 102, top box 304 and/or signage 306 may include audio data storage. Again like chair 100, audio data storage 312 on gaming machine 102, top box 304 and/or signage 306 may be any storage mechanism
5 capable of storing data in compressed or uncompressed format, and may store digital or analog audio data. In varying embodiments audio data storage 312 may comprise RAM, ROM, EPROM, flash memory, compact flash memory, hard drive, CD ROM, DVD ROM, tape storage, or any other storage media
10 capable of storing digital or analog audio data.

In some embodiments chair 100 is physically coupled to a gaming device 102. Chair 100 may be removably or fixedly coupled to gaming device 102. In alternative embodiments, chair 100 may be communicably coupled to a remote gaming device 308. In such embodiments, the coupling to remote gaming device
15 308 is electrical, however the chair 100 is not physically attached to remote gaming device 308. Remote gaming device 308 may have the same components as gaming device 102.

Figure 4 is a diagram of components included in a networked gaming system according to embodiments of the invention. In some embodiments, the networked gaming system may include gaming establishment audio system 402,
20 player tracking system 404, or other gaming establishment system and gaming device 102 coupled to network 408. Additionally, in some embodiments, chair 100 may be communicably coupled to network 408.

Gaming establishment audio system 402 comprises an audio system that
25 can distribute audio data and/or signals to various points in a gaming establishment such as a casino.

Player tracking system 404 is operable to provide player tracking services and maintain player tracking data. For example, player tracking system 404 may

be used to store and analyze information about player activity on a machine and which machines a player uses.

Other gaming establishment systems 406 may be used in the operation of gaming establishment, such systems may be used to provide audio output.

5 Network 408 may be a local area network, a wide area network, a corporate intranet, or a special purpose network (e.g. an audio network for gaming establishment audio system 402). The invention is not limited to any particular type of network. Network 408 may be a TCP/IP based network, or network 408 may use other protocols known in the art.

10 In some embodiments, gaming device 102 may be attached to network 408. In these embodiments, gaming device 102 will include a network interface 410 coupled to gaming control system 314. Similarly, in some embodiments chair 100 may also be communicably coupled to network 408. In these embodiments chair 100 may include a network interface 410 communicably
15 coupled to a processor 316 on chair 100.

A remote gaming device 308 may also be communicably coupled to network 408.

It should be noted that the gaming systems illustrated in Figures 3 and 4 are intended to illustrate some of the various components that may be included in
20 varying embodiments of the invention. No embodiment of the invention need have all of the components described and illustrated in Figures 3 and 4.

The operation of various embodiments of the invention that use the components described above with reference to Figures 1-4 will now be described.

25 In some embodiments, audio playback device 310 on chair 100 may receive audio output (i.e. sound output) and playback commands from a gaming device physically attached to chair 100. In alternative embodiments, audio playback device 310 on chair 100 may receive audio output and playback commands from a remote gaming device 308. In further alternative

embodiments, audio playback device 310 on chair 100 may receive audio output and playback commands through network 408. Such audio output may be provided by gaming establishment audio system 402, player tracking system 404 or other gaming establishment system 406. In still further alternative
5 embodiments, audio playback device 310 on chair 100 may receive audio output from a peripheral device on gaming device 102 such as top box 304 or signage 306. The audio output may be played on speakers attached to chair 100.

 In embodiments where chair 100 includes audio data storage 312, audio data may be sent for playback on speakers located anywhere on chair 100. In
10 alternative embodiments, the audio data may be sent for playback from chair 100 to a gaming device 102 physically attached to chair 100. In further alternative embodiments, audio data may be sent from chair 100 to a remote gaming device 308. In still further alternative embodiments, audio data may be sent for playback from chair 100 to a peripheral device that is part of the cabinet of
15 gaming device 102 such as a top box 304 or signage 306. In yet further embodiments, audio data may be sent from chair 100 via a network interface 410 communicably coupled to a network 408 to a gaming establishment audio system 402, player tracking system 404 or other gaming establishment system 406.

 In some embodiments, gaming device 102 loads audio data from an audio
20 storage device 312 on chair 100 into memory such as RAM maintained by a processor on gaming control system 314. The audio data may then be played back through any one or more of:

- speakers located on anywhere in chair 100
- Through gaming device 102 that is physically attached to chair 100
- 25 • Through any remote device such as another gaming device 308
- Through a peripheral device that is a part of the cabinet of gaming device 102 a remote peripheral device.
- Any network connection such as local area, wide area, player tracking system, or gaming establishment sound system

30

In some embodiments, chair 100 receives audio playback and plays audio content that is stored on an audio storage or playback device such as a CD, DVD, mpeg player, or any similar device on an attached peripheral device such as a top box 304 or signage 306. For example, a CD or DVD player may be located in a peripheral device that routes audio either directly to chair 100 or via the game cabinet wiring connections to chair 100 for playback through the chair. This audio playback may be in accompaniment of other audio that is played back via the gaming device 102 or it may be played independently of audio that is controlled by the gaming device 102.

Figure 5 is a flow diagram illustrating a method 500 for operating a gaming system in accordance with embodiments of the invention. The method begins by storing audio data on an audio storage device for a chair such as chair 100 (block 502).

Next, the gaming system receives a selection from a game player of a sound or group of sounds from the audio data (block 504). The selection may be through a user interface provided on the gaming device 102 or chair 100. For example, buttons, pointer devices, keyboards, or other input devices may be used to make the selection.

Then, upon the occurrence of a predetermined event or at a predetermined time during game play, the selected sound or group of sounds may be played (block 506). In varying embodiments these events include various combinations of one or more of: awarding a credit, entering a bonus round, winning a jackpot, accepting money (change or bills), accepting tokens, or accepting a ticket. The invention is not limited to any particular event.

Systems and methods for providing an audio-capable chair for use with a gaming device have been disclosed. Although specific embodiments have been illustrated and described herein, it will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art that any arrangement which is calculated to achieve the same purpose

may be substituted for the specific embodiments shown. This application is intended to cover any adaptations or variations of the present invention.

The terminology used in this application is meant to include all of these environments. It is to be understood that the above description is intended to be
5 illustrative, and not restrictive. Many other embodiments will be apparent to those of skill in the art upon reviewing the above description. Therefore, it is manifestly intended that this invention be limited only by the following claims and equivalents thereof.

What is claimed is:

1. A gaming system comprising:
a gaming device; and
5 a chair communicably coupled to the gaming device, the chair including an audio playback device operable to receive audio playback commands.
2. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein the audio playback device comprises a sound card.
- 10 3. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein the chair is removably coupled to the gaming device.
4. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein the gaming device is a remote
15 gaming device.
5. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein the chair further includes a network interface operable to receive audio data from a network.
- 20 6. The gaming system of claim 5, wherein the network is a local area network.
7. The gaming system of claim 5, further comprising a gaming
establishment audio system communicably coupled to the network and wherein
25 the audio playback device receives the audio data from the gaming establishment audio system.

8. The gaming system of claim 5, further comprising a player tracking system communicably coupled to the network and wherein the audio playback device receives the audio data from the player tracking system.

5 9. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein the gaming device includes a peripheral component and further wherein the audio playback device receives audio data from the peripheral component.

10 10. The gaming system of claim 9, wherein the peripheral component comprises a set-top box.

11. The gaming system of claim 9, wherein the peripheral component comprises a signage component.

15 12. The gaming system of claim 9, wherein the peripheral component comprises a remote peripheral component.

20 13. The gaming system of claim 1, wherein the chair further includes at least one processor.

25 14. A gaming system comprising:
a gaming device; and
a chair communicably coupled to the gaming device, the chair including an audio storage device operable to store audio data for playback through an audio output component.

15. The gaming system of claim 14, wherein the audio output component comprises a set of one or more speakers electrically coupled to the chair.

16. The gaming system of claim 14, wherein the audio output component comprises a sound component of the gaming device.
17. The gaming system of claim 14, wherein the gaming device is a remote
5 gaming device.
18. The gaming system of claim 14, further comprising a peripheral device and wherein the audio output component is included in the peripheral device.
- 10 19. The gaming system of claim 18, wherein the peripheral device is coupled to a cabinet of the gaming device.
20. The gaming system of claim 19, wherein the peripheral device comprises a set-top box.
- 15 21. The gaming system of claim 19, wherein the peripheral device comprises a signage component.
22. The gaming system of claim 14, wherein the chair further includes a
20 network interface operable to send audio data from the audio storage device through the network to be processed by the audio output component.
23. The gaming system of claim 22, wherein the network is a local area network.
- 25 24. The gaming system of claim 22, further comprising a gaming establishment audio system communicably coupled to the network and wherein the audio output component is located on the gaming establishment audio system.

25. The gaming system of claim 22, further comprising a player tracking system communicably coupled to the network and wherein the audio output component is located on the player tracking system.

5

26. A gaming system comprising:

a gaming device having a processor and a memory coupled to the processor; and

a chair communicably coupled to the gaming device, the chair including
10 an audio storage device operable to store audio data;
wherein the audio data is read from the audio storage device and stored in the memory for playback through an audio output device.

27. The gaming system of claim 26, wherein the audio output component
15 comprises a set of one or more speakers electrically coupled to the chair.

28. The gaming system of claim 26, wherein the audio output component comprises a sound component of the gaming device.

20 29. The gaming system of claim 26, wherein the gaming device is a remote gaming device.

30. The gaming system of claim 26, further comprising a peripheral device and wherein the audio output component is included in the peripheral device.

25

31. The gaming system of claim 30, wherein the peripheral device is coupled to a cabinet of the gaming device.

32. The gaming system of claim 31, wherein the peripheral device comprises a set-top box.

33. The gaming system of claim 31, wherein the peripheral device comprises
5 a signage component.

34. The gaming system of claim 26, wherein the gaming device further includes a network interface operable to send audio data from the memory through the network to be processed by the audio output component.
10

35. The gaming system of claim 34, wherein the network is a local area network.

36. The gaming system of claim 34, further comprising a gaming
15 establishment audio system communicably coupled to the network and wherein the audio output component is located on the gaming establishment audio system.

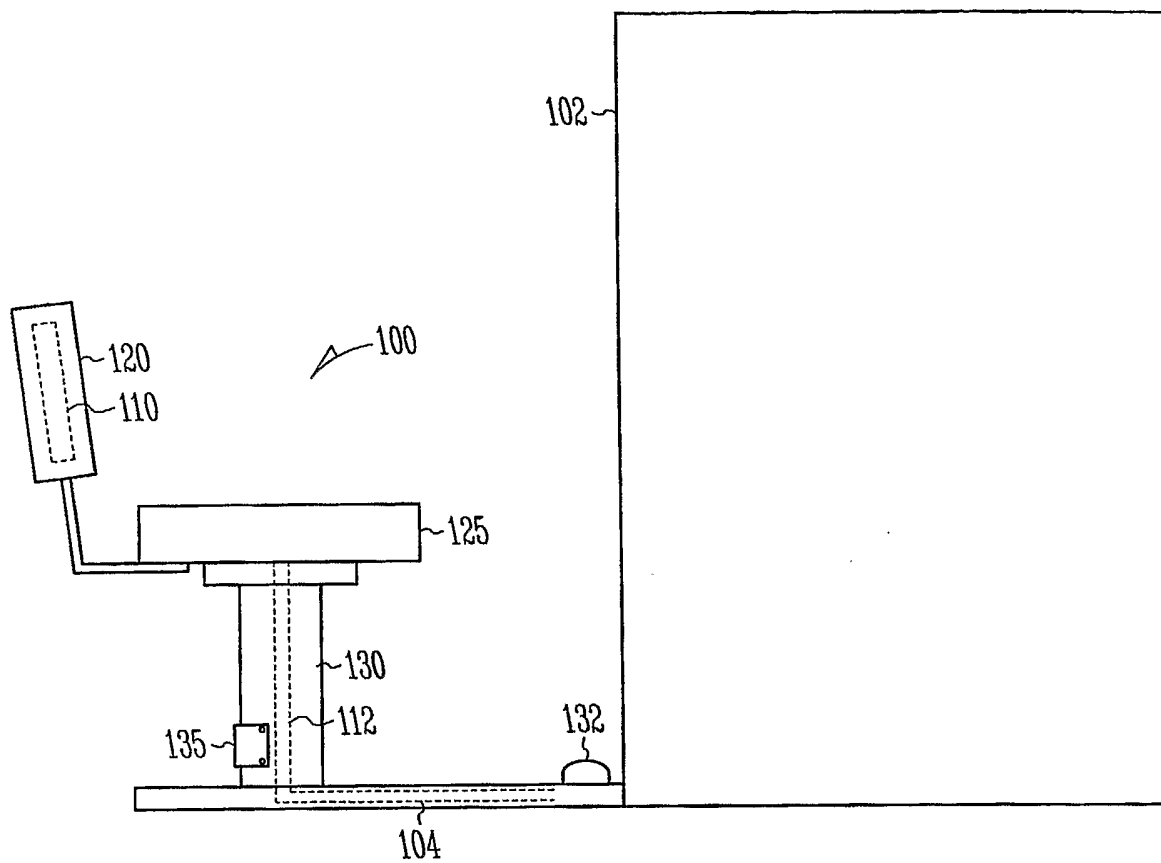
37. The gaming system of claim 34, further comprising a player tracking
20 system communicably coupled to the network and wherein the audio output component is located on the player tracking system.

38. A method for operating a gaming system comprising:
storing audio data for the gaming system on a storage device on a chair
for the gaming system, the audio data including one or more sounds;
receiving a selection of one or more sounds; and
5 playing the selected one or more sounds upon the occurrence of an event
on the gaming system.
39. The method of claim 38, wherein the event comprises an award of one or
more credits.
- 10 40. The method of claim 38, wherein the event comprises a bonus round.
41. The method of claim 38, wherein the event comprises a jackpot win.
- 15 42. The method of claim 38, wherein the event comprise an activation event.
43. The method of claim 38, wherein the event comprises producing a ticket.
44. The method of claim 38, wherein the selected one or more sounds
20 comprise a sound group.

45. A gaming system comprising:
a gaming device;
a chair coupled to the gaming device, the chair including an audio output device;
- 5 a peripheral component coupled to the gaming device; and
an audio playback device coupled to the peripheral;
wherein the audio output device plays audio content received from the audio playback device.
- 10 46. The gaming system of claim 45, wherein the peripheral component comprises a set-top box.
47. The gaming system of claim 45, wherein the peripheral component comprises a signage component.
- 15 48. The gaming system of claim 45, wherein the peripheral component comprises a remote peripheral component.
49. The gaming system of claim 45, wherein the audio playback device
- 20 comprises a compact disk player.
50. The gaming system of claim 45, wherein the audio playback device comprises a DVD player.
- 25 51. The gaming system of claim 45, wherein the audio playback device comprises an MPEG player.

52. The gaming system of claim 45, wherein the gaming device includes a gaming control system, and further wherein the gaming control system controls audio output to the audio output device.
- 5 53. The gaming system of claim 45, wherein the gaming device includes a gaming control system, and further wherein the audio output device plays audio from the audio playback device independently from the gaming control system.
54. A chair for use with a gaming device, the chair comprising:
10 a connector operable to communicably couple the chair to a gaming device; and
an audio playback device operable to receive audio playback commands through the connector.
- 15 55. The chair of claim 54, wherein the audio playback device comprises a sound card.
56. The chair of claim 54, further comprising an audio storage device operable to store audio data.

1/5

*Fig. 1*

200

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102

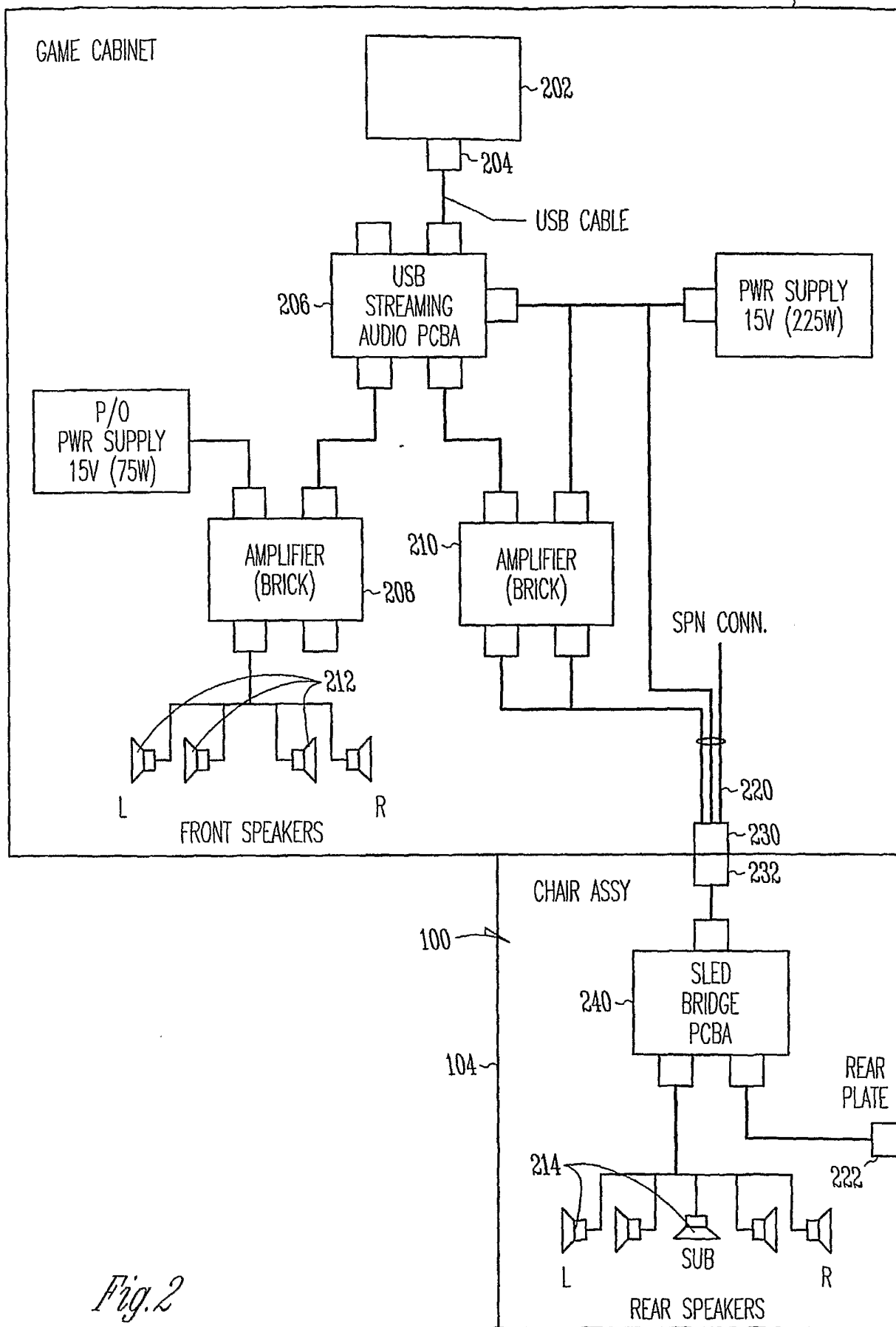
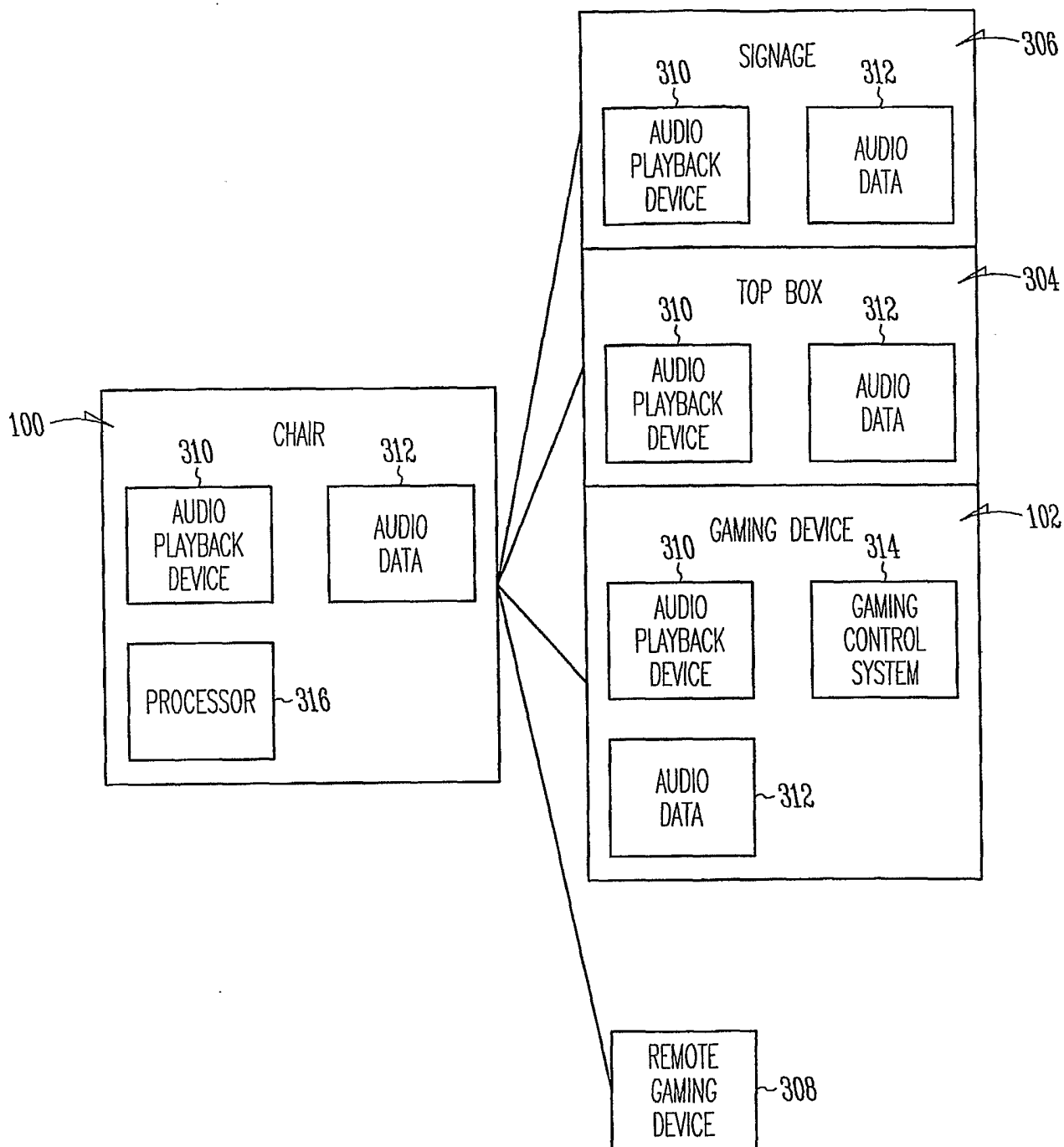
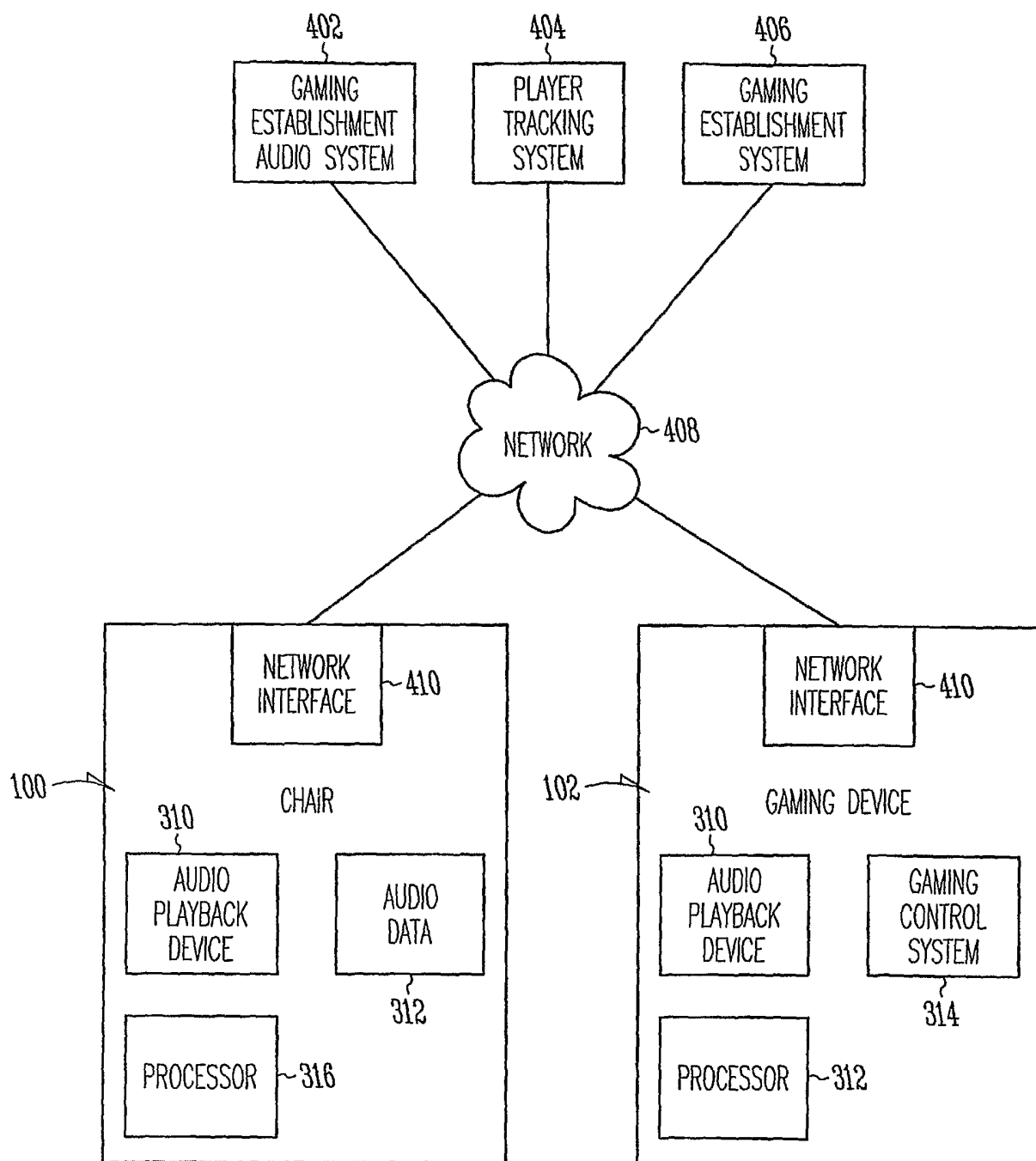


Fig. 2

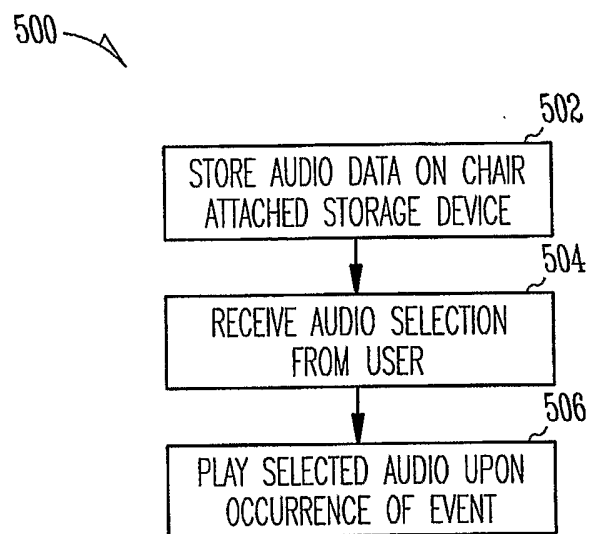
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*Fig. 3*

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*Fig. 4*

5/5

*Fig. 5*

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IPC(7) : A47B 97/00; A63F 13/02; A63F 13/08 US CL : 297/217.3; 463/47 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) U.S. : Please See Continuation Sheet Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) Please See Continuation Sheet		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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Continuation of B. FIELDS SEARCHED Item 1:

297/217.3, 172, 463.1, 67, 440.6; 463/47,36; 273/148B, 5/118, 12.1, 59.1; 296/69, 65.03, 65.01, 65.13, 65.15; 700/94; 381/94.5, 123, 74, 94

Continuation of B. FIELDS SEARCHED Item 3:

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