ELECTRONIC MAIL-BASED ADVENTURE GAME AND METHOD OF OPERATION

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ABSTRACT

An electronic adventure gaming system and methods of operation communicate with a player using a plurality of media forms. A character invites the player to participate in an adventure and appears to communicate personally with the player. A puzzle is presented by the character for the player to derive a solution of an alphanumeric answer key. A plurality of messages relate to the clues, and permit the character and the player to determine the clues and ultimately derive the alphanumeric answer key. An input means allows the player to provide the alphanumeric answer key to the server system and records the date and time of the server system receiving the alphanumeric answer key. The input means also associates the received alphanumeric answer key uniquely with the player's identity information to award the player in the event that the player inputs the alphanumeric answer key by a predetermined time.
We are glad you've decided to join us. Solve the puzzle and you could become a millionaire! Listen to what other people have said about their adventure, then come back and sign up before it's too late!

Watch:

Helen Beaumont explains her story and what she needs from you to help her recover the money.

Watch:

You've been invited to play our new game! Click here to check out your invitation.
The "Stranger Adventures" Contest ("SA") is intended for participation only in the United States and shall be construed according to, and governed exclusively by, United States law. If you are not a legal resident of the United States physically located in the United States at the time of entry, or if you do not fall within the eligibility requirements set forth in the Official Rules below, you can participate in SA for fun, but you will not be eligible to win any prizes.

The "Stranger Adventures" Contest

OFFICIAL RULES

Objective:
The players solve clues to get 10 digits to a pass code. Hints and Easter eggs are found in daily e-mails and videos to put the ten digits in order to match the pass code.

How to Play:
Follow the story through short daily e-mails delivered over a one-week period.

1. Solve the clues provided in the adventure summery to get the 10 digits of the pass code. The digits are not in the order of the pass code.
Stranger Adventures is an exciting adventure game in which you will compete against other players for $25,000! The game starts Sunday, February 19, 2006, and ends on Saturday, February 25, 2006. Sign up to start your adventure!

You are cordially invited to test a new Internet game created by Riddle Productions called Stranger Adventures.
The most terrible thing has happened! That man I saw staring at me at LAX? He IS following me!

Not the man who gave me my boarding pass back, but the one who was staring at me at the ticket counter. He followed me to Australia!

When I found the clue by the Sydney Opera House, I spotted him. I turned away — started walking faster... he moved after me. I ran towards the harbor to get away. He kept running after me. When I ran up the stairs to the Opera House, I fell... I have
Clue Sequencing Sample Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clues</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian States</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand Mainland</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leyton's favorite Play</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Dressed Up</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball letters</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ostrich Egg</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crazy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCH</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong Territories</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

Number Pairs:

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<tr>
<th>6</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Clue Sequencing Sample Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clues</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Treasure Chest Clues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIG. 10
**Introduction**

Is the player registered with Host?  

- **YES**  
  - Player agrees with rules & understands how the game works
  - **NO**  
    - Entry purchase
    - Signup process valid info required

- **NO**  
  - Disqualified

Entry purchase  

Database

Is the information correct and verified?  

- **YES**  
  - Login
  - Data transmitted
  - Valid login
  - Read e-mails
  - E-mail motor daily personalized e-mails
  - Does the user have enough entries left?  
    - **YES**  
      - Data recorded and confirmation e-mails sent
      - **NO**  
        - Enter your answer
        - Data transmitted
        - **NO**  
          - Final answer Web Interface

- **NO**  
  - Is the user registered & has purchased entries?  
    - **YES**  
      - E-mail motor daily personalized e-mails
      - **NO**  
        - Data transmitted

End
ELECTRONIC MAIL-BASED ADVENTURE GAME
AND METHOD OF OPERATION

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This is a utility patent application based on a provisional patent application Ser. No. 60/667,527 filed on Apr. 2, 2005.

FIELD

[0002] The disclosed subject matter relates primarily to electronic games and entertainment, and more particularly, to electronic adventure games that are based on an adventure story and the use of a variety of media forms. The present invention has many versions with the common thread being that using electronic mail and other media, the player and a game character participate together in an exciting adventure to win prizes of real value.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

[0003] For many years, television has been a principal mode of entertainment for literally billions of people across the planet. A particularly attractive type of television entertainment has been the television game show. Of all the television game shows, one of the most popular game shows ever has the title “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire.” The “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire” game show offers a maximum cash prize of one million dollars for correctly answering successive multiple-choice questions of increasing difficulty. Based on an original British version, the U.S. “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire” game first aired in the United States in 1999. The network version became explosively popular in 1999, and at its peak was airing in prime time four nights a week on ABC.

[0004] Another popular genre of television programming, the reality television game shows, presents unscripted dramatic or humorous situations, documents actual events, and features “ordinary” people over professional actors. Such shows portray participants put in exotic locations or abnormal situations, sometimes coached to act in certain ways by off-screen handlers, and events on screen manipulated through editing and other post-production techniques. In many reality television shows, the viewer and the camera are passive observers following people going about their daily personal and professional activities. This style of filming is often referred to as “fly on the wall.”

[0005] Some documentary-style programs place cast members, who in most cases previously did not know each other, in artificial living environments. “The Real World” is the originator of this style. In almost every other such show, cast members are given a specific challenge or obstacle to overcome. “Road Rules,” which started in 1995 as a spin-off of “The Real World,” started this pattern with the cast traveling across the country guided by clues and performing tasks. Many other shows in this category involve historical re-enactment, with cast members forced to live and work as people of a specific time and place would have.

[0006] Although game shows and reality television shows may be popular, none of these entertainment forms effectively serve the on-line entertainment market. Moreover, none of these forms of entertainment allow all of the viewers to actually become players or contestants in either the game or the reality situation.

SUMMARY

[0007] Furthermore, with all known forms of television or video entertainment, none provides a way for the viewer to play the game or participate in the reality situation from anywhere in the world he has an Internet connection and an e-mail account.

[0008] Accordingly, there is a need for a television or video entertainment medium that allows a viewer to compete against other viewers who all become active participants in a game show or in a scripted reality show environment.

[0009] Still further a need exists for presenting to the player the excitement and entertainment of a television game show or reality television episode, and that allows the player to not only participate in an adventure, but also to actually win significant prizes, such as the cash prizes offered in the “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire” and similar game shows.

[0010] Techniques here disclosed provide a client-server and electronic mail-based adventure game and method of operation which provides an improved system and process for personal and group entertainment. The present disclosure may, for example, benefit those seeking entertainment by providing dynamically changing, rich media content and personalized participation in an adventure game, while also providing a genuine opportunity to win significant immediate cash and valuable prizes for solving the adventure game puzzle.

[0011] According to one aspect of the disclosed subject matter, there is provided an electronic adventure gaming system and methods of operation that include a server system for hosting an electronic adventure game. The server system associates with a communications network and may be accessible by a player via the communications network. A website associates with the server system for communicating with a player using a plurality of media forms. A database system associates with the website and the server system to store and communicate individual identity information relating to the player. The database system further stores and communicates game information relating to the electronic adventure game.

[0012] A character associated with the electronic adventure game communicates with the player and invites the player to participate in an adventure. The character appears to communicate personally and directly with the player using the plurality of media forms. A puzzle is presented by the character for the character and the player to cooperate with one another in deriving a solution to the puzzle. An alphanumeric answer key associates with the puzzle to represent the solution to the puzzle and becomes the result of the character and the player cooperating with one another. A plurality of clues aid the player and character to cooperatively derive the alphanumeric answer key. A plurality of messages are deliverable using at least a subset of the plurality of media forms and relates to the clues, thereby permitting the character and the player to determine the clues and ultimately derive the alphanumeric answer key.

[0013] An input means allows the player to provide the alphanumeric answer key to the server system and records the date and time of the server system receiving the alphanumeric answer key. The input means also associates the
received alphanumeric answer key uniquely with the player’s identity information. Furthermore, a plurality of rewards are associated with the server system receiving the alphanumeric answer key by a predetermined time such that at least a portion of the plurality of rewards are awarded to the player in the event that the player inputs the alphanumeric answer key by a predetermined time.

[0014] These and other aspects of the disclosed subject matter, as well as additional novel features, will be apparent from the description provided herein. The intent of this summary is not to be a comprehensive description of the claimed subject matter, but rather to provide a short overview of some of the subject matter’s functionality. Other systems, methods, features and advantages here provided will become apparent to one with skill in the art upon examination of the following FIGUREs and detailed description. It is intended that all such additional systems, methods, features and advantages that are included within this description, be within the scope of the accompanying claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] The features, nature, and advantages of the disclosed subject matter will become more apparent from the detailed description set forth below when taken in conjunction with the drawings in which like reference characters identify correspondingly throughout and wherein:

[0016] FIG. 1 illustrates a network architecture in which clients access Web services over the Internet using conventional protocols;

[0017] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of a client-server architecture that may employ the teachings of the present disclosure;

[0018] FIG. 3 depicts an exemplary home page screen for use with one embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0019] FIG. 4 illustrates an aspect of the disclosed embodiment for providing the player rules of the disclosed subject matter;

[0020] FIG. 5 illustrates another aspect of the disclosed embodiment for providing a description of how a player may play the adventure game of the disclosed subject matter;

[0021] FIG. 6 presents a content-rich display for presenting to the player a streaming video including a character and associated hypertext links for use of the disclosed subject matter;

[0022] FIG. 7 presents an invitation that a player may receive for playing one embodiment of the disclosed adventure game;

[0023] FIG. 8 shows an exemplary communication appearing to be from the character and personally and confidentially to the player;

[0024] FIG. 9 presents an exemplary inbox that the disclosed subject matter makes available to the player;

[0025] FIG. 10 provides a clue sequencing sample worksheet for use with the disclosed subject matter;

[0026] FIG. 11 is a flow chart of one process flow provided by the disclosed subject matter; and

[0027] FIG. 12 presents a website architecture diagram for performing the functions of the disclosed subject matter.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC EMBODIMENTS

[0028] The disclosed subject matter of an electronic mail-based adventure game may be implemented in an essentially endless number of episodes and a virtually infinite number of settings. For example, some episodes or embodiments may occur in the United States, while others may be on distant planets, for example. So, the implementation here described provides but one of a virtually limitless set of applications to which the disclosed subject matter may apply.

[0029] With reference to FIG. 1 an exemplary data processing system 10 for practicing the disclosed subject matter includes a general purpose computing device in the form of a computer system 20, including one or more processing units 21, a system memory 22, and a system bus 23 that couples various system components including the system memory to the processing unit or units 21. The system bus 23 may be any of several types of bus structures including a memory bus or memory controller, a peripheral bus, and a local bus using any of a variety of bus architectures.

[0030] The system memory includes read only memory (ROM) 24 and random access memory (RAM) 25. A basic input/output system 26 (BIOS), containing the basic routines that help to transfer information between elements within the computer 20, such as during start-up, is stored in ROM 24. The computer 20 further includes a hard disk drive 27 for reading from and writing to a hard disk, not shown, a magnetic disk drive 28 for reading from or writing to a removable magnetic disk 29, and an optical disk drive 30 for reading from or writing to a removable optical disk 31 such as a CD ROM or other optical media. The hard disk drive 27, magnetic disk drive 28, and optical disk drive 30 are connected to the system bus 23 by a hard disk drive interface 32, a magnetic disk drive interface 33, and an optical drive interface 34, respectively. The drives and their associated computer-readable media provide nonvolatile storage of computer readable instructions, data structures, program modules and other data for the computer 20.

[0031] Although the exemplary environment described herein employs a hard disk, a removable magnetic disk 29 and a removable optical disk 31, it should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that other types of computer readable media which can store data that is accessible by a computer, such as magnetic cassettes, flash memory cards, digital video disks, Bernoulli cartridges, random access memories (RAMs), read only memories (ROM), and the like, may also be used in the exemplary operating environment.

[0032] A number of program modules may be stored on the hard disk, magnetic disk 29, optical disk 31, ROM 24 or RAM 25, including an operating system 35 wherein each of the multiple processors 21 of the computer system executes one or more program threads, one or more application programs 36, other program modules 37, and program data 38. A user may enter commands and information into the computer system 20 through input devices such as a keyboard 40 and pointing device 42. Other input devices (not shown) may include a microphone, joystick, game pad, satellite dish, scanner, or the like. These and other input
devices are often connected to the processing unit 21 through a serial port interface 46 that is coupled to the system bus, but may be connected by other interfaces, such as a parallel port, game port or a universal serial bus (USB).[0033] A monitor 47 or other type of display device is also connected to the system bus 23 via an interface, such as a video adapter 48. In addition to the monitor, personal computers typically include other peripheral output devices (not shown), such as speakers and printers. The computer 20 may operate in a networked environment using logical connections to one or more remote computers, such as a remote computer 49 that also includes a plurality of processors. The remote computer 49 may be another personal computer, a server, a router, a network PC, a peer device or other common network node, and typically includes many or all of the elements described above relative to the computer system 20, although only a memory storage device 50 has been illustrated in FIG. 1. The logical connections depicted in FIG. 1 include a local area network (LAN) 51 and a wide area network (WAN) 52. Such networking environments are commonplace in offices, enterprise-wide computer networks, intranets and the Internet.

[0034] When used in a LAN networking environment, the computer 20 is connected to the local network 51 through a network interface or adapter 53. When used in a WAN networking environment, the computer 20 typically includes a modem 54 or other means for establishing communications over the wide area network 52, such as the Internet. The modem 54, which may be internal or external, is connected to the system bus 23 via the serial port interface 46. In a networked environment, program modules depicted relative to the computer 20, or portions thereof, may be stored in the remote memory storage device of the remote computer 49. It will be appreciated that the network connections shown are exemplary and other means of establishing a communications link between the computers may be used.

[0035] FIG. 2 illustrates a representative computer configuration 60 for communicating information through a local area network 62 such as the local area network 51 or the wide area network 52 shown in FIG. 1 and among a plurality of client computers 64, 66, 68, 70 coupled to a network 102. Data from a database server 72 is made available to the clients 64, 66, 68, 70 by a server computer 74. This data is communicated from the server computer 74 to one or more of the client computers 64, 66, 68, 70 in response to a request by such client computer 64, 66, 68, 70 for the data. At periodic intervals the data on the database stored on the database server 72 is updated. After such an update of the data within the database, the server computer 74 presents updated information in response to a client request for data.

[0036] One means of updating the data within the database server 72 is for one of the clients 64, 66, 68, 70 to provide data to the server computer 74 which in turn makes that data part of the database by means of database management software executing on the database server 72. The client 64, 66, 68, 70 that has updated the data in the database 72 communicates the fact that the data on the server has been updated to other clients 64, 66, 68, 70. A client to client message from the client computer 64, 66, 68, 70 that updated the data is sent to other client computers on the network 82. In response to receipt of such a client to client message the clients can then request the updated information from the server computer 74.

[0037] A typical application of the subject matter is a use wherein the database server 72 of FIG. 2 is one or more computers, the server 74 defines a node on the Internet, and the clients 64, 66, 68, 70 are connected to the server 74 by means of the Internet. Such a system employs the HTTP protocol to implement client/server communications. This protocol, in combination with active server page scripts and ODBC technology provides widely distributed clients 64, 66, 68, 70 access to a central scalable database of information. Without more, however, such a system does not provide change notification to the clients 64, 66, 68, 70 concerning changes to the database and therefore prior art client polling of the server is required for the clients to have access to updated data.

[0038] Use of a separate, multi-client, real-time update protocol allows the clients 64, 66, 68, 70 to notify the other clients when they make a change to the database stored on the database server 72. The IRC protocol (Internet Relay Chat) which was originally designed for text chat, is the preferred means of messaging the other clients 64, 66, 68, 70. When a client makes a change to the database, the client first updates the database. Synchronization facilities in the database management software running on the database server 72 ensure orderly updating of the information in the database.

[0039] Using computer hardware, software, and networking facilities, such as those described in FIGS. 1 and 2, the presently disclosed adventure game show involves a player seeking and solving clues for a rich reward. In each weekly episode, the player is introduced to a new stranger who is seeking help to hunt for treasures and fortunes. The player is given the “story” (the story is the scenario for the week’s game) and invited to join the stranger on the adventure, and if successful, substantially share in the treasure. For example, the stranger may need to solve 10 hidden clues to come up with the combination to a safe which has $1,000, 000 cash locked in it. The stranger hunts for the clues, and as they are found, the player tries to solve them. If the player helps the stranger solve the puzzle to the combination before any other player, they collect $250,000 of the cash.

[0040] Adventure game may be delivered on a web based innovative technical platform which contains media elements such as video, photography, computer generated graphics, animation, voice and text data. These elements are dynamically combined to give the individual user a personalized media rich game experience. The platform may be used to develop a higher degree of involvement for the player and the feeling of being “inside the game”. Instead of being spectators, the viewers become players.

[0041] The game may be mass-market and enjoyed at all ages. It may be offered to a worldwide market, covering all races, gender and economic strata. The requirements of one embodiment are that players must (a) be 18 years old; (b) have a valid government issued ID; (c) have an access to an Internet connection; and (b) be a US citizen. The game may be based on proven fundamentals. Shows and movies based on adventure and suspense have always been popular. Games based on clues and puzzles have also been popular over the ages; for example, there are an estimated 50 million
regular crossword puzzle players in the US alone. The adventure game’s clues are clever and fun and begin easy, getting progressively more difficult from beginning to end. The game is very stylish. The incentive to play is well vested in the price/value relationship of the entertainment opportunity and in addition the large competition and substantial prizes make it especially compelling.

The disclosed method and system is the first game to offer a competition in which players become active participants by working with a story’s main character. The objective of the game is to solve puzzles over a one-week period. The player is given a set of clues the first day of the game and is e-mailed five more clues over the next five days. The first player to solve the puzzle wins first prize. Other players who solve the puzzle win additional prizes.

The puzzles are part of an adventure story in which the stranger is seeking to redeem a large sum of money (i.e., an “Indiana Jones” type stranger). In order to win the game, the player must unravel clues to come up with a numerical answer key. If the player helps the stranger get to the money first, then they share the loot. For example, if the stranger finds $1,000,000 in the safe deposit box, the stranger will divide $250,000 with players who solved the puzzle and will award $125,000 to the player who got the answer first.

As used herein, the term “alphanumeric” includes, but is not limited to any of the printable characters, A to Z, a to z, 0 to 9, and punctuation marks such as spaces, quotes, exclamation marks, and so on. An alphanumeric variable of four characters could hold any of the values “ABCD”, “12XY”, “1234”, or “##” because these are all printable characters and are capable of communication and storage in electronic devices and systems. Moreover, the term alphanumeric includes intelligible words, partial words, combined words, or word/number/symbol sets, including proper name, business names, trademarks, logos, and surnames understandable or repeatable in any written or oral language, which may be stored or transmitted in an electronic medium or communications systems.

The stranger communicates with the viewers through digital media, Web sites, e-mail message, photos and video. The episodes are written as a series of e-mail messages with supporting media to document the stranger’s journey. E-mail messages are sent directly to the players, but can also be viewed on the Web Site. Communications are brief but frequent; up to three short e-mail messages a day. These e-mail messages are intended to be fun and exciting. Players interact with the stranger character and receive responses and acknowledgments to their communications. The communications are personalized by the player’s name and other player profile characteristics.

As used herein, the stranger character may be unique to each episode or embodiment of the disclosed electronic gaming system or a consistent character across many episodes or embodiments. Moreover, the stranger character may be a well-known persona, such as “Carmen San Diego,” “Bill Nye The Science Guy,” “James Bond 007” or another stranger character, which character is yet a stranger to the player. Moreover, the stranger character may be associated with one or more physical features of the puzzle. For example, the stranger character may be the President of a Swiss Bank holding various anonymous deposit accounts who introduces the player to the interesting people he has come to know. Clearly, a wide variety of stranger characters and different personas may be presented to the player through the use of the disclosed electronic gaming system.

Each adventure game episode starts at noon on Sunday and ends at noon on Saturday. Each episode is a new story in which the players take part in a competition for a large cash prize. The disclosed method and system is a new game for the on-line entertainment market. Players can play anywhere in the world with an Internet connection, payment method and an e-mail account.

The disclosed method and system offers a competition in which players become active participants by working with a story’s main character. The objective of the game is to solve clues over a one-week period. The player is given a set of clues the first day of the game and is emailed many more clues over the next five days. The first player to solve the puzzle wins first prize. Other players who solve the puzzle win additional prizes.

The puzzles are part of an adventure story in which the stranger is seeking to redeem a large sum of money (i.e., an Indiana Jones type). In order to win the game, the player must unravel clues to come up with an answer key. If the player helps the stranger get to the money first, then they share the treasure. For example, if the stranger finds $1,000,000 in the safe deposit box, the stranger will divide $250,000 with players who solved the puzzle and will award $125,000 to the player who got the answer first!

The stranger communicates with the viewers through digital animation media, Web sites, e-mail message, photos and live action video. The episodes are written as a series of e-mail communications with supporting media to document the stranger’s journey. E-mail messages are sent directly to the players, but can also be viewed on the Web Site. Communications are brief but frequent; up to four short e-mail messages a day. These e-mail messages are intended to be interesting and exciting. Players interact with the character and receive responses and acknowledgments to their communications. Many of the communications are personalized by the player’s name and other player profile characteristics.

Each adventure game episode starts at noon on Sunday and ends at noon on Saturday. Each episode is a new story in which the players take part in a competition for a large cash prize. Highlights of the game include that a new stranger’s story is introduced each week. The player partners with the stranger to seek a large cash fortune by solving clues. The stranger travels to unearth clues while the player solves the puzzles. The stranger and player communicate primarily through e-mail message and Web sites. The player that solves the puzzle first shares the fortune with the stranger.

Each episode of the adventure game is a seven-day game. On day one, the player is given several answer key clues. On day two through six, the player is given additional clues each day. On day seven, the game ends and a winner is announced.

FIG. 3 depicts an exemplary home page screen 100 for use with one embodiment of the present disclosure.
home page screen view 100 appear links to many aspects of the adventure game of the present disclosure, including the primary hyperlinks of “Welcome” link 102, “Meet Helen” link 104, and “Invitation” link 106. At “Welcome” link 102 appears a brief description of the adventure game, together with “Watch” link 108. “Watch” link 108 provides a link to http server 74, for example, from which a streaming video feed may be provided to the player. The player may, during such streaming video feed receive testimonials and other information regarding the disclosed adventure game. It is at “Welcome” link 102 that the player may first receive information regarding the storyline and puzzle that is to be solved and the amount of real cash prizes that are available for winning in the event that the player solves the puzzle.

At “Meet Helen” link 104, a player receives information regarding the character, a Ms. Helen Beaumont, who explains her story and invites the player participate in her adventure to recover the prize money. “Watch” link 110, when activated, takes the player to streaming video screen 114 of FIG. 6, below, wherein Ms. Beaumont describes her story. “Invitation” link 106 informs the player of the invitation to play the adventure game. Upon clicking “Read” hyperlink 112, the player sees the invitation screen 116 of FIG. 7.

Home page 100 also presents to the player a set of secondary hyperlinks for further explaining and providing content relating to the adventure game. For example, home page 100 includes “Home” hyperlink 118 for always routing the player back to home page 100; “Rules” hyperlink 120 for access to rules screen 122 of FIG. 3, “How to play” hyperlink 124 for access to “How to play” screen 126, and “About” hyperlink 128 for access to an “About” screen (not shown), which may provide information regarding the game provider, here the assignee of the present disclosure, Riddle Productions. At the bottom of home page 100 also appear the secondary hyperlinks of “Contact” hyperlink 130 and “F.A.Q.” hyperlink 132. “Contact” hyperlink 130 accesses a page for contacting the game provider, while “F.A.Q.” hyperlink 132 accesses a web page providing a listing of frequently asked questions and associated answers that relate to the adventure game.

Still further, home page 100 provides to the player secondary hyperlinks that may be of many different types. For example, “Sign up” hyperlink 134 accesses a sign up link that takes the player to a template for providing necessary personal information in a secure format so that the player may participate in the game. Beyond “About” hyperlink 128, as discussed, the disclosed embodiment provides a link 136 entitled “to learn more about Riddle Productions click here,” which may provide more detailed information relating to the host game provider.

Another aspect of home page 100 is providing to the player any particular information resources or tools that may be helpful to playing the adventure game. For example, home page 100 may provide “cheat sheet” hyperlink 137 which connects to a document such as “Chee Sequencing Sample Worksheet [158] of FIG. 10 for assisting the player in determining the necessary clues for solving the adventure game puzzle.

In addition to tools and information resources for use by the player, home page 100 may also provide one of several platforms for commercial messages, advertisements, or other functions capable of increasing not only the utility, but also the value of the disclosed adventure game to the player. For example, hyperlink 140 may provide a link to an advertiser who associates with the adventure game, here “HKS Bank.” Hyperlink 142, in contrast, provides a link to Emmy Judges or other third parties, who may want to know more about the game for assessing the potential for the website to receive an Emmy Award or other third party functions. Clearly, a wide variety of features and functions are enabled by home page 100 of the present disclosure.

FIGS. 4 and 5, as discussed, illustrate aspects of the disclosed embodiment for providing the player rules and playing instructions, respectively. These instructions may augment the instructions provided by the character, here Ms. Helen Beaumont, for explaining all relevant technical details that the player needs to play the adventure game. In FIG. 4, Official Rules are presented in scroll down subscreen 144. By moving scroll bar 146 upward or downward, subscreen 144 moves to display the complete set of Official Rules for playing the present adventure game. Likewise, in FIG. 5, subscreen 148 provides a complete set of “How to Play” instructions, which with Official Rules 144, are useful for teaching the player all necessary aspects of starting and continuing to play the disclosed adventure game. Also, scroll bar 146 permits movement of subscreen 148 as the player desires in reading the “How to Play” instructions. Such instructions as have herein been described may be provided to the player. Also note that both Official Rules screen 122 and How to Play screen 126, all previously discussed secondary hyperlinks appear. This permits complete navigation through the disclosed adventure game as the player desires.

FIG. 6 presents a content-rich “Meet Helen” display 114 for presenting to the player a streaming video including a character and associated hypertext links for use of the disclosed subject matter. Meet Helen display 114 includes streaming video screen 158, which through the use of controls 152, a player may play a video of Ms. Helen Beaumont, who introduces herself and explains different aspects of the adventure game. As with home page 100, Meet Helen screen 114 includes a robust set of hyperlinks for connecting the player to different functions on the host server 74 that relate to the disclosed adventure game. For example, the “Home” hyperlink 154 and “Sign Up” hyperlink 156, appearing as Post-It Notes®, provide access, respectively, to home page 100 and a sign up template allowing a player to submit needed registration information. Also, the color snap-shots 158, pieces of paper 160, and other content appearing on bulletin board 162 may be any of a number of hyperlinks for a variety of relevant functional and, in some cases, commercial messages or advertising.

FIG. 7 presents an invitation that a player may receive for playing one embodiment of the disclosed adventure game. As stated above in the description of FIG. 3, invitation hyperlink 106 allows access to an invitation to the play to play the game. As such, upon clicking “Read” hyperlink 112 of FIG. 12, access goes to invitation screen 116. Invitation screen 116 provides to the player what appears to be a hand-written invitation to participate in the adventure game. In fact, in one embodiment, the screen presents to the player a pen actively writing out the invitation 164 as the player views invitation screen 116. Invitation 164, announces to the player the amount of cash money the player
may when by successfully competing, here $25,000, and states the beginning and ending dates—Sunday, Feb. 19, 2006 through Saturday, Feb. 26, 2006. By clicking “Learn more” hyperlink 166, the player may learn more about the game through access to “Official Rules” screen 122 and “How to Play” screen 126.

[0062] FIG. 8 shows an exemplary communication appearing to be from the character and personally and confidentially to the player. Once a player signs up and begins the adventure game, as discussed, the player begins to receive a set of e-mail messages. The e-mail messages permit secure links to host server 74, whereby the play may access rich media content messages. The rich media content messages may take the form appearing in message screen 170 of FIG. 8. As depicted in FIG. 8, message screen 170 includes text message 171 that appears to hand-written, as well as various images 172, 174, and 176. Each of images 172, 174, and 176 connect the player, through server 74 to rich media content that is relevant to one or more aspects of the adventure games. Such rich media content may be information concerning clues or background on the character, e.g., Ms. Helen Beaumont, or other information of use or interest to the player.

[0063] In addition to rich media relevant to the adventure game, message screen 170 also provides “Players inbox” hyperlink 178 and “Home” hyperlink 180. FIG. 9 describes the Players inbox that is accessible via “Players inbox” hyperlink 178. “Home” hyperlink 180 returns the player to home page 100. Also, message screen 170 displays at display areas 182, 184, 186, and 188 messages and/or advertising content that may be of interest or benefit to the user, with each display area also including hyperlinks to the relevant websites or content relating to the particular display.

[0064] At Players inbox screen 190 of FIG. 9 appears Inbox listing 192 of all messages sent previously to the player. Inbox listing 192 provides the subject of the messages, as well as the date and time of the message being sent to the player. The subject line 194 of each message appears as a hyperlink for taking the player to a message such as message 171 of message screen 170 (FIG. 8). Again, Players inbox screen 190 includes rich media hyperlinks for accessing different aspects of the disclosed subject matter.

[0065] FIG. 10 shows Clue Sequencing Sample Worksheet 138 for use with the disclosed subject matter. Worksheet 138 provides a way for tabulating the clues provided in the adventure game and analyzing their relevance and contribution to solving the presented puzzle. The clues may be stated in clues listing 200 with the resulting number from the clue appearing in answer listing 202. Sequence listing 204 provides a way of arranging the determined clues. In Number Pairs area 206 are boxes 208, which provide for the association of determined numbers according to further clues presented in the adventure game. Then, based on the sequencing of the particular pairs of numbers, Final Answer area 210 provides for the listing of the sequence of numbers that constitute the desired answer key solution to the puzzle.

[0066] Worksheet 138 also includes a Treasure Chest Clues section for displaying a set of clues relating to a particular treasure chest aspect of the adventure game. Similar to the display above, the treasure chest aspect of the disclosed subject matter generates clues that can be displayed in listing 212 and answers for display in listing 214 that may be analyzed using the format of the Treasure Chest Clues portion of worksheet 138. Finally, a notes section 216 provides for various notes that may of use for the treasure chest part of the adventure game.

[0067] FIG. 11 is a flow chart 220 of one process flow provided by the disclosed adventure game and related subject matter. Flow chart 220 begins at introduction step 222 where a player at a client 64, 66, 68, 70 (FIG. 2) may access home page 100, for example, at server 74. From home page 100, process flow continues to query 224, which tests whether the player is registered with the host, e.g., Riddle Productions, Inc. If yes, process flow continues to step 226, where player login may occur. If not, then process flow continues from query 224 to query 228 for testing whether the player agrees with the rules and indicates an understanding of how the game works. If the player fails query 228, then process flow goes to step 230, where he is disqualified and process flow ceases. On the other hand, if the result of query 228 is positive, then process flow goes to input step 232, at which point the player may input sign up information. Then, process flow continues to query 234 for testing whether the information is correct and verified. If this query is negative, then process flow returns to input step 232, whereupon the player may input correct and verifiable information. Otherwise, because the information is correct and verified, process flow continues to data transmitted step 236 and then onward to login step 226.

[0068] Note that in the event of process flow continuing from query 224 to login step 226 to an entry into database 238 occurs. Likewise, in the event of process flow from query 234 to data transmitted step 236 data concerning a purchase transaction associated with player registration goes to entry purchase step 240 and on to database 238.

[0069] From login step 226, process flow continues to valid login query 242. In the event of a valid login, process flow continues to player’s inbox 244. Otherwise, process flow returns to login step 226. At player’s inbox query 244, the process flow tests whether the player activates functions at player inbox screen 190 (FIG. 9), such as the reading of e-mail messages, at step 246. From player’s inbox query 244, process flow may proceed to input step 248, at which point the player’s profile may be edited. Thereafter, the player may logout to proceed to end step 250 for terminating process flow.

[0070] Once the player has determined a possible answer to the puzzle of the adventure game, access through a client 64, 66, 68, 70 (FIG. 2) may occur at step 252 using, for example, a web interface. At such a web interface process flow determines at query 254 whether the user is registered and has purchased an entry into the present adventure game. Information necessary for this determination may be derived from database 238 at this point. If the user is not registered or does not have enough entries left, process flow returns to interface step 252. Otherwise, process flow continues to query 256 at which a test of whether the user has enough entries left to provide the necessary puzzle answer. If so, then process flow continues to input step 258 allowing the player to enter an answer. Following answer input step 258, process flow continues to data processing step 260, whereupon data is recorded and confirmation e-mail messages are sent to server 74. Step 262, in response to data processing step 260, activates an e-mail message motor for daily per-
sonalized e-mail messages, using information held in database 238. In the event that the player provides the correct answer key, then that data is recorded and an e-mail message notifying the player of his winning is sent using the e-mail message motor for the personalized e-mail messages.

[0071] FIG. 12 presents a website architecture diagram 270 for performing the functions of the disclosed subject matter. The architecture of the website for the disclosed may begin with an introduction page 272, such as appears in FIG. 3, above. Introduction page 272 connects to main page 274. From main page 274, access to The disclosed method and system page 276. Learn page 278, and About Riddle Productions page 280 is permitted. The disclosed method and system page 276 provides information concerning the disclosed method and system game and other information specifically relating to the disclosed method and system products and services. Learn page 278 provides instructions, such as “How to Play” instructions of FIG. 5. From Learn page 278, access is permitted to Sample game page 282. Sample page 284, and Play Now page 286. Sample game page 282 permits access to Rules page 288, About page 290, and F.A.Q. page 292.

[0072] Play now page 286 permits a player to initiate the process flow of FIG. 11, using Sign Up page 294. Upon sign up, Your Account page 296 provides access to database 238 (FIG. 11) for communicating information relating to the player. Inbox page 298, accessible through Your Account page 296 presents to the play a Player Inbox 192 (FIG. 9). From inbox page 298, the disclosed adventure game provides access to e-mail, video, animation, photography and other rich media content located on server 74 (FIG. 2). Also accessible from Your Account page 296 are New Game page 302, Daily Communication page 304, and Enter Your Answer page 306. New Game page 302 permits a player to begin a new adventure game as herein described. Daily Communication page 302 establishes the daily communication with the player as the game proceeds. At Enter Your Answer page 306, the player may provide either partial or complete answers to the adventure game puzzle in order to receive the respective prizes.

[0073] Also from Play Now page 286, access to Contact page 306 is possible. Contact page 306 permits contact to the host server where Winners page 308 and Payout page 310 are accessible. Winners page 308 provides information relating to game winners. Payout page 310, likewise, may provide information regarding current and payout amounts and recipients of such amounts.

[0074] In operation and assembly, the disclosed adventure games may be produced in a series of episodes. Each episode is a one week long adventure story which is wrapped around a set of clues, which if solved, allows the viewer to redeem a large cash prize. The episode is produced through a series of communication vehicles including email, video, website, and graphics and voice and music. Each vehicle is used to deliver and reinforce the story, clues and overall puzzle. Each is brief in presentation and succinct in message.

[0075] Production values are meant to portray a do-it-yourself style through each of the vehicles. Emails are very informal and personal, video is shot and edited with the intention to look like low budget home style video, but with a feel and sound of a theatrical experience. The feel is meant to be high style with a little edginess and graininess giving the characters the aura of being “real people on the fly”.

[0076] Each story starts with a script. The script is written as a series of email communications which represents a new form of story/game delivery. In the story, a main character, “the stranger” is introduced to the players on Sunday. The stranger presents their dilemma to the player and invites the player to help solve the puzzle and claim the fortune. The stranger travels to mysterious locations while the players assist from home and office. The stranger communicates daily with the players and documents his travels with pictures, videos and emails. As the stranger finds the clues in each location, he/she emails them back to the players; then the stranger is off to hunt for the next clue. The game culminates on Friday evening when the final clue is presented and the game officially ends at noon on Saturday.

[0077] The answers to the clues are all one and two digit numbers. There are usually about 21 main clues and 15 hints. Half of the clues are given up front and half are provided over the week of the game. The first 10 clues are single digit numbers and they make up the first six digits of the answer key, but they are not in the correct order. The last 11 clues are 2 digit numbers and three of the four clues pair the single digit numbers provided in the first set of clues. The players need to figure out the clues (numbers) and then figure out the order of the clues to get the answer key.

[0078] The present disclosure includes a plurality of risk and reward relationships which allow acceleration or deceleration of the pressure on players to enter and compete for the awards presented in the game. The tools are based on mathematical algorithms and odds systems which enable us to gate the players’ progress and “level the playing field” so that most players have a reasonable chance to compete effectively in the game. The intent is to make the game not just for the “brainiacs”, but for most everyone.

[0079] Adventure game involves the development of the main character. Each week it is a different character and the objective of this character is to be charming and engaging. The players should look forward to his next communication and enjoy his personality.

[0080] The web site is graphically attractive, but our main objective is to make it a simple layout that is intuitive to navigate and easy to understand and follow. The web site is integrated into several database structures which support marketing, player management, customer support, game presentation, registration, authentication and security.

[0081] Video and photography elements add significant character and support to the story. Our overall production style is a reality TV flavor, always on the move, always in style. Moreover, the disclosed subject matter includes a “Blair Witch Project” style mystery that may be seasoned with a touch of occasional humor, scandal, adventure and all combined, a recipe for tasteful fun and exciting visuals.

[0082] Other elements such as voice over, graphics, animation, Photoshop® rendering, web objects, and database programs are all elements developed for each episode. These elements combine to present a pleasing and communication rich experience for the players. Security is considered the most important issue in production. Everyone on the development side of the game signs a non-disclosure contract which provides severe penalties if breached. Staff members
involved in the code development is kept to an absolute minimum. Every winner will be reviewed for relationships and every game will be reviewed by an outside auditor.

The disclosed subject matter also includes procedures to ensure and reinforce the confidentiality of the game’s answer. Outside security expertise will be retained to recommend best practice procedures to govern our game and its integrity.

The adventure game features and functions described herein can be implemented in various manners. For instance, certain variations to the disclosed subject as may appear on the Internet website www.strangeradventures demo.com or www.strangeradventures.com website as of the filing date hereof the filing, are within the scope of the claimed subject matter. For example, not only may one server 74 support the game, an entire bank of servers and related components may support the adventure game, depending on equipment capabilities and intensities of playing levels, to perform the above-described operations, but also the present embodiments may be implemented in an application specific integrated circuit (ASIC), a microcontroller, a microprocessor, or other electronic circuits designed to perform the functions described herein. The foregoing description of the preferred embodiments, therefore, is provided to enable any person skilled in the art to make or use the claimed subject matter. Various modifications to these embodiments will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, and the generic principles defined herein may be applied to other embodiments without the use of the innovative faculty. Thus, the claimed subject matter is not intended to be limited to the embodiments shown herein but is to be accorded the widest scope consistent with the principles and novel features disclosed herein.

1. An electronic adventure gaming system, comprising:
   a server system for hosting an electronic adventure game, said server system associated with a communications network and accessible by a player via said communications network;
   a website associated with said server system for communicating with a player using a plurality of media forms;
   an applications system associated with the electronic adventure gaming system;
   a database system associated with said website, applications, and said server system for communicating and storing individual identity information relating to the player and game information relating to said electronic adventure game;
   a character associated with said electronic adventure game for communicating with the player and inviting the player to participate in an adventure, said character appearing to communicate personally and directly with the player using said plurality of media forms;
   a puzzle presented by the character for the player and the player to cooperate with one another to derive a solution to said puzzle;
   an alphanumeric answer key associated with said puzzle representing the solution for said puzzle and the result of said character and the player cooperating with one another;
   a plurality of clues for deriving said alphanumeric answer key;
   a plurality of messages deliverable using at least a subset of said plurality of media forms and relating to said clues for permitting said character and the player to determine said clues and, thereby, derive said alphanumeric answer key;
   input means for the player to provide said alphanumeric answer key to said server system, said input mean recording the date and time of said server system receiving said alphanumeric answer key and associating said received alphanumeric answer key uniquely with the player's identity information;
   a plurality of rewards associated with the server system receiving said alphanumeric answer key by a predetermined time, at least a portion of said plurality of rewards for awarding to the player in the event of the player inputs the alphanumeric answer key by said predetermined time.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting a game broadcast management system.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting player registration and authentication system.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting an email system.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting an advertising system.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting a website system.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting a contest management system.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting a payment management system, a player tracking system.

9. The system of claim 1, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting a payment management system, a player tracking system.

10. The system of claim 1, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting a payment management system, a player tracking system.

11. The system of claim 1, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting a payment management system, a player tracking system.

12. An electronic adventure gaming system, comprising:
   hosting an electronic adventure gaming system using a server system, said server system associated with a communications network and accessible by a player via said communications network;
   communicating with a player using a plurality of media forms using a website associated with said server system;
operating an applications system in association with said server system and said electronic adventure gaming system;

associating a database with said website, said applications system, and said server system for communicating and storing individual identity information relating to the player and game information relating to said electronic adventure gaming system;

associating a character with said electronic adventure game for communicating with the player and inviting the player to participate in an adventure, said character appearing to communicate personally and directly with the player using said plurality of media forms;

presenting a puzzle using said character for the character and the player to cooperate with one another to derive a solution to said puzzle;

associating an alphanumeric answer key with said puzzle representing the solution for said puzzle and the result of said character and the player cooperating with one another;

deriving said alphanumeric answer key a plurality of clues;

delivering a plurality of messages to said player using at least a subset of said plurality of media forms and relating to said clues for permitting said character and the player to determine said clues and, thereby, derive said alphanumeric answer key;

providing said alphanumeric answer key to said server system, said input mean recording the date and time of said server system receiving said alphanumeric answer key and associating said received alphanumeric answer key uniquely with the player’s identity information;

associating a plurality of rewards with the server system receiving said alphanumeric answer key by a predetermined time, at least a portion of said plurality of rewards for awarding to the player in the event of that the player inputs the alphanumeric answer key by said predetermined time.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said applications system operating step further comprises the step of operating at least one software application supporting a game broadcast management system.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein said applications system operating step further comprises the step of operating at least one software application supporting player registration and authentication system.

15. The method of claim 12, wherein said applications system operating step further comprises the step of operating at least one software application supporting an advertising system.

16. The method of claim 12, wherein said applications system operating step further comprises the step of operating at least one software application supporting an advertising system.

17. The method of claim 12, wherein said applications system operating step further comprises the step of operating at least one software application supporting a puzzling system.

18. The method of claim 12, wherein said applications system operating step further comprises the step of operating at least one software application supporting a puzzling system.

19. The method of claim 12, wherein said applications system operating step further comprises the step of operating at least one software application supporting a website system.

20. The method of claim 12, wherein said applications system operating step further comprises the step of operating at least one software application supporting a contest management system.

21. The method of claim 12, wherein said applications system operating step further comprises the step of operating at least one software application supporting a payment management system, a player tracking system.

22. The method of claim 12, wherein said applications system operating step further comprises the step of operating at least one software application supporting a payment management system, a player tracking system.

23. An electronic adventure gaming network, comprising a plurality of client computers and at least one server system:

at least one server system for hosting an electronic adventure game, said server system associated with a communications network and accessible by a player via said communications network;

a website associated with said server system for communicating with a player using a plurality of media forms;

an applications system associated with the electronic adventure gaming system;

a database system associated with said website, applications, and said server system for communicating and storing individual identity information relating to the player and game information relating to said electronic adventure game;

a character associated with said electronic adventure game for communicating with the player and inviting the player to participate in an adventure, said character appearing to communicate personally and directly with the player using said plurality of media forms;

a puzzle presented by the character for the character and the player to cooperate with one another to derive a solution to said puzzle;

an alphanumeric answer key associated with said puzzle representing the solution for said puzzle and the result of said character and the player cooperating with one another;

a plurality of clues for deriving said alphanumeric answer key;

a plurality of messages deliverable to at least a subset of said plurality of client computer systems using at least a subset of said plurality of media forms and relating to said clues for permitting said character and the player to determine said clues and, thereby, derive said alphanumeric answer key;

input means associated with at least a subset of said plurality of client computers for the player to provide said alphanumeric answer key to said server system, said input mean recording the date and time of said server system receiving said alphanumeric answer key and associating said received alphanumeric answer key uniquely with the player’s identity information;
a plurality of rewards associated with the server system receiving said alphanumeric answer key by a predetermined time, at least a portion of said plurality of rewards for awarding to the player in the event that the player inputs the alphanumeric answer key by said predetermined time.

24. The electronic adventure gaming network of claim 23, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting a game broadcast management system.

25. The electronic adventure gaming network of claim 23, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting player registration and authentication system.

26. The electronic adventure gaming network of claim 23, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting an email system.

27. The electronic adventure gaming network of claim 23, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting an advertising system.

28. The electronic adventure gaming network of claim 23, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting an advertising system.

29. The electronic adventure gaming network of claim 23, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting a messaging system.

30. The electronic adventure gaming network of claim 23, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting a payment management system, a player tracking system.

31. The electronic adventure gaming network of claim 23, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting a payment management system, a player tracking system.

32. The electronic adventure gaming network of claim 23, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting a payment management system, a player tracking system.

33. The electronic adventure gaming network of claim 23, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting a payment management system, a player tracking system.

34. A computer readable magnet medium comprising an electronic adventure gaming system, comprising:

computer readable instructions for hosting an electronic adventure game on a server system, said server system associated with a communications network and accessible by a player via said communications network;

computer readable instructions for operating a website in association with said server system for communicating with a player using a plurality of media forms;

computer readable instructions for associating an applications system with the electronic adventure gaming system;

computer readable instructions for associating a database system with said website, applications, and said server system for communicating and storing individual identity information relating to the player and game information relating to said electronic adventure game;

computer readable instructions for associating a character with said electronic adventure game for communicating with the player and inviting the player to participate in an adventure, said character appearing to communicate personally and directly with the player using said plurality of media forms;

computer readable instructions for presenting a puzzle for the character and the player to cooperate with one another to derive a solution to said puzzle;

computer readable instructions for associating an alphanumeric answer key with said puzzle representing the solution for said puzzle and the result of said character and the player cooperating with one another;

computer readable instructions for associating the derivation of a plurality of clues for said alphanumeric answer key;

computer readable instructions for assisting with the delivery of a plurality of messages using at least a subset of said plurality of media forms and relating to said clues for permitting said character and the player to determine said clues and, thereby, derive said alphanumeric answer key and

computer readable instructions associated with the player providing said alphanumeric answer key to said server system, said input mean recording the date and time of said server system receiving said alphanumeric answer key and associating said received alphanumeric answer key uniquely with the player’s identity information.

35. An electronic adventure gaming system, comprising:

a server system for hosting an electronic game, said server system associated with a communications network and accessible by a player via said communications network;

a website associated with said server system for interacting with a player using a plurality of media forms;

an applications system associated with the electronic gaming system;

a database system associated with said website, applications and said server system for communicating with said player and storing player and game information relating to said electronic game;

a host, guide, avatar or assistant of said electronic game for communicating with and assisting or directing said player via a plurality of media forms;

an electronic game segment or round presented by the host, guide, avatar or assistant to solve by the player;

input means for the player to provide answers to said server system for the electronic game segment or round; and

a plurality of rewards awarded to the player for successfully completing a segment or round of the electronic game.

36. The system of claim 35, wherein a plurality of clues for deriving an answer for an electronic game segment or round is provided to the player.

37. The System of claim 35, wherein said input means forwards the player’s answers which are dated and time stamped and stored in the server system.
38. The System of claim 35, wherein the server system provides the player with the capability of inviting a plurality of players to assist the player in solving the segment or round.

39. The System of claim 38, wherein the assisting players share in any prize award to the player by the server system for successfully completing a segment or round or the electronic game.

40. The system of claim 35, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting a game broadcast management system.

41. The system of claim 35, wherein said applications system comprises at least one software application supporting player registration and authentication system.

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