PREMIUMS FOR EARLY REDEMPTION OF LOTTERY ENTRIES

Inventors: Jay S. Walker, Ridgefield, CT (US); Stephen C. Tulley, Monroe, CT (US); Daniel E. Tedesco, Huntington, CT (US); Russell P. Sammon, San Francisco, CA (US); Jeffrey Y. Hayashida, San Francisco, CA (US)

Correspondence Address: WALKER DIGITAL MANAGEMENT, LLC 2 HIGH RIDGE PARK STAMFORD, CT 06905

Applied No.: 11/531,559
Filed: Sep. 13, 2006

Foreign Application Priority Data
Jul. 31, 2006 (US) ...................... PCT/US06/29676

Publication Classification
(51) Int. Cl. A63F 9/24 (2006.01)
(52) U.S. Cl. .................................................. 463/17

ABSTRACT

Described are methods, systems and apparatus for providing an enhanced lottery payout to players who redeem winning lottery entries in accordance with predefined conditions. In an embodiment, the method includes receiving a request to redeem a lottery entry, determining that the lottery entry is a winning entry, determining a time associated with the request to redeem, and determining which one of a first payout or a second payout to authorize. The determination is made based on whether the time associated with the request to redeem is greater than a predetermined value. In some embodiments, the second payout is authorized if the time associated with the request to redeem is not greater than the predetermined value.
FIG. 1
FIG. 2

INPUT DEVICE(S)  204
COMMUNICATIONS PORT  208
OUTPUT DEVICE(S)  206
PROCESSOR  202
PROGRAM  210

200
RECEIVE REQUEST TO REDEEM A LOTTERY ENTRY

IS LOTTERY ENTRY A WINNING ENTRY?

DETERMINE TIME ASSOCIATED WITH REQUEST TO REDEEM

IS TIME GREATER THAN PREDETERMINED VALUE?

AUTHORIZE FIRST PAYOUT

AUTHORIZE SECOND PAYOUT

FIG. 5A
FIG. 5B

RECEIVE REQUEST TO REDEEM ELIGIBLE LOTTERY ENTRY

IS LOTTERY ENTRY A WINNING ENTRY?

DID A PREDEFINED EVENT OCCUR?

YES

AUTHORIZE FIRST PAYOUT

NO

AUTHORIZE SECOND PAYOUT

FIG. 5C

RECEIVE REDEMPTION REQUEST FOR WINNING LOTTERY ENTRY

HAS PREDETERMINED THRESHOLD AMOUNT OF PRIZE MONEY BEEN AWARDED?

YES

AUTHORIZE BASE PAYOUT

NO

AUTHORIZE ENHANCED PAYOUT
RECEIVE REDEMPTION REQUEST FOR A LOTTERY ENTRY

IS LOTTERY ENTRY A WINNING ENTRY?

YES

END

NO

DID REDEMPTION REQUEST OCCUR PRIOR TO A PREDETERMINED DEADLINE?

YES

AUTHORIZE ENHANCED PAYOUT

NO

AUTHORIZE BASE PAYOUT

FIG. 5D
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TICKET / ENTRY IDENTIFIER</th>
<th>TICKET / ENTRY INDICIA 1</th>
<th>TICKET / ENTRY INDICIA 2</th>
<th>TICKET / ENTRY INDICIA N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T-111111</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-111112</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-111113</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-489756</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIG. 6A**
### GAME IDENTIFIER: GM-INSTANT-N

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TICKET IDENTIFIER</th>
<th>BASE PAYOUT / BASE PRIZE</th>
<th>TIME OF PURCHASE</th>
<th>TIME OF REDEMPTION</th>
<th>PREMIUM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-555441</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>05/01/06</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-555442</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-555443</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td>05/10/06</td>
<td>05/12/06</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-950000</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>05/03/06</td>
<td>05/04/06</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIG. 6B**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TICKET / ENTRY IDENTIFIER</th>
<th>AVAILABLE REDEMPTION VALUE 1</th>
<th>AVAILABLE REDEMPTION VALUE N</th>
<th>REDEMPTION STATUS</th>
<th>FINAL REDEMPTION VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T-111111</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-111112</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-111113</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>REDEEMED 06/02/08, 10:18 AM</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-222111</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
<td>$105.00</td>
<td>OUTSTANDING</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIG. 7
RECEIVE A REDEMPTION REQUEST ASSOCIATED WITH AN ELIGIBLE WINNING LOTTERY TICKET

802

DETERMINE A TIME ASSOCIATED WITH THE REDEMPTION REQUEST

804

IS TIME ASSOCIATED WITH REDEMPTION REQUEST ≤ PREDETERMINED TIME?

806

NO

AUTHORIZE ISSUANCE OF FIRST PAYOUT BASED ON A FIRST REDEMPTION VALUE

808

YES

DETERMINE A SECOND REDEMPTION VALUE THAT IS DIFFERENT THAN A FIRST REDEMPTION VALUE

812

AUTHORIZE ISSUANCE OF SECOND PAYOUT BASED ON THE SECOND REDEMPTION VALUE

814

UPDATE REDEMPTION STATUS AND FINAL REDEMPTION VALUE FIELDS OF APPROPRIATE RECORD IN REDEMPTION STATUS DATABASE

810

FIG. 8
PREMIUMS FOR EARLY REDEMPTION OF LOTTERY ENTRIES

[0001] This application claims priority from International Application No. PCT/US2006/28676 filed Jul. 31, 2006 which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention generally relates to methods for enticing players to redeem their winning lottery entries.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0003] FIG. 1 illustrates a lottery system according to an embodiment of the invention that includes a plurality of lottery retailer terminals, a communications network, and a controller;
[0004] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of an embodiment of a lottery retailer terminal;
[0005] FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of a lottery operator controller;
[0006] FIG. 4 is a tabular representation of an embodiment of a lottery games database according to the invention;
[0007] FIGS. 5A to 5D are flowcharts illustrating embodiments of lottery entry redemption processes according to the invention;
[0008] FIG. 6A is a tabular representation of an embodiment of a lottery ticket database for an on-line lottery game according to the invention;
[0009] FIG. 6B is a tabular representation of an embodiment of a lottery ticket database for an instant lottery game according to the invention;
[0010] FIG. 7 is a tabular representation of an embodiment of a redemption status database according to the invention; and
[0011] FIG. 8 is a flowchart illustrating an embodiment of a method for determining a payout for an eligible, winning lottery entry according to the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0012] Advantages and features of the invention will become apparent upon reading the contents of this document, and the nature of the various aspects of the invention may be more clearly understood by reference to the following detailed description of exemplary embodiments of the invention, the appended claims and to the drawings attached hereto.

[0013] In a typical drawing-style lottery game, a player can purchase a lottery ticket bearing numbers (or other indicia) from a lottery retailer. The player may then wait for a drawing of numbers to occur to determine if they have won a prize. The player may be entitled to a prize if some or all of the numbers on the player’s ticket correspond to or match the numbers drawn. Some illustrative examples of drawing-style lottery games include the Multi-State Lottery Association’s “Powerball” game, Connecticut Lottery Corp.’s “Classic Lotto” game and the New Jersey Lottery’s “Pick-3” and “Pick-4” games.

[0014] In a typical instant lottery game, players purchase instant lottery tickets that may include one or more concealed play areas (e.g. “scratch-off” latex coated areas) that must be removed in order to reveal potential prize values and/or other game symbols. Certain combinations of symbols or values (such as alphanumeric indications of money amounts) correspond to prizes, thereby enabling players of instant lottery games to determine fairly quickly whether or not they are entitled to a payout or other award (e.g., goods or services).

[0015] Regardless of the type of lottery game, a winning ticket typically entitles the player to receive a cash payout or other award. Depending on the financial structure and/or rules of the game, payouts may range anywhere from a nominal level (e.g., a non-zero payout that may be within the range of one-dollar ($1.00) to twenty-dollars ($20.00), inclusive) to mid-level (e.g., a payout that may be greater than twenty-dollars ($20.00) but not greater than five-hundred-dollars ($500.00)) to high-level (e.g., any payout greater than five-hundred dollars ($500.00), a top payout associated with the game, etc.). Although the terms “nominal,” “mid-level,” and “high-level” are convenient for describing, with respect to some embodiments, the relative differences among payout values or ranges for a particular game, it should be understood by those skilled in the art upon reading this disclosure that such payout ranges or payout levels may vary from game to game, in terms of the number of levels (e.g., one game might have only a first prize tier and a second prize tier), the types of levels (e.g., one type of game may be described as having a cash prize level, a merchandise prize level, a merchandise and cash prize level, and a jackpot level), and/or the range in values associated with any particular payout level or range (as discussed further below).

[0016] Accordingly, in describing some embodiments the relative meanings of the terms “nominal payout”, “mid-level payout”, and “high-level payout,” for example, should be understood within the context of the prizes being awarded for a particular lottery game (or the type of lottery game). For example, for a drawing-style lottery game wherein each lottery entry costs one-dollar, a high-level payout may be from one hundred to several thousand dollars, a mid-level payout may be from twenty dollars up to one thousand dollars, and nominal payouts may be associated with any winning lottery entry worth a payout of ten-dollars ($10.00) or less. However, for an instant-style lottery game wherein each lottery entry costs ten-dollars, for example, a high-level payout may be from five-thousand to twenty-five thousand dollars, a mid-level payout may be in the range of from one-hundred up to two thousand dollars, and a nominal payout level may be associated with any winning lottery entry worth seventy-five dollars ($75.00) or less. Thus, because in the above examples the top lottery prizes and the amount charged for each lottery entry for the two lottery games differ by several orders of magnitude, the dollar values corresponding to nominal payouts, mid-range payouts, and large payouts also differ.

[0017] The applicants have recognized that redeeming winning lottery tickets for nominal level payouts (e.g., minimum or minimal amounts) may be an inconvenience for lottery players. For example, a player may perceive that redeeming such low value winning tickets requires a disproportionate amount of time and effort relative to the amount of the payout (e.g., a nominal payout redemption may require the effort of a return car trip to the lottery retailer from which the player originally purchased the entry, plus the time waiting on line, etc.). This perception of
inconvenience often dissuades or delays players from claiming a payout and/or a prize in a timely manner.

[0018] It has also been recognized that, as more time passes after a lottery game drawing, the less likely it will be that a nominal level prize winner will redeem his prize (e.g. because winners of such nominal prizes either lose their tickets, forget about or even discard the ticket associated with the nominal level prize). This causes yet another problem, because the opportunity to provide “positive reinforcement”, which occurs when a player redeems a winning lottery ticket and obtains cash, may be lost for many such nominal level prize winners. Having “cash in hand” is more likely to lead to customer retention (i.e., having the player purchase further lottery entries in the future) than an unredeemed low-value winning prize ticket. Thus, lottery operators (e.g., the New York State Lottery, the Connecticut State Lottery, and the like) could benefit greatly from an increase in the occurrence of nominal level prize redemptions. Furthermore, lottery operators want to award (and advertise) as many payouts as possible (e.g., as a paid prize tally) to entice players to buy lottery entries, and since nominal level prizes represent a significant portion of all prizes awarded, it would be beneficial if an increased number of nominal level prizes are actually redeemed by players. Improved participation in lotteries would result in more revenue for the lottery operators that could then be applied to the operator’s beneficial causes, such as education-related initiatives, infrastructure improvements, and the like.

[0019] In addition, lottery retailers (e.g., such as convenience stores or grocery stores) also benefit when players redeem nominal level prizes. In particular, players who redeem nominal level winning lottery tickets tend to make additional purchases, such as buying more lottery tickets and/or other retail items (such as candy, newspapers, toiletries, and the like) while they are visiting the lottery retailer’s establishment. Incremental sales opportunities are therefore afforded by an increase in the frequency of customer visits. Consequently, increased or repeat “foot traffic” of lottery players would be beneficial to lottery retailers.

[0020] Lottery operators are also constantly seeking new ways to get “casual players” to play more frequently. Generally speaking, a “casual player” is a lottery player who (i) is not averse to playing lottery games or purchasing lottery tickets, but (ii) cannot be predictably relied upon to participate in lottery games and thus to purchase lottery entries. Since it can be assumed that players who regularly participate in lottery games will have regular opportunity to redeem their winnings simply by virtue of their regular participation, it can be further assumed that a significant portion of unredeemed nominal level payouts are going unredeemed by infrequent or casual lottery players. Several reasons that may support such an assumption range from psychological and sociological reasons to the convenience reasons mentioned above. For example, a player may be embarrassed to redeem a lottery ticket associated with a nominal level payout because it will have no meaningful impact on his life, and/or may not wish to redeem it when the lottery retailer store is crowded with customers due to the social pressure associated with quickly moving through a check-out line (which the player would impede or slow down by claiming the nominal level payout).

[0021] The present disclosure provides methods, systems, and apparatus that may be useful for enticing players to redeem their winning lottery entries early during a lottery game. In some embodiments, a premium is provided to players who redeem nominal-level prize winning lottery entries in a timely manner, before a predetermined deadline and/or before a predefined event occurs. According to one example embodiment, a player may win a prize having a base payout of two-dollars, but if he redeems that lottery entry within 48 hours of his purchase of that lottery entry then he will also receive a premium, such as an additional one-dollar so that in total the player receives a payout of three-dollars. It should be understood, however, that the present methods, systems and apparatus may be useful to entice lottery players to redeem their winning lottery entries early in the lottery game regardless of whether such winning entries correspond to nominal-level, mid-level, or high-level lottery prizes.

[0022] Described below are non-limiting configurations of general-purpose components that may include hardware, software, middleware, and/or software processes and/or steps that may be employed to form a lottery system or portions thereof. The lottery system may include one or more databases stored in memory of one or more devices, and components configured to perform various lottery functions including determining default or base payout values and one or more enhanced payout values and/or premiums that are associated with redemption of winning lottery entries of various types of lottery games.

[0023] 1. Lottery Communications Network

[0024] FIG. 1 illustrates a network environment 100 that includes a plurality of lottery retailer terminals 102-1 to 102-N, a communications network 104 and a controller 106. Generally, any or all of the retailer terminals 102-1 to 102-N may operate to: (i) receive information associated with one or more lottery tickets including such data as: (a) ticket and/or lottery entry identifier(s), (b) entry indicia and c redemption values (base payout values and/or modified or enhanced payout values); (ii) transmit any or all of the received information to the controller 106 via the communications network 104, and (iii) output information including such data as: (d) information defining lottery entries and (e) information associated with one or more redemption values or benefits.

[0025] In general, each retailer terminal 102-1 to 102-N shown in FIG. 1 will correspond to (or be associated with) a particular lottery retailer. For example, retailer terminal 1 (102-1) of FIG. 1 may be associated with a first lottery retailer such as a convenience store, and retailer terminal 2 (102-2) of FIG. 1 may be associated with a second lottery retailer such as a supermarket. It should be understood that any number of lottery retailer terminals might be employed in a system 100, along with any number of corresponding controllers 106.

[0026] The controller 106 may operate to: (i) receive and store information associated with one or more lottery tickets including such data as: (a) ticket/entry identifier(s) and (b) entry indicia; (ii) determine at least a first redemption value associated with a lottery ticket; (iii) receive a redemption request associated with the lottery ticket; (iv) determine a time associated with the redemption request; (v) determine a modified redemption value (i.e., an increased value) for use when a player redeems his winning lottery entry early, according to at least one predefined condition (for example, the player qualifies for the modified redemption value if he makes a redemption request for a winning lottery entry at a time that is not later than a predefined date); and (vi)
transmit an indication of the modified redemption value to a lottery retailer terminal (e.g., for output or display to a lottery player and/or lottery terminal operator), as will be described below.

[0027] In some embodiments, a retailer terminal 102-1 of FIG. 1 may be configured to perform some or all of the functions of the controller 106. Thus, in some embodiments, the controller 106 and the lottery retailer terminal 102-1 (or another given retailer terminal and controller pairing) may be considered as the same “device”.

[0028] Generally, as explained above, the communications network of FIG. 1 may comprise or include one or more local and/or wide-area network(s), proprietary and/or public network(s) (e.g., the Internet) for facilitating two-way data communications between the retailer terminals 102-N and the controller 106. The lottery controller may communicate with lottery retailer terminals directly or indirectly, via a wired or wireless medium such as the Internet, via a local area network (LAN), via a wide area network (WAN), via an Ethernet, via a Token Ring, a telephone line, a cable line, a radio channel, an optical communications line, a satellite communications link, or via any appropriate communications means or combination of communications means. Any number and type of devices may be in communication with the lottery controller, and communication between the lottery retailer terminals and the lottery controller 106 may be direct or indirect, such as over the Internet through a Web site maintained by computer on a remote server, or over an online data network including commercial online service providers, bulletin board systems and the like. In some embodiments, the devices may communicate with one another and/or the computer over RF, cable TV, satellite links and the like. A variety of communications protocols may be part of any such communications system, including but not limited to: Ethernet (or IEEE 802.3), SAP, ATP, Bluetooth™, and TCP/IP.

[0029] Those skilled in the art will understand that devices in communication with each other need not be continually transmitting to each other. On the contrary, such devices need only transmit to each other as necessary, and may actually refrain from exchanging data most of the time. For example, a device in communication with another device via the Internet may not transmit data to the other device for days or weeks at a time. In some embodiments, a server computer may not be necessary and/or preferred. For example, in one or more embodiments, methods described herein may be practiced on a stand-alone gaming device and/or a gaming device in communication only with one or more other gaming devices. In such an embodiment, any functions described as performed by the computer or data described as stored on the computer may instead be performed by or stored on one or more gaming devices.

[0030] 2. Lottery Retailer Terminal

[0031] FIG. 2 is a block diagram 200 of some exemplary components of a lottery retailer terminal. The lottery retailer terminal 200 may include one or more processor(s) 202 such as the PENTIUM® processor, manufactured by INTEL Corporation, or other processors manufactured by other companies, such as the AMD Athlon® processor manufactured by the Advance Micro Devices company. Generally, the processor is operative to perform or process instructions, and in particular, to operate in accordance with the various methods described herein. For example, the processor 202 may be operable to allow the lottery retailer terminal 200 to transmit data to (and receive data from) the controller 106 of FIG. 1. More specifically, the processor 202 may enable the transmission of data defining or identifying a lottery ticket or entry.

[0032] Accordingly, the lottery retailer terminal 200 may further include one or more input device(s) 204. The input devices may include components such as an optical scanner and/or a barcode scanner, for reading and/or for deriving information associated with a lottery entry. For example, a lottery ticket may include registration marks, authenticity data, various codes, micro-printed indicia, one or more sense marks, and/or other lottery indicia that must be read, for example, to distinguish between one or more lottery entries (which may all be contained on one lottery ticket, for example). Examples of additional input devices include, but are not limited to, a keypad, a mouse, an image capturing device (e.g., an optical character recognition (OCR) device), a biometric reader, a portable storage device (e.g., a memory stick), and the like.

[0033] According to some embodiments, the lottery retailer terminal input device(s) 204 may comprise or include a clock. The clock may be employed to detect, derive and/or append time and/or date information for use by the controller 106 to: (i) create a data record corresponding to lottery tickets or lottery entries purchased at the lottery retailer terminal 200, and/or (ii) to determine redemption time and/or date information associated with lottery tickets and/or lottery entries, and/or (iii) determine whether a lottery player has redeemed his ticket in a manner that qualifies him to receive a premium in addition to a base value (for example, if the player makes a lottery ticket redemption request within a predetermined time frame (or relative to the occurrence of a given event)).

[0034] The lottery retailer terminal 200 of FIG. 2 may further include one or more output device(s) 206. Such output device(s) 206 may include such components as a display for outputting information to a lottery player or to a terminal operator (e.g., win/loss information and/or payout amounts), one or more benefit output devices (e.g., a cash drawer, a currency dispenser), a printer for producing a physical record (e.g., paper slip, receipt, ticket, voucher, coupon, etc.) that defines a lottery ticket or lottery entry, audio/video output device(s), and the like.

[0035] The lottery retailer terminal 200 may also include one or more communications port(s) 208, such as a serial port, modem or the like. Generally, the communications port 208 may be operable to facilitate two-way data communications between (i) the lottery retailer terminal 200 and (ii) the controller 106 shown in FIG. 1. In accordance with some embodiments, the communications port 208 may operate to facilitate the transmission of information between the lottery retailer terminal 200 and a player device such as a personal digital assistant (PDA), cell phone and/or a dedicated (e.g., a proprietary) device.

[0036] The lottery retailer terminal 200 may further include a data storage device 210 such as a hard disk, optical or magnetic media, random access memory (RAM) and/or read-only memory (ROM), or the like memory device. Generally, the lottery retailer terminal data storage device 210 stores a software program, the software program enabling the processor 202 of the retail terminal 200 to perform various functions including some or all of the various steps described herein. For example, as noted above with respect to FIG. 1, in accordance with some embodied-
ments, the retailer terminal 200 may be configured to perform some or all of the functions of the controller (and vice versa) such that the controller 106 and the lottery retailer terminal 200 (or, referring to FIG. 1, a given lottery terminal and controller pairing) may be considered as the same “device”. An example retailer terminal available in the marketplace is the EXTREMA® clerk-operated lottery terminal, distributed by Scientific Games Corporation of Alpharetta, Ga.

[0037] In some embodiments, a lottery sales device may be utilized in place of a lottery retailer terminal 200. Such a lottery sales device may be implemented as a system controller, a dedicated hardware circuit, an appropriately programmed general-purpose computer, or any other equivalent electronic, mechanical or electromechanical device. Thus, in various embodiments, a lottery sales device may comprise, for example, a Video Lottery Terminal that may include a touch sensitive screen for use by a player, a personal computer (e.g., which communicates with a remote lottery server), a telephone, or a portable handheld device (e.g., a device similar to a personal digital assistant (PDA) or other analog or digital communications device). The lottery sales device may comprise any or all of the devices of the aforementioned systems. In some embodiments, a user device such as a PDA, cell phone, and/or portable gaming unit (e.g., the PlayStation™ Portable (PSP), distributed by Sony Corporation) may be used in place of, or in addition to, some or all of the device components.

[0038] 3. Lottery Operator Controller

[0039] FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment of the components of a lottery operator controller 300. Similar to the lottery retailer terminal 200 of FIG. 2, the lottery operator controller 300 may include one or more processor(s) 302 such as the PENTIUM® processor manufactured by INTEL Corporation, or the AMD Athlon® processor manufactured by the Advance Micro Devices company. Such a processor 302 functions to process instructions, and in particular, to operate in accordance with various methods described herein. For example, the processor 302 may operate to allow the lottery operator controller 300 to transmit data to (and receive data from) the lottery retailer terminal 200 shown in FIG. 2. More specifically, the controller processor 302 may enable the transmission of data defining or identifying a lottery ticket or entry, as well as information defining one or more payout(s) associated with that lottery ticket to a specific one of the lottery retailer terminals 102-1 to 102-N shown in the lottery network 100 of FIG. 1. Thus, the lottery operator controller may be implemented as a system controller, a dedicated hardware circuit, an appropriately programmed general-purpose computer, or any other equivalent electronic, mechanical or electromechanical device. In various embodiments, a lottery operator controller may comprise, for example, a personal computer (e.g., which communicates with a remote lottery sales terminal) or mainframe computer.

[0040] The lottery operator controller 300 may further include one or more input device(s) 304. Examples of such input devices include a keypad, a mouse, a touch-screen, a random number generator, a microphone, and other digital or analog input devices. According to some embodiments, the lottery operator controller input device(s) 304 may comprise or include a clock. As described above, the clock may be employed to derive time and/or date information for use by the lottery controller 300 to (i) generate a data record corresponding to lottery tickets or lottery entries purchased at the lottery retailer terminal 200, and/or (ii) determine redemption time and/or date information associated with lottery tickets and/or lottery entries, and/or (iii) determine whether a lottery player has redeemed his ticket in a manner that qualifies him to receive a premium in addition to a base value (for example, if the player makes a lottery ticket redemption request within a predetermined time frame (or relative to the occurrence of a given event)).

[0041] The embodiment of the lottery operator controller 300 further includes one or more output device(s) 306. Example of output devices 306 include a monitor or other display for outputting information to a user of the lottery controller (e.g., for displaying information such as statistical or sales data, win and loss information and/or payout amounts), a printer for producing a physical record (e.g., a report, a paper slip, a voucher, a coupon, a ticket) of such data, and the like. In addition, the lottery operator controller 300 may include one or more communications ports 308, such as a serial port, modem or the like, operable to facilitate two-way data communications between (i) the operator controller 300 and (ii) one or more lottery retailer terminals 200, as described above with respect to FIGS. 1 and 2.

[0042] The lottery operator controller 300 may also include a data storage device 310 (e.g., a hard disk or hard drive, a media-based (removable) memory, or the like). In some embodiments, the lottery operator controller data storage device 310 stores at least one software program 312, which includes a program to enable the controller 302 to perform some or all of the various steps and functions of at least one implementation of the methods described in detail herein (for example, the process 500 explained below with respect to FIG. 5A). In addition, the lottery operator controller data storage device 310 may operate to store (i) a lottery games database 314 (described below with respect to the database 400 shown in FIG. 4), (ii) a lottery ticket database 316 (described below with respect to the database 600 and/or the database 650 shown in FIGS. 6A and 6B, respectively), and (iii) a redemption status database 318 (described below with respect to the database 700 shown in FIG. 7).

[0043] In some embodiments, the lottery operator controller may include a lottery ticket server device that is located at a lottery ticket printing facility, and may also function to manage the ticket printing process. The lottery operator controller may also function to develop the lottery game matrix (e.g., determining base payouts, enhanced payouts, win frequencies and the like) and to match static lottery content with secure payable (or payout distribution) data. In some embodiments, a lottery ticket printer device for use in such lottery systems may utilize the game matrix information from the lottery server and may apply it to the secure payable data.

[0044] 4. Other Devices

[0045] In some embodiments, a kiosk (not shown) may be configured to execute or assist in the execution of various lottery game processes. In an implementation, a kiosk may comprise a processor and a storage device or memory as described above. A kiosk may also comprise various input devices (e.g., a keyboard, a mouse, buttons, an optical scanner for reading barcodes or other indicia, a CCD camera, and the like), output devices (e.g., a display screen, audio speakers), benefit output devices (e.g., a coin tray, a
currency dispenser), communications ports, and the like. A kiosk may be configured to communicate with a lottery controller or lottery server. In some embodiments, kiosks may execute or assist in the execution of various lottery functions, as described herein.

[0046] In some embodiments, players may use one or more computing devices to obtain more information about the lottery games, and/or the specific lottery game that the player is playing. For example, a player may utilize a personal computer to access a website that contains lottery game limits, lottery game instructions, winning lottery entry payout information that includes base payout information and enhanced payout information, and the like.

[0047] 5. Lottery Games Database

[0048] FIG. 4 is a tabular representation of an embodiment of the lottery operator controller lottery games database 400. The lottery games database 400 stores data associated with one or more lottery games and/or lottery game formats. It should be understood that the various database examples described herein include illustrative accompanying data as shown in the drawings. Consequently, the data appearing in the databases is exemplary in nature, and such data entries are not limiting with regard to functionality or to the types of data that may be stored therein.

[0049] In the embodiment of FIG. 4, each record in the lottery games database generally defines a game available for play and/or for purchase of lottery entries by a lottery player. In particular, for each game defined by an entry in the lottery games database 400, a game identifier field 402 stores data that uniquely identifies the lottery game of the corresponding record. The data stored in the game identifier field 402 may comprise, for each available game, a unique numeric, alphanumeric or other type of code that uniquely identifies the lottery game defined by the corresponding entry.

[0050] For each lottery game identified by an entry in the game identifier field 402, one or more associated game rules field(s) 406 may store data or information, including a textual description of the criteria required of a lottery entry to be successful (i.e., to win a prize) in the corresponding lottery game. For example, referring to row R400-1, the game identified as "GM-DRAW-001" in the game identifier field 402 corresponds to lottery game rules based on a standard "Pick-6" on-line lottery game, wherein a player selects six numbers and winning lottery entries match at least 3 of 6 drawn numbers. The lottery games database 400 also includes a Payout Criteria 1 field 408, Payout 1 field 410, Payout Criteria N field 412 and a Payout N field 414. For any particular "Pick-6" lottery game, more or less payout criteria and payout fields would be included, which will be explained in more detail below.

[0051] For example, the Connecticut Lottery Corporation provides a "Pick-6" on-line lottery game called "Classic Lotto" wherein players go to a lottery retailer and fill out a "Classic Lotto Play Slip" by choosing six different numbers from the ordinal range of 1 to 44 (inclusive) in each individual play section or board (alternately, a computer can randomly pick the numbers for the player, if the player so chooses). Players of "Classic Lotto" can play up to five boards on each selection slip, and pay one dollar per entry. For example, a lottery player can pay a clerk at a lottery retailer five dollars to purchase five lottery entries, wherein each lottery entry includes six numbers selected from the 44 available choices. Thus, the player may fill in a pay slip and hand it to the clerk, who then enters the pay slip into the retailer terminal. The lottery terminal then issues a printed "Classic Lotto" ticket for the player to take home. The player keeps the ticket until the drawing for that lottery game, and then compares the number of his lottery entries to the drawn numbers to determine if he has won any prize(s).

[0052] Turning again to FIG. 4, row R400-1 illustrates a Pick-6 lottery game identified as "GM-DRAW-001", and the payout criteria field 408 indicates that if the player matches 3 of 6 drawn numbers, then a payout of three (3) dollars is made (see Payout Field 410). Larger payouts would also be determined for matching 4 out of 6 and for matching 5 out of 6 numbers as well (which payout criteria is not shown). The Payout Criteria N field 412 indicates that a win of 6 out of 6 matches pays out the top prize, and the top prize is yet to be determined as shown in Payout N field 414 (because the top prize is typically calculated by the lottery authority as a percentage of the total amount of money spent by players to purchase tickets, and the calculation may also include other variables that would serve to either increase or decrease the top prize value).

[0053] FIG. 4 also illustrates that, for each game corresponding to an entry in the game identifier field 402, one or more payout criteria fields (408 and 412) and a corresponding payout field (410 and 414) store data specifying the actual criteria and corresponding payouts for lottery tickets that satisfy such criteria. For example, using the "Pick-6" example above, typical payout criteria and corresponding payouts may comprise:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Payout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Match 0/6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match 1/6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match 2/6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match 3/6</td>
<td>$3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match 4/6</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match 5/6</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match 6/6 Win Jackpot/Top Prize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[0054] FIG. 4 also includes data for other lottery games. In particular, row R400-2 for lottery game GM-DRAW-002 is a "Pick-3" type of game, and the data includes a game rule 406 wherein a player must match the three drawn numbers in exact order. The payout criteria one 408 for matching one number out of the three drawn in the correct order corresponds to a nominal-level payout value of three-dollars as shown in the Payout 1 field 410. In addition, a payout criteria for matching two out of three numbers (not shown) is stored, and payout criteria N (which is the third criteria in this example) recites that if the player matches all three numbers in order, then that lottery ticket corresponds to a high-level base payout 414 of five hundred dollars.

[0055] Referring to row R400-3, the lottery game GM-DRAW-003 corresponds to a "Pick-4" type of game, and includes a game rule 406 wherein a player may match up to four drawn numbers in any order. The Payout Criteria 1 in field 408 for matching two numbers out of the four drawn corresponds to a nominal-level payout value of five-dollars as shown in Payout 1 field 410. In addition, Payout Criteria N (which is the fourth criteria for this example) recites that if the player matches all four numbers (in exact order) then a high-level payout 414 of five thousand dollars is made. As
explained earlier, the database 400 also includes entries for matching three out of the four numbers (with associated payout amounts) as well.

Row R400-(N-1) corresponds to lottery game GM-DRAW-N, which is a “Pick-10” type of game that includes a game rule 406 specifying that a player may select up to 10 numbers from a field or board of 80 numbers. If a player only picks one spot (i.e., only picks one number) as specified in the Payout I field 408, and that spot matches a drawn number then the player wins a nominal-level two-dollar prize as shown in the Payout I field 410. However, if the player picks ten spots and all ten match the drawn numbers as specified in Payout Criteria N field 412, then as shown in Payout N field 414 he is entitled to a high-level, one-hundred thousand dollar prize. As explained above, database entries would also exist to include all intermediate winning combinations, for example, payout amounts for obtaining three out of three matches numbers, four out of four matches, four out of five matches (and possibly prizes for matching most numbers of a group, such as obtaining five out of six matches, six out of seven matches, and the like), and any other matching sets or match permutations as desired.

Lastly, row R400-N illustrates data for lottery game GM-INSTANT-N, which corresponds to an instant lottery game. This lottery game includes a game rule 406 specifying that a player scratches off the play area to reveal symbols, and if any three of such symbols match, then the prize payout corresponds to the symbols that match. In this case, the game rules are equivalent to the payout criteria. For example, if the player scratches off three matching symbols that each indicate “Two Dollars”, then a nominal level prize payout of two dollars is awarded as indicated in the Payout I field 410. If the player matches three symbols that each indicates “$1,000.00”, then as shown in Payout N field 414 the player is entitled to that high-level amount as a prize.

6. Redemption Processes

Figs. 5A to 5D are flowcharts illustrating lottery entry redemption processes according to various embodiments. The lottery operator controller 106 shown in FIG. 1 (and the lottery operator controller 300 referred to in FIG. 3) in conjunction with the various data structures described herein may perform the methods of Figs. 5A to 5D. It should be understood that, although the methods illustrated by Figs. 5A to 5D are described as a series of numeric steps, the numeric designations are not intended to impart or imply a specific order to the steps. Rather, the steps of the methods in Figs. 5A to 5D may be performed in any order that is practicable and may include the addition and/or omission of one or more particular steps.

FIG. 5A is a flowchart of a lottery entry redemption process 500 according to an embodiment. A redemption request to redeem a lottery entry is received 502, and then a determination is made as to whether the lottery entry is a winning entry 504. For example, a player presents his lottery ticket to a clerk who scans a barcode on the lottery ticket (corresponding to a lottery entry identifier) into a retail lottery terminal, and then a lottery server provides information about that lottery entry which is displayed to the clerk. The lottery entry identifying information may be transmitted from the lottery retailer terminal to the lottery operator controller, which then compares the ticket identifier and/or other indicia to data that may be stored in one or more databases. For example, the controller 106 shown in FIG. 1 may receive a redemption request by way of the communications network 104 and then verify that the lottery ticket corresponds to a winning entry in a database of a lottery game that has not expired.

In some embodiments, a lottery controller may determine a first redemption value (or a first payout value) associated with each winning lottery ticket of a particular lottery game. For example, the first payout value may be a default or base value that is determined based on one or more payout criteria and/or game rules, as described above with respect to the lottery games database of FIG. 4. In an on-line game embodiment, for example, the first payout may be determined in accordance with a pay table and/or one or more game rule(s). In accordance with an instant-game embodiment, because each lottery ticket outcome is predetermined, the first payout value of a particular lottery ticket may be retrieved from a database (e.g., see the lottery ticket database of FIG. 6B, which will be explained in detail below). In some embodiments, the first payout value of a particular lottery ticket may be calculated and/or determined in direct response to the request (e.g., on an “as needed” basis).

In some embodiments, a redemption request may be associated with more than one lottery ticket or lottery entry. For example, a single ticket purchased by a player may include two or more lottery entries, and/or a player may present multiple entries via a corresponding number of multiple tickets. Thus, according to some embodiments, more than one entry may be presented via one ticket, with each entry being associated with a different win status (e.g., a player may present a ticket including five entries wherein two entries correspond to winning entries and the other three entries are non-winners).

Referring again to FIG. 5A, if the lottery entry is not a winning entry then the process ends 506. However, if the lottery entry is a winning entry, then a time associated with the redemption request is determined 508. In various embodiments, the determination of a time associated with a redemption request may include determining an actual time associated with the request (e.g., by way of the controller clock element described above with respect to FIG. 3), and/or may include determining an elapsed time associated with the redemption request (e.g., the controller may calculate that less than twenty-four hours elapsed since the occurrence of a lottery drawing and the time the lottery ticket was presented for redemption by associating the time of redemption with a received ticket identifier).

After step 508, the time is checked to see if it is greater than a predetermined value 510. If it is, then a first payout is authorized 512, but if it is not, then a second payout is authorized 514. In some advantageous embodiments the second payout is greater than the first payout, which entices players to promptly redeem their winning lottery entries. In some embodiments, the lotteries controller authorizes the issuance of a lottery payout by transmitting information associated with the determined payout to the appropriate lottery retailer terminal. Such information may then be used to instruct a lottery terminal operator (such as a retail store clerk or cashier) to confer the payout to the player (e.g., a display associated with the terminal may output and/or display an indication to the operator to pay the player an amount of cash).
According to some embodiments, the predetermined time and/or other indications, such as announcements or instructions, may be printed on the lottery ticket or lottery entry at time of purchase and/or issuance to the player (e.g., “If this is a winning lottery ticket, redeem it by 6:00 PM on May 25, 2006 for an additional redemption bonus”). Such information may be beneficial to the player because he is made aware of what is required to qualify for and receive an increased or extra prize (which may be a modified or enhanced redemption value). For example, the player is made aware of a time period by way of the lottery entry itself that would qualify him to obtain the premium. Further, such an approach serves to minimize any player confusion as to when his or her lottery entry is in fact redeemable for a modified redemption value and/or a premium. For example, in addition to a base payout, the player may receive store credit, coupons, frequent flyer miles, another lottery game entry, one or more rebate(s), product(s) or service(s), and the like. According to some embodiments, the premium received by the player may include a benefit provided by a third-party that may be unaffiliated with the lottery retailer and/or the lottery operator (e.g., a free or discounted product from a retailer other than the redeeming lottery retailer). Alternatively, the redeeming lottery retailer may sponsor or provide the premium (e.g., a gas station that is a lottery retailer may offer a 50.05 discount per gallon of gasoline).

According to some embodiments, the predetermined event and/or other indications, such as announcements or instructions, may be printed on the lottery ticket or lottery entry at time of purchase and/or issuance to the player (e.g., “If this is a winning lottery ticket, redeem it before the top prize is claimed for this lottery game”). Such information may be beneficial to the player because he is made aware of what is required to qualify for and receive the second payout. Providing such information minimizes any player confusion regarding how and when to redeem a winning lottery entry to receive an increased payout and/or a premium.

FIG. 5C is a flowchart depicting yet another lottery entry redemption process 550 according to an embodiment. A redemption request for a winning lottery entry is received 552, and then a determination is made as to whether a predetermined threshold amount of prize money has been awarded. If the threshold amount has been reached, then a base payout is authorized 556. But if the threshold amount has not yet been reached, then an enhanced payout is authorized 558. For example, if a particular lottery game has a top prize of $25,000 (and a total payout of $75,000), then the threshold amount may be set at, for example, $7,500. Thus, all winning lottery entries redeemed before payouts for winning lottery entries totals winnings of $7,500 (the threshold amount) qualify, for example, for a ten percent (10%) premium added to their base payout (an enhanced payout). For example, a winner of a $25 payout who redeems his lottery ticket before $7,500 of total prize money has been awarded will collect $27.50 (the $25.00 prize plus the 10% premium of $2.50). Such a process encourages players to redeem their winning lottery entries early in the lottery game.

FIG. 5D is another flowchart depicting a lottery entry redemption process 575 according to an embodiment. A redemption request to redeem a lottery entry is received 576, and then a determination is made 578 as to whether the lottery entry is a winning entry. If the lottery entry is not a winning entry then the process ends 580. However, if the lottery entry is a winning entry, then a determination is made 582 as to whether the redemption request occurred prior to a predetermined deadline. (For example, the predetermined deadline may be 24 hours from the purchase time and date of that lottery entry.) If the deadline has not passed, then an enhanced payout is authorized 584, but if the redemption request occurred after the deadline, then a base payout is authorized 586. The benefit of receiving an enhanced payout before a deadline passes entices players to redeem their winning lottery entries promptly. As described above, instructions regarding how and when to redeem a winning lottery entry in order to qualify to receive a premium may be printed on each lottery ticket of a lottery game, so that players are aware of the conditions and requirements for qualifying to receive the premium awards.

Thus, in some embodiments, first and second redemption values (i.e., first and second payouts) may be predetermined for each winning lottery entry. In some embodiments, the second redemption value may have a higher prize value than the first redemption value, and thus the second redemption value can be awarded if the time associated with the redemption request is not greater than a predetermined time (e.g., an elapsed time and/or an actual time). Such a process enables a lottery operator or lottery administrator to modify or enhance a base or default...
redemption value that is associated with a winning lottery ticket (e.g., a lottery entry in a drawing-type lottery game), provided that the winning lottery ticket is presented for redemption within a predetermined time frame (or prior to a given predetermined event, as described further herein below). For example, a lottery operator or administrator may modify or increase the redemption value of a winning lottery entry to reflect a premium above a base redemption value (for example, by authorizing an award of an additional ten percent above base value), provided that the lottery entry is presented for redemption within 48 hours of a lottery drawing associated with the lottery entry. In some embodiments, the winning lottery entries that may be redeemed for an increased or enhanced value may be required to belong to a specific class of lottery entries, such as those lottery entries associated with nominal-level prize values.

[0072] According to some embodiments, certain “instant” and/or “scratch-off” game tickets may be temporarily associated with modified or enhanced redemption values. For example, every winning ticket from a given pool of tickets that is redeemed prior to anyone winning the top jackpot may be eligible to receive a fifteen percent (15%) redemption bonus in addition to the base or default redemption value of the winning ticket. Alternatively, winning instant tickets associated with certain payouts (e.g., nominal-level payouts, and/or the earliest issued payouts of a given prize level (mid-level, high-level, and the like) that are redeemed in a timely manner (e.g., before a predetermined deadline and/or before a predefined event occurs) may be eligible to qualify for a redemption value bonus.

[0073] According to some embodiments, the modification of the redemption value of a lottery entry (such as a scratch-off ticket) may include adding a cash value, non-cash value or a combination premium in addition to a default redemption value (which may be a base value). For example, according to the rules of a given lottery game, it may be determined that a lottery entry is associated with a base payout of three-dollars ($3.00). Thereafter, that lottery entry may be associated with a second payout (a modified or enhanced payout) of four-dollars and fifty cents ($4.50) for a limited period of time following the initial determination of the base payout (e.g., 24 hours from the purchase date, and/or 48 hours from the drawing date, and/or a period of time (or actual time) prior to the next lottery drawing, and the like). Thus, various types of deadlines or expiration conditions can be used, alone or in combination, after which the player is only eligible to receive the first payout value (i.e., a default or base payout amount). For example, the expiration condition may include a predetermined period of time that has elapsed since the sale of the lottery ticket, and/or a period of time that has elapsed since a drawing occurred, and/or the awarding of a jackpot, and/or may include the awarding of a threshold number of prizes (or prize value). The threshold number of prizes may include prizes of a given type (e.g., the first 1,000 instances of $3 prizes (or $3,000) in a newly-offered instant game). If a player elects to redeem his winning lottery entry within the predetermined timeframe, and/or before the predetermined expiration condition occurs, then the player receives the second payout (which is an increased or enhanced redemption value of higher value than the base or default redemption value). It is noted that one or more deadlines and/or conditions may be associated with a winning lottery entry that must be satisfied in order for the player to obtain a second payout that has a greater value than the first payout.

[0074] In some embodiments, the second payout (an enhanced payout) may include a base payout plus a non-cash premium. Thus, the second payout may include cash plus a non-cash premium. Examples of various non-cash premiums include, but are not limited to, free or discounted entries in a different and/or a future lottery game, free or discounted services or merchandise, frequent flyer miles, award points, credits and/or alternate currency (e.g., merchant-specific or limited-use currency), and coupons. Therefore, the second payout value may be determined by using a formula such as:

Second Payout= (First Payout)+$1.00+ (One free entry in a subsequent lottery game).

[0075] 7. Lottery Entry Database

[0076] FIG. 6A depicts a tabular representation of an embodiment of a lottery ticket database 600 corresponding to an on-line lottery game, and FIG. 6B depicts a tabular representation of an embodiment of a lottery ticket database 650 corresponding to an instant lottery game. In general, lottery ticket databases such as that shown in FIGS. 6A and 6B store data associated with eligible lottery tickets and/or lottery entries for a given instance of a lottery game and/or lottery drawing. Such lottery ticket databases may be similar to the lottery game database 400 shown in FIG. 4.

[0077] Referring to FIG. 6A, the lottery ticket database 600 includes a game identifier field 602 for storing data identifying the particular lottery game (or type of game) associated with lottery tickets (as defined by other records in the table of FIG. 6A). The lottery ticket database 600 may also include a game instance identifier field 604 for storing data identifying a particular instance (e.g., a drawing) associated with the particular lottery game. For example, the information stored in the game instance identifier field 604 may include the time and/or the date information identifying the particular instance (for example, the drawing time and date of winning numbers) of the lottery game.

[0078] Each lottery ticket that is eligible for the lottery game identified in field 602 is associated with an expiration date field 606 that stores data indicative of the last available date by which winning entries associated with that lottery game instance may be redeemed for any redemption value (enhanced, modified or otherwise). This is the expiration date of the lottery game. For each lottery ticket that is eligible for the identified game and game instance (e.g., an instance of a drawing for which the entry may be eligible), a lottery ticket identifier field 608 stores data identifying the eligible ticket(s). The information stored in the lottery ticket identifier field 608 may be any unique numeric, alphanumeric or other type of code that uniquely identifies an eligible lottery ticket for the particular lottery game instance identified by the information stored in the game instance identifier field 604. In association with the identifier that uniquely identifies a given eligible lottery entry, ticket entry/indicia fields 610, 612 to 614 store data representing the particular numbers (or other indicia) comprising the actual lottery entry (e.g., in accordance with an on-line game embodiment) of the corresponding record. As shown, there are N such fields (where N may be equal to the total amount of numbers to be drawn for that particular lottery). For example, the New York State lottery agency operates a daily on-line lottery game called “Pick 10”, wherein players select 10 numbers from the ordinal range of 1 through 80 (inclusive) by filling in squares on a playcard. The player then
receives one or more lottery ticket(s) (or entries) for use in comparing their chosen numbers to numbers determined via a random drawing (i.e., “winning numbers”). If the database 600 corresponded to such a “Pick 10” game, then row R600-1 for ticket T-11111 would include ten fields (one for each number chosen by the player), such that ticket/entry indicia 1 in field 610 is 14, ticket/entry indicia 2 in field 612 is 23, out to the tenth chosen number (shown in ticket/entry indicia N field 614) of 28. Similar data is shown for rows R600-2, R600-3 and R600-N in FIG. 6A. The information stored in these lottery ticket or lottery entry indicia fields will be compared by the operator controller to a given set of winning indicia (e.g., determined in conjunction with the lottery drawing) in order to determine the win or loss status and associated payouts (if any) for each of the eligible lottery entries within a given game instance (e.g., an instance of a drawing), as described above with respect to FIG. 4.

[0079] In addition (though not shown) the ticket database of FIG. 6A may include one or more field(s) operative to store other types of data identifying the particular retailer from which the lottery ticket was purchased, and/or data identifying the time and date of the lottery ticket purchase.

[0080] FIG. 6B illustrates an embodiment of a lottery ticket database adapted for use in conjunction with an “instant” lottery game. The lottery ticket database of FIG. 6B may include a lottery game identifier field 652, which in this example indicates GM-ININSTANT-N, for storing data identifying the particular game (or type of lottery game) associated with the lottery tickets (as defined by records in the table of FIG. 6B). For example, the information stored in the game identifier field of 652 may comprise or include a number version associated with a particular game title (e.g., “Joker Poker 2.0”) and/or a unique numeric identifier.

[0081] For each instant lottery ticket that is associated with the game identifier 652 shown in FIG. 6B, a lottery ticket identifier field 654 stores data identifying the eligible ticket(s). The information stored in the lottery ticket identifier field 654 may be any unique numeric, alpha-numeric or other type of code that uniquely identifies a lottery ticket that is eligible for the particular game instance identified by the information stored in the game identifier field 652. For each instant lottery ticket that is associated with the identified game and/or game instance, a Base Payout/Base Prize field 656 stores data corresponding to the base payout or default payout associated with the instant lottery ticket of the corresponding record. Contrary to on-line games (such as “pick-6”, described above), base or default payouts (and thus redemption values) associated with instant lottery games are typically predetermined and assigned to respective individual physical lottery tickets at the time of their manufacture (instead of per the result of a comparison of player chosen indicia to winning indicia).

[0082] In accordance with some embodiments, a modified or enhanced redemption value associated with an instant or scratch-off game ticket may be determined based on the elapsed time between the initial purchase of the lottery ticket and the actual time of redemption of any particular prize associated with that lottery ticket. Accordingly, the ticket database 650 includes a Time of Purchase data field 658, a Time of Redemption data field 660, and a Premium data field 662.

[0083] For example, the data contained in row R650-1 indicates that the lottery ticket 1-555441 is associated with a base payout or base prize of zero and was purchased on May 1, 2006. Since this ticket is a losing ticket, it will not be redeemed and is not associated with a premium so the indicator N/A (not applicable) appears in data fields 660 and 662. The data for ticket 1-555442 shown in row R650-2 indicates that this lottery ticket is also a losing entry and has not yet been purchased. Referring to row R650-3, the lottery ticket 1-555443 is associated with a base payout of $50.00 as shown in Base Payout/Base Prize field 656. In addition, as shown in data fields 658, 660 and 662, lottery ticket 1-555443 was purchased on May 10, 2006, redeemed on May 12, 2006, and did not qualify for a Premium. However, as shown by the data in row R650-N, ticket 1-950000 was associated with a base payout of $3.00, was purchased on May 3, 2005, redeemed on May 4, 2006 and was awarded a premium value of $1.00 which was added as a bonus to the $3.00 payout. Thus, in the case of lottery ticket 1-950000, the player collected a total of $4.00 as the lottery prize ($3.00 base prize+$1.00 premium).

[0084] 8. Redemption Status Database

[0085] FIG. 7 is a tabular representation of an embodiment of a redemption status database 700 that may be utilized by a lottery operator controller. In general, the redemption status database 700 stores information that may be used by the lottery operator controller to determine the redemption value of a lottery ticket. The database 700 includes a game identifier field 702 and a game instance identifier field 704 (both of which have been described above with respect to FIGS. 4, 6A and 6B). A game results field 706 is also included for storing information identifying a set of winning indicia, in this case the winning lottery numbers that were drawn (according to an on-line game embodiment). In the illustrated example, the game results field 706 indicates that the results of the lottery game drawing were the numbers 03, 11, 16, 19, 33 and 40, and these numbers are associated with the game GM-DRAW-001. Thus, these numbers are the set of winning numbers for this particular game instance (for other lottery games, a set of symbols rather than numbers may be drawn). Based on the information stored in the game results field 706 and the information in the corresponding entries of the ticket database 600 (see FIG. 6A), at least a first redemption value or first payout (base or default payout) is determined for the winning lottery tickets identified by an entry in the ticket/entry identifier field 708 of the corresponding record. For example, the initial redemption values and/or payouts may be determined in a manner similar to that discussed above with respect to various payout criteria (and/or game rules) represented in the lottery games database of FIG. 4. Upon determination of the initial redemption value/payout, information representing this amount is then stored in the “Available Redemption Value 1” field 710 of the redemption status database 700.

[0086] In accordance with some embodiments, one or more modified redemption values (enhanced values) that are different than the initially determined base redemption value may be associated with a particular lottery ticket or lottery entry. The modified redemption value may include a premium in addition to the base redemption value. In addition, the modified redemption value may be associated with the lottery ticket or lottery entry for a limited amount of time (or until the occurrence of a given event) in order to provide an incentive for players to timely redeem (all or some) of their winning lottery entries. Upon the determination of an enhanced redemption value (as described below),
information representing the enhanced redemption value may be stored in the “Available Redemption Value N” field 712.

[0087] For each lottery ticket or lottery entry defined by an entry in the ticket status database 700, a redemption status field 714 may store information representing whether or not an available payout has been associated with the ticket. Upon issuance (or authorization of issuance) of a payout for a given entry and the determination of the actual payout to be provided, information reflecting the final payout may be stored in the final redemption value field 716.

[0088] For example, as shown in rows R700-1 and R700-2, for lottery tickets T-111111 and T-111112 the available redemption value field 716 has been set to zero. However, for row R700-3, ticket T-111113 is associated with a base value of $3.00, an enhanced value of $4.00, and was redeemed on Jan. 31, 2008. Thus, the final redemption value field 716 is $4.00 (because the player satisfied the criteria for receiving the enhanced redemption value as a prize). As shown in row R700-N, ticket T-222111 has an associated base value of $100.00 and an enhanced value of $105.00, but is still outstanding (e.g., the ticket has been sold to a player, but the player has not yet redeemed this lottery ticket), and thus the final redemption value is to be determined (TBD).


[0090] FIG. 8 is a flowchart 800 depicting an embodiment of a method for determining a payout associated with an eligible, winning lottery ticket or lottery entry. The method may apply to an instant type lottery game, or to an online type game, or to a “hybrid-type” lottery game (wherein a hybrid-type lottery game may be defined as a lottery game that has both an associated online component (a drawing), and a scratch-off component). As explained above, a winning eligible lottery ticket may be defined as a lottery ticket that includes at least one winning entry, and that is associated with a lottery game that has not yet expired. The lottery operator controller 106 shown in FIG. 1 (and the lottery operator controller 300 referred to in FIG. 3) in conjunction with the various data structures described herein may perform the method of FIG. 8. It should be understood that, although the method of FIG. 8 is described as a series of numeric steps, the numeric designations are not intended to impart or imply a specific order to the steps. Rather, the steps of the method of FIG. 8 may be performed in any order that is practicable and may include the addition and/or omission of one or more particular steps.

[0091] The process illustrated by FIG. 8 begins when a redemption request 802 is received that is associated with an eligible, winning lottery ticket. For example, as discussed earlier, the controller 106 of FIG. 1 may receive a redemption request by way of the communications network 104 from any of the retailer terminal(s) 102.1 to 102-N and then verify that the lottery ticket corresponds to a winning entry in a database of a lottery that has not expired. Typically, a player presents a lottery ticket for redemption to a lottery terminal operator or clerk at a lottery retailer, who then scans or otherwise enters the ticket identifier at the retailer terminal. The identifying information is then transmitted from the lottery retailer terminal to the lottery operator controller, which then compares the ticket identifier and/or other indicia to data that may be stored in one or more databases.

[0092] Referring again to FIG. 8, upon receiving the redemption request in step 802, the controller determines a time 804 associated with the redemption request. In various embodiments, the determination of a time associated with a redemption request may include determining an actual time associated with the request (e.g., by way of the controller clock element described above with respect to FIG. 3), and/or may include determining an elapsed time associated with the redemption request (e.g., the controller may calculate that less than twenty-four hours elapsed since the occurrence of a lottery drawing and the time the lottery ticket was presented for redemption by associating the time of redemption with a received ticket identifier).

[0093] In another embodiment, instead of determining a time associated with the redemption request, a controller may operate on the basis that a base value should be associated with a lottery ticket (or with all winning lottery tickets) and the base value may be modified until such time as the occurrence of a terminating event. For example, players may receive a modified redemption value (e.g., fifty percent more than the base value) until such time that a predetermined number of winning lottery entries and/or lottery tickets having been redeemed. For example, players receive the modified or enhanced redemption value until a predetermined threshold number of redemptions, such as one hundred redemptions, are made.

[0094] Continuing with the example embodiment shown in FIG. 8, after determining a time associated with the redemption value 804, the lottery operator controller then determines 806 whether the actual and/or elapsed time is less than or equal to a predetermined time value. For example, the time of the redemption request may be compared to the time associated with a given instance of an online lottery game in order to determine whether the request to redeem the lottery ticket occurred within a predetermined elapsed time from the drawing time. In another example, the controller may determine the time of the redemption request and compare such data to the time associated with the sale of a given instant ticket, in order to determine whether the redemption request has occurred within a predetermined elapsed time relative to the sale of the instant ticket (this implementation was described above with respect to FIG. 5B). According to some embodiments, the controller may determine the actual time and/or the elapsed time associated with the redemption request (e.g., via a clock element as described above with respect to FIG. 3).

[0095] In FIG. 8, if it is determined that the time associated with the redemption request in step 806 is not less than or equal to the predetermined time (an actual and/or an elapsed time), then the controller authorizes 808 the issuance of a first payout based on a first redemption value. For example, the first redemption value may comprise a base or default redemption value (e.g., non-modified monetary value) that is associated with the lottery entry and/or lottery ticket. In some embodiments, as mentioned earlier, the controller authorizes the issuance of a lottery payout by transmitting information associated with the determined payout to the appropriate lottery terminal. Such information may then be used to instruct a lottery terminal operator to confer the payout to the player. The process then continues,
and in this embodiment the controller updates 810 a redemption status field and a final redemption value field to provide an appropriate record of the lottery transaction in a redemption status database (for example, by updating the appropriate fields of the redemption status database 700 shown in FIG. 7). [0096]. However, if it is determined in step 806 that the time associated with the redemption request is less than or equal to the predetermined time (an actual time and/or an elapsed time), the lottery controller determines a second redemption value (e.g., a modified monetary value) that is different from the first redemption value. In some embodiments, the modified redemption value is determined in accordance with one or more payout determination rule(s). For example, a payout determination rule may include a time (duration, elapsed time or actual time) during which a redemption value associated with a lottery ticket and/or lottery entry may be modified. Alternatively, the redemption value may be modified until such time as the occurrence of a predetermined event (e.g., the awarding or issuance of a top prize, a number of winning ticket redemptions, an expiration date, and the like), at which point the redemption value may be determined to be zero.

[0097]. According to some embodiments, the modified redemption value may be determined by accessing data stored in the available redemption value field N of a redemption status database (which was described above with respect to FIG. 7). In another embodiment, the first redemption value may not be modified, but the player may instead be entitled to receive some alternative (such as a non-cash prize) benefit or premium.

[0098]. Referring again to FIG. 8, the lottery controller then authorizes 814 the issuance of a second payout (which may be an enhanced payout) by transmitting information associated with the determined payout (modified or otherwise) to the appropriate lottery terminal. Such information may then be used to instruct a lottery terminal operator to confer the second payout in cash to the player. The second redemption value may comprise, for example, a default redemption value (e.g., a non-modified monetary amount or base value) that is modified to include a premium as described above.

[0099]. After authorizing the issuance of the second payout by transmitting information to the appropriate lottery terminal, the controller then updates 810 the appropriate field(s) in the redemption status database 700 to reflect that the lottery entry and/or lottery ticket has been redeemed. For example, referring to row 700-3 of FIG. 7, the lottery entry "T-111113" has a redemption status of "REDEEMED", a first available redemption value (or first payout value) of "$3.00", an Nth available redemption value (or second payout value) of "$4.00" and a final redemption value of "$4.00". Similarly, the lottery entry shown in row 700-N with ticket identifier "T-222111" has a first redemption value of "$100.00", and an Nth redemption value of "$105.00" and a redemption status of "OUTSTANDING" (e.g., this lottery entry has not yet been redeemed).

II. Additional Embodiments

[0100]. According to some embodiments, the method may include a notification system that provides redemption reminders to players. The notification system may include reminders transmitted via email, by regular mail, by cell phone text message, by an outgoing call center, by a Wifi system, or some other form of communication. Such reminders may include an indication of a benefit such as a premium that may be provided to a player, and/or an indication of when a player is required to redeem the lottery ticket in order to obtain a benefit.

[0101]. According to some embodiments, the player may be permitted to redeem a lottery entry by operating an electronic device. For example, the player may be permitted to redeem the ticket by utilizing a website, or by making a phone call. For example, the player may use the electronic device to provide an identifier associated with the winning lottery entry that enables the lottery administrator to credit the winnings for the lottery entry to a player account. In some embodiments, players may be permitted to redeem winning lottery entries by recycling the winnings into predetermined player accounts.

[0102]. Some embodiments include the option of providing automated play of lottery games. In various embodiments, a player provides player identifying information and player parameter selections to a lottery controller or lottery server. The lottery server stores the player parameter selections and proceeds to initiate automated play of a lottery game or of multiple lottery games that have been authorized by the player. According to various embodiments, the player identifying information and player parameter selections may be entered at a player communication device, which may store the information and selections and/or transmit the information and selections to the lottery server. According to various embodiments, the player communication device may initiate automated play.

[0103]. The automated lottery play may occur while the player communication device is unattended by the player. Remote communications with the player permit the player who is engaged in the automated play to both enjoy the ongoing play, and to alter any pre-established, limiting criteria. For example, the player may change criteria relating to funding, by making appropriate adjustments during the course of the automated lottery play. In various embodiments, such adjustments may be made via a communication device, and some limitations may also be altered remotely. For example, a telephone call to personnel operating the lottery server, or an appropriate communication to the lottery server itself may suffice. The automated play session ends upon occurrence of a limiting criterion or upon the termination of the automated play session by the player. In some embodiments, the limiting criteria will be the use of the money initially authorized for lottery play, that is when an account associated with the automated lottery play mode runs out of money then the play session ends. Some configurations also provide methods and apparatus for notifying a player when available credit is running low, permitting a player to increase the balance of an account, or to remotely authorize further funds for continued play. In some embodiments, the player can also "recycle" winning lottery prizes, and can redeem winning lottery tickets remotely, for example, by going online or by using a telephone. Further details regarding such methods and apparatus can be found, for example, in U.S. Pat. No. 6,964,611 entitled "System and Method for Automated Play of Lottery Games", which is assigned to the assignee of the present application and is incorporated in its entirety for all purposes herein.

[0104]. Some lottery games may be considered "hybrid" lottery games because there is both an associated online component (a drawing), and a scratch-off component. As
mentioned above, the present methods may also be used for such hybrid lottery games. For example, a method for enticing players of such hybrid-type lottery games to redeem their winning lottery entries would be similar to that of the drawing-style lottery game examples described above, but instead of a one-dollar cash prize (which the customer used in the example above to purchase gourmet coffee) a one-dollar ($1.00) scratch-off instant ticket or the like would be issued as a premium or bonus prize. As was noted previously, in some embodiments, scratch-off type lottery tickets can be given as premiums for playing on-line type lottery games (and/or vise versa).

[0105] According to some embodiments, a modified redemption value (e.g., a second payout or an enhanced payout) may be determined based on alternative or additional factors. For example, a factor may include other redemptions by the player. For example, each player may be limited to a single redemption per visit. Alternatively or in addition, in order to qualify for a premium for redeeming an eligible winning lottery ticket, a player may be limited to a single redemption within a certain period of time, for example, once every twenty-four hours, or once every two days, and the like, thereby encouraging repeat visits by the player to the lottery retailer. In some embodiments, the determination of whether to authorize a second payout to a player may be based on the number of lottery tickets and/or the number of losing lottery tickets that a player has purchased in the past, which operation assumes that there is a purchase history associated with that player that may be available, for example, in a lottery database. In some embodiments, a determination may be made to increase the value of an enhanced payout if the time associated with the request to redeem is less than a predetermined time limit. For example, if the player redeems an eligible, winning instant lottery ticket that is associated with a base value of $7.00 within 48 hours of purchase, then he receives an additional $1.00, but if he redeems the same winning lottery ticket within 24 hours of purchase then he receives an additional $2.00 instead.

[0106] In some embodiments, a premium amount based on one or more modified redemption values may be awarded on a “first come, first served” basis. In particular, in an implementation a player’s bonus may be determined based on when the player elects to redeem. In some embodiments, the premium may be awarded to lottery players for redemption of winning lottery entries that were purchased early in the lottery game drawing cycle (for example, lottery entries that were purchased on a Monday for a lottery game having a drawing on Saturday may qualify for a premium if such entries turn out to be winning entries). This method prompts players to buy early in the lottery game cycle, which may result in protracting the advertisement of increased jackpots (i.e., the sooner players buy lottery tickets in a particular lottery game, the sooner the lottery operator can increase the jackpot, and the longer the lottery operator can advertise the increasing size of the lottery jackpot).

[0107] In another embodiment, the determination to pay a premium value in addition to a default value for a winning lottery entry may be randomly decided. For example, a player may qualify to receive a base value upon redemption of an eligible, winning lottery ticket, plus a potential bonus amount (for example, double the value of the redemption) based on a random determination. According to some embodiments, the random determination may be associated with or based on a redemption (or a purchase) time and/or date, on a redeeming retailer (e.g., all redemptions with respect to a game instance occurring at a particular retailer (or type of retailer) may be eligible for a modified redemption value), on a particular game ticket or lottery game instance, on a player ID, or the like.

[0108] In some embodiments, the decision of whether to authorize an enhanced payout may depend on one or more other purchases made by the player. For example, a player may receive a premium amount (e.g., a second monetary amount that is larger than a first payout, or a default payout) if the player purchases (or agrees to purchase) $100.00 in retailer merchandise during the redemption visit. In yet other embodiments, the decision as to whether to authorize a second payout amount may depend upon one or more purchases made by other players. For example, the redemption value of an eligible, winning lottery ticket may be determined based on how many players have purchased lottery tickets for the next lottery game drawing (or how many tickets have been sold, regardless of the number of purchasing players). In some embodiments, the determination of whether to authorize an enhanced payout may depend on the number or value of redemptions made at a specific lottery retailer establishment, for example. This method may be beneficial to lottery retailers because lottery players could be encouraged (e.g., by advertisements and/or messages via email and the like) to seek out lesser-visited (or higher-volume) lottery retailers in order to redeem their winning lottery tickets and obtain enhanced payouts. These players may be more likely to spend at least a portion of their winnings at the lottery retailer’s store, and thus such a program may be used by the lottery agency to encourage lottery retailers to sell more tickets, or could be used to reward high-volume sellers (e.g., the lottery agency can broadcast the names and locations of lottery retailers who are authorized to award payout premiums for winning lottery entries by taking advertisements on the internet, or on the radio, or on television, for example, either as a reward for high-volume lottery retailers, or as an incentive for lower volume retailers to increase their sales).

III. Example Application

[0109] In one hypothetical scenario in accordance with one or more embodiments, a customer buys a one-dollar ($1.00) drawing-style (online) lottery ticket from ABC Mart on his way home from work on a Friday night. He watches the drawing on television on Saturday night, and determines that his ticket was a ten-dollar ($10.00) winner. He noticed that an area on the back of the lottery ticket reads: “Did you win $10 or less? Redeem your winning entry no later than 24 hours immediately after the drawing and receive a 10% instant cash bonus prize! All prizes expire 1 year from date of drawing.” The player decides to return to the ABC Mart store on Sunday morning to redeem his winning lottery ticket, and plans on using the extra one-dollar ($1.00) cash bonus prize to treat himself to a cup of gourmet coffee.

[0110] On Sunday morning, the player drives his car to the ABC Mart, parks the vehicle in the lot next to the store, walks in and presents his winning lottery ticket to the clerk who scans the ticket using a scanning device coupled to a lottery terminal. The lottery system (i.e., the terminal which is in communication with a central lottery server) then confirms that (i) the ticket was a ten-dollar ($10.00) winner, and (ii) because the customer redeemed the winning lottery
ticket within a 24 hour "bonus time frame", the lottery system authorizes and records a payment of an additional one-dollar ($1.00) cash bonus prize in addition to the ten-dollar ($10.00) default or base prize (for a second payout value of eleven-dollars ($11.00)). The customer elects to keep the ten-dollar prize payout, and uses the extra one-dollar ($1.00) prize to purchase a cup of ABC Mart gourmet coffee. Consequently, as illustrated in the example application described above, by making the prize easily attainable and more meaningful to the customer, the customer left the lottery retailer pleased. ABC Mart enjoyed valuable repeat foot traffic by profiting on the sale of the cup of coffee, and the state lottery operator (i) positively reinforced the winning experience by quickly getting cash into the player’s hands and (ii) was able to get the nominal or small prize off its books and into the overall “paid prize tally” which can be used in advertisements of future lottery games.

[0111] The above illustrative process may also be used in connection with an instant-type of lottery game. For example, a customer buys a three-dollar ($3.00) scratch-off-style (instant) lottery ticket from the XYZ Gas Station during a fill-up on his way home from work. As part of the lottery ticket purchase, the XYZ gas station clerk scans the ticket to allow the lottery system to record the time and the date of the ticket’s sale. Deciding that he has a few minutes, the customer scratches the ticket while waiting for the gas station attendant and realizes that he has just won a seven-dollar ($7.00) prize. The customer then decides to redeem his winnings, and notices an area on the back of the ticket that reads: “Did you win a cash prize of $20 or less? Redeem your winning ticket no later than 24 hours immediately following ticket purchase and receive a $1 Free Scratch-off Game ticket in addition to your cash prize! Note: All tickets and prizes expire 1 year from date of sale of last available top prize ticket.” After reading the notification, the customer presents his ticket to the XYZ Gas Station clerk, who then scans the winning ticket into the lottery system. The lottery system then (i) determines that the winning ticket has an associated base (or first) payout of $7.00, (ii) determines that the winning ticket is being redeemed within 24 hours immediately following the ticket’s purchase, and (iii) prompts the XYZ Gas Station clerk to provide the player with a seven-dollar ($7.00) cash payout and one-dollar ($1.00) scratch ticket from available stock (which may be either a specific type of one-dollar lottery game or a comparable lottery game of the customer’s choosing). As in the previous example, the process makes it easy for the player to claim the prize and makes it more meaningful, so that the customer leaves the lottery retailer pleased, the customer identifies the XYZ Gas Station with a positive experience and will probably return in the future, and the state lottery operator (i) positively reinforced the winning experience by quickly getting cash and another lottery entry into the player’s hands and (ii) was able to get the nominal or small prize off its books and into the overall “paid prize tally” which can be used in advertisements of future lottery games.

[0112] It should be noted that the above examples are non-limiting, illustrative descriptions only, and have been included herein for the sake of clarity to demonstrate how processes according to some embodiments could be utilized with regard to several example lottery games.

[0113] The present methods and apparatus presented herein provide numerous benefits to players, lottery retailers and to lottery operators. In particular, customers (i.e., lottery players) are provided with the ability to realize higher overall payouts and are fairly rewarded for promptly redeeming winning lottery entries, even for lottery tickets that are associated with nominal or low payouts. With an improvement in overall lottery redemptions, lottery operators are able to advertise higher total payouts and/or prize tallies (e.g., “to date, the New York State Lottery has awarded $X million in prizes to players”). Lottery retailers also benefit from increased customer visits and resultant incremental sales opportunities. The resulting increase in redemption frequency may also translate or correspond to an increase in the frequency with which players elect to play lottery games.

IV. Rules of Interpretation

[0114] Numerous embodiments have been described, and are presented for illustrative purposes only. The described embodiments are not intended to be limiting in any sense. The invention is widely applicable to numerous embodiments, as is readily apparent from the disclosure herein. 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 structural, logical, software, electrical and other changes may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention. Accordingly, those skilled in the art will recognize that the present invention may be practiced with various modifications and alterations. Although particular features of the present invention may be described with reference to one or more particular embodiments or figures that form a part of the present disclosure, and in which are shown, by way of illustration, specific embodiments of the invention, it should be understood that such features are not limited to usage in the one or more particular embodiments or figures with reference to which they are described. The present disclosure is thus neither a literal description of all embodiments of the invention nor a listing of features of the invention that must be present in all embodiments.

[0115] The terms “an embodiment”, “embodiment”, “embodiments”, “the embodiment”, “the embodiments”, “an embodiment”, “some embodiments”, “an example embodiment”, “at least one embodiment”, “one or more embodiments” and “one embodiment” mean “one or more (but not necessarily all) embodiments of the present invention(s)” unless expressly specified otherwise. The terms “including”, “comprising” and variations thereof mean “including but not limited to”, unless expressly specified otherwise.

[0116] The term “consisting of” and variations thereof mean “including and limited to”, unless expressly specified otherwise.

[0117] The enumerated listing of items does not imply that any or all of the items are mutually exclusive. The enumerated listing of items does not imply that any or all of the items are collectively exhaustive of anything, unless expressly specified otherwise. The enumerated listing of items does not imply that the items are ordered in any manner according to the order in which they are enumerated.

[0118] The term “comprising at least one of” followed by a listing of items does not imply that a component or subcomponent from each item in the list is required. Rather, it means that one or more of the items listed may comprise the item specified. For example, if it is said “wherein A
comprises at least one of: a, b and c” it is meant that (i) A may comprise a, (ii) A may comprise b, (iii) A may comprise c, (iv) A may comprise a and b, (v) A may comprise a and c, (vi) A may comprise b and c, or (vii) A may comprise a, b and c.

[0119] The terms “a”, “an” and “the” mean “one or more”, unless expressly specified otherwise.

[0120] The term “based on” means “based at least on”, unless expressly specified otherwise.

[0121] The methods described herein (regardless of whether they are referred to as methods, processes, algorithms, calculations, and the like) inherently include one or more steps. Therefore, all references to a “step” or “steps” of such a method have antecedent basis in the mere recitation of the term ‘method’ or a like term. Accordingly, any reference in a claim to a ‘step’ or ‘steps’ of a method is deemed to have sufficient antecedent basis.

[0122] Headings of sections provided in this document and the title are for convenience only, and are not to be taken as limiting the disclosure in any way.

[0123] Devices that are in communication with each other need not be in continuous communication with each other, unless expressly specified otherwise. In addition, devices that are in communication with each other may communicate directly or indirectly through one or more intermediaries.

[0124] A description of an embodiment with several components in communication with each other does not imply that all such components are required, or that each of the disclosed components must communicate with every other component. On the contrary a variety of optional components are described to illustrate the wide variety of possible embodiments of the present invention.

[0125] Further, although process steps, method steps, algorithms or the like may be described in a sequential order, such processes, methods and algorithms may be configured to work in alternate orders. In other words, any sequence or order of steps that may be described in this document does not, in and of itself, indicate a requirement that the steps be performed in that order. The steps of processes described herein may be performed in any order practical. Further, some steps may be performed simultaneously despite being described or implied as occurring non-simultaneously (e.g., because one step is described after the other step). Moreover, the illustration of a process by its depiction in a drawing does not imply that the illustrated process is exclusive of other variations and modifications thereto, does not imply that the illustrated process or any of its steps are necessary to the invention, and does not imply that the illustrated process is preferred.

[0126] It will be readily apparent that the various methods and algorithms described herein may be implemented by, e.g., appropriately programmed general purpose computers and computing devices. Typically a processor (e.g., a microprocessor or controller device) will receive instructions from a memory or like storage device, and execute those instructions, thereby performing a process defined by those instructions. Further, programs that implement such methods and algorithms may be stored and transmitted using a variety of known media.

[0127] When a single device or article is described herein, it will be readily apparent that more than one device/article (whether or not they cooperate) may be used in place of a single device/article. Similarly, where more than one device or article is described herein (whether or not they cooperate), it will be readily apparent that a single device/article may be used in place of the more than one device or article.

[0128] The functionality and/or the features of a device may be alternatively embodied by one or more other devices which are not explicitly described as having such functionality/features. Thus, other embodiments of the present invention need not include the device itself.

[0129] The term “computer-readable medium” as used herein refers to any medium that participates in providing data (e.g., instructions) that may be read by a computer, a processor or a like device. Such a medium may take many forms, including but not limited to, non-volatile media, volatile media, and transmission media. Non-volatile media include, for example, optical or magnetic disks and other persistent memory. Volatile media may include dynamic random access memory (DRAM), which typically constitutes the main memory. Transmission media may include coaxial cables, copper wire and fiber optics, including the wires or other pathways that comprise a system bus coupled to the processor. Transmission media may include or convey acoustic waves, light waves and electromagnetic emissions, such as those generated during radio frequency (RF) and infrared (IR) data communications. Common forms of computer-readable media include, for example, a floppy disk, a flexible disk, hard disk, magnetic tape, any other magnetic medium, a CD-ROM, DVD, any other optical medium, punch cards, paper tape, any other physical medium with patterns of holes, a RAM, a PROM, an EPROM, a FLASH-EEPROM, any other memory chip or cartridge, a carrier wave as described hereinafter, or any other medium from which a computer can read.

[0130] Various forms of computer readable media may be involved in carrying sequences of instructions to a processor. For example, sequences of instruction (i) may be delivered from RAM to a processor, (ii) may be carried over a wireless transmission medium, and/or (iii) may be formatted according to numerous formats, standards or protocols, such as Transmission Control Protocol, Internet Protocol (TCP/IP), Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, TDMA, CDMA, and 3G.

[0131] Where databases are described, it will be understood by one of ordinary skill in the art that (i) alternative database structures to those described may be readily employed, and (ii) other memory structures besides databases may be readily employed. Any schematic illustrations and accompanying descriptions of any sample databases presented herein are illustrative arrangements for stored representations of information. Any number of other arrangements may be employed besides those suggested by the tables shown. Similarly, any illustrated entries of the databases represent exemplary information only; those skilled in the art will understand that the number and content of the entries can be different from those illustrated herein. Further, despite any depiction of the databases as tables, other formats (including relational databases, object-based models and/or distributed databases) could be used to store and manipulate the data types described herein. Likewise, object methods or behaviors of a database can be used to implement the processes of the present invention. In addition, the databases may, in a known manner, be stored locally or remotely from a device that accesses data in such a database.

[0132] It should also be understood that, to the extent that any term recited in the claims is referred to elsewhere in this
13. The method of claim 10, wherein the at least one factor comprises at least one of a number of redemptions processed by at least one retailer, and a predefined amount of winning entries redeemed by at least one retailer.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the time associated with the request to redeem comprises calculating a period of time between a time the lottery entry was purchased and a time the request to redeem the lottery entry is received.

15. The method of claim 14, which further comprises increasing the value of the second payout if the time associated with the request to redeem is less than a second predetermined time limit.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the time associated with the request to redeem comprises calculating a period of time between a time a lottery drawing associated with the lottery entry and a time the request to redeem the lottery entry is received.

17. The method of claim 1, which further comprises authorizing the second payout according to at least one rule.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the at least one rule comprises a requirement to present the winning lottery entry prior to at least one of:

- an award of a predetermined threshold number of prizes;
- an award of a predetermined threshold amount of prize money;
- the expiration of a deadline calculated from a start date of the lottery game;
- the expiration of a deadline calculated from the purchase date of the lottery entry;
- the expiration of a deadline calculated from a drawing date of the lottery; and
- the expiration of a deadline calculated from a date of an award of a lottery jackpot prize.

19. The method of claim 1, further comprising notifying a player of at least one redemption condition associated with receiving the second payout.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the at least one redemption condition comprises presenting winning lottery entries for redemption before at least one of a deadline, and the occurrence of a predefined event.

21. The method of claim 19, which further comprises notifying the player of the redemption condition by providing at least one message via at least one of printed matter on the lottery entry, email, telephone, a kiosk, cell phone, set-top device, PDA, and mail.

22. The method of claim 1, further comprising reminding a player to redeem the lottery entry.

23. The method of claim 22, which further comprises notifying the player by utilizing at least one of email, telephone, cell phone, set-top device, PDA, and mail.

24. The method of claim 22, which further comprises an indication of at least one of a benefit, a deadline for collecting the first payout, a value of the first payout, a deadline for collecting a second payout, and a value of the second payout.

25. The method of claim 1, wherein the lottery entry comprises at least one of a drawing-style lottery ticket, an instant lottery ticket, a scratch-off lottery ticket, and an on-line lottery ticket.

26. The method of claim 1, further comprising authorizing the first payout if at least one termination event occurs.

27. The method of claim 28, wherein the termination event comprises at least one of expiration of a second payout.
deadline, redemption of a lottery grand prize, payouts of a predetermined number of winning lottery entries, and a predetermined total payout value of winning lottery entries.

28. The method of claim 1, further comprising storing lottery data in a memory.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the lottery data comprises at least one of a final redemption status and a final payout value, wherein the final payout value corresponds to at least one of the first payout and the second payout.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein the lottery data comprises at least one of first payout value data, second payout value data, lottery game data, a lottery entry purchase time and date, a lottery entry redemption time and date, a lottery entry identifier, a first payout deadline, retailer data, and player data.

31. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
   retrieving second payout data from a lottery database; and
   transmitting the second payout data to at least one of a retailer terminal and a player device.

32. A computer readable medium storing instructions configured to direct a processor to perform the method of claim 1.

33. The computer readable medium of claim 32, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to authorize the second payout if the time associated with the request to redeem is not greater than the predetermined value.

34. The computer readable medium of claim 32, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to authorize the first payout if the time associated with the request to redeem is greater than the predetermined value.

35. The computer readable medium of claim 32, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to, subsequent to receiving the request to redeem a lottery entry, void the lottery entry if the time associated with the request to redeem corresponds to a date greater than a lottery game expiration date.

36. The computer readable medium of claim 32, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to provide payment to at least one of a player and a player account.

37. The computer readable medium of claim 32, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to receive the request to redeem a lottery entry via at least one of a retailer terminal, a personal computer, a kiosk, a telephone, a cell phone, a personal digital assistant device, and an electronic device.

38. The computer readable medium of claim 32, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to determine the time associated with the request to redeem by calculating a period of time using a time the lottery entry was purchased and a time the request to redeem the lottery entry is received.

39. The computer readable medium of claim 38, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to calculate an increased value for the second payout if the time associated with the request to redeem is equal to or less than a second predetermined value.

40. The computer readable medium of claim 32, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to determine the time associated with the request to redeem by calculating a period of time using a time of a lottery drawing associated with the lottery entry and a time the request to redeem the lottery entry is received.

41. The computer readable medium of claim 32, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to notify a player of at least one redemption condition associated with receiving the first payout.

42. The computer readable medium of claim 32, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to remind a player to redeem a lottery entry.

43. The computer readable medium of claim 32, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to authorize the first payout if at least one termination event occurs.

44. The computer readable medium of claim 32, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to store lottery data in a memory.

45. The computer readable medium of claim 32, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to:
   retrieve second payout data from a lottery database; and
   transmit the second payout data to at least one of a retailer terminal and a player device.

46. A method, comprising:
   receiving a request to redeem an eligible lottery entry;
   determining that the lottery entry is a winning entry; and
   determining whether to authorize a first payout or a second payout, wherein the second payout is authorized if a predefined event has not yet occurred.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein the second payout is greater than the first payout.

48. The method of claim 47, wherein the second payout comprises a value equal to the first payout plus a premium.

49. The method of claim 48, wherein the premium comprises at least one of a cash value, a non-cash prize, a percentage of the first payout, a credit, a store credit, a discount coupon, frequent flyer miles, a lottery game entry, and a rebate.

50. The method of claim 46, further comprising providing payment to at least one of a player and a player account.

51. The method of claim 46, wherein the predefined event comprises at least one of:
   an award of a predetermined threshold number of prizes;
   an award of a predetermined threshold amount of prize money;
   the expiration of a deadline calculated from a start date of the lottery game;
   the expiration of a deadline calculated from the purchase date of the lottery entry;
   the expiration of a deadline calculated from a drawing date of the lottery; and
   the expiration of a deadline calculated from the date of an award of a lottery jackpot prize.

52. The method of claim 46, which further comprises receiving the request to redeem the eligible lottery entry via at least one of a retailer terminal, a personal computer, a kiosk, a telephone, a cell phone, a personal digital assistant device, and an electronic device.

53. The method of claim 46, which further comprises determining the second payout value based on at least one factor.

54. The method of claim 53, wherein at least one factor comprises at least one of a predetermined number of redemptions made by a player, a purchase made by the player, purchases made by other players, a total number of
lottery entries purchased by the player, a total number of losing lottery entries purchased by the player, and a random value.

55. The method of claim 53, wherein the at least one factor comprises at least one of a predetermined maximum number of matching lottery selections on a lottery entry and a predefined low value for a lottery entry.

56. The method of claim 53, wherein the at least one factor comprises at least one of a number of redemptions processed by at least one retailer, and a predefined amount of winning entries redeemed by at least one retailer.

57. The method of claim 46, wherein the predefined event comprises at least one of:
an award of a predetermined threshold number of prizes; an award of a predetermined threshold amount of prize money;
the expiration of a deadline calculated from a start date of the lottery game;
the expiration of a deadline calculated from the purchase date of the lottery entry;
the expiration of a deadline calculated from a drawing date of the lottery; and
the expiration of a deadline calculated from a date of an award of a lottery jackpot prize.

58. The method of claim 46, further comprising notifying a player of the predefined event associated with receiving the first payout.

59. The method of claim 58, which further comprises notifying the player of at least one of a benefit, a deadline for collecting the first payout, a value of the first payout, a deadline for collecting a second payout, and a value of the second payout.

60. The method of claim 46, wherein the lottery entry comprises at least one of a drawing-style lottery ticket, an instant lottery ticket, a scratch-off lottery ticket, and an on-line lottery ticket.

61. The method of claim 46, further comprising storing lottery data in a memory.

62. The method of claim 46, further comprising storing lottery data in a memory.

63. The method of claim 62, wherein the lottery data comprises at least one of a final redemption status and a final payout value, wherein the final payout value corresponds to at least one of the first payout and the second payout.

64. The method of claim 62, wherein the lottery data comprises at least one of a first payout value data, second payout value data, lottery game data, a lottery entry purchase time and date, a lottery entry redemption time and date, a lottery entry identifier, at least one first payout deadline, retailer data, and player data.

65. The method of claim 46, further comprising:
retrieving second payout data from a lottery database; and
transmitting the second payout data to at least one of a retailer terminal and a player device.

66. A computer readable medium storing instructions configured to direct a processor to perform the method of claim 46.

67. The computer readable medium of claim 66, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to provide payment to at least one of a player and a player account.

68. The computer readable medium of claim 66, which further comprises instructions configured to direct the processor to authorize the second payout if at least one of the following predetermined events has not yet occurred:
an award of a predetermined threshold number of prizes; an award of a predetermined threshold amount of prize money;
the expiration of a deadline calculated from a start date of the lottery game;
the expiration of a deadline calculated from the purchase date of the lottery entry;
the expiration of a deadline calculated from a drawing date of the lottery; and
the expiration of a deadline calculated from the date of an award of a lottery jackpot prize.

69. The computer readable medium of claim 66, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to determine the second payout value based on at least one of a predetermined maximum number of matching lottery selections on a lottery entry and a predefined low value for a lottery entry.

70. The computer readable medium of claim 66, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to determine the second payout value based on at least one of a number of redemptions processed by at least one retailer, and a predefined amount of winning entries redeemed by at least one retailer.

71. The computer readable medium of claim 66, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to determine the second payout value based on at least one of a number of redemptions processed by at least one retailer, and a predefined amount of winning entries redeemed by at least one retailer.

72. The computer readable medium of claim 66, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to notify a player of the predefined event associated with receiving the second payout.

73. The computer readable medium of claim 66, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to notify the player of at least one of a benefit, a deadline for collecting the first payout, a value of the first payout, a deadline for collecting a second payout, and a value of the second payout.

74. The computer readable medium of claim 66, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to store lottery data in a memory.

75. The computer readable medium of claim 66, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to store at least one of a final redemption status and a final payout value, wherein the final payout value corresponds to at least one of the first payout and the second payout.

76. The computer readable medium of claim 66, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to store at least one of a first payout value data, second payout value data, lottery game data, a lottery entry purchase time and date, a lottery entry redemption time and date, a lottery entry identifier, at least one first payout deadline, retailer data, and player data.

77. The computer readable medium of claim 66, which further comprises instructions configured to direct a processor to authorize the second payout by retrieving second
payout data from a lottery database, and by transmitting the second payout data to at least one of a retailer terminal and a player device.

**78.** A method, comprising:
- receiving a redemption request for a winning lottery entry;
- determining whether to authorize a base payout or an enhanced payout, wherein the enhanced payout is authorized if the redemption request occurred prior to an award of a predetermined threshold amount of prize money.

**79.** The method of claim **78,** which further comprises authorizing the base payout if the lottery entry is presented for redemption subsequent to at least one of:
- an award of a predetermined threshold number of prizes;
- an award of the grand prize for the lottery game;
- the expiration of a deadline calculated from the start date of the lottery game;
- the expiration of a deadline calculated from the purchase date of the lottery entry;
- the expiration of a deadline calculated from a drawing date of the lottery game; and
- the expiration of a deadline calculated from a date of an award of a lottery jackpot prize.

**80.** A computer readable medium storing instructions configured to direct a processor to perform the method of claim **78.**

**81.** A method, comprising:
- receiving a redemption request for a lottery entry;
- determining that the lottery entry is a winning entry; and
- determining whether to authorize a base payout or an enhanced payout, wherein the enhanced payout is greater than the base payout and is authorized if the redemption request occurred prior to the expiration of a deadline calculated from the purchase date of the lottery entry.

**82.** The method of claim **81,** which further comprises authorizing the base payout if the lottery entry is presented for redemption subsequent to at least one of:
- an award of a predetermined threshold amount of prize money;
- an award of a predetermined threshold number of prizes;
- an award of the grand prize for the lottery game;
- the expiration of a deadline calculated from the start date of the lottery game;
- the expiration of a deadline calculated from a drawing date of the lottery game; and
- the expiration of a deadline calculated from a date of an award of a lottery jackpot prize.

**83.** A computer readable medium storing instructions configured to direct a processor to perform the method of claim **81.**