



US 20080090657A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**  
**Miller**

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2008/0090657 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Apr. 17, 2008**

(54) **MULTIPLE CONSOLE VIDEO GAMING SYSTEM AND METHOD**

**Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Provisional application No. 60/603,613, filed on Aug. 23, 2004.

(76) Inventor: **J. Ryan Miller, Malvern, PA (US)**

**Publication Classification**

(51) **Int. Cl.**  
*A63F 9/24* (2006.01)  
(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **463/31**

Correspondence Address:  
**ROBERT S. LIPTON, ESQUIRE**  
**201 NORTH JACKSON STREET**  
**P. O. BOX 934**  
**MEDIA, PA 19063-0934 (US)**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A system and method for receiving a request to initiate console based video game play in which the automated session is based upon a specified period of time related to a cash or credit based purchase, providing for activation of a player specific gaming location, and/or gaming control device, and for later deactivation of player location, and/or gaming control device after expiration of purchased time. Also presented is a system to support a plurality of video display devices, audio and video management, distribution and control devices, plurality of console devices, management/control hardware and software, video game participant control devices.

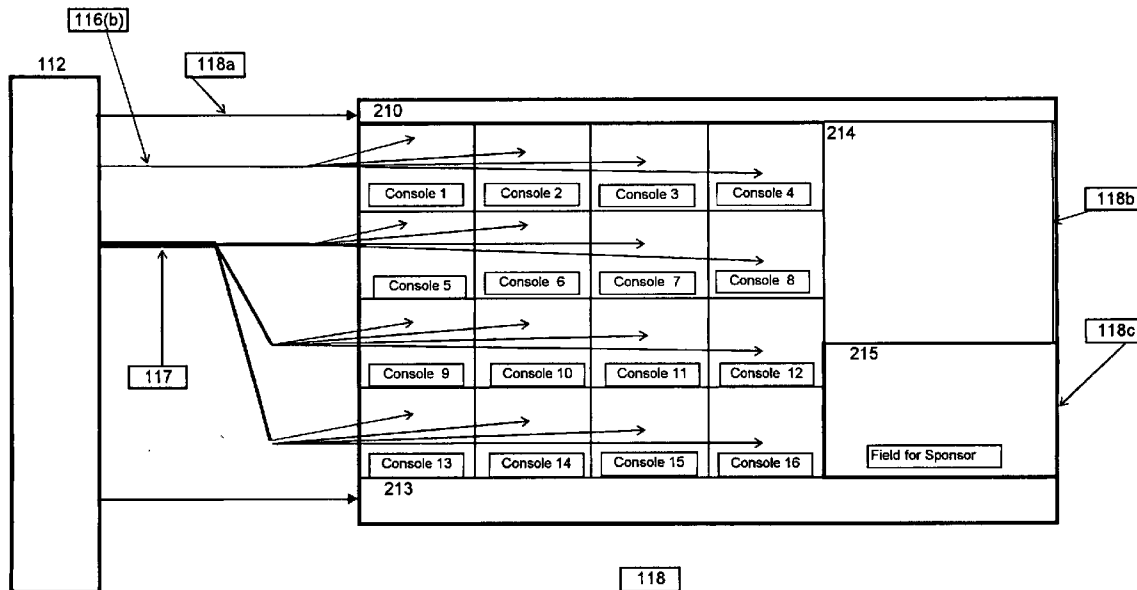
(21) Appl. No.: **11/660,888**

(22) PCT Filed: **Aug. 22, 2005**

(86) PCT No.: **PCT/US05/29900**

§ 371(c)(1),  
(2), (4) Date: **Dec. 21, 2007**

200 **Combination Display Device**



200 Combination Display Device

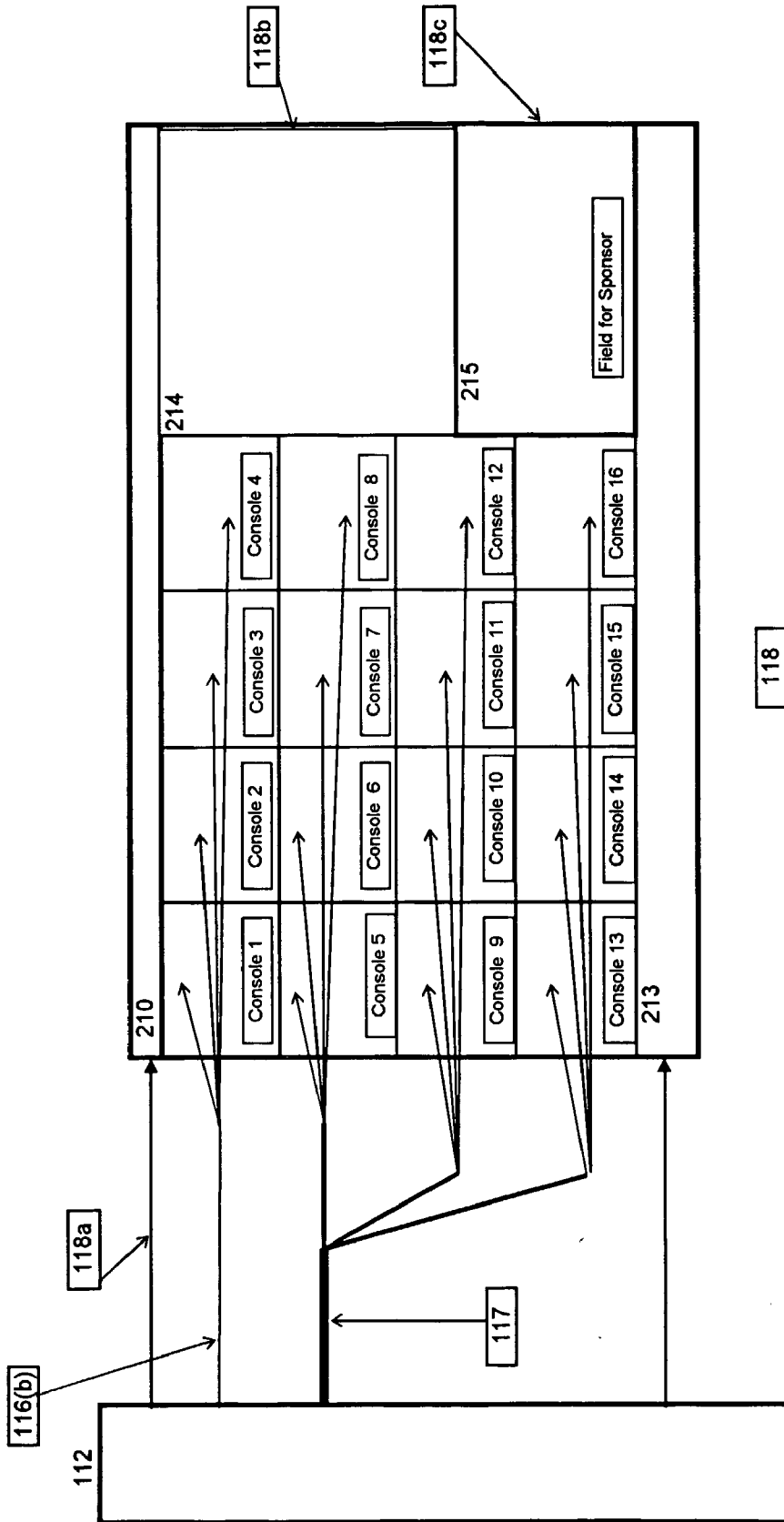


FIGURE 1

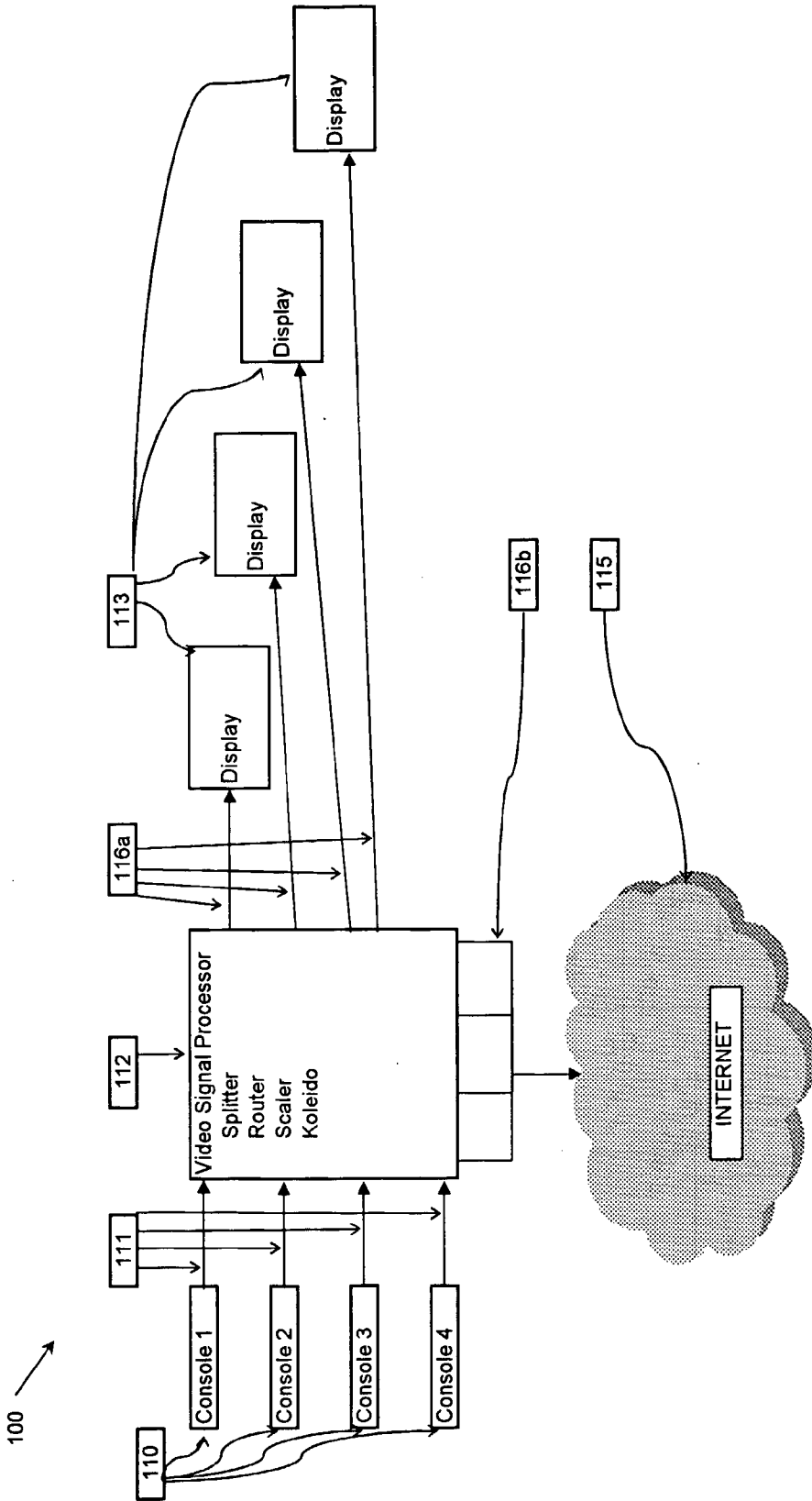


FIGURE 1.1

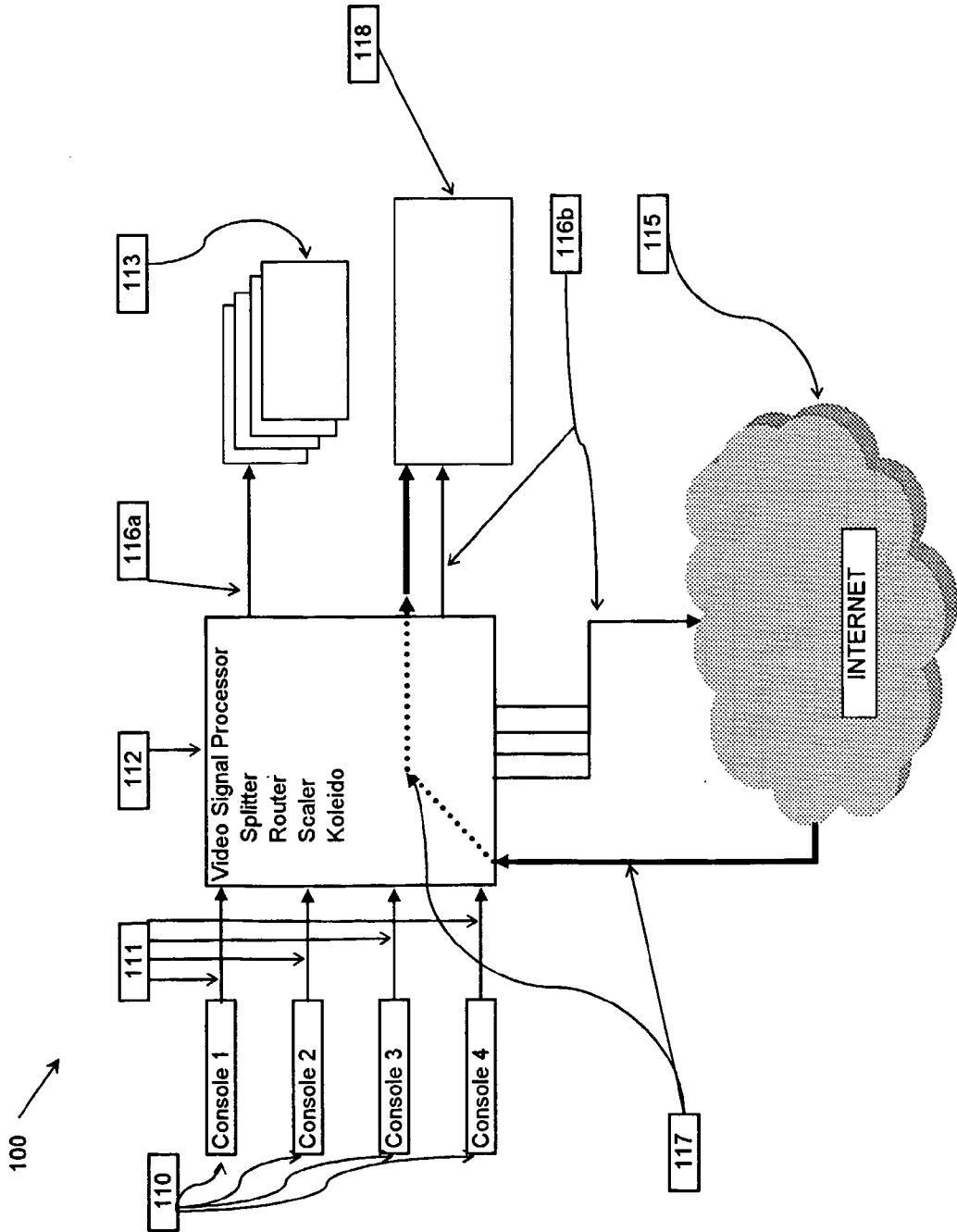


FIGURE 1.2

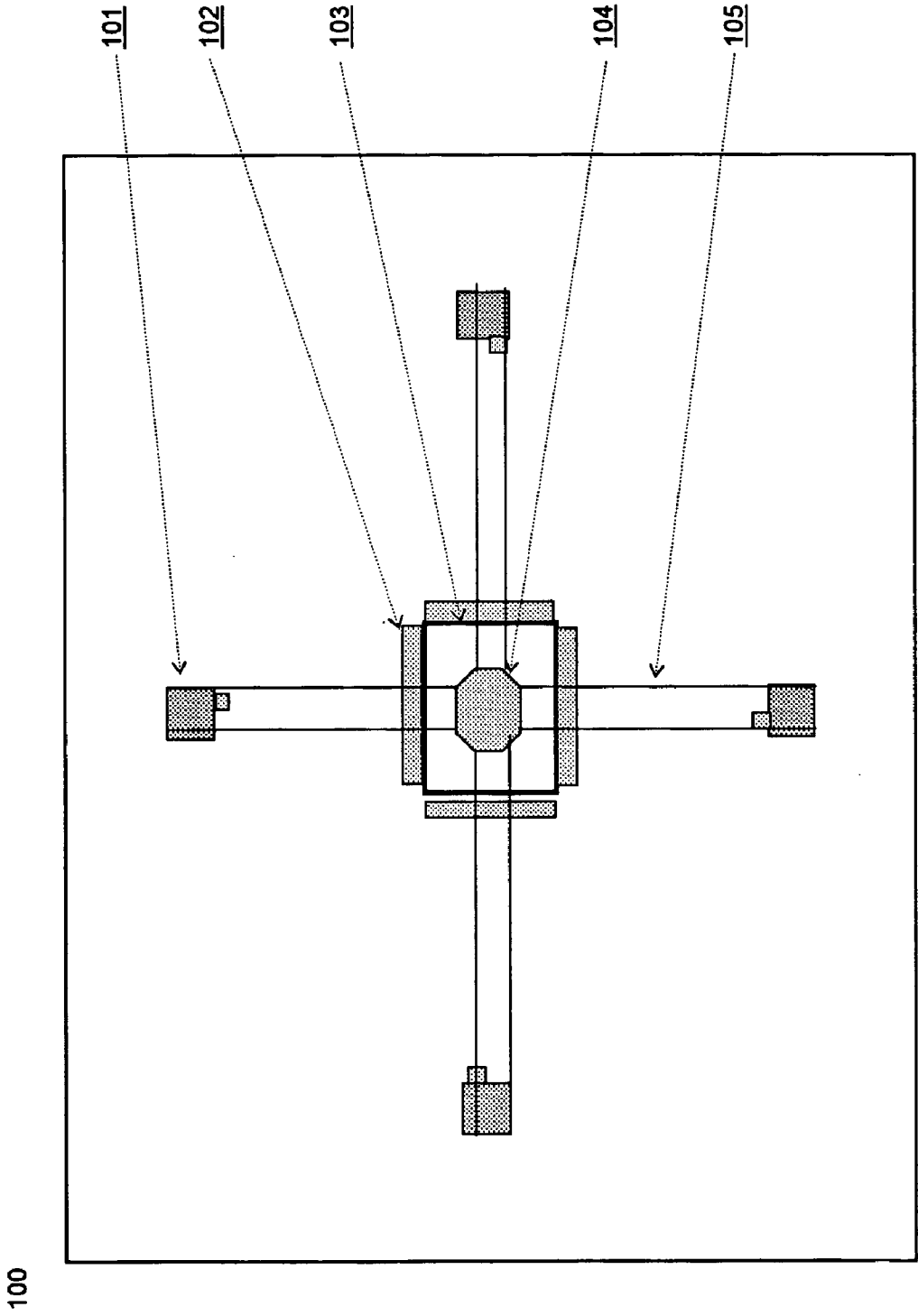


FIGURE 1.3

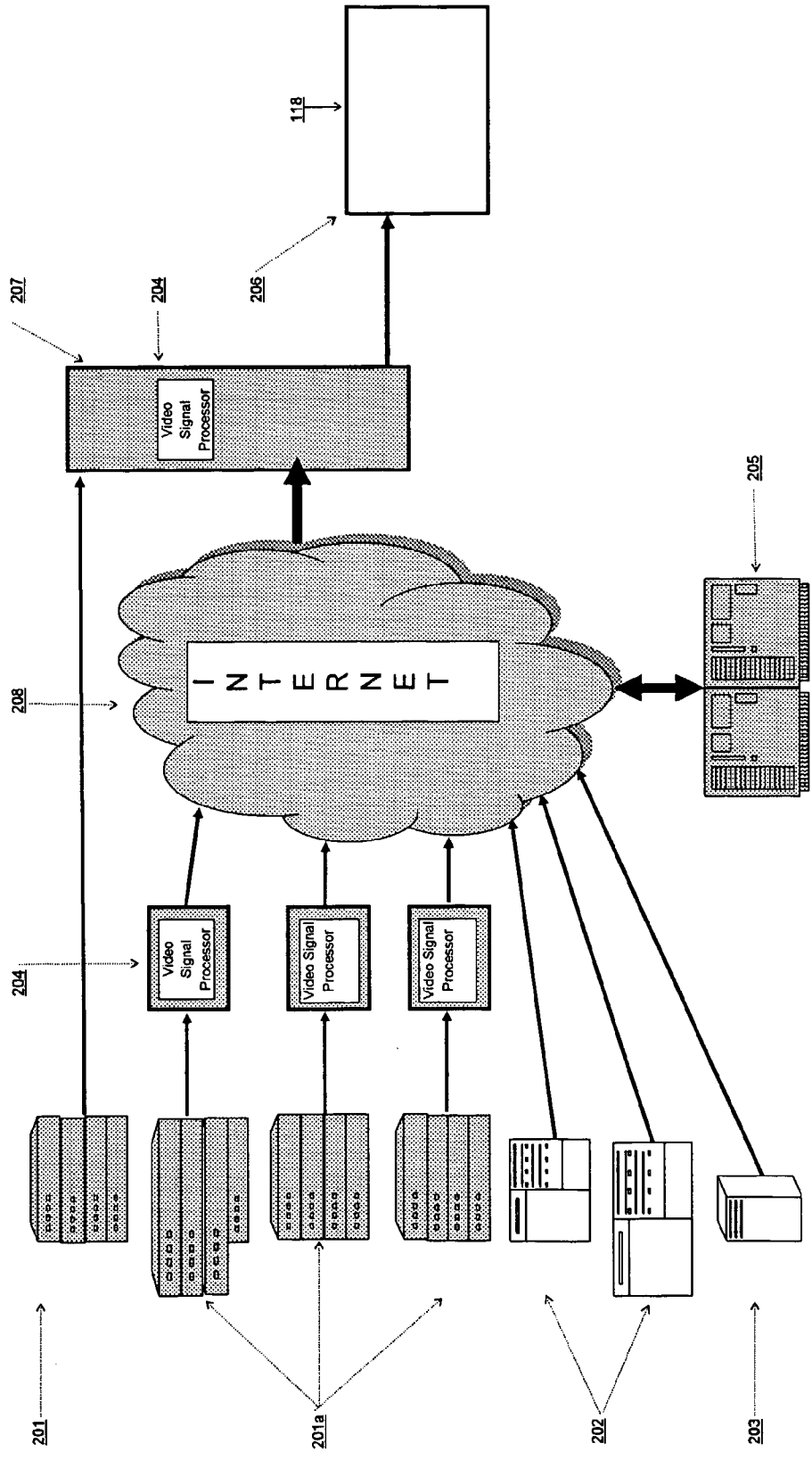


FIGURE 2

Video Gaming Kiosk

Modular Panel  
Dual Display

300

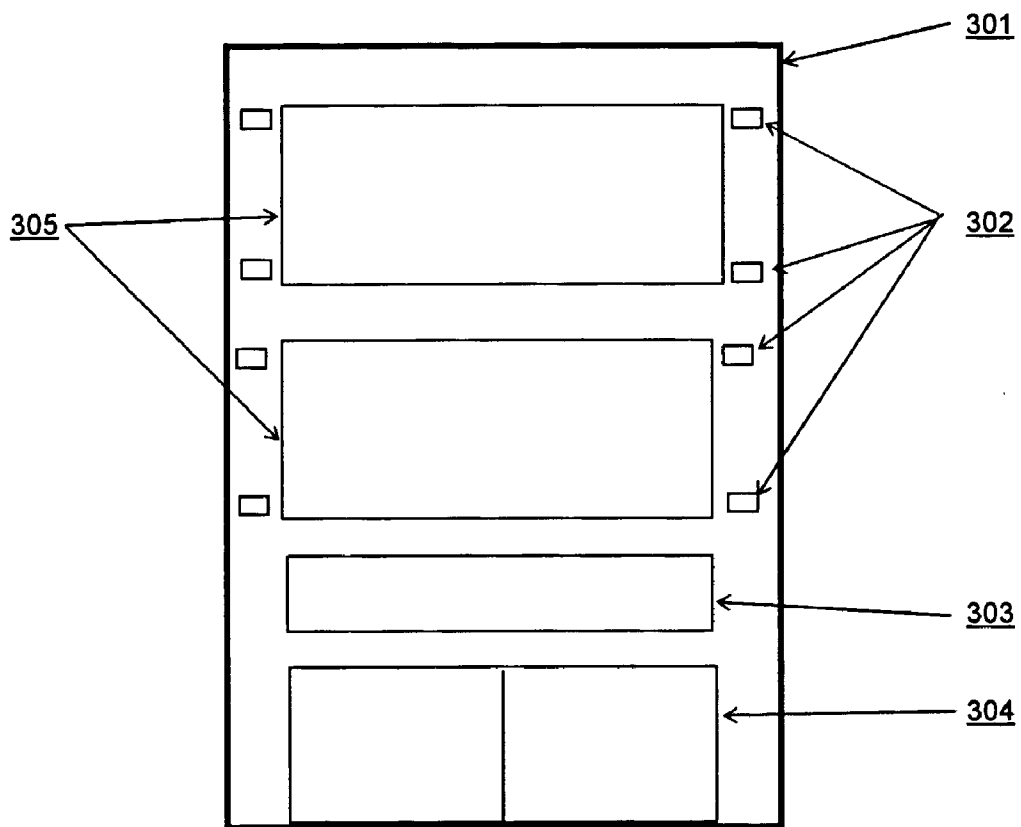


FIGURE 3

Video Gaming Kiosk

Modular Panel  
Single Display

400

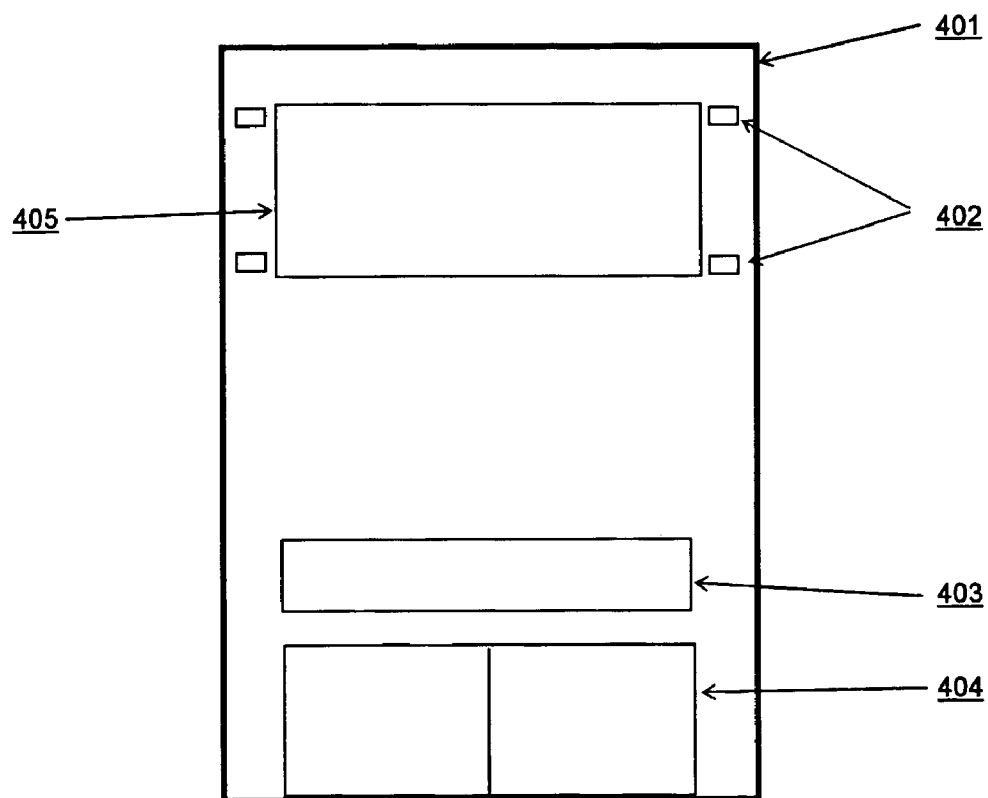


FIGURE 4

Video Gaming Kiosk

Internal Structure

500

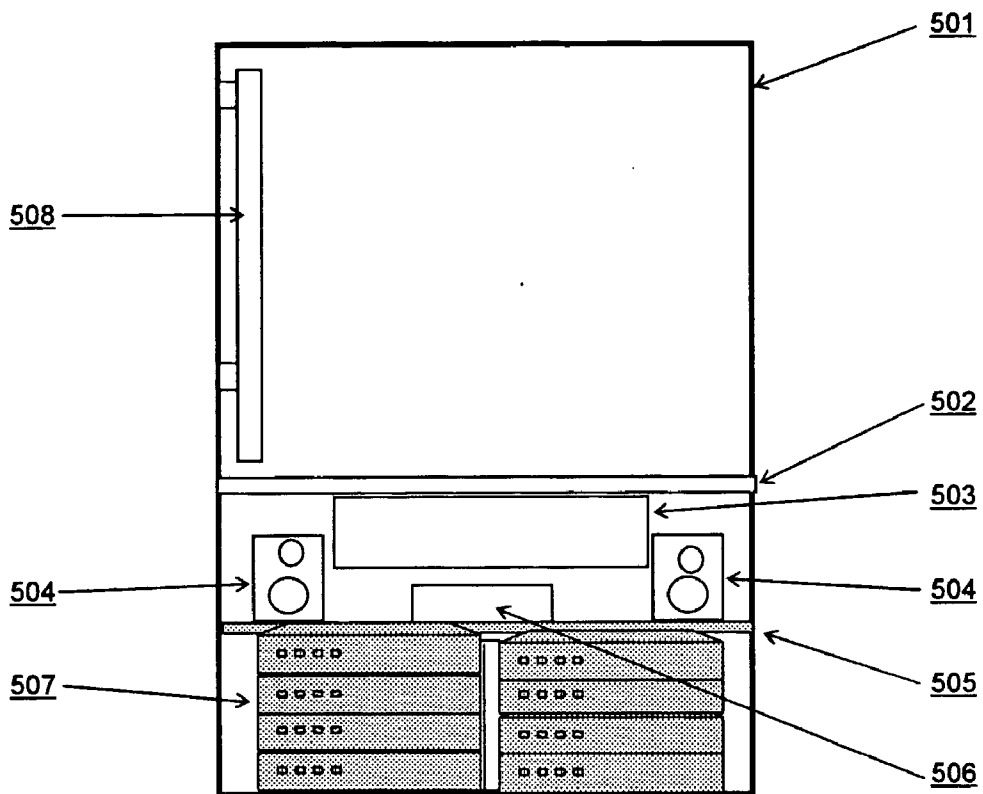


FIGURE 5

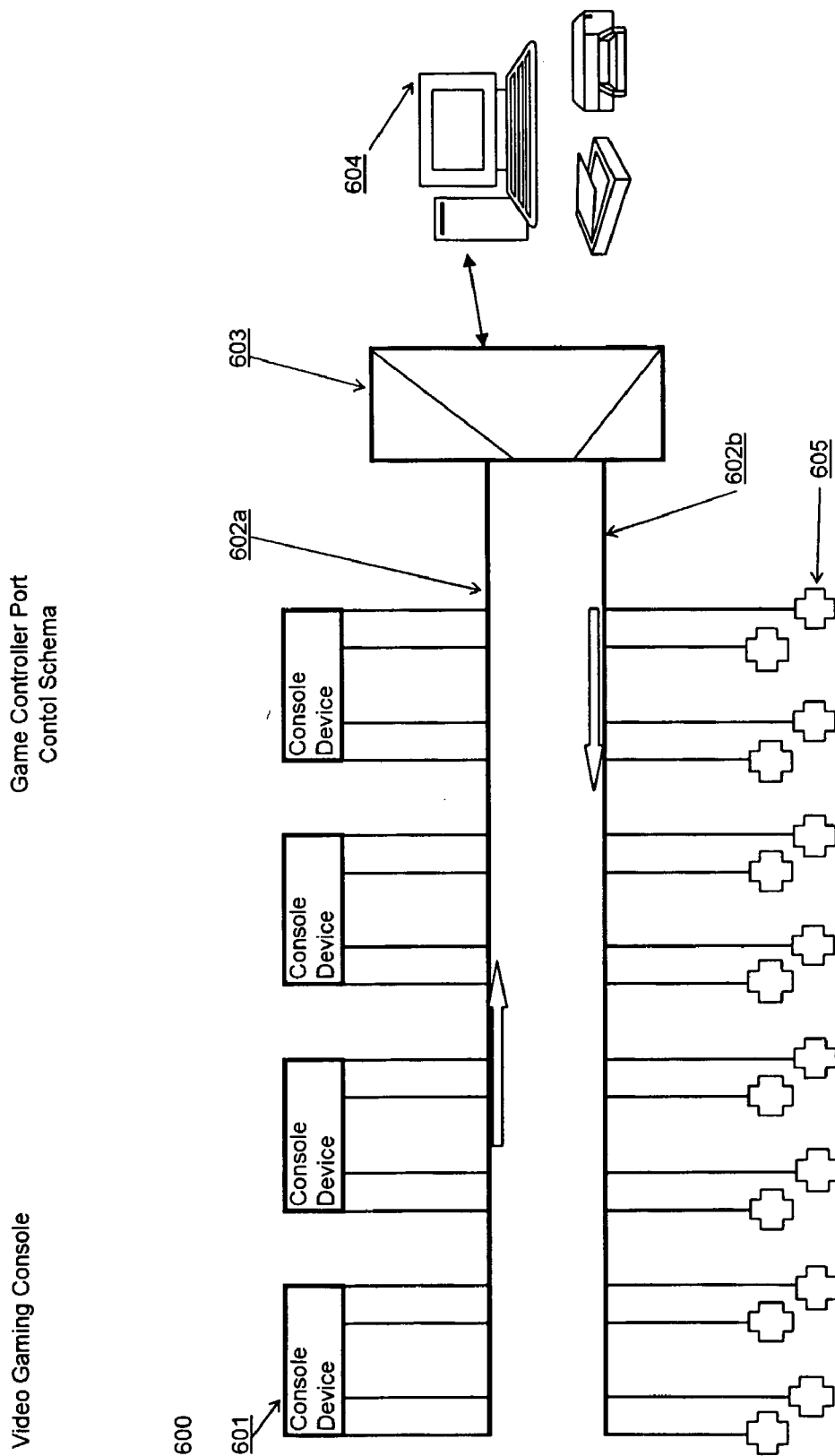


FIGURE 6

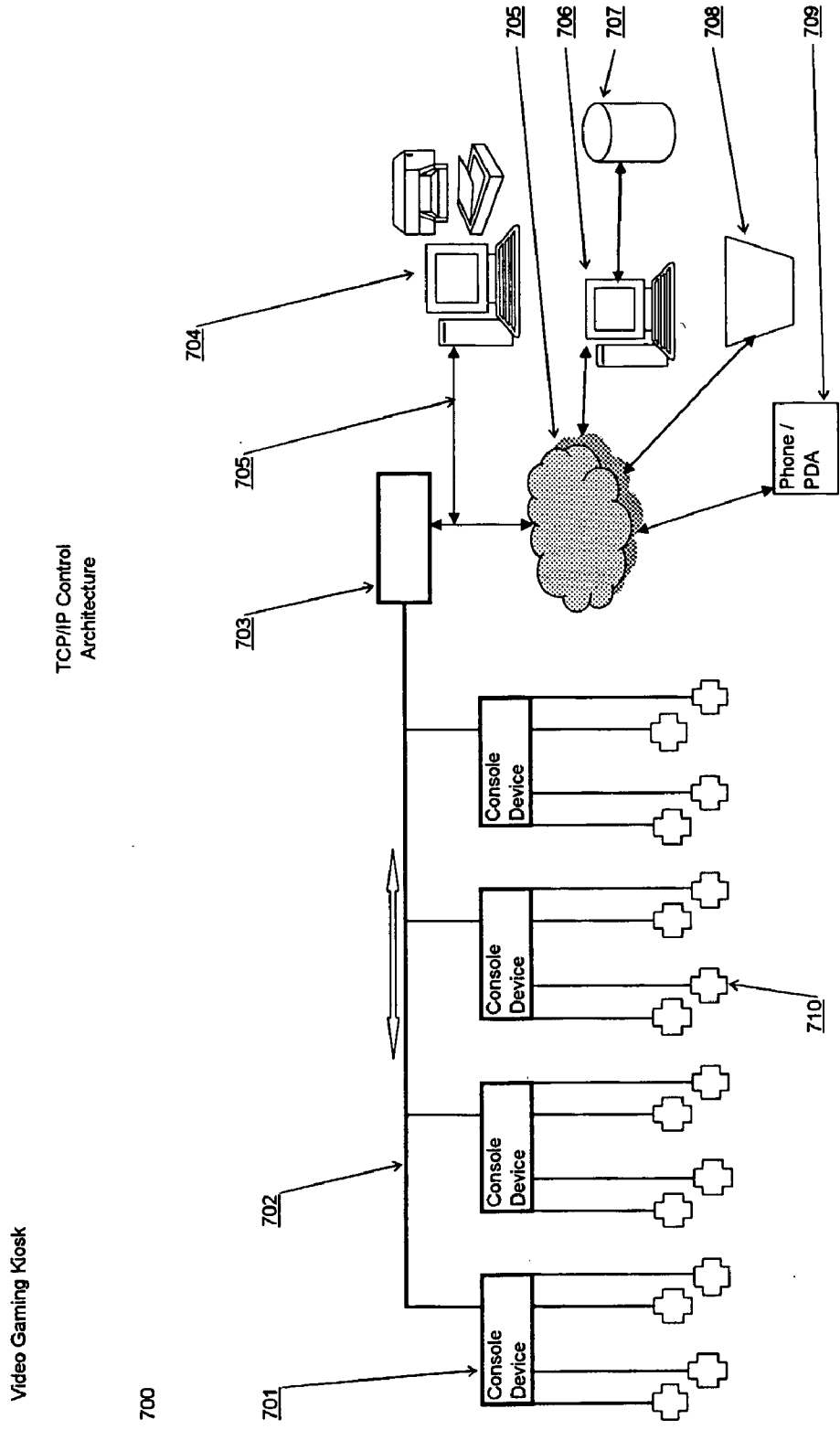


FIGURE 7

Video Gaming Kiosk

Personal Audio Device  
Schema

800

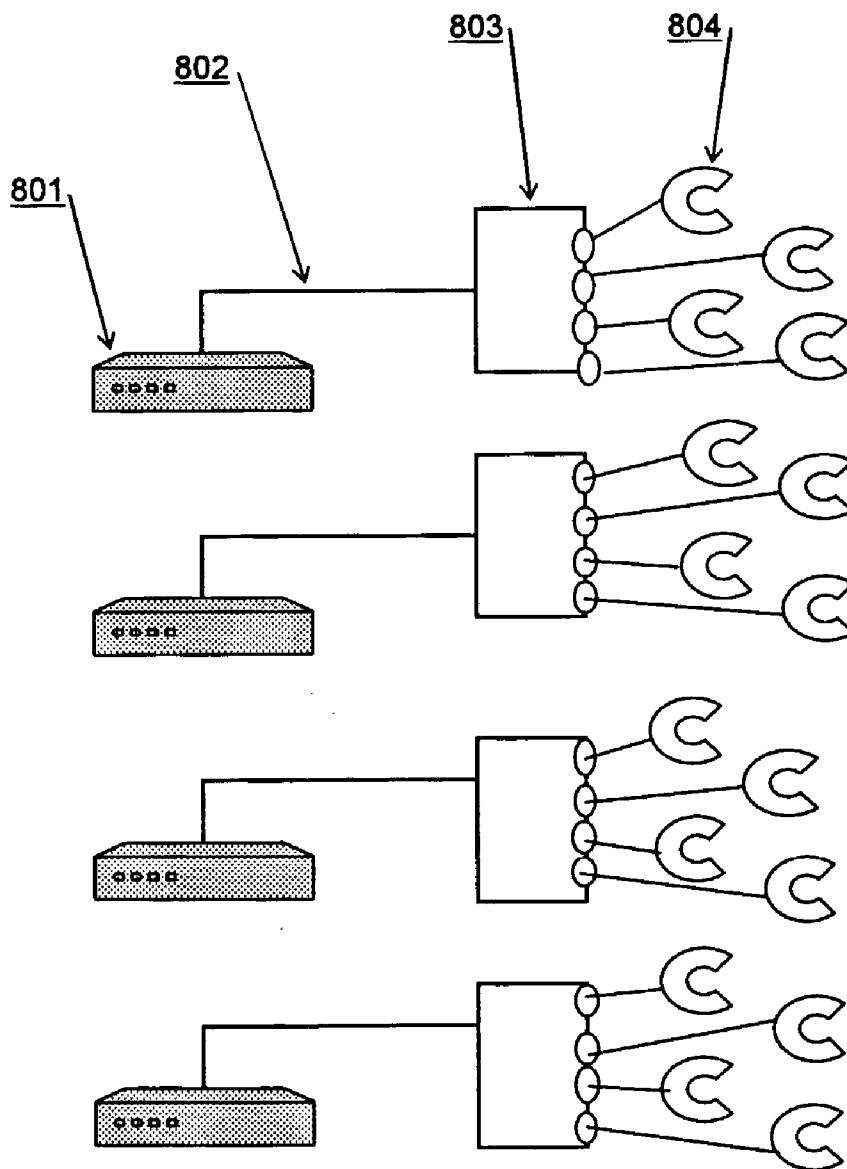


FIGURE 8

900

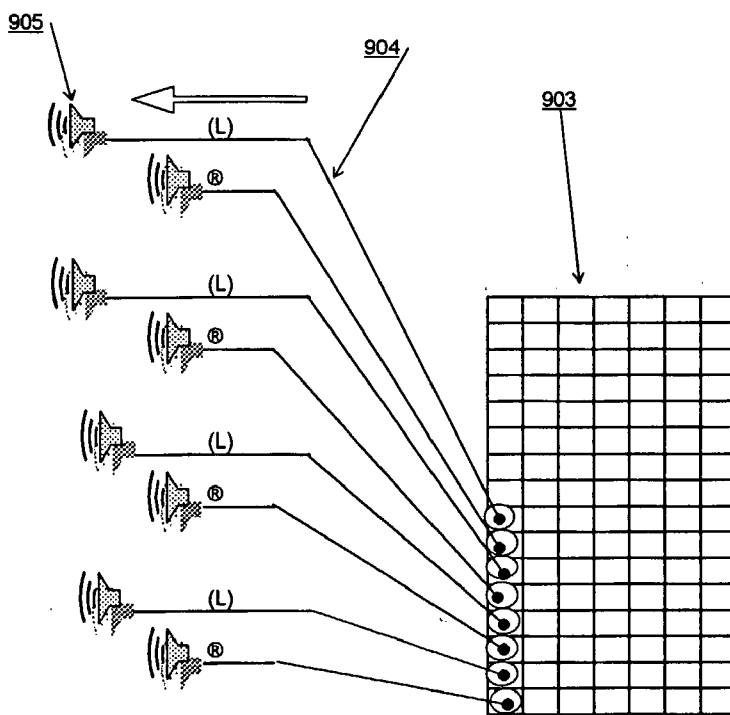
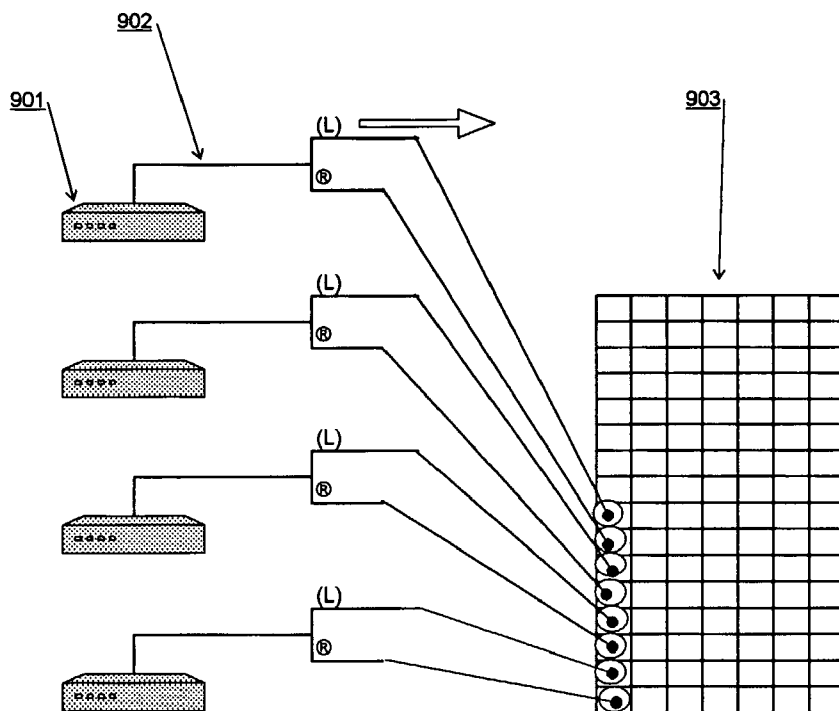


FIGURE 9

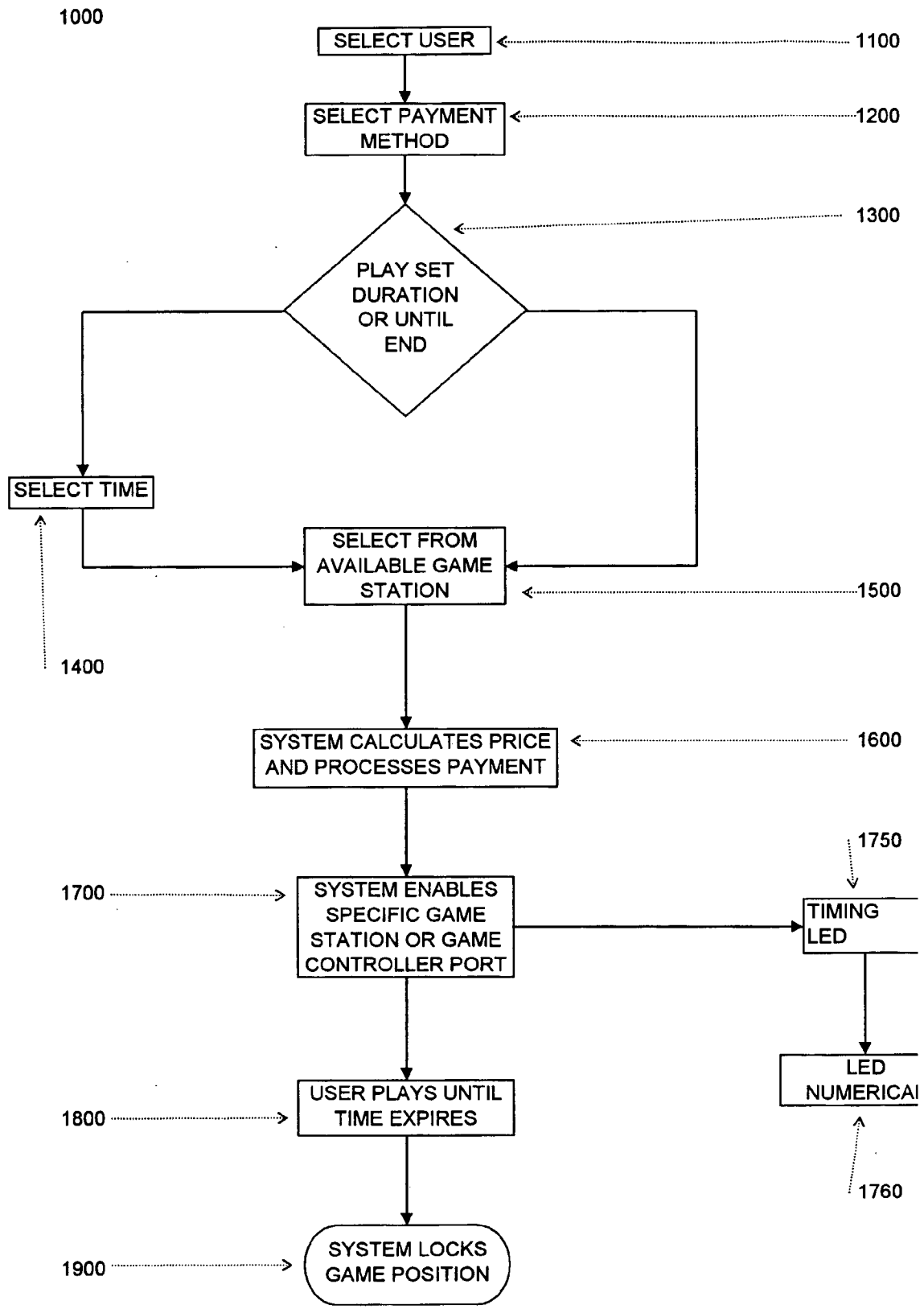


FIGURE 10

1100

<b>User Profile</b>	<b>User Payment</b>	<b>Order</b>	<b>Order History</b>	<b>Game</b>	<b>Game Score History</b>	<b>Game Score</b>
User ID	Credit Card/Bank 1	Order ID	Order ID	Game Serial number	User ID	Game serial number
Password	Number	Priority	Game serial number	Game ID	Game serial number	User ID
First Name	Expiration	Game serial number	Date stamp	Game name	Date stamp	Date stamp
Last Name	Credit Card/Bank 2	User ID	Time stamp	Manufacturer	Time stamp	Time stamp
Active	Number	Date stamp		Manufacturer serial number	Game Score ID	Game score
User Type	Expiration	Time stamp		Purchase date		Game duration
	Credit Card/Bank 3	Duration purchased		Expiry date		
	Number			Location		
	Expiration					
	Game Card number					
	Game Card Value					

**FIGURE 11**

**MULTIPLE CONSOLE VIDEO GAMING SYSTEM AND METHOD**

**CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/603,613 filed Aug. 23, 2004.

**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

[0002] The present invention relates generally to a method and apparatus for initiating and terminating, automated play of console based video game console devices, such as: (Microsoft Xbox, Sony Playstation 2, Nintendo GameCube, etc.), based upon time, commensurate with purchase (Pay-per-Play). The present invention relates to the aggregation of a plurality of console devices, multiple display devices, with an audio, and a video management/distribution architecture.

**DESCRIPTION OF RELATED ART**

[0003] There are several types of dedicated video gaming devices in use today. Most of these dedicated video gaming devices, such as arcade machines, personal computer based gaming centers, server based internet video gaming, have variations of managing pay-per-play of video gaming devices.

[0004] Arcade devices provide a single or multiple people a gaming experience. The prior art discloses that arcade devices are capable of initiating game play based upon coins, tokens, or power cards. Activation of the arcade device is for a period of time, which can be a function of a person's skill level. Arcade devices prior art has not disclosed their ability to operate console based software games.

[0005] Personal computer based gaming centers provide pay-per-play gaming, on personal computers connected to our through a server connection. These locations reveal in their prior art the ability to initiate and terminate automated play specific to personal computer based gaming. Many personal computer gaming centers do provide console based video gaming entertainment. There has been no disclosure for an apparatus for initiating and terminating automated play of console-based video gaming systems. Server based Internet gaming is currently provided for both personal computer gaming and console-based gaming.

[0006] A local computer user connecting to the Internet and logging into a server accomplishes personal computer gaming via the Internet. The local computer may or may not have the gaming software residing on their computer. Subject to the type of game selected, pay-per-play may be offered. Users connecting to play a high twitch game such as Counter Strike, or Battlefield 1942, may not have a fee associated with their participation. The prior art of online casinos, where a personal computer connects via the Internet, would experience pay-per-play in interactive gambling. Several console devices have platforms, which provide for Internet based gaming. Such as Microsoft Xbox Live. The prior art has established an annual fee whereby a video gaming console device can be connected to the Internet a connect to other console devices all gathered through a server.

[0007] Tournament participation of video gaming also has established a structure for providing pay-per-play. The prior

art discloses that participants can pay a tournament fee to compete with other participants for a prize or ranking. This prior art has not disclosed an apparatus for initiating and terminating automated play. Tournaments, which are based on either video gaming console devices or personal computers connected to a server, reflect time control as a function of specific game software settings. I.e., a specific game such as Counter Strike can be set to last a predefine number of kills. If nobody gets killed the game would continue forever.

[0008] Video gaming has been growing in popularity due to the rapid technological advances and the significantly enhanced graphics. Technological advances have propelled the quality of an arcade style of gaming, to be available from a home. While development and technology is supporting, at-home based entertainment, and group participation through the internet, a significant social, emotional need is left unattended.

[0009] Video gaming participants enjoy direct communication and participation with their friends, and fellow gamers. Internet based gaming provides a portal, and communication, but lacks the social component of a participant sitting by your side.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

[0010] A method according to one embodiment of the present invention provides for: receiving a request to initiate console based video game play. Which the automated session is based upon a specified period of time related to a cash or credit based purchase. Activation of a player specific gaming location, and/or gaming control device. Deactivation of player location, and/or gaming control device after expiration of purchased time. A structure to support: a plurality of video display devices, audio and video management, distribution and control devices, plurality of console devices, management/control hardware and software, video game participant control devices.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0011] FIGS. 1, 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are an overall schematic view of a system according to one embodiment of the present invention, including a plurality of video game console devices, including a block diagram of a console based video game video signal path 100 in accordance with the preferred embodiment as described herein.

[0012] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of a console based video game video distribution path 200 in accordance with the preferred embodiment as described herein.

[0013] FIGS. 3 and 4 are block diagrams of a console-based video gaming kiosk modular assembly 300 in accordance with the preferred embodiment as described herein.

[0014] FIG. 5 is a block diagram illustrating the internal structure of a video gaming kiosk modular panel 500.

[0015] FIG. 6 is a block diagram, which illustrates the control signal path of video gaming console device, individual game controller port based control 600.

[0016] FIG. 7 is a block diagram, which illustrates the TCP/IP control signal path of video gaming console device(s) 700.

[0017] FIG. 8 is a block diagram, which illustrates the audio signal architecture for personal audio devices 800.

[0018] FIG. 9 is a block diagram, which illustrates the audio signal architecture for speaker based audio distribution 900.

[0019] FIG. 10 is a Flow Chart, which illustrates the commands software communication and operations of a video gaming kiosk 1000.

[0020] FIG. 11 is a spreadsheet of data tables used in various embodiments of the invention 1100.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0021] Various embodiments of the present invention provide a method and apparatus for time-controlled play on console type devices dedicated to operating video game entertainment. Such devices are described as consoles. Examples of dedicated video game devices described as consoles would be: Microsoft Xbox, Sony PlayStation 2, Nintendo GameCube, Sega Dreamcast, Sony Playstation 1, Nintendo 64, Nintendo 32, Sega Genesis, etc.

[0022] An apparatus according to other various embodiments of the present invention include a physical structure to consolidate, and distribute sub-components of the present invention. A method, according to other various embodiments of the present invention to construct an apparatus; hereto-called gaming kiosk.

Gaming Kiosk Physical Structure (Fixed):

[0023] The preferred embodiment of the present invention of the Kiosk will be fabricated out of steel with an internal steel frame and externally attached steel skins. Steel frame will accommodate the preferred video display system of multiple flat screen display devices. The preferred embodiment of the present invention utilizes (4) flat screen plasma monitors, similar to manufacturer Samsung, Part Number PPM42S3.

[0024] Other various embodiments of the present invention may include multiple display monitors. The structure will have built in functionality to increase the quantity of display devices.

[0025] On each side of the kiosk will be a series of doors or access points for game controllers, personal audio devices, and console game equipment. Additional access may be provided for internal computer hardware, software, and control devices. Structure is modular in design to allow flexibility to increase, or decrease size of kiosk, subject to the desired method of deployment.

[0026] Other various embodiments of the present invention include internal storage and electronics management. Inside the base structure will be internal rack and or shelf type supporting apparatus. Racks or shelves will be of adequate materials and strength to support multiple gaming console devices. The console gaming devices will be products such as: Microsoft Xbox, Sony Playstation 2, Nintendo GameCube, Sega, or other device designed primarily for interactive video gaming.

[0027] Various embodiments of the present invention provide for the termination, management and control of multiple electronic, data, audio, and video signals. Console

devices each will have several types of signals required to be distributed and managed through a kiosk.

Signal management will consist of but not limited to:

- [0028] Audio
- [0029] Video
- [0030] Data.

Audio Signal Distribution

[0031] Various embodiments of the present invention provide for management of Audio signals generated through the console gaming device.

[0032] A method according to other various embodiments provide for the audio signal management to Personal Audio Devices (Headphones).

Personal Audio Devices

[0033] The present invention incorporates an integrated audio management system for individual player sound. The architecture represents the preferred method and apparatus for distributing audio within the kiosk. (Want to claim the solution of the material selection is immaterial compared to the finished solution of headphones at each player location. For example: I would want to provide latitude for including a Microsoft Xbox, headset option for local or internet based gaming.) The preferred embodiment of the invention for distribution of audio would be accomplished as follows:

[0034] Audio signal generated from a console device presently is distributed on cable with a composite connection. The present invention calls for the connection to the console devices Left and Right audio signal to a headphone amplifier similar to a product manufactured by ROLLS, Inc. Part Number HA43. The headphone amplifier would have it's own DC power source connected to an AC powered receptacle. The console audio signal will terminate on the Stereo input port on the HA43 type of device. The output side of the Stereo Headphone Amp device will receive inputs from multiple headphone devices similar to manufacture type AUDIO TECHNICA, INC. Part Number: ATHM2X. Various embodiments of the present invention provide for a headphone per playing position at a gaming kiosk.

Audio Signal Distribution Speaker Array

[0035] A method according to other various embodiments provide for the audio signal distribution to a speaker array. (I want to protect the kiosk structure specific to the Audio distribution on speakers. That the invention is not specific to the layout or design of the speakers, but speakers in general.) The present invention provides for the management, control, and distribution of video gaming consoles audio signal. The Left and Right audio signal composite connections will be adapted to 1/4" mono male connectors. The present invention provides for the connection to all console devices within a gaming kiosk.

[0036] The adapted cable would be inserted into a discrete channel on a multi-channel mixing board similar to equipment manufactured by BEHRINGER, Model Number: UB1622FX-PRO. The output side of the mixing board would send a Left signal to one speaker and a right signal to another speak similar to a product manufactured by M Audio, Part Number: BX5. Each console would have it's

own left and right speaker assignment. For displays connected to multiple consoles, each console would have a single speaker emitting a blended signal of left and right audio through the mixing board. The architecture of the Speaker design and layout is based upon prior art technology with the flexibility and adaptability for managing video game audio signals. We claim the use of the audio signal management specific to video gaming kiosks utilized for pay-per-play.

#### Video Signal Distribution

[0037] The present embodiment of the invention utilizes a method and apparatus for managing console gaming device video signals. Video gaming console devices transmit a video signal for visual display of a video game. We claim to manage and distribute the video signal inside the gaming kiosk based upon, composite, s-video, DVI, or other means supported by video gaming consoles to transmit a video signal. The preferred embodiment of the present invention provides for management, control and distribution of e Composite or S-video signals. The present inventions utilize a method of connecting to the video game console devices composite or S-Video signal.

[0038] Other various embodiments of the present invention include method and apparatus for management, control, termination and distribution of other video signals.

[0039] Video game console device video signals will terminate on the input terminal of a video display device. Said video display device in the preferred embodiment of the invention is a flat panel Plasma Display as typically manufactured by Hitachi, Inc. Part Number: 12345. Other various embodiments of the present invention provide for the termination of multiple video game console device video signals into a single display device. Video display device would display the signal for interactive video game participation.

[0040] Other various embodiments of the present invention provide a secondary method and apparatus to manage and distribute video signals from video game console devices. The video signal from a video gaming console device would be adapted to an apparatus to provide video splitting, distribution, and management. Similar to product manufactured by Miranda, Inc product type Koleido or Alipne. The said device would receive a signal from one or a multiple of video game console devices. Each video gaming console device would have one signal terminated on a display device. A secondary, duplicate video game console video signal will processed in the Miranda, Koleido type product. Process signal will be transmitted to a remote location.

[0041] Other various embodiments of the present invention provide for the transmission and reception of video console device video signals to remote locations.

[0042] Remotely transmitted video will be a data signal via data carrying medium such as: (Ethernet, Coax, Fiber, 801.2g, Satellite, etc.) The remotely transmitted video may/ or may not be collected at a central video management hardware and software distribution facility. The preferred embodiment of the present invention is to centrally collect remotely transmitted video gaming data signals utilizing a product similar to manufacturer Miranda part Koleido. This central location will be a video receiving and transmission

Hub. Video signals transmitted from multiple Kiosk locations will be received and routed as outbound video signals to multiple Kiosk locations. The Hub location will contain software and hardware for video signal management, control and transmission similar to manufacturer Miranda, part number Koleido.

[0043] Other various embodiments of the present invention provide for the management, control, transmission, reception of multiple video signals emanating and terminating at video gaming kiosk locations. The present invention provides for transmission and reception of other data signals inside the architecture of a video gaming kiosk.

[0044] Other various embodiments of the present invention provide for the visual display layout of multiple video signals specific to console based video game entertainment. The present invention provides for a single display device to collectively display multiple video signals (local and remote) for Video Game Kiosk Competition.

[0045] The splitting distribution and management device, similar to the Miranda, Koleido product, installed in the video gaming kiosk will also receive a single or multiple video signal(s) from the Hub location. The product similar to the Miranda, Koleido will receive the signals from the Hub location and transmit the remotely generated signals to a video display device.

[0046] The preferred embodiment of the present invention identifies the apparatus, method and process for Video gaming kiosk display of multiple video signals from remote locations. The video signal transmitted from the product similar to the Miranda, Koleido, may be sent to a single or a plurality of display devices.

#### Pay-Per-Play Time Control

[0047] The preferred embodiment of the present invention is to control video gaming console devices specific to time controlled play as related to purchase of time. Various embodiments of the present invention provide for a combination of apparatus, and methods to control and manage a video gaming console device.

[0048] The present invention provides an apparatus to manage and control communications control points of video game console devices to manage and control time.

#### TCP/IP Port Control

[0049] The preferred embodiment of the present invention is to control multiple aspects of a video gaming console device via a TCP/IP control port. The present invention provides for the connection to an Ethernet, USB, and fire-wire termination. Various embodiments of the present invention provide for termination of TCP/IP data carrying signals. Method of data transmission may be, but is not limited to: Ethernet, 801.3g wireless, Coax, Fiber, satellite, etc.

[0050] The preferred embodiment of the present invention will provide for the alteration of video gaming console command set encoding. The command set data encoding will provide for remote control activation and deactivation of an individual game players, game controller.

[0051] The preferred embodiment of the present invention also provides for software command set encoding to transmit and receive data, specific to video gaming console

devices. This information would include, but is not limited to: Game player identification~(Gamer TAG), Game Play Selection (Game Type, Number of Players), Game Play Statistics, etc.

[0052] Other various embodiments of the present invention include a method and apparatus for the creation of TCP/IP control. The present invention provides for the ability to adapt software, to video gaming console devices, which will provide control of the data via a TCP/IP type connection. The present invention provides for the use of software, similar to product manufactured by LINUX, to be installed onto video gaming console devices.

[0053] The preferred embodiment of the present invention is to utilize the TCP/IP data to control individual game player positions and/or game controllers based upon time for pay-per-play gaming.

[0054] The TCP/IP data communicates directly with the data management and control apparatus detailed later.

Communications Port Control

[0055] The embodiment of the present invention also includes the apparatus, and method for controlling video game console devices communications ports for activation and deactivation of game player controllers for pay-per-play.

[0056] Console based video game device communications ports will be connected to a computer controlled switching device. The switching device will activate and de-activate individual game player positions or game controllers.

[0057] Various embodiments of the present invention provide for computer switching control of groups of player positions, entire gaming kiosk, or multiple gaming kiosks.

[0058] The computer controlled switching device communicates directly with a personal computer stored at each Kiosk location, via standard data communications hardware. The present invention provides for video gaming kiosk software systems. Software systems provide for the management, reporting, and control of data, information and devices which are specific to managing the following information:

- [0059] Player Name
- [0060] Address
- [0061] City
- [0062] State
- [0063] Zip
- [0064] Phone
- [0065] Email
- [0066] Website
- [0067] membership status
- [0068] game type selection
- [0069] gamer tag
- [0070] banked time
- [0071] credit card
- [0072] purchased time
- [0073] clan membership

- [0074] clan name
- [0075] tribe membership
- [0076] tribe name
- [0077] school name
- [0078] birth date
- [0079] tournament participant
- [0080] time purchased
- [0081] Kiosk location
- [0082] kiosk number
- [0083] kiosk tcp/ip address

[0084] The present invention provides for the inclusion of additional data fields specific to the operations of a video gaming kiosk. The present invention provides for the software coordination of the switching device and the video management device. Additional fields can be added to the software to facilitate control and management of game play and time specific to the preferred embodiment of the invention of pay-per-play video console game devices.

Alternate Communications Port Control

[0085] The embodiment of the present invention also anticipates the evolution and development of alternate apparatus used by video game console manufacturers for communication control. The present invention is capable of interfacing directly with any device which is utilized to transmit data signals, i.e. (Ethernet, Coax, wireless, fiber (Photonic), etc.), specific to managing control specific to pay-per-play gaming on console based video gaming devices.

Data Management and Control

[0086] The embodiment of the present invention also includes a computer similar to manufacturer DELL, part number: OptiPlex GX280. Computer device maintains storage, management and control of software for the operations and control of a video gaming kiosk. Peripheral devices will be connected to the computer they will be, but are not limited to the following:

- [0087] printer
- [0088] Monitor
- [0089] Keyboard
- [0090] Mouse
- [0091] touchscreen display
- [0092] cash register
- [0093] camera
- [0094] bar code reader
- [0095] power card data recorder
- [0096] lamination device

[0097] The peripheral devices are provided for the routine operations of a video gaming kiosk.

[0098] Various embodiments of the present invention provide for computer software storage and control of relational data points. The preferred embodiment of the invention

provides for a relational database schema for control and operations of the video gaming kiosk. Various embodiments of the present invention provide for a relational database schema for the management and control of remote broadcast video signals. Software residing on the computer will store in a database, the relational data information specific to operating pay-per-play video gaming. The computer will also store a software system, which will manage the data, and control signals, transmitted via the electronic/data time based switching device. The present invention also embodies a software system for visually representing on visual display or touch screen device information specific for controlling and managing pay-per-play gaming. A video screen will represent a player location with the amount of time purchased along with the amount of time remaining. The kiosk software user interface will permit the extension of time through additional purchase of time. Software will receive the instructions and update the display to represent the additional time remaining.

#### Player Indication

[0099] The embodiment of the present invention provides for an indication of time remaining for an individual player commensurate with their purchased time. The preferred embodiment of the invention includes a visual LED numerical display. LED will indicate time purchased. Through the computer-switching device the LED will continue to reflect the time remaining until the player time expires. The LED will, but is not required to provide a player with a visual time remaining status to indicate how much time remains. At the expiration of the time, the software on the computer will signal the electronic/data switching device to interrupt the game player controller for the device which time has expired. Game player positions can only be reactivated based upon the computer, receiving acknowledgement of additional payment received.

#### Full-Functioning Kiosk

[0100] The embodiment of the present invention provides for time-based control of pay-per-play video gaming on video console game devices. The preferred embodiment includes each component of the present invention, video display, console device, audio management, video management, and time display device. The present embodiment also includes a reduction of components whereby a video gaming kiosk may not require the complete breadth and depth of each of the technologies. Another embodiment of the invention is a video gaming kiosk, which is constructed for portable use.

#### Portable Kiosk

[0101] Another embodiment of the present invention is a video gaming kiosk for effective portable use.

#### Portable Kiosk Construction

[0102] The embodiment of the present invention includes a portable video gaming kiosk for pay-per-play console based video gaming. The present invention of a portable kiosk would be fabricated from materials to facilitate rapid deployment and transportability. Materials would be similar to support structures manufactured by TCB, Inc. part number MAKNUS5604. Apparatus is designed to support multiple projector based display devices similar to manufacturer NEC, V2000 and Flat screens similar to manufacturer Draper Clarion.

[0103] Various embodiments of the present invention provide for the use of alternate display and projection devices.

[0104] Central support structure of a portable gaming kiosk will have racking and/or shelving to provide storage and access to multiple video game console devices. The present invention provides for Additional access for computer, hardware, software, and peripheral devices. A portable kiosk in the present invention may or may not require all components associated with a fixed kiosk. Deployment of a portable kiosk would be for applications, which may or may not require a visual display indication of time remaining. An example would be a locally run fair, whereby admission would be attained through a ticket purchase and the time control will be provided on a pay-per-game. Visual time indication would not be required for this application.

#### Pay-Per-Play (Variations)

[0105] The embodiment of the present invention of the video gaming kiosk based on video gaming console devices also includes variable control or pay-per-play entertainment.

#### Pay-Per-Game

[0106] The video gaming kiosk includes electronic, data, and time control whereby the computer and software can control an individual game player controller on a per game basis. The pay-per-game application includes the control of a plurality of participants to play a single game until it's conclusion. Whereby, the game has expired based a predetermined time, to provide an upper limit of a pay-per-game experience. Participants would pay for a particular game style or type. The present invention reflects that tournament applications disclosed in prior art indicate a pay-per-game. The video gaming kiosk provides a electronic, and software control schema for managing pay-per-game experiences.

#### Pay-Per-Event

[0107] The present embodiment of the invention utilizes apparatus and process whereby, multiple video gaming console devices, display devices, audio equipment, game player controllers, can be controlled on a per-event basis. The present invention includes the apparatus and process for macro based control of a gaming kiosk or a plurality of gaming kiosks.

#### Data and Control Management of Multiple Video Gaming Kiosks

[0108] The embodiment of the present invention also utilizes apparatus, and process to remotely, and centrally gather data from multiple kiosks. Video gaming kiosk computer software and hardware have the necessary processes embedded to support E-Commerce communication. Video gaming kiosks will connect to the internet and communicate to a centralized database. Architecture of database provides the ability to remotely manage, monitor, control individual, or groups of kiosk locations. Financial information of an individual kiosk location will be routinely added to the E-Commerce database. The present invention also provides for the E-Commerce database to store console based video game history and statistics. Data management of video game history and statistics represented in the present invention may be applied to video gaming kiosk competition.

[0109] In a number of embodiments that have been disclosed above and/or illustrated in the drawings, specific

types of interfaces (such as Ethernet) have been enumerated. It should be understood that no limitation is intended by the specific type of interface that has been included as part of the various embodiments, and those skilled in the art will recognize that various alternatives data interfaces, may be used, depending upon such things as cost, available space, preferred protocol, and other design considerations which are routinely addressed by engineers.

BEST MODE OF OPERATION

[0110] While preferred embodiments of the invention have been described herein, many variations are possible which remain within the conceptual nature and scope of the intent of consol-based video gaming kiosk. The best mode of operation combines the integration of various embodiments of the present invention as described herein consisting of:

- [0111] Gaming Kiosk Physical Structure (fixed)
- [0112] Personal Audio Devices
- [0113] Video Signal. Distribution
- [0114] TCP/IP Port Control
- [0115] Data Management Control
- [0116] Data Management Control of Multiple Video Gaming Kiosks
- [0117] Pay-Per-Play Time Control

Business Operations Model

[0118] The embodiment of the present invention also utilizes a process for the operations and management of a video gaming kiosk subject to chosen method of installation. The present invention provides for several types of fixed video gaming kiosk with discrete operational and management criteria described herein.

Fixed Retail Merchant Location

[0119] The present invention provides for the video gaming kiosk to be installed in a variety or retail type establishments. Whereas, a retail establishment would be an individual company store such as Target, Walmart, Sears, Best Buy) or a group of stores. A group of stores may consist of but not limited to a strip shopping center, a shopping mall, or other venue where several stores are aggregated (air port, amusement park, resort, etc.) The business operations provides for the installation of a video gaming kiosk's connect ability of the Data Management Control architecture to integrate into merchant software systems. Whereby participants can participate in merchant specific pay-per-play programming.

Fixed Location Non-Retail

[0120] The present invention provides for the video gaming kiosk to be installed in a variety of locations in a fixed type of deployment. Examples of fixed locations which would be non retail would consist of, but not limited to, Casino's, Shopping Mall, Resort, Cruise Ship, Amusement Park, etc. A fixed non-retail deployment has the capability of providing video gaming entertainment with or without pay-per-play Time control and/or Data Management of multiple gaming kiosks. The video gaming kiosk provides for deployment in non-retail applications to bypass discrete control of the pay-per-play functionality. Operations of a video gaming

kiosk without enabling the pay-per-play system, transfers the operations of the kiosk to multiple entertainment options, such as advertising, no pay-per-play gaming, tournament based play or other uses not specifically defined where content is displayed on video display devices.

Portable Retail Merchant Location

[0121] The present invention provides for the video gaming kiosk to be operated on a portable basis. Portability of video gaming kiosks provides for flexibility specific to events, promotions, or short-term operations. Portably operated units may or may not utilize pay-per-play or the Data Management control devices. Operations of a portable video game kiosk includes for a fee-based transaction for the operations of the gaming kiosk. Alternative devices to those described herein may be utilized for the receipt and storage and/or other management as may be necessary for the handling of monetary funds or credit. Video gaming device in retail merchant location may or may not be used for promotional advertisement and/or other video gaming entertainment.

Portable Non-Retail Merchant Location

[0122] The present invention provides for the video gaming kiosk to operate on a portable basis without limitation. Various portable deployments may include but are not limited to: (birthday parties, youth events, Bar Mitzvahs, Fraternity, Sorority, Fairs, Graduation Party, or any other event where people would be gathered and benefit from a video gaming kiosk) Operations of a portable unit provides for flexibility in use or non-use of various functions of the kiosk subject to the needs of an event. Elements of pay-per-play and data-management control can be active and/or inactive. Specifically, in the business operations of a local fair, a kiosk provides for the pay-per-play time control, in conjunction with a fairs (ticket) method of payment. Alternatively, the operations of a portable gaming kiosk at a fair may provide for an inactive pay-per-play and operate a fee based tournament service. The preferred embodiment of the present invention provides for the discrete controllability of devices when deployed in portable applications.

Fixed Location Non-Attendant

[0123] The present invention provides for the video gaining kiosk either fixed or portable to be deployed without the use of an operator. The business operations of non-attendant based locations provide for an automated process for the collection of funds, activation of play, assignment of player location, initiation and expiration of time. Types of installations identified in this business process would be those similar to, cruise ships, arcades, bars, lan cafes, air ports, or other environment where deployment would be benefited by an operator less technology.

Mobile Tournament

[0124] The present invention provides for either the fixed or portable video gaming kiosks to be utilized in tournament-based competition. The business process provides for the element of pay-per-play time control to be managed in accordance with the needs of a particular style, type, schedule or other needs of a tournament, as relates to video game entertainment. Fractional adjustment of individual, or multiple video game kiosks can be managed throughout a particular tournament. Thereby providing participants on a

video gaming kiosk flexibility during an event. Mobile tournaments may or may not utilize complete functionality of a video gaming kiosk and may or may not chose the best mode of the invention.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0125] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a console based video game video signal path 100 in accordance with the preferred embodiment as described herein. As illustrated in FIG. 1.1 the video signal path 100 comprises one or more video gaming console devices 110, video signal connection 111, video signal processing device 112, one or more display devices 113, and one or multiple connections to the internet 116b & 117, internet network gateway 115. In a typical environment, which is contemplated, a plurality of console based video gaming devices 110 (in the order of four to hundreds) may be included in the video signal path system 100, but the principles and concepts described herein do not depend on any particular number of video gaming console devices 110 being utilized in the video signal processing system 100. As further illustrated in FIG. 1.1 each video gaming console device 110, video signal 111, may comprise composite, S-video or similar signal capable of reproducing and carrying a video signal. The embodiment of the present invention provides a method for adapting different signal carrying configurations. Said video signal 111, will be terminated into the video signal-processing device 112. The video signal-processing device 112, will receive the video signal from a video gaming console device 110, utilizing a termination device consistent with the material delivering the video gaming signal 111. The video signal-processing device 112, will provide the management, scaling, routing, distribution and other management functions of the video gaming device signals 116(a&b). The video signal-processing device 112, will transmit a multiple of console based video game signals 116(a&b). Console based video gaming video signal 116(a) will be transmitted to video display device(s) 113. (The present embodiment of the invention provides for the console-based video gaming video signal 116(a), to be transmitted to one or multiple displays. Video display devices 113, embodied in the present invention provide for a flat screen plasma device similar to product manufactured by Hitachi America Ltc., Home Electronics Division, P.O. Box 3900, Peoria, Ill. 61612. Model Number: CMP4202U. The present invention provides for similar devices as manufactured by Sony, NEC, Samsung, LG Electronics, Etc.

[0126] The video display devices 113, will directly display video gaming signals 111 & 116(a) for individual game player viewing.

[0127] The video gaming signal 116(b), will be transmitted via video signal processor 112, to the Internet 115. Video gaming signal 116(b) will be transmitted as video content data such as MPEG 2 or MPEG 3.

[0128] In a number of embodiments that have been disclosed above and/or illustrated in the drawings, specific types of data content signals (such as MPEG 2 or MPEG 3) have been enumerated. It should be understood that no limitation is intended by the specific type of data transmission signal that has been included as part of the various embodiments, and those skilled in the art will recognize that

various alternatives data transmission methods, may be used, depending upon such things as cost, available space, preferred protocol, and other design considerations which are routinely addressed by engineers.

[0129] As described in detail, the functionality of the video signal design 100 provides a visually positive display of video gaming software. Incorporating a local video signal with remote broadcasting capabilities 116(b), provides a significant opportunity to video content providers in addition to international marketing capabilities of gaming software providers, and developers.

[0130] As illustrated in drawing 100 the video signal path 116(b) as described, is being sent from the Video Signal Processing device 112, to a combination video display device 118. The preferred embodiment of the present invention provides for an LCD display device similar to product part number 52MCU4Y as manufactured by NEC America, Corporation 1313 Mockingbird Lane, Anytown, Pa. 19641. The combination video display device 118, provides for the display of multiple video signals 116(a&b), transmitted via the video signaling processor 112.

[0131] The various embodiments of the present invention provide for the video signaling processor 112, to receive multiple video signals 117, broadcast via the Internet 115, and display the signals on the combination display device 118.

[0132] Multiple video signals 117, broadcast via the Internet 115, according to various embodiments of the present invention provide for full motion video, and/or advertising content.

[0133] In a number of embodiments that have been disclosed above and/or illustrated in the drawings, data content signals (such as full motion video and/or advertising content) have been enumerated. It should be understood that no limitation is intended by the specific type of data transmission signal that has been included as part of the various embodiments, and those skilled in the art will recognize that various alternatives data transmission methods, may be used, depending upon such things as cost, available space, preferred protocol, and other design considerations which are routinely addressed by engineers. The preferred embodiment of the present invention provides to the allocation of visual content to be displayed on video display devices 113, and/or combination video display 118.

[0134] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of a console based video game video distribution path 200 in accordance with the preferred embodiment as described herein. As illustrated in 200, a plurality of video game console devices 201, are connected to the Internet. Drawing 200 is specific to the video signal distribution. Other console based Internet connectivity is contained further herein. Video Signal Processing device 204, will be situated within a video gaming kiosk 207. Remotely located kiosks with video signal processing devices 201a & 204, will transmit their kiosk specific video signal to the Internet 208. The remotely broadcast video signal 201a, through the Internet 208, will be sent to a Video Signal Processing Hub 205, similar to manufacturer Miranda product name Kaleido. The Video Signal Processing Hub 205, will transmit console based video game signals, back to the Internet 205, for individual local kiosk 207, combination display 206. Owners of multiples of

kiosks **202**, can provide video and or software advertising content through the internet **208**. Video and software data transmitted from computer device, may be managed through the Video Signal Processing Hub **205**, or managed at individual kiosk locations **207**. The Video Signal Processor at the individual kiosk location **204**, will be similar to Miranda product, name Alto. Advertisers, and content providers **203**, can transmit video, and or software data content to the Internet **205**. Advertiser content may be managed through the Video Signal Processing Hub **205**, or managed at individual kiosk locations **207**. The Video Signal Processor at the individual kiosk location **204**, will manage the content for transmission on the combination video display device **206**.

[0135] The preferred embodiment of the invention is to provide a method and apparatus **200**, located at individual kiosk locations **207**, to provide a combination video display of console based video game **201**, entertainment. Specific to the operations of the combination video display **206**, a single or plurality of devices will display, simultaneous multi-location, multi-participant, video gaming competition. Through the use of the method and apparatus detailed in drawing **200**, a single display device can visually display video gaming activities across the globe. It should be also understood that the combination video display device has been detailed as a 52" Flat Screen LCD device. Other various embodiments of the present invention provide for other apparatus, methods, and devices for visual display. It should be understood that no limitation is intended by the identification of a particular display device size or type. Those skilled in the art will recognize that various alternatives for displaying visual images may be used, depending upon such things as size, weight, location, heat, noise, efficiency, image size, image quality, kiosk structural integrity, and other design considerations, which are routinely addressed by engineers

[0136] FIG. 3 is a block diagram of a console-based video gaming kiosk modular assembly **300** in accordance with the preferred embodiment as described herein. As illustrated in FIG. 3 the structure will provide for the combined use of materials to construct a frame **301**. The preferred embodiment provides for the use of various materials in the construction of the frame **301**. The preferred embodiment of the present invention provides for the frame **301** to be constructed out of steel. The frame provides for the attachment and management of subcomponents. Structural frame **301**, designs utilize materials to provide the appropriate support, and stability to the overall structure. Structural frame **301** provides for the modular expansion of panels to expand the overall size of a gaming kiosk. The preferred embodiment provides for the attachment of a structural skin **306**. The structural skin provides for the security and protection of internal components. Additional functionality of the structural skin **306**, provides for the attachment of additional devices. A preferred embodiment of the present invention includes the attachment of visual LED numerical display devices **305**. Various embodiments of the present invention provide for a quantity of visual LED numerical display devices **305** to be of a quantity which would reflect the number of individual gaming players visible on a single display device. As illustrated on drawing **300** access panels **303** & **304** are constructed to be integral with the steel frame **301** and the exterior skin **306**. It should be understood that no limitation is intended by the specific quantity nor size of

the access panels, and those skilled in the art will recognize that various alternatives for component access methods, may be used, depending upon such things as cost, available space, preferred security, structural integrity, and other design considerations which are routinely addressed by engineers.

[0137] Access panel **303** provides for the access, storage and security of individual player devices in the operations of a video gaming kiosk. The preferred embodiment of the present invention provides for the access panel **303** to store personal listening devices and individual gaming controllers. The personal devices will be described elsewhere herein.

[0138] Access panel **304** provides for the access, storage and security of electronic equipment specific to the operations of a video gaming kiosk. The preferred embodiment of the present invention provides for the access panel **304**, to video game console based devices. It should be understood that no limitation is intended by the specific size of the access panel, and those skilled in the art will recognize that various alternatives for component access methods, may be used, depending upon such things as cost, available space, preferred security, structural integrity, and other design considerations which are routinely addressed by engineers. It should also be understood that the access panel may provide access to other devices and/or connections in the functionality of a video gaming kiosk.

[0139] Attached to either or both the steel frame **301**, and the steel skin **306** will be video display device(s) **305**. The preferred embodiment of the present invention provides for the mounting and attachment of one or a combination of video display devices **305**. It should be understood that the selection, and quantity of devices are not limited, and that those skilled in the art will recognize that various alternatives for visual display selection would depend on such things as cost, available space, modular panel size, physical weight, structural integrity, safety, and other design considerations which, are routinely addressed by engineers.

[0140] FIG. 5 is a block diagram illustrating the internal structure of a video gaming kiosk modular panel **500**. The internal structure provides for a structural frame **510**, combination stabilizing shelf and access panel support **502**, individual player component access panel **503**, audio speakers **504**, internal support shelf **505**, console based communication port control device **506**, plurality of console based video game systems **507**, and power management/distribution device **508**. The preferred embodiment of the present invention provides for the internal structural frame **510** for the attachment, placement, and management of internal components, devices and wire management. The combination stabilizing shelf and access panel support **502** provides support for panel integrity in addition to securing the individual player component access panel **503**. Other various embodiments provide for the combination, stabilizing shelf and access panel support device to perform as a storage area for materials, equipment, devices or other items utilized in the operations of a video gaming kiosk. The individual player component access panel **503**, provides for secured placement, storage, access and individual player flexibility to individual video gaming accessories. It should be understood that the primary purpose of the individual component access panel **503**, is to store and secure individual gaming

accessories. Individual gaming accessories may consist of individual player gaming controllers, personal listening device(s) [headphones]. It should be understood that the individual component access panel can provide access to a variety devices specific to individual game player activities. The location and size of the access panel **503** would vary, depending on such things as cost, security, quantity of devices. And that those skilled in the art would recognize the various alternative for the component access.

[**0141**] The speaker devices **504**, provide for an alternative to personal audio devices. It should be understood that no limitation is intended by the specific quantity, size, type, or location of the speakers, and that those skilled in the art will recognize that various alternatives for speaker selection and placement may be used, depending upon such things as cost, available space, power consumption, and other design considerations which are routinely addressed by engineers.

[**0142**] The internal support shelf **505**, provides for the support of speaker devices, and the console based communications port control device **506**. Internal support shelf **505**, provides for the additional storage, security, and management of components and wiring specific to the electronic operation of a video gaming kiosk.

[**0143**] The communication port control device **506**, provides for a variety of different devices as described earlier in the document. The communication port control device **506**, is the computer controlled device providing the activation and deactivation of individual game player controller devices. Other various embodiments of the present invention provide for the communication port control device **506**, to perform the function of Local Area Network switching. The communications port control device **506**, communicates through software directly with a computer. The communications port control device **506**, provides for time and or game duration control of individual game player controllers. Specific, incremental time control provides for owners of a video gaming kiosk to track revenue, directly to an activated game player position for a pre-determined period of time. In the operations of the video gaming kiosk, a kiosk owner maintains a software, and hardware record and control of the relationship between revenue, and the duration a kiosk had operating game player positions. This control provided through the combination of the communication port control device **506** and computer software, to be describe further, provide the management of revenue on console based video gaming. The prior art has not disclosed a video gaming kiosk solution, which provides for the electronic, data, and operational control of console based video game systems to control pay-per-play, or pay-per-game systems.

[**0144**] The console-based video game device(s) **507**, are located within the bottom of the video gaming kiosk internal structure **500**. It should be understood that no limitation is intended by the specific quantity or type of console-based video game systems **507**, to be contained in the internal structure **500**. And those skilled in the art will recognize that various alternatives for console-based video game component selection, placement methods, may be used, depending upon such things as cost, available space, preferred security, functionality, and other design considerations, which are routinely addressed by engineers. Console-based video game device(s) **507**, may include such products as manufactured by:

[**0145**] Microsoft Xbox

[**0146**] Sony Playstation 1

[**0147**] Sony Playstation 2

[**0148**] Nintendo GameCube

[**0149**] Sega Genesis

[**0150**] Sega Dreamcast

[**0151**] It should be understood that the specific manufacturer type of console-based video game device intends no limitation. Any device, which is designed and fabricated for the primary intent of providing interactive video gaming entertainment, is provided for in the video gaming kiosk.

[**0152**] Power management of a video gaming kiosk is provided via a power management and distribution device **508**. A console-based video game kiosk utilizes numerous devices requiring a commercial power source. The internal structure **500** includes the power management and distribution device to terminate and distribute multiple power supplies. The power management and distribution device **508**, will connect to an adjoining modular section **500**, power distribution device **508**. It should be understood that no limitation is intended by the specific size, quantity or type of power management and distribution devices, and those skilled in the art will recognize that various alternatives for power management and distribution may be used, depending on such things as power loads, length of power run, voltage requirements, desired connection types, and other design considerations which are routinely addressed by engineers.

[**0153**] FIG. 6 is a block diagram, which illustrates the control signal path of video gaming console device, individual game controller port based control **600**. The signal path includes a video gaming console device **601**, individual player game port control cable connection **602**, communications port control device **603**, a kiosk located computer system with peripheral devices **604**, and individual player game controllers **605**.

[**0154**] The video gaming console device **601**, contain a port where by individual player game controllers **605**, can be inserted. One of the various embodiments of the present invention provide for the individual game controller cable **602a**, to be connected to communication port control device **603**. It should be understood that no limitation is intended by the specific quantity or specific type of individual game controller cables **602a**. Video game console manufactures disclose that their individual game controller cable termination device is proprietary to their console devices. The present invention provides for the adherence of the proprietary connect ability of the video console manufacturers game port player controller **605**, termination device. Video console manufacturers also disclose that the individual game controllers function using data signals.

[**0155**] The individual game controller cable **602a**, exits the video gaming console device **601**, and terminates in the communications port control device **603**. The communications port control device will accommodate a plurality of individual game controller cable **602a** terminations. The plurality of terminations is a function of the video gaming console device **601**, ability to support multiple players. The communication port control device **603**, contains computer controlled, time based switching and or relay devices. The

communications port control device is connected via RS232 606, to a computer system 604. The RS232 is a data control link between the communications port control device 603, and the computer system 604. The computer system operates relational database control based software which will be described further herein. The present invention provides for the computer system 604, to receive information via data entry. Software will have triggers associated to relational database field, which will execute a signal via the RS242 606, to the communications port control device 603. Subject to the command instructions issued via the software, either an individual game player, or group of game player controller 605, positions will be activated for play. Concurrent with the activation of the game player controller 605, a signal will be sent from the computer software 604, through the communications port control device 604, to the visual LED timer 607. The LED timer 607, will reflect the interval of time which had been authorized at the computer 604. It should be understood that no limitation is intended by specific identification of communications signaling control. Reference had been made to RS232 signal termination. Those that are skilled in the art will recognize that various alternatives for communications control signal can be provided RS485, Ethernet, Coax, Fiber, or other data communications medium, and that design depends upon such things as distance, data bit stream size, speed, and other design considerations which are routinely addressed by engineers.

[0156] FIG. 7 is a block diagram, which illustrates the TCP/IP control signal path of video gaming console device(s) 700. The signal path includes a video gaming console device 701, TCP/IP control cable 702, TCP/IP switch 703, and broadband connection 710, to the Internet 705. TCP/IP control of console-based video game devices provide for another embodiment of the present invention.

[0157] Video game console manufacturers disclose an apparatus and method for providing connection of their console devices, via a broadband connection to the Internet. Various console manufacturers disclose their ability to directly connect their devices for a Local Area Network participation. The console manufacturers disclose their hardware and software, for connecting, and control as being proprietary to their device.

[0158] TCP/IP encoding is proprietary to each console manufacturer. Attaining developer relationships with console manufacturers provide the ability to modify existing software encoding to accomplish time controlled game play. An example is the product offering through Microsoft. Their console system is capable of supporting console to console direct connection for Local Area Networked entertainment. In addition their console is capable of connecting to the internet through and Xbox Live subscription, or XBNconnect, to establish networked TCP/IP controlled play. Microsoft utilizes XBN code for encoding TCP/IP traffic and command sets. Permission to modify this code set specific to console devices in video gaming kiosks creates an open network of multi-player gaming, on pay-per-play. Modifications to the XBN command set can also provide a vehicle for the creation of multi-player statistical database. This database device can contain, all participants, profiles, gamer tags, game statistics, game preferences, etc. This database would be used for international tournament management and operations in conjunction with a Video Gaming Kiosk. As described in other various embodiments, the video manage-

ment architecture provides for a locally presented display, of remotely participating events. According to other various embodiments of the present invention, console device 701, can be enhanced with open network based software. Software systems similar to products manufactured by Linux, may be loaded on to video game console devices. Through the introduction of open architecture software, new TCP/IP command set instructions are written to facilitate individual video game console device control. Installation of software on certain console devices does not void manufacturer warranty.

[0159] As detailed in the drawing, multiple video gaming kiosks 708, will be have connect ability to remote gaming kiosks via the Internet 705. As described earlier herein, the connect ability of multiple gaming kiosks, provides individual player control, coupled with a method, and apparatus for visually transmitting player gaming. Via the Internet 705, a kiosk owner or manager can call into a kiosk location using a PDA, phone, or other data communications device 709. The portability aspect of remote kiosk communication places operational control, and financial monitoring, as a function of flexibility and convenience.

[0160] FIG. 8 is a block diagram, which illustrates the audio signal architecture for personal audio devices 800. Video gaming console devices 801, come equipped with audio signal cables most commonly represented by composite connectors divided into Left and Right Signals 802. Composite signals would be combined using a 1/4" female to male stereo connector. The male end of the connector would insert into a headphone amplifier similar to Manufacture: Rolls HA43 803. The headphone amplifier device would also have an AC to DC power supply which would be plugged into the power management device on the inside of the video gaming kiosk. Personal headphones 804, would be inserted into the headphone amplifier

[0161] It should be understood that no limitation is intended by specific identification of a particular manufacture of headphone amplifier. Reference had been made to a Rolls HA42 headphone amplifier. Those that are skilled in the art will recognize that various alternatives for audio termination and distribution can be provided through other devices, and that design depends upon such things as distance, quantity of audio sources, quantity of audio output devices, power consumption, heat, cost, space, and other design considerations which are routinely addressed by engineers.

[0162] FIG. 9 is a block diagram, which illustrates the audio signal architecture for speaker based audio distribution 900. As detailed in other various embodiments the speaker based audio distribution design utilizes the same Left and Right composite audio signals 902 provided by console video game devices 901. Both the left and right audio signal will each be connected with a composite female to 1/4" male mono connector 902. An individual video game console will terminate (1) left signal and (1) right signal into a audio mixing board 903. An example would be as follows:

- [0163] Console (1)
- [0164] Left Signal inserted into mixing board channel (1)
- [0165] Right Signal inserted into mixing board channel (2)

- [0166] Console (2)
- [0167] Left Signal inserted into mixing board channel (3)
- [0168] Right Signal inserted into mixing board channel (4)
- [0169] Console (3)
- [0170] Left Signal inserted into mixing board channel (5)
- [0171] Right Signal inserted into mixing board channel (6)
- [0172] Console (4)
- [0173] Left Signal inserted into mixing board channel (7)
- [0174] Right Signal inserted into mixing board channel (8)

[0175] The speaker devices 905 would be connected 904 to the speaker output locations on the mixing board 903.

[0176] It should be understood that no limitation is intended by specific location or termination method of speakers, audio mixing board, or connector selection. Those that are skilled in the art will recognize that various alternatives for audio termination and distribution can be provided through other devices, and that design depends upon such things as distance, quantity of audio sources, quantity of audio output devices, power consumption, heat, cost, space, and other design considerations which are routinely addressed by engineers. The speaker based audio distribution is a preferred embodiment of the present invention. The design provides for a method and apparatus for the distribution of console based video game device audio signal. The apparatus provides for flexibility in the assignment, position, and location of each audio device per video game console device. Additionally, speaker location, and sound location is managed based upon number and location of video display devices. Subject to the quantity of participants playing on a single display device determine the routing of audio signals. Through the incorporation of an audio signal mixing device, signal distribution and assignment is designed for operational efficiency. FIG. 10 is a Flow Chart, which illustrates the commands software communication and operations of a video gaming kiosk 1000. The process flow is initiated at the User Selection 1100 interface. The preferred embodiment of the present invention is a touch screen device, whereby participant information can be entered via the touch screen, keyboard, mouse, or other device capable of entering data. Upon completion of the player data entry in the User Selection 1100, payment option 1200 is selected. The software and accompanying hardware are capable of recognizing multiple methods of payment such as: cash, credit, power card, gift certificate, etc. After the payment has been selected and recorded, the process continues to Play set duration or end of game 1300. The process provides for a linking of the amount paid input into the system 1200 to predetermined select time 1400 intervals. An example is that a client pays \$ X.XX which is tied to 1 hour of activated game play. The software is configurable to establish hourly or grouped rates as related to time on a per gaming kiosk or group of gaming kiosks. Gaming consoles connected to the network would communicate to the operational software,

individual open gaming positions, or open consoles. The software would automatically select an individual player position from available console positions 1500. Based upon the system confirming the availability of an open position, a clients payment is processed 1600. Upon completion of the payment processing, the console based video game devices individual game controller port 1700 will be activated to permit participant play. Concurrent with the activation of the game controller port activation 1700, the software will indicate that the player positions LED to reflect their purchased time 1750. As a player is engaged the LED will display their remaining time of play 1775. The software maintains activation of the individual game controller port until game playtime has expired 1800. When the purchased time interval has expired, the system locks the gaming position 1900.

[0177] FIG. 11 is a spreadsheet of data tables used in various embodiments of the invention 1100.

[0178] It should be understood that no limitation is intended by specific identification of a particular data table or field. Reference had been made to a variety of data sets or strings. Those that are skilled in the art will recognize that various alternatives or descriptions for data locations or identifiers may be provided through other descriptive means, and that design depends upon such things as relationship, field type, field algorithm, quantity of fields, relationships to external databases database size and other design considerations which are routinely addressed by engineers. TCP/IP Communication Port Control. The preferred embodiment of the present invention provides for the Digital Download of gaming content and software upgrades from the console manufacturers. We claim that utilization of the TCP/IP communications port, when utilized to turn on an off a gaming experience as a function of a purchase. The technology has predicted that console manufacturers will at some point in the future desire to utilize existing subscription based services, to expand into pay per play services. Microsoft Xbox and it's expected next generation product Xbox 360 will continue the Xbox Live Subscription based service. This service would include fee based digital download specific to gaming. Where tournament based experiences would be tied to a fee, transacted via TCP/IP through the console device would infringe upon our claim. An extension of the TCP/IP control would be the ability to terminate usability of an individual players controller, for a variety of non-fee based criteria. Such criteria could include but not limited to, hacking or modification to hardware, hacking or modification to software, utilization of cheats, utilization of tricks, or other types of violations which could be determined to affect the outcome of a gaming competition.

[0179] Additional criteria for valuing fee based control may include but are not limited to, point based measurement, time based measurement, skill level measurement, progress level measurement. Determining criteria may be individually established or group based. Group based measurement would be indicative of team based competition. While preferred embodiments of the invention have been described herein, many variations are possible which remain within the conceptual nature and scope of the intent of a console-based video gaming kiosk. Such variations would become clear to one of ordinary skill in the art after

inspection of the specification and drawings. The invention is not to be restricted except within the spirit and scope of any appended claims.

I claim:

1. A system for interconnecting a plurality of video game devices to facilitate play among a plurality of players comprising:

- (a) a video interconnection for providing simultaneous video display of the output of the video game devices;
- (b) an audio interconnection for providing simultaneous audio output of the video game devices;
- (c) a control interconnection for providing control signals from each of the players to one or more of the video game devices;
- (d) a data interconnection for communicating information among the video game devices;
- (e) a switching means for controlling which of the video game devices are interconnected at a particular time;
- (f) a payment means for completing a financial transaction in related to the use of the system; and
- (g) a control means for controlling each of the elements (a) through (f) to permit play.

2. A support structure for a plurality of video game devices, power connections, control connections, audio connections, video connections, audio processing means, video processing means, audio output means, video output means, interconnection means, and transaction processing means, comprising a cabinet, wiring channels, one or more video displays, one or more audio transducers, and one or more control inputs.

3. A method for operating a pay-for-play multiuser video gaming system comprising:

- (a) collecting funds from a plurality of players;
- (b) enabling one video game console for each player from whom funds have been collected for a predetermined period;
- (c) disabling the video game console after the predetermined period.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein the period is a time interval.

5. The method of claim 3 wherein the period is one game cycle.

6. The method of claim 3 wherein the period is the last-to-end game cycle from among all of the players in the plurality of players.

7. A method of controlling a plurality of video game consoles comprising switching data, control, video and audio signals in response to an enabling signal representative of permission to use each video game console.

8. The method of claim 3 wherein the funds collected are selected from the group of actual currency, credit transaction, debit transaction, decrease in stored value, or a token representative of any of these.

9. The method of claim 3 wherein the enabling and disabling steps comprise communication via a TCP/IP link.

10. The system of claim 1 wherein any of the interconnection means, switching means, and control means are via a TCP/IP link.

\* \* \* \* \*