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(54) **Method for activity tracking**

(57) The present invention provides a method for tracking the activity of a user of a gaming machine (2), said gaming machine being connected to a server (1) with a database (11) wherein an account number (31) is assigned to a user and a tracking ticket (3) is created for said user, wherein on the tracking ticket (3) a respective code for the account number (31) is printed and provided to the user, and wherein a record (13) of said database (11) is created, the account number (31) being assigned to the record (13) as a key value, wherein before a game is started on a gaming machine (2) a connection to the server (1) is established and the tracking ticket (3) is read by the gaming machine (2), and at the end of the game the said tracking ticket (3) or a further tracking ticket (3), on which a code encoding the account number (31) is printed, is provided to the user, and wherein before or after or during the game a data packet (4) comprising the account number (31; 40) of the ticket (3) as well as further gaming information (41), preferably an identification number (42) of the gaming machine (2), and/or a time stamp (43), and/or information (44) on the results of the game, is provided to the server (1) and stored to the record (13) having the same account number (31; 40) as the packet (4).

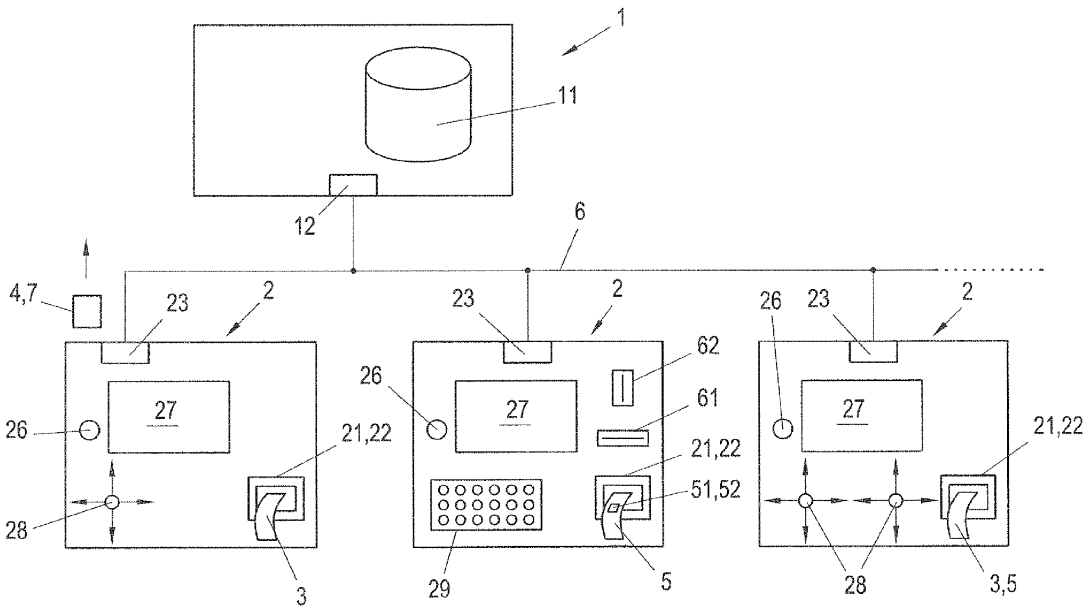

Fig. 1

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Description

[0001] The invention relates to a method for tracking the activity of the user of a gaming machine according to claim 1. Moreover the invention relates to a gaming system for tracking the activity of a user of a gaming machine, according to claim 7.

[0002] Various different bonus card systems are known from the state of the art. These systems are tracking the activity of the user on gaming systems etc. All these systems typically make use of bonus cards or bonus chips, which are handed to the user. When the user plays a game on a gaming machine he or she provides the chip or bonus card to the gaming machine, so that the gaming machine identifies the identity of the user and tracks the activity of the user.

[0003] Methods for tracking the activity of the user as known from the state of the art typically require gaming machines or servers which are prepared to read the effort mentioned bonus cards or chips. For this reason it is cumbersome and expensive to upgrade an existing gaming system, so as to make tracking of the activity of the user available. It is especially difficult to extend an existing gaming machine with a bonus card- or chip reading-device, because gaming machines typically have a user interface, that is defined by hardware components. Amendments to this user interface, would require a complete redesign of the gaming apparatus.

[0004] It is therefore the objective of the invention to provide a lesser invasive or intrusive modification of a gaming apparatus as known from the state of the art, which is still able to track the activity of the user of a gaming machine within a network of gaming machines connected to a server.

[0005] The invention solves this problem by providing a method for tracking the activity of a user of a gaming machine, said gaming machine being connected to a server with a database, wherein an account number is assigned to a user and a tracking ticket is created for said user, wherein on the tracking ticket a respective code for the account number is printed and provided to the user, and wherein a record of said database is created, the account number being assigned to the record as a key value. Before a game is started on a gaming machine a connection to the server is established and the tracking ticket is read by the gaming machine, and at the end of the game the said tracking ticket or a further tracking ticket, on which a code encoding the account number is printed, is provided to the user. Before or after or during the game a data packet comprising the account number of the ticket as well as further gaming information, preferably an identification number of the gaming machine, and/or a time stamp, and/or information on the results of the game, is provided to the server and stored to the record having the same account number as the packet.

[0006] Such a gaming method can be easily provided by a hardware of a gaming apparatus as known from the state of the art. It is not necessary to add further components, such as card reader devices, because existing gaming machines typically comprise a ticket reader and ticket writer in order to process cash tickets. The method according to the invention can be performed by the hardware of a gaming apparatus as known from the state of art, wherein only a software update is required.

[0007] In order to have tickets with a defined expire date it can be provided, that an account number is invalidated after a predefined time limit, preferably a time limit between one and ten days, as from the creation of the record or as from the time, when last data were stored in the record and assigned to the account number.

[0008] Most preferably the invention can be carried out on a gaming machine which is already equipped with a cash ticketing system. In this particular case it is provided, that a further cash ticket, on which cash information is printed and encoded, is fed to the gaming machine and read by the gaming machine before the beginning of the game. The cash information is altered, preferably reduced, according to the results of the game. At the end of the game, preferably before printing the tracking ticket, the cash ticket is printed and provided to the user. The tracking ticket and the cash ticket are printed by the ticket printer of the gaming machine and/or are read by the ticket reader of the gaming machine.

[0009] In order to make use of the tracking information on the activity of the user it can be provided, that before starting the game or during the game the record or parts of the record, whose key equals the account number of the tracking ticket, is or are sent to the gaming machine, wherein the gaming program of the gaming machine is modified according to said record.

[0010] In particular the motivation of users can be maintained or even raised with a bonus game or more favourable initialization of the game, which is offered to the user, if a bonus game or a more favourable initialization of the game is offered to the user, if the total number of entries or an aggregation, preferably a sum, of entries of the record, such as the number of previously played games or the gaming time, exceeds a predefined threshold value.

[0011] In order to pass on the account number via a ticket, it can be provided, that a code corresponding to the account number is printed on the tracking ticket, and wherein said account number is preferably encrypted before encoding and printing.

[0012] In order to reuse a ticket for multiple gaming events it can be provided, that an erasable and re-printable tracking ticket is provided to the user, wherein the ticket is erased after reading by the gaming machine and re-printed before it is provided to the user.

[0013] In order to maintain the users privacy while tracking his or her information on an individual and personalized account, it can be provided, that the one or more records exclusively contain the account number and information relating to the games, wherein preferably personal information is prohibited to be stored on said records.

[0014] The invention solves the initially mentioned problem of the invention with a gaming system for tracking the activity of the user of a gaming machine, according to claim 7.

[0015] Such a gaming system comprises a gaming server in the plurality of the gaming machines, the gaming server and the gaming machines being connected via a network. It is further provided, that the gaming server provides a database to store a plurality of records, each record having an account number as a key value. Each of the gaming machines comprises a gaming processor. Each of the gaming machines comprises a ticket reader and a ticket printer, and a network interface for providing a data connection to the database of the server. The account number is assigned to a user and a tracking ticket is created for said user, wherein on the tracking ticket a respective code for the account number is printed and provided to the user. Before or after or during the game the gaming processor generates a data packet comprising the account number of the tracking ticket as well as further gaming information, preferably an identification number of the gaming machine, and/or a time stamp, and/or information on the results of the game. After generating said data packet, the gaming processor sends said data packet to the server and forces the server to store the packet with the record having the same account number as the packet.

[0016] Such a gaming system offers the possibility of tracking the activity of the user within the framework of an existing system hardware. The gaming system of the invention may be implemented by adapting a system of the state of the art via a software modification. It is therefore not necessary to modify the user interface and the design of the gaming machine.

[0017] In order to have tickets with a defined expire date it can be provided, that wherein the server comprises an invalidation unit which invalidates records of the database after a predefined time limit, preferably from one to ten days, as from the creation of the record or as from storing the last data in said record.

[0018] Most preferably the invention can be carried out on a gaming machine which is already equipped with a cash ticketing system. In this particular case it is provided, that wherein the ticket reader is prepared to read a cash ticket on which cash information is printed and encoded, and wherein before, during or after the game the gaming processor amends the cash information according to the results of the game and forces the ticket printer to print a new cash ticket on which the amended cash information is printed and encoded, so that the ticket and the cash ticket are printed by the same printer and/or are read by the same ticket reader.

[0019] In order to make use of the tracking information on the activity of the user it can be provided, that wherein on receiving a query on an account number of a gaming machine, the server provides the record having said account number to the respective gaming machine.

[0020] In particular the motivation of users can be maintained or even raised with a bonus game or more favourable initialization of the game, which is offered to the user, if after reading a tracking ticket the gaming processor of a gaming machine sends a query regarding the account number of the ticket to the server and receives the record stored in the database having said account number. The gaming processor compares the total number of entries of the record or an aggregation, preferably a sum, of entries of the record, such as the number of previously played games or the gaming time, with a threshold value and determines, if said predefined threshold value is exceeded. The gaming processor is programmed to offer the user a bonus game or a more favourable initialization of the game, if said threshold is exceeded.

[0021] In order to pass on the account number via a ticket, it can be provided, that the gaming processor and/or the ticket printer is programmed to encode, and preferably to encrypt, the account number before printing, and/or wherein the gaming processor and/or the ticket reader is programmed to decode, and preferably to decrypt, the account number printed on the tracking ticket before reading.

[0022] In order to reuse a ticket for multiple gaming events it can be provided, that wherein the ticket printer is provided to erase and re-print tickets and provide tickets to the user, the ticket printer erasing and reprinting the tracking ticket after being read by the ticket reader.

[0023] In order to maintain the users privacy while tracking his or her information on an individual and personalized account, it can be provided, that one or more records are provided to exclusively contain the account number and information relating to the games, and/or wherein said records do not comprise any personal information on the user.

[0024] The most preferred example of the invention is explained with respect to the **Fig. 1** to **5**.

[0025] **Fig. 1** schematically shows a typical system according to the preferred embodiment of a gaming system. **Fig. 2** schematically illustrates the system architecture of a gaming machine. **Fig. 3** schematically illustrates a flow diagram for initialising a game. **Fig. 4** shows a detail of **Fig. 3** regarding the amendment of the game. **Fig. 5** shows the content of the database which stores the activities of the user.

[0026] **Fig. 1** schematically shows a preferred example of the invention comprising a server 1 with a database 11 and a plurality of gaming machines 2. The server 1 and the gaming machines 2 are connected via a computer network 6, wherein the server 1 comprises a network interface 12 and each of the gaming machines 2 comprises a network interface 23. Each of the gaming machines 2, which are connected to the server 1 via the network 6 comprises a gaming processor 20 **(Fig. 2)** and gaming peripherals. Each of the gaming machines 2 comprises a display 27 and a cashoutbutton 26. The first gaming machine 2, which is shown on the left side of **Fig. 1** comprises a single joystick 28, the second gaming ma-

chine 2, which is schematically shown in the middle of **Fig. 1** comprises a keyboard 29 and the third gaming machine 2, which is shown on the right side of **Fig. 1** comprises two joysticks 28. Each of the gaming machines 2 further comprises a ticket reader 21 and a ticket printer 22 for reading and printing tickets 3, 5.

[0027] **Fig. 2** schematically shows a gaming machine 2 of **Fig. 1** in more detail. The gaming machine 2 shown in **Fig. 2** comprises a gaming processor 20, on which a computer program for executing software implementing the respective game on the gaming machine 2 is run. The gaming processor 20 is connected with the peripherals 26, 27, 28, 29 of the gaming machine 2. In this preferred embodiment of a gaming machine 2 the gaming processor 20 is connected to the computer network 6 via network interface 23. The gaming processor 20 is connected to a cash out button 26, a display 27, a keyboard 29 and to a ticket reader 21 and a ticket printer 22. With the ticket reader 21 and the ticket printer 22 of this embodiment of the invention it is possible to read in tickets 3, 5 and print tickets 3, 5 with the same device. This device comprises only one slot, into which a ticket 3, 5 can be inserted and by which a printed ticket 3, 5 can be provided.

[0028] Each of the gaming machines 2 of this preferred embodiment of the invention is programmed to read cash tickets 5 via the ticket reader 21 and to print cash tickets 5 via the ticket printer 22. A cash ticket 5 may be handed to the user after the payment of a defined amount of cash. Before the start of the game the cash ticket 5 is inserted into the ticket reader 21. If the amount of cash stored in the cash information 51 is sufficient, the gaming processor 20 starts the game. After the game the cash information 51 stored on the cash ticket 5 is changed according to the results of the game. If for example the user wins a game the amount of cash, which is stored on the cash ticket 5 is increased. If however the user loses the game a certain amount of the cash is subtracted from the initial cash information 51. At the end of the game a cash ticket 5 is printed and provided to the user, wherein the ticket printer 22 prints a new cash ticket 5 on which the changed cash information 51 is printed.

[0029] In order to be able to track the activity of a user of the gaming machine 2 each of the gaming machines 2 is connected to the server 1. The server 1 comprises a database 11, whose contents are shown in **Fig. 5.** The database 11 provides a respective record 13 for each of the users, wherein each record 13 is uniquely assigned to one of the users of the gaming machine 2. When entering the Casino or before starting to play an account number 31 is assigned to the user. The user is provided with a tracking ticket 3, on which a respective code for the account number 31 is printed. When providing a tracking ticket 3 with an account number 31 to the user a record 13 of the database 11 is created. The account number 31 is assigned to the record 13 as key value. Therefore the respective record 13, which is assigned to the user can be accessed via the account number 31 stored on the tracking ticket 3 of the user. Before the user starts to play on one of the gaming machines 2 the record 13 assigned to the user is empty.

[0030] Before starting a game on the gaming machine 2 the user is invited to provide his tracking ticket 3 to the gaming machine 2. The user inserts the tracking ticket 3 into the slot of the ticket reader 21, which reads the information printed on the tracking ticket 3 and determines the account number 31 stored on the tracking ticket 3. After reading the tracking ticket 3 the gaming machine 2 invites the user to provide a cash ticket 5 and to start the game. Optionally, instead of the cash ticket 5, bills and/or coins may be provided via a bill acceptor 61 and/or coin acceptor 62 of the gaming machine 2 to start the game.

[0031] **Fig. 3** shows a diagram that illustrates the initialization of a game. In a first step 100 a tracking ticket 3 provided by the user is read by the ticket reader 21. The account number 31 of the tracking ticket 3 is provided to the gaming processor 20. In a second step 110 the gaming processor 20 determines whether the ticket 3, 5 provided by the user is a cash ticket 5 or a tracking ticket 3. If the ticket 3, 5 provided by the user is a cash ticket 5 a game is started (step 140). If, however, the ticket 3, 5 provided by the user is not a cash ticket 5 then the gaming processor 20 determines whether the ticket 3, 5 provided by the user is a tracking ticket 3 (step 120). If the ticket 3, 5 provided by the user is neither a cash ticket 5 nor a tracking ticket 3 the user is invited to provide a further ticket 3, 5. If, however, the ticket 3, 5 provided by the user is a tracking ticket 3, then an initialization step 130 for altering the game is carried out. After this initialization step 130 the game is stored respectively ready for operation.

[0032] In **Fig. 4** a preferred method for the initialization the game in a way more favourable to the user is shown. In a first initialization step 131 the account number 31, which is stored on the tracking ticket 3 is extracted. In a second step 132 the gaming processor 20 sends a query 7 to the server 1 wherein the query 7 comprises the account number 31 stored on the tracking ticket 3. The query 7 is sent by the gaming processor 20 via the network interface 23, the computer network 6 and the network interface 12 of the server 1 to the server 1.

[0033] In a further step 133 the server 1 processes the query 7 and identifies the record 13, which is assigned to the account number 31 of the query 7. The server 1 sends the record 13, which is assigned to the account number 31 to the gaming machine 2 via the computer network 6.

[0034] The gaming processor subsequently receives (step 134) and analyses the record 13.

[0035] If the total number of the entries or the number of previously paid games or the gaming time exceeds a predefined threshold value, in this preferred example a threshold value of the games, or 25 minutes, or a loss of a certain amount of money is used, the game provided by the gaming controller 12 is initialized in a more favour-

able way to the user. In an initialization step 135 of this very example of the invention additional bonus and/or free games are provided to be played by the user

[0036] After amending the game in the initialization step 135, the game is started (step 140). After the end of the game the gaming processor 20 generates a data packet 4, which comprises the account number of the tracking ticket 3 as well as further gaming information, namely an identification number 42 of the gaming machine, a time stamp 43 and information of the results 44 of the game. In this example of the invention the results 44 of the game indicate the amount of cash the user won or lost during the game. The packet 4 is sent to the server 1 as an update request. When the server 1 obtains the data packet 4 the update request stored on that data packet is inserted into the record 13 of the user.

[0037] **Fig. 5** shows the contents of the database 1, wherein four users are registered to the system and user is provided with a tracking respective ticket 3, each with different account numbers. The first user was provided a ticket on which the account number "151" was stored. At 17:27 the first user lost EUR 30,- on a gaming apparatus with an identification number "15", on at 19:30 the same user won EUR 5,- a gaming apparatus with the identification number "17".

[0038] In order to avoid manipulations of the tracking tickets 3 the ticket printer 22 comprises a decryption module, so that an encrypted code corresponding to the account number 31 is printed on the tracking ticket 3. The account number 31 is encrypted before being printed on the tracking ticket 3. The ticket reader 21 comprises a decryption module, which decrypts the code printed on the ticket 3 and determines the account number 31 accordingly. As a separate measure or in addition the operation of the gaming machine 2 may be such that the sequence of receiving the tracking ticket 3 and issuing a new tracking ticket 3 shall be strictly adhered to. That is to say that in case if the account number 31 has been recognized by the gaming system then this account number 31 is locked until the regular new tracking ticket 3 is issued following the end of game play. Optionally, in case if the account number 31 is in the locked state then the gaming system may generate an alarm message, for instance to the system operator, in the case if an identical account number 31 is being recognised within the gaming system.

[0039] In this preferred example of the invention the gaming apparatus 2 of the gaming system comprises a ticket printer 22, which is provided to erase and reprint tickets 3, 5. A tracking ticket 3 or cash ticket 5 which is provided to the gaming machine 2 by the user is read by the ticket reader 21 and afterwards erased by the ticket printer 22. After the end of the game the tracking ticket 3 is reprinted and provided to the user. A further embodiment (not shown in detail in the Fig.) of the invention uses reprintable tickets 3, 5. Again, a common unit may be used, providing the functionality of the reader 21 and the printer 22. In this regard, reference is made to U.S. patent U.S. 5854477, the entire content of which is incorporated herein by reference.

[0040] The paper/ticket may be coated with a UV light-sensitive chemical substance such that information can be deleted on the paper by irradiation with ultraviolet light. Alternatively, the paper may be coated with thermally sensitive substances.

[0041] Such thermal printing papers have covered on it, for example, in an unactivated state colorless dye, known leuco dye, and a developer. The developer provides an activation of the dyes. The application of heat melts and merges these materials, i.e. their molecules bind together in a chemical reaction. Leuco dyes that have reacted with the developer may produce such as black, blue and other colours. By separating back the coloured leuco dye and developer the colours are "deleted", i.e. so that the displayed information is lost.

[0042] Staining and de-colouring are caused by differences in the effect of temperature on the materials. The materials (leuco dyes, developer) melt at higher temperature T1 (for example, 160° C) and subsequent quenching. Decolouration occurs if the paper is again heated, but to a slightly lower temperature T2. The use of a thermal print head enables the selective use of temperature fields in which colour is desired, for example, to produce text. Use of a heating roller to the entire sheet makes it is possible to delete the text completely. The process of printing and deleting may be carried out several/many times. Alternatively, it is further possible, as disclosed in JP 2000154345 A (TOSHIBA), to use a deletable printer ink that can be deleted by heat after being printed.

[0043] Even if it is possible to connect personal information of the user, such as name, address, credit card number, telephone number etc. with the account number 31 of the user, the preferred example of the invention avoids linking or connecting such a data in order to maintain the privacy of the user. One or more records 13 exclusively contain the account number 31 and information relating to the games. Personal information is prohibited to be stored on those records 13.

[0044] After a predefined time limit of for example five days as from its creation a record 13 is invalidated and further gaming information 41, preferably the identification number of the gaming machine 2 a time stamp or information 44 on the results of the game, are prohibited from storage. Alternatively the time limit for storing data to an account may be determined as from the time when the last data were stored to the record 13. A tracking ticket 3 becomes therefore invalid after a time limit of non-use.

[0045] A tracking ticket 3 may be initially issued to the user (patron) at a register desk or self-register desk. Such a register desk may comprise a ticket printer and a data connection to the server 1 and database 11.

Claims

1. A method for tracking the activity of a user of a gaming machine (2), said gaming machine being connected to a server (1) with a database (11)

   - wherein an account number (31) is assigned to a user and a tracking ticket (3) is created for said user, wherein on the tracking ticket (3) a respective code for the account number (31) is printed and provided to the user, and wherein a record (13) of said database (11) is created, the account number (31) being assigned to the record (13) as a key value,
   - wherein before a game is started on a gaming machine (2) a connection to the server (1) is established and the tracking ticket (3) is read by the gaming machine (2), and at the end of the game the said tracking ticket (3) or a further tracking ticket (3), on which a code encoding the account number (31) is printed, is provided to the user, and
   - wherein before or after or during the game a data packet (4) comprising the account number (31; 40) of the ticket (3) as well as further gaming information (41), preferably an identification number (42) of the gaming machine (2), and/or a time stamp (43), and/or information (44) on the results of the game, is provided to the server (1) and stored to the record (13) having the same account number (31; 40) as the packet (4).

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein an account number is invalidated after a predefined time limit, preferably a time limit between one and ten days, as from the creation of the record (13) or as from the time, when last data were stored in the record (13) and assigned to the account number (31).

3. A method according to claim 1 or 2, wherein a further cash ticket (5), on which cash information (51) is printed and encoded, is fed to the gaming machine (2) and read by the gaming machine (2) before the beginning of the game,

   - wherein the cash information (51) is amended, preferably reduced, according to the results of the game,
   - wherein at the end of the game, preferably before printing the tracking ticket (3), the cash ticket (5) is printed and provided to the user, and
   - wherein the tracking ticket (3) and the cash ticket (5) are printed by the ticket printer (22) of the gaming machine (2) and/or are read by the ticket reader (21) of the gaming machine (2).

4. A method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein before starting the game or during the game the record (13) or parts of the record (13), whose key equals the account number (31) of the tracking ticket (3), is or are sent to the gaming machine (2), wherein the gaming program of the gaming machine (2) is modified according to said record (13).

5. A method according to claim 4, wherein a bonus game or a more favourable initialization of the game is offered to the user, if the total number of entries (32) or an aggregation, preferably a sum, of entries (32) of the record (13), such as the number of previously played games or the gaming time, exceeds a predefined threshold value.

6. A method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein a code corresponding to the account number (31) is printed on the tracking ticket (3), and wherein said account number (31) is preferably encrypted before encoding and printing, and/or
   wherein an erasable and re-printable tracking ticket (3) is provided to the user, wherein the ticket (3) is erased after reading by the gaming machine (2) and re-printed before it is provided to the user, and/or
   wherein the one or more records (13) exclusively contain the account number (31) and information relating to the games, wherein preferably personal information is prohibited to be stored on said records (13).

7. A gaming system for tracking the activity of a user of a gaming machine (2), the system comprising a gaming server (1), and a plurality of gaming machines (2), the gaming server (1) and the gaming machines (2) being connected via a network (6),

   - wherein the gaming server (1) provides a database (11) to store a plurality of records (13), each record having an account number (31) as a key value,
   - wherein each of the gaming machines (2) comprises a gaming processor (20)
   - wherein each of the gaming machines (2) comprises a ticket reader (21) and a ticket printer (22), and a network interface (23) for providing a data connection to the database (11) of the server (1),
   - wherein the account number (31) is assigned to a user and a tracking ticket (3) is created for said user, wherein on the tracking ticket (3) a respective code for the account number (31) is printed and provided to the user,
   - wherein before or after or during the game the gaming processor (20) generates a data packet (4) comprising the account number (31; 40) of the tracking ticket (3) as well as further gaming information, preferably an identification number (42) of the gaming machine (2), and/or a time stamp (43), and/or information (44) on the re-

sults of the game, and

- wherein after generating said data packet (4), the gaming processor (20) sends said data packet to the server (1) and forces the server (1) to store the packet (4) with the record having the same account number (31; 40) as the packet (4).

8. A system according to claim 7, wherein the server (1) comprises an invalidation unit (12) which invalidates records (13) of the database (11) after a predefined time limit, preferably from one to ten days, as from the creation of the record (13) or as from storing the last data in said record (13).

9. A system according to claim 7 or 8, wherein the ticket reader (21) is prepared to read a cash ticket (5) on which cash information (11) is printed and encoded, and wherein before, during or after the game the gaming processor (20) amends the cash information (51, 52) according to the results of the game and forces the ticket printer (22) to print a new cash ticket (50) on which the amended cash information (52) is printed and encoded, so that the ticket (3; 3') and the cash ticket (5; 50) are printed by the same printer (22) and/or are read by the same ticket reader (21).

10. A system according to any of claims 7 to 9, wherein on receiving a query on an account number (31) of a gaming machine (2), the server (1) provides the record (13) having said account number (31) to the respective gaming machine (2).

11. A system according to claim 10, wherein after reading a tracking ticket (3) the gaming processor (20) of a gaming machine (2) sends a query regarding the account number (31) of the ticket to the server (1) and receives the record (13) stored in the database (11) having said account number (31),
wherein the gaming processor (20) compares the total number of entries (32) of the record (13) or an aggregation, preferably a sum, of entries (32) of the record (13), such as the number of previously played games or the gaming time, with a threshold value and determines, if said predefined threshold value is exceeded, and

- wherein the gaming processor (20) is programmed to offer the user a bonus game or a more favourable initialization of the game, if said threshold is exceeded.

12. A system according to any of the claims 7 to 11, wherein

- the gaming processor (20) and/or the ticket printer (22) is programmed to encode, and preferably to encrypt, the account number (31) before printing, and/or
- wherein the gaming processor (20) and/or the ticket reader (21) is programmed to decode, and preferably to decrypt, the account number (31) printed on the tracking ticket (3) before reading.

13. A system according to any of the claims 7 to 12, wherein the ticket printer (22) is provided to erase and re-print tickets (3, 5) and provide tickets (3, 5) to the user, the ticket printer (22) erasing and reprinting the tracking ticket (3) after being read by the ticket reader (21) and/or

- wherein the one or more records (13) are provided to exclusively contain the account number and information relating to the games, and/or wherein said records (13) do not comprise any personal information on the user.

14. A computer program product directly loadable into the internal memory of a digital computer, comprising software for performing the steps of any of the claims 1 to 6, when the product is run on a computer, preferably on gaming machine or a server connected to a plurality of gaming machines via a network.

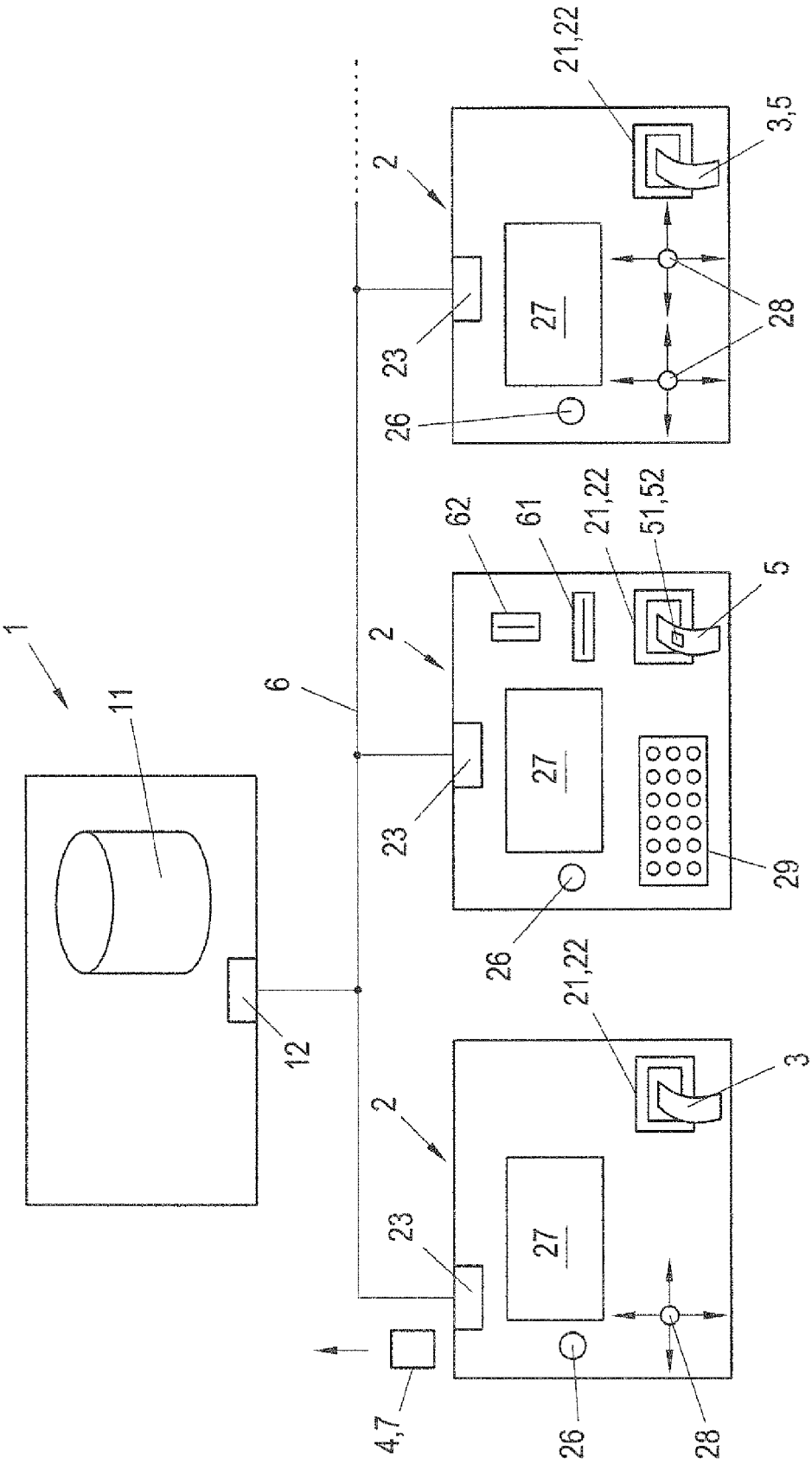

Fig. 1

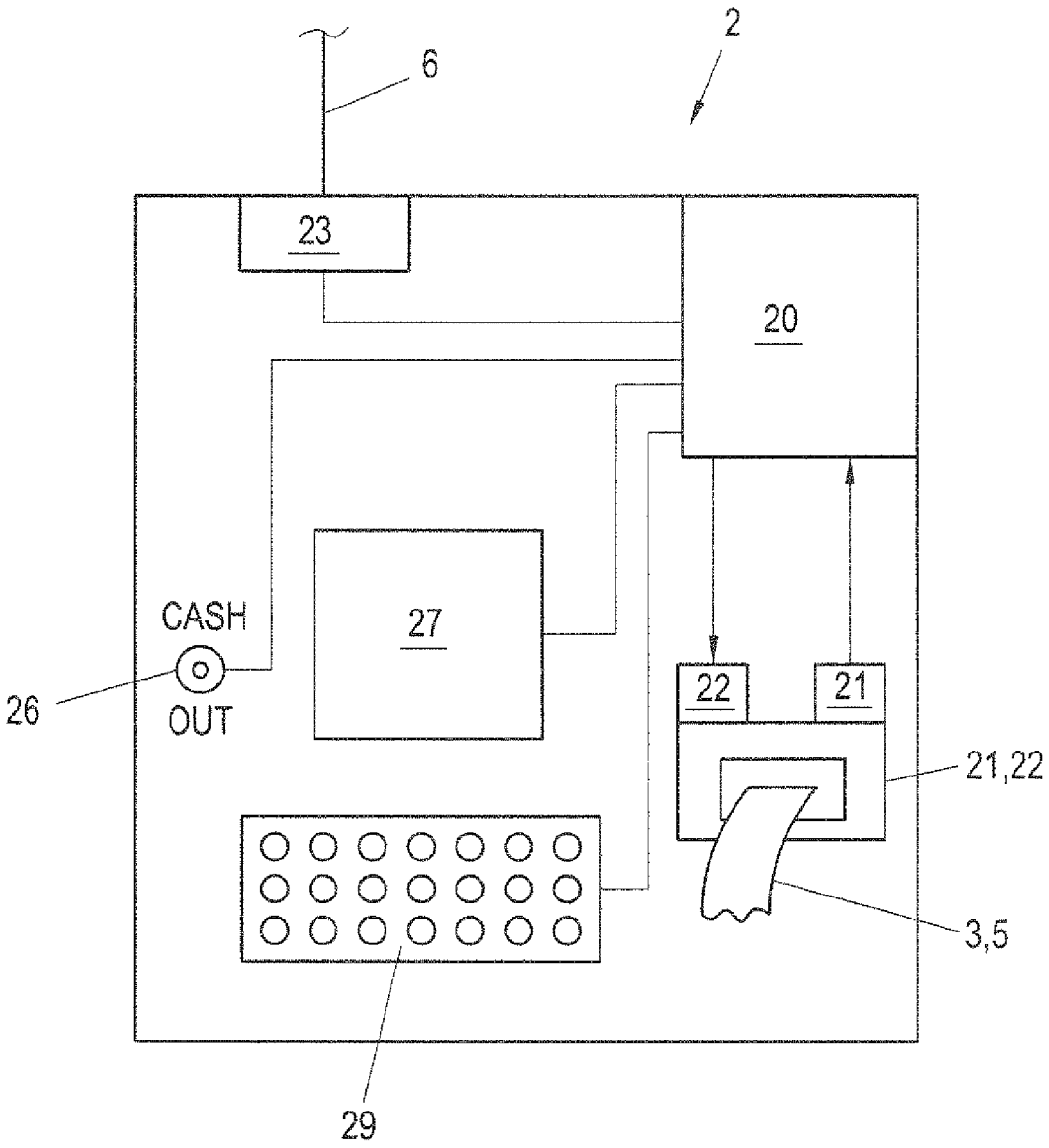

Fig. 2

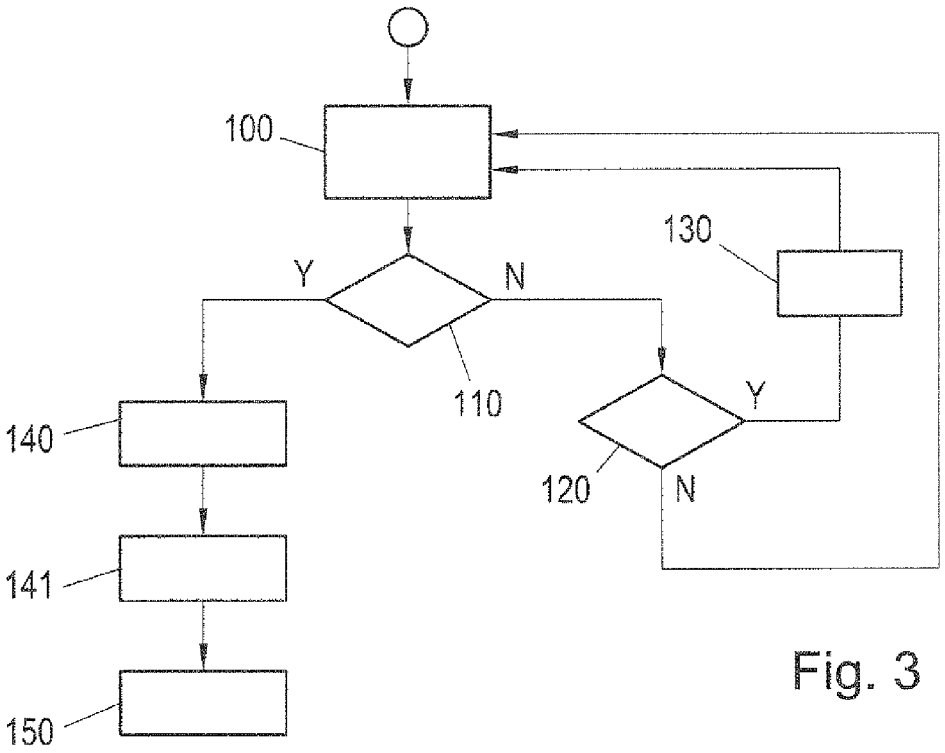

Fig. 3

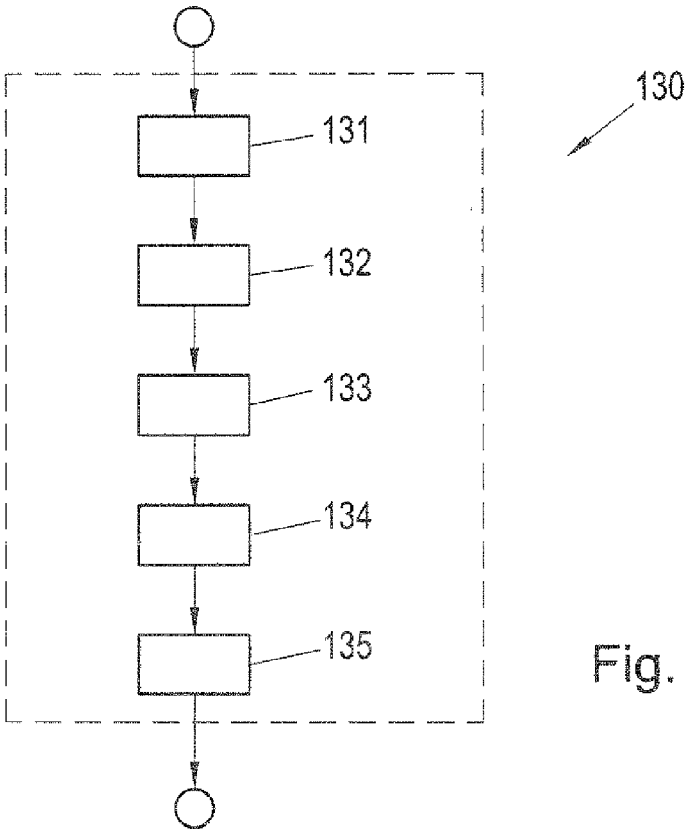

Fig. 4

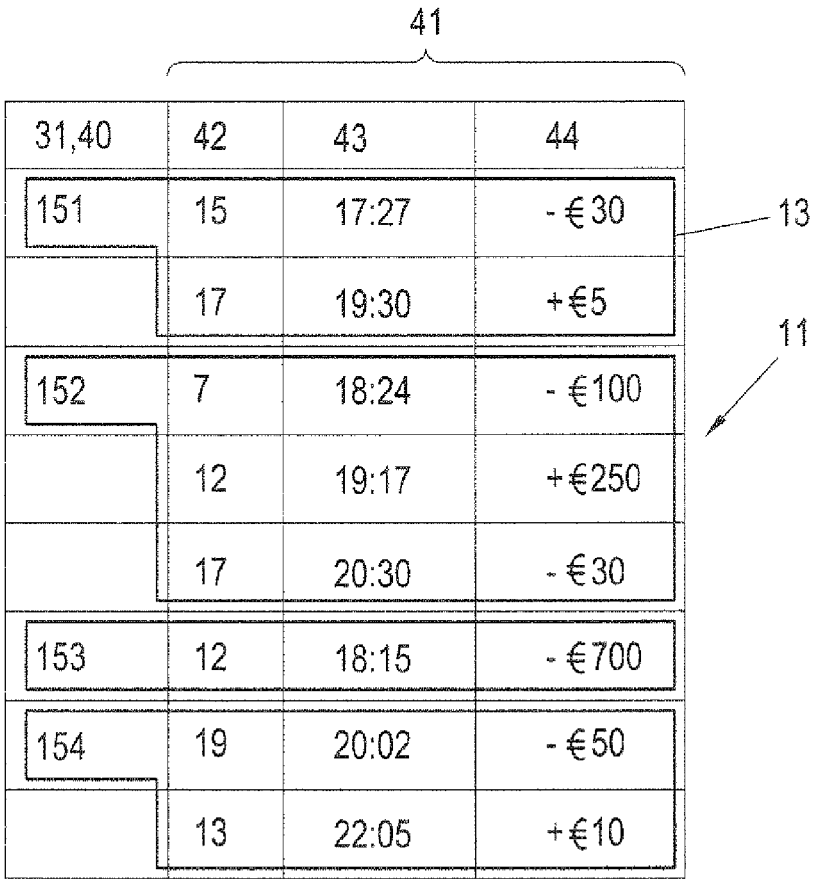
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Fig. 5

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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 12 17 9616

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
X	WO 2007/064327 A1 (WALKER DIGITAL LLC [US]; WALKER JAY S [US]; FINCHAM MAGDALENA M [US];) 7 June 2007 (2007-06-07) * the whole document * -----	1-14	INV. G07F17/32

TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)

G07F

The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
The Hague	5 December 2012	Guenov, Mihail

CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS

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