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(54) **GAMING SYSTEM, A GAMING METHOD AND A GAMING SERVER**

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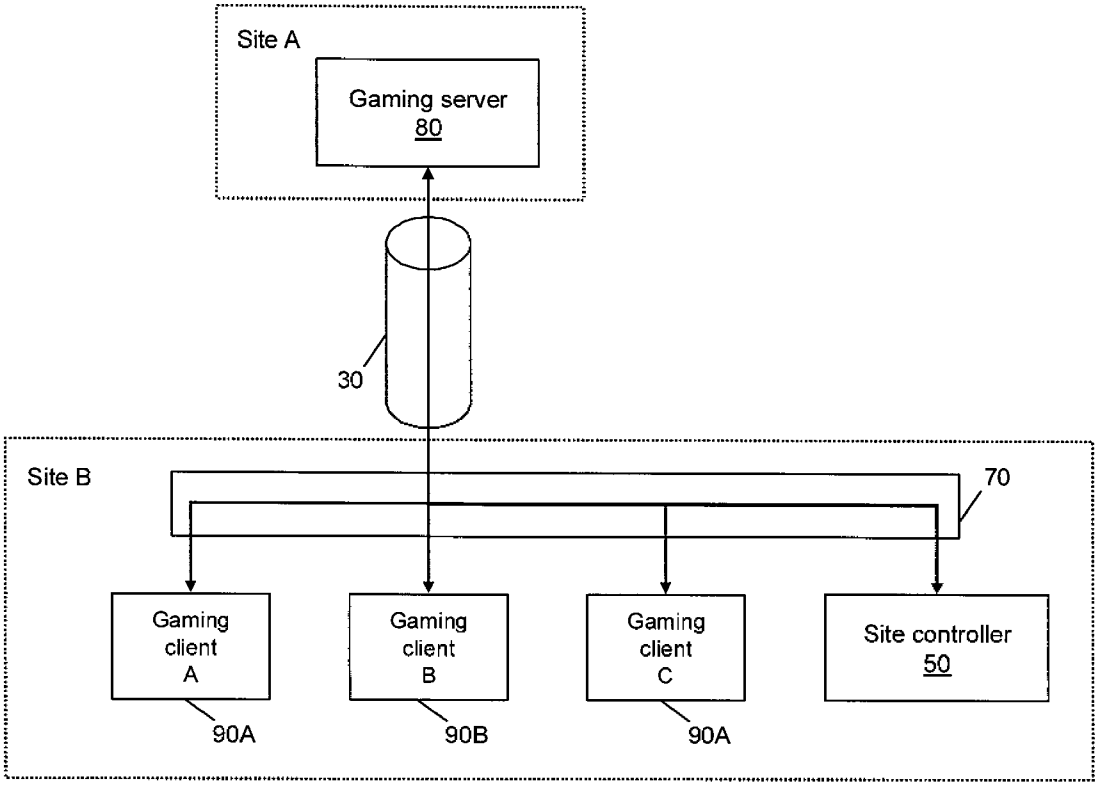
(57) **ABSTRACT**

There is provided a gaming system, comprising: a plurality of gaming clients located at a first site; a site controller located at the first site; and a gaming server adapted to generate game outcomes for the gaming clients, the gaming server being located at a second site remote from the first site and in communication with the gaming clients and the site controller over a network, the gaming server comprising an operational database adapted to store operational data of each gaming client; and a communication interface arranged to communicate the operational data of each gaming client to the site controller.



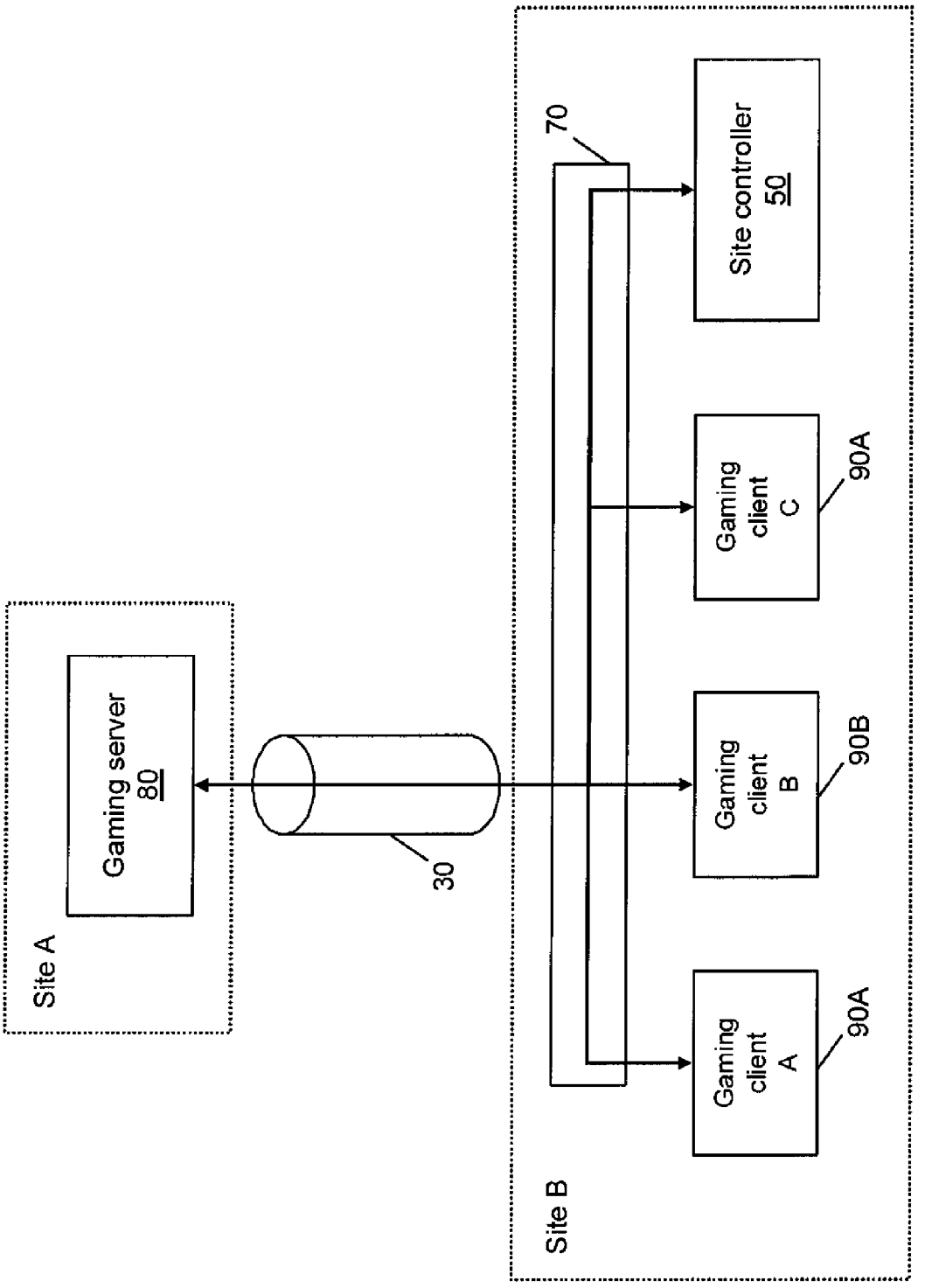

Site A
Gaming server
80
30
Site B
70
Site controller
50
Gaming
client
C
90A
Gaming
client
B
90B
Gaming
client
A
90A

Figure 1

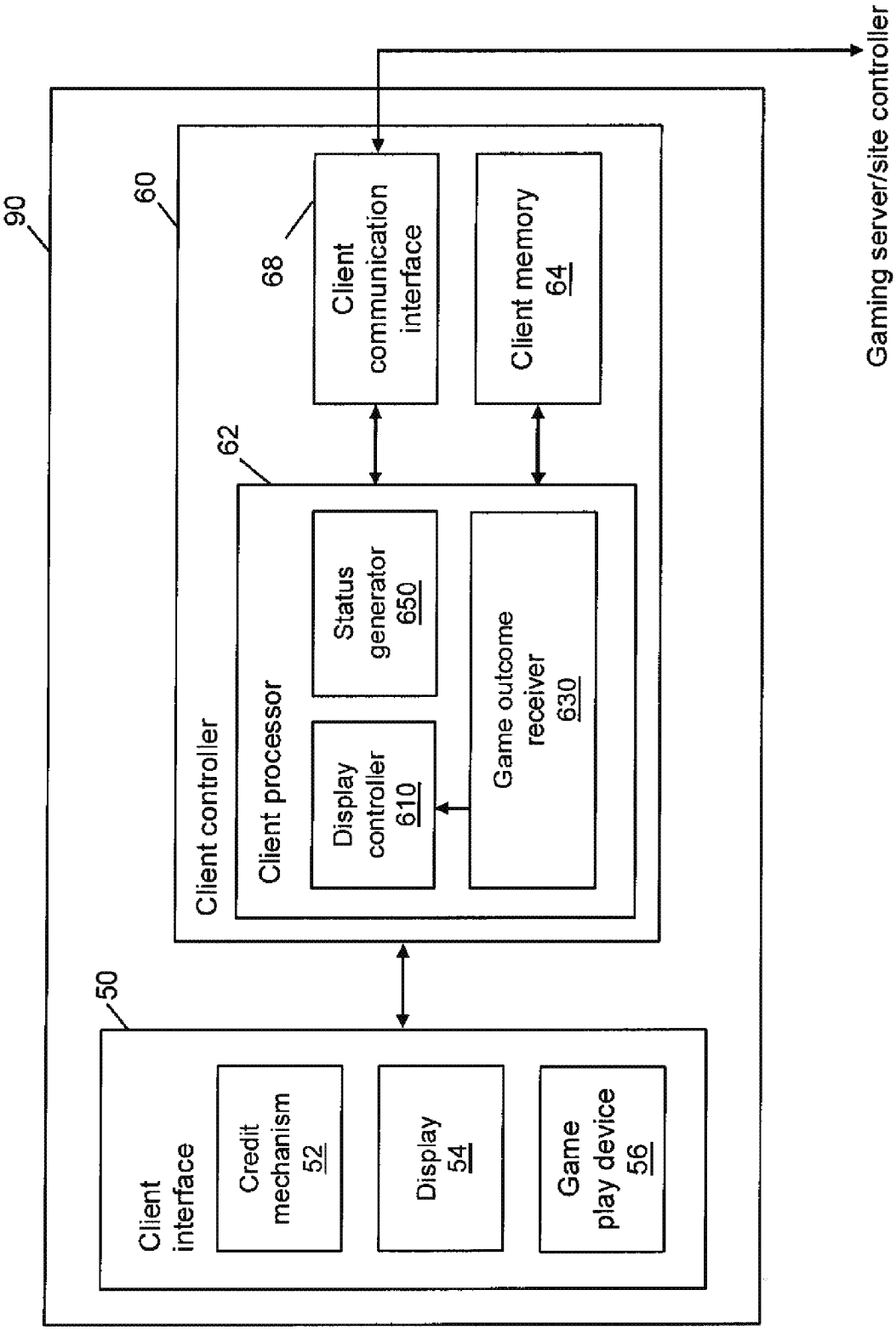

90
60
68
Client communication interface
Client memory 64
Gaming server/site controller
62
Client processor
Status generator 650
Display controller 610
Game outcome receiver 630
Client controller
50
Client interface
Credit mechanism 52
Display 54
Game play device 56

Figure 2

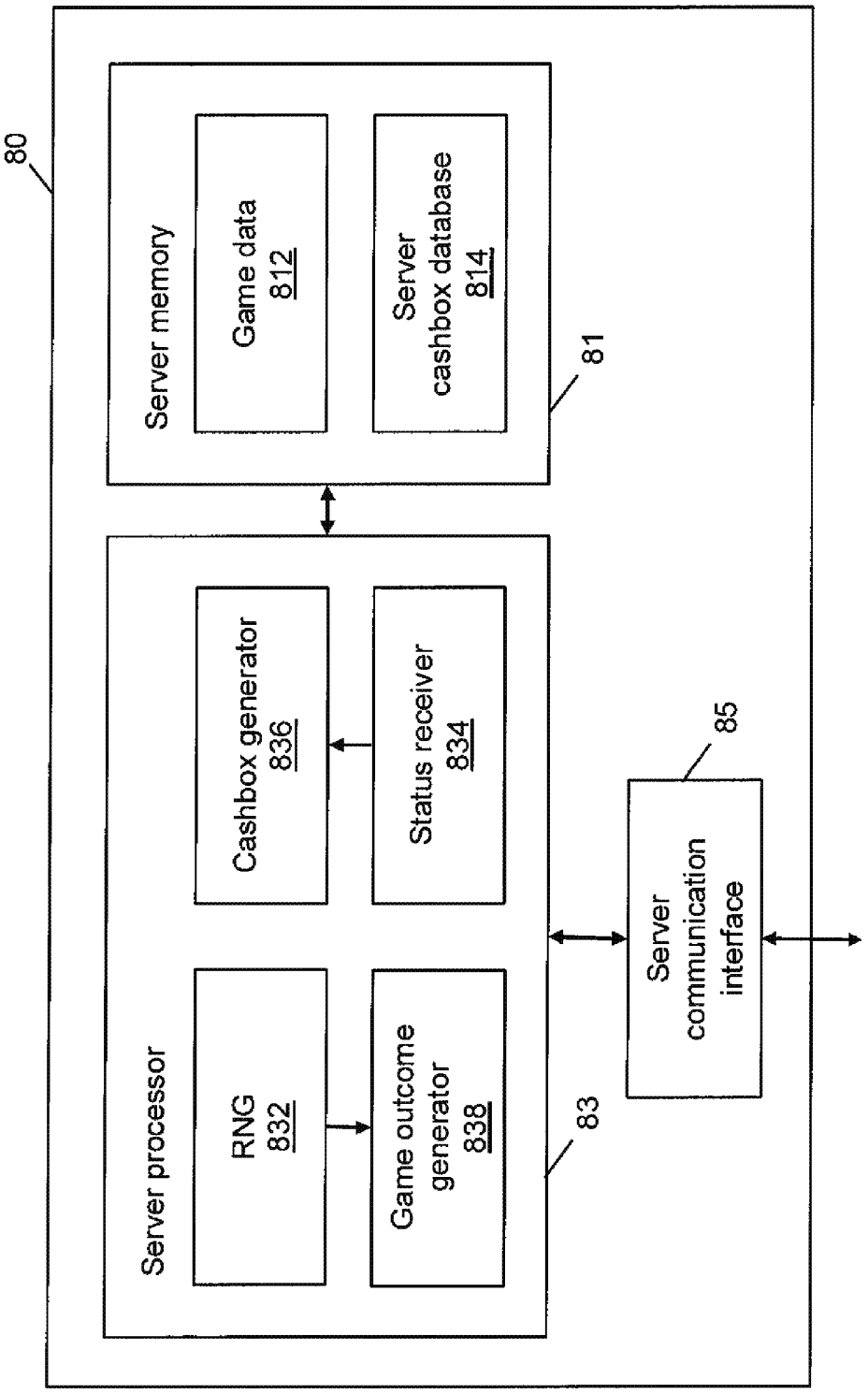

80
Server memory
Game data
812
Server
cashbox database
814
81
Server processor
Cashbox generator
836
Status receiver
834
RNG
832
Game outcome
generator
838
83
85
Server
communication
interface
Gaming clients/site controller

Figure 3

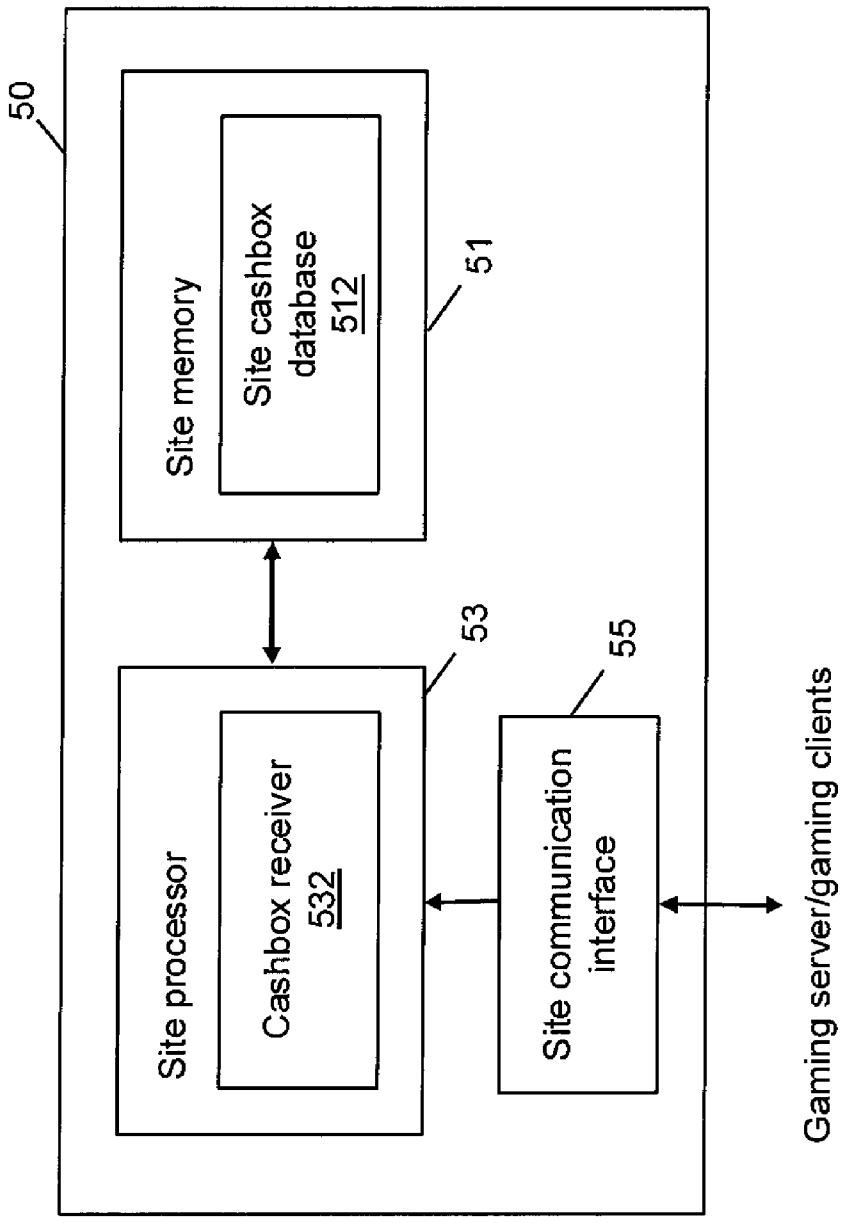

50
Site memory
Site cashbox database 512
51
53
55
Site processor
Cashbox receiver 532
Site communication interface
Gaming server/gaming clients

Figure 4

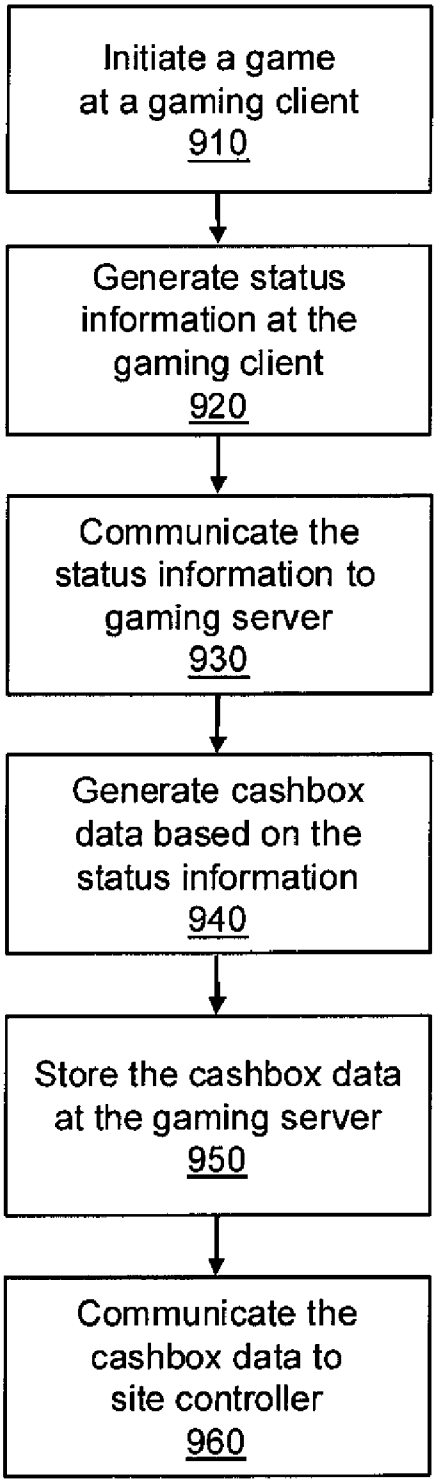

Initiate a game at a gaming client 910
Generate status information at the gaming client 920
Communicate the status information to gaming server 930
Generate cashbox data based on the status information 940
Store the cashbox data at the gaming server 950
Communicate the cashbox data to site controller 960

Figure 5

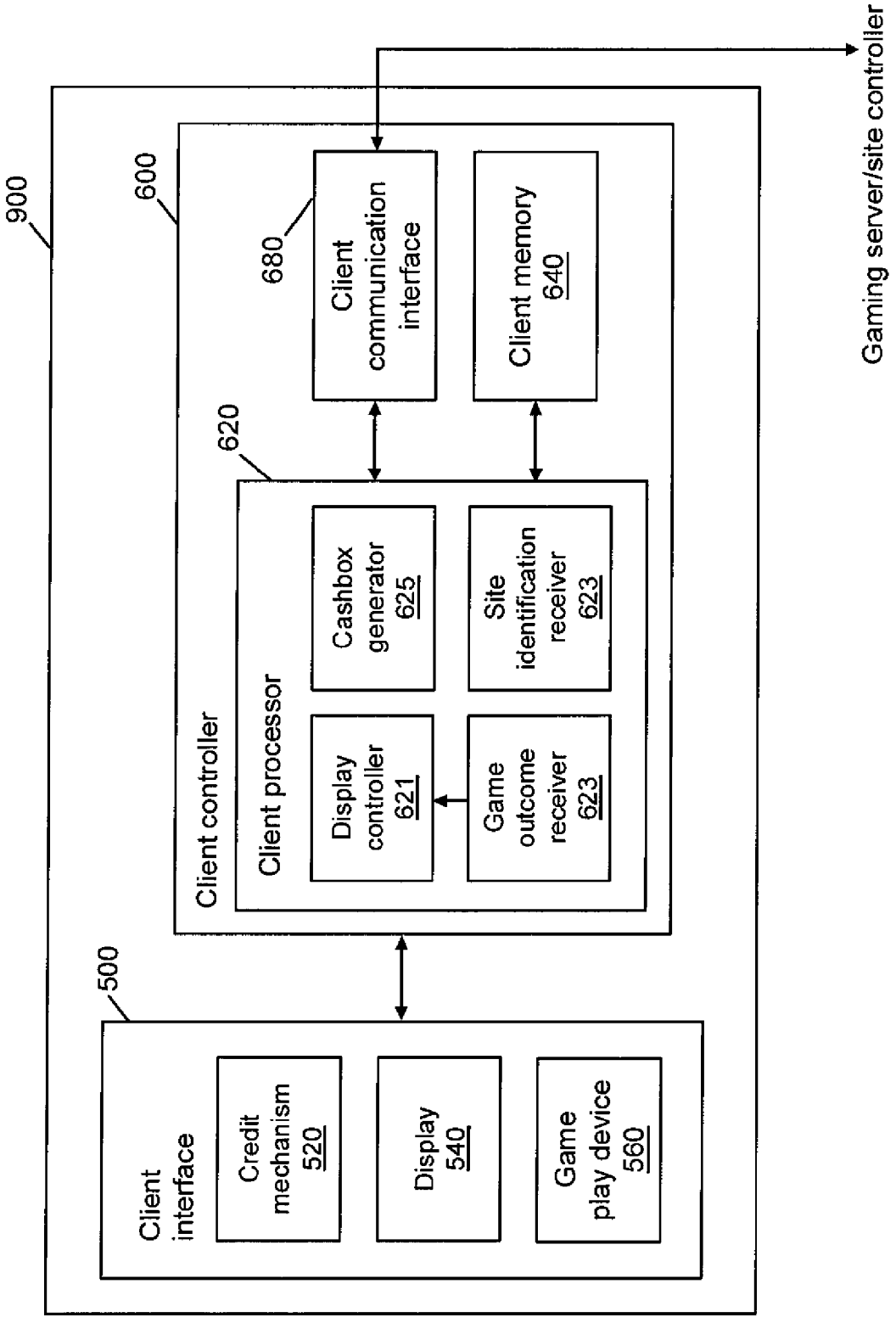

900
600
680
Client communication interface
Client memory 640
Gaming server/site controller
620
Client processor
Cashbox generator 625
Site identification receiver 623
Client controller
Display controller 621
Game outcome receiver 623
500
Client interface
Credit mechanism 520
Display 540
Game play device 560

Figure 6

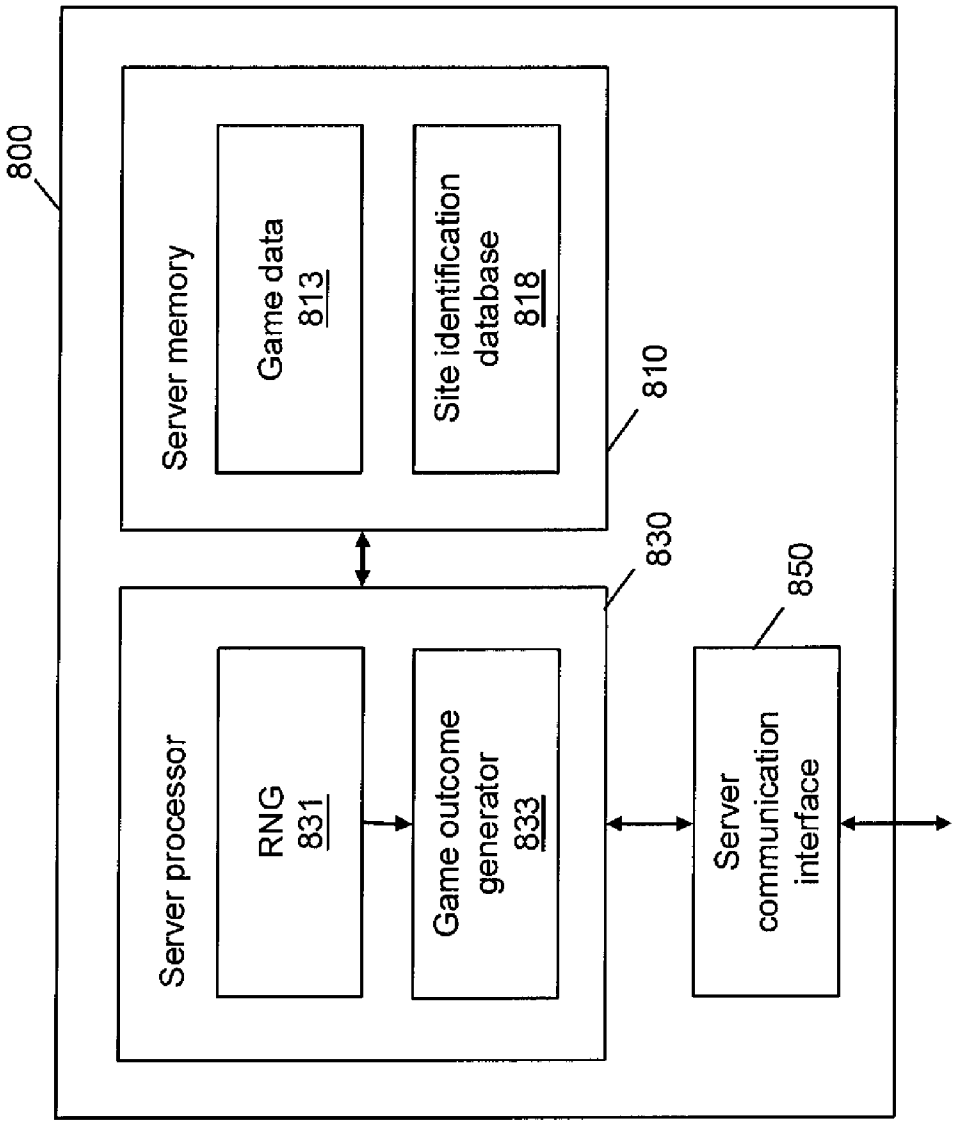

800
Server memory
Game data
813
Site identification
database
818
810
830
850
Server processor
RNG
831
Game outcome
generator
833
Server
communication
interface
Gaming clients/site controller

Figure 7

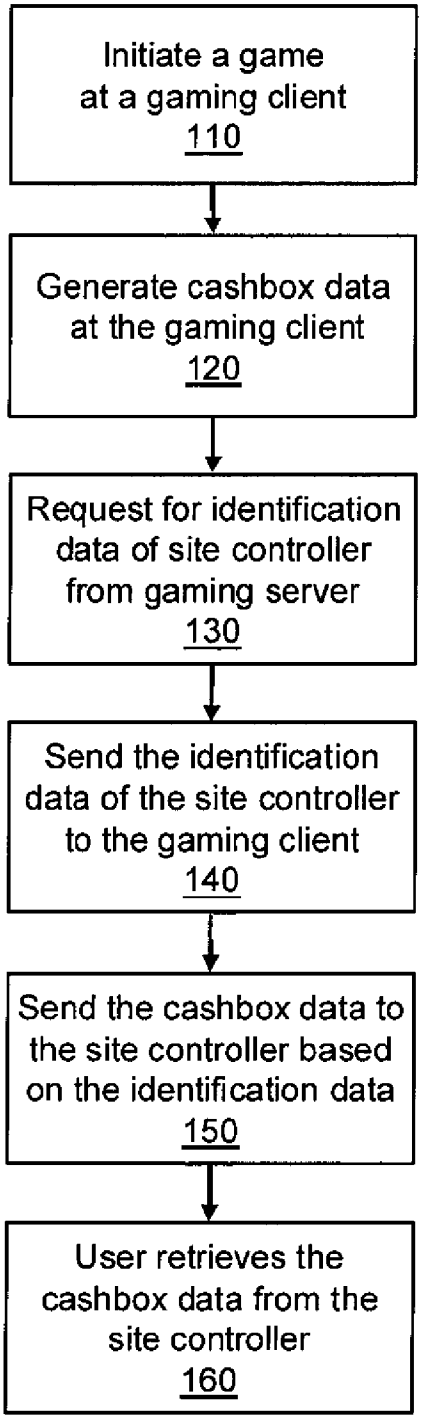

Initiate a game at a gaming client 110
Generate cashbox data at the gaming client 120
Request for identification data of site controller from gaming server 130
Send the identification data of the site controller to the gaming client 140
Send the cashbox data to the site controller based on the identification data 150
User retrieves the cashbox data from the site controller 160

Figure 8

GAMING SYSTEM, A GAMING METHOD AND A GAMING SERVER

RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This patent claims priority to Australian Provisional Application 2011900495 filed Feb. 15, 2011, which is hereby incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

FIELD

[0002] The invention relates to a gaming system, a gaming method and a gaming server.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Server based gaming systems have been developed for the gaming industry. In server based systems, the remote gaming server carries out most gaming functions while the client terminal receives player inputs and present game outcomes to the player. As a result, certain information resides on the server.

[0004] There is a need for an alternative gaming system and gaming method.

BRIEF SUMMARY

[0005] In a first aspect, the invention provides a gaming system, including:

[0006] a plurality of gaming clients located at a first site;

[0007] a site controller located at the first site; and

[0008] a gaming server adapted to generate game outcomes for the gaming clients, the gaming server being located at a second site remote from the first site and in communication with the gaming clients and the site controller over a network, the gaming server including:

[0009] an operational database adapted to store operational data of each gaming client; and

[0010] a communication interface arranged to communicate the operational data of each gaming client to the site controller.

[0011] In an embodiment, the gaming server includes a status receiver arranged to receive status information of each gaming client.

[0012] In an embodiment, the operational data includes cashbox data of each gaming client, the operational database is a cashbox database adapted to store the cashbox data of each gaming client, and the gaming server includes a cashbox generator arranged to generate the cashbox data of each gaming client based on the status information of the gaming client.

[0013] In an embodiment, the gaming server includes an outcome generator arranged to generate the game outcomes for the gaming clients.

[0014] In an embodiment, the network is a wide area network.

[0015] In an embodiment, the status information of each gaming client includes depositing of cash or emptying of cashbox.

[0016] In an embodiment, the status information of each gaming client includes one of the group including: starting of game; ending of game; starting of service session; ending of service session; starting of player session; and ending of player session.

[0017] In an embodiment, the gaming server communicates with the gaming clients and the site controller via one or more secure channels.

[0018] In an embodiment, the gaming server is in data communication with gaming clients at a plurality of sites, and the gaming server stores operational data in the operational database such that the operational data is associated with a specific site.

[0019] In a second aspect, the invention provides a gaming method, including:

[0020] storing operational data of a plurality of gaming clients at a gaming server adapted to generate game outcomes for the gaming clients, the gaming clients being located at a first site, the gaming server being located at a second site remote from the first site; and

[0021] communicating the operational data of each gaming client from the gaming server to a site controller located at the first site.

[0022] In an embodiment, the gaming method further includes receiving status information of each gaming client from the gaming client at the gaming server via a network.

[0023] In an embodiment, the operational data includes cashbox data of each gaming client, and the gaming method further includes generating the cashbox data of each gaming client at the gaming server based on the status information of the gaming client.

[0024] In an embodiment, the gaming method further includes communicating the game outcome for each gaming client from the gaming server to the gaming client via a network.

[0025] In an embodiment, the network is a wide area network.

[0026] In an embodiment, the status information of each gaming client includes depositing of cash or emptying of cashbox.

[0027] In an embodiment, the status information of each gaming client includes one of the group including: starting of game; ending of game; starting of service session; ending of service session; starting of player session; and ending of player session.

[0028] In an embodiment, the communication between the gaming server and the site controller is via a secure channel.

[0029] In an embodiment, the gaming method further includes storing at the gaming server operational data of a further plurality of gaming clients located in a third site remote from the first and second sites, and operational data is stored in the operational database such that the operational data is associated with a specific site.

[0030] In a third aspect, the invention provides a gaming server for generating game outcomes for a plurality of gaming clients located at a first site, the gaming server being located at a second site remote from the first site, the gaming server including:

[0031] an operational database adapted to store operational data of each gaming client; and

[0032] a communication interface arranged to communicate the operational data of each gaming client to a site controller located at the first site.

[0033] In an embodiment, the operational data includes cashbox data of each gaming client, and the operational database is a cashbox database adapted to store the cashbox data of each gaming client.

[0034] In an embodiment, the gaming server further includes:

[0035] a status receiver arranged to receive status information of each gaming client; and

[0036] a cashbox generator arranged to generate the cashbox data of each gaming client based on the status information of the gaming client.

[0037] In an embodiment, the status information of each gaming client includes depositing of cash or emptying of cashbox.

[0038] In an embodiment, the status information of each gaming client includes one of the group including: starting of game; ending of game; starting of service session; ending of service session; starting of player session; and ending of player session.

[0039] In an embodiment, the gaming server further includes an outcome generator arranged to generate the game outcomes for the gaming clients.

[0040] In an embodiment, the gaming server is in communication with the gaming clients and the site controller over a network.

[0041] In an embodiment, the network is a wide area network.

[0042] In an embodiment, the communication between the gaming server and the site controller is via a secure channel.

[0043] In an embodiment, the operational database is adapted to store operational data of a plurality of gaming clients located at a plurality of sites, and operational data is stored in the operational database such that the operational data is associated with a specific site.

[0044] In a fourth aspect, the invention provides a site controller located at the first site, the site controller being in communication with a gaming server adapted to generate game outcomes for a plurality of gaming clients located at the first site, the gaming server being located at a second site remote from the first site and including an operational database adapted to store operational data of each gaming client, the site controller including a site receiver arranged to receive the operational data of each gaming client from the gaming server.

[0045] In an embodiment, the operational data includes cashbox data of each gaming client, the operational database is a cashbox database adapted to store the cashbox data of each gaming client, and the site receiver is a cashbox receiver arranged to receive the cashbox data of each gaming client from the server.

[0046] In an embodiment, the site controller receives the operational data of each gaming client from the gaming server over a network.

[0047] In an embodiment, the network is a wide area network.

[0048] In an embodiment, the site controller receives the operational data of each gaming client from the gaming server via a secure channel.

[0049] In an embodiment, the operational database is adapted to store operational data of a plurality of gaming clients located in a plurality of sites and operational data is stored in the operational database such that the operational data is associated with a specific site.

[0050] In a fifth aspect, the invention provides a gaming system, including:

[0051] a plurality of gaming clients located at a first site;

[0052] a site controller; and

[0053] a gaming server adapted to generate game outcomes for the gaming clients, the gaming server being located at a second site remote from the first site and including a site database including identification data of the site controller;

[0054] wherein each gaming client is adapted to:

[0055] receive the identification data of the site controller from the gaming server; and

[0056] communicate operational data to the site controller based on the identification data received from the gaming server.

[0057] In an embodiment, the operational data includes cashbox data of each gaming client.

[0058] In an embodiment, the gaming server includes an outcome generator arranged to generate the game outcomes for the gaming clients.

[0059] In an embodiment, the gaming server communicates with the gaming clients and the site controller via one or more secure channels.

[0060] In an embodiment, the gaming server is in data communication with gaming clients at a plurality of sites, and the site database includes identification data of a plurality of site controllers.

[0061] In a sixth aspect, the invention provides computer program code which when executed implements any one of the above method.

[0062] In a seventh aspect, the invention provides a tangible computer readable medium including the above computer program code.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0063] The invention is further explained by means of the following non-limiting examples and in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0064] FIG. **1** is a schematic diagram of a server based gaming system;

[0065] FIG. **2** is a block diagram of the functional components of a gaming client;

[0066] FIG. **3** is a block diagram of the functional components of a gaming server;

[0067] FIG. **4** is a block diagram of the functional components of a site controller;

[0068] FIG. **5** is a flow chart of a gaming method;

[0069] FIG. **6** is a block diagram of the functional components of an alternative gaming client;

[0070] FIG. **7** is a block diagram of the functional components of an alternative gaming server; and

[0071] FIG. **8** is a flow chart of an alternative gaming method.

[0072] The foregoing summary, as well as the following detailed description of certain implementations of the methods, apparatus, systems, and/or articles of manufacture described herein, will be better understood when read in conjunction with the appended drawings. It should be understood, however, that the methods, apparatus, systems, and/or articles of manufacture described herein are not limited to the arrangements and instrumentality shown in the attached drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0073] Although the following discloses example methods, apparatus, systems, and articles of manufacture including, among other components, firmware and/or software executed on hardware, it should be noted that such methods, apparatus, systems, and/or articles of manufacture are merely illustrative and should not be considered as limiting. For example, it is contemplated that any or all of these firmware, hardware, and/or software components could be embodied exclusively in hardware, exclusively in software, exclusively in firmware,

or in any combination of hardware, software, and/or firmware. Accordingly, while the following describes example methods, apparatus, systems, and/or articles of manufacture, the examples provided are not the only way(s) to implement such methods, apparatus, systems, and/or articles of manufacture.

[0074] When any of the appended claims are read to cover a purely software and/or firmware implementation, at least one of the elements in an at least one example is hereby expressly defined to include a tangible medium such as a memory, DVD, CD, etc. storing the software and/or firmware.

[0075] An embodiment of the invention provides a server based gaming system including a site controller and a plurality of gaming clients (also known as gaming terminals) located at a first site, and a gaming server located at a second site remote from the first site. In the system, operational data (for example, cashbox data such as the cashbox balance) of each of the plurality of gaming clients is generated and stored in the gaming server and communicated from the gaming server to the site controller. Advantageously, the gaming system allows access to operational data at a local centralized point: the site controller located at the first site.

[0076] FIG. **1** is a schematic diagram of an embodiment of a server based gaming system. The system includes a gaming server **80** located at a first site ("site A") and a plurality of gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C located at a second site ("site B") remote from the first site. The server based gaming system according to the present embodiment is based on a client/server architecture where the majority of gaming and administrative functions are performed by the gaming server **80**. In this context, a gaming server generally means hardware and software units in a central system that provide server functions, database functions and other centralized functions to connectable gaming clients.

[0077] The system also includes a site controller **50** located at the same site as the plurality of gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C (that is, at site B). Persons skilled in the art will appreciate the distance between site A and site B can vary. For example, the two sites may be in the same city or they may be in different cities.

[0078] The gaming server **80** is in communication with the gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C and the site controller **50** over a network. The plurality of gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C and the site controller **50** are connected in the same Local Area Network (LAN) **70** (for example, an Ethernet network, a WiFi network etc). The gaming server **80** is connected to the site controller **50** and the plurality of gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C via a Wide Area Network (WAN) **30** (such as the Internet). It is envisaged that each of the gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C communicates with the gaming server **80** via separate secure channels. It is envisaged that communications between the site controller **50** and the gaming server is also via a secure channel.

[0079] In the gaming system of FIG. **1**, there are three gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C. However, it will be appreciated that there can be two or more than three gaming clients.

[0080] Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the system may additionally include a router to route the communications between the gaming server **80** and each of the gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C and the communications between the site controller **50** and the gaming server **80**.

[0081] In FIG. **1**, the gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C and the site controller **50** communicate with the gaming server **80** via the same physical link. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that each of the gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C and the site controller **50** may be connected to the gaming server **80** via separate physical links.

[0082] Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the gaming server **80** may communicate with other devices from other networks (for example, a corporate network, another WAN etc). For example, it is envisaged that, in an alternative embodiment, the gaming server **80** may be in communication with gaming clients from a plurality of other sites remote from site A and site B over different WANs.

[0083] FIG. **2** is a block diagram of the functional components of one of the gaming clients **90**. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that a gaming client is typically provided with data processors, memory, data communications interfaces, control programs, user input/output interfaces etc.

[0084] In this embodiment, the gaming client **90** is provided with a client interface **50** and a client controller **60**. The client interface **50** includes a credit mechanism **52**, a display **54** and a game play device **56**. Examples of credit mechanism that are typically provided in gaming clients include: coin input/output chutes, bill collectors/acceptors etc. Examples of displays that are typically provided in gaming clients include: Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) displays, Liquid Crystal Displays (LCDs), plasma screens etc. Examples of game play devices that are typically provided in gaming clients include: buttons, pull handles, touch screens etc. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the credit mechanism **52**, the display **54** and the game play device **56** need not be ones that are typically included in gaming clients. For example, while buttons are typically used to allow a player to place a wager and initiate a play of a game, any input device that enables the player to input game play instructions may be used. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that additional hardware may be included as part of the gaming client **90**, or hardware may be omitted based on a specific implementation. For example, an alternative gaming client may include a credit mechanism or include more than one display.

[0085] The client controller **60** includes a client communication interface **68**, a client memory **64** and a client processor **62**. Herein, the term "processor" is used to refer to any device that can process player instructions from the game play device **56** and/or the credit mechanism **52** of the client interface **50**. Examples of processors that are typically provided in the gaming client include: a microprocessor (sometimes also referred to as a Central Processing Unit (CPUs)), microcontroller, programmable logic device etc. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the processor is typically mounted on a circuit board, and that instructions and data to control operation of the processor are stored in a memory, which is in data communication with the processor.

[0086] In this embodiment, the client processor **62** is arranged to implement a set of modules based on program code stored in memory **64**. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the modules are based typically on program code and data stored in a memory. Persons skilled in the art will also appreciate that the modules need not be implemented using a processor or be based on program code and data stored in a memory and that one or more of the modules could be implemented in some other way, for example, by a dedicated circuit such as an Application Specific Integrated Circuit (ASIC), a Field Programmable Gate Array (FPGA) etc.

[0087] The modules implemented by the client processor **62** include a status generator **650**, a game outcome receiver

630 and a display controller 610. The status generator 650 is arranged to generate status information of the gaming client 90. Examples of status information that may be generated by the status generator 650 include: depositing of cash, emptying of cashbox, starting of game, ending of game, starting of service session, ending of service session, starting of player session, ending of player session etc. In use, the status generator 650 generates status information during game play in response to a player operating the game play device 56 and/or the credit mechanism 52 of the client interface 50 and communicates the status information to the client communication interface 68 which, in turn, communicates the status information to the gaming server 80. For example, when the player deposits cash for playing a game at the gaming client 90, the status generator 650 generates status information indicating that cash has been deposited at the gaming client 90 and communicates this to the client communication interface 68 which, in turn, communicates to the gaming server 80 that cash has been deposited at the gaming client 90.

[0088] The game outcome receiver 630 is arranged to receive game outcomes from the gaming server 80 via the client communication interface 68. In use, the game outcome receiver 630 receives game outcome from the gaming server 80 whenever a game is played at the gaming client 90.

[0089] The display controller 610 is arranged to receive communications from the game outcome receiver 630 to control the display 54 of the client interface 50 to display the game to the player. For example, the display controller 610 may control the display 54 to display a winning combination based on a game outcome received by the game outcome receiver 630.

[0090] Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that, in other embodiments, the client processor 62 may implement additional modules, for example, an audio controller for controlling an audio output device.

[0091] As indicated above, the client controller 60 also includes a client communication interface 68. The client communication interface 68 enables communication between a gaming client 90 and the gaming server 80. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the client communication interface 68 is typically a network card. In this system, the client communication interface 68 allows the gaming client 90 to communicate over the LAN 70 and the WAN 30 with the gaming server 80. In use, the client communication interface 68 enables the gaming client 90 to send requests to the gaming server 80 during game play in order for the game outcome receiver 630 to receive the game outcomes generated by the gaming server 80.

[0092] FIG. 3 is a block diagram of the functional components of the gaming server 80. The gaming server 80 is provided with a server memory 81 and a server processor 83 arranged to implement a set of modules based on program code and data stored in the server memory 81. As with the client processor, a person skilled in the art will appreciate that the modules of the server processor 83 need not be implemented using a processor or be based on program code and data stored in a memory and that one or more of the modules could alternatively be implemented by a dedicated circuit. Persons skilled in the art will also appreciate that the server processor 83 may implement additional modules not illustrated in FIG. 3. For example, in another embodiment, the server processor may implement a licensing monitor for monitoring use of licenses relating to particular games.

[0093] Besides the server memory 81 and the server processor 83, the gaming server 80 is also provided with a server communication interface 85 that enables the gaming server 80 to communicate with the plurality of gaming clients 90A, 90B, 90C and to communicate with the site controller 50.

[0094] The server memory 81 includes game data 812 and a server cashbox database 814. The modules implemented by the server processor 83 include a Random Number Generator (RNG) 832, a game outcome generator 838, a status receiver 834 and a cashbox generator 836.

[0095] The RNG 832 is arranged to generate random numbers for use by the server processor 83. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the reference to random numbers includes pseudo-random numbers.

[0096] The game outcome generator 838 is arranged to generate game outcomes for each of the plurality of gaming clients 90A, 90B, 90C based on the game data 812 stored in the server memory 81 and the random numbers generated by the RNG 832. In use, the game outcome generator 838 generates game outcomes for the game being played at a gaming client 90 upon receiving a request from the gaming client 90. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the game outcomes generated for a gaming client 90 may be different to the game outcomes generated for another gaming client, and that the game outcome generator 838 may generate game outcomes for the gaming clients 90A, 90B, 90C in parallel or sequentially.

[0097] The status receiver 834 is arranged to receive status information from each of the gaming clients 90A, 90B, 90C using the server communication interface 85. In use, the status information generated by the status generator 650 of a gaming client 90 is received by the status receiver 834 whenever there is a change in status at the gaming client 90. For example, the status receiver 834 receives status information indicating that a new game has started at a gaming client 90 when a new game starts at the gaming client 90.

[0098] The cashbox generator 836 is adapted to generate cashbox data of each of the gaming clients 90A, 90B, 90C based on the status information received from the gaming clients 90A, 90B, 90C. For example, upon receiving from the status receiver 834 of a gaming client 90 that cash has been deposited at the gaming client 90, the cashbox generator 836 generates cashbox data indicating that a certain amount of cash has been deposited at the gaming client 90.

[0099] The cashbox data generated by the cashbox generator 836 is stored in the server cashbox database 814. It is envisaged that the cashbox data of each of the gaming clients 90A, 90B, 90C is stored in the cashbox database 814 such that it is associated with the gaming client 90. It is envisaged that, in an embodiment where the cashbox generator 836 generates cashbox data for a plurality of sites, the cashbox data of each gaming client 90 is stored in the cashbox database 814 such that the cashbox data is associated with the gaming client 90 and also with the site in which the gaming client 90 is located. In this embodiment, the cashbox data of each gaming client 90 is stored in the server cashbox database 814, and the server cashbox database 814 is part of the gaming server 80. However, a person skilled in the art will appreciate that, in an alternative embodiment, the server cashbox database 814 may be stored on a stand alone device separate from the gaming server 80.

[0100] FIG. 4 is a block diagram of the functional components of the site controller 50. The site controller 50 is provided with a site processor 53 and a site memory 51 including

a site cashbox database **512**. In addition, the site controller **50** also includes a site communication interface **55** for enabling communications between the site controller **50**, the gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C, and the gaming server **80**.

[0101] The site processor **53** is arranged to implement a cashbox receiver **532** based on program code stored in the site memory **512**. The cashbox receiver **532** is arranged to receive cashbox data of one or more of the plurality of gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C from the gaming server **80** via the site communication interface **55**, and to store the received cashbox data in the site cashbox database **512**. Persons skilled in the art will appreciate that the site cashbox database **512** may be part of the site controller **50** or may be a stand alone device that is separate from the site controller **50**. In use, the site controller **50** receives cashbox data of one or more of the plurality of gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C from the gaming server **80**, and stores the cashbox data in the site cashbox database **512**, thereby allowing a user access to the cashbox data of all of the gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C at a centralized point at the first site. Thus, in this embodiment, cashbox information can be provided at the venue without involvement of the gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C. Indeed, the gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C are not "aware" of the existence of the site controller and do not need to be connected to it.

[0102] FIG. **5** is a flow chart of a gaming method that generates and stores cashbox data of gaming clients at a gaming server located at a first site, and that communicates the cashbox data of each gaming client from the gaming server to a site controller located at a second site remote from the first site.

[0103] At step **910**, a player initiates a new game at one of the plurality of gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C using the game play device **56** and the credit mechanism **52** of the client interface **50**. At step **920**, in response to the initiation of the new game, the status generator **62** of the client processor **62** of the gaming client **90** generates status information indicating that a new game has initiated at the gaming client **90**. The client communication interface **68** of the gaming client **90** then communicates the status information generated by the status generator **62** to the gaming server **80** via the LAN **70** and the WAN **30** at step **930**. At step **940**, the status receiver **834** of the gaming server **80** receives the status information via the server communication interface **85** and the cashbox generator **836** of the gaming server **80** generates cashbox data of the gaming client **90** based on the received status information. At step **950**, the generated cashbox data is stored in the server cashbox database **814**. At step **960**, the cashbox data stored in the server cashbox database **814** is then communicated by the server communication interface **85** to the site controller **50** via the WAN **30** and the LAN **70**. Subsequently, the cashbox receiver **532** of the site controller **50** then receives the cashbox data via the site communication interface **55**, and the cashbox data received by the cashbox receiver **532** of the site controller **50** is then stored in the site cashbox database **512** of the site memory **51**.

[0104] In the above gaming system, the operational data of each gaming client **90** generated and stored in the gaming server **80** and communicated from the gaming server **80** to the site **50** controller is cashbox data of the gaming client **90**. However, it is envisaged that the operational data may additionally include or alternatively be some other kind of operational data of each gaming client **90**. For example, the operational data may include or be the status information of each gaming client **90**, wagering information of each gaming client **90**, payout information of each gaming client **90**, player tracking information of each gaming client **90**, game information of each gaming client **90**, session information of each gaming client **90** etc.

[0105] Also, in the above gaming system, cashbox data of the gaming clients **90**A, **90**B, **90**C are generated at the gaming server **80** and subsequently communicated from the gaming server **80** to the site controller **50**. In an alternative embodiment, the gaming clients are configured to retrieve identification data of a site controller from the gaming server (e.g. at start up) and communicate directly with the site controller based on the identification data of the site controller received from the gaming server. It is envisaged that there is typically more than one site controller in this alternative embodiment such that a gaming client cannot by itself determine the identity of the site controller. FIGS. **6** and **7** illustrate respectively the functional components of a gaming client **900** and a gaming server **800** of this alternative embodiment.

[0106] Referring to FIG. **6**, the gaming client **900** includes a client interface **500** and a client controller **600** including a client communication interface **680**, a client processor **620** and a client memory **640**.

[0107] The client processor **620** is arranged to implement a cashbox generator **625** and a site identification receiver **623** based on the program code stored in the client memory **640**.

[0108] The cashbox generator **625** is arranged to generate cashbox data in response to a player's operation of the credit mechanism **520** and the game play device **560**. For example, the cashbox generator **625** is arranged to generate cashbox information in response to the player depositing cash for initiating a new game at the gaming client **90** using the credit mechanism **520**.

[0109] The site identification receiver **623** is arranged to receive identification data of the site controller **70** from the gaming server **800**.

[0110] In use, when a player deposits cash using the credit mechanism **520** for initiating a new game at the gaming client **900**, the gaming client **900** sends a request to the gaming server **800** for identification data of a site controller. In response, the gaming server **800** communicates the identification data of a site controller to the gaming client **900**. Upon the site identification receiver **623** receiving the identification data of a site controller from the gaming server **800**, the gaming client **900** communicates the cashbox data generated by the cashbox generator **625** directly to the site controller based on the identification data of the site controller received from the gaming server **800**.

[0111] Referring to FIG. **7**, the gaming server **800** includes a server processor **830**, a server memory **810** and a server communication interface **850**.

[0112] In addition, the server memory **810** is provided with a site identification database **818** arranged to store identification data of one or more site controllers. In use, the gaming server **800** communicates the identification data of a site controller in response to a request by a gaming client.

[0113] FIG. **8** depicts an example flow diagram representative of processes that may be implemented using, for example, computer readable instructions that may be used to facilitate game play. The example processes of FIG. **8** may be performed using a processor, a controller and/or any other suitable processing device. For example, the example processes of FIG. **8** may be implemented using coded instructions (e.g., computer readable instructions) stored on a tangible computer readable medium such as a flash memory, a

read-only memory (ROM), and/or a random-access memory (RAM). As used herein, the term tangible computer readable medium is expressly defined to include any type of computer readable storage and to exclude propagating signals. Additionally or alternatively, the example processes of FIG. **8** may be implemented using coded instructions (e.g., computer readable instructions) stored on a non-transitory computer readable medium such as a flash memory, a read-only memory (ROM), a random-access memory (RAM), a cache, or any other storage media in which information is stored for any duration (e.g., for extended time periods, permanently, brief instances, for temporarily buffering, and/or for caching of the information). As used herein, the term non-transitory computer readable medium is expressly defined to include any type of computer readable medium and to exclude propagating signals.

[0114] Alternatively, some or all of the example processes of FIG. **8** may be implemented using any combination(s) of application specific integrated circuit(s) (ASIC(s)), programmable logic device(s) (PLD(s)), field programmable logic device(s) (FPLD(s)), discrete logic, hardware, firmware, etc. Also, some or all of the example processes of FIG. **8** may be implemented manually or as any combination(s) of any of the foregoing techniques, for example, any combination of firmware, software, discrete logic and/or hardware. Further, although the example processes of FIG. **8** are described with reference to the flow diagram of FIG. **8**, other methods of implementing the processes of FIG. **8** may be employed. For example, the order of execution of the blocks may be changed, and/or some of the blocks described may be changed, eliminated, sub-divided, or combined. Additionally, any or all of the example processes of FIG. **8** may be performed sequentially and/or in parallel by, for example, separate processing threads, processors, devices, discrete logic, circuits, etc.

[0115] FIG. **8** is a flow chart of a gaming method according to the alternative embodiment. At block **110**, a player initiates a new game at a gaming client **800**. At block **120**, the cashbox generator **625** of the gaming client **800** generates cashbox data in response to the player depositing cash using the credit mechanism **520**. At block **130**, the gaming client **900** requests the gaming server for identification data of a site controller. At block **140**, the gaming server **800** communicates the identification data of a site controller to the gaming client **900** in response to the request from the gaming client **900**. At block **150**, the gaming client **900** sends the cashbox data generated by the cashbox generator **625** to the site controller based on the identification data received from the gaming server **800**. At block **160**, a user retrieves the cashbox data stored in the site cashbox database of the site controller.

[0116] Various other modifications will be apparent to person skilled in the art. In particular features of the above embodiments and examples can be employed to form further embodiments.

[0117] It is to be understood that, if any prior art publication is referred to herein, such reference does not constitute an admission that the publication forms a part of the common general knowledge in the art, in Australia or any other country.

[0118] In the claims which follow and in the preceding description of the invention, except where the context requires otherwise due to express language or necessary implication, the word "comprise" or variations such as "comprises" or "comprising" is used in an inclusive sense, i.e. to specify the presence of the stated features but not to preclude the presence or addition of further features in various embodiments of the invention.

1. A gaming system, comprising:
- a plurality of gaming clients located at a first site;
- a site controller located at the first site; and
- a gaming server adapted to generate game outcomes for the gaming clients, the gaming server being located at a second site remote from the first site and in communication with the gaming clients and the site controller over a network, the gaming server comprising:
  - an operational database adapted to store operational data of each gaming client; and
  - a communication interface arranged to communicate the operational data of each gaming client to the site controller.

2. A gaming system as claimed in claim **1**, wherein the gaming server comprises a status receiver arranged to receive status information of each gaming client.

3. A gaming system as claimed in claim **2**, wherein the operational data comprises cashbox data of each gaming client, the operational database is a cashbox database adapted to store the cashbox data of each gaming client, and the gaming server comprises a cashbox generator arranged to generate the cashbox data of each gaming client based on the status information of the gaming client.

4. A gaming system as claimed in claim **1**, wherein the gaming server comprises an outcome generator arranged to generate the game outcomes for the gaming clients.

5. A gaming system as claimed in claim **1**, wherein the network is a wide area network.

6. A gaming system as claimed in claim **1**, wherein the status information of each gaming client comprises depositing of cash or emptying of cashbox.

7. A gaming system as claimed in claim **1**, wherein the status information of each gaming client comprises one of the group including: starting of game; ending of game; starting of service session; ending of service session; starting of player session; and ending of player session.

8. A gaming system as claimed in claim **1**, wherein the gaming server communicates with the gaming clients and the site controller via one or more secure channels.

9. A gaming system as claimed in claim **1**, wherein the gaming server is in data communication with gaming clients at a plurality of sites, and the gaming server stores operational data in the operational database such that the operational data is associated with a specific site.

10. A gaming method, comprising:
- storing operational data of a plurality of gaming clients at a gaming server adapted to generate game outcomes for the gaming clients, the gaming clients being located at a first site, the gaming server being located at a second site remote from the first site; and
- communicating the operational data of each gaming client from the gaming server to a site controller located at the first site.

11. A gaming method as claimed in claim **10**, further comprising receiving status information of each gaming client from the gaming client at the gaming server via a network.

12. A gaming method as claimed in claim **11**, wherein the operational data comprises cashbox data of each gaming client, and further comprising generating the cashbox data of each gaming client at the gaming server based on the status information of the gaming client.

13. A gaming method as claimed in claim 10, further comprising communicating the game outcome for each gaming client from the gaming server to the gaming client via a network.

14. A gaming method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the network is a wide area network.

15. A gaming method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the status information of each gaming client comprises depositing of cash or emptying of cashbox.

16. A gaming method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the status information of each gaming client comprises one of the group including: starting of game; ending of game; starting of service session; ending of service session; starting of player session; and ending of player session.

17. A gaming method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the communication between the gaming server and the site controller is via a secure channel.

18. A gaming method as claimed in claim 10, further comprising storing at the gaming server operational data of a further plurality of gaming clients located in a third site remote from the first and second sites, and wherein operational data is stored in the operational database such that the operational data is associated with a specific site.

19. A gaming server to generate game outcomes for a plurality of gaming clients located at a first site, the gaming server being located at a second site remote from the first site, the gaming server comprising:

an operational database adapted to store operational data of each gaming client; and

a communication interface arranged to communicate the operational data of each gaming client to a site controller located at the first site.

20. A gaming server as claimed in claim 19, wherein the operational data comprises cashbox data of each gaming client, and the operational database is a cashbox database adapted to store the cashbox data of each gaming client.

21. A gaming server as claimed in claim 19, further comprising:

a status receiver arranged to receive status information of each gaming client; and

a cashbox generator arranged to generate the cashbox data of each gaming client based on the status information of the gaming client.

22. A gaming server as claimed in claim 19, wherein the status information of each gaming client comprises depositing of cash or emptying of cashbox.

23. A gaming server as claimed in claim 19, wherein the status information of each gaming client comprises one of the group including: starting of game; ending of game; starting of service session; ending of service session; starting of player session; and ending of player session.

24. A gaming server as claimed in claim 19, further comprising an outcome generator arranged to generate the game outcomes for the gaming clients.

25. A gaming server as claimed in claim 19, wherein the gaming server is in communication with the gaming clients and the site controller over a network.

26. A gaming server as claimed in claim 25, wherein the network is a wide area network.

27. A gaming server as claimed in claim 19, wherein the communication between the gaming server and the site controller is via a secure channel.

28. A gaming server as claimed in claim 19, wherein the operational database is adapted to store operational data of a plurality of gaming clients located at a plurality of sites, and wherein operational data is stored in the operational database such that the operational data is associated with a specific site.

29. A site controller located at a first site, the site controller being in communication with a gaming server adapted to generate game outcomes for a plurality of gaming clients located at the first site, the gaming server being located at a second site remote from the first site and comprising an operational database adapted to store operational data of each gaming client, the site controller comprising a site receiver arranged to receive the operational data of each gaming client from the gaming server.

30. A site controller as claimed in claim 29, wherein the operational data comprises cashbox data of each gaming client, the operational database is a cashbox database adapted to store the cashbox data of each gaming client, and the site receiver is a cashbox receiver arranged to receive the cashbox data of each gaming client from the server.

31. A site controller as claimed in claim 29, wherein the site controller receives the operational data of each gaming client from the gaming server over a network.

32. A site controller as claimed in claim 31, wherein the network is a wide area network.

33. A site controller as claimed in claim 29, wherein the site controller receives the operational data of each gaming client from the gaming server via a secure channel.

34. A site controller as claimed in claim 29, wherein the operational database is adapted to store operational data of a plurality of gaming clients located in a plurality of sites and wherein operational data is stored in the operational database such that the operational data is associated with a specific site.

35. A gaming system comprising:

a plurality of gaming clients located at a first site;

a site controller; and

a gaming server adapted to generate game outcomes for the gaming clients, the gaming server being located at a second site remote from the first site and comprising a site database comprising identification data of the site controller;

wherein each gaming client is adapted to:

receive the identification data of the site controller from the gaming server; and

communicate operational data to the site controller based on the identification data received from the gaming server.

36. A gaming system as claimed in claim 35, wherein the operational data comprises cashbox data of each gaming client.

37. A gaming system as claimed in claim 35, wherein the gaming server comprises an outcome generator arranged to generate the game outcomes for the gaming clients.

38. A gaming system as claimed in claim 35, wherein the gaming server communicates with the gaming clients and the site controller via one or more secure channels.

39. A gaming system as claimed in claim 35, wherein the gaming server is in data communication with gaming clients at a plurality of sites, and wherein the site database comprises identification data of a plurality of site controllers.

40. A tangible computer readable storage medium comprising computer program code, which when executed implements a gaming method, comprising:

storing operational data of a plurality of gaming clients at a gaming server adapted to generate game outcomes for the gaming clients, the gaming clients being located at a first site, the gaming server being located at a second site remote from the first site; and

communicating the operational data of each gaming client from the gaming server to a site controller located at the first site.

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