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(54) **BETTING TERMINAL WITH LOGGING FACILITY**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A betting terminal comprises a gaming server (2) that regulates the progress of a number of different selectable games, a user access facility (3a, 3b), a communication network (9), storage means (10) and a logging facility (11) capable of logging transaction data relating to each wager placed by the player on the user access facility and to download the logged transaction data to the storage facility.
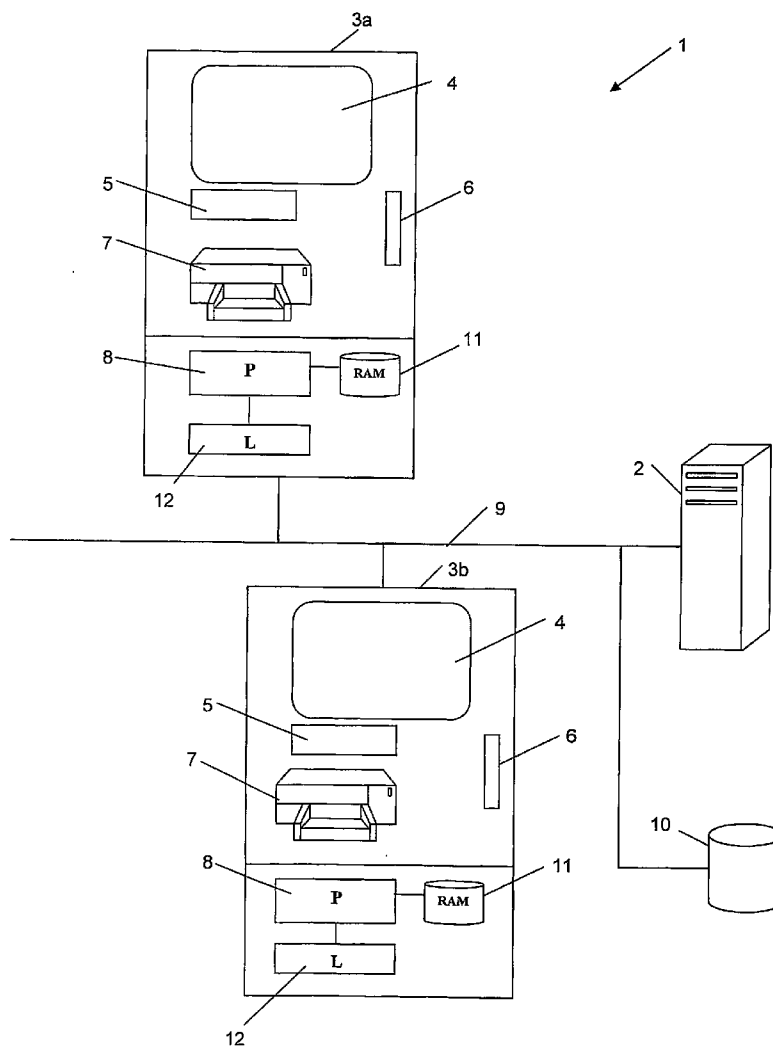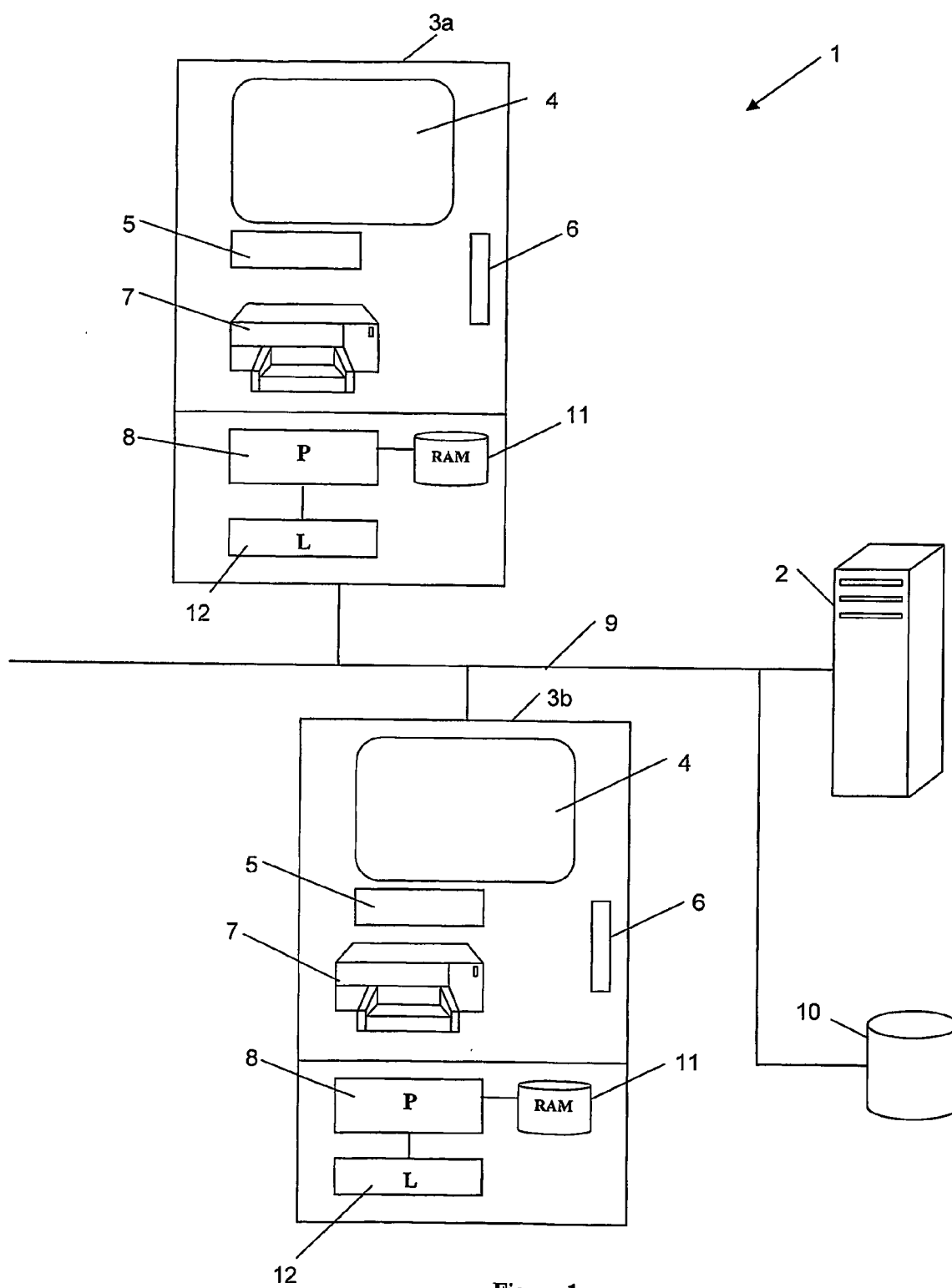
Figure 1

BETTING TERMINAL WITH LOGGING FACILITY

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to a betting terminal and, more particularly, to a betting terminal of a type that is commonly employed in betting shops, entertainment venues and the like. The invention extends to a method of operating a betting terminal.

BACKGROUND TO THE INVENTION

[0002] Betting terminals have become increasingly common in a number of different jurisdictions that have a regulated gambling industry.

[0003] Such a betting terminal has a player console that offers a player a menu of one or more games of chance that the player can select to play. The games of chance have outcomes that are determined by random events, usually generated by means of a random number generator implemented in software. The software random number generator may be executed locally within the player console itself or may be implemented externally in a gaming server to which the player terminal is linked by means of a communication network. In the latter topology, one or more separate player consoles may be connected to a single external gaming server by means of the communication network.

[0004] It is usual for the player to play any of the games of chance by means of pre-purchased credit. For reasons of simplicity and convenience it is customary for the player console to be equipped with a coin-receiving mechanism and a banknote reader that will allow the player to acquire credit in a simple manner without the necessity of using prepayment tokens such as credit cards, debit cards and the like. The player console may also be equipped with a printer that prints out an encoded voucher on demand when the player desires to terminate his playing session and to cash out any credit that he may have accumulated. The voucher may be redeemed for value from an operator of the betting terminal.

[0005] The games of chance offered by the player console may offer jackpot prizes that can be won from time to time.

[0006] Such a player console operates in an "always on" mode, in the sense that no player login or authentication is required in order to play any of the games of chance. The player console may be located at a convenient location, such as a betting shop, an entertainment venue, or the like. The gaming server to which the player console is linked may also be located with the player console, or may be located remotely therefrom. Revenue derived by an operator of the betting terminal may be shared with a supplier of the terminal. Other similar commercial arrangements are possible between the operator and the supplier of the betting terminal.

[0007] Those skilled in the art will appreciate that, due to the "always on" operation of the betting terminal, difficulties may arise for the supplier from time to time in verifying the operator's compliance with the commercial arrangements.

OBJECT OF THE INVENTION

[0008] It is an object of this invention to provide a betting terminal and a method of operating a betting terminal that will, at least partially, alleviate the abovementioned difficulties and disadvantages.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] In accordance with this invention there is provided a betting terminal, comprising:

[0010] a gaming server operable under program control to regulate the progress of any one of a number of different selectable games;

[0011] a user access facility usable by a player to select any one of the number of different selectable games for play and to place a wager on any turn thereof;

[0012] a communication network providing communication between the user access facility and the gaming server;

[0013] a storage means communicable with the user access facility by means of the communication network; and

[0014] a logging facility operable to log transaction data relating to each wager placed by the player on the user access facility and to download the logged transaction data to the storage means.

[0015] Further features of the invention provide for the transaction data relating to any wager to include data relating to a size and type of the wager, an outcome of the wager, the outcome of the wager being either successful or unsuccessful, a size of a prize won by the player when the wager is successful, and a corresponding identity of one of the number of different selectable games on which the wager was placed, for the logging facility to log the transaction data in a buffer capable of storing transaction data corresponding to a predetermined number of turns of any of the different selectable games, and for the logging facility to download the buffered transaction data to the remote storage means when the buffer is full.

[0016] Still further features of the invention provide for a plurality of different user access facilities to be communicable with the gaming server by means of the communication network, each one of the plurality of different user access facilities having a corresponding unique identification code, and for the transaction data relating to any particular wager to also include a unique identification code of a user access facility from which the player placed the wager.

[0017] Yet further features of the invention provide for the games to be casino games, for the communication network to be an open communication network, for the open communication network to be the Internet, and for the user access facility to be a computer workstation connectable to the World Wide Web of the Internet.

[0018] The invention extends to a method of operating a betting terminal, comprising the steps of:

[0019] operating a gaming sever under program control to regulate the progress of any one of a number of different selectable games;

[0020] selecting, by means of a user access facility, any one of the number of different selectable games for play and placing a wager on a turn thereof, the user access facility being communicable with the gaming server;

[0021] logging transaction data relating to each wager placed by the player on the user access facility; and

[0022] downloading the logged transaction data to a storage means remote from the user access facility.

[0023] There is further provided for the transaction data relating to any wager to include data relating to a size and type of the wager, an outcome of the wager, the outcome of the wager being either successful or unsuccessful, a size of a prize won by the player when the wager is successful, and a corresponding identity of one of the number of different selectable games on which the wager was placed, for logging the transaction data in a buffer capable of storing transaction data corresponding to a predetermined number of turns of any of the different selectable games, and for downloading the buffered transaction data to the remote storage means when the buffer is full.

[0024] There is still further provided for linking a plurality of different user access facilities with the gaming server by means of the communication network, each one of the plurality of different user access facilities having a corresponding unique identification code, and for including in the buffered transaction data a unique identification code of a user access facility from which the wager was placed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0025] One embodiment of the invention is described below, by way of example only, and with reference to the abovementioned drawings, in which:

[0026] FIG. 1 is functional representation of a betting terminal according to the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0027] Referring to FIG. 1, a betting terminal is indicated generally by reference numeral (1).

[0028] The betting terminal (1) includes a gaming server (2) and two user access facilities (3a and 3b) in the form of two player console each having a touch screen (4), a banknote reader (5), a coin receiving mechanism (6) such as a coin slot, and a thermal printer (7). Each player console also includes an Internet-enabled processor (8) which is in communication with the gaming server (2) by means of a communication network (9) that is, in this embodiment, the Internet.

[0029] The player consoles (3a and 3b) are located remotely from the gaming server (2). Each player console (3) is usable by a player to play any one of a number of different video games that are available for play. A menu of available games is presented to the player on the touch screen (4) and the player is able to select any one of the games in the menu for play by touching corresponding icons (not shown) displayed on the screen in a manner that is well known in the art.

[0030] The betting terminal (1) includes a logging database (10) remote from the player consoles (3) and accessible by means of the communication network (9). The operation of the logging database (10) will be described in more detail in the description that follows.

[0031] The Internet-enabled processor (8) is a conventional personal computer operating under a Windows 2000 operating system, which is well known and commercially available from the Microsoft Corporation of Seattle, Wash.,

USA. The Internet-enabled processor (8) and the gaming server (2) execute different components of any available game that is selected for play by the player. Each game consists of a client process that is executed in the processor (8) and a server process that is executed in the gaming server (2). The client process of a selected game simulates the progress of the game on the touch screen (4), while the server process generates, upon request of the of the client process, one or more random events that determine an outcome or outcomes of a turn of the game. The client component obtains the result of the random event and utilises the result to display a corresponding outcome of the game to the player in an intelligible manner by means of the simulation on the touch screen (4).

[0032] Each one of the available games is playable by the player against the consumption of credit. The player may insert one or more banknotes into the banknote reader (5) and coins into the coin slot (6) in order to procure credit to play any of the games, without the need to use payment tokens such as debit cards, credit cards or the like. A player's credit balance is displayed on the touch screen (4) at all times. The player utilises his credit to place a wager on every turn of the games that he selects for play. The outcome of any wager is either an unsuccessful outcome in which the player's wager is forfeited to an operator of the betting terminal (1), or a successful outcome in which the player's wager is paid out at predetermined odds.

[0033] The betting terminal (1) includes a logging facility in the form of a non-volatile storage memory (11) and a logging application software program (12) that is executable in the processor (8) of each player console (3). The non-volatile storage memory (11) is a local Random Access Memory circular buffer that is sized to store transaction data corresponding to a predetermined number, say 20, of consecutive wagers made by the player. The transaction data is buffered in the non-volatile storage memory (11) by the logging application software program that executes in the processor (8) of the player console (3).

[0034] The transaction data corresponding to any particular wager includes data relating to a size and type of the wager, an outcome of the wager, a size of a prize won by the player for a successful wager, an identification code corresponding to the selected game on which the wager was made, and an identification code corresponding to a player console from which the wager was made by the player. The logging application software program (12) downloads the buffered transaction data to the logging database (10) when the local buffer (11) is full and, once download is complete, flushes the local buffer. It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the downloaded contents from the local buffers (11) of the display consoles (3) are consolidated and merged into the remote logging database (10). The merged transaction data in the remote logging database (10) is available for the performance of offline queries by interested parties such as a supplier of the betting terminal (1).

[0035] Numerous modifications are possible to this embodiment without departing from the scope of the invention. In particular, the betting terminal (1) may include more that two player consoles (3a and 3b) than indicated above. Alternatively, the betting terminal (1) may include only a single player console in which the gaming server (2) is integrated within the display console to provide, effectively,

a standalone betting terminal. In this instance, the functionality of the gaming server (**2**) and the processor (**8**) in the display console may be consolidated, necessitating only a single processor for the betting terminal (**1**). Further, the remote logging database (**10**) may also be integrated within the display console. In such a stand-alone embodiment, the use of an open communication network (**9**) such as the Internet may be dispensed with, and communication between the gaming server (**2**), the processor (**8**) and the logging database (**10**) can take place by means of a local communication bus or a closed network.

[0036] The invention therefore provides a betting terminal (**1**) with a logging facility that enables the generation of a historical log file of transaction data relating to any wager placed by a player on a display console forming part of the betting terminal.

1. A betting terminal, comprising:

a gaming server operable under program control to regulate the progress of any one of a number of different selectable games;

a user access facility usable by a player to select any one of the number of different selectable games for play and to place a wager on any turn thereof;

a communication network providing communication between the user access facility and the gaming server;

a storage means communicable with the user access facility by means of the communication network; and

a logging facility associated with the user access facility, including:

a) a buffer memory capable of storing transaction data relating to the player's wagers on a plurality of turns of any of the different selectable games; and

b) a logging application software program operable to log transaction data in the buffer memory and to automatically download the logged transaction data from the buffer memory to the storage means when the buffer memory is full.

2. A betting terminal as claimed in claim 1 in which the gaming server is communicable with a plurality of different user access facilities by means of the communication network, each one of the plurality of different user access facilities having a corresponding unique identification code and a corresponding logging facility.

3. A betting terminal as claimed in claim 2 in which logged transaction data downloaded to the storage means by the logging facility in each of the plurality of different user access facilities is consolidated and merged in the storage means.

4. A betting terminal as claimed in claim 1 in which the transaction data relating to any wager includes data relating to a size and type of the wager, an outcome of the wager, the outcome of the wager being either successful or unsuccessful, a size of a prize won by the player when the wager is successful, and a corresponding identity of one of the number of different selectable games on which the wager was placed.

5. A betting terminal as claimed in claim 4 in which the transaction data relating to any particular wager also includes a unique identification code of a user access facility from which the player placed the wager.

6. A betting terminal as claimed in claim 1 in which the games are casino games.

7. A betting terminal as claimed in claim 1 in which the communication network is the Internet.

8. A betting terminal as claimed in claim 7 in which the user access facility is a computer workstation connectable to the World Wide Web of the Internet.

9. A method of operating a betting terminal, comprising the steps of:

operating a gaming server under program control to regulate the progress of any one of a number of different selectable games;

selecting, by means of a user access facility, any one of the number of different selectable games for play and placing a wager on a turn thereof, the user access facility being communicable with the gaming server;

logging transaction data relating to each wager placed by the player on the user access facility;

logging transaction data relating to the player's wagers in a buffer memory capable of storing transaction data for a plurality of turns of any of the different selectable games; and

automatically downloading the logged transaction data from the buffer memory to a storage means remote from the user access facility when the buffer memory is full.

10. A method as claimed in claim 9 that includes a step of linking a plurality of different user access facilities to be communicable with the gaming server, each one of the plurality of different user access facilities having a corresponding unique identification code and logging transaction data in a corresponding buffer memory.

11. A method as claimed in claim 10 which includes the further step of consolidating and merging transaction data downloaded to the storage means from the buffer memory in each of the plurality of different user access facilities.

12. A method as claimed in claim 9 in which the transaction data relating to any wager includes data relating to a size and type of the wager, an outcome of the wager, the outcome of the wager being either successful or unsuccessful, a size of a prize won by the player when the wager is successful, and a corresponding identity of one of the number of different selectable games on which the wager was placed.

13. A method as claimed in claim 12 in which a unique identification code of a user access facility from which the wager was placed is included in the buffered transaction data relating to that wager.

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