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(54) **DEVICE AND METHOD FOR A
DYNAMICALLY CONFIGURABLE USER
INTERFACE IN A GAME OF CHANCE**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

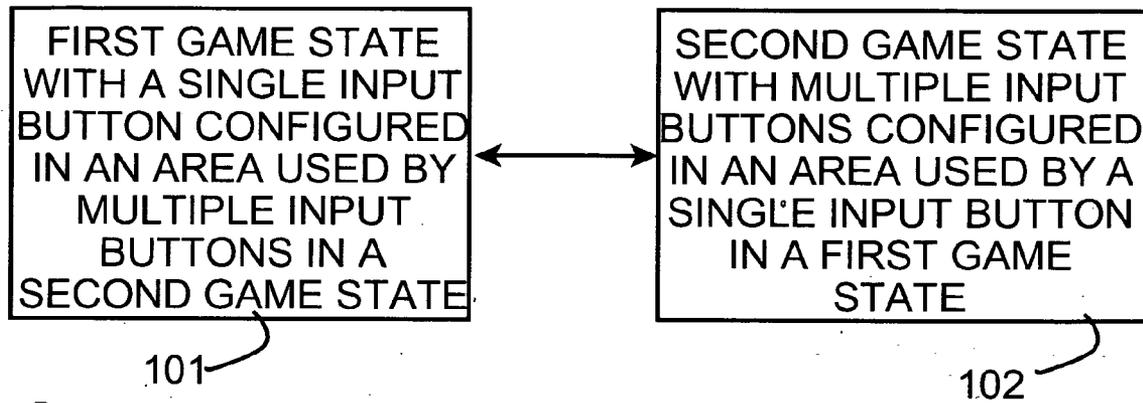
The device and method of the present invention configures a gaming device so that an input device receiving input in one game state to be interpreted and applied according to one input state is reconfigured so that input received in a different game state is interpreted and applied according to a different input state. In an optional embodiment, multiple different input devices may be reconfigured to provide the same input in one or more game states. Also in optional embodiment, a set of input devices of a cardinality in one game state may be reconfigured into a set of input devices of different cardinality in another game state.

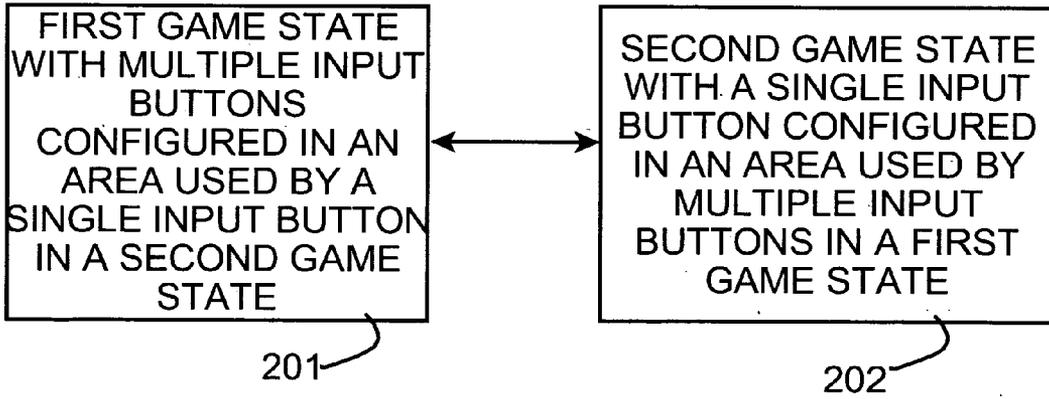
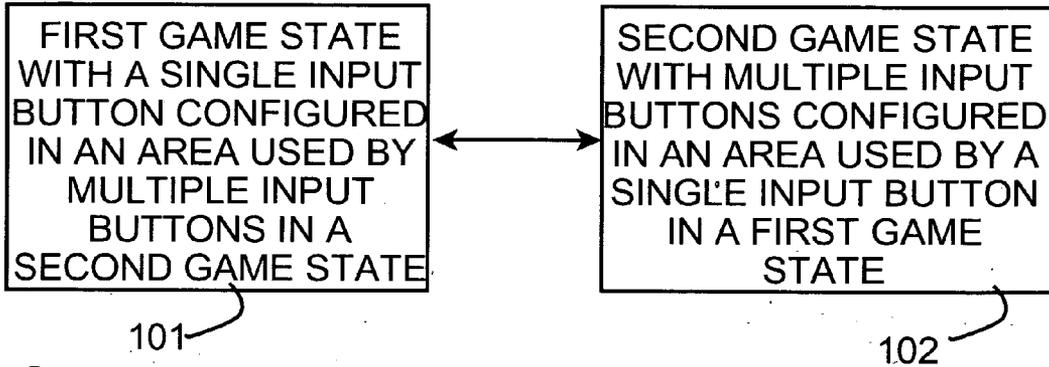
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(60) Provisional application No. 60/677,513, filed on May 3, 2005.





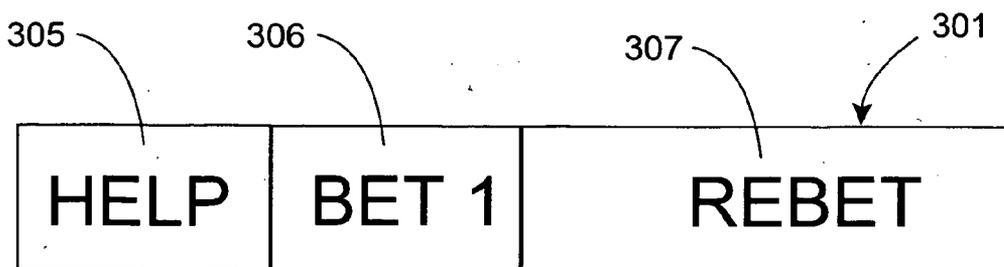


FIG. 3A

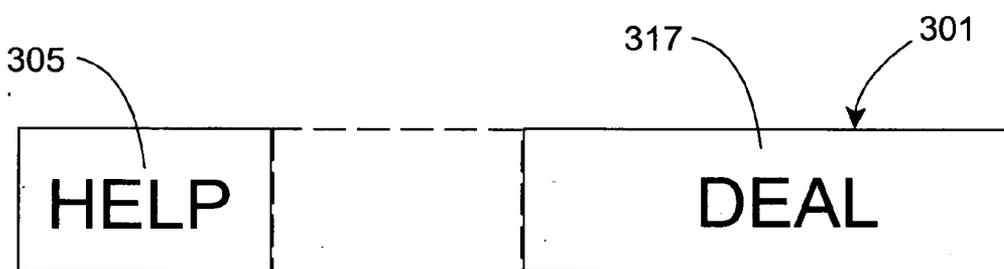


FIG. 3B

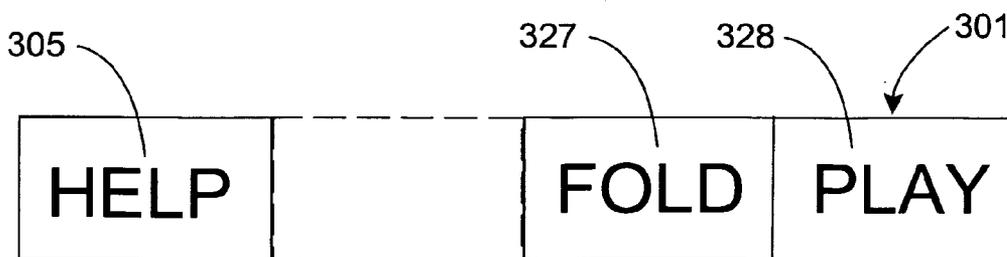


FIG. 3C

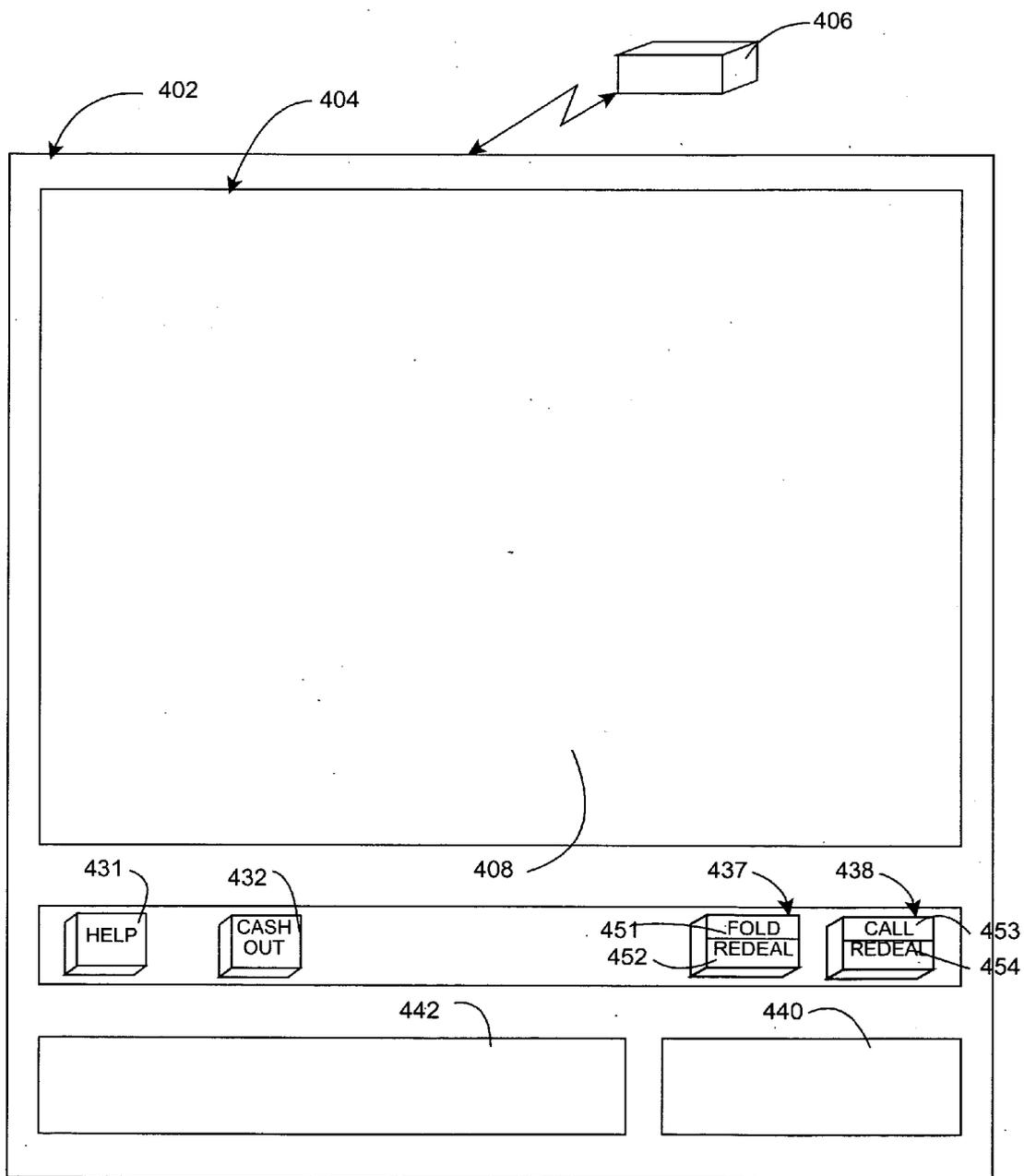


FIG. 4

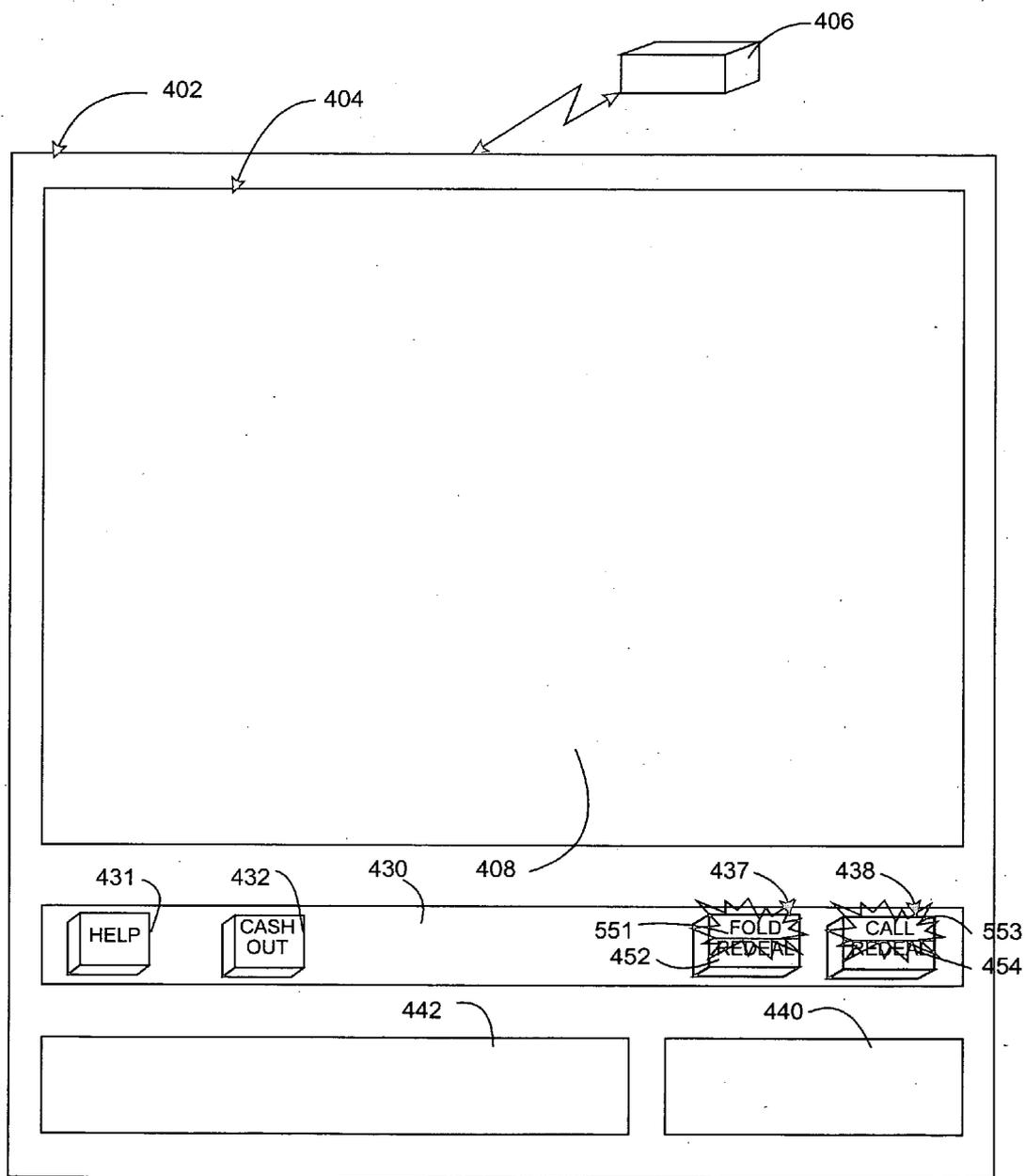


FIG. 5

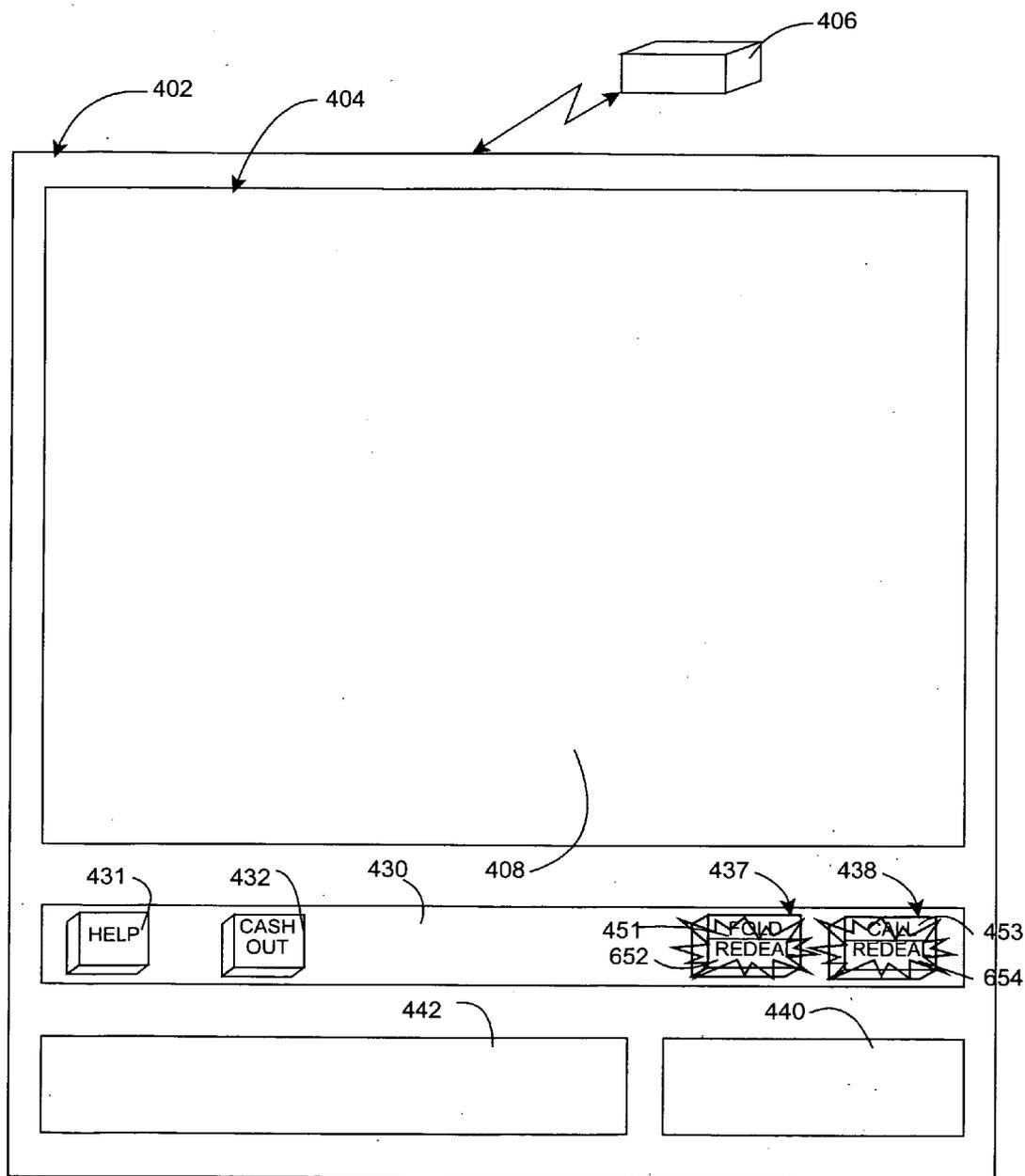


FIG. 6

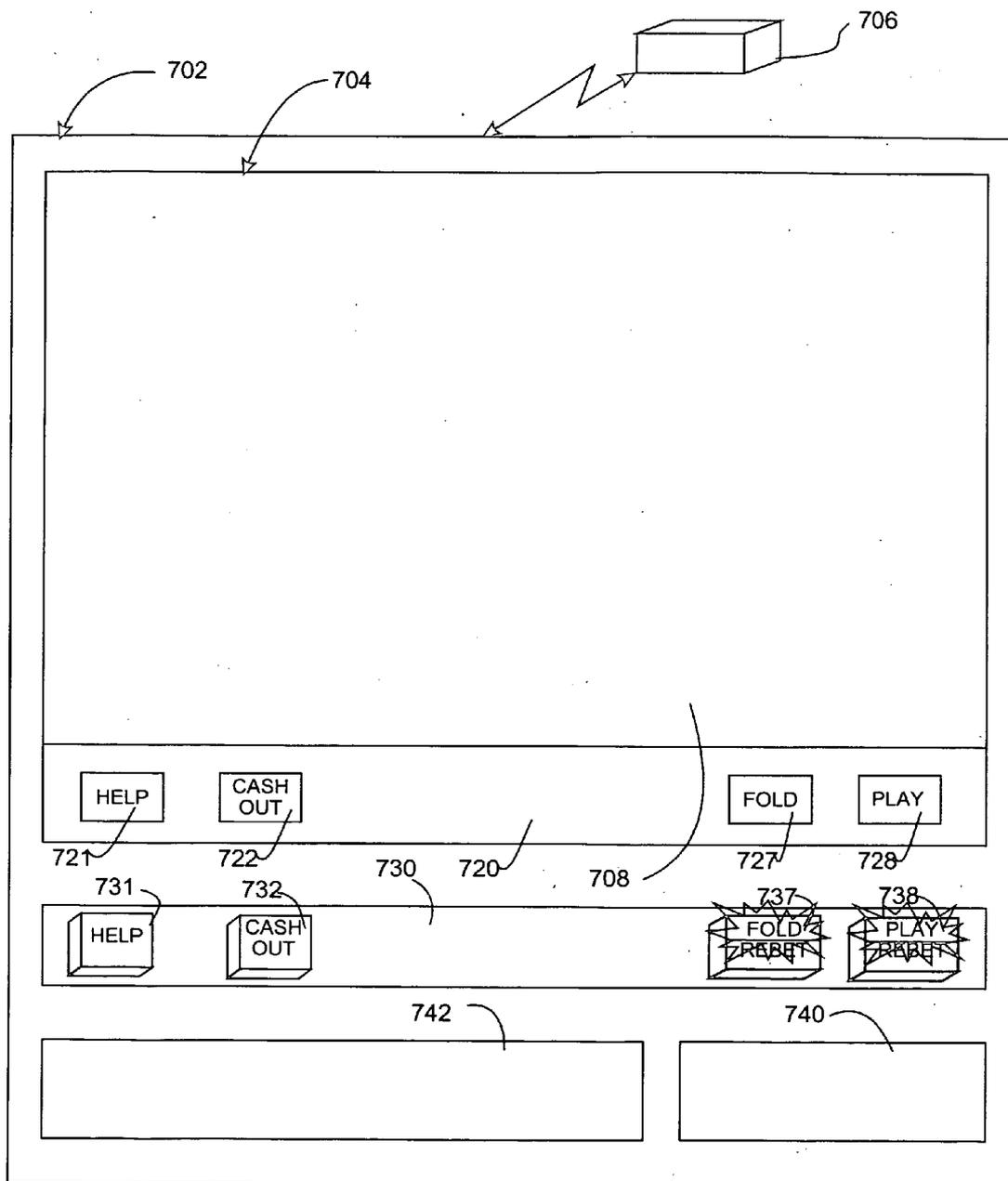


FIG. 7

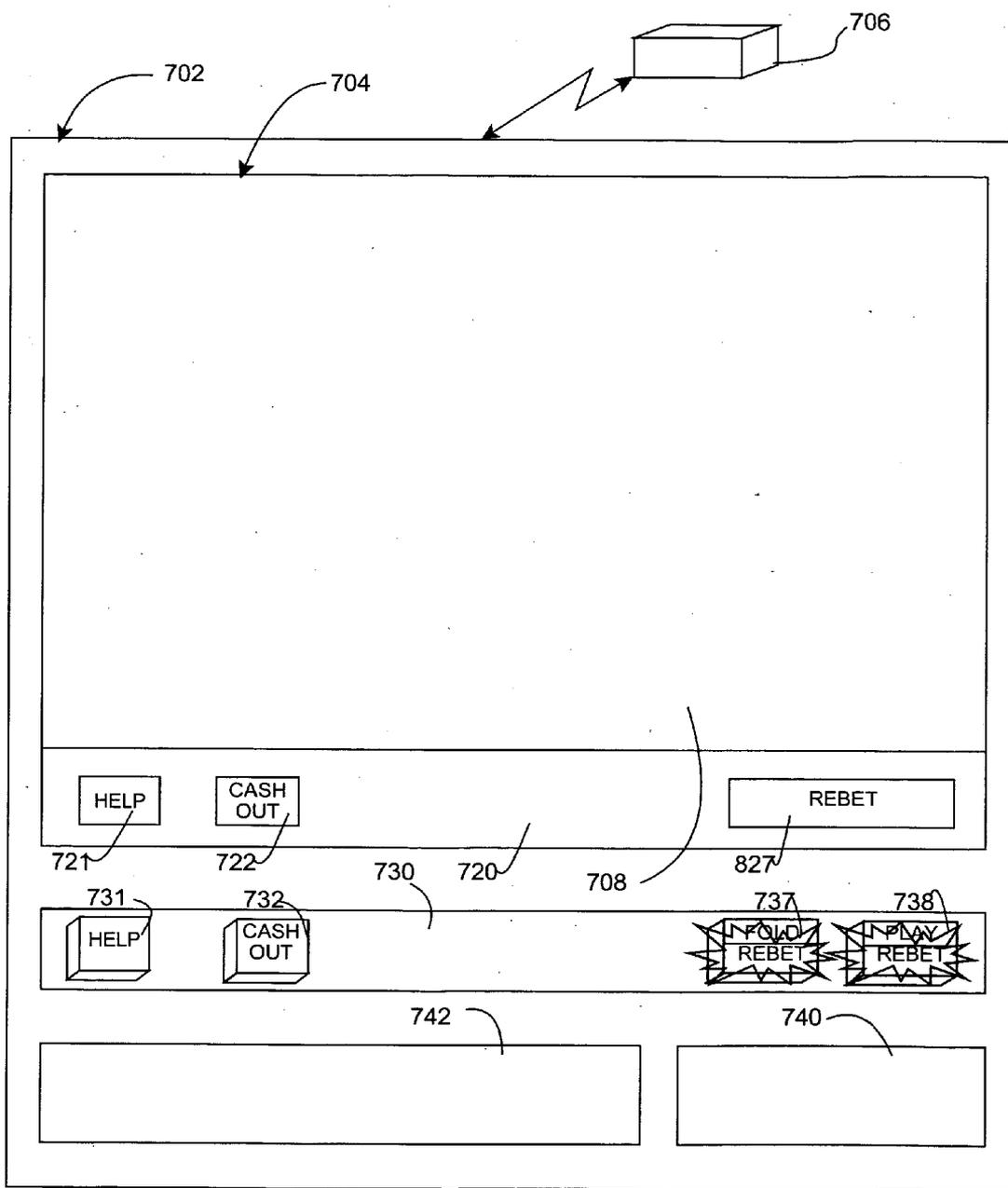


FIG. 8

DEVICE AND METHOD FOR A DYNAMICALLY CONFIGURABLE USER INTERFACE IN A GAME OF CHANCE

RELATED APPLICATION DATA

[0001] The present application claims the priority of U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 60/677,513, entitled "Device and Method for User Interface in Games of Chance," filed May 3, 2005 by Applicant herein.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to electronic gaming systems and devices. More particularly, the present invention is a method and system in which an input interface is reconfigurable to a primary input during the course of a game, thereby allowing players to input certain selections faster and easier.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] User interface is a critical component to the success of an electronic gaming system. There are two major factors that come into play. A player may be unlikely to even play a game whose user interface is too confusing. Similarly, a confusing experience, though overcome, may still leave the player feeling insecure. Another factor is one of ergonomics. The more effort and movement required by a player to continue playing, the more likely such a player will end their play session early.

[0004] There are some techniques used in electronic gaming systems to address these user interface concerns. One such technique would be to put user control buttons close to one another to minimize the amount of hand or pointer movement the player has to make to move between the last selection and the next one. Another technique is to somehow brighten, color or highlight buttons that the game designer wishes to encourage the player to notice and use. Another technique is to place the most important button in the most convenient place relative to the other buttons. For an electronic game with a touch-screen interface, this often would be the right-most position closest to the player's right hand.

[0005] These techniques, however, are limited or made more difficult by the fact that the relative use of game buttons often changes as the game progresses through multiple game states. For example, the game buttons to control initial wagers may be essential prior to the start of a game, but unused after the play commences. The Hold/Discard game buttons in a draw poker game are not needed until after wagering completes, but then become essential.

[0006] In order to take such variability of importance into account, one technique would be to employ reconfigurable game buttons where the function and labeling of a given game button may be altered as the phase of the game changes. For example, a game may continually offer the most-used or most desirable function at the right edge of the control bar at the bottom of the screen, with such game button displayed in a distinct bright color such as gold.

[0007] In a game like Three Card Poker, the rightmost game button would change function and label based on the step of the game. After a game has been played, and before the next game is begun, this game button functions as REBET. Once a bet is placed, the game button becomes

DEAL. Once the deal begins and the player must make play decisions, the game button is PLAY. Other play decision game buttons, such as FOLD, are placed proximal to the REBET/DEAL/PLAY game button to reduce the distance between such game buttons as are typically used in sequence, and hence the effort required for the player to move his cursor from where it originally was (typically over the DEAL game button when the game is started) to where it needs to be for the player to input the desired selection.

[0008] Usually, the last game button input a player makes in the Three Card Poker game is either FOLD or PLAY. If the player last chose PLAY, then the cursor will already be positioned for to click REBET without being moved. If the player has reason to believe that the cursor has not moved since clicking PLAY, the player does not even need to look at the position of the cursor to know it is properly placed to click the next game button. If the player last chose FOLD, the player will have to move the cursor to be positioned to subsequently click the rightmost game button (REBET) to continue play. The distance to move the cursor will, however, be minimized.

[0009] As the exigencies of the game vary from game step to game step, the expected sequence of game buttons to be selected may vary. Thus in order to continue to improve the ergonomic efficiency of a game by minimizing cursor movement or effort required for user input selection, it can be seen that there is a need in the art for a method and device which include an input device that is reconfigurable throughout the play of a game to ease the selection of game options by a player. Furthermore, as the number of relevant game buttons may vary between game states, in implementations where it is technically feasible, there is a need to be able to reconfigure one set of game buttons to a second set of game buttons of unlike cardinality, e.g. 1-to-n or n-to-1.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] The present invention is a method for dynamically reconfiguring an input device for different input states depending upon game state. The present invention also includes a device with one or more reconfigurable input devices. According to the present invention, a single input device can have different effects during the course of a game. That is, according to the present invention, an input device may be dynamically reconfigured for different input states to provide different input to a game depending upon the game state of a game of chance when the input device is actuated.

[0011] According to an optional embodiment of the present invention, a gaming device for conducting a game of chance with multiple game states includes an electronic display, an input device receiving user input, and a processor in communication with the display and the input device. The processor is adapted to execute instructions to conduct a game having at least two game states. Two or more input states are correlated to different game states and the input device is adapted to reconfigure between the different input states. In this manner, user input received at the input device in a game state is interpreted by the processor according to the input state associated with that game state. More specifically, user input received at the input device in one game state is interpreted by the processor according to the input state associated with that one game state, whereas user input received at the input device in a different game state is

interpreted by the processor according to the input state associated with that different game state. It is noted that the present invention may include multiple input devices, with each the input device adapted to reconfigure between or among different input states correlated to different game states.

[0012] For example, in one optional embodiment, a gaming device conducts at least one game of chance having a plurality of game states. The gaming device includes at least one input device receiving user input communicating with a processor.

[0013] The input device has at least one input button adapted to dynamically reconfigure between at least two different input states. The input device may include mechanical buttons, display buttons, or the like. In one optional embodiment including mechanical buttons, the mechanical buttons may include indicia for each input state and an illumination device for each indicia. In such an optional embodiment, the processor is adapted to selectively illuminate indicia for an input state correlated to a game state during the game of chance.

[0014] In another optional embodiment, the input device may include at least one display button at the display. In such an optional embodiment, the data structure may store a display button image for each input state and the processor directs the display of a display button for an input state correlated to a game state during the game of chance. The display buttons could take many different forms. In one optional embodiment, the display button image for each input state is substantially the same dimensions when displayed on the display. In another optional embodiment, the data structure stores at least one large display button image and at least two small display button images that are substantially the same dimensions as the large display button image when displayed simultaneously adjacent to one another on the display.

[0015] As noted above, a processor is in communication with the one input device(s) and a data structure communicating with the processor. The data structure stores correlations between the input states and the game states and instructions executable by the processor to conduct the game of chance. User input received at the input device at one game state of the game of chance is interpreted by the processor according to an input state correlated to that game state and user input received at the input device at a different game state of the game of chance is interpreted by the processor according to an input state correlated to that different game state.

[0016] In an optional embodiment, the processor is remote from the input device. In such an optional embodiment, the input device is in communication with a terminal processor. The terminal processor communicates with a terminal communication device which, in turn, communicates with a host communication device. Optionally, the terminal communication device and host communication device communicate through a computer network, such as a local area network ("LAN"), wide area network ("WAN"), or Internet. The processor communicates with the host communication device.

[0017] The present invention also includes a method. According to an embodiment of the present invention, a

method for conducting a game of chance having a plurality of game states includes providing an input device receiving user input. At least two different input states are defined with each input state associated with different effects in the game of chance. Each input state is correlated to at least one game state in the game of chance. The game of chance is conducted. User input is received at the input device during the game of chance. The user input effects the game of chance according to the effect associated with the input state correlated to the game state at the point when the user input is received. In this manner, user input received at the input device during game states correlated to different input states effects the game of chance differently.

[0018] The input device could take many different forms. In one optional embodiment, the input device is a mechanical button including indicia for each input state. In such an optional embodiment, the method further includes selectively illuminating indicia for an input state correlated to a game state during the game of chance.

[0019] In another optional embodiment, the input device is a display button. In such an optional embodiment, the method further includes storing a display button image for each input state. A display button image is displayed for an input state correlated to a game state during the game of chance. Optionally, the display button image for each input state is substantially the same dimensions when displayed on the display. In another optional embodiment, at least one of the display button images is a large display button image and at least two of the display button images are small display button images that are substantially the same dimensions as the large display button image when displayed simultaneously adjacent to one another on the display.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0020] **FIG. 1** shows a state diagram of a game state transition from a single input state to a multiple inputs state according to an optional embodiment of the present invention;

[0021] **FIG. 2** shows a state diagram of a game state transition from a multiple inputs state to a single input state according to an optional embodiment of the present invention;

[0022] **FIG. 3A** shows a game button configuration associated with a state according to an optional embodiment of the present invention;

[0023] **FIG. 3B** shows a game button configuration associated with a different state of the game buttons of **FIG. 3A**;

[0024] **FIG. 3C** shows a game button configuration associated with a different state of the game buttons of **FIG. 3A**;

[0025] **FIG. 4** shows a front view of a game device according to an optional embodiment of the present invention with mechanical game buttons showing multiple states;

[0026] **FIG. 5** shows a front view of a game device according to the optional embodiment of **FIG. 4** with mechanical game buttons in a game state;

[0027] **FIG. 6** shows a front view of a game device according to the optional embodiment of **FIG. 4** with mechanical game buttons in an alternate game state;

[0028] FIG. 7 shows a front view of a game device according to an optional embodiment of the invention with mechanical and display game buttons in a game state;

[0029] FIG. 8 shows a front view of a game device according to the optional embodiment of FIG. 7 with mechanical and display game buttons in an alternate game state.

DESCRIPTION

[0030] Reference is now made to the figures wherein like parts are referred to by like numerals throughout. The present invention is a device and method for reconfiguring an input device according to the step of a game being played. It is noted that the present invention could be directed for use with any game and the examples given below should not be construed as limiting. It is also noted that the present invention encompasses any form of input device including the display and buttons illustrated in the figures, as well as any other form of input device including, but not limited to, mechanical button, display button, touchscreen, controllers, mice, keypads, keyboards, pointers, joysticks, or any other device receiving input from a user.

[0031] The present invention is a method and device directed for use for any game of chance having at least two game states. It is noted that the game states may be defined in any manner. At least two input states are defined and correlated to game states. Input states define how input received at an input device is to be interpreted in the game of chance at the correlated game state. Thus, as each game state is reached, the input state associated with that game state is enabled and the input device may be reconfigured so that the input called for in the input state are prompted.

[0032] According to the present invention, the input device is reconfigured to receive input during the multiple steps of a game, using a single input device or instrumentation for multiple distinct input purposes or effects throughout the course of a game. More specifically, an input device is adapted to reconfigure between at least two different input states. Each input state is correlated to a game state. In this manner, user input received at the input device in any game state is interpreted according to the input state associated with that game state. Thus, user input received at the input device in one game state is interpreted according to the input state associated with that one game state, whereas user input received at the input device in a different game state is interpreted according to the input state associated with that different game state.

[0033] For example, when playing a card game offering the player two or more play choices, such as in the case of Three Card Poker having a FOLD or PLAY input during the play of a hand, and at least one wager input prior to commencement of the play of the hand, each step of play would reconfigure at least one input game button to facilitate the entry of such player's choice or choices as may be associated with the step in progress. As shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, in optional embodiments where it is technically feasible, the reconfiguration may redefine a set of n game buttons as a set of m game buttons, where n is unequal to m.

[0034] In such an implementation, illustrated in FIGS. 7 and 8 and discussed in greater detail later, an interface for Three Card Poker incorporating the present invention could

include reconfiguring mechanical game buttons 737, 738 used for selection of a FOLD 737 or PLAY 738 selection at a game state during the play of a hand (shown in FIG. 7) into mechanical game buttons 737, 738 used for selection of a REBET 737, 738 selection at a game state following completion of the play of a hand (shown in FIG. 8). Similarly, FIGS. 7 and 8 illustrate an optional embodiment in which display game buttons 727, 728 used for selection of a FOLD 727 or PLAY 738 selection at a game state during the play of a hand are reconfigured to a single display game button 827 used for selection of a REBET 827 selection at a game state following completion of the play of a hand. In this manner, the player could effect a FOLD or PLAY input during the game and a REBET input after the game without repositioning his finger or pointing device. In an alternate optional embodiment, the reconfiguration could effectuate a REDEAL input which would activate a new game using the same wager as the prior game, combining a REBET and a DEAL input. In an alternate optional embodiment, such as in jurisdictions which require the player to actively collect any prize awarded to them, the input after an award event could be reconfigured to permit a COLLECT input.

[0035] It is noted that the present invention could be applied to any input device, whether that input device is mechanical, electronic, or any other type of input device. Thus, even though FIGS. 4-6 illustrate an optional embodiment in which the input device includes mechanical buttons, and FIGS. 7 and 8 illustrate an optional embodiment in which the input device includes mechanical buttons and display buttons, it is contemplated that other types of inputs could be used in the present invention, including, specifically, an optional embodiment using only display buttons.

[0036] Referring specifically to FIGS. 4-6, the present invention could be applied to a gaming device having mechanical game buttons that have indicia to identify the input state and an illumination device, such as a lamp, light, light emitting diode ("LED"), or the like, to illuminate or highlight the indicia corresponding to the input state at that particular game state. That is, as illustrated in FIGS. 5 and 6, the input device could include one or more mechanical buttons with different indicia (text areas in this example) that can be independently lighted or highlighted to reflect the reconfiguration of the input device.

[0037] In alternate embodiments, not shown, a mechanical game button may change its display of indicia, or of illumination of indicia, under computer control. Similarly, in an alternate optional embodiment (not shown), the color of a mechanical game button may be changed to reflect a reconfiguration of input options. In yet another optional embodiment (not shown), the reconfiguration status of mechanical game buttons may be indicated on a display device in such a way that the player may readily determine the purpose and effect of such game buttons. Optionally, the display area may be proximal to the game buttons. It is contemplated that an embodiment may include two or more input devices, such as multiple game buttons, which share a similar text or display to indicate that any of these input devices could provide the same input. Such implementation may be effective for implementations utilizing, for example, a PC connected to a server or the Internet for execution of a gaming event which employs remote processing or other interface.

[0038] FIG. 1 illustrates a state diagram of a game state transition from a single input state 101 to a multiple input

state **102** according to an optional embodiment of the present invention. In this optional embodiment, the input game button could be reconfigurable between utilization for a single input and utilization for multiple inputs. For example, in one optional embodiment, a single input game button could be reconfigurable to cover the size and space of multiple input game buttons and vice versa. After the transition, the reconfigurable input game button may be replaced by a plurality of input game buttons. **FIG. 2** shows a state diagram of a game state transition from a multiple input state **201** to a single input state **202** according to another optional embodiment. It is noted that the game states, and the corresponding input states, may be cyclical, i.e. cycle between or among two or more states, or may be non-cyclical, i.e. linear, branching, or the like, depending upon the game of chance.

[**0039**] Turning to **FIGS. 3A-3C**, an optional embodiment of dynamic reconfiguration of an input device, in this case display buttons, to provide input appropriate to several different game states illustrated. Within each such state user an input device in the form of a display button panel **301** associated with that state are displayed. This embodiment includes a prewager state (shown in **FIG. 3A**), a predeal state (shown in **FIG. 3B**), and a game play state (shown in **FIG. 3C**). Each of the states features a Help game button **305** in a fixed location. Thus, in this optional embodiment, the Help game button **305** undergoes no reconfiguration. In the prewager state of **FIG. 3A**, there is a reconfigurable REBET game button **307**, which occupies an area substantially equivalent to the area occupied by multiple input game buttons, i.e. a FOLD game button **327** and PLAY game button **328**, in **FIG. 3C**. The prewager state of **FIG. 3A** also includes two smaller input game buttons, HELP **305** and BET **1306**. In this example, according to the underlying game of chance, the BET **1** game button **306** is only used in the prewager state of **FIG. 3A**, and reconfigures in the other two states shown in **FIGS. 3B and 3C** to provide no function or effect in those game states.

[**0040**] Continuing with the example, the predeal state of **FIG. 3B** has a DEAL game button **317** as well as a HELP game button **305**. The HELP game button **305** is carried over from the prewager state shown in **FIG. 3A**, and the DEAL game button **317** in the predeal state of **FIG. 3B** is a reconfiguration of the REBET game buttons **307** in the prewager state shown in **FIG. 3A** and occupies the same location. Optionally, as illustrated, the reconfigurable REBET game button **307** and DEAL game button **317** may be displayed in a highlighted form to be more noticeable to the player.

[**0041**] In the optional embodiment illustrated, the location allocated to the REBET game button **307** in the prewager state of **FIG. 3A** and the DEAL game button **317** in the predeal state of **FIG. 3B** is reconfigured in the game play state of **FIG. 3C** as two game buttons, a FOLD game button **327** and a PLAY game button **328**, along with the HELP game button **305** which is not reconfigured between game states. That is, the HELP game button **305** is carried over through each game state in this example. The FOLD game button **327** and the PLAY game button **328** of the game play state of **FIG. 3C** together occupy the same space as the REBET game button **307** of the prewager state of **FIG. 3A** or the DEAL game button **317** of the predeal state of **FIG. 3B**. It should be noted that, while **FIGS. 3A-3C** show the

reconfigured game buttons occupying the same size and shape in each reconfiguration, this limitation is not necessary to this invention and the reconfigured game buttons could occupy larger, smaller, or differently-shaped areas in each reconfiguration while remaining within the scope and spirit of this invention.

[**0042**] The game illustrated in **FIGS. 4-6** includes two game states, a predeal state, which includes wager information, and a game play state. **FIG. 4** illustrates an optional embodiment consisting of a gaming device **402** comprising a processor **406**, a display **404**, optionally a video display, an input device comprising a mechanical game button panel **430**, and one or more areas for identifying other game information such as wagers **440** placed and awards **442** collected. It is noted that in this optional embodiment, the input device communicates with the data processor **406** and the data processor **406** interprets user input received at the input device depending upon game state, as described in greater detail below. In an optional embodiment, the processor **406** may be in communication with a data structure storing instructions for the conduct of the game of chance along with the input states correlated with game states. In this manner, when a game state is reached, the appropriate input state is used by the processor **406** to interpret user input received at the input device.

[**0043**] The mechanical game button panel **430** may include non-reconfigurable input game buttons **431, 432**, i.e. game buttons that do not have different input states depending upon game state, in addition to reconfigurable input game buttons **437, 438**, i.e. game buttons that do have different input states depending upon game state. In this optional example, one portion **451, 453** of the reconfigurable game buttons **437, 438** display visual attributes, in this case indicia, associated with a predeal game state while another portion **452, 454** of the reconfigurable game buttons **437, 438** display indicia associated with a different post-play game state. In one embodiment, there is included no special lighting in or on the mechanical game buttons **437438** to indicate the configuration status of the game buttons. In such an optional embodiment, the input state could be determined by the player based upon game context or indicated by messaging in the game display area **408**. In an other optional embodiment, the portion of the game buttons **437** with the visual attribute, e.g. indicia, color, graphic, or the like, identifying the input state is illuminated, highlighted, or otherwise signified during each game state associated with that input state.

[**0044**] Thus, in the optional embodiment illustrated in **FIGS. 5 and 6**, each reconfigurable game button **437, 438** includes an illumination device, or other illumination means, to highlight the indicia identifying the input state **551, 553, 652, 654** enabled for that game state. Specifically, in the example of **FIG. 5**, the text indicating the input state of game button **437** for FOLD **551** is highlighted and the text indicating the input state of game button **438** for CALL **553** is highlighted while the disabled REDEAL **452, 454** input states of the game buttons **437, 438** are dimmed or unilluminated. In **FIG. 6** the text indicating the input state of both game buttons **437, 438** for REDEAL **652, 654** are highlighted while the disabled FOLD **451** and CALL **453** input states of the game buttons **437, 438** are dimmed or unilluminated.

[0045] In this example, the game state of **FIG. 6** includes redundant game buttons **437, 438**, that is, game buttons that are correlated to the same input state. In other words, at the game state of **FIG. 6**, user input received at either game button **437, 438** would be interpreted as the same user input, a REDEAL in this example. This is contrasted from the preceding game state of **FIG. 5** where the game buttons **437, 428** are correlated to different input states so that user input received at the game buttons **437, 438** would be interpreted as different user input, a FOLD or a CALL, respectively, in this example. It is noted that each of these game state-input state correlations could be used separately or together within the scope of the present invention.

[0046] It is also noted that in this example, the game state of **FIG. 6** occurs between games whereas the game state of **FIG. 5** occurs during a game. It is contemplated that game states at any point during the conduct of a game of chance, or a series of games of chance, and the input states may similarly receive user input during conduct of a game of chance, or between games of chance.

[0047] An alternate optional embodiment is illustrated in **FIGS. 7 and 8** that includes reconfigurable mechanical game buttons **737, 738** and reconfigurable display game buttons **727, 728, 827** such as mouse fields, touchscreen buttons, or other displayed, rather than physical, buttons. In this optional embodiment the display area **704** may include an area **708** in which to display standard video game information and a display button panel **720** for the display and operation of reconfigurable display game buttons **727, 728, 827**. In the optional embodiment illustrated, such display game buttons **727, 728, 827** are part of the input device and receive input directly by the player such as by touch, a mouse, a pointer, or other input. In alternate optional embodiments (not shown), such display game buttons might be for display only with the corresponding mechanical game buttons being the sole input device. In the optional embodiment illustrated, non-reconfigurable display game buttons **721, 722**, i.e. game buttons that do not change input states depending upon game state, may be displayed along with the reconfigurable display game buttons **727, 728, 827**. In alternate optional embodiments, more, or less, display game buttons may be utilized, and such game buttons may include only reconfigurable display game buttons, only non-reconfigurable display game buttons, or both.

[0048] Turning to the optional embodiment of **FIG. 7**, a game state associated with FOLD and CALL input states are enabled. Thus, in the game state of **FIG. 7**, the FOLD game button **727** and the CALL game button **728** are displayed and actuating the FOLD button **727** or CALL button **728** would be interpreted in accord with those input states. In **FIG. 8** a different game state is illustrated in which the FOLD button **727** and CALL button **728** has been reconfigured as a REDEAL game button **827**. This REDEAL game button **827** occupies the same screen area in the game state of **FIG. 8** as would be occupied by both the FOLD game button **727** and the CALL game button **728** in the game state of **FIG. 7**. In alternate optional embodiments, the REDEAL game button **827** may be displayed to occupy the area of only the FOLD game button **727** or the CALL game button **728**, or may occupy a totally different area instead. Such variation is within the spirit and scope of the invention being described.

[0049] While certain embodiments of the present invention have been shown and described it is to be understood that the present invention is subject to many modifications and changes without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention presented herein.

I claim:

1. A gaming device comprising:

an electronic display;

an input device receiving user input; and

a processor in communication with said display and said input device, said processor adapted to execute instructions to conduct a game of chance having at least two game states and said input device adapted to reconfigure between at least two different input states, each input state correlated to a game state such that user input received at said input device in a game state is interpreted by the processor according to the input state associated with that game state.

2. The device of claim 1 comprising at least two input devices, each said input device adapted to reconfigure between at least two different input states, each input state correlated to a game state such that user input received at said input device in a game state is interpreted by the processor according to the input state associated with that game state.

3. The device of claim 2 wherein at least two of said input devices are configured such that in at least one game state, at least two of said input devices are correlated to the same input state such that user input received at any of said at least two input devices is interpreted as the same user input by said processor.

4. The device of claim 2 wherein at least two of said input devices are configured such that (a) in at least one game state, at least two of said input devices are correlated to the same input state such that user input received at any of said at least two input devices is interpreted as the same user input by said processor and (b) in at least one other game state, said at least two input devices are correlated to different input states such that user input received at any of said at least two input devices is interpreted as different user input by said processor.

5. The device of claim 1 wherein said input device is configured with one or more visible attributes associated with each input state, said input device adapted to alter its visible attributes to indicate the input state for which said input device is configured.

6. The device of claim 1 wherein said game states include at least one game state during conduct of said game of chance and at least one game state between conduct of consecutive games of chance, and wherein said input device is configured such that at least one of said input states is correlated to a game state occurring during conduct of said game of chance and at least one of said input states is correlated to a game state occurring between consecutive games of chance.

7. A gaming device comprising:

an electronic display;

an input device receiving user input; and

a processor in communication with said display and said input device, said processor including a data structure storing instructions to conduct a game of chance having

at least two game states and at least two different input states, each said input state correlated to a game state, said input device adapted to reconfigure between said at least two different input states such that user input received at said input device in one game state is interpreted by said processor according to the input state associated with that one game state, whereas user input received at said input device in a different game state is interpreted by said processor according to the input state associated with that different game state.

8. The device of claim 7 comprising at least two input devices, each said input device adapted to reconfigure between at least two different input states, each input state correlated to a game state such that user input received at said input device in a game state is interpreted by the processor according to the input state associated with that game state.

9. The device of claim 8 wherein at least two of said input devices are configured such that in at least one game state, at least two of said input devices are correlated to the same input state such that user input received at any of said at least two input devices is interpreted as the same user input by said processor.

10. The device of claim 8 wherein at least two of said input devices are configured such that (a) in at least one game state, at least two of said input devices are correlated to the same input state such that user input received at any of said at least two input devices is interpreted as the same user input by said processor and (b) in at least one other game state, said at least two input devices are correlated to different input states such that user input received at any of said at least two input devices is interpreted as different user input by said processor.

11. The device of claim 7 wherein said input device is configured with one or more visible attributes associated with each input state, said input device adapted to alter its visible attributes to indicate the input state for which said input device is configured.

12. The device of claim 7 wherein said game states include at least one game state during conduct of said game of chance and at least one game state between conduct of consecutive games of chance, and wherein said input device is configured such that at least one of said input states is correlated to a game state occurring during conduct of said game of chance and at least one of said input states is correlated to a game state occurring between consecutive games of chance.

13. A gaming device for conducting at least one game of chance having a plurality of game states comprising:

at least one input device receiving user input, said input device having at least one input button adapted to dynamically reconfigure between at least two different input states with one or more visible attributes associated with each input state, said input device adapted to alter its visible attributes to indicate the input state for which said input device is configured;

a processor in communication with said at least one input device; and

a data structure in communication with said processor, said data structure storing correlations between said input states and said game states and instructions executable by said processor to conduct said game of chance such that user input received at said input

device at one game state of said game of chance is interpreted by said processor according to an input state correlated to that one game state and user input received at said input device at a different game state of said game of chance is interpreted by said processor according to an input state correlated to that different game state.

14. The gaming device of claim 13 wherein said input device includes at least one mechanical button.

15. The gaming device of claim 14 wherein said mechanical button includes indicia for each input state and an illumination device for each indicia, said processor adapted to selectively illuminate indicia for an input state correlated to a game state during said game of chance.

16. The gaming device of claim 13 wherein said input device includes at least one display button at said display.

17. The gaming device of claim 16 wherein said data structure stores a display button image for each input state, said processor adapted to display a display button for an input state correlated to a game state during said game of chance.

18. The gaming device of claim 17 wherein said display button image for each input state is substantially the same dimensions when displayed on said display.

19. The gaming device of claim 17 wherein said data structure stores at least one large display button image and at least two small display button images that are substantially the same dimensions as said large display button image when displayed simultaneously adjacent to one another on said display.

20. The gaming device of claim 13 further comprising:

a terminal processor in communication with said input device;

a terminal communication device in communication with said terminal processor; and

a host communication device in communication with said terminal communication device and said processor, such that said input device is remote from said processor.

21. The gaming device of claim 20 wherein said host communication device and said terminal communication device are adapted to communicate through a computer network.

22. The device of claim 13 comprising a plurality of input devices, wherein at least two of said input devices are configured such that in at least one game state, at least two of said input devices are correlated to the same input state such that user input received at any of said at least two input devices is interpreted as the same user input by said processor.

23. The device of claim 13 comprising a plurality of input devices, wherein at least two of said input devices are configured such that (a) in at least one game state, at least two of said input devices are correlated to the same input state such that user input received at any of said at least two input devices is interpreted as the same user input by said processor and (b) in at least one other game state, said at least two input devices are correlated to different input states such that user input received at any of said at least two input devices is interpreted as different user input by said processor.

24. The device of claim 13 wherein said game states include at least one game state during conduct of said game

of chance and at least one game state between conduct of consecutive games of chance, and wherein said input device is configured such that at least one of said input states is correlated to a game state occurring during conduct of said game of chance and at least one of said input states is correlated to a game state occurring between consecutive games of chance.

25. A method for conducting a game of chance having a plurality of game states comprising:

- providing an input device receiving user input;
- defining at least two different input states, each input state associated with different effects in said game of chance;
- correlating each input state to at least one game state;
- conducting said game of chance; and

receiving user input from said input device during said game of chance, said user input effecting said game of chance according to the effect associated with the input state correlated to the game state at the point when the user input is received, such that user input received at said input device during game states correlated to different input states effects said game of chance differently.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein said input device is a mechanical button including indicia for each input state, the method further comprising selectively illuminating indicia for an input state correlated to a game state during said game of chance.

27. The method of claim 25 wherein said input device is a display button, the method further comprising:

- storing a display button image for each input state; and
- displaying a display button image for an input state correlated to a game state during said game of chance.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein said display button image for each input state is substantially the same dimensions when displayed on said display.

29. The method of claim 27 wherein at least one of said display button images is a large display button image and at

least two of said display button images are small display button images that are substantially the same dimensions as said large display button image when displayed simultaneously adjacent to one another on said display.

30. The method of claim 25 wherein a plurality of input devices are provided, said method further comprising configuring at least two of said input devices such that in at least one game state, at least two of said input devices are correlated to the same input state such that user input received at any of said at least two input devices is interpreted as the same user input by said processor.

31. The method of claim 25 wherein a plurality of input devices are provided, said method further comprising configuring at least two of said input devices such that (a) in at least one game state, at least two of said input devices are correlated to the same input state such that user input received at any of said at least two input devices is interpreted as the same user input by said processor and (b) in at least one other game state, said at least two input devices are correlated to different input states such that user input received at any of said at least two input devices is interpreted as different user input by said processor.

32. The method of claim 25 further comprising:

- associating one or more visible attributes of said input device with each input state; and

altering visible attributes of said input device to indicate the input state for which said input device is configured.

33. The method of claim 25 wherein said game states include at least one game state during conduct of said game of chance and at least one game state between conduct of consecutive games of chance, said method further comprising correlating at least one of said input states to a game state occurring during conduct of said game of chance and correlating at least one of said input states to a game state occurring between consecutive games of chance.

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