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(54) **GAMING METHOD WITH DUAL GAME FUNCTION, ELECTRONIC GAMING APPARATUS FOR PERFORMING THE GAMING METHOD, AND COMPUTER PROGRAM PRODUCT RECORDING A GAMING PROGRAM OF THE GAMING METHOD**

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(76) **Inventor:** Arden YANG, Rosemead, CA (US)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

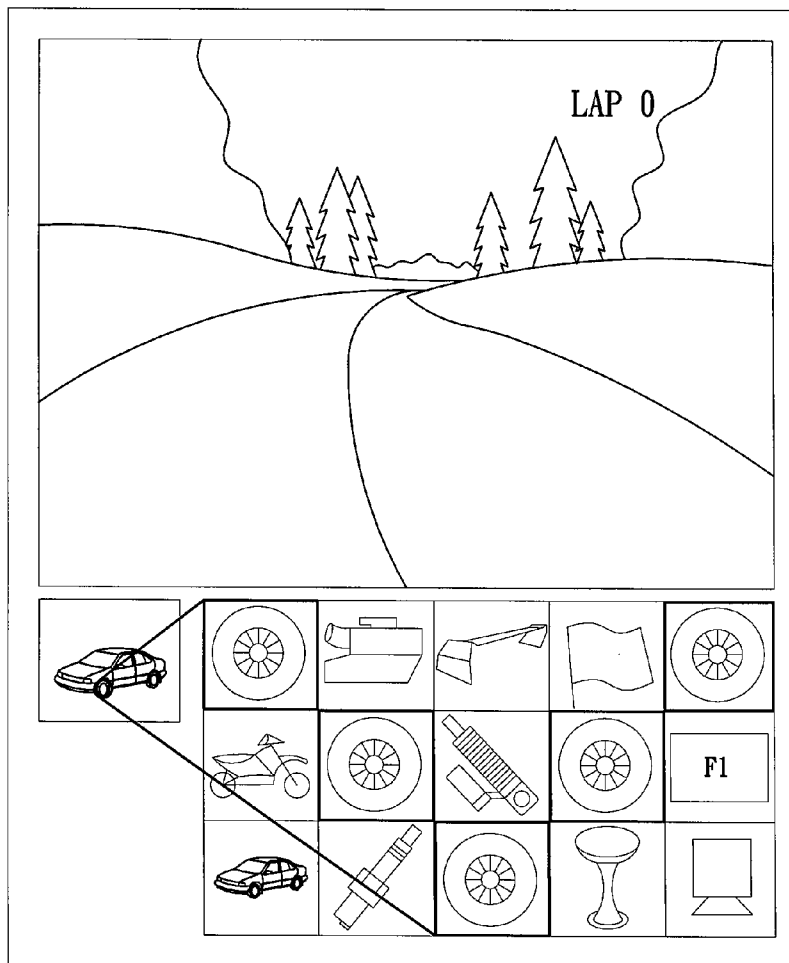
Correspondence Address:
OSTROLENK FABER GERB & SOFFEN
1180 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS
NEW YORK, NY 100368403

A gaming method provides a dual game function and is implemented using a gaming apparatus. The gaming method includes: a) starting a first game, and enabling collection of a plurality of objects of an object suite as predetermined object collection criteria are satisfied while playing the first game; and b) if all the objects of the object suite are collected while playing the first game, starting a second game that is played independently of the first game. A gaming apparatus and a computer program product are also disclosed.

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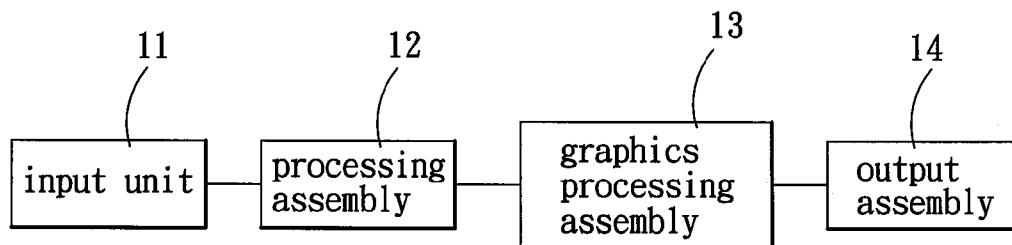


FIG. 1

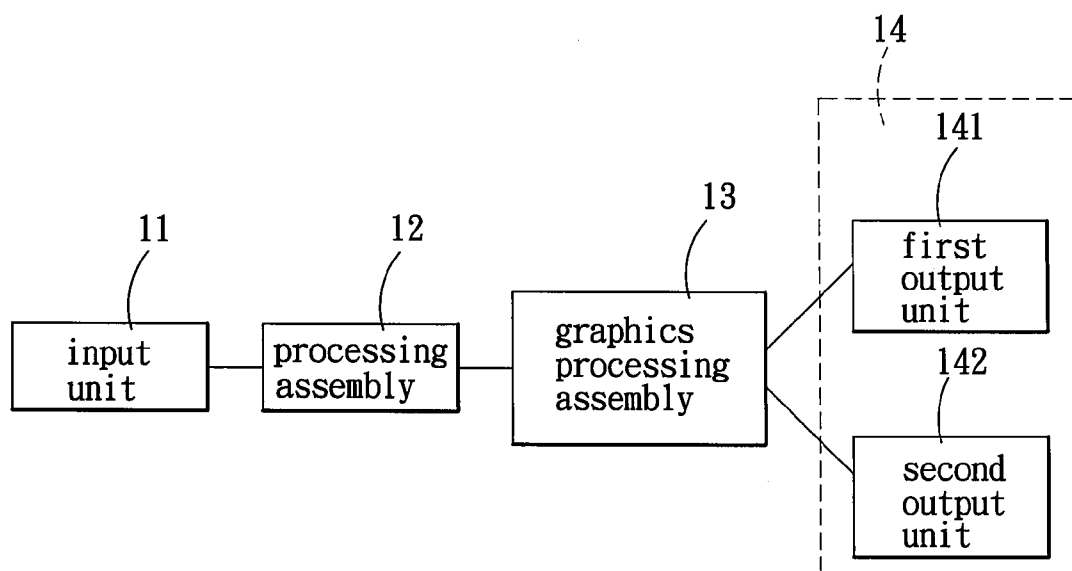


FIG. 2

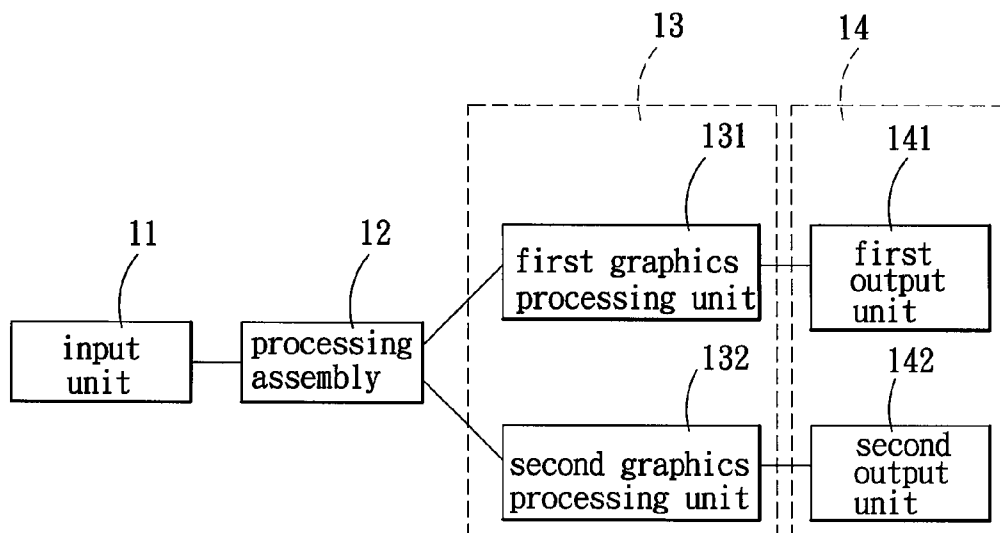


FIG. 3

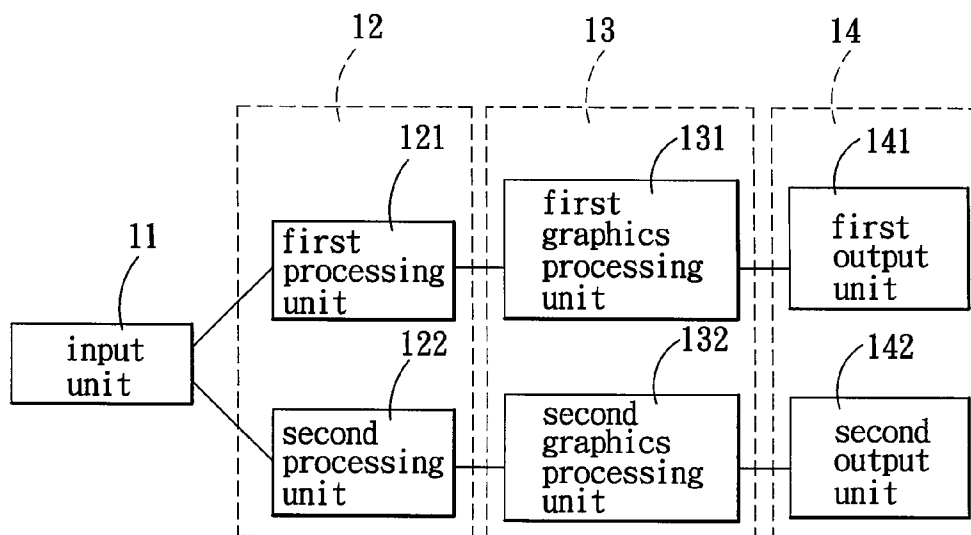


FIG. 4

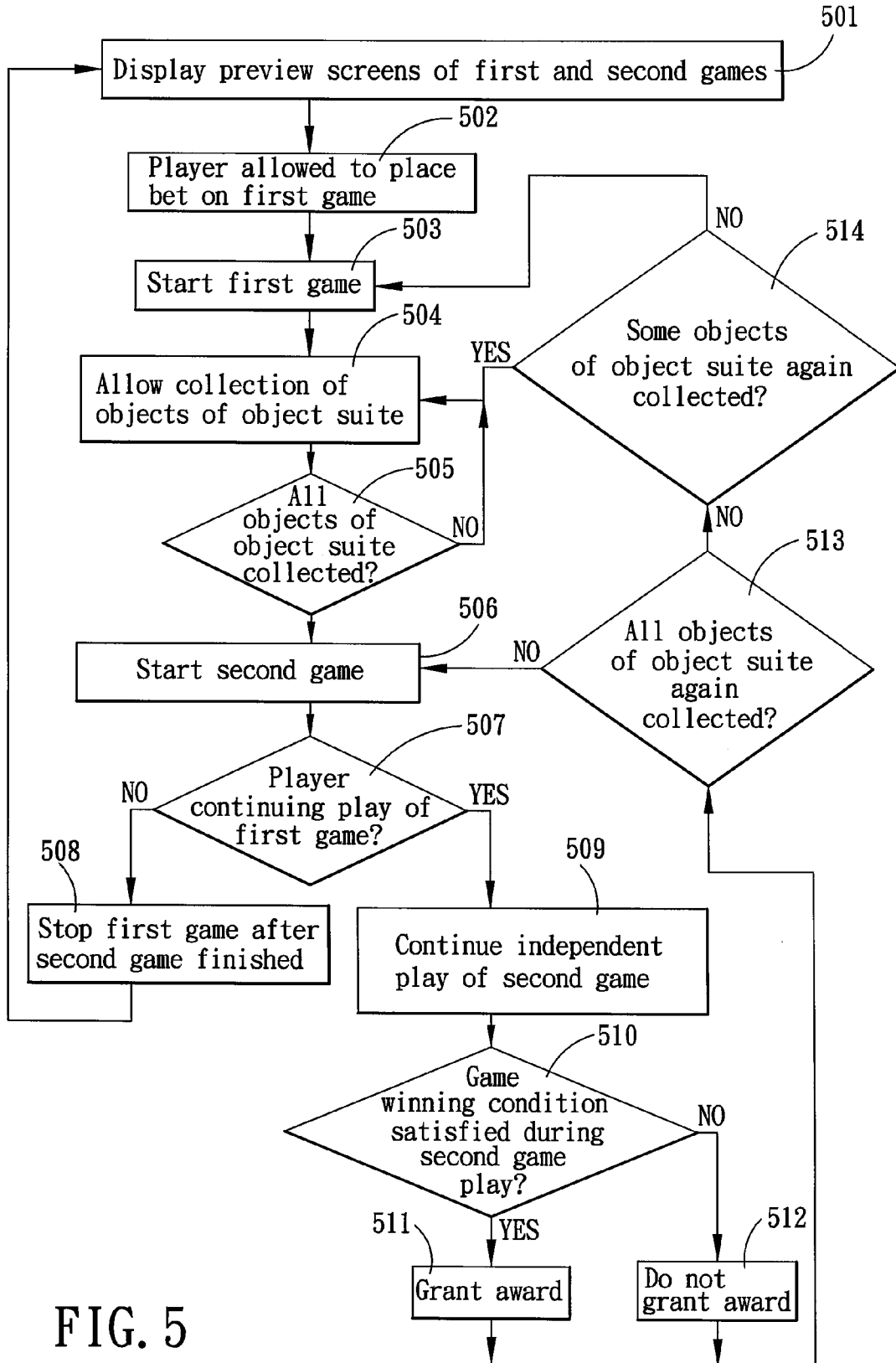


FIG. 5

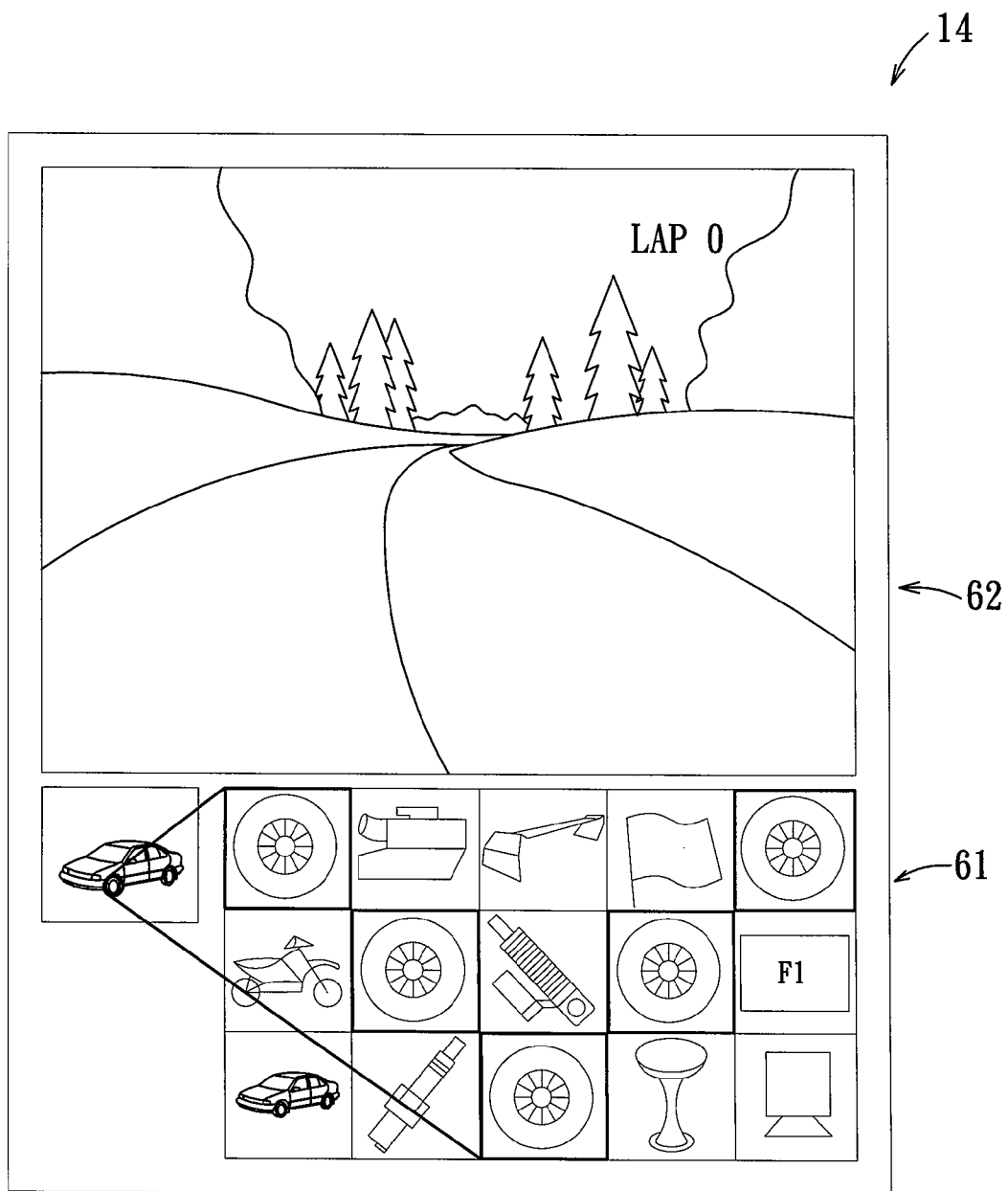


FIG. 6

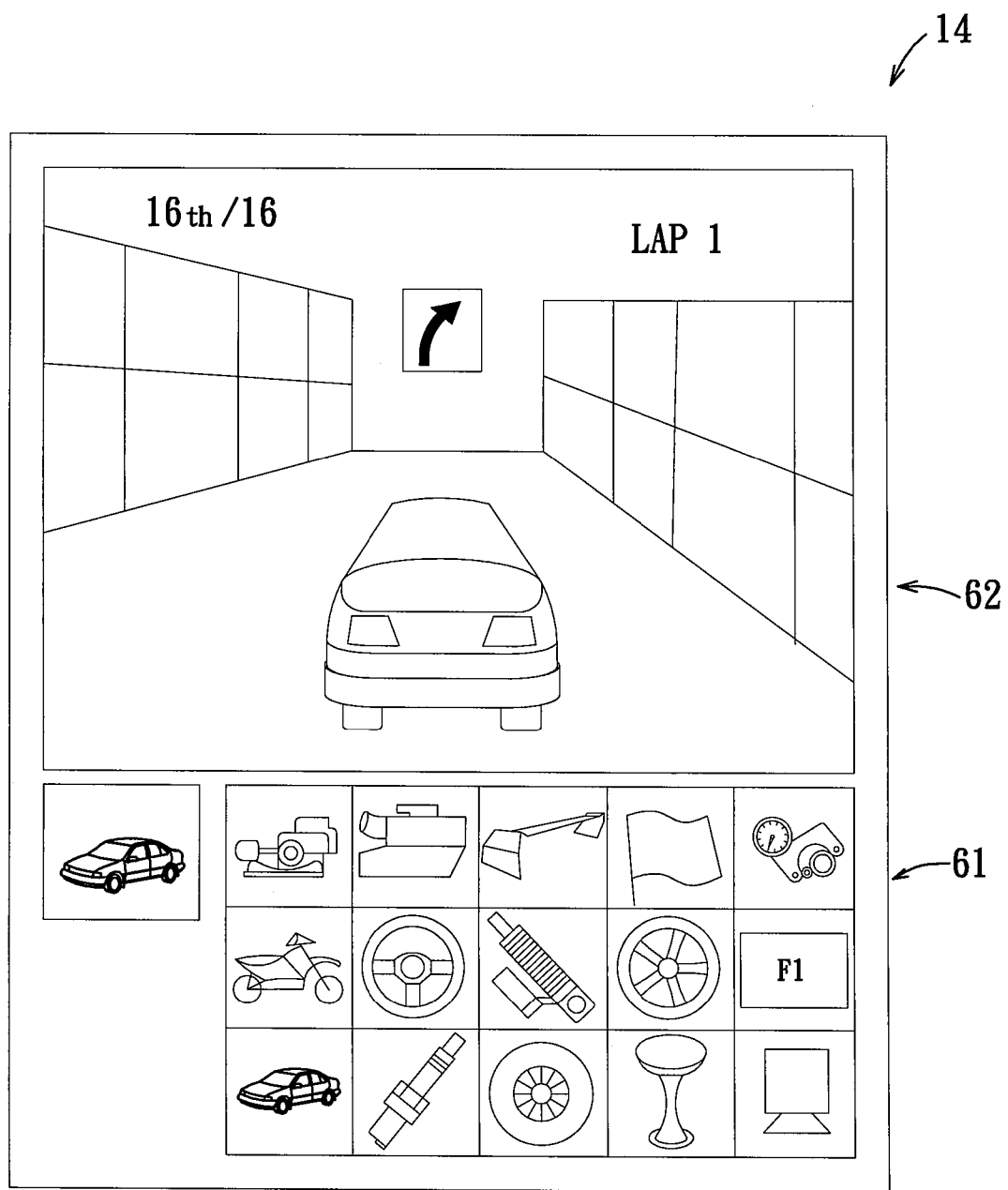


FIG. 7

GAMING METHOD WITH DUAL GAME FUNCTION, ELECTRONIC GAMING APPARATUS FOR PERFORMING THE GAMING METHOD, AND COMPUTER PROGRAM PRODUCT RECORDING A GAMING PROGRAM OF THE GAMING METHOD

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims priority of Taiwanese Application No. 095138734, filed on Oct. 20, 2006.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to a gaming method with a dual game function, an electronic gaming apparatus for performing the gaming method, and a computer program product recording a gaming program of the gaming method.

[0004] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0005] Some conventional games provide a main game and a bonus game. However, the link between the main and bonus games is very weak. Typically, the main and bonus games are no more than two games combined into one, in which the bonus game is played when a predetermined winning condition, which is wholly unrelated to the bonus game, is satisfied during play of the main game.

[0006] There is a need, therefore, for a gaming method and apparatus that provide for a dual game function in which the two games are closely associated with one another, so that players are able to have a more exciting and enjoyable gaming experience.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] Therefore, the object of the present invention is to provide a gaming method with a dual game function, in which first and second games of the gaming method are closely associated with one another. The present invention also provides an electronic gaming apparatus for performing the gaming method, and a computer program product recording a gaming program of the gaming method.

[0008] According to one aspect, the gaming method of this invention provides a dual game function and is implemented using a gaming apparatus. The gaming method comprises: a) starting a first game, and enabling collection of a plurality of objects of an object suite as predetermined object collection criteria are satisfied while playing the first game; and b) if all the objects of the object suite are collected while playing the first game, starting a second game that is played independently of the first game.

[0009] According to another aspect of this invention, the gaming apparatus comprises: an input unit allowing input by a player; an output assembly for performing display; and a processing assembly coupled to the input unit and the output assembly, and configured to perform steps of the gaming method of this invention.

[0010] According to yet another aspect of this invention, a computer program product comprises a computer-readable

storage medium that records a gaming program for causing a computer to execute steps of the gaming method of this invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] Other features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent in the following detailed description of the preferred embodiment with reference to the accompanying drawings, of which:

[0012] FIG. 1 is a schematic circuit block diagram of the preferred embodiment of an electronic gaming apparatus providing a dual game function according to the present invention;

[0013] FIG. 2 is a schematic circuit block diagram of a first modified example of the preferred embodiment;

[0014] FIG. 3 is a schematic circuit block diagram of a second modified example of the preferred embodiment;

[0015] FIG. 4 is a schematic circuit block diagram of a third modified example of the preferred embodiment;

[0016] FIG. 5 is a flowchart of a gaming method according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention; and

[0017] FIGS. 6 and 7 are schematic views, illustrating example gaming screens appearing on an output unit of the preferred embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0018] Referring to FIG. 1, the preferred embodiment of a gaming apparatus providing a dual game function according to the present invention is shown to comprise an input unit 11, a processing assembly 12, a graphics processing assembly 13, and an output assembly 14.

[0019] The input unit 11 allows input by a player, and is operable to generate control signals in response to player manipulation for controlling a first game and a second game, i.e., the two games involved in the “dual game function” provided by the gaming apparatus. The input unit 11 may include buttons (not shown), a lever (not shown), etc.

[0020] The processing assembly 12 is coupled to the input unit 11, and is configured to perform steps of a gaming method. The present invention also provides a computer program product comprising a computer-readable storage medium that records a gaming program for causing a computer to execute the steps of a gaming method. As an example, the gaming program may cause the processing assembly 12 to execute the steps of the gaming method. Further, the computer-readable storage medium may be a part of the processing assembly 12, or may be separate from but accessible by the processing assembly 12.

[0021] The graphics processing assembly 13 is coupled to the processing assembly 12 and the output assembly 14, and performs graphics rendering of gaming screens of the first and second games on the output assembly 14. It is to be noted that the graphics processing assembly 13 is optional and may be omitted from the configuration of the gaming apparatus, in which case it is the processing assembly 12 that performs operations associated with graphics rendering.

[0022] The output assembly 14 is coupled to the graphics processing assembly 13 as described above, and performs display of the gaming screens rendered by the graphics processing assembly 13. If the graphics processing assembly 13 is not included as part of the gaming apparatus as described above, the output assembly 14 is coupled to the

processing assembly 12, and the gaming screens are rendered on the output assembly 14 by the processing assembly 12.

[0023] In the preferred embodiment, the output assembly 14 is a display sufficiently sized to allow simultaneous display of the gaming screens of the first and second games. As an example, the output assembly 14 may be a rectangular display with its length vertically placed such that the gaming screens of the first and second games are displayed on the output assembly 14 in a manner of vertically arranged split windows.

[0024] Referring to FIG. 2, in a first modified example of the preferred embodiment, the output assembly 14 includes a pair of first and second output units 141, 142 coupled to the graphics processing assembly 13. In this first modified example, the gaming screen of the first game is rendered on the first output unit 141 and the gaming screen of the second game is rendered on the second output unit 142.

[0025] Referring to FIG. 3, in a second modified example of the preferred embodiment, the graphics processing assembly 13 includes a pair of first and second graphics processing units 131, 132, and the output assembly 14 includes a pair of first and second output units 141, 142 coupled respectively to the first and second graphics processing units 131, 132. In this second modified example, the gaming screen of the first game is rendered on the first output unit 141 by the first graphics processing unit 131, and the gaming screen of the second game is rendered on the second output unit 142 by the second graphics processing unit 132.

[0026] Referring to FIG. 4, in a third modified example of the preferred embodiment, the processing assembly 12 includes a pair of first and second processing units 121, 122 configured to perform steps of a gaming method respectively of the first and second games, the graphics processing assembly 13 includes a pair of first and second graphics processing units 131, 132 coupled respectively to the first and second processing units 121, 122, and the output assembly 14 includes a pair of first and second output units 141, 142 coupled respectively to the first and second graphics processing units 131, 132. In this third modified example, the gaming screen of the first game is rendered on the first output unit 141 by the first graphics processing unit 131, and the gaming screen of the second game is rendered on the second output unit 142 by the second graphics processing unit 132.

[0027] In the first, second, and third modified examples of the preferred embodiment, the first and second output units 141, 142 may be arranged vertically to allow for easy viewing of the gaming screens of the first and second games.

[0028] The preferred embodiment of a gaming method providing a dual game function will now be described with reference to FIG. 5. For purposes of illustration, the gaming method is described as being implemented using the gaming apparatus of the preferred embodiment of FIG. 1. Alternatively, the gaming method may be implemented by any one of the modified examples of the preferred embodiment. As another alternative, the gaming method may be executed by a computer as part of a gaming program recorded in the computer-readable storage medium of the computer program product of the present invention.

[0029] First, in step 501, before a player starts to play the game, control is performed such that the output assembly 14 displays preview screens of the first and second games. As

an example embodiment, the first game is a game of slots and the second game is a car racing game. Therefore, preview screens of the first and second games, similar to what is shown by first and second gaming screens 61, 62 of FIG. 6, are displayed on the output assembly 14.

[0030] Next, in step 502, the player is allowed to place a bet on the first game.

[0031] In step 503, the first game is started.

[0032] In step 504, control is performed to enable collection of a plurality of objects of an object suite as predetermined object collection criteria are satisfied while playing the first game. In this embodiment where the first game is a game of slots, one of the objects of the object suite is collected when indicia corresponding to the one of the objects form a predetermined pattern at the end of one round of the first game. Further, in this embodiment, the objects of the object suite are associated with a virtual race car. In greater detail, with reference to FIG. 6, the objects of the object suite in this embodiment are, for example, a steering wheel, a racing plate, wheels, gasoline, etc., and one of these objects is collected when at the end of one round of the game of slots, the indicia corresponding to one object form a predetermined pattern. Other objects of the object suite are similarly collected. While playing the first game and before the second game is started, the preview screen of the second game is continuously displayed.

[0033] Next, in step 505, it is determined if, through play of the first game, all the objects of the object suite have been collected. If not, step 504 is repeated to enable collection of the plurality of objects of the object suite while playing the first game.

[0034] If all the objects of the object suite have been collected while playing the first game, on the other hand, in step 506, the second game is started which is played independently of the first game. As shown in FIG. 7, the car racing game is shown started in the second gaming screen 62 of the output assembly 14.

[0035] Subsequently, in step 507, it is determined if the player continues playing the first game. This may be performed by, for example, the processing assembly 12 continuously monitoring whether or not the player continues playing the first game. If not, in step 508, the first game is stopped after the second game is finished, after which the flow returns to step 501.

[0036] However, if in step 507, it is determined that the player continues playing the first game, then in step 509, the second game is continued independently of the first game. As an example of another embodiment, the second game may be an additional game of chance, such as video roulette, in which case the second game is automatically executed fully independent of the first game. In essence, therefore, the player is allowed to play the first and second games simultaneously.

[0037] Next, in step 510, it is determined if a predetermined game winning condition is satisfied during play of the second game. If so, in step 511, an award is granted. If not, however, no award is granted in step 512. For example, step 512 may entail alerting the player that he or she has not won the second game.

[0038] At the same time the second game is played, the player continues to play the first game. Hence, it is possible for the player to again collect enough objects to complete another object suite while simultaneously playing the second game. Therefore, after the second game is finished, it is

determined in step 513 if all the objects of the object suite have again been collected during such continuous play of the first game. If so, the flow is directed to step 506 so that the second game is restarted.

[0039] Otherwise, in step 514, it is determined if the player has again collected some but not all the objects of the object suite. If so, the flow returns to step 504, in which control is performed to enable continued collection of the plurality of objects of the object suite while playing the first game. However, in step 514, if it is determined that none of the objects of the object suite have been collected, then the flow is directed to step 503 of starting the first game.

[0040] It is to be noted that as part of step 504, for example, while collecting the objects of the object suite, if a newly collected object is one that has already been collected, the newly collected object may be assigned to a subsequent object suite. By providing such a feature, the player is aided in his or her efforts of again playing the second game.

[0041] In the present invention, due to the close association between the first and second games as described hereinabove, players are provided with amore exciting and enjoyable gaming experience.

[0042] While the present invention has been described in connection with what is considered the most practical and preferred embodiment, it is understood that this invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiment but is intended to cover various arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the broadest interpretation so as to encompass all such modifications and equivalent arrangements.

What is claimed is:

1. A gaming method providing a dual game function and implemented using a gaming apparatus, said gaming method comprising:

- a) starting a first game, and enabling collection of a plurality of objects of an object suite as predetermined object collection criteria are satisfied while playing the first game; and
- b) if all the objects of the object suite are collected while playing the first game, starting a second game that is played independently of the first game.

2. The gaming method as claimed in claim 1, wherein, in step b), before starting the second game, a preview screen of the second game is displayed.

3. The gaming method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

- c) restarting the second game after the second game is finished if all the objects of the object suite are again collected during continuous play of the first game.

4. The gaming method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

- d) stopping the first game after the second game is finished if the player discontinues playing the first game.

5. The gaming method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

- e) granting an award after the second game is finished if a predetermined game winning condition is satisfied during play of the second game.

6. The gaming method as claimed in claim 1, wherein, in step a), if a newly collected object is one that has already been collected, the newly collected object is assigned to a subsequent object suite.

7. The gaming method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first game is a game of slots, and one of the objects of the object suite is collected when indicia corresponding to said one of the objects form a predetermined pattern at the end of one round of the first game.

8. The gaming method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the objects of the object suite are associated with a virtual race car, and the second game is a car racing game.

9. A gaming apparatus providing a dual game function, comprising:

- an input unit allowing input by a player;
- an output assembly for performing display; and
- a processing assembly coupled to said input unit and said output assembly, and configured to perform steps of a gaming method;

wherein the gaming method includes:

- a) starting a first game, and enabling collection of a plurality of objects of an object suite as predetermined object collection criteria are satisfied while playing the first game; and
- b) if all the objects of the object suite are collected while playing the first game, starting a second game that is played independently of the first game.

10. The gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 9, further comprising a graphics processing assembly coupled to said processing assembly and performing graphics rendering of gaming screens of the first and second games on said output assembly.

11. The gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 10, wherein said output assembly includes a pair of first and second output units coupled to said graphics processing assembly, the gaming screen of the first game being rendered on said first output unit and the gaming screen of the second game being rendered on said second output unit.

12. The gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 10, wherein said graphics processing assembly includes a pair of first and second graphics processing units, and said output assembly includes a pair of first and second output units coupled respectively to said first and second graphics processing units, the gaming screen of the first game being rendered on said first output unit by said first graphics processing unit and the gaming screen of the second game being rendered on said second output unit by said second graphics processing unit.

13. The gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein said processing assembly includes a pair of first and second processing units configured to perform steps of a gaming method respectively of the first and second games, said graphics processing assembly includes a pair of first and second graphics processing units coupled respectively to said first and second processing units, and said output assembly includes a pair of first and second output units coupled respectively to said first and second graphics processing units, the gaming screen of the first game being rendered on said first output unit by said first graphics processing unit and the gaming screen of the second game being rendered on said second output unit by said second graphics processing unit.

14. The gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein, in step b), before starting the second game, a preview screen of the second game is displayed on said output assembly.

15. The gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein the gaming method further includes:

- c) restarting the second game after the second game is finished if all the objects of the object suite are again collected during continuous play of the first game.
- 16. The gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein the gaming method further includes:
 - d) stopping the first game after the second game is finished if the player discontinues playing the first game.
- 17. The gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein the gaming method further includes:
 - e) granting an award after the second game is finished if a predetermined game winning condition is satisfied during play of the second game.
- 18. The gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein, in step a), if a newly collected object is one that has already been collected, the newly collected object is assigned to a subsequent object suite.
- 19. The gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein the first game is a game of slots, and one of the objects of the object suite is collected when indicia corresponding to said one of the objects form a predetermined pattern at the end of one round of the first game.
- 20. The gaming apparatus as claimed in claim 19, wherein the objects of the object suite are associated with a virtual race car, and the second game is a car racing game.
- 21. A computer program product comprising a computer-readable storage medium that stores a gaming program for causing a computer to execute steps of a gaming method including:
 - a) starting a first game, and enabling collection of a plurality of objects of an object suite as predetermined object collection criteria are satisfied while playing the first game; and
 - b) if all the objects of the object suite are collected while playing the first game, starting a second game that is played independently of the first game.

- 22. The computer program product as claimed in claim 21, wherein, in step b), before starting the second game, a preview screen of the second game is displayed.
- 23. The computer program product as claimed in claim 21, wherein the gaming method further includes:
 - c) restarting the second game after the second game is finished if all the objects of the object suite are again collected during continuous play of the first game.
- 24. The computer program product as claimed in claim 21, wherein the gaming method further includes:
 - d) stopping the first game after the second game is finished if the player discontinues playing the first game.
- 25. The computer program product as claimed in claim 21, wherein the gaming method further includes:
 - e) granting an award after the second game is finished if a predetermined game winning condition is satisfied during play of the second game.
- 26. The computer program product as claimed in claim 21, wherein, in step a), if a newly collected object is one that has already been collected, the newly collected object is assigned to a subsequent object suite.
- 27. The computer program product as claimed in claim 21, wherein the first game is a game of slots, and one of the objects of the object suite is collected when indicia corresponding to said one of the objects form a predetermined pattern at the end of one round of the first game.
- 28. The computer program product as claimed in claim 27, wherein the objects of the object suite are associated with a virtual race car, and the second game is a car racing game.

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