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**Betteridge, IV** (43) **Pub. Date: Jun. 14, 2007**

(54) **NETWORKED VIDEO GAME WAGERING WITH PLAYER-INITIATED VERIFICATION OF WAGER OUTCOMES**

(52) **U.S. Cl. .... 463/25; 463/42; 463/43**

(76) **Inventor: Albert Edwin Betteridge IV, Greenwich, CT (US)**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Correspondence Address:  
**KIRKPATRICK & LOCKHART PRESTON GATES ELLIS LLP**  
**535 SMITHFIELD STREET**  
**PITTSBURGH, PA 15222 (US)**

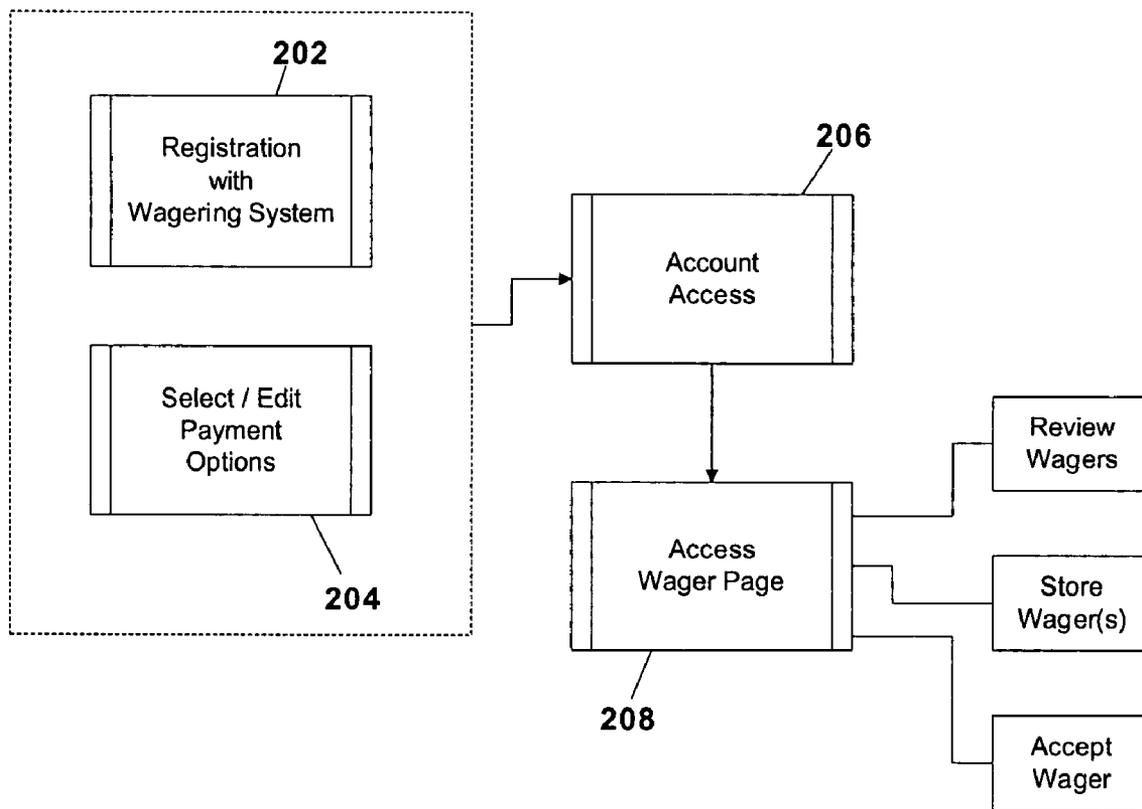
Embodiments of a wagering system are provided. The wagering system may include a server configured for processing at least one wager on a video game to be played by players on a multiplayer gaming network, and at least one database operatively associated with the server, the database being configured for storing information related to the video game wager. The server may be configured to operate independently of the multiplayer gaming network and may include a confirmation system configured to receive confirmation of the outcome of the video game wager from the players.

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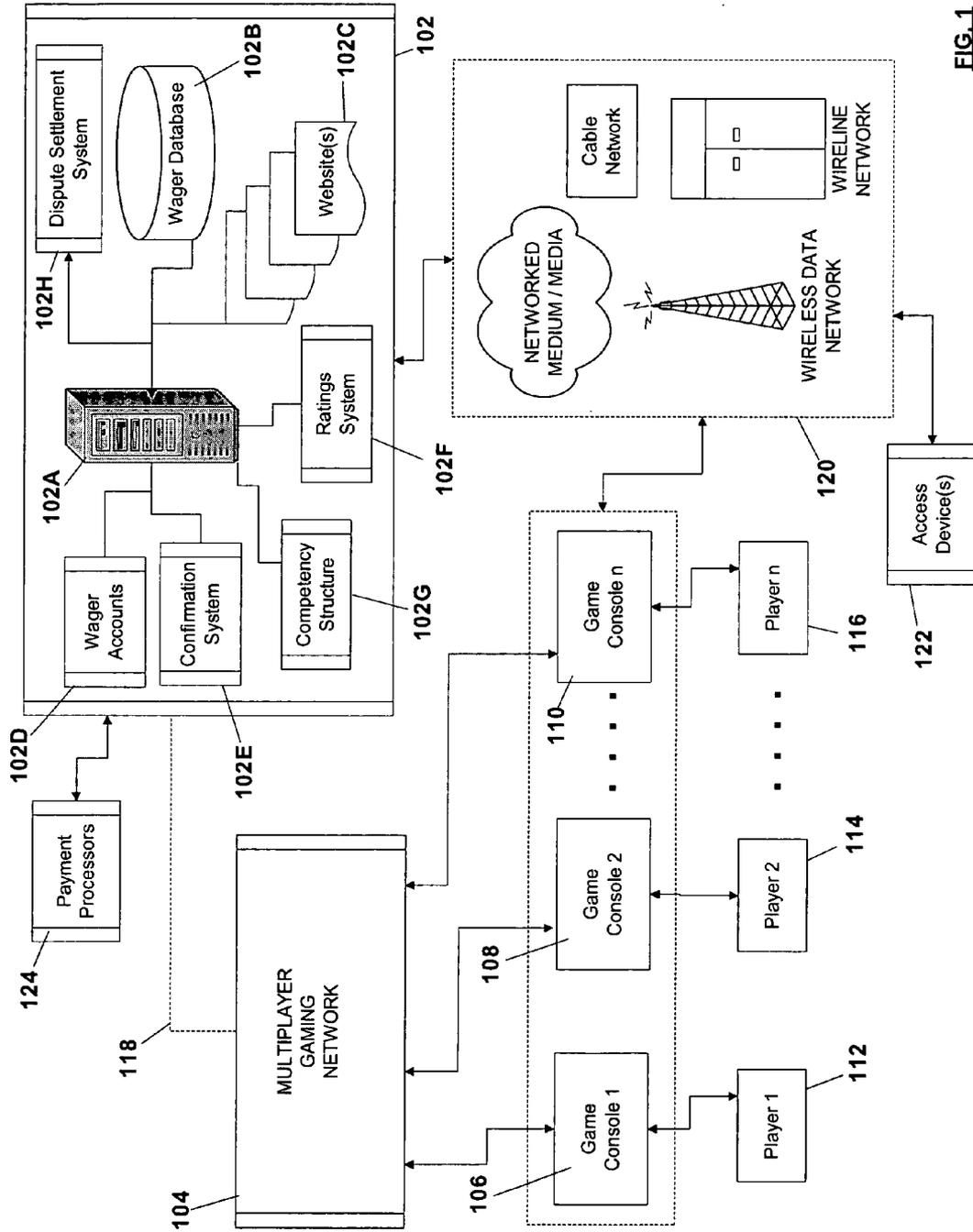
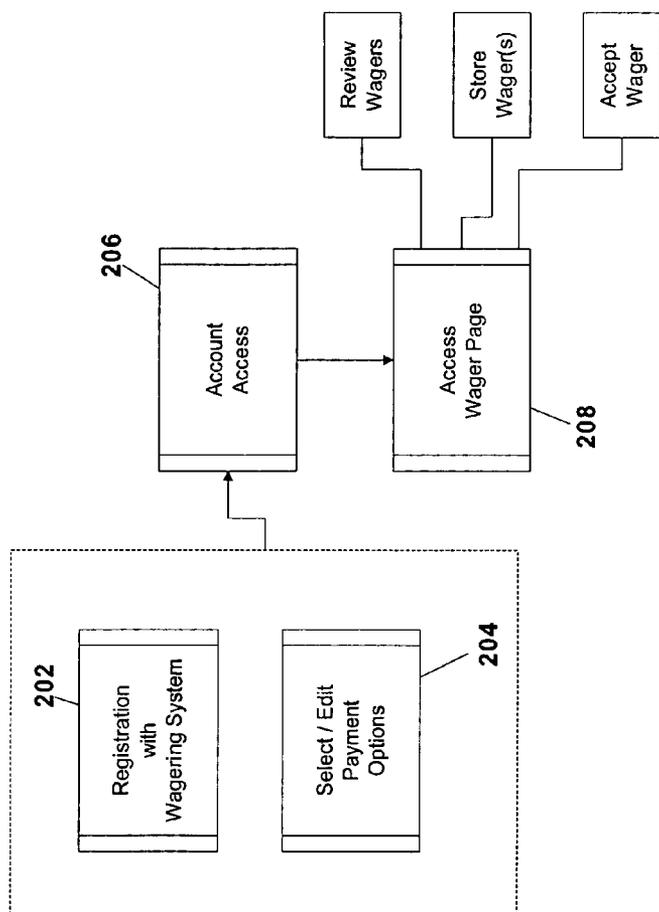


FIG. 1

FIG. 2A



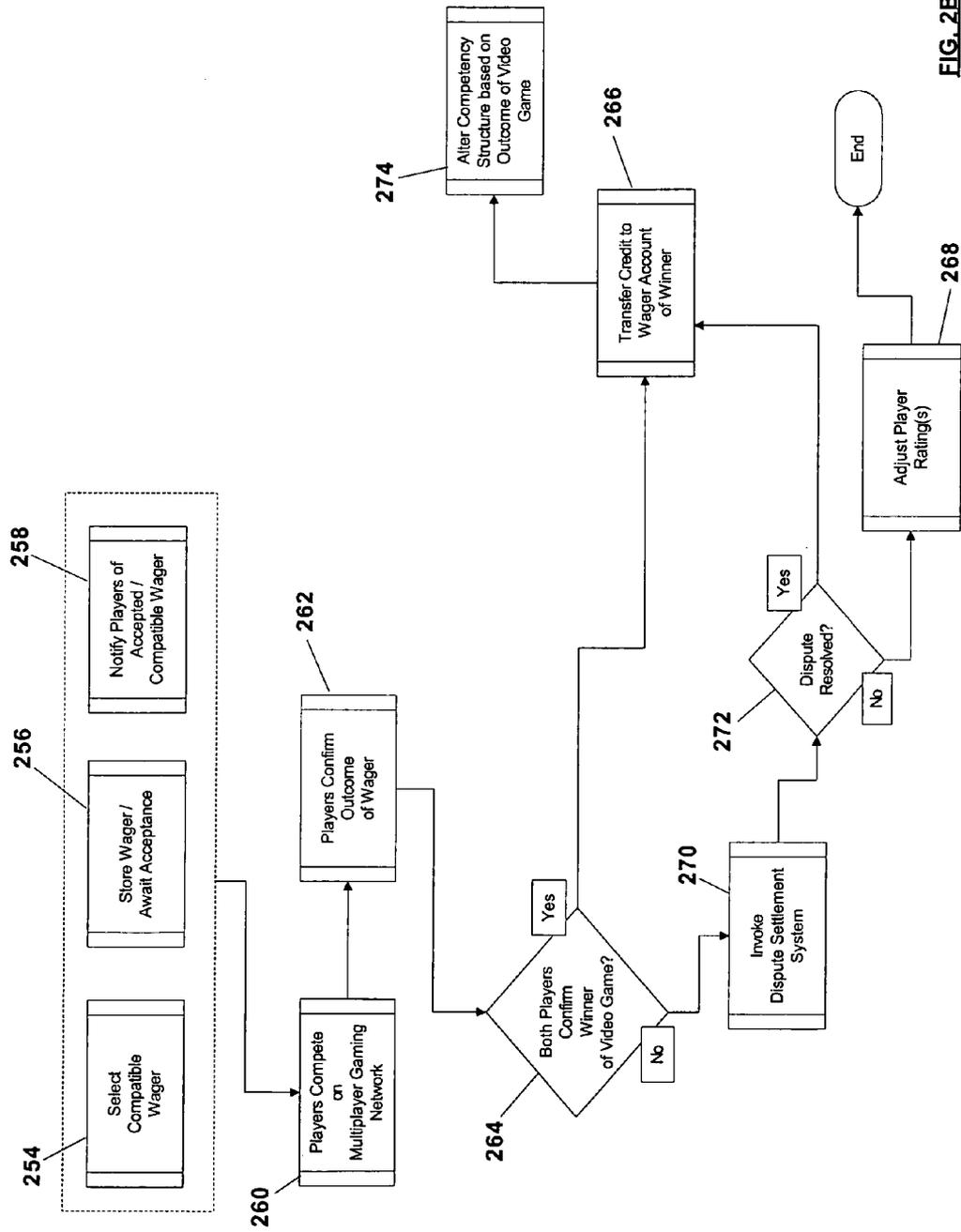


FIG. 2B

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<a href="#">Home</a>	<a href="#">Terms and Conditions</a>	<a href="#">Instructions</a>	<a href="#">Register</a>
<b>Title of Service</b>			
<b>Wager Pages</b> <b>Xbox 360:</b> Sports: Forza Moto Madden NFL NHL Rivals Fighting: Tekken 5 Shooters: Halo 2 <b>Playstation:</b> Sports: Madden NFL NBA Live Fighting: Tekken 5 <b>Quake:</b> Quake 4 <b>Doom:</b> Doom 3	<b>Top Ten Wager Pages:</b> 1) Madden: 1-on-1 2) Halo 2 3) NBA Live: 1-on-1 4) NHL Rivals: 1-on-1 5) Tekken 5 <b>Featured Wager Pages:</b> 1) Quake 4: 1-on-1 2) Doom 3: 1-on-1 3) Pong 2.2 4) Chess Master 5) Scrabble <b>Player Rankings:</b> Top 100 Overall Madden: 1-on-1 Halo 2 NBA Live: 1-on-1	6) Fight Night 7) Madden: 2-on-2 8) Forza Motorsport 9) NBA Live: 2-on-2 10) FIFA Soccer: 1-on-1 6) MLB 06 7) Tetris Challenge 8) Medal of Honor 9) Warcraft 3 10) Lord of the Rings	Username: <input type="text"/> Password: <input type="password"/> <input type="button" value="Enter"/>
Page explaining where user money is held and how it will be handled <input type="button" value="US-English"/>			

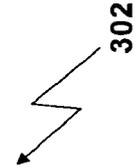


FIG. 3

**Wager Pages**

**Xbox 360:**  
 Sports:  
 Flight Night  
 Forza Moto  
 Madden NFL  
 NHL Rivals  
 Fighting:  
 Tekken 5  
 Shooters:  
 Halo 2

**Playstation:**  
 Sports:  
 Madden NFL  
 NBA LIVE  
 Fighting:  
 Tekken 5

**Quake:**  
 Quake 4

**Doom:**  
 Doom 3

Home Terms and Conditions Instructions Register

**Title of Service**

**One-on-One Madden NFL 2006**

User Name	User Rating	Skill Level	Wager
Madden11	100%	5	\$10

GameM  
 SlamGrl  
 ConnyA  
 JLD396

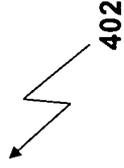
In order to wager using this service, you must log in. If you are not yet a member, please register.

Username:   
 Password:

Welcome win067!  
 Account Statement  
 Balance: \$50.00

**Stored Wagers**  
 Ref. 4056Z   
 Ref. 40571

SlamGrass14	95%	9	\$20	<input type="button" value="Accept"/>
JLD396	65%	10	\$10	<input type="button" value="Accept"/>
PerryBet391	100%	4	\$60	<input type="button" value="Accept"/>



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FIG. 4

FIG. 5

<b>Registration</b>	
First Name	<input type="text"/>
Last Name	<input type="text"/>
Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Re-Type Email Address	<input type="text"/>
Street Address	<input type="text"/>
City	<input type="text"/>
State	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>
Zip/ Postal Code	<input type="text"/>
Country	<input type="text"/>
Multipayer Network I.D.	<input type="text"/>
I am at least 18 years of age, or legal age in my jurisdiction	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Desired Username	<input type="text"/>
Desired Password	<input type="text"/>
<input type="button" value="Deposit Money"/>	

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**Wager Pages**

**Xbox 360:**  
 Sports:  
 Eight Night  
 Forza Moto  
 Madden.NFL  
 NHL Rivals  
 Fighting:  
 Tekken 5  
 Shooters:  
 Halo 2

**Playstation:**  
 Sports:  
 Madden.NFL  
 NBA.Live  
 Fighting:  
 Tekken 5

**Quake:**  
 Quake 4

**Doom:**  
 Doom 3

**Home    Terms and Conditions    Instructions**

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**Title of Service**

Payment Method	Minimum Deposit	Processing/ Fees	
VISA/MC	\$10	Instant/ 1.5%	
Bank Transfer	\$10	3 Days/ Vary	
NETeller	\$5	Instant/ Free	
InstaCASH	\$10	Instant/ Free	
spassport	\$10	Instant/ Free	
ElrePay	\$10	Instant/ Free	
Western Union	\$10	Max 16hrs/ Vary	

[Currency Converter](#)

Welcome JLD3961  
 Account Statement  
 Balance: \$0.00

Confirm Outcome  
 Deposit Money  
 Withdraw Money  
 Betting History  
 Player Profile

**Stored Wagers**  
 NONE

FIG. 6

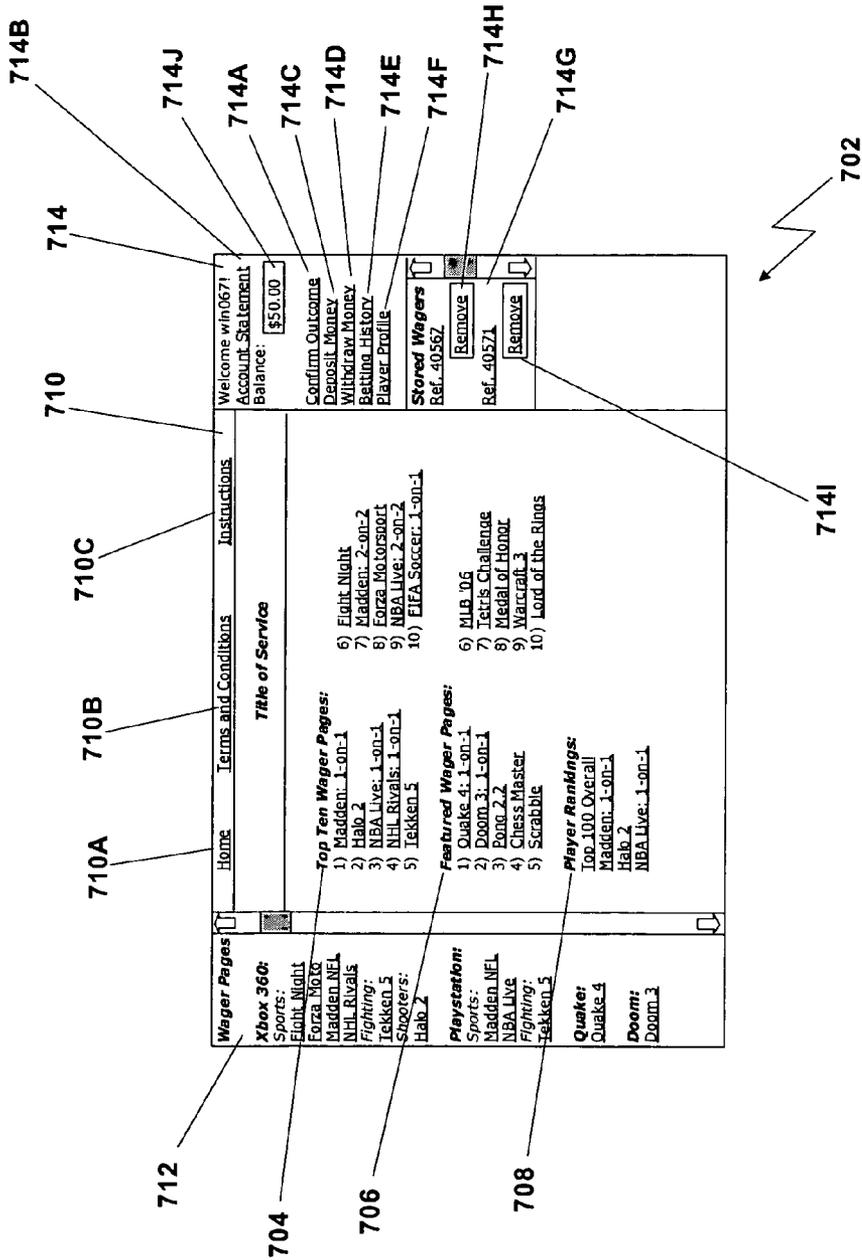


FIG. 7

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<p>Home Terms and Conditions Instructions</p>		<p>Welcome win0671 Account Statement Balance: \$50.00</p> <p>Confirm Outcome Deposit Money Withdraw Money Betting History Player Profile</p> <p><b>Stored Wagers</b> Ref. 4056Z <input type="button" value="Remove"/> Ref. 40571 <input type="button" value="Remove"/></p>
<p><b>Title of Service</b></p> <p>6) Fight Night 7) Madden: 2-on-2 8) Forza Motorsport 9) NBA Live: 2-on-2 10) FIFA Soccer: 1-on-1</p>		
<p><b>Top Ten Winner Pages:</b></p> <p>1) 1-on-1 2) 2-on-2 Madden_NFL_Rankings 3) h-1 4) NHL_Rivals: 1-on-1 5) Tekken 5</p>		
<p><b>Featured Wager Pages:</b></p> <p>1) Quake 4: 1-on-1 2) Doom 3: 1-on-1 3) Pong 2,2 4) Chess Master 5) Scrabble</p>		
<p><b>Player Rankings:</b></p> <p>Top 100 Overall Madden: 1-on-1 Halo 2 NBA Live: 1-on-1</p>		
<p><b>Wager Pages</b></p> <p><b>Xbox 360:</b> Sports: Fight Night Forza Moto Madden_NFL NHL_Rivals <b>Fighting:</b> Tekken 5 Shooters: Halo 2</p> <p><b>Playstation:</b> Sports: Madden_NFL NBA Live <b>Fighting:</b> Tekken 5</p> <p><b>Quake:</b> Quake 4</p> <p><b>Doom:</b> Doom 3</p>		

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FIG. 8

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<b>Wager Pages</b>		<b>Home</b>		<b>Terms and Conditions</b>		<b>Instructions</b>	
<b>Xbox 360:</b> Sports: Eight Night Forza Moto Madden NFL NHL Rivals Fighting: Tekken 5 Shooters: Halo 2  <b>Playstation:</b> Sports: Madden NFL NBA Live Fighting: Tekken 5  <b>Quake:</b> Quake 4  <b>Doom:</b> Doom 3		Welcome win0671 Account Statement Balance: \$50.00  Confirm Outcome Deposit Money Withdraw Money Betting History Player Profile  Stored Wagers Ref. 4056Z Remove Ref. 4057A Remove					
<b>Title of Service</b>							
<b>One-on-One Madden NFL Rankings</b>							
		<b>Player</b>	<b>Record</b>			<b>Gross Profit</b>	
		1) maddenj	512-6			36,975	
		2) giantsrule	401-5			28,040	
		3) madden4life	430-17			32,760	
		4) nungun	525-39			34,548	
		5) dimeform	394-32			20,678	
		6) primetime3	387-31			25,556	
		7) bnlns47	350-21			19,535	
		8) prudenza	342-23			22,210	
		9) peyton69	190-4			11,045	
		10) siamgrass14	615-89			23,510	
		11) shockey99	102-4			8,045	
		12) thegreatone	220-13			15,785	
		13) genesisint	52-0			10,250	
		14) haven1	106-7			11,345	
		15) connyair	345-69			17,455	
		16) hetzj	234-64			9,850	
		17) gamemaster	78-6			8,520	
		18) suzieQ	98-9			5,785	
		19) elimanming	358-94			12,365	
		20) montana12	39-1			3,600	
		21) namath8	46-3			4,235	

902

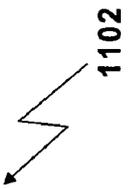
FIG. 9

The screenshot shows a betting website interface. At the top left, there is a navigation menu with 'Home', 'Terms and Conditions', and 'Instructions'. Below this is a 'Wager Pages' section listing various games and sports categories like Xbox 360, Fight Night, Forza Moto, Madden.NEL, NHL.Rivals, Fighting, Tekken.5, Shooters, Halo.2, Playstation, Madden.NEL, NBA.LIVE, Fighting, Tekken.5, Quake, Quake.4, and Doom.3. The main content area is titled 'Title of Service' and contains a table of active bets. The table has columns for Reference #, Wager, Opponent, and Outcome. Two bets are listed: one with Reference # 40398, Wager 20, Opponent Bruins47, and Outcome Won; the other with Reference # 40422, Wager 5, Opponent JLD396, and Outcome Won. To the right of the table is a 'Stored Wagers' section with a list of bets and 'Remove' buttons. At the top right, there is a 'Welcome win0671 Account Statement Balance: \$50.00' and a list of links: Confirm Outcome, Deposit Money, Withdraw Money, Betting History, Player Profile, and Stored Wagers. Callout 1004 points to the 'Instructions' link, 1002 points to the 'Welcome win0671 Account Statement Balance: \$50.00' area, and 1006 points to the main betting table area.

FIG. 10

FIG. 11

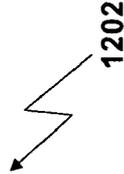
<p><b>Wager Pages</b></p> <p><b>Xbox 360:</b></p> <p>Sports:</p> <p>Eight Night</p> <p>Forza Moto</p> <p>Madden.NFL</p> <p>NHL Rivals</p> <p>Fighting:</p> <p>Tekken 5</p> <p>Shooters:</p> <p>Half 2</p> <p><b>Playstation:</b></p> <p>Sports:</p> <p>Madden.NFL</p> <p>NBA Live</p> <p>Fighting:</p> <p>Tekken 5</p> <p><b>Quake:</b></p> <p>Quake 4</p> <p><b>Doom:</b></p> <p>Doom 3</p>	<p><b>Home</b></p> <p><b>Terms and Conditions</b></p> <p><b>Instructions</b></p>	<p><b>Title of Service</b></p> <p><b>Account Statement</b></p>	<p>Welcome win0671</p> <p><b>Account Statement</b></p> <p>Balance: <input type="text" value="\$50.00"/></p> <p><b>Confirm Outcome</b></p> <p><b>Deposit Money</b></p> <p><b>Withdraw Money</b></p> <p><b>Betting History</b></p> <p><b>Player Profile</b></p>	<p><b>Gross Transactions</b></p> <p>Total Transfers \$35.00</p> <p>Wager P&amp;L \$30.00</p> <p>Gross Commissions \$5.00</p> <p>Total Withdrawals \$10.00</p> <p>Credit Balance <input type="text" value="\$50.00"/></p> <p>Outstanding \$25.00</p> <p>Available Balance <input type="text" value="\$25.00"/></p>	<p><b>Personal Information</b></p> <p>Username win067</p> <p>Email aeb2@msn.com</p> <p>Name Win Betteridge</p> <p>Address 102 Cross St.</p> <p>City New York</p> <p>State NY</p> <p>Zip Code 10014</p> <p>Country USA</p> <p>Phone 203-912-9875</p> <p><b>Registered Networks:</b></p> <p>Xbox Live</p> <p>Network I.D. kremlin9</p> <p>Playstation</p> <p>Network I.D. josefs</p> <p>Quake</p> <p>Network I.D. trotsky4</p> <p>Doom</p> <p>Network I.D. breshnev13</p> <p><input type="button" value="Change Personal Info"/></p> <p><input type="button" value="Add Network"/></p>	<p><b>Stored Wagers</b></p> <p>Ref. 4056Z <input type="button" value="Remove"/></p> <p>Ref. 4057A <input type="button" value="Remove"/></p>
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1102

FIG. 12

<p><b>Wager Pages</b></p> <p><b>Xbox 360:</b>          Sports:          Fight_Night          Forza_Moto          Madden_NFL          NHL_Rivals          Fighting:          Tekken_5          Shooters:          Halo_2</p> <p><b>Playstation:</b>          Sports:          Madden_NFL          NBA_LIVE          Fighting:          Tekken_5</p> <p><b>Quake:</b>          Quake_4</p> <p><b>Doom:</b>          Doom_3</p>	<p><a href="#">Home</a>   <a href="#">Terms and Conditions</a>   <a href="#">Instructions</a></p> <p><b>Title of Service</b></p> <p><b>Withdrawal Options</b></p> <p>Available Credit Balance: <input type="text" value="\$25.00"/></p> <p>How much of your Available Credit Balance would you like to withdraw? <input type="text" value="\$0.00"/></p> <p>How would you like to be reimbursed?</p> <p><i>Wire Transfer</i></p> <p>Account Number: <input type="text"/></p> <p><i>Check</i></p> <p>Would you like it to be sent to the address listed on your account statement?          Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If you checked "No," please provide an alternate address: <input type="text"/></p> <p>Password: <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Continue"/></p>	<p>Welcome win067!</p> <p>Account Statement Balance: <input type="text" value="\$50.00"/></p> <p>Confirm Outcome          Deposit Money          Withdraw Money          Betting History          Player Profile</p> <p><b>Stored Wagers</b>          Ref. 40567 <input type="button" value="Remove"/></p> <p>Ref. 40571 <input type="button" value="Remove"/></p>
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1202

<p><b>Wager Pages</b></p> <p><b>Xbox 360:</b>                  Sports:                  Fight Night                  Forza Moto                  Madden NFL                  NHL Rivals                  Fighting 5                  Tekken 5                  Shooters:                  Halo 2</p> <p><b>Playstation:</b>                  Sports:                  Madden NFL                  NBA LIVE                  Fighting:                  Tekken 5</p> <p><b>Quake:</b>                  Quake 4</p> <p><b>Doom:</b>                  Doom 3</p>		<p>Home</p> <p>Terms and Conditions</p> <p>Instructions</p>		<p>Welcome w/in067!</p> <p>Account Statement</p> <p>Balance: <input type="text" value="\$50.00"/></p>
<p><b>Title of Service</b></p>		<p>Confirm Outcome</p> <p>Deposit Money</p> <p>Withdraw Money</p> <p>Betting History</p> <p>Player Profile</p>		
<p><b>Betting History</b></p>		<p>Stored Wagers</p> <p>Ref. 40567 <input type="button" value="Remove"/></p> <p>Ref. 40571 <input type="button" value="Remove"/></p>		
<p>Date</p>	<p>Game</p>	<p>Wager</p>	<p>Game</p>	
5/05/05	Madden NFL '06	\$10	Madden NFL '06	
5/06/05	Fight Night	\$5	Fight Night	
5/10/05	Halo 2	\$2	Halo 2	
5/10/05	Madden NFL '06	\$20	Madden NFL '06	
5/11/05	Madden NFL '06	\$5	Madden NFL '06	
5/17/05	Fight Night	\$4	Fight Night	
5/24/05	Fight Night	\$10	Fight Night	
5/24/05	Tekken 5	\$30	Tekken 5	
5/25/05	Madden NFL '06	\$5	Madden NFL '06	
6/07/05	Tekken 5	\$50	Tekken 5	

1302

FIG. 13

Wager Pages
Home
Terms and Conditions
Instructions

**Xbox 360:**  
Sports:  
Fight Night  
Forza Moto  
Madden NFL  
NHL Rivals  
**Fighting:**  
Tekken 5  
Shooters:  
Halo 2

**Playstation:**  
Sports:  
Madden NFL  
NBA Live  
**Fighting:**  
Tekken 5

**Quake:**  
Quake 4

**Doom:**  
Doom 3

Welcome win0671  
Account Statement  
Balance: \$50.00

Confirm Outcome  
Deposit Money  
Withdraw Money  
Betting History  
Player Profile

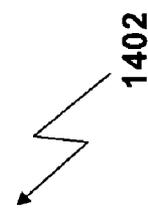
**Stored Wagers**  
Ref. 4056Z Remove

Ref. 4057A Remove

**Title of Service**

**Player Profile**

Games Played	Record	P & L	Skill Levels
Fight Night One-on-One	12-5 12-5	125 125	7
Halo 2 One-on-One Two-on-Two	5-16 2-12 3-4	(55) (60) 5	2 5
Madden NFL '06 One-on-One	16-9 16-9	30 30	7
NHL Rivals '05 One-on-One Two-on-Two Four-on-Four	25-8 12-4 10-3 3-1	40 30 5 5	8 8 7
Tekken 5 One-on-One	4-7 4-7	(110) (110)	4



**FIG. 14**

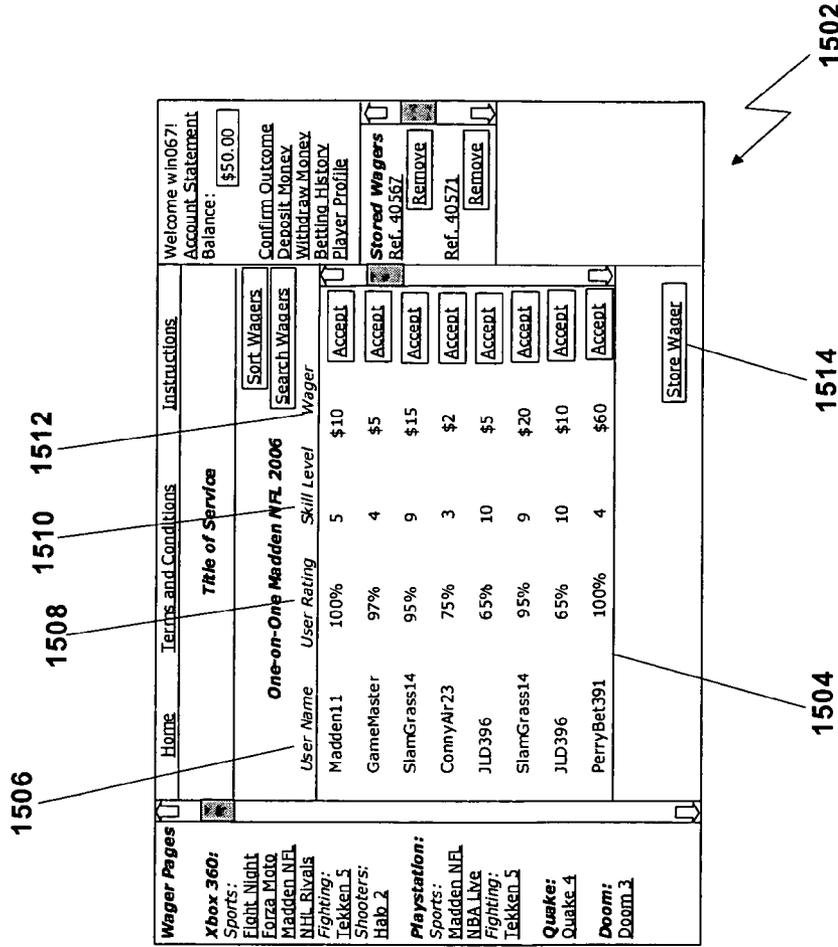


FIG. 15

FIG. 16

**Wager Pages**

**Xbox 360:**  
 Sports:  
 Flight Night  
 Forza Moto  
 Madden NFL  
 NHL Rivals  
**Fighting:**  
 Tekken 5  
 Shooters:  
 Hab 2

**Playstation:**  
 Sports:  
 Madden NFL  
 NBA Live  
**Fighting:**  
 Tekken 5

**Quake:**  
 Quake 4

**Doom:**  
 Doom 3

Home    Terms and Conditions    Instructions

**Title of Service**

**One-on-One Madden NFL 2006**

User Name	User Rating	Skill Level	Wager
Madden11	100%	5	\$10
GameMaster	97%	4	\$5
SlamGrass14	95%	9	\$15
ConnyAir23	75%	3	\$2
JLD396	65%	10	\$5
SlamGrass14	95%	9	\$20
JLD396	65%	10	\$10
PerryBet391	100%	4	\$60

Welcome win0671  
 Account Statement  
 Balance:

**Stored Wagers**  
 Ref. 4056Z   
 Ref. 4057L

**Your Wager**  
 Madden NFL '06  
 Wager

1604

1602

FIG. 17

<b>Wager Pages</b> Xbox 360: Sports: Fight Night Forza Moto Madden NFL NHL Rivals Fighting: Tekken 5 Shooters: Halo 2 <b>Playstation:</b> Sports: Madden NFL NBA Live Fighting: Tekken 5 <b>Quake:</b> Quake 4 <b>Doom:</b> Doom 3		Home    Terms and Conditions    Instructions Title of Service <b>One-on-One Madden NFL 2006</b> Sort Wagers Search Wagers Wager		Welcome win0671 Account Statement Balance: \$50.00 Confirm Outcome Deposit Money Withdraw Money Betting History Player Profile
User Name Madden11 GameMaster SlamGrass14 ConnyAir23 JLD396 SlamGrass14 JLD396 PerryBet391	User Rating 100% 95% 65% 100%	Skill Level 5 9 10 4	Wager \$10 \$20 \$10 \$60	Stored Wagers Ref. 4056Z Remove Ref. 4057A Remove Your Wager Madden NFL '06 Wager \$10.00 Submit
You cannot store a wager that is larger than your credit balance. If you want to store this wager, please deposit more money. Deposit Money    Continue				
			Accept    Accept    Accept    Accept    Accept    Accept    Accept    Accept Store Wager	

1702

1704

FIG. 18

<p><b>Wager Pages</b></p> <p><b>Xbox 360:</b> Sports: Fight Night Forza Moto Madden NFL NHL Rivals Tekken 5 Shooters: Halo 2</p> <p><b>Playstation:</b> Sports: Madden NFL NBA Live Fighting: Tekken 5</p> <p><b>Quake:</b> Quake 4</p> <p><b>Doom:</b> Doom 3</p>	<p><a href="#">Home</a>   <a href="#">Terms and Conditions</a>   <a href="#">Instructions</a></p> <p><b>Title of Service</b></p> <p>Are you sure that you want to accept this wager for \$5 against JLD396 on a One-on-One Madden NFL 2006 match?</p> <p><b>Terms and Conditions to Wager:</b> I) If you agree to these terms and conditions, then you are required to compete in this match in the next 24 hours or your user rating will be negatively impacted. II) After you compete in this match, you must confirm the outcome of the wager with the service, or your user rating will be negatively impacted, and no money will be transferred between your accounts. IV) If your confirmation differs from that of your competitor, then both of your user ratings will be negatively impacted, and no money will be transferred in between your accounts.</p> <p>Your reference number for this wager is 40651.</p> <p><input type="button" value="Agree"/>   <input type="button" value="Decline"/></p>	<p>Welcome win067! Account Statement Balance: \$50.00</p> <p>Confirm Outcome Deposit Money Withdraw Money Betting History Player Profile</p> <p><b>Stored Wagers</b> Ref. 40567 <input type="button" value="Remove"/> Ref. 40571 <input type="button" value="Remove"/></p>
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<p><b>Wager Pages</b></p> <p><b>Xbox 360:</b> Sports: Fight Night Forza Moto Madden NFL NFL Rivals <b>Fighting:</b> Tekken 5 Shooters: Halo 2</p> <p><b>Playstation:</b> Sports: Madden NFL NBA Live <b>Fighting:</b> Tekken 5</p> <p><b>Quake:</b> Quake 4</p> <p><b>Doom:</b> Doom 3</p>	<p><b>Home</b></p>	<p><b>Terms and Conditions</b></p>	<p><b>Instructions</b></p>
<p><b>Title of Service</b></p> <p>Are you sure that you want to store this wager for \$10 on a One-on-One Madden NFL 2006 match?</p> <p><b>Terms and Conditions to Wager:</b></p> <p>I) If you agree to these terms and conditions, then you are required to compete in this match, if another user accepts the wager and you have not canceled it, within 24 hours of your notification that it had been accepted. If you do not compete in this time period, your user rating will be negatively impacted.</p> <p>II) After you compete in this match, you must confirm the outcome of the wager with the service, or your user rating will be negatively impacted, and no money will be transferred between your accounts.</p> <p>IV) If your confirmation differs from that of your competitor, then both of your user ratings will be negatively impacted, and no money will be transferred in between your accounts.</p> <p>Your reference number for this wager is 40651.</p>			
<p>Welcome w/in0671 Account Statement Balance: \$50.00</p> <p>Confirm Outcome Deposit Money Withdraw Money Betting History Player Profile</p> <p><b>Stored Wagers</b> Ref. 40567 Remove Ref. 40571 Remove</p> <p><b>Your Wager</b> Madden NFL '06 Wager \$10.00 Submit</p>			

1902

FIG. 19

**Wager Pages**

**Xbox 360:**  
 Sports:  
 Eight Night  
 Forza Moto  
 Madden NFL  
 NHL Rivals  
 Fighting:  
 Tekken 5  
 Shooters:  
 Hab 2

**Playstation:**  
 Sports:  
 Madden NFL  
 NBA Live  
 Fighting:  
 Tekken 5

**Quake:**  
 Quake 4

**Doom:**  
 Doom 3

Home Terms and Conditions Instructions

**Title of Service**

**One-on-One Madden NFL 2006**

User Name	User Rating	Skill Level	Wager
Madden11	100%	5	\$10
GameMaster1			
SlamGrass14			
ConnyAir23			
JLD396			
SlamGrass14			
JLD396	65%	10	\$10
PerryBet391	100%	4	\$60

**Store Wager**

Welcome win0671  
 Account Statement  
 Balance: \$50.00

Confirm Outcome  
 Deposit Money  
 Withdraw Money  
 Betting History  
 Player Profile

**Stored Wagers**  
 Ref. 40567  
 Remove

Ref. 40571  
 Remove

**2004**

**2002**

FIG. 20

**Wager Pages**

**Xbox 360:**  
Sports:  
Eight Night  
Forza Moto  
Madden NFL  
NHL Rivals  
Fighting:  
Tekken 5  
Shooters:  
Halo 2

**Playstation:**  
Sports:  
Madden NFL  
NBA Live  
Fighting:  
Tekken 5

**Quake:**  
Quake 4

**Doom:**  
Doom 3

Home Terms and Conditions Instructions

**Title of Service**

**One-on-One Madden NFL 2006**

User Name	User Rating	Skill Level	Wager
Madden11	100%	5	\$10
GameMaster			
SlamGrass14			
ConnyAir23			
JLD396			
SlamGrass14			
JLD396	65%	10	\$10
PerryBet391	100%	4	\$60

Accept Accept Accept Accept Accept Accept Accept

Store Wager

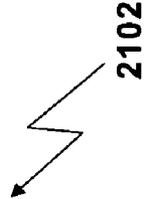
Welcome win067!

Account Statement  
Balance: \$50.00

Confirm Outcome  
Deposit Money  
Withdraw Money  
Betting History  
Player Profile

Stored Wagers  
Ref. 40567 Remove

Ref. 40571 Remove



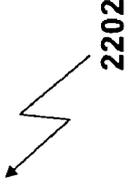
2102

2104

FIG. 21

FIG. 22

<p><b>Wager Pages</b></p> <p><b>Xbox 360:</b> Sports: Flight Night Forza Moto Madden NFL NHL Rivals Fighting: Tekken 5 Shooters: Halo 2</p> <p><b>Playstation:</b> Sports: Madden NFL NBA Live Fighting: Tekken 5</p> <p><b>Quake:</b> Quake 4</p> <p><b>Doom:</b> Doom 3</p>	<p><b>Home</b>    <b>Terms and Conditions</b>    <b>Instructions</b></p> <p><b>Title of Service</b></p> <p>Are you sure that you want to store this wager for \$10 on a One-on-One Madden NFL 2006 match?</p> <p><b>Terms</b> Go to your video game console, load Madden NFL 06, and await a challenger on Xbox Live. After competing, confirm the outcome of the wager through the link in an email that will be sent to the email address that you listed with the service. After you and your competitor have confirmed the outcome, the system will settle the wager with your opponent. If you log off of the network before you are challenged or no longer want to compete for the wager, cancel your stored wager, or else your user rating will be negatively impacted.</p> <p>Continue    Agree    Decline</p> <p>Your reference number for this wager is 40651.</p>	<p>Welcome win0671 Account Statement Balance: \$50.00</p> <p>Confirm Outcome Deposit Money Withdraw Money Betting History Player Profile</p> <p><b>Stored Wagers</b> Ref. 40562    Remove Ref. 40571    Remove</p> <p><b>Your Wager</b> Madden NFL '06 Wager \$10.00    Submit</p>
---	--	--

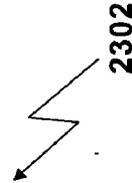


2202

2204

FIG. 23

<p><b>Wager Pages</b></p> <p><b>Xbox 360:</b> Sports: Flight Night Forza Moto Madden NFL NHL Rivals Fighting: Tekken 5 Shooters: Halo 2</p> <p><b>Playstation:</b> Sports: Madden NFL NBA Live Fighting: Tekken 5</p> <p><b>Quake:</b> Quake 4</p> <p><b>Doom:</b> Doom 3</p>	<p>Home</p> <p>Terms and Conditions</p> <p>Instructions</p>	<p>Welcome win0671</p> <p>Account Statement</p> <p>Balance: \$50.00</p> <p>Confirm Outcome</p> <p>Deposit Money</p> <p>Withdraw Money</p> <p>Betting History</p> <p>Player Profile</p> <p>Stored Wagers</p> <p>Ref. 40567 <input type="button" value="Remove"/></p> <p>Ref. 40571 <input type="button" value="Remove"/></p>
<p><b>Title of Service</b></p> <p>Are you sure that you want to accept this wager for \$5 against JLD396 on a One-on-One Madden NFL 2006 match?</p> <p><b>Terms and Conditions to Wager:</b></p> <p>I) If you go to your video game console, load Madden NFL 06, and challenge Bruins47 on Xbox Live. After competing, confirm the outcome of the wager through the link in an email that will be sent to the email address that you listed with the service. After you and your competitor have confirmed the outcome, the system will settle the wager. If Bruins47 is not logged into the network, then notify the service that this is the case using the link in the confirmation email and accept another wager.</p> <p><input type="button" value="Continue"/> <input type="button" value="Decline"/></p>		<p>Your reference number for this wager is 40651.</p>



2302

2304

FIG. 24

<p><b>Wager Pages</b></p> <p><b>Xbox 360:</b>                  Sports:                  Eight Night                  Forza Moto                  Madden_NFL                  NHL Rivals                  Fighting:                  Tekken_5                  Shooters:                  Halo_2</p> <p><b>Playstation:</b>                  Sports:                  Madden_NFL                  NBA Live                  Fighting:                  Tekken_5</p> <p><b>Quake:</b>                  Quake_4</p> <p><b>Doom:</b>                  Doom_3</p>		<p><b>Home</b>    <b>Terms and Conditions</b>    <b>Instructions</b></p> <p><b>Title of Service</b></p> <p><b>Two-on-Two Madden NFL 2006</b></p> <p><b>Sort Wagers</b>    <b>Search Wagers</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>User Name</th> <th>User Rating</th> <th>Skill Level</th> <th>Wager</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Madden11</td> <td>100%</td> <td>5</td> <td>\$10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GameMaster</td> <td>97%</td> <td>4</td> <td>\$5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SlamGrass14</td> <td>95%</td> <td>9</td> <td>\$15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CommyAir23</td> <td>75%</td> <td>3</td> <td>\$2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>JLD396</td> <td>65%</td> <td>10</td> <td>\$5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SlamGrass14</td> <td>95%</td> <td>9</td> <td>\$20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>JLD396</td> <td>65%</td> <td>10</td> <td>\$10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PerryBet391</td> <td>100%</td> <td>4</td> <td>\$60</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Accept</b>    <b>Accept</b>    <b>Accept</b>    <b>Accept</b>    <b>Accept</b>    <b>Accept</b>    <b>Accept</b>    <b>Accept</b></p> <p><b>Store Wager</b></p>		User Name	User Rating	Skill Level	Wager	Madden11	100%	5	\$10	GameMaster	97%	4	\$5	SlamGrass14	95%	9	\$15	CommyAir23	75%	3	\$2	JLD396	65%	10	\$5	SlamGrass14	95%	9	\$20	JLD396	65%	10	\$10	PerryBet391	100%	4	\$60	<p>Welcome win0671                  Account Statement                  Balance:    \$50.00</p> <p><b>Confirm Outcome</b>  <b>Deposit Money</b>  <b>Withdraw Money</b>  <b>Betting History</b>  <b>Player Profile</b></p> <p><b>Stored Wagers</b>                  Ref. 4056Z    <b>Remove</b></p> <p>Ref. 4057A    <b>Remove</b></p>	
User Name	User Rating	Skill Level	Wager																																						
Madden11	100%	5	\$10																																						
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JLD396	65%	10	\$10																																						
PerryBet391	100%	4	\$60																																						

2402

<p><b>Wager Pages</b></p> <p><b>Xbox 360:</b>                  Sports:                  Eight Night                  Forza Moto                  Madden NFL                  NHL Rivals                  Fighting                  Tekken 5                  Shooters:                  Halo 2</p> <p><b>Playstation:</b>                  Sports:                  Madden NFL                  NBA Live                  Fighting:                  Tekken 5</p> <p><b>Quake:</b>                  Quake 4</p> <p><b>Doom:</b>                  Doom 3</p>		<p>Home    Terms and Conditions    Instructions</p> <p><b>Title of Service</b></p> <p><b>Two-on-Two Madden NFL 2006</b></p> <p>Sort Wagers                  Search Wagers</p>		<p>Welcome win067!                  Account Statement                  Balance: \$50.00</p> <p>Confirm Outcome                  Deposit Money                  Withdraw Money                  Betting History                  Player Profile</p> <p><b>Stored Wagers</b>                  Ref. 40567                  Remove</p> <p>Ref. 40571                  Remove</p> <p><b>Your Wager</b>                  Madden NFL '06                  Wager \$10.00</p> <p>Teammate's                  Network I.D.</p> <p>Submit</p>																																														
<p><b>User Name</b>    <b>User Rating</b>    <b>Skill Level</b>    <b>Wager</b></p>		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>User Name</th> <th>User Rating</th> <th>Skill Level</th> <th>Wager</th> <th>Accept</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Madden11</td> <td>100%</td> <td>5</td> <td>\$10</td> <td>Accept</td> </tr> <tr> <td>GameMaster</td> <td>97%</td> <td>4</td> <td>\$5</td> <td>Accept</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SlamGrass14</td> <td>95%</td> <td>9</td> <td>\$15</td> <td>Accept</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ConnyAir23</td> <td>75%</td> <td>3</td> <td>\$2</td> <td>Accept</td> </tr> <tr> <td>JLD396</td> <td>65%</td> <td>10</td> <td>\$5</td> <td>Accept</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SlamGrass14</td> <td>95%</td> <td>9</td> <td>\$20</td> <td>Accept</td> </tr> <tr> <td>JLD396</td> <td>65%</td> <td>10</td> <td>\$10</td> <td>Accept</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PerryBet391</td> <td>100%</td> <td>4</td> <td>\$60</td> <td>Accept</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				User Name	User Rating	Skill Level	Wager	Accept	Madden11	100%	5	\$10	Accept	GameMaster	97%	4	\$5	Accept	SlamGrass14	95%	9	\$15	Accept	ConnyAir23	75%	3	\$2	Accept	JLD396	65%	10	\$5	Accept	SlamGrass14	95%	9	\$20	Accept	JLD396	65%	10	\$10	Accept	PerryBet391	100%	4	\$60	Accept
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JLD396	65%	10	\$10	Accept																																														
PerryBet391	100%	4	\$60	Accept																																														
				<p>Store Wager</p>																																														

2502

FIG. 25

**NETWORKED VIDEO GAME WAGERING WITH  
PLAYER-INITIATED VERIFICATION OF WAGER  
OUTCOMES**

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention generally relates to processing wagers in association with networked video game play.

BACKGROUND

[0002] The technological landscape for online multiplayer video gaming is rapidly evolving into exciting new areas. Online video game play through multiplayer gaming networks provides an entertaining experience by offering players the opportunity to play against multiple live opponents, rather than merely against a computer-controlled opponent, in a virtual video game world. There are presently many multiplayer gaming networks available that allow players to compete in video games against each other, and at least some of these networks have the capability to permit interaction among players on a global scale.

[0003] In view of this emerging technological landscape, what are needed are more effective ways to further enhance the excitement and entertainment value of the online video gaming experience, especially with regard to video games played on multiplayer gaming networks.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0004] The utility of the embodiments of the invention will be readily appreciated and understood from consideration of the following description of the embodiments of the invention when viewed in connection with the accompanying drawings.

[0005] FIG. 1 includes a system architecture diagram illustrating various exemplary aspects of a wagering system configured in accordance with embodiments of the invention;

[0006] FIG. 2A includes a process flow diagram illustrating certain aspects of wagering processes that may be conducted in accordance with embodiments of the invention;

[0007] FIG. 2B includes a process flow diagram illustrating certain aspects of wagering processes that may be conducted in accordance with embodiments of the invention; and,

[0008] FIGS. 3 through 25 illustrate examples of screen displays that may be provided in accordance with wagering system embodiments of the invention.

DESCRIPTION

[0009] As applied herein, a “wager” or “wagering” involves players staking something of value (e.g., money) for an opportunity to win something of value (e.g., a prize) subject to the outcome of an event (e.g., a video game contest between players), wherein the outcome of the event is predominantly determined by the skill of the players involved in the event and not a chance occurrence. In comparison, a “bet” or “gambling” involves staking something of value (e.g., money) for a chance to win something

of value (e.g., a prize) subject predominantly to the outcome of an event (e.g., a lottery drawing) which is predominantly a chance occurrence.

[0010] A “multiplayer gaming network” or “gaming network” includes any networked medium that permits players to engage in a video game, computer system game, or any other electronic gaming activity between/among the players. One example of a “multiplayer gaming network” suitable for use with various embodiments of the present invention is the “Xbox Live” gaming network operatively associated with the “Xbox” gaming system (Microsoft Corporation).

[0011] A “video game” includes any electronically executed game that can be played over a multiplayer gaming network in accordance with one or more embodiments of the invention. Examples of video games include, without limitation, console-based games such as those played on the “Xbox” gaming system, personal computer (“PC”) games, and a variety of other types of electronic games.

[0012] A “game console” includes any device or apparatus that can be configured for playing one or more video games on a multiplayer gaming network. Examples of “game consoles” may include, without limitation, video gaming system consoles, computer systems, personal data assistants (PDAs), wireless telephones, or any other device that can be configured for use as a game console in accordance with one or more embodiments of the invention described herein. In another example, cable controllers configured for access to cable network media may include interactive features that users can employ as game consoles, for example, to practice various aspects of the invention described herein.

[0013] The term “communication media” includes any medium capable of receiving data communications in accordance with various embodiments of the invention such as, without limitation, network connections (e.g., an intranet, extranet, or the Internet), wireless data networks, wire line data networks, satellite networks, or cable network connections.

[0014] Unless otherwise noted or readily evident from the context as applied herein, the term “player” refers to players participating on a multiplayer gaming network who may also be “users” of a wagering system provided in accordance with the present invention. The terms “player” and “user” sometimes may be used interchangeably herein.

[0015] With reference to FIG. 1, general aspects of an exemplary wagering system architecture that may be provided in accordance with various embodiments of the invention are illustrated. A wagering system 102 includes a server 102A configured to receive and process wagers that can be placed and settled in association with networked video game match play. The server 102A may be a web server, for example, and may be operatively associated with one or more wager databases 102B or other like storage media configured for storing a variety of wagering related information. The server 102A may host one or more web sites 102C including various pages or screen displays that facilitate collection, analysis and processing of wagering information and/or other data communicated to/from the wagering system 102. For example, information may be communicated to the wagering system 102 from various players 112, 114, 116 using multiple game consoles 106, 108, 110 (respectively), to play video games on a multi-

player gaming network 104. In various embodiments, the players 112, 114, 116 may also be users with respect to accessing and using various features of the wagering system 102.

[0016] In general, the wagering system 102 functions to allow the players 112, 114, 116 to select from among a diverse set of video games that can be played for wagers; to permit the players 112, 114, 116 to store wagers; to accept the wager of an opponent with whom they would like to compete; to remove or modify unaccepted wagers; as well as to perform various other functions. The wagering system 102 may not be configured to facilitate actual video game play between/among the players 112, 114, 116. Rather, the software that permits communication and interaction between/among the game consoles 106, 108, 110 during video game play can be executed by the multiplayer gaming network 104. The wagering system 102 may thus be configured to operate independently of the multiplayer gaming network 104; and, the game consoles 106, 108, 110 may interact with each other on the multiplayer gaming network 104 to conduct video game play. The dotted line 118 is intended to represent an association, without a direct connection or communication, between the independently operative functions of the wagering system 102 and the multiplayer gaming network 104.

[0017] As described hereinafter in more detail, the wagering system 102 provides a variety of functions: to permit players 112, 114, 116 to register and maintain wager accounts 102D; to store details of player 112, 114, 116 profiles; to store payment information; to facilitate competition with other players 112, 114, 116 who also wish to wager in a variety of video games; to confirm outcomes of video game matches with a confirmation system 102E; to apply ratings to users with a ratings system 102F to reflect the conduct of users in their interactions with the wagering system 102 and other users; to transfer an amount indicative of the wager at the conclusion of a head-to-head video game match, for example; to store outcomes of played video games, including a competency structure 102G that tracks and maintains the skill levels of players 112, 114, 116 with respect to various video games; to settle disputes between players 112, 114, 116 associated with wager outcomes by employing a dispute settlement system 102H; and/or other functions.

[0018] As shown in FIG. 1, one or more communication media 120 may be provided to enable communications between one or more of the game consoles 106, 108, 110 and the wagering system 102. Also one or more access devices 122 may be employed by the players 112, 114, 116 or other users to communicate with the wagering system 102, for example, through one or more of the communication media 120. Examples of access devices 122 include, without limitation, computer systems, personal data assistants (PDA's), telephones (of wireless or wireline variety), and/or any other access device suitable for accessing the functions of the wagering system 102.

[0019] Prior to entering into video game match play for wagers, players may be required to register as users with the wagering system 102. Players may register in a variety of manners. For instance, a visitor home page 302 may include a registration link 304 to direct new users to a registration page 502 where they may register, and a conventional login

area 306 wherein a member can enter his or her username and password to access his or her account information with the wagering system 102. Otherwise, visitors or members who have not yet logged into their accounts may be prompted to register or log into their accounts, if they attempt to engage in wagering activity within one or more web sites 102C of the wagering system 102. The player may be presented with a prompt 404 as shown in the screen display 402 of FIG. 4 that permits entry of login information (e.g., username and password information) to access the wagering system 102, and/or permits a user to access the registration page 502. In this manner, it can be seen that visitors, as well as members who have not yet logged in, are able to view the same wagering activity on the web site 102C as members who had logged into their account, although they may not be able to wager themselves until they login or register.

[0020] In order to register at step 202 and gain access to the wagering system 102, new users may be presented with the registration page 502 shown in the screen display of FIG. 5. On the registration page 502, new users may enter various name and contact information, as well as a multiplayer gaming network identification 504 that the user employs when playing video games on the multiplayer gaming network 104. New users may also enter desired username 506 and password 508 information to permit account access on the wagering system 102. Data collected on the registration page 502 may be stored in the wager database 102B of the wagering system 102.

[0021] In association with registration, new users may be directed to a "deposit options" page 602, as illustrated by the screen display of FIG. 6, to select or edit deposit options at step 204. The "deposit options" page 602 permits the user to select a payment method 604 for establishing a wager account 102D with the wagering system 102. Users may be able to deposit funds in a service account using a credit card, bank transfer, or through a variety of payment processors 124 (examples of which are listed in the payment method 604 section) that provide payment processing services to the wagering system 102. The payment processors 124 can facilitate the transfer of funds to/from the wager account 102D of the user. To load credit into a wager account 102D, for example, a user may transfer money into the wagering system 102 by using one or more accounts managed for the user by the payment processor 124 and/or by using a credit card or bank transfer. Once established, the wager account 102D may be employed by the wagering system 102 to credit or debit wager amounts for the user in connection with wagering to be settled following video game play (i.e., wins or losses) on the multiplayer gaming network 104, for example.

[0022] Once a registered account is accessed by a previously registered user or a new user at step 206, a member home page 702 as seen in the screen display of FIG. 7 may be displayed by the wagering system 102. The member home page 702, like the visitor home page 302, includes, for example, links 704 to the most popular wager pages, links 706 to "featured wager pages" that the service may want to highlight, as well as links 708 to various pages that display player rankings based on competition for a wager in a particular game and/or overall competition on the wagering system 102.

[0023] Various screen displays presented by the web sites 102C, such as the member home page 702, may include a toolbar 710 of links positioned horizontally across the screen display as shown. The links in the toolbar 710 may include a “home page” link 710A to access the member home page 702, a “terms and conditions” link 710B to display terms and conditions of using the wagering system 102, and an “instructions” link 710C to access written instructions and/or, for example, a visual demonstration, explaining how the service operates. Various screen displays presented by the web site 102C may also include a toolbar 712 of links positioned vertically across the screen display, as shown on the member home page 702, for example. The toolbar 712 may include links for a variety of video games on which a user may place a wager and play against another player on the multiplayer gaming network 104. The video game links on the toolbar 712 may be separated into distinct sections according to a number of factors including the multiplayer gaming network 104 associated with the video game and the type of video game (e.g., sports, fighting, shooter, etc.). For instance, there could be a section devoted to “Xbox” sports games or “Playstation” (Sony Corporation) fighting games. In addition, the toolbar 712 may be configured to display only those links to video games which are compatible for play with the particular game console 106, 108, 110 of the user (e.g., links for “Playstation” games only). Lastly, each video game link may allow users to access a pull-down menu 806 of sub-links related to a game 804, as shown in the screen display 802 of FIG. 8, for example. This allows a user to access wager pages for different game modes, as well as pages displaying user rankings 904 related to wagering on a game, as shown in the screen display 902 of FIG. 9, for example.

[0024] Various screen displays presented by the wagering system 102 may also include a vertically positioned toolbar 714 of links as shown, for example, on the member home page 702 as shown in the screen display of FIG. 7. The links on the toolbar 714 may allow users to access functions and processes relevant to the management of the wager account 102D.

[0025] For example, a “confirm outcome” link 714A may allow users to access a page on which they can confirm the outcome of wagers, which were entered into using the wagering system 102 and competed for on the multiplayer gaming network 104. An example of a “confirm outcome” page 1002 is shown in the screen display of FIG. 10. In addition, an “account statement” link 714B may allow access to pages that display wager account 102D statements and allow users to modify contact/password information, as well as to register with the wagering system 102 for other multiplayer networks, for example, on which they compete. An example of an “account statement” page 1102 is seen in the screen display of FIG. 11. A “deposit money” link 714C provides navigation to the “deposit options” page 602 to permit users to add credit to their wager accounts 102D. A “withdraw money” link 714D can direct users to a function or page that facilitates withdrawal of an amount of the credit balance in the wager account 102D not otherwise needed to cover an outstanding wager, or the largest of multiple outstanding wagers, stored with the wagering system 102. An example of a “withdrawal options” page 1202 is illustrated in the screen display of FIG. 12. A “betting history” link 714E can direct users to a “betting history” page 1302 (an example of which is presented in the screen display of

FIG. 13), which displays historical data for wager amounts stored by the user for various video games. A “player profile” link 714F may direct users to a function or page that summarizes a user’s skill levels competing in games and/or game modes for a wager; records play for each game and/or game modes for a wager; and/or, records profit and loss information associated with playing games and/or game modes for a wager. An example of a “player profile” page 1402 is shown in the screen display of FIG. 14.

[0026] Also, on the toolbar 714, users may be presented with a “Stored Wagers” section 714G that includes a list of outstanding, stored wagers for the user on the database 102B of the wagering system 102. For each wager, a button 714H, 714I or other function can be provided that allows for the removal of the wagers from the database 102B. It can be appreciated that the number of wagers in the “Stored Wagers” section 714G varies depending on the number of wagers stored by the user. If a user does not have any wagers stored, then a “None” designation may be presented in the “Stored Wagers” section 714G.

[0027] At step 208, the user may select a video game for which the user wants to review, store or accept a wager. Selecting the one-on-one football link (e.g., “1-on-1”) on the pull-down menu 806, for example, directs the user to the wager page 1502 as shown in the screen display of FIG. 15. In general, the wager page 1502 may be substantially representative of the characteristics of all wager pages that may be provided for different video games in accordance with embodiments of the invention. As shown, the wager page 1502 includes a list of wagers 1504 that the players 112, 114, 116 have stored on the wagering system 102 for a particular video game. The list 1504 may include the user-name 1506 of each player 112, 114, 116 who stored a wager; the user rating 1508 of each player 112, 114, 116; the skill level 1510 of each player 112, 114, 116; and/or, a wager amount 1512 associated with each wager. On the wager page 1502, the user may accept a particular stored wager with the intent of playing the video game for the wager amount 1512. In addition, the wager page 1502 may include a “store wager” option 1514 that allows users to add wagers to the list of wagers 1504 by inputting wager amounts 1512. In various embodiments, the wagering system 102 may refuse to accept wager amounts less than a predetermined minimum level or greater than a predetermined maximum level. Once the “store wager” option 1514 is selected, a “wager form” 1602 shown in the screen display of FIG. 16 may be presented to the user with a wager amount field 1604 that permits entry of the wager amount 1512. If the user attempts to store a wager amount 1512 greater than the credit amount available in the user’s wagering system 102 wager account 102D, a notification 1704 as shown in the screen display 1702 of FIG. 17 may be presented to the user.

[0028] In addition, the wager page 1502 may be configured to permit users to sort the list of stored wagers 1504 according to wager amount 1512 or skill level 1510, for example. The wager page 1502 may also be provided with a conventional search functionality that permits users to search the list 1504 for a specific wager amount 1512, a specific skill level 1510, and/or the username 1506 of a particular player 112, 114, 116. In a normal mode of operation, the list of stored wagers 1504 can be ordered according to when the wagers were initially stored, such that the first

wager on the list **1504** may be the most recent or the oldest stored wager on the list **1504**.

[0029] In various embodiments, a credit balance **714J** of the wager account **102D** of a user can be displayed on the toolbar **714**, for example, of various pages of the wagering system **102**. In addition, users may be permitted to view a breakdown of gross transactions that have impacted the credit balance by navigating to the “account statement” page **1102**, using the associated link **714B** on the toolbar **714**. The “account statement” page **1102** can be configured to display transactions including total amounts deposited to the wagering system **102**, total amounts withdrawn, total fees taken from winning wagers, and/or amounts won or lost by the user.

[0030] With general reference to FIGS. **1** through **2B**, in operation of the wagering system **102**, if a player **112**, **114**, **116** cannot find a compatible wager stored on the wagering system **102** to select at step **254**, the player **112**, **114**, **116** can store a wager at step **256**, and log into the multiplayer gaming network **104** to await another player’s **112**, **114**, **116** acceptance of the stored wager. Users may also be permitted to store multiple wagers on the wagering system **102** for a particular video game or multiple video games to promote an increased probability that an opponent player **112**, **114**, **116** will be available to play for one of the multiple wagers. With respect to multiple wagers, the wagering system **102** can be configured to verify that the player **112**, **114**, **116** has enough credit in the wager account **102D** to cover the largest of the multiple stored wagers. Players **112**, **114**, **116** who stored wagers may be automatically notified at step **258** by e-mail, instant messenger, or another communication method, if another player **112**, **114**, **116** has selected their wager. It can be seen that players **112**, **114**, **116** who had previously stored wagers on the wagering system **102** can await notification of wager acceptance while working on a computer system or other access device **122** (wireless phone, PDA, notebook, etc.), in addition to the gaming console **106**, **108**, **110**.

[0031] If the user stores a wager substantially compatible with a wager previously stored by another player, and if the wagering system **102** determines through application of its competency structure **102G** that the skill levels associated with the players **112**, **114**, **116** who made the wagers are compatible, then the players **112**, **114**, **116** associated with the wagers may then be directed to compete in networked match play immediately at step **260**. The wagering system **102** may be configured to define compatible wager amounts as substantially the same amounts or within a certain acceptable range of deviation between the amounts. The competency structure **102G** of the wagering system **102** may not permit players **112**, **114**, **116** of comparatively higher skill levels to accept wagers from players **112**, **114**, **116** at comparatively lower skill levels, but the converse may be permitted (i.e., lower skill level players **112**, **114**, **116** can be permitted to accept wagers stored by higher skill level players **112**, **114**, **116**). Also, the competency structure **102G** of the wagering system **102** may be configured to not permit a player **112**, **114**, **116** having a first skill level to play against a player **112**, **114**, **116** at a second skill level, wherein the absolute magnitude or percentage difference between the first and second skill levels exceeds a predetermined maximum level. If the wagering system **102** matches compatible wagers, or if a user accepts a stored wager on the wager page

**1502**, for example, then the user can be presented with a confirmation page **1802** as shown in the screen display of FIG. **18**. The confirmation page **1802** prompts the user to accept or decline the video game match wager subject to the terms and conditions displayed on the confirmation page **1802**. On the other hand, if a user stores a wager, then the user can be presented with the confirmation page **1902** as shown in the screen display of FIG. **19**. These confirmation pages may display a reference number attributed to the accepted or stored wager by the wagering system **102**.

[0032] If a user accepts another user’s stored wager, then that particular stored wager can be removed from the wager page **1502** by the wagering system **102**. If a user had multiple stored wagers on the wager page **1502**, or on multiple wager pages **1502**, and the user enters into competition for one of the wagers, then all of the wagers can be removed from that wager page **1502**, and/or all of the wager pages **1502**.

[0033] To select a wager at step **254**, users may be required to have loaded enough credit into the wager account **102D** to cover the wager amount; and, to have challenged another user of a compatible skill level. If a user attempts to select a wager without meeting these criteria, among possibly others, then the wagering system **102** may present the user with a notification **2004** shown in the screen display **2002** of FIG. **20** for attempting to compete with another player having an incompatible skill level; and/or a notification **2104** shown in the screen display **2102** of FIG. **21** for attempting to accept a wager of an amount greater than the credit balance of the wager account **102D** of the user. In this event, the wagering system **102** may be configured to automatically direct the user as to how to transfer additional funds into the user’s wager account **102D**.

[0034] If users have met the necessary criteria and have stored a wager, then they may receive a prompt **2204** shown in the screen display **2202** of FIG. **22**, notifying them to prepare their game console **106**, **108**, **110** and await a challenger to compete in the designated video game on the multiplayer gaming network **104**. If users have met the necessary criteria and have accepted a stored wager, then they may receive a prompt **2304** as shown on the screen display **2302** of FIG. **23**, advising them to prepare the game console **106**, **108**, **110** for game play, in the designated video game, on the multiplayer gaming network **104**, and telling them the network identification of their competitors, so that they can locate them on the network **104** for game play.

[0035] After the user who accepted the wager locates the user who stored the wager on the multiplayer video game network **104**, they may compete for the wager at step **260**, in the same manner as if they were engaging in non-wagered competition on the network **104** and independently of the operation of the wagering system **102**.

[0036] At step **262**, using the confirmation system **102E**, the competitors may confirm the outcome of their wager in various embodiments of the confirmation system **102E**. For example, the users may confirm the outcome through a link in an email sent by the wagering system **102** to both competitors after one of them accepted the stored wager of the other. This link may take them to the “confirm outcome” page **1002** as is seen in the screen display of FIG. **10** associated with their wager account **102D**. This page **1002** may display any wagers **1004**, **1006** that they may have

stored, which another user had accepted, or they may have accepted themselves. Furthermore, the page **1002** may allow them to confirm the outcome of the wager or wagers **1004**, **1006** through associated buttons and/or other functions (e.g. “win,” “loss,” or “did not play”). In general, users may confirm the outcome of a wager in a variety of ways. For example, in certain embodiments users may confirm wager outcomes by using a wireless telephone to communicate a text message to the confirmation system **102E**, or by using another interactive feature.

[0037] At step **264**, if both players **112**, **114**, **116** confirmed the same outcome of their wager, using the designated confirmation system **102E**, then the wagering system **102** may award a prize to the winning player **112**, **114**, **116** at step **266** by transferring a credit equivalent to the funds staked in the wager from the wager account **102D** of the losing player **112**, **114**, **116** to the wager account **102D** of the winning player **112**, **114**, **116**. The wager amount may be reduced by a transaction fee charged by the wagering system **102**. In this manner, no funds need to be transferred directly between users of the wagering system **102**; the server **102A** merely updates the wager accounts **102D** to reflect the results of wagers won or lost by the players **112**, **114**, **116**.

[0038] In contrast, if neither player **112**, **114**, **116** confirms the outcome, if only one player **112**, **114**, **116** confirms the outcome, or if the players **112**, **114**, **116** confirm different outcomes, at step **264**, then no prize may be immediately transferred between wager accounts **102D**. In this event, at step **270**, the dispute settlement system **102H** may be invoked to help to determine or settle the outcome of a video game wager. If one or both of the players **112**, **114**, **116** did not confirm the outcome, then the non-confirming player **112**, **114**, **116**, or players **112**, **114**, **116**, may be sent another email, reminding them to confirm the wager outcome and of the possible consequential adjustment to their user ratings if they do not confirm.

[0039] Otherwise, if the two players **112**, **114**, **116** confirm different outcomes at step **264**, then the players **112**, **114**, **116** may receive each other's email addresses from the dispute settlement system **102H** at step **270**, in order to jointly resolve the discrepancy in reported outcomes. Also, the players **112**, **114**, **116** may be notified by the wagering system **102** of possible consequential adjustment to their user ratings, if they do not confirm matching outcomes. Through a link in this email communication, for example, the players **112**, **114**, **116** may be provided with a chance to re-confirm the outcome of the wager.

[0040] If the dispute can be satisfactorily resolved at step **272**, then the credit transfer of step **266** can occur. If the dispute cannot be resolved at step **272**, however, one or both players **112**, **114**, **116** may have their user ratings adjusted by the ratings system **102F**, at step **268**, as follows. If, after invoking the dispute settlement system **102H**, neither player **112**, **114**, **116** confirms the outcome, then both players **112**, **114**, **116** user ratings may be adjusted by the ratings system **102F**. If only one player **112**, **114**, **116** confirms the outcome, then only the other player's **112**, **114**, **116** user rating may be adjusted by the ratings system **102F**. In certain embodiments, if the players **112**, **114**, **116** do not confirm the same outcome, then both players **112**, **114**, **116** user ratings may be adjusted by the ratings system **102F**.

[0041] Users of the wagering system **102** may have user ratings displayed next to their stored wagers, based on the

forementioned rating factors. For instance, new users could start with an initial, predetermined percentage user rating that can be adjusted in accordance with subsequent actions of the users in view of the rating factors. While users may have multiple skill levels for different video games and game modes, the users may be provided with a single user rating, which would be impacted by the manner in which they utilized the wagering system **102** with respect to wagered video game play. Over time, it can be seen that the user ratings system **102F** can become a self-regulating device to penalize users who do not accurately, or who never, confirm the outcome of their wagers. It can be seen that the time a player **112**, **114**, **116** with a lower user rating may wait for a video game opponent to select his or her wager generally would be greater than the time that a player **112**, **114**, **116** with a higher user rating would have to wait. Moreover, a user may not be allowed to accept other users' wagers, if his or her user rating fell below a specified, threshold level. Application of the user rating system **102F** thus reduces the possibility that a user would misuse or ignore the confirmation system **102E**.

[0042] Following the credit transfer at step **266**, the wagering system **102** may be configured to process the outcome of the concluded match, at step **274**, to alter a competency structure **102G** maintained by the wagering system **102** for the players **112**, **114**, **116**. The competency structure **102G** may be created and configured as follows. Each user of the wagering system **102** can be given skill levels in a particular video game based on a combination of factors, including the amount of money won or lost, as well as a win-loss record or other score achieved, by playing the video game against other users for wagers. For example, users might be given a skill level between one and ten, one representing an extremely poor player and ten representing an exceptional player. In this example, the skill level in a given video game would increase, if a win-loss record or a wagered amount won by the user improved, according to established algorithms. The users may access their skill levels, as well as win-loss records or other scores achieved on the player profile page **1302** as shown in the screen display of FIG. **13**, by clicking on the “Player Profile” link **714F** on the vertical toolbar **714** included on each member page. If a user had not yet played a particular video game for a wager, then an initial, mid-range skill level could be given to the user, for example. The wagering system **102** may be configured to not set the initial skill level to the lowest possible skill level, because the user might be relatively experienced playing the video game but has not yet played the game for a wager using the wagering system **102**. Based on the functioning of the competency structure **102G**, the wagering system **102** can be configured to permit players **112**, **114**, **116** of lower skill levels to challenge other players **112**, **114**, **116** with substantially the same or better skill levels, but the converse may not be permitted by the wagering system **102**.

[0043] Embodiments of the invention may also include a myriad of manifestations of team game play, from two-on-two competitions to games where multiple players **112**, **114**, **116** compete on the same team against a similar number of opponents on an opposing team. Additional links may be added to the pull-down menu **806**, for example, for different modes of team play, and the service may create distinct lists of wagers for each type of game and game mode. For instance, there could be separate links to different lists of wagers for one-on-one competitions, as compared to two-

on-two competitions. For each team game playing modality, a similar mode of operation to what has been described previously herein would permit wagering on match play. To permit multiple players **112**, **114**, **116** to compete together for a wager, for example, one player **112**, **114**, **116** may access the page of the web site **102C** that displayed the list of stored wagers for the game and game-playing mode that his or her team wished to play. An example of a wager page **2402** for team game play is illustrated in the screen display of FIG. **24**. If the user decides to accept or store a wager, identities of the user's teammates can be entered into the wagering system **102**. In this case, a "wager-form" **2502** may appear as is seen in the screen display of FIG. **25**. Each teammate may need to confirm storage or acceptance of the team wager, such as by indicating confirmation on a web site **102C**, for example, or by accessing a link in an email communicated by the wagering system **102**. If all team members indicate their willingness to compete for the wager, then those users who accept the wager will receive the network identifications of the opposing team members. Team video game play may then commence when the team that accepted a wager locates the team that stored the wager on the network. After the competition concludes, each member of either team or a single representative player elected by each team, may confirm the outcome of the wager, substantially in accordance with the process described above. The wager, deducted by the transaction fee, may then be distributed evenly from each member of the losing team's wager accounts **102D** to each member of the winning team's wager accounts **102D**.

[**0044**] In various embodiments, the competency structure **102G** may be altered to raise or lower the skill level of each of the players **112**, **114**, **116** on either team, with respect to the game and the game mode. For this reason, a user could have multiple skill levels in the same game for disparate game modes. Although one player **112**, **114**, **116** may accept or store a wager, all members of the team may be required to be registered users of the wagering system **102** and have enough credit in their respective wager accounts **102D** to cover a pro rata portion of the total team wager to allow the wager to be stored or accepted pursuant to team play.

[**0045**] The examples presented herein are intended to illustrate potential and specific implementations of the present invention. It can be appreciated that the examples are intended primarily for purposes of illustration of the invention for those skilled in the art. No particular aspect or aspects of the examples are necessarily intended to limit the scope of the present invention. For instance, screen displays included herein are examples provided merely for convenience of disclosure for those skilled in the art.

[**0046**] It is to be understood that the figures and descriptions of the present invention have been simplified to illustrate elements that are relevant for a clear understanding of the present invention, while eliminating, for purposes of clarity, other elements. For example, certain operating system details and modules of network platforms are not described herein. Those of ordinary skill in the art will recognize, however, that these and other elements may be desirable in a typical computer system or database system. However, because such elements are well known in the art and because they do not facilitate a better understanding of the present invention, a discussion of such elements is not provided herein.

[**0047**] Any element expressed herein as a means for performing a specified function is intended to encompass any way of performing that function including, for example, a combination of elements that perform that function. Furthermore the invention, as defined by such means-plus-function claims, resides in the fact that the functionalities provided by the various recited means are combined and brought together in a manner as defined by the appended claims. Therefore, any means that can provide such functionalities may be considered equivalents to the means shown herein.

[**0048**] In general, it will be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art that some of the embodiments as described hereinabove may be implemented in many different embodiments of software, firmware, and/or hardware. The software code or specialized control hardware used to implement some of the present embodiments is not limiting of the present invention. For example, the embodiments described hereinabove may be implemented in computer software using any suitable computer software language type such as, for example, C or C++ using, for example, conventional or object-oriented techniques. Such software may be stored on any type of suitable computer-readable medium or media such as, for example, a magnetic or optical storage medium. Thus, the operation and behavior of the embodiments are described without specific reference to the actual software code or specialized hardware components. The absence of such specific references is feasible because it is clearly understood that artisans of ordinary skill would be able to design software and control hardware to implement the embodiments of the present invention based on the description herein with only a reasonable effort and without undue experimentation.

[**0049**] Moreover, the processes associated with the present embodiments may be executed by programmable equipment, such as computers. Software that may cause programmable equipment to execute the processes may be stored in any storage device, such as, for example, a computer system (non-volatile) memory, an optical disk, magnetic tape, or magnetic disk. Furthermore, some of the processes may be programmed when the computer system is manufactured or via a computer-readable medium. Such a medium may include any of the forms listed above with respect to storage devices and may further include, for example, a carrier wave modulated, or otherwise manipulated, to convey instructions that may be read, demodulated/decoded and executed by a computer.

[**0050**] It can also be appreciated that certain process aspects described herein may be performed using instructions stored on a computer-readable medium or media that direct a computer system to perform process steps. A computer-readable medium may include, for example, memory devices such as diskettes, compact discs of both read-only and read/write varieties, optical disk drives, and hard disk drives. A computer-readable medium may also include memory storage that may be physical, virtual, permanent, temporary, semi-permanent and/or semi-temporary. A computer-readable medium may further involve one or more data signals transmitted on one or more carrier waves.

[**0051**] A "computer" or "computer system" through which a user may access the wagering system **102** may be, for example, a wireless or wire line variety of a microcom-

puter, minicomputer, server, mainframe, laptop, personal data assistant (PDA), wireless e-mail device (e.g., "BlackBerry" trade-designated devices), cellular phone, pager, processor, fax machine, scanner, or any other programmable device configured to transmit and receive data over a network. Moreover, it can be seen that the game consoles **106**, **108**, **110** themselves may take on the functionality of a "computer" or "computer system" with respect to allowing users to directly access and/or manipulate online content. Specifically, players **112**, **114**, **116** may be able to utilize the wagering system **102** using their consoles **106**, **108**, **110**, respectively, in a similar manner as if they were accessing it through a personal computer. Likewise, it can also be seen that cable boxes may take on the functionality of a "computer" or "computer system" with respect to allowing users to access and/or manipulate online content. Specifically, players **112**, **114**, **116** may be able to utilize the wagering system **102** through their cable boxes, using buttons on their remote control to manipulate wagering functions, in a similar manner as if they were accessing the wagering system **102** through a personal computer. With respect to accessing the wagering system **102** through game consoles **106**, **108**, **110** and cable boxes, it can be seen that the wagering system **102** may be customized for accessibility solely by one or both of these types of devices, so that its features could be more easily manipulated by a console controller and/or a cable remote control.

[0052] Computer devices disclosed herein may include memory for storing certain software applications used in obtaining, processing and communicating data. It can be appreciated that such memory may be internal or external to the disclosed embodiments. The memory may also include any means for storing software, including a hard disk, an optical disk, floppy disk, ROM (read only memory), RAM (random access memory), PROM (programmable ROM), EEPROM (electrically erasable PROM), and other computer-readable media.

[0053] In various embodiments of the present invention disclosed herein, a single component may be replaced by multiple components, and multiple components may be replaced by a single component, to perform a given function or functions. Except where such substitution would not be operative to practice embodiments of the present invention, such substitution is within the scope of the present invention. Any of the servers described herein, for example, may be replaced by a "server farm" or other grouping of networked servers that are located and configured for cooperative functions. It can be appreciated that a server farm may serve to distribute workload between/among individual components of the farm and may expedite computing processes by harnessing the collective and cooperative power of multiple servers. Such server farms may employ load-balancing software that accomplishes tasks such as, for example, tracking demand for processing power from different machines, prioritizing and scheduling tasks based on network demand, and/or providing backup contingency in the event of component failure or reduction in operability.

[0054] While various embodiments of the invention have been described herein, it should be apparent, however, that various modifications, alterations and adaptations to those embodiments may occur to persons skilled in the art with the attainment of some or all of the advantages of the present invention. The disclosed embodiments are therefore

intended to include all such modifications, alterations and adaptations without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention as set forth in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A wagering system comprising:

a server configured for processing at least one wager on a video game match to be played by players on a multiplayer gaming network;

at least one database operatively associated with the server, the database being configured for storing information related to the video game wager;

the server being configured to operate independently of the multiplayer gaming network; and,

the server including a confirmation system configured to receive a confirmation of the outcome of the video game wager from at least one of the players.

2. The wagering system of claim 1, wherein the server includes a web server.

3. The wagering system of claim 2, wherein the web server includes at least one web site having at least one page configured for receiving wagering information.

4. The wagering system of claim 3, wherein at least one of the web site pages is configured to allow the players to select from among a set of video games that can be played for wagers.

5. The wagering system of claim 3, wherein at least one of the web site pages is configured to allow the players to store a wager in association with at least one video game.

6. The wagering system of claim 3, wherein at least one of the web site pages is configured to allow the players to accept a wager in association with at least one video game.

7. The wagering system of claim 3, wherein at least one of the web site pages includes multiple video game links separated into multiple sections according to a factor selected from the group consisting of a multiplayer gaming network associated with the video game, a type of video game, and a gaming mode.

8. The wagering system of claim 1, further comprising at least one wager account stored in the database, the wager account being associated with a credit balance of at least one of the players.

9. The wagering system of claim 1, further comprising at least one player profile stored on the database.

10. The wagering system of claim 1, further comprising the server being configured to transfer a wager amount based on the outcome of the played video game.

11. The wagering system of claim 1, further comprising a competency structure operatively associated with the server, the competency structure being configured for maintaining at least one skill level of at least one of the players.

12. The wagering system of claim 1, further comprising the database being configured to store multiple wagers for a particular video game or for multiple video games.

13. The wagering system of claim 1, further comprising the database being configured to permit removal of an unaccepted, stored wager.

14. The wagering system of claim 1, further comprising the server being configured to automatically communicate to players that they should compete upon determining compatibility of wagers.

15. The wagering system of claim 14, wherein determining compatibility includes comparing skill levels associated with the players.

16. The wagering system of claim 1, further comprising a ratings system operatively associated with the server, the ratings system being configured to adjust a rating of at least one player.

17. The wagering system of claim 1, wherein the video game includes a video game that can be played by multiple players as a team.

18. The wagering system of claim 1, further comprising the confirmation system being configured to award a prize to the winning player upon receiving the same confirmation of the wager outcome from both players.

19. The wagering system of claim 1, further comprising a ratings system operatively associated with the server, the ratings system being configured for adjusting a rating of the players based on communication of the wager outcome using the confirmation system.

20. The wagering system of claim 19, further comprising the ratings system being configured to display at least one list of player rankings in association with ratings information stored in the ratings system.

21. The wagering system of claim 19, further comprising the ratings system being configured to not allow a player to accept a wager if a rating of the player falls below a threshold level.

22. The wagering system of claim 1, further comprising a dispute settlement system operatively associated with the server, the dispute settlement system being configured to help to determine a wager outcome if the confirmation system receives confirmation of the wager outcome from neither player or only one player.

23. The wagering system of claim 1, further comprising a dispute settlement system operatively associated with the server, the dispute settlement system being configured for determining a wager outcome if the confirmation system receives a different confirmation of the wager outcome from each player.

24. The wagering system of claim 1, wherein the server is accessible through a game console.

25. The wagering system of claim 1, wherein the server is accessible through a cable network connection.

26. The wagering system of claim 3, wherein at least one of the websites is accessible through a game console.

27. The wagering system of claim 3, wherein at least one of the websites is accessible through a cable network connection.

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