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(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING MULTIPLE SIMULTANEOUS ELECTRONIC GAMES**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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A system and methods for providing multiple simultaneous electronic games to a player in a public casino are described. One or more embodiments of the electronic casino-style gaming system of the present invention provide multiple simultaneous casino games to a player in a casino, the casino-style gaming system comprising a public casino; a first casino-style gaming device installed in the public casino; a second casino-style gaming device installed proximate to the first casino-style gaming device; a compact casino gaming unit physically coupled to or between the first and second casino-style gaming devices such that the compact casino gaming unit fits between the first casino-style gaming device and the second casino-style gaming device.

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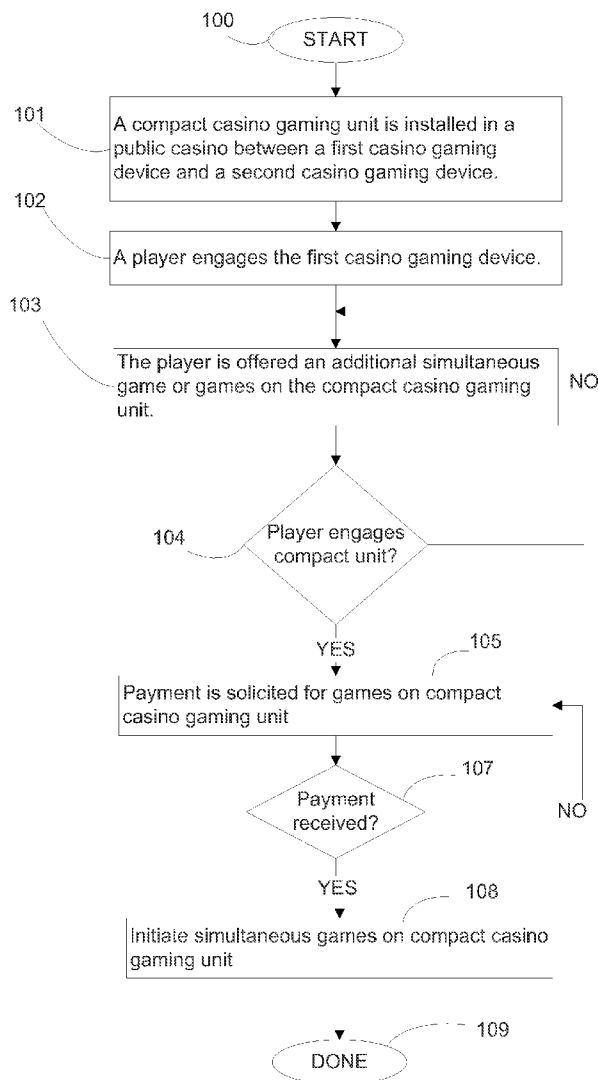
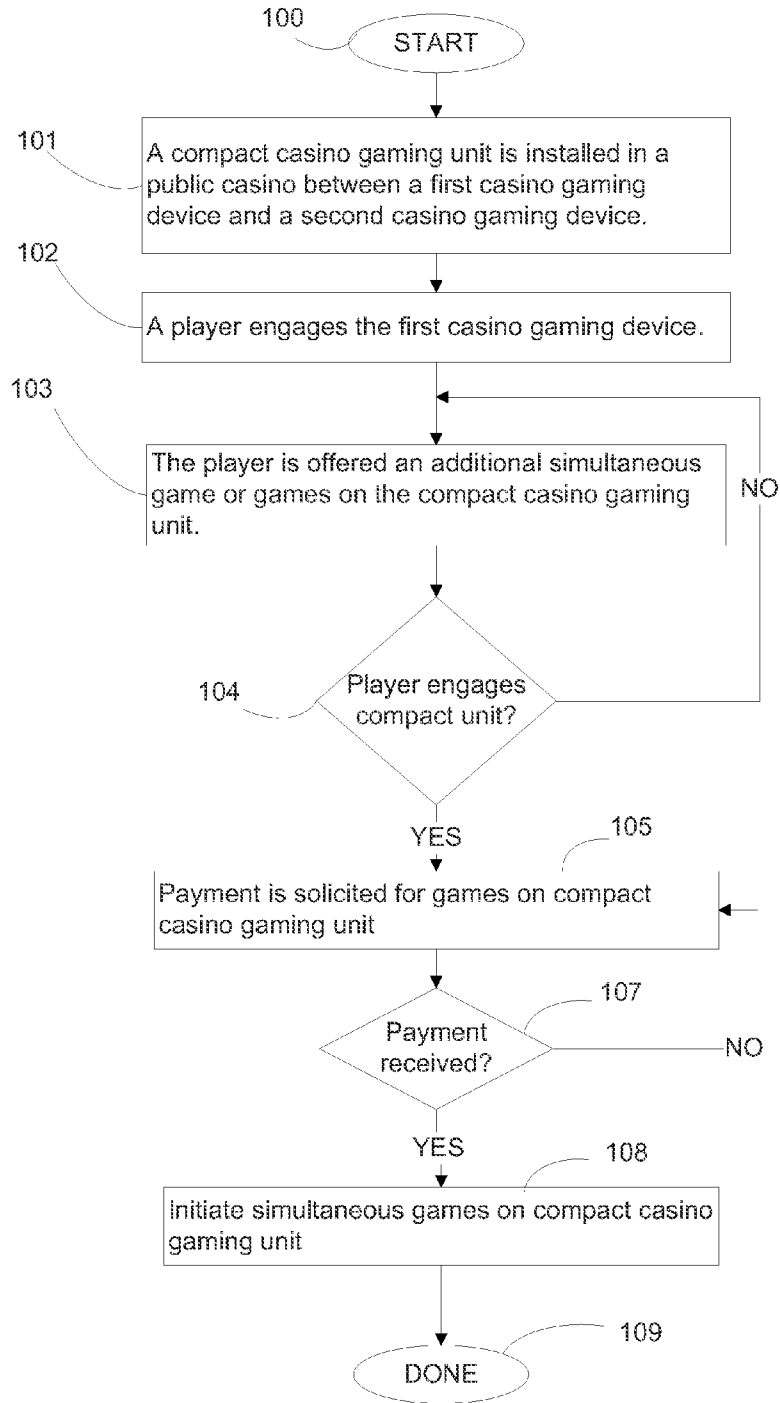
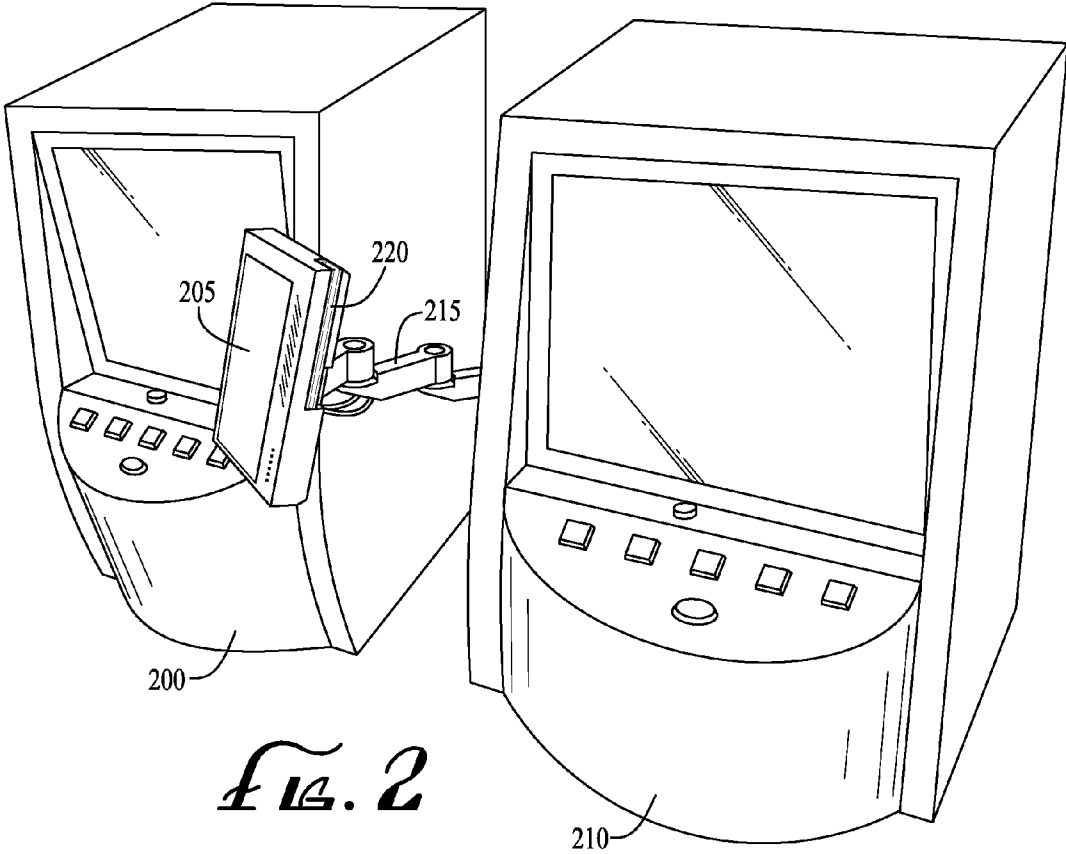


FIGURE 1





SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING MULTIPLE SIMULTANEOUS ELECTRONIC GAMES

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to a U.S. provisional patent application owned by the same inventor. That provisional application is Ser. No. 61/231,005 filed on Aug. 3, 2009, and is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] Embodiments of the invention described herein pertain to the field of electronic gaming. More particularly, but not by way of limitation, one or more embodiments of the invention enable a system and method for providing multiple simultaneous electronic games.

[0004] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0005] Games offered to players in public casinos include electronic computer games based on the old mechanical "slot machine" familiar to the gaming public. Slot machines were known as such primarily because they had "slots" for accepting coins and/or chips to pay for the game. Games contained three or more reels that spun when the game was played, stopping on one of set of symbols. If the symbols matched the player was a winner. Winners were rewarded with "payout" that rained coins into a metal bin or "well." Modernly, most if not all such machines have been replaced with electronic computer-based devices that accept account cards, for example credit cards or house account cards, to pay for games. Winners are rewarded with an increase in the card balance. Most such machines artificially duplicate the sound of the older mechanical slot machines when a player wins because of the enjoyment players get from the sound of coins raining down into the well.

[0006] Many modern electronic casino-style gaming devices offer players one or more of the same or similar games offered by their mechanical predecessors. For example, modern electronic casino-style gaming devices may play numerous games besides "slots," such as poker and its variations, bingo, 21 and Roulette. Modern electronic "slot machines" are well known by the public and those of skill in the art of creating such machines and so are not described or illustrated in detailed in this description so as not to obscure the invention described herein.

[0007] As used herein the terms "slot machine," "device" and "casino-style gaming device" all apply equally and interchangeably to the modern electronic casino-style gaming devices, still commonly called "slot machines," even though the devices now play many additional games beyond slots. As described above and herein, the term "slots" or "slot machines" is intended to encompass games simulating 3 or more electronic "spinning reels" as in slots as well as those offering electronic poker, roulette and other games of chance, such as those well known to players of casino games.

[0008] Casino operators wish to maximize profits, as does any business. For casino operators, profits may be increased by encouraging players of electronic casino-style devices to play more games during their time in the public casino. Providing additional games available to a player without leaving his or her seat at the device would be a business advantage to casino operators, as it allows the player to spend more money

during a public casino visit, thus increasing the revenue per device per unit time of a player using an electronic casino-style gaming device. Adding additional traditional casino-style gaming devices may not increase revenue if the player cannot or will not engage a second proximate device in the public casino during the "wait time" of using a first device, such as, for example, the time during which the "reels" of the device spin, perhaps for fear that the casino-style gaming device currently in use may be taken over by another player if not carefully attended. Further, it would be a business advantage to have a way to increase such revenue without having to replace, move or change any existing casino-style gaming devices because of cost savings.

[0009] For at least the limitations described above there is a need for a system and method for providing multiple simultaneous electronic games to a player of a first casino-style gaming device, which would provide a business advantage.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] One or more embodiments of the invention enable a system and method for providing multiple simultaneous electronic games.

[0011] One or more embodiments of the casino-style gaming system of the present invention provide multiple simultaneous casino games to a player in a casino, the casino-style gaming system comprising a public casino; a first casino-style gaming device installed in the public casino; a second casino-style gaming device installed proximate to the first casino-style gaming device; a compact casino gaming unit physically coupled to the first casino-style gaming device such that the compact casino gaming unit fits between the first casino-style gaming device and the second casino-style gaming device, the compact casino gaming unit further programmed to provide simultaneous additional casino games to a player of the first casino-style gaming device; a card reader informationally coupled to the compact casino gaming unit; and, a data conduit between the compact gaming unit and a casino gaming data center. A further embodiment of the invention may be compliance with state casino-style gaming device regulations.

[0012] Other embodiments may comprise a computer-implemented method for increasing revenue in a public casino, the computer-implemented method comprising installing a compact casino gaming unit between a first existing casino-style gaming device and a second existing casino-style gaming device in a public casino such that the compact casino gaming unit fits between the first and second existing casino-style gaming devices as the first and second existing casino-style gaming devices were previously installed on the public casino floor; providing simultaneous play by a player using both the first existing casino-style gaming device and the compact casino gaming unit; and increasing casino revenue per unit time collected from the first existing casino-style gaming device when the player plays using the first existing casino-style gaming device and the compact casino gaming unit simultaneously. A further embodiment of the invention may be compliance with state casino-style gaming device regulations.

[0013] Still further embodiments may comprise a computer program product for providing simultaneous play by a player using both a first existing casino-style gaming device and a compact casino gaming unit, the computer program product comprising computer-readable program code, the computer-readable program code executing in a tangible memory

medium and configured to enable simultaneous play by a player using both a first existing casino-style gaming device and a compact casino gaming unit in a public casino; and increase casino revenue per unit time collected from the first existing casino-style gaming device when the player plays using the first existing casino-style gaming device and the compact casino gaming unit simultaneously, the compact casino gaming unit fitting between the first existing casino-style gaming device and a second existing casino-style gaming device as the first and second existing casino-style gaming devices were previously installed on the public casino floor. This embodiment may also be configured to comply with state casino-style gaming device regulations.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] The above and other aspects, features and advantages of the invention will be more apparent from the following more particular description thereof, presented in conjunction with the following drawings wherein:

[0015] FIG. 1 illustrates a method of using one or more embodiments of the system of the invention.

[0016] FIG. 2 illustrates one or more systems embodying the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0017] A system and method for providing multiple simultaneous electronic games will now be described. In the following exemplary description numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a more thorough understanding of embodiments of the invention. It will be apparent, however, to an artisan of ordinary skill that the present invention may be practiced without incorporating all aspects of the specific details described herein. In other instances, specific features, quantities, or measurements well known to those of ordinary skill in the art have not been described in detail so as not to obscure the invention.

[0018] As used in this specification and the appended claims, the singular forms “a”, “an” and “the” include plural referents unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. Thus, for example, reference to a player of a casino game includes one or more players.

[0019] As used herein, the term “public casino” refers to a gaming establishment opened to the public for providing entertainment by way of gambling. Most such public casinos in the United States are legalized for-profit businesses that operate under state, federal and/or tribal laws and regulations. Other types of public casinos include temporary or permanent establishments set up for charitable purposes as permitted by law, and as such are also contemplated within the definition of a public casino.

[0020] As used herein, the term “simultaneous” as used in describing simultaneous play, means to play a second machine, such as a compact casino gaming unit, without leaving another machine or game, such as a first casino-style gaming device, unattended. More particularly, for a seated player simultaneous play is limited to units and devices all accessible from a single seat without having to get up to play the additional machines or units.

[0021] The systems and methods described herein enable a player in a public casino, such as a casino, bingo hall, club, arcade, card room, charity hall, church or school to play multiple electronic games simultaneously. In some embodiments of the invention, players pay a fee or place a wager to

play each game. In those embodiments, providing multiple simultaneous games to a player increases the revenues that may be earned by a public casino or game provider per seat per unit time. While some existing systems offer players two or more games that may be played on a given machine, the machine may engage the player in only one game at a time.

[0022] In order to increase revenue per player in a public casino, the casino operator may install the compact casino gaming unit of the present invention between existing casino-style gaming devices. Public casinos often have significant funds invested in expensive machines that are permanently or fixedly attached to the public casino floor. In one or more instances public casinos may not be permitted to add more of those machines to the casino floor due to practical or legal concerns. The present invention contemplates attaching a compact casino gaming unit between existing machines that allows a player to play multiple simultaneous games from a single seat or station in order to provide additional entertainment and convenience to the player. With such a device players are more likely to spend additional money gambling, to the profit of the casino operator. The invention may be utilized in a single player or multi-player setting and is intended to operate in conjunction with applicable gaming regulations, including those regulations and statutes regarding public wagering games.

[0023] In some embodiments, the invention includes at least one first electronic gaming device, such as for example a video poker game, whereby a player may play one or more games on the first electronic gaming device. The first electronic gaming device may include a monitor, touch screen, buttons, keyboards, and/or arms or levers that allow the player to view and interact with the game displayed on the device. For example, the first electronic gaming device may be a casino-style electronic gaming device offering games such as “slots,” video slots, electronic bingo, blackjack, or video poker, for example. The first electronic gaming device may comprise a computer, cell phone, television or any other suitable gaming device well known to those of skill in the art. In some embodiments, the first electronic game device may be coupled via a wireless or wired connection to a central processing unit and/or a master or centralized system for processing wagers in the public casino. In other embodiments, a processing unit and/or wagering processor may be included on the first electronic casino-style gaming device. The player may stand or sit in front of the first casino-style gaming device.

[0024] In certain embodiments of the invention, additional casino-style gaming devices may be displayed next to each other in rows and/or columns layout on the public casino floor. Players may participate in one or more games on more than one physically proximate electronic gaming device simultaneously. For example, players may play games on two or more electronic casino-style gaming devices located proximate or adjacent to one another on the public casino floor. To play multiple machines the player may need to reach over to another machine, stand, or walk between machines, as machines are often spaced to allow players some degree of comfort when the second casino-style gaming device is in use by another player. Thus, many players may play on only one casino-style gaming device at a time, for example, for convenience and/or comfort.

[0025] FIG. 1 illustrates a method for using the compact casino gaming unit of the invention. In step 100 the method starts. In step 101 a compact casino gaming unit is installed in

a public casino between a first and a second casino-style gaming device. At step **102** a player engages the first casino-style gaming device. At step **103** the player is offered an additional simultaneous game or games on the compact casino gaming unit. At step **104** the compact unit waits for the player to engage the unit. When the play does, at step **105**, payment for the additional game is solicited from the player. The payment may be in the form of an account or credit card inserted into a card reader, an RFID device passed near the gaming unit, or any other method known to those of ordinary skill in the art. At step **107** if payment is received the compact gaming unit will initiate a game or games on the compact casino gaming unit at step **108**. The game or games of the compact casino gaming unit may be played by a player while seated or while standing in front of the first casino-style gaming device simultaneously with games on the first casino-style gaming device. Play continues as the method ends at step **109**. This method is equally valid for the player using the second casino gaming device.

[0026] FIG. 2 illustrates one or more systems embodying the invention. In some embodiments of the invention, compact gaming unit **205** may be installed between first casino-style gaming device **200** and second casino-style gaming device **210** in a public casino. In certain embodiments, compact gaming unit **205** is smaller in size than first casino-style gaming device **200**. For example, compact gaming unit **205** may be the size of a book, laptop, cell phone, netbook, iPad (a registered trademark of Apple Inc.) or other handheld computing device. Compact gaming unit **205** may be a computer or any other device capable of providing an interactive game to a player. In one or more embodiments, compact gaming unit **205** is attached to or between the first and second casino-style gaming devices **200** and **210** using mechanical arm **215**. Mechanical arm **215** may be manipulated to make compact gaming unit **205** easily accessible to a player using either the first or second casino-style gaming devices **200** and **210**. Mechanical arm **215** may be multi jointed using, for example, a swivel joint, a universal joint, or any other combination of joints and support arms as needed to place the compact gaming unit when manipulated thereby within easy reach of a player seated before the first or second casino-style gaming devices **200** and **210**. Such joints and support arms capable of providing the described positional manipulations are well known to those of ordinary skill in the mechanical arts and therefore not further illustrated or discussed herein. In certain embodiments, compact gaming unit **205** may include card reader **220**, which may be located anywhere on compact gaming unit **205**, such as on the top, bottom, left side, right side, front or back.

[0027] In some embodiments, compact gaming unit **205** may be informationally coupled to first or second casino game device **200** or **210**, coupled to the same central processing unit as one or more of the adjacent casino-style gaming devices or coupled to a different central processing unit.

[0028] As used herein, the term “central processing unit” refers to any data processing system of, in or available to the public casino for managing casino-style gaming devices such as **200** and **210**. The data connection(s) between compact casino gaming unit **205** and an appropriate central processing unit may be wired or wireless, using any form, format or protocol understood by those in the art.

[0029] As used herein, neither the term “first casino-style gaming device” nor “second casino-style gaming device” represent uniquely identified elements. Any such two proxi-

mate devices available in a public casino may fill the role of first or second device. Thus, the terms first and second are used for convenience and are not intended to limit any configuration of the invention.

[0030] Thus, in some embodiments, compact gaming unit **205** may be located in the gap or space in between first and second casino-style gaming devices **200** and **210** and mechanical arm **215** is not necessary. In certain embodiments, compact gaming unit **205** may be wired to first casino-style gaming device **200** and/or positioned proximate to a player through the gap in between two casino-style gaming devices **200** and **210**.

[0031] In some embodiments, compact gaming unit **205** may be connected to a server or central processing unit by a wireless connection and capable of being carried throughout the public casino by a player. In some embodiments, compact gaming unit **205** may include a pull arm, card reader **220**, a coin well, a touch screen or any or none of these accessories.

[0032] Compact gaming unit **205** may allow a player to play one or more additional electronic games while simultaneously playing a game on one or more casino-style gaming devices, all without leaving his/her seat at the casino-style gaming device. For example, compact gaming unit **205** may allow a player to play roulette, bingo, multiplayer bingo, video poker, a progressive jackpot slot game or other wagering or non-wagering electronic game. Compact gaming unit **205** may be equipped to accept bets (wagers) or fees from players and/or allow players to log in, such as through card reader **220** or data connection to a central processing unit in order to offer payment for games to be played. In some embodiments, compact gaming unit **205** may interact with first casino-style gaming device **200**, though this is not required of the invention. For example, the game on compact gaming unit **205** may automatically pause, prompt or notify a player when it is time for the player to make a selection or take some other action in the game on first electronic gaming device **200**, or vice versa. Additionally, in one or more embodiments where first casino-style gaming device **200** and compact casino gaming unit **205** share any type of direct or indirect data connection, compact casino gaming unit **205** may acknowledge payment through first casino-style gaming device **200**, for example.

[0033] In one or more embodiments, the display of compact gaming unit **205** may be up to about 10 inches diagonally in a rectangular screen, as televisions are measured. The display may be rectangular or square or similar. Other sizes and shapes of display are contemplated by the invention, presuming such sizes may fit comfortably between the first and second casino-style gaming devices **200** and **210**. Compact gaming unit **205** may have a touch screen or other type of interface described elsewhere herein to accept player input. The unit may be “thin” or “flat” as those terms are used in the television or computer monitor fields, or may be up to approximately 6 inches thick. Various configurations and orientations are contemplated so that a player at either first or second casino-style gaming device **200** or **210** may access the screen from a seated position. In some embodiments the display is mounted on one or more articulated mechanical arms **215**. Mechanical arm(s) **215** attached to the casino floor, or to one or the other or both of the first and second casino-style gaming devices **200** and **210**.

Computer System Architecture and Support

[0034] The methods described herein are not limited as to the type of computer that may be used to implement the

compact casino gaming unit of the invention. In one or more embodiments the invention may be implemented and/or run on any computing device with the computational ability to perform and display the results of the games contemplated herein. Such a computing device may typically include a keyboard or means for user input or selections (such as a touch-screen keyboard or touch screen buttons), physical buttons, pointing input device (such as a mouse), a display device such as a monitor, or any appropriate combination of input and output devices. The contemplated computing device may also typically comprise a memory, a read only memory (such as a random access memory), a central processing unit and a storage device such as a hard disk drive (either local or remote and physically or logically coupled to the generalized computing device.) In some embodiments of the invention the computing device may also comprise a network connection that allows the computer to send and receive data through a computer network such as the Internet. Mobile computer platforms such as cellular telephones, smart phones, Personal Desktop Assistants (PDAs), kiosks, set top boxes, games boxes or any other computational devices, portable, personal or otherwise, may also qualify as a computing device capable of performing the methods described herein.

[0035] In various embodiments, the present invention may be implemented as a method, apparatus, or article of manufacture using standard programming and/or engineering techniques to produce software, firmware, hardware, or any combination thereof. The term “article of manufacture” (or alternatively, “computer program product”) as used herein is intended to encompass a computer program accessible from any computer-readable device, carrier or media. In addition, the software in which various embodiments are implemented may be accessible through the transmission medium, for example, from a server over the network. The article of manufacture in which the programming is implemented also encompasses transmission media, such as the network transmission line and wireless transmission media. Thus, the article of manufacture also comprises the medium in which the code is embedded. Those skilled in the art will recognize that many modifications may be made to this configuration to implement such a system without departing from the scope of the invention described herein.

[0036] Embodiments of the system described may comprise software that may execute on one or more computing devices having a computer usable memory medium (or a computer readable memory medium) and computer readable program code. The computer readable program code may include an input function, casino gaming functions and an output means such as a computer display, audio output, printing output and/or payment output.

[0037] Furthermore, embodiments of the present invention may be implemented as a program of computer-readable instructions and/or computer-readable data stored on a computer-readable medium. Programs, data and other information may constitute, but are not limited to, sets of computer instructions, code sequences, configuration information, and other information in any form, format or language usable by a general purpose computer or other processing device, such that when such a computer contains, is programmed with, or has access to the programs, data and other information the general purpose computer is transformed into a machine capable of performing the simultaneous casino-style games, such as those described above. A computer-readable medium suitable to provide computer readable instructions and/or

computer readable data for the methods and processes described herein may be any type of magnetic, optical, or electrical storage medium including a disk, tape, CD, DVD, flash drive, thumb drive, storage card, or any other memory device or other storage medium known to those of skill in the art.

[0038] In one or more embodiments of the invention, the methods described here may not be limited as to the type of computing device it may run upon and may, for instance, operate on any generalized computer system that has the computational ability to execute the methods described herein and can display the results of the user’s choices on one or more display devices. Display devices appropriate for providing user interaction with the invention described herein includes, but is not limited to, computer monitors, cell phones, PDAs, televisions, or any other form of computer-controllable output display. As used herein, a computer system refers to but is not limited to any type of computing device, including its associated computer software, data, peripheral devices, communications equipment and any required or desired computers that may achieve direct or indirect communication with a primary computing device.

[0039] In one or more embodiments of the invention, a general-purpose computer may be utilized to implement one or more aspects of the invention. In one or more embodiments of the invention, the computer may include various input and output means, including but not limited to a keyboard or other textual input devices, a display device such as a monitor or other display screen, and a pointing device and/or user selection indicator such as a mouse, keypad, touch screen, pointing device, or other known input/output devices known to those of skill in the art. The general-purpose computer described herein may include one or more banks of random access memory, read only memory, and one or more central processing unit(s). The general-purpose computer described herein may also include one or more data storage device(s) such as a hard disk drive, or other computer readable medium discussed above. An operating system that executes within the computer memory may provide an interface between the hardware and software. The operating system may be responsible for managing, coordinating and sharing of the limited resources within the computer. Software programs that run on the computer may be performed by an operating system to provide access to the invention along with access to the computer resources needed to execute the invention. In other embodiments, the compact casino gaming unit may run stand-alone on the processor to perform the methods and games described elsewhere herein.

[0040] In one or more embodiments of the invention, the method(s) described herein, when loaded on or executing through or by one or more general purpose computer(s) described above, may transform the general-purpose computer(s) into a specially programmed computer able to perform the method or methods described herein. In one or more embodiments of the invention, the computer-readable storage medium(s) encoded with computer program instructions that, when accessed by a computer, may cause the computer to load the program instructions to a memory there accessible, thereby creates a specially programmed computer able to perform the methods described herein.

[0041] The specially programmed computer of the invention may also comprise a connection that allows the computer to send and/or receive data through a computer network such as the Internet or other communication network. Mobile com-

puter platforms such as cellular telephones, Personal Desktop Assistants (PDAs), other hand-held computing devices, digital recorders, wearable computing devices, kiosks, set top boxes, games boxes or any other computational device, portable, personal, real or virtual or otherwise, may also qualify as a computer system or part of a computer system capable of executing the methods described herein as a specially programmed computer.

[0042] Computer systems as described in this section are well known to those of ordinary skill in the art and are therefore not further described or illustrated herein.

[0043] One or more embodiments of the invention may be configured to enable the specially programmed computer of the invention to take the input data given and transform it into a form usable by a compact casino gaming unit by applying one or more of the methods and/or processes of the invention as described herein. Thus, the methods described herein are able to transform player selections using the system of the invention to result in an output of the system such as a display of game results and/or a payout.

[0044] Further modifications and alternative embodiments of various aspects of the invention may be apparent to those skilled in the art in view of this description. Accordingly, this description is to be construed as illustrative only and is for the purpose of teaching those skilled in the art the general manner of carrying out the invention. It is to be understood that the forms of the invention shown and described herein are to be taken as the presently preferred embodiments. Elements and materials may be substituted for those illustrated and described herein, parts and processes may be reversed, and certain features of the invention may be utilized independently, all as would be apparent to one skilled in the art after having the benefit of this description of the invention. Changes may be made in the elements described herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as described in the following claims. In addition, it is to be understood that features described herein independently may, in certain embodiments, be combined.

What is claimed is:

1. A casino-style gaming system for providing multiple simultaneous casino games to a player in a public casino, the casino-style gaming system comprising:

- a public casino;
- a first casino-style gaming device installed in said public casino;
- a second casino-style gaming device installed proximate to said first casino-style gaming device;
- a compact casino gaming unit physically coupled to said public casino such that said compact casino gaming unit fits between said first casino-style gaming device and said second casino-style gaming device, said compact casino gaming unit further programmed to provide simultaneous additional casino-style games to a player of said first casino-style gaming device;
- a card reader informationally coupled to said compact casino gaming unit; and,
- a data conduit between said compact gaming unit and a casino gaming data center.

2. The casino-style gaming system of claim 1 further comprising compliance with state casino-style gaming device regulations.

3. The casino-style gaming system of claim 1 wherein the compact casino gaming unit physically coupled to said public casino is coupled to the first casino-style gaming device.

4. The casino-style gaming system of claim 1 wherein the compact casino gaming unit physically coupled to said public casino is coupled to the second casino-style gaming device.

5. The casino-style gaming system of claim 1 wherein the compact casino gaming unit physically coupled to said public casino is coupled to the floor between said first casino-style gaming device and said second casino-style gaming device.

6. A computer-implemented method for increasing revenue in a public casino, said computer-implemented method comprising:

installing a compact casino gaming unit between a first existing casino-style gaming device and a second existing casino-style gaming device in a public casino such that said compact casino gaming unit fits between said first and second existing casino-style gaming devices as said first and second existing casino-style gaming devices were previously installed on said public casino floor;

providing simultaneous play by a player using both said first existing casino-style gaming device and said compact casino gaming unit; and

increasing casino revenue per unit time collected from said first existing casino-style gaming device when said player plays using said first existing casino-style gaming device and said compact casino gaming unit simultaneously.

7. The computer-implemented method of claim 6 further comprising: complying with state casino-style gaming device regulations.

8. A computer program product for providing simultaneous play by a player using both a first existing casino-style gaming device and a compact casino gaming unit, said computer program product comprising computer-readable program code, said computer-readable program code executing in a tangible memory medium and configured to:

enable simultaneous play by a player using both a first existing casino-style gaming device and a compact casino gaming unit in a public casino; and

increase casino revenue per unit time collected from said first existing casino-style gaming device when said player plays using said first existing casino-style gaming device and said compact casino gaming unit simultaneously, said compact casino gaming unit fitting between said first existing casino-style gaming device and a second existing casino-style gaming device as said first and second existing casino-style gaming devices were previously installed on said public casino floor.

9. The computer program product of claim 5 further configured to comply with state casino-style gaming device regulations.

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