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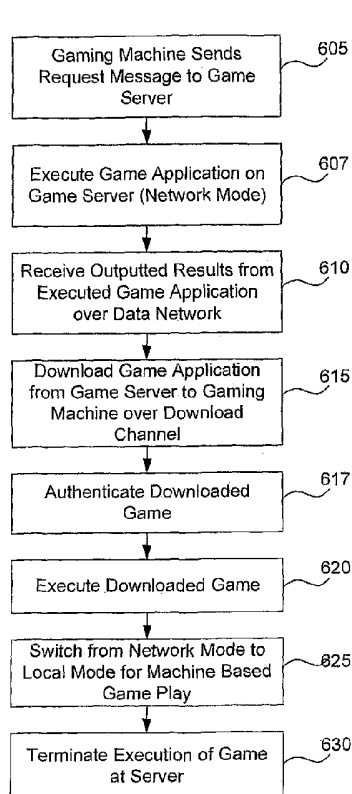
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(54) Title: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR INSTANT-ON GAME DOWNLOAD



(57) Abstract: Disclosed are methods, apparatus, and systems, including computer program products, implementing and using techniques for a method for providing a game on demand over a data network, in a gaming machine. The gaming machine sends a request message for a game application over the data network. In a network mode, the gaming machine receives outputted results from an executed game application over a streaming channel of the data network for network-based game play. During the network-based game play, the game application is downloaded over a download channel of the data network. In a local mode, the gaming machine executes the downloaded game application independent of the network-based game play. The gaming machine switches instantaneously from the network mode to the local mode for machine-based game play, including maintaining a status of the network-based game play.

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METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR INSTANT-ON GAME DOWNLOAD

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present disclosure relates to gaming machines and networks and, more
5 particularly, to games-on-demand systems.

Gaming in the United States is divided into Class I, Class II and Class III
games. Class I gaming includes social games played for minimal prizes, or
traditional ceremonial games. Class II gaming includes bingo games, pull tab games
if played in the same location as bingo games, lotto, punch boards, tip jars, instant
10 bingo, and other games similar to bingo. Class III gaming includes any game that is
not a Class I or Class II game, such as a game of chance typically offered in non-
Indian, state-regulated casinos. Many games of chance that are played on gaming
machines fall into the Class II and Class III categories of games.

Various games, particularly the Class II and Class III categories of games, can
15 be implemented as server-based games in a server-client system. Server-based games
are generally those in which the games and capabilities of a gaming terminal depend
on a central server. The terminal may download games from the central server or
may rely on the central server to run the games.

Game applications are becoming more sophisticated and, hence, larger in size,
20 to use the expanding capabilities of central servers and gaming terminals. In addition,
the number of different game applications available for play is always increasing, as
game developers attempt to meet player demand for various styles of games. There
are so many available games; it is impractical to store all of these games on a gaming
machine. Thus, the notion of server-based games is becoming a necessity in some
25 casinos and hotels.

In a games-on-demand system, a player can operate a gaming terminal to
request a particular game for playing. In a download configuration, the requested
game is downloaded from the central server to the gaming terminal, and then
executed on the gaming terminal. In a server-based configuration, on the other hand,
30 the requested game is executed on the server, and the player interacts with the server
to play the game. For example, U.S. Patent No. 5,779,549, "Database Driven Online
Distributed Tournament System" and U.S. Patent No. 6,409,602, "Slim Terminal
Gaming System" describe server-based configurations where no processing occurs on

the gaming machine. That is, the game is executed on the central server, and the gaming machine operates as an IO device for a player to interact with the central server. The game play, meter tracking, and other game functions are all carried out on the central server.

In implementing a games-on-demand system, both the download configuration and the server-based configuration described above have their respective drawbacks. In a download configuration, the gaming terminal is susceptible to long delays while a requested game is retrieved and downloaded from the central server, and then authenticated, before game play can begin. These delays are often attributable to the large and ever increasing size of game applications, described above. In a server-based configuration, a drawback is that the operability of the gaming terminals is entirely network-dependent. That is, when the central server malfunctions, or other network problems interfere with the connection between the gaming terminals and the central server, all of the gaming terminals are affected. Game play can be hindered on all of the gaming terminals, due to their dependence on the central server to execute the game.

Thus, it is desirable to provide a gaming system which eliminates both the delay associated with download configurations, and the network-dependence associated with server-based configurations.

A reference herein to a patent document or other matter which is given as prior art is not to be taken as an admission or a suggestion that that document or matter was known or that the information it contains was part of the common general knowledge as at the priority date of any of the claims.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Disclosed are methods, apparatus, and systems, including computer program products, implementing and using techniques for a method for providing a game on demand over a data network, in a gaming machine. In one aspect of the present invention, the gaming machine sends a request message for a game application over the data network. In a network mode, the gaming machine receives outputted results from an executed game application over a streaming channel of the data network for network-based game play. During the network-based game play, the game application is downloaded over a download channel of the data network. In a local mode, the gaming machine executes the downloaded game application independent of the network-based game play. The gaming machine switches instantaneously

from the network mode to the local mode for machine-based game play, including maintaining a status of the network-based game play.

All of the foregoing methods, along with other methods of aspects of the present invention, may be implemented in software, firmware, hardware and combinations thereof. For example, the methods of aspects of the present invention may be implemented by computer programs embodied in machine-readable media and other products.

According to one aspect, the present invention provides a method for providing a game on demand over a data network, the method comprising the steps of sending a request message for the game over a data network, the game being provided by executing a game application, the game application configured to be transferred over the data network in a downloadable form; receiving outputted results for play of the game from the game application being executed at a location other than the gaming machine, the outputted results received over a streaming channel of the data network for network-based game play; downloading, during the network-based game play, the downloadable form of the game application over a download channel of the data network; executing the downloadable form of the game application by the gaming machine independent of the network-based game play; and switching instantaneously from the network-based game play to machine-based game play, in which play of the game continues from the downloadable form of the game application being executed by the gaming machine, including maintaining a status of the network-based game play.

According to another aspect, the present invention provides a method for providing a game on demand using a game server having a download part and a streaming part, and a gaming machine in communication with the game server over a data network, the download part and the streaming part of the game server having access to a game application, the game being provided by executing the game application, the game application configured to be transferred over the data network in a downloadable form, the method comprising the steps of sending a request message from the gaming machine to the game server over a data network; executing, responsive to receiving the request message, the game application by the streaming part, the executing game application outputting results; sending the outputted results from the streaming part to the gaming machine over the data network for server-based game play between the gaming machine and the game server; downloading, during the server-based game play, the downloadable form of the game application from the download part to the gaming machine over the data network; executing the downloadable form of the game application by the gaming machine independent of the streaming part; and switching instantaneously from

the server-based game play to machine-based game play, in which play of the game continues from the downloadable form of the game application being executed by the gaming machine, including maintaining a status of the server-based game play.

According to yet another aspect, the present invention provides a method for providing a game on demand using a download server, a streaming server, and a gaming machine in communication with one another over a data network, the download server and the streaming server having access to a game application, the game being provided by executing the game application, the game application configured to be transferred over the data network in a downloadable form, the method comprising the steps of sending a request message from the gaming machine to the download server and the streaming server over a data network; executing, responsive to receiving the request message, the game application by the streaming server, the executing game application outputting results; sending the outputted results from the streaming server to the gaming machine over the data network for server-based game play between the gaming machine and the streaming server; downloading, during the server-based game play, the downloadable form of the game application from the download server to the gaming machine over the data network; executing the downloadable form of the game application by the gaming machine independent of the streaming server; and switching instantaneously from the server-based game play to machine-based game play, in which play of the game continues from the downloadable form of the game application being executed by the gaming machine, including maintaining a status of the server-based game play.

According to yet another aspect, the present invention provides a gaming machine for providing a game on demand over a data network, the game being provided by executing a game application, the game application configured to be transferred over the data network in a downloadable form, the gaming machine comprising a game logic module operative to i) send a request message for the game application over the data network; ii) receive outputted results from the game application being executed at a location other than the gaming machine over a streaming channel of the data network for network-based game play; iii) download, during the network-based game play, the downloadable form of the game application over a download channel of the data network; and a processor operative to i) execute the downloadable form of the game application by the gaming machine independent of the network-based game play; and ii) switch instantaneously from the network-based game play to machine-based game play, in which play of the game continues from the downloadable form of the game application

being executed by the gaming machine, including maintaining a status of the network-based game play.

According to yet another aspect, the present invention provides a system for providing a game on demand to a gaming machine over a data network, the game being provided by executing a game application, the game application configured to be transferred over the data network in a downloadable form, the system comprising a gaming machine coupled to the data network, the gaming machine coupled to send a request message over a data network; a streaming server coupled to the data network, the streaming server having access to the game application, the streaming server coupled to i) execute, responsive to receiving the request message, the game application, the executing game application outputting results, and ii) send the outputted results to the gaming machine over the data network for server-based game play between the gaming machine and the streaming server; and a download server coupled to the data network, the download server having access to the downloadable form of the game application, the download server coupled to download, during the server-based game play, the downloadable form of the game application to the gaming machine over the data network responsive to receiving the request message; wherein the gaming machine is further coupled to i) execute the downloadable form of the game application independent of the streaming server, and ii) switch instantaneously from the server-based game play to machine-based game play, in which play of the game continues from the downloadable form of the game application being executed by the gaming machine, including maintaining a status of the server-based game play.

According to yet another aspect, the present invention provides a computer program product, stored on a processor readable medium, comprising instructions operable to cause a computer to perform, in a gaming machine, a method for providing a game on demand over a data network, the method comprising the steps of sending a request message for the game over a data network, the game being provided by executing a game application, the game application configured to be transferred over the data network in a downloadable form; receiving outputted results for play of the game from the game application being executed at a location other than the gaming machine, the outputted results received over a streaming channel of the data network for network-based game play; downloading, during the network-based game play, the downloadable form of the game application over a download channel of the data network; executing the downloadable form of the game application by the gaming

machine independent of the network-based game play; and switching instantaneously from the network-based game play to machine-based game play, in which play of the game continues from the downloadable form of the game application being executed by the gaming machine, including maintaining a status of the network-based game play.

Aspects of the invention may be implemented by networked gaming machines, game servers and other such devices. These and other features and benefits of aspects of the invention will be described in more detail below with reference to the associated drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 shows a block diagram of a gaming system 100 for providing a game on demand over a data network 110, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

Fig. 2 shows a block diagram of game server 105 in communication with a gaming machine 120a, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

Fig. 3 shows a block diagram of a gaming system 300, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention, for providing a game on demand over a data network.

Fig. 4 shows a block diagram of a gaming system 400, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, for providing a game on demand over a data network.

Fig. 5 shows a block diagram of a gaming machine 120a, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 6 shows a flow diagram of a method 600 for providing a game on demand over a data network, performed in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 7 is a block diagram of a number of gaming machines in a gaming network that may be configured to implement some methods of the present invention.

Fig. 8 illustrates an exemplary gaming machine that may be configured to implement some methods of the present invention.

Fig. 9 is a block diagram of an exemplary network device that may be configured as a game server to implement some methods of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

Reference will now be made in detail to some specific embodiments of the invention including the best modes contemplated by the inventors for carrying out the invention. Examples of these specific embodiments are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. While the invention is described in conjunction with these specific embodiments, it will be understood that it is not intended to limit the invention to the described embodiments. On the contrary, it is intended to cover alternatives, modifications, and equivalents as may be included within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims. Moreover, numerous specific details are set forth below in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. The present invention may be practiced without some or all of these specific details. In other instances, well known process operations have not been described in detail in order not to obscure the present invention.

Fig. 1 shows a block diagram of a gaming system 100 for providing a game on demand over a data network 110 in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. Examples of data network 110 include a Local Area Network (LAN), a Wide Area Network (WAN) such as the Internet, and various combinations thereof. Other suitable communications networks can be used to define data network 110 within the spirit and scope of the present invention. In Fig. 1, the system 100 includes a game server 105 in communication with data network 110. Game server 105 can be constructed with various combinations of hardware and software, as described below. In Fig. 1, game server 105 is also in communication with a storage medium 115, such as a database, for storing game applications and game data. In one embodiment, storage medium 115 is external to game server 105, as shown. In another embodiment, storage medium 115 is a memory device integrated with game server 105. Game server 105 controls the storing and retrieving of game applications to and from the storage medium 115 for the operations described below. In Fig. 1, the system 100 further includes gaming machines 120a, 120b, and 120c. The gaming machines 120a, 120b, and 120c can be constructed of various combinations of hardware and software, as described below, depending on the desired implementation. The gaming machines 120a-c of system 100 communicate and interact with game server 105 over data network 110.

Fig. 2 shows a block diagram of game server 105 in communication with a gaming machine 120a, in accordance with one embodiment of the invention. The

hardware and software implementing game server 105 is described below. As part of this hardware, software, or combination thereof, game server 105 includes a streaming part 205 and a download part 210 that interact with an appropriate communications interface 215 in game server 105, as shown. The communications interface 215 provides a network endpoint on data network 110 so that game server 105 can interact with other systems and devices on data network 110. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that, in an alternative embodiment, the communications interface 215 with which streaming part 205 and download part 210 communicate is situated external to game server 105.

10 In Fig. 2, game play generally begins responsive to a request message sent from gaming machine 120a over an appropriate channel 230 of data network 110 to game server 105. Streaming part 205 retrieves a game application and any associated game data from 115, when the game application is not already stored in memory within game server 105. Streaming part 205 handles execution of the game application, including processing user inputted data received from gaming machine 15 120a over an appropriate communications channel of data network 110, such as channel 230 or 220, and outputting of results from the executing game application over a streaming channel 220 of data network 110 to gaming machine 120a. When a game is executing on game server 105 by streaming part 205, the system 100 of Fig. 1 is operating in "network mode."

20 In Fig. 2, download part 210 of game server 105 handles downloading of the game application through communications interface 215 over a download channel 225 of data network 110 to gaming machine 120a. Generally, the game application downloaded by download part 210 is the same application executed by streaming part 25 205. The downloading operation performed by download part 210 is generally initiated when execution of the game application by streaming part 205 commences, or shortly thereafter, and continues for the necessary amount of time while results are output to gaming machine 120a over streaming channel 220.

Those skilled in the art should appreciate that the channels 220, 225 and 230, 30 as shown in Fig. 2, are one possible implementation of a communications link established between game server 105 and gaming machine 120a over data network 110 for providing the transfer of various data and messages as described above. In one embodiment, two or more of the channels 220-230 are implemented as part of the same physical communications connection. In another embodiment, the channels are

implemented as individual communications connections physically separated from one another. In yet another embodiment, individual channels 220-230 are implemented in separate data networks. Other configurations of channels and connections or links for performing the same data transfer operations described above
5 are contemplated within the spirit and scope of the present invention. In addition, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the outputted results of the executing game application in streaming part 205 can be sent and received during or after execution of the game application on game server 105.

Fig. 3 shows a system 300 as an alternative embodiment to game server 105.
10 In system 300, two separate server computers are provided to perform the functions of streaming part 205 and download part 210 of game server 105. These server computers in system 300 include a streaming server 305 and a download server 310 to perform the same respective functions of streaming parts 205 and 210. That is, streaming server 305 executes the game application and streams outputted results
15 from the application to gaming machine 120a over streaming channel 220. Download server 310 receives the request message from gaming machine 120a over channel 230 and handles downloading of the game application over download channel 225 to gaming machine 120a. While not shown in Fig. 3, suitable communications interfaces similar to interface 215 in Fig. 2 are provided for each of the servers 305 and 310 to
20 communicate with gaming machine 120 over data network 110.

In Fig. 3, while the communication channels 220, 225 and 230 are established as illustrated for this embodiment, alternative configurations are contemplated within the spirit and scope of the present invention. For example, in one embodiment, the communications channel 230 is established between gaming machine 120a and
25 streaming server 305 such that the request message from gaming machine 120a is sent to streaming server 305. Responsive to receiving the request message, streaming server 305 then begins execution of the game application, as described above, and communicates the request message or a suitable signal to download server 310 over communications channel 315 established between streaming server 305 and
30 download server 310, notifying download server 310 to begin downloading the game application over download channel 225.

Fig. 4 shows a gaming system 400 constructed according to another embodiment of the present invention for providing a game on demand over a data network. In Fig. 4, the system 400 includes a plurality of gaming machines 405a,

405b, 405c and 405d. These gaming machines are in communication with one another in a peer-to-peer configuration over a suitable data network such as network 110 of Fig. 1. That is, communications links, i.e. channels 410-435 can be established as shown between one gaming machine, such as machine 405a, and one or more of the other gaming machines 405b-d in the system 400.

In Fig. 400, one or more of the gaming machines 405a-d are configured to operate the same as game server 105 of Fig. 2, rather than coupling a separate game server computer to the network. The peer-to-peer configuration of system 400 enables this feature. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the software, hardware or combination thereof within one or more of the gaming machines 405a-d of system 400, described in greater detail below, implements streaming part 205 and download part 210 of Fig. 2. Thus, when a user selects a game to play on a selected gaming machine, such as machine 405a, and that machine does not have a copy of the requested game application residing on that machine 405a, the gaming machine 405a sends a request to one or more of the other machines 405b-d in the system 400 for the requested game application. Then, the gaming machine having the requested game application interacts with the requesting game machine 405a in the same manner that the game server 105 or servers 305 and 310 interact with machine 120a as described above with respect to Figs. 1 and 3.

Using the configuration of Fig. 4, in one example, the game server or servers of Fig. 1 and 3 can be effectively removed from the system while maintaining the same functionality. In one example, a plurality of game applications are distributed among the various gaming machines 405a-d in the system 400. If possible, certain applications are installed on the particular machines where users will likely request those games. When a user requests a particular game application on a given machine, such as gaming machine 405a, and that game application is not already stored in memory on or accessible by gaming machine 405a, the gaming machine 405a sends a request message to other gaming machines in the network.

In another embodiment, similar to the system 100 of Fig. 1, the request message from a gaming machine 120a is sent to a game server such as game server 105. Responsive to receiving this request message, game server 105 broadcasts the request message to all of the other gaming machines 120b-c in the system 100. Then, the gaming machine having the requested game application, such as machine 120b, begins executing the requested application and streaming the outputted results

directly to gaming machine 120a over a suitable communications channel of network 110. In addition, the gaming machine 120b having the requested application begins downloading that application to the requesting gaming machine 120a, functioning the same as game server 105 or the combination of servers 305 and 310.

5 Fig. 5 shows a gaming machine 120a constructed according to one embodiment of the present invention. In Fig. 5, gaming machine 120a includes a suitable processor 505, as described below. In addition, gaming machine 120a includes an independent game logic module 510 in communication with a suitable memory device or medium 515 configured as shown in Fig. 5. The independent game
10 logic module 510 communicates with a game server or other gaming machine functioning as the game server, as described above in Fig. 4, over a suitable network connection 520 to data network 110.

During network mode, also referred to as server mode, when the requested game application is executing on a game server 105 or gaming machine external to
15 the requesting gaming machine 120a, state information for the executing game application, referred to herein as game settings, are maintained in the processor-readable storage medium 515. These settings will vary, depending on the particular game being played as well as the stage of the game. The configuration of these settings in storage in medium 515 can be structured as desired for the particular
20 implementation, as will be understood by those skilled in the art.

In one example, as shown in Fig. 5, the state information stored in medium 505 for the game being executed includes game settings 515a and 515b. In one example, these game settings are controlled and set with game IO logic implemented with suitable hardware, software or any combination thereof in independent game
25 logic module 510 of Fig. 5. Game settings 515a and 515b, in one example, are in XML format. In another example, one or more of the settings 515a and 515b are in HTML format. As shown in Fig. 5, the game settings stored in storage medium 515 further include a credit meter 515c maintained for the executing application, a bet meter 515d, and bet history information 515e. Other suitable bet configurations can
30 be stored in memory 515 and controlled by independent game logic module 510, depending on the desired implementation. When the gaming machine switches from network mode to local mode, that is, when the game application has been downloaded and is executing on the gaming machine 120a, the game settings for the downloaded game application are set to the current game settings for the executed application. In

other words, the game settings 515a-e in storage medium 515 at the time of switching from network mode to local mode are maintained and used by the downloaded game application. In this way, the status of the game is transferred. By transferring the state information, the gaming machine can switch instantaneously from network-based
5 game play to network-based game play, providing seamless and uninterrupted enjoyment for the player. Then, the game settings for the executed game application are used and updated by the downloaded game application as appropriate during execution in local mode.

In Fig. 5, the initial game settings for the executed game application on the
10 game server or other external gaming machine can be downloaded to gaming machine 120a over a suitable channel such as streaming channel 220 of Fig. 2. Further game settings updates and additional game settings information can similarly be sent from the game server 105 or other gaming machine over streaming channel 220 as the game is played.

Fig. 6 shows a flow diagram of a method 600 for providing a game on demand
15 over a data network, performed in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. Fig. 6 is described with respect to Figs. 1 and 2. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the method 600 is equally applicable to the systems of Figs. 3 and 4. That is, the operation of streaming part 205 in game server 105 of Fig. 2 is the
20 same as streaming server 305 of system 300, and download part 210 is implemented in download server 310. In another embodiment, in Fig. 4, the streaming part 205 and download part 210 of game server 105 are implemented in one or more gaming machines 405a-d of the peer-to-peer configuration of system 400, as described above.

In step 605 of Fig. 6, gaming machine 120a sends a request message over a
25 suitable channel of data network 110, such as communications channel 230, to game server 105. Often the request message is sent responsive to selection of the particular requested game application at the gaming machine by the player. This selection can be made using any of a variety of input devices and interfaces, as described below. Game server 105 receives the request message at communications interface 215 and
30 processes the request message accordingly. In particular, responsive to receiving the request message, in step 607, streaming part 205 of game server 105 begins executing the game application and streaming the output data or results from the executing game application back to gaming machine 120a over streaming channel 220 of data network 110. In Fig. 1, in one embodiment, game applications executable by game

server 105 are stored on a suitable processor-readable storage medium 115 in communication with game server 105. Responsive to receiving the request message, in step 607 of Fig. 6, the game server 105 retrieves the requested game application from storage medium 115 for execution.

5 When output data is being generated and streamed from game server 105 to gaming machine 120a, this is referred to herein as a “network mode” or “server mode” of operation. Network mode and server mode generally refer to the execution of the requested game application on game server 105 or any other machine or device external to gaming machine 120a, for network-based or server-based game play on
10 gaming machine 120a. In network mode, gaming machine 120a sends input data and selections, as appropriate for the particular game being executed on game server 105 or another device over the communications channel 230 or another suitable channel of data network 110. As used herein, “server-based game play” refers to execution of a game application external to the gaming machine 120a on a server such as game
15 server 105 or one or more streaming servers 305 as shown in Fig. 3, and providing output of that executed game application to the requesting gaming machine over data network 110. “Network-based game play” refers to the execution of the game application on any machine, server, or other device situated external to the requesting gaming machine and providing output of that executed game application to the
20 requesting gaming machine over data network 110. “Machine-based game play” refers to execution of the game application by the gaming machine 120a itself.

 In step 610 of Fig. 6, the outputted results from the game application executing on game server 105 are received over streaming channel 220 of data network 110 by the gaming machine 120a for network-based game play. The
25 outputted results received from the game server 105 by gaming machine 120a can be in a variety of formats, and often include video and audio data as appropriate for the particular game being played. Using appropriate user interfaces and input devices on gaming machine 120a, as described below, the user interacts with game server 105 to play the executing game application in network mode.

30 In step 615, responsive to receiving the request message from gaming machine 120a, generally at some time around the beginning of network-based game play, or shortly thereafter, the download part 210 of game server 105 begins downloading a downloadable form of the same game application executing on streaming part 205 over download channel 225 of data network 110. Following step

615, step 617 includes authentication of the downloaded game application by gaming machine 120a. The game application can be authenticated using any of a variety of techniques, as will be appreciated by those skilled in the art.

5 In step 620 of Fig. 6, after download is complete, the gaming machine 120a switches from network mode to local mode. This includes executing the downloaded game application on processor 505 of the gaming machine 120a independent of the playing of the game application executed on streaming part 205 of game server 105 in network mode. In step 625, the gaming machine 120a switches instantaneously from server mode to local mode from machine-based game play; that is, the machine
10 switches from the game executing on streaming part 205 to the game executing on gaming machine 120a. This includes maintaining a status of the network-based game play, including maintaining game settings and other state information in memory 515 associated with the executed game application on game server 105. That is, the current game settings for the network-based game play are transferred or otherwise
15 applied to the downloaded game application for machine-based game play. In this way, game play continues in an uninterrupted fashion. That is, by transferring the game settings of the executed application on game server 105 when machine-based game play begins, any history information and other state information of the network-based game play is maintained, and game play continues without any delay or
20 resetting of state information or parameters. The settings are consistent, and the user is unaware that any such switching has taken place. The user perceives game play as being in a single session, and is unaware of and does not need to be concerned with the server or machine on which the game application is actually executed. The user can focus on interacting with the game itself and the enjoyment of the gaming
25 experience.

In Fig. 6, following step 625, after switching from server mode or network mode to local mode, in step 630, the game server 105, namely streaming part 205, can terminate execution of the game application at the game server 105.

30 In one embodiment, a lower bandwidth version of the game application is run in network mode. For example, one game application normally outputs video data at 80 frames per second. In step 607 of Fig. 6, in network mode, the server executes the game, but only renders 30 frames per second. After the game application has been downloaded, in step 620, the downloaded game application is executed at full speed, i.e., 80 frames per second. In this way, the apparatus and methods described herein

can compensate for bandwidth limitations and other delay factors of the network that would otherwise impair the game play experience.

Some games of the present invention can be implemented, in part, in a gaming device such as the gaming machines described herein according to game data
5 received from a game server, such as the game servers described herein. The gaming device may receive such game data through data network 110, such as a dedicated gaming network and/or a public data network such as the Internet.

One example of a gaming system, also referred to herein as a gaming network, that may be used to implement methods performed in accordance with embodiments
10 of the invention is depicted in Fig. 7. Gaming establishment 701 could be any sort of gaming establishment, such as a casino, a card room, an airport, a store, etc. In this example, gaming network 777 includes more than one gaming establishment, all of which are networked to game server 722.

Here, gaming machine 702, and the other gaming machines 730, 732, 734,
15 and 736, include a main cabinet 706 and a top box 704. The main cabinet 706 houses the main gaming elements and can also house peripheral systems, such as those that utilize dedicated gaming networks. The top box 704 may also be used to house these peripheral systems.

The master gaming controller 708 controls the game play on the gaming
20 machine 702 according to instructions and/or game data from game server 722 or independent game logic module 510 and receives or sends data to various input/output devices 711 on the gaming machine 702. In one embodiment, master gaming controller 708 includes processor 505 and independent game logic module 510 of gaming machine 120a as described above. The master gaming controller 708
25 may also communicate with a display 710.

A particular gaming entity may desire to provide network gaming services that provide some operational advantage. Thus, dedicated networks may connect gaming machines to host servers that track the performance of gaming machines under the control of the entity, such as for accounting management, electronic fund
30 transfers (EFTs), cashless ticketing, such as EZPayTM, marketing management, and data tracking, such as player tracking. Therefore, master gaming controller 708 may also communicate with EFT system 712, EZPayTM system 716 (a proprietary cashless ticketing system of the present assignee), and player tracking system 720. The

systems of the gaming machine 702 communicate the data onto the network 722 via a communication board 718.

It will be appreciated by those of skill in the art that the present invention could be implemented on a network with more or fewer elements than are depicted in Fig. 7. For example, player tracking system 720 is not a necessary feature of the present invention. However, player tracking programs may help to sustain a game player's interest in additional game play during a visit to a gaming establishment and may entice a player to visit a gaming establishment to partake in various gaming activities. Player tracking programs provide rewards to players that typically correspond to the player's level of patronage (e.g., to the player's playing frequency and/or total amount of game plays at a given casino). Player tracking rewards may be free meals, free lodging and/or free entertainment.

Moreover, DCU 724 and translator 725 are not required for all gaming establishments 701. However, due to the sensitive nature of much of the information on a gaming network (e.g., electronic fund transfers and player tracking data) the manufacturer of a host system usually employs a particular networking language having proprietary protocols. For instance, 10-20 different companies produce player tracking host systems where each host system may use different protocols. These proprietary protocols are usually considered highly confidential and not released publicly.

Further, in the gaming industry, gaming machines are made by many different manufacturers. The communication protocols on the gaming machine are typically hard-wired into the gaming machine and each gaming machine manufacturer may utilize a different proprietary communication protocol. A gaming machine manufacturer may also produce host systems, in which case their gaming machine are compatible with their own host systems. However, in a heterogeneous gaming environment, gaming machines from different manufacturers, each with its own communication protocol, may be connected to host systems from other manufacturers, each with another communication protocol. Therefore, communication compatibility issues regarding the protocols used by the gaming machines in the system and protocols used by the host systems must be considered.

A network device that links a gaming establishment with another gaming establishment and/or a central system will sometimes be referred to herein as a "site controller." Here, site controller 742 provides this function for gaming establishment

701. Site controller 742 is connected to a central system and/or other gaming establishments via one or more networks, which may be public or private networks. Among other things, site controller 742 communicates with game server 722 to obtain game data, such as ball drop data, bingo card data, etc.

5 In the present illustration, gaming machines 702, 730, 732, 734 and 736 are connected to a dedicated gaming network 722. In general, the DCU 724 functions as an intermediary between the different gaming machines on the network 722 and the site controller 742. In general, the DCU 724 receives data transmitted from the gaming machines and sends the data to the site controller 742 over a transmission
10 path 726. In some instances, when the hardware interface used by the gaming machine is not compatible with site controller 742, a translator 725 may be used to convert serial data from the DCU 724 to a format accepted by site controller 742. The translator may provide this conversion service to a plurality of DCUs.

 Further, in some dedicated gaming networks, the DCU 724 can receive data
15 transmitted from site controller 742 for communication to the gaming machines on the gaming network. The received data may be, for example, communicated synchronously to the gaming machines on the gaming network.

 Here, CVT 752 provides cashless and cashout gaming services to the gaming machines in gaming establishment 701. Broadly speaking, CVT 752 authorizes and
20 validates cashless gaming machine instruments (also referred to herein as “tickets” or “vouchers”), including but not limited to tickets for causing a gaming machine to display a game result and cashout tickets. Moreover, CVT 752 authorizes the exchange of a cashout ticket for cash. These processes will be described in detail below. In one example, when a player attempts to redeem a cashout ticket for cash at
25 cashout kiosk 744, cash out kiosk 744 reads validation data from the cashout ticket and transmits the validation data to CVT 752 for validation. The tickets may be printed by gaming machines, by cashout kiosk 744, by a stand-alone printer, by CVT 752, etc. Some gaming establishments will not have a cashout kiosk 744. Instead, a cashout ticket could be redeemed for cash by a cashier (e.g. of a convenience store),
30 by a gaming machine or by a specially configured CVT.

 Turning to Fig. 8, more details of gaming machine 702 are described. Machine 702 includes a main cabinet 4, which generally surrounds the machine interior (not shown) and is viewable by users. The main cabinet 4 includes a main door 8 on the front of the machine, which opens to provide access to the interior of

the machine. Attached to the main door are player-input switches or buttons 32, a coin acceptor 28, and a bill validator 30, a coin tray 38, and a belly glass 40.

Viewable through the main door is a video display monitor 34 and an information panel 36. The display monitor 34 will typically be a cathode ray tube, high resolution flat-panel LCD, or other conventional electronically controlled video monitor. The information panel 36 may be a back-lit, silk screened glass panel with lettering to indicate general game information including, for example, the number of coins played. The bill validator 30, player-input switches 32, video display monitor 34, and information panel are devices used to play a game on the game machine 702. The devices are controlled by circuitry housed inside the main cabinet 4 of the machine 702.

The gaming machine 702 includes a top box 6, which sits on top of the main cabinet 4. The top box 6 houses a number of devices, which may be used to add features to a game being played on the gaming machine 702, including speakers 10, 12, 14, a ticket printer 18 which may print bar-coded tickets 20 used as cashless instruments. The player tracking unit mounted within the top box 6 includes a key pad 22 for entering player tracking information, a florescent display 16 for displaying player tracking information, a card reader 24 for entering a magnetic striped card containing player tracking information, a microphone 43 for inputting voice data, a speaker 42 for projecting sounds and a light panel 44 for display various light patterns used to convey gaming information. In other embodiments, the player tracking unit and associated player tracking interface devices, such as 16, 22, 24, 42, 43 and 44, may be mounted within the main cabinet 4 of the gaming machine, on top of the gaming machine, or on the side of the main cabinet of the gaming machine.

Understand that gaming machine 702 is but one example from a wide range of gaming machine designs on which the present invention may be implemented. For example, not all suitable gaming machines have top boxes or player tracking features. Further, some gaming machines have two or more game displays – mechanical and/or video. Some gaming machines are designed for bar tables and have displays that face upwards. Still further, some machines may be designed entirely for cashless systems. Such machines may not include such features as bill validators, coin acceptors and coin trays. Instead, they may have only ticket readers, card readers and ticket dispensers. Those of skill in the art will understand that the present can be deployed on most gaming machines now available or hereafter developed. Moreover, some

aspects of the invention may be implemented on devices which lack some of the features of the gaming machines described herein, e.g., workstation, desktop computer, a portable computing device such as a personal digital assistant or similar handheld device, a cellular telephone, etc. U.S. Patent Application No. 09/967,326, filed September 28, 2001 and entitled "Wireless Game Player," is hereby incorporated by reference for all purposes.

Returning to the example of Fig. 8, when a user wishes to play the gaming machine 702, he or she inserts cash through the coin acceptor 28 or bill validator 30. In addition, the player may use a cashless instrument of some type to register credits on the gaming machine 702. For example, the bill validator 30 may accept a printed ticket voucher, including 20, as an indicium of credit. As another example, the card reader 24 may accept a debit card or a smart card containing cash or credit information that may be used to register credits on the gaming machine.

During the course of a game, a player may be required to make a number of decisions. For example, a player may vary his or her wager on a particular game, select a prize for a particular game, or make game decisions regarding gaming criteria that affect the outcome of a particular game (e.g., which cards to hold). The player may make these choices using the player-input switches 32, the video display screen 34 or using some other hardware and/or software that enables a player to input information into the gaming machine (e.g. a GUI displayed on display 16).

During certain game functions and events, the gaming machine 702 may display visual and auditory effects that can be perceived by the player. These effects add to the excitement of a game, which makes a player more likely to continue playing. Auditory effects include various sounds that are projected by the speakers 10, 12, 14. Visual effects include flashing lights, strobing lights or other patterns displayed from lights on the gaming machine 702, from lights behind the belly glass 40 or the light panel on the player tracking unit 44.

After the player has completed a game, the player may receive game tokens from the coin tray 38 or the ticket 20 from the printer 18, which may be used for further games or to redeem a prize. Further, the player may receive a ticket 20 for food, merchandise, or games from the printer 18. The type of ticket 20 may be related to past game playing recorded by the player tracking software within the gaming machine 702. In some embodiments, these tickets may be used by a game player to obtain game services.

IGT gaming machines are implemented with special features and/or additional circuitry that differentiate them from general-purpose computers (e.g., desktop PC's and laptops). Gaming machines are highly regulated to ensure fairness and, in many cases, gaming machines are operable to dispense monetary awards of multiple millions of dollars. Therefore, to satisfy security and regulatory requirements in a gaming environment, hardware and software architectures may be implemented in gaming machines that differ significantly from those of general-purpose computers. A description of gaming machines relative to general-purpose computing machines and some examples of the additional (or different) components and features found in gaming machines are described below.

At first glance, one might think that adapting PC technologies to the gaming industry would be a simple proposition because both PCs and gaming machines employ microprocessors that control a variety of devices. However, because of such reasons as 1) the regulatory requirements that are placed upon gaming machines, 2) the harsh environment in which gaming machines operate, 3) security requirements and 4) fault tolerance requirements, adapting PC technologies to a gaming machine can be quite difficult. Further, techniques and methods for solving a problem in the PC industry, such as device compatibility and connectivity issues, might not be adequate in the gaming environment. For instance, a fault or a weakness tolerated in a PC, such as security holes in software or frequent crashes, may not be tolerated in a gaming machine because in a gaming machine these faults can lead to a direct loss of funds from the gaming machine, such as stolen cash or loss of revenue when the gaming machine is not operating properly.

For the purposes of illustration, a few differences between PC systems and gaming systems will be described. A first difference between gaming machines and common PC based computers systems is that gaming machines are designed to be state-based systems. In a state-based system, the system stores and maintains its current state in a non-volatile memory, such that, in the event of a power failure or other malfunction the gaming machine will return to its current state when the power is restored. For instance, if a player was shown an award for a game of chance and, before the award could be provided to the player the power failed, the gaming machine, upon the restoration of power, would return to the state where the award is indicated. As anyone who has used a PC, knows, PCs are not state machines and a

majority of data is usually lost when a malfunction occurs. This requirement affects the software and hardware design on a gaming machine.

5 A second important difference between gaming machines and common PC based computer systems is that for regulation purposes, the software on the gaming machine used to generate the game of chance and operate the gaming machine has been designed to be static and monolithic to prevent cheating by the operator of gaming machine. For instance, one solution that has been employed in the gaming industry to prevent cheating and satisfy regulatory requirements has been to manufacture a gaming machine that can use a proprietary processor running
10 instructions to generate the game of chance from an EPROM or other form of non-volatile memory. The coding instructions on the EPROM are static (non-changeable) and must be approved by a gaming regulators in a particular jurisdiction and installed in the presence of a person representing the gaming jurisdiction. Any changes to any part of the software required to generate the game of chance, such as adding a new
15 device driver used by the master gaming controller to operate a device during generation of the game of chance can require a new EPROM to be burnt, approved by the gaming jurisdiction and reinstalled on the gaming machine in the presence of a gaming regulator. Regardless of whether the EPROM solution is used, to gain approval in most gaming jurisdictions, a gaming machine must demonstrate sufficient
20 safeguards that prevent an operator of a gaming machine from manipulating hardware and software in a manner that gives them an unfair and some cases an illegal advantage. The code validation requirements in the gaming industry affect both hardware and software designs on gaming machines.

A third important difference between gaming machines and common PC
25 based computer systems is the number and kinds of peripheral devices used on a gaming machine are not as great as on PC based computer systems. Traditionally, in the gaming industry, gaming machines have been relatively simple in the sense that the number of peripheral devices and the number of functions the gaming machine has been limited. Further, in operation, the functionality of gaming machines were relatively constant once the gaming machine was deployed, i.e., new peripherals
30 devices and new gaming software were infrequently added to the gaming machine. This differs from a PC where users will go out and buy different combinations of devices and software from different manufacturers and connect them to a PC to suit their needs depending on a desired application. Therefore, the types of devices

connected to a PC may vary greatly from user to user depending in their individual requirements and may vary significantly over time.

Although the variety of devices available for a PC may be greater than on a gaming machine, gaming machines still have unique device requirements that differ from a PC, such as device security requirements not usually addressed by PCs. For instance, monetary devices, such as coin dispensers, bill validators and ticket printers and computing devices that are used to govern the input and output of cash to a gaming machine have security requirements that are not typically addressed in PCs. Therefore, many PC techniques and methods developed to facilitate device connectivity and device compatibility do not address the emphasis placed on security in the gaming industry.

To address some of the issues described above, a number of hardware components, software components and architectures are utilized in gaming machines that are not typically found in general purpose computing devices, such as PCs. These hardware/software components and architectures, as described below in more detail, include but are not limited to watchdog timers, voltage monitoring systems, state-based software architecture and supporting hardware, specialized communication interfaces, security monitoring and trusted memory.

A watchdog timer is normally used in IGT gaming machines to provide a software failure detection mechanism. In a normally operating system, the operating software periodically accesses control registers in the watchdog timer subsystem to "re-trigger" the watchdog. Should the operating software fail to access the control registers within a preset timeframe, the watchdog timer will timeout and generate a system reset. Typical watchdog timer circuits contain a loadable timeout counter register to allow the operating software to set the timeout interval within a certain range of time. A differentiating feature of the some preferred circuits is that the operating software cannot completely disable the function of the watchdog timer. In other words, the watchdog timer always functions from the time power is applied to the board.

IGT gaming computer platforms preferably use several power supply voltages to operate portions of the computer circuitry. These can be generated in a central power supply or locally on the computer board. If any of these voltages falls out of the tolerance limits of the circuitry they power, unpredictable operation of the computer may result. Though most modern general-purpose computers include

voltage monitoring circuitry, these types of circuits only report voltage status to the operating software. Out of tolerance voltages can cause software malfunction, creating a potential uncontrolled condition in the gaming computer. Gaming machines of the present assignee typically have power supplies with tighter voltage margins than that required by the operating circuitry. In addition, the voltage monitoring circuitry implemented in IGT gaming computers typically has two thresholds of control. The first threshold generates a software event that can be detected by the operating software and an error condition generated. This threshold is triggered when a power supply voltage falls out of the tolerance range of the power supply, but is still within the operating range of the circuitry. The second threshold is set when a power supply voltage falls out of the operating tolerance of the circuitry. In this case, the circuitry generates a reset, halting operation of the computer.

The standard method of operation for IGT slot machine game software is to use a state machine. Each function of the game (bet, play, result, etc.) is defined as a state. When a game moves from one state to another, critical data regarding the game software is stored in a custom non-volatile memory subsystem. In addition, game history information regarding previous games played, amounts wagered, and so forth also should be stored in a non-volatile memory device. This feature allows the game to recover operation to the current state of play in the event of a malfunction, loss of power, etc. This is critical to ensure the player's wager and credits are preserved. Typically, battery backed RAM devices are used to preserve this critical data. These memory devices are not used in typical general-purpose computers.

IGT gaming computers normally contain additional interfaces, including serial interfaces, to connect to specific subsystems internal and external to the slot machine. As noted above, some preferred embodiments of the present invention include parallel, digital interfaces for high-speed data transfer. However, even the serial devices may have electrical interface requirements that differ from the "standard" EIA RS232 serial interfaces provided by general-purpose computers. These interfaces may include EIA RS485, EIA RS422, Fiber Optic Serial, Optically Coupled Serial Interfaces, current loop style serial interfaces, etc. In addition, to conserve serial interfaces internally in the slot machine, serial devices may be connected in a shared, daisy-chain fashion where multiple peripheral devices are connected to a single serial channel.

IGT gaming machines may alternatively be treated as peripheral devices to a casino communication controller and connected in a shared daisy chain fashion to a single serial interface. In both cases, the peripheral devices are preferably assigned device addresses. If so, the serial controller circuitry must implement a method to
5 generate or detect unique device addresses. General-purpose computer serial ports are not able to do this.

Security monitoring circuits detect intrusion into an IGT gaming machine by monitoring security switches attached to access doors in the slot machine cabinet. Preferably, access violations result in suspension of game play and can trigger
10 additional security operations to preserve the current state of game play. These circuits also function when power is off by use of a battery backup. In power-off operation, these circuits continue to monitor the access doors of the slot machine. When power is restored, the gaming machine can determine whether any security violations occurred while power was off, e.g., via software for reading status
15 registers. This can trigger event log entries and further data authentication operations by the slot machine software.

Trusted memory devices are preferably included in an IGT gaming machine computer to ensure the authenticity of the software that may be stored on less secure memory subsystems, such as mass storage devices. Trusted memory devices and
20 controlling circuitry are typically designed to not allow modification of the code and data stored in the memory device while the memory device is installed in the slot machine. The code and data stored in these devices may include authentication algorithms, random number generators, authentication keys, operating system kernels, etc. The purpose of these trusted memory devices is to provide gaming regulatory
25 authorities a root trusted authority within the computing environment of the slot machine that can be tracked and verified as original. This may be accomplished via removal of the trusted memory device from the slot machine computer and verification of the trusted memory device contents in a separate third party verification device. Once the trusted memory device is verified as authentic, and
30 based on the approval of the verification algorithms contained in the trusted device, the gaming machine is allowed to verify the authenticity of additional code and data that may be located in the gaming computer assembly, such as code and data stored on hard disk drives.

Mass storage devices used in a general-purpose computer typically allow code and data to be read from and written to the mass storage device. In a gaming machine environment, modification of the gaming code stored on a mass storage device is strictly controlled and would only be allowed under specific maintenance type events with electronic and physical enablers required. Though this level of security could be provided by software, IGT gaming computers that include mass storage devices preferably include hardware level mass storage data protection circuitry that operates at the circuit level to monitor attempts to modify data on the mass storage device and will generate both software and hardware error triggers should a data modification be attempted without the proper electronic and physical enablers being present.

Gaming machines used for Class III games generally include software and/or hardware for generating random numbers. However, gaming machines used for Class II games may or may not have RNG capabilities. In some machines used for Class II games, RNG capability may be disabled.

Fig. 9 illustrates an example of a network device that may be configured as a game server for implementing some methods of the present invention. Network device 960 includes a master central processing unit (CPU) 962, interfaces 968, and a bus 967 (e.g., a PCI bus). Generally, interfaces 968 include ports 969 appropriate for communication with the appropriate media. In some embodiments, one or more of interfaces 968 includes at least one independent processor and, in some instances, volatile RAM. The independent processors may be, for example, ASICs or any other appropriate processors. According to some such embodiments, these independent processors perform at least some of the functions of the logic described herein. In some embodiments, one or more of interfaces 968 control such communications-intensive tasks as media control and management. By providing separate processors for the communications-intensive tasks, interfaces 968 allow the master microprocessor 962 efficiently to perform other functions such as routing computations, network diagnostics, security functions, etc.

The interfaces 968 are typically provided as interface cards (sometimes referred to as "linecards"). Generally, interfaces 968 control the sending and receiving of data packets over the network and sometimes support other peripherals used with the network device 960. Among the interfaces that may be provided are FC interfaces, Ethernet interfaces, frame relay interfaces, cable interfaces, DSL interfaces, token ring interfaces, and the like. In addition, various very high-speed

interfaces may be provided, such as fast Ethernet interfaces, Gigabit Ethernet interfaces, ATM interfaces, HSSI interfaces, POS interfaces, FDDI interfaces, ASI interfaces, DHEI interfaces and the like.

When acting under the control of appropriate software or firmware, in some
5 implementations of the invention CPU 962 may be responsible for implementing specific functions associated with the functions of a desired network device. According to some embodiments, CPU 962 accomplishes all these functions under the control of software including an operating system and any appropriate applications software.

10 CPU 962 may include one or more processors 963 such as a processor from the Motorola family of microprocessors or the MIPS family of microprocessors. In an alternative embodiment, processor 963 is specially designed hardware for controlling the operations of network device 960. In a specific embodiment, a memory 961 (such as non-volatile RAM and/or ROM) also forms part of CPU 962.
15 However, there are many different ways in which memory could be coupled to the system. Memory block 961 may be used for a variety of purposes such as, for example, caching and/or storing data, programming instructions, etc.

Regardless of network device's configuration, it may employ one or more memories or memory modules (such as, for example, memory block 965) configured
20 to store data, program instructions for the general-purpose network operations and/or other information relating to the functionality of the techniques described herein. The program instructions may control the operation of an operating system and/or one or more applications, for example.

Because such information and program instructions may be employed to
25 implement the systems/methods described herein, the present invention relates to machine-readable media that include program instructions, state information, etc. for performing various operations described herein. Examples of machine-readable media include, but are not limited to, magnetic media such as hard disks, floppy disks, and magnetic tape; optical media such as CD-ROM disks; magneto-optical
30 media; and hardware devices that are specially configured to store and perform program instructions, such as read-only memory devices (ROM) and random access memory (RAM). The invention may also be embodied in a carrier wave traveling over an appropriate medium such as airwaves, optical lines, electric lines, etc. Examples of program instructions include both machine code, such as produced by a

compiler, and files containing higher-level code that may be executed by the computer using an interpreter.

Although the system shown in Fig. 9 illustrates one specific network device of the present invention, it is by no means the only network device architecture on which the present invention can be implemented. For example, an architecture having a single processor that handles communications as well as routing computations, etc. is often used. Further, other types of interfaces and media could also be used with the network device. The communication path between interfaces may be bus based (as shown in Fig. 9) or switch fabric based (such as a cross-bar).

The above-described devices and materials will be familiar to those of skill in the computer hardware and software arts. Although many of the components and processes are described above in the singular for convenience, it will be appreciated by one of skill in the art that multiple components and repeated processes can also be used to practice the techniques of the present invention.

Although the foregoing invention has been described in some detail for purposes of clarity of understanding, it will be apparent that certain changes and modifications may be practiced within the scope of the appended claims.

Where the terms "comprise", "comprises", "comprised" or "comprising" are used in this specification (including the claims) they are to be interpreted as specifying the presence of the stated features, integers, steps or components, but not precluding the presence of one or more other feature, integer, step, component or group thereof.

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. In a gaming machine, a method for providing a game on demand over a data network, the method comprising the steps of:

5 sending a request message for the game over a data network, the game being provided by executing a game application, the game application configured to be transferred over the data network in a downloadable form;

10 receiving outputted results for play of the game from the game application being executed at a location other than the gaming machine, the outputted results received over a streaming channel of the data network for network-based game play;

downloading, during the network-based game play, the downloadable form of the game application over a download channel of the data network;

executing the downloadable form of the game application by the gaming machine independent of the network-based game play; and

15 switching instantaneously from the network-based game play to machine-based game play, in which play of the game continues from the downloadable form of the game application being executed by the gaming machine, including maintaining a status of the network-based game play.

20 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

maintaining current game settings for the game application being executed at the location other than the gaming machine.

25 3. The method of claim 2, wherein maintaining a status of the network-based game play includes:

setting game settings for the downloadable form of the game application being executed by the gaming machine to the current game settings for the game application being executed at the location other than the gaming machine.

30 4. A method for providing a game on demand using a game server having a download part and a streaming part, and a gaming machine in communication with the game server over a data network, the download part and the streaming part of the game server having access to a game application, the game being provided by executing the game application, the game

application configured to be transferred over the data network in a downloadable form, the method comprising the steps of:

sending a request message from the gaming machine to the game server over a data network;

5 executing, responsive to receiving the request message, the game application by the streaming part, the executing game application outputting results;

sending the outputted results from the streaming part to the gaming machine over the data network for server-based game play between the gaming machine and the game server;

10 downloading, during the server-based game play, the downloadable form of the game application from the download part to the gaming machine over the data network;

executing the downloadable form of the game application by the gaming machine independent of the streaming part; and

15 switching instantaneously from the server-based game play to machine-based game play, in which play of the game continues from the downloadable form of the game application being executed by the gaming machine, including maintaining a status of the server-based game play.

5. The method of claim 4, the request message designating the game application, the method further comprising the step of:

20 retrieving the game application from a processor readable storage medium.

6. The method of either of claims 4 or 5, further comprising the step of:

terminating, after switching from the server-based game play to the machine-based game play, execution of the game application at the streaming part of the game server.

7. The method of any of claims 4-6, further comprising the step of:

authenticating the downloadable form of the game application.

8. A method for providing a game on demand using a download server, a streaming server, and a gaming machine in communication with one another over a data network, the download server and the streaming server having access to a game application, the game being provided by executing the game application, the game application configured to be transferred over the data network in a downloadable form, the method comprising the steps of:

sending a request message from the gaming machine to the download server and the streaming server over a data network;

executing, responsive to receiving the request message, the game application by the streaming server, the executing game application outputting results;

5 sending the outputted results from the streaming server to the gaming machine over the data network for server-based game play between the gaming machine and the streaming server;

downloading, during the server-based game play, the downloadable form of the game application from the download server to the gaming machine over the data network;

10 executing the downloadable form of the game application by the gaming machine independent of the streaming server; and

switching instantaneously from the server-based game play to machine-based game play, in which play of the game continues from the downloadable form of the game application being executed by the gaming machine, including maintaining a status of the server-based game play.

9. The method of claim 8, the request message designating the game application, the method further comprising the step of:

retrieving the game application from a processor readable storage medium.

10. The method of either of claims 8 or 9, further comprising the step of:

terminating, after switching from the server-based game play to the machine-based game play, execution of the game application at the streaming server.

11. A gaming machine for providing a game on demand over a data network, the game being provided by executing a game application, the game application configured to be transferred over the data network in a downloadable form, the gaming machine comprising:

a game logic module operative to:

i) send a request message for the game application over the data network;

30 ii) receive outputted results from the game application being executed at a location other than the gaming machine over a streaming channel of the data network for network-based game play;

iii) download, during the network-based game play, the downloadable form of the game application over a download channel of the data network; and

a processor operative to:

i) execute the downloadable form of the game application by the gaming machine independent of the network-based game play; and

ii) switch instantaneously from the network-based game play to machine-based game play, in which play of the game continues from the downloadable form of the game application being executed by the gaming machine, including maintaining a status of the network-based game play.

12. The gaming machine of claim 11, further comprising:

a processor readable storage medium operative to maintain current game settings for the game application being executed at the location other than the gaming machine.

13. A system for providing a game on demand to a gaming machine over a data network, the game being provided by executing a game application, the game application configured to be transferred over the data network in a downloadable form, the system comprising:

a gaming machine coupled to the data network, the gaming machine coupled to send a request message over a data network;

a streaming server coupled to the data network, the streaming server having access to the game application, the streaming server coupled to:

i) execute, responsive to receiving the request message, the game application, the executing game application outputting results, and

ii) send the outputted results to the gaming machine over the data network for server-based game play between the gaming machine and the streaming server; and

a download server coupled to the data network, the download server having access to the downloadable form of the game application, the download server coupled to download, during the server-based game play, the downloadable form of the game application to the gaming machine over the data network responsive to receiving the request message;

wherein the gaming machine is further coupled to:

i) execute the downloadable form of the game application independent of the streaming server, and

ii) switch instantaneously from the server-based game play to machine-based game play, in which play of the game continues from the downloadable form of the game application being executed by the gaming machine, including maintaining a status of the server-based game play.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the gaming machine is a first gaming machine in a peer-to-peer configuration.

5 15. The system of claim 14, wherein the download server is a second gaming machine in the peer-to-peer configuration.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein the streaming server is a third gaming machine in the peer-to-peer configuration.

10 17. A computer program product, stored on a processor readable medium, comprising instructions operable to cause a computer to perform, in a gaming machine, a method for providing a game on demand over a data network, the method comprising the steps of:

15 sending a request message for the game over a data network, the game being provided by executing a game application, the game application configured to be transferred over the data network in a downloadable form;

receiving outputted results for play of the game from the game application being executed at a location other than the gaming machine, the outputted results received over a streaming channel of the data network for network-based game play;

20 downloading, during the network-based game play, the downloadable form of the game application over a download channel of the data network;

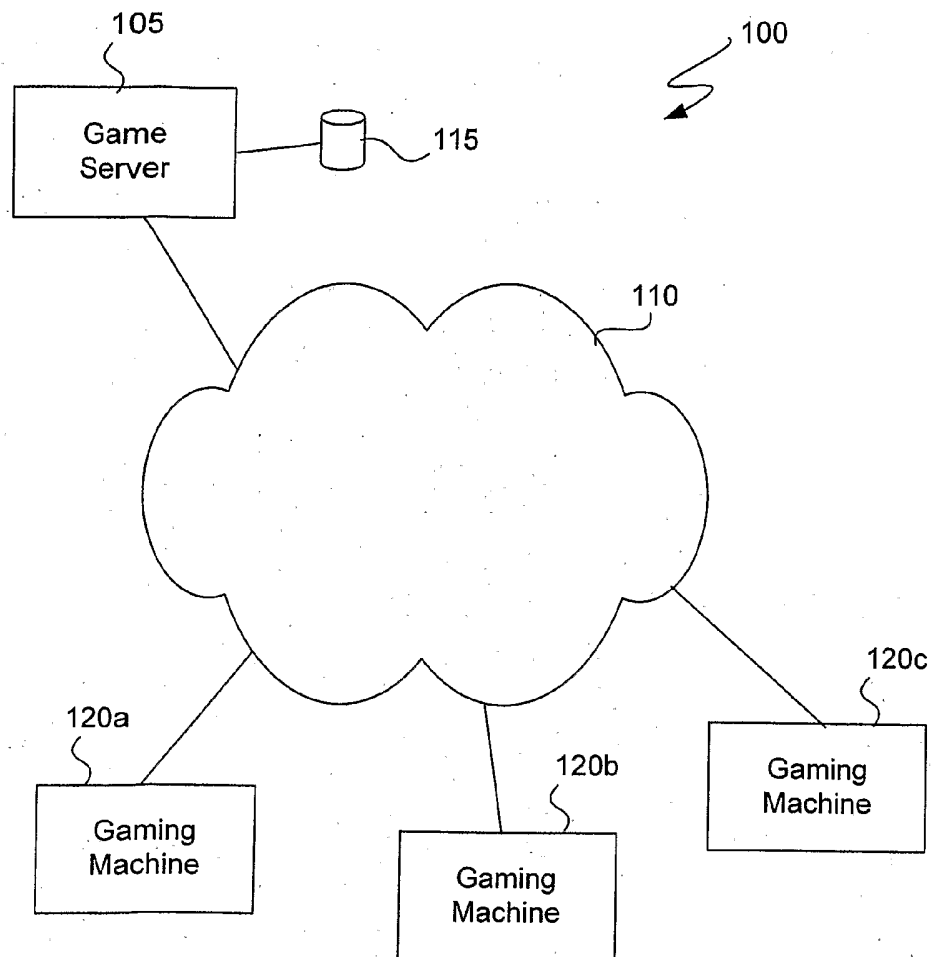
executing the downloadable form of the game application by the gaming machine independent of the network-based game play; and

25 switching instantaneously from the network-based game play to machine-based game play, in which play of the game continues from the downloadable form of the game application being executed by the gaming machine, including maintaining a status of the network-based game play.

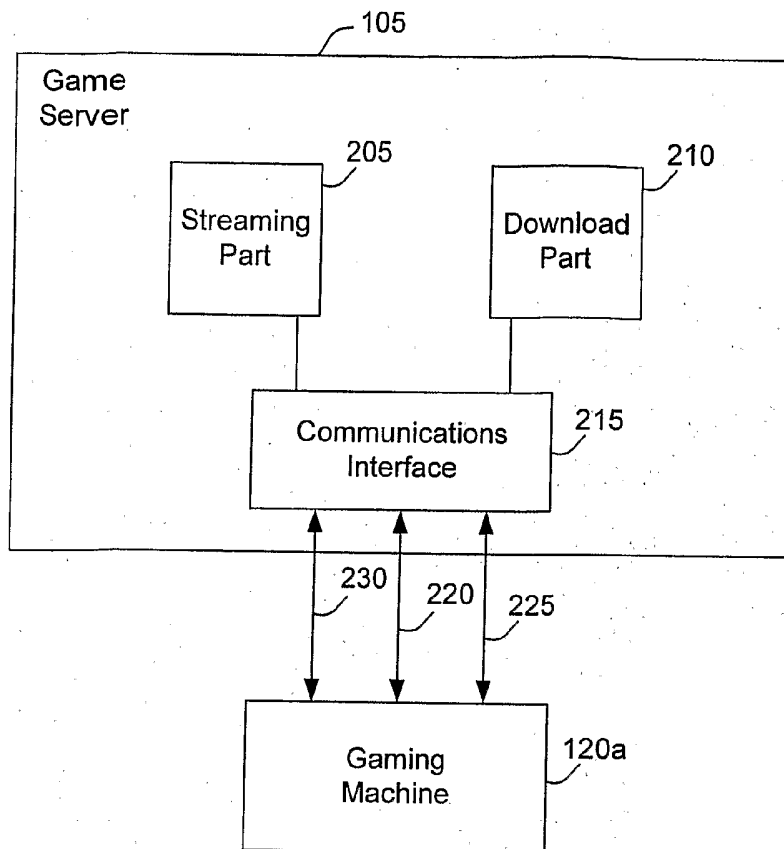
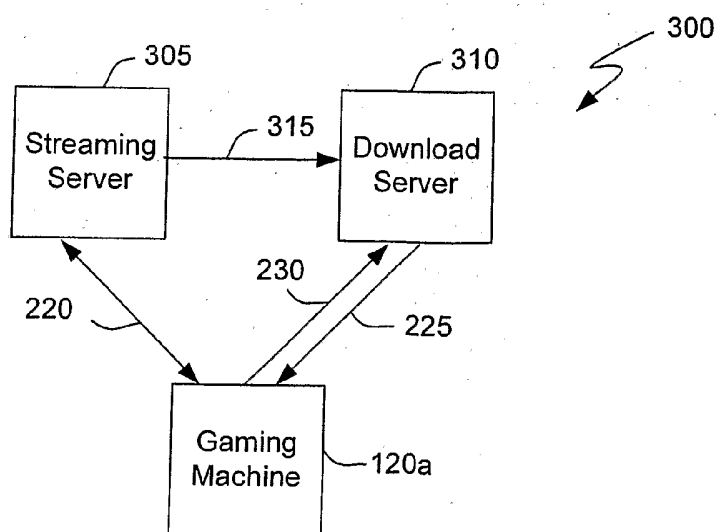
30 18. A method for providing a game on demand over a data network, substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying examples.

19. A gaming machine for providing a game on demand over a data network substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

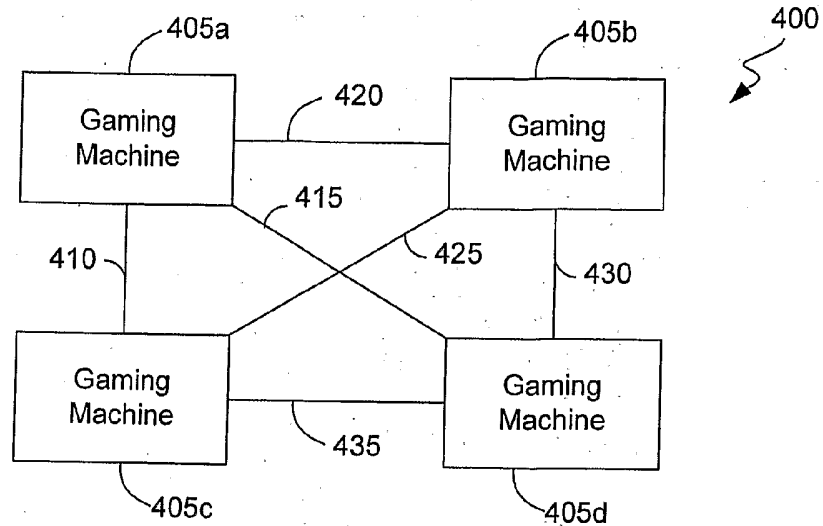
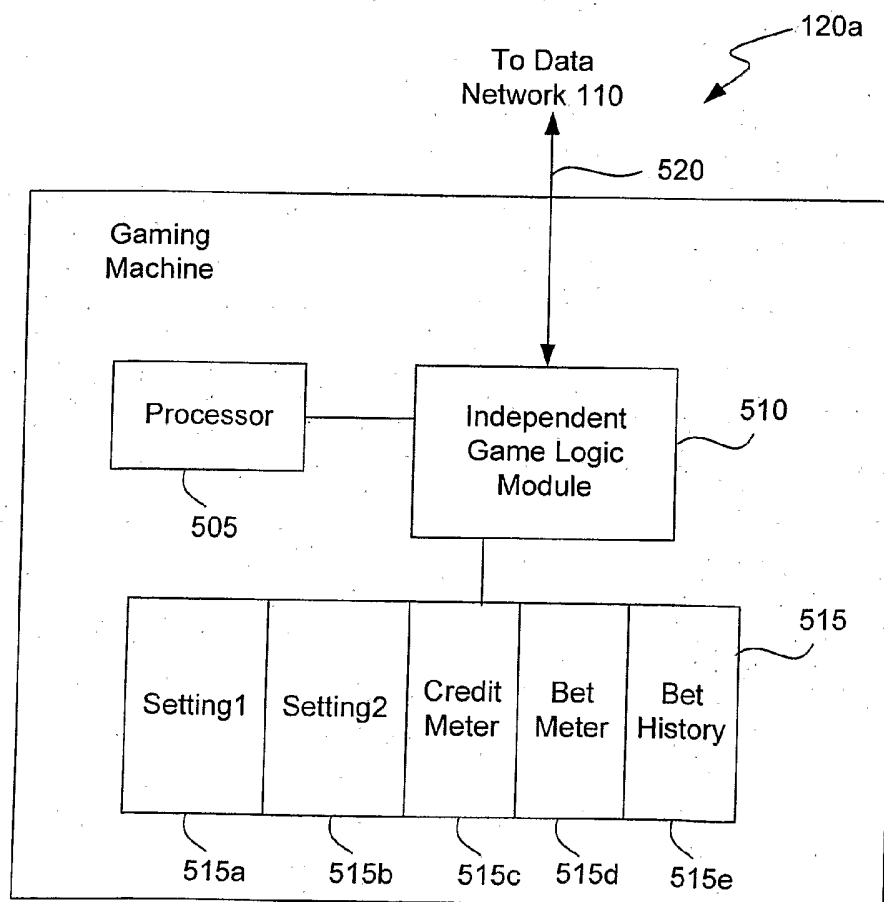
20. A system for providing a game on demand to a gaming machine over a data network substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

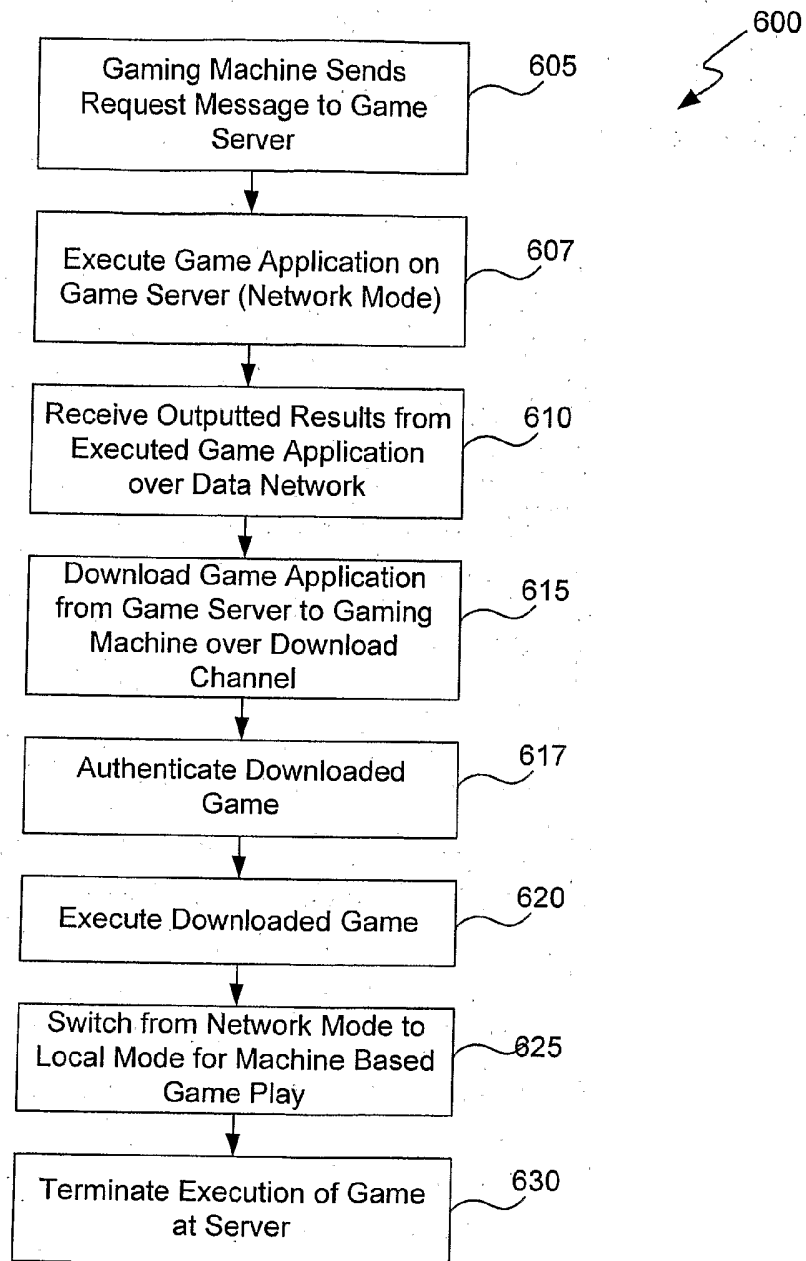
**FIG. 1**

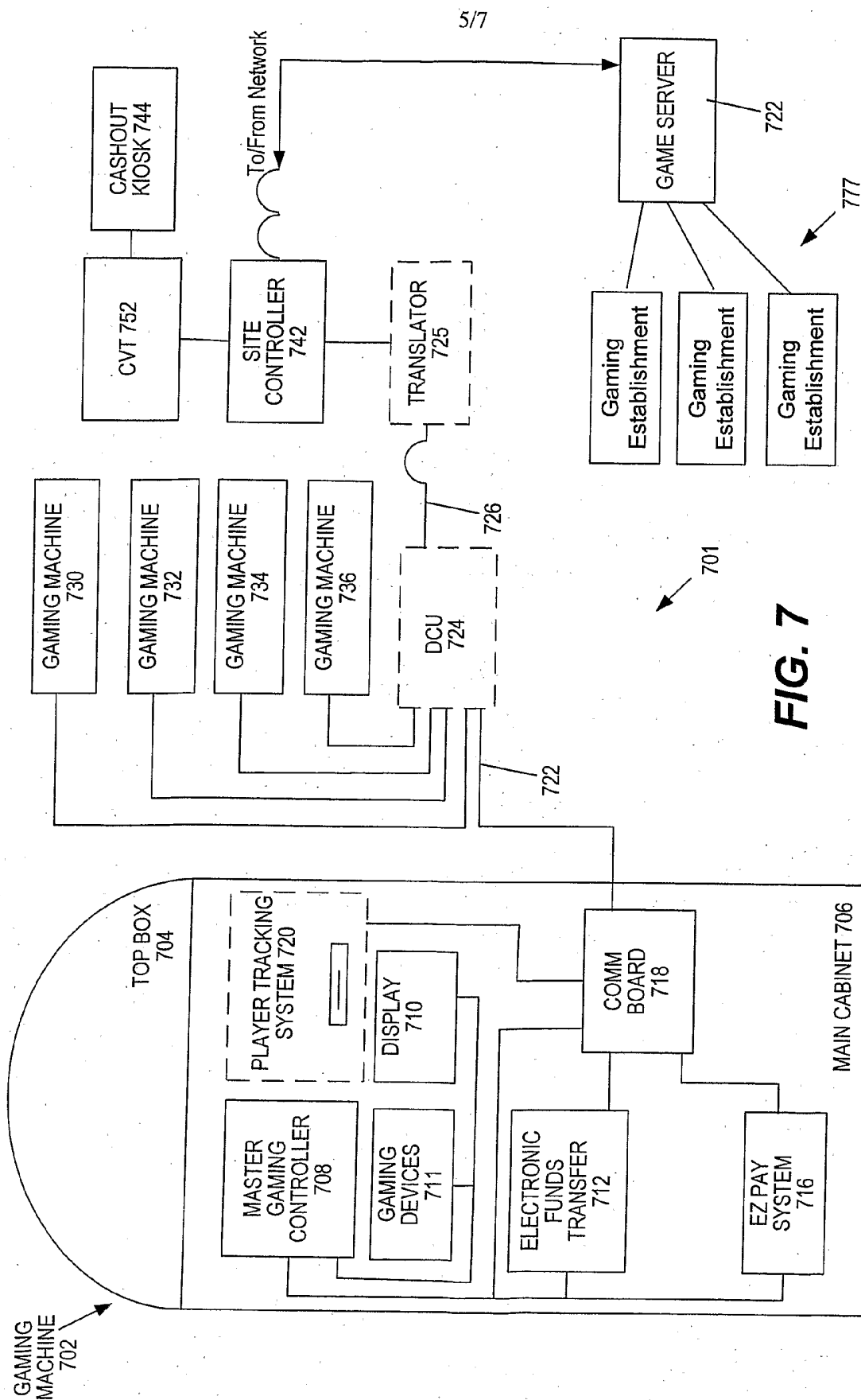
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**FIG. 2****FIG. 3**

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**FIG. 4****FIG. 5**

**FIG. 6**



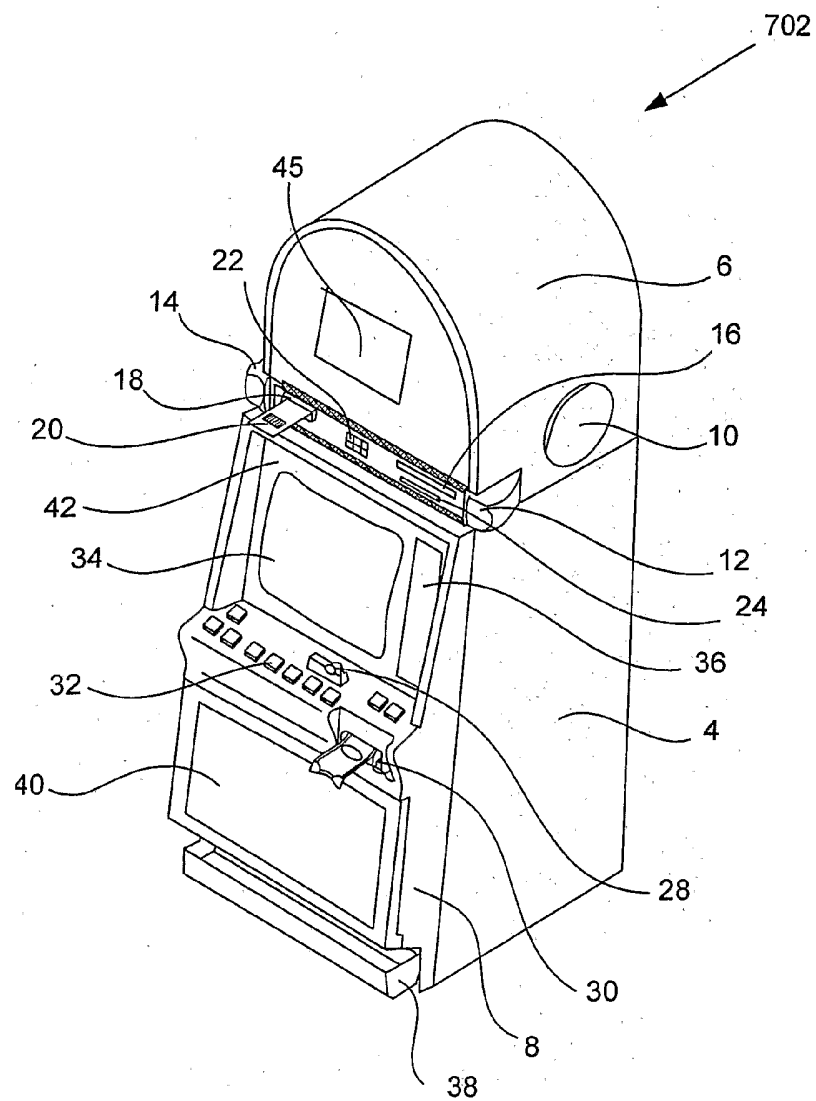


FIG. 8

