APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

For

METHOD OF TRANSFERRING GAMING DATA ON A GLOBAL COMPUTER NETWORK

By

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NUMBER: _____ EL705449427US _____
DATE: _____ October 16, 2000 _____   I hereby certify that this paper or fee is being deposited with the United States Postal Service "EXPRESS MAIL POST OFFICE TO ADDRESSEE" service under 37 C.F.R. 1.10 on the date indicated above and is addressed to: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington D.C. 20231.   Signature

METHOD OF TRANSFERRING GAMING DATA ON A
GLOBAL COMPUTER NETWORK

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to gaming machines and, more particularly, to a method of transferring data from a gaming establishment to a player at a remote site via a global computer network.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Gaming machines, such as slot machines, video poker machines and the like, have been a cornerstone of the gaming industry for several years. Generally, the popularity of such machines with players is dependent on the likelihood (or perceived likelihood) of winning money and the intrinsic entertainment value of the machine relative to other available gaming options. Shrewd operators consequently strive to employ the most entertaining and exciting machines available because such machines attract frequent play and hence increase profitability to the operator. Accordingly, in the competitive gaming machine industry, there is a continuing need for gaming machine manufacturers to produce different methods to attract frequent play by enhancing the entertainment value and excitement associated with the game.

Many game players want to be able to play gaming machines much more frequently then they are currently able to do. Such players are often limited because of the requisite travel required to attend casinos or other legal gaming establishments located in select portions of the United States. The involvedness, cost and inconvenience of a player being forced to travel to a gaming establishment severely limits the amount of gambling excursions that a player can assume. Furthermore, since these excursions are infrequent, a gaming player is often forced to spend as much time gambling as possible during the excursion because such a player may not have the means to return to the gaming establishment for several months or years. There is continuing need for a gaming player to be able to gamble more frequently or for a shorter period time than is currently available and to be able to do so from a location remote to the gaming establishment.

The present invention is directed to satisfying these needs. The foregoing and other advantages of the invention will become apparent upon reading the following detailed description.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5   A remote gaming method comprising a player accessing, via a remote terminal, a gaming site on a global computer network connected to the remote terminal. The player is able to provide via the remote terminal, personal identification information to the gaming site and select, via the remote terminal, a game of chance located at a gaming establishment for remote play. The remote terminal is located

10   outside the gaming establishment. The player places, via the remote terminal, a wager for playing the selected game and receives randomly generated text or graphical outcome data at the remote terminal for the selected game. The outcome data being generated by either a gaming server or a gaming machine at the gaming establishment and is subsequently relayed to the gaming site.

DESCRIPTION OF SPECIFIC EMBODIMENTS

15   While the invention is susceptible to various modifications and alternative forms, specific embodiments have been shown by way of example and will be described in detail herein. However, it should be understood that the invention is not intended to be limited to the particular forms disclosed. Rather, the invention is to

20   cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

        The present invention comprises a method by which data can be transferred from a gaming establishment to a gaming player disposed in a remote location from the gaming establishment. Generally, a player accesses the host gaming

25   establishment by use of a global computer network. The host gaming establishment engages in gambling-type activities (*e.g.*, a slot machine play) and reports the outcomes to the remote player.

        During the 1990's, global computer networks, such as the World Wide Web accessed through the Internet, became increasingly popular outlets. It is contemplated

30   in accordance with the present invention that other types of global computer networks are available. The Internet is a global communications network built on worldwide

data and telephone networks. Computers connected to the Internet can exchange information with any other connected computer. The backbone of the Internet is founded on various sets of major telephone conduits and switches that exist across the world. These communications conduits are designed to move large volumes of data

5   traffic at extremely high rates of speed.

Each of the major conduits referred to above terminates at a router, which is a large, fast switch that sorts the large volumes of data. Each router is connected to additional, local routing devices. Local routing devices, called "points of presence" provide local Internet access. For example, an Internet termination router located in

10   Chicago may have point of presence routers connected in, for example, Milwaukee and Indianapolis. A router is able to connect as many point of presence routers as the capacity of the switching systems and the Internet will permit.

In addition to point of presence routers, commercial Internet exchanges and global Internet exchanges also connect to the routers. These exchanges transfer data

15   between Internet service providers, both nationally and internationally. When data originates on one U.S. Internet service provider with a destination on another U.S. long distance provider, the data is first routed to the commercial Internet exchange where it makes the transfer between providers.

Personal computers typically connect to a local point of presence router

20   through a local Internet carrier. A local Internet carrier obtains a direct line to the point of presence router and provides a modem or other connection by which a personal computer user achieves Internet access. When the personal computer connects to the modem of the local Internet carrier, the local Internet carrier switches the home computer to the point of presence router, which in turn connects the

25   personal computer to the Internet.

Another method of connecting computers to the Internet is by direct connection through a local area network (LAN) to the point of presence. Multiple personal computers can be connected to a single LAN, which connects to the point of presence through a leased data line. The computers connected to the LAN receive

30   and transmit data to the point of the presence through the LAN.

Attached to most LANs are a variety of different servers including the File Server and the Hypertext Transport Protocol ("HTTP") server. The File Server

connects to the LAN and contains the common data files used by the personal computers, the LAN and other servers. An HTTP server is a particular type of server that processes incoming and outgoing data written according to a certain Internet communication protocol, called hypertext transport protocol.

5   As described above, the Internet is able to interconnect every computer on the Internet with every other computer on the Internet. An Internet site typically includes certain data files (called "web pages" that are a part of the World Wide Web) in its File Server. The Internet site HTTP server makes those pages available to other computers on the Internet. An HTTP Server that makes World Wide Web pages

10   available on the Internet usually includes a so-called "home page," the starting point for outside users to navigate through the underlying World Wide Web pages serviced by the HTTP Server. These World Wide Web pages are written in a special World Wide Web language called Hypertext Markup Language ("HTML"). When a personal computer user wants to view a home page, it can do so by requesting that

15   data over the Internet. In response, the requisite LAN retrieves the web page data from its File Server and instructs its HTTP Server to transmit the data, addressed via the Internet, to the personal computer that requested the information. The data generally travels from the local leased link to the point of presence router near the location of the LAN, through the Internet, through the point of presence router near

20   the requesting personal computer, through the local Internet carrier, and into the modem of the requesting personal computer.

Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol ("TCP/IP") controls transmission of data on the Internet to provide World Wide Web communication to users. To insure that data is sent to and received by the appropriate receiver on the

25   Internet, every device communicating on the Internet is assigned a unique address called an Internet Protocol ("IP") address. Elements of the IP address identify the location in the network that a device is connected. Other parts of the IP address identify the specific device. The IP address number has a three-digit element that identifies the state of the resident and an additional seven digits, three of which

30   identify the local exchange of the resident and four digits that specifically identify the home of the resident. The IP address is presently a thirty-two bit binary address, readily processed by computers, but cumbersome for use by human users.

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