Player information is received and a player is authenticated based on government regulations. Player deposits are compared to limits associated with player accounts. Upon reaching a limit associated with the account, the player may be prevented from depositing additional funds or playing games. In this way, gaming facilities may monitor gaming and ensure responsible gaming for all players.
Begin

110 Receive Player Information

130 Authorized To Register? No → 120 Deny Registration

130 Authorized To Register? Yes → 140 Issue Account Identifier

150 Transaction Authorized? No → 180 Deny Transaction

150 Transaction Authorized? Yes → 160 Allow Transaction

170 Another Transaction? Yes → 170

170 Another Transaction? No → End
Begin

Receive player identification and information

Record player information

Player authenticated?

No

Deny issuance of account identifier and present reason for denial to player

Yes

Issue account identifier

Return identification to player

End

FIG. 2
Begin

Receive card and funds

Insert card into card reader

Limit(s) reached or exceeded?

Yes -> Receive notice

No -> Process deposit

Notify player

End

FIG. 3
Begin

Receive player card

Insert card into card reader

Verify player image

Measure player biometric information

Biometric information authenticated?

Cash out player

End

FIG. 4
METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR AUTOMATED RESPONSIBLE GAMING CONTROLS

RELATED APPLICATIONS


FIELD

[0002] This disclosure is directed to the field of responsible gaming, and more particularly, to the field of providing automated control and enforcement of responsible gaming.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Gaming provides exceptional benefits to societies, including entertainment and social interaction. In many cases, gaming facilities, such as casinos, contribute significant amounts of money to schools, hospitals, and police in local communities. In some cases, these community contributions are crucial to the local economies, especially in remote areas.

[0004] In addition to the exceptional benefits of gaming, cashless gaming in particular may provide benefits to players, operators, and regulators. Traditional gaming is a cash intensive business. For example, traditional slot machines require coins, which forces establishments having slot machines to provide a great deal of security and accounting safeguards to avoid theft and corruption. Players are also susceptible to the loss or theft of the coins. As an alternative to coins, some cashless gaming systems use tokens, tickets, or magnetic cards. In such cashless systems, players may insert a token, ticket, or card into a player terminal equipped with an input device to play a game. However, these tokens, tickets, and cards may also be susceptible to potential loss or theft, as well as potential fraud.

[0005] Gaming may present a number of social problems in societies, such as fraud or theft, as well as under-age gaming and gaming addictions. Accordingly, there is a need for more control over gaming in order to regulate and monitor, for example, excessive gaming, gaming addictions, underage gaming, fraud, and other irresponsible gaming behavior. Casinos and other gaming facilities may achieve this control by, for example, registration of players, player authentication, extensive and detailed processing of transactions, including game play on a gaming machine or table, and a robust account-based gaming function.

[0006] As the level of security breaches and transaction fraud at casinos increases, the need for highly secure identification and personal verification technologies increases. Accordingly, there is a need for a robust yet flexible process that is consistent with modern casinos and today’s players, and which provides a player, operator, and regulator a way to solve unaddressed issues associated with gaming.

SUMMARY

[0007] Consistent with embodiments of the present invention, systems and methods are disclosed for processing a gaming deposit. In one embodiment, a deposit amount and an account identifier associated with a player account are received, and the deposit amount is compared to a limit associated with the player account. If the deposit amount is within the limit, adding the deposit amount to the player account.

[0008] Consistent with another embodiment of the present invention, systems and methods are disclosed for authenticating a player at a gaming facility. An account identifier is received from a player, wherein the account identifier is associated with a player account. The player is authenticated based on stored information associated with the account identifier. After the player has been authenticated, a request for a gaming transaction is received from the player, and it is determined if the requested gaming transaction is within a pre-established gaming limit associated with the player account.

[0009] Consistent with other embodiments of the present invention, systems and methods for automatically implementing gaming controls are disclosed. A gaming constraint associated with a player is established, and a request for a gaming transaction is received from the player. It is determined whether the requested gaming transaction would violate the gaming constraint associated with the player, and when it is determined that the requested gaming transaction would not violate the gaming constraint associated with the player, the requested gaming transaction is approved.

[0010] Consistent with other embodiments of the present invention, systems and methods for automatically implementing gaming controls are disclosed. A gaming constraint is established and associated with a player account. A player account identifier is received, and it is determined whether a transaction associated with the player account identifier would violate the gaming constraint associated with the player account. The transaction is approved when it is determined that the requested transaction would not violate the gaming constraint associated with the player account.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] FIG. 1A is a diagram of an exemplary automated responsible gaming control and enforcement system consistent with an embodiment of the present invention;

[0012] FIG. 1B is a flow diagram of an exemplary process for responsible gaming and control consistent with an embodiment of the present invention;

[0013] FIG. 2 is a flow diagram of an exemplary process for authenticating a player using a responsible gaming and control system consistent with an embodiment of the present invention;

[0014] FIG. 3 is a flow diagram of an exemplary process for processing a deposit in a responsible gaming and control system consistent with an embodiment of the present invention; and

[0015] FIG. 4 is a flow diagram of an exemplary process for cashing out a player in a responsible gaming and control system consistent with an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0016] With an automated responsible gaming control system, a government or gaming facility may specify a variety of factors to control the gaming practices of a player,
a group of players, or all players. For example, the state may wish to limit the amount of money spend on gaming by recipients of state welfare assistance. The system may limit play based on, for example: total money deposited, total money lost (e.g., the amount withdrawn subtracted from the amount deposited), total games played, and time played. For example, a player may be limited to two hours of gaming per day. Activity may be cumulated by day, month, year, or any other specified time period. For example, a player’s gaming losses may be limited to $1,000 per month. The government may allow for certain exceptions under procedural processes (for example, a presentation of evidence of specific income levels may allow for higher levels of gaming). Other types of constraints may also be implemented using systems and methods consistent with the present invention. For example, gaming methods may be prohibited during business hours or on certain holidays.

In certain embodiments, players may establish their own upper limits or fund their accounts with their desired “bankroll” in order to moderate their own limits and play. Constraints may also, in certain embodiments, be extended across gaming facilities, such as casinos. For example, a unified player database may prevent players from moving from casino to casino when they reach limits associated with their player accounts (e.g., when they reach two hours of gaming per day). The constraints may support any number of slots in a casino, from a few hundred to multiple thousands, as well as any number of table games or other types of games, e.g., Bingo or Keno.

FIG. 1A illustrates an exemplary automated responsible gaming control and enforcement system 100. System 100 may include a Transaction Center 10, which may be connected to a Gaming Local Area Network (LAN) 12, a Gaming Wide Area Network (WAN) 14, and a Management LAN 22. Gaming LAN 12 may be connected to a gaming machine 16, a kiosk 18, and a table game 20. Management LAN 22 may be connected to a wireless device 24, a cashier workstation 26, a customer registration station 28, a management workstation 30, and a printer 32. Wireless device 24 may be, for example, a mobile phone, portable computer, BlackBerry™, or other wireless communication device. Gaming LAN 12 may also be connected to an optional Alternative Transaction Center 50. Transaction Center 10’s connection to Gaming LAN 12 and Management LAN 22 may permit system 100 to centralize a player registration process, log gaming, registration, deposit, and withdrawal transactions in Transaction Center 10, and enforce and control gaming based on the information gathered from the devices (e.g., gaming machine 16 and table game 20) connected by Gaming LAN 12 to Transaction Center 10.

In one embodiment, multiple gaming locations may be managed, and information gathered by Transaction Center 10 may be duplicated, by connecting Transaction Center 10 to Alternative Transaction Center 50 via Gaming WAN 14.

A skilled artisan will recognize that system 100 may include any number of devices, including kiosks 18, gaming machines 16, table games 20, and other types of games, such as bingo (not shown). Further, many alternative configurations of system 100 fall within the scope of this invention. For example, cashier workstation 26, customer registration station 28, and management workstation 30 may be separate (as shown in FIG. 1) or may be combined. In another example, the devices of FIG. 1A may communicate via the Internet or networks 12, 14, and 22 may be combined into a single network.

RESPONSIBLE GAMING

FIG. 1B illustrates a flow diagram of an exemplary process 105 for responsible gaming and control consistent with an embodiment of the present invention. A clerk at customer registration station 28, for example, may receive a player’s information, such as age, name, address, personal identification, and/or biometric information (step 110) to enable the player to register for a gaming account or gaming card. Customer registration station 28 or transaction center 10 may determine if the player is authorized to register (step 130), for example based on the player’s gaming history or a database of prohibited gamers. An exemplary registration process is described in greater detail below with respect to FIG. 2. If the player is not authorized to play, he may be denied registration (step 120). If the player is authorized to play, the clerk may issue the player an account identifier, such as a gaming card or player number, to enable the player to access a player account (step 140).

Next, the player may attempt a transaction, such as, for example, depositing funds into the player account, playing a game, cashing out funds, etc. at any one of the devices in system 100. For example, a player may attempt to play a game at gaming machine 16 using his player card. Gaming machine 16 may access transaction center 10 via Gaming LAN 12, and may transmit the player account information and the player’s attempted transaction to transaction center 10. Transaction center 10 may determine if the attempted transaction is authorized (step 150) based on, for example, limits or rules associated with the player or the player account. If the transaction (e.g., a deposit or a play at a game machine) is authorized, transaction center 10 will allow the transaction (step 160). If the transaction is not authorized for any reason (e.g., because the player has reached a maximum deposit amount associated with the player account), transaction center 10 will deny the transaction (step 180). In an alternative embodiment, any number of devices or stations, including customer registration station 28, kiosks 18, gaming machines 16, table games 20, and other types of devices, may determine if the transaction is authorized and allow or deny the transaction.

If the player attempts another transaction (step 170), such as a deposit of funds to his account, for example, the authorization process may begin again (return to step 150). An exemplary process for processing a deposit in a responsible gaming and control system is described in greater detail below with respect to FIG. 3.

REGISTRATION

FIG. 2 illustrates a flow diagram of an exemplary process 200 for registering a player in a responsible gaming and control system consistent with the present invention. Players may present identification and player information at a customer service desk of a casino or gaming facility to become a registered player. A customer service representative may receive a player’s identification, for example at customer registration station 28 (step 210). In certain embodiments, identification may include any identification
that the government has approved as valid for the registration process, and may be government issued identification, such as a passport, driver’s license, or other government identification card. In other embodiments, a player may be identified by alternative means, such as biometric data. The customer service representative may also receive player information, and may record the player information (step 220). Player information may include, for example, the player’s name, address, telephone number, age, gaming history, health issues, and other information. In one embodiment, the player information, such as the player’s name, may be checked against a database of ineligible players. In another example, the player information may be checked to determine whether the player is of legal gaming age. If an ineligible player attempts to register, customer registration station 28 may display a message, such as: “Denied. [Registrant Name] Not Currently Eligible for Gaming Account.”

[0025] In one embodiment, customer registration station 28 includes an image capture device to perform an image capture of the provided identification or the player’s actual image. Additionally, customer registration station 28 may include information capture devices to record player information such as signatures, for example using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) scanners, and may include bar code scanners and magnetic stripe readers to record, for example, the player’s name and address from a driver’s license.

[0026] Next, the player information may be authenticated (step 230) or verified by the customer service representative. This authentication may ensure, for example, that the player is of legal age, and that any other government or casino-specified criteria are also met. For example, the customer service representative of customer registration station 28 may check public assistance databases, criminal record databases, delinquent child support databases, outstanding credit databases, and other databases in real-time by comparing player information to information in the databases. In one embodiment, the authentication may be automatically performed by software at customer registration station 28.

[0027] If the player is not authenticated for any reason, in one embodiment, the customer service representative denies issuance of a player account or account identifier, and present the reason for the denial to the player (step 240). In one embodiment, for example, the customer service representative may give the player a printed rejection slip indicating that he has been denied access to gaming at the casino, for example using printer 32. The rejection slip may explain the government or casino policy of its criteria for a casino card or “gaming permit,” in order to eliminate any burden on the customer service representative to explain the policy verbally. In this manner, there are no subjective decisions, no misunderstandings, and no ability for the customer service representative to make a mistake or to deceive the registration system.

[0028] If the player is authenticated, the customer service representative may issue an account identifier, such as a card, to the player, to enable the player to access a player account (step 250). Regardless of the results of the authentication process, the customer service representative returns the player identification to the player (step 260). In one embodiment, the entire registration process 200 may be completed in less than one minute, including the issuing of an account identifier, such as a personalized card, magnetic strip card, or smart card. A skilled artisan will appreciate that a player may receive a job, player number, or other item instead of or in addition to the player card.

[0029] In one embodiment, once the player receives the card, the player may enter a Personal Identification Number (PIN) into a PIN pad at customer registration station 28. PINs are typically 4 to 6 numbers long. The PIN may be known only to the player and may be stored in an encrypted format at customer registration station 28 or transaction center 10. In one embodiment, players may be required to enter the PIN twice to ensure that they correctly enter their intended numbers. The PIN pad used for PIN entry may be equipped with a privacy cover, or a scrambled PIN pad may be used to prevent the clerk or other players from observing the PIN setting.

[0030] Alternatively or additionally, other types of personal authentication, such as biometrics, may be used to identify or authenticate the player. Biometrics are automated methods of recognizing a person based on a physiological or behavioral characteristic. Among the features that may be measured are face, fingerprints, hand geometry, handwriting, iris, retinal, vein, voice, etc. These features may be stored at transaction center 10 and associated with the player’s account and/or card. In one embodiment, customer registration station 28 may include a breathalyzer or other detection device to check a player’s alcohol or drug level. Gaming machines 16, table games 20, and cashier workstation 26 may also be equipped with biometric identification devices and/or detection devices, as discussed in more detail below with respect to FIGS. 3-4, to authenticate players before, during, and after game play.

[0031] In one embodiment, players may not obtain multiple cards. If a player attempts to create a new account, the customer registration station 28 may deny the transaction and display a message, such as: “Denied. [Registrant Name] Already Has a Gaming Account.” Lost or stolen cards may be de-activated in real-time, immediately stopping further use. Replacement cards with new account numbers may be issued upon positive identification of the player, according to registration process 200, discussed above.

Depositing Funds

[0032] FIG. 3 illustrates a flow diagram of an exemplary process for receiving a player account deposit in a responsible gaming and control system consistent with the present invention. Players may deposit money at transaction center 10, gaming machine 16, kiosk 18, table game 20, wireless device 24, cashier workstation 26, customer registration station 28, or other area. In one embodiment, players may deposit money to a player account from a bank account via wireless device 24, the Internet, or using the telephone.

[0033] Players may deposit money to their accounts at any time after they have been issued an account. A cashier receives a player’s account identifier, such as a card, and funds (step 310). The cashier inserts the card into a card reader at cashier workstation 26 (step 320), which may be known in the art. When the cashier inserts the card into the reader, the account may be verified to ensure that deposits are allowed on the account (step 330). In one embodiment, the verification may be processed immediately (in real-time). To verify the account, cashier workstation 26 or
transaction center 10 checks to see if the account has exceeded any limits (e.g., limits established for gaming.) For example, a player may have a deposit limit on his account based on the total amount deposited. The deposit limit may be established, for example, by the player, the player’s family, the casino, government regulations, or other rules. A clerk may set the deposit limit, or, alternatively, the player may set the deposit limit. In one embodiment, the limit may be automatically set or changed at any time. More than one limit may be set for each player. Additionally, a group of players may be designated to have the same limit. For example, all players with a certain address, age, gaming history, criminal history, alcohol level, or other biometric feature may be designated with the same limit. The cashier may also authenticate that the depositing individual matches the stored account data using biometric or visual confirmation with stored data.

[0034] If it is determined that the player’s limit has been reached or exceeded, the cashier will receive a notice (step 340). The cashier may, in one embodiment, view the notice on a terminal at cashier workstation 26. The notice may, for example, indicate that all deposits are prohibited, or may indicate that the account deposit limit has been reached or exceeded (e.g., “Denied. Gaming Account Currently Suspended,” or “Deposit Denied. Monthly Deposit Limit Reached.”) In one embodiment, the cashier may print an automatically generated statement indicating the government or casino policy on deposit limits using printer 32. The cashier may notify the player that the limit was reached or exceeded, or that the deposit is not valid (step 350), for example by presenting the player with the government statement, or by orally notifying the player of the account limit or other policy violation. In certain embodiments, the cashier may notify a contact person associated with the account, such as a spouse, that the limit was reached or exceeded. Alternatively or additionally, the cashier workstation 26 may automatically notify the contact person that the limit was reached or exceeded, for example by sending an automatic e-mail, text message, voice mail, letter, or other notice to the contact person.

[0035] If the player’s limit is not exceeded, the cashier may process the deposit (step 360), for example by entering the amount of the deposit at cashier workstation 26 and processing the deposit to add value to the player’s card and/or account, according to methods known in the art.

[0036] In one embodiment, deposit process 300 may be accomplished in under 30 seconds. Alternatively or additionally, printer 32 may print paper receipts from deposit process 300 for the player, and the cashier, cashier workstation 26, and transaction center 10 may save copies, for example for auditing purposes. Players may be authenticated at machines or kiosks using personal identification numbers (PINs) or biometrics, for example in an unattended environment.

Depositing Funds at Gaming Machines

[0037] As discussed above, players may also deposit funds into their accounts at gaming machines 16, such as slot machines or kiosks 18. In one embodiment, a player may insert his card into a card reader slot on a slot machine or kiosk. Until the card is inserted into the card reader and verified, the bill acceptor and coin acceptor may be disabled on the machine. In this manner, unauthenticated players are unable to play at any machine. If the player has exceeded any limits, such as government established limits for gaming, the player will be denied the ability to deposit any funds into the machine, or the ability to play any games. In one embodiment, if the player exceeds any limits, an automatic notice may also be sent to the contact person associated with the player’s account. If the player is authenticated, he may then insert bills or coins into the appropriate acceptor on the slot machine to deposit funds to his player account.

[0038] Alternatively or additionally, when a player attempts a deposit, gaming machine 16 or kiosk 18 may automatically check the player account balance. The player account balance may be presented on a display of gaming machine 16 or kiosk 18 to the player prior to, during, and/or after the deposit process. A player may check the balance associated with his account at any time before, during, or after game play. In certain embodiments, if any limits are reached or exceeded during deposit process 300, gaming machine 16 or kiosk 18 may deny the deposit and generate a notice, such as: “Deposit Refused. Daily Deposit Limit Reached.” or warn the player that a limit was reached or exceeded. In one embodiment, gaming machine 16 or kiosk 18 may notify the player that a limit is approaching, for example to warn the player without stopping the game play.

Depositing Funds at Table Games

[0039] At table game 20, a player may present his card to a dealer or croupier together with funds for a “buy-in.” The dealer inserts the card into a card reader at table game 20, e.g., a poker table or blackjack table. Transaction center 10 may immediately verify the player’s account to ensure that buy-ins are allowed on the account. If buy-ins are allowed on the account, the dealer may enter the amount of the buy-in, for example on a touch screen or small keypad at table game 20. The amount of the buy-in may be recorded at transaction center 10, and the dealer may provide the player with a corresponding value in table chips.

[0040] At any other gaming area (e.g., keno, bingo, sports book, etc.), the player presents his card as he is placing a wager, and a clerk may process the transaction in a manner similar to process 300, described above with respect to FIG. 3. Kiosks 18, such as cash deposit kiosks, may also be used for players to deposit funds directly on their accounts. Kiosks 18 may be equipped with card readers, bill acceptors, and receipt printers, as well as PIN pads and biometric readers.

[0041] Transaction center 10 may record and process all transactions related to deposits in real-time. Additionally, the time, date, account, value of the cash transaction, terminal, cashier that processed the transaction, and other data may be recorded, for example to provide an audit trail.

Playing

[0042] After depositing funds into their account, players may play games as they would at any tables, slot machines, and other wagering areas. Game play may, however, be terminated at any time, for example if a player reaches a predetermined limit associated with the player’s account, such as a loss limit, if play is only approved for certain time periods (e.g., 5 p.m. through 10 p.m.), or if the play duration limit (e.g., 3 hours) has been exceeded.
Playing at Gaming Machines

[0043] If a player chooses to play a game at gaming machine 16, such as a slot machine, the player may insert the card into gaming machine 16. As play proceeds, a credit meter at gaming machine 16 may change to reflect the outcome of the games. In one embodiment, if the player reaches a limit (e.g., a daily loss limit, such as $500) during play, further play may be prohibited and a dialog box message may display: “Sorry; No Further Play Permitted.”

[0044] Players may also deposit additional funds into a bill, coin, credit card, or other fund acceptor of gaming machine 16. Funds deposited into the fund acceptor of gaming machine 16 may appear on the credit display of the slot machine, and deposit limits may be verified, as discussed above with respect to FIG. 3.

[0045] When the player is done playing or wishes to move to another gaming machine 16 or table game 20, he may remove his card from the card reader. In other embodiments, the player may insert and remove his card when he begins playing at the machine, and then insert and remove his card again when he finishes. Any funds that were displayed on the credit meter at gaming machine 16 may be available on the player’s account, for example for use at another gaming machine 16, table game 20, or for withdrawal at cashier workstation 26. If the player moves to another gaming machine 16, when he inserts the card in the card reader, gaming machine 16 may display the value shown on the credit meter of the previous machine.

Playing at Table Games

[0046] At table games 20, players may use chips to place bets, and may receive chips for any win. Players may purchase chips with cash, for example if they meet responsible gaming criteria, or they may purchase chips with funds existing on their accounts (e.g., from previous deposits or winnings). If allowed at the casino, players may move from table to table with their chips, and may purchase additional chips (if allowed on their account based on responsible gaming criteria, discussed above with respect to FIG. 3). When a player is done playing, he may gather up his remaining chips and proceed to a cashier as he would in a conventional gaming system.

Playing Other Games

[0047] At keno, bingo, sports books, and other gaming areas, players may place wagers while presenting their cards. In one embodiment, players may present their cards each time they place a wager, and may purchase the wager with cash (and the transaction may be recorded). Alternatively or additionally, players may purchase wagers using funds previously stored on their account from previous deposits or winnings. Should the player place a winning wager, he may present the card to cash the wager.

Cashing Out

[0048] Players may cash out at cashier workstation 26 or other cashier cages located throughout a casino. FIG. 4 illustrates a flow diagram of an exemplary process 400 for cashing out in a responsible gaming and control system consistent with the present invention. In one embodiment, when a player wishes to cash out, he may present his card to a cashier. The cashier receives the player card (step 410) and inserts it into a card reader (step 420). Transaction center 10 may verify the account to ensure that it is valid (not shown). In certain embodiments, transaction center 10 may verify the account immediately (in real-time).

[0049] The image capture that was performed during registration process 200 may also be displayed to the cashier so the cashier may verify that the player presenting the card is the proper holder of the card (step 430). In one embodiment, the cashier may measure biometric information of the player for authentication (step 440), such as face, fingerprints, hand geometry, handwriting, iris, retinal, vein, voice, etc. Alternatively or additionally, the player may enter a password or PIN into a PIN pad (such as the pad used during registration process 200) for identification in step 440.

[0050] Transaction center 10 may then check the measured biometric information against the biometric information associated with the player account, using, for example, biometric identification procedures known in the art. If the biometric information matches (step 450, yes), the cashier may proceed to cash out the player (step 460), for example using cash out methods known in the art. If the entered biometric information does not match the biometric information associated with the player’s account (step 450, no), the cashier may not cash out the player and may instead restart process 400, or may confiscate the card, destroy the card, call security, or take other appropriate action.

[0051] Utilizing the captured image display or biometric procedures may prevent a “black market” in the selling of casino cards, because only the player that was issued the card may utilize the card for cash outs. In certain embodiments where it is impossible for anyone other than the player that was issued the card to remove money from the casino, there is no market for people to get cards issued to them and sell them on a secondary market.

Cashing Out—Game Machines

[0052] When a player completes play at a game machine, such as a video poker machine, the player may proceed to a cashier workstation 26 with his card to cash out and present the card to the cashier. The cashier inserts the card in a card reader, verifies the image stored on the system (for example, at transaction center 10) and measures player biometric information, or requests a PIN or password from the player. After verification, the player account is debited the amount of funds that are dispensed to the player. As in other cases, cashiers may provide printed receipts, which may be signed by the player for additional auditing functionality. In one embodiment, electronic signature capture devices may capture a player’s signature on a cash out receipt, for example for auditing or security purposes.

Cashing Out—Table Games

[0053] When a table game player decides to leave a table game, he may collect any remaining chips and proceed to cashier workstation 26. The player may present the chips and card to the cashier. The cashier inserts the card in the card reader, verifies the player image, requests that the player enter biometric information, or a PIN or password, and exchanges the chips for cash. Alternatively, the cashier may credit the player’s account for the value of the chips.

Cashing Out—Other Games

[0054] For other games, including those that issue tickets (keno, sports books, etc.), the player may present his card to
cash any ticket, and the winnings may be paid in cash or credited to the player’s account. Authentication process 400 may be used to verify the player’s identity, as described above.

[0055] Other embodiments of the invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art from consideration of the specification and practice of the invention disclosed herein. For example, electronic funds transfer could be used to facilitate the cash out processes described above. In another example, biometric information may be collected at game machines or table games to verify a player and determine whether a transaction is authorized. In yet another example, a contact person may be notified automatically if a person or group of people attempts to exceed a limit on deposits, withdrawals, game plays, logins, or attempts to establish an account that would violate established gaming parameters. It is intended that the specification and embodiments be considered as exemplary only, with a true scope and spirit of the invention being indicated by the following claims.

We claim:
1. A method for processing a gaming deposit, comprising:
   receiving a deposit amount and an account identifier associated with a player account;
   comparing the deposit amount to a limit associated with the player account; and
   if the deposit amount is within the limit, adding the deposit amount to the player account.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the limit is a maximum amount withdrawn subtracted from an amount deposited.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the limit is an amount of game play.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the limit is predetermined.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the limit is based on government regulations.
6. The method of claim 1, further comprising searching a database to locate the limit associated with the player.
7. The method of claim 1, further comprising associating the limit with the player account.
8. The method of claim 1, further comprising issuing the account identifier to the player after storing player information.
9. A method for authenticating a player at a gaming facility, comprising:
   receiving an account identifier from a player, wherein the account identifier is associated with a player account corresponding to the player;
   authenticating the player based on stored information associated with the account identifier;
   after the player has been authenticated, receiving a request for a gaming transaction from the player; and
   determining if the requested gaming transaction is within a pre-established gaming limit associated with the player account.
10. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
   after reaching the limit, denying the transaction.
11. The method of claim 10, further comprising:
   prohibiting gaming transactions from the player for a period of time after denying the transaction.
12. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
   after reaching the limit, notifying the player that the limit was reached.
13. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
   warning the player that the limit is approaching.
14. The method of claim 9, further comprising:
   after reaching the limit, sending a notice to a contact associated with the player account that the limit was reached.
15. The method of claim 14, wherein the notice is one of: an e-mail, a text message, a voice message, and a letter.
16. The method of claim 9, wherein the transaction is a game play.
17. The method of claim 9, wherein the transaction is a deposit to the player account.
18. The method of claim 9, wherein authenticating the player comprises:
   measuring biometric information of the player; and
   determining if the measured biometric information matches the stored information.
19. The method of claim 9, wherein authenticating the player comprises:
   measuring personal identification information of the player; and
   determining if the personal identification information matches the stored information.
20. The method of claim 9, wherein the authenticating occurs during a game play.
21. The method of claim 9, wherein the authenticating occurs before a game play.
22. The method of claim 9, wherein the limit is a maximum amount withdrawn subtracted from an amount deposited.
23. The method of claim 9, wherein the limit is an amount of game play.
24. The method of claim 9, wherein the limit is predetermined.
25. The method of claim 9, wherein the limit is based on government regulations.
26. The method of claim 9, further comprising searching a database to locate the limit associated with the player.
27. A method for automatically implementing gaming controls, comprising:
   establishing a gaming constraint associated with a player;
   receiving a request for a gaming transaction from the player;
   determining whether the requested gaming transaction would violate the gaming constraint associated with the player;
   approving the requested gaming transaction, when it is determined that the requested gaming transaction would not violate the gaming constraint associated with the player.
28. The method of claim 27, wherein the gaming transaction request is a deposit to the player account.
29. The method of claim 27, wherein the gaming transaction request is a wager.
30. The method of claim 27, wherein the gaming transaction request is a game play request.
31. The method of claim 27, wherein the gaming request is a withdrawal request.

32. The method of claim 27, wherein the gaming constraint is a maximum amount of time the player may game during a predetermined time period.

33. The method of claim 27, wherein the gaming constraint is a maximum amount of money the player may deposit into a gaming account.

34. The method of claim 27, wherein the gaming constraint is a maximum wager amount the player may make while gaming.

35. The method of claim 27, further comprising: processing the requested gaming transaction, when the requested gaming transaction has been approved.

36. The method of claim 27, further comprising: storing the gaming constraint in a player account corresponding to the player.

37. The method of claim 27, further comprising: storing, in a player account corresponding to the player, data related to gaming activities of the player; and wherein the determining further comprises: analyzing the stored data based on the requested gaming transaction.

38. The method of claim 27, further comprising: rejecting the requested gaming transaction, when it is determined that the requested gaming transaction would violate the gaming constraint associated with the player.

39. The method of claim 38, further comprising: displaying a message to the player regarding the rejected gaming transaction.

40. The method of claim 38, further comprising: sending a message to a contact person associated with the player regarding the rejected gaming transaction.

41. A method for automatically implementing gaming controls, comprising: establishing a gaming constraint associated with a player account;

receiving a player account identifier;

determining whether a transaction associated with the player account identifier would violate the gaming constraint associated with the player account; and

approving the transaction, when it is determined that the requested transaction would not violate the gaming constraint associated with the player account.

42. The method of claim 41, wherein the transaction is one of: a login, a game play, a deposit, and a withdrawal.

43. A system for automatically implementing gaming controls, comprising:

an establishing component configured to establish a gaming constraint associated with a player;

a receiving component configured to receive a request for a gaming transaction from the player; and

a determining component configured to:

determine whether the requested gaming transaction would violate the gaming constraint associated with the player; and

approve the requested gaming transaction, when it is determined that the requested gaming transaction would not violate the gaming constraint associated with the player.

44. The system of claim 43, wherein the gaming transaction request is a deposit to the player account.

45. The system of claim 43, wherein the gaming transaction request is a wager.

46. The system of claim 43, wherein the gaming transaction request is a game play request.

47. The system of claim 43, wherein the gaming transaction request is a withdrawal request.

48. The system of claim 43, wherein the gaming constraint is a maximum amount of time the player may game during a predetermined time period.

49. The system of claim 43, wherein the gaming constraint is a maximum amount of money the player may deposit into a gaming account.

50. The system of claim 43, wherein the gaming constraint is a maximum wager amount the player may make while gaming.

51. The system of claim 43, further comprising:

a processor configured to process the requested gaming transaction, when the requested gaming transaction has been approved.

52. The system of claim 43, further comprising:

a database configured to store the gaming constraint in a player account corresponding to the player.

53. The system of claim 43, wherein the database is further configured to store, in a player account corresponding to the player, data related to gaming activities of the player, and wherein the determining component is further configured to analyze the stored data based on the requested gaming transaction.

54. The system of claim 43, wherein the determining component is configured to reject the requested gaming transaction, when it is determined that the requested gaming transaction would violate the gaming constraint associated with the player.

55. The system of claim 54, further comprising:

a display component configured to display a message to the player regarding the rejected gaming transaction.

56. The system of claim 54, further comprising:

a notifying component configured to send a message to a contact person associated with the player regarding the rejected gaming transaction.

57. A computer-readable medium including instructions for automatically implementing gaming controls, the method comprising:

establishing a gaming constraint associated with a player;

receiving a request for a gaming transaction from the player;
determining whether the requested gaming transaction would violate the gaming constraint associated with the player;
approving the requested gaming transaction, when it is determined that the requested gaming transaction would not violate the gaming constraint associated with the player.

58. A system for automatically implementing gaming controls, the system comprising:
means for establishing a gaming constraint associated with a player;
means for receiving a request for a gaming transaction from the player;
means for determining whether the requested gaming transaction would violate the gaming constraint associated with the player;
means for approving the requested gaming transaction, when it is determined that the requested gaming transaction would not violate the gaming constraint associated with the player.

* * * * *