

DESCRIPTION

Title of Invention: PROGRAM, PROVISION SYSTEM, AND
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT DEVICE

Technical Field

[0001]

The present invention relates to a program, a provision system, and an information management device, and in particular relates to an online service that involves provision of actual goods.

Background Art

[0002]

There are online services that use networks, such as the Internet or the like, to provide actual goods on the basis of requests from users, using shipping. PTL 1 discloses a trading system in which, in a service of sales or a match game provided by a server, a card on which card data is printed is shipped in accordance with a request for issuing of the card data having been performed. That is to say, in the trading system according to PTL 1, by performing a request for issuing of card data obtained in the service, the user can obtain this as an actual card.

Citation List

Patent Literature

[0003]

PTL 1: Japanese Unexamined Patent Application

Publication No. 2001-331667

Summary of Invention

Technical Problem

[0004]

However, in the trading system according to PTL 1, in a situation where cards cannot be provided, such as running out of printing sheets, sheets becoming jammed, or the like, for example, there is a possibility that suitable service provision will not be realized. Also, in the trading system according to PTL 1, in a case in which a request to purchase is made, a card generated by printing the data by a printer or the like is shipped. However, in an arrangement where cards produced in advance at a factory or the like are shipped, there is a possibility that suitable service provision will not be realized due to running out of stock of the cards themselves.

[0005]

It is an object of the present invention to provide a program, a provision system, and an information management device that realize suitable service provision.

Solution to Problem

[0006]

According to the present invention, a system is for performing service provision relating to a game and for imparting a first game element to a user, the system

comprising:

- a processing unit; and

- a non-transitory media readable by the processing unit, the media storing instructions that when executed by the processing unit, cause the processing unit to:

 - accept an impartation request for the first game element from the user;

 - impart the first game element to the user on the basis of the impartation request;

 - acquire a status of a second game element that corresponds to the first game element; and

 - control the impartation of the first game element in accordance with the status of the second game element that is acquired,

 - wherein the impartation of the first game element is controlled to be enabled, under a condition that the status of the second game element that is acquired is a first status.

Advantageous Effects of Invention

[0007]

According to the present invention, suitable service provision can be realized.

Brief Description of Drawings

[0008]

[Fig. 1] Fig. 1 is a diagram illustrating a configuration of a provision system according to an embodiment and modifications of the present invention.

[Fig. 2] Fig. 2 is a block diagram illustrating a functional configuration of a provision server 100 according to the embodiment and modifications of the present invention.

[Fig. 3] Fig. 3 is a block diagram illustrating a functional configuration of a management server 200 according to the embodiment and modifications of the present invention.

[Fig. 4] Fig. 4 is a block diagram illustrating a functional configuration of a user terminal 300 according to the embodiment and modifications of the present invention.

[Fig. 5] Fig. 5 is a flowchart exemplifying provision processing relating to service provision that is executed at the provision server 100 according to the embodiment and modifications of the present invention.

[Fig. 6] Fig. 6 is a flowchart exemplifying determination processing realized by the provision system according to the embodiment and modifications of the present invention.

[Fig. 7] Fig. 7 is a flowchart exemplifying securing processing realized by the provision system according to the embodiment and modifications of the present invention.

[Fig. 8] Fig. 8 is a diagram illustrating data

configuration examples of various types of information used in the provision system according to the embodiment and modifications of the present invention.

Description of Embodiments

[0009]

[Embodiment]

An embodiment will be described below in detail with reference to the attached drawings. Note that the embodiment below does not limit the invention according to the Claims, and all combinations of features described in the embodiment are not necessarily indispensable for the invention. Any two or more of the multiple features described in the embodiment may be combined. Also, configurations that are the same or similar are denoted by the same reference numerals, and redundant description will be omitted.

[0010]

In the embodiment described below, an example is described in which the present invention is applied to a system that is configured to include a provision server that performs service provision relating to a game, a management server that manages provision and stock of goods (cards) relating to the game, and a user terminal that is used by a user to use the service, as an example of a provision system, and to software that realizes the same. However,

the present invention is applicable to any system that is capable of controlling impartation of game elements to a user in accordance with states of other elements that are associated, in service provision relating to a game.

[0011]

<<Configuration of Provision System>>

Fig. 1 is a diagram illustrating a system configuration of a provision system according to the present embodiment. The provision system is configured such that a provision server 100 is capable of communication with a management server 200 and at least one user terminal 300 via a network 400 such as the Internet or the like, as illustrated in the drawing.

[0012]

In the provision system according to the present embodiment, a user can use a service provided in the provision system by accessing the provision server 100 with any user terminal 300. The provision server 100 is equipment that provides a service relating to a game via the network 400. The provision server 100 and the user terminal 300 need to be connected to use the service. More specifically, upon the user terminal 300 accessing a site relating to the provision server 100 through a browsing application for example, a connection is established between the provision server 100 and the user terminal 300, and

service provision is performed from the provision server 100 to the user terminal 300. The provision server 100 is configured to be capable of managing information of each user, and providing the users with the service including providing actual goods (real cards) relating to the game, as a second game element according to the present invention, which will be described in detail later.

[0013]

The management server 200 is configured to be capable of managing the stock status and shipping status of real cards, which are actual goods provided in the provision system. In the present embodiment, the management server 200 is described as being installed in a facility such as a warehouse or the like, which handles storage, packaging, and shipping of real cards shipped to users, for example, and acquiring information of receiving and shipping of real cards and managing stock status and shipping status. However, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. A facility that stores the real cards and a facility that packages and ships the cards may be separated, and there may be multiple facilities for each. The management server 200 may be installed at a location separate from these facilities, as long as the management server 200 aggregates and manages information input at terminals installed at these facilities.

[0014]

The user terminal 300 is equipment such as a PC, a smartphone, or the like, for example, which is configured to be capable of communication, and to be capable of using a service relating to the provision system by connecting to the provision server 100. User registration is made for each user in advance, and when the user uses the service, processing of login authentication or the like regarding an account of the user is performed to identify the user of the user terminal 300. In the present embodiment, service provision is described as being performed upon access to a site relating to the services and user authentication being performed by a browser application activated on the user terminal 300. However, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. For example, a configuration may be made in which activation of a dedicated game application or the like connects the user terminal 300 and the provision server 100 by communication, and the service can be used. Also, it is needless to say that the user terminal 300 that the user uses does not need to be a general-use communication terminal, and may be a dedicated terminal for any service, such as a gaming console, or the like, for example.

[0015]

<Configuration of Provision Server 100>

A functional configuration of the provision server 100 according to the present embodiment will be described below with reference to the block diagram in Fig. 2. Note that in the description of the functional configuration of the provision server 100, configurations that realize functions similar to configurations that the management server 200 and the user terminal 300 have will be indicated by a prefix "provision", to clearly distinguish from these.

[0016]

A provision control unit 101 is a CPU, for example, and controls the operations of each of the blocks that the provision server 100 has. Specifically, the provision control unit 101 reads out operation programs for the blocks recorded in a provision recording medium 102, for example, and loads the operation programs to provision memory 103 and executes the operation programs, thereby controlling the operations of the blocks.

[0017]

The provision recording medium 102 is a recording device capable of permanently holding data, such as non-volatile memory, an HDD, or the like, for example. The provision recording medium 102 may have recorded therein information such as parameters and so forth that are necessary for operation of the blocks, and various types of graphics data and so forth used in games that the provision

server 100 executes, in addition to the operation programs of the blocks that the provision server 100 has. The provision memory 103 is a storage device used for temporary data storage, such as volatile memory or the like, for example. The provision memory 103 is used not only as a loading region of the operation programs of the blocks, but also as a storage region for temporarily storing data and so forth that are output in the operations of the blocks.

[0018]

A user DB 104 is a database that manages information (user information) necessary for service provision for each of the users of the service provided by the provision system. User information may be configured to include, for each of the users, impartation status information 802 indicating an impartation status of later-described digital cards to the user, and shipping destination information 803 in which is described a shipping destination for providing real cards to the user, in association with a user ID 801 that uniquely identifies the user, as illustrated in Fig. 8(a), for example. Now, the impartation status information 802 may be configured to be capable of storing information of one or more digital cards imparted to the user, and may be, for example, information in which each identification No. 811 that identifies each of the digital cards is managed in association with a card ID 812 that identifies what this

digital card is. Note that although the impartation status information 802 is described in the present embodiment as managing all digital cards imparted to users, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. Digital cards regarding which the impartation status regarding users is managed may be limited to digital cards regarding which corresponding real cards are not yet provided.

[0019]

A determining unit 105 determines whether or not provision of functions involving impartation of digital cards (or provision of real cards) to the user can be performed regarding the service provided by the provision system. The determining unit 105 performs the above determination by referencing information of stock status that is managed by the management server 200, which will be described in detail later.

[0020]

An imparting unit 106 imparts a digital card as a first game element according to the present invention, to a user that has performed an impartation request via the user terminal 300, as virtual goods. Imparting digital cards to the user is realized by adding information of new digital cards to the impartation status information 802 of the user information of the user. The card ID 812 of the digital card that is to be imparted is decided by the imparting unit

106 performing drawing processing on the basis of information of a predetermined winning rate.

[0021]

A card DB 107 is a database that manages information of digital cards configured to be impartible to users (digital card information) in the provision system according to the present embodiment. Digital card information may be configured to include, for one type of digital card, a winning rate 822 in which is described the frequency of this digital card being won in the drawing processing by the imparting unit 106, in association with a card ID 821 that uniquely identifies the digital card, as illustrated in Fig. 8(b), for example. Multiple types of digital cards that are managed exist, and the winning rate 822 that is fixed is set in advance for each. The winning rate may be set in accordance with a rarity (scarcity) set for each digital card or manufacturing costs or the like of a real card corresponding to the digital card, for example, with the winning rate being set lower the higher the scarcity is and the higher the manufacturing costs of the real card of the digital card is. Although the card DB 107 is described as managing information of digital cards in the present embodiment, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this, and may manage information including both information of digital cards and information of real cards

corresponding to the digital cards.

[0022]

A provision communication unit 108 is a communication interface that the provision server 100 has, for communication with an external device. The provision communication unit 108 can connect to an external device via the network 400, which may be a communication network such as the Internet or the like or a local area network connecting equipment (regardless of whether it is wired or wireless), and enable transmission and reception of data. The provision communication unit 108 converts information input thereto as an object of transmission, for example, into data of a predetermined format, and transmits the data to an external device such as the user terminal 300 or the like, via the network 400. Also, upon receiving information from an external device via the network 400, for example, the provision communication unit 108 decodes the information and stores the information in the provision memory 103.

[0023]

<Configuration of Management Server>

Next, a functional configuration of the management server 200 according to the present embodiment will be described with reference to the block diagram in Fig. 3. Note that in the description of the functional configuration of the management server 200, configurations that realize

functions similar to configurations that the provision server 100 and the user terminal 300 have will be indicated by a prefix "management", to clearly distinguish from these.

[0024]

A management control unit 201 is a CPU, for example, and controls operations of each of the blocks that the management server 200 has. Specifically, the management control unit 201 reads out operation programs for the blocks recorded in a management recording medium 202, for example, and loads the operation programs to management memory 203 and executes the operation programs, thereby controlling the operations of the blocks.

[0025]

The management recording medium 202 is a recording device capable of permanently holding data, such as non-volatile memory, an HDD, or the like, for example. The management recording medium 202 stores information such as parameters and so forth that are necessary for operation of the blocks, in addition to the operation programs of the blocks that the management server 200 has. The management memory 203 is a storage device used for temporary data storage, such as volatile memory or the like, for example. The management memory 203 is used not only as a loading region of the operation programs of the blocks, but also as a storage region for temporarily storing data and so forth

that are output in the operations of the blocks.

[0026]

A stock DB 204 manages information of the stock status (stock information) of real cards provided by using the service of the provision system. The management server 200 is installed in a warehouse or the like that stores real cards, and manages the count of actual goods in the warehouse (stock count), for example, regarding the real cards, as described above. Stock information is managed regarding each of the multiple types of real cards provided, in the present embodiment. Stock information may be configured to include, for one type of real card, a stock count 832 that indicates a remaining count of the real card that is stored without being provided to any user, in association with a card ID 831 that uniquely identifies the real card, as illustrated in Fig. 8(c), for example. Now, in the service that the provision system provides, a user who is imparted a digital card is provided with a real card corresponding to the digital card. Although the card ID 821 used for digital card information and the card ID 831 used for stock information are described in the present embodiment as being the same regarding associated digital cards and real cards, in order to facilitate understanding of the present invention, it will be readily comprehended that carrying out the present invention is not limited to

this.

[0027]

A shipping management DB 205 is a database that manages various types of information regarding shipping of real cards to users (shipping management information). The shipping management information may be configured to include, for one shipment (shipping of cargo in which one or more real cards for one user are packaged), a user ID 842 of the user, shipping destination information 843 relating to the user, a shipped flag 844 that manages whether or not the shipment has been carried out, and shipping card information 845 that indicates the content of the real card to be shipped, in association with a shipping ID 841 that uniquely identifies the shipment, as illustrated in Fig. 8(d), for example. Note that the shipping card information 845 may be configured to include a card ID 851 indicating what the real card to be shipped is, and a count 852 to be shipped, for each type of real card to be shipped.

[0028]

A management communication unit 206 is a communication interface that the management server 200 has, for communication with an external device. The management communication unit 206 can connect to an external device via the network 400, which may be a communication network such as the Internet or the like or a local area network

connecting equipment (regardless of whether it is wired or wireless), and enable transmission and reception of data. The management communication unit 206 converts information input thereto as an object of transmission, for example, into data of a predetermined format, and transmits the data to an external device such as the provision server 100 or the like, via the network 400. Also, upon receiving information from an external device via the network 400, for example, the management communication unit 206 decodes the information and stores the information in the management memory 203.

[0029]

<Configuration of User Terminal>

A functional configuration of the user terminal 300 according to the present embodiment will be described next with reference to the block diagram in Fig. 4. Note that in the description of the functional configuration of the user terminal 300, configurations that realize functions similar to configurations that the provision server 100 and the management server 200 have will be indicated by a prefix "terminal", to clearly distinguish from these.

[0030]

A terminal control unit 301 is a CPU, for example, and controls operations of each of the blocks that the user terminal 300 has. Specifically, the terminal control unit

301 reads out operation programs for the blocks, and an execution program relating to the above-described browsing application, recorded in a terminal recording medium 302, for example, and loads the programs to terminal memory 303 and executes the programs, thereby controlling the operations of the blocks.

[0031]

The terminal recording medium 302 is a recording device capable of permanently holding data, such as non-volatile memory, an HDD, or the like, for example. The terminal recording medium 302 stores parameters and so forth that are necessary for operation of the blocks, in addition to the operation programs of the blocks and an execution program of the browsing application that the user terminal 300 has. The terminal memory 303 is a storage device used for temporary data storage, such as volatile memory or the like, for example. The terminal memory 303 is used not only as a loading region of the operation programs of the blocks and the execution program of the browsing application, but also as a storage region for temporarily storing data and so forth that are output in the operations of the blocks.

[0032]

A presentation control unit 304 includes a drawing device such as a GPU or the like for example, and generates screens to be displayed on a display unit 310 and performs

display control. The display unit 310 may be a display device externally and detachably connected to the user terminal 300, for example, or a display device integrally configured with the user terminal 300, and is configured to be capable of presenting information to the user by displaying data relating to a screen that is received from the presentation control unit 304 in a predetermined display region.

[0033]

An operation input unit 305 is a user interface that the user terminal 300 has, such as a mouse, a keyboard, or the like, for example. Upon detecting operational input being performed at one of the user interfaces, the operation input unit 305 outputs control signals corresponding to the operational input to the terminal control unit 301. Note that although the user terminal 300 is described in the present embodiment as having various types of interfaces as physical operating members, a touch input detection sensor that detects touch input performed on a screen of the display unit 310 may be included, for example.

[0034]

A terminal communication unit 306 is a communication interface that the user terminal 300 has, for communication with an external device. The terminal communication unit 306 can connect to an external device via the network 400,

which may be a communication network such as the Internet or the like or a cable connecting equipment (regardless of whether it is wired or wireless), and enable transmission and reception of data. The terminal communication unit 306 converts information input thereto as an object of transmission, for example, into data of a predetermined format, and transmits the data to an external device such as the provision server 100 or the like, via the network 400. Also, upon receiving information from an external device via the network 400, for example, the terminal communication unit 306 decodes the information and stores the information in the terminal memory 303.

[0035]

<<Overview of Service>>

Next, an overview of the service provided by the provision system according to the present embodiment having such a configuration will be described.

[0036]

As described above, the provision system according to the present embodiment provides a service involving provision of actual goods (real cards) to users. Service provision is started in response to the browsing application running on the user terminal 300 accessing a Web site relating to this service. Provision of a real card included in the service is performed on the basis of a request made

by a user, and is realized by the provision server 100 executing various types of processing, including deciding the type of digital card to be imparted in accordance with predetermined operational input performed at the user terminal 300 during service provision, imparting the digital card of the type that is decided, securing a real card corresponding to the digital card, and instructing shipping of the real card, so that the real card is shipped through a delivery company.

[0037]

Now, there is a temporal gap between operational input being performed at the user terminal 300 and completion of provision of real cards (a state in which the actual goods have reached the user). Accordingly, in the service according to the present embodiment, in order for the user to promptly comprehend the type of real card that will actually be provided as to the operational input, a digital card corresponding to the real card is presented. At this time, information of the digital card corresponding to the real card is newly imparted to the impartation status information 802 of the user information regarding the user, and a state in which the good (digital card) has been provided to the user is virtually realized on the system. In other words, in a state in which the digital card, which is the first game element according to the present

invention, has been imparted, the user is in a state of having the right to ownership of the digital card and to the real card corresponding to the digital card, which is the second game element according to the present invention. In light of the fact that the state that is first reached with regard to the operational input is the state in which the digital card has been imparted, operational input performed at the user terminal 300 regarding various types of processing relating to provision of the real card executed at the provision server 100 is described below as input instructing an "impartation request for a digital card". However, from one perspective, the real card and the digital card corresponding to each other are essentially the same, and accordingly, the above operational input may be read as input instructing a "provision request for a real card" as appropriate.

[0038]

Payment of a price is a prerequisite to provision of a real card, and various types of processing relating to provision of the real card executed at the provision server 100 in response to the impartation request for a digital card are performed under the condition that payment of the price is complete (settlement complete). It is sufficient for payment of the price to be performed using an external billing system, for example, with judgment of settlement

complete being made by the provision server 100 receiving a result of settlement processing of a predetermined currency or points (having monetary value) associated with the user. Note that providing real cards free of charge is suitable from a perspective of sales promotion and so forth, for example, and accordingly it is needless to say that payment of a price is not an indispensable prerequisite for execution of various types of processing in carrying out the present invention.

[0039]

Also, real cards that are provided, i.e., digital cards that are imparted, are configured such that the types thereof are decided by a drawing game. That is to say, the service is provision of a drawing game of digital cards that involves provision of real cards, and the operational input relating to the impartation request for a digital card performed at the user terminal 300 is equivalent to a start instruction for this drawing game. The drawing game involves the drawing processing performed by the imparting unit 106, and a digital card of the type decided (won) by the drawing is imparted to the user.

[0040]

Note that while the service provision in the provision system according to the present embodiment is described as drawing games being executed in relation to imparting

digital cards, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. It is sufficient for the present invention to perform service provision relating to a game and involving imparting a game element (digital card) to a user. The game that decides the type of game element to be imparted is not limited to simply performing a drawing alone, and may have any content. The term "game" as used here may be understood to indicate content involving interactive-type processing, in which selection of a predetermined element, presentation of effects, derivation of results of predetermined randomness, and so forth, are performed in response to operational input performed as to a predetermined display.

[0041]

Real cards provided in the service according to the present embodiment will be described as being prefabricated cards having a fixed design, which are printed and issued in advance in a factory or the like, and which are delivered to a warehouse or the like, sorted by type, and stored for provision (for shipping). In a case of a shipping instruction being given from the provision server 100 to the management server 200, shipping management information relating to the shipping instruction is referenced, the real card to be shipped is picked and packaged in a warehouse or the like, and thereafter shipped, thereby realizing

provision to the relevant user.

[0042]

As described above, the type of the real card to be provided is decided in accordance with the result of winning the drawing game, and is not configured so that the user can selectively obtain a desired real card. The drawing game is performed on the basis of the winning rate 822 set in the digital card information of the digital cards corresponding to the various types of real cards, and the type of digital card to be imparted is decided under conditions that are even to all users.

[0043]

On the other hand, in a state in which there is no stock of real cards of a particular type (out of stock), the real card cannot be shipped even if a digital card corresponding to the real card is won in the drawing game. That is to say, a state in which the real card of this type is not shipped continues until stock is received to inventory the next time, and accordingly fairness among users regarding the period from the impartation request until obtaining the real card is not guaranteed, which may diminish user interest. Also, implementing a specification in which a substitute real card is provided (a substitute digital card is imparted) due to giving priority to this period will lead to fairness among users regarding the

winning rate not being guaranteed, which also may diminish user interest.

[0044]

Accordingly, the provision system according to the present embodiment controls whether to enable or disable accepting of operational input relating to impartation requests for digital cards, i.e., whether to enable or disable execution of the drawing game, in accordance with the stock status of real cards that are the object of provision. That is to say, if there is stockout regarding a real card to be the object of provision, execution of a drawing game in which fairness among users is not guaranteed is avoided by disabling accepting operational input relating to impartation requests for digital cards.

[0045]

In the provision system according to the present embodiment, the stock information indicating the stock status of each real card is updated in accordance with new shipping management information being registered in the shipping management DB 205 or existing shipping management information being updated, on the basis of information based on new reception of real cards to inventory (particularly count received to inventory) being registered, and information of real cards regarding which shipping is determinate (securing information) received from the

provision server 100. However, carrying out the present invention is not limited to these, and updating of stock information may be performed at any timing, such as actual goods being secured for packaging for shipping for example, as long as it is a timing at which, in a state where a real card is out of stock, execution of the drawing game in which a digital card corresponding to this real card could be won can be suppressed.

[0046]

<<Provision Processing>>

Specific provision processing executed at the provision server 100 relating to service provision in the provision system according to the present embodiment will be described below, with reference to the flowchart in Fig. 5. The processing corresponding to the flowchart can be realized by, for example, the provision control unit 101 reading out a corresponding processing program stored in the provision recording medium 102, loading the program to the provision memory 103, and executing the program. Note that this provision processing will be described regarding the processing executed when the provision server 100 receives an access request to the Web site relating to the service from the user terminal 300 (hereinafter, accessing terminal), for example.

[0047]

In S501, the provision control unit 101 judges whether or not a transition request to a page that accepts impartation requests for digital cards (drawing game page) has been received from the accessing terminal. In a case of judging that a transition request to the drawing game page has been received, the provision control unit 101 transitions the processing to S502, while in a case of judging that no such request has been received, the provision control unit 101 repeats the processing of this step. Note that although description will be given regarding the processing details for the processing relating to providing real cards in the provision processing according to the present embodiment, it is needless to say that processing may be performed regarding other functions included in the service.

[0048]

In S502, the provision control unit 101 executes determination processing regarding determining whether or not impartation of digital cards can be performed, i.e., whether or not the drawing game can be started.

[0049]

<Determination Processing>

Determination processing executed in this step will be described below with reference to the flowchart in Fig. 6. The processing corresponding to this flowchart can be

realized by, for example, the provision control unit 101 and the management control unit 201 each reading out a corresponding processing program stored in the provision recording medium 102 or the management recording medium 202, loading the program to the provision memory 103 or the management memory 203, and executing the program. That is to say, the provision server 100 and the management server 200 perform this determination processing collaboratively.

[0050]

In S601, the provision control unit 101 transmits a provision request regarding stock status information indicating the stock status corresponding to real cards corresponding to digital cards that are the object of imparting, to the management server 200 via the provision communication unit 108.

[0051]

In S602, the management control unit 201 judges whether or not the provision request for stock status information has been received. In a case of judging that the provision request for stock status information has been received, the management control unit 201 transitions the processing to S603, while in a case of judging that no such request has been received, the management control unit 201 repeats the processing of this step.

[0052]

In S603, the management control unit 201 references the stock information of all types of real cards that are the object of provision, managed by the stock DB 204, configures stock status information to be transmitted to the provision server 100, and transmits the stock status information to the provision server 100 via the management communication unit 206. The stock status information in the present embodiment is logical-type information indicating whether or not there is stockout, since it is sufficient for the provision server 100 to comprehend whether there is stockout regarding any of the real cards that are the object of provision. Accordingly, the management control unit 201 references the information of the stock count 832, which is stock information of all types of real cards that are the object of provision, and configures stock status information of True indicating that there is stockout if even one type of real card has a stock count of 0, or False indicating that there is no stockout if none of the types has a stock count of 0.

[0053]

Note that the stock status information is described in the present embodiment as logical-type information indicating whether or not there is stockout, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. It is needless to say that information of stock status transmitted

to the provision server 100 from the management server 200 may be configured to include stock information of all types of real cards, or may be information of another configuration.

[0054]

In S604, the provision control unit 101 judges whether or not stock status information has been received from the provision server 100. In a case of judging that stock status information has been received, the provision control unit 101 transitions the processing to S605, while in a case of judging that no stock status information is received, the provision control unit 101 repeats the processing of this step.

[0055]

In S605, the provision control unit 101 determines whether or not digital cards can be imparted (whether or not the drawing game can be started) on the basis of the received stock status information, and stores the determination result thereof in the provision memory 103. More specifically, in a case where the stock status information is False, the provision control unit 101 stores a determination result to the effect that digital cards can be imparted in the provision memory 103, and in a case where the stock status information is True, stores a determination result to the effect that digital cards cannot be imparted

in the provision memory 103. Upon storage of the determination result in the provision memory 103 is complete, the provision control unit 101 ends this determination processing.

[0056]

Upon end of the determination processing, the provision control unit 101 judges whether or not the determination result that is stored is a determination result to the effect that digital cards can be imparted, in S503 of the provision processing. In a case where the determination result is a determination result to the effect that digital cards can be imparted, the provision control unit 101 transitions the processing to S505, while in a case of a determination result to the effect that digital cards cannot be imparted, the provision control unit 101 transitions the processing to S504.

[0057]

In S504, the provision control unit 101 performs control so that digital cards are not imparted, by setting the form of presentation elements, such as graying out the color of a button that accepts impartation requests for digital cards (a GUI composed of an image) such that the button is in a state in which operational input cannot be performed, in a drawing game page presented on the accessing terminal, or the like, for example. That is to say, by

configuring information used for presenting the drawing game page on the accessing terminal (information for page presentation) in this way, the provision control unit 101 performs control so that impartation requests for digital cards or start requests for the drawing game cannot be accepted from the accessing terminal. The provision control unit 101 may configure information for page presentation at this time to present a notification to the effect that accepting impartation of digital cards is temporarily discontinued, due to insufficient stock of real cards. The provision control unit 101 transmits the configured information for page presentation to the accessing terminal via the provision communication unit 108, and thereafter completes this provision processing.

[0058]

Also, in a case where the determination result stored in S503 is a determination result to the effect that digital cards can be imparted, in S505, the provision control unit 101 performs control so that digital cards can be imparted, by setting the form of presentation elements, such as setting the button that accepts impartation requests for digital cards to an operation-inputtable state or the like for the drawing game page, for example. That is to say, the provision control unit 101 performs control to enable accepting impartation requests for digital cards and start

requests for the drawing game from the accessing terminal, by configuring the information for page presentation in this way. At this time, the provision control unit 101 may configure information for page presentation to present a notification to the effect that digital cards are imparted by operational input to this button, or a notification to the effect that corresponding real cards will be shipped to the user in accordance with impartation of digital cards. After transmitting the information for page presentation that is configured to the accessing terminal via the provision communication unit 108, the provision control unit 101 transitions the processing to S506.

[0059]

Note that although control of whether or not to enable accepting impartation requests for digital cards is described in the present embodiment as being performed at the provision server 100 side, by configuring information used in presentation of the drawing game page in which the form of accepting impartation requests is set on the basis of the determination results, as shown in S504 and S505, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. Control of whether or not to enable accepting impartation requests for digital cards may be indirectly realized by the accessing terminal, on the basis of information of determination results supplied from the provision server 100

to the accessing terminal.

[0060]

In S506, the provision control unit 101 judges whether or not an impartation request for digital cards (or a start request for the drawing game) has been received from the accessing terminal. In a case of judging that an impartation request for a digital card has been received, the provision control unit 101 transitions the processing to S507, while in a case of judging that no such request has been received, the provision control unit 101 repeats the processing of this step.

[0061]

In S507, the provision control unit 101 judges whether or not settlement is successful (whether or not payment of the price has been performed) as a result of settlement processing relating to impartation of the digital card with regard to the user of the accessing terminal. In a case of judging that settlement relating to impartation of the digital card has succeeded, the provision control unit 101 transitions the processing to S508, and in a case of judging that settlement has failed, the provision control unit 101 makes notification to that effect, transitions to the page before transition to the drawing game page, and returns the processing to S501.

[0062]

Under control of the provision control unit 101, in S508, the imparting unit 106 executes the drawing processing to decide the digital card to be imparted to the user of the accessing terminal. The drawing processing in the present embodiment is configured such that all types of digital cards of which digital card information is managed by the card DB 107 are registered as the object of drawing on the basis of the winning rate 822 thereof, and one of these is extracted. Upon deciding a digital card to be imparted as the result of the drawing processing, the imparting unit 106 adds the information of this digital card to the impartation status information 802 of the user information relating to the user. The provision control unit 101 also transmits the information of the digital card that is imparted to the accessing terminal via the provision communication unit 108, and notifies the user. It is sufficient for notification of the digital card that is imparted at the accessing terminal to be performed along with presentation of an image of the digital card. The image of the digital card at this time may show unique artwork given to the corresponding real card.

[0063]

In S509, the provision control unit 101 performs securing processing of securing for shipping a real card corresponding to the digital card imparted in S508 (object

digital card).

[0064]

<Securing Processing>

Now, the securing processing executed in this step will be described in detail with reference to the flowchart in Fig. 7. The processing corresponding to this flowchart can be realized by, for example, the provision control unit 101 and the management control unit 201 each reading out a corresponding processing program stored in the provision recording medium 102 or the management recording medium 202, loading the program to the provision memory 103 or the management memory 203, and executing the program. That is to say, the provision server 100 and the management server 200 perform this securing processing collaboratively.

[0065]

In S701, the provision control unit 101 configures securing information indicating that shipping of the real card corresponding to the object digital card is determinate, and sends the securing information to the provision communication unit 108, which transmits the securing information to the management server 200. The securing information here is information for securing the real card regarding which provision to the user is determinate, and may be configured to include shipping destination information 862 of the user and a card ID 863 of

the object digital card (card ID of the real card to be shipped), in association with a user ID 861 of the user, as illustrated in Fig. 8(e), for example.

[0066]

In S702, the management control unit 201 judges whether or not securing information has been received from the provision server 100. In a case of judging that securing information has been received from the provision server 100, the management control unit 201 transitions the processing to S703, while in a case of judging that no securing information has been received, the management control unit 201 repeats the processing of this step.

[0067]

In S703, the management control unit 201 determines whether or not shipping management information having the same user ID 842 as the card ID 851 in the securing information that has been received, and also having a value of the shipped flag 844 indicating an unshipped state, is present in the shipping management DB 205. In the service according to the present embodiment, with regard to one or more digital cards imparted within a predetermined period, such as one service usage period (a period during which continuous access to a related Web site is performed with login authentication) or the like for example, for one user, provision of corresponding real cards to the user is

performed in a consolidated manner as one shipment. That is to say, multiple real cards can be included in one shipment, and securing information that the management server 200 has received during a predetermined period for the same user is aggregated in one piece of shipping management information, and is registered and managed. Accordingly, in this step, the management control unit 201 judges whether or not shipping management information corresponding to the service usage period this time already exists with regard to the user of the accessing terminal. In a case of judging that this shipping management information already exists, the management control unit 201 transitions the processing to S705, and in a case of judging that the shipping management information does not exist, transitions the processing to S704.

[0068]

In S704, the management control unit 201 issues a new shipping ID 841 and registers new shipping management information in the shipping management DB 205. More specifically, the management control unit 201 configures shipping management information that has the shipping ID 841 that is newly issued, and that has the value of the shipped flag 844 indicating an unshipped state. Also, the management control unit 201 enters the user ID 861 of the securing information to the user ID 842 of the shipping

management information, and the shipping destination information 862 of the securing information to the shipping destination information 843. The management control unit 201 also adds information in which the card ID 863 of the securing information is the card ID 851 and in which the count 852 is "1" to the shipping card information 845 of the shipping management information, as information of the real card regarding which shipping is determinate.

[0069]

On the other hand, in a case of judging in S703 that this shipping management information already exists, in S705 the management control unit 201 adds the information of the real card relating to the securing information to the shipping card information 845 of this shipping management information. In a case where information of a real card having the same card ID 851 as the card ID 863 in the securing information is already registered in the shipping card information 845, the management control unit 201 updates the count 852 associated with the card ID 851 to a value incremented by "1", instead of adding. Conversely, in a case where information of a real card having the same card ID 851 as the card ID 863 in the securing information is not registered yet in the shipping card information 845, the management control unit 201 adds information in which the card ID 863 of the securing information is the card ID 851

and in which the count 852 is "1" to the shipping card information 845.

[0070]

In S706, the management control unit 201 reflects, in the stock DB 204, the information of the real card regarding which shipping is determinate on the basis of the securing information. More specifically, the management control unit 201 updates the stock count 832 to a value decremented by "1" with regard to the stock information that has the same card ID 831 as the card ID 863 in the securing information and that is managed in the stock DB 204. Thus, securing of the real card to be provided to the user of the accessing terminal for shipping is realized. In other words, the right to ownership of the real card regarding which provision is determinate is transferred to the user even in the unshipped stage, and accordingly the real card is excluded from the stock information, so as not to be counted as stock.

[0071]

In S707, the management control unit 201 returns information, indicating that securing of the real card corresponding to the object digital card is complete, to the provision server 100 via the management communication unit 206.

[0072]

In S708, the provision control unit 101 judges whether or not information, indicating that securing of the real card corresponding to the object digital card is complete, has been received. In a case of judging that information indicating that securing of the real card is complete has been received, the provision control unit 101 completes this securing processing, while in a case of judging that no such information is received, the provision control unit 101 repeats the processing of this step.

[0073]

Upon end of the securing processing, in S510 of the provision processing, the provision control unit 101 judges whether or not to add a further real card to the one shipment relating to service usage this time, i.e., whether or not to impart a digital card additionally. The judgment in this step may be made in accordance with whether indication of intent to the effect of requesting further impartation of digital cards (operational input) is made, or whether indication of intent to the effect of not requesting any further impartation of digital cards (operational input), is made at the accessing terminal. Also, control may be performed such that, in a case in which the count of real cards that can be included in one shipment reaches an upper limit, for example, further addition of real cards is not permitted. In a case of judging that a digital card is

to be additionally imparted, the provision control unit 101 returns the processing to S502, and in a case of judging that a digital card is not to be additionally imparted, transitions the processing to S511.

[0074]

In S511, the provision control unit 101 transmits a shipping instruction for a real card including the user ID of the user of the accessing terminal to the management server 200 via the provision communication unit 108, and completes this provision processing at the provision server 100 side.

[0075]

Upon receiving the shipping instruction for the real cards, transmitted in this way, the management control unit 201 reads out shipping management information from the shipping management DB 205 that has the user ID included in the shipping instruction and of which the value of the shipped flag 844 indicates an unshipped state, and performs processing so that shipping procedures are performed regarding this shipping management information. Processing of shipping procedures may be realized by a manual process including, for example, transmission of the shipping management information to a terminal of a packaging staffer, and the packaging staffer performing packaging and shipping on the basis of information of the types and shipping counts

of the real cards that are the object of packaging, which is presented at the terminal, or by an automated process in which these steps are performed by machine or the like. At the time of shipping, information of shipping completed is transmitted from the terminal of the packaging staffer to the management server 200, for example, and the management control unit 201 updates the shipped flag 844 of the relevant shipping management information managed in the shipping management DB 205 to a value indicating a shipped state in response to reception of this information, and the processing of the shipping procedures is complete.

[0076]

Now, in a case of completing the provision processing through S504, there is a possibility that shipping management information, in which the shipped flag 844 has a value indicating an unshipped state regarding the user of the accessing terminal, exists in the shipping management DB 205. That is to say, in a case where judgment is made in S510 to add further real cards in the one shipment relating to the service usage this time, but determination is made in the subsequent determination processing that digital cards cannot be imparted, shipping management information regarding which real cards are unshipped exists in the shipping management DB 205 regarding this user. Accordingly, the provision control unit 101 transmits a

shipping instruction for real cards including the user ID of the user of the accessing terminal to the management server 200 via the provision communication unit 108, in a case of completing the provision processing through S504 as well.

[0077]

As described above, according to the provision system of the present embodiment, whether or not to enable impartation of digital cards can be controlled in accordance with the stock status of the corresponding real cards, and accordingly suitable service provision guaranteeing fairness among users can be realized.

[0078]

Note that although a form in which whether or not to enable accepting of an impartation request for a digital card is controlled by changing settings of the GUI of the drawing game page in accordance with the stock status of real cards is described regarding the provision processing according to the present embodiment, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. That is to say, it is sufficient for the present invention to perform control such that, in a state where a real card is out of stock, impartation of a digital card corresponding to the real card is not performed. This may be realized by operational input relating to an impartation request for a digital card being accepted at the accessing terminal, but

at the provision server 100 the provision control unit 101 controlling whether or not the imparting unit 106 is to execute drawing processing in accordance with the stock status. Alternatively, in a case where judgment is made that there is no stock of a real card corresponding to a digital card that is won as the result of drawing processing, control may be performed so that this digital card is not imparted, and the drawing processing is executed again. In this case, the digital card corresponding to the real card that is out of stock is not imparted, and accordingly control may be performed so that the result of the winning is not presented on the accessing terminal.

[0079]

Also, although a form in which multiple real cards regarding which provision is determinate during one service usage period are consolidated and shipped as one shipment is described regarding the provision processing according to the present embodiment, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. That is to say, a form may be made in which shipping management information is registered for each real card, and a shipping instruction is given along with securing information for imparted digital cards.

[0080]

Also, although the imparting unit 106 is described as performing the drawing processing on the basis of the

winning rate 822 managed in the digital card information for each of the digital cards, regarding the provision processing according to the present embodiment, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. For example, in a case of employing real cards provided in an arcade game housing or the like under a condition of payment of a price as the actual goods provided in this provision system, the drawing processing may be controlled in the same manner as in the provision form in the game housing. That is to say, instead of shuffling real cards that are the object of the drawing each time the drawing is performed, once the objects of drawing are decided for a count of cards included in a batch of real cards for replenishment of the game housing (a batch (one pack) of real cards packaged and distributed for replenishment of a card provision stocker provided in the game housing), on the basis of the winning rate, drawing processing may be performed in which reshuffling of the objects of drawing is not performed thereafter until all of these objects of drawing are won, and the card IDs of the real cards that are won are sequentially excluded from the objects. That is to say, a form may be made in which the winning rate of at least some of the real cards changes the more times the drawing processing is performed, until the drawing objects are shuffled the next time.

[0081]

Also, although determination processing is described as being executed for each impartation request that is received, assuming that the provision server 100 and the management server 200 are capable of communication, regarding the provision processing according to the present embodiment, this description is made in order to facilitate understanding of the present invention, and execution specifications of the determination processing are not limited to this. For example, in a form in which, at the time of a real card being secured and stock information being changed at the management server 200, stock status information is supplied to the provision server 100 on the basis of the stock information following the change, the provision control unit 101 can perform determination processing using the stock status information at any timing after the supplying, and hold the determination result thereof.

[0082]

Also, although regarding the provision system according to the present embodiment, a form is described in which, of services that are provided, functions of managing users and imparting digital cards are realized by the provision server 100, functions of stock management and shipping management of real cards are realized by the management server 200, and functions of accepting impartation requests for digital

cards and presenting information are realized by the user terminal 300, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. Sectioning of the entities that realize the functions may be performed in any way, and the number of devices used for realizing these functions is not limited to three. That is to say, the various types of functions relating to the provision system may be realized by one device, or execution of the functions may be distributed among multiple devices and realized.

[0083]

Also, although regarding the provision system according to the present embodiment, imparting digital cards is described as being performed through the drawing game, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. Imparting digital cards may be performed in accordance with progress status in any game, such as an online game of which gameplay is realized at the user terminal 300 via the provision server 100 (which may include so-called web applications and social network games), any standalone game executed at the user terminal 300 configured to be capable of receiving information of stock status, and so forth.

[0084]

Also, the game regarding which service provision is performed in according to the present invention does not need to be a drawing game alone in which impartation of

digital cards is the object, as in the present embodiment, and may be a game that provides other playing experiences. In such a form, information used for game progress control may be given to digital cards imparted to users and real cards provided thereto, and may be configured to be usable for user gameplay. For example, when using a real card in gameplay, it is sufficient for information given to the card to be read out at the user terminal 300.

[0085]

Also, although in the present embodiment, the first game element that is imparted in response to an impartation request received from the user is described as being a digital card (virtual goods), and the second game element corresponding to the first game element, provided in accordance with impartation of the first game element, is described as being a real card (actual goods), carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. It is sufficient for the first game element and the second game element to be elements between which correspondence is set in advance and that relate to the game of which service provision is performed (for example, they appear in game process, at least part of their information is presented in relation to the game, or the existence thereof is mentioned in game content), or that indicate features of the elements in part of the external appearance thereof. It is

sufficient for the first game element to be a game element associated with the second element that is an actual good, and may be any element relating to the game such as a character, an item, or the like, for example, besides a digital card. Also, it is sufficient for the second game element to be an actual good relating to the game of which service provision is performed, for example, associated with the first game element imparted to the user in the service, and may be any actual good, such as, for example, a shaped article like a model figure, a toy, a key fob, or the like, or a paper medium or decal or the like other than a card, and so forth, having an appearance of a game element. Also, regarding the form of a real card, the real card is not limited to the above-described prefabricated card, and may be a card corresponding to the imparted digital data, manufactured by so-called on-demand printing in response to a shipping instruction, for example. In this case, it is sufficient for determination of whether or not to enable impartation of a digital card to be performed on the basis of the remaining amount of printing sheets for cards or the state of a printing device.

[0086]

[Modification 1]

Although in the above-described embodiment, a form is described in which impartation of digital cards is disabled

in a case where there is no stock of corresponding real cards, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. That is to say, the status of real cards used to determine whether or not to enable impartation of digital cards is not limited to the stock count.

[0087]

For example, in a form configured such that multiple real cards are classified into groups (series No. 1, series No. 2, ..., series No. N), and the lineup of real cards that can be provided differs depending on a season (one of the groups is providable), or the number of types of real cards that are providable increases in accordance with passage of time (providable groups are sequentially added), there can be real cards of which stock exists, but of which provision is not permissible at the timing at which the impartation request for the digital card is made.

[0088]

At this time, it is sufficient for determination processing of whether or not to enable impartation of digital cards to be performed for each group of real cards. That is to say, a form may be made in which a transition request to the drawing game page is set so that accepting is enabled for each group of corresponding real cards, i.e., selection instructions for multiple types of drawing games are set so that accepting is enabled, and in a case where an

impartment request for a digital card is made in one of the drawing game pages, the relevant group is identified, and determination results are derived in accordance with whether or not real cards included in this group can be provided. In this form, stock information relating to one real card, for example, includes a group ID indicating which group the real card is classified to, and providable information indicating whether providable or not, or a providable season, in addition to the configuration illustrated in Fig. 8(c), and can be realized by the management control unit 201 configuring stock status information by referencing the providable information and/or the stock count 832 of the stock information relating to this real card in a case of receiving a provision request for stock status information involving a group ID.

[0089]

Note that in such a form, a list or index of impartible digital cards relating to each group may be presentably configured in a page that accepts transition requests to drawing game pages relating to multiple groups, for example, so that users can comprehend in which group the real card corresponding to a digital card that the user desires is classified. Also, the page that accepts the transition requests and the drawing game pages may be configured such that information of periods during which digital cards

relating to the respective groups can be imparted is presentable.

[0090]

In such a form, in a case where a determination result that digital cards regarding one group cannot be imparted is obtained, and in a case where digital cards regarding another group can be imparted, control may be performed at the user terminal 300 to make a notification to the effect of proposing execution of the drawing game relating to the other group.

[0091]

[Modification 2]

Although in the above-described modification, a form is described in which selection instructions regarding multiple types of drawing games can be accepted in accordance with a provision season for one type of content, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. Real cards of multiple types of content may be provided in the service of the provision system, and with regard to provision, drawing game pages may be provided for each type of content and configured to be able to accept impartation requests for digital cards for each of the drawing games. That is to say, status management of stock and so forth relating to real cards may be performed for each type of content, and determination processing of whether or not digital cards can

be imparted may be performed for each type of content. Also, it is needless to say that drawing games are further divided by provision seasons or the like for each type of content, as in Modification 1.

[0092]

[Modification 3]

In the above-described embodiment and modifications, a form is described in which digital cards of which digital card information is managed in the card DB 107 can be all selected as objects of drawing in the drawing game, as long as corresponding real cards are in a providable state. However, some of the digital cards may be unselectable as objects of drawing.

[0093]

More specifically, digital cards that are impartibly provided in the provision system according to the present modification are divided into types and managed in accordance with whether or not the digital cards can be objects of drawing in the drawing game. A configuration may be made in which, with regard to these types, information of card type, distinguishably indicating which type the digital card is, is included in digital card information relating to one digital card managed by the card DB 107, for example, in addition to the configuration indicated in Fig. 8(b). Hereinafter, a digital card serving as a first-type first

game element according to the present invention, which is the object of drawing in the drawing game, will be described as a first-type digital card, and in the same way, a digital card serving as a second-type first game element, which is excluded from being the object of drawing in the drawing game, will be described as a second-type digital card.

[0094]

Conditions other than winning in the drawing game are set regarding the second-type digital card, for impartation of the digital card and acquisition of the real card corresponding thereto. By configuring the second-type digital card to be imparted without necessitating an impartation request from the user, under a condition that the impartation count of first-type digital cards to the same user reaches a predetermined count, demand for the first-type digital card and/or the real card corresponding thereto in the service rises, leading to effects of sales promotion, for example. That is to say, in order for a user to receive impartation of the second-type digital card, acquiring a predetermined count of the first-type digital card through a predetermined count of times of the drawing game involving payment of a price is a condition. Accordingly, the scarcity of the second-type digital card becomes relatively high, raising motivation of users for buying the first-type digital card in order to obtain the

second-type digital card.

[0095]

In particular, arcade game housings that perform service provision involving providing real cards are configured such that so-called campaign cards (sales promotion media) that are not provided from the housing but are provided as free gifts with other products such as confectionary, toys, and so forth are usable in gameplay, besides real cards provided from the housing. Such campaign cards are actual goods not acquirable through the use of the arcade game housing alone, and accordingly purchasing particular products, visiting a particular location, or the like, by the players, is necessary for acquisition thereof. In the provision system according to the present modification, such campaign cards are included as real cards that are providable, and digital cards corresponding thereto are handled as second-type digital cards, and accordingly a service can be provided in which users can acquire campaign cards or the like more easily.

[0096]

Note that the decision of which second-type digital card is to be imparted, in a case in which impartation of a second-type digital card is determinate, may be performed by drawing processing in which only the second-type digital cards are the object. In this case as well, fairness among

users may be guaranteed by changing the impartation timing of second-type digital cards, or controlling whether or not to enable accepting of impartation requests for impartation of first-type digital cards reaching a predetermined count, in accordance with whether real cards are in or out of stock.

[0097]

Also, although in the present modification, the second-type digital card is described as being imparted under a condition of impartation of a predetermined count of first-type digital cards to the same user, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. In order to guarantee the scarcity value of real cards as to second-type digital cards, for example, an impartation condition for second-type digital cards may be limited to a case in which impartation of a predetermined count of first-type digital cards is performed at one time, such as a drawing game referred to as a so-called "10-shot" (a form in which impartation of not one first-type digital card, but impartation of a predetermined count (multiple) of first-type digital cards is accepted as to one impartation request).

[0098]

Also, although in the present modification, a form is described in which an impartation condition for the second-

type digital card is set according to the count of first-type digital cards imparted, carrying out the present invention is not limited to this. The impartation condition of the second-type digital card may be any impartation condition, as long as it is set not on the basis of drawing processing relating to impartation of first-type digital cards.

[0099]

[Other Embodiments]

The present invention is not limited to the above embodiment; rather, various types of modifications and changes may be made within the scope of the essence of the present invention, without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. Also, the provision system according to the present invention can be realized by a program that causes one or more computers to function as the provision system. The program can be provided/distributed by being recorded in a computer-readable recording medium, or via an electrical communication line.

In accordance with embodiments of the invention, the provision system described above may be implemented by a processing unit that is communicatively connected to a non-transitory media. The processing unit may refer generically to any device or component that can process such instructions and may include: a microprocessor,

microcontroller, programmable logic device or other computational device. That is, the processing unit may be provided by any suitable logic circuitry for receiving inputs, processing them in accordance with instructions stored in memory and generating outputs (i.e. to the memory components, and/or PCIe BUS, etc.). In this embodiment, the processing unit may be a single core or multi-core processor with memory addressable space. A memory and an operating system may be in data communication with the processing unit via a generic bus. The memory components include both volatile and non-volatile memory and more than one of each type of memory, including a Random Access Memory (RAM), a Read Only Memory (ROM) and a mass storage device, the last comprising one or more solid-state drives (SSDs). One skilled in the art will recognize that the memory components described above comprise non-transitory computer-readable media and shall be taken to comprise all computer-readable media except for a transitory, propagating signal.

Typically, the instructions are stored as program code in the memory components but can also be hardwired. The memory may include a kernel and/or programming modules such as a software application that may be stored in either volatile or non-volatile memory.

Reference Signs List

[0100]

100 provision server
101 provision control unit
102 provision recording medium
103 provision memory
104 user DB
105 determining unit
106 imparting unit
107 card DB
108 provision communication unit
200 management server
201 management control unit
202 management recording medium
203 management memory
204 stock DB
205 shipping management DB
206 management communication unit
300 user terminal
301 terminal control unit
302 terminal recording medium
303 terminal memory
304 presentation control unit
310 display unit
305 operation input unit
306 terminal communication unit
400 network

CLAIMS

[Claim 1]

A system for performing service provision relating to a game and for imparting a first game element to a user, the system comprising:

a processing unit; and

a non-transitory media readable by the processing unit, the media storing instructions that when executed by the processing unit, cause the processing unit to:

accept an impartation request for the first game element from the user;

impart the first game element to the user on the basis of the impartation request;

acquire a status of a second game element that corresponds to the first game element; and

control the impartation of the first game element in accordance with the status of the second game element that is acquired,

wherein the impartation of the first game element is controlled to be enabled, under a condition that the status of the second game element that is acquired is a first status.

[Claim 2]

The system according to Claim 1 wherein the media

further comprises instructions for directing the processing unit to:

accept payment of a price relating to the impartation request,

wherein the impartation of the first game element is performed under a condition that payment of the price has been performed.

[Claim 3]

The system according to Claim 1 or 2, wherein the game comprises a drawing game, and wherein the media further comprises instructions for directing the processing unit to:

decide, on the basis of a result of the drawing game, the first game element to be imparted on the basis of the impartation request.

[Claim 4]

The system according to Claim 3,

wherein the first game element comprises a first-type first game element and a second-type first game element, and

wherein the first game element is decided on the basis of the result of the drawing game is the first-type first game element.

[Claim 5]

The system according to Claim 4,
wherein the second-type first game element is imparted
not on the basis of the result of the drawing game.

[Claim 6]

The system according to Claim 5,
wherein the second-type first game element is imparted
to the user under a condition that an impartation count of
the first-type first game element to the same user has
reached a predetermined count.

[Claim 7]

The system according to Claim 6,
wherein the second-type first game element is imparted
to the user under a condition that a predetermined count of
the first-type first game element is imparted to the same
user at one time.

[Claim 8]

The system according to any one of Claims 1 to 7,
wherein, in a case where the status of the second game
element that is acquired is a second status that is
different from the first status, impartation of the first
game element is controlled to be disabled.

[Claim 9]

The system according to Claim 8,
wherein the control to disable impartation of the first game element includes control to a state in which the impartation request is not accepted.

[Claim 10]

The system according to Claim 8 or 9,
wherein the first game element is a virtual good, and
wherein the second game element is an actual good.

[Claim 11]

The system according to Claim 10, wherein the media further comprises instructions for directing the processing unit to:

provide the second game element corresponding to the first game element to the user, under a condition that impartation of the first game element has been performed.

[Claim 12]

The system according to Claim 11,
wherein information regarding whether or not to permit provision of the second game element to the user is set to the second game element,
wherein the first status is a status in which

information permitting provision of the second game element to the user is set, and

wherein the second status is a status in which information not permitting provision of the second game element to the user is set.

[Claim 13]

The system according to Claim 11 or 12,

wherein the status of the second game element includes information of a stock status of the second game element,

wherein the first status is a status in which the second game element is in stock, and

wherein the second status is a status in which the second game element is out of stock.

[Claim 14]

The system according to any one of Claims 8 to 13,

wherein the game of which service provision is performed includes a plurality of types of games,

wherein the program further causes the computer to execute processing of accepting selection of one game out of the plurality of types of games, and

wherein, in a case of accepting selection of the one game, impartation of the first game element relating to the one game is performed on the basis of the impartation

request.

[Claim 15]

The system according to Claim 14, wherein the status of the second game element is managed for each type of game, and wherein the media further comprises instructions for directing the processing unit to:

propose another game of which the status of the second game element that is managed is the first status, in a case where the status of the second game element that is managed with regard to the one game, of which selection is accepted, is the second status.

[Claim 16]

The system according to either Claim 14 or 15, wherein the media further comprises instructions for directing the processing unit to:

present the user with, for each of the types of games, a period in which the first game element relating to the game is impartible.

[Claim 17]

The system according to any one of Claims 14 to 16, wherein the media further comprises instructions for directing the processing unit to:

present the user with, for each of the types of games, a list of first game elements that are impartible regarding the game.

[Claim 18]

A provision system that performs service provision relating to a game and involving imparting a first game element to a user, the provision system comprising:

accepting means that accepts an impartation request for the first game element from the user;

imparting means that imparts the first game element to the user on the basis of the impartation request accepted by the accepting means;

acquisition means that acquires a status of a second game element that corresponds to the first game element; and

control means that controls impartation of the first game element in accordance with the status of the second game element that is acquired by the acquisition means,

wherein the control means controls impartation of the first game element to be enabled, under a condition that the status of the second game element that is acquired by the acquisition means is a predetermined status.

[Claim 19]

An information management device that manages service

provision relating to a game and involving imparting a first game element, the information management device comprising:

accepting means that accepts an impartation request for the first game element;

imparting means that imparts the first game element on the basis of the impartation request accepted by the accepting means;

acquisition means that acquires a status of a second game element that corresponds to the first game element; and

control means that controls impartation of the first game element in accordance with the status of the second game element that is acquired by the acquisition means,

wherein the control means controls impartation of the first game element to be enabled, under a condition that the status of the second game element that is acquired by the acquisition means is a predetermined status.