Claims

1. A card shuffling system comprising:

multiple automatic card shuffler devices each including:

one or more mechanisms for re-arranging cards from one or more decks of cards into a shuffled one or more decks of cards;

one or more cameras incorporated therein or mounted thereon;

one or more illuminators for illuminating an area near a focus of said one or more cameras; and

a transmitter configured to send data from said one or more cameras to a remote location, said data including at least images of backs of cards from said one or more decks of cards; and

one or more local and/or remote processors configured to evaluate said data to detect anomalies and card markings associated with said cards, said one or more local or remote processors further configured to cause a comparison of captured card back images for each card back against captured card back images for each other card to determine undesirable markings and anomalies associated with any of said playing cards within said one or more decks of playing cards.

2. The card shuffling system of claim 1 further comprising a server configured to at least receive said data sent by said transmitter of each of said multiple card shuffler devices.

3. The card shuffling system of claim 1 wherein each of said multiple card shuffler devices further includes a processor.

4. The card shuffling system of claim 1 wherein said multiple card shuffler devices communicate with one another.

5. The card shuffling system of claim 1 further comprising one or more mirrors positioned to allow said one or more cameras to capture images of a card back, card sides and a card face.

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6. The card shuffling system of claim 1 further comprising electronic storage configured to maintain data associated with card data captured by said one or more cameras.

7. The card shuffling system of claim 1 further comprising photo editing software for enhancing card images to reveal hidden card marks.

8. The card shuffling system of claim 1 wherein said multiple card shuffler devices are located in two or more casino properties.

9. A card shuffling system comprising:

multiple automatic card shuffler devices each including:

one or more mechanisms for re-arranging cards from one or more decks of cards;

at least one camera having a processor;

an image processor;

one or more illuminators; and

a transmitter configured to send data from said camera processor and said image processor, said data including at least images of backs of cards; and

a remote server configured to at least receive said data from said multiple card shufflers and evaluate said data along with historical data to determine card markings and anomalies, said remote server further configured to cause a comparison of captured card back images for each card back against captured card back images for each other card to determine undesirable markings and anomalies associated with any of said playing cards within said one or more decks of playing cards.

10. The card shuffling system of claim 9 further comprising one or more mirrors positioned to allow said at least one camera to capture images of a card back, card sides and a card face.

11. The card shuffling system of claim 9 further comprising electronic storage configured to maintain data associated with card data captured by said at least one camera.

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12. The card shuffling system of claim 9 further comprising photo editing software for enhancing card images to reveal hidden card marks.

13. The card shuffling system of claim 9 wherein said multiple card shuffler devices are located in two or more casino properties.

14. A method of detecting card marks comprising:

utilizing multiple random-selection automatic card shufflers at one or more locations to shuffle cards, said multiple random-selection card shufflers having at least a camera to capture card images;

capturing images of at least one of card backs, sides and faces as cards are re-arranged by said one or more random-selection card shufflers;

collecting card data comprising at least images of at least one of said card backs, sides and faces; and

evaluating said card data along with historical card data to determine card markings and anomalies wherein said evaluating comprises a comparison of captured card back images for each card back against captured card back images for each other card to determine undesirable markings and anomalies associated with any of said playing cards within said one or more decks of playing cards.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising utilizing a camera processor in each of said one or more random-selection automatic card shufflers to first detect anomalies and an image processor to second detect marks.

16. The method of claim 14 further comprising utilizing a remote server to store collected and historical card data.

17. The method of claim 14 further comprising utilizing photo editing software for enhancing card images to reveal hidden card marks.

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18. The method of claim 14 wherein said step of evaluating said card data along with historical card data to determine card anomalies suggestive of improper card markings comprises utilizing a degree of measurement procedure to distinguish marks from defects.

19. The method of claim 14 wherein said step of evaluating said card data along with historical card data to determine card anomalies suggestive of improper card markings comprises utilizing (a) said measurement's degree of anomaly, (b) consecutive-round analysis and (c) corresponding card value to distinguish marks from defects.

20. A card shuffling system comprising:

multiple automatic card shuffler devices each comprising

(i) one or more mechanisms for re-arranging cards from one or more decks of cards;

(ii) one or more cameras incorporated therein or mounted thereon; and

(iii) one or more illuminators for illuminating an area near a focus of said one or more cameras; and

one or more software modules configured to evaluate one or more card markings and/or anomalies wherein said evaluation comprises a comparison of captured card back images for each card back against captured card back images for each other card to determine undesirable markings and anomalies associated with any of said playing cards within said one or more decks of playing cards.

21. The card shuffling system of claim 20 wherein each of said multiple automatic card shuffler devices includes a transmitter configured to send data from said one or more cameras to a remote location, said data including at least images of backs of cards from said one or more decks of cards.

22. The card shuffling system of claim 21 further comprising a server configured to receive said data sent by said transmitter of each of said multiple automatic card shuffler devices.

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23. The card shuffling system of claim 20 wherein said server runs said one or more software modules.

24. The card shuffling system of claim 20 wherein each of said multiple automatic card shuffler devices further includes an associated processor.

25. The card shuffling system of claim 20 further comprising one or more mirrors positioned to allow said one or more cameras to capture images of a card back, card sides and a card face.

26. A method of detecting card marks comprising:

utilizing multiple random-selection automatic card shufflers at one or more locations to shuffle cards, each of said multiple random-selection card shufflers having at least a camera to capture card images;

capturing images of at least one of card backs, sides and faces as cards are re-arranged by said one or more random-selection card shufflers;

collecting card data comprising at least images of at least one of said card backs, sides and faces; and

utilizing one or more software modules to determine card markings and/or anomalies wherein said evaluation comprises a comparison of captured card back images for each card back against captured card back images for each other card to determine undesirable markings and anomalies associated with any of said playing cards within said one or more decks of playing cards.

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