A ~~RETROFITTABLE~~ CONVERSION DEVICE AND AN ASSOCIATED CONVERSION METHOD

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a conversion device that is ~~retrofittable~~retrofitted into an electronic gaming machine (EGM) and an associated method. Embodiments of the present invention find application in the gaming industry.

BACKGROUND ART

Any discussion of documents, acts, materials, devices, articles or the like which has been included in this specification is solely for the purpose of providing a context for the present invention. It is not to be taken as an admission that any or all of these matters form part of the prior art base or were common general knowledge in the field relevant to the present invention as it existed in Australia or elsewhere before the priority date of this application.

In the highly competitive environment of the gaming industry there is a strong drive to make EGM's as engaging and interesting as possible so as to attract the patronage of players. Over time, older EGM's may become less attractive to players in comparison to newer EGM's that may offer additional features. Hence, it has been appreciated by the inventors of the present application that it may be desirable to increase the functionality of some older EGM's in an effort to improve their attractiveness to players.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to overcome, or substantially ameliorate, one or more of the disadvantages of the prior art, or to provide a useful alternative.

In one aspect of the present invention there is provided a ~~retrofittable~~ conversion device ~~for converting~~retrofitted into an electronic gaming machine (EGM) so as to convert the EGM from an EGM that functions without providing ~~not having~~ a stand-alone progressive jackpot into an EGM having at least one stand-alone progressive jackpot, said ~~retrofittable~~ conversion device including:

an input port for receipt of data from the EGM;

an output port; and

a processor configured to be responsive to said data so as to progressively accumulate at least one jackpot amount, said processor being responsive to a trigger so as to cause a jackpot award signal to be sent from the output port.

Preferably the ~~retrofittable~~ conversion device is sized so as to be housable within a cabinet of the EGM.

In one embodiment the data includes a turnover of the EGM and the processor is configured so as to increment the jackpot by a proportion of the turnover.

In one embodiment the trigger is triggered when the jackpot amount is incremented to, or in excess of, a trigger amount. In another embodiment the data includes a game result and the trigger is triggered when the game result falls within a pre-defined subset of game results.

Preferably the ~~retrofittable~~ conversion device has a plurality of output ports, at least one of the output ports being communicatively linkable to a centralised monitoring system. More preferably, at least some of the output ports replicate a plurality of output ports native to the EGM.

Typically the EGM has a gaming machine interface card and the input port of the ~~retrofittable~~ conversion device receives said data from said gaming machine interface card.

In one embodiment the processor is configured so as to receive a display signal from the EGM and to adapt the display signal of the EGM so as to produce an adapted display signal that includes a current value of the jackpot amount and to cause the EGM to display the adapted display signal. In another embodiment a secondary display is retrofittable onto the EGM so as to be visible by a player of the EGM and the secondary display is driven by the conversion device so as to display a current value of the jackpot amount.

In one embodiment the EGM has native credit dispensing hardware and the jackpot award signal is sent from the output port to the EGM so as to instruct the EGM to use the native credit dispensing hardware to pay the jackpot to a player of the EGM. In another embodiment credit dispensing hardware is retrofittable to the EGM and the jackpot award signal is sent from the output port to the retrofitted payout hardware so as to instruct the retrofitted credit dispensing hardware to pay the jackpot to a player of the EGM. In yet another embodiment, the jackpot award signal is sent from the output port so as to instruct an

attendant to pay the jackpot to a player of the EGM. In this embodiment the processor is responsive to a triggering of the trigger so as to send an instruction to the EGM to freeze play of the EGM until such time as the attendant provides an input to the EGM to confirm that payment of the jackpot has occurred.

In another aspect of the present invention there is provided a conversion method including the steps of: providing an electronic gaming machine (EGM) that functions without providing a stand-alone progressive jackpot; providing a conversion device having an input port, an output port and a processor; retrofitting the conversion device into the EGM such that the input port is connected for receipt of data from the EGM and such that the processor is configured to be responsive to said data so as to progressively accumulate at least one jackpot amount, said processor being responsive to a trigger so as to cause a jackpot award signal to be sent from the output port to the EGM, thereby to convert the EGM into an EGM having at least one stand-alone progressive jackpot.

The features and advantages of the present invention will become further apparent from the following detailed description of preferred embodiments, provided by way of example only, together with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACCOMPANYING DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a schematic depiction of an embodiment of the invention; and

Figure 2 is a flowchart showing steps performed in a method for using the preferred embodiment to provide a stand-alone progressive jackpot.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

Prior to retrofitting of the preferred embodiment 1, the EGM 2 is not configured to provide a stand-alone progressive jackpot. Rather, the EGM 2 is merely configured to provide one or more base games, which, for example, may be slot machine games, card games, keno, bingo and/or any of a large number of other known alternative base games.

In a manner that is well known to those skilled in the art, the EGM 2 has a Gaming Machine Interface Card (GMIC) 7 that enables signals encoding gaming data to be communicated to a centralised monitoring system (CMS) 4. The EGM 2 also has a display, player operable input means such as buttons and/or a touch sensitive screen, and credit receiving / dispensing hardware such as a currency acceptor / validator and/or a ticket reader / writer.

If it is desired to convert the EGM 2 into an EGM that is configured to provide a stand-alone progressive jackpot, then the conversion device 1 is retrofitted into the EGM 2. This is done by opening the cabinet of the EGM 2 and installing the conversion device 1 within the cabinet (the conversion device 1 is illustrated as physically separate to the EGM 2

CLAIMS:

1. A retrofittable conversion device for converting an electronic gaming machine (EGM) not having a stand-alone progressive jackpot into an EGM having at least one stand-alone progressive jackpot, said retrofittable conversion device including:

an input port for receipt of data from the EGM;

an output port; and

a processor configured to be responsive to said data so as to progressively accumulate at least one jackpot amount, said processor being responsive to a trigger so as to cause a jackpot award signal to be sent from the output port.

2. A retrofittable conversion device according to claim 1 being sized so as to be housable within a cabinet of the EGM.

3. A retrofittable conversion device according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the data includes a turnover of the EGM and wherein the processor is configured so as to increment the jackpot by a proportion of the turnover.

4. A retrofittable conversion device according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the trigger is triggered when the jackpot amount is incremented to, or in excess of, a trigger amount.

5. A retrofittable conversion device according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the data includes a game result and wherein the trigger is triggered when the game result falls within a pre-defined subset of game results.

6. A retrofittable conversion device according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the retrofittable conversion device has a plurality of output ports, at least one of the output ports being communicatively linkable to a centralised monitoring system.

7. A retrofittable conversion device according to claim 6 wherein the plurality of output ports replicate a plurality of output ports native to the EGM.

8. A retrofittable conversion device according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the EGM has a gaming machine interface card and wherein the input port of the retrofittable conversion device receives said data from said gaming machine interface card.

9. A retrofittable conversion device according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the processor is configured so as to receive a display signal from the EGM and to adapt the display signal of the EGM so as to produce an adapted display signal that includes a current value of the jackpot amount and to cause the EGM to display the adapted display signal.

10. A retrofittable conversion device according to any one of claims 1 to 8 wherein a secondary display is retrofittable onto the EGM so as to be visible by a player of the EGM and wherein the secondary display is driven by the conversion device so as to display a current value of the jackpot amount.

11. A retrofittable conversion device according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the EGM has native credit dispensing hardware and wherein the jackpot award signal is sent from the output port to the EGM so as to instruct the EGM to use the native credit dispensing hardware to pay the jackpot to a player of the EGM.

12. A retrofittable conversion device according to any one of claims 1 to 8 wherein credit dispensing hardware is retrofittable to the EGM and wherein the jackpot award signal is sent from the output port to the retrofitted credit dispensing hardware so as to instruct the retrofitted credit dispensing hardware to pay the jackpot to a player of the EGM.

13. A retrofittable conversion device according to any one of claims 1 to 8 wherein the jackpot award signal is sent from the output port so as to instruct an attendant to pay the jackpot to a player of the EGM.

14. A retrofittable conversion device according to claim 13 wherein the processor is responsive to a triggering of the trigger so as to send an instruction to the EGM to freeze play of the EGM until such time as the attendant provides an input to the EGM to confirm that payment of the jackpot has occurred.

CLAIMS

1. A conversion device retrofitted into an electronic gaming machine (EGM) so as to convert the EGM from an EGM that functions without providing a stand-alone progressive jackpot into an EGM having at least one stand-alone progressive jackpot, said conversion device including:

an input port for receipt of data from the EGM;

an output port; and

a processor configured to be responsive to said data so as to progressively accumulate at least one jackpot amount, said processor being responsive to a trigger so as to cause a jackpot award signal to be sent from the output port.

2. A conversion device according to claim 1 being sized so as to be housable within a cabinet of the EGM.

3. A conversion device according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the data includes a turnover of the EGM and wherein the processor is configured so as to increment the jackpot by a proportion of the turnover.

4. A conversion device according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the trigger is triggered when the jackpot amount is incremented to, or in excess of, a trigger amount.

5. A conversion device according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the data includes a game result and wherein the trigger is triggered when the game result falls within a pre-defined subset of game results.

6. A conversion device according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the conversion device has a plurality of output ports, at least one of the output ports being communicatively linkable to a centralised monitoring system.

7. A conversion device according to claim 6 wherein the plurality of output ports replicate a plurality of output ports native to the EGM.

8. A conversion device according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the EGM has a gaming machine interface card and wherein the input port of the conversion device receives said data from said gaming machine interface card.

9. A conversion device according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the processor is configured so as to receive a display signal from the EGM and to adapt the display signal of the EGM so as to produce an adapted display signal that includes a current value of the jackpot amount and to cause the EGM to display the adapted display signal.

10. A conversion device according to any one of claims 1 to 8 wherein a secondary display is retrofittable onto the EGM so as to be visible by a player of the EGM and wherein the secondary display is driven by the conversion device so as to display a current value of the jackpot amount.

11. A conversion device according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the EGM has native credit dispensing hardware and wherein the jackpot award signal is sent from the output port to the EGM so as to instruct the EGM to use the native credit dispensing hardware to pay the jackpot to a player of the EGM.

12. A conversion device according to any one of claims 1 to 8 wherein credit dispensing hardware is retrofittable to the EGM and wherein the jackpot award signal is sent from the output port to the retrofitted credit dispensing hardware so as to instruct the retrofitted credit dispensing hardware to pay the jackpot to a player of the EGM.

13. A conversion device according to any one of claims 1 to 8 wherein the jackpot award signal is sent from the output port so as to instruct an attendant to pay the jackpot to a player of the EGM.

14. A conversion device according to claim 13 wherein the processor is responsive to a triggering of the trigger so as to send an instruction to the EGM to freeze play of the EGM until such time as the attendant provides an input to the EGM to confirm that payment of the jackpot has occurred.

15. A conversion method including the steps of:

providing an electronic gaming machine (EGM) that functions without providing a stand-alone progressive jackpot;

providing a conversion device having an input port, an output port and a processor;

retrofitting the conversion device into the EGM such that the input port is connected for receipt of data from the EGM and such that the processor is configured to be responsive to said data so as to progressively accumulate at least one jackpot amount, said processor being responsive to a trigger so as to cause a jackpot award signal to be sent from the output port to the EGM, thereby to convert the EGM into an EGM having at least one stand-alone progressive jackpot.

16. A conversion method according to claim 15 wherein the conversion device is housed within a cabinet of the EGM.

17. A conversion method according to claim 15 or 16 wherein the data includes a turnover of the EGM and wherein the processor is configured so as to increment the jackpot by a proportion of the turnover.

18. A conversion method according to any one of claims 15 to 17 wherein the EGM has native credit dispensing hardware and wherein the jackpot award signal is sent from the output port to the EGM so as to instruct the EGM to use the native credit dispensing hardware to pay the jackpot to a player of the EGM.

19. A conversion method according to any one of claims 15 to 17 wherein credit dispensing hardware is retrofittable to the EGM and wherein the jackpot award signal is sent from the output port to the retrofitted credit dispensing hardware so as to instruct the retrofitted credit dispensing hardware to pay the jackpot to a player of the EGM.

20. A conversion method according to any one of claims 15 to 17 wherein the jackpot award signal is sent from the output port so as to instruct an attendant to pay the jackpot to a player of the EGM.