Claims

1. A lottery method comprising the steps of:

a lottery contestant electronically submitting a digital image and payment to a lottery for lottery participation, said digital image comprising at least one still or video image selected from a personal image, a family image, and a pet image;

electronically encrypting said digital image and contestant information to form an information capsule comprising a lottery ticket;

entering said lottery ticket into a batch of a plurality of other lottery tickets comprised of information capsules;

selecting a lottery ticket from said batch of a plurality of lottery tickets and designating such lottery ticket as a winning ticket of said lottery;

decrypting said information capsule comprising said winning lottery ticket and obtaining information about the lottery contestant which submitted said winning ticket from said decrypted information capsule~~;~~

~~identifying a single winner of said lottery by analyzing said digital image and/or said contestant information~~.

2. The lottery method according to claim 1 further including the step of:

integrating said lottery into one of the group consisting of: a television show, web broadcast, website, mobile device broadcast, or software generated graphical user interface.

3. The lottery method according to claim 1 further including the steps of:

prior to the step of selecting and designating a winning ticket, selecting a subset number of said plurality of lottery tickets which is less than the total number of said plurality of lottery tickets and designating said subset number of selected lottery tickets as winners of an intermediate stage of said lottery.

4. The lottery method according to claim 2 further including the steps of:

prior to the step of selecting and designating a winning ticket, selecting a subset number of said plurality of lottery tickets which is less than the total number of said plurality of lottery tickets and designating said subset number of selected lottery tickets as winners of an intermediate stage of said lottery.

5. The lottery method according to claim 4 further including the steps of:

at said intermediate stage, displaying images of intermediate stage winners on said television show, web broadcast, website, mobile device broadcast, or software generated graphical user interface; and

when a final, single winning ticket is selected, displaying the image submitted by the winning contestant on said television show, web broadcast, website, mobile device broadcast, or software generated graphical user interface.

6. The lottery method according to claim 5 further including the step of generating a number associated with each said lottery ticket entered into said batch of a plurality of lottery tickets and logging said number for use in performing the intermediate stage winner selection or winner selection steps.

7. The lottery method according to claim 6 wherein said intermediate stage winner selection or winner selection steps are performed utilizing a random number generator to randomly generate numbers which are matched to logged numbers generated in association with lottery tickets being entered into said batch to thereby select intermediate stage winners and/or a final lottery winner.

8. The lottery method according to claim 1 wherein said digital image is submitted via an apparatus selected from the group comprising: a mobile electronic device, a kiosk, and a computer using an internet connection.

9. The lottery method according to claim 5 wherein said digital image is submitted via an apparatus selected from the group comprising: a mobile electronic device, a kiosk, and a computer using an internet connection.

10. The lottery method according to claim 1 wherein said payment is submitted via a mechanism selected from the group comprising: a prepaid SIM card, a personalized payment account, and via credit card payment on the internet.

11. The lottery method according to claim 5 wherein said payment is submitted via a mechanism selected from the group comprising: a prepaid SIM card, a personalized payment account, and via credit card payment on the internet.

12. A lottery system comprising the steps of:

a) a lottery contestant electronically submitting a digital image and payment to a lottery for lottery participation, said digital image comprising at least one still or video image selected from a personal image, a family image, and a pet image;

b) electronically encrypting said digital image and contestant information to form an information capsule comprising an lottery ticket;

c) generating a random entry number, derived from digital image information, and affiliating said random entry number with said lottery ticket;

d) repeating steps a), b), and c) such that a plurality of lottery tickets are formed and a plurality of random entry numbers are generated and affiliated with said plurality of lottery tickets;

e) randomly selecting a random winner number in a winner selection phase and matching said random winner number with one of said plurality of random entry numbers to thereby determine a winning ticket of said lottery; and

f) decrypting said information capsule comprising said winning lottery ticket and obtaining information about the lottery contestant which submitted said winning ticket from said decrypted information capsule ~~by analyzing said digital image and/or said contestant information~~.

13. The lottery system according to claim 12 further including the steps of:

prior to step e), randomly selecting a plurality of random advancement numbers in a lottery advancement phase, said plurality of random advancement numbers being of a quantity which is less than the total number of said plurality of lottery tickets;

matching said plurality of random advancement numbers with corresponding numbers among said plurality of random entry numbers to thereby determine a subset

identity of lottery tickets as winners of an intermediate, advancement stage of said lottery.

14. The lottery system according to claim 12 further including the step of:

integrating said lottery into one of the group consisting of: a television show, web broadcast, website, mobile device broadcast, or software generated graphical user interface.

15. The lottery system according to claim 14 further including the steps of:

prior to step e), randomly selecting a plurality of random advancement numbers in a lottery advancement phase, said plurality of random advancement numbers being of a quantity which is less than the total number of said plurality of lottery tickets;

matching said plurality of random advancement numbers with corresponding numbers among said plurality of random entry numbers to thereby determine a subset identity of lottery tickets as winners of an intermediate, advancement stage of said lottery.

16. The lottery method according to claim 15 further including the steps of:

at said intermediate, advancement stage of said lottery, displaying images of intermediate stage winners on said television show, web broadcast, website, mobile device broadcast, or software generated graphical user interface; and

when a final, single winning ticket is selected, displaying the image submitted by the winning contestant on said television show, web broadcast, website, mobile device broadcast, or software generated graphical user interface.

17. The lottery method according to claim 12 wherein said digital image is submitted via an apparatus selected from the group comprising: a mobile electronic device, a kiosk, and a computer using an internet connection.

18. The lottery method according to claim 15 wherein said digital image is submitted via an apparatus selected from the group comprising: a mobile electronic device, a kiosk, and a computer using an internet connection.

19. The lottery method according to claim 12 wherein said payment is submitted via a mechanism selected from the group comprising: a prepaid SIM card, a personalized payment account, and via credit card payment on the internet.

20. The lottery method according to claim 15 wherein said payment is submitted via a mechanism selected from the group comprising: a prepaid SIM card, a personalized payment account, and via credit card payment on the internet.

21. The lottery method according to claim 1 or 12 wherein said encryption step of forming said information capsule comprising a lottery ticket is performed by a lottery contestant.

22. The lottery method according to claim 21 wherein said encryption step of forming said information capsule comprising a lottery ticket is performed by a lottery contestant with a mobile electronic device or a computer.

23. The lottery method according to claim 1 or 12 wherein said encryption step of forming said information capsule comprising a lottery ticket is performed by a lottery server, lottery equipment, a lottery agent, or a lottery administrator.

24. A lottery system comprising the steps of:

a) a lottery contestant generating or creating a digital image for use as a lottery ticket and thereafter submitting said digital image to a lottery for lottery participation, said digital image comprising at least one still or video image selected from a personal image, a family image, and a pet image;

b) generating an entry number and affiliating said entry number with said lottery ticket;

c) repeating steps a) and b) such that a plurality of lottery tickets are formed and a plurality of entry numbers are generated and affiliated with said plurality of lottery tickets; and

d) randomly selecting a winning ticket number in a winner selection phase and matching said winning ticket number with one of said plurality of entry numbers to thereby determine a winning ticket of said lottery~~;~~

~~e) analyzing said digital image comprising said winning ticket to identify the identity of a single lottery winner~~.

25. A lottery system according to claim 24 further comprising the steps of:

combining said digital image with contestant information to form an information capsule, said information capsule serving as said lottery ticket.

26. A lottery system according to claim 25 further comprising the step of:

a lottery contestant submitting payment for lottery participation.

27. A lottery system according to claim 26 further comprising the step of:

combining information related to said payment for lottery participation in said information capsule.

28. A lottery system according to claim 24 further comprising the step of:

encrypting said digital image for use as a lottery ticket.

29. A lottery system according to claim 25 further comprising the step of:

encrypting said information capsule in a step of creating said lottery ticket.

30. A lottery system according to claim 27 further comprising the step of:

encrypting said information capsule in a step of creating said lottery ticket.

31. A lottery system according to claim 28 further comprising the step of:

decrypting a digital image comprising a winning lottery ticket and obtaining identification information about the lottery contestant which submitted said winning ticket from said decrypted digital image.

32. A lottery system according to claim 29 further comprising the step of:

decrypting an information capsule comprising a winning lottery ticket and obtaining information about the lottery contestant which submitted said winning ticket from said decrypted information capsule.

33. A lottery system according to claim 30 further comprising the step of:

decrypting an information capsule comprising a winning lottery ticket and obtaining information about the lottery contestant which submitted said winning ticket from said decrypted information capsule.

34. A lottery system according to claim 25 wherein said information capsule is formed by a lottery contestant.

35. A lottery system according to claim 26 wherein said information capsule is formed by a lottery contestant with a mobile electronic device or a computer.

36. A lottery system according to claim 25 wherein said information capsule is formed by a lottery server, lottery equipment, a lottery agent, or a lottery administrator.

37. A lottery system according to claim 31, 32, or 33 wherein said encrypting step is performed by a lottery contestant.

38. A lottery system according to claim 37 wherein said encrypting step is performed by a lottery contestant with a mobile electronic device or a computer.

39. A lottery system according to claim 31, 32, or 33 wherein said encrypting step is performed by a lottery server, lottery equipment, a lottery agent, or a lottery administrator.

40. The lottery method according to claim 1 wherein said contestant information includes lottery player identification information.

~~41. The lottery method according to claim 40 wherein said contestant information is determined from said payment submitted to said lottery for lottery participation.~~

4142. The lottery method according to claim 40 wherein said lottery player identification information is submitted by said lottery contestant to said lottery.

4243. The lottery method according to claim 40 wherein said lottery player identification information is used to monitor compulsive gambling habits, evaluate suspicious lottery transactions, and/or trace lottery ticket origins.