

Method for gaming and gaming system

Field of the invention

The present invention relates to a method for gaming and for a gaming system.
5 More particularly the present invention relates to mobile or networked gaming with a terminal, such as a mobile terminal.

Background of the invention

As the use of network and particularly wireless network technology has become
10 everyday habit, the gaming and gambling has also been implemented to that environment. Several types of network or mobile phone based gaming methods are generally known. One interesting field of network or mobile gambling is real time type of gambling, wherein the player will know immediately if he wins. Usually the player has to register first to the game service provider in order to play.

15 IE20020907 describes a method of playing a game, such as a lottery game, based on a mobile phone network, wherein a player dials up a game service provider using a mobile phone. If playing for the first time, the player registers with the game service provider and receives a personal identification number (PIN) from the provider. The game service provider downloads a portal module to the subscriber identification
20 module (SIM) card of the player's mobile phone. The player then plays the game, and arranges for payment to the provider, before hanging up. Generally in order to be programmable in such way, the SIM card must be specially designed for that purpose, and for example provided by that specific service provider.

Also, the charging for the gaming or the payment of the win is usually arranged in a
25 relatively complicated way. WO01/48712 A1 discloses a method and system for providing real time scratch-off lottery like games over a wireless network. Substantially concurrently, security, including win/loss determination is maintained by a betting service provider on a system apart from the wireless station of the user. A user authentication routine is executed by the betting service. Once the user is au-
30 thenticated, a choice of electronic lottery ticket-like games is presented and the user selects one or more "tickets". Once a selection is made, the betting service randomly selects game tickets and transmits them to the user. Once received by the user, the

game ticket can be played on a wireless station. In a preferred embodiment, the game is presented as an electronic representation of a scratch-off-type lottery ticket. A determination of winning or losing is made as the user plays the game. If the user has lost, the user may play another ticket, select another game or quit playing and
5 log-off the betting service. If the user wins the lottery game, the designated prize, can be credited to the betting service account of the user. The credit to the user can also be made in the form of the issue of new lottery game tickets (with or without additional credit to the users account). The user may then play another selected ticket, select another ticket, or log-off the betting service. In this method the system
10 creates and tracks user accounts and the win prizes are credited to the betting service account of the user.

The idea of the present invention is to provide a simple automated system for use in network or mobile gaming. Any suitable terminal, such as mobile terminal, should be usable as the gaming terminal as such. No installation of additional applications
15 to the terminal should be needed nor should any modifications be made to terminal, SIM card, software or like. Furthermore, no registration to the service or specific SIM card provided by the gaming operator should be needed and the gaming service should be accessible generally everywhere. The payment of prizes and the transfer of the prize money should be independent of the terminal. As there is poor support
20 in the mobile terminals for the mobile payment systems, such as wallet applications, the use of such systems should be avoided.

Summary of the invention

The present invention provides a method and system for playing a networked or
25 mobile game by messages between a user using a terminal and gaming system within a single gaming session. In said single gaming session said user sends a first message to said gaming system, wherein said user is identified by an existing user identifier without a specific registration to said gaming system, and said gaming system calculates a win/loss value for said user to define if there is a win or loss in
30 the game, and said gaming system responses with a second message to said user to report the result of said game.

In the case of win said user may respond with a third message to said gaming system to provide payment system account information for the prize payment, such as bank account number. Then the gaming system responses to said user with a mes-

sage containing a verification of the payment, such as an verification code, and said user sends back said verification code to said gaming system in order to accept a prize payment. The gaming system may pay the prize according to given payment system account information, if other conditions for the payment are fulfilled, such as age of majority of the player or other possible conditions set by local legislation. The win prize may also be added to player's gaming account.

Generally the user payment for the gaming is associated with said first message, but also other ways of payment are possible, for example the payment may be associated to a gaming event already happened, such as a gaming event from the day before or like.

An advantage of the present invention is that any mobile, wireless or other suitable terminal can be used as such without any modifications or application downloads.

Another advantage of the present invention is that no separate registration to gaming system is needed for playing.

Still another advantage of the present invention is that gaming is possible virtually everywhere.

Still another advantage of the present invention is that the payment of prizes is simple and independent of the type of terminal used.

Still another advantage of the present invention is that the gaming is independent of the telephone number.

One aspect of the present invention refers to a method described above to play a electronic mobile or networked game.

Another aspect of the present invention refers to a gaming system for playing the mobile game as described in the method above.

Still another aspect of the present invention refers to a server or device arrangement for providing the mobile game as described in the method above.

Next the present invention will be described in details. References will be made to the following figures.

Brief description of the drawings

Figure 1 shows a schematic drawing of a system according to present invention

Figure 2 shows an example of gaming events on a display of a mobile phone

Figure 3 shows a flow chart of the start of the gaming process

5 Figure 4 shows a flow chart of the gaming process

Figure 5 shows a flow chart of a weekly lottery

Figure 6 shows a flow chart of the payment of a win prize

Detailed description of the invention

10 Generally the system of the present invention should include at least the end user of the service, the network or mobile phone operator, the gaming service provider and the payment systems.

The “end user” of the service refers to a user, or the player, who plays the game according to the invention. The end user, or user or player as referred herein, generally
15 uses a terminal for playing. In one embodiment said terminal is any known mobile terminal, such as a mobile phone or any other mobile device, e.g. “communicator” or personal digital assistance type of device. Such terminal is capable of communicating on suitable network, such as on a wireless network, internet or like, for example on a cellular phone network. The user messages according to the invention
20 are generally sent by the user with said terminal to the service provider.

The “network or mobile phone operator” refers to service provider, who provides the wireless or wired network services, such as mobile phone services or internet services to enable the network or mobile phone communication between its clients. Said operator may also debit the costs of games and/or win prizes or intermediate
25 such payments.

The “gaming service provider” refers to the gaming operator, who provides the gaming service. Generally said gaming service provider utilises the services of the network, internet or mobile phone operator. The gaming service provider may also be a network, internet, cable TV, terrestrial or satellite operator for analog or digital
30 television networks, digital radio, mobile phone operator or any other suitable op-

erator network or like. The “gaming system” refers to the system or systems of the gaming service provider needed to enable the playing of the game according to the invention. The gaming system may contain one or more servers, networks, data bases and other suitable device and software arrangements. Generally such gaming system works substantially automatically without any user intervention by the gaming operator.

The “payment systems” refers to any suitable payment system to be used in the method of the present invention. Such payment systems include the systems of a bank or other monetary institution or like. Payment can also be made in advance by purchasing or otherwise paying for credits that can be used to pay for gaming events (prepaid systems, payment systems for digital television etc.)

An example of such system setup according to the invention is shown on Figure 1. There are shown the end user (1) and the gaming service provider’s system (3), who are connected with mobile phone network and Internet. The network or mobile phone operator (2) enables the communication between the end user (1) and the gaming service provider (3). The end user (1) uses any kind of suitable terminal, such as mobile phone. The gaming service provider (3) may have different kind of servers to enable the gaming and payments, such as a gaming server, a data base server or a payment server. There is also a payment system (4), which may contain specific networks and servers of a bank or several banks, such as the bank of the end user (the player) and the bank of the gaming service provider. The end user may send a service request via the operator (2) to the gaming service provider (3) to play. To pay the win prize the gaming service provider (3) may send payment requests to the payment system (4) to make a credit transfer to the player’s bank account.

Suitable games to be played with the method of the present invention include generally any money game or like, which can be played with suitable terminal, which may be mobile, stationary, wireless, wired, external device connected to an existing device (for example digital television set top box) or of any other suitable type. Any games wherein the player (user) sets bets or pays gaming payments to get a prize or prizes from the game are suitable games to be used in the system of the invention. A general example of such game is a simple lottery, wherein the gaming system makes a draw and the player is informed whether or not there was a win. Such lottery may be carried out with an aid of a computerized system, such as by random number generation to calculate a win or loss value for every game. The prize may

be announced substantially immediately or later, e.g. in the case of a timed lottery, such as weekly or monthly lottery, or like.

In the system of the invention the player contacts the gaming system directly or indirectly, generally by using telematic means, such as mobile or network connections, or other suitable means. Examples of devices and terminals to be used are
5 mobile phones and like, computers, gaming terminals, digital TVs, digital video cameras with internet connectivity, digital set top box for analog television, car computers and other consumer electronics devices capable of network, cellular network or peer-to-peer communication. The gaming terminals include public gaming
10 terminals and gaming terminals used at home, such as XBOX, Playstation, Gamecube or like. The devices and terminals to be used may contain the user identification or they may be associated with means to read said identification from another source. The identification may also be entered manually by the end user.

The prize (or prizes), such as money or other goods, of the game may or may not be
15 predetermined or the prize may be associated with the profit, revenues, number of players, number of gaming events or other measurable or non-measurable quantities of the service.

The prize may be delivered to the winner directly during the gaming event, such as gaming session, or it can be delivered indirectly to an institution, such as a bank or
20 other monetary institution) assigned by the player by any suitable means. Examples of such means are bank transfer, giro transfer, cheque or any other generally known mean or method for transferring money or other goods.

The prize may be transferred automatically or by the user of the service or representative thereof, immediately or delayed in respect of the gaming event.

25 The payment of the prize may be secured in any suitable way known in the art. One example of such secure system is to provide a verification code, which must be sent back to the sender in order to accept the event associated with the verification. For example one embodiment of the present invention provides a system wherein the user sends a message to gaming system to give the user's bank account information
30 for the prize payment. The gaming system will reply with a message containing a complex verification code. Then the user will send back this code to the gaming system to accept the payment, and the gaming system will pay the prize to the bank account given. The user may send back the whole message containing the verification code or only a part of it, such as only said verification code.

The "gaming session" refers to one single gaming event starting from the event wherein the user contacts the gaming system for the first time for that particular game until the end of that gaming event, such as the reporting of the result or the acceptance of the prize payment. If the user starts again another similar gaming event by contacting the gaming system again in the same manner as before, it should be considered as another gaming session, even though the user identification information could be already recognized by the gaming system.

In the method of the present invention the user has an existing identifier which is not originally related to the game, such as phone number, social security number, bank security code, biometric ID, national or international digital id, trusted device identification, credit card number, imei-code, sim-code, other trusted account identification, digital television terminal id code, any other suitable code, number or other means of identifying, determining or otherwise separating and uniquely identifying players from each others, which identifier already exists before starting the gaming session. This existing identifier does not have to be provided by the gaming service provider and this is why the user does not have to actively register to the gaming service but the service will recognize said existing identifier and uses that to identify the user. The gaming service provider may register said existing user identifier on a database or like, but in the present invention this is not considered as registration for the game by the user, since the identifier is given without any separate active action by the user. In a case where the gaming service provider is also a telephone operator or like, the existing identifier may be provided by the same service provider, but substantially for other purposes than playing. A general example of such identifier is a phone number, which is originally given for operating a telephone, not for gaming purposes.

Said existing user identification may be provided to the gaming system by any suitable means. In one embodiment the identification is provided as a phone number within a text message. In another embodiment the identification is provided by using a specific reader associated with the terminal used for playing, which reader may read information from the identification means. Such reader may be remote or wireless type of reader or a reader in contact with the identification means. Examples of such readers are a card reader, such as bank or credit card or identification card reader, a smart card reader, a Bluetooth or wireless USB connection to contact the identification means, such as a mobile phone or like which contains the user identification, or an optical reader, such as bar code reader.

The messages used in the method of the present invention may be any suitable messages, such as SMS messages, multimedia messages, SMS-like messages, email messages or secured email message. The messages may be words of any natural language or anything else, such as codes or messages produced automatically, for example in a case of digital television system. The messages send directly or indirectly by the end user or terminal used to play the game by end user are meant to indicate the will of the end user to accomplish different kinds of events, generally related to the game currently being played. Non-limiting examples of such messages are plain text messages "PLAY" or "PAY" sent by any mobile phone.

The message reporting the result of the game, generally sent by the gaming system, may be a simple message containing only text, such as a text message of a mobile phone, or it may contain also other elements, such as images and sound, e.g. multimedia message, image or like. The message may be any other suitable message type used by suitable carrier network including, but not limited to, all terrestrial or satellite networks. It may also be a disposable multimedia application. In all cases the purpose of this reporting message is to provide information about the result of the game, which result is already determined. A more complicated form of such message may improve the playability of the game or make it more exciting. Example of such message is a multimedia animation, which shows a scratch-off type lottery ticket animation. Even though the actual lottery has already been carried out by the gaming system and the result is already determined, the player is given the excitement of the game by providing said result piece by piece with said animation, which may be interactive or non-interactive.

As this message may be an application, it should be noted that applications relating to actual playing of the game, for example applications which carry out the actual lottery act or other acts to solve or affect to the result of the game, are not included in the scope of the present invention.

Also other messages may be sent during the game, such as for informing the user about the terms of playing, or for ensuring certain acts or choices the user has made. These optional messages may generally facilitate the gaming process, but they are not essential for the present invention.

Now the present invention will be described with examples relating to gaming with a mobile terminal, such as mobile phone. These examples are provided only to enlighten the idea of the present invention and they should not be considered as limiting the scope of the invention. A person skilled in the art can figure out several

other embodiments which can be applied on different environments, terminals, games and like within the scope of the attached claims.

Examples

5 Example 1. The course of a game

A. Opening a game account

The player sends a text message "PLAY" to the gaming service (Figure 2.1.1). The service will reply by announcing that player is about to start playing (Figure 2.1.2). The gaming service may also announce the terms of playing. If after this the player
10 will send a message indicating the gaming to the service, it will be interpreted as accepting the terms.

B. Playing, winning

The player sends a text message "PLAY" or the name of the game or like to the service (Figure 2.2.1). The service calculates a win/lose value for the player and the
15 value indicates that there is a win. The service will reply by announcing "Congratulations, you have just won!" (Figure 2.2.2) The service may give instructions how to cash the prize by sending a message back to the service with bank account number and name. The player may still also take part to weekly lottery (Figure 2.2.3).

C. Playing, no win

20 The player sends a text message "PLAY" or the name of the game or like to the service (Figure 2.3.1). The service calculates a win/lose value for the player and the value indicates that there is no win. The service will reply by announcing "Unfortunately you did not win an instant prize" (Figure 2.3.2). The player may still also take part to weekly lottery (Figure 2.3.3).

25 D. Cashing the prize

To be able to cash the prize the player must confirm the bank account or personal identification information. For example player under 18 may not be able to cash the prize (as may be indicated in the terms of playing). The player sends a message with bank account number, name and an indication to pay the prize (Figure 2.4.1). The
30 service will reply by confirming the information (Figures 2.4.2, 2.4.3). The service

will send a message containing a disposable verification code (Figure 2.4.4) which the player must send back to the service in order to accept the bank transfer and get the prize.

Example 2. The server process

5 The processes of the game progress on the server of the gaming system are described here. The gaming event example described here is a similar to the one described above wherein a mobile phone is used as the terminal for playing. Also other suitable types of terminals and messages may be used. Not all of the essential steps of the processes are shown in the flow charts of the following examples, but
10 rather some exemplary steps to show some of the processes carried out at different phases. The terminal as referred herein represents the end user.

1. The first gaming session (Figure 3)

The terminal sends a message "play" to the server. The server checks if the service has been used before from that particular phone number. If not, the system will send
15 the terminal a message which tells the terms of playing. The messages and possibly other information are saved into data base. In the terminal the player is shown the terms of playing. It is also told, that sending a message which indicates playing is interpreted as accepting the terms. The server will check if the use from that particular phone is allowed. If yes, the events are considered as normal gaming events. If
20 not, the player will reply to the terminal and inform the player that the use of the service from that number is forbidden. The data base will save the information. The information herein refers to any information related to the gaming, player, terminal or like, such as the messages, gaming events, phone numbers or other user identification and like.

25 2. Playing (Figure 4)

The terminal sends a message "play" to the server. The server checks from the data-base if the service has been used before from that particular phone number. If this is the first time, see 1 (The first gaming session). If the player is already known and the phone number is in to data base, the server will check if the playing from that
30 particular terminal is allowed. If not, the player will reply to the terminal and inform the player that the use of the service from that number is forbidden. The events are saved into data base. If the playing is allowed, the server will draw lots i.e. the win or loss is calculated and the game result will be available. A message telling the result of the game is sent and shown at the terminal. The user message is added to an-

other lottery that will be drawn later (“weekly lottery”) and the jackpot is increased. The events are saved into data base.

3. Paying the prize (Figure 5)

5 The terminal sends a message “pay” to the server. The server checks if the bank account information for that specific phone number is saved. If not, the server will reply by giving the instructions in a message. If yes, the server will reply by message showing the bank account information already saved into database. The events are saved into data base. The terminal will accept the bank transfer. The server will contact a bank and transfer the money. The server will update the win tracking databases. The server will check if the event was successful. If yes, the transfer event is verified. The events are saved into data base. If no, the user is informed about the error. The events are saved into data base.

4. Weekly lottery (Figure 6)

15 The server will start the timed weekly game. The gaming process is carried out and the jackpot and smaller wins are determined. The events are saved into data base. The server will inform all the participants and the winners about the results. WWW-pages concerning the game situation are updated. The user terminals show the players a message whether or not the player has won. The events are saved into data base. The server will update the win tracking databases. The events are saved into data base.

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Claims

1. A method of playing a networked or mobile game by messages between an user using a terminal and gaming system within a single gaming session, **characterized** in that in said single gaming session
- 5 – said user sends a first message to said gaming system, wherein said user is identified by an existing user identifier without a specific registration to said gaming system,
– said gaming system calculates a win/loss value for said user to define if there is a win or loss in the game,
- 10 – said gaming system responses with a second message to said user to report the result of said game.
2. The method of claim 1, **characterized** in that in the case of win said user responses with a third message to said gaming system to provide payment system account information for the prize payment.
- 15 3. The method of claim 2, **characterized** in that said gaming system responses to said user with a message containing a verification of the payment and said user sends back said verification to said gaming system in order to accept a prize payment.
4. The method of claim 3, **characterized** in that said gaming system pays the
20 prize according to given payment system account information.
5. The method of claim 1, **characterized** in that in the case of a win the prize is added to player's gaming account.
6. The method of any of the preceding claims, **characterized** in that the user payment for the gaming is associated with said first message.
- 25 7. The method of any of the preceding claims, **characterized** in that said payment system account information is bank account information.
8. The method of any of the preceding claims, **characterized** in that said user further takes part to another gaming session wherein said first user message is not required.

9. The method of any of the preceding claims, **characterized** in that said existing user identifier is a phone number, identification card, social security number, bank security code, biometric ID, national or international digital id, trusted device identification, credit card number, imei-code, sim-code, other trusted account identification, digital television terminal id code, or any other suitable code, number or other means of identifying, determining or otherwise separating and uniquely identifying players from each other
10. The method of any of the preceding claims, **characterized** in that said terminal is a mobile terminal.
11. The method of claim 10, **characterized** in that said mobile terminal is a mobile phone, PDA, communicator, laptop or any other wireless terminal.
12. The method of any of the claims 1–9, **characterized** in that said terminal is a network terminal.
13. The method of claim 12, **characterized** in that said network terminal is a personal computer, gaming terminal or digital television terminal.
14. The method of any of the preceding claims, **characterized** in that said message is SMS message, multimedia message, SMS-like message, email message, secured email message.
15. The method of claim 1, **characterized** in that if said user is a new user the gaming system will send back to said user a message containing the terms of usage.
16. The method of claim 1, **characterized** in that said gaming system checks if said user is allowed to play and based on this either allows or denies said user to play.
17. A gaming system for playing a networked or mobile game by messages between an user using a terminal and gaming system within a single gaming session, **characterized** in that in said single gaming session
- the gaming system is arranged to receive a first message from said user, wherein said user is arranged to be identified by an existing user identifier without a specific registration to said gaming system,
 - said gaming system is arranged to calculate a win/loss value for said user to define if there is a win or loss in the game,

– said gaming service is arranged to respond with a second message to said user to report the result of said game.

18. The gaming system of claim 17, **characterized** in that in the case of win said gaming system is arranged to receive a third message from said user to provide payment system account information for the prize payment.

19. The gaming system of claim 18, **characterized** in that said gaming system is arranged to respond to said user with a message containing a verification of the payment and to receive back said verification from said user in order to accept a prize payment.

20. The gaming system of claim 19, **characterized** in that said gaming system is arranged to pay the prize according to given payment system account information.

21. The gaming system of claim 17, **characterized** in that in the case of a win the prize is arranged to be added to player's gaming account.

22. The gaming system of any of claims 17–21, **characterized** in that the user payment for the gaming is associated with said first message.

23. The gaming system of any of the claims 17–22, **characterized** in that said payment system account information is bank account information.

24. The gaming system of any of the claims 17–23, **characterized** in that said user further takes part to another gaming session wherein said first user message is not required.

25. The gaming system of any of the claims 17–24, **characterized** in that said existing user identifier is a phone number, identification card, social security number, bank security code, biometric ID, national or international digital id, trusted device identification, credit card number, imei-code, sim-code, other trusted account identification, digital television terminal id code, or any other suitable code, number or other means of identifying, determining or otherwise separating and uniquely identifying players from each other

26. The gaming system of any of the claims 17–25, **characterized** in that said terminal is a mobile terminal.

27. The gaming system of claim 26, **characterized** in that said mobile terminal is a mobile phone, PDA, communicator, laptop or any other wireless terminal.

28. The gaming system of any of the claims 17–25, **characterized** in that said terminal is a network terminal.

29. The gaming system of claim 28, **characterized** in that said network terminal is a personal computer, gaming terminal or digital television terminal.

5 30. The gaming system of any of the claims 17–29, **characterized** in that said message is SMS message, multimedia message, SMS-like message, email message, secured email message.

10 31. The gaming system of claim 17, **characterized** in that if said user is a new user the gaming system is arranged to send back to said user a message containing the terms of usage.

32. The gaming system of claim 17, **characterized** in that said gaming system is arranged to check if said user is allowed to play and based on this it is arranged to either allow or deny said user to play.