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PULLTAB GAMING

Abstract

A pulltab game includes a set of pulltab cards, wherein each winning card within the set comprises a prize-verification code. In some examples, the prize-verification code is encoded by a barcode printed underneath one of the perforated tabs of the winning card. A prize-redemption kiosk is configured to automatically dispense a cash prize upon verifying the prize-verification code on the winning card. For instance, the prize-redemption kiosk can include a barcode scanner configured to scan the barcode to extract the prize-verification code, and then verify that the prize-verification code has not already been redeemed.

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Background/Summary

PRIORITY CLAIM [0001] This U.S. non-provisional utility patent application claims priority to the filing date of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 63/554,909, filed on Feb. 16, 2024 and entitled “PULLTAB GAMING.” The entire contents of the provisional patent application are hereby incorporated by reference.

FIELD OF TECHNOLOGY
[0002] The present disclosure generally relates to card-based games and lottery-type games, including collectible trading cards and pulltab games.
BACKGROUND
[0003] “Pulltabs” (or “pull-tabs”) is an incredibly popular lottery-type game played in bars, pubs, breweries, and restaurants throughout the world. Known also by the names “pop-opens,” “break-opens,” and “pickle cards,” pulltabs involves a set of small cardboard cards (or “tickets”) available for purchase by customers of the hosting establishment. Often, a ticket booth staffed by a designated vendor manages sales of the cards, however, bartenders or other employees of the establishment can run the game as well. Typical pulltab cards include two or more cardboard layers coupled together—a bottom layer, featuring one or more randomized gaming entries; and a perforated top layer adhered overtop of the bottom layer to initially conceal the gaming entries. After purchase, the player can rip open a set of perforated strips (or “tabs”) on the top layer of the card in order to reveal the gaming entry concealed underneath. Upon revealing a “winning” gaming entry, the player can return the opened card to the vendor in exchange for a cash prize.
SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION
[0004] Disclosed herein are various example systems, devices, and methods for automating certain aspects of a pulltab game, as well as a set of associated ornamental designs of various components.
[0005] In some examples, a pulltab-game system includes: a vending machine configured to retain and dispense a set of pulltab cards of a pulltab game; and a prize kiosk configured to: identify a winning card from the set of pulltab cards; and in response to identifying the winning card, dispense a cash prize associated with the winning card.
[0006] In some examples, a prize kiosk of a pulltab-game system includes: means for receiving data comprising a set of game data corresponding to a pulltab game; a digital memory configured to store the set of game data; a barcode scanner configured to scan a barcode printed under a perforated tab on a winning card of the pulltab game; a cash dispenser; and processing circuitry configured to: determine a prize-verification code encoded by the barcode printed on the winning card; locate a winning entry within the set of game data that includes the prize-verification code; determine, from the winning entry, a prize denomination corresponding to the prize-verification code; and cause the cash dispenser to dispense a cash prize corresponding to the prize denomination.
[0007] In some examples, a method includes: receiving, by a prize kiosk, a set of game data corresponding to a pulltab game; storing, by the prize kiosk, the set of game data in local memory; scanning, by a prize kiosk, a barcode printed underneath a perforated tab on a winning card of the pulltab game; determining, based on the scanned barcode, a prize-verification code encoded by the

barcode; identifying, within the set of game data, a winning entry that comprises the prize-verification code; determining, from the winning entry, a prize denomination associated with the prize-verification code; and dispensing, by the prize kiosk, a cash prize corresponding to the prize denomination.

[0008] The aspects, features, advantages, benefits, and objects of the invention will become clear to those skilled in the art by reference to the following description, claims and drawings.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIG. **1** is a conceptual diagram of an automated pulltab-game system, in accordance with techniques of this disclosure.

[0010] FIG. **2** is a perspective view of an example pulltab-card vending machine of the system of FIG. **1**.

[0011] FIG. **3**A is a front view of an example collectible pulltab card from the system of FIG. **1**A.

[0012] FIG. **3**B is a back view or rear view of the collectible pulltab card of FIG. **3**A, having a set of perforated tabs in a “sealed” or “closed” configuration.

[0013] FIG. **3**C is a back view of the pulltab card of FIGS. **3**A and **3**B, with its perforated tabs in an “unsealed” or “open” configuration.

[0014] FIG. **4** is a front view of an example prize-redemption kiosk of the system of FIG. **1**.

[0015] FIG. **5** is a spreadsheet depicting an example of a set of pulltab-game data for the system of FIG. **1**.

[0016] FIG. **6** is a conceptual block diagram of an example central computer of the pulltab-game system of FIG. **1**.

[0017] FIG. **7** is a screenshot of an example graphical user interface (GUI) of a website run by the central computer of FIGS. **1** and **6**.

[0018] FIG. **8** is a screenshot of an example GUI of a customized Customer-Relationship Management software application run by the central computer of FIGS. **1** and **6**.

[0019] FIG. **9** is a flowchart illustrating a method of running an automatic pulltab game.

[0020] FIGS. **10**A and **10**B illustrate a first example collectible pulltab card of the system of FIG. **1**.

[0021] FIGS. **11**A and **11**B illustrate a second example collectible pulltab card of the system of FIG. **1**.

[0022] FIGS. **12**A and **12**B illustrate a third example collectible pulltab card of the system of FIG. **1**.

[0023] FIGS. **13**A and **13**B illustrate a fourth example collectible pulltab card of the system of FIG. **1**.

[0024] FIGS. **14**A and **14**B illustrate a fifth example collectible pulltab card of the system of FIG. **1**.

[0025] FIGS. **15**A and **15**B illustrate a sixth example collectible pulltab card of the system of FIG. **1**.

[0026] FIGS. **16**A and **16**B illustrate a seventh example collectible pulltab card of the system of FIG. **1**.

[0027] FIGS. **17**A and **17**B illustrate an eighth example collectible pulltab card of the system of FIG. **1**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0028] The following disclosure describes, illustrates, and exemplifies one or more embodiments of the present invention. This description is not provided to limit the disclosure to the embodiments described herein, but rather to explain and teach various principles to enable one of ordinary skill in

the art to understand these principles and, with that understanding, be able to apply them to practice not only the embodiments described herein, but also other embodiments that may come to mind in accordance with these principles. The scope of the instant disclosure is intended to cover all such embodiments that may fall within the scope of the appended claims, either literally or under the doctrine of equivalents. It should be noted that, in the description and drawings, like or substantially similar elements may be labeled with the same reference numerals. However, sometimes these elements may be labeled with differing numbers in cases where such labeling facilitates a more clear description. Additionally, the drawings set forth herein are not necessarily drawn to scale, and in some instances proportions may have been exaggerated to more clearly depict certain features.

[0029] In general, the present disclosure is directed to systems, devices, and techniques for automating one or more functions of a pulltab game, enabling the game to be run faster, cheaper, more accurately, and efficiently scaled to a wider audience. FIG. **1** is a conceptual diagram of an example automatic pulltab-game system **100**, in accordance with the techniques of this disclosure. As illustrated in FIG. **1**, system **100** includes a central computing device **102** (or "computer **102**"); a card printer **104**; a card-vending machine **106**; and a prize-redemption kiosk **108**. Users of (and/or participants in) system **100** include a game manager **110** and a plurality of players **112**.

[0030] During operation of system **100**, game manager **110** uses central computing device **102** to generate a new pulltab game, which includes: (1) a complete set of graphical card images **114**; and (2) a corresponding set of game data **116** for automatically identifying the winning game cards and their associated prize information. As elaborated further below, graphical card images **114** include a number of unique features corresponding to game data **116** in order to facilitate automation of the pulltab game.

[0031] Game manager **110** instructs central computer **102** to transmit graphical card images **114** to a pulltab-card printer **104** via any suitable data-communication conduit, whether wired (e.g., via a local-area network (LAN)) or wireless (e.g., email transmitted via Wi-Fi). Card printer **104** can include a single printer device (e.g., a standard inkjet/toner printer), up to a designated mass-printing facility, capable of generating a complete set of physical pulltab cards **118** from the graphical card images **114**. In accordance with certain aspects of this disclosure, and as detailed further below, pulltab cards **118** can be constructed to provide dual gaming functionality-a front side of each card corresponds to a collectible trading-card game, and a back side of each card corresponds to the pulltab game.

[0032] The physical pulltab cards **118** are retrieved from printer **104** and securely deposited within a pulltab-card vending machine **106** at a game-hosting establishment, such as a bar, pub, brewery, or restaurant. Meanwhile, a prize-redemption kiosk **108** is situated locally to the vending machine **106**, e.g., either at the same hosting establishment, or within a substantially short (e.g., "walking") distance. Although FIG. **1** depicts vending machine **106** and prize kiosk **108** as two physically distinct components, in other examples of system **100**, vending machine **106** and prize kiosk **108** are integrated within a common housing to form a single device, or equivalently, a single device is configured with the functionality ascribed to both vending machine **106** and prize kiosk **108**.

[0033] Prize kiosk **108** is configured to receive the set of game data **116** associated with the pulltab cards **118** of a particular game. As detailed further below with respect to FIG. **5**, game data **116** can include, for example: a first unique identifier (e.g., a serial number) associated with a particular pulltab game to which all of pulltab cards **118** belong; a second unique identifier for each winning pulltab card from a particular game; and a prize indicator for each winning card. In some cases, game data **116** can be manually uploaded to prize kiosk **108**, such as by inserting a USB flash drive (or other suitable removable digital storage volume) and copying the contents into a local memory of kiosk **108**. Additionally or alternatively, game data **116** can be remotely transmitted to prize kiosk **108** from central computer **102**, such as via a wired and/or wireless network connection.

[0034] With the physical cards **118** secured within vending machine **106**, and with game data **116**

uploaded to prize kiosk **108**, the pulltab game can begin. Players **112**, such as customers or patrons of the hosting establishment, can take turns engaging with vending machine **106**, a detailed example of which is shown in FIG. **2**.

[0035] FIG. **2** is a front-perspective view of an example implementation of the pulltab-card vending machine **106** of FIG. **1**. As shown in FIG. **2**, vending machine **106** includes: a lockable card safe **220**, a cash-deposit slot **222**, a plurality of selectable buttons **224**, and a pulltab-card-output slot **226**.

[0036] In the illustrative, non-limiting example depicted in FIG. **2**, lockable card safe **220** contains four columns or stacks **228**A-**228**D of pulltab cards, as viewed through transparent window **230**. Each column or stack **228** corresponds to one of four different pulltab games running simultaneously. For instance, stack **228**A includes pulltab cards available for $1 each, as indicated by button **224**A. Stack **228**B includes pulltab cards available for $2 each, as indicated by button **224**B. Stack **228**C includes pulltab cards available for $5 each, as indicated by button **224**C. And stack **228**D includes pulltab cards available for $10 each, as indicated by button **224**D. In other examples, lockable card safe **220** can retain pulltab cards from more, fewer, or different games. For instance, in a different example, columns **228**A and **228**B could include pulltab cards from the same game, and buttons **224**A and **224**B would display the same dollar amount for purchase.

[0037] During use, a player **112** (FIG. **1**) initiates a transaction by depositing cash into the cash-deposit slot **222**. Upon receiving cash through cash-deposit slot **222**, one or more of buttons may be configured to illuminate, indicating which stacks **228** of pulltab cards the player **112** can select from. For instance, if the player **112** deposited $5, then buttons **224**A, **224**B, and **224**C would illuminate, but not button **224**D, as the player **112** did not deposit enough cash to purchase a $10 pulltab card from stack **228**D. In that case, the player **112** can select from any combination of buttons **224**A-**224**C to purchase a number of pulltab cards collectively adding up to $5. As a few examples, the player could select button **224**A five times; or the player could select button **224**A three times and button **224**B one time; or the player could select button **224**C one time.

[0038] Vending machine **106** also includes an “ALL” button **224**E. By selecting this button, the player indicates to vending machine **106** that they would like to select “all” of their cards from a common stack **228**. For instance, rather than pressing button **224**A five times in a row, the player could press the “ALL” button **224**E, and then press button **224**A, and vending machine **106** will automatically begin grabbing pulltab cards drawn from stack **228**A, and dispensing each pulltab card **232** outward through card-output slot **226**, until either (1) the player's cash deposit is spent, or (2) the user aborts the dispensing by pressing a different button. Other examples of vending machine **106** can include additional and/or different types of user-input devices other than pressable buttons **224**, such as a digital touchscreen, a joystick, a scroll wheel, or any other suitable mechanism for indicating the player's card-stack selection to vending machine **106**.

[0039] FIGS. **3**A-**3**C depict an illustrative, non-limiting example of a pulltab card **232** that may be dispensed from vending machine **106**. Pulltab card **232** of FIGS. **3**A-**3**C is one example of such a card belonging to a larger set of pulltab cards **118** (FIG. **1**) associated with a common pulltab game.

[0040] As referenced above, pulltab cards of the present disclosure can provide dual gaming functionality. For instance, as shown in FIG. **3**A, a front side (or “first” side) **334**A of pulltab card **232** corresponds to a collectible trading-card game, e.g., featuring graphical imagery associated with an athlete, an anime character, or any other suitable object that belongs to a larger collection of similar (but non-identical) objects.

[0041] Concurrently, as shown in FIGS. **3**B and **3**C, a back side (or “second” side) **334**B of pulltab card **232** corresponds to a pulltab game, in accordance with system **100** described throughout this disclosure. Accordingly, in some examples of the present disclosure, each pulltab card **232** is formed from two layers of material (e.g., cardboard, or the functional equivalent). During manufacture of each card **232**, printer **104** (FIG. **1**) prints graphical imagery onto both surfaces **336**A, **336**B of a first cardboard layer, and onto just one surface **336**C of the second cardboard

layer, and then the two cardboard layers are adhesively assembled into the card. For instance, as depicted in FIG. **3**A, a first printed surface **336**A of a first cardboard layer constitutes the "collectible" front side **334**A of the assembled pulltab card **232**. As depicted in FIGS. **3**B and **3**C, the second surface **336**B of the first cardboard layer, and the first surface **336**C of the second cardboard layer, collectively form the "pulltab-game" back side **334**B of the assembled card **232**.
[0042] As shown in FIGS. **3**B and **3**C, the outer surface **336**C of the second cardboard layer of pulltab card **232** defines one or more perforated tabs **338**A-**338**E. In this non-limiting example, back-outer surface **336**C defines five vertically aligned perforated tabs **338**; other examples of pulltab card **232** can include more than five tabs or fewer than five tabs, as desired. As detailed further below, the back-outer surface **336**C further includes a quick-response ("QR") code **340**.
[0043] The second cardboard layer is adhered onto the back surface **336**B of the first cardboard layer, such that back-inner surface **336**B of the first cardboard layer and the back-outer surface **336**C of the second cardboard layer face the same direction, i.e., opposite from the direction of the front surface **336**A of the first cardboard layer.
[0044] In the example shown in FIG. **3**C, the player **112** (FIG. **1**) has ripped open all five perforated tabs **338**A-**338**E of the second cardboard layer, thereby revealing certain portions of the printed back surface **336**B of the first cardboard layer thereunder. Specifically, the printed back surface **336**B of the first cardboard layer includes one or more pulltab-game entries **342**A-**342**D, with each game entry **342** strategically positioned underneath a respective perforated tab **338**A-**338**D of the second cardboard layer.
[0045] For instance, upon tearing open the first perforated tab **338**A, the player **112** discovers that the game entry **342**A concealed underneath the tab **338**A includes a particular sequence of icons **345** (depicted here as three consecutive football-shaped icons), which, under the rules of the corresponding pulltab game, constitutes a winning game entry **342**—thus, pulltab card **232** is a winning card.
[0046] At the time each pulltab game is originally generated, central computer **102** (FIG. **1**) automatically identifies all of the winning game entries for that game, and graphically marks the winning game entries with a horizontal line **344** (which printer **104** prints onto the back surface **336**B of the first cardboard layer), in order to simplify and expedite the game for player **112**. Additionally, upon generating a winning game entry **342**A, computing device **102** determines a cash prize associated with the winning sequence of icons **345**, and generates a numerical cash-prize indication **346** overtop of the winning game entry **342**A (or, in other examples, overtop of a different (non-winning) game entry **342**B-**342**D on the same card **232**).
[0047] Even further, in accordance with the techniques of this disclosure, computing device **102**, upon generating a winning game entry **342**A, is configured to designate the winning card **232** with a unique identifier, thereby enabling automation of a subsequent portion of the game in which player **112** collects their cash prize. In FIG. **3**C, this unique identifier is printed onto the back surface **336**B of the first cardboard layer and strategically concealed beneath the fifth perforated tab **338**E, and includes both a numeric (or alphanumeric) prize-verification code **348**, and a machine-readable barcode **350** that digitally encodes the prize-verification code **348**.
[0048] In the example shown, prize-verification code **348** and barcode **350** occupy the space on the printed back surface **336**B of the first cardboard layer that would otherwise be occupied by a fifth game entry. But since pulltab card **232** is already a winning card, game entries other than the winning game entry **342**A are not necessary to be included on the same card. Prize-verification code **348** is shown in FIG. **3**C as an eleven-digit numeric sequence, although other sequences are also contemplated, such as a six-character or seven-character alphanumeric sequence (as just two examples). The prize-verification code **348** is mapped, within game data **116** (FIG. **1**), to a unique "game" serial number **351** (FIG. **3**A) indicating which pulltab game the card **232** belongs to, when game data **116** is originally generated by central computer **102**. After tearing open fifth perforated tab **338**E to reveal barcode **350**, the winning player **112** can bring the winning card **232** to prize-

redemption kiosk **108**, an example of which is shown in FIG. **4**. FIG. **4** is a front view of an example implementation of prize-redemption kiosk (or "prize kiosk") **108** of FIG. **1**. As shown in FIG. **4**, prize kiosk **108** includes an integrated barcode scanner **452**. Upon detecting a valid barcode **350** (FIG. **3**C) placed in front of the scanner **452**, prize kiosk **108** is configured to extract the prize-verification code **348** encoded by the barcode **350**, and compare the prize-verification code **348** to game data **116** stored in the internal digital memory of prize kiosk **108**. Additionally or alternatively, prize kiosk **108** can include a user interface **454**, such as a digital touchscreen displaying a graphical user interface (GUI), that enables player **112** to manually enter the prize-verification code **348** from winning card **232**. If prize kiosk **108** identifies a match between the prize-verification code **348** and game data **116**, it will automatically dispense a corresponding amount of prize money from cash dispenser **456**.

[0049] FIG. **5** is a spreadsheet **558** illustrating an example set of game data **116** that might be generated by computing device **102** (FIG. **1**) and then uploaded to prize kiosk **108**. In this example, game data **116** is formatted as a Comma-Separated Values (".CSV") file with four data parameters (e.g., columns) for each entry (e.g., row), wherein each entry represents a different winning pulltab card from the same pulltab game. Column A encodes the unique "game" serial number **351** assigned to each pulltab game. Column B encodes a dollar amount **346** of the cash prize for the pulltab card corresponding to that row. For instance, in the value "0001D.pdf," the number "0001" represents a prize amount of $1, and the letter "D" indicates which game entry **342** (e.g., the fourth game entry **342**D concealed underneath the fourth perforated tab **338**D) was the winning game entry on the card. Column C encodes the prize-verification code **348** for a winning pulltab card, which is also encoded by the barcode **350**. And Column D encodes an artwork template identifier (ID) **353**, which is used by printer **104** when printing physical cards **118**.

[0050] When a winning player **112** collects a cash prize by scanning the barcode **350** on the barcode scanner **452** of prize kiosk **108**, the prize kiosk is configured to automatically store an indication that the associated prize-verification code **348** has been claimed, e.g., so that the same prize cannot be collected multiple times. This, and other related gameplay data is collected and transferred back to game manager **110** for further analysis via custom software running on central computer **102**.

[0051] FIG. **6** is a conceptual block diagram of an example implementation of central computer **102** of FIG. **1**. Although depicted in FIG. **6** as a single functional unit, in practice, central computer **102** can be or can include one or more communicatively-connected computing devices, e.g., each having a unique processor (or "processing circuitry") **660** and/or a digital memory **662**. Memory **662** encodes one or more software applications ("apps" or "modules") for generating and managing pulltab games.

[0052] For instance, as shown in FIG. **6**, central computer **102** is configured to run or execute a pulltab-game generator **664**. When executed, game generator **664** is configured to automatically generate a new pulltab game that includes a set of game data **116** (e.g. a .csv file), and corresponding digital pulltab-card images **114** (e.g., a .jpg, .bmp, .webp file etc.), each featuring randomized sets of game entries **342** (FIG. **3**C).

[0053] Central computer **102** is further configured to host (e.g., store in memory **662**) and run (e.g., execute) a public-facing website **666**, accessible via the Internet. Players **112** can access website **666** with, for instance, a personal computer, laptop, smartphone, smartwatch, or tablet, in order to learn more information about a pulltab game, or in some cases, to enroll in an additional bonus game.

[0054] As one example, a winning player **112** can use their smartphone to scan the quick-response ("QR") code **340** (FIG. **3**B) on the back side **334**B of their winning pulltab card **232**. The QR code **340** will direct their smartphone's mobile browser to website **666**, where player **112** can enter a "second-chance" drawing to win an additional prize.

[0055] FIG. **7** is a screenshot of an example graphical user interface (GUI) **776** of public-facing

website **666** of FIG. **6**. As shown in FIG. **7**, GUI **776** enables a winning player **112** to submit their name, contact info, and the prize-verification code **348** from their winning card **232** in order to be entered into a periodic, randomized “second-chance” drawing to win an additional prize. The drawing can occur weekly, monthly, semi-annually, or annually, as a few illustrative examples.

[0056] The public-facing website **666** can be configured to interface with a customized Customer-Relationship-Management (CRM) software application **668** run by central computer **102** of FIG. **6**. FIG. **8** is a screenshot of an example GUI **878** of CRM software **668** of FIG. **6**. For instance, CRM GUI **878** may be generated by processor(s) **660** of central computer **102** and output for display via electronic display screen **670**.

[0057] As shown in the example GUI **878** of FIG. **8**, CRM software **668** is configured to receive, via website **666**, the second-chance drawing entry data from winning player **112**. Additionally, game manager **110** can upload game data **116** to CRM software **668**, in order to verify the winning player's prize-verification code and confirm their entry into the drawing. Equivalently, game generator **664** can automatically upload game data **116** to CRM software **668** every time it generates a new pulltab game. In some examples, CRM software **668** is configured to run all drawing entries through a validation process by matching each player's entry (e.g., game serial number **351**, name of pulltab game, and prize-verification code **348**) with game data **116** stored in memory **662**. If CRM software **668** validates a player's entry, the player's entry receives an positive-validation indicator within GUI **878**, such as by displaying that player's entry in green. In one non-limiting, illustrative example, CRM software **668** can be configured to help run the drawing annually by randomly selecting among all the player entries submitted during the previous calendar year (i.e., January 1 through December 31). The winner of the drawing can be contacted directly using the player's entry data, and announced publicly on website **666**. Through CRM software **668**, every drawing entry is assigned a drawing date to help differentiate between different promotions (e.g., subsequent years' drawings).

[0058] In some examples, CRM software **668** can also use the player's drawing-entry data to keep track of the number of redeemed winning pulltab cards **232** for each game, as they are purchased and opened over time. Such data can help inform pulltab-game inventory management, another function performed by CRM software **668**. For instance, game manager(s) **110** can use CRM software **668** to help decide whether to either increase or decrease the rate at which new pulltab games are generated, based on the rate at which winning cards **232** are purchased and redeemed.

[0059] FIG. **9** is a flowchart illustrating a method or process **900** for automating one or more aspects of a pulltab game. Process **900** is described from the perspective of prize-redemption kiosk **108** of FIGS. **1** and **4**.

[0060] At Step **902**, prize kiosk **108** receives a set of game data **116** for a new pulltab game, either locally, e.g., from a removable digital storage inserted into the kiosk, or remotely, e.g., via the Internet from a central computer **102**. At Step **904**, prize kiosk **108** stores a copy of game data **116** in its local memory.

[0061] At Step **906**, prize kiosk **108** detects a barcode **350** on a pulltab card **232** placed in front of its integrated barcode scanner **452**. Barcode scanner **452** scans the barcode **350**, and at Step **908**, extracts the prize-verification code **348** encoded by the barcode **350**. At Step **910**, prize kiosk **108** compares the prize-verification code **348** to the complete set of prize-verification codes included in game data **116**. At Step **912**, prize kiosk **108** identifies a matching number, and also verifies that prize-verification code **348** has not yet been redeemed, thereby confirming that pulltab card **232** is a valid, winning card. In such cases, at Step **914**, prize kiosk **108** retrieves, from game data **116**, a prize denomination corresponding to prize-verification code **348**, and at Step **916**, automatically dispenses a cash prize from prize dispenser **456**, in an amount corresponding to the prize denomination.

[0062] FIGS. **10**A-**17**B collectively illustrate an example set of pulltab cards, such as the set of cards **118** of FIG. **1**. For instance, FIG. **10**A shows a front side **1034**A, and FIG. **10**B shows a back

side **1034**B, of an example pulltab card **1032** that may be printed (by printer **104**) and assembled as one of pulltab cards **118**. Specifically, pulltab card **1032** is an example of pulltab card **232** depicted in FIGS. **3**A-**3**C. As referenced above, pulltab cards of the present disclosure can include dual gaming functionality. The back side **1034**B of card **1032**, shown in FIG. **10**B, can include one or more tearable perforated tabs **338** (FIG. **3**B, not shown in FIG. **10**B) as part of a pulltab game. Simultaneously, the front side **1034**A of card **1032**, shown in FIG. **10**A, includes a graphical design such that pulltab card **1032** simultaneously functions as a collectible trading card. Specifically, in the example of FIG. **10**A, the front side **1034**A of pulltab card **1032** includes a signature and symbol representing a famous athlete. In this example, the front side **1034**A of card **1032** also indicates the "game" serial number **351** that identifies which pulltab game the card **1032** belongs to, as well as the artwork template ID **353**.

[0063] FIG. **11**A shows a front side **1134**A, and FIG. **11**B shows a back side **1134**B, of another example pulltab card **1132** that may be printed (by printer **104**) and assembled as one of pulltab cards **118** of FIG. **1**. Pulltab card **1132** is another example of pulltab card **232** depicted in FIGS. **3**A-**3**C in that, while not explicitly shown, the back side **1134**B includes a plurality of perforated tabs concealing respective pulltab-game entries. In the event that one of the concealed game entries is a winning entry, the back side **1134**B will further feature, underneath another one of the perforated tabs, a barcode encoding a prize-verification code that may be scanned by prize-redemption kiosk **108** of FIGS. **1** and **4**.

[0064] FIG. **12**A shows a front side **1234**A, and FIG. **12**B shows a back side **1234**B, of another example pulltab card **1232** that may be printed (by printer **104**) and assembled as one of pulltab cards **118** of FIG. **1**. Pulltab card **1232** is another example of pulltab card **232** depicted in FIGS. **3**A-**3**C in that, while not explicitly shown, the back side **1234**B includes a plurality of perforated tabs concealing respective pulltab-game entries. In the event that one of the concealed game entries is a winning entry, the back side **1234**B will further feature, underneath another one of the perforated tabs, a barcode encoding a prize-verification code that may be scanned by prize-redemption kiosk **108** of FIGS. **1** and **4**.

[0065] FIG. **13**A shows a front side **1334**A, and FIG. **13**B shows a back side **1334**B, of another example pulltab card **1332** that may be printed (by printer **104**) and assembled as one of pulltab cards **118** of FIG. **1**. Pulltab card **1332** is another example of pulltab card **232** depicted in FIGS. **3**A-**3**C in that, while not explicitly shown, the back side **1334**B includes a plurality of perforated tabs concealing respective pulltab-game entries. In the event that one of the concealed game entries is a winning entry, the back side **1334**B will further feature, underneath another one of the perforated tabs, a barcode encoding a prize-verification code that may be scanned by prize-redemption kiosk **108** of FIGS. **1** and **4**.

[0066] FIG. **14**A shows a front side **1434**A, and FIG. **14**B shows a back side **1434**B, of another example pulltab card **1432** that may be printed (by printer **104**) and assembled as one of pulltab cards **118** of FIG. **1**. Pulltab card **1432** is another example of pulltab card **232** depicted in FIGS. **3**A-**3**C in that, while not explicitly shown, the back side **1434**B includes a plurality of perforated tabs concealing respective pulltab-game entries. In the event that one of the concealed game entries is a winning entry, the back side **1434**B will further feature, underneath another one of the perforated tabs, a barcode encoding a prize-verification code that may be scanned by prize-redemption kiosk **108** of FIGS. **1** and **4**.

[0067] FIG. **15**A shows a front side **1534**A, and FIG. **15**B shows a back side **1534**B, of another example pulltab card **1532** that may be printed (by printer **104**) and assembled as one of pulltab cards **118** of FIG. **1**. Pulltab card **1532** is another example of pulltab card **232** depicted in FIGS. **3**A-**3**C in that, while not explicitly shown, the back side **1534**B includes a plurality of perforated tabs concealing respective pulltab-game entries. In the event that one of the concealed game entries is a winning entry, the back side **1534**B will further feature, underneath another one of the perforated tabs, a barcode encoding a prize-verification code that may be scanned by prize-

redemption kiosk **108** of FIGS. **1** and **4**.
[0068] FIG. **16**A shows a front side **1634**A, and FIG. **16**B shows a back side **1634**B, of another example pulltab card **1632** that may be printed (by printer **104**) and assembled as one of pulltab cards **118** of FIG. **1**. Pulltab card **1632** is another example of pulltab card **232** depicted in FIGS. **3**A-**3**C in that, while not explicitly shown, the back side **1634**B includes a plurality of perforated tabs concealing respective pulltab-game entries. In the event that one of the concealed game entries is a winning entry, the back side **1634**B will further feature, underneath another one of the perforated tabs, a barcode encoding a prize-verification code that may be scanned by prize-redemption kiosk **108** of FIGS. **1** and **4**.
[0069] FIG. **17**A shows a front side **1734**A, and FIG. **17**B shows a back side **1734**B, of another example pulltab card **1732** that may be printed (by printer **104**) and assembled as one of pulltab cards **118** of FIG. **1**. Pulltab card **1732** is another example of pulltab card **232** depicted in FIGS. **3**A-**3**C in that, while not explicitly shown, the back side **1734**B includes a plurality of perforated tabs concealing respective pulltab-game entries. In the event that one of the concealed game entries is a winning entry, the back side **1734**B will further feature, underneath another one of the perforated tabs, a barcode encoding a prize-verification code that may be scanned by prize-redemption kiosk **108** of FIGS. **1** and **4**.
[0070] Although the systems, devices, and methods of the invention have been described in connection with the field of trading cards, card-based games, and lottery-type gaming, it can readily be appreciated that the invention is not limited solely to such fields, and can be used in other fields.
[0071] For simplicity and clarity of illustration, the drawing figures illustrate the general manner of construction, and descriptions and details of well-known features and techniques may be omitted to avoid unnecessarily obscuring the present disclosure. Additionally, elements in the drawing figures are not necessarily drawn to scale. For example, the dimensions of some of the elements in the figures may be exaggerated relative to other elements to help improve understanding of embodiments of the present disclosure. The same reference numerals in different figures denote the same elements.
[0072] The terms “first,” “second,” “third,” “fourth,” and the like in the description and in the claims, if any, are used for distinguishing between similar elements and not necessarily for describing a particular sequential or chronological order. It is to be understood that the terms so used are interchangeable under appropriate circumstances such that the embodiments described herein are, for example, capable of operation in sequences other than those illustrated or otherwise described herein. Furthermore, the terms “include,” and “have,” and any variations thereof, are intended to cover a non-exclusive inclusion, such that a process, method, system, article, device, or apparatus that comprises a list of elements is not necessarily limited to those elements, but may include other elements not expressly listed or inherent to such process, method, system, article, device, or apparatus.
[0073] The terms “left,” “right,” “front,” “back,” “top,” “bottom,” “over,” “under,” and the like in the description and in the claims, if any, are used for descriptive purposes and not necessarily for describing permanent relative positions. It is to be understood that the terms so used are interchangeable under appropriate circumstances such that the embodiments of the apparatus, methods, and/or articles of manufacture described herein are, for example, capable of operation in other orientations than those illustrated or otherwise described herein.
[0074] Although the invention or elements thereof may by described in terms of vertical, horizontal, transverse (lateral), longitudinal, and the like, it should be understood that variations from the absolute vertical, horizontal, transverse, and longitudinal are also deemed to be within the scope of the invention.
[0075] The terms “couple,” “coupled,” “couples,” “coupling,” and the like should be broadly understood and refer to connecting two or more elements mechanically and/or otherwise. Two or

more electrical elements may be electrically coupled together, but not be mechanically or otherwise coupled together. Coupling may be for any length of time, e.g., permanent or semi-permanent or only for an instant. “Electrical coupling” and the like should be broadly understood and include electrical coupling of all types. The absence of the word “removably,” “removable,” and the like near the word “coupled,” and the like does not mean that the coupling, etc., in question is (or is not) removable.

[0076] As defined herein, “approximately” can, in some embodiments, mean within plus or minus ten percent of the stated value. In other embodiments, “approximately” can mean within plus or minus five percent of the stated value. In further embodiments, “approximately” can mean within plus or minus three percent of the stated value. In yet other embodiments, “approximately” can mean within plus or minus one percent of the stated value.

[0077] The embodiments above are chosen, described and illustrated so that persons skilled in the art will be able to understand the invention and the manner and process of making and using it. The descriptions and the accompanying drawings should be interpreted in the illustrative and not the exhaustive or limited sense. The invention is not intended to be limited to the exact forms disclosed. While the application attempts to disclose all of the embodiments of the invention that are reasonably foreseeable, there may be unforeseeable insubstantial modifications that remain as equivalents. It should be understood by persons skilled in the art that there may be other embodiments than those disclosed which fall within the scope of the invention as defined by the claims. Where a claim, if any, is expressed as a means or step for performing a specified function it is intended that such claim be construed to cover the corresponding structure, material, or acts described in the specification and equivalents thereof, including both structural equivalents and equivalent structures, material-based equivalents and equivalent materials, and act-based equivalents and equivalent acts.

Claims

1. A pulltab-game system comprising: a vending machine configured to retain and dispense a set of pulltab cards of a pulltab game; and a prize kiosk configured to: identify a winning card from the set of pulltab cards; and in response to identifying the winning card, dispense a cash prize associated with the winning card.

2. The pulltab-game system of claim 1, wherein the winning card comprises a prize-verification code, and wherein the prize kiosk is configured to redeem the cash prize by: determining the prize-verification code of the winning card; and verifying the prize-verification code.

3. The pulltab-game system of claim 2, wherein the prize-verification code comprises an eleven-digit numeric code.

4. The pulltab-game system of claim 2, wherein the winning card comprises a barcode encoding the prize-verification code, and wherein the prize kiosk is configured to determine the prize-verification code by scanning the barcode.

5. The pulltab-game system of claim 2, wherein the prize kiosk comprises a user interface, and wherein the prize kiosk is configured to determine the prize-verification code by receiving, via the user interface, user input comprising the prize-verification code.

6. The pulltab-game system of claim 5, wherein the user interface comprises a touchscreen.

7. The pulltab-game system of claim 2, wherein the prize kiosk is configured to verify the prize-verification code by: retrieving, from memory, a set of game data associated with the pulltab game; and locating the prize-verification code within the set of game data.

8. The pulltab-game system of claim 7, wherein the set of game data comprises a comma-separated values (.CSV) file comprising, for each of a plurality of winning cards of the pulltab game that includes the winning card, a set of values indicating: a serial number of the pulltab game; the prize-verification code; a cash-prize denomination; and a graphical card image displayed on a front side

of the winning card.
9. The pulltab-game system of claim 7, wherein the prize kiosk is further configured to: receive the set of game data via a removable digital storage device inserted into the prize kiosk; and store the set of game data in memory.
10. The pulltab-game system of claim 7, wherein the prize kiosk is further configured to: wirelessly receive the set of game data from a remote computing device; and store the set of game data in memory.
11. The pulltab-game system of claim 1, further comprising a computing device configured to generate the pulltab game by generating: a set of game data comprising a plurality of randomized game entries; and a set of card graphics corresponding to the set of game data, wherein the set of pulltab cards comprises the set of card graphics.
12. The pulltab-game system of claim 11, further comprising a printer configured to print the card graphics onto sheets of cardboard for subsequent assembly into the set of pulltab cards.
13. The pulltab-game system of claim 1, further comprising the set of pulltab cards including the winning card, wherein the winning card comprises: a plurality of perforated tabs; a winning game entry printed underneath one of the perforated tabs; and a prize-verification code printed underneath another one of the perforated tabs.
14. The pulltab-game system of claim 13, wherein the winning card further comprises a quick-resource (QR) code encoding a uniform resource locator (URL) of a webpage corresponding to a periodic prize drawing.
15. A prize kiosk comprising: means for receiving data comprising a set of game data corresponding to a pulltab game; a digital memory configured to store the set of game data; a barcode scanner configured to scan a barcode printed under a perforated tab on a winning card of the pulltab game; a cash dispenser; and processing circuitry configured to: determine a prize-verification code encoded by the barcode printed on the winning card; locate a winning entry within the set of game data that includes the prize-verification code; determine, from the winning entry, a prize denomination corresponding to the prize-verification code; and cause the cash dispenser to dispense a cash prize corresponding to the prize denomination.
16. The prize kiosk of claim 15, wherein the processing circuitry is further configured to determine, based on the set of game data, that the prize-verification code has not already been redeemed, prior to causing the cash dispenser to dispense the cash prize.
17. A method comprising: receiving, by a prize kiosk, a set of game data corresponding to a pulltab game; storing, by the prize kiosk, the set of game data in local memory; scanning, by a prize kiosk, a barcode printed underneath a perforated tab on a winning card of the pulltab game; determining, based on the scanned barcode, a prize-verification code encoded by the barcode; identifying, within the set of game data, a winning entry that comprises the prize-verification code; determining, from the winning entry, a prize denomination associated with the prize-verification code; and dispensing, by the prize kiosk, a cash prize corresponding to the prize denomination.
18. The method of claim 17, further comprising determining, by the prize kiosk based on the set of game data, that the prize-verification code has not already been redeemed, prior to dispensing the cash prize.
19. The method of claim 17, wherein receiving the set of game data comprises receiving the set of game data from a removable digital storage device manually inserted into the prize kiosk.
20. The method of claim 17, wherein the set of game data comprises a comma-separated values (.CSV) file comprising, for each of a plurality of winning cards of the pulltab game that includes the winning card, a set of values indicating: a serial number of the pulltab game; the prize-verification code; the prize denomination; and a graphical card image displayed on a front side of the winning card.