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(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING REAL WORLD VALUE IN A VIRTUAL WORLD ENVIRONMENT**

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See application file for complete search history.

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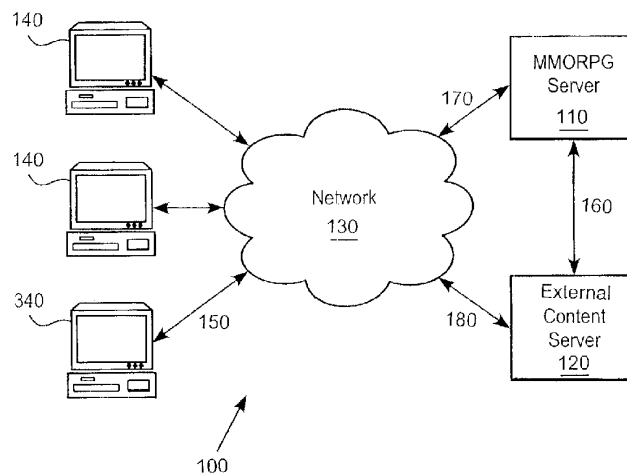
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(57)   **ABSTRACT**

A system and a method is provided wherein real world monetary or cash values are placed on virtual world avatars, avatar possessed or avatar purchasable virtual world items, environmental virtual world items and virtual world computer generated non-player characters (NPCs), such as slayable beasts, monsters, creatures, or humanoids. These NPCs or other avatars (i.e., other players' avatars) have the ability to defeat and collect the cash value of avatars and their gear, thus gaining cash value for the NPC or the avatars. This cash value is then winnable by any avatar with the skill to best the NPC or other avatar. In this system and method, a real world cash value of an avatar is established and can be increased or decreased based upon the avatar's interaction with other avatars, the virtual world environment and/or a player's investment of real world cash value.

16 Claims, 2 Drawing Sheets

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FIG. 1

FIG. 2

Avatar with Cash Value
210

Competition between Avatars
220

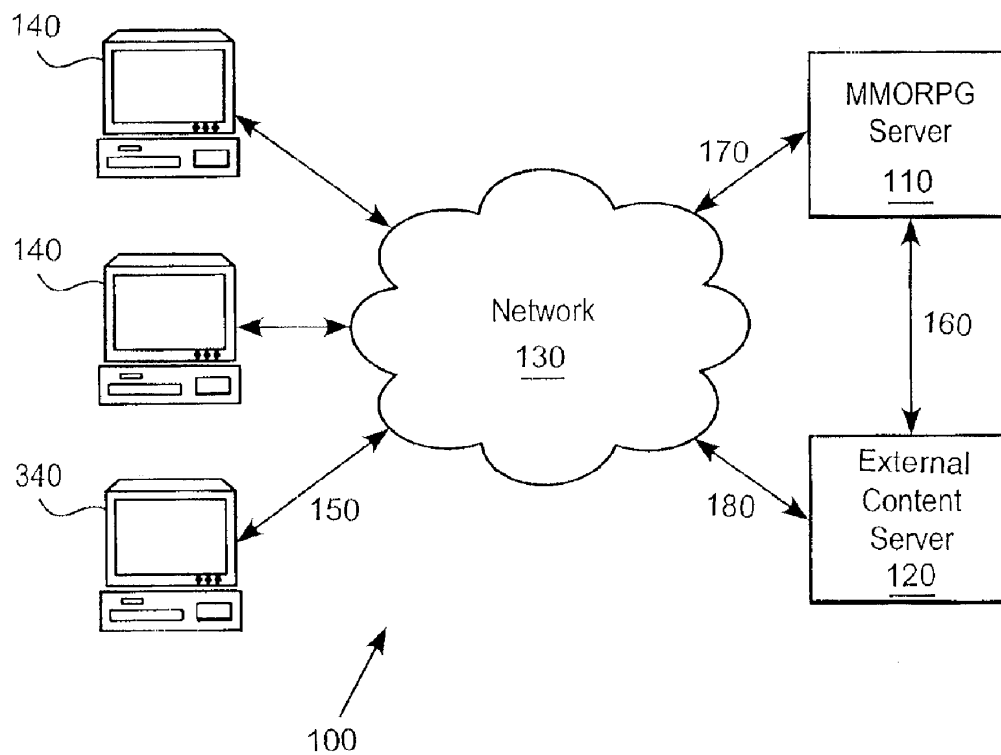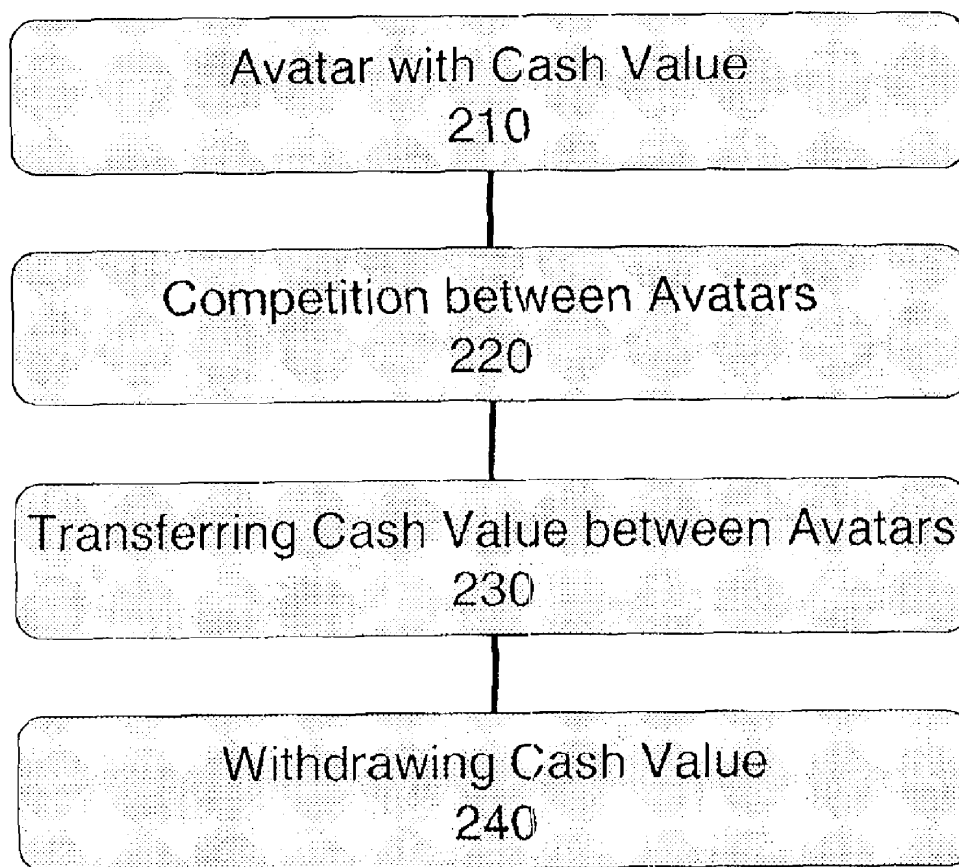Transferring Cash Value between Avatars
230

Withdrawing Cash Value
240

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING REAL WORLD VALUE IN A VIRTUAL WORLD ENVIRONMENT

Virtual worlds are computer-based simulated environments intended for its players to inhabit and interact via avatars. Avatars in virtual worlds can be virtual images or representations such as humanoids, or any other representation of a player, and can be in the form of two or three-dimensional graphical representations. Virtual worlds are generally purposed for interaction between players with one another and with computer-based simulated environments.

Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPG) utilize virtual worlds and can include millions of players who often play these games, rather than playing single player stand-alone computer games on their personal console, because of the player interaction. Examples of MMORPGs include Second Life™, There™, World of Warcraft™, and ActiveWorlds™, etc.

In these virtual worlds, the players within the world primarily interact with each other, and interaction with computer systems often occurs to provide tools for interaction between the players. For example, the virtual world platform can be used as a toolbox, wherein the computer system creators, designers, etc. can provide tools to allow the players to build and customize their avatars, as well as items for use by their avatars, such as clothes or houses, etc. Basically, the computer system allows customization of the universe, or "metaverse," as desired by the player within the confines of the computer-based simulated environments.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING FIGURES

FIG. **1** illustrates an exemplary embodiment of a computer network including local computers and servers.

FIG. **2** illustrates an exemplary embodiment of a method of providing an online tournament.

SUMMARY

A system and a method is provided wherein real world monetary or cash values are placed on virtual world avatars, avatar possessed or avatar purchasable virtual world items, environmental virtual world items and virtual world computer generated non-player characters (NPCs), such as slayable beasts, monsters, creatures, or humanoids. These NPCs or other avatars (i.e., other players' avatars) have the ability to defeat and collect the cash value of avatars and their gear, thus gaining cash value for the NPC or the avatars. This cash value is then winnable by any avatar with the skill to best the NPC or other avatar. In this system and method, a real world cash value of an avatar is established and can be increased or decreased based upon the avatar's interaction with other avatars, the virtual world environment and/or a player's investment of real world cash value.

Additionally, virtual world items, such as weapons, armor, etc., can be assigned or can earn cash values, and thus can be bought from, traded to, taken by, or sold to other avatars. These virtual world items, as well as the cash value of the avatars, can be taken by other avatars through competition and tournaments. In other words, some or all of an avatar's cash value and the avatar's virtual world items can be won or lost to another avatar or a NPC.

Also, an avatar's cash value and virtual world items can be placed in a bank or turned into real world money and withdrawn from the game as desired by a player, wherein the cash

value of that particular avatar can be decreased if desired. Alternatively, real world cash value can be added to an avatar's real world cash value via a real world cash value deposit, for example, or the avatar can acquire virtual world items from other players or the environment, as other examples.

Competitions, such as individual tournaments, can be provided, wherein avatars compete for real world money. In these competitions, for example, at least two individual players enter their avatars into a competition and in the end one of the avatars is declared the champion.

Other competitions, such as head-to-head duels, team vs. team or a free-for-all multiplayer arena, are also contemplated, wherein teams (i.e., two or more avatars) can be formed and can compete for real world money, wherein at least two competitors enter into a team competition, for example, and at least two teams compete using their avatars and in the end one team of avatars is declared the champion.

Victory can be accomplished in several different ways. For example, victory can be achieved by surviving a multiplayer arena type setting, or victory can be achieved by fulfilling a game requirement.

Prize winnings can also vary as desired. For example, avatars can have the ability to enter unique tournaments in which each avatar starts with its own unique bounty value, competes, and wins instant cash that cannot be lost even if the avatar is defeated and regardless of the round of play the avatar leaves the game.

Disclosed is a system for providing real world monetary values in a virtual world environment, comprising: a computer for storing real world monetary values of an avatar; a computer for storing real world monetary values on virtual world items; and a computer for hosting a competition between avatars in a virtual world environment, wherein a first avatar can defeat a second avatar and the real world monetary values and the virtual world items of the second avatar are transferred to the first avatar.

Also disclosed is a method for providing real world monetary values in a virtual world environment, comprising: providing real world monetary values on an avatar; providing real world monetary values on virtual world items; and providing a competition, wherein a first avatar can defeat a second avatar and the real world monetary values and the virtual world items of the second avatar are transferred to the first avatar.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

As used herein, the terms "player" and "competitor" are synonymous and are utilized to signify a person who is playing on the system provided herein and/or utilizing the method provided herein.

As used herein, the term "avatar" is utilized to signify the virtual world representation of the player or competitor.

As used herein, the terms "real world monetary value," "real world cash value" and "cash value" are synonymous and are utilized to signify actual cash, such as United States dollars or other legal tender.

As used herein, the term "computer" is utilized to signify a computerized system, such as a server, which operates to implement the exemplary embodiment systems and methods described herein.

As used herein, the terms "competition" and "tournament" are utilized to signify player vs. player interactions, such as one-on-one, two-on-two, three-on-three, team play, etc. Competitions and tournaments can be formalized single round or multiple round events or can be informal individual or team activities. Competitions and tournaments can be

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