US 20070087655A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication** (10) **Pub. No.: US 2007/0087655 A1**

Rifkin (43) **Pub. Date: Apr. 19, 2007**

(54) **INTERLEAVING STORY TOY**

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(21) Appl. No.: **11/255,055**

(22) Filed: **Oct. 19, 2005**

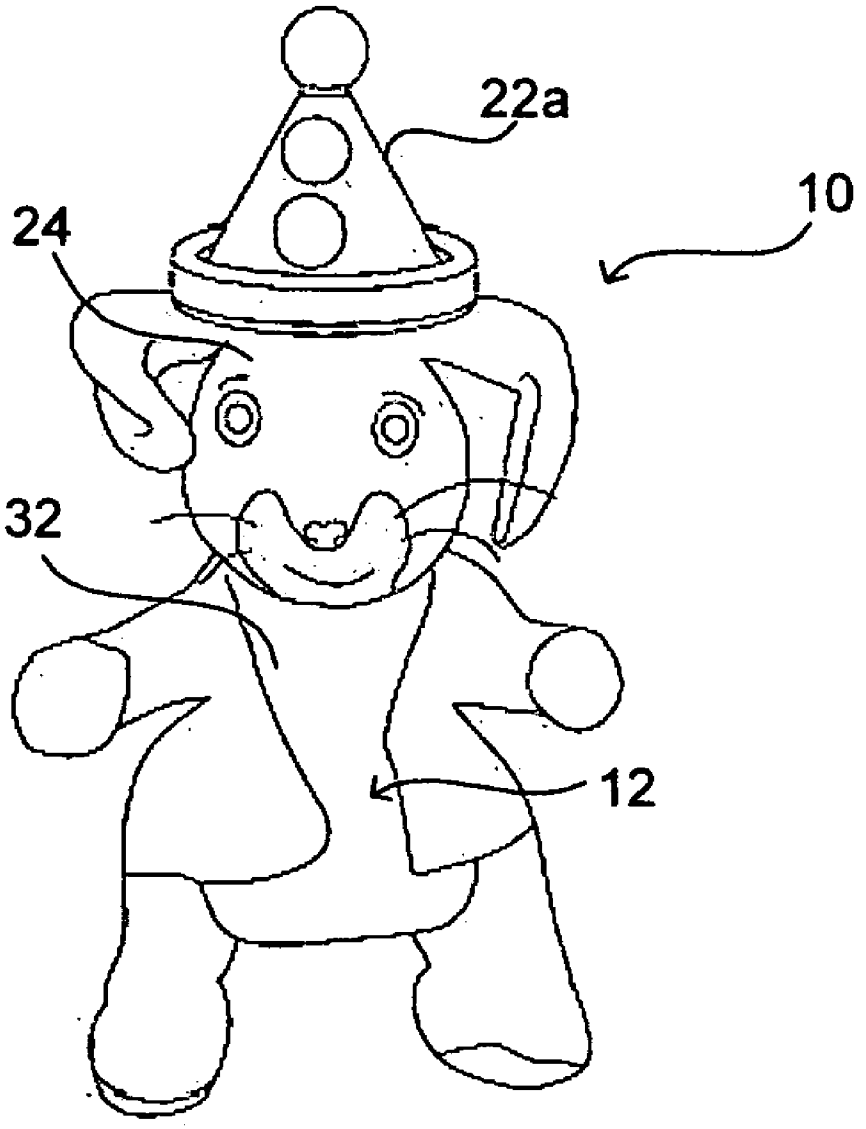
Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
A63H 3/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **446/268**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Provided are a method, system, and device for electronically telling a story in a predetermined narrative sequence. Alternate story parts may be substituted for each portion of the narrative sequence. Alternate story parts may be selected in accordance with selections made by a user. In the illustrated embodiment, clothing items such as a hat, for example, may be placed on a doll and replaced with different clothing items as the story progresses. As each substitute clothing item is identified, an alternate story part may be selected and substituted for playback in accordance with the identified substitute clothing items. Additional embodiments are described and claimed.



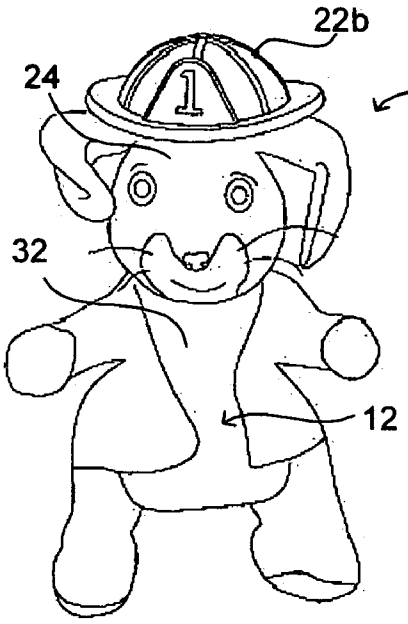


FIG. 1B

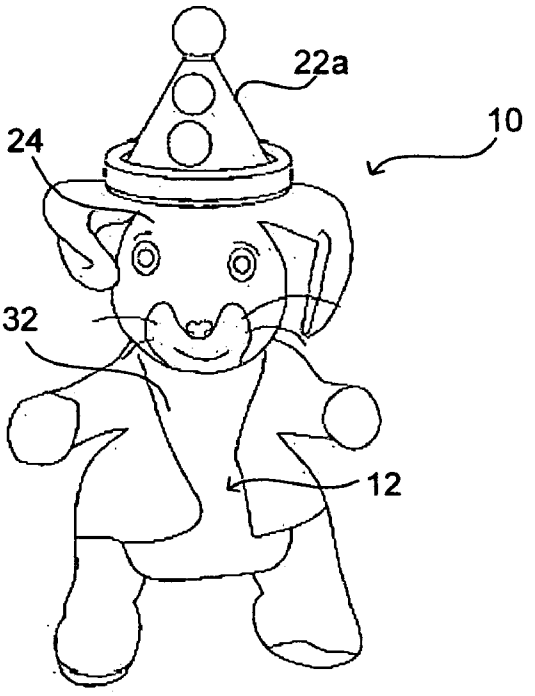


FIG. 1A

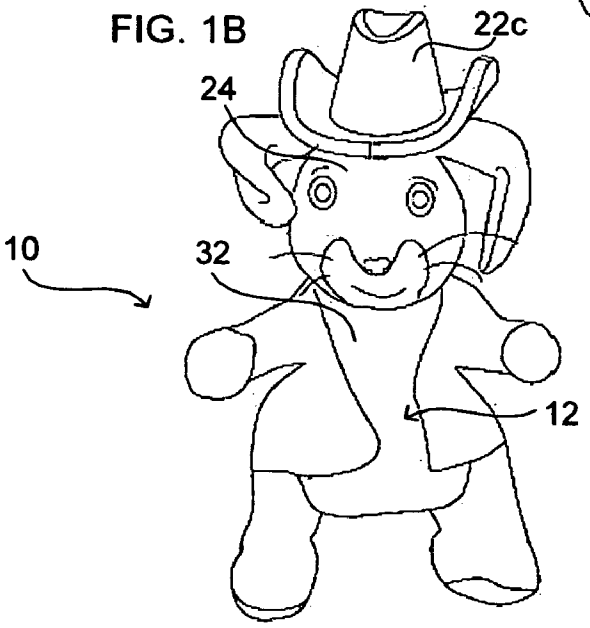


FIG. 1C

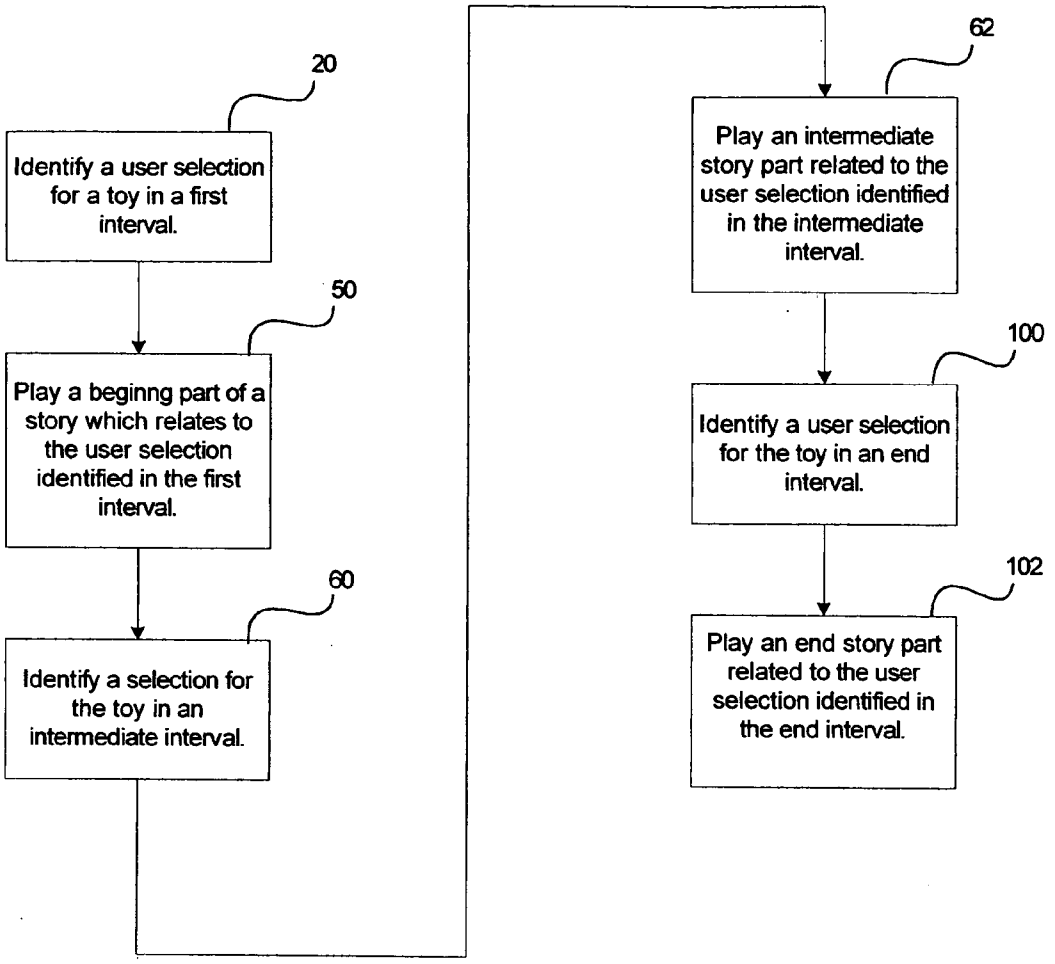

20
Identify a user selection for a toy in a first interval.
50
Play a beginng part of a story which relates to the user selection identified in the first interval.
60
Identify a selection for the toy in an intermediate interval.
62
Play an intermediate story part related to the user selection identified in the intermediate interval.
100
Identify a user selection for the toy in an end interval.
102
Play an end story part related to the user selection identified in the end interval.

FIG. 2

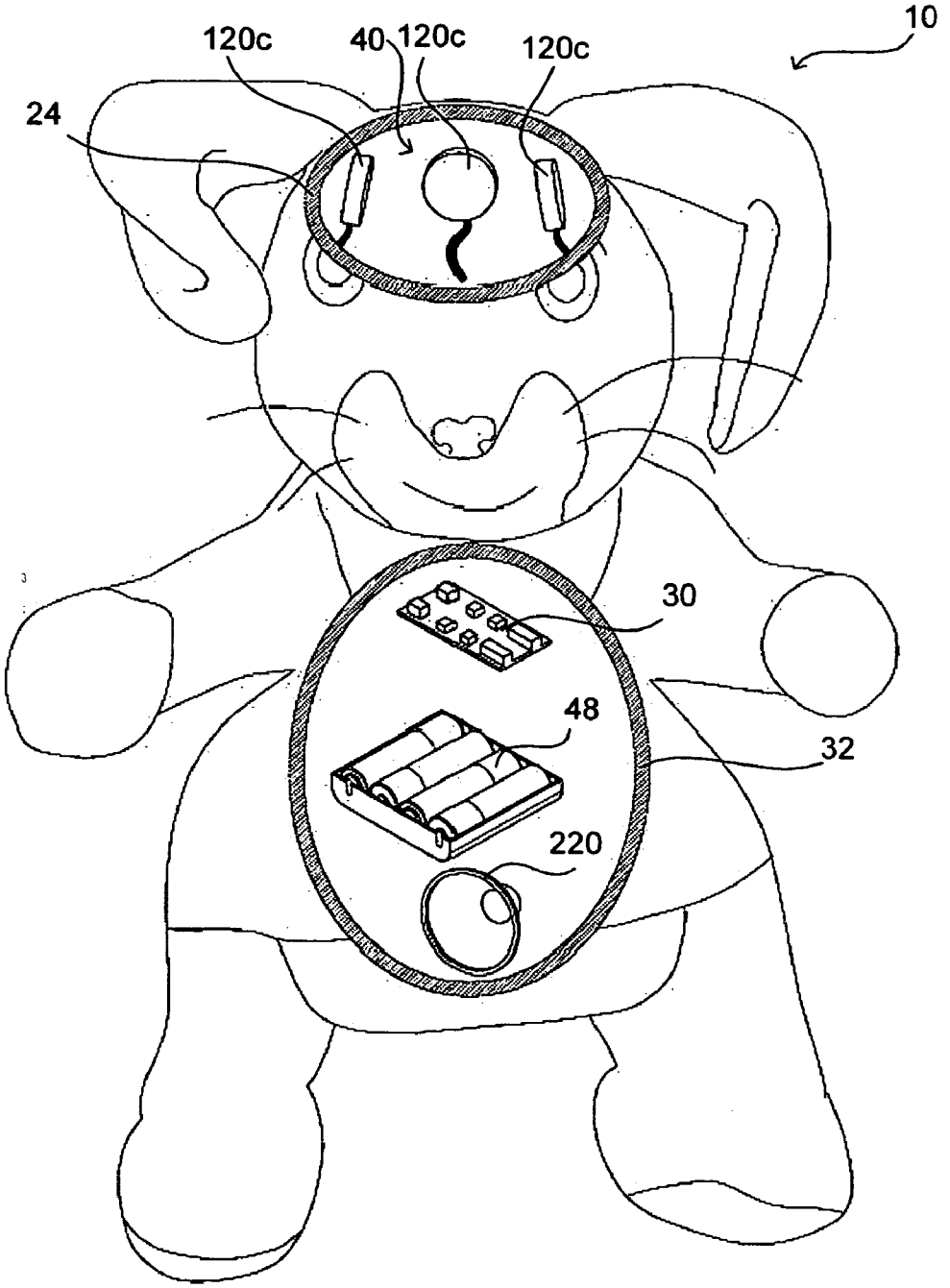


FIG. 3

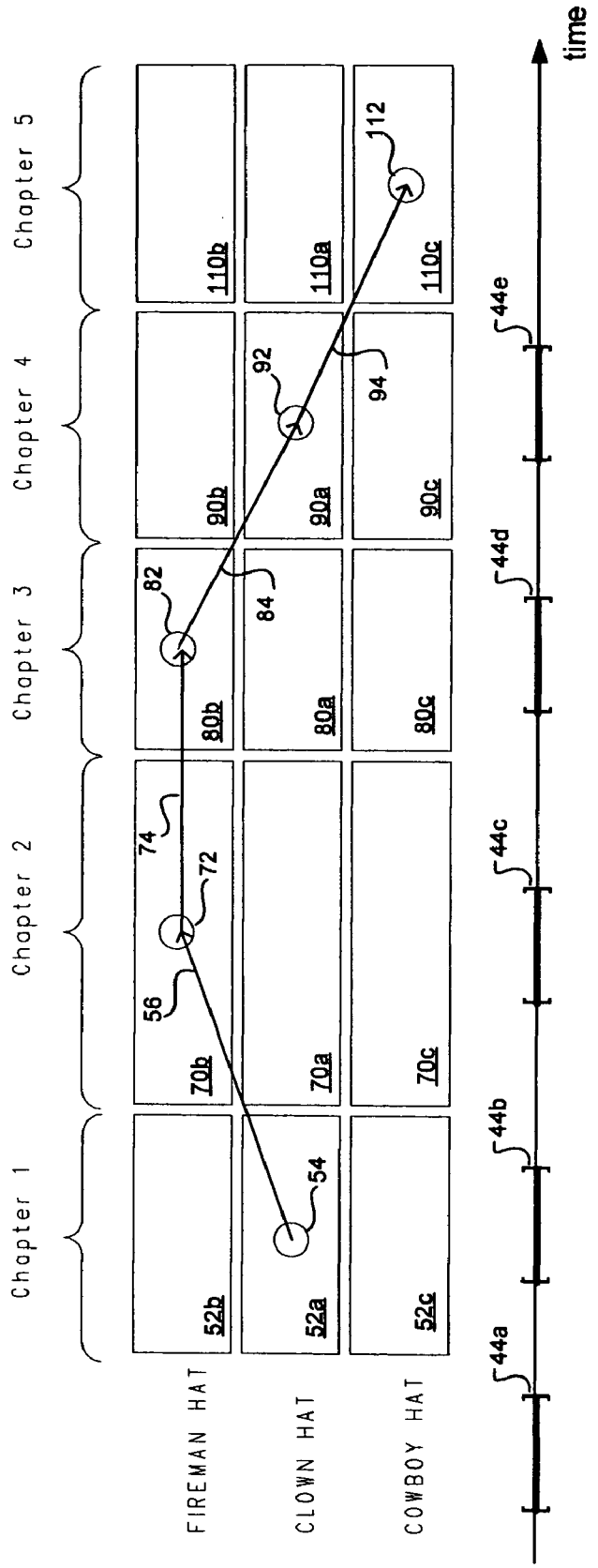

Chapter 1
Chapter 2
Chapter 3
Chapter 4
Chapter 5
time
FIREMAN HAT
CLOWN HAT
COWBOY HAT
52b
52a
52c
70b
70a
70c
80b
80a
80c
90b
90a
90c
110b
110a
110c
44a
44b
44c
44d
44e
54
56
72
74
82
84
92
94
112

FIG. 4

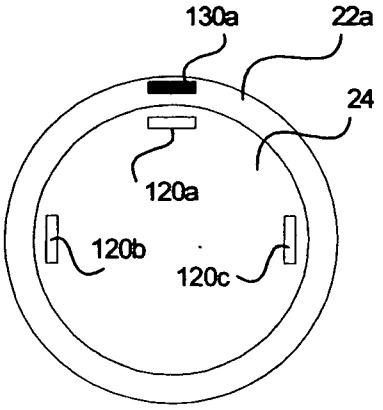


FIG. 5A

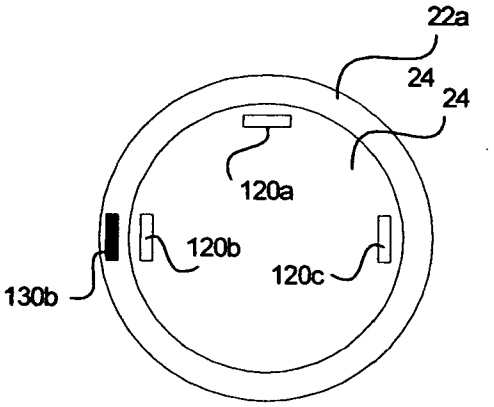


FIG. 5B

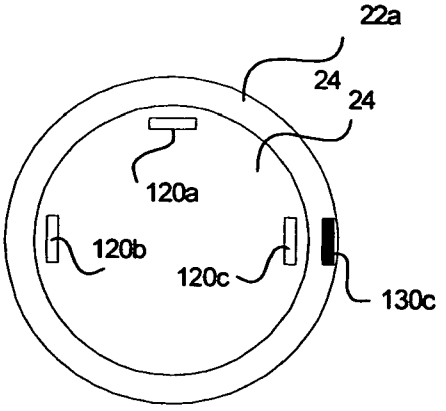


FIG. 5C

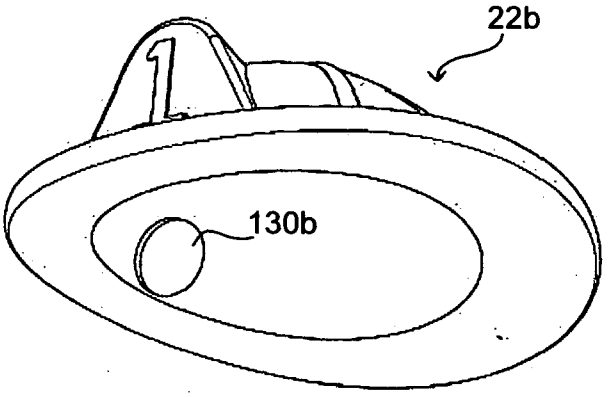


FIG. 6B

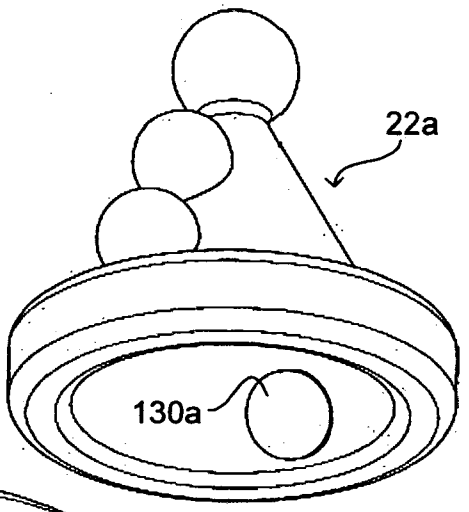


FIG. 6A

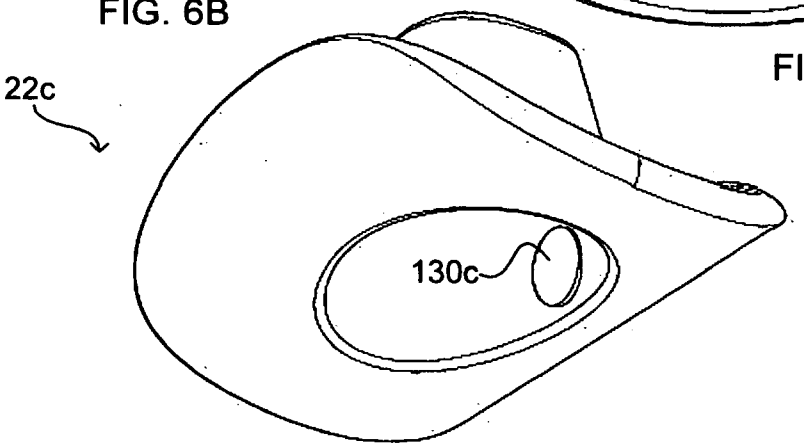


FIG. 6C

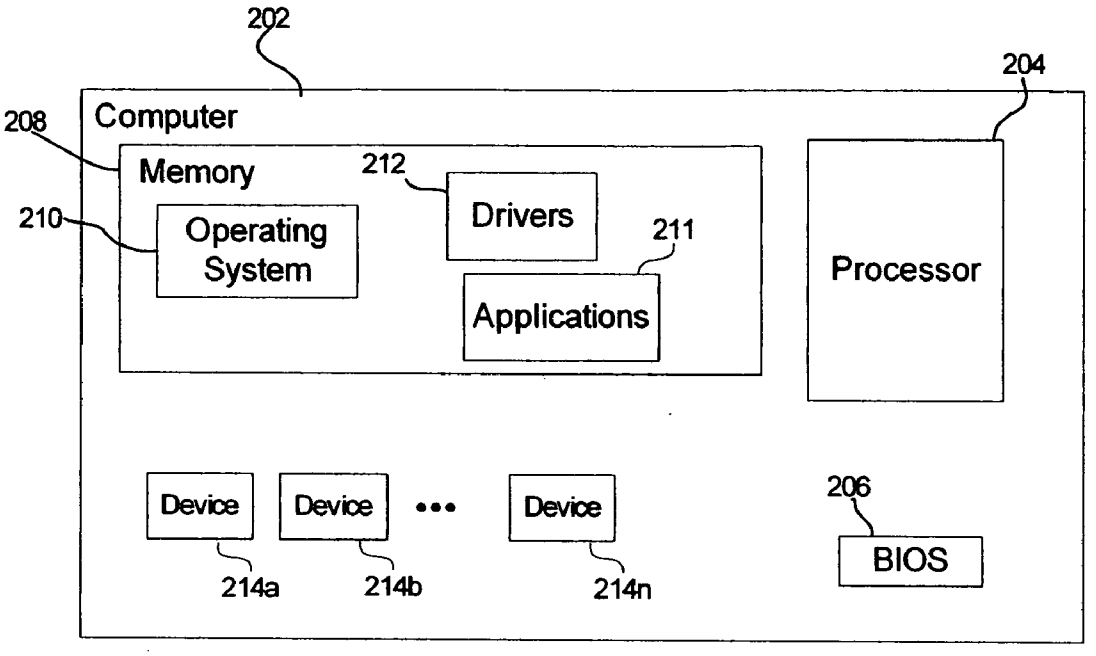

202
204
208
Computer
Memory
212
Drivers
210
Operating System
211
Applications
Processor
Device
Device
Device
206
BIOS
214a
214b
214n

FIG. 7

INTERLEAVING STORY TOY

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0001] FIGS. **1**A-**1**C are perspective views of a toy in accordance one embodiment of the present description, and depicted as wearing different clothing articles.

[0002] FIG. **2** illustrates one example of operations of a toy in accordance with one embodiment of the present description.

[0003] FIG. **3** is a partial cut away view illustrating interior components of the toy of FIGS. **1**A-**1**C.

[0004] FIG. **4** is a schematic diagram illustrating selection of alternative story parts in a narrative sequence of a story.

[0005] FIGS. **5**A-**5**C are schematic diagrams illustrating sensor operation to identify different clothing items placed on the doll head of FIGS. **1**A-**1**C.

[0006] FIGS. **6**A-**6**C illustrate different sensor actuation device placements for different clothing items.

[0007] FIG. **7** is a schematic diagram of a controller for the toy of FIGS. **1**A-**1**C.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0008] In the following description, reference is made to the accompanying drawings which form a part hereof and which illustrate several embodiments. It is understood that other embodiments may be utilized and structural and operational changes may be made without departing from the scope of the descriptions provided.

[0009] FIGS. **1**A-**1**C illustrate one example of an electronic toy **10** which may be operated to play digital recordings of a story in accordance with one embodiment of the description provided herein, As described in greater detail below, in response to various user selections, portions of the story being played by the toy **10** may change as the story is being played in a predetermined narrative sequence comprising a beginning part, followed by at least one intermediate part, and ending with an end part.

[0010] In the embodiment of FIGS. **1**A-**1**C, the toy **10** includes a doll **12** in the shape of an animal such as a rabbit. It is appreciated that the doll **12** may have other shapes including human and other animal shapes. It is further appreciated that the toy **10** may have the overall shape of other objects such as trees and flowers and inanimate objects such as books, houses and automobiles, for example, as well as entirely fanciful shapes.

[0011] FIG. **2** illustrates one example of operations of a toy, such as the toy **10** in response to user selections. In one operation, a user selection for a toy is identified (block **20**) in a beginning interval. In the illustrated embodiment, the doll **12** has three different hats, a clown hat **22***a*, a firefighter's hat **22***b* and a cowboy hat **22***c*, as shown in FIGS. **1**A, **1**B and **1**C, respectively. As described in greater detail below, a first user selection may be made by placing the clown hat **22***a* on the head **24** of the doll **12** as shown in FIG. **1**A. This selection by the user may be identified by a controller **30** which may be disposed within the body **32** of the doll **12**, as schematically represented in FIG. **3**. The doll **12** may have a plurality of sensors **40** disposed in the head **24** of the doll **12** and positioned to sense placement of a particular hat of the hats **22***a*, **22***b*, **22***c* of the head **24** of the doll **12**. Signals output by the sensors **40** may be input by the controller **30** to identify the particular hat **22***a*, **22***b*, **22***c* placed on the head of the doll **12**. It is appreciated that sensors may be used to detect user selection of other types of clothing articles and accessories for the doll **12**.

[0012] FIG. **4** is a timeline depicting a plurality of time intervals **44***a*-**44***e* in a chronological sequence. The sequence of intervals **44***a*-**44***e* occurs in connection with the playing of a story in an ordered narrative sequence of story parts indicated as "Chapter 1, Chapter 2 . . . etc." In the illustrated embodiment, the Chapter 1 story part is directed to the introduction of a character. The Chapter 2 story part is directed to a description of the story setting. The Chapter 3 story part is directed to an action taken by a character. The Chapter 4 story part is directed to a problem resulting from an action. The Chapter 5 story part is directed to a resolution of a problem. In the illustrated embodiment, the story parts are played in narrative sequential order, starting with a beginning story part, that is, Chapter 1, followed by intermediate story parts, that is, Chapters 2, 3, . . . , in order, and ending with an end story party, that is, Chapter 5, in this example. Thus, the narrative sequence of this embodiment is introduction of a character, followed by a description of the story setting, followed by action taken by a character, followed by a problem resulting from a character's action, followed by a resolution of that problem. It is appreciated that other narrative sequences may be utilized in other embodiments.

[0013] A first or beginning interval **44***a* for identifying a user selection may be initiated by, for example, turning on the toy **10**. The toy **10** may be turned on by closing a suitable switch, for example, to apply power from a batter pack **48** or other suitable power source, to the controller **30**. It is appreciated that other events may be utilized to initiate a beginning interval for identifying a user selection.

[0014] In response to identifying (block **20**) a user selection in a beginning interval such as the interval **44***a*, a beginning or introductory part of a story may be played (block **50**) wherein the beginning part relates to the selection identified in the beginning interval. Thus, for example, the user may initially select the clown hat **22***a* by placing the clown hat **22***a* on the doll **12** as shown in FIG. **1**A. During the beginning interval **44***a*, the controller **30** may identify this user selection and in response, select and playback an introductory story part which relates to a clown. Such an introductory story part relating to a clown is schematically represented in the timeline of FIG. **4** by a story segment or part **52***a*. Selection of the story part **52***a* for playback is represented by the tail **54** of an arrow **56**.

[0015] Alternatively, the user may initially select the firefighter hat **22***b* as shown in FIG. **1**B. If so, during the beginning interval **44***a*, the controller **30** may identify this user selection and in response, select and playback a beginning or introductory story part which relates to a firefighter. Such a beginning story part relating to a firefighter is schematically represented in the timeline of FIG. **4** by a story segment or part **52***b*. Alternatively, the user may initially select the cowboy hat **22***c* as shown in FIG. **1**C. If so, during the beginning interval **44***a*, the controller **30** may identify this user selection and in response, select and playback an introductory story part which relates to a

cowboy. Such an introductory story part relating to a cowboy is schematically represented in the timeline of FIG. **4** by a story segment or part **52***c*.

[**0016**] The collection of beginning story parts **52***a*, **52***b*, **52***c* form a class of beginning story parts designated as the "Chapter 1" class in FIG. **4**, in which the subject matter of each Chapter 1 story part **52***a*, **52***b*, **52***c* of the Chapter 1 class is a common portion of the narrative sequence. In the illustrated embodiment, the common subject matter of a story part of the Chapter 1 class introduces a character. It is appreciated that a Chapter 1 class may be directed to other types of common subject matter. In accordance with one aspect, one of the alternative beginning story parts **52***a*, **52***b*, **52***c* may be selected from the Chapter 1 class of story parts and played back as "Chapter 1" of the ordered narrative sequence of the story being played.

[**0017**] In another aspect of the description provided herein, alternative story parts may also be selected and substituted in real time, in response to user selections, as the story is played while maintaining the narrative sequence. Thus, in another operation, a user selection for a toy is identified (block **60**) in an intermediate interval, such as the intermediate interval **44***b*. In the illustrated embodiment, the interval **44***b* for identifying a user selection may be initiated during, for example, the playback of the beginning story part, that is, the Chapter 1 class story part, in this example. It is appreciated that other events may be utilized to initiate an intermediate interval for identifying a user selection.

[**0018**] In response to identifying (block **60**) a user selection in an intermediate interval such as the interval **44***b*, an intermediate part of a story may be played (block **62**) wherein the intermediate part relates to the selection identified in the intermediate interval **44***b*. Thus, for example, after the user initially selects the clown hat **22***a* in the beginning interval **44***a*, the user may subsequently select the firefighter hat **22***b* by removing the clown hat **22***a* and replacing it with the firefighter hat as shown in FIG. **1**B. During the intermediate interval **44***b*, the controller **30** may identify this user selection and in response, select and playback an intermediate story part which relates to a firefighter. Such an intermediate story part relating to a firefighter is schematically represented in the timeline of FIG. **4** by a story part **70***b*. Selection of the story part **70***b* for playback as the Chapter 2 story part of the story is represented by the tail **72** of an arrow **74**. Thus, the Chapter 2 story part may describe a story setting relating to firefighters.

[**0019**] In the illustrated embodiment, the playback of story segment **70***b* as the Chapter 2 story part of the story, may begin following the termination of the playback of the story part **52***a* as the Chapter 1 story part of the story. It is appreciated that in other embodiments, playback of a story segment may be terminated prior to completion of that story segment, depending upon the particular application.

[**0020**] Alternatively, the user may elect to keep the clown's hat **22***a* on as shown in FIG. **1**A. If so, during the intermediate interval **44***b*, the controller **30** may identify this user selection and in response, select and playback an intermediate story part which relates to a clown as the Chapter 2 story part of the story. Such an intermediate story part relating to a clown is schematically represented in the timeline of FIG. **4** by a story part **70***a*. Thus, the Chapter 2 story part may describe a story setting relating to clowns.

[**0021**] Alternatively, the user may initially select the cowboy hat **22***c* as shown in FIG. **1**C. If so, during the intermediate interval **44***b*, the controller **30** may identify this user selection and in response, select and playback an intermediate story part which relates to a cowboy as the Chapter 2 story part of the story. Such an intermediate story part relating to a cowboy is schematically represented in the timeline of FIG. **4** by a story part **70***c*. Thus, the Chapter 2 story part may describe a story setting relating to cowboys.

[**0022**] The collection of intermediate story parts **70***a*, **70***b*, **70***c* form a class of intermediate story parts designated as the "Chapter 2" class in FIG. **4**, in which the subject matter of each Chapter 2 story part **70***a*, **70***b*, **70***c* of the Chapter 2 class is a common portion of the narrative sequence. In the illustrated embodiment, the common subject matter of a story part of the Chapter 2 class describes a story setting. It is appreciated that a Chapter 2 class may be directed to other types of common subject matter. In accordance with one aspect, one of the alternative intermediate story parts **70***a*, **70***b*, **70***c* may be selected from the Chapter 2 class of story parts and played back as "Chapter 2" of the ordered narrative sequence of the story being played.

[**0023**] The remaining intermediate story parts for intermediate Chapters 3 and 4 may be selected and played back in narrative sequential order in a manner similar to that described above. In the example of FIG. **4**, the user has elected to keep the firefighter hat **22***b* on the doll as identified in the next interval **44***c* of the chronologically ordered sequence of time intervals. Hence, the next story part selected and played is story part **80***b* as represented by tail **82** of an arrow **84**. Accordingly, Chapter 3 of the story is provided by story segment **80***b* which relates to a firefighter hat. Thus, the Chapter 3 story part may describe action taken by a firefighter.

[**0024**] The collection of intermediate story parts **80***a*, **80***b*, **80***c* form a class of intermediate story parts designated as the "Chapter 3" class in FIG. **4**, in which the subject matter of each Chapter 3 story part **80***a*, **80***b*, **80***c* of the Chapter 3 class is a common portion of the narrative sequence, that is, the description of an action taken by a character. It is appreciated that a Chapter 3 class may be directed to other types of common subject matter. In accordance with one aspect, one of the alternative intermediate story parts **80***a*, **80***b*, **80***c* may be selected from the Chapter 3 class of story parts and played back as "Chapter 3" of the ordered narrative sequence of the story being played.

[**0025**] Next, in the example of FIG. **4**, the user elects to remove the firefighter hat **22***b* and replace it with a clown hat **22***a* which is identified in the next interval **44***d* of the chronologically ordered sequence of time intervals. Hence, the next story part selected and played is story part **90***a* as represented by tail **92** of an arrow **94**. Accordingly, Chapter 4 of the story is provided by story segment **90***a* which relates to a clown hat. Thus, the Chapter 4 story part may describe a problem resulting from an action related to a clown.

[**0026**] The collection of intermediate story parts **90***a*, **90***b*, **90***c* form a class of intermediate story parts designated as the "Chapter 4" class in FIG. **4**, in which the subject matter of each Chapter 4 story part **90***a*, **90***b*, **90***c* of the Chapter 4 class is a common portion of the narrative sequence, that is, a problem resulting from action taken by a character. It is appreciated that a Chapter 4 class may be directed to other

types of common subject matter. In accordance with one aspect, one of the alternative intermediate story parts **90***a*, **90***b*, **90***c* may be selected from the Chapter 4 class of story parts and played back as "Chapter 4" of the ordered narrative sequence of the story being played.

[**0027**] In the illustrated embodiment, the story has three intermediate story parts as presented by Chapters 2, 3 and 4. It is appreciated that a story may have a greater or lesser number of intermediate story parts in a narrative sequence, depending upon the particular application.

[**0028**] Following selection of the intermediate story parts in sequential order, in another operation, a user selection for a toy is identified (block **100**) in an end interval, such as the end interval **44***e*. In the illustrated embodiment, the interval **44***e* for identifying a user selection may be initiated during, for example, the playback of the last intermediate story part, that is, the Chapter 4 class story part, in this example. It is appreciated that other events may be utilized to initiate an end interval for identifying a user selection.

[**0029**] In response to identifying (block **100**) a user selection in an intermediate interval such as the interval **44***b*, an end part of a story may be played (block **102**) wherein the end part relates to the selection identified in the end interval **44***e*. Thus, for example, the user may elect to subsequently select the cowboy hat **22***c* by removing the clown hat **22***a* and replacing it with the cowboy hat **22***c* as shown in FIG. **1**C. During the end interval **44***e*, the controller **30** may identify this user selection and in response, select and playback an end story part which relates to a cowboy. Such an end story part relating to a cowboy is schematically represented in the timeline of FIG. **4** by a story part **110***c*. Selection of the story part **110***c* for playback as the Chapter 5 story part of the story is represented by the head **112** of the arrow **94**. Thus, the Chapter 5 story part may describe a resolution of a problem relating to a cowboy.

[**0030**] The collection of end story parts **110***a*, **110***b*, **110***c* form a class of end story parts designated as the "Chapter 5" class in FIG. **4**, in which the subject matter of each Chapter 5 story part **110***a*, **110***b*, **110***c* of the Chapter 5 class is a common portion of the narrative sequence, that is, resolution of a problem. It is appreciated that a Chapter 5 class may be directed to other types of common subject matter. In accordance with one aspect, one of the alternative end story parts **110***a*, **110***b*, **110***c* may be selected from the Chapter 5 class of story parts and played back as "Chapter 5" of the ordered narrative sequence of the story being played.

[**0031**] In this manner, a complete story from beginning to end may be told by the toy **10** as represented by the arrows **56**, **74**, **84** and **94**. The story may be told in narrative sequence, beginning at the first chapter, Chapter 1, continuing through Chapters 2, 3 and 4 in order and ending with the final chapter, Chapter 5. Thus, in the illustrated embodiment, there are **153** (3 to the 5^{th} power) possible story lines resulting from 5 chapters and three choices for each chapter in accordance with the user selection of a hat. The number of story lines may vary depending upon the number of story segments or chapters, and the number of choices for each segment or chapter. In the illustrated embodiment, the narrative sequence of Chapters 1-5 is introduction of a character, followed by a description of the story setting, followed by action taken by a character, followed by a problem resulting from a character's action, followed by a resolution of a problem. While maintaining this narrative sequence, the story part selected for each chapter may be selected from a class of story parts in which each story part of the class may relate to a common portion of the narrative sequence. Thus, the story part selected from a particular class relates both to the clothing article selected by the user for that portion of the story as well as to the particular portion of the narrative sequence for that class.

[**0032**] In one embodiment, the various story parts of each class for each Chapter may be worded in a generic fashion such that a story part for one Chapter relating to one user selection may be substituted with another story part from the same class for that Chapter but for a different user selection and yet maintain a degree of narrative continuity as the story progresses from Chapter to Chapter in sequence notwithstanding changes in the clothing article user selections.

[**0033**] In the illustrated embodiment, the lengths of the story parts of each chapter class are depicted in FIG. **4** has have the same duration. It is appreciated that story parts of a particular class may vary within a class such that a story part for one user selection may have a longer duration than the story part for a different user but within the same class of story parts. It is further appreciated that the placements and durations of the various intervals for sending user selections may vary, depending upon the particular application.

[**0034**] In the illustrated embodiment, the sensors **40** may include a plurality of magnetically actuated switches **120***a*, **120***b*, **120***c* (FIG. **3**) which may be uniquely positioned on the body of the doll **12** to provide data indicating to the controller **30** the placement of a clothing article on the doll **12** and the identity of the particular clothing item. For example, FIG. **5**A is a schematic diagram showing the sensor switches **120***a*, **12***b*, **120***c* disposed in three separate, unique locations on the head **24** of the doll **12**. Furthermore, each hat **22***a*, **22***b*, **22***c* may have a sensor activator such as a magnet **130***a*, **130***b*, **130***c*, respectively, disposed in a separate, unique location of the associated hat, as shown in FIGS. **6***a*, **6***b* and **6***c*, respectively. Thus, the clown hat **22***a* may have a magnet **130***a* disposed in the rear of the clown hat **22***a*, positioned to be in close physical proximity to the similarly rear positioned sensor switch **120***a* of the doll **12**, when the clown hat **22***a* is placed on the head **24** of the doll **12** as schematically represented in FIG. **5**A. The magnet **130***a* is sufficiently close to the sensor switch **120***a* to close the sensor switch **120***a* when the clown hat **22***a* is placed on the clown head **24**. Conversely the magnet **130***a* is sufficiently far from the other sensor switches **120***b*, **120***c* to not actuate the switches **120***b*, **120***c*. In this manner, the controller **30** can detect by the closure of one of the switches **120***a*, **120***b*, **120***c* that a hat has been placed on the head **24** of the doll **12**. Furthermore, the controller **30** can identify the hat as the clown hat **22***a* if the closed sensor switch is sensor switch **120***a*.

[**0035**] Similarly, the firefighter hat **22***b* may have a magnet **130***b* disposed on one side of the firefighter hat **22***b*, to be positioned to be in close physical proximity to the similarly side positioned sensor switch **120***b* of the doll **12**, when the firefighter hat **22***b* is placed on the head **24** of the doll **12** as schematically represented in FIG. **5**B. The magnet **130***b* is sufficiently close to the sensor switch **120***b* to close the sensor switch **120***b* when the firefighter hat **22***b* is placed

on the clown head **24**. Conversely the magnet **130***b* is sufficiently far from the other sensor switches **120***a*, **120***c* to not actuate the switches **120***a*, **120***c*. Thus, the controller **30** can identify the hat placed on the doll as the firefighter hat **22***b* if the closed sensor switch is sensor switch **120***b*. The cowboy hat **22***c* may be identified by the sensor switch **120***c* as depicted in FIG. **5**C by placing the cowboy hat magnet **130***c* in a unique position such as the other side of the hat **22***c* to actuate a correspondingly uniquely positioned sensor magnet **120***c*. It is appreciated that other types of sensors and sensor activators may be used to identify clothing articles being placed on the doll **12**. It is further appreciate that the locations of the sensors and sensor actuators may vary, depending upon the particular application.

[**0036**] FIG. **7** illustrates one example of a computing environment which may be used with the described embodiments. In this embodiment, the controller **30** may comprise a computer **202** which includes a processor **204** (such as one or more central processing units (CPU)), a basic input/output system (BIOS) **206** including code executed by the processor **204** to initialize and control various computer **202** components (e.g., input sensor circuits, and music and speech synthesizer output circuits) during a boot sequence. In alternative embodiments, the computer components may include a keyboard, display screen, disk drives, serial communications, etc.) The computer **202** includes a memory **208**, comprising one or more volatile memory devices, such as volatile random access memory (RAM), in which an operating system **210**, an application **211**, and one or more drivers **212**, such as a device driver interfacing with an attached device **214***a*, **214***b* . . . **214***n*, may be loaded into the memory **208** implementing a runtime environment. In some applications, the memory **208** may further include nonvolatile memory (e.g., a flash memory, Electronically Erasable Programmable Memory (EEPROM), optical disk drives, magnetic disk drives etc.) for storing data such as application data, story part data, speech data and music data. The nonvolatile memory may in one embodiment, be removable or updateable to permit substitute application data, story part data, speech data or music data to be provided to the computer **202**.

[**0037**] Each device **214***a*, **214***b*, . . . **214***n* may comprise any type of Input/Output (I/O) device internal or external to the body **32** of the toy **10**, such as the input sensors **40**, music and speech synthesizer circuits etc. As shown in FIG. **3**, audio circuits including speech and music synthesizer circuits may have an output speaker **220** which may be disposed inside the body **32** of the doll **12** or in an exterior location.

[**0038**] In other embodiments, the devices **214***a*, **214***b*, . . . **214***n* may comprise a hard disk drive, or a video chipset, for example which may be integrated on the computer **202** motherboard or on an expansion card inserted in an expansion slot on the computer **202** motherboard. The BIOS **206** may be implemented in firmware in a non-volatile memory device on the computer **202** motherboard, such as a Flash memory, Read Only Memory (ROM), Programmable ROM (PROM), etc. The BIOS **206** code indicates the sequence of the boot operations. The operating system **210** may comprise a suitable operating system, such as a Microsoft® Windows® operating system, Linux™, Apple® Macintosh®, etc. (Microsoft and Windows are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation, Apple and Macintosh are registered trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc., and Linux is a trademark of Linus Torvalds). In the illustrated embodiment, the controller **30** including the computer **202** are disposed within the body **32** of the doll **12**. However, it is appreciated that the controller **30** may comprise any computing device known in the art, such as a mainframe, server, personal computer, workstation, laptop, handheld computer, telephony device, network appliance, virtualization device, programmable or dedicated circuit, etc. Any suitable CPU or processor **204** or operating system may be used.

Additional Embodiment Details

[**0039**] The described operations may be implemented as a method, apparatus or article of manufacture using standard programming and/or engineering techniques to produce software, firmware, hardware, or any combination thereof. The term "article of manufacture" as used herein refers to code or logic implemented in a tangible medium, where such tangible medium may comprise hardware logic (e.g., an integrated circuit chip, Programmable Gate Array (PGA), Application Specific Integrated Circuit (ASIC), etc.) or a computer readable medium, such as magnetic storage medium (e.g., hard disk drives, floppy disks, tape, etc.), optical storage (CD-ROMs, optical disks, etc.), volatile and non-volatile memory devices (e.g., EEPROMs, ROMs, PROMs, RAMs, DRAMs, SRAMs, firmware, programmable logic, etc.). Code in the computer readable medium is accessed and executed by a processor. The tangible medium in which the code or logic is encoded may also comprise transmission signals propagating through space or a transmission media, such as an optical fiber, copper wire, etc. The transmission signal in which the code or logic is encoded may further comprise a wireless signal, satellite transmission, radio waves, infrared signals, Bluetooth, etc. The transmission signal in which the code or logic is encoded is capable of being transmitted by a transmitting station and received by a receiving station, where the code or logic encoded in the transmission signal may be decoded and stored in hardware or a computer readable medium at the receiving and transmitting stations or devices. Additionally, the "article of manufacture" may comprise a combination of hardware and software components in which the code is embodied, processed, and executed. Of course, those skilled in the art will recognize that many modifications may be made to this configuration without departing from the scope of the present description, and that the article of manufacture may comprise any suitable information bearing medium.

[**0040**] The foregoing description of various embodiments has been presented for the purposes of illustration. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit to the precise form disclosed. Many modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teaching.

What is claimed is:

1. A method, comprising:

playing a story in a predetermined narrative sequence of story parts comprising a beginning story part followed by at least one intermediate story part, followed by an end part; wherein said story playing includes:

identifying a user selection for a toy in a first interval in a chronological sequence of intervals comprising at least a beginning interval, followed by at least one intermediate interval, followed by an end interval;

selecting from a class of beginning story parts, a particular beginning story part which relates to the user selection identified in said beginning interval;

identifying a user selection for said toy in an intermediate interval of said sequence of intervals;

selecting from a class of intermediate story parts, a particular intermediate story part which relates to the selection identified in said intermediate interval; and

identifying a user selection for said toy in an end interval of said sequence of intervals; and

selecting from a class of end story parts, a particular end story part which relates to the user selection identified in said end interval;

wherein the selected beginning, intermediate and end story parts are played in the predetermined narrative sequence.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the toy is in the shape of a doll and each user selection identifying includes identifying a clothing article placed by a user on said doll.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the clothing article identified in said first interval is a first clothing item and said clothing article identified in said intermediate interval is a second clothing item different from said first clothing item wherein said played story has at least one story part related to said first clothing item and at least one story part related to said second clothing item.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein said selecting an intermediate story part includes substituting an intermediate story part related to said second clothing article for an intermediate story part relating to said first clothing item wherein said substituted intermediate story part relating to said second clothing article is played instead of an intermediate story part relating to said first clothing item.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the clothing article identified in said end interval is a third clothing item different from said first and second clothing items wherein said played story has at least one story part related to said first clothing item, at least one story part related to said second clothing item and at least one story part related to said third clothing item.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein said selecting an end story part includes substituting an end story part related to said third clothing article for an end story part relating to said second clothing item wherein said substituted end story part relating to said third clothing article is played instead of an end story part relating to said second clothing item.

7. The method of claim 3 wherein said second clothing article identification in said intermediate interval includes identifying said second clothing article in place of said first clothing article.

8. The method of claim 5 wherein said third clothing article identification in said end interval includes identifying said third clothing article in place of said second clothing article.

9. The method of claim 3 wherein each beginning part of said class of beginning story parts introduces a character related to a clothing article selectable by a user.

10. The method of claim 2 wherein each intermediate story part of said class of intermediate story parts describes a story setting related to a clothing article selectable by a user.

11. The method of claim 2 wherein each intermediate story part of said class of intermediate story parts describes an action taken by a character wherein the action is related to a clothing article selectable by a user.

12. The method of claim 2 wherein each intermediate story part of said class of intermediate story parts describes a problem resulting from action taken by a character wherein the problem is related to a clothing article selectable by a user.

13. The method of claim 2 wherein each end story part of said class of end story parts describes a resolution of a problem wherein the resolution is related to a clothing article selectable by a user.

14. The method of claim 2 wherein the clothing article identified in each interval is one of a plurality of different hats.

15. A toy, comprising:

a plurality of different clothing articles;

a doll having a plurality of sensors positioned to respond to each clothing article when placed on said doll;

a speaker coupled to said doll; and

a controller including an input circuit coupled to said sensors and an audio output circuit coupled to said speaker, wherein said controller has logic adapted to:

identify in response to said input circuit and said sensors, a clothing article on said doll in a first interval;

play an introductory part of a story through said audio output circuit and said speaker wherein the introductory part relates to the clothing article identified in said first interval;

identify in response to said input circuit and said sensors, a clothing article on said doll in an intermediate interval;

play an intermediate story part through said audio output circuit and said speaker wherein said intermediate part relates to a clothing article identified in said intermediate interval; and

identify in response to said input circuit and said sensors, a clothing article

on said doll in an end interval; and

play an end story part through said audio output circuit and said speaker wherein said conclusion part relates to a clothing article identified in said end interval.

16. The toy of claim 15 wherein the clothing article identified in said first interval is a first clothing item and said clothing article identified in said intermediate interval is a second clothing item different from said first clothing item wherein said played story has at least one story part related to said first clothing item and at least one story part related to said second clothing item.

17. The toy of claim 15 wherein said playing an intermediate story part includes substituting an intermediate story part related to said second clothing article for an intermediate story part relating to said first clothing item wherein said substituted intermediate story part relating to said second clothing article is played instead of an intermediate story part relating to said first clothing item.

18. The toy of claim 17 wherein the clothing article identified in said end interval is a third clothing item different from said first and second clothing items wherein said played story has at least one story part related to said first clothing item, at least one story part related to said second clothing item and at least one story part related to said third clothing item.

19. The toy of claim 18 wherein said playing an end story part includes substituting an end story part related to said third clothing article for an end story part relating to said second clothing item wherein said substituted conclusion story part relating to said third clothing article is played instead of an end story part relating to said second clothing item.

20. The toy of claim 16 wherein said second clothing article identification in said intermediate interval includes identifying said second clothing article in place of said first clothing article.

21. The toy of claim 18 wherein said third clothing article identification in said end interval includes identifying said third clothing article in place of said second clothing article.

22. The toy of claim 16 wherein said introductory story part being played introduces a character related to the clothing article identified in the first interval.

23. The toy of claim 15 wherein an intermediate story part being played describes a story setting related to the clothing article identified in the intermediate interval.

24. The toy of claim 15 wherein an intermediate story part being played describes an action taken by a character wherein the action is related to the clothing article identified in the intermediate interval.

25. The toy of claim 15 wherein an intermediate story part being played describes a problem resulting from action taken by a character wherein the problem is related to the clothing article identified in the intermediate interval.

26. The toy of claim 15 wherein the end story part being played describes resolution of a problem wherein the resolution is related to the clothing article identified in the end interval.

27. The toy of claim 15 wherein the clothing article identified in each interval is a hat.

28. The toy of claim 27 wherein a first clothing article is a fire fighter hat, a second clothing item is a clown hat and a third clothing item is a cowboy hat.

29. The toy of claim 15 wherein each clothing article has a magnet and each sensor includes a magnetic switch responsive to a clothing article magnet when placed in proximity to said switch.

30. The toy of claim 15 wherein the magnet of each clothing article is placed in a different location than the magnet of the other clothing articles.

31. The toy of claim 15 wherein said doll has a body and said controller and speaker are disposed within said body.

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