



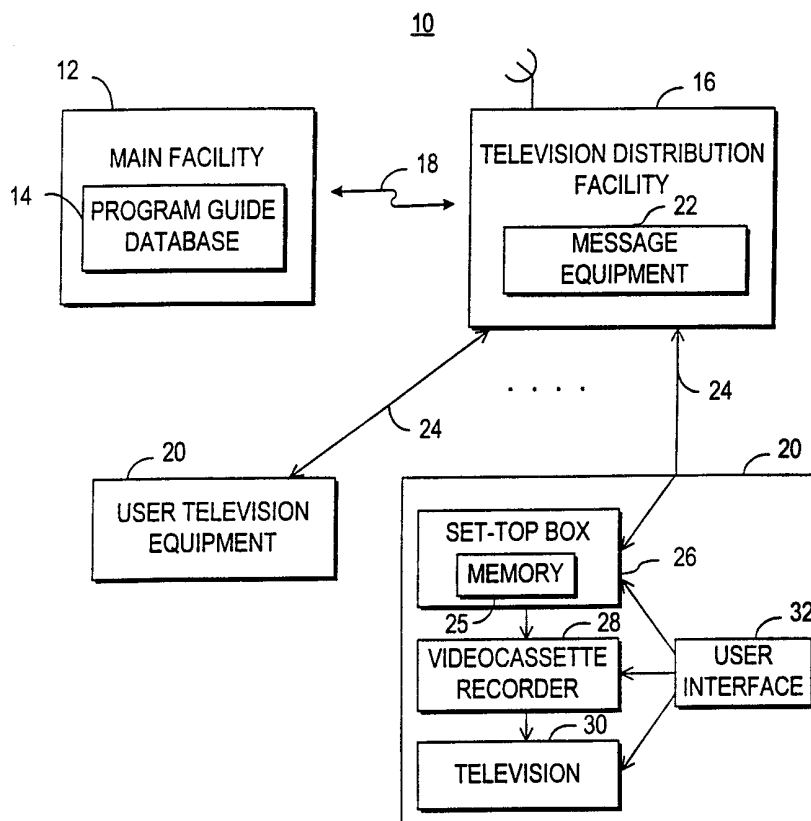
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

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(54) Title: TELEVISION MESSAGE SYSTEM

(57) Abstract

A television message system is provided that allows users at user television equipment devices that are connected to a television distribution facility to transmit messages to each other relating to a television program or other suitable subject. The television message system permits users to participate in evaluations, contests, promotions, and surveys related to a television program while watching that television program. The television message system also permits users to compose and send a message to a television program entity. Users can send messages through the television message system to users at personal computers who are connected to the user's television distribution facility through a communications network. The television message system also allows a user to purchase a gift related to television programming for a recipient. The gift may be an electronic gift certificate for pay-per-view programming. The television message system may be based on an interactive television program guide or a set-top box application implemented on a set-top box.



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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int. Application No.

PCT/US 99/19541

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC 7 H04N7/173 H04N7/14

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 H04N

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5 583 927 A (ELY THOMAS C ET AL) 10 December 1996 (1996-12-10)	1,2, 6-10, 15-28, 32-37, 42-55, 59-64, 69-78
Y	the whole document — — — — — — / — —	142, 143, 146-151, 157, 161-166, 172, 176-181, 186



Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.



Patent family members are listed in annex.

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"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"Z" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

15 February 2000

Date of mailing of the international search report

28. 02. 2000

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int. l. Application No

PCT/US 99/19541

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 94 14284 A (DISCOVERY COMMUNICAT INC) 23 June 1994 (1994-06-23) the whole document	92, 93, 95-106, 108-117
Y	WO 96 41478 A (TV GUIDE ON SCREEN) 19 December 1996 (1996-12-19)	142, 143, 146-151, 157, 161-166, 172, 176-181, 186
A	the whole document	1-117
A	WO 98 17064 A (WESTBERG THOMAS E ;KWOH DANIEL S (US); LEUNG ELSIE Y (US); MANKOVI) 23 April 1998 (1998-04-23)	
A	WO 96 25006 A (FLEXYDIAL PTY LTD ;GOSNEY PETER JOHN (AU)) 15 August 1996 (1996-08-15) page 1, line 8 - line 16 page 19, line 17 -page 20, line 22 page 22, line 20 - line 25 page 30, line 4 - line 17 page 36, line 10 -page 38, line 21 page 46, line 19 -page 48, line 18 figures 1-5,13	118-141

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US 99/ 19541

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 1 of first sheet)

This International Search Report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the International Application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful International Search can be carried out, specifically:
3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. Claims: 1-117,142-186 Television message system in which users send messages to each other or a head end.
2. Claims: 118-141 Television message system in which users can purchase gifts.

1. ☒ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this International Search Report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
- ☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

Int. Application No

PCT/US 99/19541

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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