

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
18 January 2007 (18.01.2007)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2007/008076 A2

- (51) International Patent Classification: **Not classified**
- (21) International Application Number:
PCT/NL2006/050174
- (22) International Filing Date: 12 July 2006 (12.07.2006)
- (25) Filing Language: Dutch
- (26) Publication Language: English
- (30) Priority Data:
1029494 12 July 2005 (12.07.2005) NL
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- (81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, LY, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RS, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.
- (84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).
- Published:**
— without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report
- For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEM COMPRISING A PLURALITY OF PORTABLE TELEPHONE SETS

(57) Abstract: A telecommunication system comprises: a computer system; transmitter/receiver units; and wireless telephones which are used by users, and comprise means for sending and receiving SMS and/or MMS messages to and from a selected user via the computer system. The computer system comprises: a memory for messages; access means with which a user gains access to the memory; and identification means which assign a code and send this code to the relevant telephone, wherein the access means are released by the user sending this code to an allocated phone number, wherein: after sending the code for the first time, messages addressed to the user are stored in the memory and blocked from transmission; and by sending the code for the second and subsequent times, all messages stored in the memory are sent to the user.



WO 2007/008076 A2

**TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEM COMPRISING A PLURALITY
OF PORTABLE TELEPHONE SETS**

The invention relates to a telecommunication system with

a fixedly disposed central computer system operated by a provider;

5 a network of distributed transmitter/receiver units connected to this computer system, and

a number of wireless telephones, for instance of the GSM or UMTS type, which are in the possession of and are used by users, and comprise means for sending and
10 receiving SMS and/or MMS messages to and from a selected user via the computer system.

Such a telecommunication system is known.

SMS and MMS are services on the basis of "push".

This means that the receiver receives the messages sent
15 to him/her unconditionally.

Such messages are often received at a moment or in a situation perceived by a user as being inconvenient or otherwise unwelcome. When a message is received, the recipient mobile telephone usually generates an acoustic
20 signal as well as a visual signal, this being perceived as irritating in for instance a quiet environment, during a concert or the like. Conditions can further occur in which the mobile phone of a user is also accessible to third parties. When an SMS or MMS is
25 received it is then not possible to prevent these third parties gaining access to the possibly confidential information available in the relevant message. This can be highly annoying for a user.

In view of the foregoing, the invention has for its
30 object to provide a telecommunication system of the stated type, which provides the option of a user activating a service provided by the provider via said computer, whereby SMS and MMS messages are stored from a point in time chosen by the user and are only forwarded
35 to him/her at a second point in time chosen by him/her. In this way the user has the option of activating said

service at the start of a situation in which the forwarding of messages is undesired, and of deactivating the service at the moment that the user wishes to receive the possibly stored messages.

5 This object according to the invention is realized with a telecommunication system which has the feature that the computer system comprises:

10 a memory in which said messages can be stored and from which said messages can be retrieved and read in order to be fed to said network such that the relevant user can receive them;

access means which can be controlled by a user by means of his/her mobile phone such that the relevant user gains access to the memory; and

15 identification means which assign a personal code (PIN) to a user at the request of this user, and which send this code by SMS to the mobile phone of the relevant user, wherein the access means are released by this user sending an SMS with this code to a
20 specifically allocated phone number, wherein

(1) after sending an SMS with the assigned code for the first time, SMS and MMS messages addressed to the mobile phone of the relevant user are stored in the memory and are blocked from transmission via the
25 network; and

(2) by sending an SMS with the assigned code for the second and subsequent times, all messages stored in the memory are sent to the mobile phone of the relevant user and erased from the memory.

30 A telecommunication system is known from GB-A-2 404 301 which provides the option of downloading SMS messages by means of a remote control. For this purpose the user must subscribe to the service in question. The server saves copies of all SMS messages not yet read by
35 the subscriber. The subscriber can download SMS messages by means of another phone without first having to return to his/her 'home' telephone for this purpose. In order to make use of the service in question the user must communicate to the system an authorization code assigned
40 to him/her. The 'home' telephone can be a mobile phone.

EP-A-1 255 414 relates to a system configuration wherein use is made of sensing an SMS message to a message receiver. This can for instance be a wireless telephone. Use is made of a central management system which controls transmission of and reply to SMS messages. The system provides automatic reply to SMS messages. As an example, this specification refers to the sending of a message that the relevant subscriber is on holiday. In order to activate the service the user must enter a determined code assigned to him/her.

The prior art briefly described above does not state that the user can activate and deactivate a central storage service for SMS and MMS messages by transmitting a specific PIN code, as according to the invention.

In a specific embodiment the telecommunication system according to the invention has the feature that the memory comprises selection means which can be controlled by a user by means of his/her mobile phone such that he/she can store numbers of selected mobile phones in the selection means, whereby the storing of messages in the memory respectively retrieving and reading messages from the memory takes place only in respect of messages which are received from the relevant selected mobile phones. In this case the user activates the service offered by the provider via the computer system of the latter only for selected numbers.

In yet another embodiment the telecommunication system according to the invention has the special feature that the memory comprises a timer which controls the memory after a message has been stored therein such that the memory saves this message for a chosen period of time entered in the timer, for instance 21 days, and then erases it. This avoids the central computer of the provider becoming congested with an unnecessarily large number of SMS and MMS messages. This option assumes that after some time, for instance the stated three weeks, the topicality of the information in question is lost and that the user clearly does not set great store by receiving the messages from the preceding period.

In order to make the accessibility of the service as easy as possible for every user, an embodiment is recommended in which the assigned telephone number is the telephone number of the mobile phone of the relevant user. In this manner it is not necessary for the user to enter a specific telephone number in the number memory of his/her mobile telephone or to remember a number. It is assumed in this respect that everyone knows their own telephone number.

According to another aspect of the invention, the telecommunication system has the special feature that, when said code is assigned at the request of the user, the identification means if necessary also modify the relevant settings of the mobile phone of the user.

Such a modification of the settings is also generally usual for other services and is transmitted via an SMS and communicated to the recipient in the usual manner in the form of an SMS.

According to a final aspect of the invention, the telecommunication system has the special feature that the access means for a user can be controlled via the website of the provider.

The service according to the invention requires that the provider installs a relevant application in the central computer system. This application can consist of a database with the relevant telephone numbers and the associated messages coupled thereto. These messages remain retrievable for a predetermined period, for instance 21 days. The sender of an SMS or MMS must however pay the costs of the SMS messages sent by him and temporarily blocked by the recipient, even in the case the service is activated.

The provider preferably makes available a website also allowing retrieval and modification of the settings relating to the service via the web.

As already noted above, when the message blocking service in question is activated the user receives an SMS which adjusts the settings of his/her mobile phone to this service. If the mobile phone is not known, the changes in the settings can only be carried out via the web.

According to a specific aspect of the invention, the telecommunication system has the special feature that a user can specify numbers of mobile phones to the selection means by means of a second code (PIN) assigned
5 to him/her, whereafter SMS and MMS messages originating from those mobile telephones are not stored in the memory and are thus not sent to the user when messages stored in the memory are retrieved by him/her.

According to a specific aspect of the invention,
10 the telecommunication system comprises blocking means with which a user can send a message to the computer system by means of his/her mobile phone, as a result of which the computer system is adjusted such that a third party, who sends an SMS or MMS message by means of
15 his/her mobile phone to the mobile phone of said user, receives a reply on his/her mobile phone which shows that the mobile telephone of said user is switched off or is out of reach of the network.

The invention can be very briefly summarized as
20 follows. The user gains access to a service provided by the provider by activating thereof by means of an SMS which is sent to the computer system by his/her mobile telephone. In the menu of the mobile telephone the user can block all incoming SMS and MMS messages or messages
25 coming from selected numbers temporarily or permanently (until further notice). By sending an assigned code (PIN), which the user receives upon activation, to the provider by means of an SMS, all SMS and MMS messages stored in the memory are forwarded to the user, except
30 the messages coming from senders mentioned on the list of numbers to be definitively blocked, as given to the provider by the user. Such messages are neither stored in the memory nor forwarded to the user directly or upon request.

CLAIMS

- 5 1. Telecommunication system with
a fixedly disposed central computer system operated
by a provider;
a network of distributed transmitter/receiver units
connected to this computer system, and
10 a number of wireless telephones, for instance of
the GSM or UMTS type, which are in the possession of and
are used by users, and comprise means for sending and
receiving SMS and/or MMS messages to and from a selected
user via the computer system,
15 characterized in that
the computer system comprises:
a memory in which said messages can be stored and
from which said messages can be retrieved and read in
order to be fed to said network such that the relevant
20 user can receive them;
access means which can be controlled by a user by
means of his/her mobile phone such that the relevant
user gains access to the memory; and
identification means which assign a personal code
25 (PIN) to a user at the request of this user, and which
send this code by SMS to the mobile phone of the
relevant user, wherein the access means are released by
this user sending an SMS with this code to a
specifically allocated phone number, wherein
30 (1) after sending an SMS with the assigned code for
the first time, SMS and MMS messages addressed to the
mobile phone of the relevant user are stored in the
memory and are blocked from transmission via the
network; and
35 (2) by sending an SMS with the assigned code for
the second and subsequent times, all messages stored in
the memory are sent to the mobile phone of the relevant
user and erased from the memory.
- 40 2. Telecommunication system as claimed in claim 1,
wherein the memory comprises selection means which can

be controlled by a user by means of his/her mobile phone such that he/she can store numbers of selected mobile phones in the selection means, whereby the storing of messages in the memory respectively retrieving and
5 reading messages from the memory takes place only in respect of messages which are received from the relevant selected mobile phones.

3. Telecommunication system as claimed in claim 1,
10 wherein the memory comprises a timer which controls the memory after a message has been stored therein such that the memory saves this message for a chosen period of time entered in the timer, for instance 21 days, and then erases it.

15

4. Telecommunication system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the assigned telephone number is the telephone number of the mobile phone of the relevant user.

20 5. Telecommunication system as claimed in claim 1, wherein, when said code is assigned at the request of the user, the identification means if necessary also modify the relevant settings of the mobile phone of the user.

25

6. Telecommunication system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the access means for a user can be controlled via the website of the provider.

30 7. Telecommunication system as claimed in claim 2, wherein a user can specify numbers of mobile phones to the selection means by means of a second code (PIN) assigned to him/her, whereafter SMS and MMS messages originating from those mobile telephones are not stored
35 in the memory, and are thus not sent to the user when messages stored in the memory are retrieved by him/her.

8. Telecommunication system as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, comprising blocking means with
40 which a user can send a message to the computer system by means of his/her mobile phone, as a result of which

the computer system is adjusted such that a third party, who sends an SMS or MMS message by means of his/her mobile phone to the mobile phone of said user, receives a reply on his/her mobile phone which shows that the
5 mobile telephone of said user is switched off or is out of reach of the network.