

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
29 August 2002 (29.08.2002)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 02/066130 A1

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: A63F 13/12, G06F 17/00, H04Q 7/32

(21) International Application Number: PCT/AU02/00162

(22) International Filing Date: 15 February 2002 (15.02.2002)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
PR 3182 16 February 2001 (16.02.2001) AU

(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): WAPLI-CATIONS PTY LIMITED [AU/AU]; Level 5, 655 Pacific Highway, St Leonards, NSW 2065 (AU).

(72) Inventor; and

(75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): SWAN, Robert, Benjamin [AU/AU]; 8/21 Holbrook Ave., Kirribilli, NSW 2061 (AU).

(74) Agent: HODGKINSON OLD MCINNES; Level 3, 20 Alfred Street, Milsons Point, NSW 2061 (AU).

(81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

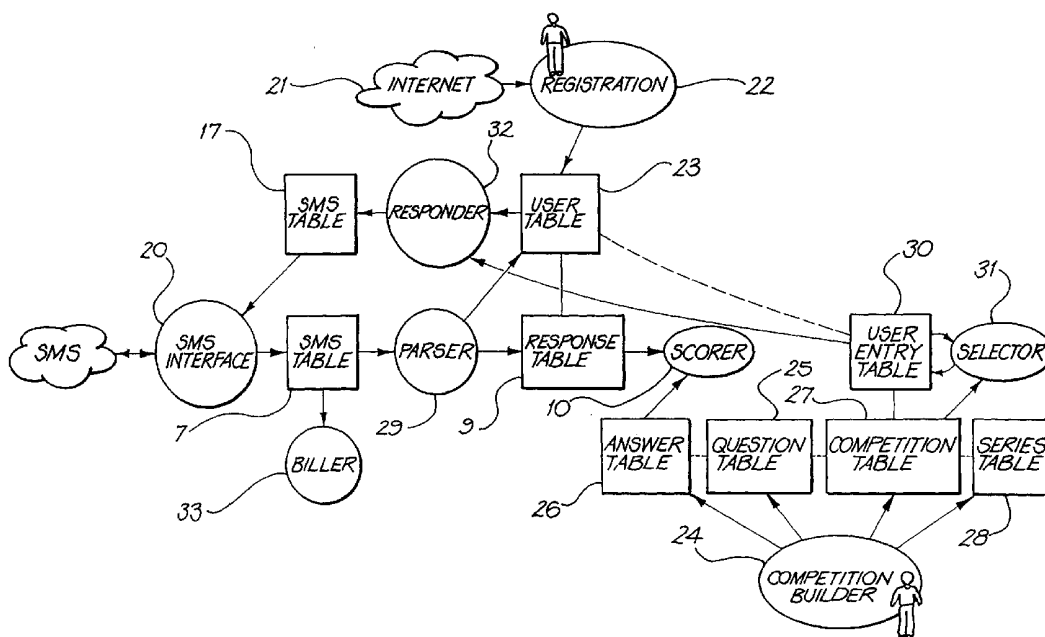
(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— with international search 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: METHOD OF PLAYING A GAME OVER A BROADCAST MEDIUM



(57) Abstract: A method of playing a game over a broadcast medium involving a large number of players with SMS enabled wireless telecommunication devices, the method comprising the steps of: broadcasting of one or more questions over said broadcast medium to said players; receiving and storing a response from each of said players via said SMS enabled wireless telecommunication devices in a database adapted to store at least a unique identifier and details of said response for each player; and processing said responses for allocation of a score to each player.

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METHOD OF PLAYING A GAME OVER A BROADCAST MEDIUM

TECHNICAL FIELD

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The present invention relates generally to a method of playing a game over a broadcast medium involving a large number of players with "short message service" (SMS) enabled wireless telecommunication devices.

10 BACKGROUND

Television quiz shows are well known, where players in the television studio answer questions in order to win prizes. Many viewers of such programs enjoy watching them at home attempting to answer the questions. In the past viewers at home have been given the
15 opportunity of answering questions by means of phone ins, but none of them allow for real time interactive game shows in which viewers participate as players.

The present invention seeks to ameliorate this by providing a method and system of playing a game over a broadcast medium involving a large number of players with SMS
20 enabled wireless telecommunication devices.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

According to a first aspect the present invention consists in a method of playing a game
25 over a broadcast medium involving a large number of players with SMS enabled wireless telecommunication devices, the method comprising the steps of:

- (i) broadcasting of one or more questions over said broadcast medium to said players;
- (ii) receiving and storing a response from each of said players via said SMS enabled
30 wireless telecommunication devices in a database adapted to store at least a unique identifier and details of said response for each player; and
- (iii) processing said responses for allocation of a score to each player.

Preferably at least one score of one of said players is broadcast via said broadcast medium.

Preferably at least one score of one of said players is forwarded to the SMS enabled wireless telecommunication device of said player.

5

Preferably said game is a real time interactive game.

Preferably the broadcast medium is television.

10 Preferably the unique identifier is a mobile phone number.

In one embodiment the game is a sports tipping game.

In another embodiment the game is a trivia quiz game or a general knowledge game.

15

According to a second aspect the present invention consists in a system for playing a game comprising:

- (i) a broadcast medium;
- (ii) at least one SMS enabled wireless telecommunication device for operation by a player desiring to play said game;
- (iii) at least one computer database adapted to receive and store a unique identifier and details of a response from said player via said SMS enabled wireless telecommunication device, wherein said response is an answer to at least one question broadcast over said broadcast medium and said database processes said response for allocation of a score to said player.

20

25

Preferably said score of said player is broadcast via said broadcast medium.

30 Preferably said score of said player is forwarded to the SMS enabled wireless telecommunication device of said player.

Preferably said game is a real time interactive game.

Preferably the broadcast medium is television.

Preferably the unique identifier is a mobile phone number.

5 In one embodiment the game is a sports tipping game.

In another embodiment the game is a trivia quiz game or a general knowledge game.

10 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a schematic view of an embodiment of a system for playing a game in accordance with the present invention.

15 Fig. 2 is a block diagram of the system architecture and human interfaces of the system for playing a game as shown in Fig. 1.

MODE OF CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

20 Fig. 1 depicts an embodiment of a system for playing a game over a broadcast medium. The system involves televising a "live" television program 1 over a "free to air" television network 2, the program being viewed via television sets 3 by a large number of viewers in a conventional manner. Those viewers desiring to be players of the game must be equipped with an SMS enabled mobile phone 4 or other like SMS enabled wireless
25 telecommunication device.

In one format the television program 1 may be a half hour general knowledge quiz show broadcasting ten multiple-choice questions to viewers. The viewers may be offered four answers labelled "a", "b", "c" or "d" to each question, and invited to provide their answers
30 once all ten questions have been broadcast. To participate in the game as players, the viewers must send their answers in a requested SMS message to a game phone number provided by the television program 1. The steps for a player may be as follows:

Step 1. Player enters answers sequentially as an SMS message on their SMS enabled mobile phone 4.

example. acbadcdaab

5 Step 2. Player enters game phone number

Step 3. The player sends the SMS.

10 The SMS message or “response” of each player is transmitted by the conventional mobile telecommunications network 5 to a telecommunication receiving centre 6 which comprises a computer database with means for storage of responses 7, means for processing of responses 8 and means for allocating and storing scores 9,10 to each players response. Each player is identified by a “unique identifier”, which in this embodiment is their mobile phone number.

15

The receiving centre 6 is capable of forwarding one or more players scores to another computer database located at the site of the television program for broadcast purposes, and capable of forwarding return SMS messages to players with a thank you message, their score or prize confirmation.

20

As the game is preferably real time interactive, receiving centre 6 must be able to handle a large volume of SMS traffic in a small time frame. Preferably the means for allocating and storing scores 9,10 of receiving centre 6 should be able to allocate a score to each player, and be able to provide one or more players scores to the computer database at the television program 1 during the half hour showing of program 1. Preferably the return SMS messages to players with a thank you message, their score or prize confirmation, may be sent after the program 1 has finished in order to minimise the impact on the SMS interface between receiving centre 6 and telecommunications network 5.

25

30 Prizes may be allocated to players either by getting all answers correct, or by awarding random prizes during a show. If there are a large number of players who have got the answers correct, a winner may be randomly selected from those who have got all the answers correct.

The playing of the game during a single broadcast of a program 1, may have two or more distinct sections to the game and players may be invited to provide their answer or answers in two or more SMS responses. This would allow for scores and prizes to be allocated for each section of the show and for all sections of the show.

The game may form part of a series of games being held on a day or over a number of days or weeks. In such a format players are asked to watch the television program 1 at a scheduled time and provide answers to ten multiple choice questions in a similar manner described earlier. However, the players may be asked to provide additional information in their SMS “response” to identify which game they are providing answers to. An example may be as follows:

	SMS “response”	172acbadcdaab
	where	1- is the show code
15	where	7- game episode
	where	2- is the section of the game
	where	acbadcdaab are the answers to ten multiple-choice questions

Whilst the above-mentioned embodiment is directed towards a general knowledge quiz show, it can in other embodiments be directed towards a sports knowledge quiz show, teen quiz show or any other suitable game show or television competition. For instance, the system may be used as a guessing game or a trade promotion.

Another embodiment is a game format related to a live television broadcast of a sports fixture. Prior to the fixture commencing the television program showing the fixture may ask participants to guess the outcome of the fixture. The sports fixture may for example be a basketball match between two teams named “Sydney” and “Melbourne”. Before the match commences, the television program 1 may ask viewers who wish to participate in a guessing game to provide the final score of the game. To participate in the guessing game as players, the viewers must send their guessed score (answer) in a requested SMS format to a game phone number provided by the television program 1. The steps for a player may be as follows:

Step 1. Player enters guessed score (answer) as an SMS message on their SMS enabled mobile phone 4.

Example. S96M87 (which represents Sydney 96 defeat Melbourne 87)

5 Step 2. Player enters game phone number

Step 3. The player sends the SMS.

The SMS message or "response" of each player is transmitted to the receiving centre 6 for storage and processing in a like manner to the earlier embodiment. However, at the end of the basketball match the result of the game is provided to the receiving centre 6 for checking. The receiving centre 6 is capable of forwarding details of one or more players who guessed the final score of the match correctly to a computer database located at the site of the television program 1 for broadcast purposes, and capable of forwarding return SMS messages to players with a thank you message or prize confirmation.

In a variation to this game format the sports fixture may again for example relate to a basketball match between two teams named "Sydney" and "Melbourne". Before the match commences, the television program 1 may ask viewers who wish to participate in a guessing game to provide the points difference between the two teams at half time and full time. To participate in the guessing game as players, the viewers must send their guessed point differences (answer) in a requested SMS format to a game phone number provided by the television program 1. The steps for a player may be as follows:

25 Step 1. Player enters guessed score (answer) as an SMS message on their SMS enabled mobile phone 4.

example. M5S7 (which represents Melbourne leads at half time by 5
and Sydney wins by 7 at full time)

30 Step 2. Player enters game phone number

Step 3. The player sends the SMS.

The SMS message or "response" of each player is transmitted to the receiving centre 6 for storage and processing in a like manner to the earlier embodiment. At half time of the basketball match the receiving centre 6 processes and identifies all players who got the "points difference" correct for the first half of the basketball match. The receiving centre 6 then forwards an SMS reply to these players congratulating them on their success of guessing the first half "points difference" and wishing them good luck for the second half of the basketball match. At the end of the basketball match, players who got both the first half and second half points differences correct may be forwarded a return SMS with prize confirmation. The receiving centre 6 may also forward details of players who have guessed correctly to the computer database at the television program 1 for broadcast purposes.

In a further variation to this game format, a number of sports fixtures may be covered by a single game. For example, the game format may be used for sports tipping for one or more rounds of structured sports competitions such as football, tennis, basketball, hockey, cricket, baseball and other popular sports.

An example may be as follows. A sports tipping or guessing competition may be carried out on a FIFA World Cup competition where viewers of the television coverage for that event are asked prior to the commencement of a group or round of matches to guess the outcome.

For example, England (ENG), Sweden (SWE), Argentina (ARG) and Nigeria (NIG) may all be in a single group of the FIFA World Cup competition. On one particular day, Sweden may be playing against Nigeria followed by Argentina playing against England. Prior to commencement of the football games, television viewers may be invited to participate in a tipping competition and invited to guess the outcome of:

1. SWE v. NIG.
2. ARG v. ENG

30

To participate, the viewers must send their guessed answer in a requested SMS format to a game phone number provided by the television program 1. The steps for a player may be as follows:

Step 1. Player enters guessed outcome (answer) as an SMS message on their SMS enabled mobile phone 4.

5 Example: 1 SWE 2 DRAW (which represents Sweden to win match 1, and a draw between England and Argentina in match 2).

Step 2. Player enters games phone number.

Step 3 Player sends the SMS.

10

The SMS message or "response" of each player is transmitted to the receiving center 6 for storage and processing in a like manner to the earlier embodiments.

15 At the end of the second match, the receiving centre may identify all players who correctly guessed the outcome of both matches and send them a congratulatory SMS or randomly select them for a prize. The receiving center may also send an SMS to successful players to invite them to guess the outcome of future matches in the same FIFA World Cup competition, with large prizes on offer where a player guesses the outcome correctly for a sequence of football matches.

20

In another embodiment, TV viewers or radio listeners may be invited to guess the outcome of a whole round of teams playing in a football competition before the commencement of that round. For example, it may be a round of football in the Australian National Rugby League where the following matches are to be played:

25

1. Melbourne (MEL) v. Canberra (CAN)
2. North Queensland (NQL) v. Brisbane (BRI)
3. Bulldogs (BLD) v. Wests Tigers (WTG)
4. Parramatta (PRM) v. Penrith (PEN)
- 30 5. Northern Eagles (NEG) v. Newcastle (NWC)
6. St George (STG) v. Sharks (SHK)
7. Souths (STH) v. Roosters (RST)

To participate, the viewers must send their guessed answer, in a requested SMS format to a game phone number provided by the television program 1 or other broadcast medium, such as a radio program. The steps for a player may be as follows:

- 5 Step 1 Player enters guessed outcome (answer) as an SMS message on their SMS enabled mobile phone 4.

Example 1 MEL 2 BRI 3 BLD 4 PRM 5 NWC 6 DRAW 7 STH (which
10 represents Melbourne, Brisbane, Bulldogs, Parramatta, Newcastle
and Souths to win, and a draw between St George and Sharks).

Step 2 Player enters phone number

Step 3 Player sends the SMS

15

The SMS message or "response" of each player is forwarded to the receiving centre 6 and processed in a similar fashion to that described for the earlier embodiments. At the completion of the round, those who have correctly guessed the outcome of all seven games within the round may be sent a congratulatory message and/or eligible for a prize or to be
20 entered into a prize draw. Such a game may preferably be entered as a one-off game or alternatively be part of a larger tipping/guessing competition held over the whole season of the football competition. It may be that a player registers for the whole season and is eligible to play in all say, 26 rounds of a football competition.

25 Registration by a player to play the game for all twenty six rounds of the Australian National Rugby League football competition may be achieved by the player forwarding a registration SMS to an advertised number in a television or radio program, or via the internet or some other medium. A registered player may choose to receive a reminder SMS, shortly before the commencement of a football round, say six to twelve hours before
30 the start of the first football match in the round. The reminder may include details of the football round to assist the player in playing the game.

An advantage of playing games of the above mentioned type are that a number of viewers in one household may all be watching the same program, and each viewer may be able to participate in the game by answering questions utilising their own mobile phone 4. Furthermore, when viewers are watching the television program 1 away from their own home, they are still able to play the game as they are using their mobile phone 4 as the means of providing answers.

A more detailed description will now be given to the operation of the receiving centre 6 with reference to Fig. 2. The purpose of the receiving centre 6 is to provide a computer software database and communications system to enable the games of the type described earlier, which are interactively played over a broadcast medium involving a large number of players with SMS enabled wireless telecommunication devices. During the conduct of such games players provide their answers by using the SMS messaging system of their existing mobile telecommunications network 5. These SMS messages are collected, stored, processed and scored in receiving centre 6. Winners are selected from players with correct responses and the receiving centre 6 is able to provide details to the program 1 as well as return SMS messages to players with a thank you message, their score or prize confirmation. The system architecture of receiving centre 6 provides a mechanism by which game questions, answers and scoring logic can be constructed.

An SMS interface 20 interconnects the various mobile telecommunications networks 5 to the receiving centre 6. SMS interface 20 receives and dispatches SMS messages to and from a means for storage of responses 7, which is in the form of an SMS table that can be accessed by other parts of receiving centre 6 (shown in Fig. 1) for processing.

The receiving centre 6 allows for players to register for games in advance by using the Internet 21. This enables those conducting the game to collect player profile information. For some games or competitions it may be necessary to register prior to entry, in other cases it will be optional, where simply responding during the game being played will be sufficient, as the phone number of the mobile phone acts as a unique identifier. Where pre-registration exists the web based registration interface 22, may be used for advertising purposes. Information collected such as player's name, address, mobile phone number, e-mail address is stored in a user table 23 and may be kept either for many games or only one

game. Preferably only one Registration shall be accepted for each mobile phone-SMS number. E-mail or SMS messaging may preferably be used to remind registered players on the day the game is to be held.

- 5 The competition builder 24 has a simple web based interface by which the game operator can determine questions and answers for a given game. The game may belong to a series of games. The game operator may enter data into the question table 25, answer table 26, competition table 27 and series table 28.
- 10 Parser 29 reads data from player SMS messages (responses) in SMS table 7 and extracts important information, which is then accessed by other parts of the system. If allowed by the rules of the specific game or competition, players can be added to the user table 23 when their SMS “response” is received even if they have not registered in advance. If a rule of the specific game or competition requires players to have registered before
15 commencement of the game, the parser 29 rejects a response if the mobile phone number (unique identifier) associated with it is not already stored in the user table 23. The response for each player is stored in a response table 9. Each response may contain more than one answer. The parser 29 may preferably be capable of dealing with poorly formed responses. For instance a response to ten multiple-choice questions may be required in the sequence
20 “acbadcdaab”, however the parser 29 may be programmed to accept answers such as “acbadcdaab” or “acba dcdaab” etc.

Scorer 10 compares players responses in response table 9 against the answers in answer table 26 and scores are totalled and allocated in user entry table 30. Where games are
25 played over a series it may be necessary to provide a separate cumulative scorer (not shown) to calculate cumulative scores over multiple games belonging to the same series.

In games or competitions where many players score correctly, selector 31, which comprises a random number generator device, may be used to randomly choose a winner
30 or winners from players who have scored correctly.

The responder 32 gathers information and sends SMS messages to players via a second SMS table 17 and SMS interface 20. The operation of responder 32 may be game specific

and may be automatic or alternatively initiated by the game operator. The responder 32 may respond to all or selected players after the game. The response back to the player may contain the score and optionally the player's name and other information obtained during pre-registration.

5

Billers 33 is used to query message data to count how many SMS messages were received through the various mobile telecommunications networks 5. This information may be used in allocation of revenue generated by conducting the games.

10 Whilst the earlier described quiz show embodiment is described with a particular format involving a single SMS response to ten multiple choice questions, it should be understood that in other embodiments the games may have varied formats to those as described above. For instance, in relation to another quiz game format involving a plurality of questions, players may be asked to send an SMS answer response to a specific question and only be
15 allowed to participate further in the game if their answer is correct. Each subsequent question requiring a separate SMS response.

Furthermore, whilst the earlier described sports fixture game format is described with a particular format directed to a basketball match, the method and system of playing the
20 game in accordance with the present invention can be applied to any number of sports including, football, tennis, cricket, baseball, hockey and vary in format.

Whilst the above mentioned embodiments relate to "free to air" television as the broadcast medium, it should be understood that other broadcast mediums such as "pay" or "cable"
25 television, radio, print media, advertising displays including electronic displays, or Internet may be used.

It will be recognised by persons skilled in the art that numerous variations and modifications may be made to the invention without departing from the spirit and scope of
30 the invention.

The term "comprising" herein is used in the inclusive sense of having or including and not in the exclusive sense of consisting only of.

CLAIMS

1. A method of playing a game over a broadcast medium involving a large number of players with SMS enabled wireless telecommunication devices, the method
5 comprising the steps of:
 - (i) broadcasting of one or more questions over said broadcast medium to said players;
 - (ii) receiving and storing a response from each of said players via said SMS enabled wireless telecommunication devices in a database adapted to store at least a
10 unique identifier and details of said response for each player; and
 - (iii) processing said responses for allocation of a score to each player.
2. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one score of one of said players is broadcast via said broadcast medium.
15
3. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one score of one of said players is forwarded to the SMS enabled wireless telecommunication device of said player.
4. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein said game is a real time interactive
20 game.
5. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the broadcast medium is television.
6. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the unique identifier is a mobile phone
25 number.
7. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the game is a sports tipping game.
8. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the game is a trivia quiz game.
30

9. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the game is a general knowledge game.
10. A system for playing a game comprising:
- 5 (i) a broadcast medium;
- (ii) at least one SMS enabled wireless telecommunication device for operation by a player desiring to play said game;
- (iii) at least one computer database adapted to receive and store a unique identifier and details of a response from said player via said SMS enabled wireless telecommunication device, wherein said response is an answer to at least one question broadcast over said broadcast medium and said database processes said response for allocation of a score to said player.
- 10
11. The system as claimed in claim 10, wherein said score of said player is broadcast via said broadcast medium.
- 15
12. The system as claimed in claim 10, wherein said score of said player is forwarded to the SMS enabled wireless telecommunication device of said player.
13. The system as claimed in claim 10, wherein said game is a real time interactive game.
- 20
14. The system as claimed in claim 10, wherein the broadcast medium is television.
15. The system as claimed in claim 10, wherein the unique identifier is a mobile phone number.
- 25
16. The system as claimed in claim 10, wherein the game is a sports tipping game.
17. The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the game is a trivia quiz game.

18. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the game is a general knowledge game.

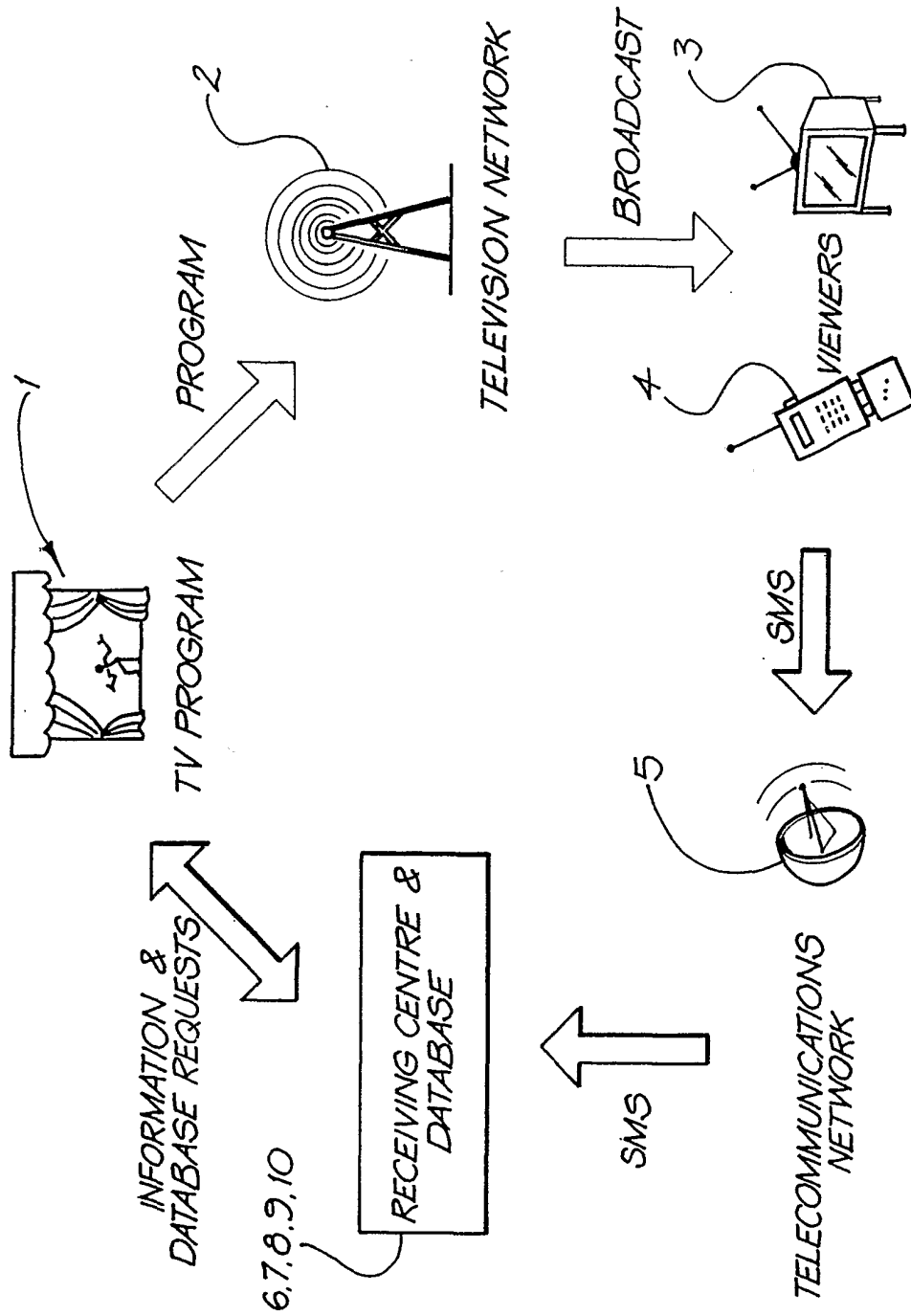


FIG. 1

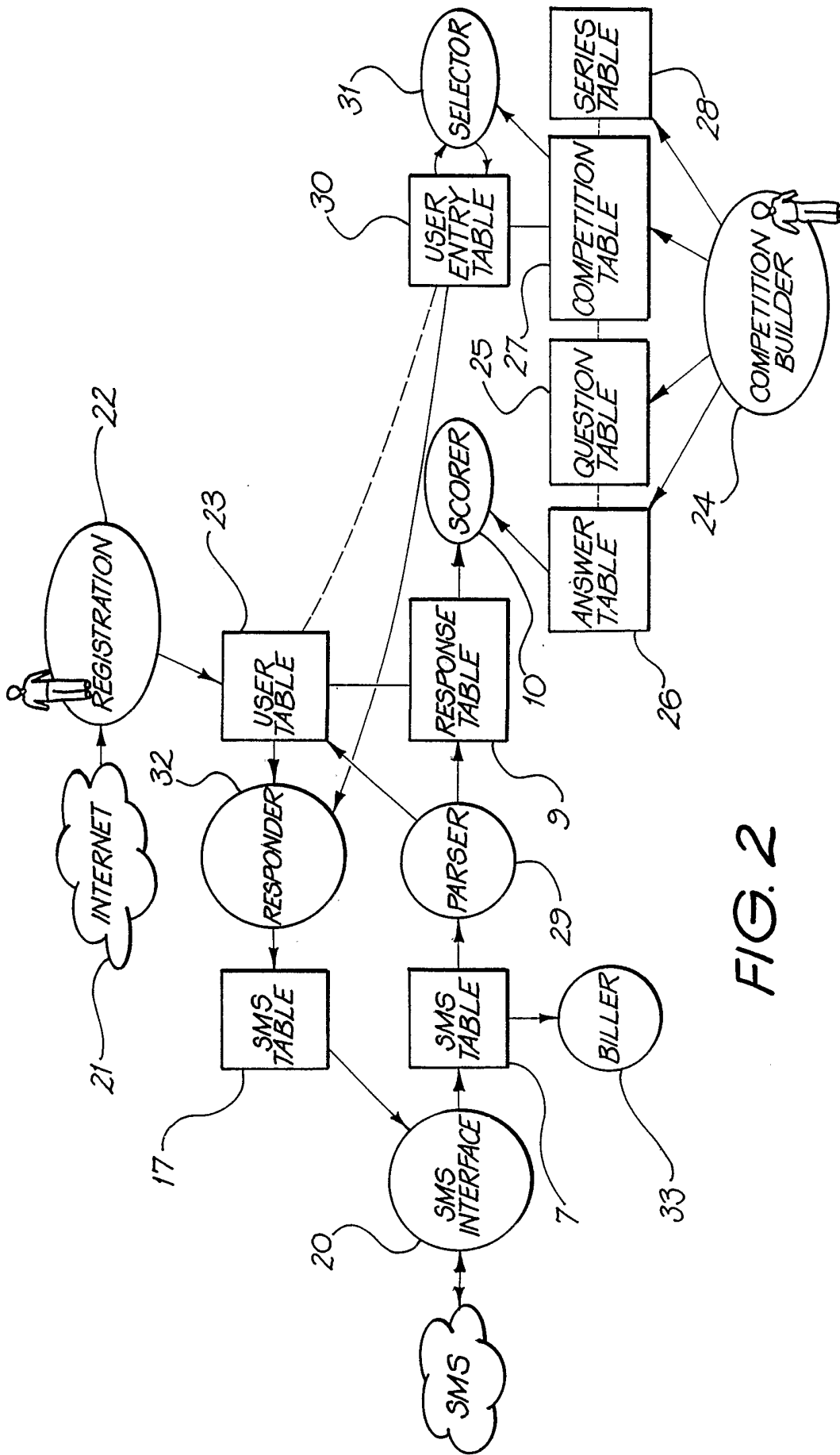


FIG. 2

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/PCT/AU02/00162

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

Int. Cl. ⁷: A63F 13/12, G06F 17/00, H04Q 7/32

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)

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 practicable, search terms used)

WPAT: sms, game, quiz, mobile, cellular phone and similar terms
USPTO

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
P, X	WO 01/43048 A1 (OY PRIKATTI AB) 14 June 2001 abstract, Fig 2, page 3, line 15 - page 7, line 3, page 8, line 1 - page 10, line 30	1, 3-5, 7, 10, 12-14, 16
Y	US 5999808 A (LADUE) 7 December 1999 abstract, Fig 1B, column 1, line 55 - column 4, line 8	1-18

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C See patent family annex

* Special categories of cited documents:	"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
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"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
"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date	"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
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"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search

7 March 2002

Date of mailing of the international search report

15 MAR 2002

Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU

AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE
PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA
E-mail address: pct@ipaaustralia.gov.au
Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929

Authorized officer

R.W.J. FINZI
Telephone No : (02) 6283

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/PCT/AU02/00162

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 5916024 A (VON KOHORN) 29 June 1999 Figs 1, 3 & 32, column 1, line 26 - column 10, line 48	1-18
A	EP 1066867 A2 (NOKIA CORPORATION) 10 January 2001 Fig 4, column 1, line 3 - column 4, line 2	
A	EP 1066868 A2 (NOKIA CORPORATION) 10 January 2001 Fig 3, column 1, line 3 - column 3, line 35	
A	DE 20014003 U1 (LASCZYK) 30 November 2000 abstract	
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No. PCT/PCT/AU02/00162
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This Annex lists the known "A" publication level patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The Australian Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent Document Cited in Search Report	Patent Family Member		
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END OF ANNEX