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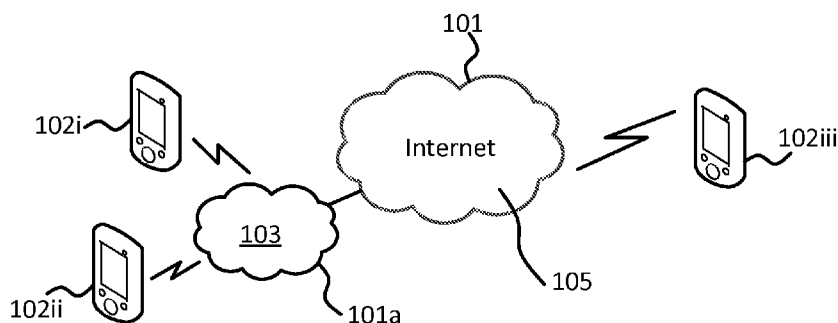


Figure 1

(57) **Abstract:** The disclosure relates to a first near-end terminal, the first near-end terminal being a mobile user terminal operable to establish voice or video calls with one or more far-end user terminals over a network. A detection module detects when the first near-end terminal is within a relative proximity of a second near-end terminal available to provide a call-related service in relation to one or more of the voice or video calls. A notification module outputs a notification to a user of the first near-end terminal based on said detection, notifying the user of the call-related service. In response to said detection, a configuration module is operable to store a configuration configuring the first near-end terminal as having the second near-end terminal identified for later provision of the call-related service.



PROVIDING NOTIFICATIONS OF CALL-RELATED SERVICES

BACKGROUND

[0001] VoIP (voice over IP) allows users to make voice or video calls over packet-based
5 networks such as the Internet. Traditionally VoIP (voice over IP) calls have been accessed
using desktop or laptop computers, but increasingly nowadays the user tends to have a
number of devices around the home or office that can potentially be used in VoIP calls or
other such packet-based telephony.

[0002] However, organizing or coordinating the use of these different devices is not
10 necessarily straightforward for the user, or user may not even be aware when different
devices are available to provide VoIP services or the like.

SUMMARY

[0003] According to one aspect, the disclosure herein relates to an apparatus for use in
relation to a first near-end terminal, the first near-end terminal being a mobile user
15 terminal such as a mobile phone, tablet or laptop computer, operable to establish voice or
video calls with one or more far-end user terminals over a network, e.g. VoIP calls. In
embodiments the apparatus may be implemented at the first near-end user terminal, or at
an intermediate network element such as a server, or router or access point of a local
wireless network. The apparatus comprises a detection module, a notification module and
20 a configuration module (which in embodiments may be implemented as portions of code
arranged for execution on one or more processors of the apparatus). These are arranged to
operate as follows.

[0004] The detection module detects when the first near-end terminal is within a relative
proximity of a second near-end terminal which is available to provide a call-related service
25 in relation to one or more of the voice or video calls. For example the detection may be
made on the basis that the first and second near-end terminals are both found on the same
local network; e.g. same wireless local area network such as a Wi-Fi network, or same
wireless ad-hoc network such as a Bluetooth network. Other options for detecting
proximity are also possible, as will be discussed in more detail later. As for the call-related
30 service, in embodiments for example, this may comprise the possibility of using the
second near-end terminal as a media end-point for one of the calls established from the
first near-end terminal, so that the second near-end terminal plays out or generates at least
one audio or video stream of the call while the first terminal controls the call and/or plays
out one or more other audio or video streams of the same call. E.g. the second near-end

terminal could comprise another mobile terminal such as a phone, tablet or laptop for use as a remote microphone or camera; or a terminal such as a desktop computer, television, set-top box or stereo or hi-fi unit for use to play out the audio or video of the call.

[0005] Based on the detection, the notification module outputs a notification to a user of

5 the first near-end terminal, notifying the user of the call-related service. In embodiments the notification may prompt the user as to whether he or she wishes to accept use of the

call-related service from the second near-end terminal (e.g. whether he or she would like to have another terminal like a tablet, TV, etc. set for use as a secondary media end-point to play out or generate the voice or video of the call). Further, in response to the detection

10 (and assuming any user prompt is accepted), the configuration module is operable to store

a configuration setting configuring the first near-end terminal as having the second near-end terminal identified for later provision of the call-related service, i.e. to store the

configuration setting in a non-volatile storage medium for use of the service on another occasion. In an example use case, this means the user and his or her first (mobile) terminal

15 can depart from the proximity of the second terminal (e.g. leaving the house when the second terminal is a household appliance like a TV), then return and already have the second terminal pre-configured at the first terminal for use in subsequent calls.

[0006] In this way, the user may be notified when call-related services are available from one or more other nearby terminals, while the configuration module handles the

20 storing of the relevant setting allowing the call-related service to be pre-configured for use whenever the user later wishes to conduct a call, without having to re-configure on each occasion.

[0007] This Summary is provided to introduce a selection of concepts in a simplified form that are further described below in the Detailed Description. This Summary is not

25 intended to identify key features or essential features of the claimed subject matter, nor is it intended to be used to limit the scope of the claimed subject matter. Nor is the claimed subject matter limited to implementations that solve any or all of the disadvantages noted in the Background section.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

30 [0008] For a better understanding of the present disclosure and to show how in embodiments it may be put into effect, reference is made by way of example to the accompanying drawings in which:

[0009] Figure 1 is a schematic representation of a mobile communication system,

[0010] Figure 2 is a schematic block diagram of a mobile user terminal, and

[0011] Figure 3 is a flow chart schematically illustrating a method of providing notifications.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0012] According to embodiments disclosed herein, a notification is provided to a device within the proximity of another device. The notification may be intended for a particular device, user or type of device. The notification may serve to either announce a resource or provide a user defined message (e.g. notes or announcements). The notification may be displayed to the user when the second device is detected, or alternatively only when the user performs an action such as initiating or starting a call.

[0013] Embodiments may be carried out as follows: 1) detect that the first device is co-located with a second device – this may be achieved for example by determining that the first and second devices are connected to the same network; and 2) responsive to detecting that the devices are co-located, activating a service to the user and optionally providing a notification to the user that the service is available.

[0014] The teachings disclosed herein may be implemented in a number of scenarios, for example:

I) a mobile computing and/or communication device (e.g. phone) may be offered access to a service provided by a TV or games console, such as an offer of consuming the larger, more appropriate screen to render incoming video;

II) a mobile computing device might offer its local/mobile services such as audio capture to a fixed device (e.g. to use the mobile device as a remote microphone); or

III) an anchor device such as an ATA (analogue telephone adaptor) might offer access to a locally available service (such as incoming phone calls rendered at the ATA).

[0015] Figure 1 gives a schematic example of a communication system in which embodiments disclosed herein may be deployed. The system comprises a first near-end device in the form of a first mobile user terminal 102i and a second near-end device in the form of a second user terminal 102ii, which may be a mobile or fixed terminal. Each of the user terminals 102 may be any user terminal capable of electronic communications, such as a mobile phone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer, TV set, set-top box, games console, etc.

[0016] The system also comprises a packet-switched network 101 which may take the form of a wide-area inter network such as the Internet, or alternatively a private network. The packet-switched network 101 may comprises a sub network 101a, e.g. a wireless local area network (WLAN), comprising wireless network equipment 103 by which the mobile

user terminals 102 can access the wireless sub network 101a and the wider network 101. For example the wireless equipment may comprise a wireless access point such as a wi-fi access point (e.g. providing coverage within a café, bar, shop, mall or other retail complex, or railway or bus station, airport or other transport hub); or a wireless router providing
5 coverage in the home (e.g. covering a single home or an apartment block or complex) or office (e.g. covering a single office or company or a plurality of offices or companies within a block or complex).

[0017] The packet-switched network 101 also comprises other network equipment 105 such as wired switches and routers, and/or other wired or wireless sub networks, via which
10 one or more further, far-end user terminals 102iii may connect to the wider network 101. The first (near-end) user terminal 102i is arranged to conduct a voice or video call with one or more such far-end user terminals 102iii over the sub-network 101a (e.g. wireless LAN) and wider packet-based network 101 (e.g. internet).

[0018] Further, the first near-end user terminal 102i is configured to detect presence of
15 one or more second near-end terminals 102ii on the same wireless LAN or other such local or sub network. In this way the first and second near-end terminals may be determined to be approximately co-located, e.g. as they share the same home or office network.

[0019] In some alternative or additional embodiments, one or both of the first and
20 second mobile user terminals 102i, 102ii may be equipped with at least one geographic location technology for determining the location of that mobile user terminal, in terms of geographic position relative to the surface of the earth; for example, a satellite based positioning system such as GPS (Global Positioning System, including potential variants such as assisted GPS or differential GPS), GLONASS (Global Navigation Satellite
25 System) or Galileo; and/or trilateration (or more generally multilateration) relative to a plurality of different wireless base stations or access points having known locations; and/or a technique based on detecting signal strength relative to a known base station or access point. In another example, one or both of the first and second mobile user terminals 102i, 102ii may be registered with a location service allowing look-up of their geographic
30 position from a server mapping device identifiers (e.g. IP addresses) to locations.

[0020] At least one of the second near-end terminals 102ii is operable to be involved in the call established by the first near-end user terminal 102i with the far-end terminal 102iii, by providing a call-related service such as acting as a media end-point. In some example use cases, the first near-end terminal 102i may be a laptop, tablet or desktop

computer and the second near-end terminal 102ii may be a mobile phone available to provide the service of providing a remote microphone or camera, to capture a voice or video stream of the call. In another example, the first near-end terminal 102i may be a mobile phone and the second near-end terminal 102ii may be a tablet, laptop, desktop or TV available to provide the service of playing out a video stream of the call.

[0021] Figure 2 is a schematic block diagram of a mobile user terminal 102 as might be instantiated by the first user terminal 102i. The mobile user terminal 102 comprises a processor 204 in the form of a central processing unit (CPU) comprising one or more cores or execution units, and storage 202 in the form of a memory comprising one or more memory devices comprising one or more storage media (e.g. a magnetic storage medium such as a hard disk or electronic storage such as EEPROM or “flash” memory). The mobile user terminal 102 also comprises one or more wireless transceivers, in embodiments comprising a cellular transceiver 206 for connecting to the packet-switched network 101 via a mobile cellular network such as a 3GPP network (parts of which may form part of the equipment 105 of the packet-switched network 101), and/or a local wireless transceiver 108 such as a wi-fi transceiver for connecting to the packet switched network 101 via one or more wireless access points 103 of one or more sub networks 101a of the packet-switched network (again at least in part forming some of the equipment of the packet-switched network 101).

[0022] The memory 202 stores computer-readable code arranged to be executed on the processor 204. This comprises a VoIP or other communication client application 212 comprising a call engine 213, a detection module 214, a user interface comprising a notification module 215, and a configuration module 216. The call engine 213 comprises a call set-up protocol and is thereby arranged to establish VoIP calls (or other packet-based calls) with the far-end terminal 102iii. The detection module 214 is arranged to determine whether the first and second near-end terminals 102i, 102ii are within a suitable proximity for provision of one or more call-related services from the second terminal 102ii to the first near-end terminal 102i, and to detect one or more capabilities of the second-near-end terminal 102ii to determine whether the second terminal is operable to provide any such call-related services. In embodiments this is performed by detecting the second near-end terminal on the same local sub-network 101a, e.g. via local transceiver 108. The notification module 215 is arranged to provide notifications to the user of the first terminal 102i, e.g. displayed on a screen of the first terminal 102i, if proximity of one or more call-related services from one or more other terminals is detected by the detection module 214.

The configuration module is arranged to store a configuration setting of the first terminal 102i in a non-volatile storage unit, e.g. in the storage 202 of the first terminal 102i, to thereby set the first near-end user terminal 102i as being configured for using of any detected call-related services.

5 [0023] In order to determine whether the first and second near-end terminals 102i, 102ii are suitably co-located, it is possible to exploit knowledge of the network to which both the terminals 102i, 102ii are connected. That is, the system exploits the fact that at least some portion of the network 101a provides an infrastructure that is fixed, or at least can be assumed to be substantially fixed relative to the first and second terminals 102i, 102ii. For
10 example if it is known that the first terminal is substantially co-located with a part of the network 101a such as a sub network 101a corresponding to an access point or router 103, and the second terminal 102ii is also known to be co-located with that same sub network 101a, and it is assumed that the sub-network provides a fixed frame of reference, then it can be determined appropriate to consider the first terminal and second terminals 102i,
15 102ii effectively co-located.

[0024] In an example use case, a user has both a mobile phone 102i and a household or office appliance such as a desktop computer, TV or games console 102i connected to a home router 103. The two devices may be able to find each other because they are on the same local network 101a, e.g. same home or office wireless LAN. Further, the first device
20 102i can exploit the fact that the router 103 of sub-network 101a can be assumed to be a fixed reference point for the two devices, and thereby determine that it is substantially co-located with the second device 102ii (e.g. in the same house, apartment or office).

[0025] Note that in embodiments, the second near-end terminal need not comprise a full instance of the communication client 212. The complementary application on the second
25 near-end terminal 102ii can be a “stripped down” or “dumb” version of the client that does not comprise call set-up protocol and is not in itself capable of establishing a call with the far-end terminal 102iii, and may in fact have minimal capability. Instead, the dumb client on the second near-end terminal 102ii may comprise, in the least, a module for performing the relevant call-related service, e.g. playing out audio or video streamed to it over the
30 local network 101a, or providing captured audio or video over the local network 101a; and for communicating its presence and available service(s) on the local network 101a.

[0026] Figure 3 shows a schematic flow chart of a method that may be implemented by the client application 212 run on the first terminal 102i.

[0027] At Step S10, the detection module 214 on the first near-end terminal checks whether it can detect any second-near end terminal 102ii within a suitable proximity for providing call related services (more detail for implementing this will be discussed below). If so, the detection module 214 determines an identifier of the second near-end terminal 102ii, e.g. an address identifying it on the local network 101a or the wider network 101. At step S15, the detection module 214 also detects the capabilities of the detected terminal 102ii to determine whether it can provide any suitable call-related services, e.g. whether it can act as remote microphone, or whether it can provide a screen for playing out video of a call. For example this may comprise querying the second near-end terminal 102ii over the local network 101a, or detecting a message advertised by the second near-end terminal 102ii over the local network 101a. Thus according to step S10 and S15, the detection module 214 is able to discover at least an indication that the second terminal 102ii is nearby, an identifier of that second terminal 102ii (e.g. its address), and an indication of one or more capabilities of the second terminal 102ii (i.e. what service or services it can provide). The indication of the capability may comprise or include an indication of what type of device the second terminal 102ii is, e.g. phone, tablet, laptop, TV, games console etc.

[0028] At step S20, if one such service from a second near-end terminal was detected, the notification module 215 automatically outputs a notification to the user, e.g. on a screen of the first terminal 102i. The notification may indicate the second terminal's identity, type, the service and/or the proximity. In some embodiments the notification may comprise a user defined element, defined by a user of the first and/or second near-end terminal 102i, 102ii (e.g. "Hi, this is my device, Dave"). In some further embodiments the notification may be dependent on what type of device the first terminal 102i is, or what type of device the second terminal 102ii is, or on the combination of the types of the first and second terminals 102i, 102ii. E.g. the notification that a TV set is available for playing out the video of a call may be more emphatic when the first terminal 102i is a mobile phone (having a small screen) than if it is a tablet or laptop (having a larger screen), or alternatively the notification may only be displayed on condition that the first terminal 102i is a certain type of terminal like a mobile phone and not if it is another type like a tablet or laptop.

[0029] Further, the notification may prompt the user of the first near-end terminal 102i as to whether they wish to accept the offer of the call-related service from the second near-

end terminal 102ii. At step S30 the notification module 215 receives the user's selection in response to this prompt and determines whether it is affirmative.

[0030] If not, at step S40 the configuration module 216 stores the user's selection not to accept the service as a configuration setting in a non-volatile storage unit such as the

5 storage 202 on the first terminal 102i itself. If the user does select to accept the service on the other hand, the configuration module 216 instead stores this selection as a

configuration setting in the non-volatile storage. The first near-end terminal 102i is thus configured to be able to make use of the call-related service offered by the second near-

end terminal 102ii. The configuration may be stored indefinitely (e.g. until the user

10 cancels the setting or resets the device) so as to remain valid not just at the time the second

near-end terminal is detected (at which time the user may not wish to make a call), but to

pre-configure the first terminal 102i with the setting for use of the service on one or more

future occasions. For example, if the second terminal 102i is a household appliance on a home network and the user then leaves the house and returns later, the setting remains

15 stored to continue to indicate the user's selection if he or she then makes or accepts a call at that later time.

[0031] As well as the user selection itself, in embodiments the configuration setting comprises one or more of:

- an identifier of the accepted second terminal 102ii (e.g. its address on the local

20 network 101a or wider network 101);

- a name for the second terminal 102ii mapped to its identifier (e.g. entered by the user of the first terminal 102i or communicated from the second terminal 102ii);

- an indication of when or in what circumstance(s) the second terminal 102ii is expected to be in proximity (e.g. an identifier of the local network 101a it was

25 originally found on, e.g. an SSID); and/or

- an indication of the second terminal's capability or capabilities (what service or services it can provide);

- any other condition associated with use of the service (e.g. a user defined or preconfigured condition such as only when the first and second terminals are a

30 certain combination of device types, only at certain times of day, only if the call is a certain type of call such as a video call, only when involved in a multiparty call with more than two participants, etc.).

[0032] After the setting has been stored, time passes. On some later occasion, at step T10 the user decides to conduct a voice or video call (e.g. after going out for the day with his or her first, mobile terminal 102i while the second terminal 102ii remains at home, and then later returning home so the two terminals return to proximity). The call engine 213 on the first-near-end terminal 102i establishes the call with the far-end terminal 102iii. “Establishing” here may comprise the user of the first terminal 102i making an outgoing call, or accepting an incoming call.

[0033] At this time, in response to the user making or accepting the call, at step T20 the configuration module 216 retrieves the configuration setting, comprising the user’s prior selection from the time the second near-end terminal 102ii was originally detected and any of the above additional pieces of data.

[0034] Upon retrieving the setting, the detection module 214 may perform a check to confirm whether the first-near end terminal 102i is currently in the proximity of the second near-end terminal 120ii, for example to check that the first terminal is back on the local network 101a (e.g. based on the SSID) and/or whether it can see the second terminal 102ii on the local network (e.g. based on its address). However in embodiments, as long as the second terminal 102ii is there, the detection module 214 does not need to go through the process of detecting the second terminal’s capabilities again as it already has this information stored in the configuration setting.

[0035] Assuming the two near-end terminals 102i, 102ii are still or again in proximity, in some embodiments the detection module 214 may also provide the user with another prompt to confirm he or she wants to use the service of the second terminal 102ii on this particular occasion. However, this can be a simplified prompt compared with the first prompt at steps S20-S30, as it can already be assumed the user has already understood the nature of the service and has accepted it for potential use. For example when the first terminal 102i rings upon an incoming call, the user could just be presented with two large buttons, one saying “answer with this phone” and the other saying “answer using TV”, or the like; whereas at step S20 the notification would have explained the nature of the decision in more detail. Alternatively, the use of the second terminal’s service could be completely automatic upon making or answering a call. For example, as long as the user has pre-selected it and the detection module 214 finds current proximity of the second terminal 102ii, the configuration module may automatically select the use of the service without prompt; or may automatically select it in additional dependence on any condition forming part of the retrieved configuration setting (e.g. only if the call is a video call, etc.).

[0036] In another alternative implementation, the user is not notified at step S20, when the second near-end terminal 102ii is originally detected. Instead the configuration module 216 may automatically store the configuration at the time without prompting the user for a selection, and the step of notifying can be performed at step T10, when the user makes or receives a call. In this case the user may be prompted at that point whether he or she wishes to use the service from the second terminal 102ii.

[0037] At step T30 the first near-end terminal 102i then begins to conduct the call with the far-end user terminal 102iii, using the service of the second near-end terminal 102ii based on the configuration setting retrieved from the non-volatile storage. As mentioned, in embodiments this may comprise the second terminal 102ii being used to play out an audio or video stream of the call. In embodiments this may be achieved by receiving the stream at the first terminal 102i from the far-end terminal 102iii over the wider network 101, and forwarding the stream from the first terminal 102i to the second terminal 102ii over the local network. Alternatively the first terminal 102i could instruct the far-end terminal 102iii to redirect the stream directly to the second terminal 102ii. In another situation, the second terminal 102ii is used to generate (e.g. capture) an audio or video stream of the call. In embodiments this may be achieved by receiving the stream at the first terminal 102i from the second terminal 102ii over the local network 101a, and forwarding the stream from the first terminal 102i to the far-end terminal 102iii over the wider network. Alternatively the first terminal 102i could instruct the second terminal 102ii to redirect the stream directly to the far-end terminal 102iii. Either way, while the second terminal 102ii handles one or more of the streams, the first terminal 102i retains possession of call signalling and/or continues to generate or play out or more other streams of the call.

[0038] In another embodiment, the second near-end terminal 102ii comprises an analogue telephone adaptor (ATA), the network 101 comprises an analogue telephone network, and the far-end user terminal 102iii is an analogue telephone. The ATA is a device which plugs into a more traditional analogue telephone at the near end and connects it to the packet-switched network 101 (typically the Internet). In this example, the call-related service comprises use of the ATA to render a packet-based call received over the network 101 and transfer it to the first near-end terminal 102i.

[0039] The following now describes in more detail some examples for determining proximity between the first near-end terminal 102i and the second near-end terminal 102ii, e.g. as implemented in the detection module 214 and at step S10.

[0040] Where two devices 102i, 102ii share a common external IP address (e.g. public IP, or are on the same private network in the context of IPv6) it may be assumed that they are on the same network. For a consumer this means that they are likely to be co-located geographically.

5 [0041] Where communication can be established between these devices (whether directly or with cloud assistance), this may provide a further validation in that these devices may be considered to have a degree of 'implicit trust' (although to a lesser degree in the case where cloud assistance is required). For example in the case where a home shares a common internet connection it is possible (and increasingly likely) that there
10 might be devices sharing a common network.

Consider:-

(A) where a direct single hop IP connection can be made then likely they are on the same network and segment,

(B) where the devices share the same subnetwork (addressing space) then likely they are
15 on the same network and segment,

(C) where the devices connect to a device with a common MAC interface address then likely they are on the same network and segment

(in these cases with a high degree of probability); or

(D) Where the devices are able to connect to each other (multi-hop), but directly they are
20 likely on the same network – e.g. two devices on a small wireless LAN having two routers

(in this case with a lower degree of probability).

[0042] One or more of these tests may also be combined with a shared token (either common user identity, passcode (as with Bluetooth), cryptographic key or other shared
25 element – such shared key being prompted as a result of detection of any of the criteria (A) to (D) above; then it can be assumed that there is a trust relationship.

[0043] There is an additional option which is available to further refine the relative location dimension – which is the time taken for a packet to traverse the network between the two devices. In this context:-

30 (E) a simple RTT (round trip time) between the two devices provides a proxy for distance;

(F) this may be further refined by making allowances for intermediate devices (e.g. routers, switches etc.) – who's impact can be calculated; and/or

(G) the relative difference in time in RTT between the two devices and a fixed third point (assuming a common egress/ingress to the shared network defined above there is no

real point in triangulating using two fixed external points) where a common RTT would increase probability of co-location;

[0044] Additionally, the fact that there may be multiple shared network paths between two devices using different network media, i.e. different types of access technology. For example wired, wireless LAN, personal area network (e.g. Bluetooth) and potentially other techniques might be used to further increase certainty. For instance:

(H) if the two devices can hear each other via an ad-hoc access technology like Bluetooth), this may indicate they are more likely to be close to one another than if only able to connect on the WLAN; or

(I) if the two devices are in range of one another via an ad-hoc access technology like Bluetooth, and are on the same WLAN (e.g. Wi-Fi), this may indicate they are more likely to be close to one another than if only able to connect on the WLAN.

[0045] In yet another embodiment, the first terminal 102i is arranged to determine its geographic location using a geographic location technology, such as GPS or another satellite based location technology, or such as cell triangulation. The first terminal may then determine whether its geographic location is within an geographic area associated with the second terminal 102ii, for example as follows.

(J) The first device may determine its own geographic coordinates (e.g. GPS coordinates) and query the geographic coordinates (e.g. GPS coordinates) of the second device, e.g. querying that device for a read it has itself taken. The first device may then determine whether the two devices are within a threshold range based on these geographic coordinates.

(K) Alternatively if the second device has a fixed location registered with a server of a location service, e.g. is a household appliance, the first device may look-up the geographic location of the second device, e.g. to find its postal address. The first device may then determine whether its geographic coordinates (e.g. GPS coordinates) are within a geographic area associated with the location returned from the location service, e.g. whether within an area on a map associated with the postal address.

[0046] In yet another alternative, it is possible for devices to make a determination using environmental data (which could be compared in the cloud, or fingerprints of the environment exchanged between the devices) – an example here would be that both devices sample the sound from their surroundings by sampling the sound the pattern of sound can be compared using peaks and troughs in sound and an accurate time reference to correlate the ‘environments’ around the devices. Alternatively the second device could

introduce a sound into the environment which the first device attempts to detect, or vice versa. If the one device can hear the other, they may be determined to be co-located.

[0047] Thus in embodiments, proximity between a first user terminal and a second terminal may be determined based on sound data common to the first and second

5 terminals, and detected by one or both of the two user terminals – either a sound profile of the environment in which the first and second mobile user terminals are located, or a sound deliberately emitted into the environment by one of the first and second terminals to be detected by the other.

(L) In the first case, each of the first and second user captures sound data from its

10 surroundings and the sound data from the two are compared (at either terminal or another network element such as a server). The sound could be an incidental ambient sound such as background music or background conversation, or a sound deliberately introduced into the environment by another element for that purpose, e.g. a sound signature emitted by the router or access point. If the sound detected by the first and
15 second terminals is found to be sufficiently similar, e.g. based on a correlation or pattern matching algorithm, then it may be determined that the terminals are likely to be in the same environment (e.g. same room) and therefore in effect co-located to within an acceptable degree of proximity.

(M) In the second case one of the first and second terminals deliberately emits a sound
20 signature into the environment, and the other of the first and second terminals determines whether it can detect the signature, e.g. by matching to a predetermined instance of the signature stored at that terminal. If so it may be determined that the terminals are likely to be in the same environment (e.g. same room) and therefore in effect co-located to within an acceptable degree of proximity.

25 [0048] In embodiments any one or a combination of the above tests may be applied. The tests may be determined for example by the decision module 114 of the first terminal 102i querying the second terminal 102ii, or by querying a network element such as a router, access point or server which has record of the relevant information about the second terminal terminal (e.g. the fact that it connects to the same sub network, and/or its IP
30 address, etc.).

[0049] It will be appreciated that the above embodiments have been described only by way of example.

[0050] In alternative implementations, any or all of the detection module 214, notification module 215 and/or configuration module could be implemented at network

element such as a server. For example the server may be arranged to receive information such as the IP addresses of the first and second devices 102i, 102ii or an identifier of the sub-network to which they connect (e.g. an ID of the access point or router 103), and to determine proximity centrally. The determination may then be sent to the first terminal 102i, or the server may also be configured to generate the notification at the server and send that to the first terminal. Further, the configuration setting may be stored at a server, and any determination resulting from those configurations communicated from there to the first terminal 102i. Alternatively any or all of these functions could be implemented at the router or access point 103. Further, the above has been described in terms of software modules 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, but it is not excluded that any of these modules is implemented partially or wholly in dedicated hardware.

[0051] Generally, any of the functions described herein can be implemented using software, firmware, hardware (e.g., fixed logic circuitry), or a combination of these implementations. The terms “module,” “functionality,” “component” and “logic” as used herein generally represent software, firmware, hardware, or a combination thereof. In the case of a software implementation, the module, functionality, or logic represents program code that performs specified tasks when executed on a processor (e.g. CPU or CPUs). The program code can be stored in one or more computer readable memory devices. The features of the techniques described below are platform-independent, meaning that the techniques may be implemented on a variety of commercial computing platforms having a variety of processors.

[0052] For example, the user terminals may also include an entity (e.g. software) that causes hardware of the user terminals to perform operations, e.g., processors functional blocks, and so on. For example, the user terminals may include a computer-readable medium that may be configured to maintain instructions that cause the user terminals, and more particularly the operating system and associated hardware of the user terminals to perform operations. Thus, the instructions function to configure the operating system and associated hardware to perform the operations and in this way result in transformation of the operating system and associated hardware to perform functions. The instructions may be provided by the computer-readable medium to the user terminals through a variety of different configurations.

[0053] One such configuration of a computer-readable medium is signal bearing medium and thus is configured to transmit the instructions (e.g. as a carrier wave) to the computing device, such as via a network. The computer-readable medium may also be

configured as a computer-readable storage medium and thus is not a signal bearing medium. Examples of a computer-readable storage medium include a random-access memory (RAM), read-only memory (ROM), an optical disc, flash memory, hard disk memory, and other memory devices that may use magnetic, optical, and other techniques to store instructions and other data.

[0054] Although the subject matter has been described in language specific to structural features and/or methodological acts, it is to be understood that the subject matter defined in the appended claims is not necessarily limited to the specific features or acts described above. Rather, the specific features and acts described above are disclosed as example forms of implementing the claims.

CLAIMS

1. Apparatus for use in relation to a first near-end terminal, the first near-end terminal being a mobile user terminal operable to establish voice or video calls with one or more far-end user terminals over a network, the apparatus comprising:

a detection module arranged to detect when the first near-end terminal is within a relative proximity of a second near-end terminal available to provide a call-related service in relation to one or more of the voice or video calls;

a notification module arranged to output a notification to a user of the first near-end terminal based on said detection, notifying the user of the call-related service; and

a configuration module operable, in response to said detection, to store a configuration configuring the first near-end terminal as having the second near-end terminal identified for later provision of the call-related service.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the notification module is arranged to automatically output the notification when the first and second near-end terminals are detected to be within said proximity.

3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the notification prompts the user for a user selection as to whether to accept use of the call-related service, and the configuration module is arranged to store said setting on condition of said user selection being affirmative.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein the configuration module is arranged to automatically retrieve the configuration setting for making use of the call-related service after the first terminal and/or second near-end terminal has departed from and then returned to said proximity

5. The apparatus of any preceding claim, wherein the configuration module is arranged to automatically retrieve the configuration setting when the user later makes one of the voice or video calls, thereby making use of the call-related service in the call.

6. The apparatus of any preceding claim, wherein the second near-end terminal is a user terminal providing a media end-point, and wherein the call-related service comprises use of the second near-end terminal to play out or generate at least one of an audio or video stream of the call,

7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein while the second near-end terminal plays out or generates the at least one stream, the first near-end terminal plays out or generates at least one other audio or video stream of the call and/or continues to control the call.

8. The apparatus of any preceding claim, wherein the detection module is arranged to detect when the first and second near-end terminals are within said proximity based on one or more of:

the first and second near-end terminals both being connected to a same local network;

the first and second near-end terminals sharing an address space being a subset of addresses of a packet-switched network;

the first and second near-end terminals both connecting to a same network interface address of an intermediate network equipment;

the first and second near-end terminals being separated by no more than a threshold number of hops;

a transmission time of a packet travelling between the first and second near-end terminals; and/or

a type of access technology currently available for communicating between the first and second near-end terminals.

9. The apparatus of any preceding claim, wherein the detection module is arranged to detect when the first and second near-end terminals are within said proximity based on: using a satellite-based positioning system or other geographic localization technology to detect that a geographic location of the first near-end terminal is within a proximity of a geographic location of the second near-end user terminal.

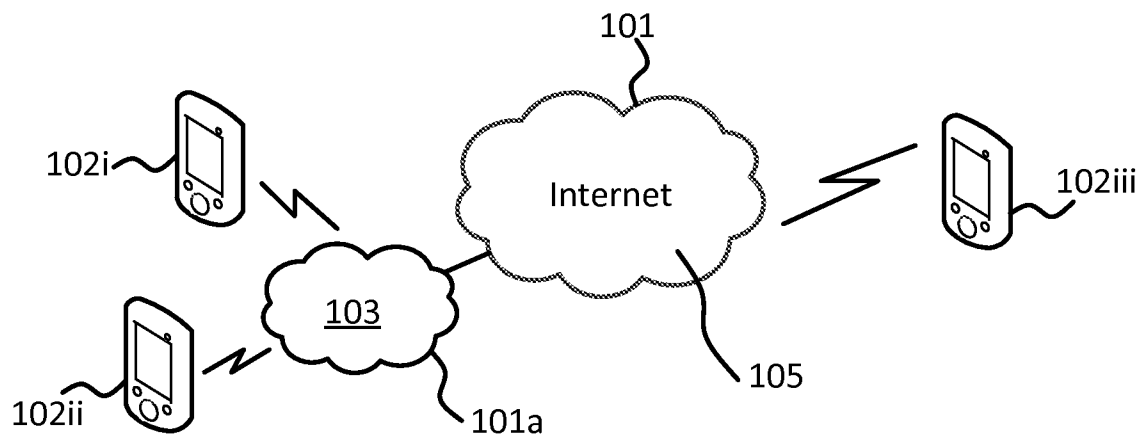
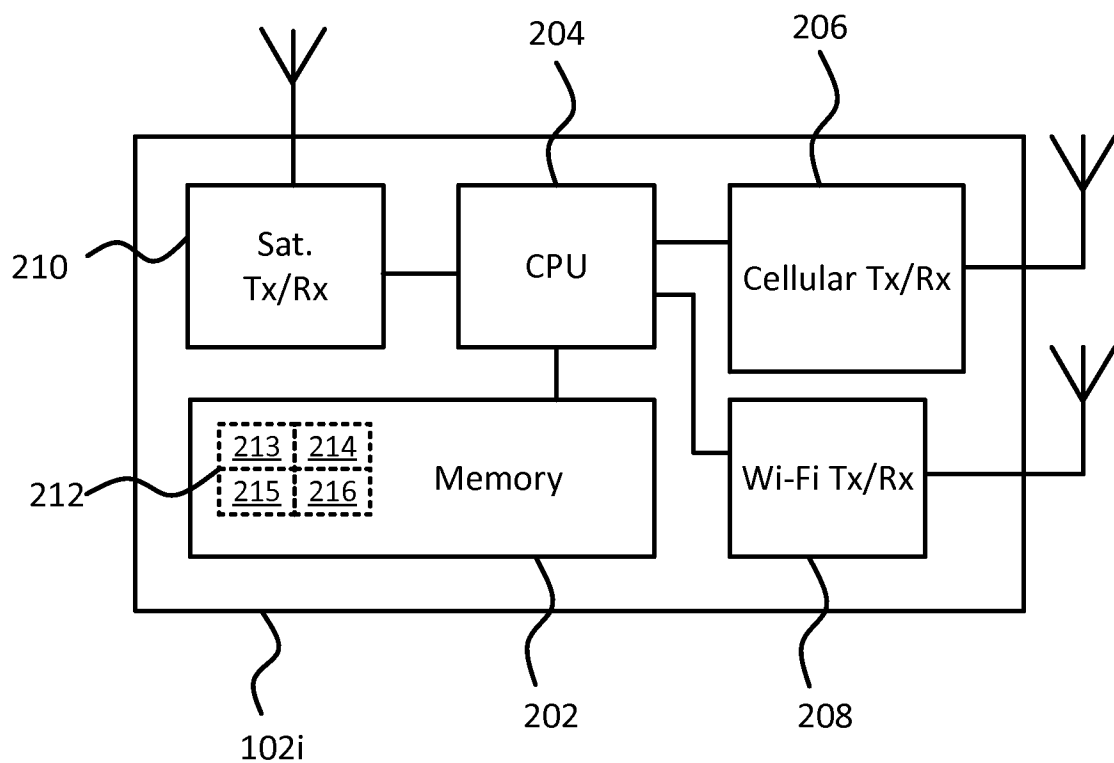
10. A computer program product for use in relation to a first near-end terminal, the first near-end terminal being a mobile user terminal operable to establish voice or video calls with one or more far-end user terminals over a network, the computer program product being embodied on a computer readable storage medium and comprising code configured so as when executed on one or more processors to perform operations of:

detecting when the first near-end terminal is within a relative proximity of a second near-end terminal available to provide a call-related service in relation to one or more of the voice or video calls;

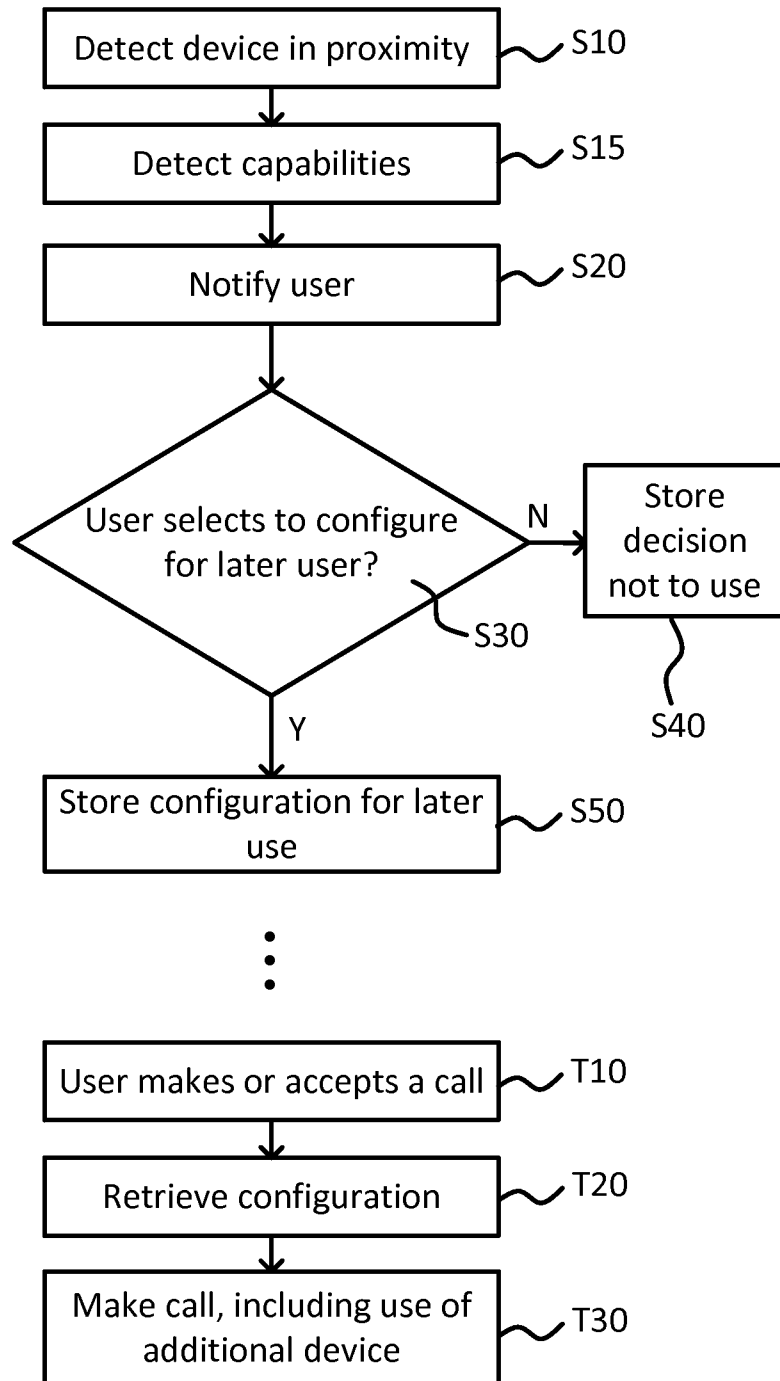
based on said detection, outputting a notification to a user of the first near-end terminal notifying the user of the call-related service; and

in response to said detection, storing a configuration setting configuring the first near-end terminal as having the second-near end terminal identified for later provision of the call-related service.

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**Figure 1****Figure 2**

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**Figure 3**