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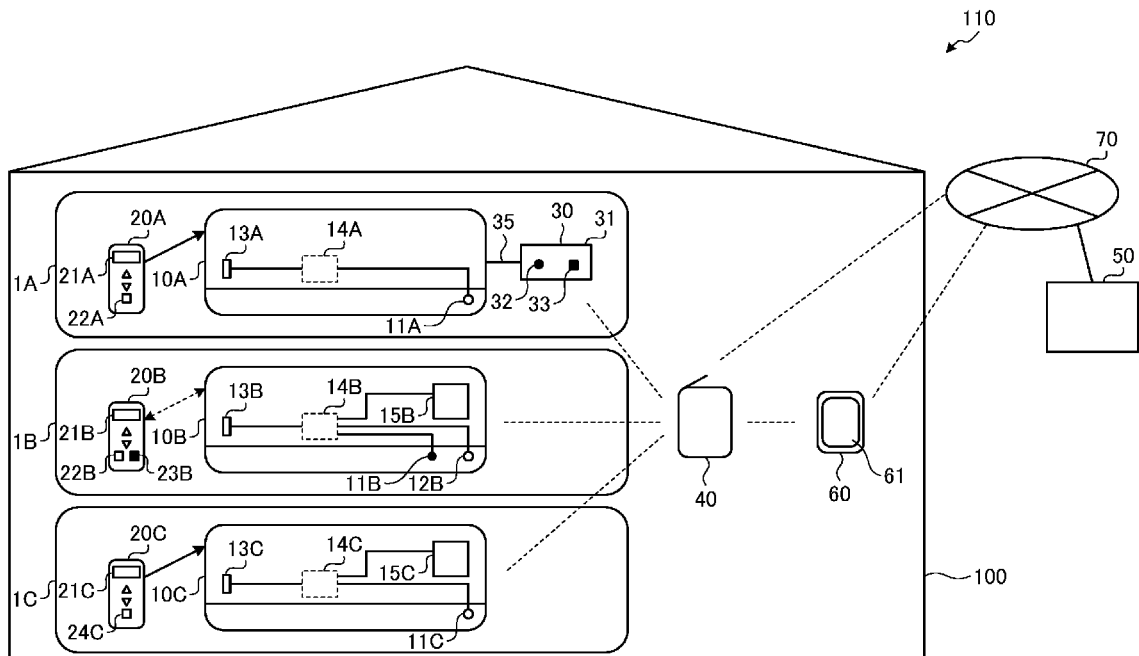
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(57) Abstract: An appliance control system (1A, 1B, 1C) is provided with a household electrical appliance (10A, 10B, 10C), a wireless communication unit, and a remote operation unit. The household electrical appliance includes a reporting unit for reporting the state of the household electrical appliance by means of a display or a notification. The wireless communication unit enables the household electrical appliance to be connected to a server device (50) by way of a wireless network. The remote operation unit enables operations of the household electrical appliance to be set, and enables

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network connections to be set, including connecting the wireless communication unit to the wireless network and to the server device. The household electrical appliance includes a control unit (14A, 14B, 14C) for controlling the operation in accordance with an operation setting instruction from the remote operation unit, or for controlling the reporting unit in accordance with the operating state of the household electrical appliance. The control unit controls reporting, employing the reporting unit, of information relating to the network connection during an interval from after a predetermined first condition is satisfied until a predetermined second condition is satisfied.

(57) 要約：機器制御システム(1A, 1B, 1C)は、家電機器(10A, 10B, 10C)と、無線通信部と、遠隔操作部と、を備える。家電機器は、表示または報知により状態を通知する通知部を有する。無線通信部は、無線ネットワークを介してサーバ装置(50)に家電機器を接続可能とする。遠隔操作部は、家電機器の動作設定とともに、無線通信部の無線ネットワークへの接続およびサーバ装置への接続を含むネットワーク接続の設定を可能とする。家電機器は、遠隔操作部からの動作設定の指示に従った動作制御を行い、または家電機器の動作状態に応じて通知部を制御する制御部(14A, 14B, 14C)を有する。制御部は、予め定められた第1条件が満たされた後から予め定められた第2条件が満たされるまでの間にネットワーク接続に関する情報を、通知部を用いて通知する制御を行う。

Technical Field

[0001] The present disclosure relates to an appliance control system that provides a notification of an operating state of a home appliance and a connection state thereof to a network, the home appliance, and a notification control method for the home appliance.

Background

[0002] In recent years, there have been increasing cases where home appliances are connected to the Internet. Regarding a home appliance that does not have a communication function, connection to a wireless communication adapter having a wireless communication function enables such a home appliance to be connected to the Internet via a router constituting a local area network (LAN) with the wireless communication adapter. The wireless communication adapter includes a lamp that provides a notification of a radio condition. In a case where a trouble occurs in network connection and the network connection needs to be reset, if the wireless communication adapter is installed at a position where the lamp cannot be easily checked, there is a possibility that the lamp of the wireless communication adapter cannot be checked, which is inconvenient.

[0003] Patent Literature 1 discloses a technique in which a wireless communication adapter provides, to a terminal device including a display capable of communicating with the wireless communication adapter, connection information indicating whether the wireless communication adapter can communicate with a router.

Patent Literature

[0004] Patent Literature 1: Japanese Patent Application

Laid-open No. 2020-027954

[0005] With the technique described in Patent Literature 1, however, although it is possible, when a home appliance and the router are not correctly connected, to notify a user who possesses the terminal device including the display of the connection information, it is not possible to notify a user who does not possess such a terminal device of the connection information. In addition, although a remote controller is provided in the home appliance, since communication between such a remote controller and a corresponding home appliance is normally unidirectional, the remote controller cannot be notified of the connection information. Moreover, not only a home appliance to which a wireless communication adapter is externally attached, but also a home appliance incorporating a wireless communication module therein has a similar problem. Therefore, there is a demand for a technique capable of notifying a user, without changing a configuration of an existing home appliance, of connection information of a wireless communication adapter externally attached to a home appliance or a wireless communication module incorporated in a home appliance.

[0006] It is desired to address or ameliorate one or more disadvantages or limitations associated with the prior art, or to at least provide a useful alternative.

Summary

[0007] In at least one embodiment an appliance control system according to the present disclosure includes a home appliance, a wireless communication unit, and a remote operation unit. The home appliance includes a notification unit that provides a notification of a state by display or

annunciating. The wireless communication unit enables the home appliance to be connected to a server device via a wireless network. The remote operation unit enables operation settings of the home appliance and settings of network connection including connection of the wireless communication unit to the wireless network and to the server device to be performed. The home appliance includes a control unit that performs operation control in accordance with an instruction of the operation settings from the remote operation unit, or controls the notification unit in accordance with an operating state of the home appliance. The control unit controls the notification unit by performing switching between a first mode in which the notification unit provides a notification of the operating state of the home appliance and a second mode in which the notification unit provides a notification of information regarding the network connection, and performs switching to the second mode between a time when a predetermined first condition is satisfied and a time when a predetermined second condition is satisfied in the first mode, wherein the predetermined first condition is a time when the wireless communication unit starts pairing; and the predetermined second condition is a time when the connection to the server device is completed or fails.

[0007a] In another embodiment, the present invention provides a home appliance including a notification unit to provide a notification of a state by display or annunciating. The home appliance comprises a control unit to perform operation control in accordance with an instruction of operation settings from a remote operation unit that enables the operation settings of the home appliance to be performed, or to control the notification unit in accordance with an operating state of the home

appliance. The control unit controls the notification unit by performing switching between a first mode in which the notification unit provides a notification of the operating state of the home appliance and a second mode in which the notification unit provides a notification of information regarding network connection including connection of a wireless communication unit to a wireless network and to a server device, the wireless communication unit enabling the home appliance to be connected to the server device via the wireless network, and when receiving, from the remote operation unit, an instruction of settings of the network connection, the control unit performs switching to the second mode between a time when a predetermined first condition is satisfied and a time when a predetermined second condition is satisfied in the first mode, wherein the predetermined first condition is a time when the wireless communication unit starts pairing; and the predetermined second condition is a time when the connection to the server device is completed or fails.

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[0007b] In a further embodiment, the present invention provides a notification control method for a home appliance in an appliance control system. The appliance control system comprises a home appliance including a notification unit to provide a notification of a state by display or annunciating and a control unit. The appliance control system further comprises a wireless communication unit to enable the home appliance to be connected to a server device via a wireless network. The appliance control system also comprises a remote operation unit to enable operation settings of the home appliance and settings of network connection including connection of the wireless communication unit to the wireless network and to

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the server device to be performed. The notification control method for the home appliance comprises a first step performed by the control unit of performing operation control in accordance with an instruction of the operation settings from the remote operation unit, or controlling the notification unit in accordance with an operating state of the home appliance in a first mode in which the notification unit provides a notification of the operating state of the home appliance, and a second step performed by the control unit of controlling the notification unit by performing switching between the first mode and a second mode in which the notification unit provides a notification of information regarding the network connection. In the second step, switching to the second mode is performed between a time when a predetermined first condition is satisfied and a time when a predetermined second condition is satisfied in the first mode, wherein the predetermined first condition is a time when the wireless communication unit starts pairing; and the predetermined second condition is a time when the connection to the server device is completed or fails.

[0008] An appliance control system according to at least some embodiments of the present disclosure achieves an effect that, in a home appliance connectable to a server device via a wireless network, it is possible to notify a user, without changing a configuration of an existing home appliance, of information regarding connection to the wireless network by wireless communication and connection to the server device via the wireless network.

Brief Description of Drawings

[0009] Embodiments of the present invention are

hereinafter described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a diagram illustrating an example of a configuration of a management system including appliance control systems according to a first embodiment.

FIG. 2 is a diagram illustrating an example of state transition of a home appliance used in the appliance control system according to the first embodiment.

FIG. 3 is a diagram illustrating an example of operation notification control information of a lamp or a buzzer of the home appliance that does not have a wireless communication function.

FIG. 4 is a diagram illustrating an example of connection notification control information of the lamp or the buzzer used in a connection mode in the home appliance of the appliance control system according to the first embodiment.

FIG. 5 is a flowchart illustrating an example of a procedure of a notification control method for the home appliance according to the first embodiment.

FIG. 6 is a diagram illustrating an example of state transition of the home appliance used in the appliance control system according to a second embodiment.

FIG. 7 is a diagram illustrating an example of state check notification control information of the lamp or the buzzer used in a connection state check mode in the home appliance of the appliance control system according to the second embodiment.

FIG. 8 is a diagram illustrating an example of state transition of the home appliance used in the appliance control system according to the second embodiment.

FIG. 9 is a block diagram schematically illustrating an example of a hardware configuration of a control unit

included in the home appliances according to the first and second embodiments.

Detailed Descriptions

5 [0010] Hereinafter, an appliance control system, a home appliance, and a notification control method for the home appliance according to each embodiment of the present disclosure will be described in detail with reference to the drawings.

10 [0011] First Embodiment.

First, an appliance control system according to a first embodiment will be described. FIG. 1 is a diagram illustrating an example of a configuration of a management system including appliance control systems according to the first embodiment. Hereinafter, a case where a home
15 appliance is an air conditioner will be described as an example.

[0012] A management system 110 includes appliance control systems 1A, 1B, and 1C, a router 40, a server
20 device 50, and an information terminal 60. In one example, the appliance control systems 1A, 1B, and 1C are provided in an architectural structure 100 in which home appliances 10A, 10B, and 10C are installed. Examples of the architectural structure 100 include a detached house, an
25 apartment or condominium, a building, and a commercial facility.

[0013] The appliance control system 1A includes the home appliance 10A, a remote controller 20A, and a wireless communication adapter 30. The remote controller
30 corresponds to a remote operation unit.

[0014] The home appliance 10A includes a lamp 11A, a buzzer 13A, and a control unit 14A. The lamp 11A performs control so that a visual notification of a state of the

home appliance 10A is provided in accordance with an instruction from the control unit 14A. An example of the lamp 11A is a light emitting diode (LED). In one example, the lamp 11A provides a notification of the state of the home appliance 10A by combining a color to be displayed, a blinking pattern, and the like. When receiving an operation from the remote controller 20A, the buzzer 13A annunciates that the operation from the remote controller 20A has been received in accordance with an instruction from the control unit 14A. What is meant by "annunciate" used herein is to provide an auditory notification. The lamp 11A and the buzzer 13A correspond to a notification unit that provides a notification of a state by display or annunciating.

[0015] The control unit 14A controls the operation of the home appliance 10A in accordance with a setting instruction from the remote controller 20A. In addition, the control unit 14A is electrically connected to the lamp 11A and the buzzer 13A, and performs notification control in the lamp 11A or the buzzer 13A in accordance with an operating state of the home appliance 10A. The control unit 14A controls the lamp 11A or the buzzer 13A with reference to operation notification control information in which the operating state of the home appliance 10A and the content of control of the lamp 11A or the buzzer 13A are associated with each other.

[0016] The remote controller 20A is a user interface for the home appliance 10A that enables settings of the operation of the home appliance 10A to be performed. The remote controller 20A includes a display unit 21A indicating a setting state of the home appliance 10A and a button 22A for changing the settings of the home appliance 10A. In general, the remote controller 20A can communicate

with the control unit 14A of the home appliance 10A by unidirectional communication using electromagnetic waves such as infrared rays. The remote controller 20A need not include the display unit 21A.

5 [0017] The wireless communication adapter 30 is a device that is connected to the home appliance 10A via a cable 35 and can connect the home appliance 10A to the server device 50 via a wireless network. The wireless communication adapter 30 corresponds to a wireless communication unit.

10 The wireless communication adapter 30 includes, in a housing 31, a button 32 for performing wireless settings and a lamp 33 that displays a wireless connection state. When the button 32 is pressed, the wireless communication adapter 30 performs a process of establishing wireless

15 communication with the router 40 constituting a wireless LAN which is a wireless network.

[0018] In one example, the appliance control system 1A including the home appliance 10A, the remote controller 20A, and the wireless communication adapter 30 is provided

20 in one room in the architectural structure 100. The home appliance 10A of the appliance control system 1A does not include a lamp that displays a wireless connection state to the router 40 and a connection state to the server device 50. The remote controller 20A does not include a wireless

25 setting unit for the wireless communication adapter 30. Therefore, a user of the home appliance 10A performs wireless communication settings by the button 32 of the wireless communication adapter 30 connected to the home appliance 10A, and checks the wireless connection state to

30 the router 40 and the connection state to the server device 50 by the lamp 33 of the wireless communication adapter 30. The term "user" used herein means a person who uses the appliance control systems 1A, 1B, and 1C, and also includes

a contractor who temporarily uses the appliance control systems 1A, 1B, and 1C when performing construction thereof in the architectural structure 100.

5 [0019] The appliance control system 1B includes the home appliance 10B and a remote controller 20B.

[0020] The home appliance 10B includes a lamp 11B, a lamp 12B, a buzzer 13B, a control unit 14B, and a wireless communication module 15B. Since the lamp 11B and the buzzer 13B have functions similar to those of the lamp 11A and the buzzer 13A of the home appliance 10A, respectively, descriptions thereof will be omitted. The lamp 12B provides a visual notification of a network connection state, which is a state related to network connection by the wireless communication module 15B in accordance with an instruction from the control unit 14B. The network connection state is information regarding network connection including a wireless connection state to the router 40 and a connection state to the server device 50 via Internet 70. An example of the lamp 12B is an LED. In one example, the lamp 12B indicates a state of the home appliance 10B by combining a color to be displayed, a blinking pattern, and the like.

[0021] The control unit 14B performs operation control of the home appliance 10B in accordance with a setting instruction from the remote controller 20B and network connection control. In addition, the control unit 14B is electrically connected to the lamps 11B and 12B and the buzzer 13B, performs notification control in the lamp 11B or the buzzer 13B in accordance with an operating state of the home appliance 10B, and performs notification control by the lamp 12B or the buzzer 13B in accordance with the network connection state. The control unit 14B controls the lamp 11B or 12B or the buzzer 13B with reference to

operation notification control information in which the operating state of the home appliance 10B and the content of control of the lamp 11B or 12B or the buzzer 13B are associated with each other. In addition, the control unit 14B controls the lamp 11B or 12B or the buzzer 13B with reference to connection notification control information in which a network connection state of the home appliance 10B and the content of control of the lamp 11B or 12B or the buzzer 13B are associated with each other.

10 [0022] The wireless communication module 15B has a wireless communication function. The wireless communication module 15B enables the home appliance 10B to be connected to the server device 50 via the wireless network. The wireless communication module 15B corresponds to a wireless communication unit.

[0023] The remote controller 20B is a user interface for the home appliance 10B that enables settings of the operation of the home appliance 10B, network connection settings of the wireless communication module 15B, and display of the network connection state of the wireless communication module 15B to be performed. The remote controller 20B includes a display unit 21B that indicates a state of operation settings of the home appliance 10B and a network connection state of the wireless communication module 15B, a button 22B for changing the operation settings of the home appliance 10B, and a button 23B for performing the network connection settings. The remote controller 20B can communicate with the home appliance 10B by bilateral communication to acquire information from the home appliance 10B, specifically, to acquire the network connection state.

[0024] In one example, the appliance control system 1B including the home appliance 10B and the remote controller

20B is provided in one room other than the room in which the appliance control system 1A is provided in the architectural structure 100. The home appliance 10B of the appliance control system 1B includes the lamps 11B and 12B
5 that display a wireless connection state to the router 40 and a connection state to the server device 50. The remote controller 20B includes the button 23B for performing the network connection settings for the wireless communication module 15B. Therefore, the user of the home appliance 10B
10 can perform the network connection settings by the button 23B of the remote controller 20B, and check the wireless connection state to the router 40 and the connection state to the server device 50 by the display unit 21B of the remote controller 20B.

15 [0025] The appliance control system 1C includes the home appliance 10C and a remote controller 20C.

[0026] The home appliance 10C includes a lamp 11C, a buzzer 13C, a control unit 14C, and a wireless communication module 15C. Since the buzzer 13C has a
20 function similar to that of the buzzer 13A of the home appliance 10A, and the wireless communication module 15C has a function similar to that of the wireless communication module 15B, descriptions thereof will be omitted. The lamp 11C provides a visual notification of a
25 state of the home appliance 10C and the network connection state of the wireless communication module 15C in accordance with an instruction from the control unit 14C. An example of the lamp 11C is an LED. In one example, the lamp 11C indicates the state of the home appliance 10C by
30 combining a color to be displayed, a blinking pattern, and the like.

[0027] The control unit 14C performs operation control of the home appliance 10C in accordance with a setting

instruction from the remote controller 20C and network connection control. In addition, the control unit 14C is electrically connected to the lamp 11C and the buzzer 13C, performs notification control in the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C in accordance with an operating state of the home appliance 10C, and performs notification control by the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C in accordance with the network connection state. The control unit 14C controls the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C with reference to operation notification control information in which the operating state of the home appliance 10C and the content of control of the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C are associated with each other. In addition, the control unit 14C controls the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C with reference to connection notification control information in which a network connection state of the home appliance 10C and the content of control of the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C are associated with each other.

[0028] The remote controller 20C is a user interface for the home appliance 10C that enables settings of the operation of the home appliance 10C and network connection settings of the wireless communication module 15C to be performed. The remote controller 20C includes a display unit 21C that indicates a state of operation settings of the home appliance 10C and a button 24C for changing the operation settings and the network connection settings of the home appliance 10C. In general, the remote controller 20C can communicate with the control unit 14C of the home appliance 10C by unidirectional communication using electromagnetic waves such as infrared rays. The remote controller 20C need not include the display unit 21C. As described above, the configurations of the home appliance 10C and the remote controller 20C of the appliance control

system 1C are similar to those of the home appliance 10A and the remote controller 20A of the appliance control system 1A, but the function of the control unit 14C of the home appliance 10C and the function of the button 24C of the remote controller 20C are changed by software.

[0029] In one example, the appliance control system 1C including the home appliance 10C and the remote controller 20C is provided in one room other than the room in which the appliance control system 1A or 1B is provided in the architectural structure 100. In the appliance control system 1C, the home appliance 10C includes the lamp 11C that displays the operating state of the home appliance 10C and the connection state of the wireless communication module 15C to the network. The remote controller 20C includes the button 24C for performing the operation settings of the home appliance 10C and the network connection settings of the wireless communication module 15C. Therefore, the user of the home appliance 10C can perform the network connection settings by the button 24C of the remote controller 20C, and check the network connection state by the lamp 11C of the home appliance 10C.

[0030] The router 40 constitutes a wireless LAN which is a wireless network with the wireless communication adapter 30 of the appliance control system 1A, the wireless communication module 15B of the home appliance 10B of the appliance control system 1B, and the wireless communication module 15C of the home appliance 10C of the appliance control system 1C. The router 40 connects the wireless LAN to the Internet 70. Consequently, it is possible to access the Internet 70 by the wireless communication adapter 30 of the appliance control system 1A, the wireless communication module 15B of the home appliance 10B of the appliance control system 1B, and the wireless communication module

15C of the home appliance 10C of the appliance control system 1C.

[0031] The server device 50 is connected to the Internet 70, collects information regarding the home appliances 10A, 10B, and 10C, and performs monitoring and the like of the home appliances 10A, 10B, and 10C. The server device 50 provides the user and the like of the home appliances 10A, 10B, and 10C with the information regarding the home appliances 10A, 10B, and 10C, and controls the home appliances 10A, 10B, and 10C in accordance with an instruction from the information terminal 60 of the users and the like of the home appliances 10A, 10B, and 10C. The server device 50 may be a cloud server or an on-premises server.

[0032] The information terminal 60 is an information processing apparatus capable of acquiring information regarding the home appliances 10A, 10B, and 10C, and setting operations of the home appliances 10A, 10B, and 10C. The information terminal 60 includes a wireless communication module (not illustrated) and a display unit 61. Examples of the information terminal 60 include a personal computer, a smartphone, and a tablet terminal. In a case where the information terminal 60 is present within a range in which the information terminal 60 can be wirelessly connected to the router 40, the information terminal 60 can communicate with the home appliances 10A, 10B, and 10C directly via the router 40 in the same wireless LAN as that including the home appliances 10A, 10B, and 10C. Alternatively, the information terminal 60 can communicate with the home appliances 10A, 10B, and 10C via the server device 50 connected to the Internet 70. In the case of communication is performed directly via the router 40 in the same wireless LAN as that including the

home appliances 10A, 10B, and 10C, the server device 50 need not be present.

[0033] In the appliance control system 1A, expenses are incurred for the housing 31 and the cable 35 of the wireless communication adapter 30, and in a case where the home appliance 10A is one installed at a high place such as an air conditioner, it takes time and effort to perform the settings of the network connection and to check the state thereof. In addition, since the wireless communication adapter 30 is provided separately from the home appliance 10A, the appearance is also affected. Therefore, although the appliance control system 1A is a useful system in a case where a wireless communication function is added later, the appliance control system 1A is not a preferable system for a home appliance having a wireless function as a standard.

[0034] Since the appliance control system 1B does not include the wireless communication adapter 30, the expenses for the housing 31 and the cable 35 of the wireless communication adapter 30 can be saved and the appearance is not affected as compared with the appliance control system 1A. However, since the home appliance 10B further includes the lamp 12B that indicates the network connection state as compared with the home appliance 10A of the appliance control system 1A, and the remote controller 20B further includes the button 23B for performing the network connection settings as compared with the remote controller 20A of the appliance control system 1A, the cost increases as compared with the appliance control system 1A. That is, it is purely disadvantageous for a user who does not desire the wireless communication function.

[0035] In the appliance control system 1C, the button 22A of the remote controller 20A of the appliance control

system 1A is changed, by software, to the button 24C for performing the operation settings and the network connection settings of the home appliance 10C. By changing the software, the lamp 11A of the home appliance 10A of the appliance control system 1A is changed so as to display the operating state and the network connection state of the home appliance 10C. By changing the software, the buzzer 13A of the home appliance 10A of the appliance control system 1A is changed so as to receive an operation from the remote controller 20C and provide a notification of the network connection state. As described above, with the same configuration as the appliance control system 1A and the function changed by changing the software, cost can be prevented from increasing as compared with the case of the appliance control system 1A.

[0036] However, in the appliance control system 1C, when a notification of the settings and state of the operation of the home appliance 10C and a notification of the settings and state of the network connection thereof are provided, there arises a case where functions conflict with each other. In that case, the user may be confused because the user cannot determine whether the content of the notification provided by the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C relates to the operating state of the home appliance 10C or relates to the network connection state thereof. In particular, regarding the settings and state of the network connection, there are various types of notification contents. As in a case where the wireless communication module 15C is anomalous, a case where pairing with the router 40 fails, a case where an internet protocol (IP) address cannot be acquired, a case where a domain name system (DNS) cannot be resolved, and a case where the server device 50 is down, there are many contents that

require notification. The settings and state of the network connection are important information in an anomalous state, and details are required immediately. Therefore, it is difficult to cut down these notification contents from the notification using the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C. However, these notification contents are not constantly necessary in a normal state.

[0037] Therefore, in the first embodiment, the control unit 14C of the home appliance 10C performs control so that a notification of information regarding network connection by the wireless communication module 15C is provided by using the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C in a predetermined period. The content of the notification provided by using the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C in this period is not information regarding the operating state of the home appliance 10C but information regarding the network connection state. As a condition for the start of the predetermined period, a time when the wireless communication module 15C starts pairing can be set. In addition, as a condition for the end of the predetermined period, a time when the connection to the server device 50 is completed or fails, or a time when the connection to the router 40 fails can be set. The condition for the start of the predetermined period corresponds to a first condition, and a condition for the end of the predetermined period corresponds to a second condition.

[0038] Specifically, a normal mode in which the lamp 11C and the buzzer 13C provide a notification of the operating state of the home appliance 10C and a connection mode in which the lamp 11C and the buzzer 13C provide a notification of the network connection state are provided. The normal mode is set in the normal state, but is switched to the connection mode when the condition for the start of

the predetermined period is satisfied. Thereafter, when the condition for the end of the predetermined period is satisfied, the connection mode is switched to the normal mode.

5 [0039] In the normal mode, the notification by the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C indicates the state of the operation of the home appliance 10C. That is, the control unit 14C provides the notification using the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C corresponding to the state of the operation of the home
10 appliance 10C with reference to the operation notification control information. At that time, the wireless communication module 15C is unconnected to the wireless LAN or is connected to the server device 50. The normal mode corresponds to a first mode.

15 [0040] In the connection mode, the notification by the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C indicates the network connection state of the wireless communication module 15C. That is, the control unit 14C provides the notification using the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C corresponding to the network
20 connection state with reference to the connection notification control information. The connection mode corresponds to a second mode.

[0041] Next, state transition in the normal mode and the connection mode will be described. FIG. 2 is a diagram
25 illustrating an example of state transition of the home appliance used in the appliance control system according to the first embodiment.

[0042] As illustrated in FIG. 2, in the home appliance 10C of the first embodiment, the normal mode (step S100) and the connection mode (step S200) are provided for the
30 notification by the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C.

[0043] The normal mode (step S100) includes a state of being unconnected to the server (step S101) in which the

wireless communication module 15C is not connected to the server device 50 and a state of being connected to the server (step S102) in which the wireless communication module 15C is connected to the server device 50. In the
5 normal mode (step S100), the notification by the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C is a notification regarding the operating state of the home appliance 10C.

[0044] Next, a flow from the state of the normal mode (step S100) to the state of being connected to the server
10 (step S102) will be described. When the user presses the button 24C of the remote controller 20C in the state of the normal mode (step S100), the state transitions to the state of the connection mode (step S200). That is, when the button 24C is pressed, pairing with the router 40 is
15 started. The button 24C is a button for performing the operation settings and the network connection settings of the home appliance 10C in the remote controller 20C, and is a button that is included also in a model that does not include the wireless communication module 15C. Therefore,
20 the transition to the connection mode (step S200) can be realized by continuously pressing the button 24C for a predetermined time or longer, for example, for five seconds, or, in a case where there are a plurality of buttons 24C, by simultaneously pressing the plurality of
25 buttons 24C of a predetermined combination.

[0045] There are roughly two states in the connection mode (step S200). That is, the connection mode (step S200) includes a state of attempting to connect to the router 40 (step S210) and a state of attempting to connect to the
30 server (step S220).

[0046] When the mode transitions to the connection mode (step S200), first, the wireless communication module 15C transitions to a state of attempting to connect to the

router (step S211), which is a process of establishing wireless connection to the router 40. At that time, in one example, the user presses a Wi-Fi Protected Setup (WPS) button provided on the router 40. Thereafter, when the wireless communication module 15C succeeds in connection to the router 40, the state transitions to a state of successful connection to the router (step S213).

[0047] After the state of successful connection to the router (step S213), the state transitions to a state of attempting to connect to the server (step S221) in which the wireless communication module 15C attempts to connect to the server device 50 via the router 40. When the connection between the wireless communication module 15C of the home appliance 10C and the server device 50 is completed, the state transitions to a state of completed connection to the server (step S223), and then transitions to the state of being connected to the server (step S102) in the normal mode (step S100).

[0048] Next, a case where network connection fails will be described. In a case where the wireless communication module 15C fails in wireless connection to the router 40 in the state of attempting to connect to the router (step S211), the state transitions to a state of failed connection to the router (step S212). As an example of the case where the wireless communication module 15C fails in wireless connection to the router 40, there is a failure of WPS. Thereafter, the state transitions to the state of being unconnected to the server (step S101) in the normal mode (step S100).

[0049] In a case where the wireless communication module 15C fails in wireless connection to the server device 50 in the state of attempting to connect to the server (step S221), the state transitions to a state of failed

connection to the server (step S222). As an example of the case where the wireless communication module 15C fails in connection to the server device 50, there is a case where the Internet is not reached. Thereafter, the state transitions to the state of being unconnected to the server (step S101) in the normal mode (step S100).

[0050] In a case where the wireless communication module 15C has a hardware failure, for example, wireless communication cannot be performed, in the state of the connection mode (step S200), the state transitions to the state of being unconnected to the server (step S101) in the normal mode (step S100).

[0051] For example, suppose that, in attempting to connect to the server in step S221, a wide area network (WAN) cable of the router 40 is unplugged and connection to the Internet 70 is disconnected. In that case, the state transitions to the state of failed connection to the server (step S222) in which it is not possible to access the server device 50. Thereafter, the state transitions from the state of failed connection to the server (step S222) to the state of being unconnected to the server (step S101) in the normal mode (step S100). In a case where the WAN cable of the router 40 is inserted into the router 40 and the connection to the Internet 70 is restored in that state, the state may transition to the state of being connected to the server (step S102). On the other hand, when the WAN cable is unplugged in the state of being connected to the server (step S102), the state transitions to the state of being unconnected to the server (step S101) in the normal mode (step S100).

[0052] In the network connection settings to the router 40, there occur states in which connection is not possible due to various factors such as a failure of the router 40

or maintenance of the server device 50. Therefore, if there is no notification of each of the states, a situation arises in which the user does not know where there was a failure at the time of the network connection settings and cannot cope with the failure.

[0053] FIG. 3 is a diagram illustrating an example of operation notification control information of the lamp or the buzzer of the home appliance that does not have a wireless communication function. As illustrated in FIG. 3, the operation notification control information is information defining how the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C is operated with respect to the operating state of the home appliance 10C. Here, a case is illustrated where the lamp 11C includes an operation lamp indicating an operation state of the home appliance 10C and a clean lamp indicating a cleaning state. The operation notification control information in FIG. 3 includes items of "state", "lamp or beeping sound", and "notification content". The item of "state" indicates an operating state of the home appliance 10C. The item of "lamp or beeping sound" indicates the lamp 11C or beeping sound used in notification when the operating state of the home appliance 10C is defined in the "state". The item of "notification content" indicates how the operation lamp, the clean lamp, or the buzzer 13C is controlled. For example, when the "state" indicates cooling, the operation lamp is lit in blue. When the "state" indicates that cleaning is in operation, the clean lamp is turned on. When the "state" indicates reception of operation from the remote controller, the buzzer 13C emits beeping sound including two consecutive short blips: blip-blip. As described above, in a case where the contents of the notification for the network connection state are further added in a state where many contents of the

notification for the operating state of the home appliance 10C are set, the contents conflict with existing notification contents, and the network connection state cannot be realized by the notification by the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C, or becomes difficult for the user to understand.

[0054] In the first embodiment, as described above, the content of the notification provided by using the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C in the normal mode is information regarding the operating state of the home appliance 10C, and a notification of the information regarding the network connection state is not provided. In addition, the content of the notification provided by using the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C in the connection mode is information regarding the network connection state, and a notification of information regarding the operating state of the home appliance 10C is not provided. As described above, the notification pattern of the operating state of the home appliance 10C and the notification pattern of the network connection state thereof are separated depending on the mode, that is, the period. In some cases, the pattern for the normal mode and the pattern for the connection mode can be combined.

[0055] FIG. 4 is a diagram illustrating an example of connection notification control information of the lamp or the buzzer used in the connection mode in the home appliance of the appliance control system according to the first embodiment. As illustrated in FIG. 4, the connection notification control information is information defining how the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C is operated with respect to the network connection state of the wireless communication module 15C. In FIG. 4, an item of "state" indicates each of the states in the connection mode of step

S200 of FIG. 2, an item of "lamp" indicates how the lamp 11C of the home appliance 10C is controlled, and an item of "beeping sound" indicates how the buzzer 13C of the home appliance 10C is controlled.

5 [0056] As described above, the control unit 14C switches the mode from the normal mode to the connection mode in a case where the condition for the start of the predetermined period is satisfied. Therefore, in a state where the condition for the start of the predetermined period is not
10 satisfied, the mode is the normal mode, and the control unit 14C controls the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C on the basis of the operation notification control information illustrated in FIG. 3. In addition, after the condition for the start of the predetermined period is satisfied, the
15 mode is switched to the connection mode, and the control unit 14C controls the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C on the basis of the connection notification control information illustrated in FIG. 4. In one example, by the user operating the button 24C of the remote controller 20C when
20 performing switching from the normal mode to the connection mode, the condition for the start of the predetermined period is satisfied. Since the user can recognize whether the switching from the normal mode to the connection mode has been performed, the user can determine a difference in
25 meaning of the notifications using the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C. By combining the lamp 11C and the buzzer 13C as illustrated in FIG. 4, the connection notification control information can be a notification in contrast to that in the case of the operation notification control
30 information in FIG. 3 in which the lamp 11C and the buzzer 13C are not combined. As a result, it is possible to more clearly determine the network connection state in the connection mode.

[0057] In the above description, the case has been described where regarding the appliance control system 1C of FIG. 1, the normal mode and the connection mode are provided and separated depending on conditions. However, 5 also regarding the appliance control systems 1A and 1B of FIG. 1, the normal mode and the connection mode can be provided and separated depending on conditions. In the case of the appliance control system 1A, it is only required that the wireless communication module 15C be 10 replaced with the wireless communication adapter 30. In addition, in the case of the appliance control system 1A, similarly to the case of the appliance control system 1C described above, the control unit 14A controls the lamp 11A or the buzzer 13A on the basis of the operation 15 notification control information in FIG. 3 in the case of the normal mode, and on the basis of the connection notification control information in FIG. 4 in the case of the connection mode. In a case of a home appliance that does not include the wireless communication module 15B or 20 15C or a home appliance that does not include the wireless communication module 15B or 15C and to which the wireless communication adapter 30 is not attached, the normal mode (step S100) includes only the state of being unconnected to the server (step S101).

25 [0058] In the case of the appliance control system 1B, the lamp 11B or the buzzer 13B is controlled on the basis of the operation notification control information in FIG. 3 in the case of the normal mode, and the lamp 12B or the buzzer 13B is controlled on the basis of the connection 30 notification control information in FIG. 4 in the case of the connection mode.

[0059] In the above description, an example has been described in which the normal mode is switched to the

connection mode when the wireless communication module 15B or 15C or the wireless communication adapter 30 starts pairing with the router 40 as the condition for the start of the predetermined period, but the mode may be switched to the connection mode under other conditions. In one example, the condition for the start of the predetermined period under which switching to the connection mode is performed may be a time when the clean lamp is not used, a time when the operation is stopped, or the like. This makes it easier for the user to understand.

[0060] Next, operations of the control units 14A, 14B, and 14C of the home appliances 10A, 10B, and 10C of the appliance control systems 1A, 1B, and 1C according to the first embodiment will be described. FIG. 5 is a flowchart illustrating an example of a procedure of a notification control method for the home appliance according to the first embodiment. Hereinafter, in a case where the home appliances 10A, 10B, and 10C are not distinguished from each other, each thereof is denoted as a home appliance 10. In a case where the lamps 11A, 11B, 12B, and 11C are not distinguished from each other, each thereof is denoted as a lamp 11 or 12, in a case where the buzzers 13A, 13B, and 13C are not distinguished from each other, each thereof is denoted as a buzzer 13, and in a case where the control units 14A, 14B, and 14C are not distinguished from each other, each thereof is denoted as a control unit 14. In a case where the remote controllers 20A, 20B, and 20C are not distinguished from each other, each thereof is denoted as a remote controller 20. In addition, the wireless communication adapter 30 and the wireless communication modules 15B and 15C are each referred to as a wireless communication unit in the description of FIG. 5.

[0061] The control unit 14 controls the lamp 11 or 12 or

the buzzer 13 on the basis of the operation notification control information from the operating state of the home appliance 10 in the normal mode (step S501). Thereafter, the control unit 14 determines whether a condition for
5 switching from the normal mode to the connection mode has been satisfied (step S502). If the condition has not been satisfied (No in step S502), the process returns to step S501.

[0062] If the condition has been satisfied (Yes in step
10 S502), the control unit 14 performs switching from the normal mode to the connection mode (step S503). The control unit 14 acquires the network connection state in the wireless communication unit (step S504), and controls the lamp 11 or 12 or the buzzer 13 on the basis of the
15 connection notification control information from the acquired network connection state (step S505). Thereafter, the control unit 14 determines whether a condition for switching from the connection mode to the normal mode has been satisfied (step S506).

20 [0063] If the condition has not been satisfied (No in step S506), the process returns to step S504. If the condition has been satisfied (Yes in step S506), the control unit 14 performs switching from the connection mode to the normal mode (step S507). Then, the process returns
25 to step S501. Thus, the notification control method for the home appliance 10 ends.

[0064] Here, a description will be given for the contents of notifications provided by the lamps 11 and 12 in a case where switching between the normal mode and the
30 connection mode is not performed. Assuming that the clean lamp is used as the "lamp" of the connection notification control information in FIG. 4, as the contents of notifications provided by the lamps 11 and 12, "cleaning is

in operation" of the operation notification control information in FIG. 3 and "successful connection to router (step S213)" and "completed connection to server (step S223)" of the connection notification control information in FIG. 4 are all included. That is, a conflict occurs in states of operations associated with the same display of the lamps 11 and 12.

[0065] However, in the first embodiment, in the home appliance 10 including the lamp 11 or 12 or the buzzer 13, the normal mode in which a notification of the operating state of the home appliance 10 is provided, and the connection mode in which the network connection state by the wireless communication adapter 30 externally attached to the home appliance 10A or the wireless communication modules 15B and 15C respectively incorporated in the home appliances 10B and 10C is indicated, are separated.

Consequently, it is possible, even in a case where there are various types of network connection states, to notify the user of the network connection states by using the lamp 11 or 12 or the buzzer 13 without changing the configuration of the home appliance 10 as an existing home appliance and without conflicting with a notification indicating the operating state of the home appliance 10.

That is, it is possible to prevent hardware for providing a notification of the network connection state from being added to the home appliance 10 as an existing home appliance. Therefore, the component cost can be reduced, and furthermore, in the configurations of the home appliances 10B and 10C respectively including the wireless communication modules 15B and 15C and the home appliance 10A that does not include the wireless communication module 15B or 15C, configurations other than the configurations of the wireless communication modules 15B and 15C can be

standardized.

[0066] Second Embodiment.

In the first embodiment, the normal mode and the connection mode are separated, and a notification of the network connection state is provided by using the lamp 11 or 12 or the buzzer 13 in the connection mode. However, due to an environment, that is, a factor of failure, network connection including wireless connection to the router 40 or connection to the server device 50 via the router 40 may be disconnected. For example, use of a microwave oven results in interference with the 2.4 GHz band, and therefore, the wireless connection may be disconnected depending on channel settings between the wireless communication module 15B or 15C or the wireless communication adapter 30 and the router 40. The network connection may be disconnected due to various other factors such as wireless disconnection due to opening and closing of a door of a room in which the home appliance 10 is provided, shutdown of the server device 50 due to maintenance thereof, and a WAN cable unplugged from the router 40 or the server device 50. Therefore, if the control unit 14 controls the lamp 11 or 12 or the buzzer 13 every time the network connection is disconnected, the user may be confused. In addition, if such factors of the failure are eliminated, there is no need to perform the network settings again. Therefore, the solution by the method described in the first embodiment may not be appropriate.

[0067] In such a case, the information terminal 60 illustrated in FIG. 1 can display whether the wireless LAN is connected to the server device 50. However, in a case where the connection to the server device 50 cannot be established, since the network connection is disconnected,

it is not possible in principle to determine what causes the disconnection for all the cases. Therefore, the user has to feel his/her way to identify the factor of the failure, which is a problem.

- 5 [0068] Therefore, in a second embodiment, the above-described problem is solved by providing the normal mode and a connection state check mode which is a mode in which in a case where a failure occurs in network connection, a notification of the content of the failure of the network
10 connection is provided by using the lamp 11 or 12 or the buzzer 13. Note that the configurations of the appliance control systems 1A, 1B, and 1C according to the second embodiment are similar to those illustrated in FIG. 1 of the first embodiment. However, the control unit 14
15 transitions from the normal mode to the connection state check mode in a case where a predetermined condition is satisfied. In the connection state check mode, the control unit 14 provides the notification by the lamp 11 or 12 or the buzzer 13 corresponding to the network connection state
20 in accordance with the predetermined condition. In addition, the control unit 14 transitions from the connection state check mode to the normal mode after the elapse of a predetermined period from switching to the connection state check mode, or in accordance with an
25 instruction from the user. The predetermined condition corresponds to a first condition, and after the elapse of the predetermined period or the instruction from the user corresponds to a second condition. The connection state check mode corresponds to a second mode.
- 30 [0069] FIG. 6 is a diagram illustrating an example of state transition of the home appliance used in the appliance control system according to the second embodiment. Note that descriptions of the same parts as

those in FIG. 2 will be omitted. In the following description, similarly to the first embodiment, the operations of the home appliance 10C and the remote controller 20C of the appliance control system 1C will be described as an example.

[0070] After network connection is completed, an anomaly may be caused in the network connection due to various factors. As described above, whether the network connection is normal or anomalous is determined by operating the information terminal 60. The details of the network connection are checked by transition from the state of the normal mode (step S100) to the state of the connection state check mode (step S300) in response to an instruction from the remote controller 20C, for example.

In one example, it is possible to transition to the connection state check mode by pressing the button 24C as a predetermined button of the remote controller 20C. In that case, pressing the button 24C as a predetermined button of the remote controller 20C corresponds to a first condition.

[0071] The connection state check mode (step S300) includes a state of being connected to the server (step S310), a state of appliance anomaly (step S320), a state of failed connection to the router (step S330), and a state of failed DNS resolution (step S340). These states indicate factors of the failure of the network connection. These factors of the failure are obtained in a process in which the wireless communication module 15C is connected to the wireless LAN and connected to the server device 50, and the control unit 14C is notified of these factors of the failure. That is, the control unit 14C acquires the factors of the failure from the wireless communication module 15C, and controls notification using the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C in association with the acquired factors of

the failure. Note that as a condition for returning from the connection state check mode (step S300) to the normal mode (step S100), any of the followings may be employed: a case where a certain period of time has elapsed from the transition to the connection state check mode (step S300), and an instruction given from the remote controller 20C by operating the remote controller 20C again to perform transition to the state of the normal mode (step S100).

[0072] FIG. 7 is a diagram illustrating an example of state check notification control information of the lamp or the buzzer used in the connection state check mode in the home appliance of the appliance control system according to the second embodiment. As illustrated in FIG. 7, the state check notification control information is information defining how the lamp 11C or the buzzer 13C is operated with respect to the network connection state of the wireless communication module 15C. In FIG. 7, an item of "state" indicates each of the states in the connection state check mode of step S300 of FIG. 6, an item of "lamp" indicates how the lamp 11C of the home appliance 10C is controlled, and an item of "beeping sound" indicates how the buzzer 13C of the home appliance 10C is controlled.

[0073] Similarly to the first embodiment, in the connection state check mode, that is, by limiting the period, a conflict with an existing function that is not related to the network connection can be avoided. As a result, it is possible to make a determination on details of malfunction of the network connection. In addition, similarly to the first embodiment, by combining the lamp 11C and the buzzer 13C, it is possible to more clearly determine the factors of the failure of the network connection in the connection state check mode.

[0074] In the above description, the case has been

described where regarding the appliance control system 1C of FIG. 1, the normal mode and the connection state check mode are provided and separated depending on conditions. However, also regarding the appliance control systems 1A and 1B of FIG. 1, the normal mode and the connection state check mode can be provided and separated depending on conditions. In addition, in the case of the remote controller 20B capable of bidirectional communication as in the appliance control system 1B, each of the states of the connection state check mode may be displayed on the remote controller 20B.

[0075] In the above, the example has been described in which the mode is switched to the connection state check mode in the case where a predetermined operation is performed by the remote controller 20. However, the mode may be switched to the connection state check mode under other conditions. In one example, the condition for the switching to the connection state check mode may be a time when the clean lamp is not used, or a time when the operation is stopped. This makes it easier for the user to understand.

[0076] Note that by combining the first embodiment and the second embodiment and performing switching between the normal mode, the connection mode, and the connection state check mode, the lamp 11 or 12 or the buzzer 13 of the home appliance 10 may be caused to provide a notification of the states in the respective modes. FIG. 8 is a diagram illustrating an example of state transition of the home appliance used in the appliance control system according to the second embodiment. FIG. 8 is a combination of FIG. 2 and FIG. 6. That is, in the home appliance 10, the normal mode (step S100), the connection mode (step S200), and the connection state check mode (step S300) are provided for

the notification by the lamp 11 or 12 or the buzzer 13. Consequently, regarding the notification of the operating state of the home appliance 10 in the normal mode (step S100), the notification of the network connection state in the connection mode (step S200), and the notification of the factors of the failure of the network connection in the connection state check mode (step S300), it is possible to notify the user thereof by the lamp 11 or 12 or the buzzer 13 without a conflict.

[0077] In addition, in a case where the functions described in the first and second embodiments are applied to the home appliance 10 that does not include the wireless communication module 15B or 15C, it is possible to standardize the specification by not performing the transition to the connection mode or the connection state check mode. That is, the control unit 14 determines whether the wireless communication module 15B or 15C is included, and if the wireless communication module 15B or 15C is not included, the control unit 14 prevents the transition to the connection mode or the connection state check mode. In a case where the transition is not performed, the control unit 14 may clearly indicate to the user by the lamp 11 or 12 or the buzzer 13 that the wireless communication module 15B or 15C is not included. In addition, the control unit 14 may prompt, by the lamp 11 or 12 or the buzzer 13, the user to retrofit the wireless communication adapter 30. In a case where the wireless communication adapter 30 is added, the notification of the state of the connection mode described in the first embodiment or that of the connection state check mode described in the second embodiment can be provided by using the lamp 11 or 12 or the buzzer 13 of the home appliance 10. Also in that case, the control unit 14 determines

whether the wireless communication adapter 30 is included, and if the wireless communication adapter 30 is not included, the control unit 14 prevents the transition to the connection mode or the connection state check mode.

5 [0078] In the second embodiment, in the home appliance 10 including the lamp 11 or 12 or the buzzer 13, the normal mode in which a notification of the operating state of the home appliance 10 is provided, and the connection state check mode in which a notification of the factors of the failure of the network connection of the wireless communication unit including the wireless communication adapter 30 externally attached to the home appliance 10 or the wireless communication module 15B or 15C incorporated in the home appliance 10 is provided, are separated.

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15 Consequently, it is possible, even in a case where there are various types of factors of failure of the network connection, to notify the user of the factors of the failure of the network connection by using the lamp 11 or 12 or the buzzer 13 without changing the configuration of the home appliance 10 as an existing home appliance and without conflicting with a notification indicating the operating state of the home appliance 10.

20

[0079] The control unit 14 of the first and second embodiments is implemented by processing circuitry. The processing circuitry may be dedicated hardware, or a circuit including a processor. FIG. 9 is a block diagram schematically illustrating an example of a hardware configuration of the control unit included in the home appliances according to the first and second embodiments.

25

30 The control unit 14 includes a processor 501 and a memory 502. The processor 501 and the memory 502 are connected via a bus line 503. The control unit 14 is implemented by the processor 501 executing a program stored in the memory

502. A plurality of processors and a plurality of memories may cooperate to implement the above functions. A part of the functions of the control unit 14 may be implemented as an electronic circuit which is dedicated hardware, and
5 other parts thereof may be implemented by using the processor 501 and the memory 502. In one example, in the case of the first and second embodiments, the control unit 14 controls the lamps 11 and 12 and the buzzer 13 by an electric signal.

10 [0080] The configurations described in the above embodiments are merely examples and can be combined with other known technology, the embodiments can be combined with each other, and part of the configurations can be omitted or modified without departing from the gist
15 thereof.

[0080a] Throughout this specification and the claims which follow, unless the context requires otherwise, the word "comprise", and variations such as "comprises" and "comprising", will be understood to imply the inclusion of
20 a stated integer or step or group of integers or steps but not the exclusion of any other integer or step or group of integers or steps.

[0080b] The reference in this specification to any prior publication (or information derived from it), or to any
25 matter which is known, is not, and should not be taken as an acknowledgment or admission or any form of suggestion that that prior publication (or information derived from it) or known matter forms part of the common general knowledge in the field of endeavour to which this
30 specification relates.

Reference Signs List

[0081] 1A, 1B, 1C appliance control system; 10, 10A,

10B, 10C home appliance; 11, 11A, 11B, 11C, 12, 12B, 33
lamp; 13, 13A, 13B, 13C buzzer; 14, 14A, 14B, 14C control
unit; 15B, 15C wireless communication module; 20, 20A,
20B, 20C remote controller; 21A, 21B, 21C, 61 display
5 unit; 22A, 22B, 23B, 24C, 32 button; 30 wireless
communication adapter; 31 housing; 35 cable; 40 router;
50 server device; 60 information terminal; 70 Internet;
100 architectural structure; 110 management system.

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

[Claim 1] An appliance control system comprising:

5 a home appliance including a notification unit to provide a notification of a state by display or annunciating;

a wireless communication unit to enable the home appliance to be connected to a server device via a wireless network; and

10 a remote operation unit to enable operation settings of the home appliance and settings of network connection including connection of the wireless communication unit to the wireless network and to the server device to be performed, wherein

15 the home appliance includes a control unit to perform operation control in accordance with an instruction of the operation settings from the remote operation unit, or controls the notification unit in accordance with an operating state of the home appliance, and

20 the control unit controls the notification unit by performing switching between a first mode in which the notification unit provides a notification of the operating state of the home appliance and a second mode in which the notification unit provides a notification of information regarding the network connection, and performs switching to the second mode between a time when a predetermined first condition is satisfied and a time when a predetermined second condition is satisfied in the first mode, wherein

25 the predetermined first condition is a time when the wireless communication unit starts pairing; and

30 the predetermined second condition is a time when the connection to the server device is completed or fails.

[Claim 2] The appliance control system according to claim 1, wherein

the information regarding the network connection is a network connection state that indicates a state when the wireless communication unit is connected to the wireless network and the server device, and

the second mode is a connection mode in which the notification unit provides a notification of the network connection state.

[Claim 3] The appliance control system according to claim 1, wherein

the information regarding the network connection is information indicating a factor of failure of the network connection, and

the second mode is a connection state check mode in which the notification unit provides a notification of the factor of the failure of the network connection.

[Claim 4] The appliance control system according to claim 2, wherein

the information regarding the network connection further includes information indicating a factor of failure of the network connection,

the second mode further includes a connection state check mode in which the notification unit provides a notification of the factor of the failure of the network connection, and

the control unit controls the notification unit by performing switching between the first mode, the connection mode, and the connection state check mode.

[Claim 5] The appliance control system according to any one

of claims 1 to 4, wherein the wireless communication unit is incorporated in the home appliance.

5 [Claim 6] The appliance control system according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the wireless communication unit is external and connected to the home appliance via a cable.

10 [Claim 7] The appliance control system according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the control unit determines whether the wireless communication unit is included, and if the wireless communication unit is not included, the control unit does not cause transition to the second mode.

15 [Claim 8] A home appliance including a notification unit to provide a notification of a state by display or annunciating, the home appliance comprising:

20 a control unit to perform operation control in accordance with an instruction of operation settings from a remote operation unit that enables the operation settings of the home appliance to be performed, or to control the notification unit in accordance with an operating state of the home appliance, wherein

25 the control unit controls the notification unit by performing switching between a first mode in which the notification unit provides a notification of the operating state of the home appliance and a second mode in which the notification unit provides a notification of information regarding network connection including connection of a
30 wireless communication unit to a wireless network and to a server device, the wireless communication unit enabling the home appliance to be connected to the server device via the wireless network, and when receiving, from the remote

operation unit, an instruction of settings of the network connection the control unit performs switching to the second mode between a time when a predetermined first condition is satisfied and a time when a predetermined
5 second condition is satisfied in the first mode, wherein

the predetermined first condition is a time when the wireless communication unit starts pairing; and

the predetermined second condition is a time when the connection to the server device is completed or fails.

10 [Claim 9] A notification control method for a home appliance in an appliance control system, the appliance control system including:

a home appliance including a notification unit to
15 provide a notification of a state by display or annunciating and a control unit;

a wireless communication unit to enable the home appliance to be connected to a server device via a wireless network; and

20 a remote operation unit to enable operation settings of the home appliance and settings of network connection including connection of the wireless communication unit to the wireless network and to the server device to be performed,

25 the notification control method for the home appliance, comprising:

a first step performed by the control unit of performing operation control in accordance with an instruction of the operation settings from the remote
30 operation unit, or controlling the notification unit in accordance with an operating state of the home appliance in a first mode in which the notification unit provides a notification of the operating state of the home appliance;

and

5 a second step performed by the control unit of
controlling the notification unit by performing switching
between the first mode and a second mode in which the
notification unit provides a notification of information
regarding the network connection, wherein

10 in the second step, switching to the second mode is
performed between a time when a predetermined first
condition is satisfied and a time when a predetermined
second condition is satisfied in the first mode, wherein

the predetermined first condition is a time when
the wireless communication unit starts pairing; and
the predetermined second condition is a time when
the connection to the server device is completed or
15 fails.

FIG.1

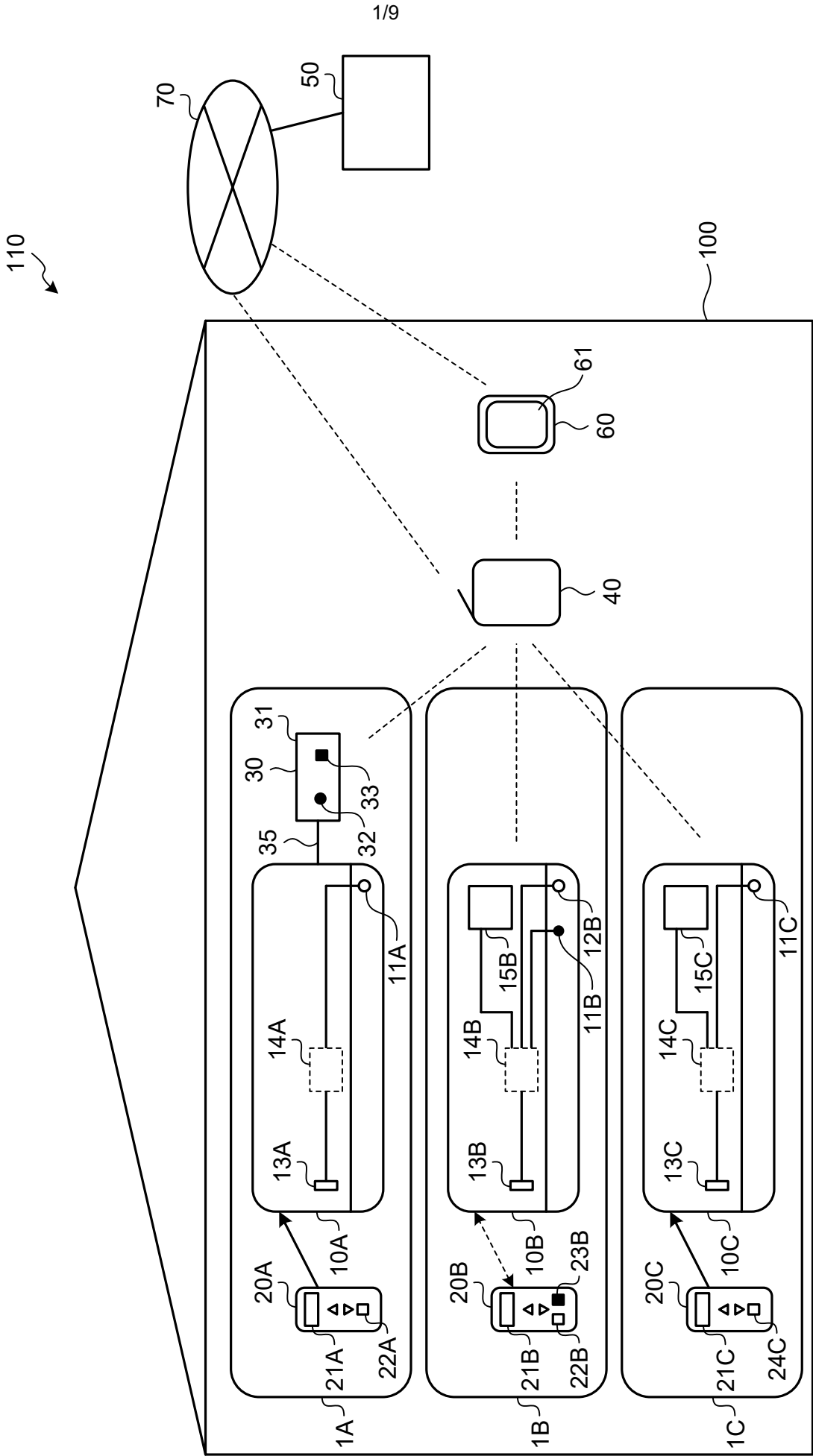


FIG.2

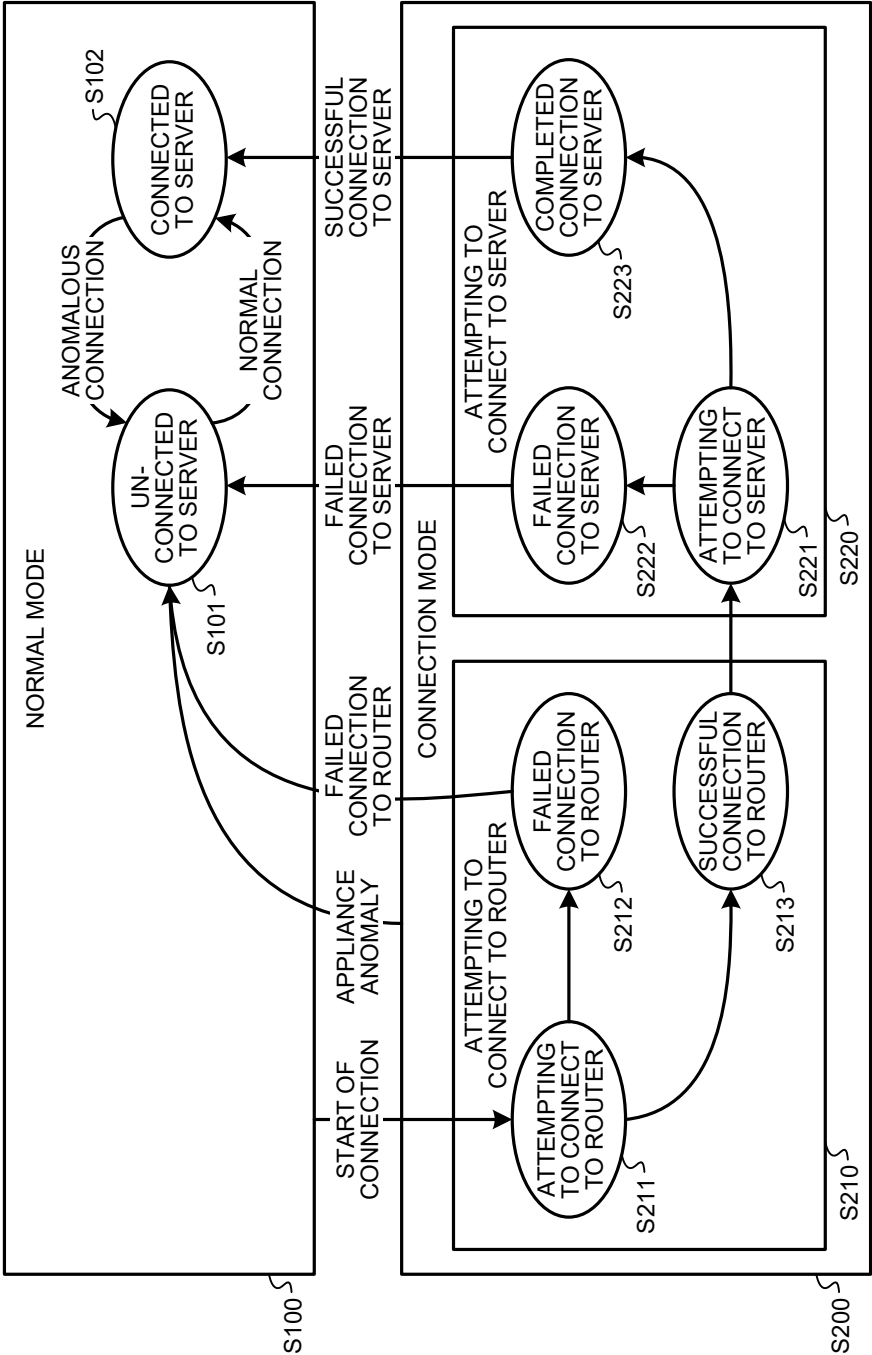


FIG.3

STATE	LAMP OR BEEPING SOUND	NOTIFICATION CONTENT
COOLING	OPERATION LAMP	BLUE
HEATING		ORANGE
DRY		GREEN
FAN ONLY		WHITE
OPERATION IS OFF		TURNED OFF
MONITORING		ALTERNATE RED AND WHITE
PLEASANT SLEEP IS SET		DARK (COLOR DEPENDS ON OPERATION MODE)
CLEANING IS IN OPERATION	CLEAN LAMP	TURNED ON
CLEANING IS NOT IN OPERATION		TURNED OFF
NORMAL	BEEPING SOUND	NO SOUND
RECEPTION OF OPERATION FROM REMOTE CONTROLLER		TWO CONSECUTIVE SHORT BLIPS: BLIP-BLIP
ERRONEOUS OPERATION FROM REMOTE CONTROLLER		THREE CONSECUTIVE SHORT BLIPS: BLIP-BLIP-BLIP

FIG.4

STATE	LAMP	BEEPING SOUND
ATTEMPTING TO CONNECT TO ROUTER (S211)	TWO FLASHES WITH 0.5-SECOND INTERVAL	REPETITION OF TWO BLIPS: BLIP, BLIP, AND BLIP, BLIP
FAILED CONNECTION TO ROUTER (S212)	TURNED OFF	FIVE BEEPS: BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP
SUCCESSFUL CONNECTION TO ROUTER (S213)	TURNED ON	FIVE-SECOND BEEP
ATTEMPTING TO CONNECT TO SERVER (S221)	THREE FLASHES WITH 0.5-SECOND INTERVAL	REPETITION OF THREE CONSECUTIVE SHORT BLIPS: BLIP-BLIP-BLIP, AND BLIP-BLIP-BLIP
FAILED CONNECTION TO SERVER (S222)	TURNED OFF	FIVE BEEPS: BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP
COMPLETED CONNECTION TO SERVER (S223)	TURNED ON	FIVE-SECOND BEEP

FIG.5

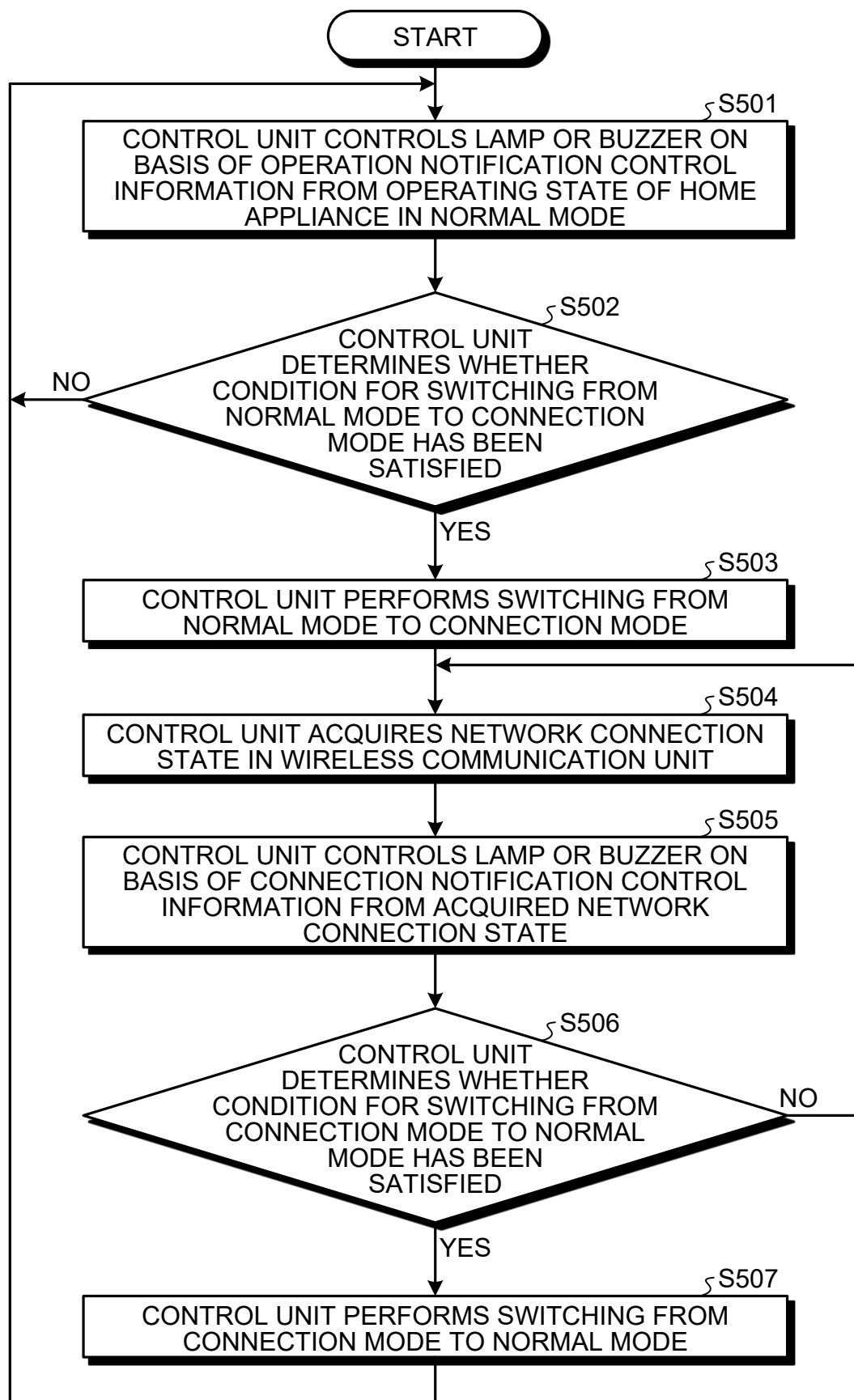


FIG.6

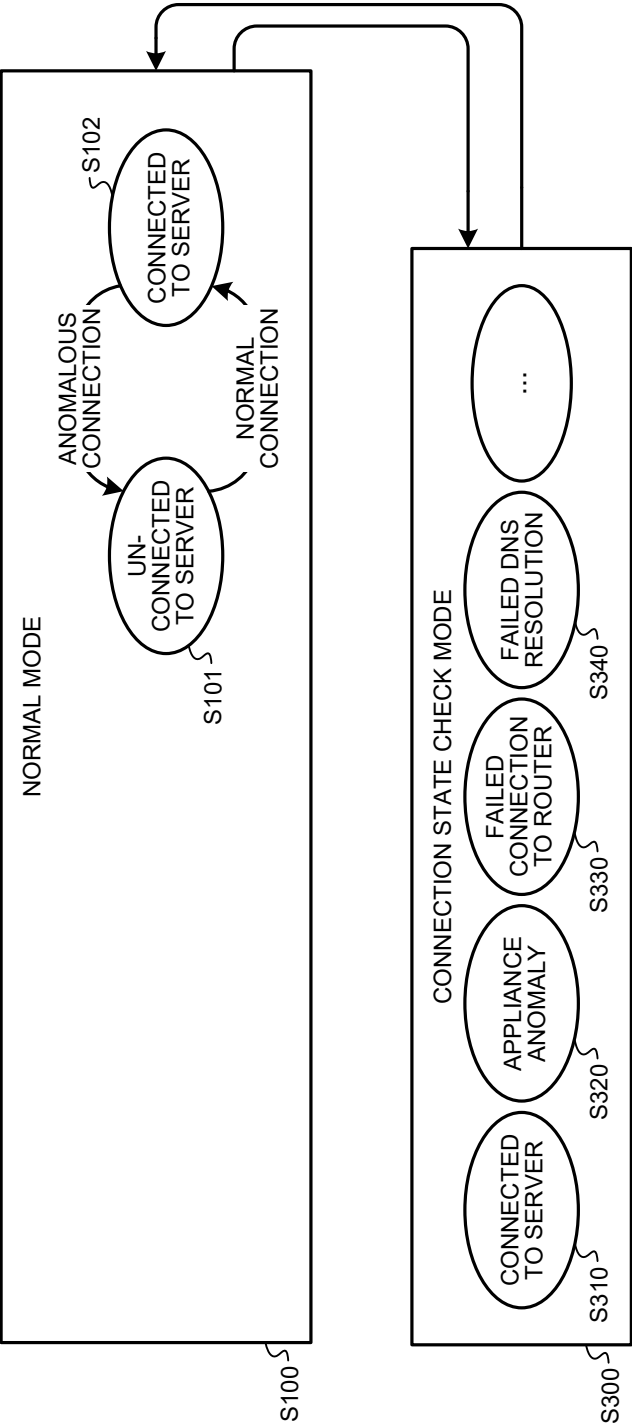


FIG.7

STATE	LAMP	BEEPING SOUND
CONNECTED TO SERVER (S310)	FLASH WITH ONE-SECOND INTERVAL	BEEP
APPLIANCE ANOMALY (S320)	ONE FLASH WITH 0.5-SECOND INTERVAL	REPETITION OF ONE BLIP: BLIP, AND BLIP
FAILED CONNECTION TO ROUTER (S330)	TWO FLASHES WITH 0.5-SECOND INTERVAL	REPETITION OF TWO BLIPS: BLIP, BLIP, AND BLIP, BLIP
FAILED DNS RESOLUTION (S340)	THREE FLASHES WITH 0.5-SECOND INTERVAL	REPETITION OF THREE BLIPS: BLIP, BLIP, BLIP, AND BLIP, BLIP, BLIP
...	...	...

FIG.8

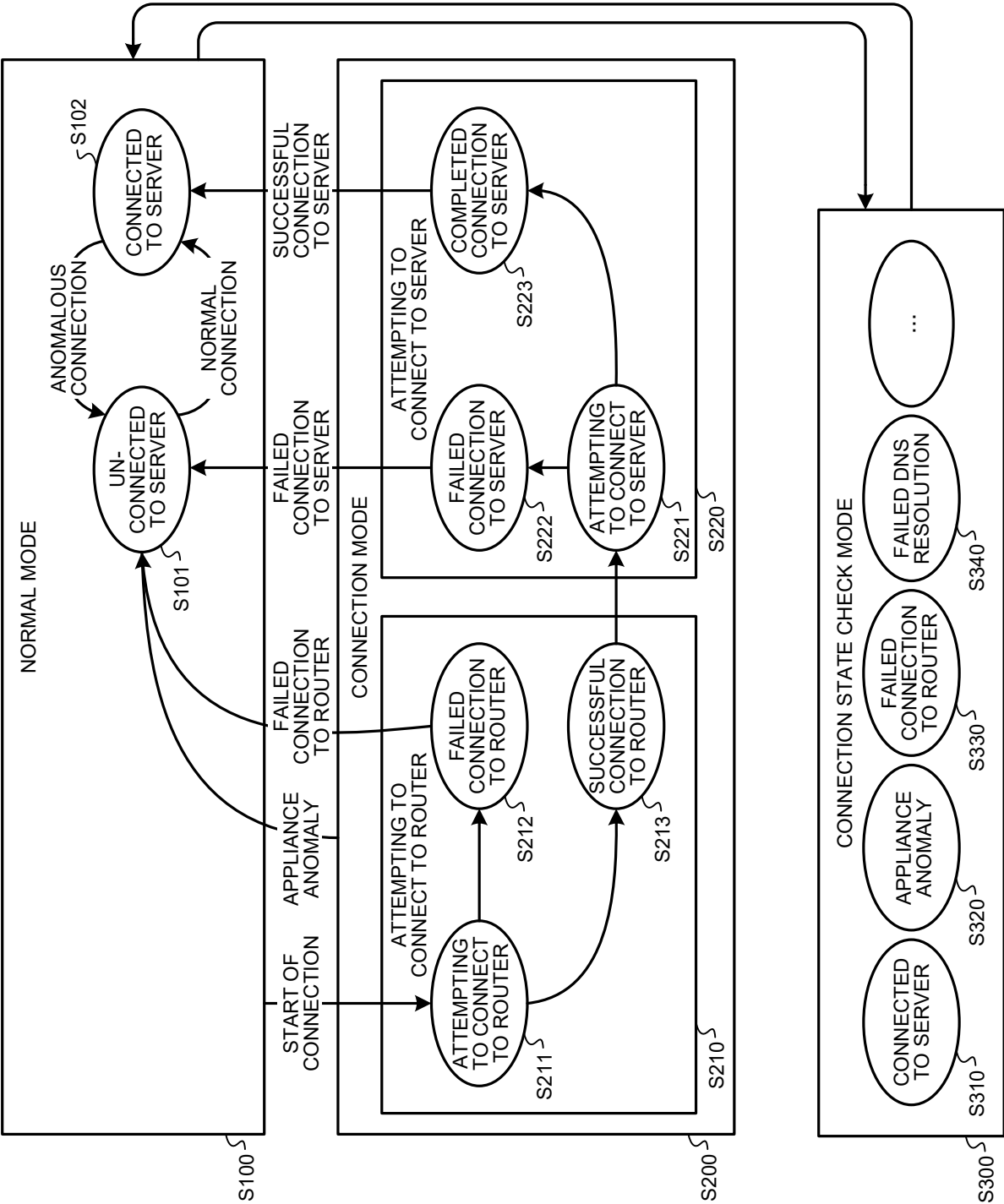


FIG.9

