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REPUBLICATION

(54) **ELECTRONIC BOOK ELECTRONIC LINKS**

(52) **U.S. Cl. 713/193; 715/273**

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(US)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

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The invention, an electronic book selection and delivery system, is a new way to distribute books and other textual information to bookstores, libraries and consumers. The primary components of the system are a subsystem for placing text in a video signal format and a subsystem for receiving and selecting text that is placed in the video signal format. The system configuration for consumer use contains additional components and optional features that enhance the system, namely: (1) an operation center, (2) a video distribution system, (3) a home subsystem, including reception, selection, viewing, transacting and transmission capabilities, and (4) a billing and collection system. The operation center and/or video distribution points perform the functions of manipulation of text data, security and coding of text, cataloging of books, messaging center, and uplink functions. The home subsystem performs the functions of connecting to a video distribution system, menu selecting text, storing text, and transacting through phone or cable communicating mechanisms. A portable book-shaped viewing device is used for viewing the textual material delivered. The billing and collection system performs the transaction, management, authorization, collection and publisher payments automatically utilizing the telephone system.

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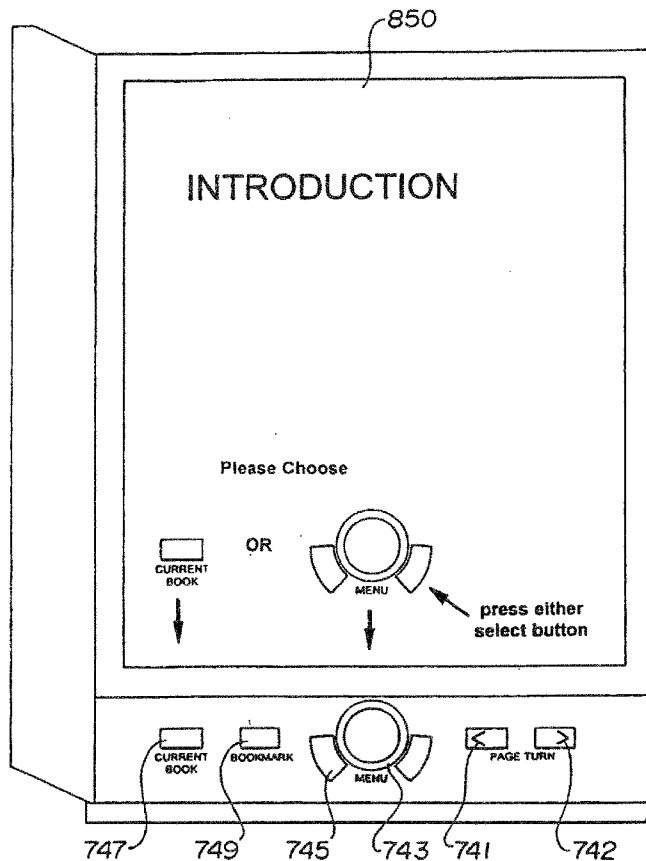
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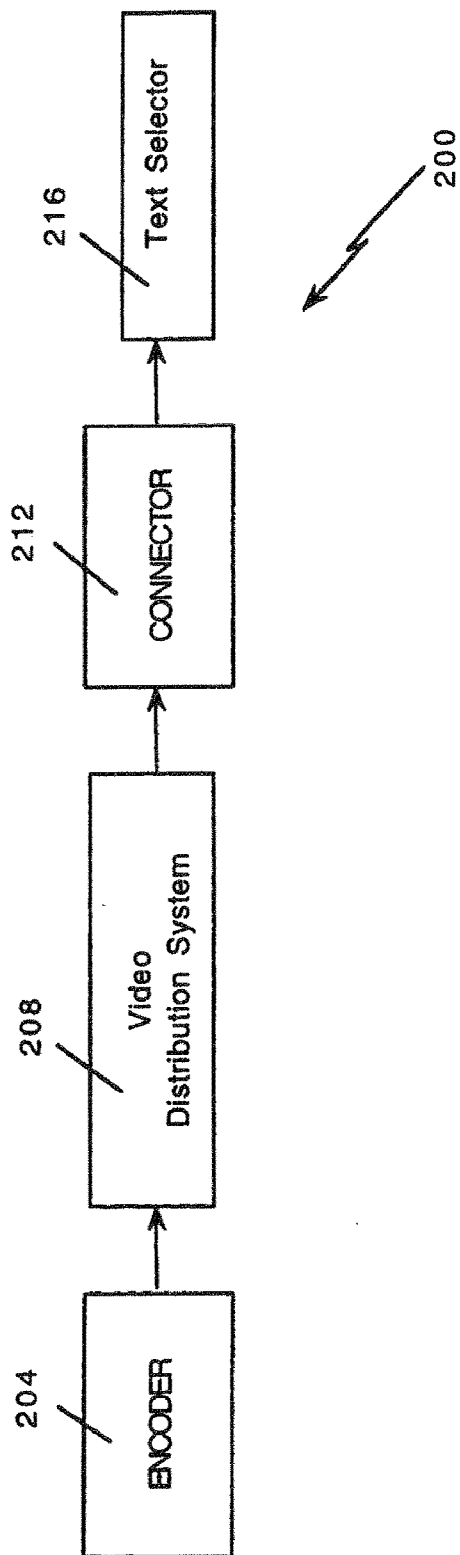


Fig. 1

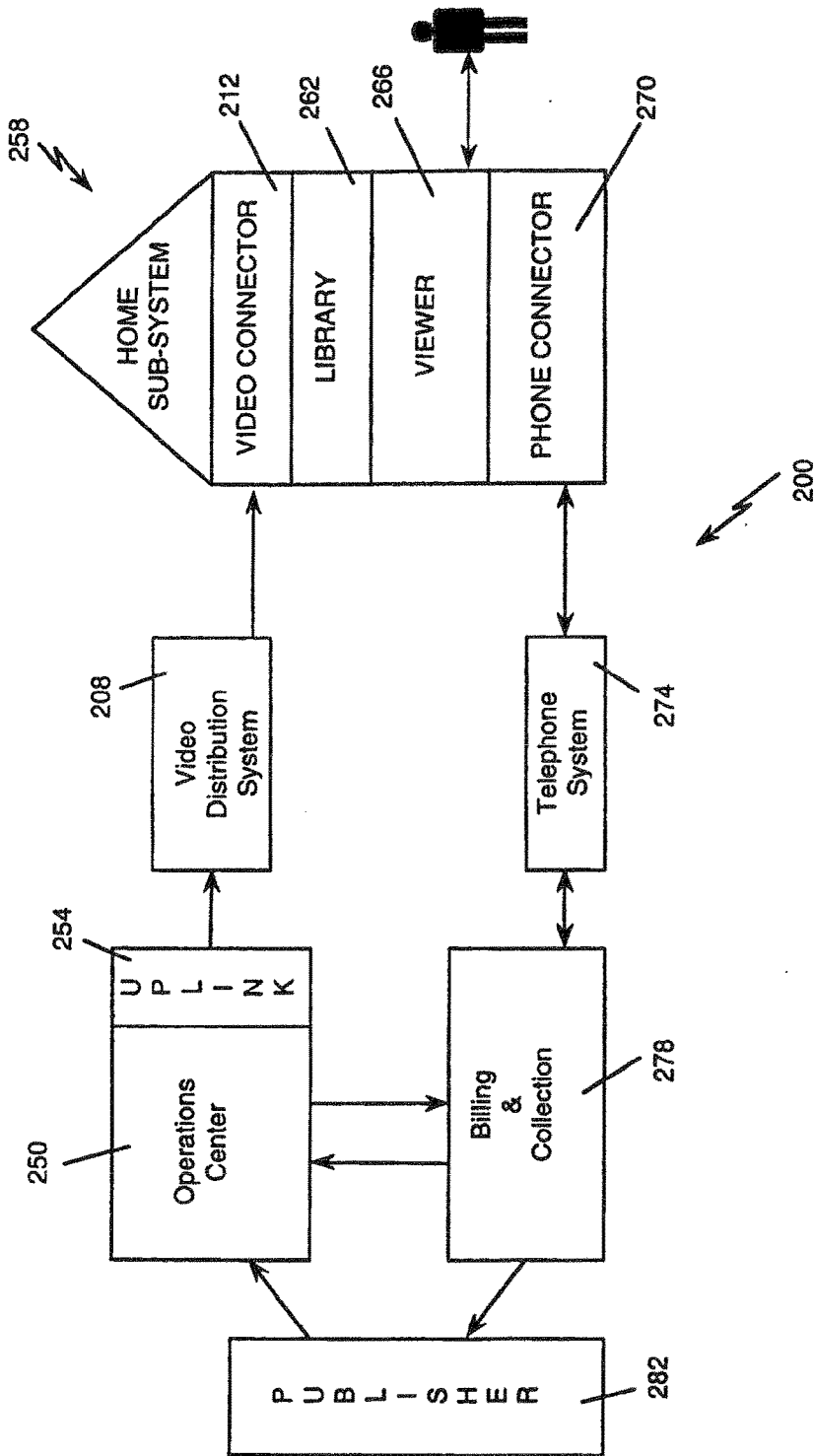
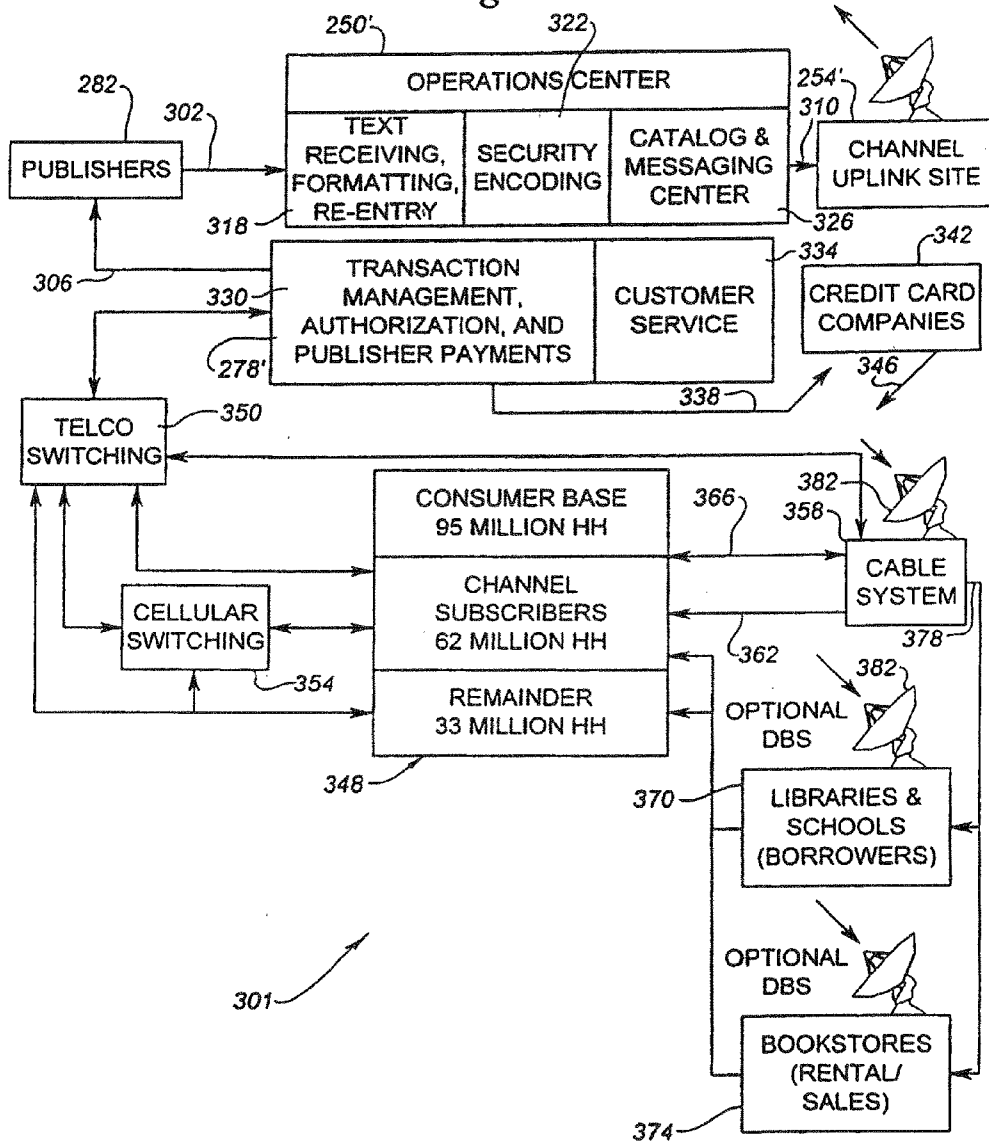


Fig. 2

Fig. 3



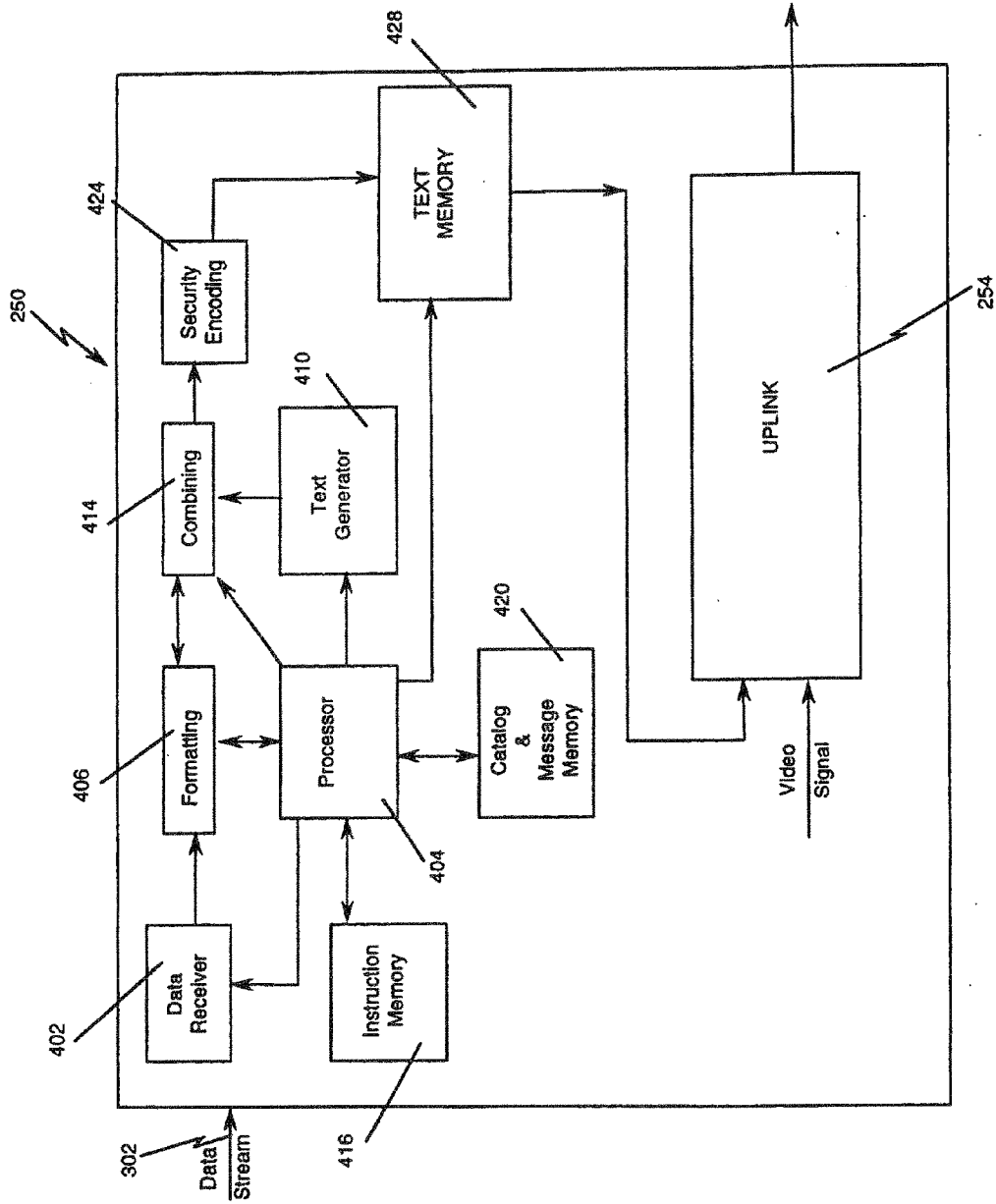


Fig. 4

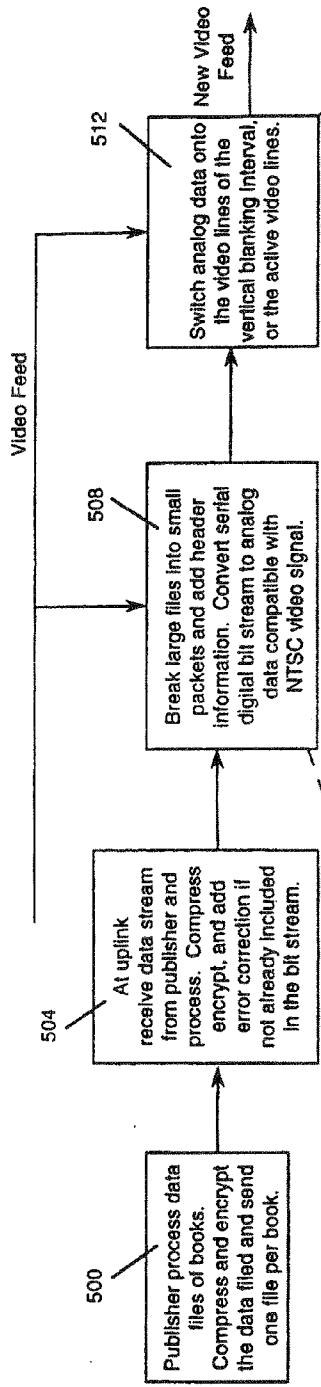


Fig. 5a

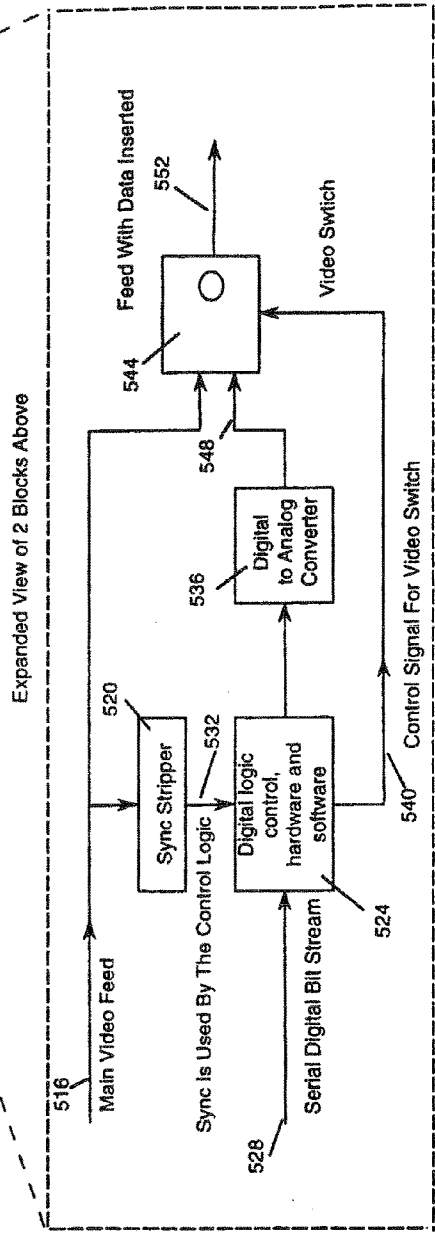


Fig. 5b

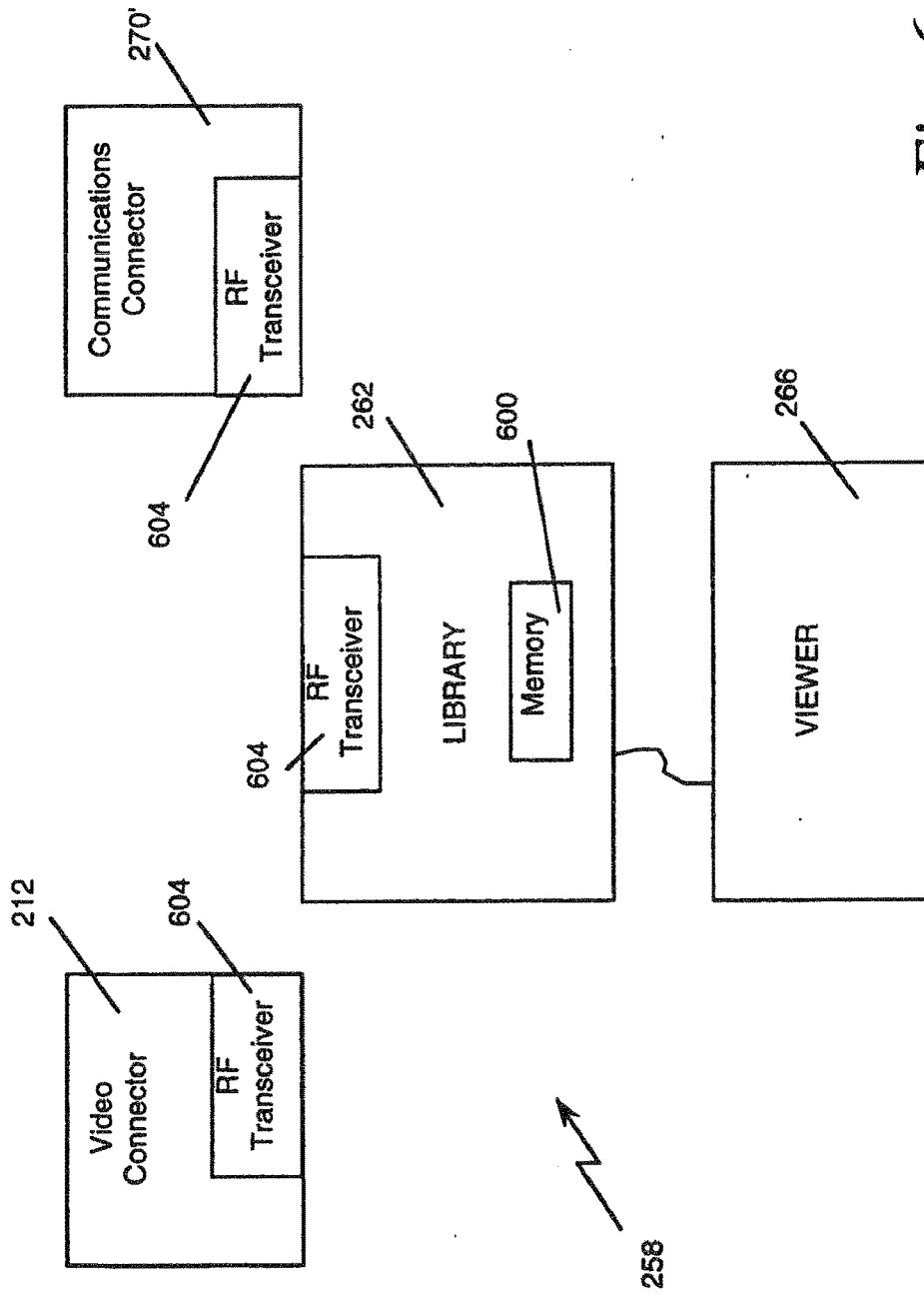


Fig. 6a

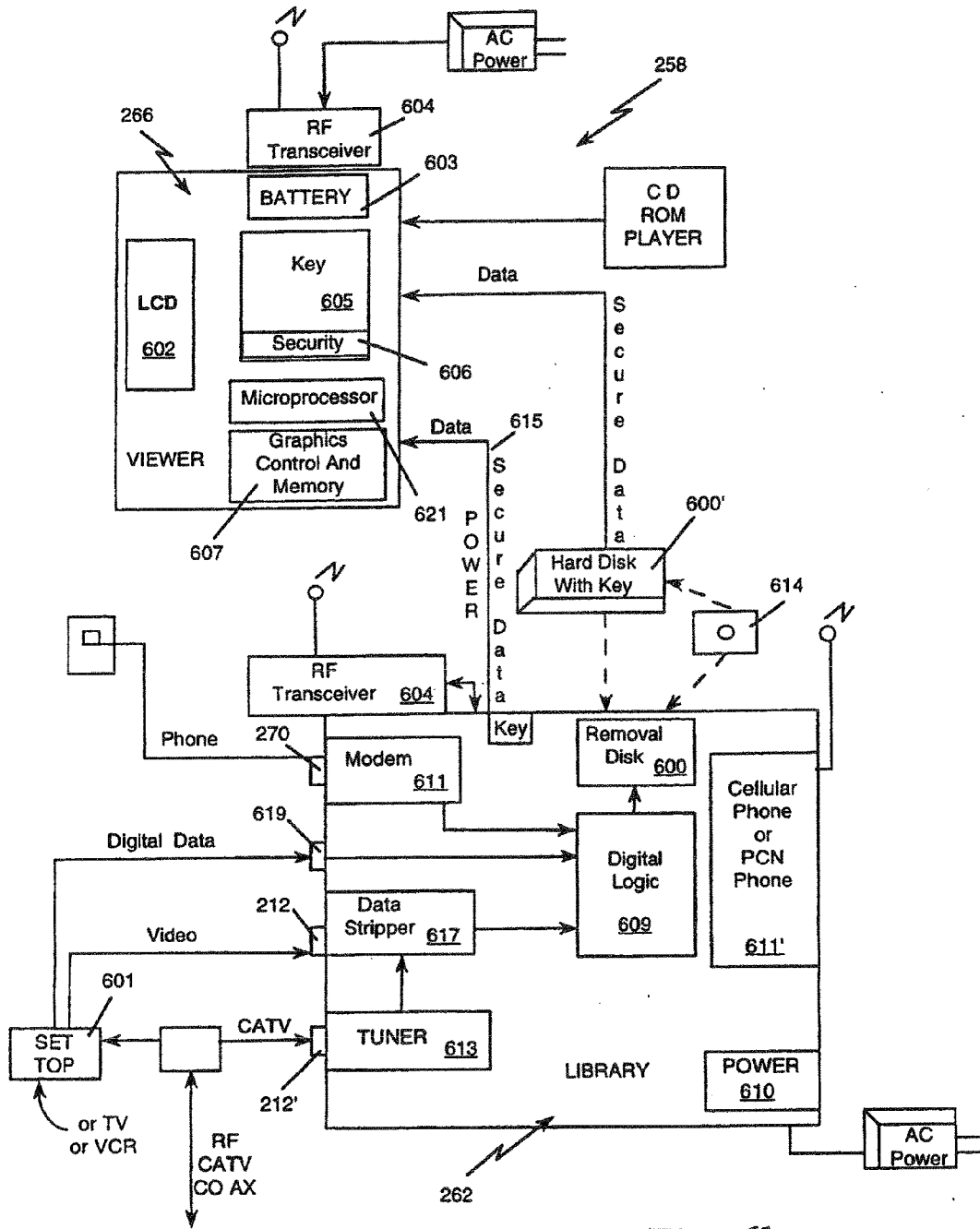


Fig. 6b

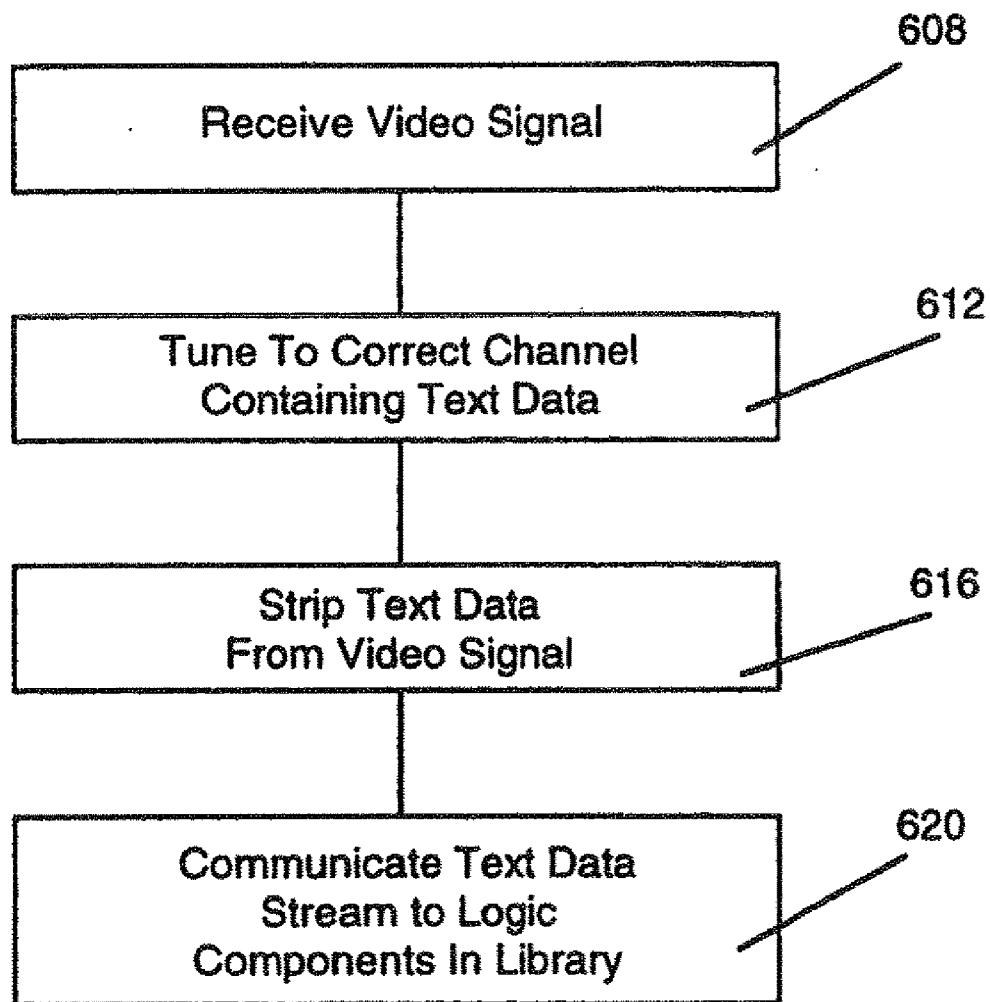


Fig. 7

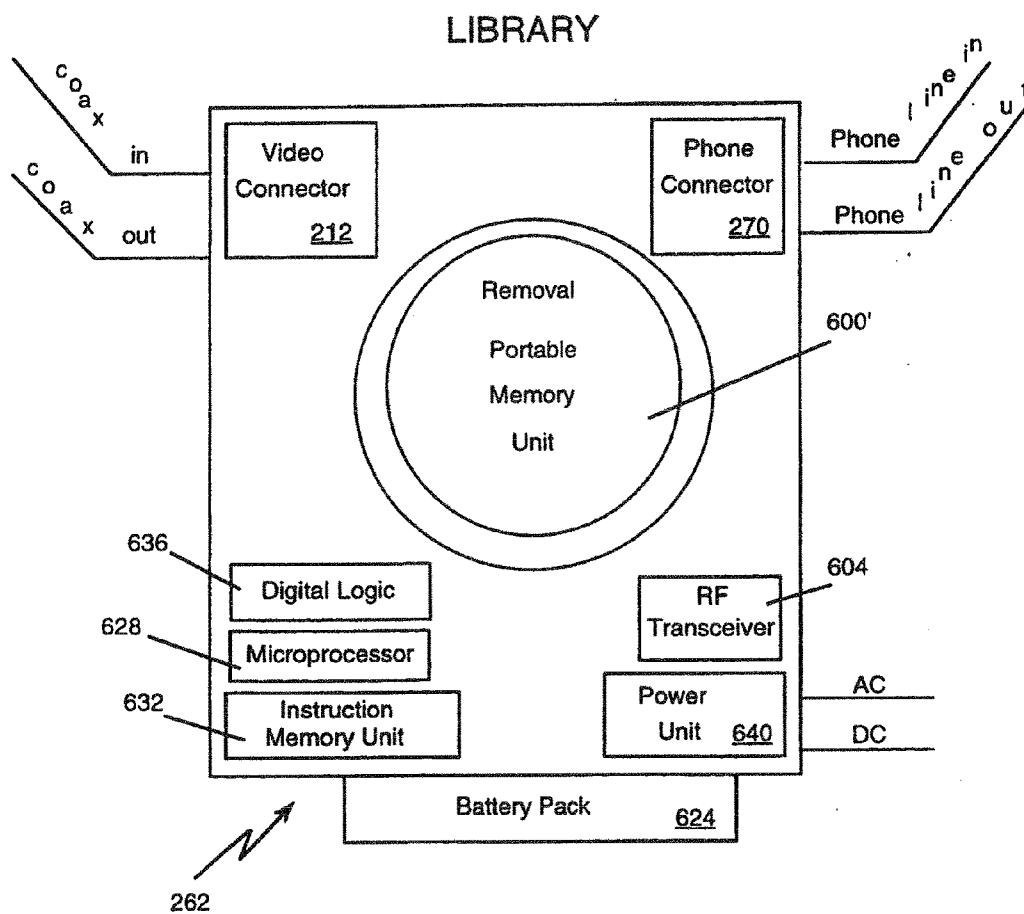


Fig. 8

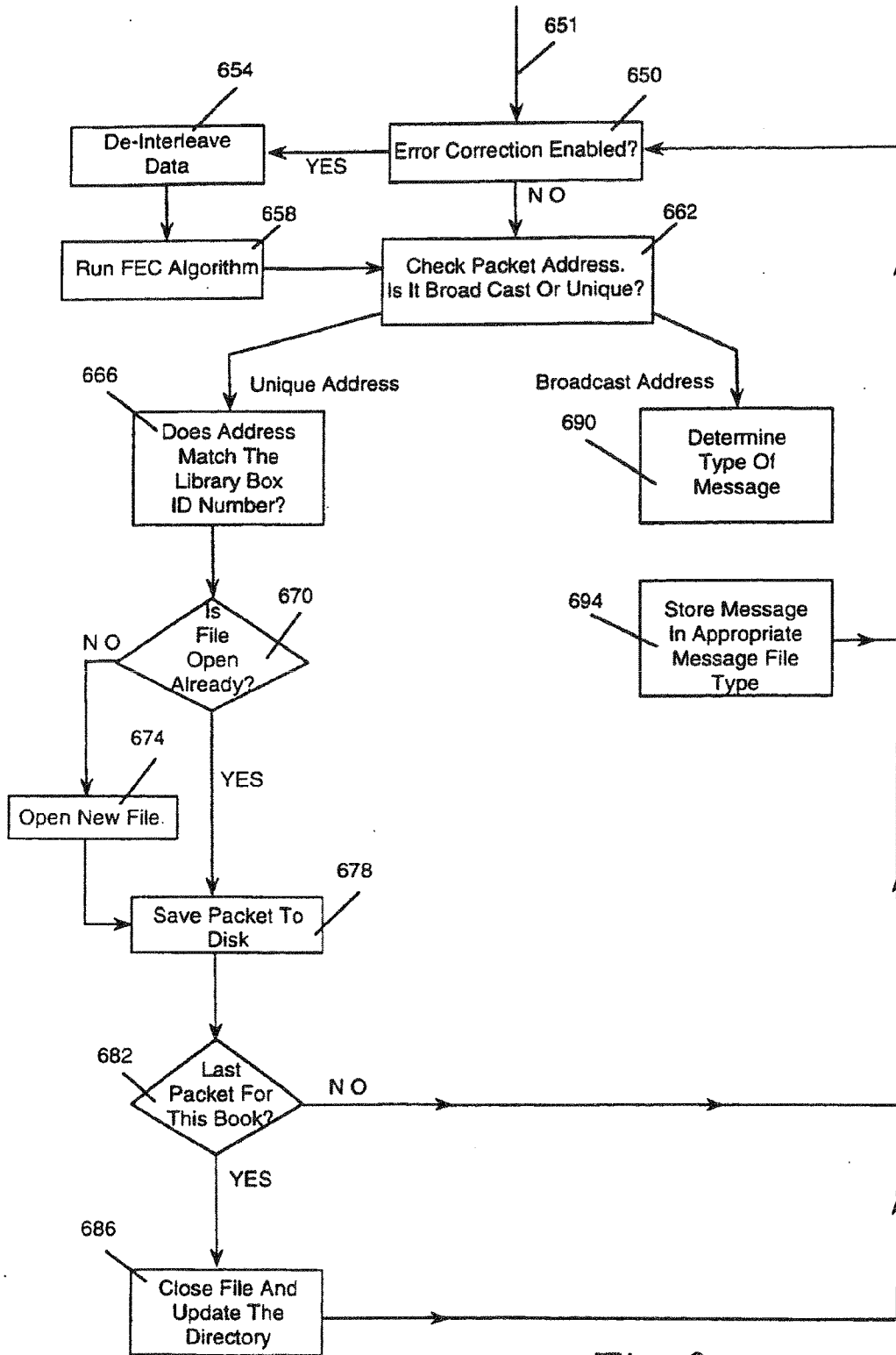


Fig. 9

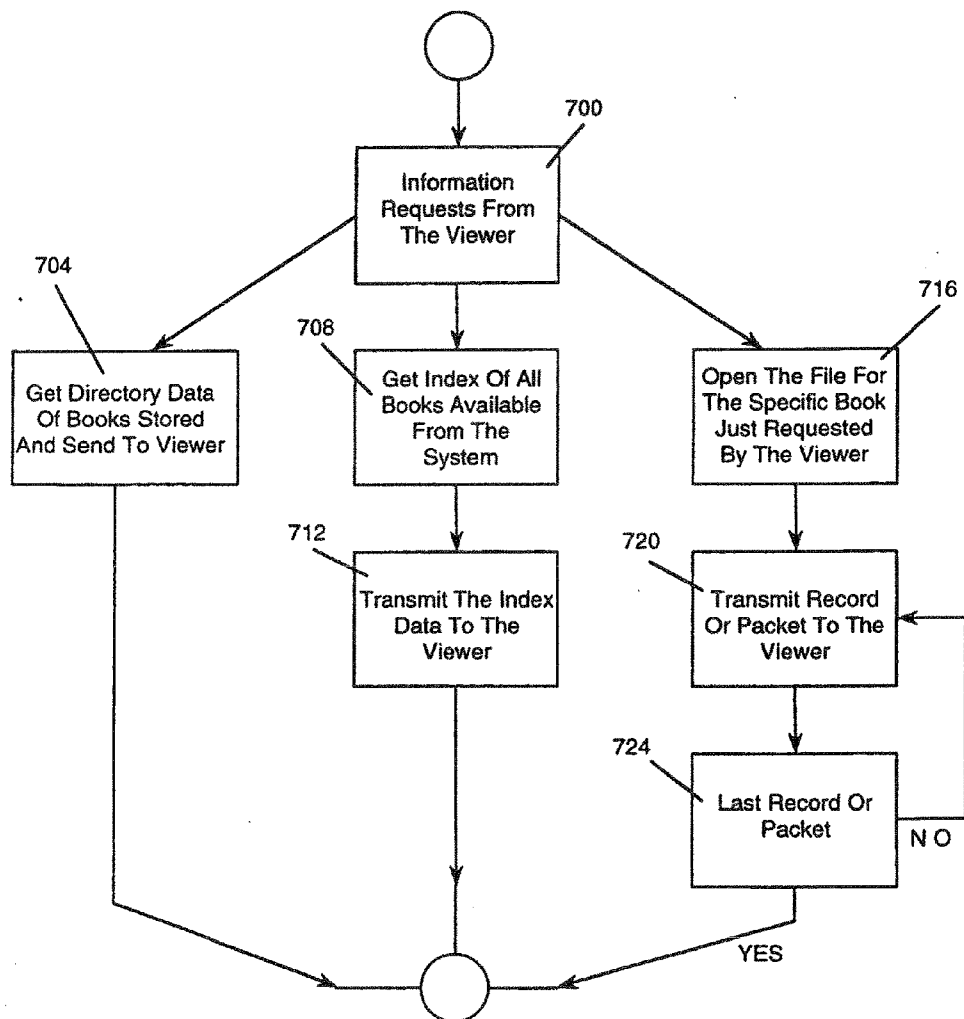


Fig. 10

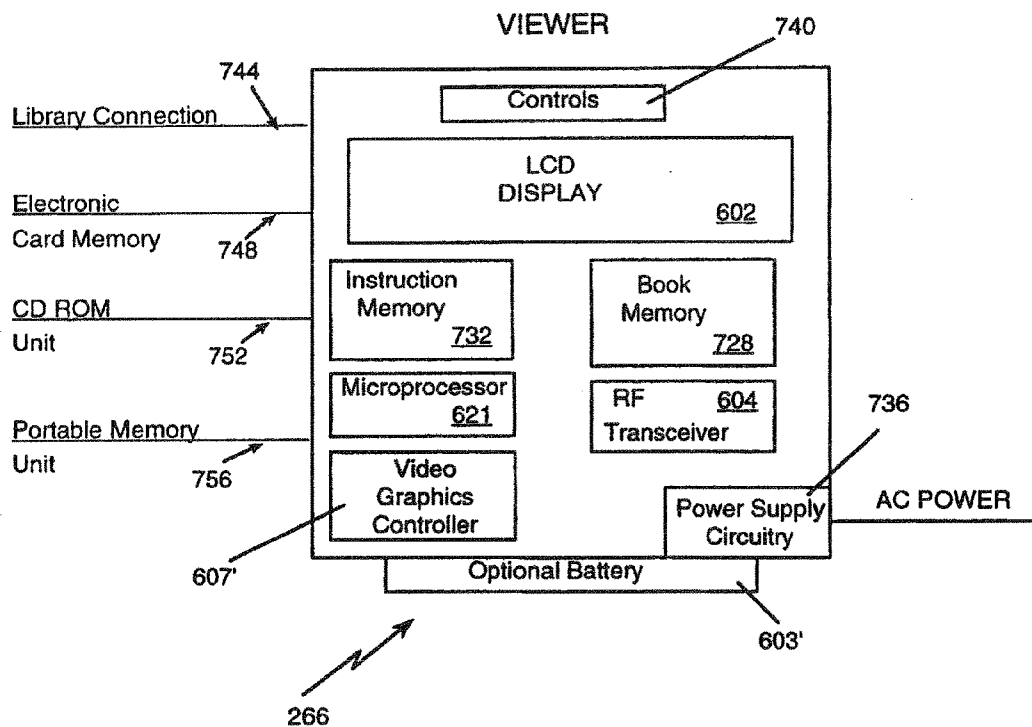


Fig. 11

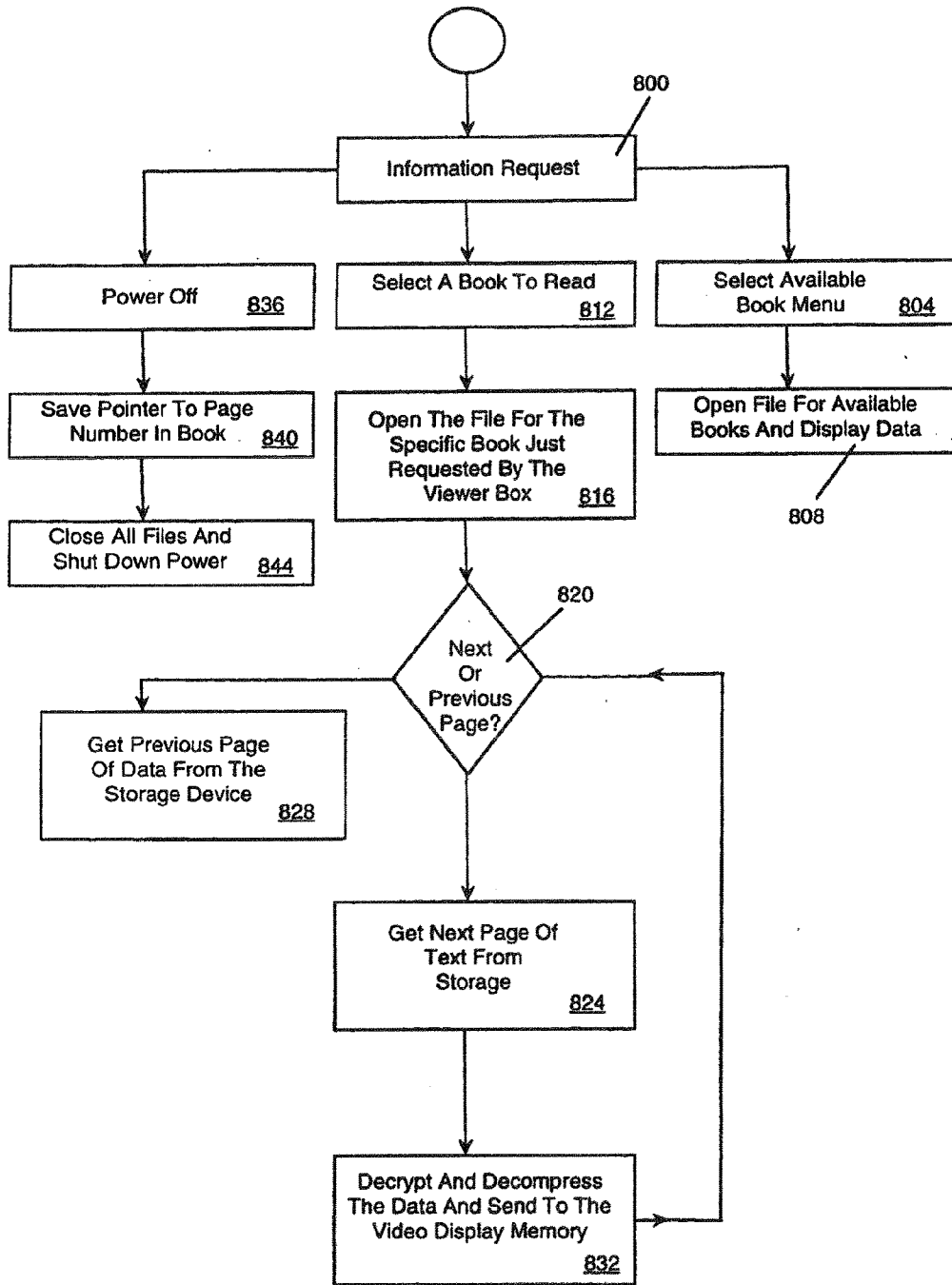


Fig. 12

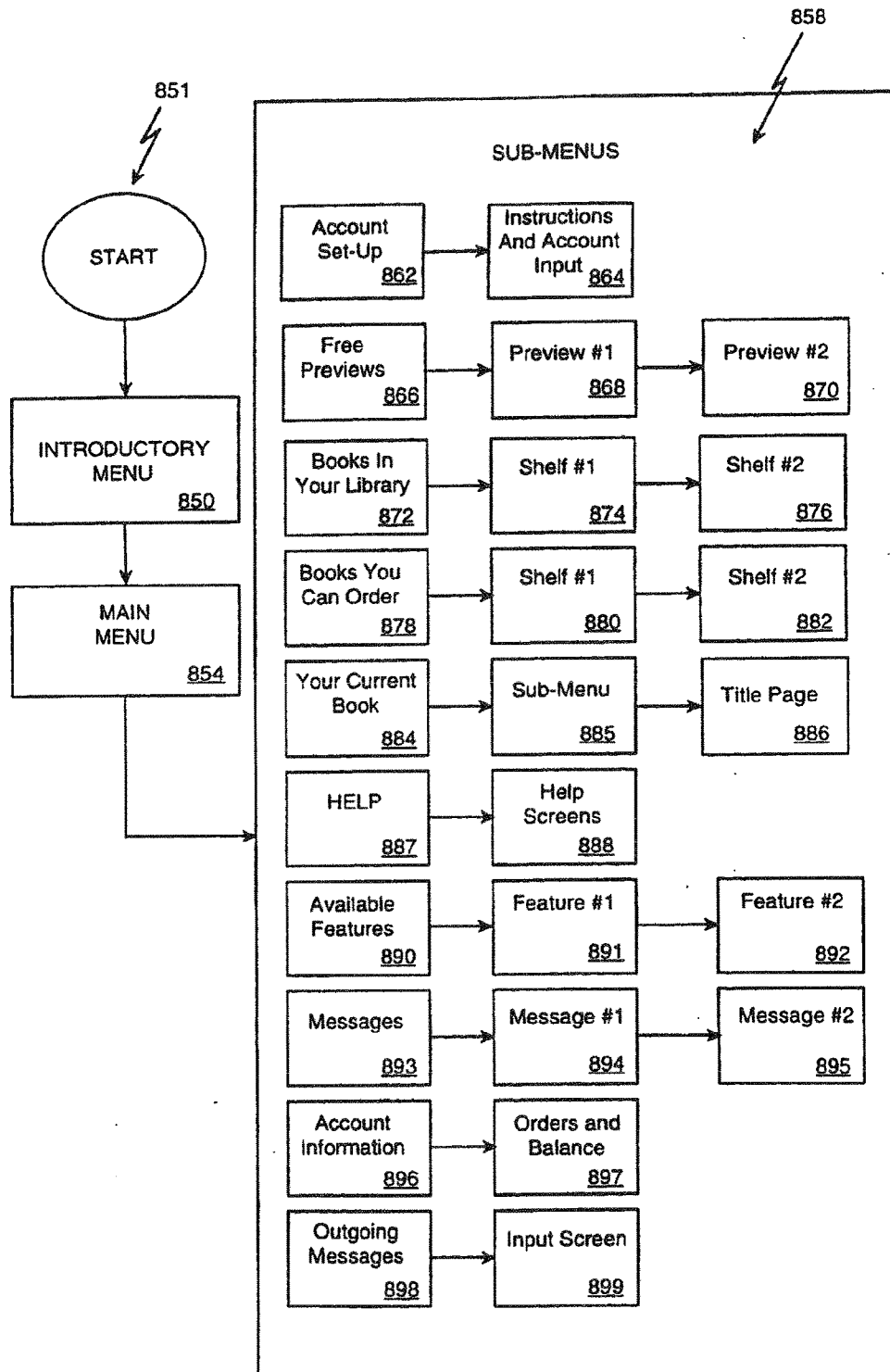


Fig. 13

Fig. 14a

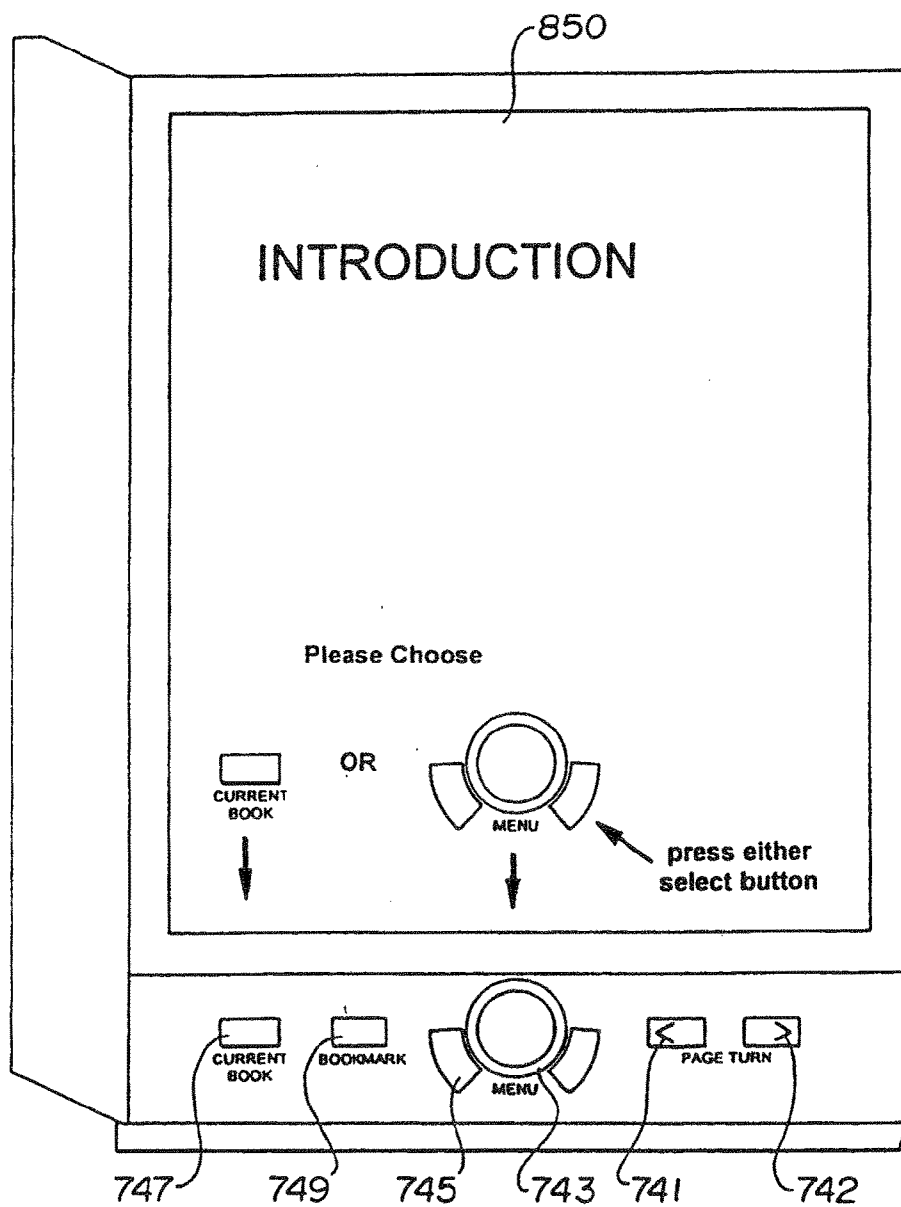


Fig. 14b

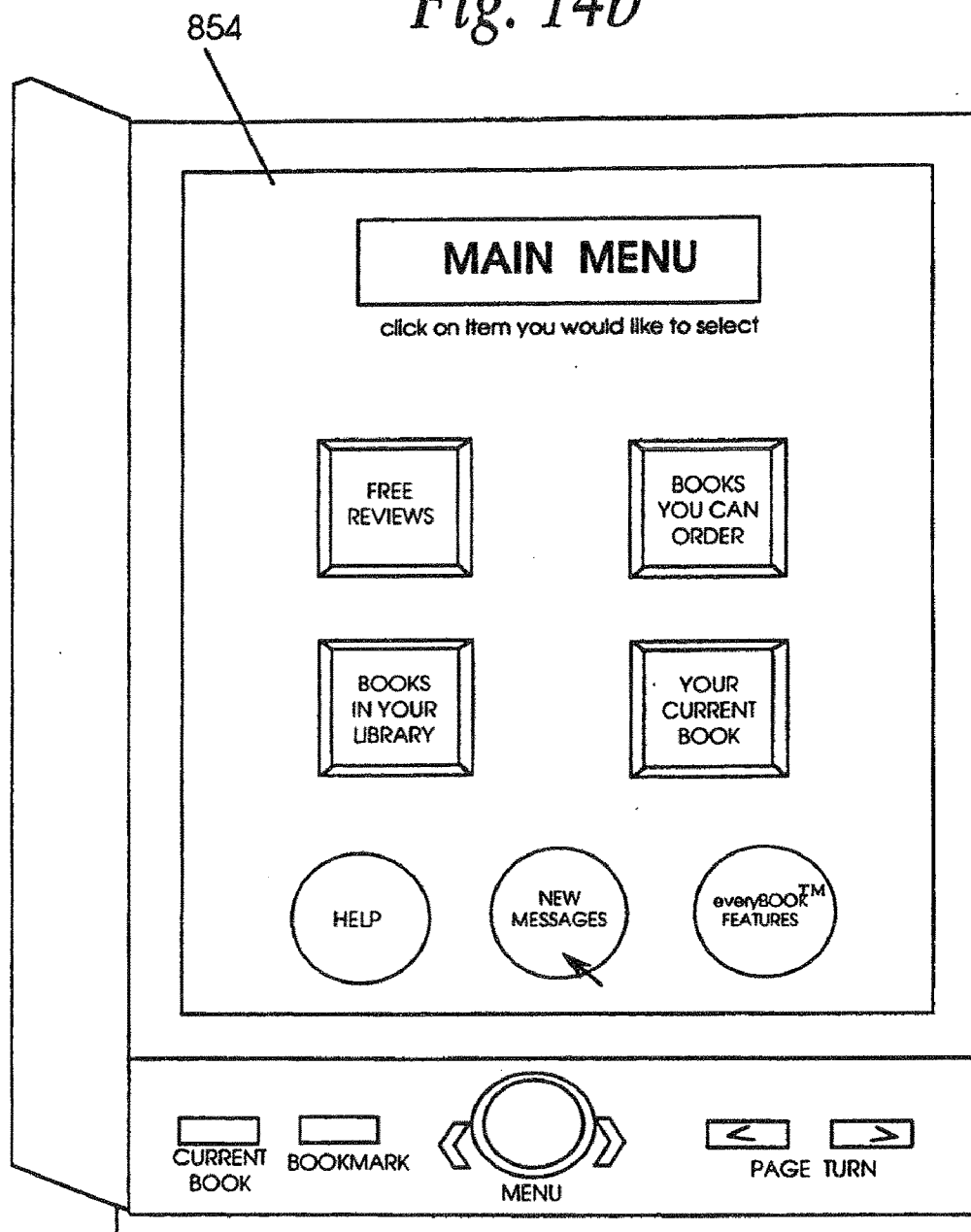


Fig. 14c

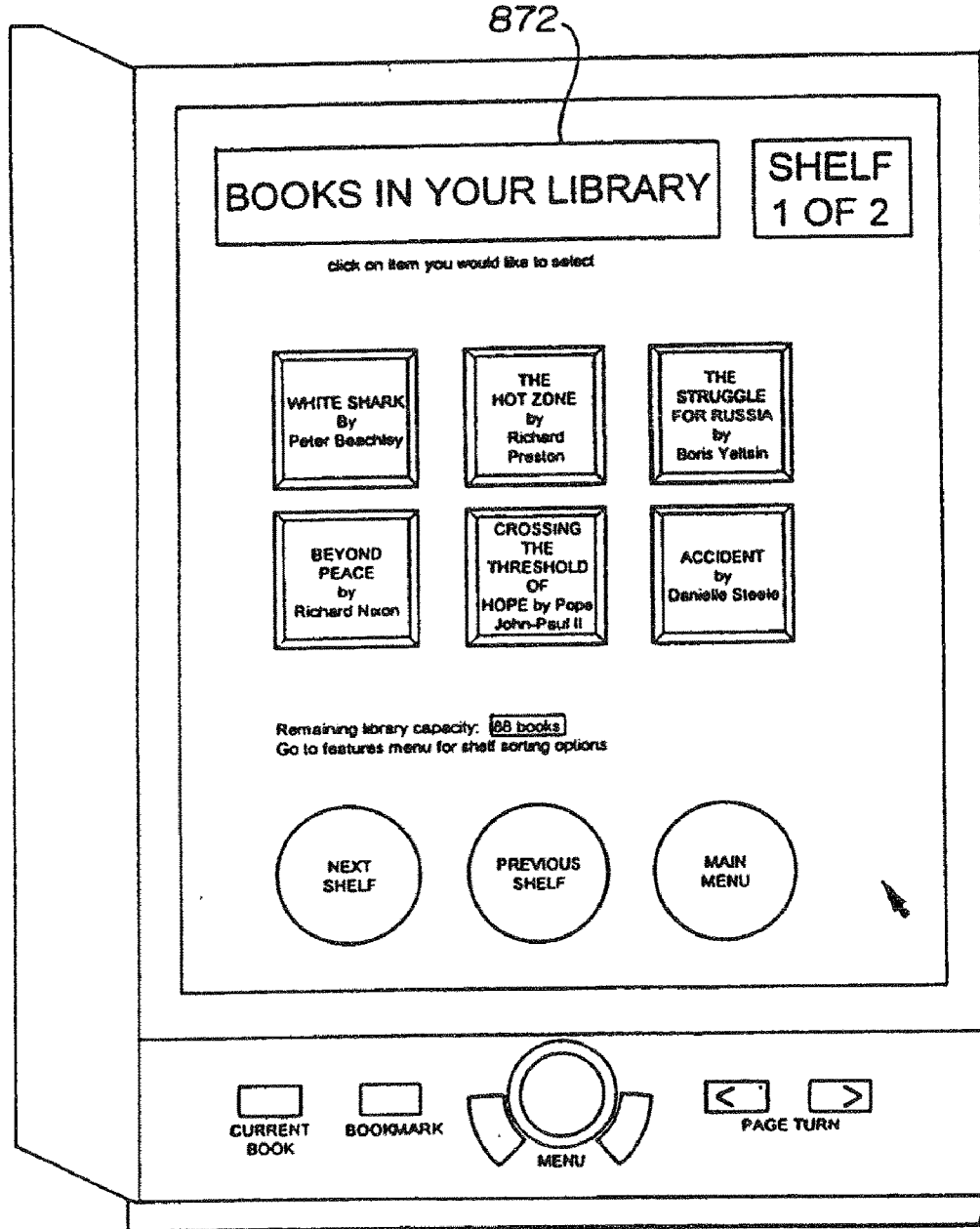


Fig. 14d

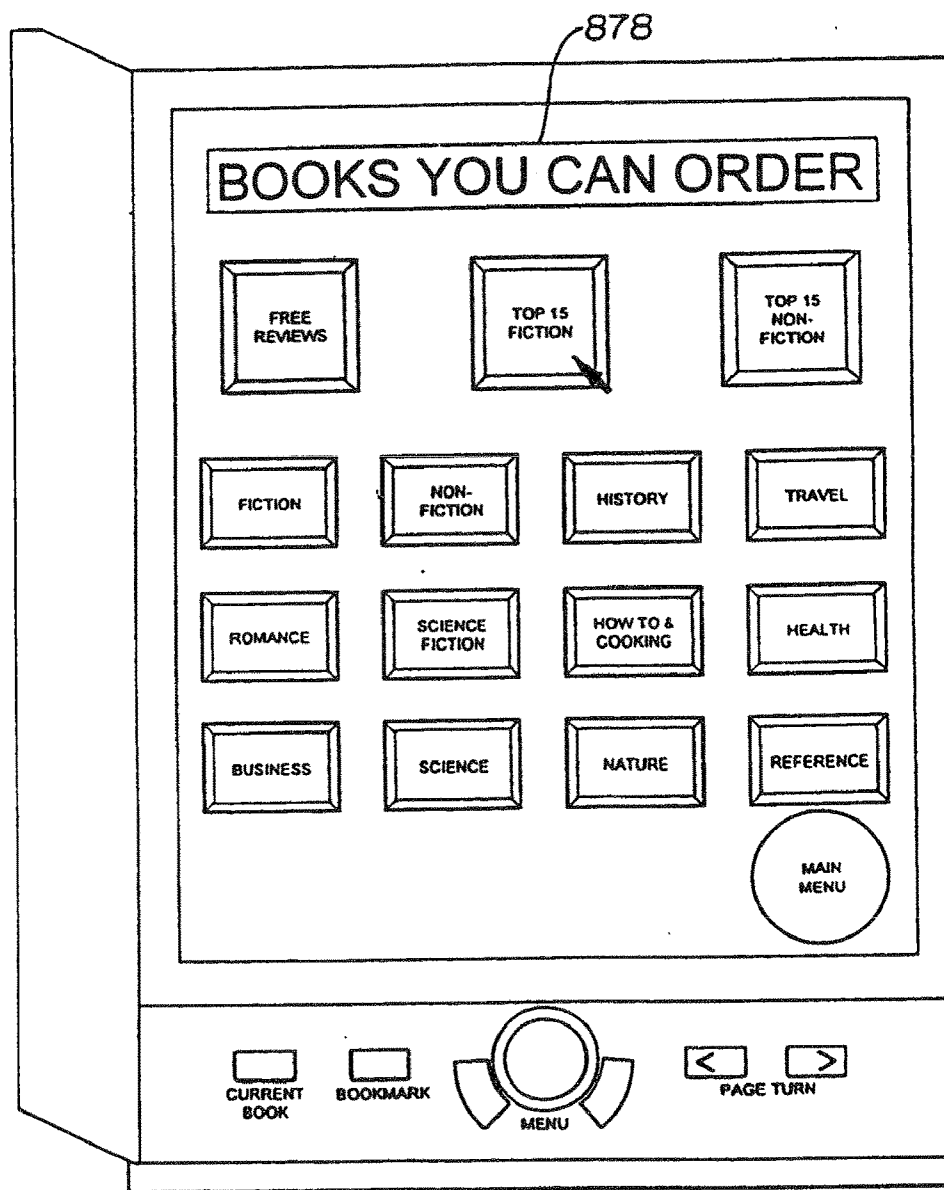
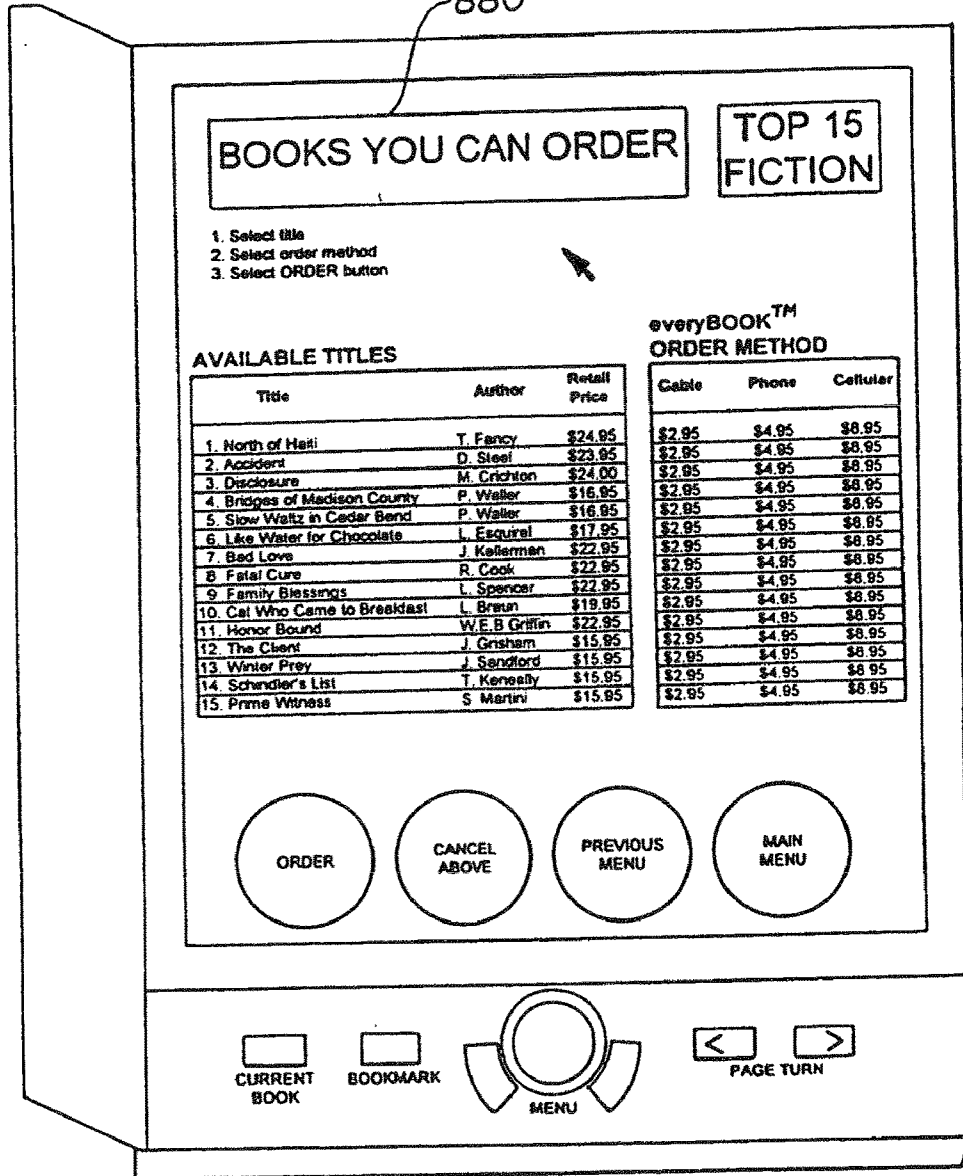


Fig. 14e

880



BOOKS YOU CAN ORDER

TOP 15 FICTION

- 1. Select title
- 2. Select order method
- 3. Select ORDER button

AVAILABLE TITLES

Title	Author	Retail Price
1. North of Haiti	T. Fancy	\$24.95
2. Accident	D. Steel	\$23.95
3. Disclosure	M. Crichton	\$24.00
4. Bridges of Madison County	P. Walker	\$16.95
5. Slow Waltz in Cedar Bend	P. Walker	\$16.95
6. Like Water for Chocolate	L. Esquivel	\$17.95
7. Bad Love	J. Kellerman	\$22.95
8. Fatal Cure	R. Cook	\$22.95
9. Family Blessings	L. Spencer	\$22.95
10. Cat Who Came to Breakfast	L. Braun	\$19.95
11. Honor Bound	W.E.B. Griffin	\$22.95
12. The Client	J. Grisham	\$15.95
13. Winter Prey	J. Sandford	\$15.95
14. Schindler's List	T. Keneally	\$15.95
15. Prime Witness	S. Martini	\$15.95

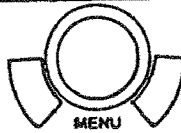
everyBOOK™ ORDER METHOD

Cable	Phone	Cellular
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95
\$2.95	\$4.95	\$8.95

- ORDER
- CANCEL ABOVE
- PREVIOUS MENU
- MAIN MENU

CURRENT BOOK

BOOKMARK



PAGE TURN

Fig. 14f

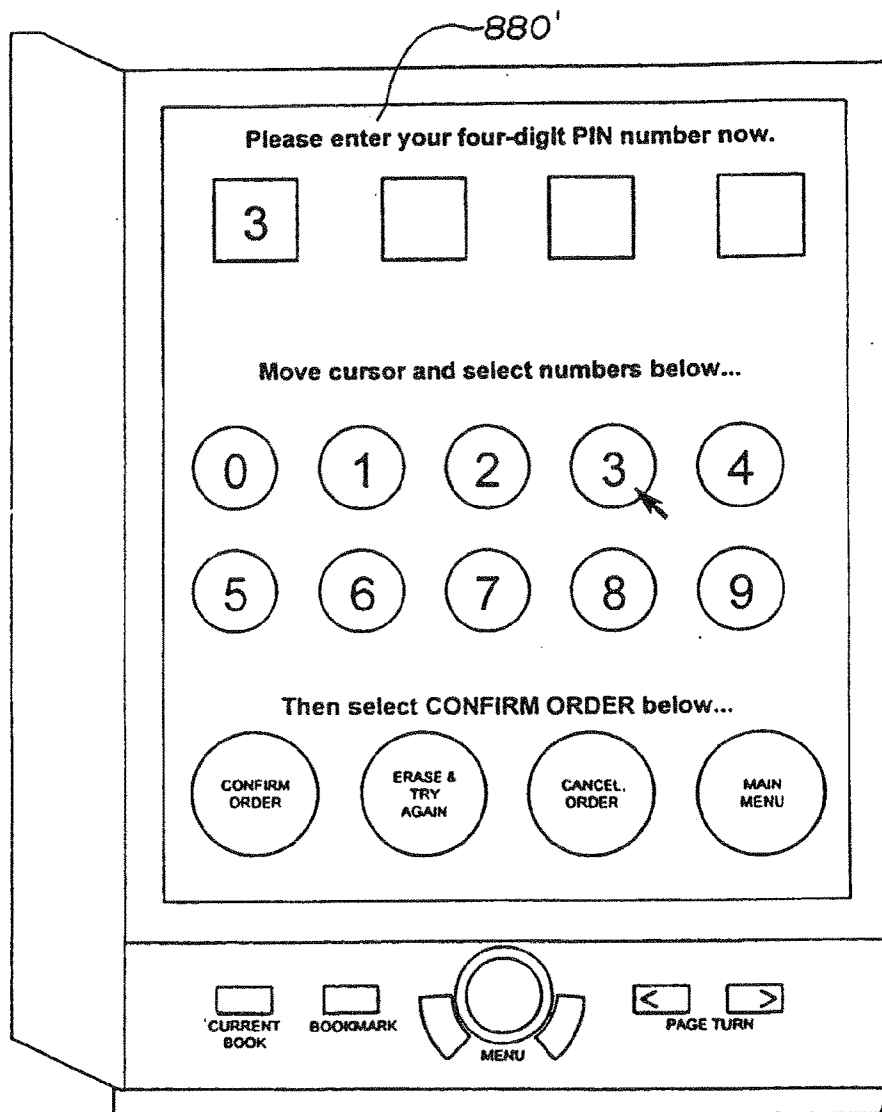


Fig. 14g

880'

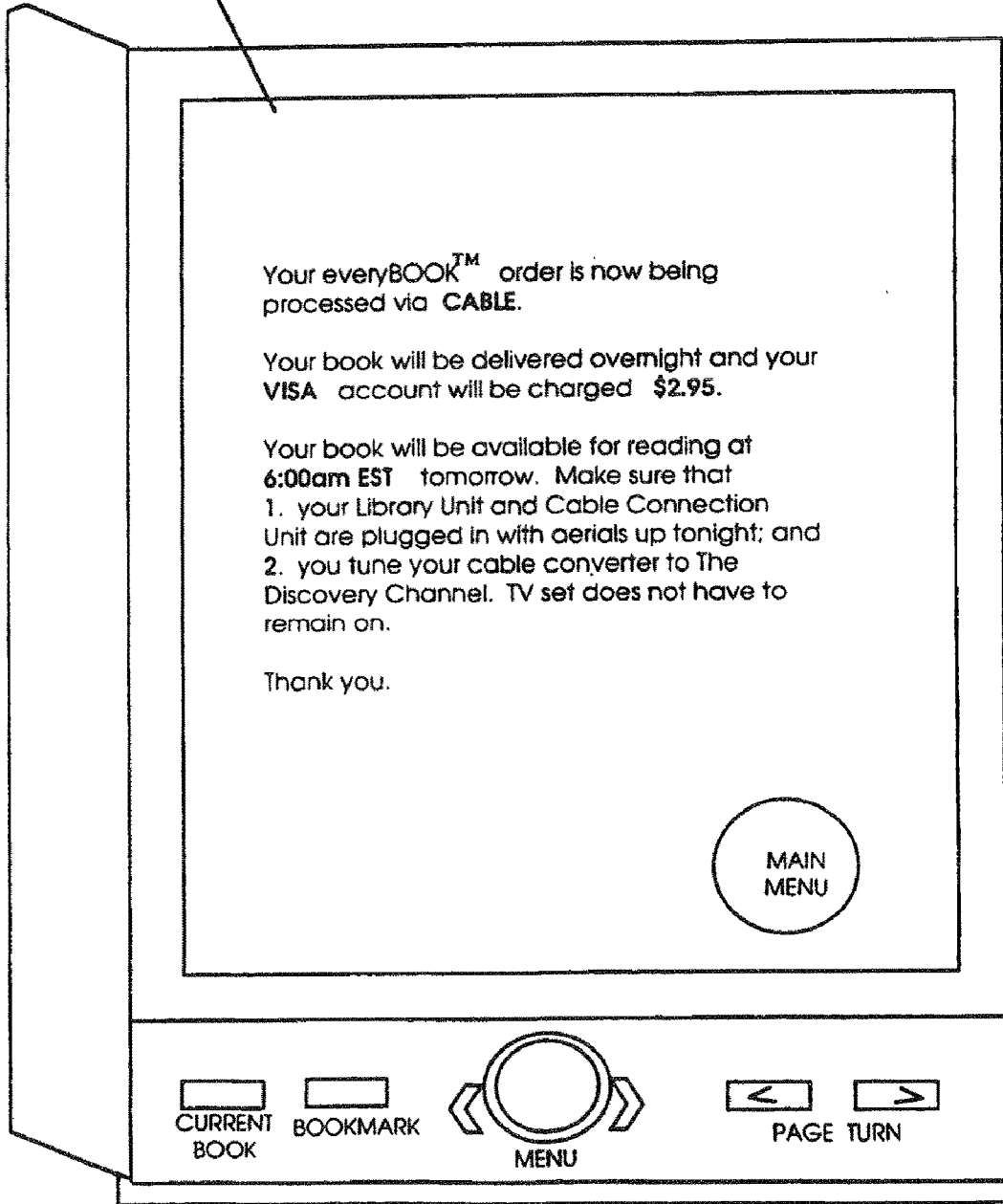


Fig. 14h

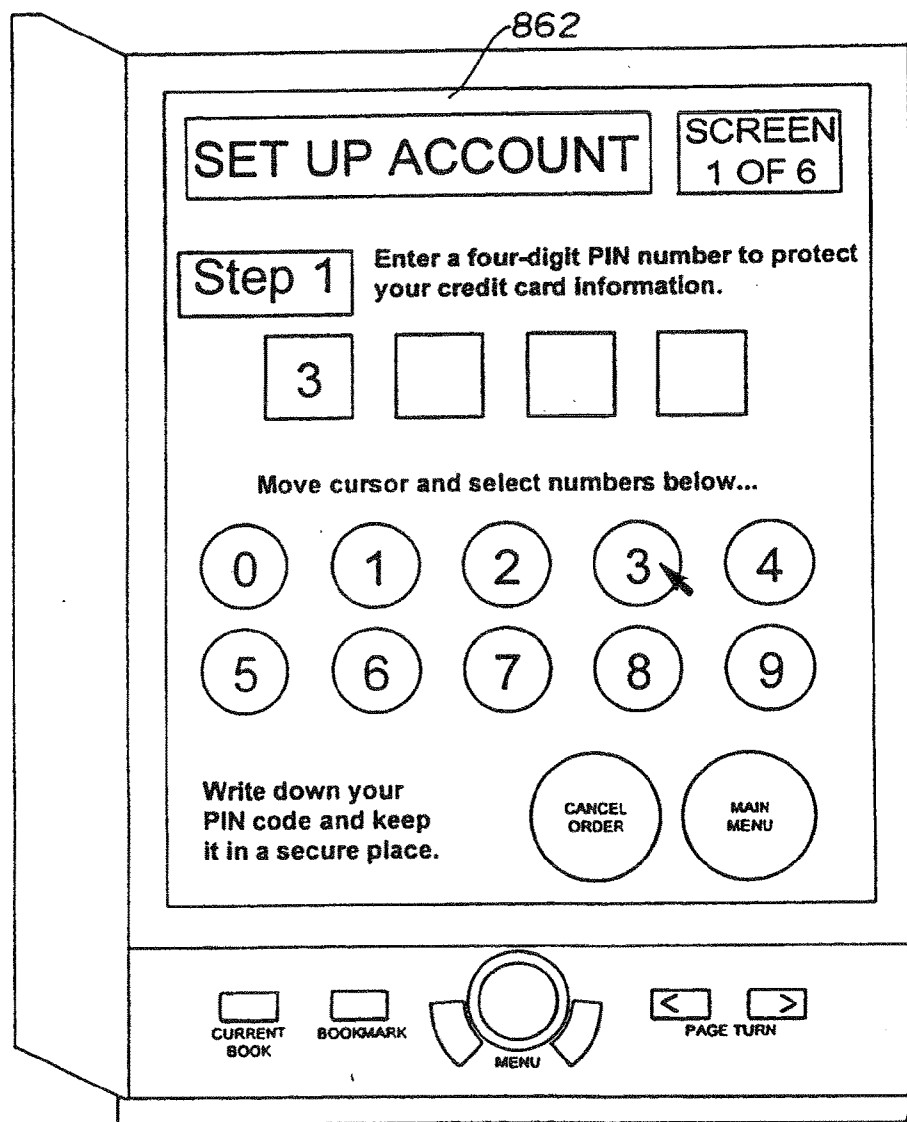


Fig. 14i

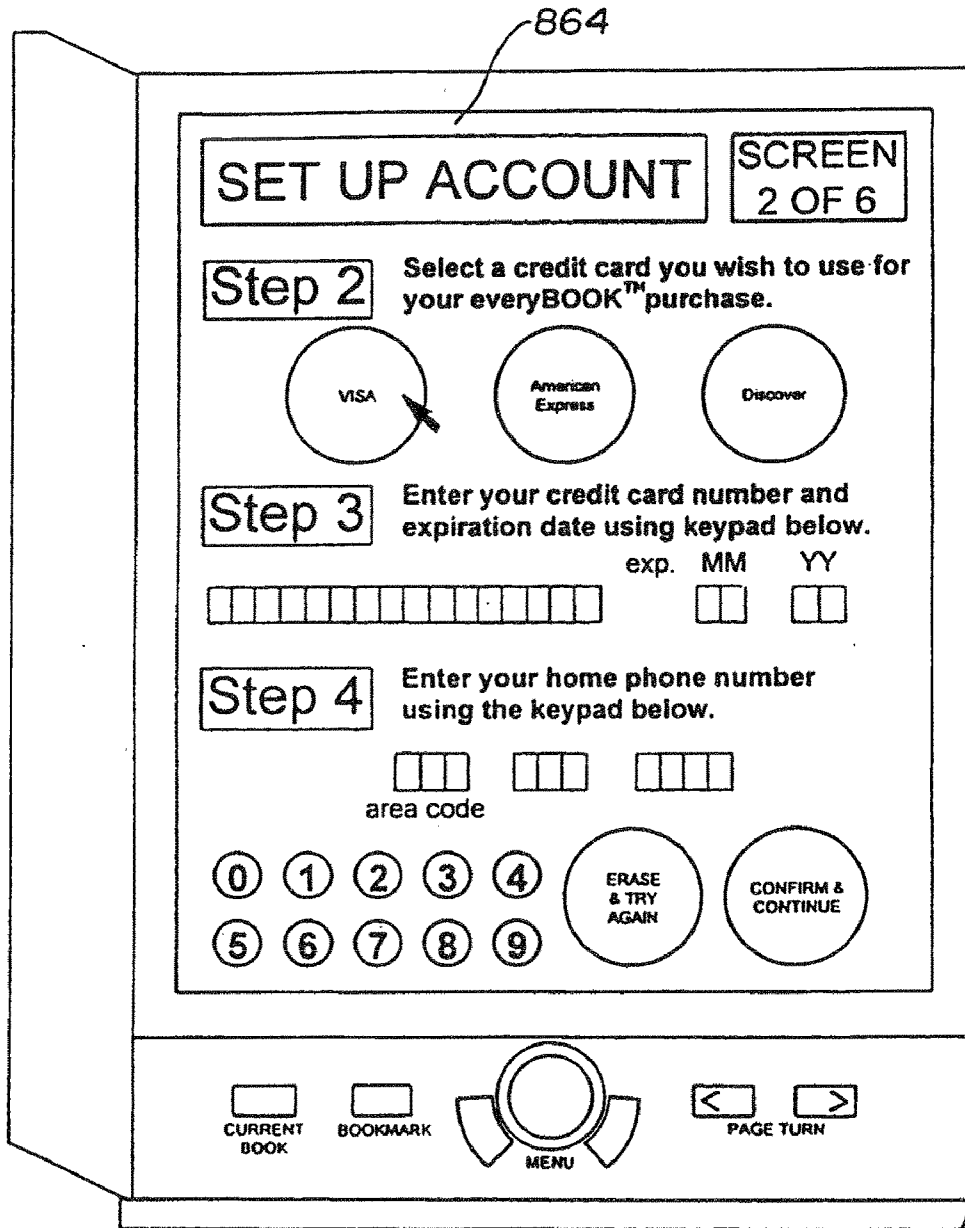


Fig. 14j

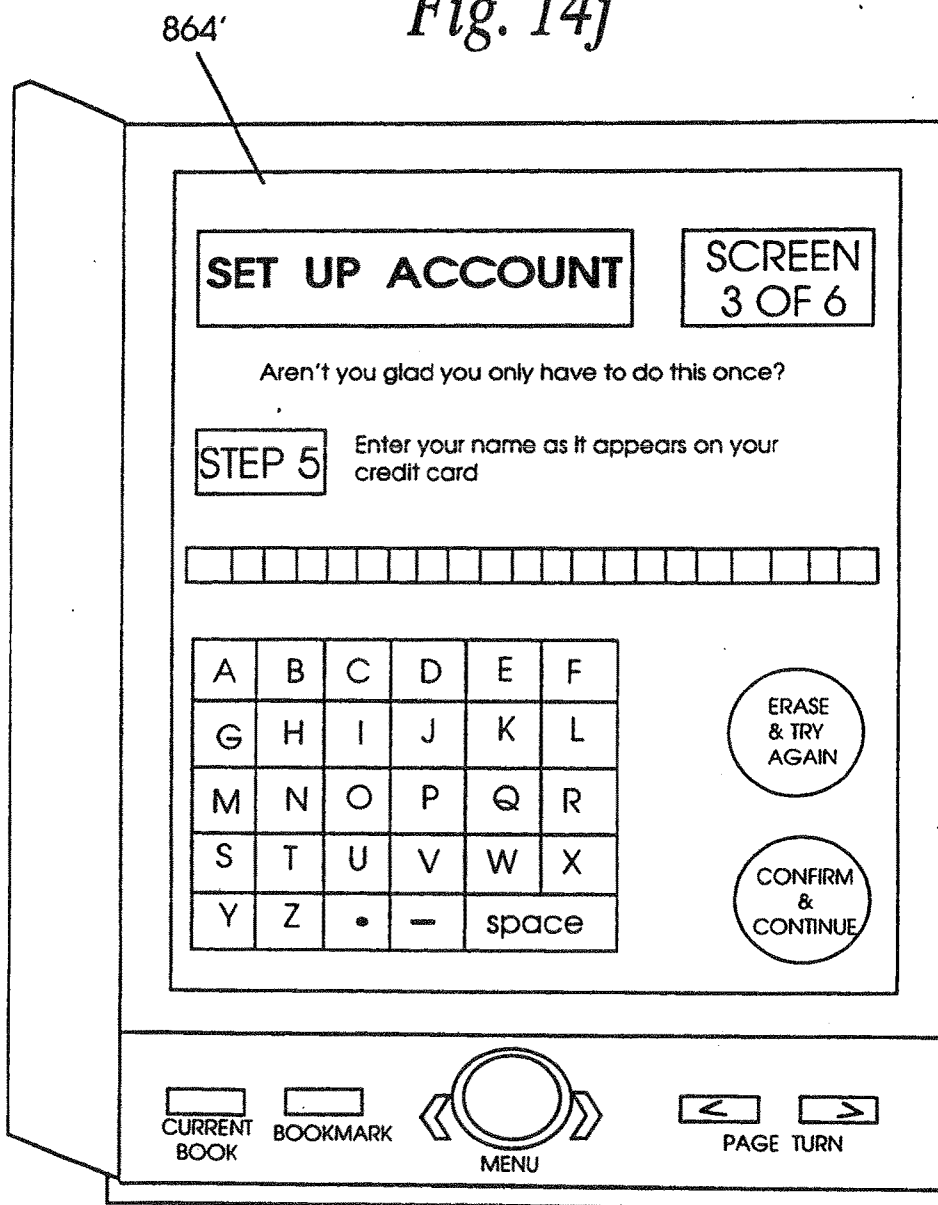


Fig. 14k

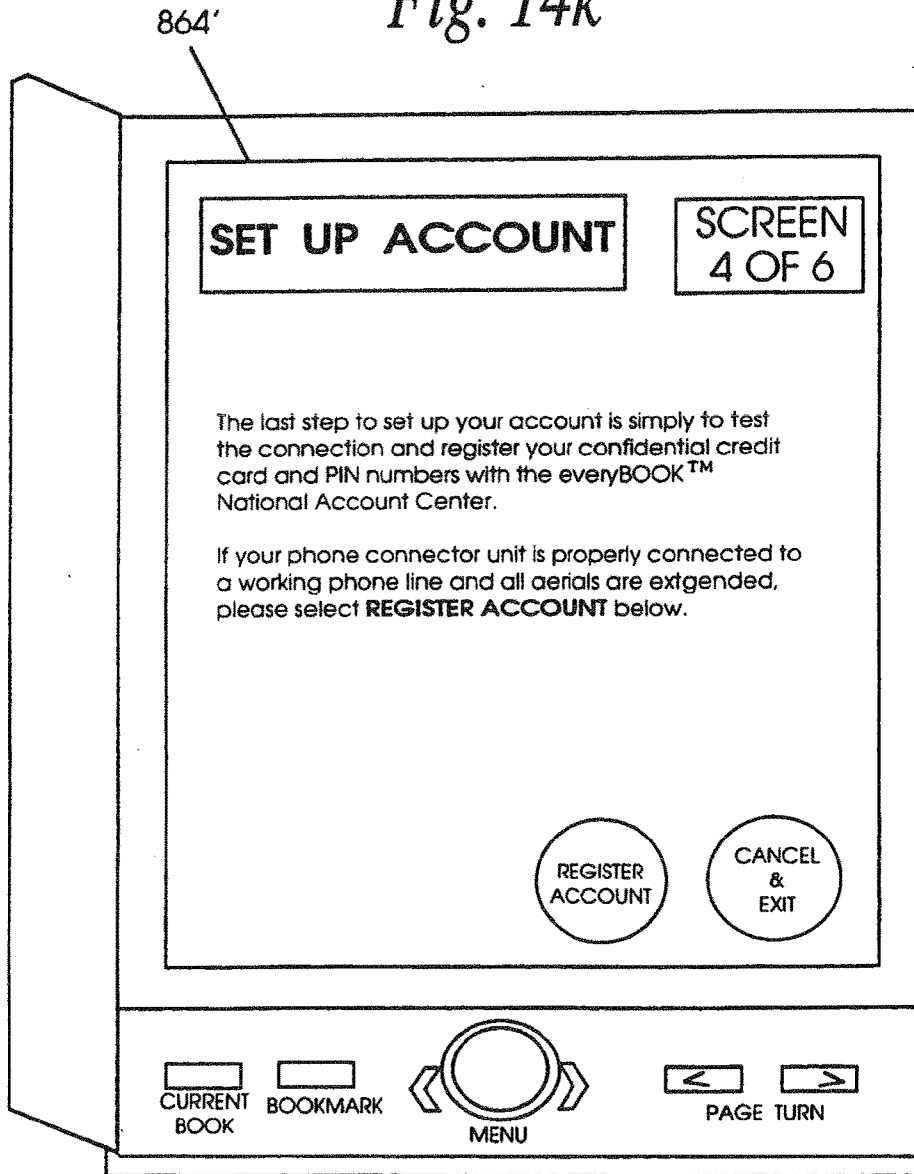


Fig. 14l

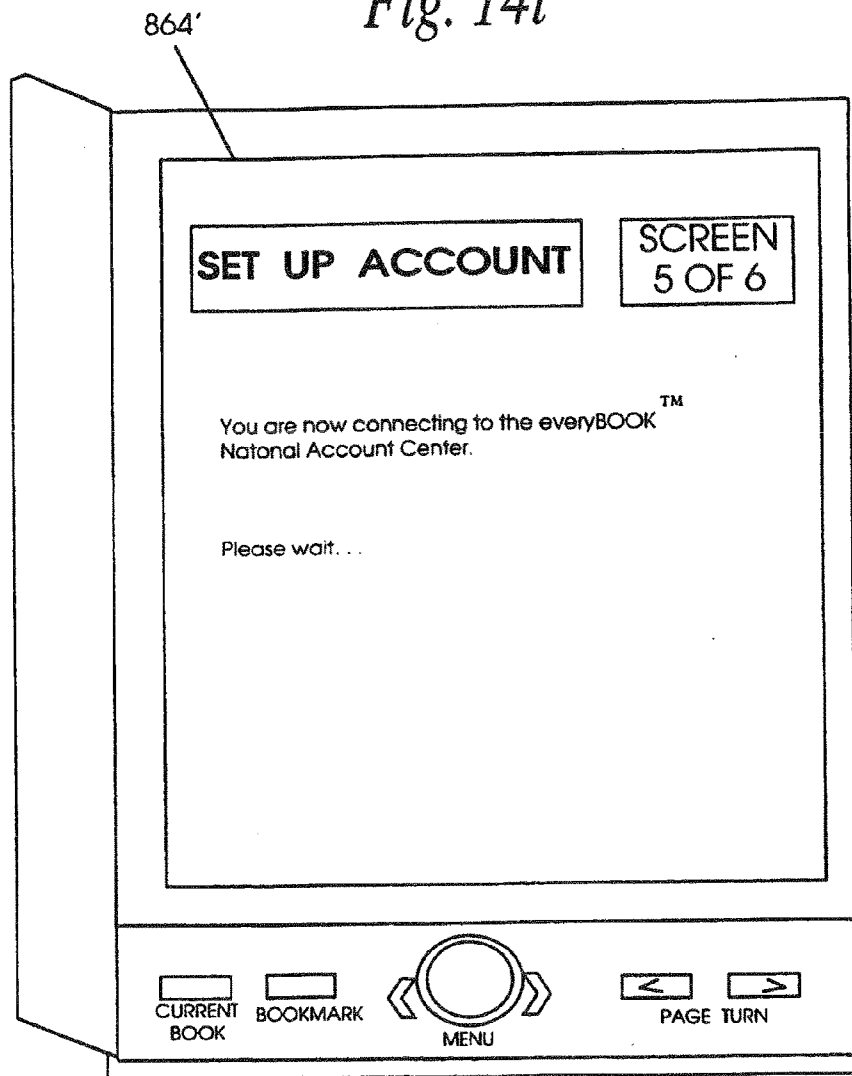


Fig. 14m

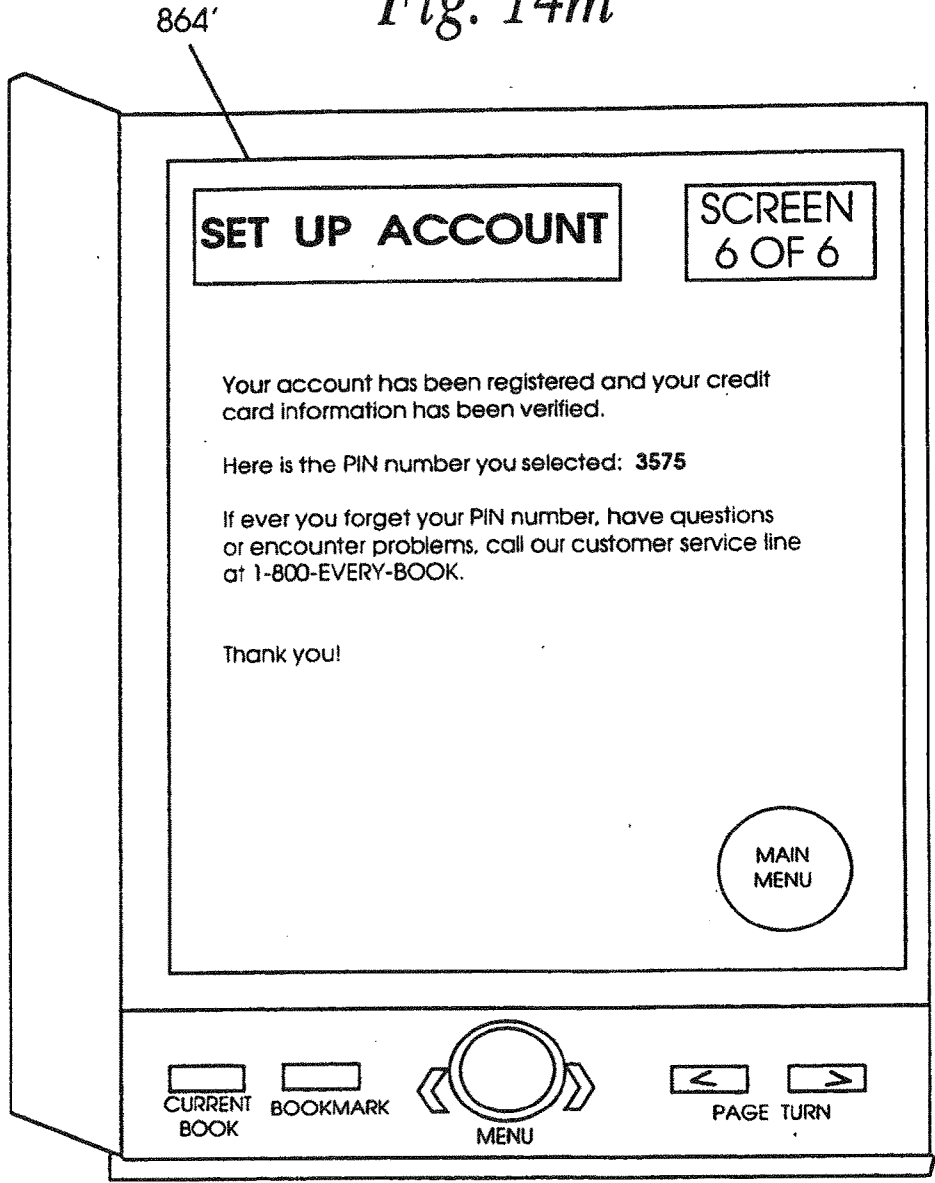


Fig. 14n

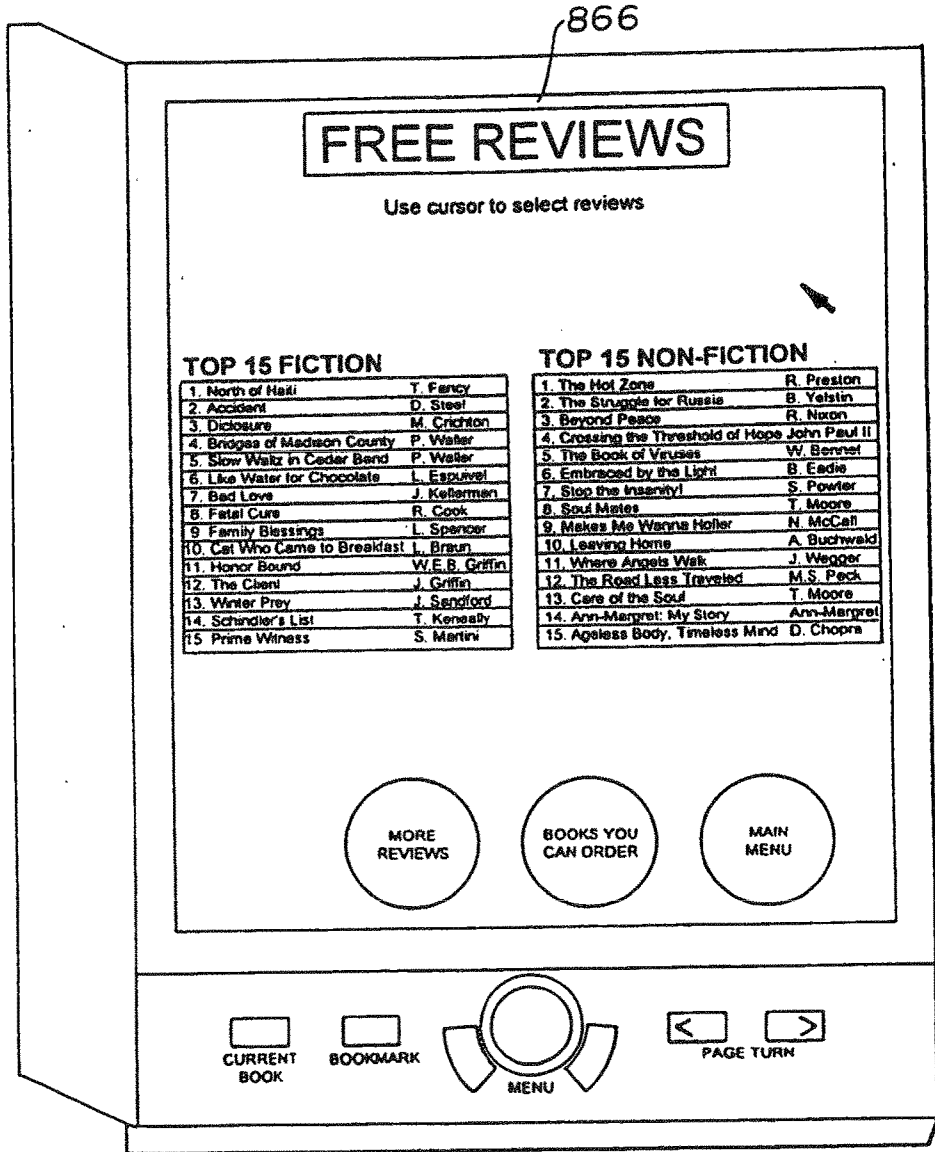


Fig. 140

868

FREE REVIEWS

THE HOT ZONE
by Richard Preston
Random House

Price	
Bookstore	\$23
Cable	\$3
Phone	\$6
Cellular	\$9

DESCRIPTION (BOOK COVER EXCERPT)
The virus kills nine out of ten of its victims so quickly and gruesomely that even biohazard experts are terrified. It is airborne. It is extremely contagious, and it is about to burn through the suburbs of a major American city. Is there any way to stop it?

In the winter of 1989, at an Army research facility outside Washington, D.C., this doomsday scenario seemed like a real possibility. A SWAT team of soldiers and

scientists wearing biohazard space suits had been organized to stop the outbreak of an exotic "hot" virus. The grim operation went on in secret for eighteen days, under dangerous conditions for which there was no precedent.

The Hot Zone tells this dramatic story in depth for the first time, giving an absolutely hair-raising account of the appearance of rare and lethal viruses and their "crashes" into the human race.

REVIEWS (BOOK COVER EXCERPT)
"The first chapter of *The Hot Zone* is one of the most horrifying things I've ever read in my whole life...and then it gets worse. That's what I keep marveling over. It keeps getting worse. What a remarkable piece of work. I devoured it in two or three sittings...and have a feeling the memories will linger a long time."

—Steven King

"One of the most terrifying books I've ever read. Move over Stephen King and Michael Crichton — this really happened within sight of the Washington Monument. An sooner or later it will happen again."

—Arthur C. Clarke

CRITIC
REVIEWS
OF
THIS BOOK

ABOUT THE
AUTHOR

ORDER
THIS
BOOK

FREE
REVIEWS

MAIN
MENU

CURRENT BOOK

BOOKMARK

⏪

⏩

MENU

⏪

⏩

PAGE TURN

Fig. 14p

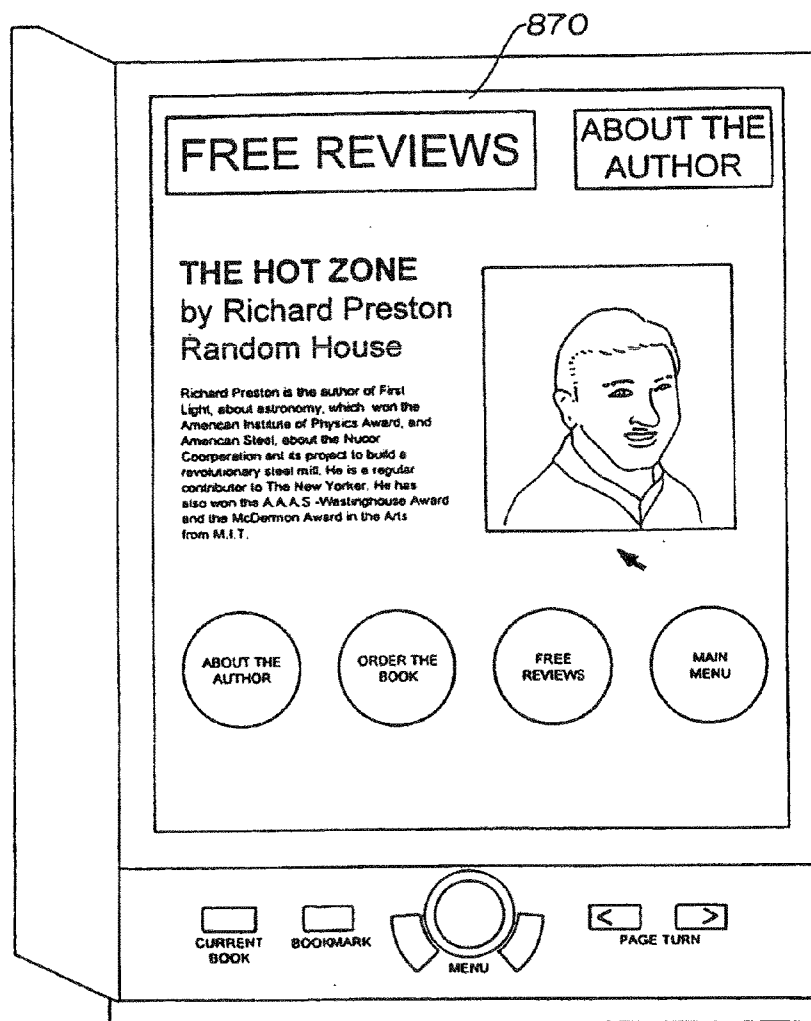


Fig. 14q

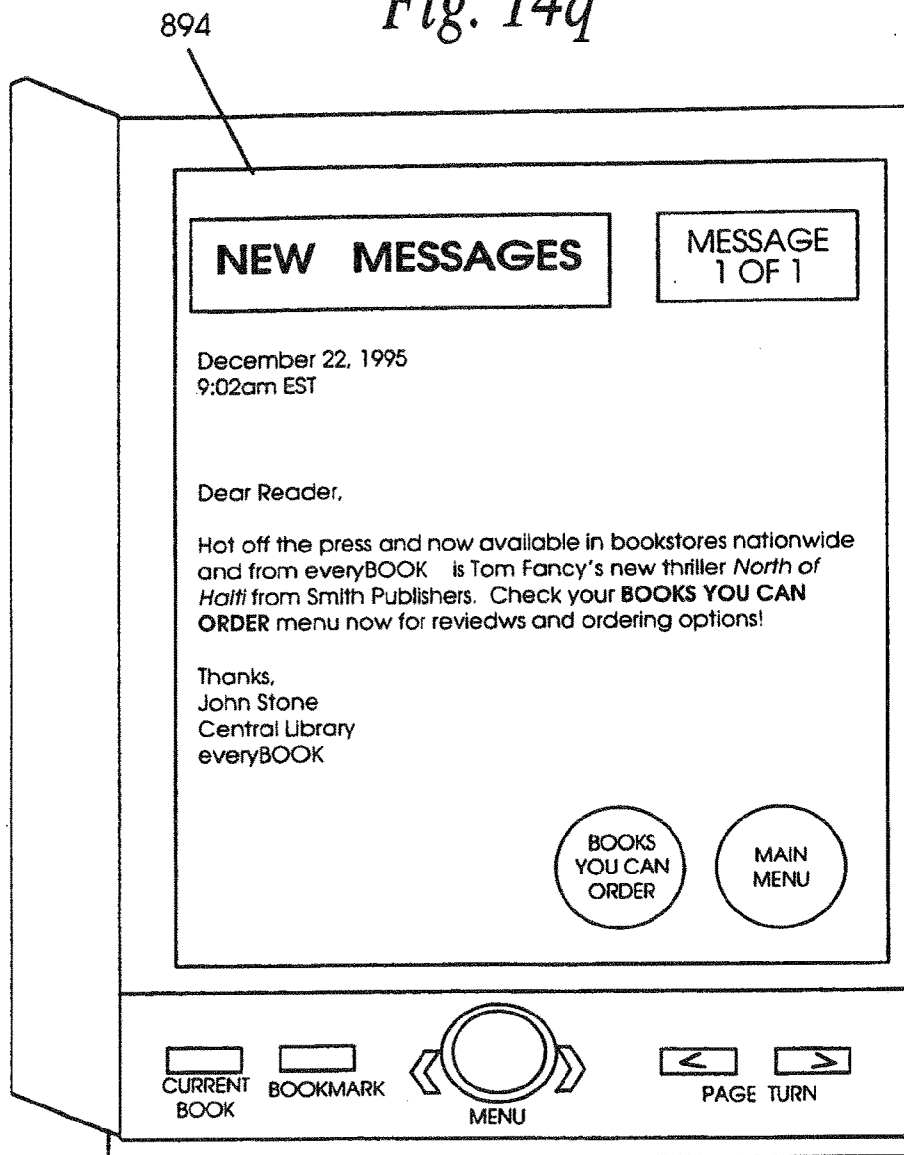


Fig. 14r

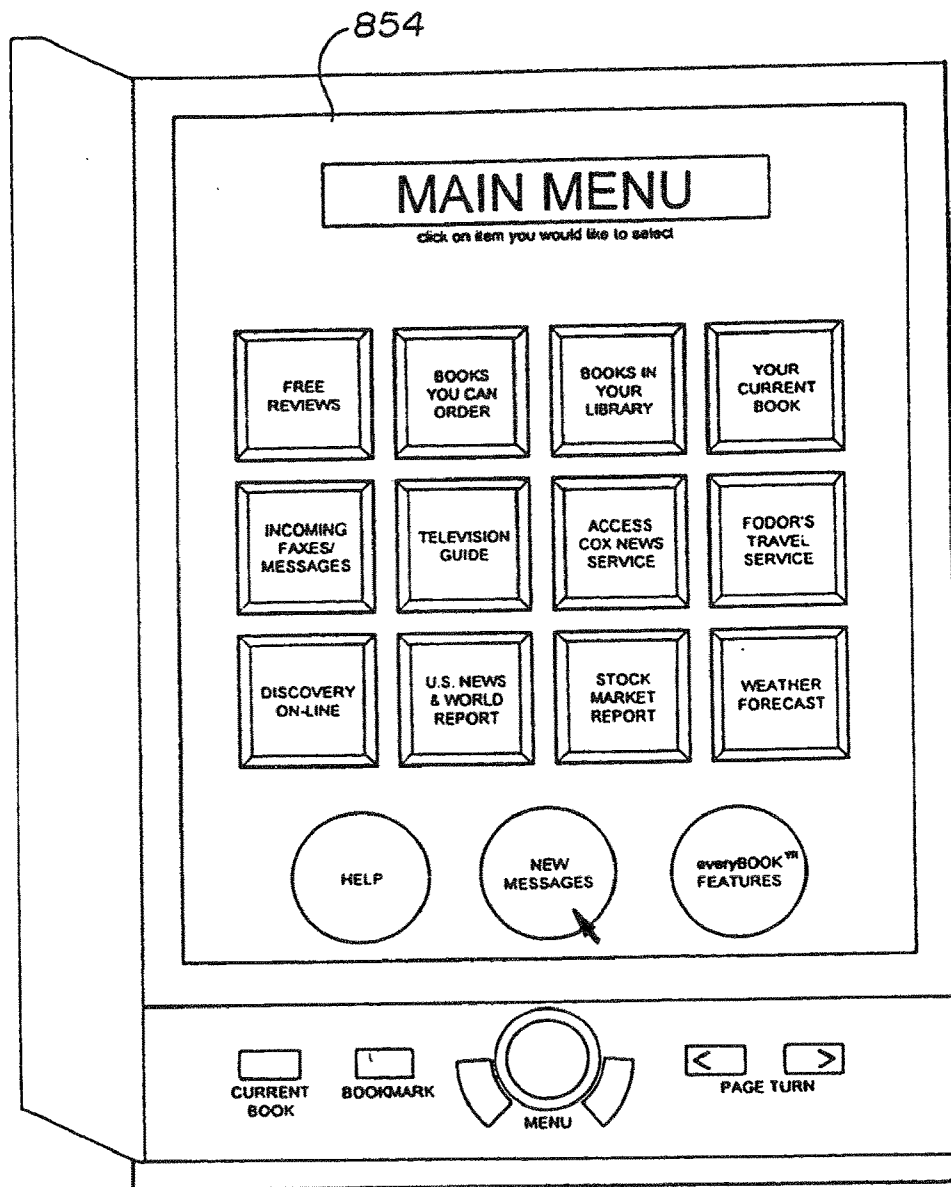


Fig. 14s

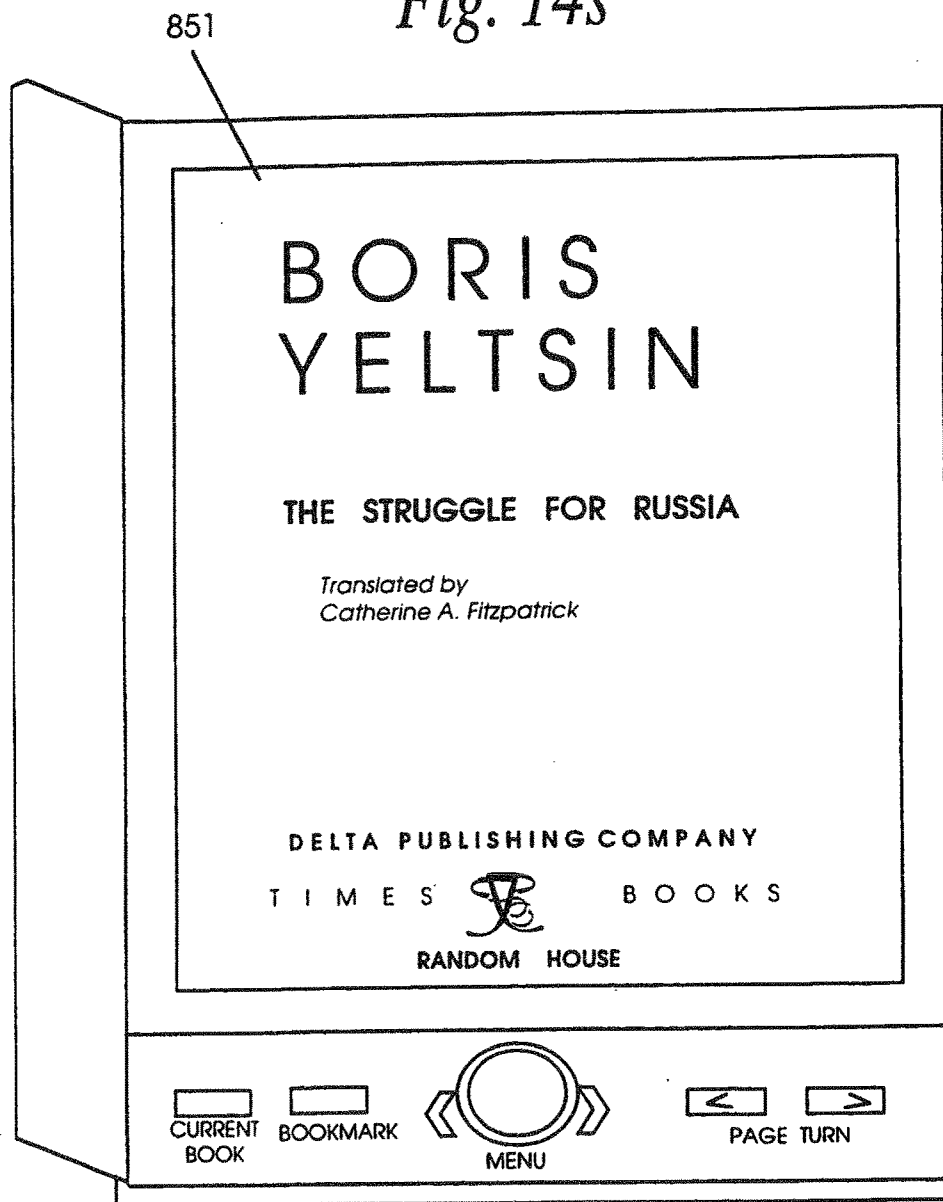


Fig. 14t

853

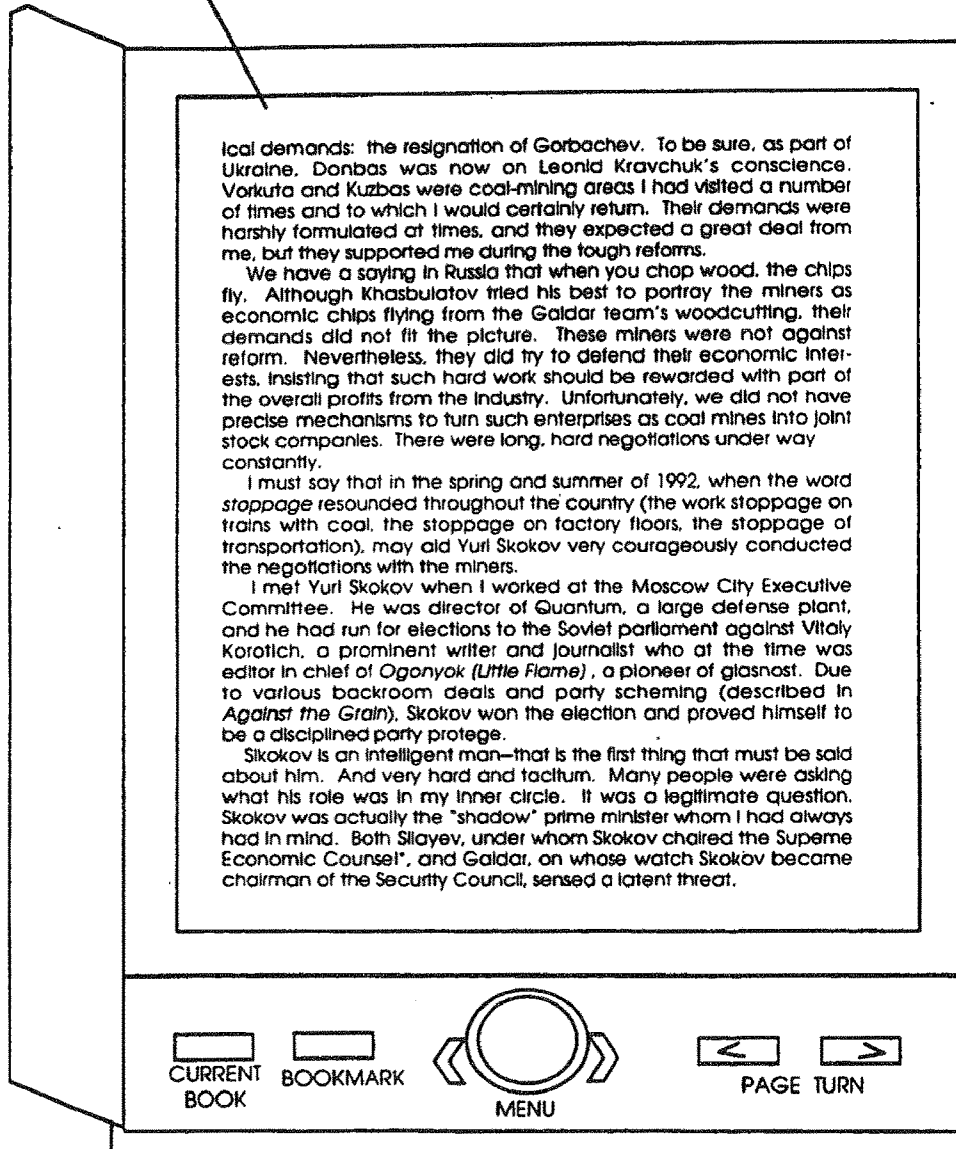
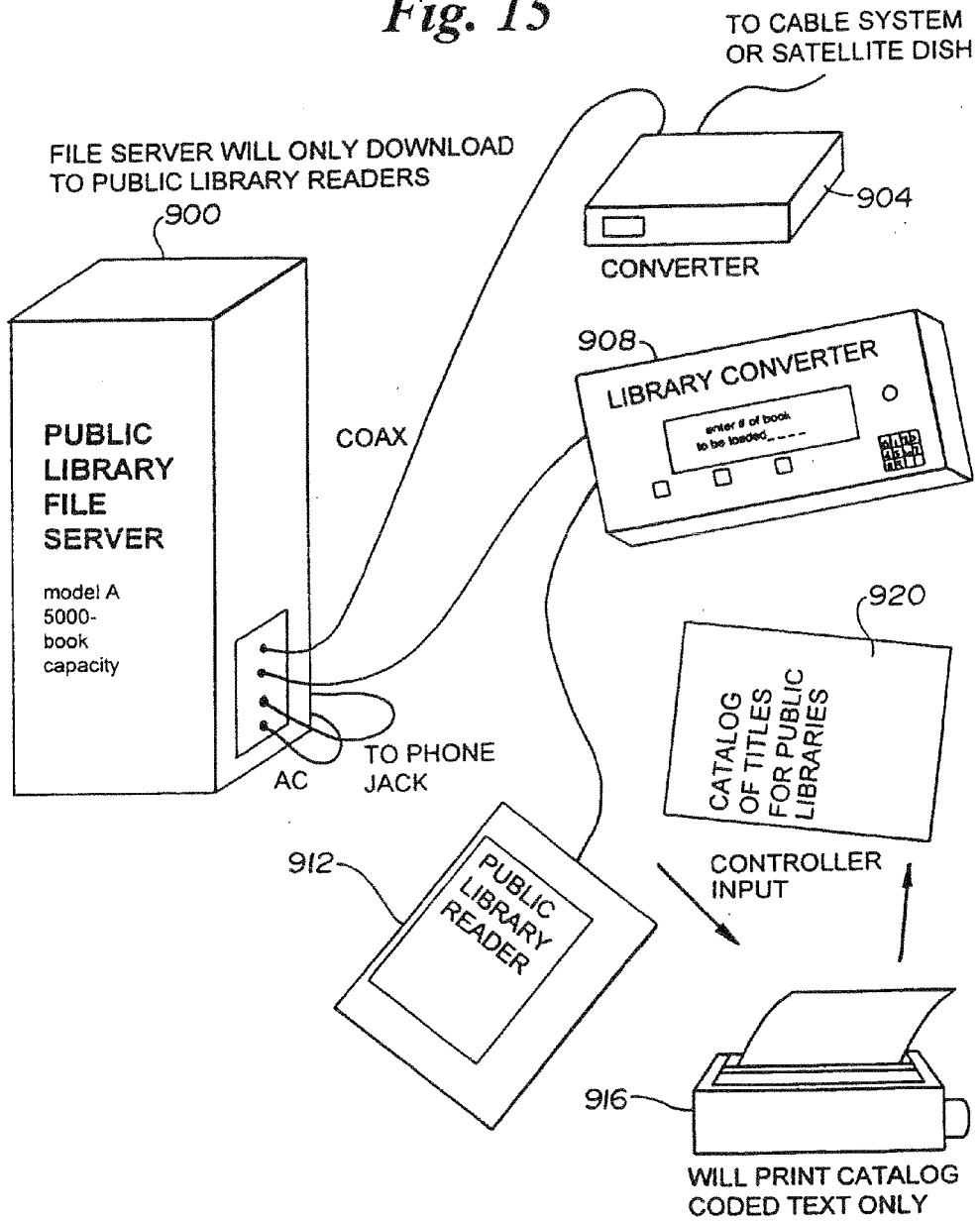


Fig. 15



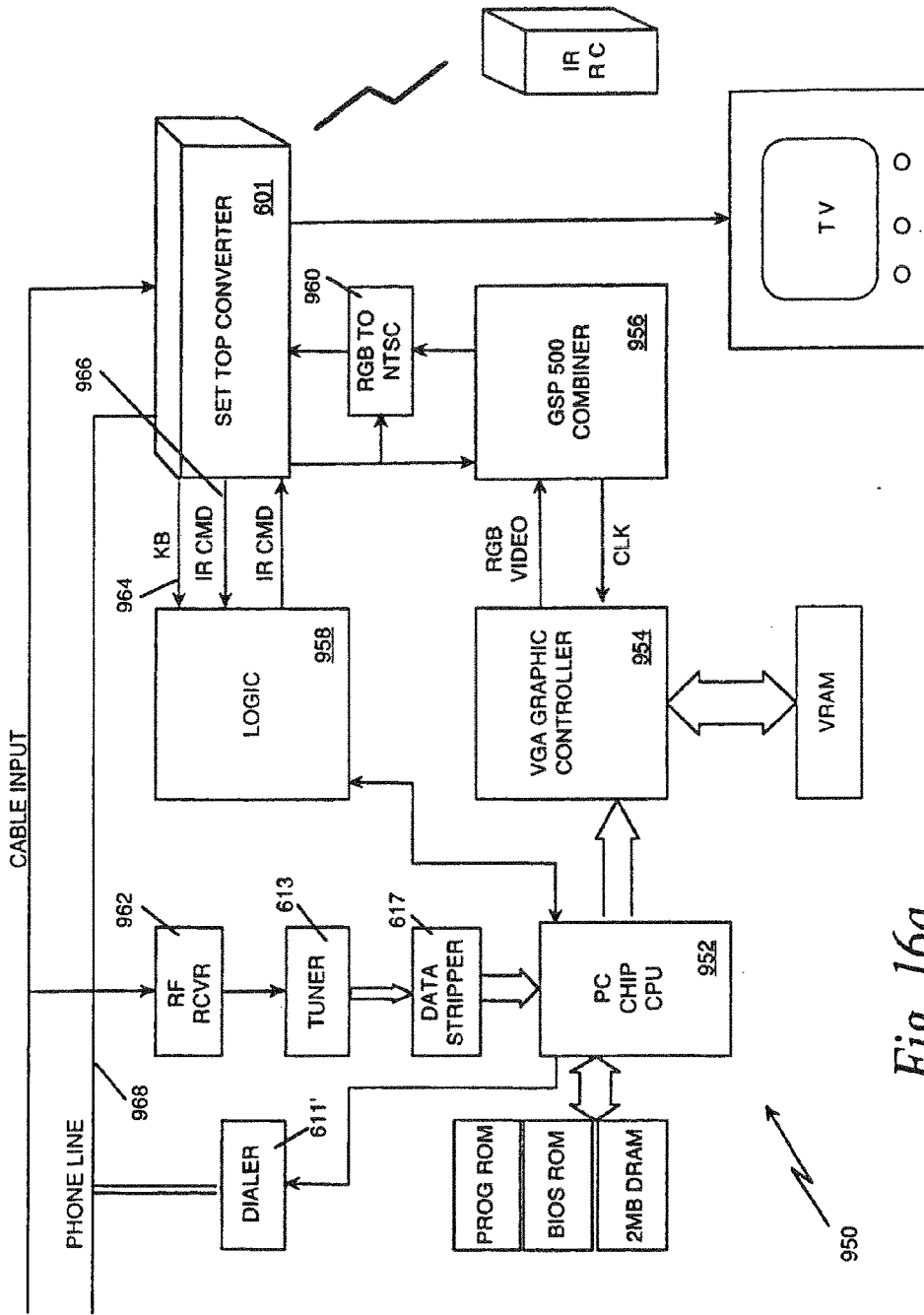


Fig. 16a

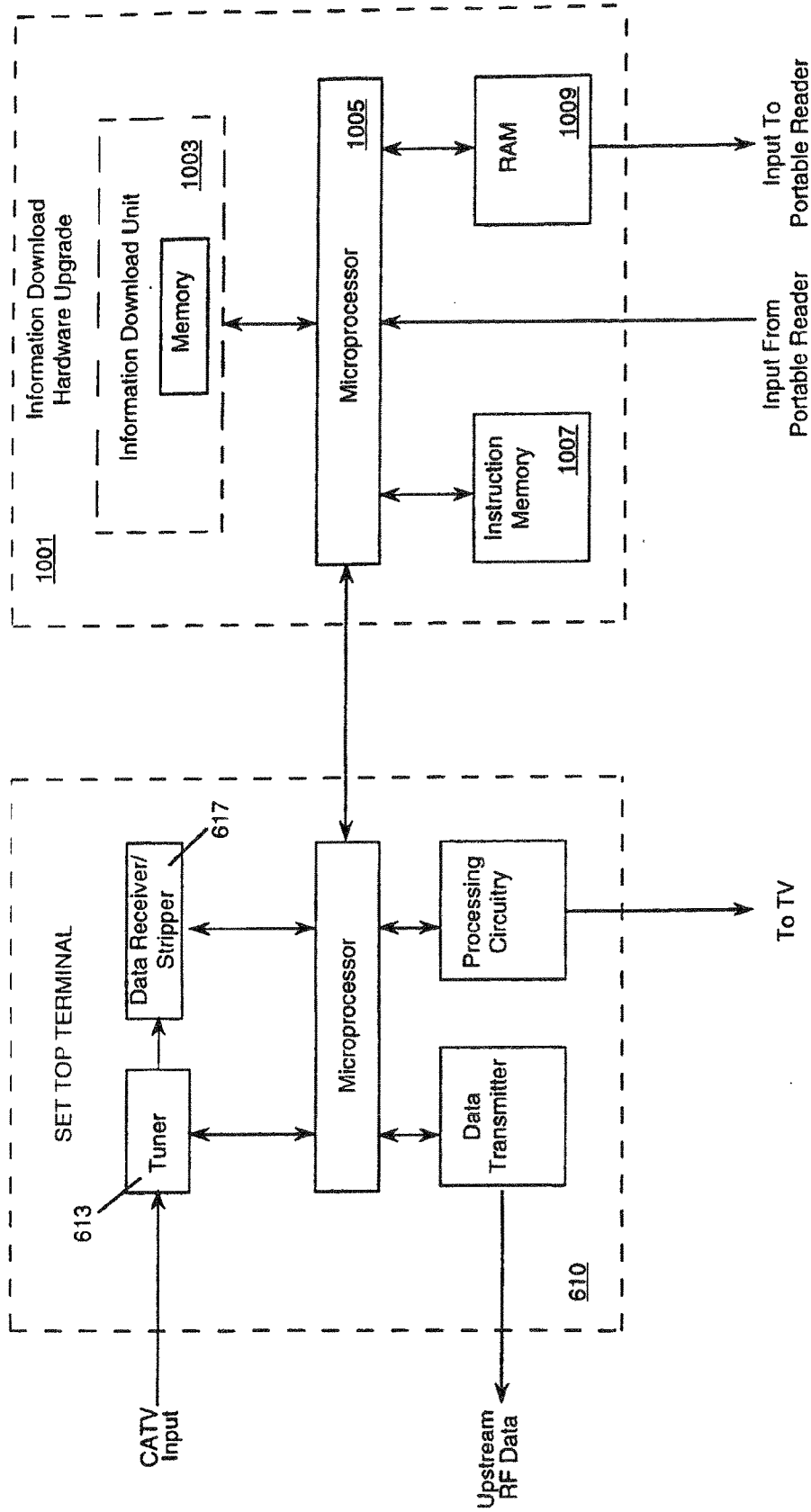


Fig. 16b

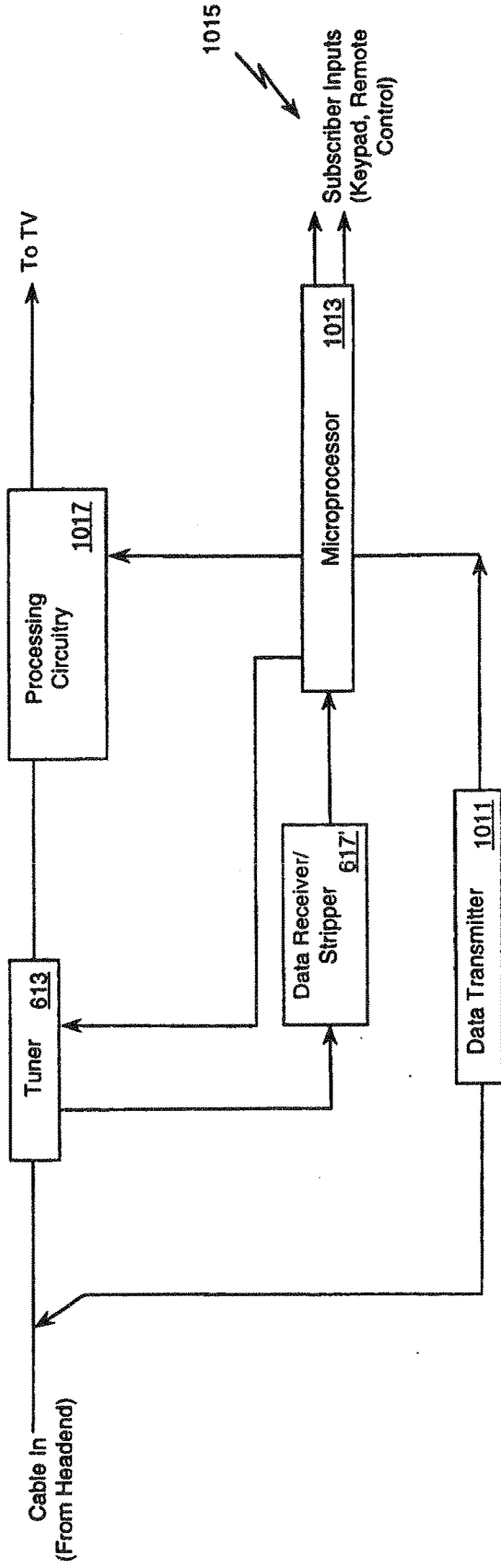
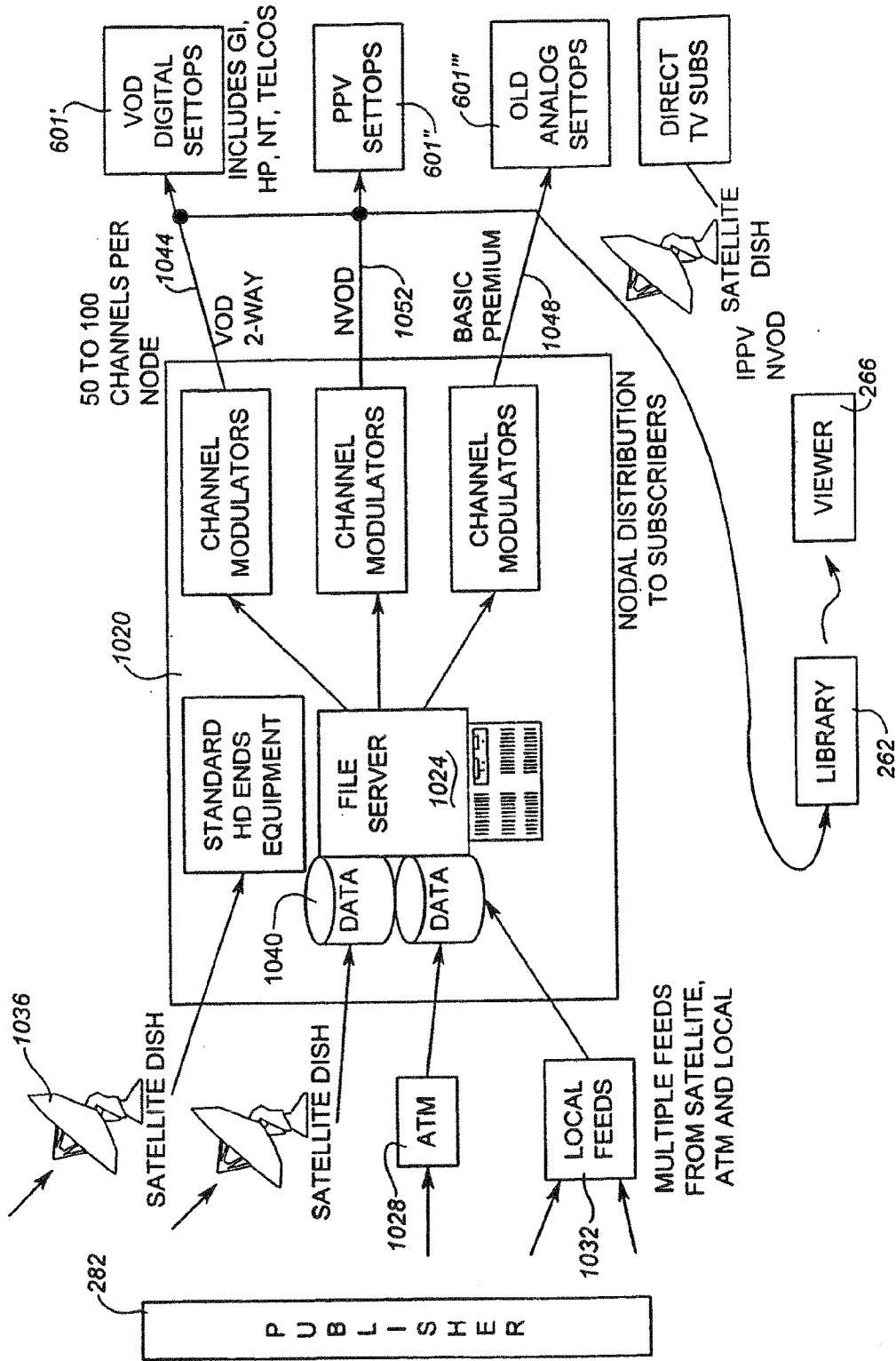
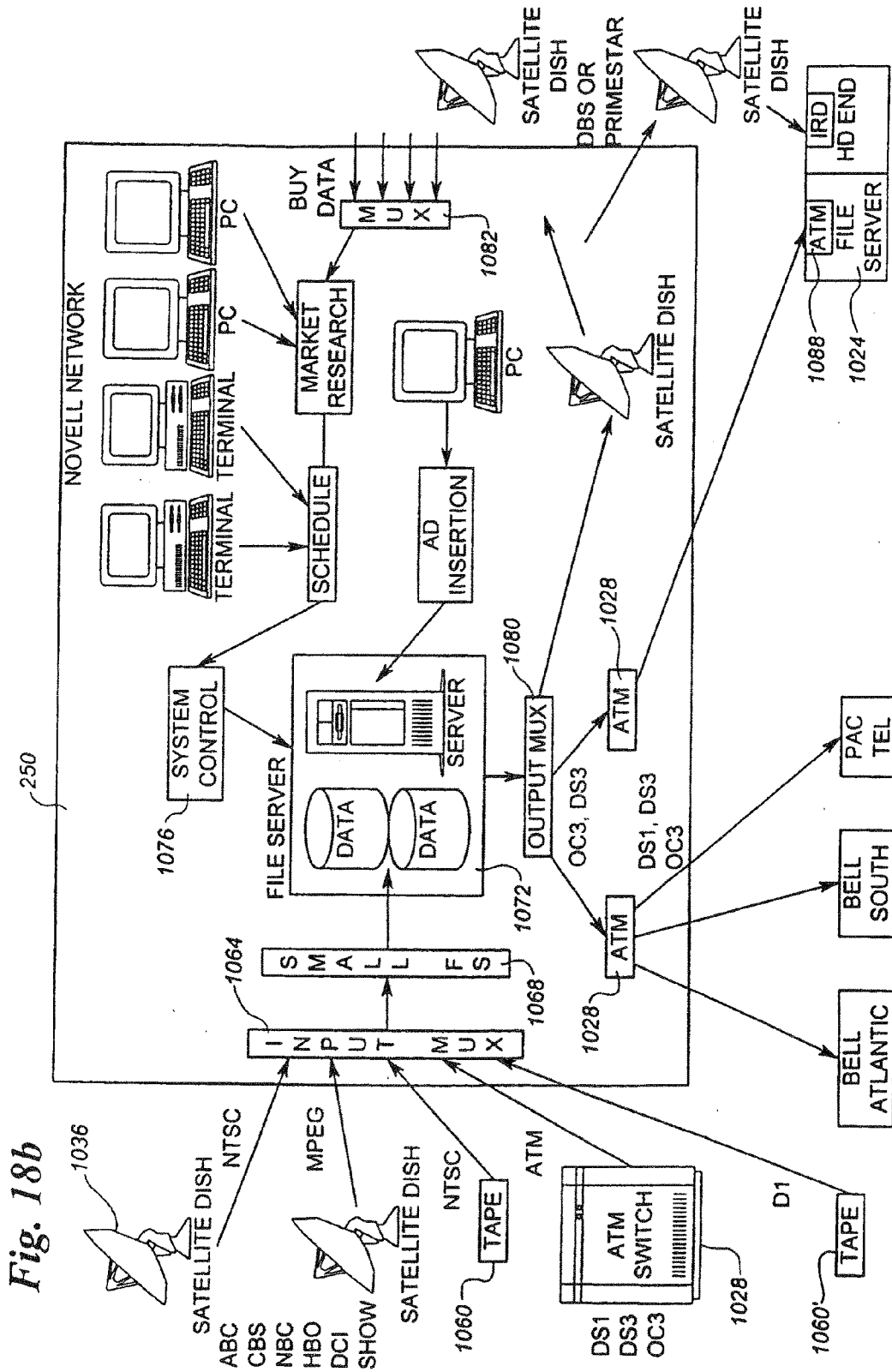


Fig. 17

Fig. 18a





ELECTRONIC BOOK ELECTRONIC LINKS

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a divisional of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/722,519 filed Nov. 28, 2000, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/237,825, filed Jan. 27, 1999, entitled ELECTRONIC BOOK SELECTION AND DELIVERY SYSTEM, now abandoned, Dec. 14, 2005, which is a divisional of U.S. application Ser. No. 08/336,247, filed Nov. 7, 1994, entitled ELECTRONIC BOOK SELECTION AND DELIVERY SYSTEM, now U.S. Pat. No. 5,986,690, issued on Nov. 16, 1999. All of the above applications are incorporated by reference herein in their entireties.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Sparked by the concept of an information super-highway, a revolution will take place in the distribution of books. Not since the introduction of Gutenberg’s movable typeset printing has the world stood on the brink of such a revolution in the distribution of text material. The definition of the word “book” will change drastically in the near future. Due to reasons such as security, convenience, cost, and other technical problems, book and magazine publishers are currently only able to distribute their products in paper form. This invention solves the problems encountered by publishers.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0003] The electronic book selection and delivery system is a new way to distribute books to bookstores, libraries, and consumers. The technological breakthroughs of this invention provide a secure electronic system for both delivering selected books and receiving payments. The system has an unusual combination of features that provides the consumer with a daily use household appliance that has a high tech aura while being very practical, portable, and easy to use.

[0004] The clear advantage of the system is that it eliminates the distribution of any physical object such as a paper book or computer memory device from any book distribution system. The purchase of a book becomes a Pay-Per-Read™ event avoiding the overhead, “middle-men,” printing costs, and time delay associated with the current book distribution system. Published material and text such as the President’s speech, a new law, a court decision on abortion, or O. J. Simpson’s testimony can be made immediately available to the consumer at a nominal fee.

[0005] The system is a novel combination of new technology involving the television, cable, telephone, and computer industries. It utilities high bandwidth data transmissions, strong security measures, sophisticated digital switching, high resolution visual displays and user friendly interface software.

[0006] The primary components of the text delivery system are the subsystem for placing the text onto a video signal and the subsystem for receiving and selecting text that was placed on the video signal. The preferred embodiment of the system includes additional components and optional features that enhance the system. The system may be configured for use by bookstores, libraries, and consumers. The system for consumer use is made up of four subsystems, namely: (1) an

Operations Center, (2) a video distribution system, (3) a home subsystem including reception, selection, viewing, transacting and transmission capabilities, and (4) a billing and collection system.

[0007] The Operations Center performs several primary functions: manipulating text data (including receiving, formatting and storing of text data), security encoding text, cataloging books, providing a messaging center capability, and performing uplink functions. The system delivers the text from the Operations Center to consumer homes by inserting data within analog video signals. The insertion of text is generally performed with a text generator and an encoder at an uplink site that is within or near the Operations Center. The system can be several lines of the Vertical Blanking Interval (VBI), all the lines of the analog video signal, or a digital video signal to transmit text data. Using the VBI delivery method, the top ten or twenty book titles may be transmitted with video during normal programming utilizing existing cable or broadcast transmission capability without disruption to the subscriber’s video reception. Using the entire video signal, thousands of books may be transmitted within just one hour of airtime. Nearly any analog or digital video distribution system may be used to deliver the video signal with included text.

[0008] The home subsystem performs five primary functions: connecting to the video distribution system, selecting text, storing text, displaying text, and transacting through a phone or cable communicating mechanism. The components of the home subsystem may be configured in a variety of hardware configurations. Each function may be performed by a separate component, the components may be integrated, or the capability of existing cable set top converter boxes and televisions may be utilized. Preferably, a connector, library unit and viewer unit are used. The connector portion of the home subsystem receives the analog video signal and strips or extracts the text from the video. The home library stores the text signal, provides a user friendly software interface to the system and processes the transactions at the consumer home. The viewer provides a screen for viewing text or menus.

[0009] The viewing device is preferably a portable book shaped viewer which stores one or more books for viewing and provides a screen for interacting with the home library unit. A high resolution LCD display is used to both read the books and to interact with the home library software. An optional phone connector or return-path cable connection initiates the telephone calls and, with the aid of the library, transmits the necessary data to complete the ordering and billing portion of the consumer transaction. The billing and collection system performs transaction management, authorizations, collections and publisher payments automatically utilizing the telephone system.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of the primary components of the electronic book selection and delivery system.

[0011] FIG. 2 is a schematic showing an overview of the electronic book selection and delivery system.

[0012] FIG. 3 is a schematic of the delivery plan for the electronic book selection and delivery system.

[0013] FIG. 4 is a block diagram of the operations center.

[0014] FIG. 5a is a flow diagram of the processing at the operations center and uplink.

[0015] FIG. 5b is a block diagram of the hardware configuration for an uplink site.

[0016] FIG. 6a is a block diagram of the hardware configuration for a four component home subsystem.

[0017] FIG. 6b is a schematic of a two unit home subsystem.

[0018] FIG. 7 is a flow diagram of the processes performed by the video connector.

[0019] FIG. 8 is a block diagram for an example of a library unit.

[0020] FIG. 9 is a flow diagram of some of the processes performed by the library on the 14 received data stream.

[0021] FIG. 10 is a flow diagram of the processes performed by the library unit on information requests from the viewer.

[0022] FIG. 11 is a block diagram showing the components for an example of a viewer.

[0023] FIG. 12 is a flow diagram of some of the processes performed by the viewer on an information request from a subscriber.

[0024] FIG. 13 is a chart depicting the menu structure and sequencing of inenus in the menu system.

[0025] FIG. 14a is a schematic of an introductory menu.

[0026] FIG. 14b is a schematic showing an example of a main menu.

[0027] FIG. 14c through FIG. 14q are schematics showing examples of submenus.

[0028] FIG. 14r is a schematic showing another example of a main menu.

[0029] FIG. 14s and FIG. 14t are schematics showing examples of screens for a book.

[0030] FIG. 15 is a schematic diagram of an electronic book system for a bookstore or public library.

[0031] FIG. 16a and FIG. 16b are schematics of hardware modifications or upgrades to a set top converter.

[0032] FIG. 17 is a schematic showing a set top terminal that includes a data receiver and data transmitter.

[0033] FIG. 18a is a schematic of a book-on-demand system.

[0034] FIG. 18b is a schematic of an operations center supporting a book-on-demand system.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0035] The primary components of the electronic book selection and delivery system 200 are an encoder 204, a video distribution system 208, a connector 212, and a text selector 216 as shown in FIG. 1. The encoder 204 places textual data on a video signal to form a composite signal. A variety of equipment and methods may be used to encode text data onto a video signal. The video distribution system 208 distributes the video signal from the single point of the encoder 204 to multiple locations which have connectors 212. The connector

212 receives the digital or analog video signal from the video distribution system 208 and separates, strips or extracts the text data from the composite video signal. If necessary, the extracted text data is converted into a digital bit stream. Text selector 216 works in connection with the connector 212 to select text.

[0036] Using a connector 212 and text selector 216 combination, various methods of selecting and retrieving desired text from a composite or video signal are possible. Text may be preselected, selected as received or selected after being received and stored. The preferred method is for the connector 212 to strip all the text from the video signal and have the text selector 216 screen all the text as received from the connector 212. The text selector 216 only stores text in long term or permanent memory if the text passes a screening process described below.

[0037] An overview of a preferred embodiment is shown in FIG. 2. The system 200 includes: an operations center 250 including an uplink site 254, a video distribution system 208, a home subsystem 258 including a video connector 212, a library 262, a viewer 266, and a phone connector 270, and telephone system 274 and a billing and collection subsystem 278. The operations center receives textual material from outside sources 282 such as publishers, newspapers, and on-line services. The operations center receives this textual material in various digital formats and converts them to a standard compressed format for storage. In so doing, the operations center creates a pool of textual material that is available to be delivered to the home system. Normally, the text material is grouped by books or titles for easy access. The operations center includes an uplink site for placing the text onto a video signal and sending the composite video signal into a video distribution system. The uplink site would generally include an encoder (not shown in FIG. 2) to encode the text onto a video signal.

[0038] Many analog and digital video distribution systems 208 can be used with this text delivery system 200, such as, cable television distribution systems, broadcast television distribution systems, video distributed over telephone systems, direct satellite broadcast distribution systems, and other wire and wireless distribution systems. Nearly any distribution system which can deliver a video signal will work with the text delivery system. It is also possible to distribute the text without using a video signal as described below.

[0039] The home subsystem performs five primary functions, (1) connecting with a video distribution system, (2) selecting data, (3) storing data, (4) displaying data, and (5) handling transactions. An important optional function of the home sub-system is communicating using a telephone communication system. The home subsystem is made up of primarily four parts: a video connector 212 or similar type of connector for connecting with a video distribution system, a library unit 262 for storing and processing, a viewer unit 266 for viewing menus and text and a telephone connector 270 for connecting with a telephone communications system 274.

[0040] The billing and collection subsystem 278 may be co-located with the operations center 250 or located remote from the operations center. The billing and collection subsystem 278 is in communication with the home subsystem via telephone-type communication systems. Any of a number of telephone type communication systems, such as, a cellular system, will operate with the billing and collection system.

The billing and collection system records the books or portions of text that are selected or ordered by the subscriber. The collection system will charge a subscriber's credit account or bill the subscriber. In addition the billing and collection system will monitor that amount due to publishers or other outside sources **282** who have provided textual data or other services such as air time to enable the text delivery system **200** to operate.

[0041] FIG. 3 is an expanded overview of a preferred delivery plan for the electronic book selection and delivery system. It is a comprehensive delivery plan to support various types of users and various billing systems. FIG. 3 shows that publishers **282** will provide text transfer **302** to the operations center **250'** and receive payments **306** from the billing and collection system **278'**. A separate channel uplink site **254'** is shown in this configuration receiving data **310** from the operations center **250'**. The operations center **250'** has three separate sections (**318**, **322**, **326**) one for text receiving, formatting and re-entry **318**, a second for security encoding **322** and a third section for catalog and messaging center functions **326**.

[0042] The collection and billing system **278'** shown has two sections (**330**, **334**) one for transaction management, authorizations and publisher payments **330**, and the other for customer service **334**. The customer service section **334** provides for data entry and access to customer account information. Transaction accounting information **338** is supplied to credit card companies **342** by the transaction management section **330** of the billing and collection system **278'**. The credit card companies **342** provide billing **346** to customers either electronically or by mail.

[0043] Three methods for communicating between the subscriber base **348** and the billing and collection system **278'** are shown: by telephone switching **350** alone, cellular switching **354** and telephone switching **250** combined and by use of the cable system **358** and the telephone switching **350**. The system shown supports both one-way **362** and two-way cable communication **366** with subscribers. Libraries and schools **370** as well as bookstores **374** may use the delivery system.

[0044] Libraries and schools **370** would have a modified system to allow the viewer to be checked-out or borrowed while bookstores **374** would rent or sell the viewer and sell electronic book data. The bookstores **374** as well as the libraries and schools **370** may be serviced by cable **378**. Optional direct broadcast systems (DBS) **382** can also be used with the system **200**.

I. The Operations Center

[0045] FIG. 4 is a schematic of an operations center **250** which includes an uplink **254**. The Operations Center **250** gathers text or books by receiving, formatting, storing, and encoding. A data stream **302** containing text is received at the operations center by a data receiver **402**. The data receiver **402** is under the control of a processor **404**. After reception, the data stream is formatted using digital logic for formatting **406** which is also under the control of the processor **404**. If any additional text is being generated at the operation center locally for insertion into the distributed signal, the text generation is handled through text generator hardware **410** which may include a data receiver and a keyboard (not shown). Following processing by the text generator, the additional text can be added to the text received the combining hardware **414** that includes digital logic circuitry (not shown).

[0046] The processing at the operations center is controlled by a processor **404** which uses an instruction memory **416**. The processor and instruction memory may be supplied by a personal computer or mini-computer. To perform the catalog and messaging functions, the operations center uses a catalog and message memory **420** and the text generator **410** if necessary.

[0047] The data stream of text, catalog and messages is preferably encoded by a security ending prior to being sent to the uplink module **424**. Various encoding techniques may be used such as the commercial derivative of NSA's encryption algorithm, Data Encryption System (DES), and General Instruments DigiCipher II may be used by the security encoding module **424**. Following encoding, the encoded text may be stored in text memory **428** prior to being sent the uplink **254**. It is preferred that a first-in-first-out text memory arrangement is used under the control of the processor **404**. Various types of memory may be used for the text memory **428** including RAM. The operations center may use file server technology for the text memory **428** to catalog and spool books for transmission as is described below.

[0048] To transmit textual data, the delivery system uses high bandwidth transmission techniques such as those defined by the North American Broadcast Teletext Standard (NABTS) and the World System Teletext (WST) standard. Using the WST format (where each line of the Vertical Blanking Interval contains 266 data bits), a four hundred page book, for example, may be transmitted during programming using four lines of the Vertical Blanking Interval at a rate of approximately one book every 1.6 minutes (63,840 bits per second). Alternatively, books may be transmitted over a dedicated channel, which interrupts programming so that 246 lines of video can be used to transmit approximately 2,250 books every hour (3.9 Mbits per second). A teletext type format is the simplest but possibly the slowest text format to use with the system. In either event, an encoder is utilized at an uplink site to insert textual data into the analog video signal. In many other respects, the delivery of the textual information is completed using existing cable television plants and equipment.

[0049] FIG. 5a is a flowchart of the steps involved in processing text from the publisher or provider **282** that occurs at the operations center **250**. As shown in block **500**, the publisher **282** processes data files of text for books, compresses, encrypts and sends the data files to the 23 operations center or uplink. Text files for books are preferably sent one book at a time. As shown in block **504**, the uplink **254** or operations center **250** receives and processes the data stream from the publisher **282**. Generally, part of this processing includes encryption and error correction.

[0050] As shown in block **508**, files are broken into smaller packets of information. Header information is added to the packets. The bit stream is converted from a serial digital bit stream to an analog bit stream that is compatible with an NTSC video signal. Block **512** shows the switching of analog data into the video lines of a video signal. The analog data is either placed in the VBI or the active video lines.

[0051] FIG. 5b is an example of a hardware configuration to perform some of the functions for blocks **508** and **512**. A video feed **516** is received and processed through a sync stripper **520**. The sync signal **532** stripped is used by the digital logic control **524**. The digital logic control **524** receives the sync signal **532** and a serial digital bit stream **528**

for processing. The digital logic control **524** passes the serial digital bit stream to the Digital to Analog converter **536** and outputs a control signal **540** for the video switch **544**. The video switch **544** integrates the video feed **516** and analog data stream **548** into a video feed with analog data signal inserted **552**.

[0052] As an alternative to cable or television delivery methods, the telephone system may be used to transmit books to the subscribers. An average book would take about 7 minutes to transmit over the public telephone system. Using the telephone system, it is not necessary to combine video and text into a composite signal. In most other respects, the operation center would remain similar whether text delivery was by telephone or cable. It is preferred that file server technology (such as that described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,262,875, entitled AUDIO/VIDEO FILE SERVER INCLUDING DECOMPRESSION/PLAYBACK MEANS, issued to Mincer, et al., and, U.S. Pat. No. 5,218,695, entitled FILE SERVER SYSTEM HAVING HIGH-SPEED WRITE EXECUTION, issued to Noveck, et al., incorporated herein by reference) be used at the operation center with a telephone system text delivery method.

II. The Home Subsystem

[0053] The hardware configuration for a four component home subsystem **258** is shown in FIG. **6a**. FIG. **6b** shows a hardware configuration for a two component home subsystem. The home subsystem **258** performs several functions, such as receiving data and video transmissions, stripping the data from the video signal, screening and storing the data, providing user friendly interface software, displaying menus and text, processing transactions, initiating telephone calls and transmitting billing data. Various hardware configurations may be utilized to achieve the desired functions of the home subsystem. For example, as shown in FIG. **6b**, the home subsystem can be configured to utilize the reception and channel tuning capability of the current installed subscriber base of cable converter boxes and televisions **601**. The home subsystem can also be designed as an advanced set top terminal converter box with menu generation capability, electronic memory and a telephone modem as described in section V below.

[0054] The electronic components which make up the home subsystem can be arranged in a variety of ways. In the four unit subsystem of FIG. **6a** the viewer **266** and library **262** are wired together while the remaining components communicate through RF transceivers **604**. In the simplest version of the home subsystem there are only two units, a library **262** and a viewer **266**. FIG. **6b** shows a two unit home subsystem with certain optional features. The viewer **266** is generally equipped with a high resolution viewing area **602**, digital logic (including a key **605**, security **606**, and a microprocessor **621**), video graphics control and memory **607**, power supply circuitry **602** (not shown), an optional battery **603** and an optional RF transceiver **604**. In a two unit arrangement, the library **262** contains the connector function to the video distribution system, connector function to a public telephone communications system, and memory **600** (which may be removable and portable **600'**). More specifically, the library would include data stripping functions **617**, digital logic **609**, memory storage **600**, power circuitry **610**, optional telephone connections **611** (including cellular or PCN **611'**), optional battery (not shown), optional tuner module **613** and an

optional RF transceiver **604**. The video connector **212** and the public telephone system connection **270**, as well as the removable portable memory unit **600** of the library may be broken out into separate components. FIG. **6b** shows a removable portable hard disk memory **600'** with removable cartridges **614**.) Therefore, the home subsystem may have as many as five separate components which communicate with each other. The two, three, four or five separate components which make up the home subsystem can communicate with each other in a variety of ways, including hardwired connection **615**, RF transceiver **604** and other wireless methods.

[0055] RF communications are preferred in the home because it allows the separate components to be located throughout the home without restriction.

[0056] The data communicated between the units is preferably secure data. In addition, the library **262** may provide power to the viewer **266** through the hard wire communication link **615**.

[0057] To receive and strip the data from the video signal at the consumer's home, either a cable interface device or cable connector is used. The cable connector device includes a tuner **613**, while the cable interface device makes use of existing tuning equipment in the home. In either configuration, data is stripped from the video signal and stored at the subscriber's location in the library **262**. The phone connector **270**, and modem **611** initiate telephone calls and transmit ordering and billing information to the Operations Center or billing and collection system. The home library **262** is the intelligent component of the home subsystem, incorporating the hardware and software necessary to store the text data, generate menus and effect the purchase transactions. In addition to an RF transceiver **604**, the home library **262** also includes the necessary jacks and connections to allow the system to be connected to the viewer **266**. As shown in FIG. **6b**, the library communicates the text data to the viewer in a secure format which requires a key **605** for decryption. The text is generally only decrypted page by page just before viewing.

[0058] a. The Video Connector

[0059] FIG. **7** shows the flow of the processes performed by the video connector **212**. The video connector receives the video signal **608**, tunes to the channel containing the text data **612**, strips the text data from the video signal **616**, and communicates the text data stream to logic components in the library **620**.

[0060] The connection to the video distribution system is preferably a cable connector to a cable television delivery system, as shown in FIG. **6b**. The cable connector includes a data stripper circuit **617**, which accepts video input from either a set top converter, TV or VCR **601**, or an optional tuner block **613** that receives the CATV signal through the cable connector **212'**. The data stripper circuit **617** strips data out of the video, and outputs a digital bit stream to the digital logic portion **609** of the library unit **262**. The data is embedded in the video signal either in the vertical blanking interval or the active video portion in an encrypted and compressed format. The data stripper circuit **617** can be placed inside the set top converter box **601**, TV, or in the library unit. The data stripper circuit **617** outputs the digital bit stream to be used by the library digital logic **609**.

[0061] The video connector **212** may also contain a channel tuner module **613** that can tune to the video channel and

provide access to the video that contains the data to be stripped. Using the optional tuner module 613, a set top converter, VCR, or TV tuner is not needed in the home subsystem. The optional tuner module 613 would instead receive the CATV signal directly through the cable connector 212'.

[0062] b. Library

[0063] An embodiment of the library 262 for a two unit home subsystem is shown in both FIG. 6b and FIG. 8. The embodiment shown includes the following optional parts the video connector 212, phone connector 270, RF transceiver 604, and battery pack 624 in addition to a removal portable memory 600', microprocessor 628, instruction memory unit 632, digital logic 636, and power unit 640.

[0064] The library 262 contains a digital logic section 609 (not shown in FIG. 8) which includes the microprocessor 628, the digital logic 636 and the instruction memory unit 632. The microprocessor 628 is preferably a secure microprocessor such as the Mot SC21 device sold by Motorola. The digital logic section 609 will receive the serial digital bit stream from the data stripper circuit 617 and process the data. Error correction will also be performed by the digital logic section 609 and the data will be checked for proper address. If the address of the data is correct and the library 262 is authorized to receive the data, the data will be transferred to the memory storage unit 600, 600'. Authorization to receive the data is provided by the cable headend or another distribution point. An authorization code may be sent in the serial digital bit stream. The digital logic section 609 will send appropriate text and graphical data to the memory storage unit 600, 600'. It transfers this data in a compressed and encrypted format and the data remains stored in a compressed and encrypted format.

[0065] i. Memory Storage Unit

[0066] The memory storage unit of the library is preferably a removable portable memory unit 600 (as shown in FIGS. 6a, 6b and 8). A variety of options are available for memory storage: a hard disk drive, such as an 80 megabyte, a 200 megabyte, a hard disk with removable platters, and CD ROM. Referring to FIG. 6b, a hard disk drive unit 600' which contains removable platters may also be used. This would provide virtually unlimited library storage capacity. Data will be stored in the memory storage unit in a compressed and encrypted format. As is also shown in FIG. 6b, the data will also contain a key or unique ID number that matches the ID or key of the viewer 266. This matching of a unique key or ID number prevents unauthorized transfer of text data from the memory storage unit to an unauthorized viewer. Small memory devices such as smart cards, electronic memory cards or PCM CIA cards (personal computer memory card industry association) may also be used to store the data.

[0067] ii. Power Circuitry

[0068] As shown in FIGS. 6b and 8, the library 262 will accept power from either AC wall power or optional battery power. It is preferred that the power circuitry provide all the voltage necessary from either the battery 624 or AC unit for the various circuitry in the library. Preferably the power circuitry will also provide power to the viewer through a single data cable when connected to the viewer. The power circuitry will recharge the battery using AC power when in operation. With the optional battery unit 624 installed, the library 262 becomes a portable unit and can still provide power to the

viewer 266. In order to extend battery life, power conservation measures may be utilized, such as shutting down the memory system when not in use. When the viewer unit 266 is being utilized and the library circuitry is not being utilized, virtually all power may be shut down to the library 262.

[0069] iii. Connection to the Public Telephone System

[0070] The connection to the telephone system is preferably provided by a modem 611. Various available modems may be used to perform this function. As shown in FIG. 6b, cellular phone or PCN phone connections 611' may also be provided. When the home subsystem is first initialized, the modem will be used to transfer the name and credit card information of the consumer to the billing and collection subsystem. The telephone connection 270 may be utilized each time a book is purchased by a consumer to complete and record the transaction. The telephone connection 270 may also be used as a means for receiving the text data from the operations center, by-passing the video distribution system. The phone connection 270 may be a separate unit as shown in FIG. 6b.

[0071] iv. Library Processing

[0072] FIG. 9 shows an example of some basic processing performed by the library 262 on the data stream received from the video connector 212 or stripper circuit 617. First the data stream is checked for error correction by block 650. If an error is detected, block 654 de-interleaves the data followed by block 658 running a FEC (Forward Error Correcting) algorithm. The combination of block 650, 654 and 658 perform the error correction needed on the data stream. If no error correction is necessary the data proceeds to block 662 where packets are individually checked for packet address.

[0073] If the address is a unique address, block 666 checks whether the address of the packet matches the library box ID number. The library box ID number is a unique number associated with that library 262 which is used to ensure security of the data. Block 670 determines whether an electronic file has already been opened into which the data packet can be saved. If no data file has been opened then block 674 opens a new data file for that packet. If an electronic file has been opened, then the packet is saved in that electronic file on disk, block 678. Next, the process checks to see if this is the last packet for a particular book for a particular textual data block being received 682. If it is the last packet of information, then the electronic file is closed and the directory of available electronic files is updated 686. Following either block 682 or 686, the process returns to receive another data packet from the data stream received from the data stripper block.

[0074] With the packet address is checked and the address is determined to be a broadcast address, the process determines the type of message that is being sent 690. The message is then stored in appropriate electronic message file 694 and the process is returned to block 650 to receive another data packet and perform another error check.

[0075] Using the process of FIG. 9, the library is able to receive, store and update directories related to the textual data and graphical data that can be used to depict pictures in a given book. Variations of the processes are possible depending on the format of the data and operating system of the library 262.

[0076] FIG. 10 shows an example of the processing of information requests from the viewer 266 at the library 262.

Information requests from the viewer **266** are received either through the cable connecting the viewer **266** to the library **262** or through wireless transmissions such as RF. It is possible in some embodiments for subscribers' requests to come from a set top converter box **602**.

[0077] Information requests received from the viewer **266** generally fall into three categories: (1) directory data of books stored in the library **262**, (2) index of all available books on the system, and (3) requests for a specific book (Block **700**). Process block **704** answers a request from the viewer **266** for a directory of data showing the books stored at the viewer **266**. The directory of data is sent to the viewer **266** so that it may be displayed to the subscriber. Process block **708** handles requests from the viewer **266** for an index of all available books on the system. The library **262** will obtain an index of all the available books on the system and transmit that index, process **712**, with menu information to the viewer box. Process block **716** replies to a request from the viewer **266** for a specific book. The library **262** opens an electronic file for the specific book requested by the viewer **266** and transmits the record or transmits the information on a packet-by-packet basis to the viewer, **720**. This process of transmitting the specific book, record, or packets to the viewer continues until the last record or packet has been sent, **724**.

[0078] In addition to the processes shown on FIG. **10** in handling a request for a specific book, the library **262** also orders and receives specific books from the operations center **250** using the process as described in **716**. Following a request for a specific book which is not stored at the library **262**, the library **262** will proceed to determine the next available time the book will be on the video distribution system **208** and ensure reception and storage of that book (process not shown). In performing this process the library **262** will transmit to the viewer information on when it will obtain the text data for the book so that the subscriber may view the book. In addition to timing information, price and other ordering information may also be passed by the library unit **262** to the subscriber.

[0079] c. The Viewer

[0080] FIG. **11** is a block diagram of a viewer **266** showing its internal components. The viewer **266** of FIG. **11** is similar to the viewer **266** depicted in FIG. **6b**. The viewer **266** is designed to physically resemble a bound book. The viewer **266** is made up of five primary components and four optional components: (1) LCD display **602**, (2) digital circuitry (not shown), (3) video graphics controller **607'**, (4) controls **740**, (5) book memory **728**, (6) optional power supply circuitry **736**, (7) optional battery **603'**, (8) optional RF transceiver **604**, and (9) optional cellular or mobile communicator (not shown).

[0081] (1) A high resolution LCD screen, preferably of VGA quality, is used by the viewer **266** to display text and graphic images. The screen is preferably the size of one page of a book.

[0082] (2) Digital circuitry that includes a secure microprocessor **621**, instruction memory **732**, and digital logic. Data is transferred to the viewer **266** in compressed and encrypted format. The secure microprocessor **621** compares the ID number of the viewer **266** with the incoming data stream and only stores the text data if the ID number of the viewer **266** matches that within the incoming data stream. It is preferred

that the viewer **266** not output text data or other data and that the data is decompressed and decrypted only at the moment of viewing and only for the current page being viewed. These measures are preferred because they provide additional security against unauthorized access to data.

[0083] (3) A video graphics controller **607'** that is capable of assisting and displaying VGA quality text and graphic images is included in the viewer **266**. The graphics controller **607'** is controlled by the digital circuitry described above. Text may be displayed in multiple font sizes.

[0084] (4) The viewer **266** of FIG. **11** has touch panel controls **740**. The controls **740** allow the consumer to select stored books and books from catalogues, move a cursor, and turn pages in a book. Typically, the preferred controls include forward and reverse page buttons **741**, a ball **743** for cursor movement, a selection button **745**, a current book button **747** and a bookmark button **749** (see FIG. **14a**).

[0085] (5) Book memory **728** for at least one book or more of text is included in the viewer **266**. The memory **728** stores text and any graphics which represent pictures in a book. The memory **728** can also store menu graphics data. Two different memory **728** devices may be used in the viewer **266**, one for the instructions for the microprocessor **621** in the digital circuitry and a second type of memory may be used for the book memory **728**. Various memory devices available on the market may be used such as, ROM, RAM or a small hard disk. Since a book requires approximately 0.6 megabytes of storage, a small hard disk providing approximately 60 MBytes of storage provides memory to store approximately 100 books. Text for books may be stored in various font sizes so that larger or smaller fonts may be recalled from memory **728** as desired.

[0086] (6) Power supply circuitry **736** in the view will accept power from either an AC power source or from an optional battery **603'**, or the library **262**. The power supply circuitry provides the necessary voltages to accommodate the various systems within the viewer **266**.

[0087] (7) An optional battery **603'** is provided in the preferred embodiment. The battery **603'** is automatically recharged when AC power is available.

[0088] (8) An optional RF transceiver **604** which provided two-way data link between the viewer **266** and other components of the home subsystem can also be included in the viewer **266**.

[0089] (9) Also, the viewer **266** may include a cellular transceiver (not shown) for mobile communications.

[0090] The viewer **266** of FIG. **11** has parts available for providing a library connection **744**, electronic card memory **748**, CD ROM units **752**, and a portable memory unit **756** (such as that shown in FIG. **6b 600'**). Various electronic memory cards such as PCM CIA can be used with this viewer **266**.

[0091] Security, low power consumption and excellent display technology are desired features of the viewer **266** design. The viewer **266** should be lightweight and portable. The viewer **266** contains a software operating system that allows books to be stored, read and erased and includes the capability to order books and retain them in memory for a predefined period of time determined by the system operator. The software can be configured to allow the book to be read during a

period of time (i.e., two weeks) and then automatically erased, read once and erased, or held in memory permanently. Each viewer **266** has a unique key **605**. All of the data storage is encrypted with the key **605** for an individual viewer **266** to prevent more than one viewer device **266** accessing the text file or book file.

[**0092**] FIG. **12** is a flow diagram of some of the processes executed by the viewer **266**. Generally, the viewer **266** receives inputs from the subscriber through touch panel controls **740**. The subscriber's information requests are then processed **800** by the viewer **266**.

[**0093**] If the subscriber requests a menu of available books, process block **804** will select a book menu. Process block **808** will open the electronic files which list the books that are available (related to the category of topic of the menu) and display the menu with the names of the available books.

[**0094**] If the subscriber selects a particular book to read, then process block **812** will process the selection and determine the electronic file that contains the specific book. Process block **816** will open the file for that specific book and normally access the first page. (If a pointer has already been set in that book's electronic file, the process may default to that pointer.) Process block **820** will then determine which page needs to be displayed. Process block **820** will determine whether a next page, previous page or a bookmarked page needs to be displayed. If the pointer for the electronic file is not in the correct location then process block **828** will move the pointer and obtain the previous page of data from the stored file. Otherwise, process block **824** will normally obtain the next page of text from the stored electronic file. Process block **832** will decrypt and decompress the text data and send the data to the video display. The video display will generally have a video display memory associated with it and process block **832** will send the data directly to that video display memory. The circuitry for the display then completes the process of displaying the page of text.

[**0095**] If the subscriber, through the controls **740**, requests (from process block **800**) that the power be turned off, then the process, **836**, of turning the power off will be initiated. Process block **840** saves the pointer in memory to the page number in the book that the viewer **266** is currently reading. Process block **844** closes all the electronic files and signals the power circuitry to shut down the power to the various circuits in the viewer **266**. With these examples of basic processes the viewer **266** is able to display book selections and display text from those books.

[**0096**] d. Menu System

[**0097**] It is preferred that the electronic book system have a menu system for selecting features and books from the electronic book system. The operating software and memory required for the menu system is preferably located at the viewer **266**. However, it can also be located at the library or the library and the viewer **266** can share the software and memory needed to operate the menu system. Since the menus are usually displayed on the viewer **266** and it is preferred that the viewer **266** be capable of operating in the absence of the library, the basic software and memory to create the menus is more conveniently located at the viewer **266**.

[**0098**] The preferred menu system is a system which allows sequencing between menus and provides menu graphics for graphical displays such as on the viewer **266**. In a system

which uses a set top converter these menus may also be displayed on a television screen. In the simplest embodiment, the menus provide just basic text information for the subscriber to choose from. In more sophisticated embodiments, the menus provide visual displays and icons to assist the subscriber.

[**0099**] FIG. **13** depicts a menu system with sequencing. The primary menus in the system are an introductory menu **850**, a main menu **854** and various submenus **858**. In the embodiment shown, there are three levels of submenus. In certain instances one or two submenus is sufficient to easily direct the subscriber to the selection or information requested. However, there are features in which three or more submenus makes the user interface more friendly for the subscriber. Each level of submenu may consist of various menus. The particular menu displayed depends on the selection by the subscriber on the previous shown menu. An example of this tree sequence of menus are the help submenus **887**, **888**. Depending upon the specific help requested, a different menu is displayed.

[**0100**] An example of an introductory menu **850** is shown on FIG. **14a**. Generally the introductory menu **850** introduces the viewer **266** to the system and provides initial guidance and instruction. The introductory menu **850** is followed by a main menu **854**, an example of which is shown in FIG. **14b**. The main menu provides the viewer **266** with the basic selection or features available in the system. For example, FIG. **14b** shows that the viewer **266** is able to choose by a point and click method, six available options; (1) free previews, (2) books you can order, (3) books in your library, (4) your current book, (5) help, and (6) other system features. Following a selection on the main menu, a submenu is shown.

[**0101**] FIG. **13** shows ten available primary or first level submenus. They are (1) account set up **862**, (2) free previews **866**, (3) books in your library **872**, (4) books you can order **878**, (5) your current book **884**, (6) help **887**, (7) available features **890**, (8) messages **893**, (9) account information **896** (10) outgoing message submenu **898**. FIG. **14c** is an example of a first level submenu for books in your library **872**. This "Book In Your Library" submenu shows six available books by title and author and provides the subscriber with the ability to check a different shelf of books or return to the main menu. FIGS. **14d** and **14e** show other submenus for books that may be ordered using the "Books You Can Order" submenu.

[**0102**] The "Account Set Up Menu" **862** and further submenus related to account set up (which provide instructions and account input **864**) are shown in FIGS. **14f** through FIG. **14m**. These submenus allow initialization of an account at the operations center and orders to be charged to credit cards. The submenus include the ability to enter data related to your credit cards.

[**0103**] Free previews for books **866** are also provided by submenus (**868,870**). Examples of the free preview menus are shown in FIG. **14n**, FIG. **14o**, and FIG. **14p**.

[**0104**] Referring to FIG. **13**, submenus are shown on the "Books In Your Library" submenu **872** and are preferably broken into shelf numbers with submenus for each shelf **874**, **876**. The submenus on the "Books You Can Order" submenu **878** is similarly broken out into submenus by shelves **880**, **882**. These shelves may each be a category or genre of books. Books may be grouped into categories such as best sellers, novels, fiction, romance, etc. See FIG. **14d**.

[0105] Referring to FIG. 13, the submenu for “Your Current Book” allows a subscriber to select a current book 884 and then determine what page to view. This selection is confirmed with submenu 885. The help submenu provides the subscriber with additional help screens 888. The submenus for available features 890 are preferably broken out into a separate submenu for each feature 891, 892.

[0106] Referring to FIG. 13, messages can also be sent with the electronic book selection and delivery system. A level one message screen provides the subscriber with the ability to select from the various pending messages he has 893. Each message is then shown on a separate submenu screen 894, 895. An example of such a submenu is shown in FIG. 14g.

[0107] Referring to FIG. 13, account information is shown on a level one submenu 896 and then follow-on submenus show the recent orders and your account balance 897. There is also a level one submenu for outgoing messages 898 which has a follow-on submenu used as an input screen 899.

[0108] In addition to the specific features and submenus described in FIG. 13 and FIG. 14a through FIG. 14g, many other variations and features are possible. FIG. 14r is an example of a main menu with additional features and submenus available.

[0109] When a book is finally selected for viewing on the system it will appear on the screen as shown in FIG. 14s for the title and FIG. 14t for a page of text.

III. The Billing and Collection System

[0110] The billing and collection system utilizes the latest technology in electronic transaction and telephone switching to track orders, authorize deliveries, bill consumers, and credit publishers automatically. The telephone calls initiated by the phone connector are received by the billing and collection system which responds immediately without human intervention by placing the order and charging the consumers credit card account. Data is compiled periodically and publishers are credited for sales of their books. The billing and collection system may also connect with subscribers through two-way cable connections, cellular or other communication means.

[0111] It is preferred that the billing and collection system communicate with the operations center to track changes in available books and to provide statistical data to the operations center.

IV. Library and Bookstore System

[0112] The electronic book system can be modified to be used at public libraries and bookstores. FIG. 15 shows one possible arrangement of components for a public library or bookstore location. The main unit at public library or bookstore is the file server 900. The file server 900 is a large electronic memory unit that can store thousands of books. Various electronic storage means may be used in the file servers, such as hard disks and read-write CD ROMs and read only CD ROMs.

[0113] The system comprises five components; a converter or video connector 904, a controller 908, a viewer 912, and a catalog printer 916. The software for controlling the system is primarily located in the controller. The converter or video connector 904 is similar to those described above. In this configuration the controller unit 908 monitors the data being

transferred to the file server by the converter 904. The controller 908 is preferably provided with a viewing screens and several control buttons. When it is necessary to have a larger screen to perform more sophisticated controlling of the system a viewer may be connected to the controller 908 and the viewer screen and controls may be used.

[0114] The controller 908 is only able to download books to the viewer 912 which are authorized to receive books from the particular file server. For security reasons it is not desirable that the public viewer 912 have access to more than one file server. In this way, security can be maintained over the text data for books. It is preferred that the public viewer 912 be limited to receiving one or two books at a time from the controller 908. When the user of the public viewer 912 needs a new or additional book he returns the viewer 912 to the library where he receives a new book from the controller 908.

[0115] In order to track the books that are available on the file server, the titles of the available books may be printed on a catalog printer 916. The catalog printer 916 is connected to the library controller 908 and the titles of the books are downloaded to the catalog printer 916. None of the coded text for any of the books can be printed using the controller 908 and Catalog printer 916 of this system. In order to maintain security over the data, none of the book data is allowed to be downloaded to the printer. Once a complete printout of available book titles, magazines, or other textual material is complete, a hard copy of the catalog 920 can be maintained at the file server.

[0116] The system shown may also be used at bookstores. The bookstores can rent the public viewer 912 to customers with the text for one or two books loaded onto the viewer 912. The viewer 912 may be provided with an automatic timeout sequence. The timeout sequence would erase the textual data for the books after a certain period of time, for example, two weeks. It is expected that after a period of time (perhaps within two weeks) the renter would return the public viewer 912 to the bookstore and receive additional books for viewing. Using this arrangement, it is also possible for the bookstore to (permanently) sell a viewer 912 to a regular customer. The customer then returns to the bookstore from time to time to receive textual data for a book which the customer can then store permanently on his own viewer 912. Various other configurations are possible for bookstores and libraries using the file server and viewer 912 described.

V. Use of Set Top Converter

[0117] Existing set top converter boxes such as those made by Scientific Atlanta or General Instruments are presently unequipped to handle the book selection system of the present invention. Although set top converters may be built which include the library functions, hardware modifications are necessary in order to use the book selection system with existing set top converter technology.

[0118] FIGS. 16a and 16b are examples of hardware modification. A port is used to attach hardware upgrades described below to a set top terminal. Two upgrades are possible to set top converters 601 to assist in receiving and selecting electronic books. A menu generation card upgrade (FIG. 16a) and an information download unit (FIG. 16b). Each of these upgrades may be connected to the set top terminal unit through an upgrade port. A four wire a cable, ribbon cable or the like may be used to connect the upgrade to the set top converter 601.

[0119] A card addition **950** to a set top converter **601** is depicted in FIG. **16a**. The card **950** shown provides the additional functionality needed to utilize the book selection system with existing set top converter **601** technology. The card **950** may be configured to slip inside the frame of a set top terminal and become part of the set top terminal, an advanced set top terminal. The primary functions the card **950** adds to the set top converter **601** are the interpreting of data signals, generating of menus, sequencing of menus, and, ultimately, the ability of the viewer **912** to select a book using either the television or a viewer **912**. The card **950** also provides a method for a remote location, such as the cable headend, to receive information on books ordered. The books ordered information and control commands may be passed from the cable headend to the card **950** using telephone lines.

[0120] The primary components of the card **950** are a PC chip CPU **952**, a VGA graphic controller **954**, a video combiner **956**, logic circuitry **958**, NTSC encoder **960**, a receiver **962**, demodulator (not shown), and a dialer **611'**. The card **950** operates by receiving the data text signal from the cable headend through the coaxial cable. The logic circuitry **958** of the card **950** receives data **964**, infrared commands **966**, and synchronization signals (not shown) from the set top converter **601**. Menu selections made by the viewer **912** on the remote control are received by the set top converter's **601** IR equipment and passed through to the card **950**. The card **950** interprets the IR signal and determines the book (or menu) the subscriber has selected. The card **950** modifies the IR command to send the information to the set top converter **601**. The modified IR command contains the channel information needed by the set top converter **601**. Using the phone line **968** and dialer **611'**, the card **950** is able to transmit books ordered information to the cable headend. It is also possible to receive the books over the telephone lines and by-pass the video distribution system.

[0121] These commands are passed through the interface linking the set top terminal's microprocessor with the microprocessor of the hardware upgrades. In this way, subscriber inputs, entered through the set top terminal keypad or remote control, can be transferred to any of the hardware upgrades for processing and responses generated therein can then be sent back to the set top terminal for display. In the preferred embodiment the IR commands **966** are transferred from set top terminal **601** to hardware upgrade.

[0122] Hardware upgrades may include a microprocessor, interactive software, processing circuitry, bubble memory, and a long-term memory device. In addition to these basic components, the hardware upgrade may make use of an additional telephone modem or CD-ROM device.

[0123] The information download hardware upgrade **1001** (shown in FIG. **16b**) allows the subscriber to download large volumes of information from the operations center or cable headend using the set top converter **601**. The hardware upgrade **1001** will enable subscribers to download data, such as books and magazines, to local storage. Primarily, the hardware upgrade **1001** is an additional local storage unit **1003** (e.g., hard disk, floppy, optical disk or magnetic cartridge) and may include a microprocessor **1005**, instruction memory **1007**, and a random access memory **1009**, as shown in FIG. **16b**). Preferably, a small portable viewer **912** is also provided with the upgrade **1001** to enable downloaded text to be read without the use of a TV.

[0124] The downloadable information may be text or graphics supplied by the operations center or cable headend. With this upgrade, books may be downloaded and read anywhere with the portable reader. Using this upgrade, books may be downloaded and stored in compressed form for later decompression. The books would be decompressed only at the time of viewing. Important text that the public desires immediate access may be made available through this system. Text such as the President's speech, a new law, or a recent abortion decision rendered by the Supreme Court may be made immediately available.

[0125] In the preferred embodiment, book ordering information is stored at each set top terminal until it is polled by the cable headend using a polling request message format. An example of a polling request message format consists of six fields, namely: (1) a leading flag at the beginning of the message, (2) an address field, (3) a subscriber region designation, (4) a set top terminal identifier that includes a polling command/response (or P/F) bit, (5) an information field, and (6) a trailing flag at the end of the message. A similar response frame format for information communicated by the set top terminal to the cable headend in response to the polling request may be used.

[0126] FIG. **17** shows a preferred set top terminal that includes a data receiver **617'** and a data transmitter **1011**. The data transmitter provides upstream data communications capability between the set top terminal **601** and the cable headend. Upstream data transmissions are accomplished using the polling system described and, using a data transmitter **1011**. Both receiver **617'** and transmitter **1011** may be built into the set top terminal **601** itself or added through an upgrade module. Regardless of the specific hardware configuration, the set top terminal's data transmission capabilities may be accomplished using the hardware shown in FIG. **17**.

[0127] FIG. **17** shows RF signals, depicted as being received at by a data receiver **617'** and tuner **613** working in unison. Both of these devices are interfaced with the microprocessor **1013**, which receives inputs **1015**, from the subscriber, either through a set top terminal's keypad, a remote control unit or viewer **912**. All cable signals intended for reception on the subscriber's TV are accessed by the tuner **613** and subsequently processed by the processing circuitry **1017**. This processing circuitry **1017** typically includes additional components (not shown) for descrambling, demodulation, volume control and remodulation on a Channel 3 or 4 TV carrier.

[0128] Data targeted to individual set top terminals is received by the data receiver **617'** according to each set top terminal's specific address or ID. In this way, each addressable set top terminal only receives its own data. The data receiver **617'** may receive set top terminal **601** specific data in the information field of the signal frame described or on a separate data carrier located at a convenient frequency in the incoming spectrum.

[0129] Any received data includes information regarding books and menus available for selection. The subscriber may enter a series of commands **1015** using a keypad or remote control in order to choose a channel or program. Upon receipt of such commands, the set top terminal's microprocessor **1013** instructs the tuner to tune to the proper frequency of the channel carrying data and subsequently instructs the processing circuitry **1017** to begin descrambling of this data.

[0130] Upon selection of a book, the microprocessor **1013** stores any selection information in local memory (not shown) for later data transmission back to the cable headend. The set top terminal's microprocessor **1013** coordinates all CATV signal reception and also interacts with various upstream data transmission components. Typically, the data transmitter **1011** operates in the return frequency band between 5 and 30 MHz. In an alternative embodiment, the 6 frequency band of 10 to 15 MHz may be used. Regardless, however, of the frequency band used, the data transmitter **1011** sends information to the cable headend in the information field of the response frame described. Those skilled in the art will recognize that a number of variations and combinations of the above described set top terminal hardware components may be used to accomplish upstream data transmissions.

VI. Books-On-Demand System

[0131] The electronic book system described may also be configured in a book-on-demand style. FIG. **18a** shows one example of a configuration for a book-on-demand system. A book on demand system requires more powerful two-way communications between the consumer's home, bookstore or library and either the operations center or a distribution site **1020** such as the cable headend. This type of two-way communication can be provided by the hardware shown in FIG. **17** and described above.

[0132] Referring to FIG. **18a**, in a book-on-demand system, the subscriber selects the book to be download from an available menu of books. The available menu is usually sent to the subscriber location by the distribution site **1020**. After his selection, information about his selection (or request) is then communicated to either a distribution point **1020** (such as a cable headend) or the operations center. Upon receipt of this request, the needed textual and graphical information for the book is spooled and sent to the subscriber. In this manner, books are only sent when requested by the subscriber and are sent immediately upon demand for the book.

[0133] In order to support such a demand system, the text delivery and distribution must be conducted on a strong nodal architected distribution system, such as, a video-on-demand cable or telephone television system, or through use of individual telephone calls on the public telephone system.

[0134] The book-on-demand system allows for a greater selection of books to the subscriber and limits the amount of communicated book data that is unnecessary or unneeded. It also provides the book to the subscriber in a much timelier fashion.

[0135] In addition to a stronger distribution system, a book-on-demand system requires a distribution point **1020** to have more sophisticated equipment to spool out the textual information. This can be accomplished using file server technology **1024** for storing the books and ATM **1028** or telephone-type switching (not shown) to distribute the textual information. The file server **1024** and distribution technology that can be used in configuring such a book-on-demand system is described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,262,875 and U.S. Pat. No. 5,218,695, cited above.

[0136] FIG. **18a** shows an embodiment for a book-on-demand system that utilizes file server technology. In addition to books, the embodiment of FIG. **18a** will support distribution of nearly any digital data. Books or textual files are received from publishers **282** and other sources through local feeds

1032, ATM **1028**, or by satellite dish **1036**. The data is then stored in memory **1040** at the file server **1024**. Preferably, distribution point **1020** is a cable headend that receives requests from subscribers and delivers text to subscribers over a two-way communication system (such as a video-on-demand system (VOD) **1044**).

[0137] The library unit **262** can be connected to either a basic premium-type service cable system **1048**, a near video-on-demand type cable system (or pay-per-view (PPV) **1052**) or a video-on-demand cable system **1044**. In connecting with either of these three systems the library **262** may access the cable directly or may access the system through a set top terminal **601'**, **601''**, or **601'''**.

[0138] Using the two-way video-on-demand system **1044**, a subscriber is able to request a specific book title and receive that text immediately following its request. To accomplish this, the distribution point **1020** transmits a list of available books through the cable delivery system to the library **262**. The library **262** displays the list of available books on a menu or similar format. As described earlier, it is preferred that the library **262** use menus which list categories of available books to form its request from the distribution point **1020**. After selecting a book the library **262** then sends a request signal on the two-way communication system **1044** back to the distribution point **1020**. This request signal can be handled in two ways. Either the library **262** initiates the request or the distribution point **1020** polls the various libraries on to the two-way system **1044**. Upon receiving the request for the book title, the text associated with that book title is transmitted to the library **262** using the two-way cable system **1044**.

[0139] FIG. **18b** is an expanded view of an operations center **250** that supports a regional or national book-on-demand system. In fact, the operations center **250** shown supports distribution of nearly any digital data. The operations center **250** supports multiple feeds to receive digital information by tape **1060**, **1060'**, ATM **1028**, or satellite **1036**. The information is processed through an input MUX **1064** and a small file server **1068** before reaching the master file server **1072**. Digital data such as books received from publishers **282** is then stored on the master file server **1072**. It is preferred that the digital data is stored compressed in a standard format such as MPEG2.

[0140] A system controller **1076** provides control over the regional or national book-on-demand system. Books may be packaged into groups to provide feeds to various cable headends. In addition, scheduling and marketing research are conducted at the operations center **250**. In order to handle the scheduling and market research, book buy data is received at the operations center **250** through a multiplexer **1082**. Book buy information can be provided by the operation center **250** to the billing and collection subsystem.

[0141] The operations center **250** is also equipped to insert messages or advertisements into the file server. These messages or advertisements will eventually be received by the subscribers.

[0142] The master file server **1072** uses an output multiplexer **1080** and ATM **1028** as well as satellite connections to distribute digital data. In the preferred embodiment, cable headends receive text data on books from the master file server **1080** through the output multiplexer **1028** and an ATM system **1028**. After receiving the digital book data, the cable

headends store the books in a local file server **1024**. FIG. **18a**'s distribution point **1020** is an example of a cable head-end which may receive data from the operations center **250** of FIG. **18b** through an ATM hookup **1088** or satellite hookup.

1-26. (canceled)

27. An electronic book viewer for receiving, storing, and displaying an electronic book, comprising:

a display;

a wireless transceiver;

controls disposed near the display, the controls comprising:

one or more selection buttons;

a forward page button; and

a reverse page button;

an instruction memory having stored therein instructions for:

receiving an index of a plurality of available electronic books, wherein the index is available for downloading from a database remote from the viewer via a wireless distribution system of electronic books, and wherein the electronic books in the index are available for downloading via the wireless distribution system;

displaying the index on the display to a user using the viewer;

receiving inputs from the user through the controls;

downloading one specific electronic book in the index via the wireless distribution system to the viewer via the wireless transceiver, wherein the specific electronic book is downloaded in an encrypted format to the viewer, in response to the user selecting the specific electronic book from the index using the one or more selection buttons;

decrypting the downloaded electronic book;

displaying, on the display, a current page of the downloaded electronic book;

displaying, on the display, a next page to the current page, in response to the user using the forward page button;

displaying, on the display, a previous page to the current page, in response to the user using the reverse page button; and

a microprocessor configured to execute the instructions stored in the instruction memory,

wherein the display, controls, instruction memory, wireless transceiver and microprocessor are integrated into a portable, hand-held unit.

28. The electronic book viewer of claim 27, wherein the wireless transceiver comprises a cellular transceiver for mobile communications.

29. The electronic book viewer of claim 27, wherein the wireless transceiver comprises a radio frequency (RF) transceiver.

30. The electronic book viewer of claim 27, further comprising:

a video graphics controller.

31. The electronic book viewer of claim 27, further comprising:

a battery.

32. The electronic book viewer of claim 31, further comprising:

a power supply circuit configured to accept power from an AC power source or the battery.

33. The electronic book viewer of claim 27, wherein the instructions stored in the instruction memory further comprises instructions for:

creating an index of downloaded electronic books, wherein the downloaded electronic books have been downloaded via the wireless distribution system, and wherein the downloaded electronic books are stored on the electronic book viewer; and

displaying, on the display, the index of downloaded electronic books.

34. The electronic book viewer of claim 33, further comprising:

a book memory configured to store the downloaded electronic books.

35. The electronic book viewer of claim 34, wherein the instruction memory and the book memory are different types of memory.

36. The electronic book viewer of claim 27, wherein the display is a liquid crystal display (LCD) screen.

37. An electronic book viewer for receiving, storing, and displaying an electronic book, comprising:

a display;

a wireless transceiver;

one or more selection controls;

one or more page controls;

an instruction memory having stored therein instructions for:

receiving an index of a plurality of available electronic books, wherein the index is available for downloading from a database remote from the viewer via a wireless distribution system of electronic books, and wherein the electronic books in the index are available for downloading via the wireless distribution system;

displaying the index on the display to a user using the viewer;

receiving inputs from the user through the one or more selection and page controls;

downloading one specific electronic book in the index via the wireless distribution system to the viewer via the wireless transceiver, wherein the specific electronic book is downloaded in an encrypted format to the viewer, in response to the user selecting the specific electronic book from the index using the one or more selection controls;

decrypting the downloaded electronic book;

displaying, on the display, a current page of the downloaded electronic book;

displaying, on the display, a next or previous page to the current page, in response to the user using the one or more page controls;

creating an index of downloaded electronic books, wherein the downloaded electronic books have been downloaded via the wireless distribution system, and wherein the downloaded electronic books are stored on the electronic book viewer; and

displaying, on the display, the index of downloaded electronic books; and a microprocessor configured to execute the instructions stored in the instruction memory;

wherein the display, controls, instruction memory, wireless transceiver and microprocessor are integrated into a portable, hand-held unit.

38. The electronic book viewer of claim 37, wherein the one or more page controls comprises:

a forward page control; and

a reverse page control.

39. The electronic book viewer of claim 37, wherein the wireless transceiver comprises a cellular transceiver for mobile communications.

40. The electronic book viewer of claim 37, wherein the wireless transceiver comprises a radio frequency (RF) transceiver.

41. The electronic book viewer of claim 37, further comprising:

a book memory configured to store the downloaded electronic books.

42. A computer program comprising instructions stored in a memory of a portable hand-held device, the instructions being executable on the microprocessor of the hand-held device to perform the functions of:

receiving an index of a plurality of available electronic books, wherein the index is available for downloading

from a database remote from the hand-held device via a wireless distribution system of electronic books, and wherein the electronic books in the index are available for downloading via the wireless distribution system;

displaying the index on the display of the hand-held device to a user of the hand-held device;

downloading one specific electronic book in the index via the wireless distribution system to the hand-held device via the wireless transceiver, wherein the specific electronic book is downloaded in an encrypted format to the hand-held device, in response to the user selecting the specific electronic book from the index;

decrypting the downloaded electronic book;

displaying, on the display, a current page of the downloaded electronic book; and

displaying, on the display, a next or previous page to the current page in response to input from the user, wherein the portable hand-held device comprises an integrated display, controls, instruction memory, wireless transceiver, and a microprocessor.

43. The computer program comprising instructions stored in a memory of a hand-held device of claim 42, the instructions being further executable to perform the functions of:

creating an index of downloaded electronic books, wherein the downloaded electronic books have been downloaded via the wireless distribution system, and wherein the downloaded electronic books are stored on the hand-held device; and

displaying, on the display, the index of downloaded electronic books.

44. the electronic book viewer of claim 27, wherein the wireless distribution system is a radiofrequency network.

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