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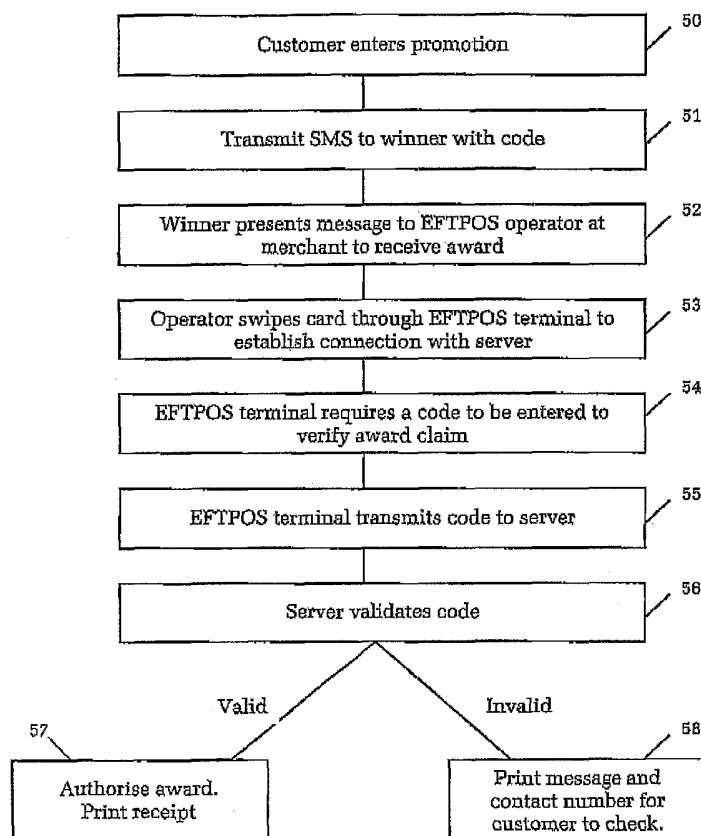
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(54) Title: PROMOTION SYSTEM



(57) Abstract: This invention concerns a marketing server system for managing a promotion in which users seek to win an award, such as competition to win a good or service. The marketing server system comprising an application server to process entries to the promotion from users and a communications gateway to communicate first transmissions between the application server and users, and to communicate second transmissions between the application server and a terminal. The application server operates to select a winning user from the entries and to generate a security code as part of a first transmission transmitted to the winning user, and to authorise an award to be made at the terminal when the security code is obtained from a second transmission sent from the terminal. The invention also concerns a method for managing a promotion, marketing management system for the promotion and a message sent to a mobile communication device concerning the promotion.



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Title**PROMOTION SYSTEM****Field of Invention**

- 5 This invention concerns a marketing system for managing a promotion in which users seek to win an award.

Background of the Invention

- 10 There are 11 million mobile handsets in the Australian market today. An average of five million SMS messages are transmitted each day and the core user is under 30 years of age. Response rates to SMS programs are much higher than more traditional mediums such as postal mail, television or radio promotions. SMS competition response rates can reach up to 25% in Australia and overseas.

- 15 SMS promotions are becoming increasingly popular within the 18 to 24 year old age group because the technology is relevant and accessible to this audience. This audience recognises that entering a competition using SMS is much easier than making a phone call or posting an entry form.

- 20 SMS competitions allow for total automation and streamlining of the competition process. With phone numbers and entry details sent straight to a central database, this eliminates the need for time-consuming data entry.

- Due to the high response rates and cost-effectiveness offered by SMS messaging technology, enabling SMS competition entries has become a vital component of successful competition management in Australia. The sense of immediacy is an important factor in the success of SMS competitions.

25

Summary of the Invention

 The invention is a marketing server system for managing a promotion in which users seek to win an award, the marketing server system comprising:

- 30 an application server to process entries to the promotion from users; and
 a communications gateway to communicate first transmissions between the application server and users, and to communicate second transmissions between the application server and a terminal;

- where, the application server operates to select a winning user from the entries and to generate a security code as part of a first transmission transmitted to the winning user, and to authorise an award to be made when the security code is obtained from a
35 second transmission sent from the terminal.

In a second aspect, the invention is a method for managing a promotion in which users seek to win an award, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving entries from users to enter the promotion;
selecting a winning user from the entries;

- 5 transmitting a first transmission having a security code to the winning user;
receiving a second transmission having the security code from a terminal; and
authorising the award to be made.

The entries may be Short Messaging Service (SMS) messages.

- The transmissions may be messages. The second transmission may be Dual
10 Tone Multi Frequency (DTMF) tones.

A message may be transmitted to the mobile communications device of a user from the application server. The message may be an SMS message or an e-mail. The mobile communications device may be a mobile phone or wireless communicator device, for example, a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) phone.

- 15 The winner may be selected at random.

The security code may be generated by an algorithm to make it difficult to guess. The security code may include the phone number and/or the International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number of the mobile communications device.

- The terminal may be an Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale (EFTPOS)
20 terminal.

- The second transmission may be made using a secure device. The secure device may be a magnetic stripe card or a smart card. The secure device may be coded for use with only one promotion. The secure device may provide the terminal with connection information to connect with the communication gateway. The connection information
25 may be a telephone number, an Internet Protocol (IP) address or a Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

The award may be goods or services. The award may be a gift certificate or cash.

- The promotion may be a competition or an interactive television game show.
30 The promotion may be a remote purchase of goods or services.

The security code may be manually entered into the terminal. The security code may be transmitted from the mobile communications device to the terminal via Infrared data transfer.

- A receipt may be printed after the award is authorised. The receipt may include
35 details of the award.

A reply message may be sent from the communication gateway to the terminal to authorise the award to be made at the terminal.

A database may be provided to store the entries received from the users. The security code may be stored in the datastore. The application server may authorise the
5 award by comparing the security code from the second transmission against security codes stored in the datastore.

In a third aspect, the invention is a marketing management system comprising:
a terminal to receive a security code from a user, and to send a second
10 transmission; and

a marketing server system for managing a promotion in which users seek to win an award comprising:

an application server to process entries to the promotion from users; and
a communications gateway to communicate first transmissions between the
15 application server and users, and to communicate second transmissions between the application server and a terminal;

where, the application server operates to select a winning user from the entries and to generate the security code as part of a first transmission transmitted to the winning user, and to authorise the award to be made at the terminal when the security
20 code is obtained from a second transmission sent from the terminal.

In a fourth aspect, the invention is a message transmitted to a mobile communications device of a user, the message comprising:

a security code generated by an application server; and
25 promotion identification information to identify a promotion in which users seek to win an award;

whereby when the message is presented to a merchant to receive the award, the security code is transmitted from a terminal of the merchant to the application server to authorise the award to be made.

30 Advantageously, the present invention reduces the likelihood of fraud while encouraging greater user participation in promotions by allowing users to collect their awards conveniently using their mobile phones.

Brief Description of the Drawings

35 An example of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a block diagram of the promotional system.

Figure 2 is a process flow diagram.

Detailed Description of the Drawings

5 Referring to Figure 1, the marketing management system 1 is a client/server system. On server side 10, an application server 14 is enabled to communicate via fixed line telephone networks, wireless communication networks and the Internet with merchants 21 and users 30 on client side 20. The application server 14 has SMS gateways 13 to process SMS messages 40 sent and received from different mobile
10 operators, for example, Telstra, Optus or Vodafone. The application server 14 also applies the rules for each competition, for example, comparing an answer contained in a message 40 with a correct answer. Other rules include randomly selecting winners from the competition at a specified time. A database server 11 is provided to the application server 14 to manage individual competitions. The database server 11 has
15 competition databases 12 for each competition. Each competition database 12 includes fields relating to the promoter of the competition, the duration of the competition, the prizes being offered and categories of winners. When a message 40 is received, it is separated by the application server 14 into parts which correspond to the database fields. The message parts are forwarded to an appropriate competition database 12 and
20 stored in a user record.

On client side 20, merchants 21 are provided with Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale (EFTPOS) terminals 22 that connect to the application server 14 using a modem. To establish a connection with the application server 14, EFTPOS operators 24 are provided with a magnetic stripe card 23 which is swiped through the EFTPOS
25 terminal 22. By swiping the card 23, electronic data capture (EDC) software of the EFTPOS terminal 22 acquires and dials a stored telephone number to connect with the application server 14. Cards 23 are exclusive to individual competitions and are issued to the merchants 21 at the commencement of a competition. This increases security and reduces the likelihood of fraud because cards 23 of previous competitions become
30 invalid. Cards 23 for different competitions have different telephone numbers to dial for accessing a specific competition database 12. This facilitates the running of multiple competitions at the same time by the same merchant and ensures the integrity of each competition database 12.

Referring to Figure 2, users 30 enter competitions by sending 50 a Short
35 Messaging Service (SMS) message 40 from their mobile phone 31 to a phone number displayed on marketing material such as leaflets, pamphlets or advertised in radio,

television, e-mail or web site advertisements. The phone number is associated with a specific competition database 12. The application server 14 receives the SMS message 40 and adds a new user record in the competition database 12 storing the user's 30 phone number obtained from the received Caller Line Identity (CLI) information. Other
5 related information is also stored in the record, for example, a selection from a multiple choice question or an answer to a trivia question from a TV game show and whether the selection or answer is correct.

Winning users 30 receive notification of competitions they have won by receiving 51 an SMS message 41 from the application server 14. The message 41
10 includes a security code 42 generated by an algorithm on the application server 14. The code 42 is difficult to be guessed or copied and is not sequential to reduce the possibility of counterfeit codes. The code 42 is also stored in the competition database 12 to be validated against when the user 30 claims their prize. The message 41 also includes other information relating to the name of the competition, outlets where the
15 prize can be claimed and the expiry time for claiming the prize.

In a typical scenario, the user 30 presents 52 the message 41 to an EFTPOS operator 24 at a merchant 21 for claiming the prize. In a closed loop process, the EFTPOS operator 24 swipes the card 23 corresponding to the competition through the EFTPOS terminal 22. The EFTPOS terminal 22 acquires and dials the stored telephone
20 number to establish 53 a connection with the application server 14. The telephone number also determines which competition database 12 the application server 14 is to access.

Once the connection is established, the user 30 is asked to enter 54 their code 42 into the EFTPOS terminal 22. The entered code 42 is transmitted 55 to the application
25 server 14 where it is validated 56 against valid codes stored in the database 12. If the code 42 exists in the database 12 and has not been claimed previously, it is considered valid. The application server 14 responds to the EFTPOS terminal 22 that the code 42 is valid. This authorises the EFTPOS operator 24 to award 57 the prize to the user 30. A receipt is printed for the user 30 to sign after they receive their prize which is kept by
30 the merchant 21 for their records or used as a rebate by competition promoters. The application server 14 also updates the database 12 to indicate that the code 42 is no longer valid because a claim has been made to it. Alternatively, if the code 42 does not exist or a claim has already been made against it, the code 42 is considered invalid. In this case, the application server 14 responds to the EFTPOS terminal 22 that the code
35 42 is invalid. A note is printed 58 declining the claim. A phone number is provided on the note to allow the user 30 to make an enquiry and check that the details are correct.

Although the code 42 has been described as generated by an algorithm, the code 42 itself can be algorithmic. That is, the code 42 acts as a key to decipher ciphered information stored in the application server 14. If the code 42 is valid, the deciphered information will test correctly against an expected result. In addition to the code 42, the
5 International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number of the user's 30 mobile phone and/or the mobile phone number of the user 30 from Caller Line Identity (CLI) information can be used. This increases security and further reduces the likelihood of fraud.

Within the scope of the invention, it is envisaged that interaction with the
10 application server 14 can occur across any communication medium such as fixed line or wireless, by using data, or voice via an Interactive Voice Response unit (IVR). Although SMS messages 40, 41 have been described, it is envisaged that e-mail and other data messages can be used for communication between the application server 14 and the user 30.

15 Although a competition has been described, other applications such as gift certificates, TV interactive game shows, remote purchasing, or applications where insecure messages are required to be verifiable documents are possible.

It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that numerous variations and/or modifications may be made to the invention as shown in the specific
20 embodiments without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as broadly described. The present embodiments are, therefore, to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive.

CLAIMS:

1. A marketing server system for managing a promotion in which users seek to win an award, the marketing server system comprising:
 - an application server to process entries to the promotion from users; and
 - 5 a communications gateway to communicate first transmissions between the application server and users, and to communicate second transmissions between the application server and a terminal;
 - where, the application server operates to select a winning user from the entries and to generate a security code as part of a first transmission transmitted to the winning
 - 10 user, and to authorise an award to be made when the security code is obtained from a second transmission sent from the terminal.
2. A marketing server system for managing a promotion according to claim 1, where the second transmission is made using a secure device, such as a magnetic stripe card or a smart card.
- 15 3. A marketing server system for managing a promotion according to claim 2, where the secure device is coded for use with only one promotion.
4. A marketing server system for managing a promotion according to any one of claims 2 or 3, where the secure device provides the terminal with connection information to connect with the communication gateway, such as a telephone number,
- 20 an Internet Protocol (IP) address or a Uniform Resource Locator (URL).
5. A marketing server system for managing a promotion according to any one of the preceding claims, where at least one entry or transmission is a Short Messaging Service (SMS) message or an e-mail.
6. A marketing server system for managing a promotion according to any one of
- 25 the preceding claims, where the second transmission is a Dual Tone Multi Frequency (DTMF) tones.
7. A marketing server system for managing a promotion according to any one of the preceding claims, where the first transmission is transmitted to a mobile communications device of a user, such as a mobile phone or wireless communicator
- 30 device.
8. A marketing server system for managing a promotion according to any one of the preceding claims, where the security code is generated by an algorithm to make it difficult to guess.
9. A marketing server system for managing a promotion according to claim 8,
- 35 where the algorithm utilises the phone number and/or the International Mobile

Equipment Identity (IMEI) number of a mobile communications device of the winning user.

10. A marketing server system for managing a promotion according to any one of the preceding claims, where the terminal is an Electronic Funds Transfer at Point of Sale (EFTPOS) terminal.
11. A marketing server system for managing a promotion according to any one of the preceding claims, where the award is a good, service, gift certificate or cash.
12. A marketing server system for managing a promotion according to any one of the preceding claims, where the promotion is a competition, an interactive television game show or a remote purchase of goods or services.
13. A marketing server system for managing a promotion according to any one of the preceding claims, where the second transmissions includes a reply transmission sent from the communication gateway to the terminal to authorise the award to be made at the terminal.
14. A marketing server system for managing a promotion according to any one of the preceding claims, the system further comprising a datastore to store the entries from the users and/or the security code.
15. A marketing server system for managing a promotion according to claim 14, where the application server authorises the award by comparing the security code from the second transmission against security codes stored in the datastore.
16. A method for managing a promotion in which users seek to win an award, the method comprising the steps of:
 - receiving entries from users to enter the promotion;
 - selecting a winning user from the entries;
 - transmitting a first transmission having a security code to the winning user;
 - receiving a second transmission having the security code from a terminal; and
 - authorising the award to be made.
17. A method for managing a promotion according to claim 16, where the second transmission is made using a secure device, such as a magnetic stripe card or a smart card.
18. A method for managing a promotion according to claim 17, where the secure device provides the terminal with connection information to connect with a server, such as a telephone number, an Internet Protocol (IP) address or a Uniform Resource Locator (URL).
19. A method for managing a promotion according to claim 16, 17 or 18, where at least one entry or transmission is a Short Messaging Service (SMS) message.

20. A method for managing a promotion according to any one of claims 16 to 19, where the second transmission is a Dual Tone Multi Frequency (DTMF) tones.
21. A method for managing a promotion according to any one of claims 16 to 20, where transmitting the first transmission is transmitted to a mobile communications
5 device of a user, such as a mobile phone or wireless communicator device.
22. A method for managing a promotion according to any one of claims 16 to 21, the method further comprising the step of generating a security code using an algorithm to make it difficult to guess.
23. A method for managing a promotion according to claim 22, where the algorithm
10 utilises the phone number and/or the International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number of a mobile communications device of the winning user.
24. A method for managing a promotion according to any one of claims 16 to 23, where the award is a good, service, gift certificate or cash.
25. A method for managing a promotion according to any one of claims 16 to 24,
15 where the promotion is a competition, an interactive television game show or a remote purchase of goods or services.
26. A method for managing a promotion according to any one of claims 16 to 25, where authorising the award to be made comprises replying to the second transmission with the authority for the award to be made at the terminal.
- 20 27. A method for managing a promotion according to any one of claims 16 to 26, the method further comprising the step of storing entries from the users and/or the security code in a datastore.
28. A method for managing a promotion according to claim 27, where authorising the award to be made comprises comparing the security code from the second
25 transmission against security codes stored in the datastore.
29. A marketing management system comprising:
a terminal to receive a security code from a user, and to send a second transmission; and
a marketing server system for managing a promotion in which users seek to win
30 an award according to any one or more of claims 1 to 15.
30. A message transmitted to a mobile communications device of a user, the message comprising:
a security code generated by an application server; and
promotion identification information to identify a promotion in which users seek
35 to win an award;

whereby when the message is presented to a merchant to receive the award, the security code is transmitted from a terminal of the merchant to the application server to authorise the award to be made.

31. A message transmitted to the mobile communications device of a user according
5 to claim 30, where the transmission of the security code from the terminal to the application server uses a secure device, such as a magnetic stripe card or a smart card.
32. A message transmitted to the mobile communications device of a user according to claim 31, where the secure device is coded for use with only one promotion.
33. A message transmitted to the mobile communications device of a user according
10 to any one of claims 30, 31 or 32, where the message is a Short Messaging Service (SMS) message.
34. A message transmitted to the mobile communications device of a user according to any one of claims 30 to 33, where the mobile communications device of a user is a mobile phone or wireless communicator device.
- 15 35. A message transmitted to the mobile communications device of a user according to any one of claims 30 to 34, where the security code is generated by an algorithm that utilises the phone number and/or the International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number of the mobile communications device.
36. A message transmitted to the mobile communications device of a user according
20 to any one of claims 30 to 35, where the award is a good, service, gift certificate or cash.
37. A message transmitted to the mobile communications device of a user according to any one of the preceding claims, where the promotion is a competition, an interactive television game show or a remote purchase of goods or services.
- 25 38. A message transmitted to the mobile communications device of a user according to claim 34, where the security code can be transmitted from the mobile communications device to the terminal via Infrared data transfer.

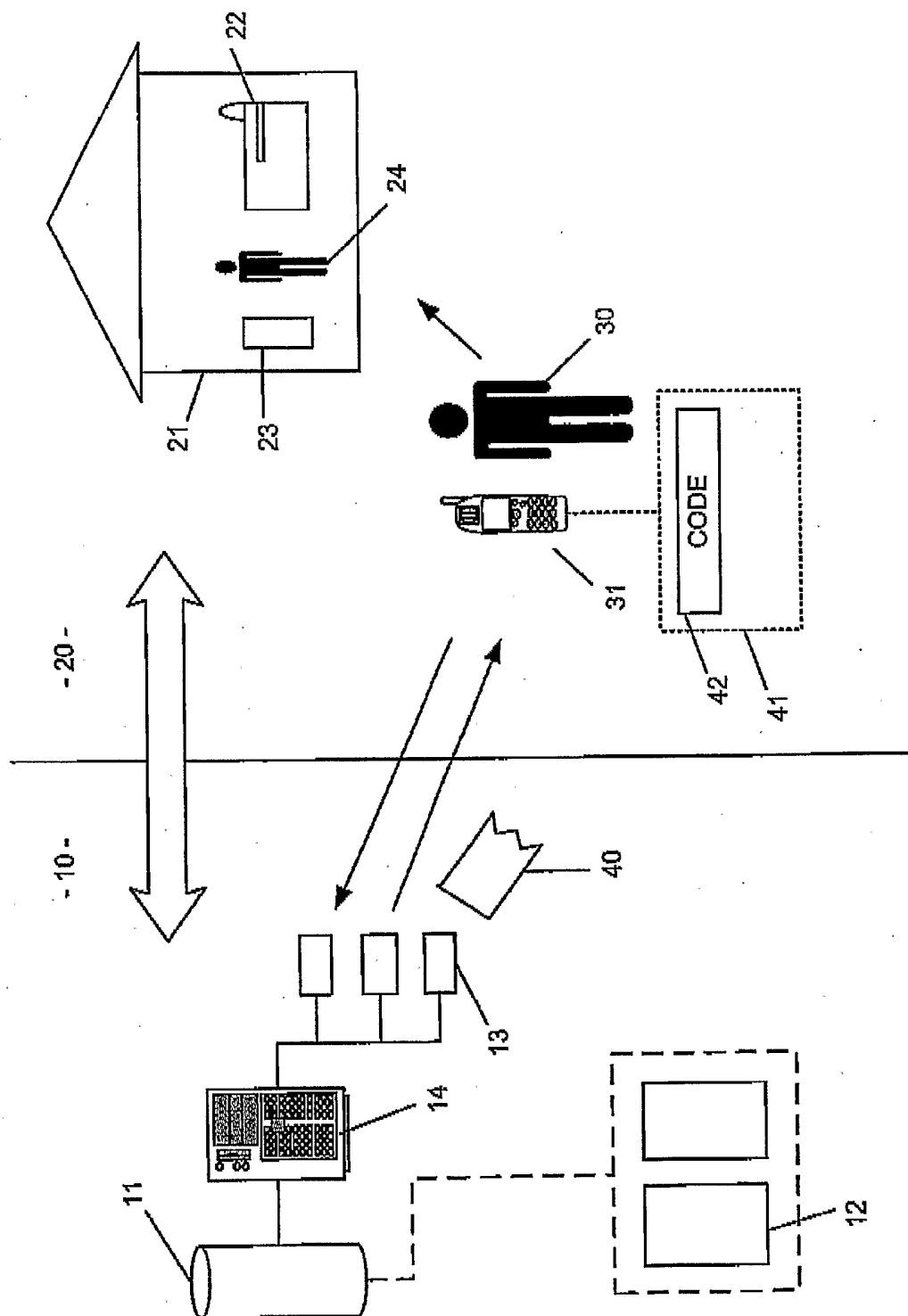


Figure 1

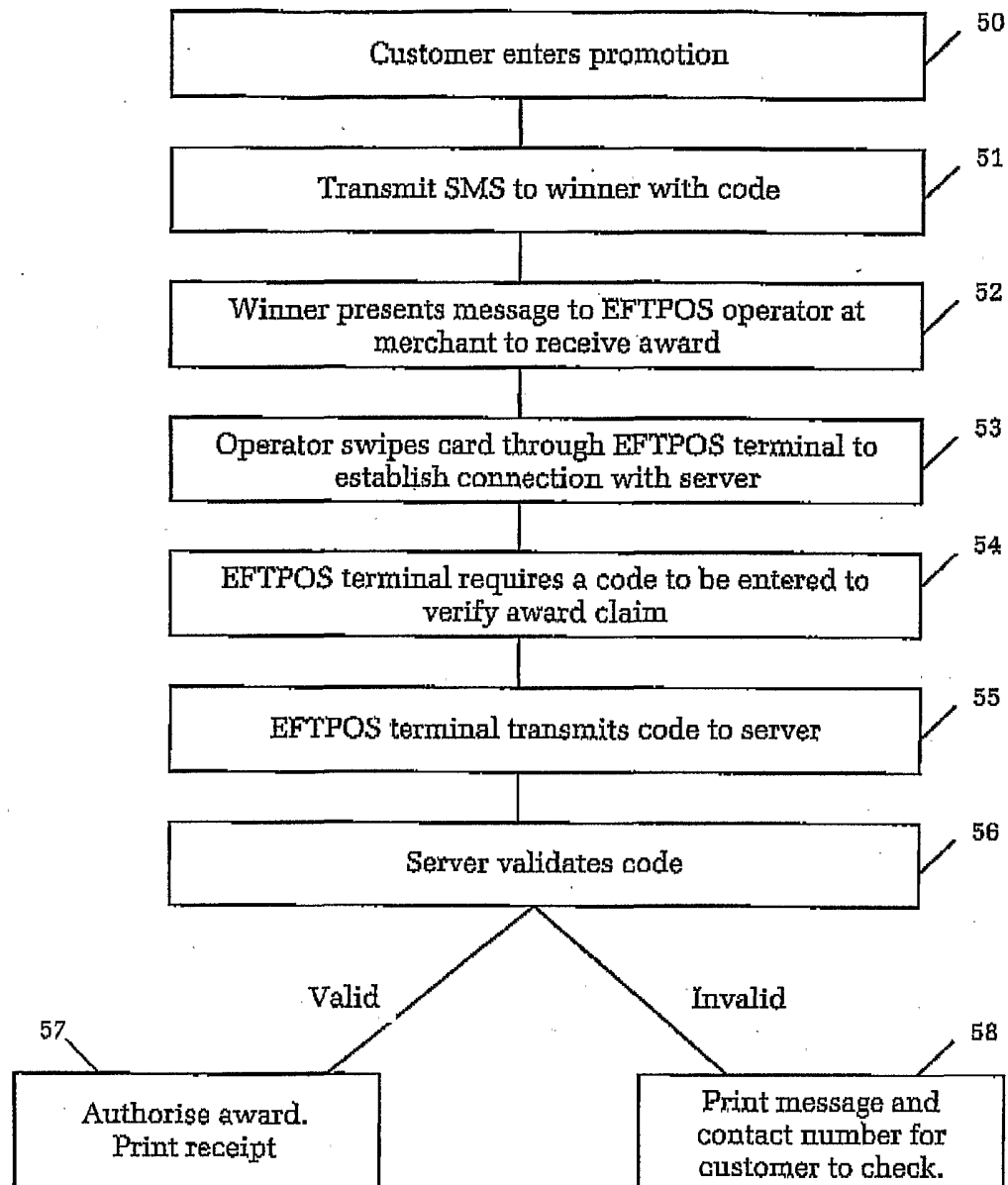


Figure 2

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/AU2004/000202

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER Int. Cl. ⁷ : G06F 17/60, 19/00, H04M 7/42, H04Q 7/22 According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) DWPI, internet (SMS, text message, mobile, cellular, competition, prize, winner, promotion, lottery, poll, vote, coupon, voucher, point of sale, redemption, card, etc.)		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
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X Y	EP 1 262 930 A2 (NORTEL NETWORKS LIMITED), 4 December 2002 the whole document (when combined with GB 2 373 361, WO 02/45384 or WO 02/45384)	1-38 1-38
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex		
* Special categories of cited documents: "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art "&" document member of the same patent family	
Date of the actual completion of the international search 17 March 2004	Date of mailing of the international search report 29 MAR 2004	
Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaaustralia.gov.au Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929	Authorized officer M. D. HOLLINGWORTH Telephone No : (02) 6283 2024	

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/AU2004/000202

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.

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

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