A system and method is disclosed for automatically answering and playing a desired telephone call from a desired calling party. In one embodiment, the called telephone is a cellular phone with a speaker or headset for use in a car. The called party is located and local traffic conditions are report to the called party over the speaker or headset of the called party’s telephone which automatically answers the incoming call as a desired phone call. In other embodiments, information requested comprises concierge services, reminder services or intermittent and/or periodic announcements of desired information.
301
[Wait for incoming call]

302
[Call number on call list?]

303
[Location sensitive?]

304
[Ring phone]

305
[Auto answer]
AUTOMATIC ANSWERING TELEPHONE SYSTEM

[0001] This is a continuation-in-part application of and claims priority to co-pending application U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/040,668, "Network Based Voice Mail with Call Screening", filed Mar. 18, 1998.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to a telephone system and, more particularly, to a telephone system that automatically and selectively answers and plays incoming calls.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] For decades many telephone users were faced with a dilemma each time the phone rang. Users had no way of discerning who the calling party was prior to actually answering the call. If the call was unwanted, the called party would not know until answering the call and was thus faced with the problem of answering an undesired phone call. For example, if a frustrated user, after having received a series of telemarketing calls attempting to sell products that were of no interest to the user received another call, he/she would have had to continue answering the telephone even though there was a high probability that the call was from another telemarketer. This is because the user would not have known prior to answering the phone who was calling and there was a chance that the call was coming from a party with whom contact was desired. If the call was not answered and it was from such a party, then the user would have missed an important telephone call. If the call was answered and it was from a party that the user wished to avoid (e.g. telemarketer), then the user would have been inconvenienced. Either scenario resulted in undesired consequences and extreme frustration for the user.

[0004] Some telephone users, if expecting a call from a particular party, could arrange with the calling party in advance to cue his/her calls in such a way that it would be clear that the call was from the desired party. For example, the prearranged agreement may entail allowing the phone to ring a certain specified number of times, discontinuing the call, then calling back immediately. In this way, the called party would be alerted to the call as being a desired phone call. However, this method was only applicable with certain parties that were personally known by the called party. Such an arrangement was very difficult to implement with most parties, such as with businesses who may have been reluctant to expend the effort for a single call. Furthermore, the method provided non-specific results as there was no definitive indication that the calling party was the desired party and therefore no guarantee could be obtained that the calling party was the desired party.

[0005] When a call is placed, a billing number of the originating party is sent to a terminating central office. This Automatic Number Identification (ANI) method provides information on the calling party and the identity of the calling party's telephone number cannot be blocked by the calling party. ANI was used by telephone companies to identify the billing account for a toll call. Information of the originating party was therefore available, however, this information was not typically released beyond the terminating central office. Exceptions to this included 911 emergency services or law enforcement agencies. With the advent of Signaling System 7 (SS7) however, it became feasible to forward caller information to the called party in a process commonly known as Caller ID (CID).

[0006] Caller ID (CID) provides called parties with a means of determining the probable identity of the calling party by providing the date, time and calling number of the calling party to the called party. This service provides telephone users with a method of determining the number of the calling party and therefore telephone users can effectively screen calls. Calls from unwanted parties can be safely avoided and calls from important or desired contacts can be answered with confidence.

[0007] However, as phone calls were received, the called party was required to check on the number of the calling party. This meant that as the phone was signaling the incoming call (e.g. ringing), the called party must have been in close enough proximity to the telephone to determine the identity of the calling number which would entail, for example, physically relocating to a position close to the telephone and observing the calling number on a display. Then, the user would have to make a decision at that time whether the call should be taken or not. Once the user decided on the action to take in response to the incoming call, he/she would have to act accordingly—i.e., either answer the phone or ignore it or allow a message to be taken. If it was determined by the called party that the phone call had enough merit to be answered, the called party would have to pick up the receiver or perform some physical act of answering the phone. This would have to be performed expeditiously before the calling party discontinued the call.

[0008] In many situations, an incoming call was expected and desired. If this was the case, the called party would have been waiting for receipt of the call and when an incoming call was received, the called party would have to physically relocate to the area of the telephone, observe the identity of the calling number, verify that the calling number matched the number of the party whose phone call was being expected and answering the phone if there was a match. If no match was detected, then the called party would have to continue waiting for the next incoming call and repeat the laborious process again when the next incoming call was received. This created many problems for the called party because of multiple trips to the telephone as well as the need to perform the physical act of answering the telephone. This was particularly problematic for telephone users who were physically challenged or otherwise indisposed such that answering the telephone was either not possible or required great physical effort.

[0009] Further, certain incoming calls were necessary under special conditions but unwanted under other conditions. For example, when in certain locations, a called party may desire information from a calling party and would thus require receiving the call. At the same time, if the called party was not in the proper location, the incoming call would be undesirable. The called party would have to observe the number of the calling party and act accordingly causing great inconvenience to the called party.

[0010] Today, certain telephones can autoanswer all calls. These telephones are configured such that they may be switched to autoanswer mode such that all incoming phone calls may be automatically answered safely. If a driver utilizing a car phone, for example, switches his/her car phone to autoanswer, then all incoming calls regardless of
who is calling will be answered safely and legally. However, such a user would be subjected to every call that is received including unwanted calls. For example, a user may be driving when a phone call from a telemarketer is received. The telephone, having been switched to autoanswer, will automatically answer the telephone even though the user may not wish to receive the call. The user would then be forced to converse with the telemarketer against his will resulting in extreme anger and frustration for the user. Currently, there is no means for telephone systems to autoanswer only desired calls and to screen unwanted calls and no safe and legal means to do so in a car.

Therefore, a need exists in the art for a system and method for automatically answering a telephone for selected calling parties, especially for telephone users for whom answering the telephone is problematic, inconvenient or otherwise not possible.

There also exists in the art a need for a system and method for automatically answering a telephone for selected calling parties when the called party is under a predeter-

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention solves the above mentioned problems by providing a system and method for screening incoming calls, identifying desired calls and automatically answering the incoming call if the incoming call is a desired call. Desired calls are identified, for example, by comparing the incoming call with a database of desired numbers. Answering of the desired incoming call is automatic. In U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/040668, filed Mar. 18, 1998 and incorporated herein in its entirety, inventor Urs Mueller describes a system and method for comparing a telephone number of a calling party with a voice mail service number and if the number matches, the call is immediately answered and put on a speaker phone. In this application, further embodiments of the invention are described in detail as outlined below.

In one embodiment of the invention, the system is located in a mobile vehicle, such as a car; truck; bus; etc., and the incoming call is from a traffic congestion notification service such as disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/455,243, filed Dec. 6, 1999 and incorporated herein in its entirety. Optionally, the geographical location of the called party is determined through a variety of methods such as Time Difference of Arrival (TDOA), triangulation or global position system (GPS), for example. It is understood that the method of determining the geographical location of the called party is not so limited and any effective method of determining the geographical location of the called party may be used. If the location of the called party indicates that proximity to a traffic condition necessitating announcement to the called party, a call is placed. The called party receiver (e.g. telephone) receives the incoming call and determines that the call is a desired telephone call by identifying the calling party and determining that the call is desired. The call is automatically answered and the received message is automatically played for the called party.

In another embodiment, the system is located in a mobile vehicle, such as a car; truck; bus; etc. and the incoming call is from a concierge service that is initiated, for example, from a telephone. A call is placed to a user or called party when a desired condition is met and the system detects that the incoming call is a desired call. The incoming call is then automatically answered. Any number of desired conditions is possible. For example, a user may request to be notified when he/she is in the neighborhood of a gas station. The location of the user is determined through such methods as TDOA, triangulation or GPS and when the user is in the vicinity of a gas station, a call is placed to the user. As an added feature, the calling service would maintain of database of hours of business of commercial establishments and notify the called party of gas stations that are open for business, for example. The call is determined to be a desired call and is answered and played automatically.

In another embodiment, the system is located in a mobile vehicle, such as a car; truck; bus; etc., and the incoming call is from a reminder service that is initiated by a user or called party. A call is placed to a user or called party when a desired condition is met and the system detects that the incoming call is a desired call. The incoming call is then automatically answered. For example, a user may request to be reminded to buy milk when he/she is near grocery store. The location of the user is determined through such methods as TDOA, triangulation or GPS and when the user is in the vicinity of a grocery store, a call is placed to the user. The call is determined to be a desired call and is answered and played automatically. Determination of the call as being a desired call may be performed by the called party's telephone via Caller ID, for example. In such an embodiment, the phone receiving the call determines its location via any one of many known positioning systems including GPS, identifies the calling party and determines if the call is a desired call in regards to the determined called party's location. If the call is determined to be appropriate under the conditions, the call is automatically answered and played. As an added feature, the calling service would maintain of database of hours of business of commercial establishments and notify the called party of grocery stores that are open for business, for example.

In another embodiment of the invention, the incoming call provides one-time or intermittent information. A call is placed and automatically answered by a called party if the call is a desired call. For example, a user may request to be notified when a stock reaches a certain value, or may request to be kept apprised of on-going sports results, or may request to be notified if he/she has won the lottery. Calls are placed to the called party as requested, determined to be desired calls and are answered automatically.

FIG. 1 illustrates a typical wireless communication system.

FIG. 2 illustrates a typical wired communication system.

FIG. 3 is a flowchart illustrating a method of automatically answering an incoming call.

The present invention relates to a system and method for automatically answering an incoming telephone call after determining that the incoming call is desired.
FIG. 1 illustrates a typical wireless communication system capable of use in the present invention such as but not limited to a cellular telephone. The system comprises a modulator (MOD) 111, a transmitter 113, a receiver 114, a demodulator (DEMOD) 112, and a control 110 that provides signals to and receives signals from the transmitter 113 and receiver 114, respectively. A battery 190 provides power. The control 110 contains circuitry required for implementing the audio and logic functions of the system. By example, the control 110 may be comprised of a digital signal processor device, a microprocessor device, and various analog to digital converters, digital to analog converters, and other support circuits. The control and signal processing functions of the system are allocated between these devices according to their respective capabilities. The control 110 further comprises circuitry such as digital signal processor devices, microprocessor devices and various circuits required to implement Caller ID (CID). The memory 220 comprises information on desired phone numbers, i.e. phone numbers of desired calling parties. A user enters phone numbers of desired calling parties through the keypad 130. The phone numbers of desired calling parties are then processed by the control 110 and stored in memory 220. An incoming call is received in the control 210 and the phone number of the incoming call is determined through Caller ID capabilities of the control 210 and compared to the phone numbers of desired calling parties stored in memory 220. If the phone number of the incoming call matches a desired phone number in memory 220, the control 210 automatically answers the call and the call is played through the speaker 250. The user may respond verbally or otherwise to the caller through the microphone 255 and transmit to the calling party through the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN).

An exemplary embodiment is illustrated in FIG. 3. In this non-limiting example, an incoming call is received at a telephone in step 301. The telephone contains a speaker or a headset and could be a wireless or wired phone. The preferred headset, if used, comprises one earpiece or two earpieces. The incoming call is identified when the calling number is matched to a number in a database of phone numbers for which auto-answer is desired in step 302. The database may be a list of phone numbers that are pre-selected by the telephone user. If the incoming phone number does not match any numbers on the list of phone numbers for which auto-answer is desired, then the call is not answered automatically and the telephone will ring (step 304). If the phone is not then answered, the call is optionally forwarded to a voice message system (not shown). If the incoming call number matches a number on the list of phone numbers for which auto-answer is desired, on the other hand, the system determines if the incoming number is location specific, i.e. if answering the call depends on location of the user for example (step 306). If it is determined that location of the called party does not apply to the call, then the call is automatically answered (step 305), otherwise, the location of the called party may be determined such that a decision can be made if the phone call should be answered automatically (step 303). If location tracking criteria is met, then the call is automatically answered (step 305). The announcement from the calling party is then played over, for example, through the speaker or headset. Otherwise, the call is not answered automatically and the telephone will ring (step 304). If the phone is not then answered, the call is optionally forwarded to a voice message system (not shown).

There are several methods of creating or maintaining the list of desired numbers. For example, this list of desired phone numbers could be keyed directly into the phone or uploaded to the phone from a computer, for example via a cable, infrared, or wireless connection. Alternatively, the list of services available such as but not limited to concierge service, reminder service, one-time notification service, traffic congestion notification service, weather service, etc. could be pre-programmed into the phone at the factory and selectively activated by the user. For added flexibility, the user may also subscribe to a notification service and the notification service itself could send the list to the user via placing a phone call and determining a correct security code. In this way, the list of numbers can be changed along with changes to the service. In a further preferred embodiment, the user may configure the phone to accept certain calls on a need basis. As a non-limiting example, a user may place a call to contact a notification or concierge service. Because this phone number is a desired number, the user may indicate at the time of this contact with the notification or concierge service that the number is a desired number such that the number is entered into the list.
of desired numbers. One possible method of indicating the number is desired may be by pushing button on the phone during the call or after the call to indicate that the last number called is a desired number however any one of many known methods may be used. The number may then be stored in memory permanently or temporarily. If temporarily, the user may specify the length of time to store the number.

[0026] Location of the called party could be determined in a variety of ways. One system for tracking the location of cellular phones involves the use of Time Difference of Arrival (TDOA). Through the use of TDOA for example, the geographical location of a party’s cellular phone is identified by the use of three cell site antennae that lock in on the signal from the cellular phone. The exact location of the cellular telephone is then identified and plotted. TDOA may be used to track the location of the user and when it is determined that the user is in a designated location for receiving a telephone call, the call will be automatically answered. Alternatively, the location of the called party could be determined using triangulation wherein the source of a radio signal is located using three receivers, each of which focuses on the direction of maximum signal strength.

[0027] The calling service could be further equipped with voice recognition technology such that the service could respond to verbal commands from the user. As a non-limiting example, the service would ask the user “Would you like me to repeat this message?”, the user would respond “yes”, and the service would recognize this command and replay the message. If the user replied “no”, then the service would not replay the message.

[0028] The system may further comprise a means for powering on when a desired phone call is received. In this embodiment, the telephone may be turned off when a desired phone call is received. In this scenario, the system will detect the calling party as a desired call and the telephone will be forced on. The call is subsequently answered automatically and the call from the calling party is automatically played.

[0029] To better understand the invention, exemplary embodiments are provided however, it is understood that the invention is not limited thereto since modifications may be made by persons skilled in the art that still fall within the spirit and scope of the disclosed invention.

[0030] In one non-limiting embodiment of the invention, a cell phone in an automobile is used. A user may subscribe to a network-based traffic congestion notification service as disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/455,243 which is incorporated herein in its entirety. The service may track the geographical location of the user in his/her car using a variety of methods such as TDOA and when the user is detected as approaching or arriving in the vicinity of an area of traffic congestion, the service places a local traffic report telephone call to the user’s cellular telephone. While driving a car, a driver often cannot safely answer a telephone. In fact, answering a telephone while driving is illegal in some jurisdictions because it is considered unsafe to do so. With the system of the present invention, the user’s cellular telephone system will access a database of desired calling numbers, for example an auto-answer list of calling numbers. The network-based traffic congestion notification service, having been predetermined to be a desired calling number, triggers an automatic answer of the phone call. The phone automatically answers the telephone and the traffic report is played for the user without requiring any input from the user. The announcement may be played on a speaker or on a headset, the headset comprising one earpiece if the local jurisdiction prohibits the use of two earpiece headsets. After completion of the call, disconnection of the call would be accomplished by a variety of methods including but not limited to auto disconnect (as in digital PCS systems) or disconnection after a long silence is detected from the calling party.

[0031] In another exemplary embodiment, the user may request to be notified when certain conditions are met. For example, a driver of a car may notice that his/her gas tank is approaching “empty” and may wish to be notified when he/she is in the vicinity of a gas station. The user places a call to the notification system and requests to be notified when he/she is close to gas station. This request may be initiated from a telephone, for example. Further, the request may be spoken or entered on a telephone keypad. Alternatively, a gas tank sensor can be used such that when the gas level falls to a predetermined level, the notification system is automatically triggered to place a call. The service tracks the geographical location of the user using TDOA for example and when the user is within a certain predetermined distance from a gas station, the service places a call to the user’s cellular telephone. The called cellular telephone detects the calling number and determines that the number is a desired calling party. The phone number is then automatically answered and an alert message, such as “There is a gas station 100 feet due East” is played over the cellular telephone’s speaker or headset. As an added feature, the service would comprise a database of operating hours for gas stations and would report only those gas stations that are currently open for business resulting an announcement such as “There is an OPEN gas station 100 feet due East”, for example. It should be appreciated that this process is not limited as such and can be applied to any situation wherein the driver requires notification such as being in the vicinity of a restaurant, rest stop, barber shop, etc.

[0032] In another exemplary embodiment, the user may wish to be reminded to perform an action when a particular set of conditions is met. For example, the user may wish to make a purchase such as buying milk at a grocery store but is not presently near a grocery store. The user may forget to perform the action by the time he/she is in a position to perform the action. In this example, by the time the user is in the vicinity of a grocery store, he/she may not remember to buy milk. With the system of the present invention, the user may place a request to a notification service to be reminded to buy milk when he/she is in the vicinity of a grocery store. The service tracks the geographical location of the user and when it detects that the user is in the vicinity of a grocery store, the service places a reminder announcement call to the user’s cellular telephone. The called cellular telephone detects the calling number and determines that the number is a desired calling party. The phone number is then automatically answered and an alert message, such as “You are approaching a grocery store, don’t forget to buy milk” is played over the cellular telephone’s speaker or headset. It should be appreciated that this process is not limited as such and can be applied to any situation wherein the driver requires a reminder under a certain set of conditions.
[0033] In another exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the user may wish to be notified of certain desired information under certain conditions. For example, the user may request to be notified when a particular stock reaches a certain price or when a particular sports team wins a tournament or when the user has won the lottery. Notification may be set up by placing a telephone call, registering on the Internet, registering through a human agent or through an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, for example. The user includes the caller number information in a database of desired callers. When the condition is met, for example AT&T stock reaches 100 or the New York Mets win the World Series or the user has won the lottery, the caller will place a notification telephone call to the user. The calling phone number is detected as a desired calling party and the call is automatically answered. The announcement is automatically played through the speaker or headset of the called telephone. This embodiment may also be used for periodically receiving information such as intermittent reports of ongoing sports scores or intermittent stock quotes on desired holdings, etc. It should be appreciated that this process is not limited as such and can be applied to any situation wherein the user requires notification of data under certain conditions.

[0034] In another exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the user may be unable to answer the telephone but wishes to receive certain phone calls while desiring to screen certain other calls. For example, the user may be physically unable to answer the telephone but wishes to answer all calls from certain parties such as a spouse, child or doctor. In this embodiment, the user may be bedridden, may be an amputee and physically unable to answer the telephone, or may be otherwise incapable of answering the telephone, for example. It is understood that the examples are not intended in any way to be limiting as a person may be unable to answer or incapable of answering a phone for any variety of reasons. The calling party calls the user's telephone. The calling phone number is detected as a desired calling party through comparison to an autoanswer list of calling numbers, for example. The phone call is automatically answered without requiring any physical action on the part of the user. Disconnection of the call after call completion would be accomplished by a variety of methods including but not limited to automatic disconnect (such as in ISDN phone systems) or disconnection after a long silence is detected. Likewise, if an incoming call is from a party who is not designated as a desired calling party, the incoming phone number is detected as such and the call is not automatically answered and is instead optionally routed to a voice message system.

[0035] While this invention has been described in connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments, but, on the contrary, it is intended to cover various modifications within the spirit and scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:
1. A system for providing control of telecommunications network services by a called party comprising:
   a) means for receiving an incoming call at a called party receiver from a calling party,
   b) means for identifying the incoming call,
   c) means for determining if the number of the incoming call is a desired number, and
   d) means for automatically answering the incoming call if the number of the incoming call is a desired number.
2. The system of claim 1 further comprising a means for determining the geographical location of the called party.
3. The system of claim 2 wherein the means for determining the geographical location of the called party is a Global Positioning System (GPS).
4. The system of claim 2 wherein the geographical location of the called party is determined by Time Difference of Arrival (TDOA).
5. The system of claim 2 wherein the geographical location of the called party is determined by triangulation.
6. The system of claim 1 wherein the called party receiver is a telephone.
7. The system of claim 6 wherein the telephone comprises a speaker.
8. The system of claim 6 wherein the telephone comprises a headset.
9. The system of claim 8 wherein the headset comprises only one earpiece.
10. The system of claim 1 wherein the means for identifying the incoming call comprises caller ID.
11. The system of claim 1 wherein the means for determining if the number of the incoming call is a desired number compares the number of the incoming call to a list of desired numbers.
12. The system of claim 11 wherein the list of desired numbers comprises numbers preprogrammed into the called party receiver.
13. The system of claim 11 wherein the list of desired numbers comprises numbers input into the called party receiver by a calling service.
14. The method of claim 11 wherein the list of desired numbers comprises numbers input into the called party receiver by the called party.
15. The method of claim 14 wherein inputting desired numbers into the called party receiver comprises direct input or input via a computer.
16. A method for providing control of telecommunications network services by a called party comprising the steps of:
   a) receiving an incoming call at a called party receiver from a calling party,
   b) identifying the incoming call,
   c) determining if the number of the incoming call is a desired number, and
   d) answering the incoming call if the number of the incoming call is a desired number,
   wherein said step of answering the incoming call is performed automatically.
17. The method of claim 16 further comprising determining the geographical location of the called party.
18. The method of claim 17 wherein the geographical location of the called party is determined by a Global Positioning System (GPS).
19. The method of claim 17 wherein the geographical location of the called party is determined by Time Difference of Arrival (TDOA).
20. The method of claim 17 wherein the geographical location of the called party is determined by triangulation.

21. The method of claim 16 wherein the called party receiver is a telephone.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein the telephone comprises a speaker.

23. The method of claim 21 wherein the telephone comprises a headset.

24. The method of claim 23 wherein the headset comprises only one earpiece.

25. The method of claim 16 wherein the incoming is received periodically.

26. The method of claim 16 wherein identifying the incoming call comprises using caller ID.

27. The method of claim 16 wherein determining if the number of the incoming call is a desired number comprises comparing the number of the incoming call to a list of desired numbers.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein the list of desired numbers comprises numbers preprogrammed into the called party receiver.

29. The method of claim 27 wherein the list of desired numbers comprises numbers input into the called party receiver by a calling service.

30. The method of claim 27 wherein the list of desired numbers comprises numbers input into the called party receiver by the called party.

31. The method of claim 30 wherein inputting desired numbers into the called party receiver comprises direct input or input via a computer.

32. A method for providing control of telecommunications network services by a called party located in a mobile vehicle, said method comprising the steps of:

a) receiving an incoming call at a called party receiver from a calling party, said called party receiver located in a mobile vehicle,

b) identifying the incoming call,

c) determining if the number of the incoming call is a desired number, and

d) answering the incoming call if the number of the incoming call is a desired number,

wherein said step of answering the incoming call is performed automatically.

33. The method of claim 32 wherein the called party is a traffic notification service.

34. The method of claim 33 wherein the traffic notification service provides data comprising traffic conditions.

35. The method of claim 34 wherein the data further comprises alternate driving routes.

36. The method of claim 32 wherein the calling party is a concierge service.

37. The method of claim 36 wherein the concierge service provides data comprising a requested notification.

38. The method of claim 37 wherein the concierge service comprises a database of desired criteria information and wherein the concierge service provides data comprising a requested notification if at least one of the desired criteria is met.

39. The method of claim 32 wherein the calling party is a reminder service.

40. The method of claim 39 wherein the reminder service provides data comprising a requested reminder.

41. The method of claim 40 wherein the reminder service comprises a database of desired criteria information and wherein the reminder service provides data comprising a requested reminder if at least one of the desired criteria is met.

42. The method of claim 32 further comprising determining the geographical location of the called party.

43. The method of claim 42 wherein the geographical location of the called party is determined by a Global Positioning System (GPS).

44. The method of claim 42 wherein the geographical location of the called party is determined by Time Difference of Arrival (TDOA).

45. The method of claim 42 wherein the geographical location of the called party is determined by triangulation.

46. The method of claim 32 wherein the called party receiver is a telephone.

47. The method of claim 46 wherein the telephone comprises a speaker.

48. The method of claim 46 wherein the telephone comprises a headset.

49. The method of claim 48 wherein the headset comprises only one earpiece.

50. The method of claim 32 wherein identifying the incoming call comprises using caller ID.

51. The method of claim 32 wherein determining if the number of the incoming call is a desired number comprises comparing the number of the incoming call to a list of desired numbers.

52. The method of claim 51 wherein the list of desired numbers comprises numbers preprogrammed into the called party receiver.

53. The method of claim 51 wherein the list of desired numbers comprises numbers input into the called party receiver by a calling service.

54. The method of claim 51 wherein the list of desired numbers comprises numbers input into the called party receiver by the called party.

55. The method of claim 54 wherein inputting desired numbers into the called party receiver comprises direct input or input via a computer.