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(54) **CONTROLLING THE USE OF A WIRELESS MOBILE COMMUNICATION DEVICE**

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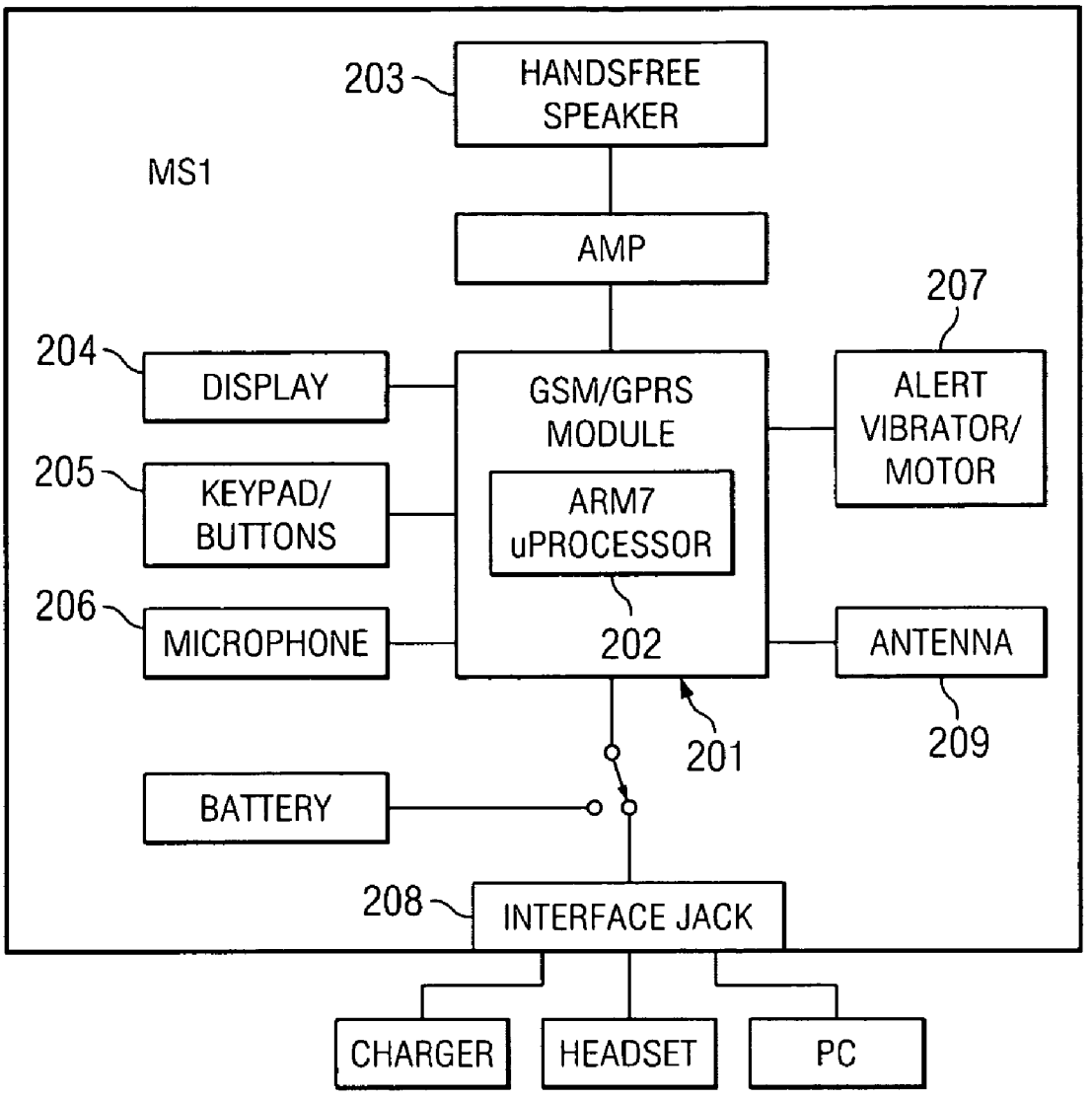
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **455/550.1**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A controlling party can set limitations on a controlled party's access to applications operating on the controlled party's wireless mobile communication device. The controlling party can effectuate these limitations via various different mechanisms. In one instance, the controlling party uses another wireless communication device to effectuate the limitations. In another instance, the limitations are effectuated by the controlling party's operation of a data processing apparatus connected by a wired data communication bus to the controlled party's wireless mobile communication device. In a still further instance, the controlling party effectuates the limitations by accessing a website supported by a web server.



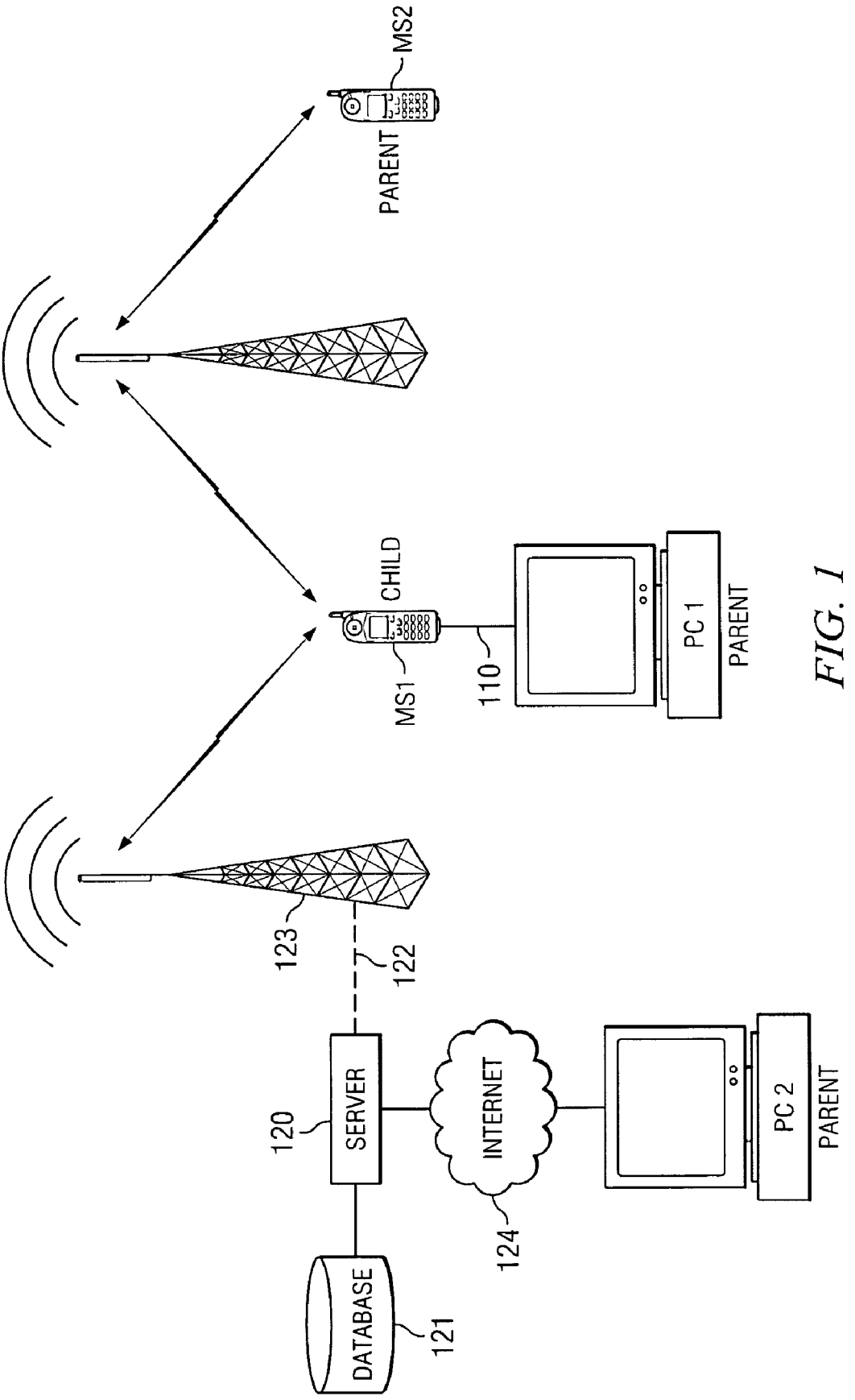

MS2
PARENT
CHILD
MS1
110
PC 1
PARENT
123
122
120
SERVER
INTERNET
124
PC 2
PARENT
DATABASE
121

FIG. 1

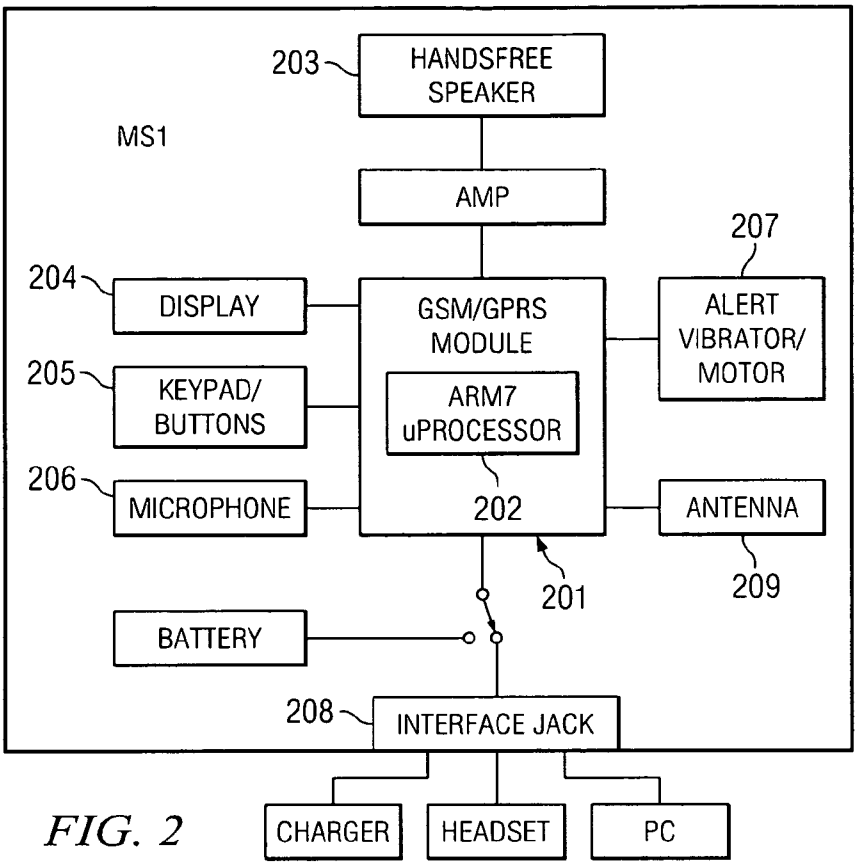


FIG. 2

310 PHONE NUMBER (ALLOWED)	320 CALL DURATION FILTER	330 TIME OF DAY FILTER
MOM	NO RESTRICTION	NO RESTRICTION
DAD	NO RESTRICTION	NO RESTRICTION
JOHN	60 MINUTES/MONTH	7-9 P.M.
LISA	90 MINUTES/MONTH	6-10 P.M.
⋮	⋮	⋮

340	GENERAL PHONE SETTINGS
350	CURRENT DATE AND TIME
	CALENDAR EVENTS
	TO DO LIST
	COUNTDOWN TIMERS
	INCOMING AND OUTGOING MESSAGING
	GAMES
	⋮

FIG. 3

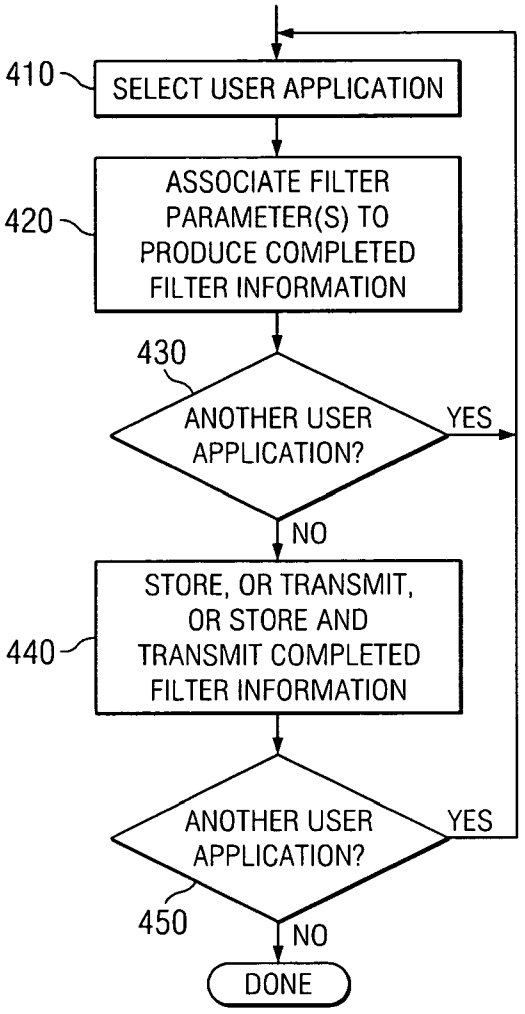


FIG. 4

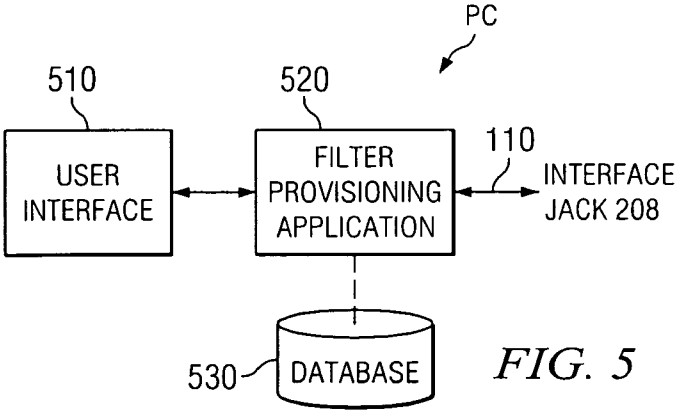


FIG. 5

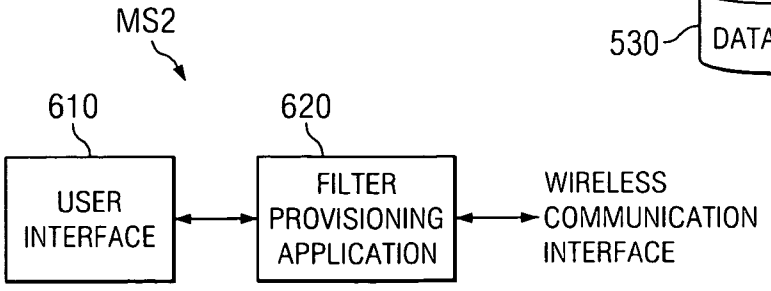


FIG. 6

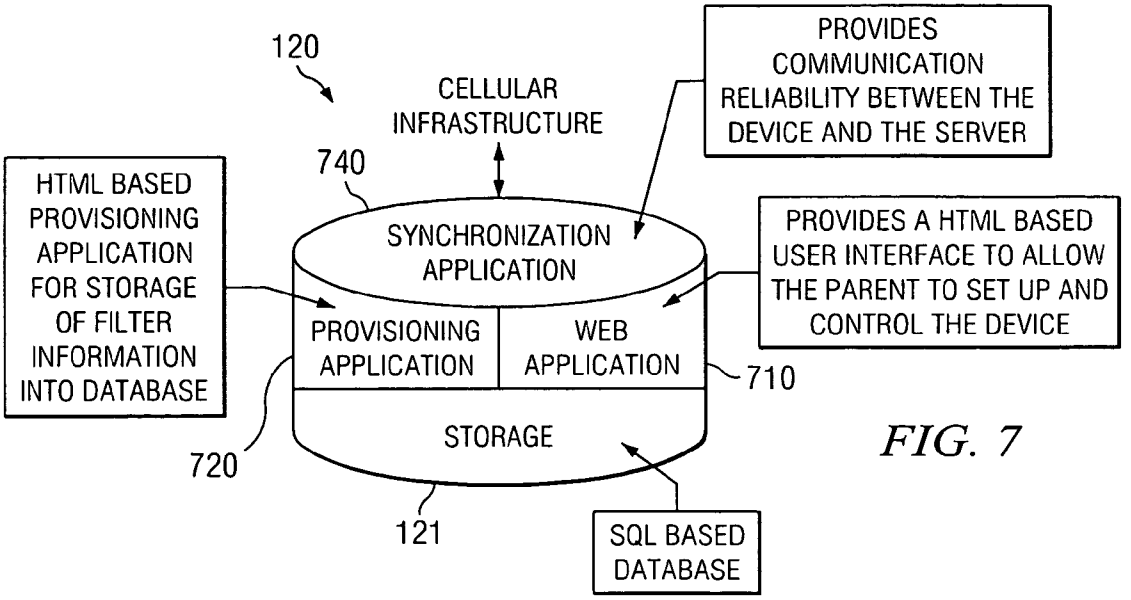


FIG. 7

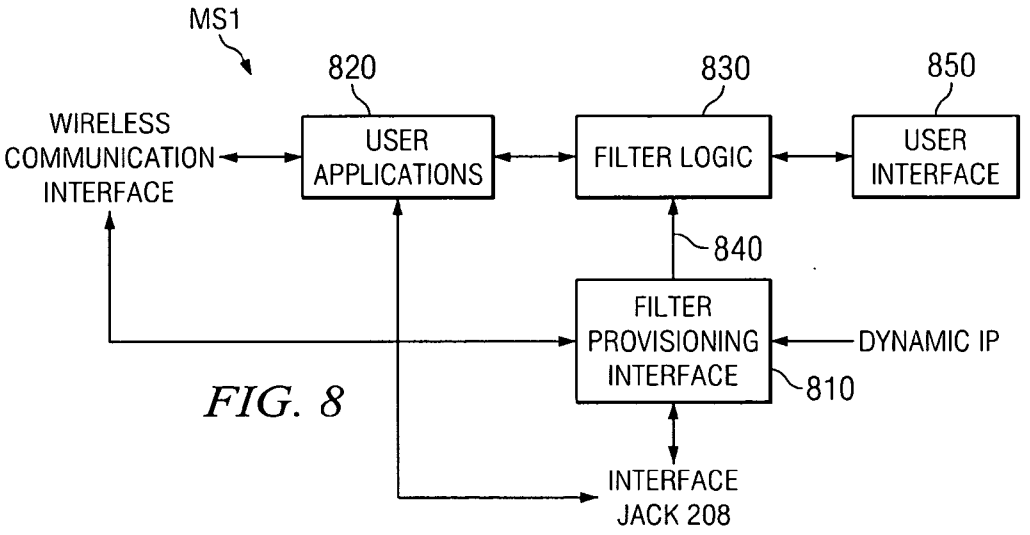


FIG. 8

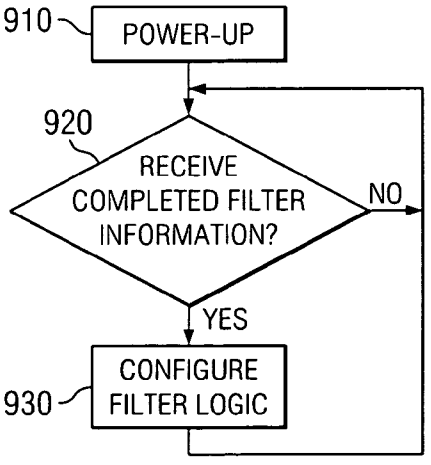


FIG. 9

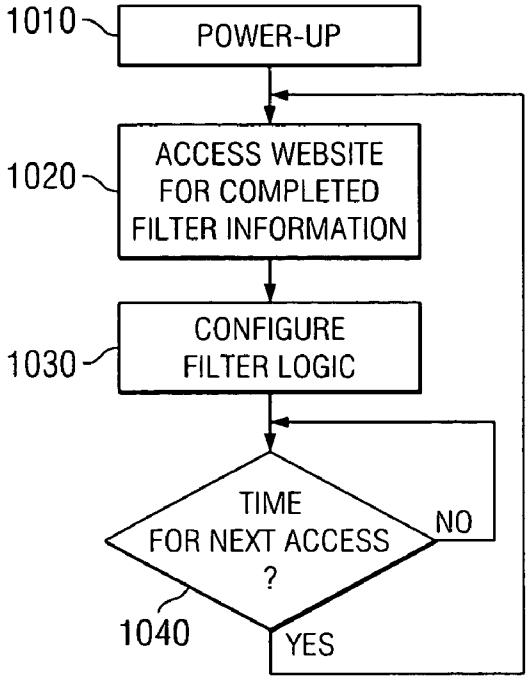


FIG. 10

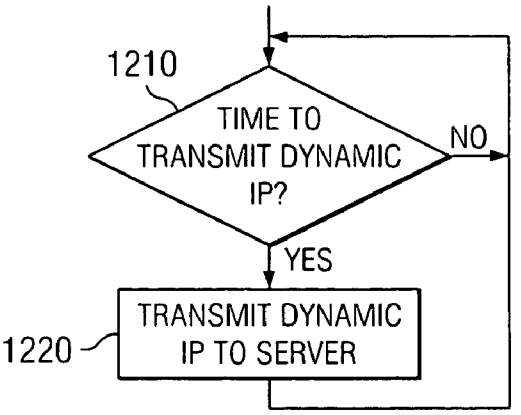


FIG. 12

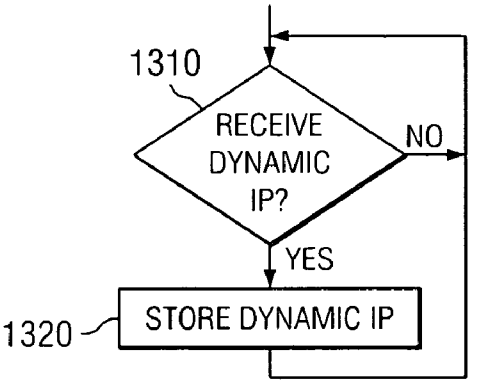


FIG. 13

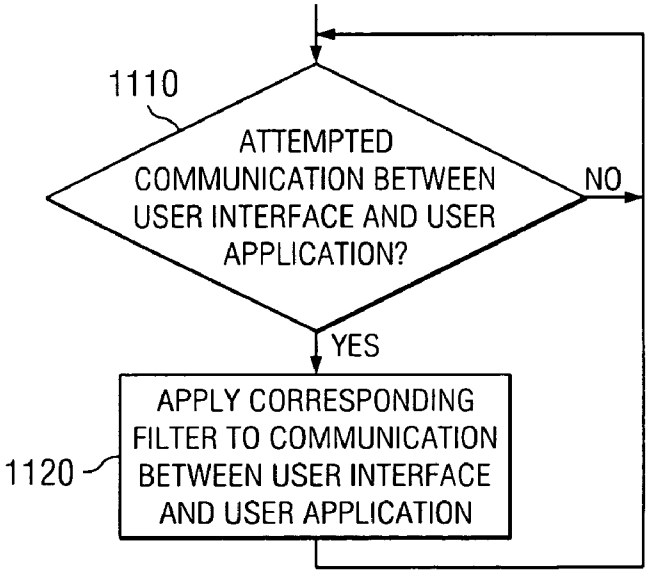


FIG. 11

CONTROLLING THE USE OF A WIRELESS MOBILE COMMUNICATION DEVICE

PRIORITY CLAIM

[0001] This application claims the priority under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) of co-pending U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/510,705, filed on Oct. 10, 2003 and incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The invention relates generally to wireless mobile communication devices and, more particularly to controlling the use of a wireless mobile communication device.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] The usefulness and practicality of providing children with access to wireless mobile telecommunications technology is evident. Wireless communication devices such as mobile telephones are particularly useful and practical as a means of maintaining contact with children for purposes of safety, security and general peace of mind. However, although wireless telephones such as cell phones provide many obvious advantages for children, there are also several areas of concern. These areas of concern include the possibility of excessively large monthly telephone bills, unwanted callers, and general irresponsibility associated with children and young adults. This irresponsibility can manifest itself, for example, in excessive game playing on the wireless device, excessive time spent on telephone chats (whether or not they result in an increased bill), and poor management of the audible ringer function (for example, the phone rings in the middle of a child's math class).

[0004] It is therefore desirable to provide for parental control of the use of a wireless mobile communication device, such as a mobile telephone, that is made available by a parent to a child.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] The present invention overcomes the limitations of the prior art and provides additional benefits. A brief summary of some embodiments and aspects of the invention are first presented. Some simplifications and omissions may be made in the following summary. The summary is intended to highlight and introduce some aspects of the disclosed embodiments, but not to limit the scope of the invention. The summary does not provide an exhaustive list of embodiments of the invention.

[0006] The present invention permits a controlling party to set limitations on a controlled party's access to applications operating on the controlled party's wireless mobile communication device. The controlling party can effectuate these limitations via various different mechanisms. For example, in some embodiments, the controlling party uses another wireless communication device to effectuate the limitations. In other embodiments, the limitations are effectuated by the controlling party operating a data processing apparatus connected by a wired data communication bus to the controlled party's wireless mobile communication device. In still further embodiments, the controlling party effectuates the limitations by accessing a website supported by a web server.

[0007] The foregoing has outlined rather broadly the features and technical advantages of the present invention so that those skilled in the art may better understand the detailed description of the invention that follows. Additional features and advantages of the invention will be described hereinafter that form the subject of the claims of the invention. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that they may readily use the conception and the specific embodiment disclosed as a basis for modifying or designing other structures for carrying out the same purposes of the present invention. Those skilled in the art will also realize that such equivalent constructions do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention in its broadest form.

[0008] Before undertaking the DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION below, it may be advantageous to set forth definitions of certain words or phrases used throughout this patent document: the terms "include" and "comprise," as well as derivatives thereof, mean inclusion without limitation; the term "or" is inclusive, meaning and/or; the phrases "associated with" and "associated therewith," as well as derivatives thereof, may mean to include, be included within, interconnect with, contain, be contained within, connect to or with, couple to or with, be communicable with, cooperate with, interleave, juxtapose, be proximate to, be bound to or with, have, have a property of, or the like; and the term "controller" means any device, system or part thereof that controls at least one operation, whether such a device is implemented in hardware, firmware, software or some combination of at least two of the same. It should be noted that the functionality associated with any particular controller may be centralized or distributed, whether locally or remotely. Definitions for certain words and phrases are provided throughout this patent document, and those of ordinary skill in the art will understand that such definitions apply in many, if not most, instances to prior as well as future uses of such defined words and phrases.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] For a more complete understanding of the present invention, and the advantages thereof, reference is now made to the following descriptions taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein like numbers designate like objects, and in which:

[0010] **FIG. 1** diagrammatically illustrates exemplary embodiments of communication systems according to of the invention.

[0011] **FIG. 2** diagrammatically illustrates a portion of **FIG. 1** in more detail.

[0012] **FIG. 3** illustrates exemplary communication applications and filter parameters according to the invention.

[0013] **FIG. 4** illustrates exemplary filter provisioning operations according to the invention.

[0014] **FIG. 5** diagrammatically illustrates a portion of **FIG. 1** in more detail.

[0015] **FIG. 6** diagrammatically illustrates a portion of **FIG. 1** in more detail.

[0016] **FIG. 7** diagrammatically illustrates a portion of **FIG. 1** in more detail.

[0017] **FIG. 8** diagrammatically illustrates a portion of **FIGS. 1 and 2** in more detail.

[0018] **FIG. 9** illustrates exemplary filter configuration operations according to the invention.

[0019] **FIG. 10** illustrates further exemplary filter configuration operations according to the invention.

[0020] **FIG. 11** illustrates exemplary filtering operations according to the invention.

[0021] **FIG. 12** illustrates exemplary dynamic IP update operations according to the invention.

[0022] **FIG. 13** illustrates further exemplary dynamic IP update operations according to the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0023] **FIGS. 1 through 13**, discussed below, and the various embodiments used to describe the principles of the present invention in this patent document are by way of illustration only and should not be construed in any way to limit the scope of the invention. Those skilled in the art will understand that the principles of the present invention may be implemented in any suitably arranged device. The numerous innovative teachings of the present application will be described with particular reference to the presently preferred embodiment.

[0024] The invention will now be described with respect to various embodiments. The following description provides specific details for a thorough understanding of, and enabling description for, these embodiments of the invention. However, one skilled in the art will understand that the invention may be practiced without these details. In other instances, well known structures and functions have not been shown or described in detail to avoid unnecessarily obscuring the description of the embodiments of the invention.

[0025] Exemplary embodiments of the invention permit a controlling party, for example a parent, to set limitations on a controlled party's, for example a child's, access to and use of communication and other applications operating on the controlled party's wireless mobile communication device. The controlling party can effectuate these limitations via several different mechanisms, for example by using another wireless communication device, by operating a data processing apparatus connected by a wired data communication bus to the controlled party's wireless mobile communication device, or by accessing a website supported by a web server which can communicate with the controlled party's wireless mobile communication device.

[0026] **FIG. 1** diagrammatically illustrates exemplary embodiments of communication systems according to the invention. **FIG. 1** illustrates a child's wireless mobile communication station MS1 (e.g., a phone, a PDA, a laptop computer, etc.) which supports various communication applications. A parent can limit the child's access to (or use of) these communication applications via three different control mechanisms according to the examples of **FIG. 1**. In one example, the parent can use another wireless communication station, for example the mobile wireless communication station MS2 to communicate the desired limitations to the child's communication device MS1. The actual wireless communication of the limitation information from MS2 to MS1 can be performed using conventional wireless communication techniques, for example the techniques described in the well known GSM/GPRS standards. Some embodiments use suitably customized text messaging to communicate the limitation information from MS2 to MS1.

[0027] In another example, the parent can communicate the desired limitation information to MS1 via a data processing apparatus connected to MS1 via a wired data communication bus **110**, for example a Universal Serial Bus (USB) or an RS-232 bus. The data processing apparatus of **FIG. 1**, designated PC1, can be any data processing apparatus capable of data communication via the wired data communication bus **110**. Examples of the data processing apparatus PC1 include a desktop computer, a laptop computer, a notebook computer, a personal digital assistant, etc.

[0028] In another example, the parent can communicate the desired limitation information to MS1 by using a suitable data processing apparatus PC2 to access, via a data network **124** (such as the internet), a web server **120** that supports a website (password protected in some embodiments) designed to process, store and transmit (to MS1) the limitation information. The server **120** includes a database **121** for storing the limitation information. In the example of **FIG. 1**, the server **120** utilizes conventional cellular infrastructure (shown by broken line at **122**) to gain access to a conventional cellular base station **123**. The base station **123** communicates with MS1 using any suitable conventional wireless communication techniques, for example the techniques defined in the GSM/GPRS standards. The limitation information provided by the parent to the server **120** can thus be communicated from the server **120** to the child's communication device MS1 via the cellular infrastructure **122** and the cellular base station **123**. The data processing apparatus PC2 that the parent utilizes to access the web server **120** via the data network **124** can be any suitable data processing apparatus capable of data communication over a data network such as the internet. Examples of PC2 include a desktop computer, a laptop computer, a notebook computer, a personal digital assistant, etc.

[0029] **FIG. 2** illustrates in more detail an exemplary embodiment of the child's communication device MS1 of **FIG. 1**. In the example of **FIG. 2**, the communication device MS1 includes a GSM/GPRS module **201** that is provided with a data processing apparatus **202**, for example a microprocessor, a microcontroller, or a digital signal processor. Various user interface components are coupled to the module **201**. In the example of **FIG. 2**, these user interface components include a handsfree speaker **203**, a visual display **204**, a keypad and/or push button component **205**, a microphone **206**, an alert vibrator/motor **207** and an interface jack **208**. The interface jack **208** can give the various illustrated external devices access to the module **201**. In particular, the data processing apparatus PC1 of **FIG. 1** can access the module **201** via the data communication bus **110** (see also **FIG. 1**) and the interface jack **208** of **FIG. 2**, thus permitting the data processor **202** to receive the controlling party's limitation information. The communication device MS1 also includes an antenna apparatus **209** coupled to the module **201** for supporting wireless communication according to the GSM/GPRS standards. Thus, the antenna apparatus **209** and the GSM/GPRS module **201** permit the data processor **202** to receive the controlling party's limitation information via the air interface.

[0030] In some embodiments, the data processor **202** of communication device **MS1** implements the controlling party's limitations in the form of corresponding filtering functions. For example, if the controlling party places a limitation on the controlled party's use of a given application running on the data processor **202**, then the data processor **202** implements that limitation in the form of a filter which filters input and/or output information associated with that application.

[0031] **FIG. 3** illustrates examples of various applications and corresponding limitation information, or filter parameters, which filter parameters can be defined by the controlling party and transmitted to the controlled party's device **MS1**. **FIG. 3** specifies filter parameters for a mobile telephony application by specifying at **310** telephone numbers (and corresponding parties) with which the controlled party is allowed to establish a telephone call. Separate lists of approved parties can be provided for incoming calls and outgoing calls. The filter parameters at **320** specify the call duration permitted for the various allowed parties specified at **310**. The call duration parameter can be defined in any manner desired, for example, no restrictions, or restricted to a specified total amount of time per month, etc. The filter parameters at **330** specify a time of day filter corresponding to each of the permitted parties at **310**. Thus, the controlled party can carry on telephone conversations with the various parties permitted at **310** only during the permitted times specified at **330**. Considering one example of a filter defined by the filter parameters at **310**, **320** and **330**, and assuming, for example, that these filter parameters pertain to incoming calls, the controlled party can receive incoming calls from John (e.g., John's telephone number), but only during the hours of 7 to 9 p.m., and for no more than a total of 60 minutes in a month.

[0032] Referring still to the examples of **FIG. 3**, general phone settings are designated at **340**. For example, the controlling party can specify at **340** the time period(s) during the day or night when **MS1** will be on or off, the time period(s) during the day or night when **MS1** will ring to announce an incoming call, the type of ring that will occur during specific time periods during the day or night, etc. One parameter at **340** can specify that the telephone would not ring during the hours that a child would have the device in school. This parameter may also specify that the vibration announcement is to be utilized instead of the audible ring during the time period that the child will be in school. Various exemplary applications normally available to the controlled party (user of **MS1**) are designated generally at **350**. Limitations (filter parameters) can be programmed to permit or prevent (e.g., at all times or during selected time periods) the controlled party from accessing one or more of the applications at **350**, namely the current date and time, the calendar of events, the to-do list, countdown timers, incoming and outgoing messaging, and games. Thus, the applications at **350** can have associated therewith filter parameters of the same general type shown at **330** in **FIG. 3**. Preventing access to the date and time application can, for example, prevent the controlled party from modifying the date and time in order to avoid the restrictions at **320** and/or **330**. The countdown timer application could provide information such as, for example, "24 days and 6 hours until Dad's birthday". The rest of the exemplary applications illustrated at **350** are self-explanatory.

[0033] **FIG. 4** illustrates exemplary filter provisioning operations which can be performed at the direction of the controlling party to impose limitations or filters on the available applications (also referred to as user applications) of the controlled party's communication device **MS1**. In some exemplary embodiments, the operations of **FIG. 4** can be performed by the controlling party via any of the above-described mechanisms associated with **MS2**, **PC1** and **PC2** of **FIG. 1**. After selecting a given user application at **410**, the desired filter parameter(s) can be associated to the selected user application at **420**, thereby producing completed filter information for the currently selected user application. As indicated at **430**, the operations at **410** and **420** can be repeated for as many user applications as desired before proceeding to **440**. As illustrated at **440**, and depending upon the particular embodiment, the completed filter information produced at **420** can be stored without transmitting it to **MS1** at that time (for example, if **MS1** is known to be turned off at that time), or it can be transmitted to **MS1** without storing it, or it can be both stored and transmitted to **MS1**. Referring again to the operation at **430** above, it can be seen that the operations at **440** can be performed with respect to as many or as few user applications as desired. After the desired operation is performed at **440**, the operations at **410**, **420** and **440** can be performed with respect to another user application, as indicated generally at **450**. The operations at **430** and **450** are thus provided to illustrate that the operation selected at **440** can, in various embodiments, be performed with respect to one user application at a time (for example when **430** is answered "no" and **450** is answered "yes"), or can be performed with respect to as many user applications as desired (for example when **430** is answered "yes").

[0034] **FIG. 5** diagrammatically illustrates pertinent portions of exemplary embodiments of the data processing apparatus **PC1** of **FIG. 1**. A user interface **510** (e.g., tactile, visual, etc.) provides a user with access to a filter provisioning application **520** running on a data processor. The filter provisioning application **520** receives from the user interface **510** controlling party input information indicative of selected user applications and corresponding filter parameters. The filter provisioning application **520** associates the user applications to the filter parameters to produce completed filter information (see also **420** of **FIG. 4**). The filter provisioning application **520** can then transmit the completed filter information to the controlled party's device **MS1** via the wired data communication bus **110** (see also **FIG. 1**) and the interface jack **208** of **MS1** (see also **FIG. 2**). In some embodiments, indicated by broken line in **FIG. 5**, the filter provisioning application **520** can also store the completed filter information in a database **530**. In other embodiments, the filter provisioning application **520** can store the completed filter information in the database **530** without transmitting the completed filter information to **MS1** at that time.

[0035] **FIG. 6** diagrammatically illustrates pertinent portions of exemplary embodiments of a wireless communication device operated by the controlling party (such as **MS2** in **FIG. 1**). A user interface **610** (e.g., tactile, visual, etc.) provides the controlling party with access to a filter provisioning application **620** running on a data processor. In response to controlling party input information indicative of selected applications and corresponding filter parameters, the filter provisioning application **620** associates the selected applications to the corresponding filter parameters to thereby

produce completed filter information (see also **420** in **FIG. 4**). The filter provisioning application **620** then provides the completed filter information to a wireless communication interface for conventional wireless transmission of the completed filter information to the controlled party's device MS1. In some embodiments, the filter provisioning application **620** implements a conventional text messaging application to construct text messages that each include the aforementioned completed filter information.

[0036] **FIG. 7** diagrammatically illustrates pertinent portions of exemplary embodiments of the web server **120** of **FIG. 1**. As shown in **FIG. 7**, the server **120** implements a web application **710** which provides a HTML based user interface. The controlling party accesses the web application **710** via the data processing apparatus PC2 and the data network **124** (see also **FIG. 1**), and is thereby able to provide to a provisioning application **720** controlling party input information indicative of selected communication applications and corresponding filter parameters. The provisioning application **720** associates the communication applications to the corresponding filter parameters in order to produce completed filter information (see also **420** in **FIG. 4**). The provisioning application **720** can then provide the completed filter information to a synchronous application **740** which provides a communication interface (via the cellular infrastructure) toward the controlled party's device MS1. In some exemplary embodiments, the provisioning application **720** provides the completed filter information to the synchronization application **740** for transmission to MS1. In other exemplary embodiments, the provisioning application provides the completed filter information to the database **121** (see also **FIG. 1**) for storage, without providing the completed information to the synchronization application **740** for transmission to MS1. In further embodiments, the provisioning application **720** provides the completed filter information to the database **121** for storage therein, and also to the synchronization application **740** for transmission to MS1. In some exemplary embodiments, the applications at **710**, **720** and **740** are JAVA (J2EE) based applications. In some exemplary embodiments, the database **121** is provided as an SQL-based database.

[0037] **FIG. 8** diagrammatically illustrates pertinent portions of exemplary embodiments of the controlled party's wireless mobile communication device MS1 of **FIGS. 1 and 2**. A filter provisioning interface application **810**, running on the data processor **202**, can receive input information from the controlling party via either the interface jack **208** of **FIG. 2** or via a wireless communication interface (including antenna apparatus **209** of **FIG. 2**). The controlling party's input information includes the completed filter information for the communication (user) applications **820**. The filter provisioning interface **810** provides the completed filter information at **840** to configure a filter logic application **830** running on the data processor **202**. This filter logic implements the filters with respect to the user applications **820**. The filter logic **830** is interposed in the data path between the user applications **820** and the user interface **850** (which can include for example, some, all or any combination of the user interface components described above relative to **FIG. 2**), and can thereby filter information provided by or intended for the user applications **820**, thereby implementing the limitations embodied in the completed filter information **840**. In the example of **FIG. 8**, some of the user applications **820** are coupled for communication with the wireless communication interface and others of the user applications **820** are coupled for communication with the interface jack **208**.

[0038] **FIG. 9** illustrates exemplary filter configuration operations which can be performed by the controlled party's wireless mobile communication device according to exemplary embodiments of the invention. The operations of **FIG. 9** can be performed by the exemplary embodiments of **FIG. 8**. After power-up at **910**, completed filter information is awaited at **920**. After the completed filter information has been received from the controlling party at **920**, the filter logic is configured at **930** to reflect the currently received completed filter information. After configuring the filter logic with the currently received completed filter information, the next completed filter information is awaited at **920**.

[0039] **FIG. 10** illustrates further exemplary filter configuration operations which can be performed by the controlled party's wireless mobile communication station according to exemplary embodiments of the invention. The exemplary operations of **FIG. 10** can be performed by the exemplary embodiments of **FIG. 8**. After power-up at **1010**, the communication device accesses the website on the web server (see also **FIG. 1**) to obtain the completed filter information as stored in the web server database. This is illustrated generally at **1020**. After the completed filter information has been obtained at **1020**, the filter logic is configured at **1030** to implement the newly obtained completed filter information. As illustrated generally at **1040**, the website can be accessed periodically to obtain therefrom any new completed filter information. In some embodiments, the filter provisioning interface **810** of **FIG. 8** uses conventional techniques to access the website of **FIG. 7** (see also **FIG. 1**).

[0040] **FIG. 11** illustrates exemplary communication application filtering operations which can be performed according to the invention. The exemplary operations of **FIG. 11** can be performed by the exemplary embodiments of **FIG. 8**. If an attempted communication between the user interface and a user application is detected at **1110**, the corresponding filter is applied at **1120** with respect to communications between the user interface and that user application. Thereafter, the next attempted communication is awaited at **1110**.

[0041] Referring again to **FIGS. 1, 7** and **8**, in GSM/GPRS embodiments, the GSM/GPRS operation utilizes a dynamic IP environment. Accordingly, in embodiments where the controlling party utilizes the web server **120** to access the controlled party's communication device MS1, the device MS1 utilizes a scheme to transmit the dynamic IP to the web server **120**, so the web server **120** can maintain contact with the controlled party's device MS1. The filter provisioning interface **810** of **FIG. 8** includes a dynamic IP input which receives information indicative of the dynamic IP. The filter provisioning interface **810** forwards this information to the web server **120** (see also **FIG. 1**) via the air interface and cellular infrastructure. The synchronization application **740** receives the updated dynamic IP information, and stores it in the database **121**. In this manner, the web server can remain abreast of the changing IP environment of the controlled party's device MS1.

[0042] **FIGS. 12 and 13** illustrate exemplary operations in support of the above-described dynamic IP update scheme. **FIG. 12** illustrates exemplary operations which can be

performed by the controlled party's device. It is first determined at **1210** whether or not it is time to transmit the dynamic IP information. For example, this can be done periodically, or whenever a change in the dynamic IP environment occurs. When it is determined at **1210** that it is time to transmit the dynamic IP information, this information is transmitted to the web server at **1220**. Thereafter, operations return to **1210** to await the occurrence of the next occasion of transmitting dynamic IP.

[**0043**] **FIG. 13** illustrates exemplary operations which can be performed by the synchronization application **740** of the web server of **FIG. 7**. At **1310**, the synchronization application awaits the dynamic IP information update. When the dynamic IP information update has been received at **1310**, the synchronization application then stores the dynamic IP information update at **1320**. Thereafter, the synchronization application awaits the next dynamic IP update at **1310**.

[**0044**] In some embodiments, the synchronization application **740** utilizes an acknowledgement verification protocol in order to confirm delivery of the completed filter information to the controlled party's device MS1. In such embodiments, the filter provisioning interface **810** of **FIG. 8** transmits an acknowledgement to the synchronization application **740** upon receipt of the completed filter information. In various embodiments, the filter provisioning interface **810** provides acknowledgements to any of the sources (e.g., **120**, PC1 and MS2 in **FIG. 1**) from which it receives completed filter information.

[**0045**] In some exemplary embodiments, the synchronization application **740** and the filter provisioning interface **810** utilize checksum verifications in conjunction with transmission of the completed filter information. In other exemplary embodiments, checksum verification is used in conjunction with transmission of the completed filter information from any of the sources of **FIG. 1** to the controlled party's device MS1. In some embodiments, the aforementioned acknowledgement and checksum verification techniques are combined with respect to the transmission of the completed filter information to the controlled party's device.

[**0046**] In some embodiments which utilize the aforementioned acknowledgement protocol, the synchronization application **740** can implement a retry algorithm wherein the server attempts a predetermined number of retries in the absence of an acknowledgement, for example 3 retries, the first retry at 30 seconds after the initial transmission, the second retry at one minute after the initial transmission, and the third retry at 5 minutes after the initial transmission.

[**0047**] In some embodiments, the controlling party defines the filter operation such that the filter examines information associated with the user application and provides to the web server an update regarding the status of the examined information. For example, the filter operation can detect whether the controlled party is, via the user interface, removing a task from a "to-do" list, and the filter provisioning interface **810** can forward to the web server **120** a message indicating that this task of the "to-do" list has been completed. The controlling party can thus monitor the completion of activities by simply visiting the website on the server **120**.

[**0048**] In some exemplary embodiments, the filter operation can be defined to perform an addition of an item to a given "to-do" list. For example, if the controlled party already has a list of things to do when she arrives home from school, the controlling party can add an item to that "to-do" list, for example "take out the dog when you get home".

[**0049**] In some exemplary embodiments, the identifier of the conventional, non-removable modem hardware in the module **201** of **FIG. 2** is used instead of the removable SIM as the identification information for the controlled party's device MS1. This identification information is used to verify communication between the controlled party's device MS1 and the source from which the controlling party's completed filter information is received.

[**0050**] Although exemplary embodiments of the invention have been described above in detail, this does not limit the scope of the invention, which can be practiced in a variety of embodiments.

1. canceled.

2. canceled.

3. A wireless mobile communication apparatus, comprising:

a data processor for supporting a user application that is controllably accessible to a user of said wireless mobile communication apparatus;

an input for receiving from an external communication source information indicative of a limitation that a controlling party desires to impose on the user's access to the user application; and wherein

said data processor is coupled to said input and responsive to said limitation information for automatically limiting the user's access to the user application in accordance with said limitation information.

4. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said limitation information defines the user's ability to access the user application during selected times or under selected conditions.

5. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said limitation information includes information indicative of one of a denial of the user's access to the user application, a time period during which the user's access to the user application is prohibited, a limit on a total amount of time permitted for the user's cumulative access of the user application, and a limit on the user's ability to access the user application for other than actions permitted by the controlling party.

6. The apparatus of claim 3, provided as one of a telephone, a personal digital assistant, and a portable computer, each equipped for wireless communication.

7. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said data processor is responsive to receipt of said limitation information for providing an acknowledgement of said receipt, and including an output coupled to said data processor for outputting said acknowledgement for transmission to the external communication source.

8. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said data processor is responsive to receipt of said limitation information for performing checksum verification of said limitation information.

9. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said input is for receiving said limitation information via one of a wired communication channel and a wireless communication channel.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said wired communication channel includes one of a Universal Serial Bus (USB) and an RS-232 bus, and wherein said wireless communication channel includes a GSM/GPRS channel.

11. An apparatus for controlling the use of a wireless mobile communication device, comprising:

a controlling party interface for enabling a controlling party to input first information indicative of a user application running on the wireless mobile communication device and controllably accessible to a user, and second information indicative of a limitation that the controlling party desires to impose on the user's access to the user application;

a data processor having an input coupled to said controlling party interface, said data processor for associating said first information to said second information and for producing third information indicative of an association between said first information and said second information; and

an output coupled to said data processor for outputting said third information for transmission to the wireless mobile communication device.

12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said output is for outputting said third information for transmission on one of a wired communication channel and a wireless communication channel.

13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said wired communication channel includes one of a Universal Serial Bus (USB) and an RS-232 bus, and wherein said wireless communication channel includes a GSM/GPRS channel.

14. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said data processor supports a text messaging application for providing said third information in a text message.

15. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said data processor is provided in a web server.

16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said controlling party interface includes a website implemented by said web server.

17. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein said website is accessible through the Internet.

18. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said wireless mobile communication device is provided as one of a telephone, a personal digital assistant, and a portable computer, each equipped for wireless communication.

19. The apparatus of claim 11, provided as one of a telephone, a desktop computer, a portable computer and a personal digital assistant.

20. A method of controlling the use of a wireless mobile communication apparatus, comprising:

transmitting, from a communication source apparatus to a communication destination apparatus that is physically separate from the communication source apparatus, information indicative of a limitation that a controlling party desires to impose on a user's access to a user application running on the wireless mobile communication apparatus and controllably accessible to the user;

in response to receipt of the limitation information at the communication destination apparatus, transferring the limitation information to the wireless mobile communication apparatus; and

in response to receipt of the limitation information at the wireless mobile communication apparatus, automatically limiting the user's access to the user application in accordance with the limitation information.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein said transmitting step includes transmitting the limitation information on one of a wired communication channel and a wireless communication channel.

22. The method of claim 20, wherein said transmitting step includes transmitting the limitation information across a data communication network.

23. The method of claim 20, wherein said transmitting step includes transmitting the limitation information on a wired communication channel, and said transferring step includes transmitting the limitation information on a wireless communication channel.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the limitation information is stored on a server prior to being transferred on the wireless communication channel.

25. The method of claim 20, wherein said transmitting step includes entering the limitation information at a website.

26. The method of claim 20, wherein said limiting step includes limiting the user's ability to access the user application during selected times or under selected conditions.

27. The method of claim 20, including transmitting from the wireless mobile communication apparatus to a website server an indication that the user has accessed the user application.

28. A method for controlling the use of a wireless communication device that provides a plurality of user applications, the method comprising:

configuring said wireless communication device to process parameters for controlling the use of at least one of said applications;

setting at a separate device the value(s) of at least one of said control parameters;

communicating said parameter value(s) from said separate device to said wireless communication device; and

processing said parameter value(s) at said wireless communication device to control the use of at least one of said applications.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein said wireless communication device is a cellular telephone.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein said wireless communication device is a personal digital assistant (PDA) with wireless communication capability.

31. The method of claim 28, wherein said separate device is another wireless communication device that communicates with said wireless communication device through a wireless communication network.

32. The method of claim 28, wherein said separate device is a computing device that communicates with said wireless communication device through a direct link.

33. The method of claim 28, wherein said separate device is a computing device that communicates with said wireless communication device through a data communication network coupled to a wireless communication network.

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