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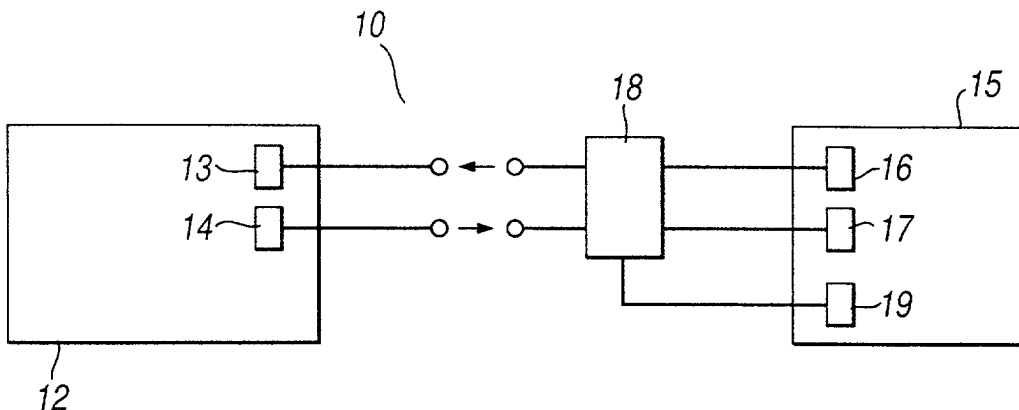
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(54) **Optical communication system for utility meters**

(57) The present invention relates to an improved optical communication system for gas or electricity meters. The system comprises a transmitter and a receiver disposed on a utility meter, and a further transmitter and receiver disposed on a receiver unit. The utility meter transmitter is arranged to transmit a data signal and a further signal to the receiver unit, with the further signal

having a pulse width greater than a pulse width of the data signal. The receiver unit further comprises a separation means for separating the data signal and the further signal based on pulse width. The further signal may contain calibration information or be used to link the meter to external equipment. The present invention advantageously allows for a reduction in component parts while enhancing the functionality of the meter.



*Fig. 1*



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			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search The Hague		Date of completion of the search 22 February 2005	Examiner Janyszek, J-M
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons ..... & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT  
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EP 99 11 4445

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on  
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