



US008176135B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Lau et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 8,176,135 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** ***May 8, 2012**

(54) **METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR ENHANCED MESSAGING**

(75) Inventors: **Chung Lau**, Sunnyvale, CA (US); **C. Douglass Thomas**, Saratoga, CA (US)

(73) Assignee: **IpVenture, Inc.**, Los Altos, CA (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

(21) Appl. No.: **13/113,972**

(22) Filed: **May 23, 2011**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2011/0223884 A1 Sep. 15, 2011

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 12/214,434, filed on Jun. 19, 2008, now Pat. No. 7,953,809, which is a continuation of application No. 10/397,474, filed on Mar. 26, 2003, now Pat. No. 7,403,972.

(60) Provisional application No. 60/444,198, filed on Jan. 30, 2003, provisional application No. 60/418,491, filed on Oct. 15, 2002, provisional application No. 60/404,645, filed on Aug. 19, 2002, provisional application No. 60/375,998, filed on Apr. 24, 2002.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
G06F 15/16 (2006.01)
G06F 12/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **709/206; 709/207**

(58) **Field of Classification Search** **709/206–207, 709/217–218, 225–229, 250**

See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

5,347,274	A	9/1994	Hassett
5,389,934	A	2/1995	Kass
5,400,020	A	3/1995	Jones et al.
5,461,365	A	10/1995	Schlager et al.
5,491,486	A	2/1996	Welles, II et al.
5,512,902	A	4/1996	Guthrie et al.
5,515,858	A	5/1996	Myllymaki
5,528,247	A	6/1996	Nonami
5,528,518	A	6/1996	Bradshaw et al.
5,532,690	A	7/1996	Hertel

(Continued)

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

EP 0 874 529 A2 10/1998

(Continued)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

“352C22 Miniature Low Profile ICP Accelerometer,” Precision Accelerometers, PCB Piezoelectronics Products—SVS Division, webpages, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Apr. 11, 2002: www.pcb.com/products/sys/sys352c22.html).

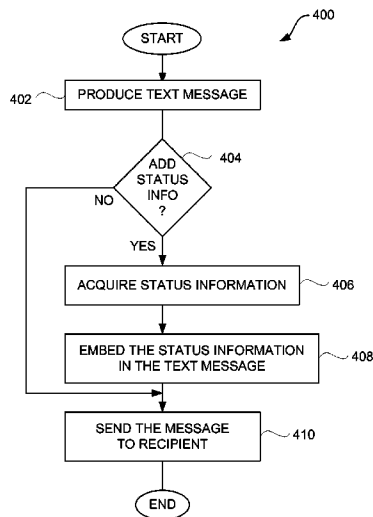
(Continued)

Primary Examiner — Zarni Maung

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Techniques for acquiring, sending, receiving or using status information from a remote location over a network are disclosed. The status information is transmitted over the network between or among electronic devices. The status information can be provided by one or more sensors associated with the electronic device that is transmitting the status information. The status information can be transmitted with messages so as to enhance the messages. The electronic devices include at least computing devices, such as personal computers, personal digital assistants, pagers, and mobile telephones.

72 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets



U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS					
5,539,748 A	7/1996	Raith	6,171,264 B1	1/2001	Bader
5,541,845 A	7/1996	Klein	6,172,640 B1	1/2001	Durst et al.
5,550,551 A	8/1996	Alesio	6,175,616 B1	1/2001	Light et al.
5,568,119 A	10/1996	Schipper et al.	6,198,390 B1	3/2001	Schlager et al.
5,570,412 A	10/1996	LeBlanc	6,198,431 B1	3/2001	Gibson
5,576,716 A	11/1996	Sadler	6,198,930 B1	3/2001	Schipper
5,592,173 A	1/1997	Lau et al.	6,199,045 B1	3/2001	Giniger et al.
5,598,460 A	1/1997	Tendler	6,226,622 B1	5/2001	Dabbiere
5,604,708 A	2/1997	Helms et al.	6,231,519 B1	5/2001	Blants et al.
5,623,260 A	4/1997	Jones	6,232,916 B1	5/2001	Grillo et al.
5,629,678 A	5/1997	Gargano et al.	6,236,358 B1	5/2001	Durst et al.
5,633,874 A *	5/1997	Diachina et al. 370/329	6,238,337 B1	5/2001	Kambhatla et al.
5,650,770 A	7/1997	Schlager et al.	6,243,039 B1	6/2001	Elliot
5,652,570 A	7/1997	Lepkofker	6,243,660 B1	6/2001	Hsu et al.
5,673,692 A	10/1997	Schulze et al.	6,246,376 B1	6/2001	Bork et al.
5,686,888 A	11/1997	Welles, II et al.	6,252,543 B1	6/2001	Camp
5,710,551 A	1/1998	Ridgeway	6,263,280 B1	7/2001	Stingone, Jr.
5,712,619 A	1/1998	Simkin	6,278,936 B1	8/2001	Jones
5,731,757 A	3/1998	Layson, Jr.	6,281,797 B1	8/2001	Forster
5,731,788 A	3/1998	Reeds	6,282,362 B1	8/2001	Murphy et al.
5,742,233 A	4/1998	Hoffman et al.	6,292,687 B1	9/2001	Lowell et al.
5,751,245 A	5/1998	Janky et al.	6,298,306 B1	10/2001	Suarez et al.
5,771,001 A	6/1998	Cobb	6,300,875 B1	10/2001	Schafer
5,771,455 A	6/1998	Kennedy, III et al.	6,302,844 B1	10/2001	Walker et al.
5,774,876 A	6/1998	Woolley et al.	6,304,467 B1	10/2001	Nebbrigic
5,797,091 A	8/1998	Clise et al.	6,314,308 B1	11/2001	Sheynblat et al.
5,808,565 A	9/1998	Matta et al.	6,317,049 B1	11/2001	Toubia et al.
RE35,920 E	10/1998	Sorden et al.	6,323,807 B1	11/2001	Golding et al.
5,825,283 A	10/1998	Camhi	6,324,213 B1	11/2001	Harrison
5,826,195 A	10/1998	Westerlage et al.	6,327,533 B1	12/2001	Chou
5,835,907 A	11/1998	Newman	6,331,817 B1	12/2001	Goldberg
5,841,352 A	11/1998	Prakash	6,339,397 B1	1/2002	Baker
5,844,862 A	12/1998	Cocatre-Zilgien	6,340,928 B1	1/2002	McCurdy
5,850,196 A	12/1998	Mowers	6,342,847 B1	1/2002	Archuleta et al.
5,861,841 A	1/1999	Gildea et al.	6,349,257 B1	2/2002	Liu et al.
5,883,594 A	3/1999	Lau	6,353,390 B1	3/2002	Beri et al.
5,889,770 A	3/1999	Jokiaho et al.	6,353,798 B1	3/2002	Green et al.
5,892,454 A	4/1999	Schipper et al.	6,356,841 B1	3/2002	Hamrick et al.
5,905,461 A	5/1999	Neher	6,362,778 B2	3/2002	Neher
5,913,078 A	6/1999	Kimura et al.	6,363,254 B1	3/2002	Jones et al.
5,917,433 A	6/1999	Keillor et al.	6,363,323 B1	3/2002	Jones
5,918,180 A	6/1999	Dimino	6,373,430 B1	4/2002	Beason et al.
5,938,721 A	8/1999	Dussell et al.	6,377,810 B1	4/2002	Geiger et al.
5,948,040 A	9/1999	DeLorme et al.	6,388,612 B1	5/2002	Neher
5,948,043 A	9/1999	Mathis	6,393,346 B1	5/2002	Keith et al.
5,959,575 A	9/1999	Abbott	6,404,352 B1	6/2002	Ichikawa et al.
5,959,577 A	9/1999	Fan et al.	6,407,698 B1	6/2002	Ayed
5,963,130 A	10/1999	Schlager et al.	6,411,892 B1	6/2002	Van Diggelen
5,982,285 A	11/1999	Bueche et al.	6,411,899 B2	6/2002	Dussell et al.
5,991,690 A	11/1999	Murphy	6,421,538 B1	7/2002	Byrne
5,995,849 A	11/1999	Williams et al.	6,426,719 B1	7/2002	Nagareda et al.
6,002,363 A	12/1999	Krasner	6,427,120 B1	7/2002	Garin et al.
6,002,982 A	12/1999	Fry	6,430,602 B1	8/2002	Kay et al.
6,009,319 A	12/1999	Khullar et al.	6,433,732 B1	8/2002	Dutta et al.
6,013,007 A	1/2000	Root et al.	6,434,396 B1	8/2002	Rune
6,014,080 A	1/2000	Layson, Jr.	6,441,778 B1	8/2002	Durst et al.
6,014,090 A	1/2000	Rosen et al.	6,442,380 B1	8/2002	Mohindra
6,023,241 A	2/2000	Clapper	6,442,391 B1	8/2002	Johansson et al.
6,032,051 A	2/2000	Hall et al.	6,443,890 B1	9/2002	Schulze et al.
6,034,622 A	3/2000	Levine	6,445,937 B1	9/2002	daSilva
6,054,928 A	4/2000	Lemelson et al.	6,453,237 B1	9/2002	Fuchs et al.
6,064,336 A	5/2000	Krasner	6,463,272 B1	10/2002	Wallace et al.
6,067,018 A	5/2000	Skelton et al.	6,466,821 B1	10/2002	Pianca et al.
6,067,044 A	5/2000	Whelan et al.	6,469,639 B2	10/2002	Tanenhaus et al.
6,072,396 A	6/2000	Gaukel	6,471,087 B1	10/2002	Shusterman
6,078,290 A	6/2000	McBurney et al.	6,478,736 B1	11/2002	Mault
6,083,248 A	7/2000	Thompson	6,496,775 B2	12/2002	McDonald, Jr. et al.
6,083,353 A	7/2000	Alexander	6,505,048 B1	1/2003	Moles et al.
6,094,168 A	7/2000	Duffett-Smith et al.	6,505,049 B1	1/2003	Dorenbosch
6,100,806 A	8/2000	Gaukel	6,513,532 B2	2/2003	Mault et al.
6,115,595 A	9/2000	Rodal et al.	6,522,871 B1	2/2003	Patrick et al.
6,131,067 A	10/2000	Girerd et al.	6,522,889 B1	2/2003	Aarnio
6,140,863 A	10/2000	Fujisawa	6,529,164 B1	3/2003	Carter
6,141,570 A	10/2000	O'Neill, Jr. et al.	6,544,193 B2	4/2003	Abreu
6,144,303 A	11/2000	Federman	6,552,652 B2	4/2003	Beken
6,148,280 A	11/2000	Kramer	6,553,336 B1	4/2003	Johnson et al.
6,154,422 A	11/2000	Shinkawa et al.	6,559,620 B2	5/2003	Zhou et al.
6,163,696 A	12/2000	Bi et al.	6,569,094 B2	5/2003	Suzuki et al.
			6,579,231 B1	6/2003	Phipps

6,579,844 B1 6/2003 Morrison et al.
 6,625,437 B1 9/2003 Jampolsky et al.
 6,630,885 B2 10/2003 Hardman et al.
 6,640,085 B1 10/2003 Chatzipetros et al.
 6,650,907 B1 11/2003 Kamperschroer et al.
 6,661,372 B1 12/2003 Girend et al.
 6,679,071 B1 1/2004 Storey et al.
 6,714,791 B2 3/2004 Friedman
 6,721,542 B1 4/2004 Anttila et al.
 6,741,927 B2 5/2004 Jones
 6,747,675 B1 6/2004 Abbott et al.
 6,748,318 B1 6/2004 Jones
 6,788,766 B2 9/2004 Logan
 6,801,853 B2 10/2004 Workman
 6,804,606 B2 10/2004 Jones
 6,847,892 B2 1/2005 Zhou et al.
 6,856,804 B1 2/2005 Ciotta
 6,865,385 B1 3/2005 Kohda et al.
 6,937,900 B1 8/2005 Pianca et al.
 6,952,645 B1 10/2005 Jones
 6,975,941 B1 12/2005 Lau et al.
 6,980,826 B2 12/2005 Yamaguchi
 7,010,144 B1 3/2006 Davis et al.
 7,071,842 B1 7/2006 Brady, Jr.
 7,085,253 B2 8/2006 Yang
 7,110,773 B1* 9/2006 Wallace et al. 455/456.1
 7,136,832 B2 11/2006 Li et al.
 7,187,278 B2 3/2007 Biffar
 7,212,829 B1 5/2007 Lau et al.
 7,218,938 B1 5/2007 Lau et al.
 7,253,731 B2 8/2007 Joao
 7,321,774 B1 1/2008 Lau et al.
 7,325,061 B2 1/2008 Haruki
 7,366,522 B2 4/2008 Thomas
 7,403,972 B1* 7/2008 Lau et al. 709/206
 7,539,557 B2* 5/2009 Yamauchi 700/245
 7,809,377 B1 10/2010 Lau et al.
 7,905,832 B1 3/2011 Lau et al.
 7,953,809 B2* 5/2011 Lau et al. 709/206
 2001/0006891 A1 7/2001 Cho
 2001/0020204 A1 9/2001 Runyon et al.
 2001/0027378 A1 10/2001 Tennison et al.
 2001/0028304 A1 10/2001 I'Anson et al.
 2001/0044299 A1 11/2001 Sandegren
 2001/0044332 A1 11/2001 Yamada et al.
 2001/0052849 A1 12/2001 Jones, Jr.
 2002/0000930 A1 1/2002 Crowson et al.
 2002/0016173 A1 2/2002 Hunzinger
 2002/0027507 A1 3/2002 Yarin et al.
 2002/0036593 A1 3/2002 Ying
 2002/0038182 A1 3/2002 Wong et al.
 2002/0050945 A1 5/2002 Tsukishima et al.
 2002/0057192 A1 5/2002 Eagleson et al.
 2002/0063622 A1 5/2002 Armstrong et al.
 2002/0071677 A1 6/2002 Sumanaweera
 2002/0077080 A1 6/2002 Greene
 2002/0087260 A1 7/2002 Hancock et al.
 2002/0087619 A1 7/2002 Tripathi
 2002/0094067 A1 7/2002 August
 2002/0111171 A1 8/2002 Boesch et al.
 2002/0111819 A1 8/2002 Li et al.
 2002/0115453 A1 8/2002 Poulin et al.
 2002/0119770 A1 8/2002 Twitchell et al.
 2002/0119789 A1 8/2002 Friedman
 2002/0120475 A1 8/2002 Morimoto
 2002/0120503 A1 8/2002 Iwayama et al.
 2002/0140081 A1 10/2002 Chou et al.
 2002/0193121 A1 12/2002 Nowak et al.
 2003/0003943 A1 1/2003 Bajikar
 2003/0009410 A1 1/2003 Ramankutty et al.
 2003/0013445 A1 1/2003 Fujiwara et al.
 2003/0069759 A1 4/2003 Smith
 2003/0083011 A1 5/2003 Haller et al.
 2003/0151507 A1 8/2003 Andre et al.
 2003/0204132 A1 10/2003 Suzuki et al.
 2004/0034470 A1 2/2004 Workman
 2004/0046637 A1 3/2004 Wesby Van Swaay
 2004/0114731 A1 6/2004 Gillett et al.
 2004/0117108 A1 6/2004 Nemeth

2004/0233065 A1 11/2004 Freeman
 2006/0173444 A1 8/2006 Choy et al.
 2007/0156286 A1* 7/2007 Yamauchi 700/245
 2008/0021645 A1 1/2008 Lau et al.
 2008/0261636 A1 10/2008 Lau et al.
 2009/0042540 A1 2/2009 Bodnar et al.
 2011/0022533 A1 1/2011 Lau et al.

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

EP 1 037 447 A2 9/2000
 EP 1 037 447 A3 10/2001
 JP 11-64482 3/1999
 JP 11-258325 9/1999
 JP 11-289574 10/1999
 JP 11-306491 11/1999
 WO WO 97/14054 4/1997
 WO WO 97/41654 11/1997
 WO WO 98/01769 A1 1/1998
 WO WO 98/16045 4/1998
 WO WO 98/40837 9/1998
 WO WO 00/51391 8/2000
 WO WO 01/50151 A1 7/2001
 WO WO 01/63318 8/2001
 WO WO 01/75700 A2 10/2001
 WO WO 02/42979 A1 5/2002
 WO WO 02/084618 A1 10/2002
 WO WO 03/012720 A1 2/2003

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

"3G Mobile Internet Revolution, . . . only with Location Based Services!" pp. 1, (downloaded Aug. 10, 2002: <http://webhome.idirect.com/~dental/3glocator/home.htm>).
 "Airline Cargo Containers," Case Study, RJI Incorporated, webpages, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Mar. 16, 2002: www.rji.cc/casestudies/airlinecargococontainers.html).
 "Airline Food Carts," Case Study, RJI Incorporated, webpages, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Mar. 16, 2002: www.rji.cc/casestudies/airlinefoodcarts.html).
 "An Introduction to SnapTrack Server-Aided GPS Technology," SnapTrack Inc.
 "Audiovox Intros GPS, Bluetooth Phone," INT Media Group, Inc. (allNetDevices), Apr. 5, 2002. (downloaded: www.allnetdevices.com/wireless/news/2001/11/15/audiovox_intros.html).
 "Carrier and end-user applications for wireless location systems," TruePosition, Inc., pp. 1-7.
 "Danger-Products" and "Hiphop Communicator Brochure," Danger, Inc., downloaded Oct. 26, 2003: www.danger.com/products.php.
 "Developing a GPSs for the Global Supply Chain," Aberdeen Group, Inc., Executive White Paper, Jun. 2002.
 "Devices for Text Messages in Deutsche Telekom's fixed network have already found their way into many households," Deutsche Telekom AG, Press Release, Mar. 13, 2002, pp. 1-2.
 "Digital/Analog Compass Sensors" and "1655 Digital Compass Sensor," webpages, The Robson Company, Inc., pp. 1-2 (downloaded Apr. 11, 2002: www.dinsmoresensors.com/index.html).
 "EarthTrack™ Vehicle Tracking Systems," Outfitter Satellite, Inc., 1998 (downloaded Jan. 22, 2000).
 "Enhanced Tracking," United Parcel Service of America, Inc. (UPS), webpages, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Jun. 1, 2002: www.ups.com/myupsinfo/info/etrack?pnav=stdservice).
 "Fleet Management Systems-Asset Tracking Devices," Axiom Navigation Inc., 2000-2001 (downloaded Oct. 19, 2002: www.axiomnav.com/Prod_Systems/prod_system.asp).
 "Frozen Food Warehouse," Case Study, RJI Incorporated, webpages, pp. 1-3 (downloaded Mar. 16, 2002: www.rji.cc/casestudies/frozenfoodwarehouse.html).
 "FunMail Launches on the NTT DoCoMo i-mode network," FunMail, Press Release, May 1, 2001, pp. 1-2.
 "Global Cell Phone Location," Axiom Navigation Inc., 2000-2001 (downloaded Oct. 19, 2002: www.axiomnav.com/Prod_Global/prod_global.asp).
 "Global Locating Services," SkyBitz, webpage, p. 1, (downloaded Nov. 15, 2002: www.skybitz.com/services/gls.html).

- "GLS Communicator," SkyBitz, webpages, pp. 1-2, (downloaded Nov. 15, 2002: www.skybitz.com/gls/communicator.html).
- "Guide to Tracking Info.," Nippon Express, website page, p. 1 (downloaded Jun. 9, 2002: www.nittsu.co.jp/edoc/howtoe.htm).
- "Introduction to SMS," by C. Tull of Anywhere YouGo.com, pp. 1-4 (downloaded: www.devx.com/wireless/articles/SMS/SMSintro-asp).
- "IO Data Develops GPS Adapter for I-Mode Mobile," AsiaBizTech, Sep. 17, 2002, pp. 1-2.
- "Locate Networks: Our Service," Locate Networks, webpages, pp. 1-7 (downloaded Sep. 26, 2002: www.locatenetworks.com/).
- "MMS phones: Don't believe the hype," CNN.com/SCI-TECH, Aug. 8, 2002, pp. 1-3.
- "Mobile Location Based Services: Cell Tracking Devices of People & Thongs . . .," pp. 1-2, (downloaded Aug. 10, 2002: <http://3glocate.com>).
- "MoniTrack," Case Study, RJI Incorporated, webpages, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Mar. 16, 2002: www.rji.cc/technology/telematic.html).
- "MY UPS.COM Benefits," United Parcel Service of America, Inc. (UPS), webpage, p. 1 (downloaded Apr. 13, 2002: www.ups.com/myupsinfo/info/benefits?pnav=stdsservice).
- "NavMate® Navigation System," Visteon Corporation, webpage, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Jun. 21, 2002: www.visteon.com/technology/automotive/navmate.html).
- "News," SkyBitz, webpages, pp. 1-8, (downloaded Nov. 15, 2002: www.skybitz.com/about/news.html).
- "Pakhound: Your Watchdog in the Shipping Industry," website (pages), pp. 1-3 (downloaded Jun. 9, 2002: www.pakhound.com/fact.asp).
- "Parkwatch and Wherenet Unveil the First Amusement Visitor Locating system," ParkWatch, Press Release, Jun. 27, 2000.
- "pulver.com's Location Based Services Report," pulver.com, Inc., Oct. 2001, pp. 1-17 (downloaded Jun. 4, 2002: www.pulver.com/lbsreport/lastbsreport.02/oct01.txt).
- "Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)," Case Study, RJI Incorporated, webpage, p. 1 (downloaded Mar. 16, 2002: www.rji.cc/technology/rfid.html).
- "Real Time Location System (RTLS)," Case Study, RJI Incorporated, webpage, p. 1 (downloaded Mar. 16, 2002: www.rji.cc/technology/rtls.html).
- "Real-Time Warehouse Tracking," Case Study, RJI Incorporated, webpages, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Mar. 16, 2002: www.rji.cc/casestudies/rtwarehousetracking.html).
- "Savi Reusable Transport Container," Savi Technology, Inc., Apr. 30, 2002, pp. 1-2.
- "Send images to i-mode phones," Mobile Media Japan, 2001, pp. 1-3.
- "Ski Rental with Auto ID and Tracking," Case Study, RJI Incorporated, webpages, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Mar. 16, 2002: www.rji.cc/casestudies/skirentalcompany.html).
- "SnapTrack and SignalSoft Corp. Team Up to Trial Location-based Information Service for GSM Test Group," Press Release, SnapTrack Inc., Dec. 6, 1999.
- "SnapTrack Awarded Additional Key Patents for Enhanced GPS System," Press Release, SnapTrack Inc., Jan. 4, 2000.
- "Start-up crams single chip with phone, GPS and Bluetooth," CNET Network, Inc. (ZDNET), Mar. 22, 2002 (downloaded: <http://news.zdnet.co.uk/story/0,t284-x2107163,00.html>).
- "Status Icons/Messages," Yahoo! Messenger Help, Yahoo! Inc., 2002, pp. 1-2.
- "Technical Applications of Our Current Technology," Aetherwire, webpages, pp. 1-4 (downloaded Mar. 16, 2002: www.aetherwire.com/CDROM/General/app11.html).
- "The Always on Network," Position Paper, Nortel Networks, 2002.
- "Theme Park Visitors & Cashless Purchasing," Case Study, RJI Incorporated, webpages, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Mar. 16, 2002: www.rji.cc/casestudies/themepark.html).
- "Track Shipments—Detailed Results," FedEx, webpages, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Oct. 29, 2002: www.fedex.com).
- "Track Your FedEx Shipments via Email," FedEx, webpages, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Oct. 29, 2002: www.fedex.com).
- "Tracking Helpful Tips," United Parcel Service of America, Inc. (UPS), webpages, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Jun. 1, 2002: www.ups.com/tracking/nm_help.html).
- "Trimble and Rosum Team to Develop Universal Positioning Technology," Trimble Navigation, Inc., News Release, Feb. 27, 2003.
- "Turning Position Into Knowledge," SkyBitz, webpage, p. 1, (downloaded Nov. 15, 2002: www.skybitz.com).
- "UPS Package Tracking," United Parcel Service of America, Inc. (UPS), webpages, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Apr. 13, 2002: www.ups.com/tracking/tracking.html).
- "UPS Wireless Solutions," United Parcel Service of America, Inc. (UPS), webpage, p. 1 (downloaded Apr. 13, 2002: www.ups.com/myupsinfo/info/wireless?pnav=stdsservice).
- "Welcome to Iship, Inc.," iShip, Inc., webpages, pp. 1-2, (downloaded Jun. 9, 2002: www.iship.com/).
- "Welcome to Traker Systems," Traker Systems, webpages, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Jun. 9, 2002: www.trakersystems.com).
- "What are Instant Messages?" Yahoo! Messenger Help, Yahoo! Inc., 2002, pp. 1.
- "What is '3G' technology?," CNN.com/SCI-TECH, Oct. 22, 2001, pp. 1-3.
- "What is a Friend List?" Yahoo! Messenger Help, Yahoo! Inc., 2002, pp. 1.
- "Wherify Wireless and SiRF Team to Deliver Child Locator System," Wherify Wireless, Inc., Press Release, Mar. 19, 2001, pp. 1-2.
- "Wherify Wireless Breakthrough in Location-Based Services," Mobilemag.com, Feb. 28, 2001, p. 1.
- "Wherify Wireless GPS Locator for Kids User Guide," Wherify Wireless, Inc., 2003, pp. 1-106.
- "Wherify Wireless Location Services," Wherify Wireless, Inc., webpages, pp. 1-5 (downloaded: Mar. 25, 2003: www.wherifywireless.com/prod_watches.htm).
- "X-GPS™—Hybrid GPS Location Server Solution," Axiom Navigation Inc., 2000-2001 (downloaded Oct. 19, 2002: www.axiomnav.com/Prod_Global/x-gps.asp).
- "Yahoo! Messenger—Sending Messages to a Mobile Phone," Yahoo! Messenger, Yahoo! Inc., 2002, pp. 1-7 (downloaded Oct. 27, 2002: [http://messenger.yahoo.com/messenger/wireless/pc2sms/tour1.html\(through/tour7.html\)](http://messenger.yahoo.com/messenger/wireless/pc2sms/tour1.html(through/tour7.html))).
- "Yahoo! Messenger for Text Messaging," Yahoo! Messenger, Yahoo! Inc., 2002, pp. 1-10 (downloaded Oct. 27, 2002: [http://messenger.yahoo.com/messenger/wireless/smsmgr/tour1.html\(through/tour7.html\)](http://messenger.yahoo.com/messenger/wireless/smsmgr/tour1.html(through/tour7.html))).
- "Yahoo! Messenger for WAP," Yahoo Messenger, Yahoo! Inc., 2002 (tours 1-9), pp. 1-17 (downloaded Oct. 27, 2002: [www.messenger.yahoo.com/messenger/wireless/wap/tour1.html\(through/tour9.html\)](http://www.messenger.yahoo.com/messenger/wireless/wap/tour1.html(through/tour9.html))).
- Accelerometers—General Purpose, LP Series, Crossbow Technology, Inc., data sheet, pp. 1-3 (downloaded Apr. 11, 2002: www.xbow.com/Products/Accelerometers.htm).
- Bickers, "Eyes in the sky," SafeTzone Technology Corporation, webpages, 2001, pp. 1-3 (downloaded: www.safetzone.com/newsKiosk.asp).
- Chertkoff, Rachel, "Vehicle Locator Systems," Pager Technology, pp. 1-2, 1998.
- Commercial Uses for LoJack (webpage), LoJack Corporation, downloaded Jan. 22, 2000.
- Crossbow Product Guide—Accelerometers, Crossbow Technology, Inc., webpages, pp. 1-3 (downloaded Apr. 11, 2002: www.xbow.com/Products/Accelerometers.htm).
- Delphi and MobileAria Demonstrate True Hands Free In-Vehicle Mobile Productivity Services At CES, Press Release, Delphi Automotive Systems, Jan. 8, 2002 (downloaded Apr. 5, 2002: www.delphiauto.com/news/pressRelease/pr6828-01082002).
- F. Rivera, "Special Report: Keeping Tabs on Your Teen," 7 News, Boston, Apr. 30, 2002, pp. 1-3.
- FedEx Insight, FedEx, webpages, pp. 1-11 (downloaded Oct. 29, 2002: www.fedex.com).
- GPS2000, Omega Research and Development, Inc., webpages, pp. 1-9 (pp. 7-9 pertain to an online tour) (downloaded Jul. 14, 2003: www.gps2000online.com/).
- IMVironment, Yahoo! Messenger Yahoo! Inc., 2002, pp. 1-12 (downloaded (including) Oct. 27, 2002: [http://help.yahoo.com/help/us/mesg/imv/imv-01.html\(through/index5.html\)](http://help.yahoo.com/help/us/mesg/imv/imv-01.html(through/index5.html))).
- J.Wrolstad, "Chrysler Claims First With Bluetooth Mobile Phone System," Wireless Newsfactor, Oct. 26, 2001.

- K. Hill, "Prada Uses Smart Tags to Personalize Shopping," CRMDaily.com, Apr. 24, 2002., pp. 1-4.
- K. Miyake, "Sharp to unveil 3G PDA-type cell phone," ITworld.com, Inc., Jan. 11, 2002.
- Kleinknecht, William, "Juvenile authorities want satellite tracking for felons," The Star-Ledger of New Jersey, Nov. 18, 1997.
- LoadTrak, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Jun. 4, 2002: www.load-trak.com).
- Marek, "The Unstoppable SnapTrack," Wireless Week, Dec. 18, 2000.
- Motorola Consumer Catalog: Pagers (webpage), Motorola, Inc., downloaded Jan. 19, 2000.
- My.Roadway!, Roadway Express, Inc., webpages, pp. 1-2, (downloaded Jun. 9, 2002: www.quicktrak.roadway.com/cgi-bin/quicktrak).
- Packtrack™, PackTrack.com, webpages, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Jun. 9, 2002: www.packtrack.com).
- Precision Accelerometers, PCB Piezoelectronics Products—SVS Division, webpages, pp. 1-2 (downloaded Apr. 11, 2002: www.pcb.com/products/svs/index.html).
- Rabinowitz and Spilker, Jr., "A New Positioning System Using Television Synchronization Signals," Rosum Corporation, pp. 1-11 (downloaded May 21, 2003).
- Rabinowitz and Spilker, Jr., "Positioning Using the ATSC Digital Television Signal," Rosum Corporation Whitepaper, Rosum Corporation (downloaded May 21, 2003).
- Real Time Locating System, Executive Summary, Technology Systems International, Inc.
- Ryan, "Catching up with Dick Tracy," San Francisco Chronicle, news article, Mar. 18, 2002.
- SandPiper GPS Receiver, Specification sheet by Axiom Navigation Inc. (www.axiomnav.com).
- Smart Antenna, Specification sheet by Axiom Navigation Inc. (www.axiomnav.com).
- SnapTrack—Privacy Protection (webpage), SnapTrack Inc., downloaded Jan. 19, 2000.
- SnapTrack—Technology At Work (webpage), SnapTrack Inc., downloaded Jan. 19, 2000.
- SnapTrack in Action (webpage), SnapTrack Inc., downloaded Jan. 19, 2000.
- Stilp, Louis A., "Examining the Coming Revolution in Location Services," pp. 1-11.
- Swift A2 GPS Receiver, Specification sheet by Axiom Navigation Inc. (www.axiomnav.com).
- Swift B2 GPS Receiver, Specification sheet by Axiom Navigation Inc. (www.axiomnav.com).
- TruePosition Virtual Brochure (webpage), TruePosition, Inc.
- Wong, "Fishers, golfers join the rush to GPS," San Jose Mercury News, news article, Mar. 25, 2002.
- Office Action for U.S. Appl. No. 10/397,474, dated Aug. 23, 2006.
- Office Action for U.S. Appl. No. 10/397,474, dated Feb. 27, 2007.
- Office Action for U.S. Appl. No. 10/397,474, dated Sep. 6, 2007.
- Notice of Allowance for U.S. Appl. No. 10/397,474, dated Mar. 28, 2008.
- Restriction Requirement for U.S. Appl. No. 12/214,434, dated Nov. 16, 2010.
- Office Action for U.S. Appl. No. 12/214,434, dated Dec. 7, 2010.
- Notice of Allowance for U.S. Appl. No. 12/214,434, dated Feb. 9, 2011.
- Sauer, Matthew, "Company Finds Niche by Giving Directions . . ." Sarasota Herald-Tribune (Florida), Section: Business Weekly, pg. 1, Jul. 7, 1997.
- "ATX Technologies Signs Nationwide Service Deal with AT&T," Global Positioning & Navigation News, vol. 7, No. 9, May 7, 1997.
- "Car Thieves Take the 'Bait' in Tulsa; Two Suspects Caught Off Guard with OnGuard Once Again," PR Newswire, Section: Financial News, Jan. 8, 1997.
- "Car Thieves Take the 'Bait' in Tulsa; Two Suspects Caught Off Guard with On Guard," PR Newswire, Section: Financial News, Dec. 9, 1996.
- Jackson, Terry, "Smart Cars Whether By Satellite or the Internet, High-Tech Devices and Services May Make Crumpled Road Maps A Thing of the Past," The Miami Herald, Section: Travel, pg. 1J, Oct. 6, 1996.
- "San Antonio Personal Security Company Links Up with Senior PGA Golfer," PR Newswire, Section: Financial News, Apr. 1, 1996.
- "San Antonio Personal Security Company Links Up with Senior PGA Golfer," Southwest Newswire, Apr. 1, 1996.
- Business Briefs, San Antonio Express-News, Mar. 25, 1996.
- "ATX Research Signs Exclusive Sales Agreement with Arizona Company," PR Newswire, Mar. 21, 1996.
- "ATX Research Signs Exclusive Sales Agreement with Arizona Company," Southwest Newswire, Mar. 21, 1996.
- "Automotive GPS Satellite/Safety System Race Is On," Southwest Newswire, Feb. 20, 1996.
- "Dealerships Can Track Down New Aftermarket Revenues," PR Newswire, Feb. 9, 1996.
- "ATX Research Unveils New Stealthrac Capability," PR Newswire, Feb. 9, 1996.
- "Dealerships Can Track Down New Aftermarket Revenues," Southwest Newswire, Feb. 9, 1996.
- BRIEFS, Global Positioning & Navigation News Wire, vol. 6, No. 2, Jan. 24, 1996.
- "ATX Research Provides Police Departments With OnGuard Personal Security and Vehicle Tracking System," PR Newswire, Jan. 15, 1996.
- "ATX Research Provides Police Departments With OnGuard Personal Security and Vehicle Tracking System," Southwest Newswire, Jan. 15, 1996.
- "ATX Research Relocates to New Corporate Headquarters," PR Newswire, Dec. 12, 1995.
- "ATX Research Relocates to New Corporate Headquarters," Southwest Newswire, Dec. 12, 1995.
- "Texas invention tracks stolen cars, lets driver call for help," The Vancouver Sun, Oct. 20, 1995.
- "San Antonio Company Unveils Satellite/Cellular Personal Security System," PR Newswire, Oct. 3, 1995.
- "San Antonio Company Unveils Satellite/Cellular Personal Security System," Southwest Newswire, Oct. 3, 1995.
- Archived copy of a page entitled "Money-Back Guarantee Policy" from fedex.com, archived by the Internet Archive on Aug. 17, 2000.
- Strom, Stephanie. "A Wild Sleigh Ride at Federal Express," The New York Times, Dec. 20, 1994.
- Danger Product Overview, 5 pgs., Danger, Inc. (2010).
- PCV *trak*™ Installation and Operator's Manual, Trimble Navigation, 24623-00 Rev. A, May 1994, pp. 1-259.
- "Advanced Traveler Aid Systems for Public Transportation," Final Report, Federal Transit Administration, Sep. 1994, pp. 1-131.
- Campbell, Laurel, "SECURITY—Military satellite enlisted to thwart car crime," The Commercial Appeal, Sep. 26, 1996, pp. 5B.
- Law, Alex, "Week in Wheels/ . . . From a Driver's Notebook," Newsday, Inc., Sep. 20, 1996, pp. C03.
- Cortez, Angela, "Springs police can track thief, vehicles," The Denver Post, Sep. 10, 1996, pp. B-01.
- "OnGuard Tracker Nabs Auto Burglar," Global Positioning & Navigation News, vol. 6, No. 16, Aug. 8, 1996.
- "OnGuard Tracker Nabs Auto Burglar," Section: Financial News, PR Newswire, Jul. 29, 1996.
- Nauman, Matt, "Pressing the Panic Button: Car Security Enters a New Age with Cellular Phones and Satellites that Watch Over You," San Jose Mercury News, Jun. 21, 1996, pp. 1G.
- "Monday Briefing" San Antonio Express-News, p. 1, Part B, Jun. 10, 1996.
- "OnGuard Tracker Makes Debut on 'One Lap of America'," PR Newswire, Jun. 7, 1996.
- "OnGuard Tracker Makes Debut on 'One Lap of America'," Southwest Newswire, Jun. 7, 1996.
- Dominguez, Raul, "Women get their day in sun—American Golf planning events nationwide May 18," San Antonio Express-News, Apr. 18, 1996, pp. 2, part B.
- "Vehicle Navigation Units Being Measured in Luxury Autos," Global Positioning & Navigation News, vol. 6, No. 7, Apr. 4, 1996.
- "Advanced Business Sciences, Inc. Announces Completion of Acquisition of Comguard of Illinois," Business Wire, Aug. 26, 1998.
- "Advanced Business Sciences, Inc. Announces Filing With Securities and Exchange Commission," Business Wire, Jun. 25, 1999.
- "Advanced Business Sciences, Inc. Announces Preliminary Fourth Quarter 1998 Revenue Results," Business Wire, Feb. 4, 1999.

- "Business People Burnsy's Grill Names Two," Omaha World-Herald, Section Business, p. 4M, Oct. 20, 1996.
- "Company Sees Prisoner Tracking and Monitoring Market Niche," Global Positioning & Navigation News, vol. 6, No. 10, May 16, 1996.
- GPS-Based Personal Monitoring Systems Offered to Corrections, Private Market, Global Positioning & Navigation News, vol. 8, No. 11, Jun. 3, 1998.
- GPS tracks parolees, probationers, Corrections Professional, vol. 5, No. 6, Nov. 19, 1999.
- High-Tech System Tracks Offenders—Satellites Watching Criminals, Business Wire, Nov. 14, 1997.
- BRIEFS, Global Positioning & Navigation News, vol. 9, No. 4, Feb. 24, 1999.
- Dunkelberger, Lloyd, "Lawmakers question criminal-tracking system," Sarasota Herald-Tribune (Florida), pp. 16A, Nov. 28, 1999.
- Powell, Barbara. "New gadgets help drivers find their way," Fort Worth Star-Telegram (Texas), p. 1, Jan. 20, 1997.
- "New Service Lets Corrections Agencies Track Offenders by Satellite," PR Newswire, Jan. 11, 1999.
- "New Service Lets Corrections Agencies Track Offenders by Satellite; SecurityLink Offers "GPS" Tracking for Offenders on Electronic Monitoring—Sandusky Municipal Court Adopts Technology for Local Offenders," PR Newswire, Jan. 12, 1999.
- "New Service Lets Corrections Agencies Track Offenders by Satellite; SecurityLink Offers "GPS" Tracking for Offenders on Electronic Monitoring," PR Newswire, Section: Financial News, Jan. 11, 1999.
- "New Service Lets Corrections Agencies Track Offenders by Satellite," Satellite Today, vol. 2, No. 8, Jan. 13, 1999.
- "Prisoner Security Monitoring Company Grabs Contracts for GPS-Based System," Global Positioning & Navigation News, vol. 7, No. 1, Jan. 15, 1997.
- Atwater, Andi, "Proposal seeking 24-hour tracking of all sex offenders," the News-Press (Fort Meyers, FL), pp. 1A, Feb. 20, 2000.
- BRIEFS, Global Positioning & Navigation News, vol. 9, No. 3, Feb. 10, 1999.
- Brauer, David, "Satellite 'Big Brother' Tracks Ex-Inmates; Agencies Experiment with GPS to Monitor Parolee Whereabouts," Chicago Tribune, Section: News, pg. 31, Dec. 18, 1998.
- "Satellite Spotlight; Eye in the Sky to Monitor Parolees," Satellite News, vol. 21, No. 15, Apr. 13, 1998.
- "Satellite Spotlight: Fighting Crime From Space," Satellite News, vol. 19, No. 20, May 13, 1996.
- Prohaska, Thomas J, "Satellite Will Keep Tabs on Convicts," Buffalo News (New York), Section: Local, p. 5B, Sep. 20, 1999.
- "Sierra Wireless and Pro Tech Team Up on Monitoring Product," Global Positioning & Navigation News, vol. 8, No. 8, Apr. 22, 1998.
- Anderson, Larry, "Technology rules at Securing New Ground," Access Control & Security Systems Integration, Section: Industry Outlook; ISSN 1084-6425, Dec. 1999.
- Trimble Navigation Warns 2nd-Quarter Earnings to Miss Target, Dow Jones Business News, Jul. 10, 1998.
- "Trimble Navigation's Net Income Skidded 93% Amid Order Delays," Dow Jones Business News, Jul. 23, 1998.
- BRIEFS, Global Positioning & Navigation News, vol. 9, No. 2, Jan. 27, 1999.
- BRIEFS, Global Positioning & Navigation News, vol. 9, No. 14, Jul. 14, 1999.
- Dailey et al. "Automatic Transit Location System," Final Research Report, 55 pgs., Feb. 1996.
- Maguire, Jr. et al. "SmartBadges: a wearable computer and communication system," codes/CASHE '98, 47 pgs., 1998.
- Koshima et al. "Personal locator services emerge," IEEE Spectrum, Feb. 2000, pp. 41-48.
- Zygowicz et al. "State of the Art in Automatic Vehicle Location Systems," Center for Urban Transportation Studies, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Feb. 1998.
- Ashworth, Jon. "Big brother is watching you," The Times (London), Section: Features, May 7, 1999.
- "Car Thieves Take the "Bait" in Michigan; Two Suspects Reeled in With OnGuard," Business Wire, Sep. 11, 1997.

* cited by examiner

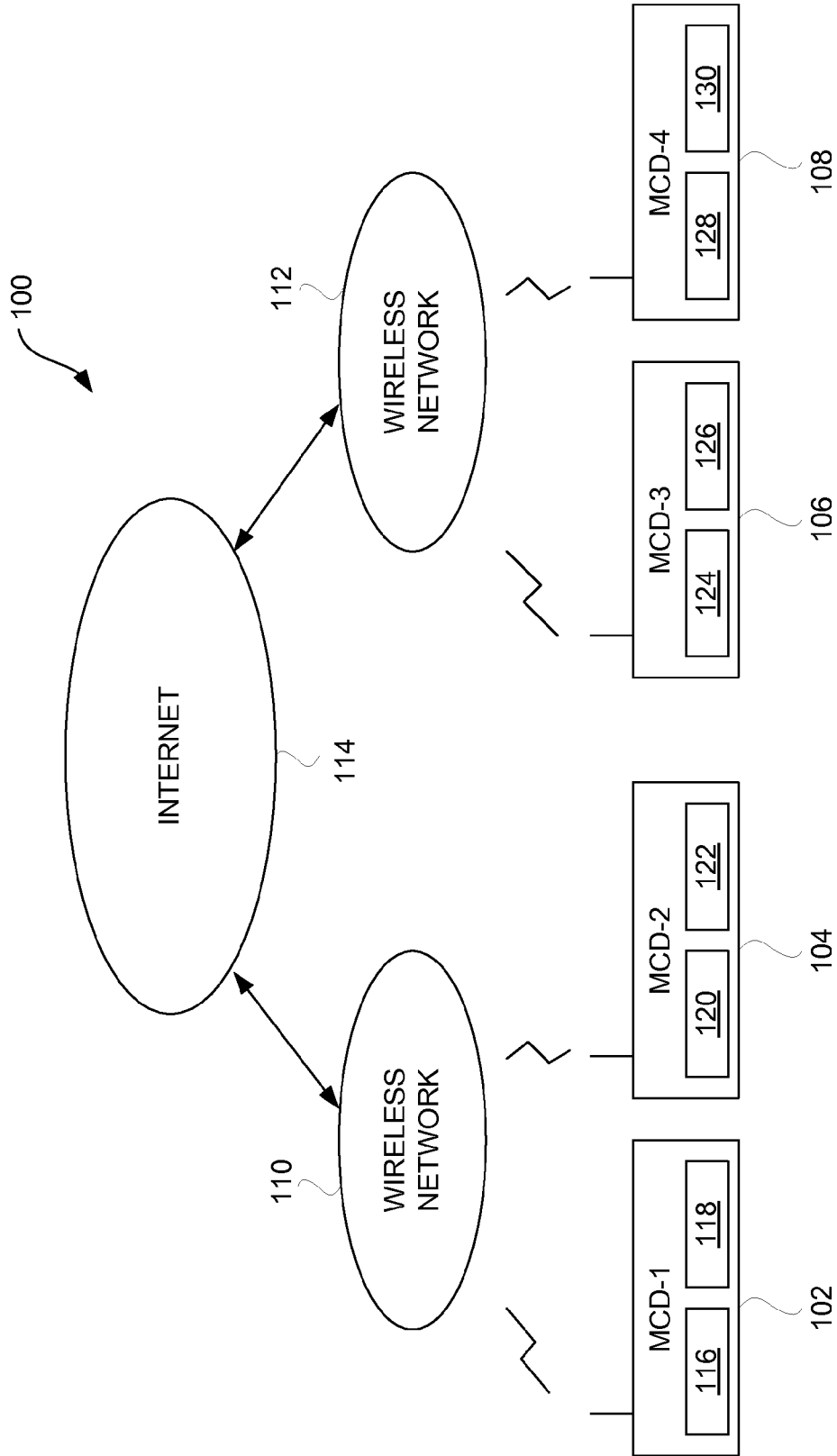


FIG. 1

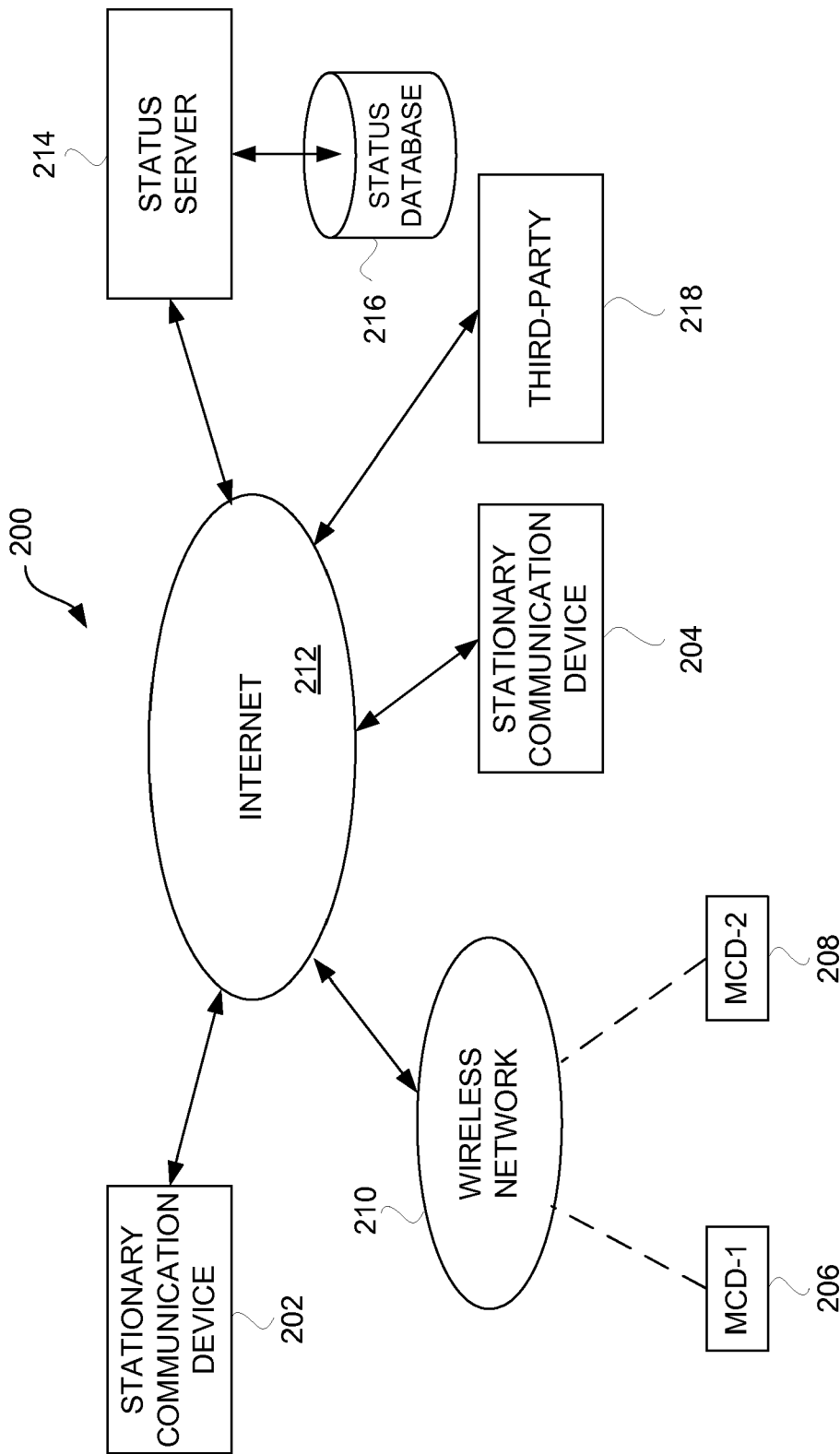


FIG. 2

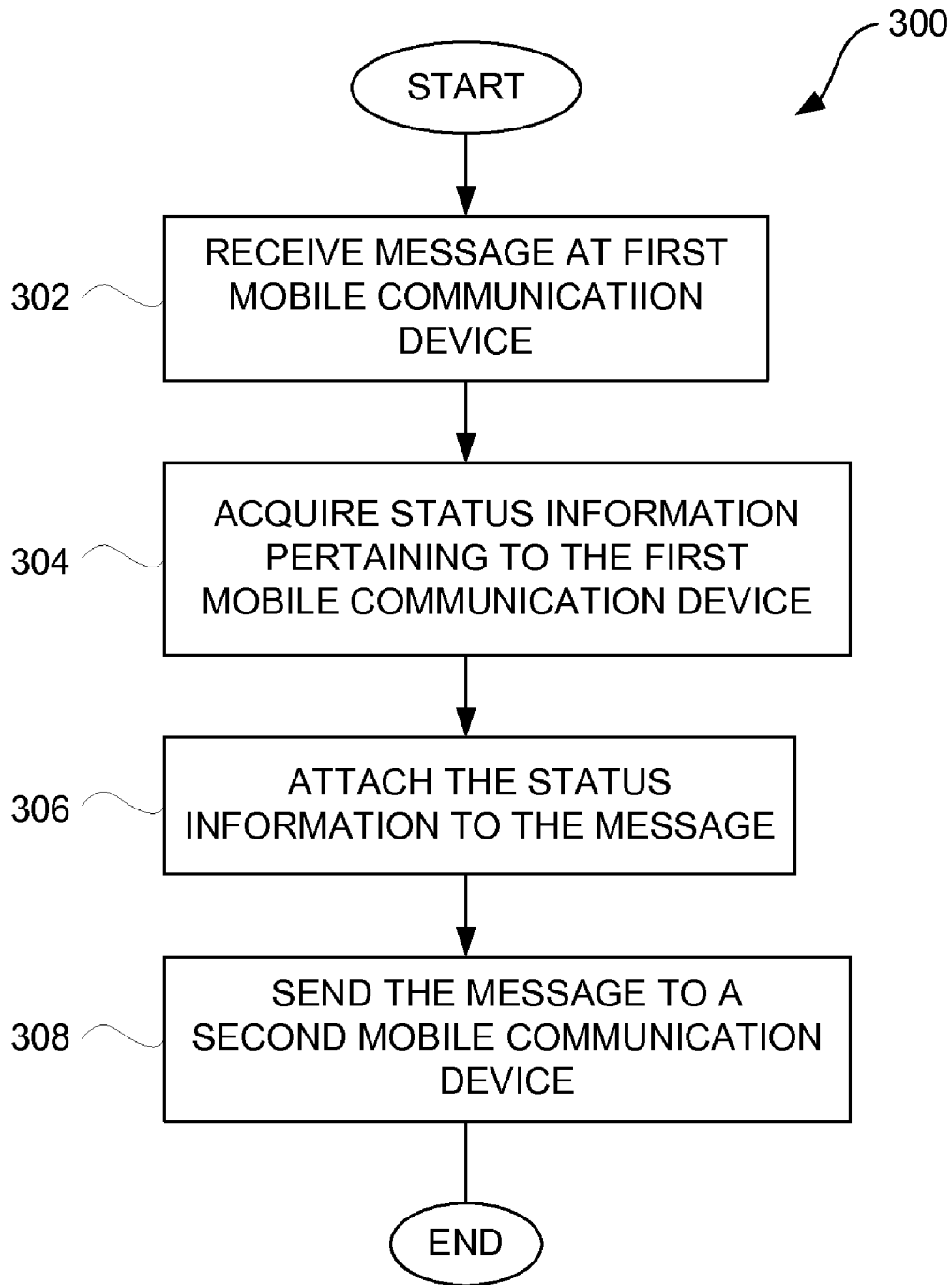


FIG. 3

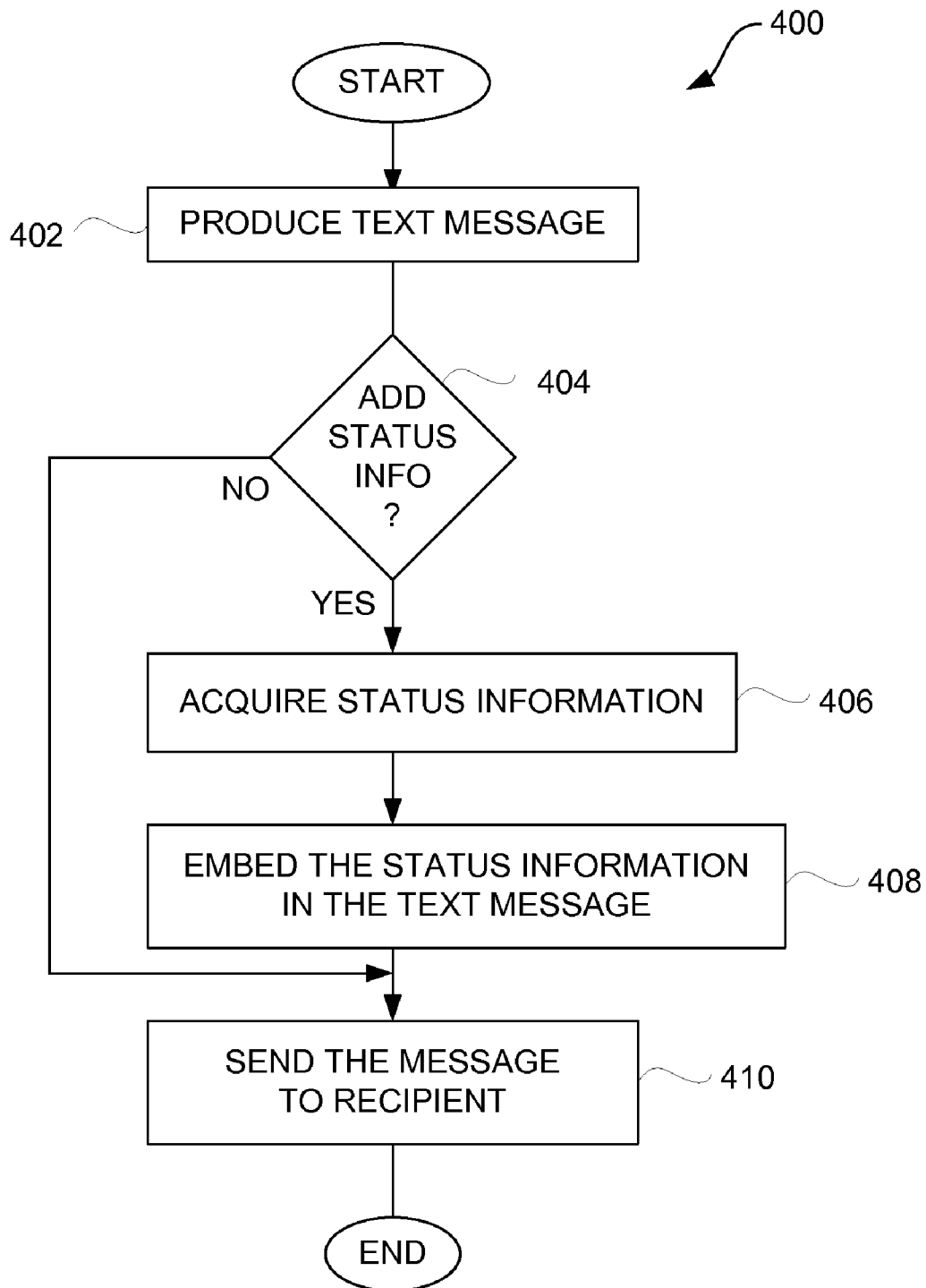


FIG. 4

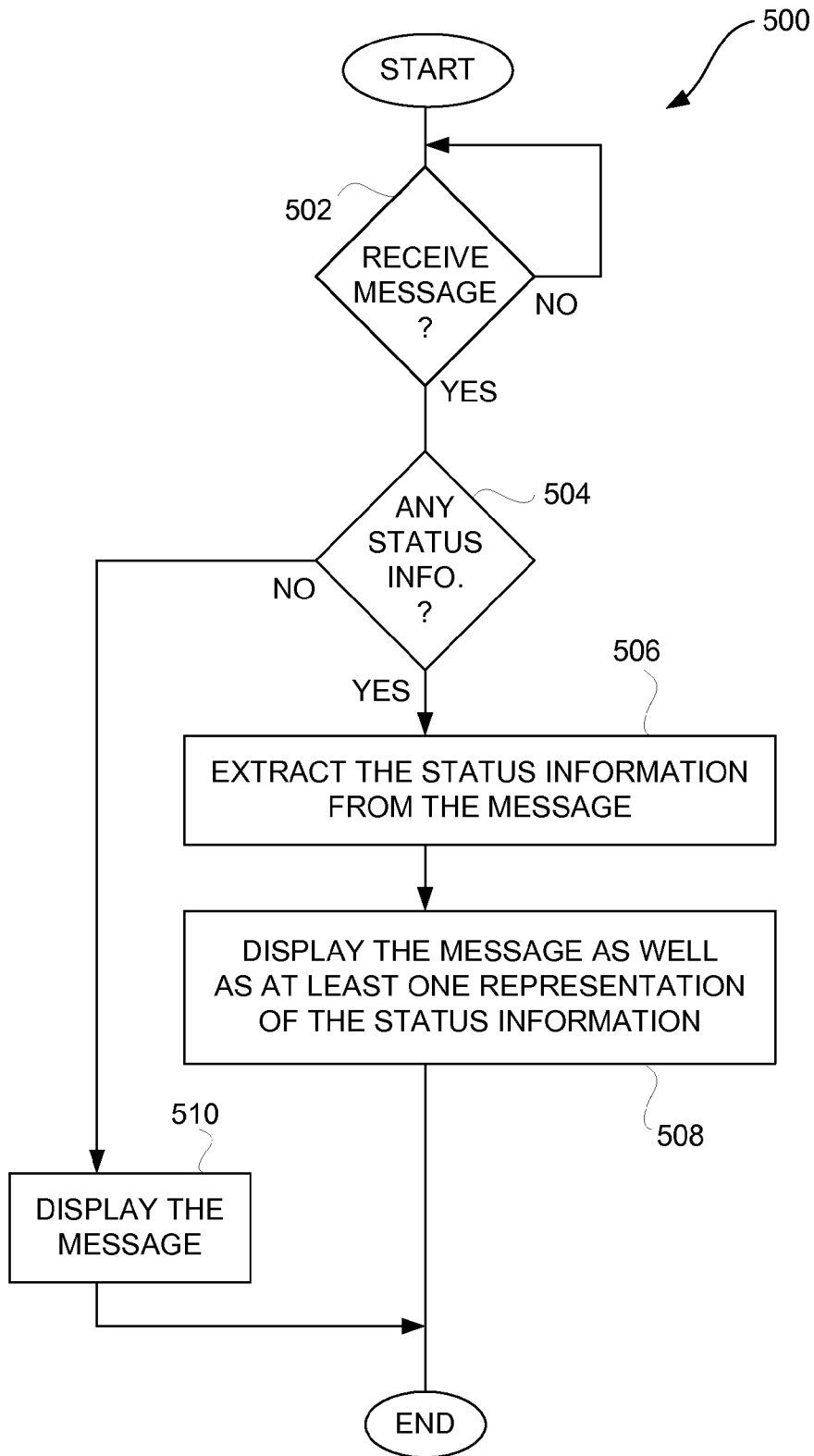


FIG. 5

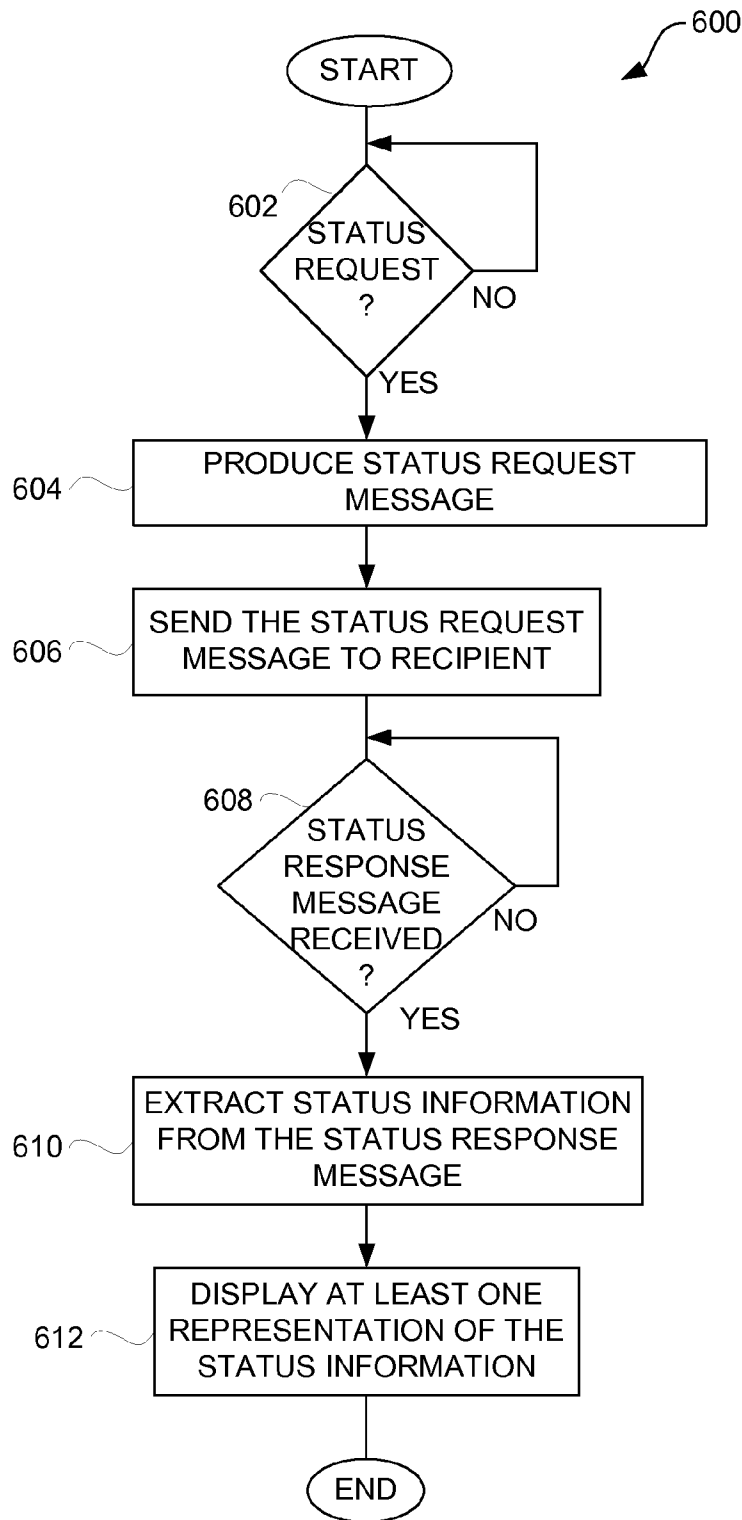


FIG. 6

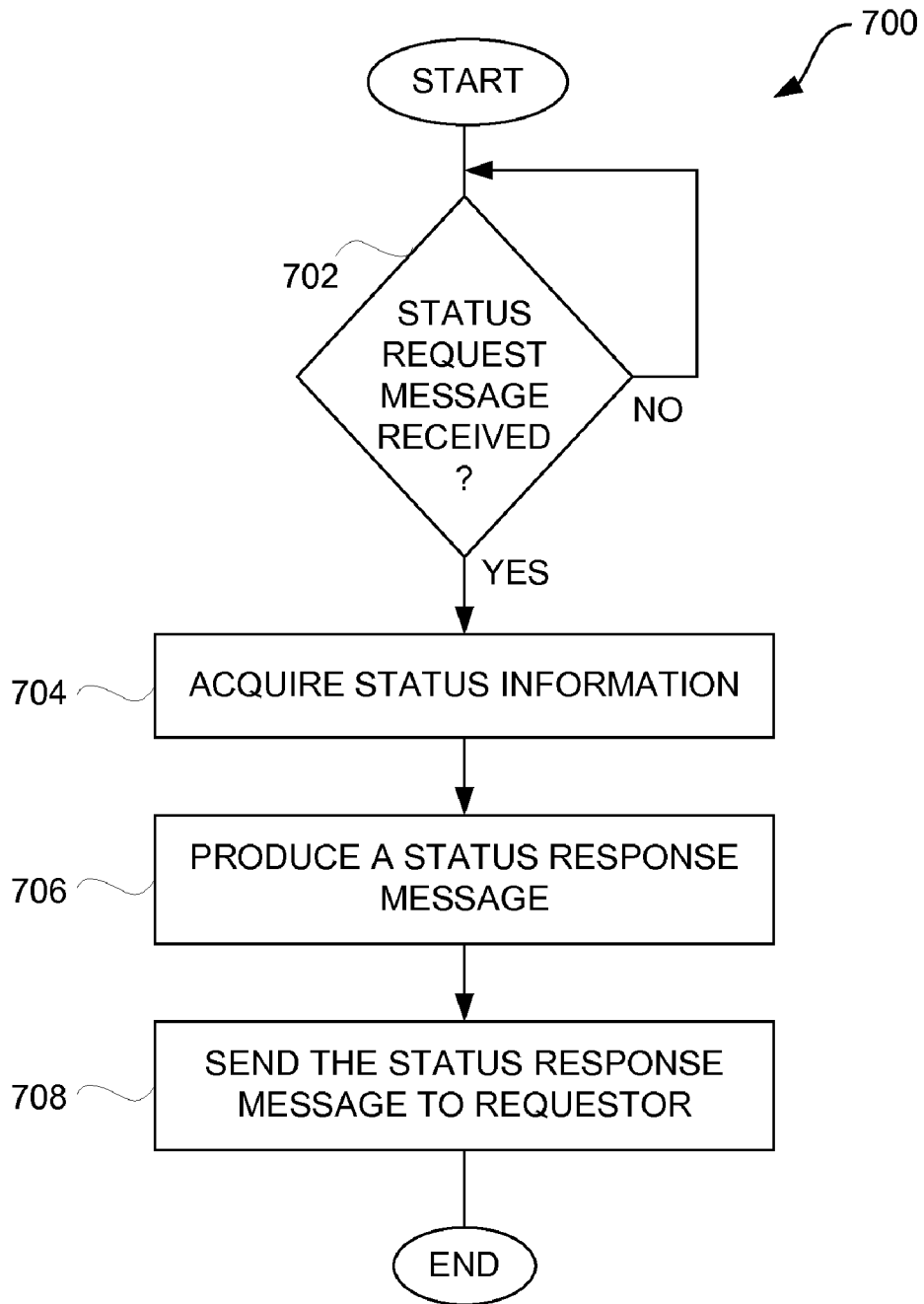


FIG. 7

METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR ENHANCED MESSAGING

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/214,434, filed Jun. 19, 2008, and entitled "METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR ENHANCED MESSAGING" (now U.S. Pat. No. 7,953,809), which is hereby incorporated herein by reference, which in turn is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/397,474, filed Mar. 26, 2003, and entitled "METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR ENHANCED MESSAGING" (now U.S. Pat. No. 7,403,972), which is hereby incorporated herein by reference, and which in turn claims benefit of: (i) U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/444,198, filed Jan. 30, 2003, and entitled "SYSTEM, METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ACQUIRING, PRESENTING, MONITORING, DELIVERING, MANAGING AND USING STATUS INFORMATION," which is hereby incorporated herein by reference; (ii) U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/418,491, filed Oct. 15, 2002, and entitled "SYSTEM, METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ACQUIRING, PRESENTING, MONITORING, DELIVERING, MANAGING AND USING STATUS INFORMATION," which is hereby incorporated herein by reference; (iii) U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/404,645, filed Aug. 19, 2002, and entitled "SYSTEM, METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ACQUIRING, PRESENTING, MONITORING, DELIVERING, MANAGING AND USING POSITION AND OTHER INFORMATION," which is hereby incorporated herein by reference; and (iv) U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/375,998, filed Apr. 24, 2002, and entitled "SYSTEM, METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ACQUIRING, PRESENTING, MANAGING AND USING POSITION INFORMATION," which is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

This application is also related to: (i) U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/397,473, filed Mar. 26, 2003, and entitled "METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR INTELLIGENT ACQUISITION OF POSITION INFORMATION (now U.S. Pat. No. 6,975,941);" (ii) U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/397,472, filed Mar. 26, 2003, and entitled "METHODS AND APPARATUS TO ANALYZE AND PRESENT LOCATION INFORMATION (now U.S. Pat. No. 7,218,938);" (iii) U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/397,637, filed Mar. 26, 2003, and entitled "METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR PROVIDING SHIPMENT TRACKING AND NOTIFICATIONS (now U.S. Pat. No. 7,212,829);" (iv) U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/397,641, filed Mar. 26, 2003, and entitled "METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR PERSONALIZED MEDICAL MONITORING AND NOTIFICATIONS THEREFOR (now U.S. Pat. No. 7,905,832);" (v) U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/397,640, filed Mar. 26, 2003, and entitled "INEXPENSIVE POSITION SENSING DEVICE (now U.S. Pat. No. 7,321,774);" (vi) U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/397,512, filed Mar. 26, 2003, and entitled "APPLICATIONS OF STATUS INFORMATION FOR INVENTORY MANAGEMENT."

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to communication devices and, more particularly, to enhanced messaging for communication devices.

2. Description of the Related Art

Today, electronic mail (email) is a common mode of communication. One person, acting as a sender, composes an email message and then sends the email message to another person designated as a recipient. The sender composes the email message by interacting with a communication device. The recipient is able to read the email message by interacting with another communication device. Communication devices are often personal computers or mobile telephones. These communication devices can receive and transmit electronic mail messages over a network. The network can be public or private as well as wired or wireless.

Although email is an effective means of communication, when a sender is using a mobile telephone, composing an email message can be tedious and difficult. User interfaces can provide limited assistance to users such as by creating email messages through word prediction, predetermined responses, etc. Nevertheless, given the difficulties with composing messages, email messages from mobile telephones in most cases are relatively short. Recently, communication devices, including mobile telephones, have been able to send and receive instant messages, which are short text messages sent and received in near real time between communication device.

Apart from sending and receiving email messages, mobile telephones can also display the location or availability (i.e., online or offline) of other users via their mobile telephones. This information is provided by a wireless service provider that monitors location or availability of users via their mobile phones. Unfortunately, such information needs the assistance of wireless service providers and tends not to be widely available. Moreover, if such information is available, the information would very likely not be current and thus the usefulness of the information would be limited.

Thus, there is a need for improved approaches to enhance the capabilities of messaging.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Broadly speaking, the invention relates to techniques for acquiring, sending, receiving or using status information from a remote location over a network. The status information is transmitted by electronic devices over the network. The status information can be provided by one or more sensors associated with the electronic device that is transmitting the status information. The status information can be transmitted with messages so as to enhance the messages.

According to one aspect of the invention, base messages are entered by a user or automatically produced. The base messages can be text messages (including instant messages), voice messages, video messages or other types of messages. The base messages are augmented to additionally include status information, such as position and/or other conditions information. The status information is normally provided by one or more sensors. In one implementation, base messages can be combined with status information, whereby the resulting messages are referred to as enhanced messages. These enhanced messages are electronically sent from and received at electronic devices, such as personal computers and mobile communication devices.

The invention can be implemented in numerous ways including, a method, system, device, graphical user interface, and a computer readable medium. Several embodiments of the invention are discussed below.

As a user communication system for communicating between users of mobile communication devices, one embodiment of the invention can, for example, include at

least a communication apparatus including at least one processor configured to execute non-transitory computer program code to provide communication between users of mobile communication devices. The computer program code can include at least: computer program code for obtaining a message from a first mobile communication device to be delivered to a plurality of other mobile communication devices; computer program code for acquiring status information of the first mobile communication device, the status information including at least position information associated with the first mobile communication device; computer program code for determining whether the plurality of other mobile communication devices or users thereof are authorized to obtain the status information of the first mobile communication device; and computer program code for sending the message along with the status information from the first mobile communication device to each of the plurality of other mobile communication devices, provided that said computer program code for determining determines that the plurality of other mobile communication devices or users thereof are authorized to receive the status information of the first mobile communication device. The message is from a user of the first mobile communication device, and the message is distinct from the status information.

As a method for providing communications between computing devices, another embodiment of the invention includes at least the acts of: obtaining a message at a first mobile communication device to be delivered to a second mobile communication device; determining whether status information is to accompany the message; sending the message without any status information when it is determined that status information is not to accompany the message; and acquiring status information at the first mobile communication device and then sending the message and the status information to the second mobile communication device when it is determined that status information is not to accompany the message.

As a method for displaying a message on a display device of a computing device, one embodiment of the invention includes at least the acts of: receiving a message from another computing device over a network; determining whether the message includes at least status information; extracting the status information from the message when it is determined that the message includes at least the status information; and displaying the message and at least one representation of the status information on the display device following the extracting when it is determined that the message includes at least the status information.

As a method for displaying a message on a display device of a computing device, another embodiment of the invention includes at least the acts of: receiving a message from another computing device over a network; determining whether the message includes at least status information; extracting the status information from the message when it is determined that the message includes at least the status information; and displaying the message and at least one representation of the status information on the display device following the extracting when it is determined that the message includes at least the status information.

Other aspects and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings which illustrate, by way of example, the principles of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention will be readily understood by the following detailed description in conjunction with the accompanying

drawings, wherein like reference numerals designate like structural elements, and in which:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of an enhanced messaging system according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram of an enhanced messaging system according to another embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 3 is a flow diagram of status message processing according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 4 is a flow diagram of send processing according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 5 is a flow diagram of display processing according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 6 is a flow diagram of status retrieval processing according to one embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 7 is a flow diagram of status request processing according to one embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to techniques for acquiring, sending, receiving or using status information from a remote location over a network. The status information is transmitted over the network between or among electronic devices. The status information can be provided by one or more sensors associated with the electronic device that is transmitting the status information. The status information can be transmitted with messages so as to enhance the messages. The electronic devices include at least computing devices, such as personal computers, personal digital assistants, pagers, and mobile telephones.

According to one aspect of the invention, messages are enhanced through use of status information. Base messages are entered by a user or automatically produced. The base messages can be text messages (including instant messages), voice messages, video messages or other types of messages. The base messages are augmented to additionally include status information, such as position and/or other conditions information. The status information is normally provided by one or more status sensors. In one implementation, base messages can be combined with status information, whereby the resulting messages are referred to as enhanced messages. These enhanced messages are electronically sent from and received at communication devices, such as personal computers and mobile communication devices.

Different embodiments of the invention are discussed below with reference to FIGS. 1-7. However, those skilled in the art will readily appreciate that the detailed description given herein with respect to these figures is for explanatory purposes as the invention extends beyond these limited embodiments.

According to one aspect of the invention, traditional messages transmitted between communication devices are augmented to additionally include status information, such as position and/or conditions information. The conditions information can pertain to one or more of environmental conditions, device-related conditions, or user-related conditions. One or more status sensors associated with the communication devices can capture or obtain the status information. In the case of position information, the status sensor can be a receiver, such as a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver or other means.

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of an enhanced messaging system 100 according to one embodiment of the invention. The enhanced messaging system 100 allows electronic messages (e.g., text messages) to be sent between mobile communication devices. The electronic messages being sent can be enhanced to include status information pertaining to (i) status

of the associated mobile communication devices, (ii) status associated with the environment of the mobile communication devices, and/or (iii) status of the person(s) using the mobile communication device(s).

The enhanced messaging system **100** includes mobile communication devices **102**, **104**, **106** and **108**. The mobile communication devices **102** and **104** communicate with a wireless network **110**, and the mobile communication devices **106** and **108** communicate with a wireless network **112**. The wireless networks **110** and **112** can be the same or different networks and can utilize same or different protocols. The wireless networks **110** and **112** can be coupled together and/or can couple to the Internet **114**, and can support global messaging.

The enhanced messages are sent from one of the mobile communication devices to one or more other of the mobile communication devices. These enhanced messages can include additional information about the mobile communication device, its user and/or its environment. In one embodiment, the status information can include at least position (location) information and other status information. To provide the status information, the mobile communication devices **102**, **104**, **106** and **108** can include one or more status sensors, such as position detectors, and/or one or more other types of condition sensors for different conditions regarding the communication devices. A position detector can provide position information pertaining to its corresponding mobile communication device. Similarly, a condition sensor provides condition information pertaining to conditions sensed at the corresponding mobile communication device. More particularly, the mobile communication device **102** includes a position detector **116** and at least one condition sensor **118**; the mobile communication device **104** includes a position detector **120** and at least one condition sensor **122**; the mobile communication device **106** includes a position detector **124** and at least one condition sensor **126**; and the mobile communication device **108** includes a position detector **128** and at least one condition sensor **130**.

In one embodiment, the position information is obtained from a global positioning system (GPS) receiver, which can be in a mobile communication device. In other words, the position detector can be a GPS receiver. The position information can be obtained or augmented by a local positioning system such as utilized with a local network (e.g., Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, etc.). The conditions information can vary with application. Examples of conditions that can be provided within the conditions information include environment conditions or conditions of the environment of the corresponding mobile communication device. Environment conditions include temperature, humidity, pressure, gaseous or liquid states, chemical compositions, wind speed, color composition, scent, light, sound, smoke, particle or radiation (e.g., infrared radiation). The conditions information can be pertaining to a mobile communication device itself, such as force or pressure asserted on it, or its vibration, acceleration, speed (velocity) or direction. The conditions information can also include user-related conditions. These are conditions related to the user, who is typically a living being and who may be using the corresponding mobile communication device. Examples of user-related conditions include the being's physical conditions (e.g., heart beat, temperature, pupil dilation, hunger, perspiration, tired or sick), volitional behavior (e.g., facial expressions, jumping or moving), or the user's emotional state, such as the user's mood. Examples of emotional states or moods include sad, happy, mad, stressed, or excited. Some

of these conditions are not determined directly by sensors, but are instead determined indirectly through processing other sensor data.

In one embodiment, an enhanced messaging system can operate in a distributed manner with little or no centralized management for status information exchange. In other words, the exchange of status information can be peer-to-peer (e.g., from one mobile communication device to another) without an intermediate centralized server to store and manage distribution of the status information. Such an embodiment can operate without assistance from wireless networks service providers. The enhanced messaging system **100** shown in FIG. **1** is suitable for use as such an embodiment.

In another embodiment, an enhanced messaging system can operate in a centralized manner, such as shown below in FIG. **2**. In the case of a centralized system, or at least one providing centralized assistance, the status information can be stored and/or processed by a separate entity, independent of the parties sending and receiving information.

FIG. **2** is a block diagram of an enhanced messaging system **200** according to one embodiment of the invention. The enhanced messaging system **200** provides web-based enhanced messaging between users of communication devices. The enhanced messages being sent from one of the communication devices to one or more other of the communication devices. These enhanced messages can include additional information pertaining to a communication device, its user and/or its environment. In one embodiment, the status information can include at least position (location) information and conditions information.

According to the embodiment shown in FIG. **2**, the enhanced messaging system **200** includes stationary communication devices **202** and **204**. The enhanced messaging system **200** also includes mobile communication devices (MCD) **206** and **208**. Typically, the mobile communication devices **206** and **208** are worn by, affixed to or carried by users. The enhanced messaging system **200** would normally be able to support multiple stationary communication devices, such as desktop computers, and mobile communication devices, such as mobile telephones, personal digital assistants and two-way pagers.

In general, messages can be transmitted (sent and/or received) between and/or among any of the communication devices, regardless of whether stationary or mobile. For discussion, it is assumed that a message is created and sent from the mobile communication device **206** to the stationary communication device **204**. The message is assumed to be a text message, such as a real-time text message (e.g., instant message). In this example, the mobile communication device **206** acquires status information pertaining to the user, the device and/or the environment. The acquired status information is provided to the stationary communication device **204** along with the message.

The mobile communication devices **206** and **208** couple to a wireless network **210**. The wireless network **210** couples to the Internet **212**. Further, a status server **214** is coupled to the Internet **212**. The status server **214** also couples to a status database **216**. The Internet **212** can be replaced by other data networks (e.g., enterprise network, regional network, Local Area Network, Wide Area Network and global network).

The status information can include at least position (location) information and conditions information. The position information is obtained typically from a global positioning system (GPS) receiver within the first mobile communication device **206**. The position information can be obtained or augmented by a local positioning system such as utilized with a local network (e.g., Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, etc.).

The conditions information can vary with application. Various examples of conditions that can be provided within the conditions information were noted above. The corresponding conditions sensor(s) can also be in the mobile communication device **206**, or the sensor(s) can be wired or wirelessly coupled to the mobile communication device **206**.

The status information that is obtained by the first mobile communication device **206** is sent by the first mobile communication device **206** to the status server **214** via the wireless network **210** and the Internet **212**. The status server **214** stores the status information pertaining to the first mobile communication device **206** into the status database **216** such that it is associated with the first mobile communication device **206**. The status server **214** monitors status information for numerous communication devices, including mobile communications devices and/or stationary communication device, and thus stores status information pertaining to numerous communication devices.

The enhanced messaging system **200** can also include at least one third-party **218**. The third-party **218** is a user interested in status information acquired by mobile communication devices but does not normally receive the text messages also being sent.

The enhanced messaging system **200** can allow a recipient of the message to not only receive the text of the message but also the status information associated with the message. In one embodiment, the recipient receives the status information with the message. The recipient of the message can, for example, include one or more of the mobile communication devices **206** and **208** or one or more of the stationary communication devices **202** and **204**, or users thereof. In another embodiment, an authorized party, such as the user of the stationary communication devices **202** and **204** or the third-party **218**, can interact with the status server **214** through a web interface so that such users are able to access certain status information via the status server **214** and the status database **216**. The web interface can facilitate a user in accessing status information anytime anywhere.

FIG. **3** is a flow diagram of status message processing **300** according to one embodiment of the invention. The status message processing **300** is, for example, performed by a mobile communication device (e.g., mobile telephone, two-way pager) or other computing device (e.g., desktop computer, gateway, server).

Initially, the status message processing **300** receives **302** a message at a first mobile communication device. For example, a user of the mobile communication device would typically interact with the mobile communication device (e.g., through a user interface) to create the message. Hence, in this embodiment, the message is considered to be a user-entered message. The user-entered message can be a voice message, a text message, a video message or some other type of input, or some combination thereof. A text message is, for example, a standard email message, a short message (e.g., SMS message) or an instant message. Status information pertaining to the first mobile communication device (and/or its user or environment) can be acquired **304**. As noted above, in one embodiment, the status information can include at least position (location) information and/or conditions information. Some or all of the status information can then be attached **306** to the user-entered message. In one embodiment, at least some of the status information has been processed before attachment. The processed status information is still considered as status information. With the status information attached **306** to the user-entered message, the user-entered message becomes an enhanced message. The enhanced message is then sent **308** from the first mobile communication

device to another electronic device, such as a second mobile communication device (e.g., mobile telephone, personal digital assistant, or pager) or other computing device (e.g., portable or stationary computer). Typically, the sending of the enhanced message involves electronic transmission of the enhanced message over a wireless network as well as perhaps a wired network. Although the enhanced message is often sent from one mobile communication device to another mobile communication device, the message can alternatively be sent to another computing device, such as a personal computer coupled to the network. Following the operation **308**, the status message processing **300** is complete and ends.

FIG. **4** is a flow diagram of send processing **400** according to one embodiment of the invention. The send processing **400** is, for example, performed by a mobile communication device or other computing device.

The send processing **400** initially produces **402** a message. In this embodiment, the message is a user-entered message such as a text message. The text message can, for example, be produced or initiated by a user of the mobile communication device or other computing device. However, in other embodiment, the message can be a voice message or a video message.

A decision **404** then determines whether status information is to be added to the text message. The decision **404** allows the user to limit or restrict the status information that is sent to others. For example, the user might restrict the status information such that it can only be sent to authorized persons or destinations. The restrictions can be imposed by a profile or configuration information associated with the user. In one implementation, a user can make use of a list of recipients permitted to receive status information (e.g., pre-authorized recipients). As another example, a dialog box (or other graphical user interface) could be displayed to allow the user to select none, some or all of the available status information to be sent generally with all text messages, or specifically with a particular text message. As still another example, default authorizations can control the status information that is to be sent to recipients. Yet, in another example, status information can have different levels. Some levels can be more confidential than others, or some levels can be more important than others. These levels can also be set by the user. Regardless, different recipients can receive different levels of status information.

In any case, when the decision **404** determines that status information is to be provided with the text message, the status information is acquired **406**. The status information is acquired from the mobile communication device or other computing device that is sending the text message. For example, the status information can be acquired **406** from a position detector and at least one condition sensor within (wired or wirelessly coupled to) the mobile communication device.

Regardless of how or when acquired, the status information can then be embedded **408** in the text message. Once the status information has been embedded in **408** (or otherwise combined with or linked to) the text message, the resulting message is referred to as an enhanced message. The status information can be embedded in an open (e.g., as additional displayed information) or hidden manner (e.g., as undisplayed text). In one example, the status information is embedded in the text message using a markup language. The status information being embedded in the text message can also be encrypted, or the entire enhanced message can be encrypted. After the status information is embedded **408** (as well as directly after the decision **404** when no status information is to be added, the resulting message (regardless of whether enhanced or not) is sent **410** to a recipient. The recipient is

typically a user of another mobile communication device or other computing device. However, the recipient can also be the another mobile communication device or other computing device. Following the operation **410**, the send processing **400** is complete and ends.

FIG. **5** is a flow diagram of display processing **500** according to one embodiment of the invention. The display processing **500** is, for example, performed by a mobile communication device or other computing device. The display processing **500** is, for example, performed in response to a message being received due to the send processing **400** of FIG. **4**. In other words, the display processing **500** can be performed by a computing device associated with a recipient that has received a message.

The display processing **500** begins with a decision **502** that determines whether a message has been received. When the decision **502** determines that a message has not yet been received, then the display processing **500** awaits the receipt of a message. On the other hand, when the decision **502** determines that a message has been received, a decision **504** then determines whether any status information is provided with the message that has been received. Here, the message is examined to determine whether status information is provided within the message. When the decision **504** determines that status information is provided with the message (and thus the message is an enhanced message), then the status information is extracted **506** from the message.

Next, the message as well as at least one representation of the status information are displayed **508**. The representation (e.g., indication) of the status information being displayed can vary with implementation. In one embodiment, the representation is a graphical symbol that represents at least a portion of the status information. For example, a smiling face icon can represent a happy mood, a frown face icon can represent that the user is unhappy, etc. In another embodiment, the representation is textual information that is or represents a portion of the status information. In still another embodiment, the representation is a link (e.g., hyperlink) that provides access to at least a portion of the status information. For such representations, the status information can specify its presentation, or additional processing of the status information can determine an appropriate presentation.

The status information can also be interpreted, analyzed or processed before or while the representation to be displayed is determined. In one embodiment, such interpretation, analysis or processing can be performed, at least in part, by the device sending the message. As one example, the status information can include (or interpreted to include) temperature (e.g., ambient temperature) and user perspiration. Based on these two pieces of status information, one interpretation is that the user is perspiring (i.e., sweating) because of the high temperature.

As another example of the interpretation of status information, relative position of two computing devices can be computed and displayed. For example, if a receiving-computing device (either mobile or stationary) receives position information from a sending-computing device (preferably mobile), then the receiving-computing device (which knows its position) can determine and display the relative position (e.g., distance and/or direction) of the sending and the receiving-computing devices. Further, through use of other conditions information pertaining to the sending-computing device that might also be provided to the receiving-computing device, the receiving-computing device can also display the speed (velocity), direction of travel, etc. of the sending-computing device. Through additional interpretation or analysis of the conditions information, the speed (or average speed)

could be used to categorize the type of movement of the sending-computing device, which would be available for display, as a symbol or other indication. As examples, the categories could be auto, bicycle, run, fast walk, slow walk, and stationary.

In yet another example, conditions information can include the user's mood. This can be measured in a number of different ways. One method is discussed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,774,591, entitled, "APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR RECOGNIZING FACIAL EXPRESSIONS AND FACIAL GESTURES IN A SEQUENCE OF IMAGES," which is hereby incorporated herein by reference. Such conditions information can be interpreted at the sending-computing device or the receiving-computing device. Conditions information can be a user's stress level. This piece of status information can, for example, be interpreted and transformed into a symbol, such as a stressed-face icon which the stress level is high. In one embodiment, both the raw data and the symbol(s) are transmitted to a receiving-computing device, but with only the symbol being displayed and the raw data being hidden. By selecting the displayed symbol or through other appropriate user-input, the receiving-computing device can additionally analyze or view the raw data.

Alternatively, when the decision **504** determines that status information is not provided with the message, then the message is displayed **510**. Here, there is no status information available to present; therefore, the message is simply displayed. Following the operations **508** and **510**, the display processing **500** is complete and ends.

The display processing **500** operates to present at least an indicator or representation of the status information through a display. In another embodiment, the status can be presented to the user of the mobile communication device or other computing device in other ways. For example, the status information could be presented by an audio output (e.g., synthesized voice), a tactile output or other types of outputs that can be sensed by the user, which is typically a living being, such as a human being.

In one aspect of the invention, status information can be automatically included with user-entered messages being sent as noted above. As another aspect of the invention, status information can be acquired and presented on request.

FIG. **6** is a flow diagram of status retrieval processing **600** according to one embodiment of the invention. The status retrieval processing **600** is, for example, performed by a mobile communication device or other computing device.

The status retrieval processing **600** begins with a decision **602** that determines whether a status request has been requested. The status request is provided by a requestor to acquire status information from another mobile communication device or other computing device. In one embodiment, the status request is initiated by a requestor. The requestor can be a user of the mobile communication device or other computing device. In another embodiment, the status request can be initiated by the mobile communication device or other computing device. When the decision **602** determines that a status request has not been requested, then the status retrieval processing **600** awaits such a request.

Once the decision **602** determines that a status request has been requested, a status request message is produced **604**. The status request message is then sent **606** from the requestor to a recipient. In one embodiment, the status request message is a short text message (e.g., SMS message) that need not be displayed at the recipient. A status request message that is not displayed at the recipient can be referred to as a dummy message. The recipient can be another mobile communication device or other computing device, or a user thereof.

Next, a decision **608** determines whether a status response message has been received by the requestor. The status response message includes status information associated with the recipient. The status response message is a message sent by the recipient in response to the status request message from the requestor. When the decision **608** determines that the status response message has not yet been received, then the status retrieval processing **600** awaits receipt of a status response message. On the other hand, when the decision **608** determines that a status response message (responsive to the status request message) has been received, then the status retrieval processing **600** continues. Namely, status information is extracted **610** from the status response message. Next, at least one representation of the status information is displayed **612**. The representation can vary with implementation. In one embodiment, the representation is a graphical symbol that represents at least a portion of the status information. In another embodiment, the representation is text that is or represents a portion of the status information. In another embodiment, the representation is a piece of video clip that is or represents a portion of the status information. In still another embodiment, the representation is a link (e.g., hyperlink) that provides access to at least a portion of the status information. The status information can also be interpreted, analyzed or processed before or while the representation to be displayed is determined. Following the operation **600**, the status retrieval processing **600** is complete and ends.

FIG. 7 is a flow diagram of status request processing **700** according to one embodiment of the invention. The status request processing **700** is, for example, performed by a mobile communication device or other computing device. The status request processing **700** is, for example, performed in response to a status request message of the status retrieval processing **600** of FIG. 6.

The status request processing **700** begins with a decision **702** that determines whether a status request message has been received. When the decision **702** determines that a status request message has not yet been received, then the status request processing **700** awaits such a message. Once the decision **702** determines that a status request message has been received, status information for the associated mobile communication device or other computing device or user thereof is acquired **704**. A status response message is then produced **706** based on the status information. The status response message is then sent **708** to the requestor. The requestor can be considered to be a mobile communication device or other computing device, or a user thereof, that caused the status request message to be sent. According to one embodiment, once the status response message is sent **708**, the operations **610-612** of the status retrieval processing **600** of FIG. 6 can be performed.

As described above, status information is typically presented in some manner at the recipient (often presented concurrently with a message). In other embodiments, the status information can be stored in a database for later utilization. The messages can be subsequently searched, sorted or otherwise processed.

In still another aspect of the invention, status information can be automatically sent to one or more recipients whenever available or when changed. For example, one such embodiment could have a mobile communication device periodically or on events (e.g., status events) send its status information to another computing device. As another example, status information could be automatically sent to another computing device when changed by more than a threshold amount. This would enable the another computing device to maintain awareness of up-to-date status information of the mobile

communication device. Like other embodiments, this embodiment can operate in a peer-to-peer manner or in a centralized manner.

Note that status sensors do not have to be embedded in a mobile communication device. A status sensor can be physically detached, but electronically coupled to a communication device through a wireless link, such as based on the Bluetooth or Wi-Fi technologies. In yet another embodiment, a status sensor electronically couples to a communication device through a wire connection.

In yet another embodiment, the sending of status information can be through user-activation. In other words, although a piece of status information is acquired via a status sensor, its transmission to another electronic device can depend on a user's voluntary action, such as pushing a button.

One application of the invention is to provide the status information with messages, such as text messages and in particular near real-time text messages, such as instant messages. Hence, users of computing devices, namely, mobile communication devices, can exchange near real-time text messages and in doing so can also exchange status information. In some embodiments, the exchange of status information is achieved automatically, without user initiation.

The messages can be provided in a markup language format. The status information can be embedded or included in the messages also in a markup language. As examples, the markup language include HTML, HDML, WML, XML, etc. The messages and/or status information can also be provided in a programming language format, such as JAVA or C.

Another application of the invention is in the medical area. For example, a patient carries a mobile communication device with a position detector. He is also carrying one or more status sensors that can sense, for example, his body temperature, blood pressure, blood sugar or glucose level, blood oxygen, spirometry, ECG, heart rate, arrhythmias, brain wave, other sound wave measurable by a stethoscope, and/or body fat. The sensors can be non-invasive or invasive. Also, the sensor(s) can be coupled to the device in a wireless or wired manner. Such status information can be transmitted upon his command. In one embodiment, a patient's mobile communication device sends a message ("Very tired.") to an emergency clinic. It is an enhanced message that includes some of the patient's status information, such as his physical location and blood sugar level. In response, a specialist at the clinic sends one or more messages back, instructing the patient how to care for himself and/or controlling the release of insulin into the patient. In the mean time, the specialist can dispatch an ambulance to pick him up.

A number of embodiments have been described based on text messages. The present invention is also applicable to other types of messages, such as voice messages. In one embodiment, the message is provided with a voice call, and the mobile communication device is a mobile telephone (e.g., cell phone).

Also, a number of embodiments have been described regarding a device sending information to another device. In one embodiment, a device can broadcast enhanced messages to many devices.

In yet another embodiment, communication among devices can be monitored and charged by a third party. For example, the user of a communicating device can be billed depending on the amount of enhanced messages he has been sending or the amount or degree of enhancement to messages. In one embodiment, both the recipient and the sender of the enhanced messages are billed. In another embodiment, the more types of status messages included, the higher the bill.

For example, enhanced messages with position, temperature and humidity information will cost more than enhanced messages with just position.

The various aspects can be used separately or in any combination.

The above-described system, methods and processes can be used together with other aspects of a monitoring system or mobile device, including the various aspects described in: (i) U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/444,198, filed Jan. 30, 2003, and entitled "SYSTEM, METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ACQUIRING, PRESENTING, MONITORING, DELIVERING, MANAGING AND USING STATUS INFORMATION," which is hereby incorporated herein by reference; (ii) U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/418,491, filed Oct. 15, 2002, and entitled "SYSTEM, METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ACQUIRING, PRESENTING, MONITORING, DELIVERING, MANAGING AND USING STATUS INFORMATION SYSTEM, METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ACQUIRING, PRESENTING, MANAGING AND USING POSITION INFORMATION," which is hereby incorporated herein by reference; (iii) U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/404,645, filed Aug. 19, 2002, and entitled "SYSTEM, METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ACQUIRING, PRESENTING, MONITORING, DELIVERING, MANAGING AND USING POSITION AND OTHER INFORMATION," which is hereby incorporated herein by reference; and (iv) U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/375,998, filed Apr. 24, 2002, and entitled "SYSTEM, METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ACQUIRING, PRESENTING, MANAGING AND USING POSITION INFORMATION," which is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

The invention can be implemented in software, hardware or a combination of hardware and software. The invention can also be embodied as computer readable code on a computer readable medium. The computer readable medium can be any data storage device that can store data which can thereafter be read by a computing device. Examples of the computer readable medium include read-only memory, random-access memory, CD-ROMs, magnetic tape, optical data storage devices, and carrier waves. The computer readable medium can also be distributed over network-coupled computer systems so that the computer readable code is stored and executed in a distributed fashion.

The advantages of the invention are numerous. Different embodiments or implementations may yield one or more of the following advantages. One advantage is that status information is able to be obtained easily while exchanging electronic messages or otherwise through use of electronic messages. Another advantage of the invention is that messages are able to be enhanced with status information acquired by sensors. Still another advantage of the invention is that it can operate in a point-to-point or centralized manner to gather and present status information between computing devices (e.g., mobile communication devices).

The many features and advantages of the present invention are apparent from the written description and, thus, it is intended by the appended claims to cover all such features and advantages of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation as illustrated and described. Hence, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to as falling within the scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A user communication system for communicating among users of mobile communication devices, said user communication system comprising:
 - 5 an electronic apparatus including at least one processor configured to execute non-transitory computer program code to provide communication between users of mobile communication devices, the computer program code including at least:
 - 10 computer program code for obtaining a message from a first mobile communication device to be delivered to a plurality of other mobile communication devices;
 - computer program code for acquiring status information of the first mobile communication device, the status information including at least position information associated with the first mobile communication device;
 - computer program code for determining whether the plurality of other mobile communication devices or users thereof are authorized to obtain the status information of the first mobile communication device; and
 - computer program code for initiating sending of the message along with the status information to each of the plurality of other mobile communication devices, provided that said computer program code for determining determines that the plurality of other mobile communication devices or users thereof are authorized to receive the status information of the first mobile communication device,
 - wherein the message is from a user of the first mobile communication device, and
 - wherein the message is distinct from the status information.
 2. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the computer program code further includes at least:
 - computer program code for modifying the message to enable displaying, at the plurality of other mobile communication devices, a graphical representation of the position information associated with the first mobile communication device.
 3. A user communication system as recited in claim 2, wherein the graphical representation of the position information associated with the first mobile communication device is configured to be displayed concurrently with the message.
 4. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein at least one of the other mobile communication devices receives the message and the status information provided with the message.
 5. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the status information is embedded in the message.
 6. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the computer program code further includes at least:
 - computer program code for augmenting the position information acquired from the first mobile communication device prior to sending such to the plurality of other mobile communication devices.
 7. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the computer program code further includes at least:
 - computer program code for modifying the status information to enable displaying, at the plurality of other mobile communication devices, a graphical representation of the position information associated with the first mobile communication device, and
 - wherein the status information being modified is modified at the electronic apparatus prior to sending of the mes-

15

sage along with the status information to the plurality of other mobile communication devices.

8. A user communication system as recited in claim 7, wherein the graphical representation of the position information associated with the first mobile communication device is configured to be displayed concurrently with the message at each of the plurality of other mobile communication devices.

9. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the status information being sent along with the message includes at least a graphical representation of at least the position information.

10. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the status information being sent along with the message includes at least a link that provides access to at least the position information.

11. A user communication system as recited in claim 10, wherein the link provides access to a graphical representation of at least the position information.

12. A user communication system as recited in claim 11, wherein, following selection of the link, the graphical representation of the position information associated with the first mobile communication device is configured to be displayed concurrently with the message at one or more of the plurality of other mobile communication devices.

13. A user communication system as recited in claim 11, wherein the link comprising a hyperlink.

14. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the computer program code for sending the message initiates sending of at least one SMS message to each of the plurality of other mobile communication devices, the at least one SMS message including at least the message and the status information.

15. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the computer program code for sending the message initiates sending of a single SMS message to each of the plurality of other mobile communication devices, the single SMS message including at least the message and the status information.

16. A user communication system as recited in claim 14, wherein the SMS message includes at least (i) text that was previously identified by the user, and (ii) the position information associated with the first mobile communication device.

17. A user communication system as recited in claim 16, wherein the computer program code further includes at least: computer program code for modifying the status information acquired from the first mobile communication device prior to sending such to the plurality of other mobile communication devices.

18. A user communication system as recited in claim 17, wherein the computer program code for modifying the status information produces modified status information that includes at least one presentation instruction.

19. A user communication system as recited in claim 18, wherein the at least one presentation instruction is provided at least in part in a markup language.

20. A user communication system as recited in claim 17, wherein the computer program code for modifying the status information produces modified status information that includes at least one link.

21. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the computer program code further includes at least: computer program code for augmenting the status information acquired from the first mobile communication device prior to sending such to the plurality of other mobile communication devices.

16

22. A user communication system as recited in claim 21, wherein the computer program code for augmenting the status information produces augmented status information that facilitates display of a graphical representation of the position information.

23. A user communication system as recited in claim 22, wherein at least a portion of the augmented status information is provided in a markup language.

24. A user communication system as recited in claim 22, wherein at least a portion of the augmented status information includes at least presentation instructions.

25. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the computer program code further includes at least: computer program code for modifying the position information acquired from the first mobile communication device prior to sending such to the plurality of other mobile communication devices.

26. A user communication system as recited in claim 25, wherein the computer program code for modifying the position information produces modified position information that includes at least one presentation instruction.

27. A user communication system as recited in claim 26, wherein the at least one presentation instruction is provided at least in part in a markup language.

28. A user communication system as recited in claim 25, wherein the computer program code for modifying the position information produces modified status information that includes at least one link.

29. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the computer program code further includes at least: computer program code for modifying the position information acquired from the first mobile communication device.

30. A user communication system as recited in claim 29, wherein the computer program code for modifying the position information produces modified position information based at least in part on a local network.

31. A user communication system as recited in claim 30, wherein the local network comprises a Wi-Fi network.

32. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the computer program code for acquiring the status information is configured to determine the position information based on location data supplied by a GPS receiver provided in the first mobile communication device.

33. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the computer program code for acquiring the status information is configured to determine the position information based on (i) location data supplied by a GPS receiver provided in the first mobile communication device, and (ii) other location data associated with a local network available for use by the first mobile communication device.

34. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the computer program code for acquiring the status information is configured to receive the position information from a GPS receiver in the first mobile communication device.

35. A user communication system as recited in claim 34, wherein the computer program code further includes at least:

computer program code for modifying the position information acquired from the first mobile communication device, and

wherein the computer program code for modifying the position information is configured to modify the position information from the GPS receiver.

17

36. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the computer program code includes:

computer program code for determining whether the user of the first mobile communication device has provided at least one indication, via the first mobile communication device, concerning whether the status information is to be provided with the message to be sent, and

wherein the computer program code for initiating sending of the message along with the status information to each of the plurality of other mobile communication devices does so in accordance with the at least one indication of the user of the first mobile communication device.

37. A user communication system as recited in claim 36, wherein the at least one indication is received at the first mobile communication device via a graphical user interface.

38. A user communication system as recited in claim 37, wherein the graphical user interface allows the user to indicate that at least a portion of the status information be provided with the message.

39. A user communication system as recited in claim 37, wherein the graphical user interface allows the user to direct that at least a portion of the status information not be provided with the message.

40. A user communication system as recited in claim 37, wherein the graphical user interface allows the user to generally indicate that at least a portion of the status information be provided with all messages to be sent by the user of the first mobile communication device.

41. A user communication system as recited in claim 36, wherein the status information to be provided with the message can be set at different levels as determined by the at least one indication.

42. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the status information to be provided with the message can be set at different levels.

43. A user communication system as recited in claim 1, wherein the message is a text message.

44. An electronic apparatus, comprising:

a computing device configured to execute computer program code to provide communication among users of mobile communication devices; and

a data storage device configured to store computer program code that is able to be executed by the computer device, the computer program code stored in the data storage device including at least:

computer program code for obtaining a message from a first mobile communication device to be delivered to a plurality of other mobile communication devices;

computer program code for acquiring status information of the first mobile communication device, the status information including at least position information associated with the first mobile communication device;

computer program code for determining whether the plurality of other mobile communication devices or users thereof are authorized to obtain the status information of the first mobile communication device; and

computer program code for initiating sending of the message along with the status information to each of the plurality of other mobile communication devices, provided that said computer program code for determining determines that the plurality of other mobile communication devices or users thereof are authorized to receive the status information of the first mobile communication device,

18

wherein the message is from a user of the first mobile communication device, and wherein the message is distinct from the status information.

45. An electronic apparatus as recited in claim 44, wherein the computer program code stored in the data storage device includes:

computer program code for receiving a message from another mobile communication device over a network;

computer program code for determining whether the received message includes at least status information;

computer program code for extracting the status information from the received message when said computer program code for determining determines that the received message includes at least the status information; and

computer program code for displaying the received message and at least one representation of the status information on the display when said computer program code for determining determines that the received message includes at least the status information.

46. A non-transitory computer readable medium including at least computer program code to facilitate communication among users of mobile electronic devices, said computer readable medium comprising:

computer program code for receiving a message via the first mobile electronic device to be delivered to a plurality of other mobile electronic devices;

computer program code for acquiring status information of the first mobile electronic device, the status information including at least position information associated with the first mobile electronic device;

computer program code for determining whether the plurality of other mobile electronic devices or users thereof are authorized to obtain the status information of the first mobile electronic device; and

computer program code for initiating sending of the message along with the status information to each of the plurality of other mobile electronic devices via a wireless network, provided that said computer program code for determining determines that the plurality of other mobile electronic devices or users thereof are authorized to receive the status information of the first mobile electronic device,

wherein the message is different from the status information.

47. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 46, wherein said computer readable medium comprises:

computer program code for modifying the status information acquired from the first mobile communication device prior to said computer program code for initiating sending acting to initiate sending such to the plurality of other mobile communication devices.

48. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 47, wherein the computer program code for modifying the status information produces modified status information that includes at least one presentation instruction.

49. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 48, wherein the at least one presentation instruction is provided at least in part in a markup language.

50. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 47, wherein the computer program code for modifying the status information produces modified status information that includes at least one link.

51. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 46, wherein said computer readable medium comprises:

- computer program code for receiving a message from another mobile electronic device via the wireless network;
- computer program code for determining whether the received message includes at least status information;
- computer program code for extracting the status information from the received message when said computer program code for determining determines that the message includes at least the status information; and
- computer program code for displaying the received message and at least one representation of the status information on the display when said computer program code for determining determines that the received message includes at least the status information.

52. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 46, wherein said computer readable medium comprises:

- computer program code for augmenting the status information acquired from the first mobile communication device prior to sending such to the plurality of other mobile communication devices.

53. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 52, wherein the computer program code for augmenting the status information produces augmented status information that facilitates display of a graphical representation of the position information.

54. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 53, wherein at least a portion of the augmented status information is provided in a markup language.

55. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 53, wherein at least a portion of the augmented status information includes at least presentation instructions.

56. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 46, wherein said computer readable medium comprises:

- computer program code for modifying the position information acquired from the first mobile communication device.

57. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 56, wherein the computer program code for modifying the position information produces modified position information based at least in part on a local network.

58. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 57, wherein the local network comprises a Wi-Fi network.

59. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 46, wherein the computer program code for acquiring the status information is configured to determine the position information based on location data supplied by a GPS receiver provided in the first mobile communication device.

60. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 46, wherein the computer program code for acquiring the status information is configured to determine the position information based on (i) location data supplied by a GPS receiver provided in the first mobile communication device, and (ii) other location data associated with a local network available for use by the first mobile communication device.

61. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 46, wherein the computer program code for acquiring the status information is configured to receive the position information from a GPS receiver provided in the first mobile communication device.

62. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 61,

- wherein said computer readable medium comprises:
 - computer program code for modifying the position information acquired from the first mobile communication device, and

wherein the computer program code for modifying the position information is configured to modify the position information from the GPS receiver.

63. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 46,

- wherein said computer readable medium comprises:
 - computer program code for determining whether the user of the first mobile communication device has provided at least one direction, via the first mobile communication device, concerning whether the status information is to be provided with the message to be sent, and

wherein the computer program code for initiating sending of the message along with the status information to each of the plurality of other mobile communication devices does so in accordance with the at least one direction of the user of the first mobile communication device.

64. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 63, wherein the at least one direction is received at the first mobile communication device via a graphical user interface.

65. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 64, wherein the graphical user interface allows the user to direct that at least a portion of the status information be provided with the message.

66. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 64, wherein the graphical user interface allows the user to direct that at least a portion of the status information not be provided with the message.

67. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 64, wherein the graphical user interface allows the user to generally direct that at least a portion of the status information be provided with all messages to be sent by the user of the first mobile communication device.

68. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 63, wherein the status information to be provided with the message can be set at different levels as determined by the at least one direction.

69. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 46, wherein the status information for inclusion with a message can be set at different levels.

70. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 46, wherein the message is a text message.

71. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 64,

- wherein said computer program code for initiating sending of the message along with the status information to each of the plurality of other mobile electronic devices via a wireless network operates to include the status information with the message, provided that said computer program code for determining determines that the plurality of other mobile electronic devices or users thereof are authorized to receive the status information of the first mobile electronic device,

wherein the graphical user interface allows the user to direct that at least a portion of the status information be included or not included with the message, and wherein the message is a text message.

21

72. A non-transitory computer readable medium as recited in claim 64,

wherein said computer program code for initiating sending of the message along with the status information to each of the plurality of other mobile electronic devices via a wireless network operates to include the status information with the message, provided that said computer program code for determining determines that the plurality of other mobile electronic devices or users thereof are

22

authorized to receive the status information of the first mobile electronic device,
wherein the graphical user interface allows the user to generally direct that at least a portion of the status information be included with all messages to be sent by the user of the first mobile communication device, and wherein the messages are text messages.

* * * * *