11. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the transmitting means (292, 294, 296) includes means for transmitting the signal to a plurality of selectable satellite transponders and wherein the apparatus is further characterized by means for grouping television programs into separate groups for transmission over selected transponders.

12. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the transmitting means (292, 294, 296) includes means for transmitting the signal to a plurality of selectable satellites and the apparatus is further characterized by means for grouping television programs into separate groups for transmission to different geographical regions.

13. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the database means (268) includes a plurality of databases and wherein the apparatus is further characterized by processing means for accessing the databases and processing the information therein to provide the requisite program control information signal, the databases including information concerning each scheduled Program, records representing the source from which each television program was obtained, optional display services available, available previews of television programs, program categories for each television program to be transmitted and price categories for each television program to be transmitted.

14. The apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein the database means (268) includes a plurality of databases, each database composed of multiple related sets of data, and wherein the apparatus is further characterized by processing means for accessing the databases and processing the information therein and management means for determining how to operate the apparatus so that it provides the requisite control information signal, the databases including:

means for storing information about each destination to which the apparatus transmits;

means for storing information about rights in or ownership in each program source;

means for storing information about price, promotion and packaging of each program broadcast;

means for storing information about the storage location of each internally stored program; and

means for storing information about marketing and customer.

15. The apparatus of claim 1 modified in that:

the apparatus is further characterized by an internal collection means, connected to the receiving means (272), for gathering television programs from internal sources and feeding the television programs from internal sources to the reception port;

the generation means (264) and the input means (262) are part of a packaging means for creating program control information and for packaging television programs using the program control information, the packaging means including:

the central processing unit (264);

the input means (262) which includes an interface, connected to the central processing unit (264), to enable the program packager to enter program line-up information, wherein the interface is operably connected to the central processing unit (264);

a storage means, connected to the central processing unit (264), for storing the entered program line-up information;

logic means (264), connected to the central processing unit (264), for arranging the stored program line-up information and for creating program control information; and

means (264), connected to the logic means (264), for generating a program control information signal (276) from the program control information;

the combining means (270) combines the set of television programs identified in the program control information signal (276) with the program control information signal(276) to create a combined signal, wherein the combining means includes a delivery control processor (270);

the multiplexing means (290) multiplexes the combined signal; and

the transmission means (292, 294, 296), transmits the combined signal.

16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein

the packaging means includes means for generating menu configurations (324); and

the packaging means generates the program control information using the menu configurations.

17. The apparatus of claim 15 further characterized by:

means (264) for receiving unique cable franchise control information from cable franchises;

means (269, 328), connected to the receiving means (264), for storing the unique cable franchise control information, the storing means includes the cable franchise configuration database (328); and

wherein the generating means (264), connected to the storing means (328) comprises means for including the unique cable franchise control information signal in the generated program control information signal.

18. A method for delivering televisions programs in a television program delivery system characterized by the steps of:

(a) receiving (272) a plurality of television programs in analog or digital format, each having video and audio components;

(b) supplying (262) information about the received television programs, including information on the identities of the received television programs;

(c) storing (268) information supplied about the received television programs for use in the steps of delivering the received television programs;

(d) creating (400, 316, 318, 342) a plurality of program line-ups that identify received television programs using the stored information about the received television programs;

(e) generating (326, 442) a program control information signal (276) using one or more of the created program line-ups;

(f) preparing (332, 334) the program control information signal (276) and a plurality of the television programs identified in the program control information signal for transmission; and

(g) transmitting (292, 294, 296) the prepared program control information signal (276) and the prepared television programs for redistribution to subscriber locations, whereby, the prepared and transmitted television programs may be viewed by a subscriber.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein the preparing step includes a method of transmitting a plurality of programs to a cable headend (208), each of the plurality of programs corresponding to one of a plurality of genre categories, the transmitting including the steps of:

prioritizing (400) each of the programs by assigning to each of the programs one of a plurality of priority levels, the plurality of priority levels including a high priority level and progressively lower priority levels;

forming (400) a plurality of signals, each of the signals including programs corresponding to a single priority level;

appending (320) a header to each of the signals, wherein the header identifies the priority level for a corresponding signal, thereby enabling recognition by the cable headend; and

transmitting (292, 294, 296) each of the headers and the corresponding signals to the cable headend (208).

20. The method of claim 18, wherein the preparing step includes a method of transmitting programs to a plurality of transponders, the method including the steps of:

prioritizing (400) each of the programs by assigning to each of the programs one of a plurality of priority levels, the plurality of priority levels including a high priority level and progressively lower priority levels;

forming (400) a plurality of signals, each of the signals including programs corresponding to a single priority level; and

transmitting (292, 294, 296) the plurality of signals to the plurality of transponders so that none of the transponders receives more than one of the signals.

21. The method of claim 20 further including the step of dynamically changing bandwidth allocation for at least one of the plurality of categories.

22. The method of claim 18 wherein the preparing step includes a method of transmitting a plurality of programs in a first amount of bandwidth for reception by a first cable headend (208), and in a second amount of bandwidth which is less than the first amount of bandwidth for a second cable headend (208), the method including the steps of:

prioritizing (400) each of the programs by assigning to each of the programs one of a plurality of priority levels, the plurality of priority levels including a high priority level and progressively lower priority levels;

dividing (320) the first amount of bandwidth so that each program category receives a portion of the first amount of bandwidth;

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