PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT COVER SHEET

This is a request for filing a **PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT** under 37 C.F.R. § 1.53(c).

		Docket Number	26006.0001	Type a Plus Sign (+) inside this box → → → →	+
INVENTOR(s)/APPLICANT(s)					
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TITLE OF INVENTION (280 characters max)

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR DISTRIBUTING MEDIA ASSETS TO USER DEVICES AND MANAGING USER RIGHTS OF THE MEDIA ASSETS

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ENCLOSED APPLICATION PARTS (*Check All That Apply*)

[X]   Specification   *Number of Pages*   **[5]**

[X]   Drawing(s)   *Number of Sheets*   **[6]**

[]   Small Entity Statement

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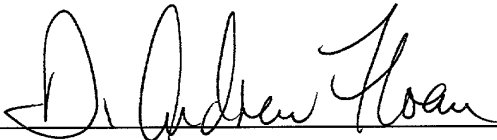| METHOD PAYMENT OF FILING FEES FOR THIS PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT (*Check One*)		
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_____

Respectfully submitted,

SIGNATURE ___D. Andrew Floam___ Date __10/5/99__

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                                                          (*If Appropriate*)

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SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR DISTRIBUTING MEDIA ASSETS TO USER DEVICES AND MANAGING USER RIGHTS OF THE MEDIA ASSETS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In a connected world where multiple infotainment devices exist to play back multimedia assets, it is imperative that a method exists to allow for the portability of those assets across different machines. The invention is directed to a method of and system for distributing and accessing multimedia assets in a connected environment where the source of the assets (i.e., a server), the consumer, and the retail vendor are all connected to a common communications network. The consumer, via a client system, will connect to the source of the assets, which will transfer an electronic "object" of multimedia content to the consumer/client.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is an overall block diagram of the system according to the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram depicting the interaction of various software components in the system.

FIG. 3 is a block diagram depicting the flow of media asset data according to the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a diagram showing the virtual media asset library according to an aspect of the invention.

FIG. 5 is a diagram showing the interaction or alliance of various parties for the media asset distribution system of the present invention.

FIG. 6 is an example of a world wide web page showing how rights to a media asset are purchased over the Internet according to the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Reference is made to FIGs. 1-6 in conjunction with the following description. Within this invention, system, or method, there are several components:

1) <u>Client Multimedia Player</u>. Software technology that can run on various multimedia computer devices and is capable of decrypting, decoding, and playing a multimedia object based on its embedded security features and rights management rules. The Client Multimedia Player will run on a variety of devices, including home consumer

electronics devices, portable devices, computers, car entertainment devices, PDAs, mobile communications devices, and Internet browsers.

2) <u>Member</u>. Anyone who is enrolled within the network system for virtual distribution of his or her assets. (Each Member will have his or her own security password for system access.)

3) <u>Member Family</u>. A group of individuals that has been assigned the rights to act on a Member's behalf in accessing and utilizing the Member's multimedia assets within the virtual distribution network.

4) <u>User</u>. Persons that will use a Client Multimedia Player from within any particular Member Family. These Users will have varying levels of access and privileges to those multimedia assets housed within the invented system. (For example, an adult User might have access to certain "R" rated films, while a child User might have access to only "G" rated films.)

5) <u>Master Database Server</u>. A server or group of servers that functions to allow for the storage and download of "rented" or "purchased" assets by Members of the network. This server will function to allow for synchronization and replication of a Member's assets between the Member's various Client Multimedia Players and itself. This server also will serve as a central repository within which multimedia assets will be "tagged" with the identity and access privileges of those Members (and Users within a Member Family) that possess ownership rights in the multimedia assets.

6) <u>Multimedia Object</u>. An element of reference for a Member's Client Multimedia Players and the Master Database Server. This Multimedia Object can be representative of a song, video clip, movie, a television program, interactive animation, or any other data type that can be stored in a binary fashion within a modern database. The Multimedia Object shall be protected, where applicable, from piracy by the use of various methods, including encryption and watermarking.

As a base premise, the consumer becomes a Member of a networked system, under which his or her identity will be initialized, and he or she will be issued a Member-specific password. Once a membership exists, a virtual private database of Multimedia Objects will be created and associated with the Member's login account and password. The Member's database will represent an intersection of the Main Database Server's multimedia assets and those assets with respect to which the Member possesses ownership rights.

It is also a premise that the Main Database Server will be an ever-growing storage mechanism for multimedia assets, a subset of which will correspond to each Member's virtual private databases of multimedia assets with respect to which the Member possesses some form of ownership rights. For ease of discussion heretofore, the terms "rental" and "purchase" of the intangible multimedia assets maintained within the Main Database Server have been used to provide an analogy to the consumer's experience in

the bricks and mortar world of today. In reality, the Member's rights with respect to the multimedia assets contained within the Main Database Server will be either limited term, non-exclusive licensing rights (corresponding, for example, to a two-day movie rental in the bricks and mortar world) or indefinite, non-exclusive licensing rights (corresponding, for example, to a CD purchase in the bricks and mortar world). The system will use a series of rights management rules that will be associated with each Member's tagged assets to limit the Member's access to his or her assets to only those periods to which the Member's license of those assets applies. Depending upon the specific licensing arrangement between a multimedia asset owner and the Member, the rights management rules can provide for a limited number of plays of a particular asset, a limited number of days during which the asset can be played, or a limited number of other individuals with which the Member may share the asset.

The network will permit Members to download their licensed multimedia assets to secure Client Multimedia Players installed within various infotainment devices and to play back their licensed multimedia assets on those devices. As with the physical use of a CD in the bricks and mortar world, a User will have the right to transport and copy his or her licensed assets to other infotainment devices that he or she owns or uses, provided those devices are registered within the network system as being permitted to play back the User's licensed assets. The media industry has mandated that distribution of artists' intellectual property must be protected from piracy in order for the industry to adopt Internet-based distribution methods. With this said, the invention allows for security against asset piracy via three methods: watermarking; encryption; and object encapsulation. Moreover, as discussed above, the invention includes rights management information within the Multimedia Objects to allow for User playback based on pre-negotiated rules.

With the invention, a multimedia asset will be encrypted for general protection when the asset is first entered as an object within the Master Database Server. Upon the request for download by a Member, the multimedia asset will be watermarked to coincide with the serial number of the Member's family of Client Multimedia Players. Each Client Multimedia Player that the Member owns shall become a licensed playback device for his or her registered multimedia assets. For example, if a member owns five Client Multimedia Players capable of running the defined security and playback engine, the invention will allow him or her to transport his or her multimedia assets from one Client Multimedia Player to another in seamless fashion. This example illustrates a capability of the invention to move or copy an asset from any home, car, portable, computer, or other browser-based computing device. Each Client Multimedia Player will have a protection key that is capable of decrypting and executing the object that has been downloaded to the player. Each Client Multimedia Player device key will be unique, but will have some level of identity with the other Client Multimedia Player devices used by the Member Family. From an auditing and security standpoint, each Client Multimedia Player will maintain a log of its playback activity for purposes of reconciliation with the Master Database Server. From the point of multimedia asset download forward, the asset will be associated with and licensed to the Member Family's Client Multimedia Players.

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