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Merritt et al.

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(54) **NETWORK-BASED SYSTEM ENABLING IMAGE COMMUNICATIONS**

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patent is extended or adjusted under 35
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Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 08/636,200, filed on
Apr. 22, 1996, now abandoned, which is a continuation of
application No. 08/175,022, filed on Dec. 2, 1993, now
abandoned.

(51) **Int. Cl.**⁷ **H04M 11/00**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **379/93.17; 379/93.15;**
379/100.13

(58) **Field of Search** **379/93.15, 100.13,**
379/88.13, 88.14, 100.08, 100.09, 93.08;
707/523, 526

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A system is disclosed which enables a multitude of dissimilar end-system devices, appliances, and platforms to interchange image information. The inventive method utilizes a directory database of end-user profiles, a session manager, a conversion manager, individual conversation processors, a queuing database, and a store-and-forward file-folder database. The system accommodates pre-subscribed end-users as well as non-subscription users. The system handles both real-time and store-and-forward communications modes. The present invention may be practiced as either a one-node or a multi-node distributed architecture, scalable as required, and may be either network-based or premises-based, or a hybrid combination of these. Communications transport both into and out of the node(s) can range from voiceband telephone on analog circuits to high speed channel or fact-packet protocol communications modes.

25 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets

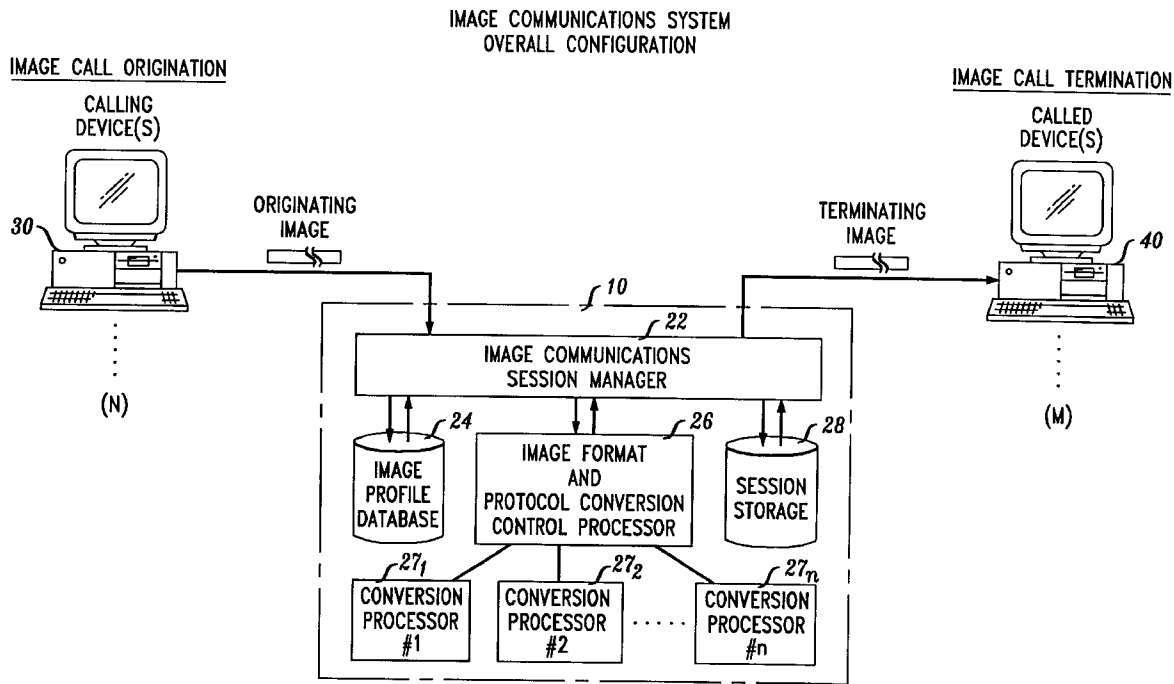


FIG. 1A
NETWORK-BASED IMAGE PROTOCOL
AND
FILE FORMAT DATABASE

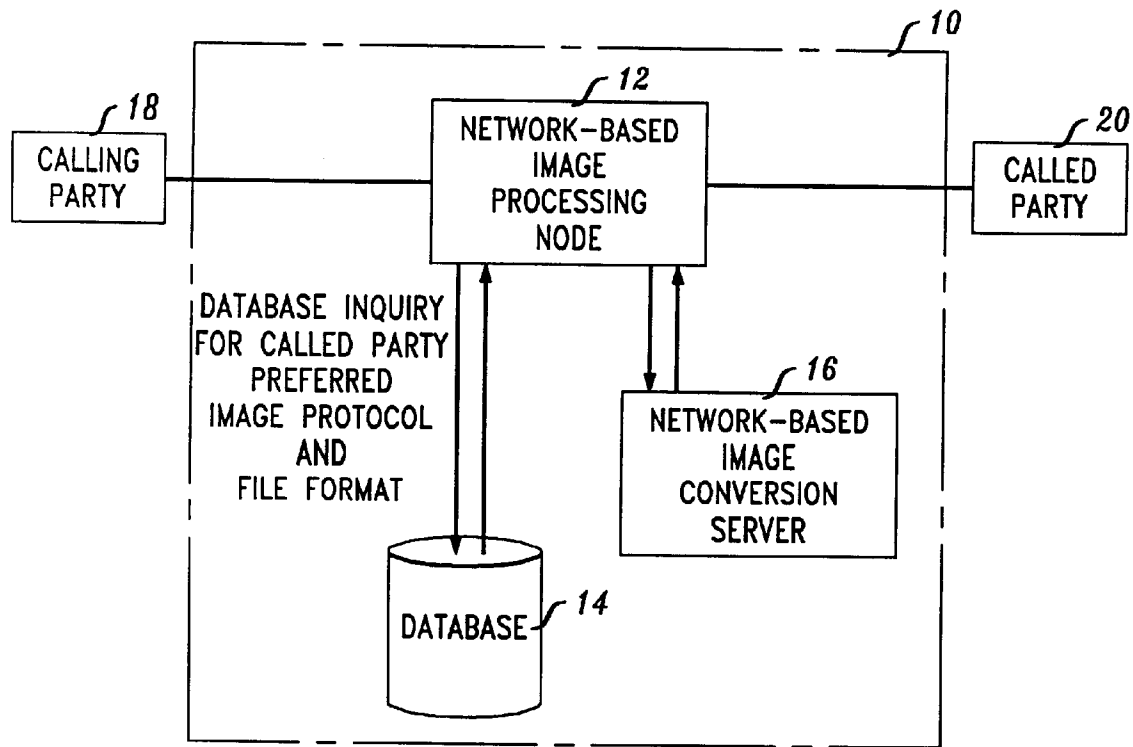


FIG. 1B

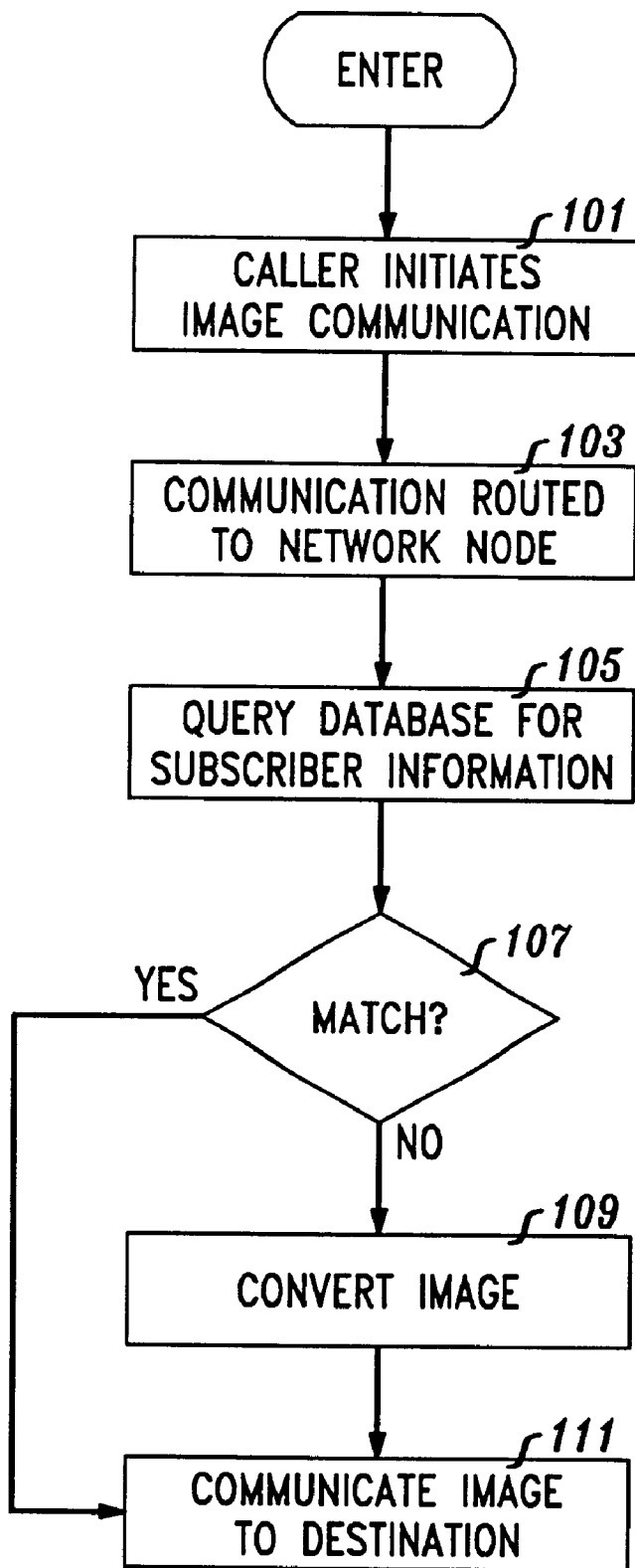


FIG. 2

IMAGE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM
OVERALL CONFIGURATION

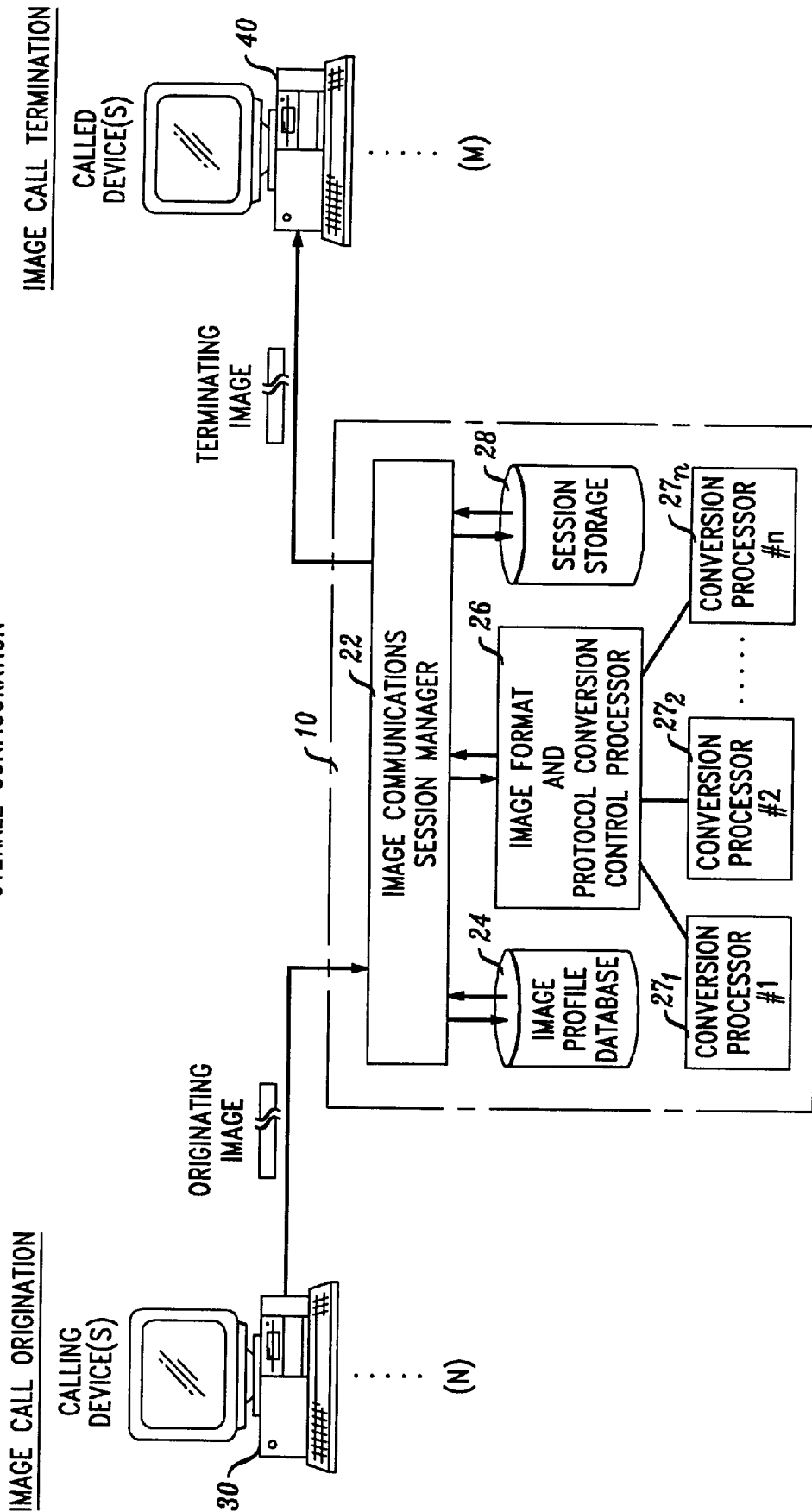
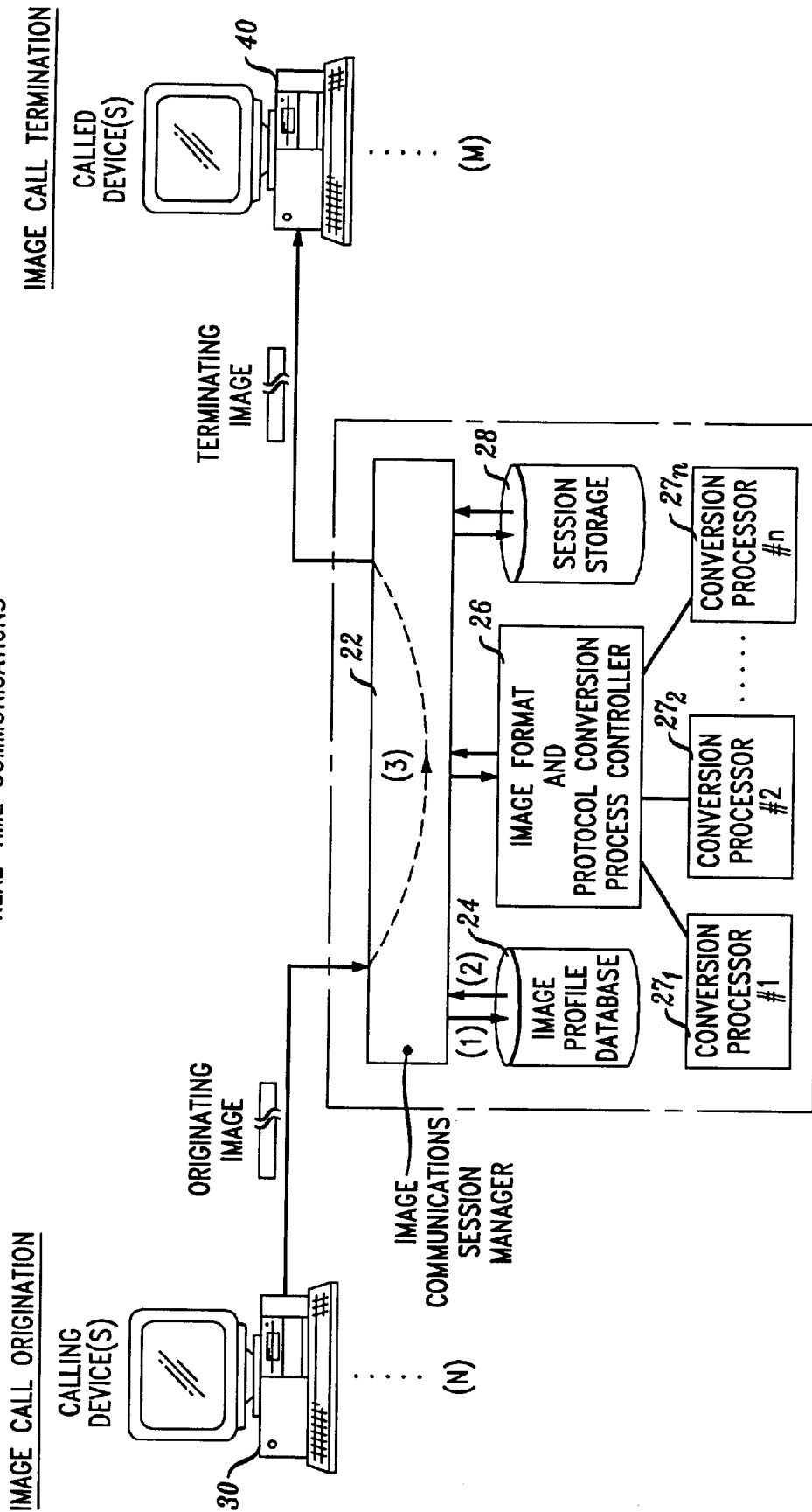


FIG. 3A

IMAGE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM
CASE 1: CALLING SUBSCRIBER WITH IMAGE FILE MATCH
AND
REAL-TIME COMMUNICATIONS



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