

(12) **United States Patent**
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
 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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Related U.S. Application Data

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 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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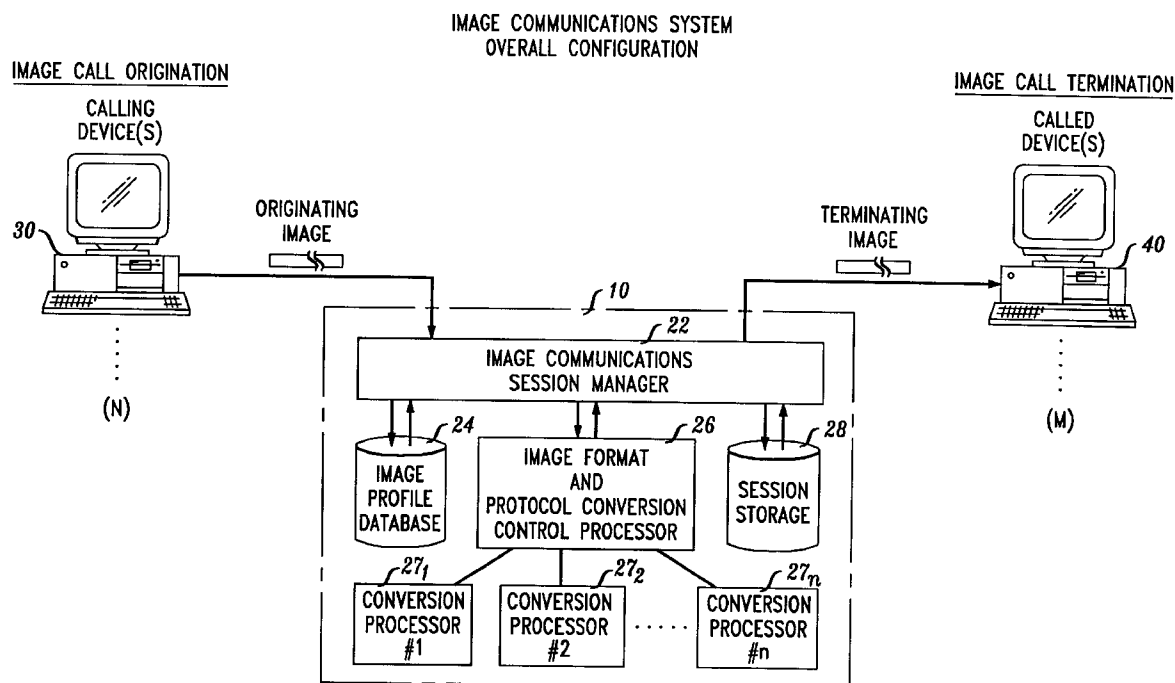
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(57) ABSTRACT

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



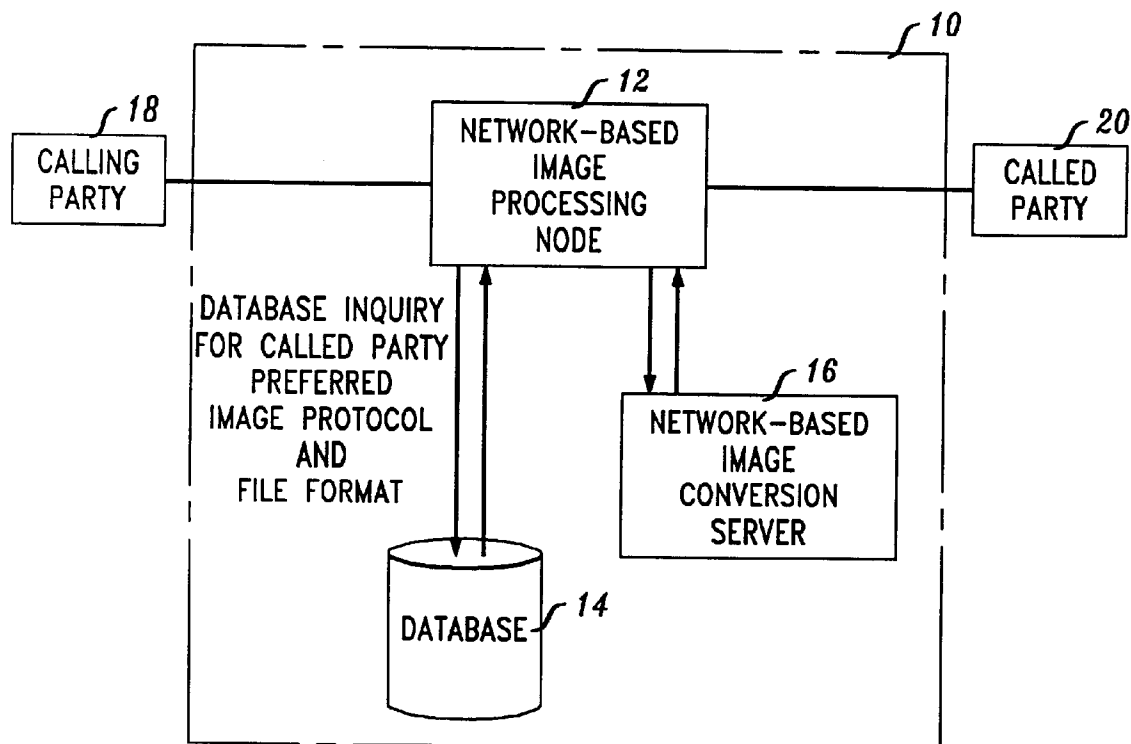
*FIG. 1A*NETWORK-BASED IMAGE PROTOCOL
AND
FILE FORMAT DATABASE

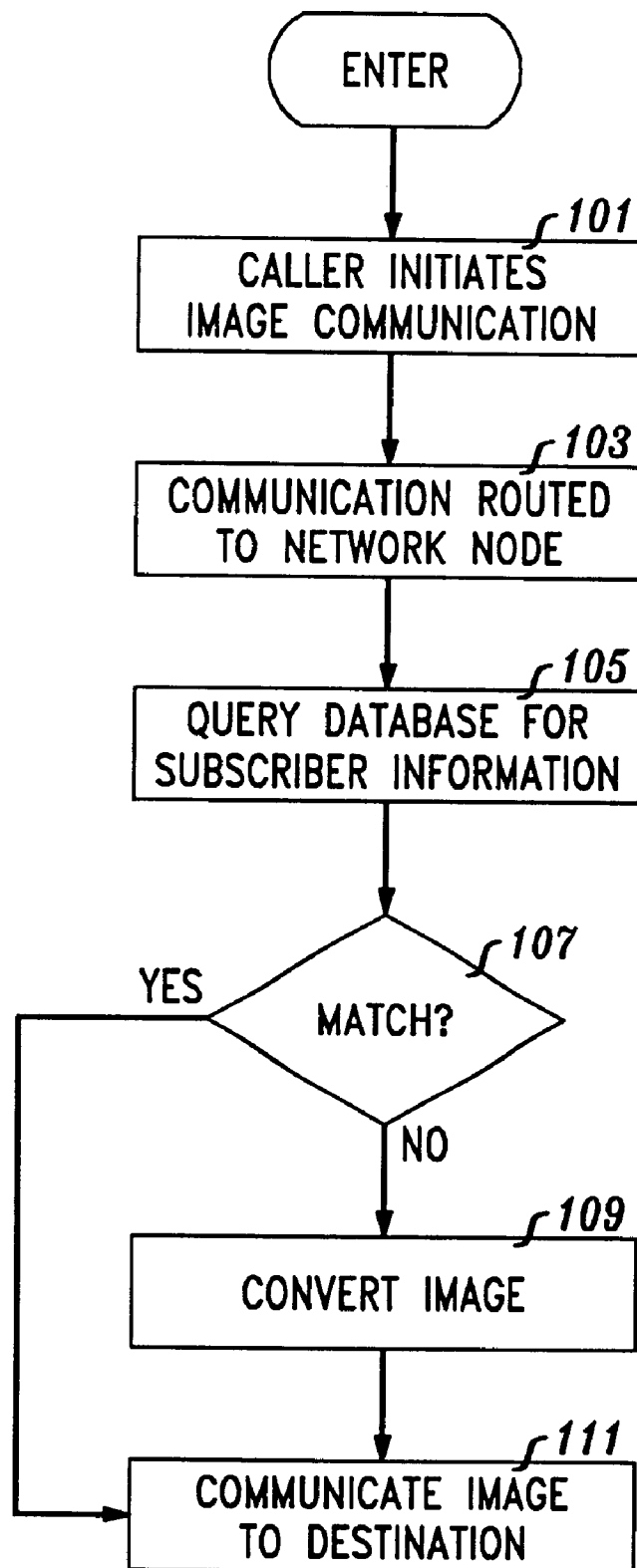
FIG. 1B

FIG. 2

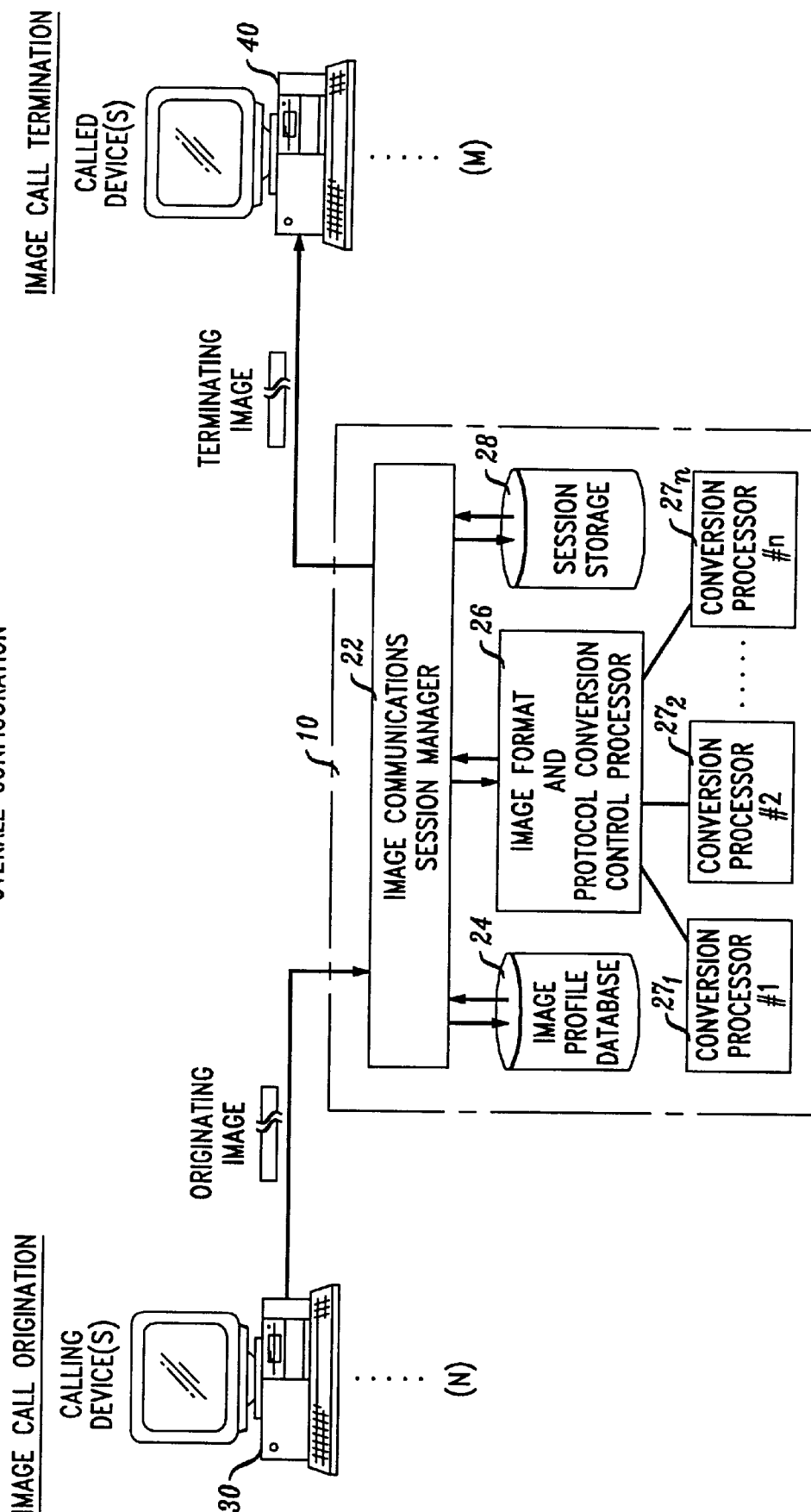
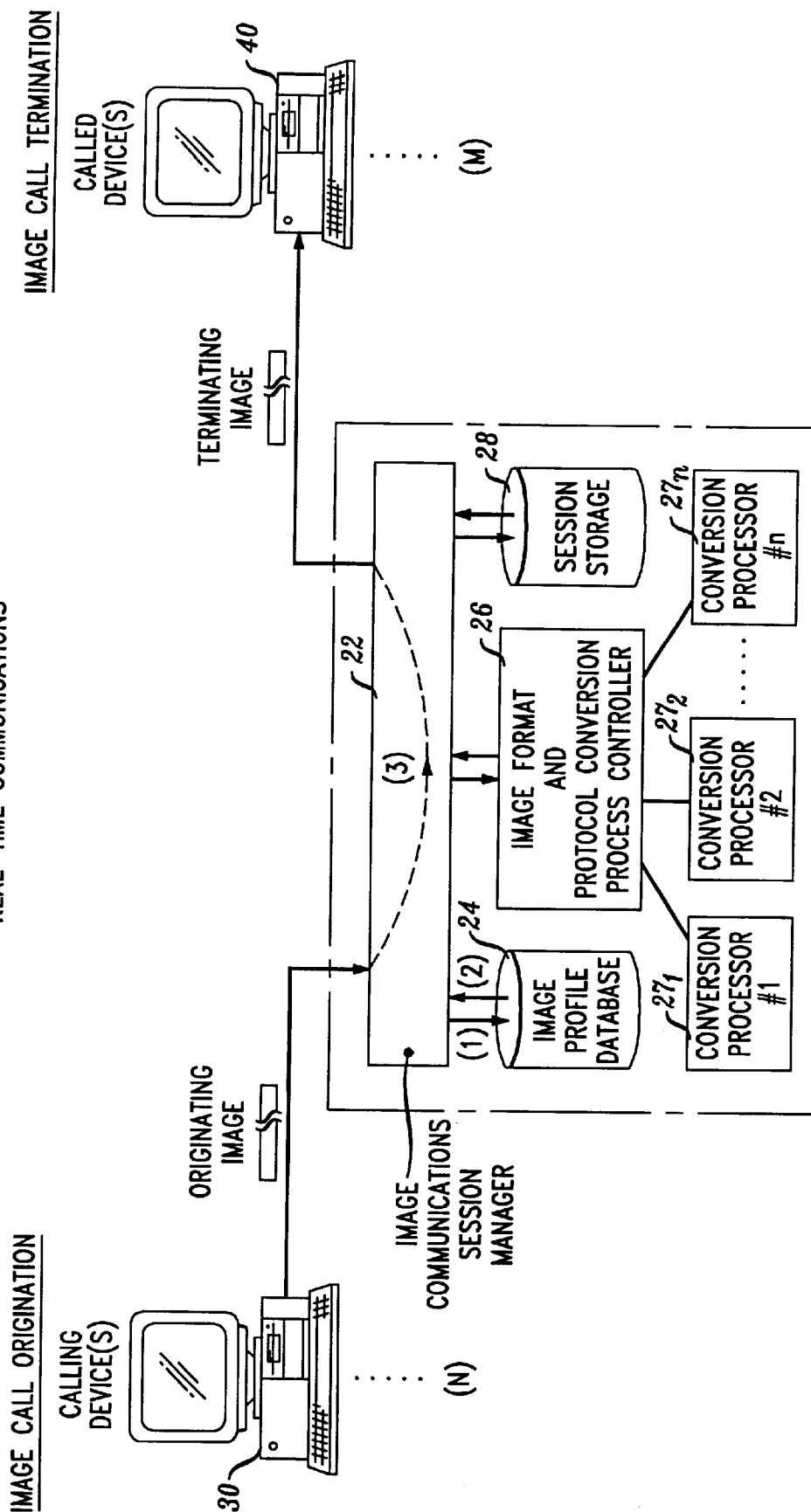
IMAGE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM
OVERALL CONFIGURATION

FIG. 3A

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



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