



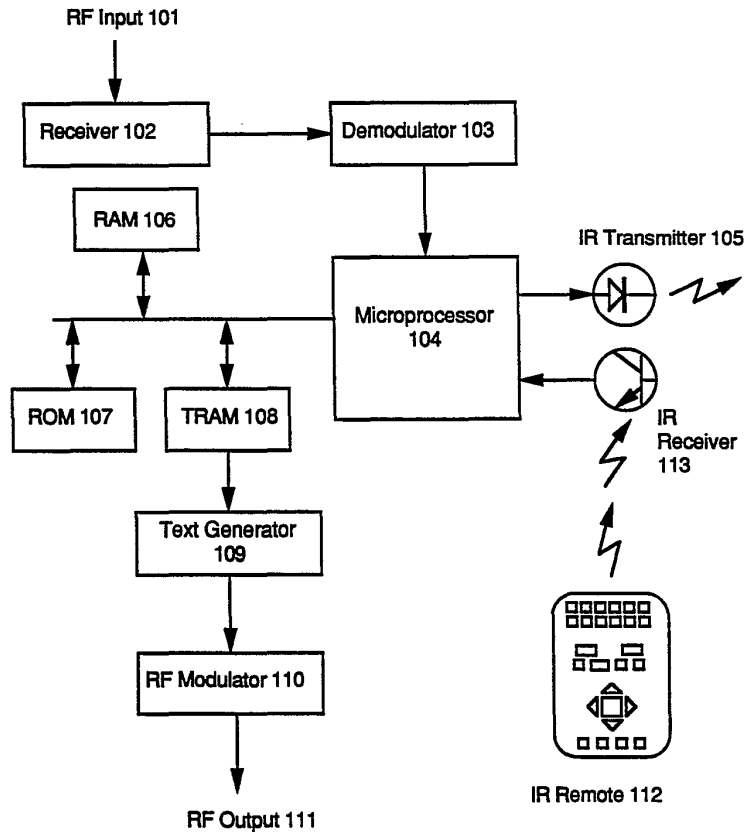
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(54) Title: TELEVISION PROGRAM SELECTION

(57) Abstract

A signal representative of a television program guide and a signal indicating which program is currently being received are received at the point of reception of a television program signal. The program guide signal is used to cause a program guide to be displayed on a television screen. A viewer selects one or more programs to be recorded or viewed from the displayed guide. While the received program indicating signal indicates that the program currently being received is one of the selected programs, recording or viewing of the program is enabled. A further extension of the invention causes the name of a television program to be recorded on a video recording along with the program so that on replay the recording can readily be identified.



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TELEVISION PROGRAM SELECTION

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TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to means for and methods of controlling video appliances, such as video cassette recorders or television receivers, so that selected television programs are viewed or recorded.

BACKGROUND ART

With the increasing use of video cassette recorders (VCRs) in the home, VCRs are being increasingly used for recording broadcast programs for later replay and viewing. Many VCRs are equipped with timing means for starting and stopping recording of programs at times selected by the user. To take advantage of this ability, the user must consult a television schedule, select the programs to be recorded, and enter into the VCR's memory the start time and end time or duration of the selected programs, and channel to be recorded. In some cases this process can be complicated and error-prone. There is a great need for convenient ways of selecting programs to be recorded.

In an attempt to address this problem, some manufacturers have equipped VCRs with bar-code reading wands. Users can pass the wand over a bar-code printed on the television schedule which identifies the channel and time of the selected program. This information is used to set the timing means of the VCR. Another variation on this concept involves use of a sheet of times, dates and channels bearing the associated bar codes. In this case, the user must scan the appropriate bar code on this sheet for time, date and channel corresponding to programs selected for recording.

While these prior-art schemes have somewhat alleviated the difficulties, programming VCRs for recording is still error prone and inconvenient. Attempts have been made to provide improved programming by providing a device which accepts a machine-readable version of the television schedule via the medium of

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magnetic card, tape or similar means, the user being then offered a display of available programs from which to select. Although this arrangement does represent an improvement over prior schemes, it suffers the disadvantage that the user must obtain the medium on
5 which the schedule is distributed, which may be inconvenient. The media cost and cost of the reading device is also considerable. Another shortcoming of prior-art schemes is that they rely on time-of-day information for starting and stopping recording, with the result that unwanted material can be recorded, or part of the
10 wanted program missed, in cases where actual broadcast times differ from scheduled times. It is also not possible using such schemes to control recording with great precision, with the result that selective recording, as required for example for eliminating advertisements from recordings, is not possible.

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DISCLOSURE OF INVENTION

The present invention is directed towards providing new and useful alternatives to known arrangements for controlling video
20 appliances so that selected programs can be viewed or recorded. As well as making selection simple, fast and accurate, the present invention offers a number of other benefits not hitherto obtainable.

According to the present invention there is provided a method of selecting television programs to be recorded including the steps of
25 receiving a first signal conveying data representative of a television programming schedule, decoding said received signals, displaying the resulting decoded schedule information, selecting one or more of programs displayed in said schedule as programs to be recorded, receiving a second signal identifying for each television channel the
30 program being currently broadcast, decoding said second signal, and controlling recording of the selected programs according to the selection from the schedule and the content of said decoded second signal.

According to another aspect of the present invention there is
35 provided a method of selecting television programs to be viewed including the steps of receiving a first signal conveying data representative of a television programming schedule, decoding said received signals, displaying the resulting decoded schedule

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information, identifying a number of programs displayed in said schedule as programs to be recorded, receiving a second signal identifying for each television channel the program being currently broadcast, decoding said second signal, and enabling viewing of the selected programs according to the programs selected from the schedule as those to be viewed and the content of said decoded second signal.

According to another useful extension of this inventive concept, there is provided a television program recording identifying method comprising the steps of receiving a first signal representative of the name of a television program being broadcast, receiving a second signal being a television broadcast, and recording said first signal while simultaneously recording said second signal.

In another aspect, the invention consists in a television program recording selector including a receiver adapted to receive a first signal conveying data representative of a television programming schedule, means to decode said received signals, means for displaying the resulting decoded schedule information, means for selecting a number of programs displayed in said schedule as programs to be recorded, means for receiving a second signal identifying for each television channel the program being currently broadcast, means for decoding said second signal, and means for controlling recording of the selected programs according to the programs identified as those to be recorded and the content of said decoded second signal.

In another aspect, the invention consists in a television program viewing selector including a receiver adapted to receive a first signal conveying data representative of a television programming schedule, means to decode said received signal, means for displaying the resulting decoded schedule information, means for selecting a number of programs displayed in said schedule as programs to be viewed, means for receiving a second signal identifying for each television channel the program being currently broadcast, means for decoding said second signal, and means for controlling viewing of the identified programs according to the programs selected as those to be viewed and the content of said decoded second signal.

According to another useful extension of this inventive concept, there is provided a television program recorder comprising means

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