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(54) **AUDIO PROGRAM PLAYER INCLUDING A DYNAMIC PROGRAM SELECTION CONTROLLER**

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **707/501**; 434/319; 434/320
(58) **Field of Search** 707/501, 513; 434/10, 308, 318, 319, 320, 185, 156; 704/270, 278; 345/328–335, 356–357

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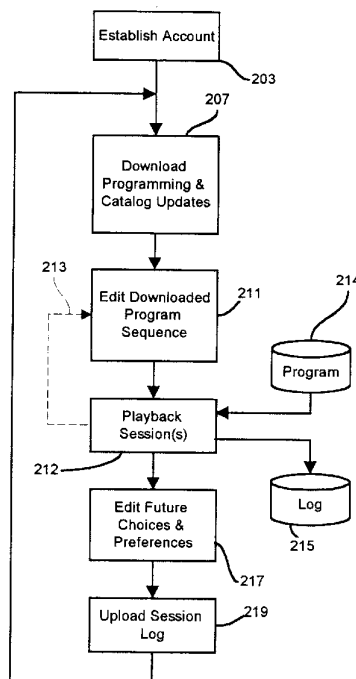5,810,600 * 9/1998 Okada 434/185

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An audio program and message distribution system in which a host system organizes and transmits program segments to client subscriber locations. The host organizes the program segments by subject matter and creates scheduled programming in accordance with preferences associated with each subscriber. Program segments are associated with descriptive subject matter segments, and the subject matter segments may be used to generate both text and audio cataloging presentations to enable the user to more easily identify and select desirable programming. A playback unit at the subscriber location reproduces the program segments received from the host and includes mechanisms for interactively navigating among the program segments. A usage log is compiled to record the subscriber's use of the provided program materials, to return data to the host for billing, to adaptively modify the subscriber's preferences based on actual usage, and to send subscriber-generated comments and requests to the host for processing. Voice input and control mechanisms included in the player allow the user to perform hands-free navigation of the program materials and to dictate comments and messages which are returned to the host for retransmission to other subscribers. The program segments sent to each subscriber may include advertising materials which the user can selectively play to obtain credits against the subscriber fee. Parallel audio and text transcript files for at least selected programming enable subject matter searching and synchronization of the audio and text files. Speech synthesis may be used to convert transcript files into audio format. Image files may also be transmitted from the server for synchronized playback with the audio programming.
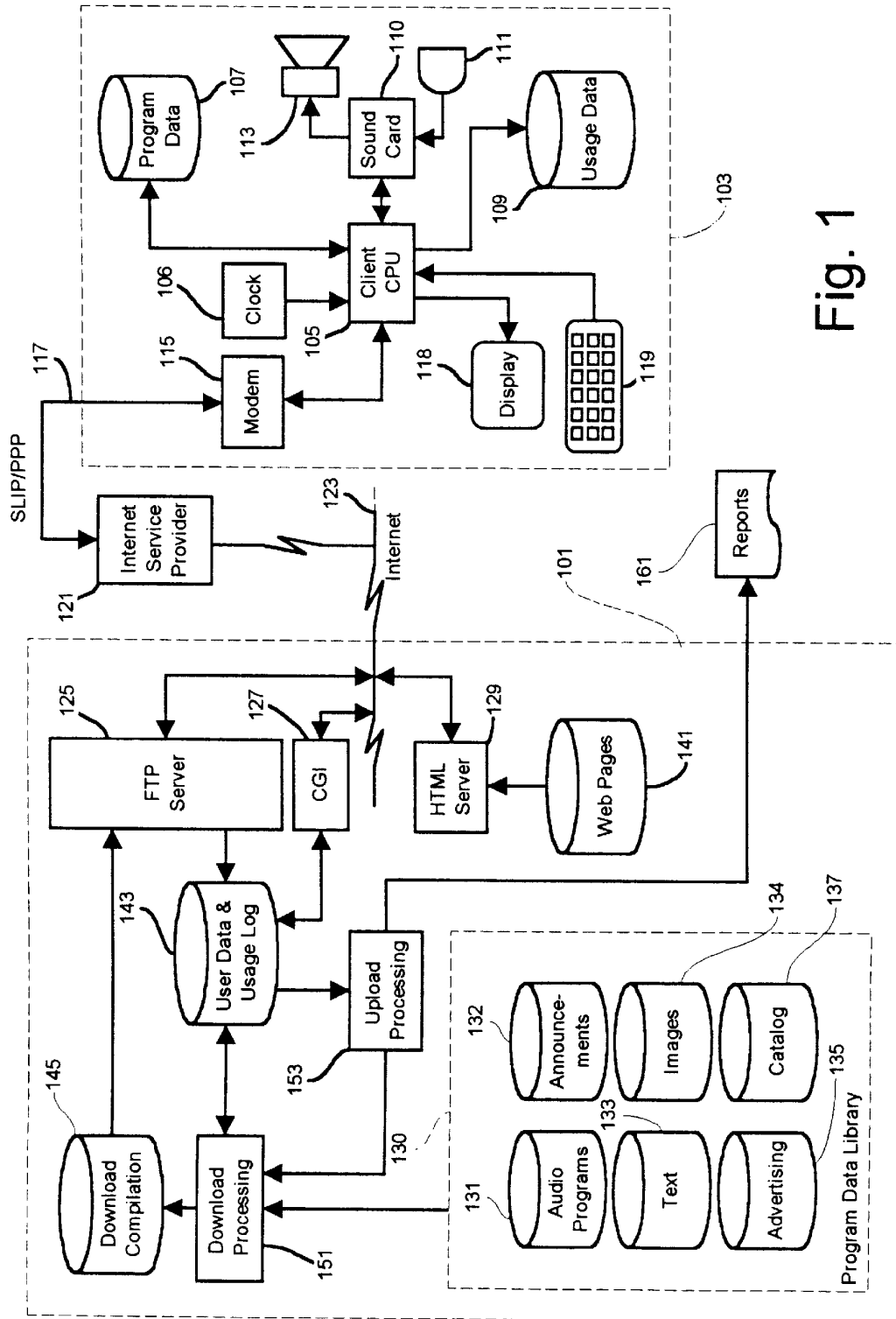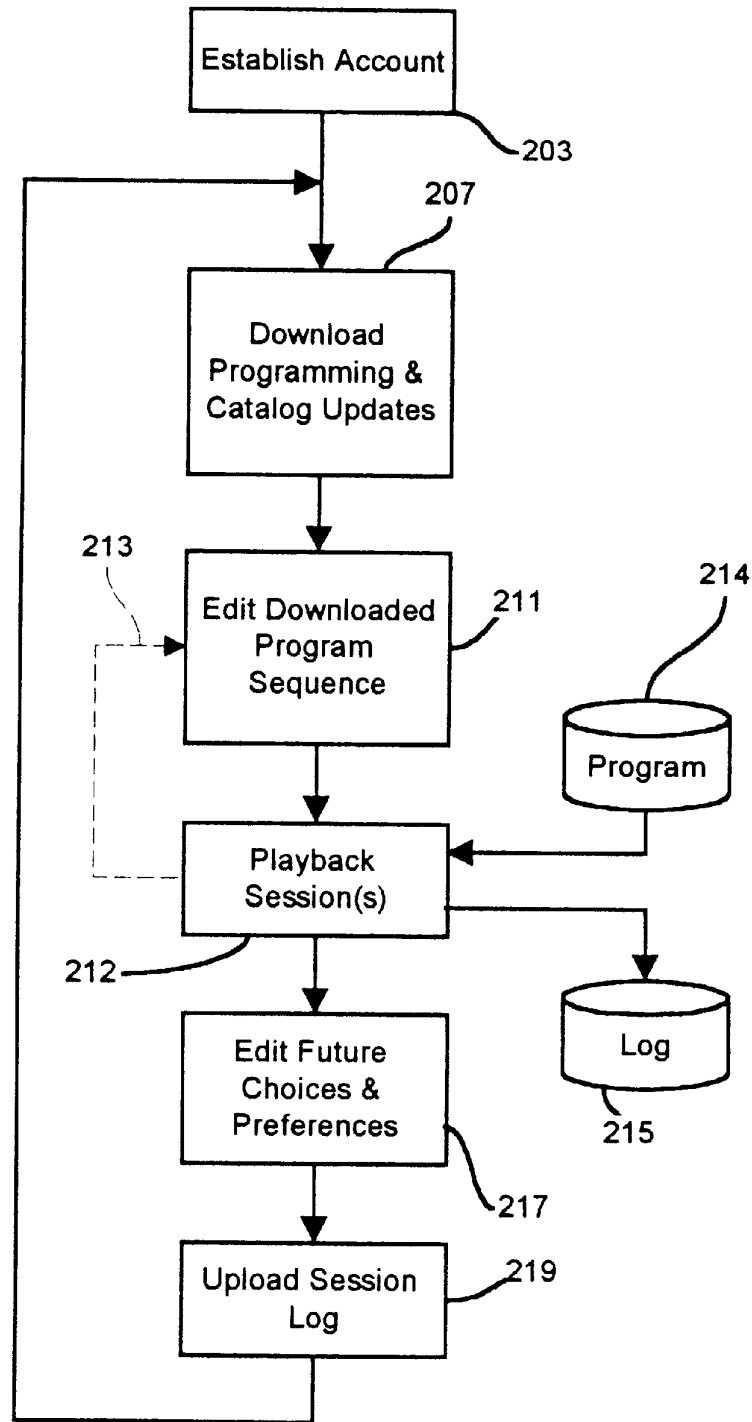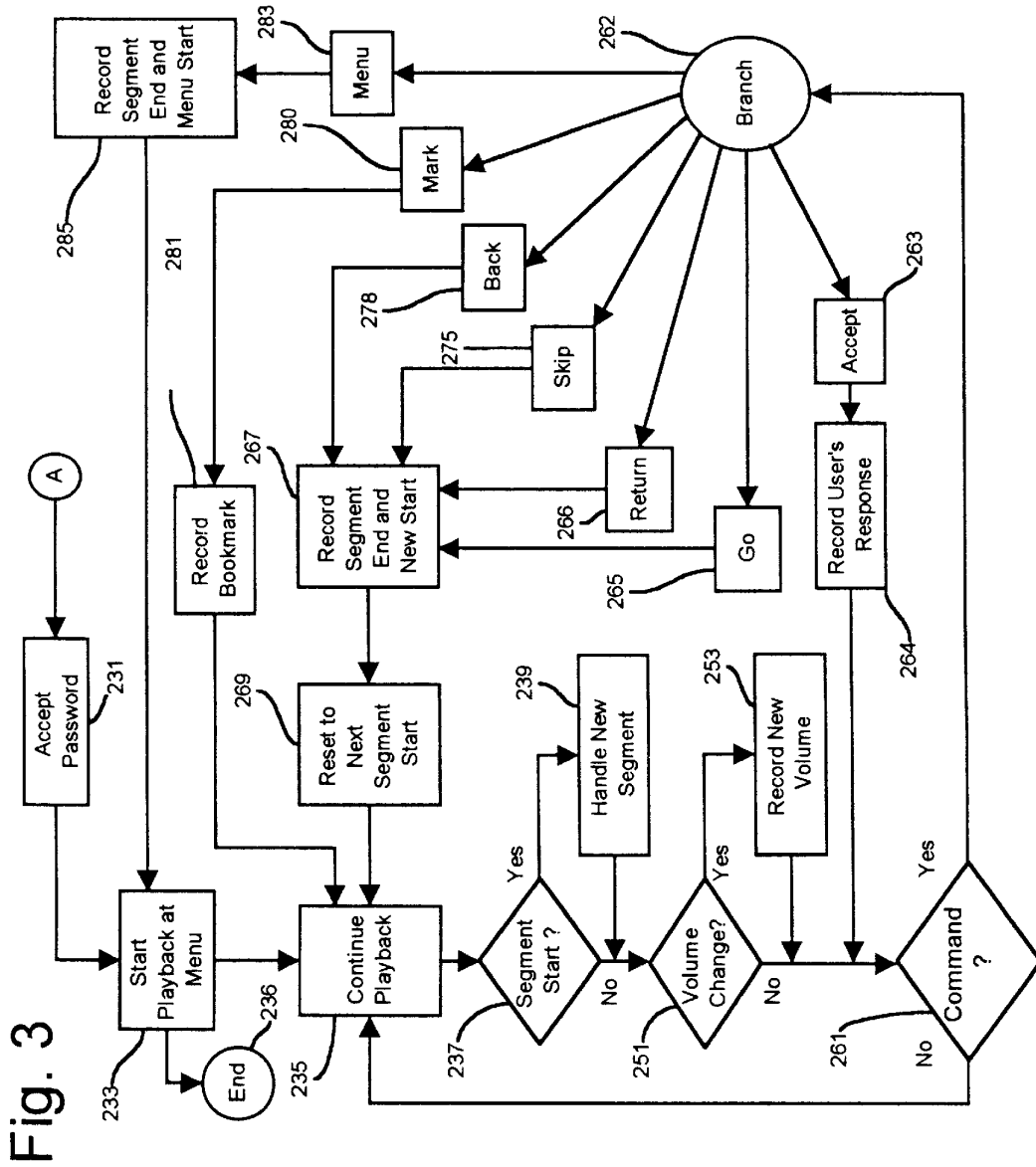
17 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets

Fig. 1

Establish Account
— 203

207

Download
Programming &
Catalog Updates

213

Edit Downloaded
Program
Sequence
211

214

Program

Playback
Session(s)

212

Log

215

Edit Future
Choices &
Preferences

217

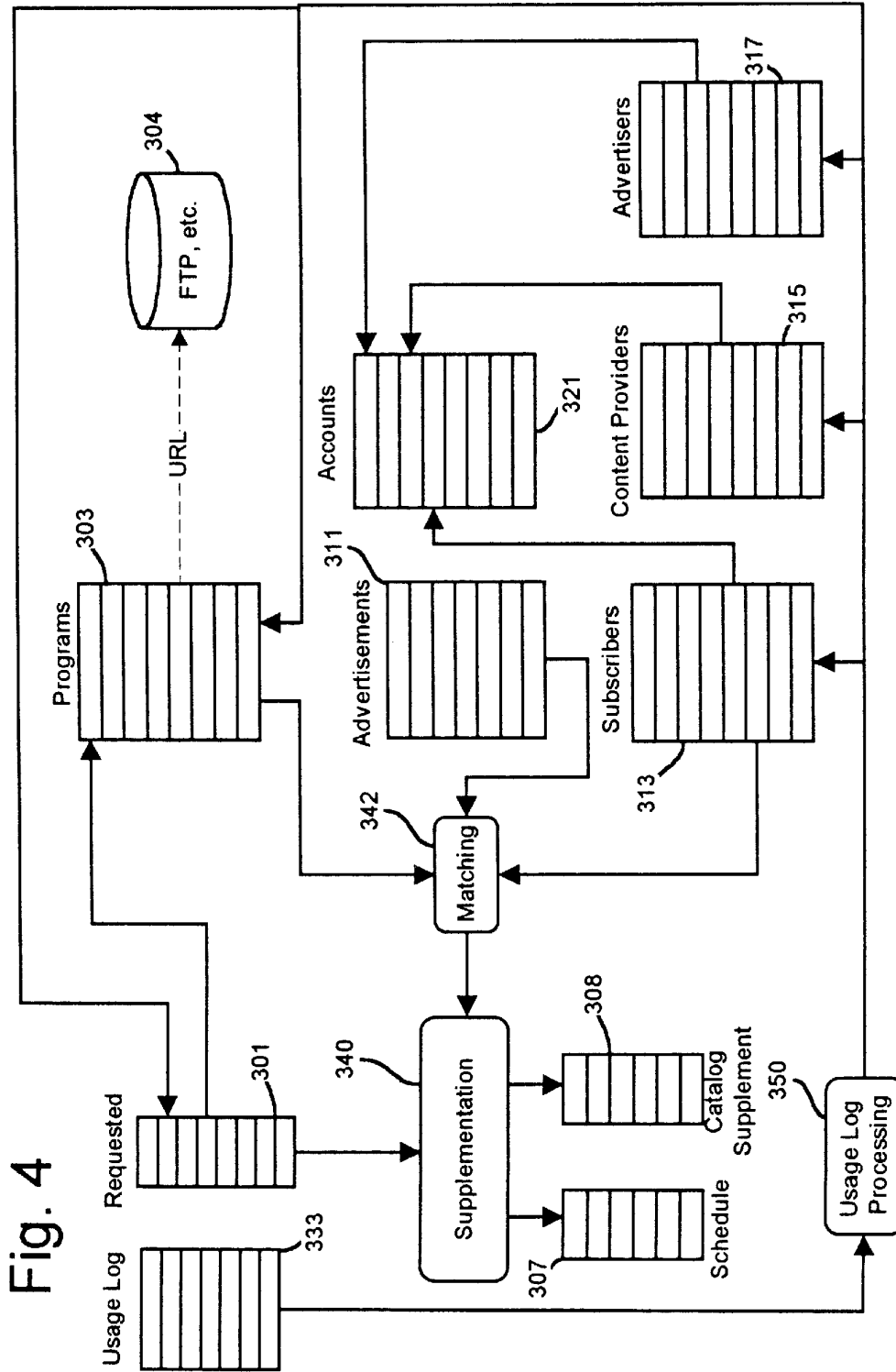Upload Session
Log
219

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

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