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(54) **INTEGRATED INTERNET CAMERA SYSTEM AND METHOD**

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This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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(63) Continuation of application No. 13/415,346, filed on Mar. 8, 2012, now Pat. No. 8,477,197, which is a continuation of application No. 13/037,303, filed on Feb. 28, 2011, now Pat. No. 8,134,600, which is a continuation of application No. 12/637,277, filed on Dec. 14, 2009, now Pat. No. 7,907,172, which is a continuation of application No. 11/484,373, filed on Jul. 11, 2006, now Pat. No. 7,633,524.

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H04N 7/14	(2006.01)
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G06F 15/16	(2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC **348/207.1**; 348/14.02; 725/105; 708/219

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
USPC 348/207.1, 14.02; 725/105; 709/219
See application file for complete search history.

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(57)   **ABSTRACT**

An integrated Internet camera system method comprises a website archive and review center (WSARC) for storing and managing images and an Internet direct device for capturing an image, automatically transmitting the image to an account associated with the Internet direct device on the WSARC upon image capture and receiving stored image from the WSARC. The Internet direct device comprises an imaging system, a microprocessor and a display for displaying the captured image and the received image. The Internet direct device automatically connects to the communication network on power-up. The Internet direct device automatically switches to another available mode of connection when the Internet direct device detects that the primary mode of connection to the communications network is unavailable.

40 Claims, 2 Drawing Sheets
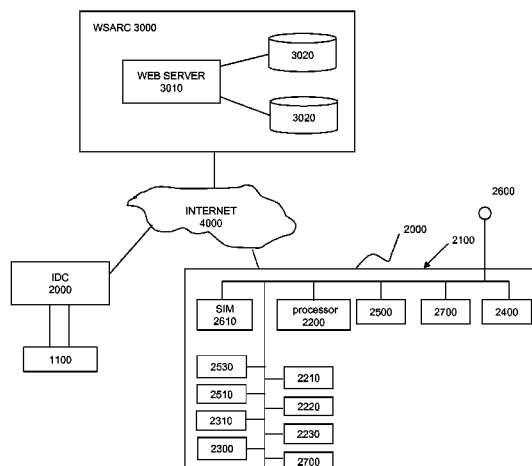
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Fig. 1

Internet

PC
200

Camera
100

Fig. 2

WSARC 3000

WEB SERVER 3010

3020

3020

INTERNET 4000

IDC 2000

1100

2600

2100

2000

SIM 2610

processor 2200

2500
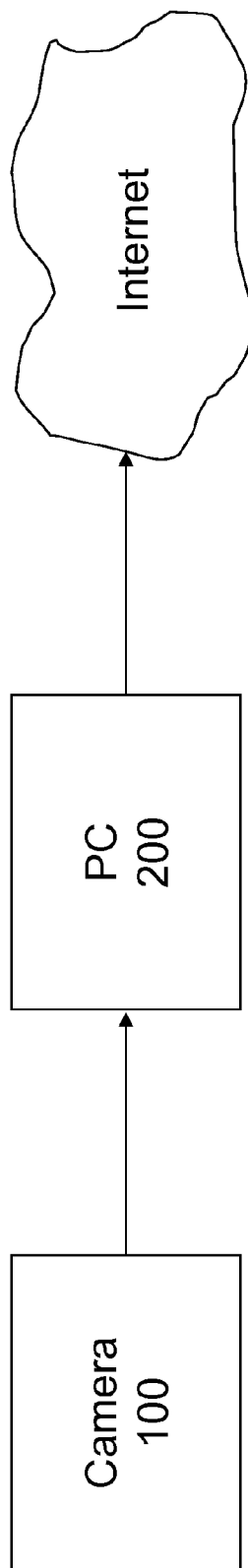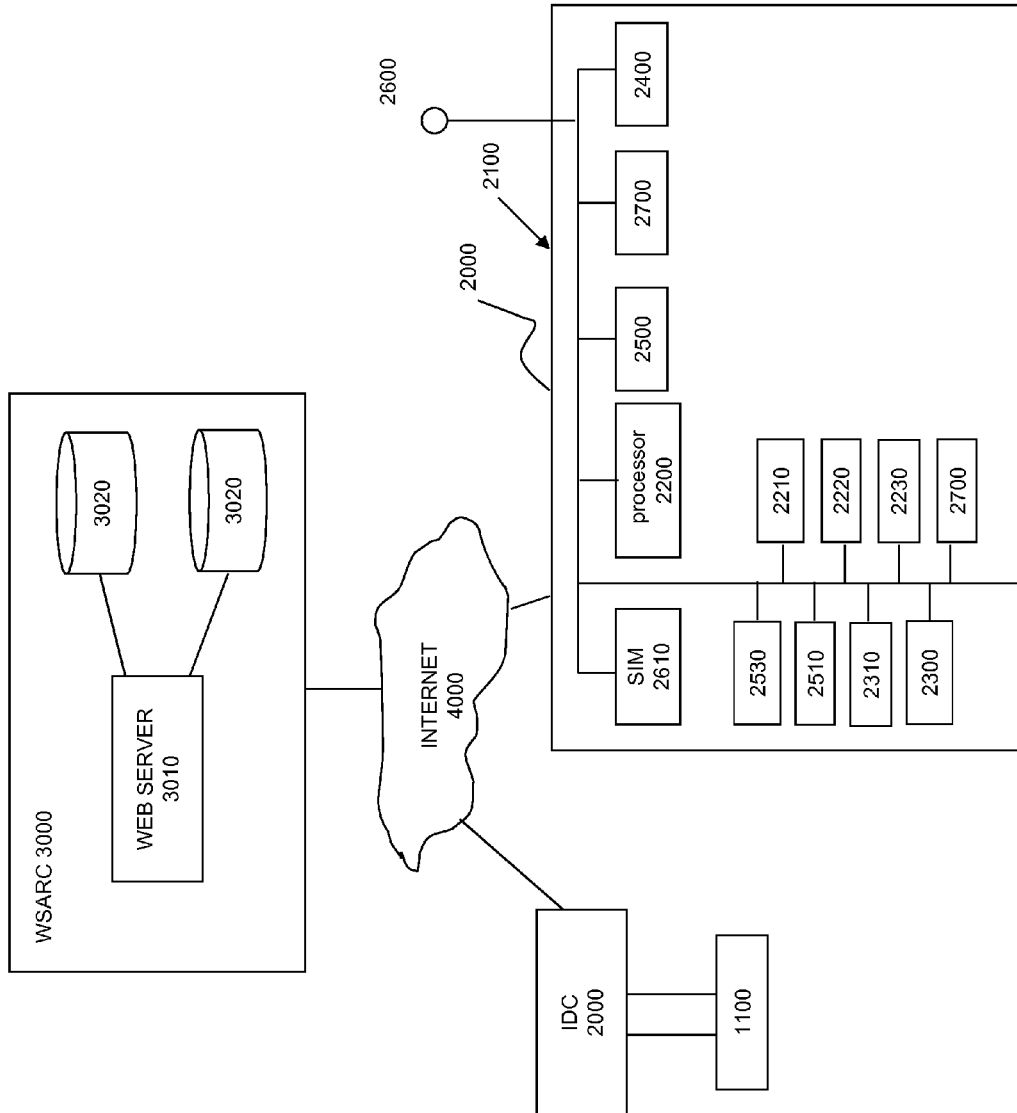
2700

2400

2210

2220

2230

2700

2530

2510

2310

2300

INTEGRATED INTERNET CAMERA SYSTEM AND METHOD

RELATED APPLICATION

The present application is a continuation of application Ser. No. 13/415,346 filed Mar. 8, 2012, which is a continuation of application Ser. No. 13/037,303 filed Feb. 28, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,134,600, which is a continuation of application Ser. No. 12/637,277 filed Dec. 14, 2009, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,907, 172, which is a continuation of application Ser. No. 11/484, 373 filed Jul. 11, 2006, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,633,524, which claims a priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/702,470, each of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to an integrated Internet camera and/or system that is simple to install, operate and maintain, more particularly to an integrated Internet camera and/or video system that seamlessly and automatically transmits, receives, stores and/or archives still images, video and/or audio to and from a web site service/monitor center over the Internet using one or more integrated Internet cameras.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The increasing use and awareness of the utility afforded by the Internet has transformed this simple image recording or capture process into a more complicated process requiring permanent storage and providing a secure centralized access to such storage from any remote location.

The currently available camera systems available are rigid and expensive. These systems are complex and require a host of peripheral devices to place an image on the Internet or Web. Additionally, these systems are bulky and not very portable. Moreover, the user must install one or more software to operate such camera systems. In a security monitoring application, these camera systems require a qualified operator to operate and maintain such system.

An example of such prior camera system is shown in FIG. 1. In order for an operator to transfer the still image, video and/or audio file from a video camera **100** to an account on the Internet or Web, the operator must connect the video camera **100** to a personal computer PC **200**. The still image, video and/or audio file is transferred and stored in the PC **200** before it is transferred or uploaded onto the Internet. That is, the camera **100** must be connected to a network device (e.g., PC **200**) before it can transmit or receive still image, video or audio files.

Some have attempted to resolve this problem by purchasing a network card (wired or wireless) to enable their camera **100** to connect to the Internet without a separate network device (i.e., PC **200**). However, such solution is only available if the camera **100** can accept such network card and does not provide two-way access to the image file, i.e., transmitting to storage and receiving from storage. Additionally, such solution generally requires the operator to install the network card and accompanying software to "network" enabled camera **100**.

Therefore, it is desirable to have an integrated Internet camera system that can seamlessly upload and download video and/or audio files to and from the Internet, transmits these files to another web-enabled portable device (e.g.,

files from another portable device and/or store/archive these files in a secure website without the necessity of connecting to another device, such as a PC **200**.

OBJECTS AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

There are many commercial and general consumer needs for this integrated Internet camera system. Some examples are in the fields of security, engineering, entertainment, advertising, child care monitoring and personal use, such as for family social occasions.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide an integrated Internet camera system ("IICS") that allows even the novice users to seamlessly link their Internet direct cameras ("IDC") to a dedicated website of the IICS operator (such as a website archive and review center ("WSARC") to begin recording/storing/archiving of the images on the WSARC by simply powering their IDC. The present invention's ease of use, less working parts, lower maintenances, lower expenses, and easily accessible support enables the novice users to quickly employ and enjoy the IICS of the present invention. Additionally, the IICS is very flexible, it can be easily expanded and customized to provide a host of services and meet various needs of both personal and commercial users.

It is another object of the present invention to provide the IICS as aforesaid, which comprises IDC that can automatically and seamlessly connect to the WSARC by simply powering on the IDC. That is, when an operator takes a picture, the IDC automatically transmits the image to the WSARC.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide an inexpensive and efficient camera having all necessary functionality for transmission and reception of real-time, stored and archived digital images to and from the Internet in a single, portable standalone apparatus (i.e., an embedded system), without requiring the use of an external controlling apparatus such as a personal computer.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a WSARC that enables an authorized user to schedule transmission of digital images to one or more IDC(s) upon receipt of an image from an IDC associated with that authorized user.

A further of the present invention is to provide a portable, standalone camera that initiates transmission of digital images to the Internet, i.e., WSARC, upon an image capture.

In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, an integrated Internet camera system for transmitting digital images to an Internet address comprises an image pickup, an optical module for forming an image on the image pickup, and an image capturing module for capturing digital images from the image pickup. A wireless device or SIMMS card connects and maintains the IDC's connection to the Internet for transmission of the digital image files to a user account associated with the IDC at a predetermined Internet address (i.e., WSARC) and transfers the digital image files to the user account. The digital image files in the user account are then available to authorized users of the account. Depending on the access privilege such authorized user may access the entire or a portion of the stored/archived digital image files.

In accordance with an embodiment of the present invention, an integrated Internet camera system comprises a website archive and review center (WSARC) for storing, archiving and managing images and an Internet direct camera (IDC) for capturing an image, automatically transmitting the

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