

METHOD TO PROVIDE AD HOC AND PASSWORD PROTECTED DIGITAL AND VOICE NETWORKS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation of co-pending U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 13/751,453 filed January 28, 2013, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 12/761,533 filed on April 16, 2010, now U.S. Patent No. 8,364,129 issued January 29, 2013, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 11/615,472 filed on December 22, 2006, now U.S. Patent No. 8,126,441 issued on February 28, 2012, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 11/308,648 filed April 17, 2006, now U.S. Patent No. 7,630,724 issued on December 8, 2009, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/711,490, filed on September 21, 2004, now U.S. Patent No. 7,031,728 issued on April 18, 2006.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

[0002] A communications method and system using a plurality of cellular phones each having an integrated Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) and Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver for the management of two or more people through the use of a communications network. The method and system provide each user with an integrated handheld cellular/PDA/GPS/phone that has Advanced Communication Software application programs (hereinafter referred to as ACS) and databases used in conjunction with a remote Server that enable a user to quickly establish a communication network of cell phone participants having a common temporary ad hoc network using mobile wireless communication devices.

[0003] The invention includes a method and communication system to quickly set up and provide ad hoc, password protected, digital and voice networks to allow a group of people to be able to set up a network easily and rapidly, especially in an emergency situation.

Description of Related Art

[0004] The purpose of a communications system is to transmit digital messages from a source, located at one point, to user destination(s), located at other point(s) some distance away. A communications system is generally comprised of three basic elements: transmitter, information channel and receiver. One form of communication in recent years is cellular phone telephony. A network of cellular communication systems set up around an area such as the United States allows multiple users to talk to each other, either on individual calls or on group calls. Some cellular phone services enable a cellular phone to engage in conference calls with a small number of users. Furthermore, cellular conference calls can be established through 800 number services. Cellular telephony also now includes systems that include GPS navigation that utilizes satellite navigation. These devices thus unite cellular phone technology with navigation information, computer information transmission and receipt of data.

[0005] The method and operation of communication devices used herein are described in U.S. Patent 7,031,728 which is hereby incorporated by reference and U.S. Patent No. 7,630,724.

[0006] Military, first responder, and other public and private emergency groups need to be able to set up ad hoc digital and voice networks easily and rapidly. These private networks may be temporary or longer lasting in nature. The users need to be able to rapidly coordinate their activities eliminating the need for pre-entry of data into a web and or identifying others by name, phone numbers or email addresses so that all intended participants that enter the agreed ad hoc

network name and password are both digitally and voice interconnected. When a user or users leave the network, no data concerning the network participants need be retained.

[0007] Coordinating different organizations at the scene of a disaster presents several problems as there are voice and digital data (text messages) communications that need to be constantly occurring up and down the chain of command. As an example, communications are required from a police chief to a police captain to a police lieutenant to a police sergeant to a policeman and then back up the same chain of command. Digital data exchange of GPS data or other means provides the location component of the units. Digital chat, text messages, white boards and photo video exchange provide extensive collaboration. However, during a disaster, other first responders such as fire departments must become engaged. While the fire department users may have voice and digital data (text messages) communications up and down their chain of command, these individuals do not have the ability to cross communicate necessarily with police units without a substantial degree of immediate coordination. The method and system in accordance with the present invention described herein discloses how digital communications along with Personal Computer (PC) and PDA devices can be used to quickly establish user specific password protected private ad hoc voice and data networks to enable both data and voice communications up and down their chain of command and simultaneously with different, not pre-known, organizations responding to a disaster. The invention defines a method of accomplishing this by providing all personnel that need to communicate with each other with a PC or PDA which are interconnected to a Server using cellular or other communications.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] Applicant's communication system and method described herein is embodied in the Advanced Communication Software (ACS) application programs developed by applicant and installed in the integrated PDA/GPS cell phones used herein and remote Servers.

[0009] A plurality of Internet Protocol (IP) capable PDA/GPS devices each having ACS application programs and databases provides a communication network in conjunction with a remote Server that provides the ability to: a) establish an ad hoc network of devices so that the devices can either broadcast to a group or selectively transmit to each of the other; each PDA / GPS phone starts by requesting access to the Server and identifying a mutually agreed to network name and password and once granted, reports its GPS position and status; the Server then routes the data to all signed on network participants so that each of the devices exchange location, status and other information; (b) force the received information to the recipient's display and enable the recipient to acquire additional information by touching the display screen at a remote phone's location on the PDA display; (c) make calls to or send data to remote phones by touching their display symbols and selecting the appropriate soft switch; (d) layer a sufficient number of soft switches or buttons on the PDA display to perform the above functions without overlaying the map; and (e) allow a polling mode in each cell phone that permits a user to contact other cell phone users that have a common interest or relationship with a password and identifier for communication and to establish quickly a temporary ad hoc network especially in an emergency.

[00010] A communication Server acts as a forwarder for IP communications between any combination of cell phone/PDA users and/or PC based users. Network participant location, identity and status messages are sent to the Server by each user. Network participant entered tracks are also sent to the Server. Because this network participant location and track data is of

interest to all the network participants, the Server forwards the data received from one participant to all other participants, causing their displays automatically, without any operator action, to display the received information, thus providing the information necessary for all network participants to know the identity, location and status of all other network participants.

[00011] The Server also acts as a forwarder of data addressed from one participant to one or more addressed participants, thus permitting the transmission of free text, preformatted messages, photographs, video, Email and Uniform Resource Locator (URL) data from one network participant to other selected network participants.

[00012] The above functions can also be accomplished using peer to peer WiFi, WiMax or other peer to peer communications. However, for use with cellular communications and to assure the level of security that cell phone companies require, a centralized static IP routable Server is used.

[00013] The IP Server also fills another role of being a database from which data can be requested by network participants (i.e. maps, satellite images, and the like) or can be pushed to network participants (i.e. symbology and soft switch changes, and the like). The Server is used to establish an ad hoc network within certain groups using an ad hoc event name and password.

[00014] This invention provides a method and a system establishing an ad hoc password protected digital and voice network that can be temporarily set up or longer lasting in nature. The invention described herein allows users to rapidly coordinate their activities without having to pre-enter data into a web or identify others by name, E mail addresses or phone numbers. Essentially the users that establish the ad hoc and password protected digital and voice networks are required to enter the Server's IP address and an ad hoc event name and a password. In the case of military and first responders, the name of the user's unit may also be used. This action

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