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Peer-to-Peer Mobile Data Transfer Method and Device

5 **Cross Reference to Related Applications**

This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application No. 10/817,994, filed April 4, 2004, and a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application No. 10/935,342, filed September 7, 2004.

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Field of the Invention

The present invention relates generally to data transfer techniques for mobile devices, and more specifically, a technique to establish data transfer directly between mobile devices.

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Background of the Invention

Current multimedia messaging technologies for mobile devices depend upon a server that receives and prepares multimedia content to be retrieved by the recipient of the multimedia 20 message. For example, the Multimedia Messaging Service ("MMS") protocol utilizes a server known as a Multi Media Service Center ("MMSC") to store multimedia content in preparation for a retrieval process initiated by the recipient. Specifically, under MMS, the initiating device initiates a data connection over TCP/IP and performs an HTTP POST of an MMS Encapsulation Format encoded multimedia message to the MMSC. The MMSC stores the multimedia message and makes it available as a dynamically generated URL link. The MMSC then generates a notification 25 message containing the dynamically generated URL and sends the notification message to the recipient through WAP Push over the Short Message Service ("SMS") protocol. When the recipient receives the MMS notification message, it initiates a data connection over TCP/IP and performs an HTTP request to retrieve the MMS message containing multimedia content from the

30 MMSC through the dynamically generated URL.

The MMSC is used, in part, by the MMS protocol in order to provide a known address (e.g., a URL) that can be provided to the recipient in a text based format in order to initiate a data transfer transaction to retrieve the multimedia content. Without such a known address, the sender would be unable to transmit multimedia content to the recipient, since other pre-existing messaging technologies (e.g., SMS) only provide the capability to send limited text, and not multimedia content, directly to the recipient. As such, what is needed is a method to establish data transfer sessions directly between mobile devices, where such mobile devices are capable of directly communicating with other mobile devices through the underlying wireless technology, such that no separate multimedia server and separate retrieval notification message is needed to

40 obtain data (e.g., multimedia content) other than text.

Summary of the Invention

The present invention provides a method for establishing a direct data transfer session between mobile devices over a digital mobile network system that supports data packet-based communications. Under the present invention, no separate data server need be used to provide

- 5 a known location from which a recipient retrieves data such as multimedia content. Instead, a mobile device initiating a data transfer opens a listening port defined by an underlying data packet based network protocol. The initiating mobile device sends an invitation message containing the network address, including the listening port, of the initiating device to a target mobile device through a page-mode messaging service (e.g., text based service) supported by the digital mobile network system. The initiating mobile device further utilizes and incorporates a unique identification number (e.g., telephone number, PIN number, etc.) associated with the target
- mobile device into the invitation message to locate and contact the target mobile device within the wireless mobile network. Once the initiating mobile device receives a response from the target mobile device at the listening port, the two mobile devices are able to establish a reliable virtual
 connection through the underlying data packet-based network protocol in order to transfer data directly between the two mobile devices.

Brief Description of the Drawings

20 FIGURE 1 depicts a diagram of an environment for establishing a data transfer session in accordance with the present invention between a first mobile device and a second mobile device in a GSM mobile network system supporting GPRS as a data packet-based communications service, SMS as a text messaging service, and TCP/IP as an underlying data packet based network protocol.

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FIGURE 2 depicts a flow chart for establishing a data transfer session in accordance with the present invention.

FIGURE 3 depicts a flow chart for a second embodiment for establishing a data transfer 30 session in accordance with the present invention.

Detailed Description of the Invention

Figure 1 depicts one environment to deploy an embodiment of the present invention. As
depicted, the underlying digital mobile network system in this environment is the Global System for Mobile communications (GSM) 100 standard. Under the GSM standard, each of the mobile devices 105 and 110 includes a Subscriber Information Module (SIM) card that contains unique identification information that enables the GSM system to locate the mobile devices within the network and route data to them. A current commercial example of a mobile device (e.g., smartphone, PDA, handheld, etc.) that might be used in Figure 1 could be Research In Motion's

(RIM) BlackBerry handheld devices, which include a QWERTY keyboard to facilitate the typing of text. As depicted, a GSM architecture includes the following components: base transceiver stations (BTS) **115** and base station controllers (BSC) (**120A** or **120B**) for managing the transmission of radio signals between the MSC (defined below) and the mobile devices, mobile

- 5 service-switching centers (MSC) (125A and 125B) for performing the all switching functions and controlling calls to and from other telephone and data systems, a home location register (HLR) 130 for containing all the administrative, routing and location information of each subscriber registered in the network, visitor location registers (VLR) (135A and 135B) for containing selected administrative information about subscribers registered in one HLR who are roaming in a another
- HLR, and an equipment identity register (EIR) (not shown) for containing a list of all valid mobile equipment on the network). As depicted in Figure 1, in one architecture of a GSM network, there may be exist one HLR while there may exist multiple MSCs (each with a related VLR) which each serves a different geographic area. The MSCs also provide the interface for the GSM network to more traditional voice networks 170 such as the PSTN. This underlying GSM architecture provides radio resources management (e.g., access, paging and handover procedures, etc.), mobility management (e.g., location updating, authentication and security, etc.), and communication management (e.g., call routing, etc.) in order to enable mobile devices in the GSM network to send and receive data through a variety of services, including the Short Message Service (SMS), an asynchronous bi-directional text messaging service for short alphanumeric messages (up to 160 bytes) that are transported from one mobile device to another mobile device in a store-and-forward fashion.

A GSM network within which the present invention may be deployed would also support a page-mode messaging service, such as SMS, that relies upon the underlying GSM mechanisms to resolve routing information in order to locate destination mobile devices. A GSM network supporting SMS text messaging may further include the following SMS specific components: a 25 short message service center (SMSC) (140A or 140B) for storing and forwarding messages to and from one mobile device to another, an SMS Gateway-MSC (SMS GMSC) for receiving the short message from the SMSC (140A or 140B) and interrogating the destination mobile device's HLR 130 for routing information to determine the current location of the destination device to deliver the short message to the appropriate MSC (125A or 125B). The SMS GMSC is typically 30 integrated with the SMSC 140. In a typical transmission of an SMS text message from an originating mobile device 105 to a receiving mobile device 110, (i) the text message is transmitted from the mobile 105 to the MSC 125A, (ii) the MSC 125A interrogates its VLR 135A to verify that the message transfer does not violate any supplementary services or restrictions, (iii) the MSC 125A sends the text message to the SMSC 140A, (iv) the SMSC 140A, through the SMS GMSC, 35

interrogates the receiving mobile device's HLR **130** (by accessing the SS7 network) to receive routing information for the receiving mobile device **110**, (v) the SMSC sends the text message to

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