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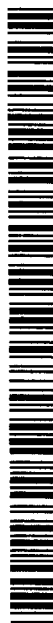
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(54) Title: METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR VOICE EXCHANGE AND VOICE DISTRIBUTION

(57) Abstract: A method for voice exchange and voice distribution between users of computer networks comprises the following steps: creating a message in a voice container; contacting a central server to locate a recipient of the message; forwarding the message to the recipient if the recipient is available; storing the message at the central server when the recipient is not available for forwarding when the recipient is available. The method also allows the control of the origination, distribution and listening to these messages, and also offers the options of ringing a pre-configured phone number at the recipient's request for the delivery of the message or

1 **METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR VOICE EXCHANGE AND VOICE**
2 **DISTRIBUTION**

3 **FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

4 This invention relates to the field of packet communications, and more
5 particularly to voice packet communication systems.

6 **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

7 Many users of on-line services utilize text-based communication systems for
8 the exchange of messages. Two well known text-based communication systems
9 techniques are e-mail, wherein text messages are placed in a central file associated
10 with a destination address, to be downloaded at a later time when the recipient "logs
11 in" and instant messaging, where text is typed and exchanged between computers
12 when a "buddy" address (or group address) is present in an address field. Although it
13 is possible to attach files to the text file for the transfer of non-text formats, including
14 graphic and audio files, this technique is greatly limited. When an audio file is
15 attached, the technique lacks a method for convenient recording, storing, exchanging,
16 responding and listening to voices between one or more parties, independent of
17 whether or not they are logged in to their network.

18 **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

19 The present invention is a system and method for voice exchange and voice
20 distribution utilizing a voice container. Based on states, rules and type of devices
21 provided, voice containers can be stored, transcoded and routed to the appropriate
22 recipients instantaneously or stored for later delivery. The present invention system

1 and method for voice exchange and voice distribution allows a software agent with a
2 user interface in conjunction with a central server to send, receive and store messages
3 using voice containers. In addition, the present invention for voice exchange and
4 voice distribution provides the ability to store messages both locally and centrally at
5 the server whenever the recipient is not available for a prescribed period of time.
6 Additionally, the present invention allows manual or pre-programmed control of the
7 origination, distribution and listening to these messages, and also offers the options of
8 ringing a pre-configured phone number at the recipient's request for the delivery of
9 the message or forwarding the message to another Internet or voice container enabled
10 device.

11 **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

12 A more complete understanding of the present invention may be obtained from
13 consideration of the following description in conjunction with the drawings in which:

14 FIG. 1 is a high level functional block diagram of the system for voice
15 exchange and voice distribution;

16 FIG. 1A is the high level functional block diagram of FIG. 1 including a voice
17 format detection and translation system;

18 FIG. 2 is a high level overview of the system architecture;

19 FIG. 3 is an exemplary embodiment of the voice container structure;

20 FIG. 4 is a high level flow chart for PC to PC and PC to network
21 communications utilizing the system for voice exchange and voice distribution;

1 FIG. 5 is a high level flow chart for dial in emulation from a telephone
2 utilizing the system for voice exchange and voice distribution;

3 FIG. 6 is a high level flow chart for spot calling utilizing the method and
4 system for voice exchange and voice distribution;

5 FIG. 7 is a flow chart of an exemplary embodiment illustrating the method and
6 system with respect to the originator;

7 FIG. 8 is a flow chart of an exemplary embodiment illustrating the method and
8 system with respect to the central server;

9 FIG. 9 is a flow chart of an exemplary embodiment illustrating the method and
10 system with respect to the recipient;

11 FIG. 10 is a flow chart of an exemplary embodiment illustrating the method
12 and system for voice exchange and voice distribution with respect to the originator of
13 a voice spot;

14 FIG. 11 is a flow chart of an exemplary embodiment illustrating the method
15 and system for voice exchange and voice distribution with respect to the central server
16 for a voice spot;

17 FIG. 12 is a flow chart of an exemplary embodiment illustrating the method
18 and system for voice exchange and voice distribution with respect to the recipient of a
19 voice spot;

20 FIG. 13 is a flow chart of an exemplary embodiment illustrating the method
21 and system for voice exchange and voice distribution with respect to the originator
22 and recipient for an anonymous voice communication;

1 FIG. 14 is a flow chart of an exemplary embodiment illustrating the method
2 and system for voice exchange and voice distribution with respect to the central server
3 for an anonymous voice communication;

4 FIG. 15 is a flow chart of an exemplary embodiment illustrating the method
5 and system for voice exchange and voice distribution with respect to the central server
6 for emulation through a telephone system;

7 FIG. 16 is a flow chart of an exemplary embodiment illustrating the method
8 and system for voice exchange and voice distribution with respect to the originator of
9 a voice container with multimedia attachments;

10 FIG. 17 is a flow chart of an exemplary embodiment illustrating the method
11 and system for voice exchange and voice distribution with respect to the central server
12 for a voice container with multimedia attachments;

13 FIG. 18 is a flow chart of an exemplary embodiment illustrating the method
14 and system for voice exchange and voice distribution with respect to the recipient of a
15 voice container with multimedia attachments;

16 FIG. 19 is a flow chart of an exemplary embodiment illustrating the method
17 and system for voice exchange and voice distribution with respect to preparing a voice
18 container without a PC; and,

19 FIG. 20 is a flow chart of an exemplary embodiment illustrating the method
20 and system for voice exchange and voice distribution with respect to playing a voice
21 container on a non-PC based appliance.

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