

METHOD OF UTILIZING FORCED ALERTS FOR INTERACTIVE REMOTE COMMUNICATIONS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 11/612830 filed on December 19, 2006 which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 11/308,648 filed April 17, 2006 which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/711,490 now U.S. Patent No. 7,031,728.

10 1. Field of the Invention

A communications system and method that uses a plurality of PCs and PDA/cell phones for the coordination of two or more people through the use of a communications network. The system and method provide each user with a PC or PDA/cell phone that has forced message alert software that enables a user to create and send a voice or text message alert that forces an automatic acknowledgement upon receipt and a manual response from the recipient.

15 2. Description of Related Art

The purpose of a communications system is to transmit information bearing digital messages from a source, located at one point, to a user destination, located at another point 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, with handheld devices. 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 the ability to access local WiFi connections, allowing the devices to utilize cellular phone data transmission technology as well as the data transmission ability of the Internet.

5 The method and operation of the integrated PDA/cell phones (cell phone/PDA/GPS with touch screen) used herein is described in U.S. Patent 7,031,728, which is hereby incorporated by reference, pending U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 11/308,648, and pending U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 11/612,830, and are usually discussed herein as a cell phone.

10 In many situations it is desirable for a user to be able to simultaneously send a message to the cell phones or PCs of a large group of people. This can be typically accomplished using Digital SMS (Smart Message Service) and TCP/IP messages that are transmitted using cellular technology such as the various versions of GSM and CDMA or via a WiFi local area network. However, in some situations it is additionally desirable to know: (a) which people received the
15 message on their cell phone or PC, (b) which people did not receive the message on their cell phone or PC, and (c) the response of each person receiving the message. Digital SMS and TCP/IP messages do not provide each of those functions. As a result, what is needed is a method in which a sender of a text or voice message can force an automatic acknowledgement upon receipt from a recipient's cell phone or PC and a manual response from the recipient via
20 the recipient's cell phone or PC when sending the text or voice message.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Applicant's communication system and method described herein is embodied in the forced alert software developed by applicant and installed in the PCs and PDA/cell phones used herein.

A plurality of PCs and PDA/cell phones each having forced alert software installed providing a communication network of PCs and PDA/cell phones with the ability to: a) allow an operator to create and transmit (via TCP/IP or another digital transmission means) a forced voice alert, wherein said forced voice alert is comprised of a text or voice message file and a forced alert software packet, from a sender PC or PDA/cell phone to one or more recipient PCs and PDA/cell phones within said communication network; (b) automatically transmit an acknowledgement of receipt from said recipient PCs and PDA/cell phones to the sender PCs or PDA/cell phones upon receipt of the forced message alert by the recipient PCs and PDA/cell phones; (c) periodically resend the message to the recipient PCs and PDA/cell phones that have not sent an acknowledgement until an acknowledgement is received from every recipient PC and PDA/cell phone; (d) provide an indication on the display of the sender PC or PDA/cell phone of which recipient PCs and PDA/cell phones have acknowledged the forced message alert; (e) provide a manual response list on the display of the recipient PC and PDA/cell phone's display that can only be cleared by manually selecting and transmitting a response from the list or recording and transmitting a voice response after sending said automatic acknowledgment; and (f) provide an indication on the sender PC or PDA/cell phone

of the status the manual response and the content of the manual response from each recipient PCs and PDA/cell phones.

A communication network server can act as a forwarder for TCP/IP communications between any combination of PC users or PDA/cell phone users. The server can also act as a
5 forwarder of data addressed from one participant to one or more addressed participants, thus permitting the transmission of forced text or voice messages, other messages, photographs, video, E-mail and URL data from one network participant to other selected network participants.

The above functions can also be accomplished using WiFi, WiMax or other peer to
10 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.

It is the object of this invention provide to a method in which by sending a forced text or voice message to a recipient or a group of recipients, a sender can compel an automatic acknowledgement of receipt from each recipient's PC or PDA/cell phone and require a manual
15 response from the recipient via the recipient's cell phone before the message can be cleared.

In accordance with these and other objects which will become apparent hereinafter, the instant invention will now be described with particular reference to the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1a shows a front elevational view of an integrated PDA/cell phone having a touch screen that includes forced message alert software described herein.

Figure 1b shows a flow chart that explains the device shown in Figure 1a.

5 Figure 2 shows the installation and set up of the forced message alert software on a communication network of cell phones, integrated PDA/cell phones, and PCs.

Figure 3A shows the first section of a flow chart showing a process of sending a forced message alert to one or more recipients as well as for ascertaining which recipients received the forced message alert and which recipients responded to the forced message alert.

10 Figure 3B shows the second section of a flow chart showing a process of sending a forced message alert to one or more recipients as well as for ascertaining which recipients received the forced message alert and which recipients responded to the forced message alert.

Figure 4 shows a flow chart showing a process of receiving a forced message alert as well as providing an acknowledgment of receipt and a response by the recipient.

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