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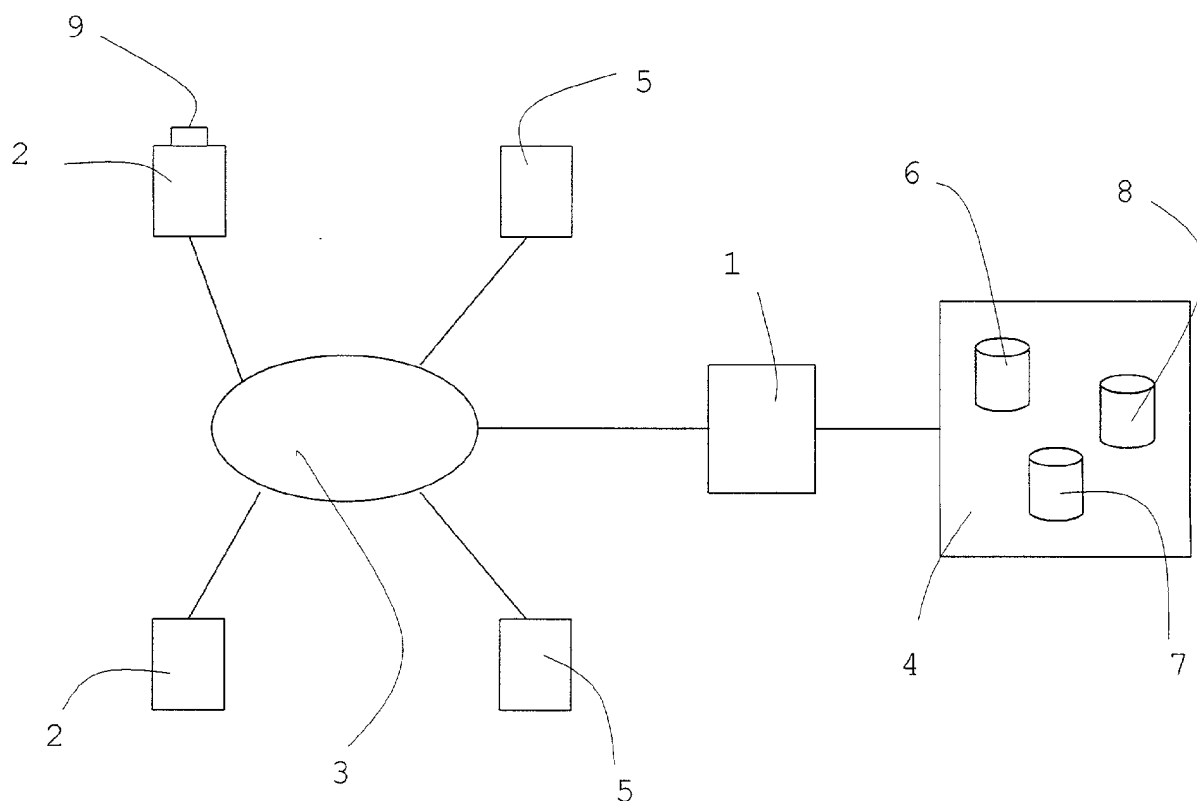
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(54) **System for providing at least one service to clients**

(57) A system for providing at least one service to clients comprises a server and a number of client devices. Each client device is adapted to communicate with the server and the server is programmed to support various services. At least a part of said services is provided by means of various service devices. The server is adapted to communicate with each of said service de-

vices. Each client device is adapted to transmit at least one service code with a client code to the server and the server is programmed to select a service device by means of the received service and client codes and to transmit a service request to the selected service device together with information on the location of the client device.



Description

[0001] The invention relates to a system for providing at least one service to clients, comprising a server and a number of client devices, each client device being adapted to communicate with the server.

[0002] Systems of this type are known in various embodiments. Such a system can be a computer network, wherein clients can order a service by means of a client computer from a server. In another embodiment the system can be implemented as an alarm system in a hospital, for example, wherein patients are provided with a button to send an alarm signal to a server. In the known systems, a server is generally adapted to support one service only. If a client is interested to obtain various services, he either needs various client devices and/or has to communicate with various servers. If the client device is a mobile phone for example, the client has to use different phone numbers to communicate with different servers and generally the client needs to use different protocols to obtain the desired service.

[0003] The invention aims to provide an improved system of the above-mentioned type.

[0004] To this end the server is programmed to support various services, at least a part of said services being provided by means of various service devices, wherein the server is adapted to communicate with each of said service devices, wherein each client device is adapted to transmit at least one service code with a client code to the server and the server is programmed to select a service device by means of the received service and client codes and to transmit a service request to the selected service device together with information on the location of the client device.

[0005] In this manner a uniform system is obtained, wherein a server supports various services and the client device is adapted to communicate with this server to obtain any supported service by transmitting the corresponding service code to the server. The system is user friendly as the clients can obtain various services using one and the same protocol. This significantly reduces the risk of making errors, especially in emergency situations.

[0006] In a preferred embodiment at least a plurality of the client devices each comprises a camera, wherein each client device belonging to said plurality is adapted to transmit image information provided by the camera as or together with a service code, wherein the server is adapted to store the image information together with additional information, such as time of receipt, client device location. In this embodiment the system provides a security system with a virtually unlimited area of coverage. As soon as a client experiences unsafe conditions, he can use the client device to transmit a service code to the server and the image information provided by the camera will automatically be transmitted to the server for storage and further action.

[0007] The invention will be further explained by reference to the drawing in which a diagram of an embodiment of the system of the invention is shown.

reference to the drawing in which a diagram of an embodiment of the system of the invention is shown.

[0008] As shown a server 1 and a number of client devices 2 are connected to a communication network 3. The server 1 may comprise one or more computers and is provided with a memory 4. Further, a number of service devices 5 are connected to the communication network 3. Only two client devices 2 and two service devices 5 are shown. Various types of client and service devices, for example telephones, mobile phones, PDA's, GPS's and computers can be used in the system. The communication network can be any suitable communication network and may comprise telephone communication networks, wireless communication networks, LAN's, WAN's and the internet.

[0009] The server 1 is programmed to support various services, which services may comprise services provided by the server 1 or the company managing the server and services provided by means of the service devices 5 or the company managing the service device 5. In order to obtain a service a client device 2 transmits a service code to the server 1. Generally this transmission includes a client code, so that the server 1 is able to identify the client device 2 from which a server code is received. To this end the server 1 comprises a client database 6 in which data is stored on the service or services desired by each client with corresponding service codes used by the client. A client can obtain most of the services only if he is subscribed to the desired service(s). Each client may subscribe to one or more services supported by the server 1. Subscriptions can easily be managed by means of the database 6.

[0010] The server 1 is programmed to select a service device 5 by means of the received service and client codes. If the client has a subscription for the requested service, the server 1 transmits a service request to the selected service device 5 together with information on the location of the client device. In this manner the management company managing the service device 5 can provide the requested service to the client which did transmit the service code. The server 1 is provided with a service database 7 with data on the service devices 5, so that the server 1 can send a service request to the service device 5 using the information from the database 7. Information on new service devices 5 can be added to the service database 7 in an easy manner.

[0011] The server 1 further comprises a database 8 for storing service codes received from client devices together with additional information, such as time of receipt, client device location and transmitted service request. It will be understood that although separated databases 6, 7 and 8 are shown, the databases may be implemented as one database.

[0012] The system described allows clients to obtain various services using one and the same client device, for example a mobile phone, a PDA, a computer or other suitable terminal. All services can be obtained on the basis of the same protocol. If the client device is a mobile

phone for example, some of the numeral keys may be programmed to initiate transmission of specific service codes. In this manner a client can easily obtain the desired service with a reduced risk of errors. This is especially important in emergency cases.

[0013] According to a preferred embodiment some of the client devices 2 are provided with a camera 9, such as a webcam or the like. If the client device 2 transmits an emergency service code to the server 1, the image information provided by the camera 9 is also transmitted to the server 1 and stored in the database 8. Depending on the type of emergency service code transmitted by the client device 2, the server 1 can immediately forward an emergency service request to an alarm station, such as a police or fire station to ensure that immediate action is taken. Further, the server 1 can be programmed to analyze the image information and to initiate an action depending on the analysis result. If the image information indicates an emergency for example, an emergency request can be transmitted by the server 1 to the alarm station.

[0014] In this preferred embodiment the system of the invention provides a video security system with a virtually unlimited coverage as a client can always send an emergency service code in case he enters an unsafe area or unsafe situation. For example, if a client intends to withdraw cash from an automatic teller machine, he can use his client device 2 to send a service code to the server 1 providing a connection with the server 1 so that image information is stored in the database 8 during the use of the automatic teller machine. In this manner persons using the system will feel more safe and the system has a preventive effect.

[0015] Depending on the type of emergency service code transmitted by the client device 2 to the server 1, the server 1 can transmit a request to the client device 2 to obtain more or updated information on the emergency circumstances.

[0016] It will be understood that the invention provides a flexible system allowing to support various services, wherein a desired service can be obtained by subscription and wherein after subscribing the desired service can be obtained in an easy manner using a fixed protocol for various services thereby reducing the risk of errors. The type of service corresponding to the service codes provided by a client device can be personalised by storing corresponding data in the database 6. The server 1 will initiate the process to obtain the desired service after receipt of the service code in accordance with the details agreed upon with the client. The system can be used in various service fields, for example for crime prevention or to obtain medical services, for example ordering medicines, emergency calls for medical assistance and the like.

[0017] The invention is not restricted to the above described embodiments which can be varied in a number of ways within the scope of the attached claims.

Claims

1. System for providing at least one service to clients, comprising a server and a number of client devices, each client device being adapted to communicate with the server, **characterised in that** the server is programmed to support various services, at least a part of said services being provided by means of various service devices, wherein the server is adapted to communicate with each of said service devices, wherein each client device is adapted to transmit at least one service code with a client code to the server and the server is programmed to select a service device by means of the received service and client codes and to transmit a service request to the selected service device together with information on the location of the client device.
2. System according to claim 1, wherein the server is programmed to transmit a confirmation message to the client device that the desired service has been requested.
3. System according to claim 2, wherein the server transmits the confirmation message after receipt of an acknowledgement from the respective service device that the requested service will be provided.
4. System according to anyone of the preceding claims, wherein the server comprises a client database with data on the services desired by each client with corresponding service codes used by the client, and a service database with data on the service devices.
5. System according to anyone of the preceding claims, wherein the server comprises a database for storing service codes received from clients together with additional information, such as time of receipt, client device location, transmitted service request.
6. System according to anyone of the preceding claims, wherein at least a plurality of the client devices each comprises a camera, wherein each client device belonging to said plurality is adapted to transmit image information provided by the camera as or together with a service code, wherein the server is adapted to store the image information together with additional information, such as time of receipt, client device location.
7. System according to claim 6, wherein the server is programmed to analyse the image information and to initiate an action depending on the analysis result.
8. System according to claim 6 or 7, wherein the serv-

er is adapted to communicate with an alarm station, such as a police or fire station, wherein the server transmits an alarm message to the alarm station upon receipt of the image information and an appropriate service code or as a result of the analysis result.

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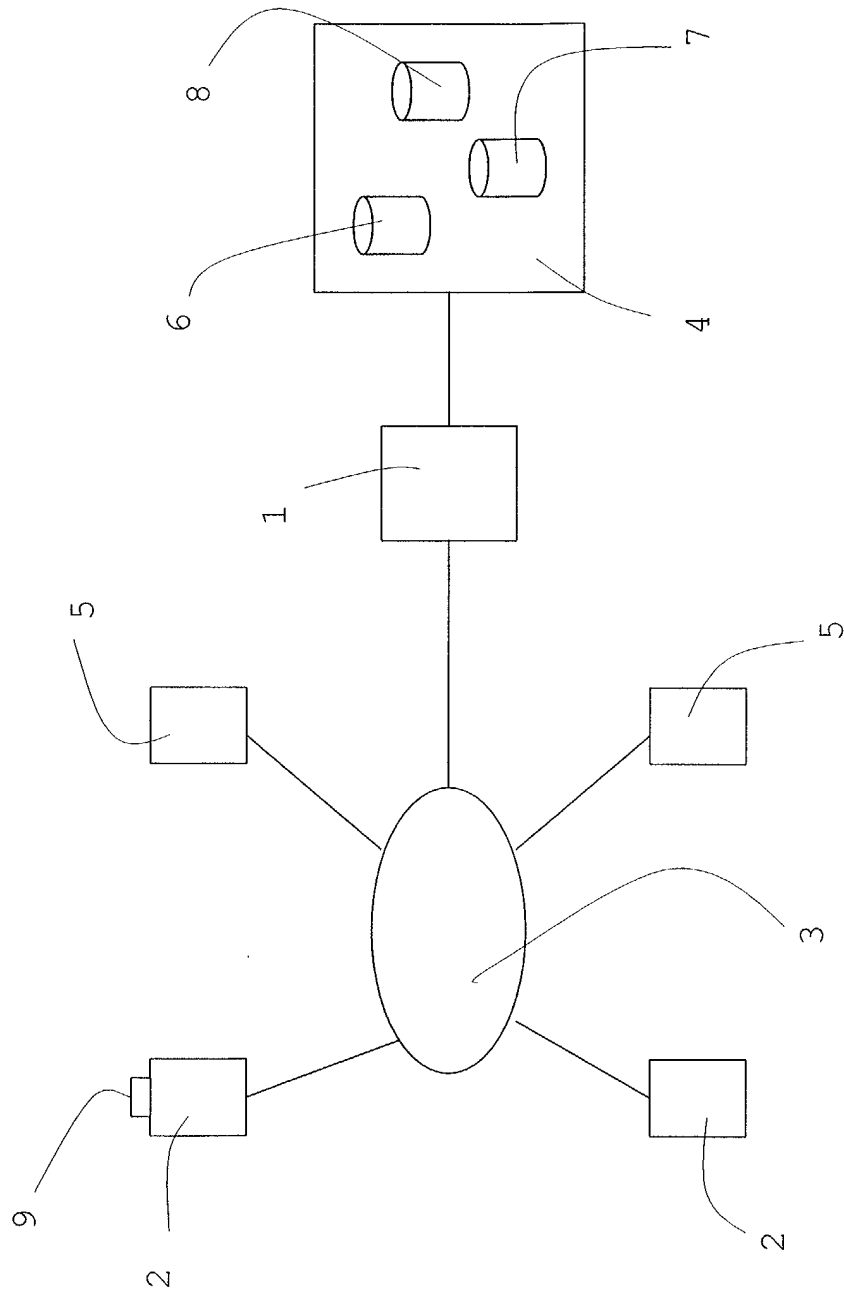
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European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 02 07 6727

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
X	WO 01 73664 A (PICCIONI ROBERT L) 4 October 2001 (2001-10-04) * abstract; figure 1 * * claims 1,2 * * page 20, line 28 - page 21, line 1 * * page 11, line 27 - page 12, line 3 * ---	1,4-8	G08B25/08
A	US 6 369 705 B1 (KENNEDY THOM) 9 April 2002 (2002-04-09) * abstract * * column 3, line 11-15 * * column 11, line 16-21 * -----	1-8	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
			G08B G06F
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		7 October 2002	Paven, A
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 02 07 6727

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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07-10-2002

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For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82