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(54) **System and carrier for the retrieval of a lost entity**

(57) The invention relates to a system for retrieving a lost entity (1) on the basis of a unique code (2) associated with the entity. The system comprises a control system (13) in which at least one telecommunication address (14) is linked to the unique code. The control system is provided with a telecommunication system which

is adapted and able to bring about at least one telecommunication connection (15) to the at least one telecommunication address on the basis of the unique code. Telecommunication means (20) of the owner, manager or carer of the entity are coupled to this telecommunication address (15). The code is transferred particularly from a carrier.

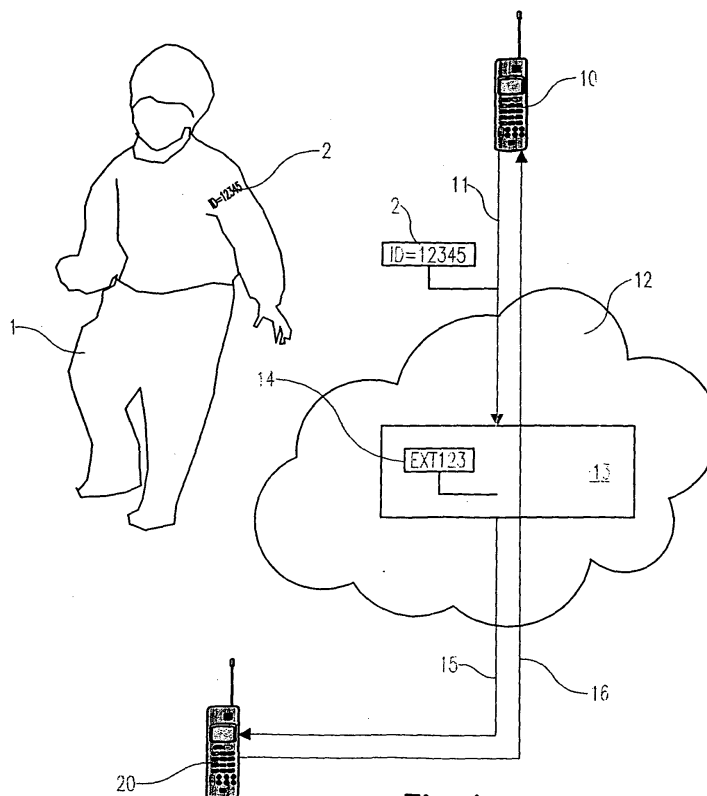


Fig.1

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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a system for retrieving a lost entity on the basis of a unique code associated with the entity.

[0002] This entity takes the form of a person or object, and in particular missing children. Beaches, amusement parks, fairs and other attractions are not infrequently characterized by being very busy, wherein particularly children can easily get lost. It is often difficult in a large crowd to keep sight of children adequately, with the result that parents and/or carers regularly have to be traced at such attractions. It is sometimes possible here to resort to an available public-address system, but it is quite often necessary to rely on both child and parents taking the initiative to report at an information point. In the meantime there will have been a great deal of distress and both child and parents will have been very upset.

[0003] The present invention has for its object to provide among other things a system of the type stated in the preamble with which children and other entities can be retrieved considerably more directly and thus also more quickly.

[0004] In order to achieve the stated objective, a system of the type stated in the preamble has the feature according to the invention that there is provided therein a control system in which at least one telecommunication address is linked to the unique code and that there is provided therein a telecommunication system which is adapted and able to bring about at least one telecommunication connection to the at least one telecommunication address on the basis of the unique code. In this system the entity is equipped with a unique code. In the case of a child the unique code can be arranged for instance in or on an armband or chain or provided in other manner. If the child loses its parents/carers and is encountered in this situation, it is possible to report to the control system to find quickly and directly a relevant communication address associated with the code at which the parents/carers can be contacted. This is forwarded in optionally automated manner to this communication address so as to have direct contact with the parents/carers, so that the period of uncertainty can be limited to a minimum on both sides. This is also possible *mutatis mutandis* in the case of lost property and other entities.

[0005] In a preferred embodiment the system according to the invention has the feature that the control system is a telecommunication system with which the unique code can be linked by a remote user to at least one telecommunication address to be entered by the user. In this case a person is no longer dependent on a service point or other information point to gain access to the control system, but a connection can be made thereto in simple manner by making use of for instance a mobile telecommunication provision such as a mobile telephone. The system more particularly has the feature

here that a voice-response system controls the control system and telecommunication system. Making use of per se known techniques, such a system can be embodied such that, by simply entering the code found in or on the entity, the system automatically forwards to the registered communication address.

[0006] In a particular embodiment the system according to the invention is characterized in that the at least one telecommunication address comprises an address from a group of an email address, a connection identification in a public telephone network, and a unique IP address within the Internet Protocol, and more particularly that the at least one telecommunication address comprises a connection identification in a mobile telephone network. Particularly if both the control system and the telecommunication address can be accessed via a mobile telecommunication network, a fully mobile system for retrieving a lost entity can be achieved within the context of the present invention.

[0007] In order to finance the system, the payment of an admission charge can be set as condition for use of the code. With a view hereto, a further particular embodiment of the system according to the invention has the feature that the unique code therein has a limited period of validity.

[0008] In order to ensure the uniqueness of the code in or on the entity, it is recommended that one agency or body is responsible for the provision thereof. The present invention therefore also relates to a carrier provided with the unique code as applied within the system according to the invention. Such carriers can be provided, optionally at a charge, in various forms and via diverse distribution channels.

[0009] With a view to an application for, among others, children of parents and/or carers, a further embodiment of the carrier according to the invention has the feature that the carrier comprises a strip on which the unique code is arranged as printing, and that the printing allows of transfer onto the skin of the entity. With an eye to attractions in or close to water, an embodiment of the system according to the invention herein has the further feature that the printing is waterproof. By thus applying the code as printing on for instance the upper arm, the code is readily visible and prevented from possibly being separated from the child, which is possible for instance in the case of an armband or necklace which is to be worn on the body and which includes the code.

[0010] The invention will now be further elucidated with reference to an exemplary embodiment and an associated drawing, in which:

figure 1 shows a schematic view of an exemplary embodiment of the system according to the invention; and

figure 2 shows a view of a carrier according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0011] The figures are purely schematic and not

drawn to scale. Some dimensions in particular can be exaggerated to a greater or lesser extent for the sake of clarity. Corresponding parts are designated as far as possible in the figures with the same reference numerals.

[0012] The system of figure 1 relates to the retrieval of a child 1 who has lost his parents for instance on a beach or in an amusement park, and is encountered in this situation by someone, such as for instance another visitor, referred to below as the helper. The helper recognizes a unique identification code 2 on the arm of the child and, making use of for instance his/her own mobile telephone device 10, he/she makes contact with a central control system 13 which can be reached via a public telecommunication network 12.

[0013] Control system 13 answers the call 11 from the helper in fully automatic manner with a voice-response system, on the basis of which the helper is asked to enter the unique code 2 with his/her telephone device 10. Control system 13 comprises or is coupled to a database in which at least one communication address is stored with the unique code 2. In this embodiment the communication address comprises a connection identification 14 of a mobile telecommunication network. On the basis of this connection identification 14 a connection 15 is made to a telecommunication device 20 coupled thereto of the parents of child 1, so that a telephone connection 16 is established between the helper and the parents, so that direct arrangements can be made to reunite the child with the parents.

[0014] The linking of connection identification 14 to code 2 can also take place fully automatically. The parent/carer makes contact with control system 13 using his/her or another telecommunication device 20. Guided by the voice-response system, the code 2 can be activated, wherein the parent/carer is requested to enter the desired communication addresses. Only after code 2 is thus activated is it ready for use. If desired, the period of use can be limited to for instance a day, whereafter the code and the communication addresses stored therewith are erased.

[0015] Code 2 can be arranged per se in any desired manner. Instead of being applied to the skin, a necklace or armband could for instance be arranged with the code therein or thereon. A mark on the skin does however have the advantage that it cannot become detached, certainly not if it takes a waterproof form, and will generally entail lower costs. Use can advantageously be made for this purpose of for instance a carrier 25 as shown in figure 2. The carrier comprises a plasticized paper strip to which a waterproof printing is applied which includes code 2 and allows itself to be transferred as a kind of fake tattoo onto the skin of child 1. In order to increase the degree of acceptance by the child it is possible, as here, to add an attractive image of for instance a soft toy or the like. Such carriers 25 can be distributed or sold via diverse outlets. The operating cost of the system according to the invention can thus be cov-

ered by the sale of carriers.

[0016] Although the invention has been further elucidated above with reference to only this exemplary embodiment, it will be apparent that the invention is by no means limited thereto. On the contrary, many variations and embodiments are still possible within the scope of the invention for a person with ordinary skill in the art. The system can therefore not only be applied to reunite children, but can also be employed for other people, animals and even goods. The unique code on the lost entity will always lead via the system according to the invention to the communication address where an owner, parent or carer of the lost entity can be directly reached. Access to the control system can be provided in diverse ways, so as well as via a telephone network also for instance via other telecommunication channels or a helpdesk. If desired, the method of access can be indicated in the printing with the code and separately on the carrier.

[0017] A charge for the use of the system according to the invention can be derived from the sale of the codes, for instance via printed carriers provided therewith, but the parent/carer can also be charged via a telephone subscription and in other ways. This latter has the advantage that a code with a period of use which is on the point of expiring can be renewed and prolonged in simple manner. Instead of a voice-response system another type of interface can be provided, for instance via the internet or a mobile data service such as WAP, SMS and other mobile information services. The system according to the invention provides the option of wholly autonomous operation.

Claims

1. System for retrieving a lost entity on the basis of a unique code associated with the entity, **characterized in that** there is provided therein a control system in which at least one telecommunication address is linked to the unique code and that there is provided therein a telecommunication system which is adapted and able to bring about at least one telecommunication connection to the at least one telecommunication address on the basis of the unique code.
2. System as claimed in claim 1, **characterized in that** the control system is a telecommunication system with which the unique code can be linked by a remote user to at least one telecommunication address to be entered by the user.
3. System as claimed in claim 2, **characterized in that** a voice-response system controls the control system and telecommunication system.
4. System as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3, **characterized**

in that the at least one telecommunication address comprises an address from a group of an email address, a connection identification in a public telephone network, and a unique IP address within the Internet Protocol.

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5. System as claimed in any of the foregoing claims, **characterized in that** the at least one telecommunication address comprises a connection identification in a mobile telephone network. 10
6. System as claimed in one or more of the foregoing claims, **characterized in that** the unique code therein has a limited period of validity. 15
7. Carrier provided with the unique code as applied within the system as claimed in one or more of the foregoing claims.
8. Carrier as claimed in claim 7, **characterized in that** the carrier comprises a strip on which the unique code is arranged as printing, and that the printing allows of transfer onto the skin of the entity. 20
9. Carrier as claimed in claim 8, **characterized in that** the printing is waterproof. 25
10. Carrier as claimed in claim 8 or 9, **characterized in that** the printing also comprises an attractive image. 30

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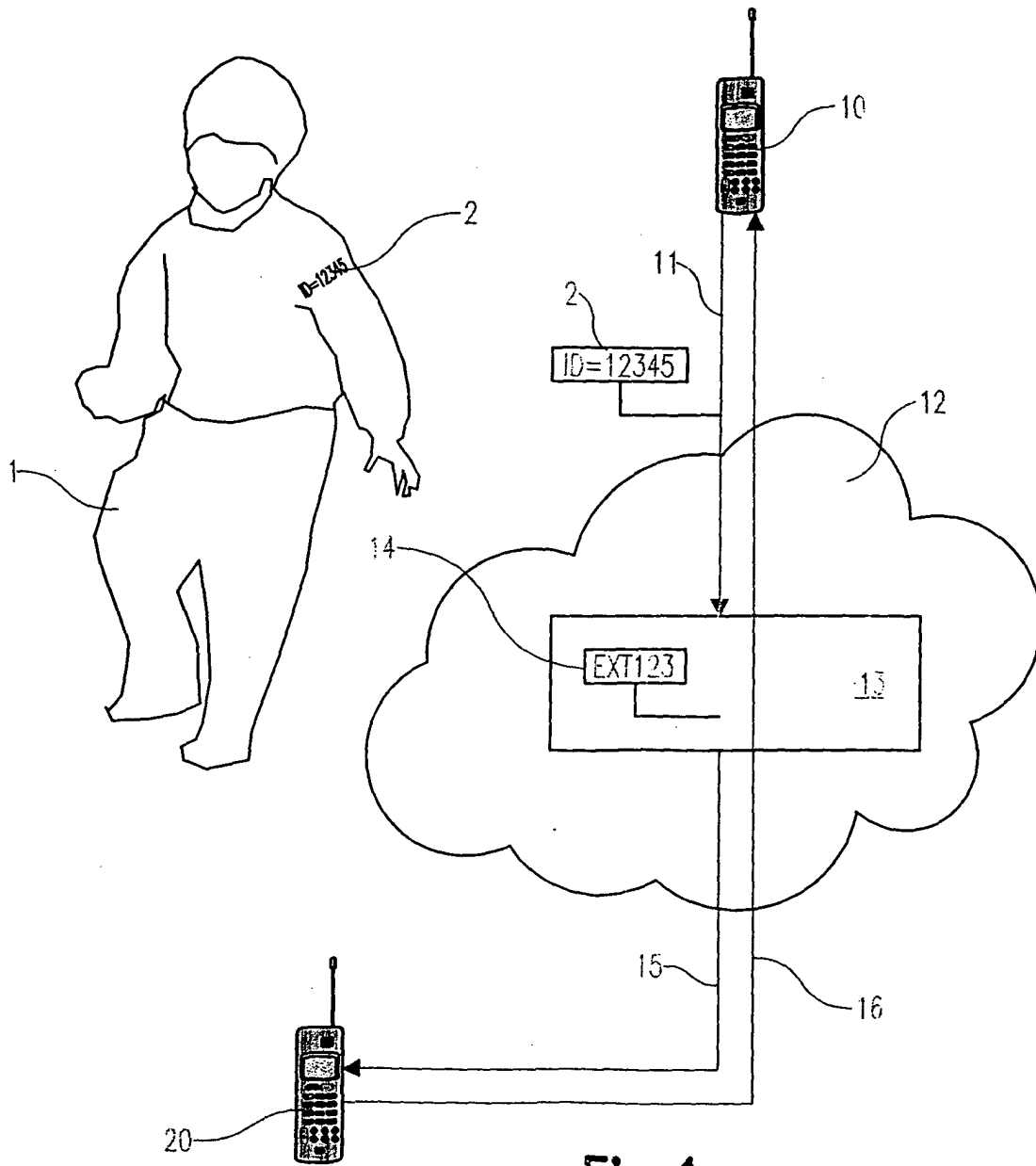


Fig.1

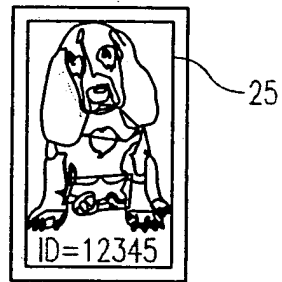


Fig.2



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 04 07 6565

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Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 1 September 2004	Examiner Coffa, 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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EP 04 07 6565

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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EP 04 07 6565

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