Electronic program guide with digital storage

Ein elektronischer Programmrückblick mit digitaler Speicherung

Guide électronique de programme à stockage numérique

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Description

Background of the Invention

[0001] This invention relates to video systems, and more particularly, to interactive television program guide systems which allow for digital storage of programs and program related information.

[0002] Cable, satellite, and broadcast television systems provide viewers with a large number of television channels. Users have traditionally consulted printed television program schedules to determine the programs being broadcast at a particular time. More recently, interactive electronic television program guides have been developed that allow television program information to be displayed on a user’s television.

[0003] Interactive program guides allow the user to navigate through television program listings using a remote control. In a typical program guide display, television listings are organized into subsets of listings according to multiple organization criteria and are sorted in various ways. One approach is to organize program listings into a program listings grid. Each row in the grid contains television program listings for a different channel. The columns in the grid correspond to a series of scheduled broadcast times. The user can scroll up or down to view program listings for different channels or may pan left or right to view information about programs being broadcast at different times.

[0004] Recently, interactive program guides have been developed that allow for storage of programs selected within the program guide on an independent storage device, typically a videocassette recorder. Usually, a control path involving an infrared transmitter coupled to an infrared receiver in the videocassette recorder is used to control the videocassette recorder. WO-A-92/22983 discloses an audio/video recorder system which receives a plurality of transmission signals each containing program information and simultaneously stores the received transmission signals. The system can be controlled by user input to allow for automatic recording of selected programs simultaneously input from multiple sources, reconfiguration of stored programs, and routing of stored programs to selected outputs. US-A-5,479,266 presents a user interface of a television schedule system based on a grid array from which programs can be selected for recording. The use of independent analog storage devices like videocassette recorders, however, does not allow for the more advanced features that might be implemented if a digital storage device were associated with the program guide.

[0005] It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide an interactive television program guide with digital storage.

Summary of the Invention

[0006] This and other objects of the invention are accomplished in accordance with appended claims 1 and 6 the principles of the present invention by providing an interactive program guide system with digital storage that allows the program guide to be used to provide more advanced features than previously offered by interactive program guide systems.

[0007] Program guide data is provided by a data source in a satellite uplink facility. This information is transmitted to a television distribution facility such as a cable headend via satellite link. The television distribution facility distributes the information (and television programming signals) to user television equipment on which an interactive television program guide is implemented. One suitable distribution scheme involves transmitting television channels and distributing the information for program listings in the vertical blanking interval of one of the channels or a sideband.

[0008] The user television equipment for receiving and processing the television program listings and program data may include a set-top box. The set-top box is also able to receive the television programming distributed by the television distribution facility. The program guide implemented on the set-top box processes television program listings information and generates display screens (e.g., an interactive television program guide grid) for display, e.g., on a standard television monitor. The user can interact with the television program guide by entering commands via a user input interface. An illustrative input interface is an infrared remote control with cursor keys, a "guide" button, a "record" button, a "play" button, an "exit" button, an "info" button, and an "enter", "select", or "OK" button. The set-top box may store television programming and program information in a digital storage device associated with the program guide. The digital storage device may be an optical or a magnetic storage device (e.g., a device using writable digital video discs, magnetic disks, or a hard drive or random access memory (RAM), etc.).

[0009] The use of a digital storage device associated with the program guide provides the user with more advanced features than could be performed using an independent analog storage device. For example, the current invention gives the user the ability to store information associated with recorded programs in a directory in the digital storage device thereby providing easy access to program information. The program guide may also provide a global media library for indicating the programs stored on removable storage media used with the program guide. Non-time-sensitive data associated with recorded programs may be stored in a way that allows the user to interact with the data on playback as if the program were being originally aired. The program guide also allows the user to define "super-programs" for playback of a sequence of stored programs or program segments. The program guide may also provide for the transfer of programs and super-programs to other volumes of the digital storage device or to a secondary storage device.
Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 is a schematic block diagram of a system in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a schematic block diagram of illustrative user television equipment in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 3 is a generalized schematic block diagram of portions of the illustrative television equipment of FIG. 2.

FIGS. 4-14 are illustrative display screens in accordance with the present invention.

FIGS. 15-22 are flow charts of steps involved in the operation of the present invention.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

[0011] An illustrative system 10 in accordance with the present invention is shown in FIG. 1. Main facility 12 provides data from program guide data source 14 to television distribution facility 16 via communications link 18. There are preferably numerous television distribution facilities 16, although only one such facility is shown in FIG. 1 to avoid over-complicating the drawing. Link 18 may be a satellite link, a telephone network link, a cable or fiber optic link, a microwave link, a combination of such links, or any other suitable communications path. If it is desired to transmit video signals over link 18 in addition to data signals, a relatively high bandwidth link such as a satellite link may generally be preferred to a relatively low bandwidth link such as a telephone line. Television distribution facility 16 may be any suitable distribution facility (e.g., a cable system headend, a broadcast distribution facility, a satellite television distribution facility, or any other suitable distribution facility).

[0012] The data transmitted by main facility 12 to television distribution facility 16 includes television program listings data (e.g., program times, channels, titles, and descriptions) and other program data for additional services other than television program listings (e.g., weather information, associated Internet web links, computer software, etc.).

[0013] Television distribution facility 16 distributes the television program listings and additional data to multiple users via communications paths 20. Each user has user television equipment 22 for displaying the television program listings information using an interactive television program guide. Communication paths 20 preferably have sufficient bandwidth to allow television distribution facility 16 to distribute television programming to user television equipment 22. If desired, television programming may be provided over separate communications paths (not shown).

[0014] An illustrative arrangement for user television equipment 22 is shown in FIG. 2. Television equipment 22 of FIG. 2 receives video and data from television distribution facility 16 (FIG. 1) at input 26. During normal television viewing, the user tunes set-top box 28 to a desired television channel. The signal for that television channel is then provided at video output 30. The output signal is typically either a radio-frequency (RF) signal on a predefined channel (e.g., channel 3 or 4), or a de-modulated video signal, but may also be a digital signal provided to television 36 on an appropriate digital bus (e.g., a bus using the IEEE 1394 standard, (not shown)). The video signal at output 30 is received by optional secondary storage device 32. Secondary storage device 32 can be any suitable type of analog or digital program storage device (e.g., a videocassette recorder, a digital video disc (DVD) player with the ability to record DVD discs, etc.). Program recording and other features may be controlled by set-top box 28 using control path 34. If secondary storage device 32 is a videocassette recorder, for example, a typical control path 34 involves the use of an infrared transmitter coupled to the infrared receiver in the videocassette recorder that normally accepts commands from a remote control such as remote control 40. Remote control 40 may be used to control set-top box 28, secondary storage device 32, and television 36.

[0015] The user may also record programs and program data in digital form on digital storage device 31. Digital storage device 31 may be a writable optical storage device (such as a DVD player capable of handling recordable DVD discs), a magnetic storage device (such as a disk drive or digital tape), or any other digital storage device. Digital storage device 31 preferably supports a directory structure containing information associated with stored entries. This directory information can be stored in one location, for example at the beginning or the end of the storage device. The directory information can also be distributed (e.g., by storing a portion of such information at the same location as each entry). For removable storage media like DVDs, each storage unit may have its own directory information, and the program guide may keep a global media library (discussed below).

[0016] Digital storage device 31 can be contained in set-top box 28 or it can be an external device connected to set-top box 28 via an output port and appropriate interface. If necessary, processing circuitry in set-top box 28 formats the received video, audio and data signals into a digital file format. Preferably, the file format is an open file format such as the Motion Pictures Expert Group (MPEG) MPEG-2 standard. The resulting data is streamed to digital storage device 31 via an appropriate bus (e.g., a bus using the IEEE 1394 standard), and is stored on digital storage device 31.

[0017] Television 36 receives video signals from secondary storage device 32 via communications path 38. The video signals on communications path 38 may be generated by secondary storage device 32 when playing back a prerecorded storage medium (e.g., a videocassette or a recordable digital video disc), by digital storage device 31 when playing back a prerecorded digital medium, may be passed through from set-top box 28,
a combination of such arrangements may be used. The video signals
provided to television 36 correspond to the desired channel to which
the user has tuned with set-top box 28. The video signals provided
to television 36 may also be by set-top box 28 when set-top box 28 is
used to play back information stored on digital storage device 31.

[0018] When the user wishes to access the features of the program
guide, the user may use a "menu" key on remote control 40 or an
appropriate key corresponding to the desired feature. For example,
if the user wishes to view programming information, a "guide" key
on remote control 40 can be used. When set-top box 28 receives
commands from remote control 40 that inform set-top box 28 that the menu or other feature button has been pressed, processing circuitry within set-top box 28 supplies information that is displayed on television 36 as described further below.

[0019] A more generalized embodiment of user television equipment 22 (FIG. 2) is shown in FIG. 3. As shown in FIG. 3, program listings, programming and program data associated with the programming (hereinafter "associated program data") from television distribution facility 16 (FIG. 1) are received by control circuitry 42 of user television equipment 22. Video signals are typically provided on multiple television channels. Associated program data and program listings may be provided on a television channel sideband, in the vertical blanking interval of a television channel, using an in-band digital channel, using an out-of-band digital signal, or by any other suitable data transmission technique.

[0020] The user controls the operation of user television equipment 22 with user input interface 46. User input interface 46 may be a pointing device, wireless remote control, keyboard, touch-pad, voice recognition system, or any other suitable user input device. To watch television, the user instructs control circuitry 42 to display a desired television channel on monitor 45. To access the features of the program guide, the user instructs the program guide implemented on user television equipment 22 to generate a main menu or a desired program guide display screen for display on monitor 45.

[0021] The functions of control circuitry 42 may be provided using the set-top box arrangement of FIG. 2. Alternatively, these functions may be integrated into an advanced television receiver, personal computer television (PC/TV), or any other suitable arrangement. If desired, a combination of such arrangements may be used.

[0022] When a user indicates a desire to access the main menu or other feature of the program guide (e.g., by entering a command with user interface 46), the program guide generates an appropriate program guide display screen for display on monitor 45. An illustrative main menu screen 50 is shown in FIG. 4. From the main menu, the user can access any one of a number of features of the program guide. Features indicated by main-menu screen 50 may include program listings, recording schedules, the digital storage medium directory, program guide setup, transferring stored entries and super-programs to another volume or device, and global media library. These and other features will be described below.

[0023] When main-menu screen 50 is displayed on monitor 45, the user may access a feature by indicating a desire to do so. This can be done, for example, by using user interface 46 to position movable highlight region 56 over the desired feature. If user input interface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, the user can position highlight region 56 by, for example, using "up", "down", "left", and "right" cursor keys. The user can then access the desired feature by entering an appropriate command by, for example, using a "select" or "OK" key (hereinafter referred to as "selecting" the entry). The main-menu screen may also consist of "buttons" which the user "pushes" by entering appropriate commands with user interface 46 (e.g., by highlighting a button and selecting it). The program guide then generates the appropriate program guide display screen for display on monitor 45.

[0024] When a user indicates a desire to view television programming information (e.g., by selecting program listings option 48 from main-menu screen 50, or by using a "guide" key on remote control 40), the program guide generates an appropriate program listings screen for display on monitor 45. A program listings screen may contain one or more lists of programs organized according to multiple organization criteria (e.g., by program type, theme, or any other pre-defined or user defined and selectable criteria) and sorted in various ways (e.g., alphabetically). The program listings screen may be overlaid over a program being viewed by the user or overlaid over a portion of the program in a "browse" mode.

[0025] One approach is to organize program listings into a program listings grid. An illustrative program listings grid 60 is shown in FIG. 5a. Program listings grid 60 has program listings rows 62, 64, 66, and 68. Program listings row 62 contains selectable program listings for programs 1 and 2 on channel 2 (Public Television). Program listings row 64 contains selectable program listings for programs 1 and 2 on channel 3 (HBO). Program listings row 66 contains selectable program listings for programs 1, 2, and 3 on channel 4 (NBC). Program listings row 68 contains a selectable program listing for program 1 on channel 5 (FOX). The programs on each channel are typically different.

[0026] Program listings grid 60 preferably has movable cell highlight region 61, which highlights the current grid cell. The range of movement of highlight region 61 is typically bounded by column 63 on the left, by program listings time cells 65 on the top, by screen boundary 67 on the right, and by lower screen boundary 69 on the bottom.

[0027] The user may position highlight region 61 by entering appropriate commands with user interface 46.
For example, if the user interface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, the user can position highlight region 61 using "up", "down", "left", and "right" cursor keys. If the user repeatedly moves highlight region 61 until it reaches lower screen boundary 69, further attempts at downward movement cause the program listings to scroll in the vertical direction.

Similarly, the listings in grid 60 are moved when highlight region 61 is panned (i.e., moved to the right or left). Panning highlight region 61 to the right causes the program listings in all of the program listings rows 62, 64, 66, and 68 to pan to the left by an equal amount. This allows new program listings to be displayed. Time cells 65 are adjusted accordingly (i.e., by incrementing each cell by 30 minutes). If highlight region 61 is panned to the left, the program listings in rows 62, 64, 66, and 58 pan to the right.

After a user positions highlight region 61 on a desired selectable program listing, the user may access a number of program guide features. For example, the user may access additional information (typically text or graphics, but possible video) about the listing by selecting that listing. The user may obtain this information without exiting grid 60. The user makes selections by entering appropriate selection commands with user interface 46 (FIG. 3). If user interface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, the user may use a "select", "OK", or "info" key to make a selection.

Making a selection directs the program guide to generate a program listing information screen for display on monitor 45. An illustrative program listing information screen 70 is shown in FIG. 6. Information displayed in information screen 70 may include any information associated with the listing supplied by main facility 12. The information may include, for example, the title of the selection, a description, episode information, the channel, cast members, parental control ratings, categories, available language(s), available video formats, or other information like associated Internet web sites or computer software.

The user can exit program listing information screen 70 by indicating a desire to exit the screen by, for example, entering appropriate commands with user interface 46 (FIG. 3). If user interface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, the user may for example, use an "exit" or "last" key to exit the screen. The program guide may respond to a "last" command by generating the previous program guide display screen for display on monitor 45. The program guide may respond to an "exit" command by returning the user to normal television viewing.

In an alternative embodiment, the program guide may also provide selectable listings of programs currently stored on digital storage device 49 in any form of list, table, or grid. The listings may be organized according to selectable organization criteria and sorted. One approach is to use a program listings grid, as shown in FIG. 5b. This may be done, for example, by using row 145 of program listings grid 141 to indicate currently stored programs, thereby treating digital storage device 49 like an additional channel. Multiple rows may be used to organize listings according to organization criteria (e.g., by theme, program type, or any other pre-defined or user defined selectable organization criteria). In each row, the listings may be sorted (e.g., alphabetically).

Each entry in a different column 147 of row 145 may correspond to a different movie stored on digital storage device 49. To view additional titles, the user may, for example, pan right or left by using "right" and "left" cursor keys on remote control 40 of FIG. 2.

Just like program listings grid 60 of FIG. 5a, program listings grid 141 of FIG. 5b may contain highlight region 149 to select listings in any of the rows, including row 145, and thereby access program listings information screen 70 (FIG. 6) for a selected listing. If the user selects a program stored on digital storage device 49 (i.e., a listing in row 145), the program guide responds by obtaining the information associated with the listing for display in program listings information screen 70 from digital storage device 49, and by displaying program listings information screen 70. The information for program listings information screen 70 may be stored as a directory entry on digital storage device 49.

The user may also select a program stored on digital storage device 49 from grid 141 for playback. If user interface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, the user may use a digital "play" key to select the program whose listing in row 145 is surrounded by highlight region 61. The program guide responds by issuing appropriate commands to digital storage device 49 to read the selected program and to display the program. Any non-time-sensitive data associated with the program stored on digital storage device 49 may be presented to the viewer by the program guide just as it was presented when the program was originally aired. This will be described more fully below. The program guide may also provide features during playback which are similar to those provided for by current analog storage technologies (e.g., "last-forward", "rewind", "pause", and "stop").

The program guide may also display an options screen in response to the user selection of any program listing. Such an option screen may include options like "playback", "delete", and "record" that the user may select-on-screen by issuing appropriate commands with user interface 46 (e.g., by positioning a highlight region over the desired feature and selecting the feature, or by pushing an on-screen "button" that represents the option).

The user may select a program and associated program data for recording on digital storage device 49 without leaving grid 60 or grid 141. The user makes selections for digital recording by entering appropriate selection commands with user interface 46 (FIG. 3). If user interface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, the user may use a digital "record" key to select the program whose listing is surrounded by high-
light region 61 for digital recording. If desired, the default recording techniques used by the program guide may be digital recording.

[0038] Making a selection for digital recording causes the program guide to gather information from the currently loaded digital storage medium. Such information may include the estimated amount of time remaining on the storage medium (if, for example, the digital storage medium is a partially full disk). The program guide may also check directory information on the digital storage medium and compare it to the selected program listing to determine if the selected program has already been recorded. If the program guide determines that the selection has already been recorded, re-recording is not necessary. The program guide may retain the information associated with the selected program listing (supplied by main facility 12 of FIG. 1) for access by the user (e.g., using the recording schedule screen described below).

[0039] In response to an indication by the user to digitally record a selection, the programming guide may generate a recording schedule screen for display on monitor 45. The recording schedule screen lists the programs currently scheduled for recording on digital storage device 49. An illustrative recording schedule screen 80 is shown in FIG. 7a. Recording schedule screen 80 contains a number of pieces of information which may include, for example, the volume name of the currently loaded medium, an estimate of the amount of time remaining on the medium, and a grid 81 or other suitable list or table listing the programs currently scheduled for recording and relevant recording information. Grid 81 may include the title of the selections, the channel for recording, the recording date and time, and the duration of the selection.

[0040] The user can access the associated program data supplied by main facility 12 of FIG. 1 of the programs scheduled to be recorded by indicating a desire to do so (e.g., by positioning highlight region 82 on a desired program listing and pressing an "OK" key). In response to such an indication, the program guide generates a selected program listing information screen for display on monitor 45. An illustrative selected program listing information screen 84 is shown in FIG. 7b. A selected program listing information screen is similar to a program listing information screen (see FIG. 6), but may also contain user fields that the user may edit to add information that the user desires to associate with the program. FIG. 7b shows illustrative user description field 85, user category field 86, and user other field 88. The user may edit the contents of these user fields by, for example, using user interface 46 to position highlight region 89 over the desired field and indicating the information that the user desires to associate with the program. If user interface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, alphanumeric keys on remote control 40 may be used, or the user may scroll through the alphabet using "up" and "down" keys to select individual letters and thereby form words in the user fields.

[0041] If all of the information does not fit on a single screen, the user can scroll downward (and upward) to view the non-displayed information by indicating a desire to so by, for example, using "up" and "down" keys on remote control 40. The program guide responds to such an indication by scrolling the screen accordingly and showing the non-displayed information.

[0042] Recording schedule screen 80 of FIG. 7a may also indicate which of the selections currently scheduled for recording will fit on the currently loaded storage medium (e.g., when a DVD is loaded in a DVD player). This may be done, for example, by using bold text or text of a different color (see, e.g., M*A*S*H and TERMINATOR listings 89). Selections that cannot fit may be indicated as such by a different indicator, like dotted line 83. Either or both indicators can be used and the types shown in FIG. 7a are for illustration purposes only.

[0043] The user can exit recording schedule screen 80 by indicating a desire to do so (e.g., by entering appropriate commands with user interface 46 of FIG. 3). If user interface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, the user may use, for example, an "exit" key to exit the screen. When the command is given, the program guide may respond by generating the previous screen for display on monitor 45.

[0044] The user may also view recording schedule screen 80 when not in a program listings screen. For example, if user interface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, the user may access recording schedule screen 80 when in main-menu screen 50 of FIG. 4 by positioning highlight region 56 (FIG. 4) over recording schedule option 52 and selecting recording schedule option 52. The user may also access recording schedule screen 80 by selecting a program from the program listings screen and selecting an on-screen "recording schedule" option from a list of on-screen options.

[0045] The user may also select programs and associated program data for digital recording when not in program listings grid 60 by indicating a desire to do so during normal television operation (e.g., by entering appropriate commands with user interface 46 of FIG. 3). If user interface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40, this can be done by using a "record" key during television viewing. The program guide responds by generating a recording schedule for display on monitor 45. An illustrative recording schedule 87 is shown in FIG. 8. Recording schedule screen 87 may display information of the program currently being viewed by the user, such as the current channel, begin time, and end time for recording. The program guide may provide the user with the opportunity to edit the displayed information (e.g., the start and end time) by issuing appropriate commands with user interface 46. When finished, the program guide may return the user to normal television viewing and begin recording the selection, the program guide may generate a recording schedule screen for display on monitor 45 so that the viewer may see the recording schedule.

[0046] Before recording a new program and associat-
ed program data, the program guide may automatically cause digital storage device 49 to search for available space, and may store the program and associated program data anywhere on digital storage device 49 (e.g., between two other programs). The program and associated program data may even be stored in non-contiguous space on the storage medium. A best-fit algorithm may be used to determine where to store the program based on available free space and the length and format of the program.

[0047] The program guide may also store associated program data in a directory entry of digital storage device 49. This data can include, for example, the date and time the program was recorded, the channel the program was recorded on, the time duration of the program, the program title and description, cast members, parental control ratings, program categories, episode information, recorded languages and video formats, Internet links, graphics, or any other information supplied by main facility 12 of FIG. 1, the user, or the programmer.

[0048] Along with the program and associated program data, the program guide may also store additional components of a program on digital storage device 49. This can include additional video formats, additional languages, additional subtitles, or other data that cannot be stored in a directory entry. The program guide will either store all of the supplied video formats and languages, or store only the variant that matches the current viewer profile preferences (described below).

[0049] Unless associated program data is time sensitive, the user may interact with the data stream during playback just as when the program was originally aired. If, for example, associated program data is computer software that the user could have accessed when the program was originally aired, the software may be stored on digital storage device 49, so that the user can access the software during playback. Such software may be, for example, shopping software that allows the user to place orders for purchasing goods offered in the program. Or, a program may have associated with it an Internet link that the user can select and access an Internet site.

[0050] The program guide may also allow a user to view the directory information of the currently loaded storage medium. The user can access this feature by indicating a desire to do so by, for example, issuing the appropriate commands with user interface 46. If user interface 46 is a remote control like remote control 40 of FIG. 2, this may be done by using a "directory" or "list" key. This can also be done by accessing the main menu 50 (FIG. 4) and positioning highlight region 56 over medium directory option 53 and selecting medium directory option 53.

[0051] When the user indicates a desire to view the directory information for the currently loaded storage medium, the program guide obtains directory information from digital storage device 49 and generates a directory listing screen for display on monitor 45. An illustrative directory listing screen 90 may indicate, for example, the volume name and available time left on the currently loaded storage medium. Directory listing screen 90 may also include directory listing grid 91.

[0052] Directory listing grid 91 contains information about entries stored on digital storage device 49. This information may include any of the directory information stored on the medium and may be presented according to the current viewer preferences (described below). It may include, for example, the title, channel, record date, record time and duration of the entries. It may also include an indication of whether the entries have been viewed. Because the directory information for directory listing screen 90 is stored digitally, it may generally be accessed rapidly (e.g., in a fraction of a second). This fast access capability makes the directory feature easy to use to quickly check the status of stored entries. This would not be possible if an analog storage device such as a standard videocassette recorded were used.

[0053] The program guide may allow the user to access a full view of all of the directory information stored for an entry. The user may access this feature while in directory listing screen 90 by indicating a desire to do so by, for example, entering appropriate commands with user interface 46. If user interface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, this can be done by positioning highlight region 95 over the desired entry using "up" and "down" keys, and then selecting the entry, or by selecting an on-screen "info" option.

[0054] Once the user indicates a desire to view the full directory entry information of an entry, the program guide generates a full entry information screen for display on monitor 45. An illustrative full entry information screen 100 is shown in FIG. 10. If the full directory information does not fit on one screen, the user can scroll downward (and upward) by indicating a desire to do so by, for example, using "up" and "down" keys on remote control 40. In addition, user-defined fields may be edited by positioning highlight region 101 over any user-defined field and entering information into the highlighted field (e.g., with alphanumeric keys on remote control 40).

[0055] To exit full entry information screen 100, the user indicates a desire to do so by, for example, using an "exit" key on remote control 40. The program guide responds by saving the directory information to digital storage device 49 if the information has changed and generating the previous screen for display on monitor 45.

[0056] The program guide allows a user to play back a stored entry when the user indicates a desire to do so by entering appropriate commands with user interface 46. This can be done, for example, by selecting an entry from directory listing grid 91 and using a "play" button on remote control 40, or by selecting an on-screen "play" option from a list of on-screen options generated by the program guide in response to the selection of an entry by the user. Any non-time sensitive data associated with the program may be presented to the viewer by the program guide just as it was presented when the program
was originally aired.

[0057] The program guide may also edit a program and its associated data when the user indicates a desire to do so. This can be done, for example, by entering appropriate commands with user interface 46. If user interface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, then this can be done by using "delete" keys in a particular way (such as by using the "delete" key twice), or by using a "partial" key, when the user is in directory listing screen 90. This may also be accomplished by selecting an on-screen "edit" option provided by the program guide in response to the selection of a program listing or directory entry.

[0058] Once the user indicates a desire to edit a program, the program guide generates an edit screen for display on monitor 45. An illustrative edit screen 110 is shown in FIGS. 11a, 11b, and 11c. Screen 110 indicates the entry to be edited and other relevant information. This information may include, for example, the title, channel, record date, record time, and duration of the entry. Screen 110 may also contain edit indicator 115 for indicating the portion of the entry for deletion. Indicator 115 may have start time 116, end time 117, markers 118 and 140, and highlight region 119. Screen 110 may also have video feedback area 113 for showing the user the portion of the program corresponding to the position of markers 118 and 140.

[0059] Highlight region 119 is initially positioned by the program guide so as to surround one of the markers, for example marker 118. The user may indicate a desired starting time for deleting by positioning marker 118 (FIG. 11b). This may be done, for example, by entering appropriate commands with user interface 46. If user interface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, this can be done by using "left" and "right" buttons of remote control 40 to slide marker 118 left and right. As the position of marker 118 is changed, its current time position ("marker time") 120 is displayed as shown in FIGS. 11b and 11c. The beginning portion of a program is edited by leaving marker 118 in its initial position.

[0060] When the desired start time position is indicated by marker 118, the user can select marker 140 to define the end of the program segment by, for example, using the "OK" key of remote control 40. The program guide responds by positioning highlight region 119 around marker 140. The user may indicate the end time of the portion of the program to be deleted by, for example, positioning marker 140 in the same way that marker 118 was positioned, as shown in FIG. 11c.

[0061] Video feedback area 113 may display the portion of the program corresponding to markers 118 and 140 as the markers are positioned by the user. The program guide may also provide the user with the opportunity to view the portion of the program selected for deletion in a "fast-forward" playback mode, once the program portion is selected.

[0062] After the user is finished, the program guide may allow the user to continue to edit additional segments. The program guide may also return the user to a previous screen (e.g., directory listing screen 90) or to normal television viewing, when the user indicates a desire to do so (e.g., using a "last" or "exit" key on remote control 40). The program guide may also provide the user with the opportunity to confirm that the portion selected for deletion is properly defined.

[0063] Once the program portion or portions are defined, the program guide issues appropriate commands to digital storage device 49 to delete the selected program segment, additional components, and associated data as appropriate. For example, the program guide may immediately display directory listing screen 90 and issue appropriate commands to digital storage device 49 to delete the selected portion and update the directory information associated with that portion, if appropriate.

[0064] The program guide may also allow the user to define "super-programs". Super-programs are sequences of programs or program segments that the guide will play back sequentially in a specified order. The user may indicate the desire to access the super-program feature by, for example, entering appropriate commands with user interface 46. If user interface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, the user may use a "super-program" key on remote control 40 after positioning a highlight region such as highlight region 95 of directory listing screen 90 (FIG. 9) over a desired program listing (e.g., M*A*S*H*), or by selecting an on-screen "super-program" option from a list of on-screen options which are provided by the program guide when a program is selected.

[0065] The program guide may also provide the user with the ability to name super-programs and to store them on digital storage device 49. Entries for the named super-programs may be kept in the directory maintained on digital storage device 49, and may be displayed in screens which list directory entries (e.g., directory listing screen 90), along with the directory entries for program listings. For example, when directory listing screen 90 is displayed by the program guide, the program guide may provide the user with the opportunity to select a named super-program.

[0066] In response to the user selection of a named super-program, the program guide may generate a super-program screen for display on monitor 45. The program guide may also provide the user with an on-screen list of options for performing super-program functions (e.g., playing, transferring or editing the super-program).

[0067] When the user indicates a desire to define a super-program, the program guide generates a super-program screen for display on monitor 45. An illustrative super-program screen 130 is shown in FIGS. 12a and 12b.

[0068] Super-program screen 130 is organized into three areas. Area 131 indicates the selections stored on digital storage device 49 (or the currently loaded digital storage medium of digital storage device 49). Area 132 indicates the super-program sequence. Video feedback
area 137 displays the portion of the program included in
the super-program. Super-program screen 130 may also
indicate the volume name of and time remaining on the
currently loaded storage medium.

[0069] The three areas of super-program screen 130
may also be presented only when needed. For example,
area 131 may be displayed only when the program guide
is providing the user with the opportunity to select a pro-
gram stored on digital storage device 49. Once the user
has selected a program, area 131 may be removed and
area 132 may replace it while the program guide is pro-
viding the user with the opportunity to define a program
segment for inclusion in the super-program. Video feed-
back area 137 may be displayed only in response to an
indication by the user to the program guide to display the
program segment. Thus, it may not be necessary for all
three areas to be displayed at once.

[0070] To define a super-program, the user indicates
which program is to be included in the super-program
sequence. The program guide may also give the user
the ability to include in the current super-program other
previously defined super-programs. Area 131 includes a
directory listing grid 133 for listing the programs and su-
per-programs stored on digital storage device 49. If the
user interface is a remote control such as remote control
40 of FIG. 2, the user may use “up” and “down” keys to
position highlight region 134 on top of the desired pro-
gram or super-program. The user may then select a pro-
gram or super-program by using a “select” or “OK” key
on remote control 40. The user may also access other
information associated with the entry by using an “info”
key on remote control 40, or by selecting a suitable option
from an on-screen options list provided by the super-
program. The program guide generates a full entry infor-
mation screen containing information associated with the
selected program when the “info” key is pressed.

[0071] Whenever the user selects a program, the pro-
gram guide places the selected entry in the super-pro-
gram sequence at a defined point in the sequence (e.g.,
at the end of the sequence). As shown in FIG. 12a, for
example, a first segment entry has been selected by the
user and the user is currently selecting the second seg-
ment entry. The segment entries are listed in second area
132. The user then has the option of defining the play
segment of the program to be played. Indicators 135 in-
dicate the currently defined play segment.

[0072] If the user wishes to define a play segment, the
user may do so, for example, by using markers 136 to
define the segment in the same manner described for
editing programs. As shown in FIG. 12b, the user uses
highlight region 134 (positioned by the program guide
over one of the markers) to move the markers 136 to
define the play segment. Video feedback area 137 dis-
plays the portion of the program corresponding to mark-
ers 136 as markers 136 are individually positioned. The
user may indicate he or she is finished defining the play
segment by, for example, using an “OK” key on remote
control 40. The program guide then responds to this in-
dication by positioning highlight region 134 (FIG. 12a) in
first area 131 to allow the user to define another entry in
the super-program sequence.

[0073] The user may indicate that he or she is finished
defining the super-program by issuing appropriate com-
mands with user interface 46. If user interface 46 is a
remote control such as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, the
user may use a “play” key to finish editing the super-
program and play the super-program. The user may also
select an on-screen “play” option from a list of on-screen
options provided by the program guide.

[0074] The program guide responds by issuing the ap-
propriate instructions to digital storage device 49 to read
the programs and associated program data of the defined
super-program sequence. The program guide then in-
structs television equipment 22 to provide the program
and any associated data (e.g., software) in the appropri-
ate format for display on monitor 45 and use by the user
as if the user were viewing the program when it was orig-
inally aired. If monitor 45 is a television, for example, user
television equipment 22 may convert the program from
digital format to the appropriate RF or demodulated
video signal for display on monitor 45.

[0075] The user may also store the super-program for
playback or editing at a later time. The user may indicate
a desire to postpone playback by, for example, issuing
appropriate commands with user interface 46. If user in-
terface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40
of FIG. 2, the user may use an “exit” key on remote control
40 or select an on-screen “exit” option. Control circuitry
42 responds to an indication to postpone playback by
storing the playback sequence (either in memory or on
the digital storage device). The user may later access the
super-program by, for example, selecting the super-
program while in directory listing screen 90. The program
guide may respond by providing an on-screen list of op-
tions (e.g., edit, play back, transfer) that the user may
select from. The program guide may also respond by
generating a super-program screen with the previously
entered selections and defined play-segments, providing
the user with the opportunity to add, edit or re-order the
programs and program segments.

[0076] The program guide may also allow the user to
transfer programs and super-programs stored on digital
storage device 49 to other volumes of digital storage de-
vice 49 or to secondary storage device 47 (FIG. 3.). Sec-
ondary storage device 47 may be another storage device
available in the home network system like a videocas-
sette recorder, a recordable digital video disc device, a
computer (with an appropriate storage device), or other
digital storage device. This feature may be accessed by,
for example, issuing appropriate commands with user
interface 46. If user interface 46 is a remote control such
as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, the user may use a
“record” or “transfer” key when in the super-program
screen, or, for example, the user may select a “transfer”
option from an on-screen list of options provided by the
program guide in response to the user selecting a super-
program from directory listing screen 90.

[0077] The program guide responds to this indication by issuing appropriate instructions to digital storage device 49 to read the selected programs and associated data or the programs and associated data of the selected super-program sequence. The program guide then transfers the programs and associated data (if possible) in an appropriate format to secondary program data storage device 47. If, for example, secondary storage device 47 is a videocassette recorder, the program guide directs user television equipment 22 to convert the digitally stored program or super-program into an appropriate analog format.

[0078] Transferring the data (e.g., software) associated with a program or super-program may not be possible with some analog secondary storage devices, so the program guide may accordingly ignore the associated data during transfer. The program guide may, however, provide for the labeling of analog storage media with associated data. Program guides that provide for labeling videocassettes with program information are described, for example, in Blackwell U.S. patent application Serial No. 08/924,813, which is hereby incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

[0079] The programs and data may also be transferred directly from digital storage device 49 to secondary storage device 47 via channel 43 if desired. The program guide may also transfer the programs and data to another volume of digital storage device 49.

[0080] If digital storage device 49 is a device that uses removable recording media (e.g., floppy disks or recordable optical discs) the program guide may also allow a user to view a global media library screen which indicates directory information of removable storage media used with the program guide. The user may access this feature by indicating a desire to do so by, for example, entering appropriate commands with user interface 46. If user interface 46 is a remote control such as remote control 40 of FIG. 2, this may be done by, for example, using a “library” key. This may also be done by accessing main menu 50 (FIG. 4) and positioning highlight region 56 over global media library option 57 and selecting media library option 57.

[0081] The global media library may be maintained automatically by the program guide. For example, the program guide may store or update directory entry information according to the current viewer preferences (described below) in a central storage area (e.g., random access memory (RAM) or a central hard disk drive) each time directory information is stored or updated on a removable storage medium. The program guide may also store unique identifiers identifying the removable storage medium on which programs are stored (e.g., volume names or media numbers).

[0082] An illustrative global media library screen 250 is shown in FIG. 13. Global media library screen 250 may display program listings in any list, table, grid or other suitable form that contains information about stored entries on removable storage media used in digital storage device 49. Listings may be grouped into subsets of listings according to multiple organization criteria and sorted in various ways. Another approach is to display the listings in a library listing grid, such as library listing grid 251. Library listing grid 251 may include a row for each removable storage medium used with digital storage device 49 (e.g., rows 261, 262, 263, 264, and 265), and columns for each program stored on each removable storage medium (e.g., columns 271, 272, and 273). A user may access additional storage media and additional programs not displayed by, for example, scrolling up and down or panning left and right.

[0083] Just like directory listing screen 90 of FIG. 9, global media library screen 250 of FIG. 13 allows the user to access features of the program guide already described (e.g., by positioning highlight region 257 around a listing and selecting the listing), which may include accessing a full entry information screen, playing back, deleting and partially deleting programs, and defining super-programs containing programs from different storage media. These features may also be accessed by the user by selecting the desired feature from a list of on-screen options provided by the program guide in response to the selection of a listing by the user.

[0084] If the user indicates a desire to access a feature of the program guide which operates on a medium that is not currently loaded in digital storage device 49, the program guide may automatically change the loaded storage medium if digital storage device 49 has the ability to do so. Digital storage device 49 may be, for example, an optical jukebox with multiple recordable optical discs. If the user selects a program on a disc not currently positioned before a read/write head of the jukebox, the jukebox re-arranges the discs until the disc with the selected program is positioned for reading or writing. If the disc with the selected program is not in the jukebox, the program guide may display indication 255 to the user that the disc must be loaded. The program guide may also display such an indication if, for example, digital storage device 49 is a floppy disk drive and the disk with the selected program is not in the drive. Indication 255 may include a unique identifier identifying the unloaded storage medium. Preferably, the unique identifier is not displayed for the user unless the required removable storage medium is not loaded.

[0085] If digital storage device 49 uses removable storage media (e.g., floppy disks or recordable optical disks), the program guide may provide the user with the opportunity to enter an identifier that identifies the removable storage medium on which the program is stored. The identifier may be a volume name, a medium number, or other suitable unique indicator.

[0086] The program guide may also allow the user to choose various selectable options and select the types of information for display in various screens. The user can access this feature by indicating a desire to do so by, for example, using user interface 46 to enter appro-
The program guide displays a recording schedule screen for display on monitor 45. At step 410, the program guide displays a recording schedule screen, such as recording schedule screen 80 of FIG. 7a, on monitor 45. At step 450, the program guide indicates on monitor 45 the programs currently scheduled for storage on digital storage device 49. At step 452, the program guide provides a user with the opportunity to select one of the indicated programs.

The program guide may also display a recording screen for display on monitor 45 so as to provide the user with access to the programs and associated program data as if the programs and associated program data were being originally aired, as set forth in step 406.

At steps 408, 410, 412, and 414 the program guide displays on monitor 45 a set-up screen (such as set-up screen 120 of FIG. 14), a recording schedule screen (such as recording schedule screen 80 of FIG. 7a), a program listings screen (such as a screen containing program listings grid 60 of FIGS. 5a and 5b), and an edit screen (such as edit screen 110 of FIGS. 11a, 11b, and 11c). At step 416, the program guide transfers the programs and associated program data (if possible) to another volume of digital storage device 49 or to secondary storage device 47 (FIG. 3).

FIG. 16 illustrates steps involved providing the user with the ability to define selectable options. At step 424, the program guide provides the user with the opportunity to define storage options. If language, video format, enforcement of parental control, and auto-erase storage options are provided (FIG. 15), the program guide stores the programs and associated program data on digital storage device 49 according to how the storage options are defined as set forth in steps 426, 428, 430, and 432 respectively.

The program guide may also provide the user with the opportunity to define playback options, as set forth in step 434. If default language, default video format, and skip advertising playback options are provided, the program guide displays the programs and associated program data on monitor 45 according to how the options are defined as set forth in steps 436, 438, 440, respectively.

FIG. 17 illustrates steps involved in providing a user with the opportunity to record programs and associated program data on digital storage device 49. At step 410, the program guide displays a recording schedule screen, such as recording schedule screen 80 of FIG. 7a, on monitor 45. At step 450, the program guide indicates on monitor 45 the programs currently scheduled for storage on digital storage device 49. At step 452, the program guide provides the user with the opportunity to select one of the indicated programs.

The program guide may also display a recording screen for display on monitor 45 so as to provide the user with access to the programs and associated program data as if the programs and associated program data were being originally aired, as set forth in step 406.
step 468, the program guide provides the user with the opportunity to edit recording information, such as begin and end time. At step 470, the program guide provides the user with the opportunity to access the recording schedule screen. The program guide displays the recording schedule screen (step 410) or begins recording programs, associated data, and components (step 462) depending on the indication from the user.

[0099] FIG. 18 illustrates steps involved in displaying program listings and program listing information on monitor 45. The program guide may display a program listings screen on monitor 45 at step 412. The program guide may include in the program listings screen a program listings grid (sub-step 470). At step 472, the program guide provides the user with the opportunity to define and select organization criteria (e.g., theme, program type, etc.) and chose a sorting method (e.g., alphabetically) for organizing and sorting the listings. At step 474, the program guide provides the user with the opportunity to select a program listing. The program guide may also display on monitor 45 a program listings information screen, such as program listings information screen 70 of FIG. 6, indicating associated program listing information.

[0100] At step 478, the program guide may provide a list of on-screen options that the user can select to access program guide features. For example, there may be on-screen "record" and "super-program" options. If super-programs and stored entries are included in the program listings screen, the program guide may also provide on-screen "transfer" and "playback" options. The program guide displays programs, associated data, and additional components at step 480. This may be program, data, and components of the selected listing. At step 480 the program guide may also return the user to the program being viewed before the program listings screen was accessed. Step 480 may also correspond to where the user watches television programming before having accessed the program listings screen.

[0101] Other steps involved in accessing programs and associated data stored on digital storage device 49 are set forth in FIG. 19. The program guide stores programs and associated program data on digital storage device 49 at step 406. At step 488, the program guide maintains a directory of the stored associated program data. At step 490, the program guide displays a directory listing screen, such as directory listing screen 90 of FIG. 9, on monitor 45. The program guide indicates directory entry information at step 492 (by, for example, displaying directory listing grid 92 of FIG. 9 on monitor 45), and provides a user with the opportunity to select directory entry information at step 494. At step 495, the program guide provides the user with an on-screen list of options (e.g., "playback", "transfer", "super-program", etc.).

[0102] Steps involved in displaying additional information for a selected entry are set forth in steps 496, 498, 500, and 502. At step 496 the program guide displays a full entry information screen, such as full entry information screen 100 of FIG. 10, on monitor 45. At step 498, the program guide displays fields of directory entry information on monitor 45, and at step 500 the program guide displays user-defined fields on monitor 45. At step 502, the program guide provides the user with the opportunity to enter user information in the user-defined fields.

[0103] Steps involved in editing programs and associated program data and associated program data associated with directory entry information are set forth in steps 504, 506, 508, and 510 of FIG. 20. The program guide displays an edit screen, such as edit screen 110 of FIGS. 11a, 11b, and 11c, on monitor 45. At step 506, the program guide provides a user with the opportunity to define the portions of stored programs and associated program data to be edited by the program guide. At step 508 the program guide displays a video feedback area on monitor 45. The program guide edits the portions of stored programs and associated data from digital storage device 45 at step 510.

[0104] Steps involved in providing the global media library feature of the present invention are set forth in FIG. 21. At step 522, the program guide stores programs and associated program data on removable digital storage media in digital storage device 49. At step 524, the program guide maintains a global media library of the stored associated program data. The program guide displays a global media library screen, such as global media library screen 250 of FIG. 13, on monitor 45 at step 526. At step 528 the program guide provides a user with the opportunity to select a program indicated by the global media library screen. If the digital storage medium containing the selected program is not loaded in digital storage device 49, the program guide displays on monitor 45 an indication that the storage medium is not loaded at step 530.

[0105] Steps involved in providing the super-program feature of the present invention are set forth in FIG. 22. The program guide stores programs and associated program data on digital storage device 49 at step 532. At step 534, the super-program sequence is defined. This may be done by displaying a super-program screen, such as super-program screen 130 of FIGS. 12a and 12b, on monitor 45 as set forth in step 536. Stored programs are indicated by the program guide on monitor 45 at step 538, and the program guide provides a user with the opportunity to select the indicated programs at step 540. The program guide displays the programs and associated program data which are part of the super-program sequence on monitor 45 according to the super-program sequence at step 550.

[0106] Further steps involved in providing the super-program feature are set forth in steps 524, 544, 546, and 548. At step 542, the program guide provides the user with the opportunity to define play segments. The program guide may display a play segment indicator and marker for defining the play segment, as indicated by step 544. At step 546, the program guide displays a video feedback area on monitor 45. The program guide displays the play segments of programs and associated pro-
gram data on monitor 45 according to the super-program sequence at step 548.

The foregoing is merely illustrative of the principles of this invention and various modifications can be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the scope of the invention.

Claims

1. A method for transferring recorded programs using an interactive television program guide implemented on user television equipment, the method comprising:
   - displaying in a display screen at least one program listing related to at least one program;
   - enabling a user to select a program entry from the at least one displayed program listing;
   - recording the selected program related to the at least one displayed program listing on a digital storage device;
   - displaying at least one recorded program listing for at least one program recorded on the digital storage device, wherein the at least one recorded program listing includes a recorded program entry for the program recorded on the digital storage device;
   - enabling the user to select the recorded program entry to transfer the recorded program from the digital storage device to a secondary storage device; and
   - transferring the recorded program from the digital storage device to a secondary storage device.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
   - enabling the user to select a sequence of programs recorded on the digital storage device; and
   - transferring the sequence of programs to the secondary storage device.

3. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the transferring of the recorded program is performed in response to the user selection of a key on a remote control.

4. The method of any preceding claim, further comprising recording program information on the digital storage device when the program is recorded on the digital storage device.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising transferring the recorded program information from the digital storage device to the secondary storage device when the recorded program is transferred to the secondary storage device.

6. An interactive television program guide system for transferring recorded programs implemented on user television equipment, the system comprising:
   - means for displaying in a display screen at least one program listing related to at least one program;
   - means for enabling a user to select a program entry from the at least one displayed program listing;
   - means for recording the selected program related to the at least one displayed program listing on a digital storage device;
   - means for displaying at least one recorded program listing for at least one program recorded on the digital storage device, wherein the at least one recorded program listing includes a recorded program entry for the program recorded on the digital storage device;
   - means for enabling the user to select the recorded program entry to transfer the recorded program from the digital storage device to a secondary storage device; and
   - means for transferring the recorded program from the digital storage device to a secondary storage device.

7. The method of claim 1 or the system of claim 6, wherein the secondary storage device is a digital medium.

8. The method of claim 7 or the system of claim 7, wherein the digital medium is random access memory.

9. The method of claim 7 or the system of claim 7, wherein the digital medium is an optical disc.

10. The method of claim 1 or the system of claim 6, wherein the secondary storage device comprises a removable recording media.

11. The system of claim 6 further comprising:
   - means for enabling the user to select a sequence of programs recorded on the digital storage device; and
   - means for transferring the sequence of programs to the secondary storage device.

12. The system of claim 6, wherein the means for transferring of the recorded program is performed in response to the user selection of a key on a remote control.

13. The system of claim 6, further comprising means for recording program information on the digital storage device when the program is recorded on the digital storage device.
storage device.

14. The system of claim 13, further comprising means for transferring the recorded program information from the digital storage device to the secondary storage device when the recorded program is transferred to the secondary storage device.

15. The method of claim 1 or the system of claim 6, wherein the program is a broadcast program.

Patentansprüche

1. Verfahren zum Übermitteln aufgezeichneter Programme unter Verwendung eines interaktiven Fernsehprogramm-Führers, der auf einer Benutzer-Fernseheinrichtung implementiert ist, wobei das Verfahren aufweist:

   Anzeigen in einer Anzeige-Schirmansicht von zumindest einer Programmaufstellung, die sich auf zumindest ein Programm bezieht;
   einem Benutzer Ermöglichen, einen Programm eintrag von der zumindest einen angezeigten Programmaufstellung auszuwählen;
   Aufzeichnen des ausgewählten Programms, welches mit der zumindest einen angezeigten Programmaufstellung in Zusammenhang steht, auf einer digitalen Speichereinheit;
   Anzeigen zumindest einer Auflistung aufgezeichneter Programme für zumindest ein Programm, welches auf der digitalen Speichereinheit aufgezeichnet ist, wobei die mindest eine Auflistung aufgezeichneter Programme einen Programmaufzeichnungs-Eintrag für das auf der digitalen Speichereinheit aufgezeichnete Programm enthält;
   dem Benutzer Ermöglichen, den Programmaufzeichnungs-Eintrag auszuwählen, um das aufgezeichnete Programm von der digitalen Speichereinheit zu einer sekundären Speichereinheit zu übermitteln; und
   Übermitteln des aufgezeichneten Programms von der digitalen Speichereinheit zu einer sekundären Speichereinheit.

2. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, welches weiters aufweist:

   dem Benutzer Ermöglichen, eine Abfolge von Programmen auszuwählen, die auf der digitalen Speichereinheit aufgezeichnet sind; und
   Übermitteln der Abfolge von Programmen zu der sekundären Speichereinheit.

3. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, wobei das Übermitteln des aufgezeichneten Programms in Reaktion auf die Benutzerauswahl einer Taste auf einer Fern steuerung ausgeführt wird.

4. Verfahren nach einem der vorangehenden Ansprüche, welches weiters das Aufzeichnen von Programminformation auf der digitalen Speichereinheit aufweist, wenn das Programm auf der digitalen Speichereinheit aufgezeichnet wird.

5. Verfahren nach Anspruch 4, welches weiters das Übermitteln der aufgezeichneten Programminformation von der digitalen Speichereinheit zu der sekundären Speichereinheit aufweist, wenn das aufgezeichnete Programm zu der sekundären Speichereinheit übermittelt wird.

6. Interaktives Fernsehprogramm-Führer-System zum Übermitteln aufgezeichneter Programme, welches auf einer Benutzer-Fernseheinrichtung implementiert ist, wobei das System aufweist:

   Mittel zum Anzeigen in einer Anzeige-Schirmansicht von zumindest einer Programmaufstellung, die sich auf zumindest ein Programm (45, 60) bezieht;
   Mittel, um einem Benutzer zu ermöglichen, einen Programmeintrag (61) von der zumindest einen angezeigten Programmaufstellung auszuwählen;
   Mittel zum Aufzeichnen (49) des ausgewählten Programms, welches mit der zumindest einen angezeigten Programmaufstellung in Zusammenhang steht, auf einer digitalen Speichereinheit;
   Mittel zum Anzeigen (80) zumindest einer Auflistung aufgezeichneter Programme für zumindest ein Programm, welches auf der digitalen Speichereinheit aufgezeichnet ist, wobei die zumindest eine Auflistung aufgezeichneter Programme einen Programmaufzeichnungs-Eintrag für das auf der digitalen Speichereinheit aufgezeichnete Programm enthält;
   Mittel, um dem Benutzer zu ermöglichen, den Programmaufzeichnungs-Eintrag auszuwählen, um das aufgezeichnete Programm von der digitalen Speichereinheit zu einer sekundären Speichereinheit zu übermitteln; und
   Mittel zum Übermitteln des aufgezeichneten Programms von der digitalen Speichereinheit zu einer sekundären Speichereinheit.

7. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1 oder System nach Anspruch 6, wobei die sekundäre Speichereinheit ein digitales Medium ist.

8. Verfahren nach Anspruch 7 oder System nach Anspruch 7, wobei das digitale Medium ein Speicher mit wahlfreiem Zugriff ist.

10. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1 oder System nach Anspruch 6, wobei die sekundäre Speichereinheit ein entfernbares Aufzeichnungsmedium aufweist.

11. System nach Anspruch 6, welches weitaus aufweist:

   5. Mittel, um dem Benutzer zu ermöglichen, eine Abfolge von Programmen auszuwählen, die auf der digitalen Speichereinheit aufgezeichnet sind; und

12. System nach Anspruch 6, wobei das Mittel zum Übermitteln des aufgezeichneten Programms in Reaktion auf die Benutzerauswahl einer Taste auf einer Fernsteuerung ausgeführt wird.

13. System nach Anspruch 6, welches weitaus Mittel zum Aufzeichnen von Programminformation auf der digitalen Speichereinheit aufweist, wenn das Programm auf der digitalen Speichereinheit aufgezeichnet wird.


15. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1 oder System nach Anspruch 6, wobei das Programm ein Rundfunksprogramm ist.

Revendications

1. Procédé permettant de transférer des programmes enregistrés à l’aide d’un guide interactif de programmes de télévision mis en oeuvre sur un équipement de télévision personnel, le procédé comprenant les étapes suivantes :

   l’affichage sur un écran d’affichage d’au moins un intitulé de programme lié à au moins un programme ;
   le fait de permettre à un utilisateur de sélectionner une entrée de programme à partir dudit au moins un intitulé de programme affiché ;
   l’enregistrement du programme sélectionné lié audit au moins un intitulé de programme affiché sur le dispositif de stockage numérique ;
   l’affichage d’au moins un intitulé de programme enregistré correspondant à au moins un programme enregistré sur le dispositif de stockage numérique, dans lequel ledit au moins un intitulé de programme enregistré inclut une entrée de programme enregistré correspondant au programme enregistré sur le dispositif de stockage numérique ;
   le fait de permettre à l’utilisateur de sélectionner l’entrée de programme enregistré pour transférer le programme enregistré du dispositif de stockage numérique vers un dispositif de stockage secondaire, et
   le transfert du programme enregistré du dispositif de stockage numérique vers un dispositif de stockage secondaire.

2. Procédé suivant la revendication 1 comprenant en outre :

   le fait de permettre à l’utilisateur de sélectionner une suite de programmes enregistrés sur le dispositif de stockage numérique, et
   le transfert de la suite de programmes vers le dispositif de stockage secondaire.

3. Procédé suivant la revendication 1 ou 2, dans lequel le transfert du programme enregistré est effectué en réaction à la sélection par l’utilisateur d’une touche sur une télécommande.

4. Procédé suivant l’une quelconque des revendications précédentes, comprenant en outre l’enregistrement d’informations sur le programme sur le dispositif de stockage numérique lorsque le programme est enregistré sur le dispositif de stockage numérique.

5. Procédé suivant la revendication 4, comprenant en outre le transfert des informations sur le programme enregistré du dispositif de stockage numérique vers le dispositif de stockage secondaire lorsque le programme enregistré est transféré vers le dispositif de stockage secondaire.

6. Système de guide interactif de programmes de télévision pour transférer des programmes enregistrés mis en oeuvre sur un équipement de télévision personnel, le système comprenant :

   des moyens pour afficher dans un écran d’affichage d’au moins un intitulé de programme lié à au moins un programme (45, 60) ;
   des moyens pour permettre à un utilisateur de sélectionner une entrée de programme (61) à partir dudit au moins un intitulé de programme affiché (42) ;
   des moyens pour enregistrer (49) le programme sélectionné lié audit au moins un intitulé de pro-
gramme affiché sur un dispositif de stockage numérique ;
des moyens pour afficher (80) au moins un intitulé de programme enregistré correspondant à au moins un programme enregistré sur le dispositif de stockage numérique, dans lequel ledit au moins un intitulé de programme enregistré inclut une entrée de programme enregistré correspondant au programme enregistré sur le dispositif de stockage numérique ;
des moyens pour permettre à l’utilisateur de sélectionner l’entrée de programme enregistré pour transférer le programme enregistré du dispositif de stockage numérique vers un dispositif de stockage secondaire (47), et des moyens pour transférer le programme enregistré du dispositif de stockage numérique vers un dispositif de stockage secondaire.

7. Procédé suivant la revendication 1 ou système suivant la revendication 6, dans lequel le dispositif de stockage secondaire est un support numérique.

8. Procédé suivant la revendication 7 ou système suivant la revendication 7, dans lequel le support numérique est une mémoire vive.

9. Procédé suivant la revendication 7 ou système suivant la revendication 7, dans lequel le support numérique est un disque optique.

10. Procédé suivant la revendication 1 ou système suivant la revendication 6, dans lequel le dispositif de stockage secondaire comprend un support d’enregistrement amovible.

11. Système suivant la revendication 6 comprenant en outre :

des moyens pour permettre à l’utilisateur de sélectionner une suite de programmes enregistrés sur le dispositif de stockage numérique, et des moyens pour transférer la suite de programmes vers le dispositif de stockage secondaire.

12. Système suivant la revendication 6, dans lequel les moyens pour transférer le programme enregistré sont exécutés en réaction à la sélection par l’utilisateur d’une touche sur une télécommande.

13. Système suivant la revendication 6, comprenant en outre des moyens pour enregistrer des informations sur le programme sur le dispositif de stockage numérique lorsque le programme est enregistré sur le dispositif de stockage numérique.

14. Système suivant la revendication 13, comprenant en outre des moyens pour transférer les informations sur le programme enregistré du dispositif de stockage numérique vers le dispositif de stockage secondaire lorsque le programme enregistré est transféré vers le dispositif de stockage secondaire.

15. Procédé suivant la revendication 1 ou système suivant la revendication 6, dans lequel le programme est un programme diffusé.
FIG. 1
FIG. 2
FIG. 4
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHANNEL</th>
<th>7:00 PM</th>
<th>7:30 PM</th>
<th>8:00 PM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIGITAL STORAGE</td>
<td>PROGRAM 1</td>
<td>PROGRAM 2</td>
<td>PROGRAM 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLIC TELEVISION</td>
<td>PROGRAM 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>PROGRAM 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBO</td>
<td>PROGRAM 1</td>
<td>PROGRAM 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBC</td>
<td>PROGRAM 1</td>
<td>PROGRAM 2</td>
<td>PROGRAM 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOX</td>
<td>PROGRAM 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIG. 5b
PROGRAM LISTING INFORMATION

TITLE: M*A*S*H*
DESCRIPTION: SITUATION COMEDY ABOUT LIFE IN A MASH UNIT DURING THE KOREAN WAR
EPISODE: 1975 EPISODE 5
CHANNEL: 11
DURATION: 30 MIN.
VIEWED: NO
CAST MEMBERS: ALAN ALDA, LORETTA SWIT
CATEGORY(IES): COMEDY, WAR
LANGUAGE(S): ENGLISH
VIDEO FORMAT: NORMAL TV
OTHER INFORMATION: MASH WEB SITE

FIG. 6
### FIG. 7a

**VOLUME NAME: DISC ONE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>CHANNEL</th>
<th>RECORD DATE</th>
<th>RECORD TIME</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M<em>A</em>S<em>H</em></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5/1/98</td>
<td>8:00PM</td>
<td>30 MIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERMINATOR</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5/2/98</td>
<td>8:00PM</td>
<td>120 MIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILD-AFRICA</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5/3/98</td>
<td>7:00PM</td>
<td>60 MIN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EST. TIME REMAINING: 50 MIN**
PROGRAM LISTING INFORMATION

TITLE: M*A*S*H
DESCRIPTION: SITUATION COMEDY ABOUT LIFE IN A MASH UNIT DURING THE KOREAN WAR
USER DESCRIPTION: PARTY EPISODE
EPISODE: 1975 EPISODE 5
CHANNEL: 11
DURATION: 30 MIN.
VIEWED: NO
CAST MEMBERS: ALAN ALDA, LORETTA SWIT
CATEGORY(IES): COMEDY, WAR
USER CATEGORY(IES): DAD'S FAVORITES
LANGUAGE(S): ENGLISH
VIDEO FORMAT: NORMAL TV
OTHER INFORMATION: MASH WEB SITE
USER OTHER:

FIG. 7b
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHANNEL</th>
<th>TIME BEGIN</th>
<th>TIME END</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8:00 PM</td>
<td>10:00 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIG. 8**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>CHANNEL</th>
<th>RECORD DATE</th>
<th>RECORD TIME</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
<th>VIEWED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M<em>A</em>S*H</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5/1/98</td>
<td>8:00PM</td>
<td>30 MIN</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERMINATOR</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5/2/98</td>
<td>8:00PM</td>
<td>120 MIN</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILD AFRICA</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5/3/98</td>
<td>7:00PM</td>
<td>60 MIN</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIG. 9**

VOLUME NAME: DISC ONE

EST. TIME REMAINING: 500 MIN
| Title: M*A*S*H | Description: Sitcom about life in a MASH unit during the Korean War |
| User Description: Party Episode | Episode 1995 Episode 5 |
| Channel: 11 | Duration: 30 min |
| Viewed: No | User Categories: Comedy, War |
| Cast Members: Alan Alda, Loretta Swit | Language(s): English |
| Video Format: Normal TV | Other Information: MASH website |
| User Other: | |

**FIG. 10**
FIG. 11a

TITLE
M*A*S*H

CHANNEL
11

RECORD DATE
5/1/98

RECORD TIME
8:00 PM

DURATION
30 MIN

VIDEO FOR PROGRAM
AT MARKER TIME
FOR MARKER 118
### SUPER PROGRAM

**VOLUME NAME:** DISC ONE  
**EST. TIME REMAINING:** 500 MIN

---

**MEDIA DIRECTORY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>CHANNEL</th>
<th>RECORD DATE</th>
<th>RECORD TIME</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
<th>VIEWED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M<em>A</em>S*H</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5/1/98</td>
<td>8:00PM</td>
<td>30 MIN</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERMINATOR</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5/2/98</td>
<td>8:00PM</td>
<td>120 MIN</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILD AFRICA</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5/3/98</td>
<td>7:00PM</td>
<td>60 MIN</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**ENTRY** | **TITLE** | **PLAY-SEGMENT**
---|---|---
1 | M*A*S*H | 0:00
2 | WILD AFRICA | 0:00

---

**VIDEO FEEDBACK AREA**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VOLUME</th>
<th>ENTRY</th>
<th>PROGRAM 1</th>
<th>PROGRAM 2</th>
<th>PROGRAM 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>PROGRAM 1</td>
<td>PROGRAM 2</td>
<td>PROGRAM 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>PROGRAM 2</td>
<td>PROGRAM 3</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>PROGRAM 1</td>
<td>PROGRAM 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>PROGRAM 1</td>
<td>PROGRAM 2</td>
<td>PROGRAM 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIG. 13

PLEASE LOAD VOLUME 1
### Set-Up

**Entry Information Display Options**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Episode</th>
<th>Channel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Record Date</td>
<td>Record Time</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Cast Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Ctrl</td>
<td>Category(ies)</td>
<td>Language(s)</td>
<td>Video Format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Info</td>
<td>Viewed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Storage Options**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Available Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Format</td>
<td>HDTV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforce Parental Control on Storage</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto-Erase Viewed Entries</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Playback Options**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Default Language</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Default Video</td>
<td>HDTV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skip Commercials</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig. 14**
DIGITALLY STORE PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED DATA

DIGITALLY STORE ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS

DISPLAY PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED PROGRAM DATA

ALLOW ACCESS AS IF ORIGINALY AIRED

DISPLAY SET-UP SCREEN

DISPLAY RECORDING SCHEDULE SCREEN

DISPLAY PROGRAM LISTINGS SCREEN

DISPLAY EDIT SCREEN

TRANSFER PROGRAMS

FIG. 15
FIG. 16

DISPLAY SET-UP SCREEN

PROVIDE USER WITH OPPORTUNITY TO DEFINE STORAGE OPTIONS

DIGITALLY STORE PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED DATA ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE STORAGE OPTION

DIGITALLY STORE PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED DATA ACCORDING TO VIDEO FORMAT OPTION

DIGITALLY STORE PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED DATA ACCORDING TO ENFORCE PARENTAL CONTROL ON STORAGE OPTION

AUTOMATICALLY DELETE PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED DATA ACCORDING TO AUTO-ERASE VIEWED ENTRIES OPTION

PROVIDE USER WITH OPPORTUNITY TO DEFINE PLAYBACK OPTIONS

PLAYBACK PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED DATA ACCORDING TO DEFAULT LANGUAGE OPTION

PLAYBACK PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED DATA ACCORDING TO DEFAULT VIDEO FORMAT OPTION

PLAYBACK PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED DATA SKIPPING ADVERTISING ACCORDING TO SKIP COMMERCIALS OPTION.
Fig. 17
FIG. 18
DIGITALLY STORE PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED DATA

MAINTAIN DIRECTORY OF DATA

DISPLAY DIRECTORY LISTING SCREEN

INDICATE DIRECTORY ENTRY INFORMATION

PROVIDE USER WITH OPPORTUNITY TO SELECT DIRECTORY ENTRY

PROVIDE ON-SCREEN OPTIONS

DISPLAY FULL ENTRY INFORMATION SCREEN FOR SELECTION

DISPLAY FIELDS OF DIRECTORY ENTRY INFORMATION

DISPLAY USER-DEFINED FIELDS

PROVIDE USER WITH OPPORTUNITY TO ENTER USER INFORMATION IN USER-DEFINED FIELDS

FIG. 19
Fig. 20

DISPLAY EDIT SCREEN

PROVIDE USER WITH OPPORTUNITY TO DEFINE PORTIONS OF STORED PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED DATA TO BE EDITED

DISPLAY VIDEO FEEDBACK AREA

EDIT PORTIONS OF STORED PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED DATA
DIGITALLY STORE PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED DATA ON REMOVABLE DIGITAL STORAGE MEDIA

MAINTAIN GLOBAL MEDIA LIBRARY OF ASSOCIATED DATA

DISPLAY GLOBAL MEDIA LIBRARY SCREEN

PROVIDE USER WITH OPPORTUNITY TO SELECT STORED PROGRAM

DISPLAY INDICATION THAT REMOVABLE STORAGE MEDIUM IS NOT LOADED WHEN THE REMOVABLE STORAGE MEDIUM WITH SELECTED PROGRAM IS NOT LOADED

FIG. 21
DIGITALLY STORE PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED DATA

DEFINE SUPER-PROGRAM SEQUENCE

DISPLAY SUPER-PROGRAM SCREEN

INDICATE STORED PROGRAMS

PROVIDE USER WITH OPPORTUNITY TO SELECT PROGRAMS FOR SUPER-PROGRAM SEQUENCE

PROVIDE USER WITH OPPORTUNITY TO DEFINE PLAY SEGMENTS

DISPLAY A PLAY SEGMENT INDICATOR
DISPLAY MARKERS FOR DEFINING PLAY SEGMENT

DISPLAY VIDEO FEEDBACK AREA

DISPLAY PLAY SEGMENTS OF PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED DATA ACCORDING TO SUPER-PROGRAM SEQUENCE

DISPLAY PROGRAMS AND ASSOCIATED DATA ACCORDING TO SUPER-PROGRAM SEQUENCE

FIG. 22
REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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Patent documents cited in the description

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- US 5479266 A [0004]
- US 924813 A [0078]