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Post-page caller name identification system

Abstract

Caller Name Identification, or CNAM Caller ID, is a telecommunication end-user feature that appeared for PSTN landline customers in the late 1980s. The rapid development of cellular mobile and VOIP telephony systems lead to the frequent omission of the CNAM Caller ID feature. Described is an independent end-user system that obtains the CNAM Caller ID after the call page transmission. The system operates on the user's smartphone or on a TCP/IP connected computer. A user with multiple telephone devices (i.e. a smartphone, landline, and VOIP line) may share use of this system between all devices.

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Background/Summary

.Iadd.CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS .Iaddend. (1) .Iadd.The present application is one of two reissue applications filed to seek reissue of U.S. Pat. No. 8,861,698 and is a continuation reissue patent application of U.S. reissue patent application Ser. No. 15/289,905, entitled “Post-Page Caller Name Identification System,” filed on Oct. 10, 2016, now U.S. Pat. No. RE48,847. .Iaddend.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

(1) 1. Field of the Invention

(2) The present invention relates generally to caller identification systems. More specifically, it relates to a post-page caller name identification system that bridges SS7 retrievable caller data with a user-accessible IP interface. Carrier implementation of caller name identification has become increasingly complicated due to the fragmentation of service providers on the North American Public-Switched Telephone Network (PSTN). The present invention restores functionality of this important SS7/PSTN capability, caller name identification, to the increasing number of telecommunications end-users left without this feature.

(3) 2. Description of the Prior Art

(4) To place a call using the earliest long-distance telephone systems, a calling party initiated a request with the local switchboard operator. The calling party's local operator would connect to the inward operator, and specify the called party. The inward operator would identify the calling party to the called party, then coordinate the completed telephone circuit with the originating local operator.

(5) Direct dial systems using automated protocols over the Public Switched Telephone Network eventually phased out the operator switchboard system by the 1960's. Unlike the system utilizing human operators, the direct dial networks did not readily identify the calling party to the called party. The relative anonymity of automated PSTN systems created both inconvenience and the potential for abuse. The invention of what became known as caller identification addressed these shortfalls. Between 1969 and 1975, Mr. Theodore Paraskevakos successfully claimed twenty separate patents related to automatic telephone line identification. By 1989, Bell Atlantic, BellSouth, and U.S. West Communications had implemented caller identification in their consumer service offerings.

(6) Caller identification, or Caller ID, may colloquially refer to the presentation of either the calling party's telephone number, or name, to the called party. The initial caller identification systems transmitted only the calling party's phone number to the called party. By their rollout in the late 1980's, or shortly thereafter, the "Baby Bell" Caller ID service offerings typically included both CID and CNAM functionality. These services grew in popularity, with tens of millions of subscribers by the late 1990's. For this specification, caller identification, or CID, refers to the presentation of the calling party's phone number to the called party. Caller name identification, or CNAM Caller ID, shall refer to the presentation of the calling party's name to the called party.

(7) The technical protocols for Caller ID evolved since Mr. Paraskevakos' invention, to what is now industry-standard implementation over the PSTN SS7 network. Despite the standardization of the protocol, telephone line portability deregulation significantly increased the complexity and cost of a CNAM Caller ID query. CNAM information previously held in a few databases of the Baby Bells increased to hundreds, if not thousands, of databases operated by the emerging telephone companies.

(8) At the time of filing, a complete CID & CNAM Caller ID query typically involved the following steps: 1) the CID is transmitted from the calling party to the called party during SS7 call circuit provisioning (the network "page"), 2) a Global Title Translation (GTT) is initiated from the called party's SS7 signaling transfer point (STP) to determine which CNAM database and telephone carrier represents the calling party CID, 3) a GR-1188 CNAM query is relayed via SS7 to the service control point (SCP) for the respective CNAM database, and 4) the GR-1188 CNAM query result is presented to the called party. The exact sequence of events may vary depending upon the called and calling party's inter-carrier agreements and SS7 implementation. Characteristic of the prior art implementations, the entire sequence of events takes place during the ringing or network page, and prior to the call completion.

(9) As mobile phones and voice-over-IP telephony (VOIP) proliferated over the past decade, many providers never implemented full CNAM Caller ID to their mobile or VOIP end-users. Those that did implement CNAM Caller ID usually charge a monthly fee for CNAM Caller ID. For example, a major American wireless carrier recently began offering "Caller Name ID" as a premium monthly feature. Furthermore, individuals now may own several phone numbers, including a home land-line, a personal cellular mobile, and a VOIP line at work. Subscribing to a monthly CNAM service on multiple lines, if the feature is even available, is costly. As a result, CNAM Caller ID prevalence is trending backwards.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

(10) In view of the foregoing limitations inherent in the known types of caller identification systems present in the prior art, the present invention provides a post-page caller name identification system. This standalone system may function for multiple telephone devices owned or operated by the end-user. The system is independent of the end-user's carrier implementation (or lack thereof) of CNAM Caller ID.

(11) The utility of the present invention, which shall be described subsequently in greater detail, is to identify the calling party's name when only the CID is known. This is typically the case with most modern cellular mobile and VOIP systems. The present invention's post-page functionality

complements the prior art. In an ideal telephony network, CNAM Caller ID would be transmitted during the page, or ring. As described above, CNAM implementation has been declining for a decade due to increasing complexity of carriers. This necessitates the present invention as the next-best solution for an end-user wishing to identify a calling party.

(12) To attain this, the present invention comprises a system that interfaces the user directly with the calling party's SS7 SCP-connected CNAM database. After a call or page terminates, the user accesses the present invention via the user terminal, which may operate on a mobile phone application or via direct HTML web access. The user inputs the CID information relayed from the calling party to the end-user. The system then performs a Global Title Translation (GTT) query using its SS7 node. The GTT lookup returns the respective phone carrier and CNAM database applicable to the CID. The system then performs a GR-1188 CNAM query via SS7 to the service control point (SCP) for the respective CNAM database. Finally, the CNAM query result is presented on the user-interface.

(13) By utilizing the present invention, the end-user consolidates CNAM services and enjoys significant cost savings. At time of filing, a commercial implementation of the present invention was offered free-of-charge to the user via either a smartphone applications or direct web access. As stated above, the CNAM functionality offered by the present invention is often unavailable, even as a premium service, on many VOIP and cellular carriers.

(14) The calling party may opt-out from this process at three points. First, the calling party may opt-out from CID transmission on a per-call basis, which is typically known as “*67 Caller ID Block.” Second, the calling party may inform his/her carrier to remove his information from their CNAM database. Third, the calling party may opt-out using a form implemented on the privacy policy page of the present invention.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

(1) Features of the exemplary implementations of the invention will become apparent from the description, the claims, and the drawings in which:

(2) FIG. 1 identified as subparts 1A, 1B, & 1C, represents three typical variations of the caller identification prior art;

(3) FIG. 2 is a graphical depiction of the core system components and their interactions;

(4) FIG. 3 is a flow diagram enumerating each possible step the system performs to process a user query for caller name identification; and

(5) FIG. 4 depicts two additional embodiments of the user interface.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

(6) From FIG. 1, three scenarios are identified which represent the current prior art of caller identification systems. Scenario 1A represents the ideal provisioning of a call where the called party receives both the name and phone number of the calling. In this case, the CID and CNAM are 617-555-1212 and “Smith, Robert,” respectively. Scenario 1B, the middle illustration, only provides the calling party phone number. This scenario is typical of most cellular mobile carriers. In lieu of the CNAM, the cellular carrier will approximate the location of the calling party, although this is frequently subject to error. Scenario 1C, illustrated at the bottom of FIG. 1, depicts a typical VOIP caller identification presentation, which only includes the calling party number (CID).

(7) Having understood the possible combinations of CID and/or CNAM presentations possible on a caller identification system, FIG. 2 embodies the components of the present invention utilized in the context of the scenario depicted in FIG. 1B. The calling party has placed a call (1) over the PSTN, and the carrier has provisioned for the CID and estimated location to be presented on the

end-user's telephone screen (2) during the network page.

(8) The end-user initiates use of the system by accessing the user terminal. The user enters the CID from (2) into the CID entry field (3) of the user terminal. After entering a valid CID, the user (4) submits the query to the system. The system then initiates the "CNAM database query" (5) via the SS7 network.

(9) There exist several methodologies to obtain a CNAM database result via SS7, and the exact implementation depends upon the calling party's carrier, the system's carrier, and any contractual relationships between the two carriers. Exemplified in FIG. 2, and most typical, the system performs a Global Title Translation (6) using various Line Information Databases (LIDBs) to determine the calling party's carrier. In some cases, the system will already know the calling party's carrier (e.g. if they are the same as the called party), and this step will be unnecessary. Once the carrier is known, the system is able to route a CNAM query using GR-1188 (7) to the appropriate SS7 signal control point (SCP). The SCP controls CNAM database access for a given phone carrier. For the purposes of this invention, the entire process is referred to as "CNAM Database Query" (5) and refers to any of the proper SS7 methods to retrieve CNAM information.

(10) Upon successful CNAM database query, the CNAM Caller ID is relayed back to the user terminal. The caller name identification is displayed on the appropriate user interface element, thereby completing the process.

(11) FIG. 3 serves as a flow diagram enumerating all possible steps for the system, as embodied, to carry out its function. The utilization of this system commences upon end-user receipt of a CID page (100). The user then activates the system by entering the page CID into the CID entry interface (101). Before the system proceeds, it first validates that the CID is not listed within the system's opt-out privacy database (102). At this stage, the system may also ask the user to confirm the CID had been transmitted to a telephone device they own or operate.

(12) The system then instructs the SS7 interfacing node to initiate an SS7 session, if one is not already active (103). The exact state or instructions relayed to the SS7 switch/node varies depending upon carrier implementation. Once the SS7 session is active, a Global Title Translation (GTT) is performed using the CID from the CID entry interface. (104). The GTT returns the calling party carrier information necessary to locate the carrier's CNAM database on the SS7 network. A query is thereafter sent, usually via the GR-1188 protocol, to the signal control point (SCP) for the calling carrier CNAM database (105). Assuming the calling party didn't opt-out from its carrier CNAM database, the calling party's CNAM is returned to the system's SS7 node (106). Then, the CNAM database query result is displayed on the user interface (107).

(13) FIG. 4 depicts additional embodiments of the system relating to its user interface. In this illustration, the system's SS7 interface (200) is physically separated from its user interface. The user interface is implemented on either another computer linked via the TCP/IP (204), or the end-user's telephone that received the initial call page (203). The SS7 interface communicates (201 or 202) with the user interface via an industry standard API protocol such as JSON.

Claims

.[.1. A system, functioning independently of a called party's telephone carrier and device, provides a calling party's CNAM after entry of the calling party's telephone number CID, comprising: a) an entry field, within a HTML web or mobile phone application, permitting the called party to input a query, post-page, specifying the CID; b) an SS7 interfacing node permitting real-time access to the SS7 network; c) a function serving as a direct interface between the called party's query and the calling party carrier's respective CNAM database; d) within the HTML web or mobile phone application, a display of the successfully queried calling party CNAM..].

.[.2. The system of claim 1, wherein the web or mobile phone application provides free-of-charge CNAM resolution for any of the end-user's multiple telephony devices, thereby permitting cost-

savings..].

.[.3. The system of claim 1, wherein the called party enjoys significant cost savings and free-of-charge CNAM querying through an advertising display within the user interface..].

.[.4. The system of claim 1, wherein component function (c) additionally: confirms that the CID is not subject to system opt-out privacy controls; and confirms that the CID paged a telephonic device owned or operated by the called party..].

.[.5. A method for providing a called party with the calling party's CNAM after a network page, independent of interaction with the carrier or device receiving the page, comprising the following steps: a) entering of the calling party's telephone number CID into a web HTML or mobile phone application query field; b) connecting to the PSTN via an SS7 interfacing node; c) directly querying the calling party carrier CNAM database with the CID query entry; d) displaying the successfully queried calling party CNAM on the HTML web or mobile phone application user interface..].

.[.6. The method of claim 5, further comprising a step to display advertising sponsorship on the web or mobile phone application interface, thereby achieving significant user cost savings and free-of-charge CNAM querying..].

.Iadd.7. A system, including a user terminal configured to access a communication network, for providing a calling party's name independently of a called party's telephone carrier's implementation of caller name identification (CNAM), the system comprising: a user interface associated with the user terminal, the user interface configured (a) to display a telephone number received in a paging signal of the calling party's Signaling System 7 (SS7) call provisioned to a non-CNAM CID telephone of the called party, (b) (i) to receive a manual input of the telephone number from the called party, and (ii) to receive the called party's confirmation that the telephone number in the manual input was transmitted to a telephone device of the called party, and (c) to display the calling party's name; and a caller name identification system configured such that, upon the user interface receiving the manual input, the caller name identification system: (a) over a connection between the user terminal and a SS7 interfacing node, transmits to the SS7 interfacing node a query of a CNAM database for a CNAM based on the telephone number, so as to cause the SS7 interfacing node (i) to perform a Global Title Translation (GTT) operation with one or more line information databases to identify one or more CNAM databases; (ii) to forward the query to the identified CNAM databases over the SS7 network, (iii) to receive the CNAM sought in the query, and (iv) to return the received CNAM as the calling party's name to the caller name identification system; and (b) provides the calling party's name to the user interface for display.

.Iaddend.

.Iadd.8. The system of claim 7, wherein the CNAM database receiving the query from the SS7 interfacing node comprises a CNAM database administered by the calling party's carrier. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.9. The system of claim 7, wherein the user interface is part of an application program implemented in HTML web format or in a mobile telephone. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.10. The system of claim 9, wherein the application program provides a CNAM resolution service for one or more of multiple telephony devices each configured to receive a paging signal conveying a telephone number of a caller. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.11. The system of claim 7 wherein, prior to transmitting the telephone number to the SS7 interfacing node, the caller name identification system further confirms that the telephone number is not one subject to opt-out privacy control. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.12. The system of claim 7 wherein, prior to transmitting the telephone number to the SS7 interfacing node, the caller name identification system confirms that the telephonic number is received in a paging signal received at a telephone device of the called party. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.13. The system of claim 7, wherein the SS7 interfacing node accesses the identified CNAM databases through a signal control point. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.14. The system of claim 7, wherein the identified CNAM databases comprise a Public-

Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) CNAM database linked to an SS7 signal control point.

.Iaddend.

.Iadd.15. The system of claim 7, wherein the SS7 interfacing node translates a Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) request for caller name to an SS7 request for CNAM.

.Iaddend.

.Iadd.16. The system of claim 7, wherein the user interface also displays sponsored advertising messages. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.17. A method for displaying a calling party's name on a user terminal configured to access a communication network independently of a called party's telephone carrier's implementation of caller name identification (CNAM), comprising: in a user interface associated with the user terminal, (i) displaying a telephone number received in a paging signal of the calling party's Signaling System 7 (SS7) call provisioned to a non-CNAM CID telephone of the called party, (ii) receiving from the called party a manual input of the telephone number, and (iii) receiving the called party's confirmation that the telephone number in the manual input was transmitted to a telephone device of the called party; configuring a caller name identification system which, upon the user interface receiving the manual input, (a) transmit to a SS7 interfacing node over a connection between the user terminal and the SS7 interfacing node a query of a CNAM database for a CNAM based on the telephone number, so as to cause the SS7 interfacing node (i) to perform a Global Title Translation (GTT) operation with one or more line information databases to identify one or more CNAM databases; (ii) to forward the query to the identified CNAM databases over the SS7 network, (iii) to receive the CNAM sought in the query, and (iv) to return the received CNAM as the calling party's name to the caller name identification system; and displaying the returned calling party's name in the user interface. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.18. The method of claim 17, wherein the CNAM database receiving the query from the SS7 interfacing node comprises a CNAM database administered by the calling party's telephone carrier.

.Iaddend.

.Iadd.19. The method of claim 17, wherein the user interface is part of an application program implemented in an HTML web format program or a mobile telephone application program.

.Iaddend.

.Iadd.20. The method of claim 19, wherein the application program provides a CNAM resolution service for one or more of multiple telephony devices each configured to receive a paging signal conveying a telephone number of a caller. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.21. The method of claim 17 wherein, prior to transmitting the telephone number to the SS7 interfacing node, the caller name identification system further confirms that the telephone number is not one subject to opt-out privacy control. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.22. The method of claim 17 wherein, prior to transmitting the telephone number to the SS7 interfacing node, the caller name identification system confirms that the telephonic number is received in a paging signal received at a telephone device of the called party. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.23. The method of claim 17, wherein the SS7 interfacing node accesses the identified CNAM databases through a signal control point. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.24. The method of claim 17, wherein the identified CNAM databases comprises a Public-Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) CNAM database linked to an SS7 signal control point.

.Iaddend.

.Iadd.25. The method of claim 17, further comprising translating, at the SS7 interfacing node, a Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) request for caller name to an SS7 request for CNAM. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.26. The method of claim 17, further comprising displaying in the user interface sponsored advertising messages. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.27. An SS7 interfacing node connected to both a TCP/IP network and an SS7 communication network, comprising: a TCP/IP network interface configured to provide a connection to a user

terminal, the connection being configurable over an application program interface (API) using an industry standard protocol; and an SS7 communication network interface configured to communicate with signal control points (SCPs) on the SS7 communication network; wherein the SS7 interfacing node is configured (a) to receive from the user terminal over the TCP/IP network interface a query of a caller name identification (CNAM) database for a CNAM based on a telephone number obtained from a paging signal of an SS7 call, and (b)(i) to forward the query using GR-1188 to one or more CNAM databases over the SS7 communication network interface, (ii) over the SS7 communication network interface, to receive from the CNAM databases a CNAM associated with the telephone number; and (iii) over the TCP/IP network interface, to provide the received CNAM as the calling party's name to the user terminal. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.28. A method in an SS7 interfacing node connected to both a TCP/IP network and an SS7 telecommunication network, comprising: configuring a TCP/IP network interface with a user terminal using an application program interface (API) that conforms to an industry standard protocol; and configuring an SS7 communication network interface that communicates with one or more line information databases (LIDBs) and one or more SS7 signal control points (SCPs) over the SS7 communication network; wherein the SS7 interfacing node (a) receives from the user terminal over the TCP/IP network interface a query of a caller name identification (CNAM) database for a CNAM based on a telephone number obtained from a paging signal of an SS7 call; and (b) (i) forwards the query using GR-1188 to one or more CNAM databases over the SS7 communication network interface, (ii) over the SS7 communication network interface, receives from the CNAM databases a CNAM associated with the telephone number; and (iii) over the TCP/IP network interface, provides the received CNAM as the calling party's name to the user terminal. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.29. A system, functioning independently of a called party's telephone carrier's implementation of caller name identification (CNAM), provides a calling party's CNAM after entry of the calling party's telephone number ("caller identification" or CID), comprising: a) an entry field within a hypertext marked-up language (HTML) web or mobile phone application running on a user terminal of the called party that allows the called party, post-page of a Signaling System 7 (SS7) call provisioned to a non-CNAM CID telephone of the called party, (i) to specify the CID in a query of a CNAM database for the calling party's CNAM, (ii) to enter a manual input of the telephone number, and (iii) to confirm that the telephone number in the manual input was transmitted to a telephone device of the called party; b) an SS7 interfacing node that allows real-time access to the SS7 network, wherein, over a connection between the user terminal and the SS7 interfacing node, the user terminal provides the SS7 interfacing node the query, wherein the SS7 interfacing node (i) performs a Global Title Translation (GTT) operation with one or more line information databases to identify one or more CNAM databases; and (ii) forwards the query to the identified CNAM databases and receives therefrom a result of the query; and c) within the HTML web or mobile phone application, a display of the result. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.30. The system of claim 29, wherein the web or mobile phone application provides free-of-charge CNAM resolution for any of the end-user's multiple telephony devices. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.31. The system of claim 29, wherein the called party is provided free-of-charge CNAM querying through advertising. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.32. The system of claim 29, wherein the HTML web or mobile phone application additionally: confirms that the CID is not subject to system opt-out privacy controls; and confirms that the CID paged a telephonic device owned or operated by the called party. .Iaddend.

.Iadd.33. A method for providing a called party with the calling party's caller name identification (CNAM) after a network page of the calling party's Signaling System 7 (SS7) call provisioned to a non-CNAM CID telephone of the called party, independent of a called party's telephone carrier's implementation of CNAM, the method comprising the following steps: a) from an entry field displayed on a user terminal by a web hypertext marked-up language (HTML) or mobile phone

application, (i) receiving a manual input of the calling party's telephone number ("caller identification" or CID), the CID being captured from the network page, and (ii) receiving from the called party a confirmation that the CID in the manual input was transmitted to a telephone device of the called party; b) connecting the user terminal to an SS7 interfacing node on the Public-switched Telephone Network (PSTN); c) over the PSTN connection, providing to the SS7 interfacing node a query of a CNAM database for a CNAM associated with the CID, wherein the SS7 interfacing node (i) performs a Global Title Translation (GTT) operation with one or more line information databases to identify one or more CNAM databases; and (ii) forwards the query over the SS7 network to the identified CNAM databases, and receiving therefrom a result of the query; and d) displaying the result on the user terminal through the HTML web or mobile phone application. .Iaddend.
