

US Patent & Trademark Office

Patent Public Search | Text View

United States Patent	12394996
Kind Code	B2
Date of Patent	August 19, 2025
Inventor(s)	Gyoda; Minoru et al.

Battery-powered system, battery pack, electric work machine, and charger

Abstract

A battery-powered system includes a battery pack (**10; 71; 81**) connected to an electrical equipment (**30; 50; 76; 86**). The battery pack includes a first positive electrode terminal (**11**), a first negative electrode terminal (**12**), a first communication terminal (**13**), a first data input circuit (**23**), and a first limiting circuit (**D11; D72; D82**) that limits a flow of electric current in a direction from the first negative electrode terminal to the first communication terminal via the first data input circuit. The connected equipment includes a second positive electrode terminal (**31; 51**), a second negative electrode terminal (**32; 52**), a second communication terminal (**33; 53**), a second data input circuit (**43; 63; 77; 87**), and a second limiting circuit (**D31; D51; D77; D87**) that limits a flow of electric current in a direction from the second negative electrode terminal to the second communication terminal via the second data input circuit.

Inventors: Gyoda; Minoru (Anjo, JP), Suzuki; Hitoshi (Anjo, JP), Omura; Motohiro (Anjo, JP)

Applicant: MAKITA CORPORATION (Anjo, JP)

Family ID: 1000008765340

Assignee: MAKITA CORPORATION (Anjo, JP)

Appl. No.: 18/372205

Filed: September 25, 2023

Prior Publication Data

Document Identifier	Publication Date
US 20240014671 A1	Jan. 11, 2024

Foreign Application Priority Data

JP	2019-104453	Jun. 04, 2019
----	-------------	---------------

Related U.S. Application Data

continuation parent-doc US 16890518 20200602 US 11811249 child-doc US 18372205

Publication Classification

Int. Cl.: **H02J7/00** (20060101); **B25F5/00** (20060101); **H01M50/574** (20210101)

U.S. Cl.:

CPC **H02J7/00306** (20200101); **B25F5/00** (20130101); **H01M50/574** (20210101);
H02J7/0063 (20130101);

Field of Classification Search

USPC: None

References Cited

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

Patent No.	Issued Date	Patentee Name	U.S. Cl.	CPC
5371453	12/1993	Fernandez	N/A	N/A
5448180	12/1994	Kienzler et al.	N/A	N/A
5576723	12/1995	Asprey	N/A	N/A
5955869	12/1998	Rathmann	N/A	N/A
5990659	12/1998	Frannhagen	N/A	N/A
6226762	12/2000	Foote et al.	N/A	N/A
7443137	12/2007	Scott et al.	N/A	N/A
8319475	12/2011	Choksi et al.	N/A	N/A
8813866	12/2013	Suzuki	N/A	N/A
2005/0077878	12/2004	Carrier et al.	N/A	N/A
2005/0093512	12/2004	Mader et al.	N/A	N/A
2006/0087286	12/2005	Phillips et al.	N/A	N/A
2006/0091858	12/2005	Johnson et al.	N/A	N/A
2007/0226497	12/2006	Taylor	N/A	N/A
2009/0039833	12/2008	Kitagawa	N/A	N/A
2009/0085521	12/2008	Kim	N/A	N/A
2010/0268492	12/2009	Matsuura	N/A	N/A
2010/0325448	12/2009	Miki	N/A	N/A
2011/0197389	12/2010	Ota et al.	N/A	N/A
2011/0198103	12/2010	Suzuki	N/A	N/A
2015/0200553	12/2014	Endo et al.	N/A	N/A
2015/0331819	12/2014	Iwasaki et al.	N/A	N/A
2016/0006190	12/2015	Katsuura et al.	N/A	N/A
2016/0013673	12/2015	Workman et al.	N/A	N/A
2017/0149096	12/2016	Shiraishi	N/A	H02J 7/0063
2017/0194670	12/2016	Kawano et al.	N/A	N/A
2018/0277801	12/2017	Brozek et al.	N/A	N/A

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

Patent No.	Application Date	Country	CPC
104779661	12/2014	CN	N/A
2897250	12/2014	EP	N/A
2017140686	12/2016	JP	N/A

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Extended European Search Report from the European Patent Office dispatched Nov. 3, 2020 in related application No. EP 20177810.7, including Search Opinion and Search Report. cited by applicant

Office Action and Search Report from the Chinese Patent Office dispatched Aug. 7, 2024 in related CN application No. 202010404796.2, and translation thereof. cited by applicant

Second Office Action from the Chinese Patent Office dispatched Dec. 3, 2024 in counterpart application No. 202010404796.2, and translation thereof. cited by applicant

Primary Examiner: Williams; Arun C

Attorney, Agent or Firm: J-TEK LAW PLLC

Background/Summary

CROSS-REFERENCE (1) This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/890,518 filed on Jun. 2, 2020, now pending, which claims priority to Japanese patent application serial number 2019-104453, filed on Jun. 4, 2019, the contents of which are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

(1) The present disclosure generally relates to circuit designs for executing data communication between a battery pack and an electrical equipment/device, such as an electric work machine (e.g., a power tool), a charger, etc., that is electrically connected to the battery pack.

BACKGROUND ART

(2) Japanese Laid open Publication 2017-140686 discloses a power tool system configured to perform serial communication between a battery pack, which comprises a battery, and a power tool.

(3) In this known power tool system, the battery pack comprises a negative electrode terminal, which is connected to a negative electrode of the battery, and a communication terminal. The power tool comprises a negative electrode terminal, which is connected to the negative electrode terminal of the battery pack, and a communication terminal, which is connected to the communication terminal of the battery pack. The serial communication between the battery pack and the power tool is performed via these communication terminals.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

(4) The power tool system disclosed in Japanese Laid open Publication 2017-140686 has a closed loop that includes the negative electrode terminal and the communication terminal of the battery pack and the negative electrode terminal and the communication terminal of the power tool.

Therefore, it is possible for unintended (undesirable) noise currents to flow in this closed loop owing to, for example, noise generated in the power tool when the motor is driven or various other factors.

(5) If a sufficiently high noise current (noise voltage) flows in this closed loop, then there is a possibility that a data receiving process will be erroneously executed (performed) in the power tool or the battery pack due to this noise current degrading the signal integrity of a signal transmitted

from the battery pack to the power tool or vice versa. In this case, it is not possible to receive data accurately.

(6) Therefore, it is one non-limiting object of the present disclosure to improve the accuracy of data communication between a battery pack and an electrical equipment connected thereto, even if noise is generated (present) in the communication circuit.

(7) In one non-limiting aspect of the present disclosure, a battery-connected system (alternatively, “battery-powered system”) may comprise a battery pack and a connected equipment (in particular, an electrical equipment/device, such as an electric work machine (e.g., a power tool), a charger, etc.). The connected equipment is adapted/configured to be selectively placed in a connected state, in which the connected equipment has been electrically connected to the battery pack, and in a state, in which the connected state has been released (terminated).

(8) The battery pack may comprise at least a battery, a first positive electrode terminal, a first negative electrode terminal, a first communication terminal, a first data output circuit, a first data input circuit, and a first noise current limiting circuit or a first reverse current protection circuit (hereinafter, simply “first limiting circuit”). The battery comprises a positive electrode and a negative electrode. The first positive electrode terminal is electrically connected to the positive electrode of the battery. The first negative electrode terminal is electrically connected to the negative electrode of the battery. The first data output circuit may comprise at least a first output terminal, which is electrically connected to the first communication terminal, and is adapted/configured to output first transmit-data (one or more signals containing data regarding the battery, such as, e.g., current voltage, current temperature, etc.) from the first output terminal. The first data input circuit may comprise at least a first input terminal, which is electrically connected to the first communication terminal, and a first ground terminal, which is electrically connected to the first negative electrode terminal, and is adapted/configured such that second transmit-data (one or more signals containing data and/or instructions output by the connected equipment), which has been input (transmitted) from the connected equipment to the first communication terminal, is input to (at) the first input terminal. The first limiting circuit is adapted/configured to at least limit a flow of electric current (e.g., a noise current) in the direction from the first negative electrode terminal to the first communication terminal via the first data input circuit. That is, the first limiting circuit is preferably designed to at least limit the flow of electric current (e.g., noise) in the direction that is opposite (reverse) of the direction that the second-transmit data moves (flows) from the first communication terminal to the first input terminal. The first limiting circuit is preferably designed to not limit the flow of electric current (e.g., signals) in the direction that the second-transmit data moves (flows) from the first communication terminal to the first input terminal.

(9) The electric work machine may comprise at least a second positive electrode terminal, a second negative electrode terminal, a second communication terminal, a second data output circuit, a second data input circuit, and a second noise current limiting circuit or a second reverse current protection circuit (hereinafter, simply “second limiting circuit”). The second positive electrode terminal is adapted/configured to be electrically connected to the first positive electrode of the battery pack in response to the connected equipment entering the connected state (e.g., when the battery pack is mounted on (physically and electrically connected to) the connected equipment). The second negative electrode terminal is adapted/configured to be electrically connected to the first negative electrode of the battery pack in response to the connected equipment entering the connected state. The second communication terminal is adapted/configured to be electrically connected to the first communication terminal of the battery pack in response to the connected equipment entering the connected state. The second data output circuit may comprise at least a second output terminal, which is electrically connected to the second communication terminal, and is adapted/configured to output second transmit-data (one or more signals containing data/instructions generated and output by the connected equipment) from the second output terminal. The second data input circuit may comprise at least a second input terminal, which is

electrically connected to the second communication terminal, and a second ground terminal, which is electrically connected to the second negative electrode terminal, and is adapted/configured such that the first transmit-data, which has been input (transmitted) from the battery pack to the second communication terminal, is input to (at) the second input terminal. The second limiting circuit is adapted/configured to at least limit a flow of electric current in the direction from the second negative electrode terminal to the second communication terminal via the second data input circuit. That is, the second limiting circuit is preferably designed to at least limit the flow of electric current (e.g., noise) in the direction that is opposite (reverse) of the direction that the first-transmit data moves (flows) from the second communication terminal to the second input terminal. The second limiting circuit is preferably designed to not limit the flow of electric current (e.g., signals) in the direction that the first-transmit data moves (flows) from the second communication terminal to the second input terminal.

(10) With such an embodiment of a battery-connected system (or battery-powered system; the same applied hereinbelow), because the battery pack comprises the first limiting circuit, the flow of electric current in the battery pack from the first data input circuit to the first communication terminal and, in turn, the input of that electric current to the connected equipment is limited, e.g., below a level that does not detrimentally affect the signal integrity of the second-transmit data. Furthermore, because the connected equipment comprises the second limiting circuit, the flow of electric current in the connected equipment from the second data input circuit to the second communication terminal and, in turn, the input of that electric current to the battery pack is limited, e.g., below a level that does not detrimentally affect the signal integrity of the first-transmit data. Consequently, such a design makes it possible to more accurately execute (perform) data communication between the battery pack and the connected equipment.

(11) In addition, the battery pack may include a first signal path connecting the first input terminal and the first communication terminal. The first signal path may include a first connection point. By connecting the first output terminal to the first connection point, the first output terminal is electrically connected to the first communication terminal via the first connection point and the first signal path. The first limiting circuit may be provided on the first data input circuit side of the first connection point.

(12) With such an embodiment of a battery-connected system, because the first limiting circuit is provided in the battery pack on the first data input circuit side of the first connection point (i.e. the first limiting circuit is not provided in the signal path connecting the first communication terminal to the first output terminal in the battery pack), the first limiting circuit does not degrade (negatively affect) the quality (signal integrity) of the first transmit-data transmitted from the first data output circuit to the connected equipment via the first communication terminal.

(13) In addition or in the alternative, the connected equipment may include a second signal path connecting the second input terminal and the second communication terminal. The second signal path may include a second connection point. By connecting the second output terminal to the second connection point, the second output terminal is electrically connected to the second communication terminal via the second connection point and the second signal path. The second limiting circuit may be provided on the second data input circuit side of the second connection point.

(14) With such an embodiment of a battery-connected system, because the second limiting circuit is provided in the connected equipment on the first data input circuit side of the second connection point (i.e. the second limiting circuit is not provided in the signal path connecting the second communication terminal to the second output terminal in the connected equipment), the second limiting circuit does not degrade (negatively affect) the quality (signal integrity) of the second transmit-data transmitted from the second data output circuit to the battery pack via the second communication terminal.

(15) In addition or in the alternative, the first data input circuit of the battery pack may comprise at

least a first switching device (e.g., a transistor), a first bias path, and a first resistor. The first switching device may comprise at least a first switch input terminal (e.g., a gate of the transistor), which is electrically connected to the first input terminal, and a first switch ground terminal (e.g., a source of the transistor), which is electrically connected to the first ground terminal. The first bias path may connect the first switch input terminal and the first switch ground terminal (e.g., a gate-source connection) and thus ultimately to the first ground terminal. The first resistor may be provided in the first bias path. Furthermore, the first limiting circuit may be provided in the first bias path.

(16) With such an embodiment of a battery-connected system, because the first limiting circuit is provided in the first bias path in the battery pack (i.e. the first limiting circuit is not provided in the signal path connecting the first communication terminal to the first switch input terminal of the first data input circuit), the first limiting circuit does not degrade (negatively affect) the quality (signal integrity) of the second transmit-data output from the connected equipment and input to the first data input circuit of the battery pack via the first and second communication terminals and the first input terminal.

(17) In addition or in the alternative, the second data input circuit of the connected equipment may comprise at least a second switching device (e.g., a transistor), a second bias path, and a second resistor. The second switching device may comprise at least a second switch input terminal (e.g., a gate of the transistor), which is electrically connected to the second input terminal, and a second switch ground terminal (e.g., a source of the transistor), which is electrically connected to the second ground terminal. The second bias path may connect the second switch input terminal and the second switch ground terminal (e.g., a gate-source connection) and thus ultimately to the second ground terminal. The second resistor may be provided in the second bias path. Furthermore, the second limiting circuit may be provided in the second bias path.

(18) With such an embodiment of a battery-connected system, because the second limiting circuit is provided in the second bias path in the connected equipment (i.e. the second limiting circuit is not provided in the signal path connecting the second communication terminal to the second switch input terminal of the second data input circuit), the second limiting circuit does not degrade (negatively affect) the quality (signal integrity) of the first transmit-data output from the battery pack and input to the second data input circuit of the connected equipment via the first and second communication terminals and the second input terminal.

(19) In addition or in the alternative, the first limiting circuit may comprise at least a first diode that limits the flow of electric current in the direction from the first negative electrode terminal to the first communication terminal via the first data input circuit.

(20) With such an embodiment of a battery-connected system, it is possible to configure the first limiting circuit in a simple manner.

(21) In addition or in the alternative, the second limiting circuit may comprise at least a second diode that limits the flow of the electric current in the direction from the second negative electrode terminal to the second communication terminal via the second data input circuit.

(22) With such an embodiment of a battery-connected system, it is possible to configure the second limiting circuit in a simple manner.

(23) In addition or in the alternative, the connected equipment may comprise a mounting part, which is adapted/configured such that the battery pack is mountable thereon and demountable (removable, detachable) therefrom. The connected equipment may be adapted/configured to be placed in the connected state in response to the battery pack being mounted on the mounting part.

(24) With such an embodiment of a battery-connected system, it is possible to mechanically and electrically connect the battery pack and the connected equipment in a simple manner.

(25) The battery-connected system may further comprise an intermediate device (e.g., a corded adapter). The intermediate device may comprise at least: a cable (cord); a first mounting part, which is adapted/configured such that the battery pack is mountable thereon and demountable

therefrom; and a second mounting part, which is adapted/configured such that the connected equipment is mountable thereon and demountable therefrom.

(26) The first mounting part may comprise at least a first positive electrode intermediate terminal, a first negative electrode intermediate terminal, and a first communication intermediate terminal. The first positive electrode intermediate terminal may be adapted/configured to be connected to the first positive electrode terminal in response to the battery pack being mounted on the first mounting part. The first negative electrode intermediate terminal may be adapted/configured to be connected to the first negative electrode terminal in response to the battery pack being mounted on the first mounting part. The first communication intermediate terminal may be adapted/configured to be connected to the first communication terminal in response to the battery pack being mounted on the first mounting part.

(27) The second mounting part may comprise at least a second positive electrode intermediate terminal, a second negative electrode intermediate terminal, and a second communication intermediate terminal. The second positive electrode intermediate terminal may be adapted/configured to be connected to the second positive electrode terminal in response to the connected equipment being mounted on the second mounting part. The second negative electrode intermediate terminal may be adapted/configured to be connected to the second negative electrode terminal in response to the connected equipment being mounted on the second mounting part. The second communication intermediate terminal may be adapted/configured to be connected to the second communication terminal in response to the connected equipment being mounted on the second mounting part.

(28) The cable may comprise (contain within it) at least a positive electrode intermediate wire, a negative electrode intermediate wire, and a communication intermediate wire. The positive electrode intermediate wire may electrically connect the first positive electrode intermediate terminal and the second positive electrode intermediate terminal. The negative electrode intermediate wire may electrically connect the first negative electrode intermediate terminal and the second negative electrode intermediate terminal. The communication intermediate wire may electrically connect the first communication intermediate terminal and the second communication intermediate terminal.

(29) With such an embodiment of a battery-connected system, because the battery pack and the connected equipment are electrically connected via the intermediate device without being directly connected in a mechanical manner, the ergonomics of the battery-connected system can be improved owing to the fact that the battery pack (which may be heavy) may be placed, e.g., on a surface, such as the ground or a table, or clipped to an article of clothing, e.g., a belt, a shoulder harness, etc., while the user holds the connected equipment to perform work with the connected equipment (which does not have the weight of the battery pack attached thereto), thereby reducing the load (strain) on the user while performing work with the connected equipment.

(30) In addition or in the alternative, the connected equipment may comprise or may be an electric work machine, such as, e.g., a power tool, outdoor power equipment, etc. The electric work machine may comprise a manipulatable switch (e.g., a trigger), a motor, a motor drive circuit (e.g., a PWM circuit), and a drive mechanism (e.g., a gear transmission). The manipulatable switch may be manipulated by a user of the electric work machine to control operation (driving) of the motor. The motor drive circuit may be adapted/configured to drive the motor, using electric power supplied from the battery pack, in response to the manipulatable switch being manipulated. The drive mechanism may be adapted/configured to detachably mount or attach a work output member (e.g., a tool accessory) thereon or such that the work output member (e.g., a tool accessory) is integrally (permanently) affixed to the drive mechanism. The drive mechanism may be adapted/configured to cause the work output member to act (e.g., rotate, linearly reciprocate or both) on a work target by transmitting a rotational drive force of the motor and driving (e.g., moving) the work output member using that rotational drive force.

(31) With such an embodiment of a battery-connected system, data communication between the battery pack and the electric work machine may be accurately executed (performed) owing to the first and second limiting circuits.

(32) In the alternative, the connected equipment may comprise a charger, which has been adapted/configured to charge the battery.

(33) With such an embodiment of a battery-connected system, data communication between the battery pack and the charger may be executed more accurately (performed) owing to the first and second limiting circuits.

(34) In another aspect of the present disclosure, a battery pack is adapted/configured to be selectively placed in a connected state, in which the battery pack has been electrically connected to a connected equipment (in particular, an electrical equipment, such as an electric work machine (e.g., a power tool), a charger, etc.), and in a state, in which the connected state has been released (terminated).

(35) The battery pack may comprise at least a battery, a pack positive electrode terminal, a pack negative electrode terminal, a pack communication terminal, a data output circuit, a data input circuit, and a noise current limiting circuit or a reverse current protection circuit (hereinafter, simply "limiting circuit").

(36) The battery comprises a positive electrode and a negative electrode. The pack positive electrode terminal is electrically connected to the positive electrode of the battery and is adapted/configured to be electrically connected to the connected equipment in response to the battery pack entering the connected state (e.g., when the battery pack is mounted on the connected equipment). The pack negative electrode is electrically connected to the negative electrode of the battery and is adapted/configured to be electrically connected to the connected equipment in response to the battery pack entering the connected state. The pack communication terminal may be adapted/configured to be electrically connected to the connected equipment in response to the battery pack entering the connected state. The data output circuit comprises an output terminal connected to the pack communication terminal and is adapted/configured to output first transmit-data from the output terminal. The data input circuit may comprise at least an input terminal, which is electrically connected to the pack communication terminal, and a ground terminal, which is electrically connected to the pack negative electrode terminal. The data input circuit is adapted/configured such that second transmit-data (one or more signals containing data and/or instructions output by the connected equipment), which has been input (transmitted) from the connected equipment to the pack communication terminal, is input to (at) the input terminal. The limiting circuit is adapted/configured to at least limit a flow of electric current (e.g., a noise current) in the direction from the pack negative electrode terminal to the pack communication terminal via the data input circuit. That is, the limiting circuit is preferably designed to at least limit the flow of electric current (e.g., noise) in the direction that is opposite (reverse) of the direction that the second-transmit data moves (flows) from the first communication terminal to the first input terminal. The limiting circuit is preferably designed to not limit the flow of electric current (e.g., signals) in the direction that the second-transmit data moves (flows) from the first communication terminal to the first input terminal.

(37) With such an embodiment of a battery pack, because the limiting circuit is provided, the flow of electric current from the data input circuit to the pack communication terminal and, in turn, the input of that electric current to the connected equipment is limited, e.g., below a level that does not detrimentally affect the signal integrity of the second-transmit data. Consequently, such a design makes it possible to more accurately execute (perform data) communication between the battery pack and the connected equipment owing to the limiting circuit.

(38) In yet another aspect of the present disclosure, an electric work machine is adapted/configured to be selectively placed in a connected state, in which the electric work machine has been electrically connected to a battery pack comprising a battery (in particular, when the battery pack is

mounted on the electric work machine (e.g., a power tool, outdoor power equipment, etc.)), and in a state, in which the connected state has been released (terminated).

(39) The electric work machine may comprise at least an equipment positive electrode terminal, an equipment negative electrode terminal, an equipment communication terminal, a data output circuit, a data input circuit, a noise current limiting circuit or a reverse current protection circuit (hereinafter, simply “limiting circuit”), a manipulatable switch (e.g., a trigger), a motor, a motor drive circuit (e.g., a PWM circuit), and a drive mechanism (e.g., a gear transmission).

(40) The equipment positive electrode terminal is adapted/configured to be electrically connected to the positive electrode of the battery in response to the electric work machine entering the connected state (e.g., when the battery pack is mounted on the electric work machine). The equipment negative electrode terminal is adapted/configured to be electrically connected to the negative electrode of the battery in response to the electric work machine entering the connected state. The equipment communication terminal is adapted/configured to be electrically connected to the battery pack in response to the electric work machine entering the connected state. The data output circuit may comprise at least an output terminal, which is electrically connected to the equipment communication terminal, and is adapted/configured to output equipment transmit-data (one or more signals containing data/instructions generated and output by the electric work machine) from the output terminal. The data input circuit may comprise at least an input terminal, which is electrically connected to the equipment communication terminal, and a ground terminal, which is electrically connected to the equipment negative electrode terminal. The data input circuit may be adapted/configured such that battery transmit-data (one or more signals containing data regarding the battery, such as, e.g., current voltage, current temperature, etc.), which has been input (transmitted) from the battery pack to the equipment communication terminal, is input to (at) the input terminal. The limiting circuit is adapted/configured to at least limit a flow of electric current in the direction from from the equipment negative electrode terminal to the equipment communication terminal via the data input circuit. That is, the limiting circuit is preferably designed to at least limit the flow of electric current (e.g., noise) in the direction that is opposite (reverse) of the direction that the battery-transmit data moves (flows) from the equipment communication terminal to the input terminal. The limiting circuit is preferably designed to not limit the flow of electric current (e.g., signals) in the direction that the battery-transmit data moves (flows) from the equipment communication terminal to the input terminal.

(41) The manipulatable switch is manipulated by a user of the electric work machine to control operation/drive of the motor. The motor drive circuit is adapted/configured to drive the motor, using electric power supplied from the battery pack through the equipment positive electrode terminal and the equipment negative electrode terminal, in response to the manipulatable switch being manipulated. The drive mechanism is adapted/configured to detachably mount or attach a work output member (e.g., a tool accessory) thereon or such that the work output member (e.g., a tool accessory) is integrally (permanently) affixed to the drive mechanism. The drive mechanism is adapted/configured to cause the work output member to act on a work target by transmitting a rotational drive force of the motor and driving (e.g., moving) the work output member using that rotational drive force.

(42) With such an embodiment an electric work machine, because the limiting circuit is provided, the flow of electric current in the direction from the data input circuit to the equipment communication terminal and, in turn, the input of that electric current to the battery pack is limited e.g., below a level that does not detrimentally affect the signal integrity of the battery-transmit data. Consequently, data communication between the battery pack and the electric work machine can be executed (performed) more accurately owing to the limiting circuit.

(43) In yet another aspect of the present disclosure, a charger adapted/configured to be selectively placed in a connected state, in which the charger has been electrically connected to a battery pack comprising a battery (in particular, when the battery pack is mounted on the charger to initiate a

charging operation), and in a state, in which the connected state has been released (terminated).
(44) The charger may comprise at least a charger positive electrode terminal, a charger negative electrode terminal, a charger communication terminal, a data output circuit, a data input circuit, a noise current limiting circuit or a reverse current protection circuit (hereinafter, simply “limiting circuit”), and a charging circuit.

(45) The charger positive electrode terminal is adapted/configured to be electrically connected to the positive electrode of the battery in response to the charger entering the connected state. The charger negative electrode terminal is adapted/configured to be electrically connected to the negative electrode of the battery in response to the charger entering the connected state. The charger communication terminal is adapted/configured to be electrically connected to the battery pack in response to the charger entering the connected state. The data output circuit may comprise at least an output terminal, which is electrically connected to the charger communication terminal, and is adapted/configured to output charger transmit-data (one or more signals containing data/instructions generated and output by the charger) from the output terminal. The data input circuit may comprise at least an input terminal, which is electrically connected to the charger communication terminal, and a ground terminal, which is electrically connected to the charger negative electrode terminal. The data input circuit may be adapted/configured such that battery transmit-data (one or more signals containing data regarding the battery, such as, e.g., current voltage, current temperature, etc.), which has been input (transmitted) from the battery pack to the charger communication terminal, is input to the input terminal. The limiting circuit is adapted/configured to at least limit a flow of electric current in a direction from the charger negative electrode terminal to the charger communication terminal via the data input circuit. That is, the limiting circuit is preferably designed to at least limit the flow of electric current (e.g., noise) in the direction that is opposite (reverse) of the direction that the battery-transmit data moves (flows) from the charger communication terminal to the input terminal. The limiting circuit is preferably designed to not limit the flow of electric current (e.g., signals) in the direction that the battery-transmit data moves (flows) from the charger communication terminal to the input terminal.
(46) The charging circuit is adapted/configured such that electric power for charging the battery is output to the battery pack through the charger positive electrode terminal and the charger negative electrode terminal.

(47) With such an embodiment of a charger, because the limiting circuit is provided, the flow of electric current in the direction from the data input circuit to the charger communication terminal and, in turn, the input of that electric current to the battery pack is limited e.g., below a level that does not detrimentally affect the signal integrity of the battery-transmit data. Consequently, data communication between the battery pack and the charger can be executed (performed) more accurately owing to the limiting circuit.

(48) Further objects, aspects, embodiments and advantages of the present teachings will become apparent to a person skilled in the art upon reading the following detailed description in conjunction with the appended claims and drawings.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

(1) FIG. 1 is an explanatory diagram that shows the configuration of an electric work machine system according to a first embodiment of the present disclosure.

(2) FIG. 2 is an explanatory diagram that shows the configuration of a charging system according to the first embodiment.

(3) FIG. 3 is an explanatory diagram that shows the configuration of an electric work machine system according to a second embodiment of the present disclosure.

(4) FIG. 4 is an explanatory diagram that shows the configuration of an electric work machine system according to a third embodiment of the present disclosure.

(5) FIG. 5 is an explanatory diagram that shows the configuration of an electric work machine system according to a fourth embodiment of the present disclosure.

(6) FIG. 6 is an explanatory diagram that shows a charging system according to a first modification of the charging system shown in FIG. 2.

(7) FIG. 7 is an explanatory diagram that shows a charging system according to a second modification of the charging system shown in FIG. 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

(8) Exemplary, non-limiting embodiments of the present disclosure are explained below, with reference to the drawings.

1. FIRST EMBODIMENT

(9) (1-1) Overview of an Exemplary Electric Work Machine System

(10) The electric work machine system **1** shown in FIG. 1 comprises: a battery pack **10**, which comprises (contains) a battery **14**; and an electric work machine **30**. The electric work machine **30** is adapted/configured such that the battery pack **10** is mountable thereon and demountable (detachable, removable) therefrom. Specifically, the electric work machine **30** comprises a mounting part **39**, and the battery pack **10** is mountable on and demountable from the mounting part **39**.

(11) As shown in FIG. 1, the battery pack **10** comprises a positive electrode terminal **11**, a negative electrode terminal **12**, and a communication terminal **13**. The electric work machine **30** comprises a positive electrode terminal **31**, a negative electrode terminal **32**, and a communication terminal **33**.

(12) When the battery pack **10** is mounted on the electric work machine **30**, the electric work machine system **1** enters an equipment-connected state, in which the electric work machine **30** and the battery pack **10** are electrically connected. In the equipment-connected state, as shown in FIG. 1, the positive electrode terminal **11** of the battery pack **10** and the positive electrode terminal **31** of the electric work machine **30** are electrically connected, the negative electrode terminal **12** of the battery pack **10** and the negative electrode terminal **32** of the electric work machine **30** are electrically connected, and the communication terminal **13** of the battery pack **10** and the communication terminal **33** of the electric work machine **30** are electrically connected.

(13) When the electric work machine system **1** enters the equipment-connected state, it becomes possible for the electric work machine **30** to operate by receiving electric power (current) from the battery **14**. When the battery pack **10**, which had been mounted on the electric work machine **30**, is demounted (removed) from the electric work machine **30**, the equipment-connected state is released (terminated). In addition, when the electric work machine system **1** enters the equipment-connected state, data communication (e.g., half duplex serial communication) between the electric work machine **30** and the battery pack **10** becomes possible.

(14) (1-2) Configuration of an Exemplary Battery Pack

(15) As shown in FIG. 1, in addition to the positive electrode terminal **11**, the negative electrode terminal **12**, the communication terminal **13**, and the battery **14** described above, the battery pack **10** further comprises a battery control circuit (e.g., a microprocessor unit comprising at least one processor, memory having operating programs and data stored therein and at least one I/O interface) **20**, a power supply circuit **21**, a current detection circuit **22**, a data input circuit **23**, and a data output circuit **24**.

(16) The battery **14** is a rechargeable battery, which is capable of being charged and discharged. The battery **14** may contain one or more battery cells of any kind of rechargeable battery, for example, one or more lithium ion battery cells. The rated voltage value of the battery **14** may be any value without limitation, for example, 36 V. Generally speaking, batteries **14** according to the present teachings may be adapted/configured to output any rated voltage within a range of about 10-100 V, such as, e.g., 14-40 V.

(17) The positive electrode terminal **11** is electrically connected to the positive electrode of the battery **14**. The negative electrode terminal **12** is electrically connected to the negative electrode of the battery **14**. In greater detail, the negative electrode terminal **12** is electrically connected to the negative electrode of the battery **14** via the current detection circuit **22** and a ground line **15**.

(18) The current detection circuit **22** outputs, to the battery control circuit **20**, a current detection signal corresponding to the value of the electric current flowing through a negative electrode path, which extends from the negative electrode terminal **12** to the negative electrode of the battery **14** via the ground line **15**. The current detection circuit **22** may be any kind of circuit capable of detecting the value of the current momentarily flowing, e.g., from the battery **14** to the electric work machine **30** and/or from a charger to the battery **14**. For example, the current detection circuit **22** may comprise a shunt resistor (not shown) that is inserted in (in series with) the negative electrode path. In the alternative, the current detection circuit **22** may be provided at a location that differs from the negative electrode path. In such an alternative embodiment, the negative electrode terminal **12** may be directly connected to the ground line **15**.

(19) The communication terminal **13** is electrically connected to the data input circuit **23** and to the data output circuit **24**. In greater detail, a first end of a signal path **26** is connected to the communication terminal **13**, and a second end of the signal path **26** is connected to the data input circuit **23**. Thus, the communication terminal **13** is electrically connected to the data input circuit **23** via the signal path **26**.

(20) The data output circuit **24** is electrically connected to a connection point **26a** in the signal path **26** and is electrically connected to the communication terminal **13** via the connection point **26a**.

(21) A resistor **R10** is provided in (in series with) the signal path **26** between the connection point **26a** and the communication terminal **13**. A diode **D11** is provided in (in series with) the signal path **26** between the connection point **26a** and the data input circuit **23**. Specifically, the anode of the diode **D11** is electrically connected to the connection point **26a**, and the cathode of the diode **D11** is electrically connected to the data input circuit **23**.

(22) It is noted that the connection point **26a** may be provided in the signal path **26** anywhere between the anode of the diode **D11** and the communication terminal **13**. For example, the connection point **26a** may be provided between the resistor **R10** and the communication terminal **13**. In addition, for example, the connection point **26a** may be provided in the signal path **26** at the end part to which the communication terminal **13** is connected (in other words, at the location of the communication terminal **13** to which the signal path **26** is connected).

(23) The battery control circuit **20** controls the charging and the discharging of the battery **14** based on various types of information that are input into the battery control circuit **20**, such as the current detection signal input from the current detection circuit **22**.

(24) The battery pack **10** of the present embodiment comprises a universal asynchronous receiver transmitter (UART) circuit, which is embodied in the data input circuit **23**, the data output circuit **24**, and the communication terminal **13**. The battery control circuit **20** preferably performs half duplex serial communication with the electric work machine **30**, which is connected to the battery pack **10** via the UART circuit.

(25) The battery control circuit **20** comprises a Tx terminal **20a** and an Rx terminal **20b**. The battery control circuit **20** generates battery transmit-data (one or more signals) and outputs such from the Tx terminal **20a**. The battery transmit-data, which has been output from the Tx terminal **20a**, is transmitted to the electric work machine **30** via the data output circuit **24** and the communication terminal **13**. Equipment transmit-data (one or more signals) is transmitted from the electric work machine **30**. In the battery pack **10**, this equipment transmit-data is input (received) at the communication terminal **13** and then input to the Rx terminal **20b** via the data input circuit **23**. In the present embodiment, the battery transmit-data and the equipment transmit-data are in each case implemented, for example, as a binary signal having an H level (high or “1”) and an L level (low or “0”).

(26) The battery control circuit **20** executes (performs) data communication (serial communication) with the electric work machine **30** via the data input circuit **23** and the data output circuit **24** and controls the discharging of the battery **14** (i.e. the supply of power (current) to the connected equipment) in accordance with the equipment transmit-data received from the electric work machine **30**.

(27) The power supply circuit **21** generates a direct current control voltage VDD_B by stepping down the voltage of the battery **14**. The control voltage VDD_B generated by the power supply circuit **21** is supplied to each component within the battery pack **10**, including to the battery control circuit **20**, the data input circuit **23**, and the data output circuit **24**.

(28) The data input circuit **23** and the data output circuit **24** will now be explained in further detail. As shown in FIG. 1, the data input circuit **23** comprises a switching device T11, resistors R11, R12, R13, an input terminal 23a, and a ground terminal 23b. In the present embodiment, the switching device T11 is, for example, an n-channel MOSFET.

(29) The second end of the signal path **26** is electrically connected to the input terminal 23a. That is, the cathode of the diode D11, which is provided in the signal path **26**, is electrically connected to the input terminal 23a. Thereby, the equipment transmit-data, which has been input (transmitted) from the electric work machine **30** to the communication terminal **13**, is input to the input terminal 23a via the signal path **26** (i.e., via the resistor R10 and the diode D11). The ground terminal 23b is electrically connected to the ground line **15**.

(30) In the data input circuit **23**, a first end of the resistor R11 is electrically connected to the input terminal 23a, and a second end of the resistor R11 is electrically connected to the gate (switch input terminal) of the switching device T11. The source (switch ground terminal) of the switching device T11 is electrically connected to the ground terminal 23b, and the drain of the switching device T11 is electrically connected both to a first end of the resistor R13 and to the Rx terminal 20b. The control voltage VDD_B is input to a second end of the resistor R13. A first end of the resistor R12 is electrically connected to a connection point 23c, and a second end of the resistor R12 is electrically connected to a connection point 23d. The connection point 23c is provided along (in series with) a path extending from the second end of the resistor R11 to the gate of the switching device T11. The connection point 23d is provided along (in series with) a path extending from the source of the switching device T11 to the ground terminal 23b.

(31) In the above-described data input circuit **23**, if the communication terminal **13** becomes H level (high) in response to the equipment transmit-data transmitted from the electric work machine **30**, then the switching device T11 turns ON and an L-level (low) signal is output to the Rx terminal 20b. On the other hand, if the communication terminal **13** becomes L level (low) in response to the equipment transmit-data, the switching device T11 turns OFF and an H-level (high) signal is output to the Rx terminal 20b.

(32) As shown in FIG. 1, the data output circuit **24** comprises a switching device T12, resistors R14, R15, a diode D12, and an output terminal 24a. In the present embodiment, the switching device T12 is, for example, a p-channel MOSFET. The output terminal 24a is electrically connected to the connection point 26a in the signal path **26**.

(33) A first end of the resistor R14 is electrically connected to the Tx terminal 20a, and a second end of the resistor R14 is electrically connected to the gate of the switching device T12. A first end of the resistor R15 is electrically connected to the gate of the switching device T12, and a second end of the resistor R15 is electrically connected to the source of the switching device T12. Control voltage VDD_B is input to the source of the switching device T12. The anode of the diode D12 is electrically connected to the drain of the switching device T12, and the cathode of the diode D12 is electrically connected to the output terminal 24a.

(34) (1-3) Configuration of an Exemplary Electric Work Machine

(35) As shown in FIG. 1, in addition to the positive electrode terminal **31**, the negative electrode terminal **32**, and the communication terminal **33** described above, the electric work machine **30**

further comprises a motor **34**, a manipulatable switch (e.g., trigger) **36**, a drive mechanism (e.g., a speed-reducing gear transmission and/or a rotational-to-linear motion converting mechanism) **37**, a drive control circuit (e.g., a microprocessor unit comprising at least one processor, memory having operating programs and data stored therein and at least one I/O interface) **40**, a power supply circuit **41**, a drive switch (e.g., a FET) **42**, a data input circuit **43**, a data output circuit **44**, and a motor drive circuit (e.g., a pulse-width-modulation (PWM) drive circuit) **45**.

(36) The motor drive circuit **45** is connected both to the positive electrode terminal **31** (via the drive switch **42**) and to the negative electrode terminal **32** and is adapted/configured to receive (input) electric power (current) from the battery **14** of the battery pack **10**, which is mounted on the mounting part **39**. In accordance with a drive instruction that has been input from the drive control circuit **40**, the motor drive circuit **45** converts the electric power (current), which was supplied by the battery **14**, into drive power (current, e.g., according to a pulse-width modulated duty cycle) for driving (powering) the motor **34** and supplies such drive power (current) to the motor **34**.

(37) The motor **34** rotates owing to the drive power supplied from the motor drive circuit **45**. The motor **34** may be any kind of motor, such as, for example, a brushless motor or a brushed DC motor.

(38) A work output member (e.g., a tool accessory) **38** is provided on an output end/portion of the drive mechanism **37**. The work output member **38** may be affixed to (integral with) the drive mechanism **37** (e.g., to/with a spindle thereof) or may be removable or detachable from the drive mechanism **37**. The rotational drive force generated by the rotation of the motor **34** is transmitted to the drive mechanism **37**. Using the rotational drive force transmitted from the motor **34**, the drive mechanism **37** drives the work output member **38** attached to the drive mechanism **37**, e.g., rotationally, linearly and/or both rotationally and linearly.

(39) The work output member **38** acts on a work target, which is external to (separate from) the electric work machine **30**; in other words, the work output member **38** is adapted/configured to achieve or realize the function (intended purpose) of the electric work machine **30** by imparting energy to the work target. The work output member **38** may be, for example, a rotary blade adapted/configured to rotate in order to mow grass, brush cut small diameter trees, or the like. In the alternative, for example, the work output member **38** may be a drill bit adapted/configured to rotate in order to drill a hole in a workpiece. In the alternative, for example, the work output member **38** may be a fan that is rotated in order to blow or suck air (which is the work target in this embodiment).

(40) The drive switch **42** for making conductive and interrupting the conducting path is provided in (in series with) the conducting path between the positive electrode terminal **31** and the motor drive circuit **45**. The drive switch **42** is turned ON and OFF by the drive control circuit **40**.

(41) The manipulatable switch **36** is designed to be manipulated or moved (e.g., squeezed, pulled) by a user of the electric work machine **30**. In response to the manipulatable switch **36** being manipulated, the drive control circuit **40** causes the motor **34** to be rotationally driven by turning the drive switch **42** ON to make the above-described conducting path conductive and then outputting a drive instruction to the motor drive circuit **45**.

(42) The communication terminal **33** is electrically connected to the data input circuit **43** and to the data output circuit **44**. In greater detail, a first end of a signal path **46** is electrically connected to the communication terminal **33**, and a second end of the signal path **46** is electrically connected to the data input circuit **43**. The communication terminal **33** is electrically connected to the data input circuit **43** via the signal path **46**.

(43) The data output circuit **44** is electrically connected to a connection point **46a** and is electrically connected to the communication terminal **33** via the connection point **46a**. A resistor R30 is provided in (in series with) the signal path **46** between the connection point **46a** and the communication terminal **33**. A diode D31 is provided in (in series with) the signal path **46** between the connection point **46a** and the data input circuit **43**. Specifically, the anode of the diode D31 is

electrically connected to the connection point **46a**, and the cathode of the diode **D31** is electrically connected to the data input circuit **43**.

(44) It is noted that the connection point **46a** may be provided in the signal path **46** anywhere between the anode of the diode **D31** and the communication terminal **33**. For example, the connection point **46a** may be provided between the resistor **R30** and the communication terminal **33**. In the alternative, for example, the connection point **46a** may be provided in the signal path **46** at the end part to which the communication terminal **33** is connected (in other words, at the location of the communication terminal **33** to which the signal path **46** is connected).

(45) The electric work machine **30** of the present embodiment comprises the UART circuit, which is embodied by the data input circuit **43**, the data output circuit **44**, and the communication terminal **33**. The drive control circuit **40** executes (performs) half duplex serial communication with the battery pack **10**, which is connected to the electric work machine **30**, via the UART circuit.

(46) The drive control circuit **40** comprises a Tx terminal **40a** and an Rx terminal **40b**. The drive control circuit **40** generates the above-described equipment transmit-data and outputs such from the Tx terminal **40a**. The equipment transmit-data, which has been output from the Tx terminal **40a**, is transmitted to the battery pack **10** via the data output circuit **44** and the communication terminal **33**. The battery transmit-data transmitted from the battery pack **10** is, in the electric work machine **30**, received (input) at the communication terminal **33** and input to the Rx terminal **40b** via the data input circuit **43**.

(47) The power supply circuit **41** generates a direct current control voltage VDD_E by stepping down the voltage of the battery **14**, which is input from the battery pack **10** mounted on the electric work machine **30**. The control voltage VDD_E generated by the power supply circuit **41** is supplied to each component within the electric work machine **30**, including the drive control circuit **40**, the data input circuit **43**, and the data output circuit **44**. It is noted that the value of control voltage VDD_E may be the same as or different from the value of control voltage VDD_B generated by the battery pack **10**.

(48) The data input circuit **43** and the data output circuit **44** will now be explained in further detail. As shown in FIG. **1**, the data input circuit **43** comprises a switching device **T31**, resistors **R31**, **R32**, **R33**, an input terminal **43a**, and a ground terminal **43b**. In the present embodiment, the switching device **T31** is, for example, an n-channel MOSFET.

(49) The second end of the signal path **46** is electrically connected to the input terminal **43a**. That is, the cathode of the diode **D31**, which is provided in the signal path **46**, is electrically connected to the input terminal **43a**. Thereby, the battery transmit-data, which has been input (transmitted) from the battery pack **10** to the communication terminal **33**, is input to the input terminal **43a** via the signal path **46** (i.e., via the resistor **R30** and the diode **D31**). The ground terminal **43b** is electrically connected to a ground line **35**. The negative electrode terminal **32** and the motor drive circuit **45** are electrically connected to the ground line **35**.

(50) In the data input circuit **43**, a first end of the resistor **R31** is electrically connected to the input terminal **43a**, and a second end of the resistor **R31** is electrically connected to the gate (switch input terminal) of the switching device **T31**. The source (switch ground terminal) of the switching device **T31** is electrically connected to the ground terminal **43b**, and the drain of the switching device **T31** is electrically connected both to a first end of the resistor **R33** and to the Rx terminal **40b**. The control voltage VDD_E is input to a second end of the resistor **R33**.

(51) A first end of the resistor **R32** is electrically connected to a connection point **43c**, and a second end of the resistor **R32** is electrically connected to a connection point **43d**. The connection point **43c** is provided along (in series with) a path extending from the second end of the resistor **R31** to the gate of the switching device **T31**. The connection point **43d** is provided along (in series with) a path extending from the source of the switching device **T31** the ground terminal **43b**.

(52) In the above-described data input circuit **43**, if the communication terminal **33** becomes H level (high or “1”) in response to the battery transmit-data from the battery pack **10**, then the

switching device **T31** turns ON and an L-level signal (low or “0”) is output to the Rx terminal **40b**. On the other hand, if the communication terminal **33** becomes L level in response to the battery transmit-data, the switching device **T31** turns OFF and an H-level signal is output to the Rx terminal **40b**.

(53) As shown in FIG. 1, the data output circuit **44** comprises a switching device **T32**, resistors **R34**, **R35**, a diode **D32**, and an output terminal **44a**. In the present embodiment, the switching device **T32** is, for example, a p-channel MOSFET. The output terminal **44a** is connected to the connection point **46a**.

(54) A first end of the resistor **R34** is electrically connected to the Tx terminal **40a** of the drive control circuit **40**, and a second end of the resistor **R34** is electrically connected to the gate of the switching device **T32**. A first end of the resistor **R35** is electrically connected to the gate of the switching device **T32**, and a second end of the resistor **R35** is electrically connected to the source of the switching device **T32**. Control voltage **VDD_E** is input to the source of the switching device **T32**. The anode of the diode **D32** is electrically connected to the drain of the switching device **T32**, and the cathode of the diode **D32** is electrically connected to the output terminal **44a**.

(55) (1-4) Overview of an Exemplary Charging System

(56) The charging system **2** shown in FIG. 2 comprises the battery pack **10** and a charger **50**. The battery pack **10** shown in FIG. 2 is the same as the battery pack **10** shown in FIG. 1. The charger **50** is adapted/configured such that the battery pack **50** is mountable thereon and demountable therefrom. Specifically, the charger **50** comprises a mounting part **59**, and the battery pack **10** is mountable on and demountable from the mounting part **59**.

(57) As shown in FIG. 2, the charger **50** comprises a positive electrode terminal **51**, a negative electrode terminal **52**, and a communication terminal **53**. When the battery pack **10** is mounted on the charger **50**, the charging system **2** enters a charger-connected state, in which the charger **50** and the battery pack **10** are electrically connected. In the charger-connected state, as shown in FIG. 2, the positive electrode terminal **11** of the battery pack **10** and the positive electrode terminal **51** of the charger **50** are electrically connected, the negative electrode terminal **12** of the battery pack **10** and the negative electrode terminal **52** of the charger **50** are electrically connected, and the communication terminal **13** of the battery pack **10** and the communication terminal **53** of the charger **50** are electrically connected.

(58) When the charging system **2** enters the charger-connected state, it becomes possible for the charger **50** to supply charging power (current) to the battery pack **10** and thereby charge the battery **14**. When the battery pack **10**, which has been mounted on the charger **50**, is demounted from the charger **50**, the charger-connected state is released (terminated). In addition, when the charging system **2** enters the charger-connected state, data communication (e.g., half duplex serial communication) between the charger **50** and the battery pack **10** becomes possible.

(59) (1-5) Configuration of an Exemplary Charger

(60) As shown in FIG. 2, in addition to the positive electrode terminal **51**, the negative electrode terminal **52**, and the communication terminal **53** described above, the charger **50** further comprises a power supply plug **54**, a charger control circuit (e.g., a microprocessor unit comprising at least one processor, memory having operating programs and data stored therein and at least one I/O interface) **60**, a charger switch (e.g., a FET) **62**, a data input circuit **63**, a data output circuit **64**, and a charger power supply circuit **65**.

(61) The power supply plug **54** is electrically connected to an AC power supply, for example, a commercial power supply that supplies 110 or 220 VAC, and is adapted/configured to receive AC electrical power from the AC power supply.

(62) The charger power supply circuit **65** generates, from the AC electrical power that is input via the power supply plug **54** (i.e. via a power cord that electrically connects the plug **54** and the charger power supply circuit **65**), the charging power for charging the battery **14**. The charger power supply circuit **65** is electrically connected to the positive electrode terminal **51** via the

charger switch **62** and is electrically connected to the negative electrode terminal **52**. The charging power generated by the charger power supply circuit **65** is supplied, via the positive electrode terminal **51** and the negative electrode terminal **52**, to the battery pack **10**, which has been mounted on the charger **50**.

(63) The charger switch **62** is provided along (in series with) a charging path, extending between the charger power supply circuit **65** and the positive electrode terminal **51**, for outputting the charging power. The charger switch **62** is configured/adapted to make the charging path conductive and to interrupt the charging path.

(64) The charger control circuit **60** controls the charger power supply circuit **65** and the charger switch **62**. When the battery pack **10** is mounted on the charger **50** and charging of the battery **14** is possible, the charger control circuit **60** makes the above-described charging path conductive by turning the charger switch **62** ON and thereby supplies charging power to the battery pack **10** by causing the charger power supply circuit **65** to generate charging power.

(65) It is noted that the charger power supply circuit **65** has a function (intended purpose) of generating a direct current control voltage VDD_C from the AC power supply, which has been input via the power supply plug **54**. Control voltage VDD_C generated by the charger power supply circuit **65** is supplied to every component within the charger **50**, including the charger control circuit **60**, the data input circuit **63**, and the data output circuit **64**. It is noted that the value of control voltage VDD_C may be the same as or different from the value of control voltage VDD_B generated by the battery pack **10**.

(66) The communication terminal **53** is electrically connected to the data input circuit **63** and the data output circuit **64**. In greater detail, a first end of a signal path **66** is electrically connected to the communication terminal **53**, and a second end of the signal path **66** is electrically connected to the data input circuit **63**. The communication terminal **53** is electrically connected to the data input circuit **63** via the signal path **66**.

(67) The data output circuit **64** is electrically connected to a connection point **66a** in the signal path **66** and is electrically connected to the communication terminal **53** via the connection point **66a**.

(68) A resistor R50 is provided in (in series with) the signal path **66** between the connection point **66a** and the communication terminal **53**. A diode D51 is provided in (in series with) the signal path **66** between the connection point **66a** and the data input circuit **63**. Specifically, the anode of the diode D51 is electrically connected to the connection point **66a**, and the cathode of the diode D51 is electrically connected to the data input circuit **63**.

(69) It is noted that the connection point **66a** may be provided in the signal path **66** anywhere between the anode of the diode D51 and the communication terminal **53**. For example, the connection point **66a** may be provided between the resistor R50 and the communication terminal **53**. In addition, for example, the connection point **66a** may be provided in the signal path **66** at the end part to which the communication terminal **53** is connected (in other words, at the location of the communication terminal **53** to which the signal path **66** is connected).

(70) The charger **50** of the present embodiment comprises the UART circuit, which is embodied by the data input circuit **63**, the data output circuit **64**, and the communication terminal **53**. The charger control circuit **60** performs half duplex serial communication with the battery pack **10**, which is connected to the charger **50**, via the UART circuit.

(71) The charger control circuit **60** comprises a Tx terminal **60a** and an Rx terminal **60b**. The charger control circuit **60** generates the charger transmit-data (one or more signals, e.g., comprising charging instructions) and outputs such from the Tx terminal **60a**. The charger transmit-data output from the Tx terminal **60a** is transmitted to the battery pack **10** via the data output circuit **64** and the communication terminal **53**. The battery transmit-data transmitted from the battery pack **10** is, in the charger **50**, input at the communication terminal **53** and the input to the Rx terminal **60b** via the data input circuit **63**.

(72) The data input circuit **63** and the data output circuit **64** will now be explained in further detail.

As shown in FIG. 2, the data input circuit **63** comprises a switching device **T51**, resistors **R51**, **R52**, **R53**, an input terminal **63a**, and a ground terminal **63b**. In the present embodiment, the switching device **T51** is, for example, an n-channel MOSFET.

(73) The second end of the signal path **66** is electrically connected to the input terminal **63a**. That is, the cathode of the diode **D51**, which is provided in the signal path **66**, is electrically connected to the input terminal **63a**. Thereby, the battery transmit-data, which has been input from the battery pack **10** to the communication terminal **53**, is input (transmitted) to the input terminal **63a** via the signal path **66** (i.e., via the resistor **R50** and the diode **D51**). The ground terminal **63b** is electrically connected to a ground line **55**. The negative electrode terminal **52** and the charger power supply circuit **65** are electrically connected to the ground line **55**.

(74) In the data input circuit **63**, a first end of the resistor **R51** is electrically connected to the input terminal **63a**, and a second end of the resistor **R51** is electrically connected to the gate (switch input terminal) of the switching device **T51**. The source (switch ground terminal) of the switching device **T51** is electrically connected to the ground terminal **63b**, and the drain of the switching device **T51** is electrically connected both to a first end of the resistor **R53** and to the Rx terminal **60b**. The control voltage **VDD_C** is input to a second end of the resistor **R53**. A first end of the resistor **R52** is electrically connected to a connection point **63c**, and a second end of the resistor **R52** is electrically connected to a connection point **63d**. The connection point **63c** is provided along (in series with) a path extending from the second end of the resistor **R51** to the gate of the switching device **T51**. The connection point **63d** is provided along (in series with) a path extending from the source of the switching device **T51** to the ground terminal **63b**.

(75) In the above-described data input circuit **63**, if the communication terminal **53** becomes H level (high or “1”) in response to the battery transmit-data from the battery pack **10**, then the switching device **T51** turns ON and an L-level signal (low or “0”) is output to the Rx terminal **60b**. On the other hand, if the communication terminal **53** becomes L level in response to the battery transmit-data, the switching device **T51** turns OFF and an H-level signal is output to the Rx terminal **60b**.

(76) As shown in FIG. 2, the data output circuit **64** comprises a switching device **T52**, resistors **R54**, **R55**, a diode **D52**, and an output terminal **64a**. In the present embodiment, the switching device **T52** is, for example, a p-channel MOSFET. The output terminal **64a** is connected to the connection point **66a**.

(77) A first end of the resistor **R54** is electrically connected to the Tx terminal **60a**, and a second end of the resistor **R54** is electrically connected to the gate of the switching device **T52**. A first end of the resistor **R55** is electrically connected to the gate (switch input terminal) of the switching device **T52**, and a second end of the resistor **R55** is electrically connected to the source (switch ground terminal) of the switching device **T52**. Control voltage **VDD_C** is input to the source of the switching device **T52**. The anode of the diode **D52** is electrically connected to the drain of the switching device **T52**, and the cathode of the diode **D52** is electrically connected to the output terminal **64a**.

(78) (1-6) Noise Current Limiting (Protection) Function and Effects Thereof

(79) Next, a noise current limiting (protection) function, which the electric work machine system **1** and the charging system **2** of the present embodiment possess, and the effects thereof will be explained.

(80) First, it is noted that the electric work machine system **1** shown in FIG. 1 utilizes a single communication path (i.e. the connection terminals **13**, **33**) to communicate signals from the battery pack **10** to the electric work machine **30** and vice versa. Thus, a half-duplex communication system is preferably used, because it enables communications in two directions, but only one direction at a time. In half-duplex systems, if signals, voltages, etc. are transmitted in both directions at the same time (e.g., a signal in one direction and noise in the other direction), a collision may occur, thereby possibly resulting in a lost message/signal.

(81) More specifically, the electric work machine system **1** shown in FIG. **1** includes a closed loop that, in clockwise order in FIG. **1** starting from, for example, the negative electrode terminal **12** of the battery pack **10**, includes the current detection circuit **22**, the connection point of the ground line **15** with the data input circuit **23**, the data input circuit **23** (including the resistor R12), the signal path **26**, the communication terminal **13**, the communication terminal **33** of the electric work machine **30**, the signal path **46**, the data input circuit **43** (including the resistor R32), and the connection point of the ground line **35** with the data input circuit **43**, from which the closed loop returns to the negative electrode terminal **12** of the battery pack **10** via the negative electrode terminal **32**.

(82) If an unintended noise current were to flow through the above-described closed loop, e.g., owing to noise generated during the drive of the motor **34** in the electric work machine **30** or various other factors, while a signal is being transmitted in the opposite direction, then there is a possibility that the battery control circuit **20** or the drive control circuit **40** will be affected by that noise current and will become incapable to accurately receive data such that the signal is lost while the noise current is flowing. More specifically, if a noise current flows, for example, in the direction from the communication terminal **13** of the battery pack **10** in the above mentioned closed loop toward the communication terminal **33** of the electric work machine **30** (i.e., in the clockwise direction in FIG. **1**) while battery transmit-data is being transmitted by the battery pack **10** in the opposite direction, then there is a possibility that the drive control circuit **40** of the electric work machine **30** will not be able to accurately receive the battery transmit-data while this noise current is flowing owing to a collision between the battery transmit-data and the noise current. Conversely, if a noise current flows in the direction from the communication terminal **33** of the electric work machine **30** in the above mentioned closed loop toward the communication terminal **13** of the battery pack **10** (i.e., in the counterclockwise direction in FIG. **1**) while equipment transmit-data is being transmitted by the electric work machine **30** or charger **50** in the opposite direction, then there is a possibility that the battery control circuit **20** of the battery pack **10** will not be able to accurately receive the equipment transmit-data while this noise current is flowing owing to a collision between the equipment transmit-data and the noise current. In other words, the noise (voltage) moving in one direction may affect (offset) the signal (voltage) moving in the opposite direction to an extent that the signal integrity is lost and the signal can not be properly received/discerned at the intended receiver.

(83) Accordingly, in the electric work machine system **1** according to the present embodiment, in order to sufficiently limit or even block undesirable noise currents flowing in the closed loop, the diode D11 is provided in the signal path **26** of the battery pack **10**, and the diode D31 is provided in the signal path **46** of the electric work machine **30**. Noise currents that flow clockwise through the closed loop are limited (e.g., at least partially blocked, truncated, reduced, or the like) by the diode D11 of the battery pack **10**, thereby providing reverse current protection. Noise currents that flow counterclockwise through the closed loop are limited (e.g., at least partially blocked, truncated, reduced, diminished or the like) by the diode D31 of the electric work machine **30** or the diode D51 of the charger **50**. That is, in principle, diodes are asymmetrically conductive such that the diode has low resistance in one direction (cathode to anode) and a high resistance in the other direction (anode to cathode). The noise-limiting diodes D11, D31, D51 are arranged so that signals can pass in the direction of low resistance, whereas noise currents flowing in the opposite direction are at least substantially reduced so that any noise that passes through the diode D11, D31, D51 (i.e. in the direction from the anode to the cathode) does not detrimentally influence or affect the signal integrity of the desired signals moving in the opposite direction (i.e. in the direction from the cathode to the anode).

(84) Therefore, in the battery pack **10**, the diode D11 is provided in the signal path **26** on the data input circuit **23** side of the connection point **26a**. Consequently, any decrease in the quality (signal integrity) of the battery transmit-data, which is transmitted from the data output circuit **24** to the

electric work machine **30** via the communication terminal **13**, caused by a noise current flowing in the opposite direction is limited by the diode **D11**, whereby the effect of any noise currents on the battery transmit-data is suitably limited (restricted, diminished).

(85) Similarly, in the electric work machine **30**, the diode **D31** is provided in the signal path **46** on the data input circuit **43** side of the connection point **46a**. Consequently, any decrease in the quality (signal integrity) of the equipment transmit-data, which is transmitted from the data output circuit **44** to the battery pack **10** via the communication terminal **33**, caused by a noise current flowing in the opposite direction is limited by the diode **D31**, whereby the effect of any noise currents on the equipment transmit-data is suitably limited (restricted, diminished).

(86) The charging system **2** shown in FIG. **2** likewise has a closed loop, the same as in the electric work machine system **1**. In the charging system **2**, too, there is a possibility that, owing to various factors, noise currents will be generated and flow such that they circulate through the closed loop. However, in the charging system **2** according to the present embodiment, the diode **D11** is provided in the signal path **26** of the battery pack **10**, and the diode **D51** is provided in the signal path **66** of the charger **50**. Consequently, in the charging system **2**, too, noise currents, which flow such that they circulate through the closed loop, are suitably limited (restricted, diminished) by the diodes **D11** and **D51**, thereby providing reverse current protection.

(87) More specifically, in the charger **50**, the diode **D51** is provided in the signal path **66** on the data input circuit **63** side of the connection point **66a**. Consequently, any decrease in the quality (signal integrity) of the charger transmit-data, which is transmitted from the data output circuit **64** to the battery pack **10** via the communication terminal **53**, caused by a noise current flowing in the opposite direction is limited by the diode **D51**, whereby the effect of the noise currents on the charger transmit-data is suitably limited (restricted, diminished).

(88) It is noted that the electric work machine **30** and the charger **50** correspond to exemplary examples of connected equipment according to the present disclosure.

(89) In the battery pack **10**, the positive electrode terminal **11** corresponds to one example of a first positive electrode terminal and a pack positive electrode terminal in the present disclosure. The negative electrode terminal **12** corresponds to one example of a first negative electrode terminal and a pack negative electrode terminal in the present disclosure. The communication terminal **13** corresponds to one example of a first communication terminal and a pack communication terminal in the present disclosure. The data input circuit **23** corresponds to one example of a first data input circuit in the present disclosure. The input terminal **23a** corresponds to one example of a first input terminal in the present disclosure. The ground terminal **23b** corresponds to one example of a first ground terminal in the present disclosure. The switching device **T11** corresponds to one example of a first switching device in the present disclosure. The gate of the switching device **T11** corresponds to one example of a first switch input terminal in the present disclosure. The source of the switching device **T11** corresponds to one example of a first switch ground terminal in the present disclosure. The resistor **R12** corresponds to one example of a first resistor in the present disclosure. The conducting path connecting the connection point **23c** and the connection point **23d** and in which the resistor **R12** is provided corresponds to one example of a first bias path in the present disclosure. The data output circuit **24** corresponds to one example of a first data output circuit in the present disclosure. The output terminal **24a** corresponds to one example of a first output terminal in the present disclosure. The signal path **26** corresponds to one example of a first signal path in the present disclosure. The connection point **26a** in the signal path **26** corresponds to one example of a first connection point in the present disclosure. The diode **D11** corresponds to one example of a first limiting circuit, a first reverse current protection circuit, and a first diode in the present disclosure.

(90) In the electric work machine **30**, the positive electrode terminal **31** corresponds to one example of a second positive electrode terminal and an equipment positive electrode terminal in the present disclosure. The negative electrode terminal **32** corresponds to one example of a second negative

electrode terminal and an equipment negative electrode terminal in the present disclosure. The communication terminal **33** corresponds to one example of a second communication terminal and an equipment communication terminal in the present disclosure. The data input circuit **43** corresponds to one example of a second data input circuit in the present disclosure. The input terminal **43a** corresponds to one example of a second input terminal in the present disclosure. The ground terminal **43b** corresponds to one example of a second ground terminal in the present disclosure. The switching device **T31** corresponds to one example of a second switching device in the present disclosure. The gate of the switching device **T31** corresponds to one example of a second switch input terminal in the present disclosure. The source of the switching device **T31** corresponds to one example of a second switch ground terminal in the present disclosure. The resistor **R32** corresponds to one example of a second resistor in the present disclosure. The conducting path connecting the connection point **43c** and the connection point **43d** and in which the resistor **R32** is provided corresponds to one example of a second bias path in the present disclosure. The data output circuit **44** corresponds to one example of a second data output circuit in the present disclosure. The output terminal **44a** corresponds to one example of a second output terminal in the present disclosure. The signal path **46** corresponds to one example of a second signal path in the present disclosure. The connection point **46a** in the signal path **46** corresponds to one example of a second connection point in the present disclosure. The diode **D31** corresponds to one example of a second limiting circuit, a second reverse current protection circuit, and a second diode in the present disclosure.

(91) In the charger **50**, the positive electrode terminal **51** corresponds to one example of the second positive electrode terminal and a charger positive electrode terminal in the present disclosure. The negative electrode terminal **52** corresponds to one example of the second negative electrode terminal and a charger negative electrode terminal in the present disclosure. The communication terminal **53** corresponds to one example of the second communication terminal and a charger communication terminal in the present disclosure. The data input circuit **63** corresponds to one example of the second data input circuit in the present disclosure. The input terminal **63a** corresponds to one example of the second input terminal in the present disclosure. The ground terminal **63b** corresponds to one example of the second ground terminal in the present disclosure. The switching device **T51** corresponds to one example of the second switching device in the present disclosure. The gate of the switching device **T51** corresponds to one example of the second switch input terminal in the present disclosure. The source of the switching device **T51** corresponds to one example of the second switch ground terminal in the present disclosure. The resistor **R52** corresponds to one example of the second resistor in the present disclosure. The conducting path connecting the connection point **63c** and the connection point **63d** and in which the resistor **R52** is provided corresponds to one example of the second bias path in the present disclosure. The data output circuit **64** corresponds to one example of the second data output circuit in the present disclosure. The output terminal **64a** corresponds to one example of the second output terminal in the present disclosure. The signal path **66** corresponds to one example of the second signal path in the present disclosure. The connection point **66a** in the signal path **66** corresponds to one example of the second connection point in the present disclosure. The diode **D51** corresponds to another example of the second limiting circuit, the second reverse current protection circuit, and the second diode in the present disclosure.

2. SECOND EMBODIMENT

(92) An electric work machine system **3** according to a second embodiment will now be explained, with reference to FIG. **3**. Because the basic configuration of the electric work machine system **3** according to the second embodiment is the same as that of the electric work machine system **1** according to the first embodiment, only those points of difference from the electric work machine system **1** will be explained below. It is noted that symbols in the second embodiment that are the same as those in the first embodiment indicate structural elements that are the same, and preceding

explanations thereof are referenced.

(93) In the electric work machine system **1** according to the above-described first embodiment, the diode **D11** is provided in the signal path **26** of the battery pack **10** and the diode **D31** is provided in the signal path **46** of the electric work machine **30**.

(94) In contrast thereto, in the electric work machine system **3** according to the second embodiment, diode **D72** is provided in battery pack **71** instead of the diode **D11** of the first embodiment, as shown in FIG. **3**. The diode **D72** is provided within (in series with) a data input circuit **72** in a conducting path that extends from the connection point **23c** to the connection point **23d** via the resistor **R12**. Specifically, the anode of the diode **D72** is electrically connected to the connection point **23c**, and the cathode of the diode **D72** is electrically connected to the first end of the resistor **R12**.

(95) In an electric work machine **76**, too, diode **D77** is provided instead of the diode **D31** of the first embodiment. The diode **D77** is provided within (in series with) a data input circuit **77** in a conducting path that extends from the connection point **43c** to the connection point **43d** via the resistor **R32**. Specifically, the anode of the diode **D77** is electrically connected to the connection point **43c**, and the cathode of the diode **D77** is electrically connected to the first end of the resistor **R32**.

(96) In the above-described electric work machine system **3** according to the second embodiment, any noise currents generated (arising) within the closed loop are limited (at least partially blocked, truncated, reduced, diminished or the like) by the diode **D72** and the diode **D77**. Moreover, in the battery pack **71**, the diode **D72** is provided in a path that is separate from the path extending from the communication terminal **13** to the gate of the switching device **T11**. Consequently, as compared to the electric work machine system **3** of the above-described first embodiment, the electric potential differential (i.e., the voltage drop) between the communication terminal **13** and the gate of the switching device **T11** during reception of the equipment transmit-data is reduced. That is, because the diode **D11** is provided between the gate of the switching device **T11** and the communication terminal **13** in the first embodiment, the diode **D11** will cause a voltage drop in the signal being transmitted from the communication terminal **13** to the gate of the switching device **T11**. Owing to the different location of the diode **D72** of the second embodiment, it does not cause such a voltage drop at the gate of the switching device **T11**.

(97) It is noted that, in the charger **50** shown in FIG. **2**, too, the diode **D51** for limiting (reducing, diminishing) noise currents within the closed loop may be disposed the same as the diode **D77** in the electric work machine **76** shown in FIG. **3**. That is, as shown in FIG. **6**, a diode **D91** may be provided between the connection point **63c** and the first end of the resistor **R52**.

3. THIRD EMBODIMENT

(98) An electric work machine system **4** according to a third embodiment will now be explained, with reference to FIG. **4**. Because the basic configuration of the electric work machine system **4** according to the third embodiment is the same as that of the electric work machine system **1** according to the first embodiment, only those points of difference from the electric work machine system **1** will be explained below. It is noted that symbols in the third embodiment that are the same as those in the first embodiment indicate structural elements that are the same, and preceding explanations thereof will be referenced.

(99) In the electric work machine system **4** according to the third embodiment, diode **D82** is provided in battery pack **81** instead of the diode **D11** of the first embodiment, as shown in FIG. **4**. The diode **D82** is provided within a data input circuit **82** between the connection point **23d** and the ground terminal **23b**. Specifically, the anode of the diode **D82** is electrically connected to the connection point **23d**, and the cathode of the diode **D82** is electrically connected to the ground terminal **23b**.

(100) In electric work machine **86**, too, diode **D87** is provided instead of the diode **D31** of the first embodiment. The diode **D87** is provided within a data input circuit **87** between the connection

point **43d** and the ground terminal **43b**. Specifically, the anode of the diode **D87** is electrically connected to the connection point **43d**, and the cathode of the diode **D87** is electrically connected to the ground terminal **43b**.

(101) Both the diode **D82** and the diode **D87** may be, e.g., Schottky barrier diodes (or simply, “Schottky diodes”) in the third embodiment. The principle reasons for using Schottky barrier diodes as the diode **D82** and the diode **D87** are as follows. That is, in the battery pack **81**, if the switching device **T11** turns ON in response to the equipment transmit-data from the electric work machine **86**, then, in the battery control circuit **20**, it should be determined that the value of the voltage input to the Rx terminal **20b** is at the L level. However, owing to the magnitude of the forward voltage of the diode **D82**, there is a possibility that the value of the voltage input to the Rx terminal **20b** will become high and not be determined to be at the L level in the battery control circuit **20**. In the electric work machine **86**, too, if the switching device **T31** has turned ON, then there is a possibility that, owing to the magnitude of the forward voltage of the diode **D87**, the value of the voltage input to the Rx terminal **40b** will not correctly be determined in the drive control circuit **40** to be at the L level.

(102) Accordingly, in the third embodiment, Schottky barrier diodes, which have a lower forward voltage, are used as the diodes **D82**, **D87**. However, the diodes **D82**, **D87** may be some other type of diodes that differs from Schottky barrier diodes.

(103) In the above-described electric work machine system **4** according to the third embodiment, any noise currents generated (arising) within the closed loop are limited (reduced, diminished, etc.) by the diode **D82** and the diode **D87**.

(104) It is noted that, in the charger **50** shown in FIG. 2, too, the diode **D51** for limiting noise currents within the closed loop may be disposed the same as the diode **D87** in the electric work machine **86** shown in FIG. 4. That is, as shown in FIG. 7, a diode **D92** may be provided between the connection point **63d** and the ground terminal **63b**. This diode **D92** also may be, for example, a Schottky barrier diode.

4. FOURTH EMBODIMENT

(105) An electric work machine system **5** according to a fourth embodiment will now be explained, with reference to FIG. 5. The electric work machine system **5** shown in FIG. 5 comprises the battery pack **10**, the electric work machine **30**, and an intermediate device **100**. The battery pack **10** and the electric work machine **30** are the same as the battery pack **10** and the electric work machine **30** according to the first embodiment as shown in FIG. 1. The intermediate device **100** also may be called, e.g., a remote adapter, a remote battery adapter, an umbilical battery adapter, a remote battery pod adapter or a corded battery-tool adapter.

(106) The intermediate device **100** provides an electrical connection and a physical connection between the battery pack **10** and the electric work machine **30**. The intermediate device **100** comprises a first mounting part **101**, a second mounting part **102**, and a cable **103**. The first mounting part **101** is provided on a first end of the cable **103** and is adapted/configured such that the battery pack **10** is mountable thereon and demountable therefrom. The second mounting part **102** is provided on a second end of the cable **103** and is adapted/configured such that the electric work machine **30** is mountable thereon and demountable therefrom. The cable **103** is flexible. The cable **103** may have a length of, e.g., 1 meter, 2 meters, 3 meters, etc. or any length between 1-3 meters.

(107) The first mounting part **101** comprises a first positive electrode intermediate terminal **111**, a first negative electrode intermediate terminal **112**, and a first communication intermediate terminal **113**. When the battery pack **10** is mounted on (physically connected to) the first mounting part **101**, the positive electrode terminal **11** of the battery pack **10** is electrically connected to the first positive electrode intermediate terminal **111**, the negative electrode terminal **12** of the battery pack **10** is electrically connected to the first negative electrode intermediate terminal **112**, and the communication terminal **13** of the battery pack **10** is electrically connected to the first

communication intermediate terminal **113**. The first mounting part **101** optionally may also include, e.g., a hook, a clip or other type of fastening device (not shown) that enables the first mounting part **101** (with the battery pack **10** mounted thereon) to be attached, e.g., to a user's belt, shoulder harness or other article of clothing or to a physical structure, such as a ladder. In the alternative, such a fastening device may be provided directly on the battery pack **10** or may be removably attachable to the battery pack **10**.

(108) The second mounting part **102** comprises a second positive electrode intermediate terminal **121**, a second negative electrode intermediate terminal **122**, and a second communication intermediate terminal **123**. When the electric work machine **30** is mounted on (physically connected to) the second mounting part **102**, the positive electrode terminal **31** of the electric work machine **30** is electrically connected to the second positive electrode intermediate terminal **121**, the negative electrode terminal **32** of the electric work machine **30** is electrically connected to the second negative electrode intermediate terminal **122**, and the communication terminal **33** of the electric work machine **30** is electrically connected to the second communication intermediate terminal **123**.

(109) The cable **103** comprises a positive electrode intermediate wire **106**, a negative electrode intermediate wire **107**, and a communication intermediate wire **108**. The positive electrode intermediate wire **106** electrically connects the first positive electrode intermediate terminal **111** and the second positive electrode intermediate terminal **121**. The negative electrode intermediate wire **107** electrically connects the first negative electrode intermediate terminal **112** and the second negative electrode intermediate terminal **122**. The communication intermediate wire **108** electrically connects the first communication intermediate terminal **113** and the second communication intermediate terminal **123**.

(110) The above-described electric work machine system **5** makes it possible to use the electric work machine **30** while the electric work machine **30** is spaced apart from the battery pack **10**, e.g., by one meter or more. Consequently, it becomes possible to provide an ergonomic electric work machine system **5**, especially for applications in which the user has to hold the electric work machine **30**, e.g., above the user's head for an extended period of time.

(111) It is noted that the second mounting part **102** may be mounted on and demounted from the charger **50** shown in FIG. 2. That is, the battery pack **10** and the charger **50** also may be connectable to one another using the intermediate device **100**.

5. OTHER EMBODIMENTS

(112) Although embodiments of the present disclosure were explained above, the present disclosure is not limited to the embodiments described above, and it is understood that various modifications may be effected.

(113) (5-1) In the battery pack, a limiting circuit for achieving the above-described noise current limiting function may be provided at a location different from that of the diode **D11** (refer to FIG. 1), the diode **D72** (refer to FIG. 3), and the diode **D82** (refer to FIG. 4) described in the above mentioned embodiments.

(114) For example, in the battery pack **10** shown in FIG. 1, a limiting circuit may be provided, instead of the diode **D11**, within the data input circuit **23** in the conducting path between the input terminal **23a** and the connection point **23c** (i.e., in the conducting path in which the resistor **R11** is provided). More specifically, for example, a limiting circuit may be provided that comprises a diode whose anode is electrically connected to the input terminal **23a** and whose cathode is electrically connected to the first end of the resistor **R11**. In addition, for example, a limiting circuit may be provided that comprises a diode whose anode is electrically connected to the second end of the resistor **R11** and whose cathode is electrically connected to the connection point **23c**.

(115) In addition, for example, in the battery pack **71** shown in FIG. 3, a limiting circuit may be provided, instead of the diode **D72**, in the conducting path between the resistor **R12** and the connection point **23d**. More specifically, for example, a limiting circuit may be provided that

comprises a diode whose anode is electrically connected to the second end of the resistor R12 and whose cathode is electrically connected to the connection point 23d.

(116) In addition, for example, in the battery pack 81 shown in FIG. 4, a limiting circuit may be provided, instead of the diode D82, in the conducting path extending from the ground terminal 23b of the data input circuit 82 to the ground line 15. More specifically, for example, a limiting circuit may be provided that comprises a diode whose anode is electrically connected to the ground terminal 23b and whose cathode is electrically connected to the ground line 15.

(117) (5-2) The same as the limiting circuit in the battery pack described in (5-1) above, the limiting circuit in the electric work machine and the limiting circuit in the charger likewise may be provided at locations that differ from the locations described in the above mentioned embodiments.

(118) (5-3) The limiting circuit in the battery pack may differ from the limiting circuit in the connected equipment, which is connected to the battery pack.

(119) (5-4) The location of the limiting circuit in the battery pack may differ from the location of the limiting circuit in the connected equipment, which is connected to the battery pack.

Specifically, for example, in the electric work machine system 1 shown in FIG. 1, the location of the diode D11 in the battery pack 10 may be the same as shown in FIG. 1, while, in the electric work machine 30, the limiting circuit may be provided, instead of the diode D31, at a location separate/different from that of the diode D31. Conversely, the location of the diode D31 in the electric work machine 30 may be the same as shown in FIG. 1, while, in the battery pack 10, the limiting circuit may be provided, instead of the diode D11, at a location separate/different from that of the diode D11. This applies likewise to the charging system 2 shown in FIG. 2 and to the electric work machine systems 3, 4 shown in FIG. 3 and FIG. 4.

(120) (5-5) The limiting circuit of the present disclosure may differ from a circuit that comprises a single diode, as described in the embodiments above. Limiting circuits of the present disclosure may be constituted without containing a diode to achieve the noise current limiting function described above by using a component or components or a circuit that differ from a diode. More specifically, the limiting circuit of the present disclosure may be, e.g., a reverse current protection circuit that reduces or diminishes the influence of currents (noise) flowing in the direction opposite to the transmitted signals. Most diodes, in principle, exhibit reverse current leakage. Therefore, diodes, such as Schottky diodes, will permit some reverse current (noise) to pass through. However, if the noise is sufficiently attenuated, the signal integrity of the signal moving in the opposite direction is not critically affected (i.e. the receiver of the signal can still accurately discern whether the signal is H level (high) or L level (low)). Therefore, it is not necessary to entirely block the noise current flowing in the reverse direction to the signal; it is only necessary to sufficiently attenuate the noise current so that it does not unduly influence/affect the signal integrity. Therefore, a variety of types of reverse (noise) current protection circuit that achieve or realize this noise reducing effect/function or even a noise eliminating effect/function may be suitably utilized with the present teachings.

(121) (5-6) The present teachings may be applied to a variety of electric work machines, such as, for example: power tools for masonry, metalworking, and carpentry; work machines for gardening (e.g., outdoor power equipment); apparatuses prepared for work site environments; all of which are used at work sites such as professional or DIY carpentry, manufacturing, gardening, and construction. More specifically, the present teachings may be applied to a variety of electric work machines such as, for example, power hammers, power hammer drills, power drills, power drivers, power wrenches, power grinders, power circular saws, power reciprocating saws, power jigsaws, power cutters, power chainsaws, power planers, power nailers (including rivet tools), power hedge trimmers, power lawnmowers, power lawn clippers, power brush cutters, power cleaners, power blowers, power sprayers, power spreaders, power dust collectors or the like.

(122) (5-7) A plurality of functions having a single constituent element in the embodiments above may be implemented by a plurality of constituent elements, and a single function having a single

constituent element may be implemented by a plurality of constituent elements. In addition, a plurality of functions having a plurality of constituent elements may be implemented by a single constituent element, and a single function implemented by a plurality of constituent elements may be implemented by a single constituent element. In addition, a portion of the configuration of each embodiment above may be omitted. In addition, at least a portion of the configuration of each embodiment above may be supplemented or substituted by the configuration of other embodiments above.

(123) Representative, non-limiting examples of the present invention were described above in detail with reference to the attached drawings. This detailed description is merely intended to teach a person of skill in the art further details for practicing preferred aspects of the present teachings and is not intended to limit the scope of the invention. Furthermore, each of the additional features and teachings disclosed above may be utilized separately or in conjunction with other features and teachings to provide improved battery-connected (battery-powered) systems, electric work machines (e.g., power tools, outdoor power equipment, etc.), battery packs and chargers.

(124) Moreover, combinations of features and steps disclosed in the above detailed description may not be necessary to practice the invention in the broadest sense, and are instead taught merely to particularly describe representative examples of the invention. Furthermore, various features of the above-described representative examples, as well as the various independent and dependent claims below, may be combined in ways that are not specifically and explicitly enumerated in order to provide additional useful embodiments of the present teachings.

(125) All features disclosed in the description and/or the claims are intended to be disclosed separately and independently from each other for the purpose of original written disclosure, as well as for the purpose of restricting the claimed subject matter, independent of the compositions of the features in the embodiments and/or the claims. In addition, all value ranges or indications of groups of entities are intended to disclose every possible intermediate value or intermediate entity for the purpose of original written disclosure, as well as for the purpose of restricting the claimed subject matter.

(126) Additional embodiments of the present teachings include, but are not limited to:

(127) An electric work machine configured to receive electric power from a battery pack comprising a battery, the electric work machine comprising: a first positive electrode terminal configured to be electrically connected to a second positive electrode terminal of the battery pack; a first negative electrode terminal configured to be electrically connected to a second negative electrode terminal of the battery pack; a first communication terminal configured to be electrically connected to a second communication terminal of the battery pack; a data output circuit comprising an output terminal connected to the first communication terminal, the data output circuit being configured to generate and output a first signal via the output terminal; a data input circuit comprising an input terminal connected to the first communication terminal, and a ground terminal connected to the first negative electrode terminal, the data input circuit being configured to receive a second signal output from the second communication terminal of the battery pack via the first communication terminal and the input terminal; a limiting circuit configured to at least limit a flow of electric current in a direction from the first negative electrode terminal to the first communication terminal via the data input circuit; a manipulatable switch configured to be manipulated by a user of the electric work machine; a motor; a motor drive circuit configured to drive the motor, using electric power supplied from the battery pack via the first positive electrode terminal and the first negative electrode terminal, in accordance with manipulation of the manipulatable switch; and a drive mechanism configured to mount or hold a work output member and configured to cause the work output member to act on a work target by transmitting a rotational drive force of the motor and driving the work output member using that rotational drive force.

(128) A charger configured to charge a battery pack comprising a battery, the charger comprising: a

first positive electrode terminal configured to be electrically connected to a second positive electrode terminal of the battery pack; a first negative electrode terminal configured to be electrically connected to a second negative electrode terminal of the battery pack; a first communication terminal configured to be electrically connected to a second communication terminal of the battery pack; a data output circuit comprising an output terminal connected to the first communication terminal, the data output circuit being configured to generate and output a first signal via the output terminal; a data input circuit comprising an input terminal connected to the first communication terminal, and a ground terminal connected to the first negative electrode terminal, the data input circuit being configured to receive a second signal from the second communication terminal of the battery pack via the first communication terminal and the input terminal; a limiting circuit configured to at least limit a flow of electric current in a direction from the first negative electrode terminal to the first communication terminal via the data input circuit; and a charging circuit configured to output an electric current for charging the battery of the battery pack via the first positive electrode terminal and the first negative electrode terminal.

EXPLANATION OF THE REFERENCE NUMBERS

(129) **1, 3, 4, 5** Electric work machine system **2** Charging system **10, 71, 81** Battery pack **11, 31, 51** Positive electrode terminals **12, 32, 52** Negative electrode terminals **13, 33, 53** Communication terminals **14** Battery **15, 35, 55** Ground lines **23, 43, 63, 72, 77, 82, 87** Data input circuits **23a, 43a, 63a** Input terminals **23b, 43b, 63b** Ground terminals **24, 44, 64** Data output circuits **24a, 44a, 64a** Output terminals **26, 46, 66** Signal paths **26a, 46a, 66a** Connection points **30, 76, 86** Electric work machine **34** Motor **36** Manipulatable switch **37** Drive mechanism **38** Work output member **39, 59** Mounting part **45** Motor drive circuit **50** Charger **100** Intermediate device **101** First mounting part **102** Second mounting part **103** Cable **106** Positive electrode intermediate wire **107** Negative electrode intermediate wire **108** Communication intermediate wire **111** First positive electrode intermediate terminal **112** First negative electrode intermediate terminal **113** First communication intermediate terminal **121** Second positive electrode intermediate terminal **122** Second negative electrode intermediate terminal **123** Second communication intermediate terminal **D11, D31, D51, D72, D77, D82, D87** Diodes **T11, T31, T51** Switching devices

Claims

1. A charger comprising: a first positive electrode terminal configured to be electrically coupled to a second positive electrode terminal of a battery pack; a first negative electrode terminal configured to be electrically coupled to a second negative electrode terminal of the battery pack; a first communication terminal; a charging circuit configured to supply electric power to the battery pack via the first positive electrode terminal and the first negative electrode terminal; a data input circuit including an input terminal electrically coupled to the first communication terminal and a ground terminal electrically coupled to the first negative electrode terminal, the data input circuit being configured to receive first data via the first communication terminal and the input terminal, and a limiting circuit configured to limit a flow of electric current from the first negative electrode terminal to the first communication terminal via the data input circuit to a greater degree than a flow of electric current from the first communication terminal to the first negative electrode terminal via the data input circuit.
2. The charger according to claim 1, wherein the first communication terminal is configured (i) to be electrically coupled to a second communication terminal on the battery pack and (ii) to receive the first data from the battery pack via the second communication terminal.
3. The charger according to claim 1, further comprising a data output circuit including an output terminal electrically coupled to the first communication terminal, wherein the data output circuit is configured (i) to generate second data and (ii) to output the second data via the output terminal.
4. The charger according to claim 3, further comprising a signal path electrically coupling the first

communication terminal and the input terminal, the signal path including a connection point, wherein: the output terminal is electrically coupled to the connection point and thereby to the first communication terminal via the signal path; and the limiting circuit is electrically coupled to an electric current path extending from the connection point through the data input circuit to the first negative electrode terminal.

5. The charger according to claim 1, wherein: the data input circuit includes: a switching device having a first switch terminal electrically coupled to the input terminal and a second switch terminal electrically coupled to the ground terminal; a bias path electrically coupling the first switch terminal and the second switch terminal; and a resistor in the bias path; and the limiting circuit is in the bias path.

6. The charger according to claim 1, wherein the limiting circuit includes a diode configured to limit the flow of the electric current from the first negative electrode terminal to the first communication terminal via the data input circuit.

7. The charger according to claim 3, wherein: the input terminal is electrically coupled to the output terminal; and the data input circuit is configured to receive the second data output by the data output circuit via the input terminal.

8. The charger according to claim 1, wherein the limiting circuit has asymmetric conductance.

9. The charger according to claim 8, wherein the limiting circuit is electrically coupled in series with an electric current path extending from the first communication terminal through the data input circuit to the first negative electrode terminal.

10. The charger according to claim 4, wherein the limiting circuit is electrically coupled to the connection point and to the input terminal.

11. The charger according to claim 1, wherein: the data input circuit includes: a switching device having a first switch terminal electrically coupled to the input terminal, and a second switch terminal electrically coupled to the ground terminal; and a signal path electrically coupling the second switch terminal to the ground terminal; and the limiting circuit is in the signal path.

12. The charger according to claim 3, further comprising a communication circuit that (i) includes the data input circuit and the data output circuit, and (ii) is configured to perform half duplex serial communication with the battery pack via the first communication terminal.

13. A method comprising: electrically coupling a first negative electrode terminal of a first electric device with a second negative electrode terminal of a second electric device, the first electric device being a charger, a battery pack, or an electric power tool, the second electric device being distinct from the first electric device; and limiting a flow of electric current from the first negative electrode terminal to a communication terminal of the first electric device via a data input circuit of the first electric device to a greater degree than a flow of electric current from the communication terminal to the first negative electrode terminal via the data input circuit.

14. The method according to claim 13, wherein limiting a flow of electric current from the first negative electrode terminal to a communication terminal of the first electric device via a data input circuit of the first electric device to a greater degree than a flow of electric current from the communication terminal to the first negative electrode terminal via the data input circuit is performed based on: (i) the first negative electrode terminal being electrically coupled with the second negative electrode terminal; and/or (ii) an electric current flowing between the first negative electrode terminal and the second negative electrode terminal.

15. The charger according to claim 1, wherein: the first positive electrode terminal is configured to be releasably coupled, physically and electrically, to the second positive electrode terminal of the battery pack; and/or the first negative electrode terminal is configured to be releasably coupled, physically and electrically, to the second negative electrode terminal of the battery pack; and/or the first communication terminal is configured to be releasably coupled, physically and electrically, to a second communication terminal of the battery pack.

16. The charger according to claim 1, wherein the charging circuit is configured (i) to receive

alternating electric current from outside the charger and (ii) to generate the electric power from the alternating electric current.

17. The charger according to claim 1, wherein: the data input circuit further includes: a switching device including (i) a first switch terminal electrically coupled to the input terminal and (ii) a second switch terminal electrically coupled to the ground terminal; and a bias path electrically coupling the first switch terminal and the second switch terminal; and the limiting circuit is configured to limit a flow of electric current from the first negative electrode terminal to the first communication terminal via the ground terminal, the bias path, and the input terminal to a greater degree than a flow of electric current from the first communication terminal to the first negative electrode terminal via the input terminal, the bias path, and the ground terminal.
