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(54) **MULTIFACTORIAL OPTIMIZATION
SYSTEM AND METHOD**

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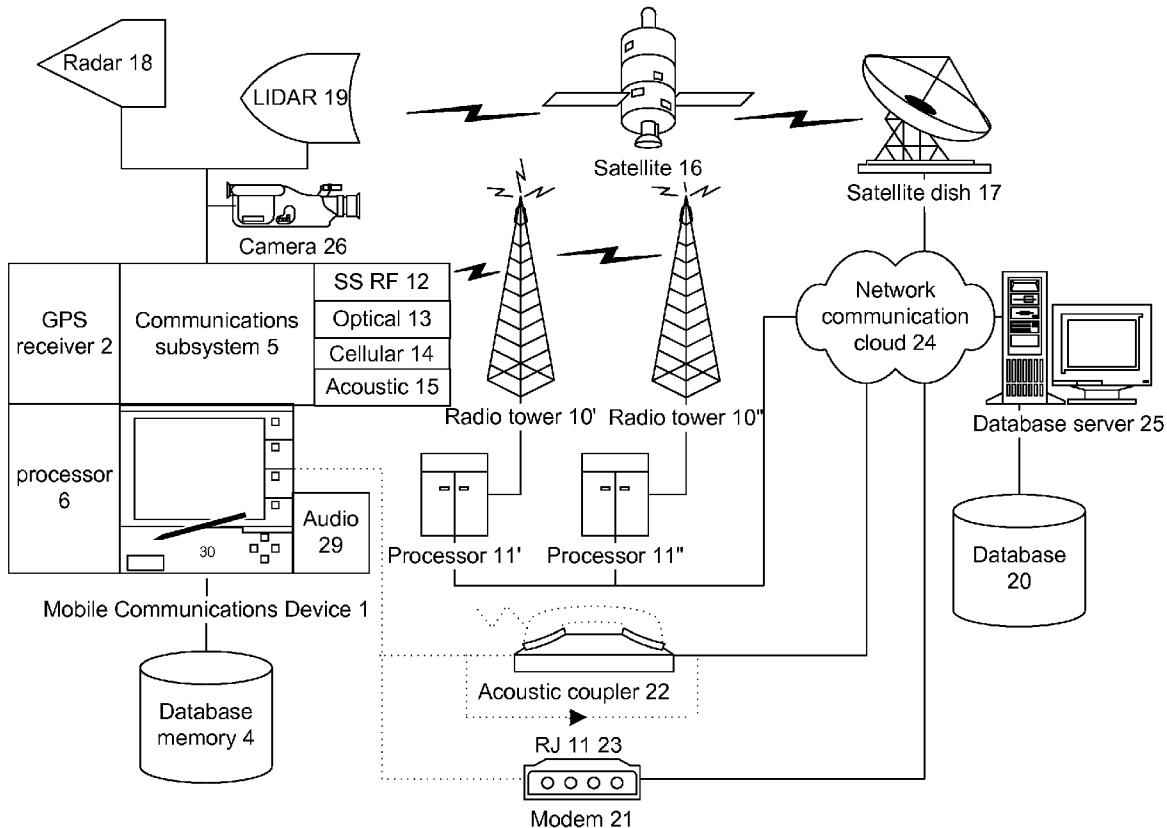
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method for providing unequal allocation of rights among agents while operating according to fair principles, comprising assigning a hierachal rank to each agent; providing a synthetic economic value to a first set of agents at the a high level of the hierarchy; allocating portions of the synthetic economic value by the first set of agents to a second set of agents at respectively different hierachal rank than the first set of agents; and conducting an auction amongst agents using the synthetic economic value as the currency. A method for allocation among agents, comprising assigning a wealth generation function for generating future wealth to each of a plurality of agents, communicating subjective market information between agents, and transferring wealth generated by the secure wealth generation function between agents in consideration of a market transaction. The method may further comprise the step of transferring at least a portion of the wealth generation function between agents.



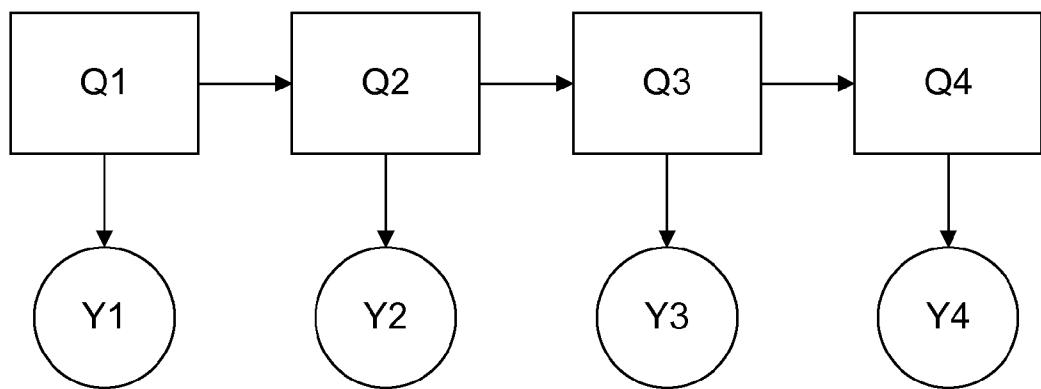


Fig. 1

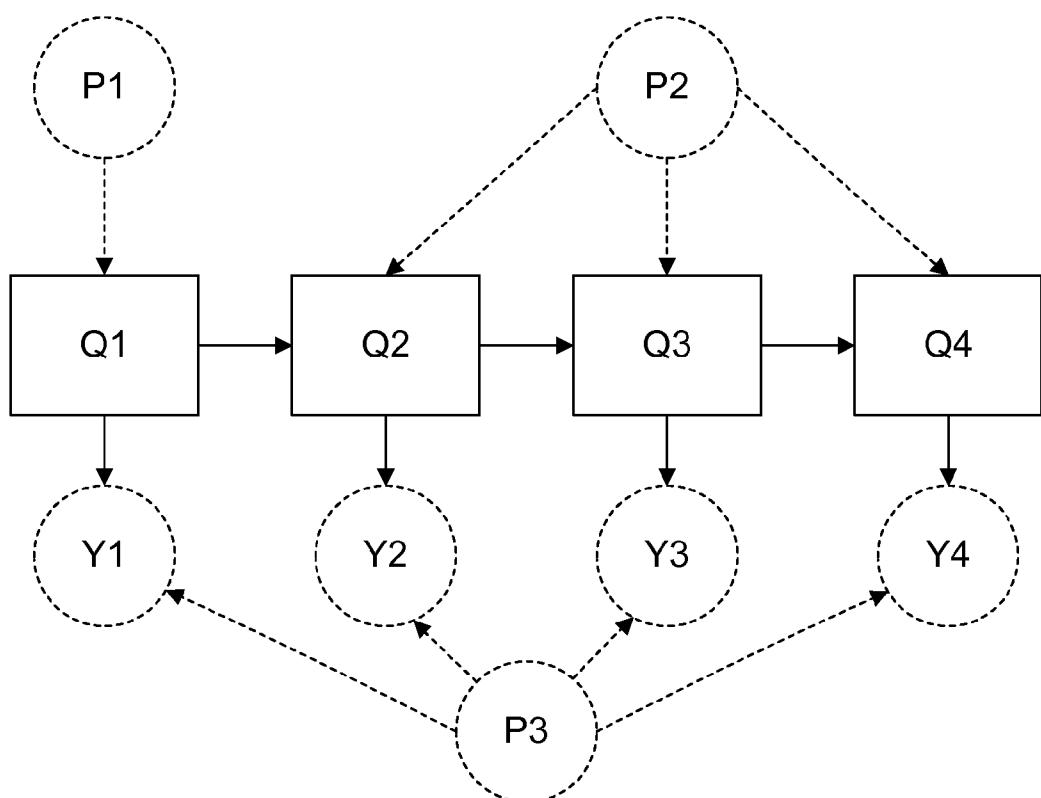
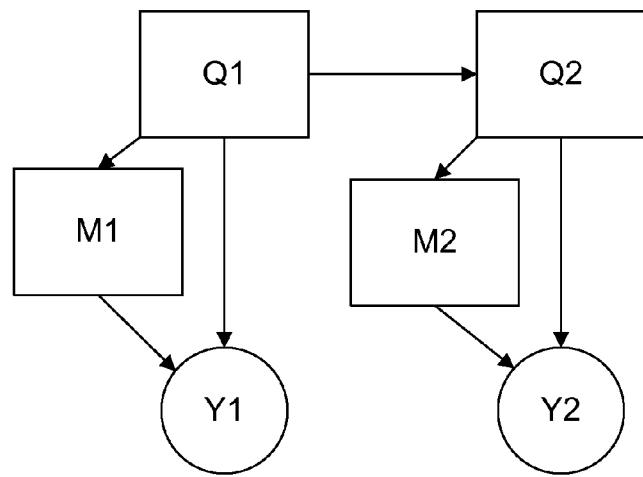
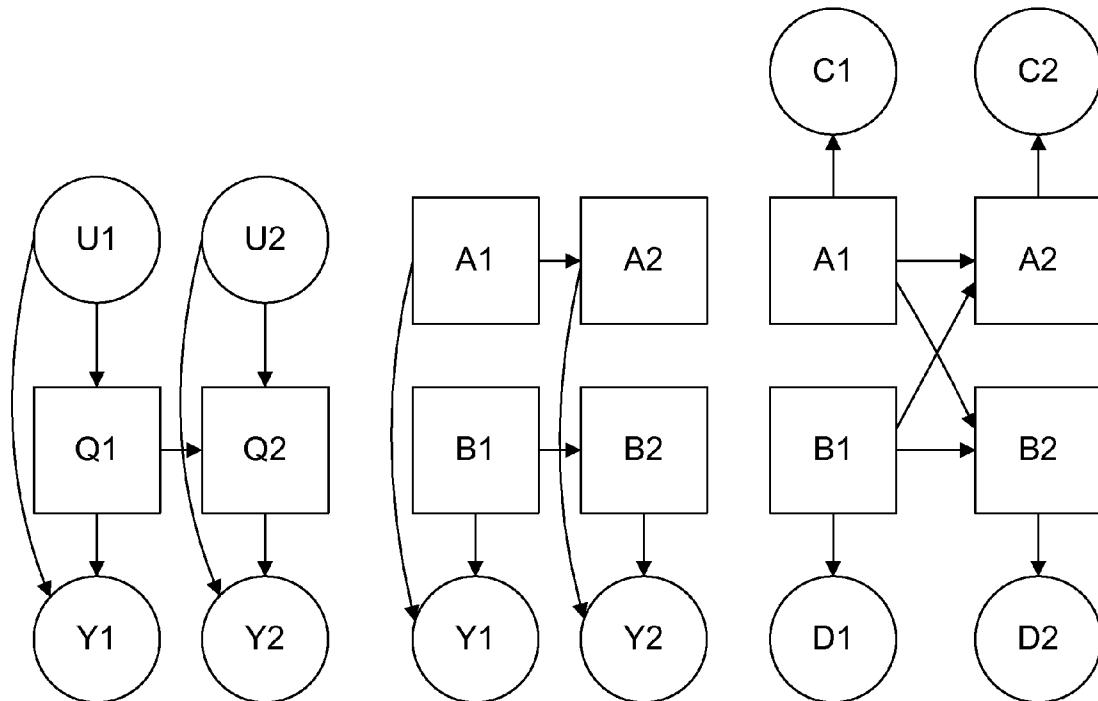


Fig. 2



HMM with mixture of Gaussians output

Fig. 3



Input-output HMM

Fig. 4A

Factorial HMM

Fig. 4B

Coupled HMM

Fig. 4C

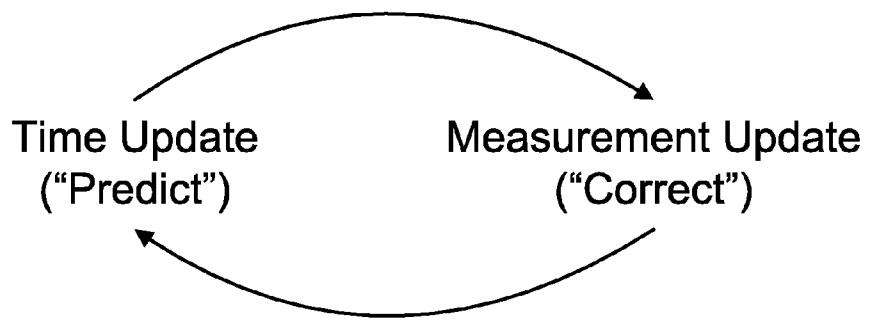


Fig. 5

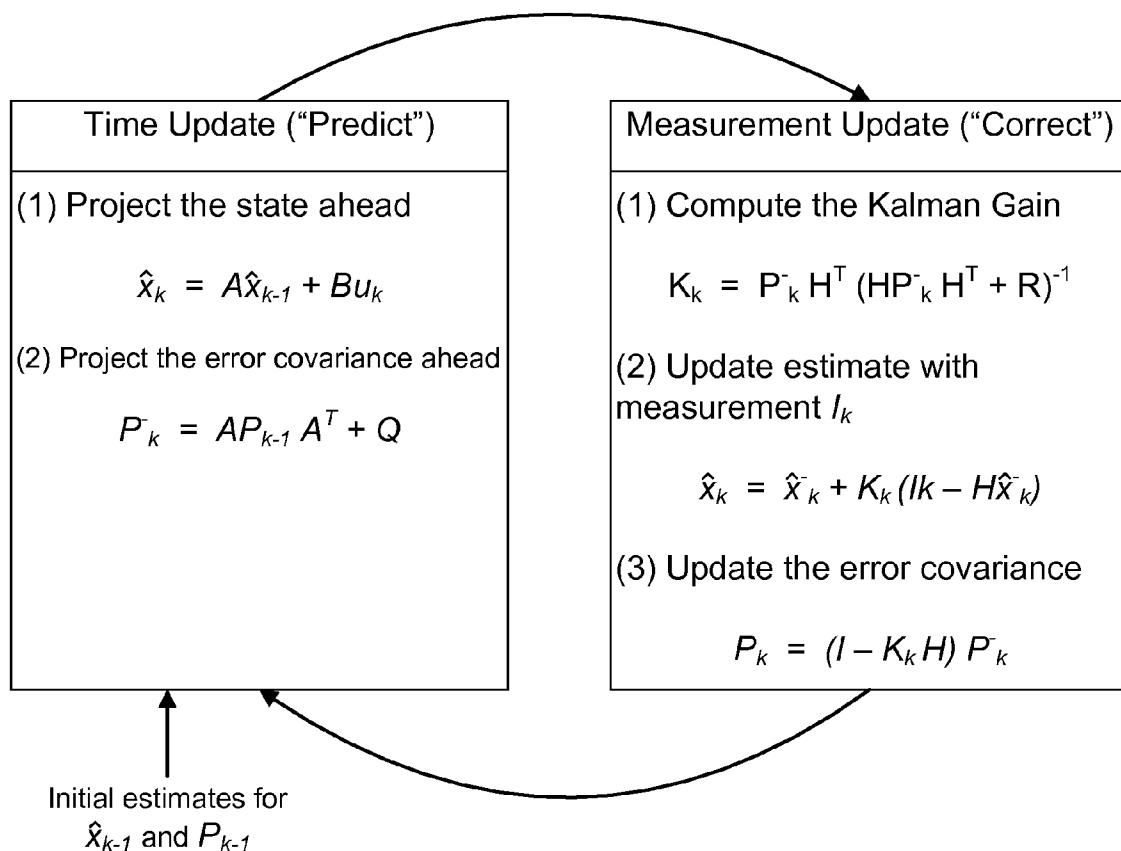


Fig. 6

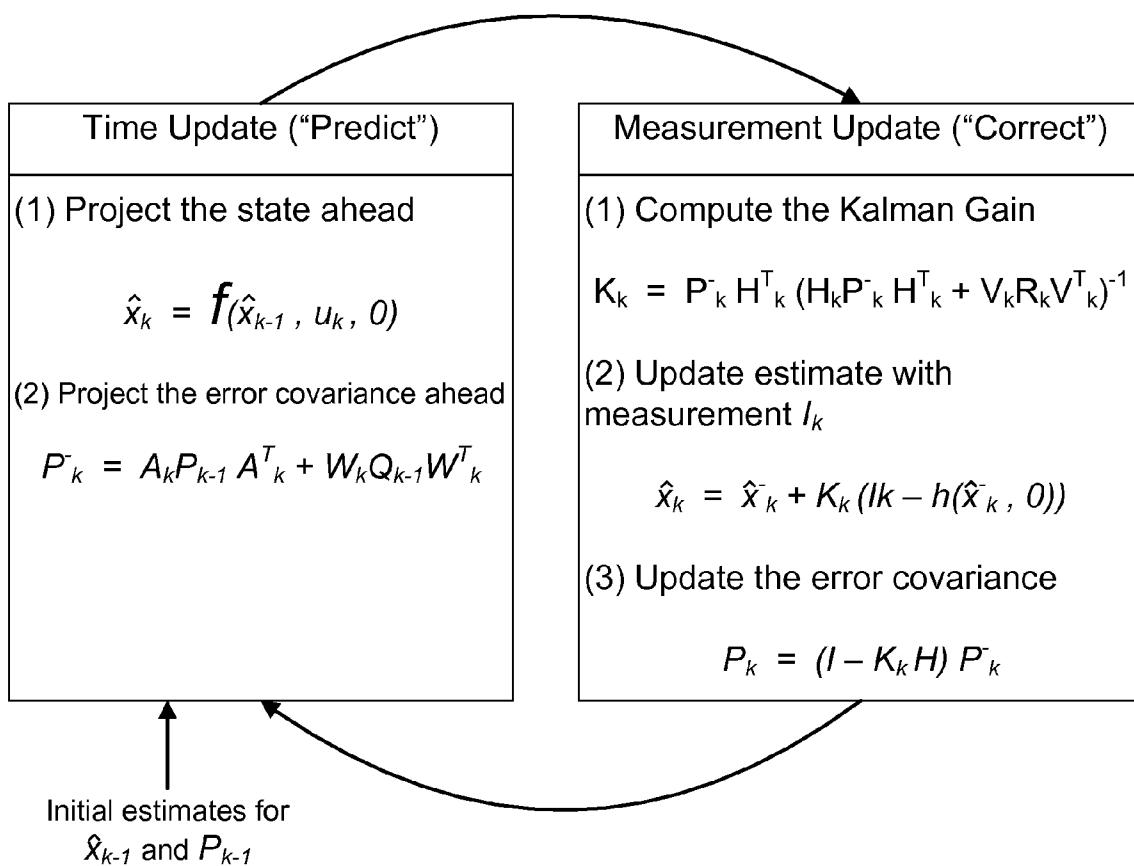


Fig. 7

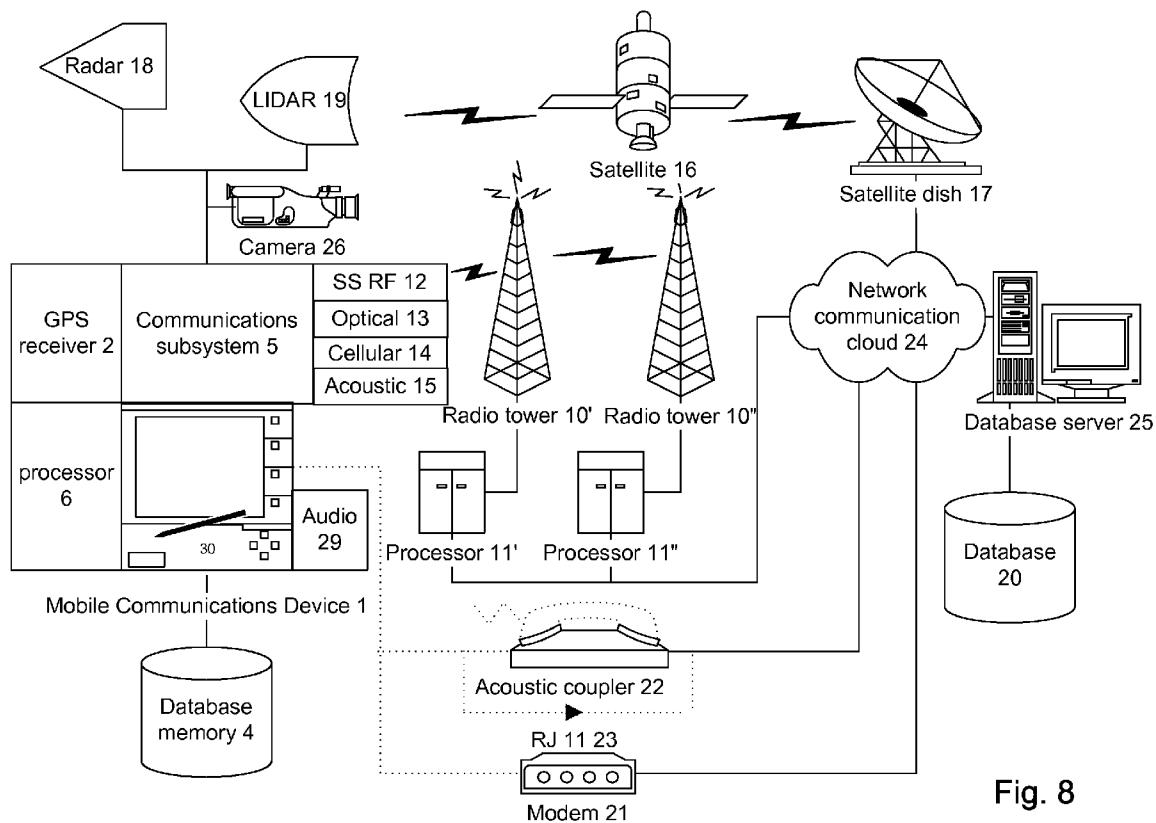


Fig. 8

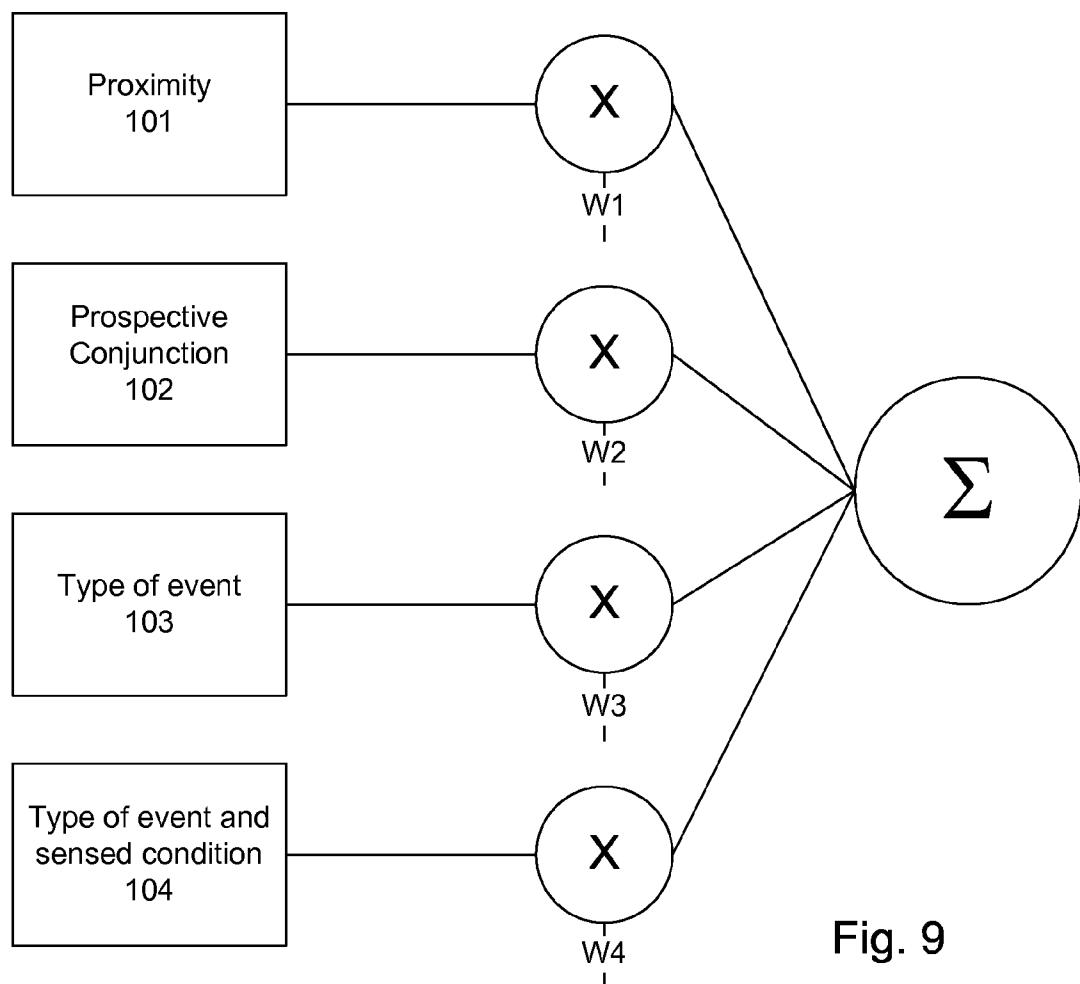


Fig. 9

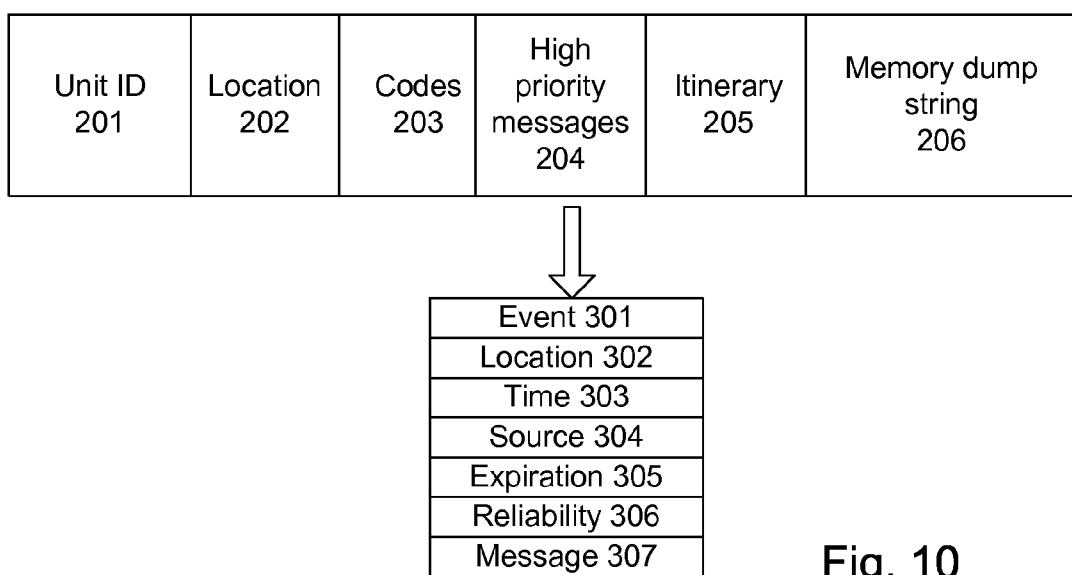


Fig. 10

**MULTIFACTORIAL OPTIMIZATION SYSTEM
AND METHOD****PRIORITY CLAIM**

[0001] The present application is a Non-Provisional application of 60/723,339 filed Oct. 4, 2005.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to the field of multifactorial economic optimization, and more generally to optimization of communities of elements having conflicting requirements and overlapping resources.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] A number of fields of endeavor are relevant to the present invention, and exemplary prior art, each of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference, are disclosed below. The references disclosed provide a skilled artisan with disclosure of embodiments of various elements of the present invention, and the teachings therein may be combined and subcombined in various manners in accordance with the present teachings. Therefore, the identified prior art provides a point of reference and set of tools which are expressly available, both as a part of the invention, and to implement the invention.

[0004] The topical headings are advisory only, and are not intended to limit the applicability of any reference. While some embodiments are discussed as being preferred, it should be understood that all embodiments discussed, in any portion of this documents, whether stated as having advantages or not, form a part of the invention and may be combined and/or subcombined in a consistent manner in accordance with the teachings hereof. Likewise, the disclosure herein is intended to disclose permissive combinations, subcombinations, and attributes, and any language which appears to limit the scope of applicant's invention is intended to apply to the particular embodiment referenced, or as a permissive suggestion for implementation of other embodiments which with it may be consistently applied. The present disclosure includes details of a number of aspects, which may find independent utility, and therefore the present specifications are not intended to be construed as being limited to the conjunction of the elements of the disclosure.

[0005] Internet

[0006] The Internet is structured such various networks are interconnected, with communications effected by addressed packets conforming to a common protocol. Based on the packet addressing, information is routed from source to destination, often through a set of networks having multiple potential pathways. The communications medium is shared between all users. Statistically, some proportion of the packets are extraordinarily delayed, or simply lost. Therefore, protocols involving communications using these packets include error detection schemes that request a retransmit of required data not received within a time window. In the event that the network nears capacity or is otherwise subject to limiting constraint, the incidence of delayed or lost packets increases, thereby increasing requests for retransmission and retransmission. Therefore, as the network approaches available bandwidth, the load increases, ultimately leading to failure. In instances where a

minimum quality of service must be guaranteed, special Internet technologies are required, to reserve bandwidth or to specify network pathways. End-to-end quality of service guarantees, however, may exceed the cost of circuit switched technologies, such as ISDN, especially where the high quality needs are intermittent.

[0007] Internet usage typically involves an Internet server, an automated system capable of responding to communications received through the Internet, and often communicating with other systems not directly connected to the Internet. The server typically has relatively large bandwidth to the Internet, allowing multiple simultaneous communications sessions, and usually supports the hypertext transport protocol (HTTP), which provides, in conjunction with a so-called web browser on a remote client system, a human readable interface which facilitates navigation of various resources available in the Internet. The client systems are typically human user interfaces, which employ a browser to display HTTP "web pages". The browser typically does not provide intelligence, although so-called applets or local servers may provide programmable intelligence or processing capability proximate to the user. Bandwidth between the client and Internet is typically relatively small, and various communications and display rendering considered normal. Typically, both client and server are connected to the Internet through Internet service providers, each having its own router. It is also known to provide so-called proxy servers and firewalls, which are automated systems that insulate the client system from the remote server or Internet in general. These local servers, applications and applets may be non-standard, and thus require special software to be available locally for execution.

[0008] Thus, the Internet poses a number of advantages for commercial use, including low cost and ubiquitous connectivity. Therefore, it is desirable to employ standard Internet technologies while achieving sufficient quality communications to effect an efficient transaction.

[0009] A widely dispersed network of access points may implement a mobile telecommunications protocol, such as IETF RFC 3344 (Mobile IP, IPv4), or various mobile ad hoc network (MANET) protocols, 2.5G, 3G, 4G cellular, WiMax (802.16), or other types of protocols. Preferably, the protocol allows the client to maintain communications between a source and destination while the network topology or routing path changes, such as in a mobile multihop ad hoc network or mobile node within a cellular or hotspot network. See, U.S. Pub. App. No. 20040073642, expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[0010] Mobile Internet Protocol (Mobile IP or MIP, in this case, v4) is an Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) network layer protocol, specified in RFC-3344. It is designed to allow seamless connectivity session maintenance under TCP (Transmission Control Protocol) or other connection oriented transport protocols when a mobile node moves from one IP subnet to another. MIPv4 uses two network infrastructure entities, a Home Agent (HA) and an optional Foreign Agent (FA), to deliver packets to the mobile node when it has left its home network. MIPv4 also supports point-of-attachment Care-of Addresses (CoA) if a FA is unavailable. Mobile IP is increasingly being deployed for 2.5/3 G (2.5 or third generation wireless) provider networks and may be deployed in medium and large Enter-

prise IEEE 802.11-based LANs (Local Area Networks) with multiple subnets. MIPv4 relies on the use of permanently assigned “home” IP addresses to help maintain connectivity when a mobile device connects to a foreign network. On the other hand, IPsec-based (Internet Protocol Security, a security protocol from IETF) VPNs (Virtual Private Networks) use a tunneling scheme in which the outer source IP address is based on a CoA at the point-of-attachment and an inner source IP address assigned for the “home” domain. In general if either address is changed, such as when the mobile node switches IP subnets, then a new tunnel is negotiated with new keys and several round trip message exchanges. The renegotiation of the tunnel interferes with seamless mobility across wired and wireless IP networks spanning multiple IP subnets.

[0011] Clearly, newer technologies, such as IP v6, and derivatives thereof, are known, and may be applied in conjunction with the present invention.

[0012] Market Economy Systems

[0013] In modern retail transactions, predetermined price transactions are common, with market transactions, i.e., commerce conducted in a setting which allows the transaction price to float based on the respective valuation allocated by the buyer(s) and seller(s), often left to specialized fields. While interpersonal negotiation is often used to set a transfer price, this price is often different from a transfer price that might result from a best-efforts attempt at establishing a market price. Assuming that the market price is optimal, it is therefore assumed that alternatives are sub-optimal. Therefore, the establishment of a market price is desirable over simple negotiations.

[0014] One particular problem with market-based commerce is that both seller optimization and market efficiency depend on the fact that representative participants of a preselected class are invited to participate, and are able to promptly communicate, on a relevant timescale, in order to accurately value the goods or services and make an offer. Thus, in traditional market-based system, all participants are in the same room, or connected by a high quality (low latency, low error) telecommunications link. Alternately, the market valuation process is prolonged over an extended period, allowing non-real time communications of market information and bids. Thus, attempts at ascertaining a market price for non-commodity goods can be subject to substantial inefficiencies, which reduce any potential gains by market pricing. Further, while market pricing might be considered “fair”, it also imposes an element of risk, reducing the ability of parties to predict future pricing and revenues. Addressing this risk may also improve efficiency of a market-based system, that is, increase the overall surplus in the market.

[0015] Auction Systems

[0016] When a single party seeks to sell goods to the highest valued purchaser(s), to establish a market price, the rules of conduct typically define an auction. Typically, known auctions provide an ascending price or descending price over time, with bidders making offers or ceasing to make offers, in the descending price or ascending price models, respectively, to define the market price. After determining the winner of the auction, typically a bidder who establishes a largest economic surplus, the pricing rules

define the payment, which may be in accordance with a uniform price auction, wherein all successful bidders pay the lowest successful bid, a second price auction wherein the winning bidder pays the amount bid by the next highest bidder, and pay-what-you-bid (first price) auctions. The pay-what-you-bid auction is also known as a discriminative auction while the uniform price auction is known as a non-discriminative auction. In a second-price auction, also known as a Vickrey auction, the policy seeks to create a disincentive for speculation and to encourage bidders to submit bids reflecting their true value for the good, rather than “shaving” the bid to achieve a lower cost. In the uniform price and second price schemes, the bidder is encouraged to disclose the actual private value to the bidder of the good or service, since at any price below this amount, there is an excess gain to the buyer, whereas by withholding this amount the bid may be unsuccessful, resulting in a loss of the presumably desirable opportunity. In the pay-what-you-bid auction, on the other hand, the buyer need not disclose the maximum private valuation, and those bidders with lower risk tolerance will bid higher prices. See, www.isoc.org/inet98/proceedings/3b/3b_3.html; www.ibm.com/iac/reports-technical/reports-bus-neg-internet.html.

[0017] Two common types of auction are the English auction, which sells a single good to the highest bidder in an ascending price auction, and the Dutch auction, in which multiple units are available for sale, and in which a starting price is selected by the auctioneer, which is successively reduced, until the supply is exhausted by bidders (or the minimum price/final time is reached), with the buyer(s) paying the lowest successful bid. The term Dutch auction is also applied to a type of sealed bid auction. In a multi-unit live Dutch auction, each participant is provided with the current price, the quantity on hand and the time remaining in the auction. This type of auction, typically takes place over a very short period of time and there is a flurry of activity in the last portion of the auction process. The actual auction terminates when there is no more product to be sold or the time period expires.

[0018] In selecting the optimal type of auction, a number of factors are considered. In order to sell large quantities of a perishable commodity in a short period of time, the descending price auctions are often preferred. For example, the produce and flower markets in Holland routinely use the Dutch auction (hence the derivation of the name), while the U.S. Government uses this form to sell its financial instruments. The format of a traditional Dutch auction encourages early bidders to bid up to their “private value”, hoping to pay some price below the “private value”. In making a bid, the “private value” becomes known, helping to establish a published market value and demand curve for the goods, thus allowing both buyers and sellers to define strategies for future auctions.

[0019] In an auction, typically a seller retains an auctioneer to conduct an auction with multiple buyers. (In a reverse auction, a buyer solicits the lowest price from multiple competing vendors for a desired purchase). Since the seller retains the auctioneer, the seller essentially defines the rules of the auction. These rules are typically defined to maximize the revenues or profit to the seller, while providing an inviting forum to encourage a maximum number of high valued buyers. If the rules discourage high valuations of the goods or services, or discourage participation by an impor-

tant set of potential bidders, then the rules are not optimum. Rules may also be imposed to discourage bidders who are unlikely to submit winning bids from consuming resources. A rule may also be imposed to account for the valuation of the good or service applied by the seller, in the form of a reserve price. It is noted that these rules typically seek to allocate to the seller a portion of the economic benefit that would normally inure to the buyer (in a perfectly efficient auction), creating an economic inefficiency. However, since the auction is to benefit the seller, not society as a whole, this potential inefficiency is tolerated. An optimum auction thus seeks to produce a maximum profit (or net revenues) for the seller. An efficient auction, on the other hand, maximizes the sum of the utilities for the buyer and seller. It remains a subject of academic debate as to which auction rules are most optimum in given circumstances; however, in practice, simplicity of implementation may be a paramount concern, and simple auctions may result in highest revenues; complex auctions, while theoretically more optimal, may discourage bidders from participating or from applying their true and full private valuation in the auction process.

[0020] Typically, the rules of the auction are predefined and invariant. Further, for a number of reasons, auctions typically apply the same rules to all bidders, even though, with a priori knowledge of the private values assigned by each bidder to the goods, or a prediction of the private value, an optimization rule may be applied to extract the full value assigned by each bidder, while selling above the seller's reserve.

[0021] In a known ascending price auction, each participant must be made aware of the status of the auction, e.g., open, closed, and the contemporaneous price. A bid is indicated by the identification of the bidder at the contemporaneous price, or occasionally at any price above the minimum bid increment plus the previous price. The bids are asynchronous, and therefore each bidder must be immediately informed of the particulars of each bid by other bidders.

[0022] In a known descending price auction, the process traditionally entails a common clock, which corresponds to a decrementing price at each decrement interval, with an ending time (and price). Therefore, once each participant is made aware of the auction parameters, e.g., starting price, price decrement, ending price/time, before the start of the auction, the only information that must be transmitted is auction status (e.g., inventory remaining).

[0023] As stated above, an auction is traditionally considered an efficient manner of liquidating goods at a market price. The theory of an auction is that either the buyer will not resell, and thus has an internal or private valuation of the goods regardless of other's perceived values, or that the winner will resell, either to gain economic efficiency or as a part of the buyer's regular business. In the later case, it is a general presumption that the resale buyers are not in attendance at the auction or are otherwise precluded from bidding, and therefore that, after the auction, there will remain demand for the goods at a price in excess of the price paid during the auction. Extinction of this residual demand results in the so-called "winner's curse", in which the buyer can make no profit from the transaction during the auction. Since this detracts from the value of the auction as a means of conducting profitable commerce, it is of concern to both

buyer and seller. In fact, experience with initial public offerings (IPOs) of stock through various means has demonstrated that by making stock available directly to all classes of potential purchasers, latent demand for a new issue is extinguished, and the stock price is likely to decline after issuance, resulting in an IPO which is characterized as "unsuccessful". This potential for post IPO decline tempers even initial interest in the issue, resulting in a paradoxical decline in revenues from the vehicle. In other words, the "money on the table" resulting from immediate retrading of IPO shares is deemed a required aspect of the IPO process. Thus, methods that retain latent demand after IPO shares result in post IPO increases, and therefore a "successful" IPO. Therefore, where the transaction scheme anticipates demand for resale after the initial distribution, it is often important to assure a reasonable margin for resellers and limitations on direct sale to ultimate consumers.

[0024] Research into auction theory (game theory) shows that in an auction, the goal of the seller is to optimize the auction by allocating the goods inefficiently, if possible, and thus to appropriate to himself an excess gain. This inefficiency manifests itself by either withholding goods from the market or placing the goods in the wrong hands. In order to assure for the seller a maximum gain from a misallocation of the goods, restrictions on resale are imposed; otherwise, post auction trading will tend to undue the misallocation, and the anticipation of this trading will tend to control the auction pricing. The misallocation of goods imposed by the seller through restrictions allows the seller to achieve greater revenues than if free resale were permitted. It is believed that in an auction followed by perfect resale, that any misassignment of the goods lowers the seller's revenues below the optimum and likewise, in an auction market followed by perfect resale, it is optimal for the seller to allocate the goods to those with the highest value. Therefore, if post-auction trading is permitted, the seller will not benefit from these later gains, and the seller will obtain sub optimal revenues.

[0025] These studies, however, typically do not consider transaction costs and internal inefficiencies of the resellers, as well as the possibility of multiple classes of purchasers, or even multiple channels of distribution, which may be subject to varying controls or restrictions, and thus in a real market, such theoretical optimal allocation is unlikely. In fact, in real markets the transaction costs involved in transfer of ownership are often critical in determining a method of sale and distribution of goods. For example, it is the efficiency of sale that motivates the auction in the first place. Yet, the auction process itself may consume a substantial margin, for example 1-15% of the transaction value. To presume, even without externally imposed restrictions on resale, that all of the efficiencies of the market may be extracted by free reallocation, ignores that the motivation of the buyer is a profitable transaction, and the buyer may have fixed and variable costs on the order of magnitude of the margin. Thus, there are substantial opportunities for the seller to gain enhanced revenues by defining rules of the auction, strategically allocating inventory amount and setting reserve pricing.

[0026] Therefore, perfect resale is but a fiction created in auction (game) theory. Given this deviation from the ideal presumptions, auction theory may be interpreted to provide the seller with a motivation to misallocate or withhold based on the deviation of practice from theory, likely based on the

respective transaction costs, seller's utility of the goods, and other factors not considered by the simple analyses.

[0027] A number of proposals have been made for effecting auction systems using the Internet. These systems include consumer-to-consumer, business-to-consumer, and business-to-business types. Generally, these auctions, of various types and implementations discussed further below, are conducted through Internet browsers using hypertext markup language (HTML) "web pages", using HTTP. In some instances, such as BIDWATCH, discussed further below, an application with associated applets is provided to define a user interface instead of HTML.

[0028] As stated above, the information packets from the transaction server to client systems associated with respective bidders communicate various information regarding the status of an interactive auction during the progress thereof. The network traffic from the client systems to the transaction server is often limited to the placement of bids; however, the amount of information required to be transmitted can vary greatly, and may involve a complex dialogue of communications to complete the auction offer. Typically, Internet based auction systems have scalability issues, wherein economies of scale are not completely apparent, leading to implementation of relatively large transaction server systems to handle peak loads. When the processing power of the transaction server system is exceeded, entire system outages may occur, resulting in lost sales or diminished profits, and diminished goodwill.

[0029] In most Internet auction system implementations, there are large quantities of simultaneous auctions, with each auction accepting tens or hundreds of bids over a timescale of hours to days. In systems where the transaction volume exceeds these scales, for example in stock and commodity exchanges, which can accommodate large numbers of transactions per second involving the same issue, a private network, or even a local area network, is employed, and the public Internet is not used as a direct communications system with the transaction server. Thus, while infrastructures are available to allow successful handling of massive transaction per second volumes, these systems typically avoid direct public Internet communications or use of some of its limiting technologies. The transaction processing limitations are often due to the finite time required to handle, e.g., open, update, and close, database records.

[0030] In business-to-business auctions, buyers seek to ensure that the population of ultimate consumers for the good or services are not present at the auction, in order to avoid the "winner's curse", where the highest bidder in the auction cannot liquidate or work the asset at a profit. Thus, business-to-business auctions are distinct from business-to-consumer auctions. In the former, the optimization by the seller must account for the desire or directive of the seller to avoid direct retail distribution, and instead to rely on a distribution tier represented in the auction. In the latter, the seller seeks maximum revenues and to exhaust the possibilities for downstream trade in the goods or services. In fact, these types of auctions may be distinguished by various implementing rules, such as requiring sales tax resale certificates, minimum lot size quantities, preregistration or qualification, support or associated services, or limitations on the title to the goods themselves. The conduct of these auctions may also differ, in that consumer involvement

typically is permissive of mistake or indecision, while in a pure business environment professionalism and decisiveness are mandated.

[0031] In many instances, psychology plays an important role in the conduct of the auction. In a live auction, bidders can see each other, and judge the tempo of the auction. In addition, multiple auctions are often conducted sequentially, so that each bidder can begin to understand the other bidder's patterns, including hesitation, bluffing, facial gestures or mannerisms. Thus, bidders often prefer live auctions to remote or automated auctions if the bidding is to be conducted strategically.

[0032] Internet auctions are quite different from live auctions with respect to psychological factors. Live auctions are often monitored closely by bidders, who strategically make bids, based not only on the "value" of the goods, but also on an assessment of the competition, timing, psychology, and progress of the auction. It is for this reason that so-called proxy bidding, wherein the bidder creates a preprogrammed "strategy", usually limited to a maximum price, are disfavored as a means to minimize purchase price, and offered as a service by auctioneers who stand to make a profit based on the transaction price. A maximum price proxy bidding system is somewhat inefficient, in that other bidders may test the proxy, seeking to increase the bid price, without actually intending to purchase, or contrarily, after testing the proxy, a bidder might give up, even below a price he might have been willing to pay. Thus, the proxy imposes inefficiency in the system that effectively increases the transaction cost.

[0033] In order to address a flurry of activity that often occurs at the end of an auction, an auction may be held open until no further bids are cleared for a period of time, even if advertised to end at a certain time. This is common to both live and automated auctions. However, this lack of determinism may upset coordinated schedules, thus impairing efficient business use of the auction system.

[0034] In order to facilitate management of bids and bidding, some of the Internet auction sites have provided non-Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) browser based software "applet" to track auctions. For example, ONSALE.COM has made available a Marimba Castanet® applet called Bidwatch to track auction progress for particular items or classes of items, and to facilitate bidding thereon. This system, however, lacks real-time performance under many circumstances, having a stated refresh period of 10 seconds, with a long latency for confirmation of a bid, due to constraints on software execution, quality of service in communications streams, and bid confirmation dialogue. Thus, it is possible to lose a bid even if an attempt was made prior to another bidder. The need to quickly enter the bid, at risk of being too late, makes the process potentially error prone.

[0035] Proxy bidding, as discussed above, is a known technique for overcoming the constraints of Internet communications and client processing limitations, since it bypasses the client and telecommunications links and may execute solely on the host system or local thereto. However, proxy bidding undermines some of the efficiencies gained by a live market.

[0036] U.S. Pat. No. 5,890,138 to Godin, et al. (Mar. 30, 1999), expressly incorporated herein by reference in its

entirety, relates to an Internet auction system. The system implements a declining price auction process, removing a user from the auction process once an indication to purchase has been received. See, Rockoff, T. E., Groves, M.; "Design of an Internet-based System for Remote Dutch Auctions", *Internet Research*, v 5, n 4, pp. 10-16, MCB University Press, Jan. 1, 1995.

[0037] A known computer site for auctioning a product on-line comprises at least one web server computer designed for serving a host of computer browsers and providing the browsers with the capability to participate in various auctions, where each auction is of a single product, at a specified time, with a specified number of the product available for sale. The web server cooperates with a separate database computer, separated from the web server computer by a firewall. The database computer is accessible to the web computer server computer to allow selective retrieval of product information, which includes a product description, the quantity of the product to be auctioned, a start price of the product, and an image of the product. The web server computer displays, updated during an auction, the current price of the product, the quantity of the product remaining available for purchase and the measure of the time remaining in the auction. The current price is decreased in a predetermined manner during the auction. Each user is provided with an input instructing the system to purchase the product at a displayed current price, transmitting an identification and required financial authorization for the purchase of the product, which must be confirmed within a predetermined time. In the known system, a certain fall-out rate in the actual purchase confirmation may be assumed, and therefore some overselling allowed. Further, after a purchase is indicated, the user's screen is not updated, obscuring the ultimate lowest selling price from the user. However, if the user maintains a second browser, he can continue to monitor the auction to determine whether the product could have been purchased at a lower price, and if so, fail to confirm the committed purchase and purchase the same goods at a lower price while reserving the goods to avoid risk of loss. Thus, the system is flawed, and may fail to produce an efficient transaction or optimal price.

[0038] An Internet declining price auction system may provide the ability to track the price demand curve, providing valuable marketing information. For example, in trying to determine the response at different prices, companies normally have to conduct market surveys. In contrast, with a declining price auction, substantial information regarding price and demand is immediately known. The relationship between participating bidders and average purchasers can then be applied to provide a conventional price demand curve for the particular product.

[0039] U.S. Pat. No. 5,835,896, Fisher, et al., issued Nov. 10, 1998, expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety, provides method and system for processing and transmitting electronic auction information over the Internet, between a central transaction server system and remote bidder terminals. Those bids are recorded by the system and the bidders are updated with the current auction status information. When appropriate, the system closes the auction from further bidding and notifies the winning bidders and losers as to the auction outcome. The transaction server posts information from a database describing a lot available for purchase, receives a plurality of bids, stored in a bid

database, in response to the information, and automatically categorizes the bids as successful or unsuccessful. Each bid is validated, and an electronic mail message is sent informing the bidder of the bid status. This system employs HTTP, and thus does not automatically update remote terminal screens, requiring the e-mail notification feature.

[0040] The auction rules may be flexible, for example including Dutch-type auctions, for example by implementing a price markdown feature with scheduled price adjustments, and English-type (progressive) auctions, with price increases corresponding to successively higher bids. In the Dutch type auction, the price markdown feature may be responsive to bidding activity over time, amount of bids received, and number of items bid for. Likewise, in the progressive auction, the award price may be dependent on the quantity desired, and typically implements a lowest successful bid price rule. Bids that are below a preset maximum posted selling price are maintained in reserve by the system. If a certain sales volume is not achieved in a specified period of time, the price is reduced to liquidate demand above the price point, with the new price becoming the posted price. On the other hand, if a certain sales volume is exceeded in a specified period of time, the system may automatically increase the price. These automatic price changes allow the seller to respond quickly to market conditions while keeping the price of the merchandise as high as possible, to the seller's benefit. A "Proxy Bidding" feature allows a bidder to place a bid for the maximum amount they are willing to pay, keeping this value a secret, displaying only the amount necessary to win the item up to the amount of the currently high bids or proxy bids of other bidders. This feature allows bidders to participate in the electronic auction without revealing to the other bidders the extent to which they are willing to increase their bids, while maintaining control of their maximum bid without closely monitoring the bidding. The feature assures proxy bidders the lowest possible price up to a specified maximum without requiring frequent inquiries as to the state of the bidding.

[0041] A "Floating Closing Time" feature may also be implemented whereby the auction for a particular item is automatically closed if no new bids are received within a predetermined time interval, assuming an increasing price auction. Bidders thus have an incentive to place bids expeditiously, rather than waiting until near the anticipated close of the auction.

[0042] U.S. Pat. No. 5,905,975, Ausubel, issued May 18, 1999, expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety, relates to computer implemented methods and apparatus for auctions. The proposed system provides intelligent systems for the auctioneer and for the user. The auctioneer's system contains information from a user system based on bid information entered by the user. With this information, the auctioneer's system determines whether the auction can be concluded or not and appropriate messages are transmitted. At any point in the auction, bidders are provided the opportunity to submit not only their current bids, but also to enter future bids, or bidding rules which may have the opportunity to become relevant at future times or prices, into the auction system's database. Participants may revise their executory bids, by entering updated bids. Thus, at one extreme, a bidder who wishes to economize on his time may choose to enter his entire set of bidding rules into the computerized system at the start of the auction,

effectively treating this as a sealed-bid auction. At the opposite extreme, a bidder who wishes to closely participate in the auction may choose to constantly monitor the auction's progress and to submit all of his bids in real time. See also, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 08/582,901 filed Jan. 4, 1996, which provides a method for auctioning multiple, identical objects and close substitutes.

[0043] Cryptographic Technology

[0044] U.S. Pat. No. 5,956,408 (Arnold, Sep. 21, 1999), expressly incorporated herein by reference, relates to an apparatus and method for secure distribution of data. Data, including program and software updates, is encrypted by a public key encryption system using the private key of the data sender. The sender also digitally signs the data. The receiver decrypts the encrypted data, using the public key of the sender, and verifies the digital signature on the transmitted data. The program interacts with basic information stored within the confines of the receiver. As result of the interaction, the software updates are installed within the confines of the user, and the basic information stored within the confines of the user is changed.

[0045] U.S. Pat. No. 5,982,891 (Ginter, et al., Nov. 9, 1999); U.S. Pat. No. 5,949,876 (Ginter, et al., Sep. 7, 1999); and U.S. Pat. No. 5,892,900 (Ginter, et al., Apr. 6, 1999), expressly incorporated herein by reference, relate to systems and methods for secure transaction management and electronic rights protection. Electronic appliances, such as computers, help to ensure that information is accessed and used only in authorized ways, and maintain the integrity, availability, and/or confidentiality of the information. Such electronic appliances provide a distributed virtual distribution environment (VDE) that may enforce a secure chain of handling and control, for example, to control and/or meter or otherwise monitor use of electronically stored or disseminated information. Such a virtual distribution environment may be used to protect rights of various participants in electronic commerce and other electronic or electronic-facilitated transactions. Distributed and other operating systems, environments and architectures, such as, for example, those using tamper-resistant hardware-based processors, may establish security at each node. These techniques may be used to support an all-electronic information distribution, for example, utilizing the "electronic highway."

[0046] U.S. Pat. No. 6,009,177 (Sudia, Dec. 28, 1999), expressly incorporated herein by reference, relates to a cryptographic system and method with a key escrow feature that uses a method for verifiably splitting users' private encryption keys into components and for sending those components to trusted agents chosen by the particular users, and provides a system that uses modern public key certificate management, enforced by a chip device that also self-certifies. The methods for key escrow and receiving an escrow certificate are also applied herein to a more generalized case of registering a trusted device with a trusted third party and receiving authorization from that party enabling the device to communicate with other trusted devices. Further preferred embodiments provide for rekeying and upgrading of device firmware using a certificate system, and encryption of stream-oriented data.

[0047] U.S. Pat. No. 6,052,467 (Brands, Apr. 18, 2000), expressly incorporated herein by reference, relates to a system for ensuring that the blinding of secret-key certifi-

cates is restricted, even if the issuing protocol is performed in parallel mode. A cryptographic method is disclosed that enables the issuer in a secret-key certificate issuing protocol to issue triples consisting of a secret key, a corresponding public key, and a secret-key certificate of the issuer on the public key, in such a way that receiving parties can blind the public key and the certificate, but cannot blind a predetermined non-trivial predicate of the secret key even when executions of the issuing protocol are performed in parallel.

[0048] U.S. Pat. No. 6,052,780 (Glover, Apr. 18, 2000), expressly incorporated herein by reference, relates to a computer system and process for accessing an encrypted and self-decrypting digital information product while restricting access to decrypted digital information. Some of these problems with digital information protection systems may be overcome by providing a mechanism that allows a content provider to encrypt digital information without requiring either a hardware or platform manufacturer or a content consumer to provide support for the specific form of corresponding decryption. This mechanism can be provided in a manner that allows the digital information to be copied easily for back-up purposes and to be transferred easily for distribution, but which should not permit copying of the digital information in decrypted form. In particular, the encrypted digital information is stored as an executable computer program that includes a decryption program that decrypts the encrypted information to provide the desired digital information, upon successful completion of an authorization procedure by the user. In combination with other mechanisms that track distribution, enforce royalty payments and control access to decryption keys, an improved method is provided for identifying and detecting sources of unauthorized copies. Suitable authorization procedures also enable the digital information to be distributed for a limited number of uses and/or users, thus enabling per-use fees to be charged for the digital information.

[0049] A patent application entitled "Three Party Authorization System", (Robert Nagel, David Felsher, and Steven Hoffberg, inventors, 2001) provides a three party authorization encryption technique. This technique has the significant advantage of being more secure than a Public Key system because it requires the agreement of all three parties—the creator of the secure record, the party that the secure record is about, and the database repository—on a case by case basis, in order to release secure records. Then and only then can a released secure record be decrypted and accessed by the requesting party alone. Each access generates an entry into a log file with automatic security alerts for any unusual activity. A component of this system is that each party wishing to secure records enters into a contract with a "virtual trust agency" to represent that party in all matters where privacy is an issue. The virtual trust agency never has access to the data contained in the secured records and yet acts on behalf of the party whose information is contained in the secure records to control data access to authorized requesting parties. To enable this privacy, the virtual trust agency issues a public-private key pair and maintains the party's private key. The private key is only used in calculations to generate an intermediate key that is passed on to the data repository and used to re-encrypt the data for the requesting party's view. A unique aspect of this patent pending technique is the fact that the party's records are actually protected from unauthorized use at all times inside the organization that holds the database repository or by the

original record's creator, not simply in transmission from the database repository or the individual or organization that created the record in the first place, to outside requesting parties. This system requires consent of all three parties to decrypt secured information. Its virtual trust component takes the place of the trusted individual or organization in protecting the party whose record contains information that has legal mandates to rights of privacy.

[0050] E-Commerce Systems

[0051] U.S. Pat. No. 5,946,669 (Polk, Aug. 31, 1999), expressly incorporated herein by reference, relates to a method and apparatus for payment processing using debit-based electronic funds transfer and disbursement processing using addendum-based electronic data interchange. This disclosure describes a payment and disbursement system, wherein an initiator authorizes a payment and disbursement to a collector and the collector processes the payment and disbursement through an accumulator agency. The accumulator agency processes the payment as a debit-based transaction and processes the disbursement as an addendum-based transaction. The processing of a debit-based transaction generally occurs by electronic funds transfer (EFT) or by financial electronic data interchange (FEDI). The processing of an addendum-based transaction generally occurs by electronic data interchange (EDI).

[0052] U.S. Pat. No. 6,005,939 (Fortenberry, et al., Dec. 21, 1999), expressly incorporated herein by reference, relates to a method and apparatus for storing an Internet user's identity and access rights to World Wide Web resources. A method and apparatus for obtaining user information to conduct secure transactions on the Internet without having to re-enter the information multiple times is described. The method and apparatus can also provide a technique by which secured access to the data can be achieved over the Internet. A passport containing user-defined information at various security levels is stored in a secure server apparatus, or passport agent, connected to computer network. A user process instructs the passport agent to release all or portions of the passport to a recipient node and forwards a key to the recipient node to unlock the passport information.

[0053] U.S. Pat. No. 6,016,484 (Williams, et al., Jan. 18, 2000), expressly incorporated herein by reference, relates to a system, method and apparatus for network electronic payment instrument and certification of payment and credit collection utilizing a payment. An electronic monetary system provides for transactions utilizing an electronic-monetary system that emulates a wallet or a purse that is customarily used for keeping money, credit cards and other forms of payment organized. Access to the instruments in the wallet or purse is restricted by a password to avoid unauthorized payments. A certificate form must be completed in order to obtain an instrument. The certificate form obtains the information necessary for creating a certificate granting authority to utilize an instrument, a payment holder and a complete electronic wallet. Electronic approval results in the generation of an electronic transaction to complete the order. If a user selects a particular certificate, a particular payment instrument holder will be generated based on the selected certificate. In addition, the issuing agent for the certificate defines a default bitmap for the instrument associated with a particular certificate, and the default bitmap

will be displayed when the certificate definition is completed. Finally, the number associated with a particular certificate will be utilized to determine if a particular party can issue a certificate.

[0054] U.S. Pat. No. 6,029,150 (Kravitz, Feb. 22, 2000), expressly incorporated herein by reference, relates to a system and method of payment in an electronic payment system wherein a plurality of customers have accounts with an agent. A customer obtains an authenticated quote from a specific merchant, the quote including a specification of goods and a payment amount for those goods. The customer sends to the agent a single communication including a request for payment of the payment amount to the specific merchant and a unique identification of the customer. The agent issues to the customer an authenticated payment advice based only on the single communication and secret shared between the customer and the agent and status information, which the agent knows about the merchant, and/or the customer. The customer forwards a portion of the payment advice to the specific merchant. The specific merchant provides the goods to the customer in response to receiving the portion of the payment advice.

[0055] U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,269 (Biffar, Apr. 4, 2000), expressly incorporated herein by reference, relates to a self-contained payment system with creating and facilitating transfer of circulating digital vouchers representing value. A digital voucher has an identifying element and a dynamic log. The identifying element includes information such as the transferable value, a serial number and a digital signature. The dynamic log records the movement of the voucher through the system and accordingly grows over time. This allows the system operator not only to reconcile the vouchers before redeeming them, but also to recreate the history of movement of a voucher should an irregularity like a duplicate voucher be detected. These vouchers are used within a self-contained system including a large number of remote devices that are linked to a central system. The central system can be linked to an external system. The external system, as well as the remote devices, is connected to the central system by any one or a combination of networks. The networks must be able to transport digital information, for example the Internet, cellular networks, telecommunication networks, cable networks or proprietary networks. Vouchers can also be transferred from one remote device to another remote device. These remote devices can communicate through a number of methods with each other. For example, for a non-face-to-face transaction the Internet is a choice, for a face-to-face or close proximity transactions tone signals or light signals are likely methods. In addition, at the time of a transaction a digital receipt can be created which will facilitate a fast replacement of vouchers stored in a lost remote device.

[0056] Micropayments

[0057] U.S. Pat. No. 5,999,919 (Jarecki, et al., Dec. 7, 1999), expressly incorporated herein by reference, relates to an efficient micropayment system. Existing software proposals for electronic payments can be divided into "on-line" schemes which require participation of a trusted party (the bank) in every transaction and are secure against overspending, and "off-line" schemes which do not require a third party and guarantee only that overspending is detected when vendors submit their transaction records to the bank (usually

at the end of the day). A new “hybrid” scheme is proposed which combines the advantages of both “on-line” and “off-line” electronic payment schemes. It allows for control of overspending at a cost of only a modest increase in communication compared to the off-line schemes. The protocol is based on probabilistic polling. During each transaction, with some small probability, the vendor forwards information about this transaction to the bank. This enables the bank to maintain an accurate approximation of a customer’s spending. The frequency of polling messages is related to the monetary value of transactions and the amount of overspending the bank is willing to risk. For transactions of high monetary value, the cost of polling approaches that of the on-line schemes, but for micropayments, the cost of polling is a small increase over the traffic incurred by the off-line schemes.

[0058] Micropayments are often preferred where the amount of the transaction does not justify the costs of complete financial security. In the micropayment scheme, typically a direct communication between creditor and debtor is not required; rather, the transaction produces a result which eventually results in an economic transfer, but which may remain outstanding subsequent to transfer of the underlying goods or services. The theory underlying this micropayment scheme is that the monetary units are small enough such that risks of failure in transaction closure is relatively insignificant for both parties, but that a user gets few chances to default before credit is withdrawn. On the other hand, the transaction costs of a non-real time transactions of small monetary units are substantially less than those of secure, unlimited or potentially high value, real time verified transactions, allowing and facilitating such types of commerce. Thus, the rights management system may employ applets local to the client system, which communicate with other applets and/or the server and/or a vendor rights-holder to validate a transaction, at low transactional costs.

[0059] Neural Networks

[0060] The resources relating to Neural Networks, listed in the Neural Networks References Appendix, each of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference, provides a sound basis for understanding the field of neural networks (and the subset called artificial neural networks, which distinguish biological systems) and how these might be used to solve problems. A review of these references will provide a state of knowledge appropriate for an understanding of aspects of the invention which rely on Neural Networks, and to avoid a prolix discussion of no benefit to those already possessing an appropriate state of knowledge.

[0061] Telematics

[0062] The resources relating to telematics listed in the Telematics Appendix, each of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference, provides a background in the theory and practice of telematics, as well as some of the underlying technologies. A review of these references is therefore useful in understanding practical issues and the context of functions and technologies which may be used in conjunction with the advances set forth herein.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The drawings show:

- [0063] FIG. 1 shows a Bayesian Network;
- [0064] FIG. 2 shows a Markov chain;
- [0065] FIG. 3 shows a model of the output of a Markov chain as a mixture of Gaussians;
- [0066] FIGS. 4A-4C show an input-output, a factorial, and a coupled Hidden Markov Model (HMM), respectively;
- [0067] FIG. 5 shows a predictor corrector algorithm of the discrete Kalman filter cycle;
- [0068] FIG. 6 shows aspects of the discrete Kalman filter cycle algorithm;
- [0069] FIG. 7 shows aspects of the extended Kalman filter cycle;
- [0070] FIG. 8 shows a block diagram of a preferred embodiment of a communications system according to the present invention;
- [0071] FIG. 9 is a schematic diagram showing the prioritization scheme; and
- [0072] FIG. 10 is a block diagram representing a message format.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0073] The present invention seeks, among other aspects, to apply aspects of optimization theory to the control and arbitration of communities of resources, that is, elements or agents which operate independently and therefore cannot be directly controlled without compromise. Rather, the system is controlled by providing incentives and disincentives for various behaviors and actions seeking to promote an efficient outcome for the system as a whole, given the external constraints. Each agent then maximizes its own state based on its own value function, in light of the incentives and disincentives, resulting in an optimal network.

[0074] This optimization employs elements of game theory, and the present invention therefore invokes all those elements encompassed within its scope as applied to the problems and systems presented. The ad hoc network of elements typically reside within “communities”, that is, the present invention does not particularly seek to apply principles to trivial networks which can be optimized without compromise or arbitration, although its principles may be applicable. The present invention therefore applies to the enhancement or optimization of communities. These communities may themselves have various rules, reputation hierarchies, arrangements or cultures, which can be respected or programmed as a part of the system operation, or merely operate as constraints on optimization. Thus, in accordance with a game theoretic analysis, various rules and perceived benefits may be applied to appropriately model the real system, or may be imposed to control behavior.

[0075] These communities may be formed or employed for various purposes, and typically interoperate in a “commons” or economy, in which all relevant actions of each member of the community have an effect on others, and this effect can be quantified or normalized into “economic” terms. For example, a typical application of this technology

would be to arbitrate access to a common or mutually interfering medium, such as a communications network. By optimizing communications, the greatest aggregate value of communications will generally be achieved, which may or may not correspond to a greatest aggregate communications bandwidth. For example, both quantity and quality of service may be independent (or semi-independent) parameters. Thus, the system tends to promote a high quality of service (or at least as high a quality as is required) over a bulk volume of service. This, in turn, permits new applications which depend on reliable communications.

[0076] A general type of economic optimization is a market economy, in which independent agents each act to maximize their respective interests. A subset of a market is an auction, in which a resource is allocated to a highest valued user or consumer, or a user or consumer acquires a resource at a lowest cost, in a single process. In a market economy, agents may act as peers, and each agent may act as a source of supply or assert a demand. That is, at some market price, a consumer may relinquish assets to others and become a supplier. Generally, a consumer has a higher private value for a resource than a supplier. The supplier, for example, may have a lower cost to obtain the resource, or a lower value for consumption of the resource, or both. Peers that both buy and sell a resource may seek to arbitrage, that is, seek to establish a committed source of supply at a lower cost than a committed purchaser, thus assuring a profit. In order to be effective, arbitrage requires that the intermediary have an advantage, or else the ultimate buyer would transact directly with the ultimate seller. The advantage(s) may be, for example, information, proprietary elements or methods, location, lower transactional costs, available capital, risk tolerance, storage facility, or the like.

[0077] So long as the advantage does not derive from an economically inefficient monopoly or other structure that artificially and/or "illegally" limits the efficiency of other agents, the arbitrage agent increases net efficiency of the network. That is, the presence and action of the arbitrage agent increases the economic surplus of the transaction and the market in general.

[0078] An object of the present invention therefore seeks to overcome the inefficiency of seeking to solve a complex NP-complete optimization problem by providing arbitrage opportunities that allow a market solution to the optimization which balances optimization cost with intermediary profits. Accordingly, while the net result may deviate from an abstract optimum condition, when one considers the cost of achieving this abstract optimum, the arbitrage mediated result is superior in terms of market surplus. The availability of arbitrage and intermediaries therefore allows a particular agent to balance its own optimization costs against overall gains.

[0079] The subject of complexity theory, including combinatorial optimization, and solution of approximation of NP-complete problems, has been extensively studied. See, e.g., the references set forth in the combinatorial optimization and auction appendix, which are expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[0080] Assuming a set of rational agents, each agent will seek to locally optimize its state to achieve the greatest gains and incur the lowest net costs. Thus, in a system which seeks to optimize a network of such agents, by permitting each

agent to optimize its local environment state, the network may then be approximated by a network of local environments, each typically comprising a plurality of agents. Thus, in the same way as the complexity of an NP-complete problem grows in polynomial space, the simplification of an NP complete problem will also be polynomial. While this simplification incurs an inefficiency, each agent models a proximate region in the space of interest, which tends to be linear (i.e., superposable) in a preferred embodiment. Agents compete with each other, and therefore the incentive to distort is limited. Likewise, since the preferred simplification of the problem does not impose a heuristic (i.e., a substitution of a first relatively simpler or more readily analytic algorithm for a second more intractable algorithm), it does not accordingly distort the incentives from those inherent in the basic optimization.

[0081] In a simple auction, a role is imposed on an agent, while in a market an agent can choose its own role dynamically, in a series of transactions, dependent on its own value function. In a market, a set of agents having a resource or requiring a resource seek to interact to reallocate the resource, such that the needs are generally satisfied, up to a "market clearing price". That is, individual agents transact to transfer the resource from those with supply to those with demand, at a price between the private values of the two agents, which reallocation occurs until the demand ask price is higher than the supply bid price. An auction is designed to maximize the economic surplus, which is then typically allocated to the more restrictive of the source of supply or consumer or the sponsor. A market, on the other hand, generally operates to minimize the gap between bids and asks over an extended period, and thus the economic surplus tends to proportionate based on the balance of supply and demand at the clearing price. The particular reallocation also depends on the state of information of each agent, inefficiencies in transfer, and the like.

[0082] Where a need or supply is not unitary, one possible means for achieving an optimal solution is a combinatorial auction, in which multiple suppliers, or multiple consumers, or both, reallocate the resource or portions thereof. Thus, a single need is not met by a single supplier, but rather there are at least three parties to a transaction. The net result is a competition between parties that raises the potential for a holdout. In fact, one way to circumvent this issue (a "hold-out" problem) is to have direct or indirect (bypass) competition for each element. In such a circumstance, no agent can effectively demand more than the least cost alternate(s).

[0083] A combinatorial auction (multifactorial optimization, also known as a Vickrey Clarke Grove [VCG] Auction) seeks to match, for the entire network of possibilities, the highest valued users with the lowest cost suppliers. This leads, however, to a surplus between the two, which must be allocated. In a one-to-many auction, the surplus is generally allocated to the restricted agent, i.e., the agent(s) with "market power". On the other hand, in an optimal market, the surplus will tend toward zero. That is, the profit to each party will tend toward a competitive mean, with higher profits only gained by undertaking higher risk. In imperfect markets, arbitrage opportunities exist, where profits can be made by trading the same resource.

[0084] In a multihop ad hoc network, a path between source and destination consists of a number of legs, with

alternate paths available for selection of an optimum. If each node has its own distinct destination, there will likely be competing demands for each intermediate communication node.

[0085] One way to promote revealing a private value is if the end result of the process does not penalize those with aberrantly high or low values. One known method is to compute the result of the process as if the bidder or askor was not involved, leading to a so-called second price. Thus, the highest bidder wins, at a price established by a second highest bid. A lowest askor wins, at a price established by the second lowest askor. In a market, the highest bidder and lowest askor win, with a second price dependant on a more restrictive of supply and demand. In a combinatorial auction, this may be extended to price each component as if the highest bidder was uninvolved. In one embodiment of the invention, the second price applies to both buyer and seller, respectively, with the economic surplus allocated to other purposes. Thus, in this case, neither party gains the particular benefit of an imbalance of supply and demand. In fact, this perturbs the traditional market somewhat, in that an imbalance in supply and demand does not particularly recruit new market entrants in the same manner as an allocation of the surplus.

[0086] Arbitrage

[0087] The present invention seeks to model, within a microeconomy, the elements of the real economy which tend to improve efficiency toward “perfection”, that is, a perfect universal balance of supply and demand, for which no strategy (other than bidding a true private value) will produce a superior result.

[0088] These efficiency producing elements, paradoxically, are the parasitic elements which thrive off of predictable inefficiencies. That is, by promoting competition among the parasitic elements, an efficient balance of optimization of the direct market and optimization of the derivative markets will produce an overall superior result to an optimization of the direct market alone.

[0089] While the use of derivative markets in real economies is well known, the implementation of these as aspects of microeconomies and isolated markets is not well known, and a part of an embodiment of the present invention. For example, in a corporate bankruptcy auction, there are often resellers present who seek to purchase assets cheaply at a “wholesale” price, and to redistribute them on a less urgent basis or in smaller quantities, or at a different location, or otherwise transformed, and to sell them at a higher “retail” price. The auction price is determined by the number and constitution of bidders, as well as the possibility of proxy or absentee bidding. In fact, we presume that the auctioneers themselves are efficient, and that significantly higher bid prices are not available in a modified process without incurring substantial investment, risk, or delay. Indeed, these premises in a narrow sense might be false, i.e., a rational auctioneer might indeed make greater investment, undertake higher risk, or incur greater delay. However, this possible inefficiency merely shifts the allocation of the surplus, and to the extent there is a substantial gain to be made, encourages arbitrage, which in turn encourages competition at subsequent auctions, leading to at least a partial remediation of the allocation “error” in the long term, over a series of auctions.

[0090] Therefore, the market system, with derivative and arbitrage possibilities, and deviations from optimal performance is at least partially self-correcting over the long term.

[0091] Likewise, because the system has mechanisms for reducing the effects of imperfections in the presumptions and/or the conformance of a real system to the stated mechanisms and applicable rules, particular aspects of the system which impose administrative or overhead burdens may be circumvented by imposing less restrictive criteria and allowing a “self correcting” mechanism to remediate. Thus, for example, if a theoretically ideal mechanism imposes a 15% burden due to overhead, thus achieving an 85% overall efficiency (100-15=85), while a simplifying presumption achieves a result which imposes a 20% efficiency impairment but only a 2% overhead factor (100-20-2=78), and an arbitrage mechanism is available to correct the simplified model to gain 12% efficiency with another 2% overhead (78+12-2), the net result is 88% efficiency, above that of the theoretically ideal mechanism.

[0092] An arbitrage mechanism seeks to identify inefficiency based on superior information or mechanism, and a pricing or value disparity, and conduct a countertrade seeking to exploit the disparity while undertaking relatively low risk, to increase overall market efficiency. (That is, to ultimately reallocate resources from a lower valued holder to a higher valued holder).

[0093] An ad hoc network generally presents a case where individual nodes have imperfect information, and efforts to gain better information invariably lead to increased overhead. Therefore, by intentionally truncating the information gathering and discovery aspect of the ad hoc network, a residual arbitrage opportunity will remain, but the inherent inefficiency of the arbitrage may be less than the corresponding overhead involved in providing more perfect information to the individual nodes (i.e., overall arbitrage cost is less than efficiency gain).

[0094] As such, a design feature of an embodiment of the invention is to provide or even encourage arbitrage mechanisms and arbitrage opportunities, in an effort to improve overall system efficiency. In fact, an embodiment of the system is preferably constructed to regularly provide arbitrage opportunities which can be conducted with low risk and with substantial market efficiency gains, and these arbitrage opportunities may be an important part of the operation of the embodiment.

[0095] A second opportunity provides risk transference, such as debt transactions, insurance, and market-making, and/or the like. In such transactions, a market risk is apparent. Each node, on the other hand, has its own subjective risk tolerance. Likewise, the market risk provides an opportunity for nodes having a high risk tolerance to improve yield, by trading risk for return. Those nodes which have generally greater liquid resources, which inherently have no return while uninvested, and may permit other nodes having lesser resources to borrow, at interest. Because there is a risk of non-payment, nodes may have different credit ratings, and this creates an opportunity for credit rating “agencies” and/or guarantors. In an ad hoc network, there is also a possibility for delivery failure, which, in turn, provides an opportunity for insurance.

[0096] Fair Allocation Perturbed by Hierarchical Considerations

[0097] In a typical auction, each player is treated fairly; that is, the same rules apply to each player, and therefore a single economy describes the process. The fair auction therefore poses challenges for an inherently hierarchical set of users, such as a military organization, where rank is accompanied by privilege. The net result, however, is a decided disadvantage to lower ranking agents, at least when viewed in light of constricted self-interest. The issues that arise are similar to the relating to “altruism”, although not identical, and thus the game theoretic analysis of altruistic behavior may be imported for consideration as appropriate.

[0098] In a mobile ad hoc communications network, a real issue is user defection or non-compliance. For example, where a cost is imposed on a user for participating in the ad hoc network, e.g., battery power consumption, if the anticipated benefit does not exceed the cost, the user will simply turn off the device until actually needed. The result of mass defection will, of course, be the instability and failure of the ad hoc network itself, leading to decreased utility, even for those who gain an unfair or undue advantage under the system. Thus, perceived fairness and net benefit is required to network success, assuming that defection and/or non-compliance are possible.

[0099] On the other hand, in military systems, the assertion of rank as a basis for priority is not itself arbitrary and capricious. Orders and communications from a central command are critical for the organization itself, and thus the lower ranking agents gain at least a peripheral benefit as their own chain of command employs their resources. Therefore, the difficulty in analyzing the application of a fair game to a hierarchical organization is principally a result of conceptualizing and aligning the individual incentives with those of the organization as a whole and the relationship between branches. Thus, in contradistinction to typical self-organizing peer-to-peer networks, a hierarchical network is not seen as self-organizing, at least in terms of the hierarchy, which is extrinsic to the formation of the communications network under consideration.

[0100] As discussed below, the “distortions” of the network imposed by the external hierarchy can be analyzed and accounted for by, for example, the concepts of inheritance and delegation. Thus, each branch of a hierarchy tree may be considered an object, which receives a set of characteristics from its root, and from which each sub-branch inherits the characteristics and adds subcharacteristics of, for example, specialization. It is noted that the hierarchy need not follow non-ambiguous or perfect rules, and thus there is no particular limit imposed that the hierarchy necessarily follow these formalisms. Rather, by analyzing those aspects of the hierarchy which comply with these formalisms in accordance therewith, efficiency is facilitated.

[0101] In establishing an economic system, a preliminary question is whether the system is microeconomic or macroeconomic; that is, whether the economy is linked to a real economy or insulated from it. One disadvantage of a real economy with respect to a peer relationship is that external wealth can override internal dynamics, thus diminishing the advantages to be gained by optimization, and potentially creating a perception of unfairness for externally less wealthy agents, at least unless and until the system accom-

plishes a wealth redistribution. An artificial economy provides a solution for a peer network in which each node has an equal opportunity to gain control over the ad hoc network, independent of outside influences. On the other hand, by insulating the network from external wealth redistribution, real efficiency gains may be unavailable. Therefore, both types of economies, as well as hybrids, are available. Thus, as discussed in more detail below, a “fair” initial (or recurring) wealth distribution may be applied, which may be supplemented with, and/or provide an output of, external wealth. The rules or proportion of external influence may be predetermined, adaptive, or otherwise.

[0102] In accordance with the proposed artificial economy, each node has a generator function for generating economic units, which are then used in an auction with other nodes to create a market economy, that is, each node has a supply and demand function, and acts as a source or sink for a limited resource. In some cases, nodes may have only supply or demand functions, or a degree of asymmetry, but in this case, these are typically subject to an external economic consideration, and the artificial economy will be less effective in providing appropriate incentives. According to this embodiment, the artificial economic units have a temporally and spatially declining value, so that wealth does not accumulate over long periods and cannot be transferred over large distances. The decline may be linear, exponential, or based on some other function. This creates a set of microeconomies insulated from each other. Where distant microeconomies must deal with each other, there is a discount. This architecture provides a number of advantages, for example, by decreasing the influence of more spatially and temporally distant effects, the scope of an optimization analysis may be relatively constrained, while reducing the amount of information which must be stored over time and/or carried over distance in order to permit an optimization. Likewise, since the economy is artificial, the discount need not be recouped within the scope of the system. In the same manner, a somewhat different incentive structure may be provided; that is, economic units generated at one location and at one time may have a higher value at a different location and time; this may encourage reduced immediate use of the system, and relocation to higher valued locations. As discussed below, one embodiment of the invention permits trading of credits, and thus, for example, a user may establish a repeater site at an underserved location to gain credits for use elsewhere. Preferably, beyond a “near field” effect, the value does not continue to increase, since this may result in inflationary pressures, and undermine the utility of the system in optimally balancing immediate supply and demand at a particular location.

[0103] As can be seen, through modifications of the governing rules and formulae, the system can be incentivized to behave in certain ways, but care should be exercised since a too narrow analysis of the incentive might result in unintended effects. To the extent that human behavior is involved, care should also be exercised in applying a rationality assumption, since this is not always true. Rather, there may be applicable models for human irrational behavior that are better suited to an understanding of the network behavior in response to a perturbation.

[0104] The typical peer-to-peer ad hoc network may be extended to the hierarchical case by treating each branch (including sub-branches) within the chain of command as an

economic unit with respect to the generator function. At any level of the hierarchy, the commander retains a portion of the wealth generation capacity, and delegates the remainder to its subordinates. Therefore, the rank and hierachal considerations are translated to an economic wealth (or wealth generation) distribution. One aspect of this system allows wealth transfer or redistribution, although in a real system, a time delay is imposed, and in the event of a temporally and/or spatially declining value, the transfer will impose a cost. Thus, an initial misallocation is undesired, and there will be an incentive to optimally distribute the wealth initially. Of course, if centralized control with low penalty is desired, it is possible to limit the penalty, of any, for wealth redistribution through appropriate rules, although the time for propagation through the network remains an issue, and blind nodes (i.e., those which do not have an efficient communication path, or have insufficient resources to utilize otherwise available paths through the hierarchy) may also lead to limitations on system performance.

[0105] In this system, there may be an economic competitive distortion, under which a node's subjective value of a resource is influenced by its then subjective wealth. If a node is supplied with wealth beyond its needs, the wealth is wasted, since it declines in value and cannot be hoarded indefinitely. (In a network wealth model in which wealth could be hoarded indefinitely, small deviations from optimality and arbitrage opportunities may be exploited to create a perception of unfairness, thus, this is not preferred.) If a node is supplied with insufficient wealth, economic surplus through transactional gains are lost. Thus, each node must analyze its expected circumstances to retain or delegate the generator function, and to optimally allocate wealth between competing subordinates. Likewise, there may be a plurality of quasi-optimal states.

[0106] In any economic transaction, there is an amount that a seller requires to part with the resource, a price a buyer is willing to pay, and a surplus between them. Typically, in a two party transaction, the surplus is allocated to the party initiating the transaction, that is, the party initiating the transaction uses some discovery mechanism to find the minimum price acceptable by the buyer. In brokered or agent-mediated transactions, a portion of the surplus is allocated to a facilitator. In accordance with this aspect of the present invention, compliance with the community rules, as well as an incentive to bid or ask a true private value is encouraged by distributing a portion of the transaction surplus to competitive bidders in accordance with their reported valuations. In particular, the competitive bidders seeking to allocate a scarce resource for themselves receive compensation for deferring to the winning bidder in an amount commensurate with their reported value. Thus, sellers receive their minimum acceptable value, buyers pay their maximum valuation, the surplus is distributed to the community in a manner tending to promote the highest bids, that is, the true bidder value (or even possibly slightly higher). In a corresponding manner, the auction rules can be established to incentivized sellers to ask the minimum possible amount. For example, a portion of the surplus may be allocated to bidders in accordance with how close they come to the winning ask. Therefore, both incentives may be applied, for example with the surplus split in two, and half allocated to the bidder pool and half allocated to the seller pool. Clearly, other allocations are possible.

[0107] The winning bidder and/or seller may be included within the rebate pool. This is particularly advantageous where for various reasons, the winning bidder is not selected. Thus, this process potentially decouples the bidding (auction) process and the resulting commercial transaction. It may also be useful to apply Vickrey (second price) rules to the auction, that is, the winning bidder pays the second bid price, and/or the winning seller pays the second ask price.

[0108] Because of transactional inefficiencies, human behavioral aspects, and a desire to avoid increased network overhead by "false" bidders seeking a share of the allocation pool without intending to win the auction, it may be useful to limit the allocation of the surplus pool to a subset of the bidders and/or sellers, for example the top three of one or both. This therefore encourages bidders and/or sellers to seek to be in the limited group splitting the pool, and thus incentivizes higher bids and lower asks. Of course, a party will have a much stronger incentive to avoid bidding outside its valuation bounds, so the risk of this type of inefficiency is small.

[0109] As discussed above, one embodiment of the invention provides a possible redistribution or wealth among nodes within a hierachal chain. This redistribution may be of accumulated wealth, or of the generation function portion. Trading among hierachally related parties is preferred, since the perceived cost is low, and the wealth can be repeatedly redistributed. In fact, it is because of the possibility of wealth oscillation and teaming that the declining wealth function is preferred, since this will tend to defeat closely related party control over the network for extended periods.

[0110] It is noted that, in a multihop mobile ad hoc network, if a communication path fail, no further transfers are possible, potentially resulting in stalled or corrupt system configuration. It is possible to transfer an expiring or declining portion of the generating function; however, this might lead a node which is out of range to have no ability to rejoin the network upon return, and thus act as an impediment to efficient network operation. Therefore, it is preferred that, in an artificial economy, each node has some intrinsic wealth generator function, so an extended period of inactivity, a node gains wealth likely sufficient to rejoin the network as a full participant.

[0111] In practice, in a typical military-type hierarchy, the bulk of the wealth generating function will be distributed to the lowest ranks with the highest numbers. Thus, under normal circumstances, the network will appear to operate according to a non-hierachal (i.e., peer-to-peer) model, with the distortion that not all nodes have a common generator function. On the other hand, hierachically superior nodes either retain, or more likely, can quickly recruit surrounding subordinates to allocate their wealth generating function and accumulated wealth to pass urgent or valuable messages. Thus, if 85% of the wealth and network resources are distributed to the lowest-ranking members, then the maximum distortion due to hierachal modifications is 15%.

[0112] One way that this allocation of wealth may be apparent is with respect to the use of expensive assets. Thus, a high level node might have access to a high power broadcast system or licensed spectrum, while low level nodes might ordinarily be limited to lower power transmis-

sion and/or unlicensed spectrum or cellular wireless communications. For a low level node to generate a broadcast using an expensive asset (or to allocate a massive amount of space bandwidth product), it must pass the request up through the chain of command, until sufficient wealth (i.e., authority) is available to implement the broadcast.

[0113] In fact, such communications and authorizations are quite consistent with the expectations within a hierarchical organization, and this construct is likely to be accepted within a military-type hierarchical organization.

[0114] Under normal circumstances, a superior would have an incentive to assure that each subordinate node possesses sufficient wealth to carry out its function and be incentivized to participate in the network. If a subordinate has insufficient initial wealth (or wealth generating function) allocation, it may still participate, but it must expend its internal resources to obtain wealth for participation in its own benefit. This, in turn, leads to a potential exhaustion of resources, and the unavailability of the node for ad hoc intermediary use, even for the benefit of the hierarchy. An initial surplus allocation will lead to overbidding for resources, and thus inefficient resource allocation, potential waste of allocation, and a disincentive to act as an intermediary in the ad hoc network. While in a traditional military hierarchy, cooperation can be mandated, in systems where cooperation is perceived as contrary to the net personal interests of the actor, network stability may be poor, and defection in spite of mandate.

[0115] In a military system, it is thus possible to formulate an “engineered” solution which forces participation and eliminates defection; however, it is clear that such solutions forfeit the potential gains of optimality, and incentivizes circumvention and non-compliance. Further, because such a system is not “cost sensitive” (however the appropriate cost function might be expressed), it fails to respond to “market” forces.

[0116] Accordingly, a peer to peer mobile ad hoc network suitable for respecting hierarchical organization structures is delegation is provided. In this hierarchical system, the hierarchy is represented by an initial wealth or wealth generation function distribution, and the hierarchically higher nodes can reallocate wealth of nodes beneath themselves, exercising their higher authority. This wealth redistribution can be overt or covert, and if overt, the hierarchical orders can be imposed without nodal assent. In a covert redistribution, trust may be required to assure redistribution by a node to a grandchild node. The wealth and its distribution can be implemented using modified micropayment techniques and other verifiable cryptographic techniques. This wealth can be applied to auctions and markets, to allocate resources. Various aspects of this system are discussed in more detail elsewhere in this specification.

[0117] Manet System

[0118] Multihop Ad Hoc Networks require cooperation of nodes which are relatively disinterested in the content being conveyed. Typically, such disinterested intermediaries incur a cost for participation, for example, power consumption or opportunity cost. Economic incentives may be used to promote cooperation of disinterested intermediaries, also known as recruitment. An economic optimization may be achieved using a market-finding process, such as an auction.

In many scenarios, the desire for the fairness of an auction is tempered by other concerns, i.e., there are constraints on the optimization which influence price and parties of a transaction. For example, in military communication systems, rank may be deemed an important factor in access to, and control over, the communications medium. A simple process of rank-based preemption, without regard for subjective or objective importance, will result in an inefficient economic distortion. In order to normalize the application of rank, one is presented with two options: imposing a normalization scheme with respect to rank to create a unified economy, or providing considering rank using a set of rules outside of the economy. One way to normalize rank, and the implicit hierarchy underlying the rank, is by treating the economy as an object-oriented hierarchy, in which each individual inherits or is allocated a subset of the rights of a parent, with peers within the hierarchy operating in a purely economic manner. The extrinsic consideration of rank, outside of an economy, can be denominated “respect”, which corresponds to the societal treatment of the issue, rather than normalizing this factor within the economy, in order to avoid unintended secondary economic distortion. Each system has its merits and limitations.

[0119] An economic optimization is one involving a transaction in which all benefits and detriments can be expressed in normalized terms, and therefore by balancing all factors, including supply and demand, at a price, an optimum is achieved. Auctions are well known means to achieve an economic optimization between distinct interests, to transfer a good or right in exchange for a market price. While there are different types of auctions, each having their limitations and attributes, as a class these are well accepted as a means for transfer of goods or rights at an optimum price. Where multiple goods or rights are required in a sufficient combination to achieve a requirement, a so-called Vickrey-Clarke-Groves (VCG) auction may be employed. In such an auction, each supplier asserts a desired price for his component. The various combinations which meet the requirement are then compared, and the lowest selected. In a combinatorial supply auction, a plurality of buyers each seek a divisible commodity, and each bids its best price. The bidders with the combination of prices which is maximum are selected. In a commodity market, there are a plurality of buyers and sellers, so the auction is more complex. In a market economy, the redistribution of goods or services is typically transferred between those who value them least to those who value them most. The transaction price depends on the balance between supply and demand; with the surplus being allocated to the limiting factor.

[0120] Derivatives, Hedges, Futures and Insurance

[0121] In a market economy, the liquidity of the commodity is typically such that the gap between bid and ask is small enough that the gap between them is small enough that it is insignificant in terms of preventing a transaction. In a traditional market, the allocation of the surplus oscillates in dependence on whether it is a buyer’s or seller’s market. Of course, the quantum of liquidity necessary to assure an acceptably low gap is subjective, but typically, if the size of the market is sufficient, there will be low opportunity for arbitrage, or at least a competitive market for arbitrage. The arbitrage may be either in the commodity, or options, derivatives, futures, or the like.

[0122] In a market for communications resources, derivatives may provide significant advantages over a simple unitary market for direct transactions. For example, a node may wish to procure a reliable communications pathway (high quality of service or QoS) for an extended period. Thus, it may seek to commit resources into the future, and not be subject to future competition for or price fluctuation of those resources, especially being subject to a prior broadcast of its own private valuation and a potential understanding by competitors of the presumed need for continued allocation of the resources. Thus, for similar reasons for the existence of derivative, options, futures, etc. markets in the real economy, their analogy may be provided within a communications resource market.

[0123] In a futures market analogy, an agent seeks to procure its long-term or bulk requirements, or seeks to dispose of its assets in advance of their availability. In this way, there is increased predictability, and less possibility of self-competition. It also allows transfer of assets in bulk to meet an entire requirement or production lot capability, thus increasing efficiency and avoiding partial availability or disposal.

[0124] One issue in mobile ad hoc networks is accounting for mobility of nodes and unreliability of communications. In commodities markets, one option is insurance of the underlying commodity and its production. The analogy in communications resource markets focuses on communications reliability, since one aspect of reliability, nodal mobility is “voluntary” and not typically associated with an insurable risk. On the other hand, the mobility risk may be mitigated by an indemnification. In combination, these, and other risk transfer techniques, may provide means for a party engaged in a communications market transaction to monetarily compensate for risk tolerance factors. An agent in the market having a low risk tolerance can undertake risk transference, at some additional but predetermined transaction costs, while one with a high risk tolerance can “go bare” and obtain a lower transaction cost, or undertake third party risk for profit.

[0125] Insurance may be provided in various manners. For example, some potential market participants may reserve wealth, capacity or demand for a fee, subject to claim in the event of a risk event. In other cases, a separate system may be employed, such as a cellular carrier, to step in, in the event that a lower cost resource is unavailable (typically for bandwidth supply only). A service provider may provide risk-related allocations to network members in an effort to increase perceived network stability; likewise, if the network is externally controlled, each node can be subject to a reserve requirements which is centrally (or hierarchically) allocated.

[0126] If an agent promises to deliver a resource, and ultimately fails to deliver, it may undertake an indemnification, paying the buyer an amount representing “damages”, the transaction cost of buyer, e.g., the cost of re-procurement plus lost productivity. Likewise, if an agent fails to consume resources committed to it, it owes the promised payment, less the resale value of the remaining resources. An indemnification insurer/guarantor can undertake to pay the gap on behalf of the defaulting party. Typically, the insurer is not a normal agent peer, but can be.

[0127] Hedge strategies may also be employed in known manner.

[0128] In order for markets to be efficient, there must be a possibility of beneficial use or resale of future assets. This imposes some complexity, since the assets are neither physical nor possessed by the intermediary. However, cryptographic authentication of transactions may provide some remedy. On the other hand, by increasing liquidity and providing market-makers, the transaction surplus may be minimized, and thus the reallocation of the surplus as discussed above minimized. Likewise, in a market generally composed of agents within close proximity, the interposition of intermediaries may result in inefficiencies rather than efficiencies, and the utility of such complexity may better come from the facilitation of distant transactions. Thus, if one presumes slow, random nodal mobility, little advantage is seen from liquid resource and demand reallocation. On the other hand, if an agent has a predefined itinerary for rapidly relocating, it can efficiently conduct transactions over its path, prearranging communication paths, and thus providing trunk services. Thus, over a short term, direct multihop communications provide long-distance communications of both administrative and content data. On the other hand, over a longer term, relocation of agents may provide greater efficiency for transport of administrative information, increasing the efficiency of content data communications over the limited communications resources, especially if a store-and-forward paradigm is acceptable.

[0129] It is noted that in an economy having persistent and deep use of financial derivatives, a stable currency is preferred, and the declining value credit discussed above would provide a disincentive to agents who might otherwise take risks over a long time-frame. It is possible, however, to distinguish between credits held by “consumers” and those held by “arbitrageurs” or institutions, with the former having a declining value but can be spent, and those which have a stable value but must be first converted (at some possible administrative cost) for consumer use.

[0130] Bandwidth Auction

[0131] A previous scheme proposes the application of game theory in the control of multihop mobile ad hoc networks according to “fair” principles. In this prior scheme, nodes seeking to control the network (i.e., are “buyers” of bandwidth), conduct an auction for the resources desired. Likewise, potential intermediate nodes conduct an auction to supply the resources. The set of winning bidders and winning sellers is optimized to achieve the maximum economic surplus. Winning bidders pay the maximum bid price or second price, while winning sellers receive their winning ask or second price. The remaining surplus is redistributed among the winners and losing bidders, whose cooperation and non-interference with the winning bidders is required for network operation. The allocation of the portion to losing bidders is, for example, in accordance with their proportionate bid for contested resources, and for example, limited to the few (e.g., 3) highest bidders or lowest offerors. The winning bids are determined by a VCG combinatorial process. The result is an optimum network topology with a reasonable, but by no means the only, fairness criterion, while promoting network stability and utility.

[0132] The purpose of rewarding losers is to encourage recruitment, and therefore market liquidity. In order to

discourage strategic losing bids, one possible option is to impose a statistical noise on the process to increase the risk that a strategically losing bid will be a winning bid. Another way is to allocate the available surplus corresponding to the closeness of the losing bid to the winning bid, not merely on its magnitude. Alternately, a “historical” value for the resource may be established, and an allocation made only if the bid is at or above the trailing mean value. Further, the loser’s allocation may be dependent on a future bid with respect to a corresponding resource at or above the prior value. In similar manner, various algorithms for surplus allocation may be designed to encourage recruitment of agents seeking to win, while possibly discouraging bidders who have little realistic possibility of winning. Bidders who do not seek to win impose an inefficiency on the network, for example requiring other agents to communicate, evaluate, acknowledge, and defer to these bids. Therefore, a relatively small bidding fee may be imposed in order to assert a bid, which may be used to increase the available surplus to be allocated between the winning and top losing bidders.

[0133] As discussed above, risk may be a factor in valuing a resource. The auction optimization may therefore be normalized or perturbed in dependence on an economic assessment of a risk tolerance, either based on a personal valuation, or based on a third party valuation (insurance/indemnification). Likewise, the optimization may also be modified to account for other factors.

[0134] Thus, one issue with such a traditional scheme for fair allocation of resources is that it does not readily permit intentional distortions, that is, the system is “fair”. However, in some instances, a relatively extrinsic consideration to supply and subjective demand may be a core requirement of a system. For example, in military systems, it is traditional and expected that higher military rank will provide access to and control over resources on a favored basis. (Note that, in contrast to an example discussed elsewhere herein, this favoritism is not enforced by a hierachal wealth generation distribution). In civilian systems, emergency and police use may also be considered privileged. However, by seeking to apply economic rules to this access, a number of issues arise. Most significantly, as a privileged user disburses currency, this is distributed to unprivileged users, leading to an inflationary effect and comparative dilution of the intended privilege. If the economy is real, that is the currency is linked to a real economy, this grant of privilege will incur real costs, which is also not always an intended effect. If the economy is synthetic, that is, it is unlinked to external economies, then the redistribution of wealth within the system can grant dramatic and potentially undesired control to a few nodes, potentially conveying the privilege to those undeserving, except perhaps due to fortuitous circumstances such as being in a critical location or being capable of interfering with a crucial communication.

[0135] Two different schemes may be used to address this desire for both economic optimality and hierachal considerations. One scheme maintains optimality and fairness within the economic structure, but applies a generally orthogonal consideration of “respect” as a separate factor within the operation of the protocol. Respect is a subjective factor, and thus permits each bidder to weight its own considerations. It is further noted that Buttyan et al. have discussed this factor as a part of an automated means for ensuring compliance with network rules, in the absence of a

hierarchy. Levente Buttyan and Jean-Pierre Hubaux, Nuglets: a Virtual Currency to Stimulate Cooperation in Self-Organized Mobile Ad Hoc Networks, Technical Report DSC/2001/004, EPFL-DI-ICA, January 2001, incorporated herein by reference. See, P. Michiardi and R. Molva, CORE: A collaborative reputation mechanism to enforce node cooperation in mobile ad hoc networks, In B. Jerman-Blazic and T. Klobucar, editors, Communications and Multimedia Security, IFIP TC6/TC11 Sixth Joint Working Conference on Communications and Multimedia Security, Sep. 26-27, 2002, Portoroz, Slovenia, volume 228 of IFIP Conference Proceedings, pages 107-121. Kluwer Academic, 2002; Sonja Buchegger and Jean-Yves Le Boudec, A Robust Reputation System for P2P and Mobile Ad-hoc Networks, Second Workshop on the Economics of Peer-to-Peer Systems, June 2004; Po-Wah Yau and Chris J. Mitchell, Reputation Methods for Routing Security for Mobile Ad Hoc Networks; Frank Kargl, Andreas Klenk, Stefan Schlott, and Micheal Weber. Advanced Detection of Selfish or Malicious Nodes in Ad Hoc Network. The 1st European Workshop on Security in Ad-Hoc and Sensor Networks (ESAS 2004); He, Qi, et al., SORI: A Secure and Objective Reputation-based Incentive Scheme for Ad-Hoc Networks, IEEE Wireless Communications and Networking Conference 2004, each of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[0136] The bias introduced in the system operation is created by an assertion by one claiming privilege, and deference by one respecting privilege. One way to avoid substantial economic distortions is to require that the payment made be based on a purely economic optimization, while selecting the winner based on other factors. In this way, the perturbations of the auction process itself is subtle, that is, since bidders realize that the winning bid may not result in the corresponding benefit, but incurs the publication of private values and potential bidding costs, there may be perturbation of the bidding strategy from optimal. Likewise, since the privilege is itself unfair and predictable, those with lower privilege ratings will have greater incentive to defect from, or act against, the network. Therefore, it is important that either the assertion of privilege be subjectively reasonable to those who must defer to it, or the incidence or impact of the assertions be uncommon or have low anticipated impact on the whole. On the other hand, the perturbation is only one-sided, since the payment is defined by the network absent the assertion of privilege.

[0137] In the extreme case, the assertion of privilege will completely undermine the auction optimization, and the system will be prioritized on purely hierachal grounds, and the pricing non-optimal or unpredictable. This condition may be acceptable or even efficient in military systems, but may be unacceptable where the deference is voluntary and choice of network protocol is available, i.e., defection from the network policies is an available choice.

[0138] It is noted that those seeking access based on respect, must still make an economic bid. This bid, for example, should be sufficient in the case that respect is not afforded, for example, from those of equal rank or above, or those who for various reasons have other factors that override the assertion of respect. Therefore, one way to determine the amount of respect to be afforded is the self-worth advertised for the resources requested. This process therefore may minimize the deviation from optimal and therefore promotes stability of the network. It is further noted that

those who assert respect based on hierarchy typically have available substantial economic resources, and therefore it is largely a desire to avoid economic redistribution rather than an inability to effect such a redistribution, that compels a consideration of respect.

[0139] In a combinatorial auction, each leg of a multihop link is separately acquired and accounted. Therefore, administration of the process is quite involved. That is, each bidder broadcasts a set of bids for the resources required, and an optimal network with maximum surplus is defined. Each leg of each path is therefore allocated a value. In this case, it is the winning bidder who defers based on respect, since the other resources are compensated equally and therefore agnostic.

[0140] Thus, if pricing is defined by the economic optimization, then the respect consideration requires that a subsidy be applied, either as an excess payment up to the amount of the winning bid, or as a discount provided by the sellers, down to the actually bid value.

[0141] Since the pricing is dependent on the network absent the respect consideration, there is an economic deficit or required subsidy. In some cases, the respected bidder simply pays the amount required, in excess of its actual bid. If we presume that the respected bidder could have or would have outbid the winning bidder, it then pays the third price, rather than the second price. If the respected bidder does not have, or will not allocate the resources, then the subsidy must come from the others involved. On one hand, since the respect in this case may be defined by the otherwise winning bidder, this bidder, as an element of its respect, may pay the difference. However, this cost (both the lost economic gains of the transaction and the subsidy) will quickly disincentivize any sort of grant of respect. The recipients could also provide a discount, however this would require consent of both the winning bidder and the recipients, making concluding the transaction more difficult. One other possibility is to request "donations" from nearby nodes to meet the subsidy, a failure of which undermines the assertion of respect.

[0142] Another alternate is to assume that there is a surplus between the aggregate winning bid and the aggregate cost, and so long as the bidder claiming respect pays the minimum cost, then the system remains operable, although the benefits of surplus allocation are lost, and all affected nodes must defer to this respect mechanism. In this case, it is more difficult to arbitrate between competing demands for respect, unless a common value function is available, which in this case we presume is not available.

[0143] The node demanding respect may have an impact on path segments outside its required route and the otherwise optimal interfering routes; and thus the required payment to meet the differential between the optimum network and the resulting network may thus be significant.

[0144] It is noted that, in the real economy, where the U.S. Government allocates private resources, it is required to pay their full value. This model appears rational, and therefore a preferred system requires a node claiming privilege and gaining a resulting benefit to pay the winning bid value (as an expression of market value), and perhaps in addition pay the winning bidder who is usurped its anticipated benefit, that is, the difference in value between the second price and its published private valuation, this having an economically

neutral affect, but also requiring a respected node to potentially possess substantial wealth.

[0145] A further possible resolution of this issue provides for an assessment of an assertion of respect by each involved node. Since the allocation of respect is subjective, each bidder supplies a bid, as well as an assertion of respect. Each other node receives the bids and assertions, and applies a weighting or discount based on its subjective analysis of the respect assertion. In this case, the same bid is interpreted differently by each supplier, and the subjective analysis must be performed by or for each supplier. By converting the respect assertion into a subjective weighting or discount, a pure economic optimization may then be performed, with the subjectively perturbed result by each node reported and used to compute the global optimization.

[0146] An alternate scheme for hierachal deference is to organize the economy itself into a hierarchy, as discussed in the first example. In a hierarchy, a node has one parent and possibly multiple children. At each level, a node receives an allocation of wealth from its parent, and distributes all or a portion of its wealth to children. A parent is presumed to control its children, and therefore can allocate their wealth or subjective valuations to its own ends. When nodes representing different lineages must be reconciled, one may refer to the common ancestor for arbitration, or a set of inherited rules to define the hierachal relationships.

[0147] In this system, the resources available for reallocation between branches of the hierarchy depend on the allocation by the common grandparent, as well as competing allocations within the branch. This system presumes that children communicate with their parents and are obedient. In fact, if the communication presumption is violated, one must then rely on a priori instructions, which may not be sufficiently adaptive to achieve an optimal result. If the obedience presumption is violated, then the hierachal deference requires an enforcement mechanism within the hierarchy. If both presumptions are simultaneously violated, then the system will likely fail, except on a voluntary basis, with results similar to the "reputation" scheme described herein.

[0148] Thus, it is possible to include hierachal deference as a factor in optimization of a multihop mobile ad hoc network, leading to compatibility with tiered organizations, as well as with shared resources.

[0149] Game Theory

[0150] Use of Game Theory to control arbitration of ad hoc networks is well known. F. P. Kelly, A. Maulloo, and D. Tan. Rate control in communication networks: shadow prices, proportional fairness and stability. *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, 49, 1998. citeseer.ist.psu.edu/kelly98rate.html; J. MacKie-Mason and H. Varian. Pricing congestible network resources. *IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Communications*, 13(7):1141-1149, 1995. Some prior studies have focused on the incremental cost to each node for participation in the network, without addressing the opportunity cost of a node foregoing control over the communication medium. Courcoubetis, C., Siris, V. A. and Stamoulis, G. D. Integration of pricing and flow control for available bit rate services in ATM networks. In *Proceedings IEEE Globecom '96*, pp. 644-648. London, UK. citeseer.ist.psu.edu/courcoubetis96integration.html.

[0151] A game theoretic approach addresses the situation where the operation of an agent which has freedom of

choice, allowing optimization on a high level, considering the possibility of alternatives to a well designed system. According to game theory, the best way to ensure that a system retains compliant agents, is to provide the greatest anticipated benefit, at the least anticipated cost, compared to the alternates.

[0152] Game Theory provides a basis for understanding the actions of Ad hoc network nodes. A multihop ad hoc network requires a communication to be passed through a disinterested node. The disinterested node incurs some cost, thus leading to a disincentive to cooperate. Meanwhile, bystander nodes must defer their own communications in order to avoid interference, especially in highly loaded networks. By understanding the decision analysis of the various nodes in a network, it is possible to optimize a system which, in accordance with game theory, provides benefits or incentives, to promote network reliability and stability. The incentive, in economic form, may be charged to those benefiting from the communication, and is preferably related to the value of the benefit received. The proposed network optimization scheme employs a modified combinatorial (VCG) auction, which optimally compensates those involved in the communication, with the benefiting party paying the second highest bid price (second price). The surplus between the second price and VCG price is distributed among those who defer to the winning bidder according to respective bid value. Equilibrium usage and headroom may be influenced by deviating from a zero-sum condition. The mechanism seeks to define fairness in terms of market value, providing probable participation benefit for all nodes, leading to network stability.

[0153] Ad Hoc Networks

[0154] An ad hoc network is a wireless network which does not require fixed infrastructure or centralized control. The terminals in the network cooperate and communicate with each other, in a self organizing network. In a multihop network, communications can extend beyond the scope of a single node, employing neighboring nodes to forward messages to their destination. In a mobile ad hoc network, constraints are not placed on the mobility of nodes, that is, they can relocate within a time scale which is short with respect to the communications, thus requiring consideration of dynamic changes in network architecture.

[0155] Ad hoc networks pose control issues with respect to contention, routing and information conveyance. There are typically tradeoffs involving equipment size, cost and complexity, protocol complexity, throughput efficiency, energy consumption, and “fairness” of access arbitration. Other factors may also come into play. L. Butyan and J.-P. Hubaux. Rational exchange—a formal model based on game theory. In Proceedings of the 2nd International Workshop on Electronic Commerce (WELCOM), November 2001. citeseer.ist.psu.edu/an01rational.html; P. Michiardi and R. Molva. Game theoretic analysis of security in mobile ad hoc networks. Technical Report RR-02-070, Institut Eurécom, 2002; P. Michiardi and R. Molva. A game theoretical approach to evaluate cooperation enforcement mechanisms in mobile ad hoc networks. In Proceedings of WiOpt '03, March 2003; Michiardi, P., Molva, R.: Making greed work in mobile ad hoc networks. Technical report, Institut Eurecom (2002) citeseer.ist.psu.edu/michiardi02making.html; S. Shenker. Making greed work in

networks: A game-theoretic analysis of switch service disciplines. IEEE/ACM Transactions on Networking, 3(6):819-831, December 1995; A. B. MacKenzie and S. B. Wicker. Selfish users in aloha: A game-theoretic approach. In Vehicular Technology Conference, 2001. VTC 2001 Fall. IEEE VTS 54th, volume 3, October 2001; J. Crowcroft, R. Gibbens, F. Kelly, and S. Ostring. Modelling incentives for collaboration in mobile ad hoc networks. In Proceedings of WiOpt '03, 2003.

[0156] Game theory studies the interactions of multiple independent decision makers, each seeking to fulfill their own objectives. Game theory encompasses, for example, auction theory and strategic decision-making. By providing appropriate incentives, a group of independent actors may be persuaded, according to self-interest, to act toward the benefit of the group. That is, the selfish individual interests are aligned with the community interests. In this way, the community will be both efficient and the network of actors stable and predictable. Of course, any systems wherein the “incentives” impose too high a cost, themselves encourage circumvention. In this case, game theory also addresses this issue.

[0157] In computer networks, issues arise as the demand for communications bandwidth approaches the theoretical limit. Under such circumstances, the behavior of nodes will affect how close to the theoretical limit the system comes, and also which communications are permitted. The well known collision sense, multiple access (CSMA) protocol allows each node to request access to the network, essentially without cost or penalty, and regardless of the importance of the communication. While the protocol incurs relatively low overhead and may provide fully decentralized control, under congested network conditions, the system may exhibit instability, that is, a decline in throughput as demand increases, resulting in ever increasing demand on the system resources and decreasing throughput. Durga P. Satapathy and Jon M. Peha, Performance of Unlicensed Devices With a Spectrum Etiquette,” Proceedings of IEEE Globecom, November 1997, pp. 414-418. citeseer.ist.psu.edu/satapathy97performance.html. According to game theory, the deficit of the CSMA protocol is that it is a dominant strategy to be selfish and hog resources, regardless of the cost to society, resulting in “the tragedy of the commons.” Garrett Hardin. The Tragedy of the Commons. Science, 162:1243-1248, 1968. Alternate Location: dieoff.com/page95.htm.

[0158] In an ad hoc network used for conveying real-time information, as might be the case in a telematics system, there are potentially unlimited data communication requirements (e.g., video data), and network congestion is almost guaranteed. Therefore, using a CSMA protocol as the paradigm for basic information conveyance is destined for failure, unless there is a disincentive to network use. (In power constrained circumstances, this cost may itself provide such a disincentive). On the other hand, a system which provides more graceful degradation under high load, sensitivity to the importance of information to be communicated, and efficient utilization of the communications medium would appear more optimal.

[0159] One way to impose a cost which varies in dependence on the societal value of the good or service, is to

conduct an auction, which is a mechanism to determine the market value of the good or service, at least between the auction participants.

[0160] Walsh, W. and M. Wellman (1998). A market protocol for decentralized task allocation, in "Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Multi-Agent Systems," pp. 325-332, IEEE Computer Society Press, Los Alamitos. In an auction, the bidder seeks to bid the lowest value, up to a value less than or equal to his own private value (the actual value which the bidder appraises the good or service, and above which there is no surplus), that will win the auction. Since competitive bidders can minimize the gains of another bidder by exploiting knowledge of the private value attached to the good or service by the bidder, it is generally a dominant strategy for the bidder to attempt to keep its private value a secret, at least until the auction is concluded, thus yielding strategies that result in the largest potential gain. On the other hand, in certain situations, release or publication of the private value is a dominant strategy, and can result in substantial efficiency, that is, honesty in reporting the private value results in the maximum likelihood of prospective gain.

[0161] Application of Game Theory to Ad Hoc Networks

[0162] There are a number of aspects of ad hoc network control which may be adjusted in accordance with game theoretic approaches. An example of the application of game theory to influence system architecture arises when communications latency is an issue. A significant factor in latency is the node hop count. Therefore, a system may seek to reduce node hop count by using an algorithm other than a nearest neighbor algorithm, bypassing some nodes with longer distance communications. In analyzing this possibility, one must not only look at the cost to the nodes involved in the communication, but also the cost to nodes which are prevented from simultaneously accessing the network due to interfering uses of network resources. As a general proposition, the analysis of the network must include the impact of each action, or network state, on every node in the system, although simplifying presumptions may be appropriate where information is unavailable, or the anticipated impact is trivial.

[0163] Game theory is readily applied in the optimization of communications routes through a defined network, to achieve the best economic surplus allocation. In addition, the problem of determining the network topology, and the communications themselves, are ancillary, though real, applications of game theory. Since the communications incidental to the arbitration require consideration of some of the same issues as the underlying communications, corresponding elements of game theory may apply at both levels of analysis. Due to various uncertainties, the operation of the system is stochastic. This presumption, in turn, allows estimation of optimality within a margin of error, simplifying implementation as compared to a rigorous analysis without regard to statistical significance.

[0164] There are a number of known and proven routing models proposed for forwarding of packets in ad hoc networks. These include Ad Hoc On-Demand Distance Vector (AODV) Routing, Optimized Link State Routing Protocol (OLSR), Dynamic Source Routing Protocol (DSR), and Topology Dissemination Based on Reverse-Path Forwarding (TBRPF). M. Mauve, J. Widmer, and H. Hartenstein. A

survey on position-based routing in mobile ad hoc networks. IEEE Network Magazine, 15(6):30-39, November 2001. citeseer.ist.psu.edu/article/mauve01survey.html; Z. Haas. A new routing protocol for reconfigurable wireless networks. In IEEE 6th International Conference on Universal Communications Record, volume 2, pages 562-566, October 1997; X. Hong, K. Xu, and M. Gerla. Scalable routing protocols for mobile ad hoc networks. IEEE Networks, 16(4):11-21, July 2002; D. Johnson, D. Maltz, and Y.-C. Hu. The dynamic source routing protocol for mobile ad hoc networks, April 2003. www.ietf.org/internet-drafts/draft-ietf-manet-dsr-09.txt; S.-J. Lee, W. Su, J. Hsu, M. Gerla, and R. Bagrodia. A performance comparison study of ad hoc wireless multicast protocols. In Proceedings of IEEE INFOCOM 2000, pages 565-574, March 2000; K. Mase, Y. Wada, N. Mori, K. Nakano, M. Sengoku, and S. Shinoda. Flooding schemes for a universal ad hoc network. In Industrial Electronics Society, 2000. IECON 2000, v. 2, pp. 1129-1134, 2000; R. Ogier, F. Templin, and M. Lewis. Topology dissemination based on reversepath forwarding, October 2003. vesuvio.ipv6.cselt.it/internet-drafts/draft-ietf-manet-tbrpf-11.txt; A. Orda, R. Rom, and N. Shimkin. Competitive routing in multi-user communication networks. IEEE/ACM Transactions on Networking, 1(5):510-521, October 1993; C. Perkins, E. Belding-Royer, and S. Das. Ad hoc on-demand distance vector (AODV) routing. Request for comments 3561, Internet Engineering Task Force, 2003; C. E. Perkins, editor. Ad Hoc Networking. Addison-Wesley, Boston, 2001; E. Royer and C.-K. Toh. A review of current routing protocols for ad hoc mobile wireless networks. IEEE Personal Communications, 6(2):46-55, April 1999; Holger Füssl, Hannes Hartenstein, Dieter Vollmer, Martin Mauve, Michael Kasemann, Location-Based Routing for Vehicular Ad-Hoc Networks, Reihe Informatik March 2002, citeseer.ist.psu.edu/560036.html; J. Broch, D. A. Maltz, D. B. Johnson, Y. C. Hu, and J. Jetcheva. A Performance Comparison of Multi-Hop Wireless Ad Hoc Network Routing Protocols. In Proc. of the ACM/IEEE MobiCom, October 1998, citeseer.ist.psu.edu/broch98performance.html.

[0165] In most systems analyzed to date, the performance metrics studied were power consumption, end-to-end data throughput and delay, route acquisition time, percentage out-of-order delivery, and efficiency. A critical variable considered in many prior studies is power cost, presuming a battery operated transceiver with limited power availability. Juha Leino, "Applications of Game Theory in Ad Hoc Network", Master's Thesis, Helsinki University Of Technology (2003); J. Shneidman and D. Parkes, "Rationality and Self-Interest in Peer to Peer Networks", In Proc. 2nd Int. Workshop on Peer-to-Peer Systems (IPTPS '03), 2003, citeseer.nj.nec.com/shneidman03rationality.html; V. Rodoplu and H.-Y. Meng. Minimum energy mobile wireless networks. IEEE Journal on Selected Areas in Communications, 17(8):1333-1344, August 1999; S. Singh, M. Woo, and C. S. Raghavendra. Power-aware routing in mobile ad hoc networks. In Proceeding of MOBICOM 1998, pages 181-190, 1998; A. Urdi, M. Bonuccelli, and S. Giordano. Modelling cooperation in mobile ad hoc networks: a formal description of selfishness. In Proceedings of WiOpt '03, March 2003; A. van den Nouweland, P. Borm, W. van Golstein Brouwers, R. Groot Bruinderink, and S. Tijs. A game theoretic approach to problems in telecommunication. Management Science, 42(2):294-303, February 1996.

[0166] There can be significant differences in optimum routing depending on whether a node can modulate its transmit power, which in turn controls range, and provides a further control over network topology. Likewise, steerable antennas, antenna arrays, and other forms of multiplexing provide further degrees of control over network topology. Note that the protocol-level communications are preferably broadcasts, while information conveyance communications are typically point-to-point. Prior studies typically presume a single transceiver, with a single omnidirectional antenna, operating according to in-band protocol data, for all communications. The tradeoff made in limiting system designs according to these presumptions should be clear.

[0167] It is the general self-interest of a node to conserve its own resources, maintain an opportunity to access network resources, while consuming whatever resource of other nodes as it desires. Clearly, this presents a significant risk of the “tragedy of the commons”, in which selfish individuals fail to respect the very basis for the community they enjoy, and a network of rational nodes operating without significant incentives to cooperate would likely fail. On the other hand, if donating a node’s resources generated a sufficient associated benefit to that node, while consuming network resources imposed a sufficient cost, stability and reliability can be achieved. So long as the functionality is sufficient to meet the need, and the economic surplus is “fairly” allocated, that is, the cost incurred is less than the private value of the benefit, and that cost is transferred as compensation to those burdened in an amount in excess of their incremental cost, adoption of the system should increase stability. In fact, even outside of these bounds, the system may be more stable than one which neither taxes system use nor rewards altruistic behavior. While the basic system may be a zero sum system, and over time, the economic effects will likely average out (assuming symmetric nodes), in any particular instance, the incentive for selfish behavior by a node will be diminished.

[0168] One way to remedy selfish behavior is to increase the cost of acting this way, that is, to impose a cost or tax for access to the network. In a practical implementation, however, this is problematic, since under lightly loaded conditions, the “value” of the communications may not justify a fixed cost which might be reasonable under other conditions, and likewise, under heavier loads, critical communications may still be delayed or impeded. A variable cost, dependent on relative “importance”, may be imposed, and indeed, as alluded to above, this cost may be market based, in the manner of an auction. In a multihop network, such an auction is complicated by the requirement for a distribution of payments within the chain of nodes, with each node having potential alternate demands for its cooperation. The market-based price-finding mechanism excludes nodes which ask a price not supported by its market position, and the auction itself may comprise a value function encompassing reliability, latency, quality of service, or other non-economic parameters, expressed in economic terms. The network may further require compensation to nodes which must defer communications because of inconsistent states, such as in order to avoid interference or duplicative use of an intermediary node, and which take no direct part in the communication. It is noted that the concept of the winner of an auction paying the losers is not generally known, and indeed somewhat counterintuitive. Indeed, the effect of this rule perturbs the traditional analysis framework, since the

possibility of a payment from the winner to the loser alters the allocation of economic surplus between the bidder, seller, and others. Likewise, while the cost to the involved nodes may be real, the cost to the uninvolved nodes may be subjective. While it would appear that involved nodes would generally be better compensated than uninvolved nodes, the actual allocation or reallocation of wealth according to the optimization may result in a different outcome.

[0169] The network provides competitive access to the physical transport medium, and cooperation with the protocol provides significant advantages over competition with it. Under normal circumstances, a well developed ad hoc network system can present as a formidable coordinated competitor for access to contested bandwidth by other systems, while within the network, economic surplus is optimized. Thus, a node presented with a communications requirement is presented not with the simple choice to participate or abstain, but rather whether to participate in an ad hoc network with predicted stability and mutual benefit, or one with the possibility of failure due to selfish behavior, and non-cooperation. Even in the absence of a present communication requirement, a network which rewards cooperative behavior may be preferable to one which simply expects altruism without rewarding it.

[0170] The protocol may also encompass the concept of node reputation, that is, a positive or negative statement by others regarding the node in question. P. Michiardi and R. Molva. Core: A collaborative reputation mechanism to enforce node cooperation in mobile ad hoc networks. In Communication and Multimedia Security 2002 Conference, 2002. This reputation may be evaluated as a parameter in an economic analysis, or applied separately, and may be anecdotal or statistical. In any case, if access to resources and payments are made dependent on reputation, nodes will be incentivized to maintain a good reputation, and avoid generating a bad reputation. Therefore, by maintaining and applying the reputation in a manner consistent with the community goals, the nodes are compelled to advance those goals in order to benefit from the community. Game theory distinguishes between good reputation and bad reputation. Nodes may have a selfish motivation to assert that another node has a bad reputation, while it would have little selfish motivation, absent collusion, for undeservedly asserting a good reputation. On the other hand, a node may have a selfish motivation in failing to reward behavior with a good reputation.

[0171] Economics and reputation may be maintained as orthogonal considerations, since the status of a node’s currency account provides no information about the status of its reputation.

[0172] This reputation parameter may be extended to encompass respect, that is, a subjective deference to another based on an asserted or imputed entitlement. While the prior system uses reputation as a factor to ensure compliance with system rules, this can be extended to provided deferential preferences either within or extrinsic to an economy. Thus, in a military hierarchy, a relatively higher ranking official can assert rank, and if accepted, override a relatively lower ranking bidder at the same economic bid. For each node, an algorithm is provided to translate a particular assertion of respect (i.e., rank and chain of command) into an economic perturbation. For example, in the same chain of command,

each difference in rank might be associated with a 25% compounded discount, when compared with other bids, i.e.

$$B_1 = B_0 \cdot 10(1+0.25\Delta R),$$

[0173] Wherein B_1 is the attributed bid, B_0 is the actual bid, and ΔR is the difference in rank, positive or negative.

[0174] Outside the chain of command, a different, generally lower, discount (dNCOC) may be applied, possibly with a base discount as compared to all bids within the chain of command (dCOC), i.e.,

$$B_1 = B_0 \cdot 10(1+dCOC+dNCOC\Delta R).$$

The discount is applied so that higher ranking officers pay less, while lower ranking officers pay more. Clearly, there is a high incentive for each bid to originate from the highest available commander within the chain of command, and given the effect of the perturbation, for ranking officers to “pull rank” judiciously.

[0175] The Modified VCG Auction

[0176] A so-called Vickrey-Clarke-Groves, or VCG, auction, is a type of auction suitable for bidding, in a single auction, for the goods or services of a plurality of offerors, as a unit. Vickrey, W. (1961). Counterspeculation, auctions, and competitive sealed tenders, *Journal of Finance* 16, 8-37; Clarke, E. H. (1971). Multipart pricing of public goods, *Public Choice* 11, 17-33; Felix Brandt and Gerhard Weiß, Antisocial Agents and Vickrey Auctions. In Pre-proceedings of the Eighth International Workshop on Agent Theories, Architectures, and Languages (ATAL-2001), pages 120-132, 2001; Tuomas Sandholm. Limitations of the Vickrey Auction in Computational Multiagent Systems. In Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Multi-Agent Systems (ICMAS). AAAI Press, 1996. Menlo Park, Calif.; Ron Lavi, Ahuva Mu'alem, and Noam Nisan, “Towards a Characterization of Truthful Combinatorial Auctions”, citeseer.ist.psu.edu/lavi03towards.html; Moulin, H. (1999). Incremental cost sharing: characterization by strategyproofness, *Social Choice and Welfare* 16, 279-320; Moulin, H. and S. Shenker (1997). Strategyproof Sharing of Submodular Costs: Budget Balance Versus Efficiency, to appear in *Economic Theory*. www.aciri.org/shenker/cost.ps; Moulin, Hervé, and Scott Shenker (2001). “Strategyproof Sharing of Submodular Costs: Budget Balance versus Efficiency.” *Economic Theory* 18, 511-533; Feigenbaum, Joan, Christos Papadimitriou, Rahul Sami, and Scott Shenker (2002). “A BGP-based Mechanism for Lowest Cost Routing.” In Proc. 21st Symposium on Principles of Distributed Computing, ACM Press, 173-182; J. Feigenbaum and S. Shenker. Distributed algorithmic mechanism design: Recent results and future directions. In Proc. 6th Int'l Workshop on Discrete Algorithms and Methods for Mobile Computing and Communications, pages 1-13, Atlanta, Ga., September 2002; Nisan, N. and A. Ronen (2000). Computationally Feasible VCG Mechanisms, to be presented at “Games 2000.” <http://www.cs.huji.ac.il/~noam/vcgbased.ps>; Tuomas Sandholm. Limitations of the Vickrey Auction in Computational Multiagent Systems. In Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Multi-Agent Systems (ICMAS). AAAI Press, 1996. Menlo Park, Calif.; C. Jason Woodard and David C. Parkes, 1st Workshop on the Economics of P2P systems, Strategyproof Mechanisms for Ad Hoc Network Formation, 2003, www.sims.berkeley.edu/research/conferences/p2pecon/papers/s6-woodard.pdf; D. C. Parkes. Itera-

tive Combinatorial Auctions: Achieving Economic and Computational Efficiency (Chapter 2). PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania, May 2001. www.eecs.harvard.edu/~parkes/pubs/ch2.ps.

[0177] In the classic case, each bidder bids a value vector for each available combination of goods or services. The various components and associated ask price are evaluated combinatorially to achieve the minimum sum to meet the requirement. The winning bid set is that which produces the maximum value of the accepted bids, although the second (Vickrey) price is paid. In theory, the Vickrey price represents the maximum state of the network absent the highest bidder, so that each bidder is incentivized to bid its private value, knowing that its pricing will be dependent not on its own value, but the subjective value applied by others. In the present context, each offeror submits an ask price (reserve) or evaluable value function for a component of the combination. If the minimum aggregate to meet the bid requirement is not met, the auction fails. If the auction is successful, then the set of offerors selected is that with the lowest aggregate bid, and they are compensated that amount.

[0178] The VCG auction is postulated as being optimal for allocation of multiple resources between agents. It is “strategyproof” and efficient, meaning that it is a dominant strategy for agents to report their true valuation for a resource, and the result of the optimization is a network which maximizes the value of the system to the agents. Game theory also allows an allocation of cost between various recipients of a broadcast or multicast. That is, the communication is of value to a plurality of nodes, and a large set of recipient nodes may efficiently receive the same information. This allocation from multiple bidders to multiple sellers is a direct extension of VCG theory, and a similar algorithm may be used to optimize allocation of costs and benefit.

[0179] The principal issue involved in VCG auctions is that the computational complexity of the optimization grows with the number of buyers and their different value functions and allocations. While various simplifying presumptions may be applied, studies reveal that these simplifications may undermine the VCG premise, and therefore do not promote honesty in reporting the buyer's valuation, and thus are not “strategyproof”, which is a principal advantage of the VCG process.

[0180] The surplus, i.e., gap between bid and ask, is then available to compensate the deferred bidders. This surplus may be, for example, distributed proportionately to the original bid value of the bidder, thus further encouraging an honest valuation of control over the resource. Thus, if we presume that a bidder may have an incentive to adopt a strategy in which it shaves its bid to lower values, an additional payoff dependent on a higher value bid will promote higher bides and disincentivize shaving. On the other hand, it would be inefficient to promote bidding above a bidder's private value, and therefore care must be exercised to generally avoid this circumstance. In similar manner, potential offerors may be compensated for low bids, to promote availability of supply. It is noted that, by broadcasting supply and demand, fault tolerance of the network is improved, since in the event that an involved node becomes unavailable, a competing node or set of nodes for that role may be quickly enlisted.

[0181] The optimization is such that, if any offeror asks an amount that is too high, it will be bypassed in favor of more “reasonable” offerors. Since the bidder pays the second highest price, honesty in bidding the full private value is encouraged. The distribution of the surplus to losing bidders, which exercise deference to the winner, is proportional to the amount bid, that is, the reported value.

[0182] In a scenario involving a request for information meeting specified criteria, the auction is complicated by the fact that the information resource content is unknown to the recipient, and therefore the bid is blind, that is, the value of the information to the recipient is indeterminate. However, game theory supports the communication of a value function or utility function, which can then be evaluated at each node possessing information to be communicated, to normalize its value to the requestor. Fortunately, it is a dominant strategy in a VCG auction to communicate a truthful value, and therefore broadcasting the private value function, to be evaluated by a recipient, is not untenable. In a mere request for information conveyance, such as the intermediate transport nodes in a multihop network, or in a cellular network infrastructure extension model, the bid may be a true (resolved) value, since the information content is not the subject of the bidding; rather it is the value of the communications per se, and the bidding node can reasonably value its bid.

[0183] Game theory also allows an allocation of cost between various recipients of a broadcast or multicast. That is, in many instances, information which is of value to a plurality of nodes, and a large set of recipient nodes may efficiently receive the same information. This allocation is a direct extension of VCG theory.

[0184] Operation of Protocol

[0185] The preferred method for acquiring an estimate of the state of the network is through use of a proactive routing protocol. Thus, in order to determine the network architecture state, each node must broadcast its existence, and, for example, a payload of information including its identity, location, itinerary (navigation vector) and “information value function”. Typically, the system operates in a continuous set of states, so that it is reasonable to commence the process with an estimate of the state based on prior information. Using an in-band or out-of-band propagation mechanism, this information must propagate to a network edge, which may be physically or artificially defined. If all nodes operate with a substantially common estimation of network topology, only deviations from previously propagated information need be propagated. On the other hand, various nodes may have different estimates of the network state, allowing efficiency gains through exploitation of superior knowledge as compared with seeking to convey full network state information to each node.

[0186] A CSMA scheme may be used for the protocol-related communications because it is relatively simple and robust, and well suited for ad hoc communications in lightly loaded networks. We presume that the network is willing to tolerate a protocol related inefficiency, and therefore that protocol communications can occur in a lightly loaded network even if the content communications are saturated. An initial node transmits using an adaptive power protocol, to achieve an effective transmit range, for example, of greater than an average internodal distance, but not encom-

passing the entire network. This distance therefore promotes propagation to a set of nearby nodes, without unnecessarily interfering with communications of distance nodes and therefore allowing this task to be performed in parallel in different regions. Neighboring nodes also transmit in succession, providing sequential and complete protocol information propagation over a relevance range, for example 3-10 maximum range hops.

[0187] If we presume that there is a spatial limit to relevance, for example, 5 miles or 10 hops, then the network state propagation may be so limited. Extending the network to encompass a large number of nodes will necessarily reduce the tractability of the optimization, and incur an overhead which may be inefficient. Each node preferably maintains a local estimate of relevance. This consideration is accommodated, along with a desire to prevent exponential growth in protocol-related data traffic, by receiving an update from all nodes within a node’s network relevance boundary, and a state variable which represents an estimate of relevant status beyond the arbitrarily defined boundary. The propagation of network state may thus conveniently occur over a finite number of hops, for example 3-10. In a dense population of nodes, such as in a city, even a single maximum range communication may result in a large number of encompassed nodes. On the other hand, in a deserted environment, there may be few or no communications partners, at any time.

[0188] Under conditions of relatively high nodal densities, the system may employ a zone strategy, that is, proximate groups of nodes are treated as an entity or cluster for purposes of external state estimation, especially with respect to distant nodes or zones. In fact, a supernode may be nominated within a cluster to control external communications for that cluster. Such a presumption is realistic, since at extended distances, geographically proximate nodes may be modeled as being similar or inter-related, while at close distances, and particularly within a zone in which all nodes are in direct communication, inter-node communications may be subject to mutual interference, and can occur without substantial external influence. Alternately, it is clear that to limit latencies and communication risks, it may be prudent to bypass nearby and neighboring nodes, thus trading latency for power consumption and overall network capacity. Therefore, a hierachal scheme may be implemented to geographically organize the network at higher analytical levels, and geographic cells may cooperate to appear externally as a single coordinated entity.

[0189] In order to estimate a network edge condition, a number of presumptions must be made. The effect of an inaccurate estimate of the network edge condition typically leads to inefficiency, while inordinate efforts to accurately estimate the network edge condition may also lead to inefficiency. Perhaps the best way to achieve compromise is to have a set of adaptive presumptions or rules, with a reasonable starting point. For example, in a multihop network, one might arbitrarily set a network edge the maximum range of five hops of administrative data using a 95% reliable transmission capability. Beyond this range, a set of state estimators is provided by each node for its surroundings, which are then communicated up to five hops (or the maximum range represented by five hops). This state estimator is at least one cycle old, and by the time it is transferred five hops away, it is at least six cycles old.

Meanwhile, in a market economy, each node may respond to perceived opportunities, leading to a potential for oscillations if a time-element is not also communicated. Thus, it is preferred that the network edge state estimators represent a time-prediction of network behavior under various conditions, rather than a simple scalar value or instantaneous function.

[0190] For example, each node may estimate a network supply function and a network demand function, liquidity estimate and bid-ask gap for its environment, and its own subjective risk tolerance, if separately reported; the impact of nodes closer than five hops may then be subtracted from this estimate to compensate for redundant data. Further, if traffic routes are identifiable, which would correspond in a physical setting of highways, fixed infrastructure access points, etc., a state estimator for these may be provided as well. As discussed above, nodes may bid not only for their own needs or resources, but also to act as market-makers or merchants, and may obtain long term commitments (futures and/or options) and employ risk reduction techniques (insurance and/or indemnification), and thus may provide not only an estimate of network conditions, but also "guaranty" this state.

[0191] A node seeking to communicate within the five hop range needs to consider the edge state estimate only when calculating its own supply and demand functions, bearing in mind competitive pressures from outside. On the other hand, nodes seeking resources outside the five hop range must rely on the estimate, because a direct measurement or acquisition of information would require excess administrative communications, and incur an inefficient administrative transaction. Thus, a degree of trust and reliance on the estimate may ensue, wherein a node at the arbitrary network edge is designated as an agent for the principal in procuring or selling the resource beyond its own sphere of influence, based on the provided parameters. The incentive for a node to provide misinformation is limited, since nodes with too high a reported estimate value lose gains from competitive sale transactions, and indeed may be requested to be buyers, and vice versa. While this model may compel trading by intermediary nodes, if the information communicated accurately represents the network state, an economic advantage will accrue to the intermediary participating, especially in a non-power constrained, unlicensed spectrum node configuration.

[0192] It should be borne in mind that the intended administration of the communications is an automated process, with little human involvement, other than setting goals, risk tolerance, cost constraints, etc. In a purely virtual economy with temporally declining currency value, the detriment of inaccurate optimizations is limited to reduced nodal efficiency, and with appropriate adaptivity, the system can learn from its "mistakes". (A defined decline in currency value tends to define the cost constraints for that node, since wealth cannot be accumulated nor overspent).

[0193] A supernode within a zone may be selected for its superior capability, or perhaps a central location. The zone is defined by a communication range of the basic data interface for communications, with the control channel preferably having a longer range, for example at least double the normal data communications range. Communications control channel transmitters operate on a number of chan-

nels, for example at least 7, allowing neighboring zones in a hexagonal tiled array to communicate simultaneously without interference. In a geographic zone system, alternate zones which would otherwise be interfering may use an adaptive multiplexing scheme to avoid interference. All nodes may listen on all control channels, permitting rapid analysis and propagation of control information. As discussed elsewhere herein, directional antennas of various types may be employed, although it is preferred that out-of-band control channels employ omnidirectional antennas, having a generally longer range (and lower data bandwidth) than the normal data communications channels, in order to have a better chance to disseminate the control information to potentially interfering sources, and to allow coordination of nodes more globally.

[0194] In order to effectively provide decentralized control, either each node must have a common set of information to allow execution of an identical control algorithm, or nodes defer to the control signals of other nodes without internal analysis for optimality. A model of semi-decentralized control is also known, in which dispersed supernodes are nominated as master, with other topologically nearby nodes remaining as slave nodes. In the pure peer network, relatively complete information conveyance to each node is required, imposing a relatively high overhead. In a master-slave (or supernode) architecture, increased reliance on a single node trades-off reliability and robustness (and other advantages of pure peer-to-peer networks) for efficiency. A supernode within a cellular zone may be selected for its superior capability, or perhaps is at a central location or is immobile.

[0195] Once each control node (node or supernode) has an estimate of network topology, the next step is to optimize network channels. According to VCG theory, each agent has an incentive to broadcast its truthful value or value function for the scarce resource, which in this case, is control over communications physical layer, and or access to information. This communication can be consolidated with the network discovery transmission. Each control node then performs a combinatorial solution to select the optimum network configuration from the potentially large number of possibilities, which may include issues of transmit power, data rate, path, timing, reliability and risk criteria, economic and virtual economic costs, multipath and redundancy, etc., for the set of simultaneous equations according to VCG theory (or extensions thereof). This solution should be consistent between all nodes, and the effects of inconsistent solutions may be resolved by collision sensing, and possibly an error/inconsistency detection and correction algorithm specifically applied to this type of information. Thus, if each node has relatively complete information, or accurate estimates for incomplete information, then each node can perform the calculation and derive a closely corresponding solution, and verify that solutions reported by others are reasonably consistent to allow or promote reliance thereon.

[0196] As part of the network mapping, communications impairment and interference sources are also mapped. GPS assistance may be particularly useful in this aspect. Where network limitations are caused by interfering communications, the issue is a determination of a strategy of deference or competition. If the interfering communication is continuous or unresponsive, then the only available strategy is competition. On the other hand, when the competing system

uses, for example, a CSMA system, such as 802.11, competition with such a communication simply leads to retransmission, and therefore ultimately increased network load, and a deference strategy may be more optimal, at least and until it is determined that the competing communication is incessant. Other communications protocols, however may have a more or less aggressive strategy. By observation of a system over time, its strategies may be revealed, and game theory permits composition of an optimal strategy to deal with interference or coexistence. It is noted that this strategy may be adopted adaptively by the entire ad hoc network, which may coordinate deference or competition as determined optimal.

[0197] The optimization process produces a representation of optimal network architecture during the succeeding period. That is, value functions representing bids are broadcast, with the system then being permitted to determine an optimal real valuation and distribution of that value. Thus, prior to completion of the optimization, potentially inconsistent allocations must be prevented, and each node must communicate its evaluation of other node's value functions, so that the optimization is performed on a normalized economic basis. This step may substantially increase the system overhead, and is generally required for completion of the auction. This valuation may be inferred, however, for intermediate nodes in a multihop network path, since there is little subjectivity for nodes solely in this role, and the respective value functions may be persistent. For example, the valuation applied by a node to forward information is generally independent of content and involved party.

[0198] A particular complication of a traffic information system is that the nature of the information held by any node is private to that node (before transmission), and therefore the valuation is not known until after all bids are evaluated. Thus, prior to completion of optimization, each node must communicate its evaluation of other nodes' value functions, so that the optimization is performed on an economic basis. This required step substantially increases the system overhead. This valuation may be inferred, however, for transit nodes in a multihop network path.

[0199] As discussed above, many of the strategies for making the economic markets more efficient may be employed either directly, or analogy, to the virtual economy of the ad hoc network. The ability of nodes to act as market maker and derivative market agents facilitates the optimization, since a node may elect to undertake a responsibility (e.g., transaction risk), rather than relay to others, and therefore the control/administrative channel chain may be truncated at that point. If the network is dense, then a node which acts selfishly will be bypassed, and if the network is sparse, the node may well be entitled to gain transactional profit by acting as a principal and trader, subject to the fact that profits will generally be suboptimal if pricing is too high or too low.

[0200] After the network architecture is defined, compensation is paid to those nodes providing value or subjected to a burden (including foregoing communication opportunity) by those gaining a benefit. The payment may be a virtual currency, with no specific true value, and the virtual currency system provides a convenient method to flexibly tax, subsidize, or control the system, and thus steer the virtual currency to a normalized extrinsic value. In a real currency

system, external controls are more difficult, and may have unintended consequences. A hybrid economy may be provided, linking both the virtual and real currencies, to some degree. This is especially useful if the network itself interfaces with an outside economy, such as the cellular telephony infrastructure (e.g., 2G, 2.5G, 3G, 4G, proposals for 5G, WiFi (802.11x) hotspots, WiMax (802.16x), etc.)

[0201] Using the protocol communication system, each node transmits its value function (or change thereof), passes through communications from neighboring nodes, and may, for example transmit payment information for the immediate-past bid for incoming communications.

[0202] Messages are forwarded outward (avoiding redundant propagation back to the source), with messages appended from the series of nodes. Propagation continues for a finite number of hops, until the entire community has an estimate of the state and value function of each node in the community. Advantageously, the network beyond a respective community may be modeled in simplified form, to provide a better estimate of the network as a whole. If the propagation were not reasonably limited, the information would be stale by the time it is employed, and the system latency would be inordinate. Of course, in networks where a large number of hops are realistic, the limit may be time, distance, a counter or value decrement, or other variable, rather than hops. Likewise, the range may be adaptively determined, rather than predetermined, based on some criteria.

[0203] After propagation, each node evaluates the set of value functions for its community, with respect to its own information and ability to forward packets. Each node may then make an offer to supply or forward information, based on the provided information. In the case of multihop communications, the offers are propagated to the remainder of the community, for the maximum number of hops, including the originating node. At this point, each node has a representation of the state of its community, with community edge estimates providing consistency for nodes with differing community scopes, the valuation function each node assigns to control over portions of the network, as well as a resolved valuation of each node for supplying the need. Under these circumstances, each node may then evaluate an optimization for the network architecture, and come to a conclusion consistent with that of other members of its community. If supported, node reputation may be updated based on past performance, and the reputation applied as a factor in the optimization and/or externally to the optimization. As discussed above, a VCG-type auction is employed as a basis for optimization. Since each node receives bid information from all other nodes within the maximum node count, the VCG auction produces an optimized result.

[0204] As discussed above, by permitting futures, options, derivatives, insurance/indemnification/guaranties, long and short sales, etc., the markets may be relatively stabilized as compared to a simple set of independent and sequential auctions, which may show increased volatility, oscillations, chaotic behavior, and other features which may be inefficient.

[0205] Transmissions are preferably made in frames, with a single bidding process controlling multiple frames, for example a multiple of the maximum number of hops. Therefore, the bid encompasses a frame's-worth of control

over the modalities. In the event that the simultaneous use of, or control over, a modality by various nodes is not inconsistent, then the value of the respective nodes may be summed, with the resulting allocation based on, for example, a ratio of the respective value functions. As a part of the optimization, nodes are rewarded not only for supporting the communication, but also for deferring their own respective communications needs. As a result, after controlling the resources, a node will be relatively less wealthy and less able to subsequently control the resources, while other nodes will be more able to control the resources. The distribution to deferred nodes also serves to prevent pure reciprocal communications, since the proposed mechanism distributes and dilutes the wealth to deferring nodes.

[0206] Another possible transaction between nodes is a loan, that is, instead of providing bandwidth per se, one node may loan a portion of its generator function or accumulated wealth to another node. Presumably, there will be an associated interest payment. Since the currency in the preferred embodiment is itself defined by an algorithm, the loan transaction may also be defined by an algorithm. While this concept is somewhat inconsistent with a virtual currency which declines in value over time and/or space, it is not completely inconsistent, and, in fact, the exchange may arbitrage these factors, especially location-based issues.

[0207] Because each node in the model presented above has complete information, for a range up to the maximum node count, the wealth of each node can be estimated by its neighbors, and payment inferred even if not actually consummated. (Failure of payment can occur for a number of reasons, including both malicious and accidental). Because each hop adds significant cost, the fact that nodes beyond the maximum hop distance are essentially incommunicado is typically of little consequence; since it is very unlikely that a node more than 5 or 10 hops away will be efficiently directly included in any communication, due to the increasing cost with distance, as well as reduction in reliability and increase in latency. Thus, large area and scalable networks may exist.

[0208] Communications are generally of unencrypted data. Assuming the network is highly loaded, this may allow a node to incidentally fulfill its data requirements as a bystander, and thus at low cost meet its needs, allowing nodes with more urgent or directed needs to both control and compensate the network. While this may reduce compensation to intermediaries and data sources, the improvements in efficiency will likely benefit the network as a whole in increase stability, since we assume that peak load conditions will occur frequently.

[0209] Enforcement of responsibility may be provided by a centralized system which assures that the transactions for each node are properly cleared, and that non-compliant nodes are either excluded from the network or at least labeled. While an automated clearinghouse which periodically ensures nodal compliance is preferred, a human discretion clearinghouse, for example presented as an arbitrator or tribunal, may be employed.

[0210] The Synthetic Economy

[0211] Exerting external economic influences on the system may have various effects on the optimization, and may exacerbate differences in subjective valuations. The appli-

cation of a monetary value to the virtual currency substantially also increases the possibility of misbehavior and external attacks. On the other hand, a virtual currency with no assessed real value is self-normalizing, while monetization leads to external and generally irrelevant influences as well as possible external arbitrage (with potential positive and negative effects). External economic influences may also lead to benefits, which are discussed in various publications on non-zero sum games.

[0212] In order to provide fairness, the virtual currency (similar to the so-called “nuggets” or “nuggets” proposed for use in the Terminodes project) is self-generated at each node according to a schedule, and itself may have a time dependent value. L. Blazevic, L. Buttyan, S. Capkun, S. Giordano, J.-P. Hubaux, and J.-Y. Le Boudec. Self-organization in mobile ad-hoc networks: the approach of terminodes. *IEEE Communications Magazine*, 39(6):166-174, June 2001; M. Jakobsson, J.P. Hubaux, and L. Buttyan. A micro-payment scheme encouraging collaboration in multi-hop cellular networks. In *Proceedings of Financial Crypto 2003*, January 2003; J.P. Hubaux, et al., “Toward Self-Organized Mobile Ad Hoc Networks: The Terminodes Project”, *IEEE Communications*, 39(1), 2001. citeseer.ist.psu.edu/hubaux01toward.html; Buttyan, L., and Hubaux, J.-P. Stimulating Cooperation in Self-Organizing Mobile Ad Hoc Networks. *Tech. Rep. DSC/citeseer.ist.psu.edu/buttyan01stimulating.html*; Levente Buttyan and Jean-Pierre Hubaux, “Enforcing Service Availability in Mobile Ad-Hoc WANs” 1st IEEE/ACM Workshop on Mobile Ad Hoc Networking and Computing (MobiHOC citeseer.ist.psu.edu/buttyan00enforcing.html; L. Buttyan and J.-P. Hubaux. Nuggets: a virtual currency to stimulate cooperation in self-organized ad hoc networks. *Technical Report DSC/2001*, citeseer.ist.psu.edu/article/buttyan01nuglets.html; Mario Cagalj, Jean-Pierre Hubaux, and Christian Enz. Minimum-energy broadcast in all-wireless networks: NP-completeness and distribution issues. In *The Eighth ACM International Conference on Mobile Computing and Networking (MobiCom 2002)*, citeseer.ist.psu.edu/cagalj02minimumenergy.html; N. Ben Salem, L. Buttyan, J.P. Hubaux, and Jakobsson M. A charging and rewarding scheme for packet forwarding. In *Proceedings of MobiHOC*, June 2003. For example, the virtual currency may have a half-life or temporally declining value. On the other hand, the value may peak at a time after generation, which would encourage deference and short term savings, rather than immediate spending, and would allow a recipient node to benefit from virtual currency transferred before its peak value. This also means that long term hoarding of the currency is of little value, since it will eventually decay in value, while the system presupposes a nominal rate of spending, which is normalized among nodes. The variation function may also be adaptive, but this poses a synchronization issue for the network. An external estimate of node wealth may be used to infer counterfeiting, theft and failure to pay debts, and to further effect remediation.

[0213] The currency is generated and verified in accordance with micropayment theory. Rivest, R. L., A. Shamir, PayWord and MicroMint: Two simple micropayment schemes, also presented at the RSA '96 conference, <http://theory.lcs.mit.edu/rivest/RivestShamirmpay.ps>, citeseer.ist.psu.edu/rivest96password.html; Silvio Micali and Ronald Rivest. Micropayments revisited. In Bart Preneel, editor, *Progress in Cryptology—CT-RSA 2002*, volume

2271 of Lecture Notes in Computer Science. Springer-Verlag, Feb. 18-22 2002. citeseer.ist.psu.edu/micali02micropayments.html.

[0214] Micropayment theory generally encompasses the transfer of secure tokens (e.g., cryptographically endorsed information) having presumed value, which are intended for verification, if at all, in a non-real time transaction, after the transfer to the recipient. The currency is circulated (until expiration) as a token, and therefore may not be subject to immediate definitive authentication by source. Since these tokens may be communicated through an insecure network, the issue of forcing allocation of payment to particular nodes may be dealt with by cryptographic techniques, in particular public key cryptography, in which the currency is placed in a cryptographic “envelope” (cryptolope) addressed to the intended recipient, e.g., is encrypted with the recipient’s public key, which must be broadcast and used as, or in conjunction with, a node identifier. This makes the payment unavailable to other than the intended recipient. The issue of holding the encrypted token hostage and extorting a portion of the value to forward the packet can be dealt with by community pressure, that is, any node presenting this (or other undesirable) behavior might be ostracized. The likelihood of this type of misbehavior is also diminished by avoiding monetization of the virtual currency. Further, redundant routing of such information may prevent single-node control over such communications.

[0215] This currency generation and allocation mechanism generally encourages equal consumption by the various nodes over the long term. In order to discourage excess consumption of bandwidth, an external tax may be imposed on the system, that is, withdrawing value from the system based on usage. Clearly, the effects of such a tax must be carefully weighed, since this will also impose an impediment to adoption as compared to an untaxed system. On the other hand, a similar effect use-disincentive may be obtained by rewarding low consumption, for example by allocating an advertising subsidy between nodes, or in reward of deference. The external tax, if associated with efficiency-promoting regulation, may have a neutral or even beneficial effect.

[0216] Each node computes a value function, based on its own knowledge state, risk profile and risk tolerance, and wealth, describing the value to it of additional information, as well as its own value for participating in the communications of others. The value function typically includes a past travel history, future travel itinerary, present location, recent communication partners, and an estimator of information strength and weakness with respect to the future itinerary. It may be presumed that each node has a standard complement of sensors, and accurately acquired descriptive data for its past travel path. Otherwise, a description of the available information is required. One advantage of a value function is that it changes little over time, unless a need is satisfied or circumstances change, and therefore may be a persistent attribute.

[0217] Using the protocol communication system, each node transmits its value function (or change thereof), passes through communications from neighboring nodes, and may, for example transmit payment information for the immediate-past bid for incoming communications.

[0218] Messages are forwarded outward (avoiding redundant propagation back to the source), with messages

appended from the series of nodes. Propagation continues for a finite number of hops, until the entire community has an estimate of the state and value function of each node in the community. Advantageously, the network beyond a respective community may be modeled in simplified form, to provide a better estimate of the network as a whole.

[0219] After propagation, each node evaluates the set of value functions for its community, with respect to its own information and ability to forward packets. Each node may then make an offer to supply or forward information, based on the provided information. In the case of multihop communications, the offers are propagated to the remainder of the community, for the maximum number of hops, including the originating node. At this point, each node has a representation of the state of its community, with community edge estimates providing consistency for nodes with differing community scopes, the valuation function each node assigns to control over portions of the network, as well as a resolved valuation of each node for supplying the need. Under these circumstances, each node may then evaluate an optimization for the network architecture, and come to a conclusion consistent with that of other members of its community. If supported, node reputation may be updated based on past performance, and the reputation applied as a factor in the optimization and/or externally to the optimization. As discussed above, a VCG-type auction is employed as a basis for optimization. Since each node receives bid information from all other nodes within the maximum node count, the VCG auction produces an optimized result.

[0220] Transmissions are made in frames, with a single bidding process controlling multiple frames, for example a multiple of the maximum number of hops. Therefore, the bid encompasses a frame’s-worth of control over the modalities. In the event that the simultaneous use of, or control over, a modality by various nodes is not inconsistent, then the value of the respective nodes may be summed, with the resulting allocation based on, for example, a ratio of the respective value functions. As a part of the optimization, nodes are rewarded not only for supporting the communication, but also for deferring their own respective needs. As a result, after controlling the resources, a node will be relatively less wealthy and less able to subsequently control the resources, while other nodes will be more able to control the resources. The distribution to deferred nodes also serves to prevent pure reciprocal communications, since the proposed mechanism distributes and dilutes the wealth to deferring nodes.

[0221] Because each node in the model presented above has complete information, for a range up to the maximum node count, the wealth of each node can be estimated by its neighbors, and payment inferred even if not actually consummated. (Failure of payment can occur for a number of reasons, including both malicious and accidental). Because each hop adds significant cost, the fact that nodes beyond the maximum hop distance are essentially incommunicado is typically of little consequence; since it is very unlikely that a node more than 5 or 10 hops away will be efficiently included in any communication, due to the increasing cost with distance, as well as reduction in reliability and increase in latency. Thus, large area and scalable networks may exist.

[0222] Typically, cryptography is employed for both authentication and to preserve privacy. External regulation, in a legal sense at least, is typically imposed by restrictions

on hardware and software design, as well as voluntary compliance at risk of detection and legal sanction.

[0223] A synthetic economy affords the opportunity to provide particular control over the generator function, which in turn supports a hierarchy. In this scheme, each node controls the generator function at respectively lower nodes, and thus can allocate wealth among subordinates. If one assumes real time communications, then it is clear that the superordinate node can directly place bids on behalf of subordinates, thus effectively controlling its entire branch. In the absence of real time communications, the superordinate node must defer to the discretion of the subordinate, subject to reallocation later if the subordinate defects. If communications are impaired, and a set of a priori instructions are insufficient, then it is up to the subjective response of a node to provide deference.

[0224] It is noted that when sets of nodes “play favorites”, the VCG auction will no longer be considered “strategyproof”. The result is that bidders will assume bidding strategies that do not express their secret valuation, with the result being likely suboptimal market finding during the auction. This factor can be avoided if hierachal overrides and group bidding play only a small role in the economy, and thus the expected benefits from shaded bidding are outweighed by the normal operation of the system. For example, by taxing transactions, over-valued bidding will be disincentivized, and by redistributing economic surplus to bystanders, the aggregate wealth of the controlling group will be mitigated.

[0225] A synthetic economy affords the opportunity to provide particular control over the generator function, which in turn provides particular advantages with respect to a hierachal organization. In this scheme, each node has the ability to control the generator function at respectively lower nodes, and thus can allocate wealth among subordinates. If one assumes real time communications, then it is clear that the superordinate node can directly place bids on behalf of subordinates, thus effectively controlling its entire branch. In the absence of real time communications, the superordinate node must defer to the discretion of the subordinate, subject to reallocation later if the subordinate defects. If communications are impaired, and a set of a priori instructions are insufficient, then it is up to the subjective response of a node to provide deference. Thus, a node may transfer all or a portion of its generator function, either for a limited time or permanently, using feed-forward or feedback control. In this sense, the hierachal and financial derivatives, options, futures, loans, etc. embodiments of the invention share a common theme.

[0226] It is noted that when sets of nodes “play favorites”, the VCG auction will no longer be considered “strategyproof”. The result is that bidders will assume bidding strategies that do not express their secret valuation, with the result being likely suboptimal market price finding during the auction. This factor can be avoided if hierachal overrides and group bidding play only a small role in the economy, and thus the expected benefits from shaded bidding are outweighed by the normal operation of the system. On the other hand, the present invention potentially promotes competition within branches of a hierarchy, to the extent the hierarchy does not prohibit this. Between different branches of a hierarchy, there will generally be full compe-

tion, while within commonly controlled branches of a hierarchy, cooperation will be expected. Since the competitive result is generally more efficient, there will be incentive for the hierachal control to permit competition as a default state, asserting control only where required for the hierachal purpose.

[0227] Military Hierarchy

[0228] In a typical auction, each player is treated fairly; that is, the same rules apply to each player, and therefore a single economy describes the process. The fair auction therefore poses challenges for an inherently hierachal set of users, such as a military organization. In the military, there is typically an expectation that “rank has its privileges”. The net result, however, is a decided subjective unfairness to lower ranking nodes. In a mobile ad hoc network, a real issue is user defection or non-compliance. For example, where a cost is imposed on a user for participating in the ad hoc network, e.g., battery power consumption, if the anticipated benefit does not exceed the cost, the user will simply turn off the device until actually needed, to conserve battery power outside the control of the network. The result of mass defection will of course be the instability and failure of the ad hoc network itself. Thus, perceived fairness and net benefit is required to important for network success, assuming that defection or non-compliance remain possible.

[0229] On the other hand, in military systems, the assertion of rank as a basis for priority is not necessarily perceived as arbitrary and capricious, and is generally not perceived subjectively as such. Orders and communications from a central command are critical for the organization itself. Therefore, the difficulty in analyzing the application of a fair game to a hierachal organization is principally a result of conceptualizing and aligning the individual incentives with those of the organization as a whole. Since the organization exists outside of the ad hoc network, it is generally not unrealistic to expect compliance with the hierachal attributes both within and outside of the network.

[0230] An artificial economy provides a basis for an economically efficient solution. In this economy, each node has a generator function for generating economic units which are used in a combinatorial auction with other nodes. The economic units may have a declining value, so that wealth does not accumulate over long periods, and by implication, wealth accumulated in one region is not available for transfer in a distant region, since the transfer may be subject to latency and/or cost. Even if a low latency system is employed to transfer the value, an express spatially declining value function may also be imposed. The geographic decline may also be explicit, for example based on a GPS or navigational system. In other cases, nodal motility is valuable, and mobile nodes are to be rewarded over those which are stationary. Therefore, the value or a portion thereof, or the generator function, may increase with respect to relocations.

[0231] This scheme may be extended to the hierachal case by treating each chain of command as an economic unit with respect to the generator function. At any level of the hierarchy, the commander retains a portion of the wealth generation capacity, and delegates the remainder to its subordinates. In the case of real-time communications, a commander may directly control allocation of the generator function at each time period. Typically, there is no real-time

communications capability, and the wealth generator function must be allocated a priori. Likewise, wealth may also be reallocated, although a penalty is incurred in the event of an initial misallocation since the transfer itself incurs a cost, and there will be an economic competitive distortion, under which a node's subjective value of a resource is influenced by its subjective wealth. If a node is supplied with wealth beyond its needs, the wealth is wasted, since it declines in value and cannot be hoarded indefinitely. If a node is supplied with insufficient wealth, economic surplus through transactional gains are lost. Thus, each node must analyze its expected circumstances to retain or delegate the generator function, and to optimally allocate wealth between competing subordinates.

[0232] In any transaction, there will be a component which represents the competitive "cost", and a possible redistribution among nodes within a hierarchical chain. This redistribution may be of accumulated wealth, or of the generation function portion. In the former case, if the communication path fails, no further transfers are possible, while in the later case, the result is persistent until the transfer function allocation is reversed. It is also possible to transfer an expiring or declining portion of the generating function; however, this might lead a node which is out of range to have no ability to rejoin the network upon return, and thus act as an impediment to efficient network operation. As discussed above, one possibility is for nodes to borrow or load currency. In this case, a node deemed credit-worthy may blunt the impact of initially having insufficient wealth by merely incurring a transaction cost (including interest, if applied).

[0233] In practice, the bulk of the wealth generating function will be widely distributed, and not concentrated at the top of the hierarchy. If this is true, under most circumstances, the network will appear to operate according to a non-hierarchical or fair VCG model, but in some circumstances, normal operation may be usurped by nodes which have apparent excess wealth resulting from a superior wealth generator function. Typically, hierarchically superior nodes will use their ability to transfer wealth to themselves, or to recruit subordinates to cooperate, in order to directly or indirectly control the network resources. It is possible, however, for nodes within one branch of a hierarchy to conspire against nodes outside that branch, resulting in a different type of distortion. Since the ad hoc network typically gains by having a larger number of participating nodes, this type of behavior may naturally be discouraged. On the other hand, hierarchically superior nodes either retain, or more likely, can quickly recruit surrounding subordinates to allocate their wealth generating function and accumulated wealth to pass urgent or valuable messages.

[0234] Where expensive assets are employed, an actual transfer of wealth or the generator function to a single entity may be required. For example, a high level node might have access to a high power broadcast system, which interferes with other communications, or simply incurs a high cost to operate. Low level nodes might ordinarily be limited to cellular (i.e., short range, low power radio) wireless communications. In order for a low level node to control an expensive asset, the assent or cooperation of others may be required, for example by hierachal superiors.

[0235] Since the network should be stable in the absence of command and control communications, a hierachal supe-

rior should assure that subordinate nodes possess sufficient wealth and motivation to maintain ad hoc network operation. Insufficient wealth will tend to eliminate the advantage to nodal participation (and therefore encourage defection), unless payments from acting as intermediary are significant. Thus, a node with insufficient wealth generation function may potentially exhaust its resources, and be unavailable for ad hoc intermediary use, even for the benefit of the hierarchy. On the other hand, an initial allocation of too much wealth will encourage high spending and less active participation as an intermediary. While it is possible in a military system to formulate an "engineered" solution which forces participation and eliminates defection, this solution does not gain the benefit of economic optimization and may have limited application outside of mandatory hierarchies.

[0236] Cellular Network Extension

[0237] Cellular Networks provide efficient coverage of large portions of the inhabited landmass. On the other hand, achieving complete coverage, including relatively uninhabited areas, may be cost inefficient or infeasible. On the other hand, there remains significant unmet demand for coverage of certain areas.

[0238] Generally, it is likely that a need for service arises within a few miles from the edge of a cellular network. That is, the fixed infrastructure is almost in reach. On the other hand, the infrastructure costs required to fill in gaps or marginally extend the network may be inordinately high, for the direct economic benefits achieved. At present, there is no effective means for remediating these gaps.

[0239] One problem arises in that the present networks generally have a threshold usage plan. All territory encompassed by a network is treated as fungible, and incurs the same cost. Likewise, usage of partner networks is also treated as fungible. Therefore, the incentive to extend network reach for any company is limited to the overall incentive for customers to defect to different networks, balanced against the increased cost of extending the network. It is in the context of this economic problem that a solution is proposed. Quite simply, in the same areas where the cellular infrastructure is insufficient and there is demand for service, it may be possible to implement a peer-to-peer network or multihop network to extend a cellular network system. In fact, if we presume that the coverage is absent, the network extension function may make use of the licensed cellular spectrum, thus making the ad hoc-cellular transceiver design more efficient, and eliminating extrinsic competing uses for the bandwidth. Likewise, this may be implemented in or as part of existing cellular network handsets, using common protocols. On the other hand, different spectrum and/or protocols may be employed, which may be licensed or unlicensed.

[0240] Various studies have shown that modeled multihop mobile ad hoc network architectures tend to have low efficiency in excess of three to five hops. This is due to node mobility and the probability of finding an end-to-end connection, mutual interference and competition for bandwidth in shared channel protocols, and the overhead of maintaining useful routing tables. If we take five hops as a reasonable maximum, and each transceiver has a 1000 meter range, then a 5 km maximum range extension is possible. It is believed that by extending the fringe of cellular networks by 3-5 km, a significant portion of the unmet demand for cellular service will be satisfied.

[0241] If we assume that a significant portion of the mobile nodes are power constrained (e.g., battery operated), that is, retransmission of packets imposes a power cost, then the stability of the mobile ad hoc network and cooperation with its requirements will depend on properly incentivizing intermediary nodes to allocate their resources to the network. Since this incentive is provided in a commercial context, that is, the cellular service is a commercial enterprise with substantial cash flow, a real economy with monetary incentives may be provided. Under such circumstances, it is relatively straightforward to allocate costs and benefits between the competing interests to achieve consistent and apparent incentives. On the other hand, the cost of this additional process must be commensurate with the benefits provided, or else the ad hoc network will become unreliable.

[0242] While the true economics of the costs and value functions for the participants are not defined, some estimates are available. The issue is: are users willing to pay for extended cellular reach? If so, do they value the benefits commensurate with the overall costs, including service fees, hardware, and ad hoc cooperative burdens? As such, care must be exercised to define competitive compensation or the business will be inefficient. Since this extension is driven by the cellular network operator, a suitable return on investment is mandated.

[0243] Many analyses and studies have concluded that voluntary ad hoc networks are efficient when the incentives to cooperate with the network goals are aligned and sufficient to incentivize users accordingly. If the reward for cooperation is near optimum, then the network will benefit by increased coverage and reliability, each node will benefit from increased utility, and intermediary nodes will specifically benefit through compensation. Due to the technical possibility for potential intermediaries to fail to either participate in network administration or operation, while taking advantage of the network as a beneficiary, the promotion of network availability as an incentive for cooperation is typically itself insufficient incentive to assure cooperation. The particular cost of the limited power resource for potential intermediaries makes non-cooperation a particularly important factor. On the other hand, the presumption of power cost as a critical factor may be accurate only in some circumstances: In many cases, a cheap power source is available, such as in a home or office, or in a vehicle, making other factors more important.

[0244] It is noted that, in a cellular telephone system, the reasonable acts of a user which might undermine the network are limited. Clearly, the user can choose a different network or provider. The user may turn off his phone or make it unavailable. The user may abuse the service contract, taking advantage of promotions or “free” access to the detriment of others. Notably, the user typically has no reasonable ability to reprogram the phone or alter its operation in accordance with the protocol, unless granted this option by the network operator. The user cannot reasonably compete or interfere with the licensed spectrum. While older analog cellular phones provided the user with an option to install power amplifiers and vehicle mount antennas, few current users employ these options.

[0245] If one limits the present system to a five hop distance from fixed cellular infrastructure (or more accu-

rately, permits the system to deny service to nodes more than five hops away) then the routing requirements and node complexity may be substantially simplified. We also presume that each node has geolocation capability, and therefore can provide both its location and velocity vector. This is reasonable, since the FCC E911 mandate provides for geolocation of handsets within range of the cellular infrastructure, and GPS is a one significant and readily available option to provide this feature, independent of the cellular infrastructure.

[0246] The ad hoc communications can occur using a licensed or unlicensed band. For example, since we presume that nodes are beyond range of a fixed cellular tower (except the closest node), the ad hoc network may reuse licensed bandwidth in the uncovered region. The ad hoc communications may also occur in unlicensed spectrum, such as the 2.4 GHz ISM band, 5.8 GHz ISM band, DSRC band, or 900 MHz band.

[0247] In order to provide optimum compensation, two issues are confronted. First, the total compensation paid; and second, the distribution of payments between the intermediaries. The VCG auction is a known means for optimizing a payment which must be distributed between a number of participants. In this case, each potential intermediary places a “bid”. A multi-factorial optimization is performed to determine the lowest cost set which provides sufficient services.

[0248] In a cellular system, each subscriber typically purchases a number of minute units on a monthly recurring charge basis. Compensation might therefore be based on minutes or money. Since there is a substantial disincentive to exceed the number of committed minutes, providing a surplus of minutes may not provide a significant incentive, because the user will rarely exceed the committed amount. Monetary incentives, on the other hand, must be coupled to a higher monthly recurring fee, since the proposal would be unprofitable otherwise.

[0249] A more direct scheme provides an economy for multihop networks somewhat independent from the cellular system economy. That is, nodes that participate as intermediary, may also participate as a principal to the information communication, while those who abstain from intermediary activities are denied access to the network extension as a principal.

[0250] While, on a theoretical basis, optimization of both price and distribution would be considered useful, in a practical system, it may be useful to make simplifying presumptions and simplifications. For example, while a VCG auction may provide an optimal cost and distribution of compensation, in a commercial network, a degree of certainty may actually prove advantageous. For example, a fixed compensation per hop or per milliWatt-second may prove both fair and reasonable.

[0251] Likewise, a degree of certainty over cost would be beneficial over an “optimal” cost. On the other hand, fixed cost and fixed compensation are inconsistent in a revenue neutral system. Even if the cellular carrier subsidizes the extension operation, there is little rationale for making the usage at the fringe insensitive to cost, other than the relief from uncertainty, which will tend to increase fringe usage, and the scope of the subsidy cost.

[0252] As discussed above, there are methods drawn from financial models which may also serve to improve certainty and reduce perceived risk.

[0253] Therefore, it is realistic for a node requesting extension service to apply a value function to define a maximum payment for service. The payment is therefore dependent on system cost, alleviating the requirement for subsidy, but also dependent on need.

[0254] In the typical case, the load on the extension network will be low, since if demand were high, the fixed infrastructure would likely be extended to this region. On the other hand, there may be cases where demand is high, and therefore there is some competition for access to the network, leading to a need to arbitrate access.

[0255] In general, where economic demand is high, there is a tendency to recruit new sources of supply. That is, the system may operate in two modes. In a first, low demand mode, costs are based on a relatively simple algorithm, with a monetary cap. In a second mode, costs are competitive (and in excess of the algorithmic level), with compensation also being competitive. The surplus, in this case, would generally be allocated to the cellular carrier, since this represents the commercial profit of the enterprise. The first mode also serves another purpose; under lightly loaded conditions, the market may be thin, and therefore pricing unstable. Therefore, the imposition of fixed pricing leads to reduced pricing risk.

[0256] In the second mode, an intended user specifies his demand as a maximum price and demand function, that is, a bid based on, for example, a value of the communication. Generally, this would be set by the user in advance as a static value or relatively simple function representing the contextual value of the communication. The actual price may be, for example, the bid price less otherwise attributable discount under the first mode based on the maximum number of hops, etc. The intermediate nodes set forth their bids in the manner of a VCG auction, with each bid presumably exceeding the first mode compensation. The VCG optimization may be corrected for quality of service factors and anticipated network stability.

[0257] It is noted, as elsewhere herein, that the preferred bidding and optimization is performed automatically as a part of the protocol, and not under direct human control and supervision. Therefore, the automated processes may be defined to promote stability and cooperation by both the device and its owner with the network. In other cases, human involvement may be used, although this will typically be quite inefficient and impose transactional expenses (opportunity costs) in excess of the underlying transaction value. The use therefore provides a set of explicit or implicit subjective criteria as a basis for the agent to act accordingly. An intermediary chooses its bid for providing packet forwarding services based on a number of factors, such as anticipated power cost, opportunity cost, etc.

[0258] Clearly, the economics of the system are substantially under the control of the cellular carrier, who may offer "plans" and "services" for their customers, thus providing an alternative to the usage-based bidding process, at least for some users. The VCG process, however, remains useful for compensating intermediaries.

[0259] The intermediary chooses its bid for providing packet forwarding services based on a number of factors,

such as anticipated power cost, opportunity cost, etc. These bids are determined automatically, and therefore do not consume substantial human efforts.

SUMMARY

[0260] Game theory is a useful basis for analyzing ad hoc networks, and understanding the behavior of complex networks of independent nodes. By presuming a degree of choice and decision-making by nodes, we obtain an analysis that is robust with respect to such considerations. The principal issues impeding deployment are the inherent complexity of the system, as well as the overhead required to continuously optimize the system. Determination of a set of simplifying presumptions to reduce protocol overhead and reduce complexity may improve performance. Hierarchical considerations can be imposed to alter the optimization of the system, which would be expected to provide only a small perturbation to the efficient and optimal operation of the system according to a pure VCG protocol. A marketplace auction with competition between potential buyers and potential sellers, and with the economic surplus distributed between parties which must defer to active participants, provides incentive to all affected parties, and therefore may provide a better result than a simple transfer between supply and demand elements only.

[0261] The ad hoc network does not exist in a vacuum. There are various competing interests seeking to use the same bandwidth, and technological superiority alone does not assure dominance and commercial success. Game theory may also be used as a tool to analyze the entities which seek to deploy ad hoc networks, especially where they compete.

FIRST EMBODIMENT

[0262] In a typical auction, each player is treated fairly; that is, the same rules apply to each player, and therefore a single economy describes the process. The fair auction therefore poses challenges for an inherently hierarchical set of users, such as a military organization, where rank is accompanied by privilege. The net result, however, is a decided apparent disadvantage to lower ranking agents, at least when viewed in light of constricted self-interest. The issues that arise are similar to the relating to "altruism", although not identical, and thus the game theoretic analysis of altruistic behavior may be imported for consideration, as appropriate.

[0263] In a mobile ad hoc communications network, a real issue is user defection or non-compliance. For example, where a cost is imposed on a user for participating in the ad hoc network, e.g., battery power consumption in a mesh radio network, if the anticipated benefit does not exceed the cost, the user will simply turn off or disable the device until actually needed. The result of mass defection will, of course, be the instability and failure of the ad hoc network itself, leading to decreased utility, even for those who gain an unfair or undue advantage under the system. Thus, perceived fairness and net benefit is required for network success, assuming that defection and/or non-compliance are possible.

[0264] On the other hand, in military systems, the assertion of rank as a basis for priority is not itself necessarily arbitrary or capricious. Orders and communications from a central command are critical for the organization itself, and thus the lower ranking agents gain at least a peripheral, if not direct benefit as their own chain of command employs their

resources. Therefore, the difficulty in analyzing the application of a fair game paradigm to a hierachal organization is principally a result of conceptualizing and aligning the individual incentives with those of the organization as a whole and the relationship between branches. Thus, in contradistinction to typical self-organizing peer-to-peer networks, a hierachal network is not seen as self-organizing, at least in terms of the hierarchy, which is extrinsic to the formation of the communications network under consideration.

[0265] As discussed below, the "distortions" of the network imposed by the external hierarchy can be analyzed and accounted for by, for example, the concepts of inheritance and delegation. Thus, each branch of a hierarchy tree may be considered an object, which receives a set of characteristics from its root, and from which each sub-branch inherits the characteristics and adds subcharacteristics of, for example, specialization. It is noted that the hierarchy need not follow non-ambiguous or perfect rules, and thus there is no particular limit imposed that the hierarchy necessarily follow these formalisms. Rather, by analyzing those aspects of the hierarchy which comply with these formalisms in accordance therewith, efficiency is facilitated.

[0266] In establishing an economic system, a preliminary question is whether the system is microeconomic or macroeconomic; that is, whether the economy is linked to a real economy or insulated from it. One disadvantage of a real economy with respect to a peer relationship is that external wealth can override internal dynamics, thus diminishing the advantages to be gained by optimization, and potentially creating a perception of unfairness for externally less wealthy agents, at least unless and until the system accomplishes a wealth redistribution. An artificial economy provides a solution for a peer network in which each node has an equal opportunity to gain control over the ad hoc network, independent of outside influences and constraints. On the other hand, by insulating the network from external wealth redistribution, real efficiency gains may be unavailable. Therefore, both types of economies, as well as hybrids, are available. Thus, as discussed in more detail below, a "fair" initial (or recurring) wealth distribution may be applied, which may be supplemented with, and/or provide an output of, external wealth. The rules or proportion of external influence may be predetermined, adaptive, or otherwise.

[0267] In accordance with the proposed artificial economy, each node has a generator function for generating economic units, which are then used in a transaction (e.g., an auction) with other nodes to create a market economy, that is, each node has a supply and demand function, and acts as a source or sink for a limited resource. In some cases, nodes may have only supply or demand functions, or a degree of asymmetry, but in this case, these are typically subject to an external economic consideration, and the artificial economy will be less effective in providing appropriate incentives. According to one implementation of this embodiment, the artificial economic units have a temporally and/or spatially declining value, so that wealth does not accumulate over long periods and/or cannot be transferred over large distances. The decline may be linear, exponential, or based on some other function. This creates a set of microeconomies insulated from each other. Where distant microeconomies must deal with each other, there is a discount. This archi-

ture provides a number of advantages, for example, by decreasing the influence of more spatially and temporally distant effects, the scope of an optimization analysis may be relatively constrained, while reducing the amount of information which must be stored over time and/or carried over distance in order to permit an optimization. Likewise, since the economy is artificial, the discount need not be recouped within the scope of the system; that is, conservation of capital is not required. In the same manner, a somewhat different incentive structure may be provided; that is, economic units generated at one location and at one time may have a higher value at a different location and time; this may encourage reduced immediate use of the system resources, and relocation to higher valued locations. As discussed below, one embodiment of the invention permits trading of credits, and thus, for example, a user may establish a repeater site at an under-served location to gain credits for use elsewhere. Preferably, beyond a "near field" effect, the value does not continue to increase, since this may result in inflationary pressures, and undermine the utility of the system in optimally balancing immediate supply and demand at a particular location.

[0268] As can be seen, through modifications of the governing rules and formulae, the system can be incentivized to behave in certain ways, but care should be exercised since a too narrow analysis of the incentive might result in unintended long term or distant effects. To the extent that human behavior and subjective analysis is involved, care should also be exercised in applying a rationality assumption, since this is not always true. Rather, there may be applicable models for human irrational behavior that are better suited to an understanding of the network behavior in response to a perturbation.

[0269] The typical peer-to-peer ad hoc network may be extended to the hierachal case by treating each branch (including sub-branches) within the chain of command as an economic unit with respect to the generator function. At any level of the hierarchy, the commander optionally retains a portion of the wealth generation capacity, and delegates the remainder to its subordinates. Therefore, the rank and hierachal considerations are translated to an economic wealth (or wealth generation) distribution. One aspect of this system allows wealth transfer or redistribution, although in a real system, a time delay is imposed, and in the event of a temporally and/or spatially declining value, the transfer will impose a cost. Thus, an initial misallocation is undesired, and there will be an incentive to optimally distribute the wealth initially. Of course, if centralized control with low penalty is desired, it is possible to limit the penalty, if any, for wealth redistribution through appropriate rules, although the time for propagation through the network remains an issue, and blind nodes (i.e., those which do not have an efficient communication path, or have insufficient resources to utilize otherwise available paths through the hierarchy) may also lead to limitations on system performance.

[0270] In this system, there may be an economic competitive distortion, under which a node's subjective value of a resource is influenced by its then subjective wealth. If a node is supplied with wealth beyond its needs, the wealth is wasted, since it may decline in value and cannot be hoarded indefinitely. (In a network wealth model in which wealth could be hoarded indefinitely, small deviations from optimality and arbitrage opportunities may be exploited to create

a perception of unfairness, thus, this is not preferred.) If a node is supplied with insufficient wealth, economic surplus through transactional gains are lost. Thus, each node must analyze its expected circumstances to retain or delegate the generator function, and to optimally allocate wealth between competing subordinates. Likewise, there may be a plurality of quasi-optimal states.

[0271] In any economic transaction, there is an amount that a seller requires to part with the resource, a price a buyer is willing to pay, and a surplus between them. Typically, in a two party transaction, the surplus is allocated to the party initiating the transaction, that is, the party initiating the transaction uses some discovery mechanism to find the minimum price acceptable by the buyer. In brokered or agent-mediated transactions, a portion of the surplus is allocated to a facilitator.

[0272] In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, compliance with the community rules, as well as an incentive to bid or ask a true private value is encouraged by distributing a portion of the transaction surplus to losing competitive bidders. While according to one proposal, this portion is allocated in accordance with their reported valuations, this creates a potential incentive for bidders who know they will not be winning bidders to overbid, and thereby gain an increased portion of the surplus. In order to reward honest reporting of private values, the reward function must penalize both overreporting and underreporting of private values. This circumstance occurs if, at each bid, there is a risk of winning commensurate with the bid, and thus the system is strategyproof. In order to achieve this circumstance, for example, a statistical noise or probability distribution may be added to the system, with an acceptance of a bid made a statistical process. This results in a "fuzzy" boundary on the bid value, although it may impose an inefficiency on the market since any deviation from the optimal market price represents a loss.

[0273] Another approach to minimizing strategic bidding is to impose a bid fee. That is, each bidder must offer a prepayment corresponding to a small portion of its bid, thereby disincentivizing bidding to lose. The winning bidder will then pay a second price plus the deposit bid. The sellers will receive their own lowest cost (or second cost) bid. Losing bidders will receive a payment in accordance with the value of their bid, less the bid deposit. In order to disincentivize strategic bidding, the average return to a bidder is less than the bid cost. In fact, a good target for the bidder deposit is the administrative cost of transacting the bidding negotiations. This, in turn, provides an incentive to keep the administrative overhead low, thus improving overall system performance, especially where the administrative communications compete with normal communications for bandwidth. In this circumstance, those bidding to win receive either the benefit of the transaction or a payment for deference, less the transactional fee. Those who are bidding strategically, in manner seeking to acquire the deference payment, must risk the transactional cost, and to gain substantially, must submit a relatively high bid. When the bids are "competitive", there is a substantial risk that the bid will be a winning bid, and thus incur the full bid cost. Thus, there is a disincentive to bidding a high value, but without an intent to win. Of course, the bid deposit may be a flat fee, or subject to a mathematical or adaptive function, rather than directly related to administrative cost.

[0274] The aggregated bid deposits may, for example, be awarded to a class who are optimally incentivized by the nature of this payment. For example, it may be awarded to those selling bandwidth, in a manner generally inversely proportional to the value of their ask, or, for example, based on allocations during the combinatorial (VCG) auction. This payment would then incentivize sellers to offer services at a low price, improving network availability.

[0275] Of course, there may be other classes within the auction population who may be taxed or subsidized, using value derived from the auction process.

[0276] In a strategyless auction, automated bidding is quite feasible, since the optimal bid is the computed value. For auctions in which a bidder does not have an incentive to bid its true private value, and thus must assume a strategic play, automated bidding becomes more of a challenge, but may also be automated.

[0277] In a strategy-less auction, a bidder cannot gain by bidding over or under its private value. If a bidder bids below its private value, it has a reduced chance of gaining the benefit of the transaction.

[0278] In an auction which is subject to strategic bidding, the strategy may be mitigated by imposing commensurate risks and costs to balance the perceived advantage toward zero.

[0279] In particular, the competitive bidders seeking to allocate a scarce resource for themselves receive compensation for deferring to the winning bidder in an amount commensurate with their reported value. Thus, sellers receive their minimum acceptable value, buyers pay their maximum valuation, the surplus is distributed to the community in a manner tending to promote the highest bids within the private value of the bidder. In a corresponding manner, the auction rules can be established to incentivized sellers to ask the minimum possible amount, above their reserve. For example, a portion of the surplus may be allocated to bidders in accordance with how close they come to the winning ask. Therefore, both incentives may be applied, for example with the surplus split in two, and half allocated to the bidder pool and half allocated to the seller pool. Clearly, other allocations or proportionations are possible.

[0280] The winning bidder and/or seller may be included within the rebate pool. This is particularly advantageous where for various reasons, the winning bidder is not selected. Thus, this process potentially decouples the bidding (auction) process and the resulting commercial transaction.

[0281] Because of transactional inefficiencies, human behavioral aspects, and a desire to avoid increased network overhead by "false" bidders seeking a share of the allocation pool without intending to win the auction, it may be useful to limit the allocation of the surplus pool to a subset of the bidders and/or sellers, for example the top three of one or both. This therefore encourages bidders and/or sellers to seek to be in the limited group splitting the pool, and thus incentivizes higher bids and lower asks. Of course, a party will have a much stronger incentive to avoid bidding outside its valuation bounds, so the risk of this type of inefficiency is small.

[0282] As discussed above, one embodiment of the invention provides a possible redistribution or wealth among nodes within a hierachal chain. This redistribution may be of accumulated wealth, or of the generation function portion. Trading among hierachally related parties is preferred, since the perceived cost is low, and the wealth can be repeatedly redistributed. In fact, it is because of the possibility of wealth oscillation and teaming that the declining wealth function is preferred, since this will tend to defeat closely related party control over the network for extended periods.

[0283] It is noted that, in a multihop mobile ad hoc network, if a communication path fail, no further transfers are possible, potentially resulting in stalled or corrupt system configuration. It is possible to transfer an expiring or declining portion of the generating function; however, this might lead a node which is out of range to have no ability to rejoin the network upon return, and thus act as an impediment to efficient network operation. Therefore, it is preferred that, in an artificial economy, each node has some intrinsic wealth generator function, so an extended period of inactivity, a node gains wealth likely sufficient to rejoin the network as a full participant.

[0284] In practice, in a typical military-type hierarchy, the bulk of the wealth generating function will be distributed to the lowest ranks with the highest numbers. Thus, under normal circumstances, the network will appear to operate according to a non-hierachal (i.e., peer) model, with the distortion that not all nodes have a common generator function. On the other hand, hierachically superior nodes either retain, or more likely, can quickly recruit surrounding subordinates to allocate their wealth generating function and accumulated wealth to pass urgent or valuable messages. Thus, if 85% of the wealth and network resources are distributed to the lowest-ranking members, then the maximum distortion due to hierachal modifications is 15%.

[0285] One way that this allocation of wealth may be apparent is with respect to the use of expensive assets. Thus, a high level node might have access to a high power broadcast system or licensed spectrum, while low level nodes might ordinarily be limited to lower power transmission and/or unlicenced spectrum or cellular wireless communications. For a low level node to generate a broadcast using an expensive asset (or to allocate a massive amount of space bandwidth product), it must pass the request up through the chain of command, until sufficient wealth (i.e., authority) is available to implement the broadcast.

[0286] In fact, such communications and authorizations are quite consistent with the expectations within a hierachal organization, and this construct is likely to be accepted within a military-type hierachal organization.

[0287] Under normal circumstances, a superior would have an incentive to assure that each subordinate node possesses sufficient wealth to carry out its function and be incentivized to participate in the network. If a subordinate has insufficient initial wealth (or wealth generating function) allocation, it may still participate, but it must expend its internal resources to obtain wealth for participation toward its own benefit. This, in turn, leads to a potential exhaustion of resources, and the unavailability of the node for ad hoc intermediary use, even for the benefit of the hierarchy. An initial surplus allocation will lead to overbidding for

resources, and thus inefficient resource allocation, potential waste of allocation, and a disincentive to act as an intermediary in the ad hoc network. While in a traditional military hierarchy, cooperation can be mandated, in systems where cooperation is perceived as contrary to the net personal interests of the actor, network stability may be poor, and defection in spite of mandate.

[0288] In a military system, it is thus possible to formulate an “engineered” solution which forces participation and eliminates defection; however, it is clear that such solutions forfeit the potential gains of optimality, and incentivizes circumvention and non-compliance. Further, because such a system is not “cost sensitive” (however the appropriate cost function might be expressed), it fails to respond to “market” forces.

[0289] Accordingly, a peer to peer mobile ad hoc network suitable for respecting hierachal organization structures is provided. In this hierachal system, the hierarchy is represented by an initial wealth or wealth generation function distribution, and the hierachally higher nodes can reallocate wealth of nodes beneath themselves, exercising their higher authority. This wealth redistribution can be overt or covert, and if overt, the hierachal orders can be imposed without nodal assent. In a covert redistribution, trust may be required to assure redistribution by a node to a grandchild node.

[0290] The wealth and its distribution can be implemented using modified micropayment techniques and other verifiable cryptographic techniques. This wealth can be applied to auctions and markets, to allocate resources. Various aspects of this system are discussed in more detail elsewhere in this specification.

[0291] In accordance with aspects of this embodiment, an example is provided. In this scenario, a vehicle traveling along a highway seeks traffic information 10-20 miles ahead on the road. The transceiver in the vehicle has a range of about 0.5 miles, meaning that, assuming maximum hop range, 20-40 hops would be necessary in each direction in order to fulfill a response to a request for information. If we further assume that the traffic density allows an average density of compatible transceivers of 1 per 0.05 miles², then it would appear that for each hop, a number of intermediaries would be possible. We further assume that each vehicle has a pair of antennas (which may operate on different frequencies), forward and backward looking, so that forward

[0292] And backward communications are non-interfering. It is noted that, in operation, it is not a single vehicle that seeks information responding to a request; rather, it is likely that 2-25% of vehicles will seek information within a short period, especially of the cost of fulfilling a request is relatively low. We also assume that there is no common trigger event, such as an accident, which would provoke essentially all vehicles to request the same information, a circumstances that could be addressed through a multicast or broadcast.

[0293] If the vehicle sought to arrange a communication over the entire 10-20 miles in advance of communicating, this would require a multifactorial optimization likely involving over 100 transceivers, and if even one of the 20-40 intermediates fails, the entire communication fails. The administrative overhead for this process may not outweigh its advantages.

[0294] On the other hand, if we instead presume that the vehicle only optimize a path over a limited range or number of hops, e.g., 1 mile or 5 hops, then the optimization is facilitated and the administrative overhead reduced. On the other hand, this requires that vehicles or nodes at the fringe arrange for completion of the communication. It is here that the statistical aspects of the network architecture may be exploited to achieve efficiencies. Thus, in observing or participating in the network activities over a period of time, a node can model the behavior of nearby nodes, and determine a degree of risk with respect to the model. That node may then undertake the risk associated with its assessment of its environment, and communicate an offer to act as agent for completion of the communication, without explicitly communicating the details of the communication. Therefore, the originating node optimizes a local region ad hoc network, and then adopts an estimate of the network state beyond the edge of the local region.

[0295] Economically, the vehicle seeking the information broadcasts a bid or value function of its valuation of the resources it requires. This bid is propagated to the local region or beyond, and compared with the bids or value functions of other vehicles or nodes. A winning vehicle or node then assumes control over the minimum temporal-spatial-frequency channel required. As stated above, at the edge of the local region, nodes may act as proxies or agents, and undertake the risk of the more distant communication, adding a risk premium to their ask. The node with the lowest ask is selected as the agent or proxy. It is noted that the role of communication intermediary and proxy or agent is discrete, and therefore need not be a single element, though certain efficiencies are gained if this is the case. The agent or proxy must also conduct an auction for the next stage of the communication, in a process which is repeated until the destination node is included within the local region.

[0296] The proxy or agent undertakes the risk of the cost of the downstream communications, as well as the risk of non-payment, and thus may well charge a substantial premium over its actual risk-free cost. Therefore, the efficiency gained through the use of the agent or proxy derives from the administrative efficiencies gained, as well as comprehension that the risks are inherent, and must generally be undertaken by some element of the network. The incrementally added risks may be small, but are transferred. A node which promotes itself for acting as agent or proxy may do so because it has lower risks, costs or otherwise unproductive assets. For example, a cellular telephone carrier may choose to participate in the network, using its fixed infrastructure as a backup, or bypass. In that case, if the network fails, or is less efficient, it has the option of using its own facilities.

[0297] The agent or proxy therefore arbitrages the risk, based on its own knowledge of its local region which is different from the local region of the originator of the communication. There may be less competition for the role of arbitrageur, allowing it to claim a larger portion of the economic surplus. In fact, an arbitrageur may pre-acquire resources at a defined price, and resell them later at a profit. Thus, it is seen that economic efficiencies and increased profits for intermediaries are not inconsistent, where opportunities for reduction in inefficiencies exist.

[0298] Adding hierachal element to this example, it is noted that certain risks are reduced when transactions are

conducted between related entities. For example, if their respective wealth is interlinked, over the long term, the risk of non-payment is abated. Likewise, the risk of defection or non-compliance is reduced. Further, since it is presumed that the benefit function of related nodes is intertwined, actual costs may be reduced, since the communication itself is a countervailing benefit to the cost of a related node conveying the message or packet. Thus, there will likely be a preference for communications between more closely related nodes than between more distantly related or unrelated nodes. On the other hand, since wealth (virtual or real) itself is desirable, and inter-party transactions limit wealth gain opportunities, there will also be an incentive to conduct transactions with unrelated nodes for full value. As discussed above, in a hierarchy, a top level node is initially allocated the entire wealth and/or wealth generation function for its subordinates, which is then redistributed as appropriate or desired. The top level node will generally not maintain more wealth than required, since this is inefficient, and redistributions incur their own inefficiencies.

[0299] The economy is preferably virtual, employing arbitrary value credits generated using a cryptographic function. One possible exception is where external elements, such as cellular telephone carriers, are integrated into the system. Since these are real economy agents, there must be some interchange in value between credits and cash, unless the cellular carrier gains a benefit from the ad hoc network. One such possible benefit is extension of its fixed infrastructure to serve under-covered areas. Another possible benefit is the ability to provide information from the ad hoc network to more remote areas. A further benefit is the ability to use unlicensed spectrum for its activities in a standard and non-interfering manner.

[0300] In the virtual economy, each node has a physically and/or logically secure cryptographic module, which sequentially generates values which have a unique index number, and may be verified as to node and time of origin, and possibly chain of owners. A node receiving this value can therefore verify that it is authentic, its time of creation (and therefore amortization schedule), and as an audit trail, the chain of ownership. Each bid is also cryptographically secure and signed, so that if a node places a bid, and later fails to pay, a later investigation can be conducted to correctly account for the transaction, and possibly penalize wrongdoing. The payments for a communication are communicated after the transaction, in a cryptographic wrapper (cryptolope) destined for a target node. Since these are secure, the opportunity for theft is low, and there is little incentive for intentional delay of transmission by any intermediate. Further, these packets may be transmitted along redundant paths, to limit the ability of any one node to disrupt communications.

[0301] The ability of a node to spend the same value packet twice is limited by a number of factors. First, since each node has a defined generator function, if its spending exceeds its generation capacity, this will be apparent to nearby nodes. Second, since each packet has an index value, the other nodes may compare these values to make sure that they are not used more than once by any node, before they are transferred to another node. Since the value of the credit declines in value over time, indefinite period monitoring is not required.

[0302] In some instances, saving value may be an efficient strategy. In order to take advantage of these gains, special bank nodes may be established which have the ability to hoard credits and then reissue new credits when required. Typically, there will be no interest, and in fact there may be discount and delay. The net result of promoting savings will typically be a reduction in demand with respect to supply, thus increasing availability of resources. By allowing withdrawal of savings, periods of inflation and high peak demand is possible. Further, if the withdrawn wealth has the same amortization schedule as newly generated credits, an event which provokes a “run on the bank” may result in a rapid diminution of saved wealth, unless the immediate recipients bank the newly transferred wealth.

[0303] As is seen, many of the economic institutions of the real economy have equivalents in the virtual economy, and therefore may be employed in their traditional and known roles to improve efficiency where the self-organizing features of the network alone incur corresponding inefficiencies, thus creating opportunities. Where necessary, links to a real economy, in order to pay for capital investment, efforts, or compensate for risks, may be employed, however it is preferred that these links be attenuated in order to isolate the bulk of the ad hoc network from the influence of real-economy node wealth, and therefore to promote defection of those nodes who are disadvantaged thereby.

SECOND EMBODIMENT

[0304] Multihop Ad Hoc Networks require cooperation of nodes which are relatively disinterested in the content being conveyed. Typically, such disinterested intermediaries incur a cost for participation, for example, power consumption or opportunity cost. Economic incentives may be used to promote cooperation of disinterested intermediaries. An economic optimization may be achieved using a market price-finding process, such as an auction. In many scenarios, the desire for the fairness of an auction is tempered by other concerns, i.e., there are constraints on the optimization which influence price and parties of a transaction. For example, in military communication systems, rank may be deemed an important factor in access to, and control over, the communications medium. A simple process of rank-based preemption, without regard for subjective or objective importance, will result in an inefficient economic distortion. In order to normalize the application of rank, one is presented with two options: imposing a normalization scheme with respect to rank to create a unified economy, or considering rank using a set of rules outside of the economy. One way to normalize rank, and the implicit hierarchy underlying the rank, is by treating the economy as an object-oriented hierarchy, in which each individual inherits or is allocated a subset of the rights of a parent, with peers within the hierarchy operating in a purely economic manner. The extrinsic consideration of rank, outside of an economy, can be denominated “respect”, which corresponds to the societal treatment of the issue, rather than normalizing this factor within the economy, in order to avoid unintended secondary economic distortion. Each system has its merits and limitations.

[0305] An economic optimization is one involving a transaction in which all benefits and detriments can be expressed in normalized terms, and therefore by balancing all factors, including supply and demand, at a price, an optimum is

achieved. Auctions are well known means to achieve an economic optimization between distinct interests, to transfer a good or right in exchange for a market price. While there are different types of auctions, each having their limitations and attributes, as a class these are well accepted as a means for transfer of goods or rights at an optimum price. Where multiple goods or rights are required in a sufficient combination to achieve a requirement, a so-called Vickrey-Clarke-Groves (VCG) auction may be employed. In such an auction, each supplier asserts a desired price for his component. The various combinations which meet the requirement are then compared, and the lowest cost combination selected. In a combinatorial supply auction, a plurality of buyers each seek a divisible commodity, and each bids its best price. The bidders with the combination of prices which is maximum is selected. In a commodity market, there are a plurality of buyers and sellers, so the auction is more complex. In a market economy, the redistribution of goods or services are typically transferred between those who value them least to those who value them most. The transaction price depends on the balance between supply and demand; with the surplus being allocated to the limiting factor.

THIRD EMBODIMENT

[0306] A third embodiment of the invention, described below, represents a system which may employ a self-organizing network to convey information between mobile nodes. It is expressly understood that the concepts set forth above in the first and second embodiments are directly applicable, and each aspect of the third embodiment may be extended using the hierachal principles and modifications, in a consistent manner, to achieve the advantages described herein. That is, while the third embodiment generally describes peer nodes, the extension of the systems and methods to non-peer nodes is specifically envisioned and encompassed.

[0307] This patent builds upon and extends aspects of U.S. Pat. No. 6,252,544 (Hoffberg), Jun. 26, 2001, and U.S. Pat. No. 6,429,812, Aug. 6, 2002, which are expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. See, also, U.S. Pat. No. 6,397,141 (Binnig, May 28, 2002, Method and device for signaling local traffic delays), expressly incorporated herein by reference, which relates to a method and an apparatus for signaling local traffic disturbances wherein a decentralized communication between vehicles, which is performed by exchanging their respective vehicle data. Through repeated evaluation of these individual vehicle data, each reference vehicle may determine a group of vehicles having relevance for itself from within a maximum group of vehicles and compare the group behavior of the relevant group with its own behavior. The results of this comparison are indicated in the reference vehicle, whereby a homogeneous flow of traffic may be generated, and the occurrence of accidents is reduced.

[0308] One aspect of the invention provides a communications system, method and infrastructure. According to one preferred embodiment, an ad hoc, self organizing, cellular radio system (sometimes known as a “mesh network”) is provided.

[0309] Advantageously, high gain antennas are employed, preferably electronically steerable or phased array antennas, to provide efficient communications and to increase spatial

communications bandwidth, both between nodes and for the system comprising a plurality of nodes communicating with each other. See, U.S. Pat. No. 6,507,739 (Gross, et al., Jan. 14, 2003), expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[0310] In general, time-critical, e.g., voice communications require tight routing to control communications latency. On the other hand, non-time critical communications generally are afforded more leeway in terms of communications pathways, including a number of “hops”, retransmission latency, and out-of-order packet communication tolerance, between the source and destination or fixed infrastructure, and quality of communication pathway. Further, it is possible to establish redundant pathways, especially where communications bandwidth is available, multiple paths possible, and no single available path meets the entire communications requirements or preferences.

[0311] Technologies for determining a position of a mobile device are also well known. Most popular are radio triangulation techniques, including artificial satellite and terrestrial transmitters or receivers, dead reckoning and inertial techniques. Advantageously, a satellite-based or augmented satellite system, although other suitable geolocation systems are applicable.

[0312] Navigation systems are also well known. These systems generally combine a position sensing technology with a geographic information system (GIS), e.g., a mapping database, to assist navigation functions. Systems which integrate GPS, GLONASS, LORAN or other positioning systems into vehicular guidance systems are well known, and indeed navigational purposes were prime motivators for the creation of these systems.

[0313] Environmental sensors are well known. For example, sensing technologies for temperature, weather, object proximity, location and identification, vehicular traffic and the like are well developed. In particular, known systems for analyzing vehicular traffic patterns include both stationary and mobile sensors, and networks thereof. Most often, such networks provide a stationary or centralized system for analyzing traffic information, which is then broadcast to vehicles.

[0314] Encryption technologies are well known and highly developed. These are generally classified as being symmetric key, for example the Data Encryption Standard (DES), and the more recent Advanced Encryption Standard (AES), in which the same key is used for encryption as decryption, and asymmetric key cryptography, in which different and complementary keys are used to encrypt and decrypt, in which the former and the latter are not derivable from each other (or one from the other) and therefore can be used for authentication and digital signatures. The use of asymmetric keys allows a so-called public key infrastructure, in which one of the keys is published, to allow communications to be directed to a possessor of a complementary key, and/or the identity of the sender of a message to be verified. Typical asymmetric encryption systems include the Rivest-Shamir-Adelman algorithm (RSA), the Diffie-Hellman algorithm (DH), elliptic curve encryption algorithms, and the so-called Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) algorithm.

[0315] One embodiment of the invention provides a system that analyzes both a risk and an associated reliability.

Another embodiment of the invention communicates the risk and associated reliability in a manner for efficient human comprehension, especially in a distracting environment. See, U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,201,493; 5,977,884; 6,118,403; 5,982,325; 5,485,161; WO0077539, each of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference, and the Uniden GPSRD (see Uniden GPSRD User's Manual, expressly incorporated herein by reference). See, also U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,650,770; 5,450,329; 5,504,482; 5,504,491; 5,539,645; 5,929,753; 5,983,161; 6,084,510; 6,255,942; 6,225,901; 5,959,529; 5,752,976; 5,748,103; 5,720,770; 6,005,517; 5,805,055; 6,147,598; 5,687,215; 5,838,237; 6,044,257; 6,144,336; 6,285,867; 6,340,928; 6,356,822; 6,353,679 each of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[0316] According to this embodiment, a vehicle equipped with sensors, or acting as a probe, acquires information from its surroundings, and communicates them to other vehicles, either directly or through a number of hops. By advantageously employing advanced radio and communication technologies, efficient and reliable transfer video data over unlicensed spectrum may be supported, even multiple real-time streams over potentially conflicting channels.

[0317] Statistical Analysis

[0318] It is understood that the below analysis and analytical tools, as well as those known in the art, may be used individually, in sub-combination, or in appropriate combination, to achieve the goals of the invention. These techniques may be implemented in dedicated or reprogrammable/general purpose hardware, and may be employed for low level processing of signals, such as in digital signal processors, within an operating system or dynamic linked libraries, or within application software. Likewise, these techniques may be applicable, for example, to low level data processing, system-level data processing, or user interface data processing.

[0319] A risk and reliability communication system may be useful, for example, to allow a user to evaluate a set of events in statistical context. Most indicators present data by means of a logical indicator or magnitude, as a single value. Scientific displays may provide a two-dimensional display of a distribution, but these typically require significant user focus to comprehend, especially where a multimodal distribution is represented. Typically, the human visual input can best accommodate a three dimensional color input representing a set of bounded objects which change partially over time, and it is ergonomically difficult to present more degrees of freedom of information simultaneously. That is, the spatial image is not arbitrary, but represents bounded objects (or possibly fuzzy edges), and the sequence over time should provide transitions. User displays of a magnitude or binary value typically do not provide any information about a likelihood of error. Thus, while a recent positive warning of the existence of an event may be a reliable indicator of the actual existence of the event, the failure to warn of an event does not necessarily mean that the event does not exist. Further, as events age, their reliability often decreases.

[0320] The present invention therefore seeks to provide additional information which may be of use in decision-making, including a reliability of the information presented, and/or risk associated with that information, if true. These types of information are typically distinct from the objects

themselves. In order to present these additional degrees of freedom of information within the confines of efficient human cognition, a new paradigm is provided. Essentially, the objects presented (which may be, for example, identifiers of events), are mapped or ranked by a joint function of risk and reliability. Typically, the joint function will adopt economic theory to provide a normalized cost function. Of course, the risk and reliability need not be jointly considered, and these may remain independent considerations for mapping purposes. Because of human subjective perception of risk and reliability, it may be useful to tune the economic normalized cost function for subjective considerations, although in other instances, an objective evaluation is appropriate and efficient.

[0321] In analyzing a complex data set for both time and space patterns, wavelets may be useful. While the discrete wavelet transform (DWT), an analogy of the discrete Fourier transform (DFT) may be employed, it is perhaps more general to apply arbitrary wavelet functions to the data set, and adopting mathematical efficiencies as these present themselves, rather than mandating that an efficient and predefined transform necessarily be employed.

[0322] See references listed in Transforms Appendix, each of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[0323] One embodiment of the present invention thus advances the art by explicitly communicating reliability or risk information to the user. Therefore, in addition to communicating an event or predicted event, the system also computes or determines a reliability of the information and outputs this information. The reliability referred to herein generally is unavailable to the original detection device, though such device may generate its own reliability information for a sensor reading.

[0324] Therefore, one user interface embodiment according to this embodiment is improved by outputting information relating to both the event and a reliability or risk with respect to that information.

[0325] According to a preferred embodiment of the invention, a vehicle travel information system is provided, for example integrated with a vehicular navigation system. In a symmetric peer-to-peer model, each vehicle includes both environmental event sensors and a user interface, but the present invention is not dependent on both aspects being present in a device. As the vehicle travels, and as time advances, its context sphere is altered. For any context sphere, certain events or sensed conditions will be most relevant. These most relevant events or sensed, to the extent known by the system, are then output through a user interface. However, often, the nature or existence of relevant or potentially relevant event is unreliable, or reliance thereon entail risk.

[0326] In the case of a vehicle traveling along a roadway, there are two particular risks to analyze: first, that the recorded event may not exist (false positive), and second, that an absence of indication of an event is in error (false negative). For example, the degree of risk may be indicated by an indication of color (e.g., red, yellow green) or magnitude (e.g., a bar graph or dial).

[0327] In many cases, the degree of risk is calculable, and thus may be readily available. For example, if the event sensor is a detection of police radar, reliability may be

inferred from a time since last recording of an event. If a car is traveling along a highway, and receives a warning of traffic enforcement radar from a car one mile ahead, there is a high degree of certainty that the traffic enforcement radar will actually exist as the vehicle proceeds along the highway. Further, if the traffic radar is in fixed location, there is a high degree of certainty that there is no traffic enforcement radar closer than one mile. On the other hand, if a warning of traffic radar at a given location is two hours old, then the risk of reliance on this information is high, and the warning should be deemed general and advisory of the nature of risks in the region. Preferably, as such a warning ages, the temporal proximity of the warning is spread from its original focus.

[0328] On the contrary, if the warning relates to a pothole in a certain lane on the highway, the temporal range of risk is much broader: even a week later, the reliability of the continued existence at that location remains high. However, over the course of a year, the reliability wanes. On the other hand, while there may be a risk of other potholes nearby, the particular detected pothole would not normally move.

[0329] The algorithm may also be more complex. For example, if a traffic accident occurs at a particular location, there are generally acceptable predictions of the effect of the accident on road traffic for many hours thereafter. These include rubbernecking, migrations of the traffic pattern, and secondary accidents. These considerations may be programmed, and the set of events and datapoints used to predict spatial and temporal effects, as well as the reliability of the existence of such effects. This, in turn, may be used to advise a traveler to take a certain route to a destination.

[0330] Eventually, the reliability of the information is inferred to be so low as to cause an expiration of the event, although preferably a statistical database is maintained to indicate geographic regional issues broadly.

[0331] Therefore, the system and method according to the present invention provides an output that can be considered "two dimensional" (or higher dimensional); the nature of the warning, and the reliability of the warning. In conjunction, the system may therefore output a reliability of an absence of warning. In order to conserve communications bandwidth, it is preferred that an absence of warning is inferred from the existence of a communications channel with a counterpart, along with a failure of a detection of an event triggering a warning. Alternately, such communications may be explicit.

[0332] The present invention can provide a mobile warning system having a user interface for conveying an event warning and an associated reliability or risk of reliance on the warning.

[0333] Preferably, the reliability or risk of reliance is assessed based on a time between original sensing and proximity. The reliability may also be based on the nature of the event or sensed condition. An intrinsic reliability of the original sensed event or condition may also be relayed, as distinct from the reliability or risk of reliance assuming the event or condition to have been accurately sensed.

[0334] In order to determine risk, often statistical and probabilistic techniques may be used. Alternately, non-linear techniques, such as neural networks, may be employed. In employing a probabilistic scheme, a sensor reading at time

zero, and the associated intrinsic probability of error are stored. A model is associated with the sensor reading to determine a decay pattern. Thus, in the case of traffic enforcement radar, the half-life for a "radar trap" for K band radar being fixed in one location is, for example, about 5 minutes. Thereafter, the enforcement officer may give a ticket, and proceed up the road. Thus, for times less than three minutes, the probability of the traffic enforcement radar remaining in fixed position is high. For this same time-period, the probability that the traffic enforcement officer has moved up the road against the direction of traffic flow is low. A car following 3 miles behind a reliable sensor at 60 mph would therefore have a highly reliable indication of prospective conditions. As the time increases, so does the risk; a car following ten miles behind a sensor would only have a general warning of hazards, and a general indication of the lack thereof. However, over time, a general (and possibly diurnal or other cyclic time-sensitive variation) risk of travel within a region may be established, to provide a baseline.

[0335] It is noted that the risks are not limited to traffic enforcement radar or laser. Rather, the scheme according to the present invention is generalized to all sorts of risks. For example, a sensor may detect or predict sun glare. In this case, a model would be quite accurate for determining changes over time, and assuming a reliable model is employed, this condition could generally be accurately predicted.

[0336] Another example is road flooding. This may be detected, for example, through the use of optical sensors, tire drag sensors, "splash" sensors, or other known sensors. In this case, the relevant time-constant for onset and decay will be variable, although for a given location, the dynamics may be modeled with some accuracy, based on sensed actual conditions, regional rainfall, ground saturation, and particular storm pattern. Therefore, a puddle or hydroplaning risk may be communicated to the driver in terms of location, likely magnitude, and confidence.

[0337] It is noted that these three independent parameters need not all be conveyed to the user. For example, the geographic proximity to an event location may be used to trigger an output. Therefore, no independent output of location may be necessary in this case. In some cases, the magnitude of the threat is relevant, in other cases it is not. In many present systems (e.g., radar detection), threat magnitude is used as a surrogate for risk. However, it is well understood that there are high magnitude artifacts, and low magnitude true threats, and thus this paradigm has limited basis for use. The use of risk or confidence as an independent factor may be express or intermediate. Thus, a confidence threshold may be internally applied before communicating an event to the user. In determining or predicting risk or confidence, it may be preferred to provide a central database. Therefore, generally more complex models may be employed, supported by a richer data set derived from many measurements over an extended period of time. The central database may either directly perform the necessary computations, or convey an appropriate model, preferably limited to the context (e.g., geography, time, general environmental conditions), for local calculation of risk.

[0338] The incorporated references relate, for example, to methods and apparatus which may be used as part of, or in

conjunction with the present invention. Therefore, it is understood that the present invention may integrate other systems, or be integrated in other systems, having complementary, synergistic or related in some way. For example, common sensors, antennas, processors, memory, communications hardware, subsystems and the like may provide a basis for combination, even if the functions are separate.

[0339] The techniques according to the present invention may be applied to other circumstances. Therefore, it is understood that the present invention has, as an object to provide a user interface harnessing the power of statistical methods. Therefore, it is seen that, as an aspect of the present invention, a user interface, a method of providing a user interface, computer software for generating a human-computer interface, and a system providing such a user interface, presents a prediction of a state as well as an indication of a statistical reliability of the prediction.

[0340] Within a vehicular environment, the statistical analysis according to the present invention may also be used to improve performance and the user interface of other systems. In particular, modern vehicles have a number of indicators and warnings. In most known systems, warnings are provided at pre-established thresholds. According to the present invention, a risk analysis may be performed on sensor and other data to provide further information for the user, e.g., an indication of the reliability of the sensor data, or the reliability under the circumstances of the sensor data as basis for decision. (For example, a temperature sensor alone does not indicate whether an engine is operating normally.)

FOURTH EMBODIMENT

[0341] The present example provides a mobile telecommunications device having a position detector, which may be absolute, relative, hybrid, or other type, and preferably a communications device for communicating information, typically location relevant information. The device may serve as a transmitter, transmitting information relevant to the location (or prior locations) of the device, a receiver, receiving information relevant to the location (or prospective location) of the device, or a composite.

[0342] In the case of a transmitter device or stand-alone device, a sensor is provided to determine a condition of or about the device or its context. This sensor may populate a map or mapping system with historical map data.

[0343] During use, a receiving device seeks to output location context-relevant information to the user, and therefore in this embodiment includes a human user interface. Typically, in a vehicle having a general linear or highly constrained type path, a position output is not a critical feature, and may be suppressed in order to simplify the interface. On the other hand, there are a number of navigation system user interfaces suitable for this application, which may be employed as necessary.

[0344] A relative position output, however, may be more appropriate, indicating a relative position (distance, time, etc.) with respect to a potential contextually relevant position. In addition, especially in systems where a plurality of different types of sensors or sensed parameters are available, the nature of the relevant context is also output. Further, as a particular feature of the present invention, a risk or

reliability assessment is indicated to the user. This risk or reliability assessment is preferably statistically derived, although it may be derived through other known means, for example Boolean analysis, fuzzy logic, or neural networks.

[0345] In this case, risk indicates a parameter of an event, if it occurs, relating to a cost or impairment. Reliability relates to the probability that the event will occur, separate from the risk incurred if it did occur. While it is often possible to produce a composite parameter resulting from a reduction in a perceived cost of the risk based on its reliability or probability of occurrence, this composite eliminates useful or critical information.

[0346] For example, the device may provide weather information to the user. Through one or more of meteorological data from standard reporting infrastructure (e.g., NOAA, Accuweather®, etc.), mobile reporting nodes (e.g., mobile devices having weather sensors), satellite data, and other weather data sources, a local weather map is created, preferably limited to contextual relevance. In most cases, this weather map is stored locally; however, if the quality of service for a communications link may be assured, a remote database system serving one or more devices may be provided. For example, a cellular data communications system may be used to communicate with the Internet or a service provider.

[0347] The mobile unit, in operation, determines its position, and, though explicit user input and/or inferential analysis, determines the itinerary or expected path of the device and time sequence. The device (or associated systems) then determines the available weather information for the route and anticipated itinerary (which may itself be dependent on the weather information and/or reaction thereto). This available information is then modeled, for example using a statistical model as described hereinabove, to predict the forthcoming weather conditions for the device or transporting vehicle.

[0348] The device then determines the anticipated conditions and relevance sorts them. In this case, both positive and negative information may be useful, i.e., a warning about bad weather, ice, freezing road surfaces, fog, sand-storms, rain, snow, sleet, hail, sun glare, etc., and an indication of dry, warm, well-illuminated road surfaces may both be useful information.

[0349] In addition, through the analysis, a number of presumptions and predictions are made, for example using a Markov chain. Therefore, while the system may predict a most likely state of affairs, this alone does not provide sufficient information for full reliance thereon. For example, the present road surface freezing conditions thirty miles ahead on a road may be a poor indicator of the road conditions when the device is at that position. In addition to changes in the weather, human action may be taken, such as road salt, sand, traffic, etc., which would alter the conditions, especially in response to a warning. On the other hand, a report of freezing road conditions one mile ahead would generally have high predictive value for the actual road conditions when the device is at that location, assuming that the vehicle is traveling in that direction. In each case, the risk is similar, but the reliability is different; a composite indication would possibly reduce the 30 mile warning below a noise threshold, even though it may be anticipated that this

event would produce substantial traffic and residual delays, even of the event abated before the vehicle approached the respective zone of interest.

[0350] In many cases, there is too much raw information to effectively display to the user all relevant factors in making a reliability or risk determination. Thus, the device outputs a composite estimation of the reliability or risk, which may be a numeric or non-parametric value. This is output in conjunction with the nature of the alert and its contextual proximity. Likewise, a threshold function may be applied to squelch notifications of events with low probability, or of low risk, or both.

[0351] As stated above, there will generally be a plurality of events, each with an associated risk and/or reliability and respective location. The relevance of an event may be predicted based on the dynamics of the vehicle in which the device is transported and the nature of the event. Thus, if the vehicle requires 170 feet to stop from a speed of 60 MPH, a warning which might trigger a panic stop should be issued between 170-500 feet in advance. If the warning is triggered closer than 170 feet, preferably the warning indicates that the evasive maneuver will be necessary, rather than a panic stop. If the warning is given too far in advance, the triggering event may not even exist as the vehicle approaches, leading to a false alert. In that case, it is better to present an advisory rather than an action item.

[0352] In this case, the indication is dependent on a number of factors. First, there is the reliability of the data upon which the warning is based. Second, there is the reliability of the predictive model which extrapolates from, the time the raw data is acquired to the conjunction of the device and the location of the event. Third, there is an assessment of the relative risks of, responding to a false positive versus failing to respond to a false negative. Other risks may also be included in the analysis. Together, the composite risk is output, for example as a color indicator. Using, for example, a tricolor (red-green-blue) light emitting diode (LED) or bicolor LED (red-green), a range of colors may be presented to the user. Likewise, in an audio alert, the loudness or harmonic composition (e.g., harmonic distortion) of a tone or alert signal may indicate the risk or reliability. (In the case of loudness, preferably a microphone measures ambient noise to determine a minimum loudness necessary to indicate an alert).

[0353] The position detector is preferably a GPS or combined GPS-GLOASS receiver, although a network position detection system (e.g., Enhanced 911 type system) may also be employed. Preferably, the position detector typically achieves an accuracy of ± 10 meters, and preferably provides redundant sensors, e.g., GPS and inertial sensors, in case of failure or error of one of the systems. However, for such purposes as pothole reporting, positional accuracies of 1 to 3 meters are preferred. These may be obtained through a combination of techniques, and therefore the inherent accuracy of any one technique need not meet the overall system requirement.

[0354] The position detector may also be linked to a mapping and/or navigation system and possibly a dead reckoning system, in order to pinpoint a position with a geographic landmark. Thus, while precise absolute coordinate measurements of position may be used, it may also be possible to obtain useful data at reduced cost by applying

certain presumptions to available data. In an automotive system, steering angle, compass direction, and wheel revolution information may be available, thereby giving a rough indication of position from a known starting point. When this information is applied to a mapping system, a relatively precise position may be estimated. Therefore, the required precision of another positioning system used in conjunction need not be high, in order to provide high reliability position information. For example, where it is desired to map potholes, positional accuracy of 10 cm may be desired, far more precise than might be available from a normal GPS receiver mounted in a moving automobile. Systems having such accuracy may then be used as part of an automated repair system. However, when combined with other data, location and identification of such events is possible. Further, while the system may include or tolerate inaccuracies, it is generally desired that the system have high precision, as compensation for inaccuracies may be applied.

[0355] A typical implementation of the device provides a memory for storing events and respective locations. Preferably, further information is also stored, such as a time of the event, its character or nature, and other quantitative or qualitative aspects of the information or its source and/or conditions of acquisition. This memory may be a solid state memory or module (e.g., Flash memory), rotating magnetic and/or optical memory devices, or other known types of memory.

[0356] The events to be stored may be detected locally, such as through a detector for radar and/or laser emission source, radio scanner, traffic or road conditions (mechanical vehicle sensors, visual and/or infrared imaging, radar or LIDAR analysis, acoustic sensors, or the like), places of interest which may be selectively identified, itinerary stops, and/or fixed locations. The events may also be provided by a remote transmitter, with no local event detection. Therefore, while means for identifying events having associated locations is a part of the system as a whole, such means need not be included in every apparatus embodying the invention.

[0357] Radar detectors typically are employed to detect operating emitters of X (10.5 GHz), K (25 GHz) and Ka (35 GHz) radar emissions from traffic control devices or law enforcement personnel for detecting vehicle speed by the Doppler effect. These systems typically operate as superheterodyne receivers which sweep one or more bands, and detect a wave having an energy significantly above background. As such, these types of devices are subject to numerous sources of interference, accidental, intentional, and incidental. A known system, Safety Warning System (SWS) licensed by Safety Warning System L.C., Englewood Fla., makes use of such radar detectors to specifically warn motorists of identified road hazards. In this case, one of a set of particular signals is modulated within a radar band by a transmitter operated near the roadway. The receiver decodes the transmission and warns the driver of the hazard.

[0358] LIDAR devices emit an infrared laser signal, which is then reflected off a moving vehicle and analyzed for delay, which relates to distance. Through successive measurements, a speed can be calculated. A LIDAR detector therefore seeks to detect the characteristic pulsatile infrared energy.

[0359] Police radios employ certain restricted frequencies, and in some cases, police vehicles continuously transmit a signal. While certain laws restrict interception of messages

sent on police bands, it is believed that the mere detection and localization of a carrier wave is not and may not be legally restricted. These radios tend to operate below 800 MHz, and thus a receiver may employ standard radio technologies.

[0360] Potholes and other road obstructions and defects have two characteristics. First, they adversely affect vehicles which encounter them. Second, they often cause a secondary effect of motorists seeking to avoid a direct encounter or damage, by slowing or executing an evasive maneuver. These obstructions may therefore be detected in three ways, first, by analyzing the suspension of the vehicle for unusual shocks indicative of such vents; second, by analyzing speed and steering patterns of the subject vehicle and possibly surrounding vehicles; and third, by a visual, ultrasonic, or other direct sensor for detecting the pothole or other obstruction. Such direct sensors are known; however, their effectiveness is limited, and therefore an advance mapping of such potholes and other road obstructions greatly facilitates avoiding vehicle damage and executing unsafe or emergency evasive maneuvers. An advance mapping may also be useful in remediation of such road hazards, as well.

[0361] Traffic jams occur for a variety of reasons. Typically, the road carries traffic above a threshold, and for some reason the normal traffic flow patterns are disrupted. Therefore, there is a dramatic slowdown in the average vehicle speed, and a reduced throughput. Because of the reduced throughput, even after the cause of the disruption has abated, the roadways may take minutes to hours to return to normal. Therefore, it is typically desired to have advance warnings of disruptions, which include accidents, icing, rain, sun glare, lane closures, road debris, police action, exits and entrances, and the like, in order to allow the driver to avoid the involved region or plan accordingly. Abnormal traffic patterns may be detected by comparing a vehicle speed to the speed limit or a historical average speed, by a visual evaluation of traffic conditions, or by broadcast road advisories. High traffic conditions are associated with braking of traffic, which in turn results in deceleration and the illumination of brake lights. Brake lights may be determined by both the specific level of illumination and the center brake light, which is not normally illuminated. Deceleration may be detected by an optical, radar or LIDAR sensor for detecting the speed and/or acceleration state of nearby vehicles.

[0362] While a preferred embodiment of the present invention employs one or more sensors, broadcast advisories, including those from systems according to or compatible with the present invention, provide a valuable source of information relating to road conditions and information of interest at a particular location. Therefore, the sensors need not form a part of the core system. Further, some or all of the required sensors may be integrated with the vehicle electronics ("vetronics"), and therefore the sensors may be provided separately or as options. It is therefore an aspect of an embodiment of the invention to integrate the transceiver, and event database into a vetronics system, preferably using a digital vetronics data bus to communicate with existing systems, such as speed sensors, antilock brake sensors, cruise control, automatic traction system, suspension, engine, transmission, and other vehicle systems.

[0363] According to one aspect of the invention, an adaptive cruise control system is provided which, in at least one

mode of operation, seeks to optimize various factors of vehicle operation, such as fuel efficiency, acceleration, comfort, tire wear, etc. For example, an automatic acceleration feature is provided which determines and/or implements a most fuel-efficient acceleration for a vehicle, for example by controlling throttle and transmission. Too slow an acceleration will result in increased time at suboptimal gear ratios, while too fast acceleration will waste considerable fuel. In addition, it is sometimes more efficient to vary operating speed than to maintain a constant speed, even if time is considered a cost factor. Actual operating efficiency may be measured during vehicle use, allowing an accurate prediction of fuel efficiency under dynamically changing conditions, such as acceleration. Vehicle sensors may assist in making a determination that optimum acceleration is safe; objects both in front and behind the vehicle may be sensed. If an object is in front of the vehicle, and the closing speed would predict a collision, then the acceleration is decreased, or even brakes applied. If an object is rapidly advancing from the rear, the acceleration may be increased in order to avoid impact or reduce speed differential. See, U.S. Pat. No. 6,445,308 (Koike, Sep. 3, 2002, Positional data utilizing inter-vehicle communication method and traveling control apparatus), U.S. Pat. No. 6,436,005 (Bellinger, Aug. 20, 2002, System for controlling drivetrain components to achieve fuel efficiency goals), U.S. Pat. No. 6,418,367 (Toukura, et al., Jul. 9, 2002, Engine transmission control system), expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[0364] Likewise, the operation of a vehicle may be optimized approaching a stop, such as a stop sign, red light, or the like. In this case, the system optimization may be more complex. In addition to fuel economy, wear on brakes, engine (especially if engine drag braking is employed), transmission, tires, suspension, time, accident-related risks, and the like, may also be included. In the case of a stop sign, the issue also arises with respect to a so-called "rolling stop". Such a practice provides that the vehicle does not actually stop, but reaches a sufficiently low speed that the driver could stop if required by circumstances. While this practice is technically considered a traffic violation, in many instances, it is both efficient and useful. For example, a stop line is often located behind an intersection, with impaired visibility. Thus, the vehicle might come to a complete stop, begin to accelerate, and then find that the intersection is not clear, and be forced to stop again. One particular reason for a rolling stop is the storage of energy in the vehicular suspension during acceleration and deceleration. As the vehicle comes to a stop, the springs and shock absorbers of the suspension undergo a damped oscillation, which is relatively comfortable, and destabilizes the vehicle and its contents. To the extent that a rolling stop is safe, efficient and illegal, a change in law is advocate

[0365] According to one aspect of the present invention, the driver may locate a deceleration target and/or a target speed. The vehicle navigation system may assist, recording an exact location of a stop line, geographic (hills, curves, lane marker locations, etc.), weather conditions (ice, sand, puddles, etc.) and other circumstances surrounding the vehicle. Other vehicles obstructions or pedestrians, etc. may also be identified and modeled. Using models of the various components, as well as cost functions associated with each, as well as subjective factors, which may include vehicle occupant time-cost and comfort functions, an optimal acceleration or deceleration profile may be calculated. The system

may therefore express control over throttle, brakes, transmission shifts, clutch, valve timing, suspension controls, etc., in order to optimize vehicle performance. Of course, a fail-safe and dead-man override would generally be provided to ensure that the vehicle operator endorses the automated control operation.

[0366] See U.S. Pat. Nos. (expressly incorporated herein by reference): U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,503,170; 6,470,265; 6,445,308; 6,292,743; 6,292,736; 6,233,520; 6,230,098; 6,220,986; 6,202,022; 6,199,001; 6,182,000; 6,178,377; 6,174,262; 6,098,016; 6,092,014; 6,092,005; 6,091,956; 6,070,118; 6,061,003; 6,052,645; 6,034,626; 6,014,605; 5,990,825; 5,983,154; 5,938,707; 5,931,890; 5,924,406; 5,835,881; 5,774,073; 6,442,473; 4,704,610; 5,712,632; 5,973,616; and 6,008,741.

[0367] The radio used for the communications subsystem can be radio frequency AM, FM, spread spectrum, microwave, light (infrared, visible, UV) or laser or maser beam (millimeter wave, infrared, visible), or for short distance communications, acoustic or other communications may be employed. The system preferably employs an intelligent transportation system (ITS) or Industrial, Scientific and Medical (ISM) allocated band, such as the 915 MHz, 2.4 MHz, 5.8 GHz or DSRC band. (The 2.350-2.450 GHz band corresponds to the emission of microwave ovens, and thus the band suffers from potentially significant interference). The 24.125 GHz band, corresponding to K-band police radar, may also be available; however, transmit power in this band is restricted, e.g., less than about 9 mW. The signal may be transmitted through free space or in paths including fiber optics, waveguides, cables or the like. The communication may be short or medium range omnidirectional, line of sight, reflected (optical, radio frequency, retroreflector designs), satellite, secure or non-secure, or other modes of communications between two points, that the application or state-of-the-art may allow. The particular communications methodology is not critical to the invention, although a preferred embodiment employs a spread spectrum microwave transmission.

[0368] A particularly preferred communications scheme employs steerable high gain antennas, for example a phased array or mechanically steered directional antenna, which allows a higher spatial reuse of communications bands and higher signal to noise ratio that an omnidirectional antenna.

[0369] A number of Dedicated Short Range Communications (DSRC) systems have been proposed or implemented in order to provide communications between vehicles and roadside systems. These DSRC systems traditionally operate in the 900 MHz band for toll collection, while the FCC has recently made available 75 MHz in the 5.850-5.925 GHz range for such purposes, on a co-primary basis with microwave communications, satellite uplinks, government radar, and other uses. However, spectrum is also available in the so-called U-NII band, which encompasses 5.15-5.25 GHz (indoors, 50 mW) and 5.25-5.35 (outdoors, 250 mW). A Japanese ITS ("ETC") proposal provides a 5.8 GHz full duplex interrogation system with a half duplex transponder, operating at about 1 megabit per second transmission rates.

[0370] In August 2001, the DSRC standards committee (ASTM 17.51) selected 802.11a as the underlying radio technology for DSRC applications within the 5.850 to 5.925 GHz band. The IEEE 802.11a standard was modified, in a

new standard referred to as 802.11a R/A (roadside applications) to meet DSRC deployment requirements, and includes OFDM modulation with a lower data rate, 27 MBS for DSRC instead of 54 MBS for 802.11a.

[0371] Proposed DSRC applications include:

[0372] Emergency Vehicle Warning—Currently, emergency vehicles only have sirens and lights to notify of their approach. With DSRC, the emergency vehicle can have the traffic system change traffic lights to clear traffic along its intended route. Also, this route information can be broadcast to other cars to provide user/vehicle specific directions to reduce collisions.

[0373] Traffic congestion data can be exchanged between vehicles. On-coming traffic exchanges information on traffic status ahead so that vehicle navigation systems can dynamically provide the best route to a destination.

[0374] An industry standard interoperable tolling platform could expand the use of toll systems or processing payments at parking lots, drive-through establishments (food, gas), etc.

[0375] Safety applications could benefit from use of DSRC. The DSRC automaker consortium (DaimlerChrysler, GM, Ford, Toyota, Nissan, & VW) are seeking ways to enhance passenger safety with DSRC communications. For example, in a typical collision, a car has only 10 milliseconds to tighten seatbelts, deploy airbags, etc. If an additional advance warning of 5 milliseconds was provided, one could tighten seatbelts, warm-up the airbags, etc. to prepare the car for collision. Using radar, GPS data, etc. a car can determine that a collision is imminent, and it can then notify the car about to be hit to prepare for collision.

[0376] It is noted that the present technology has the capability for streamlining transportation systems, by communicating traffic conditions almost immediately and quickly allowing decisions to be made by drivers to minimize congestion and avoid unnecessary slowdowns. A particular result of the implementation of this technology will be a reduction in vehicular air pollution, as a result of reduced traffic jams and other inefficient driving patterns. To further the environmental protection aspect of the invention, integration of the database with cruise control and driver information systems may reduce inefficient vehicle speed fluctuations, by communicating to the driver or controlling the vehicle at an efficient speed. As a part of this system, therefore, adaptive speed limits and intelligent traffic flow control devices may be provided. For example, there is no need for fixed time traffic lights if the intersection is monitored for actual traffic conditions. By providing intervehicle communications and identification, such an intelligent system is easier to implement. Likewise, static speed limits may be eliminated in favor of a system which employs intelligence to optimize the traffic flow patterns based on actual existing conditions and safe and reasonable limits, rather than a static set of rules which are applied universally and without intelligence. See:

[0377] ASTM E2213-02—Standard Specification for Telecommunications and Information Exchange Between Roadside and Vehicle Systems—5 GHz Band Dedicated Short Range Communications (DSRC) Medium Access Control (MAC) and Physical Layer (PHY) Specifications (This standard, ASTM E2213-02—Standard Specification for Telecommunications and Information Exchange

Between Roadside and Vehicle Systems—5 GHz Band Dedicated Short Range Communications (DSRC) Medium Access Control (MAC) and Physical Layer (PHY) Specifications, describes a medium access control layer (MAC) and physical layer (PHY) specification for wireless connectivity using dedicated short-range communications (DSRC) services. This standard is based on and refers to the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) standard 802.11 (Wireless LAN Medium Access Control and Physical Layer specifications), and standard 802.11a (Wireless LAN Medium Access Control and Physical Layer specifications High-Speed Physical Layer in the 5 GHz band). This standard is an extension of IEEE 802.11 technology into the high-speed vehicle environment. It contains the information necessary to explain the difference between IEEE 802.11 and IEEE 802.11a operating parameters required to implement a mostly high-speed data transfer service in the 5.9-GHz Intelligent Transportation Systems Radio Service (ITS-RS) band or the Unlicensed National Infrastructure (UNII) band, as appropriate).

[0378] ANSI X3.38-1988 (R1994)—Codes—Identification of States, the District of Columbia, and the Outlying and Associated Areas of the United States for Information Interchange

[0379] ASTM PS111-98—Specification for Dedicated Short Range Communication (DSRC) Physical Layer Using Microwave in the 902 to 928 MHz Band

[0380] ASTM PS105-99—Specification for Dedicated Short Range Communication (DSRC) Data Link Layer: Medium Access and Logical Link Control

[0381] CEN Draft Document: prENV278/9/#65 Dedicated Short Range Communication (DSRC)—Application Layer (Layer 7)

[0382] IEEE Std 1489-1999—Standard for Data Dictionaries for Intelligent Transportation Systems—Part 1: Functional Area Data Dictionaries

[0383] GSS Global Specification for Short Range Communication. The platform for Interoperable Electronic Toll Collection and Access Control

[0384] ISO 3166-1:1997—Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions—Part 1: Country codes

[0385] ISO 3779:1983—Road vehicles—Vehicle identification numbering (VIN)—Content and structure

[0386] ISO/IEC 7498-1:1994—Information technology—Open Systems Interconnection—Basic Reference Model: The Basic Model

[0387] ISO 7498-2:1989—Information processing systems—Open Systems Interconnection—Basic Reference Model—Part 2: Security Architecture

[0388] ISO/IEC 7498-3:1997—Information technology—Open Systems Interconnection—Basic Reference Model: Naming and addressing

[0389] ISO/IEC 7498-4:1989—Information processing systems—Open Systems Interconnection—Basic Reference Model—Part 4: Management framework

- [0390] ISO 3780:1983—Road vehicles—World manufacturer identifier (WMI) code
- [0391] ISO/IEC 8824-1:1995—Information technology—Abstract Syntax Notation One (ASN.1): Specification of basic notation
- [0392] ISO/IEC 8825-2:1996—Information technology—ASN.1 encoding rules: Specification of Packed Encoding Rules (PER)
- [0393] ISO TC204 WG15 Committee Of Japan TICS/ DSRC—DSRC Application Layer High Data Rate mobile environment
- [0394] ASTM E2158-01—Standard Specification for Dedicated Short Range Communication (DSRC) Physical Layer Using Microwave in the 902-928 MHz Band
- [0395] ASTM PS 105-99—Standard Provisional Specification for Dedicated Short Range Communication (DSRC) Data Link Layer
- [0396] IEEE Std 1455-1999—Standard for Message Sets for Vehicle/Roadside Communications
- [0397] IEEE Std 802.11-1999—Information Technology—Telecommunications and information exchange between systems—Local and metropolitan area networks—Specific requirements—Part 11: Wireless LAN Medium Access Control and Physical Layer specifications
- [0398] IEEE Std 802.11a-1999—Information Technology—Telecommunications and information exchange between systems—Local and metropolitan area networks—Specific requirements—Part 11: Wireless LAN Medium Access Control and Physical Layer specifications: High Speed Physical Layer in the 5 GHz band
- [0399] Each of which is expressly incorporated herein in its entirety.
- [0400] It is noted that the present technology has the capability for streamlining transportation systems, by communicating traffic conditions almost immediately and quickly allowing decisions to be made by drivers to minimize congestion and avoid unnecessary slowdowns. A particular result of the implementation of this technology will be a reduction in vehicular air pollution, as a result of reduced traffic jams and other inefficient driving patterns. To further the environmental protection aspect of the invention, integration of the database with cruise control and driver information systems may reduce inefficient vehicle speed fluctuations, by communicating to the driver or controlling the vehicle at an efficient speed. As a part of this system, therefore, adaptive speed limits and intelligent traffic flow control devices may be provided. For example, there is no need for fixed time traffic lights if the intersection is monitored for actual traffic conditions. By providing intervehicle communications and identification, such an intelligent system is easier to implement. Likewise, the 55 miles per hour speed limit that was initially presented in light of the "oil crisis" in the 1970's, and parts of which persist today even in light of relatively low petroleum pricing and evidence that the alleged secondary health and safety benefit is marginal or non-existent, may be eliminated in favor of a system which employs intelligence to optimize the traffic flow

patterns based on actual existing conditions, rather than a static set of rules which are applied universally and without intelligence.

[0401] The communications device may be a transmitter, receiver or transceiver, transmitting event information, storing received event information, or exchanging event information, respectively. Thus, while the system as a whole typically involves a propagation of event information between remote databases, each system embodying the invention need not perform all functions.

[0402] In a retroreflector system design, signal to noise ratio is improved by spatial specificity, and typically coherent detection. An interrogation signal is emitted, which is modulated and redirected back toward its source, within a relatively wide range, by a receiver. Thus, while the receiver may be "passive", the return signal has a relatively high amplitude (as compared to nonretroreflective designs under comparable conditions) and the interrogator can spatially discriminate and coherently detect the return signal. Both optical and RF retroreflector systems exist. This technique may also be used to augment active communications schemes, for example allowing a scanning or array antenna to determine an optimal position or spatial sensitivity or gain, or a phase array or synthetic aperture array to define an optimal spatial transfer function, even in the presence of multipath and other types of signal distortion and/or interference.

[0403] According to one embodiment of the invention, a plurality of antenna elements are provided. These may be, for example, a set of high gain antennas oriented in different directions, or an array of antennas, acting together. Accordingly, the antenna structure permits a spatial division multiplexing to separate channels, even for signals which are otherwise indistinguishable or overlapping. For example, this permits a single antenna system to communicate with a plurality of other antenna systems at the same time, with reduced mutual interference. Of course, these communications channels may be coordinated to further avoid overlap. For example, the communications band may be subdivided into multiple channels, with respective communications sessions occurring on different channels. Likewise, a plurality of different bands may be simultaneously employed, for example 802.11g (2.4 GHz), 802.11a (5.4 GHz), and 802.11a R/A (5.9 GHz). In another embodiment, a mechanically scanning high gain antenna may provide directional discrimination. Such an antenna may be, for example, a cylindrical waveguide electromagnetically reflective at one end, having a diameter corresponding to the wavelength of the band, and with a probe extending about half-way into the cylinder perpendicularly to its axis, at about a quarter wavelength from the reflective end. Likewise, a so-called "Pringles Can Antenna", which has been termed a Yagi design, and known modifications thereof, have been deemed useful for extending the range of 802.11b communications.

[0404] According to one embodiment, a radome may be provided on the roof of a vehicle, having therein an antenna array with, for example, 4-64 separate elements. These elements, are, for example, simple omnidirectional dipole antennas. The size and spacing of the antenna elements is generally determined by the wavelength of the radiation. However, this distance may be reduced by using a different dielectric than air. For example, see U.S. Pat. No. 6,452,565,

expressly incorporated herein by reference. See, also antenova.com (Antenova Ltd., Stow-cum-Quy, Cambridge, UK).

[0405] A preferred radome also includes GPS antenna, as well as cellular radio antenna (IS-95, PCS, GSM, etc.).

[0406] In a preferred embodiment, the communications device employs an unlicensed band, such as 900 MHz (902-928 MHz), FRS, 49 MHz, 27 MHz, 2.4-2.5 GHz, 5.4 GHz, 5.8 GHz, etc. Further, in order to provide noise immunity and band capacity, spread spectrum RF techniques are preferred.

[0407] As appropriate, multiple-input multiple-output (MIMO) antenna radio technologies may be employed to increase channel bandwidth, though in a mobile system the benefits of this technology may be limited.

[0408] In one embodiment, communications devices are installed in automobiles. Mobile GPS receivers in the vehicles provide location information to the communications devices. These GPS receivers may be integral or separate from the communications devices. Event detectors, such as police radar and laser (LIDAR) speed detectors, traffic and weather condition detectors, road hazard detectors (pot holes, debris, accidents, ice, mud and rock slides, drunk drivers, etc.), traffic speed detectors (speedometer reading, sensors for detecting speed of other vehicles), speed limits, checkpoints, toll booths, etc., may be provided as inputs to the system, or appropriate sensors integrated therein. The system may also serve as a beacon to good Samaritans, emergency workers and other motorists in the event of accident, disablement, or other status of the host vehicle.

[0409] It is noted that at frequencies above about 800 MHz, the transmitter signal may be used as a part of a traffic radar system. Therefore, the transmitted signal may serve both as a communications stream and a sensor emission. Advantageously, an electronically steerable signal is emitted from an array. Reflections of the signal are then received and analyzed for both reflection time coefficients and Doppler shifts. Of course, a radar may use static antennas and/or mechanically scanning antennas, and need not completely analyze the return signals.

[0410] Functions similar to those of the Cadillac (GM) On-Star system may also be implemented, as well as alarm and security systems, garage door opening and "smart home" integration. Likewise, the system may also integrate with media and entertainment systems. See, U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,418,424; 6,400,996; 6,081,750; 5,920,477; 5,903,454; 5,901,246; 5,875,108; 5,867,386; 5,774,357, expressly incorporated herein by reference. These systems may reside in a fixed location, within the vehicle, or distributed between fixed and mobile locations. The system may also integrate with a satellite radio system, and, for example, the satellite radio antenna may be included in the antenna system for other communication systems within the vehicle.

[0411] The memory stores information describing the event as well as the location of the event. Preferably, the memory is not organized as a matrix of memory addresses corresponding to locations, e.g., a "map", but rather in a record format having explicitly describing the event and location, making storage of the sparse matrix more efficient and facilitating indexing and sorting on various aspects of each data record. Additional information, such as the time of

the event, importance and nature of the event, expiration time of the event, source and reliability of the event information, and commercial and/or advertising information associated with the event may be stored. The information in the memory is processed to provide a useful output, which may be a simple alphanumeric, voice (audible) or graphic output of the telecommunications system. In any case, the output is preferably presented in a sorted order according to pertinence, which is a combination of the abstract importance of the event and proximity, with "proximity" weighted higher than "importance". Once a communication or output cycle is initiated, it may continue until the entire memory is output, or include merely output a portion of the contents, for example the contextually relevant portion having a risk and/or reliability exceeding a threshold.

[0412] Typically, a navigation system includes a raster "map" of geographic regions, which is further linked to a database of features, geocoded to the map. Alternately, the map may itself be a set of geocoded features, without a raster representation. Various events and features defined by the sensors provided by the present system, or received through a communications link, may therefore be overlaid or integrated into the geocoded features. Advantageously, all of the geocoded features are separately defined from the static geography, and therefore may be separately managed and processed. For example, geologic features are persistent, and absent substantial human activity or natural disaster, are persistent. Other features, such as roads, attractions, and other conditions, are subject to change periodically. Each geocoded feature (or indeed, any feature or event, whether geocoded or not) may be associated with a timeconstant representing an estimated life; as the time since last verification increases, the probability of change also increases. This may be used to provide a user with an estimation of the reliability of the navigation system, or indeed any output produced by the system. It is noted that the timeconstant may also be replaced with an expression or analysis which is a function of time, that is, to account for diurnal, weekly, seasonal, annual, etc. changes. Such expression or analysis need not be repetitive; for example, after an abnormality in traffic flow, traffic patterns tend to remain distorted for a long period (e.g., hours) after the abnormality is corrected, or after a driver passes the abnormality; this distortion is both temporally and spatially related to the original abnormality, and may be statistically estimated. Chaos, fractal and/or wavelet theories may be particularly relevant to this analysis, and employed as desired to analyze or present the data.

[0413] In outputting information directly to a human user, thresholds are preferably applied to limit output to events which are of immediate consequence and apparent importance. For example, if the communications device is installed in a vehicle, and the information in the memory indicates that a pothole, highway obstruction, or police radar "trap" is ahead, the user is informed. Events in the opposite direction (as determined by a path or velocity record extracted from the position detector) are not output, nor are such events far away. On the other hand, events such as road icing, flooding, or the like, are often applicable to all nearby motorists, and are output regardless of direction of travel, unless another communications device with event detector indicates that the event would not affect the local communications device or the vehicle in which it is installed.

[0414] According to one embodiment of the invention, relevance of information and information reliability are represented as orthogonal axes. For each set of facts or interpretation (hypothesis) thereof, a representation is projected on the plane defined by these two axes. This representation for each event generally takes the form of a bell curve, although the statistics for each curve need not be Gaussian. The area under the superposed curves, representing the constellation of possible risks or relevances, are then integrated, starting with relevance=1.00 (100%), proceeding toward relevance=0.00 (0%). As the area under a given peak exceeds a threshold, which need not be constant, and indeed may be a function of relevance or reliability, and/or subjective factors, the event is presented as a warning output to the user. This method ensures that the output includes the most relevant events before less relevant events, but excluding those events with low reliability. Using a dynamic threshold, highly relevant events of low reliability are presented, while low relevance events of even modest reliability are suppressed. It is possible for the threshold to exceed 1.0, that is, a complete suppression of irrelevant events, regardless of reliability.

[0415] Alternately, the event projection into the relevance-reliability plane may be normalized by a function which accounts for the desired response function, with a static threshold applied.

[0416] The reason why the determination employs an integration of a stochastic distribution, rather than a simple scalar representation of events, is that this allows certain events with broad distributions, but a mean value below than of another event with a narrower distribution, to be ranked ahead, as being more significant. This has potentially greater impact for events having decidedly non-normal distributions, for example with significant kurtosis, skew, multimodality, etc., and in which a mean value has no readily interpretable meaning.

[0417] The present invention therefore provides a method, comprising receiving a set of facts or predicates, analyzing the set of facts or predicates to determine possible events, determining, from the possible events, a relevance to a user and associated statistical distribution thereof, and presenting a ranked set of events, wherein said ranking is dependent on both relevance and associated statistical distribution. The associated statistical distribution, for example, describes a probability of existence of an associated event, and the relevance comprises a value function associated with that event if it exists, wherein said ranking comprises an analysis of probability-weighted benefits from each event to an overall utility function for the user. The ranking may comprises a combinatorial analysis of competing sets of rankings.

[0418] It is therefore apparent that each set of events, that is, a set of facts or factual predicates, or conclusions drawn therefrom, are represented as a distribution projected into a relevance-reliability plane. On the abscissa, relevance has a scale of 0 to 1. At zero relevance, the information is considered not useful, whereas at a relevance value approaching 1, the information is considered very relevant. Since the determination of relevance is generally neither exact nor precise, there is an associated reliability, that is, there is a range of possibilities and their likelihoods relating to a set of presumed facts. The various possibilities sum to

the whole, which means that the area under the curve (integral from 0 to 1 of the distribution curve) should sum to 1, although various mathematical simplifications and intentional or unintentional perturbations may alter this integrated area. Relevance requires a determination of context, which may include both objective and subjective aspects. Communicated relevance information typically should be determined with respect to the requestor, not the requestee, although in certain circumstances, the requestee (possibly with adjustments) may serve as a proxy for the requestor. There are a number of methods for weighting higher relevances above lower relevances. One way is to determine a transfer function which masks the normalized distribution with a weighting function. This may be a simple linear ramp, or a more complex function. As discussed above, a numeric integration from 1 to 0, with a respective decision made when the integral of a "curve" representing an event exceeds a threshold, allowing multiple decisions to be ranked, is another possibility.

[0419] Using a hierachal analysis, this process may occur at multiple levels, until each significant hypothesis is analyzed, leaving only putative hypothesis which are insignificant, that is, with sufficient external information to distinguish between the respective possibilities. In order to simplify the output set, redundancy is resolved in favor of the most specific significant hypothesis, while insignificant hypotheses are truncated (not presented). As the number of significant hypotheses becomes in excess of a reasonable number (which may be an adaptive or subjective determination), related hypotheses (either by the nature of the events or the nature of an anticipated responses) may be grouped. Relatedness of hypotheses may be determined based on commonality of factual predicates, resulting user action, or other commonality. That is, the grouping may be the same as, or different from, the hierarchy of the analysis.

[0420] It is also noted that the projection need not be in the relevance-reliability plane. Rather, the analysis is intended to present useful information: that which represents information having a potential materiality to the user, and which has significance in a statistical sense. Therefore, a data analysis which does not purely separate relevance and reliability, but nevertheless allows a general balancing of these issues, may nevertheless be suitable.

[0421] Referring now to the aforementioned auction for control of bandwidth, in which a bidder communicates a value function which must be resolved by the recipient, this type of relevance-reliability analysis may be used to normalize utility functions between respective bidders. To determine a cost, a local set of events or factual predicates are analyzed with respect to a received context. The various hypotheses are projected onto a relevance-reliability plane. With respect to each bidder, the projection of each event is normalized by that bidder's conveyed utility or valuation function. It is useful to maintain the stochastic distribution representation for each event, since this facilitates application of the bidder valuation utility function. The winning bidder is the bidder with the highest normalized integration of the event representation in the relevance-reliability projection plane.

[0422] Advantageously, according to an embodiment of the present invention, output information is presented to the user using a statistical and/or probabilistic analysis of both

risk and reliability. Risk is, for example, the estimated quantitative advantage or disadvantage of an event. In the case of competing risks, a cost function may be employed to provide a normalized basis for representation and analysis. While the risk is generally thought of as a scalar value, there is no particular reason why this cannot itself be a vector or multiparameter function, such as a mean and standard deviation or confidence interval. Reliability is, for example, the probability that the risk is as estimated. Likewise, the reliability may also be a scalar value, but may also be a complex variable, vector or multiparameter function.

[0423] Since a preferred use of the risk and reliability estimates is as part of a user interface, these are preferably represented in their simplest forms, which will typically take a scalar form, such as by projection from a high dimensionality space to a low dimensionality space, or an elimination or truncation of information which is predicted to be of low usefulness in a decision-making process. However, where the risk, or risk profile, cannot be simply represented, or such representation loses significant meaning, a higher dimensionality representation may be employed. For human user interfaces, graphic displays are common, which generally support two-dimensional graphics, representing three dimensional distributions, for example, x, y, and brightness or color. Using a time sequence of graphic elements, one or more additional dimensions may be represented. Likewise, some graphic displays are capable of representing depth, and thus support an additional degree of freedom. Therefore, it can be seen that the risk and reliability are not intrinsically limited to scalar representations, and where the quantity and quality of the information to be presented warrants, a higher dimensionality or additional degrees of freedom may be presented.

[0424] In a voice output system, a sequence of information may be output, trading immediacy and semantic complexity for information content. Complex sounds or other grammars may also be employed, especially where the relevance has a short time-constant.

[0425] According to one embodiment of the invention, risk and reliability are separately output to the user. It is understood that both risk and reliability may be output in an integral or interrelated form as well. For example, a driver might wish to employ a radar detector. A traditional radar detector emits a signal indicative of signal type and signal strength. Based on these emissions, the driver decides on a course of action. Ideally, the driver responds immediately (if necessary) to the first detected signal, even if this is of low signal strength or potentially an artifact. On the other hand, the system according to the present invention may analyze the reliability of the detected signal as an indicator of risk. For example, on a highway, an X band radar signal directed from in front of the vehicle, which commences at relatively high signal strength, and which occurs in a location having a past history of use as a location for monitoring traffic speeds for enforcement purposes, and which was recently confirmed (e.g., within the past 5 minutes) as being an active traffic enforcement site, would be deemed a high reliability signal. On the other hand, on the same highway, if a continuously emitted (or half-wave 60 Hz emission from a microwave oven) X band signal is detected, in a location where such a signal is consistently detected by other drivers, and none is cited for violation of traffic laws, then this detection would be considered a low reliability detection of

a risk or traffic enforcement radar. While a threshold of reliability may be applied, and thus a "squench" applied to the risk output, preferably, the reliability signal is presented separately. When risk and reliability are both high, for example, an enhanced alert may be presented. When risk is high but reliability low, an indication may be nevertheless presented to the user for his analysis. This scheme would assist the user in dealing with statistical aberrations, as well as intentional masking of conditions. For example, a traffic enforcement radar system may be intentionally used in an area of normal interference with radar detectors; the system according to the present invention would present an alert to the user of this possibility.

[0426] Such analysis is not limited to radar detectors. For example, a bridge may be likely to freeze (i.e., become slippery) under certain conditions. Some of these conditions may be detected, such as local weather, past precipitation, and the like. Indeed, recent road sand and salt may also be accounted for. However, uncertainty remains as to the actual road surface conditions, which may change over the course of a few minutes. Therefore, the system according to the present invention may determine the risk, i.e., slippery road conditions, and the reliability of its determination. This reliability may be estimated from actual past experience of the system in question, as well as from other systems including appropriate sensors, for which data is available.

[0427] According to the present invention, to risk tolerance, or more properly stated, the reliability-adjusted risk tolerance of a user may be used to "normalize" or otherwise adjust the outputs of the system. Thus, for example, an emergency vehicle may take higher risks than would normally be acceptable. Clearly, if there is a 100% probability that the vehicle will skid on black ice on the road ahead, this risk would be unacceptable for any rational driver seeking to continue driving. On the other hand, an ambulance driver on an urgent call may be willing to undertake a 5% risk that the road is slippery, while a normal driver might be willing to accept only a 1% risk. The ambulance driver, in the above example, generally takes a number of risks, and caution must be balanced to assure that the goals are met, and indeed that risks are not increased as a result of undue caution. For example, driving at a slow speed increases the risk that the vehicle will be rear-ended, or that the driver will fall asleep during the trip. Even pulling over the side of the road does not eliminate risk to zero, so it is important to do a comparative risk analysis.

[0428] The risk/reliability analysis is not limited to driving condition alerts. For example, the system may be used to advise the user regarding the need for preventive maintenance or repair. The system may also be used as part of an entertainment system: What is the likelihood that a channel will broadcast an undesired commercial within the next minute? Should a recording stored in memory be purged in favor of a new recording? What radio station will be most acceptable to the set of occupants of the vehicle?

[0429] In some cases, therefore, the risk/reliability analysis may be used by an automated system, and need not be presented directly to the user; in other instances, the set of information is for presentation to the user.

[0430] Another aspect of the invention involves a method for presentation of a multidimensional risk profile to a user. According to prior systems, a "risk" is presented to a user as

a binary signal, modulated binary signal, and/or a scalar value. A signal type (e.g., band, SWS code, etc. for a radar detector, temperature, wind speed, wind direction, barometric pressure and trend, for a weather gauge) may also be expressed. Accordingly, as set of orthogonal scalar values is presented representing different parameters. Certainly, graphic representations of mean and standard deviation are well known; however, the reliability aspect of the present invention is not analogous to a simple standard deviation—it typically represents something qualitatively different. For example, a determination of the magnitude of the risk variable carries its own standard deviation, which, though a possible element of a reliability determination, does not address the issue of how the measured parameter (with its own statistical parameters of measurement) relates to the underlying issue, or the impact of the underlying issue on the recipient. In some cases, there will be a direct relationship and near 100% correlation between the measured parameter and risk variable; in other cases, the measured parameter has poor correlation with the risk variable, and further analysis is necessary.

[0431] The system preferably ages event data intelligently, allowing certain types of events to expire or decrease in importance. A traffic accident event more than 12 hours old is likely stale, and therefore would not be output, and preferably is purged; however, locations which are the site of multiple accidents may be tagged as hazardous, and the hazard event output to the user as appropriate. A temporal analysis may also be applied to the event data, and therefore diurnal variations and the like accounted for. Examples of this type of data include rush hour traffic, sun glare (adjusted for season, etc.), vacation routes, and the like.

[0432] Thus, user outputs may be provided based on proximity, importance, and optionally other factors, such as direction, speed (over or under speed limit), time-of-day, date or season (e.g., sun glare), freshness of event recordation, and the like.

[0433] According to the present invention, a stored event may be analyzed for reliability. Such reliability may be determined by express rules or algorithms, statistically, or otherwise, generally in accordance with particular characteristics of the type of event. Thus, even where a detected value, at the time of measurement, has a high reliability for indicating an event or condition, over time the reliability may change.

[0434] U.S. Pat. No. 6,175,803 (Chowanic, et al., Ford Global Technologies, Inc.), expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety, relates to a telematics system which employs routing criteria which include a statistical risk index. The route and associated risks may be output together, and a risk-minimized route may be automatically selected.

[0435] According to a preferred embodiment, audio and/or visual warnings are selectively provided. In this case, a warning of only a single event is provided at any given time. Typically, a visual alert indicator illuminates, and an initial tone alert indicates the nature of an urgent warning. The visual indicator also outputs a strength or proximity of the alert. Typically, these basic indicators are illuminated red, because this color is societally associated with alerts, and this causes less constriction of the iris of the eye at night. A separate visual indicator, such as a bar graph, meter, or color

coded indicator (e.g., bicolor or tricolor light emitting diode) provides a separate reliability or risk of reliance indication. After acoustically indicating the nature and strength or proximity of the warning, an acoustic indication of reliability or risk of reliance may be enunciated. The visual reliability or risk of reliance indicator may be constantly active, while the warning indicator is preferably selectively active when an alert is present.

[0436] Typically, alerts will be classified by category, and a separate algorithm applied to determine the appropriate reliability factor, for example an exponential decay. As updated information is received or becomes available, this replaces presumably less reliable older data as a basis for a reliability determination. The system may also anticipate a geographic change in location of the event, for example a traffic enforcement officer in motion, or a traffic jam, along with reliability information for the prediction.

[0437] When multiple alerts are simultaneously active, low priority alerts are suppressed, and the active higher-priority alerts alternate. Priority of alerts, in this case, may be determined based on the nature of the alert, contextual proximity, the reliability of the measurement of the alert, the reliability of reliance on the recorded information, and a comparison of the respective alerts and potential interaction.

[0438] At any time, there will likely be a number "issues" to be analyzed. In order to provide an efficient user interface, these issues are analyzed to determine urgency or importance, and only those which meet criteria are particularly presented. For example, the fact that the fuel gauge reads half-full is not normally a cause for particular alert. However, if the vehicle is passing a gas station which has a relatively low price, the alert may be welcome. Without further information, these facts together reach a sufficient importance to produce an alert. See, U.S. Pat. No. 6,484,088 (Reimer, Nov. 19, 2002, Fuel optimization system with improved fuel level sensor), expressly incorporated herein by reference. That is, the risk (need for fuel; capacity to purchase additional fuel; distance to next gas station and margin of safety given present fuel supply; etc.), and the reliability (fuel price predicted to be cheaper than other fuel along predicted vehicle path before urgent need for fuel; etc.), together meet a "threshold" (which, of course, may be particularly dynamic in nature). Additional information, however, may reduce the importance of this information below a threshold level; for example, the present trip is time critical; the same gas station is predicted to be passed a number of times before the fuel tank is empty; other stations predicted to be passed have lower prices; pricing is anticipated to be more advantageous at a later time (e.g., gas sale on Monday; anticipated trip to another locale with lower gas prices; etc.), etc. Thus, the set of facts including available information is analyzed, for example using Bayesian techniques, Hierarchical Markov Models or other techniques, to predict the importance to the user. Each of these facts or predicates, or sets of facts and/or predicates, of course, has its own estimated reliability, and thus the overall conclusion is thereby limited. Accordingly, this reliability of the logical conclusion is output along with the conclusion itself.

[0439] With sufficient facts or predicates available, there may be competing outputs, both relating to fuel use, conservation, and refill strategies and otherwise. Thus, the system must compare the competing prospective outputs to

determine which are actually presented. It may be useful in such circumstances to compute a cost function for presenting this data. In this way, for example, an advertiser or other external influence maybe permitted to impact the overall analysis, e.g., presentation of data through the user interface. This cost function may also balance driving conditions: for example, when stopped at a traffic light, less urgent messages may be presented with lower risk of driver distraction. The user interface typically supports only a limited amount of information to be conveyed, and ergonomics may further limit the amount of information. Thus, the issue of screening information for presentation to the user typically arises.

[0440] The cost function is analogous to a utility function, which may be perturbed or modified based on subjective factors. As such, automated negotiations are possible based on bidder and auctioneer contexts, and predetermined and/or adaptive parameters. By communicating complex, non-normalized information, and allowing an ex post facto reduction in dimensionality or degrees of freedom, greater efficiency may be obtained.

[0441] In choosing which information to present, a preferred embodiment according to the present invention analyzes the risk and reliability, to produce a composite weight or cost, which may then be compared with other weights or costs, as well as a dynamic threshold, which may be separately analyzed or implemented as a part of a cost function. Taking a simple case first, information which is immediately applicable, represents a high degree of risk, and which is reliable, is presented with a highest weighting. If the same indication is unreliable, then the presentation is deweighted. A high risk with a low reliability would compete with a low risk with high reliability for presentation through the user interface. As previously discussed, a cost function may be used to factor in external or artificial considerations as well.

[0442] If the risk or reliability changes as a function of time, and this is the significant temporal relationship, then these factors may be changed updated, and the user interface modified according to a present condition. In some cases, the presentation relating to an event need not be continuous. That is, as a result of presentation to the user, the cost function is dynamically modified, and the event is not again represented until the cost function exceeds the presentation threshold. The change in cost function may indeed be purely a function of time, or take into consideration dynamically changing variables. For example, if a traffic jam is ten minutes ahead on the road (using predicted travel speeds), and there are a number of opportunities within the path leading toward the traffic to circumvent it, the urgency of taking a detour is low. As the time until the traffic decreases, or as the last opportunities for detour are approaching, any decision by the user become critical. This required decision is, in this case, the risk. On the other hand, the traffic may be caused by a traffic light or other temporary obstruction. Therefore, the reliability of the risk indication will depend on an analysis of the surrounding circumstances and the likelihood that the predicted risk will be the actual risk. Time, in this case, is not clearly independent of the other factors, and therefore need not represent an independent output to the user. It is noted that such analysis of risk and reliability may be facilitated by a wavelet domain transform, which need not be a discrete wavelet transform (DWT), although the binary decomposition properties of this transform may prove convenient or advantageous in various

circumstances. In particular, the purpose of the transform is not necessarily a storage or computation-efficient representation; rather, the purpose is to significantly separate degrees of freedom to simplify the statistical and probabilistic analysis. It is also noted that the particular wavelets may be complex, high dimensionality, asymmetric functions, and need not be wavelets of a traditional kind used in image or generic data compression.

[0443] It may also be useful to transform the data into various domains, such as time, frequency, wavelet, alternate iterated function system, or the like, for filtering and denoising. Preferably, adaptive thresholds are employed, although in many instances the filtering may be performed in a context-independent manner. On the other hand, where appropriate, the filtering may be context sensitive, that is, the modifications of the data set during the filtering are dependent on a calculated risk, reliability, or relevance, or other parameter. Further analysis may be performed either in the transform domain, inverse transform to the original representation, or using a different transform.

[0444] It is also possible to employ a fractal (iterated function system) analysis and/or transform of the data. In this case, a function within a space, of any dimensional order, is decomposed into a representation of a set of components, which may include continuous functions (wavelet) or discontinuous functions (geometric shape), each of which may be translated, scaled only any axis, and amplitude scaled. Indeed, where convenient, the function within a space may be decomposed into a plurality of separate representations. Thus, according to one example, a number of feature-specific decompositions may be applied where appropriate. In the case of non-linear functions, it may be possible to decompose the function into a linear component and a non-linear component, wherein a relatively simplified non-linear component may be subjected to a type-specific analysis. Thus, it is understood that even relatively complex and seemingly intractable problems may be addressed. It is further noted that incalculable aspects of a fact or predicate net may be represented within the context of a reliability variable. As such, a network is analyzed, and to the extent possible, numeric analysis applied to reduce the result to low-dimensionality terms. The predicted magnitude or potential magnitude of the residual function or the uncertainty bounds may then be estimated, resulting in a contribution to the reliability output. Of course, the reliability estimate need be limited to unknowns, and may also represent a contribution from an analytical technique which produces a calculated uncertainty.

[0445] In a typical process, a data set, which may include a plurality of dimensions, is first processed to reduce noise. For example, error correction and detection algorithms may be applied to eliminate spurious data or correct data which has been corrupted. This process may also include a sub-process for eliminating intentional spurious data, for example, data communicated by a malfeasant, or data generated automatically in a random or pseudorandom manner to make the entire dataset unavailable as a source of forensic evidence. This is discussed in more detail, below. The data may also be filtered or denoised using one or more various algorithms, especially where the data is obtained continuously from local sensors. Preferably, one or more model-based or content relevant algorithms are employed to optimally process data or portions of data. This later function

may be consolidated with a feature extractor to correlate data with patterns which likely indicate a known event, to classify the signal.

[0446] A multidimensional hidden Markov tree (HMT) analysis may be used to process the data. A known principal component analysis (PCA) may, for example, precede the HMT, to reduce the dimensionality of the data matrix by extracting the linear relationship between the variables and decorrelating the cross correlation in the data matrix. The hidden Markov tree is a statistical model governing the wavelet coefficients, and exploiting its tree structure in the time-frequency domain. Each wavelet coefficient is modeled as a Gaussian mixture with a hidden state variable. See, Detection and Classification of Abnormal Process Situations Using Multi-dimensional Wavelet Domain Hidden Markov Trees (Nov. 9, 2000), Amid Bakhtazad, www.chem.eng.usyd.edu.au/events/poster_2000/present6/ppframe.htm

[0447] In order to prevent a data transmission from being used as self-incriminating evidence, steps may be taken to undermine the reliability of any single piece of data within a data set. According to one possibility, a random or pseudorandom process may be used to corrupt the database. This may take the form of modifications of existing records and/or generation of phantom or spurious records. Typically, such corruptions are made in such manner that a corresponding filter in a receiving unit, with high reliability, will be able to nearly, but not absolutely, "uncorrupt" the data. However, without knowledge of the actual corruption parameters, which are not transmitted, the reconstruction is statistical and not lossless. Therefore, with high reliability, the content of the database is communicated, but not in such manner that anyone could opine that individual data within the database is real. For example, a database with GPS and chronology will necessarily include data which may be used to derive the speed of the vehicle. When that speed is in excess of the speed limit, a transmission or retention of the data may be used as an admission of transgression of speed limit laws. Using a known filter scheme implemented at the receiver, an algorithm at the transmitter may operate on the data to corrupt that data in such manner that the receiver will likely correct the data. By applying a parameter at the transmitter, the reliability of the received data can be controlled. The transmitter may, for example, determine that 25% of the data is to be corrupted, and 1% corrupted in such manner that the receive filter does not accurately reconstruct the data. However, the corrupt 1% may be distributed such that 99% is flagged as spurious, based on, for example, excess or negative speeds, non-monotonic travel, etc. Thus, 0.01% of the corrupt data is conveyed without being caught, a statistic which is likely less than other, non-intentional corrupting influences. Each of these parameters may be independently controlled at the transmitter. Likewise, it is even possible for these corrupting parameters to be transmitted, alerting the receiver that the data may be suspect. Again, since these are statistical processes, no single data point would have evidentiary reliability.

[0448] Using various cryptographic techniques, such as public key infrastructure (PKI), it may also be possible to secretly synchronize the internal filters of the communicating devices, to maintain high reliability of user alerts, while masking the data itself. Thus, using secure hardware and appropriate software techniques, all or most of the corruptions may be corrected or eliminated. For example, the

transmitter uses a pseudorandom noise generator to control a corruption of data to be transmitted. Information related to the cryptographic key used to initialize the pseudorandom noise generator is securely conveyed to the receiver, for example using a Kerberos, Diffie-Hellman key exchange, El Gamal key exchange, or other type of cryptographic key negotiation. The receiver then initializes its own corresponding pseudorandom noise generator to generate a synchronized stream, allowing it to decorrupt the data. Clearly, various techniques, including those known in the art, may be combined to remedy weaknesses of any given scheme. Preferably, a plurality of different algorithms are available, should one or more prove broken.

[0449] See, Matthew Crouse and Robert Nowak and Richard Baraniuk, "Wavelet-Based Statistical Signal Processing Using Hidden Markov Models", Proceedings ICASSP-97 (IEEE International Conference on Acoustics, Speech and Signal Processing), IEEE Transactions on Signal Processing, 1997, and cited references, expressly incorporated herein by reference. See, also, B. Vidakovic, Wavelet-based nonparametric Bayes methods, Technical Report, ISDS, Duke University., Merlise Clyde, and Heather Desimone and Giovanni Parmigiani, Prediction Via Orthogonalized Model Mixing, Journal of the American Statistical Association, 91(435):1197 (1996); Katrin Keller, Souheil Ben-Yacoub, and Chafic Mokbel, Combining Wavelet-domain Hidden Markov Trees with Hidden Markov Models, IDIAP-RR 99-14 (1999), expressly incorporated herein by reference. See, also, Attoor Sanju Nair, Jyh-Charn Liu, Laurence Rilett and Saurabh Gupta, "Non-Linear Analysis of Traffic Flow," the 4th International IEEE conference on Intelligent Transportation systems, Oakland Calif., Aug. 25-29, 2001, (accepted), expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[0450] In like manner, additional dimensions of analysis may be added, resulting in further modifications of a cost function.

[0451] Urgency is a subset of relevance. Relevance may also be treated as an independent factor; that is, not included within risk or reliability. For example, a fact representing a risk may be known with high certainty, for example, a weather condition on a road: this fact, however, has low relevance if the car is parked in a covered garage. Thus, according to an aspect of the invention, the relevance may be considered an independent variable. Typically, in this case, the risk and reliability are together analyzed to determine a cost function; the cost function is then filtered using a relevance criteria (which, for example, produces a modified cost function), and typically sorted or ranked by weight. This relevance therefore replaces a simple threshold with respect to making ultimate decisions regarding information presentation to the user. Relevancy may be determined by explicit input from the user, implicit user input, collaborative processes, statistical analysis of other user under like circumstances, or the like. It is noted that the cost function may be personalized for each user.

[0452] In some cases, a dimensionless cost function is too simplistic, and leads to results which fail to convey useful information to the user; in those cases, sets of outputs may be presented based on one or more criteria, or an estimated composite function. Therefore, it is understood that a complex "cost function" or utility function, resulting in an output having various degrees of freedom, may be employed.

[0453] Preferably, the system according to the present invention is integrated with a vehicular telematics system, thus providing access to various vehicle data, in addition to environmental data. However, it is not so limited, and may be used in any type of man-machine interface wherein complex data is to be presented to a user for human consideration.

[0454] It is noted that, in some instances, a fact or predicate set may possibly represent a plurality of different events. In this case, it may sometimes be useful to group these events together. This is particularly the case if the nature of the alert and likely response to the alert by the user is similar, regardless of the particular event giving rise to the sensor readings. In that case, the risks, reliabilities, and relevance are aggregated in an appropriate fashion, for example vector summed or composite magnitude, and an aggregate cost function output, along with a generic alert. This generic alert may then be subdivided into its components, for example in a lower-hierarchical level user interface output. In this manner, a set of possible events, none of which would exceed an alert threshold individually, may together exceed the threshold and indeed receive a high ranking.

[0455] Another way of analyzing this situation is that the system may analyze the available data at a number of hierarchical levels. At each level, the risk, reliability and optionally relevance is determined, and the result stored. The user interface may then select events based on redundancy and generic alerts, superseding the particular ranking of events at a homogeneous level of analysis. For example, data indicating stopped traffic ahead may be consistent with an accident, stop light, or construction. These may be divided into normal events (with low risk) (traffic light) and abnormal events (with high risk)(accident or construction). The former would not generally issue an alert, unless a suitable bypass is available that would be efficient. The later, on the other hand, would likely generate an alert. The available information may not be able to distinguish between an accident and construction, and indeed, the individual probabilities of these may be insignificant. However, together, the probabilities may be significant. Likewise, since these are two alternative, generally inconsistent possibilities, the reliability of each will be greatly reduced. Grouped together, however, their joint reliability is estimated to be about the remaining likelihood after the traffic light is accounted for, with high reliability. With respect to relevance, each of these events would have similar relevance, which would be high, assuming the stopped traffic is along the itinerary of the vehicle. Thus, a composite alert of "abnormal stopped traffic 1 mile ahead; reliability 33%" would be a useful compromise to maintain an efficient user interface while conveying the useful information. Of course, the underlying system should generally still compute the probabilities, reliability and relevance for each possibility, since this analysis may yield more useful information and provide better guidance to the user.

[0456] The ranking may, for example, employ a combinatorial analysis of a set of rankings based on a self-consistent probability-weighted utility of each event within a ranked set. That is, if various events are mutually inconsistent, then a ranking is limited by a presumption of the existence of one event, and competing hypotheses are established as different rankings. In a rigorous sense, the utility

may be determined by a mathematical integration of the appropriate function, although in many instances either the data will be represented as a field which can be simply summed, or simplifying presumptions may be applied to make the evaluation tractable.

[0457] According to an aspect of the invention, a user transmits a relevance or cost function to corresponding other users, which then calculate the most useful information to transmit based on the circumstances of the intended recipient. Likewise, a plurality of users may exchange their respective relevance or cost functions. This relevance or cost function is, for example, a current position, immediate itinerary, and any other particular relevance factors. Such other factors might include heavy load, urgent transit, travel preferences, or the like. Upon receipt, the device of the other corresponding user then calculates relevance and/or cost functions using its local data set based on the received parameters. This calculation is then used as a filter to determine a priority of data to be transmitted. As the time available for transmission grows, the amount of information transmitted may be complete. For example, two cars traveling adjacent on a highway or parked near each other may conduct a complete data exchange. When optimizing the broadcast of data based on a plurality of user's relevance or cost functions, a weighting may be applied which balances the maximum good for the many with the urgent needs of the few. Likewise, accommodations may be made for anticipated duration of communication for the respective users, and the availability of packet forwarding and secondary retransmission.

[0458] Since all devices share a common transmission medium, it is generally useful to compute a cost function for use of the shared medium as well, allowing peers access to the medium after the marginal utility for the current user has declined. Access to the shared medium may also be allocated on a round robin or other "fair" basis, especially when demand is highest. Each device preferably monitors all local transmissions, since these will likely include data of some relevance to each device. Likewise, by monitoring such transmissions, one device may make presumptions as to the state of the local database of another device (especially given a knowledge of its present position and path), and therefore avoid redundant transmissions of data. Likewise, in such a peer to peer network, a voting scheme may be instituted, allowing the peer with the "best" data, i.e., the data which is most reliable, most accurate, most recent, most detail, or other criteria to transmit with higher priority.

[0459] Known packet data broadcast protocols may be used to convey the information. Likewise, known peer-to-peer techniques and protocols may be used to communicate, or control communications, between peers.

[0460] According to another aspect of the invention, a user may broadcast or transmit a specific query for information, using as at least a part of the query a relevance or cost function. Recipients of the broadcast or transmission then execute a search of their database based on the received query, and respond accordingly. This query may be a broad or narrow request for information, and thus need not result in a complete exchange of data.

[0461] In order to optimally allocate communications bandwidth, users within an area may engage in a local auction, that is, each user bids for use of the shared medium,

with those deferred and the supplier of information receiving credits. An accounting for these credits may, for example, take place each time a device connects with a central database, for example, using a “hotspot” or other access to the Internet. These credits may, for example, be converted into economic values. In like manner, advertisers may also bid for access to users, with users, for example, receiving credit for receipt of advertising. Such bidding may be on an individual or group basis. Typically, advertising will be relevant, for example as a location-based output, but need not be.

[0462] It is also possible to conduct auctions or otherwise account for control of the communications medium using a zero-sum temporal averaging. That is, each user has an a priori equal right to access. As a user takes advantage of that access, its rights decrease, until exhausted. Over time, rights are added, and accrued rights expire. For example, rights may have a half-life of 5 minutes, with a regression to a predetermined value. As more users compete for control over the medium, cost increases. Suppliers of information may receive partial credits from the consumer. Value transmission may take place using a modified micropayment scheme, for example a variant of Agora Micropayment Protocol, “Agora: A Minimal Distributed Protocol for Electronic Commerce”, Eran Gabber and Abraham Silberschatz, Bell Laboratories or MPTP, Micro Payment Transfer Protocol (MPTP) Version 0.1, W3C Working Draft 22-Nov-1995, www.w3.org/pub/WWW/TR/WD-mptp-951122.

[0463] Thus, within a cell, each user is a primary recipient, a secondary recipient, a supplier, or undefined. A primary recipient bids for access and control of the medium, i.e., the communications band. This bid takes the form of a cell identification (i.e., the controlling user’s location and itinerary), as well as an economic function representing the required information and valuation thereof by the user. The bids are broadcast and each recipient calculates an actual value for the bid using its own database and the relevance function. The calculated economic values, filtered by the recipient databases, are then broadcast, and the highest actual valuation is deemed winner. A negotiation then occurs between the bidder and the holder of the valued information, for payment for the transmission, and other bidders receive a lesser value as a concession. Secondary recipients of the information also pay for the information, based on their respective bids, with a redistribution to the other bidders as a concession. Devices which are not active bidders have no economic effect, although these may accumulate and use transmitted information from others. Thus, an economic redistribution occurs efficiently, while optimally allocating scarce bandwidth.

[0464] In general, the auction parameters may be too complex for interactive user entry. Rather, the user cost function itself represents the user valuation, and therefore is usable as a bidding function. In the cost function, both subjective and objective values are observed. With respect to objective values, the relationship of a user context and an event known by the recipient provides a relevance, and therefore the objective valuation. This objective valuation is then warped by user subjective factors. Some users may be quite willing to pay more for a better quality of service. At least a portion of this value is distributed to other users; this system allows even those with low valuation to access the network, since these deferred users will accumulate credits.

In some cases, the credits may be provided with cash value (i.e., an ability of a user to extract cash proceeds from the system), while in other cases, these credits are limited to use with the system, with no redemption rights. The use of a central authority for the purchase of usage credits therefore allows a profit incentive for the authority responsible for the system. A user may therefore express a higher valuation by purchasing units from an authority, or by providing value to other users of the system, which may, for example, require enhanced hardware purchases to include more and/or better sensors of various conditions.

[0465] A negotiation or auction may also include external elements, such as fixed infrastructure. In this case, the scarce resource is, for example, the right of way. Elements of the fixed infrastructure which are subject to negotiation include traffic lights, draw bridges, railroad crossings, etc. Typically, such infrastructure systems have low intelligence. By employing communications with interested parties, a more efficient outcome may be predicted as compared to “fair”, though unintelligent decisions. Thus, competing drivers may bid for a right of way or green light. The traffic signal may be arbiter of the negotiation, or merely recipient of the defined result. In some instances, the negotiation is free of cost, for example, a traffic light with but one car approaching and no hazards surrounding. In this case, the signal allows the driver to pass, unobstructed. In another instance, a large amount of traffic may be present, seeking to pass through an intersection. All of the vehicles seeking to pass present “bids” for the right, with bids representing common interests or outcomes pooled. The aggregate bids are then compared for action. In this case, the transaction may have no economic impact, but rather the utility functions may be relatively non-subjective. For example, emergency vehicles may have a non-subjectively determined high valuation, cars driving toward the intersection with a present state of traffic flow control in their favor at a medium valuation, and stopped traffic with a low valuation. As the duration of the stop increases, a delay factor increases the valuation for the stopped traffic to compensate, allowing or forcing the signal to change. The objective criteria used in this circumstance (which may, for example, be defined by a municipality or traffic engineer) may include optimization of pollution, energy efficiency, effects of traffic flow on other intersections, speed control, and other considerations.

[0466] It is noted that, since external elements communicate using the same communications system, and indeed various communications systems may share the same band, the concept of bidding for use of the shared or scarce resource may transcend a given communications purpose, and, other than communicating using a common protocol for the bidding and auction process, other users of the band need not communicate public information.

[0467] A user may also provide a subjective element to a context, for example, a driver may be in a rush or be late for a meeting. This may be explicitly input by the user, as a factor which adjusts the cost function higher, or may be derived implicitly from observation of user behavior. Likewise, a driver may be in no particular rush, and therefore place a low relevance to information which might be of particular benefit to allow him to travel faster.

[0468] Thus, in a purely fair system, each user is allocated a “fair” chance for access to the scarce bandwidth resource,

and bids using equally distributed credits to compensate those users deferred, and particularly those users who provide useful information. A user bids using a cost function, representing the maximum value of the resource to that user. Using known auction theory, for example, the cost to the winning bidder may be the price bid by the second-highest bidder. Of course, other known auction types may be employed. The cost function may be automatically generated by a user based on available funds, likely future required use of the funds, a relevance or context which allows for adaptive bidding based on the value of the information to be provided, and user-subjective factors. The actual normalized bid is resolved by the respective recipients, which then broadcast the results. The maximum value bidder then controls the scarce bandwidth resource until the bid-for communication is completed or exhausted. In order to avoid inefficient reauction overhead, a periodic auction may be conducted, with all bidders placed in a queue.

[0469] Clearly, in real world situations, a number of additional distortions will take place. Bidders may become unavailable prior to completion of a communication. Interference may require retransmission.

[0470] As discussed above, each "limited resource" may be subject to auction. Preferably, a spatial division multiplexing scheme is employed, wherein each band has one or more frequency channels. High gain, directional antennas are employed, such that there is a high degree of frequency reuse within a local area. However, there will be a statistical degree of competition for the frequencies. In addition, there will be competition from other competing uses for the band, which may also engage in an auction scheme for access. Typically, by efficiently negotiating an auction between all users of the resource (i.e., the overhead for negotiation is negligible as compared to the actual usage), overall throughput and capacity will be increased.

[0471] For example, each system may include 8-16 transceivers or the ability to conduct 8-16 communication sessions simultaneously. In the former case, 8-16 directional antennas having relatively low overlap are arrayed in different directions, providing a physical separation. In the later case, a phased array or synthetic aperture antenna system electronically defines 8-16 independent apertures, also with low overlap. Each spatial domain aperture and its associated coverage area represents a different resource which may be allocated. Therefore, multiple simultaneous negotiations may occur simultaneously. Each aperture may be a separate radio, with packets routed there-between, or the radios may be coordinated.

[0472] It is also noted that the communications system may be used not only for packet data communications between peers, but also as a real time communication system for data streams, such as voice communications. In this case, hand-offs may be necessary between various nodes in order to assure continuous end-to-end communications. Such hand-offs and multiple hop communications may be predicted in advance and pre-negotiated. Such communications predictions may, indeed, involve multiple systems, such as various cellular carriers and protocols, 802.11 hot spots, and a mobile ad-hoc network with sporadic links to fixed infrastructure. This, in turn, allows a balancing of competitive uses for the resources, quality of service, cost, and reliability. For example, by providing a mobile ad-hoc supplementation

for a fixed cellular infrastructure, the incidence of dropped calls and service unavailability may be reduced. Likewise, cellular carriers may allocate their infrastructure build-outs and capital investments where the return on investment will be maximum. On the other hand, cellular users in such regions may employ other users to act as repeaters for extending the effective range of their equipment. In this case, the compensation and/or negotiation therefore for use of the system may come, in whole, or in part, from the fixed infrastructure provider. On the other hand, if the system is sponsored by the fixed infrastructure carrier, then the repeater services hosted by each node may be at no incremental cost to the fixed service provider.

[0473] This later possibility provides an interesting opportunity. Since the fixed cellular infrastructure providers generally own licensed spectrum, the implementation of repeater or ad hoc services between mobile units may be coordinated centrally, with mobile-to-mobile communications using cellular channels, which may be time domain (TDMA), frequency domain (FDMA), code division (CDMA and related systems), or other type of band-sharing scheme in accordance with the more global standards generally established for these services. Typically, mobile-to-mobile communications use omnidirectional antennas, and packet data communications may use excess system capacity, e.g., capacity not presently being used for voice or other toll or real-time service. The fixed infrastructure may also provide coordination of information communication services, local buffering, and multicast of information of general interest.

[0474] It is therefore clear that the present invention may comprise both disruptive and incremental technologies, and the underlying business model may therefore be modified to suit.

[0475] A particular issue which is advantageously addressed during the design phase is the security of the system against "hackers" or malfeasants. This may be dealt with by providing a central database of authorized users, with peer reporting of accounting and apparent abuse. If a user is suspected of abuse, its access rights may be extinguished. This, in turn, will at least prevent the user from engaging in auctions, and, if transmissions are encrypted or otherwise secure, may prevent eavesdropping on normal communications streams. This same result may be imposed on a user who exhausts his credits, although it is preferred that a user who is otherwise in compliance with normal regulations be permitted to receive communications and indeed to gain new credits by transmitting useful information.

[0476] Since the system is a packet data system, similar to in many respects, and possibly an extension of, the Internet, various known Internet security paradigms may be applied and employed.

[0477] While it is often useful to engage in fair auctions or games, it is also possible to engage in unfair auctions. For example, since there may be external financial requirements for maintenance of the system, these may be paid by subscription fees, or subsidized by advertisers. The advertiser may transmit its own cost function, and bid for presentation to given users, or engage in a broadcast for all users. In this case, more valuable users will gain more credits, and therefore have more control over the network.

This is not "fair", but the distortions implicit in this technique may be tolerable. Likewise, a bidder may purchase credits, but typically this purchase will be consumed by the service operator, and not paid to the users as a whole. However, presumably, this will on the whole reduce normal service pricing for all users. Indeed, various promotional techniques may be used to distort allocation of bandwidth, without departing from the general scope of the invention.

[0478] It is noted that this implicit auction process, wherein a user bids a utility function rather than a normalized economic value, is a distinct part of the invention, applicable to a plurality of contexts and environments, well beyond telematics. Likewise, the concept of bidding for quality of service to control a shared resource, against competing users, is also applicable to other contexts, notably peer-to-peer networks, other shared transmission medium networks, and queues.

[0479] In order to define a user's subjective preferences, value functions, and the like, a number of methods may be employed. Certainly, express and explicit inputs may be received from a user. Likewise, a user model may be constructed by observation of the user. A user may be classified as a member of a group having common preferences, and then the preferences associated with the group may serve as a proxy for the user himself. This is called a collaborative profile, the basis for a collaborative filter. In order to classify a user into a group, personality tests and/or common attributes may be employed. According to a particular aspect of the invention, a user may be classified by game play. By using game theory, irrational or subjective user biases may be revealed. By using games, a user's utility function valuation may be assessed. Likewise, risk tolerance and demand for immediate gratification can be determined. Further, game theory in the form of wagering may also assist in determining economic normalizations. Games, especially with the results augmented by collaborative profiling, may through a limited number of iterations, elicit relatively detailed information. Indeed, through inter-relation with commercial sponsorship (or state associated lotteries), the economic incentives and risks of the game may be made quite real.

FIFTH EMBODIMENT

[0480] In communicating data to another communications device, typically it is desired to transmit (or exchange) all of the memory or all of a "public" portion of the memory, with the received information sorted and processed by the receiving unit and relevant information persistently stored in the memory. After exchange, conflicts may be resolved by a further exchange of information. An error detection and correction (EDC) protocol may be employed, to assure accurate data transmission.

[0481] Since the communication bandwidth is necessarily limited, and the communications channels subject to noise and crowding, it is often important to prioritize transmissions. It is noted that, without a complete communication of the memory, it is difficult to determine which events a communications partner is aware of, so that an initial communication may include an identification of the partners as well as recent encounters with other partners, to eliminate redundant communications, where possible. Vehicles traveling in the same direction will often be in close proximity

longer than vehicles traveling in opposite directions. Further, the information of relevance to a vehicle traveling in the same direction will differ from the information of relevance to a vehicle traveling in the opposite direction. Thus, in addition to an identification of the communications device, the recent path and proposed path and velocity should also be exchanged. Based on this information, the data is prioritized and sorted, formatted and transmitted. Since the communications channel will likely vary in dependence on distance between partners, the communications protocol may be adaptive, providing increased data rate with decreasing distance, up to the channel capacity. Further, when the vehicles are relatively close, a line-of-sight communications scheme may be implemented, such as infrared (e.g., IRDA), while at larger distances (and/or for all distances) a spread spectrum 915 MHz, 2.4 GHz or 5.825 GHz RF communications scheme implemented.

[0482] Where multiple communications devices are present within a common communications region, these may be pooled, allowing transmissions from one transmitter to many receivers. In addition, within a band, multiple channels may be allocated, allowing multiple communications sessions. In this case, a single arbitration and control channel is provided to identify communications devices and communications parameters. Preferably, a communications device has the capability to monitor multiple channels simultaneously, and optionally to transmit on multiple channels simultaneously, where channel congestion is low. The channels are typically frequency division. Where such frequency division channels are defined, communications may be facilitated by so-called "repeaters", which may itself be a mobile transceiver according to the present invention. Preferably, such a repeater unit itself monitors the data stream, and may even process the data stream based on its internal parameters before passing it on.

[0483] In order to assure data integrity and optimize data bandwidth, both forward and retrospective error correction are applied. Data is preferably packetized, with each packet including error detection and correction information. Successful receipt of each packet is acknowledged on a reverse channel, optionally interspersed with corresponding data packets traveling in the reverse direction (e.g., full duplex communications). Where the data error rate (raw or corrected) is unacceptably high, one or more "fallback" modes may be implemented, such as reduced data rates, more fault tolerant modulation schemes, and extended error correction and detection codes. Transmitter power may also be modulated within acceptable limits.

[0484] A central repository of event data may be provided, such as on the Internet or an on-line database. In this case, event information may be administered remotely, and local storage minimized or eliminated.

[0485] Communications with the central database may be conducted through cellular infrastructure, wired or wireless local area network hotspots, or in other communications bands and other communications schemes.

[0486] Where primary event information storage is remote from the device, preferably local storage is based on an itinerary (route) and frequently traveled areas, with less frequently traveled and not prospectively traveled routes stored remotely. This allows consolidated update of memory by a large number of sources, with statistical error detection

and correction of errant event information. The itinerary information may be programmed in conjunction with a GPS system and mapping/navigation software.

[0487] According to one embodiment of the invention, a plurality of functions are integrated into a single device, a sensor or detector for sensor emissions, for example speed control devices, a human computer interface, a computer system including processor, memory, and operating system, geospatial positioning device, and wireless communication system. Preferably, the system supports accessory inputs and outputs, which may be through wired or wireless means. The human computer interface preferably includes both a graphic display and a natural language (e.g., voice) interface. The computer system preferably possesses sufficient machine intelligence to filter outputs based on relevance and context, as well as interpret inputs as usable commands.

[0488] Data communications over a wireless link, for communicating between vehicles, preferably is highly compressed and fault tolerant. For digital data, this typically requires error detection and correction codes, while for data representing analog information, the information may be encoded such that more important information is transmitted in a more robust manner than less important information. For example, image information may be communicated in a hierarchically compressed manner, with higher order information transmitted in a manner less susceptible to interference and signal fading than lower order information.

[0489] The digital data may be compressed, for example, using a dictionary lookup, run length encoding, and/or model-based vector quantization method. Thus, since transceivers in accordance with this embodiment will typically be within 2000 meters from each other, relative position may be relayed in an offset format, with a grid size based on GPS precision and required accuracy, e.g., about 50-100 meters. The encoding may be adaptive, based, for example, on stored map information, with information representation density highest on traveled routes and lower in desolate areas. Thus, a sort of differential-corrected positional coding may be established between units.

[0490] By integrating functions, efficiencies are achieved. Thus, a single central processor, memory, program store and user interface may suffice for all functions. Further, the power supply and housing are also consolidated. While GPS and telecommunication antennas may be maintained as distinct elements, other portions of the system may also be integrated. In a device intended for vehicular applications, the GPS and other functions may be available to other vehicular systems, or the required data received from other systems.

[0491] Communication between communications devices may employ unlicensed spectrum or licensed spectrum, and may communicate between mobile units or between mobile and fixed resources. For example, excess capacity of a traditional cellular system may be used for inter-vehicle communications. Thus, the system may include or encompass a typical cellular (AMPS, IS-136, IS-95, CDPD, PCS and/or GSM) type telecommunications device, or link to an external telecommunications device.

[0492] Even where the cellular telephony infrastructure is not involved, mobile hardware may be reused for the present invention. For example, digital or software defined cellular

telephone handsets may permit programmed use outside the normal cellular system protocols.

[0493] According to the present invention, messages may be passed between a network of free roving devices. In order to maintain network integrity, spurious data should be excluded. Thus, in order to prevent a "hacker" or miscreant (e.g., overzealous police official) from intentionally contaminating the dispersed database, or an innocent person from transmitting corrupted data, the ultimate source of event data is preferably recorded. When corrupt or erroneous data is identified, the source may then also be identified. The identity of the corrupting source is then transmitted or identified, for example to other radios or to a central database, whereupon, units in the field may be programmed to ignore the corrupt unit, or to identify its location as a possible event to be aware of. Further, assuming the hardware of the corrupted unit remains operational, a code may be transmitted to it deactivating it or resetting or reprogramming it.

[0494] Preferably, data is transmitted digitally, and may be encrypted. Encryption codes may be of a public-key/private key variety, with key lookup and/or certificate verification, either before each data exchange, or on a global basis with published updates. In fact, corrupt or unauthorized units may be deactivated by normal and authorized units within the network, thus inhibiting "hacking" of the network. Communications may be metered or otherwise controlled externally, with charges assessed based on usage factors. As discussed above, units may bid for control over the transmission medium, and an accounting may take place either between corresponding units, with a central database, or both. Thus, a subscription based system is supported.

[0495] Techniques corresponding to the Firewire (IEEE 1394) copy protection scheme may be implemented, and indeed the system according to the present invention may implement or incorporate the IEEE 1394 interface standard. The IEEE 1394 key management scheme may be useful for implementing subscription schemes and for preventing tampering.

[0496] One way to subsidize a subscription-based system is through advertising revenue. Therefore, the "events" may also include messages targeted to particular users, either by location, demographics, origin, time, or other factors. Thus, a motel or restaurant might solicit customers who are close by (especially in the evening), or set up transponders along highways at desired locations. Travelers would then receive messages appropriate to time and place. While the user of the system according to the present invention will typically be a frequent motorist or affluent, the system may also provide demographic codes, which allow a customized response to each unit. Since demographic information is personal, and may indicate traveler vulnerability, this information is preferably not transmitted as an open message and is preferably not decodable by unauthorized persons. In fact, the demographic codes may be employed to filter received information, rather than to broadcast interests.

[0497] Commercial messages may be stored in memory, and therefore need not be displayed immediately upon receipt. Further, such information may be provided on a so-called "smart card" or PC Card device, with messages triggered by location, perceived events, time and/or other factors. In turn, the presentation of commercial messages

may be stored for verification by an auditing agency, thus allowing accounting for advertising fees on an "impression" basis.

[0498] The communications device may also receive data through broadcasts, such as using FM sidebands, paging channels, satellite transmission and the like. Thus, locationally or temporally distant information need not be transmitted between mobile units. Satellite radio systems may also be integrated.

[0499] While low power or micropower design is desirable, in an automobile environment, typically sufficient power is continuously available to support sophisticated and/or power hungry electronic devices; thus, significant design freedom is provided to implement the present invention using available technologies.

SIXTH EMBODIMENT

[0500] FIG. 8 shows a block diagram of a communications device embodiment of the present invention. The mobile communications device 1 includes a location sensing system 2, producing a location output 3; a memory 4, for example storing a set of locations and associated events, a telecommunications subsystem 5, for example communicating event and location information between a remote system and the memory 4; and a processor 6, for example processing the location output in conjunction with the stored locations and associated events in the memory 4, to determine a priority thereof.

[0501] The location sensing system 2 may include a known GPS receiver, which produces data that is analyzed by the processor 6. In an alternate embodiment, the GPS receiver includes its own processor and outputs coordinate positions, e.g., Cartesian coordinates, latitude and longitude, to the communications device processor 6, e.g., through a serial port or data bus, such as PC card, Universal serial Bus (USB), Firewire (IEEE 1394), peripheral connect interface (PCI), or other bus, such as that present within an automobile for communication of signals between subsystems. The location sensing system may also determine a position based on the GLONASS system, LORAN, inertial reference, cellular base stations 10', 10", triangulation with fixed radio sources, such as FM radio and television stations, environmental markers and/or transponders, or the like. The location system may also be network based, for example relying on a cellular network to produce georeferenced position information.

[0502] The communications subsystem 5 is, for example, an 802.11g wireless Ethernet local area network system, having a router and switch controlling communications between 8 separate spatially distinct channels, defined by a "smart antenna". These spatially distinct channels are agile and having an aperture capable of being steered in real time to adjust for a change in relative position and orientation. The router and switch permit forwarding of packets received through one channel to another, as well as local communications control. The radio transceiver 12, operates in the unlicensed 2.4 GHz band, according to FCC regulations for this type of equipment. The system may alternately or additionally communicate in other unlicensed bands, such as 27 MHz, 49 MHz, FRS band, 900 MHz, 5.4 GHz, 5.8-5.9 GHz using various known modulation schemes and data communication protocols. Further, licensed radio bands may

also be used, including FM radio sidebands (88-108 MHz), television PRO channel, cellular telephony channels, DECT, PCS and GSM channels, and the like. Likewise, satellite systems 16, 17 may be used to communicate with the mobile communications device 1. Thus, for example, instead of direct communication between mobile units, the existing cellular telephony 10', 10" infrastructure may be used to provide intercell, local, and/or regional communications between units, controlled by cellular telephone switching processors 11', 11". These communications may be given a lower priority than voice communications on the cellular telephone network, and therefore may use otherwise excess bandwidth, thus allowing reduced costs and reduced user fees or subscription rates.

[0503] The memory 4 may be of any standard type, for example, one or more of static random access memory, dynamic random access memory, ferroelectric memory, magnetic domain memory (e.g., diskette, hard disk), non-volatile semiconductor memory (e.g., UV-EPROM, EEPROM, Flash, non-standard electrically erasable programmable non-volatile memory), optically readable memory (e.g., R-CDROM, RW-CDROM, R-DVD, DVD-RAM, etc.), holographic memory, and the like. Preferably, common memory devices, such as EDO, SDRAM, RIMM, DDR, are employed, at least for a volatile portion of the memory, allowing simple upgrades and industry standard compatibility.

[0504] While the preferred embodiment includes a radio frequency transceiver for transmitting event data and receiving event data, embodiments are also possible which either transmit or receive the relevant data, but not both. For example, regulations may limit certain transmissions or relevant event sensors, e.g., radar detectors in trucks. In these cases, a receive-only embodiment may be appropriate. Further, while radio frequency communications are preferred, due to their range, data capacity and availability, optical communications systems 13, e.g., infrared LED's and laser diodes, acoustic communication 15, passive back-scatter communications (employing an RF transceiver such as the spread spectrum transceiver 12), and the like may also be employed in conjunction or in substitution of a radio frequency system. Optical communication systems 13 may employ various detectors, including optical homodyne detectors, or other coherent optical detectors, or other types of optical sensors, such as PIDs, CCDs, silicon photodiodes, and the like.

[0505] Under some circumstances, a wired or dedicated link between units may be appropriate. For example, a central database 20 may provide consolidated and reliable data. The relevant portion of the database 20 may be downloaded by telephone through a modem 21, either through a physical connection 23 (e.g., POTS or ISDN, line), through a broadband Internet connect, or other network 24, to a database server 25. The memory 4 of the mobile unit may also be uploaded to the central database 20, after processing by the database server 25, during the same connection or session.

[0506] Thus, according to the present invention, the public switched telephone network 24 may be involved both during intermittent mass data communications with a central database 20, and also using, for example, cellular telephony 14, for the normal operation of the system (e.g., communications between mobile units).

[0507] As discussed above, general access to and control over the communications channel may be arbitrated on a bid and auction basis, as appropriate to avoid contention.

[0508] The processor 6 analyzes the information stored in memory 4 to provide a prioritized output. Thus, the memory may store information relating to a relatively large number of events, without overwhelming the capacity of a human user or communications partner. Priority may be based on a number of factors, including proximity of a stored location to a sensed location or a spatial-temporal proximity of a stored location to a loci of an itinerary 101, a prospective conjunction 102 of a sensed location with a stored location, a type of event 103, a type of event and a sensed condition associated with the mobile communications device 104, or other factors or a combination of factors. Neural networks, fuzzy logic and/or traditional logic paradigms may also be employed to prioritize the outputs. These logical paradigms are provided in known manner, and, especially in the case of neural network-based systems, a training aspect may be supplied with the system to allow it to adapt to the preferences and capabilities of the user. Thus, for a human user, events which are forthcoming and important are output, while past events and those in the distant future, if at all, are low priority. On the other hand, for communications with other devices, the prioritization is primarily in consideration of the fact that the communication between units may be only short lived; therefore, the data is communicated in order to priority, preferably of the recipient device. In an adaptive device, if the user believes that the information from the device is inappropriate, a simple input is provided, which is later analyzed to alter the information presentation algorithm. Likewise, if an information alert retrospectively turns out to be erroneous is a predictable manner, i.e., relating to a route not taken, the system may internally adjust the algorithm without user input.

[0509] In order to sort the priorities, the intended recipient may, for example, identify itself 201 and communicate its location 202 an itinerary or intended or prospective path 205. High priority messages 204 and various codes 203 may be interspersed through the communication string. The transmitting unit then outputs data 206 in order of the computed or predicted importance of the event and the time before the recipient encounters the event. Static events, such as fixed location radar emission sources, which may, for example, indicate a source for interference with a radar detector, or a speed detection/control device, may be transmitted as well. In the case where there is contention for the band, the communications session is limited by the scope of the authorization for use of the band. Where there is no contention, the duration of the communications channel will generally control the amount of information communicated.

[0510] Therefore, it is noted that the present invention provides a means for mapping events and for analyzing their significance. Thus, this embodiment does not merely rely on processed sensor outputs to supply information to the user; rather, sensor outputs may be filtered based on past experience with the particular location in question. If a particular user does not have direct experience with a location, then the experience of others at that location may be substituted or combined to improve analysis of the sensor signal. Therefore, the signal analysis from the sensor need not be subjected to a relatively high threshold to avoid false alarms. A low threshold is acceptable because other information is

employed to determine the nature of the physical elements that give rise to the event and sensor activation.

[0511] It is noted that, in the case of "false alarms", the response of the unit is to detect the event, e.g., radar signal, correlate it with a stored "false alarm" event, and suppress an alarm or modify the alarm signal. Thus, information stored in memory and/or transmitted between units, may signify an important alarm or a suppression of an erroneous alarm. In this context is apparent that the integrity of the database structure, especially from corruption by the very sources of alarms which are intended to be detected, is important. To the extent that the environment responds to the existence and deployment of the system according to the present invention, for example by detecting transmissions between units to identify and locate units, and thereby alter the nature of an event to be detected, the present system may also be adaptive, in terms of its function and signature spectral patterns. In one aspect, the system may flash memory or flash memory modules, which controls system operation. Therefore, periodically, the system operation may be altered. The communications may selectively occur on a plurality of bands, using a plurality of protocols. Thus, for example, the system may have tri-band capability, e.g., 900 MHz, 2.4 GHz and 5.8-5.9 GHz. The mapping feature of the present invention may also be used to identify the locations of such monitoring sites. The system may also mask its transmissions as other, more common types of transmissions or environmental sources of emissions. A direct sequence spread spectrum technique maybe employed that is difficult to detect without knowing the spread spectrum sequence seed. Of course, an aspect of the present invention is open communications, which as a matter of course are not securely encrypted and which would identify the transponder and its location. This problem may be addressed, in part, relying on laws which prevent unauthorized eavesdropping and unauthorized interception and decryption of communications, unauthorized "copying" of copyright works and defeating of copy protection schemes thereof, control over availability of authorized transceivers, and patent protection of the design and implementation. According to one embodiment of the invention, channel use and control is established over a first channel, which may be out of band with respect to the normal communications channel. Preferably, this control channel is longer-range and more robust than the data communications channel, permitting control to precede normal communications capability, and providing enhanced recover and network reconfiguration capabilities.

[0512] According to one embodiment, all communications are direct sequence spread spectrum over a wide band, with medium to high security codes, e.g., 10 bits or greater length chip sequence and 12 bits or greater data encryption, and more preferably 16 bit or greater chip sequence and 16 bit or greater data encryption. The chip sequence of the control and arbitration channel, which should be available to all compatible units, may be adaptive or changing, for example following a formula based on time, location, and/or an arbitrary authorization code provided with a subscription update. Further, the chip sequence may vary based on selective availability (SA) deviancias in GPS data, or based on the identity of satellites in view of the receiver. While such information might be available to "pirates", miscreants, hackers and scofflaws, the algorithm for generating the chip sequence might be held as confidential, and thus the system unusable without specific authorization and incompatible

with equipment without such algorithm. Such systems employing secure encryption with open access have been employed in satellite television (General Instrument Video-Cipher II) and the like. It is noted that, in order to mask a message in a spread spectrum signal, multiple active channels may be employed, one or more of which transmits the desired data and the remainder transmitting noise or masking data.

[0513] Employing 2.4 or 5.8-9 GHz communications bands, data rates of 54-108 megabits per second (MBPS) are possible, although lower rates, such as 0.5-1.0 MBPS may be preferred to gain range, reduce loss due to interference or adverse communications conditions and maintain availability of simultaneous communications on multiple channels within the band in a small geographic area.

[0514] Where mobile devices are traveling parallel and at similar speeds, or both are stopped, an extended communications session may be initiated. In this case, the data prioritization will be weighted to completely exchange a public portion of the database, although emphasis will still be placed on immediately forthcoming events, if anticipated. On the other hand, where computed or user-input trajectories indicate a likely brief encounter, the immediate past events are weighted most heavily.

[0515] In order to analyze temporal or spatial relevance, the memory 4 preferably stores an event identifier 301, a location 302, a time of detection of an event 303, a source of the event information 304, an encoding for a likely expiration of the event 305, a reliability indicator for the event 306, and possibly a message associated with the event 307 including other information. These data fields may each be transmitted or received to describe the event, or selectively transmitted based on the nature of the event or an initial exchange between units specifying the information which will be communicated. Other types of relevance may also be accounted for, as discussed above.

[0516] For example, in a radar detector embodiment, mobile police radar "traps" are often relocated, so that a particular location of one event should not be perpetuated beyond its anticipated or actual relevance. In this case, expirations may be stored, or calculated based on a "type" of event according to a set of rules. False alarms, due to security systems, traffic control and monitoring systems, and the like, may also be recorded, to increase the reliability any warnings provided.

[0517] Likewise, traffic jams often resolve after minutes or hours, and, while certain road regions may be prone to traffic jams, especially at certain hours of the day and/or days of the week, abnormal condition information should not persist indefinitely.

[0518] The preferred embodiment according to the present invention provides an event detector, which, in turn is preferably a police radar 18 and LIDAR 19 detector. Other detected events may include speed of vehicle, traffic conditions, weather conditions, road conditions, road debris or potholes, site designation, sources of radio signals or interference or false alarms for other event detectors, and particular vehicles, such as drunk drivers or unmarked police cars (possibly by manual event input). The event detector may include, for example, a sensor, such as a camera 26, which may analyze traffic control indicia (such as speed

limits, cautions, traffic lights). The event may also include a commercial message or advertisement, received, for example from a fixed antenna beside a road, which, for example, is stored as the message 307. Such a commercial message 307 may be presented immediately or stored for future output. The received message, whether commercial or not, may be a static or motion graphic image, text or sound message. The user output of the system 27 may thus be visual, such as a graphic or alphanumeric (text) display, indicator lights or LED's 28, audible alerts or spoken voice through an audio transducer 29.

[0519] The camera is, for example, a color or infrared charge coupled device (CCD) or complementary metal oxide silicon field effect transistor (CMOS) imager, having resolution of 0.3 to 13 megapixels. Image communication may be, for example H.261 or H.263+, using H.323 or H.324 protocol, or MPEG-4. The imager may also be incorporated as part of a mobile videoconferencing system, although a dual imager system (one for imaging persons and the other for imaging road conditions) may be implemented. Other ITU standards, e.g., T.120, may be employed for data communications, although the particular nature of the data communications channel(s) may compel other communications protocols.

[0520] In order to maintain the integrity of the database stored in memory 4, 20, it may be useful to store the originator of a record, i.e., its source 304. Thus, if event information from that origin is deemed unreliable, all records from that source may be purged, and future messages ignored or "flagged". As stated above, even the proximity of an unreliable or modified unit may be detrimental to system operation. Therefore, where the location of such a unit is known, other units in proximity may enter into a silent mode. Further, normal units may transmit a "kill" message to the unreliable unit, causing it to cease functioning (at least in a transmit mode) until the problem is rectified or the unit reauthorized.

[0521] The unit is preferably tamper-proof, for example, codes necessary for unit activation and operation are corrupted or erased if an enclosure to the unit is opened. Thus, techniques such as employed in the General Instrument VideoCipher II and disclosed in Kaish et al., U.S. Pat. No. 4,494,114, may be employed.

[0522] The communications subsystem preferably employs an error correction/error detection protocol, with forward error correction and confirmation of received data packet. The scheme may be adaptive to the quality of the communication channel(s), with the packet length, encoding scheme, transmit power, bandwidth allocation, data rate and modulation scheme varied in an adaptive scheme to optimize the communication between units. In many cases, units engaged in communication will exchange information bidirectionally. In that case, a full duplex communication protocol is preferred; on the other hand, where communication is unidirectional, greater data communication rates may be achieved employing the available bandwidth and applying it to the single communication session.

[0523] In some instances, it may be desired to maintain privacy of communications. In that case, two possibilities are available; spread spectrum communications, preferably direct sequence spread spectrum communications is employed, to limit eavesdropping possibilities. Second, the

data itself may be encrypted, using, for example, a DES, PGP, elliptic keys, or RSA type encryption scheme. Keys may be supplied or exchanged in advance, negotiated between partners, or involve a public key-private key encryption algorithm. For example, the spread spectrum communications chip sequence may be based on an encrypted code. Ultrawideband (UWB) communications techniques may also be employed.

[0524] In order to provide flexibility in financing the communications devices, the commercial messages 307 discussed above may be employed. Further, by circulating authorization tokens or codes 203, a subscription service may be provided. Thus, in a simplest subscription scheme, the communications device has a timer function, which may be a simple clock or GPS referenced. The user must input an authorization code periodically in order for the device to continue operating. Thus, similarly to satellite television receivers and some addressable cable television decoders, failure to provide the authorization code, which may be entered, e.g., by telephone communication or through a keypad 30, renders the device temporarily or permanently inoperative. In order to reduce the burden of reauthorizations, the authorization codes or tokens may be passed through the communications "cloud" 24, so that devices 1, if used, will eventually receive the authorization data. Conversely, a code 203 may be circulated which specifically deactivates a certain device 1, for example for non-payment of the subscription fee or misuse of the device (e.g., in an attempt to corrupt other users databases). The authorization process is preferably integral to the core operation of the system, making bypassing authorization difficult.

[0525] Where a number of communications devices are in proximity, a multi-party communication session may be initiated. For example, the communications subsystem may have simultaneous multi-channel capability, allowing each unit to transmit on a separate channel or use a shared channel. Where the number of channels or channel capacity is insufficient, units may take turns transmitting event information on the same channel (e.g., according to estimated priority), or time division multiplex (TDM) the channel(s). Preferably, the communication scheme involves a number of channels within a band, e.g., 1 common control channel and 24 data communications channels. Since some communication sessions may be relatively short, e.g., limited to a few seconds, a data communications channel preferably has a maximum capacity of tens of kilobits per second or higher. In some cases, hundreds of kilobits, or megabit range bandwidths are achievable, especially with a small number of channels (e.g., one channel). For example, so-called third generation (3G) cellular communications protocols may be employed.

[0526] Thus, for example, an 802.11g or 802.11n compatible spread spectrum transceiver operating in the 2.4 GHz band might have a usable bandwidth of 10-108 megabits per second, even while sharing the same band with other transceivers in close proximity. Where necessary, directional antennas, or phased arrays may be employed to provide spatial discrimination.

[0527] The system preferably has advanced ability to detect channel conditions. Thus, where communications are interrupted by physical limitations in the channel, the impairment to the communications channel is detected and

the communications session paused until the impairment abates. This, in turn, will allow other units, which might not be subject to the impairment, to use the same channel during this interval. The channel impairment may be detected by a feedback protocol between communications partners, or by means of symmetric antennas and communications systems, by which an impairment of a received signal may be presumed to affect the transmitted signal as well. The latter requires a high degree of standardization of equipment design and installation for effectiveness.

[0528] It is particularly noted that, where the events to be detected and the communications subsystem operate in the same band, structures may be shared between the communications and event detection systems, but this also increases the possibilities for interference.

[0529] As one embodiment of the invention, the processor may be provided as a standard personal digital assistant (PDA) with a PC Card or PCMCIA slot for receiving a standard GPS receiver and another standard PC Card slot for receiving an 802.11b/g/a R/A module. The PDA, in turn has memory, which may include random access memory, flash memory, and rotating magnetic memory (hard disk), for example. The PDA has a processing system which is capable of running applications written in general purpose, high level languages such as C. The PDA may operate under a standard operating system, such as Microsoft Windows CE, XP, Palm OS, Linux, or a proprietary operating system. A software application written in a high level language can normally be ported to run in the PDA processing system. Thus, the basic elements of the hardware platform are all available without customization. In a preferred embodiment, an event sensor is provided, such as a police radar and laser speed detection equipment system (e.g., "radar detector") is provided. This may employ a modified commercially available radar detector, to produce a serial data stream or parallel signal set. For example, radar detectors providing an alphanumeric display often transmit data to the display controller by means of a serial data signal. This signal may be intercepted and interfaced with a serial port or custom port of the PDA.

[0530] Optionally, the GPS Smart Antenna is "differential-ready" to apply differential GPS (DGPS) error correction information to improve accuracy of a GPS determined location. The application program for the PDA may be provided in a semiconductor memory cartridge or stored on hard disk.

[0531] The PDA 30 includes the processing system, including a microprocessor, memory, pre-coded program instructions and data stored in memory, a microprocessor bus for addresses, data, and control, an interrupt bus for interrupt signals, and associated hardware, operates in a conventional manner to receive digital signals, process information, and issue digital signals. A user interface in the PDA includes a visual display or audible output to present signals received from the processing system to a user, a user entry system to issue signals from the user to the processing system. The user interface may include one or more push keys, toggle switches, proximity switches, trackballs, joysticks or pressure sensitive keys, a touch-sensitive display screen, microphones or a combination of any of the above used together or with other similar type user input methods. The PDA sends digital signals representing addresses, data,

and commands to the memory device and receives digital signals representing instructions and data from the memory. A PDA interface electrically connects the processing system to a GPS Smart Antenna. If the PDA and GPS are not integrated, a preferred interface comprises a computer standard low to medium speed serial data interface, such as RS-232, RS-422, or USB (1.0, 1.1, 2.0), IEEE-1394, Bluetooth (especially if the communications system operates in another band), through a cabled interface for connection to the GPS Smart Antenna.

[0532] The GPS Smart Antenna system includes a GPS receiver antenna to receive GPS satellite signals from GPS satellite transmitters, a GPS frequency downconverter to downconvert the approximately 1.575 GHz frequency of the L1 GPS satellite signals to a lower frequency (LF) signal that is suitable for digital processing, and to issue the LF to a GPS processor. The GPS processor demodulates and decodes the LF signal and provides location information for at least one of (i) location of the GPS antenna, (ii), GPS satellite pseudoranges between the GPS satellites and the GPS antenna, (iii) rate of change of location of the GPS antenna, (iv) heading of the GPS antenna, and (v) time to a GPS interface. Optionally, the GPS Smart Antenna and GPS processor are differential-ready. An optional input select switch, controlled by the GPS processor upon a request from the PDA, allows a single serial interface to receive either a control signal from the PDA or a DGPS error correction signal from an optional DGPS radiowave receiver. Alternately, a DGPS-type system may be coordinated between multiple mobile receivers, to provide high relative position accuracy, even where the absolute position accuracy is low. Since the event position calculations are based on the relative position frame, the effect is to accurately position the events with respect to the vehicle.

[0533] The user device may display, for example, map features according to a coordinate system such as latitude and longitude. The display may also include an indication of the location of the GPS receiver, an itinerary, proposed route, and indications of the location of various events. By correlating the GPS with a stored map, the absolute location of the vehicle may be determined by map matching techniques. In accordance with the present invention, these events are derived from the event detector or the memory. Other communications devices may also be located on the display.

[0534] The user entry system has both touchscreen keys and press keys in the present embodiment. With a touchscreen, a user enters a request by touching a designated portion overlying a visual display with his finger (or soft pointer, such as a plastic pen). The touchscreen senses the touch and causes a digital signal to be sent to the processing system indicating where the touch was made. Switches such as rotary switches, toggle switches, or other switches can equally well be applied. An advantage of the touchscreen is that a label or a placement of the touchscreen, and a corresponding function of the touchscreen, may be changed by the computer controlling the display any number of times without changing electrical or mechanical hardware. In the present embodiment, zoom keys may be employed change scale and resolution of a map on the display. Zooming in decreases the scale, so that the map is viewed with greater resolution over a lesser area of the map. Zooming out increases the scale, so that a greater area of the map is

viewed with lesser resolution. A map orientation key selects an orientation of a direction on the map with a direction on the visual display, for example, orientations of north up or current ground track up. It is noted that these map functions are generally known, and known techniques may be generally applied for such map functions. According to the present invention, in addition to normal map functions, the event data may be overlayed on the map to provide additional dimensions of display data. Further, by providing these data, which are dynamic, the map system becomes useful even to travelers who are well aware of the geography and layout of the region being traveled.

[0535] One communications scheme, a 900 MHz spread spectrum communications system, operates as follows. The RF receiver demodulates the signal using known techniques, which may include superheterodyne and zero-IF techniques. Thus, in a frequency hopping embodiment, the demodulator tracks the hop frequency sequence. In a direct sequence spread spectrum embodiment, the demodulator provides the appropriate pseudorandom code sequence to demodulate the received signal. Time synchronization may be effected by using the timing functions of the GPS receiver. The demodulated signal is then decoded into messages, which are typically digital bitstreams. The receiver may be process a plurality of signals simultaneously, allowing multiple signals to be received simultaneously.

SEVENTH EMBODIMENT

[0536] Ad hoc networks are a good candidate for analysis and optimization according to game theory. A multihop ad hoc network requires a communication to be passed through a disinterested node. The disinterested node incurs a cost, thus leading to a disincentive to cooperate. Meanwhile, bystander nodes must defer their own communications. By understanding the decision analysis of the various nodes in a network, it is possible to define a system which, in accordance with game theory, provides a benefit or incentive to promote cooperation and network reliability and stability. The incentive, in economic form, may be charged to the node(s) benefiting from the communication, and is preferably based on a value of the benefit received. This network optimization employs a modified combinatorial (VCG) auction, which optimally compensates those burdened by the communication, while charging the benefiting participants. Equilibrium usage and headroom may be influenced by deviating from a zero-sum condition. The mechanism seeks to define fairness in terms of market value, providing probable participation benefit for all nodes, leading to network stability.

[0537] The present example describes the application of game theory concepts to the arbitration of access to bandwidth in an ad hoc communications network, more particularly to network including mobile nodes. According to applicable elements of game theory, an agent makes a decision to cooperate with a system having established rules, or to circumvent it. Likewise, cheating, i.e., adopting behavior contrary to an expected nor, may be an option, and can be analyzed in the context of a decision. Therefore, a game theoretic approach addresses the situation where the operation of an agent which has freedom of choice, allowing optimization on a high level, considering the possibility of alternatives to a well designed system. According to game theory, the best way to ensure that a system retains compli-

ant agents, is to provide the greatest anticipated benefit, at the least anticipated cost, compared to the alternates.

[0538] Mobile ad hoc networks encompass multihop networks, which, by their nature, require participation of disinterested nodes to operate. Technically, however, the multihop scenario is not intrinsic, since it is reasonable to presume that in some networks, all nodes are within range of each other. Each scenario poses a classic game theory issue to each node: why defer to other nodes if no direct benefit is obtained? The multihop network adds the further issue of: why participate in communications between other nodes if no direct benefit is obtained? We discuss a set of mechanisms, incentives and rationales as a framework for analyzing node behavior and optimization, and seeks to respond to these issues by proposing appropriate incentives to promote network efficiency and stability.

[0539] The application of game theory to ad hoc networks has been addressed in various forms to date. In general, there is a divergence between approaches which define a real-world system, with all of its complexity, and required functionality, and those which seek to mathematically tractable model having a definite set of rules and presumptions leading to a comprehensible and useful result.

[0540] An ad hoc network is a wireless network which does not require fixed infrastructure or centralized control. The terminals in the network cooperate and communicate with each other, in a self organizing network. In a multihop network, communications can extend beyond the scope of a single node, employing neighboring nodes within the scope, to forward messages. In a mobile ad hoc network, constraints are not placed on the mobility of nodes, that is, they can relocate within a time scale which is short with respect to the communications, thus requiring consideration of dynamic changes in network architecture.

[0541] Ad hoc networks pose control issues with respect to contention, routing and information conveyance. There are typically tradeoffs involving equipment size, cost and complexity, protocol complexity, throughput efficiency, energy consumption, and "fairness" of access arbitration. Other factors may also come into play.

[0542] Game theory studies the interactions of multiple independent decision makers, each seeking to fulfill their own objectives. Game theory encompasses, for example, auction theory and strategic decision-making. By providing appropriate incentives, a group of independent actors may be persuaded, according to self-interest, to act toward the benefit of the group. That is, the selfish individual interests are aligned with the community interests. In this way, the community will be both efficient and the network of actors stable and predictable. Of course, any system wherein the "incentives" impose too high a cost, themselves encourage circumvention. In this case, game theory also addresses this issue.

[0543] Cooperative Problems in Ad Hoc Networks

[0544] To understand why game theory is applicable the control over ad hoc networks, consider the analogy of a classroom. The teacher acts as a central authority and arbitrator to ensure decorum. The teacher recognizes one student at a time for public communication. This is an example of centralized control. If there were no teacher to recognize a student, pandemonium would result, unless a

suitable process of self-organization is established, which obtains cooperation dictating common rules, adopted according to mutual incentives.

[0545] Now, suppose one student wishes to send a note across the room. Presumably, there are multiple paths to the destination. But how can the student be sure that the note will be forwarded? How does one know which neighbor to hand-off to? Suppose that forwarding the note imposes a burden, such as the risk of being caught and sanctioned? Consider the possibility, after conclusion of negotiations for forwarding, a student fails to fulfill his assumed responsibility?

[0546] It is therefore clear that the issues of subjective and objective costs and benefits, distance, complexity, and reliability, are therefore interrelated, and there may be practical restraints on achieving theoretical system capacity.

[0547] The game theoretic solution is to link an incentive or benefit to the desired behavior, to promote cooperation of each agent with note forwarding, on a rational basis. The ultimate payoff should be borne by the student receiving the benefit. Thus, by linking benefits to costs, a stable society is achieved, approaching a desirable equilibrium.

[0548] In order to incentivize the intermediaries, a student could compensate them by taping dimes to the note, instructing each forwarding student to remove one dime (the packet purse model). Alternately, the recipient may be expected to pay for the transmission through an acknowledgement message with attached value (the packet trade model). However, how do we know that the first recipient will not remove all the money and throw away the note? How can the intermediaries ensure, in the packet trade model, that the recipient will eventually pay? How does the responsible party know how much must be paid? These models also require stability of the route during the process, and imply a priori knowledge of the route. This approach does not permit variations in compensation, e.g., some students might accept a nickel, and others in a critical position, might require a quarter. In cases of unreliable routes, should the originator send two notes by alternate paths, or attempt to pay more for a single reliable delivery?

[0549] Even with imposition of a traffic sensitive cost, one node of the network may seek to send an inordinate number of messages, resulting in congestion. A node in a critical location may become wealthy, and its fees rise, leading to instability. Likewise, in a virtual construct, what does one use as currency? We see that consideration must be given to keeping traffic below capacity, since highly loaded networks often have decreased efficiency.

[0550] Game Theory

[0551] Game theory is the study of the interaction of independent agents, in an environment where there are rules, decisions, and outcomes. Game theory defines the theoretical basis for strategy, as well as providing a framework for analyzing real-world actors. Game theory may be applied to automated systems, providing a basis for the analysis and optimization of such systems. Aspects of game theory have been applied to telecommunications, for example to optimize network routing, and has quality of service implications. Communications resources may be treated as utilities, and auctions have been applied to the optimization of allocation of utility resources.

[0552] Each game has a set of rules or constraints, under which the agents operate. "Cheating", if permitted at all, is modeled as an available decision of an agent to comply with other constraints. Therefore, the game is valid as a model only for the rules and constraints considered. Each decision maker pursues a goal, and may take into account their knowledge or expectations of the other decision makers' behavior. According to game theory, rationality leads to optimality, and therefore analyzing the game and acting logically in accordance with the rules leads to the best outcome.

[0553] It is conceptually simple for an automated system to act rationally. That is, given a set of facts and circumstances, the rational analysis is fixed and obtainable. On the other hand, humans acting on purely mental consideration may deviate from rationality. For example, humans exhibit a broad range of risk tolerance, which is not directly explained by rational analysis. It is noted that risk tolerance, and other aspects of behavior, have been modeled, and as such, can themselves be treated scientifically and rationally. In fact, game theory expressly recognizes that agents may express private values which are not rationally explained, and that by understanding these values, a strategic advantage is obtained. Thus, while rationality is assumed as an optimum strategy for each entity, real entities have imperfect estimates of payoff and risk, and indeed may miscalculate or misconstrue the circumstances. Such perturbations may be compensated, under certain circumstances, by way of various parameters added to the modeling equation.

[0554] Game theory is typically encompassed in the study of economics, since a self-interested node will always try to increase its wealth, and all other concepts may be considered in terms of their subjective economic costs and benefits. Game theory can be used not only to analyze a defined game, but also to define a game having a desired outcome, i.e., to optimize a set of rules and constraints. The preferences of a node can be expressed either with a utility function, or with preference relations, ranking various consequences.

[0555] Games can be divided into noncooperative and cooperative games. In cooperative games, the joint actions of groups are analyzed, i.e. what is the outcome if a group of players cooperate. In noncooperative games, the actions of the single players are considered. The cooperative game model may be used to analyze heterogeneous ad hoc networks. In strategic games, decisions are made at the commencement of the game. In extensive games, decisions may be made interactively. The strategic game model is suitable for representing simple real life events such as a sealed bid auction. A progressive bid auction may be modeled as an extensive game.

[0556] Games can also be divided according to their payoff structures. A game is called zero-sum game if the sum of the utilities is constant in every outcome. Zero-sum games are considered strictly competitive games. For example, an auction is a zero sum game, since the buyer pays the seller, with no other gains or losses incurred. If the players are fully informed about each other's moves, the game has perfect information. Only extensive games consider the issue of perfect information. In games with complete information the utility function of each player is known. In a game with incomplete information, the privacy of a player's utility function is held as a strategic advantage.

[0557] Pareto efficiency exists if there is no other outcome that would make all players better off. An equilibrium is a result of the optimization of the individual players, but does not imply that the result is "good" or globally optimum. The solution of a strategic game is a Nash equilibrium. Every strategic game with finite number of players, each with a finite set of actions, has an equilibrium point. This Nash equilibrium is a point from which no single player wants to deviate unilaterally. When a game is played, the rationality assumption will force the game into a Nash equilibrium outcome. If the outcome is not a Nash equilibrium, at least one player would gain a higher payoff by choosing another action. If there are multiple equilibria, more information on the behavior of the players is needed to determine the outcome of the game.

[0558] In the strategic and extensive games, the solution of a game is a complete set of strategies that achieve a Nash equilibrium. In cooperative games, the solution comprises the subsets of players or coalitions from which no member has an incentive to break away. Cooperative games can be divided between games in which the coalition is free to internally distribute a payoff (transferable payoff), and those in which the payoff is personal to coalition members (non-transferable payoff). A dominant strategy is one in which the same decision is made based on the various different rational strategies an agent may adopt.

[0559] To better understand game theory, it is useful to consider simple games. In one game, called the prisoner's dilemma, two criminals are arrested and charged with a crime. The police do not have enough evidence to convict the suspects, unless at least one confesses. They are not able to communicate. If neither confesses, they will be convicted of a minor crime and sentenced for one month. If one confesses, and the other does not, the confessing one will be given immunity and released and the other will be sentenced for nine months. If both confess, both will be sentenced for six months.

[0560] Another famous game is the battle of the sexes. A couple is going to spend an evening out. She wishes to attend the opera and he wishes to attend a hockey match, but each gains a benefit of the other's company.

[0561] In the prisoner's dilemma, all the outcomes except (Confess; Confess) are Pareto efficient. In the battle of the sexes, an outcome in which husband and wife attend different events are not Pareto efficient. The outcome (Confess; Confess) is the equilibrium, while outcome (Don't confess; Don't confess) results in higher payoff for both the criminals, but it is not an equilibrium because both the players have an incentive to deviate from it. In the battle of the sexes, the pure strategy equilibrium points are (Opera; Opera) and (Hockey; Hockey). There is also a third Nash equilibrium with mixed strategies, in which both choose their preferred option with probability 2:3. The prisoner's dilemma is a good example of a sub-optimal equilibrium. Both players would gain a higher payoff by playing (Don't confess; Don't confess).

[0562] Another example of game theory is the so-called tragedy of the commons. In this game, a set of farmers live in a community with a grass-filled square. Each farmer is confronted with a decision as to whether to acquire another goat, which eats grass in the square. So long as the benefit of having the goat is in excess of the personal detriment of

that goat's grass consumption, it is a dominant strategy to acquire the goat, even though the necessary result of all farmers acting rationally is the loss, to all, of the benefits of the square.

[0563] In computer networks, issues arise as the demand for communications bandwidth approaches the theoretical limit. Under such circumstances, the behavior of nodes will affect how close to the theoretical limit the system comes, and also which communications are permitted. The well known collision sense, multiple access (CSMA) protocol allows each node to request access to the network, essentially without cost or penalty, and regardless of the importance of the communication. While the protocol incurs relatively low overhead and may provide fully decentralized control, under congested network conditions, the system may exhibit instability, that is, a decline in throughput as demand increases, resulting in ever increasing demand on the system resources and decreasing throughput. According to game theory, the deficit of the CSMA protocol is that it is a dominant strategy to be selfish and hog resources, regardless of the cost to society, resulting in "the tragedy of the commons."

[0564] Game theory is most readily applied in the optimization of communications routes through a defined network, to achieve the best surplus allocation. The problems of determining the network topology, and conducting the communications themselves, are also applications of game theory. Since the communications incidental to the network access arbitration require consideration of some of the same issues as the underlying communications, elements of game theory apply correspondingly. Due to various uncertainties, the operation of the system is stochastic. This presumption, in turn, allows estimation of optimality within an acceptable margin of error, permitting simplifying assumptions and facilitating implementation.

[0565] In an ad hoc network used for conveying real-time information, as might be the case in a telematics system, there are potentially unlimited data communication requirements, and network congestion is almost guaranteed. Therefore, using a CSMA protocol as the paradigm for basic information conveyance is destined for failure, unless there is a disincentive to network use. On the other hand, a system which provides more graceful degradation under high load, sensitivity to the importance of information to be communicated, and efficient utilization of the communications medium would appear more optimal.

[0566] One way to impose a cost which varies in dependence on the societal value of the good or service, is to conduct an auction, which is a mechanism to determine the market value of the good or service, at least between the auction participants. In an auction, the bidder seeks to bid the lowest value, up to a value less than or equal to his own private value (the actual value which the bidder appraises the good or service, and above which there is no surplus), that will win the auction. Since competitive bidders can minimize the gains of another bidder by exploiting knowledge of the private value attached to the good or service by the bidder, it is generally a dominant strategy for the bidder to attempt to keep its private value a secret, at least until the auction is concluded, thus yielding strategies that result in the largest potential gain. Auction strategies become more complex when the bidder himself is not a consumer or

collector, but rather a reseller. In this case, the private value of the bidder is influenced by the perception of the private value of other bidders, and thus may change over the course of the auction in a successive price auction. On the other hand, in certain situations, release or publication of the private value is a dominant strategy, and can result in substantial efficiency, that is, honesty in reporting the private value results in the maximum likelihood of prospective gain.

[0567] A so-called Vickrey-Clarke-Groves, or VCG, auction, is a type of auction suitable for bidding, in a single auction, for the goods or services of a plurality of offerors, as a unit. In the classic case, each bidder bids a value vector for each available combination of goods or services. The various components and associated ask price are evaluated combinatorially to achieve the minimum sum to meet the requirement. The winning bid set is that which produces the maximum value of the accepted bids, although the second (Vickrey) price is paid. In the present context, each offeror submits an ask price (reserve) or evaluable value function for a component of the combination. If the minimum aggregate to meet the bid requirement is not met, the auction fails. If the auction is successful, then the set of offerors selected is that with the lowest aggregate bid, and they are compensated that amount.

[0568] The surplus, i.e., gap between bid and ask, is then available to compensate the deferred bidders. This surplus is distributed proportionately to the original bid value for the bidder, thus further encouraging an honest valuation of control over the resource.

[0569] The network is such that, if any offeror asks an amount that is too high, it will be bypassed. Since the bidder pays the second highest price, honesty in bidding the full private value is encouraged. VCG auctions have found application in providing segment links to route goods, or information in a network. In defining the goods and services that are the subject of the auction, it is possible to value the non-interference of a competitor; that is, a competitor is both a buyer and seller in the sale multi-good auction, with the purchase and sale being inconsistent combinations.

[0570] The traditional VCG auction, is postulated as being optimal for allocation of multiple resources between agents. It is "strategyproof" and efficient, meaning that it is a dominant strategy for agents to report their true valuation for a resource, and the result of the optimization is a network which maximizes the value of the system to the agents. Game theory also allows an allocation of cost between various recipients of a broadcast or multicast. That is, the communication is of value to a plurality of nodes, and a large set of recipient nodes may efficiently receive the same information. This allocation from multiple bidders to multiple sellers is a direct extension of VCG theory, and a similar algorithm may be used to optimize allocation of costs and benefit.

[0571] Ad Hoc Networks

[0572] In an ad hoc network, there is no central authority controlling network operation, and there is typically a presumption that some nodes cannot directly communicate with others, leading to a requirement for communication intermediaries to forward packets, i.e., a multihop architecture. A mobile ad hoc network adds the further presumption that nodes are not stationary, and therefore a route discovery mechanism is required.

[0573] In order to determine the network architecture state, each node must broadcast its existence, and, for example, a payload of information including its identity, location, itinerary (navigation vector) and possibly an “information value function” and/or “information availability function”. Typically, the system operates in a continuous state, so that, after stabilization, it is reasonable to estimate of the present state based on the prior state information. In a system with mobile nodes, the mobility may be predicted, or updates provided as necessary. Using an in-band or out-of-band propagation mechanism, this information must propagate through a sphere of influence or to a network edge, which may be physically or artificially defined. Nodes may be presumed to operate with a substantially common estimation of network topology, and therefore only deviations from previously propagated information need be propagated. Of course, a mechanism should be provided for initialization and in case a new node joins the network. If such estimates were accurate, the network could then be modeled similarly to a non-mobile network, with certain extensions. On the other hand, typical implementations will present substantial deviations between actual network architecture and predicted network architecture, requiring substantial fault tolerance in the fundamental operation of the protocol and system.

[0574] If we presume that there is a spatial or temporal limit to relevance, for example, 5 miles or 10 hops, or 1 to 5 minutes, then the network state propagation may be so limited. Extending the network to encompass a large number of nodes, will necessarily reduce the tractability of the optimization, although this may also produce substantial benefits, especially if the hop distance is relatively short with respect to the desired communication range. Each node may therefore impose a local estimate of relevance as a filter on communications, especially arbitration communications. This consideration is accommodated by communicating, from each node, an update to all other nodes within its network relevance boundary, and a state variable which represents an estimate of relevant status beyond the arbitrarily defined boundary. The boundary estimate is advantageous in order to ensure long range consistency. On a practical note, assuming a cost is incurred by employing the ad hoc network, which scales with the number of hops, then at some point, especially considering the latency and reliability issues of ad hoc networks with a large number of hops, it is more efficient to employ cellular communications or the like. On the other hand, making the ad hoc network suitable and reliable for 100 hop communications will necessarily impede communications over a much smaller number of hops, thus disincentivizing the more reasonable uses of the network.

[0575] For example, the propagation of network state and other protocol-level information may conveniently occur over a finite number of hops, for example 5-10, in an outward direction, a condition which may be assessed by GPS assistance. For each hop, a relatively simple protocol, such as a collision sense-multiple access (CSMA) protocol, may be employed, with each node propagating information according to a set of rules. (It is noted that, since this communication is not “limitless” in contrast to bulk or streaming real-time sensor data, CSMA may be an appropriate and efficient protocol).

[0576] An example of the application of game theory to influence system architecture arises when communications latency is an issue. A significant factor in latency is the node hop count. Therefore, a system may seek to reduce node hop count by using an algorithm other than a nearest neighbor algorithm, bypassing some nodes with longer distance communications. In analyzing this possibility, one must not only look at the cost to the nodes involved in the communication, but also the cost to nodes which are prevented from simultaneously accessing the network. As a general proposition, the analysis of the network must include the impact of each action, or network state, on every node in the system, although simplifying presumptions may be appropriate where information is unavailable, or the anticipated impact is trivial.

[0577] Known and well analyzed routing models proposed for forwarding of packets in ad hoc networks. These include Ad Hoc On-Demand Distance Vector (AODV) Routing, Optimized Link State Routing Protocol (OLSR), Dynamic Source Routing Protocol (DSR), and Topology Dissemination Based on Reverse-Path Forwarding (TBRPF). In most scenarios analyzed to date, the performance metrics studied were power consumption, end-to-end data throughput and delay, route acquisition time, percentage out-of-order delivery, and efficiency. A critical variable considered in many prior studies is power cost, presuming a battery operated transceiver with finite available power. There can be significant differences in optimum routing depending on whether node has a transmit power control, which in turn controls range, and provides a further control over network topology. Likewise, steerable antennas, antenna arrays, and other forms of multiplexing provide further degrees of control over network topology. Note that the protocol-level communications are preferably broadcasts, while information conveyance communications are typically point-to-point. Prior analyses typically presume a single transceiver, with a single antenna, and thus use an omni-directional antenna, with in-band protocol data, for all communications. The tradeoff made in limiting system designs according to these presumptions should be clear.

[0578] Routing protocols in ad hoc networks typically employ three strategies: flooding, proactive routing, and reactive routing. Flooding protocols broadcast packets to all the nodes in the network, while the remaining protocols do not. In proactive routing, the protocol maintains route information all the time, while in reactive routing, a route is discovered only when needed. All or some of these strategies may be employed simultaneously. Flooding typically consumes too much bandwidth and energy to be efficient, as compared to more sophisticated strategies. However, in cases with very high mobility, the flooding protocols best ensure that the transmission reaches its destination.

[0579] In proactive routing, each node stores and updates routing information constantly. The routing tables can be updated based on perceived changes in the network topology. Therefore, a new transmission can start immediately without a route discovery delay. However, the constant exchange of routing information adds overhead to the protocol. OLSR and TBRPF protocols use proactive routing. The overhead traffic of a proactive routing protocol increases as the mobility of the nodes increases, since the routing information needs to be updated in shorter intervals.

[0580] In reactive routing, when a node wishes to transmit, it starts a route discovery process in order to find a path to the receiver. The routes remain valid until the route is no longer needed. AODV and DSR protocols use reactive routing. In the AODV protocol, to find a route to a receiver, a terminal broadcasts a route request message containing the address of the receiver and the lifespan of the message. Terminals receiving the message add their address to the packet and forward it if the lifespan is not exhausted. If a receiver or a terminal knowing the route to the receiver receives the route request message, it sends a route reply back to the requester. If the sender does not receive a route reply before a timeout occurs, it sends another route request with a longer lifespan. The use of sequential route requests with incremental increases in timeout allows a mapping of the network by hop count.

[0581] In order for an ad hoc network to be effective, the nodes need to cooperate. This cooperation comes at a cost. In power constrained systems, for example, the cost is battery consumption. In other scenarios, the network utilization is itself a burden. The various nodes must cooperate in both arbitration and control, e.g., route discovery and optimization, and the information forwarding itself. In fact, participation in the route discovery, without notice that the node will fail to forward information packets, has been shown in studies to be more detrimental to the network than simply abstaining entirely.

[0582] It is the general self-interest of a node to conserve its own resources, maintain an opportunity to access resources, while consuming whatever resource of other nodes as it desires. Clearly, this represents the “tragedy of the commons”, in which selfish individuals fail to respect the very basis for the community they enjoy, and a network of rational nodes operating without significant incentives to cooperate would likely fail. On the other hand, if donating a node’s resources generated an associated benefit to that node, while consuming network resources imposed a cost, stability and reliability can be achieved. So long as the functionality is sufficient to meet the need, and the economic surplus is “fairly” allocated, that is, the cost incurred is less than the private value of the benefit, and that cost is transferred as compensation to those burdened in an amount in excess of their incremental cost, adoption of the system should increase stability. In fact, even outside of these bounds, the system may be more stable than one which does not tax system use nor reward altruistic behavior. While the system is a zero sum system, and over time, the economic effects will average out, in any particular instance, the incentive for selfish behavior by a node will be diminished.

[0583] The concepts of node misbehavior and maliciousness, and competing networks consuming the same resources, are also addressed by aspects of game theory. For example, an ad hoc network may defer to or compete with an interfering network, and the decision of which strategy to adopt is within the province of game theory. The particularities of agent misbehavior or hacking are also encompassed by Game Theory, and real implementations must necessarily consider these issues. Sometimes, the solution to these issues is technological, but in others, the reaction of other nodes to discovery of misbehavior may be sufficient to discourage it. The intent is to formulate a system which is sufficiently robust and advantageous as to disincentivize non-compliance and non-cooperation, that is, the inherent

advantages of compliance with the system architecture exceed the anticipated benefits of the alternative.

[0584] One way to remedy selfish behavior is to increase the cost of acting this way, that is, to impose a cost or tax for access to the network. In a practical implementation, however, this is problematic, since under lightly loaded conditions, the “value” of the communications may not justify a fixed cost which might be reasonable under other conditions, and likewise, under heavier loads, critical communications may still be delayed or impeded. Note that where the network includes more nodes, the throughput may increase, since there are more potential routes and overall reliability may be increased, but the increased number of nodes will likely also increase network demand. A variable cost, dependent on relative “importance”, may be provided, and indeed, as alluded to above, this cost may be market based, in the manner of an auction. In a multihop network, such an auction is complicated by the requirement for a distribution of payments between the chain of nodes, with each node having potential alternate demands for its cooperation. The VCG auction mechanism excludes nodes which ask too high a price, and the auction itself may comprise a value function encompassing reliability, latency, quality of service, or other non-economic parameters, in economic terms.

[0585] The network may further require compensation to nodes which must defer communications because of inconsistent states, such as in order to avoid interference or duplicative use of an intermediary node, and which take no direct part in the communication. It is noted that the concept of the winner of an auction paying the losers is at first difficult to contemplate, but on further analysis quite logical. This upsets the normal analysis, since the possibility of a payment from the winner to the loser alters the allocation of economic surplus between the bidder, seller, and others. Likewise, while the cost to the involved nodes may be real, the cost to the uninvolved nodes may be subjective. Clearly, it would appear that involved nodes should generally be better compensated than uninvolved nodes, although a formal analysis remains to be performed.

[0586] In a more general sense, the underlying presumption is that the network provides competitive access to the physical transport medium, and that cooperation with the protocol provides significant advantages over competition with it. Clearly, the issues of commercial success and market dominance are much more complex and not capable of being accurately modeled according to known paradigms; on the other hand, a system providing rational benefits will be more likely to succeed than one with irrational benefits or ill defined explicable benefits. Under normal circumstances, a well developed ad hoc network system can present as a formidable coordinated competitor for access to contested bandwidth by other systems, while within the network, high valued communications may receive priority. Thus, a node presented with a communications requirement is presented not with the simple choice of participate or abstain, but rather whether to participate in an ad hoc network with predicted stability and mutual benefit, or one with the possibility of failure due to selfish behavior, and non-cooperation. Even in the absence of a present communication requirement, a network which rewards cooperative behavior may be preferable to one which simply expects altruism.

[0587] After the network architecture is defined, compensation is paid to those nodes providing value or subjected to a burden (including foregoing communication opportunity) by those gaining a benefit. The payment may be a virtual currency, with no specific true value, although the virtual currency system provides a convenient method to tax, subsidize, or control the system, and thus apply a normalized extrinsic value.

[0588] Game theory also encompasses the concept of that each node may have an associated “reputation” in the community. This reputation may be evaluated as a parameter in an economic analysis, or applied separately. This reputation may be anecdotal or statistical. In either case, if access to resources and payments are made dependent on reputation, nodes will be incentivized to maintain a good reputation, and avoid generating a bad reputation. Therefore, by maintaining and applying the reputation in a manner consistent with the community goals, the nodes are compelled to advance those goals in order to benefit from the community. Game theory distinguishes between good reputation and bad reputation. Nodes may have a selfish motivation to assert that another node has a bad reputation, while it would have little selfish motivation, absent collusion, for undeservedly asserting a good reputation. On the other hand, a node may have a selfish motivation in failing to reward behavior with a good reputation.

[0589] The virtual currency and reputation may be considered orthogonal, since the status of a node’s currency account provides no information about the status of its reputation.

[0590] Published Ad Hoc Network Examples

[0591] By no way a comprehensive list of published applications of game theory to the control of ad hoc networks, below are discussed a number of prominent examples.

[0592] The Terminodes project includes many of the features described above. This project proposes a method to encourage cooperation in ad hoc networks that is based on a virtual currency called nuglets. Each node contains a tamper-proof hardware module which handles the nuglets. When a node forwards a packet it extracts nuglets from the payload. In order to make a transmission, the sender appends nuglets needed to forward the packet through the network to its destination. However, a central node probably likely accumulates excess nuglets, hence it has less value for additional nuglets, leading to lower incentive for network activity. Peripheral nodes may possess insufficient nuglets to support their needs. However, the system appears to achieve a balance over time, assuming random node movement. The Terminodes project is notable for the depth and completeness of its analysis, as well as the progress made toward implementation.

[0593] Crowcroft et al. present a traffic-sensitive pricing model. Compensation for packet forwarding is responsive to both required energy consumption and local congestion at a node. This mechanism both enforces cooperation and balances traffic loads to avoid congestion. Stabilization of price and node wealth occurs in static networks.

[0594] The Confidant protocol detects node misbehavior and routes traffic around the misbehaving nodes, to isolate them from the network. Misbehavior of neighboring nodes

is broadcast to the network by observing nodes. A trust record is used to evaluate the validity of a report, thus disincentivizing misbehavior in the reporting process. The reputation information is applied by a path manager define a route and rejects access requested by misbehaving nodes.

[0595] The Core protocol is similar to Confidant; each node maintains reputation information, which is updated based on both observation and third party report. A threshold function is applied to limit access by nodes based on their reputation, resulting in isolation.

[0596] Michiardi et al. analyze whether it is optimal to join or defect from an ad hoc network, based on node utility function, payoff share, cost of cooperation, number of cooperating nodes, etc.

[0597] Srinivasan et al. apply game theory to model an ad hoc network at a connection level, providing a complicated extended game model. Before a user can transmit, all the nodes along the defined route must accept the relay request. Energy consumption of terminals is restricted by an expected lifetime of batteries, that is, the nodes are modeled as being power constrained. A normalized acceptance rate, a proportion of successful and attempted relays through a node, as observed by neighboring nodes, is sought to be maximized.

[0598] Urpi et al. model an ad hoc network at packet level. The model is based on an estimate of neighboring nodes, the remaining energy of node, and various packet traffic metrics. The payoff of the model is simply the access to packet forwarding, weighted by energy cost, provided to a node.

[0599] Noncooperative game theory offers a basis for analyzing Internet traffic, wherein each user tries to independently maximize its quality of service. The network operator focuses on maximizing network performance as a whole. Thus, in this case, different players adopt different roles, with different value functions. Game theory may thus be applied to optimize routing, flow control, queuing disciplines and traffic pricing. While ad hoc network routing is similar to the Internet, there are also significant differences. In an ad hoc network, routes may be inconsistent.

[0600] Nagle studied the concept of fairness in queuing in packet switches. In a first in-first out queue, a selfish node may saturate the queue with requests. Nagle proposes, as a solution, distinct queues for each source with a round-robin scheduler, providing a fair queuing scheme, which encourages keeping the user’s queue as short as possible.

[0601] Game theory has also been applied on flow control. Each user tries to maximize its utility, defined by the ratio of average throughput and average delay. It has been shown that a unique Nash equilibrium exists in such a system, which converges to an equilibrium point. The nodes seek to both maximize their own quality of service, but also the fairness of resource allocation, resulting in a Pareto efficient solution.

[0602] ALOHA is a wireless CSMA protocol using time division multiplexing. Transmission probabilities are a design specification of the system, but if a player uses a higher probability, his throughput will likely increase, leading to a misbehavior incentive. The selfish system appears to perform no better than a centrally controlled (non-CSMA)

system, and performance typically drops by half. A pricing mechanism may be incorporated, thus taxing users for their bandwidth demands.

[0603] An extensive analysis of the subject of the application of game theory to the control of ad hoc networks, including both an extensive review of the literature, and new analysis, is provided in the master's Thesis of Juha Leino, entitled "Applications of Game Theory in Ad Hoc Network", Helsinki University Of Technology (2003). Leino modeled the interaction between one node and the rest of the network as an extensive game. The networks were presumed to be energy constrained, and the nodes to be selfish, with the result stated as the amount of contribution the network can request from a node. Leino modeled nodes with power constrained, power adaptive, omnidirectional transceivers, each of which have a uniform communication demand on the network.

[0604] When a node connects to an ad hoc network, it gains both benefits and obligations. The other nodes forward its traffic, hence it can save energy and reach nodes outside its own transmission range, as compared to a single hop transmission. Correspondingly, the node should participate in the network functions like the route discovery and traffic forwarding that consume the resources of the node, in addition to the basic communications themselves. In order to find participation in the network advantageous, the node has gain greater benefits greater than the obligations imposed. This, of course, may be modeled as a game. The node seeks to minimize energy consumption, and the network seeks to ensure its functionality. The decision of the node is to cooperate or to defect.

[0605] In one of Leino's models, he requires that reward of forwarding needs to be proportional to the energy consumed when the packet is forwarded. He analyzes the situation of both a honest node and a cheating node, i.e., one that uses the network's resources without full participation in the network overhead. He concluded that if a node has an opportunity to cheat, it adversely affects the network far more than mere defection. Leino also analyzed whether, under his presumptions, a group of honest nodes will voluntarily aggregate as an ad hoc network, or would prefer to remain as a set of independent uncooperative actors, without benefit of multihop transmissions. He concludes that under his presumptions, in some networks, there are nodes which have detrimental involvement in the ad hoc network, and if all such "loser" nodes refuse to participate, the network may collapse. The proportion of losers drops with minimum energy routing, since the average cost is lowered, making gains from participation more likely. There are also networks with no losers, and these provide gains to all participants. Loser nodes tend to be in the center of the network, rather than the periphery.

[0606] Real Time Telematics Information Communication

[0607] Mobile, self organizing, ad hoc communications networks have been proposed for telematics systems, for cellular network extension, long range (multihop) traffic information communication, and short range collision avoidance systems.

[0608] Telematics is a recently applied term that now encompasses radio transmitters or receivers in vehicles. Three basic schemes exist: wide area broadcast communi-

cation, where all relevant nodes are presumed to be within the same communication zone (e.g., satellite radio, RDDS receivers, etc.); cellular communications, where an array of fixed-position low power transceivers contiguously blanket a territory, providing various zones which allow multiplexing within a band; and mesh network communications, which allow ad hoc formation of a communications infrastructure, optionally linking to various fixed infrastructure.

[0609] Telematics systems may be used for many purposes, for example, real time traffic information (RTTI), which in an extreme case may involve communication of live video streams. In a more modest system, various sensors may provide road and traffic data, as well as weather and incident information. In other words, the appetite of such a system for bandwidth is potentially limitless, unless constraints are imposed. On the other hand, RTTI is typically not power constrained, since it is vehicle based rather than hand-held, and therefore the cost of using the system will focus more on competition for bandwidth (the limited physical transport layer (PHY) resource) than power consumed in communications. Likewise, communications latency is not critical, unless full duplex voice communications are supported. It is noted that parked vehicles may also be involved in network communications, and the frequency band may be shared with portable communicators with self-contained power sources, making the economic cost of communications and power consumption a potential factor for some nodes, leading to split strategies.

[0610] Likewise, especially for voice communications, interfacing with the fixed infrastructure through cellular telephone towers or 802.11 hotspots may impose additional economic constraints on the system. Telematics systems typically include a GPS geolocation system, which may be of great use in mapping nodes for routing navigation functions. Indeed, the telematics system may be integrated within a navigation system and/or entertainment system. This is relevant to the extent that one considers the incremental cost of the hardware and its market placement.

[0611] The system is designed to operate over a wide range of node densities, from city rush hour traffic to rural highways. Due to a perceived incompatibility of a RTTI system with cellular infrastructure business models, as well as inconsistent availability of cellular coverage of roadways, the architecture is designed as a decentralized control, with incidental involvement of the cellular networks, except for voice communications outside of the mobile ad hoc network. This decentralized control introduces a substantial level of complexity, since it must account for rapidly changing network architecture, various types of channel impairments, hidden nodes, and temporal and spatial distance issues, and interference.

[0612] In defining the system, both the available hardware, costs and purposes for use must be considered. Desirable characteristics of a telematics system include real time telematics information communication, multihop voice communication forwarding, decentralized control, and to the extent possible, user privacy. The hardware may include multichannel directional smart antennas, out-of-band signaling and control, complex and sophisticated computational resources, to provide efficient utilization of an unlicensed or shared band.

[0613] That is, it is clear that a system that provides an omnidirectional antenna system with in band signaling and

control, is inefficient as compared to a system which directs its transmitted energy only in the direction of the intended target, and does not intrude on a high capacity physical transport medium with relatively low information content signaling packets.

[0614] In a real time telematics ad hoc network with potentially unlimited data communication requirements, network congestion is almost guaranteed, in a continuous network of mobile nodes. RF interference issues will likely prevent network capacity from scaling with node density. Therefore, an alternate to CSMA was sought that provided more graceful degradation under high load, sensitivity to the importance of information to be communicated, and efficient utilization of the communications medium.

[0615] In order to optimize the network, additional information is employed, although this imposes a burden of increased protocol overhead, complexity, and potential loss privacy. One way to remedy selfish behavior is to increase the cost of acting this way, that is, to impose a cost for access to the network. In a practical implementation, however, this is problematic, since under lightly loaded conditions, the "value" of the communications may not justify a fixed cost which might be reasonable under other conditions, and likewise, under heavier loads, critical communications may still be delayed or impeded. Therefore, a variable cost, dependent on relative "importance", may be imposed. In determining this relative importance, a market evaluation, requires a comparison, termed an auction, is employed. In a multihop network, such an auction is complicated by the requirement for distributing payments among the chain of nodes along the route, with each node having potential alternate demands for its cooperation and resources. According to a more sophisticated analysis, one must also compensate nodes not directly involved in the communication for their deference.

[0616] In a scenario involving a request for information, the auction is complicated by the fact that the information resource content is unknown to the recipient, and therefore the bid is blind, that is, the value of the information to the recipient is indeterminate. However, game theory supports the communication of a value function or utility function, which can then be evaluated at each node possessing information to be communicated, to normalize its value. Fortunately, it is a dominant strategy in a VCG auction to communicate a truthful value. In this case, a value function may instead be communicated, which can then be evaluated at each node possessing information to be communicated. In a mere request for information conveyance, such as the transport nodes in a multihop network, or in a cellular network infrastructure extension model, the bid may be a true (resolved) value, since the information content is not the subject of the bidding; rather it is the value of the communications per se, and the bidding node can reasonably value its bid.

[0617] In a cellular network infrastructure extension model, the bid may represent a resolved value, since the information content is not the subject of the bidding; rather it is the value of the communications per se. In the case of voice, however, the communications are bidirectional and enduring, thus raising quality of service and handoff issues.

[0618] Game theory is most readily applied in the optimization of communications routes through a defined net-

work, to achieve the best economic surplus allocation. That is, the problem of determining the network topology, and the communications themselves, are ancillary, though real, applications of game theory. Since the communications incidental to the arbitration require consideration of some of the same issues as the underlying communications, corresponding elements of game theory may apply at both levels of analysis. Due to various uncertainties, the operation of the system is stochastic. This presumption, in turn, allows estimation of optimality within a margin of error, simplifying implementation as compared to a rigorous analysis without regard to statistical significance.

[0619] The VCG auction is postulated as being optimal for allocation of multiple resources between agents. It is "strategyproof" and efficient, meaning that it is a dominant strategy for agents to report their true valuation for a resource, and the result of the optimization is a network which maximizes the value of the system to the agents.

[0620] Game theory also allows an allocation of cost between various recipients of a broadcast or multicast. That is, in many instances, telematic information is of value to a plurality of nodes, and a large set of recipient nodes may efficiently receive the same information. This allocation is a direct extension of VCG theory.

[0621] The preferred method for acquiring an estimate of the state of the network is through use of a proactive routing protocol. Thus, in order to determine the network architecture state, each node must broadcast its existence, and, for example, a payload of information including its identity, location, itinerary (navigation vector) and "information value function". Typically, the system operates in a continuous state, so that it is reasonable to commence the process with an estimate of the state based on prior information. Using an in-band or out-of-band propagation mechanism, this information must propagate to a network edge, which may be physically or artificially defined. If all nodes operate with a substantially common estimation of network topology, only deviations from previously propagated information need be propagated.

[0622] CSMA is proposed for the protocol-related communications because it is relatively simple and robust, and well suited for ad hoc communications in lightly loaded networks. An initial node transmits using an adaptive power protocol, to achieve an effective transmit range of somewhat less than about two times the estimated average inter-nodal distance. This distance therefore promotes propagation to a set of neighboring nodes, without unnecessarily interfering with communications of non-neighboring nodes and therefore allowing this task to be performed in parallel. Neighboring nodes also transmit in succession, providing sequential and complete protocol information propagation over a relevance range.

[0623] If we presume that there is a spatial limit to relevance, for example, 5 miles or 10 hops, then the network state propagation may be so limited. Extending the network to encompass a large number of nodes will necessarily reduce the tractability of the optimization. Each node has a local estimate of relevance. This consideration is accommodated, along with a desire to prevent exponential growth in protocol-related data traffic, by receiving an update from all nodes within a node's network relevance boundary, and a state variable which represents an estimate of relevant status

beyond the arbitrarily defined boundary. The propagation of network state may thus conveniently occur over a finite number of hops, for example 5-10.

[0624] Under conditions of relatively high nodal densities, the system may employ a zone strategy, that is, proximate groups of nodes are treated as an entity for purposes of external state estimation, especially with respect to distant nodes or zones. Such a presumption is realistic, since at extended distances, geographically proximate nodes may be modeled as being similar or inter-related, while at close distances, and particularly within a zone in which all nodes are in direct communication, internode communications may be subject to mutual interference, and can occur without substantial external influence. Alternately, it is clear that to limit latencies and communication risks, it may be prudent to bypass neighboring nodes, thus trading latency for power consumption and overall network capacity. Therefore, a hierachal scheme may be implemented to geographically organize the network at higher analytical levels, and geographic cells may cooperate to appear externally as a single entity.

[0625] A supernode within a zone may be selected for its superior capability, or perhaps a central location. The zone is defined by a communication range of the basic data interface for communications, with the control channel having a longer range, for example at least double the normal data communications range. Communications control channel transmitters operate on a number of channels, for example at least 7, allowing neighboring zones in a hexagonal tiled array to communicate simultaneously without interference. In a geographic zone system, alternate zones which would otherwise be interfering may use an adaptive multiplexing scheme to avoid interference. All nodes may listen on all control channels, permitting rapid propagation of control information.

[0626] In order to effective provide decentralized control, either each node must have a common set of information to allow execution of an identical control algorithm, or nodes defer to the control signals of other nodes without internal analysis for optimality. A model of semi-decentralized control is also known, in which dispersed "supernodes", are nominated as master, with other topologically nearby nodes remaining as slave nodes. In the pure peer network, complete information conveyance to each node is required, imposing a relatively high overhead. In a master-slave (or supernode) architecture, increased reliance on a single node trades-off reliability and robustness (and other advantages of pure peer-to-peer networks) for efficiency. A supernode within a cellular zone may be selected for its superior capability, or perhaps is at a central location or is immobile.

[0627] Once each control node (node or supernode) has an estimate of network topology, the next step is to optimize network channels. According to VCG theory, each agent has an incentive to broadcast its truthful value or value function for the scarce resource, which in this case, is control over communications physical layer, and or access to information. This communication can be consolidated with the network discovery transmission. Each control node then performs a combinatorial solution for the set of simultaneous equations according to VCG theory (or extensions thereof). This solution should be consistent between all nodes, and the effects of inconsistent solutions may be

resolved by collision sensing, and possibly an error/inconsistency detection and correction algorithm specifically applied to this type of information.

[0628] As part of the network mapping, communications impairment and interference sources are also mapped. GPS assistance may be particularly useful in this aspect. Where interference is caused by interfering communications, the issue is a determination of a strategy of deference or competition. If the interfering communication is continuous or unresponsive, then the only available strategy is competition. On the other hand, when the competing system uses, for example, a CSMA system, such as 802.11, competition with such a communication simply leads to retransmission, and therefore ultimately increased network load, and deference strategy may be more optimal (dominant), at least and until it is determined that the competing communication is incessant. Other communications protocols, however may have a more or less aggressive strategy. By observation of a system over time, its strategies may be revealed, and game theory permits composition of an optimal strategy.

[0629] The optimization process produces a representation of an optimal network architecture during the succeeding period. That is, value functions representing bids are broadcast, with the system then being permitted to determine an optimal real valuation and distribution of that value. Thus, prior to completion of the optimization, potentially inconsistent allocations must be prevented, and each node must communicate its evaluation of other node's value functions, so that the optimization is performed on a normalized economic basis. This step may substantially increase the system overhead, and is generally required for completion of the auction. This valuation may be inferred, however, for transit nodes in a multihop network path, since there is little subjectivity for nodes solely in this role, and the respective value functions may be persistent. For example, the valuation applied by a node to forward information is generally content and involved party independent.

[0630] A particular complication of a traffic information system is that the nature of the information held by any node is private to that node (before transmission), and therefore the valuation is not known until after all bids are evaluated. Thus, prior to completion of optimization, each node must communicate its evaluation of other nodes' value functions, so that the optimization is performed on an economic basis. This required step substantially increases the system overhead. This valuation may be inferred, however, for transit nodes in a multihop network path.

[0631] After the network usage is defined, compensation is paid to those nodes providing value or subjected to a burden (including foregoing communication opportunity) by those gaining a benefit. The payment is generally of a virtual currency, with no specific true value, although the virtual currency system provides a convenient method to tax the system.

[0632] Exerting external economic influences on the system may have various effects on the optimization, and may exacerbate differences in subjective valuations. The application of a monetary value to the virtual currency substantially also increases the possibility of misbehavior and external attacks. On the other hand, a virtual currency with no assessed real value is self-normalizing, while monetization leads to external and generally irrelevant influences as

well as possible arbitrage. External economic influences may also lead to benefits, which are discussed in various papers on non-zero sum games.

[0633] In order to provide fairness, the virtual currency (similar to the so-called “nuglets” or “nuggets” proposed for use in the Terminodes project) is self-generated at each node according to a schedule, and itself may have a time dependent value. For example, the virtual currency may have a half-life or temporally declining value. On the other hand, the value may peak at a time after generation, which would encourage deference and short term savings, rather than immediate spending, and would allow a recipient node to benefit from virtual currency transferred before its peak value. This also means that long term hoarding of the currency is of little value, since it will eventually decay in value, while the system presupposes a nominal rate of spending, which is normalized among nodes. The variation function may also be adaptive, but this poses a synchronization issue for the network. An external estimate of node wealth may be used to infer counterfeiting, theft and failure to pay debts, and to further effect remediation.

[0634] The currency is generated and verified in accordance with micropayment theory. Micropayment theory generally encompasses the transfer of secure tokens (e.g., cryptographically endorsed information) having presumed value, which are intended for verification, if at all, in a non-real time transaction, after the transfer to the recipient. The currency is circulated (until expiration) as a token, and therefore is not subject to immediate authentication by source. Since these tokens may be communicated through an insecure network, the issue of forcing allocation of payment to particular nodes may be dealt with by cryptographic techniques, in particular public key cryptography, in which the currency is placed in a cryptographic “envelope” addressed to the intended recipient, e.g., is encrypted with the recipient’s public key, which must be broadcast and used as, or in conjunction with, a node identifier. This makes the payment unavailable to other than the intended recipient. The issue of holding the encrypted token hostage and extorting a portion of the value to forward the packet can be dealt with by community pressure, that is, any node presenting this (or other undesirable) behavior might be ostracized. The likelihood of this type of misbehavior is also diminished by avoiding monetization of the virtual currency.

[0635] This currency generation and allocation mechanism generally encourages equal consumption by the various nodes over the long term. In order to discourage consumption of bandwidth, an external tax may be imposed on the system, that is, withdrawing value from the system base on usage. Clearly, the effects of such a tax must be carefully weighed, since this will also impose an impediment to adoption as compared to an untaxed system. On the other hand, a similar effect use-disincentive may be obtained by rewarding low consumption, for example by allocating an advertising subsidy between nodes, or in reward of deference. In a model telematics system, an audio and/or visual display provides a useful possibility for advertising and sponsorship; likewise, location based services may include commercial services.

[0636] Each node computes a value function, based on its own knowledge state, risk profile and risk tolerance, and wealth, describing the value to it of additional information,

as well as its own value for participating in the communications of others. The value function typically includes a past travel history, future travel itinerary, present location, recent communication partners, and an estimator of information strength and weakness with respect to the future itinerary. It may be presumed that each node has a standard complement of sensors, and accurately acquired descriptive data for its past travel path. Otherwise, a description of the available information is required. One advantage of a value function is that it changes little over time, unless a need is satisfied or circumstances change, and therefore may be a persistent attribute.

[0637] Using the protocol communication system, each node transmits its value function (or change thereof), passes through communications from neighboring nodes, and may, for example transmit payment information for the immediate-past bid for incoming communications.

[0638] Messages are forwarded outward (avoiding redundant propagation back to the source), with messages appended from the series of nodes. Propagation continues for a finite number of hops, until the entire community has an estimate of the state and value function of each node in the community. Advantageously, the network beyond a respective community may be modeled in simplified form, to provide a better estimate of the network as a whole.

[0639] After propagation, each node evaluates the set of value functions for its community, with respect to its own information and ability to forward packets. Each node may then make an offer to supply or forward information, based on the provided information. In the case of multihop communications, the offers are propagated to the remainder of the community, for the maximum number of hops, including the originating node. At this point, each node has a representation of the state of its community, with community edge estimates providing consistency for nodes with differing community scopes, the valuation function each node assigns to control over portions of the network, as well as a resolved valuation of each node for supplying the need. Under these circumstances, each node may then evaluate an optimization for the network architecture, and come to a conclusion consistent with that of other members of its community. If supported, node reputation may be updated based on past performance, and the reputation applied as a factor in the optimization and/or externally to the optimization. As discussed above, a VCG-type auction is employed as a basis for optimization. Since each node receives bid information from all other nodes within the maximum node count, the VCG auction produces an optimized result.

[0640] Transmissions are made in frames, with a single bidding process controlling multiple frames, for example a multiple of the maximum number of hops. Therefore, the bid encompasses a frame’s-worth of control over the modalities. In the event that the simultaneous use of, or control over, a modality by various nodes is not inconsistent, then the value of the respective nodes may be summed, with the resulting allocation based on, for example, a ratio of the respective value functions. As a part of the optimization, nodes are rewarded not only for supporting the communication, but also for deferring their own respective needs. As a result, after controlling the resources, a node will be relatively less wealthy and less able to subsequently control the resources, while other nodes will be more able to control the resources.

The distribution to deferred nodes also serves to prevent pure reciprocal communications, since the proposed mechanism distributes and dilutes the wealth to deferring nodes.

[0641] Because each node in the model presented above has complete information, for a range up to the maximum node count, the wealth of each node can be estimated by its neighbors, and payment inferred even if not actually consummated. (Failure of payment can occur for a number of reasons, including both malicious and accidental). Because each hop adds significant cost, the fact that nodes beyond the maximum hop distance are essentially incommunicado is typically of little consequence; since it is very unlikely that a node more than 5 or 10 hops away will be efficiently included in any communication, due to the increasing cost with distance, as well as reduction in reliability and increase in latency. Thus, large area and scalable networks may exist.

[0642] Typically, cryptography is employed for both authentication and to preserve privacy. External regulation, in a legal sense at least, is typically imposed by restrictions on hardware and software design, as well as voluntary compliance at risk of detection and legal sanction.

CONCLUSION

[0643] The use of game theory as a basis for analyzing ad hoc networks provides a basis for understanding the behavior of complex networks of independent nodes. By presuming a degree of choice and decision-making by nodes, we obtain an analysis that is robust with respect to such considerations.

[0644] The principal issues impeding deployment are the inherent complexity of the system, as well as the overhead required to continuously optimize the system. Further work will allow a determination of a set of simplifying presumptions to reduce protocol overhead and reduce complexity.

[0645] The ad hoc network does not exist in a vacuum. There are various competing interests seeking to use the same bandwidth, and technological superiority alone does not assure dominance and commercial success. Game theory may also be used as a tool to analyze the entities which seek to deploy ad hoc networks, especially where they compete.

[0646] The present invention therefore provides an automated negotiation for control of a set of resources by competing bidders and offerors, comprising receiving, from each of a plurality of bidders, a utility function representing a value to the bidder to obtain of a set of resources, receiving, from each of a plurality of offerors, a utility function representing a value to the offeror to relinquish a set of resources, computing a set of successful bids from the plurality of bidders and plurality of offers, a successful bid comprising a matching of a maximum aggregate value of the sets of resources to the bidders and a minimum aggregate value of the sets of resources to the offerors, wherein the maximum aggregate value of bids equals or exceeds the minimum aggregate value of offers; and receiving for each set of resources from a bidder placing a respective successful bid a Vickrey price, and paying to for each set of resources to an offeror of a respective successful bid each its offer price, with any surplus being allocated to bidders based on a value bid. The bidder utility function may be evaluated based on private information of an offeror, and communicated as a normalized value.

[0647] It is noted that in an auction for a synthetic economic value generated by a generation function, the payment may be by currency or the ability to generate currency. That is, an agent may transfer to another agent the micro-payment or the ability to generate a micropayment, both within the auction or outside of it. Normally, the valuation of the ability to generate synthetic currency would be discounted from the future value by a subjective discount rate dependent on the recipient. In other cases, it may be expedient to apply an objective discount rate which is calculable without requiring substantial communications (or even any communications) with each agent. Thus, each agent can anticipate its future communication needs and target sufficient resources at the appropriate time to meet that need, while leaving for other agents the communication resources when these are not needed.

EIGHTH EMBODIMENT

[0648] According to a further aspect of the invention, it is desired to understand the subjective risk aversion profile of a person. Risk-aversion is a significant deviation from rationality which can be quantified and understood, and further a calculus is available for applying the risk aversion to normalize systems in which rationality is presumed. Accordingly, the method comprises presenting a game for play by a person, wherein the payoff of the game is real and beneficial to the person. That is, the incentive and risk must be real, with some limits on the ability to extrapolate beyond the scope of risk presented. The person is then sufficiently observed during the game play to comprehend a risk aversion profile of the user. Typically, the game is automated, but this is not required, and, in fact, a competition between two or more players is possible. This scenario is generally quite beneficial where the stakes of the game are identical or similar to the risk aversion personality attribute sought to be defined. The comprehended risk aversion profile may then be used to modify a rationality expectation for the person. The modified rationality expectation may then be applied to optimize an interaction with the person outside of the game play environment.

[0649] This process is particularly useful for creating a user-agent to act on behalf of the user, in a manner commensurate with a subjective profile of the user, or to subjectivize a presentation of risk data to a user. For example, in the probability based user interface discussed above, the event-probability map may be analyzed based on the subjective risk tolerance of the user, and the output optimized accordingly. This method may also be applied for optimally pairing a user with another person or process, based on compatibility.

[0650] There has thus been shown and described novel communications devices and systems and methods which fulfill all the objects and advantages sought therefor. Many changes, modifications, variations, combinations, subcombinations and other uses and applications of the subject invention will, however, become apparent to those skilled in the art after considering this specification and the accompanying drawings which disclose the preferred embodiments thereof. All such changes, modifications, variations and other uses and applications which do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention are deemed to be covered by the invention, which is to be limited only by the claims which follow.

APPENDICES

[0651] The following resources, each of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference, provides a basis for understanding aspects of the invention and has implications for the design, control, and analysis of systems and networks, and the method of operation thereof.

OTHER PATENTS BY INVENTOR HEREOF

[0652] The following patents are expressly incorporated herein by reference: U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,865,825, 6,850,252, 6,791,472, 6,640,145, 6,429,812, 6,418,424, 6,400,996, 6,252,544, 6,230,501, 6,081,750, 5,920,477, 5,903,454, 5,901,246, 5,875,108, 5,867,386, and 5,774,357.

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and method for data recovery); U.S. Pat. No. 6,026,379 (System, method and article of manufacture for managing transactions in a high availability system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,026,490 (Configurable cryptographic processing engine and method); U.S. Pat. No. 6,028,932 (Copy prevention method and apparatus for digital video system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,028,933 (Encrypting method and apparatus enabling multiple access for multiple services and multiple transmission modes over a broadband communication network); U.S. Pat. No. 6,028,936 (Method and apparatus for authenticating recorded media); U.S. Pat. No. 6,028,937 (Communication device which performs two-way encryption authentication in challenge response format); U.S. Pat. No. 6,028,939 (Data security system and method); U.S. Pat. No. 6,029,150 (Payment and transactions in electronic commerce system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,029,195 (System for customized electronic identification of desirable objects); U.S. Pat. No. 6,029,247 (Method and apparatus for transmitting secured data); U.S. Pat. No. 6,031,913 (Apparatus and method for secure communication based on channel characteristics); U.S. Pat. No. 6,031,914 (Method and apparatus for embedding data, including watermarks, in human perceptible images); U.S. Pat. No. 6,034,618 (Device authentication system which allows the authentication function to be changed); U.S. Pat. No. 6,035,041 (Optimal-resilience, proactive, public-key cryptographic system and method); U.S. Pat. No. 6,035,398 (Cryptographic key generation using biometric data); U.S. Pat. No. 6,035,402 (Virtual certificate authority); U.S. Pat. No. 6,038,315 (Method and system for normalizing biometric variations to authenticate users from a public database and that ensures individual biometric data privacy); U.S. Pat. No. 6,038,316 (Method and system for protection of digital information); U.S. Pat. No. 6,038,322 (Group key distribution); U.S. Pat. No. 6,038,581 (Scheme for arithmetic operations in finite field and group operations over elliptic curves realizing improved computational speed); U.S. Pat. No. 6,038,665 (System and method for backing up computer files over a wide area computer network); U.S. Pat. No. 6,038,666 (Remote identity verification technique using a personal identification device); U.S. Pat. No. 6,041,122 (Method and apparatus for hiding cryptographic keys utilizing autocorrelation timing encoding and computation); U.S. Pat. No. 6,041,123 (Centralized secure communications system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,041,357 (Common session token system and protocol); U.S. Pat. No. 6,041,408 (Key distribution method and system in secure broadcast communication); U.S. Pat. No. 6,041,410 (Personal identification fob); U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,131 (Secure digital x-ray image authentication method); U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,155 (Method and system for securely archiving core data secrets); U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,157 (Microprocessor suitable for reproducing AV data while protecting the AV data from illegal copy and image information processing system using the microprocessor); U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,205 (Communications system for transferring information between memories according to processes transferred with the information); U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,349 (Secure and convenient information storage and retrieval method and apparatus); U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,350 (Certificate meter with selectable indemnification provisions); U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,388 (Pseudorandom number generator); U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,462 (Method and apparatus for managing key revocation); U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,463 (Method and system for message delivery utilizing zero knowledge interactive proof protocol); U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,

464 (Method of protecting broadcast data by fingerprinting a common decryption function); U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,466 (Flexible and dynamic derivation of permissions); U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,468 (Secure transmission using an ordinarily insecure network communication protocol such as SNMP); U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,051 (Implementation of charging in a telecommunications system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,066 (Communication method and device); U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,067 (Electronic-monetary system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,072 (Method for secure key distribution over a nonsecure communications network); U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,242 (Computer system for protecting software and a method for protecting software); U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,268 (Method and apparatus for billing for transactions conducted over the internet); U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,269 (Self-contained payment system with circulating digital vouchers); U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,374 (Method and apparatus for embedding authentication information within digital data); U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,887 (System and method for connecting money modules); U.S. Pat. No. 6,049,610 (Method and apparatus for digital signature authentication); U.S. Pat. No. 6,049,612 (File encryption method and system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,049,613 (Method and apparatus for encrypting, decrypting, and providing privacy for data values); U.S. Pat. No. 6,049,671 (Method for identifying and obtaining computer software from a network computer); U.S. Pat. No. 6,049,785 (Open network payment system for providing for authentication of payment orders based on a confirmation electronic mail message); U.S. Pat. No. 6,049,786 (Electronic bill presentment and payment system which deters cheating by employing hashes and digital signatures); U.S. Pat. No. 6,049,787 (Electronic business transaction system with notarization database and means for conducting a notarization procedure); U.S. Pat. No. 6,049,838 (Persistent distributed capabilities); U.S. Pat. No. 6,049,872 (Method for authenticating a channel in large-scale distributed systems); U.S. Pat. No. 6,049,874 (System and method for backing up computer files over a wide area computer network); U.S. Pat. No. 6,052,466 (Encryption of data packets using a sequence of private keys generated from a public key exchange); U.S. Pat. No. 6,052,467 (System for ensuring that the blinding of secret-key certificates is restricted, even if the issuing protocol is performed in parallel mode); U.S. Pat. No. 6,052,469 (Interoperable cryptographic key recovery system with verification by comparison); U.S. Pat. No. 6,055,314 (System and method for secure purchase and delivery of video content programs); U.S. Pat. No. 6,055,321 (System and method for hiding and extracting message data in multimedia data); U.S. Pat. No. 6,055,508 (Method for secure accounting and auditing on a communications network); U.S. Pat. No. 6,055,512 (Networked personal customized information and facility services); U.S. Pat. No. 6,055,636 (Method and apparatus for centralizing processing of key and certificate life cycle management); U.S. Pat. No. 6,055,639 (Synchronous message control system in a Kerberos domain); U.S. Pat. No. 6,056,199 (Method and apparatus for storing and reading data); U.S. Pat. No. 6,057,872 (Digital coupons for pay televisions); U.S. Pat. No. 6,058,187 (Secure telecommunications data transmission); U.S. Pat. No. 6,058,188 (Method and apparatus for interoperable validation of key recovery information in a cryptographic system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,058,189 (Method and system for performing secure electronic monetary transactions); U.S. Pat. No. 6,058,193 (System and method of verifying cryp-

tographic postage evidencing using a fixed key set); U.S. Pat. No. 6,058,381 (Many-to-many payments system for network content materials); U.S. Pat. No. 6,058,383 (Computationally efficient method for trusted and dynamic digital objects dissemination); U.S. Pat. No. 6,061,448 (Method and system for dynamic server document encryption); U.S. Pat. No. 6,061,454 (System, method, and computer program for communicating a key recovery block to enable third party monitoring without modification to the intended receiver); U.S. Pat. No. 6,061,692 (System and method for administering a meta database as an integral component of an information server); U.S. Pat. No. 6,061,789 (Secure anonymous information exchange in a network); U.S. Pat. No. 6,061,790 (Network computer system with remote user data encipher methodology); U.S. Pat. No. 6,061,791 (Initial secret key establishment including facilities for verification of identity); U.S. Pat. No. 6,061,792 (System and method for fair exchange of time-independent information goods over a network); U.S. Pat. No. 6,061,794 (System and method for performing secure device communications in a peer-to-peer bus architecture); U.S. Pat. No. 6,061,796 (Multi-access virtual private network); U.S. Pat. No. 6,061,799 (Removable media for password based authentication in a distributed system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,064,723 (Network-based multimedia communications and directory system and method of operation); U.S. Pat. No. 6,064,738 (Method for encrypting and decrypting data using chaotic maps); U.S. Pat. No. 6,064,740 (Method and apparatus for masking modulo exponentiation calculations in an integrated circuit); U.S. Pat. No. 6,064,741 (Method for the computer-aided exchange of cryptographic keys between a user computer unit U and a network computer unit N); U.S. Pat. No. 6,064,764 (Fragile watermarks for detecting tampering in images); U.S. Pat. No. 6,064,878 (Method for separately permissioned communication); U.S. Pat. No. 6,065,008 (System and method for secure font subset distribution); U.S. Pat. No. 6,067,620 (Stand alone security device for computer networks); U.S. Pat. No. 6,069,647 (Conditional access and content security method); U.S. Pat. No. 6,069,952 (Data copyright management system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,069,954 (Cryptographic data integrity with serial bit processing and pseudo-random generators); U.S. Pat. No. 6,069,955 (System for protection of goods against counterfeiting); U.S. Pat. No. 6,069,969 (Apparatus and method for electronically acquiring fingerprint images); U.S. Pat. No. 6,069,970 (Fingerprint sensor and token reader and associated methods); U.S. Pat. No. 6,070,239 (System and method for executing verifiable programs with facility for using non-verifiable programs from trusted sources); U.S. Pat. No. 6,072,870 (System, method and article of manufacture for a gateway payment architecture utilizing a multichannel, extensible, flexible architecture); U.S. Pat. No. 6,072,874 (Signing method and apparatus using the same); U.S. Pat. No. 6,072,876 (Method and system for depositing private key used in RSA crypto-system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,073,125 (Token key distribution system controlled acceptance mail payment and evidencing system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,073,160 (Document communications controller); U.S. Pat. No. 6,073,172 (Initializing and reconfiguring a secure network interface); U.S. Pat. No. 6,073,234 (Device for authenticating user's access rights to resources and method); U.S. Pat. No. 6,073,236 (Authentication method, communication method, and information processing apparatus); U.S. Pat. No. 6,073,237 (Tamper resistant method and apparatus); U.S. Pat. No. 6,073,238

(Method of securely loading commands in a smart card); U.S. Pat. No. 6,073,242 (Electronic authority server); U.S. Pat. No. 6,075,864 (Method of establishing secure, digitally signed communications using an encryption key based on a blocking set cryptosystem); U.S. Pat. No. 6,075,865 (Cryptographic communication process and apparatus); U.S. Pat. No. 6,076,078 (Anonymous certified delivery); U.S. Pat. No. 6,076,162 (Certification of cryptographic keys for chipcards); U.S. Pat. No. 6,076,163 (Secure user identification based on constrained polynomials); U.S. Pat. No. 6,076,164 (Authentication method and system using IC card); U.S. Pat. No. 6,076,167 (Method and system for improving security in network applications); U.S. Pat. No. 6,078,663 (Communication apparatus and a communication system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,078,665 (Electronic encryption device and method); U.S. Pat. No. 6,078,667 (Generating unique and unpredictable values); U.S. Pat. No. 6,078,909 (Method and apparatus for licensing computer programs using a DSA signature); U.S. Pat. No. 6,079,018 (System and method for generating unique secure values for digitally signing documents); U.S. Pat. No. 6,079,047 (Unwrapping system and method for multiple files of a container); U.S. Pat. No. 6,081,597 (Public key cryptosystem method and apparatus); U.S. Pat. No. 6,081,598 (Cryptographic system and method with fast decryption); U.S. Pat. No. 6,081,610 (System and method for verifying signatures on documents); U.S. Pat. No. 6,081,790 (System and method for secure presentment and payment over open networks); U.S. Pat. No. 6,081,893 (System for supporting secured log-in of multiple users into a plurality of computers using combined presentation of memorized password and transportable passport record), U.S. Pat. No. 6,192,473 (System and method for mutual authentication and secure communications between a postage security device and a meter server), each of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[2549] See, also, U.S. Pat. No. 6,028,937 (Tatebayashi et al.), U.S. Pat. No. 6,026,167 (Aziz), U.S. Pat. No. 6,009,171 (Ciacelli et al.) (Content Scrambling System, or "CSS"), U.S. Pat. No. 5,991,399 (Graunke et al.), U.S. Pat. No. 5,948,136 (Smyers) (IEEE 1394-1995), and U.S. Pat. No. 5,915,018 (Aucsmith), expressly incorporated herein by reference, and Jim Wright and Jeff Robillard (Philips Semiconductor), "Adding Security to Portable Designs", Portable Design, March 2000, pp. 16-20.

[2550] See also, Stefik, U.S. Pat. No. 5,715,403 (System for controlling the distribution and use of digital works having attached usage rights where the usage rights are defined by a usage rights grammar); U.S. Pat. No. 5,638,443 (System for controlling the distribution and use of composite digital works); U.S. Pat. No. 5,634,012 (System for controlling the distribution and use of digital works having a fee reporting mechanism); and U.S. Pat. No. 5,629,980 (System for controlling the distribution and use of digital works), expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[2551] Computer Security and Devices

[2552] A number of references relate to computer system security, which is a part of various embodiment of the invention. The following references relevant to this issue are incorporated herein by reference: U.S. Pat. No. 5,881,225 (Worth, Mar. 9, 1999); U.S. Pat. No. 5,937,068 (Audebert, Aug. 10, 1999); U.S. Pat. No. 5,949,882 (Angelo, Sep. 7, 1999); U.S. Pat. No. 5,953,419 (Lohstroh, et al., Sep. 14,

1999); U.S. Pat. No. 5,956,400 (Chaum, et al., Sep. 21, 1999); U.S. Pat. No. 5,958,050 (Griffin, et al., Sep. 28, 1999); U.S. Pat. No. 5,978,475 (Schneier, et al., Nov. 2, 1999); U.S. Pat. No. 5,991,878 (McDonough, et al., Nov. 23, 1999); U.S. Pat. No. 6,070,239 (McManis, May 30, 2000); and U.S. Pat. No. 6,079,021 (Abadi, et al., Jun. 20, 2000).

[2553] A number of references relate to computer security devices, which is a part of various embodiment of the invention. The following references relevant to this issue are incorporated herein by reference: U.S. Pat. No. 5,982,520 (Weiser, et al., Nov. 9, 1999); U.S. Pat. No. 5,991,519 (Benhammou, et al., Nov. 23, 1999); U.S. Pat. No. 5,999,629 (Heer, et al., Dec. 7, 1999); U.S. Pat. No. 6,034,618 (Tatebayashi, et al., Mar. 7, 2000); U.S. Pat. No. 6,041,412 (Timson, et al., Mar. 21, 2000); U.S. Pat. No. 6,061,451 (Muratani, et al., May 9, 2000); and U.S. Pat. No. 6,069,647 (Sullivan, et al., May 30, 2000).

[2554] Virtual Private Network

[2555] A number of references relate to virtual private networks, which is a part of various embodiment of the invention. The following references relevant to this issue are incorporated herein by reference: U.S. Pat. No. 6,079,020 (Liu, Jun. 20, 2000); U.S. Pat. No. 6,081,900 (Secure intranet access); U.S. Pat. No. 6,081,533 (Method and apparatus for an application interface module in a subscriber terminal unit); U.S. Pat. No. 6,079,020 (Method and apparatus for managing a virtual private network); U.S. Pat. No. 6,078,946 (System and method for management of connection oriented networks); U.S. Pat. No. 6,078,586 (ATM virtual private networks); U.S. Pat. No. 6,075,854 (Fully flexible routing service for an advanced intelligent network); U.S. Pat. No. 6,075,852 (Telecommunications system and method for processing call-independent signalling transactions); U.S. Pat. No. 6,073,172 (Initializing and reconfiguring a secure network interface); U.S. Pat. No. 6,061,796 (Multi-access virtual private network); U.S. Pat. No. 6,061,729 (Method and system for communicating service information in an advanced intelligent network); U.S. Pat. No. 6,058,303 (System and method for subscriber activity supervision); U.S. Pat. No. 6,055,575 (Virtual private network system and method); U.S. Pat. No. 6,052,788 (Firewall providing enhanced network security and user transparency); U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,325 (Network device for supporting construction of virtual local area networks on arbitrary local and wide area computer networks); U.S. Pat. No. 6,032,118 (Virtual private network service provider for asynchronous transfer mode network); U.S. Pat. No. 6,029,067 (Virtual private network for mobile subscribers); U.S. Pat. No. 6,016,318 (Virtual private network system over public mobile data network and virtual LAN); U.S. Pat. No. 6,009,430 (Method and system for provisioning databases in an advanced intelligent network); U.S. Pat. No. 6,005,859 (Proxy VAT-PSTN origination); U.S. Pat. No. 6,002,767 (System, method and article of manufacture for a modular gateway server architecture); U.S. Pat. No. 6,002,756 (Method and system for implementing intelligent telecommunication services utilizing self-sustaining, fault tolerant object oriented architecture), each of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[2556] See also, U.S. Pat. No. 6,081,900 (Secure intranet access); U.S. Pat. No. 6,081,750 (Ergonomic man-machine interface incorporating adaptive pattern recognition based

control system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,081,199 (Locking device for systems access to which is time-restricted); U.S. Pat. No. 6,079,621 (Secure card for E-commerce and identification); U.S. Pat. No. 6,078,265 (Fingerprint identification security system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,076,167 (Method and system for improving security in network applications); U.S. Pat. No. 6,075,455 (Biometric time and attendance system with epidermal topographical updating capability); U.S. Pat. No. 6,072,894 (Biometric face recognition for applicant screening); U.S. Pat. No. 6,070,141 (System and method of assessing the quality of an identification transaction using an identification quality score); U.S. Pat. No. 6,068,184 (Security card and system for use thereof); U.S. Pat. No. 6,064,751 (Document and signature data capture system and method); U.S. Pat. No. 6,056,197 (Information recording method for preventing alteration, information recording apparatus, and information recording medium); U.S. Pat. No. 6,052,468 (Method of securing a cryptographic key); U.S. Pat. No. 6,045,039 (Cardless automated teller transactions); U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,349 (Secure and convenient information storage and retrieval method and apparatus); U.S. Pat. No. 6,044,155 (Method and system for securely archiving core data secrets); U.S. Pat. No. 6,041,410 (Personal identification fob); U.S. Pat. No. 6,040,783 (System and method for remote, wireless positive identity verification); U.S. Pat. No. 6,038,666 (Remote identity verification technique using a personal identification device); U.S. Pat. No. 6,038,337 (Method and apparatus for object recognition); U.S. Pat. No. 6,038,315 (Method and system for normalizing biometric variations to authenticate users from a public database and that ensures individual biometric data privacy); U.S. Pat. No. 6,037,870 (Detector system for access control, and a detector assembly for implementing such a system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,035,406 (Plurality-factor security system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,035,402 (Virtual certificate authority); U.S. Pat. No. 6,035,398 (Cryptographic key generation using biometric data); U.S. Pat. No. 6,031,910 (Method and system for the secure transmission and storage of protectable information); U.S. Pat. No. 6,026,166 (Digitally certifying a user identity and a computer system in combination); U.S. Pat. No. 6,018,739 (Biometric personnel identification system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,016,476 (Portable information and transaction processing system and method utilizing biometric authorization and digital certificate security); U.S. Pat. No. 6,012,049 (System for performing financial transactions using a smartcard); U.S. Pat. No. 6,012,039 (Tokenless biometric electronic rewards system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,011,858 (Memory card having a biometric template stored thereon and system for using same); U.S. Pat. No. 6,009,177 (Enhanced cryptographic system and method with key escrow feature); U.S. Pat. No. 6,006,328 (Computer software authentication, protection, and security system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,003,135 (Modular security device); U.S. Pat. No. 6,002,770 (Method for secure data transmission between remote stations); U.S. Pat. No. 5,999,637 (Individual identification apparatus for selectively recording a reference pattern based on a correlation with comparative patterns); U.S. Pat. No. 5,999,095 (Electronic security system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,995,630 (Biometric input with encryption); U.S. Pat. No. 5,991,431 (Mouse adapted to scan biometric data); U.S. Pat. No. 5,991,429 (Facial recognition system for security access and identification); U.S. Pat. No. 5,991,408 (Identification and security using biometric measurements); U.S. Pat. No. 5,987,155 (Biometric input device

with peripheral port); U.S. Pat. No. 5,987,153 (Automated verification and prevention of spoofing for biometric data); U.S. Pat. No. 5,986,746 (Topographical object detection system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,984,366 (Unalterable self-verifying articles); U.S. Pat. No. 5,982,894 (System including separable protected components and associated methods); U.S. Pat. No. 5,979,773 (Dual smart card access control electronic data storage and retrieval system and methods); U.S. Pat. No. 5,978,494 (Method of selecting the best enroll image for personal identification); U.S. Pat. No. 5,974,146 (Real time bank-centric universal payment system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,970,143 (Remote-auditing of computer generated outcomes, authenticated billing and access control, and software metering system using cryptographic and other protocols); U.S. Pat. No. 5,966,446 (Time-bracketing infrastructure implementation); U.S. Pat. No. 5,963,908 (Secure logon to notebook or desktop computers); U.S. Pat. No. 5,963,657 (Economical skin-pattern-acquisition and analysis apparatus for access control; systems controlled thereby); U.S. Pat. No. 5,954,583 (Secure access control system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,952,641 (Security device for controlling the access to a personal computer or to a computer terminal); U.S. Pat. No. 5,951,055 (Security document containing encoded data block); U.S. Pat. No. 5,949,881 (Apparatus and method for cryptographic companion imprinting); U.S. Pat. No. 5,949,879 (Auditable security system for the generation of cryptographically protected digital data); U.S. Pat. No. 5,949,046 (Apparatus for issuing integrated circuit cards); U.S. Pat. No. 5,943,423 (Smart token system for secure electronic transactions and identification); U.S. Pat. No. 5,935,071 (Ultrasonic biometric imaging and identity verification system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,933,515 (User identification through sequential input of fingerprints); U.S. Pat. No. 5,933,498 (System for controlling access and distribution of digital property); U.S. Pat. No. 5,930,804 (Web-based biometric authentication system and method); U.S. Pat. No. 5,923,763 (Method and apparatus for secure document timestamping); U.S. Pat. No. 5,920,477 (Human factored interface incorporating adaptive pattern recognition based controller apparatus); U.S. Pat. No. 5,920,384 (Optical imaging device); U.S. Pat. No. 5,920,058 (Holographic labeling and reading machine for authentication and security applications); U.S. Pat. No. 5,915,973 (System for administration of remotely-proctored, secure examinations and methods therefor); U.S. Pat. No. 5,913,196 (System and method for establishing identity of a speaker); U.S. Pat. No. 5,913,025 (Method and apparatus for proxy authentication); U.S. Pat. No. 5,912,974 (Apparatus and method for authentication of printed documents); U.S. Pat. No. 5,912,818 (System for tracking and dispensing medical items); U.S. Pat. No. 5,910,988 (Remote image capture with centralized processing and storage); U.S. Pat. No. 5,907,149 (Identification card with delimited usage); U.S. Pat. No. 5,901,246 (Ergonomic man-machine interface incorporating adaptive pattern recognition based control system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,898,154 (System and method for updating security information in a time-based electronic monetary system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,897,616 (Apparatus and methods for speaker verification/identification/classification employing non-acoustic and/or acoustic models and databases); U.S. Pat. No. 5,892,902 (Intelligent token protected system with network authentication); U.S. Pat. No. 5,892,838 (Biometric recognition using a classification neural network); U.S. Pat. No. 5,892,824 (Signature capture/verification systems and

methods); U.S. Pat. No. 5,890,152 (Personal feedback browser for obtaining media files); U.S. Pat. No. 5,889,474 (Method and apparatus for transmitting subject status information over a wireless communications network); U.S. Pat. No. 5,881,226 (Computer security system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,878,144 (Digital certificates containing multimedia data extensions); U.S. Pat. No. 5,876,926 (Method, apparatus and system for verification of human medical data); U.S. Pat. No. 5,875,108 (Ergonomic man-machine interface incorporating adaptive pattern recognition based control system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,872,849 (Enhanced cryptographic system and method with key escrow feature); U.S. Pat. No. 5,872,848 (Method and apparatus for witnessed authentication of electronic documents); U.S. Pat. No. 5,872,834 (Telephone with biometric sensing device); U.S. Pat. No. 5,870,723 (Tokenless biometric transaction authorization method and system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,869,822 (Automated fingerprint identification system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,867,802 (Biometrically secured control system for preventing the unauthorized use of a vehicle); U.S. Pat. No. 5,867,795 (Portable electronic device with transceiver and visual image display); U.S. Pat. No. 5,867,578 (Adaptive multi-step digital signature system and method of operation thereof); U.S. Pat. No. 5,862,260 (Methods for surveying dissemination of proprietary empirical data); U.S. Pat. No. 5,862,246 (Knuckle profile identity verification system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,862,223 (Method and apparatus for a cryptographically-assisted commercial network system designed to facilitate and support expert-based commerce); U.S. Pat. No. 5,857,022 (Enhanced cryptographic system and method with key escrow feature); U.S. Pat. No. 5,850,451 (Enhanced cryptographic system and method with key escrow feature); U.S. Pat. No. 5,850,442 (Secure world wide electronic commerce over an open network); U.S. Pat. No. 5,848,231 (System configuration contingent upon secure input); U.S. Pat. No. 5,844,244 (Portable identification carrier); U.S. Pat. No. 5,841,907 (Spatial integrating optical correlator for verifying the authenticity of a person, product or thing); U.S. Pat. No. 5,841,886 (Security system for photographic identification); U.S. Pat. No. 5,841,865 (Enhanced cryptographic system and method with key escrow feature); U.S. Pat. No. 5,841,122 (Security structure with electronic smart card access thereto with transmission of power and data between the smart card and the smart card reader performed capacitively or inductively); U.S. Pat. No. 5,838,812 (Tokenless biometric transaction authorization system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,832,464 (System and method for efficiently processing payments via check and electronic funds transfer); U.S. Pat. No. 5,832,119 (Methods for controlling systems using control signals embedded in empirical data); U.S. Pat. No. 5,828,751 (Method and apparatus for secure measurement certification); U.S. Pat. No. 5,825,880 (Multi-step digital signature method and system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,825,871 (Information storage device for storing personal identification information); U.S. Pat. No. 5,815,577 (Methods and apparatus for securely encrypting data in conjunction with a personal computer); U.S. Pat. No. 5,815,252 (Biometric identification process and system utilizing multiple parameters scans for reduction of false negatives); U.S. Pat. No. 5,805,719 (Tokenless identification of individuals); U.S. Pat. No. 5,802,199 (Use sensitive identification system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,799,088 (Non-deterministic public key encryption system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,799,086 (Enhanced cryptographic system and method with key escrow feature); U.S.

Pat. No. 5,799,083 (Event verification system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,790,674 (System and method of providing system integrity and positive audit capabilities to a positive identification system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,790,668 (Method and apparatus for securely handling data in a database of biometrics and associated data); U.S. Pat. No. 5,789,733 (Smart card with contactless optical interface); U.S. Pat. No. 5,787,187 (Systems and methods for biometric identification using the acoustic properties of the ear canal); U.S. Pat. No. 5,784,566 (System and method for negotiating security services and algorithms for communication across a computer network); U.S. Pat. No. 5,784,461 (Security system for controlling access to images and image related services); U.S. Pat. No. 5,774,551 (Pluggable account management interface with unified login and logout and multiple user authentication services); U.S. Pat. No. 5,771,071 (Apparatus for coupling multiple data sources onto a printed document); U.S. Pat. No. 5,770,849 (Smart card device with pager and visual image display); U.S. Pat. No. 5,768,382 (Remote-auditing of computer generated outcomes and authenticated billing and access control system using cryptographic and other protocol); U.S. Pat. No. 5,767,496 (Apparatus for processing symbol-encoded credit card information); U.S. Pat. No. 5,764,789 (Tokenless biometric ATM access system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,763,862 (Dual card smart card reader); U.S. Pat. No. 5,761,298 (Communications headset with universally adaptable receiver and voice transmitter); U.S. Pat. No. 5,757,916 (Method and apparatus for authenticating the location of remote users of networked computing systems); U.S. Pat. No. 5,757,431 (Apparatus for coupling multiple data sources onto a printed document); U.S. Pat. No. 5,751,836 (Automated, non-invasive iris recognition system and method); U.S. Pat. No. 5,751,809 (Apparatus and method for securing captured data transmitted between two sources); U.S. Pat. No. 5,748,738 (System and method for electronic transmission, storage and retrieval of authenticated documents); U.S. Pat. No. 5,745,573 (System and method for controlling access to a user secret); U.S. Pat. No. 5,745,555 (System and method using personal identification numbers and associated prompts for controlling unauthorized use of a security device and unauthorized access to a resource); U.S. Pat. No. 5,742,685 (Method for verifying an identification card and recording verification of same); U.S. Pat. No. 5,742,683 (System and method for managing multiple users with different privileges in an open metering system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,737,420 (Method for secure data transmission between remote stations); U.S. Pat. No. 5,734,154 (Smart card with integrated reader and visual image display); U.S. Pat. No. 5,719,950 (Biometric, personal authentication system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,712,914 (Digital certificates containing multimedia data extensions); U.S. Pat. No. 5,712,912 (Method and apparatus for securely handling a personal identification number or cryptographic key using biometric techniques); U.S. Pat. No. 5,706,427 (Authentication method for networks); U.S. Pat. No. 5,703,562 (Method for transferring data from an unsecured computer to a secured computer); U.S. Pat. No. 5,696,827 (Secure cryptographic methods for electronic transfer of information); U.S. Pat. No. 5,682,142 (Electronic control system/network); U.S. Pat. No. 5,682,032 (Capacitively coupled identity verification and escort memory apparatus); U.S. Pat. No. 5,680,460 (Biometric controlled key generation); U.S. Pat. No. 5,668,878 (Secure cryptographic methods for electronic transfer of information); U.S. Pat. No. 5,666,400 (Intelligent recogni-

tion); U.S. Pat. No. 5,659,616 (Method for securely using digital signatures in a commercial cryptographic system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,647,364 (Ultrasonic biometric imaging and identity verification system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,647,017 (Method and system for the verification of handwritten signatures); U.S. Pat. No. 5,646,839 (Telephone-based personnel tracking system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,636,282 (Method for dial-in access security using a multimedia modem); U.S. Pat. No. 5,633,932 (Apparatus and method for preventing disclosure through user-authentication at a printing node); U.S. Pat. No. 5,615,277 (Tokenless security system for authorizing access to a secured computer system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,613,012 (Tokenless identification system for authorization of electronic transactions and electronic transmissions); U.S. Pat. No. 5,608,387 (Personal identification devices and access control systems); U.S. Pat. No. 5,594,806 (Knuckle profile identity verification system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,592,408 (Identification card and access control device); U.S. Pat. No. 5,588,059 (Computer system and method for secure remote communication sessions); U.S. Pat. No. 5,586,171 (Selection of a voice recognition data base responsive to video data); U.S. Pat. No. 5,583,950 (Method and apparatus for flash correlation); U.S. Pat. No. 5,583,933 (Method and apparatus for the secure communication of data); U.S. Pat. No. 5,578,808 (Data card that can be used for transactions involving separate card issuers); U.S. Pat. No. 5,572,596 (Automated, non-invasive iris recognition system and method); U.S. Pat. No. 5,561,718 (Classifying faces); U.S. Pat. No. 5,559,885 (Two stage read-write method for transaction cards); U.S. Pat. No. 5,557,765 (System and method for data recovery); U.S. Pat. No. 5,553,155 (Low cost method employing time slots for thwarting fraud in the periodic issuance of food stamps, unemployment benefits or other governmental human services); U.S. Pat. No. 5,544,255 (Method and system for the capture, storage, transport and authentication of handwritten signatures); U.S. Pat. No. 5,534,855 (Method and system for certificate based alias detection); U.S. Pat. No. 5,533,123 (Programmable distributed personal security); U.S. Pat. No. 5,526,428 (Access control apparatus and method); U.S. Pat. No. 5,523,739 (Metal detector for control of access combined in an integrated form with a transponder detector); U.S. Pat. No. 5,497,430 (Method and apparatus for image recognition using invariant feature signals); U.S. Pat. No. 5,485,519 (Enhanced security for a secure token code); U.S. Pat. No. 5,485,312 (Optical pattern recognition system and method for verifying the authenticity of a person, product or thing); U.S. Pat. No. 5,483,601 (Apparatus and method for biometric identification using silhouette and displacement images of a portion of a person's hand); U.S. Pat. No. 5,478,993 (Process as safety concept against unauthorized use of a payment instrument in cashless payment at payment sites); U.S. Pat. No. 5,475,839 (Method and structure for securing access to a computer system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,469,506 (Apparatus for verifying an identification card and identifying a person by means of a biometric characteristic); U.S. Pat. No. 5,457,747 (Anti-fraud verification system using a data card); U.S. Pat. No. 5,455,407 (Electronic-monetary system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,453,601 (Electronic-monetary system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,448,045 (System for protecting computers via intelligent tokens or smart cards); U.S. Pat. No. 5,432,864 (Identification card verification system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,414,755 (System and method for passive voice verification in a telephone network); U.S. Pat.

No. 5,412,727 (Anti-fraud voter registration and voting system using a data card); U.S. Pat. No. 5,363,453 (Non-minutiae automatic fingerprint identification system and methods); U.S. Pat. No. 5,347,580 (Authentication method and system with a smartcard); U.S. Pat. No. 5,345,549 (Multimedia based security systems); U.S. Pat. No. 5,341,428 (Multiple cross-check document verification system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,335,288 (Apparatus and method for biometric identification); U.S. Pat. No. 5,291,560 (Biometric personal identification system based on iris analysis); U.S. Pat. No. 5,283,431 (Optical key security access system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,280,527 (Biometric token for authorizing access to a host system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,272,754 (Secure computer interface); U.S. Pat. No. 5,245,329 (Access control system with mechanical keys which store data); U.S. Pat. No. 5,229,764 (Continuous biometric authentication matrix); U.S. Pat. No. 5,228,094 (Process of identifying and authenticating data characterizing an individual); U.S. Pat. No. 5,224,173 (Method of reducing fraud in connection with employment, public license applications, social security, food stamps, welfare or other government benefits); U.S. Pat. No. 5,208,858 (Method for allocating useful data to a specific originator); U.S. Pat. No. 5,204,670 (Adaptable electric monitoring and identification system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,191,611 (Method and apparatus for protecting material on storage media and for transferring material on storage media to various recipients); U.S. Pat. No. 5,163,094 (Method for identifying individuals from analysis of elemental shapes derived from biosensor data); U.S. Pat. No. 5,155,680 (Billing system for computing software); U.S. Pat. No. 5,131,038 (Portable authentication system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,073,950 (Finger profile identification system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,067,162 (Method and apparatus for verifying identity using image correlation); U.S. Pat. No. 5,065,429 (Method and apparatus for protecting material on storage media); U.S. Pat. No. 5,056,147 (Recognition procedure and an apparatus for carrying out the recognition procedure); U.S. Pat. No. 5,056,141 (Method and apparatus for the identification of personnel); U.S. Pat. No. 5,036,461 (Two-way authentication system between user's smart card and issuer-specific plug-in application modules in multi-issued transaction device); U.S. Pat. No. 5,020,105 (Field initialized authentication system for protective security of electronic information networks); U.S. Pat. No. 4,993,068 (Unforgettable personal identification system); U.S. Pat. No. 4,972,476 (Counterfeit proof ID card having a scrambled facial image); U.S. Pat. No. 4,961,142 (Multi-issuer transaction device with individual identification verification plug-in application modules for each issuer); U.S. Pat. No. 4,952,928 (Adaptable electronic monitoring and identification system); U.S. Pat. No. 4,941,173 (Device and method to render secure the transfer of data between a videotex terminal and a server); U.S. Pat. No. 4,926,480 (Card-computer moderated systems); U.S. Pat. No. 4,896,363 (Apparatus and method for matching image characteristics such as fingerprint minutiae); U.S. Pat. No. 4,890,323 (Data communication systems and methods); U.S. Pat. No. 4,868,376 (Intelligent portable interactive personal data system); U.S. Pat. No. 4,827,518 (Speaker verification system using integrated circuit cards); U.S. Pat. No. 4,819,267 (Solid state key for controlling access to computer systems and to computer software and/or for secure communications); U.S. Pat. No. 4,752,676 (Reliable secure, updatable "cash" card system); U.S. Pat. No. 4,736,203 (3D hand profile identifi-

cation apparatus); U.S. Pat. No. 4,731,841 (Field initialized authentication system for protective security of electronic information networks); U.S. Pat. No. 4,564,018 (Ultrasonic system for obtaining ocular measurements), each of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference.

MICROPAYMENTS REFERENCES

[2557] The following U.S. patents, expressly incorporated herein by reference, define aspects of micropayment, digital certificate, and on-line payment systems: U.S. Pat. No. 5,930,777 (Barber, Jul. 27, 1999, Method of charging for pay-per-access information over a network); U.S. Pat. No. 5,857,023 (Jan. 5, 1999, Demers et al., Space efficient method of redeeming electronic payments); U.S. Pat. No. 5,815,657 (Sep. 29, 1998, Williams, System, method and article of manufacture for network electronic authorization utilizing an authorization instrument); U.S. Pat. No. 5,793,868 (Aug. 11, 1998, Micali, Certificate revocation system), U.S. Pat. No. 5,717,757 (Feb. 10, 1998, Micali, Certificate issue lists); U.S. Pat. No. 5,666,416 (Sep. 9, 1997, Micali, Certificate revocation system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,677,955 (Doggett et al., Electronic funds transfer instruments); U.S. Pat. No. 5,839,119 (Nov. 17, 1998, Krsul; et al., Method of electronic payments that prevents double-spending); U.S. Pat. No. 5,915,093 (Berlin et al.); U.S. Pat. No. 5,937,394 (Wong, et al.); U.S. Pat. No. 5,933,498 (Schneck et al.); U.S. Pat. No. 5,903,880 (Biffar); U.S. Pat. No. 5,903,651 (Kocher); U.S. Pat. No. 5,884,277 (Khosla); U.S. Pat. No. 5,960,083 (Sep. 28, 1999, Micali, Certificate revocation system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,963,924 (Oct. 5, 1999, Williams et al., System, method and article of manufacture for the use of payment instrument holders and payment instruments in network electronic commerce); U.S. Pat. No. 5,996,076 (Rowney et al., System, method and article of manufacture for secure digital certification of electronic commerce); U.S. Pat. No. 6,016,484 (Jan. 18, 2000, Williams et al., System, method and article of manufacture for network electronic payment instrument and certification of payment and credit collection utilizing a payment); U.S. Pat. No. 6,018,724 (Arent); U.S. Pat. No. 6,021,202 (Anderson et al., Method and system for processing electronic documents); U.S. Pat. No. 6,035,402 (Vaeth et al.); U.S. Pat. No. 6,049,786 (Smorodinsky); U.S. Pat. No. 6,049,787 (Takahashi, et al.); U.S. Pat. No. 6,058,381 (Nelson, Many-to-many payments system for network content materials); U.S. Pat. No. 6,061,448 (Smith, et al.); U.S. Pat. No. 5,987,132 (Nov. 16, 1999, Rowney, System, method and article of manufacture for conditionally accepting a payment method utilizing an extensible, flexible architecture); U.S. Pat. No. 6,057,872 (Candelore); and U.S. Pat. No. 6,061,665 (May 9, 2000, Bahreman, System, method and article of manufacture for dynamic negotiation of a network payment framework). See also, Rivest and Shamir, "PayWord and MicroMint: Two Simple Micropayment Schemes" (May 7, 1996); Micro PAYMENT transfer Protocol (MPTP) Version 0.1 (22-Nov.-95) et seq., www.w3.org/pub/WWW/TR/WD-mptp; Common Markup for web Micropayment Systems, www.w3.org/TR/WD-Micropayment-Markup (09-Jun.-99); "Distributing Intellectual Property: a Model of Microtransaction Based Upon Metadata and Digital Signatures", Olivia, Maurizio, olivia.modlang.denison.edu/~olivia/RFC/09/, all of which are expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[2558] See, also: U.S. Pat. No. 4,977,595 (Dec. 11, 1990, Method and apparatus for implementing electronic cash);

U.S. Pat. No. 5,224,162 (Jun. 29, 1993, Electronic cash system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,237,159 (Aug. 17, 1993, Electronic check presentment system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,392,353 (February 1995, Morales, TV Answer, Inc. Interactive satellite broadcast network); U.S. Pat. No. 5,511,121 (Apr. 23, 1996, Efficient electronic money); U.S. Pat. No. 5,621,201 (April 1997, Langhans et al., Visa International Automated purchasing control system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,623,547 (Apr. 22, 1997, Value transfer system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,679,940 (October 1997, Templeton et al., TeleCheck International, Inc. Transaction system with on/off line risk assessment); U.S. Pat. No. 5,696,908 (December 1997, Muehlberger et al., Southeast Phonecard, Inc. Telephone debit card dispenser and method); U.S. Pat. No. 5,754,939 (May 1998, Herz et al., System for generation of user profiles for a system for customized electronic identification of desirable objects); U.S. Pat. No. 5,768,385 (Jun. 16, 1998, Untraceable electronic cash); U.S. Pat. No. 5,799,087 (Aug. 25, 1998, Electronic-monetary system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,812,668 (Sep. 22, 1998, System, method and article of manufacture for verifying the operation of a remote transaction clearance system utilizing a multichannel, extensible, flexible architecture); U.S. Pat. No. 5,828,840 (Oct. 27, 1998, Server for starting client application on client if client is network terminal and initiating client application on server if client is non network terminal); U.S. Pat. No. 5,832,089 (Nov. 3, 1998, Off-line compatible electronic cash method and system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,850,446 (Dec. 15, 1998, System, method and article of manufacture for virtual point of sale processing utilizing an extensible, flexible architecture); U.S. Pat. No. 5,889,862 (Mar. 30, 1999, Method and apparatus for implementing traceable electronic cash); U.S. Pat. No. 5,889,863 (Mar. 30, 1999, System, method and article of manufacture for remote virtual point of sale processing utilizing a multichannel, extensible, flexible architecture); U.S. Pat. No. 5,898,154 (Apr. 27, 1999, System and method for updating security information in a time-based electronic monetary system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,901,229 (May 4, 1999, Electronic cash implementing method using a trustee); U.S. Pat. No. 5,920,629 (Jul. 6, 1999, Electronic-monetary system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,926,548 (Jul. 20, 1999, Method and apparatus for implementing hierarchical electronic cash); U.S. Pat. No. 5,943,424 (Aug. 24, 1999, System, method and article of manufacture for processing a plurality of transactions from a single initiation point on a multichannel, extensible, flexible architecture); U.S. Pat. No. 5,949,045 (Sep. 7, 1999, Micro-dynamic simulation of electronic cash transactions); U.S. Pat. No. 5,952,638 (Sep. 14, 1999, Space efficient method of electronic payments); U.S. Pat. No. 5,963,648 (Oct. 5, 1999, Electronic-monetary system); U.S. Pat. No. 5,978,840 (System, method and article of manufacture for a payment gateway system architecture for processing encrypted payment transactions utilizing a multichannel, extensible, flexible architecture); U.S. Pat. No. 5,983,208 (Nov. 9, 1999, System, method and article of manufacture for handling transaction results in a gateway payment architecture utilizing a multichannel, extensible, flexible architecture); U.S. Pat. No. 5,987,140 (Nov. 16, 1999, System, method and article of manufacture for secure network electronic payment and credit collection); U.S. Pat. No. 6,002,767 (Dec. 14, 1999, System, method and article of manufacture for a modular gateway server architecture); U.S. Pat. No. 6,003,765 (Dec. 21, 1999, Electronic cash implementing method with a surveillance institution, and

user apparatus and surveillance institution apparatus for implementing the same); U.S. Pat. No. 6,021,399 (Feb. 1, 2000, Space efficient method of verifying electronic payments); U.S. Pat. No. 6,026,379 (Feb. 15, 2000, System, method and article of manufacture for managing transactions in a high availability system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,029,150 (Feb. 22, 2000, Payment and transactions in electronic commerce system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,029,151 (Feb. 22, 2000, Method and system for performing electronic money transactions); U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,067 (Apr. 4, 2000, Electronic-monetary system); U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,887 (Apr. 11, 2000, System and method for connecting money modules); U.S. Pat. No. 6,055,508 (Apr. 25, 2000, Method for secure accounting and auditing on a communications network); U.S. Pat. No. 6,065,675 (May 23, 2000, Processing system and method for a heterogeneous electronic cash environment); U.S. Pat. No. 6,072,870 (Jun. 6, 2000, System, method and article of manufacture for a gateway payment architecture utilizing a multichannel, extensible, flexible architecture), each of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for fairly allocating use rights among agents for at least one of at least one communications channel in a network and at least one computational resource in a computer system, comprising:
 - (a) determining a use demand function for a plurality of consumer agents;
 - (b) determining a use supply function for a plurality of supply agents,
 - (c) providing at least one economic agent, said economic agent providing at least one function to other agents selected from the group consisting of loaning an economic resource, borrowing an economic resource, insuring a use, guaranteeing a use, arbitraging use rights, buying use options, selling use options, buying use futures, selling use futures;wherein a single agent can fulfill one or more role selected from the roles of supply agent, consumer agent, and economic agent, and wherein each respective role may have independent valuation;
 - (d) permitting the consumer agents, supply agents and economic agents to transact in self interest to achieve a market economy optimization.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the use comprises a right to access at least one communications channel in a communication network.
3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the use comprises a right to access at least one communications channel in an ad hoc communication network.
4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the use comprises a right to access at least one communications channel in a multihop ad hoc communication network.
5. The method according to claim 1, wherein the use comprises a right to access at least one computational resource in a computer system.
6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the use comprises a right to access at least one processor core in a computer system.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein the use comprises a right to access at least communication channel in a computer system.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the use comprises a right to access at least one memory location in a computer system.

9. The method according to claim 1, wherein the use comprises a right to access at least one peripheral device in a computer system.

10. The method according to claim 1, wherein the use comprises a right to access at least one functional processor element in a computer system.

11. The method according to claim 1, wherein the use comprises a right to access at least one functional processor element in a computer system.

12. The method according to claim 1, wherein an agent issues a loan for economic consideration.

13. The method according to claim 1, wherein an agent issues a loan for consideration in kind.

14. The method according to claim 1, wherein an economic agent borrows an economic resource for economic consideration.

15. The method according to claim 1, wherein an economic agent borrows an economic resource for consideration in kind.

16. The method according to claim 1, wherein an economic agent insures a use of a resource.

17. The method according to claim 1, wherein an economic agent guarantees a payment for use of a resource.

18. The method according to claim 1, wherein an agent buys and sells the same resource in a set of transactions.

19. The method according to claim 1, wherein an agent sells an option for purchase of a resource.

20. The method according to claim 1, wherein an agent buys an option for purchase of a resource.

21. The method according to claim 1, wherein an agent sells a future contract for transferring a use at a later time.

22. The method according to claim 1, wherein an agent buys a future contract for acquiring a use at a later time.

23. The method according to claim 1, wherein at least two agents are assigned a hierachal rank, and wherein one of the at least two agents has a higher rank than another of the at least two agents, further comprising the step of delegating an economic right from the higher ranked agent to the lower ranked agent.

24. The method according to claim 1, wherein at least two agents are assigned a hierachal rank, and wherein one of the at least two agents has a higher rank than another of the at least two agents, further comprising the step of allocating an economic right held by lower ranked agent on behalf of the higher ranked agent.

25. The method according to claim 1, wherein a plurality of agents are each respectively assigned a rank, and wherein a lower ranked agent delegates rights to the higher ranked agent, separately from the market economy optimization.

26. The method according to claim 1, wherein the agents transact using a virtual currency.

27. The method according to claim 1, wherein the agents transact using a virtual currency, each agent having currency generation function.

28. The method according to claim 1, wherein the agents transact using a virtual currency, each agent having currency generation function and a currency expiration function.

29. The method according to claim 1, wherein the agents transact using a cryptographically authenticated virtual currency.

30. The method according to claim 1, wherein the agents transact using a virtual currency, and different agents have respectively different currency generation functions and currency expiration functions.

31. The method according to claim 1, wherein said market economy optimization comprises an auction.

32. The method according to claim 1, wherein said market economy optimization comprises a multifactorial auction.

34. The method according to claim 1, wherein said auction allocates communication bandwidth within a communication network.

35. The method according to claim 1, wherein said market economy optimization operates according to a Vickrey-Clark-Groves combinatorial auction framework.

36. The method according to claim 1, wherein the agents transact using a virtual currency, and a value of the virtual currency being location-dependent.

37. The method according to claim 1, wherein the agents transact using a virtual currency produced by an agent using a generation function, wherein an agent can transfer at least a portion of the generation function to another agent.

38. The method according to claim 1, wherein the market economy optimization compensates at least one consumer agent for deferring to another consumer agent.

39. A wireless mesh network node, comprising:

(a) a first antenna for communication through a first communication channel, the first antenna having a directional pattern with a useful aperture having a directional vector;

(b) a geolocation input;

(c) a second antenna for communicating through a second communication channel; and

(d) a controller, for receiving information through the second antenna defining in conjunction with the geolocation input a directional vector for the first communication channel, and for controlling a communication through the first antenna in accordance with the directional vector.

40. The wireless mesh network node according to claim 39, wherein the first antenna comprises an electronically steerable antenna.

41. The wireless mesh network node according to claim 39, wherein the first antenna comprises a phased array antenna.

42. The wireless mesh network node according to claim 39, wherein the first antenna comprises a mechanically steerable antenna.

43. The wireless mesh network node according to claim 39, wherein the second antenna is an omnidirectional antenna.

44. The wireless mesh network node according to claim 39, wherein the first antenna and second antenna operate in different bands.

45. The wireless mesh network node according to claim 39, wherein the first communication channel and the second communication channel have respectively different protocols.

46. The wireless mesh network node according to claim 39, wherein the first communication channel has a respectively shorter range than the second communication channel.

47. The wireless mesh network node according to claim 39, wherein the first communication channel is adapted to support a multihop communication protocol.

48. A system for analyzing a data set having a magnitude within a first set of dimensions representing a time domain, comprising: a memory for storing the data set, a processor for formulating a prediction of a magnitude at a time, based on antecedent data, performing at least one data transform between a time domain and time-frequency hybrid domain, and predicting a magnitude of at least one future datum of the data set.

49. The system according to claim 48, wherein the processor applies a threshold function to the time-frequency hybrid domain representation of the data.

50. The system according to claim 48, wherein the processor applies a distance-selective function to the time-frequency hybrid domain representation of the data.

51. The system according to claim 48, wherein the processor applies a low-pass spatial filtering function to the time-frequency hybrid domain representation of the data.

52. The system according to claim 48, wherein the processor applies a high-pass spatial filtering function to the time-frequency hybrid domain representation of the data.

53. The system according to claim 48, wherein the processor applies a band-pass spatial filtering function to the time-frequency hybrid domain representation of the data.

54. The system according to claim 48, wherein the processor applies a noise-filtering function to the time-frequency hybrid domain representation of the data.

55. The system according to claim 48, wherein at least one data point within the data set are associated with a probabilistic distribution, and wherein the processor performs the at least one transform between the time domain and data a time-frequency hybrid domain on the probabilistic distribution.

56. The system according to claim 48, wherein a plurality of data points within the data set are associated with probabilistic distributions expressed as probability density functions, and wherein the processor performs the at least one transform of the probability density functions between the time domain and data a time-frequency hybrid domain.

57. The system according to claim 48, wherein the processor performs at least one inverse transform between the time domain and the time-frequency hybrid domain.

58. The system according to claim 48, wherein at least one of the data set and the time-frequency hybrid domain represented data is a sparse data set.

59. The system according to claim 48, wherein the processor processes at least one of the time domain data set and the time-frequency hybrid domain represented data set to increase its sparsity.

60. The system according to claim 48, wherein the data set comprises a risk parameter and a reliability parameter, said

risk parameter representing a predicted cost or value associated with a datum and said reliability parameter representing a statistical probability distribution of the representation of the cost or value.

61. The system according to claim 60, wherein at least the risk parameter is subjective.

62. The system according to claim 60, wherein the reliability parameter is adaptive.

63. The system according to claim 60, wherein said risk parameter is at least ambiguous, having at least two inferred causalities, and wherein each inferred causality has an associated reliability parameter.

64. A human computer interface system for presenting information, comprising:

(a) a memory for storing data representing at least one event, the at least one event being associated with a risk parameter and a reliability parameter, the risk parameter representing a predicted severity associated with the event and the reliability parameter representing a statistical probability distribution of the representation of the severity;

(b) a processor for analyzing the at least one event based on both its associated risk parameter and reliability parameter to determine a relevance; and

(c) an output for presenting an identification of the at least one event to a user dependent on its relevance.

65. The human computer interface system according to claim 64, wherein the memory stores data representing a plurality of events, the processor generates a value for each of the plurality of events, and the output ranks at least a subset of the plurality of events in dependence on an associated value.

66. The human computer interface system according to claim 64, wherein the relevance is further dependent on at least one subjective consideration.

67. The human computer interface system according to claim 66, further comprising a memory for storing a set of subjective data associated with a user.

68. The human computer interface system according to claim 64, wherein the relevance of an event is dependent on a risk-tolerance of a user.

69. The human computer interface system according to claim 64, wherein the severity of the event is expressed as an economic parameter having an associated cost or value.

70. The human computer interface system according to claim 64, wherein the processor transforms the data between a time domain and a hybrid time-frequency domain, wherein said relevance is analyzed, at least in part, based on the hybrid time-frequency domain data representation.

71. The human computer interface system according to claim 64, wherein the event relates to at least one of traffic conditions associated with one or more regions of a roadway and weather.