



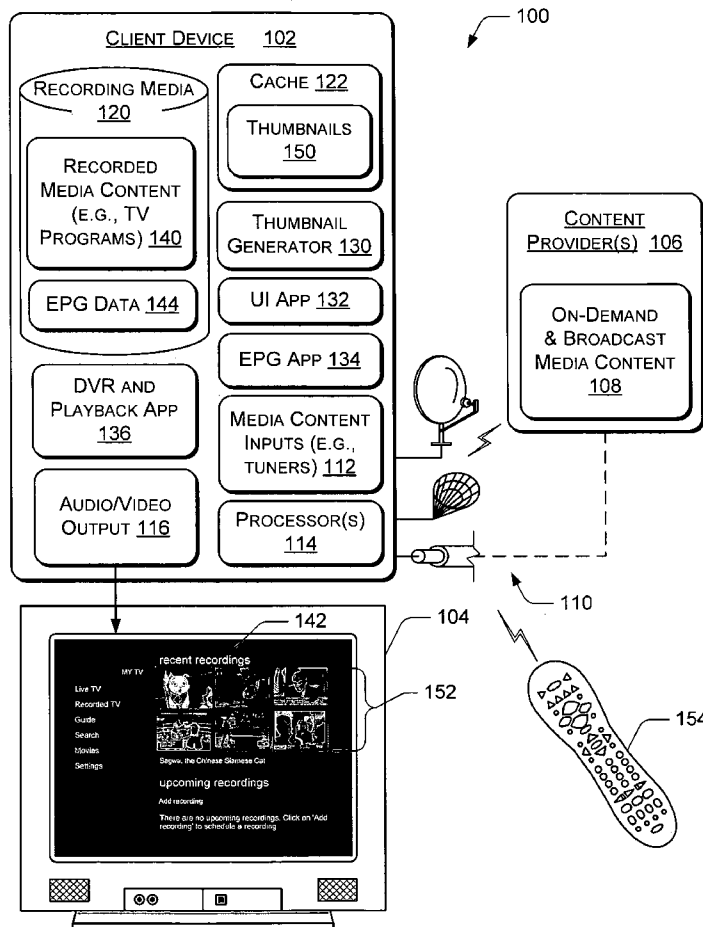
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(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
DeYonker et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2006/0107289 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: May 18, 2006**(54) **THUMBNAIL GENERATION AND
PRESENTATION FOR RECORDED TV
PROGRAMS****Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.****H04N 5/445** (2006.01)**G06F 13/00** (2006.01)**G06F 3/00** (2006.01)(52) **U.S. Cl.** **725/37; 725/38; 725/39**(75) Inventors: **Aaron DeYonker**, Seattle, WA (US);
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SPOKANE, WA 99201**ABSTRACT**

Thumbnail images representative of recorded TV programs are generated and presented to aid a user in browsing the recorded TV programs. In one implementation, a temporary thumbnail image is generated when a TV program first starts recording. The temporary thumbnail is used to populate any user interface (UI) screens that reference the recorded TV program. Once the TV program has reached a threshold amount of recording (e.g., a prescribed duration of recording, or completion of the recording), a permanent thumbnail image is generated and associated with the TV program. The permanent thumbnail is then presented in any subsequent UI screens, replacing the temporary thumbnail. In another implementation, display of the thumbnail images in the UI screens may be further controlled by setting preferences, such as parental controls.

(73) Assignee: **Microsoft Corporation**, Redmond, WA(21) Appl. No.: **10/900,923**(22) Filed: **Jul. 28, 2004**

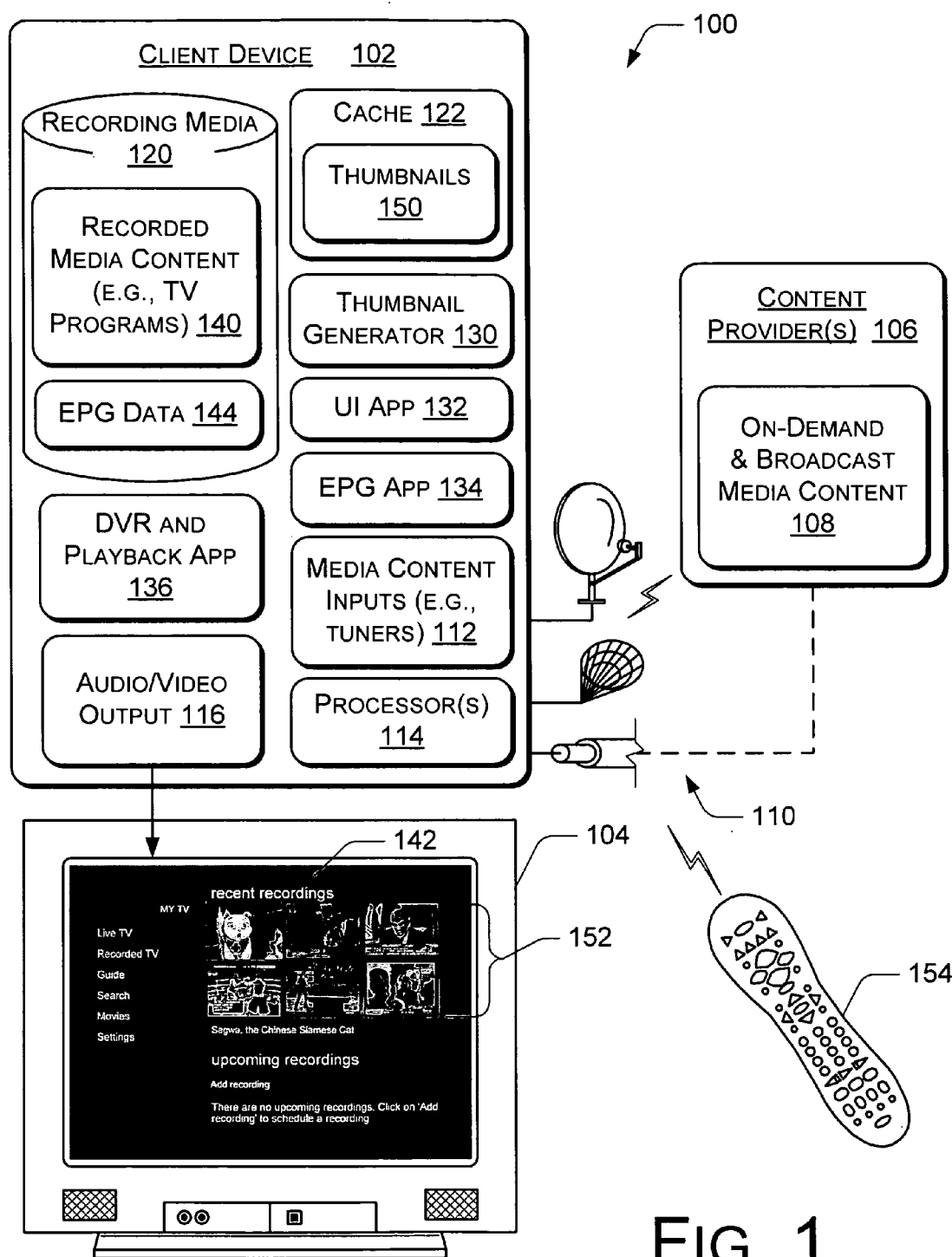


FIG. 1

200
↙

	202	204	206	208	210
	THUMBNAIL ID	TV ID	PROGRAM TITLE	RATING	SHOW THUMB.
220(1)	00032.TMP	31456	CSI: MIAMI	TV 14	No
	:	:	:	:	:
220(N)	04520.PMT	63290	RUGRATS	ALL	YES

FIG. 2

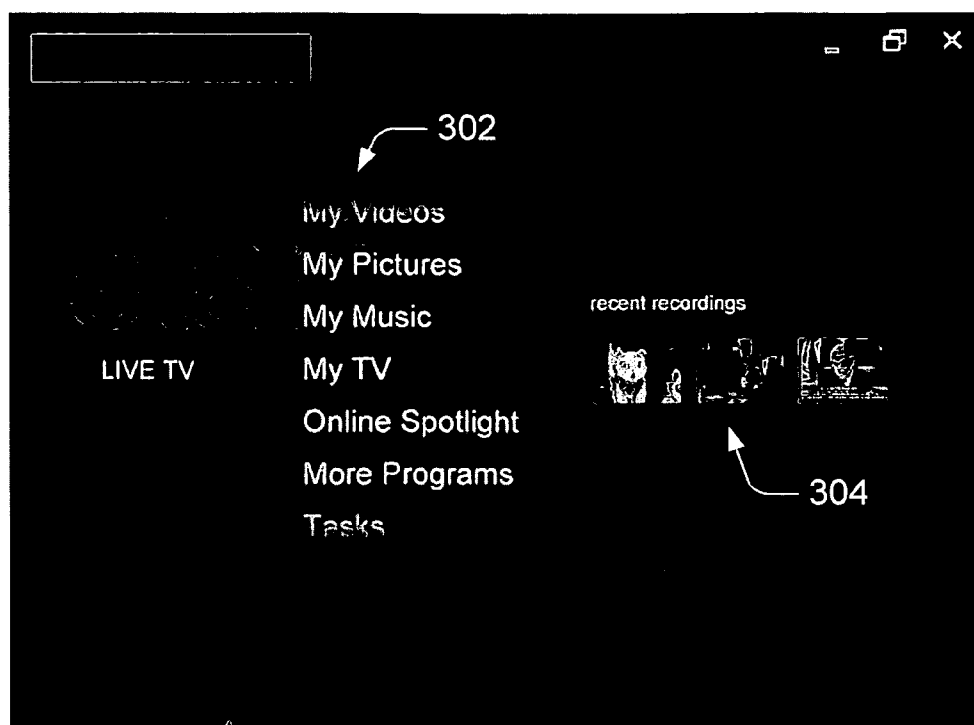


FIG. 3

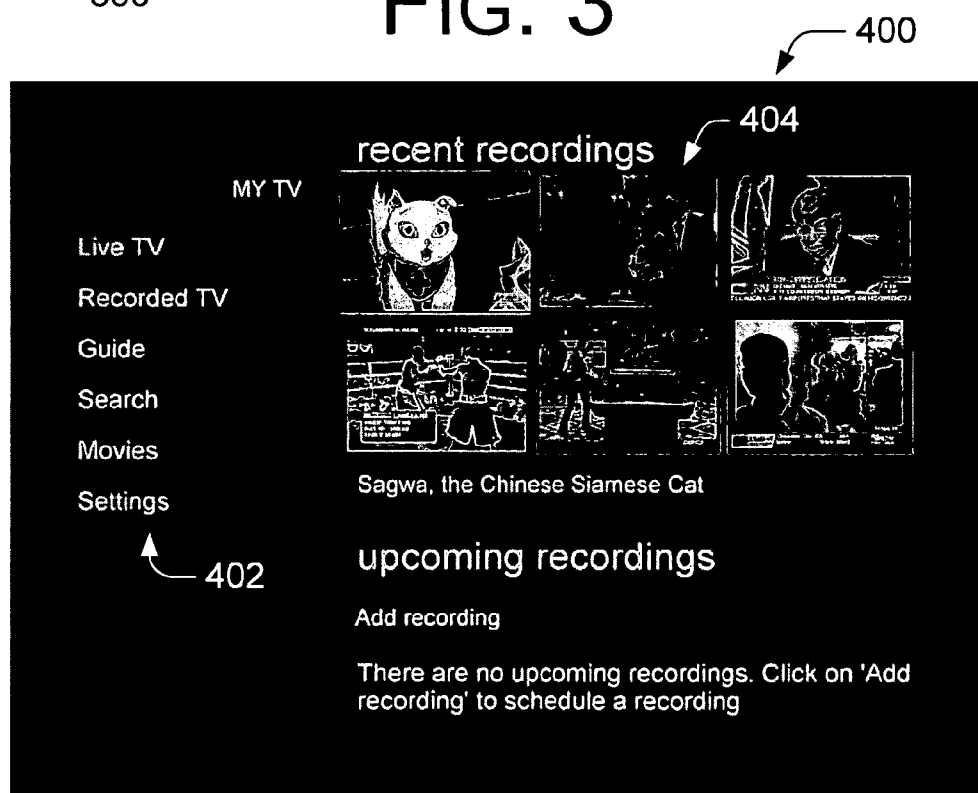


FIG. 4



500

FIG. 5

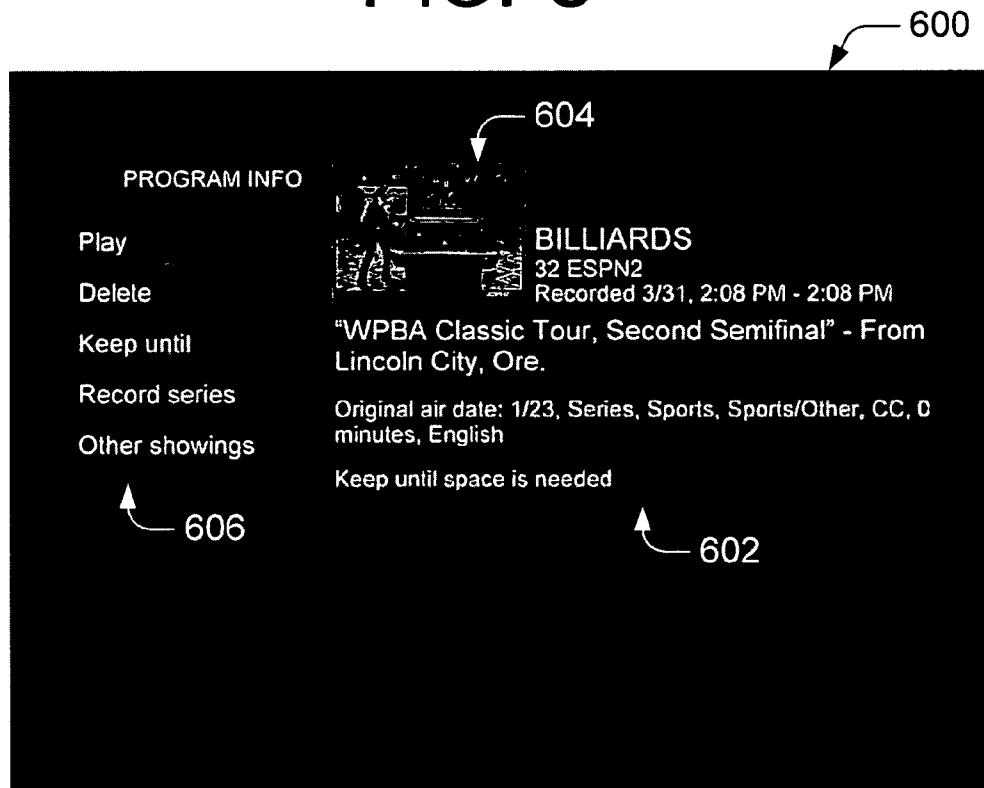


FIG. 6

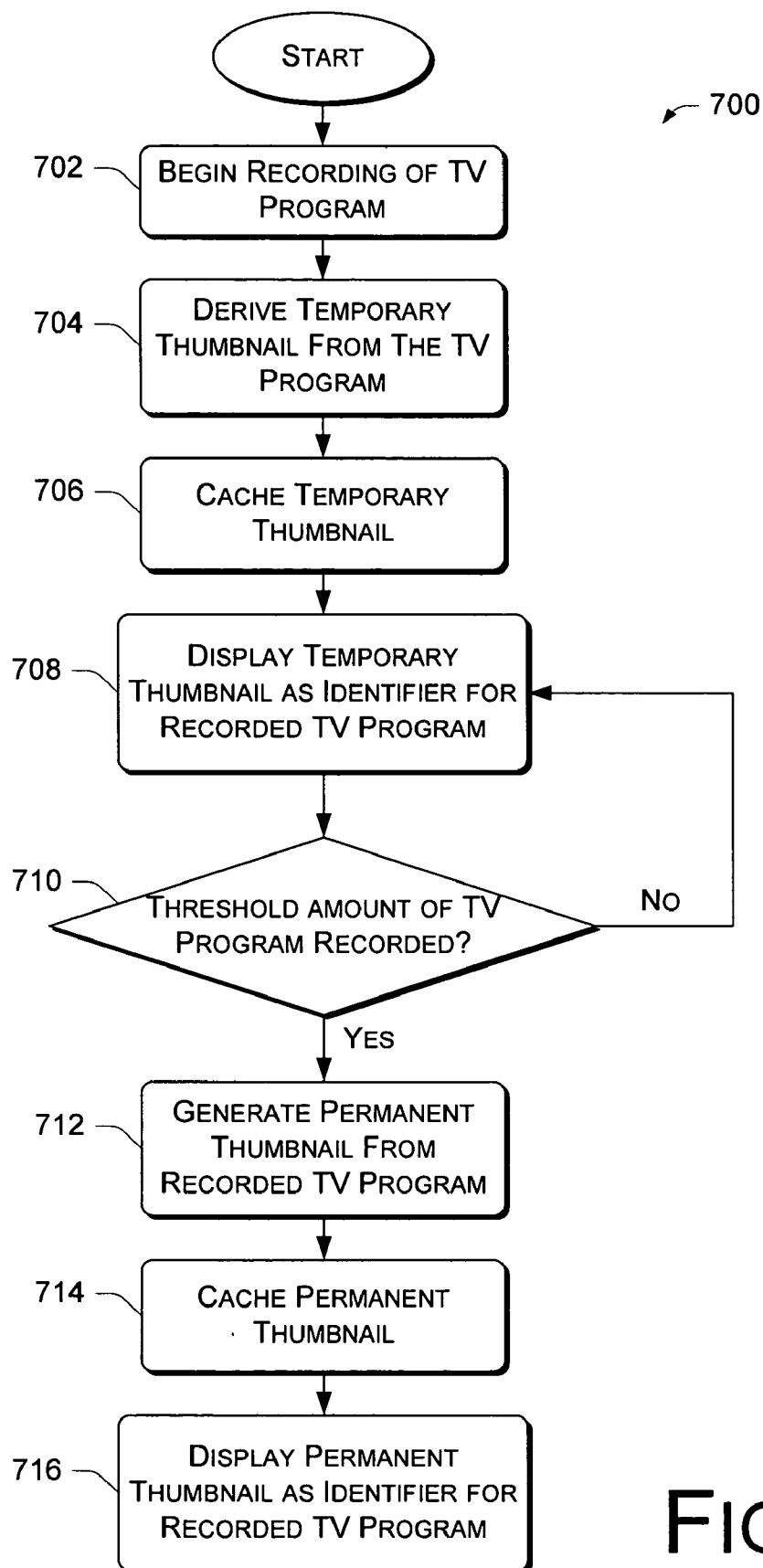


FIG. 7

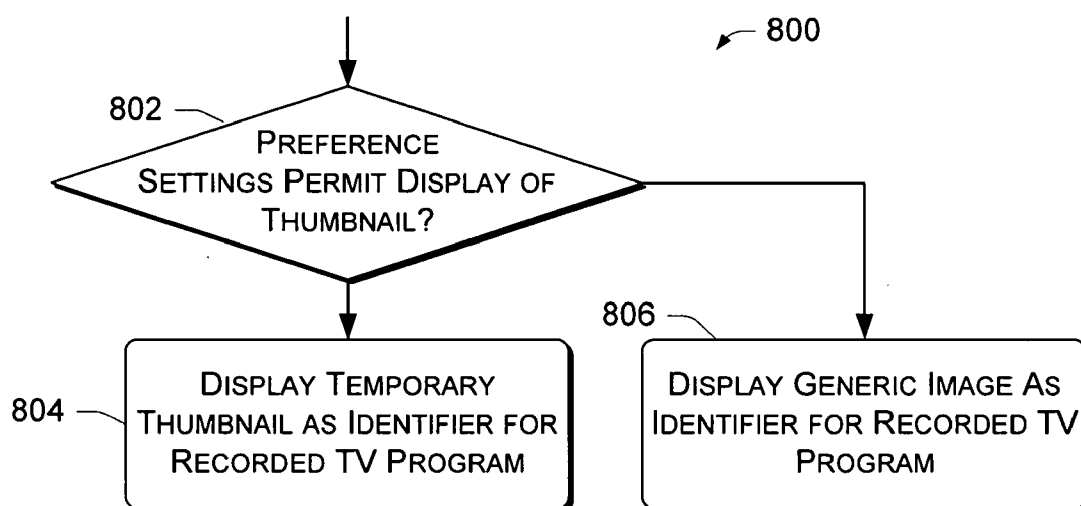


FIG. 8

THUMBNAIL GENERATION AND PRESENTATION FOR RECORDED TV PROGRAMS

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention generally relates to TV recording systems, and more particularly, to ways to generate and present thumbnails derived from recorded TV programs.

BACKGROUND

[0002] With the convergence of home entertainment technologies, there are a growing number of devices that store many different forms of content, such as music, movies, pictures, TV programs, videos, games, and so forth. Devices like digital video recorders (DVRs), game consoles, and entertainment-configured computers (e.g., computers that run the Windows® XP Media Center operating system from Microsoft Corporation) enable users to record, manage, and playback many different forms of content. Even less featured devices, such as set-top boxes, can be designed to record multiple types of content.

[0003] As such devices are configured to store more content and offer more functionality, the ability to present the various forms of recorded content in a cohesive, understandable, and user-friendly manner continues to be a challenge. This is particularly true for recorded TV programs. Traditionally, home entertainment devices have simply provided a title or other text identifier of recorded TV programs. It would be useful if other techniques for identifying and navigating recorded TV programs were developed.

SUMMARY

[0004] Thumbnail images representative of recorded TV programs are generated and presented to aid a user in browsing the recorded TV programs. In one implementation, a temporary thumbnail image is generated when a TV program first starts recording. The temporary thumbnail is used to populate quickly any user interface (UI) screens that reference the TV program, even as the program is recording. Once the TV program has reached a threshold amount of recording (e.g., a prescribed duration of recording or completion of the recording), a permanent thumbnail image is generated and associated with the TV program. The permanent thumbnail is then presented in any subsequent UI screens that reference the TV program, replacing the temporary thumbnail. The user can navigate among the thumbnail images presented in the various UI screens and select a particular recorded TV program by choosing the corresponding thumbnail image. According to another implementation, display of the thumbnail images within the UI screens may be further controlled by preference settings, such as parental controls.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] The detailed description is provided with reference to the accompanying figures. In the figures, the left-most digit(s) of a reference number identifies the figure in which the reference number first appears. The use of the same reference numbers in different figures indicates similar or identical items.

[0006] FIG. 1 illustrates a system in which TV content is delivered from a content provider to a client device and

recorded for subsequent playback. The system represents an exemplary environment in which thumbnail generation and presentation for recorded TV programs can be implemented.

[0007] FIG. 2 illustrates a data structure used by the client device of FIG. 1 to associate thumbnail images with corresponding TV programs.

[0008] FIG. 3 shows a “Start” graphical UI screen that is presented when a viewer wishes to access various forms of content on the client device of FIG. 1.

[0009] FIG. 4 shows a “My TV” graphical UI screen that is presented upon selection of a menu item in the “Start” graphical UI screen of FIG. 3.

[0010] FIG. 5 shows a “Recorded TV” graphical UI screen that is presented upon selection of a menu item in the “My TV” graphical UI screen of FIG. 4.

[0011] FIG. 6 shows a “Program Info” graphical UI screen that is presented upon selection of a particular program listed in the “Recorded TV” graphical UI screen of FIG. 5.

[0012] FIG. 7 shows a process for generating and presenting thumbnail images in conjunction with recorded TV programs.

[0013] FIG. 8 shows a process for controlling display of the thumbnail images based on user preference settings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0014] The following disclosure describes techniques for generating and presenting thumbnail images that are representative of recorded TV programs. The thumbnail images, or simply “thumbnails”, are created from actual video content of the TV programs and hence, are visually descriptive of the recorded programs. The thumbnail images are presented in a user interface to assist a viewer in browsing among the recorded TV programs and selecting a particular recorded TV program.

[0015] The following discussion is directed generally to entertainment systems, and particularly to television-based systems, such as broadcast TV systems, interactive TV systems, cable TV systems, and Web-enabled TV systems. While aspects of the described systems and methods can be implemented in any number of television-enabled entertainment systems, and within any number and types of client devices, the systems and methods are described in the context of the following exemplary system.

[0016] FIG. 1 illustrates an exemplary system 100 for recording TV programs and generating representative thumbnails for purposes of browsing the recorded TV programs. System 100 includes a client device 102, a display 104 (e.g., television, monitor, etc.), and one or more content providers 106. The content providers 106 control distribution of on-demand and/or broadcast media content 108, such as movies, TV programs, commercials, music, and similar audio, video, and/or image content. Content providers 106 are representative of satellite operators, network television operators, cable operators, Web-based content providers, and the like.

[0017] The client device 102 receives and stores the media content 108 distributed by the content providers 106. In particular, the client device 102 is configured to receive and

record TV programs broadcast or otherwise transmitted by the content providers **106**. Examples of TV programs include news, sitcoms, comedies, TV movies, infomercials, talk shows, sporting events, and so on. The client device **102** can be implemented in many ways, including as a TV-enabled computer, a computer-based media server, a set-top box, a satellite receiver, a TV recorder with a hard disk, a digital video recorder (DVR), a game console, an information appliance, and so forth.

[0018] The client device **102** receives the media content **108** via various transmission media **110**, such as satellite transmission, radio frequency transmission, cable transmission, and/or via any number of other transmission media, such as a file transfer protocol over a network (e.g., Internet or Intranet) and/or data packet communication. The client device **102** includes one or more media content inputs **112**, which may include tuners that can be tuned to various frequencies or channels to receive television signals and/or Internet Protocol (IP) inputs over which streams of media content are received via an IP-based network.

[0019] The client device **102** also includes one or more processors **114** which process various instructions to control operation of client device **102**, to execute applications stored on the client device, and to communicate with other electronic and computing devices. The processors **114** may further include a content processor to receive, process, and decode media content and program data. The client device **102** is also equipped with an audio/video output **116** that provides audio and video data to the display **104**, or to other devices that process and/or display, or otherwise render, the audio and video data. Video and audio signals can be communicated from the client device **102** to the display **104** via an RF (radio frequency) link, S-video link, composite video link, component video link, analog audio connection, or other similar communication links.

[0020] The client device **102** is equipped with different types of memory components, including both volatile and non-volatile memory. In this example, the client device **102** has a recording media **120** and a cache **122**. The recording media **120** may be implemented in many ways using various non-volatile storage media, such as hard disk drives, RAID systems, recordable and/or rewritable discs, and so forth. Cache **122** can be implemented, for example, as random access memory (RAM) for faster access during data processing in client device **102**. Although not shown, the client device may further include one or more data memory components as well as a program memory to store applications.

[0021] One or more application programs can be stored in program memory and executed by the processor(s) **114**. Representative applications shown in FIG. 1 include a thumbnail generator **130**, a user interface (UI) application **132**, an electronic program guide (EPG) application **134**, and a DVR and playback application **136**. An operating system (not shown) may also be maintained in storage and executed on processor(s) **114**.

[0022] The DVR and playback application **136** records media content received from the content providers **106** in the recording media **120**. The recorded media content **140** includes TV programs that a viewer has recorded to watch at a later time. The DVR and playback application **136** also facilitates playback of the recorded media content **140** on the display **104**.

[0023] The UI application **132** allows a user to browse and select content recorded on the client device **102**. The UI application **132** supports interactive and graphical UI screens that identify the media content **140** stored in the recording media **120** and offer options for handling the media content **140** in some manner. For example, the UI screens might enable navigation to various recorded content (e.g., audio, still images, video, TV programs, etc.), list recently recorded content, or provide detailed information on specific content. One exemplary UI screen **142** is depicted on the display **104**. This UI screen **142** shows the most recently recorded TV programs.

[0024] The EPG application **134** generates a program guide for presentation on the display **104**. The program guide includes a schedule indicating when particular content will be broadcast for viewing and on which channel the content will be broadcast. The EPG application **134** enables a viewer to navigate through the program guide and locate broadcast programs, recorded programs, video on-demand programs and movies, interactive game selections, and other media access information or content of interest to the viewer. EPG data **144** is downloaded from the content providers **106** and stored in recording media **120**, where it is accessed by the EPG application **134** to populate the program guide.

[0025] The thumbnail generator **130** creates thumbnail images **150** representative of the recorded TV programs and stores the thumbnail images **150** in the cache **122**. The thumbnail images, or just "thumbnails", are derived from the actual video content of the TV programs and are used by the UI application **132** and/or the EPG application **134** to visually represent the recorded TV programs in the UI screens. By storing the thumbnails **150** in the cache **122**, the thumbnails **150** are available for immediate retrieval to populate the appropriate UI screens. The thumbnails **150** may alternatively, or additionally, be stored in other memory, such as the recording media **120**.

[0026] In FIG. 1, the UI screen **142** shows six thumbnail images **152** created from recorded TV programs stored in the recording media **120**. The thumbnails show representative video frames from related TV programs so that the viewer will visually associate a stored program with the depicted thumbnail. The viewer can then navigate the screen **142** using an input device, such as remote control handset **154**, to browse among the thumbnails as a way to ascertain what TV programs are recorded on the recording media **120**. With the handset **154**, the viewer can select a thumbnail to cause the client device **102** (and namely, the DVR and playback application **136**) to playback the recorded TV program associated with the thumbnail.

[0027] According to one implementation, the thumbnail generator **130** is configured to create two thumbnails as the TV program is being recorded. A temporary thumbnail is derived when the TV program first begins recording. In one implementation, the temporary thumbnail is derived from a video frame extracted from a beginning portion of the TV program. For instance, the thumbnail generator **130** selects the first non-black video frame in the TV program from which to derive the temporary thumbnail. In this manner, the thumbnail image is generated within seconds and is available for immediate display in a UI screen as soon as the TV program begins recording.

[0028] A permanent thumbnail is subsequently generated when more of the TV program has been recorded. The

permanent thumbnail is generated using video detection techniques which rely on analysis of a larger portion of the TV program. Such analysis might include, for example, avoidance of a black frame, avoidance of any frames associated with a commercial, avoidance of padding, scene analysis, examination of program metadata, and so forth. One example of a suitable technique for isolating and deriving thumbnail candidates from a recorded video program is disclosed in co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. _____, entitled "Systems and Methods for Smart Media Content Thumbnail Extraction", which was filed _____, and is assigned to Microsoft Corporation (Attorney Docket Number: MS1-2099US/308999.01). The detection techniques may be performed on the program after a pre-determined is recorded (e.g., 15 minutes, 30 minutes, etc.) or after the entire program is recorded.

[0029] The thumbnail created from the TV program can be static or dynamic. A static thumbnail contains a still image generated from the video content. A dynamic thumbnail consists of multiple images generated from the TV program, which are then played in a continuous loop so that the thumbnail appears animated.

[0030] The temporary and permanent thumbnails 150 are stored in the cache 122 in association with corresponding TV programs so that when the UI application 132 and/or the EPG application 134 display information about a particular TV program, the corresponding thumbnail is retrieved from the cache 122 and presented in a UI screen. One way to associate the thumbnails with the TV programs is via a data structure stored in memory, such as program or data memory.

[0031] FIG. 2 shows one example data structure 200 used to associate the thumbnail images 150 with the corresponding TV programs stored in recording media 120. The data structure 200 includes multiple data fields that hold and correlate information for each record entry. In this example, the data fields include a thumbnail identifier field 202, a TV identifier field 204, a program title field 206, a rating field 208, and a show thumbnail field 210. It is noted that more or less fields may be used in such a data structure, and that the illustrated structure is just one example.

[0032] Multiple entries 220(1)-220(N) are shown in the data structure 200. Each entry contains information pertaining to a TV program. Here, entry 220(1) is for a TV program entitled "CSI: Miami", which has an identifier of "31456" and a content rating of "TV 14". **This TV program is associated with a temporary thumbnail identified as "00032.TMP".** Entry 220(1) is an example of a TV program that has just started recording, and hence has a temporary thumbnail associated therewith.

[0033] Another entry 220(N) is for a TV program titled "Rugrats", which has an identifier of "63290" and a content rating of "All". This TV program is associated with a permanent thumbnail identified as "04520.PMT". Entry 220(N) is an example of a TV program that has been recording a sufficient amount of time (or has been completely recorded), and hence has a permanent thumbnail associated therewith.

[0034] An aspect of the described system is that the thumbnail images generated from the TV programs may or may not be displayed based on preferences established by

the viewer. For instance, suppose a parent has established parental controls that prevent display of programs with a TV14 or higher rating at certain times of operation, or on certain displays viewed by younger viewers in the home. In this case, the parent would most likely prefer not to have a thumbnail image of the corresponding content displayed in various UI menus or listings. Accordingly, the show thumbnail field 210 dictates when a thumbnail should be displayed based on the rating provided in the rating field 208. In this example, if the rating is TV14 or higher, as is the case for the TV program "CSI: Miami" at entry 220(1), the entry contains a "No" data item in the show thumbnail field 210 to indicate that the associated thumbnail should not be shown. The thumbnail image can be replaced with a blank image, a logo of the TV rating, an icon, or other form of generic image. If the rating is less than TV 14, as is the case for the TV program "Rugrats" at entry 220(N), a "Yes" data item is in the show thumbnail field 210 to indicate that the associated thumbnail can be shown.

[0035] In another implementation, the determination of whether to display a thumbnail based on viewer preferences may be made without maintaining a flag designator in show thumbnail field 210 for each associated recorded program (thereby eliminating the use of field 210 in data structure 200). In this alternate implementation, preferences are maintained in a separate memory location and the determination is made by dynamically comparing the rating of the recorded show against the current preferences to decide whether to depict the thumbnail at the time the thumbnail is to be displayed. In this manner, if the preferences are changed at anytime, the change is made quickly in this single memory location rather than updating every flag designator in the show thumbnail field 210 for all recorded programs.

[0036] FIGS. 3-6 show various examples of UI screens that depict the temporary and/or permanent thumbnail images. FIG. 3 shows a "Start" UI screen 300, which is initially presented to a viewer when accessing various forms of content stored on the client device 102. In this example, the UI screen 300 has a menu 302 of different types of content the viewer might wish to access, including videos, pictures, music, TV, and other content. Adjacent the menu 302 are three thumbnail images 304 that are associated with the three most recently recorded TV programs. These thumbnails 304 may be temporary or permanent, depending upon how much of the corresponding program has been recorded. As an example, the first thumbnail depicting a cartoon cat could be a temporary thumbnail derived from the first few frames of a cartoon that the client device 102 has just started recording. The second and third thumbnails might represent permanent thumbnails generated from TV programs that have already been recorded. It is noted that as more of the cartoon is recorded, a permanent thumbnail image will be generated and later replace the temporary thumbnail image on the "Start" UI screen 300.

[0037] FIG. 4 shows a "My TV" UI screen 400, which is presented upon selection of the "My TV" item in menu 302 of the "Start" UI screen 300 (FIG. 3). The "My TV" UI screen 400 has a menu 402 of operational choices for the viewer, including a listing of live TV programs currently playing, a listing of recorded TV programs stored on the device 102, a program guide, a search feature, a listing of movie selections, and operational settings. A set of six thumbnail images 404 representing the six most recently

recorded TV programs are also depicted on the UI screen **400**. These thumbnails **404** may include temporary thumbnails and/or permanent thumbnails.

[0038] **FIG. 5** shows a “Recorded TV” UI screen **500**, which is presented upon selection of the “Recorded TV” item in menu **402** of the “My TV” UI screen **400** (**FIG. 4**). The “Recorded TV” UI screen **500** has a menu **502** of operational choices to sort the recorded TV programs by date or by name, to add a recording, schedule a recording, or create a CD/DVD of the recorded program. To the right of the menu **502** is a listing **504** of recorded TV programs represented by the associated thumbnail image, a program title, and the date/time it was recorded. Once again, the thumbnails used in this listing **504** may include temporary thumbnails and/or permanent thumbnails.

[0039] **FIG. 6** shows a “Program Info” UI screen **600**, which is presented upon selection of a particular program in listing **504** of the “Recorded TV” UI screen **500** (**FIG. 5**). The “Program Info” UI screen **600** shows more detailed information **602** on a selected program, such as the program title, a brief description, when it was recorded and from which channel, and so forth. Included with this detailed information is a thumbnail image **604** to visually convey a sample of the content in the TV program. The thumbnail **604** may be temporary at first, but is later replaced with a permanent thumbnail when a sufficient amount of the program has been recorded. The “Program Info” UI screen **600** also has a menu **606** of operational choices to play the program, delete the program, set a “keep until” date for maintaining the program, and record a series of programs.

[0040] **FIG. 7** shows a process **700** for generating and presenting thumbnail images in conjunction with recorded TV programs. The process **700** is illustrated as a collection of blocks in a logical flow graph, which represent a sequence of operations that can be implemented in hardware, software, firmware, or any combination thereof. In the context of software and/or firmware, the blocks represent computer instructions that, when executed by one or more processors, perform the recited operations.

[0041] For discussion purposes, the process **700** is described with reference to the system **100** described above with respect to **FIG. 1**. It is noted that the process **700** may be implemented by other types of systems that are designed to record and playback TV programs.

[0042] At block **702**, the client device **102** begins recording a TV program. During this initial recording, the thumbnail generator **130** derives a temporary thumbnail image representative of the TV program (block **704**). This temporary thumbnail is quickly created, for example, from the beginning portion of the TV program. The derivation involves at least minimum logic to ensure that the thumbnail generator **130** avoids extracting a black frame. Thus, the thumbnail generator **130** might be configured to extract the first non-black frame from the TV program and derive a thumbnail image from that frame.

[0043] At block **706**, the temporary thumbnail image is stored in the cache **122**. At block **708**, the temporary

thumbnail is displayed as part of any UI screens that identify recorded TV programs, such as the example UI screens **300**, **400**, **500**, and **600** (**FIGS. 3-6**). As the program continues recording, a permanent thumbnail is generated from the recorded content. To ensure that a highly representative thumbnail is created, a larger portion of the recorded program is analyzed.

[0044] Accordingly, decision block **710** determines whether a threshold amount of the TV program has been recorded. This threshold amount may be measured in number of frames, duration, or other ways. For instance, the client device **102** may be configured to begin generating a permanent thumbnail after **1000** frames have been recorded, or after **15** minutes of the program has been recorded, or alternatively after the entire program has been recorded. If a sufficient portion of the TV program has not yet been recorded (i.e., the “No” branch from block **710**), the client device **102** continues to use the temporary thumbnail in the cache **122**.

[0045] Alternatively, if a sufficient portion of the TV program has been recorded (i.e., the “Yes” branch from block **710**), the thumbnail generator **130** generates a permanent thumbnail representative of the recorded TV program (block **712**). The thumbnail generator **130** uses video detection techniques to generate the image. It analyzes the frames of the recorded program, relying on significant logic to avoid black frames and frames from commercials, to ignore pre-padding and post-padding, to consider head shots, and use program metadata (e.g. category/genre). Once the frames are analyzed, a representative video frame is selected and the thumbnail image is derived from that selected frame.

[0046] At block **714**, the permanent thumbnail image is stored in the cache **122**. The permanent thumbnail can be stored over the temporary thumbnail, thereby deleting the temporary thumbnail from the cache, or alternatively, stored in addition to the temporary thumbnail. In any event, at block **716**, the permanent thumbnail is displayed as part of any UI screens that identify recorded TV programs, such as the example UI screens **300**, **400**, **500**, and **600** (**FIGS. 3-6**), thereby replacing the temporary thumbnail in such UI screens.

[0047] **FIG. 8** shows a process **800** for controlling display of the thumbnail images based on parental control or other user preference settings. At block **802**, the client device **102** determines whether preference settings, such as parental controls, permits display of the thumbnail images. If permitted (i.e., the “Yes” branch from block **802**), the client device **102** displays the thumbnails (temporary or permanent) within the UI screens as identifiers for the recorded TV program (block **804**). Conversely, if not permitted (i.e., the “No” branch from block **802**), the client device **102** displays some other generic image in place of the thumbnail (block **806**) or, alternatively, foregoes altogether any display of another image.

[0048] Although the invention has been described in language specific to structural features and/or methodological acts, it is to be understood that the invention defined in the appended claims is not necessarily limited to the specific features or acts described. Rather, the specific features and acts are disclosed as exemplary forms of implementing the claimed invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:
 - during initial recording of a TV program, deriving a temporary thumbnail representative of the TV program; and
 - subsequently generating a permanent thumbnail representative of the recorded TV program.
2. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the deriving comprises forming the temporary thumbnail based on a video frame from a beginning portion of the TV program.
3. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the deriving comprises forming the temporary thumbnail based on a first non-black video frame in the TV program.
4. A method as described in claim 1, wherein the generating comprises:
 - analyzing the recorded TV program;
 - selecting a representative video frame from the recorded TV program based on the analysis; and
 - forming the permanent thumbnail based on the representative video frame.
5. A method as described in claim 1, further comprising presenting the temporary thumbnail within a user interface until the permanent thumbnail is generated, and thereafter presenting the permanent thumbnail within the user interface instead of the temporary thumbnail.
6. A method as described in claim 1, further comprising presenting plural thumbnails within a user interface that lists recorded TV programs.
7. A method as described in claim 1, further comprising:
 - presenting plural thumbnails within a user interface; and
 - enabling a user to browse recorded TV programs by navigating the plural thumbnails.
8. A method as described in claim 1, further comprising caching at least one of the temporary thumbnail or the permanent thumbnail.
9. A method as described in claim 1, wherein at least one of the temporary thumbnail or the permanent thumbnail is dynamic.
10. A method as described in claim 1, further comprising:
 - associating the temporary thumbnail and the permanent thumbnail with a content rating that is subject to a preference setting;
 - presenting the temporary thumbnail and the permanent thumbnail in an event that the preference setting for the associated content rating permits viewing; and
 - preventing presentation of the temporary thumbnail and the permanent thumbnail in an event that the preference setting for the associated content rating does not permit viewing.
11. A method comprising:
 - creating a thumbnail that is representative of recorded video content; and
 - determining whether to present the thumbnail depending upon a rating of the recorded video content.
12. A method as described in claim 11, wherein the thumbnail is dynamic.

13. A method as described in claim 11, wherein the creating comprises forming the thumbnail based on a video frame from the recorded video content.

14. A method as described in claim 11, further comprising presenting a generic image instead of the thumbnail in an event that the thumbnail is determined, based on the rating, not to be presented.

15. A computer-readable media comprising computer-executable instructions that, when executed, direct a device to:

derive, during initial recording of a TV program, a temporary thumbnail from a video frame extracted from an early portion of the TV program;

present the temporary thumbnail in a user interface as an identifier of the TV program;

generate, after the initial recording of the TV program, a permanent thumbnail from a video frame selected from the TV program;

present the permanent thumbnail, instead of the temporary thumbnail, in the user interface as an identifier of the TV program.

16. A computer-readable media as recited in claim 15, further comprising computer-executable instructions that, when executed, direct a device to:

present plural thumbnails within the user interface; and

enable a user to browse the TV programs by navigating the plural thumbnails.

17. A computer-readable media as recited in claim 15, further comprising computer-executable instructions that, when executed, direct a device to cache at least one of the temporary thumbnail or the permanent thumbnail.

18. A computer-readable media as recited in claim 15, further comprising computer-executable instructions that, when executed, direct a device to:

associate the temporary thumbnail and the permanent thumbnail with a content rating that is subject to a preference setting; and

prevent presentation of the temporary thumbnail and the permanent thumbnail in an event that the preference setting for the associated content rating does not permit viewing.

19. A device comprising:

a storage medium to store the TV program;

a processor; and

the computer-readable media as recited in claim 15, operatively coupled to the processor so that when the processor executes the computer-executable instructions, the device derives the temporary thumbnail and generates the permanent thumbnail from the TV program stored in the storage medium.

20. A device comprising:

a recorder to record one or more TV programs onto a recording medium;

a thumbnail generator to form a first thumbnail representative of a TV program as the TV program is initially being recorded and to form a second thumbnail repre-

sentative of the TV program sometime after the first thumbnail is formed; and

a user interface to present one of the first thumbnail or the second thumbnail as an identifier of the TV program.

21. A device as recited in claim 20, wherein the thumbnail generator forms the first thumbnail from a video frame from a beginning portion of the TV program.

22. A device as recited in claim 20, wherein the thumbnail generator forms the first thumbnail from a first non-black video frame in the TV program.

23. A device as recited in claim 20, wherein the thumbnail generator forms the second thumbnail by analyzing the recorded TV program, selecting a representative video frame from the recorded TV program based on the analysis, and deriving the second thumbnail from the representative video frame.

24. A device as recited in claim 20, wherein the user interface presents the first thumbnail until the second thumbnail is formed, and thereafter presents the second thumbnail instead of the first thumbnail.

25. A device as recited in claim 20, wherein the user interface presents plural thumbnails and enables a user to browse recorded TV programs by navigating the plural thumbnails.

26. A device as recited in claim 20, further comprising a cache to store the first thumbnail and the second thumbnail.

27. A device as recited in claim 20, further comprising a data structure to associate the first and second thumbnails with content ratings, wherein the user interface presents the first and second thumbnails in an event that a preference setting for the content rating permits viewing and the prevents presentation of the first and second thumbnails in an event that the preference setting for the content rating does not permit viewing.

28. A device comprising:

means for deriving, during initial recording of a TV program, a temporary thumbnail representative of the TV program; and

means for subsequently generating a permanent thumbnail representative of the recorded TV program.

29. A device as described in claim 28, wherein the deriving means comprises means for forming the temporary thumbnail based on a video frame from a beginning portion of the TV program.

30. A device as described in claim 28, wherein the deriving means comprises means for forming the temporary thumbnail based on a first non-black video frame in the TV program.

31. A device as described in claim 28, wherein the generating means comprises means for analyzing the recorded TV program, selecting a representative video frame from the recorded TV program based on the analysis, and forming the permanent thumbnail based on the representative video frame.

32. A device as described in claim 28, further comprising means for presenting the temporary thumbnail until the permanent thumbnail is generated, and thereafter presenting the permanent thumbnail instead of the temporary thumbnail.

33. A device as described in claim 28, further comprising:

means for presenting plural thumbnails; and

means for enabling a user to browse recorded TV programs by navigating the plural thumbnails.

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