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(54) **VIEWER INTERFACE FOR A CONTENT DELIVERY SYSTEM**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A viewer interface for a content delivery system is described. In one embodiment, a method for displaying programming content described. This method, occurring in a receiver controller, includes receiving a user identification from an user interface device; in response to the user identification, activating an interactive graphical display personalized for a viewer identified by the user identification; and displaying, in the interactive graphical display, a menu of programming content that can be personalized for the viewer according to the viewer's viewing preferences, wherein the programming content can be received from at least one of a broadcast transmission and unicast transmission. Other embodiments are also described.

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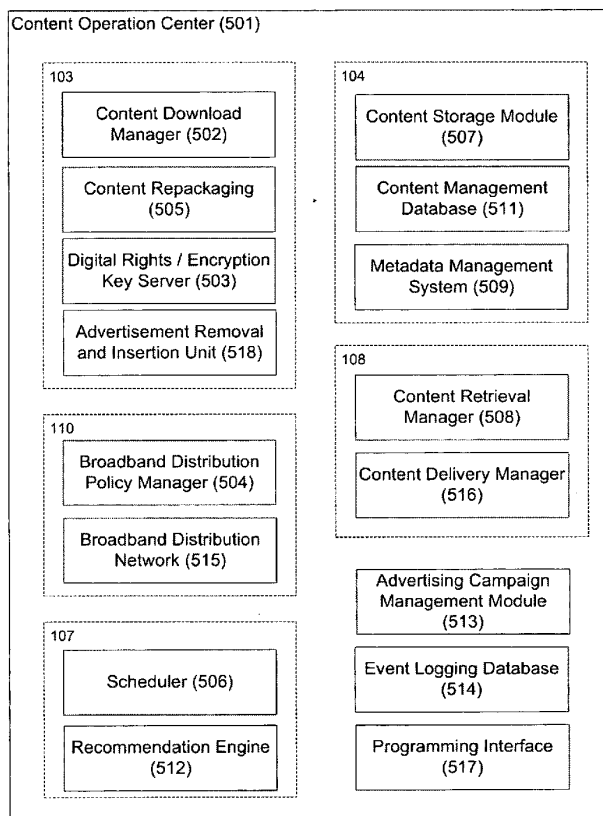
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(22) Filed: **Apr. 14, 2008**

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 60/923,371, filed on Apr. 13, 2007, provisional application No. 61/016,416,

500



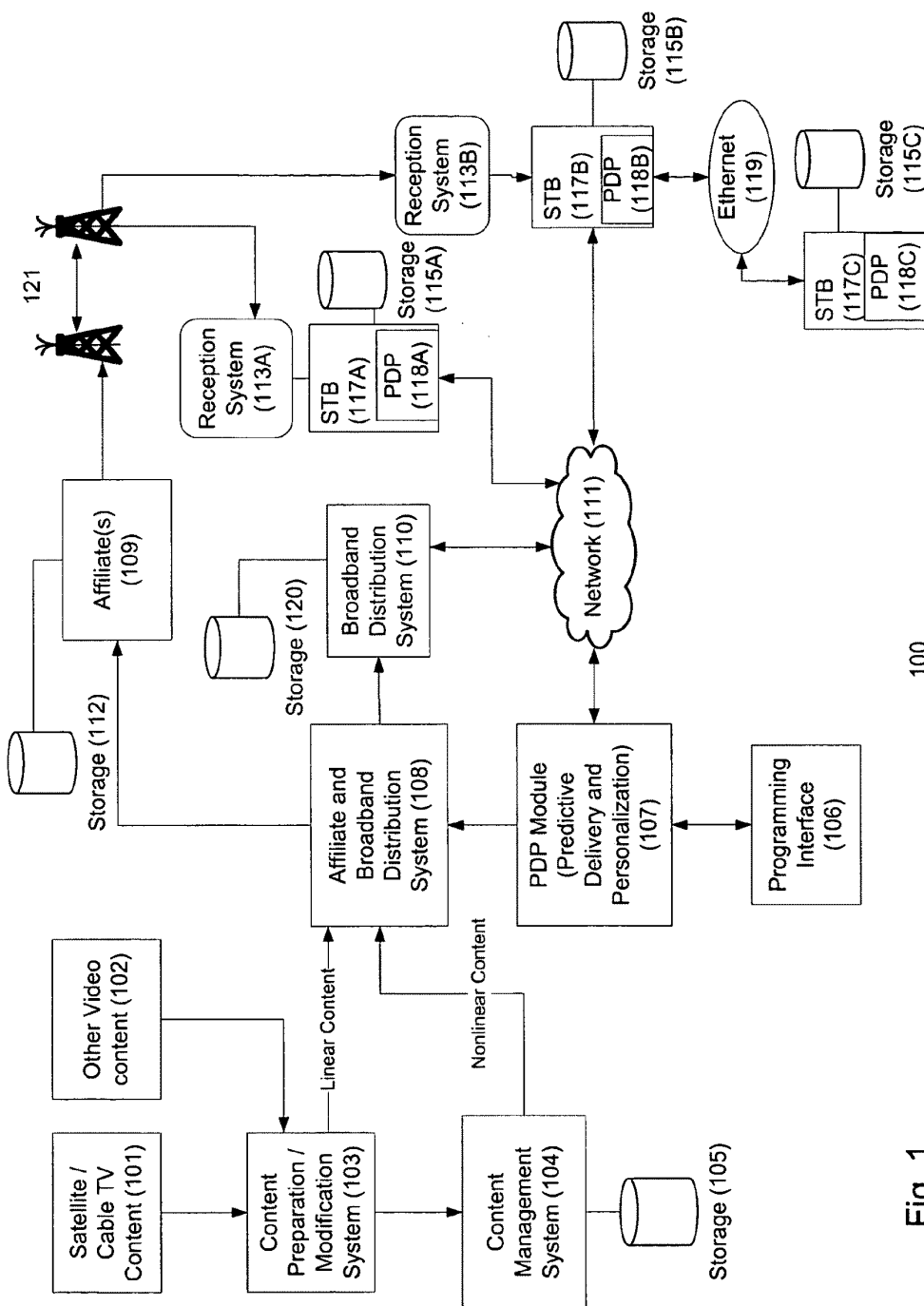


Fig. 1

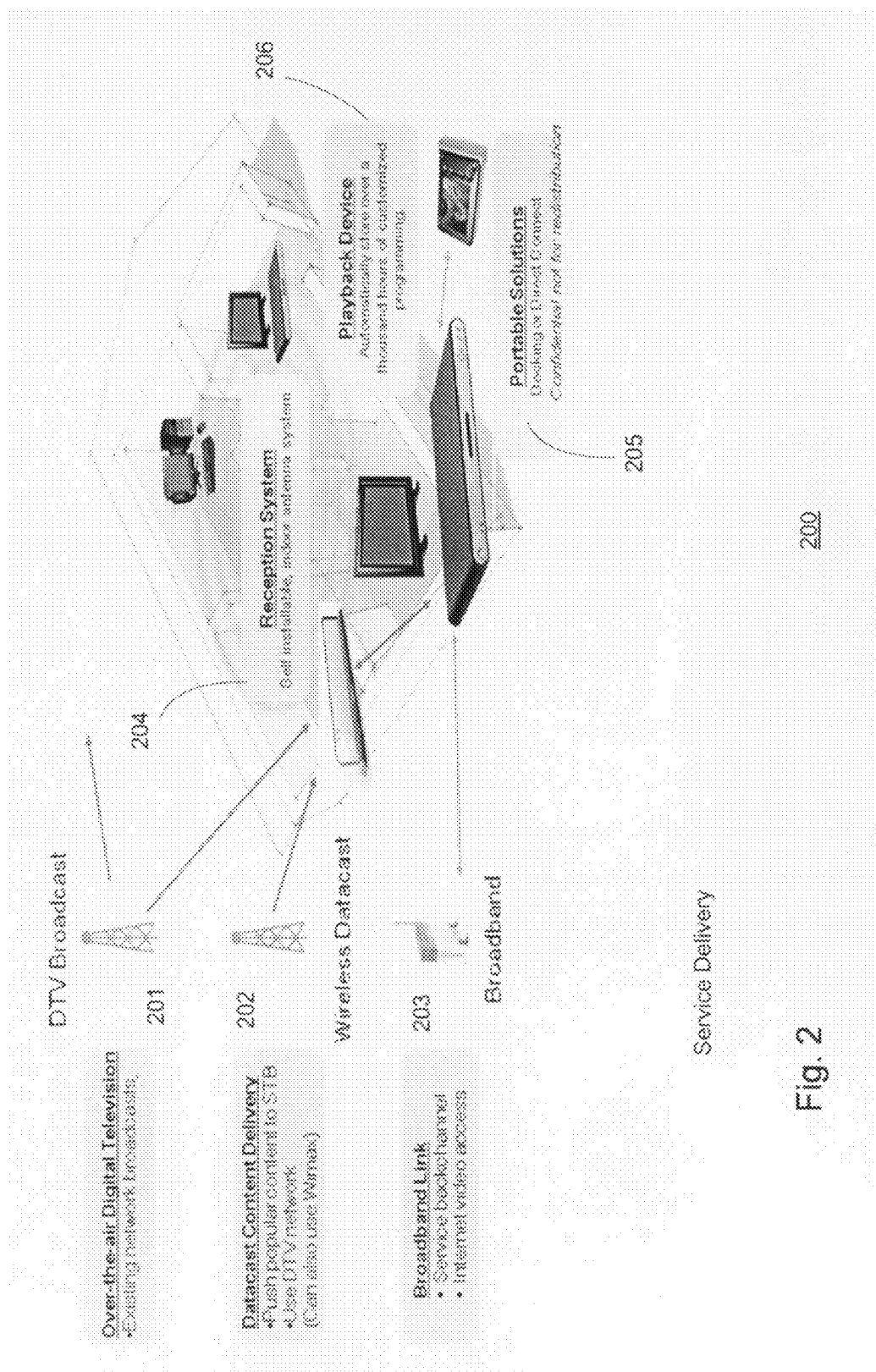
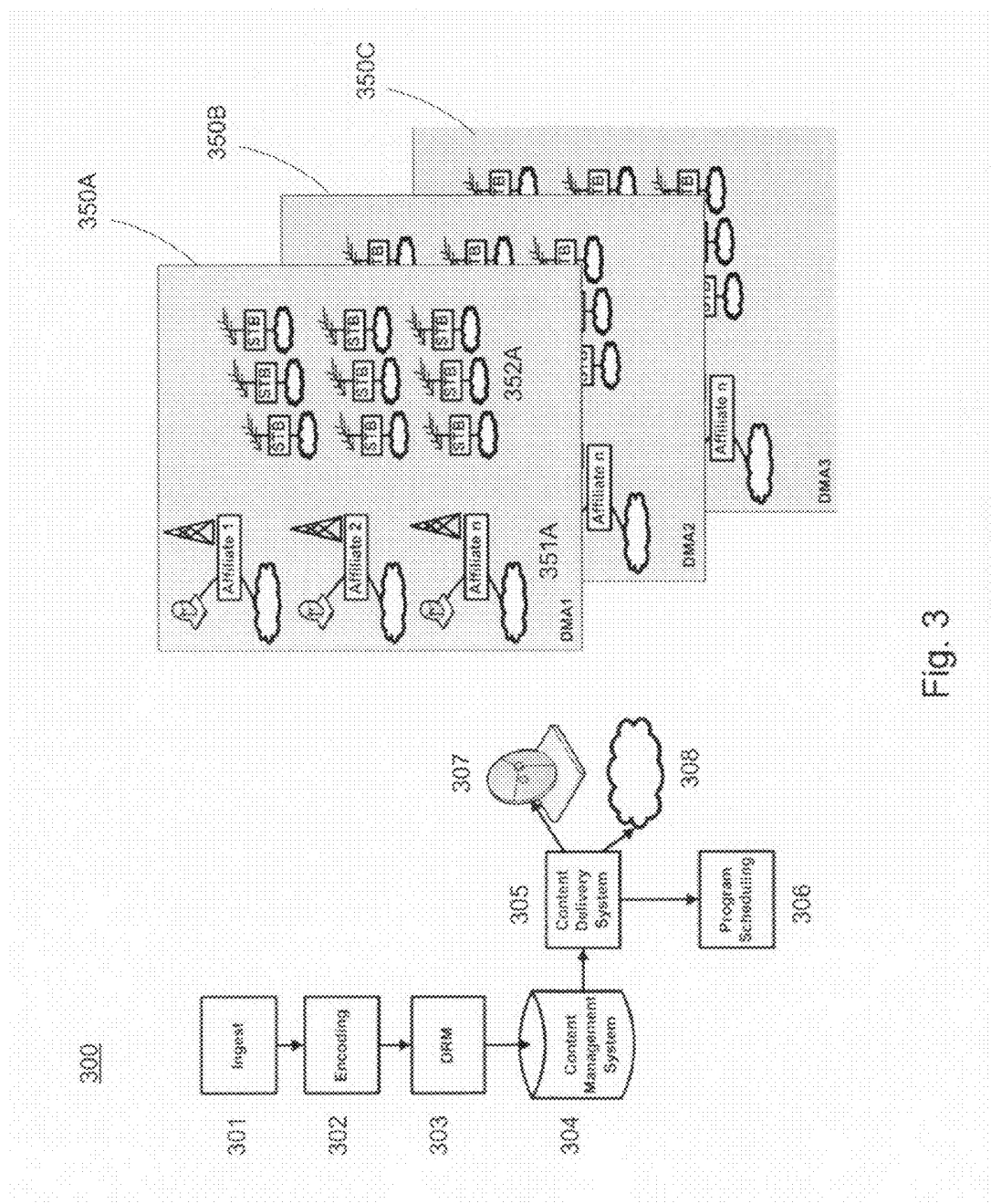


Fig. 2



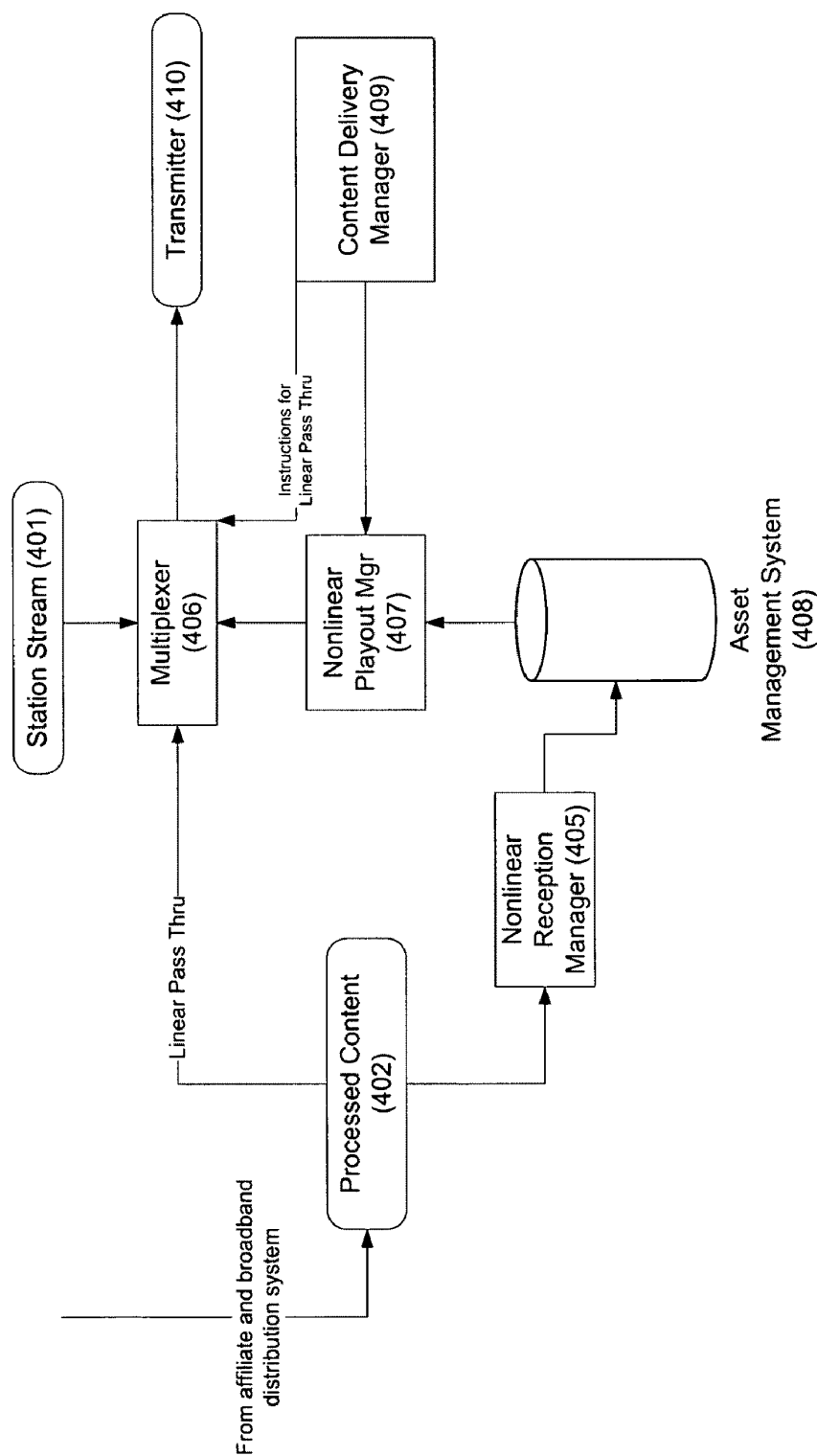


Fig. 4

500

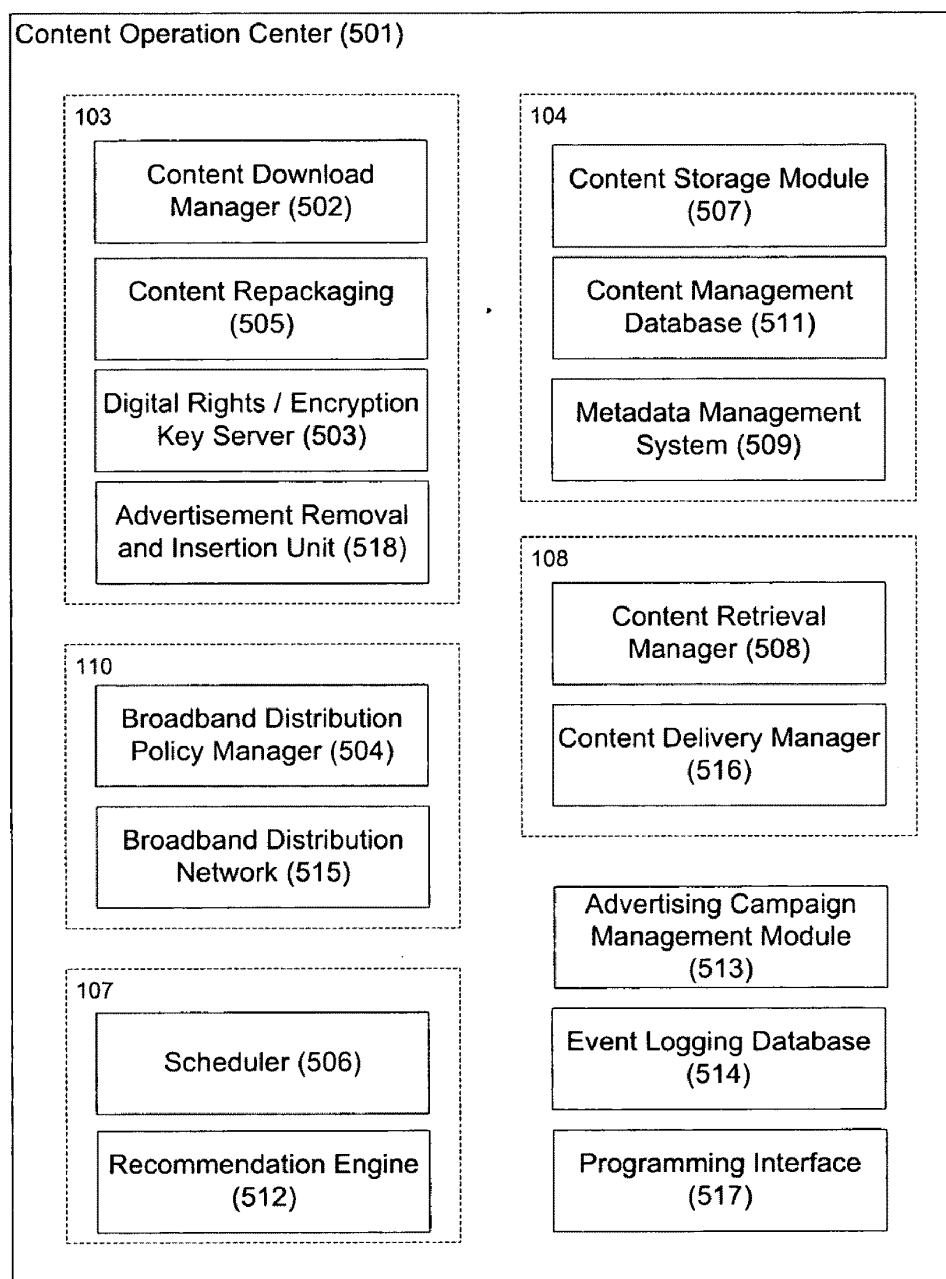
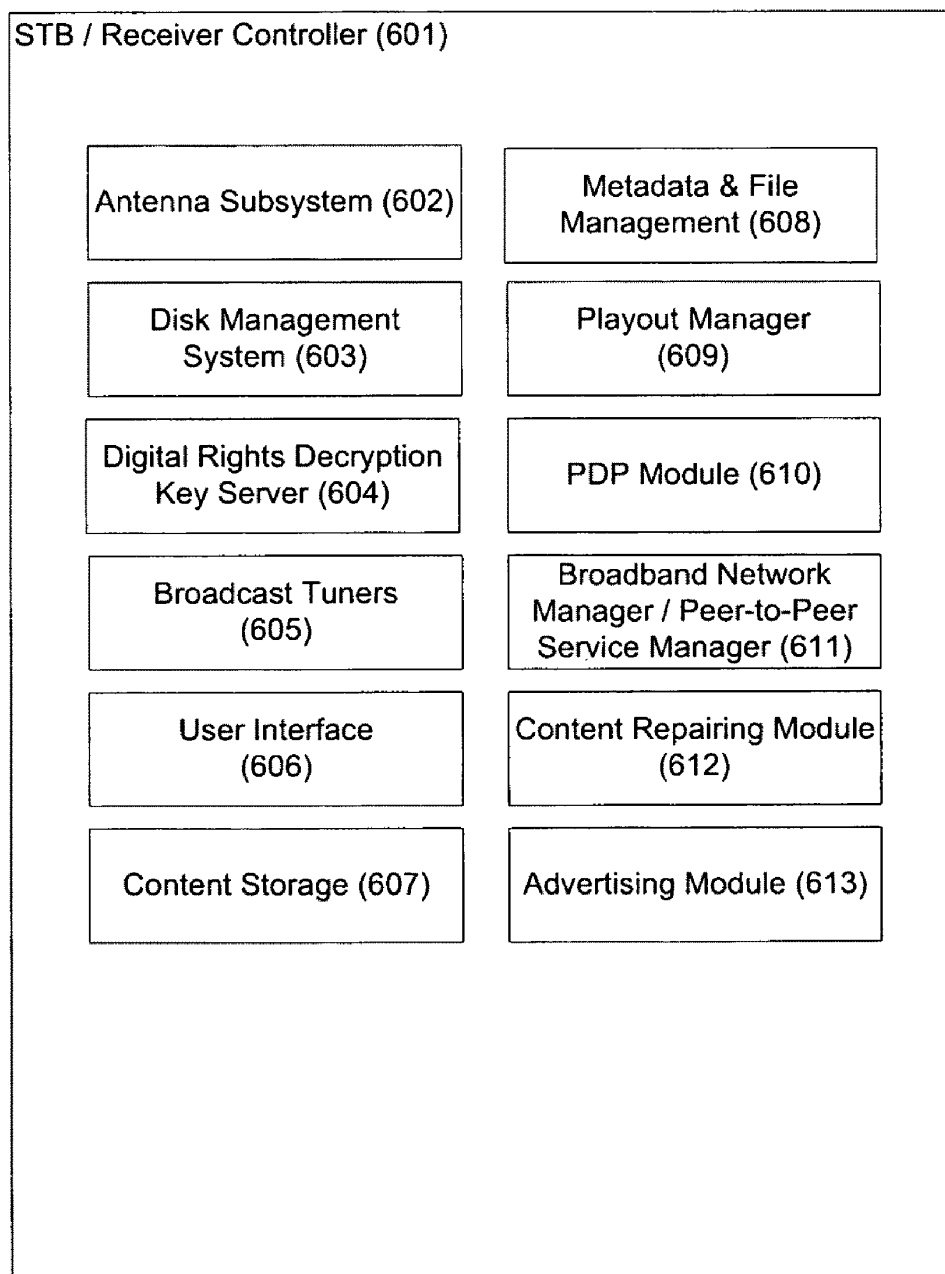
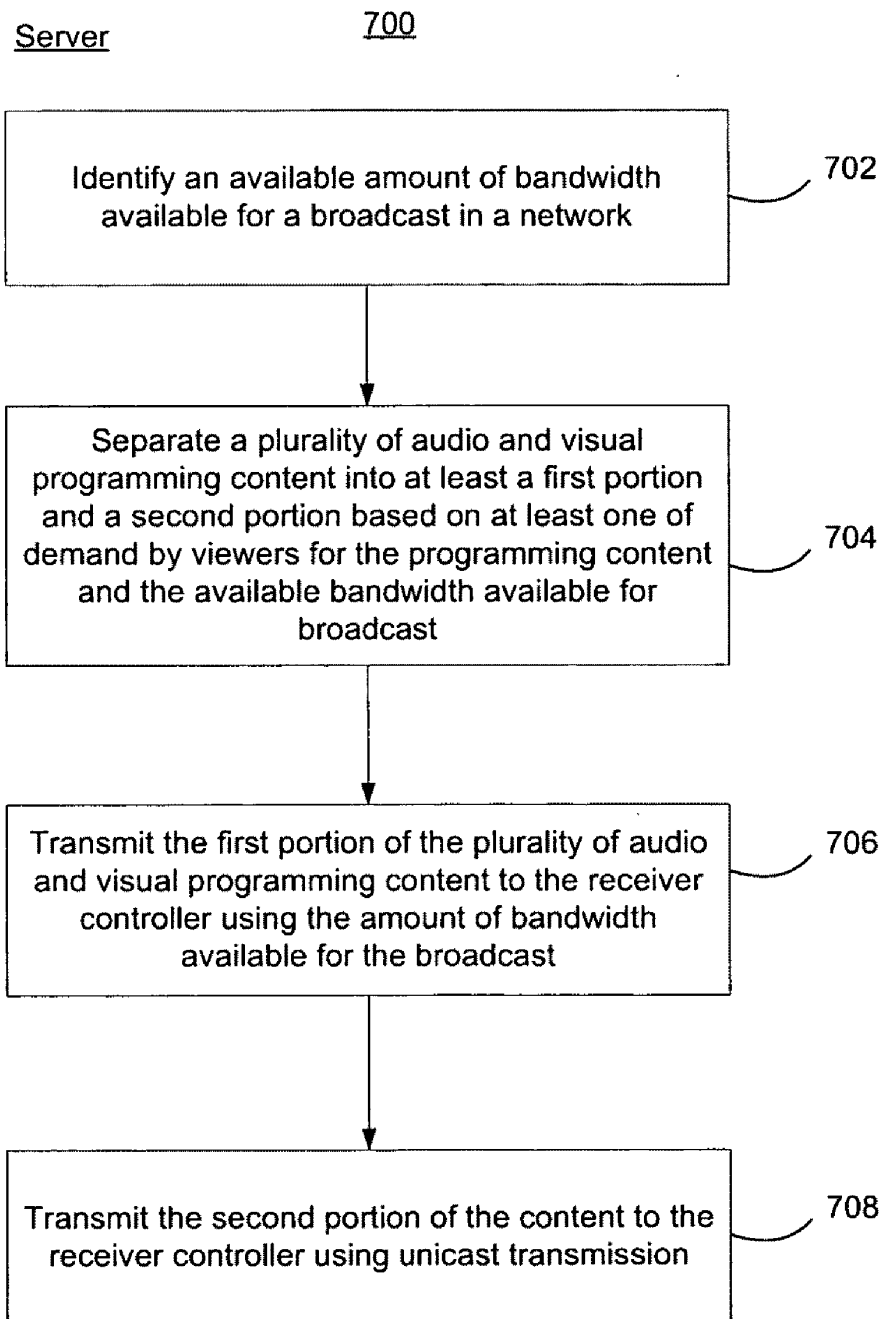


Fig. 5

600**Fig. 6**

**Fig. 7A**

720

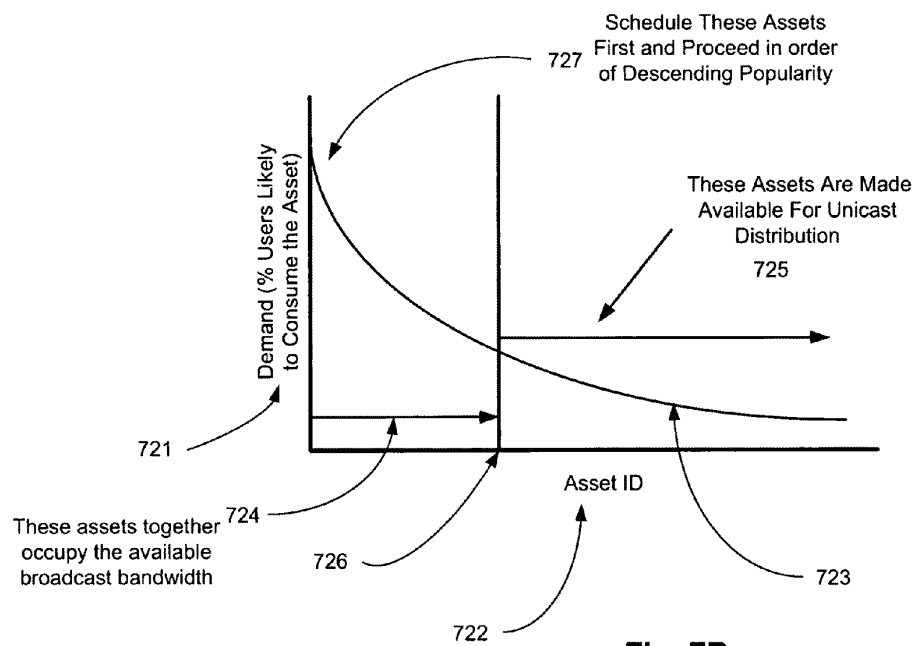
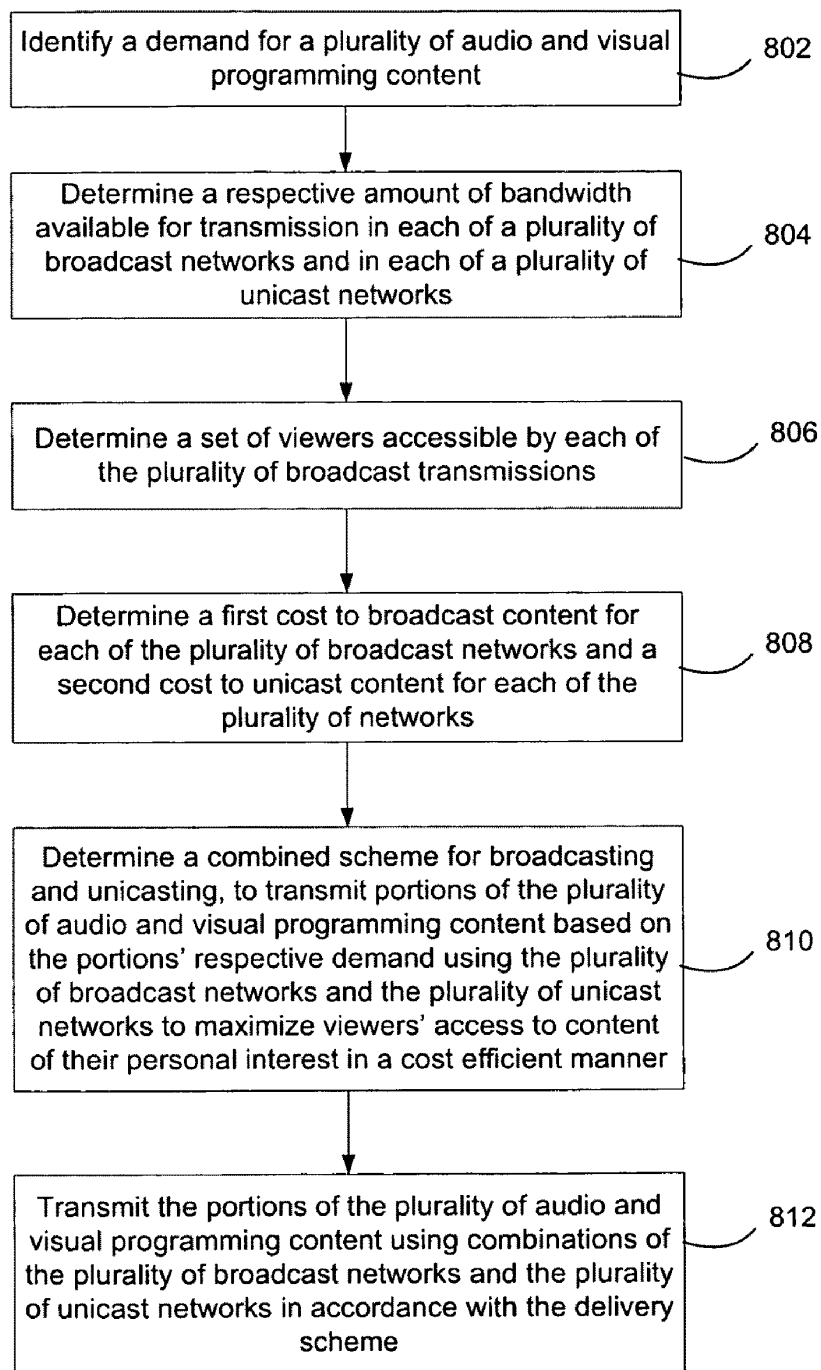


Fig. 7B

800Server**Fig. 8**

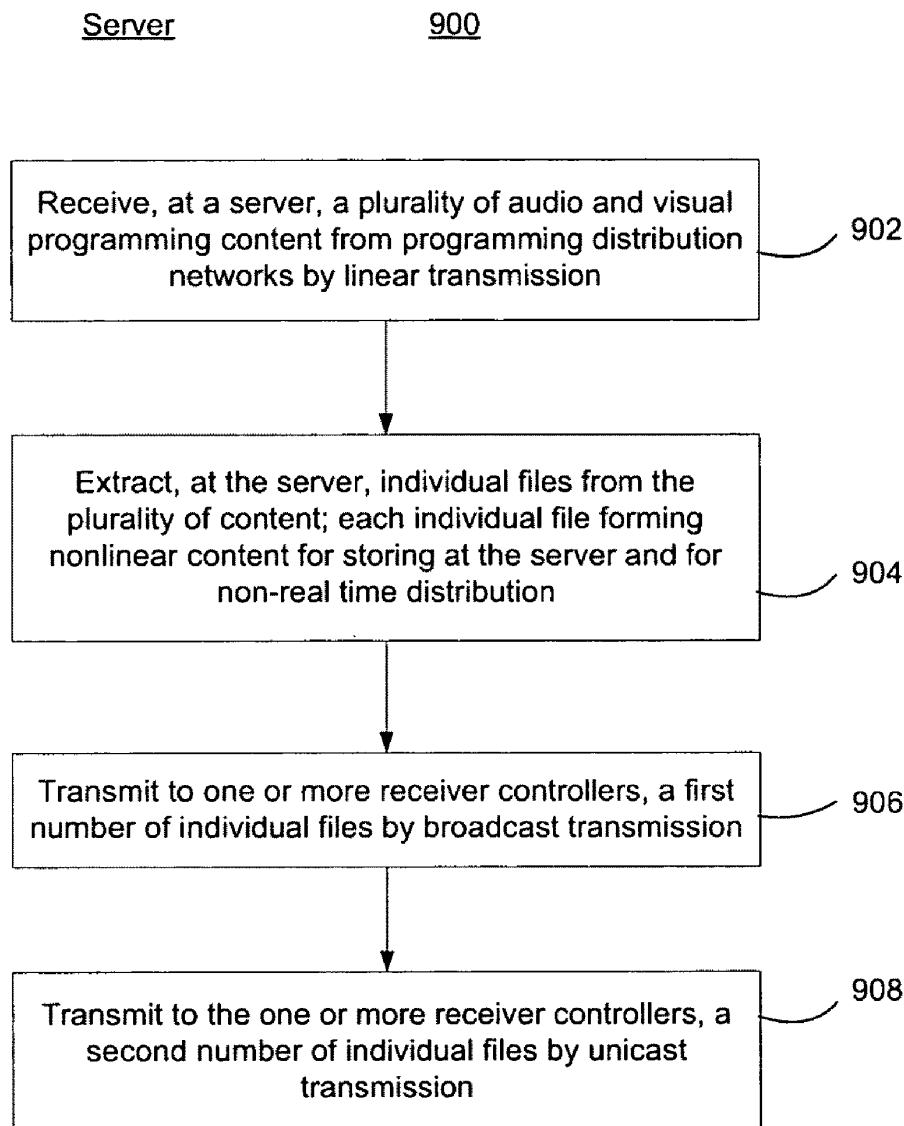


Fig. 9

Server

1000

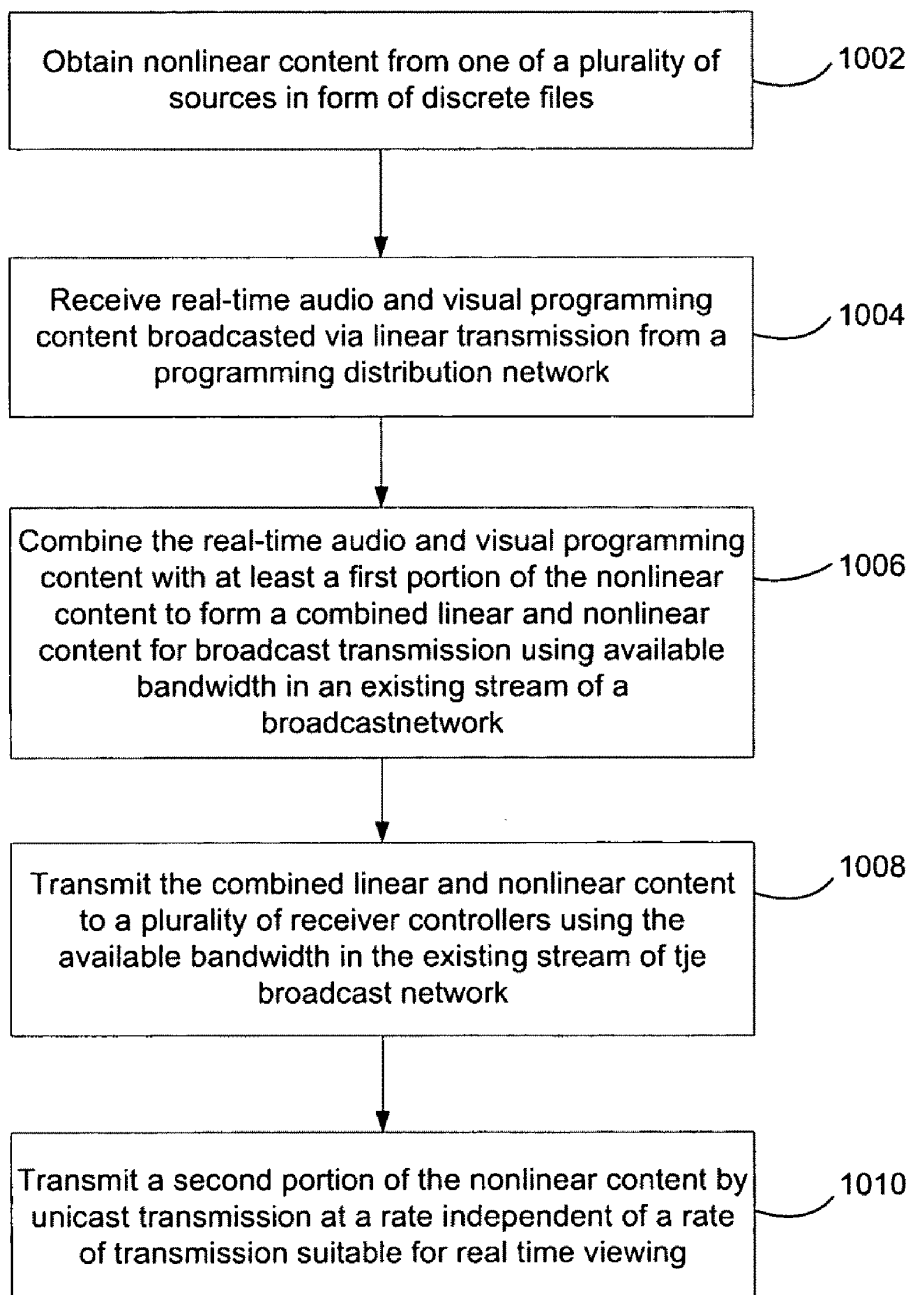


Fig. 10

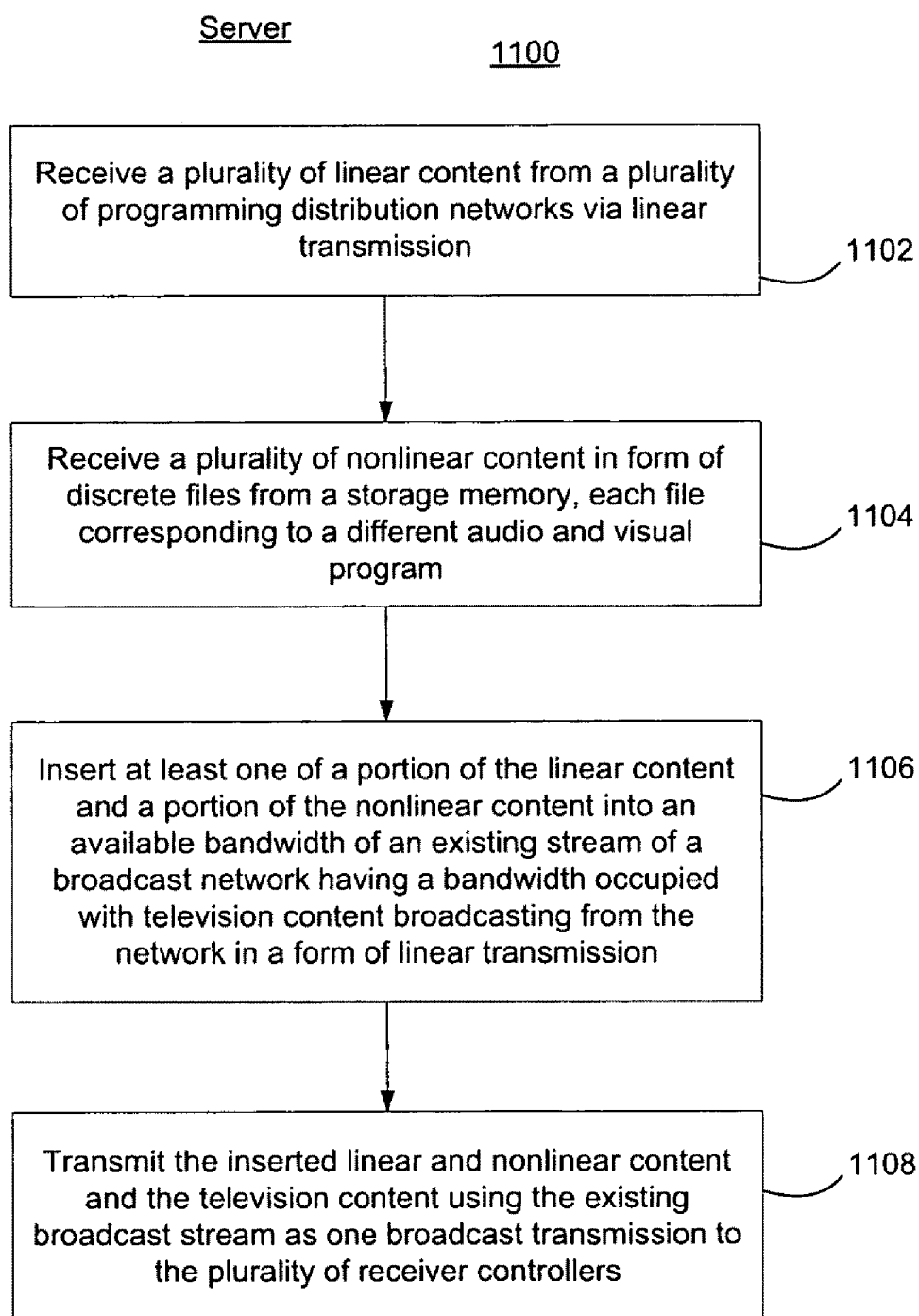


Fig. 11

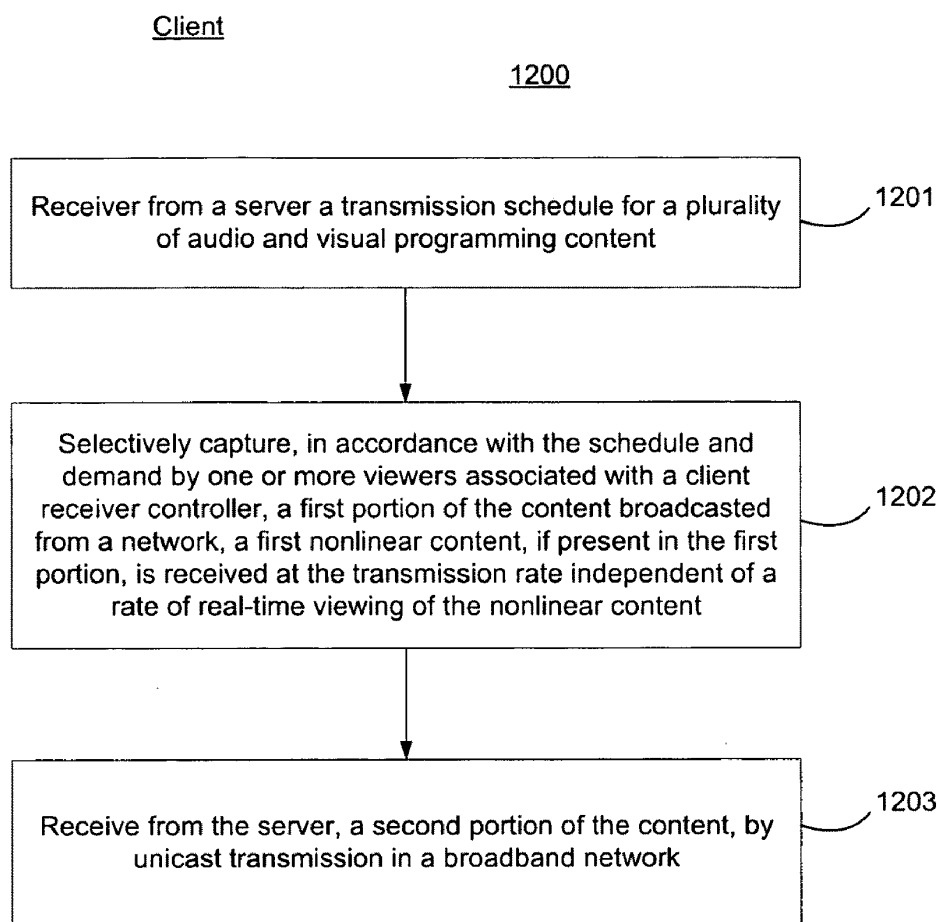


Fig. 12

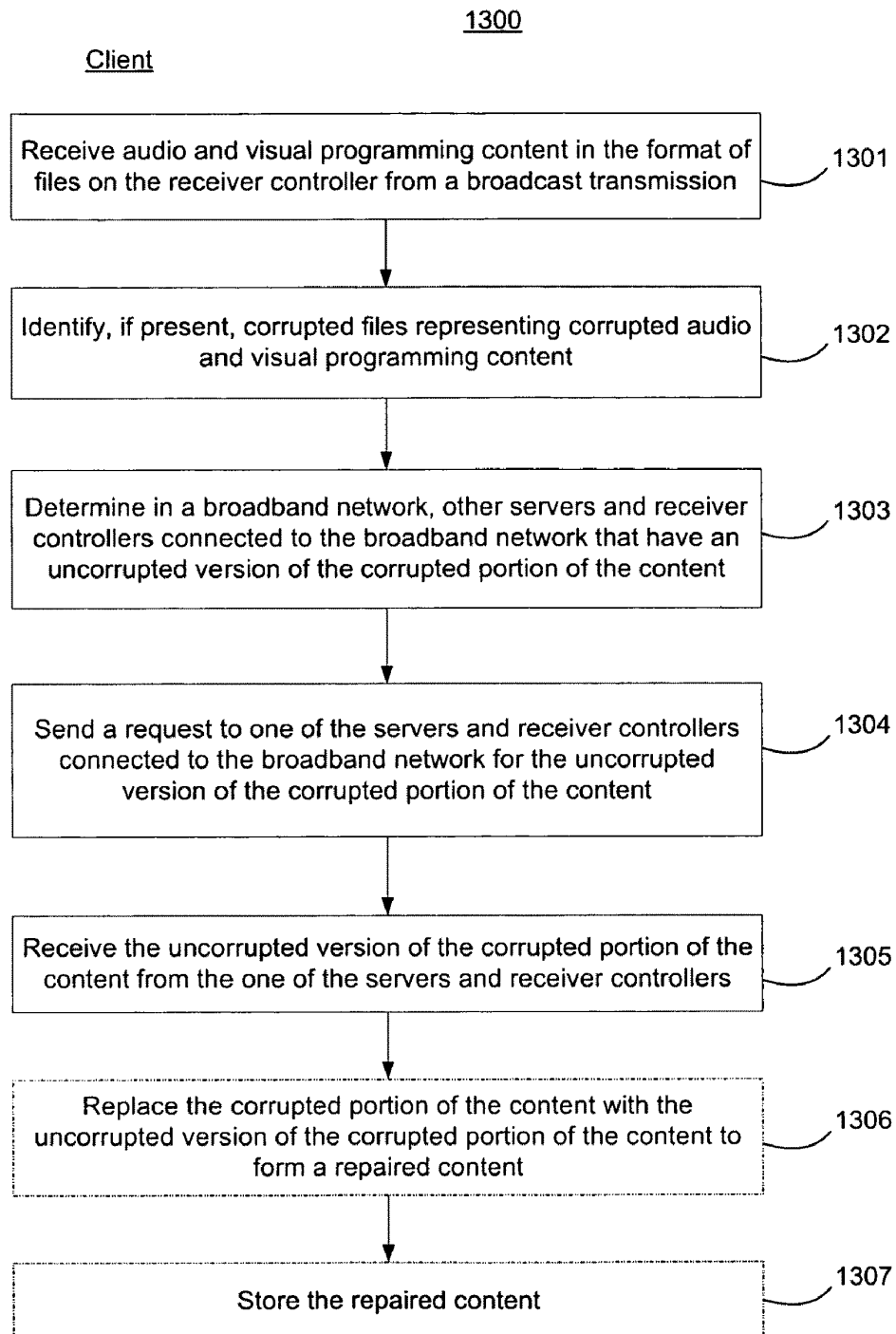


Fig. 13

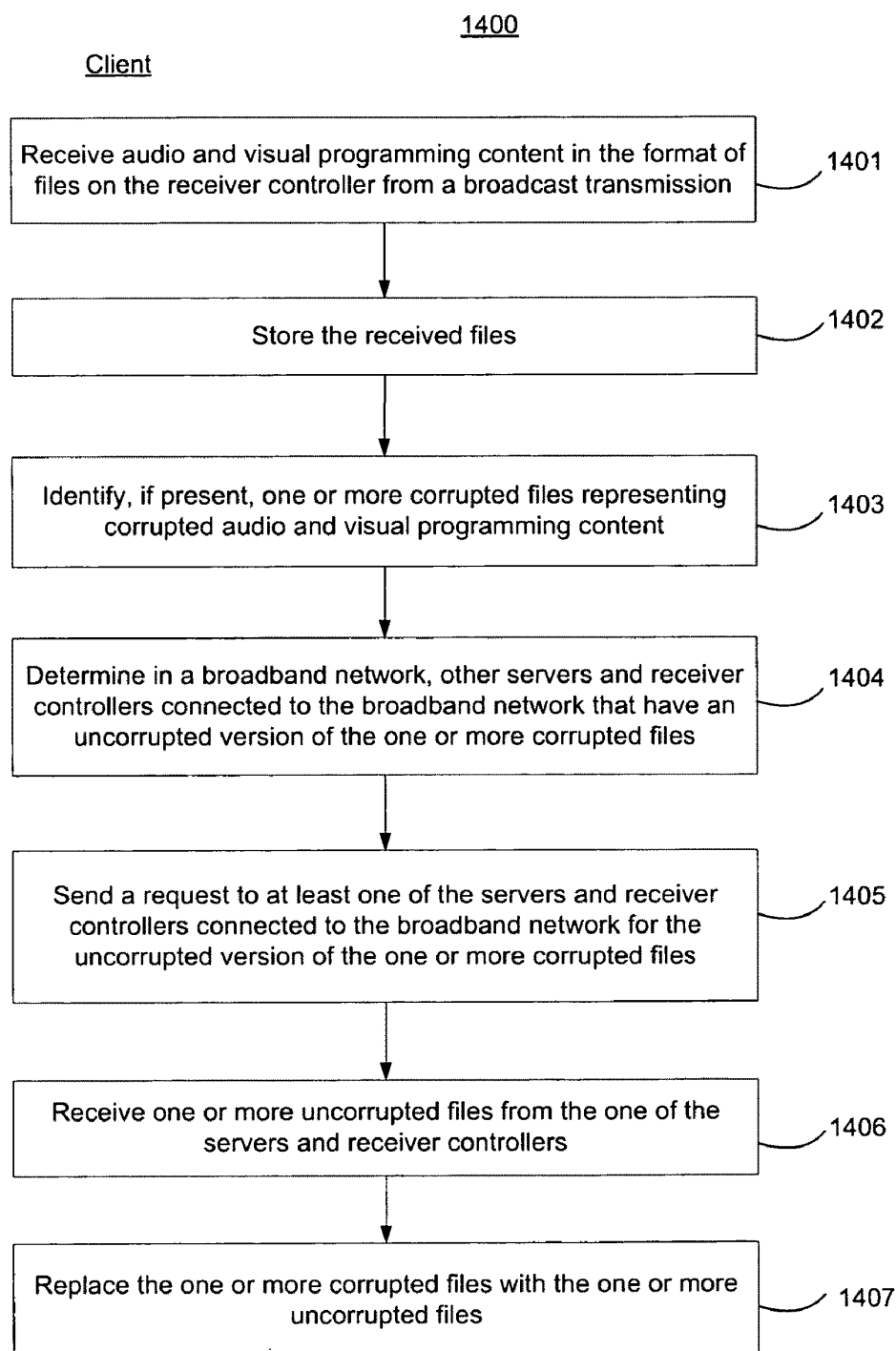


Fig. 14

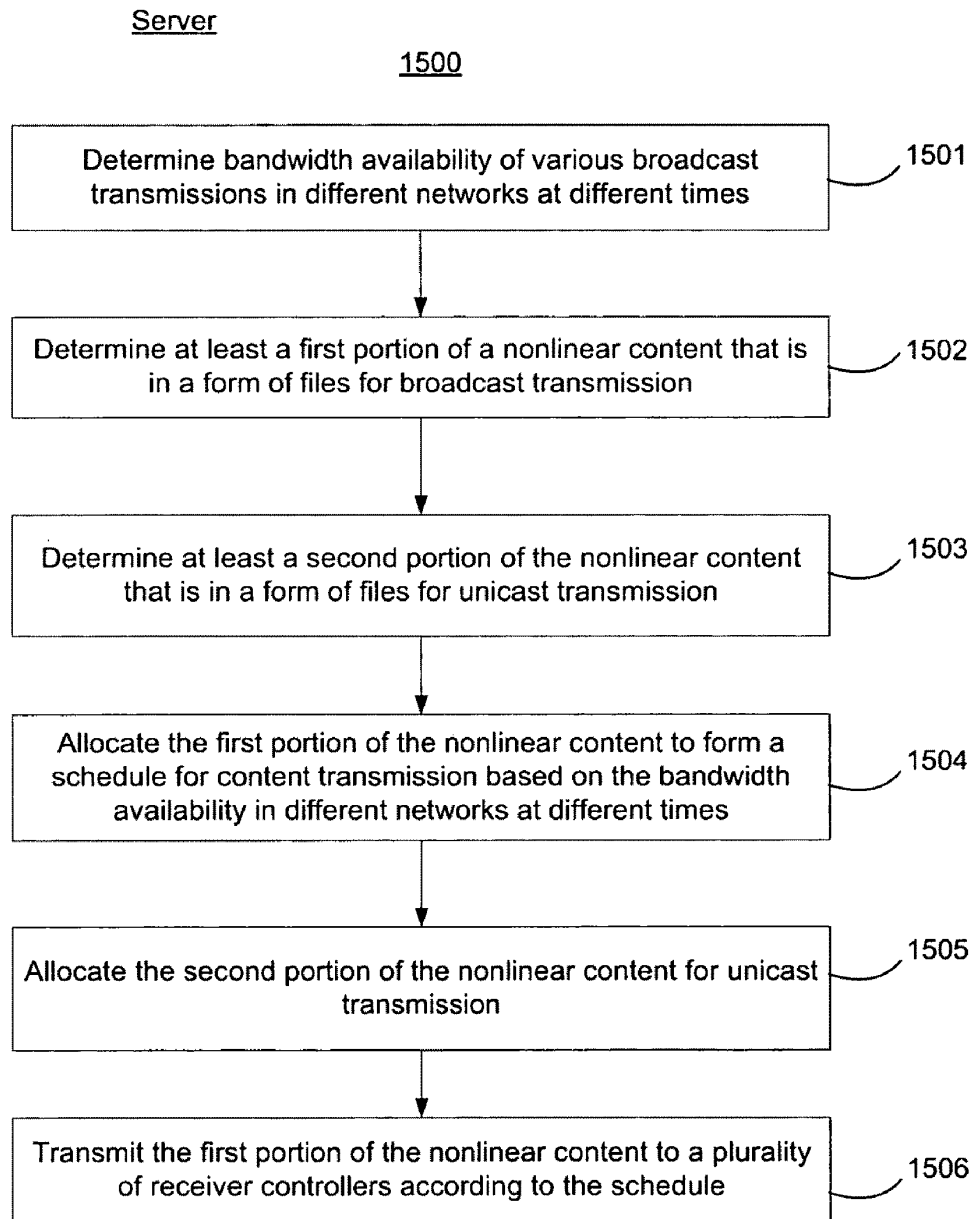


Fig. 15A

1520

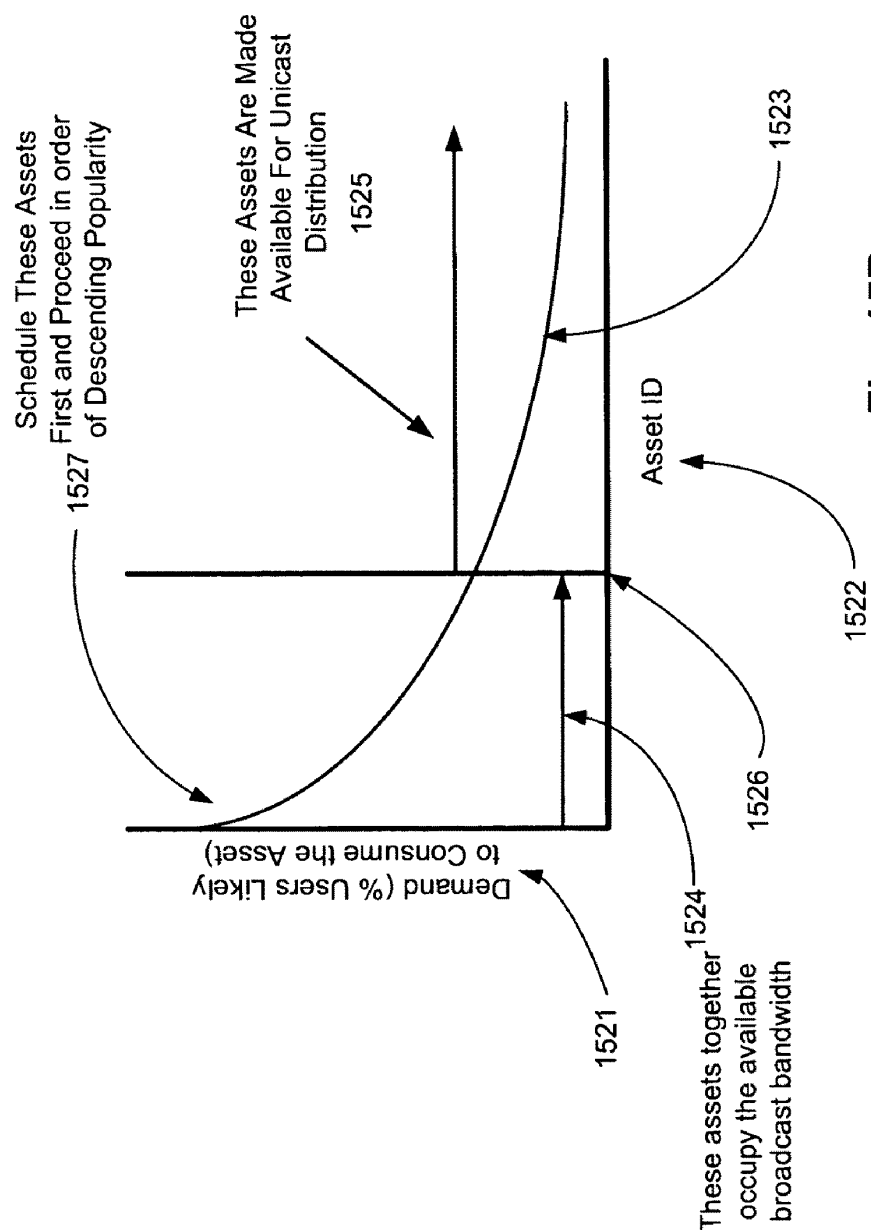
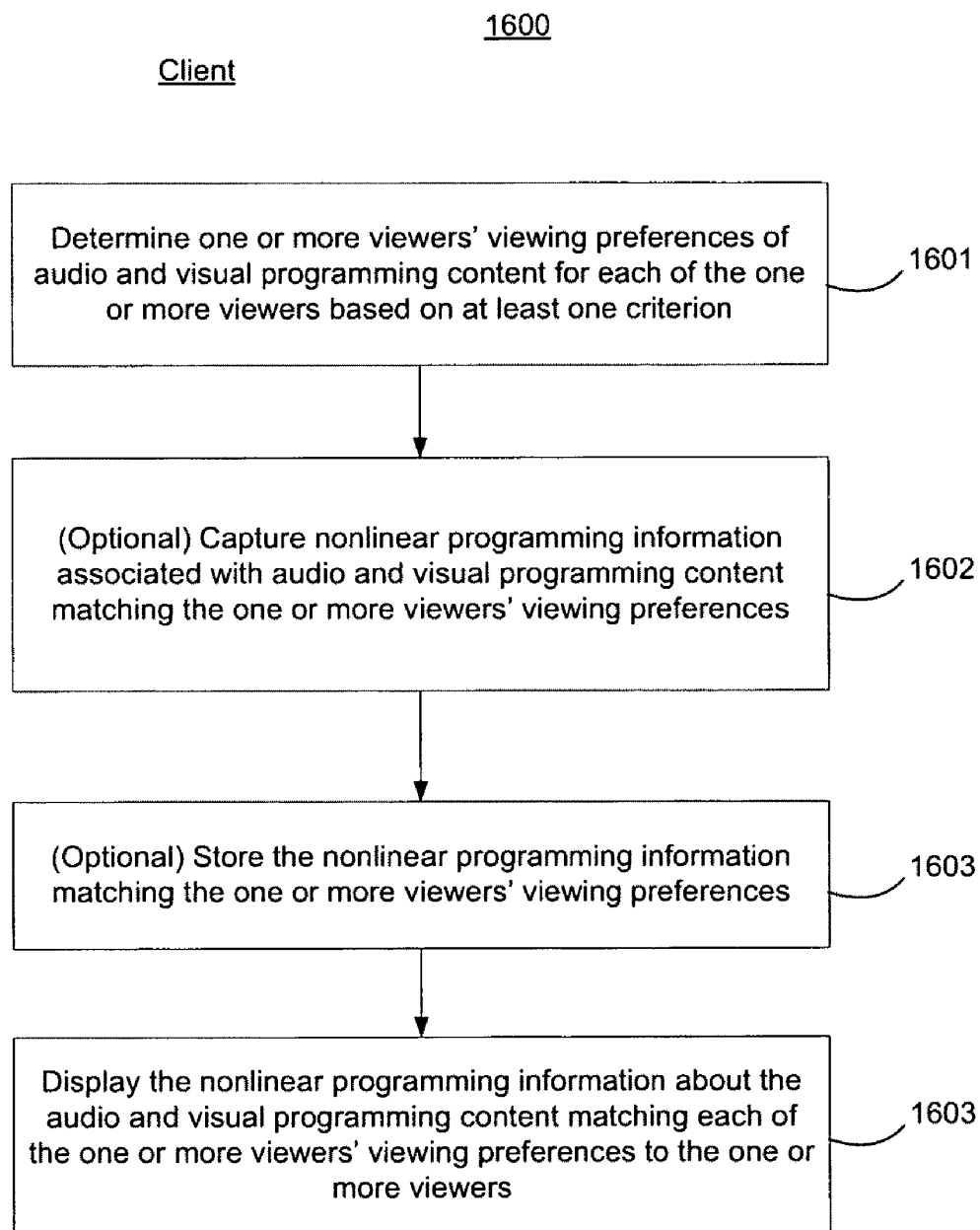


Fig. 15B

**Fig. 16**

Client

1700

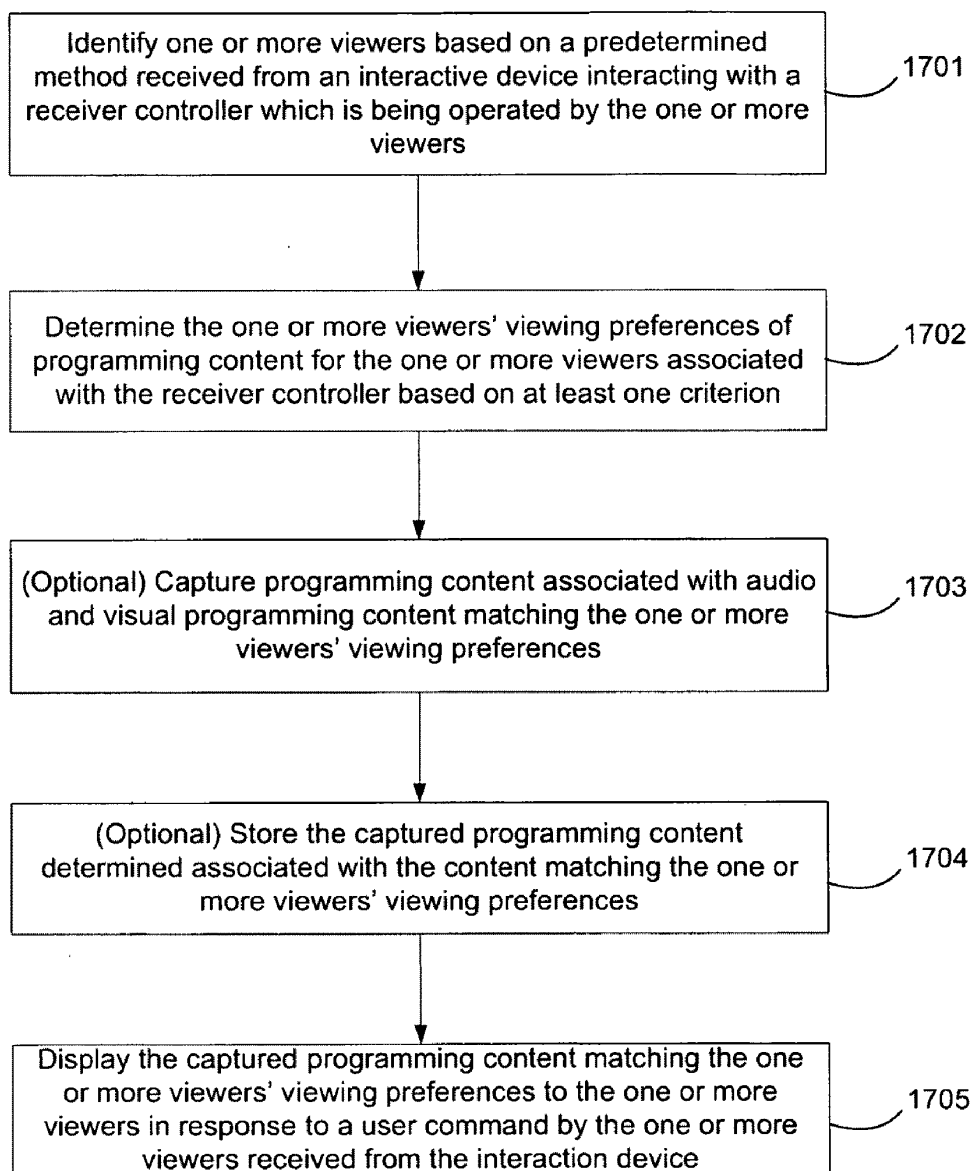


Fig. 17

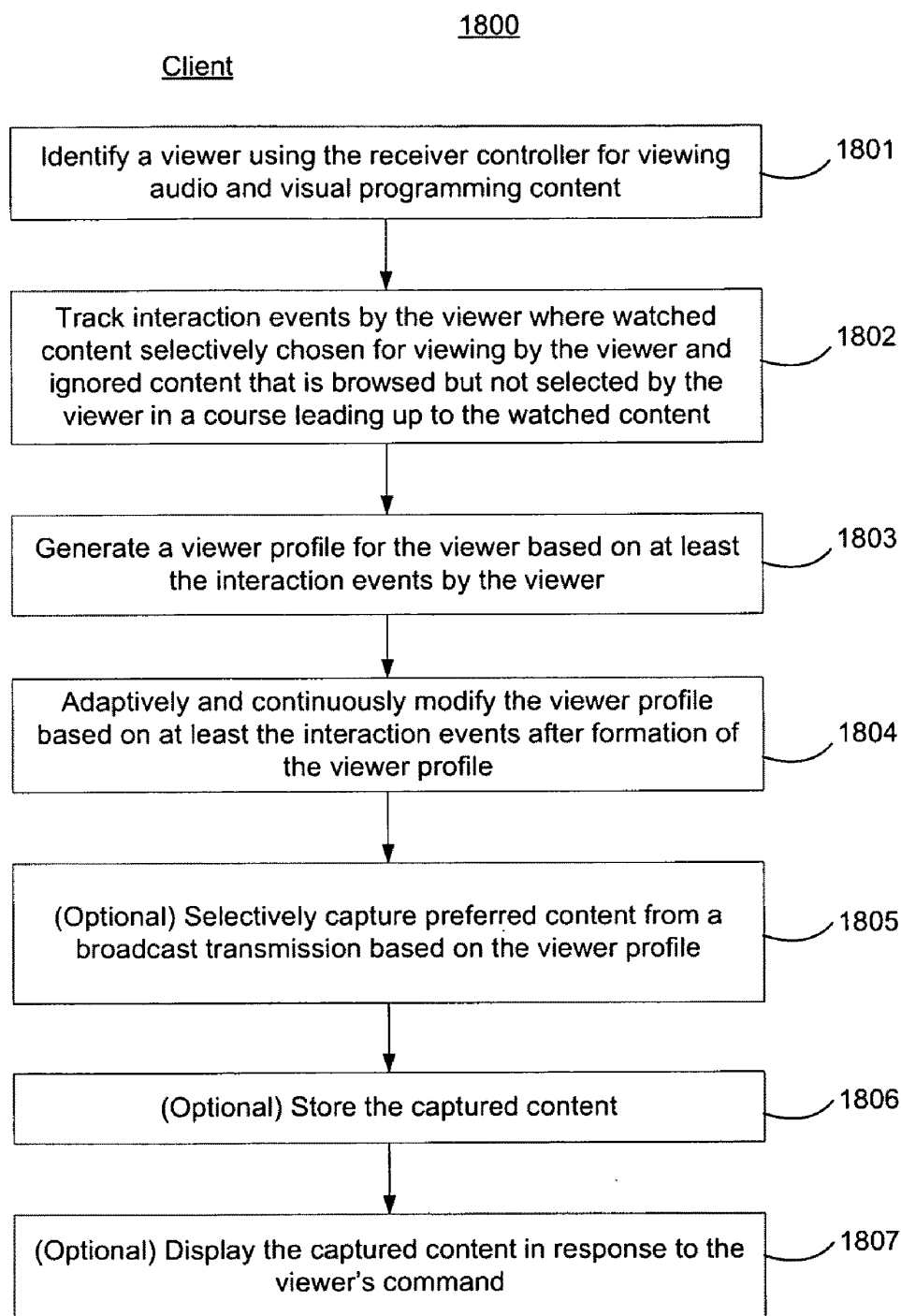


Fig. 18

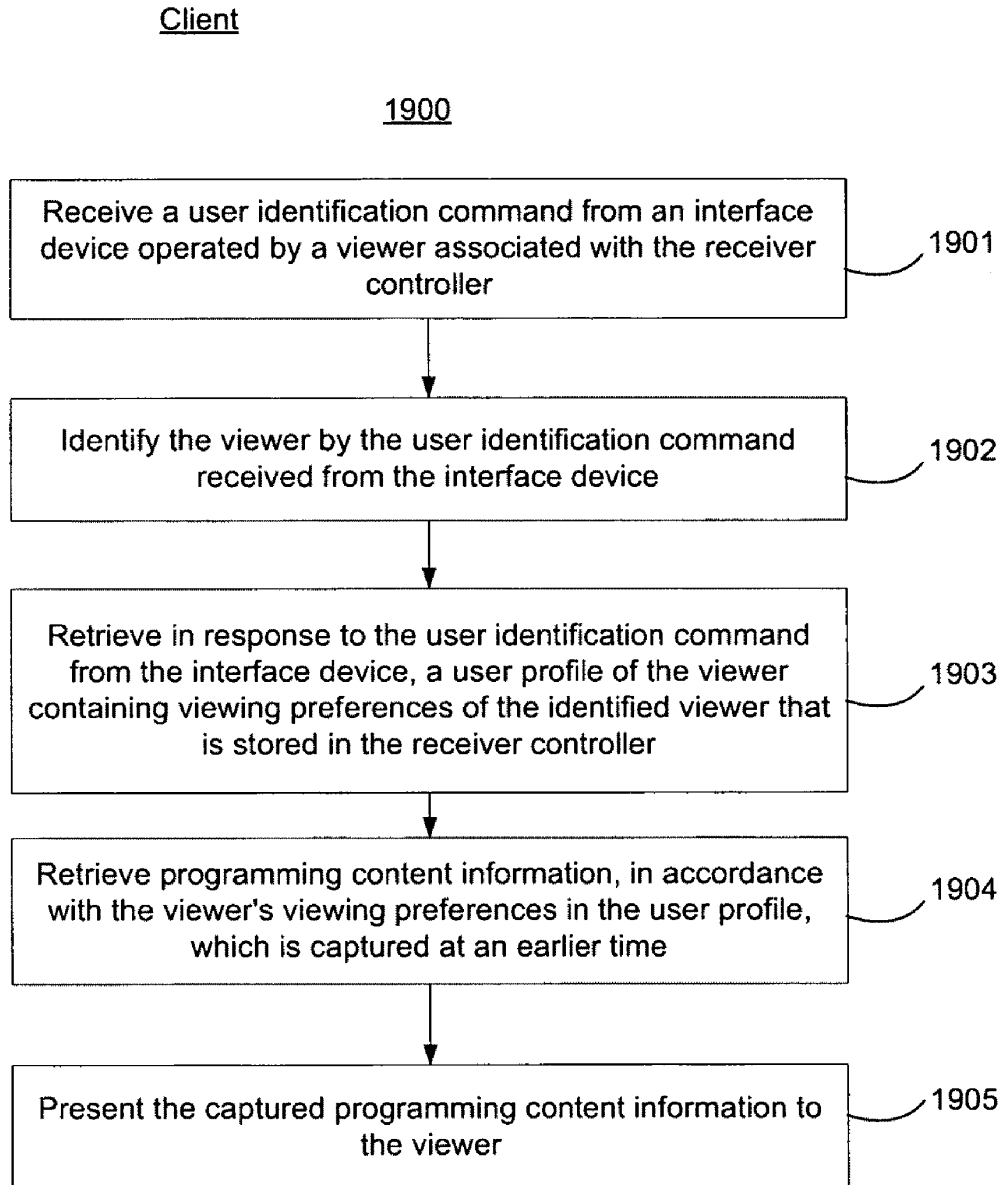


Fig. 19

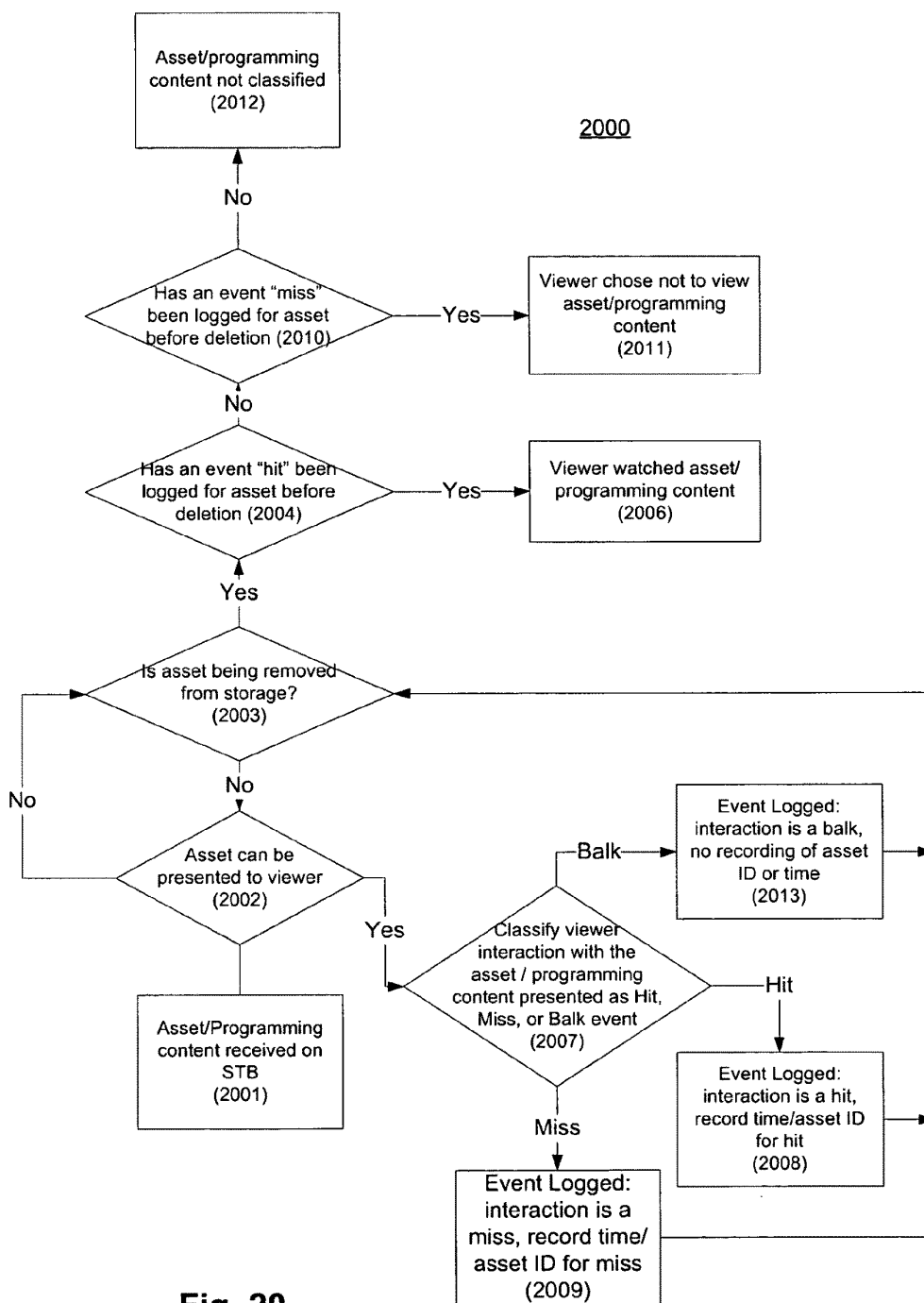


Fig. 20

2100

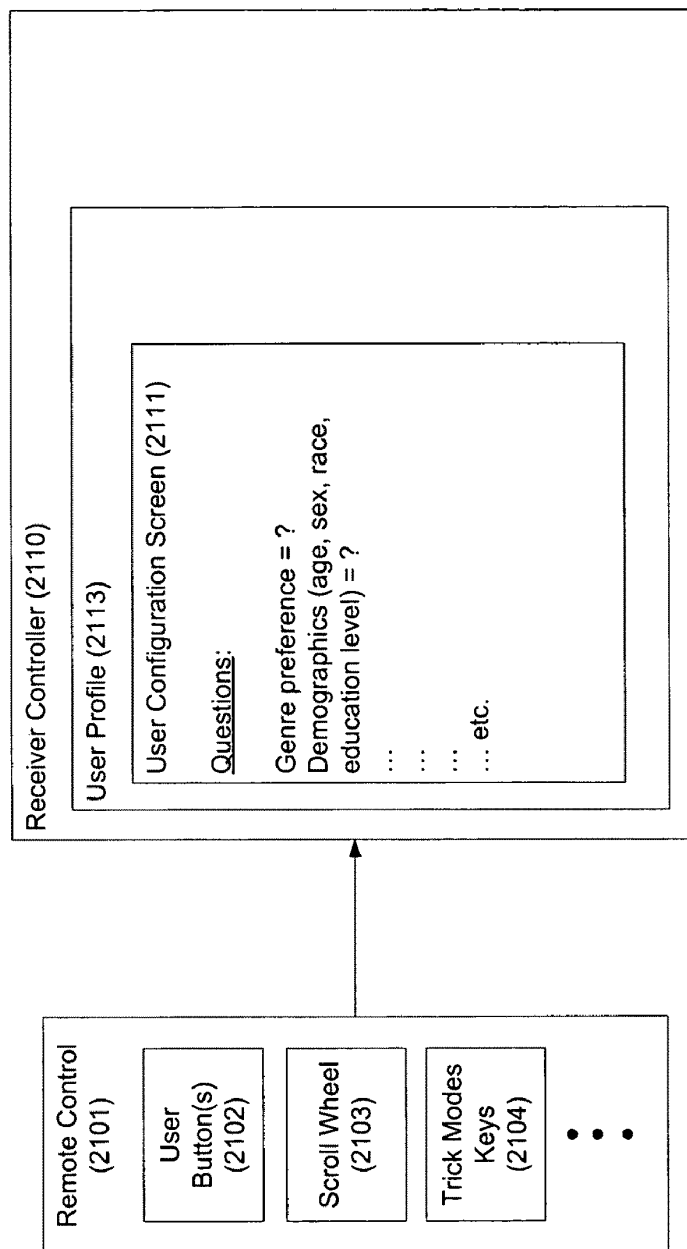


Fig. 21

Client

2200

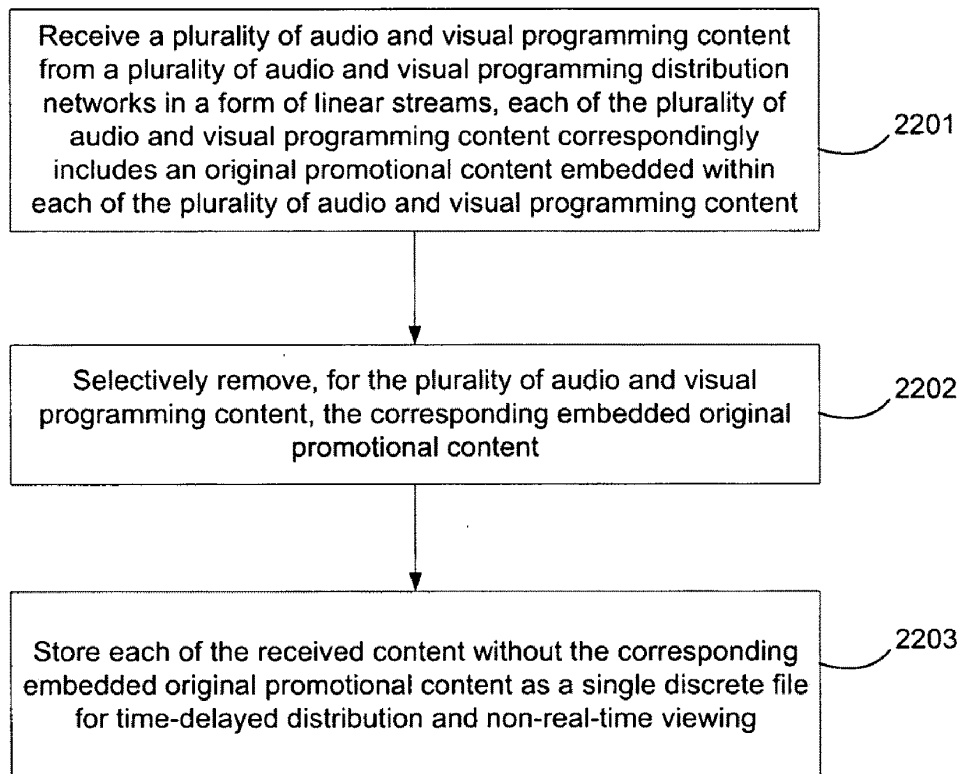


Fig. 22

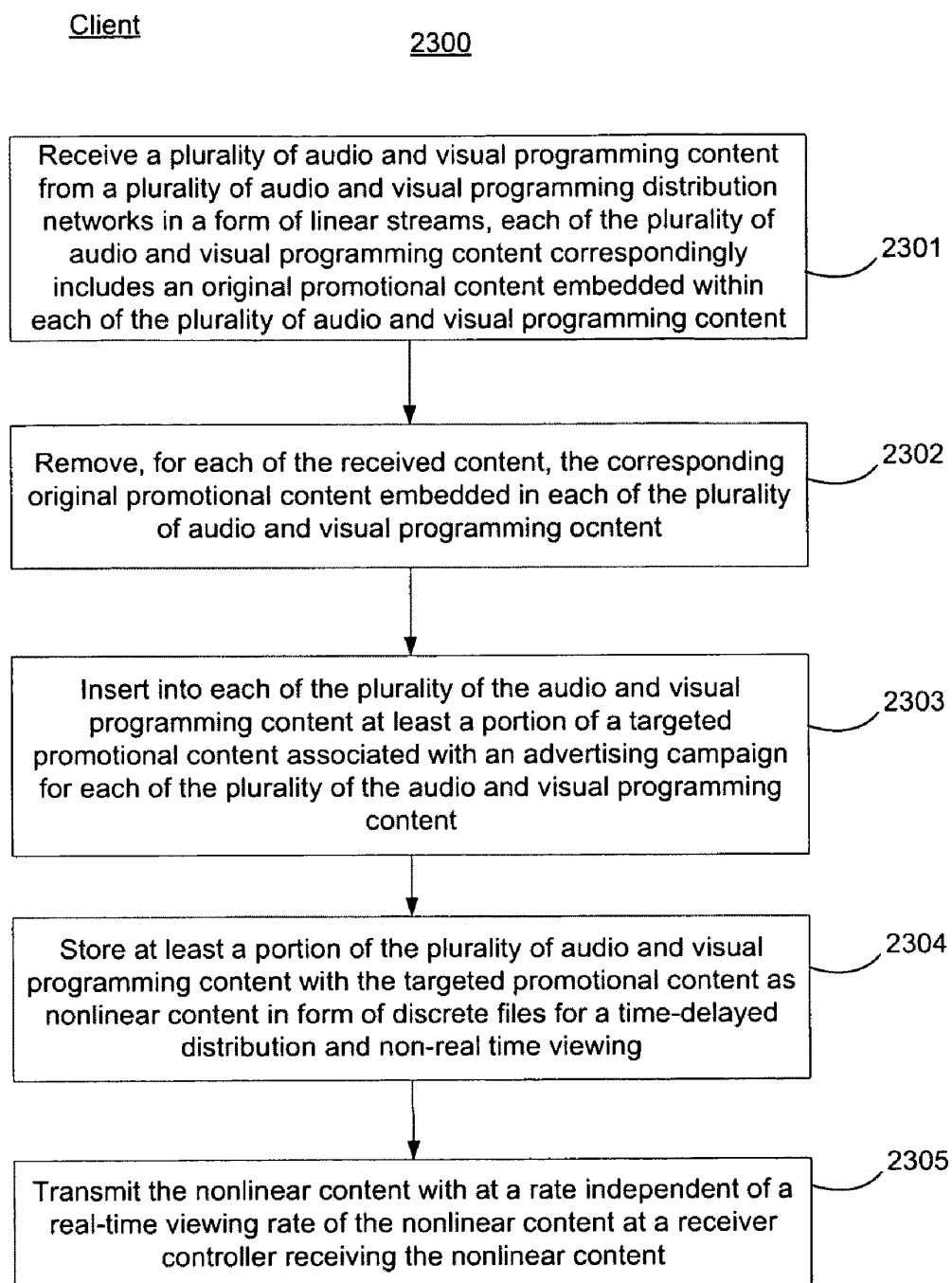


Fig. 23

Client

2400

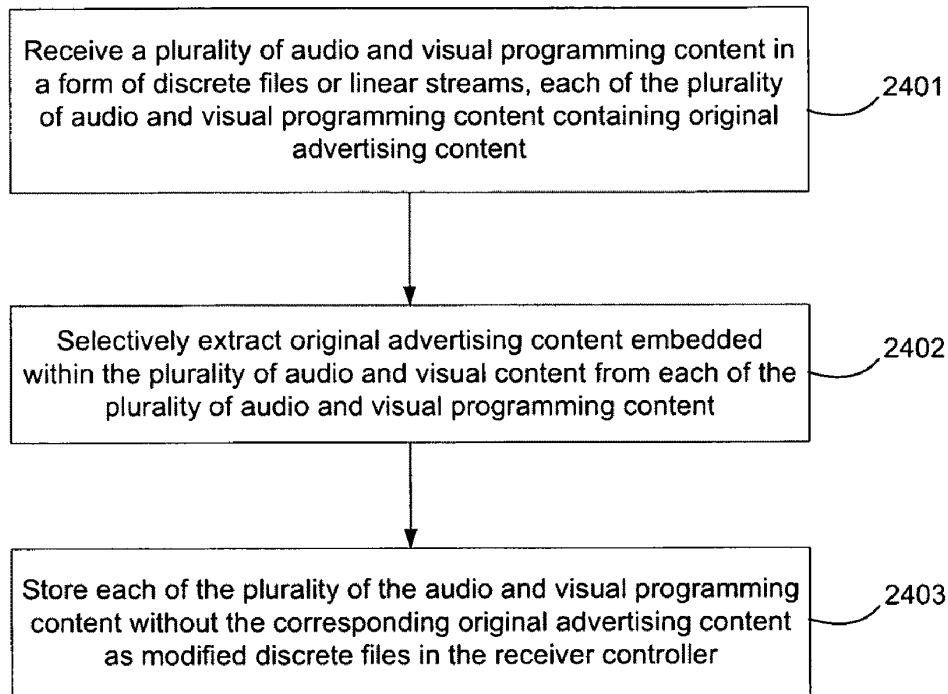


Fig. 24

Client

2500

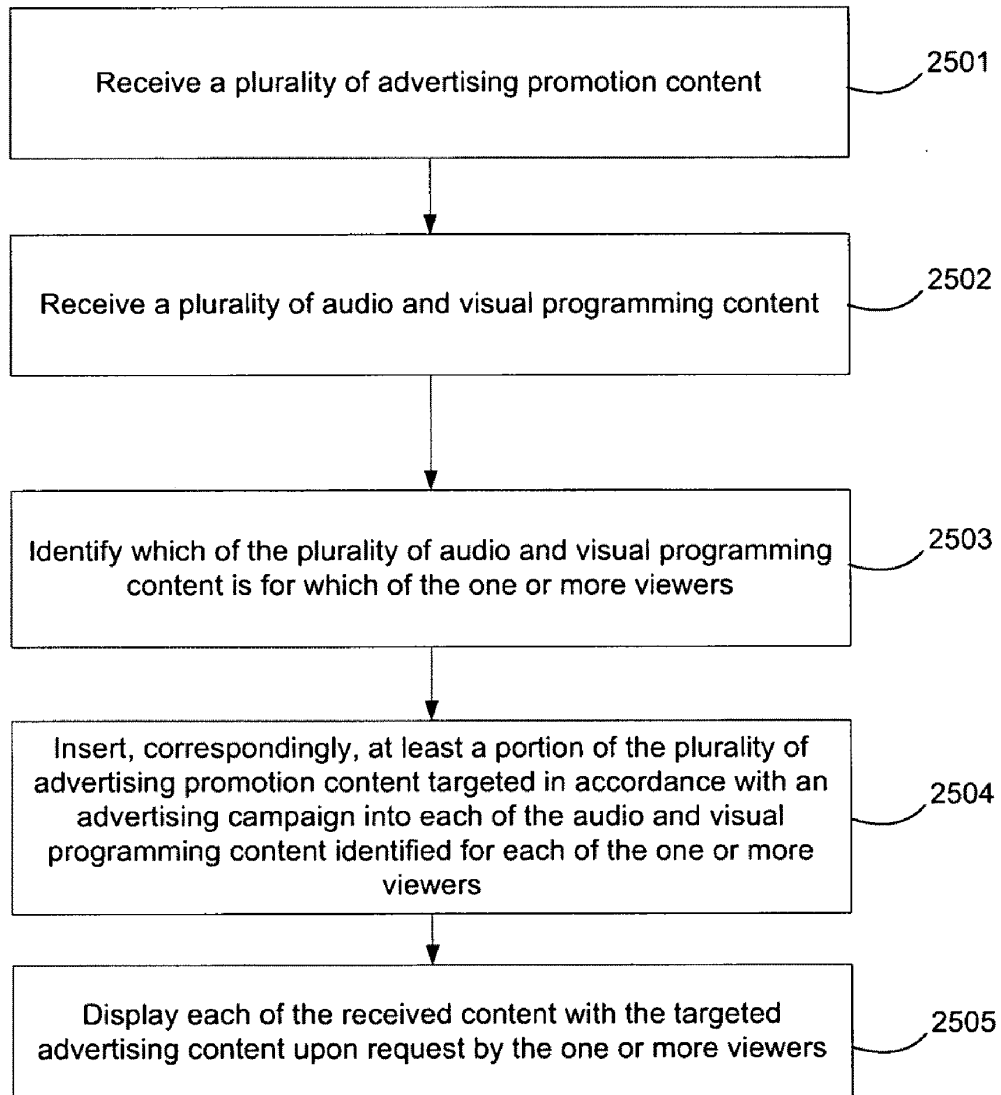


Fig. 25

Client

2600

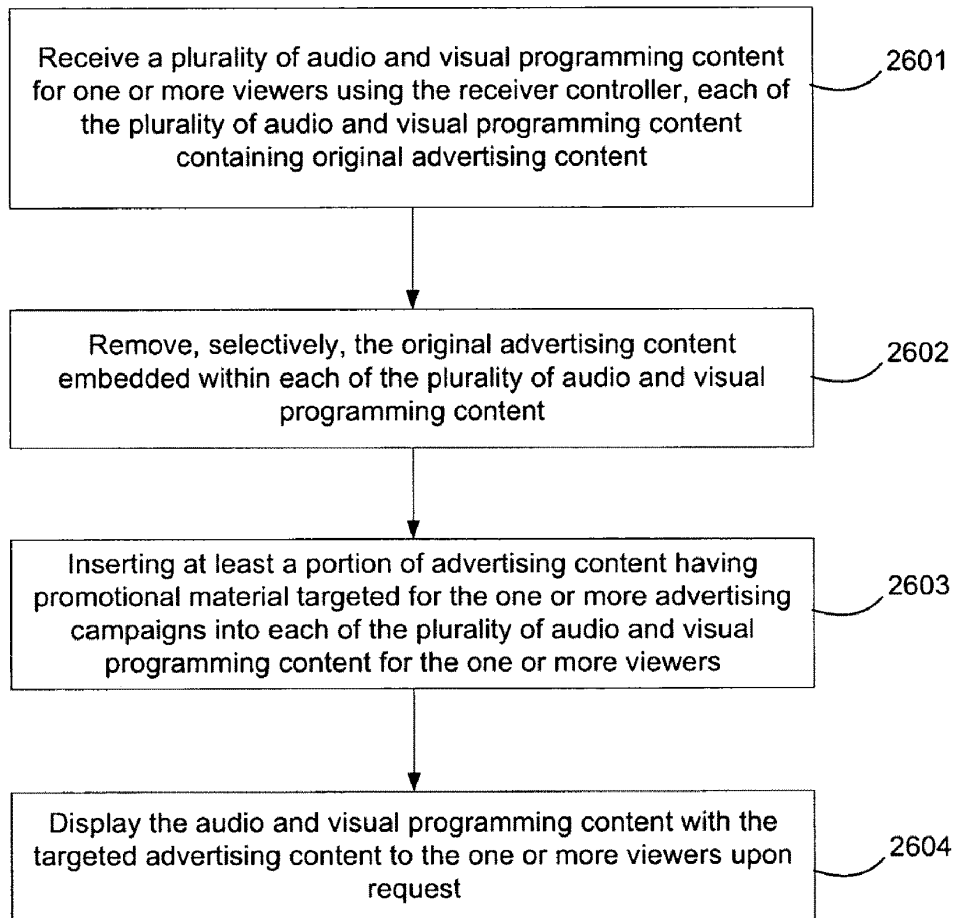


Fig. 26

2700

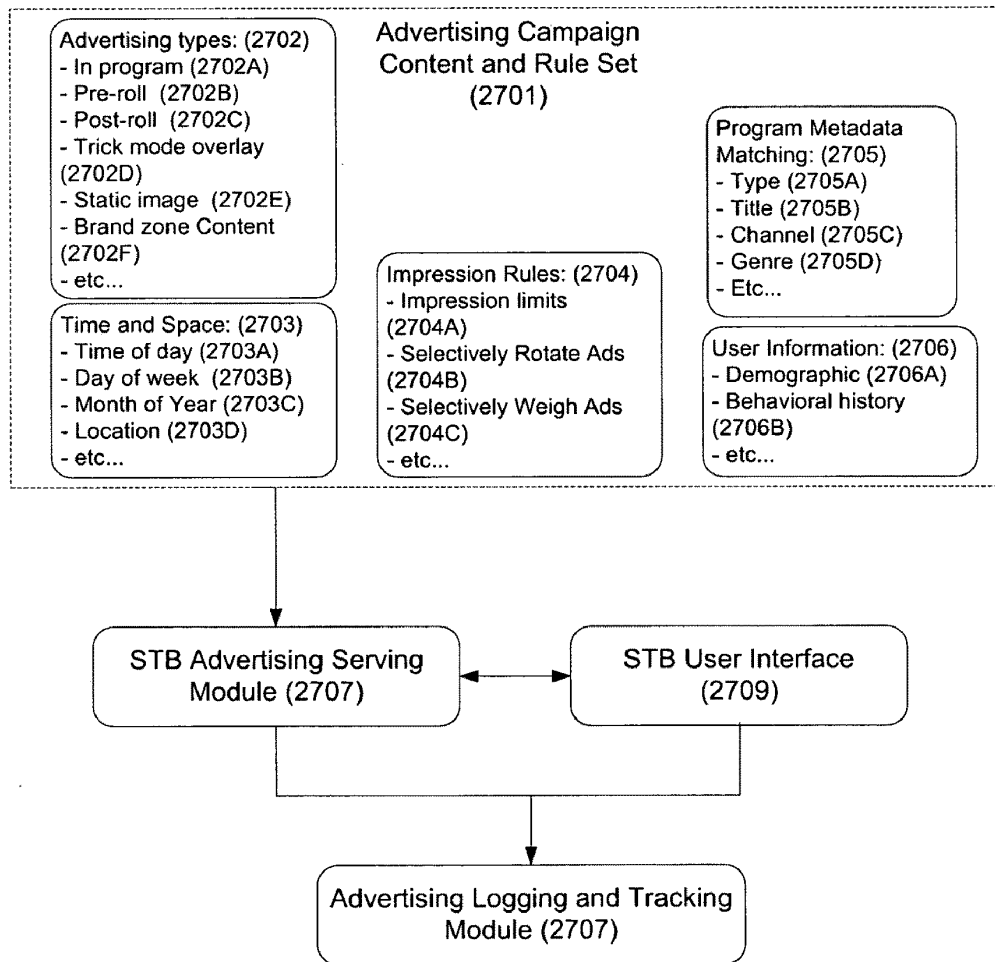


Fig. 27

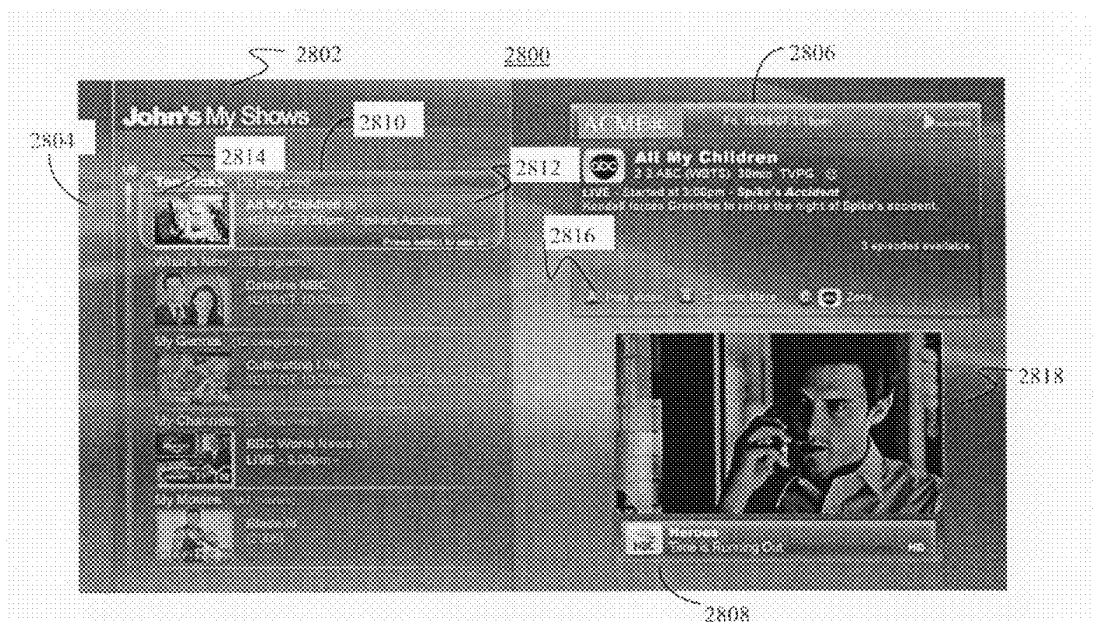


FIGURE 28

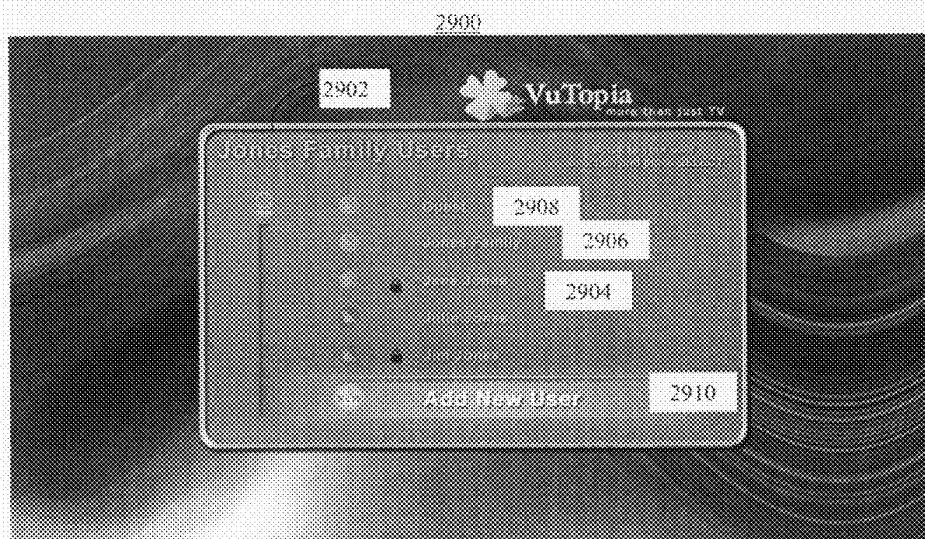


FIGURE 29

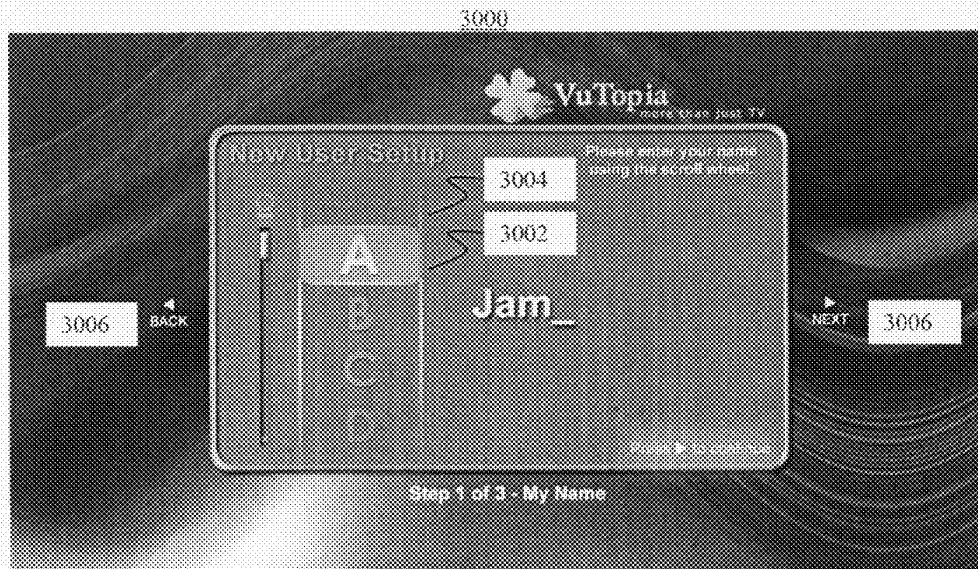


FIGURE 30A

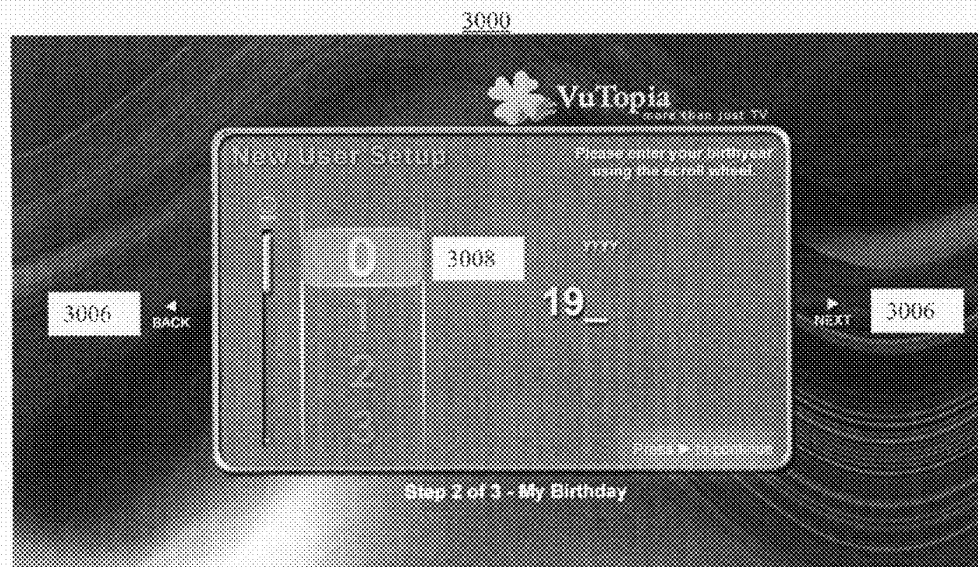


FIGURE 30B

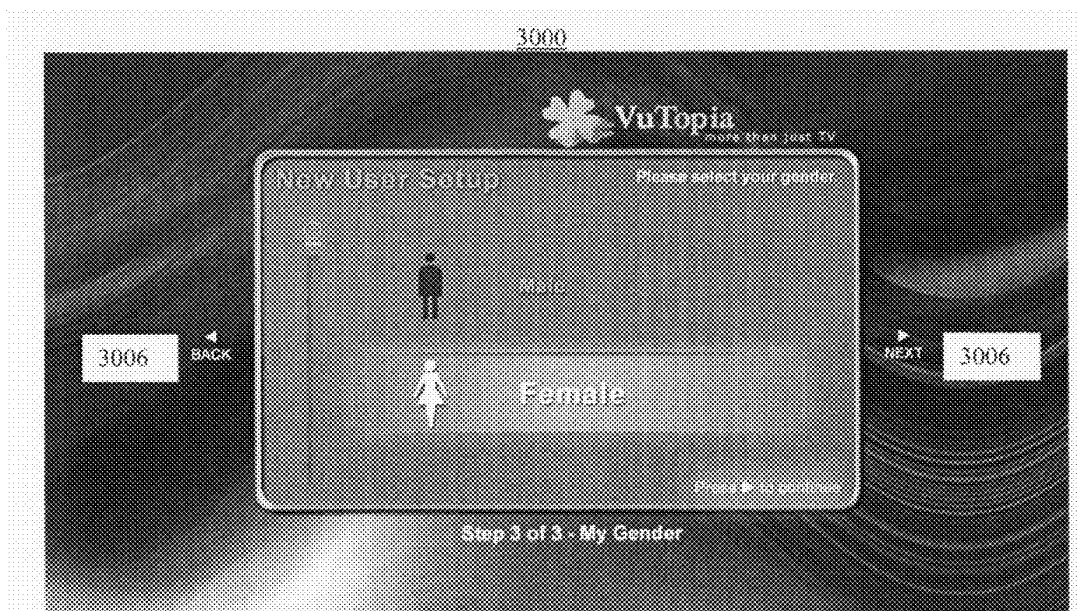


FIGURE 30C

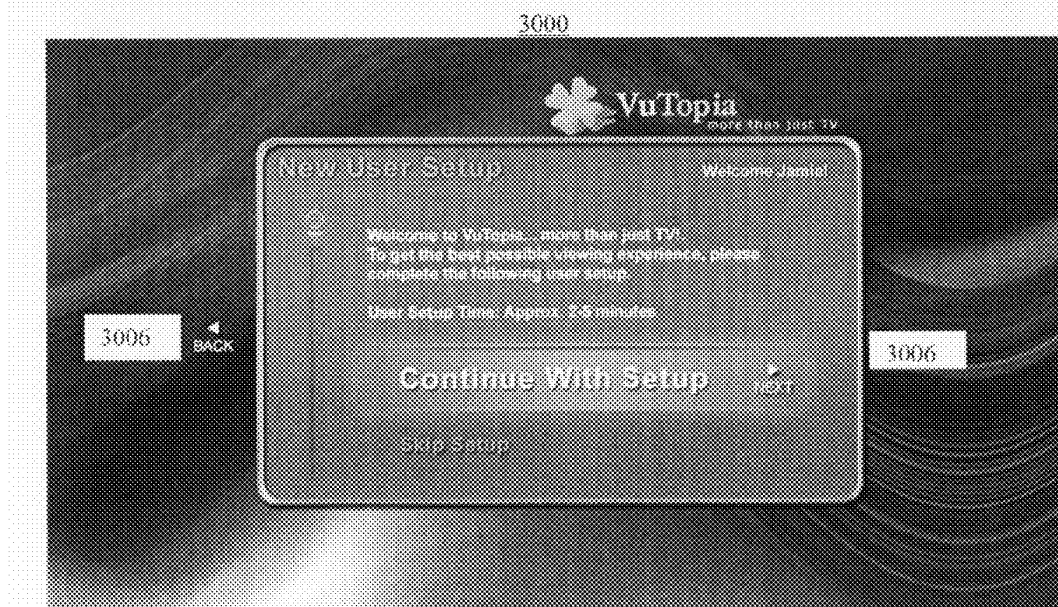
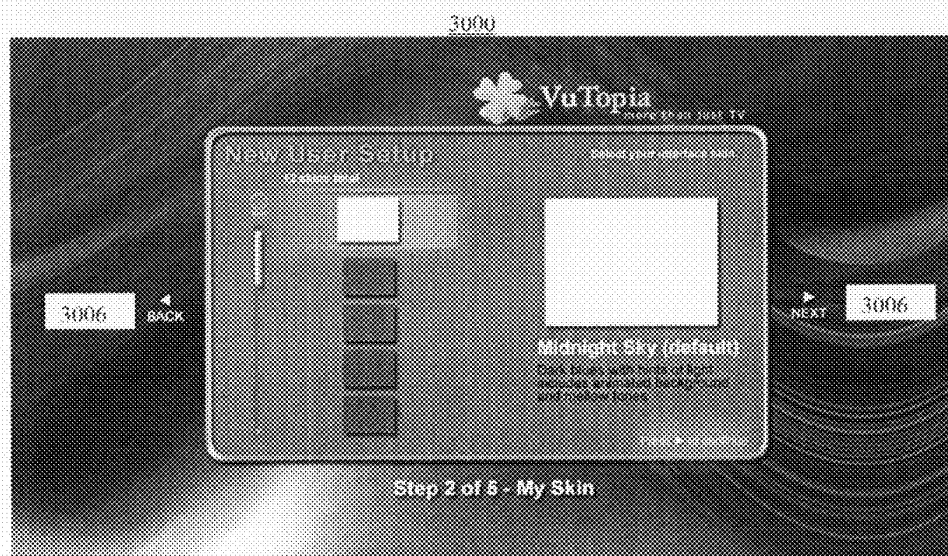
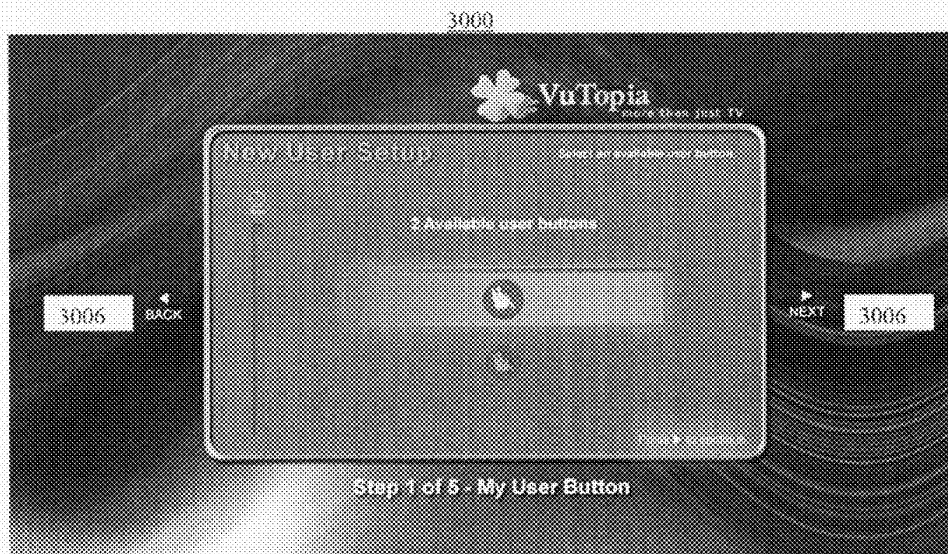


FIGURE 30D



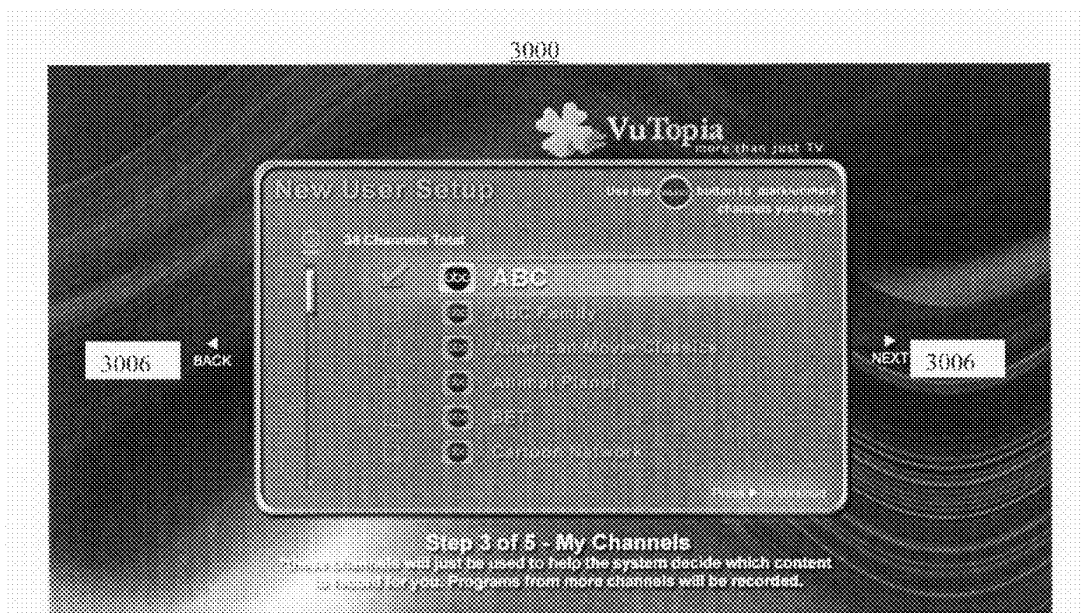


FIGURE 30G

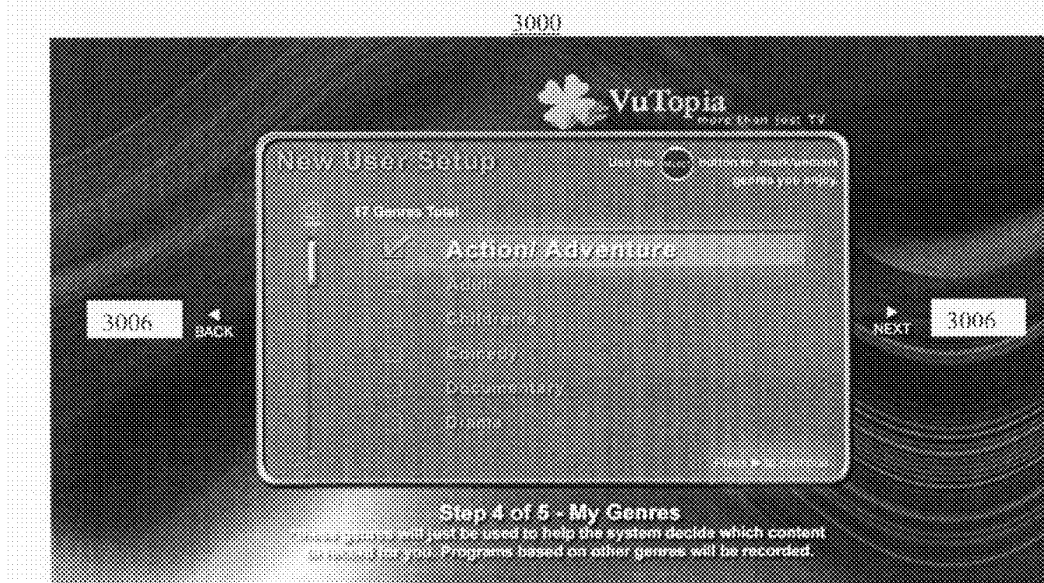


FIGURE 30H

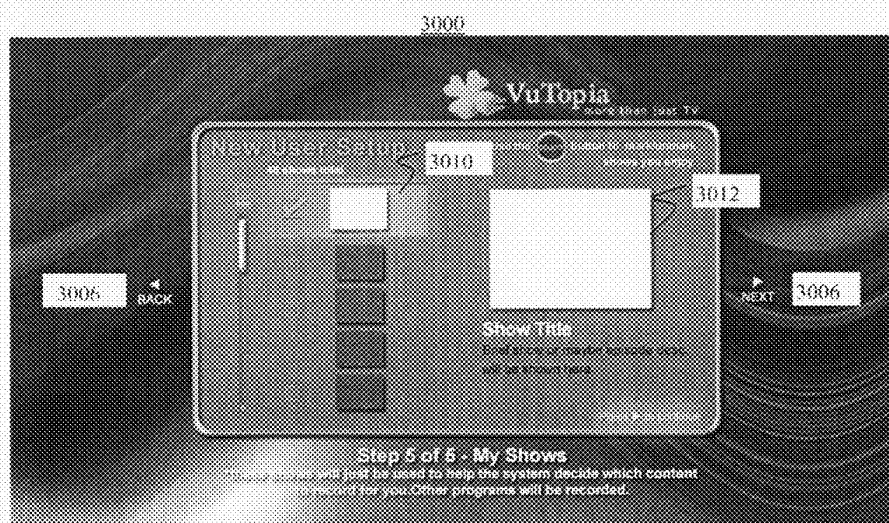
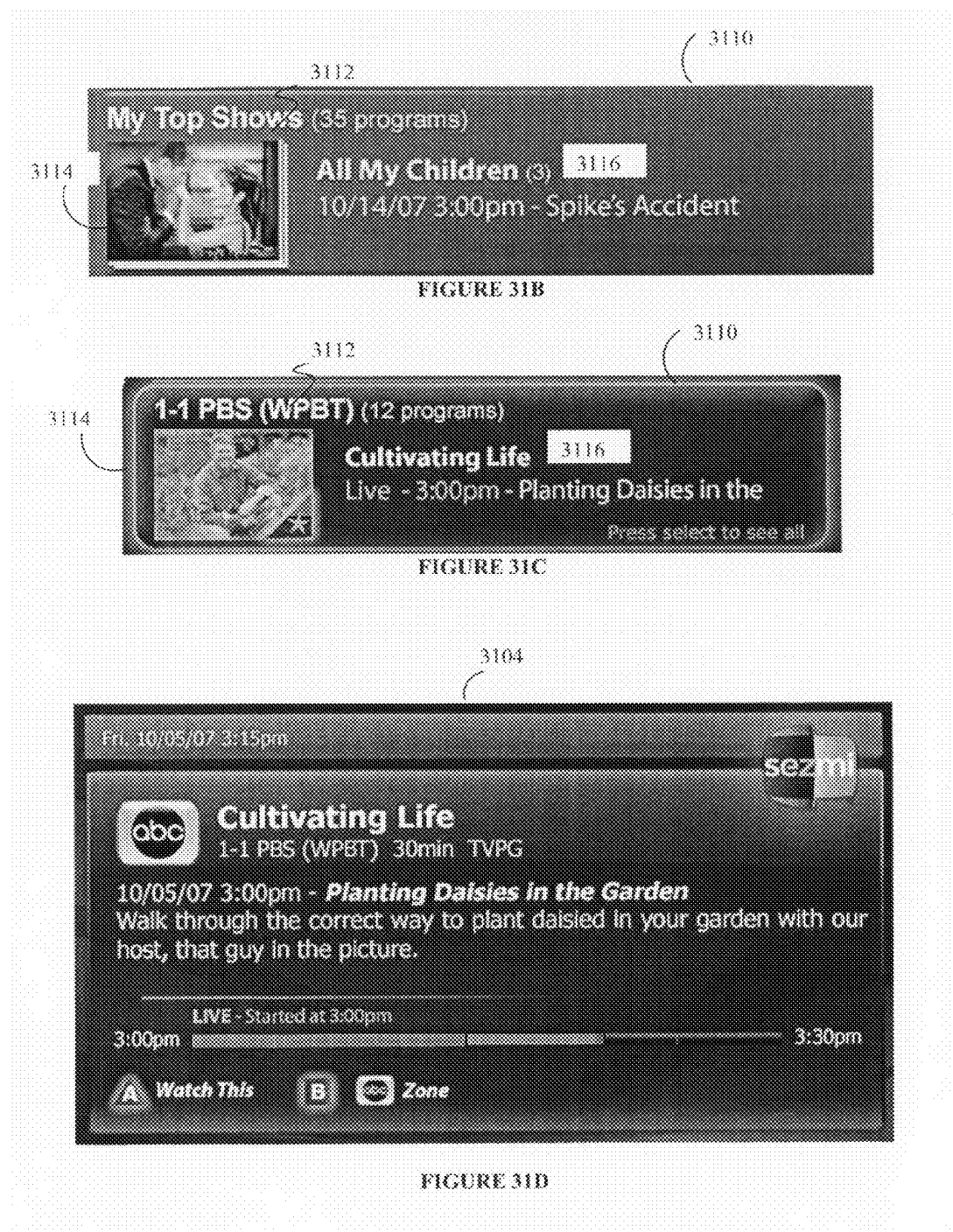


FIGURE 301



FIGURE 31A



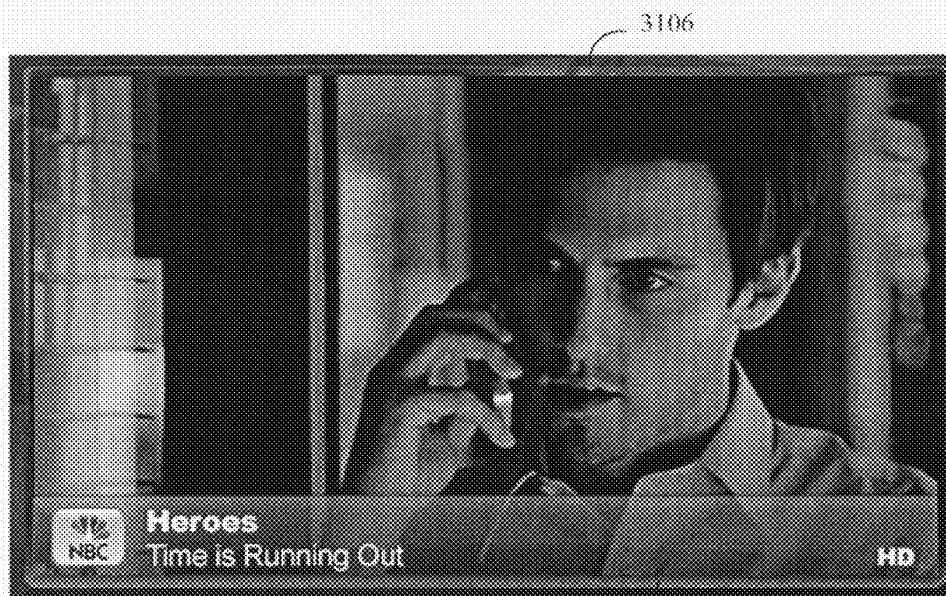


FIGURE 31E

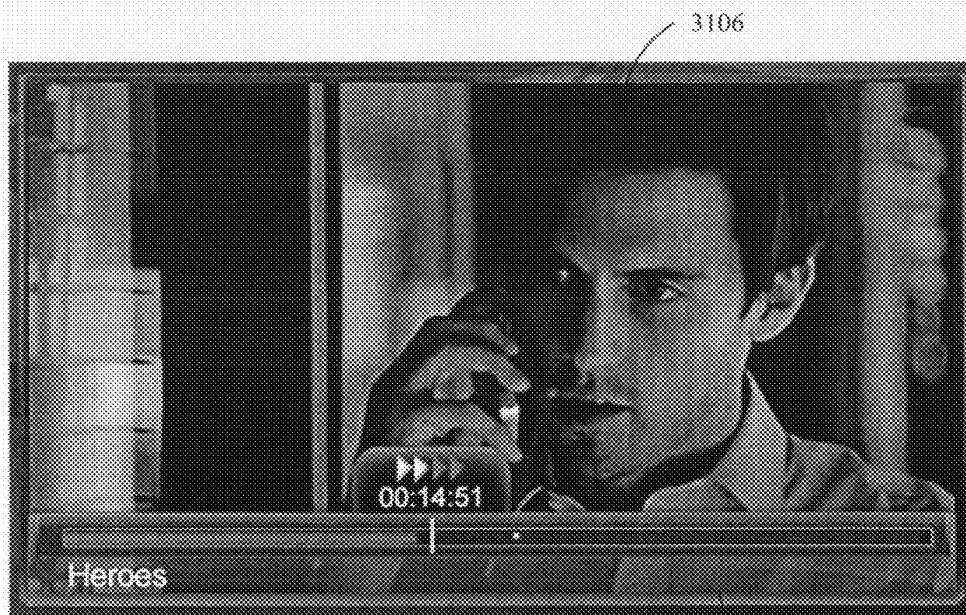


FIGURE 31F



FIGURE 32

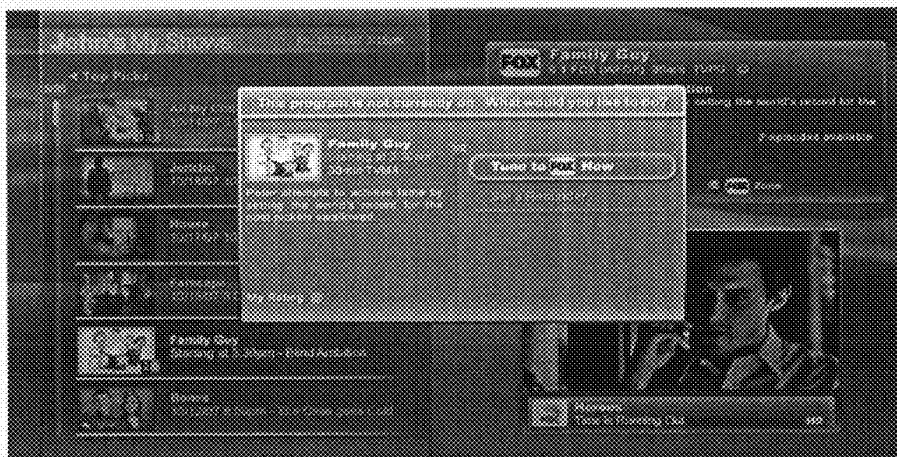


FIGURE 32A

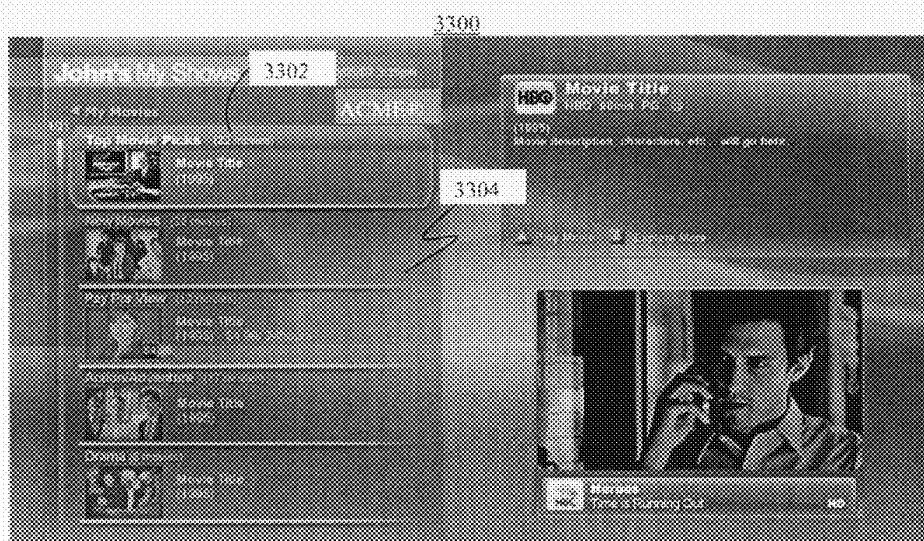


FIGURE 33

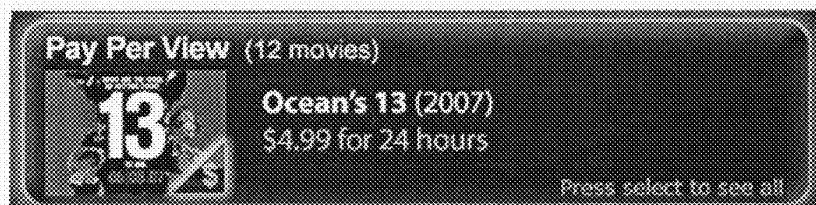


FIGURE 33A



FIGURE 34A



FIGURE 34B



FIGURE 35

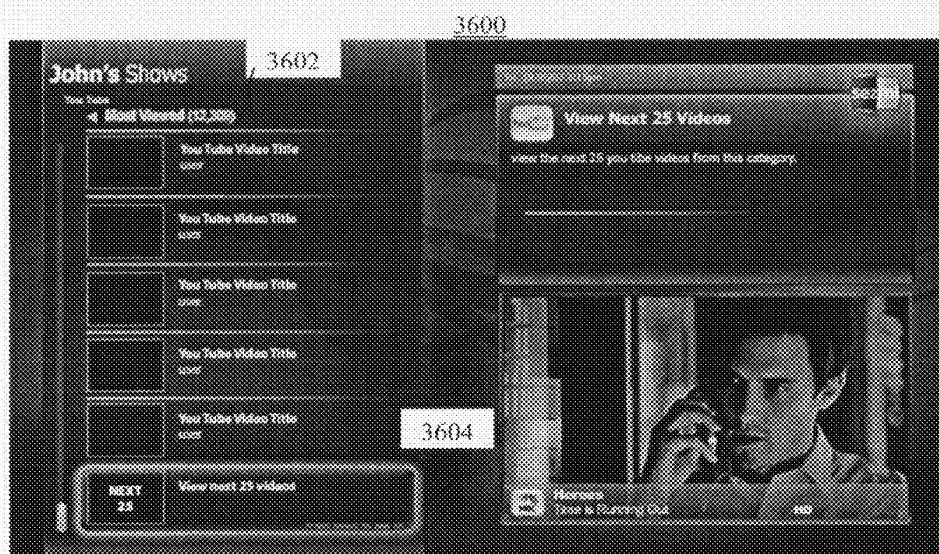


FIGURE 36A



FIGURE 36B

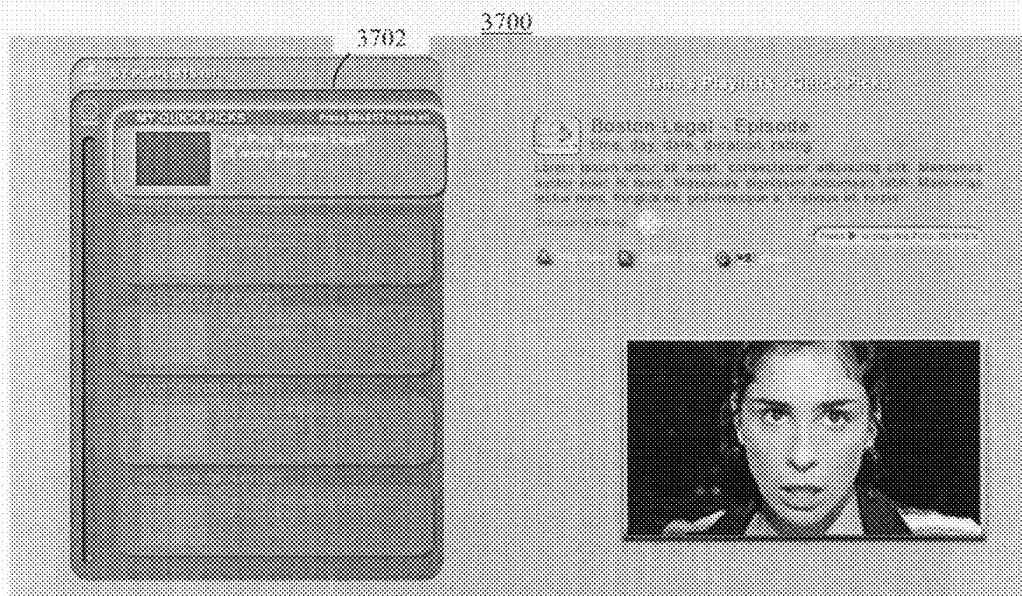


FIGURE 37

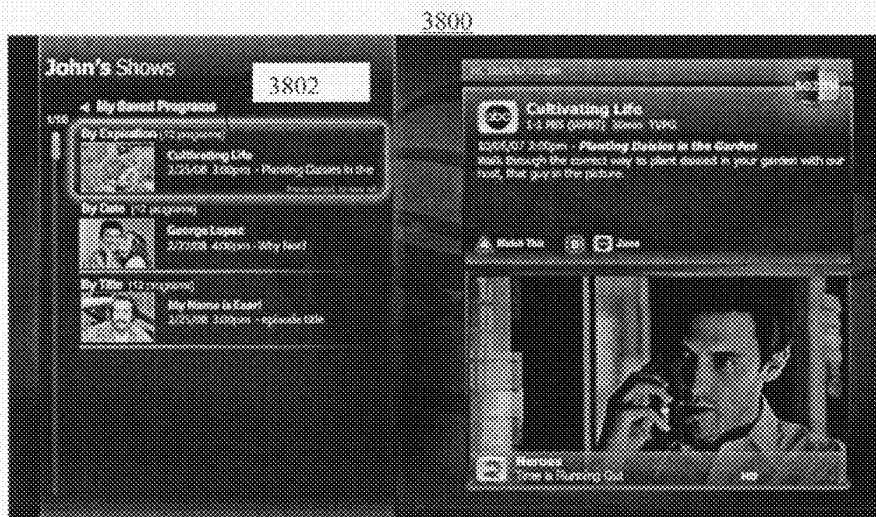


FIGURE 38

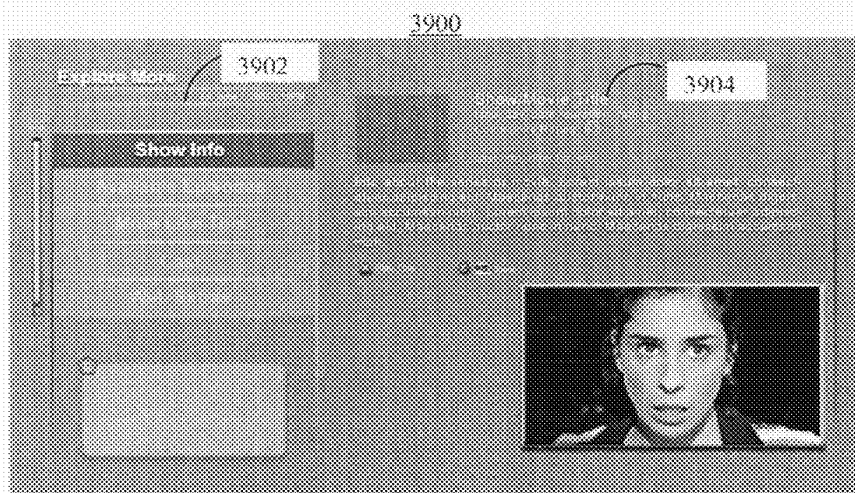


FIGURE 39A

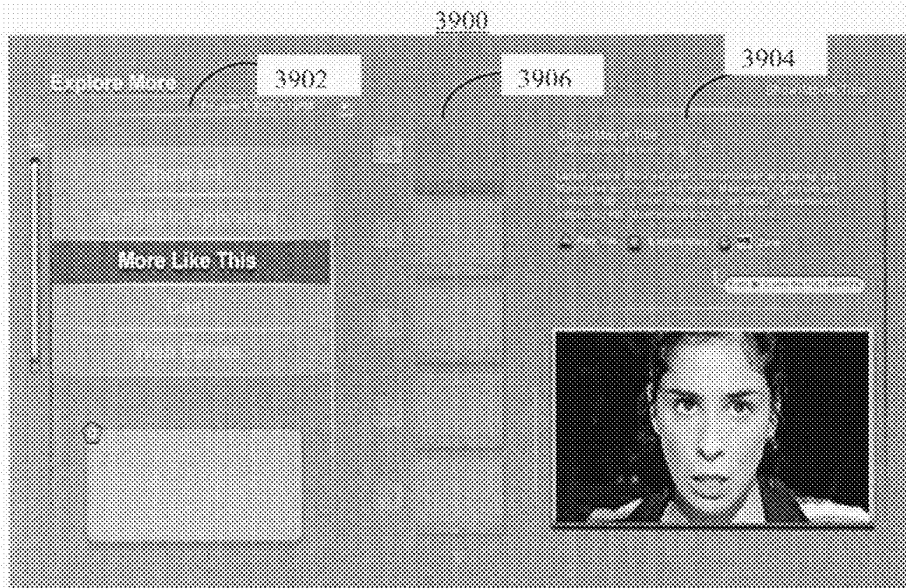


FIGURE 39B

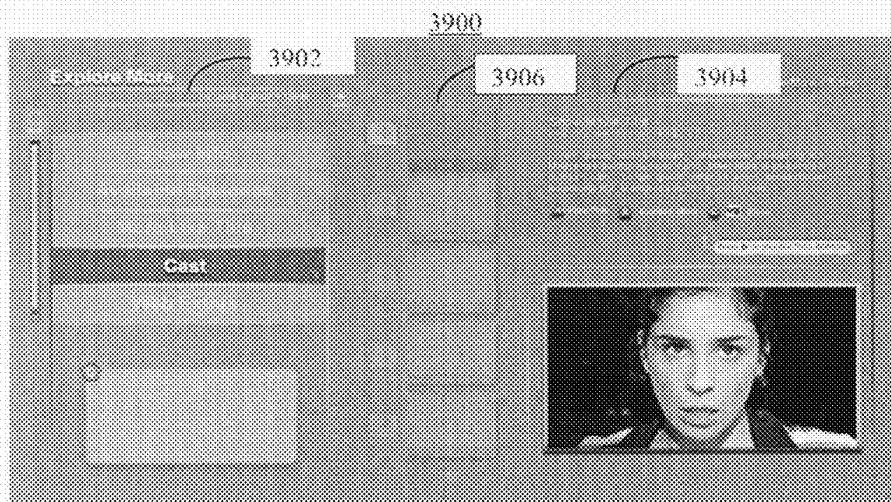


FIGURE 39C

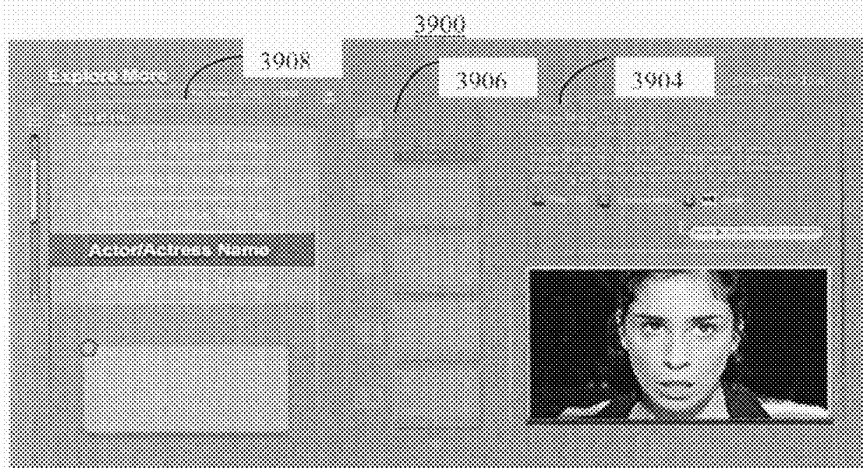


FIGURE 39D

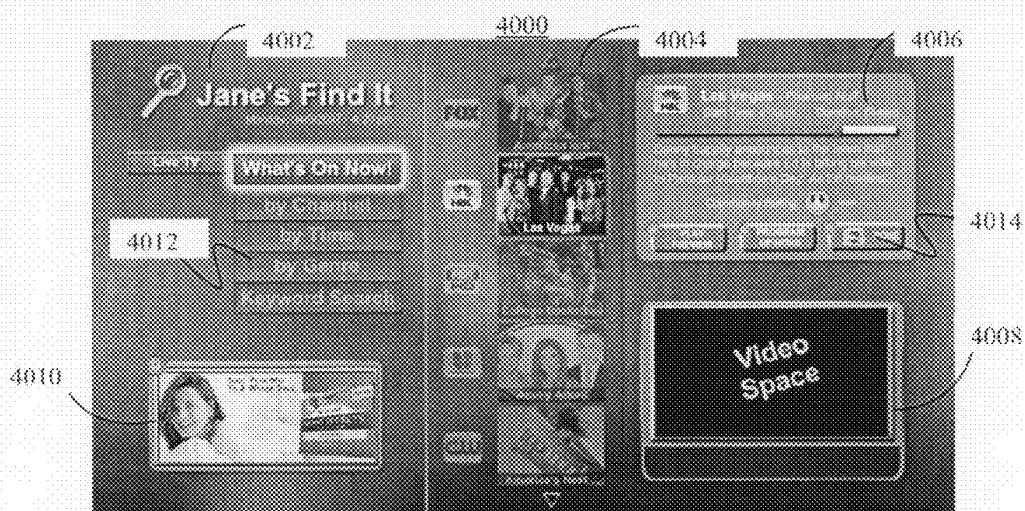


FIGURE 40

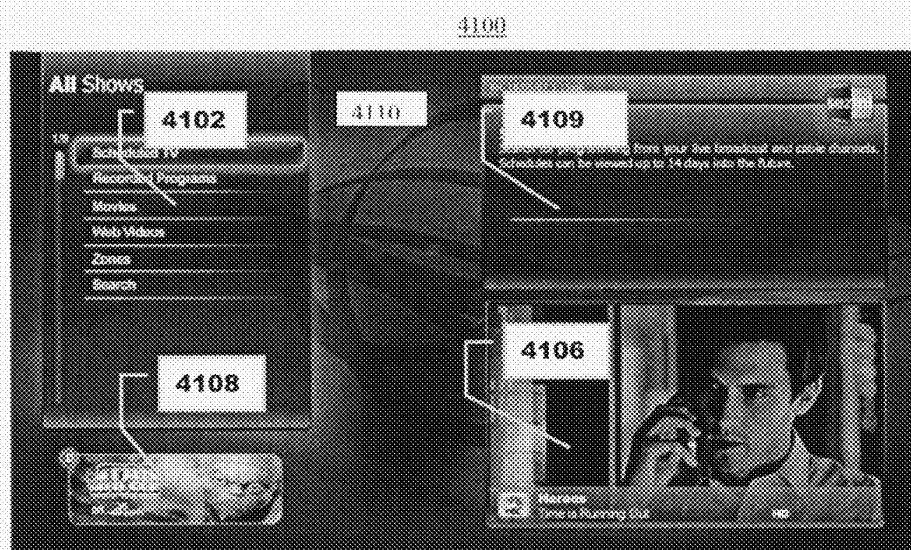


FIGURE 41



FIGURE 42A

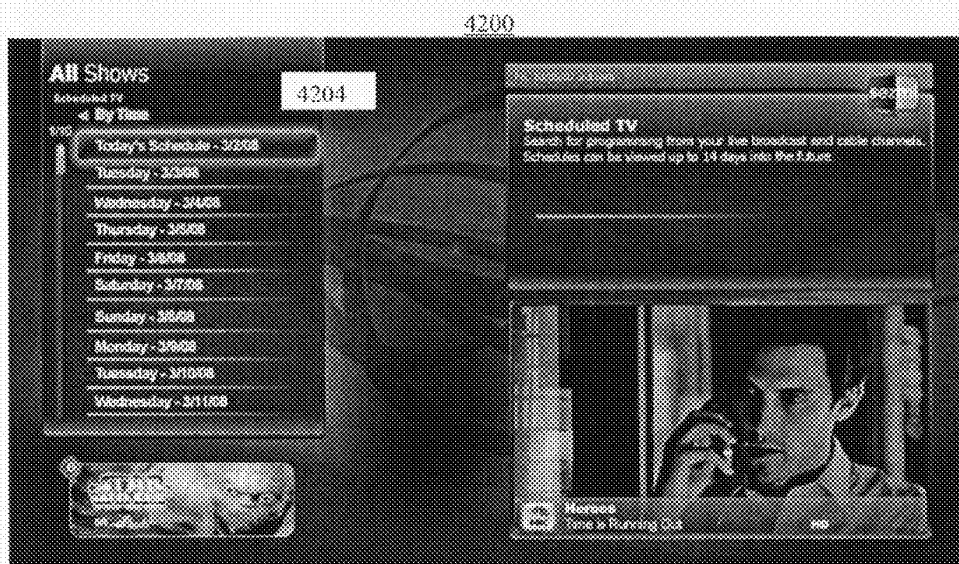


FIGURE 42B



FIGURE 42C



FIGURE 42D



FIGURE 42E

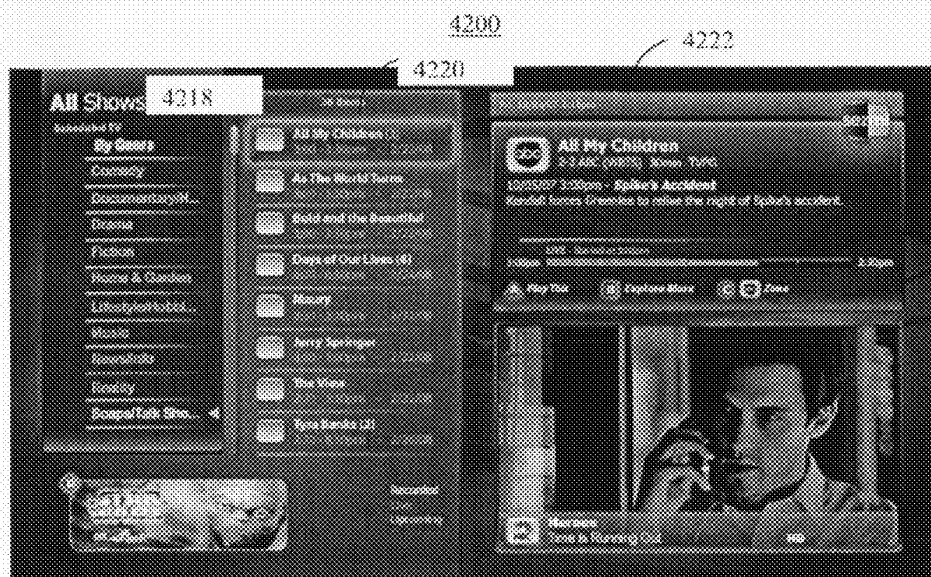


FIGURE 42F

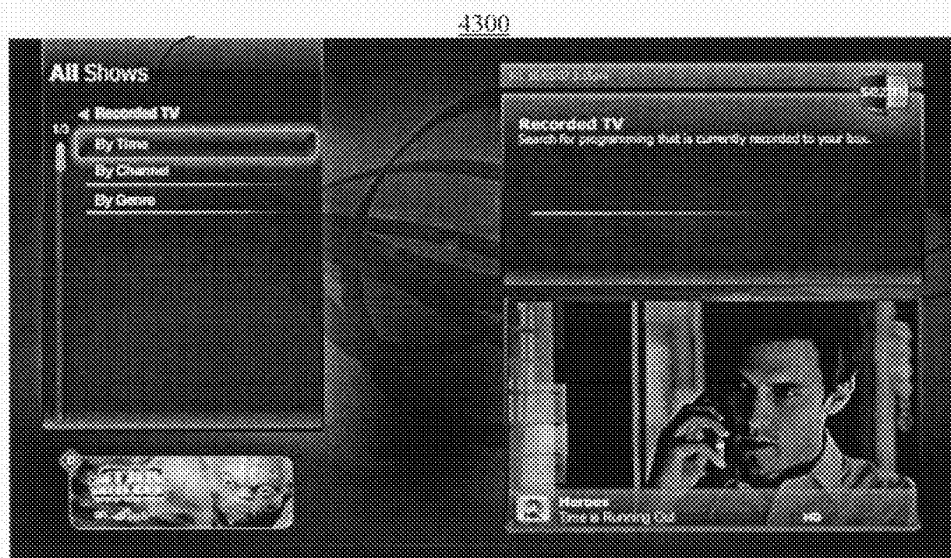


FIGURE 43

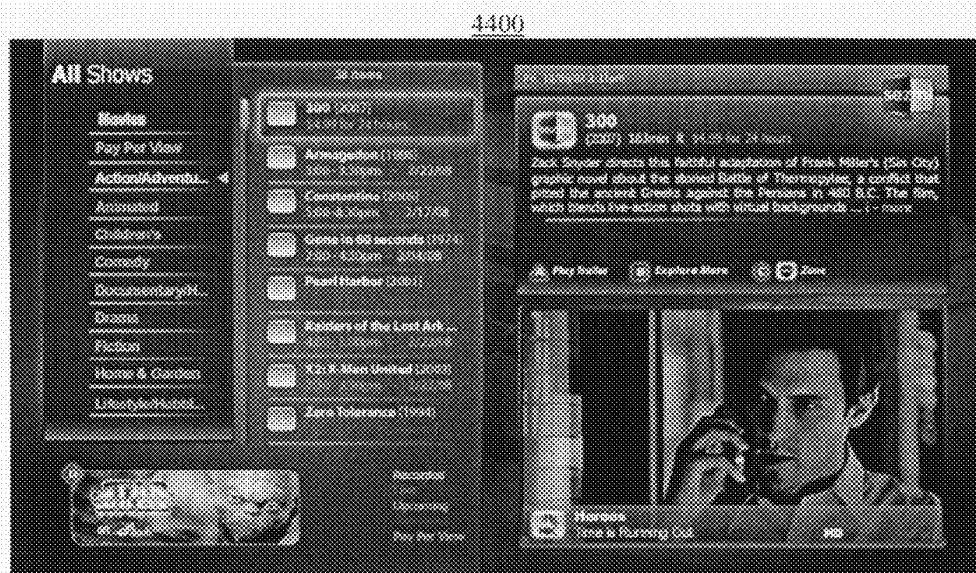


FIGURE 44



FIGURE 45

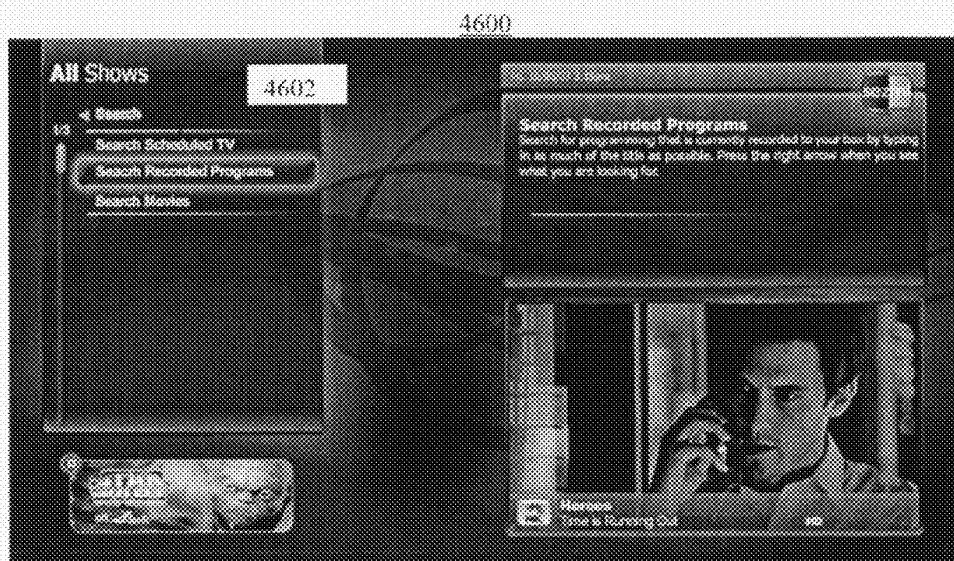


FIGURE 46A



FIGURE 46B

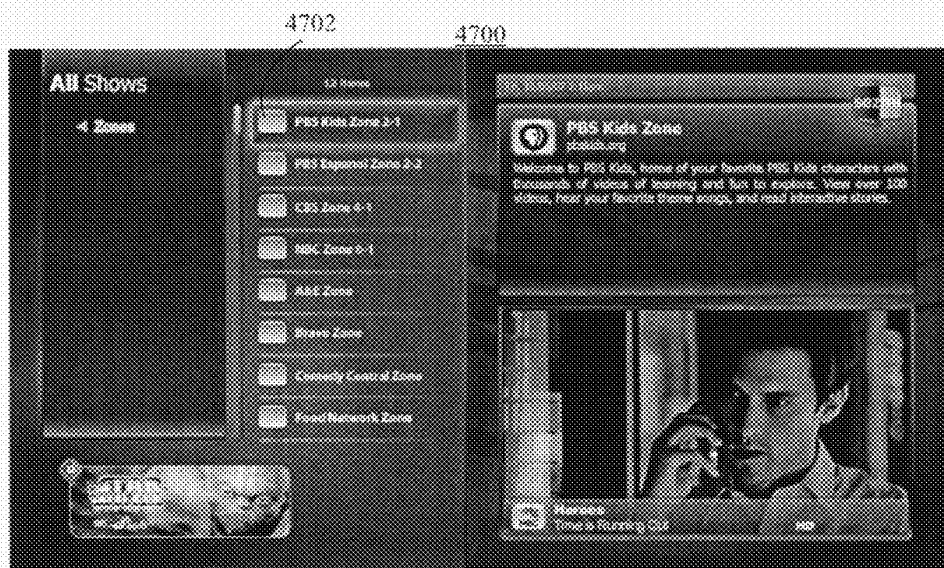


FIGURE 47

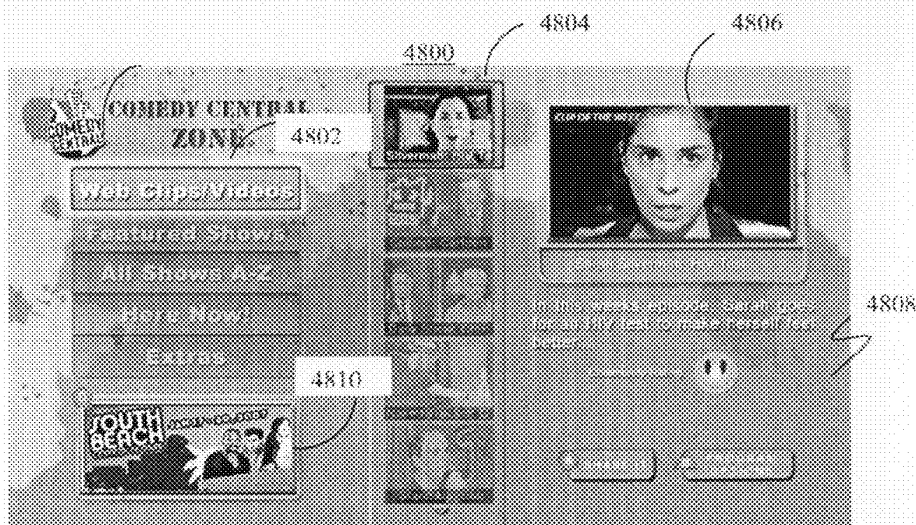


FIGURE 48



FIGURE 49

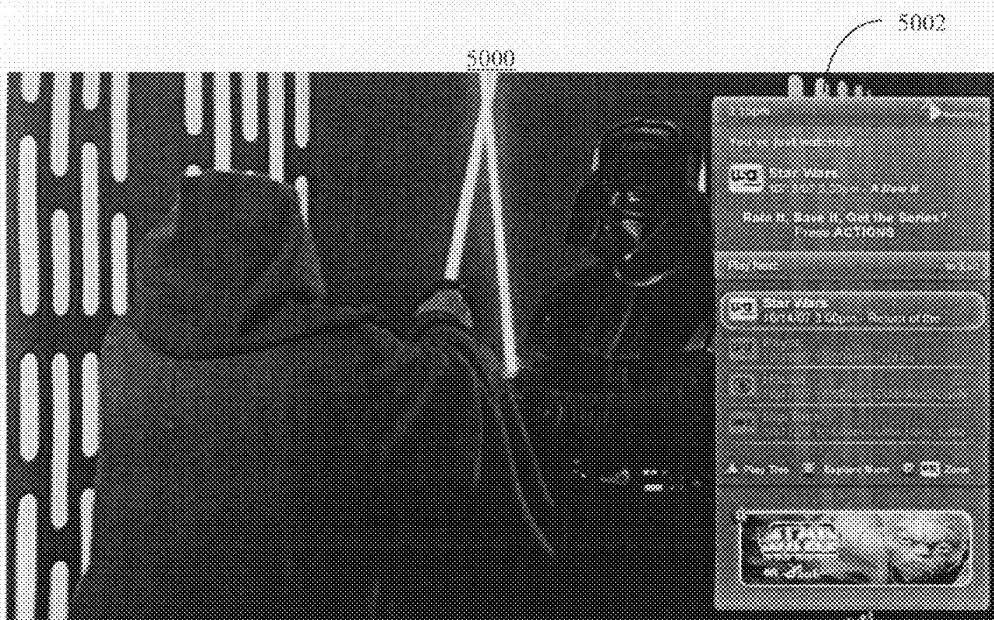


FIGURE 50



FIGURE 51A

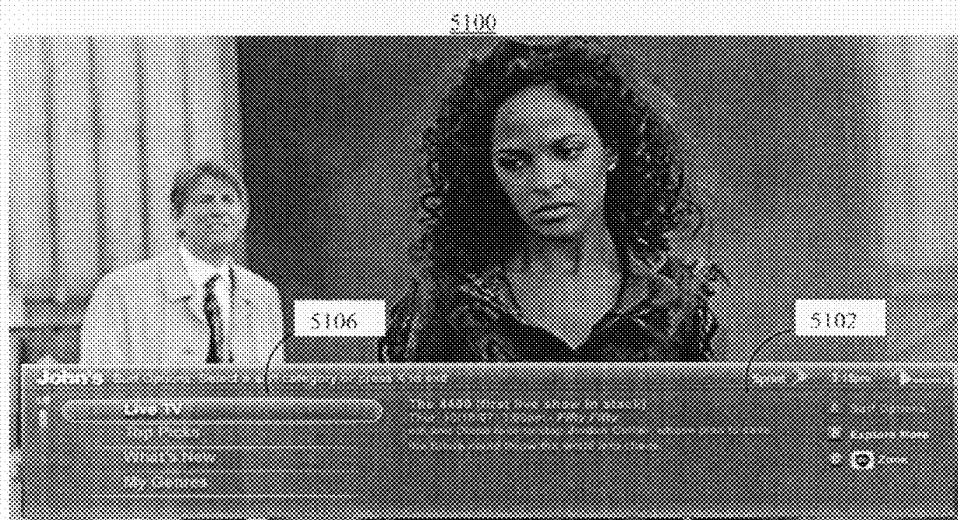


FIGURE 51B

VIEWER INTERFACE FOR A CONTENT DELIVERY SYSTEM

CLAIM OF PRIORITY

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. provisional application Ser. No. 60/923,371 titled "User Interface for Home Media Control" filed on Apr. 13, 2007; U.S. provisional application Ser. No. 61/016,416 titled "System Architecture For Content Delivery" filed on Dec. 21, 2007; and U.S. provisional application Ser. No. 61/010,110 titled "User Interface For A Content Delivery Service" filed on Jan. 4, 2008. All of these provisional applications are hereby incorporated in their entireties.

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0002] This application is related to U.S. provisional application Ser. No. 60/940,957 titled "Efficient Content Delivery" filed on May 30, 2007; U.S. provisional application Ser. No. 61/016,412 titled "System Architecture For Content Delivery" filed on Dec. 21, 2007; U.S. provisional application Ser. No. 61/016,422 titled "System Architecture For Content Delivery" filed on Dec. 21, 2007; U.S. provisional application Ser. No. 61/016,648 titled "System Architecture For Content Delivery" filed on Dec. 26, 2007; U.S. provisional application Ser. No. 61/016,906 titled "System Architecture For Content Delivery" filed on Dec. 27, 2007; and U.S. non-provisional application filed on Apr. 14, 2008 titled "A Networked Antenna Transport System Unit."

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0003] The disclosed embodiments generally related to viewer interfaces, and more particularly, to viewer interfaces for interacting with a content delivery system.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0004] In the following drawings like reference numbers refer to corresponding parts throughout the figures.

[0005] FIG. 1 schematically illustrates a content delivery system that delivers personalized content to individual households using a hybrid mode of data transmission in accordance with some embodiments.

[0006] FIG. 2 schematically illustrates different modes of data transmission for delivering content to a household in accordance with some embodiments.

[0007] FIG. 3 schematically illustrates the use of different broadcast transmissions by different networks for delivering content to different households in accordance with some embodiments.

[0008] FIG. 4 schematically illustrates the processing and integration of programming content into an available bandwidth of a broadcast stream prior to transmission in accordance with some embodiments.

[0009] FIG. 5 is a block diagram of a content operation center where content is at least processed and managed before transmission in accordance with some embodiments.

[0010] FIG. 6 is a block diagram illustrating some components in a receiver controller in a household in accordance with some embodiments.

[0011] FIG. 7A is a flow diagram illustrating a delivery of content by hybrid modes of transmission in accordance with some embodiments.

[0012] FIG. 7B is a schematic diagram illustrating a relationship between user demand and programming content

identification of content which are to be broadcasted and content which are to be unicasted in accordance with some embodiments.

[0013] FIG. 8 is a flow diagram illustrating a method for selecting a broadcast scheme in a hybrid delivery system in accordance with some embodiments.

[0014] FIG. 9 is a flow diagram illustrating separation and extraction of content into nonlinear content for hybrid delivery in accordance with some embodiments.

[0015] FIG. 10 is a flow diagram illustrating combining of linear and nonlinear content for transmission in accordance with some embodiments.

[0016] FIG. 11 is a flow diagram illustrating insertion of linear and nonlinear content into an available bandwidth of a broadcast stream for broadcast transmission in accordance with some embodiments.

[0017] FIG. 12 is a flow diagram illustrating reception of content in a receiver controller/STB in accordance with some embodiments.

[0018] FIG. 13 is a flow diagram illustrating repairing portions of content received by a receiver controller/STB in accordance with some embodiments.

[0019] FIG. 14 is a flow diagram illustrating repairing whole files received by a receiver controller/STB in accordance with some embodiments.

[0020] FIG. 15A is a flow diagram illustrating the determining of a schedule for content delivery by a content operation center in accordance with some embodiments.

[0021] FIG. 15B is a schematic diagram illustrating a relationship between user demand and programming content identification of content which are to be broadcasted and content which are to be unicasted in accordance with some embodiments.

[0022] FIG. 16 is a flow diagram illustrating the PDP portion in a receiver controller/STB as an automated personalized recommendation and storage engine in accordance with some embodiments.

[0023] FIG. 17 is a flow diagram illustrating the receiver controller/STB performing as a recommendation engine in conjunction with use of a remote control in accordance with some embodiments.

[0024] FIG. 18 is a flow diagram illustrating the PDP portion in a receiver controller/STB as an adaptive learning device with tracking of hits and misses in accordance with some embodiments.

[0025] FIG. 19 illustrates a flow diagram of receiver controller displaying information about captured programming content in accordance with some embodiments.

[0026] FIG. 20 is a block diagram illustrating an algorithm that intelligently determines viewer preferences by tracking a viewer's interactions with programming content in accordance with some embodiments.

[0027] FIG. 21 is a block diagram illustrating the initial set up of a remote control/interaction device in setting up a user profile stored on the receiver controller that corresponds to a particular user button on the remote control, in accordance with an embodiment.

[0028] FIG. 22 is a flow diagram illustrating removal of original advertising content from programming content at the content operation center in accordance with some embodiments.

[0029] FIG. 23 is a flow diagram illustrating removal of original advertising content and insertion of targeted adver-

tising content into programming content at the content operation center in accordance with some embodiments.

[0030] FIG. 24 is a flow diagram illustrating removal of original advertising content from programming content at the receiver controller/STB in accordance with some embodiments.

[0031] FIG. 25 is a flow diagram illustrating removal of insertion of targeted advertising content into viewer specific programming content at the receiver controller/STB in accordance with some embodiments.

[0032] FIG. 26 is a flow diagram illustrating removal of original advertising content from viewer specific programming content and insertion of targeted advertising content into the viewer specific programming content in the receiver controller/STB in accordance with some embodiments.

[0033] FIG. 27 is a block diagram illustrating different elements used by advertising campaigns and rules of the advertising management system in accordance with some embodiments.

[0034] FIG. 28 is a schematic screenshot illustrating an UI 2800 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0035] FIG. 29 is a schematic screenshot illustrating a viewer selection screen 2900 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0036] FIGS. 30A-I are schematic screenshots illustrating an interface 3000 for a new viewer setup process in accordance with some embodiments.

[0037] FIG. 31A is a schematic screenshot illustrating a "My Shows" interface 3100 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0038] FIGS. 31B-C are schematic screenshots illustrating menu items 3110 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0039] FIG. 31D is a schematic screenshot illustrating a metadata area 3104 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0040] FIG. 31E-F are schematic screenshots illustrating a video window area 3106 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0041] FIG. 32A is a schematic screenshot illustrating a "My Top Shows" interface 3200 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0042] FIG. 32B is a schematic screenshot illustrating a popup window in accordance with some embodiments.

[0043] FIG. 33A is a schematic screenshot illustrating a "My Movies" interface 3300 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0044] FIG. 33B is a schematic screenshot illustrating a "pay-per-view" stack 3304 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0045] FIGS. 34A-B are schematic screenshots illustrating a "My Channels" interface 3400 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0046] FIG. 35 is a schematic screenshot illustrating a "My Genres" interface 3500 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0047] FIGS. 36A-B are schematic screenshots illustrating a "My Web Videos" interface 3600 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0048] FIG. 37 is a schematic screenshot of a "My Playlist" interface 3700 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0049] FIG. 38 is a schematic screenshot of a "My Saved Programs" interface 3800 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0050] FIGS. 39A-D are schematic screenshots illustrating an "Explore More" interface 3900 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0051] FIG. 40 is a schematic screenshot illustrating an interface 4000 for searching all content in accordance with some embodiments.

[0052] FIG. 41 is a schematic screenshot illustrating an interface 4100 for searching all content in accordance with some other embodiments.

[0053] FIGS. 42A-F are schematic screenshots illustrating a "Scheduled TV" interface 4200 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0054] FIG. 43 is a schematic screenshot illustrating a "Recorded TV" interface 4300 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0055] FIG. 44 is a schematic screenshot illustrating a "Movies" interface in accordance with some embodiments.

[0056] FIG. 45 is a schematic screenshot illustrating a "Web Videos" interface in accordance with some embodiments.

[0057] FIG. 46A-B are schematic screenshots illustrating a "Search" interface 4600 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0058] FIG. 47 is a schematic screenshot illustrating a "Zones" interface 4700 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0059] FIG. 48 is a schematic screenshot illustrating an individual Zone interface 4800 in accordance with some embodiments.

[0060] FIG. 49 is a schematic screenshot illustrating a soft button selection 4900 displaying an advertisement in accordance with some embodiments.

[0061] FIG. 50 is a schematic screenshot of an overlay 5002 appearing at the end of a program in accordance with some embodiments.

[0062] FIGS. 51A-B are schematic screenshots illustrating a mini browser 5102 overlaying a full viewing screen in accordance with some embodiments.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

Introduction

[0063] The general model of delivering of television programming content to viewers is based on a temporal schedule and channels for distributing television programming. Generally, to view a particular television programming content, a viewer has to find the channel where the particular television programming content is offered and the time at which the television programming content is available for viewing. Viewers receive television programming broadcast through different tiers of services offered by cable television providers and satellite television providers. For example, without subscribing to a cable or satellite provider, a viewer is limited to receiving only local network broadcasts available in a particular region. The viewer is offered different levels of programming services when subscribing to a cable or satellite provider. The more the viewer pays, the more the number of channels of programming content is available to the user. In addition, the subscriber to the cable or satellite services is often offered a pay per view or on-demand service where movies or special features such as certain live events can be transmitted to the user for viewing at a one-time fee. However, the delivery of content to a subscriber of these cable and satellite service providers is done by one mode of transmission by each provider, such as cable or satellite or wireless broadcast and never a hybrid mode of transmission.

[0064] Other non-television based programming provider such as movies or video-on-demand providers use the Internet as a mode of delivering content. These providers do not deliver any live television programming content, they only deliver videos and movies for play back at a viewer's home. In other words, these providers do not deliver live television programming or any sort of linear programming and deliver only non-linear programming, programs that cannot be viewed in real-time, and may be viewable only once after the programming content is downloaded. These providers are limited to transmitting their programming content, such as movies, via the Internet.

[0065] In addition to television programming content and on-demand movie content, viewers are also increasingly interested in viewing audio and visual data such as video clips posted by others for sharing on the Internet. There is currently not one service provider available in the market to allow a viewer to view live television, on-demand movie content, and internet video clips. Many of the current modes of content delivery such as cable provider, satellite provider, and Internet movie-on-demand provider are expensive. Often, the offerings available to viewers are limited by the mode of delivery that they are set up to receive. Most importantly, with the increasingly dynamic schedules in television viewers' lives, even with the availability of recording devices like digital video recorders (DVRs), video cassette recorders (VCRs), the current modes of television viewing still do not adequately adapt to the viewing behavior of viewers and what viewers pay do not correlate to the amount of programming content they actually view.

[0066] This disclosure describes a method and system of delivering audio visual programming data including linear content that can be viewed in real-time as the content is received, non-linear content such as television programs, movies, etc. that are intended for time-delayed viewing, and video clips shared by others on the Internet. The system described uses a hybrid mode of delivery including at least broadcast transmission and broadband transmission. Broadcast transmission delivers content to a broad base of viewers compared to satellite or cable and can send a same or larger amount of data at a lower cost per bit of data transferred. Broadband transmission delivers content directly from the provider to a specific user for a particular program requested by a user.

[0067] The system broadcasts content digitally using available bandwidth on transmission streams carrying real time content from broadcasting networks of existing broadcast systems, including but not limited to, satellite, terrestrial broadcast, local cellular broadcasts etc. In some instances, the audio-visual programming content is broadcasted to the viewers on the basis of general demand by viewers in a region, so they are not constrained to the availability by a network channel and the schedule in which the programming content is available. In this system, while linear content is still delivered live for viewing in real-time as the content is received by the viewers, most content such as television shows, movies etc., are delivered as nonlinear content which are not suitable for real-time viewing like in the traditional format. Instead, they are stored in form of files in a receiver controller at viewers' households for a time-delayed viewing at anytime after they are received. Programming content that are not widely in demand are sent to viewers requesting such content by, for example, unicast transmission. The system also has a personalization and intelligent component that adapts to each

viewer's viewing behavior and can automatically capture programming content preferred by each respective viewer from a broadcast transmission. The system is therefore aimed at personalizing a television viewing experience customized to a particular viewer's preference rather than having a viewer adhering to a schedule dictated by programming content providers.

Content Delivery System Configuration

[0068] FIG. 1 schematically illustrates a content delivery system that delivers personalized content to individual households using a hybrid mode of data transmission in accordance with some embodiments, a content delivery system intakes or ingests audio and visual programming content from one or more original content sources, processes the ingested content, and transmits the processed content to viewers at households in one or more ways. For example, some processed content may be broadcasted to multiple households or viewers simultaneously, and some other processed content may be unicast to viewers at households using broadband transmission. In this scheme, every household has one or more unique systems that are configured to receive the processed content by at least broadcast transmission and unicast transmission. Specifically, in some embodiments, the processed content is broadcasted to multiple households using an existing broadcast transmission stream in an affiliate broadcast network. In particular, the content delivery system has an ability to detect the amount of bandwidth available in an existing broadcast transmission stream of an affiliate network and is configured to insert at least a portion of the processed content into the available bandwidth of the existing broadcast transmission stream so that the processed content is broadcasted simultaneously with the network content being transmitted in the existing broadcast transmission stream.

[0069] Schematic diagram 100 in FIG. 1 illustrates in a broad overview the implementation of some embodiments of a content delivery system described in this disclosure. The content transmission source of the audio and visual programming content data includes at least satellite/cable television programming content 101 and other video content 102. The satellite/cable television programming content 101 may be linear streams of content, for example, content available on existing satellite cable feeds or file based assets, such as programming content available on physical media. Certain parts of the linear streams are passed directly through for broadcasting to ensure real time delivery and availability to the receiver controller/set-top-boxes (STB). However, if the content is processed and stored before re-transmission, the content is part of nonlinear content. Nonlinear content is content that is intended for time-delayed transmission, non-real time viewing by viewers, and is transmitted over broadcast or unicast at throughputs that are independent of the rates otherwise required for real time viewing. In some embodiments, satellite/cable television content 101 may be received from at least a programming network that produces the programming content, a fiber source such as a cable feed, a satellite feed and any linear feed etc. Other video content 102 may originate from physical storage media such as optical disks, magnetic disks, flash memory and any other storage devices.

[0070] The content preparation and modification system 103 is responsible for ingesting and processing the content prior to transmission. In some embodiments, this may include

decoding content from linear feeds, transcoding content data, encrypting content, removing advertising promotions, inserting advertising promotions, and other content processing etc. In some embodiments, content may be delivered for real-time viewing or time-delayed viewing. Content for real-time viewing are processed on-the-fly by this system and sent to the affiliate and broadband distribution system **108** directly for broadcast at a transmission rate viewable by viewers as they receive the content in real time. Content for time-delayed viewing are processed, modified, or prepared, the processed content is sent to the content management system **104** as part of nonlinear content where it is redirected to storage. As necessary such nonlinear content is then distributed to affiliate and broadband distribution system **108** and from there to the affiliates **109** for a time-delayed transmission at a transmission rate that is independent of that required for real-time viewing.

[0071] The content management system **104** manages the processed content. The content management system **104** is responsible for storing and maintaining the content assets and metadata associated with the content. In some embodiments, the content management system is also responsible for maintaining compliance and digital rights management.

[0072] The storage **105** is a depository for the nonlinear content. In some embodiments, the storage **105** stores the nonlinear content in a form of files. Alternatively, storage **105** may be viewed as an asset management with a database storing individual programming content or assets for retrieval. For example, each television program, movie, any viewable audio visual program is stored as an individual file. The stored nonlinear content is generally scheduled for a time delayed transmission to viewers in at least one transmission mode, at a transmission rate independent of a real-time viewing rate, according to the demand for the particular nonlinear content.

[0073] The programming interface **106** is an interface, available to content system administrators or program planning personnel, to allow manual tuning of how certain content is distributed, captured by receiver controllers/STBs, or presented to viewers. In some embodiments, a newly acquired show has been acquired by the content delivery system and is ready for distribution to receiver controllers. Program planning personnel may instruct the system to accommodate and highlight this newly acquired show to viewers via the programming interface **106**. In other embodiments, certain special events such as the Superbowl may receive a "boost" from this programming interface to ensure a large majority of households automatically acquire this content for time delayed viewing without any intervention by the end viewers. In some embodiments, this interface may thus allow manual entry of data concerning programming content such as an overall popularity or general demand by viewers.

[0074] The predictive delivery and personalization (PDP) system **107** includes at least a scheduler and a recommendation engine. In some embodiments, as a scheduler, the PDP system creates a schedule of when nonlinear and linear content are to be transmitted to the viewers and in what mode of transmission the respective content is to be delivered. This schedule is created for the purpose of communication with the receiver controllers/STBs **117** and is not generally visible to viewers. In some embodiments the scheduler is designed to use available transmission media efficiently while maximizing user experience. In such embodiments, the output of the scheduler determines which content is to be broadcasted by

which affiliate and partner network and which other content is to be unicast by a broadband network. To accomplish this, the scheduler has access to information about the available bandwidth and cost of the broadcast and unicast networks and about the behavior of the subscriber base. This behavioral information includes interaction events on the receiver controller/STB where subscribers watch television content, where subscribers are presented with the opportunity to watch specific television content but choose not to do so, where subscribers explicitly rate television content, where subscribers request television content for future delivery and where subscribers record television content.

[0075] In some embodiments the PDP system **107** also functions as a recommendation engine, wherein the system analyses information sent via the network **111** from a set-top-box **117**. The information includes but is not limited to content viewing patterns of individual subscribers. In some embodiments, the system uses the information to correlate the viewing pattern against types and availability of content and determine which content is likely to be preferred by different viewers, therefore creating a personalized list of recommended shows for each viewer.

[0076] Once a schedule for delivering content is created and upon availability of content assets, the affiliate and broadband distribution system **108** or a broadband distribution system **110** push the content assets out to the various affiliates or to the broadband distribution system for storage **120** and distribution. In some embodiments, the affiliate and Broadband distribution system **108** further processes the content for delivery by broadcast or unicast transmission.

[0077] Affiliates **109** are independent networks that own or control broadcast systems. In some embodiments, broadcast systems include wireless broadcasts such as digital television that distribute television programming content to a wide audience. For example, an affiliate may be a local broadcast network belonging to a nation-wide broadcast network (e.g. ABC, CBS, NBC etc.) that broadcasts television programming content to a region wide population. In some embodiments, these affiliates broadcast programming content uses an ATSC digital television standard. The storage **112** associated with the affiliates **109** is for storing any scheduled nonlinear content for delivery. At the affiliates **109**, the nonlinear content is broadcasted to the subscriber base over the networks and in accordance with a schedule that may be static or dynamic. In some embodiments, the schedule may be dynamically modified by factors including but not limited to viewers' demand for a particular content and emphasis of specific programming content by programming planning personnel. Also at the affiliates **109**, linear feeds and nonlinear content may also be integrated together for delivery. For example, a number of files representing nonlinear content may be encoded, interleaved or combined together before being sent out.

[0078] In some embodiments, the affiliates **109** broadcast content using, for example, transmission towers **121**. In other embodiments, the content may not be broadcasted via affiliates **109**, but instead may be broadcasted via satellite broadcast systems. Still in some other embodiments, the content may be broadcasted by a local cellular network in broadcast mode. In some embodiments, the broadcast system is not only used for video and audio content transmission but also for other data transmissions including, but not limited to, other

types of control information, content schedules, and software updates that need to reach multiple receiver controllers/STBs at the same time.

[0079] The broadband distribution system (110) is a series of servers and storage elements deployed across the Internet to optimize delivery of content to receiver controllers/STBs that serve viewers in different households. The delivery of content is accomplished by high-speed broadband Internet.

[0080] While not explicitly stated, the content preparation/modification system 103, content management system 104, storage 105, affiliate and broadband distribution system 108, programming interface 106, PDP scheduler/recommendation engine 107, and the broadband distribution system may collectively act as components of a content operation center, which is merely a part of the content delivery system. In some embodiments, viewing the content delivery system in its simplest terms, the entire content delivery system may be seen as having multiple parts, each part serving a unique function. For example, there is the content operation center where data is processed before they are sent to the affiliates for broadcasting or to a broadband network for unicasting. Affiliates provide a mode of broadcast transmission via broadcast networks. Broadcast networks and broadband network(s) are at least some of the media in which content is transmitted. Lastly, the receiver controllers/STBs form equipment in each household or at each customer premise for receiving content and controlling the display of the content received.

[0081] The network 111 represents, in some embodiments, the Internet and the broadband network in which content is delivered by the broadband distribution system 110 to receiver controllers/STBs 117 located in different households. In other embodiments, the network 111 also represents the medium in which receiver controllers/STBs 117 communicate with the PDP system 107 as well as with each other. Accordingly, a network coupling one or more content transmission sources and a plurality of receiver controllers that enables the receiver controllers to receive content from the content transmission source(s) or to allow two or more receiver controllers to communicate with each other, may be referred to as a content delivery network. In some embodiments, the receiver controllers/STBs 117 send information about viewers' respective viewing behavior to the PDP system 107, which in turn, can data mine this information and make recommendations about novel programming content that can be introduced to the viewers according to their individual preferences. In other embodiments, the broadband distribution system 110 may be used to send other types of control information, content schedules, and software updates to individual receiver controllers/STBs. In still some embodiments, the receiver controllers/STBs 117 is configured to communicate with each other so that if one receiver controller/STB (e.g. 117A) received a corrupted version of a program file, the one receiver controller/STB (e.g. 117A) can obtain an uncorrupted version or a portion of the uncorrupted program to replace or repair the corrupted version by communicating with another receiver controller/STB (e.g. 117B).

[0082] Each receiver controller/STB 117 is equipped with a reception system 113, storage 115, and a PDP unit 118. The reception system 113 is configured to receive content by at least one of broadcast and unicast transmissions under instructions of the receiver controller/STB 117. Therefore, the reception system includes at least an antenna to receive broadcast signals and at least one of a wired and wireless communication interface for receiving instructions via a local

network, which may be further coupled to the Internet. In one embodiment, the reception system is a networked antenna transport system unit (NATSU) that is physically separated from the receiver controller/STB 117 but is coupled to the latter via the local network. According to one embodiment, the NATSU is a broadcast receiver for the receiver controller/STB 117 while the receiver controller/STB 117 directly receives unicast transmissions via the local network. In another embodiment, the NATSU receives both broadcast and unicast transmissions for the receiver controller/STB 117. According to one embodiment, the communication interface is configured to receive unicast transmissions at a high speed transfer of information from the Internet. Some content available as linear feeds are presented for real time viewing and for recording to storage 115 for non-real time viewing. Other content available in nonlinear feeds are selectively captured from broadcast transmission at times and on networks specified by the schedule which are then stored as files in storage 115. The storage 115 should have a large memory storage space, having at least 500 GB storage. In some embodiments, the receiver controller/STB 117 is configured to capture or to receive internet content including audio and video information directly from the internet, including but not limited to websites, such as YouTube™ and Google Video etc. Once the internet content from the websites are captured and received, they are downloaded by the STB 117 and displayed for viewing. In some other embodiments, the downloaded internet content may be stored in the storage 115 of the receiver controller/STB 117 for time-delayed viewing. The receiver controller/STB 117 is part of a system for enabling a content viewing experience personalized to a viewer. The storage 115 is intended to store programming content that is personalized to the viewers associated with each particular receiver/STB 117. Since the content is automatically captured from a broadcast or downloaded by unicast and stored on the receiver/STB 117, the viewer is not constrained to a traditional manner of television viewing by adhering to a fixed schedule of linear content transmitted at a particular time and limited by offerings of particular channel(s), in order to view or record the program. This system allows each viewer to directly obtain relevant content preferred by the viewer without adhering to a fixed schedule dictated by, for example, a cable or satellite television service provider and can view the personalized and preferred content in accordance with the viewer's demand.

[0083] The PDP unit 118 in each of the receivers/STBs 117 contributes to the personalized viewing experience of the viewer. The PDP unit 118 is an intelligent and adaptive unit that can learn about the viewing behavior of each viewer associated with the receiver/STB 117. In some embodiments, the receiver/STB 117, with the aid of a remote control (not shown), can identify each individual viewer, and learns about the viewer's viewing behavior and thus preferences of programming content. The information learned about the viewer is also shared with the PDP system 107 to recommend novel content to the viewer. In addition, the information learned also helps the PDP unit 118 in capturing the programming content that is known to be of interest to the viewer, transmitted by broadcast system, as described earlier. In other embodiments, once the PDP unit 118 learned about each viewer's preference, it will automatically capture programming content of interest to each viewer without the viewer's deliberate request or command to do so.

[0084] In some embodiments, there may be more than one receiver/STB 117 per household. For example, separate and independent receivers/STBs 117B and 117C can be linked or connected by a local area network (LAN) such as Ethernet, where they can communicate with each other for programming capture and sharing of storage space etc. within one household.

Form of Content Transmission

[0085] FIG. 2 schematically illustrates different modes of data transmission for delivering content to a household in accordance with some embodiments. A differentiating aspect of the content delivery system, when compared to other content delivery systems, is this system's ability to deliver content in more than one mode of transmission. Unlike cable television or satellite television programming providers that transmit content using a single mode of transmission, this content delivery system uses at least two modes of transmission. Schematic diagram 200 shows the different modes of transmissions some embodiments can employ for the system. In some embodiments, the receiver controller/STBs may receive content using pre-existing digital television (DTV) broadcast 201. In other embodiments, the system may transmit, and the receiver controller/STBs may receive, additional content using a wireless datacast 202, and broadband unicast 203. Regardless of the mode of transmission, the different content that are, for example, broadcasted or unicast, originate from a single content transmission source, before they are split and selectively distributed by different modes of transmissions. Each reception system 204 residing in a household is configured to receive content transmitted by any one of the different modes of transmissions. Therefore, in this system, all content sent to different households originates from one or more content transmission source, but the path in which different content arriving at same or different households can be different. The path and timing at which content is transmitted by broadcast or unicast transmission is dictated at least by a schedule originating in the PDP.

[0086] The schematic diagram 200 shows two different modes of transmission. For example, both DTV broadcast 201 and wireless datacast 202 uses a broadcast system, while a unicast delivery employs a broadband network 203. Further distinctions from traditional satellite or cable service providers include at least the format in which content is sent and the rate in which content is sent. Besides using a single mode of transmission, such as fiber (cable) or satellite for sending content, cable or satellite provider also transmits content only as linear streams, meaning that content sent from each provider is only transmitted at a rate for real time viewing, and if a viewer chooses to view a program at a later time, the program has to first be recorded in real time as it is being transmitted. In other words, cable or satellite providers transmit their content at a single fixed rate suitable for real time viewing.

[0087] In contrast, in some embodiments, the present system transmits linear streams of content at a rate suitable for real time viewing using a DTV broadcast, but transmits nonlinear content at a much faster rate using a similar broadcast system aimed for a time delayed or non-real time viewing. In other embodiments, the content is delivered using available bandwidth of an existing broadcast by, for example, a local television network utilizing the ATSC digital television standard. The same linear streams and nonlinear content are both delivered using the same available bandwidth in the broad-

cast. However, the rates of transmission of linear content and nonlinear content varies greatly, with linear content being transmitted at a rate suitable for real time viewing as the content is being received, whereas the nonlinear content being transmitted either at a faster or slower rate compared to the transmission rate of linear content, and is therefore not for real-time viewing. Nonlinear content is not only sent at a different transmission rate as compared to linear content designed for real time viewing, they are also received as individual files. Still in other embodiments, nonlinear content is intended for non-real time viewing, meaning that nonlinear content is meant for viewing after it has been downloaded and cannot be viewed as the file(s) are in the process of being downloaded. In other embodiments, a viewer may begin to view the nonlinear content as soon as a portion of the files being received as part of a transmission have been buffered to the disk.

[0088] As shown in schematic diagram 200, the reception system 204 serves to receive at least the broadcast content with an antenna system. In some embodiments, the reception system 204 incorporates a communication interface configured to receive content unicast from a broadband network 203, in addition to the antenna system. In other embodiments, a portable component 205 may download and store a portion of content from the STB for portable viewing away from the home. The playback device 206, is the part of the reception system responsible for storing and playing back nonlinear content. This is where the nonlinear content is received and stored, and also where the STB centric PDP unit resides to learn about each viewer's viewing behavior and their viewing preferences.

[0089] FIG. 3 schematically illustrates the use of different broadcast transmissions by different networks for delivering content to different households in accordance with some embodiments. Schematic diagram 300 in FIG. 3 shows an example of how content received is broadcasted by different networks. As content is ingested 301 by either linear feeds or from a physical media, they are transcoded. In some embodiments, programming content is received in MPEG or MPEG2 or similar video standard and transcoded into H.264 standard. The content may also be encrypted and further processed, as part of the encoding process 302. In some embodiments, advertising and promotional content may be stripped or removed from the ingested content as part of the processing. In some embodiments, linear content is encrypted on-the-fly in real time and immediately sent for broadcasting to the customer. In other embodiments, nonlinear content, if coming from a linear feed is parsed into individual programming content, transcoded and encrypted, if the nonlinear content is coming from a physical media, it is also transcoded and encrypted. In both cases, nonlinear content is packaged into encrypted files for storage, each encrypted file corresponding to a program. Nonlinear content is stored at the content operation center. However, in some other embodiments, when certain nonlinear content is programmed for transmission in accordance with a schedule, specific nonlinear programming content may be distributed from storage in the content operation center to a storage either at the affiliate or within the broadband distribution system as required. Additionally, expiration time may be set and added to certain nonlinear or linear content such that the linear content if saved by a user, or any nonlinear saved in storage at a household, will automatically be deleted after a certain amount of time has elapsed.

This operation is carried out as part of the digital rights management (DRM) 303, processing of the content.

[0090] The content is generally maintained by the content management system 304 which also organizes and stores the content and the metadata associated with the content. The content management system 304 maintains the data and interacts with the content delivery system 305 (also known as the affiliate and broadband distribution system (108)) which pushes or sends out content by some distribution mechanism 307 (e.g. satellite or fiber feeds) to the affiliates or partners 351 for broadcasting to receiver controllers/STBs, or to a broadband distribution network 308 for unicast distribution in accordance with a program schedule 306. As described earlier, in some embodiments, this schedule is not visible to the viewers and is solely for the purpose of synchronizing content transmission from the content operation center and content capture or content reception at the receiver controllers/STBs at individual households. In some embodiments, the content delivery system 350 can send the content to multiple forms of broadcasts. For example, multiple forms of broadcast may include satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcasts, and local cellular network broadcast. The different broadcasts 350A-350C are shown in the schematic diagram and each form of broadcast may have multiple affiliates 351A-351C reaching different audiences having different receiver controllers/STBs 352A-352C in different regions that is reached by the different affiliates 351A-351C having the different forms of broadcasts 350A-350C. As an example, in the schematic diagram 300, a form of broadcast (e.g. 350A) may be a terrestrial broadcast. The terrestrial broadcast is used by multiple affiliates (e.g. 351A) to broadcast within a specific geographical region. Therefore, every household or receiver controller/STB (e.g. 352A) within the specific geographical region can be reached via the terrestrial broadcast. Similarly, a unicast delivery of content is available to those who have access to a high speed broadband network. In some embodiments, this can be any broadband network regardless of the provider. In other embodiments, this may be a dedicated broadband network that is specific for content transfer and communication among receiver controllers/STBs and the content delivery system.

System Infrastructure at Affiliate Location

[0091] FIG. 4 schematically illustrates the processing and integration of programming content into an available bandwidth of a broadcast stream at an affiliate prior to transmission in accordance with some embodiments. Schematic diagram 400 represents a portion of the content operation center illustrating where content, both linear and nonlinear, are combined together, and where the resulting combination is inserted into an available bandwidth of an existing broadcast stream and broadcasted with content on the existing broadcast stream. The processed content 402 represents both processed linear and nonlinear content from the affiliate and broadband distribution system 108. The nonlinear content portion of the processed content 402 is sent to the nonlinear reception manager (405) that is responsible for organizing the nonlinear content for storage at a local asset management 408 at the content operation center.

[0092] The content delivery manager 409 uses a schedule, as described earlier, to determine when the content, including the nonlinear content, is to be delivered, and by which mode of transmission. In some embodiments, as illustrated in schematic diagram 400, the content delivery manager controls

when and how a nonlinear playout manager 407 retrieves nonlinear content from the asset management 408 or storage, and transmit the nonlinear content to a multiplexer 406 for broadcast transmission. Finally in some embodiments, using the schedule, the content delivery manager 409 indicates to the multiplexer 406 at what points in time and on which streams to directly multiplex "linear pass through" streams onto the broadcast transmission.

[0093] The multiplexer 406 may, in some embodiments, be able to combine nonlinear content from storage with processed linear content into a combined linear and nonlinear processed content, before the combined content is to be combined with a live stream 401 of data from a network. In other embodiments, the multiplexer 406 may be able to combine nonlinear content from storage with processed linear content data and a live stream 401 of linear content from a network directly. Therefore in some embodiments, the multiplexer 406 has the unique function to combine at least processed nonlinear content with processed linear content; and in other embodiments, the multiplexer 406 can combine nonlinear processed content with linear processed content and live stream 401 of linear content from a network. Still, in some embodiments, the nonlinear playout manager 407 may combine nonlinear content, which are in form of discrete files stored in asset management 408 before being fed to the multiplexer 406 for transmission. This means discrete files are combined or interleaved into one or more files and transmitted. Therefore, while nonlinear content are stored in the form of discrete files before transmission and after being received, multiple discrete files may be combined or mixed together at the time of transmission. The combined product of nonlinear processed content, linear processed content, and live stream 401 content from a network are put on a single broadcast stream and broadcasted by the transmitter 410.

[0094] Asset management system 408, in some embodiments, collectively describes a storage system and a database containing logic that controls retrieval and storage of programming content stored in the storage system. Generally, nonlinear content is stored in the asset management system 408 as discrete files until the nonlinear content is retrieved by the nonlinear playout manager 407. In other words, each nonlinear program is stored as a separate and independent file and retrieved by the nonlinear play out manager 407 as such before being multiplexed and combined into an available bandwidth of an existing broadcasting or unicasting transmission stream.

Content Operation Center and Components

[0095] FIG. 5 is a block diagram of a content operation center where content is at least processed and managed before transmission in accordance with some embodiments. Block diagram 500 describes a content operation center 501 in some forms of implementation. In some embodiments, the content operation center 501 may include, but not limited to having at least one of: a content download manager 502, a content repackaging unit 505, a digital rights/encryption key server 503, a broadband distribution policy manager 504, a broadband distribution network (515), a scheduler 506, a recommendation engine 512, a content storage module 507, a content retrieval manager 508, a content management database 511, a metadata management system 509 (e.g., the last three may collectively be components of the content management system 104), an advertising campaign management module 513, and an event logging database 514.

[0096] The content download manager **502** controls downloading of content from physical media or from a satellite or fiber feed. The content download manager **502** is a controller for ingestion of data, regardless of the original content source of the content. For example, the content download manager **502** will have information about which content is to be ingested from a fiber or cable feed, which other content is to be ingested from a physical medium, and where/when this content may become available for ingestion. The content download manager **502**, in some embodiments, may have at least one of the following information about the content to be ingested by the system: where the content is available, when the content is available, and from which mode of transmission the content is ingested.

[0097] The content repackaging unit **505** is responsible for processing the content. In some embodiments, it processes content from all original content sources, including but not limited to satellite feed, fiber feed, and physical media. The content repackaging unit **505** may perform at least one of: encoding or transcoding content, for example, in some cases, from a MPEG2 standard into a H.264 standard, encrypting content (so that content is not viewable until after a decryption key is received at a household), and separating content for storage as individual files.

[0098] The digital rights/encryption key server **503** is responsible for managing digital rights of linear and nonlinear content. Linear and nonlinear content may have digital rights which are managed through associated decryption keys. The digital rights/encryption key server **503** issues encryption keys and manages the distribution of associated decryption keys. While both linear and nonlinear content are transmitted in encrypted form from the content operation center **501**, decryption keys at the receiver controllers are required to decrypt the content before it can be viewed. The digital rights/encryption key server **503** is responsible for generating the encryption and decryption keys, cooperating with the content repackaging unit **505** to encrypt the content, and distributing the decryption keys to viewers.

[0099] The advertisement removal and insertion unit **518** removes and/or inserts advertising promotional content into linear or nonlinear audio and visual programming content and is part of the processing of content that takes place at the content operation center **501**. In some embodiments, the advertisement removal and insertion unit **518** is also responsible for at least one of removal of original advertising and promotion content in the programming content received, and insertion of targeted advertising and promotion content into the programming content where the original advertising and promotion content is removed or is absent. In some embodiments, the content received from cable/fiber feeds, may contain original advertising and promotion content if the content is broadcasted from a network. However in other embodiments such as content received from a physical media directly from an original content source, there may not be any original advertising or promotion content associated with the programming content. In some embodiments, a unique aspect of this content delivery system is that content may be customized or personalized to viewers' preference and advertising content can be targeted to specific viewers. In some embodiments, both removal and insertion of targeted advertising and promotion content are performed at the advertisement removal and insertion unit **518** in the content operation center **501**. In other embodiments, the advertisement removal and insertion unit **518** is responsible for removal of the original

advertising and promotion content, and the insertion of the targeted advertising may be performed at the receiver controller/STB. Still, there are some embodiments in which both removal of original advertising content associated from a respective programming content and insertion of targeted advertising content are performed entirely at the receiver controller/STB. Operations of the advertisement removal and insertion unit **518** to remove and/or insert advertising content are part of the content preparation in the content operation center **501**. In some embodiments, the advertisement removal and insertion unit **518** may insert advertising content based on rules provided by the advertising campaign management module **513**. In other embodiments, the advertisement removal and insertion unit **518** is an independent functioning unit in the content operation center **501**.

[0100] In some embodiments, the content download manager **502**, the content repackaging unit **505**, the digital rights/encryption key server **503**, and the advertisement removal and insertion unit **518** are components of the Content Preparation/Modification System **103** which was shown in FIG. 1. In other embodiments, the Content Preparation/Modification System **103** in FIG. 1 may include more or less components than described.

[0101] The content storage module **507** is the storage component for storing nonlinear content at the content operation center **501** generally. The nonlinear content stored within may include, but not limited to, at least one of TV and movie video programming content, advertising, internet video content, and other programming content in form of discrete files. In some embodiments, the content storage module **507** is similar to the Storage **105** in FIG. 1.

[0102] The content management database **511** stores information about content such as type of content, encoding format, file size, content playback length etc. In some embodiments, the content management database **511** stores the metadata associated with content. In some embodiments where the content is stored in one of multiple possible locations, the content management database **511** stores the locations of where different content may be retrieved. In other embodiments, the content management database **511** may store information about where processed nonlinear content is stored in the content storage module **507** so that particular nonlinear can be retrieved for the time-delayed transmission. In some embodiments, the content management database **511** may be a part of the Content Management System **104**.

[0103] The metadata management system **509** is responsible for input and editing of metadata for content and maintaining such correspondences between the metadata and the content over time. In some embodiments, metadata is associated with both linear and nonlinear content. For example, the metadata may include tags corresponding to respective content that lists applicable content attributes such as content identification (ID), show/movie/episode titles, channel, cast members, genres, program description and plot. In some embodiments, such metadata is used to aid the receiver controller/STB in correctly categorizing and describing the content to the viewer. In other embodiments, such metadata is used by the receiver controller/STB in enabling content search functionality on the receiver controller/STB. In other embodiments, such metadata is used by the recommendation engine **512** along with other behavioral data to recommend novel content to viewers. In some embodiments, the metadata management system **509** includes capabilities for assigning content IDs. However, other embodiments of the metadata

management system **509** may include capabilities for importing external metadata feeds from multiple providers in multiple formats. Once imported, the metadata management system **509** consolidates these formats and publishes the result into one uniform format. Still, other embodiments of the metadata management system **509** allow manual editing and authoring of metadata.

[**0104**] In some embodiments, the content storage module **507** and the content management database content management database **511**, and the metadata management system **509** are components of the content management system **104**. In other embodiments, the content management system **104** may include more or less components than described.

[**0105**] The scheduler **506** is responsible for creating and maintaining a schedule for content delivery by broadcast transmission and unicast transmission to viewers. The scheduler **506** schedules delivery of both linear content and nonlinear content to viewers. A schedule is created based on evaluation of at least one of several factors including, but not limited to: demand of a particular content by all viewers, the available bandwidth on each broadcast transmission stream of each affiliate network, the cost of data transmission in the available bandwidth for each transmission stream, the number of viewers accessible by each broadcast transmission stream, and the availability of receiver controllers to receive the content at different times in different households. The schedule is created with an objective to deliver content so as to maximize the user experience given the available resources. In some embodiments, maximizing the user experience means ensuring a maximum number of viewers can capture their preferred content. In some embodiments, the schedule is created with an objective that the nonlinear content is delivered not longer after a target time as determined by external program planning input or not longer after a target time period after initial airing of the corresponding program on alternative linear systems.

[**0106**] The various criteria in determining the schedule are factored into a cost function which is then minimized either approximately or optimally to determine a final schedule. The scheduler **506** acts as the "brains" of a content delivery and distribution system. In some embodiments, the scheduler **506** determines the routes in which content is to be transmitted. For example, the scheduler **506** determines the modes of content transmission for both linear and nonlinear content. In one instance, the scheduler **506** may determine that a widely demanded nonlinear content is to be broadcasted via wireless networks at a specific time, while another less popular nonlinear content demanded only by a few viewers are to be unicast via broadband networks. In embodiments with multiple broadcast networks, the scheduler **506** is responsible for determining which of a number of different broadcasting networks' broadcast transmission stream is used for delivering different content. In other words, different content chosen for broadcasting may be routed to different networks, depending on different factors. Such factors may include, but not limited to, for example, viewers accessible by different networks, cost per data byte transmitted, and regional viewer demand for a particular programming content. The scheduler thus tells the content delivery manager **516** which content is to be routed where, including whether a particular content is to be broadcasted or unicast, and by which network.

[**0107**] The recommendation engine **512** is responsible for making recommendations about novel content to viewers. In some embodiments, the recommendation engine **512** gathers

viewers' viewing behavior and preferences for content from the receiver controller or STB in each household and determine based on the viewing behavior and preferences, new content to recommend for viewers. In some embodiments, recommendations in form of at least one of: numerical content identification (ID), title, descriptions, and snippets or clips of content are sent to the receiver controller or STB associated with viewers in each household. In some embodiments, the viewers, if interested in the recommended novel content, can request for the entire program be captured by the receiver controller or STB for viewing. In other embodiments, recommendations in form of entire programs are automatically captured by the receiver controller associated with viewers in each household from the broadcast network or are sent directly to the receiver controller via unicast.

[**0108**] In some embodiments, the scheduler **506** and the recommendation engine **512** are components of the PDP (Predictive Delivery and Personalization) System **107** as described in FIG. 1. In other embodiments, the PDP Module **107** may include more or less components than described.

[**0109**] The content delivery manager **516** determines which content is to be forwarded to which network for transmission or delivery to viewers and at what time based on the schedule provided by the scheduler **506**. For nonlinear programming, content delivery manager **516** retrieves programming content indicated by the schedule from the content management system **104**. In some embodiments, if so indicated by the schedule, the content delivery manager **516** will push a specific nonlinear programming content to the appropriate affiliate at a scheduled time for required broadcasting by the affiliate as indicated by the schedule. In other embodiments, if so indicated by the schedule, the content delivery manager **516** will push a specific nonlinear programming content to a particular receiver controller/STB via unicast transmission through the broadband distribution system **110**. Still, in some other embodiments, if so indicated by the schedule, the content delivery manager will make available a specific nonlinear programming content on the broadband distribution system **110** for subsequent unicast download by/receiver controllers. In other embodiments concerning linear programming, the content delivery manager **516** accepts linear feeds and, if so indicated by the schedule, forwards such feeds to the appropriate broadcast affiliate for linear broadcasting. In some embodiments, the linear pass through content is often not stored, so the content delivery manager **516** simply accepts the linear content without needing to perform any active retrieving.

[**0110**] The content retrieval manager **508** processes requests for content retrieval and retrieves the content to the requesting source making the request. In particular upon a read out of the scheduled requests for content are passed from the content delivery manager to the content retrieval manager which then retrieves the desired content from the content storage module **507** and passes it to the content delivery manager **516**. In some embodiments, the content retrieval manager **508** interacts with the content management database **511** to determine where content is located. In other embodiments, the content retrieval manager **508** may retrieve as well as passively accept content and pass the content onto the content routing manager **510** for determining how the content should be delivered. For example, the content retrieval manager **508** may actively retrieve nonlinear video content and advertising from the content storage module **507** while accepting linear pass through feeds of content for broadcast-

ing. The linear pass through content is often not stored, so the content retrieval manager **508** simply accepts the linear content without needing to perform any active retrieving. The content actively retrieved from the content storage module **507** may include at least one of nonlinear video content and advertising promotional content. The content retrieval manager **508** cooperates with the content delivery manager **516** to deliver content, linear or nonlinear, to viewers.

[0111] The content delivery manager **516** routes content from the content retrieval manager **508** based on the schedule from the scheduler **506**. Thus, in some embodiments, content designated for broadcast distribution by the schedule is pushed to the appropriate affiliates while content designated for unicast distribution is likewise made available to the broadband distribution network. In some embodiments, content designated for unicast distribution is automatically pushed to the corresponding STBs or are indicated as ready for download by the STBs which then download the content over the broadband network. In other embodiments, content may be designated for unicast distribution but are downloaded only upon explicit feedback by the end user to do so. In some embodiments, the content delivery manager **516** may form different components of an affiliate and broadband distribution system **108** as shown in FIG. 1. In other embodiments, the affiliate and broadband distribution system **108** as shown in FIG. 1 may include more or less components than described.

[0112] The broadband distribution policy manager **504** provides functions to manage the broadband distribution network **515**. For example, the broadband distribution policy manager **504** regulates broadband traffic throughputs to and from each receiver controller/STB to ensure that the broadband connection associated with the STB is not saturated. In some embodiments, the broadband distribution policy manager **504** provides functions to control the availability or non-availability of programming content on the broadband distribution network **515**. For example, broadband network manager **504** may direct the broadband distribution network **515** to remove from distribution a specific programming content whose digital rights window for viewing has expired. In some embodiments the broadband distribution network **515** functions to unicast content that was not broadcasted or to unicast content whose broadcast transmission was otherwise not captured by the STB. During unicasting, content is delivered to a specific viewer at one time (e.g. point to point data transmission). This is different from broadcasting content where content is delivered to many viewers at one time (e.g. point to multiple points data transmission).

[0113] Broadband distribution network **515** is a system of computers or servers, each referred to as a node or peer, networked together across the Internet that cooperates with each other transparently to deliver content. Each node contains storage, and such nodes are distributed across a network in multiple locations. These nodes transparently move content behind the scenes to optimize the fulfillment of requests for content by the receiver controllers/STB and to optimize the push delivery of content to the receiver controllers/STB. Optimization can take the form of reducing bandwidth costs, improving end-user performance, or both. In some embodiments, content to be unicasted from the content operation center **501** is stored or cached at the nodes or peers to achieve cost and delivery efficiency. In some embodiments, the broadband distribution network **515** enables nodes and STBs to communicate directly with each other in a peer-to-peer man-

ner in order to deliver a programming asset to a particular STB. In some embodiments, the broadband distribution network **515** enables users to communicate directly with each other in a peer-to-peer manner, where one user may obtain an uncorrupted version of data to repair errors incurred during reception of broadcast transmission.

[0114] In some embodiments the broadband distribution policy manager **504** and the broadband distribution network **515** are components of the broadband distribution system **110**. For example, the broadband distribution policy manager **504** manages the broadband traffic in the broadband distribution network **515**, while the broadband distribution network **515** stores the content across servers and receiver controllers/STBs. The broadband distribution network **515** also makes the content available for unicasting to particular viewers, either from a central node or from other receiver controller/STBs, in a peer-to-peer fashion. In other embodiments, the broadband distribution system **110** may contain more or less components than described.

[0115] The advertising campaign management module **513** is responsible for at least one of entering and managing various advertising campaigns, pushing the campaign rules out to receiver controllers/STBs, and then tracking the results in terms of ad impressions or other relevant metrics. Advertising campaigns include but are not limited to operations initiated by advertisers who are either interested in promoting a specific service or product and operations targeted according to preferences of viewers to deliver the most relevant advertising or promotion content of interest to the viewers. Different campaigns' rules are pushed out to each and every receiver controller/STB on a daily basis over the hybrid broadcast and broadband Internet delivery system and results are collected on a daily basis from each and every receiver controller/STB on a daily basis over the broadband Internet connection. These results provide feedback on how the targeted advertising content is received by viewers thus acting as feedback to adjust campaign rules on each receiver controller/STB residing at each household. In some embodiments, the relevant metrics or ad impressions may be, in some embodiments, measured by viewers' response and interactions with the ads. For example, tracking of viewer's explicit reaction to ads such as in the form of user initiated click-thru to explore or expand an ad or to learn more is considered a favorable impression whereas fast forwarding may be considered less favorable.

[0116] The event logging database **514** logs and mines data transmitted from the receiver controller in each individual household. In some embodiments, the event logging database contains a storage unit as well as a data mining unit. The event logging database **514** receives viewers' viewing data from the receiver controller/STB from each individual household. The data includes at least one of: user ratings of viewed programming content, viewers' rankings of viewed content, records of programming content that is selected and watched by viewers, records of programming content that is ignored by viewers in process of finding a programming content which is ultimately selected and viewed, records of programming content subscribed on a regular basis and records of programming content requested for one time viewing. The event logging database **514** provides viewer viewing data for the recommendation engine **512** for the recommendation engine **512** to match novel content to the viewers' individual interests and preferences. The event logging database **514** also provides viewer viewing data for the scheduler **506**. Therefore, in some embodiments, the event logging database **514** may be a

part of the PDP, interacting with the recommendation engine **512** to recommend data to different viewers.

[0117] The programming interface **517** provides an interface for managing and manually making changes to the algorithms and rules established for components operating in the content operation center **501**. In some embodiments, the programming interface **517** provides a means to identify the aggregate set of content that is to be programmed for a viewer base. In some embodiments, the programming interface **517** also provides a means to re-prioritize this content prior to delivery to a viewer base. For example, there may be times when certain content may be deemed to be of high priority than originally determined by the schedule. The programming interface **517** provides a means to manage and change the priority for delivery of the content. Therefore, the programming interface **517** increases flexibility to the system where content may be manually managed.

[0118] The advertisement removal and insertion unit **518** works in cooperation with the advertising campaign management module **513** to carry out the advertising campaign. In some embodiments, the advertising removal and insertion unit **518** removes advertising and promotion content as part of nonlinear content processing by the content preparation and modification system **103** after the nonlinear content is ingested. In some embodiments, original advertising and promotional content associated with the content ingested is removed prior to storage. Advertising and promotional content targeted for certain campaigns, in some embodiments, is added to the ingested nonlinear content which has its original advertising and promotional content removed by the advertisement removal and insertion unit **518**. However, in some other embodiments, the targeted advertising and promotional content that is tailored or customized according to viewers' preferences may be inserted after the content is received by the receiver controller/STB. Therefore, removal and insertion of advertising and promotional content from ingested nonlinear content may be performed directly at the content operation center or the receiver controller/STB depending on the types of advertising campaigns planned for different nonlinear content. Still in some embodiments, the original advertising and promotional content may not be removed from the ingested nonlinear content at the content operation center by the advertisement removal and insertion unit **518** but instead be removed after being received by a receiver controller/STB, with targeted advertisement and promotions inserted at the STB/Receiver before it is viewed or displayed.

Receiver Controller/STB and Components

[0119] FIG. 6 is a block diagram illustrating some components in a receiver controller in a household in accordance with some embodiments. Block diagram **600** describes a receiver controller/STB **601** in some forms of implementation. In some embodiments, the receiver controller **601** may include, but not limited to having at least one of: an antenna system **602**, a disk management system **603**, a digital rights encryption key server **604**, a broadcast tuners **605**, a user interface **606**, a content storage **607**, a metadata & file management **608**, a playout manager **609**, a personalized delivery control module **610**, and a broadband network manager/peer-to-peer service manager **611**.

[0120] The antenna subsystem **602** is configured to receive broadcast transmissions from at least one of a number of networks having live broadcast streams. In some embodiments, the antenna subsystem **602** may be a unique antenna

that is configured to facilitate indoor reception of digital television signals in the upper VHF and UHF bands. In some embodiments, the antenna subsystem **602** may include features to enable high quality reception on different channels without a need to re-position the antenna for different channels. According to other embodiments, this antenna subsystem **602** may take the form of a networked antenna system transport unit (NATSU) which is physically separated from the receiver controller but is coupled to the receiver controller via a local network. Thus, any content received by the NATSU may be stored on the NATSU and then sent to the receiver controller via the local network or directly sent to the receiver controller for storage.

[0121] The disk management system **603** manages the disk and storage space of the receiver controller/STB **601**. In some embodiments, the disk management system **603** includes a content acquisition and deletion manager to control the acquisition and deletion of content. In some embodiments, content is captured from broadcast or unicast transmissions and stored. For example, all nonlinear content is acquired by the disk management system **603** and stored in the content storage **607** of the system with the object of providing an on-demand viewing experience for each viewer.

[0122] The digital rights decryption key server **604** is the counterpart of the digital rights/encryption key server **503** in FIG. 5. The digital rights decryption key server **604** receives the digital decryption keys transmitted from the digital rights encryption key server from the content operation center **501** for decrypting content that is received from broadcast and unicast transmissions. In some embodiments, this server **604** communicates closely with the counterpart server in the content operation center **501** for transmission of the decryption keys. In some embodiments, the encryption and decryption keys are closely associated with digital rights management. For example, digital viewing rights of certain content may be set for expiration for a particular period after the content is received from a transmission. Once the period expires, the content can no longer be decrypted with the decryption key that was transmitted to the server **604**. In some embodiments, the expired decryption keys and the associated content may be deleted automatically. In other embodiments, the expired decryption keys may either be automatically renewed or a viewer may request for the expired decryption keys to be renewed.

[0123] Each broadcast tuner **605** may be configured to perform at least one of receiving nonlinear content originating from the content operation center **501** via broadcast or unicast transmission, receiving linear content originating from the content operation center **501** via broadcast or unicast transmission, and receiving linear content from a preexisting content transmission source. Each broadcast tuner **605** may capture nonlinear and linear content as directed by the PDP Module **610**. In some embodiments, a schedule received from the content operation center **501** determines which channel and time at which the broadcast tuner **605** should tune into in order to capture a particular asset or programming content. In other embodiments, the tuners may be in a continuous reception mode in which broadcast content is opportunistically stored to disk and in which content meeting specific criteria is committed to long term storage as dictated by the PDP. For linear content the broadcast tuners **605** receive content at a rate suitable for real time viewing. For nonlinear content the broadcast tuners **605** receive content at a rate independent of that required for real time viewing. The broadcast tuners **605**

are also configured to interact with the user interface 606 to select linear content for display on a live basis. Each receiver controller/STB 601 has at least one or more broadcast tuners 605. In some embodiments, a broadcast tuner 605 may tune directly to linear programming at the direction of the viewer via the user interface. In some embodiments, there are multiple broadcast tuners to enable a viewer to, for example, simultaneously view a live linear programming content, record another live linear programming content, and to receive nonlinear content from a broadcast transmission.

[0124] The user interface 606 interacts with a remote control operated by viewers to execute commands and requests of the viewers. In some embodiments, the user interface 606 can be uniquely targeted for a content delivery system delivering content personalized according to viewers' preference. For example, the user interface may be designed to interact with a simple remote control having a minimalist design, such as one without any numerical input pad. A remote control unit, in some embodiments, is described in U.S. provisional application 60/985,173, titled "Remote Control Unit for Intelligent Video Programming System" filed on Nov. 2, 2007, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. In some embodiments, the user interface is not optimized for live television programming but is optimized for selecting content based on viewer preference and demand. For instance, the user interface is not designed for finding content based on a number of channels and time in which programming content is available at particular channels. Rather, the user interface is optimized to display content obtained from broadcast or unicast transmission according to preferences of the viewers associated with the receiver controller/STB 601. In some embodiments, the remote control and the user interface are configured to recognize each individual viewer who is using the receiver controller/STB 601 to view content. Further, unique features in the user interface further aid the PDP control module 610 to continually learn about the viewers' viewing preferences and to modify, adjust and adapt user preferences in view of users' viewing behavior.

[0125] The content storage 607 is a physical medium for storing content in the receiver controller/STB 601. In some embodiments, the content storage 607 is an integral component of the receiver controller/STB 601 including, but not limited to, a hard drive, flash memory, or any physical storage component. In other embodiments, the content storage 607 may be an external storage device that is coupled to the receiver controller/STB 601 and serve as either a primary or secondary source of content storage. The content storage 607 stores nonlinear content captured by the receiver controller/STB 601 for non-real time viewing. In some embodiments, nonlinear content including but not limited to, television programming content, movies, Internet video clips etc., is stored in the content storage 607 as discrete files. Still in some embodiments, the content storage 607, in addition to storing nonlinear content, may also store targeted advertisements and promotions that are transmitted from the content operation center in advertising campaigns. In some embodiments, the content storage 607 may also store linear content transmitted and recorded by the receiver controller/STB 601 in real time at a transmission rate consistent for real-time viewing. On the contrary, the nonlinear content, unlike linear content, is often delivered to the receiver controller/STB 601 at a transmission rate independent of real-time viewing rate.

[0126] The metadata & file management system 608 manages metadata associated with programming content stored

on disk including nonlinear content received by broadcast transmission, linear content received from broadcast transmission, and programming content received via unicast. The metadata may include tags corresponding to respective content that lists applicable content attributes such as content ID, show/movie/episode titles, channel, cast members, genres, program description and plot. In some embodiments, such metadata is used to aid the receiver controller/STB in correctly categorizing and describing the content to the viewer. In other embodiments, such metadata is used by the receiver controller/STB in enabling content search functionality on the receiver controller/STB.

[0127] The playout manager 609 controls the playout of content which includes but is not limited to television programming, Internet video clips and movies etc. In some embodiments, the playout manager 609 is the engine that drives the playing of content on the receiver controller/STB 601 for display. the playout manager 609 operates closely with at least the User Interface 606 in selecting the content to play. In some embodiments, the playout manager 609 supported MPEG2 and MPEG4 video encoding formats. In other embodiments, the playout manager 609 plays out linear content which are to be received by the receiver controller/STB 601 in real time, linear content which are to be received by the receiver controller/STB 601 that has been stored to disk, and nonlinear content stored in the content storage module 607. In other embodiments, the playout manager 609 also plays out internet video and audio clips stored in the content storage module 607 that have been suitably encoded or transcoded in a format supported by the playout manager 609.

[0128] The PDP module 610 is responsible for learning about the viewers' viewing behavior and patterns and determining the viewing preferences of viewers associated who use the receiver controller/STB 601 for viewing content. The PDP module 610 determines such preferences based on at least one of tracking viewing behavior, subscriptions for linear and nonlinear content, explicit requests by the user to record specific linear content, explicit requests by the user to capture specific nonlinear content, and explicit ratings for specific content. In some embodiments, the PDP module 610 tracks each viewer's viewing behavior, identifying programming content that is selected and viewed by the viewer as well as programming content that are presented to the viewer but ignored in the process of arriving at the selected programming content.

[0129] In some embodiments of the system described, the viewer may request subscriptions to linear and nonlinear content thus instructing the PDP to respectively record or capture the corresponding content on an ongoing basis. In some embodiments of the system described, the viewer may explicitly request recording of a specific linear content or may explicitly request capturing of a specific nonlinear content. In some embodiments, the system described also has the ability to rate the linear or nonlinear content viewed through the User Interface 606.

[0130] The PDP module 610, in some embodiments, uses the preferences to determine the placement of content in the user interface and to instruct the receiver/controller STB to respectively record linear content and capture nonlinear content to disk. For example, a PDP module 610, after learning that a viewer has watched consecutive episodes of a particular programming content, will automatically instruct one of the broadcast tuners 605 to capture future episodes for the viewer and will instruct the user interface 606 to display such cap-

tured episodes to the viewer. Therefore, in some embodiments, the PDP module 610 operates closely with the broadcast tuners 605 in the receiver controller/STB 601 for capturing different content and with the user interface 606 for displaying content.

[0131] In some embodiments, the PDP module 610 also informs the recommendation engine 512 in the content operation center 501 of specific events with respect to the viewing behavior, subscriptions for linear and nonlinear content, explicit requests by the user to record specific linear content, explicit requests by the user to capture specific nonlinear content, and explicit ratings for specific content. These events are used by the recommendation engine 512 to determine novel content matching the viewers' preference to recommend to the viewers. The PDP module 610 receives these recommendations from the content operation center 501 and uses these recommendations to determine the placement of novel content in the user interface and to instruct the receiver controller/STB 601 to respectively record linear content and to capture nonlinear content into storage. In some embodiments, the PDP module 610 also informs the scheduler 506 in the content operation center 501 of specific events with respect to the viewing behavior, subscriptions for linear and nonlinear content, explicit requests by the user to record specific linear content, explicit requests by the user to capture specific nonlinear content, and explicit ratings for specific content events. These events are used by the scheduler 506 in determining or estimating demand for certain content.

[0132] The broadband network manager/peer-to-peer service manager 611 controls the communication interface with a broadband network. In some embodiments, it controls the interface for receiving information via the household's Internet connection. In some embodiments, this includes, but is not limited to, receiving unicast content through the broadband distribution network as made available from the content operation center 501, receiving content from other sources such as third party websites, and receiving system control messaging and software updates from the content operation center 501. In other embodiments, the broadband network manager 611 also controls communication that is sent from the receiver controller/STB 601 to the content operation center 501 or other STBs/receiver controllers 601. For example, whenever the PDP module 610 sends viewers' information to the content management center for the recommendation engine, transmission of the viewers' information is controlled by the broadband network manager 611. In other embodiments, the receiver controller 601 has the ability to communicate directly with the content management center and other receiver controllers/STBs 611 that are connected to the broadband network for obtaining uncorrupted version of program files or a portion of a program file for repairing one or more corrupted files received from transmission. The broadband network manager 611 enables this peer-to-peer service by regulating communications such as requests and responses to other peers that are on a broadband network.

[0133] The content repairing module 612 repairs errors in content resulting from errors during reception of broadcast transmissions. In some embodiments, the detection and correction of errors is performed for nonlinear and linear programming content and other system communications such as schedule updates originating from the content operation center 501. In other embodiments, the detection and correction of errors is performed for linear programming content originating from local terrestrial digital television broadcasters. For

example, corrupted content received at a receiver controller/STB 601 is a result of broadcast transmission error. In some embodiments, the content repairing module 612 is able to detect and repair corrupted programming content received by the receiver controller/STB 601. After the corrupted content is detected, the content repairing module 612 sends a request to other peers connected to the broadband network, including other receiver controllers/STB 601 and the content operation center 501, for an uncorrupted version of the corrupted content. In some embodiments, the Content Repairing Module 612 is able to isolate a corrupted portion of the corrupted content and request an uncorrupted portion, corresponding to the corrupted portion of the corrupted content, from a peer to replace the corrupted portion of the corrupted content. In other embodiments, the content repairing module 612 detects a portion of the content being corrupted and requests for an uncorrupted version of the entire content as a replacement. In some embodiments, the content repairing module 612 is configured to detect and repair nonlinear content received at the receiver controller/STB 601 that are in form of files. The content repairing module 612 operates closely in conjunction with the broadband network manager/peer-to-peer service manager 611 to interact with peers who are also connected on the broadband network.

[0134] The advertising module 613 manages the advertisement and promotional content in the receiver controller/STB 601. In some embodiments, the advertising module 613 receives advertising promotional content from the content operation center 501 for the receiver controller 601. The advertising promotional content received is either targeted to the content transmitted to the receiver controller/STB 601 or targeted to the viewers associated with the receiver controller/STB 601. The advertising promotional content received is, in some embodiments, stored in the content storage 607. In other embodiments, the advertising module is responsible for removing and/or inserting advertising content. For example, nonlinear content received by the receiver controller/STB 601 may or may not have advertisement contained within. If the programming content does have original advertising content and the original advertising content is not targeted to the viewer of the content who is associated with the receiver controller/STB 601, the advertising module will remove the original advertising content, then retrieve selected downloaded advertising promotional content from the content storage 607 and insert advertising content targeted for the viewer into the programming content. If the programming content does not have original advertising content, appropriate advertising content targeted to the viewer will be selected from the downloaded programming content and inserted into the programming content. Removal and insertion of original and targeted advertising content, respectively, may different steps in one procedure occurring before storage of the downloaded programming content, or immediately before display of the downloaded programming content. However, removal of original advertising content may be performed before storage while insertion of targeted advertising content may be performed immediately before displaying of the programming content.

Hybrid Transmission of Content Delivery

[0135] FIG. 7 is a flow diagram illustrating a method of delivering content by hybrid modes of transmission in accordance with some embodiments. In some embodiments, such as flow diagram 700 in FIG. 7, a hybrid delivery system, using

at least a broadcast mode of transmission and a unicast mode of transmission, is used to deliver audio and visual programming content containing linear and nonlinear content.

[0136] A broadcast network used for broadcasting content in a hybrid delivery system may typically have a variable bandwidth. To deliver audio and visual programming content, an amount of available bandwidth available for broadcast in the network is to be identified, as shown in block **702**. A plurality of audio and visual programming content for transmission to a receiver controller/STB is separated into at least a first and a second portion, based on at least one of demand by viewers for the plurality of audio and visual programming content and the amount of bandwidth available for the broadcast, as shown in block **704**. Generally, any portion of content to be transmitted may include nonlinear content. The first and the second portions are generally prioritized where one of the portions, for example, the first portion, contains audio and visual programming content having a higher demand than other portions. It should further be understood that the content may be separated into more than two portions.

[0137] As shown in block **706**, the first portion of the plurality of audio and visual programming content is transmitted to the receiver controller using the amount of bandwidth available for the broadcast. The rate of transmission of the nonlinear content, if present, in the first portion, is transmitted at a rate independent of a rate for real time viewing of the nonlinear content at the receiver controller. Thus, the nonlinear content is typically not viewed in real time at the receiver controller/STB as the nonlinear content is being received by the receiver controller/STB. Instead, the nonlinear content is often stored for time-delayed viewing. The second portion of the plurality of audio and visual programming content may be transmitted to the receiver controller using unicast transmission, as shown in block **708**.

[0138] This procedure is further schematically illustrated in FIG. 7B. FIG. 7B is a schematic diagram illustrating a relationship between user demand and programming content identification of content which are to be broadcasted and content which are to be unicasted in accordance with some embodiments. The y-axis **721** of the graph **720** represents a demand for certain programming content or the percent of viewers likely to consume the asset, and the x-axis **722** of the graph represents the identification of the programming content or asset identifications (IDs). The curve **723** is the demand by the identification of the programming content or asset IDs, where the asset IDs for various content are ordered by most popular on the left and least popular to the right. The threshold **726** represents a cutoff point where certain programming content or asset IDs, for example, those in a high demand region **724**, are selected for broadcast, and where certain other programming content or asset ID, for example, those in a lower demand region **725**, are made available for unicast transmission. This cutoff is determined by the available broadcast bandwidth. In the high demand region **724**, programming content or assets together occupy the available broadcast bandwidth. The programming content designated for broadcast is transmitted by the available bandwidths in broadcast networks, while the content designated for unicast transmission is made available to the broadband distribution network **515**. In some embodiments, the content designated for unicast distribution is automatically pushed to the corresponding receiver controllers/STBs or are indicated as ready for download by the receiver controllers/STBs which then download the content over the broadband network. In other

embodiments, content may be designated for unicast distribution but are downloaded only upon explicit feedback by the end user.

[0139] Audio and visual programming content includes linear content and nonlinear content. For instance, audio and visual programming content may include television programs, movies, and all video content having an audio component (e.g. video clips found on YouTube™). Linear content and nonlinear content differ in several ways. Linear content is content delivered to a receiver controller at a fixed transmission rate that is possible for the viewer to view the linear content in real time as the linear content is being downloaded. Nonlinear content, in contrast, is delivered at a rate independent of the transmission rate of the linear content. Nonlinear content may be transmitted to a receiver controller at a rate that varies from the rate at which linear content is being transmitted. Nonlinear content may be transmitted to a receiver controller at much higher (or slower) speed than linear content. For example, a television program containing forty minutes of viewing content may be downloaded to a receiver controller in less than ten minutes. In other words, nonlinear content is transmitted at a rate that independent of the rate of transmission suitable for real-time viewing by user as the content is being transmitted.

[0140] Nonlinear content is also not part of a concatenation of programming. While nonlinear content and linear content are delivered using the same available bandwidth in a broadcast stream, and the assets comprising linear streams are programmed to be viewed in concatenated manner, the individual assets comprising nonlinear content are not concatenated and are not meant to be presented to the viewer in a preset order and are not meant to be viewed in a preset order. While nonlinear content is stored as discrete files at the content operation center **501**, nonlinear content may be transmitted by at least one of several ways. In some embodiments, nonlinear content is transmitted in a form of discrete files that are not part of a concatenation of programming for receiving and storing at one or more receiver controllers.

[0141] In other embodiments, portions of nonlinear content, each in the form of discrete files, are encoded into an aggregate file for transmission. In some embodiments the encoding may include both interleaving the bits in each discrete file together with the application of forward error correction. After encoding, the aggregate file is delivered by broadcast transmission to the receiver controllers. After the aggregate file is received at the receiver controllers, it is decoded back into individual discrete files of nonlinear content for storing and non-real time play back. The encoding process may be important in situations where further resiliency to broadcast reception errors is required or where a subset of receivers is only able to receive a subset of the encoded file. In such cases, the encoding still allows the recovery of each individual nonlinear asset in an error free manner. Linear content, by comparison, is transmitted in a form of linear streaming to the receiver controllers for viewing in real time and/or for recording in real time.

[0142] Nonlinear content is stored at a receiver controller/STB as discrete files for play back at a time different from the time of transmission. Each discrete file representing a complete programming content such as a movie or a television episode, etc. Therefore, in some embodiments, the nonlinear content generally cannot be viewed by the viewer as the nonlinear content is being transmitted, at least not until sufficient amount of the nonlinear content is buffered. The non-

linear content is generally viewed at a time after it is downloaded and stored at the receiver controller.

[0143] There are also differences in the different modes of transmission. Broadcast transmission is the transmission of content from a single point source to multiple points or destinations; whereas, unicast transmission is the transmission of content from a single point source to a single destination. For example, when content is broadcasted, the content may be received and captured by different receiver controllers in different households. However, when content is unicasted, the content is aimed at a particular receiver controller at a particular household. While the transmission bandwidth of broadcast networks is generally dynamic and variable over time, it may also be fixed. In other words, the bandwidth available in a broadcast stream for transmission of data changes, depending on the amount of bandwidth used by the network to transmit its content. For example, this is particularly the case when the broadcast bandwidth used are owned and controlled by affiliates **109** that are independent networks using a portion of their broadcast bandwidth for their own terrestrial digital television broadcasts. For example, such an affiliate may transmit about 6 Mbps of its content in the morning, but transmits about 15 Mbps of its content during primetime, if in this example, the entire bandwidth is 20 Mbps, then, about 14 Mbps is available in the morning and about 5 Mbps of bandwidth is available during prime time. In some embodiments, each individual broadcast stream in a network is defined as a single data channel for content transmission. For example, a local broadcast affiliate of ABC network broadcasts one stream of data and this stream of data forms a single data channel for content transmission in this system. The dynamic and varying nature of bandwidth availability also applies similarly to unicast transmissions.

[0144] Another manner that differentiates broadcasting and unicasting is the content that is transmitted in each mode. Audio and visual programming content of the highest demand by viewers are broadcasted; whereas, programming content of low demand or specifically requested by viewers are transmitted by unicasting. Furthermore, content transmitted by unicasting may be initiated by a server without a prior request by the user. An example of this type of content is "long tail" content which only a small subset of the viewer base is likely to consume but are very likely to be consumed by those specific viewers that have an expressed or implied likelihood to consume. In some embodiments, the different content being transmitted by broadcast transmission is allocated for transmission by various broadcast networks in accordance with a set of criteria associated with the broadcast transmission characteristics of a plurality of broadcast networks in which the content is being transmitted. The set of criteria includes at least available bandwidths on different broadcast networks, number of subscribers reachable by each broadcast network, and costs of data transmission in each broadcast network. Similarly in some embodiments, the different content being transmitted by unicast transmission are allocated to different unicast distribution methods in accordance with a set of criteria associated with the unicast transmission characteristics of a plurality of unicast networks in which the content is being transmitted. The set of criteria includes at least available bandwidths on different unicast networks, number of subscribers reachable by each unicast network, and costs of data transmission in each unicast network.

[0145] In some embodiments, linear content may be received at the content operation center **501** either by linear

streaming or from physical storage media. In some embodiments, for linear content received by linear streaming, the linear content is processed in real time before being sent for immediate delivery. In some embodiments, the processing also includes at least transcoding and/or encryption of the linear content in real time. The processed linear content is fed directly into the available bandwidth in a broadcast stream for delivery to viewers. In some embodiments, the linear content that is received by linear stream is not stored. However, linear content received by linear streaming may sometimes be stored and either broadcasted later as linear content, for viewing in real time, or as nonlinear content where the rate of transmission is not suitable for real time viewing. In other embodiments, content received in form of discrete files or from physical storage media may be transmitted as linear content and are transmitted to viewers at a rate of transmission suitable for real time viewing, at a particular designated time. For example, a brand new, never aired episode of a popular television series is obtained from the television series producer, the episode is targeted to be aired and viewed by viewers in real time, according to a particular schedule. In most cases, such an episode will not be available as nonlinear content for broadcasting at least until the same time that the episode is scheduled to be broadcasted live. In some embodiments, all linear content that is transmitted at a rate suitable for real time viewing is delivered by broadcast transmission. In other embodiments, certain linear content may be transmitted at a rate suitable for real time viewing by unicast transmission.

[0146] In some embodiments, audio and visual content may be separated into different portions based on demand by viewers for each of the different portions. The estimated demand for different audio and visual programming content is based on one or more factors. In some embodiments, there are at least six different factors from which demand by viewers may be determined and on which separation of content can be based. First is a list of interaction events resulting from watched programming content, such as watched television content, that is selectively chosen for viewing by the one or more viewers using a user interface to control the selection of the programming content. Second is a list of interaction events resulting from ignored programming content, such as ignored television content, that is browsed but not selected in the user interface. Third is a time of day and week wherein at least one of the first list of interaction events and the second list of interaction events occurred. Fourth are ratings of programming content, such as general television content, submitted by the one or more viewers about the television content viewed, using a user interface. Fifth is programming content, such as movies, television content etc., specifically requested by the one or more viewers. And, sixth is programming content, such as specific television series or movies etc., which is selectively captured by the receiver controller/STB at the one or more viewers' commands.

[0147] While in some embodiments demand from viewers may be directly estimated from at least one of the above factors, in other embodiments, different factors regarding the consumption of content serve as input into, for example, a recommendation engine **512** that further processes these factors to estimate demand. This may prove useful for instance in estimating demand for shows that have had no prior history of consumption and have not been available to the viewer base. In some embodiments, there are at least six different factors that may be processed by a recommendation engine **512** to

estimate demand by viewers and on which separation of content can be based. First is a list of interaction events resulting from watched programming content, such as watched television content, that is selectively chosen for viewing by the one or more viewers using a user interface to control the selection of the programming content. Second is a list of interaction events resulting ignored programming content, such as ignored television content, that is browsed but not selected in the user interface. Third is a time of day and week wherein at least one of the first list of interaction events and the second list of interaction events occurred. Fourth are ratings of programming content, such as general television content, submitted by the one or more viewers about the television content viewed, using a user interface. Fifth is programming content, such as movies, television content etc., specifically requested by the one or more viewers. And, sixth is programming content, such as specific television series or movies etc., which is selectively captured by the receiver controller/STB at the one or more viewers' commands.

[0148] In gathering viewer information such as those described above about a programming content, a specific demand for the programming content may be established. Further, this specific demand may be determined for a particular geographical region or demographic population. In the opposite, when such information provided by a user is analyzed for a particular viewer or user, a profile can be created for each viewer or user and the viewer or user's individual preference is identified. Moreover, a continuous analysis of the information gathered may allow a system to modify and adjust the viewer's preference and modify the user's profile containing the viewer's preferences.

[0149] In some embodiments, separation of content may be based on other factors in addition to those defining demand of particular programming content. For instance, programming content may be separated based on how content can be most conveniently delivered to a specific demographic population. In an example, certain foreign language based programming content, such as Spanish, may be more conveniently be delivered by a particular network because that network broadcasts to a region most populated by a Spanish speaking viewer base. Separation of content may also be based on a cost factor. For example, a satellite network may be able to reach a larger population, but using a combination of WiMax broadcast and a terrestrial broadcast at different times may reach the same population at a lower cost, therefore, the content may be divided not simply based on the type of transmission, but also the times in which network becomes available for transmission, at a lower cost. The above examples are merely exemplary illustrations of different basis in which content can be separated. The theme is that content is separated before transmission. Content separation may be based on one or more factors that include but not limited to, at least, a mode of transmission, a time of transmission, rate of transmission, user demand, viewers reached of a network, and cost of data transmission etc.

[0150] In some embodiments, broadcast transmission comprises at least one of several different types of networks, including, but not limited to, a wired broadcast network, a wireless broadcast network, and an Internet Protocol (IP) multicast network. In some embodiments, the wired broadcast network may be a cable network. Whereas, in other embodiments, the wireless broadcast network may be at least one of a satellite broadcast network, a terrestrial broadcast network, an ATSC DTV broadcast, a local cellular broadcast

network, and a WiMax broadcast. In some embodiments, different broadcast networks are selected for broadcasting different portions of the content to be delivered. Generally, a schedule is created by the scheduler. This schedule contains information about where and when content including linear and nonlinear content will be transmitted by broadcasting and unicasting. The schedule is sent to the different receiver controllers at different households so that the receiver controllers can capture the particular linear and nonlinear programming content preferred by each viewer associated with the receiver controller.

Optimizing Content Transmission Using Different Schemes

[0151] FIG. 8 illustrates a method for selecting a combined scheme for broadcasting and unicasting in a hybrid delivery system in accordance to some embodiments. A combined scheme having multiple broadcast networks and multiple unicast networks for transmitting data is used for transmitting content. Such a method of transmitting content using a combination of multiple broadcasting networks and multiple unicasting networks is described in flow chart 800. In some embodiments, a demand for a plurality of audio and visual programming content is identified, as shown in block 802. A respective amount of bandwidth available for transmission in each of a plurality of broadcast networks and in each of a plurality of unicast networks is to be determined, as shown in block 804. A set or group of viewers accessible by each of the plurality of broadcast transmissions is determined, as shown in block 806. The different costs associated with each of the plurality of broadcast networks and with each of the plurality of unicast networks are also determined, as shown in 808. A combine scheme for broadcasting and unicasting is determined, based on several factors, to maximize viewers' access to content of their respective interests, in a cost efficient manner, is shown in block 810. The factors including the different levels of viewers' demands for different contents, the availability of the bandwidths in the plurality of broadcast networks and the plurality of unicast networks, the accessibility in reaching viewers by each of the plurality of broadcast networks, and the cost associated with transmitting content in each of the plurality of broadcast networks and each of the plurality of unicast networks. The different content is transmitted in portions using combinations of the plurality of broadcast networks and the plurality of unicast networks in accordance with the delivery scheme, as shown in block 812.

[0152] In some embodiments, content is distributed in accordance with demand. For example, content with a higher demand is generally transmitted using broadcasting while content not well demanded is generally transmitted using unicasting to viewers specifically requesting the content. As such, understanding viewers' demand for different content is used in deciding which combination of using different modes of transmission is suitable for delivering a particular content to viewers demanding the content at a lowest cost per data transmitted.

[0153] Determining an availability of bandwidth for each broadcast and unicast network at any particular time is used for determining a schedule. In some embodiments, different broadcast networks each has a dynamic bandwidth that varies in time. In other embodiments, each different broadcast network has a fixed bandwidth. Still, in other embodiments, some broadcast networks have dynamic bandwidths while others have fixed bandwidths. Similarly, in some embodi-

ments, each unicast network has a dynamic and variable bandwidth. In other embodiments, each different unicast network has a fixed bandwidth. Still, in some embodiments, there may be a mixed of unicast networks, some have dynamic and variable bandwidth, and others have fixed bandwidth. Therefore, understanding when and which certain broadcast networks and certain unicast networks have the bandwidth available for transmissions is useful for determining a transmission schedule.

[0154] In some embodiments heterogeneous broadcast networks may be employed wherein the broadcast networks have different throughputs, possibly different or overlapping coverage in terms of subscribers, and diverse cost profiles. In these cases it is beneficial to ensure that content is delivered over the combination of broadcast networks in such a fashion as to maximize the ability of users to access the content of personal interest in as efficient a manner as possible. The general procedure to perform such maximization is to establish one or more cost functions and one or more associated constraints in order to reduce the problem to an optimization problem. This procedure is illustrated for heterogeneous broadcast as follows where for simplicity it is assumed that the broadcast networks have constant transmission bandwidth:

[0155] Let i label each content element and let n label each available broadcast network. Let matrix B represent the broadcast transmission of content i over network n where $B(i,n)=1$ if asset i is to be broadcast over network n and $B(i,n)=0$ otherwise.

[0156] Let matrix "Reach" represent the ability for broadcast network n to reach subscriber s where $\text{Reach}(n,s)=1$ if network n can reach subscriber s and $\text{Reach}(n,s)=0$ otherwise.

[0157] Let matrix "Demand" represent a measure of demand by subscribers for specific content assets, so that $\text{Demand}(s,i)$ is then a measure of demand by subscriber s for content i

[0158] Let matrix Cost represent the broadcast transmission cost of the programming content so that $\text{Cost}(n,i)$ is the cost of transmission of programming content i over network n . Then in one embodiment the heterogeneous broadcast optimization problem is to determine matrix B according to:

[0159] Maximize Over matrix B : $\text{Trace}(\text{Demand} * \text{Min}\{B * \text{Reach}, 1\})$;

[0160] While limiting the total cost of broadcast $\text{Trace}(B * \text{Cost})$ below a predetermined value; and

[0161] while ensuring that the capacity of no broadcast network is exceeded.

[0162] The matrix B so determines and establishes which programming content to broadcast on which networks.

[0163] Similarly, each different broadcast network may reach a different set of viewers. In some embodiments, some broadcast networks are located in densely populated areas, thus reaching large sets of viewers. In other embodiments, some broadcast networks are located in sparsely populated areas, thus reaching smaller sets of viewers. Still, in some embodiments, some broadcast networks broadcast to geographical areas highly populated by a particular social or demographic group, thus more suitable for delivering content to viewers fitting the particular demographics. Broadcasting is generally a preferred means of delivering content because of its efficiency in reaching a large set of viewers. In some embodiments, a combination of different broadcast networks reaching different social or demographic groups can be used to reach a diverse group of viewers.

[0164] Cost of transmission of content is a factor in determining a combined scheme. In some embodiments, keeping cost at a minimum is a goal, and therefore broadcasting may be favored for delivering most content. However, in other embodiments, in order to ensure that a maximum set of viewers can receive the most generally demanded content or content in which each viewer specifically requested, unicast transmission may be used for content delivery. Unicast transmission is generally more costly than broadcast transmission, but is effective to ensure successful delivery of content to specific individuals as long as these viewers are connected to a broadband network.

[0165] A combined scheme for content delivery using a combination of broadcast networks and unicast networks is aimed at maximizing viewers' access to content of their respective personal interests in a most cost efficient manner. Specifically, the combine scheme is targeted to reduce cost per viewer in receiving portions of the plurality of audio and visual programming content demanded by the viewers while maximizing the set of viewers to which the content can be delivered for each broadcast transmission. In some embodiments, when the bandwidth of the plurality of unicast networks is zero, or cost of data transmission for each of the plurality of unicast networks is prohibitively high, no unicast network is used. In other embodiments, the broadcast networks can reach a sufficiently large set of viewers, so no unicast transmission has to be used for content delivery. Still, in some embodiments, content designated for unicast distribution or transmission is available for download by a set of end users and is transmitted upon explicit request by the end users. In other embodiments, content designated for unicast distribution or transmission is content that is pushed from a content operation center, including content from a recommendation engine that is based on viewers' personal preferences.

[0166] A combined scheme can be used to deliver audio and visual programming content including both linear and nonlinear content. Nonlinear programming content is transmitted at a rate independent of a rate of transmission suitable for real time viewing of the nonlinear programming content at the time of receiving the nonlinear programming content at the receiver controller. Linear programming content is generally delivered using broadcast transmissions and may sometimes be delivered using unicast transmission. Broadcast transmissions may include at least one of a wired broadcast, a wireless broadcast, and an IP multicast. Furthermore, the wireless broadcast may include any one of a satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, local cellular broadcast, IP multicast, and a WiMax broadcast. Content scheduled for broadcasting is generally inserted in available bandwidth in an existing broadcast stream of a broadcast network, such as an available bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of a broadcast network.

[0167] FIG. 9 is a flow diagram illustrating a separation and extraction of content into nonlinear content for hybrid delivery in accordance with some embodiments. In some embodiments, nonlinear content is ingested directly as individual discrete files from physical storage media. However, in other embodiments, nonlinear content may be ingested from linear feeds, then separated and extracted from the linear feeds into individual discrete files for processing. In most cases, nonlinear content is stored before they are sent for delivery.

[0168] In some embodiments, flow diagram 900 in FIG. 9 illustrates a method where nonlinear content is separated and

extracted from linear feeds. A plurality of audio and visual programming content is received from one or more programming distribution networks by linear streaming, also known as linear transmission or linear feed, as shown in block 902. A component in the content operation center 501, such as the content preparation and modification system 103 or the content download manager 502, extracts individual files from the plurality of audio and visual programming content into individual files. Each individual file forms a different nonlinear content for storing at a component of the content operation center 501, such as the content storage module 507. These files are stored for a time delayed distribution for non-real time viewing, as shown in block 904. From the content storage module 507, a first number of individual files that are nonlinear content will be selectively retrieved and transmitted to one or more receiver controllers by broadcast transmission, as shown in block 906. Similarly, a second number of individual files that are also nonlinear content will be selectively retrieved and transmitted to one or more receivers by unicast transmission, as shown in block 908.

[0169] Nonlinear content ingested from physical storage media may be conveniently ingested as discrete files. In other embodiments, when nonlinear content is ingested in a form of a linear stream, extraction is more time consuming as the nonlinear content is ingested at the rate of transmission of the nonlinear content, such as a transmission rate suitable for real time viewing, and then separated into discrete files corresponding to the respective nonlinear programming content. The nonlinear content extracted from linear feeds may then be processed before storage. Such processing may include but is not limited to the processes of transcoding and encryption.

[0170] Broadcasting is a single point to multiple point transmission. As described before, in some embodiments, a broadcast network may be any one of a wired broadcast network, a wireless broadcast network and an IP multicast network. In some embodiments, a wired broadcast network is a cable network. However, in other embodiments, a wireless broadcast network may include at least one of satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, ATSC DTV broadcast, local cellular broadcast, and WiMax broadcast. In some embodiments, the broadcast transmission utilizes extra bandwidth in the broadcast stream, such as available bandwidth on an ATSC digital broadcast stream, for delivery of content.

[0171] The nonlinear content, once extracted is generally transcoded and then encrypted before being stored. While most nonlinear content goes through similar processing, different nonlinear content are demanded differently by viewers. For purposes of illustration and not by restriction, assume there are two groups of individual files, all representing nonlinear content. A first number of individual files having a first aggregate demand by a segment of viewers, and a second number of individual files having a second aggregate demand by a same segment of viewers. Further assuming that the first number of files has a higher aggregate demand than the second number of files. The first number of files may be identified for broadcast transmission while the second number of files may be identified for unicast transmission. While this is a simplified analogy, the object is that different groups of nonlinear files are often selected by one or more factors for different modes of transmission.

[0172] In some embodiments, linear and nonlinear content are combined before being further delivered to viewers. FIG. 10 is a flow diagram illustrating combining of linear and nonlinear content for transmission in accordance to some

embodiments. In some embodiments, the combined linear and nonlinear content is to be inserted into an available bandwidth in a broadcast stream for broadcast transmission. In other embodiments, the combined linear and nonlinear content is prepared for unicast transmission.

[0173] Flow diagram 1000 illustrates the combining of nonlinear and linear content for either broadcast or unicast transmission. Nonlinear content is usually obtained in form of discrete files, originally from either a linear feed or a physical storage, as shown in block 1002. Linear content, such as real time audio and visual programming content, may be received in form of linear streaming from an audio and visual programming distribution network, as shown in block 1004. In some embodiments, the real time audio and visual programming content is combined with at least a first portion of the nonlinear content, forming a combined linear and nonlinear content, for insertion into an available bandwidth in an existing stream of a broadcast network for broadcast transmission, as shown in block 1006. In the same embodiments, the combined linear and nonlinear content is transmitted to a plurality of receiver controllers using the available bandwidth in the existing stream of the broadcast network, as shown in block 1008. A second portion of the nonlinear content which is not combined with the linear content is transmitted by a unicast transmission at a rate independent of a rate of transmission suitable for real time viewing. Therefore, FIG. 10 illustrates some preferred embodiments where a combined linear and nonlinear content is transmitted by broadcast transmission, while a portion of the non-combined nonlinear content is transmitted by unicast transmission.

[0174] For some embodiments, linear content may not originate from a linear feed but instead originate from a physical storage media. In both cases, the linear content is being transmitted at a rate of transmission which is suitable for real time viewing as the linear content is being received by the viewer. For instance, in one case where the linear feed is already being transmitted at a rate suitable for real time viewing, the linear feed can be inserted directly into the broadcast stream at that rate of transmission. For linear content that may original from a physical storage media, the linear content will be played out at a rate suitable for real time viewing and then inserted into the broadcast stream for broadcast transmission. On the contrary, nonlinear content are discrete files and since they are intended for a time delayed distribution and for non-real time viewing, they can be transmitted at any rate and do not have to adhere to the exact rate of transmission that is suitable for real time viewing. In some embodiments, discrete files of nonlinear content are each sent individually at a higher transmission rate. In other embodiments, portions of nonlinear content, each in the form of discrete files, are encoded into an aggregate file for transmission. In some embodiments the encoding may include both interleaving the bits in each discrete file together with the application of forward error correction. In such embodiments, since discrete files are encoded and combined into a larger aggregate file, the information associated with each discrete file is actually transmitted at a rate slower compared to when each discrete file is sent individually.

[0175] As mentioned above nonlinear content is intended for non-real time viewing and can be transmitted at any rate and do not have to adhere to the exact rate of transmission that is suitable for real time viewing. This allows a greater degree of flexibility in how and when nonlinear is distributed. This is particularly the case when the broadcast bandwidths used are

owned and controlled by affiliates **109** that are independent networks that use a portion of their broadcast bandwidth for their own terrestrial digital television broadcasts. When a certain bandwidth is already occupied with live content transmitted by the network for real time viewing, a certain amount of bandwidth remains. In this remaining bandwidth, a fixed amount is used for sending linear content. Since linear content is being transmitted at a constant rate for play out over a certain period of time, during this time period, the amount of bandwidth used for the linear content transmission is constant. Therefore, the leftover bandwidth is available for broadcast transmission of nonlinear content. While each discrete file of a nonlinear content is of a certain size, if one discrete file is sent using all the leftover bandwidth, the discrete file can be transmitted faster as compared to when multiple discrete files are combined together using the same amount of left over bandwidth. When multiple discrete files are aggregated together on the leftover bandwidth, the capacity of the leftover bandwidth is split among the multiple files, and so the size of each discrete file being transmitted is less and so it will take longer for each discrete file to be transmitted.

[**0176**] In some embodiments, the nonlinear content may be stored at the affiliate prior to being combined into the available bandwidth in the broadcast stream before transmission. While generally, the linear content is directly streamed through without being stored, as described earlier, some content that is to be streamed at a linear content transmission rate may be first stored at the affiliate and played out at a rate for transmission suitable for real time viewing. In some embodiments, the broadcast network may include any of a wired broadcast network, a wireless broadcast network, and an IP multicast network. The wireless broadcast network may further include any of a satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, ATSC DTV broadcast, local cellular broadcast and WiMax broadcast. In some preferred embodiments, the available bandwidth may be extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of a broadcast network.

[**0177**] In some embodiments, the combined linear and nonlinear content are inserted into an available bandwidth in an existing broadcast stream for broadcast transmission to viewers in different households. In some embodiments, the existing broadcast stream has a certain bandwidth occupied by live television programming content that is broadcasted at a transmission rate for real time viewing when received by the viewers. FIG. 11 is a flow diagram illustrating insertion of linear and nonlinear content into an available bandwidth of a broadcast stream for broadcast transmission in accordance with some embodiments.

[**0178**] In some embodiments, the combined linear and nonlinear content is multiplexed into the linear stream of a broadcast network at the affiliate. Flow diagram **1100** illustrates the insertion of linear and nonlinear content into an existing stream of a broadcast network. In some embodiments, a plurality of linear content from a plurality of audio and visual programming distribution networks is received by an affiliate via linear streaming transmission as shown in block **1102**. In the affiliate, a plurality of nonlinear content in form of discrete files is retrieved from a storage memory. Each of the discrete files corresponds to a different audio and visual program, as shown in block **1104**. An available bandwidth in an existing stream of a broadcast network in the affiliate is to be identified. The existing stream will have a portion of bandwidth occupied with, for example, television

content broadcasting from the network in a form of a linear streaming transmission at a transmission rate suitable for real time viewing. After the available bandwidth is identified, at least one of a portion of the linear content and a portion of the nonlinear content are inserted in the identified available bandwidth to form an inserted content, as shown in block **1106**. The inserted content is to be transmitted with the television content broadcasted in the same existing stream of the network as one broadcast transmission to the plurality of receiver controllers, as shown in block **1108**. The portion of linear content, if present, in the inserted content, and the television content broadcasted from the network are transmitted at a rate of transmission suitable for real time viewing. However, the portion of nonlinear content, if present, in the inserted content, will be transmitted at a rate independent of the rate of transmission suitable for real time viewing. Therefore, even though the linear and nonlinear content are combined and inserted into the available bandwidth of the broadcast stream as the linear television content, the rates of transmission for the different content can be different from each other.

[**0179**] The broadcast stream of each broadcast transmission is dynamic and variable. The bandwidth available on each broadcast stream varies over time depending on the amount of content that is sent by a network through an affiliate at different times of a day. For instance, a broadcast transmission stream may be viewed as carrying affiliate content in affiliate occupied bandwidth, and the remaining bandwidth or available bandwidth is used to carry linear and/or nonlinear content. In some embodiments, during prime time, more users are tuned into the broadcast networks and the affiliate content occupies a larger bandwidth, for instance, to broadcast live television content to the larger number of viewers demanding the live television content, such as news. In other embodiments, for example, during off-peak hours, such as when everyone has gone to sleep, the demand for live television content is minimal and thus the available bandwidth increases as the affiliate occupied bandwidth decreases. Therefore, the available bandwidth remaining for transmitting linear content and nonlinear content also fluctuates and is variable depending on the amount of affiliate content that contributes to the affiliate occupied bandwidth in the overall broadcast transmission stream capacity. In some embodiments, during peak hours, because a high percentage of the viewers is using the tuners to tune into linear content or prime time content provided by third party television stations, tuners are less available for receiving broadcast transmission of nonlinear content. Therefore, since most tuners are occupied and there is a likelihood that nonlinear content may be missed by viewers, usually the less demanded content are broadcast transmitted at this time. Additionally, during prime time is where viewers are expecting "watercooler" content, defined as the third party channel content that may be expected to be viewed by a viewer base at a particular time. Therefore, most of this available bandwidth will be used for transmitting the "watercooler" content. However, during non peak hours, when the affiliate occupied bandwidth is low and the available bandwidth is high, the highly demanded nonlinear content may be broadcasted. One feature of the content operation center is that it has the intelligence to identify when the available bandwidth is maximum and when the available bandwidth is minimal. Consequently, the nonlinear content is often separated into at least a first portion and a second portion based on at least one of demand by viewers for the

nonlinear audio and visual programming content and the bandwidth available for the broadcast.

[0180] In some embodiments, the more popular or highly demanded content has a high priority to be transmitted than the less demanded content using a broadcast stream. However, the least demanded nonlinear content may be transmitted by unicast transmission because it tends to be the most costly to use. In some embodiments, different content may be allocated to be transmitted at different times using a same transmission mode, such as broadcast transmission. In other embodiments, the different content may be allocated to be transmitted by a different transmission mode based on demand. Lastly, different content may be allocated to be transmitted by same or different transmission modes, individually or combined, and at various different times etc., to achieve the most efficient manner of delivering as many of the demanded content to the viewers demanding the content at the lowest cost.

[0181] When content is transmitted to a receiver controller/STB **601** over unicast transmission, the receiver controller/STB **601** receives and captures content for storage and playback of the content. This content may either be linear content or nonlinear content. Linear content may be viewed or recorded live in real time as it is being received at the receiver controller/STB. Nonlinear content is often received and saved for a time delayed play back. In some embodiments, nonlinear content may begin a process of downloading and as soon as a sufficient amount of the nonlinear content is downloaded and buffered, a viewer may begin watching the programming content, even if the entire file is not completely downloaded.

[0182] In some embodiments, there is one or more receiver controller/STB in every household. Each receiver controller/STB is configured to capture content independent of another and each receiver controller/STB **601** is connected to the Internet, for instance, via a broadband network. In some embodiments, each of multiple receiver controller/STBs in one household may be configured to communicate with other receiver controller/STBs using a local area network (LAN) or an equivalent network, including but not limited to a wireless network and an Ethernet. Collectively, the broadband distribution network and each receiver controller/STB connected to the broadband network together form a peer-to-peer network. Each receiver controller/STB and the content operation center acts as a peer in the network. All the peers are configured to communicate and interact with each other using the broadband network. As such, information can be exchanged between any two peer in the network.

Modes of Transmission and Capturing of Content

[0183] In some embodiments, receiver controller/STBs receive linear and nonlinear content similarly. FIG. **12** is a flow diagram illustrating reception of content in a receiver controller/STB in accordance with some embodiments. Flow diagram **1200** illustrates how a receiver controller/STB receives both linear and nonlinear content from both a broadcast transmission and a unicast transmission. In some embodiments, a receiver controller/STB receives a transmission schedule for a plurality of audio and visual programming content from a transmission stream, for example, a broadcast transmission stream from an affiliate network, as shown in block **1201**. In accordance with a demand by one or more

viewers associated with the STB/Receiver, and the transmission schedule, the receiver controller/STB will selectively capture a first portion of the plurality of audio and visual programming content transmitted by broadcast transmission from a broadcast network, as shown in block **1202**. There may be linear content, nonlinear content, or both kinds of content, in the first portion of the content. If linear content is present, it is received at a rate of transmission suitable for real time viewing as the linear content is being received at the receiver controller/STB. If nonlinear content is present, it is likely received at a rate of transmission independent of the rate of transmission for real time viewing. In other words, nonlinear content is likely received at a transmission that is either too fast or too slow for real time viewing as it is being received at the receiver controller/STB. Also in accordance with the demand by the one or more viewers and the transmission schedule, the receiver controller/STB will receive or selectively capture a second portion of the plurality of audio and visual programming content that is transmitted by unicast transmission from a broadband network, as shown in block **1203**. In some embodiments, content designated for unicast transmission is made available to the broadband distribution network. The content designated for unicast distribution is either automatically pushed to the corresponding receiver controllers/STBs or is indicated as ready for download by the receiver controllers/STBs which then download the content over the broadband network. In other embodiments, content may be designated for unicast distribution but are downloaded only upon explicit feedback by the end user.

[0184] In some embodiments, each receiver controller/STB may capture content in multiple different ways depending on what content is transmitted, the format in which the content is being transmitted and the mode of content transmission. In some embodiments, the audio and visual programming content includes both linear and nonlinear content. Linear content, in some embodiments, is received in a form of linear streaming in a broadcast transmission, while in other embodiments, may be received in a unicast transmission, at the receiver controller/STB, for real time viewing and/or recording. Nonlinear content, in some embodiments, may be received in a form of discrete files. Nonlinear content in form of discrete files generally do not have to undergo further processing. The discrete files are stored for a time delayed play back. In other embodiments, portions of nonlinear content, each in the form of discrete files, are encoded into an aggregate file for transmission. In some embodiments, the encoding may include interleaving the bits in each discrete file together with the application of forward error correction. After the aggregate file is received at the receiver controllers, it is decoded back into individual discrete files of nonlinear content for storing and non-real time play back. Nonlinear content may be delivered by either broadcast transmission or unicast transmission.

[0185] Each receiver controller/STB is configured to receive content in a hybrid delivery system that includes at least broadcast transmission and unicast transmission. A broadcast network, in some embodiments, includes at least one of: satellite network, terrestrial network, local cellular network, an IP multicast network, and a WiMax network. Both linear and nonlinear content may be broadcasted to the STB/Receiver in any of the above networks. Each STB/Receiver will have at least one communication interface, such as an antenna subsystem, configured to receive the broadcasted content by at least one of the above mentioned networks. Each

receiver controller/STB will also have a communication interface for receiving linear or nonlinear content unicast by a broadband network. Linear and/or nonlinear content is typically inserted into an extra bandwidth of a broadcast stream for transmission. In some embodiments, the extra bandwidth is the residual bandwidth left over in an ATSC digital broadcast containing pre-existing third party linear broadcast streams.

[0186] Generally, linear and nonlinear content are selectively inserted into a particular mode of transmission for delivery to a receiver controller/STB. In some embodiments, linear and nonlinear content are both inserted into extra bandwidth of a broadcast stream for transmission to a plurality of receiver controller/STBs. In other embodiments, nonlinear content may be sent to designated receiver controller/STBs by unicast transmission. In some embodiments, linear and nonlinear content are selected for transmission based on demand by one or more viewers associated with the receiver controllers receiving the content. For example, nonlinear content that is demanded by a large population of viewers are received by broadcast transmission at the various receiver controller/STBs associated with the large population. In another example, a few individuals who specifically request certain nonlinear content that is not widely popular will receive their nonlinear content by unicast transmission. Similarly, receiver controller/STBs may also receive targeted promotional content, and/or recommendations of nonlinear content that is initiated by the server via unicast transmission without a prior request by a user. In other embodiments, content may be designated for unicast distribution by the system but are downloaded only upon explicit feedback by the end user.

[0187] A receiver controller/STB learns about which linear and nonlinear content to capture from a broadcast transmission and/or a unicast transmission by learning about the viewing routines and preferences of viewers who are associated with the receiver controller/STB. Routines may refer to at least one of certain recurring programming content viewed by a viewer during a time in a day, week, month and/or year, and recurring interaction events such as channel surfing among certain channels during a time in a day, week, month and/or year. In other words, routine is used to describe a recurring event performed by the viewer and may reflect on the viewer's viewing habits. Whereas preference may refer to programming content that are preferred by the viewer. These routines and preferences are utilized by each STB/receiver controller to capture linear and nonlinear content preferred by the viewers associated with a particular STB/Receiver. According to some embodiments, capturing refers to selectively receiving nonlinear programming content, whereas recording refers to selectively receiving linear programming content. While in both cases, the programming content are preferred by a viewer, the rate at which the content is received by capturing (nonlinear content) and recording (linear content) differs. For each viewer, the STB/receiver controller estimates a demand for a particular content and learns about a viewer's viewing routine and preference by performing at least one of the following: First, tracking a list of interaction events resulting from watched content that is selectively chosen for viewing by the one or more viewers using a user interface; Second, tracking a list of interaction events resulting from ignored content that is browsed but not selected in the user interface; Third, tracking a time of day and week wherein at least one of the first list of interaction events and the second list of inter-

action events occurred (e.g., routine); Fourth, tracking ratings of watched content submitted by one or more viewers; Fifth, tracking content that is specifically requested by the one or more viewers (e.g., preference); and sixth tracking content selectively recorded by the receiver controller at the one or more viewers' command (e.g. preference).

[0188] Additionally, a receiver controller/STB learn about which linear and nonlinear content to capture from a broadcast transmission and/or a unicast transmission through communications with the PDP module in the content operations center. The PDP module informs each receiver controller/STB of "discovery" content that viewers associated with each receiver controller/STB may be interested in. The PDP analyzes information sent from each receiver controller/STB including at least content viewing patterns of individual subscribers. The PDP module uses at least this information to correlate the viewing pattern across multiple viewers together with any direct input from the programming interface to determine which content is likely to be preferred by different viewers, therefore creating a personalized list of recommended shows for each viewer. This personalized list then forms the basis for capture of "discovery content" at the STB.

[0189] All content is securely encrypted before either broadcast transmission or unicast transmission. In some embodiments; after receiving a linear content, the receiver controller/STB will automatically decrypt the linear content for display. In other embodiments, after receiving a nonlinear content, the nonlinear content is directly placed in storage and will not be decrypted until it is ready for display. The process of decrypting and displaying content is performed by the software of the receiver controller/STB. In some embodiments, the receiver controller/STB also incorporates different mechanisms to prevent tampering to protect the content. In other embodiments, communication transmitted to receiver controller/STB is encrypted using SSL/TLS protocols or other schemes depending on the type of communication.

Content Repair at a Receiver Controller/STB

[0190] FIG. 13 is a flow diagram illustrating repairing portions of content received by a receiver controller/STB in accordance with some embodiments. In some embodiments, nonlinear content may be sent as individual files or encoded as one aggregate file from the content operation center to receiver controllers/STBs. In some instances, errors may incur during receiving of content, leading to corruption of the file(s). This may occur during the reception of individual files(s), or it may occur during reception and subsequent decoding of aggregate file(s). Flow diagram 1300 illustrates repairing of portions of content by a receiver controller/STB after files are received. In block 1301, audio and visual programming content in the format of files are received at the receiver controller/STB from a broadcast transmission. In some embodiments, the files received at the receiver controller/STB are stored in the content storage module 607 after having been received at the receiver controller/STB (and are later repaired if found to be corrupted.) In block 1302, corrupted files representing the corrupted audio and visual programming content, if present, is detected. In some embodiments, the error or corruption detection mechanism is inherently built into the file(s) itself. In block 1303, the content repairing module 612 sends a request to the nodes or peers, such as other servers and receiver controllers/STBs connected to the broadband network, to determine which ones of the nodes have an uncorrupted version of the cor-

rupted portion of the content. In block **1304**, the content repairing module **612** in the receiver controller/STB sends a request to at least one of the identified nodes having the uncorrupted version of the portion of the content. In block **1305**, the content repair module **612** receives the uncorrupted version of the corrupted portion of the content from one of the servers or receiver controller/STBs on the network. In block **1306**, the content repair module **612** replaces the corrupted portion of the content with the uncorrupted version of the corrupted portion of the content to form a repaired content. In block **1307**, the repaired content is stored in the content storage module **607** and ready for display in response to a user command.

[0191] In other embodiments, errors may occur during the reception of linear content originating from third party providers such as third party terrestrial digital TV stations. Such content are similarly stored in the content storage module **607** after having been received at the receiver controller/STB and are later repaired if found to be corrupted. If particular segments are found to be corrupted, the content repairing module **612** sends a request to the nodes or peers, such as other servers and receiver controller/STBs connected to the broadband network, to determine which ones of the nodes or peers have an uncorrupted version of the corrupted portion of the content. The content repair module receives the uncorrupted version of the corrupted portion of the content from the one of the servers or receiver controller/STBs on the network and replaces the corrupted portion of the content with the uncorrupted version of the corrupted portion of the content to form a repaired content.

[0192] In some embodiments, as described above, nonlinear content files can be corrupted anywhere in the process of transmitting files from the content operation center to receiving the files at the receiver controller/STB. In some embodiments, portions of a received content in files are corrupted, but not the entire file. In other embodiments, an entire file or more than one part of each file is corrupted. When a portion of a file is corrupted, the file can be repaired in accordance with the process described above. Alternately, the entire file can be replaced instead of repairing a portion of the file. The process of replacing a corrupted file is described below.

[0193] FIG. **14** is a flow diagram illustrating repairing whole files received by a receiver controller/STB in accordance with some embodiments. In some embodiments, audio and visual programming content are received at the receiver controller/STB from a broadcast transmission, as shown in block **1401**. In some embodiments, the audio and visual programming content received are optionally stored in form of files in the content storage module **607**, as shown in block **1402**. In block **1403**, the one or more corrupted files representing corrupted audio and visual programming content is identified. In some embodiments, the one or more corrupted files are detected by the file(s) itself as the file structure has a file detection mechanism inherently built-in. In other embodiments, the one or more corrupted files are detected and identified by the content repair module **612** that scans each individual file that is stored in the content storage module **607**. In block **1404**, having known which file(s) are corrupted, the content repair module **612** simultaneously sends multiple requests to multiple nodes on

the network to determine which has an uncorrupted version of the one or more corrupted file(s). In other embodiments, the content repair module **612** sequentially sends requests to determine which node has the uncorrupted version of the one or more corrupted files.

[0194] In block **1405**, the content repair module **612** sends a request to at least one of the servers and receiver controllers/STBs connected to the broadband network for the uncorrupted version of the one or more corrupted files. In some embodiments, once the content repair module **612** learned about which nodes contain the uncorrupted version of the one or more corrupted files, the content repair module **612** simultaneously sends a request to all the identified nodes or peers and waits for a response in the form of receiving the uncorrupted version of the corrupted file. Once the content repair module **612** receives the uncorrupted version of the one or more corrupted files, a request is sent to the remaining identified nodes, notifying them there is no need to send the file. In other embodiments, the content repair module **612** sequentially sends a request to each of the identified nodes and wait for a response in the form of receiving the uncorrupted version of the one or more corrupted files, when the file is not received within a certain duration, a termination request is sent and a new request is sent to a next node for the uncorrupted version(s) of the one or more corrupted file(s). This process is iterated until the uncorrupted version of the one or more corrupted file(s) is received. In block **1406**, the content repair module **612** or the receiver controller/STB receives one or more uncorrupted files from one of the nodes contacted. In block **1407**, the content repair module **612** replaces the one or more corrupted files stored in the content storage module **607** with the uncorrupted version(s) received.

[0195] Both content repairing mechanisms described above may apply to content received by broadcast or unicast transmission. Generally, content corruption occurs in files that pertain to nonlinear content, including but are not limited to movies, television series episodes, and internet video files etc. The content repair mechanism can equally applied to repair or replace content files for any type of nonlinear files. Furthermore, the content repair mechanism can equally applied to repair or replace content files for any type of recorded linear content such as content distributed by unrelated third party digital terrestrial television networks. Similarly, it should be appreciated that audio and visual content may be received in any one of multiple forms of broadcast transmissions including, but are not limited to, a wired broadcast, a wireless broadcast, and an IP multicast. Furthermore, the wireless broadcast may include, but is not limited to, satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, local cellular network broadcast, and WiMax broadcast. As discussed previously, the broadband transmission generally utilizes extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of broadcasting networks. In some embodiments, each node or peer, including any one of the receiver controller/STBs and servers on the network, is configured to communicate with each other directly without going through a central server.

Determination of a Schedule for Content Transmission

[0196] FIG. **15** is a flow diagram illustrating determination of a schedule for content delivery by a content operation center in accordance with some embodiments. Content is delivered to viewers in accordance with a schedule that is determined based on at least one of a number of factors. In

some embodiments, the schedule controls how content is delivered and when content is delivered to viewers. For example, the schedule may decide whether a particular nonlinear content is delivered by broadcast transmission or by unicast transmission and at what times. To create a schedule, in some embodiments, the available bandwidth of various broadcast transmission in different broadcast networks at different times is first determined, as shown in block 1501. In block 1502, a first portion of a nonlinear content is chosen for broadcast transmission. In block 1503, a second portion of the nonlinear content is chosen for unicast transmission. In block 1504, the first portion of the nonlinear content is allocated to form a schedule for broadcast transmission based on the bandwidth availability in different broadcast networks at different times. In block 1505, the second portion of the nonlinear content is allocated for unicast transmission. In block 1506, the first portion of the nonlinear content is transmitted to a plurality of receiver controllers in accordance with the schedule.

[0197] In some embodiments, the schedule is designed to ensure that at least some of the nonlinear content is delivered not longer than a time period after a target time such as the initial airing of a corresponding one of the nonlinear content on other third party systems. For instance, if a television episode is first aired in a cable network at a certain time and date, the same episode, in form of nonlinear content would be scheduled for transmission no later than a period after the initial airing of the episode. In some embodiments, the schedule is designed to ensure that the most popular content is transmitted via broadcast transmission while less popular content is allocated to unicast delivery.

[0198] The method by which such schedules are optimized involves the creation of a cost function for a given schedule whose value can then be minimized by various optimization techniques. By way of illustration one may construct such a cost function that takes into account available broadcast bandwidth, time of airing, and popularity of the content as follows:

$$\text{Cost}(\text{Schedule } S) = \sum B(i) \times D(i) * \left[e^{\frac{t(i,S) - t_0(i)}{\tau(i)}} - 1 \right] + \sum U(i) * D(i)$$

② indicates text missing or illegible when filed

[0199] Cost(Schedule S) is the cost assigned to a given schedule. The first sum covers all assets Broadcast(S) scheduled for broadcast transmission in schedule S and the second sum covers all assets Unicast(S) scheduled only for Unicast distribution. Here D(i) represents the fractional demand for asset or show "i" which may be taken for example as the fraction of viewers that have a high probability of consuming asset "i". The demand assigned may be based on past popularity of the show in question or estimated future popularity determined either via manual input or estimated future demand so determined via automated means such as the use of a recommendation engine. Here B(i) and U(i) represent the cost of broadcast and unicast distribution of asset or show "i" respectively. Since broadcast transmission is generally much cheaper than unicast distribution B(i) << D(i). Here t(i,S) represents the time t(i,S) that the asset or show "i" is scheduled for broadcast transmission by schedule S. t₀(i) is the target time at which asset (or show) "i" should be broadcasted. For example, this could be the time that the show is aired on other systems. tau(i) is a time constant designed to penalize sched-

uling a show too far ahead of the target time. The optimization problem is then simply to minimize Cost(Schedule S) across all schedules such that the identified broadcast bandwidth is not exceeded.

[0200] While in general achievement of a global minimum may be computationally difficult particularly when the cost function is further enhanced to take into account of other factors, a good first guess may be achieved by assigning and scheduling the assets in order starting from most popular assets until the broadcast bandwidth is exhausted. This is illustrated schematically in FIG. 15B, a figure similar to FIG. 7B as described earlier. FIG. 15B illustrates a relationship between user demand and programming content identification of content. The curve 1523 is the demand by programming content or asset IDs where the asset IDs for various content are ordered by most popular on the left and least popular to the right. An initial schedule may be established by first scheduling the asset of highest demand and then successively scheduling the asset of lesser demand wherein at each individual scheduling step the incremental effect on the cost function is minimized. This procedure is continued until all assets have been scheduled. The threshold 1526 represents a cutoff point where certain programming content or asset, for example, those in a high demand region 1524, are scheduled for broadcast distribution, and where certain other programming content or asset, for example, those in a lower demand region 1525, are made available for unicast transmission. This cutoff is determined by the available broadcast bandwidth. Finally, while such a schedule may represent a good first guess, it may also be possible to achieve a lower cost by successively varying the schedule. For example, the scheduled time and distribution method (broadcast vs unicast) for two or more assets may be interchanged on a random or pseudo random basis or according to some intelligent heuristic, such changes resulting in a revised schedule only if the change results in a lower cost function.

[0201] In some embodiments, factors beyond available bandwidth may be used for determining a schedule. For example, the times that are available for receiver controllers to receive content on each network are estimated or determined. The availability of receiver controllers is important since in some embodiments, receiver controllers are more occupied in receiving and recording other programming content such as linear content or receiving and capturing to disk other nonlinear content and are thus less available for receiving content from a transmission. On the contrary, there are other times where most receiver controllers are more available for receiving content from transmissions, such as during working hours when viewers are typically at work, or late in the night when viewers may be sleeping. Therefore, there are embodiments that will allocate the nonlinear content to form a schedule for content transmission based on available bandwidth in different broadcast networks at different times, as well as, based on times of availability for receiver controllers to receive content from different networks. In such circumstances the procedure of cost function minimization outlined above may be enhanced to take into account receiver availability.

[0202] In some embodiments, the determination of a schedule for content transmission is targeted to maximize probability of reception and storage of nonlinear content at the plurality of receiver controllers. And generally such maximization may be accomplished through the creation and minimization of a representative cost function.

[0203] Generally, in some embodiments, the schedule is transmitted to the receiver controllers so that the receiver controllers can capture the nonlinear content in accordance with the schedule.

[0204] Still, in other embodiments, linear content is also transmitted according to a schedule. In determining a schedule for transmitting both linear and nonlinear content in broadcasting and/or unicasting transmissions, the different types of linear content to be transmitted in form of streams are determined. For example, linear content may include live news and sports or linear feeds of popular prime time cable content ("watercooler content"). In some embodiments, the first portion of a linear content in form of streams for broadcast transmission is determined and the nonlinear content in form of files for broadcast transmission is determined, then both the linear and nonlinear content are scheduled for broadcast transmission.

[0205] In some embodiments, tuners within the population may be allocated to receiving local DTV channels. In such cases, tuner availability for the reception of nonlinear content will not be static overtime and will tend to be low during prime time and high during off peak hours. Furthermore the number of tuners per set top box may depend on the set top box in question. In such embodiments the determination of a schedule for content transmission is designed to account for availability of tuners at receiver controllers in receiving nonlinear content from different networks at different times at which broadcast bandwidth and demand for the assets are in question. This may be accomplished by introducing appropriate terms in the cost function to account for tuner availability so that for example transmitting an individual asset during periods of low tuner availability incurs a higher marginal cost

[0206] In some embodiments, the delivery of linear content is also an important part of the service. For example, some prime time cable channel content may be expected to be viewed by the viewer base at a particular time. Such content is often termed "watercooler" content as the expectation is that the corresponding content may form the subject of active conversations at schools, offices, and places of leisure the next day. In such embodiments, therefore, the determining and scheduling a first portion of a linear content in form of streams for broadcast transmission is an important part of the creation of the schedule. Nonlinear content may then be incorporated into such a schedule based on factors that include, but not limited to, the bandwidth availability in the different networks at the different times, utilization of the plurality of receiver controllers by viewers, and demand of nonlinear content by viewers

[0207] The bandwidth available for broadcast transmissions may be dynamic or static in different broadcast networks. In some embodiments, some broadcast networks broadcast a same amount of network content at different times, thus, the amount of available bandwidth for broadcasting transmission of linear or nonlinear content is static and remains constant at all times. In other embodiments, some broadcast networks broadcasts different amount of network content during different times, thus, the amount of available bandwidth for broadcast transmission of linear or nonlinear content is dynamic and changes depending on a time of day, week, and/or year. Still in other embodiments, there are occurrences where extra bandwidths may become available in a manner that was unanticipated before hand. This unanticipated bandwidth that becomes available is known as

opportunistic bandwidth. In some embodiments of this system, the system is capable of inserting at least one of a portion of the nonlinear content and a portion of the linear content into an opportunistic bandwidth for broadcast transmission. This portion of nonlinear and/or linear content inserted into the opportunistic bandwidth may be content previously scheduled for broadcast transmission, or it may be content previously scheduled for unicast transmission, or it may be content not previously scheduled for immediate transmission.

[0208] Similar to other descriptions above, nonlinear content in a schedule for broadcast transmission is transmitted at a rate independent of a rate of real-time viewing of the nonlinear content at the receiver controllers receiving the nonlinear content. Furthermore, the broadcast networks may be a wired broadcast network, a wireless broadcast network, and an IP multicast network. If it is a wired broadcast network, the network may be a cable network. However, if it is a wireless broadcast network, the broadcast may be at least one of a satellite broadcast, a terrestrial broadcast, an ATSC DTV broadcast, a local cellular broadcast, and a WiMax broadcast.

System Intelligence for Adapting and Learning Viewing Preferences

[0209] FIG. 16 is a flow diagram illustrating the PDP portion in a receiver controller/STB as an automated personalized recommendation and storage engine in accordance with some embodiments. In some embodiments, the receiver controller is an automated personalized recommendation and storage engine of nonlinear content. For instance, some receiver controllers may have the intelligence to learn about viewers' preferences for audio and visual programming content through programming content viewed by viewers, programming content not viewed by viewers, the time of day and week when such events occur, and programs that are recorded, subscribed to, and/or rated by viewers. Furthermore, these receiver controllers are also capable of continuously adapting to and modifying the viewers' viewing preferences as long as the viewers are using the receiver controllers to select and to watch programming content. Once these receiver controllers learn about the viewing preferences, they are capable of making recommendations to the viewers based on the viewers' viewing preferences.

[0210] In some embodiments, the capture and storage of programming content is illustrated in flow diagram 1600 of FIG. 16. In flow diagram 1600, one or more viewers' viewing preferences of particular audio and visual programming content for the one or more viewers associated with the receiver controller is determined based on at least one criterion, as shown in block 1601. In some embodiments, the receiver controller can automatically capture the nonlinear programming content information matching the one or more viewers' viewing preferences. In other words, the receiver controller has built in intelligence to first learn about the viewers' viewing preferences based on at least one of many possible factors, including learning about the programming content that is viewed, selected, not selected, subscribed to and/or rated by the viewer. Furthermore, in some embodiments, once the viewing preferences for the one or more viewers are determined, the receiver controller can automatically search for nonlinear programming content matching the viewers' preferences in accordance with the schedule in which the nonlinear programming content matching the viewers' preferences are transmitted. In other embodiments, the receiver control-

lers can search, and optionally capture the nonlinear programming information the corresponding to the audio and visual programming content matching the one or more viewers' viewing preferences, as shown in block 1602. The corresponding captured nonlinear programming content matching the one or more viewers' viewing preferences are stored in the receiver controllers, as shown in block 1603. The nonlinear programming information about the audio and visual programming content matching each of the one or more viewers' preferences is then displayed and presented to the viewers, as shown in block 1604.

[0211] In some embodiments nonlinear programming content is not captured until the viewer explicitly makes a request to capture the content. For instance, information about nonlinear programming content may be presented and displayed to viewers to generate interest, and only captured via broadcast transmission or downloaded via unicast transmission after an indication is received from the viewer.

[0212] The receiver controller/STB learns and continuously adapt to viewers' viewing preferences by evaluating several criteria. In some embodiments, no emphasis is placed on any particular criterion, while in other embodiments, emphasis may be placed on selected ones of a series of criteria. The criteria comprise a range of factors. In some embodiments, a first list of interaction events resulting from watched television content that is selectively chosen for viewing by the one or more viewers using a user interface is used. In other words, the first list of interaction events leading to a particular watched programming content is used as a pattern to learn about the one or more viewers' viewing preference. In other embodiments, a second list of interaction events resulting from ignored television content that is browsed but not selected in the user interface is used. In this case, the second list of interaction events resulting from ignored television content that are browsed but not selected are used to learn about programming content that is not preferred by the one or more viewers. In some other embodiments, the criterion is a time of day, week, and/or year wherein at least one of the first list of interaction events and the second list of interaction events occurred. For instance, the time of day, week, and/or year when particular viewer interactions are most frequent may be understood by the receiver controller to be the favored times for presentation of the particular or similar nonlinear content associated with such events.

[0213] In some embodiments, a list of audio and visual programs marked for subscription by the one or more viewers is used to learn about content favored by the one or more viewers. Similarly, in some embodiments, ratings of television or programming content submitted by the one or more viewers about content viewed, television content requested by the one or more viewers, and television content selectively captured by the receiver controller at the one or more viewer's commands, are also used by the receiver controller to learn about the one or more viewers' viewing preferences.

[0214] In some embodiments, if after a number of instances where information about captured nonlinear programming content is presented to the viewer and the viewer is not interested in viewing the underlying content, the captured nonlinear programming content may be deleted from disk. In some embodiments, the content is either automatically deleted after a period of time or deleted in response to a user command. However, in other embodiments, where the viewer is interested in the captured nonlinear programming content based

on the information displayed, the viewer can request to view the captured nonlinear programming content by a user command.

[0215] In some embodiments, the system described may be used in conjunction with an interface device, including, but not limited to a remote control. The interface device may be used to control a user interface on the receiver controller to control different functions and operations of the receiver controller. FIG. 17 is a flow diagram illustrating the receiver controller/STB performing as a recommendation engine in conjunction with use of a remote control in accordance with some embodiments. For example, at a receiver controller, one or more viewers are identified based on a user command sent from an interaction device capable of identifying the one or more viewers using the interaction device to interact with the receiver controller/STB as shown in block 1701. For instance, such a user command may be accomplished at least by one or more user buttons on the interaction device where the one or more user buttons are dedicated to identify a corresponding one or more individual viewers operating the interaction device. In other words, the user command sent from the interaction device is used to activate a viewer profile that is stored in the receiver controller/STB, which corresponds to a user operating the interaction device, containing that viewer's viewing preferences. The viewer's viewing preferences of programming content is determined based on at least one criterion. While the viewer is identified based on the user command received from the interaction device, the viewing preferences corresponding to the identified user is determined based on past and continuing interaction with the receiver controller, as shown in block 1702. Once determined, the viewing preferences of the identified user or viewer is used by the receiver controller to, optionally, capture programming content information associated with audio and visual programming content matching the viewer's viewing preferences, as shown in block 1703. The captured programming content associated with the audio and visual programming content matching the one or more viewers' viewing preferences is stored, optionally, as shown in block 1704. The receiver controller may display the captured programming associated with the content matching the viewer's viewing preference to the one or more viewers in response to a user command by the one or more viewers received from the interaction device by the viewer, as shown in block 1705.

[0216] In essence, interactions between the interaction device and the receiver controller/STB are used to accomplish at least two important features of the system: to build a viewer profile that is stored on the receiver controller/STB and to present matching content. In some embodiments, interaction events represented by, for example, viewer selections and ratings of programming content, assist the system in identifying viewers' preferences to build a profile and to capture programming content that are at least similar to those preferred by viewers. In other embodiments, interaction events, similarly, including but not limited to user selections and ratings of programming content, are used to instruct the system in presenting programming content, including those selected by the viewers and recommended to the viewers based on their individual preferences.

[0217] In other embodiments, the viewer may continue to watch a program, and upon conclusion of the program in progress or before the viewer begins to watch a new program, the programming information corresponding to other programming content matching the viewer's viewing preference

will be displayed for the viewer to select. In such embodiments, the programming content associated with the programming information has preferably already been captured along with the programming information. In other embodiments, the programming content is captured in response to explicit instructions from a viewer after the programming information is displayed. In such a case, the associated content is typically captured via unicast. In some embodiments, the programming content matching the viewer's viewing preference is automatically selected and displayed in transition after the program in progress is terminated, without a viewer's explicit instruction.

[0218] According to one embodiment, a unique remote control, as described in the earlier referenced U.S. provisional application Ser. No. 60/985,173, titled "Remote Control Unit for Intelligent Video Programming System" filed on Nov. 2, 2007, is used to control a user interface in the receiver controller/STB. The remote control has at least one button dedicated to the identification of a viewer. Specifically, when a viewer identification button is activated, the user profile of the particular viewer corresponding to the user identification button is activated in the receiver controller/STB. Consequently, the viewing profile of the viewer becomes active and the programming information captured for the viewer is retrieved from storage and displayed by the receiver controller to the viewer.

[0219] Generally, in some embodiments, the receiver controller/STB captures audio and visual programming content matching a viewer's preferences. The viewer's preferences are based on at least one of multiple criteria. In some embodiments, the receiver controller is an adaptive learning device that tracks hits and misses of programming content selected by a viewer to determine the viewer's viewing preference. "Hits" are defined as programming content that are selected or substantially consumed or viewed by a viewer, while "misses" are defined as programming content which are browsed prior to a "Hit" against other programming content but not viewed. FIG. 18 is a flow diagram illustrating the PDP portion in a receiver controller/STB as an adaptive learning device with tracking of hits and misses in accordance with some embodiments. Viewing preferences are determined independently for each viewer, and the receiver controller continuously modifies a viewer's viewing preference by learning and adapting to different programming content that are viewed and/or deliberately skipped by the viewer.

[0220] Flow diagram 1800 in FIG. 18 illustrates, in some embodiments, how a receiver controller adaptively learns about each viewer's viewing preferences by tracking programs watched and not watched by each viewer. For instance, a receiver controller/STB identifies a viewer using the receiver controller for viewing audio and visual programming content, as shown in block 1801. When the viewer is identified, the interaction events by the viewer are tracked as the viewer uses the interface device and the user interface to select programs for viewing, as shown in block 1802. For example, interaction events may include, but are not limited to, a viewer choosing and selecting a first content for viewing, but ignoring at least a second content that is browsed but not selected. If a viewer's profile has been previously created, the viewer's profile in the receiver controller/STB is modified based on the interaction events by the viewer, and if the viewer's profile is not previously created, one is generated based on the interaction events by the viewer, as shown in block 1803. This series of adaptive and continuous modifica-

tions of the viewer profile based on at least interaction events after formation of the viewer profile is repeated for interaction events while the viewer is operating the receiver controller, as shown in block 1804. The receiver controller can optionally selectively capture preferred audio and visual programming content from at least a broadcast transmission based on the viewer profile, as shown in block 1805. The captured audio and visual programming content is, optionally, stored in block 1806 and, optionally, displayed in response to the viewer's command, as shown in block 1807. In some embodiments, the captured audio and visual programming content is prioritized in accordance to at least one of users' preferences and users' routines before display. Thus, the order in which programming content is presented for display may be determined by the demand for a particular program by the viewer and/or by the habit or routine in which the viewer watches different programming content.

[0221] Besides interaction events, the receiver controller may also use other factors and criteria for modifying the viewer profile. In some embodiments, the time of day, week, and/or year in which the interaction events occur are tracked. For example, the times in which interactions with certain content are most frequent represent instances when the viewers are most active in viewing content of a certain type. Using the viewer profile, for example, in such an instance, the receiver controller/STB may therefore present the user with the specified content type at the appropriate time of day, thus adapting to the viewer's daily routine. In some embodiments, the receiver controller/STB tracks the subscriptions of audio and visual programs by the viewer. Still in some embodiments, the receiver controller adaptively and continuously modifies the viewer profile based on the subscriptions. In other embodiments, the receiver controller/STB tracks audio and visual programs that are rated favorably by the viewer. Still, in some embodiments, the receiver controller tracks programming content specifically requested by the viewer. While in other embodiments, the receiver controller/STB tracks programming content that is selectively captured by the receiver controller at the viewer's command. In some embodiments, a receiver controller may use collectively, all or some of the above factors or criteria to modify a viewer profile on a continuous basis as long as a viewer is properly identified by the receiver controller to correspond the events to the proper viewer profile.

[0222] In some embodiments, the receiver controller/STB identifies the viewer through feedback from an interface device and uses the associated viewer's viewing profile, and uses these viewing preferences to present information about content that may be of interest to the viewer. FIG. 19 illustrates a flow diagram of receiver controller/STB displaying information about programming content in accordance with some embodiments. Block 1901 shows a receiver controller/STB receiving user identification command from an interface device operated by a viewer associated with the receiver controller/STB. In block 1902, the receiver controller/STB identifies the viewer by the user identification command received from the interface device. In block 1903, the receiver controller/STB retrieves, in response to the user identification command from the interface device, a user profile of the viewer containing viewing preferences of the identified viewer that is stored in the receiver controller/STB. In block 1904, the receiver controller/STB retrieves programming information, in accordance with the user profile having one or more viewers' viewing preferences, which is captured at an

earlier time. In block **1905**, the captured programming information is presented to the viewer.

[0223] In the embodiments described above, the receiver controller/STB displays and presents the captured programming information when a different user is identified by the receiver controller through the different user's activation of a different user identification button on the interface device. In other embodiments, the captured programming content information may be displayed upon request by a viewer or upon completion of a programming content that is being viewed by the viewer. In the former case, if the viewer requests to view programming content information captured, the programming content information is displayed once the receiver controller/STB receives such a user command from the interface device. In other embodiments, the programming content information is automatically presented to the viewer, among other programming content information stored on the receiver controller/STB, upon completion of a program being viewed, without instructions from the viewer. If a viewer is interested in the programming content associated based on the information presented, the viewer selects the audio and visual programming content by activating a command from the interface device (e.g., remote control), and the receiver controller/STB will respond by displaying the selected programming content.

[0224] One of the unique intelligent features of this system is its ability to use the viewers interactions with the programming content or asset, to improve viewer experience. Generally, such interaction events are used to improve viewer experiences such as, including but not limited to, "personalizing" the PDP module in the content operation center and display priority of different programming content/asset in the user interface when interfacing with the receiver controller/STB. FIG. **20** is a block diagram illustrating an algorithm that intelligently determines viewer preferences by tracking a viewer's interactions with programming content in accordance with some embodiments. In some embodiments, the asset or programming content is received via at least one of broadcast transmission and unicast transmission at the receiver controller/STB, as shown in block **2001**. This programming content or asset may then be presented by the system to a viewer associated with the receiver controller/STB in response to activation of the receiver controller/STB and identification of the viewer as shown in block **2002**. If the programming content/asset is presented to the viewer, the response of the viewer, in form of viewer interaction with the asset/programming content, is determined by the system intelligence as one of hit, miss, or balk events, as shown in block **2007**. A hit is referred to as a viewer selecting the asset/programming content for viewing, a miss is referred to as a viewer skipping the asset/programming content and choosing to watch another asset/programming content, and a balk is referred to as a viewer not responding to the asset/programming content, in which case, it is unclear if the asset or programming content is received favorably or unfavorably by the viewer. The system logs each of these viewer interactions as an event. For instance, if the viewer interaction is classified as a hit, the event is logged as a hit, and the corresponding time and asset ID are recorded for the event as shown in block **2008**. If the viewer interaction is classified as a miss, the event is logged as a missed, and the corresponding time and asset ID are recorded for the event as shown in block **2009**. Lastly, if the viewer interaction cannot be classified, the event is logged as a balk, and no corresponding time or asset

ID is recorded for that event. In some embodiments, such classification of interaction events as they are related to particular programming content/asset helps to personalize the PDP in the content operation center and contribute to the determination of programming content in which the recommendation engine sends or recommends to the receiver controller/STB.

[0225] In some embodiments, this logging of events and association of events logged for each asset helps a receiver controller to prioritize the many programming content or asset being displayed in a user interface to the viewer. For instance, in some embodiments, where an asset is associated with multiple events that the interaction is a miss, the asset is displayed lower on a list since it realizes the viewer has deliberately skipped it a number of times. Alternatively, they could be put higher on the list because the receiver controller/STB wants to bring attention to the viewer that the particular asset has been skipped multiple times and thus the viewer should either watch it or delete it. Similarly, an asset receiving multiple events where the interaction is a hit suggests that the viewer likes the asset and repeatedly watches the asset, and thus the asset may be placed high on the list. Also, for assets associated with a large number of events where there is not any favorable or unfavorable interaction, the assets may be listed high on the list to generate interest from the viewer or placed low on the list.

[0226] In other embodiments, once the interaction with the programming content has been logged as an event as either a hit, miss, or balk classification, the programming content/asset is then stored until the asset is deleted by the receiver controller/STB to make room for other programming content, expiration of the digital management rights (or viewing rights), or until the viewer deliberately deletes or removes the content. While the asset is stored, the asset may be presented to the viewer again for viewing. However, if the asset is being removed from storage, as shown in block **2003**, the system will query about the hit, miss, and balk events related to the viewer interactions with the asset or programming content that is being removed. For instance, if there is at least one event of a hit logged for the asset before it is being deleted, the system will register that the viewer has watched the asset or programming content, as shown in block **2006**. If there is not a single log event associated with the asset as being a hit, the system asks if there has ever been an event logged as a miss for the asset being deleted, as shown in block **2010**. If there is, then the system interprets that the viewer has chosen not to view the asset/programming content, as shown in block **2011**. Still, if there is not an event associated with the asset being deleted as being either a hit or a miss, the system interprets the viewer's impression of the asset is undetermined and the system cannot interpret if the viewer like or dislike the asset and thus the asset is not classified as shown in block **2012**. In some embodiments, such classification of interaction events as they are related to particular programming content/asset helps to personalize the PDP in the content operation center and contribute to the determination of programming content in which the recommendation engine sends or recommends to the receiver controller/STB.

[0227] Yet another intelligent aspect of the system is that each viewer is capable of sharing his/her preferred programming content with other viewers. This is a form of community sharing of programming content. Community sharing refers to the ability of having one viewer recommend programming content to one another. For example, person A in California

can recommend a specific show to person B in New York, directly by using the interface device or remote control. Such recommendations may be processed by the PDP in the content operations center before being pushed to the other receiver controllers/STBs or such recommendations may be sent directly to the other receiver controllers/STBs. In some embodiments, viewer A recommends a program to viewer B through the user interface on A's receiver controller/STB. Person B's receiver controller/STB would then either automatically capture and present the recommended content to person B, or present an option for person B to capture the recommended content in the future. In some embodiments, this recommendation and sharing feature may be presented as one option in the user interface of the receiver controller/STB where a viewer can select and control using the remote control or interface device. For instance, each viewer may have an option to "recommend to friends", where recommendations of a programming content can be sent to any of a list of friends where their receiver controllers/STBs are interconnected.

[0228] In other embodiments, the system can identify that certain viewers are recommending content to one another and so build a social recommendation graph and data mine such a graph to automate such cross promotions between users. In other words, a network of receiver controllers/STB may be made into a social network comprising viewers operating their receiver controllers/STB that communicates with each other by recommending audio and visual programming content. In some embodiments, the network of receiver controllers/STB may be tied into a social network application that is commonly operated on a desk top terminal such as a computer. In such embodiments, each receiver controller/STB is aware of a social network and each profile on a receiver controller/STB may be tied to a corresponding profile on the social network. In this example, a particular user of the social network may show other users what specific content the particular user has recently viewed. By associating a profile on the receiver controller/STB with a profile on a social network, this association may be used as a basis for sharing recommendations in programming content among users.

[0229] Still another intelligent aspect of the system is its ability to capture and present content of relevance to a viewer using information collected during initial configuration to generate a foundation of a profile for a user or viewer. In some embodiments, after a system is initiated, a user or viewer is asked to set up a viewer profile on the receiver controller/STB. Specifically, each user button on the interactive device/remote represents an individual viewer associated with the receiver controller. In some embodiments, initial configuration of the receiver controller, includes but is not limited to, questions about the viewer's sex, age, race, education level, preferred programming content such as genre and channels. All the questions were aimed at collecting information about the viewer so as to build an initial user profile and to capture and present content of relevance or of interest to the viewer.

Intelligent Presentation of Targeted Advertising

[0230] The system described in this disclosure is designed to store and play out digital audio and video files to the television set. This system utilizes a user interface to present content options in an organized and personalized fashion. One distinct aspect of the system is its ability to deliver advertising in a paradigm different than the thirty second ad segments employed by the traditional television advertising. The advertising paradigm of this system is unique in at least

three different ways. First, the system provides a number of diverse opportunities to target advertisements to viewers within the user interface, in accordance with rules of an advertising campaign. Second, the system has the potential to target and achieve relevancy in targeting advertising to the viewer using different rules belonging to different advertising campaigns. And third, the system has the capability of implementing, managing and tracking different advertising campaigns.

[0231] The different ways of implementing the advertising paradigm of the system is enabled by the interaction of at least the user interface, the interaction device (e.g. remote control), the receiver controller/STB, and the ability to transmit programming content and advertising content through different means in an expeditious manner. For example, the receiver controller/STB is able to identify different viewers through the interaction device, and the user interface on the receiver controller/STB enables different viewers to control their individual viewing content providing opportunities for advertisement insertion where it is not previously possible. The components in the receiver controller/STB enable the system to continuously and adaptively learn about the viewers' preferences and to target advertising content to specific viewers based on either the viewing preferences or the selected programming content. Furthermore, the massive storage enables the receiver controller/STB to provide a wide range of programming content and advertising content for display.

[0232] Interaction of different components and functions of the system enables the implementation of intelligent advertising. First, the system has the ability to remove original advertisements from programming content and/or insert targeted advertisements into programming content at different levels. Second, in combination with a user interface, the system has the intelligence to selectively target, display, and place advertisements, in accordance with different advertising campaign management rules, including but not limited to, targeting one or more specific viewers associated with the receiver controller, to effectively communicate promotional information to viewers. Third, advertising may be targeted at precise circumstances associated with viewers' interactions (e.g. time of day, week, and/or year, type of program etc.) as dictated by a list of attributes or rules supported by a campaign management system.

[0233] In some embodiments, the interaction device or the remote control device has one or more user buttons specifically designed to send a user identification command to the receiver controller to identify the viewer operating the interaction device. In some embodiments, this user identification is accomplished during set up of the receiver controller in conjunction with the use of the remote control. In some embodiments, initial configuration of the user profile may be achieved via a website on the internet. FIG. 21 is a block diagram illustrating the initial set up of a remote control/interaction device in setting up a user profile stored on the receiver controller that corresponds to a particular user button on the remote control, in accordance with an embodiment. FIG. 21 shows a remote control or interaction device 2101 having at least one or more user buttons 2102, a scroll wheel 2103, and keys or buttons to active certain "trick modes" 2104. During initial set up, one of the user buttons 2102 is activated and corresponds to a particular user/viewer profile 2113. Within this user/viewer profile is a user/viewer configuration screen 2111 for configuring the basic demographic information of the user/viewer who is being identified by the particular user button. In some embodiments, questions

including but not limited to information about the viewer's sex, age, race, education level will be presented to gather basic demographic information of the viewer. Further, other questions, including but not limited to programming content preference such as genre, may be asked of the user/viewer. Such information is collected during initial configuration to generate a foundation of a profile of the user/viewer. The complete profile will be built with additional information gathered from other data/information, including but not limited to, the tracking of interaction events such as classification of programming content as hits, misses and bulk, viewer/user's rating of programming content, user/viewer's ranking of programming content, user/viewer's subscription to particular programming content etc. will all be used to modify the viewer profile. This specific profile will be retrieved by the receiver controller whenever the particular user identification command is received from the activation of the corresponding user button on the remote control/interaction device.

Removal of Advertisements at the Content Operation Center

[0234] The system has the ability to remove original advertisements from programming content and/or insert advertisements and promotional content into programming content at different levels of the system. For instance, either or both of these operations can be performed at the content operation center. FIG. 22 is a flow diagram illustrating removal of original advertising content from programming content at the content operation center in accordance with some embodiments. In some embodiments, the content operation center receives a plurality of audio and visual programming content from a plurality of audio and visual programming distribution networks in a form of linear streams, as shown in block 2201. Each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content includes a corresponding original promotional content embedded within each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content. The content operation center further selectively removes the corresponding embedded original promotional content, as shown in block 2202, for the plurality of audio and visual programming content. The content operation center then stores each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content without the corresponding embedded original promotional content as nonlinear content, in the form of a single discrete file, for time-delayed distribution and non-real time viewing.

[0235] In some embodiments, the audio and visual programming content received by the content operation center in form of linear streams may include, but are not limited to, television programming such as episodes of a series, movies, documentaries, internet videos etc. In some embodiments where the audio and visual programming content contains original advertisements embedded in the programming content, once the original advertisements are removed, the programming content without the advertisements are saved as discrete files for time-delayed distribution as nonlinear content. Such nonlinear content may be transmitted to the viewers depending on a schedule. The nonlinear content may be delivered by broadcast transmission or unicast transmission. If it is a broadcast transmission, it may be a wired broadcast network, wireless broadcast network, or an IP multicast network, using available bandwidth of an ATSC digital broadcast.

Removal and Insertion of Advertisements at the Advertising Campaign Management Module

[0236] In some embodiments, the content operation center may perform both removal and insertion of advertisement

content in the programming content. For instance, FIG. 23 is a flow diagram illustrating removal of original advertising content and insertion of targeted advertising content into programming content at the content operation center in accordance with some embodiments. Similar to removal of content, the content operation center receives a plurality of audio and visual programming content from a plurality of audio and visual programming distribution networks in a form of linear streams, as shown in block 2301. Original promotional content is embedded within each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content. In other embodiments, the programming content may be received in form of discrete files. The content operation center then removes the corresponding original promotional content embedded in each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content as shown in block 2302, in accordance with a particular advertising campaign. The content operation center then inserts into each of the plurality of the audio and visual programming content, at least a portion of a targeted promotional content by applying a set of rules for the particular advertising campaign, as shown in block 2303. In some embodiments, the advertising campaign may be aimed at viewers of each of the plurality of the audio and visual content, while in other embodiments, the advertising campaign may be aimed at attributes associated with a particular programming content. Still, in some embodiments, the promotional content may be part of an advertising campaign unrelated to programming content, but rather a time such as Christmas to generate interests on advertised goods and services, that is inserted into a broad range of programming content, indiscriminate of the programming content. In other embodiments, certain targeted promotional content relevant to the programming content is inserted. In some embodiments, at least a portion of the plurality of audio and visual programming content with the targeted promotional content is stored as nonlinear content in form of discrete files for a time-delayed distribution and non-real time viewing, under at least instructions from the advertising campaign management system, as shown in block 2304. In other embodiments, at least a portion of the nonlinear content is transmitted to viewers by broadcast transmission at a rate that is independent of a real-time viewing rate of the nonlinear content at the receiver controller receiving the programming content, in accordance to a schedule, as shown in block 2305.

[0237] In some embodiments, audio and visual programming content may be received at the content operation center in a form of discrete files or linear streams. While the programming content may or may not contain original advertising content, the content operation center has the ability to extract or remove original advertising content if present, whether the audio and visual programming content is received as linear streams or discrete files. If there is no embedded advertising content within the programming content, as in some other embodiments, the programming content is either stored as discrete files as received without advertisements, or have targeted advertisements inserted into the programming content before being stored under instructions from the campaign management system to target a specific advertising campaign. Similarly, if the programming content has original advertising content in some embodiments, the programming content may be stored with the embedded original advertising content as discrete files and save for removal of the advertisements at a different time. On the contrary in other embodiments, the original embedded advertisements may be removed from the programming content

before stored, or insert targeted advertisements in place of the original advertisements before the programming content is stored. In some embodiments, where and when any original advertising is removed and/or where and when advertising targeted to a particular advertising campaign is inserted, are at least controlled in part by the advertising campaign management system.

Removal of Advertisements at the Receiver Controller/STB

[0238] In those embodiments where the programming content does not include advertisements, or if the original advertisements embedded in the programming content is not removed before being transmission to the viewers, advertisements removal and/or insertion that is part of an advertising campaign is performed at the receiver controller/STB prior to display of programming content. FIG. 24 is a flow diagram illustrating removal of original advertising content from programming content at the receiver controller/STB in accordance to some embodiments. In some embodiments, the receiver controller/STB receives a plurality of audio and visual programming content in a form of linear streams or discrete files, where each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content contains original advertising content, as shown in block 2401. The receiver controller/STB selectively extracts the original advertising content, which is embedded within the plurality of audio and visual content, from each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content, as shown in block 2402. The receiver controller/STB then stores each of the plurality of the audio and visual programming content without the corresponding original advertising content as modified discrete files in the receiver controller, as shown in block 2403. The removal of original advertising content may, in some embodiments, may be a function of a particular targeted advertising campaign with a unique objective.

[0239] In some embodiments, the audio and visual programming content may be linear or nonlinear content. Linear content is typically received by broadcast transmission while nonlinear content may be received by the receiver controller/STB via broadcast transmission or unicast transmission. Furthermore, nonlinear content is generally received at a rate independent of a rate of real time viewing of the nonlinear content at the receiver controller. For instance, the nonlinear content may be transmitted at a rate much faster or much slower than the real-time viewing rate of the nonlinear content.

[0240] In the aforementioned embodiments, the audio and visual programming content generally contains originally embedded advertising content, but in some cases, may contain advertisements inserted into the audio and visual programming content at the content operation center. There may be instances where the advertisements inserted at the content operation center may be expired or are to be replaced as instructed by the content operation center because of a change in advertisement campaign. In each of these cases, the advertising content may be removed by the receiver controller/STB under specific instructions from the advertising campaign management system.

[0241] In some other embodiments, each of the received programming content is identified before advertisements are removed under instructions from the advertising management system in accordance to rules targeting a specific advertising campaign. For instance, the advertising management

system may make a determination about a programming content in which a targeted advertising campaign is to be applied. Afterwards, based on advertising campaign rules, identification of the programming content, the original advertisements associated with the programming content is removed and the advertisements associated with the targeted advertising campaign is inserted. In some embodiments, selected advertisements may be inserted into the programming content before it is stored, and in other embodiments, selected advertisements may be inserted immediately before display after the programming content has been requested by the viewer.

Insertion of Advertisements at the Receiver Controller/STB

[0242] Still there are some embodiments where the audio and visual programming content does not contain any advertisement when received at the receiver controller/STB. Typically, when the receiver controller/STB receives programming content without any advertisements, advertisements from targeted advertising campaigns are inserted into programming content. In some embodiments where advertising campaigns are targeting each of the specific viewers associated with the receiver controller/STB, the targeted advertisements will be inserted into corresponding programming received for each of the specific viewers. In these embodiments, the programming content is either ingested at the content operation center without advertisements, or the original embedded advertisements are removed before transmitted to the receiver controller/STB. FIG. 25 is a flow diagram illustrating insertion of targeted advertising content into viewer specific programming content at the receiver controller/STB in accordance with some embodiments. In these embodiments, the receiver controller is configured to receive a plurality of advertising promotion content, as shown in block 2501, and may optionally be targeted to a particular advertising campaign by the advertising campaign management system or to one or more viewers using the receiver controller. The receiver controller/STB receives a plurality of audio and visual programming content, as shown in block 2502. Then, the receiver controller/STB identifies which of the plurality of audio and visual programming content is for which of the one or more viewers, as shown in block 2503. In some embodiments, some of the plurality of audio and visual programming content may also be identified as targets of one or more particular advertising campaigns. After the identification, the receiver controller/STB inserts, correspondingly, at least a portion of the plurality of advertising promotion content targeted in accordance with an advertising campaign or for the one or more viewers into each of the audio and visual programming content identified for each of the one or more viewers, as shown in block 2504. The receiver controller/STB then displays each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content with the targeted advertising promotion upon request by the one or more viewers using the receiver controller, as shown in block 2505.

[0243] In some embodiments, after having been received by the receiver controller/STB, each of the plurality of audio and programming content after the plurality of audio and visual programming content is stored before any advertising promotion content is inserted. In other words, the advertising content is inserted before the programming content is displayed or inserted during displaying of the programming content, and after a request is made to view the programming content. In other embodiments, after having been received by

the receiver controller/STB, the plurality of audio and visual programming content is identified either for one or more viewers or for association with one or more advertising campaigns. The appropriate advertising content selected for each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content is retrieved and inserted into each of the corresponding plurality of audio and visual programming content. In some embodiments, the advertising content is stored in the receiver controller/STB. In other embodiments, the advertising content is directly retrieved by downloading via unicast transmission from the content operation center. The audio and visual programming content with the inserted advertising content is then stored before being displayed in response to a viewer request.

[0244] In some embodiments, a viewer may be identified via a user command received from an interaction device having one or more user buttons that is activated by the viewer when interacting with the receiver controller/STB. Specifically, when the one or more user buttons are activated in the interaction device, a predetermined profile stored on the receiver controller is activated, such that specific viewing preferences and programming information and/or content associated with the viewing preferences connected to the corresponding profile is determined. When programming content matching the viewing preferences is selected, the programming content is displayed. In some embodiments, the targeted advertisements are inserted after the programming content is selected but before it is displayed; in other embodiments, the targeted advertisements are inserted as the program is being displayed, still, in some embodiments, the advertisements are inserted before the programming content is initially stored.

[0245] In some embodiments, targeted advertisements may be inserted before, after, or as part of the programming content when an action is being performed on the audio and visual programming content. In some embodiments, at least a portion of the plurality of advertising promotion content is selectively downloaded onto the receiver controller to target the viewers associated with the receiver controller. Such selectively downloaded advertising promotion content is displayed over the programming content when an action, including but not limited to, fast forward, rewind, pause, skip forward, skip backward etc., is performed on the programming content. For example, during fast forward, when embedded or inserted advertisements in the programming content are being fast forwarded, a different advertising image or another form of advertising may be placed over the fast forwarding advertisements. This overlaying image or advertising is then removed when the operation is deactivated. In other embodiments, advertisements may be selectively inserted immediately before and after content playback. Still, some portions of the advertisements can be personalized to make the advertisements particularly individualized to the viewer, such as for example, "Bill, this can be your car!!"

Removal and Insertion of Advertisements at the Receiver Controller/STB

[0246] Both removal of original advertisements and insertion of targeted advertisements may be performed in the receiver controller/STB. For instance, in some embodiments, programming content may not be processed at the content operation center at all after ingestion. However, in some other embodiments, programming content is processed at the content operation center but has to be modified at the receiver

controller either due to a change in advertising campaign or updating of advertising content to better target the viewers. FIG. 26 is a flow diagram illustrating removal of original advertising content from viewer specific programming content and insertion of targeted advertising content into the viewer specific programming content in the receiver controller/STB in accordance with some embodiments. In some embodiments, a receiver controller receives a plurality of audio and visual programming content for one or more viewers using the receiver controller, each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content containing original advertising content, as shown in block **2601**. Optionally in some embodiments, the receiver controller identifies which of the plurality of audio and visual programming content is for which one of the one or more viewers. The receiver controller then selectively removes the original advertising content embedded within each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content, as shown in block **2602**. At least a portion of advertising content having promotional material targeted for one or more advertising campaigns is correspondingly inserted into each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content for the one or more viewers, as shown in block **2603**. In some embodiments, the advertising campaigns may be targeted at one or more viewers associated with the receiver controller/STB. Upon request by the one or more viewers, the audio and visual programming content is displayed with the targeted advertising content, as shown in block **2604**.

[0247] In some embodiments, the audio and visual programming content is stored in the receiver controller before identification of the audio and visual programming content, removal of original advertising content, or insertion of targeted advertising content. As described previously, in some embodiments, the removal of original advertising content and insertion of targeted advertising content occurs after the audio and visual programming content is identified, associated with the viewer, and retrieved. In some embodiments, the removal and insertion of advertisements are performed prior to display of the programming content, while in other embodiments, the removal and insertion of advertisements are performed during display of the programming content. In some embodiments, targeted advertising content is received by the receiver controller/STB via either broadcast or unicast transmission from the content operation center.

[0248] In some embodiments, as described earlier, retrieval of programming content is in response to identification of the viewer. In some embodiments, a viewer operating an interaction device sends a user identification command to the receiver controller, using one of the user identification buttons on the interaction device, and the receiver controller identifies the viewer based on the user identification command. In some embodiments, when a particular program is selected, advertising content targeted for one or more advertising campaigns that is downloaded earlier is retrieved and selectively inserted into the program either before the program is displayed or when the program is being displayed. In other embodiments, some portions of the advertisements for the advertising campaigns may also be displayed when an action is performed on the program, including, but not limited to, fast forward, reverse, pause, skip forward, skip backward, etc., as previously described. Similarly, other portions of the advertisements targeting the viewer may also be displayed before or after playback of the program. Furthermore, some portions of the advertisements may be personalized specifi-

cally for the viewer, such as, for example, “Bill, this can be your car!!” to make the advertisements more personal to the viewer.

[0249] According to one embodiment, expired advertisements that are considered “old” or “stale” can be swapped out. For instance, a network broadcasting a general television program is paid by advertisers for advertisements that are viewed up to three (3) days from original airing. In this example, an “old” or “stale” advertisement may be defined as any advertisement that is older than three (3) days from original airing. Anytime after the three (3) days, the content broadcasting network is free to remove and replace those advertisements. In one embodiment, a receiver controller/STB can have the ability to identify these expired advertisements and replace them by “new” or “fresh” ones at the time of expiration of these advertisements. Storage space consumed by expired advertisements can be recycled for new ones. This feature enables advertisement storage space to be utilized efficiently on the receiver controller/STB so that the viewer is always receiving the most up-to-date advertisements. From a perspective of a content broadcasting network, a fresh stream of revenue also accompanies the new advertisements.

System Intelligence Enabling Targeted Advertising

[0250] Besides the system’s ability to remove and/or insert advertisements in the programming content at different levels, the intelligent and personalized nature of the service provided by the system enables it to target different advertisements at different viewers who may be viewing the same programming content. For example, different viewers viewing the same programming content in different households may view different advertising. In other words, different viewers viewing the same programming content at on the same channel at the same time can view different advertisements. The system’s targeted advertising is determined based on answers to questions such as “who is watching”, “what is being watched”, “when is it being watched” and “where is it being watched”. By understanding who is watching a particular content at what particular time and where, in some embodiments, the system is capable of associating relevant advertisements to the particular viewers to increase efficiency in which advertisers can reach a particular targeted audience.

[0251] This system, including at least the content operation center, the advertising campaign management system, and the receiver controllers/STB receiving the content, is configured to show various types of different advertising content in one or more different ways. First, for programming content that supports advertising queues, the advertising management system can intelligently and dynamically insert advertising segments during play back of the programming content. In some embodiments, advertising segments may be of any length (e.g., the typical thirty seconds in duration, or a combination of different lengths.) In other embodiments, the targeted advertising content may be determined based on a pre-designed rule set for a targeted advertising campaign. Second, different advertising content may be selectively inserted for display during pre-roll and post-roll of programming content playback. In other words, different content may be selectively displayed before or after programming content playback. For instance, pre-roll advertising is common in free online content offerings. Third, discrete advertising overlays and “ad bugs” during operations on the programming content so termed as “trick mode” play back such as fast forward, rewind, pause, skip forward, skip backwards, slow motion

etc. are also made possible. For instances, static or dynamic advertising images can be inserted during activation of such trick mode operations. Fourth, various locations in the user interface offers advertisers opportunities to present static image based advertising that may or may not contain an interactive component. For example, in some embodiments, static images of a product or brand of product and service is displayed. In other embodiments, an image of products or services may include an interactive component, such as, without limitation, a hyperlink or some other active component for interaction with the viewer. Fifth, the user interface can have branded “zones” that offer networks and content providers the ability to highlight content and their brands. Still in some embodiments, the system is capable of creating telescoping and interactive advertisements. For example, telescoping advertisements “expand” a short advertisement into a longer advertisement in response to a user selection and activation. Interactive advertisements allow the viewer to make selections during the advertisements where the possibilities include branching to other advertisements or other advertising segments as well as requesting responses that may include, but is not limited to, an electronic coupon offering.

[0252] Central to the advertising campaign is a powerful user interface, an intelligence component and a massive storage which are parts of the STB/Receiver, and an interaction device that interacts with the STB/Receiver to identify the viewer. In addition to the programming content, the storage in the STB/Receiver may hold at least approximately about five hundred (500) to approximately about two thousand (2000) traditional thirty seconds duration advertising clips. These advertising clips or segments are generally delivered to the receiver controller/STB using at least one of the broadcast transmission and unicast transmission. In some embodiments, the advertising segments are pushed down to particular receiver controller/STBs by the content operation center. In other embodiments, the receiver controller/STB selectively capture different advertising clips/segments from the broadband or unicast transmission.

[0253] The intelligence behind the targeted advertising is made possible by the advertising campaign management module in the content operation center and the advertising module in the receiver controller/STB. While the advertising campaign management module manages advertising campaigns and coordinates the different campaigns and different rules for the different campaigns, the advertising module in the receiver controller/STB determines which advertisements to present on screen. The advertising module selects advertisements to present in accordance with queues resulting from user operations in the user interface and according to rule sets determined by various active advertising campaigns. Specific viewer responses to the advertisements, also known as impression counts, are tracked and logged in the advertising module and fed back to the advertising campaign management system in the content operations center for feedback of the one or more campaigns’ effectiveness.

[0254] Each advertising campaign may specify rule sets incorporating a number of different elements. FIG. 27 is a block diagram illustrating different elements in advertising campaigns and rules of the advertising management system in accordance with some embodiments. Associated with each advertising campaign content and rule set 2701 are different elements including, but not limited to, advertising types 2702, time and space 2703 in which the advertisements are presented, impression rules 2704, program metadata 2705, and

user information **2706**. The advertising campaign content and rule set **2701** and its elements can be distributed to the advertising module in the receiver controller/STB **2708** which decides based on the rules and elements, what, when, where and how the advertisements are presented to viewers. Viewers can respond to the advertisements through the STB/user interface **2709**, and both the information about the presentation of the advertisements from the advertising module **2708** and the responses from the STB/user interface **2709** are fed back to the advertising logging and tracking module **2707** which is a part of the advertising campaign management system in the content operations center.

[0255] The different elements in the advertising campaign content and rule set **2701** interact in concert to selectively display advertisements targeting different viewers while viewers are watching different programming content. Advertising types **2702** refer to the different forms advertisements can be presented. For instance advertisements can be presented in program **2702A**, similar to traditional advertisements that are separately spaced and inserted within a programming content. Due to the unique user interface of the system, various other advertising types are possible. For example, specific advertisements may be presented pre-roll **2702B** and post-roll **2702C**, where advertisements are inserted before and after the programming content. Such pre-roll **2702B** and post-roll **2702C** advertisements, in some embodiments, can be made compulsory that cannot be skipped or fast forwarded by viewers. In other embodiments such as a trick mode overlay **2702D**, advertisements can be presented to a viewer when a user selects a user operation including, but not limited to, fast forward, reverse, pause, skip forward, skip backwards, slow motion etc. Such trick mode overlay **2702D** is performed during the time in which the operation is in effect and throughout the duration of the operation. In some embodiments, the trick mode over is a static advertisement image, in other embodiments, the trick mode overlay **2702D** may be a dynamic advertisement. Still in other embodiments, static images **2702E** may be presented on screen in different viewing areas of the user interface that are visible by viewers. Finally, the user interface may incorporate brand zone content **2702F** that are zones for network and content provider to promote contents or brands. In some embodiments brand zone content **2702F** is an area on the user interface that can dynamically interact with a viewer.

[0256] Another different element is time and space **2703** that controls when and where the advertisements are displayed. For instance, certain advertising campaign may be targeted at general adult viewers, such advertising content may be presented during a particular time of day **2703A**, like during prime time, when news are broadcasted. Similarly, in other embodiments, different campaigns may be seasonal and targeted for a specific duration. For instances, a campaign for thanksgiving turkeys may be targeted for display over certain days of week **2703B** or month of year **2703C**. Other examples of seasonal advertising campaigns are Christmas sales or sales of produces or services around specific times of a year. Still, in some embodiments, advertisement campaigns may be specifically targeted at different locations **2703D**. Different locations may include, but are not limited to, different cities, counties, states and regions. Furthermore, different locations may be determined based upon the different social demographics, including but not limited to, diversity of population, educational level of population, spoken language(s) of

population, income level(s) of population and ethnicity or cultural background of population.

[0257] A different element contributing to advertising campaign rules is program metadata matching **2705**. Program metadata contains inherent information about a programming content that identifies the programming content. For example, program metadata may include, but is not limited to, type of programming content (e.g. movie, episode etc.), title of programming content (e.g., "Friends", "24"), or specific episode (e.g. "Seinfeld Episode 23"), channel where programming content is displayed (e.g., "Discovery", "TLC" etc.), and genre/category of the program (e.g., reality, documentary etc.). The advertising module can target advertising by matching advertisements to one or more specific types of information found in the metadata. For example, advertisements for cars and trucks may be matched with genre of program that is classified as "action", female products may be targeted at title of programming content such as "Sex in the City" etc. In some embodiments, matching is accomplished via a Boolean rule set so that inclusion and exclusion rules can easily be manipulated.

[0258] Another element contributing to advertising campaigns and rules is user information **2706**. User information includes demographic profile **2706A** and behavioral history **2706B**. In some embodiments, demographic profile is used in a specific campaign to target a specific segment of the population. For instance, a campaign may be targeted at teenage females, while a different campaign may be targeted at female household members. In other embodiments, behavioral history may be used by a specific campaign to target matching against previous events in the viewers' behavioral history. For example, if a particular interactive advertisement has once generated a particularly high response, a new campaign to follow up on that interactive advertisement may be directed at those viewers who previously responded or interacted with that advertisement.

[0259] Another different element that is important to the advertising campaign and rules are impression rules **2704**. Impression rules are rules that govern the number of times and how advertisements are displayed and presented to viewers. Impression rules include, but are not limited to, setting impression limits **2704A** or the number of times advertisements are displayed, selectively rotating ads **2704B**, and selectively weighing ads **2704C**. In some embodiments, certain ads about new products may want a high exposure and thus the frequency of display may be high, however, another different service may want to maintain a sense of exclusivity and is only displayed only in association with certain programs. Similarly, those ads that are intended to have achieved a high impression may have a heavier weight for more frequent displaying while those with lesser impressions may be rotated more frequently.

[0260] A last element that is essential to the advertising campaign is the interaction device. The interaction device or remote control, not displayed, serves a fundamental function in identifying the viewer. Specifically, in each interaction device or remote control, there is at least one dedicated button or key which is used by the viewer to identify himself/herself. This interaction device is customized and tailored to interact specifically with the user interface and the components inside the receiver controller/STB to achieve the targeted advertising and personalized viewing based on profiles for each identified viewer stored in the receiver controller/STB.

[0261] In this system, cross-platform advertising may also be implemented. In particular, advertising on the receiver controller/STB may be made more relevant to the viewer by understanding a user's preferences through websites visited or searches the viewer makes at home via their computer. In some embodiments, a program may be associated with a computer that communicates with the receiver controller/STB used by a viewer. This program may be used to learn about a viewer's web behavior such as websites the viewer likes to visit on the internet. This "internet profile" may be communicated by the program to the advertising campaign management module in the content operations center or to the advertising module on the receiver controller/STB and then used as input into advertising campaigns running on the receiver controller/STB. For instance, a viewer seeking to purchase a new vehicle may have been visiting websites and searching for a sports car. With this information, the receiver controller/STB may be able to filter, retrieve, and/or capture relevant advertisements personalized to sports cars and present these advertisements/promotions to the user to help the user in making a purchase. In some embodiments, association may be made between the Internet profile on the computer and the receiver controller/STB. This may be accomplished, in some embodiments, by manually making the program on the computer aware of the serial number of the receiver controller/STB by the viewer. In other embodiments, the computer can be made to communicate with the receiver controller/STB via a home network. In summary, the program acts as an information collector that works with the advertising campaign management module in the content operations center and the advertising module in the receiver controller/STB so the receiver controller/STB can download and present the relevant advertisement for presentation.

[0262] Cross-platform advertising can be implemented, in other embodiments, using servers on the internet that are adapting and learning about the viewer's web behavior such as websites visited. For instance, this may be accomplished through the use of cookies residing in the browser's cookie cache to build a user or viewer or household's "internet profile." This user or viewer or household's "internet profile" is then used as input into advertising campaigns run on the receiver controller/STB. In some embodiments, no programs specifically associated with the computer, used by the user or viewer or members of the household, specifically for the purpose of communicating the "internet profile" is necessary. Instead servers, including but not limited to advertising network servers, on the Internet would monitor the user's or household's web behavior such as websites visited through the use of cookies residing in the browser's cookie cache. This manner of using third-party cookies to collect user information is commonly employed, for example, by advertising companies. Using the browser information and advertising information collected, such servers build a user or household "Internet profile" and this profile may be associated with the user's or household's profile on the receiver controller/STB. For example, the receiver controller/STB could host a web interface and push a cookie into the browser's cookie cache; or for example, a cookie could be placed in the browser cache when the viewer visits a web server on the Internet dedicated for monthly account and service maintenance. This association may then be used to push more relevant promotional content to the receiver controller/STB. For example, a user

looking for a sports car may be shown promotional content concerning one or more different sport cars.

Viewer Interface for a Content Delivery System

[0263] Detailed embodiments of a viewer interface ("UI") for interacting with a content delivery system are described. A viewer of content uses a remote control unit or some other interactive device to navigate a UI on a display device to selectively display audio visual programming content in a content delivery system. Such audio visual programming content include, inter alia, television programming content, on-demand programming content, and videos posted on the Internet. The content delivery system may comprise of a transmission portion and a receiving portion. The transmission portion transmits content in a hybrid mode of transmission, which uses at least a broadcast mode of transmission and a unicast mode of transmission to deliver audio and visual programming content containing linear and nonlinear content. The receiving portion can then receive such content transmitted either by broadcast or unicast transmission. In some embodiments, the receiving portion comprises of a receiver controller such as a base or set-top-box residing in a household location and a networked antenna and transport system further comprising multiple Networked Antenna and transport System Units (NATSUs). Content available on a broadcast mode of transmission may be received by possibly multiple NATSUs and sent to the receiver controller to be displayed on a display device such as a television monitor. Content may also be received by the receiver controller through the Internet via a broadband IP connection. In addition, content may be viewed in real time when content is received or may be stored locally on a storage device for future viewing. In some embodiments, the storage device is an integral component of the receiver controller, while in some other embodiments, the storage device is an external storage device coupled to the receiver controller to serve as a primary or secondary source of content storage. In some embodiments, the receiver controller and the display device may be a single integrated unit. In some other embodiments, the receiver controller and the display device are separate devices. The UI interacts with the receiver controller, which in turn interacts with other portions of the content delivery system to present contents to the viewer. In some embodiments, the UI may be driven by software on the receiver controller. Detailed description of such a content delivery system can be found in U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/016,416, entitled "System Architecture For Content Delivery" filed on Dec. 21, 2007, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

[0264] The UI is designed to accommodate both content delivered via broadcast modes of transmission and content delivered via unicast modes of transmission. In the broadcast mode of transmission, content is transmitted from a single point source to multiple points or destinations (e.g. ATSC digital signal). In the unicast mode of transmission, content is transmitted from a single point source to a single destination (e.g. broadband). Broadcast and unicast modes of transmission may also differ in the type of content being transmitted. Regardless of the mode of transmission used to deliver the content, however, the UI is designed to organize all contents in a manner that allows the viewer to quickly and easily access any particular content. In addition, the UI is also designed to accommodate both linear and nonlinear content, and in some embodiments, internet content. Linear content refers to con-

tent that can be viewed in real time as the content is being received while nonlinear content refers to content that is transmitted and received at a rate independent of the rate for viewing the content. Nonlinear contents refer to contents that are typically captured by the receiver controller from the transmission portion of the content delivery system and stored for future playback, although linear contents may be recorded by the receiver controller for future play back as well. Nevertheless, regardless whether the content is linear, nonlinear, or internet content, the UI is capable of allowing a viewer to freely browse and view such content. The UI integrates all audio visual programming content in a consistent and uniform manner, regardless of the mode of delivery of such content and regardless whether the content is being accessed in real time or from storage.

[0265] Unlike traditional interfaces for displaying audio visual content, the UI is organized into categories of lists, files, brands, and so forth to allow a viewer to easily navigate all available irrespective of how the content is being delivered. For example, the UI may include a default interface containing a set of contents personalized for the particular viewer navigating the UI. These personalized contents are delivered via a hybrid mode of transmission and may include local network broadcast programming content, cable channel content, programs originating from premium content providers, programs stored in extended libraries, videos posted for sharing on the Internet, and so forth. The UI presents these personalized contents to the viewer in different lists such as “Top Picks for John,” “John’s Genres,” “John’s Movies,” “John’s Channels,” or “John’s Web Videos.” Content in each of these lists may be selected and ranked by the content delivery system’s intelligence components according to John’s navigational behavior or the behavior of other subscribers to the content delivery system. These contents are in turn presented to John accordingly. In some embodiments, this selection and ranking is performed by a PDP unit in the receiver controller, which is an intelligent and adaptive unit that can learn about the viewing behavior of each viewer associated with the receiver controller. In some embodiments, these information are then sent to intelligence components in other parts of the content delivery system, such as a PDP system, so that the system can analyze and use such information to make personalized predictions and recommendations to a particular viewer.

[0266] For example, in some embodiments, the “Top Picks for John” list includes shows that the intelligence components of the receiver controller and/or other parts of the content delivery system has selected to present to John based on John’s preferences, habits, and routines, as well as those of other viewers. Similarly, the “John’s Channels” list includes linear and nonlinear programs categorized by channel and captured by the receiver controller for John, again based on John’s preferences, habits, and routines as well as those of other viewers. In some embodiments, the UI enables the PDP unit on the receiver controller to gather the viewer’s preferences, habits and routines based on the viewer’s explicit or implicit feedback while navigating content on the UI. For example, in some embodiments, the UI may allow the viewer to explicitly indicate whether the viewer is interested in certain content or the UI may allow the viewer to subscribe to a series of programs for that content. The UI may also interact with the receiver controller to track the viewer’s implicit preferences. For example, the UI may track which contents the viewer has browsed through but chose to ignore, and

which contents the viewer has browsed through and chose to watch and inform the PDP unit of such interactions. By aggregating such interactions the PDP unit may track the viewer’s habits and routines such as learning that the viewer watches a certain show at a certain time regularly. For example, if the viewer watches the show “Oprah” at 4 pm every weekday, the receiver controller will learn this routine and present the show every weekday afternoon to the viewer. Such information learned about the viewer may then be shared with intelligence components of other parts of the content delivery system, such as a PDP system. The content delivery system then uses this information to correlate the viewer’s preferences against types and availability of content, and to determine which content is likely to be preferred by that particular viewer, therefore creating a personalized list of recommended shows for that viewer. The information learned also helps the PDP unit in the receiver controller to capture the programming content that is known or predicted to be of interest to the viewer. As described above, once contents are delivered to the receiver controller, the PDP unit may perform further selections and rankings to fine tune the presentation such contents to the viewer.

[0267] The UI may also include an interface that allows the viewer to search for all contents available to that viewer, including contents not selected by the content delivery system’s intelligent components to be presented to that user. This interface may contain categories such as “All Live Channels” which presents linear contents that may be viewed in real time. This interface may also contain categories such as “All Recorded Programs” which presents all contents recorded or captured to the receiver controller and stored in the form of files in the receiver controller and/or storage device for future playback. Live contents and stored contents may also be integrated under one category such as “All Movies” or “All Shows” containing all movies or programs respectively, or “Top Movies” or “Top Shows” containing movies or shows personalized for the particular viewer. Thus, regardless whether the content is linear, nonlinear, or internet content, the UI is capable of allowing a viewer to freely browse and view such content in a single easily accessible location. In yet another example, the UI may also include interfaces dedicated to a particular network or brand, thus allowing the viewer to browse and view contents specific to that network or brand.

[0268] In addition, along with a remote control unit or some other interactive device, the UI gives the viewer control of at least selecting, displaying and performing operations on content such as rating or recording the content. The UI may further allow a viewer to communicate with the transmission portion of the content delivery system, such as making a request for particular contents to be transmitted. In some embodiments, operations and actions in the UI environment can be easily navigated using a remote control unit having a simple scroll wheel or scroll pad. Thus, in some embodiment, a viewer can navigate the UI using only a scroll wheel and some simple buttons on the remote control unit, without the need of a numerical or alphanumeric keypad for making entries. In addition, there may be specific buttons on the remote control unit that will directly activate a feature in the UI. For example, in some embodiments, there are different viewer buttons on the remote control unit and activation of each different viewer button leads to activation of a different viewer profile in the UI. In other embodiments, some UI feature buttons on the remote control may provide dedicated

control of commonly used or important features to the UI. For example, in some embodiments, an “Options” button may provide access to context-dependent operations in the UI related to the video currently playing on the display screen. Pressing the “Options” button will display a menu of commands, including items such as “Play from beginning”, “Parental controls”, “Audio language”, and “Closed captions.” In some embodiments, an “Information” button may display a program information overlay, while an “Exit” button will clear any on-screen displays and returns the viewer to watching full-screen video. Still in some embodiments, a “Help” button may provide access to context-sensitive help for the viewer. Detailed description of such a remote control unit can be found in U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/985,173, titled “Remote Control Unit for Intelligent Video Programming System” filed on Nov. 2, 2007, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

[0269] In some embodiment, the UI is a hierarchical menu driven system where elements or submenus within menus can be highlighted, and in which the viewer can navigate up and down each menu and submenu hierarchy. While navigating such hierarchies a “bread crumb trail” may be provided to give the viewer relevant context information, such as location of the viewer’s navigation within the hierarchy. In addition, the menus are organized in a manner focused on the viewer and the viewer’s preferences. Each category within a menu and subcategories within categories are configured in an intuitive manner that is easy for a viewer to find information or to perform actions from a broad to specific manner. In some embodiments, the menus, categories, and subcategories are organized and displayed in the form of windows and scrollable lists of items within windows. The UI also allows for the viewer to simultaneously watch content while browsing in a richer environment. While watching a particular content, a viewer can have a fast preview of different lists of content in different categories so that the viewer can be watching the payout of a particular content while making a selection among content listed in various different categories. In some embodiments, the UI is capable of enabling a viewer to watch the payout of a particular content in full screen mode while allowing fast content navigation and “surfing” on the same screen. Furthermore, the UI may be designed to maintain viewer engagement by facilitating fast access to another program or content of relevance upon termination of viewing of a particular program. For example, a series of different content can be programmed in advance to be displayed in series, one after another, in accordance with the viewer’s preference.

[0270] FIG. 28 is a schematic screenshot illustrating an UI 2800 in accordance with some embodiments. The UI 2800 is organized in a menu structure to facilitate a logical and intuitive way of searching, exploring, accessing, requesting, and viewing content. UI 2800 presents an interface 2802 titled “John’s My Shows” that presents contents specifically tailored for the viewer John. The interface 2802 uses a three-way partitioning scheme, where each of the partitions 2804, 2806, and 2808 has its own logical function. Navigational functions such as moving through menus and submenus are generally performed on the left hand side partition 2804. This left hand side partition 2804 may display menu “stacks” 2810 containing menu items 2812 representing contents selected for a viewer. These menu items 2812 are categorized into “Top Picks,” “What’s New,” “My Genres,” “My Channels,” and “My Movies.” As described in further detail below, each menu item 2812 within menu 2810 may be further broken

down into subcategories. For example, the “My Movies” menu item/category displayed under the top level menu 2810 may be further separated into genres, new movies, movies viewed by the viewer, movies selected for the viewer, and so forth. Similarly, a category “My Saved Programs” under the top level menu 2810 may be further separated into subcategories that group all saved contents by title, by expiration date, by date recorded, by channels, by genre, and so forth.

[0271] The three-way partitioning scheme may be used by other interfaces in the UI 2800. In some embodiments, for example, menu stack 2810 may be used by a top level interface titled “Find It” or “All Shows” to display all contents available to the viewer in categories such as “Live TV,” “Recorded Content,” “Future Programming,” “Pay Per View,” “Web Content,” “Search All Movies & Shows,” and so forth. As described in further detail below, the “Find It” or the “All Shows” interface is configured to provide the viewer with a fast way of searching for all contents according to different categories. For instance, the “Find It” or the “All Shows” interface gives the viewer a way to explore and search for programs that may or may not have been recorded or captured as nonlinear content, as well as a place where the viewer can search for future content or content that may be downloaded over an Internet connection. In some embodiments, categories under “Find It” or “All Shows” may be further separated into subcategories. For example, the category “Live TV” may be separated into subcategories such as “On Now” or “Coming up Next” that organizes content by what is currently on and what is coming up next. Similarly, other categories may be further separated into subcategories that make it intuitively easy and fast for a viewer to find a desired content.

[0272] Partition 2804 may further include information related to the content in each menu item or stack 2812, including, but not limited to, a thumbnail image or video of the content, the number of episodes available, the time at which it is available, the particular channel in which it is available, and so forth. For example, thumbnail images or videos 2814 representing a program contained in each menu item or stack 2812 are displayed on menu 2810. Information such as title of the program, title of the particular episode, date and time of the program, etc., are displayed alongside each thumbnail 2814. If the program is a series, a corner of thumbnail 2814 may further indicate how many episodes of that series is available for viewing as well as how many episodes are available upon request. Each menu item or stack 2812 may also display whether the program contained in that stack is live, coming up in the near future, available by pay-per-view, or available by request. In some embodiments, a live tag indicates that the program is live, a stopwatch icon indicates that the program is coming up, a dollar sign icon indicates that the program is pay per view, and a download icon indicates that the program is available by request. These icons may be displayed at a corner of each thumbnail 2814.

[0273] As the viewer drills down menu 2810 and highlights a menu item 2812, detailed information about the content in that selected menu item or stack 2812 is presented in partition 2806 located at the upper right side of the interface. For example, if the show “All My Children” from the menu item or stack “Top Picks” is highlighted, partition 2806 will display metadata of the program including, but not limited to, the title of the program, the network logo, the digital channel, the network call sign, the network name, the program’s duration, MPAA rating (e.g. TVPG) and community rating (e.g. a smiley face icon indicating favorable community rating). Below

the title of the program, partition **2806** displays the program's airing date and time or the program's release year, followed by the title of the episode if the program is part of a series. Partition **2804** also displays a brief description of the program. If the program is part of a series, partition **2806** may display the number of episodes available for viewing and the number of episodes available by request. In some embodiments, partition **2806** may display a message informing the viewer of those episodes. Partition **2806** may also display the availability of the program, indicating whether the program is live or coming up in the near future.

[0274] To play the selected content full screen, a viewer can select a "Play Video" soft button among the soft button grouping **2816**. In some embodiments, each soft button displayed in soft button grouping **2816** corresponds to an actual soft button on the remote control unit. To view additional information and content based on the selected content, a viewer can select the "Explore More" soft button among the soft button grouping **2816**. In some embodiments, selecting the "Explore More" soft button takes the viewer to a screen that gives the viewer further options such as "Show Info," "More Like This," "Cast & Crew," "Other Episodes," "Web Extras," and "Related Playlists." Further details for the "Explore More" function are provided with respect to FIGS. 39A-D and the descriptions below. The soft button grouping **2816** may also display a "Zone" soft button if the network for the highlighted content has a dedicated Zone on the content delivery system. A Zone refers to a place for networks or brands to give the viewer more information about that particular network or brand. Further details for the "Zone" interface are provided with respect to FIG. 48 and the descriptions below. Below partition **2806** is a third partition **2808** to the UI **2800**. In some embodiments, partition **2808** of the interface is reserved for playing content that the viewer is currently watching while the viewer navigates through menus within the UI **2800**. For example, partition **2808** contains a video inset window **2818** that continues to play an episode of "Heroes," which the viewer was watching before the viewer switched to browsing other program selections displayed by menu **2810**. Metadata for the program playing in the Video inset window **2818**, such as title of the show, title of the episode, network logo, and so forth, are displayed beneath video inset window **2818** in partition **2808**.

[0275] As apparent from the descriptions above with respect to FIG. 28, UI **2800** is also designed to provide the viewer with a navigational and viewing experience that is personal and unique to that viewer in a variety of ways. First, UI **2800** interacts with the receiver controller to identify the particular viewer(s) navigating the UI. This may be accomplished via a remote control unit or other interactive device having a means of identification dedicated to that particular viewer(s). This may also be accomplished via an identification process on the UI itself. Identification of a viewer allows UI **2800** to maintain that viewer's identity throughout the viewer's navigational experience. Second, UI **2800** supports a viewer profile for each individual viewer or group of viewers interacting with the UI. The viewer profile includes all relevant information about that viewer and all preferences for that viewer. In some embodiments, relevant information for a viewer not only includes basic viewer information such as viewer's name, age, gender, account information, and so forth, but also includes links to that viewer's account on third party social networks. In some embodiments, a particular viewer's preferences may be based on rankings, ratings and

preference entries by the viewer. In some embodiments, the viewer's navigational behavior such as what shows the viewer has been viewing among the selections presented and what shows the viewer has not been viewing are taken into account in determining that viewer's preferences. In some embodiments, the viewer profile may be stored on the receiver controller.

[0276] When a viewer wants to interact with UI **2800**, that viewer is first identified to the receiver controller to activate that viewer's personal profile. The UI **2800** then interacts with the receiver controller's intelligence components to present contents personalized to the viewer associated with the activated viewer profile, including, but not limited to, predictions and recommendations selectively recorded and captured for that viewer. In addition, while that viewer navigates UI **2800**, the intelligence components of the receiver controller may track that viewer's behavior throughout the UI **2800** in order to continuously modify and adjust the viewer's profile so that more accurate predictions and recommendations of content can be provided to that viewer. For instance, in some embodiments, intelligence components of the receiver controller acquires data about the viewer's viewing selections, preferences or navigational behavior and uses this data to interact with other intelligence components of the content delivery system to further determine the lists of content to be presented to that viewer upon activation of that viewer's personal profile.

[0277] In addition, once a particular viewer is identified, personalized content delivered by the content delivery system will be presented to the viewer in a manner easily accessible by that particular viewer. For example, in some embodiments, once the viewer identifies himself, an interface providing personalized content choices will appear on the display device providing the viewer with a constrained and organized set of personalized content choices, including content that the viewer has indicated a preference for as well as content that the content delivery system has recommended or predicted for the viewer. The viewer can then navigate through different categories organized by type to select a particular content. Because presentation of contents within UI **2800** may be personalized in accordance to the viewing preferences of each viewer, each viewer in a household who may be using the same receiver controller and possibly multiple NATSUs will experience a different presentation of contents in UI **2800** when that viewer's personal profile is activated on UI **2800**. Thus, UI **2800** is designed to minimize the time required for viewers to find content that is preferred or of relevance to particular viewers. Instead of a traditional time or channel schedule based format, UI **2800** is configured to focus on a viewer's preferred content. UI **2800** is designed with a general theme of presenting to each viewer that viewer's preferred contents in a most simple and direct manner.

[0278] Furthermore, the appearance of UI **2800** itself may be personalizable. A viewer may choose among various colors, designs, skins, avatars or other additional themes to be displayed on that viewer's personal UI **2800**. Skins refer to custom graphical appearances that may include colors, graphic designs, animated backgrounds, sound effects, or other graphical or musical themes. Avatars refer to graphical representations of the particular viewer navigating the UI and may be animated or customized according to that viewer's preferences. In some embodiments, a new viewer may select the colors, designs, skins, avatars, or other themes for to be associated with that viewer's personal profile during an initial

profile creation process. In some embodiments, these selections may be saved to the receiver controller and displayed every time that viewer activates that viewer's profile and navigates through UI 2800.

[0279] This comprehensive personalization of viewer experience begins with identification of the viewer. In some embodiments, viewer identification may be performed through a remote control unit with a grouping of different viewer-buttons dedicated to identifying that viewer to activate that viewer's personal profile. For example, in a household of four, a red viewer-button may be dedicated to the mother, a green viewer-button may be dedicated to the father, a blue viewer-button may be dedicated to the daughter, and a yellow viewer-button may be dedicated to the son. Activation of each viewer-button leads to activation of a different viewer profile on the UI 2800. Detailed description of such a remote control unit can be found in U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/985,173. In some other embodiments, identification of a viewer may occur solely in UI 2800 itself by having viewers identify themselves to a login screen on UI 2800. For example, in some embodiments, UI 2800 may contain a viewer selection screen that displays a list of selectable viewer profiles, some of which may require password entry upon selection. If a viewer is a new user to UI 2800 and does not have a personal profile created on the content delivery system, a new profile can be created for the viewer on UI 2800.

[0280] FIG. 29 is a schematic screenshot illustrating a viewer selection screen 2900 in accordance with some embodiments. The viewer selection screen displays a list of selectable viewer profiles 2902 for a family of viewers, including several individual viewer profiles 2904, a family viewer profile 2906, and a guest viewer profile 2908. The individual viewer profiles 2904 are dedicated to the named individual and presents personalized content and a unique navigational experience for that viewer. In some embodiments, if a remote control unit with dedicated viewer buttons is used to interact with UI 2800, the individual viewer profiles 2904 may be listed in an order corresponding to the order of the dedicated viewer buttons on the remote control unit. Profiles for any remaining viewers not assigned a dedicated viewer button may be listed alphabetically by viewer name. The list may also include a family viewer profile 2906 that is dedicated to a specific group of viewers such as a family and provides viewing and navigational experience tailored to that group or family. The list may also include a guest viewer option 2908 to allow a viewer to navigate a default profile. In some embodiments, content presented to the viewer in the guest viewer option 2908 include popular programming based on community popularity and ratings. In some embodiments, customization and tracking of the guest viewer's preferences, routines and behaviors will be limited in the guest viewer profile 2908. In addition to displaying a list of selectable profiles, the viewer selection screen 2900 also displays an Add New Viewer option 2910 that allows new viewer profiles to be created. In some embodiments, selecting this option brings the new viewer through a setup process that interacts with the receiver controller, which in turn interacts with the rest of the content delivery system, to populate the new viewer profile with a listing of programs personalized for that viewer.

[0281] FIGS. 30A-I are schematic screenshots illustrating an interface 3000 for a new viewer setup process in accordance with some embodiments. To enter a viewer name, the

viewer can interact with a remote control unit having a scroll wheel or directional keys to select the appropriate letter from a list of letters 3002 (FIG. 30A). The viewer can also highlight and select a backspace option 3004 or a space option to edit the viewer's entry. To proceed to the next screen or to return to the previous screen, the viewer can highlight and select the Back and Next arrows 3006. To enter a birth year, the viewer can navigate the number options 3008 in a similar manner (FIG. 30B). To enter a gender, the viewer can interact with a remote control unit having directional keys to select the appropriate gender option (FIG. 30C). Once the initial information has been entered, UI 2800 will display an option for the viewer to either continue with the setup process or to proceed directly to interacting with the system (FIG. 30D). In some embodiments, if the viewer chooses to forego proceeding through the rest of the setup process, a message will appear warning the viewer that doing so may not result in an optimal personalization of the viewer's navigational and viewing experience.

[0282] In some embodiments, if the viewer chooses to continue with setup, UI 2800 will display a list of icons corresponding to available viewer buttons on the remote control unit used to interact with the UI 2800 (FIG. 30E). A viewer button on a remote control unit is available if that button has not been dedicated to a particular viewer. In some embodiments, only viewer(s) with administrative access in a household will have the option to reassign designations of viewer buttons. Next, the viewer may be asked to select among a list of skins to be presented for that viewer's UI 2800 (FIG. 30F). Each skin has its own graphical appearance including graphical design, animated background, sound effect, and/or other graphical or musical theme. In some embodiments, interface 3000 will give the viewer an option to complete a cold start survey process so that the intelligence components of the receiver controller and/or other parts of the content delivery system can begin to learn the viewer's preferences and build the viewer's profile accordingly. For example, interface 3000 may display a listing of channels for the viewer to select from (FIG. 30G). To select a channel, the viewer can highlight that channel option by navigating to it with a scroll wheel or directional keys on the remote control unit and selecting that option using a select key on the remote control unit. UI 2800 may also display a listing of genre types for the viewer to select from (FIG. 30H). UI 2800 may further display other selectable listings to aid the intelligence components in learning the viewer's preferences and building the viewer's profile accordingly.

[0283] UI 2800 may also display an option during setup that allows the new viewer to associate that viewer's profile in the content delivery system with that viewer's account on a third party social network. Similar to the other viewer information and settings described above, the association will then be saved to the receiver controller as part of the viewer's profile. Once such an association is created, the receiver controller may query a subscriber database in the content delivery system to determine which members of that viewer's social network are also subscribers/viewers to the content delivery system and have also associated their viewer profiles with a social network account. The receiver controller will constantly maintain and update this list as members and/or viewers are added or deleted. Once an association with the social network is created and saved to the receiver controller, selecting an "Actions" option for a particular program provides the viewer with the option to recommend that program to a friend.

When the viewer selects this “Recommend to Friend” option, UI 2800 will display a list of friends in that viewer’s social network account who have similarly associated their viewer profiles to the social network account. The viewer may then pick a friend to recommend the content to. The recommendation will then be sent to the receiver controller(s) associated with that friend. On the receiving end of that friend, a category labeled “Recommendations From Friends” under an interface such as “My Shows” may appear, listing the recommended content. Depending on the particular content, the friend then has the option to view that content, download that content for later viewing, download that content for current viewing, or record future shows for that content if it is part of a series.

[0284] Based on these initial selections, the UI 2800 will display a list of content suggestions personalized for that viewer. These suggestions may include contents that have already been saved to the receiver controller and/or stored on a local storage device. These suggestions may also include contents that have not been delivered to the receiver controller but that the intelligence components of the receiver controller and other parts of the content delivery system predict and recommend for that viewer (FIG. 301). In addition, without the viewer having to select among these suggestions, the receiver controller may proactively begin to record or capture broadcast and unicast content in accordance to predications and recommendations for the viewer. In some embodiments, each programming selection displays a thumbnail image or video 3010 representing the program along with metadata for the program, including, but not limited to, brief description, status (e.g. live or in the near future), network, duration, rating, and so forth. In some embodiments, when a particular selection from the list of selections is highlighted, a screen portion 3012 will display further information about the selection such as a summary of the program. In some embodiments, video for the highlighted selection will be played out in screen portion 3012. From this list of programs, the viewer can select specific programs to be presented or recorded for that viewer on that viewer’s newly created profile. In some embodiments, once the cold start survey has been completed, the UI 2800 will display a thank you message acknowledging the viewer’s entries and settings. The message may also inform the viewer that programs preferred by the viewer will be recorded for that viewer. The message may further inform the viewer that due to timing and other factors, it may take a few days for the content delivery system to populate the viewer’s profile with a good list of programming contents personalized for that viewer. In some embodiments, completing the new viewer set up process brings the viewer immediately to an interface that displays a well-organized and constrained set of content selections personalized for that viewer. One example of such an interface according to some embodiments is an interface titled “My Shows.”

[0285] In some embodiments, the “My Shows” interface is the primary mode of UI 2800. For example, the “My Shows” interface may be the first interface presented when a viewer powers on the display device and identifies himself to the UI. Within the “My Shows” interface, the viewer will find programs specific to their viewing habits and expressed interests. Contents under “My Shows” are contents that the viewer can watch immediately or in the near future. In some embodiments, contents presented under each of the subcategories of “My Shows” are contents that have not been watched by the viewer, unless that content has been saved in a subcategory of the interface such as “My Saved Programs.” Contents that

have been viewed by the viewer, however, may still be stored on the receiver controller and/or a storage device so that another viewer in the same household may choose to view those contents. The main menu under the interface is composed of a number of contents displayed in “stacks.” Each stack acts as a container for the content displayed within it.

[0286] There are several different types of content that can appear under the “My Shows” interface. In some embodiments, these types of content include: (i) TV shows recorded or selectively captured to the receiver controller and ranked highly likely for the viewer to watch, (ii) movies recorded or selectively captured to the receiver controller and ranked highly likely for the viewer to watch, (iii) TV shows and movies currently being broadcasted on the linear local channels (i.e. content that can be viewed in real time as the content is being received), (iv) shows and movies about to broadcast on linear local channels during their next time block, (v) pay-per-view movies or programs, (vi) programs that the viewer explicitly requested to be saved for any period of time, (vii) programs that the viewer marked to be added to their “Quick List,” (viii) web videos (e.g. videos available on YouTube™), (ix) TV shows and movies downloaded as requested by the viewer, and (x) TV shows and movies delivered via unicast transmission to the receiver controller and ranked highly likely for the viewer to watch. In some embodiments, the “My Shows” interface will not include programs that are available for download, programs that have been recorded but predicted as not likely to be watched by the viewer, or linear broadcasted content airing past the next time block for any particular linear broadcast channel. These contents, however, may be available via other interfaces within UI 2800.

[0287] FIG. 31A is a schematic screenshot illustrating a “My Shows” interface 3100 in accordance with some embodiments. The “My Shows” interface 3100 uses a three-way partitioning scheme similar to that described with respect to FIG. 28. The interface 3100 is partitioned into a menu section 3102, a metadata area 3104, and a video window area 3106. Menu section 3102 contains a top level “My Shows” menu 3108 in which the viewer navigates to content. The “My Shows” menu 3108 contains a number of categories or stacks 3110 which in turn contains contents listed in accordance to the viewer’s preference. In some embodiments, there are multiple levels of menu under the “My Show” interface: header level menu(s) (e.g. the top level “My Shows” stack) and content level menu (e.g. the “My Top Shows” stack). The header level menu depicts the top level menu for an interface and contains headings describing the contents of each category under the menu. Each category under a header level menu may itself be a header level menu. At the lowest level of the hierarchy is a content level menu displaying a stack of the specific programs available for viewing. The top level “My Shows” menu 3108 in menu section 3102 is one exemplary header level menu, and the “My Top Shows” stack among the number of options or stacks 3110 under the “My Shows” menu 3108 is one exemplary content level menu.

[0288] FIGS. 31B-C are schematic screenshots illustrating menu items 3110 in accordance with some embodiments. Each menu item 3110 under menu 3108 displays certain elements such as the stack’s header 3112, a thumbnail image or video 3114 depicting the first show in that stack and informational text 3116 about the first show in the stack. In some embodiments, a number will display in parenthesis next to stack header 3112 indicating the number of options presented in that particular stack. For example, 35 programs are avail-

able under the stack “My Top Shows.” (FIG. 31B) In some embodiments, if the program displayed is part of a series and has multiple episodes available for either immediate viewing or viewing by request, a “multiple episodes” graphic treatment may be displayed in a corner of thumbnail 3114 and an indication of the exact number of available episodes may appear in parenthesis next to the program’s title. If there is only one episode of the program available, no number will be displayed and thumbnail 3114 will not contain graphical indication of multiple episodes. In some embodiments, each menu item 3110 also displays the date and time that the program was recorded and the episode title if applicable. For movies that were not recorded from linear broadcast, menu item 3110 may also display the release year for that movie. In some embodiments, if a program included in a particular stack is playing live as a linear stream via broadcast or unicast transmission, a colored icon indicating that the program is live may appear either in a corner of thumbnail 3114 or some other area of menu item 3110 (FIG. 31C). Also, in place of text indicating the date the program was recorded, the word “Live” followed by the airing time may appear. Similarly, for programs that are coming up within the next time block on a linear stream via broadcast or unicast transmission, a colored icon indicating the program is coming up next may appear and the word “Upcoming” may be displayed in place of the date of the program.

[0289] When the viewer highlights a menu item 3110 under menu 3108, metadata area 3104 provides further information for the highlighted menu item 3110. In some embodiments, if a particular program is highlighted, the metadata displayed in metadata area 3104 will follow this format:

Channel logo	Show Title
Channel #, Channel Name, Call letters, Duration (in minutes), Rating	
Date MM/DD/YY, Time - Episode Title	
Episode Description	
Beginning time	Live Status bar if live End time
Soft buttons	

[0290] FIG. 31D is a schematic screenshot illustrating a metadata area 3104 in accordance with some embodiments. The soft button labeled “A” displayed at the bottom of metadata area 3104 may perform multiple functions: (i) If the program is recorded or live, soft button A may display “Watch This.” (ii) If the program is upcoming, the soft button A may display “Set Reminder.” (iii) If the program is a pay-per-view movie with a trailer available for viewing, soft button A may display “Play Trailer.” (iv) If the program is a pay-per-view movie without a trailer available for viewing, soft button A may display “Buy This.” (v) If the program is available for download, soft button A may display “Download This.”

[0291] FIG. 31E-F are schematic screenshots illustrating a video window area 3106 in accordance with some embodiments. In some embodiment, as the viewer navigates menu 3108 and as information displayed in metadata area 3104 changes accordingly, video window area 3106 will continue to play what the viewer was currently watching. In some embodiments, video window area 3106 contains an overlay 3116 reminding the viewer what is currently playing. Overlay 3116 may take the form of an information bar displaying the channel logo as well as the show title, episode title if applicable, and whether the show is in HD (FIG. 31E). In some embodiments, certain “trick modes” may be enabled in this

view. For example, the viewer can pause/play, fast forward, rewind, skip forward and skip back through the video playing in the video window area 3106. When a “trick mode” is performed, a status bar will be displayed over the video in the same as it would be displayed for a “trick mode” in full screen (FIG. 31F). To play the video in the video window area 3106 full screen, the viewer may select a corresponding “Exit” option on the remote control unit to exit out of the “My Shows” interface 3100.

[0292] The top level menu 3108 of “My Shows” interface 3100 contains menu items or stacks 3110 representing categories titled “My Top Shows,” “My Movies,” “My Channels,” “My Web Videos,” “My Quick List,” and “My Saved Programs.” Contents presented within each stack 3110 may be selected and ordered by the intelligence components of the receiver controller and/or other parts of the content delivery system. In some embodiments, the intelligence components use various algorithms to rank contents for each individual viewer and determines the content that a particular viewer is most likely to prefer. In order to present the best matches for that viewer as well as to allow the viewer to make a selection quickly, the number of content choices within each stack 3110 may be limited initially. If there are no programs on a particular stack such as “My Quick List” or “My Saved Programs,” the thumbnail 3114 representing that stack or the informational text describing the program or category represented by that stack will display a message informing the viewer that no programs are available. In some embodiments, if the currently activated viewer profile is a newly created profile, the first show from that viewer’s “My Top Shows” stack may begin playing automatically once the viewer is identified. Further details for each category represented by menu items 3110 under the top level “My Shows” menu 3108 are described below.

[0293] FIG. 32A is a schematic screenshot illustrating a “My Top Shows” interface 3200 in accordance with some embodiments. “My Top Shows” interface 3200 is presented when the viewer highlights and selects the “My Top Shows” category from the “My Shows” interface 3100. In some embodiments, the top level menu 3108 under “My Shows” interface 3100 will slide out to the left and the selected sub-menu “My Top Shows” 3202 will slide in from the right. A “breadcrumb trail” 3204 is displayed above the “My Top Shows” stack 3202, indicating that the subcategory “John’s Shows” is under the category “My Top Shows.” The “breadcrumb trail” 3204 may also display an icon depicting the option to go back to the previous interface. Because “My Top Shows” stack 3202 is a content level menu, stack headers need not be displayed in menu items 3204. The “My Top Shows” stack 3202 contains menu items 3204 representing programs that the content delivery system has predicted and recommended to the particular viewer associated with the activated viewer profile. These contents may include those that are highly ranked for that viewer by the intelligence components within the content delivery system, and they may be ordered based on those rankings. In some embodiments, contents that rank below a certain affinity threshold will not be displayed. For example, the contents may be presented in order from highest preference rating to the lowest or cutoff preference rating. These contents may include recorded TV shows, recorded movies, programs that are being broadcast live when the viewer is currently making the selection, as well as programs that will be broadcasting live during the next time block.

[0294] “My Top Shows” stack **3202** or any other stack presented in UI **2800** may also include content recorded or captured based on determinations by a program planning function in the content delivery system. The program planning function determines how certain contents should be distributed, recorded, captured, and displayed for certain viewers. The program planning function may be remote from the receiver controllers and may allow for both manual tuning by a program planning team as well as automated instructions. For example, a program planning team may determine that a particular content is of high relevance to a particular set of viewers (e.g. viewers in a particular demographic). This determination may be based on analytical data gathered by various components of the content delivery system or may simply be based on what popular media is saying about the content. The program planning team may further specify where in the UI **2800** (e.g. under “My Top Shows”) and to which particular viewers to deliver the content (e.g. viewers in a particular demographic). These instructions may be designed to ensure that a large majority of households automatically acquire this content for time delayed viewing without any intervention by the end viewers. Thus, certain special events such as the Superbowl may be determined by the program planning function as very popular content, and therefore all receiver controllers should capture the Super Bowl from local linear feeds and present it to the viewer. Similarly, the program planning function may determine that all receiver controllers with a viewer of 18-30 female or male demographic should receive the MTV music award, and all such receiver controllers should only present this show to viewers in a specific demographic or to viewers that watch MTV regularly.

[0295] The content delivery system will then take these instructions from program planning and inform the designated receiver controllers of such planning. The designated receiver controllers then prioritize the capture of such content at a level that may be higher than what the content would have been ranked at without such input from program planning. For local broadcast content, once the content is available on a local linear channel, the designated receiver controllers will capture the content as long as the resulting priority is high enough. For all other contents delivered by the content delivery system, whether linear or nonlinear, once the content has been scheduled for broadcast or unicast delivery, the receiver controllers will capture the content via broadcast or unicast as long as the resulting priority is high enough. If the designated content is captured, UI **2800** will then interact with the corresponding receiver controller to display the content according to the manner specified by program planning. This captured content may be displayed, for example, under “My Top Shows” stack **3202** or any other appropriate category within UI **2800**.

[0296] In some embodiments, a corner of the thumbnail **3206** displayed for each menu item **3204** within the “My Top Shows” stack **3202** contains an icon indicating whether the program is live, upcoming or by request. In some embodiments, a number to the right of the title or at the corner of thumbnail **3206** indicates the number of unwatched episodes of the program that are available for immediate viewing and the number of episodes available for viewing by request. In some embodiments, one of several actions will occur upon selecting a menu item **3204** corresponding to a program from the “My Top Shows” stack **3202**. If the program is currently live or has only one recorded episode, selecting the menu item

3204 corresponding to that program will play the program full screen. If the program has more than one episode, selecting the menu item **3204** corresponding to that program will allow the viewer to drill down to another submenu that displays selections to all episodes available for viewing. In some embodiments, if the viewer chooses to watch an episode of a recorded program, that episode will be tagged as “Watched” in the menu entry for that episode and drop to the bottom of the episode list for that viewer. After all episodes of a recorded program have been watched, the particular series will move to the bottom of the menu stack **3202**. In some embodiments, programs will disappear from the “My Top Shows” stack **3202** after a certain time period has expired. Finally, if the program is upcoming on a live channel, selecting the menu item **3204** corresponding to that program will display a popup window allowing the viewer to choose from a list of actions such as: (i) tuning in to that channel, (ii) setting a reminder for the viewer, and (iii) setting to record that program if not previously set to record (FIG. **32B**).

[0297] FIG. **33A** is a schematic screenshot illustrating a “My Movies” interface **3300** in accordance with some embodiments. “My Movies” interface **3300** presents another exemplary category that may be found under the “My Shows” interface **3100**. “My Movies” interface **3300** contains top movies selected for the viewer associated with the activated viewer profile based on that viewer’s preferences. These movies may include movies recorded from linear broadcast television, movies airing live or upcoming on local broadcast channels, pay-per-view movies, movies from premium providers, movies stored in libraries on the content delivery system, and any other type of movies. Thus, regardless whether the movie contains linear or nonlinear content and whether it is delivered via broadcast or unicast modes of transmission, it will be available in a single location under “My Movies.” For viewer profiles having the parental control option enabled, only movies within their MPAA rating permission may be available. In some embodiments, the “My Movies” menu **3302** is a header level menu rather than a content level menu. This header level menu **3302** may include subcategories or stacks **3304** such as “Top Movie Picks,” “New Movies,” “Pay-Per-View,” and stacks categorized by genre and listed alphabetically. In some embodiments, an “Adult” stack may be presented to the particular viewer if relevant to that viewer’s preferences, but the stack will be listed at the bottom of menu **3302**. In some embodiments, pay-per-view movies are listed also within the genre stacks rather than or in addition to being listed under the “Pay-Per-View” stack. In some embodiments, a movie’s pay-per-view status may be indicated by a colored icon and text in “pay-per-view” stack **3304** (FIG. **33B**).

[0298] In some embodiments, one of several actions will occur upon selecting a movie from any of the subcategories or stacks **3304**. If the movie is recorded, free, or currently airing live, selecting the menu item for that movie will take the viewer to watch that movie full screen. If the movie must be purchased before viewing, selecting the menu item for that movie will display a popup window giving the viewer several options. These options may include an option to purchase the movie for a certain price for a certain amount of time or the option to play a trailer for the movie. If a movie is upcoming on a live channel, selecting the menu item for that movie will also display a popup window giving the viewer several options. These options may include an option for the viewer to tune into that channel now, an option to set a reminder, and

an option to set the system to record the movie. In some embodiments, after a recorded movie has been watched by the viewer, the movie will be tagged "Watched" in its corresponding menu entry in the subcategory or stack 3304 and drop to the bottom of the stack 3304. In some embodiments, the movie will disappear from the stack 3304 after a certain time period has expired.

[0299] Another exemplary category that may be found under the "My Shows" interface is the "My Channels" interface, which contains highly ranked programs categorized by the particular channel airing the program. Content displayed under this interface may include TV shows, movies recorded from TV, programs currently airing live on the local linear channels, and programs upcoming on the local linear channels in the next time block. Once again, these programs may be presented in the order of predicted preference for that viewer associated with the activated viewer profile. In some embodiments, if a channel subcategory or stack under this interface does not contain highly ranked programs, it may disappear after a certain period of time. In some embodiments, if a channel stack is present in the interface but does not contain any content, the thumbnail and/or informational text representing that channel stack may indicate that no programs are available.

[0300] FIGS. 34A-B are schematic screenshots illustrating a "My Channels" interface 3400 in accordance with some embodiments. The "My Channels" menu 3402 is presented when the viewer highlights and selects the "My Channels" stack from the top level "My Shows" menu 3108 in "My Shows" interface 3100 (FIG. 34A). In some embodiments, the menu items 3404 corresponding to the various channel stacks are presented in the order of linear channels or digital channel lineup by number (e.g. 1-1 to 69-x), followed by cable channels listed alphabetically. In some embodiments, for those menu items 3404 that represent linear channels, thumbnails 3406 and the informational text will represent the program that is airing live at the moment. For example, at 3:15 pm, the menu item 3404 for the local broadcast channel PBS contains a thumbnail 3406 depicting the show "Cultivating Life" and an indication that the show is "Live" beginning at 3:00 pm. Next to the channel number (e.g. 1-1) and name (e.g. PBS) is a number of programs in that channel stack. For example, 22 programs are in the PBS channel stack. Selecting the PBS channel stack will slide the "My Channels" menu 3402 to the left and slide in the PBS content level menu 3408 from the right (FIG. 34B). The content level menu 3408 will display only programming content from that selected channel stack 3402. In some embodiments, the first program listed in a channel stack 3402 for any local broadcast channel is the program currently airing on the live feed, and the next program listed in the channel stack 3402 is content that is coming up on that live feed after the current programming content finishes. The next programs listed in the channel stack 3402 may be content that have been recorded from that channel and are listed in order of preference rankings for the viewer associated with the activated viewer profile. For example, at 3:15 pm, the PBS channel stack 3402 displays the TV show "Cultivating Life" as currently live beginning at 3:00 pm, followed by the upcoming show "Bill Moyer's Journal," followed by the recorded show "Charlie Rose," and so forth.

[0301] In some embodiments, one of several actions will occur upon selecting a program within a channel stack 3408. If the program is currently live or has one recorded episode associated with the program, selecting the menu entry 3410

for that program will bring the viewer to watch that program in full screen. If the program represented by a menu entry 3410 is part of a series and contains more than one episode, selecting the menu entry 3410 for that program will allow the viewer to drill down to a separate menu that displays all the recorded episodes available to that viewer. In some embodiments, after a recorded episode of a program has been watched, the episode will be tagged "Watched" in the menu entry 3410 and will drop down to the bottom of the stack 3408. In some embodiments, the episode will disappear from the stack 3408 after a certain period of time has expired. If the program is upcoming on a live channel, then selecting the menu entry 3410 for that program will display a popup window giving the viewer several options. These options may include an option to tune in to that channel, to set a reminder for the viewer, or to set the system to record that program if not previously set to record.

[0302] FIG. 35 is a schematic screenshot illustrating a "My Genres" interface 3500 in accordance with some embodiments. "My Genres" interface 3500 presents a further exemplary category found under the "My Shows" interface 3100. "My Genres" interface 3500 allows a viewer to find all content highly ranked for that viewer by genre. If a particular genre stack under the "My Genres" menu 3502 does not contain highly ranked programs after a period of time, that stack may disappear from the interface even though the particular contents under that stack may still be stored on the receiver controller. Also, if a particular genre stack is displayed in the "My Genres" menu 3502 but does not contain any content, the thumbnail or informational text for that genre stack may indicate that no programs are available under that stack. In some embodiments, the top stack presented by the "My Genres" menu 3502 is a stack titled "Sezmi Suggests." This stack contains all contents that the content delivery system has predicted for the viewer even though that viewer may not have explicitly requested for those contents. After the "Sezmi Suggests" stack is presented, other genre stacks may be ordered alphabetically, with the exception of the "Adult Genre" being displayed last if that genre is available to the particular viewer associated with the activated viewer profile. Selection of a particular program from any of the genre stacks may lead to one of several actions similar to selecting a program from one of the other stack categories described above in "My Top Shows" interface 3200, "My Movies" interface 3300, and "My Channels" interface 3400.

[0303] FIGS. 36A-B are schematic screenshots illustrating a "My Web Videos" interface 3600 in accordance with some embodiments. "My Web Videos" interface 3600 presents yet another exemplary category under the "My Shows" interface 3100. "My Web Videos" interface 3600 contains web videos from various web video providers, including YouTube™ and other third party web video providers. The header level web video menu may further contain subcategories organized by provider. In some embodiments, the web videos are supplied over an Ethernet connection in a format suitable for the receiver controller. Selecting a provider subcategory in some embodiments will display a content level menu containing the first set of web videos from the selected provider category. For example, selecting the "My Web Videos" entry from the "My Shows" menu 3108 will display a web videos menu containing stacks of web video providers such as YouTube™. When the viewer selects the YouTube™ stack, interface 3600 will display a "Most Viewed" stack 3602 listing the first 25 most viewed web videos in that stack (FIG. 36A). The last

selection displayed is a “View next 25 videos” selection **3604**. After selecting the “view next 25 videos” selection **3604**, the first option displayed in the “Most Viewed” stack **3602** will be a “view previous 25 videos” option. Once a web video has been selected, that video will begin playing in a partition of web interface **3600** (FIG. 36B). In some embodiments, an additional menu **3606** listing videos related to the selected web video may be displayed in another partition of interface **3600**. As the viewer scrolls over the related videos menu **3606**, metadata at the top of the menu **3606** will change accordingly.

[0304] Other exemplary top level stacks that may be found under the “My Shows” interface **3100** are further described as follow. In some embodiments, “My Shows” interface **3100** includes a “What’s New” category containing content that have been captured or downloaded for that viewer within a recent time period. In some embodiments, “My Shows” interface **3100** includes a “My Quick List” category where the viewer can add and delete shows that they want to have quick and easy access to. To add a program to a viewer’s “Quick List,” the viewer may interact with an “Actions” button on the remote control to bring up an “Add To Quick List” selection. “Actions” can be performed while the program is highlighted in a menu or while the program is playing full screen. Further details describing the “Actions” function will be provided below. In some embodiments, if multiple episodes of a show have been added to the viewer’s “Quick List,” those episodes will appear as separate entries rather than together in a stack so that the viewer can quickly retrieve a particular episode. In some embodiments, the “Quick List” category is dedicated to recorded TV shows or movies and not to live, future, web or pay-per-view content. A viewer may also remove a program from the viewer’s “Quick List.” In some embodiments, this is done by highlighting that program and activating the “Actions” menu to select a “Remove From Quick List” action.

[0305] FIG. 37 is a schematic screenshot of a “My Playlist” interface **3700** in accordance with some embodiments. “Playlist” interface **3700** presents another exemplary category under the “My Shows” interface **3100**. “Playlist” interface **3700** contains concatenations of programs based on some form of grouping or common thread. Contents in each “playlist” are designed to be watched as a group. Such playlists may be automatically generated by the content delivery system, created by the viewer, or created by other viewers in the system. Thus, the “My Playlists” category may further include subcategories according to playlist. In some embodiments, the first subcategory displayed under the “My Playlists” menu **3702** is a “My Quick Picks” stack containing contents similar to that contained in the “Quick List” category described above.

[0306] FIG. 38 is a schematic screenshot of a “My Saved Programs” interface **3800** in accordance with some embodiments. “My Saved Programs” interface **3800** presents another exemplary category under the “My Shows” interface **3100**. The “My Saved Programs” interface **3800** presents a place where the viewer can find all programs that the viewer has specifically set to be saved for a certain amount of time. Saving a program can be achieved in a number of ways. In some embodiments, a viewer can (i) highlight a program in a menu and press “Actions” on a remote control unit to select “Save” for some amount from the “Actions” menu, (ii) press “Actions” on a remote control unit while watching a program in full screen to select “Save” for some amount of time from

the “Actions” menu, or (iii) select to save a recording for some amount of time when setting a recording manually for a program.

[0307] In some embodiments, if a viewer selects the viewer’s “My Saved Programs” category from the top level “My Shows” menu **3108**, an additional header level menu **3802** will be presented allowing the viewer to view saved programs in various sorted stacks. The various stacks are ordered alphabetically in a “By Title” stack, by expiration date in a “By Expiration” stack, and by recording date in a “By Date” stack. For example, in the stack of programs ordered “By Expiration,” programs presented first will be programs that are about to expire and programs presented last will be programs tagged “Save Until I delete.” Also, in the stack of programs ordered “By Date,” programs will be ordered from the most recently recorded to least recently recorded.

[0308] In addition to providing the identified viewer with a personalized interface containing well-organized sets of content personalized for that viewer, the UI **2800** is also configured to allow a viewer to easily search, explore, access, request, and view other content. For instance, in some embodiments, UI **2800** contains other top level interfaces such as “Explore More,” “Options,” “Find It,” and “Zone.” The “Explore More” interface allows a viewer to learn more about a particular content by viewing information about that content. In some embodiments, any time the viewer is highlighting and viewing a menu entry for a particular program, the viewer will have access to a selection labeled “Explore More.” The selection may indicate to the viewer that a particular soft button on the remote control unit is currently dedicated to the “Explore More” selection. When that soft button is pressed, UI **2800** will display an additional partition or screen allowing the viewer to view content and information based on the highlighted program. In some embodiments, the “Explore More” soft button or selection is displayed in the metadata area to the right side of the screen.

[0309] FIGS. 39A-D are schematic screenshots illustrating an “Explore More” interface **3900** in accordance with some embodiments. The “Explore More” interface **3900** has features that enable a viewer to find other programs or shows that are similar to the particular content that the viewer is interested in. For example, if the viewer is interested in a particular TV show, the “Explore More” interface **3900** allows the viewer to also view a movie based on that TV show and vice versa. “Explore More” interface **3900** may also have a feature that allows the viewer to find other episodes of a show that may or may not have been previously viewed. Moreover, there may be a feature to enable the viewer to find other shows or programs featuring cast members, actors, actresses, directors, producers, and so forth featured in the particular content that the viewer is interested in.

[0310] In some embodiments, the first screen presented when a viewer selects the “Explore More” interface **3900** is information about the program for which the viewer is interested in (FIG. 39A). The first selection highlighted in the “Explore More” menu **3902** will be the “Show Info” selection. Metadata area **3904** will then display information on the program that the viewer selected to “Explore More” information about. If the program is part of a series, metadata area **3904** may give information on the series rather than a particular episode. If the program is a movie, metadata area **3904** may display a limited cast list, director, rating, year of release, and community rating. In some embodiments, the menu options within “Explore More” menu **3902** include “Show

Info,” “More Like This,” “Cast & Crew,” “Other Episodes,” “Web Extras,” and “Related Playlists.” In some embodiments, when the “More Like This” option is selected, programs similar to the program the viewer “Explored More” about will populate a filmstrip **3906** in the center of the screen (FIG. **39B**). Thus the “More Like This” option allows the viewer to discover content the viewer may not have already found even though the viewer would have a interest in such content.

[**0311**] Similarly, in some embodiments, when the “Other Episodes” option is selected from the “Explore More” menu **3902**, episodes available for viewing either immediately or by request will populate filmstrip **3906** in the center of the screen. The “Other Episodes” option will not be available in some embodiments if no episodes for a particular content are available. In some embodiments, when the “Cast” option is selected, a second menu **3908** appears in place of the “Explore More” menu **3902**. This second menu **3908** contains menu options for each cast member displayed in alphabetical order (FIGS. **39C-D**). The viewer can then select a specific cast member to explore other programs featuring that cast member. Doing so will populate filmstrip **3906** with programs featuring that cast member ordered by title, date, or some other ordering scheme. The “Explore More” menu **3902** may also include a “Web Extras” option, which when selected will populate filmstrip **3906** with any web extras associated with the interested program. In some embodiments, the “Web Extras” menu option will display Zone content first, followed by YouTube™ content related to the program the viewer wanted to “Explore More” about.

[**0312**] Another top level interface of the UI **2800** is an interface that provides the viewer with a well organized way of searching for all contents delivered by the content delivery system, even if the content is not personalized for that viewer to be included under “My Shows” interface **3100**. In some embodiments, such an interface is titled “Find It” or “All Shows.” As in other interfaces throughout UI **2800**, this interface may include contents stored on the receiver controller and/or some other storage device as well as live content available for download from the content delivery system. This interface serves the function of providing the viewer with a simple and easy way to access all contents regardless whether such contents are already delivered or to be delivered in the future, and regardless whether they have been delivered for that viewer specifically or delivered for some other viewer associated with the same receiver controller. To facilitate searching, the “Find It” interface or the “All Shows” interface organizes content into categories further broken down into subcategories. At the content levels of these subcategories, contents may be ordered alphabetically unless otherwise specified. In some embodiments, a search paradigm in the “Find It” or the “All Shows” interface allows for a progressive narrowing of search results as the viewer enters additional letters for particular search terms. In some embodiments, the “Find It” interface or the “All Shows” interface can be easily accessed by pressing a corresponding “Find It” or “All Shows” button on the remote control unit or some other interactive device.

[**0313**] FIG. **40** is a schematic screenshot illustrating an interface **4000** for searching all content in accordance with some embodiments. The interface **4000**, titled “Find It,” is partitioned into a menu area **4002**, a film strip **4004**, a metadata area **4006**, a now-playing video window **4008**, and a promotional advertising area **4010**. The top level of the “Find It” interface **4000** displays options representing the broadest

level of content searching. Exemplary top level menu choices displayed in top level menu **4012** include “What’s On Now,” “By Channel,” “By Time,” “By Genre,” and “Keyword Search.” As the viewer highlights a menu option in the top level “Find It” menu **4012**, thumbnails representing programs within that category populates filmstrip **4004** in the center of the screen. If the program is a series, numbers indicating how many episodes that are available, either immediately and/or by request, may appear in a corner of the corresponding thumbnail. In some embodiments, filmstrip **4004** appears as dimmed if no thumbnails are highlighted. When filmstrip **4004** is not in focus, the program description in metadata area **4006** will reflect the program represented by the first thumbnail in filmstrip **4004**. To highlight a thumbnail in filmstrip **4004**, the viewer may interact with a right arrow button on the remote control unit to move from the left side menu **4012** to the center filmstrip **4004**. Once a thumbnail in filmstrip **4004** is highlighted, metadata area **4006** will reflect information for the program represented by the highlighted thumbnail. Similar to the metadata area **3104** in “My Shows” interface **3100**, metadata area **4006** in “Find It” interface **4000** may include selections **4014** corresponding to soft buttons that allows the viewer to play a selected content full screen, explore more content related to the selected content, or proceed to the network Zone for the selected content.

[**0314**] FIG. **41** is a schematic screenshot illustrating an interface **4100** for searching all contents in accordance with some other embodiments. Interface **4100** is titled “All Shows” and is partitioned into a menu area **4102**, a metadata area **4104**, a now-playing video window **4106**, and a promotional advertising area **4108**. Similar to “My Shows” interface **3100**, there may be multiple levels of menus under “All Shows” interface **4100** including (i) a header level menu where the menu items are themselves menus and (ii) content level menus where selections to actual programs are being displayed. For example, the top level “All Shows” menu **4110** is a header level menu and consists of six menu options which are turn be menus themselves. In some embodiments, these menu options are: “Scheduled TV,” “Recorded Programs,” “Movies,” “Web Videos,” “Zones,” and “Search.” Each menu option will be described in further detail below.

[**0315**] FIGS. **42A-F** are schematic screenshots illustrating a “Scheduled TV” interface **4200** in accordance with some embodiments. “Scheduled TV” interface **4200** allows a viewer to find programs from local broadcast channels and live cable channels based on when those programs are scheduled to air on those channels. The viewer can request to view all shows that are scheduled to play live by selecting the menu item “Scheduled TV” in the top level “All Shows” menu **4110**. Recorded content, web content, and pay-per-view movies will not be displayed under “Scheduled TV” interface **4200**. In some embodiments, “Scheduled TV” interface **4200** allows the viewer to view TV schedules up to 14 days into the future. In some embodiments, when the viewer highlights and selects the menu item “Scheduled TV” from the top level “All Shows” menu **4110**, the top level “All Shows” menu **4110** will slide out to the left and the “Scheduled TV” menu **4202** will slide in from the right (FIG. **41A**). A “breadcrumb trail” **4214** will reflect that the viewer has drilled down into the “Scheduled TV” category. The “Scheduled TV” menu **4202** is a header level menu rather than a content level menu, and thus further includes menu options broken down into subcategories such as time, channel, and genre.

[0316] If a viewer wishes to browse for content based on the content's airing time, the viewer can highlight and select the "By Time" menu item (FIG. 42B) from the "Scheduled TV" menu 4202. In some embodiments, the "Scheduled TV" menu 4202 will slide out to the left and another header level menu 4204 will slide in from the right. In some embodiments, this "By Time" menu 4204 will display the various days by which the viewer can search for programming and begins with the current date and continues 14 days into the future. When the viewer select and highlights a day from the "By Time" menu 4204, "By Time" menu 4204 will slide out to the left and a "Days" menu 4206 will slide in from the right (FIG. 41C). In some embodiments, an additional dimmed out menu 4208 displaying content selections will slide out from behind "Days" menu 4206. At this point the viewer will have reached a content level menu and focus will be on the "By Day" menu 4206 to the left of the screen, which allows the viewer to pick a time block. As the viewer scrolls down and highlights a time block from the "Days" menu 4206, the dimmed out menu 4208 to the right side of the screen will change to display content that is playing during that time block. Once the viewer selects a time block, the other time block menu options in the "Days" menu 4206 will dim. In some embodiments, a "Back" icon 4210 will be displayed to the right of the chosen time block and focus will be on the content menu 4208 (FIG. 42D).

[0317] In some embodiments, a graphical treatment above the content menu 4208 indicates the number of programs listed in content menu 4208. Each content menu item in content menu 4208 has a channel logo displayed to the left of the program information. The first line displays the program title, the second line displays the start and end time followed by the date it airs. For movies that air on TV, the first line may display the title of the movie followed by the release year in parenthesis. The second line may display the start and end time followed by the date it airs on TV. The airing status of the program may be displayed by a change in color of the time and date. Programs that are currently on live will be displayed in a different color than those that are upcoming in the future. Channels in the content menu 4208 may be listed in the order of local broadcast channels first (e.g. 1-69), followed by the cable channels listed alphabetically. Now that the highlight is over the content menu 4208, browsing is achieved by scrolling down the content menu 4208 until whatever the viewer was looking for is highlighted. In some embodiments, selecting a program from the content menu 4208 may lead to one of two things: (i) if the program is currently live, selecting the program will take the viewer to watching that program in full screen, and (ii) if the program is showing at a later time on a live channel, selecting that program will display a popup window giving the viewer options as to what to do next. In some embodiments, these options include tuning in to the channel, setting a reminder, and setting to record if the program has not already been set to record.

[0318] If the viewer wishes to browse for content based on the channels that the content is airing on, the viewer can highlight and select the "By Channel" menu item from the "Scheduled TV" menu 4202 (FIG. 42E). Similar to the presentation of other menus under "Schedule TV," highlighting and selecting the "By Channel" menu item in the "Scheduled TV" menu 4202 may cause "Scheduled TV" menu 4202 to slide out to the left, a channel menu 4212 to slide in from the right, and a dimmed out content menu 4214 to slide out from behind the channel menu 4212. At this point the viewer will have reached a content level menu and focus will be on the left

side menu 4212, which allows the viewer to pick a channel. As the viewer scrolls down and highlights a channel selection from the channel menu 4212, the dimmed out content menu 4214 will display that channel's program lineup accordingly. In addition, as the viewer scrolls down the channel selections in the channel menu 4212, a number above the content menu 4214 will change to reflect how many items are listed under that channel stack. In some embodiments, channels are listed in the channel menu 4212 in order of local broadcast channels first (e.g. 1-69), followed by cable channels listed alphabetically.

[0319] Once the viewer selects a channel from the channel menu 4212, the other channel menu options in the channel menu 4212 will dim, a "Back" icon 4216 will be displayed to the right of the chosen channel, and the focus will be on the content menu 4214. The content menu 4214 lists programs by time based on that channel's lineup. The first show will be the show that is currently airing live on that channel followed by the rest of the channel's lineup. If the channel is a cable channel delivering content from a live feed, there may be some indication of content modification for that channel. In some embodiments, the viewer can scroll through five days worth of programming in the content menu 4214. Now that the highlight is over the content menu 4214, browsing is achieved by scrolling down the content menu 4214 until whichever content the viewer was looking for has been highlighted. In some embodiments, selecting a program from the content menu 4214 may lead to one of two things. If the program is currently live now, selecting the program will take the viewer to watching that program in full screen. If the program is showing at a later time on a live channel, selecting the program will display a popup screen giving the viewers options as to what to do next, similar to the popup window described above with respect to the "By Time" menu 4204 described above.

[0320] A viewer may also browse the "Scheduled TV" interface 4200 by genre in manners similar to that described for browsing by time and channel (FIG. 42F). In some embodiments, menu entries for the "By Genre" menu 4218 may be ordered alphabetically with the exception of an "Adult" genre, if applicable, being displayed at the bottom of the menu 4218. Once the viewer selects a genre, the other genre menu options in menu 4218 will dim, a "Back" icon will be displayed to the right of the chosen genre, and the focus will be on the content menu 4220. In some embodiments, airing status (e.g. live or upcoming) may be indicated by a change in the color for the time and date of each program. In some embodiments, there may only be one program shown per series, but if there are more episodes of a show playing in the future, a number will display in parenthesis next to the show's title. For example, there are three episodes playing for the highlighted show "All My Children." The episode indicated in metadata area 4222 will be the next upcoming episode of that show within a two weeks window period. Selecting a program from content menu 4220 may be performed in a similar manner to that described above with respect to browsing by time or channel.

[0321] FIG. 43 is a schematic screenshot illustrating a "Recorded TV" interface 4300 in accordance with some embodiments. "Recorded TV" interface 4300 presents another exemplary category under the "All Shows" interface 4100. It allows the viewer to browse all contents that have been recorded or captured to the receiver controller. These programs may include programs recorded or captured either

explicitly by viewer request or automatically by the receiver controller for that particular viewer. These programs may also include programs recorded by or for other viewers associated with the same receiver controller. In some embodiments, these contents may only consist of recorded TV shows and recorded movies. Live content, future content, web content, pay-per-view movies and content available for download will not be displayed under "Recorded TV" interface 4300. Navigation in the "Recorded TV" interface 4300 can be done in a similar manner to that described above for "Scheduled TV" interface 4200.

[0322] Other exemplary interfaces/categories under the "All Shows" interface 4100 include "Movies," "Web Videos," "Zones," and "Search." The "Movies" interface allows a viewer to browse for all movies, including, but not limited to, movies recorded or captured to the receiver controller whether or not for the particular viewer of the currently activated viewer profile, movies currently airing on a live channel or upcoming in the future, pay-per-view movies delivered to the receiving portion, movies available for download, and movies that can be downloaded for free. The "Web Videos" interface allows a viewer to browse for videos provided by various web content providers such as You Tube and Yahoo. Live content, future content, non-web movies, pay-per-view programs and content available for download will not be displayed here. FIG. 44 is a schematic screenshot illustrating a "Movies" interface in accordance with some embodiments. FIG. 45 is a schematic screenshot illustrating a "Web Videos" interface in accordance with some embodiments.

[0323] FIG. 46A-B are schematic screenshots illustrating a "Search" interface 4600 in accordance with some embodiments. "Search" interface 4600 allows a viewer to input a search term to search for all contents by allowing the viewer to interact with a text input module. The viewer need only spell out as much of the title of a program as necessary in order to search for that program. For example, when searching by title, entering the letters "FA" may immediately lead to the shows "Family Guy" and "Farscape" being shown in a results column. In some embodiments, when the user highlights and selects the "Search" option from the "All Shows" menu 4110, "All Shows" menu 4110 will slide out to the left and the "Search" menu 4602 will slide in from the right. The "breadcrumb trail" will now indicate that the viewer has drilled down into "Search" in the "All Shows" interface 4100. "Search" menu 4602 is a header level menu having three menu options that allows the viewer to narrow the list of programs that their search will return. These options may include "Search Scheduled TV," "Search Recorded Programs," and "Search Movies."

[0324] For example, if the viewer wishes to search for programming that has already been recorded or captured by the receiver controller, the viewer can highlight and select the "Search Recorded Programs" option for the "Search" menu 4602 to bring up a "Recorded Programs" input module menu 4604. Focus will be on input module menu 4604, which allows the viewer to select letters that spell out what the viewer is searching for. As the viewer scrolls down and selects a letter from input module menu 4604, a dimmed out content menu 4606 to the right will begin to populate with programs depending on what letters has been typed in. Also as the viewers selects the letters, a number above the content menu 4606 will change to reflect how many items are listed based on that search. When the viewer is finished "typing" out the letters or sees what the appropriate selection in the content

menu 4606, the viewer can press a right arrow key on the remote control unit to jump over to the content menu 4606. To backspace or add a space, the viewer may select the backspace or space option in the input module menu 4606.

[0325] FIG. 47 is a schematic screenshot illustrating a "Zones" interface 4700 in accordance with some embodiments. "Zones" interface 4700 allows a viewer to browse all Zones that are offered for the receiving portion associated with that viewer. Zones are network or brand specific interfaces that allow a viewer to browse and find contents specific to the particular network or brand featured. For example, an advertiser such as a brand for sports gear can have a dedicated Zone available on the UI 2800. In some embodiments, when the viewer highlights "Zones" on the top level "All Shows" menu 4110 and presses select, top level "All Shows" menu 4110 will slide out to the left and "Zones" menu 4702 will slide in from the right. At this point the viewer is still navigating a header level menu displaying the various Zones that a viewer can jump to. Zones in "Zones" menu 4702 may be listed by local broadcast channels first (e.g. 1-69), followed by all other Zones listed alphabetically.

[0326] FIG. 48 is a schematic screenshot illustrating an individual Zone interface 4800 in accordance with some embodiments. Each individual Zone interface 4800 may be built with a layout structure similar to that of the "All Shows" interface 4100. Individual Zone interface 4800 may include partitions for a Zone menu 4802, a filmstrip 4804, a video inset window 4806, a metadata area 4808, and an advertising area 4810. In some embodiments, however, program that the viewer is currently watching will not continue to play in the video inset window 4806. Instead, the currently watched program will pause and the video inset window 4806 will play content that the network or brand has specified to play. Doing so will focus the viewer's attention to that network or brand. In addition, promotions displayed in advertising area 4810 will be specified by the network or brand. In some embodiments, network Zones will only be offered to viewers in a geographical location where that network is available for viewing. For example, a Zone for the Seattle based local channel KOMOtv will only be visible to viewers that can tune to KOMOtv.

[0327] As illustrated in FIG. 48, navigation in an individual Zone interface 4800 may be performed in a similar manner as navigation in a "Find It" interface 4000 described above with respect to FIG. 40. At any time, the viewer can press a right arrow button on a remote control unit or interact with some other interactive device to jump from Zone menu 4802 to filmstrip 4804. Categories displayed by Zone menu 4802 can be dynamically tailored by the network or brand. In addition, Zone menu 4802 may also contain generic default categories such as "Featured Shows," "Here Now," "All Shows," "Web Clips," and "Extras." When the viewer highlights the "Featured Shows" item, filmstrip 4804 will display thumbnails representing shows that the Zone network has specified as their "Featured Shows." These shows may be shows that the network wants to promote and are therefore the first highlighted category when the viewer reaches a Zone interface 4800. If a particular show has multiple episodes available for viewing, a corner of the thumbnail for that show may display a number similar to thumbnails of other menus and filmstrips.

[0328] When the viewer highlights the "Here Now" menu item, filmstrip 4804 will display thumbnails of programs from that network that has already been delivered to the receiver controller associated with that viewer. When the

viewer highlights the “All Shows” menu item, filmstrip **4804** will populate with thumbnails of all shows from that network that the content delivery system has access to, thus allowing the viewer to make requests to shows from that network. Even if there is no guarantee that a particular show that the viewer requests can be immediately downloaded, this menu option may nevertheless allow the viewer to express interests in certain programs that can be taken into account by the content delivery system. When the viewer highlights the “Web Clips” menu item, filmstrip **4804** will display thumbnails for web content related to that network. Finally, when the viewer highlights the “Extras” menu item, filmstrip **4804** will display thumbnails for a variety of different content related to that network but not necessarily airing on that network. These contents may include behind the scenes footage, games, and bloopers reels.

[0329] A Zone interface **4800** may also display selections corresponding to soft buttons in a metadata area (not shown in FIG. **48**). If a selected content is available for viewing immediately, a selection corresponding to a soft button A may allow the viewer to play that content. In some embodiments, however, the selected video will play in the video inset area until the viewer chooses to exit to full screen. Thus, the viewer’s attention can be kept within the Zone when viewing Zone content. The metadata area may also display a selection corresponding to a soft button B allowing the viewer to “Explore More” on a selected content. In addition, areas on the screen not dedicated to menus or program information may be reserved for advertisement. In some embodiments, the area below Zone menu **4802** may be reserved for a selection **4810** corresponding to soft button D that displays a link to Zone advertisement. Pressing soft button D will pause the current video in video inset window **4808** and play the promotion video in video inset window **4808**.

[0330] Similarly, in “All Shows” interface **4100** or “Find It” interfaces **4000**, areas on the screen not dedicated to menus or program information may be reserved for advertisement targeted to a general audience within a geographic location or targeted to that particular viewer associated with the activated viewer profile. In some embodiments, the area below “All Shows” menu **4110** and “Find It” menu **4012** may be reserved for a soft button selection **4900** that displays targeted advertisement. In some embodiments, the presence of soft button selection **4900** may usually indicate that the advertisement is an active promotional advertisement. Active promotional advertisements may have a video associated with it or a link to a “Zone.” The viewer can press the corresponding soft button on the remote control unit to pause what is playing in the video inset window and begin playing the advertisement video, either in the video inset window or full screen. For example, in FIG. **40**, pressing the corresponding soft button D allows the viewer to access a video advertisement for Crest in the video inset window **4008** or full screen. If the advertisement is playing in the video inset window **4008**, a hint may appear letting the viewer know that an “Exit” option can be selected to bring the video to full screen. The “Exit” option may be displayed on or near the video inset window **4008** or located on the remote control unit or some other interactive device. When the advertisement video is finished playing either in the video inset window **4008** or full screen, the video that had been paused will resume playing either in the video inset window **4008** or full screen. If the advertisement is an active promotional advertisement that is linked to a “Zone,” pressing soft button D will take the viewer to that Zone. In

some embodiments, before the viewer is taken to a Zone, a popup window will appear informing the viewer that “The program you are currently watching will be paused and placed in your saved programs.” This popup window may display options such as (i) pause the current program and jump to the selected Zone, or (ii) resume watching the current program and do not jump to the selected Zone.

[0331] FIG. **49** is a schematic screenshot illustrating a soft button selection **4900** displaying an advertisement in accordance with some embodiments. Advertisements displayed in soft button selection **4900** may rotate on a time basis and may also rotate out as they are played. In some embodiments, soft button selection **4900** takes the form of a standard rectangular area. The rounded corners may be masked in via software and not necessarily cropped by the advertiser. Advertisements displayed by soft button selection **4900** may be selected by the intelligence components of the content delivery system specifically for the viewer associated with the activated viewer profile. In addition to soft button selection **4900**, branding and advertisement may be inserted within menus or program information areas. For example, an advertisement logo (not shown in FIG. **49**) may be displayed within “All Shows” menu **4110**, beneath the stacked menu options.

[0332] In some embodiments, promotional advertisements may show up throughout any other interfaces in UI **2800**. Various locations in UI **2800** may offer advertisers opportunities to present static images that may or may not contain an interactive component. For example, an “Acme” logo is displayed in metadata area **2806** in interface **2802**, as shown in FIG. **28**. In some embodiments, an image of products or services may include an interactive component, such as a hyperlink or some other active component for interaction with the viewer as described above with respect to FIG. **49**. Still in some embodiments, various interfaces throughout UI **2800** present telescoping and interactive advertisements. Telescoping advertisements “expand” a short advertisement into a longer advertisement in response to a viewer selection and activation. Interactive advertisements allow the viewer to make selections during the advertisements where the possibilities include branching to other advertisements or other advertising segments as well as requesting responses such as an electronic coupon offering.

[0333] In some embodiments, the UI **2800** is designed to facilitate other types of advertising paradigms. First, for programming content that supports advertising queues, an advertising management system in the content delivery system can intelligently and dynamically insert advertising segments during play back of the programming content. Moreover, different advertising content may be selectively inserted for display during pre-roll and post-roll of programming content playback. In other words, different content may be selectively displayed before or after programming content playback. For instance, pre-roll advertising is common in free online content offerings. In some embodiments, original promotional content is embedded within each of the plurality of programming content received by a content operation center in the content delivery system. The content operation center may then intelligently and dynamically remove the original promotional content and inserts targeted promotional content before delivering the programming content to the receiver controller. Such inserted advertisements will then be displayed by UI **2800** during play back of the programming content. In some other embodiment, programming content delivered to the receiver controller may not include advertise-

ments or original advertisements embedded in the programming content may not have been removed before the programming content is delivered to the receiver controller. Nevertheless, the receiver controller may itself intelligently and dynamically remove the original promotional content and/or insert targeted promotional content into such programming content. Such inserted advertisements will then be displayed by UI 2800 during play back of the programming content, in the same way as display of advertisements inserted by the content operation center. The inserted advertisements may be advertisements targeted to the particular viewer associated with the activated viewer profile, and may be determined based on a pre-designed rule set for a targeted advertising campaign. Advertising segments may be of any length including the typical thirty-second durations or a combination of different lengths.

[0334] Furthermore, UI 2800 may allow for discrete advertising overlays and “ad bugs” during operations on the programming content so termed as “trick mode” play back “Trick mode” play back includes such operations as fast forward, rewind, pause, skip forward, skip backwards, slow motion, and so forth. Static or dynamic advertising images can be inserted as an overlaying image during activation of such trick mode operations. For example, if the viewer decides to fast forward through a commercial for a particular make of a car, the advertiser’s logo may be inserted as an overlay when that viewer fast forward through the car commercial. When the viewer gets to the next commercial, the logo may change to reflect the contents of the next commercial. Detailed descriptions of different advertising paradigms and details about the content delivery system can be found in U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/016,412 titled “System Architecture for a Content Delivery System” filed on Dec. 21, 2007, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

[0335] In addition to presenting a comprehensive personalization of navigation and viewing experience an identified viewer or an identified group of viewers, UI 2800 may also be designed to maintain viewer engagement. For instance, UI 2800 provides for a smooth transition between the time viewers sign off from their personal profiles and when they later return to their personal profiles. In some embodiments, if the viewer is returning to the UI 2800 there are a number of content choices that could begin playing either in a video inset window or full screen. First, if the viewer was watching a live channel the last time that viewer interacted with UI 2800 in that viewer’s personal profile, UI 2800 will tune to that live channel the next time the viewer navigates the UI 2800 in that viewer’s personal profile. Second, if the viewer was watching a recorded program and did not finish watching it the last time that viewer interacted with the UI 2800 in the viewer’s personal profile, the program will resume the next time the viewer navigates the UI 2800 in the viewer’s personal profile. Third, if the viewer was watching but did not finish a pay-per-view movie and there is still time left on the rental, the movie will resume playing the next time the viewer navigates the UI 2800 in the viewer’s personal profile. Fourth, if the viewer was watching a web video from a web video provider or from a Zone, the first show from the “My Top Shows” stack 3202 rather than the web video will automatically begin to play the next time the viewer navigates the UI 2800 in the viewer’s personal profile.

[0336] In addition, UI 2800 also provides for a smooth transition from one content to another when a viewer finishes

watching a selected content with or without viewer intervention. For example, when a program from the “My Top Shows” stack 3202 finishes playing, the next program from stack 3202 will automatically begin to play if the viewer makes no other selections. Similarly, when a program from the “My Channels” stack or the “My Scheduled TV” stack finishes playing, the next program from that stack may automatically begin to play if the viewer makes no other selections. In some embodiments, UI 2800 provides the viewer with further selectable suggestions that the viewer may enjoy when that viewer finishes watching a particular program. For example, at the end of each program being viewed, an overlay may appear on the screen to give the viewer suggestions on what to view next.

[0337] FIG. 50 is a schematic screenshot of an overlay 5002 appearing at the end of a program in accordance with some embodiments. Once the credit roll begins at the end of any recorded program, overlay 5002 may appear on the right side of the screen giving the viewer some information on the program just watched as well as a short list of quick selections for the viewer to view next. For example, the top section of overlay 5002 informs the viewer that the program just watched was “Star Wars—A New Hope” and also gives the viewer a hint on how to act on that show (e.g. by pressing the “Actions” button on the remote control unit). Information displayed in this top portion of overlay 5002 includes network logo, and the title of the show. Below the title is the date and time the show aired, followed by the episode title if one exists. Below this information there may be some hint as to how to act on that show (e.g. rate it, save it, delete it, get the series, etc.) At the bottom portion of overlay 5002 is a list of suggestions, with “Star Wars—Return of the Jedi” as the first suggestion. The list of suggestions are likely choices for what a viewer would want to watch next so that the viewer would not have to go back through lists to search for something to watch next. Presenting a list of suggestions in this manner may also allow for network promotion by having a viewer essentially stay on the same network.

[0338] For example, if the viewer was watching a TV show, shows presented in the suggestion list of overlay 5002 may be ordered as follows: (1) most recently recorded unwatched episode for that viewer, (2) the next “My Top Show” from “My Top Show” stack 3202 on the same network as the show they just watched, (3) the next “My Top Show” regardless of what network it aired on, and (4) the next “My Top Shows” within the same genre as the show they just watched. In some embodiments, if the viewer was watching a movie that they chose from the “My Top Shows” stack 3202, programs presented in the suggestions list of overlay 5002 may be ordered as follows: (1) the next “My Top Show” from “My Top Show” stack 3202 on the same network regardless if it is a TV show or movie, (2) the next “My Top Show” on the same network as the movie they just watched, (3) the next movie from “My Top Show” stack 3202 regardless of what network it aired on, and (4) the next movie from “My Top Show” stack 3202 within the same genre as the movie they just watched. These ordering schemes may also be adopted for transitioning between programs without user intervention, as described above.

[0339] In some embodiments, UI 2800 is capable of enabling a viewer to watch a particular content in full screen while allowing fast content navigation and “surfing” at the same time. While in “Surf” mode, UI 2800 may display a mini browser over a full viewing screen to allow the viewer to surf through different content based on different categories. For

example, in “Surf” mode, the viewer can search among all nonlinear contents that have been captured by the receiver controller, stored, and available to the viewer. In some embodiments, the “Surf” mode may be accessed via a designated button on the remote control unit. In some other embodiments, at any point while watching a program full screen, the viewer may press any directional button, touch the scroll wheel or press the “Info” button to bring up a surfing overlay.

[0340] FIGS. 51A-B are schematic screenshots illustrating a mini browser 5102 overlaying a full viewing screen in accordance with some embodiments. This overlay 5102 will let the viewer know what contents the viewer is currently browsing or surfing through (e.g. “Now Surfing” . . .). As the viewer highlights a program in the menu to the left of overlay 2200, the metadata area in the middle of overlay 2200 displays information for that highlighted item (FIG. 51A). To the right of overlay 2200 are selections corresponding to soft buttons A, B, C and D on the remote control unit. Soft button A will allow the viewer to change the category of content the viewer is currently browsing or surfing in. Soft button B will allow the viewer to “Explore More” based on what the viewer has highlighted. Soft button C will take the viewer from the viewing screen to the network Zone for the network airing the selected program. Soft button D will allow the viewer to purchase pay-per-view content.

[0341] For example, when a viewer presses soft button A on the remote control unit to change the category of content to surf through, a “breadcrumb trail” will always let the viewer know how far down the menu hierarchy the viewer has navigated (FIG. 49B). Doing so will replace the “Now Surfing” menu with a “Surf Options” menu. The first category on this “Surf Options” menu is a “Live TV” option that allows the viewer to surf through contents in linear channels. The categories following are the same categories from the top level “My Shows” menu 3108 described above with respect to “My Shows” interface 3100. When the “Live TV” option is highlighted, the metadata area to the right of the “Surf Options” menu displays the first show in the “Live TV” stack.

[0342] UI 2800 is also designed to allow the viewer to perform explicit operations on content. In some embodiments, UI 2800 provides an “Action” menu that can be displayed for any particular program. The “Actions” menu allows the viewer to choose from a list of actions including, but not limited to, rating the program, setting recording options for the program, subscribing to the entire series for the program, saving the program, deleting the program, and performing audio controls, closed caption controls, or parental controls on the program. In some embodiments, the “Actions” menu can be one or more windows that overlay a full screen playing out a particular content. In other embodiments, the “Actions” menu can be one or more windows that overlay various video inset windows in navigational interfaces. To activate the “Actions” menu on a particular content while browsing through a navigational interface, the viewer can highlight that content from a navigational menu and press the “Actions” button on the remote control unit. To activate the “Actions” menu on a content playing in full screen, the viewer can press the “Actions” button directly. A popup window will then appear over the navigational interface or over the full screen, causing any video that the viewer was currently watching to pause. In some embodiments, information for the content that the viewer is acting on will appear to the left of the popup window as a reminder of what content the

viewer is acting on. A menu of actions will appear to the right of the popup window. The viewer may navigate this menu of actions in a similar manner as the viewer would in any other menu on the UI 2800.

[0343] For example, the viewer may choose to rate a certain program by highlighting and selecting a “Rate This Program” selection from the menu of actions in the popup window. In some embodiments, doing so will slide the actions menu away to the left and slide in a “Rate This Program” menu from the right. The “Rate This Program” menu may contain icons selections corresponding to preference ratings such as “I loved it,” “It was Good,” “It was mediocre,” “Not very good,” and “I hated it!” This information will be taken into account by the intelligence components of the receiver controller and other parts of the content delivery system to further learn the viewer’s preferences and to more accurately build the viewer’s profile. In some embodiments, rating a program will push that program up the program rankings made by the intelligence components for that particular viewer.

[0344] In some embodiments, UI 2800 also provide a “Home” interface where a viewer can view or edit viewer profiles, set personal or system wide settings, check and organize scheduled recordings or captures of nonlinear content, solve viewer conflicts, access help features, and access community features. For example, the “Home” interface may include a “My Preferences” menu where the viewer can set and edit personal preferences to be associated with that viewer’s profile on the content delivery system. The viewer may edit that viewer’s name entry, change the viewer button on the remote control unit dedicated to that viewer, change skins and avatars to be displayed when that viewer is navigating UI 2800 in that viewer’s profile, and change the password setting to activate that viewer’s profile. The viewer may also change or select additional channels, genres, ratings to be associated with that viewer’s profile, choose language settings, sound effect settings, closed caption settings, and any other relevant settings. Furthermore, the viewer may also associate that viewer’s profile with that viewer’s account in any third party social networks that the viewer belongs to. In addition, the viewer may reset any initial settings associated with that viewer’s personal profile.

[0345] Another exemplary category under the “Home” interface is a “My Account” category that allows the viewer to view information pertinent to the viewer’s account on the content delivery system. Viewers may see what packages, channels or services they have subscriptions to as well as recent changes to their account such as recent package purchases or pay-per-view purchases. Viewers may also be able to purchase additional packages, channels or services. Furthermore, other viewers on the content delivery system may leave messages for a particular viewer via the “My Account” interface.

Other Embodiments Described

[0346] In addition to the inventions claimed in the appended claims, the embodiments described herein can extend to a method for transmitting content, comprising identifying an amount of bandwidth available for broadcast in a network, the broadcast having a variable bandwidth for content transmission; separating a plurality of audio and visual programming content for transmission to a receiver controller into at least a first portion and a second portion, based on at least one of demand by viewers for the plurality of audio and visual programming content and the amount of bandwidth

available for the broadcast, wherein at least a portion of the audio and visual programming content includes nonlinear content; and transmitting the first portion of the plurality of audio and visual programming content to the receiver controller using the amount of bandwidth available for the broadcast, wherein rate of transmission of a nonlinear content, if present, in the first portion is independent of a rate for real-time viewing of the nonlinear content at the receiver controller; and transmitting the second portion of the plurality of audio and visual programming content to the receiver controller using unicast transmission.

[0347] The method further extends to one in which the broadcast transmission bandwidth can be fixed.

[0348] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the unicast transmission is in response to at least one of a user request and an initiation by a server without a prior request by the user.

[0349] The method also extends to one in which the nonlinear content after having been received at the receiver controller is stored at the receiver controller for play back at a time different from the time of transmission.

[0350] The method further extends to one further comprising transmitting the nonlinear content in a form of discrete files, which are not part of a concatenation of programming, to the one or more receiver controllers for storing.

[0351] The method also extends to one further comprising encoding portions of the nonlinear content, each in form of discrete files, into an aggregate file; transmitting the aggregate file by the broadcast transmission, wherein the aggregate file, having been received by a receiver controller, is decoded into individual discrete files of nonlinear content for non-real time play back.

[0352] The extends to one in which the audio and visual programming content further comprises linear content and the linear content is transmitted in a form of linear streaming to the receiver controller for viewing in real-time and/or for recording.

[0353] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising estimating the demand by viewers for the plurality of audio and visual programming content based on at least one of: a first list of interaction events resulting from watched television content that is selectively chosen for viewing by the one or more viewers using a user interface; a second list of interaction events resulting from ignored television content that is browsed but not selected in the user interface; and a time of day and week wherein at least one of the first list of interaction events and the second list of interaction events occurred.

[0354] The method further extends to one further comprising estimating the demand by viewers for the plurality of audio and visual programming content based on at least one of: a list of audio and visual programs marked for subscription by the one or more viewers; ratings of television content submitted by the one or more viewers on the television content viewed using the user interface; television content specifically requested by the one or more viewers; and television content selectively captured by the receiver controller at the one or more viewer's command.

[0355] The method also extends to one wherein the preference by one or more viewers associated with the client receiver controller is determined using a recommendation engine whose input comprises data acquired from a plurality of other receiver controllers consisting of at least one of: a first list of interaction events resulting from watched television

content that is selectively chosen for viewing by the one or more viewers using a user interface; a second list of interaction events resulting from ignored television content that is browsed but not selected in the user interface; and a time of day and week wherein at least one of the first list of interaction events and the second list of interaction events occurred.

[0356] In addition, method can also extend to one wherein the preference by one or more viewers associated with the client receiver controller is determined using a recommendation engine whose input comprises data acquired from a plurality of other receiver controllers consisting of at least one of: a list of audio and visual programs marked for subscription by the one or more viewers; ratings of television content submitted by the one or more viewers on the television content viewed; television content specifically requested by the one or more viewers; and television content selectively captured by the receiver controller at the one or more viewer's command.

[0357] The method further extends to one wherein the second portion contains particular content specifically requested by one or more viewers.

[0358] The method also extends to one further comprising allocating the audio and visual programming content in accordance with a set of criteria associated with broadcast transmission characteristics of a plurality of broadcast networks; and transmitting the prioritized audio and visual programming content using the plurality of broadcast networks.

[0359] In addition, method can also extend to one wherein the set of criteria further comprises at least one of available bandwidth on broadcast network, number of subscribers reachable by broadcast network, and cost of transmission in a broadcast network.

[0360] The method further extends to one further comprising allocating the audio and visual programming content in accordance with a set of criteria associated with unicast transmission characteristics of a plurality of unicast networks; and transmitting the prioritized audio and visual programming content using the plurality of unicast networks.

[0361] The method also extends to one in which wherein the set of criteria further comprises at least one of available bandwidth on the unicast network and cost of transmission in a unicast network.

[0362] The extends to one in which the broadcast network further comprises at least one of a wired broadcast network, a wireless broadcast network, and an IP multicast network.

[0363] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the broadcast transmission utilizes extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of broadcasting networks.

[0364] The method further extends to one in which the wireless broadcast network is composed of at least one of satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, ATSC DTV broadcast, local cellular broadcast, and WiMax broadcast.

[0365] The method also extends to one in which the wired broadcast network can be a cable network.

[0366] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising sending a schedule of transmission of the separated content to the receiver controllers for the receiver controllers to capture the plurality of audio and visual programming content delivered by at least one of the broadcast and the unicast transmission.

[0367] A method for delivering content across different broadcast networks and different unicast networks for delivering content, comprising identifying a demand for a plurality of audio and visual programming content; determining a

respective amount of bandwidth available for transmission in each of a plurality of broadcast networks and in each of a plurality of unicast networks; determining a set of viewers accessible by each of the plurality of broadcast transmissions; determining a first cost to broadcast content for each of the plurality of broadcast networks and a second cost to unicast content for each of the plurality of unicast networks; determining a combined scheme for broadcast and unicast delivery to transmit portions of the plurality of audio and visual programming content based on the portions' respective demand using the plurality of available broadcast networks and the plurality of unicast networks, to maximize viewers' access to content of their personal interest in a cost efficient manner; transmitting the portions of the plurality of audio and visual programming content using combinations of the plurality of broadcast networks and the plurality of unicast networks in accordance with the delivery scheme.

[0368] The method further extends to one in which the audio and visual programming content further comprising at least one of linear and nonlinear content.

[0369] The method also extends to one further comprising transmitting the nonlinear content at a broadcast transmission rate independent of a rate for real-time viewing of the nonlinear content at the plurality of receiver controllers receiving the nonlinear content.

[0370] In addition, method can also extend to one in which at least one of the plurality of broadcast transmissions further comprises at least one of a wired broadcast, a wireless broadcast, and an IP multicast

[0371] The method further extends to one in which the wireless broadcast further comprises at least one of: satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, local cellular network broadcast, IP multicast, and WiMax broadcast.

[0372] The method of extends to one further comprising utilizing extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of broadcasting networks in the plurality of broadcast transmissions

[0373] The method also extends to one in which content designated for unicast distribution is available for download by the end user and is transmitted upon explicit request by the end user.

[0374] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the bandwidth of the plurality of unicast networks is zero or a cost of data transmission for each of the plurality of unicast networks is prohibitively high so that no unicast network can be used.

[0375] A method for separating content for delivery comprising receiving, at a server, a plurality of audio and visual programming content from a plurality of audio and visual programming distribution networks by a linear content streaming transmission; extracting, at a server, the plurality of audio and visual programming content into individual files, each individual file forming a nonlinear content for storing at the server for a time-delayed distribution and non-real time viewing; transmitting to the one or more receiver controllers, a first number of individual files by broadcast transmission at a rate independent of a rate of transmission suitable for real time viewing; and transmitting to the one or more receiver controllers, a second number of individual files by unicast transmission at a rate independent of a rate of transmission suitable for real time viewing.

[0376] The method further extends to one in which the broadcast network further comprises at least one of a wired broadcast network, a wireless broadcast network, and an IP multicast network.

[0377] The method also extends to one in which the wireless broadcast network is composed of at least one of satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, ATSC DTV broadcast, local cellular broadcast, and WiMax broadcast.

[0378] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the wired broadcast network can be a cable network.

[0379] The method further extends to one further comprising utilizing an extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of in the wireless broadcast network for delivery of content.

[0380] The method also extends to one further comprising determining a first mode of transmission for the first number of individual files and a second mode of transmission for the second number of individual files based on a first aggregate demand by at least a segment of viewers for the first number of individual files and a second aggregate demand by at least the segment of viewers for the second number of individual files.

[0381] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the unicast transmission is in response to at least one of a user's request and an initiation by the server without a prior request by the user.

[0382] The method further extends to one further comprising extracting original promotions associated with audio and visual programming content corresponding to each individual file; storing the individual files and processing the individual files for a time-delayed broadcast or unicast transmission for non-real time distribution.

[0383] The method also extends to delivering content, comprising obtaining nonlinear content from one of a plurality of sources in form of discrete files; receiving real-time audio and visual programming content broadcasted via linear streaming from a audio and visual programming distribution network; combining the real-time audio and visual programming content with at least a first portion of the nonlinear content, forming a combined linear and nonlinear content, for broadcast transmission into an available bandwidth in an existing stream of a broadcast network; transmitting the combined linear and nonlinear content and the nonlinear content to a plurality of receiver controllers using the available bandwidth in the existing stream of the broadcast network; and transmitting a second portion of the nonlinear content by unicast transmission at a rate independent of a rate of transmission suitable for real time viewing.

[0384] The method also extends to one in which the nonlinear content is a plurality of audio and visual programming content extracted from a plurality of audio and visual programming distribution networks by extracting different audio and visual programs from a linear content streaming transmission into corresponding discrete individual files.

[0385] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the nonlinear content is a plurality of audio and visual programming content extracted from a physical media source.

[0386] The method further extends to one in which the broadcast network further comprises at least one of a wired broadcast network, a wireless broadcast network, and an IP multicast network.

[0387] The method also extends to one in which the wireless broadcast network further comprises at least one of satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, ATSC DTV broadcast, local cellular broadcast, and WiMax broadcast.

[0388] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the wired broadcast network can be a cable network.

[0389] The method further extends to one further comprising utilizing an extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of a broadcast network for the broadcast transmission.

[0390] A method for delivering content, comprising receiving a plurality of linear content from a plurality of audio and visual programming distribution networks via a linear streaming transmission; retrieving from a storage memory a plurality of nonlinear content in form of discrete files, each file corresponding to a different audio and visual program; inserting at least one of a portion of the linear content and a portion of the nonlinear content into an available bandwidth of an existing stream of a broadcast network to form an inserted content, the existing stream having a portion of bandwidth occupied with television content broadcasting from the network in a form of a linear streaming transmission at a transmission rate suitable for real time viewing; transmitting the inserted content and the television content broadcasted from the network in the existing broadcast stream of the network as one broadcast transmission to the plurality of receiver controllers, wherein the portion of the nonlinear content, if present, in the inserted content is transmitted at a rate independent of a rate of transmission suitable for real time viewing, and the portion of the linear content, if present in the inserted content is transmitted at a rate of transmission suitable for real time viewing.

[0391] The method also extends to one further comprising transmitting the nonlinear content in an extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of broadcasting networks.

[0392] In addition, method can also extend to one in which bandwidth availability of the broadcast transmission is variable and changes at different times.

[0393] The method further extends to one in which the broadcast transmission is a terrestrial broadcast by a television network.

[0394] The method also extends to one further comprising separating the nonlinear content into at least a first portion and a second portion based on at least one of demand by viewers for the plurality of audio and visual programming content and the amount of bandwidth available for the broadcast wherein the first portion is designated for broadcast transmission and wherein the second portion is designated for unicast transmission.

[0395] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the plurality of receiver controllers are connected to each other by a broadband network, the plurality of receiver controllers collectively forming a peering network where portions of files containing nonlinear content can be sent directly from one receiver controller to another receiver controller.

[0396] The method further extends to one further comprising selectively transmitting the linear content by time of day according to viewer demand.

[0397] The method also extends to receiving content, comprising: at a client receiver controller: receiving from a server, a transmission schedule for a plurality of audio and visual programming content; selectively capturing, in accordance with the transmission schedule and preference by one or more viewers associated with the client receiver controller, a first portion of the plurality of audio and visual programming content by broadcast transmission from a network, wherein a first nonlinear content, if present, in the first portion of the plurality of audio and visual programming content, is received at a transmission rate independent of a rate for real-

time viewing of the first nonlinear content at the receiver controller; and receiving from the server, a second portion of the plurality of audio and visual programming content, by unicast transmission in a broadband network.

[0398] The method also extends to one in which the second portion of the plurality of audio and visual programming content is selectively received by the receiver controller according to preferences of viewers associated with the receiver controller.

[0399] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the plurality of audio and visual programming content comprises linear and nonlinear content.

[0400] The method further extends to one further comprising receiving the nonlinear content in a form of discrete files for play back and storage in the one or more receiver controllers.

[0401] The method also extends to one further comprising receiving the nonlinear content in a form of an aggregate file.

[0402] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising decoding the aggregate file into individual discrete files for play back and storage in the one or more receiver controllers.

[0403] The method further extends to one further comprising receiving a linear content, as a portion of the audio and visual programming content received in the broadcast transmission, in a form of streaming at the one or more receiver controllers for viewing in real-time and/or for recording.

[0404] The method also extends to one further comprising receiving both the linear and nonlinear content by broadcast or unicast transmission, wherein a mode of transmission of the linear and nonlinear content is selected based on demand by the one or more viewers associated with the receiver controllers for the linear and nonlinear content.

[0405] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising receiving the second portion of the plurality of audio and visual programming content by unicast in response to at least one of a user's request and an initiation by the server without a prior request by the user.

[0406] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising utilizing the extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of broadcasting networks for broadcast transmission.

[0407] The method also extends to one further comprising selecting a broadcast network for the broadcast transmission from at least one of a satellite broadcast, a terrestrial broadcast, an ATSC DTV broadcast, a local cellular broadcast and a WiMax broadcast.

[0408] The method further extends to one in which the receiver controller and other receiver controllers are connected to a broadband network, collectively forming a peering network where portions of files having nonlinear content can be sent directly from one receiver controller to another receiver controller.

[0409] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising estimating a demand by viewers associated with the receiver controller for the plurality of audio and visual programming content based on at least one of: a first list of interaction events resulting from watched television content that is selectively chosen for viewing by the one or more viewers using a user interface; a second list of interaction events resulting from ignored television content that is browsed but not selected in the user interface; and a time of day and week wherein at least one of the first list of interaction events and the second list of interaction events occurred.

[0410] The method also extends to one further comprising estimating a demand by viewers associated with the receiver controller for the plurality of audio and visual programming content based on at least one of: a list of audio and visual programs marked for subscription by the one or more viewers; ratings of television content submitted by the one or more viewers on the television content viewed; television content specifically requested by the one or more viewers; and television content selectively captured by the receiver controller at the one or more viewer's command.

[0411] The method also extends to repairing corrupted content, comprising: at a receiver controller: receiving audio and visual programming content on the receiver controller from a broadcast transmission; identifying, if present, corrupted portions of audio and visual programming content; determining in a broadband network, other servers and receiver controllers connected to the broadband network that have an uncorrupted version of the corrupted portion of the audio and visual programming content; sending a request to at least one of the servers and receiver controllers connected to the broadband network for the uncorrupted version of the corrupted portion of the audio and visual programming content; and receiving the uncorrupted version of the corrupted portion of the audio and visual programming content from the one of the servers and receiver controllers.

[0412] The method further extends to one, further comprising replacing the corrupted portion of the audio and visual programming content with the uncorrupted version of the corrupted portion of the audio and visual programming content to form a repaired audio and visual programming content; and storing the repaired audio and visual programming content.

[0413] In addition, method can also extend to one in which at least one of the plurality of broadcast transmissions further comprises at least one of a wired broadcast, a wireless broadcast, and an IP multicast

[0414] The method also extends to one in which the wireless broadcast further comprises at least one of: satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, local cellular network broadcast, IP multicast, and WiMax broadcast.

[0415] The method further extends to one the broadcast transmission utilizes extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of broadcasting networks.

[0416] In addition, method can also extend to one wherein the receiver controller and the other servers and receiver controllers connected to the broadband network collectively form a peer to peer network.

[0417] The method also extends to one in which the receiver controller and the other receiver controllers are configured to communicate with each other directly without going through a central server.

[0418] The method also extends to repairing corrupted content, comprising: at a receiver controller: receiving audio and visual programming content on the receiver controller from a broadcast transmission; storing the audio and visual programming content in the form of files on the receiver controller; identifying, if present, one or more corrupted files representing corrupted audio and visual programming content; determining in a broadband network, other servers and receiver controllers connected to the broadband network that have an uncorrupted version of the one or more corrupted files; sending a request to at least one of the servers and receiver controllers connected to the broadband network for the uncorrupted version of the one or more corrupted files; and

receiving one or more uncorrupted files from one of the servers and receivers controllers.

[0419] The method further extends to one, further comprising replacing the one or more corrupted files with the one or more uncorrupted files; and storing the one or more uncorrupted files in the receiver controller.

[0420] In addition, method can also extend to one in which at least one of the plurality of broadcast transmissions further comprises at least one of a wired broadcast, a wireless broadcast, and an IP multicast

[0421] The method also extends to one in which the wireless broadcast further comprises at least one of: satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, local cellular network broadcast, IP multicast, and WiMax broadcast.

[0422] The method further extends to one the broadcast transmission utilizes extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of broadcasting networks.

[0423] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the receiver controller and the other servers and receiver controllers connected to the broadband network collectively form a peer to peer network.

[0424] The method also extends to one in which the receiver controller and the other receiver controllers are configured to communicate with each other directly without going through a central server.

[0425] The embodiments include a method for delivering content, comprising at a server: determining bandwidth availability of various broadcast transmissions in different broadcast networks at different times; determining at least a first portion of a nonlinear content for broadcast transmission; determining at least a second portion of the nonlinear content for unicast transmission; allocating the first portion of nonlinear content to form a schedule for content transmission based on the bandwidth availability in different broadcast networks at different times; allocating the second portion of nonlinear content for unicast distribution; and transmitting the first portion of the nonlinear content to a plurality of receiver controllers according to the schedule.

[0426] The method further extends to one in which the nonlinear content is separated into at least the first portion and the second portion based on at least one of demand by viewers for the nonlinear content and the amount of bandwidth available for the broadcast and wherein the first portion is transmitted in the broadcast transmission.

[0427] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the schedule is designed to ensure that at least some of the nonlinear content is delivered not longer than a time period after a target time.

[0428] The method also extends to one further comprising transmitting the schedule to the plurality of receiver controllers for the receiver controllers to capture nonlinear content from broadcast transmissions.

[0429] The method further extends to one further comprising determining times of availability for receiver controllers to receive content on each network; allocating the nonlinear content to form a schedule for content transmission based on the times of availability for receiver controllers to receive content on each network.

[0430] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising determining and scheduling a first portion of a linear content in form of streams for broadcast transmission.

[0431] The method also extends to one further comprising determining times of availability for receiver controllers to receive content on each network; allocating the linear content

and the nonlinear content to form a schedule for content transmission based on the times of availability for receiver controllers to receive content on each network.

[0432] The method further extends to one in which the broadcast networks further comprise at least one of a wired broadcast network, a wireless broadcast network, and an IP multicast network.

[0433] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the wireless broadcast network is composed of at least one of satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, ATSC DTV broadcast, local cellular broadcast, and WiMax broadcast.

[0434] The method also extends to one in which the broadcast transmission utilizes extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of broadcasting networks.

[0435] The method further extends to one in which at least a portion of the nonlinear content is transmitted at a rate independent of a rate of real-time viewing of the nonlinear content at the plurality of receiver controllers receiving the nonlinear content.

[0436] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the schedule is designed to account for availability of tuners at receiver controllers in receiving nonlinear content from the different networks at the different times.

[0437] The method also extends to one further comprising inserting at least a third portion of the nonlinear content and a second portion of the linear content into an opportunistic bandwidth for broadcast transmission, the opportunistic bandwidth being bandwidth that became available in at least one of the different networks not anticipated by the scheduling.

[0438] The method also extends to presenting preferred content, comprising: at a receiver controller: determining one or more viewers' viewing preferences of audio and visual programming content for the one or more viewers associated with the receiver controller based on at least one criterion; and displaying the nonlinear programming information about the audio and visual programming content matching the one or more viewers' viewing preferences to the one or more viewers.

[0439] The method further extends to further comprising capturing nonlinear programming information associated with audio and visual programming content matching the one or more viewers' viewing preferences; and storing the nonlinear programming information matching the one or more viewers' viewing preferences.

[0440] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising selectively capturing preferred nonlinear programming content from a broadcast transmission matching the one or more viewers' viewing preferences; and storing the captured nonlinear programming content.

[0441] The method also extends to one in which the preferred nonlinear content is transmitted at a rate independent of a rate of real-time viewing of the preferred nonlinear content at the plurality of receiver controllers receiving the preferred nonlinear content.

[0442] The method further extends to one in which at least a first portion of the preferred nonlinear programming content is received at the receiver controller by a broadcast transmission and a second portion of the preferred nonlinear programming content is received at the receiver controller by a unicast transmission in accordance with a schedule based on at least demand by viewers for the preferred nonlinear programming content.

[0443] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the nonlinear programming information and the corresponding preferred nonlinear programming content is captured in accordance with a schedule.

[0444] The method also extends to one in which the at least one criteria is selected from a group consisting of: a first list of interaction events resulting from watched television content that is selectively chosen for viewing by the one or more viewers using a user interface; a second list of interaction events resulting from ignored television content that is browsed but not selected in the user interface; and a time of day and week wherein at least one of the first list of interaction events and the second list of interaction events occurred.

[0445] The method further extends to one in which the at least one criteria is selected from a group consisting of: a list of audio and visual programs marked for subscription by the one or more viewers; ratings of television content submitted by the one or more viewers; television content specifically requested by the one or more viewers; and television content selectively captured by the receiver controller at the one or more viewer's command.

[0446] The method also extends to selecting content for capturing, comprising: at a receiver controller, for one or more viewers using the receiver controller: identifying a viewer using the receiver controller for viewing audio and visual programming content; tracking interaction events by the viewer, the interaction events including watching a first content that is selectively chosen for viewing by the one or more viewers and ignoring a second content that is browsed but not selected; generating a viewer profile for the viewer based on at least the interaction events by the viewer; adaptively and continuously modifying the viewer profile based on at least interaction events after formation of the viewer profile.

[0447] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising tracking a time of day and time of week of the interaction events as part of the viewer profile.

[0448] The method also extends to one further comprising tracking subscriptions of audio and visual programs by the viewer; tracking audio and visual programs that are rated favorably by the viewer; and adaptively and continuously modifying the viewer profile based on the subscriptions.

[0449] The method further extends to one further comprising selectively capturing preferred audio and visual programming content from a broadcast transmission based on the viewer profile; storing the captured audio and visual programming content; and displaying the captured audio and visual programming content.

[0450] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising prioritizing the captured audio and visual programming content in a display in accordance with a viewer preference and viewer routine.

[0451] The method also extends to one in which the audio and visual programming content comprises linear and nonlinear content.

[0452] The method of extends to one in which the broadcast transmission is transmitted by at least one of a wired broadcast network, a wireless broadcast network, and an IP multicast network.

[0453] The method of extends to one in which the wireless broadcast network further comprises at least one of a satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, ATSC DTV broadcast, local cellular broadcast, and WiMax broadcast.

[0454] The method of extends to one in which the wired broadcast network can be a cable network.

[0455] The method of extends to one in which the broadcast transmission utilizes extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of broadcasting networks.

[0456] The method also extends to capturing content, comprising: at a receiver controller: identifying one or more viewers based on a predetermined command received from an interaction device, interacting with the receiver controller, which is being operated by the one or more viewers; determining the one or more viewers' viewing preferences of programming content for the one or more viewers associated with the receiver controller based on at least one criterion; and displaying programming information matching the one or more viewers' viewing preferences to the one or more viewers in response to a user command by the one or more viewers received from the interaction device.

[0457] The method of extends to one further comprising capturing the programming audio and visual programming content matching the one or more viewers' viewing preferences; and storing the captured programming audio and visual programming content matching the one or more viewers' viewing preferences.

[0458] The method further extends to one further comprise: capturing the programming information associated with audio and visual programming content matching the one or more viewers' viewing preferences; and storing the captured programming information associated with the audio and visual programming content matching the one or more viewers' viewing preferences.

[0459] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising prioritizing the programming information in a display in accordance with a viewer preference and viewer routine.

[0460] The method also extends to one in which the at least one criterion is selected from a group consisting of: a first list of interaction events resulting from watched television content that is selectively chosen for viewing by the one or more viewers using a user interface; a second list of interaction events resulting from ignored television content that is browsed but not selected in the user interface; and a time of day and week wherein at least one of the first list of interaction events and the second list of interaction events occurred.

[0461] The method further extends to one in which the at least one criterion is selected from a group consisting of: a list of audio and visual programs marked for subscription by the viewer; ratings of television content submitted by the one or more viewers on the television content viewed; television content specifically requested by the one or more viewers; and television content selectively captured by the receiver controller at the one or more viewer's command.

[0462] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the audio and visual programming content comprises linear and nonlinear content.

[0463] The method also extends to one in which the audio and visual programming content is transmitted by at least one of a wired broadcast network, a wireless broadcast network, and an IP multicast network.

[0464] The method further extends to one in which the wireless broadcast network further comprises at least one of a satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, ATSC DTV broadcast, local cellular broadcast, and WiMax broadcast.

[0465] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the wired broadcast network can be a cable network

[0466] The method also extends to one in which the audio and visual programming content is broadcast transmitted utilizing extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of broadcasting networks.

[0467] The method also extends to displaying captured content, comprising: at a receiver controller receiving a user identification command from an interface device operated by a viewer associated with the receiver controller; identifying the viewer by the user identification command received from the interface device; retrieving, in response to the user identification command received from the interface device, a user profile of the viewer that is stored in the receiver controller; retrieving programming information, in accordance with the user profile from the receiver controller; and presenting the programming information to the viewer.

[0468] The method further extends to one in which comprising receiving a user activation command selecting an audio and visual program associated with the programming information; retrieving the audio and visual program stored in the receiver controller; displaying the audio and visual program for viewing.

[0469] The method also extends to removing content, comprising: at a server configured to transmit audio and visual programming content by at least one of a broadcast transmission and a unicast transmission: receiving a plurality of audio and visual programming content from a plurality of audio and visual programming distribution networks in a form of a linear streams, wherein each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content includes a corresponding original promotional content embedded within each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content; removing selectively from the plurality of audio and visual programming content, the corresponding embedded original promotional content; and storing each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content without the corresponding embedded original promotional content as a single discrete file for time-delayed distribution and non-real time viewing.

[0470] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the audio and visual programming content comprises at least one of television programming content and movies.

[0471] The method also extends to one in which at least a portion of the audio and programming content comprises nonlinear content and the nonlinear content is transmitted at a transmission rate that is independent of a rate for real-time viewing of the nonlinear content at the receiver controller receiving the nonlinear content.

[0472] The method further extends to one in which the broadcast transmission utilizes extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of broadcasting networks.

[0473] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the broadcast transmission is transmitted by at least one of a wired broadcast network, a wireless broadcast network, and an IP multicast network.

[0474] The method also extends to one in which the wireless broadcast network is composed of at least one of satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, ATSC DTV broadcast, local cellular broadcast, and WiMax broadcast.

[0475] The method further extends to one in which the wired network can be a cable network.

[0476] The method also extends to combining content, comprising: at a server configured to transmit a plurality of audio and visual programming content by at least a broadcast transmission: receiving a plurality of audio and visual programming content from a plurality of audio and visual pro-

gramming distribution networks in a form of linear streams, wherein each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content correspondingly includes an original promotional content embedded within each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content; removing, from each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content, the corresponding original promotional content embedded in each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content; inserting into each of the plurality of the audio and visual programming content at least a portion of a targeted promotional content associated with an advertising campaign for each of the plurality of the audio and visual programming content; storing at least a portion of the plurality of audio and visual programming content with the targeted promotional content as nonlinear content in form of discrete files for time-delayed distribution and non-real time viewing; and transmitting the nonlinear content at a rate that is independent of a real-time viewing rate of the nonlinear content at a receiver controller receiving the nonlinear content.

[0477] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the plurality of audio and visual programming content comprises at least one of television programming content and movies.

[0478] The method also extends to one in which the plurality of audio and visual programming content further comprises at least one of linear content.

[0479] The method further extends to one in which the broadcast transmission utilizes extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of broadcasting networks.

[0480] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the broadcast transmission is transmitted by at least one of a wired broadcast network, a wireless broadcast network, and an IP multicast network.

[0481] The method also extends to one in which the wireless broadcast network is composed of at least one of satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, ATSC DTV broadcast, local cellular broadcast, and WiMax broadcast.

[0482] The method further extends to one in which the wired network can be a cable network.

[0483] In addition, method can also extend to one in which at least a portion of the plurality of audio and visual programming content is also transmitted by unicast transmission.

[0484] The method also extends to extracting content, comprising: at a receiver controller configured to receive audio and visual programming content at least by broadcast transmission: receiving a plurality of audio and visual programming content in a form of linear stream or discrete files, each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content containing original advertising content; selectively extracting original advertising content, embedded within the plurality of audio and visual content, from each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content; and storing each of the plurality of the audio and visual programming content without the corresponding original advertising content as modified discrete files in the receiver controller.

[0485] The method also extends to one in which the audio and visual programming content comprises at least one of television programming content and movies.

[0486] The method further extends to one in which the audio and visual programming content comprises at least one of linear and nonlinear content.

[0487] In addition, method can also extend to one in which further comprising receiving the nonlinear content at a trans-

mission rate independent of a rate for real-time viewing of the nonlinear content at the receiver controller receiving the nonlinear content.

[0488] The method also extends to one in which the broadcast transmission utilizes extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of broadcasting networks.

[0489] The method further extends to one in which at least a portion of the audio and visual programming content is also received by unicast transmission.

[0490] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the broadcast transmission is transmitted by at least one of a wired broadcast network, a wireless broadcast network, and an IP multicast network.

[0491] The method also extends to one in which the wireless broadcast network is composed of at least one of satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, ATSC DTV broadcast, local cellular broadcast, and WiMax broadcast.

[0492] The method further extends to one in which the wired broadcast network can be a cable network.

[0493] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising identifying which of the plurality of audio and visual programming content is for which of the one or more viewers; retrieving promotion and advertisement content targeted for the identified one or more viewers in accordance with one or more advertising campaigns; inserting the targeted promotion and advertisement content into corresponding ones of the plurality of audio and visual programming content in accordance with the one or more advertising campaigns; and displaying, in response to one or more viewers' user command, audio and visual programming content with the targeted promotion and advertisement content, embedded within.

[0494] The method also extends to displaying advertising content, comprising: at a receiver controller configured to receive audio and visual programming content at least by broadcast transmission: receiving a plurality of advertising promotion content; receiving a plurality of audio and visual programming content; identifying which of the plurality of audio and visual programming content is for which of the one or more viewers; inserting, correspondingly, at least a portion of the plurality of advertising promotion content targeting the one or more viewers in accordance with an advertising campaign into each of the audio and visual programming content identified for each of the one or more viewers; and displaying each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content with the targeted advertising promotion upon request by the one or more viewers using the receiver controller.

[0495] The method also extends to one further comprising storing each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content after the plurality of audio and programming content is received and before any advertising promotion content can be inserted.

[0496] The method further extends to one further comprising storing each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content after corresponding advertising promotion content has been inserted into each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content.

[0497] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising displaying at least another portion of the plurality of advertising promotion content when an action including at least one of fast forwarding, rewinding, slow motion, pause, forward skip and backward skip, is performed on the audio and visual programming content.

[0498] The method also extends to one further comprising displaying at least another portion of the plurality of advertising promotion content prior to and after the displaying of the plurality of audio and visual programming content.

[0499] The method further extends to one in which the audio and visual programming content comprises at least one of television programming content and movies.

[0500] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the audio and visual programming content comprises at least one of linear and nonlinear content.

[0501] The method also extends to one in which each of the plurality of audio and visual content does not contain advertising content.

[0502] The method further extends to one further comprising receiving the plurality of audio and visual programming content by unicast transmission.

[0503] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising receiving the nonlinear content at a transmission rate that is independent of a rate for real-time viewing of the nonlinear content at the receiver controller receiving the nonlinear content.

[0504] The method also extends to one in which the broadcast transmission utilizes extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of broadcasting networks.

[0505] The method further extends to one in which the broadcast transmission is transmitted by at least one of a wired broadcast network, a wireless broadcast network, and an IP multicast network.

[0506] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the wireless broadcast network is composed of at least one of satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, ATSC DTV broadcast, local cellular broadcast, and WiMax broadcast.

[0507] The method also extends to one in which the wired broadcast network can be a cable network.

[0508] The method further extends to one further comprising identifying one or more viewers based on a user identification command received from an interaction device operated by the one or more viewers for interacting with the receiver controller.

[0509] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising personalizing the portion of the plurality of advertising promotional content targeted for each of the one or more viewers as the targeted advertising promotional content can be displayed.

[0510] The method also extends to one in which the inserting of the plurality of advertising promotional content can occur before displaying of the audio and visual programming content or at the time of displaying of the audio and visual programming content.

[0511] The method also extends to extracting and insert content, comprising: at a receiver controller configured to receive audio and visual programming content by at least a broadcast transmission: receiving a plurality of audio and visual programming content for one or more viewers using the receiver controller, each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content containing original advertising content; selectively removing the original advertising content embedded within each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content; inserting at least a portion of advertising content having promotional material targeted for the one or more viewers, in accordance with one or more advertising campaigns, into each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content for the one or more viewers; and dis-

playing the audio and visual programming content with the targeted advertising content, to the one or more viewers upon request.

[0512] The method further extends to one further comprising displaying at least another portion of the targeted advertising content when an action is performed on the audio and visual programming content such as fast forwarding, fast forwarding, rewinding, slow motion, or pause.

[0513] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising displaying at least another portion of the customized advertising content prior to and after the displaying of the plurality of audio and visual programming content.

[0514] The method also extends to one in which the audio and visual programming content comprises at least one of television programming content and movies.

[0515] The method further extends to one in which the first portion of the targeted advertising content is inserted in place of the original advertising content.

[0516] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising requesting for a plurality of different customized advertising content in accordance with one or more advertising campaigns.

[0517] The method also extends to one further comprising receiving the plurality of audio and visual programming content by unicast transmission.

[0518] The method further extends to one further comprising storing each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content after the plurality of audio and programming content is received and before any advertising promotion content can be inserted.

[0519] In addition, method can also extend to one further comprising storing each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content after corresponding advertising promotion content has been inserted into each of the plurality of audio and visual programming content.

[0520] The method also extends to one in which the audio and visual programming content comprises at least one of linear and nonlinear content.

[0521] The method further extends to one in which the nonlinear content is received at a transmission rate independent of a rate for real-time viewing of the nonlinear content at the receiver controller receiving the nonlinear content.

[0522] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the broadcast transmission utilizes extra bandwidth in an ATSC digital broadcast of broadcasting networks.

[0523] The method also extends to one in which the broadcast transmission is transmitted by at least one of a wired broadcast network, a wireless broadcast network, and an IP multicast network

[0524] The method further extends to one in which the wireless broadcast network is composed of at least one of satellite broadcast, terrestrial broadcast, ATSC DTV broadcast, local cellular broadcast, and WiMax broadcast.

[0525] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the wired broadcast network can be a cable network.

[0526] The method also extends to one further comprising identifying one or more viewers based on a predetermined profile received from an interaction device operated by the one or more viewers for interacting with the receiver controller;

[0527] The method further extends to one further comprising personalizing the portion of the plurality of advertising

promotional content targeted for each of the one or more viewers as the targeted advertising promotional content can be displayed.

[0528] In addition, method can also extend to one in which the inserting of the plurality of advertising promotional content can occur before displaying of the audio and visual programming content or at the time of displaying of the audio and visual programming content.

[0529] Furthermore, the method includes displaying programming content, comprising: at a receiver controller, receiving a user identification from an user interface device; in response to the user identification, activating an interactive graphical display personalized for a viewer identified by the user identification; and displaying, in the interactive graphical display, a menu of programming content that can be personalized for the viewer according to the viewer's viewing preferences, wherein the programming content can be received from at least one of a broadcast transmission and a unicast transmission.

[0530] The method further extends to one wherein the interactive graphical display personalized for the viewer includes personalization of at least one of skins, colors, and avatars in the interactive graphical display for identification of the viewer.

[0531] The method further extends to one wherein the programming content personalized for the viewer is captured by the receiver controller in nonlinear form and stored on the receiver controller.

[0532] The method further extends to one wherein the viewer's viewing preferences can include at least a daily viewing routine of the viewer.

[0533] The method further extends to one wherein the programming content can include programming content originating from multiple sources. Moreover, the method further extends to one wherein the programming content can be captured by at least one of broadcast transmission from the content operation center in a nonlinear form, unicast transmission from the content operation center in a nonlinear form, broadcast transmission from the content operation center in a linear form, and broadcast transmission from a local broadcast network in linear form.

[0534] Another method, comprising: receiving a user identification from a user interface device; in response to the user identification, displaying an interactive graphical display personalized to a viewer identified by the user identification; and displaying in the interactive graphical display, a menu of programming content personalized for a viewer and organized in categories; displaying for at least one category a plurality of subcategories, at least one of which includes a list of programming content arranged in order of the viewer's preference by a receiver controller.

[0535] The method further extends to one wherein the programming content can be personalized according to the viewer's viewing preference and stored in a receiver controller prior to being presented.

[0536] The method further extends to one wherein the programming content can be captured by at least one of broadcast transmission from the content operation center in a nonlinear form, unicast transmission from the content operation center in a nonlinear form, broadcast transmission from the content operation center in a linear form, and broadcast transmission from a local broadcast network in linear form.

[0537] The method further extends to one wherein the programming content can include programming content originating from multiple sources.

[0538] The method further extends to one wherein the interactive graphical display can be personalized for a viewer by personalizing at least one of skins, colors, and avatars in the first mode of the user interface for identification of the viewer.

[0539] Accordingly, another embodiment may include a user interface, comprising: a personalized interactive graphical interface configured to present to a viewer information to prompt the viewer to respond and to interact with a receiver controller, the receiver controller being configured to: cause selective capture of programming content based on viewing preferences of at least one of a plurality of viewers who are associated with the receiver controller, the programming content being delivered to the receiver controller from an antenna subsystem after being captured; store the captured programming content; and the personalized interactive graphical interface further being configured to organized and to present to the viewer at least a portion of the captured programming content in accordance with viewing preferences corresponding to the viewer.

[0540] The user interface may extend to one wherein the personalized interactive graphical interface is activated in response to a user identification identifying the viewer.

[0541] The user interface may extend to one configured to cause communication of the viewing preferences of at least the one of the plurality of viewers to a content delivery system via the receiver controller.

[0542] The user interface may extend to one wherein the personalized interactive graphical display include at least one of skins, colors, and avatars personalized according to preferences of the viewer for identification of the viewer.

[0543] The user interface may extend to one wherein the personalized programming content is selectively captured and stored by the receiver controller prior to being presented.

[0544] The user interface may extend to one wherein the interactive graphical display is configured to present targeted advertising to the viewer in response to operations on the programming content during presentation of the programming content.

[0545] A different user interface included in this disclosure comprises: an interactive graphical display personalized for an identified viewer based on a user identification for the identified viewer and received from an user interface device, wherein the user identification identifies the viewer; the interactive graphical display configured to display targeted advertisements determined in accordance with rules generated by an advertising management system; and programming content organized in accordance with the viewing preferences of the identified viewer, wherein the programming content can be received from at least one of broadcast transmissions and unicast transmission.

[0546] The user interface may extend to one wherein the viewing preferences of the identified viewer are maintained at least at one of a receiver controller and a content operation center.

[0547] Still, the user interface may extend to one wherein the display of the targeted advertisements is caused by instructions from the receiver controller.

[0548] The user interface may extend to one wherein the targeted advertisements can be specifically targeted at the identified viewer.

[0549] Yet another embodiment of a user interface, comprises: an interactive graphical display configured to allow a viewer to interact with a receiver controller; and the receiver controller being configured to dynamically inserting different targeted advertising content into the interactive graphical display, according to rules of an advertising system, the targeted advertising content being displayed during: presentation of a programming content at selected times of the presentations; pre-roll and post-roll of the programming content presentation, and an operation on the programming content during the presentation of the programming content.

[0550] The user interface may extend to one wherein the operation is in response to one of a plurality of trick modes activated by a user interface device.

[0551] The user interface may extend to one wherein the plurality of trick modes further comprise at least one of fast forward, rewind, skip forward, skip backward and pause commands.

[0552] Still, the user interface may extend to one wherein the targeted advertisement is targeted based on at least one of the programming content; the viewer's demographics; a category of programming content into which the programming content belong can be classified; and a time of day or week in which certain interactions between the viewer and the interactive graphical display can occur.

[0553] The user interface may extend to one wherein the interactive graphical display can be personalized for a viewer by personalizing at least one of skins, colors, and avatars in the first mode of the user interface for identification of the viewer.

[0554] Another embodiment of a user interface, comprises: an interactive graphical display that is activated by a receiver controller in response to identification of a user, to present programming content to the user, the user interface being interchangeable between at least two modes in which: in a first mode, a the display is partitioned into at least first, second, and third areas: the first area being for presenting a menu of programming content arranged in accordance with at least one of the user's preference; the second area being for presenting information about a programming content selected from the menu by a user; and the third area being for displaying one of a previously selected programming content and the programming content selected from the menu; and in a second mode, displaying programming content in full screen.

[0555] The method may extend to one wherein the user interface can be personalized for a viewer by personalizing at least one of skins, colors, and avatars in the first mode of the user interface for identification of the viewer.

[0556] The method may extend to one wherein the programming content can be personalized for a viewer and is captured by the receiver controller in nonlinear form and stored on a receiver controller.

[0557] The method may extend to one wherein the programming content can include programming content originating from multiple sources.

[0558] Another embodiment of a user interface, comprises: an interactive graphical display activated in response to a user command and partitioned to present simultaneously: a menu of personalized programming content arranged in at least categories, subcategories, and ordered lists, wherein at least the menu of personalized programming content is organized in accordance with a viewer's viewing preference; a description of a programming selected from the menu; and a window in which is displayed one of a selected program and a pro-

gramming content being viewed by a viewer prior to activation of the interactive graphical display.

[0559] The user interface may extend to one wherein at least one partition has an area configured to display a targeted advertisement presented according to rules of an advertising management system.

[0560] The user interface may extend to one wherein the interactive graphical display can be personalized for a viewer by personalizing at least one of skins, colors, and avatars in the user interface for identification of the viewer.

[0561] The user interface may extend to one wherein the personalized programming content is selectively captured and stored by a receiver controller prior to being presented.

[0562] The user interface may extend to one wherein the interactive graphical display is configured to present targeted advertising to the viewer in response to operations on the programming content during presentation of the programming content.

[0563] A different method disclosed, comprises: in a content delivery system: determining, programming content to be prioritized for capture and presentation to a subset of viewers each associated with a receiver controller; determining a category of programming content in which the programming content is to be categorized at time of presentation to the subset of viewers; informing the corresponding receiver controllers of the prioritized programming content and the category; transmitting the prioritized programming content; receiving and storing the programming content on the receiver controller; and in response to a user identification identifying the specific viewer, presenting the stored programming content in the category in a user interface personalized to the specific viewer.

[0564] The method may extend to one wherein the programming content comprises nonlinear content for at least one of a broadcast transmission and a unicast transmission.

[0565] The method may also extend to one wherein the programming content prioritized for capture and presentation comprises content from a local linear broadcast.

[0566] A different method also disclosed, comprises: at a receiver controller, determining different viewing preferences of a plurality of viewers via the plurality of viewers' interactions with different interactive graphical displays corresponding to the plurality of viewers; capturing a plurality of programming content in accordance with the determined viewing preferences of the plurality of viewers; and presenting a subset of the plurality of programming content corresponding to the determined viewing preferences of one of the plurality of viewers to the one of the plurality of viewers.

[0567] The foregoing description, for purpose of explanation, has been described with reference to specific embodiments. However, the illustrative discussions above are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed. Many modifications and variations are possible in view of the above teachings. The embodiments were chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention and its practical applications, to thereby enable others skilled in the art to best utilize the invention and various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

What is claimed is:

1. A user interface, comprising:

an interactive graphical display configured to present information to which a viewer can respond,

the user interface being configured to collect information, which can be used by a content operation center to determine viewing preferences of the viewer by:

- causing communication of personal information disclosed by the viewer to the content operation center via a receiver controller,
- causing communication of the viewer's interactions with programming content to the content operation center via the receiver controller, and
- causing communication of at least one of (a) ratings and subscriptions of programming content and (b) the viewer's viewing behavior to the content operation center via a receiver controller; wherein

the interactive graphical display is further configured to aid the receiver controller in organizing and presenting programming content that can be received from at least one of broadcast transmission and unicast transmission in accordance with the viewer's viewing preferences.

2. The user interface of claim 1 wherein the interactive graphical display is personalized in accordance to a profile of the viewer, and is configured to response to a user identification identifying the viewer.

3. The user interface of claim 1 wherein the interactive graphical display can be personalized for a viewer by personalizing at least one of skins, colors, and avatars in the first mode of the user interface for identification of the viewer.

4. The user interface of claim 1 wherein the programming content can be personalized according to the viewer's viewing preference and stored in a receiver controller prior to being presented.

5. The user interface of claim 4 wherein the programming content can be captured by at least one of broadcast transmission from the content operation center in a nonlinear form, unicast transmission from the content operation center in a nonlinear form, broadcast transmission from the content operation center in a linear form, and broadcast transmission from a local broadcast network in linear form.

6. The user interface of claim 4 wherein the interactive graphical display is configured to present targeted advertisements to the viewer in response to operations on the programming content during presentation of the programming content.

7. A method for displaying advertisements, comprising: presenting a programming content in an interactive graphical display, wherein the interactive graphical display is personalized according to a viewer's viewing preference;

in response to a first user command to perform an operation on the presented programming content, displaying a targeted advertisement over the presented programming content during the operation on the programming content; and

ceasing display of the targeted advertisement in response to a second user command.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the display of the targeted advertisement ceases in response to the second user command to resume presentation of the programming content.

9. The method of claim 7 wherein the programming content can be personalized according to the viewers' viewing preference and stored in a receiver controller.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein the programming content can be captured by at least one of broadcast transmission from the content operation center in a nonlinear form, unicast

transmission from the content operation center in a nonlinear form, broadcast transmission from the content operation center in a linear form, and broadcast transmission from a local broadcast network in linear form.

11. The method of claim 7 wherein the targeted advertisement is determined according to rules generated by an advertising management system.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the targeted advertisement is targeted based on at least one of the programming content; the viewer's demographics; a category of programming content into which the programming content belong can be classified; and a time of day or week in which certain interactions between the viewer and the interactive graphical display can occur.

13. The method of claim 7 wherein the targeted advertisement can include at least one of a static image and a short video.

14. The method of claim 7 wherein the interactive graphical display can be personalized for a viewer by personalizing at least one of skins, colors, and avatars in the first mode of the user interface for identification of the viewer.

15. The method of claim 7 wherein the first user command to perform an operation is at least one of a command selected from the group consisting of fast forward, rewind, skip forward, skip backward and pause commands.

16. A method to display programming content, comprising:

while presenting a first programming content on a display, partitioning the display into at least a first, second, and third areas;

displaying, in the first area, a menu of items including at least one of a category of programming content and a list of programming content wherein programming content in at least one category is viewer-preferred content;

allowing a viewer to perform at least one of browsing and selecting an item from the menu;

if the user selects an item from the menu, displaying, in the second area, information about a programming content corresponding to the item selected from the menu; and

displaying, in a third area, a window in which the viewer can perform at least one of continuing to view the first programming content and previewing at least a segment of a the programming content corresponding to the item selected from the menu.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein at least one of the programming content that is viewer preferred can be selectively received by at least one of broadcast transmission and unicast transmission for storage in a receiver controller configured to organize and present the programming content in the menu.

18. The method of claim 16 wherein at least one category of programming content includes subcategories of programming content, at least one of which represents at least a list of view-preferred content.

19. A method, comprising:

presenting a first programming content, from a list of preferred programming content, on a display;

upon termination of the first program, automatically providing a choice to a viewer to select at least a second programming content from the list of programming content; and

upon receiving the viewer's selection of the second program; presenting the second program on the display.

20. The method of claim **19** wherein the list of programming content is presented in a prioritized manner at least in accordance to one of the group consisting of an order of programming content most preferred by the viewer, a chronological order in which the list of programming content is released, channels in which programming content is associated, and advertisements.

21. The method of claim **19** wherein a choice of the second programming content is provided in a prioritized manner at least in accordance to one of the group consisting of an order of programming content most preferred by the viewer, a chronological order in which the list of programming content is released, channels in which programming content is associated, and advertisements.

22. The method of claim **19** wherein the programming content can be personalized according to the viewers' viewing preference and stored in a receiver controller prior to being presented.

23. The method of claim **19** wherein the programming content can be captured by at least one of broadcast transmission from the content operation center in a nonlinear form, unicast transmission from the content operation center in a nonlinear form, broadcast transmission from the content operation center in a linear form, and broadcast transmission from a local broadcast network in linear form.

24. A content delivery system, comprising:

- a content operation center configured to broadcast programming content;
- a networked antenna subsystem in communication with a local area network and configured to receive the broadcast programming content;
- a receiver controller in communication with the local area network and having a plurality of associated content viewers, the receiver controller being configured to:

provide instructions for the networked antenna subsystem to capture a selected programming content previously identified as being preferred by at least one of a plurality of viewers associated with the receiver controller;

cause storage of the captured selected programming content;

receive a user identification identifying a unique one of the plurality of viewers; and

cause presentation, in a user interface of at least a portion of the stored selected programming content for the unique one of the plurality of viewers based on user identification and viewing preferences of the unique one of the viewers.

25. The system of claim **24** wherein the programming content is at least partially selected for broadcast transmission in accordance with public demand for the programming content.

26. The system of claim **24** wherein the receiver controller is further configured to communicate a viewer's preferences and viewing behavior to the content operation center.

27. The system of claim **24** wherein at least some of the programming content is broadcasted according to the viewer's preferences and viewing behavior.

28. The system of claim **24** wherein at least some of the programming content is received by the networked antenna subsystem in a nonlinear form.

29. The system of claim **24** wherein the viewing preferences can include viewing routine of the unique one of the viewers.

30. The system of claim **24** wherein the selected programming content can be captured from at least two of local linear broadcast stations, nonlinear content originating from a content operation center via broadcast transmission and nonlinear content originating from a content operation via unicast transmission.

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