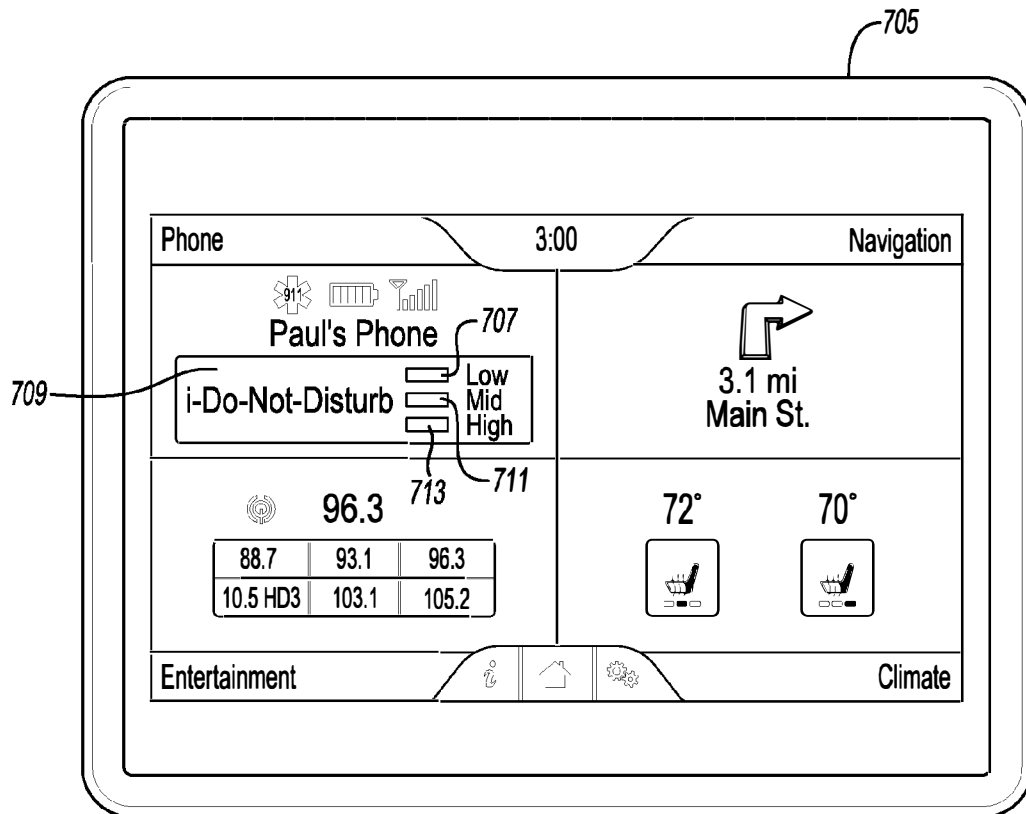


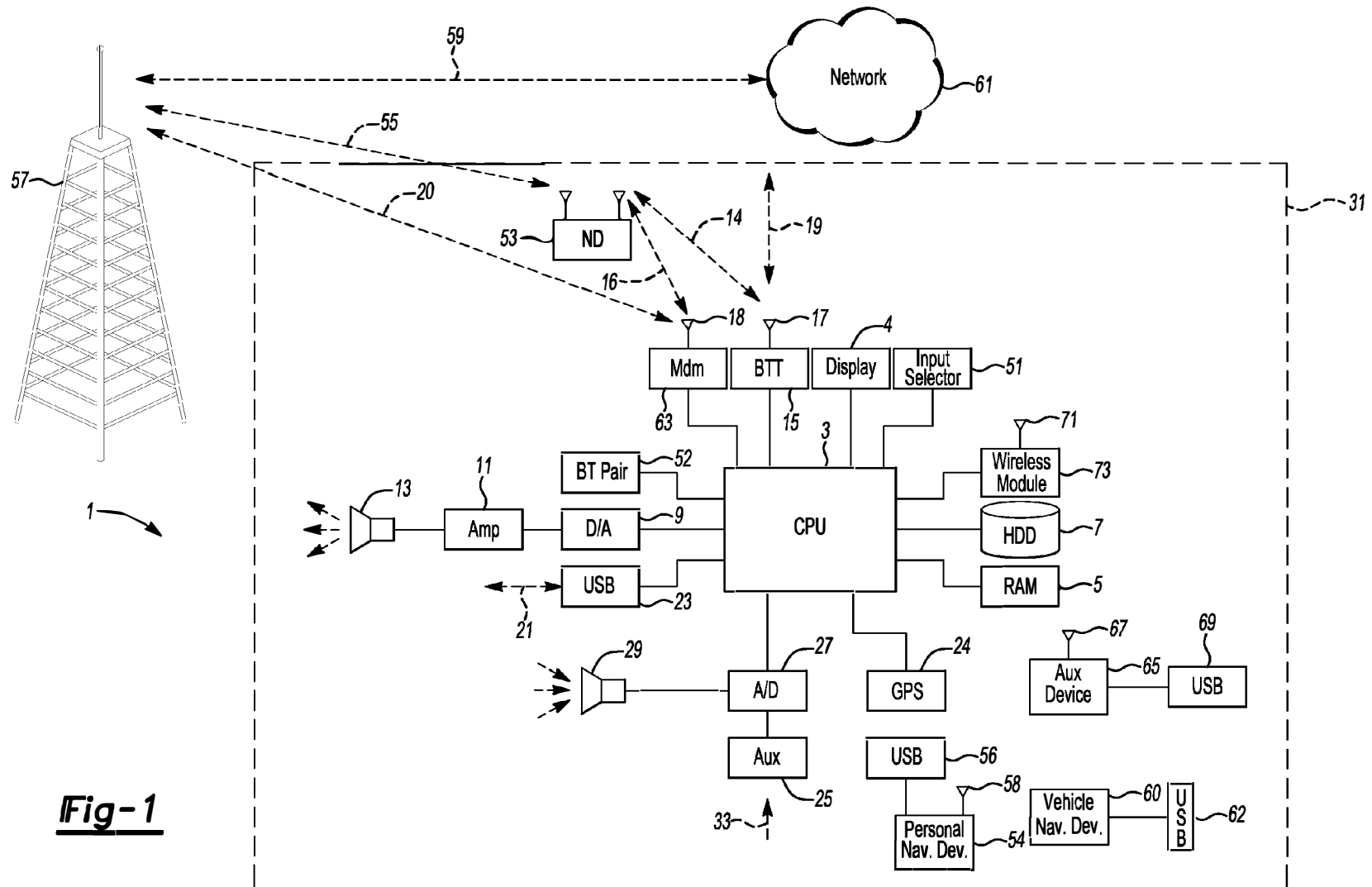


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LLC, Dearborn, MI (US)**(21) Appl. No.: **13/798,658**(22) Filed: **Mar. 13, 2013**(57) **ABSTRACT**

A vehicle computer system includes one or more processors configured to receive context data representative of a vehicle's environment from one or more modules. The one or more processors are programmed and configured to receive the context data from one or more modules, determine an attention demand value utilizing the context data and a workload value corresponding to the context data, and output an indicator to activate or adjust a do not disturb feature based on the attention demand value.





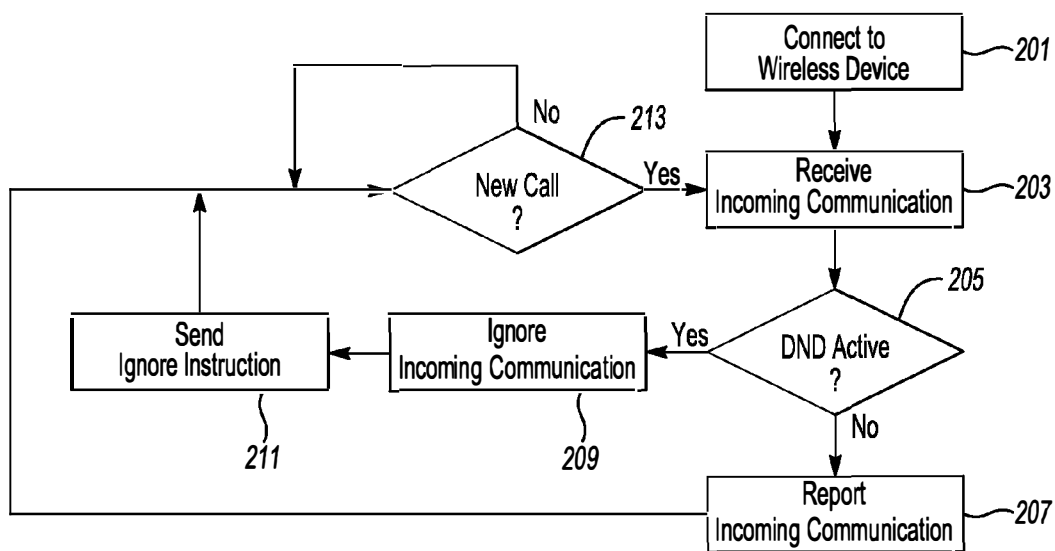


Fig-2

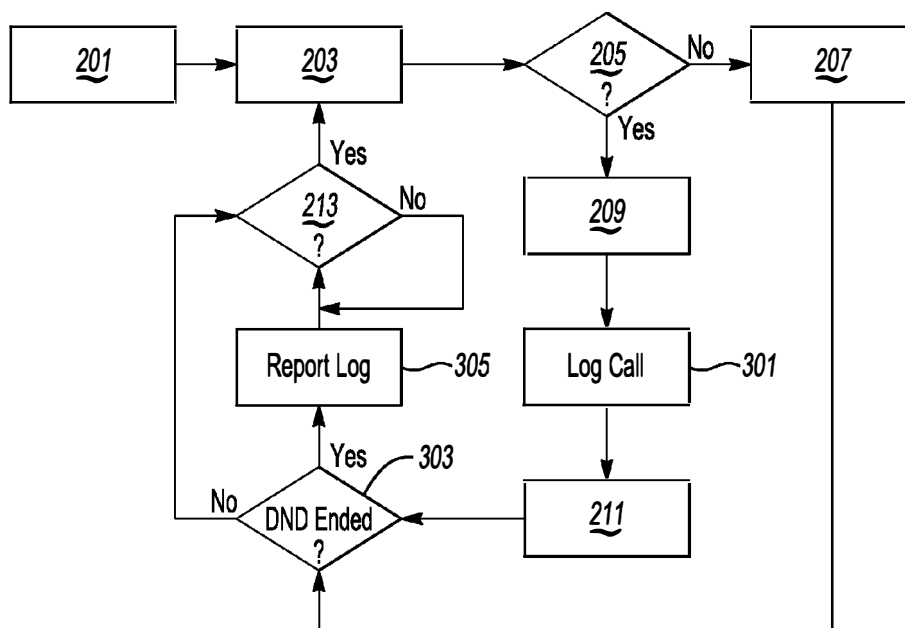
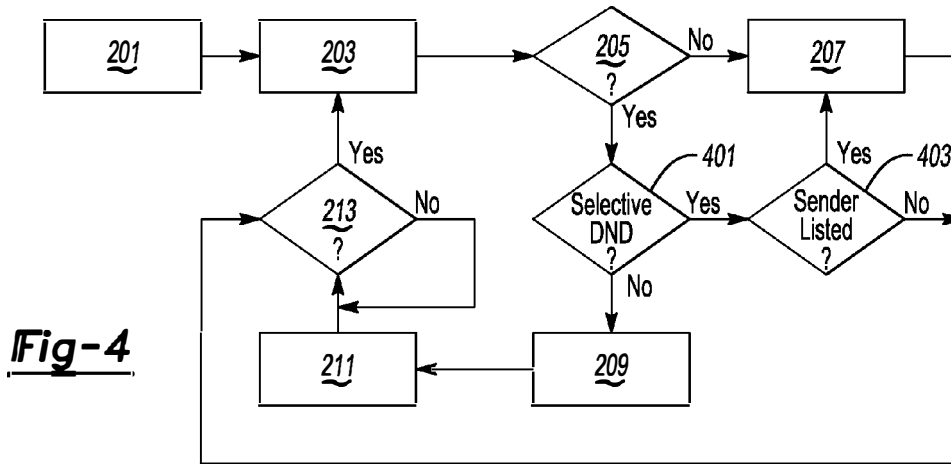
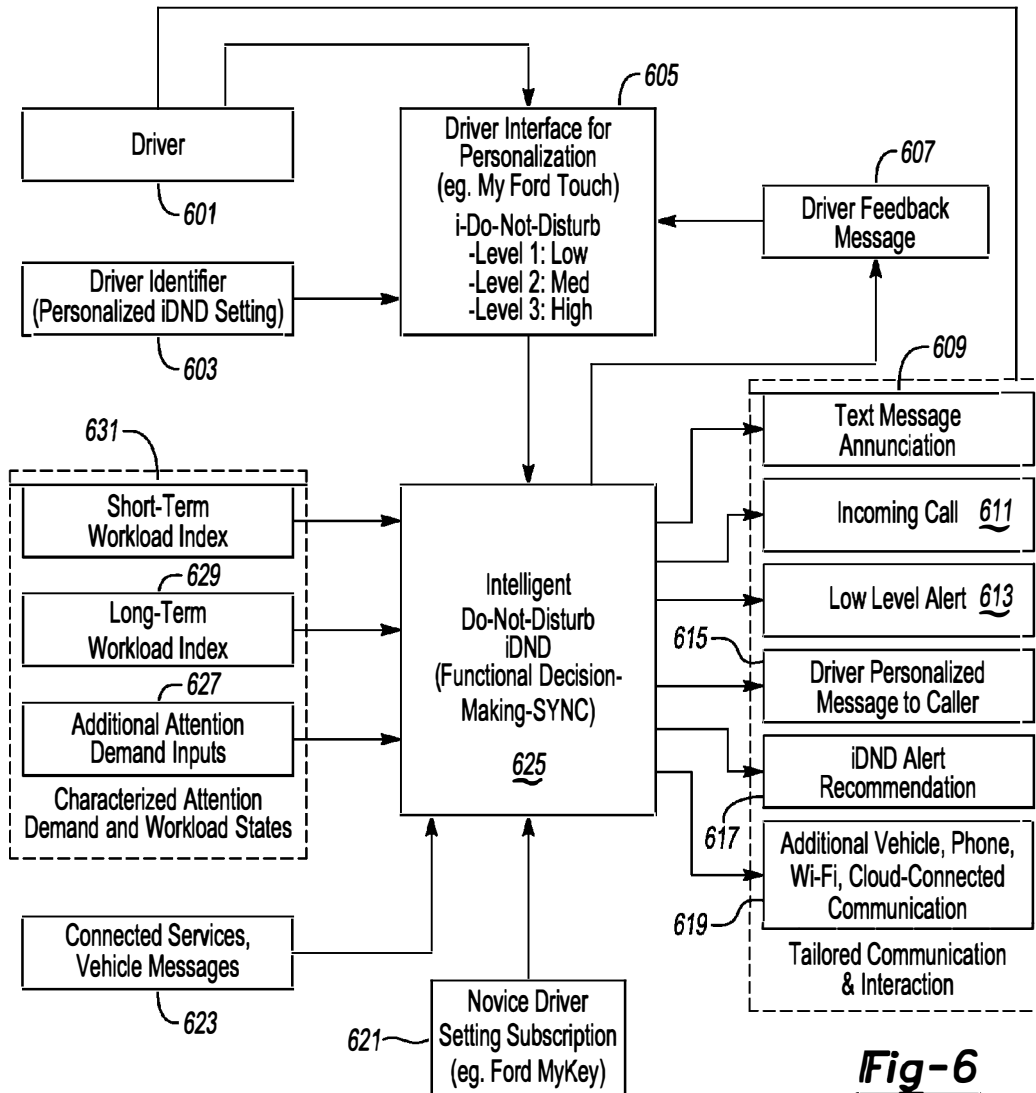


Fig-3



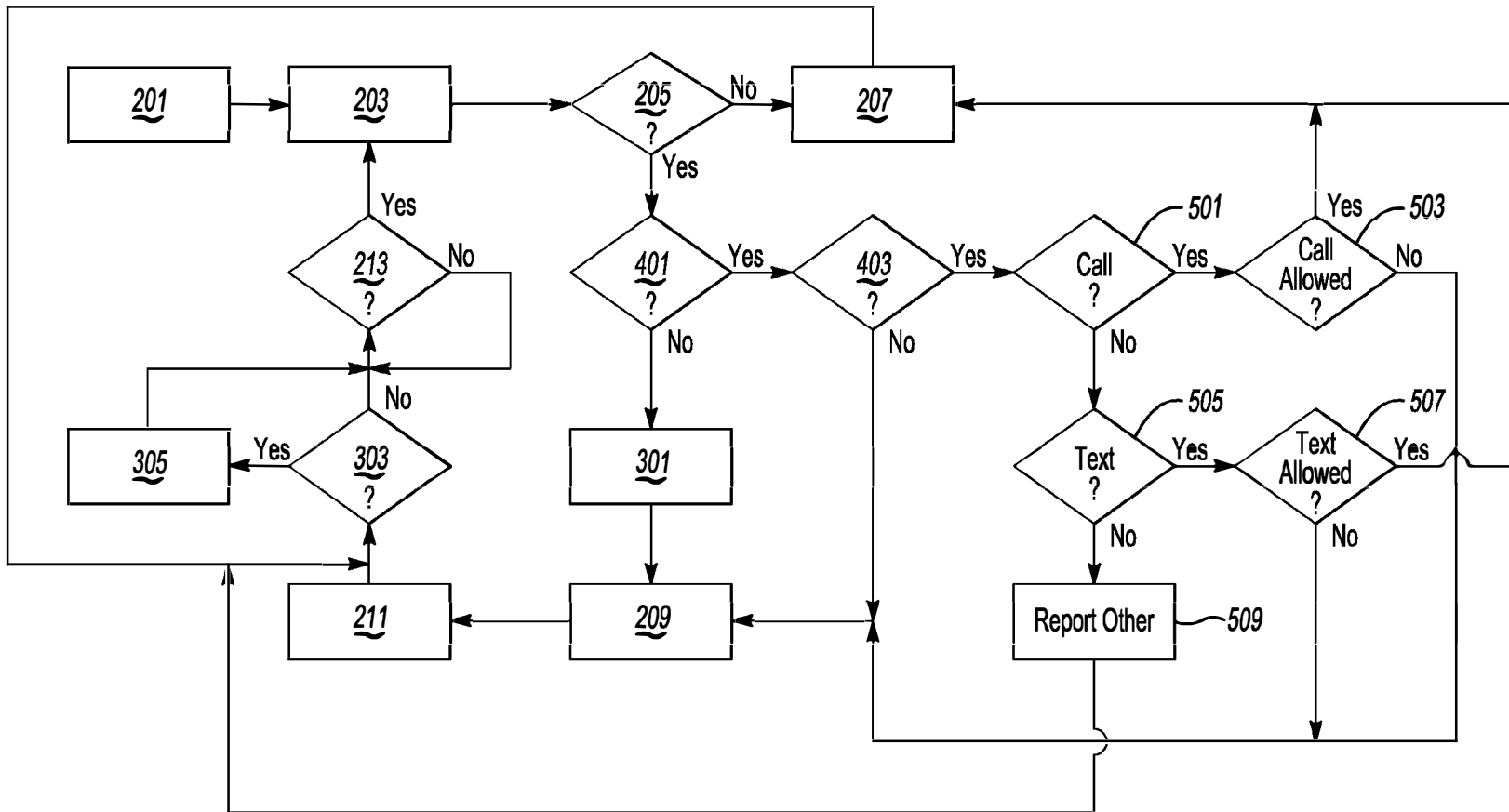


Fig-5

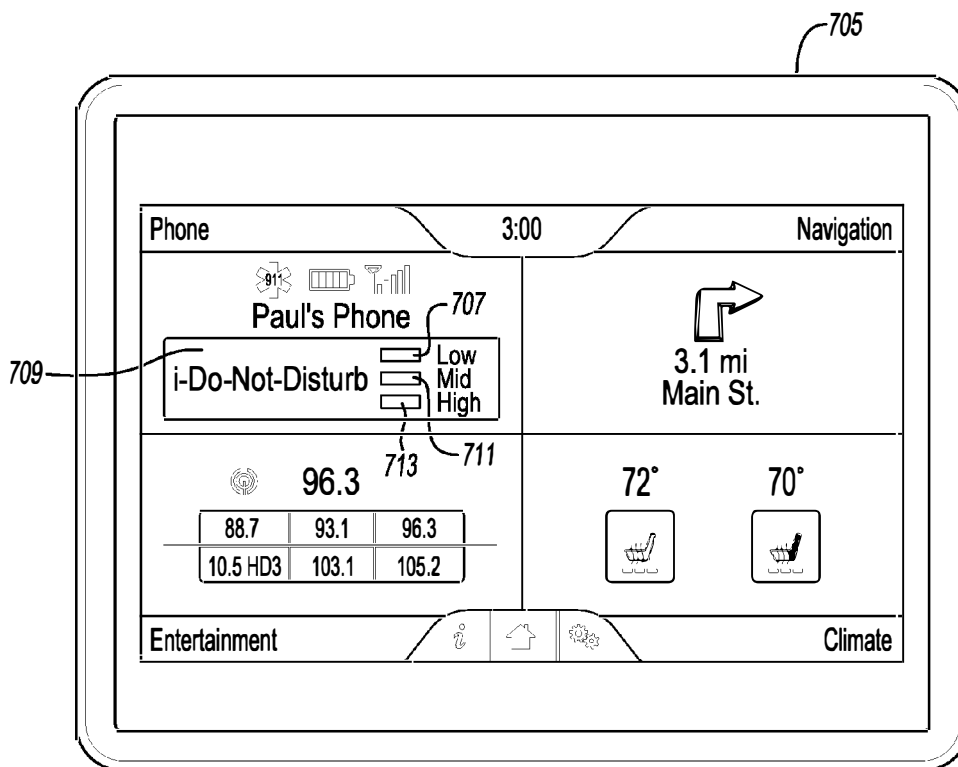


Fig-7

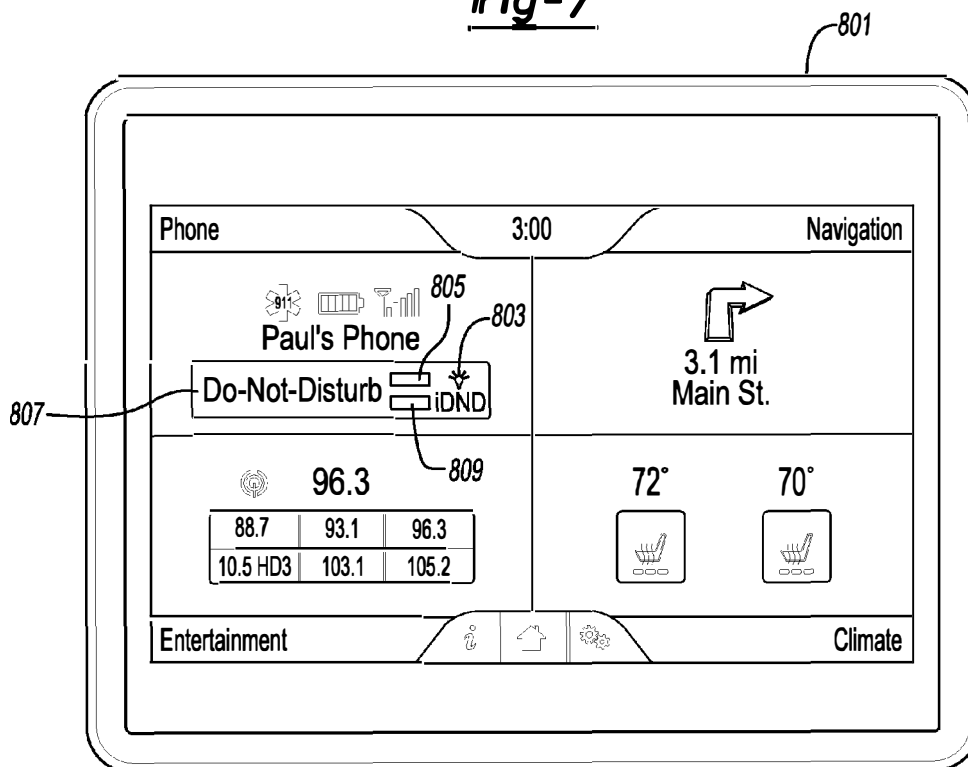


Fig-8

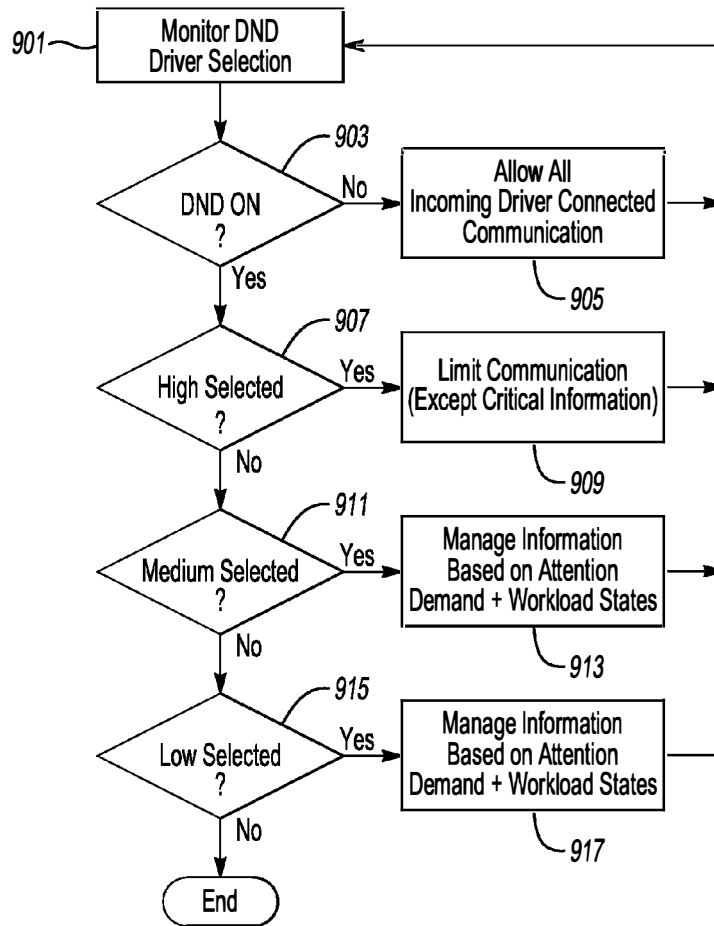


Fig-9

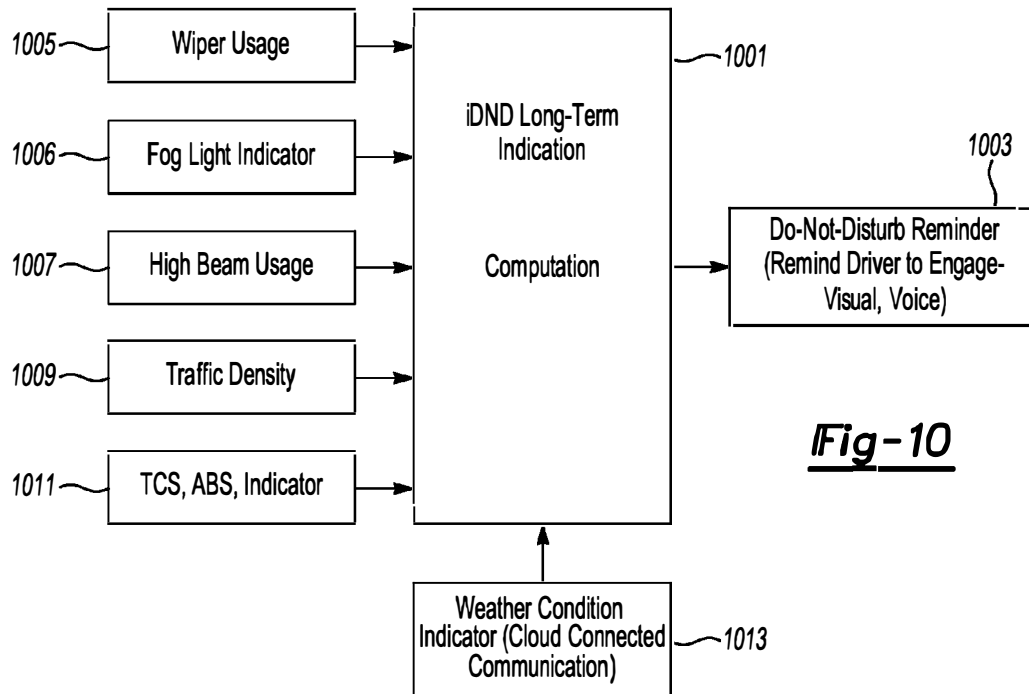


Fig-10

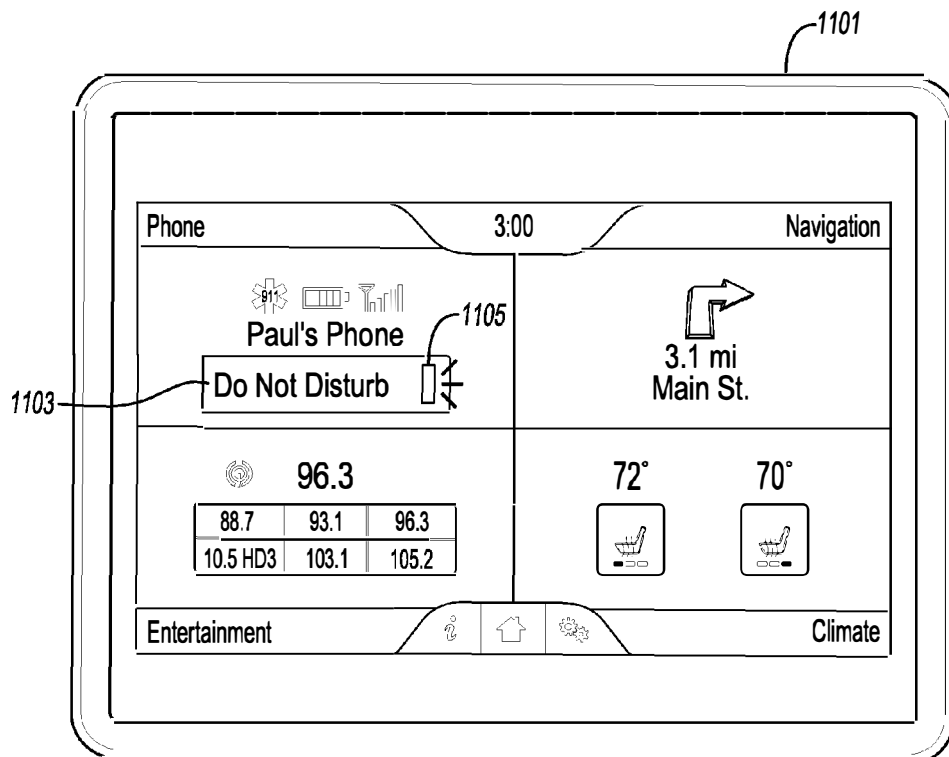


Fig-11A

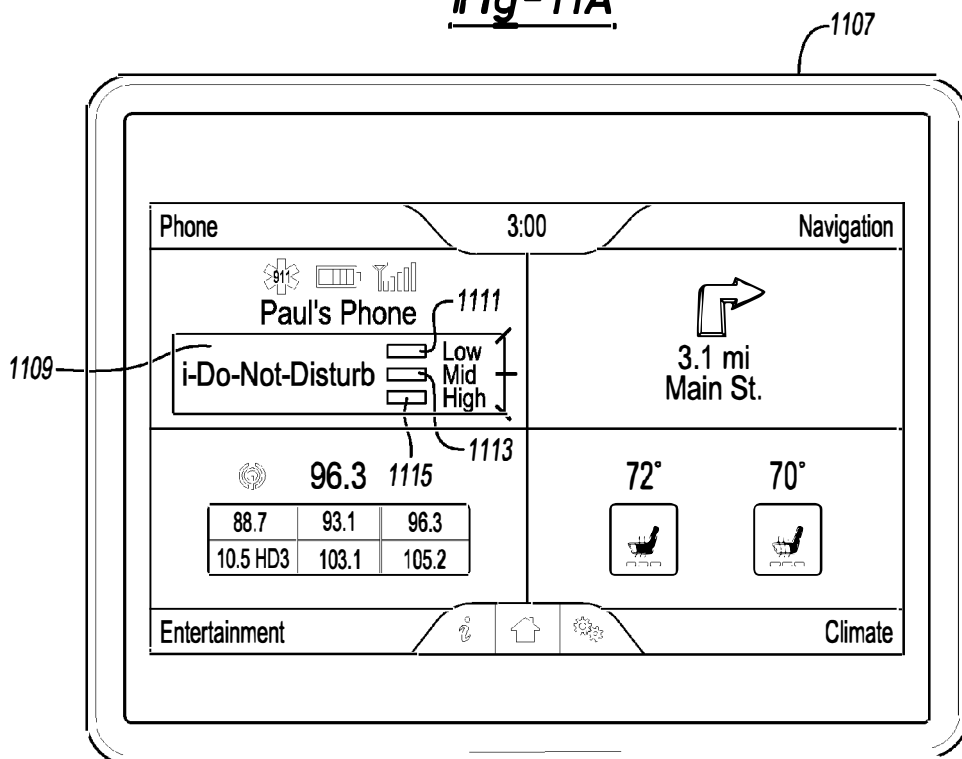


Fig-11B

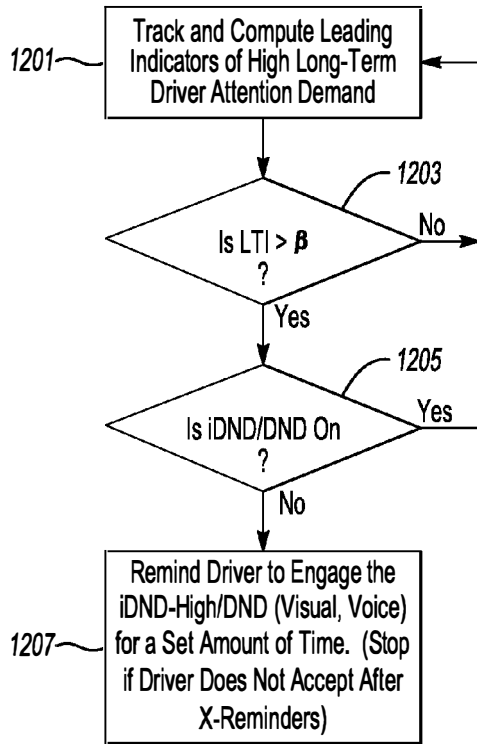


Fig-12

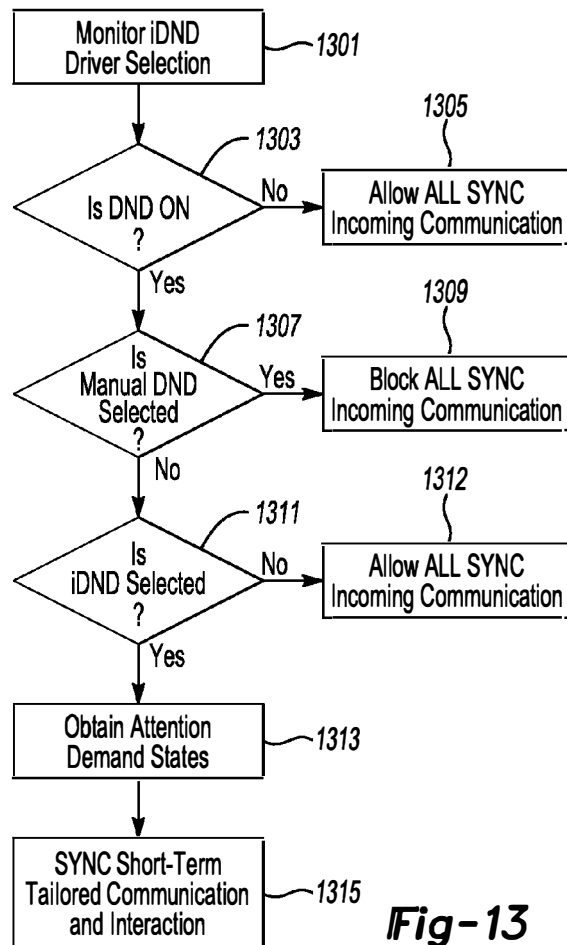


Fig-13

METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR SUPERVISING INFORMATION COMMUNICATION BASED ON OCCUPANT AND VEHICLE ENVIRONMENT

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The illustrative embodiments generally relate to selective alert processing utilizing a vehicle computer system.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Many states and localities have passed laws prohibiting the use of cellular phones while driving (without a hands-free connection), prohibiting texting while driving, and generally discouraging cellular phone usage while operating a moving vehicle.

[0003] In response to this, drivers are now frequently seeking out hands-free connectivity for their portable wireless devices, such that calls can more safely be made while operating a vehicle. In some advanced connectivity solutions, such as the FORD SYNC system, the vehicle computing system, in communication with a wireless device, is capable of reading incoming text messages to a driver, as well as handling incoming calls.

[0004] United States Pub No. 2012/0157069 discloses a computer-implemented method that includes receiving, at a vehicle computing system, a notification that an incoming communication is being sent to a wireless device in communication with the vehicle computing system. The method also includes determining that a do not disturb function is active in the vehicle computing system and blocking a notification to a driver regarding the incoming communication. Finally, this method includes sending a command from the vehicle computing system to the wireless device to silence any notification that the wireless device provides in conjunction with the incoming communication.

[0005] United States Pub No. 2012/0250517 discloses an approach for managing device do-not-disturb operational modes based on context information. A do-not-disturb manager determines context information associated with a device, a user of the device, or a combination thereof. The do-not-disturb manager also processes and/or facilitates a processing of the context information to cause, at least in part, an activation of one or more operational modes of the device. The do-not-disturb manager also causes, at least in part, a disabling or enabling of one or more functions of one or more applications associated with the device based, at least in part, on the activated one or more operational modes.

SUMMARY

[0006] In a first illustrative embodiment, a vehicle computer system includes one or more processors configured to receive context data representative of a vehicle's environment from one or more modules. The one or more processors are programmed and configured to receive the context data from the one or more modules, determine an attention demand value utilizing the context data and a workload value corresponding to the context data, and output an indicator to activate or adjust a do not disturb feature based on the attention demand value.

[0007] In a second illustrative embodiment, a computer-implemented method includes receiving context data from one or more data sources representative of a vehicle's envi-

ronment. The method also includes determining an attention demand value based on the context data and a workload value corresponding to the context data, configuring a do not disturb communication setting based on the attention demand value, wherein the do not disturb communication setting includes two or more options, receiving a request at the vehicle to output a communication, and controlling the communication based on the do not disturb setting.

[0008] In a third illustrative embodiment, a vehicle computer system includes a processor configured to receive a signal from a module indicating that one or more vehicle functions is active. Additionally, the processor is programmed and configured to determine an attention demand value utilizing the signal and a workload value corresponding to the signal; and output an indicator to activate or adjust a do not disturb communication feature based on the attention demand value.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIG. 1 illustrates an example block topology for a vehicle based computing system for a vehicle.

[0010] FIG. 2 illustrates an illustrative example of a do not disturb function;

[0011] FIG. 3 shows a second illustrative embodiment in which a call/message log is created;

[0012] FIG. 4 shows an illustrative example of a selective do not disturb function; and

[0013] FIG. 5 shows an illustrative example of a system including selectivity based on incoming notification type.

[0014] FIG. 6 shows an illustrative example of a system including a personalized intelligent do not disturb function.

[0015] FIG. 7 shows an illustrative example of a do not disturb function with driver selectable levels for personalization.

[0016] FIG. 8 shows an illustrative example of an automatic do not disturb function.

[0017] FIG. 9 shows an illustrative example of a flow chart utilizing an illustrative example of driver customized information management of the do not disturb function within a vehicle computer system.

[0018] FIG. 10 shows an illustrative example of a block diagram for the do not disturb function utilizing a long-term indicator computation.

[0019] FIG. 11A shows an illustrative example of an augmented visual indicator configured to prompt a driver based on real-time conditions.

[0020] FIG. 11B shows an example of a do not disturb function with driver selectable levels of personalization that is configured to output a visual indicator to prompt the driver based on real-time conditions.

[0021] FIG. 12 shows an example of a flow chart utilizing the driver customized information management with an intelligent do not disturb function reminder.

[0022] FIG. 13 shows an example of a flow chart of the different do not disturb functions interacting with one another.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0023] As required, detailed embodiments of the present invention are disclosed herein; however, it is to be understood that the disclosed embodiments are merely exemplary of the invention that may be embodied in various and alternative forms. The figures are not necessarily to scale; some features

may be exaggerated or minimized to show details of particular components. Therefore, specific structural and functional details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as limiting, but merely as a representative basis for teaching one skilled in the art to variously employ the present invention.

[0024] The invention now will be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which illustrative embodiments of the invention are shown. This invention, may however, be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein. Like numbers refer to elements throughout. As used herein the term “and/or” includes any and all combinations of one or more of the associated listed items.

[0025] FIG. 1 illustrates an example block topology for a vehicle based computing system 1 (VCS) for a vehicle 31. An example of such a vehicle-based computing system 1 is the SYNC system manufactured by THE FORD MOTOR COMPANY. A vehicle enabled with a vehicle-based computing system may contain a visual front end interface 4 located in the vehicle. The user may also be able to interact with the interface if it is provided, for example, with a touch sensitive screen. In another illustrative embodiment, the interaction occurs through, button presses, spoken dialog system with automatic speech recognition and speech synthesis.

[0026] In the illustrative embodiment 1 shown in FIG. 1, a processor 3 controls at least some portion of the operation of the vehicle-based computing system. Provided within the vehicle, the processor allows onboard processing of commands and routines. Further, the processor is connected to both non-persistent 5 and persistent storage 7. In this illustrative embodiment, the non-persistent storage is random access memory (RAM) and the persistent storage is a hard disk drive (HDD) or flash memory.

[0027] The processor is also provided with a number of different inputs allowing the user to interface with the processor. In this illustrative embodiment, a microphone 29, an auxiliary input 25 (for input 33), a USB input 23, a GPS input 24 and a BLUETOOTH input 15 are all provided. An input selector 51 is also provided, to allow a user to select between various inputs. Input to both the microphone and the auxiliary connector is converted from analog to digital by a converter 27 before being passed to the processor. Although not shown, these and other components may be in communication with the VCS over a vehicle multiplex network (such as, but not limited to, a CAN bus) to pass data to and from the VCS (or components thereof).

[0028] Outputs to the system can include, but are not limited to, a visual display 4 and a speaker 13 or stereo system output. The speaker is connected to an amplifier 11 and receives its signal from the processor 3 through a digital-to-analog converter 9. Output can also be made to a remote BLUETOOTH device such as PND 54 or a USB device such as vehicle navigation device 60 along the bi-directional data streams shown at 19 and 21 respectively.

[0029] In one illustrative embodiment, the system 1 uses the BLUETOOTH transceiver 15 to communicate 17 with a user's nomadic device 53 (e.g., cell phone, smart phone, PDA, or any other device having wireless remote network connectivity). The nomadic device can then be used to communicate 59 with a network 61 outside the vehicle 31 through, for example, communication 55 with a cellular tower 57. In some embodiments, tower 57 may be a WiFi access point.

[0030] Exemplary communication between the nomadic device and the BLUETOOTH transceiver is represented by signal 14.

[0031] Pairing a nomadic device 53 and the BLUETOOTH transceiver 15 can be instructed through a button 52 or similar input. Accordingly, the CPU is instructed that the onboard BLUETOOTH transceiver will be paired with a BLUETOOTH transceiver in a nomadic device.

[0032] Data may be communicated between CPU 3 and network 61 utilizing, for example, a data-plan, data over voice, or DTMF tones associated with nomadic device 53. Alternatively, it may be desirable to include an onboard modem 63 having antenna 18 in order to communicate 16 data between CPU 3 and network 61 over the voice band. The nomadic device 53 can then be used to communicate 59 with a network 61 outside the vehicle 31 through, for example, communication 55 with a cellular tower 57. In some embodiments, the modem 63 may establish communication 20 with the tower 57 for communicating with network 61. As a non-limiting example, modem 63 may be a USB cellular modem and communication 20 may be cellular communication.

[0033] In one illustrative embodiment, the processor is provided with an operating system including an API to communicate with modem application software. The modem application software may access an embedded module or firmware on the BLUETOOTH transceiver to complete wireless communication with a remote BLUETOOTH transceiver (such as that found in a nomadic device). Bluetooth is a subset of the IEEE 802 PAN (personal area network) protocols. IEEE 802 LAN (local area network) protocols include WiFi and have considerable cross-functionality with IEEE 802 PAN. Both are suitable for wireless communication within a vehicle. Another communication means that can be used in this realm is free-space optical communication (such as IrDA) and non-standardized consumer IR protocols.

[0034] In another embodiment, nomadic device 53 includes a modem for voice band or broadband data communication. In the data-over-voice embodiment, a technique known as frequency division multiplexing may be implemented when the owner of the nomadic device can talk over the device while data is being transferred. At other times, when the owner is not using the device, the data transfer can use the whole bandwidth (300 Hz to 3.4 kHz in one example). While frequency division multiplexing may be common for analog cellular communication between the vehicle and the internet, and is still used, it has been largely replaced by hybrids of Code Domain Multiple Access (CDMA), Time Domain Multiple Access (TDMA), Space-Domain Multiple Access (SDMA) for digital cellular communication. These are all ITU IMT-2000 (3G) compliant standards and offer data rates up to 2 mbs for stationary or walking users and 385 kbs for users in a moving vehicle. 3G standards are now being replaced by IMT-Advanced (4G) which offers 100 mbs for users in a vehicle and 1 gbs for stationary users. If the user has a data-plan associated with the nomadic device, it is possible that the data-plan allows for broad-band transmission and the system could use a much wider bandwidth (speeding up data transfer). In still another embodiment, nomadic device 53 is replaced with a cellular communication device (not shown) that is installed to vehicle 31. In yet another embodiment, the ND 53 may be a wireless local area network (LAN) device capable of communication over, for example (and without limitation), an 802.11g network (i.e., WiFi) or a WiMax network.

[0035] In one embodiment, incoming data can be passed through the nomadic device via a data-over-voice or data-plan, through the onboard BLUETOOTH transceiver and into the vehicle's internal processor 3. In the case of certain temporary data, for example, the data can be stored on the HDD or other storage media 7 until such time as the data is no longer needed.

[0036] Additional sources that may interface with the vehicle include a personal navigation device 54, having, for example, a USB connection 56 and/or an antenna 58, a vehicle navigation device 60 having a USB 62 or other connection, an onboard GPS device 24, or remote navigation system (not shown) having connectivity to network 61. USB is one of a class of serial networking protocols. IEEE 1394 (FireWire™ (Apple), i.LINK™ (Sony), and Lynx™ (Texas Instruments)), EIA (Electronics Industry Association) serial protocols, IEEE 1284 (Centronics Port), S/PDIF (Sony/Philips Digital Interconnect Format) and USB-IF (USB Implementers Forum) form the backbone of the device-device serial standards. Most of the protocols can be implemented for either electrical or optical communication.

[0037] Further, the CPU could be in communication with a variety of other auxiliary devices 65. These devices can be connected through a wireless 67 or wired 69 connection. Auxiliary device 65 may include, but are not limited to, personal media players, wireless health devices, portable computers, nomadic device, key fob and the like.

[0038] Also, or alternatively, the CPU could be connected to a vehicle based wireless router 73, using for example a WiFi (IEEE 803.11) 71 transceiver. This could allow the CPU to connect to remote networks in range of the local router 73.

[0039] In addition to having exemplary processes executed by a vehicle computing system located in a vehicle, in certain embodiments, the exemplary processes may be executed by a computing system in communication with a vehicle computing system. Such a system may include, but is not limited to, a wireless device (e.g., and without limitation, a mobile phone) or a remote computing system (e.g., and without limitation, a server) connected through the wireless device. Collectively, such systems may be referred to as vehicle associated computing systems (VACS). In certain embodiments particular components of the VACS may perform particular portions of a process depending on the particular implementation of the system. By way of example and not limitation, if a process has a step of sending or receiving information with a paired wireless device, then it is likely that the wireless device is not performing the process, since the wireless device would not "send and receive" information with itself. One of ordinary skill in the art will understand when it is inappropriate to apply a particular VACS to a given solution. In all solutions, it is contemplated that at least the vehicle computing system (VCS) located within the vehicle itself is capable of performing the exemplary processes.

[0040] The illustrative embodiments present an alternative to simply disabling or powering-down a wireless device. Instead, the driver is able to put a wireless device into "ignore" mode, or a "selective ignore" mode, whereby some or all calls and/or messages are ignored. This avoids the hassle sometimes encountered in powering a phone up and down (e.g., delays in start-up, missed messages, etc.). Further, in at least one illustrative embodiment, the driver can be notified of any calls, messages, etc. that were missed while the phone was in this mode.

[0041] In an illustrative embodiment, shown in FIG. 2, a simple do not disturb function is presented. This function is activated through a vehicle computing system, using, for example, without limitation, a control on the steering wheel, a touch control on a navigation display, a verbal command, etc. Once active, the vehicle computing system will not report incoming calls or messages, and it will instruct the wireless device connected thereto to mute the ring, send the call to voicemail, reject the call, etc.

[0042] In this illustrative embodiment, the vehicle computing system connects to a wireless device 201. This connection process is described in more detail with respect to FIG. 1. Once the computing system is connected, it may detect an incoming call or message signal 203 (messages can be text messages, email messages, IM messages, etc.).

[0043] When the incoming message signal is detected 203, the system checks to see if a do not disturb function is active 205. The do not disturb function may have been activated through a driver verbal command, use of a manual input, or even in response to a hazardous or potentially hazardous condition detected by a vehicle sensor. For example, the driver may be uncomfortable driving in heavy rain, so the driver may have the system automatically enable do not disturb whenever conditions correspondent with heavy rain are detected by one or more vehicle sensors.

[0044] If do not disturb is active, the system will ignore the incoming call or message 209. That is, the system will not report to the driver that a call or message is incoming, so as not to distract the driver. Additionally, since a ringing or beeping wireless device could still distract the driver, the system may also relay a command to the wireless device to reject the call 211 (which could include bypassing a notification signal, sending the call to voicemail without notification, muting a notification signal, etc.).

[0045] The bypass may cause the call to go directly to voicemail, or simply mute the signal. It's also possible that one or more rings or partial rings may escape the device before the device is notified by the system, but the system will generally try to avoid this (at least, in this illustrative embodiment), by relaying the "mute" command as quickly as possible. In other illustrative embodiments the wireless device may go unaffected and alert the driver as usual.

[0046] When the incoming communication has been dealt with, the system waits for another call 213.

[0047] FIG. 3 shows a second illustrative embodiment in which a call/message log is created when calls are "ignored" by the do not disturb function. In this illustrative embodiment, the system may generally function as the exemplary system from FIG. 2. The system will connect to a wireless device 201, receive and incoming call 203, and report the call/message 207 if the do not disturb function is inactive 205.

[0048] If do not disturb is active 205, however, then in this illustrative embodiment, prior to ignoring the call 209 and sending an instruction for the ringer to be muted 211, the system will create a log of the call 301. This log can be created on an on-board memory (such as, but not limited to, a HDD or RAM) or the log could be created on the memory of the wireless device.

[0049] In this illustrative embodiment, the system checks to see if the do not disturb function has been disabled or ended 303. If the do not disturb function has ended 303, then the illustrative system reports the call/message log to the driver.

This report can include, but is not limited to, an audio output, a visual display on, for example, a navigation system window, etc.

[0050] If the do not disturb function has not ended **303**, then the system checks to see if a call is incoming **213**. While waiting for an incoming call, the system (in this illustrative embodiment), periodically checks to see if the do not disturb function has ended. Once a call comes in, the call is handled as described previously with respect to FIG. 3.

[0051] FIG. 4 shows an illustrative, non-limiting example of a selective do not disturb function. In this illustrative embodiment, a selective do not disturb function has been enabled, such that only some calls/messages are filtered out. The user can, for example, create lists of “priority” calls and or message senders, and if a call or message comes in from one of those sources, then the system can “allow” that call to process. The lists could be created on a PC and uploaded to the vehicle computing system, the lists could be selected on the wireless device, or the lists could be input via a vehicle input, such as, but not limited to, a navigation screen display.

[0052] In the exemplary system shown with respect to FIG. 4, the vehicle computing system connects to a wireless device **201**, receives an incoming call **203**, and checks to see if a do not disturb function is active **205**. If the do not disturb function is disabled, then the system reports the call **207** as per its standard operation.

[0053] If the do not disturb function is active, then, in this illustrative embodiment, the system checks to see if selective do not disturb has been enabled **401**. Additionally or alternatively, the system could simply check an “allowed caller” list to see if it is currently populated with any names.

[0054] If selective do not disturb is not enabled, or if the incoming call is not from a number on the list **403**, then the system ignores the call **209** and sends the signal to the wireless device to similarly silence any notification **211**.

[0055] If selective do not disturb is enabled and if the incoming call/message is from a number (or name, designation, etc.) on the list of allowable callers/messengers, then the system alerts the driver **207** if the do not disturb function had not been enabled.

[0056] FIG. 5 shows an illustrative, non-limiting example of a system employing aspects of the illustrative examples shown in FIGS. 2-4 and including selectivity based on incoming notification type as well as caller/messenger.

[0057] In this illustrative embodiment, the system connects to a wireless device **201** and receives an incoming call/message **203**. While the incoming notification has been described herein as a call or message, it can include, but is not limited to, a phone call, a text message, an email alert, an IM message, etc.

[0058] If the do not disturb function is not enable **205**, then the system handles the incoming notification in a customary manner **207**. If do not disturb is enabled, then the system checks to see if selective do not disturb has been enabled **401**. If selective do not disturb has not been enabled, then the system will log the incoming call/message **301** and ignore the call/message **209**. The system also sends a signal to the wireless device to mute any audible notification **211** (visual notification may also be suppressed). The system then cycles between waiting for a call **213** and checking to see if do not disturb has been disabled **305**, at which point it will report the log of missed calls to the driver **305**.

[0059] If selective do not disturb has been enabled, then the system checks to see if the caller/messenger is on the

“allowed” list **403**. If not, the system will ignore the call and proceed with step **301**. If the caller is on the allowed list, then, in this illustrative embodiment, the system checks to see if the incoming message is a phone call **501**, a text message **505** or another type of message **509**. If the message is “other” (e.g., not a message type that is recognized, although it is understood that the system is capable of checking for, recognizing and reporting IM, email, etc.), the system reports that an unrecognized communication has been received from an allowed caller **509** and then proceeds with waiting for another incoming call **303**.

[0060] If the incoming notification type (in this embodiment) corresponds to a call **501** or a text **505**, then the system (respectively), checks to see if calls **503** or texts **507** are allowed. It may be the case that the driver does not wish to receive any texts, but does wish to receive calls from certain allowed numbers. In this illustrative embodiment, the driver has the degree of freedom not only to specify who may call or message, but also what types of incoming notifications are or are not ignored. If the type is allowed, then the system reports the notification to the driver **207**. If the incoming type is prohibited, then the system proceeds to log the ignored notification **301** and waits for a new notification to arrive.

[0061] Additionally, due to delays in processing and wireless communication between a vehicle computing system and a wireless device, it may not be possible to selectively allow certain calls (e.g., all calls may need to be blocked). It is possible, however, to provide a notification when, for example, an “approved” call has been blocked (allowing the driver to call that person back immediately). In another illustrative example, the system could automatically call back blocked calls from an “approved” list. In yet a further illustrative embodiment, if multiple calls came in a short span of time, do not disturb may be temporarily disabled, in case an emergency condition has arisen whereby someone needs to reach the vehicle occupant.

[0062] FIG. 6 shows an illustrative, non-limiting example of a system including a personalized intelligent do not disturb (DND) function. A driver **601** may be utilizing various functions within the vehicle that require additional workload. Various vehicle information and calculations may be utilized to determine the driver’s workload state, such as those described in PCT/US2010/043605 entitled “SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR SCHEDULING DRIVER INTERFACE TASKS BASED ON DRIVER WORKLOAD,” which is hereby incorporated by reference. The driver identifier **603** may utilize a cell phone, seat position, key fob, and other unique items tailored to a specific driver, in order to recognize a driver. Upon recognizing the driver, the intelligent do not disturb system may be able to utilize the personalized DND function. In one example, a vehicle computer system utilizes the driver identifier **603** to extract ID information from a driver’s key fob or paired cell phone. Upon recognizing and identifying a driver, the DND setting may be tailored to that specific driver.

[0063] The DND interface **605** may allow a user to select various levels of the DND feature, rather than simply turning the setting on or off. The driver may set the level of information coordination intensity for the respective levels. For example, the “Low” setting may only allow low priority alerts, such as text messages and in-vehicle messages, to be postponed during short-term (e.g. 3-5 seconds) interval high attention-demand situations. The information may then be provided during low attention demand states. In another

example, the “Medium” setting may allow incoming phone calls and cloud connected information messages to be postponed during short-term (3-5 seconds) intervallic high attention-demand situations. In yet another example, the “High” setting may offer only very limited connectivity communication. Only critical messages, which may be pre-defined or user-defined, may be presented to the user. Some examples of critical messages may be an alert to the user that the engine is over-heating, or a message from a vehicle’s collision warning system. The driver may also be able to set the DND function off to allow all messages to pass through.

[0064] A driver feedback message 607 may alert the driver when the DND function should be turned on, dependent on the workload of the driver. The driver feedback message may be in the form of an audible message, a visual message, or any combination thereof. Thus, the driver can be notified that a possible optimal DND setting is available to meet the driver’s current workload demand.

[0065] The intelligent do not disturb functional decision making 625 may utilize various inputs and algorithms to calculate when to provide the driver feedback message 607. The functional decision making 625 may utilize the drivers characterized attention demand and workload states to determine the user’s current environment. Some examples of inputs utilized is the short term workload index 631. The short term workload index may calculate the instant or real-time workload demand of the driver. Some driving situations that may be representative of scenarios that require a short term workload index are navigation roadway/freeway merges, wide turns, lane changes, difficult curves, and extreme acceleration and deceleration by the driver. The long-term workload index 629 is another example of an input that is utilized by the DND functional decision making 625. The long-term workload index 629 may evaluate and calculate the driver’s workload or stress over a longer period of time or for an upcoming scenario that may be in the future. Some long-term driving scenarios that may require increased attention demand for the driver include rainy conditions, slippery conditions, dense traffic, etc. During these long-term driving scenarios, the system may be configured to provide an automatic prompt providing the driver to select the “High” setting of the DND function. Additional attention demand inputs 627 may be utilized as well. Additional inputs could be the driver’s head position that is retrieved from an in-vehicle camera, or a driver’s psychological information obtained from a brought in device, on-board, or an off-board server.

[0066] Various connected services and vehicle messages 623 are also in communication with the DND functional decision maker 625. The connected services 623 may be both a wired or wireless connection. Some examples of messages that may come from a connected service include messages from a user’s Bluetooth phone (e.g. phone call or text message), SAT radio services, traffic services, weather services, etc. Furthermore, vehicle messages may be any message set to output to the user that is related to a vehicle module. Some examples of vehicle messages may be a fuel warning indicator, oil change indicator, tire pressure monitor, audio or video messages, and various pop-ups from the HMI. Additionally, applications that may be running on a user’s mobile phone and connected to a vehicle computer system utilizing an API, such as Ford’s APPLINK, may request to send incoming communications to the driver. One example may be include a “tweet” from a user’s Twitter account that is in communication with the vehicle computer system from a mobile phone.

The “tweet” may be evaluated as an incoming message and could be delayed or blocked by the DND function, based on the DND setting and the driver’s current environment.

[0067] Furthermore, a novice driver setting subscription indicator 621 may be sent to the functional decision maker 625. A certain key fob, e.g. FORD MYKEY, may be utilized for a novice driver with poor driving habits or minimal driving experience. The functional decision maker 625 may receive a message that the driver is currently using the vehicle. This may allow the decision maker 625 to override certain settings to enforce stricter requirements for broadcasting messages to the novice driver. Thus, previous settings that have been activated may be overrode and block all or many of the messages to be output to the novice driver.

[0068] Upon gathering various information, data, and messages related to the drivers attention demand and workload, the functional decision maker 625 may determine how to limit, prevent, postpone, or annunciate the messages for presentation to the user based on the driver’s workload. The communication and interaction of the messages and data may be tailored to the driver and current driving environment or scenario. In one example, text message annunciation 609 maybe delayed or presented to the user based on the environment. The vehicle may utilize a text-to-speech engine to output the message via the vehicle speakers. Additionally, an incoming call 611 may be silenced based on the driver’s workload. A low level alert 613 may be presented to the user. Such alerts may include a message or communication stating the vehicle’s fuel is low, tire pressure is low, or a check engine light. Additionally, the driver may be able to output to a driver a personalized message 615 to a caller if a caller’s incoming call or message is delayed by the DND feature. In one example, the message may state “I am currently driving. I will get back to you once I am parked.” Any type of message may be personalized by the user. The system may be capable of automatically populating a message based on the message. In one scenario, if the driver is experiencing severe down pour and a caller drives to send a text to the driver, the DND feature may utilize the weather data to send a custom message to the caller stating “John is currently driving in a rain storm. When he is available, he will get back to you.”

[0069] In another example a DND alert recommendation 617 may be output based on the workload scenario. The alert may be utilized to recommend a different setting of the DND feature or turning the DND feature on/off based on the current user environment. In one example, a pop-message or an audible warning may alert the driver to change the setting based on the driver’s environment. The DND alert recommendation 617 may be in the form of voice, visual-flashing or a combination thereof. In another example, the functional decision maker 625 may be tailored to provide intelligent communication to additional vehicle, phone, Wi-Fi, Cloud-connected communications 619. For example, the system may be configured to utilize a configurable setting to tailor incoming communications from a social networking site. Furthermore, the system may be configured for various connectivity messages of appropriate information to be delivered to the driver for various applications and application developers, such as those used by the FORD SYNC system and the FORD APP-LINK system. In one illustrative example, a smart-phone may have a weather application that is capable of delivering localized weather content to the system, such as a pollen alert message.

[0070] FIG. 7 shows an illustrative example of a do not disturb function with driver selectable levels for personalization. In this embodiment, the DND feature is incorporated in the driver display. The communication messages and information delivery for the various DND levels, in addition to a core base set-up, are flexible and configurable. The user interface screen **705** may output various content and information for the driver. Within the user interface screen, the do not disturb button **709** may be located. The do not disturb button **709** contains three customizable levels for driver personalization. The “Low” setting **707** may allow for more messages to be output to the user than the “Medium” setting **711** and “High” setting **713**. Additionally, the user may be able to select the DND feature off. When selected off, the DND feature is not activated and the vehicle computer system may allow all messages and alerts to be presented to the driver. Although the illustrative embodiment depicts three levels of settings, any number of levels may be available. Furthermore, the DND button is not limited to a driver display, but may also be used on a hard button anywhere in the vehicle or any display located in the vehicle. The communication or messages that are received from the vehicle computer system may also have different importance values associated with them. Thus, a message that indicates a flat tire which wishes to be sent to the tell-tale, may be more important than a text message or phone call received from a mobile phone paired with the vehicle’s multimedia system.

[0071] FIG. 8 shows an illustrative example of an automatic do not disturb function in a driver display. The DND interface screen **801** allows the DND feature to be selected with DND button **807**. The DND button **807** may allow the selection to be toggled through an automatic selection indicator **805**, or a manual DND selection **809**. If the automatic DND function is selected by the driver, low priority alerts, text-messages, in-vehicle messages, incoming phone calls, and connectivity information are automatically postponed during a short-term (3-5 seconds) intervallic high attention-demand situations. An icon **803** may be activated when the automatic DND feature is selected. The delayed message may be provided when attention demand becomes low. If the manual DND feature is selected, limited vehicle-driver and connectivity communications are provided to the driver. Of course, critical messages may be provided to the driver. The driver may also have the capability of turning off the DND button.

[0072] FIG. 9 shows an illustrative example of a flow chart utilizing a driver customized information management system of the do not disturb function within a vehicle computer system. The vehicle computer system may monitor the do not disturb selection of the user **901** in the background of the operating system. This may be a feature that a user can select on, or it can be transparent to the user and may be always running in the background. Monitoring of the selection of the do not disturb function allows the vehicle computer system to track different scenarios that may lead a user in selecting the DND feature.

[0073] The vehicle computer system may analyze if the do not disturb function is currently on **903**. If the DND function is not on, the vehicle computer system will allow all incoming driver connected communication **905**. Thus, when a paired Bluetooth phone receives a text message, the vehicle computer system may output the message via the vehicle’s speakers or a vehicle display, rather than ignore or postpone delivery of the message. If the DND function is on, the vehicle computer system may then begin to analyze the level of the

DND setting. Thus, the system may analyze whether the “High” setting is selected **907**. Upon receiving confirmation that the “High” setting is selected, the vehicle computer system may limit the communication that is delivered to the driver **909**. In one example, a selection of the “High” setting may limit all communications besides critical information **909**. For example, if the user has the “High” setting selected and a text message is received at the user’s Bluetooth phone, the system may delay the delivery of the message. However, if the engine ECU determines that there is a faulty component, the “CHECK ENGINE” warning may still be delivered due to the crucial importance of this warning. Additionally, a user may be allowed to adjust the types of communication limited to being received when the “High” setting is selected.

[0074] In an alternate scenario, if the “High” setting is not selected, the system may check if the “Medium” setting is selected **911**. If the “Medium” setting is selected, the system may manage the information retrieved by the vehicle computer system to output to the driver based on both the attention demand and the workload states of the driver **913**. Thus, information may be output to the driver in a delayed fashion. For example, incoming phone calls and cloud connected information messages may be postponed during short-term (3-5 seconds) intervallic high attention-demand situations. Otherwise, if the driver demand is not high, the system may output the message to the user. Critical messages may also be output to the driver if the selection is “Medium.”

[0075] In an alternate scenario, if the “Medium” setting is not selected, the system may check if the “Low” setting is selected **915**. If the “Low” setting is selected, the system may manage the information retrieved by the vehicle computer system to output to the driver based on both the attention demand and the workload states of the driver **917**. Thus, synchronous information and text messages may be output to the driver in a delayed fashion if the “Low” setting is selected. For example, low priority alerts, text messages, and in-vehicle message may be postponed during short-term (3-5 seconds) intervallic high attention-demand situations. Thus, the information may be delayed and output to the driver during low attention demand states. Additionally, if the driver demand is not high when an incoming message is present, the system may output the message to the user. Critical messages may also be output to the driver if the selection is “Low.”

[0076] Upon verification of the selected setting or when deactivating the setting, the system may continue to analyze the level of the DND setting. Furthermore, it should be noted that the particular order of the flow chart may be different than that illustrated in FIG. 9. For example, the system may check to determine if the “Medium” setting is selected prior to determining if the “High” setting is selected, and so forth. Furthermore, not all steps are required in other alternative embodiments. Thus, one could construct the order of the flow chart in numerous ways.

[0077] FIG. 10 shows an illustrative example of a block diagram for the do not disturb function utilizing a long-term indicator (LTI) computation. The block diagram is a system for long-term computation based on driver initiated vehicle interactions. Additionally, cloud connected information may also be incorporated. The long-term indication computation **1001** may utilize various inputs to compute attention demand. The LTI computation may recognize a situation in which the driver may enter a scenario in which heightened focus is required for the driving environment. Various vehicle components may send context data to determine a vehicle envi-

ronment and calculate driver demand. The context data may be used to help identify environments that may include driving in a long stretch of stop-and-go traffic, driving in a rain/snow storm, driving in a foggy condition, etc. Thus, it may be advantageous that the vehicle computer system understand the upcoming difficult driving scenario to recommend the driver to activate the DND feature. Driver selection and vehicle indication of leading attention demand vehicle usage, including fog light selection, high beam usage, traction control and anti-brake system triggers, provide an indication of driver attention demand. Wiper usage data **1005** may be sent to the long-term indication computation **1001**. Wiper usage data may be representative of severe weather that a user is experienced. Fog light indicator data **1006** may be sent to the LTI computation **1001**. The fog light indicator data may indicate that a driver may be in dark/foggy area, thus heightened awareness is required by the driver. High beam usage data **1007** may also be utilized for similar driving scenarios. Traffic density data **1009** may be utilized to determine the driver's surrounding environment. Traction control system and anti-braking system indicators/data **1011** may be utilized to identify a high stress or high workload scenario that the driver may be experiencing, such as slippage of the tires or loss of control of the vehicle. Weather data **1013** may be utilized to understand the impact that the climate has on the vehicle's driving environment. The weather data may be retrieved from an off-board server that is utilizing a long-distance connection to communicate with the vehicle. In one example, the weather data may indicate that the weather is currently snowy or experiencing fog. Thus, the processor computing the long term indication may utilize the data that is representative of the current weather data to calculate a workload for a driver. Additionally, other vehicle sensors or off-board servers may be utilized to facilitate computation of the driver's attention demand.

[0078] The context data retrieved from the various vehicle components may be data that simply indicates whether a setting is on or off. Other vehicle components may send data that contains different values that are representative of the workload attainable to the user given the condition. Upon retrieving all the various vehicle data and usage that provides an indication of driver attention demand a calculation is done by the do not disturb function's LTI computation. A minimum number threshold is configured by the vehicle system. The threshold may be set by a user or by the manufacturer. When do not disturb function's LTI computation calculates that the threshold is exceeded, the DND reminder is provided. For example, the number of TCS or ABS triggers may be summed together. When a minimum number threshold is exceeded the iDND reminder is provided. For indicators which may be turned on or off quickly, an approach to provide long-term attention demand reminders is required. When a LTI device is engaged at any time instant k , for example, the output is given by:

$$LTI_i(k) = \lambda \cdot LTI_i(k-1) + (1-\lambda) \cdot 1 \quad (1)$$

When a LTI is not engaged, the output is given by:

$$LTI_i(k) = \lambda \cdot LTI_i(k-1) + (1-\lambda) \cdot 0 \quad (2)$$

[0079] LTI_i may be the leading indicator for long-term tracking value for each on/off long-term leading indicator, such as a vehicle component, being tracked, and 2 is a tuning factor. Thus, each device that the user interacts with may have a different tuning factor that is indicative of a workload value. For example, the fog lights may have a different tuning factor

than a brake module. Furthermore, within each device a different tuning factor maybe representative by different scenarios. For example, if an off-board traffic server outputs to the vehicle computer system different degrees of traffic, each degree of traffic may have a different tuning factor.

[0080] The interaction with leading long-term attention indication is aggregated into a composite index. The LTI output may then be given by:

$$LTI = \max(LTI_1, LTI_2, LTI_3, \dots, LTI_n) \quad (3)$$

[0081] When the LTI is above a threshold value of 0.7 for example, a DND "High" reminder is provided for a selected period of time. Different values may trigger different reminders. Additionally, the values may be modified by the user or manufacturer to be tailored to the system or driver. Thus, the DND method and system described provides a way for personalized information and connectivity management for convenient driving experiences.

[0082] FIG. 11A shows an illustrative example of an augmented visual indicator configured to prompt a driver based on real-time conditions. The interface screen **1101** may have a do not disturb button **1103** that is selectable by a user. However, the DND button **1105** may also be configured to automatically prompt the driver based on the vehicle surroundings. If the LTI output calculation is above a threshold value, a reminder **1105** may flash or display to prompt the driver that the DND function has been activated. Although the embodiment above describes a visual indicator, there may also be an audible indicator to output audible instructions to the user to activate the DND setting. The reminder may be activated for not only announcing to the user that the DND setting is off and should be activated, but also to suggest another level (e.g. change the 'Low' setting to 'High') that the user may benefit in using.

[0083] FIG. 11B shows an example of a do not disturb function with driver selectable levels of personalization that is configured to output a visual indicator to prompt the driver based on real-time conditions. The interface screen **1107** may contain a DND button **1109** that contains various settings, such as "High" **1115**, "Medium" **1113**, and "Low" **1111**. The settings may be automatically prompted based on the vehicle's surround settings. Thus, a reminder may flash on one of the DND's settings which is calculated to be most suitable for the driver's conditions. As an example, when the LTI output is above 0.7, for example, the "High" reminder may be triggered, along with the option of an audible beep when the indicator is flashing. In another example, an LTI output within the range of 0.3-0.7 may trigger a reminder for the "Medium" setting. An LTI output range below 0.3 may trigger the "Low" setting. Although a visual reminder is depicted in FIG. 11B, an audible reminder may also be triggered. For example, if a certain threshold is meant during calculation of the LTI output, the vehicle computer system may prompt the user through the vehicle's speakers an audible menu asking "Would you like to set your Do Not Disturb feature to High?" Based on the driver's voice command, the driver maybe chose to activate the recommended setting, another setting, or a simply select to ignore the reminder and keep the DND function off FIG. 12 shows an example of a flow chart utilizing the driver customized information management with an intelligent do not disturb function reminder. The vehicle computer system may track and compute leading indicators of high long-term driver attention demand **1201**. The tracking may be accomplished in the background without any user interaction.

The leading indicators may be the same indicators as disclosed in FIG. 10. Upon tracking and computing the long term indication (LTI) output, the vehicle computer system may determine if the LTI output is greater than a specific threshold value, which is indicated by the symbol β . The threshold value β may be set by the user in certain embodiments, or the vehicle manufacturer in other embodiments. If the LTI output does not meet the value of β , the system will continue to track and calculate the LTI output. However, if the LTI output is greater than β , the vehicle computer system may assume that the driver is in a situation which requires greater driver attention. Thus, upon determining that the driver is experiencing a high attention scenario, the vehicle computer system may determine if the intelligent DND or manual DND function is currently running 1205. If the setting is on for either DND function, the vehicle computer system may continue to utilize the function according to the DND setting (i.e. as in FIG. 9 or FIG. 13). However, if the vehicle computer system determines that the DND functionality is not active and the long term driver attention demand exceeds the threshold value β , the system may send a reminder to the driver 1207. The reminder may be in the form of a visual indicator, as illustrated in FIG. 11A or 11B, or it may be audible. The reminder may be active for a set amount of time. Thus, the manufacturer of the vehicle computer system, or the driver, may be able to customize the amount of time the reminder is maintained active. The reminder may timeout after a certain amount of time or a certain number of reminders. Again, the amount of reminders of time that the reminder stays active may be customized by the driver or the vehicle manufacturer.

[0084] FIG. 13 shows an example of a flow chart of the different do not disturb functions interacting with one another. The vehicle computer system may be currently monitoring the user's intelligent do not disturb selection 1301. The system may first determine if any do not disturb function is currently active 1303. If the DND function is not active, the vehicle computer system may be configured to allow incoming communications through the SYNC multimedia system 1305. However, if a DND setting is active, the vehicle computer system may proceed to determine which type of DND setting is active. The vehicle computer system may determine if the manual DND function is selected 1307. If the manual DND feature is active, the vehicle computer system may block all incoming communication 1309 to the user.

[0085] In the alternative, the manual DND feature may not be active. Thus, the vehicle computer system may determine if the intelligent DND function is active. If the intelligent DND function is not active, the vehicle computer system may allow all incoming communication 1312. However, if the intelligent DND function is selected, the vehicle computer system may obtain the attention demand states for the driver 1313. The attention demand states may be calculated utilizing the components illustrated in FIG. 10. Upon calculating the attention demand states, the vehicle computer system, such as FORD SYNC, may tailor the communication and interaction of various driver components to the vehicle user 1315. For example, the different settings and tailored communication of FIG. 9 may be utilized to limit the interaction of the vehicle computer system.

[0086] The processes, methods, or algorithms disclosed herein can be deliverable to/implemented by a processing device, controller, or computer, which can include any existing programmable electronic control unit or dedicated elec-

tronic control unit. Similarly, the processes, methods, or algorithms can be stored as data and instructions executable by a controller or computer in many forms including, but not limited to, information permanently stored on non-writable storage media such as ROM devices and information alterably stored on writeable storage media such as floppy disks, magnetic tapes, CDs, RAM devices, and other magnetic and optical media. The processes, methods, or algorithms can also be implemented in a software executable object. Alternatively, the processes, methods, or algorithms can be embodied in whole or in part using suitable hardware components, such as Application Specific Integrated Circuits (ASICs), Field-Programmable Gate Arrays (FPGAs), state machines, smart phones, controllers or other hardware components or devices, or a combination of hardware, software and firmware components.

[0087] While exemplary embodiments are described above, it is not intended that these embodiments describe all possible forms encompassed by the claims. The words used in the specification are words of description rather than limitation, and it is understood that various changes can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the disclosure. As previously described, the features of various embodiments can be combined to form further embodiments of the invention that may not be explicitly described or illustrated. While various embodiments could have been described as providing advantages or being preferred over other embodiments or prior art implementations with respect to one or more desired characteristics, those of ordinary skill in the art recognize that one or more features or characteristics can be compromised to achieve desired overall system attributes, which depend on the specific application and implementation. These attributes can include, but are not limited to cost, strength, durability, life cycle cost, marketability, appearance, packaging, size, serviceability, weight, manufacturability, ease of assembly, etc. As such, embodiments described as less desirable than other embodiments or prior art implementations with respect to one or more characteristics are not outside the scope of the disclosure and can be desirable for particular applications.

What is claimed is:

1. A vehicle computer system, comprising:

one or more processors configured to receive context data representative of a vehicle's environment from one or more modules, wherein the one or more processors are further programmed and configured to:

receive the context data from the one or more modules;

determine an attention demand value based on the context data and a workload value corresponding to the context data; and

output an indicator to activate or adjust a do not disturb communication feature based on the attention demand value.

2. The vehicle computer system of claim 1, wherein the do not disturb communication feature is configured to delay an incoming communication to a vehicle occupant.

3. The vehicle computer system of claim 1, wherein the vehicle computer system further comprises a vehicle speaker configured to output the indicator via an audible message.

4. The vehicle computer system of claim 1, wherein the vehicle computer system further comprises a vehicle display configured to output the indicator via a visual indicator.

5. The vehicle computer system of claim 1, wherein the do not disturb communication feature includes a plurality of do not disturb configurations each corresponding to a different type of communication.

6. The vehicle computer system of claim 1, wherein the one or more modules include a transceiver configured to communicate with a nomadic device or an off-board server.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the one or more modules include a cellular phone in communication with the vehicle computer system.

8. The system of claim 7, wherein an incoming vehicle communication is received from the cellular phone and the processor is further configured to send a message to the cellular phone indicating that a user is unavailable when the do not disturb communication feature is activated.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the message is capable of being customized by a vehicle occupant.

10. The system of claim 1, wherein the context data indicates the module is off.

11. The system of claim 1, wherein the context data indicates one or more data selected from a group consisting of traffic data, wiper usage data, fog light indicator data, high beam indicator data, weather data, and traction control system data.

12. The system of claim 1, wherein the workload value corresponding to the context data is based on a type of module sending the context data.

13. The system of claim 1, wherein the workload value corresponding to the context data is based on a type of usage of the module sending the context data.

14. The system of claim 1, wherein the attention demand value is representative of a short-term high attention demand environment.

15. A computer-implemented method comprising:
receiving context data from one or more data sources representative of a vehicle's environment;

determining an attention demand value based on the context data and a workload value corresponding to the context data;

configuring a do not disturb communication setting based on the attention demand value, wherein the do not disturb communication setting includes two or more options;

receiving a request at the vehicle to output a communication; and

controlling the communication based on the do not disturb setting.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the one or more data sources includes a transceiver in communication with an off-board server.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein the two or more options include delaying, ignoring, or outputting an incoming communication to an occupant based on a different type of communication.

18. A vehicle computer system, comprising:

a processor configured to receive a signal from a module indicating that one or more vehicle functions is active, wherein the processor is programmed and configured to:
determine an attention demand value utilizing the signal and a workload value corresponding to the signal; and
output an indicator to activate or adjust a do not disturb communication feature based on the attention demand value.

19. The vehicle computer system of claim 18, wherein the signal is data or an analog signal.

20. The vehicle computer system of claim 19, wherein the data is one or more data selected from a group consisting of traffic data, wiper usage data, fog light indicator data, high beam indicator data, weather data, and traction control system data.

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