

Docket No.: RIN-036

Patent

DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR PATENT APPLICATION

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below, next to my name

I believe I am the original, first, and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first, and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

Controlling and grouping in a multi-zone media system

The specification of which

 X is attached hereto.
 was filed on _____ as
United States Application Number _____
or PCT International Application Number _____
and was amended on _____
(if applicable)

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claim(s), as amended by any amendment referred to above. I do not know and do not believe that the claimed invention was ever known or used in the United States of America before my invention thereof, or patented or described in any printed publication in any country before my invention thereof or more than one year prior to this application, that the same was not in public use or on sale in the United States of America more than one year prior to this application, and that the invention has not been patented or made the subject of an inventor's certificate issued before the date of this application in any country foreign to the United States of America on an application filed by me or my legal representatives or assigns more than twelve months (for a utility patent application) or six months (for a design patent application) prior to this application.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d), of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed:

<u>Prior Foreign Application(s)</u>			<u>Priority Claimed</u>	
<u>(Number)</u>	<u>(Country)</u>	<u>(Day/Month/Year Filed)</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
<u>(Number)</u>	<u>(Country)</u>	<u>(Day/Month/Year Filed)</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
<u>(Number)</u>	<u>(Country)</u>	<u>(Day/Month/Year Filed)</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>

I hereby claim the benefit under title 35, United States Code, Section 119(e) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below

<u>(Application Number)</u>	<u>Filing Date</u>
<u>(Application Number)</u>	<u>Filing Date</u>

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, Section 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, Section 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose all information known to me to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT International filing date of this application.

<u>(Application Number)</u>	<u>Filing Date</u>	<u>(Status -- patented, pending, abandoned)</u>
<u>(Application Number)</u>	<u>Filing Date</u>	<u>(Status -- patented, pending, abandoned)</u>

I hereby appoint those associated with:

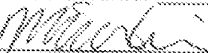
Customer Number:

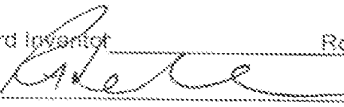
26797

with full power of substitution and revocation, to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected herewith.

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full Name of Sole/First Inventor Christopher Kalisi
Inventor's Signature  Date 1/24/2011
Residence Santa Barbara, California Citizenship United States
(City, State) (Country)
Post Office Address 23 West Padre Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93105, USA

Full Name of Joint/Second Inventor Michael Darrell Andrew Ericson
Inventor's Signature  Date 1/24/11
Residence Santa Barbara, California Citizenship United States
(City, State) (Country)
Post Office Address PO Box 21813, Santa Barbara, CA 93121, USA

Full Name of Joint/Third Inventor Robert A. Lambourne
Inventor's Signature  Date 1/24/2011
Residence Santa Barbara, California Citizenship United Kingdom
(City, State) (Country)
Post Office Address 3722 Cedar Vista, Santa Barbara, CA 93110, USA

NONPUBLICATION REQUEST UNDER 35 U.S.C. 122(b)(2)(B)(i)	First Named Inventor		Christopher Kallai
	Title	Controlling and grouping in a multi-zone media system	
	Atty Docket Number		RIN-036

I hereby certify that the invention disclosed in the attached application **has not and will not be** the subject of an application filed in another country, or under a multilateral agreement, that requires publication at eighteen months after filing.

I hereby request that the attached application not be published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b).

01/25/2011

Date

/ joe zheng /

Signature

Joe Zheng, Reg. No.: 39,450

Typed or printed name

This request must be signed in compliance with 37 CFR 1.33(b) and submitted with the application **upon filing**.

Applicant may rescind this nonpublication request at any time. If applicant rescinds a request that an application not be published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b), the application will be scheduled for publication at eighteen months from the earliest claimed filing date for which a benefit is claimed.

If applicant subsequently files an application directed to the invention disclosed in the attached application in another country, or under a multilateral international agreement, that requires publication of applications eighteen months after filing, the applicant **must** notify the United States Patent and Trademark Office of such filing within forty-five (45) days after the date of the filing of such foreign or international application. **Failure to do so will result in abandonment of this application (35 U.S.C. 122(b)(2)(B)(iii)).**

Burden Hour Statement: This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.213(a). The information is used by the public to request that an application not be published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b) (and the PTO to process that request). Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This form is estimated to take 6 minutes to complete. This time will vary depending upon the needs of the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you are required to complete this form should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Washington, DC 20231. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231.

In the United States Patent and Trademark Office

Utility Application

for

Controlling and grouping in a multi-zone media system

Inventor(s): Christopher Kallai
23 West Padre Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93105
Citizenship: USA

Michael Darrell Andrew Ericson
PO Box 21813
Santa Barbara, CA 93121
Citizenship: USA

Robert A. Lambourne
3722 Cedar Vista
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
Citizenship: United Kingdom

File No.: RIN-036

Express Mail Label: **e-filed** Date of Deposit: **January 25, 2011**

I hereby certify that this paper or fee is being deposited with the EFS of the United States Patent and Trademark Office on the date indicated above and is addressed to "Mail Stop: New Application, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313"

Signed: / joe zheng /
Joe Zheng

Controlling and grouping in a multi-zone media system

Christopher Kallai
Michael Darrell Andrew Ericson
Robert A. Lambourne

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of US application Serial No.: 11/853,790, filed 09/11/2007, which claims the benefits of the provisional application, No.: 60/825,407, entitled "Controlling and manipulating groupings in a multi-zone music or media system", filed 09/12/2006.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

[0002] The invention is generally related to the area of consumer electronics and human-computer interaction. In particular, the invention is related to method and apparatus for controlling or manipulating a plurality of multimedia players in a multi-zone system.

[0003] An enduring passion for quality audio reproduction or system is continuing to drive demands from users. One of the demands includes an audio system in a house in which, for example, one could grill to classic rock on a patio while another one may cook up his/her own music selections in a kitchen. This is all at the same time while a teenager catches a ballgame in a family room, and another one blasts pop in a bedroom. And the best part of such audio system is that each family member does not need his or her own stereo system - one system gives everyone access to all the music sources.

[0004] Currently, one of the systems that can meet part of such demand is a conventional multi-zone audio system that usually includes a number of audio players. Each of the audio players has its own amplifier(s) and a set of speakers and typically installed in one place (e.g., a room). In order to play an audio source at one location, the audio source must be provided locally or from a centralized location. When the audio source is provided locally, the multi-zone audio system functions as a collection of many stereo systems, making source sharing difficult. When the audio source is provided centrally, the centralized location may include a juke box, many compact discs, an AM or FM radio, tapes, or others. To send an audio source to an audio player demanding such source, a cross-bar type of device is used to prevent the audio source from going to other audio players that may be playing other audio sources.

[0005] In order to achieve playing different audio sources in different audio players, the traditional multi-zone audio system is generally either hard-wired or controlled by a pre-configured and pre-programmed controller. While the pre-programmed configuration may be satisfactory in one situation, it may not be suitable for another situation. For example, a person would like to listen to broadcast news from his/her favorite radio station in a bedroom, a bathroom and a den while preparing to go to work in the morning. The same person may wish to listen in the den and the living room to music from a compact disc in the evening. In order to satisfy such requirements, two groups of audio players must be established. In the morning, the audio players in the bedroom, the bathroom and the den need to be grouped for the broadcast news. In the evening, the audio players in the den and the living room are grouped for the music. Over the weekend, the audio players in the den, the living room, and a kitchen are grouped for party music. Because the morning group, the evening group and the weekend group contain the den, it can be difficult for the traditional

system to accommodate the requirement of dynamically managing the ad hoc creation and deletion of groups.

[0006] There is a need for dynamic control of the audio players as a group. With a minimum manipulation, the audio players may be readily grouped. In a traditional multi-zone audio system, the audio players have to be adjusted one at a time, resulting in an inconvenient and non-homogenous audio environment. When the audio players are grouped, there is a need to individually or systematically adjust the sound (e.g., volume) of the audio players. In a situation in which two or more audio players are separately in one environment, there is a need to reconfigure these audio players dynamically to create a more pleasant listening environment to increase the maximum capable sound output (e.g., a sound pressure level).

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] This section is for the purpose of summarizing some aspects of the present invention and to briefly introduce some preferred embodiments. Simplifications or omissions in this section as well as in the abstract or the title of this description may be made to avoid obscuring the purpose of this section, the abstract and the title. Such simplifications or omissions are not intended to limit the scope of the present invention.

[0008] In general, the present invention pertains to controlling a plurality of multimedia players, or simply players, in groups. According to one aspect of the present invention, a mechanism is provided to allow a user to group some of the players according to a theme or scene, where each of the players is located in a zone. When the scene is activated, the players in the scene react in a synchronized manner. For

example, the players in the scene are all caused to play an audio source or music in a playlist, wherein the audio source may be located anywhere on a network.

[0009] According to another aspect of the present invention, the scene may be activated at any time or a specific time. A user may activate the scene at any time so that only some selected zones in an entertainment system facilitate a playback of an audio source. When the scene is activated at a specific time, the scene may be used as an alarm or buzzer.

[0010] According to still another aspect of the present invention, a controlling device (also referred to herein as controller) is provided to facilitate a user to select any of the players in the system to form respective groups each of which is set up per a scene. Although various scenes may be saved in any of the members in a group, commands are preferably sent from the controller to the rest of the members when one of the scenes is executed. Depending on implementation, the commands include parameters pertaining to identifiers of the players, volumes settings, audio source and etc.

[0011] According to still another aspect of the present invention, a configurable module is implemented in the controlling device that provides interactive graphic user interface for forming, managing and controlling groups in the system, de-grouping a group or adjusting audio volume of individual players or a group of players.

[0012] According to still another aspect of the present invention, individual players may be paired or grouped to stimulate a multi-channel listening environment. In instead of grouping selected players to play back an audio item, a user is allowed to activate one of the players to process the data of the audio item, essentially separating the data into individual streams, each of the streams representing a single-sound track

and being played back in one of the players, thus creating a multi-channel listening environment with the selected players.

[0013] The present invention may be implemented in many forms including software, hardware or a combination of both. According to one embodiment, the present invention is a method for simulating a multi-channel listening environment, the method comprises: grouping a set of players to simulate the multi-channel listening environment, the players capable of communicating over a data network; designating which of the players to reproduce which one of audio channels in a title selected on a controller with a display screen; causing to process data representing the selected title into streams, each of the streams representing one of audio channels; causing to distribute the streams respectively to the players; and causing the players to play back the streams in synchronization.

[0014] According to another embodiment, the present invention is directed to a system for a stereo listening environment, the system comprises: a plurality of players, at least a first one and a second one of the players located in one place; and a controller providing a mechanism to allow a user to select the first and second players to be paired to simulate the stereo listening environment, the first player being configured to process data for a selected title into two streams respectively for left and right sound channels, wherein the controller provides a user interface to allow the user to determine which one of the first and second players to reproduce the left sound channel or the right sound channel, the controller is further configured to display a playlist from which the title is selected.

[0015] According to still another embodiment, the present invention is an apparatus for a stereo listening environment. The apparatus may be a smart phone with a display screen. The apparatus comprises a network interface to facilitate the

apparatus to communicate with the Internet; a phone networking interface to facilitate the apparatus to communicate with a cell phone network provided by a service provider; a user interface to enable the network interface and the phone networking interface; a display screen to allow a user to control a plurality of audio players being coupled to an ad-hoc network, select first and second audio players to be paired to simulate a stereo listening environment, both of the first and second audio players being configured to process a data stream for a selected title into two streams respectively for left and right sound channels, wherein the user determines which one of the first and second audio players to reproduce the left sound channel or the right sound channel, and configures to display a playlist from which the title is selected to be played in the stereo listening environment.

[0016] One of the objects, features, and advantages of the present invention is to stimulate a multi-channel listening environment. Other objects, features, and advantages of the present invention will become apparent upon examining the following detailed description of an embodiment thereof, taken in conjunction with the attached drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] These and other features, aspects, and advantages of the present invention will become better understood with regard to the following description, appended claims, and accompanying drawings where:

[0018] FIG. 1 shows an exemplary configuration in which the present invention may be practiced;

[0019] FIG. 2A shows an exemplary functional block diagram of a player in accordance with the present invention;

[0020] FIG. 2B shows an example of a controller that may be used to remotely control one of more players of FIG. 2A;

[0021] FIG. 2C shows an example of a controller that may be used to remotely control one of more players of FIG. 2A

[0022] FIG. 2D shows an exemplary internal functional block diagram of a controller in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

[0023] FIG. 3A provides an illustration of one zone scene, where the left column shows the starting zone grouping – all zones are separate, the column on the right shows the effects of grouping the zones to make a group of 3 zones named after “Morning”;

[0024] FIG. 3B shows that a user defines multiple groups to be gathered at the same time;

[0025] FIG. 4 shows an exemplary user interface that may be displayed on a controller or a computer of FIG. 1;

[0026] FIG. 5A shows a user interface to allow a user to form a scene;

[0027] FIG. 5B shows another user interface **520** to allow a user to form a scene;

[0028] FIG. 5C shows a user interface to allow a user to adjust a volume level of the zone players in a zone scene individually or collectively;

[0029] FIG. 6 shows a flowchart or process of providing a player theme or a zone scene for a plurality of players, where one or more of the players are placed in a zone;

[0030] FIG. 7 shows a configuration in which an audio source is played back on two players and, according to one embodiment of the present invention; and

[0031] FIG. 8 shows a flowchart or process of grouping a plurality of audio products to play separated sound tracks in synchronization to simulate a multi-channel listening environment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0032] The detailed description of the invention is presented largely in terms of procedures, steps, logic blocks, processing, and other symbolic representations that directly or indirectly resemble the operations of data processing devices coupled to networks. These process descriptions and representations are typically used by those skilled in the art to most effectively convey the substance of their work to others skilled in the art. Numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. However, it will become obvious to those skilled in the art that the present invention may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well known methods, procedures, components, and circuitry have not been described in detail to avoid unnecessarily obscuring aspects of the present invention.

[0033] Reference herein to “one embodiment” or “an embodiment” means that a particular feature, structure, or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment can be included in at least one embodiment of the invention. The appearances of the phrase “in one embodiment” in various places in the specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment, nor are separate or alternative

embodiments mutually exclusive of other embodiments. Further, the order of blocks in process flowcharts or diagrams representing one or more embodiments of the invention do not inherently indicate any particular order nor imply any limitations in the invention.

[0034] Referring now to the drawings, in which like numerals refer to like parts throughout the several views. FIG. 1 shows an exemplary configuration **100** in which the present invention may be practiced. The configuration may represent, but not be limited to, a part of a residential home, a business building or a complex with multiple zones. There are a number of multimedia players of which three examples **102**, **104** and **106** are shown as audio devices. Each of the audio devices may be installed or provided in one particular area or zone and hence referred to as a zone player herein.

[0035] As used herein, unless explicitly stated otherwise, an audio source or audio sources are in digital format and can be transported or streamed over a data network. To facilitate the understanding of the present invention, it is assumed that the configuration **100** represents a home. Thus, the zone player **102** and **104** may be located in one or two of the bedrooms while the zone player **106** may be installed in a living room. All of the zone players **102**, **104** and **106** are coupled directly or indirectly to a data network **108**. In addition, a computing device **110** is shown to be coupled on the network **108**. In reality, any other devices such as a home gateway device, a storage device, or an MP3 player may be coupled to the network **108** as well.

[0036] The network **108** may be a wired network, a wireless network or a combination of both. In one example, all devices including the zone players **102**, **104** and **106** are coupled to the network **108** by wireless means based on an industry standard such as IEEE 802.11. In yet another example, all devices including the zone players **102**, **104** and **106** are part of a local area network that communicates with a wide area network (e.g., the Internet). In still another example, all devices including the

zone players **102**, **104** and **106** and a controller **412** forms an ad-hoc network and may be specifically named, e.g., a household identifier: Smith Family, to be differentiated from a similar neighboring setup with a household identifier, e.g., Kallai Family.

[0037] Many devices on the network **108** are configured to download and store audio sources. For example, the computing device **110** can download audio sources from the Internet and store the downloaded sources locally for sharing with other devices on the Internet or the network **108**. The computing device **110** or any of the zone players can also be configured to receive streaming audio. Shown as a stereo system, the device **112** is configured to receive an analog audio source (e.g., from broadcasting) or retrieve a digital audio source (e.g., from a compact disk). The analog audio sources can be converted to digital audio sources. In accordance with the present invention, the audio source may be shared among the devices on the network **108**.

[0038] Two or more zone players may be grouped together to form a new zone group. Any combinations of zone players and an existing zone group may be grouped together. In one instance, a new zone group is formed by adding one zone player to another zone player or an existing zone group. In one application, there are two zone players in one environment (e.g., a living room in a house). In one embodiment, instead of grouping these two zone players to play back the same audio source, one can configure these two zone players to play two separate sounds in left and right channels. In other words, the stereo effects of a sound are reproduced through these two zone players, one for the left sound and the other for the right sound. Likewise, for a 3-channel (or 2.1 sound effects) sound, three such zone players may be reconfigured as if there are three speakers: left and right speakers and a subwoofer to form a stereo sound. The details of the reconfiguring the zone players and operating these audio products will be described below. Similar configurations with multiple channels (greater than 3) also apply.

[0039] Referring now to FIG. 2A, there is shown an exemplary functional block diagram of a zone player **200** in accordance with the present invention. The zone player **200** includes a network interface **202**, a processor **204**, a memory **206**, an audio processing circuit **210**, a module **212**, and optionally, an audio amplifier **214** that may be internal or external. The network interface **202** facilitates a data flow between a data network (i.e., the data network **108** of FIG. 1) and the zone player **200** and typically executes a special set of rules (i.e., a protocol) to send data back and forth. One of the common protocols used in the Internet is TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol). In general, a network interface manages the assembling of an audio source or file into smaller packets that are to be transmitted over the data network or reassembles received packets into the original source or file. In addition, the network interface **202** handles the address part of each packet so that it gets to the right destination or intercepts packets destined for the zone player **200**. Accordingly, each of the packets includes an IP-based source address as well as an IP-based destination address.

[0040] The network interface **202** may include one or both of a wireless interface **216** and a wired interface **217**. The wireless interface **216**, also referred to as a RF interface, provides network interface functions by a wireless means for the zone player **200** to communicate with other devices in accordance with a communication protocol (such as the wireless standard IEEE 802.11a, 802.11b, 802.11g, 802.11n, or 802.15.1). The wired interface **217** provides network interface functions by a wired means (e.g., an Ethernet cable). In one embodiment, a zone player includes both of the interfaces **216** and **217**, and other zone players include only a RF or wired interface. Thus these other zone players communicate with other devices on a network or retrieve audio sources via the zone player. The processor **204** is configured to control the operation of other parts in the zone player **200**. The memory **206** may be loaded with one or more

software modules that can be executed by the processor **204** to achieve desired tasks. According to one aspect of the present invention, a software module implementing one embodiment of the present invention is executed, the processor **204** operates in accordance with the software module in reference to a saved zone group configuration characterizing a zone group created by a user, the zone player **200** is caused to retrieve an audio source from another zone player or a device on the network and synchronize the players in the zone group to play back the audio source as desired.

[0041] According to one embodiment of the present invention, the memory **206** is used to save one or more saved zone configuration files that may be retrieved for modification at any time. Typically, a saved zone group configuration file is transmitted to a controller (e.g., the controlling device **140** or **142** of FIG. 1, a computer, a portable device, or a TV) when a user operates the controlling device. The zone group configuration provides an interactive user interface so that various manipulations or control of the zone players may be performed.

[0042] The audio processing circuit **210** resembles most of the circuitry in an audio playback device and includes one or more digital-to-analog converters (DAC), an audio preprocessing part, an audio enhancement part or a digital signal processor and others. In operation, when an audio source is retrieved via the network interface **202**, the audio source is processed in the audio processing circuit **210** to produce analog audio signals. The processed analog audio signals are then provided to the audio amplifier **214** for playback on speakers. In addition, the audio processing circuit **210** may include necessary circuitry to process analog signals as inputs to produce digital signals for sharing with other devices on a network.

[0043] Depending on an exact implementation, the module **212** may be implemented as a combination of hardware and software. In one embodiment, the

module **212** is used to save a scene. The audio amplifier **214** is typically an analog circuit that powers the provided analog audio signals to drive one or more speakers.

[0044] Referring now to FIG. 2B, there is shown an exemplary controller **240**, which may correspond to the controlling device **140** or **142** of FIG. 1. The controller **240** may be used to facilitate the control of multi-media applications, automation and others in a complex. In particular, the controller **240** is configured to facilitate a selection of a plurality of audio sources available on the network, controlling operations of one or more zone players (e.g., the zone player **200**) through a RF interface corresponding to the RF interface **216** of FIG. 2A. According to one embodiment, the wireless means is based on an industry standard (e.g., infrared, radio, wireless standard IEEE 802.11a, 802.11b, 802.11g, 802.11n, or 802.15.1). When a particular audio source is being played in the zone player **200**, a picture, if there is any, associated with the audio source may be transmitted from the zone player **200** to the controller **240** for display. In one embodiment, the controller **240** is used to synchronize more than one zone players by grouping the zone players in a group. In another embodiment, the controller **240** is used to control the volume of each of the zone players in a zone group individually or together.

[0045] The user interface for the controller **240** includes a screen **242** (e.g., a LCD screen) and a set of functional buttons as follows: a “zones” button **244**, a “back” button **246**, a “music” button **248**, a scroll wheel **250**, “ok” button **252**, a set of transport control buttons **254**, a mute button **262**, a volume up/down button **264**, a set of soft buttons **266** corresponding to the labels **268** displayed on the screen **242**.

[0046] The screen **242** displays various screen menus in response to a user’s selection. In one embodiment, the “zones” button **244** activates a zone management screen or “Zone Menu”, which is described in more details below. The “back” button **246**

may lead to different actions depending on the current screen. In one embodiment, the “back” button triggers the current screen display to go back to a previous one. In another embodiment, the “back” button negates the user’s erroneous selection. The “music” button **248** activates a music menu, which allows the selection of an audio source (e.g., a song) to be added to a zone player’s music queue for playback.

[0047] The scroll wheel **250** is used for selecting an item within a list, whenever a list is presented on the screen **242**. When the items in the list are too many to be accommodated in one screen display, a scroll indicator such as a scroll bar or a scroll arrow is displayed beside the list. When the scroll indicator is displayed, a user may rotate the scroll wheel **250** to either choose a displayed item or display a hidden item in the list. The “ok” button **252** is used to confirm the user selection on the screen **242**.

[0048] There are three transport buttons **254**, which are used to control the effect of the currently playing song. For example, the functions of the transport buttons may include play/pause and forward/rewind a song, move forward to a next song track, or move backward to a previous track. According to one embodiment, pressing one of the volume control buttons such as the mute button **262** or the volume up/down button **264** activates a volume panel. In addition, there are three soft buttons **266** that can be activated in accordance with the labels **268** on the screen **242**. It can be understood that, in a multi-zone system, there may be multiple audio sources being played respectively in more than one zone players. The music transport functions described herein shall apply selectively to one of the sources when a corresponding one of the zone players or zone groups is selected.

[0049] FIG. 2C shows an exemplary controller **260** which may correspond to the controlling device **140** or **142** of FIG. 1. The controller **260** is provided with a touch screen that allows a user to interact with the controller, for example, to navigate a

playlist of many items, to control operations of one or more players. In one embodiment as it will be further shown in FIGS 9s, a user may interact with the controller to make a stereo pair and separate a stereo pair. It should be noted that other network-enabled portable devices such as iPhone, iPad or a smart phone may be used as a controller to interact or control multiple zone players in an environment. According on one embodiment, an application may be downloaded into a network enabled device. Such an application may implement most of the functions discussed above for the controller **240** using a navigating mechanism or touch screen in the device. Those skilled in the art shall know a possible modification of such an application when porting it to a new type of portable device given the detailed description herein.

[0050] FIG. 2D illustrates an internal functional block diagram of an exemplary controller **270**, which may correspond to the controller **240** of FIG. 2B, a computing device or a smart phone. The screen **272** on the controller **270** may be a LCD screen. The screen **272** communicates with and is commanded by a screen driver **274** that is controlled by a microcontroller (e.g., a processor) **276**. The memory **282** may be loaded with one or more application modules **284** that can be executed by the microcontroller **276** with or without a user input via the user interface **278** to achieve desired tasks. In one embodiment, an application module is configured to facilitate grouping a number of selected zone players into a zone group and synchronizing the zone players for one audio source. In another embodiment, an application module is configured to control together the audio sounds (e.g., volume) of the zone players in a zone group. In operation, when the microcontroller **276** executes one or more of the application modules **284**, the screen driver **274** generates control signals to drive the screen **272** to display an application specific user interface accordingly, more of which will be described below.

[0051] The controller **270** includes a network interface **280** referred to as a RF interface **280** that facilitates wireless communication with a zone player via a corresponding RF interface thereof. In one embodiment, the commands such as volume control and audio playback synchronization are sent via the RF interfaces. In another embodiment, a saved zone group configuration is transmitted between a zone player and a controller via the RF interfaces. The controller **270** may control one or more zone players, such as **102**, **104** and **106** of FIG. 1. Nevertheless, there may be more than one controllers, each preferably in a zone (e.g., a room) and configured to control any one and all of the zone players.

[0052] In one embodiment, a user creates a zone group including at least two zone players from the controller **240** that sends signals or data to one of the zone players. As all the zone players are coupled on a network, the received signals in one zone player can cause other zone players in the group to be synchronized so that all the zone players in the group playback an identical audio source or a list of identical audio sources in a timely synchronized manner such that no audible delays or hiccups could be heard. Similarly, when a user increases the audio volume of the group from the controller, the signals or data of increasing the audio volume for the group are sent to one of the zone players and causes other zone players in the group to be increased together in volume and in scale.

[0053] According to one implementation, an application module is loaded in memory **282** for zone group management. When a predetermined key (e.g. the “zones” button **244**) is activated on the controller **240**, the application module is executed in the microcontroller **276**. The input interface **278** coupled to and controlled by the microcontroller **276** receives inputs from a user. A “Zone Menu” is then displayed on the screen **272**. The user may start grouping zone players into a zone group by activating a “Link Zones” or “Add Zone” soft button, or de-grouping a zone group by

activating an “Unlink Zones” or “Drop Zone” button. The detail of the zone group manipulation will be further discussed below.

[0054] As described above, the input interface **278** includes a number of function buttons as well as a screen graphical user interface. It should be pointed out that the controller **240** in FIG. 2B is not the only controlling device that may practice the present invention. Other devices that provide the equivalent control functions (e.g., a computing device, a hand-held device) may also be configured to practice the present invention. In the above description, unless otherwise specifically described, it is clear that keys or buttons are generally referred to as either the physical buttons or soft buttons, enabling a user to enter a command or data.

[0055] One mechanism for ‘joining’ zone players together for music playback is to link a number of zone players together to form a group. To link a number of zone players together, a user may manually link each zone player or room one after the other. For example, there is a multi-zone system that includes the following zones.

Bathroom

Bedroom

Den

Dining Room

Family Room

Foyer

[0056] If the user wishes to link 5 of the 6 zone players using the current mechanism, he/she must start with a single zone and then manually link each zone to that zone. This mechanism may be sometimes quite time consuming. According to one embodiment, a set of zones can be dynamically linked together using one command. Using what is referred to herein as a theme or a zone scene, zones can be configured

in a particular scene (e.g., morning, afternoon, or garden), where a predefined zone grouping and setting of attributes for the grouping are automatically effectuated.

[0057] For instance, a “Morning” zone scene/configuration command would link the Bedroom, Den and Dining Room together in one action. Without this single command, the user would need to manually and individually link each zone. FIG. 3A provides an illustration of one zone scene, where the left column shows the starting zone grouping – all zones are separate, the column on the right shows the effects of grouping the zones to make a group of 3 zones named after “Morning”.

[0058] Expanding this idea further, a Zone Scene can be set to create multiple sets of linked zones. For example, a scene creates 3 separate groups of zones, the downstairs zones would be linked together, the upstairs zones would be linked together in their own group, and the outside zones (in this case the patio) would move into a group of its own.

[0059] In one embodiment as shown in FIG. 3B, a user defines multiple groups to be gathered at the same time. For example: an “Evening Scene” is desired to link the following zones:

- Group1
 - Bedroom
 - Den
 - Dining Room
- Group 2
 - Garage
 - Garden

where Bathroom, Family Room and Foyer should be separated from any group if they were part of a group before the Zone Scene was invoked.

[0060] One important of the features, benefits and objects in the present invention is that that zones do not need to be separated before a zone scene is invoked. In one embodiment, a command is provided and links all zones in one step, if invoked. The command is in a form of a zone scene. After linking the appropriate zones, a zone scene command could apply the following attributes:

Set volumes levels in each zones (each zone can have a different volume)

Mute/Unmute zones.

Select and play specific music in the zones.

Set the play mode of the music (Shuffle, Repeat, Shuffle-repeat)

Set the music playback equalization of each zone (e.g., bass treble).

[0061] A further extension of this embodiment is to trigger a zone scene command as an alarm clock function. For instance the zone scene is set to apply at 8:00am. It could link appropriate zones automatically, set specific music to play and then stop the music after a defined duration. Although a single zone may be assigned to an alarm, a scene set as an alarm clock provides a synchronized alarm, allowing any zones linked in the scene to play a predefined audio (e.g., a favorable song, a predefined playlist) at a specific time or for a specific duration. If, for any reason, the scheduled music failed to be played (e.g., an empty playlist, no connection to a share, failed UPnP, no Internet connection for an Internet Radio station), a backup buzzer will sound. This buzzer will be a sound file that is stored in a zone player.

[0062] FIG. 4 shows an exemplary user interface **400** that may be displayed on a controller **142** or a computer **110** of FIG. 1. The interface **400** shows a list of items that may be set up by a user to cause a scene to function at a specific time. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 4, the list of items includes “Alarm”, “Time”, “Zone”, “Music”, “Frequency” and “Alarm length”. “Alarm” can be set on or off. When “Alarm” is set on, “Time” is a specific time to set off the alarm. “Zone” shows which zone players are being

set to play a specified audio at the specific time. “Music” shows what to be played when the specific time arrives. “Frequency” allows the user to define a frequency of the alarm. “Alarm length” defines how long the audio is to be played. It should be noted that the user interface **400** is provided herein to show some of the functions associated with setting up an alarm. Depending on an exact implementation, other functions, such as time zone, daylight savings, time synchronization, and time/date format for display may also be provided without departing from the present invention.

[0063] According to one embodiment, each zone player in a scene may be set up for different alarms. For example, a “Morning” scene includes three zone players, each in a bedroom, a den, and a dining room. After selecting the scene, the user may set up an alarm for the scene as whole. As a result, each of the zone players will be activated at a specific time.

[0064] FIG. 5A shows a user interface **500** to allow a user to form a scene. The panel on the left shows the available zones in a household. The panel on the right shows the zones that have been selected and be grouped as part of this scene. Depending on an exact implementation of a user interface, Add/Remove buttons may be provided to move zones between the panels, or zones may be dragged along between panels.

[0065] FIG. 5B shows another user interface **520** to allow a user to form a scene. The user interface **520** that may be displayed on a controller or a computing device, lists available zones in a system. A checkbox is provided next to each of the zones so that a user may check in the zones to be associated with the scene.

[0066] FIG. 5C shows a user interface **510** to allow a user to adjust a volume level of the zone players in a zone scene individually or collectively. As shown in the user interface **510**, the ‘Volumes...’ button (shown as sliders, other forms are possible)

allows the user to affect the volumes of the associated zone players when a zone scene is invoked. In one embodiment, the zone players can be set to retain whatever volume that they currently have when the scene is invoked. Additionally the user can decide if the volumes should be unmuted or muted when the scene is invoked.

[0067] FIG. 6 shows a flowchart or process **600** of providing a player theme or a zone scene for a plurality of players, where one or more of the players are placed in a zone. The process **600** is presented in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention and may be implemented in a module to be located in the memory **282** of FIG. 2C.

[0068] The process **600** is initiated only when a user decides to proceed with a zone scene at **602**. The process **600** then moves to **604** where it allows a user to decide which zone players to be associated with the scene. For example, there are ten players in a household, and the scene is named after “Morning”. The user may be given an interface to select four of the ten players to be associated with the scene. At **606**, the scene is saved. The scene may be saved in any one of the members in the scene. In the example of FIG. 1, the scene is saved in one of the zone players and displayed on the controller **142**. In operation, a set of data pertaining to the scene includes a plurality of parameters. In one embodiment, the parameters include, but may not be limited to, identifiers (e.g., IP address) of the associated players and a playlist. The parameters may also include volume/tone settings for the associated players in the scene. The user may go back to **602** to configure another scene if desired.

[0069] Given a saved scene, a user may activate the scene at any time or set up a timer to activate the scene at **610**. The process **600** can continue when a saved scene is activated at **610**. At **612**, upon the activation of a saved scene, the process **600** checks the status of the players associated with the scene. The status of the players

means that each of the players shall be in condition to react in a synchronized manner. In one embodiment, the interconnections of the players are checked to make sure that the players communicate among themselves and/or with a controller if there is such a controller in the scene.

[0070] It is assumed that all players associated with the scene are in good condition. At **614**, commands are executed with the parameters (e.g., pertaining to a playlist and volumes). In one embodiment, data including the parameters is transported from a member (e.g., a controller) to other members in the scene so that the players are caused to synchronize an operation configured in the scene. The operation may cause all players to play back a song in identical or different volumes or to play back a pre-stored file.

[0071] FIG. 7 shows a configuration in which an audio source is played back on two players **702** and **704**, according to one embodiment of the present invention. These two players **702** and **704** may be located in one place (e.g., a hall or a room) and are designated to play two sound tracks respectively. For example, an audio source has left and right sound channels or tracks, a typical stereo sound. Instead of grouping the players **702** and **704** to play back the audio source together, a user can group or pair the players **702** and **704** (e.g., through a designated interface) and cause the players **702** and **704** to play the two sound tracks respectively. As a result, the stereo sound effects can be simulated.

[0072] In operation, a controller **706** (e.g., a controller **142** of FIG. 1 or **240** of FIG. 2B or a portable device) is used to initiate the operation. Through a proper user interface, the controller **706** causes a player **702** to retrieve the audio source, provided the audio source is on a network **708** (e.g., the Internet or a local area network). Similarly, the controller **706** may also cause a designated device (e.g., another

networked device) to establish a communication session with the player **702** to deliver the requested audio source. In any case, either one or both of the players **702** and **704** shall have an access to the data representing the audio source.

[0073] An appropriate module in the player **702** is activated to process the data. According to one embodiment, the right and left sound tracks are separated. One sound track is retained locally in one player and the other sound track is pushed or uploaded to the other device (e.g., via an ad-hoc network). When the right and left sound tracks are played back simultaneously, the stereo sound effect can be appreciated.

[0074] To avoid a time delay in delivering a single sound track to the other device, the time delay may be measured. According to another embodiment, a test message may be initiated from one device to another that is also activated to send back an acknowledgement. Upon receiving the acknowledgement, the time delay in transporting data from one device to another can be measured. The time delay will be considered when synchronizing the two players to play back the two separated sound tracks. In one embodiment, the locally retained sound track data is delayed to start with a latency determined by the time delay. Depending on implementation, such a time delay may be measured from time to time to ensure that the two sound tracks are simultaneously played back. Details of synchronizing operations of two or more players are provided in commonly assigned US application No.,: 10/816,217, filed Apr. 1, 2004, entitled "System and Method For Synchronizing Operations Among A Plurality Of Independently Clocked Digital Data Processing Devices" which is hereby incorporated by reference.

[0075] FIG. 8 shows a flowchart or process **800** of grouping a plurality of audio products to play separated sound tracks in synchronization to simulate a multi-channel listening environment. The process **800** is presented in accordance with one

embodiment of the present invention and may be implemented in a module to be located in the memory **282** of FIG. 2C. To facilitate the description of the present invention, a listening environment of stereo sound with left and right channels is described. Those skilled in the art can appreciate that the description can be equally applied to other forms of multi-channel listening environment.

[0076] Typically, there is a plurality of players being controlled by one or more controllers, where these players are disposed in various locations. For example, there are five players in a house, three of them are respectively disposed in three rooms while two players are disposed in a larger room. Accordingly, these two players would be candidates to be paired to simulate a stereo listening environment. In another example, there are four players in a large space, two pairs of the players may be paired to simulate a stereo listening environment, in which two players in one pair can be grouped to play back one (left) sound track and the other two in the other pair can be grouped to play back one (right) sound track.

[0077] In any case, two groups of players or two players are decided to be paired at **802**. If no players are paired, the process **800** will not be activated. It is assumed that two players from a group of players being controlled by a controller are selected to be paired at 802. The process **800** proceeds.

[0078] At **804**, a user needs to decide which player is to play back which sound track. Depending on the location of the user or listener(s) with respect to the selected players, it is assumed that a player or unit A is chosen to play back a left sound track and another player or unit B is chosen to play back a right sound track.

[0079] Accordingly to one embodiment, a time delay in transporting data between the two units A and B is measured at **806**. This time delay may facilitate sound synchronization between the two units as one of the units will receive a processed

sound track from the other. The user may continue to operate on a controller to select a title (e.g., an audio source or an item from a playlist) for playback on the two units at **810**.

[0080] Once the title is determined at **812**, the data for the title needs to be accessed. Depending on where the data is located, the controller may be configured to cause one of the two units to obtain or stream in the data. In one embodiment, the controller or unit A initiates a request to a remotely-networked device storing the data. Assuming an authentication procedure, if any, completes successfully, the remote device starts to upload the data to the unit A. Likewise, if the data is locally stored in the unit A, the data can be accessed locally without requesting the same from the network. As the data is being received or accessed in the unit A, a processing module is activated in the unit A to process the data, essentially separating the data into two streams of sound tracks at **814**.

[0081] At **816**, one of the streams is uploaded from the unit A to unit B via a local network (e.g., the ad-hoc network formed by all the players being controlled by the controller). As the streams are being distributed, the two units are configured to play back the streams respectively, each reproducing the sound of a single sound track at **818**. Together, the two units create a stereo sound listening environment.

[0082] It should be noted that the delay time, if noticeable, may be incorporated into the unit A to delay the consumption of the stream by the delay time to synchronize with the unit B. Alternatively, a non-selected player may be used to process a streaming data of the title and configured to supply two streams to the pair of players, thus equalizing the delay time that would be otherwise experienced by the unit B.

[0083] To further under the operations of making a stereo pair, FIGS. 9A-9F are provided according to one embodiment of the present invention. FIGS. 9A-9F are

snapshots from a computing device (e.g., a laptop) used as a controller. Those skilled in the art can appreciate that FIGS. 9A-9F may be readily modified to be used in a portable device with network capability, such as iPhone or iTouch or other smart phones.

[0084] FIG. 9A shows a graphic interface 900 that is caused to be displayed when a user desires to make a stereo pair with two players in a system, where there are more than two players in the system. Once the interface 900 is displayed, a list of the players in the system may be displayed (not shown), from which the user selects two or more players to make the stereo pair. It is assumed that the user has chosen two players respectively named as “ZPS5-Black” and “S5” to the stereo pair as shown in FIG. 9B. FIG. 9C shows an exemplary display 930 to allow the user to choose another play to be paired with the “ZPS5-Black” player.

[0085] As the stereo pair is playing back various audio items, the user is provided with an option to control either one or both of the sound channels. FIG. 9D shows a display 930 that one of the two channels is being muted. FIG. 9E shows a display 940 that reminds the user of what name the stereo pair is named after. In one embodiment and as shown in FIG. 3A or 3B, a graphic display is provided to show to the user all the players in a system and how they are grouped or named. A nickname for the stereo pair in the display 940 is highlighted and would be in FIG. 3A if FIG. 3A is modified after the stereo pair is done, provided the two players are in one place so that the stereo sound effect can be experienced. FIG. 9F provides an interface to allow the user to separate the stereo pair when needed.

[0086] The present invention has been described in sufficient detail with a certain degree of particularity. It is understood to those skilled in the art that the present disclosure of embodiments has been made by way of examples only and that numerous

changes in the arrangement and combination of parts may be resorted without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as claimed. While the embodiments discussed herein may appear to include some limitations as to the presentation of the information units, in terms of the format and arrangement, the invention has applicability well beyond such embodiment, which can be appreciated by those skilled in the art. Accordingly, the scope of the present invention is defined by the appended claims rather than the forgoing description of embodiments.

Claims

We claim:

1. A method for simulating a multi-channel listening environment, the method comprising:
 - grouping a set of players to simulate the multi-channel listening environment, the players capable of communicating over a data network;
 - designating which of the players to reproduce which one of audio channels in a title selected on a controller with a display screen;
 - causing to process data representing the selected title into streams, each of the streams representing one of audio channels;
 - causing to distribute the streams respectively to the players; and
 - causing the players to play back the streams in synchronization.
2. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the players located in an environment, each of the players is capable to play back the selected title when the data is all transported thereto.
3. The method as recited in claim 2, wherein said causing to process data representing the selected title into streams comprises:
 - determining where the data is located; and
 - causing one of the players to retrieve the data via the data network from another device when the data is not locally stored.
4. The method as recited in claim 3, wherein said causing to distribute the streams respectively to the players comprises:
 - causing to retain one of the streams for the one of the players; and

causing the one of the players to upload remaining of the streams respectively to remaining of the players.

5. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the controller displays a graphical user interface for a user to group the set of players, the players being respectively identified with locations to facilitate the user to group the players, disperse a group and control sound quality of each of the players.

6. The method as recited in claim 5, wherein the controller is used to manage the group and create, edit or update a playlist.

7. The method as recited in claim 6, wherein the controller is used to search the title in the playlist.

8. The method as recited in claim 7, further comprising:
determining where the data is located;
designating one of the players to retrieve the data according to the title selected by the user when the data is not locally available in the one of the players;
and wherein said causing to distribute the streams respectively to the players comprises:
causing to retain one of the streams for the one of the players; and
causing the one of the players to upload remaining of the streams respectively to remaining of the players.

9. The method as recited in claim 8, wherein the controller is a smart phone with internet capability.

10. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:
- causing one of the players to measure a time delay in communicating with each of remaining of the players;
 - and said causing the players to play back the streams in synchronization comprises:
 - causing the one of the players to incorporate the time delay so that all of the players play back the streams in synchronization.
11. A system for a stereo listening environment, the system comprising:
- a plurality of players, at least a first one and a second one of the players located in one place; and
 - a controller providing a mechanism to allow a user to select the first and second players to be paired to simulate the stereo listening environment, the first player being configured to process data for a selected title into two streams respectively for left and right sound channels, wherein the controller provides a user interface to allow the user to determine which one of the first and second players to reproduce the left sound channel or the right sound channel, the controller is further configured to display a playlist from which the title is selected.
12. The system as recited in claim 11, wherein the first player is configured to retain one of the two streams locally and the second player is caused to receive another one of the two streams.
13. The system as recited in claim 12, wherein the players and the controller are coupled to a data network, the players are being controlled by the controller using Internet Protocol (IP)-based data packets.

14. The system as recited in claim 13, wherein the data is retrieved from another device on the Internet.

15. The system as recited in claim 13, wherein the data is represented in data packets.

16. The system as recited in claim 11, wherein the first player includes:

- a memory space for storing code;

- a processor, coupled to the memory, to execute the code to perform operations of:

- retaining one of the two streams according to an instruction of the controller,

- wherein the instruction indicates which of the left sound channel and the right

- sound channel is being played back by the first player; and

- uploading another one of the two streams to the second players.

17. The system as recited in claim 16, wherein the first player is configured to measure a time delay in communicating with the second player, the operations being performed in the first player further comprising incorporating the time delay in playing back the one of the two streams so that the first and second players are configured to play back the two streams in synchronization.

18. The system as recited in claim 11, wherein the controller is a smart phone with Internet capability.

19. An apparatus for a stereo listening environment, the apparatus comprising:

- a network interface to facilitate the apparatus to communicate with the Internet;

- a phone networking interface to facilitate the apparatus to communicate with a cell

- phone network provided by a service provider;

- a user interface to enable the network interface and the phone networking interface;

a display screen to allow a user to control a plurality of audio players being coupled to an ad-hoc network, select first and second audio players to be paired to simulate a stereo listening environment, both of the first and second audio players being configured to process a data stream for a selected title into two streams respectively for left and right sound channels, wherein the user determines which one of the first and second audio players to reproduce the left sound channel or the right sound channel, and configures to display a playlist from which the title is selected to be played in the stereo listening environment.

Controlling and grouping in a multi-zone media system

Abstract

Techniques for grouping or pairing individual audio products with network capability (players) to stimulate a multi-channel listening environment are disclosed. In instead of grouping selected players to play back an audio item, a user is allowed to activate one of the players to process the data of the audio item, essentially separating the data into individual streams, each of the streams representing a single-sound track and being played back in one of the players, thus creating a multi-channel listening environment with the selected players.

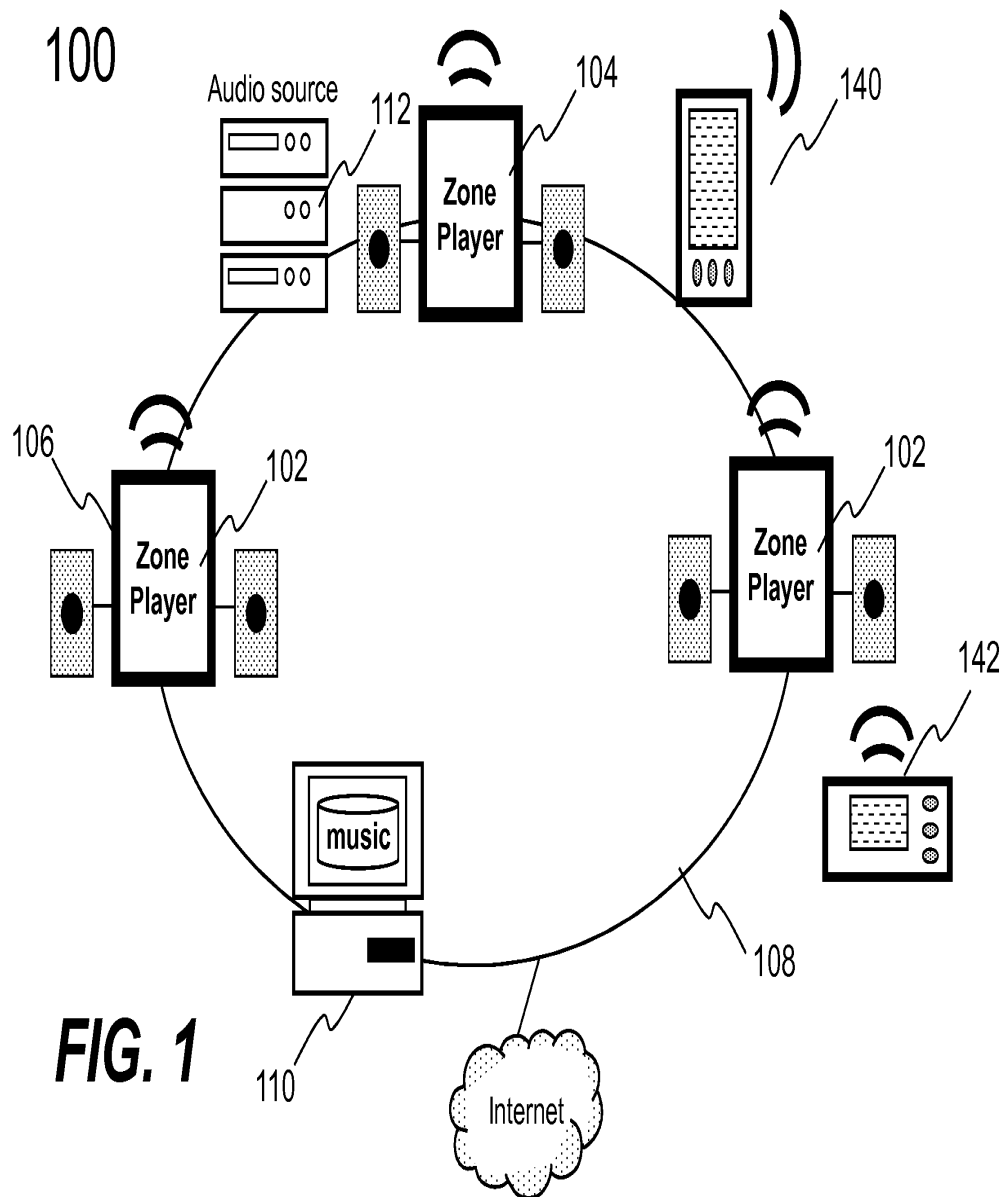
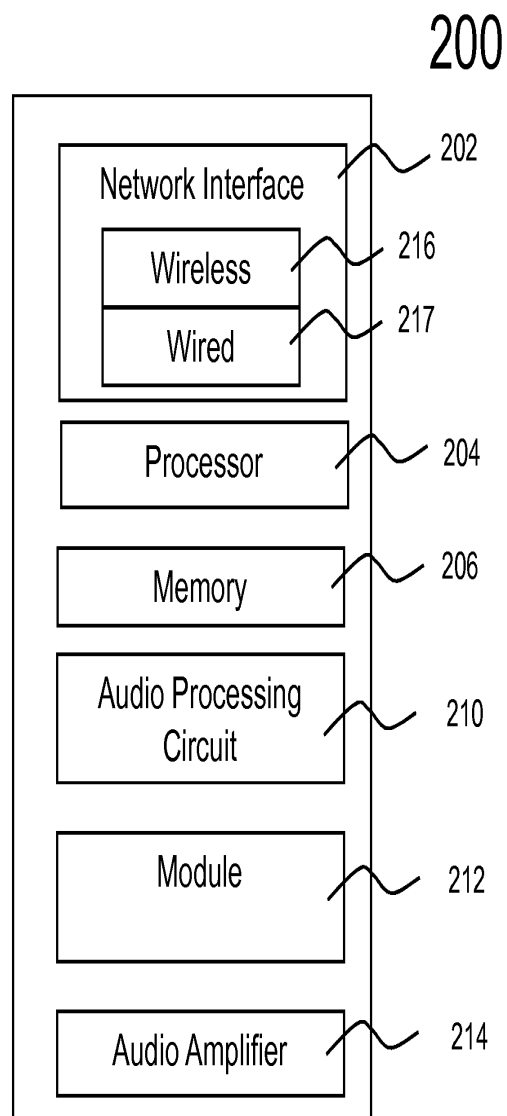
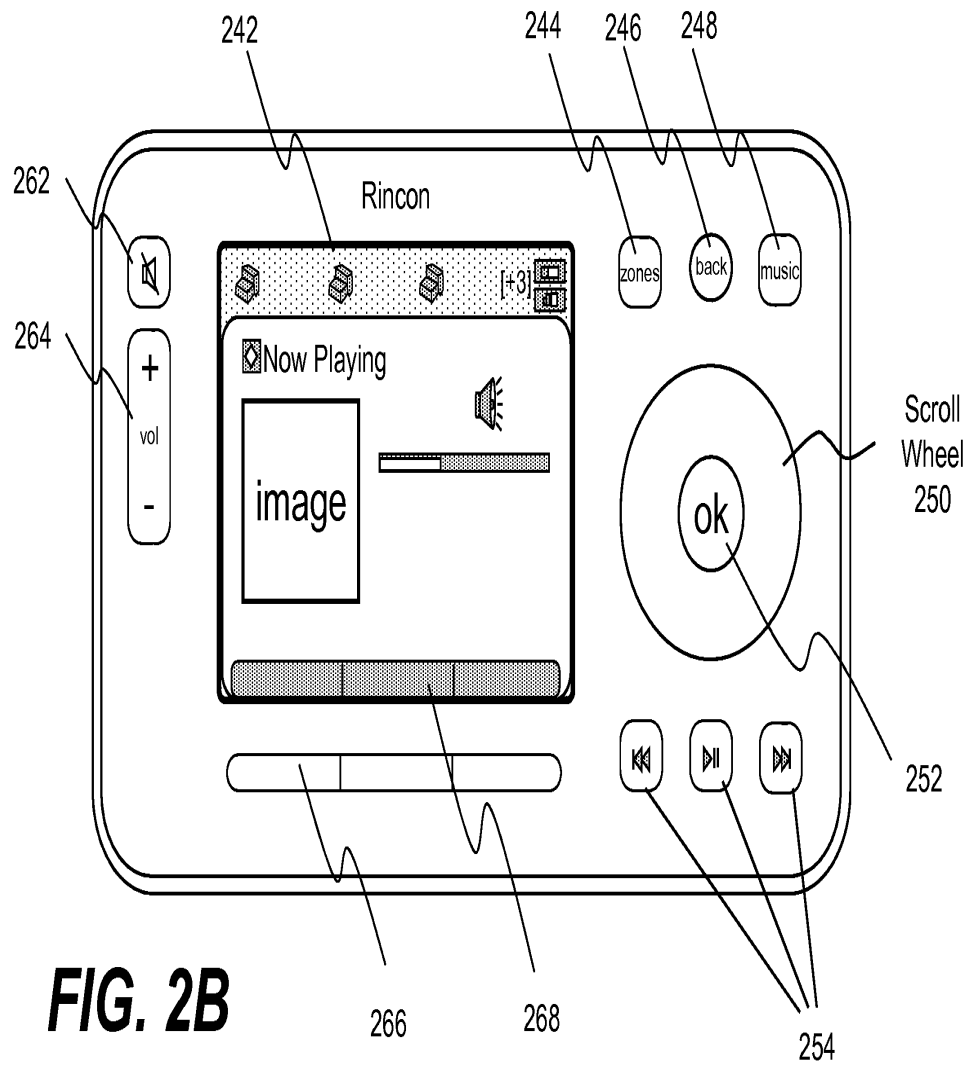
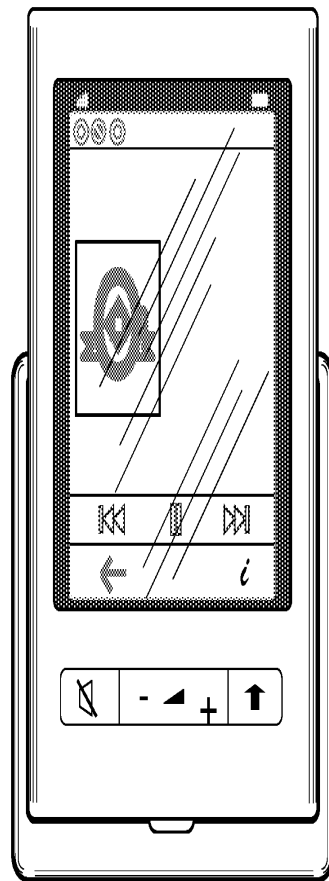


FIG. 2A



240





260

FIG. 2C

270

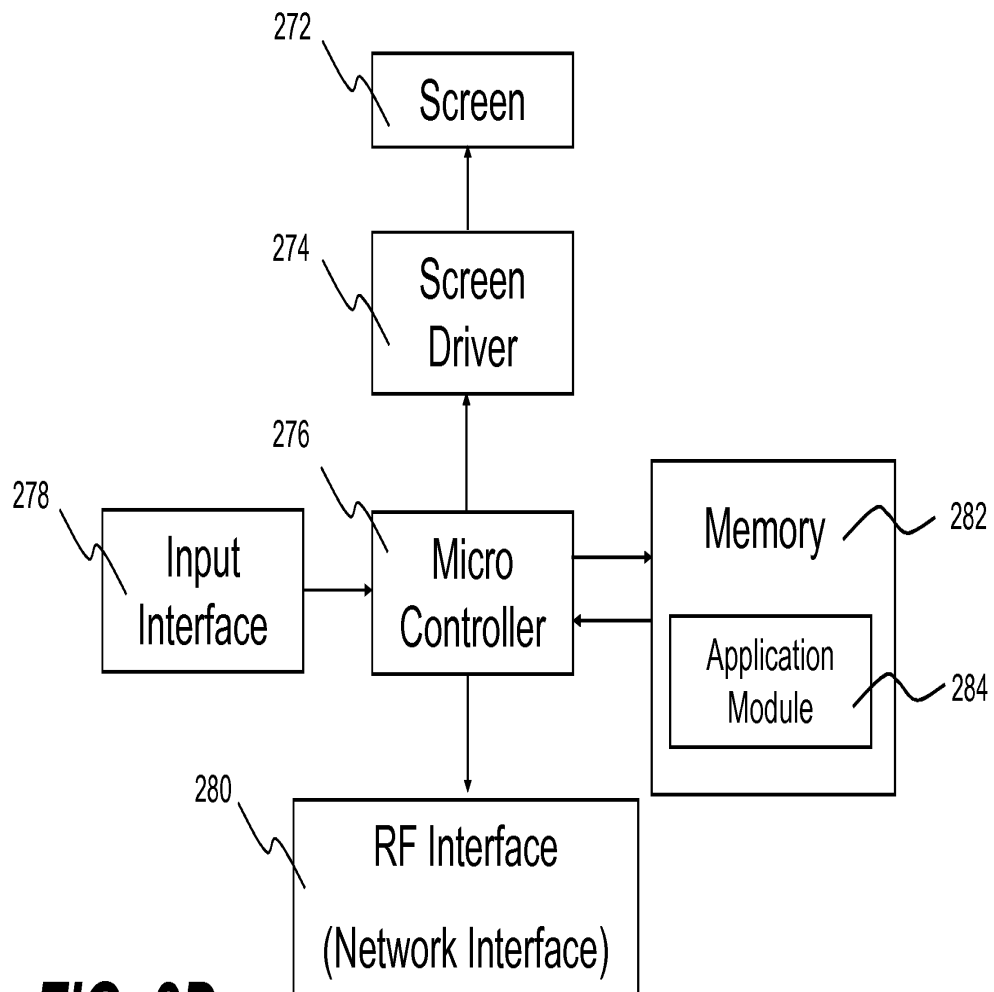


FIG. 2D

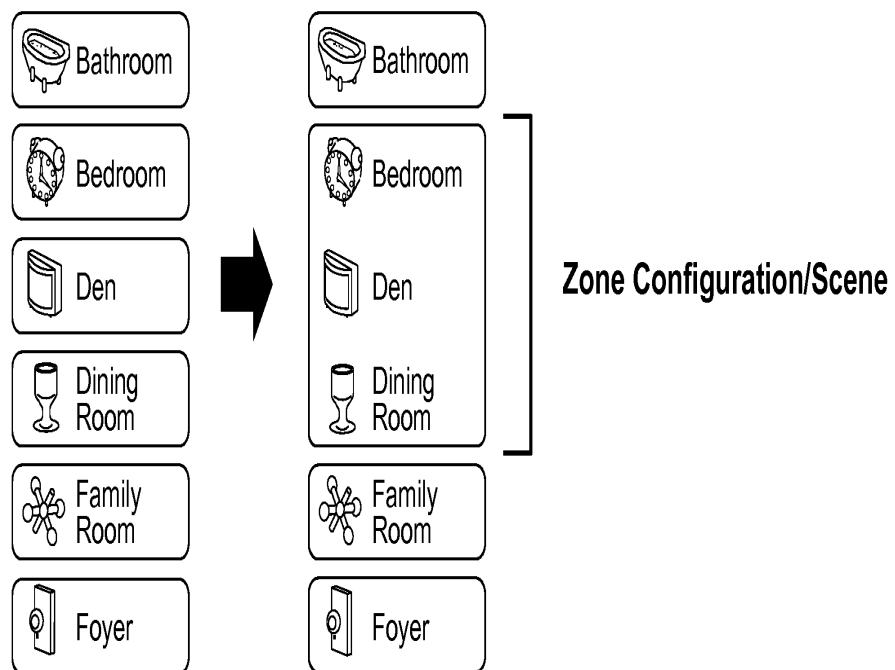


FIG. 3A

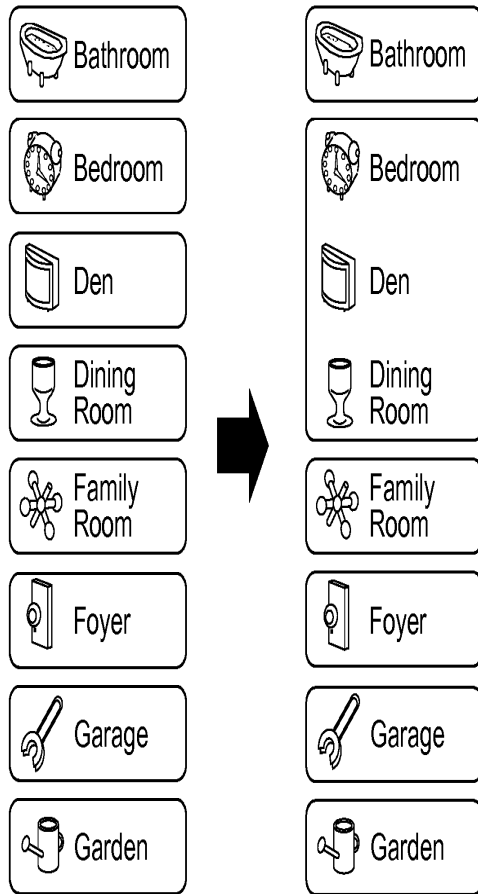


FIG. 3B

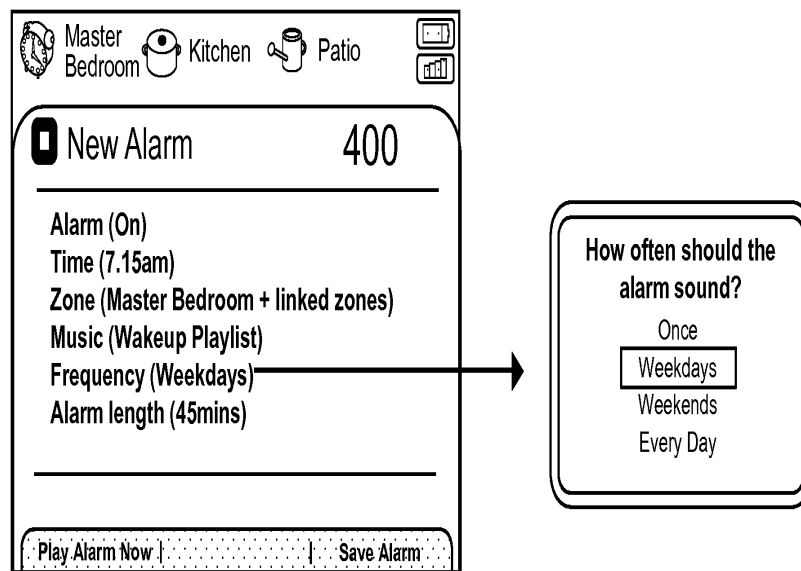


FIG. 4

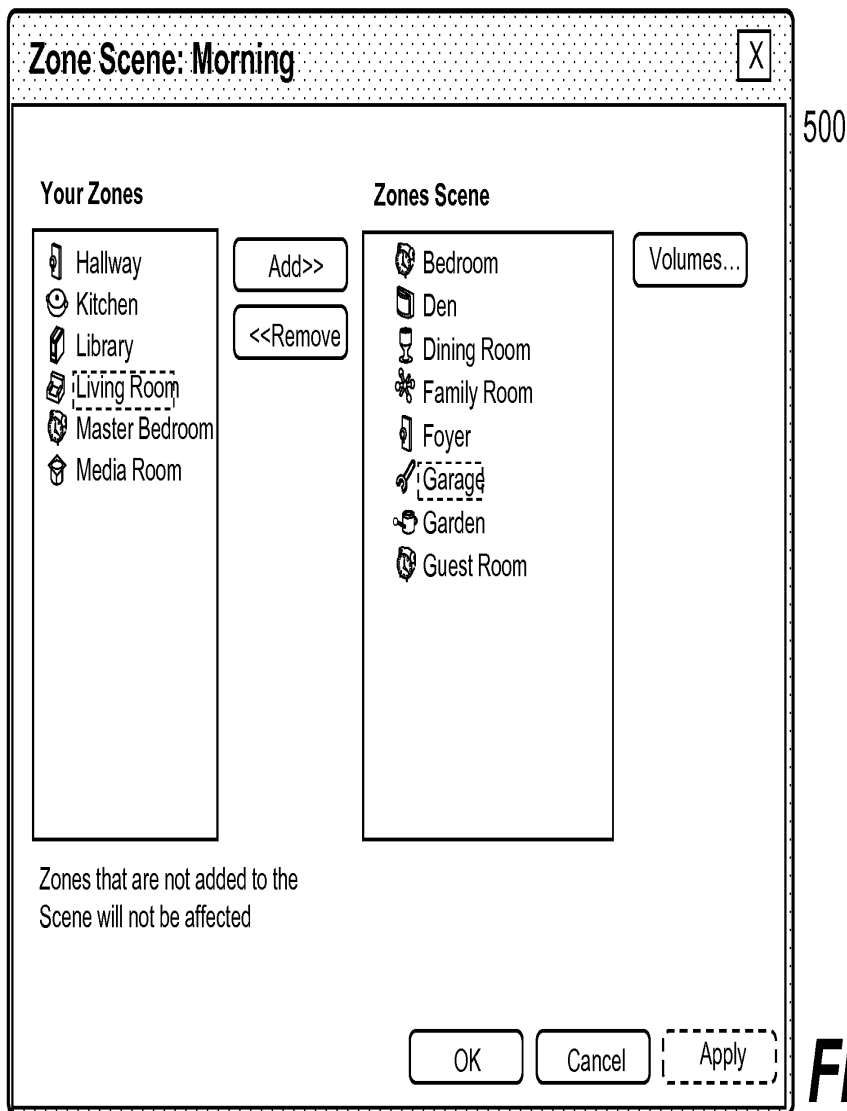


FIG. 5A

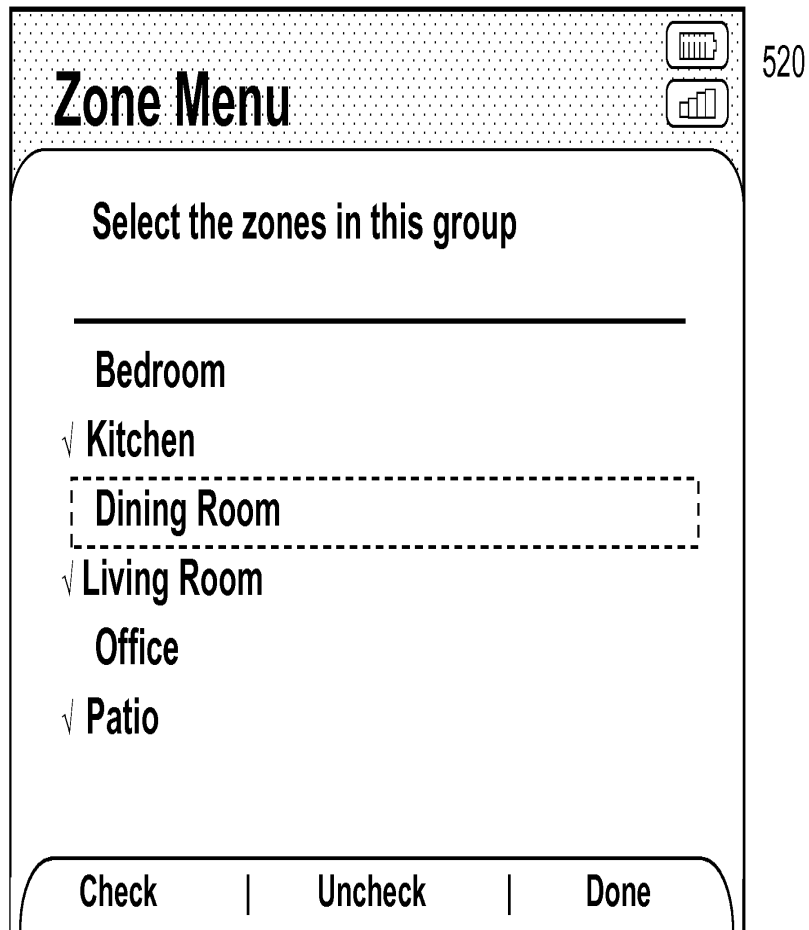


FIG. 5B

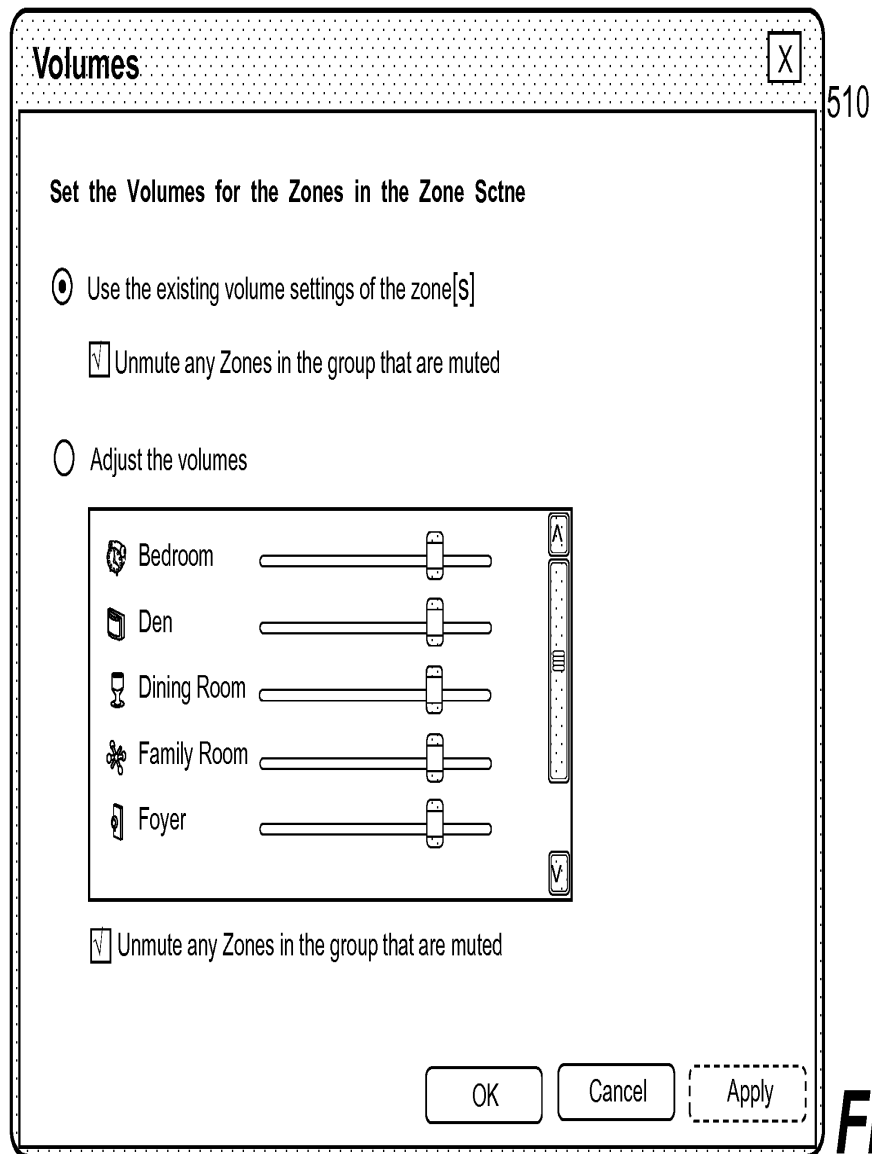


FIG. 5C

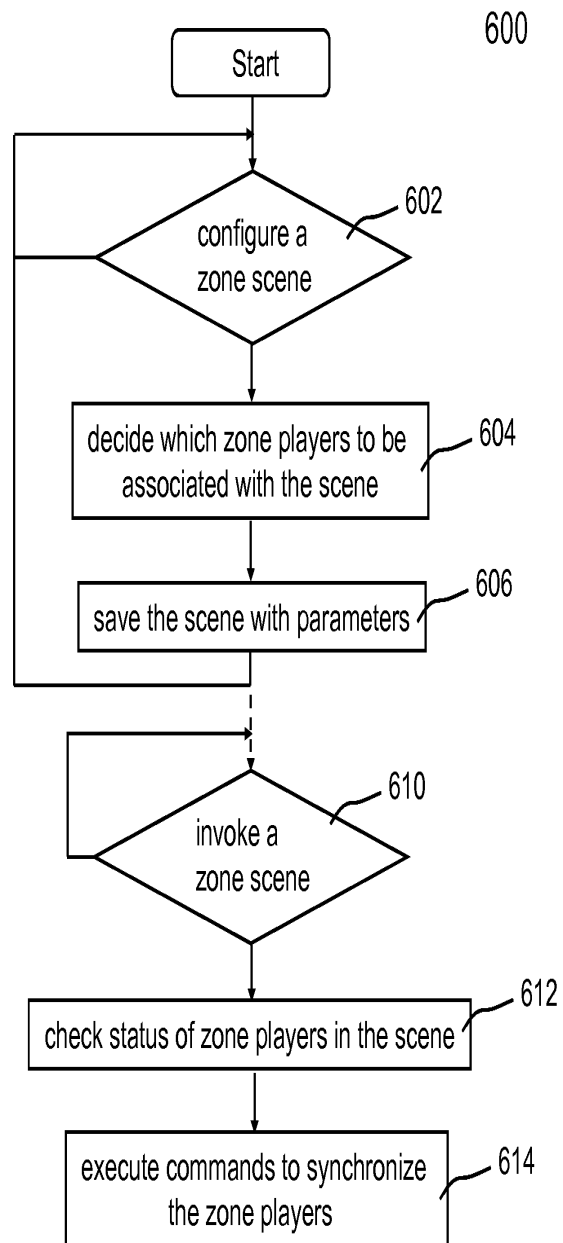


FIG. 6

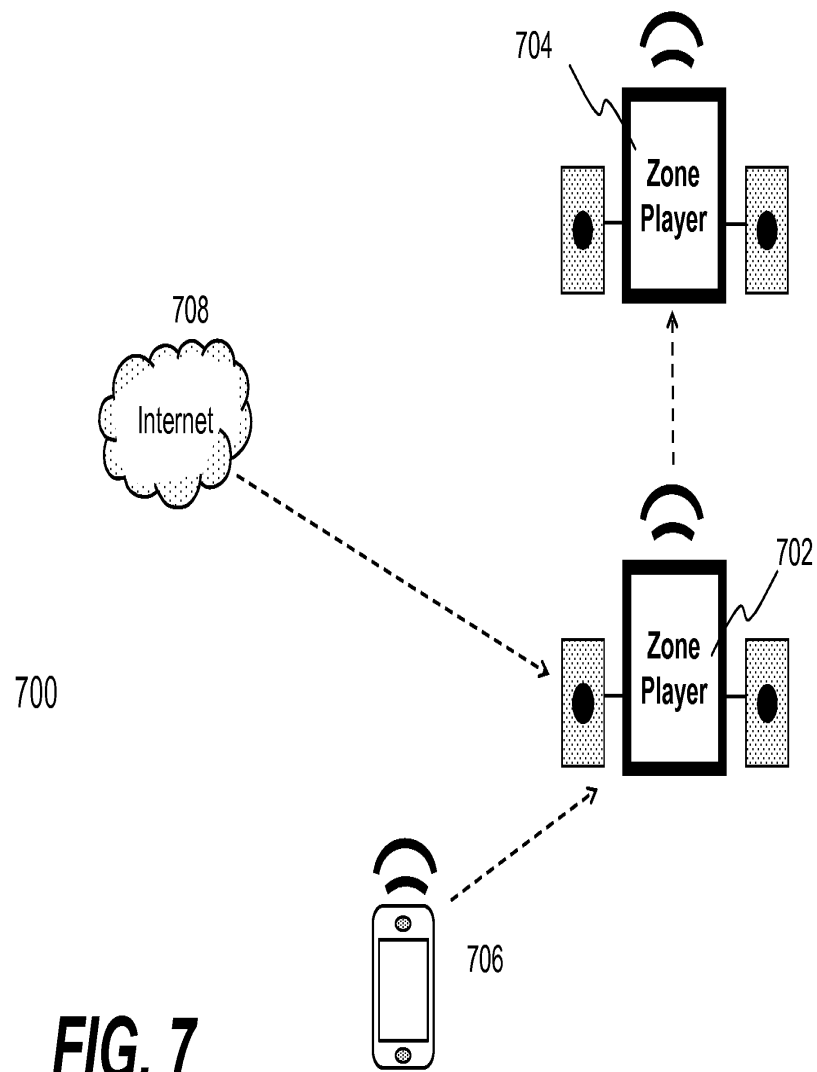


FIG. 7

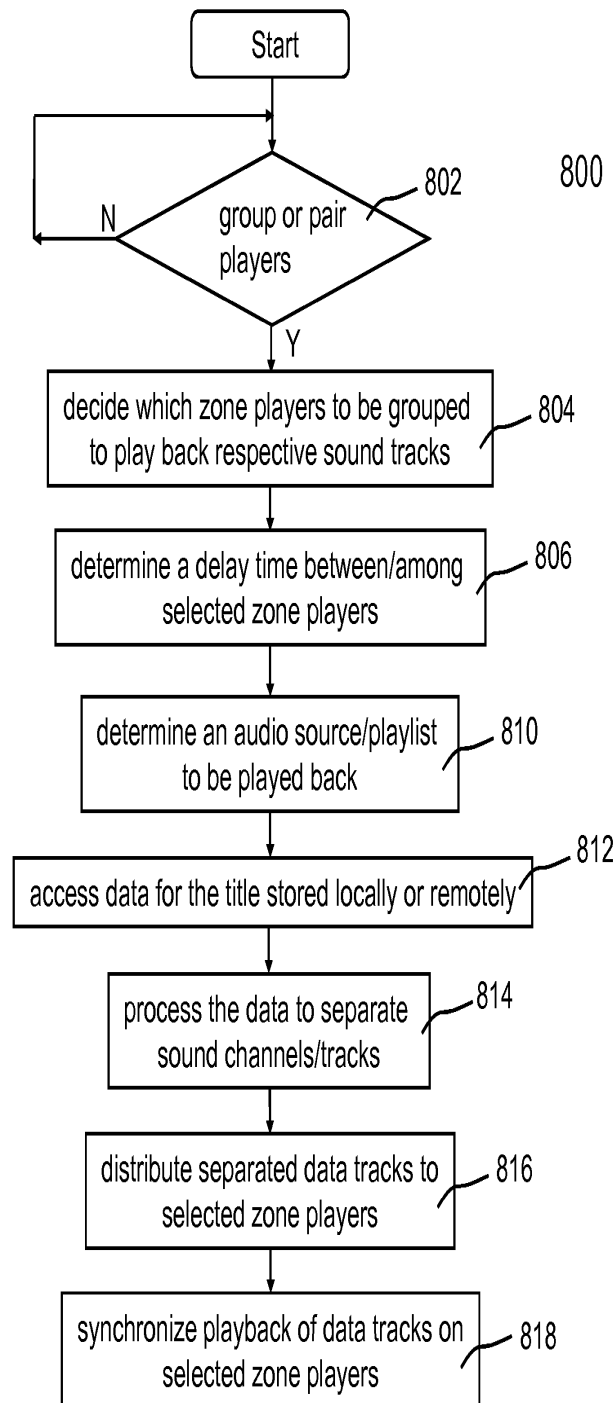


FIG. 8

900

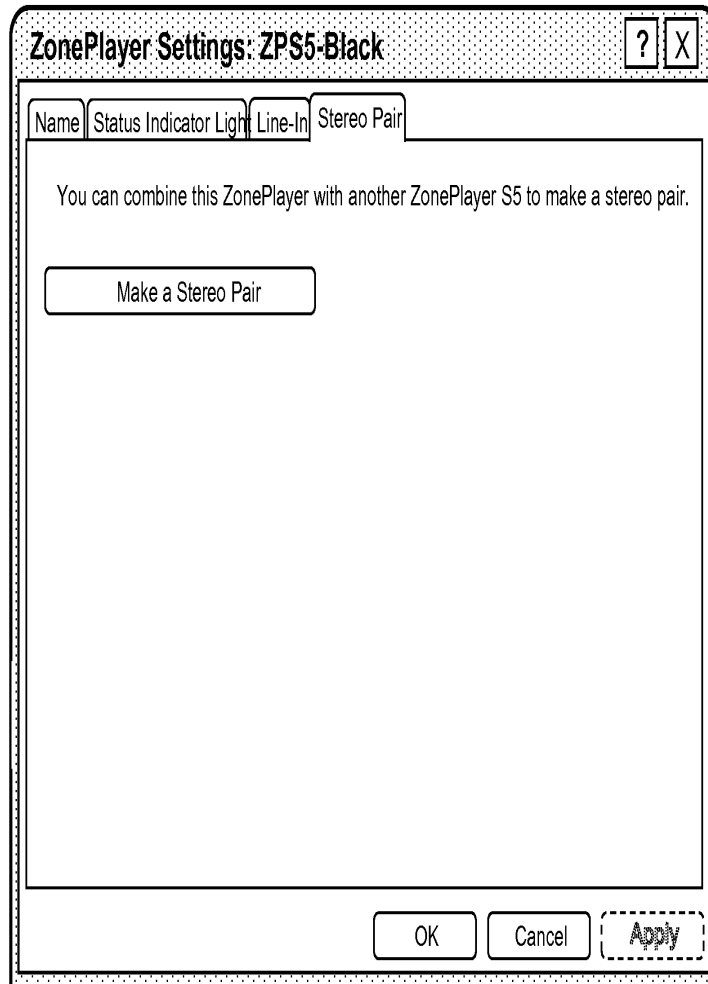


FIG. 9A

910

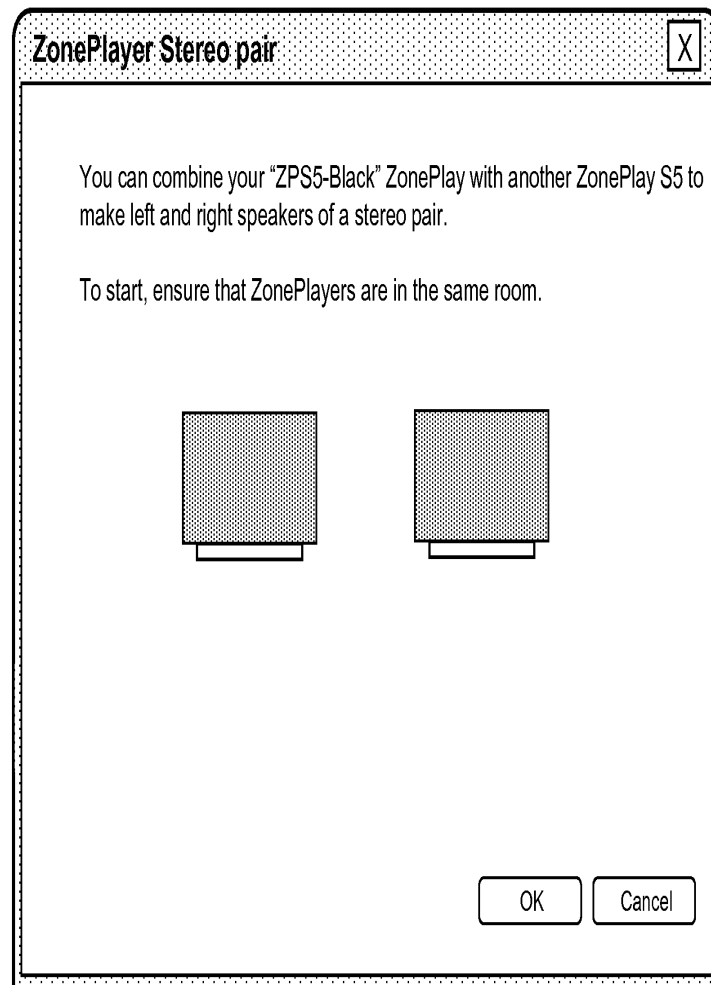


FIG. 9B

920

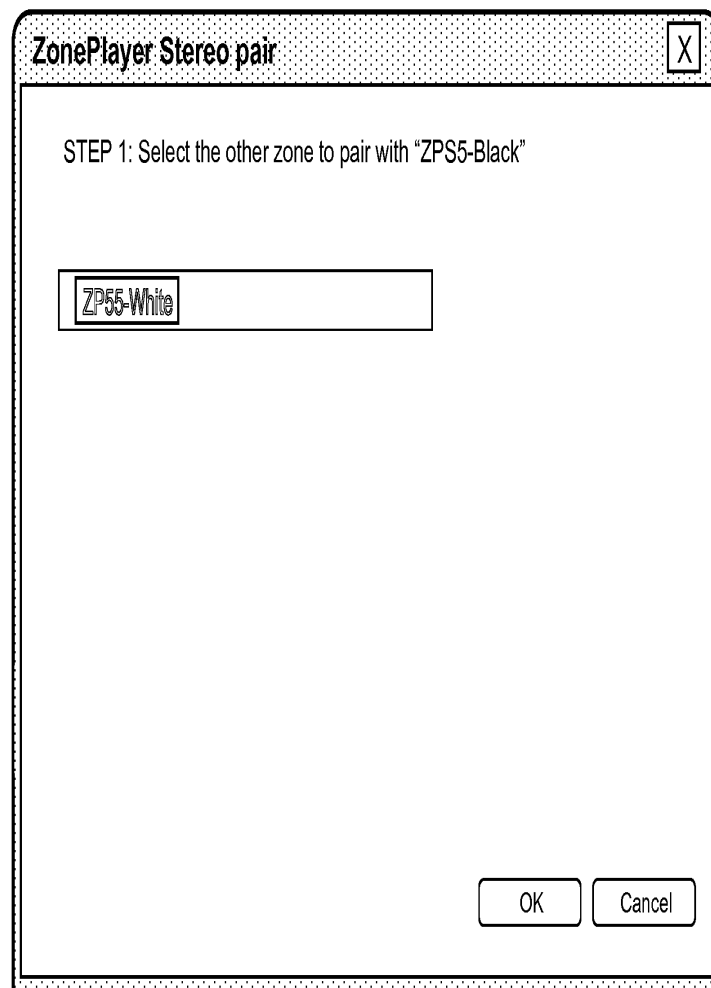


FIG. 9C

930

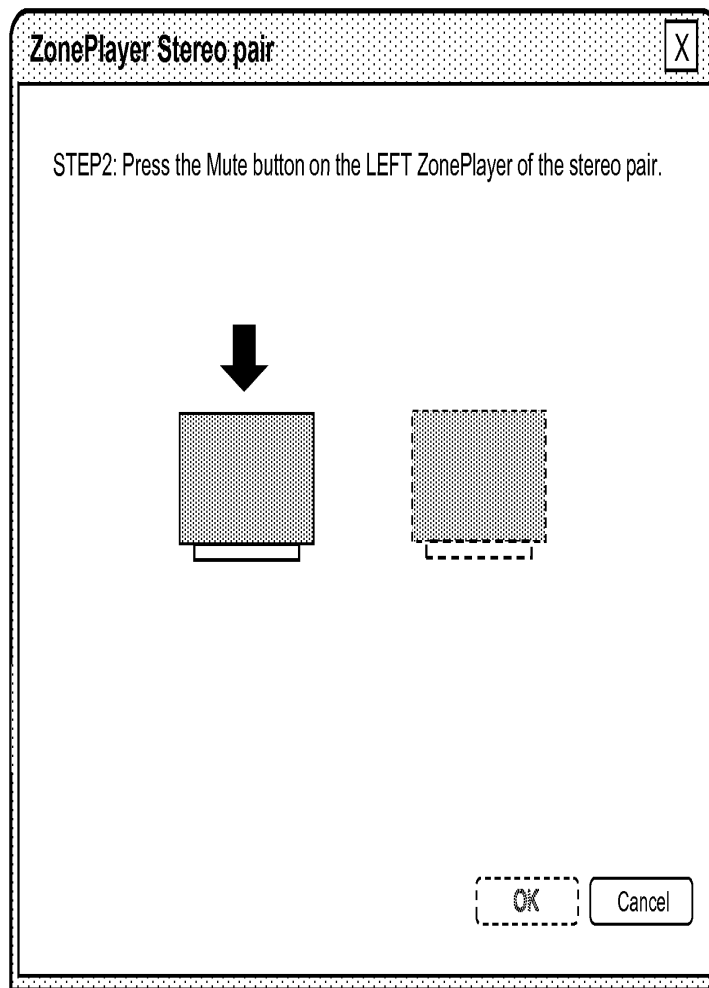


FIG. 9D

940

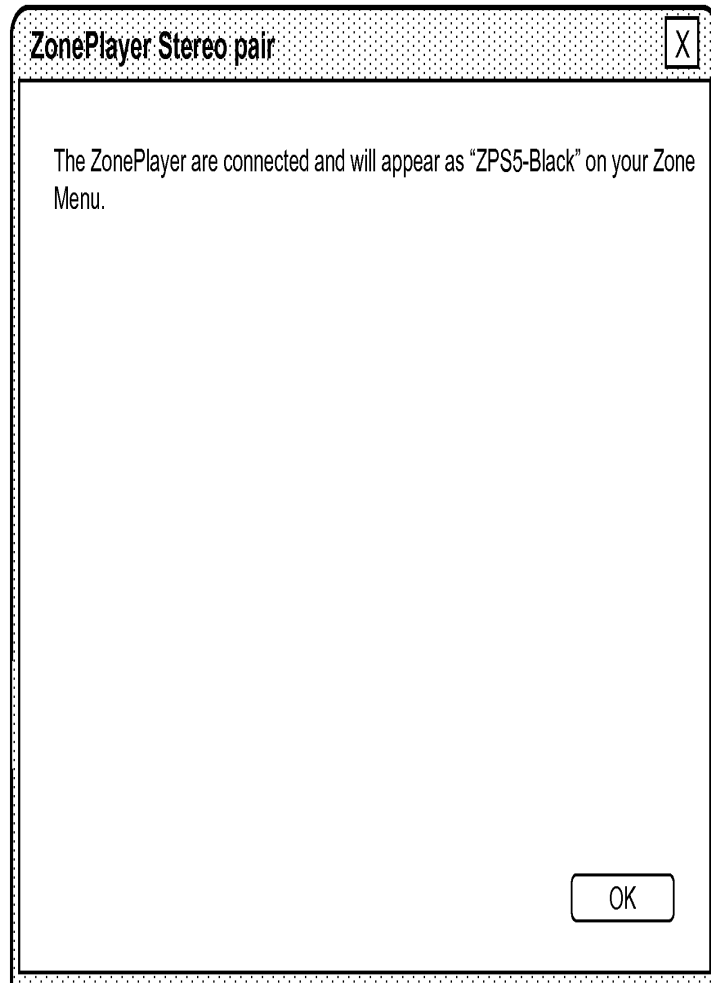
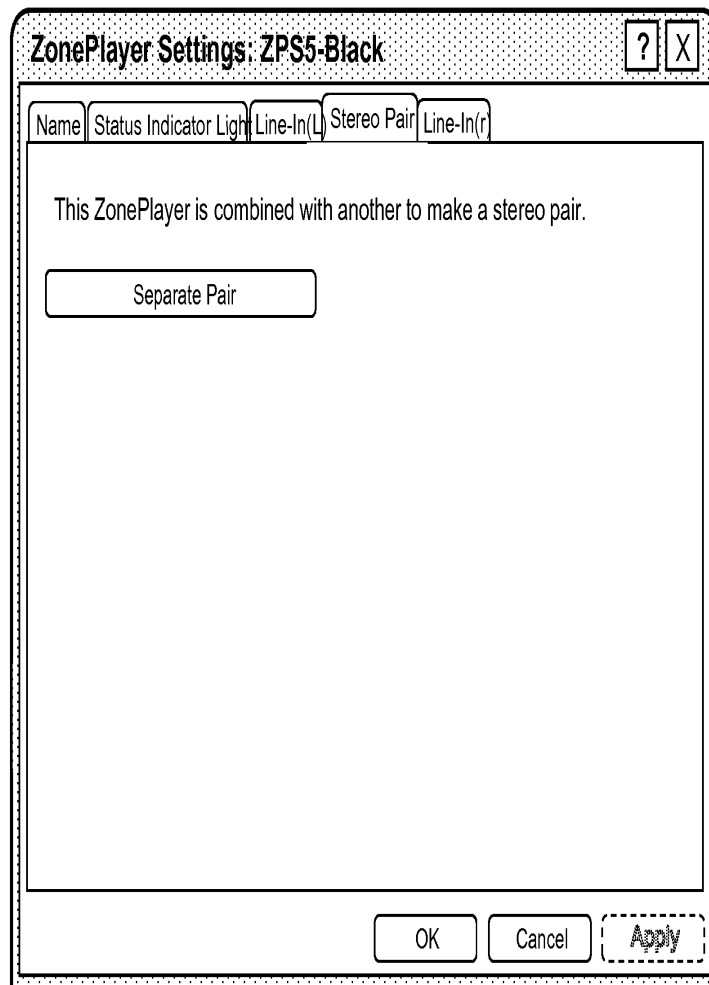


FIG. 9E

950



The image shows a software dialog box titled "ZonePlayer Settings: ZPS5-Black". The title bar includes a question mark icon and a close (X) button. Below the title bar is a tabbed interface with five tabs: "Name", "Status Indicator Light", "Line-In(L)", "Stereo Pair", and "Line-In(r)". The "Stereo Pair" tab is currently selected. The main content area of the dialog contains the text "This ZonePlayer is combined with another to make a stereo pair." and a button labeled "Separate Pair". At the bottom of the dialog are three buttons: "OK", "Cancel", and "Apply" (which is highlighted with a dashed border).

FIG. 9F

Electronic Patent Application Fee Transmittal				
Application Number:				
Filing Date:				
Title of Invention:		Controlling and grouping in a multi-zone media system		
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:		Christopher Kallai		
Filer:		Joe Zheng		
Attorney Docket Number:		RIN-036		
Filed as Small Entity				
Utility under 35 USC 111(a) Filing Fees				
Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD(\$)
Basic Filing:				
Utility filing Fee (Electronic filing)	4011	1	82	82
Utility Search Fee	2111	1	270	270
Utility Examination Fee	2311	1	110	110
Pages:				
Claims:				
Miscellaneous-Filing:				
Petition:				
Patent-Appeals-and-Interference:				

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD(\$)
Post-Allowance-and-Post-Issuance:				
Extension-of-Time:				
Miscellaneous:				
Total in USD (\$)				462

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt	
EFS ID:	9305664
Application Number:	13013740
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	9283
Title of Invention:	Controlling and grouping in a multi-zone media system
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	Christopher Kallai
Customer Number:	26797
Filer:	Joe Zheng
Filer Authorized By:	
Attorney Docket Number:	RIN-036
Receipt Date:	25-JAN-2011
Filing Date:	
Time Stamp:	20:03:48
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	yes
Payment Type	Credit Card
Payment was successfully received in RAM	\$462
RAM confirmation Number	7818
Deposit Account	
Authorized User	

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
-----------------	----------------------	-----------	-------------------------------------	------------------	------------------

1	Oath or Declaration filed	SignedDeclaration.pdf	1433939 418420e696f0b8075e2f647164a33e561e4f50b3	no	3
Warnings:					
Information:					
2	Nonpublication request from applicant.	NonPublicationRequest.pdf	22415 05b8da643524f102f0e5ed3b50cb49c38626e9c9	no	1
Warnings:					
Information:					
3	Specification	PatentAsFiled.pdf	153737 e70d0716cbc8f858f94859effbca86e5e32f588a	no	34
Warnings:					
Information:					
4	Drawings-only black and white line drawings	Drawings.pdf	383316 1a262fbbec3baa70ea67752ba59d061d3b6bb864	no	20
Warnings:					
Information:					
5	Fee Worksheet (PTO-875)	fee-info.pdf	32514 be9d1237af9d25a36e64182951c6876784726b85	no	2
Warnings:					
Information:					
Total Files Size (in bytes):			2025921		
This Acknowledgement Receipt evidences receipt on the noted date by the USPTO of the indicated documents, characterized by the applicant, and including page counts, where applicable. It serves as evidence of receipt similar to a Post Card, as described in MPEP 503. <u>New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111</u> If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application. <u>National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371</u> If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course. <u>New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office</u> If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.					