

BUS AND INTERFACE SYSTEM FOR CONSUMER DIGITAL EQUIPMENT

This invention relates to a bus interface system/apparatus for coupling audio, video and data processing systems, and in particular to coupling digital signals for digital recording and reproduction.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

It is known in the audio/video electronics arts to interconnect a variety of consumer electronic processing devices on a bus structure, so that signal available at one device may be utilized by another device connected on the bus. For example audio/video signal available from a television receiver may be applied to a video cassette recorder for storage, or the audio from a television receiver may be applied to a component stereo system for reproduction etc. Examples of this type of audio/video interconnect systems may be found in U. S. Patents 4,575,759; 4,581,664; 4,647,973; and 4,581,645.

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The signals distributed in these analog bus systems are relatively self contained. That is they include all the timing information necessary for the respective devices connected to the bus to decode the respective signals.

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Currently there are a number of compressed audio and video transmission systems, such as the Grand Alliance HDTV system proposed for terrestrial high definition television broadcasting, or the DirecTV™ system which currently broadcasts compressed NTSC signal via satellite. Both systems transmit program material in transport packets, and transport packets for different programs and/or program components may be time division multiplexed in a common frequency band. Respective packets undergo noise detection/correction encoding prior to transmission and after reception, and the transport packets are thereafter reconstituted in a receiver. Recording apparatus (e.g. VCR or video disc) and authoring apparatus (e.g. cameras or camcorders) for compressed signals, on the other hand, may process the compressed signals in the same packet format, however they may not require the same noise processing. As a consequence the conveyance of signal between processing components is most conveniently effected in packet form.

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Problems arise in communicating compressed signals between processing components if the packetized format is subjected to timing variations or perturbations. Such timing variations may result when one of the processing components is a recording device. A first

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problem results from the fact that synchronization indicia is not included in all transport packets of compressed data. A further problem results from the non-uniform generation or delivery rate of transport packets which is not suited to recording directly. In addition, a digital recording system may benefit from a continuous signal presence in order to simplify data clock recovery techniques.

Furthermore, to facilitate the reproduction of compressed data suitable for decoding may require a suitable timing reference be included during recording, and a relatively precise timing reference for use during reproduction. A recorded timing indicia may facilitate the elimination of data timing perturbations and discontinuities resulting from record/replay processing and enable the recorded signal timing to be restored to that existing prior to recording.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A signal processing apparatus for processing a data stream comprising a packetized signal subjected to timing perturbations. The packetized signal comprises a plurality of superpackets and each of the superpackets has a transport packet and a timestamp, the timestamps are indicative of gaps between corresponding parts of superpackets prior to the timing perturbation. The apparatus comprises a means for receiving the superpackets from the packetized signal subject timing perturbation. A storing means is coupled to the receiving means for storing the superpackets. Timestamps from each of the received superpackets are read by a reading means. A counter and the reading means are coupled to a means for generating a control signal. The control signal indicates each successive coincidence between the timestamps from the received superpackets and a count of the counter. The control signal initiates reading of the superpackets from the storing means.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention will be described with reference to the following drawings wherein;

FIGURE 1 is a block diagram of an inventive embodiment of a daisy chain connection of bus hardware including a number of bus/device interfaces; and

FIGURE 2 is a block diagram of a portion of one of the bus interfaces of FIGURE 1; and

FIGURE 3 is a first system block diagram illustrating a receiver coupled via a data bus to a source of timing perturbation and an inventive superpacket restoration block.

FIGURE 4A is a waveform and pictorial representation of bus superpackets according to a first arrangement, and

FIGURE 4B illustrates an alternative superpacket arrangement; and

FIGURE 5 is a system block diagram including a receiver coupled to a digital recording and replay device and employing various inventive embodiments;

FIGURES 6 and 7 are block diagrams of apparatus for forming a superpacket; and

FIGURE 8 is a further system block diagram including a digital recording and replay device and employing various inventive embodiments.

FIGURE 9 is a circuit diagram of an inventive controller advantageously used in FIGURES 8 and 10.

FIGURE 10 is another system block diagram including a digital recording and replay device and employing various inventive embodiments.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring to FIGURE 1, there is shown a cascade of audio-video-data AVD bus interfaces interconnected by an AVD bus. Each interface is bi-directional in that it can be conditioned to provide signal to, or accept signal from a device component. However, it cannot do both concurrently, and will be conditioned to do one or the other for a session. Each interface includes an output buffer, OB, for driving a component device with signal provided by the bus. Each interface includes an input buffer, IB, for driving the bus with signal provided from the device component. Both the input and the output buffers are selectably coupled to the bus via switches which are controlled by a master controller. Thus the direction of applying signal to, or receiving signal from the bus may be determined with a high degree of flexibility.

Each interface may include a half duplex transceiver, at both connections to the AVD bus, for coupling signal from the bus to the interface. The bus includes a pair of control lines on which serial control signals are communicated from a master controller. The control

signals may include addresses so that respective ones of the interfaces may be selectively controlled.

An exemplary interface switch apparatus is illustrated in FIGURE 2. In this illustration, the AVD bus is presumed to consist of three line pairs or six conductors. All of the line pairs carry bit-serial signals. Two of the conductors, (the control pair) are consigned to carry the control signals. Each decoder carries a unique address which enables individual commands to be delivered to specific interfaces. Responsive to a control signal directed to the specific interface, the decoder outputs steering signals to the respective demultiplexers 01, 02, 03 and 04. The control signals determine: which of the respective bus conductors are coupled to the output port OUT, which are in turn coupled to the output buffer OB; and which of the respective bus conductors are coupled to the input port IN, which are in turn coupled to the input buffer IB; and which of the conductors will transit the interface between right and left input/output ports. The use of demultiplexers allows the daisy chain connection between components to be broken, permitting independent communications between components on either side of the break while employing the same conductors. Consequently a greater number of unique communications may be performed with fewer conductors in the bus structure.

FIGURE 3A illustrates a first exemplary system employing an integrated receiver decoder or IRD 100 which is coupled via the advantageous interface switch apparatus 101, as illustrated in FIGURES 1 and 2, to the AVD bus 500. A television receiver display 110 is coupled to IRD 100 and receives at either R.F., or base band video signals for display. The AVD bus 500 couples control signal data and two streams of signal format data.

In FIGURE 3A it is assumed that the signal to be communicated is provided in the form of transport packets such as defined in the system layer of the MPEG2 video standard, or the transport layer of the Grand Alliance signal format. In both the MPEG2 video standard and the transport layer of the Grand Alliance signal format, transport packets are associated with timestamps or PCRs which allow re-synchronization of local system clocks to the original encoder clock frequency. Hence, having synchronized the local system clock generator, the transport packets may be processed to remove jitter or timing perturbations which may accumulate, for example, during

transmission by switched bus structures and processing etc. However, transport packets may be subjected to jitter and timing discontinuities which may not be correctable based on the variable, and specified intermittent occurrence of timestamps in the transport stream. The

5 AVD bus 500 is illustrated coupled to a source of timing perturbation, block 05 which may impart a timing error Δt to the data streams present on the bus. The source of timing perturbations or jitter may result from bus switching, bus arbitration, timebase modulation, or recording and reproduction processes. AVD bus 500 with timing error

10 Δt , is coupled to block 50 which removes the timing error component, and restores the bus signal components.

To facilitate the removal of the timing error Δt from the AVD signals, IRD 100 processes transport packets to form a further packet, designated herein as a superpacket, prior to transmission via AVD bus

15 500. Each superpacket includes a timestamp, the transport packet and a reserved data area which may include a playback rate code. Two timestamp embodiments are shown in FIGURES 4A and 4B. The timestamp is a timing code which is a sample of an oscillator count taken at a specific instant, for example, at the occurrence of a frame

20 clock pulse. Since a timestamp is added to each superpacket, the timestamp may be utilized to facilitate correction of timing jitter and perturbations impressed on the corresponding superpacket and its contents. The playback rate code may be used by a recording device to determine the rate at which a particular signal is to be recorded or

25 played back. The playback rate is coded relative to the recording rate and is read and utilized by any recording devices connected to the AVD bus. The purpose of the playback rate code is to allow recording at a relatively high bit rate and playback at a normal bit rate.

FIGURE 3A depicts an integrated receiver decoder IRD 100

30 which receives a radio frequency signal from, for example, antenna 10 or a cable source, not shown. The RF signal is tuned by tuner 11 to receive and demodulate a user selected program. The tuner output packet stream is coupled to block 12, packet source, which separates the user's specific program transport stream TP from other program

35 streams present in the received packet stream. The transport stream is coupled to a demultiplexer 13 where a program clock reference PCR value is extracted from the transport stream responsive to control by a demultiplexer controller 14. The demultiplexer controller 14 is

controlled to extract the PCR by a packet timing pulse P which is coincident with and indicates the occurrence of respective transport packets. Packet timing pulse P is derived from the program transport stream by packet source 12. The PCR value, which is demultiplexed by
5 block 13, is coupled for storage by latch 15.

A voltage controlled crystal oscillator 17 operates at a nominal clock frequency of 27 MHz and is controlled by a clock controller 16. A control signal E is generated responsive to a difference between the received PCR value, stored in latch 15, and a latched value
10 derived by counting VCXO 17 in counter 18 and storing in latch 19. Thus VCXO 17 is synchronized by the received PCR value, which in turn is representative of the clock frequency at the time of encoding. Let the successive timestamp values be designated TS_n and TS_{n+1} . Let corresponding successive count values stored in the latch 19 be
15 designated LCR_n and LCR_{n+1} . The clock controller 16 reads the successive values of TS's and LCR's and forms an error signal E proportional to the differences

$$E \Rightarrow |TS_n - TS_{n+1}| - |LCR_n - LCR_{n+1}|$$

The error signal E, is applied as a control signal to condition the voltage
20 controlled oscillator 17 to produce a frequency equal to the frequency of the system clock from which the PCRs were encoded. The error signal E produced by the clock controller 16 may be in the form of a pulse width modulated signal, which may be rendered into an analog error signal by low pass filtering, not shown. The constraints on this
25 system are that the counters throughout the system, namely encoder, decoder and recorder, count the same frequency or even multiples thereof. This requires that the nominal frequency of the voltage controlled oscillator be fairly close to the frequency of the system clock in the encoder.

30 It will be noted that the occurrence of transport packets generated as illustrated for example, in FIGURES 3, 5, 6 and 7 are synchronous with a system clock. The system clock was in turn synchronized to an encoder clock via PCR's located within the transport stream and derived in packet source 12. The occurrence of these
35 transport packets are time stamped in cooperation with the receiver synchronous clock, and the respective transport packets are tagged with timestamps, derived from the clock before application to the AVD bus.

The operation of superpacket generator 98 is as follows. A timestamp TS is formed in latch 20 which captures a counter value produced by counting pulses from an oscillator, for example VCXO 17 in counter 18. The latched counter value is representative of the frequency of the oscillator at a specific instant, for example, an edge of a frame clock signal FC, or the start of a transport packet. Timestamp TS is coupled to block 22 where it is combined with control data, for example playback speed data PB from controller 23, and a delayed transport packet TP from delay 21. The formatted superpacket SP is coupled from formatting block 22, of generator 98, for transmission via AVD bus 500 responsive to control by controller 23.

FIGURE 4A is a pictorial representation of a superpacket signal as conveyed by AVD bus 500. A frame clock is provided on one of the bus conductors and may be used to indicate the occurrence or presence of a superpacket on another of the AVD bus conductors. When frame clock FC is in a high state, a superpacket is framed within and coincident with the high state. The high state or active interval of the frame clock is of constant duration for all packets, and in this example is equal to the duration of 191 eight bit bytes. These 191 bytes are divided between a 20-bit timestamp, a 4-bit playback rate code and a 188-byte transport packet. If a transport packet is less than 188-bytes it is loaded in the leading part of the transport packet portion of the superpacket. FIGURE 4A illustrates a first sequence where the first 20 bits of data represent the timestamp, the second 4 bits represent the playback rate code and the final 188-bytes comprise the transport packet. FIGURE 4B illustrates a second superpacket arrangement where the first sequence comprises 12 bits of reserved data, for example playback rate code, the second 20 bits represent the timestamp. The final portion of the superpacket comprises the transport packet. The superpacket stream occurs in bursts with intervening gaps, where the bursts comprises the superpacket and transport packet etc., which may, for example, contain 140 or 188 bytes, representing DSSTM and MPEG packets respectively. The active portions of the frame clock are of constant duration, with inactive intervals of variable duration which correspond with gaps resulting from deleted or non-selected elemental streams. These variable periods of inactivity may provide considerable flexibility in the formation of superpackets.

Timestamps are samples of counts from a high frequency oscillator which is assumed to run stably, without perturbation. Hence timestamp values, or oscillator counts, may be communicated, for example, to provide oscillator synchronization or to uniquely identify the occurrence of a specific instant or event. Differences between timestamps values represent an elapsed number of oscillator cycles, which may alternatively be considered to represent an elapsed time interval between timestamps. However, if the elapsed time interval between timestamps is disturbed or perturbed, i.e., the occurrence, or spacing between timestamps is not the same as when encoded or time stamped, the timestamp values can not be used to control or synchronize a "receiving" node oscillator.

FIGURE 3B illustrates in simplified form, processing employed within superpacket restoration block 50 which utilizes superpacket timestamp values to remove timing error Δt impressed, for example, on signals coupled from AVD bus 500. The operation of superpacket restoration block 50 is as follows. The AVD bus 500 is received by interface switch apparatus 102 which is enabled by a control signal on control conductors of bus 500. The superpacket signal with time perturbations $SP \pm \Delta t$, is coupled from the data bus to a demultiplexer DEMUX 52 which reads the timestamp from the superpacket. The superpacket signal is also coupled to a buffer store STORE S. PACK 51, which is controlled to store the superpacket responsive to, for example, a frame clock signal FC, or other control signal derived from the control conductors of AVD bus 500. An oscillator 54 has a stable free running frequency and has an output signal CK which is coupled to buffer store 51 and to counter 53. Oscillator 54 is required to have a nominal frequency which is fairly close to the frequency of the clock employed in formatting the timestamp. The count value CTR, of counter 53 and the demultiplexed timestamp TS, are coupled to a buffer store read controller READ CTRL 55. The read controller compares the separated timestamp value with the free running oscillator count, and at coincidence generates a read, or output control signal EN. The output control signal EN is coupled to buffer store 51 which outputs the respective superpacket responsive to the control signal. In addition to re-establishing superpacket start time, the superpacket bit rate is restored by clock signals CK derived from oscillator 54. Thus, by means of the superpacket timestamp and the

stable, free running oscillator, the timing error Δt is removed and each superpacket SP is restored to occur at substantially the same time as when formatted by generator 98 of IRD 100. Since the superpacket is clocked out by a clock signal from oscillator 54, the superpacket has
5 substantially the same bit rate as when formatted. Furthermore, since the superpacket occurrence and duration are restored to nominally the values existing at the time of formatting, so too are the variable length, intervening gaps. The restored superpacket SP may be returned to AVD
10 bus 500 for re-transmission to other bus interface switches beyond the source of timing perturbation, or superpacket SP may be utilized within an apparatus of which superpacket restoration block 50 may form part.

In general, recording systems rely on signal presence or absence to provide an elementary level of signal loss detection. Additionally, continuous signal presence, particularly in a digital
15 recording system is advantageous for data clock recovery. Since magnetic recording systems are subject to random signal losses of variable, and unpredictable duration, it is beneficial to employ a record signal having a constant bit or clock rate. Thus with such a recorded
20 signal, periods of missing data may be considered representative of recording media losses.

In FIGURE 5 bus interface 102 accepts bursts of superpackets from bus 500. The superpackets are coupled to signal sorter 202 which contains demultiplexer 30 for separating or reading the constituent parts of the superpacket. In the exemplary system of
25 FIGURE 5, superpackets SP, rather than transport packets are recorded on recording media 405. The superpackets, with variable length gaps, are coupled to a data buffer 281 which forms part of recording circuitry 28. Data buffer 281 and associated circuitry may be clocked with signals derived from a sync generator 99. Sync generator 99 may be
30 synchronized by clock signals generated by a stable, VCXO clock generator 37. Clock generator 37 may be synchronized to the superpacket timestamp during a record mode. Data buffer 281 smoothes the bursts of superpackets to remove or substantially reduce the intervening variable duration gaps for further processing within
35 recording circuitry 28. For example, Reed Solomon error detection and correction codes may be computed and added to the buffered superpackets as illustrated in block 282. The buffered superpacket data may be stored as depicted by Format Sync Block 283. It is known

to shuffle or interleave data prior to recording to mitigate effects of media damage which may result in uncorrectable errors during reproduction. The shuffling or interleaving may be carried out over the period of a recorded segment, i.e. a head scan, or an average picture interval. In addition to shuffling, the data may be formatted by Format Sync Block 283, to produce sync blocks having a data structure which may comprise a preamble or sync word identifying the start of the track, an identification code, the data to be recorded (superpacket) and a postamble.

5 Error coded, shuffled and syncblock formatted data may be further processed for record coding, in an embodiment illustrated as record block REC. CODE 284. Record coding may be used to reduce or eliminate any DC components in the data stream, and may also be used to tailor the recorded frequency spectrum of the processed superpacket signal.

10 The replay process performs the inverse of the record mode signal processing. The replay signal 407 from transducer 406 is code converted in block REC. DECODE 271, to restore the error coded, shuffled formatted data signal. The start of the data track is identified by the sync word and the data is clocked into a memory, represented by DEFORMAT SYNC BLOCK 272, to enable deformatting of the recorded shuffled structure. The memory of block 272 is read out in a manner complementary to that employed for shuffling prior to recording. Thus by shuffling and deshuffling, media derived errors are dispersed throughout the data contained in the recorded sector or track.

20 Following deshuffling the data is error corrected in block 273 using the exemplary Reed Solomon code added during record processing. Thus output data stream 401, from replay circuitry 27, represents the buffered superpacket stream as generated by packet buffer 281.

25 However, to enable subsequent decoding by decoder 24 of IRD 100, the buffered superpackets are restored, in block 453, to more closely represent the timing and intermittent or burst like delivery of the superpackets as formatted by IRD 100 prior to recording. Operation of superpacket restoration circuitry 450 is similar to that described for FIGURE 3B and is described following the explanation of oscillator and timestamp synchronization.

30 FIGURE 5 illustrates an exemplary utilization of timestamps for synchronization and timing purposes in digital recorder 400. In a

record mode, superpackets from one conductor of AVD bus 500 are coupled via interface switch 102 to signal sorter 202. The frame clock signal FC present on another AVD bus conductor is applied to a second input of sorter 202. An edge detector, 31, detects the transition of the frame clock signal FC which defines the start of the active frame clock interval, and responsive to such detection, captures in a latch 35 the count exhibited by a counter 36. Counter 36 counts pulses from a voltage controlled oscillator 37 which has a nominal free running frequency close to the frequency used to generate the superpacket timestamps.

Simultaneously with capturing the count value in latch 35, the edge detector 31 alerts demultiplexer controller 33 to provide a sequence of control signals for controlling demultiplexer DEMUX 30 to separate the components of the superpacket. The timestamp contained in the superpacket is separated and stored in a memory 32, for access by a clock controller 39. Depending upon the form of signal the recorder is arranged to handle, DEMUX 30 may be designed to provide the signal in a variety of formats. That is, it may provide the superpacket in toto, as illustrated in FIGURES 4A, 4B, for buffering and recording as shown in FIGURE 5. Alternatively DEMUX 30 may be arranged to provide the playback rate code PB on one port which is accessed by the recorder control circuitry 29. Transport packets may be provided at another port as an alternative signal for coupling to record buffer circuitry 281.

The clock controller includes apparatus for storing successive values latched in latch 35 and successive timestamp values stored in MEMORY 32. The clock controller 39 reads the successive values of timestamps and latched counter values and forms an error signal E proportional to the difference. The error signal E, is applied as a control signal to condition the voltage controlled oscillator 37 to produce a frequency equal to the frequency of the system clock with which the timestamps were generated. The error signal E produced by the clock controller 39 may be in the form of a pulse width modulated signal, which may be rendered into an analog error signal by implementing a low pass filter 38 with analog components. The constraints on this system are that the counters at throughout the system, namely encoder, decoder and recorder, count the same frequency or even multiples thereof. This requires that the nominal

frequency of the voltage controlled oscillator be fairly close to the frequency of the system clock in the encoder.

It will be noted that the occurrence of transport packets generated as illustrated in FIGURES 3, 5 and 6, for example, are synchronous with a system clock. The system clock was in turn synchronized with to an encoder clock via PCR's located within the transport stream and derived in packet source 12. The occurrence of these transport packets are time stamped in cooperation with the receiver synchronous clock, and the respective transport packets are tagged with timestamps before application to the AVD bus. At the recorder interface to the AVD bus, the recorder may record the superpacket and may utilize the timestamps to generate a recorder system clock which is synchronous with the transport packet and the receiver system clock. However, superpacket timestamps may be derived from a stable oscillator, independent of the receiver system clock, which may also be utilized for recorder synchronization.

Timestamps are samples of counts from a clock oscillator which is assumed to run stably, without perturbation. Hence timestamp values, or oscillator samples, may be communicated for remote synchronization or to uniquely identify the occurrence of a specific instant or event. Differences between timestamp values represent an elapsed number of oscillator cycles, which may be considered to represent an elapsed time interval. When digital recorder 400 replays a recorded signal from media 405, VCXO 37 may not be controlled in response to reproduced timestamps. Control of oscillator 37 is not possible because, although timestamps represent numeric values sampled from a stable oscillator, the elapsed time intervals represented by timestamp values is violated if the reproduced occurrence a superpackets, or the spacing between corresponding points on adjacent superpackets is not the same as when encoded. Such reproduced timing differences may, for example, result from recorder input buffering, data smoothing, reproducing mechanism instabilities, and transducer switching.

Hence when digital recorder 400 replays, oscillator VCXO 37 free runs, driving sync generator 99 which provides reference signals for the recorder mechanism and the processes of block 27. The stability of VCXO 37 and sync generator 99 is sufficient to facilitate recovery of the buffered superpackets which are output as signal 401. However,

specifications for a "reference" MPEG decoder require that each packet arrive within 25 micro seconds of it's original timing. Thus decoder 24 of IRD 100, may require that superpacket signal 401 be restored to more closely represent the timing and superpacket occurrence, and therefore transport packet timing, as when formatted by generator 98 of IRD 100. In addition, although MPEG decoder specifications may specify timing jitter tolerances, a recording and replay signal process may introduce timing perturbations beyond the clock synchronization and buffer capacity of a decoder.

Superpacket signal 401, $SP \pm \Delta t$, may be advantageously restored or reformatted by utilizing the timestamps added to each superpacket. Signal 401 is coupled to demultiplexer 452 where the timestamps are extracted or copied and coupled to demultiplexer control block 451. Timestamps may be demultiplexed by, for example, counting data bits based on the superpacket structures illustrated in FIGURES 4A and 4B, and knowing where the start of replay data occurs based on the format of the recorded syncblock and associated sync word. Alternatively, during superpacket buffering, shown in block 28, a timestamp identifier may be added to provide identification during reproduction. The demultiplexer control compares the replayed timestamp value with a continuously changing count value produced by counting a free running oscillator, for example, oscillator 37 and counter 36. Clearly to enable superpacket timing restoration, oscillators of nominally the same frequency are required at each end of the system. When the value of counter 36, and the demultiplexed timestamp are equal, demux control 451 generates signal EN which initiates the start time of the replayed superpacket. Thus the encoded reference time, for example the start of the transport packet within the superpacket is restored. Thus each superpacket is restored to occur at the same oscillator count as when formatted by block 22. In addition to re-establishing superpacket timing, the bit rate of the superpacket must also be restored. To enable superpacket restoration, block 453 may comprise a storage buffer coupled to receive replayed signal 401. Buffer block 453 may be clocked by pulses CK from oscillator 37, hence each buffered superpacket is read out at a rate determined by oscillator 37, which has substantially the same frequency as used when formatting. Since the superpackets have been retimed to occur at substantially the original "encoded" time, and the superpacket bit rate is

substantially the same as when formatted, thus the variable, intervening gaps between superpackets are also restored. Thus the reproduced signal from restoration block 453 is substantially as formatted and free of recorder derived timing discontinuities and perturbations. The restored superpacket signal 402 is coupled to AVD bus 500 via switch 102 which is controlled via control data pair of the bus.

Referring to FIGURE 6, a further method of generating superpackets is illustrated and will be described. In this example a camera 40 generates a video signal. This video signal is compressed in an MPEG encoder 41, and packaged in transport packets by the transport processor 42. The MPEG encoder 41 in cooperation with a system clock 45 and a modulo M counter 43, includes presentation timestamps in the compressed video signal. The transport processor 42, also in cooperation with the modulo M counter 43, includes program clock references in ones of the transport packets. The transport processor provides bit-serial transport packets of the video signal on one output port, and in parallel therewith provides a timing signal indicative of the start of successive output transport packets.

Successive transport packets are delayed in a compensating delay element 50, and then applied to a superpacket formatter 47. At the start of each new transport packet the count exhibited in the modulo M counter 43 is captured in a latch 44, the output of which is coupled to formatter 47. In addition a playback rate control code, PB, is applied from a system controller 46 to the superpacket formatter. In this example it is presumed that the camera is operating at real time and at normal speed, hence the playback rate code will reflect a playback speed equivalent to recording speed. However, the camera may operate at a higher than normal imaging rate, for example, 90 images per second. Such high rate image signals may be used to portray image movement in slow or variable motion, hence the desired viewing speed may be communicated by the playback rate control code. For example a playback rate of 1/3 will portray image motion at one third speed. The speed of camera action is controlled by a user input 48, which may define a number of variable coding and compression parameters.

When the timing signal provided by the transport processor indicates the occurrence of a new transport packet, controller 46

conditions the formatter to first output, in serial form, the reserved data block, for example 12 bits as illustrated in FIGURE 4B, which includes the playback rate code. Following the reserved data block, the count from latch 44 is output in serial form to generate the timestamp.

- 5 Finally the delayed transport packet from delay 50 is output in serial form to complete superpacket formatting. The delay incurred by the transport packet in the delay element 50 is equivalent to the time necessary to read out the timestamp and the playback rate code.

The superpackets are applied to a desired one of the
10 conductors in the interface 49 under control of control signals present on the control pair of conductors of the interface. In addition controller 46 generates a frame clock signal FC which is coincident with the superpacket and which is applied to a second conductor of the AVD bus at interface 49. If controller 46 is the overall system controller, it will
15 generate control signals which are applied to the control pair. User control 48 may provide signal selection and direction. If controller 46 is not the system controller, the only interaction with the interface will be generation of the frame clock in this example.

FIGURE 7 illustrates a further example of a superpacket
20 generator. In FIGURE 7 elements designated with the same numbers as elements in FIGURE 6 are similar and perform the same function. Transmitted transport packets are received by a modem and error corrected by a Reed Solomon decoder of the packet source 51. The packet source generates outputs pulses P, which are coincident with and
25 indicate the occurrence of respective transport packets. The pulses P and the transport packets are applied to an inverse transport processor 53. In this example it is assumed that the signal applied to the packet source contains time division multiplexed packets pertaining to different programs and different program components. Respective
30 packets contain program identifiers, PID's, by which they are associated with respective programs or program components. The transport processor is conditioned to select only packets associated with a desired program. The payloads of these packets are applied via a direct memory access, DMA, to a buffer memory 54. Respective program
35 component payloads are applied to specific areas of the buffer memory. As respective program component processors 55, 56, 57 and 58 require component signal data, they request same from the processor 53, which reads the appropriate payload via the DMA structure.

Ones of the transport packets contain program clock references, PCR's, which precisely relate the creation of the transport packet to the encoder system clock at generation. The transport processor 53 extracts these PCR's and applies them to a system clock generator 52. Using the PCR's, clock generator 52 generates a system clock which is frequency locked to the encoder system clock. The system clock is utilized by the inverse transport processor 53 and the packet source 51, hence the transport packets are relatively synchronized with their original creation timing.

The system clock is counted by modulo M counter 43, and the count value exhibited by the counter when a pulse P occurs, i.e. when the start of a new transport packet is output by the packet source, is captured by latch 44 responsive to pulse P. The count from counter 43 is latched latch 44 responsive to a packet timing pulse P derived from the received transport stream to be formatted for coupling to the AVD bus. This latched count value is utilized as a timestamp. In addition, the associated transport packet is applied to a compensating delay element 50. The delayed transport packet from element 50, the counter value or timestamp from latch 44, and a playback rate code from a controller 460 are applied to respective input ports of a superpacket formatter 47.

The controller 460, under user control 48, communicates with the inverse transport processor to designate which program transport packets are to be packaged in superpackets. On the occurrence of respective transport packets, the inverse transport processor provides a pulse to the controller 460 whenever a received packet is a desired transport packet. Responsive to this pulse the controller 460 conditions the formatter to form the superpacket with the current timestamp, PB and transport packet. Note in this example the delay element 50 must accommodate not only the formation time of the first two data elements of the superpacket but also the time required of the inverse processor to ascertain that a packet is the one which is desired.

In the foregoing examples the timestamp is generated at the occurrence of a transport packet. Alternatively timestamps may be generated relative to the timing or generation of the superpacket. That is, the timestamp may define the instant a superpacket is to be output, or the instant assembly of the superpacket begins. In these instances

the time stamp will generally be related to the leading edge of the Frame Clock, though it may not define the timing of this transition. However, whatever timed occurrence the timestamp value represents, the timestamp is specific to a particular superpacket and the transport conveyed within.

The frame clock FC is not a fixed frequency signal. That is, the inactive portion of the frame clock has a specified minimum and maximum duration. It is specifically desired that the frame clock not be a fixed frequency clock so that superpackets may be formed at any time a transport packet is available. It is undesirable to use a fixed frequency frame clock, since this may force a delay in the formation of a superpacket for transport packets that occurred after the beginning of an active portion of the frame clock until the subsequent cycle of the frame clock. If the timestamp is to be related to the formation of superpackets or the frame clock, then latches 44 in FIGURES 6 and 7 may be conditioned to capture count values by either the formatters 47 or the controllers 46 or 460 respectively.

A second exemplary audio-video-data AVD bus system is illustrated in FIGURE 8. This second exemplary AVD system employs a simplified daisy chained bus 501 for coupling between an IRD 100, digital recorder 400 and a display 110. This simplified bus has only two conductor pairs A/B with switch control logic C incorporated at each interface switch matrix 101/102. The switch control logic C monitors the state of each pair of bus 501 and in response to user selected status, for example, playback or record modes, automatically determines an appropriate signal routing via bus 501. In simple terms, the switch control logic ensures that sources of signals are only coupled to signal destinations and that only one signal source at a time is coupled to a bus pair. The presence of a data signal on a bus pair is indicated by an indicia Vs. Indicia Vs may be generated, as shown in exemplary FIGURE 9, by element 405 and detected by element 401.

FIGURE 9 illustrates a data bus transmitter and receiver employing an inventive bus status indicator and detector. Ones of the inventive transmitter circuit are coupled to each input of the interface switch. Ones of the inventive receiver/detector circuitry are coupled to each bus line coupled to the interface switch. The theory and operation of balanced line driving and reception techniques is well known. The inventive data indicia transmitter 405 and detector 401 utilize the

balanced transmission condition to introduce a DC voltage data indicia V_s , equally into each conductor of the bus pair when coupled to transmit data. At a receiving bus node the presence of the data indicia V_s is detected by receiver 401, which forms part of switch control logic C. Thus the presence of a data signal is indicated for coupling to a destination via the interface switch matrix.

In FIGURE 9 a single indicia transmitter 405 is shown coupled to a single input line pair A of data bus 501. However, a system employing the inventive control method requires that an indicia transmitter is included or is associated with each possible data source. Indicia transmitter 405 comprises a switched emitter follower Q2 which is coupled equally into each conductor of line pair A. A transistor Q1 functions as a switch coupled between the base of emitter follower Q2 and ground. An indicia control signal is coupled to the base terminal of transistor Q1 via a resistor R5. The indicia control signal may be generated, or derived from control logic in response to a device operating mode command, for example, initiation of Play mode in a digital player recorder. In an exemplary Play mode, a logical low or nominally zero volt signal is applied to resistor R5 from control logic 410. The nominally zero volt signal turns off transistor Q1 which allows the base terminal of transistor Q2 to assume a potential of approximately 1.6 volts, determined by the series combination of resistors R6, R7 and diode D1. The emitter follower action of transistor Q2 results in an emitter voltage V_s , of approximately 1 volt, which is applied the data bus conductors via resistors R1 and R2. In non-replay modes a logical high or nominally 5 volt signal is generated by logic 410 and applied to resistor R5. The nominally 5 volt signal, coupled via resistor R5, turns on transistor Q1 which clamps the base terminal of transistor Q2 to ground. Thus transistor Q2 is turned off and no indicia or sensing voltage V_s is generated.

A single indicia detector 403 is shown in FIGURE 9 coupled to a bus pair A of data bus 501. However, a system employing the inventive control method requires that an indicia detector is provided for each data bus pair coupled to a switch matrix. Indicia detector 403 comprises a balancing network formed by resistors R3 and R4 coupled from each bus line to a parallel combination of a resistor R14 and a capacitor C2 connected to ground. Resistors R11 and R12 are connected to each bus line and are joined at a non-inverting input of an integrated

circuit comparator amplifier U1. An inverting input of integrated circuit U1 is connected to a DC potential divider formed by resistors R8 and R9, coupled between +5 volts and ground and generating a voltage of about 0.8 volts. When data indicia Vs is absent the data bus sits at nominally ground or zero volt potential. This nominally ground potential is coupled via resistors R11 and R12 to the non-inverting input of IC U1. Thus with zero volts applied to the non-inverting input and 0.8 volts applied to the inverting input the output terminal of IC U1 assumes a low, nominally ground potential. When data indicia Vs is present the data bus is nominally 1 volt positive relative to ground potential. The +1 volt DC indicia signal applied to the non-inverting input of IC U1 causes the output terminal to assume a high, nominally supply rail potential. Thus integrated circuit U1 output signal indicates a data bus signal presence with a high level signal and a data bus signal absence with a low level output signal.

TABLE 1 illustrates an advantageous automated interface switch apparatus controller associated with a digital recorder, for example, D-VHS. The recorder mode is determined by user command, for example by manual switch operation or IR remote control. Control logic associated with the interface switch apparatus and digital recorder determine the user desired mode and establish connection between the appropriate exemplary D-VHS input or output terminal and an appropriate bus conductor.

TABLE 1. DIGITAL PLAYER / RECORDER AUTO SWITCHING MATRIX

DIGITAL Player/Recorder MODE	STATUS OF BUSSES A/B		
	0/0	0/1	1/0
RECORD	WAIT	B->IN B->A	A->IN A->B
REPLAY	OUT->A OUT->B	OUT->A	OUT->B
OFF	OPEN	B->A	A->B

Operation of the automated interface switch apparatus is as follows. For example, upon selection of a replay mode, transmitter 405 circuitry of FIGURE 8 is enabled and DC sensing voltage indicia Vs is applied to the output of a bus driver amplifier (not shown). Indicia detectors

401/402, associated with control logic of the automated interface switch 102, determine the presence, or absence of an indicia Vs on bus lines A or B and couple the output replay data and DC indicia voltage Vs to which ever bus line is not currently utilized i.e. has no DC sensing voltage present. Thus in exemplary TABLE 1, assuming the digital player/recorder is in a replay mode and bus status is 0/0, signifying no signals are present on either bus conductor, replay data from digital player/recorder, for example D-VHS, is coupled to both conductors A and B.

10 If digital player/recorder 400 is controlled to assume a record mode the automated interface switch apparatus functions as follows. The control logic associated with the automated interface switch 102 determines the presence or absence of a data indicia on bus line A or B, as an indicator of data signal presence. Thus in TABLE 1, 15 bus status 1/0 indicates that a data signal is present on bus A and this data signal is connected to a recording input of the exemplary D-VHS digital recorder. Similarly, if the data signal indicia is present on bus B, the automated coupling connects the recording input to bus B.

20 An inventive aspect of the automated interface switch apparatus occurs when a record mode is selected for the digital player/recorder but data signals are not present on either bus A or B, i.e. bus status 0/0. A condition such as described may occur when the transmission of the specific program selected for recorded is delayed. Under this condition TABLE 1 indicates a WAIT or record paused 25 condition is applied to the recorder. The control logic associated with the automated interface switch may inhibit initiation of the user selected record mode until a data signal indicia is detected on either bus conductor. Detection of the data indicia Vs controls coupling of data to the recording input, and in addition, may enable initiation of the pre- 30 selected record mode. Thus, the advantageous control logic prevents the unnecessary consumption of recording media and ensures the desired program is recorded without the use of a separate control bus or IR blaster.

35 A third exemplary audio-video-data AVD bus system is illustrated in FIGURE 10. FIGURE 10 shows a simplified single pair daisy chained bus which couples between a digital recorder 400, IRD or DSS receiver 100 and display 110. Advantageous automated controllers C are coupled to interface switch apparatus 102 associated with a digital

recorder 400, for example, D-VHS and interface switch apparatus 101 associated with receiver 100 and display 110. TABLE 2 illustrates the automated functions of controller C of interface switch 101 associated with an exemplary DSSTM receiver 100 and an exemplary data signal source digital recorder/player 400, for example, D-VHS. The receiver mode is determined by user command, for example by manual switch operation, not shown or IR remote control. The receiver may be controlled to output data to or receive data from the single pair bus A. Control logic associated with the interface switch apparatus and digital recorder determine the user desired mode and establish connection between bus conductor A and the appropriate input or output terminal of receiver 100.

TABLE 2. RECEIVER AUTO SWITCHING MATRIX

RECEIVER MODE	STATUS OF BUS A	
	0	1
OUTPUT RECEIVED DATA	OUT->A	OUT->IN
DATA INPUT (REPLAYED DATA)	OUT->A	OUT->A
OFF	OPEN	OPEN

Operation of the automated interface switch apparatus is as follows. For example, the user determines that the receiver will receive and output a specific program data stream. The control logic associated with the automated interface switch 101, of receiver, 100 determines the presence or absence of a data signal indicia, for example the DC sensing voltage V_s , on bus line A. An absence of indicia on bus line A indicates that digital recorder/player 400 is not outputting data and consequently bus line A is available for transmission of receiver 100 output data. The receiver output data is also coupled to the receiver decoder input for decoding and coupling for display. When the user initiates a replay mode, controller 410 generates a play command for recorder/player 400 and in addition enables generation of data indicia V_s . Indicia V_s is added symmetrically to the replay data stream which is coupled, for example, to the automated interface switch 102. Indicia detectors, for example, 401/2/3/4 of FIGURE 8 or 401/3 of FIGURE 10 determine the absence of an indicia V_s on, for example bus line pair A, and enable coupling of the data stream and indicia to bus pair A.

Interface switch apparatus 101 within receiver 100 detects the indicia voltage V_s and enables coupling of the replay data for decoding by IRD 100 and display in monitor 110. Thus the simple, single pair bus may provide automated coupling between two sources and a monitoring
5 input without the use of a control bus conductor.



CLAIMS

- 1 1. A signal processing apparatus (Δt) for processing a
2 packetized data stream (SP) subjected to timing perturbations (Δt), said
3 data stream (SP) comprising a plurality of superpackets, each of said
4 superpackets having a transport packet (TD) and a timestamp (TS), said
5 timestamps (TS) being indicative of a relationship in time between said
6 superpackets (SP) and a reference prior to said timing perturbations
7 (Δt), characterized by said apparatus comprising:
8 means (102) for receiving said superpackets from said
9 perturbed packetized data stream ($SP \pm \Delta t$);
10 means (51) coupled to said receiving means (102) for
11 storing said superpackets (SP);
12 means (52) for reading respective timestamps (TS) from
13 each of said received superpackets ($SP \pm \Delta t$);
14 a counter (53); and,
15 means (55) coupled to said reading means (57) and to said
16 counter (53) for generating a control signal (EN) indicating each
17 coincidence between successive ones of said timestamps (TS) from said
18 received superpackets ($SP \pm \Delta t$) and a count (CTR) of said counter (53),
19 said control signal (EN) initiating reading of said superpackets (SP)
20 from said storing means (51).
- 1 2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said counter (53) is
2 coupled to count an oscillator signal (CK).
- 1 3. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said oscillator (54) is
2 free running.
- 1 4. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein said oscillator signal
2 CK) is coupled to said storing means (51) for reading said superpackets
3 (SP) therefrom.



1 5. An apparatus for reproducing a recorded signal from a
2 recording medium (405), said recorded signal being representative of a
3 plurality of superpackets (SP), each of said superpackets (SP) having a
4 transport packet (TP) and a timestamp (TS), said timestamps (TS) being
5 indicative of time intervals between corresponding parts of
6 superpackets (SP) in a data stream prior to being recorded, said
7 apparatus comprising:
8 a transducer (406) operable with said recording medium
9 (405) and generating a transduced signal (407) representative of said
10 recorded signal;
11 means (27) for recovering said superpackets (SP) from said
12 transduced signal (407); and,
13 means (450) for generating an output signal (402) of said
14 recovered superpackets (SP) in which said time intervals have been
15 restored.

1 6. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein said output signal
2 generating means (450) comprises:
3 means (453) for storing said recovered superpackets (401);
4 means (452) for reading respective timestamps (TS) from
5 each of said recovered superpackets (401);
6 a counter (36); and,
7 means (451) coupled to said reading means (452) and to
8 said counter (36) for generating a control signal (EN) indicating
9 coincidence between successive ones of said timestamps (TS) from said
10 recovered superpackets (401) and a count of said counter (36), said
11 control signal (EN) initiating reading of said superpackets (SP) from said
12 storing means (453), said superpackets (SP) being separated by said
13 time intervals.



1 7. An apparatus for reproducing a recorded signal from a
2 recording medium (405), said recorded signal being representative of a
3 packetized signal having a plurality of superpackets (SP), each of said
4 superpackets (SP) having a transport packet (TP) and a timestamp (TS),
5 said timestamps (TS) being indicative of gaps between corresponding
6 parts of said superpackets (SP) in a data stream prior to being recorded,
7 said apparatus comprising:

8 a transducer (406) operable with said recording medium
9 (405) and generating a transduced signal (407) representative of said
10 recorded signal;

11 means (27) for recovering said superpackets from said
12 transduced signal (407);

13 means (452) for reading respective timestamps (TS) from
14 each of said recovered superpackets (401);

15 means (453) for storing said recovered superpackets (401);

16 a source of a clock signal (37);

17 a counter (36) coupled to said clock signal (37) for counting;

18 and,

19 means (451) coupled to said reading means (452) and to
20 said counter (36) for generating a control signal (EN) indicating each
21 coincidence between successive one of said separated timestamps (TS)
22 and a count of said counter (36), said control signal (EN) initiating
23 reading of said superpackets (SP) from said storing means (453).

1 8. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein a signal from said
2 oscillator (37) is coupled to said storing means (453) for reading said
3 superpackets (SP) therefrom.

1 9. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein said superpackets (SP)
2 are read from said storing means (453) intermittently with gaps there
3 between of variable duration.

1 10. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein said storing means
2 (453) is clocked by a signal (CK) from said oscillator (37) to restore said
3 superpackets (SP) to a time sequence existing prior to recording on said
4 medium (405).



1 11. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein said superpackets
2 (SP) are read from said storing means (453) to restore gaps between
3 ones of said plurality of superpackets (SP), said gaps being
4 substantially similar to gaps between said ones of said plurality of
5 superpackets (SP) established during superpacket formation.

1 12. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein said oscillator (37) is
2 free running.

1 13. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein each of said
2 superpackets (SP) has a playback rate code (PB2) for determining a
3 reproduction speed which differs from a speed at which said recorded
4 signal was recorded.

1 14. A recording medium (405) having recorded thereon an
2 MPEG like signal transport packets (TP) being included in superpackets
3 (SP), said superpackets (SP) including timestamps (TS) representing
4 intervals between successive superpackets (SP) existing prior to
5 recording on said medium (405), said timestamps (TS) being suitable
6 for controlling a reproduction apparatus (400) to restore said intervals
7 between said superpackets (SP).

1 15. The recording medium (405) of claim 14 wherein said
2 timestamps (TS) control initiation of reading said superpackets (SP)
3 from said reproduction apparatus (400).

1 16. The recording medium (405) of claim 14 wherein said
2 timestamps (TS) control initiation of reading said transport packets
3 (TP) from said reproduction apparatus (400).

1 17. The recording medium (405) of claim 14 wherein said
2 timestamps (TS) control initiation of clocking by said reproduction
3 apparatus (400) to restore said superpackets (SP) to a time sequence
4 existing prior to recording on said medium (405).

1 18. The recording medium of claim 14 wherein said
2 timestamps (TS) control said reproduction apparatus (400) to restore an



3 intermittent occurrence of said superpackets (SP) existing prior to
4 recording on said medium (405).

1 19. A recording medium (405) having recorded thereon an
2 MPEG like signal transport packets (TP) being included in superpackets
3 (SP), each of said superpackets (SP) including a timestamp (TS) and
4 playback rate code (PB), said playback rate code (PB) representing a
5 reproducing speed for said MPEG like signal, and being suitable for
6 determining a reproducing speed of a reproduction apparatus (400)
7 which differs from a speed at which said MPEG like signal was recorded.