ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In a television system including closed caption circuitry (145) for receiving and decoding closed caption data, a controller (110) continually monitors the closed caption circuitry for an indication of the presence of any of a plurality of predetermined valid closed caption data codes. Every time any of the predetermined valid closed caption data codes is detected, a timer (118) is reset to begin timing a predetermined time interval, and an on-screen display (140) indicating that closed caption data are available is enabled. If a subsequent one of the predetermined valid closed caption data codes is not detected before the expiration of the time interval, then the on-screen display indicating that closed caption data are available is disabled. In another embodiment of the invention, a lamp is illuminated to indicate the availability of useful closed-caption data.

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