CLAIMS

1. A playback management device for use with a receiver for receiving a content signal encoded by a key updated in a fixed update period and first control information obtained by encoding information about the key and a playable time for the encoded content signal, wherein the playback management device comprises:

a memory portion for storing the fixed update period in advance;

an interface for collecting the first control information from the receiver;

a first decoding portion for decoding the first control information and thereby restoring the key and the playable time for the encoded content signal, wherein the playable time is a time period for which the encoded content signal is played without a contract of playing the encoded content signal; and

a control portion for determining, according to the playable time for the encoded content signal and the fixed update period stored in the memory portion, whether to output the key to the receiver, and outputting the restored key to the receiver when determining to output, wherein the control portion outputs the key for a number of times corresponding to a ratio of the playable time to the fixed update period.

2. The playback management device of claim 1, wherein a security of the playback management device is higher than a security of the receiver.

3. The playback management device of claim 1, wherein the playback management device is an IC chip or an IC card inserted into the receiver.

4. A content receiving system, comprising:

the playback management device of claim 1; and

a receiver for receiving the encoded content signal and the first control information;

wherein when the receiver forwards the first control information to the playback management device and collects the key from the playback management device, the receiver uses the key to decode the encoded content signal.

5. A playback management method, comprising steps performed by a playback management device for use with a receiver, the receiver being adapted to receive a content signal encoded by a key updated in a fixed update period and first control information obtained by encoding information about the key and a playable time for the encoded content signal, the playback management method comprising the steps of:

collecting the first control information from the receiver;

decoding the first control information and restoring information about the key and the playable time for the encoded content signal, wherein the playable time is a time period for which the encoded content signal is played without a contract of playing the encoded content signal;

determining, by a control portion according to the playable time for the encoded content signal and the fixed update period stored in a memory portion of the playback management device, whether to output the key to the receiver; and

outputting the restored key to the receiver when determining to output,

wherein the control portion outputs the key for a number of times corresponding to a ratio of the playable time to the fixed update period.