CLAIMS

1. A general power outlet system comprising:

a general power outlet (GPO), comprising:

at least one socket;

a power module for supplying electrical power to each of the at least one socket;

a control module for controlling the power supply state of each of the at least one socket by controlling the power module, comprising a controller communications module for receiving a switching signal from a remote switch module, wherein the control module switches the power supply state in response to the received switching signal;

a housing wherein the housing is adapted to allow removable attachment of the remote switch module to the housing,

an attachment detection module for detecting attachment of the remote switch module to the GPO, wherein the attachment detection module comprises a sensor which detects physical attachment of the remote switch module to the GPO and generates an attachment signal which indicates to the control module that the remote control module is attached to the GPO and is used by the control module to control or inhibit switching of the power supply state, wherein in a remote control mode the control module only switches the power supply state when the remote switch module is detected as being attached to the GPO; and

the remote switch module, comprising:

a removable attachment module for removable attachment to the GPO;

at least one switch actuator;

a power supply module; and

a remote communications module, comprising a transmitter for transmitting the switching signal to the control module in the general power outlet to cause switching of the power state of at least one of the at least one socket in response to actuation of one of the at least one switch actuators.

2. The system as claimed in claim 1 , wherein the controller communications module and the remote communications module communicate using a radio frequency protocol.

3. The system as claimed in claim 2, wherein the protocol is the Zigbee protocol.

4. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the power supply module of the remote switch module comprises a battery.

5. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1, 2 or 3, wherein the power supply module of the remote switch module comprises a receiver for wirelessly receiving a power signal transmitted by the GPO and the power module of the general power outlet wirelessly provides power to the power supply module in the remote switch module for powering the remote switch module.

6. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the control module further comprises a manual to remote switch for the at least one socket for switching the control module between a manual mode and a remote control mode and in the manual mode the power supply state to the at least one socket is configured to be either in an on state or an off state when the remote control module is detected as not being attached to the GPO and when the remote control module is detected as attached the control module switches allows switching of the power supply state, and when in the remote control mode the control module only switches the power supply state when the remote switch module is detected as being attached to the general power outlet.

7. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the GPO comprises a plurality of sockets, and the remote switch module may be attached to the GPO in a plurality of attachment locations, and each attachment location is associated with one or more sockets, and the attachment detection module detects the attachment location, and the control module only allows the remote switch module to control switching of the one or more sockets associated with the current attachment location.

8. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the remote switch module further comprises a housing that is constructed to match the thickness and shape of the GPO around an attachment location so that when the remote switch module is attached to the GPO the system has a flush appearance.

9. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the remote switch module further comprises at least one indicator for indicating the power supply state of at least one socket and the controller communications module transmits the state of at least one socket to the remote switch module.

10. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein the remote switch module further comprises an indicator for indicating the power status of the remote switch module.

11. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 10, wherein the control module further comprises a security module for verifying that the remote switch module is authorised to control the at least one socket of the GPO, and the remote switch module stores one or more authorisation keys that are used to verify that the remote switch module is authorised to control at least one socket of a GPO.

12. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the removable attachment module is configured to attach the remote switch module to at least one side of the GPO.

13. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the removable attachment module is configured to clip the remote switch module onto the GPO.

14. The system as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the removable attachment module is configured to magnetically attach the remote switch module to the GPO.

15. A general power outlet (GPO) comprising:

at least one socket;

a power module for supplying electrical power to each of the at least one socket;

a control module for controlling the power supply state of each of the at least one socket, comprising a controller communications module for receiving a switching signal from a remote switch module, wherein the control module switches the power supply state in response to the received switching signal;

a housing wherein the housing is adapted to allow removable attachment of the remote switch module to the housing,

an attachment detection module for detecting attachment of the remote switch module to the GPO, wherein the attachment detection module comprises a sensor which detects physical attachment of the remote switch module to the GPO and generates an attachment signal which indicates to the control module that the remote control module is attached to the GPO and is used by the control module to control or inhibit switching of the power supply state, wherein in a remote control mode the control module only switches the power supply state when the remote switch module is detected as being attached to the GPO.

16. The GPO as claimed in claim 15, wherein the controller communications module communicates with the remote switch module using a radio frequency protocol.

17. The GPO as claimed in claim 16, wherein the protocol is the Zigbee protocol.

18. The GPO as claimed in claim 15, 16 or 17, wherein the power module wirelessly provides power to the remote switch module.

19. The GPO as claimed in any one of claims 15 to 18, wherein the control module further comprises a manual to remote switch for the at least one socket for switching the control module between a manual mode and a remote control mode and in the manual mode the power supply state to the at least one socket is configured to be either in an on state or an off state when the remote control module is detected as not

being attached to the GPO and when the remote control module is detected as attached the control module switches allows switching of the power supply state, and when in the remote control mode the control module only switches the power supply state when the remote switch module is detected as being attached to the GPO.

20. The GPO as claimed in any one of claims 15 to 19, wherein the GPO comprises a plurality of sockets, and the remote switch module may be attached to the GPO in a plurality of attachment locations, and each attachment location is associated with one or more sockets, and the attachment detection module detects the attachment location, and the control module only allows the remote switch module to control switching of the one or more sockets associated with the current attachment location.

21. The GPO as claimed in any one of claims 15 to 20, wherein the control module further comprises a security module for verifying that the remote switch module is authorised to control the at least one socket of the GPO.

22. A remote switch module when used in the system of any one of claims 1 to 14 , comprising:

a removable attachment module for removable attachment to the GPO;

at least one switch actuator;

a power supply module; and

a communications module, comprising a transmitter for transmitting a switching signal to a control module in the general power outlet to cause switching of the power state of at least one of the at least one socket in response to actuation of one of the at least one switch actuators.