

DESCRIPTION
WATCHING SYSTEM

Technical Field

5 [0001]

The present invention relates to a watching system for watching a person to be watched, such as a senior citizen.

Background Art

[0002]

10 Recently, the number of solitary senior citizens and the number of senior citizens who care for their parents, have increased due to nuclear families, a low birthrate and longevity. This caused a large problem of dying alone of senior citizens.

[0003]

15 Based on this background, a service has been known in which a visit staff regularly visits a dwelling of a senior citizen, ascertains the personal safety, and reports the result to a family in a distance place.

[0004]

20 JP-A 2003-162780 discloses a safety information management system that collects safety information on an individual person from a terminal possessed by the individual person, and collects site information from a terminal of the person whose safety cannot be ascertained.

25 [0005]

In a case where a visit staff visits a dwelling of a senior citizen to ascertain the safety, conventionally, when visiting the dwelling of a senior citizen, for example, the visit staff confirms the state of the senior citizen's health, and makes a report.

30 However, the visit staff grasps only the state of the senior citizen at the time of the visit. The visit staff only relies on information extracted from the senior citizen, for example, in terms of the life activities and the state of health of the senior citizen between the previous visit and this visit. Accordingly, the visit staff depends
35 on a memory of the senior citizen. The memory may lack in credibility. In a case where the senior citizen has contracted any

disease, the visit staff may not perceive a change of the state of the disease.

[0006]

5 The present invention has been made to provide a watching system capable of further carefully watching a person to be watched, such as a senior citizen or a handicapped person.

[0007]

10 In order to solve the above problems, according to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a watching system including: an information input card to store answer information personally input by a person to be watched with respect to a predetermined question item, in association with information on time at which an answer has been given; a portable information terminal to perform close range wireless
15 communication with the information input card, collect the information stored in the information input card, and store information that a visitor who has met the person to be watched has acquired by directly meeting the person to be watched, in association with identification information of the person to be
20 watched; and an information management device to read and manage the information stored in the portable information terminal, in association with the identification information of the person to be watched.

[0008]

25 The portable information terminal may include: an identification information register to register the identification information of the person to be watched; a registration determining unit to determine whether the identification information transmitted from the information input card by the
30 close range wireless communication is registered in the identification information register; an information collecting unit to collect the information stored in the information input card when the registration determining unit determines to be registered; a collected information storage to store the
35 information collected by the information collecting unit in association with the identification information of the person to be

watched; an information input unit to input the information that the visitor has acquired by directly meeting the person to be watched; and a meeting information storage to store the information input by the information input unit, in association with the identification information of the person to be watched.
[0009]

The visitor regularly visits a dwelling of the person to be watched, collects the information in the information input card by the portable information terminal at the dwelling, and stores in the portable information terminal the information acquired by directly meeting the person to be watched in association with the identification information of the person to be watched.
[0010]

According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a watching system including: an information input card to store answer information that a person to be watched personally operates and inputs with respect to a predetermined question item, in association with information on time at which an answer has been given; and an information management device to perform close range wireless communication with the information input card, collect the information stored in the information input card, and store information that a visitor who has met the person to be watched has acquired by directly meeting the person to be watched in association with identification information of the person to be watched.
[0011]

The person to be watched regularly goes to a designated place to meet the visitor, and the visitor stores the information in the information input card and the information acquired by directly meeting the person to be watched, in the information management device at the designated place.
[0012]

The information input card may include: a wireless communication unit to perform the close range wireless communication with the portable information terminal; a plurality of buttons with which the person to be watched inputs the answer

with respect to the question item; and an in-card storage to store operation information of the plurality of buttons in association with the information on time at which the plurality of buttons has been operated.

5 [0013]

The plurality of buttons may include a cancel button to instruct cancellation of press operation of an arbitrary button operated by the person to be watched just before, and the in-card storage stores information on the effect that press information of the button pressed just before the cancel button has been pressed is cancelled when the cancel button is pressed.

[0014]

The information management device may transmit at least part of information on the person to be watched, to a close relative of the individual person to be watched, based on the information stored in the portable information terminal and the information that the visitor has acquired by meeting the person to be watched.

[0015]

According to the present invention, a person to be watched, such as a senior citizen or a handicapped person, can be further carefully watched. For example, a change of the state of health of the person to be watched can be further correctly grasped. In addition, according to the present invention, time during which a visitor has held a hearing with respect to the person to be watched, can be shortened.

Brief Description of Drawings

[0016]

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a schematic configuration of a watching system 1 according to a first embodiment.

FIG. 2 is a view of an external appearance of an information input card 2 according to the first embodiment.

FIG. 3 is a block diagram of an exemplary internal configuration of a communication module 11.

FIG. 4 is a block diagram of an exemplary internal configuration of an ASIC 12.

FIG. 5 is a block diagram of an exemplary internal configuration of a portable information terminal 3.

FIG. 6 is a view of an exemplary display screen of the portable information terminal 3.

5 FIG. 7 is a flow chart of an example of processing processes of the portable information terminal 3 when a visit staff visits a dwelling of a person to be watched.

Description of Embodiments

10 [0017]

Embodiments of the present invention will be described in detail below.

[0018]

(First Embodiment)

15 FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a schematic configuration of a watching system 1 according to a first embodiment. The watching system 1 in FIG. 1 includes an information input card 2 possessed by a person to be watched, such as a senior citizen or a handicapped person, a portable information terminal 3
20 possessed by a visit staff (visitor) who regularly visits a dwelling of the person to be watched, an information management device 4 that manages information stored in the portable information terminal 3, and a communication device 5 possessed by, for example, a family of the person to be watched.

25 [0019]

FIG. 2 is a view of an external appearance of the information input card 2 according to the first embodiment. The information input card 2 in FIG. 2 is a sheet member including paper, resin, or plastic, and is a foldable type. When the card 2 is
30 spread, an information input surface 2 appears as illustrated in FIG. 2.

[0020]

The information input card 2 in FIG. 2 is to be possessed by each of persons to be watched. Note that, all the persons to be
35 watched do not necessarily possess the information input card 2 with the same contents. For example, an individual information

input card 2 may be prepared for every person to be watched having a special disease or a special symptom. Alternatively, an individual information input card 2 may be prepared for every age group or gender.

5 [0021]

The information input surface of the information input card 2 in FIG. 2 has a three-surface configuration including a first surface 2a, a second surface 2b, and a third surface 2c. Folds 2d are formed on boundaries of the respective surfaces. The
10 respective surfaces are folded by these folds 2d and can be overlapped so as to include three layers. Therefore, it is easy to carry the information input card 2.

[0022]

A start button b1 and a cancel button b2 are disposed on
15 the first surface 2a. Question items related to life activities of the person to be watched and buttons for answering the respective question items are disposed on the second surface 2b and the third surface 2c. More specifically, three buttons b3 to b5 for morning-waking, three buttons b6 to b14 for each of meals
20 of morning, noon, and evening, two buttons b15 and b16 for fluid intake, are disposed on the second surface 2b. One button b17 for exercise (outdoors), two buttons b18 and b19 for drinking, three buttons b20 to b22 for defecation, three buttons b23 to b25 for urination, three buttons b26 to b28 for today's mood, are
25 disposed on the third surface.

[0023]

Note that, types of buttons and the number of buttons are arbitrary for question items to be disposed on the information input surface. As described above, an individual information
30 input surface with different question items may be prepared for every individual person to be watched or every group including some persons to be watched.

[0024]

The information input card 2 is possessed by a person to be
35 watched. The person to be watched presses a relevant button for each of all the question items described on the second surface 2b

and the third surface during time previously set or at predetermined time intervals.

[0025]

A visit staff regularly visits the person to be watched.
5 Upon the visit to a dwelling of the person to be watched, the visit staff certainly carries the portable information terminal 3. The visit staff collects, into the portable information terminal 3, information recorded in the information input card 2 of the person to be watched, at the dwelling of the person to be watched.
10 Information acquired by directly meeting the person to be watched, is input into the portable information terminal 3. As described later, information transmission from the information input card 2 to the portable information terminal 3 is performed, for example, by close range wireless communication.

15 [0026]

When completing the collection of the information and the input of the information acquired by the meeting, into the portable information terminal 3, the visit staff transmits these pieces of information to the information management device 4. The
20 information management device 4 manages the pieces of information collected and input into the portable information terminal 3 in association with the individual person to be watched.

[0027]

As necessary, the information management device 4
25 transmits at least a part of the pieces of information collected and input into the portable information terminal 3 by the visit staff, to the communication device 5 possessed by, for example, a family of the person to be watched. Note that, in response to a request of, for example, the family of the person to be watched, at least a
30 part of the pieces of information collected and input into the portable information terminal 3 by the visit staff may be sent by a physical means, such as a mail service.

[0028]

The communication device 5 possessed by, for example,
35 the family of the person to be watched is an electronic device having a communication function. Examples of the

communication device 5 include a general-purpose PC, a tablet, a smartphone, or a mobile phone.

[0029]

5 A flat-board-shaped communication module is mounted inside the information input card 2. The communication module includes a plurality of pads. The plurality of pads are coupled to a plurality of terminal pads printed on the sheet member using a conductive ink.

[0030]

10 FIG. 3 is a block diagram of an exemplary internal configuration of the communication module 11. The communication module 11 in FIG. 3 includes an ASIC 12, a quartz oscillator 13, a button cell 14, and a speaker 15. These components are covered with, for example, resin so as to be
15 flat-board-shaped.

[0031]

FIG. 4 is a block diagram of an exemplary internal configuration of the ASIC 12. The ASIC 12 in FIG. 4 includes a wireless communication unit (wireless communication circuitry)
20 21, a storage (in-card storage) 22, a controller 23, and a clock generating unit (clock generating circuitry) 24. The wireless communication unit 21 performs the close range wireless communication with the portable information terminal 3. The storage 22 stores operation information of the plurality of buttons
25 by the person to be watched, in association with information on time at which the plurality of buttons has been operated. The controller 23 performs ascertainment of whether the plurality of buttons has been pressed, and storage control to the storage 22. The clock generating unit 24 generates a clock signal based on a
30 reference oscillation signal from the quartz oscillator 13. Each of the wireless communication unit 21 and the controller 23 synchronizes with the clock signal, and performs processing.

[0032]

The button cell 14 supplies electric power to the ASIC 12,
35 the quartz oscillator 13, and the speaker 15. Note that, in a case where electric power of initial power receiving of a radio wave can

be stored in the communication module 11 or an external large-capacity capacitor and also in a case where the close range wireless communication with the portable state terminal can be performed and reading-and-writing can be performed with respect to the storage 22 using the stored electric power, the button cell 14 may be omitted.

[0033]

Each of the plurality of buttons disposed on the information input surface includes a contact portion disposed on the other side of each of the plurality of buttons, and a contact conductive portion, paired with the contact portion, to be conducted at the contact portion. When the person to be watched presses any of the buttons, a corresponding contact portion comes in contact with a contact conductive portion paired with the corresponding contact portion.

[0034]

An individual contact conductive portion paired with a contact of each of the buttons has been coupled to a conductive pattern. The conductive pattern extends to a corresponding terminal pad. The individual terminal pad has been coupled to a corresponding pad 16 of the communication module 11. The contact, the contact conductive portion, the conductive pattern, and the terminal pad are printed on a surface of the sheet member using, for example, a conductive ink. When a contact of any of the buttons comes in contact with a corresponding contact conductive portion paired with the contact, an electric current flows into a corresponding conductive pattern. The controller 23 in the communication module 11 recognizes that the corresponding button has been pressed.

[0035]

The speaker 15 is used for performing voice output of an alarm or an automatic voice signal for voice guidance. Note that the speaker 15 is not essential and may be omitted.

[0036]

The person to be watched performs button operations in order to answer all the question items described on the second

surface 2b and the third surface 2c in the information input surface. The button operations are periodically repeated. More specifically, the person to be watched presses the start button b1 on the first surface before starting the button operations with
5 respect to the question items. After that, the button operations are successively performed for all the question items described on the second surface 2b and the third surface. Position information and the information on time of a button pressed by the person to be watched, are stored in the storage 22 in the communication
10 module 11 through a contact, a contact conductive portion, and a conductive pattern.

[0037]

In a case where the person to be watched makes an mistake of the button operations, by pressing the cancel button b2
15 on the first surface, it is possible to cancel the operation information of a button that has been pressed just before the cancel button b24 is pressed. More specifically, when being recognized that the cancel button b2 has been pressed, the controller 23 erases operation information of the button that has
20 been pressed just before, from the storage 22. Alternatively, the storage 22 stores information on the effect that the operation information of the button that has been pressed just before the operation of the cancel button b2 is invalid.

[0038]

25 When visiting the dwelling of the person to be watched, the visit staff forwards the information stored in the storage 22 in the information input card 2 of the person to be watched, to the portable information terminal 3 of the visit staff by the close range wireless communication. The close range wireless
30 communication is not limited to a specific means, such as near field communication (NFC) or Bluetooth (registered trademark). A wireless band of the radio wave is also not particularly limited. For example, the wireless communication is performed by a wireless method conforming to ISO14443, in a band of 13.56 MHz.

35 [0039]

FIG. 5 is a block diagram of an exemplary internal

configuration of the portable information terminal 3. The portable information terminal 3 in FIG. 5 includes a wireless communication unit (wireless communication circuitry) 30, an identification information register 31, a registration determining unit (registration determining circuitry) 32, an information collecting unit (information collecting circuitry) 33, a collected information storage 34, an information input unit (information input circuitry) 35, a meeting information storage 36, and a display 37.

10 [0040]

The wireless communication unit 30 performs the close range wireless communication with the information input card. The identification information register 31 registers identification information of the person to be watched. The identification information to be registered is transmitted from the information management device 4 by, for example, a wired LAN, a wireless LAN, or cellular communication.

[0041]

The registration determining unit 32 determines whether the identification information transmitted from the information input card 2 by the close range wireless communication has been registered in the identification information register 31. The information collecting unit 33 collects the information stored in the information input card 2 when the registration determining unit 32 determines that the registration has been done.

[0042]

The collected information storage 34 stores the information collected by the information collecting unit 33 in association with the identification information of the person to be watched. The information input unit 35 inputs information that the visitor has acquired by directly meeting the person to be watched. The meeting information storage 36 stores the information input by the information input unit 35 in association with the identification information of the person to be watched.

35 [0043]

FIG. 6 is a view of an exemplary display screen of the

portable information terminal 3. A card-collection information section 41 for displaying information transmitted from the portable information terminal 3 by close range wireless communication, and a meeting information section 42 onto which
5 the visit staff inputs at the place while meeting the person to be watched, are disposed on the display screen of the portable information terminal 3. The card-collection section and the meeting information section 42 may be separately displayed on different screens. The card-collection information section 41
10 displays button operation information of all the buttons for the life activities every date at which the person to be watched has performed information input. The button operation information displayed on the card-collection information section 41 is button operation information that has been input into the information
15 input card 2 by the person to be watched since the previous visit until this visit of the visit staff.

[0044]

The button operation information stored in the storage 22 in the information input card 2 may be erased in response to an
20 instruction of the controller 23 after being forwarded to the portable information terminal 3. In a case where there is no function for erasing the button operation information in the storage 22, the controller 23 writes forwarding-completion information indicating to what extent button operation
25 information has been forwarded to the portable information terminal 3, in the storage 22. When the button operation information is next forwarded to the portable information terminal 3, the forwarding-completion information is searched and duplicate button operation information is preferably prevented
30 from being forwarded to the portable information terminal 3.

[0045]

The meeting information section 42 is a section into which the visit staff inputs with an input key and a selection button of the portable information terminal 3. Information to be input into the
35 section is not particularly limited. For example, the visit staff may prepare a kind of questionnaire in advance, and performs a

hearing to the person to be watched in order of description on the questionnaire. Alternatively, anything that the visit staff feels from an appearance and a tone of voice of the person to be watched, may be written in the meeting information section 42.

5 [0046]

In addition, a remaining battery level of the information input card 2 may be displayed on the display screen of the portable information terminal 3. In order to reduce a member cost by simplifying a structure as much as possible, the information input card 2 is assumed to be disposable. Replacement and a recharge of the cell 14 are not assumed. Therefore, when the remaining battery level decreases, a message that encourages replacement of the portable information terminal 3, may be automatically displayed on the portable information terminal 3. Note that, the portable information terminal 3 cannot directly ascertain the remaining battery level of the information input card 2. Thus, the portable information terminal 3 stores a date at which the information input card 2 has been first used, and determines whether replacement time of the portable information terminal 3 has approached.

[0047]

FIG. 7 is a flow chart of an example of processing processes of the portable information terminal 3 when the visit staff visits the dwelling of the person to be watched.

25 [0048]

First, the portable information terminal 3 establishes a connection by the close range wireless communication by holding up the information input card 2 of the person to be watched (Step S1).

30 [0049]

Once the connection has been established, next, an ID of the information input card 2 of the person to be watched is acquired (Step S2). In order to prevent personal information from being leaked out, only the ID of the person to be watched is stored and other personal information is not preferably stored in the portable information terminal 3.

[0050]

Next, the ID that has been acquired at Step S2 and the ID that has been previously stored in the portable information terminal 3 are compared. Authentication of whether both of the
5 IDs correspond to each other, is performed (Step S3). As described above, the portable information terminal 3 performs the authentication with only the IDs and does not store the other personal information of the person to be watched. Therefore, the personal information can be prevented from being leaked out.

10 [0051]

In a case where the authentication has not succeeded, the processing is completed. In a case where the authentication has succeeded (Step S4), the button operation information stored in the storage 22 of the information input card 2 is read and collected
15 in the portable information terminal 3 (Step S5).

[0052]

Next, the button operation information that has been collected is displayed on the card-collection information section 41 illustrated in FIG. 6 (Step S6). Next, information input by the
20 visit staff using the input key and the selection button of the portable information terminal 3, is displayed on the meeting information section 42 illustrated in FIG. 6 (Step S7).

[0053]

When having completed the information collection into the card-collection information section 41 and the information input into the meeting information section 42 illustrated in FIG. 6, the visit staff completes the visit to the person to be watched. After that, the visit staff may subsequently visit another person to be watched. In this case, the portable information terminal 3 is
30 previously made to store all IDs of persons to be watched, who are scheduled to be visited. The processing in FIG. 7 is performed to each of the persons to be watched. Thus, information of each of the persons to be watched can be distinguished and stored based on the IDs.

35 [0054]

For example, when having completed a day's amount of

information input into the portable information terminal 3, the visit staff performs processing for forwarding the information input in the day to the information management device 4. The close range wireless communication may be used for the forwarding. Alternatively, other communication methods (for example, wired communication using a USB terminal or a LAN terminal, or wireless communication using, for example, a wireless LAN, infrared communication, or cellular communication) may be used.

10 [0055]

The information management device 4 is, for example, a server and includes a large-capacity storage device for storing a large amount of information. The information management device 4 also manages personal information of all the persons to be watched. Accordingly, the information management device 4 operates under an OS with high security performance, such as a firewall.

[0056]

In response to a request of, for example, a family of an individual person to be watched, the information management device 4 can perform a service for providing, for example, the corresponding family of an individual person to be watched with at least part of the information that the visit staff has acquired during the visit. This service includes, for example, making information acquired during the visit understandable and sending the information by electronic mail, or reporting with the information acquired during the visit and sending the report by a physical means, such as a mail service, every time the visit staff visits. Alternatively, for example, the family of the person to be watched may access a special URL address. In a case where authentication of, for example, a password has succeeded, the information acquired by the visit staff during the visit may be made to be browsed on-line. In some cases, a photograph or video of, for example, an expression of the person to be watched captured by the visit staff may be provided to, for example, the family of the person to be watched.

[0057]

As described above, according to the first embodiment, the button operation information that the person to be watched regularly inputs into the information input card 2, is forwarded to the portable information terminal 3 possessed by the visit staff when the visit staff visits the dwelling of the person to be watched, and the visit staff inputs the information that the visit staff has acquired by, for example, the hearing with respect to the person to be watched, into the portable information terminal 3. Accordingly, the portable information terminal 3 stores the information that the visit staff has acquired at the point in time at which the visit staff has visited the person to be watched. The portable information terminal 3 also stores, for example, the life activities of the person to be watched since the previous visit until this visit. Therefore, the life activities and the state of health of the person to be watched can be further carefully grasped. Accordingly, in a case where the person to be watched has contracted any disease, the pieces of information can be used for the diagnosis. The person to be watched previously inputs a part of contents of a hearing to be held to the person to be watched by the visit staff, into the information input card 2. Thus, hearing time of the person to be watched by the visit staff can be shortened. A burden of the visit staff can be reduced.

[0058]

The information input card 2 that has been possessed by the person to be watched and in which the person to be watched performs button input, is formed of the sheet member that is easy to carry. The button input is easily performed without knowledge of OA equipment. Thus, there is no risk that a burden of the person to be watched increases.

[0059]

For example, in a case where the information input is regularly required to be performed into the information input card 2, when time to perform the information input comes, the speaker 15 of the information input card 2 is made to output a beep or a sound of automatic voice guidance for notifying the time.

Therefore, the person to be watched can be prevented from forgetting the input.

[0060]

As illustrated in FIG. 2, the cancel button b2 is disposed on
5 the information input card 2. Even when the person to be
watched makes a mistake of the button operation, by pressing the
cancel button b2, it is possible to cancel the button operation just
before. Thus, there is no need for giving a mental burden to the
person to be watched, it is possible to avoid the mental burden in
10 which the button operation must be performed correctly. Also,
the cancel button b2 can reduce the frequency of button operation
errors.

[0061]

The visit staff forwards the information stored in the
15 portable information terminal 3 in association with the ID of the
person to be watched, to the information management device 4.
The information management device 4 manages the personal
information of the person to be watched. Thus, the information
management device 4 can manage the button operation
20 information that the person to be watched personally has input
into the information input card 2 and the information that the visit
staff has acquired by, for example, the hearing with respect to the
person to be watched, in association with the individual person to
be watched. Therefore, at least part of the information stored in
25 the information management device 4 can be notified to, for
example, the family of the person to be watched as necessary.
The life activities and the state of health of the person to be
watched can be further carefully grasped even when, for example,
the family does not visit the person to be watched.

30 [0062]

Furthermore, the portable information terminal 3 has
recorded the information of a date and time at which the visit staff
has visited the dwelling of the person to be watched. Thus, it can
be ascertained that the visit staff has visited the dwelling of the
35 person to be watched at a predetermined date and time.

[0063]

If a biometric authentication system using, for example, fingerprints, is introduced into the portable information terminal 3, it is possible to securely prevent identity fraud of the person to be watched or the visit staff.

5 [0064]

(Second Embodiment)

According to the above first embodiment, an example in which the visit staff collects the information of the information input card 2 when visiting the dwelling of the person to be watched and also inputs the information acquired by the meeting, has been described. In a case where the person to be watched is not bedridden, the person to be watched may be urged to walk actively and to visit a place where communication with another person can be made, from a point of view of health maintenance of the person to be watched and giving the person to be watched a chance of communicating with the person.

[0065]

According to a second embodiment, a person to be watched is assumed to come to a predetermined place at a designated date and time. Note that, depending on a person to be watched, the legs and loins are sometimes handicapped although the head is fine. The person to be watched does not necessarily need to walk to the designated place and may go there using, for example, a wheelchair.

25 [0066]

Note that, according to the present embodiment, the person to be watched is required to bring his/her information input card 2 when going to the predetermined place,. A visitor who meets the person to be watched is present at the predetermined place. Button operation information in the information input card 2 of the person to be watched is forwarded to a portable information terminal 3 possessed by the visitor. In this case, the processes of the portable information terminal 3 is the same as in FIG. 7.

35 [0067]

Since a plurality of persons to be watched come to the

predetermined place at the designated date and time, an opportunity for communication between the plurality of persons to be watched can be provided. The visitor or a specialized staff may prepare, for example, a game for the communication
5 between the persons to be watched.

[0068]

Note that, according to the present embodiment, the visitor does not necessarily need to possess the portable information terminal 3.

10 In a case where an information management device 4 is disposed at the predetermined place, collection of the button operation information in the information input card 2 of the person to be watched and input of information acquired by meeting the person to be watched may be performed using the information
15 management device 4.

[0069]

As described above, according to the second embodiment, when the person to be watched has come to the predetermined place with the information input card 2, the visitor forwards the
20 information of the information input card 2 to the information management device 4 through or without the portable information terminal 3. In addition, the visitor inputs or forwards the information acquired by meeting the person to be watched at the place, to the information management device 4. Accordingly, the
25 information management device 4 can manage information on, for example, life activities and the state of health for every individual person to be watched. As necessary, the pieces of information can be sent to, for example, a family of the person to be watched.

[0070]

30 An aspect of the present invention is not limited to each of the embodiments described above and may include various modifications to be conceived by those skilled in the art. Advantageous effects of the present invention are also not limited to those described above. In other words, various additions,
35 alternations, and partial deletions may be made without departing from the scope of the conceptual idea and spirit of the present

invention derived from the contents specified in the claims and equivalents thereof.

CLAIMS

1. A watching system comprising:
 - an information input card to store answer information personally input by a person to be watched with respect to a predetermined question item, in association with information on time at which an answer has been given;
 - a portable information terminal to perform close range wireless communication with the information input card, collect the information stored in the information input card, and store information that a visitor who has met the person to be watched has acquired by directly meeting the person to be watched, in association with identification information of the person to be watched; and
 - an information management device to read and manage the information stored in the portable information terminal, in association with the identification information of the person to be watched.
2. The watching system according to claim 1,
 - wherein the portable information terminal comprises:
 - an identification information register to register the identification information of the person to be watched;
 - a registration determining unit to determine whether the identification information transmitted from the information input card by the close range wireless communication is registered in the identification information register;
 - an information collecting unit to collect the information stored in the information input card when the registration determining unit determines to be registered;
 - a collected information storage to store the information collected by the information collecting unit in association with the identification information of the person to be watched;
 - an information input unit to input the information that the visitor has acquired by directly meeting the person to be watched; and

a meeting information storage to store the information input by the information input unit, in association with the identification information of the person to be watched.

3. The watching system according to claim 1,
wherein the visitor regularly visits a dwelling of the person to be watched, collects the information in the information input card by the portable information terminal at the dwelling, and stores in the portable information terminal the information acquired by directly meeting the person to be watched in association with the identification information of the person to be watched.

4. A watching system comprising:
an information input card to store answer information that a person to be watched personally operates and inputs with respect to a predetermined question item, in association with information on time at which an answer has been given; and
an information management device to perform close range wireless communication with the information input card, collect the information stored in the information input card, and store information that a visitor who has met the person to be watched has acquired by directly meeting the person to be watched in association with identification information of the person to be watched.

5. The watching system according to claim 4,
wherein the person to be watched regularly goes to a designated place to meet the visitor, and
the visitor stores the information in the information input card and the information acquired by directly meeting the person to be watched, in the information management device at the designated place.

6. The watching system according to claim 1,
wherein the information input card comprises:

a wireless communication unit to perform the close range wireless communication with the portable information terminal;

a plurality of buttons with which the person to be watched inputs the answer with respect to the question item; and

an in-card storage to store operation information of the plurality of buttons in association with the information on time at which the plurality of buttons has been operated.

7. The watching system according to claim 6, wherein the plurality of buttons comprises a cancel button to instruct cancellation of press operation of an arbitrary button operated by the person to be watched just before, and

the in-card storage stores information on the effect that press information of the button pressed just before the cancel button has been pressed is cancelled when the cancel button is pressed.

8. The watching system according to claim 1,

wherein the information management device transmits at least part of information on the person to be watched, to a close relative of the individual person to be watched, based on the information stored in the portable information terminal and the information that the visitor has acquired by meeting the person to be watched.