

**A METHOD RELATING TO TELEPHONE COMMUNICATIONS THAT INCLUDE
THE TRANSMISSION OF ADVERTISING MESSAGES**

The present invention pertains to a method relating to
5 telecommunications systems in which a call connection is
setup between two subscribers and the call is billed to a
first subscriber and wherein advertisements are transmitted
during the course of the call.

10 Swedish Patent Nos. 9403793-4 and 9700334-7 teach a method of
forwarding and billing a telephone call wherein the telephone
of a first subscriber is connected to the telephone of a
second subscriber via a standard telephone network. The
standard telephone network may be either a fixed network or a
15 mobile telephone network.

According to these patent specifications, a call connection
is setup by virtue of the first subscriber dialling a
subscriber number, a prefix or the like, followed by a
20 subscriber number that leads to a third subscriber and then
dialling a subscriber number that leads to a second
subscriber. This procedure results in the setup of a
connection between the first and the second subscribers while
billing the third subscriber for the call between said first
25 and second subscribers.

The prefix or corresponding code causes the telephone network
to connect the call through the telephone network to a
network-connected computer unit associated with the third
30 subscriber. The prefix also causes the computer unit to
forward the call to the second subscriber via said computer
unit, so as to connect the first subscriber with the second

subscriber. According to the aforesaid patent specifications, the computer unit is caused to transmit advertisements at given time intervals during the duration of the call connection setup between the first and the second subscribers.

For instance, a chain of hamburger restaurants or a chain of gas stations may transmit during the course of the call connection advertisements relating to sales offers or ongoing marketing campaigns.

The computer unit is caused to collect advertising data from a database in a predetermined order and to transmit these advertisements on the ongoing call connection. Because information relating to the respective telephone numbers of the first and the second subscribers is found in the database, the computer unit is able to fetch advertisements that are local to respective areas or regions in which the two subscribers are located. The subscribers may also be categorised in another database, or in one and the same database, in which a profile of each calling subscriber that has a subscription agreement with the third subscriber is stored, as described in Swedish Patent Specification No. 9700096-2. The computer unit can also be caused to collect advertisements that suit the respective profiles of the subscriber concerned and send these advertisements to said subscriber.

In this case, the first subscriber is not billed for the call to the second subscriber on the understanding that a company or an organisation is able to advertise its activities to the first and the second subscribers.

The object of the present invention is to enable an advertiser to intensify promulgation of advertisements to those subscribers that can be thought to be interested in the goods or the services to which the advertisements refer.

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This object is achieved by the present invention.

The present invention thus pertains to a method relating to telecommunications wherein a call connection is setup between
10 two subscribers, wherein the call is billed to a third subscriber, wherein the first subscriber telephone is connected to a second subscriber telephone via a standard telephone network, wherein the first subscriber dials a subscriber number, preferably preceded by a prefix, that
15 leads to the third subscriber and then dials a subscriber number that leads to the second subscriber, wherein the telephone network is caused to connect the call to a telephone network connected computer unit that forwards the call to said second subscriber such as to connect said first
20 subscriber with said second subscriber, wherein the call between the first and the second subscribers is billed to the third subscriber, and wherein advertisements are sent on the call connection between the first and the second subscribers, said advertisements belonging to a company that wishes to
25 promote its services or products, hereinafter referred to as the advertiser, wherein the invention is characterized by causing at least one question to be sent to the first and/or the second subscriber in conjunction with the advertising message asking whether the subscribers concerned are
30 interested in establishing further contact with the advertiser, wherein in the computer unit is caused to sense any code or the like that might be entered by the subscriber

concerned in response to such a question,; and wherein the computer unit is caused to store at least the telephone number of the subscriber concerned or some other subscriber identifying information, at least when sensing a code that indicates that further contact is desired.

The invention will now be described in more detail, partially with reference to an exemplifying embodiment thereof and partly with reference to the accompanying drawing, where Figure 1 is a block schematic illustrating an arrangement of apparatus for carrying out the present invention.

Figure 1 illustrates an inventive arrangement for forwarding and billing a telephone call, where a first subscriber telephone 1 is connected to a second subscriber telephone 2 via a standard telephone network, generally designated 3.

The arrangement includes a third subscriber having a computer unit 4 that is connected to the telephone network 3. The computer unit 4 is adapted to sense a prefix dialled by a first consumer and followed by a subscriber number that leads to the third subscriber. The third subscriber may have a local telephone exchange 5 to which the computer unit 4 is connected. The telephone exchange 5 may be programmed to connect an incoming call to the computer unit when sensing the prefix. When sensing the prefix, the computer unit 4 functions to forward the call, via the telephone network, to a subscriber number that the first subscriber has dialled after said first-mentioned subscriber number and that leads to a second subscriber, so as to establish a call connection from the first subscriber to said second subscriber.

The telephone network 3 is also adapted to bill the cost of the call between the first and the second subscribers to the subscription of the third subscriber, when sensing said prefix. In this regard, either the full cost of the call may be billed to the third subscriber, or a part of the cost may be billed to the third subscriber and the remainder of the cost billed to the calling subscriber. Ideally, the prefix is sensed in a telephone exchange in a telephone station 6 belonging to the telephone network for billing purposes.

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Advertisements are sent simultaneously to the first and the second subscribers on the subscriber call connection at different time intervals.

15 In this regard, the computer unit 4 is connected to a database 7 that contains advertising messages.

The database 7, or another database, contains a number of advertising messages in the form of recordings on data media.

20 These advertising messages are ideally categorised in an appropriate order. For instance, the messages may be categorised in accordance with age, sex, income and housing district of respective subscribers.

25 In accordance with the present invention, at least one question is sent to the first and/or the second subscriber in respect of the advertising message, asking whether or not the subscribers concerned desire further contact with the advertiser, i.e. the company whose products or services are advertised. When the subscriber or subscribers concerned enter a code or the like in response to this question, the computer unit 4 is caused to sense the code. The computer

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unit is caused to at least store the telephone number of the subscriber concerned or some other subscriber identification information, at least when the computer unit senses a code that indicates that further contact is desired.

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According to one embodiment, the code is a code entered on the button pad of the subscriber's telephone. For instance, the subscriber will press one on his keypad when the answer to the question is Yes, and two when the answer is No.

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According to another method, the code is a voice message given by the subscriber, a so-called voice response. The subscriber will then, for instance, answer Yes or No to the aforesaid question. In this regard, the computer unit is
15 programmed to analyze the voice message and convert it to a digitalized signal.

Thus, when advertisements are transmitted whilst two subscribers are in conversation, the advertiser is able to
20 ask the subscribers concerned whether they wish to establish further contact with the advertiser, for instance by the advertiser making contact with the subscriber by telephone or by sending information material to the subscriber.

25 For instance, when the advertiser is a travel agency advertising cheap holidays in the Mediterranean area, the actual advertisement can be terminated with the following messages: If you would like to receive our catalogue, press 1 on your telephone keypad. If you would like us to contact you
30 by telephone, press 2 on your telephone keypad.

Naturally, the advertising messages sent to the two conversing subscribers may be different. Moreover, the advertising messages may be adapted to the subscriber concerned, as described in Swedish Patent Specification No. 5 9700096-2, wherewith the computer unit is coupled to a database that contains information concerning different subscribers.

10 After sensing the code and the telephone number of the subscriber concerned, the computer unit is caused to disclose at least the telephone number to the advertiser. This can be effected by sending via the telephone network those telephone numbers which have expressed an interest in establishing further contact with the advertiser.

15 However, the computer unit may send further information in addition to the telephone number, for instance. When the database contains subscriber information, this information can be sent to the advertiser. When the database of the 20 computer unit includes information relating to the addresses of different subscribers, the computer unit may, instead, produce a list of names and addresses and send this list to the advertiser.

25 The aforesaid further contact with the advertiser may, for instance, consist in the advertiser sending advertisement material to the subscriber concerned, or a personal visit from a representative of the advertising company. This latter approach may, for instance, be applicable with regard to 30 advertisements from insurance companies concerning insurance policies.

It may also be the case that the subscriber concerned wishes to be contacted by telephone. In this case, the advertiser is able to call the subscriber after having been informed by the computer unit of those subscribers who desire telephone contact.

According to one preferred embodiment, in the case of a subscriber who desires telephone contact, the computer unit is caused to setup a call connection between the subscriber and the advertiser at the end of an ongoing call.

It will be obvious from the foregoing, that the object of the invention is achieved with the present invention.

The aforesaid prefix may be the subscriber number of the third subscriber or some other number or a code that includes the star symbol or the square symbol. Both subscriber number and prefix may be numerical or alphanumerical or contain only letters.

The invention shall therefore not be considered to be limited to the aforescribed exemplifying embodiments thereof, since variations can be made within the scope of the following Claims.



CLAIMS

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1. A method relating to telecommunications, wherein a call connection is setup between two subscribers, wherein the call
5 is billed to a third subscriber, wherein a first subscriber telephone is connected to a second subscriber telephone via a standard telephone network, wherein the first subscriber dials a subscriber number, preferably preceded by a prefix, that leads to said third subscriber and dials a subscriber
10 number that leads to the second subscriber, wherein the telephone network is caused to connect the call to a computer unit (4) which is connected to the telephone network and which forwards the call to said second subscriber, such as to connect said first subscriber with said second subscriber,
15 wherein the call between the first and the second subscriber is billed to the third subscriber, and wherein an advertisement is sent on the call connection established between the first and the second subscriber, and wherein a company wishing to promote its products or services is the
20 advertiser, characterized by causing at least one question to be sent to the first and/or the second subscriber in conjunction with the advertising message, asking whether or not the subscriber concerned wishes to establish further contact with the advertiser, wherein in the event of the
25 subscriber concerned responding to such a question by entering a code or the like, the computer unit is caused to sense said code; and wherein the computer unit is caused to at least store the telephone number of the subscriber concerned or other subscriber identification information, at
30 least when sensing a code that indicates that the subscriber concerned wishes to make further contact with the advertiser.

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2. A method according to Claim 1, characterized in that after sensing said code and the telephone number of the subscriber concerned, the computer unit (4) is caused to send at least the telephone number to the advertiser.

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3. A method according to Claim 1 or 2, characterized in that said code is a code keyed on the keypad of the subscriber's telephone.

10 4. A method according to Claim 1 or 2, characterized in that the code is a message spoken by the subscriber, i.e. a so-called voice response.

15 5. A method according to Claim 1, 2, 3 or 4, characterized in that when said code indicates that the subscriber concerned desires telephone contact with the advertiser, the computer unit is caused to setup a call connection between the subscriber and the advertiser at the end of the ongoing call.

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