

DESCRIPTION

TITLE OF THE INVENTION

TRANSMISSION TERMINAL, TRANSMISSION
5 MANAGEMENT APPARATUS, PROGRAM, TRANSMISSION METHOD,
AND TRANSMISSION SYSTEM

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a
10 transmission terminal which is connected to a
transmission management apparatus, managing a
plurality of transmission terminals, via a network,
and carries out transmission with at least one
transmission terminal.

15

BACKGROUND ART

In a video conference system, a
transmission terminal acquires an image and a sound
by taking an image and acquiring a statement of a
20 participant of the video conference, and transmits
the acquired image and sound to a destination
transmission terminal. The destination transmission
terminal displays the image using a display or a
projector connected to the destination transmission
25 terminal, and outputs the sound from a speaker.

Thus, it is possible for respective remote participants to carry out a conference in a condition similar to an actual conference.

In such a remote conference system, the
5 number of transmission terminals that participate in a conference is not limited to 2, and, it is possible to implement a video conference among many bases by using all the transmission terminals that participate in the conference.

10 Generally speaking, in a video conference carried out among many bases, a participant who will participate in the conference using a transmission terminal wishes to know who in a remote place has participated in the conference. Therefore, each
15 transmission terminal divides an image area of a display of the transmission terminal into divisions corresponding to transmission terminals which have participated in the video conference, and displays participants in the respective division image areas
20 transmitted from the corresponding transmission terminals.

However, if the number of transmission terminals that have participated in a video conference increases, the size of each division image
25 area becomes smaller accordingly, and therefore, it

may be difficult for each participant to know the other participants. Also, when the number of bases that participate in a video conference becomes greater, it may be impossible to display all the
5 bases, due to a restriction concerning layout.

In order to solve the problem, a transmission terminal that has an image mode where information of transmission terminals that have participated in a video conference is displayed in
10 addition to an image mode where images transmitted from the other transmission terminals are displayed is known (for example, see Patent Reference No. 1).

PRIOR ART REFERENCE

15 PATENT REFERENCE

Patent Reference No. 1: Japanese Unexamined Patent Application No. 2013-157995

NON-PATENT REFERENCE

Non-Patent Reference No. 1: "Voice Recognition",
20 written by Yasunaga Niimi, published by Kyoritsu Shuppan Co., Ltd., 68-72 pages, 1979

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED BY THE INVENTION

25 However, in a transmission terminal

disclosed in Patent Reference No. 1, switching is carried out between an image mode where images transmitted from the other transmission terminals are displayed and an image mode where information of
5 transmission terminals that have participated in a video conference is displayed. Therefore, for example, in the image mode where images transmitted from the other transmission terminals are displayed, it is impossible to acquire the information of
10 transmission terminals acquirable in the image mode where the information of transmission terminals that have participated in a video conference is displayed.

In consideration of the problem, an object of the present invention is to provide a transmission
15 terminal with which it is possible to know information of other bases even in an image mode where images from transmission terminals are displayed.

20 MEANS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

According to one aspect, a transmission terminal that is connected to a transmission management apparatus, managing a plurality of transmission terminals, via a network, and carries
25 out transmission with at least one of other

transmission terminals, includes a transmission means configured to transmit a terminal information request to request the number of transmission terminals under transmission to the transmission management apparatus, and a display means configured to display image data received from the transmission terminal under transmission on a display device, and display the number of the transmission terminals under transmission received from the transmission management apparatus in response to the terminal information request on the display device.

ADVANTAGEOUS EFFECTS OF THE INVENTION

It is possible to provide a transmission terminal with which it is possible to know information of other bases even in an image mode where images from transmission terminals are displayed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 generally illustrates one example of a transmission system 1;

FIG. 2 is a conceptual diagram illustrating one example of a state where, in the transmission system, image data, sound data, and various sorts of

management information are transmitted and received;

FIG. 3 is a conceptual diagram illustrating image quality of image data;

FIG. 4 is one example of an outline view of
5 a transmission terminal;

FIG. 5 illustrates one example of a hardware configuration of the transmission terminal;

FIG. 6 is a hardware configuration diagram of any one of a transmission management apparatus, a
10 UI providing apparatus, a relay apparatus, and a program providing apparatus;

FIG. 7 is one example of a functional block diagram of each of the terminals, the apparatuses and the system included in the transmission system;

15 FIG. 8 is one example of a conceptual diagram of a terminal authentication management table managed by the transmission management apparatus;

FIG. 9A is one example of a conceptual diagram of a terminal management table managed by the
20 transmission management apparatus;

FIG. 9B is one example of a conceptual diagram of a terminal management table managed by the transmission management apparatus;

FIG. 10 is one example of a conceptual
25 diagram of a terminal management table managed by the

transmission management apparatus;

FIG. 11 is one example of a sequence diagram illustrating a preparation stage operation carried out until a transmission terminal enters a preparation state for participating in a video conference;

FIG. 12 is one example of a sequence diagram illustrating a conference participation operation carried out until a transmission terminal enters a participated state where the transmission terminal has participated in the video conference;

FIG. 13 is one example of a sequence diagram illustrating a data transmission operation between transmission terminals;

FIG. 14 illustrates one example of a screen page displayed on a display in a full screen display mode;

FIG. 15 illustrates one example of a screen page displayed on the display in an information display mode;

FIG. 16 is a sequence diagram illustrating a terminal information displaying operation of displaying terminal information in a terminal information display area when a transmission terminal has switched a display mode into the information

display mode;

FIG. 17A illustrates one example of a display screen page in the full screen display mode when the number of bases is 4;

5 FIG. 17B illustrates one example of a display screen page in the full screen display mode when the number of bases is 9;

FIG. 18 illustrates one example of a display screen page where the number of bases is
10 displayed in the full screen display mode;

FIG. 19 illustrates another example of a display screen page where the number of bases is displayed in the full screen display mode;

FIG. 20 illustrates one example of a
15 display screen page where the number of images displayed in the full screen display mode is different from the number of bases displayed in a second area;

FIG. 21 is one example of a sequence
20 diagram illustrating a procedure in which the transmission system displays the number of bases when a transmission terminal is in the full screen display mode;

FIG. 22 illustrates one example of a screen
25 page from which a user performs a setting to display

an auxiliary area;

FIG. 23 is one example of a flowchart illustrating an operation procedure of the transmission management apparatus;

5 FIG. 24 is one example of a flowchart illustrating an operation procedure of a transmission terminal;

FIG. 25 illustrates one example of a system configuration in a case where a transmission terminal
10 is applied as a car navigation apparatus;

FIG. 26 illustrate one example of a configuration diagram of an in-vehicle car navigation apparatus; and

FIG. 27 illustrates one example of
15 displaying a destination list displayed on the car navigation apparatus.

MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

Below, embodiments of the present invention
20 will be described with reference to the drawings.

FIG. 1 generally illustrates a transmission system 1 according to an embodiment of the present invention. FIG. 2 is a conceptual diagram illustrating a state where, in the transmission
25 system 1, image data, sound data, and various sorts

of management information are transmitted and received. FIG. 3 is a conceptual diagram illustrating image quality of image data.

The transmission system 1 may be a data
5 providing system that unidirectionally transmits content data from one transmission terminal to a plurality of transmission terminals via a transmission management apparatus 50, or a communication system that transmits information,
10 feelings, and so forth, mutually between a plurality of transmission terminals via a transmission management apparatus 50. The communication system may be a system that transmits information, feelings, and so forth, mutually between a plurality of
15 communication terminals (corresponding to "transmission terminals") via a communication management apparatus (corresponding to a "transmission management apparatus"), and thus, for example, may be a video conference system, a video
20 phone system, or the like.

Concerning the present embodiment, the transmission system 1, a transmission management apparatus 50, and transmission terminals 10 will be described, assuming a video conference system as one
25 example of a communication system, assuming a video

conference management apparatus as one example of a communication management apparatus, and assuming video conference terminals as examples of communication terminals. That is, the transmission terminals and the transmission management apparatus 5 50 according to the present invention can be applied not only to a video conference system but also to a communication system, or a data transmission system.

As illustrated in FIG. 1, the transmission system 1 includes a plurality of the transmission terminals 10aa, 10ab, and so forth, displays 120aa, 120ab, and so forth of the respective transmission terminals 10aa, 10ab, and so forth, a UI providing apparatus 20, an information processing terminal 40, 10 relay apparatuses 30a, 30b, 30c, and 30d, the transmission management apparatus 50, and a program providing apparatus 90. The transmission terminals 10aa, 10ab, and so forth, transmit and receive, for example, image data and sound data, as content data.

Note that, hereinafter, any one of the transmission terminals 10aa, 10ab, and so forth, may be referred to as a "transmission terminal 10", and any one of the displays 120aa, 120ab, and so forth, may be referred to as a "display 120". A 20 transmission terminal that requests to start a video

conference may be referred to as a "requesting terminal", and a transmission terminal which is thus requested may be referred to as a "destination terminal". Also, any one of the relay apparatuses
5 30a through 30d may be referred to as a "relay apparatus 30".

Also, transmission terminals 10 that have participated in a video conference or places where the terminals 10 are located will be referred to as
10 "bases". The number of bases is the same as the number of transmission terminals 10 that have participated in the video conference. However, there may be a plurality of terminals 10 in a space that can be regarded as a single place (for example, a
15 single conference room).

The UI providing apparatus 20 transmits layout information (described later), mainly for displaying the number of bases, to transmission terminals 10. For example, the transmission
20 management apparatus 50 or a relay apparatus 30 may function as the UI providing apparatus 20 in addition to the original function of the transmission management apparatus 50 or the relay apparatus 30 itself.

25 Also, the information processing terminal

40 is an apparatus where the function of a
transmission terminal 10 is implemented by software.
Actually, the information processing terminal 40 is
implemented in a configuration of, for example, a PC
5 (Personal Computer), a tablet-type terminal, a
smartphone, a cell phone, a PDA (Personal Digital
Assistant), an electronic book reading terminal, or
the like.

As illustrated in FIG. 2, in the
10 transmission system 1, a management information
session 300I for transmitting and receiving various
sorts of management information is established
between a requesting terminal and a destination
terminal via the transmission management apparatus 50.

15 Also, between a requesting terminal and a
destination terminal between which a management
information session 300I is established, 4 respective
sessions are established for transmitting and
receiving, via a relay apparatus 30, 4 types of data,
20 i.e., high resolution image data 310, medium
resolution image data 320, low resolution image data
330, and sound data 340. Note that in the present
embodiment, the 4 sessions will be referred to as an
"image and sound data session 300D" as a whole.

25 Image data processed in the present

embodiment is scalably encoded. For example, image data processed in the present embodiment includes low resolution image data 330, medium resolution image data 320, and high resolution image data 310. As
5 illustrated in FIG. 3, low resolution image data 330 has a resolution such as 320 pixels (horizontal direction) by 180 pixels (vertical direction), medium resolution image data 320 has a resolution such as 640 pixels (horizontal direction) by 360 pixels
10 (vertical direction), and high resolution image data 310 has a resolution such as 1280 pixels (horizontal direction) by 720 pixels (vertical direction).

If a band to transmit image data is narrow, low resolution image data 330 as a base image is
15 transmitted, and a transmission terminal 10 on the reception side can display an image of low image quality based on the transmitted low resolution image data 330.

If a band to transmit image data is
20 relatively wide, low resolution image data 330 as a base image and medium resolution image data 320 are transmitted, and a transmission terminal 10 on the reception side can display an image of medium image quality based on the transmitted low resolution image
25 data 330 and the medium resolution image data 320.

If a band to transmit image data is very wide, low resolution image data 330 as a base image, medium resolution image data 320, and high resolution image data 310 are transmitted, and a transmission
5 terminal 10 on the reception side can display an image of high image quality based on the transmitted low resolution image data 330, the medium resolution image data 320, and the high resolution image data 310.

10 In FIG. 1, a relay apparatus 30 relays content data between a plurality of transmission terminals 10. The transmission management apparatus 50 unitarily manages login authentication requested by transmission terminals 10, transmission statuses
15 of transmission terminals 10, a destination list, a transmission situations in relay apparatuses 30, and so forth. Note that an image expressed by image data may be a moving image or a static image, or both a moving image and a static image.

20 A plurality of routers 70a, 70b, 70c, 70d, 70ab, and 70cd select optimum routes of image data and sound data. Note that hereinafter, any one of the routers 70a, 70b, 70c, 70d, 70ab, and 70cd may be referred to as a "router 70".

25 The program providing apparatus 90 includes

a hard disk (HD) 204 (FIG. 6), stores a transmission terminal control program 1000a (FIG. 7) to implement various functions of transmission terminals 10, and can transmit the transmission terminal control
5 programs 1000a to the transmission terminals 10.

Also, in the HD204 of the program providing apparatus 90, a relay apparatus program to implement various functions of a relay apparatus 30 is stored, and the program providing apparatus 90 can transmit
10 the relay apparatus programs to the relay apparatuses 30.

Also, in the HD204 of the program providing apparatus 90, a transmission management program to implement various functions of the transmission
15 management apparatus 50 is stored, and the program providing apparatus 90 can transmit the transmission management program to the transmission management apparatus 50.

Also, in the HD204 of the program providing apparatus 90, a UI providing apparatus program to implement various functions of the UI providing
20 apparatus 20 is stored, and the program providing apparatus 90 can transmit the UI providing apparatus program to the UI providing apparatus 20.

25 Also, in the HD204 of the program providing

apparatus 90, an information processing terminal
program to implement various functions of the
information processing terminal 40 is stored, and the
program providing apparatus 90 can transmit the
5 information processing terminal program to the
information processing terminal 40.

The transmission terminals 10aa, 10ab, 10ac,
and so forth, and the router 70a are connected
together via a local area network (LAN) 2a in a
10 manner to enable data transmission. The transmission
terminal 10ba, 10bb, 10bc, and so forth, and the
router 70b are connected together via a LAN 2b in a
manner to enable data transmission.

The LANs 2a and 2b are connected together
15 via a private line 2ab that includes the router 7ab,
in a manner to enable data transmission, and are
installed in a certain area A. For example, the area
A is Japan, the LAN 2a is installed in a Tokyo office,
and the LAN 2b is installed in an Osaka office.

20 The transmission terminal 10ca, 10cb, 10cc,
and so forth, and the router 70c are connected
together via a LAN 2c in a manner to enable data
transmission. The transmission terminal 10da, 10db,
10dc, and so forth, and the router 70d are connected
25 together via a LAN 2d in a manner to enable data

transmission.

The LANs 2c and 2d are connected together via a private line 2cd that includes the router 7cd, in a manner to enable data transmission, and are
5 installed in a certain area B. For example, the area B is USA, the LAN 2c is installed in a New York office, and the LAN 2d is installed in a Washington office. The areas A and B are connected together via the Internet using the routers 70ab and 70cd,
10 respectively, in a manner to enable data transmission therebetween.

Also, the relay apparatuses 30, the transmission management apparatus 50, the UI providing apparatus 20, the information processing
15 terminal 40, and the program providing apparatus 90 are connected to the respective transmission terminals 10 via the Internet 2i in a manner to enable data transmission. The relay apparatuses 30, the transmission management apparatus 50, the UI
20 providing apparatus 20, the information processing terminal 40, and the program providing apparatus 90 may be installed in the area A or the area B, or in an area other than the areas A and B.

Note that according to the present
25 embodiment, the transmission network 2 includes the

LANs 2a and 2b, the private line 2ab, the Internet 2i,
the private line 2cd, and the LANs 2c and 2d. The
transmission network 2 may include not only zones
where wired transmission is carried out, but also
5 zones where wireless transmission is carried out
through WiFi (Wireless Fidelity), Bluetooth
(registered trademark), or the like.

Also, in FIG. 1, the 4 digit figures
indicated below each of the transmission terminals 10,
10 the relay apparatuses 30, the transmission management
apparatus 50, the routers 70, the UI providing
apparatus 20, the information processing terminal 40,
and the program providing apparatus 90 simply express
an IP address in a general IPv4. For example, the IP
15 address of the transmission terminal 10aa is
"1.2.1.3". Instead of IPv4, IPv6 may be used.
However, for the sake of simplification of
description, description will be made using IPv4.

Note that the respective transmission
20 terminals 10 may be used not only for a video
conference among a plurality offices or among a
plurality of rooms in the same office, but also for
a video conference in the same room, or a video
conference between an outdoor place and an indoor
25 place, or between an outdoor place and another

outdoor place. If the respective transmission terminals 10 are used outdoor, transmission is carried out wirelessly through a cell phone network or the like.

5 FIG. 4 is an outline view of a transmission terminal 10. Below, description will be made assuming the longitudinal direction of the transmission terminal 10 as an X-axis direction, a direction perpendicular to the X-axis direction on a
10 horizontal plane as a Y-axis direction, and a direction (vertical direction) perpendicular to the X-axis direction and the Y-axis direction as a Z-axis direction.

 As illustrated in FIG. 4, a transmission
15 terminal 10 includes a housing 1100, an arm 1200, and a camera housing 1300. A front wall 1110 of the housing 1100 has an air suction surface (not illustrated) that includes air suction holes, and a rear wall 1120 of the housing 1100 has an air
20 ejection surface 1121 that includes air ejection holes. Thereby, as a result of a cooling fan included in the housing 1100 being driven, an external air can be suctioned through the suction surface from the front side of the transmission
25 terminal 10, and the suctioned air can be ejected to

the rear side of the transmission terminal 10 through the air ejection surface 1121. The right wall 1130 of the housing 1100 has a sound collection hole 1131 through which, by a built-in-type microphone 114 (FIG. 5) described later, voices, sounds, noises, and so forth can be collected.

At a side of the housing 1100 near the right wall 1130, an operation panel 1150 is formed. The operation panel 1150 has a plurality of operation buttons 108a through 108e, a power switch 109, and an alarm lamp 119, and also, has a sound output surface 1151 that includes sound output holes through which sounds that are output from a built-in-type speaker 115 (FIG. 5) pass. At a side of the housing 1100 near the left wall 1140, an accommodation section 1160 as a recess to accommodate the arm 1200 and the camera housing 1300 is formed. The right wall 1130 of the housing 1100 has connection holes 1132a through 1132c for eclectically connecting cables to an external apparatus connection interface (I/F) 118 (FIG. 5). The left wall 1140 of the housing 1100 has a connection hole (not illustrated) for electrically connecting a cable 120c for the external apparatus connection I/F 118 for the display 120.

Hereinafter, any one of the operation

buttons 108a through 108e will be referred to as an "operation button 108", and any one of the connection holes 1132a through 1132c will be referred to as a "connection hole 1132".

5 The arm 1200 is installed on the housing 1100 via a torque hinge 1210, so that the arm 1200 is vertically rotatable with respect to the housing 1100, in a tilt angle range $\theta 1$ of 135 degrees. FIG. 4 indicates that a state of the arm 1200 where the tilt
10 angle $\theta 1$ is 90 degrees.

 The camera housing 1300 has a built-in-type the camera 112, and it is possible to take images of a user, a document, a room, and so forth through the camera 112. Also, the camera housing
15 1300 has a torque hinge 1310. The camera housing 1300 is installed on the arm 1200 through the torque hinge 1310. The camera housing 1300 is rotatable vertically and horizontally with respect to the arm 1200, in a panning range of $\theta 2$ of ± 180 degrees and
20 a tilt angle range $\theta 3$ of ± 45 degrees from the state of the camera housing 1300 illustrated in FIG. 4.

 Note that the UI providing apparatus 20, the relay apparatuses 30, the transmission management apparatus 50, the program providing apparatus 90, and
25 a maintenance system 100 have outlines the same as a

common server computer. Therefore, description of the outlines will be omitted. The information processing terminal 40 has an outline the same as a common PC, a smartphone, a tablet terminal, or the like, and therefore, description of the outline will be omitted.

FIG. 5 illustrates one example of a hardware configuration of a transmission terminal 10. As illustrated in FIG. 5, the transmission terminal 10 includes a CPU (Central Processing Unit) 101 controlling the entirety of the transmission terminal 10, a ROM (Read-Only Memory) 102 storing programs such as an IPL (Initial Program Loader) used to drive the CPU 101, a RAM (Random Access Memory) 103 used as a work area of the CPU 101, a flash memory 104 storing various sorts of data such as the transmission terminal control program 1000a, and image data and sound data, a solid state drive (SSD) 105 controlling reading various sorts of data from the flash memory 104 and writing various sorts of data to the flash memory 104 under the control of the CPU 101, a medium drive 107 controlling reading data from a recording medium 106 such as a flash memory and writing (storing) data to the recording medium 106, the operation buttons 108 operated for selecting

a destination of the transmission terminal 10, for example, the power switch 109 for turning on and off the power in the transmission terminal 10, and a network I/F 111 for data transmission via the
5 transmission network 2 (FIG. 1).

Also, the transmission terminal 10 includes the built-in-type the camera 112 to acquire image data by taking an image of a subject under the control of the CPU 101, an image sensor I/F 113 to
10 control driving the camera 112, the microphone 114 as a built-in-type sound collection device to input sounds, the built-in-type speaker 115 to output sounds, a sound input and output I/F 116 inputting and outputting sound signals between the microphone
15 114 and the speaker 115 under the control of the CPU 101, a display I/F 117 transmitting image data to an externally installed display 120 under the control of the CPU 101, the external apparatus connection I/F 118 to connect various external apparatuses, and a
20 bus line 110 such as an address bus, a data bus, and so forth to electrically connect the above-mentioned respective elements.

A display 120 is a display device using a liquid crystal or an organic electroluminescence
25 (EL) to display an image of a subject, operation

icons, and so forth. The display 120 is connected to the display I/F 117 via the cable 120c. The cable 120c may be an analog RGB (VGA) signal cable, a component video cable, a cable for HDMI (High-
5 Definition Multimedia Interface) (registered trademark), or a DVI (Digital Video Interactive) signal.

The camera 112 includes a lens and a solid-state image sensing device to acquire image data of
10 an image of a subject by converting light into charge. As the solid-state image sensing device, a CMOS (Complementary Metal Oxide Semiconductor), a CCD (Charge Coupled Device), or the like is used.

It is possible to connect an external
15 apparatus such as an externally installed camera, an externally installed microphone, an externally installed speaker, and so forth to the external apparatus connection I/F 118 through a USB (Universal Serial Bus) cable, or the like.

20 If an externally installed camera is connected to the external apparatus connection I/F 118, the CPU 101 drives the externally installed camera in priority to the built-in-type the camera 112. Also, if an externally installed microphone or
25 an externally installed speaker is connected to the

external apparatus connection I/F 118, the CPU 101 drives the externally installed microphone or the externally installed speaker in priority to the built-in-type microphone 114 or the built-in-type
5 speaker 115.

Note that the recording medium 106 is detachable to the transmission terminal 10. Also, the transmission terminal 10 may use, as a nonvolatile memory for reading data and writing data
10 under the control of the CPU 101, an EEPROM (Electrically Erasable and Programmable ROM), or the like, instead of the flash memory 104.

The transmission terminal control program 1000a may be a file of an installable or executable
15 type, and may be circulated in a form of a computer readable medium such as the recording medium 106. Also, the transmission terminal control program 1000a may be stored in the ROM 102 instead of the flash memory 104.

20 The information processing terminal 40 has a hardware configuration the same as or similar to the transmission terminal 10, and therefore, description of the hardware configuration will be omitted. However, in the SSD 105, the information
25 processing terminal program to control the

information processing terminal 40 is stored.

FIG. 6 is a hardware configuration diagram of any one of the transmission management apparatus 50, the UI providing apparatus 20, a relay apparatus 5 30, and the program providing apparatus 90. As illustrated in FIG. 6, the transmission management apparatus 50 includes a CPU 201 to control the entirety of the transmission management apparatus 50, a ROM 202 to store programs such as an IPL to drive 10 the CPU 201, a RAM 203 used as a work area of the CPU 201, a HD204 to store various sorts of data such as the transmission management program, a hard disk drive (HDD) 205 to control reading various sorts of data from and writing various sorts of data to the 15 HD204 under the control of the CPU 201, a medium drive 207 to control reading data from and writing (storing) data to (in) a recording medium 206 such as a flash memory, a display 208 to display various sorts of information such as a cursor, a menu, a 20 window, a character/letter, an image, and so forth, a network I/F 209 for data transmission through the transmission network 2 (FIG. 1), a keyboard 211 including a plurality of keys for inputting character/letters, numerical values, various 25 instructions, and so forth, a mouse 212 for selecting

or executing various instructions, selecting a processing target, moving the cursor, and so forth, a CD-ROM (Compact Disc Read-Only Memory) drive 214 to control reading various sorts of data from and
5 writing various sorts of data to a CD-ROM 213 as an example of a detachable recording medium, and a bus line 210 such as an address bus and a data bus to electrically connect the respective elements.

Note that the transmission management
10 program may be a file of an installable or executable type, and may be circulated in a form of a computer readable medium such as the recording medium 206 or the CD-ROM 213. Also, the transmission management program may be stored in the ROM 202 instead of the
15 HD 204.

A relay apparatus 30 has a hardware configuration the same as or similar to the transmission management apparatus 50, and therefore, description of the hardware configuration will be
20 omitted. However, in the HD 204, the relay apparatus program to control the relay apparatus 30 is stored.

Also in this case, the relay apparatus program may be a file of an installable or executable type, and may be circulated in a form of a computer
25 readable medium such as the recording medium 206 or

the CD-ROM 213. Also, the relay apparatus program may be stored in the ROM 202 instead of the HD 204.

Also, the program providing apparatus 90 has a hardware configuration the same as or similar
5 to the transmission management apparatus 50, and therefore, description of the hardware configuration will be omitted. However, in the HD 204, the program providing apparatus program to control the program providing apparatus 90 is stored.

10 Also in this case, the program providing apparatus program may be a file of an installable or executable type, and may be circulated in a form of a computer readable medium such as the recording medium 206 or the CD-ROM 213. Also, the program providing
15 apparatus program may be stored in the ROM 202 instead of the HD 204.

Also, the UI providing apparatus 20 has a hardware configuration the same as or similar to the transmission management apparatus 50, and therefore,
20 description of the hardware configuration will be omitted. However, in the HD 204, the UI providing apparatus program to control the UI providing apparatus 90 and layout information described later is stored.

25 Also in this case, the UI providing

apparatus program and the layout information may be files of an installable or executable type, and may be circulated in a form of a computer readable medium such as the recording medium 206 or the CD-ROM 213.

5 Also, the UI providing apparatus program and the layout information may be stored in the ROM 202 instead of the HD 204.

Note that as the above-mentioned computer readable recording media, CD-R (Compact Discs
10 Recordable), DVD (Digital Versatile Disks), Blu-ray disks, or the like may be used.

FIG. 7 is a functional block diagram of any one of the terminals, apparatuses and the system included in the transmission system 1. As
15 illustrated in FIG. 7, a transmission terminal 10, a relay apparatus 30 and the transmission management apparatus 50 are connected together via the transmission network 2 in such a manner as to enable data transmission. Note that because the relay
20 apparatuses 30 and the program providing apparatus 90 illustrated in FIG. 1 do not directly relate to data transmission concerning video conferences, the relay apparatus 30 and the program providing apparatus 90 are omitted in FIG. 7. Because the information
25 processing terminal 40 has a function equivalent to a

transmission terminal 10, the transmission terminal 10 in FIG. 7 may be the information processing terminal 40.

A functional configuration of a
5 transmission terminal 10 will be described. The transmission terminal 10 includes a transmission and reception unit 11, an operation input reception unit 12, a login request unit 13, an imaging unit 14, a sound input unit 15a, a sound output unit 15b, a
10 display control unit 17, and a storing and reading process unit 19. These elements are functions implemented by the CPU 101 executing the transmission terminal control program 1000a written in the RAM 103 from the flash memory 104. Also, the transmission
15 terminal 10 has a storage unit 1000 implemented by the RAM 103 and the flash memory 104.

The transmission and reception unit 11 is implemented by the CPU 101 and the network I/F 111, and transmits various sorts of data and information
20 to and receives various sorts of data and information from another transmission terminal 10, a relay apparatus 30, the transmission management apparatus 50, and the program providing apparatus 90 via the transmission network 2.

25 The transmission and reception unit 11

starts receiving respective items of status information that indicate statuses of the respective transmission terminals 10 as candidates for connecting destinations concerning a video conference, 5 from the transmission management apparatus 50, before starting the video conference with the desired destination terminals.

The status information indicates not only an operational status as to whether each transmission 10 terminal 10 is in an online status or an offline status but also a detailed operational status as to whether each transmission terminal 10 is in an online and transmission possible status or in an online and under transmission status, or the like.

15 Also, the status information indicates not only the operational status of each transmission terminal 10 but also various statuses of each transmission terminal 10 as to whether the cable 120c is removed from the transmission terminal 10, the 20 transmission terminal 10 outputs a sound but does not output an image, the transmission terminal 10 is in a state where the transmission terminal 10 is prevented from outputting a sound (MUTE), and so forth. However, hereinafter, for the sake of easily 25 understanding the present invention, a case where

status information indicates an operational status of each transmission terminal 10 will be described.

The operation input reception unit 12 is implemented by the CPU 101, the operation buttons 108, 5 and the power switch 109, and receives user's various inputs. For example, if a user turns on the power switch 109, the operation input reception unit 12 receives the power-turning-on operation, to turn on the power in the transmission terminal 10.

10 The login request unit 13 is implemented by the CPU 101, and, in response to reception of a power-turning-on operation, the login request unit 13 transmits login request information that indicates a request to login and a current IP address of the 15 transmission terminal 10, to the transmission management apparatus 50 from the transmission and reception unit 11 via the transmission network 2.

Also, if a user operates the power switch 109, from the turned on state to the turned off state, 20 the operation input reception unit 12 completely turns off the power in the transmission terminal 10 after the transmission and reception unit 11 transmits status information that indicates to turn off the power to the transmission management 25 apparatus 50. Therefore, the transmission management

apparatus 50 can know that the transmission terminal 10 is switched from the power turned on state to the power turned off state.

5 The imaging unit 14 is implemented by the CPU 101, the camera 112, and the image sensor I/F 113, takes an image of a subject, and outputs image data acquired from taking the image to the transmission and reception unit 11.

10 The sound input unit 15a is implemented by the CPU 101 and the sound input and output I/F 116. A sound signal that represents a sound collected by the microphone 114 is input to the sound input unit 15a which converts the input sound signal into sound data.

15 The sound output unit 15b is implemented by the CPU 101 and the sound input and output I/F 116, converts sound data into a sound signal, outputs the converted sound signal to the speaker 115 which then outputs a corresponding sound.

20 The display control unit 17 is implemented by the CPU 101 and the display I/F 117, combines respective pieces of image data received by the transmission and reception unit 11 having different resolutions, transmits the combined image data to the display 120 which then displays an image expressed by

25

the image data.

Also, the display control unit 17 transmits destination list information that the transmission and reception unit 11 receives from the transmission management apparatus 50 to the display 120 which thus displays a corresponding destination list.

The display control unit 17 has an auxiliary area display unit 18. If the transmission terminal 10 is in a full screen display mode that will be described later, the auxiliary area display unit 18 displays the number of bases participating a conference, and so forth, in an auxiliary area of a display screen page.

The storing and reading process unit 19 is implemented by the CPU 101 and the SSD 105, and stores various sorts of data in the storage unit 1000, and reads various sorts of data from the storage unit 1000.

The storage unit 1000 stores an identifier for identifying the transmission terminal 10 (also referred to as identification information, and, hereinafter, referred as a "terminal ID"), a password, and so forth. Also, the storage unit 1000 is used as a reception buffer for storing image data and sound data that are received when the transmission terminal

10 carries out a video conference with a destination terminal.

Note that the terminal ID according to the present embodiment denotes information for uniquely
5 identifying the transmission terminal 10 such as a language, characters/letters, a symbol, or any one of various signs. Also, the terminal ID may be information acquired from combining at least two of a language, characters/letters, a symbol, and any one
10 of various signs.

A functional configuration of the transmission management apparatus 50 will now be described. The transmission management apparatus 50 includes a transmission and reception unit 51, a
15 terminal authentication unit 52, a status management unit 53, a terminal extraction unit 54, a terminal status acquisition unit 55, and a storing and reading process unit 59. These units are functions implemented by the CPU 201 that executes the
20 transmission management program written in the RAM 203 from the HD 204. Also, the transmission management apparatus 50 has a storage unit 5000 implemented by the HD 204.

In the storage unit 5000, a terminal
25 authentication management DB 5002 that has a

terminal authentication management table 5002T such as a table illustrated in FIG. 8 is established. In the terminal authentication management table 5002T, passwords are associated with respective terminal
5 IDs of all the transmission terminals 10 managed by the transmission management apparatus 50 and are managed. For example, the terminal authentication management table 5002T illustrated in FIG. 8 indicates a password "aaaa" for a terminal ID "01aa"
10 of a transmission terminal 10aa.

Also, in the storage unit 5000, a terminal management DB 5003 that has a terminal management table 5003T such as a table illustrated in FIGs. 9A and 9B is established. FIG. 9A illustrates the
15 terminal management table 5003T where the transmission terminal 10aa that has the terminal ID "01aa" has logged in, and FIG. 9B illustrates the terminal management table 5003T where the transmission terminal 10aa that has the terminal ID
20 "01aa" has transmitted start request information that will be described later.

In the terminal management table 5003T, for the terminal ID of each transmission terminal 10, an identifier of the transmission terminal 10
25 (hereinafter, referred to as a "terminal name"), the

operational status of the transmission terminal 10,
the received date and time at which the transmission
management apparatus 50 has received login request
information for logging in to transmission system 1,
5 and the IP address of the transmission terminal 10
are associated with each other, and are managed.

For example, the terminal management table
5003T illustrated in FIG. 9A indicates that the
transmission terminal 10aa that has the terminal ID
10 "01aa" has a terminal name "Japan Tokyo office AA
terminal", and the operational status "online
(transmission possible)", the date and time at which
the transmission management apparatus 50 has received
login request information is "13:40, November 10,
15 2009", and the transmission terminal 10aa has the IP
address "1.2.1.3".

The terminal ID in the terminal management
table 5003T is uniquely assigned to each transmission
terminal 10 when the transmission terminal 10 is
20 registered with the transmission system 1 before
login request information that is transmitted in step
S22 of FIG. 11 described later is transmitted, and
the terminal name is registered or changed by an
administrator of the transmission management
25 apparatus 50. Note that the terminal name may be

registered or changed according to a request that is transmitted from the transmission terminal 10 to the transmission management apparatus 50.

The operational status "online
5 (transmission possible)" denotes a state where the transmission terminal 10 has logged in the transmission system 1, and has not participated in a video conference. The operational status "online
10 (under transmission)" denotes a state where the transmission terminal 10 has logged in the transmission system 1, and has participated in a video conference. The operational status "offline" denotes a state where the transmission terminal 10 has not logged in the transmission system 1. A
15 transmission terminal 10 that has participated in a video conference is a transmission terminal 10 that has an operational status "online (under transmission)".

Also, in the storage unit 5000, a
20 destination list management DB 5004 that has a destination list management table 5004T such as a table illustrated in FIG. 10 is established. Note that the destination list management DB 5004 corresponds to a destination list management table
25 storage unit.

In the destination list management table 5004T, all of the terminal IDs of destination terminals registered as candidates for destination terminals are associated with the terminal ID of a requesting terminal that requests to start a video conference, and are managed.

For example, the destination list management table 5004T illustrated in FIG. 10 indicates that candidates for destination terminals to which the transmission terminal 10aa that has the terminal ID "01aa" requests to start a video conference are the transmission terminal 10ab of the terminal ID "01ab", the transmission terminal 10ba of the terminal ID "01ba", and the transmission terminal 10db of the terminal ID "01db". Candidates for destination terminal are added or deleted according to a request that is transmitted from a transmission terminal 10 to the transmission management apparatus 50.

In the destination list management table 5004T, candidates for destination terminals to which a transmission terminal 10 requests to start a video conference are registered. The transmission terminals 10 that can participate in a video conference are not limited to the transmission

terminals 10 registered in the destination list management table 5004T.

Also, in the storage unit 5000, the URI (Uniform Resource Identifier) 5005 of the UI providing apparatus 20 is stored. The URI 5005 of the UI providing apparatus 20 is set by an administrator of the transmission management apparatus 50 or the UI providing apparatus 20.

The transmission and reception unit 51 is implemented by the CPU 201 and the network I/F 209, and transmits various sorts of data and information to and receives various sorts of data and information from a transmission terminal 10, a relay apparatus 30, and the program providing apparatus 90 via the transmission network 2.

The terminal authentication unit 52 is implemented by the CPU 101, and searches the terminal authentication management DB 5002 of the storage unit 5000 using the terminal ID and the password included in login request information received by the transmission and reception unit 51 as search keys, to carry out terminal authentication by determining whether the same terminal ID and password are managed in the terminal authentication management DB 5002.

The status management unit 53 is

implemented by the CPU 101, and, in order to manage the operational status of a requesting terminal that has transmitted a login request, associates the operational status, the received date and time at
5 which the transmission management apparatus 50 has received the login request information, and the IP address with the terminal ID of the requesting terminal, store the associated information in the terminal management DB 5003 (FIG. 9A and 9B) to
10 manage the stored information.

Also, the status management unit 53 changes the operational status of a transmission terminal 10 from "online" to "offline" in the terminal management DB 5003 (see FIGs. 9A and 9B)
15 based on the status information that indicates to turn off the power transmitted from the transmission terminal 10 as a result of the user switching the state of the power switch of the transmission terminal 10 from the turned on state to the turned
20 off state

The terminal extraction unit 54 is implemented by the CPU 101, and searches the destination list management DB 5004 (FIG. 10) using the terminal ID of a requesting terminal that has
25 transmitted a login request as a search key to

extract the terminal IDs of candidates for destination terminals of the requesting terminal.

Also, the terminal extraction unit 54 searches the destination list management DB 5004 (FIG. 10) using the terminal ID of a requesting terminal that has transmitted a login request as a search key to extract the terminal IDs of other requesting terminals that register the terminal ID of the requesting terminal as candidates for destination terminals.

The terminal status acquisition unit 55 is implemented by the CPU 101, and searches the terminal management DB 5003 (FIG. 9A and 9B) using the terminal IDs of candidates for destination terminals extracted by the terminal extraction unit 54 as search keys, to read the operational statuses for the thus detected terminal IDs.

Thereby, the terminal status acquisition unit 55 can acquire the operational statuses of candidates for destination terminals of a requesting terminal that has transmitted a login request. Also, the terminal status acquisition unit 55 searches the terminal management DB 5003 using a terminal ID extracted by the terminal extraction unit 54 as a search key, to acquire the operational status of a

requesting terminal that has transmitted a login request.

The storing and reading process unit 59 is implemented by the CPU 101 and the HDD 205, stores
5 various sorts of data in the storage unit 5000, and read various sorts of data from the storage unit 5000.

A functional configuration the UI providing apparatus 20 will be described. The transmission and reception unit 21 is implemented by the CPU 201 and
10 the network I/F 209, and transmits various sorts of data and information to and receives various sorts of data and information from a transmission terminal 10 via the transmission network 2.

The server unit 22 is implemented by the
15 CPU 101, acquires a layout information request signal from a transmission terminal 10, to transmit layout information 2000L that is read from the storage unit 2000 by the storing and reading process unit 23 to the transmission terminal 10 via the transmission and
20 reception unit 21.

The storing and reading process unit 23 is implemented by the CPU 101, stores various sorts of
data in the storage unit 2000, and reads various
sorts of information from the storage unit 2000. The
25 storage unit 2000 is implemented by the HDD 205, and

mainly stores the layout information 2000L.

Next, operation of the transmission system 1 according to the present embodiment will be described. FIG. 11 is a sequence diagram illustrating a preparation stage operation carried out until a transmission terminal 10 enters a prepared state where the transmission terminal 10 will participate in a video conference. Note that FIG. 11 illustrates an example where the transmission terminal 10aa comes to enter the prepared state. In the preparation stage operation, various sorts of information is transmitted and received in the management information session 300I (FIG. 2).

First, in step S21, when a user of the transmission terminal 10aa has turned on the power switch 109 of the transmission terminal 10aa, the operation input reception unit 12 receives the power-turning-on operation to turn on the power. Then, in step S22, in response to the reception of the power-turning-on operation, the login request unit 13 transmits login request information that indicates a login request to the transmission management apparatus 50 through the transmission and reception unit 11 of the transmission terminal 10aa via the transmission network 2.

The login request information includes the terminal ID and the password to identify the transmission terminal 10aa that has transmitted the login request. The terminal ID and the password are
5 read by the storing and reading process unit 19 from the storage unit 1000.

Note that when the login request information transmitted from the transmission terminal 10aa has been received by the transmission
10 management apparatus 50, the transmission management apparatus 50 can know the IP address of the transmission terminal 10aa on the transmission side.

Next, in step S23, the terminal authentication unit 52 of the transmission management
15 apparatus 50 carries out a terminal authentication operation by searching the terminal authentication management DB 5002 (FIG. 8) of the storage unit 5000 using the terminal ID and the password included in the login request information received through the
20 transmission and reception unit 51 as search keys to determine whether the terminal authentication management DB 5002 has managed the same terminal ID and password as the search keys.

If the terminal authentication unit 52 has
25 determined that the terminal authentication

management DB 5002 has not managed the same terminal ID and password as the search keys, that is, if it is determined that the login request is not a login request from a transmission terminal 10 that has
5 legitimate usage authority, the transmission and reception unit 51 transmits authentication result information that indicates the authentication result acquired by the terminal authentication unit 52 to the transmission terminal 10aa that has requested
10 login via the transmission network 2, and thus, the operation in the preparation stage is ended.

On the other hand, if the terminal authentication unit 52 has determined that the terminal authentication management DB 5002 has
15 managed the same terminal ID and password as the search keys, that is, it is determined that the login request is a login request from a transmission terminal 10 that has legitimate usage authority, the status management unit 53 associates the terminal ID
20 and the operational status of the transmission terminal 10aa, the received date and time at which the login request information has been received, and the IP address of the transmission terminal 10aa with each other, and stores the associated items of
25 information in the terminal management DB 5003 (FIG.

9A) in step S24.

Thus, as illustrated in FIG. 9A, the terminal management table 5003T associates the terminal ID "01aa", the operational status "online
5 (transmission possible)", the received date and time "2009.11.10.13:40", and the IP address "1.2.1.3" of the transmission terminal 10aa with each other, and manages the associated items of information.

Next, in step S25, the transmission and
10 reception unit 51 of the transmission management apparatus 50 transmits authentication result information that indicates the authentication result acquired by the terminal authentication unit 52 to the transmission terminal 10aa that has requested
15 login via the transmission network 2. Also, the transmission management apparatus 50 transmits, together with the authentication result information, or before or after the transmission of the authentication result information, the URI 5005 of
20 the UI providing apparatus 20 to the transmission terminal 10. Thereby, the transmission terminal 10 comes to be able to access the UI providing apparatus 20.

The URI 5005 of the UI providing apparatus
25 20 indicates the place where the layout information

2000L is stored in the transmission network 2. For example, the URI has a format such as "IP address (or a domain name) + folder name + file name", and can have any format as long as it is possible to access
5 the UI providing apparatus 20.

As a result of the URI 5005 being not stored by each transmission terminal 10, it is sufficient for the administrator of the transmission management apparatus 50 to change the URI stored by
10 the transmission management apparatus 50, even if the UI providing apparatus 20 is replaced, the URI is changed, or the like. That is, because it is not necessary to change the URL in all the transmission terminals 10, it is possible to reduce the management
15 load.

Next, in step S26, the terminal extraction unit 54 of the transmission management apparatus 50 searches the destination list management DB 5004 (FIG. 10) using the terminal ID "01aa" of the transmission
20 terminal 10aa that has requested login as a search key, to extract the terminal IDs of candidates for destinations of the transmission terminal 10aa.

In this example, the respective terminal IDs "01ab", "01ba", and "01db" of the transmission
25 terminals 10ab, 10ba, and 10db that are destination

terminals of the transmission terminal 10aa having the terminal ID "01aa" are extracted.

Next, in step S27, the terminal status acquisition unit 55 of the transmission management apparatus 50 acquires the respective operational statuses of the transmission terminals 10ab, 10ba, and 10db by searching the terminal management DB 5003 (FIG. 9A) using the terminal ID "01ab", "01ba", and "01db" of the candidates for destination terminals extracted by the terminal extraction unit 54 as search keys, to read the operational statuses, i.e., "offline", "online (transmission possible)", or "online (under transmission)", for the respective terminal IDs extracted by the terminal extraction unit 54.

Next, in step S28, the transmission and reception unit 51 of the transmission management apparatus 50 transmits destination status information that includes the terminal IDs "01ab", "01ba", and "01db" used in step S27 as the search keys, and the respective operational statuses, i.e., "offline", "online (transmission possible)", or "online (under transmission)", of the corresponding transmission terminals 10ab, 10ba, 10db to the transmission terminal 10aa via the transmission

network 2.

Thereby, the transmission terminal 10aa can know the current respective operational statuses, i.e., "offline", "online (transmission possible)", or
5 "online (under transmission)", of the transmission terminal 10ab, 10ba, and 10db that are candidates for destination terminals.

Also, in step S29, the terminal extraction unit 54 of the transmission management apparatus 50
10 searches the destination list management DB 5004 (FIG. 10) using the terminal ID "01aa" of the transmission terminal 10aa that has requested login as a search key, to extract the terminal IDs of other transmission terminals 10 each of which registers the
15 terminal ID "01aa" of the transmission terminal 10aa as a candidate for a destination terminal. For example, in the destination list management table 5004T illustrated in FIG. 10, the terminal IDs "01ab", "01ba", and "01db" are extracted.

20 Next, in step S30, the status management unit 53 of the transmission management apparatus 50 searches the terminal management DB 5003 (FIG. 9A) using the terminal ID "01aa" of the transmission terminal 10aa that has requested login as a search
25 key, to acquire the operational status "online

(transmission possible)" of the transmission terminal 10aa that has requested login.

Next, in steps S31-1 and S31-2, the transmission and reception unit 51 of the

5 transmission management apparatus 50 transmits destination status information that includes the terminal ID "01aa" and the operational status "online (transmission possible)" of the transmission terminal 10aa acquired in step S30, to the transmission

10 terminals 10ba and 10db which have the operational statuses "online" in the terminal management DB 5003 (FIG. 9A) from among the respective transmission terminals 10ab, 10ba, and 10db respectively identified by the terminals ID "01ab", "01ba", and

15 "01db" extracted in S29.

Note that, when the destination status information will be transmitted to the transmission terminals 10ba and 10db, the transmission and reception unit 51 reads the IP addresses of the

20 transmission terminals managed in the terminal management table 5003T illustrated in FIG. 9A based on the respective terminal IDs "01ba" and "01db".

Thus, it is possible to report the terminal ID "01aa" and the operational status "online

25 (transmission possible)" of the transmission terminal

10aa that has requested login to the transmission terminals 10db and 10ba each of which can transmit data to the transmission terminal 10aa that has requested login as a destination.

5 Also, the display control unit 17 of the transmission terminal 10aa can allow the user to know the transmission terminal 10 that has participated in or can participate in the video conference by, for example, highlighting the information item of the
10 transmission terminal 10db that has participated in the video conference, that is, the information item of the transmission terminal 10db that has the operational status "online (under transmission)" or "online (transmission possible)" on the display 120
15 from among information items of the destination list displayed on the display 120, when step S28 of the preparation operation has been completed.

FIG. 12 is a sequence diagram illustrating a conference participating operation carried out
20 until a transmission terminal 10 enters a participated state where the transmission terminal 10 has participated in the video conference. Note that FIG. 12 illustrates an example where the transmission terminal 10aa enters a participated state. In the
25 conference participating operation, various sorts of

information is transmitted and received in the management information session 300I (FIG. 2).

First, in step S41, as a result of the user pressing an operation button 108 (FIG. 4) to select
5 to participate in the video conference, the operation input reception unit 12 receives a request to participate in the video conference with the transmission terminal 10db. Note that if the transmission terminal 10 is the information
10 processing terminal 40, the operation input reception unit 12 receives a request to participate in the video conference as a result of a hardware key or a software key displayed on a touch panel of the information processing terminal 40, instead of the
15 operation button 108, being pressed.

In step S42, in response to the request, the transmission and reception unit 11 of the transmission terminal 10aa transmits participation request information that includes the terminal ID
20 "01aa" of the transmission terminal 10aa and the terminal ID "01db" of the transmission terminal 10db, and indicates to participate in the video conference to the transmission management apparatus 50.

Thereby, the transmission and reception
25 unit 51 of the transmission management apparatus 50

can receive the participation request information and can know the IP address "1.2.1.3" of the transmission terminal 10aa that has transmitted the information.

Next, in step S43, the status management
5 unit 53 of the transmission management apparatus 50 searches the terminal management DB 5003 using the terminal ID "01aa" of the transmission terminal 10aa included in the participation request information as a search key to set the operational status of the
10 transmission terminal 10aa that has requested to participate in the video conference to be "online (under transmission)". Thus, the operational status in the terminal management table 5003T is updated (FIG. 9B).

15 Next, in step S44, the transmission and reception unit 51 of the transmission management apparatus 50 transmits start request information that includes the terminal ID "01aa" of the transmission terminal 10aa to the transmission terminal 10db
20 through the transmission network 2. Thereby, the transmission terminal 10db can know which transmission terminal 10 has requested to participate in the video conference.

Although detailed description will be
25 omitted for the sake of easily understanding the

present invention, the transmission and reception unit 51 of the transmission management apparatus 50 transmits start request information that includes the terminal ID "01aa" of the transmission terminal 10aa
5 also to the transmission terminal 10cb through the transmission network 2 because also the operational status of the transmission terminal 10cb is "online (under transmission)" in the terminal management DB 5003 illustrated in FIG. 9B.

10 Next, in step S45, the transmission terminal 10db transmits reception completion information that indicates that reception of the start request information has been completed, from the transmission and reception unit 11 to the
15 transmission management apparatus 50 via the transmission network 2.

 Next, in step S46, the transmission and reception unit 51 of the transmission management apparatus 50 transmits relay start request
20 information that indicates a request to start relaying to the relay apparatus 30 via the transmission network 2. The relay start request information includes the respective IP addresses "1.2.1.3" and "1.3.2.4" of the transmission terminal
25 10aa and the transmission terminal 10db.

Thereby, in step S47, the relay apparatus
30 establishes a session for transmitting 3 types,
i.e., low resolution, medium resolution, and high
resolution, of image data, and sound data between the
5 transmission terminals 10aa and 10db. Thus, the
transmission terminal 10aa comes to be able to
participate in the video conference with the
transmission terminal 10db.

Also, in step S48, the transmission and
10 reception unit 51 of the transmission management
apparatus 50 transmits terminal status change
information that includes the terminal ID "01aa" and
the operational status "online (under transmission)
of the transmission terminal 10aa to the respective
15 transmission terminals 10 registered in the terminal
management DB 5003 (FIG. 9B). Thereby, the
respective transmission terminals 10 that have
received the terminal status change information can,
as appropriate, store and display the operational
20 status of the transmission terminal 10aa of the
terminal ID "01aa".

FIG. 13 is a sequence diagram illustrating
a data transmission operation between transmission
terminals 10. Note that in the data transmission
25 operation illustrated in FIG. 13, image data and

sound data are transmitted and received in an image and sound data session 300D (FIG. 2).

After the session is established between the transmission terminals 10aa and 10db as described above with reference to FIG. 12, the transmission terminal 10aa transmits image data taken by the imaging unit 14 and sound data converted from a sound signal that is input to the sound input unit 15a to the relay apparatus 30 through the transmission and reception unit 51 in step S60.

In steps S61-1 and S61-2, the relay apparatus 30 that has received the image data and the sound data from the transmission terminal 10aa transmits the received image data and sound data to the respective transmission terminals 10aa and 10db that have participated in the video conference.

In steps S62-1 and S62-2, the respective transmission terminals 10aa and 10db that have received the image data and the sound data from the relay apparatus 30 display images expressed by the received image data on the displays 120 through the display control units 17, and output sounds expressed by the received sound data from the speakers 115 through the sound output units 15b.

Next, in step S63, the transmission

terminal 10db transmits image data taken by the
imaging unit 14 and sound data converted from a sound
signal that is input to the sound input unit 15a to
the relay apparatus 30 through the transmission and
5 reception unit 51.

In steps S64-1 and S64-2, the relay
apparatus 30 that has received the image data and the
sound data from the transmission terminal 10db
transmits the received image data and sound data to
10 the respective transmission terminals 10aa and 10db
that have participated in the video conference.

In steps S65-1 and S65-2, the respective
transmission terminals 10aa and 10db that have
received the image data and the sound data from the
15 relay apparatus 30 display images expressed by the
received image data on the displays 120 through the
display control units 17, and output sounds expressed
by the received sound data from the speakers 115
through the sound output units 15b.

20 Thus, the transmission terminals 10aa and
10db can carry out the video conference through the
relay apparatus 30. Note that in FIG. 13, for the
sake of easily understanding the present embodiment,
the transmission terminals 10 that participate in the
25 video conference are the two transmission terminals

10aa and 10db. However, transmission terminals 10
that participate in a video conference can be three
or more transmission terminals. Also in this case,
image data and sound data are transmitted in the same
5 way as the data transmission operation illustrated in
FIG. 13.

Displaying an image in a transmission
terminal 10 will be described. The display control
unit 17 according to the present embodiment has two
10 display modes, i.e., a full screen display mode and
an information display mode.

First, with reference to FIG. 14, the full
screen display mode will be described. FIG. 14
illustrates one example of a screen page displayed on
15 the display 120 (FIG. 4) in the full screen display
mode. A screen page is displayed in the full screen
display mode as a result of the session being
established in step S47 of FIG. 12, and transmission
and reception of image data and sound data being
20 started. That is, from among the two display modes,
the full screen display mode is a display mode mainly
used during a video conference.

In the full screen display mode, the
display control unit 17 of the transmission terminal
25 10 displays all the images transmitted from the

respective transmission terminals 10 that have participated in the video conference on the display 120. If one image area becomes smaller as a result of all the images being displayed together, the
5 number of the images corresponding to a predetermined upper limit are displayed.

To the display screen page illustrated in FIG. 14, one first image area 500 that is relatively wide and a plurality of second image areas 510 that
10 are relatively narrow are assigned. For example, in the respective second image areas 510, images expressed by image data transmitted from the respective transmission terminals 10 that have participated in the video conference are displayed.
15 In the first image area 500, an image expressed by image data transmitted from a main transmission terminal 10 from among the transmission terminals 10 that have participated in the video conference is displayed.

20 For example, the display control unit 17 identifies, as the main transmission terminal 10, a transmission terminal 10 that has transmitted sound data that expresses a voice from among respective received pieces of sound data received from the
25 transmission terminals 10 that have participated in

the video conference. Sound data that expresses a voice means sound data determined to have a voice period, as a result of the respective received pieces of sound data being processed to determine whether
5 the respective received pieces of sound data include the voice period. Note that detection of the voice period can be implemented using known technology (for example, see Non-Patent Reference NO. 1).

Note that the display screen page
10 illustrated in FIG. 14 is merely one example. In the full screen display mode, it is possible to display respective images in such a manner that all of a plurality of image areas have the same size, display only an image of a main transmission terminal 10
15 throughout the whole area of the display 120, or the like.

Next, the information display mode will be described. As a result of, for example, a user operating an operation button 108 (FIG. 4), it is
20 possible to switch between the two display modes. Note that if the transmission terminal 10 is the information processing terminal 40, it is possible to switch between the two display modes as a result of a hardware key or a software key displayed on a touch
25 panel of the information processing terminal 40,

instead of an operation button 108, being pressed or touched.

FIG. 15 illustrates one example of a screen page displayed on the display 120 (FIG. 4) in the information display mode. As illustrated in FIG. 15, in the information display mode, the display control unit 17 of the transmission terminal 10 displays terminal information that includes at least the terminal names and the terminal IDs of the respective transmission terminals 10 that have participated in the video conference on the display 120.

To the display screen page illustrated in FIG. 15, an image display area 520 for displaying an image, and a terminal information display area 530 for displaying terminal information. For example, in the terminal information display area 530, a list of items of terminal information of the transmission terminals 10 that have participated in the video conference is displayed.

Note that, in the list of items of terminal information, an item of terminal information that does not include a terminal name corresponds a transmission terminal 10 that has not been registered as a candidate for a destination terminal of the transmission terminal 10 that displays the display

screen page in the destination list management DB 5004 (FIG. 10).

For example, in the display screen page illustrated in FIG. 15, because the transmission terminal 10db is registered as a candidate for a destination terminal of the transmission terminal 10aa in the destination list management DB 5004, the terminal name is displayed. In contrast thereto, because the transmission terminal 10cb is not registered as a candidate for a destination terminal of the transmission terminal 10aa in the destination list management DB 5004, the terminal name is not displayed.

In the image display area 520, an image expressed by image data of the main transmission terminal 10 from among the transmission terminals 10 that have participated in the video conference is displayed. For example, the display control unit 17 identifies, as the main transmission terminal 10, the transmission terminal 10 that has transmitted sound data that expresses a voice from among the received pieces of sound data from the transmission terminals 10 that have participated in the video conference. Also, the display control unit 17 may identify a selected transmission terminal 10 as the main

transmission terminal if the operation input
reception unit 12 receives a selection operation for
one transmission terminal 10 from among the
transmission terminals 10 that have participated in
5 the video conference in response to the corresponding
user's operation of a operation button 108. Note
that if the transmission terminal 10 is the
information processing terminal 40, the information
processing terminal 40 identifies the selected
10 transmission terminal 10 as the main transmission
terminal 10 as a result of a hardware key or a
software key displayed on a touch panel of the
information processing terminal 40, instead of a
operation button 108, being pressed.

15 FIG. 16 is a sequence diagram illustrating
a terminal information displaying operation of
displaying terminal information in the terminal
information display area 530 when the transmission
terminal 10 has switched the display mode into the
20 information display mode. Note that, in the terminal
information displaying operation illustrated in FIG.
16, various sorts of information is transmitted and
received in a management information session 300I
(FIG. 2).

25 First, in step S70, the transmission

terminal 10 transmits a terminal information request
signal that requests terminal information of the
transmission terminals 10 that have participated in
the video conference to the transmission management
5 apparatus 50.

In step S71, the terminal status
acquisition unit 55 that has received the terminal
information request signal of the transmission
management apparatus 50 searches the terminal
10 management DB 5003 (FIG. 9B) of the storage unit 5000
using the IP address of the transmission terminal 10
that has transmitted the terminal information request
signal as a search key to acquire the terminal ID of
the transmission terminal that has transmitted the
15 terminal information request signal.

Next, in step S72, the terminal status
acquisition unit 55 searches the terminal management
DB 5003 to retrieve the terminal IDs and the terminal
names for which the operational statuses are "online
20 (under transmission)". In the present embodiment,
the terminal IDs retrieved by the terminal status
acquisition unit 55 are "01aa", "01cb", and "01db".
Note that the operational status of the transmission
terminal having the terminal ID "01aa" is set as
25 "online (under transmission)" in step S43 of FIG. 12

(FIG. 9B).

Next, in step S73, the terminal status acquisition unit 55 searches the destination list management DB 5004 (FIG. 10) of the storage unit 5000
5 using the terminal ID (in the present embodiment, "01aa") detected in step S71 as a search key to acquire the terminal IDs of candidates for destination terminals of the transmission terminal 10 that has transmitted the terminal information request
10 signal.

For example, assuming that the terminal ID of the transmission terminal 10 that has transmitted the terminal information request signal is "01aa", the terminal IDs retrieved by the terminal status
15 acquisition unit 55 are "01ab", "01ba", and "01db".

Next, in step S74, the terminal status acquisition unit 55 determines whether the respective terminal IDs retrieved in step S72 are included in the terminal ID of the transmission terminal 10 that
20 has transmitted the terminal information request signal and the terminal IDs retrieved in step S73. Concerning the terminal IDs from among the respective terminal IDs retrieved in step S72 determined to be included in the terminal IDs of the transmission
25 terminal 10 that has transmitted the terminal

information request signal and the terminal IDs
retrieved in step S73, the terminal status
acquisition unit 55 causes the transmission and
reception unit 51 to transmit the corresponding
5 terminal IDs and terminal names to the transmission
terminal 10 that has transmitted the terminal
information request signal. Concerning the terminal
IDs from among the respective terminal IDs retrieved
in step S72 determined to be not included in the
10 terminal ID of the transmission terminal 10 that has
transmitted the terminal information request signal
and the terminal IDs retrieved in step S73, the
terminal status acquisition unit 55 causes the
transmission and reception unit 51 to transmit only
15 the corresponding terminal IDs to the transmission
terminal 10 that has transmitted the terminal
information request signal.

For example, if the transmission terminal
10 that has transmitted the terminal information
20 request signal has the terminal ID "01aa", the
terminal IDs "01aa" and "01db" and the terminal names
"Japan Tokyo office AA terminal" and "USA Washington
office DB terminal" of the transmission terminal 10aa
and the transmission terminal 10db, and the terminal
25 ID "01cb" of the transmission terminal 10cb are

transmitted to the transmission terminal 10aa that has transmitted the terminal information request signal.

In step S75, the display control unit 17
5 that has received the response of the transmission terminal 10 displays the corresponding contents in the terminal information display area 530 as illustrated in the display screen page illustrated in FIG. 15.

10 Displaying the number of bases, and so forth, in the full screen display mode will be described. From the display screen page of the full screen display mode illustrated in FIG. 14, a participant of the video conference can easily know
15 the other participants who have participated in the conference if the number of the transmission terminals 10 that have participated in the conference is small. However, if the number of the transmission terminals 10 that have participated in the conference
20 becomes greater, it is not possible for a participant of the video conference to easily know the other participants who have participated in the conference. This point will now be described with reference to drawings.

25 FIG. 17A illustrates one example of a

display screen page in the full screen display mode
when the number of bases is 4. The display screen
page of FIG. 17A has a wider first image area 171,
and 3 second image areas 172 narrower than the first
5 image area 171. In the same way as FIG. 14, in each
second image area 172, images expressed by image data
transmitted from the respective transmission
terminals 10 that have participated in the video
conference are displayed, while in the first image
10 area 171, an image expressed by image data
transmitted from the main transmission terminal 10
from among the transmission terminals 10 that have
participated in the video conference is displayed.

If the number of bases is on the order of 4,
15 it is not impossible for a user to identify a
participant from one second image area 172. However,
if, as illustrated in FIG. 17B, the number of bases
becomes greater, it is difficult for a participant to
identify the other participants. FIG. 17B
20 illustrates one example of a display screen page in
the full screen display mode when the number of bases
is 9.

Further, in consideration of usefulness, it
is desired to set an upper limit (referred to as a
25 "display upper limit") for the number of bases that

the display 120 displays simultaneously. However, the number of bases (referred to as a "base upper limit") among which transmission terminals 10 can carry out a video conference may not be the same as the display upper limit. If the display upper limit is greater than or equal to the base upper limit, each transmission terminal 10 can display the images of all the bases on the display 120. However, if the display upper limit is less than the base upper limit, it is not possible for some bases to be displayed on the transmission terminal 10.

There is a case where the terminal names and the terminal IDs of the transmission terminals 10 of all the bases can be displayed, as a result of the user operating an operation button 108 (FIG. 4) to switch the display mode into the information display mode as illustrated in FIG. 16. However, in this case, the user is required to perform the operation to implement the switching.

Further, during the information display mode, because the image of one main base is displayed while the images of the other bases are not displayed, it is not possible to know the situations in the other bases.

Therefore, in the transmission terminal 10

according to the present embodiment, the number of bases that have participated in the video conference is displayed while the full screen display mode is kept. Therefore, a participant of a video conference
5 can know the number of bases in a real-time manner while the full screen display mode is kept.

FIG. 18 illustrates one example of a display screen page where the number of bases is displayed in the full screen display mode. In the
10 auxiliary area display unit 18 (FIG. 7) displays the number of bases in an auxiliary area 173 in the full screen display mode. In FIG. 18, the auxiliary area 173 is a belt-like blank space at the top of the display screen page. However, the auxiliary area 173
15 may be a belt-like blank space at the right end, the left end, or the bottom end of the display screen page, or may be displayed in the image in a superimposing manner.

The auxiliary area 173 is segmented into a
20 first area ar1 through a sixth area ar6. In the first area ar1, the terminal ID of the transmission terminal 10 that displays the display screen page is displayed. A user who wishes to participate in the same video conference as the transmission terminal 10
25 that displays the display screen page can query the

displayed terminal ID, and input the acquired
terminal ID from the transmission terminal 10 that
the user is operating or select the acquired terminal
ID displayed on the transmission terminal 10 that the
5 user is operating to participate in the video
conference. In the second area ar2, the number of
bases (the number of the participants) is displayed.
In the third area ar3, the period of time elapsed
from when the session was established is displayed.
10 In the fourth area ar4, any information can be
displayed. In the fifth area ar5, network band
information (i.e., respective communications rates in
the uplink and the downlink) is displayed. In the
sixth area ar6, a cursor is displayed.
15 Note that the number of bases may be
displayed at any one of the first through sixth areas.
If the auxiliary area 173 is not segmented, the
number of bases may be displayed at any position in
the auxiliary area 173. However, as a result of the
20 auxiliary area 173 being segmented, visibility of the
user for the display screen page is improved.

The cursor in the sixth area ar6 is an icon
for the user to indicate that it is possible to
switch whether to display the various sorts of
25 information of the first area ar1 through the sixth

area ar6 in the auxiliary area 173 by operating an operation button 108 (FIG. 2) of the transmission terminal 10. That is, according to an initial setting of the transmission terminal 10, the various sorts of information of the first area ar1 through the sixth area ar6 is displayed in the auxiliary area 173. However, the user can switch the setting into such a setting as to not display the various sorts of information of the first area ar1 through the sixth area ar6 in the auxiliary area 173 by operating the operation button 108.

Note that if the transmission terminal 10 is the information processing terminal 40, it is possible to not display the various sorts of information of the first area ar1 through the sixth area ar6 in the auxiliary area 173 as a result of a hardware key or a software key displayed on a touch panel of the information processing terminal 40, instead of the operation button 108, being pressed.

In FIG. 18, images of 4 bases are displayed on the display 120. Therefore, the number of bases in the second area ar2 is "4". The user can know that the number of bases that have participated in the video conference at a glance.

FIG. 19 illustrates another example of a

display screen page where the number of bases is
displayed in the full screen display mode. In FIG.
19, the same elements as the elements of FIG. 18
have the same or similar functions, and therefore,
5 different points will be described.

In FIG. 19, the display screen page is
divided into nine areas. Also, the number of second
areas ar2 is "9". Therefore, even if the number of
bases increases, the user can know the number of
10 bases that have participated in the video conference
at a glance.

For the sake of convenience of description,
it is assumed that the display upper limit in the
transmission terminal 10 is "9". When the display
15 upper limit in the transmission terminal 10 is "9",
10 or more transmission terminals 10 may be
participating in the video conference. In this case,
the transmission terminal 10 keeps the number of
images displayed in the full screen display mode as
20 "9" as it is, while the transmission terminal 10
displays the number of transmission terminals 10 that
have participated in the video conference in the
second area ar2 as the number of bases.

FIG. 20 illustrates one example of a
25 display screen page where the number of images

displayed in the full screen display mode is different from the number of bases displayed in the second area ar2. In FIG. 20, while the number of images displayed in the full screen display mode is "9", the number of bases displayed in the second area ar2 is "15". Thus, even when the number of bases that have participated in a video conference exceeds the display upper limit, the user can know the number of bases that have participated in the video conference at a glance.

The layout (i.e., the arrangement) in the auxiliary area 173 is prescribed in the layout information 2000L (FIG. 7) stored in the storage unit 2000 of the UI providing apparatus 20. The layout information 2000L is described based on a language or a standard such as HTML, JavaScript (registered trademark), XML, CSS, or the like.

According to the layout information 2000L, the position of the auxiliary area 173, the manner that the auxiliary area 173 is segmented into the first area through the sixth area having respective fixed sizes, and respective items of information displayed in the first area ar1 through the sixth area ar6 are determined. Therefore, the transmission terminal 10 that has acquired the layout information

2000L from the UI providing apparatus 20 can set various sorts of information in the first area ar1 through the sixth area ar6, and display the information in the first area ar1 through the sixth
5 area ar6.

As illustrated in FIGs. 17A and 17B, and so forth, the arrangement (layout) in which the transmission terminal 10 displays image data received from the destination terminals on the display 120 in
10 the full screen display mode is previously determined depending on the number of bases, and so forth. In contrast thereto, the layout information 2000L is defined separately from the layout of image data. Therefore, it is possible to determine information to
15 be arranged in the auxiliary area 173 and the arrangement in the auxiliary area 173 without being influenced by the layout of image data. That is, the transmission terminal 10 can display the first area ar1 through the sixth area ar6 in the auxiliary area
20 independently from image data, and therefore, even if the layout of image data is changed, the auxiliary area 173 is not influenced by the change.

FIG. 21 is one example of a sequence diagram illustrating a procedure in which the
25 transmission system 1 displays the number of bases

when the transmission terminal 10 is in the full screen display mode. The procedure of FIG. 21 is carried out after the session is established in step S47 of FIG. 12 even when the user does not operate
5 the operation button 108 (FIG. 4) or the like. That is, in the transmission terminal 10, an initial setting to display the auxiliary area 173 has been set.

The procedure of FIG. 21 may also be
10 carried out as a result of, after the session is established in step S47, the user pressing an operation button 108. Note that, in this regard, if the transmission terminal 10 is the information processing terminal 40, the procedure of FIG. 21 is
15 carried out as a result of a hardware key or a software key displayed on a touch panel of the information processing terminal 40, instead of the operation button 108, being pressed.

First, in step S80, the transmission
20 terminal 10 designates the URI of the UI providing apparatus 20 acquired in step S25 of FIG. 11 to transmit a layout information request signal (one example of an arrangement information request) for requesting the layout information 2000L to the UI
25 providing apparatus 20. Note that, instead of

acquiring the URI of the UI providing apparatus 20 in step S25 of FIG. 11, the URI of the UI providing apparatus 20 may be acquired, for example, by the transmission terminal 10 from the transmission management apparatus 50 immediately before step S80, or by the user pressing an operation button 108. Note that if the transmission terminal 10 is the information processing terminal 40, the URI of the UI providing apparatus 20 is acquired as a result of a hardware key or a software key displayed on a touch panel of the information processing terminal 40, instead of the operation button 108, being pressed.

In step S81, the transmission and reception unit 21 of the UI providing apparatus 20 receives the layout information request signal, and, as a result, the server unit 22 reads the storage unit 2000 based on the designated URI to acquire the layout information 2000L.

Next, in step S82, the server unit 22 transmits the layout information 2000L that has been read through the transmission and reception unit 21 to the transmission terminal 10 that has transmitted the layout information request signal.

In step S83, the transmission and reception unit 11 of the transmission terminal 10 stores the

layout information 2000L in a volatile memory. The
volatile memory is, for example, the RAM 103. that
is, by storing the layout information 2000L that has
been acquired once in the transmission terminal 10,
5 it is not necessary to again acquire the layout
information 2000L from the UI providing apparatus 20
during the power being supplied. Therefore, even if
the transmission terminal 10 again displays the
auxiliary area 173 after having removed the auxiliary
10 area 173 once, the transmission terminal 10 can read
the layout information 2000L from the volatile memory
of the transmission terminal 10. Therefore, it is
possible to eliminate a processing time to acquire
the layout information 2000L, and as a result, a time
15 for displaying the auxiliary area 173 can be reduced.
Also, as a result of the layout information 2000L
being stored in a volatile memory, the layout
information 2000L is deleted as a result of the power
being turned off in the transmission terminal 10.
20 Thus, it is possible to prevent the layout
information 2000L from being leaked from the
transmission terminal 10.

Next, in step S84, the auxiliary area
display unit 18 of the transmission terminal 10 (FIG.
25 7) transmits a terminal information request signal to

the transmission management apparatus 50. The terminal information request signal is a signal to request the number of the transmission terminals 10 which have participated in the video conference.

5 In step S85, the transmission and reception unit 51 of the transmission management apparatus 50 receives the terminal information request signal, and as a result, the terminal status acquisition unit 55 searches the terminal management DB 5003 to calculate
10 the number of terminal IDs for which the operational statuses are "online (under transmission)". That is, the terminal status acquisition unit 55 identifies the terminal management table 5003T (FIG. 9B) that registers the IP address of the transmission terminal
15 10 that has transmitted the terminal information request signal, and identifies all of the terminal IDs for which the operational statuses are "online (under transmission)" from the identified terminal management table 5003T to acquire the number of the
20 terminal IDs. According to the present embodiment, the terminal status acquisition unit 55 detects the terminal IDs, i.e., "01aa", "01cb", and "01db". Thus, the number of the terminal IDs is "3". Note that the operational status of the transmission terminal 10aa
25 that has the terminal ID "01aa" is set to be "online

(under transmission)" in step S43 of FIG. 12.

Note that it is possible to acquire the number of the transmission terminals 10 of "online (transmission possible)" in addition to the number of
5 transmission terminals 10 of "online (under transmission)". As a result, each transmission terminal 10 can display the number of the transmission terminals 10 that have logged in on the display 120. It is also possible to separately
10 acquire the number of the transmission terminals 10 of "online (under transmission)", and the number of the transmission terminals 10 of "online (transmission possible)", and each transmission terminal 10 can display these numbers separately on
15 the display 120. As a result, it is possible to know that there are users who have not participated in the conference if these numbers are not the same as one another, for example. Next, in step S86, the terminal status acquisition unit 55 transmits,
20 through the transmission and reception unit 51, the acquired number of the terminal ID of "online (under transmission)" to the transmission terminal 10 that has transmitted the terminal information request signal.

25 Note that the terminal status acquisition

unit 55 may transmit the terminal IDs of "online (under transmission)" also to other transmission terminals 10 than the transmission terminal 10 that has transmitted the terminal information request signal. For example, after the number of the terminal IDs of online is transmitted to the transmission terminal 10aa that has the terminal ID "01aa" in step S86, the number of the terminal IDs of online may be transmitted also to the transmission terminals 10cb and 10db that have the terminal IDs "01cb" and "01db". Thereby, each of the transmission terminals 10cb and 10db having the terminal IDs "01cb" and "01db" can display the number of the bases in the auxiliary area 173 only by receiving the layout information 2000L.

In step S87, the transmission and reception unit 11 of the transmission terminal 10 receives the number of the terminal IDs of "online (under transmission)", and the auxiliary area display unit 18 displays the number on the display 120. That is, the auxiliary area display unit 18 interprets the layout information 2000L to determines a position of the auxiliary area 173 and a layout of the first area ar1 through the sixth area ar6, sets the respective items of information in the first area ar1 through

the sixth area ar6, and displays the information on the display 120.

The terminal ID of the transmission terminal 10 itself in the first area ar1 has been
5 stored in the storage unit 1000. The number of bases in the second area ar2 is transmitted from the transmission management apparatus 50. The period of time elapsed from when the session has been established in the third area ar3 is measured by the
10 transmission terminal 10 after the session has been established. Information in the fourth area ar4 is, for example, information that the transmission terminal 10 or the transmission management apparatus 50 has. Information concerning a network band in the
15 fifth area ar5 is displayed in such a manner that the transmission terminal 10 measures the communications rate between the transmission terminal 10 and the relay apparatus 30 periodically or in a real-time manner, and displays the measured rate. The cursor
20 in the sixth area ar6 is image data such as a previously determined icon.

Note that the displayed auxiliary area 173 can be removed as a result of the user operating an operation button 108. Also, the displayed auxiliary
25 area 173 can be again displayed as a result of the

user operating an operation button 108.

Thus, the transmission terminal 10 can display the number of bases which have participated in the video conference without entering an
5 information display mode. Therefore, the user need not operate an operation button 108, or the like. Because the transmission terminal 10 is kept in the full screen display mode, the user can know the number of bases while seeing images of the respective
10 bases. Even if the number of bases that have participated in the video conference exceeds the display upper limit, the user can accurately know the number of bases.

The user is allowed to set either one of a
15 manner to "display in response to being operated" the auxiliary area 173 or a manner to "remove after elapse of certain period of time" the once displayed auxiliary area 173 to the transmission terminal 10.

FIG. 22 illustrates one example of a screen
20 page from which the user performs a setting to display the auxiliary area 173. The screen page of FIG. 22 is displayed on the display 120 in response to the user operating, for example, an operation button 108. The screen page of FIG. 22 includes two
25 radio buttons 221 and 222, a message 223 "display in

response to being operated" associated with the radio button 221, and a message 224 "remove after elapse of certain period of time" associated with the radio button 222. The user can select either one of the
5 two radio buttons 221 and 222.

If the radio button 221 is selected, the transmission terminal 10 continuously displays the auxiliary area 173, and removes the auxiliary area 173 when the user performs an operation to remove the
10 auxiliary area 173. If the user performs an operation to display the auxiliary area 173, the transmission terminal 10 displays the auxiliary area 173. If the radio button 222 is selected, the transmission terminal 10 removes the auxiliary area
15 173 after displaying the auxiliary area 173 for a certain period of time, and again displays the auxiliary area 173 in response to a detection of a trigger to again display the auxiliary area 173. Also in this case, the user may display or remove the
20 auxiliary area 173 by performing an operation as one example of the trigger.

If the radio button 222 is selected, a message "set certain period" 225 becomes visible, and also, the user is allowed to set a numeral in a time
25 period setting field 226. The user can set a period

of time for which the auxiliary area 173 will be displayed and will be removed thereafter in the time period setting field 226. Before the user sets the period of time, a certain initial value has been set.

5 The user of the transmission terminal 10 can set any period of time in the time period setting field 226. An upper limit and a lower limit may be prescribed to limit a period of time that can be set in the time period setting field 226.

10 Next, operations of the transmission management apparatus 50 and the transmission terminal 10 after the transmission terminal 10 displays the auxiliary area 173 in step S87 of FIG. 21 will now be described.

15 FIG. 23 is one example of a flowchart illustrating operations of the transmission management apparatus 50. A process of FIG. 23 is, for example, carried out repetitiously after the transmission management apparatus 50 calculates the
20 number of the online terminal IDs in step S85 of FIG. 21.

 In step S85-1, the terminal status acquisition unit 55 (FIG. 7) monitors the terminal management table 5003T in which the IP address (or
25 the terminal ID) of the transmission terminal 10 that

has transmitted the terminal information request signal is registered.

In step S85-2, the terminal status acquisition unit 55 determines whether the number of
5 the terminal IDs of "online (under transmission)" transmitted in step S85 of FIG. 21 has increased or decreased.

If the determination result in step S85-2 is NO, the process of FIG. 23 is once ended, and the
10 process is then repetitiously carried out from step S85-1.

If the determination result in step S85-2 is YES, this means that the number of bases has changed. Therefore, in step S85-3, the terminal
15 status acquisition unit 55 transmits the number of terminal IDs each of which currently has the operational status "online (under transmission)" to the transmission terminal 10. Therefore, the transmission terminal 10 that has once acquired the
20 number of the terminal IDs of "online (under transmission)" can acquire the correct number of bases at any time.

Also in FIG. 23, the terminal status acquisition unit 55 may transmit the number of the
25 terminal IDs of "online (under transmission)" also to

the transmission terminals 10 of "online (under transmission)" other than the transmission terminal 10 that has transmitted the terminal information request signal. Thereby, all the transmission
5 terminals 10 of online can have the correct number of bases at any time.

FIG. 24 is one example of a flowchart illustrating an operation procedure of the transmission terminal 10. The process of FIG. 24 is,
10 for example, repetitiously carried out after the transmission terminal 10 displays the auxiliary area 173 in step S87 of FIG. 21. FIG. 24 now will be described assuming a case where a setting is made to select the manner "remove after elapse of certain
15 period of time" the once displayed auxiliary area 173.

First, in step S87-1, the auxiliary area display unit 18 (FIG. 7) determines whether the auxiliary area display unit 18 is currently displaying the auxiliary area 173.

20 If the determination result in step S87-1 is YES, the auxiliary area display unit 18 determines in step S87-2 whether the period of time that has elapsed from when the auxiliary area display unit 18 starts displaying the auxiliary area 173 exceeds the
25 certain period of time.

If the determination result of step S87-2 is YES, the auxiliary area display unit 18 removes the auxiliary area 173 in step S87-3. Therefore, the participant can participate in the video conference while paying attention mainly to the images of the respective bases.

If the determination result of step S87-2 is NO, the auxiliary area display unit 18 keeps displaying the auxiliary area 173.

10 If the determination result of step S87-1 is NO, the auxiliary area display unit 18 determines whether a trigger to display the auxiliary area 173 occurs. The trigger is a case where the auxiliary area display unit 18 has received the number of the terminal IDs of "online (under transmission)" from 15 the transmission management apparatus 50, or a case where the user has performed an operation to display the auxiliary area 173.

First, in step S87-4, the auxiliary area display unit 18 determines whether the auxiliary area display unit 18 has received the number of the terminal IDs of "online (under transmission)" from 20 the transmission management apparatus 50.

If the determination result of step S87-4 is YES, the auxiliary area display unit 18 again 25

displays the auxiliary area 173 based on the layout information 2000L stored in the RAM 103, in step S87-5. Thereby, if the number of bases has changed, the transmission terminal 10 can immediately reflect the
5 changed number of bases in the auxiliary area 173.

If the determination result of step S87-4 is NO, the auxiliary area display unit 18 determines in step S87-6 whether the user has performed an operation to display the auxiliary area 173.

10 If the determination result of step S87-6 is YES, the auxiliary area display unit 18 displays the auxiliary area 173 based on the layout information 2000L stored in the RAM 103 in step S87-5. Thereby, the user can display the auxiliary area 173
15 at any timing.

If each of both the determination results of step S87-4 and step S87-6 is NO, the auxiliary area display unit 18 keeps not displaying the auxiliary area 173.

20 Thus, the auxiliary area 173 is displayed when the number of bases has changed. Therefore, the user can easily know that the number of bases has changed. Because the auxiliary area 173 is removed after the elapse of the certain period of time, the
25 user can participate in the video conference while

paying attention mainly to the images of the respective bases.

If the user wishes to know details of bases which have participated in the video conference as a
5 result of knowing a change in the number of bases or knowing the number of bases, the user can switch the display mode into the information display mode.
Because the user can switch the display mode into the information display mode when the number of bases has
10 changed, the user need not switch the display mode into the information display mode to know the number of bases or the bases which have participated in the video conference.

The transmission terminals, the
15 transmission management apparatuses, the programs, the transmission methods, and the transmission systems have been described in the embodiments.
However, the present invention is not limited to the above-mentioned embodiments, and various
20 modifications and improvements can be made within the scope of the present invention.

For example, the relay apparatuses 30, the transmission management apparatus 50 and the program providing apparatus 90 can be established by a single
25 computer instead of being provided separately. Also,

the respective elements and the storage units 1000, 2000, 3000, and 5000 of the relay apparatuses 30, the transmission management apparatus 50 and the program providing apparatus 90 can be freely assigned to a plurality of computers. In this case, the UI providing apparatus 20 can be included as a function of any one of the computers.

Also, as an example of quality of an image relayed by a relay apparatus 30, resolution of an image of image data is managed in the above-mentioned embodiments. However, what is managed is not limited to this example. As others example of quality to be managed, a depth of image quality of image data, a sampling frequency used when a sound is sampled to acquire sound data, a bit length in a sound of sound data, or the like, can be managed. Also, it is possible that sound data is transmitted and received in a manner that the sound data is separated into respective pieces that have 3 types of resolution (high resolution, medium resolution, and low resolution).

Also, in FIG. 9A and 9B, the IP addresses of the transmission terminals 10 are managed. However, what is managed is not limited to IP addresses, and any other information for identifying

the transmission terminals 10 in the transmission network 2 may be used. For example, FQDNs (Fully Qualified Domain Names) of the transmission terminals 10 may be managed. In this case, through
5 a known DNS (Domain Name System) server, the IP addresses corresponding to the FQDNs are acquired.

Also, in the above-mentioned embodiments, a video conference system has been described as one example of the transmission system 1. However, the
10 transmission system 1 is not limited to the video conference system. For example, the transmission system 1 may be a telephone system of IP (Internet Protocol) phones, internet phones or the like, or an interactive white board system.

15 Also, the transmission system 1 can be a car navigation system. In this case, for example, one transmission terminal 10 corresponds to a car navigation apparatus mounted in an automobile, and another transmission terminal 10 corresponds to a
20 management terminal or a management server in a management center that manages car navigation, or a car navigation apparatus mounted in another automobile.

FIG. 25 illustrates one example of a system
25 configuration in a case where transmission terminals

10 are applied as car navigation apparatuses. In this case, one transmission terminal 10 corresponds to the car navigation apparatus 200-2 mounted in an automobile 601. Another transmission terminal 10
5 corresponds to a management terminal 200-1 used by a communicator in a management center 604, a management server 603 that manages the car navigation apparatuses, or the car navigation apparatus 200-3 mounted in another automobile 602.

10 FIG. 26 illustrates one example of a configuration diagram of an in-vehicle car navigation apparatus. The car navigation apparatus 200-2 includes a control unit 611 controlling the entirety of the apparatus, a GPS receiver 612, a vehicle speed
15 sensor 613, a gyro sensor 614, and a road map data 615. Also, to the control unit 611, a transmission terminal 10 of the present embodiment is connected. The control unit 611 is an information processing apparatus such as a microcomputer, executes a program
20 to carry out a function as the car navigation apparatus. The GPS receiver 612 captures GPS satellite signals to output the coordinates of the current position. The vehicle speed sensor 613 detects the vehicle speed (i.e., the rotational speed
25 of the wheels). The gyro sensor 614 detects the

angular velocity, and, as a result of integrating the angular velocity, it is possible to detect the direction in which the vehicle travels.

5 The road map data 615 is data that expresses roads by combinations of nodes and links, and can be downloaded from the outside or can be previously held by the vehicle. The road map data is displayed on the display 120.

10 Note that the car navigation apparatus 200-2 may have, in addition to the configuration illustrated, an audio function to output music or TV broadcasts. Also, the car navigation apparatus 200-2 may further have a browser function to display Web sites.

15 The control unit 611 estimates the position of the vehicle by applying autonomous navigation that accumulates travel distances detected by the vehicle speed sensor 613 in the travel direction detected by the gyro sensor 614 to the position information that
20 is detected by the GPS receiver 612. The position of the vehicle is displayed in the road map in a form of a vehicle mark.

25 The car navigation apparatus 200-2 is connected to the transmission network 2 through the function of the transmission terminal 10 or via a

cell phone network through a cell phone, or the like.

The transmission terminal 10 as the car navigation apparatus 200-2 displays a screen page of a destination list on the display 120 such as the
5 destination list of FIG. 27. The destination list is a display screen page where, in a destination list frame 1100-1, terminal IDs 1100-2, terminal names 1100-3, and icons 1100-4a through 1100-4c representing status information of destination
10 terminal candidates are included. The occupant selects a destination terminal from the list of destination terminals displayed on the display 120. After logging in, the transmission terminal 10 can transmit and receive image data from the camera,
15 voice data, and so forth. Also, as a result of the occupant performing an operation on the transmission terminal 10, the transmission terminal 10 can take display data such as a road map, a TV picture, or the like. In this case, the car navigation apparatus
20 200-2 can transmit display data to the car navigation apparatus that is the destination terminal.

Thus, merely the mounting place becomes the moving body, image data, voice data, and display data can be transmitted and received in a manner the same
25 as or similar to a transmission terminal 10 in an

office.

Also, in the above-mentioned embodiments, as an example of content data, image data and sound data are processed. However, content data is not
5 limited to image data and sound data, and content data may be touch data. In this case, a feeling generated when a user touches one transmission terminal 10 is transmitted to another transmission terminal 10.

10 Also, content data may be smell data. In this a case, a smell on the side of one transmission terminal is transmitted to another transmission terminal. Also, content data may be at least one of image data, sound data, touch data, and smell data.

15 Also, in the above-mentioned embodiments, the case where the transmission system 1 is used to carry out a video conference. However, applications of the transmission system 1 are not limited to this case. The transmission system 1 may be used for a
20 meeting, a general conversation among family members, friends, or the like, or submitting information unidirectionally.

The present application claims priority to Japanese Patent Application No. 2014-071406, filed
25 March 31, 2014. The contents of Japanese Patent

Application No. 2014-071406 are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

Description of the Reference Numeral

5	1 transmission system
	10 transmission terminal
	11 transmission and reception unit
	12 operation input reception unit
	15a sound input unit
10	15b sound input unit
	17 display control unit
	18 auxiliary area display unit
	19 storing and reading process unit
	30 relay apparatus
15	50 transmission management apparatus
	51 transmission and reception unit
	52 terminal authentication unit
	53 status management unit
	54 terminal extraction unit
20	55 terminal status acquisition unit
	59 storing and reading process unit
	120 display (display device)

CLAIMS

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Claim 1. A transmission terminal that is connected to a transmission management apparatus, managing a plurality of transmission terminals, via a network, and carries out transmission with at least

10 one of other transmission terminals, comprising:

a transmission means configured to transmit a terminal information request to request the number of transmission terminals under transmission to the transmission management apparatus; and

15 a display means configured to display image data received from the transmission terminal under transmission on a display device, and display the number of the transmission terminals under transmission received from the transmission
20 management apparatus in response to the terminal information request on the display device.

25

Claim 2. The transmission terminal
according to claim 1, wherein the number of pieces of
image data displayed on the display device is within
a maximum number of pieces of image data displayable
5 on the display device.

10 Claim 3. The transmission terminal
according to claim 2, wherein the display means is
configured to display the pieces of image data within
the maximum number on the display device if the
number of the transmission terminals under
15 transmission is greater than the maximum number, and
display the number of transmission terminals under
transmission on the display device,.

20

Claim 4. The transmission terminal
according to any one of claims 1-3, wherein the
display means is configured to display the number of
25 the transmission terminals under transmission on the

display device based on predetermined arrangement information.

5

Claim 5. The transmission terminal according to claim 4, wherein

the transmission means is configured to
10 transmit an arrangement information request to
request the arrangement information to an apparatus
other than the plurality of transmission terminals
connected to the network, and

the display means is configured to display
15 the number of the transmission terminals under
transmission on the display device according to the
predetermined arrangement information received in
response to the arrangement information request.

20

Claim 6. The transmission terminal according to claim 4 or 5, further comprising a
25 position information acquisition means configured to

acquire position information of a position where the arrangement information is stored in the network from the transmission management apparatus, wherein

the transmission means is configured to
5 transmit an arrangement information request for the arrangement information stored in the position of the position information.

10

Claim 7. The transmission terminal according to any one of claims 4-6, further comprising a storage means configured to store the
15 arrangement information received in response to an arrangement information request, wherein

the display means is configured to display the number of the transmission terminals under transmission on the display device according to the
20 arrangement information read from the storage means, in case of displaying the number of the transmission terminals under transmission on the display device after a state where the number of the transmission terminals under transmission is displayed on the
25 display device is changed into a state where the

number of the transmission terminals under
transmission is not displayed on the display device.

5

Claim 8. The transmission terminal
according to claim 7, wherein the arrangement
information stored in the storage means is cleared
10 when power in the transmission terminal is turned off.

15 Claim 9. The transmission terminal
according to any one of claims 1-8, wherein the
display means is configured to not display the number
of the transmission terminals under transmission on
the display device if a certain period of time has
20 elapsed from a display of the number of the
transmission terminals under transmission on the
display device.

25

Claim 10. The transmission terminal
according to claim 9, wherein the display means is
configured to display the number of the transmission
terminals under transmission on the display device
5 received from the transmission management apparatus
in response to reception of the number of the
transmission terminals under transmission from the
transmission management apparatus, if the number of
the transmission terminals under transmission has
10 been received from the transmission management
apparatus in a state where the display means does not
display the number of the transmission terminals
under transmission.

15

Claim 11. The transmission terminal
according to claim 9 or 10, further comprising a
20 setting reception means configured to receive a
setting of the certain period of time.

25

Claim 12. The transmission terminal
according to any one of claims 1-10, further
comprising an operation reception means configured to
receive a user's operation for displaying the number
5 of the transmission terminals under transmission,
wherein

the display means is configured to display
the number of the transmission terminals under
transmission on the display device if the operation
10 reception means has received the user's operation.

15 Claim 13. The transmission terminal
according to any one of claims 1-12, wherein the
display means is configured to display identification
information of the transmission terminal on the
display device.

20

Claim 14. The transmission terminal
25 according to claim 13, wherein the identification

information is such that another transmission terminal will receive an input of the identification information to participate in the same conference as the transmission terminal.

5

Claim 15. A transmission management
10 apparatus that manages a plurality of transmission terminals, comprising:

a reception means configured to receive a request to participate in a conference from one transmission terminal of the plurality of
15 transmission terminals;

a calculation means configured to calculate the number of transmission terminals under transmission having participated in the conference in response to a request from the transmission terminal;
20 and

a transmission means configured to transmit the number of the transmission terminals under transmission calculated by the calculation means to the transmission terminal for displaying the number
25 of the transmission terminals under transmission on a

display device of the transmission terminal together with image data transmitted from the transmission terminal under transmission.

5

Claim 16. A program causing an information processing apparatus that is connected to a transmission management apparatus, managing a plurality of transmission terminals, via a network, and carries out transmission with at least one of the plurality of transmission terminals to carry out transmitting a terminal information request to request the number of transmission terminals under transmission to the transmission management apparatus; and displaying image data received from the transmission terminal under transmission on a display device, and displaying the number of the transmission terminals under transmission received from the transmission management apparatus in response to the terminal information request on the display device.

25

Claim 17. A transmission method for carrying out transmission with at least one of a plurality of transmission terminals managed by a transmission management apparatus, the method

5 comprising:

transmitting a terminal information request to request the number of transmission terminals under transmission to the transmission management apparatus via a network; and

10 displaying image data received from the transmission terminal under transmission on a display device, and displaying the number of the transmission terminals under transmission received from the transmission management apparatus in response to the
15 terminal information request on the display device.

20 Claim 18. A transmission system comprising:

a transmission management apparatus configured to manage a plurality of transmission terminals; and

25 a transmission terminal connected with the

transmission management apparatus via a network and configured to carry out transmission with at least one of other transmission terminals, wherein

the transmission terminal includes:

5 a transmission means configured to transmit a terminal information request to request the number of transmission terminals under transmission to the transmission management apparatus; and

10 a display means configured to display image data received from the transmission terminal under transmission on a display device, and display the number of the transmission terminals under transmission received from the transmission

15 management apparatus in response to the terminal information request on the display device, and

the transmission management apparatus includes:

20 a reception means configured to receive a request to participate in a conference from the transmission terminal;

25 a calculation means configured to calculate the number of the transmission terminals under transmission having participated in the conference in response to the terminal information

request from the transmission terminal; and

a transmission means configured to
transmit the number of the transmission terminals
under transmission calculated by the calculation

5 means to the transmission terminal for displaying the
number of the transmission terminals under
transmission on the display device.