

D E S C R I P T I O N

Title of Invention:
5 SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE CONTROL SYSTEM, CONTROL
METHOD, CONTROL APPARATUS, AND SERVER

Technical Field

Embodiments described herein relate generally to a
social infrastructure control system for controlling a
10 social infrastructure.

Background Art

A society (community) where people live is
supported by a wide variety of social infrastructures
such as electricity, waterworks, transportation,
15 railways, communications, and buildings. On the other
hand, recently growing awareness of ecological problems
and urgent energy situations require energy saving in
every field of the society. There is much heated
debate about how to create a social system capable of
20 saving energy without forcing people to put up with
inconveniences in life.

Summary of Invention

Technical Problem

In the conventional social system, the social
25 infrastructures are basically managed and operated
independently. In, for example, an electricity
infrastructure, energy optimization control on a
municipality (city, town, or village), region, or
household basis is not implemented yet, not to mention

energy saving on a country basis.

It is an object to provide a social infrastructure control system, a control method, a control apparatus, and a server.

5 Solution to Problem

According to an embodiment, a social infrastructure control system includes a control apparatus which controls a social infrastructure and a server capable of communicating with the control

10 apparatus. The control apparatus includes a collection unit, a transmission unit, a reception unit and a control unit. The collection unit collects sensing data concerning control targets in the social infrastructure. The transmission unit transmits the

15 collected sensing data to the server via the communication network. The reception unit receives, from the server, a control instruction to control the control targets. The control unit controls the control targets based on the received control instruction. The

20 server includes an acquisition unit, a database, a generation unit and an instruction unit. The acquisition unit acquires the sensing data from the control apparatus via the communication network. The database stores the acquired sensing data. The

25 generation unit generates the control instruction by processing the sensing data stored in the database. The instruction unit transmits the generated control

instruction to the control apparatus. And the control unit executes control of control targets based on the control instruction at a timing based on a priority defined for each control target.

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Brief Description of Drawings

FIG. 1 is a view showing an example of a system according to an embodiment.

FIG. 2 is a view showing an example of a social infrastructure control system according to the
10 embodiment.

FIG. 3 is a view showing an example of the architecture of a social system.

FIG. 4 is a conceptual view showing the cooperative configuration between a local control
15 apparatus 31 according to the first embodiment and a server 18 that is the upper layer apparatus of the local control apparatus 31.

FIG. 5 is a flowchart showing the processing procedure of autonomous control of the local control
20 system shown in FIG. 4.

FIG. 6 is a flowchart showing the processing procedure of the local control system shown in FIG. 4 at the time of communication path switching.

FIG. 7 is a flowchart showing the processing
25 procedure of the local control apparatus 31 and the server 18 when a failure having been occurring in the telecommunication line of the optical communication

network 17 between the server 18 and the local control apparatus 31 is recovered.

FIG. 8 is a flowchart showing the control program correction procedure of the local control apparatus 31 shown in FIG. 4.

FIG. 9 is a flowchart showing the corrected control program providing procedure of the server 18 shown in FIG. 4.

FIG. 10 is a functional block diagram showing an example of a social infrastructure control system according to the first embodiment.

FIG. 11 is a functional block diagram showing another example of the social infrastructure control system according to the first embodiment.

FIG. 12 is a functional block diagram showing an example of a local control apparatus 31 and a server 18 according to the second embodiment.

Description of Embodiments

FIG. 1 is a view showing an example of a system according to an embodiment. FIG. 1 illustrates an example of a system known as a so-called smart grid. In an existing grid, existing power plants such as a nuclear power plant, a thermal power plant, and a hydroelectric power plant are connected to various customers such as an ordinary household, a building, and a factory via the grid. In the next-generation power grid, distributed power supplies such as a PV

(Photovoltaic Power generation) system and a wind power plant, battery devices, new transportation systems, charging stations, and the like are additionally connected to the power grid. The variety of elements
5 can communicate via a communication grid.

Systems for managing energy are generically called EMS's (Energy Management Systems). The EMS's are classified into several groups in accordance with the scale and the like. There are, for example, an HEMS
10 (Home Energy Management System) for an ordinary household and a BEMS (Building Energy Management System) for a building. There also exist an MEMS (Mansion Energy Management System) for an apartment house, a CEMS (Community Energy Management System) for
15 a community, and a FEMS (Factory Energy Management System) for a factory. Fine energy optimization control is implemented by causing these systems to cooperate.

According to these systems, an advanced
20 cooperative operation can be performed between the existing power plants, the distributed power supplies, the renewable energy sources such as sunlight and wind force, and the customers. This allows to produce a power supply service in a new and smart form, such as
25 an energy supply system mainly using a natural energy or a customer participating-type energy supply/demand system by bidirectional cooperation of customers and

companies.

A social system offers comforts and conveniences to the social life via social infrastructures represented by the above-described smart grid. The social system in the future needs to achieve a social target such as energy saving by organically combining the diverse social infrastructures using information processing technologies, communication technologies, and the like. A social infrastructure control system according to an embodiment capable of solving this problem will be described below.

FIG. 2 is a view showing an example of a social infrastructure control system according to the embodiment. FIG. 2 illustrates, as examples of social infrastructures, an electricity infrastructure 11, a new energy infrastructure 12, a road traffic infrastructure 13, a railway infrastructure 14, a water treatment infrastructure 15, and a communication infrastructure 16. The social infrastructures are not limited to those, and there exist a variety of social infrastructures such as a heat supply infrastructure, a medical infrastructure, and a building infrastructure.

The electricity infrastructure 11 can include power stations, power plants, and transmission and distribution networks. The new energy infrastructure 12 is an infrastructure such as a battery SCADA (Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition) or a PV

(photovoltaic) system concerning a renewable energy. The road traffic infrastructure 13 can include traffic signals, expressway systems, and open roads.

5 The railway infrastructure 14 can include railway networks, railway vehicles, and ticket reservation centers. The water treatment infrastructure 15 can include water supply and drainage and water purification plants. The communication infrastructure 16 can include the Internet, Web services, SMS (Short
10 Message Service), and twitter. The infrastructures (social infrastructures) 11 to 16 have peculiar targets to be controlled. The targets to be controlled by the infrastructures will generically be referred to as control targets hereinafter.

15 The infrastructures 11 to 16 are connected to an optical communication network 17. A cloud computing system 1000 is connected to the optical communication network 17 via a gateway (GW) 100. In this embodiment, the optical communication network 17 will be described
20 as an example of a guarantee-type network. That is, in this embodiment, the cloud computing system 1000 and the infrastructures 11 to 16 are connected via a network capable of guaranteeing a communication band. For example, a VPN (Virtual Private Network)
25 constructed on an IP (Internet Protocol) network as well as a dedicated line using an optical communication technology exists as a network of this type.

The cloud computing system 1000 comprises a server 18 and a database 19. The server 18 can be formed as a standalone computer or an aggregate of a plurality of computers. Further, the server 18 is connectable to
5 the communication network 300 and also physically detachable or attachable to the communication network 300. The database 19 can be arranged for one computer or distributed to a plurality of computers. In this embodiment, a form including a plurality of servers 18
10 and a plurality of databases 19 will be considered. In such a form, the servers 18 are connected to each other via a cloud communication network 300. Note that, for example, a SCMS (Smart Community Management System) server 200 may be connected to a certain server 18 to
15 comprehensively control the target social system.

In this embodiment, each of the infrastructures 11 to 16 comprises a local control apparatus 31. Each local control apparatus 31 can locally control the corresponding one of the infrastructures 11 to 16 as
20 needed. That is, the local control apparatus 31 has a peculiar control function of controlling the control target in each infrastructure.

For example, the local control apparatus 31 in the electricity infrastructure 11 has a function of
25 controlling power distribution for each consumer. The control targets in this infrastructure are applicable to, for example, breakers in an electric power

substation and switching devices in feeder pathways.

The local control apparatus 31 in the new energy infrastructure 12 has a function of predicting the power generation amount of a PV system based on meteorological information. The control targets in this infrastructure are applicable to, for example, power conditioning systems installed to accompanied with a PV system.

The local control apparatus 31 in the road traffic infrastructure 13 has a function of controlling road traffic. The control targets in this infrastructure are applicable to, for example, traffic signals and road traffic signs.

The local control apparatus 31 in the railway infrastructure 14 has a function of managing operations of railways or the like. The control targets in this infrastructure are applicable to, for example, railway signals and railway switching points.

The local control apparatus 31 in the water treatment infrastructure 15 has a function of controlling the flow rates of water supply and drainage or controlling the water reserve for irrigation or in a dam. The control targets in this infrastructure are applicable to, for example, the valves for controlling the amount of water discharge and movable weirs.

The local control apparatus 31 in the communication infrastructure 16 has a function of

controlling the flow or routing of an IP (Internet Protocol) network or controlling call connection of an ISDN (Integrated Service Digital Network). The control targets in this infrastructure are applicable to, for
5 example, radio base stations and base station controlling devices.

The local control apparatuses 31 can be connected to a telecommunication line of the optical communication network 17. Further, the local control
10 apparatus 31 is physically detachable or attachable to the telecommunication lines of the optical communication network 17. The local control apparatuses 31 can communicate information to/from the servers 18 or acquire various kinds of data from the
15 databases 19 via the telecommunication line of the optical communication network 17, or store various kinds of data in the databases 19 via the servers 18. That is, the local control apparatuses 31 and the servers 18 can be connected via the telecommunication
20 line of the optical communication network 17 so as to mutually communicate information.

The server 18 has a function of giving the local control apparatuses 31 various kinds of instructions (including commands and control data) to control the
25 control targets. That is, the server 18 has the position of the upper layer relative to the local control apparatuses 31 or the infrastructures 11 to 16.

The database 19 stores sensing data associated with the social infrastructures. Examples of the sensing data are meter data, sensor data, traffic, GPS (Global Positioning System) data, and life logs from various kinds of monitor control systems such as smart meters, various sensors, network monitoring apparatuses, MDMS (Meter Data Management System), and fundamental systems (Billing System). That is, sensing data are amounts measurable by some measurement means. These data are enormous in amount and are therefore also referred to as BigData in fields concerning cloud computing.

When controlling the social infrastructures, it is necessary to consider processing of data of a very large amount, real-time processing, resistance to failures (robustness), redundancy, currency continuation guarantee, disaster countermeasures, high level of security, personal information protection, data guarantee, following legal systems/regulations of individual countries, coping with communication situations of individual countries, SLA (Service Level Agreement) of each region, and the like. In this embodiment, control for real-time processing will mainly be explained.

FIG. 3 is a view showing an example of the architecture of a social system. The architecture shown in FIG. 3 is applicable to each of the various

kinds of social infrastructures according to the embodiment. In the architecture shown in FIG. 3, the functions required of the social infrastructures are classified into a plurality of categories such as monitor control, analysis/summarization, charging/payment, and facility/equipment management. The control functions for a control target are divided into, for example, a local control system 310, a monitor control system 320, an operation support system 330, and an offline work system 340. Considering the cooperation between the processing categories is the key point in transferring the control function for the control target from the local side to the cloud computing system side.

The server 18 shown in FIG. 1 has the functions of the monitor control system 320, the operation support system 330, and the offline work system 340. Each local control apparatus 31 shown in FIG. 1 has the function of the local control system 310.

Referring to FIG. 3, a control system for the local facility of a social infrastructure as a control target corresponds to the local control system 310. The local control system 310 acquires the sensing data and various kinds of continuous variables of the control target in real time and controls the control target in real time.

For example, physical quantities such as a flow

rate and a frequency will be exemplified. The local control system 310 acquires the measurement results of the physical quantities in real time, and converges the acquired data to specific values by loop control. For
5 example, for control in case of a failure, the local control system 310 performs processing to quickly ensure the safety by sequence control. The situation of local control is sent to the monitor control system 320 as monitor information.

10 As for charging/payment, the local control system 310 acquires a sensing result of, for example, an automatic ticket gate or ETC (Electronic Toll Collection System) in traffic and executes fee/real-time payment. The information of fee/real-time payment
15 is sent to the offline work system 340.

In addition, the local control system 310 monitors facilities concerning various kinds of social infrastructures and performs necessary control based on the result. The local control system 310 notifies the
20 monitor control system 320 of information about the facility control. Upon receiving this information, the monitor control system 320 monitors the presence/absence of abnormalities and sends a control instruction to the local control system 310 as needed.
25 The monitor control system 320 also notifies the offline work system 340 of monitor management information.

The monitor control system 320 functions as the upper layer system of the local control system 310. The monitor control system 320 analyzes/summarizes the monitor information transmitted from the local control system 310 by methods such as operator monitor, operator control, alert management, and history management. For, for example, operation history management, the monitor control system 320 provides information to the upper layer system in a form of reporting. The monitor control system 320 then finds optimum operation of the local control system from the operation history management and instructs operation change of the local control system.

The operation support system 330 predicts the demands of the various kinds of social infrastructures from the reporting information obtained by the monitor control system 320 and the like, and adjusts optimization based on the prediction result. The operation support system 330 makes a scheduling plan according to the adjusted contents. The plan is sent to the monitor control system 320 or the local control system 310 and reflected on the operation.

The offline work system 340 manages energy demands based on management/support information sequentially submitted by the monitor control system 320 or the operation support system 330. Based on the result, the energy flow between regions or social infrastructures

is adjusted. The offline work system 340 also analyzes the management/support information and creates statistical data to be used as the materials for review and a medium- and long-term plan. The offline work
5 system 340 executes charging processing for users based on fee/real-time payment information and steady charging/payment information from the local control system 310. The offline work system 340 receives facility management information from the monitor
10 control system 320 and instructs to execute maintenance and diagnosis of equipment.

[First Embodiment]

FIG. 4 is a conceptual view showing the cooperation between a local control apparatus 31
15 according to the first embodiment and a server 18 that is the upper layer apparatus of the local control apparatus 31. Referring to FIG. 4, the server 18 implements the function of a monitor control system 320. The local control apparatus 31 controls a control
20 target in real time in accordance with operation processing by a main control unit 311. At this time, the local control apparatus 31 cooperates with the server 18 in real time via a network 17.

Referring to FIG. 4, the server 18 is connectable
25 to the optical communication network 17 via an interface which is not shown in this figure and also physically detachable or attachable to the optical

communication network 17. The server 18 comprises a collection unit 18a, a calculation unit 18b, a selection unit 18c, a download unit 18d, a setting unit 18e, and a correction unit 18f.

5 The collection unit 18a collects sensing data (event information) uploaded from the local control apparatus 31 via the network 17 and stores the sensing data in a database 19. The calculation unit 18b analyzes the event information stored in the database
10 19 and calculates the characteristic of the social infrastructure.

 The selection unit 18c selects a control program adequate to the characteristic calculated by the calculation unit 18b from a plurality of control
15 programs (control programs 1 to N) stored in the database 19 in advance in correspondence with the type, the operation state, and the like of the control target. The download unit 18d download-transmits the selected control program to the local control apparatus
20 31 via the network 17. The setting unit 18e adjusts the parameters of the control program based on the calculated characteristic. The correction unit 18f determinates the state of the control target from the monitor result of the local control apparatus 31 and
25 corrects the control program based on the result.

 The local control apparatus 31 comprises the main control unit 311, a storage unit 313, an interface unit

(I/F) 314, a communication control unit 315, a monitoring unit 316, a management unit 317, an interface unit 318, a priority control unit 319, and an autonomous control unit 350. The main control unit
5 311, the storage unit 313, the interface unit (I/F) 314, the communication control unit 315, the monitoring unit 316, the management unit 317, the interface unit 318, the priority control unit 319, and the autonomous control unit 350 are connected via a bus 312.

10 The main control unit 311 controls processing such as communication, monitoring, and management in accordance with a control program stored in the storage unit 313. The storage unit 313 comprises a queuing
15 memory 313a and a control program memory 313b. The queuing memory 313a stores queuing data used to cause the main control unit 311 to execute control based on an instruction from the server 18. The control program
20 memory 313b stores the control program used by the main control unit 311. Further, the control program memory 313b stores the degree of priority determined for each
25 respective one of a plurality of control targets which constitute each social infrastructure. For example, the traffic signals, which are one kind of the control targets in the road or railroad infrastructures, are
 assigned a high degree of priority since they need to change the signals every several minutes, whereas the contents of sign plates for indicating information are

assigned to a lower degree of priority as compared to that of the traffic or railroad signals.

Further, the degree of priority determined for each of the plurality of control targets can be written
5 in the control program memory 313b with a terminal which is not shown in the figure, physically connectable and detachable to the local control device 31. In order to enable the operation in a priority control mode, which will be described later, the degree
10 of priority needs to be assigned in advance to each respective one of the control targets by the terminal not shown in the figure.

The interface unit 314 enables the local control apparatus 31 connectable to the network 17 as well as
15 physically connectable and detachable, and further the unit is designed to transmit and receive data with respect to the server 18 functioning as an upper layer control apparatus, via the network 17.

The interface unit 314 transmits/receives
20 information to/from the server 18 serving as the upper layer control apparatus via the network 17. The communication control unit 315 appropriately controls communication with the server 18. The communication control unit 315 comprises a failure detection unit
25 315a and a path switching unit 315b. Upon detecting a communication failure of the network 17, the failure detection unit 315a notifies the main control unit 311

of it. Upon receiving the notification, the main control unit 311 autonomously executes failure avoidance processing. The path switching unit 315b switches the communication path when a communication failure has been detected.

The monitoring unit 316 monitors the operation state of the control target in accordance with an instruction from the main control unit 311. The management unit 317 manages the operation process of the control target in accordance with an instruction from the main control unit 311. The interface unit 318 is connected to the control target under control and transmits/receives information to/from the control target.

The priority control unit 319 reads out a control instruction queued in the queuing memory 313a at a timing based on a priority predetermined for each control target and outputs the control instruction to the main control unit 311. Control based on the control instruction is thus executed at a timing according to the control of the priority control unit 319. Upon detecting a communication failure for the server 18, the autonomous control unit 350 autonomously continues the control.

The local control apparatus 31 stores control instructions for the control target, which are received from the server 18, in the queuing memory of the

storage unit 313. The main control unit 311 decides the priority of each queued control instruction in accordance with the priority of the control target stored in the control program memory 313b. The main
5 control unit 311 notifies the server 18 of the decided priority. When notified of the priority, the server 18 further gives the local control apparatus 31 an optimum control instruction for energy saving of the whole monitor target.

10 The local control apparatus 31 reads out the queued control instruction from the queuing memory 313a in accordance with the priority of the control target stored in the control program memory 313b. The local control apparatus 31 controls the control target
15 concerning each infrastructure based on the readout control instruction.

That is, control of the control target by the server 18 is basically executed in real time (direct real-time control mode). In addition, control of the
20 control target can also be executed at a dynamically changed timing or order by priority control as the determination of the local control apparatus 31 (priority control mode). In the priority control mode, the control target is controlled at a timing according
25 to the type, characteristic, or situation of the control target at that time.

To cause the server 18 to control the monitor

target via the local control apparatus 31 in real time,
it is important to ensure the communication path in the
telecommunication line of the optical communication
network 17 between the local control apparatus 31 and
5 the server 18. In the first embodiment, the
communication control unit 315 is provided with the
failure detection unit 315a and the path switching unit
315b to prepare for a case of a communication failure.
Upon detecting a communication failure, the
10 communication control unit 315 notifies the main
control unit 311 of it and causes the main control unit
311 to execute minimum autonomous control such as
failure avoidance. Alternatively, upon detecting a
communication failure, the communication control unit
15 315 switches the communication path to another
communication path. As described above, in the first
embodiment, safety measures against a communication
failure are taken in advance. The control target is
also imparted a function capable of continuing
20 autonomous operation without a control instruction.

The key points of the above explanation are as follows.

(1) Each local control apparatus 31 queues a
signal concerning a control instruction received from
25 the server 18 in the queuing memory 313a for control
instructions in the storage unit 313.

(2) The priority of the signal concerning the

queued control instruction in accordance with the social infrastructure managed by each local control apparatus 31 is decided in accordance with the control target based on the priority stored in the control program memory 313b.

(3) The local control apparatus 31 notifies the server 18 of the result of priority control by, for example, a notification signal or a message. Upon receiving the notification, the server 18 performs optimization control for energy saving of the entire monitor target including a plurality of control targets.

(4) The local control apparatus 31 sequentially extracts a signal for a queued control instruction and controls the control target of each infrastructure based on the control instruction.

FIG. 5 is a flowchart showing the processing procedure until the local control apparatus 31 performs autonomous control when a failure has occurred in the communication path of the optical communication network 17 between the server 18 and the local control apparatus 31. Referring to FIG. 5, the local control apparatus 31 causes the communication control unit 31 to monitor the communication state by the communication failure detection function (steps S11 and S12). Upon detecting an abnormality, the local control apparatus 31 notifies the main control unit 311 of it and

activates the autonomous control unit 350 (step S13).
The local control apparatus 31 executes minimum
autonomous control such as operation stop or power off
(step S14).

5 FIG. 6 is a flowchart showing the processing
procedure until the local control apparatus 31 switches
the communication path when a failure has occurred in
the communication path of the telecommunication line of
the optical communication network 17 between the server
10 18 and the local control apparatus 31. Referring to
FIG. 6, the local control apparatus 31 causes the
communication control unit 31 to monitor the
communication state by the communication failure
detection function (steps S21 and S22). Upon detecting
15 an abnormality, the local control apparatus 31 notifies
the main control unit 311 of it and activates the path
switching unit 315b (step S23). The local control
apparatus 31 switches the communication path to a
reserve communication path and ensure the communication
20 path (step S24).

 Note that in the above description, each of the
autonomous control unit 350 and the path switching unit
315b is used standalone. However, the autonomous
control unit 350 and the path switching unit 315b may
25 cooperatively operate. That is, upon detecting a
communication failure, the path switching unit 315b
first switches the communication path to the reserve

communication path. If a communication failure is still detected, the autonomous control unit 350 may execute minimum processing.

5 The control program memory 313b shown in FIG. 4 stores a control program that controls the control target in real time. The control programs stored in the database 19 of the cloud computing system 1000 are sequentially updated and registered in accordance with the type, the operation state, and the like of the control target. The local control apparatus 31
10 appropriately corrects the control program to control the functions of its own by the control program downloaded from the database 19 of the cloud computing system 1000.

15 FIG. 7 is a flowchart showing the processing procedure of the local control apparatus 31 when a failure having been occurring in a communication path in the optical communication network 17 between the server 18 and the local control apparatus 31 is
20 recovered.

The main control unit 311 of the local control apparatus 31 stores control operation data items created during the autonomous control period, in the storage unit 313 along with a time stamp of each data
25 item which indicates when it is created (step S51). The control operation data items are those regarding the operation during the autonomous control period, for

example, the operation stop and power off. The control operation data created during the autonomous control period are stored as log data in the storage unit 313. The main control unit 311 writes sensing data acquired
5 by the sensor during the autonomous control period in the storage unit 313.

The communication control unit 315 of the local control apparatus 31 monitors the communication status of telecommunication lines of the optical communication
10 network 17 during the autonomous control period (step S52). When a recovery of a failure is detected (step S53), the communication control unit 315 notifies so to the main control unit 311 (step S54).

When the recovery of the failure is notified, the
15 main control unit 311 reads the control operation data and sensing data during the autonomous control period from the storage unit 313 (step S55). Then, the control operation data and sensing data read out are transmitted from the server 18 via the
20 telecommunication lines of the optical communication network 17 (step S56).

The collection unit 18a of the server 18 receives the control operation data and sensing data during the autonomous operation from the local control apparatus
25 31 via the communication path of the optical communication network 17 (step S57), and accumulates the data in a database 19 (step S58).

The calculation unit 18b of the server 18 acquires the control operation data or sensing data from the database 19 (step S59) and analyze either one of both types of data as event information, thereby calculating
5 out the characteristics of the social infrastructures of the control targets (step S60). Then, based on the results of the calculation, a selection unit 18c selects a control program which adaptable to the social infrastructure from the database 19 (step S61).

10 The database 19 stores a plurality of control programs according to the types and operation states of the control targets. The selection unit 18c selects a control program which adaptable to the social infrastructure out of the plurality of the control
15 programs.

Next, the server 18 optimizes the acquired control operation data or sensing data based on the selected control program and generates a control signal (step S62). The optimization is executed based on such a
20 standard as saving of energy of all the targets to be monitored, including a plurality of control targets. The control signal is a signal regarding a control instruction to be given to the local control apparatus 31. The server 18 transmits the generated control data
25 to the local control apparatus 31 via the communication lines of the optical communication network 17 (step S63).

The local control apparatus 31 receives control signals from the server 18 (step S64). The local control apparatus 31 stores a first control signal received after the failure has been recovered, in the queuing memory 313a of the storage unit 313 (step S64).
5 The control signals stored in the queuing memory 313a are read out with priority.

Next, the main control unit 311 determines the timing for shifting to the normal control from the autonomous control based on the control signal from the server 18 (step S66). To explain, if the operation is shifted to the normal control instantly from the recovery of a failure, there may rise an unexpected trouble. In order to avoid this, the main control unit
10 311 determines a timing enabling a smooth and continuous shifting of the control of the social infrastructure in the light of the relationship between the controlling based on the autonomous controlling program and the control based on the instruction from the server 18. The main control unit 311 continues the autonomous control until the timing for shifting comes. That is, the main control unit 311 controls the social infrastructure on the basis of the control instruction related to the control based on the autonomous
15 controlling program.

The timing for shifting is determined with reference to the characteristics of the social

infrastructure of the control target, time zone for shifting, etc., with the top priority fixed to the safety of, for example, the users of the social infrastructure of the control target and the residents of the area. For example, in the case where a failure/recovery event occurs in a railroad infrastructure, the timing is selected such that the control of the operation is not shifted during a train is on the railroad between stations unless the train reaches the nearest station.

In the meantime, when a time zone for shifting the control is late at night, and the degree of use of the social infrastructure is very low, it is possible to shift the control relatively quickly after notifying caution to the users of the social infrastructure. For example, in the case of the control for infrastructure facilities of the water treatment infrastructure shown in FIG. 10, which will be later explained, it is probable that the control is shifted immediately after the failure/recovery.

Even during the control period based on the autonomous controlling program, the sensing data from the sensor are continuously transmitted to the server 18 as mentioned before. The server 18 continuously transmits the control signals based on the sensing data to the local control apparatus 31.

When a shift timing determined by the main control

unit 311 comes (Yes in step S66), the main control unit 311 stops the control instructions relating to the autonomous controlling program (step S67). Further, the main control unit 311 read out the control signal received at the point of the past which is closest to the timing of this stopping of the instructions from the queuing memory 313a of the storage unit 313 (step S68). Then, main control unit 311 restarts the control of the social infrastructure based on the contents indicated in this control signal (step S69).

As described above, as the processing procedure shown in FIG. 7 is executed between the local control apparatus 31 and the server 18 when the failure in the communication path of the optical communication network 17 is recovered, the switching/switching back of the control is executed at the optimum shift timing. In this manner, the operation can be re-optimized in the entire social system, and thus the smooth operation control of the social structures can be reliably carried out.

FIG. 8 is a flowchart showing the control program correction procedure of the local control apparatus 31. FIG. 9 is a flowchart showing the corrected control program providing procedure of the server 18.

As shown in FIG. 8, the local control apparatus 31 performs sensing of the control target (step S31) and transmits sensing data to the server 18 of the upper

layer (step S32). As shown in FIG. 9, the server 18 always monitors the sensing data (step S41). The server 18 determines, based on the sensing result, whether it is necessary to change or correct the control program in accordance with the upgraded program of the control program or the situation (step S42). Upon determining that the change or correction is necessary, the server 18 selects an appropriate control program (step S43) and distributes it to the local control apparatus 31 (step S44).

The local control apparatus 31 determines the presence/absence of reception of a control program from the server 18 (step S33). Until the reception of the control program, the local control apparatus 31 executes processing using an existing control program (step S34). Upon receiving a new control program, the local control apparatus 31 replaces the control program. That is, the local control apparatus 31 stores the received control program in the storage unit 313 (step S35).

The local control apparatus 31 executes subsequent processing using the corrected control program that has replaced (step S36). The above-described processing procedure allows the server 18 to immediately recognize a change in the state of the control target. Hence, repair/exchange of the program used by the local control apparatus 31 can be executed without any

necessity for dispatching an worker.

Note that a box serving as a communication adapter may be connected to the field apparatus that is the control target. The box has a function of mediating
5 communication between the field apparatus and the local control apparatus 31. Providing the box enables the local control apparatus 31 to collect information from each device via a wired or wireless control line. The box may have a communication function of sending a
10 control instruction to a corresponding device.

The server 18 decides the control contents based on information collected by the box serving as a communication adapter and transmits a control instruction corresponding to the control contents,
15 thereby directly controlling the device as the control target.

The server 18 also has the function of an operation support system 330 (FIG. 3) and adjusts optimization of operation concerning processing of the
20 local control apparatus 31 and a monitor control system 320 (FIG. 3). More specifically, the server 18 determines the appropriateness of control contents from a control instruction and monitor information from the local control apparatus 31 and the monitor control
25 system 320 and makes an optimum operation plan. The server 18 causes the local control apparatus 31 or the monitor control system 320 to execute control according

to the operation plan.

The server 18 has the function of an offline work system 340 (FIG. 3). Processes such as facility maintenance and charging/payment included in this function have many elements common to the infrastructures. In the first embodiment, the processing efficiency is improved by clouding with common works between various kinds of social infrastructures.

The function of the operation support system 330 forms a cloud system that attempts cooperation of works except elements peculiar to each domain. Since processing information from the local control apparatus 31 is obtained in real time, the processing time of the local control system can always be grasped. It is therefore possible to integrate the processing time and increase/decrease the charging cost in accordance with the processing time.

With the above-described arrangement, the server 18 is always notified of the local situation in real time. By the functions of the monitor control system 320, the operation support system 330, and the offline work system 340, the server 18 can always use the information between the systems. Hence, the efficiency of work support and operation can be improved.

FIG. 10 is a functional block diagram showing an example of a social infrastructure control system

according to the first embodiment. A local control system 31A in FIG. 10, and the monitor control system 320, the online operation support system 330, and the offline operation system 340 of the upper layer are associated with the server 18. The functions of the monitor control system 320, the online operation support system 330, and the offline operation system 340 can be implemented in the server 18. A water treatment infrastructure will be described as an example of the local control system 31A.

Referring to FIG. 10, reference numeral 31A denotes the local control system of the water treatment infrastructure. The system 31A will be referred to as a water treatment local system hereinafter. For example, when a water meter 1 of a water reservoir detects a decrease in the water reserve, the water treatment local system 31A activates a motor 2 to operate a pump 3 and supply water to the water reservoir. The water reserve is measured by a flow meter 4. The water treatment local system 31A causes an inverter 5 to adjust the rotational speed of the motor 2 such that the water reserve measured by the flow meter 4 becomes constant. The series of processes is controlled by a PLC/DDC (Programmable Logic Control/Digital data controller) 6.

The PLC/DDC 6 provides a function of collecting information of a sensor attached to the control target

and a control function for the actuator. The sensor and the actuator are examples of the control target. The PLC/DDC 6 has a sequence control function of sequentially operating devices in a predetermined
5 order. The PLC/DDC 6 also has a loop control function of controlling, for example, the rotational speed of an inverter 415 at a time constant of several hundred sec or less and making an analog value closer to a target value. The PLC/DDC 6 further has a function of
10 receiving a failure signal as an interlock signal and properly stopping a control target device at the time of failure occurrence.

The monitor control system 320 receives process data from the PLC/DDC 6 in the water treatment local
15 system 31A and provides the monitored situation to the operator at a predetermined period of about 1 sec. The monitor control system 320 can adjust the operation of the water treatment local system 41 in real time by transferring the control operation of the operator to
20 the PLC/DDC 6 of the lower layer.

FIG. 11 is a functional block diagram showing another example of the social infrastructure control system according to the first embodiment. FIG. 11 shows an extended example of the cloud structure shown
25 in FIG. 10. FIG. 11 illustrates the relationship between a local control system 31B of a water treatment system and the monitor control system 320, the online

operation support system 330, and the offline operation system 340 that are the associated functions of the server 18 of the upper layer.

Referring to FIG. 11, reference numeral 31B corresponds to the local control apparatus 31A shown in FIG. 10. In the example shown in FIG. 11, the water meter 1, the motor 2, the pump 3, the flow meter 4, and the inverter 5 are connected to the network 17 via communication adapters 61, 62, 63, 64, and 65, respectively. This allows to obviate the PLC/DDC 6. Here, the communication adaptors 61, 62, 63, 64 and 65 are connected to the network 17 by cable for communication, but it is alternatively possible that they are connected wirelessly for wireless communication.

The communication adapters 61 to 65 collect the sensing data of the control target via communication lines and directly transmit the collected sensing data to the monitor control system 320 that is a function of the server 18. The monitor control system 320 grasps the state of the water treatment local system 31B from the collected sensing data, calculates appropriate control contents, and adjusts the control amount of the inverter 5.

This enables to replace the control by the PLC/DDC in the infrastructure facility with the direct control from the monitor control system 320 in the water

treatment local system 31B. It is therefore possible to monitor and control at once the operations of a number of scattered control targets and facility equipment.

5 In accordance with the real-time sensing data collection and control of the local control apparatuses 31A and 31B and the monitor control system 320, the online operation support system 330 online supports processing of monitor control in a long term, thereby
10 sequentially implementing optimization.

 The offline operation system 340 can accept monitor information from the monitor control system 320 at an arbitrary timing and perform an operation such as statistical processing/accounting data creation. It is
15 therefore possible to improve the operation efficiency and provide painstaking work services. Since local information can be obtained both online and offline at an arbitrary timing, actions can be taken in early stages in accordance with the local situation.

20 According to this embodiment, in the above-described architecture, the clouding range is widened so that the monitor control system 320 that performs host control in the server 18 includes the function of the local control apparatus 31. That is, the server 18
25 attempts clouding to implement the real-time characteristic and resistance to failures for monitor/control in cooperation with the local control

apparatus 31 as the function of the monitor control system 320. This makes it possible to implement efficient operation of monitor control and largely decrease the cost of construction of a social
5 infrastructure control system.

In the first embodiment, the local control apparatus 31 has the initiative to decide the priority order of control, that is, priority control of the control target. This allows to prefer to control in a
10 domain closer to a site and ensure safety associated with the operation of the social system.

As described above, according to the first embodiment, it is possible to implement cooperation between the local control system and the upper layer management system of the control target of a social
15 infrastructure and consistency and real-time characteristic of mutual information in cooperation between regions. It is therefore possible to provide a social infrastructure control system capable of
20 implementing appropriate processing in overall determination/control and a control method thereof.

[Second Embodiment]

FIG. 12 is a functional block diagram showing an example of a local control apparatus 31 and a server 18 according to the second embodiment. The same reference
25 numerals as in FIG. 4 denote the same parts in FIG. 12, and only different parts will be described here.

The server 18 shown in FIG. 12 basically has the same functions as those of the server 18 shown in FIG. 4. The local control apparatus 31 shown in FIG. 12 basically has the same functions as those of the local control apparatus 31 shown in FIG. 4.

The local control apparatus 31 comprises a collection unit 321 in addition to the functions shown in FIG. 4. The collection unit 321 collects sensing data from a plurality of control targets of social infrastructures. The collection unit 321 can be implemented as one function of a monitoring unit 316.

The local control apparatus 31 further comprises a transmission unit 322. The transmission unit 322 transmits the collected sensing data to the server 18 via a telecommunication line of an optical communication network 17. The local control apparatus 31 also comprises a reception unit 323. The reception unit 323 receives a control instruction to control the control target from the server 18.

A main control unit 311 controls the control target based on the control instruction received by the reception unit 323. That is, the main control unit 311 executes control of a plurality of control targets based on the control instruction at a timing based on a priority defined for each control target.

The local control apparatus 31 also comprises a notification unit 324. The notification unit 324

notifies the server 18 of the result of control of the control target. The result of control includes the time stamp of the point of time the control has been done and OK/NG of the control in addition to a change
5 in the sensing data according to the control.

The server 18 comprises an acquisition unit 18f, a generation unit 18g, an instruction unit 18h, a priority control unit 18i, and a queuing memory 181 in addition to the functions shown in FIG. 4. The
10 acquisition unit 18f can be implemented as one function of the collection unit 18a.

The acquisition unit 18f acquires sensing data transmitted from the local control apparatus 18 via the telecommunication line of the optical communication
15 network 17 in real time. The acquired sensing data is stored in a database 19.

The generation unit 18g processes the sensing data stored in the database 19 and generates a control instruction to control the control targets in
20 infrastructures 11 to 16. The instruction unit 18h transmits the generated control instruction to the local control apparatus 31. The queuing memory 181 queues the generated control instruction.

The priority control unit 18i reads out the
25 control instruction queued in the queuing memory 181 at a timing based on a priority determined for the control target and transfers it to the instruction unit 18h.

The control instruction thus reaches the local control apparatus 31 in accordance with the priority-controlled or sequence-controlled timing. The local control apparatus 31 controls the control target based on the received control instruction.

The priority control of the local control apparatus 31 can change the control procedure for each control target under the local control apparatus 31. That is, the control procedure is dynamically controlled in a state closed in single social infrastructures (electricity, road systems, and the like). In, for example, the railway infrastructure 14, a control procedure of, for example, raising a crossing gate after the arrival of a train at a station is controlled for control targets belonging to the same social infrastructure.

In the second embodiment, the control procedure of the control target can dynamically be changed between all social infrastructures under the server 18. For example, in case of a blackout (electricity infrastructure), control can be performed to move a train to a nearest station using the standby power system of the train (railway infrastructure) and then stop the train after completion of the movement. That is, in the second embodiment, comprehensive optimum control for a plurality of social infrastructures becomes possible.

In the second embodiment as well, the local control apparatus 31 notifies the server 18 of a control result based on a control instruction, as in the first embodiment. Hence, according to the second
5 embodiment as well, the same effects as in the first embodiment can be obtained.

Note that the present invention is not limited to the above-described embodiments. For example, in the above-described embodiments, the architecture is
10 divided into the local control system, the monitor control system, the operation support system, and the offline operation system. However, the present invention is not limited to this. The control systems may be integrated or subdivided, or a control system
15 having another element may be added.

While certain embodiments have been described, these embodiments have been presented by way of example only, and are not intended to limit the scope of the inventions. Indeed, the novel embodiments described
20 herein may be embodied in a variety of other forms; furthermore, various omissions, substitutions and changes may be made without departing from the spirit of the inventions. The accompanying claims and their equivalents are intended to cover such forms or
25 modifications as would fall within the scope and spirit of the inventions.

C L A I M S

1. A social infrastructure control system comprising:
 - a plurality of control apparatuses each configured to be implemented for one of a plurality of kinds of social
 - 5 infrastructures and to locally control the social infrastructure; and
 - a server capable of communicating with the control apparatuses,
 - each of the control apparatuses comprising:
 - 10 a collection unit configured to collect sensing data concerning control targets in the social infrastructure;
 - a transmission unit configured to transmit the collected sensing data to the server via a communication network;
 - 15 a reception unit configured to receive, from the server, a control instruction to control the control targets; and
 - a control unit configured to control the control targets based on the received control instruction, and
 - 20 the server comprising:
 - an acquisition unit configured to acquire the sensing data from each of the control apparatuses via the communication network;
 - a database configured to store the acquired sensing
 - 25 data;

a generation unit configured to generate the control instruction by processing the sensing data acquired from each of the control apparatuses; and

an instruction unit configured to transmit the
5 generated control instruction to the control apparatus,

wherein each of the control apparatuses further comprises:

a storage unit configured to queue the received control instruction; and

10 a priority control unit configured to read out the queued control instruction at a timing based on a priority defined for each of the control targets and transfer the control instruction to the control unit.

2. A social infrastructure control system comprising:

15 a plurality of control apparatuses each configured to be implemented for one of a plurality of kinds of social infrastructures and to locally control the social infrastructure; and

a server capable of communicating with the control
20 apparatuses,

each of the control apparatuses comprising:

a collection unit configured to collect sensing data concerning control targets in the social infrastructure;

a transmission unit configured to transmit the collected sensing data to the server via a communication network;

a reception unit configured to receive, from the
5 server, a control instruction to control the control targets; and

a control unit configured to control the control targets based on the received control instruction, and the server comprising:

10 an acquisition unit configured to acquire the sensing data from each of the control apparatuses via the communication network;

a database configured to store the acquired sensing data;

15 a generation unit configured to generate the control instruction by processing the sensing data acquired from each of the control apparatuses;

an instruction unit configured to transmit the generated control instruction to the control
20 apparatus;

a storage unit configured to queue the generated control instruction; and

a priority control unit configured to read out the queued control instruction at a timing based on a
25 priority defined for each of the control targets and

transfer the control instruction to the instruction unit.

3. The social infrastructure control system according to claim 1 or 2, wherein each of the control apparatuses
5 further comprises a notification unit configured to notify the server of a result of control for each control target.

4. The social infrastructure control system according to claim 1 or 2, wherein each of the control apparatuses collects information from each control target via a
10 communication adapter provided between each of the control apparatuses and the control target and transmits the control instruction to relating control target via the communication adapter, and

the server decides control contents based on the
15 information collected by the communication adapter and transmits the control instruction according to the control contents to the control target via the communication adapter.

5. The social infrastructure control system according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the server is included in a cloud
20 computing system comprising the database.

6. A control method applicable to a social infrastructure control system comprising a control apparatus configured to control a social infrastructure,

and a server capable of communicating with the control apparatus, comprising:

causing the control apparatus to
collect sensing data concerning control targets in the
5 social infrastructure;
transmit the collected sensing data to the server;
receive, from the server, a control instruction to
control the control targets; and
control the control targets based on the received
10 control instruction; and
causing the server to
acquire the sensing data from the control apparatus;
store the acquired sensing data in a database;
generate the control instruction by processing the
15 sensing data acquired from the control apparatus;
transmit the generated control instruction to the
control apparatus,
further comprising:
causing the control apparatus to
20 queue the received control instruction in a storage
unit; and
read out the queued control instruction at a timing
based on a priority defined for each of the control targets
and transfer the control instruction to the control unit.

7. A control method applicable to a social
infrastructure control system comprising a control
apparatus configured to control a social infrastructure,
and a server capable of communicating with the control
5 apparatus, comprising:

causing the control apparatus to

collect sensing data concerning control targets
in the social infrastructure;

transmit the collected sensing data to the
10 server;

receive, from the server, a control instruction
to control the control targets; and

control the control targets based on the received
control instruction; and

15 causing the server to

acquire the sensing data from the control
apparatus;

store the acquired sensing data in a database;

generate the control instruction by processing
20 the sensing data acquired from the control apparatus;

transmit the generated control instruction to the
control apparatus;

queue the generated control instruction in a
storage unit; and

read out the queued control instruction from the storage unit at a timing based on a priority defined for each of the control targets and transfer the control instruction to the instruction unit.

5 8. A social infrastructure control system control apparatus, comprising:

 a collection unit configured to collect sensing data concerning a control target in the social infrastructure;

 a transmission unit configured to transmit the
10 collected sensing data to a server;

 a reception unit configured to receive, from the server, a control instruction to control the control target, wherein the control instruction is generated by processing the sensing data acquired from each of a
15 plurality of control apparatuses;

 a control unit configured to control the control target based on the received control instruction;

 a storage unit configured to queue the received control instruction; and

20 a priority control unit configured to read out the queued control instruction at a timing based on a priority defined for each of the control targets and transfer the control instruction to the control unit.

9. The control apparatus according to claim 8,
further comprises a notification unit configured to notify
the server of a result of control for each control target.

10. The control apparatus according to claim 8,
5 wherein the control apparatus collects information from
each control target via a communication adapter provided
between the control apparatus and the control target and
transmits the control instruction to relating control
target via the communication adapter, and
10 the server decides control contents based on the
information collected by the communication adapter and
transmits the control instruction according to the control
contents to the control target via the communication
adapter.

15 11. The control apparatus according to claim 8,
wherein the control apparatus further comprises:

a failure detection unit configured to detect a
communication failure to the server; and

an autonomous control unit configured to autonomously
20 continue control when the failure detection unit has
detected the communication failure.

12. The control apparatus according to claim 8,
wherein the control apparatus further comprises:

a failure detection unit configured to detect a
25 communication failure to the server; and

a path switching unit configured to switch a communication path to the server so as to continue cooperation with the server when the failure detection unit has detected the communication failure.

5 13. The control apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising an operation support system configured to adjust optimization of an operation associated with processing of one of the control apparatus and the server, the operation support system comprising:

10 determination means for determining appropriateness of control contents from the control instruction and monitor information of each of the control apparatuses and the server; and

operation plan execution means for making an optimum
15 operation plan and causing one of the control apparatuses and the server to execute control according to the operation plan.

14. The control apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising an offline operation system configured
20 to collect information about processing of one of the control apparatus and the server and executing an infrastructure work offline based on the collected information.

15. A social infrastructure control system server,
25 comprising:

an acquisition unit configured to acquire sensing data concerning a control target in the social infrastructure from each of a plurality of control apparatuses;

a database configured to store the acquired sensing
5 data;

a generation unit configured to generate a control instruction to control the control target by processing the sensing data acquired from each of the control apparatuses;

an instruction unit configured to transmit the
10 generated control instruction to the control apparatus;

a storage unit configured to queue the generated control instruction; and

a priority control unit configured to read out the queued control instruction at a timing based on a priority
15 defined for each of the control targets and transfer the control instruction to the instruction unit.

16. The server according to claim 15, wherein each of the control apparatuses further comprises a storage unit configured to store a control program, and

20 the server further comprises a correction unit configured to determine a state of each control target from a monitor result of each of the control apparatuses and correct the control program based on the result.

17. The server according to claim 15, wherein each of
25 the control apparatuses collects information from each

control target via a communication adapter provided between each of the control apparatuses and the control target and transmits the control instruction to relating control target via the communication adapter, and

5 the server decides control contents based on the information collected by the communication adapter and transmits the control instruction according to the control contents to the control target via the communication adapter.

10 18. The server according to claim 15, wherein the server is included in a cloud computing system comprising the database.

15 19. A control method applicable to a social infrastructure control system control apparatus which controls a social infrastructure, and a server capable of communicating with the control apparatus, comprising:

causing the control apparatus to

collect sensing data concerning control targets in the social infrastructure;

20 transmit the collected sensing data to the server;

receive, from the server, a control instruction to control the control targets; and

25 control the control targets based on the received control instruction; and

causing the server to

acquire the sensing data from the control
apparatus;

store the acquired sensing data in a database;

5 generate the control instruction by processing
the sensing data acquired from the control apparatus;
and

transmit the generated control instruction to the
control apparatus,

10 further comprising:

causing the control apparatus to

queue the received control instruction in a storage
unit; and

read out the queued control instruction at a timing
15 based on a priority defined for each of the control targets
and transfer the control instruction to the control unit.

20 20. The control method according to claim 19, wherein
the control apparatus further comprises a notification unit
configured to notify the server of a result of control for
each control target.

21. The control method according to claim 19, wherein
the control apparatus collects information from each
control target via a communication adapter provided between
the control apparatus and the control target and transmits

the control instruction to relating control target via the communication adapter, and

the server decides control contents based on the information collected by the communication adapter and
5 transmits the control instruction according to the control contents to the control target via the communication adapter.

22. The control method according to claim 19, wherein the control apparatus further comprises:

10 a failure detection unit configured to detect a communication failure to the server; and

an autonomous control unit configured to autonomously continue control when the failure detection unit has detected the communication failure.

15 23. The control method according to claim 19, wherein the control apparatus further comprises:

a failure detection unit configured to detect a communication failure to the server; and

a path switching unit configured to switch a
20 communication path to the server so as to continue cooperation with the server when the failure detection unit has detected the communication failure.

24. A control method applicable to a social infrastructure control system control server which is

capable of communicating with a control apparatus for
controlling a social infrastructure, comprising:

causing the control apparatus to

collect sensing data concerning control targets

5 in the social infrastructure;

transmit the collected sensing data to the
server;

receive, from the server, a control instruction
to control the control targets; and

10 control the control targets based on the received
control instruction; and

causing the server to

acquire the sensing data from the control
apparatus;

15 store the acquired sensing data in a database;

generate the control instruction by processing
the sensing data acquired from the control apparatus;

transmit the generated control instruction to the
control apparatus;

20 queue the generated control instruction in a
storage unit; and

read out the queued control instruction from the
storage unit at a timing based on a priority defined
for each of the control targets and transfer the

25 control instruction to the instruction unit.

25. The control method according to claim 24, wherein the control apparatus further comprises a storage unit configured to store a control program, and

the server further comprises a correction unit
5 configured to determine a state of each control target from a monitor result of the control apparatus and correct the control program based on the result.

26. The control method according to claim 24, wherein the control apparatus collects information from each
10 control target via a communication adapter provided between the control apparatus and the control target and transmits the control instruction to relating control target via the communication adapter, and

the server decides control contents based on the
15 information collected by the communication adapter and transmits the control instruction according to the control contents to the control target via the communication adapter.

27. The control method according to claim 24, wherein
20 the server is included in a cloud computing system comprising the database.