

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR REPORTING
WLAN CAPABILITIES OF A DUAL MODE
GPRS/WLAN OR UMTS/WLAN WTRU

[0001] FIELD OF INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to WTRUs having dual-mode capabilities and more particularly to method and apparatus for reporting dual mode capabilities and for reporting availability of network interworking.

[0003] BACKGROUND

[0004] The current developments of wireless local area networks (WLANs) interworking with general packet radio service/universal mobile telecommunications system/third generation (GPRS/UMTS/3G) networks has resulted in products that include two radio units in a common enclosure (e.g., cards supporting 802.11b + GPRS air interfaces and 802.11b +UMTS air interfaces). The units may be separate cards or may be integrated onto one common card.

[0005] Hereafter a wireless transmit/receive unit (WTRU) includes but is not limited to a user equipment, mobile station, fixed or mobile subscriber unit, pager, or any other type of device capable of operating in a wireless environment.

When referred to hereafter, a base station (BS) includes but is not limited to a Node-B, site controller, access point or any other type of interfacing device in a wireless environment.

[0006] Currently the network may not be aware of the dual-mode capabilities of the terminal. In addition, the offered services may change dramatically based on the terminal capabilities in terms of processing power, memory availability, screen size, bit rate, etc. For example, a dual mode 802+GPRS personal digital assistant (PDA) may be able to receive short message service (SMS) or multimedia message service (MMS) messages over a GPRS or an 802 network, however, several variations of these services may be provided in accordance with allotted memory space of the wireless terminal. Rich multimedia services may require larger memory size than that available in the

PDA. Therefore, the same multimedia services may be provided via black and white or a reduced set of colors depending on terminal capabilities. Also, the possibility of network-assisted handoff can be provided to those terminals that indicate dual mode (WLAN/GPRS or WLAN/3G) capabilities. A mechanism is needed to indicate these capabilities to the existing GPRS/UMTS networks.

[0007] In addition, in network interworking, there is no capability of informing a wireless terminal having dual-mode radio capabilities and relying upon one of the networks with which it communicates to be advised of the interworking capability to enable the wireless terminal to have the increased ability of communicating with either of the two networks.

[0008] SUMMARY

[0009] The present invention is characterized by comprising a method and apparatus for enabling a wireless terminal to communicate the dual-mode capabilities and further to provide a method and apparatus for reporting the interworking capabilities of the two networks wherein the wireless terminal has the added capability of obtaining services from either one of the interworking networks.

[0010] BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING(S)

[0011] The present invention will be understood from a consideration of the figures in which like elements are designated by like numerals and, wherein:

[0012] Figure 1 is a simplified schematic diagram of the network having integrated universal mobile telephone service (UMTS) and wireless local area network (WLAN) networks.

[0013] Figure 2 is a simplified schematic diagram showing an attach procedure and embodying the capabilities of the present invention.

[0014] Figure 3 shows a WTRU network capability information element (IE).

[0015] Figures 4 and 5 respectively show the existing and modified network capability and radio access (RA) capability information element (IE).

[0016] Figure 4A shows the modified network capabilities IE of Figure 4 in greater detail.

[0017] Figures 5A1-5A2 and 5B show the modified RA capability IE of Figure 5 in greater detail and Figure 5A shows the manner in which Figures 5A1 and 5A2 are arranged.

[0018] DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT(S)

[0019] The problem solved by this invention is the mechanism by which a terminal that supports both GPRS and WLAN, or 3G and WLAN can report its WLAN capabilities to the supporting GPRS/UMTS networks. Also, the invention identifies the mechanism by which a 3G network can indicate that 3G or packet switched domain services over WLAN are available.

[0020] Figure 1 shows a simplified block diagram of a network in which a UMTS and a WLAN are integrated. The WTRUs 12, 14 and 16 communicate with the network over respective radio links (RL-1, RL-2 and RL-3). More particularly, WTRU 12 communicates with a GSM radio access network (RAN); WTRU 14 communicates with a 2.5/3G RAN and WTRU 16 communicates with a WLAN access point (AP). WTRUs 12 and 14 may be cellular telephones while WTRU 16 may be a laptop, personal digital assistant (PDA) or other like device having an appropriate card enabling communication with the WLAN AP.

[0021] The GSM RAN communicates with a mobile switching center (MSC) which, as is known in the art, has the capability of interworking with location data bases. The MSC communicates with the visitor location register (VLR) to identify, authenticate, etc. the WTRU 12. The MSC also communicates with the short message service-gateway mobile switching center/interworking-mobile switching center (SMS-GMSC/IW-MSC) which provides the services such as short message service (SMS) data. The home location register (HLR) is a data base within the home public land mobile network (HPLMN) providing routing information for mobile terminated calls and SMS data and is also responsible for maintenance of user subscription information distributed to the relevant VLR (note the VLR in Figure 1) or GSN (GPRS support node) through the attached

process and mobility management procedures such as location area and routing area updates.

[0022] The WLAN AP communicates with a packet data gateway/WLAN access gateway (PDG/WAG). Capability information is exchanged between the GSN and the PDG/WAG. Services such as SMS data services are communicated to the PDG/WAG and hence to the WTRU 16 by way of the PDG/WAG and WLAN AP. Based on the capability of the WTRU 16, SMS data may be delivered thereto.

[0023] The WTRUs 12 and 14 when respectively communicating with the network through their associated RAN, provide information regarding their capability which, in accordance with the present invention, includes WLAN compatibility.

[0024] Figure 2 shows an attach procedure combined with a WLAN capability update. In the procedure shown in Figure 2, a UMTS dual mode WTRU, at step S1, powers up for a signaling connection to perform the ATTACH procedure. At step S2, a radio resource control (RRC) connection request message is conveyed to the radio network controller (RNC). Admission control and availability of resources is performed by the RNC, at step S3, which then conveys an RRC connection setup message to the dual mode WTRU, at step S4. The WTRU, at step S5, provides an RRC connection set up complete message providing the WTRU radio access (RA) compatibility and, at step S6, provides the initial direct transfer message, which includes the attach request and the point-to-multipoint system information (PtM SI), instant messaging system information (IM SI), network (NW) capability and radio access (RA) capability. The RNC, at step S7, provides an initial WTRU Message: attach request including the network and radio access capabilities. In addition to the UMTS capabilities, the message further contains WLAN capability. At step S8, authentication and ciphering request and security mode commands are performed and the WTRU is authenticated, at step S9. Thereafter, the SGSN provides to the SGSN a WTRU capability update to the WAG-PDG, at step S10,

and provides an attach-accept message to the RNC, at step S11, which is then conveyed, at S12, to the WTRU.

[0025] The update of the WTRU capability sent to WAG-PDG, at step S10, causes the SGSN to update the WAG, which may then decide if the service request can be terminated.

[0026] The purpose of a mobile station WTRU network capability information element is to provide the network with information concerning aspects of the WTRU related to the GPRS. The contents of the information element can affect the manner in which the network handles the operation of the WTRU. WTRU network capability information indicates general WTRU characteristics and, except for fields explicitly indicated, is independent of the frequency band of the sending channel.

[0027] WTRU network capability is a type 4 information element (IE) having a maximum length of ten octets.

[0028] The value part of the WTRU network capability IE is coded, as shown in Figure 3.

[0029] Figure 4 is a comparison of the existing network capability IE with the network capability information element of the present invention and Figure 5 shows a comparison of the radio access capability information element (RAC IE) with the RAC IE of the present invention.

[0030] The purpose of the mobile station (MS) network capability IE is to provide the network with information concerning aspects of the mobile station (i.e., WTRU) related to GPRS. The contents can affect the manner in which the network handles the operation of the mobile station. The MS network capability information indicates general mobile station characteristics and except for fields explicitly indicated, is independent of the frequency band of the channel it is sent on. The MS network capability is a type 4 information element with a maximum of ten octets length. The value part of a MS network capability information element is coded as shown in Figure 3.

[0031] Making reference to Figure 4, which shows the network capability IE in amplified fashion, item (1) of both the existing and new IE, namely the

system management capabilities by way of dedicated channels, are the same. Item (2) listed in the existing and new IE, the system management capabilities by way of GPRS channels are the same. Item (3) in the existing IE, and item (6) in the new information element, the Universal Multiple – Octet Coded Character Set (UCS), USC2 16 bit coding support, are the same.

[0032] Item (4) in the existing IE and item (7) in the new IE, i.e. the supplementary service (SS) screening indicator, are the same. The support of localized service area (SoLSA) capability, item (5) of the existing IE and item (8) of the new IE, are the same.

[0033] Item (6) in the existing IE, the revision level indicator, is the same as item (9) in the new IE. Items (4) and (5) in the new IE, namely, the system management capability by way of the WLAN and the short message system (SMS) item which identifies text only, text and animation, the instant message service and the multimedia service as well as others are provided to the WTRU, are not provided in the existing IE. Items (7) through (10) of the existing IE are omitted from the new IE and will not be discussed herein for simplicity.

[0034] Figure 4A shows the network capability IE in greater detail. For example, as shown in Figure 4A, the location service (LCS) value added (VA) location request notification bit, (in binary format) is “0” when not supported and is “1” when supported. WLAN capability is supported when its binary bit is “1” and is not supported when in the “0” state. The bit or bits identifying each capability are assigned predetermined locations with the IE. This is also the case for the RA capabilities. Also note that the GPRS encryption algorithm (GEA) capability bit is “0” when not supported and “1” when supported.

[0035] The purpose of the mobile station radio access (MS RA) capability information element (IE) is to provide the radio part of the network with information concerning radio aspects of the mobile station (i.e., the WTRU). The contents can affect the manner in which the network handles the operation of the mobile station. The MS RA capability is a type 4 information element, with a maximum length of 52 octets. The value part of a MS RA capability information element is coded as shown in Figures 5A and 5B.

[0036] Figure 5 compares the existing and new radio access capability IEs. Items (1) through (4) of the existing IE, namely the access technology type, access capabilities, UMTS FDD RA technology capability and UMTS 3.84 Mcps TDD RA technology capability, are identical to the items (1) through(4) in the new IE.

[0037] Items (5) and (6) in the existing IE are omitted from the new IE and hence will not be discussed herein for purposes of simplicity. Item (5) of the new IE does not appear in the existing IE and provides WLAN radio access capability which identifies the type of remote terminal, (such as PDA, laptop, phone, etc.), memory size, screen size, processing power, technology version (such as 802.11, 802.15, 802.16 and so forth), service profile, (such as SMS text only or text and animation), MMS, IMS, location, MBMS, and the like.

[0038] Figures 5A1-5A2/5B show the MS RA capability IE in greater detail. In Figures 5A1-5A2, the Access Technology type of four binary bits, represents the technology type used for access. Gaussian minimum shift keying (GMSK) is a form of frequency shift keying providing good spectral efficiency. 8PSK is a modulation technique where the carrier exists in one of eight states. Figure 5B shows the fields and binary bits for identifying some of the capabilities. For example, a three bit field is used to identify WLAN 802 RA Technology wherein the technology supported is identified by a particular combination of binary bits. Note that no support of WLAN 802.xx technology is represented by "000," support for WLAN 802.11b technology represented by "001" and so forth. As another example, the CDMA 2000 RA Technology capability is "0" when not supported and "1" when supported.

[0039] A dual mode WTRU provides a WLAN capability report over its UMTS (or GPRS) network depending on whether the dual mode WTRU has WLAN/UMTS or WLAN/GPRS capability.

[0040] As shown in Figure 2, when the WTRU is powered up, it first communicates by way of the UMTS channels and performs a non-access stratum (NAS) "ATTACH" procedure whereupon the UMTS/WLAN capability is exchanged with the network, as shown in Figure 2.

[0041] Depending on implementation, the user may chose to continue communicating with the UMTS network, manually switch over to WLAN channels or perform an automatic handover to the WLAN network, if available.

[0042] The present invention thus introduces two new IEs to existing GPRS/UMTS capability messages between WTRU and network and network and WTRU. The radio access capability information element (RAC IE) is modified to inform the network about the dual-mode capabilities of the WTRU/card, i.e., GPRS + WLAN or UMTS/WLAN. The radio access capability (RAC), carries all aspects of the WLAN capabilities including terminal type, (such as PDA, laptop, cell phone), memory size, screen size, processing power, technology version (such as 802.11, 802.15, 802.16 and so forth), service profile (such as SMS text only or text and animation), SMS, MMS, IMS, location, multicast broadcast media service (MBMS) and so forth. The WLAN capability update procedures are achieved without modification of the existing "ATTACH" procedure. The network capability is modified to inform dual mode WTRUs regarding the existence of WLAN interworking capabilities and the different types of services that can be provided over a WLAN network.

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CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for reporting capabilities of a wireless transmit/receive unit (WTRU) capable of supporting a wireless local area network (WLAN) and a general packet radio system/universal mobile telecommunication system (GPRS/UMTS) network, the method comprising:

said WTRU:

informing a core network of WLAN services it is capable of supporting; and

said GPRS/UMTS network:

providing those services the WTRU identifies it is capable of supporting.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the WTRU sends a radio access (RA) capability information element (IE) indicating the WLAN interworking and the WLAN capabilities it can support.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the WTRU sends the capability to support multiple services as part of an information element (IE).

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the WTRU sends a radio access capability (RAC) IE .

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the core network sends the interworking and WLAN capabilities as a part of an information element (IE) to the WTRU.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the core network sends a network capability (NW) IE.

7. Apparatus for reporting capabilities of a wireless transmit/receive unit (WTRU) capable of supporting both wireless local area network (WLAN) and general packet radio system/universal mobile telecommunication system (GPRS/UMTS) services, comprising:

the WTRU comprising:

means for providing a message informing a core network of WLAN services it is capable of supporting; and

the core network comprising means for providing the services the WTRU identifies it is capable of supporting responsive to said message.

8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said means for providing a message comprises:

means for sending the capability to support multiple services.

9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said means for sending sends a radio access capability (RAC) IE.

10. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein said means for providing a message comprises:

means for sending the capability to support multiple services as part of an information element (IE).

11. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the core network comprises:

means for sending interworking and WLAN capabilities to said WTRU.

12. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the core network comprises:

means for sending interworking and WLAN capabilities to said WTRU as a part of an information element (IE).

13. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the core network means for sending includes means for sending a network capability (NW) IE.

14. A method for reporting capabilities of a dual-mode wireless transmit/receive unit (WTRU) to a wireless communication network, comprising:
said WTRU informing said network of services said WTRU is capable of supporting;

said network providing services offered to said WTRU; and

said WTRU selecting one of said dual modes to receive services.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein said dual-mode WTRU has a capability of communication with a wireless local area network WLAN and a GPRS/UMTS network and indicates these given capabilities in given bits of an information element (IE).

16. The method of claim 15, wherein said WTRU places a binary state in said given bits to indicate the capability of supporting said services.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said network inserts binary states into given bits of said IE to identify capabilities of supporting services including SMS capability via a WLAN and SMS capabilities via GPRS channels.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein said WTRU inserts binary states into given bits of said IE to identify capabilities of supporting services including SMS capability via a WLAN and SMS capabilities via GPRS channels.

19. The method of claim 15, wherein said WTRU informs said network of capabilities by transmitting an information element (IE).

20. The method of claim 14, said WTRU further comprising:
communicating with a GPRS network when operating in a first mode;
and communicating with a WLAN when operating on a second mode.

21. The method of claim 14, said WTRU further comprising:
communicating with a UMTS network when operating in a first mode;
and communicating with a WLAN when operating on a second mode.

22. The method of claim 14, wherein said WTRU when selectively receiving
a communication card removably inserted to said WTRU for supporting one of a
plurality of WLAN communication protocols:
provides a message network identifying the inserted communication
card.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein said communication protocols include
WLAN 802 protocols and said message identifies the protocol supported by the
WTRU.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein said communication protocols include
WLAN 802.11a and WLAN 802.11b.

25. The method of claim 22, wherein said communication protocols include
WLAN 802.11b and WLAN 802.16.

26. The method of claim 14, comprising said WTRU:
transmitting a message having bit positions each identifying a given
WLAN communications protocol; and

inserting a given binary state into that bit which indicates a protocol supported by the WTRU.

27. A method for reporting capabilities of a wireless transmit/receive unit (WTRU) capable of supporting both wireless local area network (WLAN) and general packet radio system/universal mobile telecommunication system (GPRS/UMTS) services, the method comprising:

said WTRU:

informing a core network of its capability to support both WLAN and GPRS/UMTS services; and

the core network:

sending a radio access capability information element indicating the WLAN interworking and the WLAN capabilities to indicate whether if WLAN interworking is supported, or not.

28. The method of claim 27, further comprising:

said WTRU:

sending a capability to support multiple services as part of an information element (IE).

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the WTRU comprises:

sending a radio access capability (RAC) IE.

30. The method of claim 27, said core network comprising:

sending interworking and WLAN capabilities as a part of an information element (IE).