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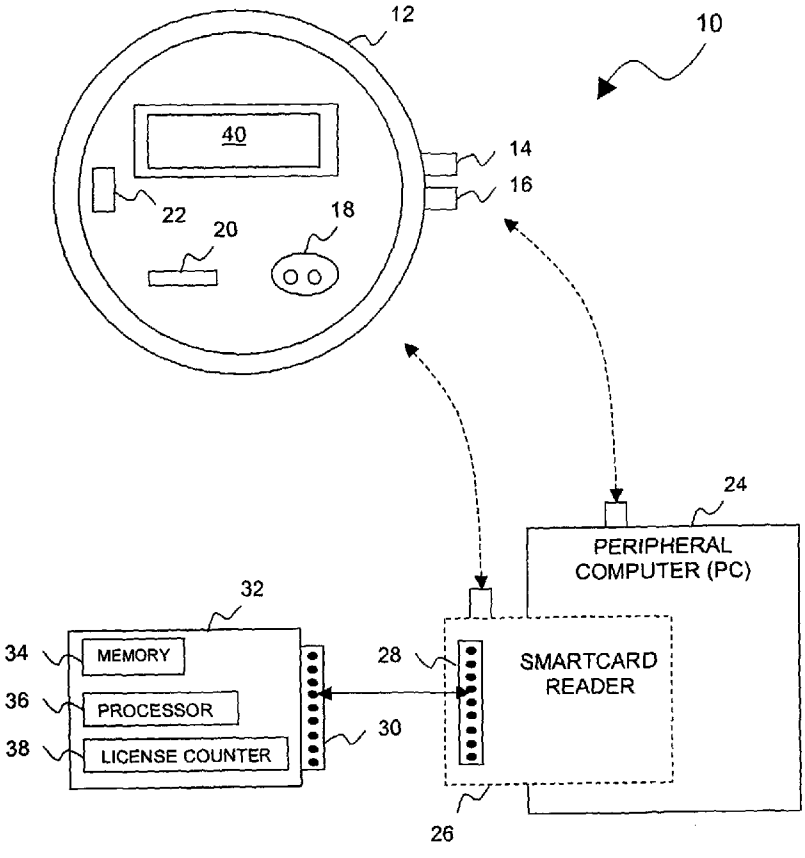
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(54) Title: TRANSFERABLE METER LICENSES USING SMARTCARD TECHNOLOGY



(57) Abstract: A metering system is provided including a smartcard reader and peripheral computer in communication with a metering apparatus. A smartcard with memory, microprocessor, and license counter may then be engaged with a smartcard reader in the metering system to effect meter license transactions. The license transactions may be purchased by a user either to enable enhanced functional meter features via a meter upgrade process or to disable functional meter features via a meter downgrade process. Such features are typically enabled or disabled by respectively either providing or restricting access to selected portions of the meter firmware. Since both upgrades and downgrades can be effected at a utility meter, the smartcards provide transferable meter licenses. Advantages of the disclosed smartcard technology facilitate secure and reliable license transactions. Such advantages more particularly result from data encryption techniques when communicating with a smartcard and a random communication protocol implemented between smartcard and utility meter modules.

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