CLAIMS

1. Method for distributing multimedia licences (LIR, LIS) by a server (10) to a plurality of user devices (30) in a distribution system of a multimedia service (CT), the access of which is protected by a first protection (KT1) according to a regular mode of distribution (RM) implemented by the server (10),

said server being provided with computing resources (11) allowing, at an instantaneous pace (Dinst) proportional to the computing resources used and up to a limit of a maximum pace (Dmax) defined by a maximum use of said resources (11), to generate regular licences (LIR) in response to requests (33) coming from user devices (30),

each regular licence (LIR) includes the first protection (KT1), the access of which is secured by a specific protection (Kp) associated to each user device (30) and different for each user device,

said method comprising the following circular steps:

- verifying if said instantaneous pace (Dinst) is lower than the maximum pace (Dmax) and,

- if so, generating and then transmitting said regular licences (LIR) to the user devices (30) in response to each of said requests (33),

- if not, switching the server (10) to a singular mode of distribution (SM) adapted to distribute as many multimedia licences (LIR, LIS) as necessary and comprising:

- protecting the access to the multimedia service (CT) by at least one second additional protection (KT2), independent of said first protection (KT1),

- generating at the server (10) at least one singular licence (LIS) comprising the second protection (KT2),

- transmitting the singular licence (LIS) to at least one part of the user devices (30),

- verifying, in a repetitive way, if the instantaneous pace (Dinst) is lower than the maximum pace (Dmax) and, if so, switching from singular mode (SM) to regular mode (RM) to allow access to multimedia service (CT) only by means of a regular licence (LIR).

2. Method of claim 1, wherein, to be generated, said singular licence (LIS) requires significantly lower computing resources than said regular licence (LIR).

3. Method of claim 1 or 2, wherein said singular licence (LIS) is a licence shared by ~~a~~ said plurality of user devices (30).

4. Method of any of preceding claims, wherein the access to said second protection (KT2) is secured by a common protection (Kc) known by at least part of said user devices (30).

5. Method of claim 1, wherein said specific protection (Kp) is either a private key, or a public key of a user device (30) in a symmetrical cryptographic scheme, respectively in an asymmetrical cryptographic scheme, between said server (10) and said user device (30).

6. Method of any of preceding claims, wherein each request (33) is identified by a specific identifier (ID) which is associated to each user device (30), which is different for each user device (30) and which allows the server (10) to send messages to said user device (30), and wherein said server (10) further carries out the following steps in the singular mode of distribution (SM):

- storing the identifier (ID) of each request (33) coming from a user device (30), and

- if the instantaneous pace (Dinst) is lower than the maximum pace (Dmax), generating a regular licence (LIR) for each request (30) whose identifier (ID) has been stored and transmit it to the user device (30) which is associated to said identifier (ID).

7. Method of any of preceding claims, wherein the regular licence (LIR) is transmitted to the user device (30) within a first entitlement management message (EMM1), the singular licence (LIS) is transmitted within a second entitlement management message (EMM2) and wherein said multimedia service (CT) is a multimedia content encrypted using a control word (CW) and wherein, in the regular mode of distribution (RM), said control word (CW) is encrypted using said first protection (KT1) to form a first control message (ECM1), and in the singular mode of distribution (SM) said control word (CW) is further encrypted using said second protection (KT2) to form ~~a second~~ a second control message (ECM2).

8. Method of any claims 1 to 5, wherein:

said server (10) further includes counting means (CPT) of a number (N_R) of required regular licences (LIR) waiting to be generated,

said singular mode of distribution (SM) further comprising the steps of:

- determining whether the instantaneous pace (Dinst) is lower than the maximum pace (Dmax), if so:

- as far as said number (N_R) of regular licences (LIR) is higher than zero: calculating and broadcasting, via an information message addressed to at least part of the user devices (30), an admission rate (T_A) representing the ratio of requests (33) acceptable by the server (10) in relation to the number (N_R) of regular licences (LIR) totalled by said counting means (CPT),

and upon reception of said information message, each user device (30) performs the following circular steps:

- verifying if it has a regular licence (LIR), if not:

- generating a random number (RND), then verifying if the generated random number (RND) is lower than or equal to the admission rate (T_A), if so, resending the request to the server (33), if not so, waiting until a new information message is received.

9. Method of claim 8, wherein said admission rate (T_A) is calculated by the following steps:

- determining a number (N_D) of regular licences (LIR) that said computing resources can generate at present time,

- said admission rate (T_A) being equal to the quotient of said number (N_D), as determined, by the number (N_R) of regular licences (LIR) totalled by the counting means (CPT).

10. Method of any of claims 1 to 5, wherein a certain number N_S of singular licences (LIS) different from each other are generated by the server (10) during said singular mode of distribution (SM), each of them being intended to be transmitted to a distinct part of the user devices (30) and includes at least one specific second protection (KT2) that makes it different from the other singular licences (LIS) and that ensures access to the multimedia content (CT), said number (N_S) of singular licences (LIS) being determined by the server (10) based on said maximum pace (Dmax) at which the computing resources (11) can determine a regular licence (LIR), and wherein said singular mode of distribution further comprises a step aiming to select, among a plurality of second protections (KT2), at least one second protection (KT2) to protect the access to the multimedia content (CT) and to periodically repeat said selection until all regular licences (LIR) have been generated in response to all requests (33) received by the server (10).

11. Device for distributing multimedia licences (LIR, LIS) to a plurality of user devices (30) ~~in a~~ in a distribution system of a multimedia service (CT), the access of which is protected by a first protection (KT1) according to a regular mode of distribution (RM), comprising:

- computing resources (11) allowing, at an instantaneous pace (Dinst) proportional to the computing resources used and up to the limit of a maximum pace (Dmax) defined by a maximum use of resources (11), to generate regular licences (LIR) in response to requests (33) coming from said user devices (30),

- a security unit (12) to generate said first protection (KT1),