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Abstract

INTERACTIVE TELEVISION CONVERTER

One or more channels (on 202) in a multi-channel cable television distribution system is used for the transmission of interactive television (ITV) signals in the form of packetized digital information from the cable system headend to subscribers. A converter (200) at each subscriber location is connected between the cable system and the subscriber's television receiver (230). Such converter contains a receiver (208) for the ITV channels. Control packets in the ITV signals are addressed to individual converters to enable the receipt of one or more virtual channels by a converter. The converter decodes and expands (214,215) the packetized digital information in such enabled channels and generates a conventional video signal (222), which is transmitted to the subscriber's television receiver on one of the channels used for the ITV signal from the headend, replacing the packetized digital information. The remaining channels from the cable system are forwarded to such television receiver unaltered. Thus, all cable-ready features of the subscriber's television receiver are usable. In alternative embodiments of the invention, the video signal generated by the converter is derived from one or more sources. Examples of such sources are an additional receiver adapted to receive a conventional television signal from the cable system and local text or symbol generators.

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