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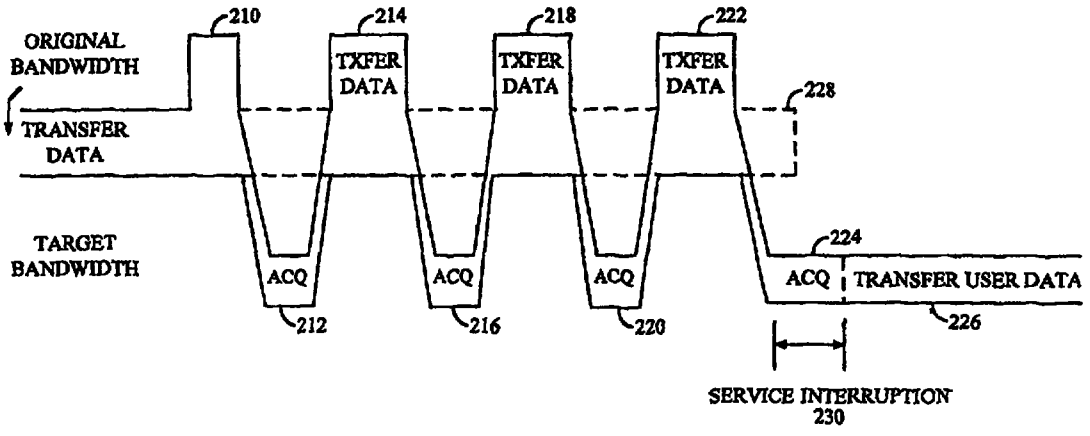
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(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR COORDINATING TRANSMISSION OF SHORT MESSAGES WITH HARD HANDOFF SEARCHES IN A WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM



(57) Abstract

A method and apparatus for coordinating the time at which a mobile station (5) performs searches for alternative systems to which a hard handoff will occur. In one system which includes the present invention, the mobile station (5) receives a command which instructs the mobile station (5) as to when to tune to alternative frequencies in order to search for indications of the presence of an alternative system. In another system which includes the present invention, predetermined times are defined with respect to a reference point in time that is common to both an origination base station (10) and a mobile station (5). The mobile station (5) tunes to alternative frequencies to perform searches only during these predetermined times. In addition, the mobile station (5) coordinates the transmission of reports which indicate the results of searches for alternative systems such that these reports are only transmitted from the mobile station (5) when the mobile station (5) is tuned to the origination frequency.