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| <b>(21) International Application Number:</b> <b>PCT/IB97/00325</b><br><b>(22) International Filing Date:</b> 1 April 1997 (01.04.97)<br><br><b>(30) Priority Data:</b><br>96200937.9 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10 April 1996 (10.04.96) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EP<br><b>(34) Countries for which the regional or international application was filed:</b> NL et al.<br><br><b>(71) Applicant:</b> PHILIPS ELECTRONICS N.V. [NL/NL]; Groenewoudseweg 1, NL-5621 BA Eindhoven (NL).<br><b>(71) Applicant (for SE only):</b> PHILIPS NORDEN AB [SE/SE]; Kottbygatan 7, Kista, S-164 85 Stockholm (SE).<br><b>(72) Inventor:</b> TEN KATE, Warner, Rudolph, Theophile; Prof. Holstlaan 6, NL-5656 AA Eindhoven (NL).<br><b>(74) Agent:</b> VAN DER KRUK, Willem, L.; Internationaal Octrooibureau B.V., P.O. Box 220, NL-5600 AE Eindhoven (NL). |           | <b>(81) Designated States:</b> JP, KR, <u>SG</u> , European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE).<br><br><b>Published</b><br><i>With international search report.</i><br><i>Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i> |

**(54) Title:** ENCODING OF A PLURALITY OF INFORMATION SIGNALS**(57) Abstract**

An apparatus for encoding a plurality of digital information signals is disclosed, having at least a first input means (1) for receiving a first digital information signal (L) and a second input means (2) for receiving a second digital information signal (R). Further, signal combination means (10) are present for combining the first and second digital information signal (L, R) and for generating a first combination signal (M). First and second data compression means (12.1, 12.2) are present for data compressing the first and second digital information signal (L, R) so as to obtain first and second data reduced digital information signals and first, second and third masked threshold determining means (14.1, 14.2, 14.3) are present for determining first, second and third masked thresholds respectively from the first, second digital information signals and the combination signal respectively.

The apparatus further comprises selection means (16.1) for deriving one masked threshold from the first and third masked threshold so as to obtain a first selected masked threshold. Preferably, said first selected masked threshold is the smallest of the first and third masked thresholds. The first data compression means is adapted to carry out a data compression step on the first digital information signal in response to said first selected masked threshold.

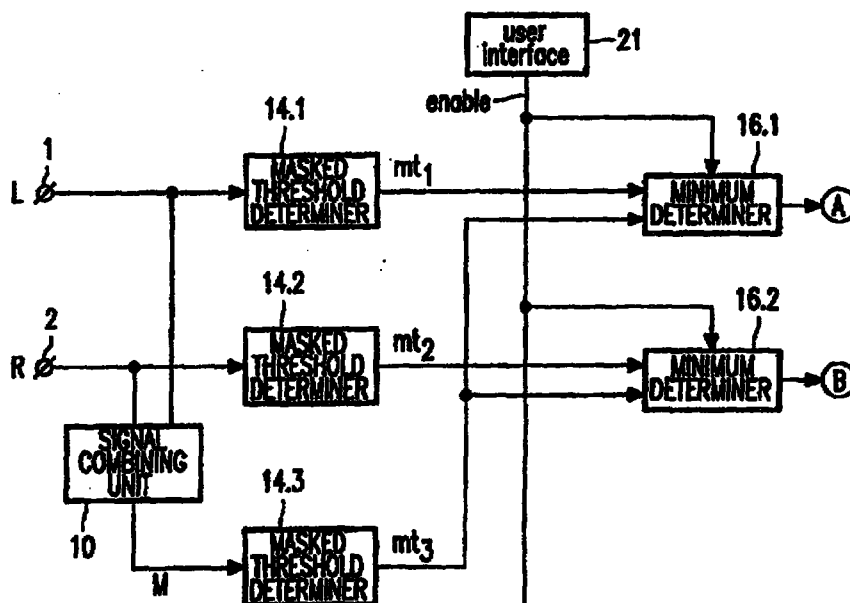


FIG. 2