

Description

The present invention concerns an arrangement which can be used in the manufacture of individual remote control transmitters for controlling a television receiver, a video tape recorder or a video disc player, or in a single, unified remote control transmitter for controlling the devices.

Manufacturers have traditionally provided remote control systems for television receivers. As the popularity of television accessories such as video cassette recorders and video disc players has grown, manufacturers have also started to provide individual remote control systems for the television accessories. As a result, a user may have three or more individual remote control transmitters. The use of individual remote control transmitters is cumbersome. Moreover, the cost of a remote control arrangement where each television device has its own remote control transmitter is expensive to the user. Accordingly, a single, unified remote control transmitter which is capable of controlling more than one television device is highly desirable for users which own a number of television devices with remote control provisions.

While users with a number of television devices will benefit from the availability of a unified remote control transmitter, manufacturers will have to manufacture individual remote control transmitters for respective television devices for users that presently only own a single television device, e.g., a television receiver, in addition to unified remote control transmitters. While a large section, e.g., the driver and transducer section, of individual and unified remote control transmitters can be made the same, the respective control portions cannot readily be made the same because they must generate a variety of different remote control messages. The latter is particularly a problem where a unified remote control transmitter has control keys which are shared for the control of different devices. Manufacturers incur inventory and testing costs because of the need for different control sections which may be passed on to consumers. The present invention is directed to solving this problem.

EP—A—0002434 discloses a computer-controlled remote control transmitter with which many different functions can be controlled remotely, the range of functions possibly covering more than one remote device, while the transmitter has a simple keypad. The function to be controlled may be determined by a control key inserted into the transmitter. It is not clear how the transmitter computer is enabled to generate signals appropriate to whichever function is selected. However, in one embodiment the control key is a magnetically readable data carrier, on which a fixed program, operands and the like are stored. It appears from this that maybe the computer is programmed appropriately for the function the transmitter is to control, by reading the program from the data carrier which, on insertion into the transmitter, specifies that function.

EP—A—0122548, which was published after the filing date of the present application but which has an earlier priority date than the priority date of the present application, discloses a remote control transmitter which can be trained to transmit the signal codes appropriate to one particular model or brand of a device type out of a plurality of possible models or brands. Thus if the transmitter is for controlling a VCR, it has pre-stored in it the signal codes appropriate for operation of various models and manufacturers' brands of VCRs. In the learning mode, it learns unambiguously which particular model or brand of VCR it is to control, and then later transmits only the codes appropriate for the single unambiguously learnt model or brand of VCR.

Aspects and preferred features of the present invention are set out in the accompanying claims. An embodiment of the present invention, given by way of non-limiting example, will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figures 1 and 2 show, in pictorial form, individual and unified remote control transmitters for controlling a television receiver, video cassette recorder and video disc player which is useful in understanding the type of remote control messages that must be generated by each;

Figure 3 shows, in block form, a remote control transmitter arrangement, embodying the present invention, for inclusion in all the remote control transmitters shown in Figures 1 and 2;

Figure 3A shows in pictorial form, the contents of the external memory included within the remote control transmitter arrangement shown in Figure 2;

Figure 4 shows, in block form, the remote control section of a television receiver controlled by the television remote control transmitter shown in Figure 1 and the unified remote control transmitter shown in Figure 2;

Figures 5A—5B and 6A—6E show, in flow chart form, the control program for the microcontroller included within the remote control transmitter arrangement shown in Figure 3; and

Figures 7 and 8 show, in flow chart form, the control program for the microcontroller included within the remote control receiver shown in Figure 4.

In Figure 1, a television receiver (TV) 10 receives television signals from video cassette recorder player (VCR) 12 and video disc player (VD) 14 for reproduction. Typically, the television signals are RF signals but they can also be video signals. An RF source 16 (which may be an antenna, as shown, or a cable distribution network) provides RF signals to VCR 12. TV 10 and VCR 12 include respective tuners. A switching arrangement is included within VCR 12 for selectively coupling the signals to only the tuner of TV 10 or to both the tuner of TV 10 and the tuner of VCR 12. In the latter state, one channel can be reproduced by TV 10 while another is being recorded by VCR 12.

Individual remote control transmitters 10a, 12a and 14a are provided for controlling various functions

of TV 10, VCR 12 and VD 14. The remote control messages generated by individual remote control transmitters 10a, 12a and 14a are provided for controlling various functions of TV 10, VCR 12 and VD 14. The remote control messages generated by individual remote control transmitters 10a, 12a and 14a are received and processed by remote control receiver (RCRCVR) sections 10b, 12b and 14b of TV 10, VCR 12 and VD 14, respectively, to control the devices in accordance with the remote control messages.

The remote control messages are generated when a user depresses respective keys of a remote control transmitter. By way of example, the following tables indicate the functions of TV 10, VCR 12 and VD 14 which are controlled when respective keys of transmitters 10a, 12a and 14a are depressed.

TABLE 1
TV Functions

Key	Function
ON	Turn TV on
OFF	Turn TV off
CU	"channel up"—tune TV tuner to next higher channel in a "skip list" indicating which channels are to be tuned and which channels are to be "skipped over"
CD	"channel down"—tune TV tuner to next lower channel in skip list
0—9	the sequential depression of two "digit" keys causes the channel with the resulting two digit channel number to be tuned
VU	"volume up"—increase the audio volume level
VD	"volume down"—decrease the audio volume level
MUTE	mute the sound; when depressed a first time sound is muted and when depressed a second time sound is "unmuted"
ADD	add the presently tuned channel to the channel list
ERASE	remove the presently tuned channel from the channel list

TABLE 2
VCR Functions

Key	Function
ON, OFF, CU, DC, 0—9, ADD and ERASE	same as for TV except for VCR
TV/VCR	when depressed a first time couples the RF source to only the tuner of the VCR; when depressed a second time, couples the RF source to the tuners of both the TV and VCR (for watching channel while recording another)
RCD	record
PLAY	play
FFWD	fast forward—rapidly advance tape
FRVS	fast reverse—rapidly rewind tape
PAUSE	stop tape motion
SM	slow motion—motion in picture slowed
TU	adjust tape synchronization tracking in upward sense for slow motion
TD	adjust tape synchronization in downward sense for slow motion

TABLE 3
VD Functions

	Key	Function
5	ON, OFF, FFWD, FRVS and PAUSE	same as for VCR except for VD
10	FVS	"forward visual search"—while a picture is produced, the disc is turned more rapidly than normal playing speed in the forward direction to allow a visual search for a particular location
15	RVS	"reverse visual search"—while a picture is produced, the disc is turned more rapidly than normal playing speed but in the reverse direction to allow a visual search

A unified remote control transmitter 20 for controlling TV 10, VCR 12 and VD 14 shown in Figure 1, is shown in Figure 2. Since many of the keys are used to control more than one device, unified remote control transmitter 20 includes device selection keys TV, VCR and VD for determining which one of TV 10, VCR 12 or VD 14 is to be controlled. The following table indicates the function or functions of the keys of unified remote control transmitter 20. As is indicated, some functions depend on which device key has been previously depressed while others unconditionally control a particular device independent of which device key has been previously depressed. Still other functions depend on which device and function keys have been previously depressed. It will also be noted that there is no ON key. This is so because the selection of a device key will automatically cause the respective device to be turned on.

TABLE 4
Unified remote functions

Key	Function
5 TV	select TV to be controlled
VCR	select VCR to be controlled
10 VD	select VD to be controlled
0—9	depending on which of the TV or VCR keys has been depressed, causes the TV or VCR channel selected by sequentially depressing the tens and units digit keys of desired channel number to be tuned
15 CU	depending on which of TV or VCR keys has been depressed, tunes the next higher TV or VCR channel
20 CD	depending on which of TV or VCR keys has been depressed, tunes the next lower TV or VCR channel
ADD	add the presently tuned channel to a skip list
25 ERASE	remove the presently tuned channel from a skip list
V/TU	increase volume level unless VCR and SM keys have been previously depressed; in the latter case, change the VCR synchronization tracking in the "upward" sense
30 V/TD	decrease volume level unless VCR and SM keys have been previously depressed; in the latter case, change the VCR synchronization tracking in the "downward" sense
35 MUTE	unconditionally mute the TV audio volume levels
RCD	if the VCR key has been previously depressed, causes VCR to record
PLAY	if the VCR key has been previously depressed, causes VCR to play
40 TV/VCR	if VCR key has previously been depressed, upon first depression, couples RF source only to VCR tuner; upon second depression, couples RF source to both the TV tuner and to VCR tuner
45 SM	if VCR key has been previously depressed, activates the slow motion feature
FVS	if VD key has been previously depressed, causes a forward visual search
RVS	if VD key has been previously depressed, causes a reverse visual search
50 FWD	if VCR key has been previously depressed, causes VCR to rapidly advance the tape; if VD key has been previously depressed, causes VD to rapidly advance the disc position
55 FRVS	if VCR key has been previously depressed, causes VCR to rapidly rewind the tape; if VD key has been previously depressed, causes VD to rapidly return the disc position
60 PAUSE	depending on which of VCR or VD keys has been depressed, causes either VCR or VD to pause
CFF	causes the last device selected to turn off

Figure 3 is a schematic of a remote control arrangement which can be used in any of the individual remote control transmitters shown in Figure 1 or in the unified remote control transmitter shown in Figure

2. Basically, it includes a keyboard 30 by which a user may enter commands, a microcontroller 32 for forming remote control messages in response to the commands entered by means of keyboard 30, and a driver section 34 for transmitting the remote control messages to a remote control receiver. Microcontroller 32 operates under the control of a stored program which is always the same, i.e., is independent of the type of remote control transmitter. Driver section 34 is also always the same. Accordingly, a significant part of all the remote control transmitters is the same. This reduces the parts inventory and testing required to manufacture the four different types of remote control transmitters and consequently the cost to both the manufacturer and consumer.

Keyboard 30 is selected in accordance with the type of remote control transmitter. However, the key codes for keys common to both an individual remote control transmitter and the unified remote control transmitter are the same.

To identify the type of remote control transmitter, certain input and output terminals of microcontroller 32 are selectively connected, i.e., "strapped", by the manufacturer either to each other, to the supply voltage (VDD) conductor, or to the reference voltage (ground) conductor in a strap configuration 36. Strap configuration 36 is examined, i.e., "read", by microcontroller 32 to determine the action to be taken in response to the activation of the keys. Specifically, the remote control messages include a preamble portion which identifies the device to be controlled and a data portion which identifies the function to be controlled. If the transmitter is an individual one (10a, 12a or 14a in Figure 1), strap configuration 36 determines the preamble portion of the remote control message. If the transmitter is a unified one (10 in Figure 1), strap configuration 36 determines the preamble, and possibly the data portion, in accordance with the contents of an external memory 38. External memory 37 also stores information, such as the skip list referred to above. These and other features will be described in greater detail with reference to the flow chart of the control program shown in Figures 5A—B and 6A—E.

Now specifically with reference to Figure 3, the switches of the various keys of keyboard 30 are coupled to a power supply switching circuit 38, in addition to microcontroller 32. When a key of keyboard 30 is depressed, power supply switching circuit 38 is caused to couple a supply voltage from a battery 40 to the rest of the remote control transmitter, including microcontroller 32. Microcontroller 32 responds to the depressed key by generating a digital word representing the appropriate remote control message. A carrier signal is modulated in accordance with the remote control message representative word within microcontroller 32, in the manner to be described below, and coupled to a driver-amplifier 42 of driver section 34. The modulated carrier is amplified by a driver-amplifier 48 and applied to a transducer 44. Transducer 50, which may comprise an infrared light emitting diode, transmits the modulated carrier.

Power supply switching circuit 38 includes an "OR" function gate 46, a set-reset flip-flop (S-R FF) 48 and an electronic switch 50. When any one of the keys of keyboard 30 is depressed, S-R FF 48 is "set" whereby a high logic level (or logic "1") is developed at its Q output. Normally non-conductive electronic switch 50 is rendered conductive in response to logic "1" produced at the Q output of S-R FF 48. As a result, the supply voltage provided by a battery 40 is coupled to a supply voltage input (labeled V_{cc}) of microcontroller 32 and to respective supply voltage inputs of driver-amplifier 42. After microprocessor 32 has caused the remote control message corresponding to a depressed key to be transmitted, it generates a "power off" signal (a logic "1") which causes S-R FF 48 to be "reset" whereby a logic "0" is developed at its Q output. In response, switch 50 is rendered "non-conductive" and the supply voltage from battery 40 is decoupled from microcontroller 32 and driver-amplifier 42. Thus, the transmitter is only energized long enough for the remote control command to be transmitted after a key is depressed. This increases the lifetime of battery 40.

The output side of switch 50 is also coupled to a "power up" detector 52 which in turn has an output coupled to a "reset" input of microcontroller 32. When a key of keyboard 30 is depressed and switch 50 is, as a result, rendered conductive to couple supply voltage to microprocessor 32, power up detector 30 generates a "reset" pulse. In response to the reset pulse, the control program for micro controller 32 is initiated as will be described below.

Microcontroller 32 includes input and output (I/O) ports 54 by which data (in digital form) is received from and coupled to external devices. A central processing unit (CPU) 56 controls the transfer and processing of data under the control of a program stored in a read-only memory (ROM) 58. For this purpose CPU 56 addresses ROM 58, reads the instruction stored at the addressed memory location and processes it. Transfers data according to the instruction. During this operation memory locations of an internal volatile random access memory (RAM) 60 are used to temporarily store data as it is processed. CPU 54 addresses RAM 40 and transfers data to and from the addressed memory location of RAM 40.

Timing signals for microcontroller 32 are derived from the output signal of a crystal oscillator 62. The frequency of oscillator 62 is also divided by counter 64 to derive the carrier signal. The carrier signal is coupled to an electronic switch 66 the conduction of which controlled by the bits (binary digits) of the remote control message representative word to derive the modulated carrier which is coupled to driver-amplifier 42.

External RAM 37 is included in the individual remote control transmitters (10a and 12b of Figure 1) for the television receiver and the video cassette recorder and in the unified remote control transmitter (20 of Figure 2) but not in the individual remote control transmitter (14a of Figure 1) for the video disc player and is therefore indicated with phantom lines.

External RAM 37 is used to store a list of preferred and non-preferred channels, i.e., a "skip list", the last device selected for control in the case of the unified remote control transmitter, and other data as well as other data indicated in Figure 3A. This will be discussed in greater detail with respect to the flow chart of the control program stored shown in Figures 5A—B and 6A—E. CPU 56 addresses RAM 37 and transfers data to and from the addressed memory location.

Battery 40 is directly connected to the supply voltage input (V_{cc}) of RAM 37 rather than through switch 50 so that the contents of RAM 37 are maintained when the remote control transmitter is off, i.e., when none of its keys are depressed.

The COP 420L microprocessor available from National Semiconductor Corp., Santa Clara, California, is a suitable choice for microcontroller 32 and the COP 499 RAM, also available from National Semiconductor Corp., is a suitable choice for RAM 37. The COP 420L microprocessor is constructed with CMOS (complementary metal-oxide semiconductor) devices and therefore is particularly well suited since CMOS devices use relatively small amounts of energy.

A schematic of remote control receiver section 10b of TV 10 shown in Figure 1 is shown in Figure 4. While remote control sections of VCR 12 and 14b of VD 14 are generally similar, the television remote control section has been illustrated so that the function of certain complex remote control messages discussed with respect to Figures 5A—C and 6A—D will be better understood.

In Figure 4, television receiver 10 includes a signal processing section 102 including a voltage controlled tuner 102 for converting the RF signal for a selected channel received from an RF source 104 (such as antenna 16 or VCR 14 shown in Figure 1) to a corresponding IF signal. The IF signal is demodulated by a demodulator 106 to produce video and audio signals which are processed in respective sections 108 and 110. A tuner control unit 110 generates a tuning control voltage for tuner 102 in accordance with the channel number the selected channel stored, in digital form, in an internal register. A volume control unit 112 generates a volume control voltage for controlling the audio volume level in accordance with a volume level representative digital word stored in an internal register. The volume may be "muted" in response to a "mute" command signal. A main power supply 116 selectively provides operating voltages to signal processing section 100 in response to "on" and "off" command signals.

Remote control receiver section 10b includes a transducer 118 from converting received remote control messages to a corresponding electrical signal and an amplifier 120 for amplifying these signals. A demodulator, which may simply comprise an envelop detector, produces a digital word representing in serial form the remote control message in response to the electrical signal provided by amplifier 120. The remote control message is examined by a microcontroller to generate the "on", "off" and "mute" command signals and the channel number and volume representative digital words. Basically, microcontroller 124 examines the preamble of the remote control message to determine if it is correct and if it is thereafter decodes the data portion of the remote control message to produce the various command and control level representative digital word signals. A standby power supply 126 continually provides supply voltages to the various portions of remote control receiver section 102 so that remote control receiver 10b is always in a condition to receive remote control messages and so that the on, off and mute commands and the channel number and volume level representative digital words are maintained when signal processing section 100 is "off".

As will be described in greater detail below, when a television channel is selected by means of the CU and CD keys, the remote control message has a complex form including both the channel number and either the channel up or channel down command (depending on whether the CU or the CD key was depressed). The purpose of this is to enable the audio to be muted while a channel is being changed. The complex remote control message is decoded by microcontroller 124 of TV remote control section 10b to derive the channel number and the appropriate one of a CU or CD signal. The CU or CD signal is coupled through an OR function circuit 126 (the function of which may be performed by microcontroller 124) to the mute control input of volume control unit 114. When a television channel is selected by means of the digit keys, the digits of the channel number are transmitted one at a time and the complete channel number is formed by microcontroller 124 when both digits have been received. At that time microcontroller 112 itself generates a mute signal which is coupled through OR function gate 126 to volume control unit 114. The mute signal generated when the MUTE key of the remote control transmitter is depressed is also coupled to the mute control input of volume control unit 114 through OR function circuit 126. The latter allows audio to be muted at anytime as desired.

Turning now to the flow chart starting in Figure 5A, the control program is initiated when a key is depressed and a reset signal is applied to the reset input of microcontroller 32. The contents of the memory location of external RAM 37 are read into corresponding memory locations of internal RAM 60 (001). The contents of a particular memory location (identified as VALID MEMORY in Figure 3A) in which a predetermined validity constant should have been stored, if the supply voltage to external RAM 37 was not disturbed, are examined to determine if the contents of external RAM 37 have been maintained (002). If the contents of external RAM 37 have not been maintained, certain initialization data is loaded into the memory locations of internal RAM 60 corresponding to those of external RAM 37 (003) as follows:

- set correct validity constant
- set skip list to indicate all channels are preferred

- set last TV and VCR channel numbers to the lowest channel number (e.g., 02)
- set the mode to TV

If the contents of external RAM 37 have been maintained or after the contents of external RAM 37 are set as indicated above, the keyboard is read (004). If no key has been depressed (005) and a predetermined time delay has not expired (as determined in 044, the purpose of which will be described with reference to Figure 6C), the contents of external RAM 37 are loaded from the contents of the corresponding memory locations of internal RAM 60 and the transmitter is turned off (006). This ends the program.

The contents of external RAM 37 are read into internal RAM 60 at the beginning of the program to increase the speed at which data can be processed since it takes considerably more time to read and write data from and into external RAM 37 than from and into internal RAM 60.

It is noted that although external RAM 37 is not present in a VD transmitter, since the program is the same for all the transmitters, coded memory address signals will still be provided at the appropriate output ports to carry out the above operations.

If a key has been depressed (005) strap configuration 36 is examined to identify the type of remote control transmitter (007). This portion of the program is shown in detail in Figure 6A.

If the remote control transmitter is a unified one (008), an examination is made to determine if the key that was depressed is a device key, i.e., a TV, VCR or VD key (009). If key was a device key, the mode is set to the corresponding device and stored in its corresponding memory location (010); the preamble portion of the remote control message is also set to the corresponding device (011) and the data portion of the remote control message is set to the "on" function (012). Then, after clearing a flag register (013) the contents of which are used to indicate whether or not a complex remote control message is to be transmitted as described below, the remote control message is caused to be transmitted (starting at point B) in the portion of the program shown in detail in Figure 6B. This causes the device selected to be turned on. Thereafter, the program returns to point A to wait for the next key to be depressed.

If the remote control transmitter is a unified one (008), but the key that was depressed is not a device key (009), the mode of operation is determined by the last device key which was depressed which is stored in the mode memory location. Accordingly, the contents of the mode memory location (014) are read and the preamble is set in accordance with the contents (015). Thereafter an examination is begun (at 016) to determine which function key was depressed in order to generate the data portion of the remote control message.

If the transmitter is not a unified one (008), the preamble is set in accordance with the type of the transmitter, i.e., TV, VCR or VD (017) as identified by strap configuration 36 and an examination is begun (starting at 016) to determine which function key was depressed to generate the data portion of the remote control message.

The determination of which function key was depressed begins with a determination of whether the function key was the mute key (016). If it was the mute key, the preamble is set to TV (018) and the data is set in accordance to the depressed key (019), i.e., mute. After the complex message flag is cleared (013) the remote control message is transmitted (starting at point B). Thus, when the mute key is depressed the audio output of the television receiver is unconditionally muted.

If the mute key was not depressed, the examination of the function key that was depressed continues (from point C) in the portion of the program shown in Figure 5B.

If the depressed key was either the VU or VD keys (020), the mode and transmitter type are examined to determine if either corresponds to VCR (021). If not, the preamble is set to TV (022) and the data is set in accordance with the depressed key, i.e., VU or VD (023). After the complex message flag is cleared (024) the remote control message is transmitted (starting at point B).

If the depressed key was VU or VD (020) and the mode or type is VCR (021) the last key (before the present one) is examined (025). If it was the SM (slow motion) key, the preamble is set to VCR (026) and the data is set to TU (track up) or TD (track down) depending on whether the VU or VD was depressed (027). After the complex message flag is cleared (024) the remote message control message is transmitted (starting at point B).

If the depressed key was a digit key (028), a direct entry portion of the program (029) shown in detail in Figure 6C is executed (029) to form the two digit channel number of the desired channel and the data is set in accordance with the depressed key, i.e., the particular digit key. After the complex message flag is cleared (024), a remote control message with the preamble set to either TV or VCR (in accordance with step 015 or 017) and with the data set to the particular digit of the channel number corresponding to the depressed key is transmitted (starting at point B).

If the depressed key was either a CU or CD key (030), the next channel in the skip list is located by executing a channel scanning portion of the program (031) shown in detail in Figure 6D. Thereafter a remote control message with the preamble set to either TV or VCR and the data set to the channel number of next channel in the skip list is transmitted (starting at point B). The remote control message will be a complex message including either CU or CD (depending on whether CU or CD was depressed). As earlier noted, if the selected device was the television receiver, this causes the audio to be muted while the new channel is being tuned.

If the depressed key was either the ADD or ERASE key (032), the last channel selected is added or removed from the skip list by executing a channel skip list set up portion of the program (033) shown in

detail in Figure 6E. Thereafter, the remote control message with the preamble set to either TV or VCR and the data set to the channel number of the last channel selected is transmitted. In response to this remote control message generated, the last channel is again tuned. If the last device selected was the television receiver, the image will temporarily disappear and then reappear as the last channel is returned. This indicates to a user that the desired action (i.e., either the addition or removal of the selected channel from the skip list) has taken place.

It is noted that once a channel is removed from the skip list, it cannot be selected by means of either the CU or CD keys and therefore it can only be added again if it is first directly entered by means of the digit keys.

When a channel is added or deleted, the remote message is complex and it includes, in addition to the channel number, the command "add" or "erase". This is desirable since it allows a skip memory included in television receiver or video cassette recorder to be set up when the skip list in the remote control transmitter is set up. The inclusion of a skip memory in the television receiver or video cassette recorder allows channels to be selected at the device itself in the same manner as with the remote control transmitter. To that end, as shown by way of example for the television receiver in Figure 4, a keyboard 128 for entering channel selection commands, as well as other function commands such as "on", "off", "volume up" and "volume down" and a memory 130 for storing the skip list are coupled to microcontroller 124. Since supply voltage is always provided by standby power supply 126, memory 130 may be included within microcontroller 124 if desired.

If the depressed key was none of the MUTE, VU, VD, CU, CD, ADD or ERASE keys, the data is set in accordance with the depressed key (023), the complex message flag is cleared (024) and the remote control message is transmitted (starting at point B).

The flow chart of the portion of the program for reading strap configuration 36 (shown in Figure 3) to determine the transmitter type is shown in Figure 6A.

As is indicated in Figure 3, in strap configuration 36 an input terminal (IN) can be connected either to the supply voltage (V_{cc}) conductor (a logic "1"), the reference voltage (ground) conductor (a logic "0"), to first output terminal (OUT 1) or to a second output terminal (OUT 2). The four possible transmitter configurations are identified as follows:

TV if IN tied to "1"
UR if IN tied to "0"
VCR if IN tied to OUT 1
VD if IN tied to OUT 2

In general, the number of remote control types that can be defined by such a strap configuration where an input terminal is tied to either the supply voltage conductor, the reference voltage conductor or to an output terminal is:

$2 + \text{number of output terminals to which the input terminal may be tied}$

Basically, as is indicated in Figure 6A, to determine the transmitter type, output terminals OUT 1 and OUT 2 are sequentially set to different logic states and the state of input terminal IN is examined at each logic state.

The flow chart for the portion of program for forming and transmitting the remote control message is shown in Figure 6B. Before the remote control message is transmitted, the key that was depressed is stored in a memory location of internal RAM 60 identified as LAST KEY (034). Thereafter, the contents of a complex message flag register are examined (035) to determine the type of remote control message to be transmitted. The contents of the LAST KEY memory location are transferred to a corresponding memory location of external RAM 37 before the program ends (see 006 of Figure 5A) for future reference in determining the preamble and data of a remote control message (see 025 of Figure 5B).

If the complex flag has not been set (036), the remote control message has the form:

PREAMBLE+DATA+PREAMBLE+DATA

where the "bars" indicate that each bit of the corresponding digital word is complemented. Such type remote control message in which the preamble and data are repeated in complemented form is conventionally used in remote control systems to reduce the possibility of error. After the remote control message has been transmitted, the program returns to wait for the next key depression (at point A of Figure 5A).

If the complex message flag has been set (037), the remote control message has the form:

PREAMBLE+DATA+PREAMBLE+DATA+PREAMBLE+COMPLEX DATA+PREAMBLE+COMPLEX DATA.

The manner in which the complex data is formed will be discussed with respect to the flow chart portions shown in Figures 6D and 6E.

After the complex remote control message has been transmitted, the complex message flag is cleared (038) and the program returns to wait for the next key depression (at point A of Figure 5A).

The flow chart portion for transmitting the tens and units digits of a channel number when a channel is directly selected is shown in Figure 6C. If the transmitter type or mode (device to be controlled) is TV or VCR (039), if a digit key has been depressed, the "1/2 entry" flag register is examined (040). If the 1/2 entry flag is not set, indicating that the depressed digit key corresponds to the tens digit, the digit key is stored in a memory location for the tens digit of the channel number (041). The 1/2 entry flag is then set (042) and a timer comprising an internal counter, is started (043). Thereafter, the digit corresponding to the depressed key is transmitted as the data portion (see 023 of Figure 5B) of a remote control message having a preamble set to either TV or VCR in accordance with the device selected for control in the case of a unified transmitter (see 015 of Figure 5A) or the transmitter type (see 017 of Figure 5A).

If a second digit key is depressed before the timer has reached a predetermined count corresponding to a predetermined time (see 044 of Figure 5A) the program will again reach the portion shown in Figure 6C and as a result a new channel will be selected as described below. However, if the timer has reached the predetermined count, i.e., if the time is finished (044 of Figure 5A) the program ends (006 of Figure 5A) without the selection of a new channel. The purpose of this is to reduce the possibility of incorrect channel selections. That is, if the user does not complete the direct entry of a channel number by depressing a second digit key, it is assumed that it was because it was realized by the user that the first digit key depressed was incorrect or that the depression of the first digit was by mistake.

If a second digit key is depressed, the 1/2 entry flag will have been previously set (040) to indicate that the second depressed digit key corresponds to the tens digit of the channel number of the desired channel. In that case, the digit corresponding to the depressed digit key is stored in a memory location for the units digit of the channel number (045), the 1/2 entry flag is cleared (046) and the timer is cleared (047). Thereafter, the channel number is stored in the memory location for the last TV channel if the transmitter type or mode (device to be controlled) is TV (048 and 049) or in the memory location for the last VCR channel if the transmitter type or mode is VCR (049 and 050). Then, the units digit is transmitted in the same manner as the tens digit of the channel number.

The flow chart for the channel scanning portion of the program is shown in Figure 6D.

While separate skip lists could be used for the television receiver and the video cassette recorder, only a single skip list is used for two reasons. The first reason is that in a given reception area, the preferred channels for the television receiver and the video cassette recorder will for the most part be the same. Accordingly, only a single skip list is required. The second reason is related to the fact that as earlier noted for reasons of operational speed, the contents of external RAM 37 are loaded into internal RAM 60 of microcontroller 32 after a key has been depressed. While an internal RAM such as RAM 60 of most inexpensive microprocessors such as the COP420L is large enough to store a single skip list and the other information transferred from external skip list 38, it is not large enough to store two skip lists.

In order to enable a single skip list to be employed, the channel number for the last TV channel selected is used as the starting point for the channel scanning operation to locate next TV channel and the channel number for the last VCR channel selected is used as the starting point for the channel scanning operation to locate the next VCR channel.

Now with specific attention to the flow chart shown in Figure 6D, if the transmitter type or mode (device to be controlled) is TV or VCR (051), if one of the CU or CD keys has been depressed, an examination is made to determine which one of the two (TV or VCR) it is (052). If the transmitter type or mode is TV, the channel number is set to the last TV channel number (053). If the transmitter type or mode is VCR, the channel number is set to the last VCR channel number (054).

If the CU key was depressed (055) the channel number is increased by one (056L). If the highest channel number has been exceeded (057U), the channel number is set to the lowest channel number (058U) to continue the scanning operation within the range of legitimate channel numbers. Thereafter, the memory location of the skip list for the present channel number, indicated in the flow chart by SL (CH.NO.), is examined to determine if it contains a "skip" indication, e.g., a logic "0" (059). If the memory location of the skip list for the present channel number contains a skip indication, the channel number is again increased until a "no skip" indication, e.g., a logic "1", is found. Essentially, the same operation occurs if the CD key was depressed, except, of course, that the channel number is decreased (see 055, 056D, 057D, 058D and 059).

Once a no skip indication is found, the corresponding channel number is stored in the memory location for the last TV channel if the transmitter type or mode is TV (060 and 061) or stored in the memory location for the last VCR channel if the transmitter type or mode is VCR (060 and 062). Then, the data is set to the channel number (063), the complex data is set to the depressed key, i.e., either CU or CD (064) and the complex message flag is set (065). Thereafter, the complex remote control message is transmitted with the appropriate preamble, i.e., either TV or VCR.

The flow chart for the add and erase portion of the program is shown in Figure 6E. If the transmitter type or mode is TV or VCR (066) if one of the ADD or ERASE keys has been depressed, the channel number is set to the last TV channel if the transmitter type or mode is TV (067 and 068) or set to the last VCR channel of the transmitter type or mode is VCR (067 and 069). If the ADD key was depressed (070), a "no skip" indication is stored in the memory location of the skip list for the present channel number (071). If the

ERASE key was depressed (070), a "skip" indication is stored in the memory location of the skip list for the present channel (072). Then, the data is set to the present channel number (073), the complex data is set to the depressed key, i.e., either ADD or ERASE, (074) the complex message flag is set (075). Thereafter, the complex remote control message is transmitted.

5 The flow chart for the program for processing received remote control messages in the remote control receiver portion of the television receiver shown in Figure 4 is shown in Figures 7 and 8. As shown in Figure 7, the program is started when supply voltage is initially provided from standby power supply 126 and a reset signal is generated by a power up detector 132 and applied to the reset input of microcontroller 124. The input terminals of microcontroller 124 coupled to keyboard 128 are monitored to determine if a keyboard entry has been made (076) and if this is the case, executes the appropriate function (077). The 10 input terminal of microcontroller 124 coupled to the output of demodulator 122 is monitored to determine if a remote control message has been received (078). If a remote control message has been received, it is decoded (079) to determine the preamble, data and complex data, if any. The validity of the remote control message is determined by comparing the complemented and uncomplemented portions (080). The preamble is examined to determine if it corresponds to the device being controlled (081). If the message is 15 not valid (080) or the preamble is incorrect (081) the program returns (to point A) to wait for the next keyboard entry or remote control message.

If the remote control message is complex (082) the complex message is processed (083) as shown in the flow chart of Figure 8.

20 If the data portion of the remote control message represents a digit (084) the channel number is formed similar to that in which the channel number is formed in the remote control transmitter (085—095). When the complete channel number has been formed, a mute signal is generated for a predetermined time long enough for the new channel to be tuned (093) and the channel number is applied to tuner control unit 112 in order to cause the corresponding channel to be tuned (094).

25 If the data does not represent a digit, the function represented by the data is executed (096).

The portion of the program for executing complex remote control messages is shown in Figure 8. Since the data portion of a complex remote control message represents a channel number, the channel number is set to the data (097).

30 If the complex data portion of the remote control message represents CU or CD (098), a mute signal is generated for the predetermined time (099) and thereafter the channel corresponding to the channel number is caused to be tuned (100).

If the complex data portion of the remote control message represents ADD or ERASE (098), the respective "skip" or "no skip" indication is stored in the memory location for the channel number (101—103). Thereafter the channel corresponding to the channel number is caused to be tuned (100).

35 The program for processing remote control messages for the video cassette recorder and video disc player are similar to that for the television receiver except in the case of the video cassette recorder the mute signal need not be generated and in the case of the video disc both the mute signal and the channel tuning commands need not be generated. However, if desired to reduce inventory and testing expenses as in the case of the remote control transmitters, the same program may be used for all the devices. In that 40 case, the preambles serve to route the program to portions for executing commands with which the particular device is concerned.

Claims

- 45 1. A remote control transmitter (20) for controlling one or more of a plurality of devices comprising: a microcontroller (32) including an input/output unit (54) by which data is coupled to and from said microcontroller; a program memory (58) in which is stored a program for controlling the operation of said remote control transmitter; a data memory (60) for temporarily storing data processed during the operation of said remote control transmitter; and a central processing unit (56) coupled to said input/output unit, to said program memory, and to said data memory for processing data received from or supplied to said input/output unit and to said data memory under the control of said program;
 - a keyboard (30) including a plurality of function control keys coupled to said input/output unit, by which a user may control respective functions of a remotely located device (10; 12; 14), said keyboard generating a function representative coded signal representing a respective function to be controlled when a function 55 key is activated by a user, said function representative coded signal being coupled to said input/output unit;
 - transmitting means (44) having an input coupled to said input/output unit for transmitting a remote control signal in accordance with remote control message representative coded signals representing remote control message; characterized by
 - transmitter type code generating means (36) coupled to said input/output unit for providing 60 transmitter type representative coded signal indicating which one or one of said plurality of devices said remote control transmitter is to control;
 - said program memory simultaneously storing information for controlling all of said plurality of devices;
 - said central processing unit (56) being responsive, under program control, to said transmitter type representative coded signals and to said function representative coded signals provided for generating 65



ERASE key was depressed (070), a "skip" indication is stored in the memory location of the skip list for the present channel (072). Then, the data is set to the present channel number (073), the complex data is set to the depressed key, i.e., either ADD or ERASE, (074) the complex message flag is set (075). Thereafter, the complex remote control message is transmitted.

5 The flow chart for the program for processing received remote control messages in the remote control receiver portion of the television receiver shown in Figure 4 is shown in Figures 7 and 8. As shown in Figure 7, the program is started when supply voltage is initially provided from standby power supply 126 and a reset signal is generated by a power up detector 132 and applied to the reset input of microcontroller 124. The input terminals of microcontroller 124 coupled to keyboard 128 are monitored to determine if a
10 keyboard entry has been made (076) and if this is the case, executes the appropriate function (077). The input terminal of microcontroller 124 coupled to the output of demodulator 122 is monitored to determine if a remote control message has been received (078). If a remote control message has been received, it is decoded (079) to determine the preamble, data and complex data, if any. The validity of the remote control message is determined by comparing the complemented and uncomplemented portions (080). The
15 preamble is examined to determine if it corresponds to the device being controlled (081). If the message is not valid (080) or the preamble is incorrect (081) the program returns (to point A) to wait for the next keyboard entry or remote control message.

If the remote control message is complex (082) the complex message is processed (083) as shown in the flow chart of Figure 8.

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The portion of the program for executing complex remote control messages is shown in Figure 8. Since the data portion of a complex remote control message represents a channel number, the channel number is set to the data (097).

30 If the complex data portion of the remote control message represents CU or CD (098), a mute signal is generated for the predetermined time (099) and thereafter the channel corresponding to the channel number is caused to be tuned (100).

If the complex data portion of the remote control message represents ADD or ERASE (098), the respective "skip" or "no skip" indication is stored in the memory location for the channel number (101—103). Thereafter the channel corresponding to the channel number is caused to be tuned (100).

35 The program for processing remote control messages for the video cassette recorder and video disc player are similar to that for the television receiver except in the case of the video cassette recorder the mute signal need not be generated and in the case of the video disc both the mute signal and the channel tuning commands need not be generated. However, if desired to reduce inventory and testing expenses as in the case of the remote control transmitters, the same program may be used for all the devices. In that
40 case, the preambles serve to route the program to portions for executing commands with which the particular device is concerned.

Claims

45 1. A remote control transmitter (20) for controlling one or more of a plurality of devices comprising: a microcontroller (32) including an input/output unit (54) by which data is coupled to and from said microcontroller; a program memory (58) in which is stored a program for controlling the operation of said remote control transmitter; a data memory (60) for temporarily storing data processed during the operation of said remote control transmitter; and a central processing unit (56) coupled to said input/output unit, to said program memory, and to said data memory for processing data received from or supplied to said input/output unit and to said data memory under the control of said program;

a keyboard (30) including a plurality of function control keys coupled to said input/output unit, by which a user may control respective functions of a remotely located device (10; 12; 14), said keyboard generating a function representative coded signal representing a respective function to be controlled when a function
55 key is activated by a user, said function representative coded signal being coupled to said input/output unit; transmitting means (44) having an input coupled to said input/output unit for transmitting a remote control signal in accordance with remote control message representative coded signals representing a remote control message; characterized by

transmitter type code generating means (36) coupled to said input/output unit for providing a
60 transmitter type representative coded signal indicating which one or one of said plurality of devices said remote control transmitter is to control;

said program memory simultaneously storing information for controlling all of said plurality of devices;

65 said central processing unit (56) being responsive, under program control, to said transmitter type representative coded signals and to said function representative coded signals provided for generating



said remote control message representative coded signals, which represent a remote control message including a preamble portion identifying the particular device to be controlled and a data portion identifying the particular function to be controlled; said central processing unit (56), under program control, generating said preamble portion in accordance with said transmitter type representative coded signals and generating said data portion in accordance with said function representative code signal if said transmitter type representative coded signal indicates that a particular one of said plurality of devices is to be controlled and said central processing unit, under program control, selectively interrogating said input/output unit to generate said preamble portion in accordance with a device selection representative coded signal representing the particular device to be controlled, other than said transmitter type representative signals, and generating said data portion in accordance with said function representative signals and said device representative signals if said transmitter type representative signal indicates that more than one of said plurality of devices are to be controlled.

2. The apparatus recited in Claim 1 characterized in that;

an external memory (38) coupled to said input/output unit stores said device representative signals; said keyboard further includes device selection keys (TV; VCR; VD) by which a user may select a particular device to be controlled, said keyboard generating said device representative coded signals when a user activates one of said device keys;

said central processing unit, under program control, if said transmitter type representative coded signal indicates that more than one of said plurality of devices are to be controlled, writing said device representative coded signals in said external memory when user activates one of said device keys and reading said device representative coded signals from external memory when a user activates one of said function keys.

3. The apparatus recited in Claim 2 characterized in that:

a battery circuit (38) is selectively coupled to said microcontroller by switching means (48, 50) for selectively connecting said battery circuit to said microcontroller after one of said keys of said keyboard has been activated and is continuously coupled to said external memory by a conductor.

4. The apparatus recited in Claim 3 characterized in that:

said central processing unit, under program control, unconditionally causes said preamble portion of said remote control message to identify a predetermined device to be controlled, independent of the transmitter type representative coded signals or said device representative coded signals when a predetermined function key is activated by a user.

5. The apparatus recited in Claim 4 characterized in that:

said keyboard includes a television selection key (TV) by which a user may select a television processing system providing audio and image responses in response to audio and video signals to be controlled, a television function selection key (V/TU, V/TD, MUTE) by which a user may control the characteristic of one of said audio and image responses of said television processing system, an accessory selection key (VCR, VD) by which a user may select an accessory for providing at least one of an audio or video signal to said television signal processing system to be controlled and an accessory function key by which a user may control the operation of said accessory; and

said central processing unit, under program control, unconditionally causes said preamble portion of said remote control message to identify said television processing system to be controlled when said television function key is operated.

6. A method of manufacturing a first type of remote control transmitter for controlling only a first device and a second type of remote control transmitter for controlling said first device and a second device, characterized by the steps of:

programming first and second identical microprocessors (32), each having input and output ports, in the identical manner with an identical program, the program containing the codes necessary for the microprocessors to generate remote control message preamble codes appropriate for remote control messages to the first device and remote control message preamble codes appropriate for remote control messages to the second device, the program instructing the microprocessors to examine data present at at least a first input port and to generate a preamble code of a remote control message according to said data at said first input port when said data at said first input port is of a first type corresponding to said first type of remote control transmitter and to generate said preamble code according to the data at a second input port when said data at said first input port is of a second type corresponding to said second type of remote control transmitter;

connecting said first microprocessor to a first circuit board (36), said first circuit board having at least one conductor connected to said first input port (IN) of said first microprocessor for applying said first type of data to said first input port in order to form said first type of remote control transmitter; and

connecting said second microprocessor and a memory to a second circuit board, said second circuit board having at least one conductor connected to said first input port of said second microprocessor to apply said second type of data to said first input port and having at least one conductor connected between said memory and said second input port of said microprocessor for applying data stored in said memory to said second input port of said second microprocessor in order to form said second type of remote control transmitter.



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7. The method recited in Claim 1 further characterized by the steps of:
connecting a first keyboard with keys for controlling the functions of said first device to said first circuit board, said first circuit board having conductors connected between said first keyboard and input ports of said first microprocessor; and

5 connecting a second keyboard with keys for controlling the functions of said first and second device to said second circuit board, said second circuit board having conductors connected between said second keyboard and input ports of said second microprocessor.

8. A remote control transmitter, having a user-operable input means (30), a programmed controller (32), and a transmission means (44), the controller (32) operating in accordance with its program to receive input signals from the input means (30) and to cause the transmission means (44) to transmit remote control signals in accordance with the input signals, the remote control signals including an identification of the device to be controlled,

10 the remote control transmitter being potentially able to transmit remote control signals including a said device identification which identifies any selected one of a plurality of devices to be controlled, characterized in that

15 the controller (32) is so programmed that it is inherently capable of operating in any selected one of a plurality of operating conditions,

20 there being, for each respective said operating condition, a respective device or group of devices for which the controller (32) is enabled to cause an appropriate said device identification to be included in a said remote control signal, and there being at least one said operating condition for which there is a respective said group containing more than one device,

25 the transmitter having means (36) to enable selection of the operating condition of the controller, which means (36) provides a condition identification code to the controller (32) which identifies the selected operating condition, and the controller (32) responding under program control to the condition identification code to determine in accordance with the condition identification code the device identification included in any particular said remote control signal.

Patentansprüche

30 1. Fernsteuersender (20) zur Steuerung eines oder mehrerer einer Mehrzahl von Geräten mit einem Mikrosteuerelement (32) enthaltend eine Eingangs/Ausgangs-Einheit (54) zum Koppeln von Daten zum und vom Mikrosteuerelement, einen Programmspeicher (58), in dem ein Programm zur Betriebssteuerung des Fernsteuersenders gespeichert ist, einen Datenspeicher (60) zur vorübergehenden Speicherung von Daten, die während des Betriebs des Fernsteuersenders verarbeitet werden, eine mit der Eingabe/Ausgabe-Einheit, dem Programmspeicher und dem Datenspeicher gekoppelte Zentralverarbeitungseinheit (56) zur Verarbeitung von Daten, die von oder zu der Eingabe/Ausgabe-Einheit und dem Datenspeicher unter Steuerung durch das Programm entnommen oder zugeführt sind,

40 einer Tastatur (30), die eine Mehrzahl von mit der Eingabe/Ausgabe-Einheit gekoppelten Funktionssteuertasten enthält, über welche ein Benutzer entsprechende Funktionen eines entfernt stehenden Gerätes (10, 12, 14) steuern kann, wobei die Tastatur ein Funktions-Darstellungs-Codesignal erzeugt, welches eine entsprechende zu steuernde Funktion darstellt, wenn eine Funktionstaste von einem Benutzer aktiviert wird, wobei das Funktions-Darstellungs-Codesignal auf die Eingabe/Ausgabe-Einheit gekoppelt wird,

45 und einem an seinem Eingang mit der Eingabe/Ausgabe-Einheit gekoppelten Sender (44) zum Senden eines Fernsteuersignals entsprechend Fernsteuernachrichten-Darstellungs-Codesignalen, die eine Fernsteuernachricht darstellen,

dadurch gekennzeichnet,

5 daß mit der Eingabe/Ausgabe-Einheit ein Sendertyp-Codegenerator (36) gekoppelt ist zur Lieferung eines Sendertypdarstellungs-Codesignals, welches anzeigt, welcher oder welche der Mehrzahl von Geräten der Fernsteuersender steuern soll,

daß der Programmspeicher gleichzeitig Information zur Steuerung aller der Mehrzahl von Geräten speichert,

55 daß die Zentralverarbeitungseinheit (56) unter Programmsteuerung in Abhängigkeit von den gelieferten Sendertypdarstellungs-Codesignalen und Funktionsdarstellungs-Codesignalen die Fernsteuernachrichten-Darstellungs-Codesignale erzeugt, welche eine Fernsteuernachricht darstellen, die einen das spezielle zu steuernde Gerät identifizierenden Eingangsbestandteil und einen die spezielle zu steuernde Funktion identifizierenden Datenbestandteil enthalten, daß die Zentralverarbeitungseinheit (56) unter Programmsteuerung den Eingangsbestandteil entsprechend den Sendertypdarstellungs-Codesignalen

60 und den Datenbestandteil entsprechenden den Funktionsdarstellungssignalen erzeugt, wenn das Sendertypdarstellungs-Codesignal anzeigt, daß ein spezielles der Mehrzahl von Geräten gesteuert werden soll, und daß die Zentralverarbeitungseinheit unter Programmsteuerung die Eingabe/Ausgabe-Einheit selektiv abfragt zur Erzeugung des Eingangsbestandteils entsprechend einem das spezielle zu steuernde Gerät darstellenden Gerätewahldarstellungs-Codesignal, welches ein anderes als das Sendertypdarstellungssignal ist, und den Datenbestandteil entsprechend den Funktionsdarstellungssignalen und den



Gerätedarstellungssignalen erzeugt, wenn das Sendertypdarstellungssignal anzeigt, daß mehr als eines der Mehrzahl von Geräten gesteuert werden soll.

2. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß ein mit der Eingabe/Ausgabe-Einheit gekoppelter externer Speicher (58) die Gerätedarstellungs-
 5 signale speichert,
 daß die Tastatur ferner Gerätewahltasten (TV; VCR; VD) enthält, durch welche ein Benutzer ein bestimmtes zu steuerndes Gerät wählen kann, daß die Tastatur die Gerätedarstellungs-Codesignale erzeugt, wenn ein Benutzer eine der Tasten aktiviert,
 daß die Zentralverarbeitungseinheit unter Programmsteuerung dann, wenn das Sendertypdar-
 10 stellungs-Codesignal anzeigt, daß mehr als eines der Mehrzahl von Geräten zu steuern ist, die Gerätewahl-Codesignale in den externen Speicher einschreibt, wenn der Benutzer eine der Gerätetasten aktiviert, und die Gerätedarstellungs-Codesignale aus dem externen Speicher ausfließt, wenn der Benutzer eine der Funktionstasten aktiviert.
3. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 2, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß eine Batterieschaltung (60) über eine
 15 Schaltung Schaltereinrichtung (48, 50) mit dem Mikrosteuerer wahlweise gekoppelt ist, zum wahlweisen Verbinden der Batterieschaltung mit dem Mikrosteuerer nach Aktivierung einer der Tasten der Tastatur, und mit dem externen Speicher über eine Leitung ständig gekoppelt ist.
4. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 3, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Zentralverarbeitungseinheit unter
 Programmsteuerung den Eingangsabschnitt der Fernsteuernachricht bedingungslos ein vorbestimmtes zu
 20 steuerndes Gerät identifizieren läßt unabhängig von den Sendertypdarstellungs-Codesignalen oder Gerätewahl-Codesignalen, wenn eine vorbestimmte Funktionstaste vom Benutzer aktiviert wird.
5. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 4, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Tastatur enthält eine Fernseh-
 wahlstaste (TV) durch welche ein Benutzer ein Fernsehverarbeitungssystem wählen kann, das in
 Abhängigkeit von zu steuernden Ton- und Bildsignalen eine Ton- und Bildwiedergabe liefert, eine
 25 Fernsehfunctiionswahlstaste (V/TU, V/TD, MUTE), durch welche ein Benutzer die Charakteristik einer der Ton- und Bildwiedergaben des Fernsehverarbeitungssystems steuern kann, eine Zusatzgeräte-Wahlstaste (VCR, VD), durch welche ein Benutzer ein Zusatzgerät wählen kann, welches mindestens eines der Ton- oder Bildsignale an das zu steuernde Fernsehsignalverarbeitungssystem liefert und eine Zusatzgerätefunktions-
 taste, über welche ein Benutzer die Betriebsweise des Zusatzgerätes steuern kann,
 30 und daß die Zentralverarbeitungseinheit unter Programmsteuerung bedingungslos den Eingangs- abschnitt der Fernsteuernachricht das zu steuernde Fernsehverarbeitungssystem identifizieren läßt, wenn die Fernsehfunktionstaste betätigt ist.
6. Verfahren zur Herstellung eines ersten Fernsteuersendertyps zur Steuerung nur eines ersten Gerätes
 und eines zweiten Fernsteuersendertyps zur Steuerung des ersten Gerätes und eines zweiten Gerätes,
 35 gekennzeichnet durch die Schritte
 Programmierung eines ersten und eines zweiten identischen Mikroprozessors (32), die jeweils Eingangs- und Ausgangsanschlüsse haben, in identischer Weise mit einem identischen Programm, welches Codes enthält, die für die Mikroprozessoren benötigt werden, zur Erzeugung von Fernsteuernachrichten-Eingangsabschnittencodes, die als Fernsteuernachrichten für das erste Gerät
 40 geeignet sind, und von Fernsteuernachrichten-Eingangsabschnittcodes, die als Fernsteuernachrichten für das zweite Gerät geeignet sind, wobei das Programm die Mikroprozessoren anweist, an mindestens einem ersten Eingangsanschluß vorhandene Daten zu prüfen, und einen Eingangsabschnittcode einer Fernsteuer- nachricht entsprechend den Daten am ersten Eingangsanschluß zu erzeugen, wenn die Daten an dem ersten Eingangsanschluß von einem ersten Typ sind, der dem ersten Fernsteuersendertyp entspricht, und
 45 den Eingangsabschnittcode entsprechend den Daten an einem zweiten Eingangsanschluß zu erzeugen, wenn die Daten am ersten Eingangsanschluß von einem zweiten Typ entsprechend dem zweiten Fernsteuersendertyp sind,
 Anschließen des ersten Mikroprozessors an eine erste Schaltungskarte (36), die mindestens einen an den ersten Eingangsanschluß (IN) des ersten Mikroprozessors angeschlossenen Leiter hat zur Zuführung
 50 des ersten Datentyps an den ersten Eingangsanschluß zwecks Bildung des ersten Fernsteuersendertyps, und Anschließen des zweiten Mikroprozessors und eines Speichers an eine zweite Schaltungskarte, die mindestens einen mit dem ersten Eingangsanschluß des zweiten Mikroprozessors verbundenen Leiter hat zur Zuführung des zweiten Datentyps zum ersten Eingangsanschluß und die mindestens einen zwischen
 den Speicher und den zweiten Eingangsanschluß des Mikroprozessors geschalteten Leiter hat zur
 55 Zuführung der im Speicher gespeicherten Daten zu dem zweiten Eingangsanschluß des zweiten Mikroprozessors zwecks Bildung des zweiten Fernsteuersendertyps.
7. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, weiterhin gekennzeichnet durch die Schritte:
 Verbinden einer ersten Tastatur mit Tasten zur Steuerung der Funktionen des ersten Gerätes mit einer
 ersten Schaltungskarte, die zwischen die erste Tastatur und die Eingangsanschlüsse des ersten
 60 Mikroprozessors geschalteten Leitungen hat, und
 Verbinden einer zweiten Tastatur mit Tasten zur Steuerung der Funktionen des ersten und zweiten Gerätes mit der zweiten Schaltungskarte, die zwischen die zweite Tastatur und die Eingangsanschlüsse des zweiten Mikroprozessors geschaltete Leiter hat.
8. Fernsteuersender mit einer von einem Benutzer betätigbaren Eingabeeinrichtung (30), einer
 65 programmierten Steuergerät (32), und einem Sender (44), wobei das Steuergerät entsprechend seiner



Programm arbeitet, um Eingangssignale von der Eingabeeinrichtung (30) aufzunehmen und den Sender (44) zu veranlassen, Fernsteuersignale entsprechend den Eingangssignalen auszusenden, und wobei die Fernsteuersignale eine Identifikation des zu steuernden Gerätes enthalten,

- wobei der Fernsteuersender potentiell in der Lage ist, Fernsteuersignale zu senden, welche die Geräteidentifikation enthalten, die ein ausgewähltes der Mehrzahl von zu steuernden Geräten identifiziert, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Steuergerät (32) so programmiert ist, daß es von Haus aus in der Lage ist, in einem ausgewählten einer Mehrzahl von Betriebszuständen zu arbeiten,
- wobei für jeden entsprechenden dieser Betriebszustände ein entsprechendes Gerät oder eine Gerätegruppe vorhanden ist, für welche das Steuergerät (32) aktiviert ist, um die Einfügung einer geeigneten solchen Geräteidentifikation, in das Fernsteuersignal zu veranlassen, und daß mindestens ein Betriebszustand existiert, für den es eine entsprechende, mehr als ein Gerät enthaltende Gruppe gibt, und daß der Sender eine Einrichtung (36) zur Auswahl des Betriebszustandes des Steuergerätes hat, welche einen Zustandsidentifizierungscode an das Steuergerät (32) liefert, welcher den gewählten Betriebszustand identifiziert, und daß das Steuergerät (32) unter Programmsteuerung aufgrund des Zustandsidentifizierungscode diesem entsprechend die in einem bestimmten Fernsteuersignal enthaltene Geräteidentifikation bestimmt.

Revendications

1. Un émetteur de télécommande (20) pour commander un dispositif ou plus d'une pluralité de dispositifs, comprenant:
 - un microcontrôleur (32) comprenant une unité entrée/sortie (54) par laquelle des données sont couplées à et dudit microcontrôleur; une mémoire de programme (58) dans laquelle est stocké un programme pour commander le fonctionnement dudit émetteur de télécommande; une mémoire de données (60) pour stocker temporairement des données traitées pendant le fonctionnement dudit émetteur de télécommande; et une unité de traitement centrale (56) couplée à ladite unité entrée/sortie, à ladite mémoire de programme, et à ladite mémoire de données pour traiter des données reçues de et appliquées à ladite unité entrée/sortie et à ladite mémoire de données sous le contrôle dudit programme;
 - un clavier (30) comprenant une pluralité de touches de commande de fonctions couplé à ladite unité entrée/sortie par lequel un utilisateur peut commander des fonctions respectives d'un dispositif (10; 12; 14) situé à distance, ledit clavier produisant un signal codé représentatif d'une fonction représentant une fonction respective à contrôler lorsqu'une touche de fonction est activée par un utilisateur, ledit signal codé représentatif d'une fonction étant couplé à ladite unité entrée/sortie;
 - un moyen d'émission (44) ayant une entrée couplée à ladite unité entrée/sortie pour émettre un signal de télécommande selon les signaux codés représentatifs du message de télécommande représentant un message de télécommande, caractérisé par
 - un moyen de production de codes (36) du type émetteur couplé à ladite unité entrée/sortie pour produire un signal codé représentatif du type d'émetteur indiquant lequel dispositif ou lesquels dispositifs de ladite pluralité de dispositifs l'émetteur de commande doit contrôler;
 - ladite mémoire de programme stockant simultanément l'information pour commander tous les dispositifs de ladite pluralité de dispositifs;
 - ladite unité centrale de traitement (56) répondant, sous la commande du programme, auxdits signaux codés représentatifs du type d'émetteur et auxdits signaux codés représentatifs de la fonction prévus pour produire lesdits signaux codés représentatifs du message de télécommande, qui représentent un message de télécommande comportant une portion de préambule identifiant le dispositif particulier à contrôler et une portion de données identifiant la fonction particulière à contrôler; ladite unité centrale de traitement (56), sous la commande du programme, produisant ladite portion de préambule selon les signaux codés représentatifs du type d'émetteur et produisant ladite portion de données selon lesdits signaux codés représentatifs de la fonction, si ledit signal codé représentatif du type d'émetteur indique qu'un dispositif particulier de ladite pluralité de dispositifs doit être contrôlé et ladite unité centrale de traitement, sous la commande du programme, interrompant sélectivement ladite unité entrée/sortie pour produire ladite portion de préambule suivant un signal codé représentatif d'une sélection du dispositif représentant le dispositif particulier à contrôler, autre que les signaux représentatifs du type d'émetteur et produisant ladite portion de données suivant les signaux représentatifs de la fonction et les signaux représentatifs du dispositif si le signal représentatif du type d'émetteur indique que plus d'un dispositif de ladite pluralité de dispositifs doit être contrôlé.
2. Dispositif selon la revendication 1, caractérisé en ce que:
 - une mémoire externe (38) couplée à l'unité entrée/sortie précitée stocke les signaux précités représentatifs du dispositif;
 - le clavier précité comprend de plus des touches de sélection de dispositif (TV; VCR; VD) par lesquelles un utilisateur peut choisir un dispositif particulier à contrôler, ledit clavier produisant lesdits signaux codés représentatifs du dispositif lorsqu'un utilisateur active l'une desdites touches du dispositif;
 - l'unité centrale de traitement précitée, sous la commande du programme, si le signal codé représentatif du type d'émetteur précité indique que plus d'un dispositif de ladite pluralité de dispositifs doit être contrôlé, écrivant lesdits signaux codés représentatifs du dispositif dans la mémoire externe



précitée lorsque l'utilisateur active l'une desdites touches du dispositif et lisant les signaux codés représentatifs du dispositif de la mémoire externe lorsqu'un utilisateur active l'une des touches de fonctions précitées.

3. Dispositif selon la revendication 2, caractérisé en ce que:
 5 un circuit de batterie (38) est couplé sélectivement au microcontrôleur précité par un moyen de commutation (48, 50) pour relier sélectivement ledit circuit de batterie au microcontrôleur après que l'une des touches précitées du clavier précité ait été activée et est couplé continuellement à la mémoire externe précitée par un conducteur.
4. Dispositif selon la revendication 3, caractérisé en ce que:
 10 l'unité centrale de traitement précitée, sous la commande du programme, amène inconditionnellement la portion de préambule précitée du message de télécommande précité à identifier un dispositif prédéterminé à contrôler, indépendamment des signaux codés représentatifs du type d'émetteur ou des signaux codés représentatifs du dispositif lorsqu'une touche de fonction prédéterminée est activée par un utilisateur.
5. Dispositif selon la revendication 4, caractérisé en ce que:
 15 le clavier précité comprend une touche de sélection de télévision (TV) par laquelle un utilisateur peut choisir un système de traitement de télévision produisant des réponses de son et d'image, en réponse à des signaux audio et vidéo à contrôler, une touche de sélection de fonction de télévision (V/TU, V/TD, MUTE), par laquelle un utilisateur peut commander la caractéristique de l'une desdites réponses audio et
 20 d'image du système de traitement de télévision, une touche de sélection accessoire (VCR, VD) par laquelle un utilisateur peut choisir un accessoire pour produire au moins l'un d'un signal audio ou vidéo au système de traitement de signaux de télévision à contrôler et une touche de fonction d'accessoire par laquelle un utilisateur peut commander le fonctionnellement dudit accessoire; et
 l'unité centrale de traitement, sous la commande du programme, amène inconditionnellement la
 25 portion de préambule du message de télécommande à identifier le système de traitement de télévision à contrôler lorsque la touche de fonction de télévision est mise en service.
6. Un procédé de fabrication d'un premier type d'émetteur de télécommande pour commander le
 30 seulement un premier dispositif et un second type d'émetteur de télécommande pour commander le premier dispositif et un second dispositif, caractérisé par les étapes de:
 programmer des premier et second microprocesseurs identiques (32), chacun ayant des points d'accès
 d'entrée et de sortie, de manière identique avec un programme identique, le programme contenant les
 codes nécessaires aux microprocesseurs pour produire des codes de préambule de messages de
 télécommande appropriés aux messages de télécommande au premier dispositif et des codes de
 35 préambule de messages de télécommande appropriés aux messages de télécommande au second dispositif, le programme instruisant les microprocesseurs à examiner les données présentes à au moins un
 premier point d'accès d'entrée et pour produire un code de préambule d'un message de télécommande
 suivant lesdites données audit premier point d'accès d'entrée lorsque lesdites données audit premier point
 d'accès d'entrée sont d'un premier type correspondant audit premier type d'émetteur de télécommande et
 40 pour produire ledit code de préambule suivant les données à un second point d'accès d'entrée lorsque lesdites données audit premier point d'accès d'entrée sont d'un second type correspondant audit second
 type d'émetteur de télécommande;
 relier ledit premier microprocesseur à une plaquette de connexion (36), ladite plaquette de connexion
 ayant au moins un conducteur relié audit premier point d'accès d'entrée (IN) dudit premier
 microprocesseur pour appliquer le premier type de données audit premier point d'accès d'entrée afin de
 45 former le premier type d'émetteur de télécommande; et
 relier ledit second microprocesseur et une mémoire à une seconde plaquette de connexion, ladite
 seconde plaquette de connexion ayant au moins un conducteur relié au premier point d'accès d'entrée du
 second microprocesseur pour appliquer le second type de données au premier point d'accès d'entrée et
 50 ayant au moins un conducteur relié entre ladite mémoire et le second point d'accès d'entrée dudit
 microprocesseur pour appliquer les données stockées dans ladite mémoire au second point d'accès
 d'entrée dudit second microprocesseur afin de former le second type d'émetteur de télécommande.
7. Procédé selon la revendication 6, caractérisé de plus par les étapes de:
 relier un premier clavier à touches pour commander les fonctions du premier dispositif précité à la
 55 première plaquette de connexion, précitée, la première plaquette de connexion ayant des conducteurs
 reliés entre le premier clavier et des points d'accès d'entrée dudit premier microprocesseur; et
 relier un second clavier à touches pour commander les fonctions d'un premier et second dispositifs à la
 seconde plaquette de connexion, la seconde plaquette de connexion ayant des conducteurs reliés entre le
 second clavier et des points d'accès d'entrée du second microprocesseur.
8. Un émetteur de télécommande, ayant un moyen d'entrée (30), actionnable par un utilisateur, un
 60 contrôleur programmé (32), et un moyen d'émission (44), le contrôleur (32) fonctionnant suivant son
 programme pour recevoir des signaux d'entrée du moyen d'entrée (30) et pour amener le moyen
 d'émission (44) à émettre des signaux de télécommande suivant les signaux d'entrée, les signaux de
 télécommande comportant une identification du dispositif à contrôler,
 65 l'émetteur de télécommande étant potentiellement capable de transmettre des signaux de



télécommande comportant une identification du dispositif qui identifie tout dispositif sélectionné d'une pluralité des dispositifs à contrôler,

caractérisé en ce que

le contrôleur (32) est programmé de sorte qu'il soit capable de façon inhérente de fonctionner dans toute condition choisie d'une pluralité de conditions de fonctionnement,

il y a, pour chaque condition respective de condition de fonctionnement, un dispositif respectif ou groupe de dispositifs pour lesquels le contrôleur (32) est validé pour amener une identification appropriée du dispositif à être incluse dans un signal de télécommande, et il y a au moins une condition de fonctionnement pour laquelle il y a un dit groupe respectif contenant plus d'un dispositif,

l'émetteur ayant un moyen (36) pour permettre la sélection de la condition de fonctionnement du contrôleur, lequel moyen (36) produit un code d'identification de condition au contrôleur (32) qui identifie la condition de fonctionnement choisie, et le contrôleur (32) répondant sous la commande du programme au code d'identification de condition pour déterminer suivant le code d'identification de condition l'identification du dispositif incluse dans tout signal de télécommande particulier.