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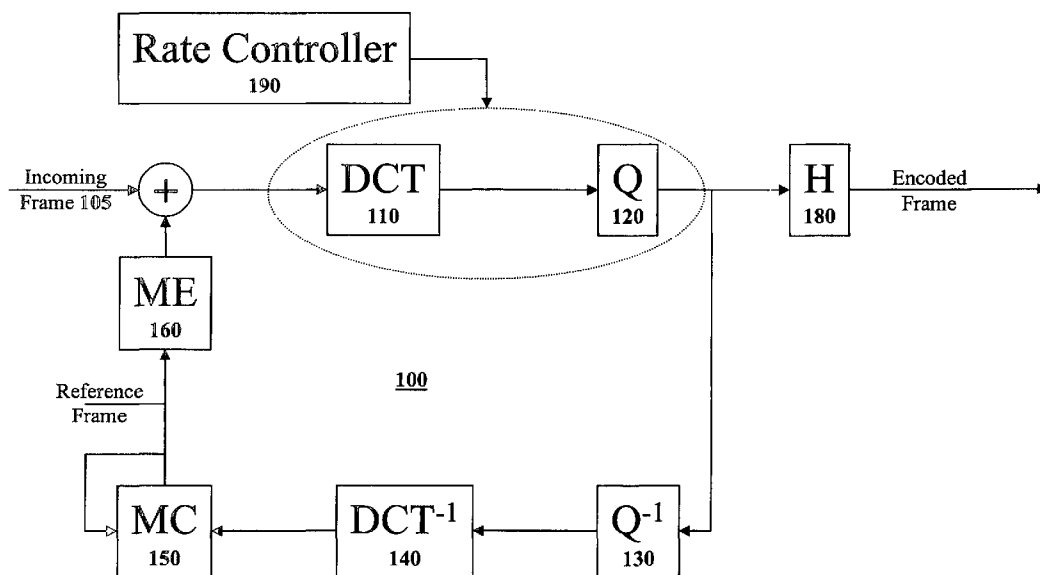
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(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR VARIABLE ACCURACY INTER-PICTURE TIMING SPECIFICATION FOR DIGITAL VIDEO ENCODING



(57) Abstract: A method and apparatus for variable accuracy inter-picture timing specification for digital video encoding is disclosed. Specifically the present invention discloses a system that allows the relative timing of nearby video pictures to be encoded in a very efficient manner. In one embodiment, the display time difference between a current video picture (105) and a nearby video picture is determined. The display time difference is then encoded (180) into a digital representation of the video picture. In a preferred embodiment, the nearby video picture is the most recently transmitted stored picture. For coding efficiency, the display time difference may be encoded using a variable length coding system or arithmetic coding. In an alternate embodiment, the display time difference is encoded as a power of two to reduce the number of bits transmitted.

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