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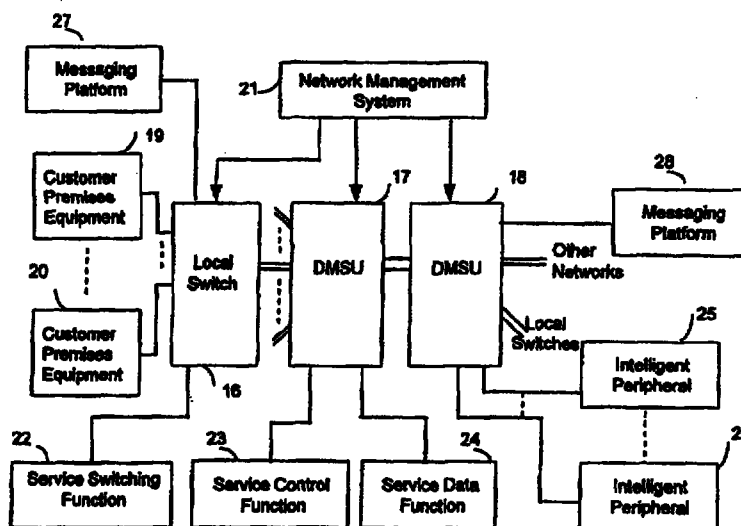
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International Bureau



INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁶ : H04L 12/58		A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 97/33413
			(43) International Publication Date: 12 September 1997 (12.09.97)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/GB97/00545		(74) Agent: BRADLEY, David, William; BT Group Legal Services, Intellectual Property Dept., 8th floor, 120 Holborn, London EC1N 2TE (GB).	
(22) International Filing Date: 26 February 1997 (26.02.97)			
(30) Priority Data: 96301435.2 4 March 1996 (04.03.96) EP (34) Countries for which the regional or international application was filed: GB et al. 9604514.1 4 March 1996 (04.03.96) GB		(81) Designated States: AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, GH, HU, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ARIPO patent (GH, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).	
(60) Parent Application or Grant (63) Related by Continuation US 648,613 (CIP) Filed on 16 May 1996 (16.05.96)			
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(54) Title: MESSAGING SYSTEMS



(57) Abstract

So that any messaging platform (27, 28) can be used for storing messages by any customer and common messaging protocols may be used, the present system is controlled by service switching function (22) and service control function (23) which may be located in differing parts of the network. On detection of a messaging service request the SSF (22) alerts the SCF (23) through signalling paths of the network via digital local exchange (16) and DMSU (17). The SCF takes control of the customer call and using data held in a service data store (24) provides appropriate prompts, access control and storage. Messages are stored in a distributed manner with sequential messages for the same customer not necessarily being held in the same messaging platform, only the location of each message being held in the SDF 24. FAX, Voice, Data and E-Mail messages may all be stored in the same manner.