

Packetized CDMA/TDM Satellite Communication System

Field of the Invention

This invention relates to satellite communication systems and in particular to such a system using a combination of packetized CDMA (i.e., Code
5 Division Multiple Access) uplink, on-board packet switching, and TDM (i.e., Time Division Multiplexing) downlink transmission.

Background of the Invention

Communication access schemes using satellite connections are commonly accomplished by FDMA (i.e., Frequency Division Multiple Access) and
10 TDMA (i.e., Time Division Multiple Access) processing techniques. Often the uplink signal is transmitted to the destination by the satellite utilizing bent pipe techniques meaning that the satellite performs merely as a repeater without performing any on-board switching or multiplexing function. Hence all switching and associated control must be performed at transmitting and receiving end stations
15 on the ground. This limits the flexibility of the system since the intelligence of the system is concentrated in the ground end stations. CDMA is also used in satellite applications but the previous lack of satellite on-board processing has prevented the invention of hybrid systems that use different types of air interfaces for the uplink and downlink.

20 Traffic in systems such as voice/multimedia tends to be bursty in nature; a circumstance not favorable to TDMA and FDMA modes of transmission. Using a TDMA and FDMA mode of transmission is unsatisfactory because the assignment of time slots and/or frequency channels requires a setup time that is unacceptable in many applications. Also, changing the allocation of slots/frequency to meet transient
25 demands is a complex process resulting in complex system control.

Summary of the Invention

A satellite communication system, according to the invention, provides a unique combination of CDMA ground to Air Interface, packetized transmission and switching (e.g., Asynchronous Transfer Mode) on board the satellite and TDM
30 downlink transmission as recited in the claims.

In systems with bursty traffic, packet switching is particularly advantageous because of its asynchronous nature in accepting signals. Variations in signal arrival are easily accommodated. Packetized CDMA is an efficient way to transmit bursty traffic from different locations using a wireless channel.

The capacity of a CDMA system greatly depends on the interference caused by other users. If the traffic is bursty and packets are sent only when there is information to be transmitted, the interference caused to other users is minimized and the number of users the system can support is increased. It also has the

5 advantage that beyond initial set-up of the circuit, no additional signaling or setup time are required to implement a data burst and/or data rate changes for a subscriber therefore providing bandwidth on demand capabilities.

In a CDMA system spreading codes need to be assigned to individual users that want to transmit information. Availability of spreading codes in typical
10 implementations, in fact, greatly exceeds the capacity of the air interface to carry specific numbers of simultaneous channels. Use of CDMA advantageously permits active channels in excess of capacity to degrade gracefully as system utilization is overgrown.

One of biggest limitations in the design of a satellite system is the power
15 that is available in the satellite. Multicarrier systems such as CDMA need to operate with low levels of efficiency in order to avoid intermodulation distortion making these systems power inefficient. By using Time Division Multiplexing (TDM) on the downlink the system becomes more power efficient while it maintains the multiple Access benefits of CDMA.

20 In a particular embodiment of the invention ATM packets in a CDMA uplink signal including user data are processed and switched on board a satellite by ATM switching included within the satellite before its downlink delivery. The ATM switch routes the ATM packets to an appropriate one of several outgoing downlink beams based on address information included in the packet header. Down link signal
25 is transmitted by Time Division Multiplex (i.e., TDM) processing. Note, the downlink can also use either Frequency Division Multiplexing (FDM) or Code Division Multiplexing (CDM). This invention has the advantage that no additional set up time is required by the network prior to a data rate change for a burst of data.

Brief Description of the Drawings

30 FIG. 1 is a schematic of a satellite communication system;

FIG. 2 is a block schematic of one embodiment of the uplink, demodulation and switching circuitry of the satellite; and downlink processing circuitry of the satellite.

Detailed Description

An illustrative satellite communication system coupling a transmitting user earth station to a receiving user earth station is shown schematically in FIG. 1. The satellite has multiple spot-beams for transmitting and receiving. Any user in any
5 beam can communicate with any other user in the same or different beam.

While illustratively depicting individual transmitting and receiving stations 101 and 102 respectively the stations could be simultaneously transmitting points and receiving points of a communication system. These stations could be either fixed spatially/geographically or mobile, although in this specific embodiment
10 they are shown to be fixed on the earth while communicating. Further the stations could be bi-directional transceivers. Only uni-directional is shown for simplicity.

Station 101-1 includes a satellite dish antenna 103 which directs a packetized RF CDMA signal to a satellite 105. Once the link is established between the satellite 105 and the earth station 101-1, which includes code synchronization,
15 the transmitter on Station 101-1 will only send RF signals when there is a packet of information to be transmitted or when it needs to send a packet to maintain synchronization. Station 102-1 receives a TDM RF signal that contains packetized information from the satellite 105 via its accompanying satellite dish antenna 104. Each beam includes a plurality of frequency bands. As shown the satellite receives
20 RF CDMA beam signals from other transmitting stations 101-N and transmits RF TDM signals to a plurality of receiving stations 102-M. The uplink represents a synchronous CDMA system where all the user's signal arrive to the satellite with chip synchronization in order to minimize the interference.

The receiving satellite transceiver equipment receives a plurality of
25 CDMA spot beams at the receiving amplifiers 201-1 to 201-N. After processing in bulk downconverters 202-1 to 202-N, the received signal is applied to a bulk downconverter followed by a multi-channel CDMA demodulator 203-1 which samples, separates and demodulates the CDMA signals. The signals are processed into I and Q components and despread with discrete time (digital) techniques. Each
30 CDMA channel contains a mix of M-PSK data signals at a variety of data rates. The received signals from all the beams are applied to the ATM switch 250.

Outbound (i.e., downlink) transmission, in TDM format, from the ATM switch 250 is applied to TDM modulators 301-1 to 301-M which include framing and forward error correction (FEC) circuitry. The signals are upconverted in blocks
35 302-1 to 302-M. The signal are amplified in modules 303-1 to 303-M using traveling wave tube amplifiers (TWTA) or Solid State Power Amplifiers (SSPA) which apply

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each channel to output bandpass filters in the same modules to suppress harmonics. These outputs are combined into beams at node 304-1 for downlink transmission.



The invention claimed is:

1. A method of signal processing for efficient multi-user satellite based communication comprising the steps of:
transmitting uplink Packetized CDMA beams from the earth station to a
5 satellite in which the uplink beam includes a plurality of packetized signals coming from different earth stations and having different destinations
establishing code synchronization and sending information in the form of packets at any time at rates up to the maximum data rate of the channel, and in the absence of information transmissions sending only a minimum amount of data
10 to achieve code synchronization.
2. A method of signal processing as claimed in claim 1 including the step of:
combining all incoming packets into beams and performing packet
switching and ATM routing within the satellite such that all packets with the same
15 destination beam are combined together into downlink beams.
3. A method of signal processing as claimed in claim 2 including the step of:
creating a hybrid CDMA-TDM air interface where a CDMA signal is used for the uplink and a TDM signal is used for the downlink whereby a CDMA
20 beam provides an efficient and flexible access scheme method for the uplink while a TDM downlink beam provides power efficient transmission from the satellite to the earth stations.
4. A method of signal processing for satellite based communication comprising the steps of:
25 transmitting an uplink beam in CDMA packet format to a satellite in which the uplink beam includes a plurality of packet signals having differing destinations;
routing the packet signals in an ATM router within the satellite and combining them into beams such that all packets with the same destination beam are
30 combined together.
5. A method of signal processing for satellite based communication, as claimed in claim 4,



comprising the steps of:
establishing code synchronization for the uplink beam.

6. A method of signal processing for satellite based communication, as claimed in claim 5,
- 5 comprising the steps of:
 combining all downlink packets into beams having a common
destination with the packets.

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Abstract

In a satellite communication system a CDMA uplink signal including user data is transmitted in a packetized manner, the packets are switched on board
5 the satellite by a packet switch before its downlink delivery. The packet switch routes the packets to the appropriate one of several outgoing downlink beams based on address information included in the packet header. Time Division Multiplexing (i.e., TDM) is used for downlink transmission. This invention constitutes an efficient multi-user satellite based communication system.

Figure 2

FIG. 1

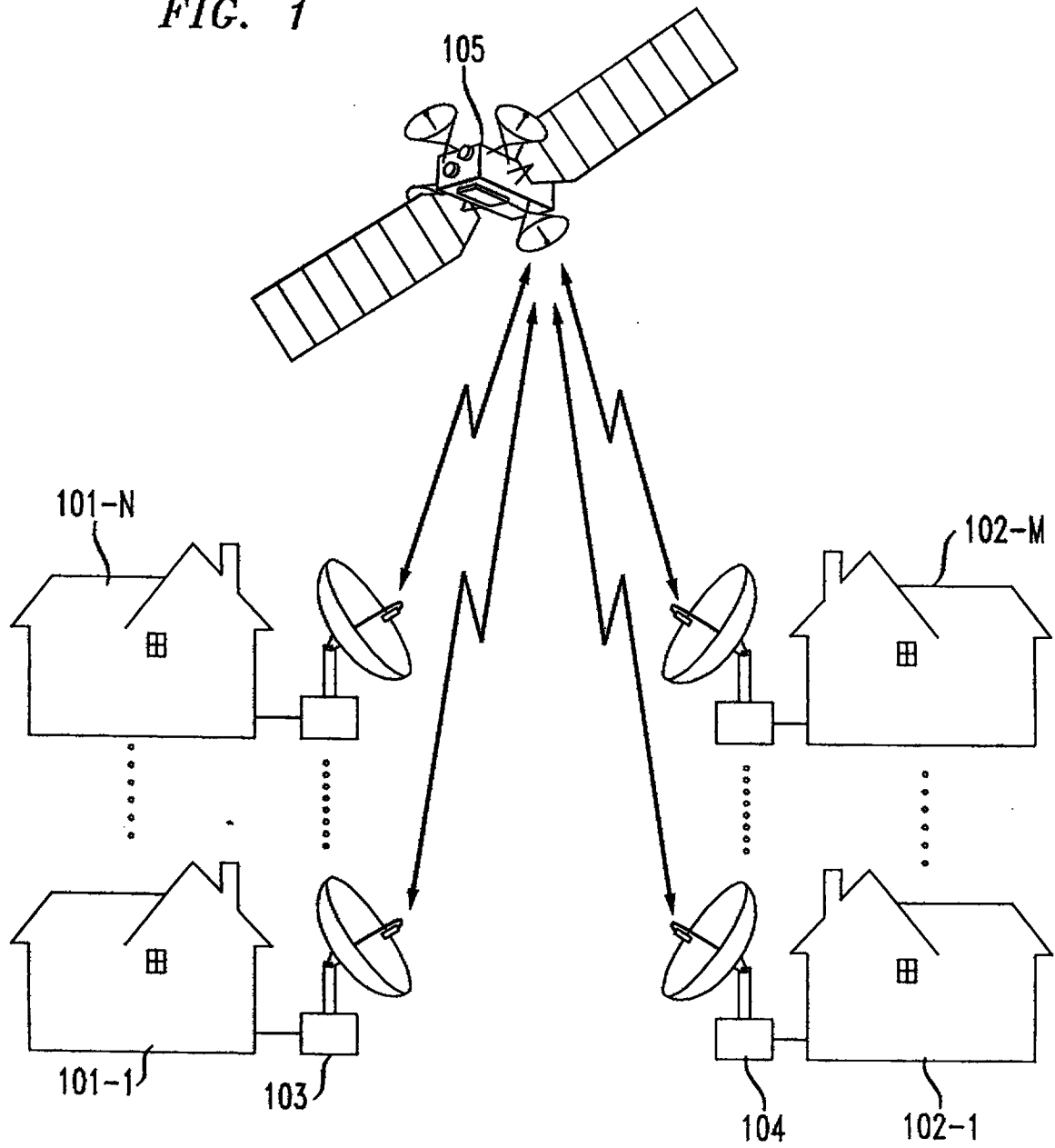


FIG. 2

