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(54) Title: A METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR INCLUDING SELF-DESCRIBING INFORMATION WITHIN DEVICES

(57) Abstract

Self-describing information is included within a device and contains information relating to a graphical representation of the device, the controls available on the device and the interface required to access those controls. The self-describing information is preferably embedded within a ROM within the device and is read by other devices coupled to the device for presenting a graphical user interface through which the device can be remotely controlled by a user. The self-describing information can also include an address from which additional information about the device and upgrades are automatically obtained. This address is either an internet address or points to a location within a network of devices. The address can also be modifiable. Alternatively, the self-describing information also includes driving software for enhancing the graphical user interface and controlling the operation of the device through another system. This driving software is written either in the native language of the device on which it is uploaded and executed or in a platform neutral language such as Java™. The graphical user interface is presented on a television, computer or other appropriate system for controlling multiple devices through the system. The controlling system obtains the self-describing information from each device within the configuration. The graphical user interface includes a graphical representation of the devices and specific control features available to the user presented in a graphical orientation. Alternatively, a three-dimensional representation of the device is presented with controls represented on the device. If no controlling system is available, a graphical user interface is controlled by an application within the device and presented on an available display.

