

**Method and Apparatus For Variable Accuracy Inter-Picture Timing
Specification For Digital Video Encoding**

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.

Figure 1