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(54) Title: ACCESS SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING INTERACTIVE ACCESS TO AN INFORMATION SOURCE THROUGH A TELEVISION DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

(57) Abstract

An interactive access system and method for accessing an information source through a television distribution system (11) is disclosed. The distribution system includes a television distribution network (12), headend distribution equipment (36), and a plurality of terminals. An input device and an upstream transmitter (64) are associated with one of the terminals to input an upstream command for the information source. The headend distribution equipment (36) associates with a headend server (38) which is interfaced to the information source, upstream receiver (64) which forwards the command to the headend server (38), and blank interval inserter (90) that receives the information from the headend server (38) and inserts sequential portions into blank intervals of a television transmission on a downstream channel. The headend server (38) forwards command to the information source and receives responses from the source. The blank interval extractor (92) is interfaced to the terminal to extract the inserted sequential portions which is displayed on a display device.

