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Lavian et al.

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(54) **DEVICE AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING ENHANCED TELEPHONY**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 339 days.

(Continued)

(21) Appl. No.: **13/022,768**

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(22) Filed: **Feb. 8, 2011**

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Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 12/699,618, filed on Feb. 3, 2010.

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(51) **Int. Cl.**
H04M 11/00 (2006.01)

Yin, M. and Zhai, S., "The Benefits of Augmenting Telephone Voice Menu Navigation with Visual Browsing and Search," CHI'06 Proceedings of the SIGCHI conference on Human Factors in computing systems: pp. 319-328, ACM, Montreal, Canada (Apr. 2006).

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC **379/93.17; 379/93.25**

(Continued)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
USPC 379/93.17, 93.25, 93.26
See application file for complete search history.

Primary Examiner — Stella Woo

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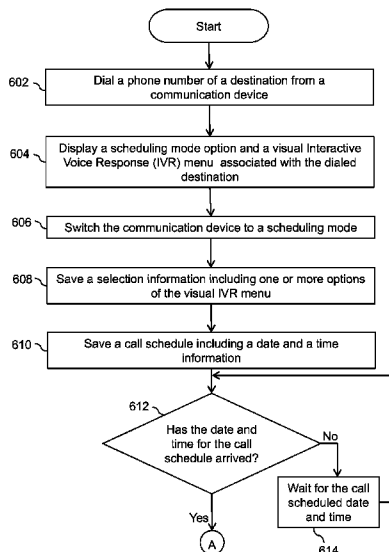
(57) **ABSTRACT**

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Embodiments of the invention provide a communication device. The communication device comprises a database comprising at least one visual Interactive Voice Response (IVR) menu associated with each of a plurality of destinations. The communication device also comprises means for dialing a phone number of a destination of the plurality of destinations based on a predefined calling information, wherein the predefined calling information is selected from a visual IVR menu associated with the destination; means for receiving information from the dialed destination based on the predefined calling information; and means for displaying the received information.

17 Claims, 10 Drawing Sheets



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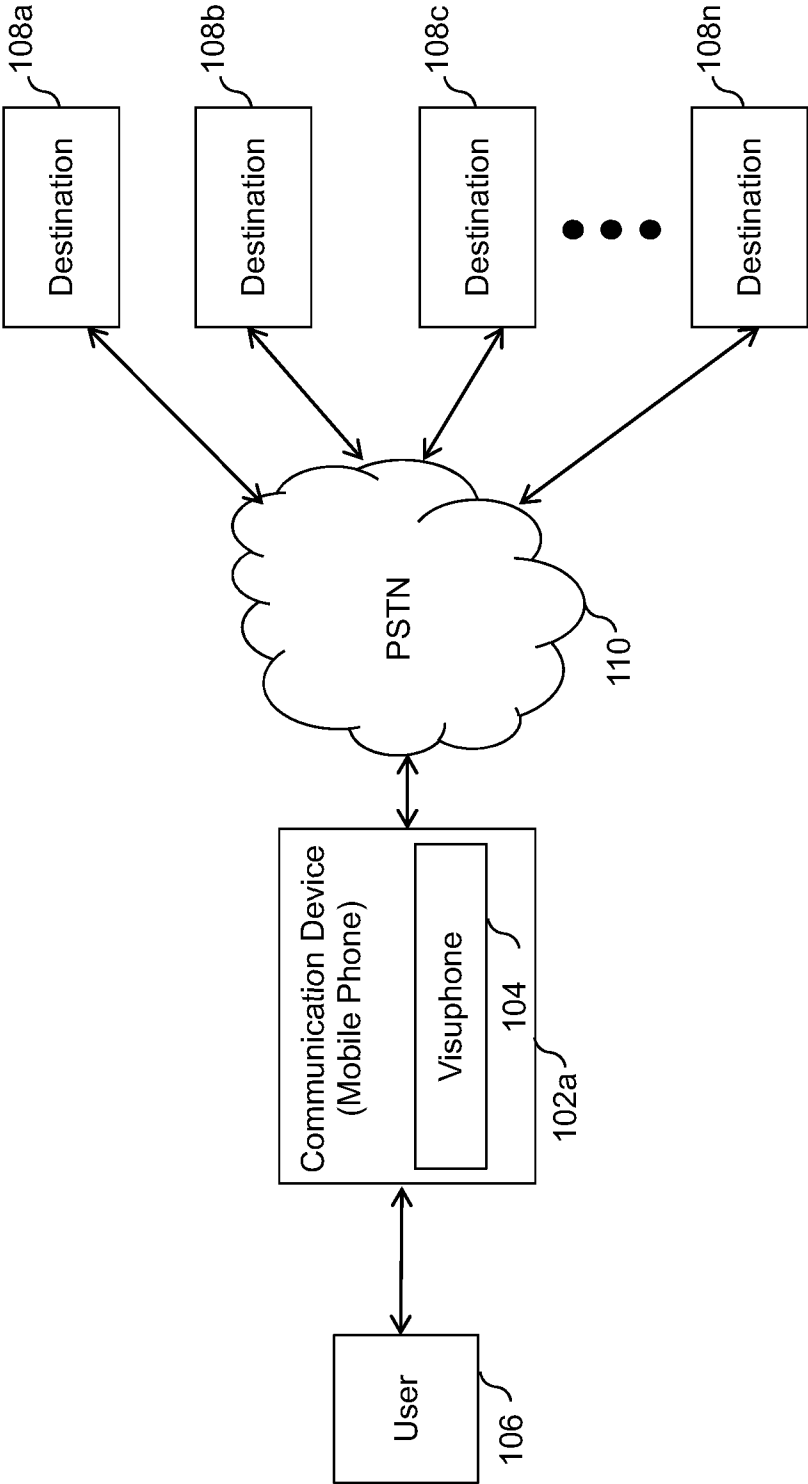


FIG. 1a

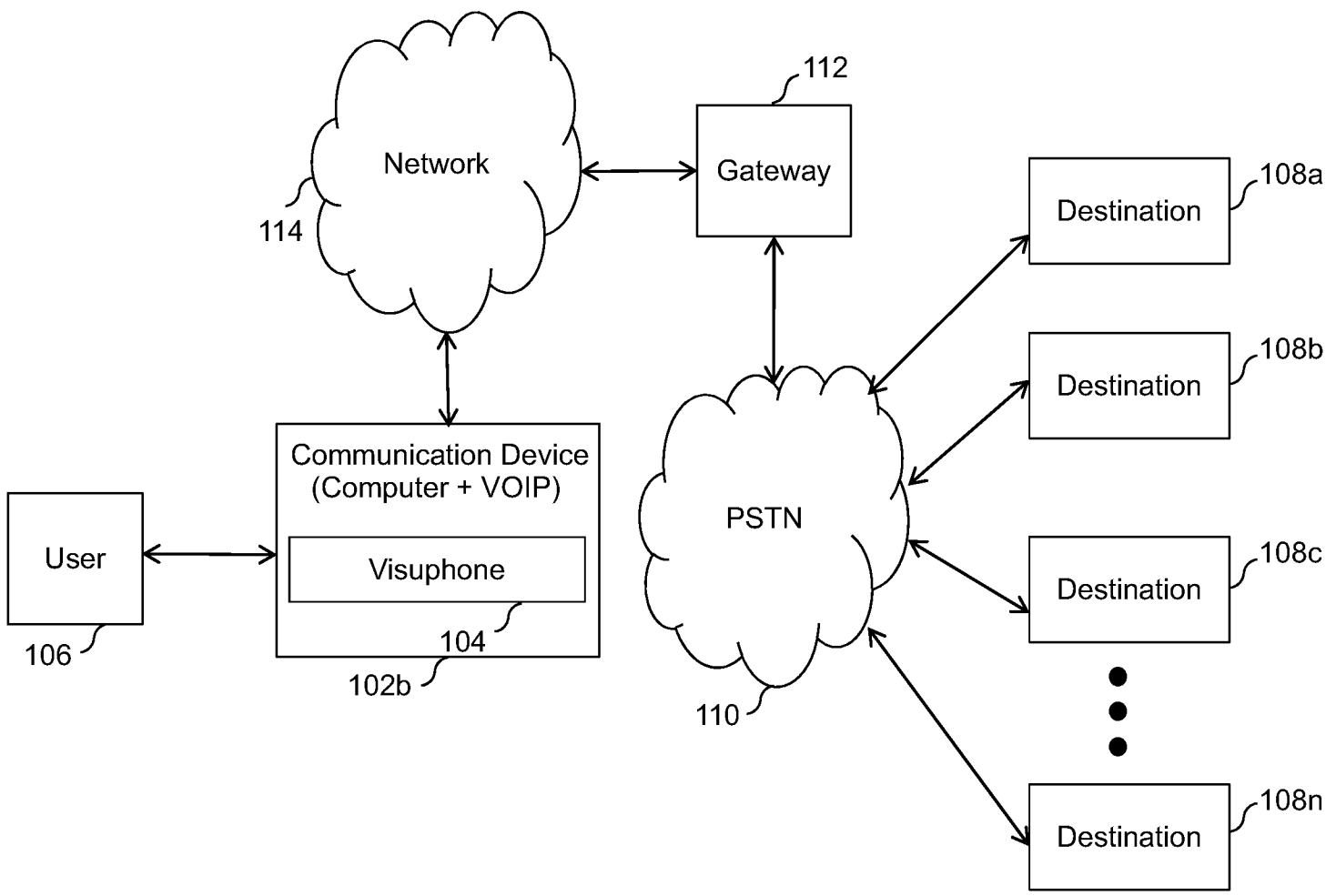


FIG. 1b

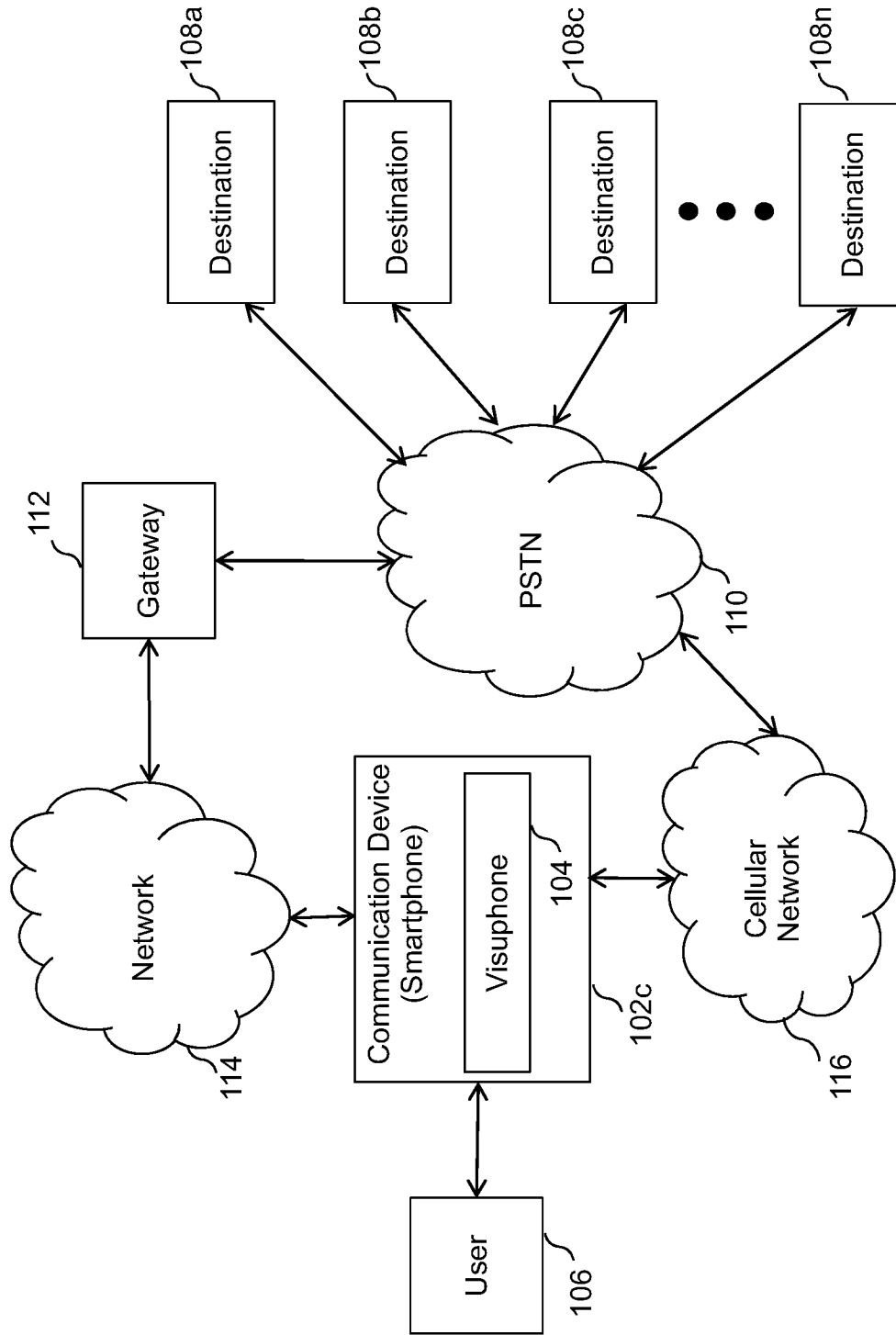


FIG. 1c

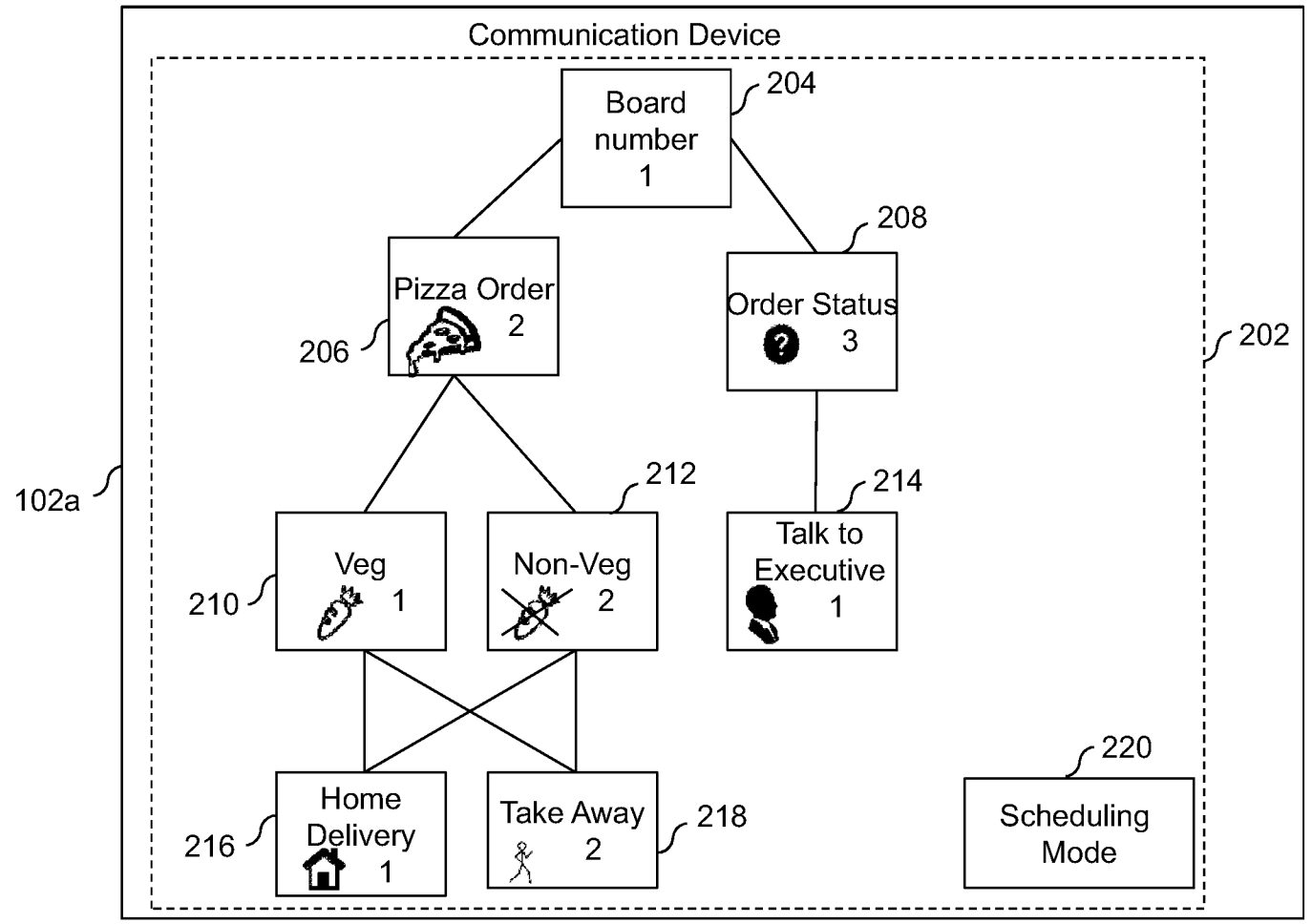
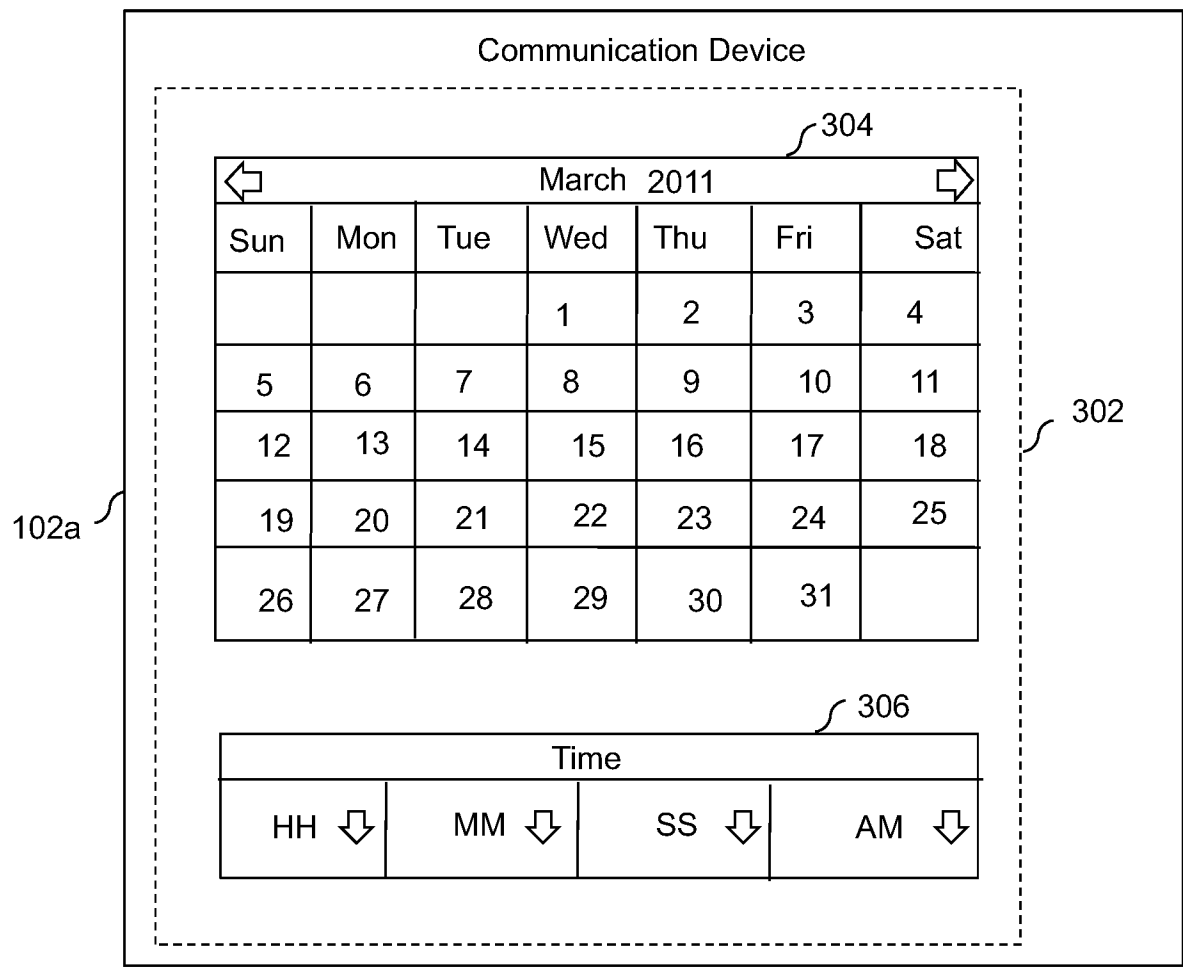


FIG. 2



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FIG. 3

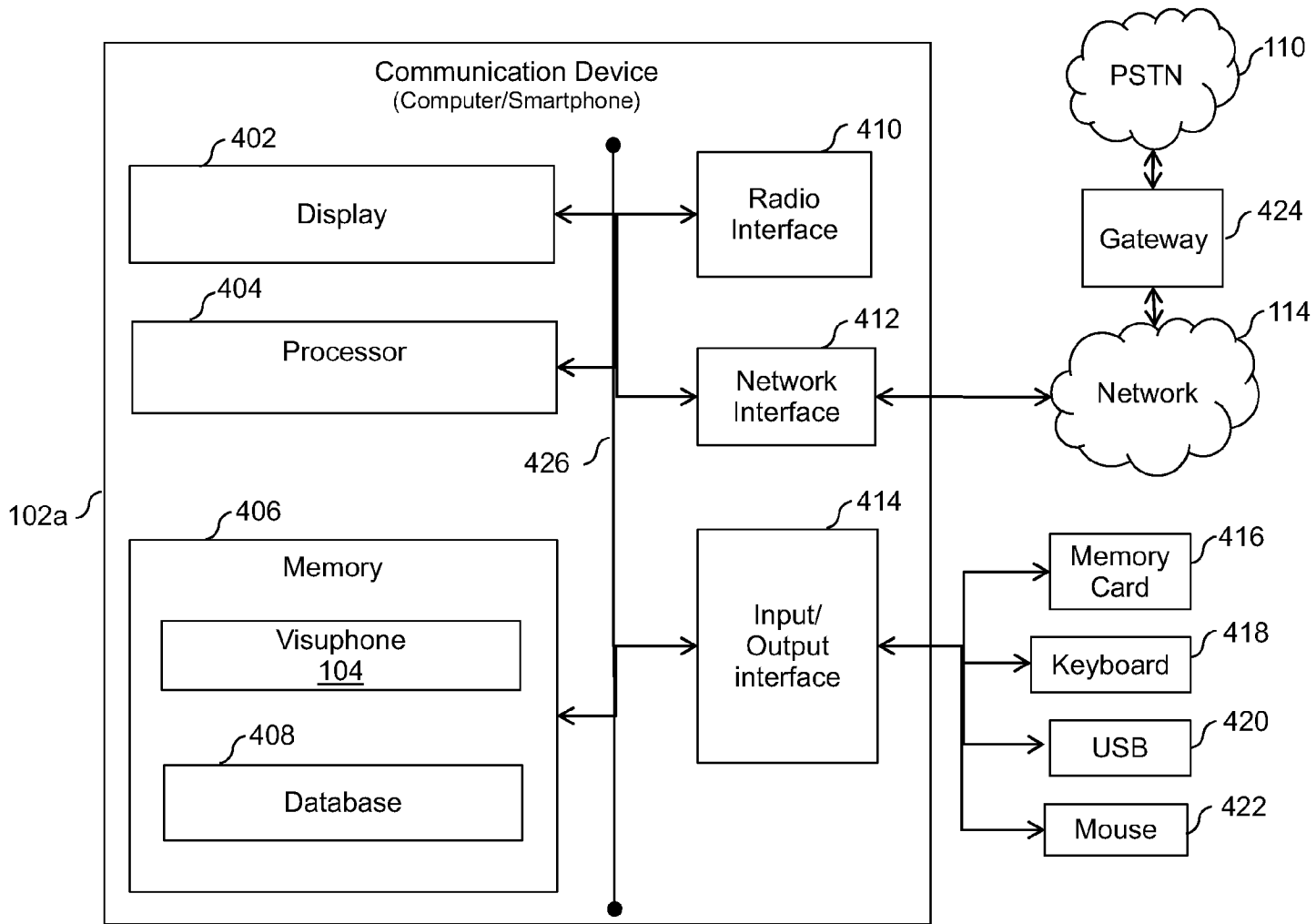


FIG. 4A

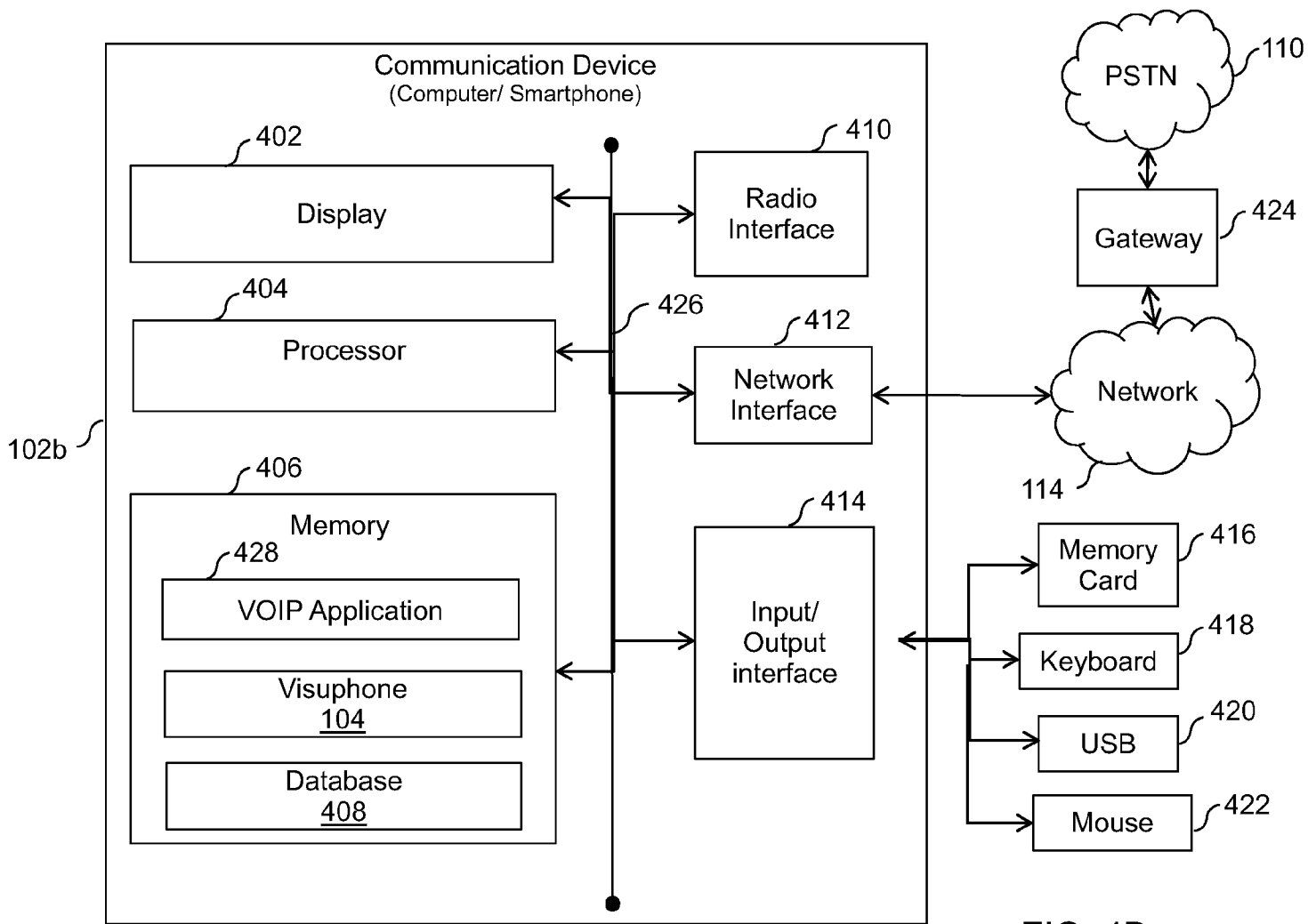


FIG. 4B

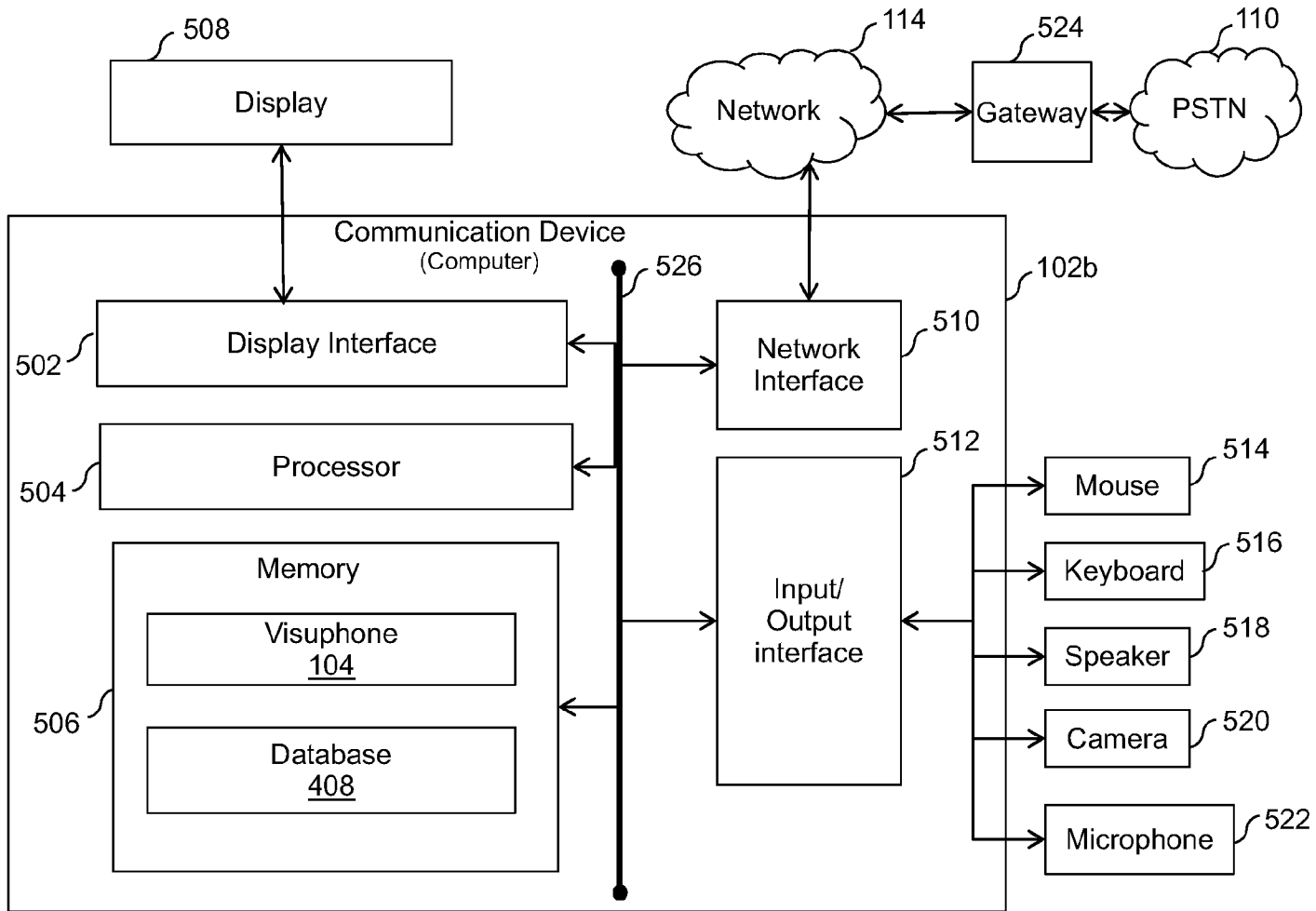


FIG. 5

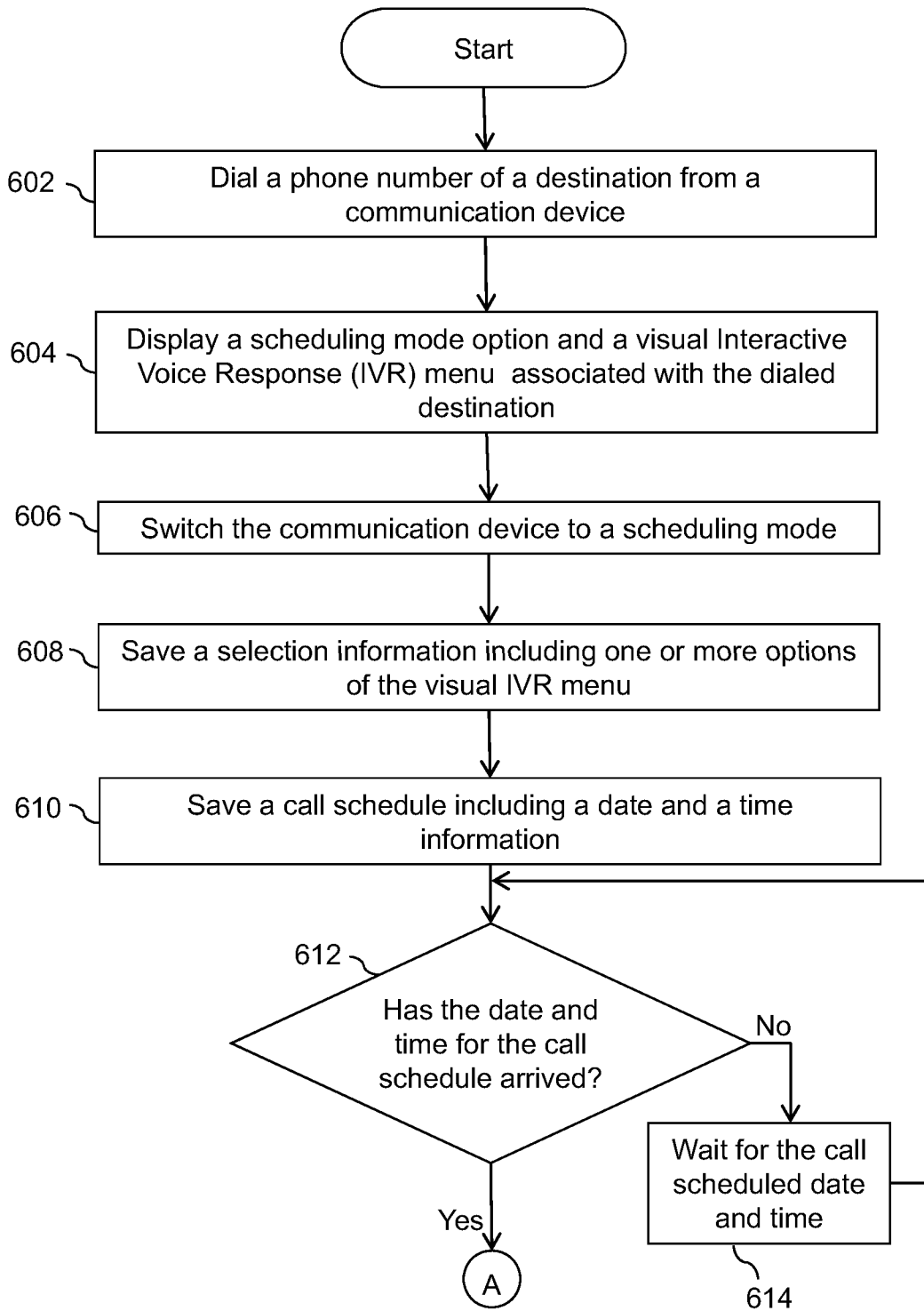


FIG. 6A

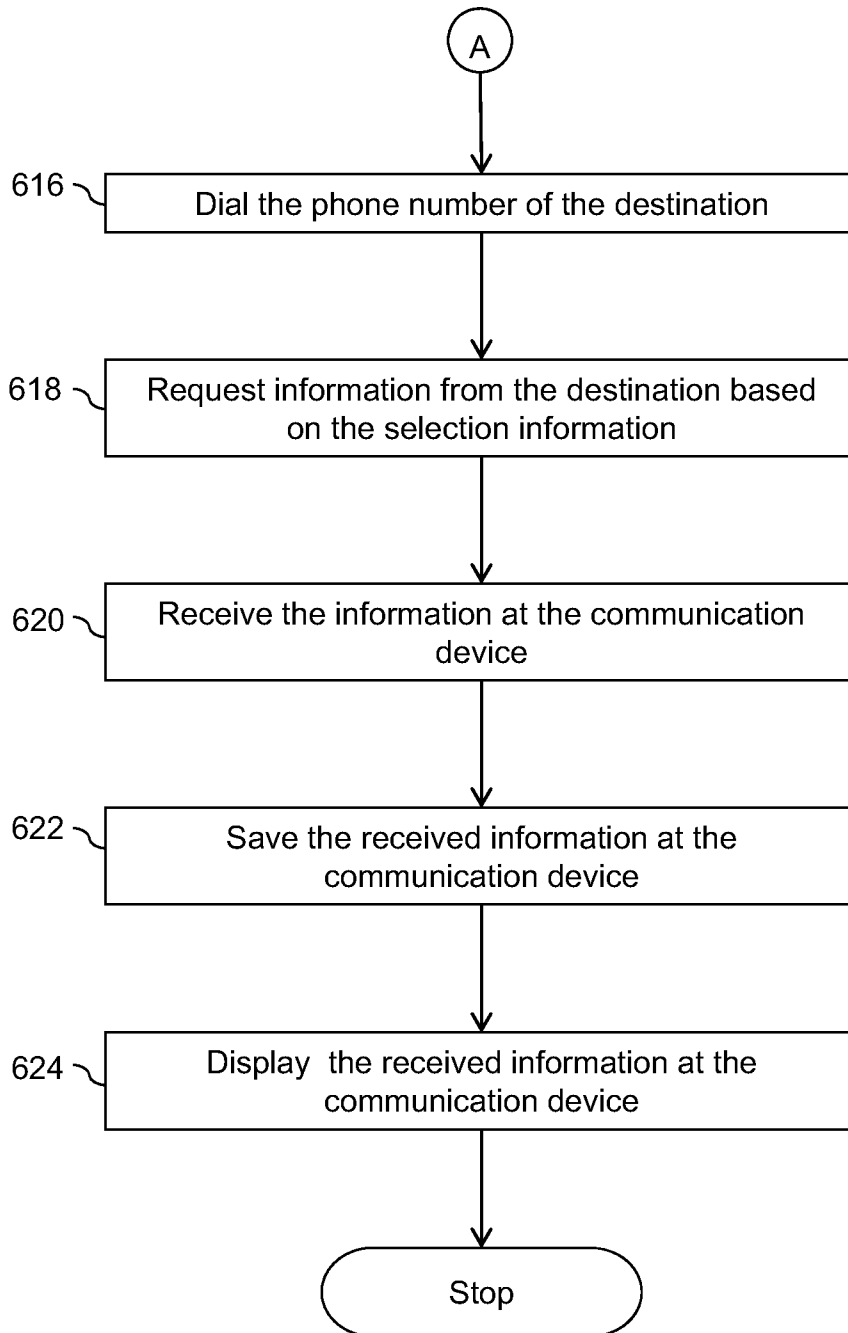


FIG. 6B

DEVICE AND METHOD FOR PROVIDING ENHANCED TELEPHONY

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a Continuation-In-Part (CIP) of U.S. Non-Provisional application Ser. No. 12/699,618 entitled 'Systems and methods for visual presentation and selection of IVR menu' and filed on Feb. 3, 2010.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to telecommunications and more specifically the invention relates to scheduling a call to an Interactive Voice Response system of a destination in a communication network.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology is generally used to detect voice and key inputs from a caller. Various organizations such as banks, insurance companies, and other service providers use IVR technology to manage calls from their customers. Typically, IVR systems are used by organizations that have high call volumes. An objective for implementing the IVR systems is to provide the customers with a quick and good experience. Moreover, the cost of providing the services is reduced. Generally, IVR systems allow a user to interact with an audio response system. The IVR systems can provide prompts to a user and receive touch tone and/or spoken responses on the prompts from the user. Through such IVR dialogue the system collects sufficient information about the user to direct the call to the most appropriate resource, information processing system or the like. Various organizations such as banks, insurance companies, and other service providers use IVR system to manage calls from their customers. Typically, IVR systems are used by organizations that have high call volumes. An objective for implementing the IVR systems is to provide the users or customers with a quick and good experience. Moreover, the cost of providing the services is reduced.

Typically, in case of an audio IVR menu the user calling the destination may have to listen and follow instructions on the menu to get a desired response or a function performed. Therefore, the process can be time consuming. Moreover, in case the user provides an incorrect input, the complete process may have to be repeated. Further, the IVR menu for an organization may be updated or changed regularly. For example, extension numbers inside an organization may be changed and correspondingly, the extension numbers associated with the IVR menu may be updated. As a result, a frequent user may not be able to reach a desired end by remembering a combination of numbers. Furthermore, the dialed destination may not include the information desired by the user. In such a case, the user may have to call the destination again for retrieving the desired information. Therefore, the user may become frustrated with the IVR systems.

Usually, the IVR menus are same for all the users. Therefore, the customer has to listen them carefully to select the appropriate option. The user may have to wait for long time for receiving information while interacting with the IVR systems. Moreover, sometimes the requested information might not be available at the time when the user calls the destination. Therefore, the user may have to either wait for long time or call again later. For example, the user may desire to talk to a customer care executive of the destination, who is busy at the

time of the call. Therefore, the call of the user may be put on hold or he may be asked to call later.

A U.S. Pat. No. 7,460,652, assigned to AT&T Intellectual Property I, L.P., discloses techniques for call routing and communication with a call originator. The call may be received at an automated call handling system. Thereafter, the call is evaluated based on a set of business rules and routed to an interactive voice response unit based on the evaluation. Further, the interactive voice response unit automatically schedules and sends an email to the originator of the call. However, the scheduling of the email is performed after establishing a communication with the automated call handling system. Moreover, the scheduling is performed at the automated call handling system.

In the light of the above discussion, techniques are desired for providing enhanced telephony.

SUMMARY

Embodiments of the invention provide a communication device. The communication device comprises a database comprising at least one visual Interactive Voice Response (IVR) menu associated with each of a plurality of destinations. The communication device also comprises means for dialing a phone number of a destination of the plurality of destinations based on a predefined calling information, wherein the predefined calling information is selected from a visual IVR menu associated with the destination; means for receiving information from the dialed destination based on the predefined calling information; and means for displaying the received information.

A communication device is provided. The communication device comprises a processor. Further, the communication device comprises a memory coupled to the processor. The memory comprises a database comprising at least one IVR menu associated with each of a plurality of destinations. Further, the memory comprises instructions executable by the processor for dialing a phone number of a destination of the plurality of destinations based on a predefined calling information, wherein the predefined calling information is selected from a visual IVR menu associated with the destination, receiving information from the dialed destination based on the predefined calling information, and displaying the received information.

Embodiments of the invention disclose a method for providing enhanced telephony. The method comprises dialing a phone number of a destination of a plurality of destinations based on a predefined calling information, wherein the predefined calling information is selected from a visual IVR menu associated with the destination. Further, the method comprises receiving information from the dialed destination based on the predefined calling information. Furthermore, the method comprises displaying the received information.

An aspect of the invention allows a communication device to call a destination automatically according to the predefined calling information entered by a user.

Another aspect of the invention is to provide a communication device for scheduling a call in a communication network based on the predefined calling information.

Another aspect of the invention is to provide a method for scheduling a call in a communication network.

Yet another aspect of the invention is to provide a method for requesting and receiving information from a destination without any user intervention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Having thus described the invention in general terms, reference will now be made to the accompanying drawings, which are not necessarily drawn to scale, and wherein:

FIG. 1A illustrates an exemplary environment where various embodiments of the invention function;

FIG. 1B illustrates another exemplary environment where various embodiments of the invention function;

FIG. 1C illustrates yet another exemplary environment where various embodiments of the invention function;

FIG. 2 illustrates an exemplary representation of a visual IVR menu associated with the phone number of the destination dialed on the communication device, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 3 illustrates an exemplary display at the communication device after switching to a scheduling mode, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIGS. 4A and 4B illustrate exemplary components of the communication device for implementing a Visuphone, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 5 illustrates exemplary components of the communication device for implementing the Visuphone, in accordance with another embodiment of the invention; and

FIGS. 6A and 6B illustrates a flowchart diagram for providing enhancing telephony, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Illustrative embodiments of the invention now will be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which some, but not all embodiments of the invention are shown. Indeed, the invention may be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will satisfy applicable legal requirements. Like numbers refer to like elements throughout.

FIG. 1A illustrates an exemplary environment where various embodiments of the invention function. A user 106 may use a communication device 102a to connect to destinations 108a-n. Further, the communication device 102a may request information from the destination 108a-n. The communication device 102a can be a telecommunication device that can connect directly to a Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) 110. A person skilled in the art will appreciate, that the communication device 102a can also connect to a private telephone exchange. Examples of the communication device 102a include, but are not limited to, a telephone, a mobile phone, a smartphone or any other device capable of voice or data communication. The user 106 connects to a destination from the destinations 108a-n by dialing a phone number of a destination. The destinations 108a-n may include one or more audible Interactive Voice Response (IVR) menus. Further, the destinations 108a-n can have different audio IVR menus. For example, IVR menus of a hospital may be completely different from that of a bank. Typically, the audible IVR menu provided by the destinations 108a-n comprises audible options or instructions.

The communication device 102a includes a Visuphone 104 that may provide data regarding a phone number of the destinations 108a-n dialed from the communication device 102a. For example, the data may include geographical information of the destinations 108a-n and/or the user 106. Further, the Visuphone 104 may display a visual IVR menu on the communication device 102a corresponding to the audible IVR menu based on a phone number of the destination to be connected. The user 106 may be required to select various options from the visual IVR menu to obtain the required resource/information or service from the dialed destination. Various types of the destinations 108a-n that implement the

audible IVR menu include, for example, banks, hotels, fast-food outlets, utility services providers, corporate offices, mobile phone service providers, hospitals and so forth. The Visuphone 104 may be hardware, software, or a firmware implemented on the communication device 102a, or a combination thereof. The visual IVR menu may have one or more options. Thereafter, the user 106 can select the options of the displayed visual IVR menu without the requirement to listen to the audible instructions.

In an embodiment of the invention, the communication device 102a can request for updates from a server through a communication network. The server may maintain the updated information of destinations and their associated properties. This may happen in a case when requested information is not available on the dialed destination. The communication network can include more than one communication devices. Examples of the communication network include, but are not limited to, the Network, PSTN, Local Area Network (LAN), Wide Area Network (WAN), and so forth.

FIG. 1B illustrates another exemplary environment where various embodiments of the invention function. As shown, a communication device 102b can be a communication device that can be connected directly to network 114. Examples of the communication device 102b include, but are not limited to, a personal computer, a laptop, a mobile phone, a smartphone, a fixed line telephone, a Voice Over Network Protocol (VOIP) phone or other devices capable of voice or data communication. The communication device 102b may include various applications or computer programs that enable the user 106 to use the communication device 102b for connecting to the destinations 108a-n through PSTN 110 over network 114 through a gateway 112. For example, the applications may be VOIP applications, such as but not limited to, Skype, Magic Jack, Google Talk and so forth. Examples of the network 114 include any wired or wireless network, such as but not limited to, LAN, WAN, a Wi-Fi network and so forth. As discussed with reference to FIG. 1A, the destinations 108a-n presents the audible IVR to the user 106. The communication device 102b includes the Visuphone 104 that displays a visual IVR menu corresponding to the audible IVR menu based on a dialed destination phone number. As discussed with reference to FIG. 1A, the Visuphone 104 may call a phone number of a destination of the destinations 108a-n automatically based on the predefined calling information.

FIG. 1C illustrates yet another exemplary environment where various embodiments of the invention function. As shown, the communication device 102b can be connected to the PSTN 110 through the network 114 or through the cellular network 116. Various service providers provide multiple or overlapping services to customers. For example, cable television service provider may also provide phone and Network service, optical Network provider may also provide phone or television services, WiMax service providers that provide phone service and so forth. The network 114 may be any service provider that provides such services, for example, but not limited to, cell phone services, wireless services, Network services, cable television services, or various combinations of the above or other type of services. As discussed with reference to FIG. 1A, the destinations 108a-n includes one or more audible IVR menus. The communication device 102b includes the Visuphone 104 which displays data corresponding to destination phone number dialed. Further, Visuphone 104 may display visual IVR menu corresponding to audible IVR menu of the destination phone number. Moreover, the visual IVR menu is displayed after the user 106 selects one or more destinations based on the information displayed. In an

embodiment of the invention, the Visuphone **104** may call the dialed destination based on the predefined calling information automatically. In an embodiment, the Visuphone **104** may keep on calling to the dialed destination until the requested information is received. In an embodiment, the dialed destination may request the information requested by the Visuphone **104** of the communication device **102c**, from the server of the communication network. Thereafter, the dialed destination may send the information received from the server to the Visuphone **104** of the communication device **102c**. Further, the Visuphone **104** may save and/or display the received information at the communication device **102c**.

FIG. **2** illustrates an exemplary representation of a visual IVR menu **202** associated with the phone number of the destination dialed on the communication device **102a**, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. The visual IVR menu **202** includes one or more options corresponding to every node in the audible IVR menu of the dialed destination of the destinations **108a-n**. It is well known that graphics are easier to learn and are faster to recognize than words. Therefore, graphics are used in various computerized device interfaces. Various types of graphics can be displayed for example, animated icons, icons that highlight or animate when the node is highlighted, and so forth. The graphics may be displayed for each node or a few nodes based on the usability of the visual IVR menu **202**. For example, for the node **210** an icon of a vegetable may be displayed to designate a vegetarian pizza, and for the node **216** of home delivery, an icon of house may be displayed. In an embodiment of the invention, the visual IVR menu **202** can be customized to display only the text, only the icons or both. Furthermore, the user **106** can suggest or use various icons based on his preferences. The visual IVR menu is specific to a destination.

Further, each of the destinations **108a-n** may have more than one audio IVR menus. Therefore, different visual IVR menus corresponding to one or more audio IVR menus can be available for each of the destinations **108a-n**. In an embodiment, the communication device **104** may include more than one visual IVR menus for each destination of the destinations **108a-n** based on the time. Therefore, different visual IVR menus corresponding to a destination **108** might be presented to the user **106** depending on the time of dialing to the destination **108**.

In an exemplary scenario, in a hotel, the food items in a daytime menu card may be different from a night menu card. Accordingly, the options in the visual IVR menu may differ. Therefore, the visual IVR menus for daytime and night can be different for the hotel. When the user **106** dials the phone number of the hotel in daytime, a daytime visual IVR menu can be displayed at the communication device **102a**, and if the user **106** calls at night, a different menu can be displayed at the communication device **102a**. Therefore, a visual IVR menu of the hotel displayed at the calling communication device for a call made at noon may be different then the visual IVR menu displayed for another call made at evening.

In an embodiment of the invention, a scheduling mode option **220** displayed on the screen along with the visual IVR menu associated with the dialed destination. The user **106** may switch the communication device **102a** to a scheduling mode by selecting the scheduling mode option **220**. When the communication device **102** is in scheduling mode, the Visuphone **104** may start saving the inputs of the user **106**. The inputs from the user **106** may include the selection of one or more options of the displayed visual IVR menu **202**. In the scheduling mode, the Visuphone **104** may display one or more input options on the screen to enter a call schedule by a user **106**. The call schedule may include a date and a time

information. The selection of the date and the time information is explained in conjunction with FIG. **3**. Furthermore, the Visuphone **104** may automatically call a phone number of a destination of the destinations **108a-n** automatically based on a predefined calling information. The predefined calling information can be entered and/or selected by the user **106**. The predefined calling information may include the selection information such as one or more options of the visual IVR menu **202** that are selected by the user **106** in the scheduling mode. Further, the predefined calling information may include the call schedule, which is the date and time information for the call. In an embodiment of the invention, the predefined calling information may also include additional data such as a predefined time interval, maximum number of dialing attempts, waiting time, and so forth.

In another embodiment of the invention, the communication device **102a** may be switched to the scheduling mode based on a predefined key sequence. The user **106** may press or select or enter a predefined key sequence for switching the communication device **102a** to a scheduling mode. The predefined key sequence may be a combination of one or more keys. For example, the predefined key sequence may include two asterisks (*) after dialing a phone number such as 123-456-7890**. The Visuphone **104** may detect such predefined key sequence dialed and switch the communication device **102a** to the scheduling mode. Thereafter, the Visuphone **104** may save the user inputs. Further, the Visuphone **104** may display the visual IVR menu associated with the dialed destination. Furthermore, the Visuphone **104** may allow the user **106** to schedule the call by entering date and time information.

FIG. **3** illustrates the communication device **104** after switching to a scheduling mode, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. As discussed with reference to FIG. **2**, the Visuphone **104** may save the inputs from the user **106** after switching to the scheduling mode. In an embodiment of the invention, the user **106** may enter and/or select a call schedule **302**. For example, the call schedule **302** may include, but not limited to, a date and a time information. A calendar **304** may be displayed on the screen of the communication device **102a** for entering and/or selecting the date information for scheduling the call. A time input box **306** may be displayed on the screen of the communication device **102a** for entering and/or selecting the time information for scheduling the call. For example, the call schedule information will include a date Mar. 15, 2011, and time 11:25:40, therefore the Visuphone **104** dial at the phone number of the destination on Mar. 15, 2011 at 11:25:40 AM. In an embodiment, the time information may be displayed in 12 hour format. In another embodiment, the time information may be displayed in 24 hours format.

In another embodiment of the invention, the call schedule **302** may include a predefined schedule for calling to the destination. For example, the Visuphone **104** may automatically schedule a call in next five minutes on the same day, based on the predefined schedule. In an embodiment, the user **106** is not required to enter or select the date and the time information for scheduling the call. In such a case, the Visuphone **104** automatically schedules the call to the destination based on the predefined schedule. A person skilled in the art will appreciate that the date and time for predefined schedule is not limited to five minutes or same day, and can be edited by the user **106**. Further, the call schedule **302** may also include additional information such as maximum number of calling attempts, waiting time, and so forth.

Thereafter, a communication is established between the communication device **102a** and the dialed destination. After

establishment of the communication, the Visuphone **104** may request and/or receive information from the dialed destination based on the selection information of the predefined calling information. In an embodiment, the Visuphone **104** may keep on dialing the phone number of the destination until the requested information is received from the dialed destination based on the selection information. In an exemplary scenario, the Visuphone **106** may be required to dial the phone number of the destination repeatedly when the requested information is not available on the dialed destination. The call schedule may further include the predefined time interval for calling the destination. For example, when the communication is not established with the dialed destination, the Visuphone **104** can call the destination after waiting for the predefined time interval such as after ten minutes. A person skilled in the art will appreciate, that the predefined time interval is not limited to ten minutes, and can be edited by the user **106**. In an exemplary scenario, if the requested information is not available at the dialed destination, than the Visuphone **104** may wait for the predefined time interval of the call schedule and may call the previously dialed destination again, and may request for the desired information according to the selection information.

FIGS. **4A** and **4B** illustrate exemplary components of the communication device **102a** for implementing the Visuphone **104**, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. The communication device **102a** includes a system bus **426** to connect the various components. Examples of system bus **426** include several types of bus structures including a memory bus, a peripheral bus, or a local bus using any of a variety of bus architectures. As discussed with reference to FIG. **1A**, the communication device **102a** can be a communication device such as computer, a smart-phone and so forth. The communication device **102a** can connect to PSTN **110** through a gateway **424**, which is connected to Network **114** through a network interface **412**. Input/Output (IO) interface **414** of the communication device **102a** may be configured to connect external or peripheral devices such as a memory card **416**, a keyboard **418**, a Universal Serial Bus (USB) device **420** and a mouse **422**. Although not shown, various other devices can be connected through IO interface **4104** to the communication device **102a**. In an embodiment of the invention, communication device **102a** may be connected to a hub that provides various services such as voice communication, Network access, television services and so forth. For example, the hub may be a Home Gateway device that acts as a hub between the home environment and the Broadband Network.

The communication device **102a** includes a display **402** to output graphical information to the user **106**. In an embodiment of the invention, the display **402** may include a touch sensitive screen. Therefore, the user **106** can provide inputs to the communication device **102a** by touching display **402** or by point and click using the 'mouse'. Memory **406** of the communication device **102a** stores various programs, data and/or instructions that can be executed by a Processor **404**. Examples of the memory **406** include, but are not limited to, a Random Access Memory (RAM), a Read Only Memory (ROM), a hard disk, and so forth. A person skilled in the art will appreciate that other types of computer-readable media which can store data that is accessible by a computer, such as magnetic cassettes, flash memory cards, digital video disks, and the like, may also be used by the communication device **102a**. The memory **406** may include Operating System (OS) (not shown) for the communication device **102a** to function. Further, the memory **406** may include other applications that enable the user **106** to communication with the destinations **108a-n**. Examples of other applications include, but are not

limited to, Skype, Google Talk, Magic Jack, and so forth. Other applications may be stored as software or firmware on the communication device **102a**.

Further, the memory **306** includes the Visuphone **104** for providing a visual representation of the destinations **108a-n**. As discussed with reference to the FIG. **1A**, the Visuphone **104** may be hardware, a software or a firmware stored on the communication device **102a**. In an embodiment, the Visuphone **104** may be implemented as plug-in to other applications. The Visuphone **104** may further determine the current time and/or date from the system clock or the internet. The visual IVR menus are stored in a database **408** in memory **406** of the communication device **102a**. As discussed with reference to FIG. **3**, the database **408** may store the predefined calling information. Further, the database **408** may store the selection information and the call schedule. The call schedule may include the date information and the time information. The call schedule may also include the predefined time interval and predefined schedule. In an embodiment, the database **408** may further store the predefined schedule and predefined time interval. The communication device **102a** may also request or receive updates from the server at a predefined time. The predefined time may be for example, once a week, once a month, or any other interval predefined by the user **106** or the Visuphone **104**.

In an embodiment, the Visuphone **104** may display a visual IVR menu associated with the dialed destination. In an embodiment, the Visuphone **104** may display a mode option on a screen of the communication device **102a**. The mode option may be selected by a user **106** for switching the mode of the communication device **102a**. Based on the selected mode of the communication device **102**, one or more input or output options may be displayed on the screen. Example of the one or more input or output options include, but are not limited to, a date of making a call, a time of making a call, a predefined time interval for repeating a call, and so forth.

In an embodiment of the invention, the mode option is a scheduling mode option. The user **106** may switch the communication device **102** to a scheduling mode by selecting the mode option. In an embodiment, when the communication device **102** is in scheduling mode, the Visuphone **104** may save the inputs from the user **106**. In an embodiment, the Visuphone **104** may save the options of the displayed visual IVR menu selected by the user **106**. In the scheduling mode, the Visuphone **104** may display one or more input options on the screen to enter a call schedule including a date and a time information. In an embodiment, the Visuphone may further ask the user **106** to enter other important information required for dialing the phone number of the destination automatically at a later time. Thereafter, the user **106** may enter the date and time information for dialing the phone number of the destination. Furthermore, the Visuphone **104** may call a phone number of a destination of the destinations **108a-n** automatically based on the predefined calling information. The predefined calling information can be entered by the user **106**. The predefined calling information may include the selection information and the call schedule. The selection information may include one or more options of the displayed visual IVR menu associated with the dialed destination, selected by the user **106**.

In an embodiment of the invention, the Visuphone **104** may establish a communication with the dialed destination based on the predefined calling information. Further, the Visuphone **104** may request information from the dialed destination based on the predefined calling information. Furthermore, the Visuphone **104** may receive the requested information from the dialed destination based on the predefined calling infor-

mation. In an embodiment, the user **106** may also interact with the dialed destination after establishment of the communication. Furthermore, the Visuphone **104** may save the received information at the communication device **102a**. In an embodiment, the Visuphone **104** may convert the format of the received information from a first format to a second format. In an embodiment, the first format of the received information may be an audio format. Examples of the audio format include, but are not limited to, WAV, Real Audio, Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI), Windows Media Audio (WMA), MP3, Ogg, and so forth. In an embodiment, the second format may be a text format such as a Unicode text, Rich Text format, HyperText Markup Language (HTML) or any other format compatible with the communication device **102a**. In an embodiment, the Visuphone **104** may display the received information at the communication device **102a**.

The user **106** may dial a phone number corresponding to a destination using keyboard **418**. The keyboard **418** may be a physical keyboard or a virtual keyboard displayed on a touch screen display **402**. In an embodiment, the keyboard **418** is a keypad on the communication device **102a**. Subsequently, after some processing by the Visuphone **104**, the visual IVR menu **202** corresponding to dialed destination phone number is searched and displayed on display **402**.

In an embodiment of the invention, the visual IVR menu may be provided in real-time to the user **106**. In an embodiment of the invention, the visual IVR menu is provided by a messaging service such as a Short Messaging Service (SMS). Therefore, destinations may provide customized visual IVR menu to the user **106**. The visual IVR menu may be customized based on the profile of user. In an embodiment of the invention, the profile may be generated based on access pattern of user or the data capture by a hub connected to the communication device **102a**.

The user **106** can interact with the visual IVR menu by pressing a desired button from the keyboard **418**. For example, the user can press a '3' key from the keyboard **418** to select a node **3** in the visual IVR menu **202**. Further, the user **106** can directly select the node **3** of the visual IVR menu **202** from the display **402**, in case of a touch sensitive screen. Depending on the complexity or size of destinations, visual IVR menu **202** may have various nodes. Moreover, display area of the display **402** may be limited or small. As a result, all the nodes of the visual IVR menu **202** may not be displayed together on the display **402**. In such a case, the Visuphone **104** is configured to allow the user **106** to navigate by scrolling horizontally and/or vertically to view nodes on the visual IVR menu **202**. Further, the Visuphone **104** may detect the capability of the communication device **102a** before displaying the visual IVR menu **202**. For example, in case the communication device **102a** is a basic mobile phone with limited functionality of the display screen. Therefore, the Visuphone **104** may display the visual IVR menu in form of a simple list. Similarly, a list may be displayed in case of fixed line or wired telephones. Moreover, in case the communication device **102a** includes a high capability screen, such as but not limited to an iPhone, then the visual IVR menu is displayed in form of graphics. Subsequently, after the user **106** selects a desired action from the visual IVR menu **202**, a connection is established between the communication device **102a** and the selected destination. In one embodiment, the Visuphone **104** is configured to detect and present an application or computer program available on the communication device **102a**.

In an embodiment, the user **106** may dial a phone number from a VOIP application **428** on the communication device **102b**, as shown with reference to FIG. 4A. The phone number may correspond to any of destination from the destinations

108a-n. In an embodiment, the user **106** selects a pre-stored phone number from the VOIP application **428**. As discussed with reference to FIG. 2, the representation of the visual IVR menu **202** and the scheduling mode option **220** can be provided on the display **402**. Subsequently, after detecting selection from the user **106**, the call schedule **302** including a calendar **304** and time input box **306** can be displayed on the display **402**.

In an embodiment, the Visuphone **104** may include a VOIP plug-in that monitors the outgoing calls made from the VOIP application. Therefore, the VOIP plug-in may search each dialed number in the database **408**. In case, the dialed number is found in database **408** and is associated with an audible IVR, then the VOIP plug-in may display the visual IVR menu corresponding to the audible IVR menu of the dialed destination phone number.

In one embodiment, the Visuphone **104** is configured to detect and present applications suitable to the user **106** for initiating the connection. For example, the Visuphone **104** may detect more than one VOIP applications present in the communication device **102b** and present them to the user **106** on the display **402**. Thereafter, the user **106** can select an application to be used or initiate the connection in a default configuration. The default configuration can be for example, a VOIP application **428** on which destination phone number was dialed. In another embodiment, the user **106** may select a phone number displayed in applications such as a browser, messenger, or a mail client. Subsequently, the Visuphone **104** detects and presents applications suitable to the user **106** for initiating the connection. Furthermore, the Visuphone **104** is configured to display the visual IVR menu **202** for the phone number selected from the applications.

In an embodiment, the communication device **102b** may include a web browser to display web pages from the Network and/or other computer networks. Various websites provide a phone number on the web pages as a click-to-talk button. The clickable button can provide, for example, a contact number of executives of the organization. The clickable button may be programmed to display a phone number of the organization and/or display a user a form to provide his contact details, so that an executive from the organization can call back the user. The Visuphone **104** is configured to detect a connect button a webpage. Connect button may be used by the Visuphone **104** to initiate a connection to a destination. The Visuphone **104** detects and launches a VOIP application on the communication device **102b**. In an embodiment, in case more than one application is available on the communication device **102**, the Visuphone **104** selects a VOIP application preferred by the user **106**. Moreover, the Visuphone **104** may be configured to automatically login into the VOIP application. In an embodiment, the user **106** stores the login details for the VOIP application in the Visuphone **104**. Further, the Visuphone **104** displays a visual IVR menu corresponding to audible IVR menu of the destination connected once clicked on the connect tab. Therefore, the user **106** can connect to the destination from web browser automatically and may not be required to dial the phone number or provide call-back information.

FIG. 5 illustrates exemplary components of the communication device **102b** for implementing the Visuphone **104**, in accordance with another embodiment of the invention. The communication device **102b** includes a system bus **526** to connect the various components. Examples of the system bus **526** include, but are not limited to, a memory bus or memory controller, a peripheral bus, or a local bus using any of a variety of bus architectures. As discussed with reference to FIG. 1B, the communication device **102b** can be a computing

device such as, but not limited to, a personal computer, a laptop, a mobile phone, a smart-phone, and so forth. The communication device **102b** can connect to the network **114** through a network interface **510**. Further, the communication device **102b** can connect to the PSTN **110** through the gateway **112** and the network **114** through the network interface **510**. An Input/Output (IO) interface **512** of the communication device **102b** may be configured to connect external or peripheral devices such as a mouse **514**, a keyboard **516**, a speaker **518**, a camera **520**, and a microphone **522**. Although not shown, various other devices such as a hard disk, a Universal Serial Bus (USB) device or others can be connected through the IO interface **512** to the communication device **102b**. A person skilled the art will appreciate that although not described, various other types of devices capable of voice and/or data communication can be connected to the communication device **102b**.

The communication device **102b** includes a display interface **502** to connect to a display **508**. The display interface **502** can be for example, a video adapter. The display **508** outputs graphical information to the user **106**. In an embodiment of the invention, the display **508** includes a touch sensitive screen. Therefore, the user **106** can provide inputs to the communication device **102b** by touching display **508** or by scrolling and pointing with the mouse **514** and a click. Memory **506** of the communication device **102b** may store various programs, data and/or instructions that can be executed by a processor **504**. Examples of the memory **506** include, but are not limited to, a Random Access Memory (RAM), a Read Only Memory (ROM), a hard disk, and so forth. A person skilled in the art will appreciate that other types of computer-readable media which can store data that is accessible by a computer, such as magnetic cassettes, flash memory cards, digital video disks, and the like, may also be used by the communication device **102b**. The memory **506** may include Operating System (OS) (not shown) for the communication device **102b** to function. Further, the memory **506** may include other applications that enable user **106** to communicate with the destinations **108a-n**. Examples of other applications include, but are not limited to, Skype, Google Talk, Magic Jack, and so forth. Other applications may be software or firmware stored on the communication device **102b**.

Further, the memory **506** may include the Visuphone **104** for calling the dialed destination based on the predefined calling information. Further, the Visuphone **104** is capable of presenting a visual IVR menu corresponding to the audible IVR menu of a selected destination as discussed with reference to FIG. 3. Furthermore, the Visuphone **104** may request and/or receive information from the dialed destination based on the selection information of the predefined calling information. The Visuphone **104** may be an application stored as a software or firmware on the communication device **102b**. The Visuphone **104** may establish a communication with the dialed destination based on the call schedule. In an embodiment, the Visuphone **104** dials a phone number of a destination of the destinations **108a-n** automatically, without any intervention by the user **106**. The memory **506** further includes a database **408**. As discussed in FIGS. 4A and 4B, the visual IVR menus are stored in the database **408** in memory **506** of the communication device **102b**. Further, the database **408** may include the selection information and the call schedule.

Depending on the complexity or size of the destinations, the visual IVR menu **202** may have various nodes. For example, an organization with 50 departments may have more menu options or nodes than that of an organization with

10 departments. Further, the display area of display **508** may be limited. As a result, all the nodes of the visual IVR menu **202** may not be displayed together on display **508**. In such a case, the Visuphone **104** is configured to allow the user **106** to navigate by scrolling horizontally and/or vertically to view nodes on the visual IVR menu **202**. Moreover, the user **106** can search for a desired option from the visual IVR menu **202**. Subsequently, after user **106** selects a desired option from the visual IVR menu **202**, a connection is established between device **102b** and the dialed destination based on the selected action.

Another embodiment of the invention allows the user to select the visual IVR menu using car display like GPS display. Hands-free cell phone system is used in many cars as a separated device or as an integrated system in the car. These devices allow the user to talk with the cell phone without holding the cell phone in his hands. Some devices are using the car speakers for the phone call. In many cases, the hands-free system can use a display screen in the car like GPS screen or other display. Following voice menu while driving might not be the optimal way to use hands-free cell phone system. In some cases, selecting an option from a visual IVR menu is preferred. While driving or stopping in red light, it might be easier to use larger display like the GPS display in the car. The display can present the visual IVR menu and the user can select the option from the menu. The computing engine to support the visual IVR menu could be embedded in the car GPS system or in another controller that have access to the car display. Once the system recognizes a destination of a call to be an IVR it will access the database, and pull out the representation of one or more destinations and display. Accordingly all the other features of the Visuphone **104** could be incorporated.

FIGS. 6A and 6B illustrate a flowchart diagram for providing enhanced telephony, in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. The user **106** may dial, select or receive one or more destination phone numbers to connect to a destination from the communication device **102**. The destinations **108a-n** may include an audible IVR menu for interaction with the user **106**. Further, the communication device **102** may include the Visuphone **104** to display a visual IVR menu associated with a phone number of a destination dialed by the user **106**. The Visuphone **104** may further display a scheduling mode option **220** at the communication device **102b**, as discussed with reference to the FIG. 3. The Visuphone may establish a communication with the phone number of the destination based on the predefined calling information. In an exemplary scenario, a user of the communication device calls a bank, than a scheduling mode option and a visual IVR of the bank may be displayed on the communication device. Sometimes, the user might not be able to receive desired information during this call then the user can switch to a scheduling mode by selecting the scheduling mode option. Thereafter, the Visuphone **104** may ask user to enter a predefined calling information. Later, the Visuphone **104** may dial the phone number of the previously dialed bank based on the predefined calling information.

At step **602**, a phone number of a destination is dialed from the communication device **102**. The user **106** may dial the phone number of destination of the destinations **108a-n**. At step **604**, a visual IVR menu associated with the dialed number and a scheduling mode option is displayed at the communication device **102**. The visual IVR menu **202** and the scheduling mode option **220** may be displayed on the display **402** of the communication device **102n**. In an embodiment, the user **106** may interact with the dialed destination and request for information, by selecting one or more options of the visual

IVR menu. In an embodiment, the requested information may not be available at the dialed destination at the time of the call. Therefore, in such a case the user 106 may need to dial the destination again or the user 106 may schedule a call at later time. At step 606, the communication device 102 is switched to a scheduling mode. The user 106 selects the scheduling mode option for switching the communication device 102 to scheduling mode. As discussed with reference to FIGS. 1A and 3, in scheduling mode the Visuphone 104 may save inputs such as a predefined calling information from the user 106. The predefined calling information may include a selection information and a call schedule.

At step 608, the Visuphone 104 saves the selection information including the one or more options of the displayed visual IVR menu. The one or more options are selected by the user 106. Thereafter, a display 10 of the communication device 102 switches to the display 20 including the calendar 304 and the time input box 306. The user 106 may enter the date and time information in the calendar 304 and time input box 306 respectively. At step 610, the Visuphone 104 saves the call schedule including the date and time information. At step 612, it is checked whether the entered call schedule's date and time has arrived. The Visuphone 104 may perform the checking by comparing the call schedule's date and time with the current date and time. The Visuphone 104 determines the current date and time based on the system clock and/or internet. If the call schedule's date and time is not equal to current date and time, then at step 614 the process waits for the call schedule's date and time to arrive, otherwise the process control goes to step 616. At step 616, the Visuphone 104 dials the phone number of the destination. The Visuphone 104 dials the phone number of the destination based on the call schedule of the predefined calling information and without any user intervention. Thereafter, the Visuphone 104 may establish a connection with the dialed destination.

At step 618, the Visuphone 104 requests information from the dialed destination based on the selection information of the predefined calling information. In an embodiment, the requested information may not be available at the dialed destination at this time, so the Visuphone 104 may wait for the predefined interval and may dial the phone number of the destination again. Examples of the predefined time interval may include, but are not limited to, thirty seconds, one minute, five minutes, ten minutes, twenty minutes, and so forth. In another embodiment, the dialed destination may transfer the request for the information by the Visuphone 104 to the server, when the information is not available at the dialed destination. In another embodiment, when the information is not available at the dialed destination, the request of the information may be transferred to another destination of the destinations 108a-n. In an embodiment, the user 106 may interact with the dialed destination after establishment of the communication by the Visuphone 104.

At step 620, the requested information is received at the communication device 102. The dialed destination may send the requested information to the communication device 102 based on the availability of the information. In an embodiment, the requested information may be received from the another destination of destinations 108a-n. In yet another embodiment, the Visuphone 104 may receive requested information from the server. In an embodiment, the Visuphone 104 may convert the format of the received information from a first format to a second format. In an embodiment, the first format of the received information may be an audio format. Examples of the audio format include, but are not limited to, WAV, Real Audio, Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI), Windows Media Audio (WMA), MP3, Ogg, and so

forth. In an embodiment, the second format may be a text format such as a Unicode text, Rich Text format, HyperText Markup Language (HTML) or any other format compatible with the communication device 102a. At step 622, the Visuphone 104 saves the received information at the communication device 102. In an embodiment, the saved information may be accessed by the user 106 in real time. In another embodiment, the saved information may be accessed by the user 106 later. At step 624, the Visuphone 104 displays the received information at the communication device 102. As discussed with reference to FIG. 4A, the received information is displayed on the display 402 of the communication device 102.

In another embodiment of the invention, electronic yellow pages directory allows the dialing the number directly from the directory and further provides representation of one or more destinations and the visual IVR menu of the destination. The user can select the exact destination before dialing or follow the visual IVR menu after dialing. For example, an airline company might have various option, menus and layers in the large organization. Selecting the exact department in the organization before dialing can save the user the time and overhead of listening to the menu and making decisions based on the voice menu. The yellow pages company can have a copy of the visual IVR menu database or can be connected to a visual IVR menu service in order to provide the menu to the user.

Alternatively an enhanced web based yellow page could be provided, wherein the user can first choose the provider he requires to contact. Thereafter, if that destination provides an IVR, then the enhanced yellow page will use the visual IVR menu database to present a visual IVR menu on the web page. Moreover, the user can click to choose the internal destination of that provider and the enhanced yellow page may accordingly initiate the call. The call could be made using the conventional telephone network or PSTN. In this case, the enhanced yellow page may need the user's telephone number to perform the connection. Alternatively, the enhanced yellow page could use a VOIP to connect the user over the web to the IVR of the destination.

In some IVR systems, the user may have to wait or hold on a queue of previous dialers until the specific department or agent is available. In another embodiment of the invention, the enhanced yellow page system will connect the user only after the specific agent is available, without waiting in a long waiting line queue. The system can recognize that the waiting queue message of the specific department, and to connect the user only after the agent is answering. Therefore, the waiting time of the user on the phone queue that sometimes may be very long, may be reduced. The system can park on the line for the waiting line on the specific entry in the menu; as soon as the agent is available the user gets a signal to start the conversation with the agent.

An advantage of the invention is that the user himself/herself does not have to dial the destination again and again for receiving information. The Visuphone 104 present at the communication device 102 of the user 106 may dial the phone number of the destination automatically based on the predefined calling information set by the user 106. Further, the Visuphone 104 requests and receives the requested or inquired information automatically.

Another advantage of the invention is that the user does not have to wait for long time for retrieving any information from a destination. When the requested information is not available, the user may schedule a call at later time by entering few settings on the communication device 102. Thereafter, the Visuphone 104 may dial the phone number of the destination

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according to the entered settings automatically and may download the desired information. The downloaded information may be used by the user at a later time.

An aspect of the invention is to provide a method for requesting and receiving information from a destination at a communication device without any user intervention. 5

Another aspect of the invention saves the effort made by the user of the communication device for retrieving information from an IVR system of the dialed destination. The Visophone dials the phone number of the destination and retrieves the information automatically depending on the predefined calling information. Later, the user can use the retrieved information as per his/her convenience. In an embodiment, the user may not wish to use the information at the time of its retrieval. In such a case the information is stored and can be accessed later. 15

Embodiments of the invention are described above with reference to block diagrams and schematic illustrations of methods and systems according to embodiments of the invention. It will be understood that each block of the diagrams and combinations of blocks in the diagrams can be implemented by computer program instructions. These computer program instructions may be loaded onto one or more general purpose computers, special purpose computers, or other programmable data processing translator to produce machines, such that the instructions which execute on the computers or other programmable data processing translator create means for implementing the functions specified in the block or blocks. Such computer program instructions may also be stored in a computer-readable memory that can direct a computer or other programmable data processing apparatus to function in a particular manner, such that the instructions stored in the computer-readable memory produce an article of manufacture including instruction means that implement the function specified in the block or blocks. 20

While the invention has been described in connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and various embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not to be limited to the disclosed embodiments, but on the contrary, is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the appended claims. The invention has been described in the general context of computing devices, phone and computer-executable instructions, such as program modules, being executed by a computer. Generally, program modules include routines, programs, characters, components, data structures, etc., that perform particular tasks or implement particular abstract data types. A person skilled in the art will appreciate that the invention may be practiced with other computer system configurations, including hand-held devices, multiprocessor systems, microprocessor-based or programmable consumer electronics, network PCs, minicomputers, mainframe computers, and the like. Further, the invention may also be practiced in distributed computing worlds where tasks are performed by remote processing devices that are linked through a communications network. In a distributed computing world, program modules may be located in both local and remote memory storage devices. 40

This written description uses examples to disclose the invention, including the best mode, and also to enable any person skilled in the art to practice the invention, including making and using any devices or systems and performing any incorporated methods. The patentable scope of the invention is defined in the claims, and may include other examples that occur to those skilled in the art. Such other examples are intended to be within the scope of the claims if they have structural elements that do not differ from the literal language 65

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of the claims, or if they include equivalent structural elements with insubstantial differences from the literal languages of the claims.

The invention claimed is:

1. A communication device comprising:

a database comprising at least one visual Interactive Voice Response (IVR) menu associated with each of a plurality of destinations;

means for initiating dialing a phone number of a destination of the plurality of destinations based on a predefined calling information, wherein the predefined calling information is selected from a visual IVR menu associated with the destination;

means for receiving information from the dialed destination based on the predefined calling information; and

means for displaying the received information, wherein the database further comprises predefined calling information, wherein the predefined calling information comprises: a selection information comprising one or more options of the displayed visual IVR menu associated with dialed destination selected by a user; and a call schedule comprising a time of day of dialing the phone number of the destination. 25

2. The communication device of claim 1 further comprising:

means for dialing, by the user, the phone number of the destination of the plurality of destinations;

means for displaying the visual IVR menu associated with the dialed destination, wherein the visual IVR menu comprises a schedule mode option; and

means for selecting, by the user, the schedule mode option. 30

3. The communication device of claim 2 further comprising means for automatically selecting, by the communication device, the scheduling mode. 35

4. The communication device of claim 3 further comprising:

means for storing the predefined calling information when the scheduling mode is selected, wherein the predefined calling information is selected by the user;

means for establishing a communication with the dialed destination;

means for requesting the information from the dialed destination based on the predefined calling information; and

means for storing the received information. 40

5. The communication device of claim 1 further comprising means for converting the received information from a first format to a second format. 45

6. A communication device comprising:

a processor; and

a memory coupled to the processor, comprising:

a database comprising at least one visual Interactive Voice Response (IVR) menu associated with each of a plurality of destinations;

instructions executable by the processor for initiating dialing a phone number of a destination of the plurality of destinations based on a predefined calling information, wherein the predefined calling information is selected from a visual IVR menu associated with the destination;

instructions executable by the processor for receiving information from the dialed destination based on the predefined calling information; and

instructions executable by the processor for displaying the received information, wherein the database further comprises predefined calling information, wherein the predefined calling information comprises: a selection information comprising one or more options of the displayed visual IVR menu associated with dialed destination 60

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selected by a user; and a call schedule comprising a time of day of dialing the phone number of the destination.

7. The communication device of claim 6, wherein the memory further comprises instructions executable by the processor for:

dialing, by the user, the phone number of the destination of the plurality of destinations;

displaying the visual IVR menu associated with the dialed destination, wherein the visual IVR menu comprises a schedule mode option; and

selecting, by the user, the schedule mode option.

8. The communication device of claim 7, wherein the memory further comprises instructions executable by the processor for:

storing the predefined calling information when the scheduling mode is selected, wherein the predefined calling information is selected by the user;

establishing a communication with the dialed destination; requesting the information from the dialed destination based on the predefined calling information; and

storing the received information.

9. The communication device of claim 8, wherein the memory further comprises instructions executable by the processor for automatically selecting, by the communication device, the scheduling mode.

10. The communication device of claim 8, wherein the memory further comprises instructions executable by the processor for converting the received information from a first format to a second format.

11. The communication device of claim 10, wherein the first format is an audio format.

12. The communication device of claim 10, wherein the second format is a text format.

13. A method for providing enhanced telephony, the method comprising:

initiating dialing, by a communication device, a phone number of a destination of a plurality of destinations based on a predefined calling information, wherein the

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predefined calling information is selected from a visual Interactive Voice Response (IVR) menu associated with the destination;

receiving, at the communication device, information from the dialed destination based on the predefined calling information; and

displaying the received information, wherein the database further comprises predefined calling information, wherein the predefined calling information comprises: a selection information comprising one or more options of the displayed visual IVR menu associated with dialed destination selected by a user; and a call schedule comprising a time of day of dialing the phone number of the destination.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising:

dialing, by the user, the phone number of the destination of the plurality of destinations;

displaying, at the communication device, the visual IVR menu associated with the dialed destination, wherein the IVR menu comprises a schedule mode option; and

selecting, by the user, the schedule mode option.

15. The method of claim 14 further comprising automatically selecting, by the communication device, the scheduling mode.

16. The method of claim 15 further comprising:

storing, at the communication device, the predefined calling information when the scheduling mode is selected, wherein the predefined calling information is selected by the user;

establishing, by the communication device, a communication with the dialed destination;

requesting, by the communication device, the information from the dialed destination based on the predefined calling information; and

storing, at the communication device, the received information.

17. The method of claim 16 further comprising converting the received information from a first format to a second format.

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