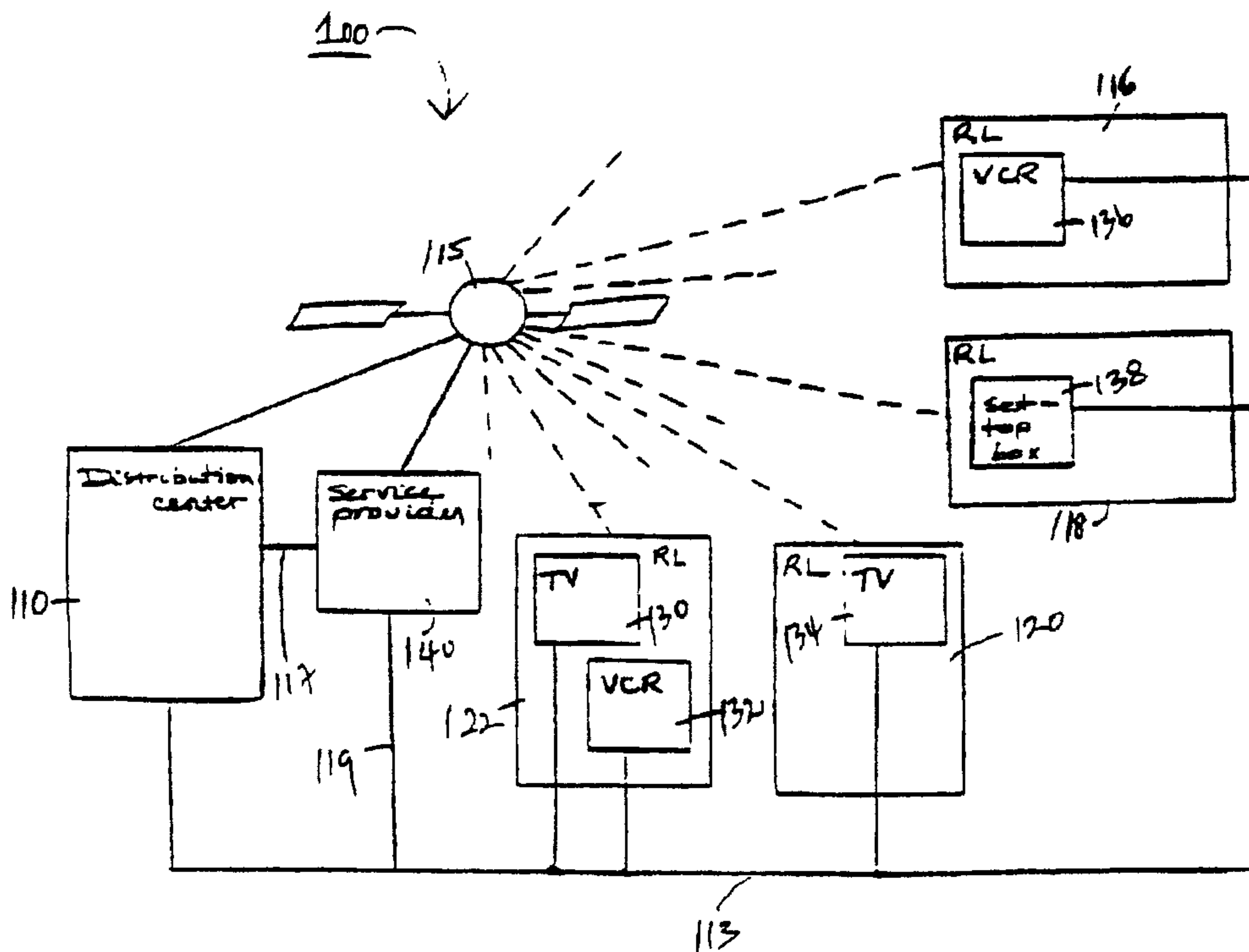




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(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

A method and apparatus for simultaneously displaying advertisements with an electronic program guide (EPG) is disclosed. A plurality of schedule information items are displayed arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a horizontal width. An advertisement is selected for display from a plurality of advertisements and the selected advertisement is simultaneously displayed. The displayed advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width as at least one of the plurality of rows.



INFORMATION SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

10 A method and apparatus for simultaneously displaying advertisements with an electronic program guide (EPG) is disclosed. A plurality of schedule information items are displayed arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a horizontal width. An advertisement is selected for display from a plurality of advertisements and the selected advertisement is simultaneously displayed. The displayed advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width as at least one of the plurality of rows.

INFORMATION SYSTEM

This application is divided from Canadian Patent Application Serial No. 2,209,071, which is a divisional of 2,253,293 filed May 2, 1997.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to a program schedule guide and, more particularly, to a system and process for allowing a television viewer to access on-screen television program listings and other information services in an easy and convenient way.

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The number of television channels available to a user has grown dramatically within the last decade, primarily due to the availability of cable and direct broadcast satellite systems. As the number of programs of potential interest to the viewer has increased, a variety of electronic program guides have been developed to help the viewer select programs of particular interest. For example, commonly assigned U.S. Patent Numbers 4,706,121 and 5,353,121 each describe schedule information processing systems which provide the viewer with a convenient way to select programs based on viewer supplied selection criteria.

15

Given the hectic lifestyle of today's society, a system which provides other information in addition to television program schedule information would be very convenient for the busy viewer. Examples of information viewers may desire are weather information, financial information, and the like. Hence, an information system such as a guide with regions reserved for such information would provide a valuable service to a user. Furthermore, these regions could be used for advertising or promotional purposes, which may or may not be interactive, thereby enabling more services to be provided without increasing the cost of the guide.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

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In accordance with one aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for simultaneously displaying advertisements with an electronic program guide (EPG).

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The method involves displaying a plurality of schedule information items. The displayed schedule information items are arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a horizontal width. The method also involves selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements and simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement. The displayed advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width as at least one of the plurality of rows. The method further involves activating the displayed advertisement to invoke a function.

The displayed advertisement may be selected independently from the display of the schedule information items.

The displayed advertisement additionally may have substantially the same horizontal width as each of the plurality of rows.

The displayed advertisement additionally may have substantially the same vertical height as at least one of the plurality of rows.

The displayed advertisement may include one or more of text, graphics, and video.

The displayed advertisement may be associated with a television program.

The displayed advertisement may promote a website.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a system for simultaneously displaying advertisements with an electronic program guide (EPG). The system includes provisions for displaying a plurality of schedule information items. The displayed schedule information items are arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a horizontal width. The system also includes provisions for selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements and provisions for simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement. The displayed advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width as at least one of the plurality of rows. The system further includes provisions for activating the displayed advertisement to invoke a function.

The displayed advertisement may be selected independently from the display of the schedule information items.

The displayed advertisement additionally may have substantially the same horizontal width as each of the plurality of rows.

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The displayed advertisement additionally may have substantially the same vertical height as at least one of the plurality of rows.

The displayed advertisement may include one or more of text, graphics, and video.

5 The displayed advertisement may be associated with a television program.

The displayed advertisement may promote a website.

The plurality of schedule information items may be displayed in a program information region of a display, and the selected advertisement may be displayed vertically adjacent to the program information region on the display.

10 The plurality of schedule information items may be displayed in a scrollable program schedule region of a display, and the selected advertisement may be displayed in a non-scrollable program information region of the display.

The selected advertisement need not change when a schedule information item is selected.

15 The plurality of schedule information items may be displayed in a program information region having a horizontal width, and the selected advertisement may be displayed substantially vertically aligned with the plurality of schedule information items along the entire horizontal width of the program information region.

20 The displayed advertisement may be automatically changed after a predetermined length of time.

Activating the displayed advertisement may involve accessing at least one website.

25 In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application. The method involves displaying a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display, selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements and simultaneously displaying, in a non-scrollable program information region of the display, the selected advertisement with the displayed plurality of schedule information items. The method also involves navigating from
30 the scrollable program schedule region to the displayed advertisement in the non-scrollable program information region and activating the displayed advertisement to invoke a function.

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At least some of the displayed plurality of schedule information items may be selectable by a user.

The selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements may be made independent of a user's selection of a schedule information item.

5 The function may include ordering one or more of an advertised product and an advertised service.

The function may include scheduling storage of a program related to an advertised product.

10 The function may include displaying a program related to an advertised product on the display.

The advertisement may promote a website.

The function may include linking to a website.

15 In accordance another aspect of the invention, there is provided a system for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application. The system includes a display monitor having a screen. The system further includes a processor configured to display a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display on the screen. An advertisement may be selected for display from a plurality of advertisements and the processor simultaneously display, in a non-scrollable program information region of the display,
20 the selected advertisement with the displayed plurality of schedule information items. The processor is also configured to navigate from the scrollable program schedule region to the displayed advertisement in the non-scrollable program information region and activate the displayed advertisement to invoke a function.

25 At least some of the displayed plurality of schedule information items may be selectable by a user.

The selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements may be made independent of a user's selection of a schedule information item.

The function may be ordering one or more of an advertised product and an advertised service.

30 The function may be scheduling storage of a program related to an advertised product.

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The function may be displaying a program related to an advertised product on the display.

The advertisement may promote a website.

5 In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for simultaneously displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application. The method involves displaying a plurality of schedule information items in a program information region having a first horizontal width and selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements, the advertisement having a second horizontal width. The method also involves simultaneously displaying the
10 selected advertisement vertically adjacent to the program information region. The first horizontal width is substantially the same as the second horizontal width.

The displayed banner advertisement may be interactive.

The displayed banner advertisement may be independent of a user's selection of one or more of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

15 The displayed banner advertisement may be substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed banner advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

20 The displayed banner advertisement may have a vertical height substantially twice the vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed banner advertisement may include one or more of text, graphics, and video.

25 The banner advertisement may be displayed above the program information region.

The banner advertisement may be displayed below the program information region.

The method may further involve activating the displayed advertisement to invoke a function.

30 The function may be ordering one or more of an advertised product and an advertised service.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a system for simultaneously displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application. The system includes a display monitor having a screen. The system further includes a processor configured to display on the screen a plurality of schedule information items in a program information region having a first horizontal width and to select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements, the advertisement having a second horizontal width, the first horizontal width being substantially the same as the second horizontal width. The processor is also configured to simultaneously display the selected advertisement vertically adjacent to the program information region.

The displayed banner advertisement may be interactive.

The displayed banner advertisement may be independent of a user's selection of one or more of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed banner advertisement may have substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for simultaneously displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application. The method involves displaying a plurality of schedule information items in a display, the schedule information items having a first left edge and a first right edge. The method also involves selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements, the advertisement having a second left edge and a second right edge. The method further involves simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement vertically adjacent to the displayed plurality of schedule information items, wherein the first left edge is substantially aligned with the second left edge and the first right edge is substantially aligned with the second right edge.

The displayed banner advertisement may be interactive.

The displayed banner advertisement may be independent of a user's selection of one or more of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed banner advertisement may have substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed banner advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed banner advertisement may have a vertical height substantially twice the vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

5 The displayed banner advertisement may include one or more of text, graphics, and video.

The banner advertisement may be displayed above the displayed plurality of schedule information.

The banner advertisement may be displayed below the displayed plurality of schedule information.

10 The method may further involve activating the displayed advertisement to invoke a function.

The function may be ordering one or more of an advertised product and an advertised service.

15 In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a system for simultaneously displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application. The system includes a display monitor having a screen. The system further includes a processor configured to display a plurality of schedule information items in a display on the screen. The schedule information items have a first left edge and a first right edge. The processor is also configured to select an advertisement for display from a
20 plurality of advertisements, the advertisement having second left edge and a second right edge. The processor is further configured to simultaneously display the selected advertisement vertically adjacent to the displayed plurality of schedule information items, wherein the first left edge is substantially aligned with the second left edge and the first right edge is substantially aligned with the second right edge.

25 The displayed banner advertisement may be interactive.

The displayed banner advertisement may be independent of a user's selection of one or more of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed banner advertisement may have substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

30 In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for simultaneously displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application. The method involves displaying a plurality of schedule information items in a display.

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The plurality of schedule information items are displayed in a program information region of the display having a horizontal width. The method also involves selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements and simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement substantially vertically aligned with the displayed plurality of schedule information items. The selected advertisement is displayed along the entire horizontal width of the program information region of the display.

The displayed banner advertisement may be adjacent to the program information region of the display.

The displayed banner advertisement may be interactive.

The method may further involve activating the displayed advertisement to invoke a function.

The displayed banner advertisement may be independent of a user's selection of one or more of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed banner advertisement may have substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed banner advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed banner advertisement may have a vertical height substantially twice the vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed banner advertisement may include one or more of text, graphics, and video.

The banner advertisement may be displayed above the displayed plurality of schedule information.

The banner advertisement may be displayed below the displayed plurality of schedule information.

The function may be ordering one or more of an advertised product and an advertised service.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a system for simultaneously displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application. The system includes a display monitor having a screen. The system further includes a

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processor configured to display a plurality of schedule information items in a display on the screen, wherein the plurality of schedule information items are displayed in a program information region of the display having a horizontal width. The processor is also configured to select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements and simultaneously display the selected advertisement substantially vertically aligned with the displayed plurality of schedule information items, wherein the selected advertisement is displayed along the entire horizontal width of the program information region of the display.

The displayed banner advertisement may be adjacent to the program information region of the display.

The displayed banner advertisement may be interactive.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application. The method involves displaying a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display, wherein the displayed schedule information items are arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a vertical height. The method also involves selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements and simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement in a program information region adjacent to the scrollable program schedule region. The selected advertisement has substantially the same height as the vertical height of the each row. The method further involves, in response to a user input, navigating from the scrollable program schedule region to the program information region in which the advertisement is displayed, and selecting the program information region.

The displayed advertisement may be interactive.

The displayed advertisement may include one or more of text and graphics.

The displayed advertisement may be related to one or more of a product and a service.

The method may further involve highlighting the displayed advertisement and displaying information relating to the highlighted advertisement in a second area of the screen.

The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed advertisement may be independent of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

5 In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a system for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application. The system includes a display monitor having a screen. The system further includes a processor configured to display a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display on the screen, wherein the displayed schedule information items
10 are arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a vertical height. The processor is also configured to select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements and to simultaneously display the selected advertisement in a program information region adjacent to the scrollable program schedule region. The selected advertisement has substantially the same height as the vertical height of each row.
15 The processor is further configured to, in response to a user input, navigate from the scrollable program schedule region to the program information region in which the advertisement is displayed, and select the program information region.

The displayed advertisement may be interactive.

The displayed advertisement may include one or more of text and graphics.

20 The displayed advertisement may be related to one or more of a product and a service.

The processor may be further configured to highlight the displayed advertisement and display information relating to the highlighted advertisement in a second area of the screen.

25 The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

30 In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application. The method involves displaying a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display, wherein the displayed schedule information items are arranged in

a plurality of rows, each row having a horizontal length. The method also involves selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements. The advertisement promotes something other than the displayed schedule information items. The method further involves simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement in a program information region adjacent to the scrollable program schedule region. The selected advertisement has substantially the same length as the horizontal length of the each row. The method further involves, in response to a user input, navigating from the scrollable program schedule region to the program information region in which the advertisement is displayed, and selecting the entire program information region.

The displayed advertisement may be interactive.

The displayed advertisement may include one or more of text and graphics.

The displayed advertisement may be related to one or more of a product and a service.

The method may further involve highlighting the displayed advertisement and displaying information relating to the highlighted advertisement in a second area of the screen.

The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed advertisement may be independent of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a system for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application. The system includes a display monitor having a screen. The system further includes a processor configured to display a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display on the screen, wherein the displayed schedule information items are arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a horizontal length. The processor is also configured to select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements. The advertisement promotes something other than the displayed schedule information items. The processor is also configured to simultaneously

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display the selected advertisement in a program information region adjacent to the scrollable program schedule region. The selected advertisement has substantially the same length as the horizontal length of each row. The processor is further configured to, in response to a user input, navigate from the scrollable program schedule region to the program information region in which the advertisement is displayed, and select the entire program information region.

The displayed advertisement may be interactive.

The displayed advertisement may include one or more of text and graphics.

The displayed advertisement may be related to one or more of a product and a service.

The processor may be further configured to highlight the displayed advertisement; and display information relating to the highlighted advertisement in a second area of the screen.

The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application. The method involves displaying a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display. The displayed schedule information items are arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a vertical height. The method also involves selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements. The advertisement promotes something other than the displayed schedule information items. The method also involves simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement adjacent to the scrollable program schedule region. The selected advertisement has a height less than twice the vertical height of the each row. The method further involves, in response to a user input, navigating from the scrollable program schedule region to the program information region in which the advertisement is displayed, and visually identifying the entire program information region.

The displayed advertisement may be interactive.

The displayed advertisement may include one or more of text and graphics.

The displayed advertisement may be related to one or more of a product and a service.

5 The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

10 The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height and substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed advertisement may include video.

15 In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a system for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application. The system includes a display monitor having a screen. The system further includes a processor configured to display a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display on the screen. The displayed schedule information items are arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a vertical height. The processor is also configured to select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements. The advertisement promotes something other than the displayed schedule information items. The processor is also configured to simultaneously display the selected advertisement adjacent to the scrollable program schedule region, wherein the selected advertisement has a height less than twice the vertical height of the each row. The processor is further configured to, in response to a user input, navigate from the scrollable program schedule region to the program information region in which the advertisement is displayed, and visually identify the entire program information region.

The displayed advertisement may be interactive.

The displayed advertisement may include one or more of text and graphics.

25 The displayed advertisement may be related to one or more of a product and a service.

30 The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

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The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height and substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application. The method involves displaying program information in a program information region of a display and selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements. The method also involves simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement adjacent to the program information region. The horizontal width of the program information region is substantially the same as the horizontal width of the advertisement. The method further involves automatically changing the displayed advertisement after a predetermined length of time and activating the displayed advertisement to invoke a function related to the advertisement.

The displayed advertisement may be selected independent of the displayed program information.

The program information may be arranged in a plurality of rows and the displayed advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height as at least one of the rows.

The displayed advertisement may include one or more of text, graphics, and video.

The advertisement may be displayed above the program information region.

The advertisement may be displayed below the program information region.

The function may be ordering one or more of an advertised product and an advertised service.

The function may be storing a program related to an advertised product or service.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a system for displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application. The system includes a display monitor having a screen. The system further includes a processor configured to display program information in a program information region of a

display on the screen and to select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements. The processor is also configured to simultaneously display the selected advertisement adjacent to the program information region. The horizontal width of the program information region is substantially the same as the horizontal width of the advertisement. The processor is further configured to automatically change the displayed advertisement after a predetermined length of time and activate the displayed advertisement to invoke a function related to the advertisement.

The displayed advertisement may be selected independent of the displayed program information.

The program information may be arranged in a plurality of rows and the displayed advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height as at least one of the rows.

The displayed advertisement may include one or more of text, graphics, and video.

The advertisement may be displayed above the program information region. The advertisement may be displayed below the program information region. The function may be ordering one or more of an advertised product and an advertised service.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application. The method involves displaying program information in a display. The displayed program information is arranged in a plurality of rows. The method also involves selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements and simultaneously displaying, as one of the plurality of rows, the selected advertisement. The method further involves navigating to the displayed advertisement and activating the displayed advertisement to access at least one website.

The displayed advertisement may be selected independently from the display of the program information.

The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height as at least one of the plurality of rows.

The displayed advertisement may include one or more of text, graphics, and video.

The displayed advertisement may include a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) or network address.

5 The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same horizontal width as at least one of the plurality of rows.

The at least one website may involve at least two websites, the at least two websites may be associated with the same program.

10 Activating the displayed advertisement to access at least one website may involve launching a web browser application and displaying the website using the web browser application.

The advertisement may be associated with a program and the at least one website may be associated with a media source on which the program is available.

15 In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a system for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application. The system includes a display monitor having a screen. The system further includes a processor configured to display program information in a display on the screen. The displayed program information may be arranged in a plurality of rows. The processor is also configured to select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements and simultaneously display, as one of the plurality of rows, the selected advertisement.
20 The processor is further configured to navigate to the displayed advertisement and activate the displayed advertisement to access at least one website.

The displayed advertisement may be selected independently from the display of the program information.

25 The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height as at least one of the plurality of rows.

The displayed advertisement may include one or more of text, graphics, and video.

The displayed advertisement may include a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) or network address.

30 The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same horizontal width as at least one of the plurality of rows.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application. The method involves displaying program information in a scrollable program information region of a display. The program information is arranged in a plurality of rows. The method also
5 involves selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements, simultaneously displaying, as one of the plurality of rows, the selected advertisement and scrolling vertically through the plurality of rows on the display.

The scrolling may occur automatically at a predetermined time rate.

The scrolling may occur in response to receiving a user command.

10 Vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows may involve vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows corresponding to the program information while the displayed advertisement may remain in a fixed position on the display during the vertical scrolling.

15 Vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows may involve vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows corresponding to the program information and the row corresponding to the displayed advertisement.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a system for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application. The system includes a display monitor having a screen. The system further includes a processor configured
20 to display program information in a scrollable program information region of the screen. The program information is arranged in a plurality of rows. The processor is also configured to select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements, simultaneously display, as one of the plurality of rows on the screen, the selected advertisement and scroll vertically through the plurality of rows on the
25 screen.

The scrolling may occur automatically at a predetermined time rate.

The scrolling may occur in response to receiving a user command.

30 Vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows may involve vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows corresponding to the program information while the displayed advertisement may remain in a fixed position on the screen during the vertical scrolling.

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a system for displaying a virtual channel in an electronic program guide (EPG). The system includes memory to store program information and control circuitry configured to display the program information on a display screen wherein the displayed program information is arranged in a plurality of rows. The control circuitry is also configured to simultaneously display the virtual channel and the program information wherein the virtual channel is located in an additional row on the display screen adjacent to at least one row from the plurality of rows of program information. The control circuitry is also configured to receive a first user input to navigate a cursor to select the virtual channel, and in response to the selection to access at least one website.

The at least one website may include at least two websites, the at least two websites may be associated with the same television program.

The control circuitry may be configured to launch a web browser application and display the at least one website using the web browser application.

The control circuitry may be further configured to select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements using a processor, and simultaneously display the selected advertisement with the virtual channel and the program information

The displayed advertisement may be selected independently from the display of the program information.

The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height as at least one of the plurality of rows.

The displayed advertisement may include one or more of text, graphics, and video.

The displayed advertisement may include a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) or network address.

The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same horizontal width as at least one of the plurality of rows.

The advertisement may be associated with a television program and the at least one website may be associated with the channel on which the television program is aired.

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In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for displaying a virtual channel in an electronic program guide (EPG). The method involves displaying program information on a display screen wherein the displayed program information is arranged in a plurality of rows. The method further involves simultaneously displaying the virtual channel and the program information wherein the virtual channel is located in an additional row on the display screen adjacent to at least one row from the plurality of rows of program information. The method further involves navigating a cursor to select the virtual channel, and in response to the selection, accessing at least one website.

10 The at least one website may involve at least two websites associated with the same television program.

Accessing the at least one website may involve launching a web browser application and displaying the at least one website using the web browser application.

15 The method may involve selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements using a processor, and simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement with the virtual channel and the program information.

The displayed advertisement may be selected independently from the display of the program information.

20 The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same vertical height as at least one of the plurality of rows.

The displayed advertisement may include one or more of text, graphics, and video.

The displayed advertisement may include a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) or network address.

25 The displayed advertisement may have substantially the same horizontal width as at least one of the plurality of rows.

The advertisement may be associated with a television program and the at least one website may be associated with the channel on which the television program is aired.

30

Vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows may involve vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows corresponding to the program information and the row corresponding to the displayed advertisement.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 illustrates a preferred embodiment of a system on which a program schedule guide according to the present invention may be displayed;

Fig. 2(a) is an illustration of a program schedule guide screen according to the present invention with program information, information icons, and information regions;

10

Fig. 2(b) is an illustration of a promotional message screen shown to the user when the user selects the information region of Fig. 2(a);

Fig. 3(a) is an illustration of a program schedule guide screen according to the present invention with program information, and information regions;

15

Fig. 3(b) is an illustration of a promotional message screen shown to the user when the user selects the information region of Fig. 3(a);

Fig. 4(a) is an illustration of an alternate embodiment of the program schedule guide screen according to the present invention with program information and an information region;

20

Fig. 4(b) is an illustration of a promotional message screen shown to the user when the user selects the information region of Fig. 4(a);

Fig. 5(a) is an illustration of an alternate embodiment of the program schedule guide screen according to the present invention with program information and an information region;

25

Fig. 5(b) is an illustration of a promotional message screen shown to the user when the user selects the information region of Fig. 5(a);

Fig. 6(a) is an illustration of an alternate embodiment of the program schedule guide screen according to the present invention with program information and an information region;

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Fig. 6(b) is an illustration of an alternate embodiment of the program schedule guide screen which includes virtual channels;

Fig. 6(c) is an illustration of a submenu screen shown to the user when the user selects the information region of Fig. 6(a) or the virtual channel of Fig. 6(b);

Fig. 6(d) is an illustration of a data page shown to the user when the user selects one of the options shown in the submenu screen of Fig 6(c);

5 Fig. 7 is an illustration of an alternate embodiment of the program schedule guide which includes information regions;

Fig. 8 is an illustration of an alternate embodiment of the program schedule guide screen which includes information icons;

Fig. 9(a) is an illustration of an embodiment of the information guide;

10 Fig. 9(b) is an illustration of a submenu of the information guide with news highlighted;

Fig. 9(c) is an illustration of a news information screen;

Fig. 10(a) is an illustration of an alternate embodiment of a submenu of the information guide with sports highlighted;

15 Fig. 10(b) is an illustration of a sports submenu;

Fig. 10(c) is an illustration of a sports information screen;

Fig. 11(a) is an illustration of an alternate embodiment of the information screen with weather highlighted;

Fig. 11(b) is an illustration of a weather submenu;

20 Fig. 11(c) is an illustration of a weather information screen;

Fig. 11(d) is an illustration of an alternate embodiment of the weather submenu;

Fig. 11(e) is an illustration of an alternate embodiment of a weather information screen; and

25 Fig. 12 illustrates the hardware elements of a preferred embodiment of the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

30 The present invention provides a schedule system which contains information regions for displaying other than television program schedule information. Fig. 1 illustrates a preferred embodiment of television/computer system 100 that displays a program schedule guide according to the present invention. As shown, system 100

includes a distribution center 110 and multiple receiving locations. Distribution center 110 compiles data for a data-stream. In a preferred embodiment, this data-stream is broadcast to receiving locations 116, 118, 120, and 122; and peripheral devices that are located within the receiving locations receive the data-stream. Several methods are available for broadcasting the data-stream from distribution center 110 to receiving locations 116-122. For example, satellite 115 may broadcast this data-stream within the vertical blanking interval (VBI) of a television channel (e.g., PBS) or a dedicated channel to receiving locations 116, 118, 120, and 122. Alternatively, the data may also be broadcast out of band, i.e., using non channel specific mechanisms. In another preferred embodiment, the data-stream is provided to receiving locations 116, 118, 120, and 122 via transmission system 113. Transmission system 113 may be, for example, optical fiber, coax cable, telephone line, over the air television broadcast, or the like.

In yet another embodiment, the peripheral devices receive the data-stream from, for example, a local service provider 140. Service provider 140 receives the data-stream from distribution center 110 via line 117, and broadcasts the data-stream to the receiving peripheral devices via satellite 115 (or another satellite), or via lines 119 and 113. The receiving peripheral devices may be televisions 130, televisions 134, VCRs 132, VCRs 136, and/or cable, satellite IRD, web-browser or set-top boxes 138. In still further embodiments, PCTVs or personal computers may be utilized, or the data-stream may be provided to a personal computer for use with the computer and/or one or more of the above devices. Hence, the system is not dependent on hardware platforms, rather it may be a software application that may be downloaded to different systems.

In a preferred embodiment, information in the data-stream includes television schedule information, advertising information, news information, weather information, financial information, internet address linking information, and the like. The information in the data-stream may further include messages from the system operator to a specific user or to subscribers of the system in general. Software applications, which may be downloaded from the distribution center or located within the peripheral devices, utilize the schedule information provided in the data-stream to generate a schedule guide. The news, weather, financial, and other information may

be included in the schedule guide, or a separate information guide may be generated. Advertising information and messages from the system operator to a user are included on the schedule guide, and may be included on the information guide as well. In yet another preferred embodiment, data in the front and back end of the data-stream may be compressed to send a tickler instead of a regular full screen video display. The tickler would be a PIP window, and because the window size is small, the quality of the picture is sufficient even though it is generated from compressed data.

If the software applications are located within the peripheral devices, they may be stored on a computer-readable storage medium such as a RAM, disk, or other storage device. Where applicable, the computer-readable storage medium may also be a ROM. If the schedule guide is in a grid format, for example, the available channels may be listed on the “y” axis and various times may be listed on the “x” axis. For more information on how the schedule system displays information, see U.S. Patent No. B1 4,706,121, U.S. Patent No, 5,479,266, and U.S. Patent No. 5,479,268. These patents, like the present patent application, are assigned to StarSight Telecast, Inc.

In another preferred embodiment, satellite 115 has processing capability. Hence, in addition to distribution center 110, satellite 115 may also compile data for the data-stream. This embodiment is very advantageous as it ensures continued and reliable data transmission in situations where satellite 115 may not be able to receive data from distribution center 110. An example of such situations is during periods of atmospheric or terrestrial interferences, which occur when satellite 115 is in-line with distribution center 110 and the Sun. The Sun, having immense energy, emits a lot of noise thereby interfering with data transmission from the distribution center 110 to the satellite 115. With its own data processor, satellite 115 may continue to transmit data, hence, ensuring continued and reliable data transfer to the receiving locations. This embodiment also ensures continued and reliable data transmission when distribution center 110 is out of service.

Fig. 2 is an illustration of a program schedule guide screen according to the present invention. As illustrated, program guide screen 200 has program information, information regions for offering product and program information, and information icons for offering information such as sports, news and the like. Fig. 2 shows only two information regions, 220 and 250, although guide screen 200 may have multiple

information regions. As shown in Fig. 2, cell 220 shows a promotion for NBC's program featuring Travolta and information region 250 is used as an advertisement space. This space can be used to provide additional advertising opportunities, an example is advertisements for a system operator. Preferably the space is used for short advertisements that change periodically, for example, on three minute intervals. An example of a suitable advertisement is "Enjoy Coke!". Here the advertisement space shows an advertisement from RCA and the advertisement has a height less than twice the vertical height of each row of schedule information. In another embodiment the information displayed in the information regions may change as the user moves from cell to cell in the program guide. Alternatively, the information may change automatically after the passage of a predetermined number of seconds, regardless of user activity. In addition or as an alternative, there may be commercial icons to allow the user to get more information about the product or service advertised.

Information regions 220 and 250 may be color coded or otherwise visually distinguished. They may also be placed at strategic positions within the guide to better catch the user's attention. As described, when an information region contains program information, such as shown at 220, the user may move the cursor to the region (or the cursor may point to the region by default) and tune to the program if it is currently on. If the program is not currently on, the user may schedule an autotune to the program when the program airs. The user may further record a current program or schedule a recording of a future program. When an information region contains product information, such as shown at 250, the user may click on the information region to tune to an infomercial on the product. Alternatively, the user may schedule an autotune to the infomercial at a later time period, or schedule a recording of the infomercial on the product. In a two way system, which has a back-channel for transmitting information or requests from the user, the user may also order a product by clicking on an information region and providing the necessary customer information for transmission to a supplier of the product, or to the system operator (service provider).

Portion 240 of guide screen 200 contains cells 245. Each cell 245 indicates the channel number corresponding to the program guide cell 255 lying immediately adjacent to it in the program guide. Instead of, or in combination with the channel number, cells 245 may contain the program service name. For example, a cell 245 may contain the channel number 32, the service name PBS, or both.

The system operator may charge television program providers an additional fee, per time slot, for promoting and featuring programs in the information regions. In this manner, the system operator may provide the guide to a user at a reduced price while providing more information. A number of different display arrangements can be used to draw the user's attention to such "special" programs. For example, the program may be listed first in the program guide, shown in a different typeface, presented in a different color, given additional space for a program description, or have some other form of graphic enhancement, including animation.

Fig. 2(b) is an illustration of a promotional message screen 260. Screen 260 is shown to the user when information region 220 is interactive, and the user clicks on information region 220. Promotional screen 260 may also contain an icon to allow immediate tuning to the program described by the promotional message. In addition, promotional screen 260 may contain another icon that returns the user to guide 200. Since the system operator may charge a fee for displaying such promotional information, some or all of a message portion 275 may also be used as an additional revenue source.

In Fig. 2(b), portion 275 contains the promotion: "Amid the flash of 70's Disco, an aspiring young dancer" This promotional material, which in this example would typically be provided by NBC, provides the user with several benefits. First, it allows a program to be promoted which is not currently represented in the program schedule guide. Second, portion 275 may be used to provide further information about a specific program, such as the starring actors or a brief description of the program content, thus possibly gaining a larger viewing audience or market share. Third, by promoting a program through prominent featuring of the program in the program guide, the broadcaster may be able to prevent potential viewers from becoming engrossed in a program which is to continue after the start time of the promoted program.

Portion 280 of screen 260 is used to indicate the sponsor of the promotional message shown in portion 275. The sponsor indication can be by broadcaster call letters, channel number, broadcaster name, or broadcaster insignia (e.g., the NBC peacock). It is also possible to eliminate portion 280, thereby enlarging portion 275. Additional information may therefore be displayed in portion 275. Since portion 280

of screen 260 displays information regarding a program, the user may click on the information region and direct tune to the program if it is currently on. Alternatively, the user may schedule automatic tuning to the program when the program comes on. If the user schedules an autotune, the system may request confirmation from the user before tuning to the program, or the system may tune to the program directly. Preferably, the system will request user confirmation before tuning to the program. If user confirmation is requested, additional information regions may be displayed until the user makes his confirmation. These information regions may include advertising for products or services.

If the promoted program is a pay-per-view program, the system may authorize payment for the program automatically. Preferably, the system will request user confirmation before authorizing payment of the program. The user may further choose to record the promoted program, whether it is a current program, a future program, or a pay-per-view program. If the user requests recording of a pay-per-view program, the system may ask for confirmation before authorizing payment for the program. If the user requests recording of a future program, the system may also request user confirmation. Additional information regions may also be displayed while the user confirms his/her recording request.

If an information region displays advertising or promotional material, the user may activate an icon, click on the region, or select a menu item to view additional information about the product or service advertised. From these additional information displays, the user may learn more about the product or service, order the product or service, or find out where the product or service may be obtained. The additional displays would of course allow the user to return to the previous displays after the user has seen the desired information displays.

The invention may also allow the user to switch between full screen display and a PIP window display of the guide via, for example, an on screen menu with cursor control. This feature would allow a user to see a large scale version of the guide, or to be able to see the guide while also getting a “flavor” for a currently selected show through only partial observation of the show. Preferably in this mode, the audio for the show also continues to be played.

Fig. 3(a) is an illustration of a program schedule guide screen **300** with program information **320** and interactive information regions **330** and **340**. As can be seen, guide screen **300** does not contain information icons. Hence, more schedule information may be shown on the screen, thereby allowing the user to access more schedule information per screen. Information region **320**, like information region **220**, promotes a program. In addition, it provides a brief description of the program content, thereby allowing information other than program description to be shown on promotional message screen **350** (Fig. 3(b)). As shown by Fig. 3(b), message screen **350** contains contest information, however, other information related to the program may also be shown on screen **350**.

Fig. 4(a) is an illustration of a program schedule guide screen **400**. As shown, the user may move a cursor across region **410** to move between the different days of the week. In Fig. 4(a), the user has selected Wednesday. Hence, the schedule information displayed is for Wednesday, and the time shown is the current time. The system knows what time the user is watching television, and automatically adjusts the cursor to be located on default on a cell that corresponds to the current time.

As shown, guide screen **400** has one information region **420**, which is promoting a program that may be on shortly or is currently on. Information region **420** is interactive. Hence, if the user clicks on region **420**, the user may see message screen **450** (Fig. 4(b)), which displays a description of the program content. In addition, message screen **450** may also display promotional materials about an upcoming program. This way, the system operator may indirectly promote multiple programs on region **420**. If the program is currently on, the user may click on icon **460** to tune to the program. If the program will come on shortly, the user will be tuned to the channel that corresponds to the program. Alternatively, the user may click on icon **470** to start recording the program if the program is on. On occasions where the program will come on shortly, the system will start recording the program when the program comes on.

Fig. 5(a) is an illustration of a program schedule guide screen **500**. As shown, guide screen **500** has one information region **520**, which is interactive. Information region **520** is promoting a program that will air in the future. As seen in Figure 5(a) a left edge of the information region **520** is substantially aligned with a left edge of a program listing (e.g. Beverly Hills **90210**) and a right edge of the information region **520** is substantially aligned with a right edge of the program listing. In this case, if the user clicks on region **520**, the user may see message screen **550** (Fig. 5(b)), which also

displays a description of the program content. In another embodiment, message screen 500 may also contain an icon, which the user may click on to view a short video preview. This preview may be shown in a PIP window, and the preview video data may be transmitted in a compressed format. As mentioned, the size of the window allows a decent video display to be generated from compressed data. Message screen 550 also displays promotional materials about an upcoming program. However, because the program will not air until a later date, message screen 550 has icon 560, which when clicked on by the user, will allow the user to schedule an autotune to the program when the program comes on. Once the user has scheduled an autotune, the system will automatically tune to the program when the program airs. Preferably, user confirmation is requested before the system tunes to the program. Alternatively, the user may click on icon 570 to schedule a recording of the program. The system will automatically start recording the program when the program comes on.

In another embodiment, the system may automatically tune a user to a promoted program when the program comes on. This may happen whether or not the user has scheduled an autotune to the program. Preferably, the system will ask the user whether the user wishes to tune to the program before automatically tuning to the program.

The interactive and non-interactive information screens may both be used for displaying scrolling messages or static messages. As discussed, these information screens may be used to promote programs as well as products. In addition, the information screens may also be used to send messages to specific users, for example, alerting a user that his/her bill is overdue. This is because each guide system has a unique unit address. Hence, the system operator is able to send messages to specific users by sending the messages to the respective unit addresses. Of course, the information screens may be used to send system wide messages to all users. For example, the information screens may be used to send alerts to all users, for example, of an impending disaster. The information screens may further be used to send messages to a specific group of users. For example, the system could send a message to all Magnavox television owners by checking for Magnavox television codes as this information is entered into the system when the user first sets up the system. To ensure that messages to the users are read by the users, such messages will have a bit

attached to them that keeps them in the information screen until the user indicates that he/she has seen the message. The user may indicate that he/she has seen the message by pushing a button on a user input device or by clicking on an icon on the guide to clear the message. This way, even though the message may be placed by the system operator in the morning, the user may still see the message when the user watches television at Prime Time. After the message is cleared, the system will place advertisements or promotions appropriate for the time when the message is cleared in the information screen.

Fig. 6(a) is an illustration of a program schedule guide screen **600**. As shown, guide screen **600** has an interactive information region **620**, which promotes a website connected with a program. In an alternate embodiment (Fig. 6(b)), guide screen **600** may include a virtual channel **640**. A virtual channel is a channel that does not tune to television programs; instead, the channel may launch an application, connect to an internet site, connect to a information guide, and the like. In the example as shown in Fig. 6(b), virtual channel **640** contains an internet address - also called a Uniform Resource Locator (URL); hence it connects to an internet site. As shown in Fig. 6(b), region **620** may be used to display promotional materials in this alternate embodiment. If a user selects virtual channel **640** of Fig. 6(b), or information region **620** of Fig. 6(a), the user may see submenu screen **650** of Fig. 6(c).

As shown in Fig. 6(c), the user may choose to connect to the Seinfeld web page, the NBC web page that promotes the Seinfeld show, or the Comedy Network web page by clicking on one of the three website icons **660**, **665**, and **669**, respectively. The system will launch a web-browser when the user selects an information region that promotes a website, or tunes to a virtual channel containing a URL. After the user has made his/her selection, the system will insert the URL corresponding to the selected website into the web-browser, which will begin to access the web and search for the website selected by the user to connect the user to the website data page. Hence, if the user selects one of the website icons, the system will connect the user to the website that corresponds to the icon. Fig. 6(d) is an illustration of a web page **680** shown to the user when the user chooses to connect to the NBC web page. As shown, after the user is connected to the page, the user may

participate in promotions on the page just as if the user had connected to the page directly through a web-browser.

Fig. 6(d) further shows window **688**, which shows the television program that the user was viewing before the user selected virtual channel **640** from program guide screen **600** of Fig. 6(b), or clicked on information region **620** of Fig. 6(a). The user may resume watching the television program by clicking on window **688**. This is referred as “hypertuning,” and the system will return the user to the program the user was viewing. While the user is viewing the program, the system preferably displays a network icon that the user may click on to hypertune to the web page. Alternatively, the system may display the page in a picture-in-picture window such as window **688** while the viewer is viewing a program. The user may click on the picture-in-picture web page to hypertune to the page.

In another preferred embodiment, after the user has selected either icon **660**, **665**, or **669** of Fig. 6(c), the user may tune to the program the viewer was watching before accessing the guide. The system will display a “searching” symbol while launching a web-browser and searching for the website that the user has requested. After the system has connected to the website, the system will notify the user that the search is complete, and asks whether the user wishes to hypertune to the web page. In yet another preferred embodiment, the user may click on any program titles shown in the program guide cells, and the system will display a list of one or more websites that are related to the program. The user may select to tune to the program or connect to one of the websites. In addition, the user may click on an icon or press a remote control button to toggle between watching television and browsing the web.

Fig. 7 is an illustration of a program schedule guide screen **700** with non-interactive program portion **705** and interactive information regions **710** and **715**. Portion **705**, as shown, is a time slice of schedule information for current programs. Since the user may not interact with portion **705** of guide screen **700**, portion **705** may be updated automatically over time to show current and future programs. The amount of future programs shown may be predetermined. Hence, the user may see what is currently on, and what programs will come on up to a predetermined amount of time. However, the user may not obtain more information regarding the programs, tune to the programs from portion **705**, or record the programs from portion **705**.

As shown in Fig. 7, information region 710 contains program promotional information. Since information region 710 is interactive with the user, the user may click on information region 710 to get further information about the programs shown in the region. The user may further click on information region 710 to tune to the program if it is currently on, or the user may schedule an autotune to the program when it comes on. When autotune is scheduled, the system may or may not notify the user before automatically tuning to the program when the program comes on. Preferably, the system will request confirmation from the user before automatically tuning to the program. Finally, the user may schedule a recording of a future program or begin recording of a program currently on. As discussed, if the system requests confirmation from the user, additional information regions may be displayed while the user confirms his/her request.

Information region 715 may either be a static or scrolling message area that contains selected news or sports information. For example, the latest sports scores can scroll across information region 715. Although in the preferred embodiment, the type of information shown in information region 715 is determined by the system operator, it is also possible to allow the user to select the type of information to be shown in information region 715.

Fig. 8 is an illustration of a program guide screen 800. Screen 800 contains a program schedule portion 805 similar in nature to the schedule guides previously described. In addition, screen 800 contains several information icons 810. Icons 810 can represent local or national weather forecasts, local or national news, sports news, sports scores, financial news, and the like. In response to the user selecting one of icons 810, screen 800 may be replaced with one or more additional information screens. For example, the weather information screen may display the current weather conditions or weather predictions for a plurality of regions. The sports score information screen may have icons or regions to represent each of a plurality of sports. A user may click on the individual icons or regions to view another screen dedicated to a single sport, or the sports score information screen may display the scores for different sports and sports teams on the same screen. The financial news information screen may likewise have icons or regions that the user may click on to choose other screens dedicated to specific financial markets. Alternatively, the

financial news information screen may combine and display the financial markets on one screen.

Fig. 9(a) is an illustration of an information guide screen 900. As shown, information guide screen 900 contains news, weather, sports, and horoscope information, however, other types of information may also be shown by information guide screen 900. As discussed, in an alternate embodiment, an information guide may be provided in addition to the program guide. The information guide may be connected to the program guide, or it may be a separate program. Since the information guide contains news, weather, sports, and other information, it may replace the information icons on the program guide, thereby allowing the program guide screen to show the user more program information.

In Fig. 9(a), the user has selected "National News." Fig. 9(b) is an illustration of a submenu 920 of information guide screen 900. As can be seen, submenu 920 further breaks "National News" down into the different headlines. In a preferred embodiment, the user may tune to CNN or other Network News Station from submenu 920. The system operator may charge a fee for this service, and may allow the user to tune to one or more Network News Station depending on the fees paid by the Network News Providers. Hence, CNN, for example, may pay a premium fee to be the only News Station that the user may connect to from submenu 920. Alternatively, CNN may pay a regular fee, and the user may tune to CNN, and other News Stations that have paid the regular fee.

From submenu 920, the user may highlight one of the headlines to select the headline and obtain the story. In this example, the story is displayed according to Fig. 9(c) in a news information screen 940. Alternatively, the user may click on a video icon (not shown) on screen 940 to further view a video clip relating to the story. The system may access the video clip via the video network, i.e., via cable, direct broadcast satellite, and the like. The video clip could be generated from compressed data, and if so, it may be presented in a PIP tickler format. Alternatively, the system may link to, for example, CNN's website, and retrieve an Audio-Video-Interleaved (AVI) file to present a moving picture related to the headline to the user. The video icon may also be available from submenu screen 920. Hence the user may click on the icon to view a video clip of the headline directly instead of reading the story. In

another preferred embodiment, the system may automatically activate a video clip corresponding to whichever news headline that the user has selected, thereby eliminating the need for the user to activate an icon in order to view the video clip.

Fig. 10(a) is an illustration of a information guide screen **1000** that is similar to information guide screen **900** except in Fig. 10(a), the user has selected “Pro Scores” instead of “National News.” Fig. 10(b) is an illustration of a submenu **1020**, which further breaks down “Pro Scores” into the different scoreboards. In a preferred embodiment, similar to the news submenu **920**, the user may tune to ESPN or other Sports Station from sports submenu **1020**. The system operator may also charge a fee for this service, and may allow the user to tune to one or more Sports Station depending on the fees paid by the Providers. Hence, ESPN may also, for example, pay a premium fee to be the only Sports Station that the user may connect to from submenu **1020**. Alternatively, ESPN may pay a regular fee, and the user may tune to ESPN, and other Sports Stations that have also paid the regular fee.

From submenu **1020**, the user may highlight one of the scoreboards to select the scoreboard and obtain scores pertaining to the board. In this example, the scores are displayed according to Fig. 10(c) in a sports information screen **1040**. As shown in screen **1040**, the scores are presented in grid format. Other arrangements may of course be used, so long as the information is presented in a logical fashion. From information screen **1040**, the user may also click on a video icon (not shown) to further view a video clip relating to the game. As discussed, the system may access the video clip via the video network, i.e., via cable, direct broadcast satellite, and the like, and this video clip could be generated from compressed data. Alternatively, the system may link to, for example, the NFL’s website, and retrieve an AVI file, if it is available, to present a moving picture related to the game to the user.

Fig. 11(a) is an illustration of a information guide screen **1100** that is also similar to information guide screen **900** except in Fig. 11(a), the user has selected “Weather” instead of “National News.” Fig. 11(b) is an illustration of a submenu **1120**, which further breaks down “Weather” into weather forecasts for the different geographic regions. The system displays different local weather forecasts depending on the location of the user. In the example as shown in Fig. 11(b), the user is located in California, along the East Bay; hence, the local weather forecasts are for the

different East Bay cities. In another embodiment, the user may specify the geographic region. Hence, the user may obtain also weather information for regions other than where the user is located.

In Fig. 11(b), the user has selected weather forecast for the United States, hence, the user may be shown a U.S. weather information screen 1140 (Fig. 11(c)), which displays the information in a column fashion. Other display arrangements that display the information in a logical manner may also be used; furthermore, the information may be more detailed than that shown in information screen 1140. Fig. 11(d) is an illustration of a submenu 1160 that is similar to submenu 1120 except in Fig. 11(d), the user has selected weather forecast for Berkeley, instead of for the U.S. Hence, the user is shown a forecast of Berkeley weather in a information screen 1180 (Fig. 11(e)) instead. Since the weather information is for a local region, it is more detailed and provides more information to the user. As shown in Fig. 11(e), the weather information is displayed in a row fashion. Again, other arrangements for presenting the weather information may also be used as long as the information is organized in a logical manner.

Fig. 12 illustrates the hardware elements of one particular embodiment of the invention. As shown, the configuration preferably utilizes a program guide controller 1205 (for example, a data processor), one or more television sources 1210, and a TV or computer monitor 1215. These systems may also include a VCR 1220 and a remote control 1225. Program guide system 1205 may be a stand-alone device or it may be incorporated into another system such as a television, a cable decoder, a computer, a PCTV, or a VCR. As shown, program guide system 1205 has a unit address 1230 that is unique to each system. Hence, the system operators may identify system 1205 according to its unique unit address thereby enabling the system operators to send messages to specific users.

Another embodiment of the present invention includes a plug-in program guide controller module 1240. Module 1240 determines the extent of program guide 1205's capabilities. Thus module 1240 may only allow program guide 1205 to provide a non-interactive guide or the guide may not have information icons. When the user wants to upgrade program guide 1205, for example, adding interactive capability, information icons, or more detailed category searching, module 1240 may

be replaced with a different module authorizing more extensive guide capabilities. This embodiment has the distinct advantage of allowing the system to be significantly altered without requiring major hardware changes. Since the user upgrades module **1240** to upgrade the guide, the user does not need the system operator to provide technical support. In this scenario the user would merely procure a different module **1240**, install the new module into the program guide system **1205**, and pay the new fee set by the system operator for the new benefits.

Preferably the system operates under the control of software applications on a renewable computer memory. The memory for the software applications may be located in one or more ICs, for example, the plug-in module of the data processor, or in ROM, RAM, FLASH memory or any combination thereof. Accordingly, while specific embodiments of the invention have been described and illustrated, such embodiments should be considered illustrative of the invention only and not as limiting the invention as construed in accordance with the accompanying claims.

**THE EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION IN WHICH AN EXCLUSIVE
PROPERTY OR PRIVILEGE IS CLAIMED ARE DEFINED AS FOLLOWS:**

1. A method for simultaneously displaying advertisements with an electronic program guide (EPG), comprising:

5 displaying a plurality of schedule information items, wherein the displayed schedule information items are arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a horizontal width;

selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements;

10 simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width as at least one of the plurality of rows; and

activating the displayed advertisement to invoke a function.

15 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the displayed advertisement is selected independently from the display of the schedule information items.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the displayed advertisement additionally has substantially the same horizontal width as each of the plurality of rows.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the displayed advertisement additionally has substantially the same vertical height as at least one of the plurality of rows.

20 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the displayed advertisement includes one or more of text, graphics, and video.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the displayed advertisement is associated with a television program.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the displayed advertisement promotes a website.
- 5 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of schedule information items are displayed in a program information region of a display, and wherein the selected advertisement is displayed vertically adjacent to the program information region on the display.
- 10 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of schedule information items are displayed in a scrollable program schedule region of a display, and wherein selected advertisement is displayed in a non-scrollable program information region of the display.
- 10 10. The method of claim 1, wherein the selected advertisement does not change when a schedule information item is selected.
- 15 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of schedule information items are displayed in a program information region having a horizontal width, and wherein the selected advertisement is displayed substantially vertically aligned with the plurality of schedule information items along the entire horizontal width of the program information region.
- 20 12. The method of claim 1, wherein the displayed advertisement is automatically changed after a predetermined length of time.
13. The method of claim 1, wherein activating the displayed advertisement comprises accessing at least one website.

- 14.** A system for simultaneously displaying advertisements with an electronic program guide (EPG), comprising:

5 means for displaying a plurality of schedule information items, wherein the displayed schedule information items are arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a horizontal width;

means for selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements;

10 means for simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width as at least one of the plurality of rows; and

means for activating the displayed advertisement to invoke a function.

- 15.** The system of claim **14**, wherein the displayed advertisement is selected independently from the display of the schedule information items.

- 15 **16.** The system of claim **14**, wherein the displayed advertisement additionally has substantially the same horizontal width as each of the plurality of rows.

- 17.** The system of claim **14**, wherein the displayed advertisement additionally has substantially the same vertical height as at least one of the plurality of rows.

- 18.** The system of claim **14**, wherein the displayed advertisement includes one or more of text, graphics, and video.

- 20 **19.** The system of claim **14**, wherein the displayed advertisement is associated with a television program.

- 20.** The system of claim **14**, wherein the displayed advertisement promotes a website.

21. The system of claim 14, wherein the plurality of schedule information items are displayed in a program information region of a display, and wherein the selected advertisement is displayed vertically adjacent to the program information region on the display.
- 5 22. The system of claim 14, wherein the plurality of schedule information items are displayed in a scrollable program schedule region of a display, and wherein selected advertisement is displayed in a non-scrollable program information region of the display.
- 10 23. The system of claim 14, wherein the selected advertisement does not change when a schedule information item is selected.
- 15 24. The system of claim 14, wherein the plurality of schedule information items are displayed in a program information region having a horizontal width, and wherein the selected advertisement is displayed substantially vertically aligned with the plurality of schedule information items along the entire horizontal width of the program information region.
25. The system of claim 14, further comprising means for automatically changing the displayed advertisement after a predetermined length of time.
26. The system of claim 14, wherein activating the displayed advertisement comprises accessing at least one website.
- 20 27. A method for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application, comprising:
- displaying a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display;
- selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements;
- 25

simultaneously displaying, in a non-scrollable program information region of the display, the selected advertisement with the displayed plurality of schedule information items;

5 navigating from the scrollable program schedule region to the displayed advertisement in the non-scrollable program information region; and

activating the displayed advertisement to invoke a function.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein at least some of the displayed plurality of schedule information items are selectable by a user.
- 10 29. The method of claim 27, wherein the selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements is made independent of a user's selection of a schedule information item.
30. The method of claim 27, wherein the function is ordering one or more of an advertised product and an advertised service.
- 15 31. The method of claim 27, wherein the function is scheduling storage of a program related to an advertised product.
32. The method of claim 27, wherein the function is displaying a program related to an advertised product on the display.
33. The method of claim 27, wherein the advertisement promotes a website.
- 20 34. The method of claim 27, wherein the function is linking to a website.

35. A system for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application, comprising:

a display monitor having a screen; and

a processor configured to:

5 display a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display on the screen;

select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements;

10 simultaneously display, in a non-scrollable program information region of the display, the selected advertisement with the displayed plurality of schedule information items;

navigate from the scrollable program schedule region to the displayed advertisement in the non-scrollable program information region; and

activate the displayed advertisement to invoke a function.

15 **36.** The system of claim **35**, wherein at least some of the displayed plurality of schedule information items are selectable by a user.

37. The system of claim **35**, wherein the selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements is made independent of a user's selection of a schedule information item.

20 **38.** The system of claim **35**, wherein the function is ordering one or more of an advertised product and an advertised service.

39. The system of claim **35**, wherein the function is scheduling storage of a program related to an advertised product.

40. The system of claim 35, wherein the function is displaying a program related to an advertised product on the display.
41. The system of claim 35, wherein the advertisement promotes a website.
42. A method for simultaneously displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:
- 5 displaying a plurality of schedule information items in a program information region having a first horizontal width;
- selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements, the advertisement having a second horizontal width;
- 10 and
- simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement vertically adjacent to the program information region, wherein the first horizontal width is substantially the same as the second horizontal width.
43. The method of claim 42, wherein the displayed banner advertisement is interactive.
- 15
44. The method of claim 42, wherein the displayed banner advertisement is independent of a user's selection of one or more of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
45. The method of claim 42, wherein the displayed banner advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
- 20
46. The method of claim 42, wherein the displayed banner advertisement has substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

47. The method of claim 42, wherein the displayed banner advertisement has a vertical height substantially twice the vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
48. The method of claim 42, wherein the displayed banner advertisement includes one or more of text, graphics, and video.
49. The method of claim 42, wherein the banner advertisement is displayed above the program information region.
50. The method of claim 42, wherein the banner advertisement is displayed below the program information region.
51. The method of claim 42, further comprising activating the displayed advertisement to invoke a function.
52. The method of claim 51, wherein the function is ordering one or more of an advertised product and an advertised service.
53. A system for simultaneously displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:
- a display monitor having a screen; and
 - a processor configured to:
 - display on the screen a plurality of schedule information items in a program information region having a first horizontal width;
 - select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements, the advertisement having a second horizontal width; and

simultaneously display the selected advertisement vertically adjacent to the program information region, wherein the first horizontal width is substantially the same as the second horizontal width.

- 5 **54.** The system of claim **53**, wherein the displayed banner advertisement is interactive.
- 55.** The system of claim **53**, wherein the displayed banner advertisement is independent of a user's selection of one or more of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
- 10 **56.** The system of claim **53**, wherein the displayed banner advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
- 57.** A method for simultaneously displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:
- 15 displaying a plurality of schedule information items in a display, the schedule information items having a first left edge and a first right edge;
- selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements, the advertisement having a second left edge and a
- 20 second right edge; and
- simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement vertically adjacent to the displayed plurality of schedule information items, wherein the first left edge is substantially aligned with the second left edge and the first right edge is substantially aligned with the second
- 25 right edge.

58. The method of claim 57, wherein the displayed banner advertisement is interactive.
59. The method of claim 57, wherein the displayed banner advertisement is independent of a user's selection of one or more of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
- 5
60. The method of claim 57, wherein the displayed banner advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
61. The method of claim 57, wherein the displayed banner advertisement has substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
- 10
62. The method of claim 57, wherein the displayed banner advertisement has a vertical height substantially twice the vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
63. The method of claim 57, wherein the displayed banner advertisement includes one or more of text, graphics, and video.
- 15
64. The method of claim 57, wherein the banner advertisement is displayed above the displayed plurality of schedule information.
65. The method of claim 57, wherein the banner advertisement is displayed below the displayed plurality of schedule information.
- 20
66. The method of claim 57, further comprising activating the displayed advertisement to invoke a function.
67. The method of claim 66, wherein the function is ordering one or more of an advertised product and an advertised service.

68. A system for simultaneously displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:

a display monitor having a screen; and

a processor configured to:

5 display a plurality of schedule information items in a display on the screen, the schedule information items having a first left edge and a first right edge;

10 select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements, the advertisement having a second left edge and a second right edge; and

15 simultaneously display the selected advertisement vertically adjacent to the displayed plurality of schedule information items, wherein the first left edge is substantially aligned with the second left edge and the first right edge is substantially aligned with the second right edge.

69. The system of claim **68**, wherein the displayed banner advertisement is interactive.

70. The system of claim **68**, wherein the displayed banner advertisement is independent of a user's selection of one or more of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

71. The system of claim **68**, wherein the displayed banner advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

72. A method for simultaneously displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:

5 displaying a plurality of schedule information items in a display, wherein the plurality of schedule information items are displayed in a program information region of the display having a horizontal width;

selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements; and

10 simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement substantially vertically aligned with the displayed plurality of schedule information items, wherein the selected advertisement is displayed along the entire horizontal width of the program information region of the display.

73. The method of claim 72, wherein the displayed banner advertisement is adjacent to the program information region of the display.

15 74. The method of claim 72, wherein the displayed banner advertisement is interactive.

75. The method of claim 74, further comprising activating the displayed advertisement to invoke a function.

20 76. The method of claim 72, wherein the displayed banner advertisement is independent of a user's selection of one or more of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

77. The method of claim 72, wherein the displayed banner advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

78. The method of claim 72, wherein the displayed banner advertisement has substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
79. The method of claim 72, wherein the displayed banner advertisement has a vertical height substantially twice the vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
80. The method of claim 72, wherein the displayed banner advertisement includes one or more of text, graphics, and video.
81. The method of claim 72, wherein the banner advertisement is displayed above the displayed plurality of schedule information.
82. The method of claim 72, wherein the banner advertisement is displayed below the displayed plurality of schedule information.
83. The method of claim 75, wherein the function is ordering one or more of an advertised product and an advertised service.
84. A system for simultaneously displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:
- a display monitor having a screen; and
 - a processor configured to:
 - display a plurality of schedule information items in a display on the screen, wherein the plurality of schedule information items are displayed in a program information region of the display having a horizontal width;
 - select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements; and

simultaneously display the selected advertisement substantially vertically aligned with the displayed plurality of schedule information items, wherein the selected advertisement is displayed along the entire horizontal width of the program information region of the display.

5

85. The system of claim **84**, wherein the displayed banner advertisement is adjacent to the program information region of the display.

86. The system of claim **84**, wherein the displayed banner advertisement is interactive.

10

87. A method for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:

displaying a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display, wherein the displayed schedule information items are arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a vertical height;

15

selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements;

simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement in a program information region adjacent to the scrollable program schedule region, wherein the selected advertisement has substantially the same height as the vertical height of the each row; and

20

in response to a user input, navigating from the scrollable program schedule region to the program information region in which the advertisement is displayed, and selecting the program information region.

25

88. The method of claim **87**, wherein the displayed advertisement is interactive.

- 89.** The method of claim **87**, wherein the displayed advertisement includes one or more of text and graphics.
- 90.** The method of claim **87**, wherein the displayed advertisement is related to one or more of a product and a service.
- 5** **91.** The method of claim **87**, further comprising:
- highlighting the displayed advertisement; and
- displaying information relating to the highlighted advertisement in a second area of the screen.
- 10** **92.** The method of claim **87**, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
- 93.** The method of claim **87**, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
- 15** **94.** The method of claim **87**, wherein the displayed advertisement is independent of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
- 95.** A system for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:
- a display monitor having a screen; and
- 20** **20** **95.** a processor configured to:
- display a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display on the screen, wherein the displayed schedule information items are arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a vertical height;

select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements;

simultaneously display the selected advertisement in a program information region adjacent to the scrollable program schedule region, wherein the selected advertisement has substantially the same height as the vertical height of the each row; and

in response to a user input, navigate from the scrollable program schedule region to the program information region in which the advertisement is displayed, and select the program information region.

96. The system of claim 95, wherein the displayed advertisement is interactive.

97. The system of claim 95, wherein the displayed advertisement includes one or more of text and graphics.

98. The system of claim 95, wherein the displayed advertisement is related to one or more of a product and a service.

99. The system of claim 95, wherein the processor is further configured to:

highlight the displayed advertisement; and

display information relating to the highlighted advertisement in a second area of the screen.

100. The system of claim 95, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

101. The system of claim 95, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

102. A method for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:

5 displaying a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display, wherein the displayed schedule information items are arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a horizontal length;

selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements, wherein the advertisement promotes something other than the displayed schedule information items;

10 simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement in a program information region adjacent to the scrollable program schedule region, wherein:

the selected advertisement has substantially the same length as the horizontal length of the each row; and

15 in response to a user input, navigating from the scrollable program schedule region to the program information region in which the advertisement is displayed, and selecting the entire program information region.

103. The method of claim **102**, wherein the displayed advertisement is interactive.

20 **104.** The method of claim **102**, wherein the displayed advertisement includes one or more of text and graphics.

105. The method of claim **102**, wherein the displayed advertisement is related to one or more of a product and a service.

106. The method of claim **102**, further comprising:

highlighting the displayed advertisement; and

displaying information relating to the highlighted advertisement in a second area of the screen.

5 **107.** The method of claim **102**, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

10 **108.** The method of claim **102**, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

109. The method of claim **102**, wherein the displayed advertisement is independent of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

110. A system for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:

15 a display monitor having a screen; and

a processor configured to:

20 display a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display on the screen, wherein the displayed schedule information items are arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a horizontal length;

select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements, wherein the advertisement promotes something other than the displayed schedule information items;

simultaneously display the selected advertisement in a program information region adjacent to the scrollable program schedule region, wherein:

the selected advertisement has substantially the same length as the horizontal length of the each row; and

in response to a user input, navigate from the scrollable program schedule region to the program information region in which the advertisement is displayed, and select the entire program information region.

- 5
- 10 **111.** The system of claim **110**, wherein the displayed advertisement is interactive.
- 112.** The system of claim **110**, wherein the displayed advertisement includes one or more of text and graphics.
- 113.** The system of claim **110**, wherein the displayed advertisement is related to one or more of a product and a service.
- 15 **114.** The system of claim **110**, wherein the processor is further configured to:
- highlight the displayed advertisement; and
- display information relating to the highlighted advertisement in a second area of the screen.
- 115.** The system of claim **110**, wherein the displayed advertisement has
- 20 substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
- 116.** The system of claim **110**, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

117. A method for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:

5 displaying a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display, wherein the displayed schedule information items are arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a vertical height;

selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements, wherein the advertisement promotes something other than the displayed schedule information items;

10 simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement adjacent to the scrollable program schedule region, wherein:

the selected advertisement has a height less than twice the vertical height of the each row; and

15 in response to a user input, navigating from the scrollable program schedule region to the program information region in which the advertisement is displayed, and visually identifying the entire program information region.

118. The method of claim 117, wherein the displayed advertisement is interactive.

20 119. The method of claim 117, wherein the displayed advertisement includes one or more of text and graphics.

120. The method of claim 117, wherein the displayed advertisement is related to one or more of a product and a service.

25 121. The method of claim 117, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.

122. The method of claim 117, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
123. The method of claim 117, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same vertical height and substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
124. The method of claim 117, wherein the displayed advertisement includes video.
125. A system for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:
- a display monitor having a screen; and
 - a processor configured to:
 - display a plurality of schedule information items in a scrollable program schedule region of a display on the screen, wherein the displayed schedule information items are arranged in a plurality of rows, each row having a vertical height;
 - select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements, wherein the advertisement promotes something other than the displayed schedule information items;
 - simultaneously display the selected advertisement adjacent to the scrollable program schedule region, wherein:
 - the selected advertisement has a height less than twice the vertical height of the each row; and
 - in response to a user input, navigate from the scrollable program schedule region to the program information region in which the advertisement is displayed, and visually identify the entire program information region.

126. The system of claim 125, wherein the displayed advertisement is interactive.
127. The system of claim 125, wherein the displayed advertisement includes one or more of text and graphics.
- 5 128. The system of claim 125, wherein the displayed advertisement is related to one or more of a product and a service.
129. The system of claim 125, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
- 10 130. The system of claim 125, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same vertical height of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
131. The system of claim 125, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same vertical height and substantially the same horizontal width of each of the displayed plurality of schedule information items.
- 15 132. A method for displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:
- displaying program information in a program information region of a display;
- selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements; and
- 20
- simultaneously displaying the selected advertisement adjacent to the program information region, wherein the horizontal width of the program information region is substantially the same as the horizontal width of the advertisement;

automatically changing the displayed advertisement after a predetermined length of time; and

activating the displayed advertisement to invoke a function related to the advertisement.

- 5 **133.** The method of claim **132**, wherein the displayed advertisement is selected independent of the displayed program information.
- 134.** The method of claim **132**, wherein the program information is arranged in a plurality of rows and the displayed advertisement has substantially the same vertical height as at least one of the rows.
- 10 **135.** The method of claim **132**, wherein the displayed advertisement includes one or more of text, graphics, and video.
- 136.** The method of claim **132**, wherein the advertisement is displayed above the program information region.
- 137.** The method of claim **132**, wherein the advertisement is displayed below the
15 program information region.
- 138.** The method of claim **132**, wherein the function is ordering one or more of an advertised product and an advertised service.
- 139.** The method of claim **132**, wherein the function is storing a program related to an advertised product or service.

140. A system for displaying banner advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:

a display monitor having a screen; and

a processor configured to:

5 display program information in a program information region of a display on the screen;

select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements; and

10 simultaneously display the selected advertisement adjacent to the program information region, wherein the horizontal width of the program information region is substantially the same as the horizontal width of the advertisement;

automatically change the displayed advertisement after a predetermined length of time; and

15 activate the displayed advertisement to invoke a function related to the advertisement.

141. The system of claim **140**, wherein the displayed advertisement is selected independent of the displayed program information.

20 **142.** The system of claim **140**, wherein the program information is arranged in a plurality of rows and the displayed advertisement has substantially the same vertical height as at least one of the rows.

143. The system of claim **140**, wherein the displayed advertisement includes one or more of text, graphics, and video.

144. The system of claim 140, wherein the advertisement is displayed above the program information region.

145. The system of claim 140, wherein the advertisement is displayed below the program information region.

5 146. The system of claim 140, wherein the function is ordering one or more of an advertised product and an advertised service.

147. A method for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:

10 displaying program information in a display, wherein the displayed program information is arranged in a plurality of rows;

selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements;

simultaneously displaying, as one of the plurality of rows, the selected advertisement;

15 navigating to the displayed advertisement; and

activating the displayed advertisement to access at least one website.

148. The method of claim 147, wherein the displayed advertisement is selected independently from the display of the program information.

20 149. The method of claim 147, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same vertical height as at least one of the plurality of rows.

150. The method of claim 147, wherein the displayed advertisement includes one or more of text, graphics, and video.

151. The method of claim 147, wherein the displayed advertisement includes a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) or network address.
152. The method of claim 147, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width as at least one of the plurality of rows.
- 5 153. The method of claim 147, wherein the at least one website comprises at least two websites, the at least two websites associated with the same program.
154. The method of claim 147, wherein activating the displayed advertisement to access at least one website comprises launching a web browser application and displaying the website using the web browser application.
- 10 155. The method of claim 147, wherein the advertisement is associated with a program and the at least one website is associated with a media source on which the program is available.
156. A system for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:
- 15 a display monitor having a screen; and
- a processor configured to:
- display program information in a display on the screen, wherein the displayed program information is arranged in a plurality of rows;
- 20 select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements;
- simultaneously display, as one of the plurality of rows, the selected advertisement;

navigate to the displayed advertisement; and

activate the displayed advertisement to access at least one website.

- 5
- 157.** The system of claim **156**, wherein the displayed advertisement is selected independently from the display of the program information.
- 158.** The system of claim **156**, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same vertical height as at least one of the plurality of rows.
- 159.** The system of claim **156**, wherein the displayed advertisement includes one or more of text, graphics, and video.
- 10 **160.** The system of claim **156**, wherein the displayed advertisement includes a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) or network address.
- 161.** The system of claim **156**, wherein the displayed advertisement has substantially the same horizontal width as at least one of the plurality of rows.
- 15 **162.** A method for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:
- displaying program information in a scrollable program information region of a display, wherein the program information is arranged in a plurality of rows;
- selecting an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements;
- 20 simultaneously displaying, as one of the plurality of rows, the selected advertisement; and
- scrolling vertically through the plurality of rows on the display.

163. The method of claim 162, wherein the scrolling occurs automatically at a predetermined time rate.
164. The method of claim 162, wherein the scrolling occurs in response to receiving a user command.
- 5 165. The method of claim 162, wherein vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows comprises vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows corresponding to the program information while the displayed advertisement remains in a fixed position on the display during the vertical scrolling.
- 10 166. The method of claim 162, wherein vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows comprises vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows corresponding to the program information and the row corresponding to the displayed advertisement.
- 15 167. A system for displaying advertisements in a media guidance application comprising:
- a display monitor having a screen; and
 - a processor configured to:
 - display program information in a scrollable program information region of the screen, wherein the program information is arranged in a plurality of rows;
 - 20 select an advertisement for display from a plurality of advertisements;
 - simultaneously display, as one of the plurality of rows on the screen, the selected advertisement; and
 - scroll vertically through the plurality of rows on the screen.

168. The system of claim 167, wherein the scrolling occurs automatically at a predetermined time rate.

169. The system of claim 167, wherein the scrolling occurs in response to receiving a user command.

5 170. The system of claim 167, wherein vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows comprises vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows corresponding to the program information while the displayed advertisement remains in a fixed position on the screen during the vertical scrolling.

10 171. The system of claim 167, wherein vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows comprises vertically scrolling through the plurality of rows corresponding to the program information and the row corresponding to the displayed advertisement.

15 172. A method for displaying a virtual channel in an electronic program guide (EPG), comprising:

displaying program information on a display screen, wherein the displayed program information is arranged in a plurality of rows;

20 simultaneously displaying the virtual channel and the program information, wherein the virtual channel is located in an additional row on the display screen adjacent to at least one row from the plurality of rows of program information;

25 navigating a cursor to select the virtual channel; and

in response to the selection, accessing at least one website.

181. The method of claim **175**, wherein the advertisement is associated with a television program and the at least one website is associated with the channel on which the television program is aired.

5 **182.** A system for displaying a virtual channel in an electronic program guide (EPG), comprising:

memory to store program information; and

10 control circuitry configured to:

display the program information on a display screen, wherein the displayed program information is arranged in a plurality of rows;

15

simultaneously display the virtual channel and the program information, wherein the virtual channel is located in an additional row on the display screen adjacent to at least one row from the plurality of rows of program information;

20

receive a first user input to navigate a cursor to select the virtual channel; and

in response to the selection, accessing at least one website.

25

183. The system of claim **181**, wherein the at least one website comprises at least two websites, the at least two websites associated with the same television program.

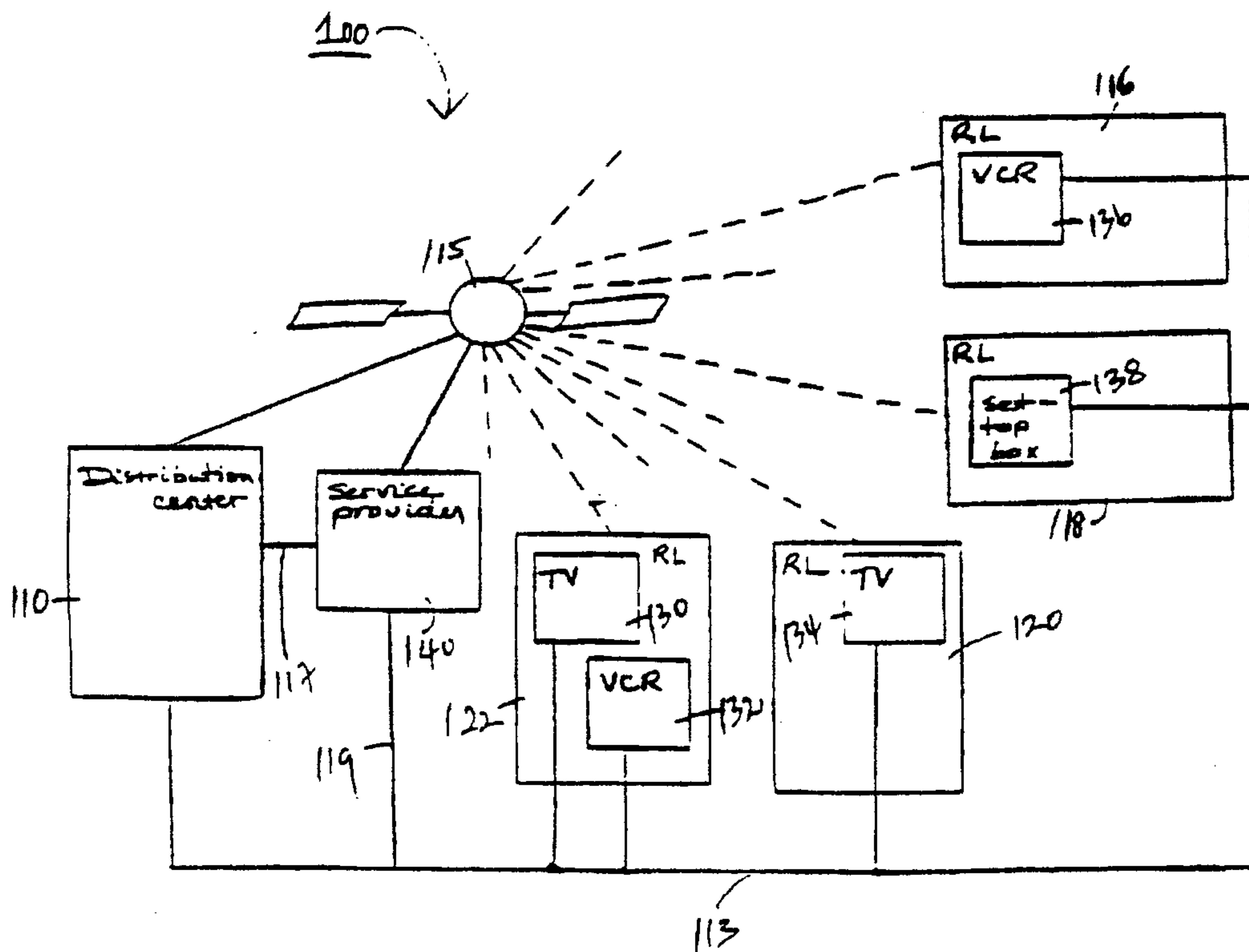


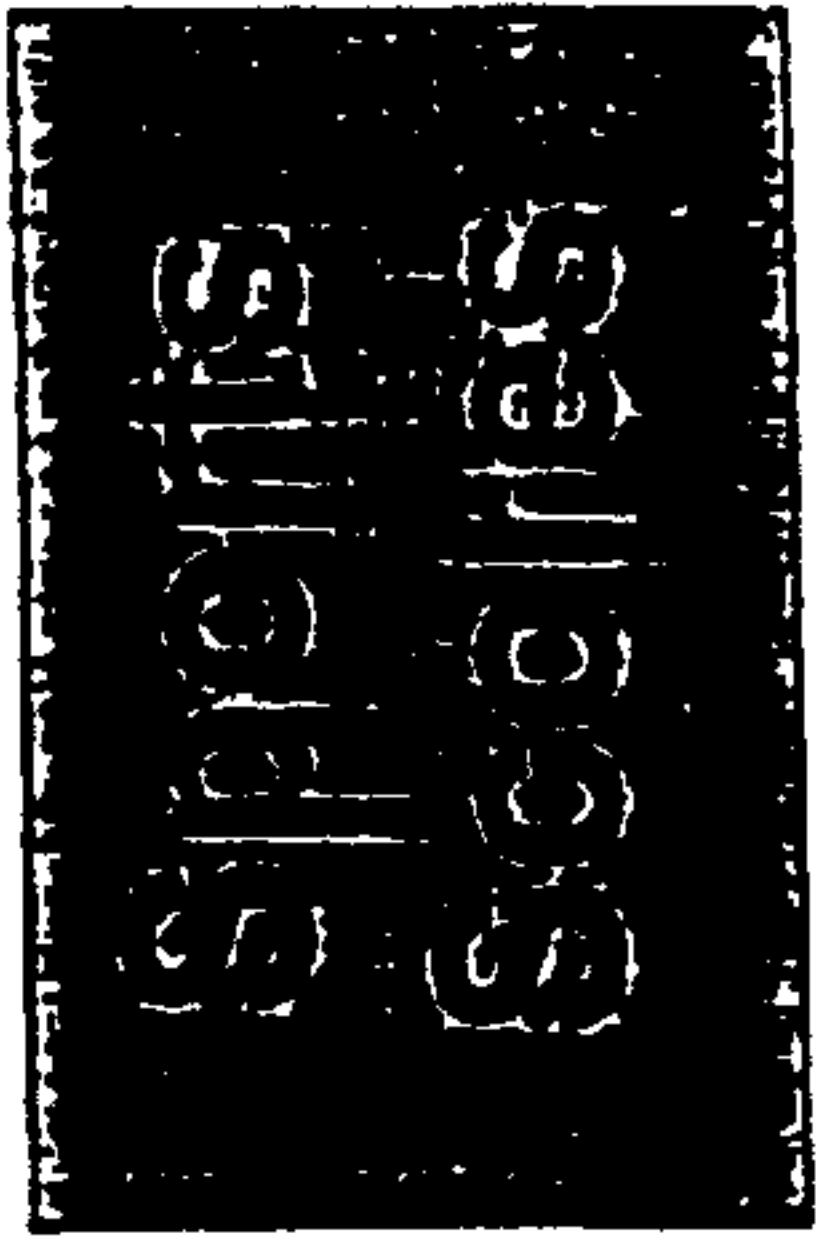
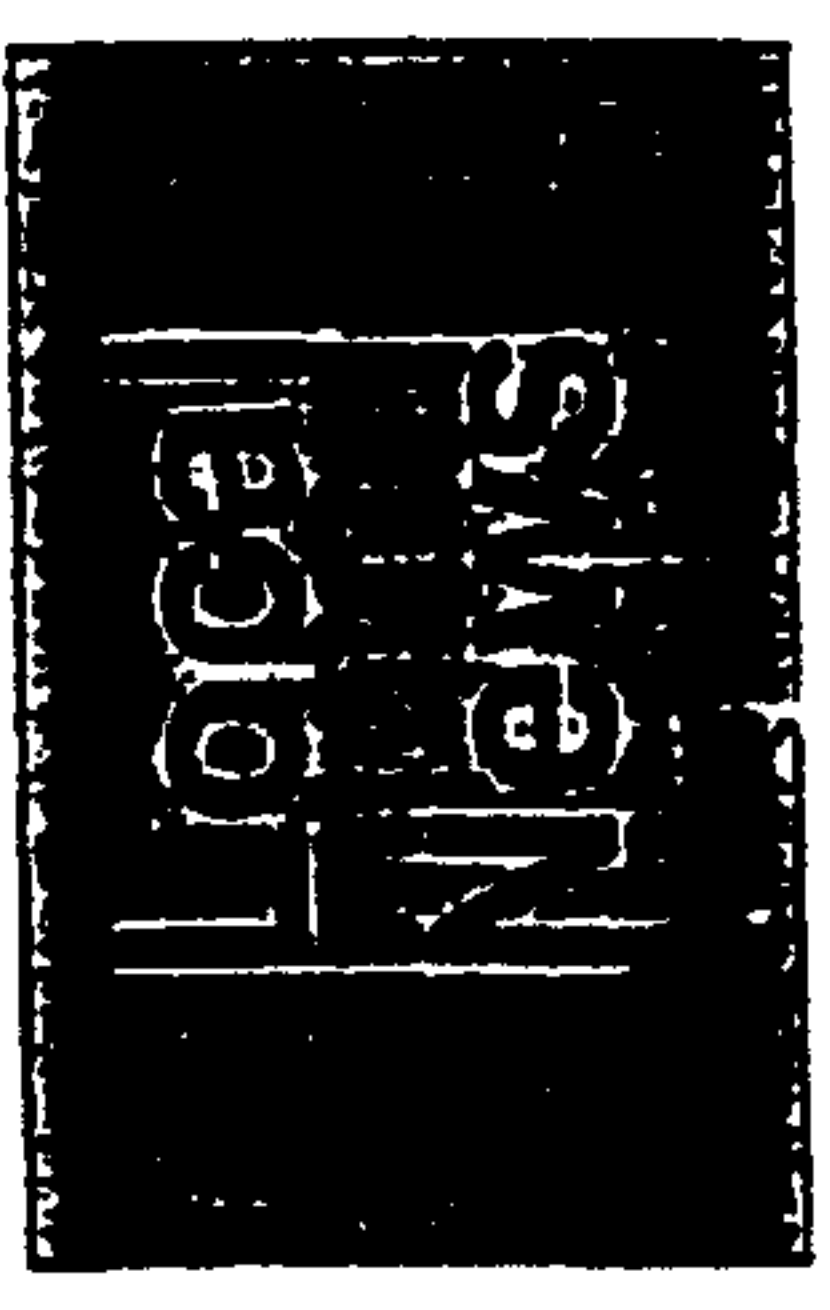
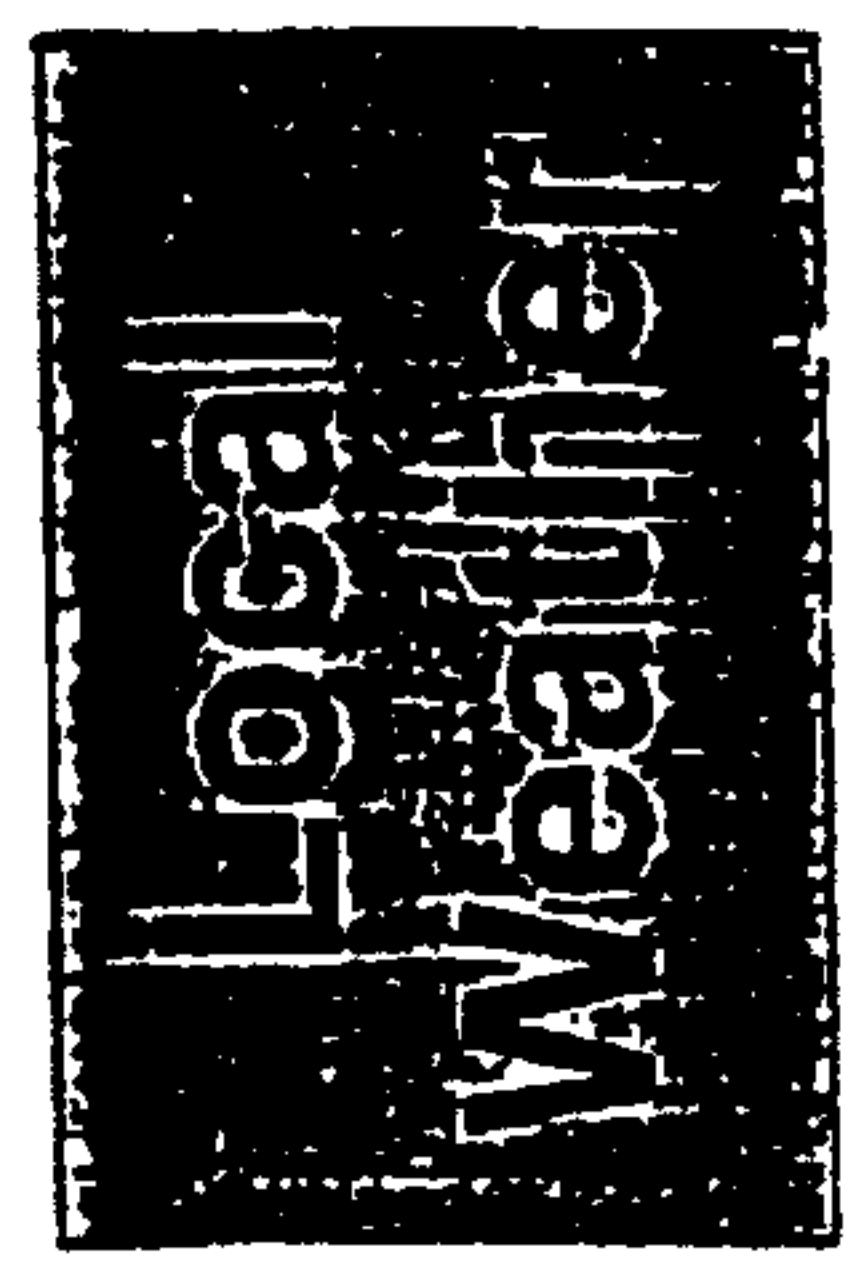
Figure 1

S I A K S I U H I



Electric Travolta!
The spirit of a decade

230



200

240

37	ESPN	Major League Baseball
17	FAM	Batman
4	KRON	Fresh Prince
32	PBS	Avonlea
27	NICK	Ren & Stimpy

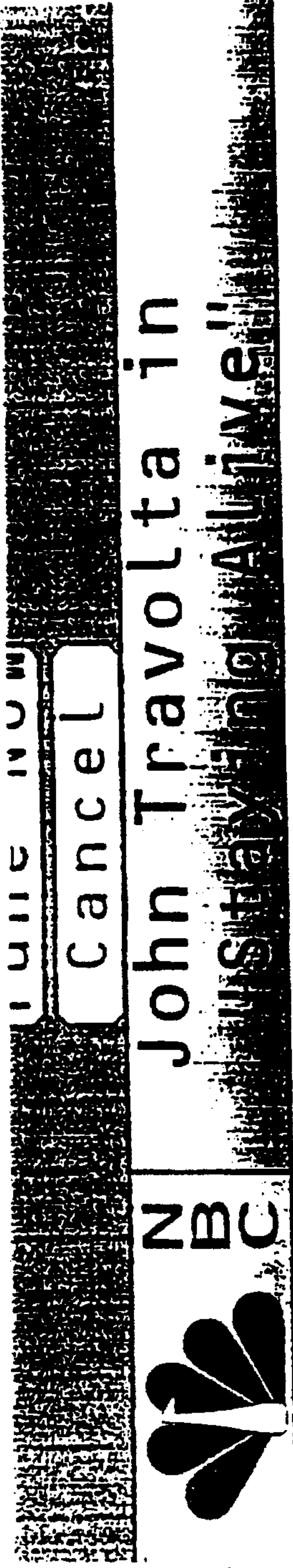
255

245

Free offer from RCA.
CALL 1-800-RCA-FREE for

250

Fig. 2(a)



280

260

Amid the flash of 70's Disco, an aspiring young dancer lands a role in a production, and jeopardizes his relationship with a young woman.

285

The electric performance that defined an era, John Travolta, Cynthia Rhodes (Stereo)

FIG 265

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THU SEP 10 8:00pm

300



NBC	Brand New Friends!
7 KPIX	Joey gets a new job.
21 SHOW	Mathnet: Despair in Mo
22 HBOE	City Slickers
26 DISC	Bingo
37 ESPN	All in a Day's Work
17 FAM	Major League Baseball
4 KRON	Batman
32 PBS	Fresh Prince
27 NICK	Avonlea
	Ren & Stimpy

330

320

Free offer from RCA. for
CALL 1-800-RCA-FREE

340

FIG. 3(a)

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Cancel

NBC Brand New Friends!



Joeey gets a new job

Contest!

350

Identify the character played by Tawnee Welch in this episode and be the first to call 1-800-NBC-FRND, and you will win a guest role on the show for yourself! (Employees of NBC not eligible.)


2nd Place will win \$1200 cash!
3rd Place wins Friends T-Shirt

Fig. 3(b)

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400 }
3410 }
3400 }

S T A R S I G H T

OCT	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE
30	8:00P			8:30P			
NBC	Proximity in the Classroom?						
							
KGOM	Beverly Hills 90210						
SHOW	Jury Duty						
HBO	Mask of Death						
DISN	Wolves of Willoughby Chase						
ESPN	Baseball						
FAM	The Waltons		Highway to H				
KRON	Dateline						
KPIX	Ellen					Drew Carey	

8:05P

Fig. 4(h)

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460

Tune Now

470

Record

450

NBC  **Tonight on DATELINE, Profanity in the classroom?**

English teacher Cecilia Lacks is fired from St. Louis inner-city high school for allowing use of profanity in a creative writing class. Students, teacher, and officials are interviewed in this provocative segment.


DON'T FORGET!!
NBA FINALS, Friday at 6:00
Watch the Sonics battle Chicago!

PG. 4(b)

8/27

500

S T A R S I G H T

OCT	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE
30	8:00P			8:30P			
NBC	Monday Night, November 4th						
	Heat Up with BACKDRAFT!						
KGO	Beverly Hills 90210						
SHOW	Jury Duty						
HBO	Mask of Death						
DISN	Wolves of Willoughby Chase						
ESPN	Baseball						
FAM	The Waltons			Highway to H			
KRON	Dateline						
KPIX	Ellen					Drew Carey	

8:05P

Fig. 5(a)

9/27


560

AutoTune

530

Record

550

 NBC Monday Night, November 4th
Heats Up with BACKDRAFT!

Spectacular fiery blazes, now including footage not seen in theaters, light up this film tribute to firefighters. Director Ron Howard focuses on sibling rivalry and the hunt for a mysterious arsonist.

The NBA FINALS, Friday at 6:00!
Catch the Sonics at Chicago!

Fig. 5(6)

10/27

6m

S T A R S I G H T



Oct	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
30	9:00P			9:30P			
NBC	Seinfeld - Visit Jeffrey						
	and NBC on the Web!						
KGO	New York Undercover						
SHOW	Bulletproof Heart						
HBO	48 Hrs.						
DISN	The Adventures of Huck Finn						
ESPN	Baseball Tonight						
FAM	Rescue 911						
KRON	Seinfeld						
KPIX	48 Hours.						
	8:05P						

Fig. 6(a)

11/27

600

S T A R S I G H T

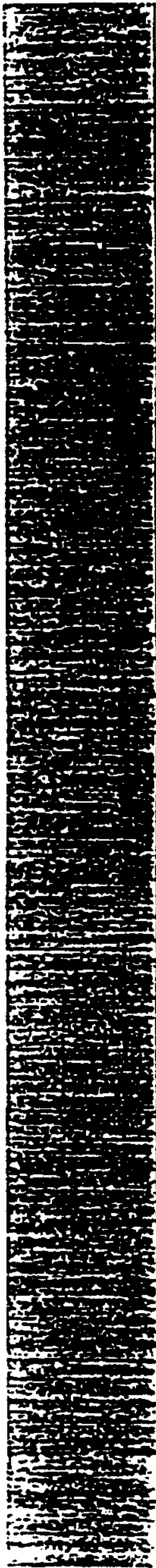
Oct 30	MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN 9:00P 9:30P	Monday Night, November 4th Heats Up with BACKDRAFT!
NBC		New York Undercover
		Bulletproof Heart
KGO		48 Hrs.
SHOW		The Adventures of Huck Finn
HBO		Baseball Tonight
DISN		Rescue 911
ESPN		Seinfeld
FAM		48 Hours.
KRON	WWW	
KPIX		8:05P


600

640

Fig. 6(b)

12/27



NBC  Seinfeld - Visit Jerry,
and NBC on the Web!

650 ~

660

Seinfeld

(http://www.nbc.com/seinfeld)

665

Must see on NBC tonight!

(http://www.nbc.com/index.html)

666

Internet Comedy Network

(http://www.net.comedy.com)

FIG. 6(c)

680

Duckscape - [StarSight Interactive TV Browse Feature]

File Edit View Go Bookmarks Options Directory Window Help

Back Forward BackHome Reload URLLS Links Print Find Stop

http://www.nbc.com/entertainment/puzzles/seinfeld/index.html

NBC.com **entertainment**

shows a-z stars a-z

Drag and drop the pieces to complete the puzzle. To play this game, you need the release version of [Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0](#).

688

Document Done

680-661

14/27

700

705

**Check out Cher in NBC's
Movie of the Week at 9:00 Tonight**

8:00 PM

5	ROCKFORD FILES
9	SEINFELD
ESPN	MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL
7	SIMPSONS
HBO	BATMAN
A&E	THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH

Giant's Clinch Pennant and Head for the World Series!.....

Fig. 7

710

715

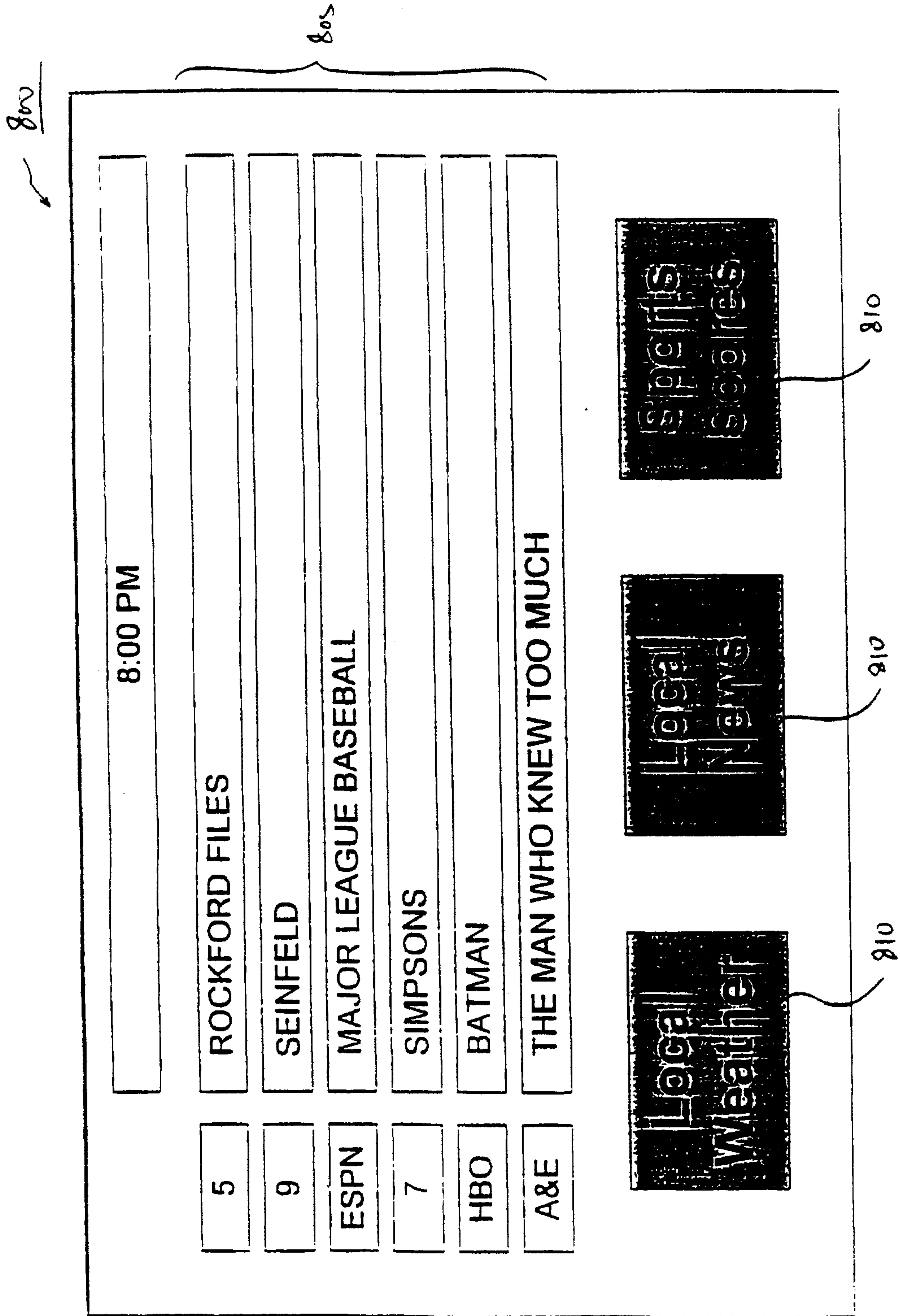


FIG. 8

900

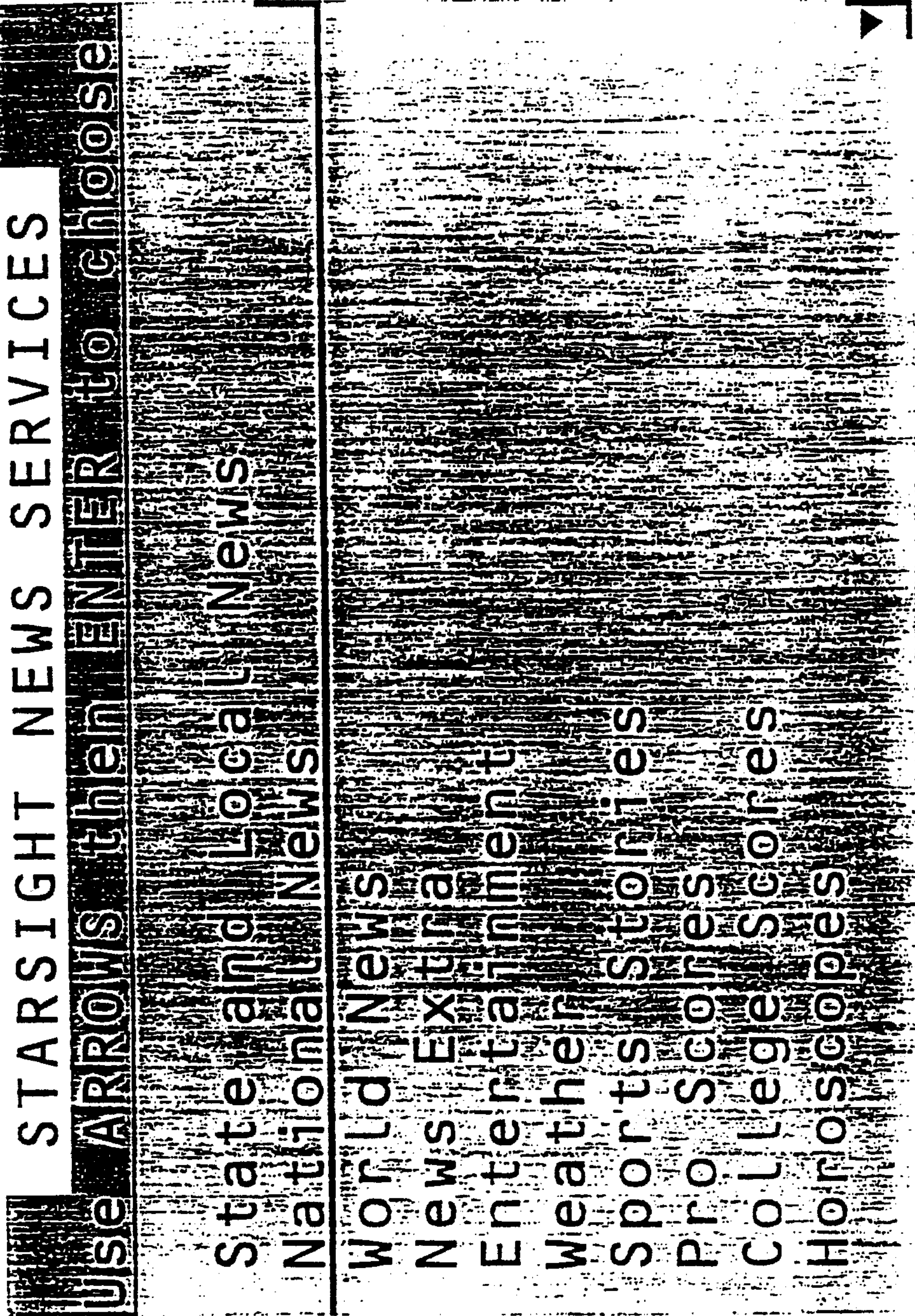


Fig 9(a)

920

NATIONAL NEWS
Use ARROWS then ENTER to choose

◆ Technology is changing lives

- ◆ Congress set to pass bill
- ◆ Volunteers team up for kids
- ◆ Bad news for some states
- ◆ Safety of new cars at issue
- ◆ High court ready to judge
- ◆ Housing deal may open door
- ◆ Vacancies down across nation
- ◆ Stuntman falls short
- ◆ Space program hits roadblock

Fn 9(b)

NATIONAL NEWS
Technology is changing Lives

Silicon Valley, Sept. 24 ⁹⁴⁰
(AP)—Can't figure out how to
install that new device on
your computer? How about
programming your VCR? Even
though many products appear
complicated, people are finding
that technology is changing
their behavior and their
ability to discover a world

Fig. 9(c)



STARSIGHT NEWS SERVICES

Use ARROWS then ENTER to choose

Station and Local News

National News

World News

News Entertainment

Weather Stories

Sports

Pro Scores

College Scores

Horoscopes

1000

FIG 10(a)

PRO SCORES
Use ARROWS then ENTER to choose

1020

NBA Scoreboard
NFL Scoreboard

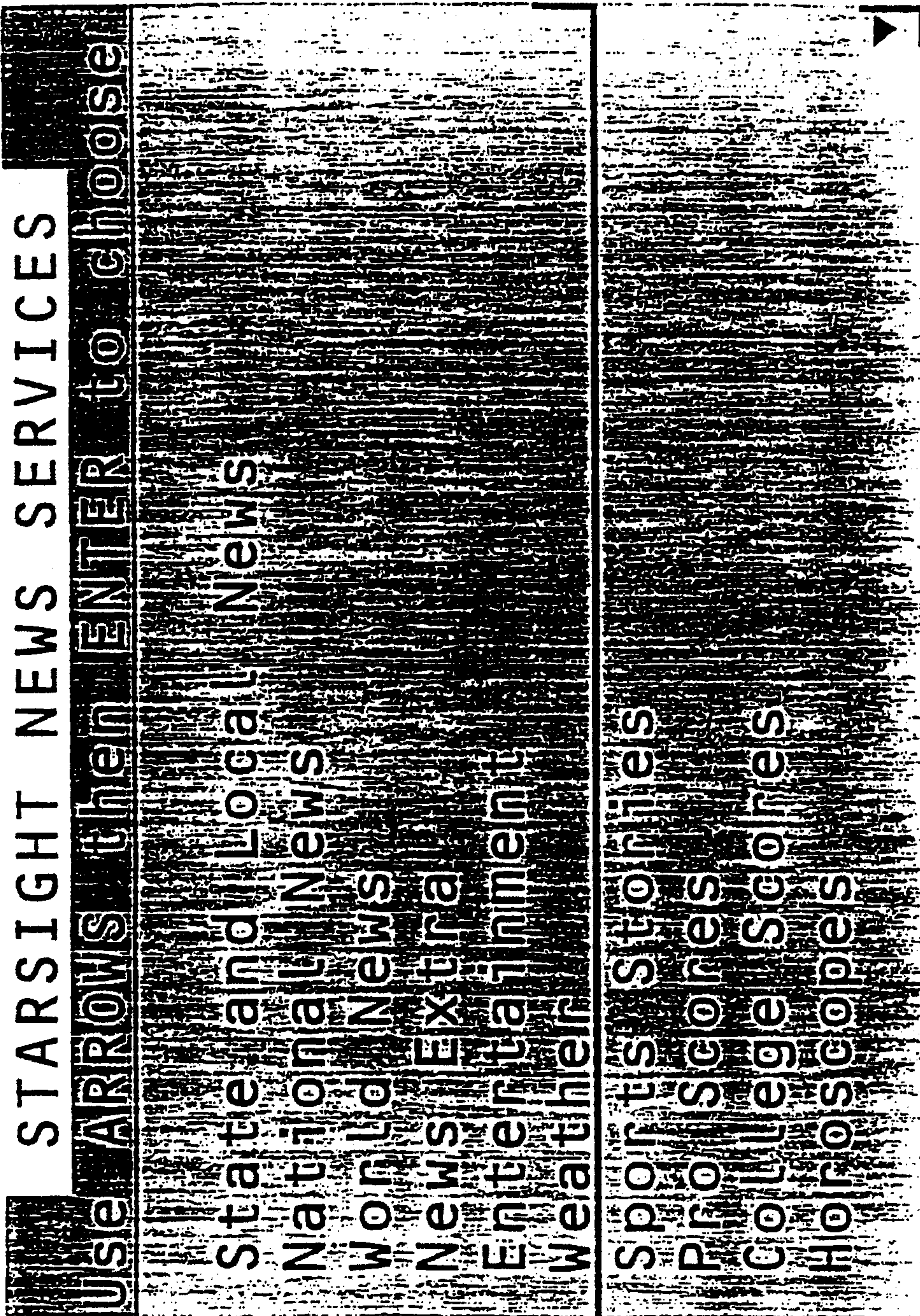
NHL Scoreboard
PGA Leaderboard

FIG. 10(b)

1040

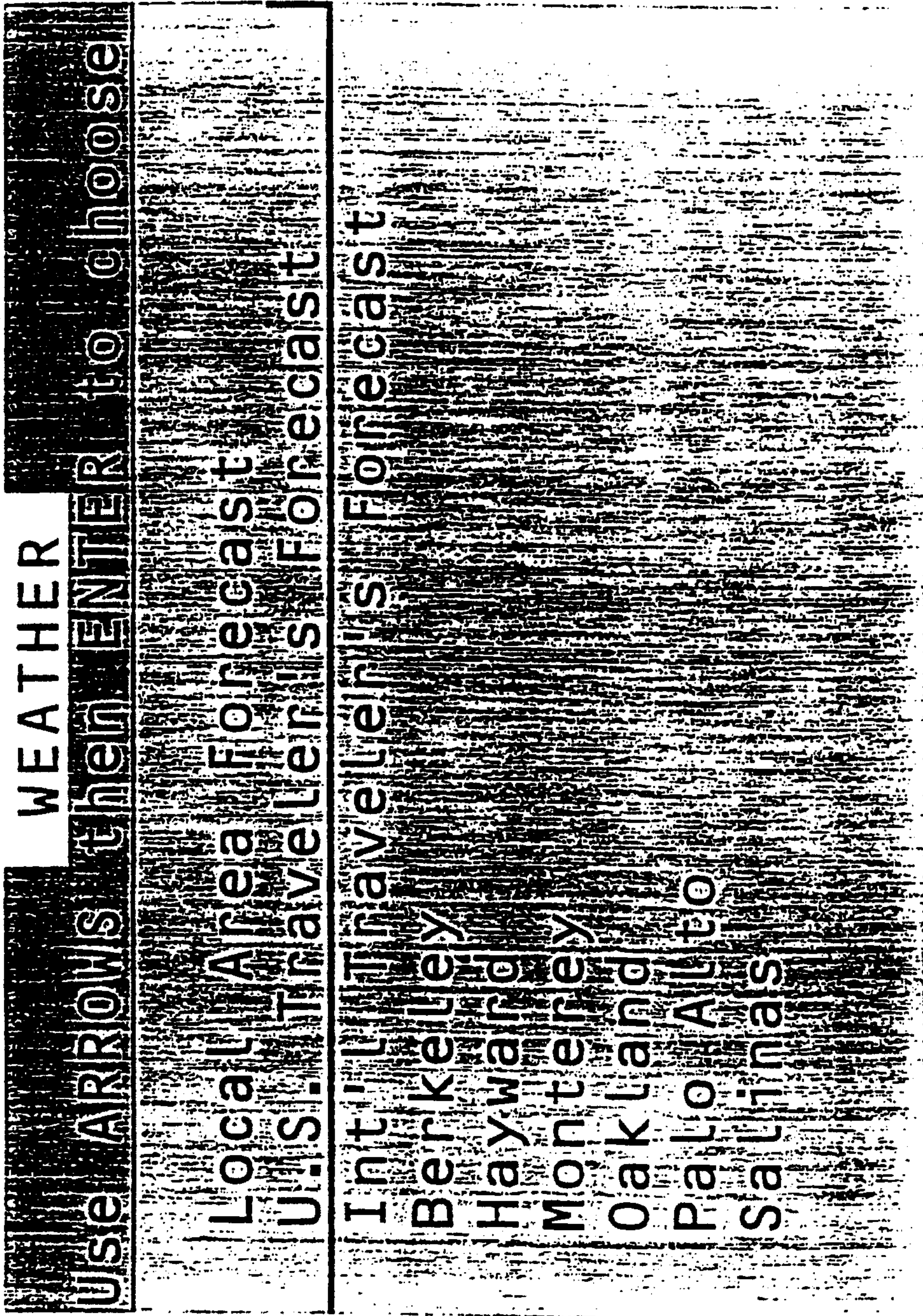
PRO SCORES		NFL SCOREBOARD	
SF	10	F	37
Hou	9	StL	31
Pit	20	Det	7
Atl	17	NYG	35
GB	13	Was	31
Tam	7	Ind	16
Phi	20	Cin	28
Car	9	Jac	21

Fig. 10(c)



1100

FIG. 11(6)



1120

Fig. 11(b)

WEATHER WEATHER
U.S. Traveler's Forecast

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

1140

Albuquerque		
58/36	PSunny	46/29 Damp
Anchorage		
16/6	PSunny	22/17 Lt. Snow
Atlanta		
72/56	PSunny	79/60 PCloudy
Boston		
66/48	MSunny	64/47 PSunny
Chicago		
68/50	PSunny	66/49 PCloudy

FIG. 11(c)

WEATHER

Use ARROWS then ENTER to choose

Local Area Forecast
 Unit Traveler's Forecast
 Berkeley
 Hayward
 Monterey
 Oakland
 Palo Alto
 San

1160

Fig. 11(d)

WEATHER

Berkeley Forecast

WEDNESDAY October 30, 1996
 Winds: NW 16 mph
 Day: High 66 - Windy & cloudy
 Night: Low 46 - Clear & breezy
THURSDAY 45 - Mostly sunny & breezy
FRIDAY 50 - Sunny & breezy

1180

Fig. 11(e)

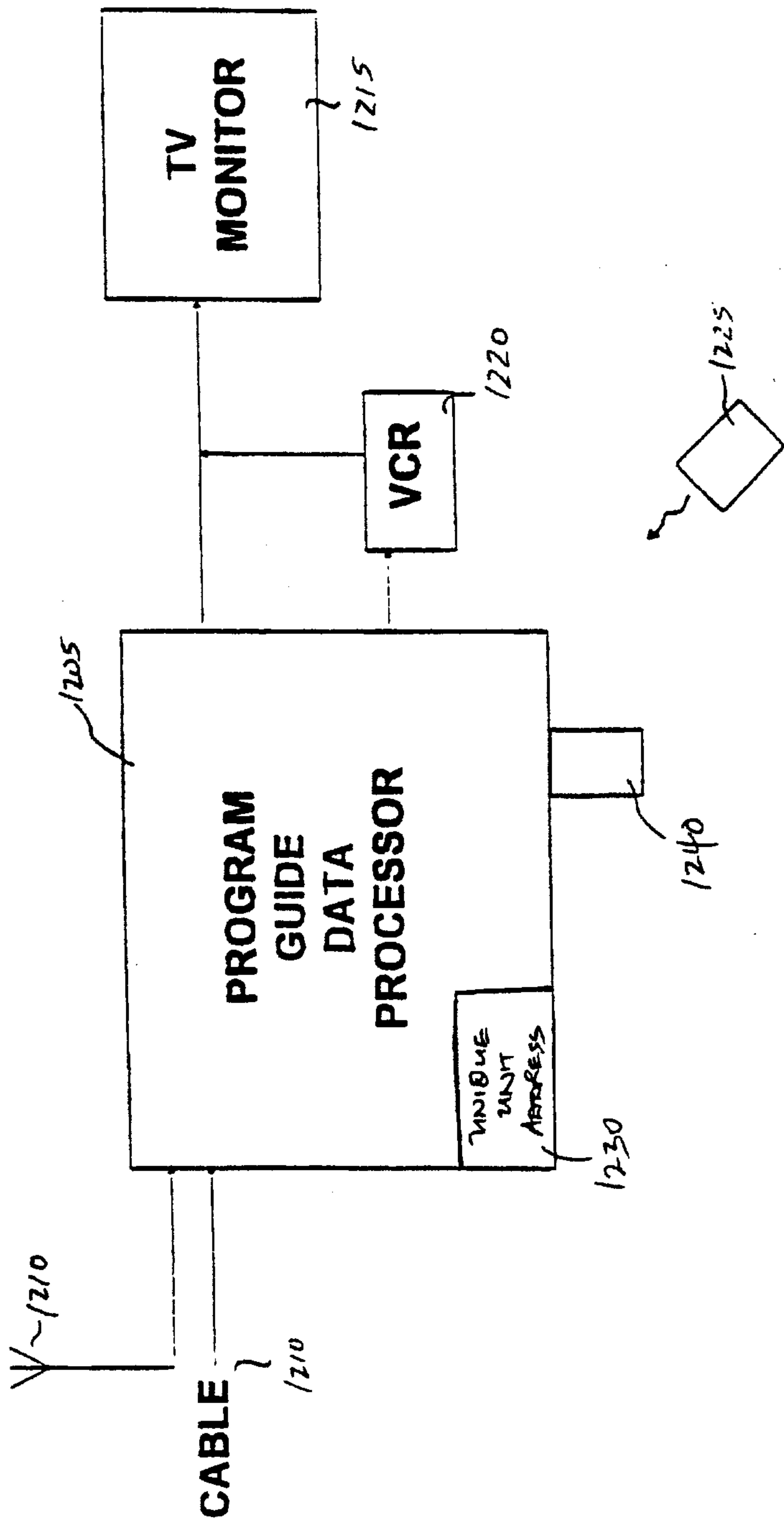


FIG. 12

