

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Beers et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2009/0300198 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Dec. 3, 2009**

(54) **CONNECTING COLLABORATION NODES**

(86) PCT No.: **PCT/US07/74860**

(76) Inventors: **Ted W. Beers**, Corvallis, OR (US);
Mark E. Gorzynski, Corvallis, OR (US);
William C. Wickes, Corvallis, OR (US);
Jon A. Brewster, Monmouth, OR (US);
Garrett Daniel Gargan, Corvallis, OR (US);
Jeffrey L. Thielman, Corvallis, OR (US);
Scott Grasley, Lebanon, OR (US)

§ 371 (c)(1),
(2), (4) Date: **Oct. 12, 2007**

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 60/894,802, filed on Mar. 14, 2007.

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
G06F 15/16 (2006.01)
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **709/230**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

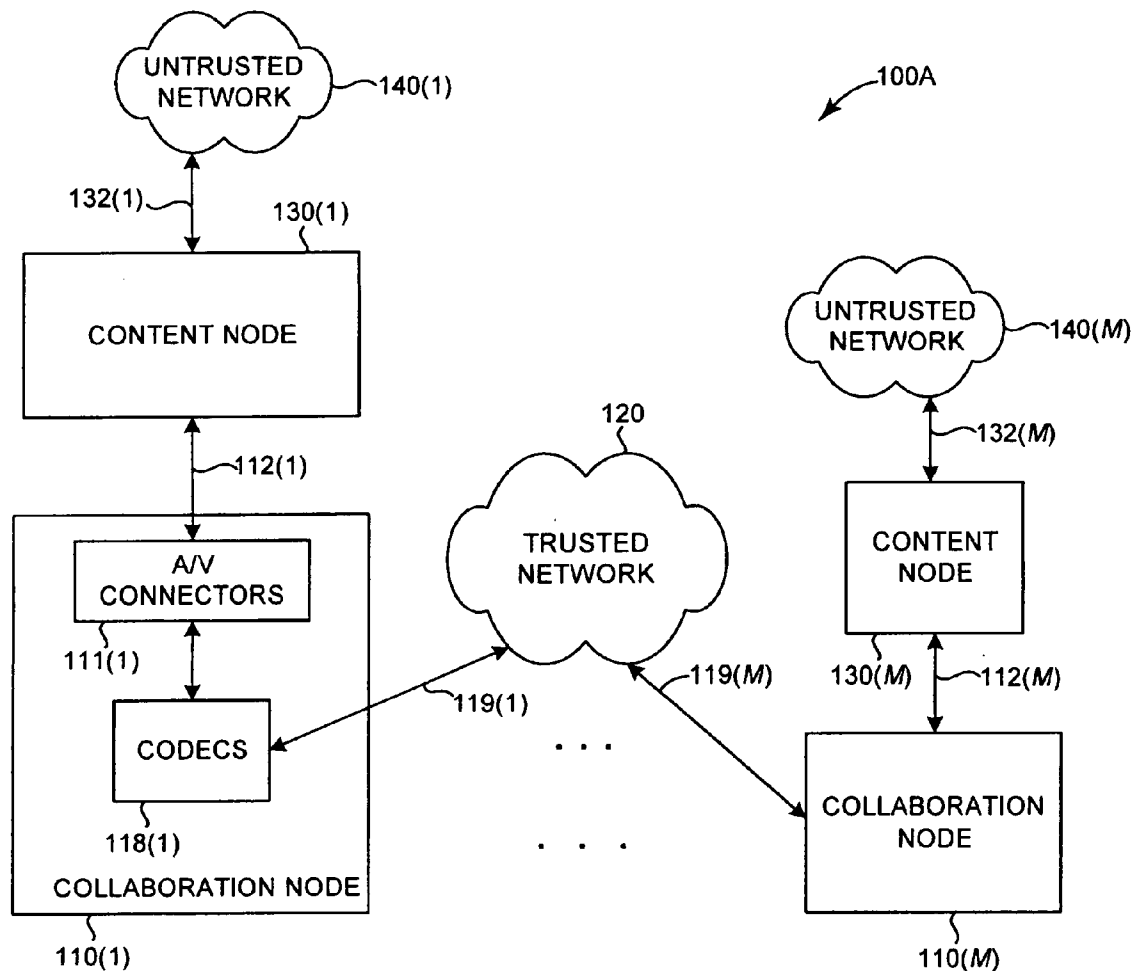
A system including a first node configured to receive first data in a first format that specifies a network destination for the first data and convert the first data to second data in a second format that does not specify a network destination for the second data and a second node configured to receive the second data from the first node over a first connection and convert the second data to third data in a third format that specifies a network destination for the third data is provided.

Correspondence Address:

HEWLETT-PACKARD COMPANY
Intellectual Property Administration
3404 E. Harmony Road, Mail Stop 35
FORT COLLINS, CO 80528 (US)

(21) Appl. No.: **11/911,499**

(22) PCT Filed: **Jul. 31, 2007**



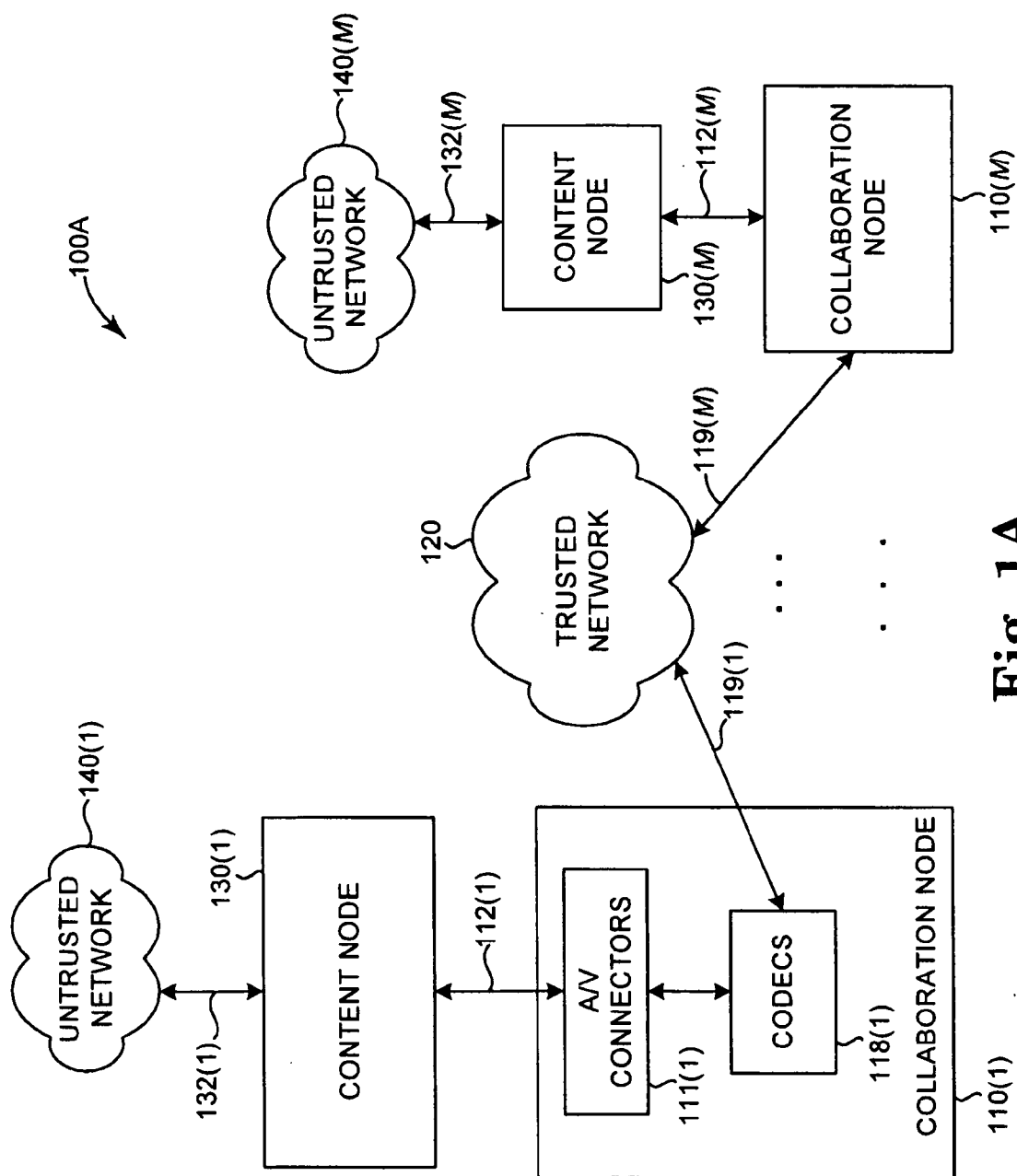


Fig. 1A

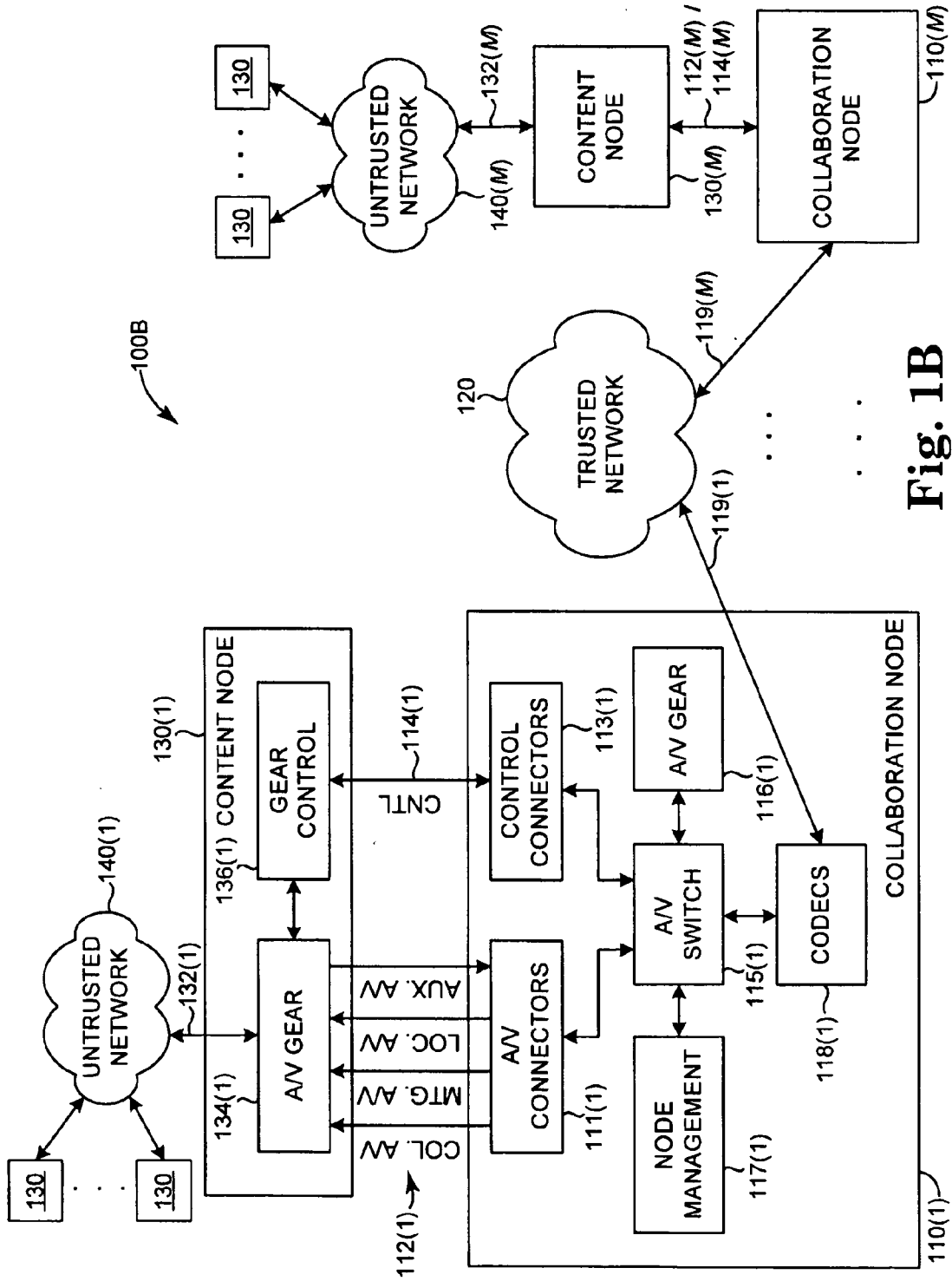


Fig. 1B

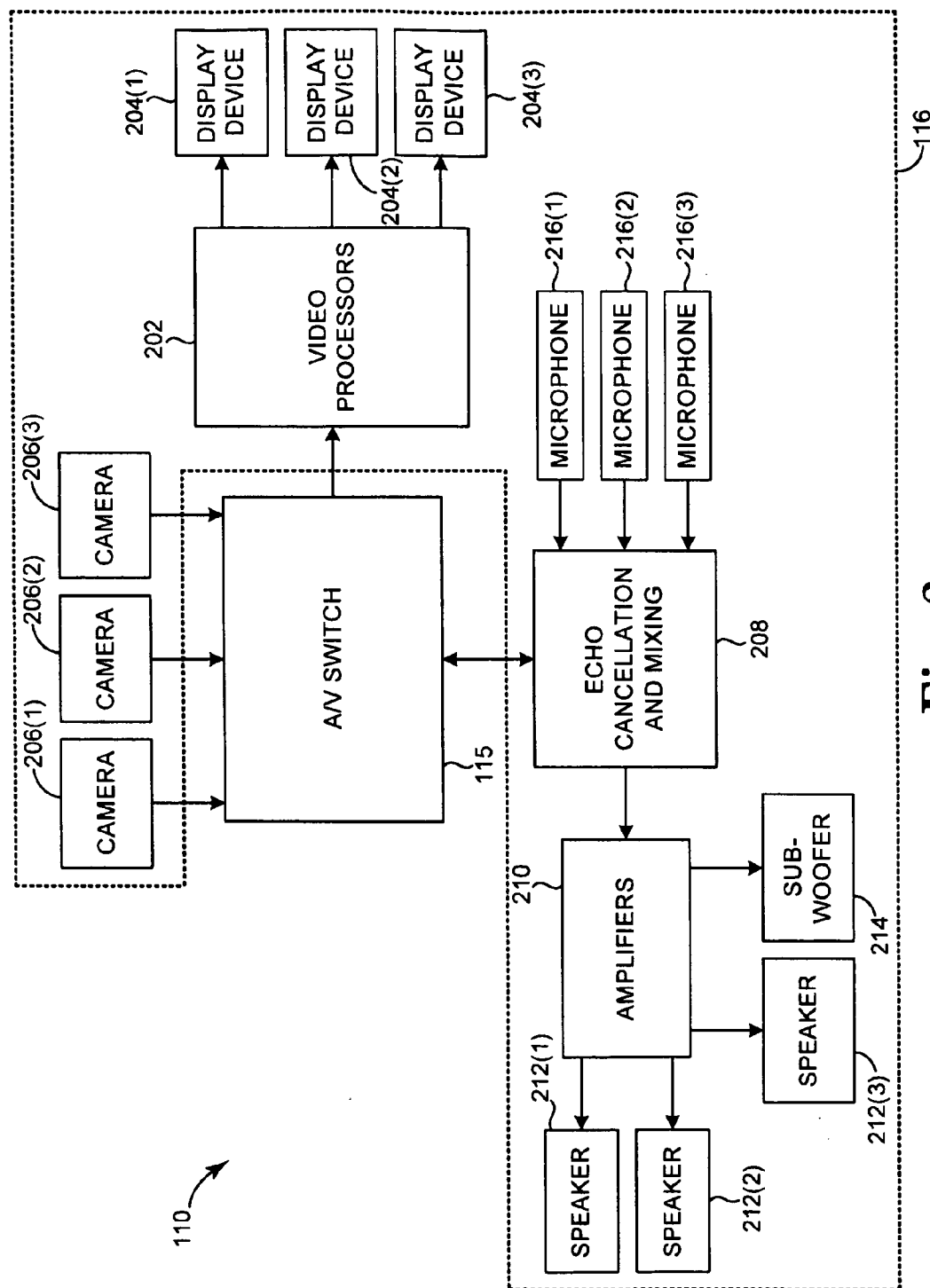
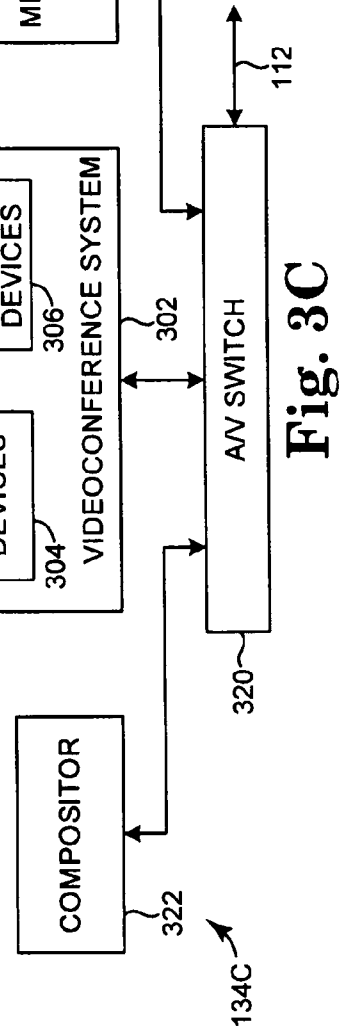
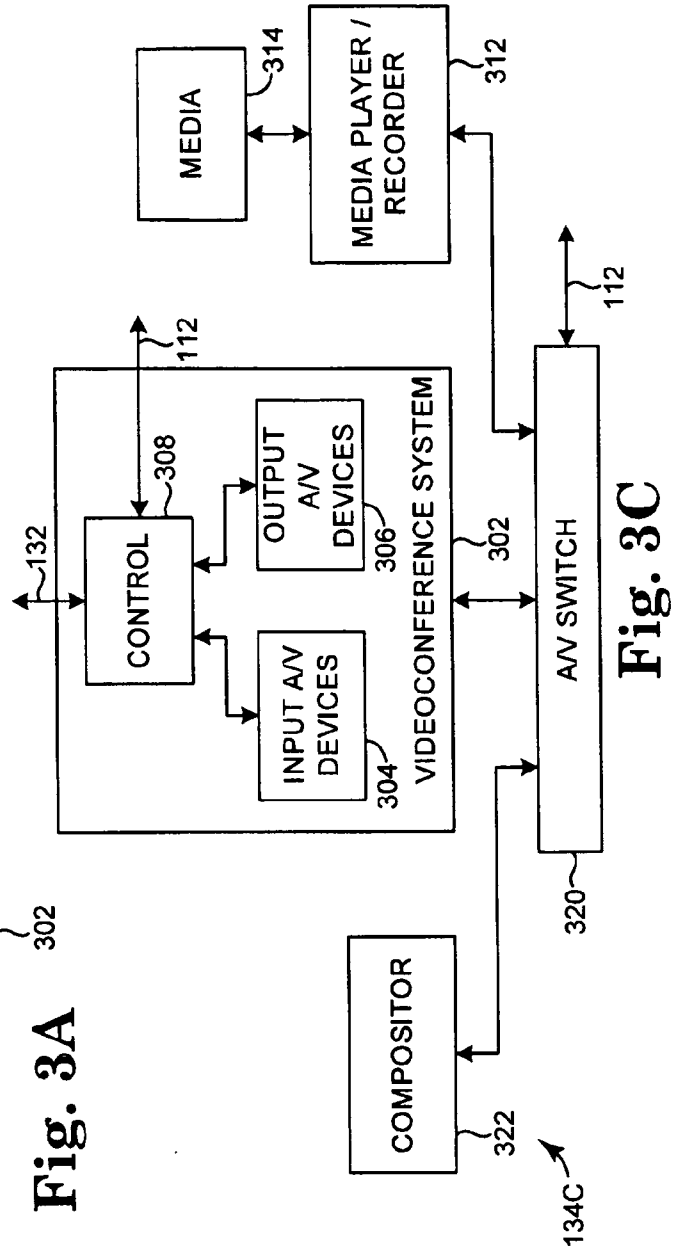
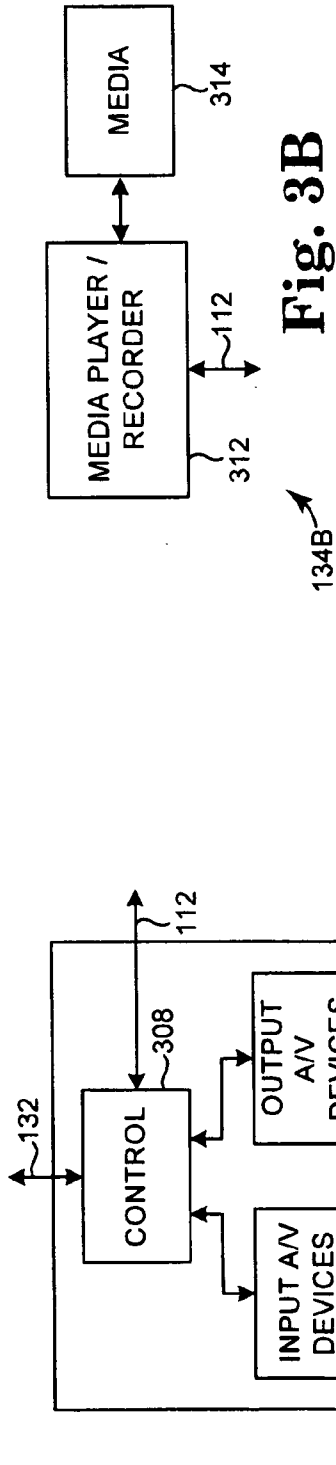


Fig. 2



CONNECTING COLLABORATION NODES

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is related to and claims the benefit of co-pending HP Docket No. 200701255-1, U.S. patent Ser. No. _____, entitled "Synthetic Bridging", filed concurrently on Jul. 31, 2007 and is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/894,802, filed Mar. 14, 2007, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Video teleconferencing systems allow for collaboration between people in different locations. These systems allow participants to interact with one another through the use of audio and video equipment that provides real time audio and video communications. Given the complexity of connecting people across various locations and adherence to various teleconferencing standards, these systems may provide limitations on the ways participants can exchange information. In addition, these systems may connect to a publicly available network, such as the Internet, which may subject them to security risks from hackers.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0003] FIGS. 1A-1B are block diagrams illustrating embodiments of a media collaboration system.

[0004] FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating one embodiment of selected portions of a collaboration node.

[0005] FIGS. 3A-3C are block diagrams illustrating embodiments of A/V gear in a content node.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0006] In the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, which form a part hereof, and in which is shown by way of illustration specific embodiments in which the invention may be practiced. It is to be understood that other embodiments may be utilized and structural or logical changes may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention. The following detailed description, therefore, is not to be taken in a limiting sense.

[0007] As described herein, a media collaboration system transports audio/video (A/V) data into and out of a collaborative session, such as a videoconference, while protecting and insulating the network infrastructures and associated media resources of session attendees. The collaborative session may take place in two or more locations (e.g., different cities) to connect one or more users or media resources in each of the locations. Cameras and microphones, for example, may capture video and audio from one or more of the locations and the video and audio may be output using one or more display devices and speakers, for example, at one or more other locations. In addition, various types of pre-recorded A/V data, such as a DVD, may be transported to one or more of the locations where it may be output using a display device or speakers, for example. One or more locations of the videoconference may include arrangements of office furniture (e.g., office chairs and a conference table) and A/V gear to provide users with gaze awareness and a full immersion feeling.

[0008] The media collaboration system transports at least a portion of the A/V data into and out of a collaborative session across at least two unrelated networks where at least one of the networks is a trusted network. The media collaboration system prevents network information from being exchanged between the unrelated networks. When a node in the system receives A/V data from a network, the node converts the A/V data from a network format that specifies a network destination for the A/V data to a non-network A/V format that does not specify a network destination for the A/V data. The node then provides the converted A/V data to another node across a non-network A/V connection. The node that receives the non-network A/V data converts the A/V data from the non-network A/V format to a network format that specifies a network destination for the A/V data and provides the network A/V data on another network that is connected to the network destination for the A/V data.

[0009] Although the media collaboration system will be described herein as transporting A/V data into and out of a collaborative session, the system may also be used to exchange any other types of data or control content, such as control signals used to drive a computer application remotely, in other embodiments.

[0010] FIGS. 1A-1B are block diagrams illustrating respective embodiments **100A** and **100B** of a media collaboration system **100**. Media collaboration system **100** forms a telepresence videoconferencing system where various A/V media streams from different sources are combined into a collaborative session in one embodiment. The media streams may be any combination of live or pre-recorded audio and/or video data that may be combined in any suitable way and output to any number of users in any number of locations by media collaboration system **100**.

[0011] Referring to FIG. 1A, media collaboration system **100A** includes collaboration nodes **110(1)-110(M)**, where M is greater than or equal to two, connected to a trusted network **120**. Collaboration nodes **110(1)-110(M)** connect to content nodes **130(1)-130(M)**, respectively, and content nodes **130(1)-130(M)** connect to untrusted networks **140(1)-140(M)**, respectively. System **100A** may also include any number of additional collaboration nodes **110** (not shown) that connect to trusted network **120** but do not connect to a content node **130**. System **100A** may further include any number of additional content nodes **130** connected to each untrusted network **140**. In addition, one or more of untrusted networks **140(1)-140(M)** may be interconnected or omitted in some embodiments.

[0012] Each collaboration node **110** includes a set of A/V connectors **111** that connects to content node **130** across A/V connections **112**. A/V connectors **111** may be any suitable type and combination of conventional standard digital and analog A/V interfaces such as composite video, component video, S-Video, analog HD, balanced stereo audio, SDI, HD-SDI, DVI, DVI-D, HDMI, VGA, or other suitable A/V interfaces without network features that might compromise security. A/V connectors **111** allow non-network A/V data to be input to and output from collaboration node **110** where the A/V data does not specify a network destination. The A/V data is usable by any A/V device that is configured to operate with the A/V interfaces of A/V connectors **111**.

[0013] A/V connectors **111** connect to A/V connections **112**. A/V connections **112** may be any suitable type and combination of conventional standard digital and analog A/V connections configured to operate with any of the example

interfaces listed above or other suitable A/V interfaces. A/V connections **112** are configured to inherently prevent any useful network protocol information from being transmitted in either direction between content node **130** and collaboration node **110**.

[0014] Each collaboration node **110** also includes a set of coding and decoding mechanisms (codecs) **118** that connect to at least the set of A/V connectors **111** and trusted network **120** across a network connection **119**. For A/V data received across A/V connections **112**, codecs **118** convert the A/V data from a non-network A/V format that does not specify a network destination to a network format that does specify a network destination and provides the A/V data in the network format to network **120** using network connection **119**. Codecs **118** generate any suitable information for the network format to specify the network destination and include the information with the A/V data as specified by the network format. The information may include MAC addresses, IP addresses, ports, and/or routing information, for example.

[0015] For A/V data received across network **120** using network connection **119**, codecs **118** convert the A/V data from a network format that specifies a network destination to a non-network A/V format that does not specify a network destination and provides the A/V data in the non-network A/V format to content node **130** using A/V connections **112**. Codecs **118** remove all information from the network format that specifies a network destination. The removed information may include MAC addresses, IP addresses, ports, and/or routing information, for example.

[0016] In one embodiment, codecs **118** convert the A/V data received across A/V connections **112** in a non-network A/V format to an Internet Protocol (IP) format. In this embodiment, codecs **118** generate IP packets to include the A/V data and also include information in each packet that specifies a destination of the packet across network **120**. By doing so, codecs **118** convert the A/V data from a non-network A/V format to an IP format. Codecs **118** provide the A/V data in the IP format to network **120** using network connection **119**.

[0017] Codecs **118** also convert the A/V data received across network connection **119** in an IP format to a non-network A/V format in this embodiment. Codecs **118** extract A/V data from each IP packet received from network **120** and discard the network destination information. Codecs **118** combine the extracted A/V data into a non-network A/V format to convert the A/V data from an IP format to a non-network A/V format. Codecs **118** provide the A/V data in the non-network A/V format to content node **130** using A/V connections **112**.

[0018] In other embodiments, codecs **118** convert A/V data to and from other network formats.

[0019] Network connection **119** may be any suitable network connection between collaboration node **110** and trusted network **120**. For example, network connection **119** may be a leased line (i.e., a T3, optical, cable, or wireless high speed link) which provides a large data pipe to and from collaboration node **110**.

[0020] Trusted network **120** may be any suitable, secure application network such as a collaborative transport network. Trusted network **120** may be a local, regional, or global network that includes any suitable network configuration that ranges from a local point-to-point connection between two collaboration nodes **110** to a global array of connections that connect many collaboration nodes **110**. Accordingly, trusted

network **120** may not include and may not provide network connections to a publicly available network such as the Internet in some embodiments. Network **120** may be designed specifically to optimize high bandwidth with low latency to be able to transport live, interactive, audio, video, and other data rich media streams. Trusted network **120** may have a smallest link of 45 Mbps to avoid any significant serialization delay. Trusted network **120** may also use a flat network topology to minimize latency. In order to keep a high quality end-user experience, trusted network **120** may keep the total one-way latency between two collaboration nodes **110** to less than one-quarter of a second. This total latency may encompass all aspects of encoding/decoding, encapsulation/de-encapsulation, capture and presentation, filtering, processing, compression and decompression and transport latencies across the transmission path. As the contribution of each component of network **120** to overall latency decreases (as technology improves), the length of the “reach” of where different sites can be physically located may be increased.

[0021] To better preserve the shortest paths capable of reliable delivery with little packet loss, bandwidth and network resource mechanisms (not shown) may be used to insure high-quality sessions for the duration of the collaboration session. As most traffic streams are presumed to take place linking a pair or small number of end sites together for any given session, network **120** may have little presumption of session pre-emption once authorized sessions commence.

[0022] In some embodiments, longer latency and/or loss tolerant sessions may be provided over network **120**. Such services may include directory, presence, messaging, credential verification, and time/name services for examples.

[0023] The interior of network **120** may concentrate on speedy delivery of traffic flows. Any access control, encryption/decryption and other proxy services, if needed may occur at the edge of the network such as in collaboration node **110** or content node **130** and not the interior of network **120**. This design may make the core of the backbone of network **120** simpler to grow, maintain, stable, and very fast.

[0024] Each content node **130** connects to a collaboration node **110** using A/V connections **112** and to an untrusted network **140** using a network connection **132**. Each content node **130** is configured to convert the A/V data between one or more A/V formats and one or more network format. For A/V data received across A/V connections **112**, content node **130** converts the A/V data from a non-network A/V format that does not specify a network destination to a network format that does specify a network destination and provides the A/V data in the network format to network **140** using network connection **132**. Content node **130** generates any suitable information for the network format to specify the network destination and includes the information with the A/V data as specified by the network format. The information may include MAC addresses, IP addresses, ports, and/or routing information, for example.

[0025] For A/V data received across network **140** using network connection **132**, content node **130** converts the A/V data from a network format that specifies a network destination to a non-network A/V format that does not specify a network destination and provides the A/V data in the non-network A/V format to collaboration node **110** using A/V connections **112**. Content node **130** removes all information from the network format that specifies a network destination. The removed information may include MAC addresses, IP addresses, ports, and/or routing information, for example.

[0026] In one embodiment, content node **130** converts the A/V data received across A/V connections **112** in a non-network A/V format to an Internet Protocol (IP) format. In this embodiment, content node **130** generates IP packets to include the A/V data and also include information in each packet that specifies a destination of the packet across network **120**. By doing so, content node **130** converts the A/V data from a non-network A/V format to an IP format. Content node **130** provides the A/V data in the IP format to network **140** using network connection **132**.

[0027] Content node **130** also converts the A/V data received across network connection **132** in an IP format to a non-network A/V format in this embodiment. Content node **130** extracts A/V data from each IP packet received from network **140** and discards the network destination information. Content node **130** combines the extracted A/V data into a non-network A/V format to convert the A/V data from an IP format to a non-network A/V format. Content node **130** provides the A/V data in the non-network A/V format to collaboration node **110** using A/V connections **112**.

[0028] In other embodiments, content node **130** converts A/V data to and from other network formats.

[0029] Network connection **132** may be any suitable network connection between content node **130** and untrusted network **140**. For example, network connection **132** may be a leased line (i.e., a T3, optical, cable, or wireless high speed link) which provides a large data pipe to and from content node **130**.

[0030] Each untrusted network **140** may be any type of network formed from any number of network devices that operate using any suitable network protocol or protocols and are connect to any number of content nodes **130** or other computer or storage systems. Each network **140** may be a secure network, such as an enterprise network or corporate intranet, with limited and secure connections to other systems or an unsecure network with any combination of secure and unsecure connections to other systems. Each network **140** may be private or publicly available and include one or more connections to the Internet.

[0031] Each untrusted network **140** is considered "untrusted" by collaboration node **110** and/or trusted network **120** because collaboration node **110** and/or trusted network **120** may have no information regarding the level of security of an untrusted network **140**. None of the untrusted networks **140**, however, affects the security level of collaboration node **110** and/or trusted network **120** because any data that is transmitted between network **120** and any of networks **140** is transmitted in a non-network format across connections **112**. Connections **112**, in conjunction with collaboration nodes **110** and content nodes **130**, provide a secure, reliable transport mechanism between network **120** and a network **140** without a network path (e.g., an IP path) between the two networks. Accordingly, collaboration media may be transported between any two untrusted networks **140** across trusted network **120** using the respective sets of A/V connections **112** as described above.

[0032] FIG. 1B illustrates an embodiment **100B** of media collaboration system **100**. Media collaboration system **100B** operates like media collaboration system **100A** as described above but with additional features that will now be described.

[0033] System **100B** includes any number of additional content nodes **130** connected to each untrusted network **140**.

As with system **100A**, one or more of untrusted networks **140(1)-140(M)** may be interconnected or omitted in some embodiments.

[0034] Each collaboration node **110** in system **100B** includes a set of one or more control connectors **113** that connect to a set of one or more control connections **114**, an A/V switch **115**, A/V gear, and a node management unit **117** in addition to the set of A/V connectors **111** and codecs **118**.

[0035] A/V connectors **111** include at least one auxiliary A/V interface, at least one local A/V interface, at least one meeting A/V interface, and at least one collaboration A/V interface. A/V connections **112** include at least one auxiliary A/V connection (AUX. A/V), at least one local A/V connection (LOC. A/V), at least one meeting A/V connection (MTG. A/V), and at least one collaboration A/V connection (COL. A/V).

[0036] Each auxiliary A/V connection provides non-network A/V data in a non-network A/V format from content node **130** to collaboration node **110**. As will be described in additional detail below, the A/V data from content node **130** may be generated in content node **130** or generated by another content node **130** that provides the A/V data over network **140** to the content node **130** that connects to the auxiliary A/V connection.

[0037] Each local A/V connection provides non-network A/V data in a non-network A/V format that is generated in collaboration node **110** from collaboration node **110** to content node **130**. In one embodiment, the local A/V connections include three video connections from three video sources in collaboration node **110** and one audio connection from an audio source in collaboration node **110** that combines the audio from the three video sources.

[0038] Each meeting A/V connection provides non-network A/V data in a non-network A/V format that is generated in a remote collaboration node **110** or content node **130** and transmitted across network **120** from collaboration node **110** to content node **130**. In one embodiment, the meeting A/V connections include three video connections from three video sources a remote collaboration node **110** or content node **130** and one audio connection from an audio source the remote collaboration node **110** or content node **130** that combines the audio from the three video sources. The video and audio sources are provided to the collaboration node **110** that connects to the meeting A/V connections across network **120**.

[0039] Each collaboration A/V connection provides non-network A/V data in a non-network A/V format from collaboration node **110** to content node **130**. Each collaboration A/V may output a corresponding input from an auxiliary A/V connection with or without additional processing by collaboration node **110**.

[0040] In other embodiments, A/V connections **112** may include other numbers, types, and/or combinations of A/V connections.

[0041] Each collaboration node **110** also includes a set of control connectors **113** that connects to content node **130** across control connections **114**. Control connectors **113** may be any suitable type and combination of digital and analog non-network control interfaces that allow non-network control signals to be input to and output from collaboration node **110** where the control signals do not specify a network destination. The control signals are usable by any controllable device that is configured to operate with the control interfaces of control connectors **113**.

[0042] Control connectors **113** connect to control connections **114**. Control connections **114** may be any suitable type and combination of digital and analog control connections that are configured to inherently prevent any useful network protocol information from being transmitted in either direction between content node **130** and collaboration node **110**.

[0043] Each collaboration node **110** further includes an A/V switch **115**. A/V switch **115** connects to A/V connectors **111**, control connectors **113**, A/V gear **116**, node management unit **117**, and codecs **118**. A/V switch **115** routes A/V data in response to control signals from node management unit **117** and/or control signals received across control connectors **113**. In particular, A/V switch **115** routes A/V data between A/V connectors **111** and codecs **118** in both directions, between codecs **118** and A/V gear **116** in both directions, and between A/V connectors **111** and A/V gear **116** in both directions.

[0044] A/V gear **116** includes any type, number, and combination of audio and video input and output devices. Examples of input devices include microphones, still and video cameras, media players, and computer and storage systems. The input devices may provide live or pre-recorded media. Examples of output devices include speakers, headphones, headsets, media recorders, and display devices such as projectors, computer monitors, and televisions. In one embodiment, A/V gear **116** includes integrated A/V gear that forms a collaboration studio such as a "Halo studio" offered by Hewlett-Packard Co.

[0045] FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating one embodiment of A/V gear **116** connected to A/V switch **115** in collaboration node **110**. In the example of FIG. 2, video processors **202** provide video data from A/V switch **115** to display devices **204(1)-204(3)**, and display devices **204(1)-204(3)** display the video data. Cameras **206(1)-206(3)** capture video data and provide the video data to A/V switch **115**. An echo cancellation and mixing unit **208** mixes and processes audio data from A/V switch **115** and provides the processed audio data to amplifiers **210**. Amplifiers **210** amplify the audio data and provide the audio data to speakers **212(1)-212(3)** and sub-woofer **214**. Speakers **212(1)-212(3)** output the higher frequencies of the audio data, and sub-woofer **214** outputs the lower, bass frequencies of the audio data. Microphones **216(1)-216(3)** capture audio data and provide the audio data to A/V switch **115**.

[0046] Display devices **204(1)-204(3)** may be arranged in such a manner around a conference table and chairs to allow for gaze awareness and a full immersion feeling in one embodiment.

[0047] Referring back to FIG. 1B, each content node **130** includes A/V gear **134** and gear control **136**. A/V gear **134** includes any type, number, and combination of audio and video input and output devices such as the example input devices and output devices listed above. Gear control **136** includes any suitable control unit configured to provide wired or wireless control signals to A/V gear **134** and A/V switch **115** such as a controller from AMX Corporation. Gear control **136** may provide network or non-network control signals to A/V gear **134**, but only provides non-network control signals to A/V switch **115**.

[0048] FIGS. 3A-3C are block diagrams illustrating embodiments **132A**, **132B**, and **132C** of A/V gear **132** in content node **130**.

[0049] In FIG. 3A, A/V gear **132A** includes a videoconference system **302** with any suitable type, number, and combination of input A/V devices **304** and output A/V devices **306**,

such as the example input devices and output devices listed above, and a control unit **132**. Control unit **308** connects to network connection **132** and A/V connections **112** to provide A/V data from network **140** to collaboration node **110** and output A/V devices **306** and from collaboration node **110** to network **140** and output A/V devices **306**. Control unit **308** also provides A/V data from input A/V devices **304** to collaboration node **110** and network **140**. Control unit **308** may operate in response to control signals from gear control **136** (shown in FIG. 1B).

[0050] In FIG. 3B, A/V gear **132B** includes a media player and/or recorder **312** that connects to A/V connections **112**. Media player/recorder **312** may operate in response to control signals from gear control **136** (shown in FIG. 1B).

[0051] Media player/recorder **312** provides A/V data from a media **314** to collaboration node **110** across connections **112**. Media **314** may be any suitable media that stores pre-recorded A/V data such as a DVD, HD-DVD™, Blu-ray™, or other optical or non-optical media.

[0052] In addition to or in place of providing A/V data to collaboration node **110**, media player/recorder **312** stores A/V data from collaboration node **110** across connections **112** to media **314**. Media **314** may be any suitable media that stores A/V data from collaboration node **110** such as a DVD-R. In this mode of operation, media player/recorder **312** may perform meeting archival functions to record all or selected portions of a collaborative session.

[0053] In FIG. 3C, A/V gear **132C** includes videoconference system **302**, media player/recorder **312** with media **314**, an A/V switch **320**, and a compositor **322**. A/V switch **320** provides A/V data between connectors **112** and videoconference system **302**, media player/recorder **312**, and compositor **322** in response to control signals from gear control **136**. Compositor **322** is a video mixing system configured to receive multiple video inputs and scale, position, and/or blend the video inputs into single video image output. Any of videoconference system **302**, media player/recorder **312**, and compositor **322** may also operate in response to control signals from gear control **136** (shown in FIG. 1B).

[0054] Referring back to FIG. 1B, media collaboration system **100B** may also include any suitable collaboration environment to control the operation of the components of system **100B**. The collaboration environment may allow users to optimize the experience provided by A/V gear **116**. Media collaboration system **100B** may further include any suitable user interface control the configuration of the media resource routings between connections **112**, A/V gear **116**, and codecs **118**.

[0055] With the above embodiments, media collaboration system **100B** may be used to cross connect collaboration sessions on different networks (e.g., a collaboration session on network **120** and a collaboration session on network **140**). The sessions may be connected in a demonstrably secure fashion to provide secure, reliable transport among two or more sites. These embodiments eliminate the need for a traditional private or untrusted Internet path between the site's networks. Media collaboration system **100B** may also be used to provide experience control using gear control **136** in one or more content nodes **130**. In addition, media collaboration system **100B** may be used to provide collaboration experience replacement. With collaboration experience replacement, different sets of A/V gear may be used for different types of collaborative sessions. For example, A/V gear **116**

may be used for one type of collaborative session and A/V gear **134** may be used in place of A/V gear **116** in another type of collaborative session using any suitable control and A/V switching arrangement.

[0056] Although the above embodiments have been described above with reference to media data that includes audio and/or video, other embodiments may transport other types of data such as control data configured to operate a remote computer system.

[0057] The embodiments described above may demonstrably and understandably secure transfer of collaboration media between networks without an IP connection between the networks. The embodiments may also provide a collaboration environment customization mechanism for use by, e.g. A/V integrators, for more efficient flexible customization of a desired collaboration environment without the need for IT support on a continuing use basis. The embodiments may further provide for transport of pre-mixed mixed audio and video streams, such as “session audio” stream, that are useful for applications such as session archival. In addition, the embodiments may allow collaboration between collaborative sessions that are incompatible in the session management standards or media stream formats.

[0058] Although specific embodiments have been illustrated and described herein for purposes of description of the preferred embodiment, it will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art that a wide variety of alternate and/or equivalent implementations may be substituted for the specific embodiments shown and described without departing from the scope of the present invention. Those with skill in the optical, mechanical, electro-mechanical, electrical, and computer arts will readily appreciate that the present invention may be implemented in a very wide variety of embodiments. This application is intended to cover any adaptations or variations of the preferred embodiments discussed herein. Therefore, it is manifestly intended that this invention be limited by the claims and the equivalents thereof.

What is claimed is:

1. A system comprising:
 - a first node configured to receive first data in a first format that specifies a network destination for the first data and convert the first data to second data in a second format that does not specify a network destination for the second data; and
 - a second node configured to receive the second data from the first node over a first connection and convert the second data to third data in a third format that specifies a network destination for the third data.
2. The system of claim 1 wherein the first and the third formats each include an Internet Protocol (IP) format, and wherein the second format includes an audio/video (A/V) format.
3. The system of claim 2 wherein the first connection is one of a composite video connection, a component video connection, an S-Video connection, an analog HD connection, a balanced stereo audio connection, a SDI connection, a HD-SDI connection, a DVI connection, a DVI-D connection, an HDMI connection, and a VGA connection.
4. The system of claim 1 wherein the first node is a first content node that is configured to receive the first data from a second content node over a first network, wherein the second node is a collaboration node that includes audio/video (A/V) gear configured to generate fourth data, and wherein the

collaboration node is configured to provide the third data and the fourth data to a second network.

5. The system of claim 4 wherein the content node includes at least one of a video conference system, a media player, and an audio/video (A/V) switch.

6. The system of claim 1 wherein the first node is a collaboration node that is configured to receive the first data from a first network, wherein the collaboration node includes first audio/video (A/V) gear configured to output the second data, and wherein the second node is a first content node that is configured to provide the third data to a second content node on a second network.

7. The system of claim 6 wherein the first and the second content nodes include second and third audio/video (A/V) gear, respectively, and wherein the second and the third audio/video (A/V) gear are configured to output the third data.

8. The system of claim 1 wherein the first node is configured to provide control signals to the second node over a second connection in a control format that does not specify a network destination for the control signals.

9. The system of claim 1 wherein the second node is configured to provide the third data to a network that is connected to the network destination that is specified for the third data.

10. A method comprising:

providing a first node that is configured to receive first data from a first network in a first format that specifies a network destination for the first data and convert the first data to second data in a second format that does not specify a network destination for the second data; and connecting the first node to a second node that is configured to receive the second data from the first node over a first connection and convert the second data to third data in a third format that specifies a network destination for the third data on a second network.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein the first and the third formats each include an Internet Protocol (IP) format, and wherein the second format includes an audio/video (A/V) format.

12. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

providing gear control configured to provide control signals over a second connection between the first node and the second node.

13. The method of claim 10 wherein the second node is configured to receive fourth data from the second network in a fourth format that specifies a network destination for the fourth data and convert the fourth data to fifth data in a fifth format that does not specify a network destination for the fifth data, wherein the first node is configured to receive the fifth data from the second node over a second connection and convert the fifth data to sixth data in a sixth format that specifies a network destination for the sixth data on the first network.

14. The method of claim 10 wherein the first node is a first content node that is configured to receive the first data from a second content node over the first network, wherein the second node is a collaboration node that includes audio/video (A/V) gear configured to generate fourth data, and wherein the collaboration node is configured to provide the third data and the fourth data to the second network.

15. The method of claim 10 wherein the first node is a collaboration node that is configured to receive the first data from the first network, wherein the collaboration node includes first audio/video (A/V) gear configured to output the second data, and wherein the second node is a first content

node that is configured to provide the third data to a second content node on the second network.

16. A system comprising:

means for receiving first audio/video (A/V) data from a first network in a first format that specifies a network destination for the first A/V data;

means for converting the first A/V data to second A/V data in a second format that does not specify a network destination for the second A/V data;

means for providing the second A/V data over a first A/V connection;

means for converting the second A/V data from the first A/V connection to third A/V data in a third format that specifies a network destination for the third A/V data; and

means for providing the third A/V data to the network destination specified by the third A/V data over a second network.

17. The system of claim **16** wherein the first and the third formats each include an Internet Protocol (IP) format, and wherein the second format includes an audio/video (A/V) format.

18. The system of claim **16** further comprising:

means for outputting the third A/V data in a first location as part of a videoconference.

19. The system of claim **18** further comprising:

means for outputting the first A/V data in a second location as part of the videoconference.

20. The system of claim **16** further comprising:

means for receiving fourth audio/video (A/V) data from the second network in a fourth format that specifies a network destination for the fourth A/V data;

means for converting the fourth A/V data to fifth A/V data in a fifth format that does not specify a network destination for the fifth A/V data;

means for providing the fifth A/V data over a second A/V connection;

means for converting the fifth A/V data from the second A/V connection to sixth A/V data in a sixth format that specifies a network destination for the sixth A/V data; and

means for providing the sixth A/V data to the network destination specified by the sixth A/V data over the first network.

21. A method comprising:

receiving first audio/video (A/V) data from a first network in a first format that specifies a network destination for the first A/V data;

converting the first A/V data to second A/V data in a second format that does not specify a network destination for the second data;

receiving the second A/V data over an A/V connection;

converting the second A/V data to third A/V data in a third format that specifies a network destination for the third A/V data; and

providing the third A/V data to the network destination specified by the third A/V data over a second network.

22. The method of claim **21** wherein the first and the third formats each include an Internet Protocol (IP) format, and wherein the second format includes an audio/video (A/V) format.

23. The method of claim **21** further comprising:

outputting the third A/V data in a first location as part of a videoconference.

24. The method of claim **23** further comprising:

outputting the first A/V data in a second location as part of the videoconference.

25. The method of claim **21** further comprising:

receiving fourth audio/video (A/V) data from the second network in a fourth format that specifies a network destination for the fourth A/V data;

converting the fourth A/V data to fifth A/V data in a fifth format that does not specify a network destination for the fifth A/V data;

providing the fifth A/V data over a second A/V connection;

converting the fifth A/V data from the second A/V connection to sixth A/V data in a sixth format that specifies a network destination for the sixth A/V data; and

providing the sixth A/V data to the network destination specified by the sixth A/V data over the first network.

* * * * *