



US009319619B1

(12) **United States Patent**
Ho et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 9,319,619 B1**
(45) **Date of Patent:** ***Apr. 19, 2016**

(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PRESENTING MULTIPLE PICTURES ON A TELEVISION**

(71) Applicant: **TP Lab, Inc.**

(72) Inventors: **Chi Fai Ho**, Palo Alto, CA (US); **Shin Cheung Simon Chiu**, Palo Alto, CA (US)

(73) Assignee: **TP LAB, INC.**, Palo Alto, CA (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

(21) Appl. No.: **14/480,595**

(22) Filed: **Sep. 8, 2014**

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 11/731,461, filed on Apr. 2, 2007, now Pat. No. 8,863,187.

(51) **Int. Cl.**

- G06F 3/00** (2006.01)
- G06F 13/00** (2006.01)
- H04N 5/445** (2011.01)
- H04N 5/45** (2011.01)
- H04N 21/431** (2011.01)
- H04N 21/4363** (2011.01)
- H04N 21/4402** (2011.01)
- H04N 21/443** (2011.01)
- H04N 21/426** (2011.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **H04N 5/44591** (2013.01); **H04N 5/45** (2013.01); **H04N 21/4263** (2013.01); **H04N 21/4316** (2013.01); **H04N 21/4363** (2013.01); **H04N 21/4438** (2013.01); **H04N 21/440272** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC ... H04N 21/482; H04N 5/45; H04N 5/44591; H04N 21/4263; H04N 21/4316; H04N 21/43632; H04N 21/43635; H04N 21/43637; H04N 21/440272; H04N 21/4438; H04N 7/0122
USPC 725/37-81
See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

- 6,563,515 B1 * 5/2003 Reynolds et al. 715/721
- 7,373,650 B1 * 5/2008 Rodriguez et al. 725/41
- 2006/0282785 A1 * 12/2006 McCarthy et al. 715/760
- 2008/0066103 A1 * 3/2008 Ellis et al. 725/38

* cited by examiner

Primary Examiner — Pankaj Kumar

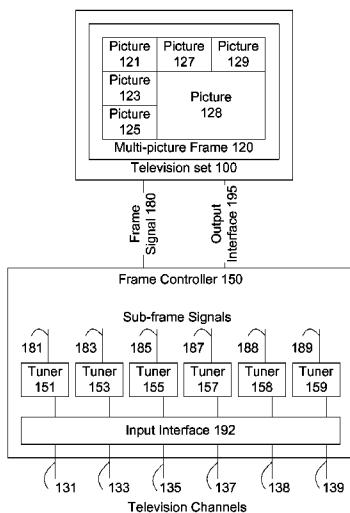
Assistant Examiner — Alazar Tilahun

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — North Shore Patents, P.C.; Michele Liu Baillie

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Provided is a method and system for displaying video from a plurality of video streams on a display. It includes an input interface for receiving video data from a plurality of video streams and transferring the video data to a frame controller in communication with a television display. The frame controller causes the video data from each of the plurality of different video streams to be displayed in a separate frame on the television display, and each frame occupying an area of the television display separate from an area occupied by any other frame. A system for displaying video from a plurality of video stream using the correct aspect ratio and resolution is also provided.

14 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets



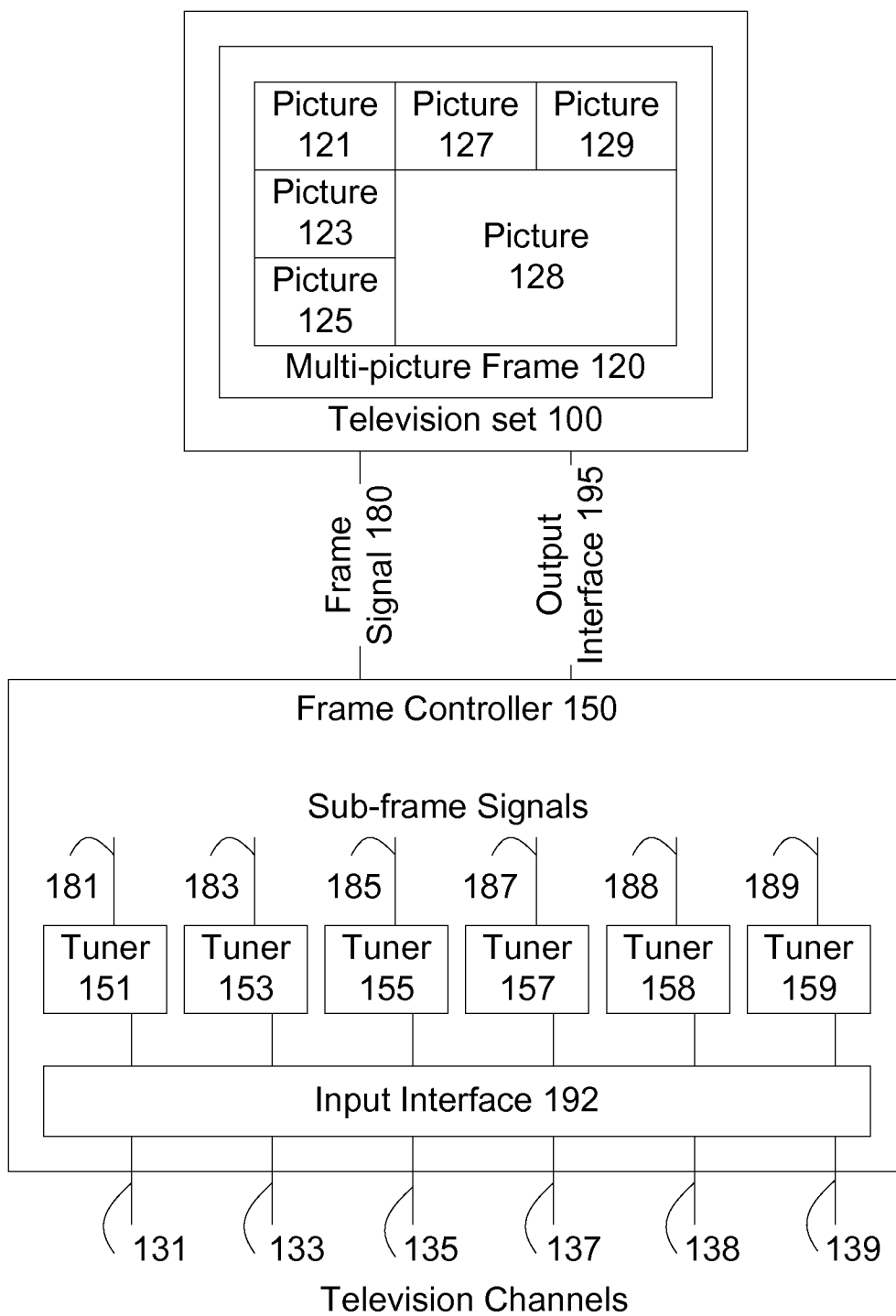


Figure 1

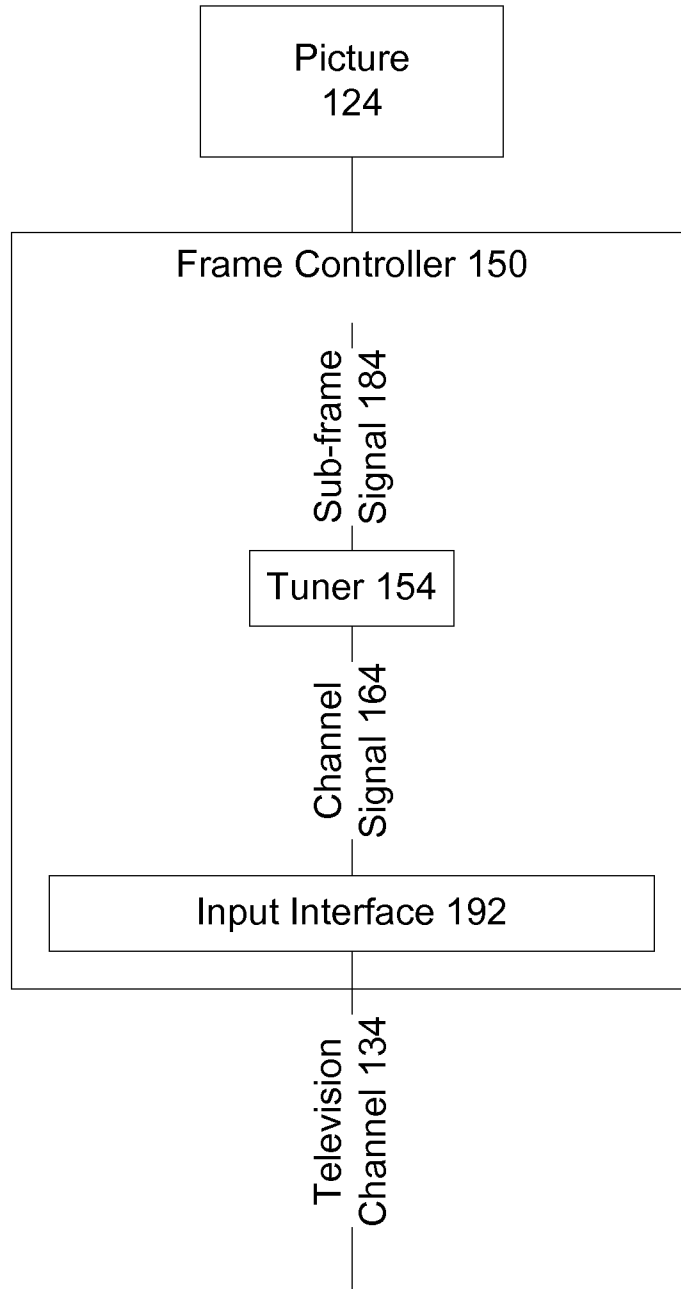


Figure 1a

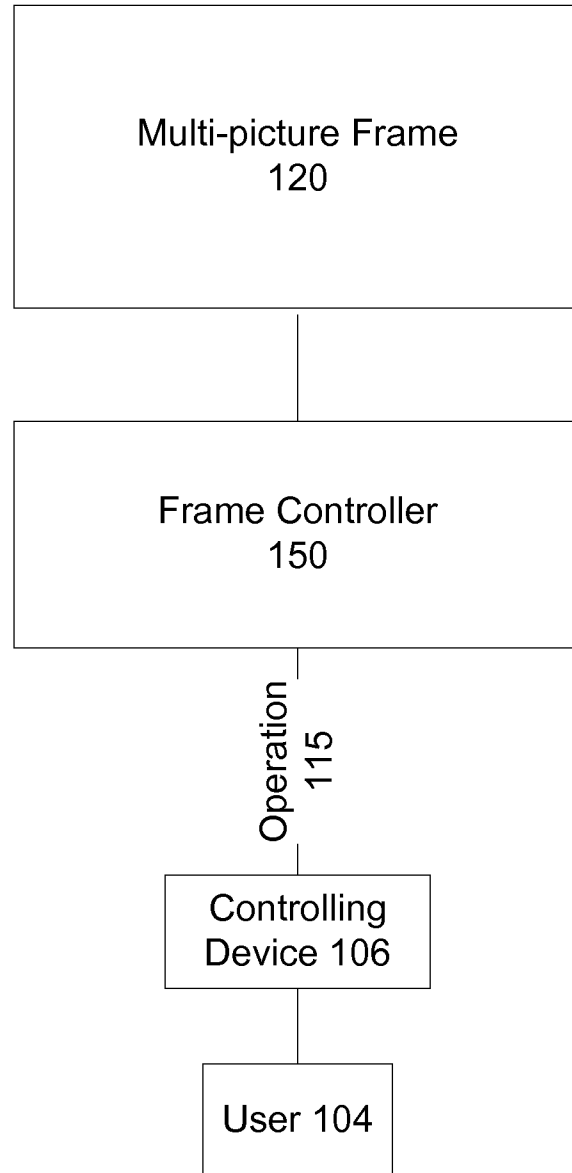


Figure 2

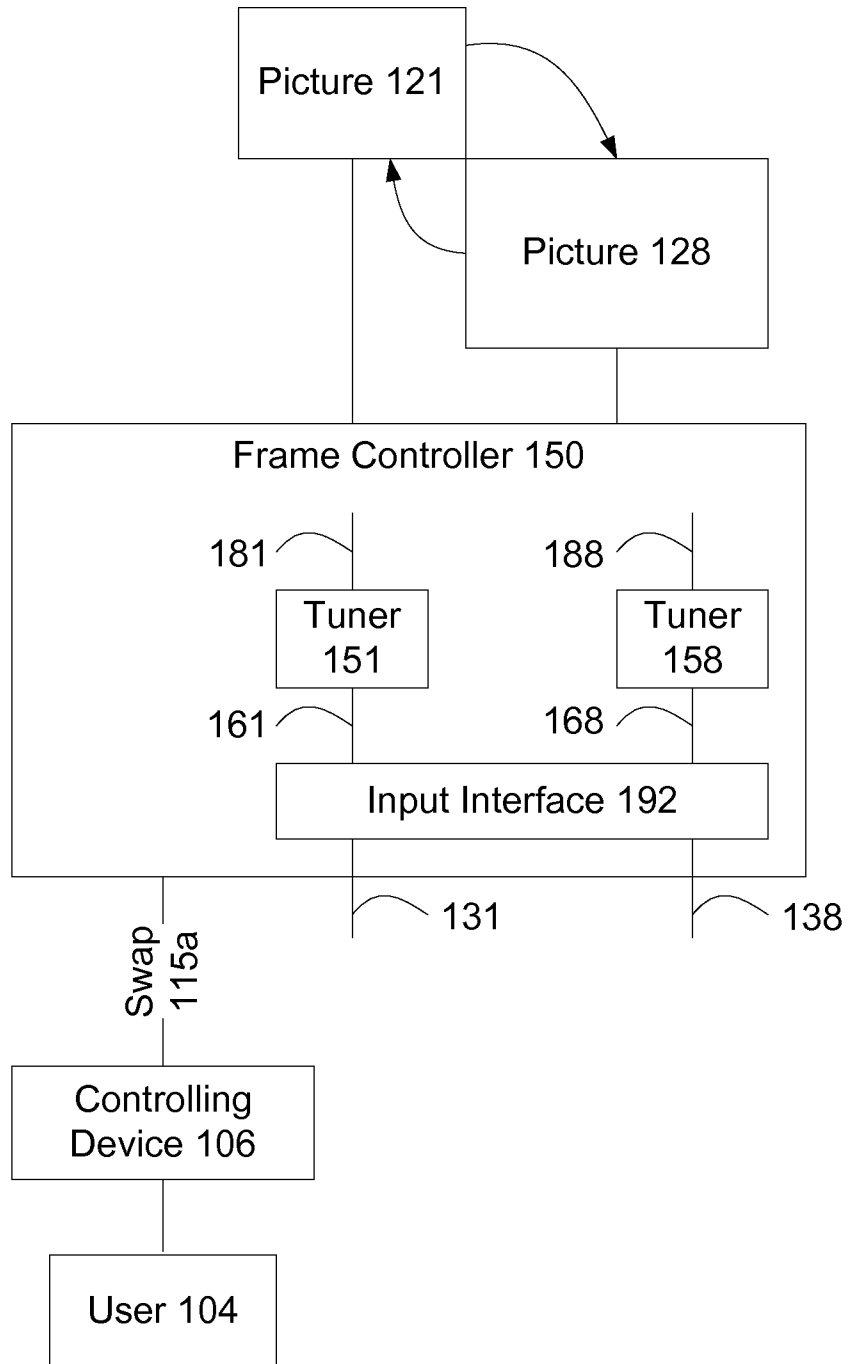


Figure 2a

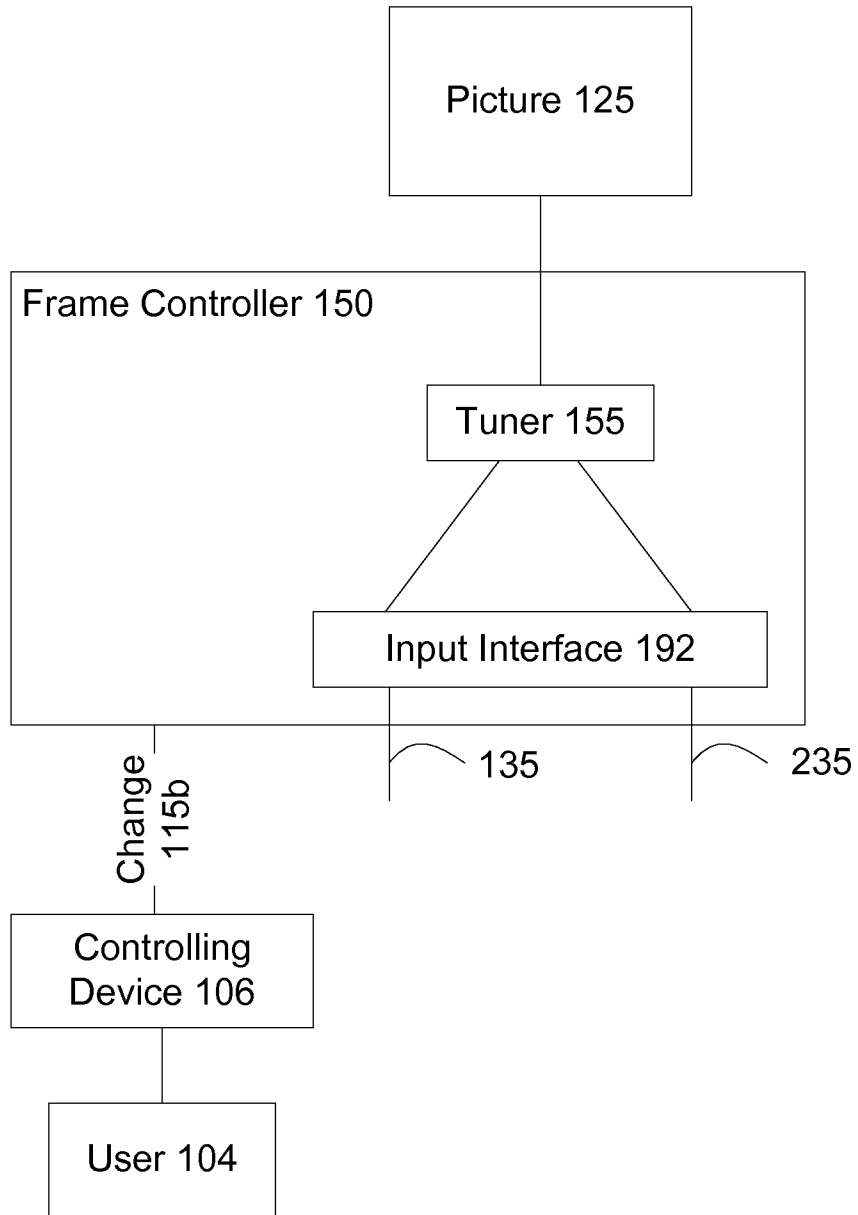


Figure 2b

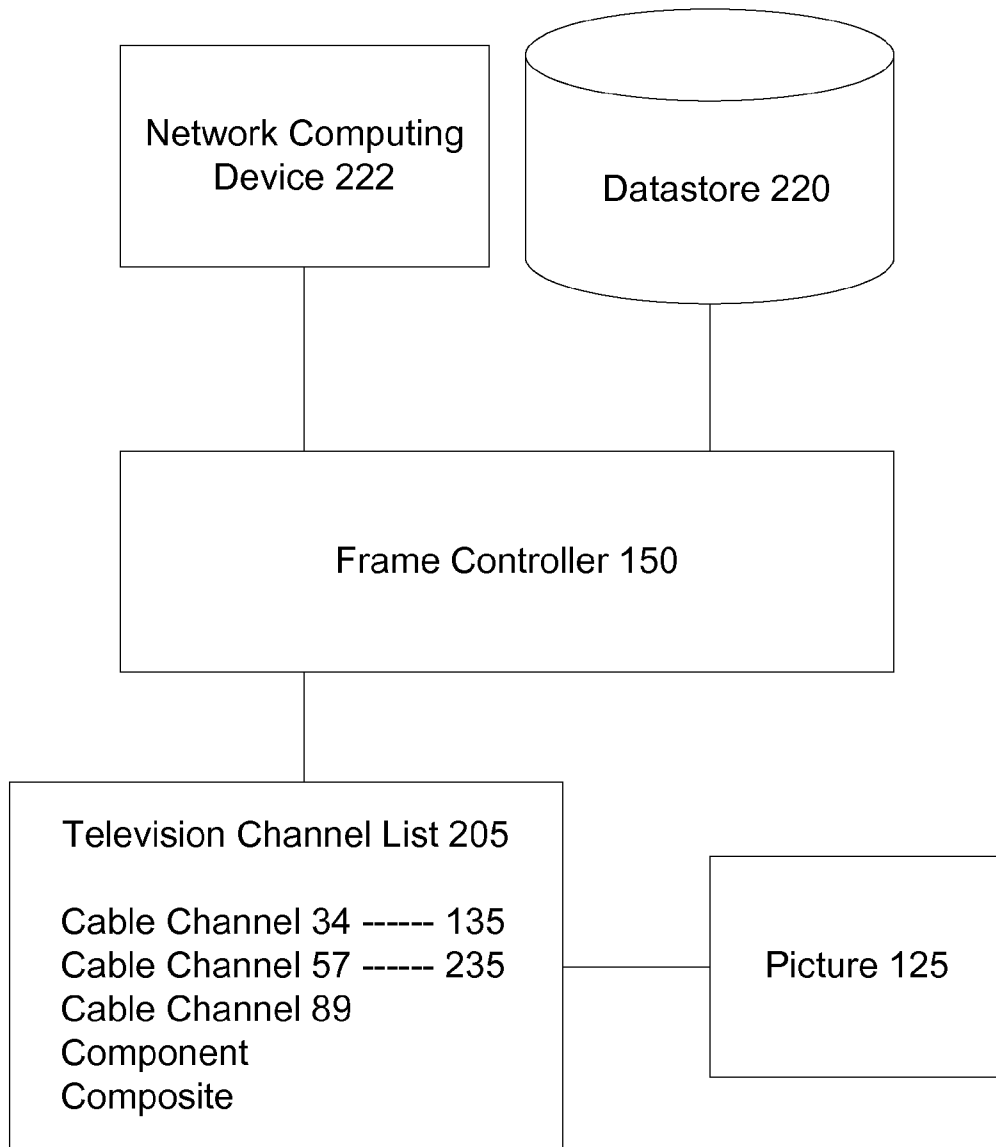


Figure 3a

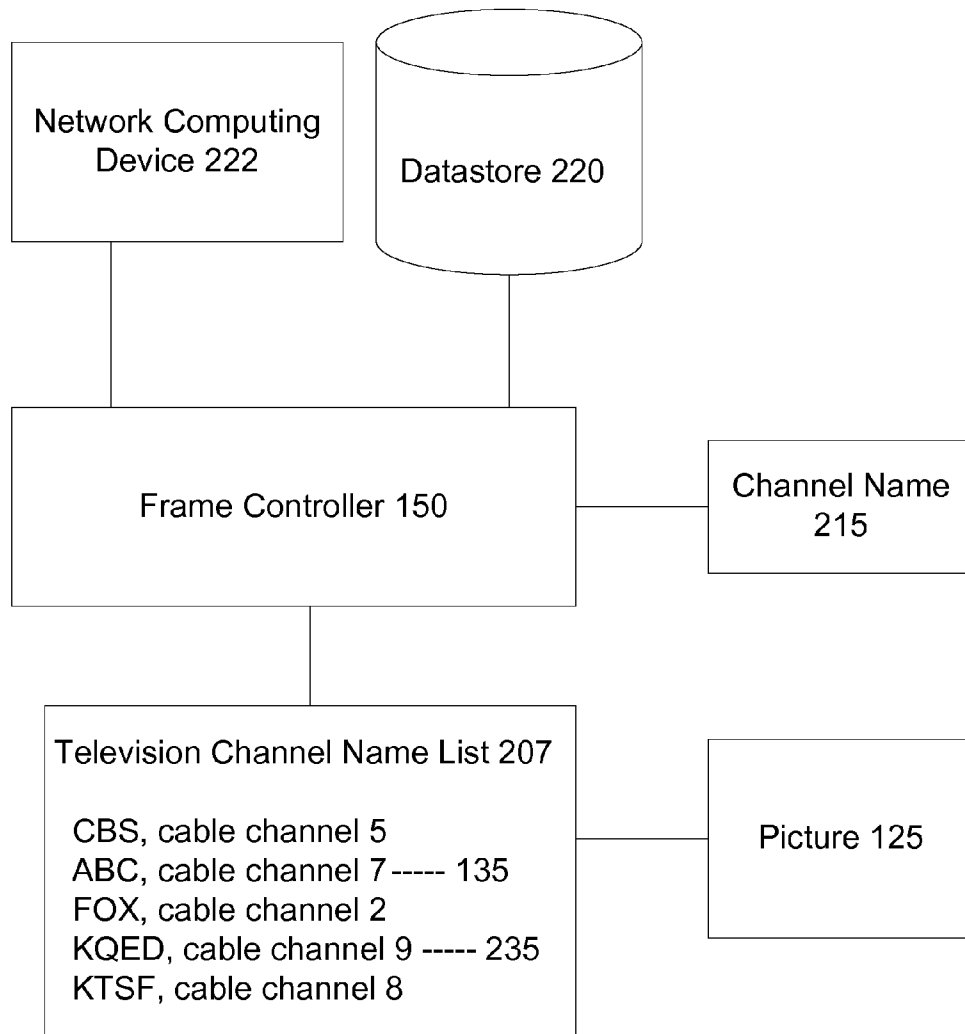


Figure 3b

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PRESENTING MULTIPLE PICTURES ON A TELEVISION

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of co-pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/731,461, filed on Apr. 2, 2007.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention generally relates to television, and more particularly, to a system and method to display multiple pictures on a television set.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The introduction of High Definition Television (HDTV) and the flat panel display has led to new and pleasant experience in watching television. The slimness of a flat panel television set saves space and allows a consumer to place a larger television in a room of limited size. HDTV sets support high resolution and better picture quality. Many HDTV sets sold today are flat panel television sets.

Along with the improved resolution and picture quality, the trend in HDTV sales has been towards a general increase in the size of the average television display. For example, in United States, the average size of a HDTV set sold is now approximately 30 inches, diagonal. In some Asian countries, the average size is even larger than 32 inches.

A large screen allows a consumer to more comfortably view multiple pictures. For example, a consumer may watch the Super Bowl on a large picture on the display screen, while simultaneously viewing an NBA game between the Sacramento Kings and the LA Lakers on a smaller picture, a local college basketball between Stanford and Berkeley on a third picture, and a hockey game between New York Islanders and Anaheim Ducks on a fourth picture on the television display. Not to miss any important news, the consumer may view CNN or FOX on a fifth picture. Last but not least, they may also view a sixth picture, such as from a baby monitor their 8-month old baby's room, at the same time. On a traditional smaller television screen, having six picture frames displaying simultaneously on the screen would necessitate that at least some of the picture frames would be so small as to be difficult to view at an average or normal viewing distance. With the large screen, however, more the larger display area allows for more picture detail to be discerned at the same distance than with a smaller television screen.

Currently, there are several ways to view multiple pictures simultaneously on a television set. Picture in picture (PIP) allows two pictures to be shown on a television set at the same time, with a smaller picture displayed on top of, or overlaying, a larger picture. Since the smaller picture overlays the larger picture, the larger picture is not entirely visible. This is often extremely inconvenient, as the overlaid picture may cover a portion of the larger picture of interest to the viewer. For example, the overlaid portion might cover the end zone of a football game.

Moreover, conventional PIP often does not display the overlaid pictures in their intended resolution or aspect ratio.

Also, there are PC television cards that can generate and present for display thumb-nail size pictures of many channels, and allow a user to select a channel to view from the small pictures. These small pictures are intended for channel selection purposes. They are small and difficult to be watched over a long period of time. Moreover, the PC television card

can only tune to one channel at a time, thus the television channels are scanned one at a time to refresh the pictures. Due to limited processing speed, not all images and sounds of a given television channel are captured by the PC television card. The scanning and tuning speed may be so slow such that the pictures are effectively displayed as still images, or at best in a slow motion manner.

When going from a relatively small conventional television display to a larger and flatter display having improved resolution, consumers expect a major change in their enjoyment of the television viewing experience, especially after they have invested in a good quality large screen HDTV set.

Thus, there is a need to display multiple pictures on a high resolution large screen television set without overlaying another picture, while preserving the high resolution of the displayed pictures.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An aspect of the present invention provides a television system including an input interface for receiving video data from a plurality of video streams and transferring the video data to a frame controller in communication with a television display. Each of the plurality of video streams has a display aspect ratio, and the frame controller causes the video data from each of the plurality of different video streams to be displayed in a separate frame on the television display. Each frame occupies an area of the television display separate from an area occupied by any other frame.

In another aspect of the invention, the input interface receives video data from one or more sources selected from the list including broadcast television, cable television, satellite television, video cassette player (VCR), and digital versatile disk (DVD).

In one aspect of the invention, the input interface receives video data in one or more of the following formats: NTSC, PAL, and HDTV.

In another aspect of the invention, the input interface includes one or more of a coaxial interface, a radio frequency (RF) interface, a high-definition multimedia interface (HDMI), component interface, composite interface, an Ethernet interface, or a wireless network interface.

In one aspect of the invention, the input interface includes a wireless network. Any wireless network may be used, including a Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN), a Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access (WiMax) network, or and Ultra-wideband (UWB) network.

In another aspect of the invention, the frame controller includes a plurality of tuners, each configured to generate a sub-frame signal from the video data from one of the video streams, with each sub-frame signal corresponding to one of the separate display frames. The frame controller is further configured to combine the sub-frame signals into a frame signal for display on the television display.

Another aspect of the invention also includes a control device for communicating instructions to the frame controller. The communicated instructions include what video streams are to be displayed in which frames.

In another aspect of the invention, the frame controller communicates with the control device by infrared signals, radio signals, or a data network. If a data network is used, it may be any of Ethernet, WLAN, WiMAX, or any other data network.

In another aspect of the invention, the control device is a remote control, a cell phone, a personal computer or a laptop computer.

Another aspect of the present invention provides a method for displaying video from a plurality of video streams on a television display. The method includes inputting video data from the plurality of video streams to a frame controller, each video stream having a display aspect ratio, causing the video data from each of the plurality of video streams to be displayed in a separate frame on the television display. Each display frame occupies an area of the television display separate from the area occupied by any other frame.

Another aspect of the present invention provides a television system including an input interface for receiving high definition television (HDTV) video data from a plurality of video streams and transferring the HDTV video data to a frame controller in communication with a television display. Each of the plurality of video streams has a display aspect ratio, and the frame controller causes the HDTV video data from each of the plurality of different video streams to be displayed in high resolution a separate frame on the television display. At least one of the video streams is displayed in a frame having a height and a width in proportion to the video stream's aspect ratio. Furthermore, each frame further occupies an area of the television display separate from an area occupied by any other frame

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE FIGURES

FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram illustrating a television set with a multi-picture frame;

FIG. 1a is a schematic diagram illustrating a picture and a frame controller in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a schematic diagram illustrating controlling operations of a multi-picture frame, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2a is a schematic diagram depicting a process to swap the television channel of two displayed pictures, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2b is a schematic diagram depicting a process to change a television channel of a display picture, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3a is a schematic diagram depicting the use of a television channel selection list for selecting a television channel to display, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 3b is a schematic diagram depicting the use of a television channel name list for selecting a television channel to display, in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

In the following description, for purposes of explanation, specific numbers, materials and configurations are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the invention. It will be apparent, however, to one having ordinary skill in the art, that the invention may be practiced without these specific details. In some instances, well-known features may be omitted or simplified so as not to obscure the present invention. Furthermore, reference in the specification to "one embodiment" or "an embodiment" means that a particular feature, structure or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment of the invention. The appearances of the phrase "in an embodiment" in various places in the specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment.

The term "video data" referred to in the descriptions of various embodiments of the invention herein described is intended to generally describe electronic audio and video signals containing or incorporating video for display on a television or other video display device. This term is used in the broadest sense as known in the electronic arts, and may include analog and/or digital signals. Likewise, the term "video stream" is used in a non-limiting fashion and generally refers to the collection of video data, together with any carrier signals, data headers or other electronic information, which singularly or taken together allow the described embodiments to operate. For example, a digital video stream from a given video source might include multiple packets of compressed video data, each packet or group thereof having one or more packet headers. Typically, one or more of the headers includes information relating to the video data, such as the compression algorithm used, the aspect ratio, etc.

The term "aspect ratio" referred to in the descriptions of the various embodiments of the invention herein described refers to the ratio of the width of the video display image to the height of the video display image. For most NTSC television display images the current aspect ratio is 4:3. High-definition Television (HDTV) uses an aspect ratio of 16:9, which is similar to the aspect ratio used by motion pictures. Reference herein to displaying a video stream in a frame having a height and a width proportional to the video stream's aspect ratio means that an HDTV video stream is displayed filling a frame having a width:height ratio of 16:9. Similarly, a standard NTSC television video stream would be displayed filling a frame having a Width:height ratio of 4:3.

As used herein, the terms "picture frame" and "frame" refer to the borders of a displayed picture. Unless otherwise specified, a picture frame does not necessarily have a border of any particular width, i.e., a displayed picture might occupy the entire area of the picture frame, or the picture frame may include a border. Reference to locations on a display device may be made by referring to either the location of the picture frame or to the location of displayed picture itself, without limitation. Reference to the size of a picture frame refers to the height and width of the frame, and frames of differing width and/or differing height are referred to as being of different sizes.

As used herein, the term "picture" refers to the whole of the display image and its picture frame, unless otherwise indicated, without limitation.

An embodiment of the present invention advantageously provides for the display of multiple pictures on a high resolution large screen television set without overlaying another picture, while preserving the high resolution and aspect ratio of the displayed pictures.

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a television set **100** displaying a multi-picture frame and a frame controller **150**. Television set **100** is an electronic device that receives and displays images and sounds. In one embodiment, television set **100** receives images and sounds as video data or a video stream from a television channel **131**, which may originate from a broadcast television network, a cable television network, a satellite television network, or Internet Protocol television (IPTV) network. Alternatively, the video data may originate from a VCR, a DVD player, a digital video recorder (DVR), a set top box, or any other video source.

In an embodiment, television set **100** includes a screen capable of displaying a multi-picture frame **120** large enough for a user to comfortably watch multiple pictures from 6 feet away. In one embodiment television set **100** has a screen size of at least 32 inches, or 80 cm. In another embodiment, a user

watches television set **100** from 15 feet away, and the screen size is at least 60 inches or 150 cm.

Multi-picture frame **120** includes multiple pictures **121**, **123**, **125**, **127**, **128**, **129**. Picture **128** is a major picture having a display size larger than the smaller pictures **121**, **123**, **125**, **127** and **129**. Multi-picture frame **120** differs from picture-in-picture (PIP) in that a small picture does not overlay over the large picture **128** in multi-picture frame **120**. Moreover, the large picture **128** does not occupy the full screen, as in a conventional PIP.

In an exemplary embodiment, television set **100** has a screen size of 32 inches diagonal, picture **128** has a size of 22 inches diagonal, and picture **121** has a size of 9 inches diagonal. In another exemplary embodiment, television set **100** has a screen size of 40 inches diagonal, picture **128** has a size of 27 inches diagonal, and picture **121** has a size of 12 inches diagonal. In still another exemplary embodiment, television set **100** has a screen size of 60 inches diagonal, picture **128** has a size of 42 inches diagonal, and picture **121** has a size of 16 inches diagonal.

In various embodiments, picture **128** may have a picture resolution and aspect ratios of NTSC standard, defined by National Television System Committee, Phase Alternating Line (PAL), DVD video, or HDTV. In one embodiment, picture **128** has a better picture resolution than NTSC, PAL or HDTV.

The layout of the multiple pictures depicted in FIG. 1 is exemplary in nature. In various embodiments the number, dimensions and positions of the various pictures or picture frames may differ. For example, in one embodiment the size of large picture **128** is as depicted, but the sizes of the small pictures are different.

FIG. 1a is a block diagram depicting a picture **124** and a frame controller **150**. Picture **124** can be a larger picture **128** or smaller picture **127**, as depicted in FIG. 1. In an embodiment, picture **124** displays images and sounds, i.e., the video signal of television channel **134**. In one embodiment, picture **124** displays cable television channel **34**, or video from a DVD player. Typically different pictures such as picture **123** and picture **129** display different television channels **133** and **139**. For example, in one embodiment, picture **123** displays cable television channel **34**, picture **129** displays broadcast television channel **48**, picture **123** displays satellite television channel **93**, and picture **127** displays a movie from a VCR.

Referring once again to FIG. 1, in an embodiment of the invention, pictures **121**, **123**, **125**, **127**, **128**, and **129** display television channels **131**, **133**, **135**, **137**, **138** and **139**, respectively.

In one embodiment, television **120** displays the sounds of the largest picture **128** and not of other pictures. Alternatively, in another embodiment, television **120** may display the sounds of picture **129** or of another picture as selected by the user.

Frame controller **150** controls multi-picture frame **120**. In an embodiment, frame controller **150** includes input interface **192** connecting to television channels **131**, **133**, **135**, **137**, **138** and **139**. Input interface **192** may include any of a coaxial interface, a Radio Frequency (RF) interface, a High-Definition Multimedia interface (HDMI), a component interface such as YPbPr or YCbCr interface, a composite interface, an Ethernet interface, or a wireless network interface. Frame controller **150** receives video streams of the said television channels from the input interface **192**.

Frame controller **150** connects to television set **100**. In one embodiment, frame controller **150** includes an output interface **195** connecting to television set **100**. Frame controller **150** sends frame signal **180** for multi-picture frame **120** over

output interface **195** to television set **100**. In one embodiment, output interface **195** may include an RF interface, an HDMI interface, an S-video interface, a component interface, or a composite interface. Output interface **195** may include a wireless network such as a Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN), a Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access (WiMax), or an Ultra-Wideband (UWB) network.

Referring back to FIG. 1a, frame controller **150** includes a tuner **154** handling a video stream or signal for picture **124**. Based on television channel **134** of picture **124**, tuner **154** selects television channel **134** from input interface **192**, receives the video stream or signal **164** of television channel **134**, transforms channel video stream or signal **164** to sub-frame signal **184**.

In FIG. 1, frame controller **150** includes multiple tuners **151**, **153**, **155**, **157**, **158**, **159** corresponding to multiple pictures **121**, **123**, **125**, **127**, **128**, and **129**, accordingly. Tuners **151**, **153**, **155**, **157**, **158** and **159** generate sub-frame signals **181**, **183**, **185**, **187**, **188** and **189**. Frame controller **150** combines sub-frame signals **181**, **183**, **185**, **187**, **188** and **189** into frame signal **180**, and transmits frame signal **180** over output interface **195** to television set **100**. Television set **100** subsequently displays frame signal **180**.

In one embodiment, television set **100** includes the frame controller **150**. In such an embodiment the output interface **195** may be an internal bus or other connection within the television set **100**.

FIG. 2 illustrates controlling operations of a multi-picture frame **120**. In an embodiment of the invention, frame controller **150** controls operations of the multi-picture frame **120**, and a user **104** uses a controlling device **106** to instruct frame controller **150**. Frame controller **150** connects to the controlling device **106** through, for example infrared signals, radio signals, or a data network such as Ethernet, WLAN, or WiMax. In alternative embodiments, the controlling device **106** is a remote control, a mobile device such as a cell phone, a personal computer or a laptop.

FIGS. 2a and 2b are block diagrams illustrating picture swapping and changing operations, respectively, in an exemplary embodiment of the invention.

In FIG. 2a, frame controller **150** provides a swap operation **115a** swapping picture **121** with picture **128**. User **104** selects, using controlling device **106**, picture **121** and picture **128**. The user **104** then selects swap operation **115a**. In response to receiving the swap operation **115a** signal from the controlling device **106**, frame controller **150** informs tuner **151** to transform channel signal **161** to sub-frame signal **181** using a large picture resolution of picture **128**. Frame controller **150** informs tuner **158** to transform channel signal **168** to sub-frame signal **188** using a small picture resolution of picture **121**. When frame controller **150** composes sub-frame signals **181**, **183**, **185**, **187**, **188** and **189**, frame controller **150** places sub-frame signal **188** to the location of picture **121** and sub-frame signal **181** to the location of picture **128**.

The replacement of picture **128** by picture **121** may be performed in several ways. In an embodiment, frame controller **150** informs tuner **158** to select television channel **131**. Tuner **158** receives channel signals **168** from television channel **131**, transforms channel signals **168** to sub-frame signal **188**. In another embodiment, frame controller **150** informs tuner **158** not to transform channel signal **168**. Frame controller **150** informs tuner **151** to transform channel signal **161** to sub-frame signal **188** using picture resolution of picture **128**, in addition to sub-frame signal **181** using current small picture resolution of picture **121**. Frame controller places sub-frame signal **188** to the location of picture **128**.

A user **104** may swap two small pictures, such as picture **123** and picture **125**, rather than swapping a small picture and a large picture.

As depicted in FIG. **2b**, in an embodiment, frame controller **150** provides a change operation **115b** to change a television channel of a displayed picture. In exemplary operation, a user **104** selects picture **125**, which is displaying television channel **135**. Next, user **104** selects the change channel operation **115b** using the controlling device **106**, and further selects another television channel to display. In one embodiment, the user **104** selects the new television channel directly, whereas, in an alternative embodiment, the user **104** selects the next channel in a sequence of channels, or the previous channel, or another video source altogether, such as DVD player. In one embodiment, the user **104** keys in a television channel number or name. Frame controller **150** determines television channel **235** and informs tuner **155** to switch to television channel **235**.

FIGS. **3a** and **3b** illustrate the use of a television channel selection list and a television channel name list, respectively, for selecting a television channel to display.

In one embodiment, frame controller **150** determines the second television channel **235** based on picture **125**. For example, picture **125** may be associated with a pre-determined television channel list **205** for picture **125**. FIG. **3a** illustrates television channel list **205** for picture **125**. Picture **125** is currently displaying television channel **135**. When the user **104** selects the next television channel, frame controller **150** determines the second television channel **235** from television channel list **205** to be cable channel **57**. In another, frame controller **150** connects to a datastore **220** that includes television channel list **205**. Frame controller **150** matches picture **125** against datastore **220** and retrieves television channel list **205**.

In another embodiment, frame controller **150** queries a network computing device **222** that includes television channel list **205**. Frame controller **150** sends picture **125** and television channel **135** to computing device **222**. Frame controller **150** obtains television channel **235** from computing device **222**.

In an embodiment, the user **104** specifies television channel **235** by channel name **215**, as depicted in FIG. **3b**. Frame controller **150** matches channel name **215** against television channel name list **207** and retrieves the corresponding television channel **235**. In one embodiment, frame controller **150** connects a datastore **220** that includes television channel name list **207**. Frame controller **150** matches picture **125** against datastore **220** and retrieves television channel name list **207**.

In another embodiment, frame controller **150** queries a network computing device **222** that includes television channel name list **207**. Frame controller **150** sends picture **125** and channel name **215** to computing device **222**. Frame controller **150** obtains television channel **235** from computing device **222**.

Numerous other operations may be performed by the frame controller **150** as directed by a user **104**. For example, operation **115** can be used to increase or reduce the size of picture **128**. In one embodiment, operation **115** can be to swap the picture whose sounds are audible between picture **123** and picture **128**. In another embodiment, frame controller **150** connects to a recorder such as a DVD recorder, and operation **115** can be used to record television channel **135** of picture **125**. In yet another embodiment, operation **115** can be used to restart a television program of television channel **137** of picture **127**, or to pause, fast forward or fast backward television channel **137** of picture **127**.

Although the invention herein has been described with reference to particular embodiments, it is to be understood that these embodiments are merely illustrative of the principles and applications of the present invention. It is therefore to be understood that numerous modifications may be made to the illustrative embodiments and that other arrangements may be devised without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A television system, comprising:

a first input interface for receiving a plurality of video streams and for transferring the plurality of video streams to a frame controller, wherein each of the plurality of video streams correspond to a different video channel;

a second input interface for receiving a command from a control device;

the frame controller causing each of the plurality of received video streams to be simultaneously displayed in corresponding separate, non-overlapping frames on a display, each frame occupying an area of the display separate from an area occupied by any other frame, wherein the non-overlapping frames comprise at least:

a first frame displaying a first video stream, wherein the displaying of the first video stream comprises displaying first video data and playing first audio data of the first video stream;

a second frame smaller in size than the first frame, the second frame displaying a second video stream different from the first video stream, wherein the displaying of the second video stream comprises displaying second video data of the second video stream and not playing second audio data of the second video stream; and

a third frame smaller in size than the first frame, the third frame displaying a third video stream different from the first and second video streams, wherein the displaying of the third video stream comprises displaying third video data of the third video stream and not playing third audio data of the third video stream; and

the frame controller further, based on the command, causing the display of the first and second video streams in the first and second frames to be modified, wherein the modified display of the first video stream comprises displaying the first video data of the first video stream in the second frame and not playing the first audio data of the first video stream, wherein the modified display of the second video stream comprises displaying the second video data in the first frame and playing the second audio data of the second video stream.

2. The television system of claim 1, wherein the first frame has a first height and a first width, wherein the second frame has a second height and a second width, wherein the command comprises a swap operation for swapping the first and second video streams displayed in the first and second frames, wherein the causing the display to be modified further comprises:

causing the first video stream to be displayed in the second frame having the second height and the second width; and

causing the second video stream to be displayed in the first frame having the first height and the first width.

3. The television system of claim 1, further comprising the control device, wherein the frame controller receives the command from the control device.

9

4. The television system of claim 3, wherein the control device comprises: a cellular telephone; a laptop computer; a personal computer; or a mobile computing device.

5. The television system of claim 4, wherein the control device sends the command based on a user selection while the user is viewing the display.

6. The television system of claim 4, wherein the control device communications with the frame controller over a data network.

7. The television system of claim 1, wherein the first frame has a first height and a first width in proportion to the first video stream's aspect ratio,

wherein the second frame has a second height and a second width in proportion to the second video stream's aspect ratio,

wherein the third frame has a third height and a third width in proportion to the third video stream's aspect ratio, wherein the third video stream's aspect ratio is different from the second video stream's aspect ratio,

wherein the causing the display to be modified further comprises: causing the display of the first and second video streams in the first and second frames to be modified according to the first height and the first width of the first frame and according to the second height and the second width of the second frame.

8. A method for displaying a plurality of video streams on a display, comprising:

receiving a plurality of video streams and transferring the plurality of video streams to a frame controller, wherein each of the plurality of video streams correspond to a different video channel;

receiving a command from a control device;

causing, by the frame controller, each of the plurality of received video streams to be simultaneously displayed in corresponding separate, non-overlapping frames on a display, each frame occupying an area of the display separate from an area occupied by any other frame, wherein the non-overlapping frames comprise at least:

a first frame displaying a first video stream, wherein the displaying of the first video stream comprises displaying first video data and playing first audio data of the first video stream;

a second frame smaller in size than the first frame, the second frame displaying a second video stream different from the first video stream, wherein the displaying of the second video stream comprises displaying second video data of the second video stream and not playing second audio data of the second video stream; and

a third frame smaller in size than the first frame, the third frame displaying a third video stream different from the first and second video streams, wherein the displaying of the third video stream comprises display-

10

ing third video data of the third video stream and not playing third audio data of the third video stream; and in response to receiving the command, causing, by the frame controller, the display of the first and second video streams in the first and second frames to be modified, wherein the modified display of the first video stream comprises displaying the first video data of the first video stream in the second frame and not playing the first audio data of the first video stream, wherein the modified display of the second video stream comprises displaying the second video data in the first frame and playing the second audio data of the second video stream.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the first frame has a first height and a first width, wherein the second frame has a second height and a second width, wherein the command comprises a swap operation for swapping the first and second video streams displayed in the first and second frames, wherein the causing the display to be modified further comprises:

causing the first video stream to be displayed in the second frame having the second height and the second width; and

causing the second video stream to be displayed in the first frame having the first height and the first width.

10. The method of claim 8, further comprising the control device, wherein the frame controller receives the command from the control device.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the control device comprises: a cellular telephone; a laptop computer; a personal computer; or a mobile computing device.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the control device sends the command based on a user selection while the user is viewing the display.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein the control device communications with the frame controller over a data network.

14. The method of claim 8, wherein the first frame has a first height and a first width in proportion to the first video stream's aspect ratio,

wherein the second frame has a second height and a second width in proportion to the second video stream's aspect ratio,

wherein the third frame has a third height and a third width in proportion to the third video stream's aspect ratio, wherein the third video stream's aspect ratio is different from the second video stream's aspect ratio,

wherein the causing the display to be modified further comprises: causing the display of the first and second video streams in the first and second frames to be modified according to the first height and the first width of the first frame and according to the second height and the second width of the second frame.

* * * * *