

**CONTENT DELIVERING METHOD, CONTENT
DELIVERING SYSTEM, AND CONTENT
DELIVERING PROGRAM**

BACKGROUNDS OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to a content delivering method and a content delivering system capable of improving the convenience of both a content rental dealer and a customer at rental of content data, and a storing medium with such a content delivering program stored there.

[0003] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0004] When a customer rents audio content stored in a storing medium such as a CD and the like and video content stored in a storing medium such as a video cassette, a DVD, and the like, he or she must go to a rental shop on the way home or near his or her house in many cases. **FIG. 9** is a view for use in describing the conventional rental form. Hereinafter, audio content and video content may be generally referred to as content simply.

[0005] In rental, a customer generally selects a favorite package from a lot of packages displayed on racks and carries it to a reception counter within the rental shop. At this time, a customer is often required to present a membership card indicating that he or she is a rental member. A clerk gets the item number attached on the package and the customer number attached on the membership card to be read out by a controller such as a POS system and the like, collects a rental charge after confirming the rental period, and lends the package to the customer. Here, a package means a jacket and the like for wrapping a storing medium such as a CD, a DVD, and the like with the content data stored therein.

[0006] Further, a customer is frequently required to become a rental membership of a rental shop at the initial rental, and at the same time, he or she is frequently requested to make a membership card. At this time, a customer is required to present an identification card with name, telephone number, address, and the like described there, for the purpose of compensation for loss and theft of a rental item. As this identification card, there are, for example, driver's license, a student identification card, and the like. Further, a customer is sometimes required to subscribe to a subscriber line when joining a member, for the above same purpose.

[0007] In the above rental form, a customer must return a package, since it is a rental package, to the rental shop by the expiration date of a rental period. Namely, a customer is required to go to a rental shop at least twice when borrowing and returning it, which becomes a troublesome labor.

[0008] Even if a customer visits a rental shop to desire the rental of some package, he or she cannot rent the desired package in vain in some cases: for example, where the rental shop doesn't deal with the package or where it is now out for rent by another customer and he or she must wait for it by the return date. Especially, on the rental start date of a popular package of current topic, there often occurs the above situation. If a customer visits a rental shop earlier than any other customer, he or she can rent a desired package. This conventional rental form that "first come, first win", however, is inconvenient for businessmen and the like on the way home.

[0009] In some cases, a customer may be required to subscribe to a subscriber line when joining a rental member, and the basic charge as well as the installation charge are required in subscribing to the subscriber line. Especially, this basic charge itself burdens a person living alone because such person is often absent from his or her house. A person living alone, however, is a main customer in the rental business. Under these circumstances, this economical burden can be an obstacle to securing customers, also for a dealer of renting content data (hereinafter, referred to as a content rental dealer).

[0010] On the other hand, a content rental dealer is required to secure a site for a shop when starting this business. At this time, many content rental dealers are required to secure a large site or a large floor for a shop in order to display many rental packages. Since a customer directly visits a shop, a shop must be located on a place of good geographical conditions, such as in front of a station, along a big street, and the like. Therefore, a person who starts the content rental business is burdened with extravagant initial investment.

[0011] Further, in the content rental dealer, since responding to customer's wide taste is a requisite for increasing sales, a content rental dealer needs to prepare a wide range of various packages, and needs to secure the number of the packages which are likely to increase the demand for rental at a special period, so as to gain the maximum achievement results at the period. Therefore, it is necessary for a content rental dealer to secure the latest package released in every week, every month, and the like and at the same time to secure the package having the demand for rental though it is old. Accordingly, a content rental dealer necessarily has an extremely large stock of packages and he or she is troubled with the adequate number of stocks and selection of a package expected to get a good achievement result. Namely, a content rental dealer may be sometimes troubled with harmony of the cost of securing the stock and the achievement results for the cost.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0012] Then, in order to solve the above problems, the present invention aims to provide a content delivering method and a content delivering system capable of improving the convenience of both a content rental dealer and a customer at rental of content data, and a storing medium with such a content delivering program stored therein.

[0013] According to the first aspect of the invention, a content delivering method for providing information to a customer through the Internet, wherein

[0014] a content rental dealer provides a customer with a secret key valid only during a rental period and encrypted content data, in rental of content data, and

[0015] a customer reproduces the content data with the secret key.

[0016] In the preferred construction, the content delivering method comprising the steps of

[0017] creating a secret key valid only during a rental period, based on received order information about rental of content data,

[0018] specifying the content data to be delivered based on the order information,