

charge has been actually paid. This confirmation may be performed by the content rental dealer's filling the bankbook or by a notice through a telephone from the financial institution.

[0086] The center server **130** displays an order information confirmation screen as shown in **FIG. 7** on the display unit of the user terminal **110** after the settlement of the rental charge. **FIG. 7** is an explanatory view showing an example of the order information confirmation screen. A customer who made an order presses a confirmation button by the mouse operation and the like if there is no problem in the displayed content on the order information confirmation screen, and when he or she wants to cancel the order, he or she presses a cancel button (Step **S304**). The user terminal **110** sends the information about whether the confirmation button is pressed or the cancel button is pressed, to the center server **130**. If the settlement of the rental charge is impossible, the center server **130** may stop the processing hereafter and it may notify the user terminal **110** to the effect that the selection procedure of the payment method should be tried again.

[0087] When the cancel button is pressed, the center server **130** stops the processing hereafter. At this time, it may notify the user terminal **110** to the effect that the ordering procedure will be tried again. When the confirmation button is pressed, the center server **130** notifies the delivery server **140** of the delivery start.

[0088] Upon receipt of the delivery start notice, the delivery server **140** creates a secret key with the term of validity, which is effective only within the rental period. The secret key includes a time stamp at a content deliver time and a time stamp of the validity term as the internal information. The time stamp may adopt the value of a timer in an information terminal such as a personal computer as the standard, and it may adopt the absolute time on the Internet as the standard. Since the "secret key delivery date and time" is "simultaneously with this order", the delivery server **140** sends thus created secret key to the delivery destination terminal **120** and the content store server **150**. The delivery destination terminal **120** and the content store server **150** hold the received secret key as a secret key file.

[0089] Considering that the "instant" is selected as the "delivery start date and time", the delivery server **140** creates advertisement data in a script language such as Java, and sends the data to the delivery destination terminal **120** prior to the delivery of the content data. The delivery destination terminal **120** displays the received advertisement data on the display unit as the advertisement information (attached information). This advertisement information as the attached information may be displayed until delivery of the content data starts, or until delivery of the content data is completed. The delivery server **140** may stop the delivery of the advertisement information at any time.

[0090] The advertisement information is to be provided by an advertising company and the like, and it includes, for example, information about new content and well-selling content, and specified information for each generation. The content rental dealer may demand a predetermined advertisement charge of the advertising company, for the cost of showing this advertisement information to a customer. At this time, the whole or one of the collected advertisement charge may be passed on to a customer in a rental charge.

[0091] The delivery server **140** instructs the content store server **150** to deliver the content. At this time, the delivery server **140** sends the item number of the ordered content data and the delivery destination specified information (address of the delivery destination terminal **120**) to the content store server **150**. The content store server **150** can specify the content data to be delivered, according to the item number and the delivery destination specified information (address of the delivery destination terminal **120**).

[0092] The content store server **150** extracts the content data to be delivered, from a plurality of stored content data, and encrypts the content data to be delivered, by using the secret key previously received. The encrypted content data is sent to the delivery destination terminal **120**. The delivery destination terminal **120** may receive the specified content data from the content store server **150**, by having access to the delivery server **140** at a predetermined date and time.

[0093] The delivery destination terminal **120** stores the received content data into a storing medium such as a hard disk. Assume that reproducing software for reproducing the received content data is built in the delivery destination terminal **120**. This reproducing software is sent to the delivery destination terminal **120**, for example, prior to the delivery of the content data.

[0094] In the above form of the embodiment, although the description has been made, by way of example, in the case where the "delivery start date and time" is "instant" and the "secret key delivery date and time" is "simultaneously with this order", when the "delivery start date and time" is "customer's desired date and time", the advertisement data may be sent to the delivery destination terminal **120** by that time. Even when the "secret key delivery date and time" is "delivery start time", "delivery completed time", or "customer's desired date and time", the operation is the same as the operation as mentioned above.

[0095] Here, the delivery destination terminal **120** is specified as the delivery destination of the content data, in consideration for a difference in the content storing capacity and the transfer capacity between the user terminal **110** and the delivery destination terminal **120**. For example, when the user terminal **110** is a telephone terminal such as a portable telephone terminal, if the user terminal **110** is specified as the delivery destination of the content data, it takes much time to transfer the data because the data transfer rate is low and hence the communication charge becomes expensive disadvantageously. In order to solve this disadvantage, a terminal having a good transfer condition of the content data is defined as the delivery destination terminal **120**. However, when there is not so much difference in the transfer condition of the content data between the user terminal **110** and the delivery destination terminal **120**, the user terminal **110** may be the delivery destination of the content data.

[0096] A customer activates the reproducing software built in the delivery destination terminal **120** (Step **S305**) when enjoying the content during the rental period. At this time, if the content data can be reproduced, the reproducing software decodes and reproduces the content data, by reference to the secret key file. When the rental period expired, the reproducing software cannot reproduce the content data since the secret key file has been invalidated.

[0097] Since the content data whose rental period expired cannot be reproduced, a customer is released from the conventional trouble of returning back the content data. Further, a customer may delete such content data that cannot be reproduced. Alternatively, the reproducing software may delete such content data.