

[0098] Although the above form of the embodiment has shown the example in which the delivery server 140 sends the advertisement information to the delivery destination terminal 120, the content store server 150 may add the advertisement data to the content data to be delivered as shown in FIG. 8. FIG. 8 is an explanatory view showing an example of the content data. This content data is sent to the delivery destination terminal 120, thereby showing the advertisement information to a customer, before or after the playback of the ordered content data. At this time, the content rental dealer can also collect the advertisement charge from an advertising company and the like.

[0099] The content rental dealer may receive the advertisement information such as release information and event information collectively from an advertising company and the like, and by reference to the customer identification information of all the customers stored in the center server 130, it may select the information to the taste of each customer from the advertisement information and send the information to the corresponding customer (the user terminal 110 or the delivery destination terminal 120) via electronic mail. At this time, the content rental dealer may collect a predetermined charge from an advertising company and the like as the agent charge. Further, it may supply customer's taste data in which the data is classified into each category such as sex, age, and occupation based on the customer identification information of all the customers, to a record company, a movie company, and the like.

[0100] Also at this time, the content rental dealer may collect the information supply charge from a record company, a movie company, and the like. The content rental dealer may pass on the whole or some of thus collected agent charge or information supply charge to a customer into a rental charge. Therefore, a customer can rent content data at a low price, by the content rental dealer's returning the whole or some of the collected agent charge or information supply charge to a rental charge.

[0101] As mentioned above, according to the form of the embodiment, a content rental dealer is provided with the center server 130, the delivery server 140, and the content store server 150, thereby making it possible to supply the content data to the delivery destination terminal 120. Therefore, it is not necessary for the content rental dealer to secure a site for a shop when starting this business, and to bear the cost of the initial investment, maintenance, man power, and the like. Further, since the same content data can be supplied to a plurality of customers through the network 100, it is not necessary for the content rental dealer to prepare a plurality of packages of the same content like the conventional rental shop, thereby reducing the labor in stock control.

[0102] Further, a customer can receive the desired content data at a desired date and time from the content rental dealer by the delivery destination terminal 120 through the network 100. The content data is encrypted by the secret key with validity term, and the delivery destination terminal 120 can reproduce the content data by using the secret key only during the rental period. Accordingly, a customer doesn't need to go to a shop to rent the content data.

[0103] Further, a content rental dealer checks customer's credit authorization through access to a credit authorization network built by a financial company and the like based on the specified information stored in a customer's credit card. After the check of the credit authorization, it settles up a rental charge according to the payment method specified by a customer. Accordingly, even in the case of the first time

rental, it is not necessary for a customer to present his or her identification card, for registration of membership, and to subscribe to a subscriber line, unlike in the conventional way.

[0104] The delivery server 140 sends the advertisement data to the delivery destination terminal 120 prior to the delivery of the content data. Alternatively, the content store server 150 may send the advertisement data, which is attached to the content data, to the delivery destination terminal 120. At this time, the content rental dealer can earn an income other than a rental charge by collecting the advertisement charge from an advertising company. A customer can rent the content data at a low price by the content rental dealer's returning the whole or some of the charge thus collected by the content rental dealer to a rental charge.

[0105] Further, the content rental dealer can create the customer's taste information and the like based on the customer identification information of all the customers stored in the center server 130 and provide this information to another dealer. Additionally, receiving the advertisement information collectively from another dealer, the content rental dealer can select some information to the taste of each customer from the advertisement information, according to the customer identification information of all the customers stored in the center server 130, and send the selected information to the corresponding customer via electronic mail. In the above case, the content rental dealer can collect a predetermined charge from another dealer. Similarly to the case as mentioned above, the whole or some of thus collected charge can be returned to a rental charge.

[0106] Such a business form is being increased, that the audio data encoded by the MP3 (MPEG1 audio layer3) method and the like is sold by every one piece to a customer through the Internet and the like. According to the present invention, since the content data such as the audio data and the like is provided to a customer in a rental way, a customer can receive the rental service of the content data at a lower price than that in the case of the purchase.

[0107] According to the present invention, provided with a server and a content store server, the content rental dealer can provide a customer with the customer's desired content data through the Internet. Therefore, it is not necessary for the content rental dealer to secure a site for a shop when starting the business. Accordingly, the content rental dealer doesn't need to bear the cost of shop maintenance and man power. Since one content data can be supplied to a plurality of customers, the present invention can reduce the labor in stock control. On the other hand, a customer can rent his or her desired content data at his or her convenient time favorably.

[0108] Since the content data provided to a customer is encrypted by a secret key only valid during a rental period, a customer can enjoy the content data only within the rental period. Accordingly, a customer is released from a trouble of going to a shop in order to rent the content data.

[0109] Further, the content rental dealer gains access to a credit authorization network built by a financial institution and the like in the rental of the content data, so as to check a customer's credit authorization, and hence settles up a rental charge in a way specified by a customer. Accordingly, the content rental dealer can collect a rental charge surely. While, a customer is not required to present his or her identification card such as a driver's license and a student identification card, for check of his or her credit authorization, even in the case of renting the content data for the first time.