

Current) adapter **53** and supplies the resultant voltage to the above-mentioned circuits, the CPU **31** through the audio reproducing section **42**.

[0054] Referring to **FIG. 4**, there is shown a general hardware configuration of a server. A CPU **510** executes an OS (Operating System) and various application programs, controlling each component of the server. A ROM **511** stores fixed data among the programs to be executed by the CPU **510** and computational parameters. A RAM **512** provides a work area and a data temporary storage area for the CPU **510**. The ROM **511** and the RAM **512** are connected to the CPU **510** via a bus **530**. An input device **514** such as a keyboard, a display device **515** such as CRT or liquid crystal display, and an external storage device such as hard disk unit, MO, or CD-ROM are connected to the bus **530** via an interface **513**. The bus **530** is connected to the Internet or an intranet (a LAN for example) via a communication section **520**.

[0055] In what follows, an example will be described in which the user of the mobile information terminal **10** performs Web channel registration (or subscription) for continuous use of a service to be provided by a particular content provider selected from among a plurality of predetermined content providers (or official sites) by the user and predetermined charging (for example, XX yen a month) is performed on the purchased service. The Web channel registration will also be referred to as My Menu registration.

[0056] In operation, the PDA **10** first must make user registration with the client service provider **18**. **FIG. 5** shows an example of making this user registration online. In addition to the Web server **413**, the client service provider **18** has a mail server **415**, a customer database management section **416**, and a recommended menu **417**, which are not shown in **FIG. 1**. The recommended menu **417** includes site access information (or a site ID) for selectively accessing above-mentioned prepared official sites. The customer DB **414** is as described before.

[0057] The user registration with the client service provider **18** is made from the mobile information terminal **10** or from a personal computer (PC) **10'**. The user registration from the personal computer **10'** is permitted because this registration requires the user to input comparatively many characters, which is a comparatively cumbersome task to do on the mobile information terminal **10** as described before. The customer management database **414** includes records having the above-mentioned items for each flash ID as shown in **FIG. 6**. At the time of this user registration, the items of My Menu (site ID) have not yet been set. If the user registration for the charging service has not yet been performed at this stage, the items of charging information are not set. It is desirable for the information inputted at the time of the user registration to be encrypted in a method to be described later before transmission.

[0058] Referring to **FIG. 7**, there is shown a general procedure for transferring information between the PDA **10** (client) and each server at the time of the Web channel registration (or so-called subscription or My Menu registration) with a content provider to be performed after the above-described user registration with the client service provider **18**. The user of the PDA **10** accesses the client service provider **18** from a given access point via the Internet connection provider **16** and the Internet to select a particular

IP site of the content provider **17** from the recommended menu **415**. Next, the user of the PDA **10** requests the particular content provider **17** for the subscription via the Internet connection provider **16** and the Internet **(1)**. At this moment, the flash ID, which is the unique identification information of the mobile information terminal **10**, is automatically read by an SSL (Secure Source Layer) compliant browser for example, the retrieved flash ID is encrypted, and the encrypted flash ID is transmitted to the client service provider **18** via the content provider **17**. This processing is transparent to the user. Receiving the request from the user, the content provider **17** requests the client service provider **18** for Web channel registration **(2)**. Receiving the request, the client service provider **18** references the customer DB **414** on the basis of the flash ID to perform user authentication. At the same time, the client service provider **18** checks the charging surrogate service provider **19** for the charging service registration **(3)**. In response, the charging surrogate service provider **19** sends the information indicative whether the user in question has already made the registration for the charging surrogate service or not to the client service provider **18** **(4)**. If the registration has already been made, the client service provider **18** requests the charging surrogate service provider **19** for the additional charging for this new content provider information providing service **(5)**. If the registration has not yet been made, the client service provider **18** requests the charging surrogate service provider **19** for the user registration and, at the same time, charging. After this registration, the information indicative of the registration OK is sent to the client service provider **18** **(6)**. This information may also be separately sent to the user by electronic mail or postal mail.

[0059] When the information indicative of the registration already made or the registration OK comes from the charging surrogate service provider **19**, the client service provider **18** sets the site ID registered as related with the flash ID of the user in question of the customer DB **414**. This becomes the so-called My Menu of the user in question. At the same time, the client service provider **18** sends the message indicative of the registration OK to the content provider **17** **(7)**. Then, the content provider **17** starts distributing the requested content to the PDA **10** **(8)**.

[0060] Referring to **FIG. 8**, there is shown a procedure corresponding to the procedure shown in **FIG. 7** for the user in question to access the site from the PDA **10** after the completion of the Web channel registration described with reference to **FIG. 7**. When the user requests the site in question for a particular piece of content **(1)**, the content provider **17** checks the client service provider **18** whether the Web channel registration has already been made or not **(2)**. The client service provider **18** performs user authentication on the basis of the flash ID and checks the charging surrogate service provider **19** for the user registration for the charging service **(3)**. If the user registration has been made with the charging surrogate service provider **19** **(4)**, the client service provider **18** sends the information indicative of the completion of the Web channel registration to the content provider **17** **(5)**. Consequently, the content provider **17** distributes the requested content to the PDA **10** **(6)**. In the course of this processing, the flash ID which is encrypted for user authentication is used. However, the encryption process is transparent to the user, so that the user may only select the site from the My Menu. Namely, the user need not enter a special user ID every time the user accesses the site.