intended to utilize core unit **12** as the front end. For after market use, i.e., handheld units already in use and incorporating their own internal front ends, mating standard interface coupler **40** can be easily incorporated so that core unit **30** can be coupled and used instead of the internal front end. Here the term "standard interface coupler" is defined as any well known coupler which can be conveniently installed in core unit **30** and in any handheld communication handsets or devices intended to utilize core unit **12** as the front end. Mating standard interface coupler **40** is connected in a well known manner to a transceiver **42** which is formatted for any of the various wireless and/or wired systems. An I/O terminal **44** is illustrated with an antenna **45** attached thereto but it will be understood that terminal **44** could be or could include a connection to various wired systems.

Thus, handheld units for all of the various communications systems (e.g., wireless devices such as AMPS, GSM (a European TDMA cellular phone), Iridium, IS95 (CDMA), Tetra (a European terrestrial trunked radio), and well known wired devices, such as V.34 MODEMs) simply require a transceiver compatible with the various formats and a mating standard interface coupler. Individual front ends can be eliminated. A common core unit **12** is then supplied for each handheld unit or, in cases where an individual desires different handheld units, a single core unit **12** can be used with any of the handheld transceiver units. Also, when an individual wants a new or different communications device he simply purchases a new handheld transceiver unit and uses the old common core unit. Further, in instances where an individual already has a handheld unit with an internal front end, he can simply install the mating standard coupler **40** and use the common core unit for secure communications. This greatly simplifies manufacturing of new handheld transceiver units and substantially reduces the cost to consumers. Therefore, each time that a customer changes to a handheld communication device with a different format or purchases a new or a second type of handheld communication device, he is not required to purchase a new or another encryption module. Because the manufacturer is only required to certify and or test a single front end, the time is substantially reduced and the cost to the consumer is reduced.

While we have shown and described a specific embodiment of the present invention, further modifications and improvements will occur to those skilled in the art. We desire it to be understood, therefore, that this invention is not limited to the particular forms shown and we intend in the appended claims to cover all modifications that do not depart from the spirit and scope of this invention.

What is claimed is:

1. Multiple format secure voice apparatus for communication handsets comprising:

a front end including operator interface elements, an audio circuit coupled to at least one of the operator interface elements and having an audio I/O terminal, an encryption/decryption element coupled to the audio circuit, a coder/decoder element coupled to the audio circuit and the encryption/decryption element, the coder/decoder element having a data I/O terminal, and a control element coupled to at least one operator interface element, the audio circuit, the encryption/decryption element, and the coder/decoder element and having a control I/O terminal; and

a standard interface coupling connected to the audio I/O terminal, the data I/O terminal, and the control I/O terminal, the standard interface coupling being designed to mate with a standard interface coupling on a handheld communication device to operatively couple the front end to a transceiver of the handheld communication device.

2. Multiple format secure voice apparatus for communication handsets as claimed in claim **1** wherein the operator interface elements of the front end include at least one of a speaker, a microphone, a keypad, and a display.

3. Multiple format secure voice apparatus for communication handsets as claimed in claim **1** wherein the coder/decoder element includes one of a vocoder ACELP, VCELP, AMBE, and IMBE.

4. Multiple format secure voice apparatus for communication handsets as claimed in claim **1** wherein the audio circuit includes one of an A-LAW PCM CODEC and a μ-LAW PCM CODEC.

5. Multiple format secure voice apparatus for communication handsets as claimed in claim **1** wherein the coder/decoder element also has a data input terminal for receiving data from an external wired source.

6. Multiple format secure voice apparatus and communication handset comprising:

a core unit comprising: a front end including operator interface elements; an audio circuit coupled to at least one of the operator interface elements and having an audio I/O terminal; an encryption/decryption element coupled to the audio circuit; a coder/decoder element coupled to the audio circuit and the encryption/decryption element, the coder/decoder element having a data I/O terminal; a control element coupled to at least one operator interface element, the audio circuit, the encryption/decryption element, and the coder/decoder element and having a control I/O terminal; and a standard interface coupling connected to the audio I/O terminal, the data I/O terminal, and the control I/O terminal; and

a replaceable unit including a standard interface coupling designed to mate with the standard interface coupling of the core unit and a transceiver coupled to the standard interface coupling of the replaceable unit.

7. Multiple format secure voice apparatus and communication handset as claimed in claim **6** wherein the replaceable unit includes one of a wireless device and a wired device.

8. Multiple format secure voice apparatus and communication handset as claimed in claim **7** wherein the wireless device includes one of a cellular telephone, a remote telephone, a two-way radio, an AMPS, a GSM (a European TDMA cellular phone), an Iridium, an IS95 (CDMA), and a Tetra (a European terrestrial trunked radio), and the wired device includes a V.34 MODEM.

9. Multiple format secure voice apparatus and communication handset as claimed in claim **6** wherein the operator interface elements of the front end include at least one of a speaker, a microphone, a keypad, and a display.

10. Multiple format secure voice apparatus and communication handset as claimed in claim **6** wherein the coder/decoder element includes one of a vocoder, ACELP, VCELP, AMBE, and IMBE.

11. Multiple format secure voice apparatus and communication handset as claimed in claim **6** wherein the audio circuit includes one of an A-LAW PCM CODEC and a μ-LAW PCM CODEC.

12. Multiple format secure voice apparatus and communication handset as claimed in claim **6** wherein the coder/decoder element also has a data input terminal for receiving data from an external wired source.

13. Multiple format secure voice apparatus and communication handset as claimed in claim **6** further including at