

In an alternate embodiment, the MLR determines whether to intercept the call based not just on the caller's information, but also on the called party's information. The system queries the MLR with calling party information such as subscriber ID, location, and type of call. The system also queries the MLR with called party information, such as called party identification. If the MLR has a record that shows the called party should be monitored, an intercept record will be made based on the called party information. Other fields are contemplated for querying the MLR such as the time of the call.

In summary, the method and apparatus of the present invention provides an advantageous means for centralizing the administration of intercept lists in communications systems. The monitoring location register provides a consistent user interface to multiple law enforcement agencies while maintaining intercept list information for a number of communications systems.

While we have shown and described specific embodiments 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. A method of operating a switch in a cellular communications system, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving by the switch a call request from a calling party;  
 sending by the switch calling party information to a register, said register including information relating to monitoring criteria based upon physical location of a party to a call;

receiving by the switch intercept information from said register, said intercept information includes information regarding whether the call should be intercepted; and

routing said call request.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of: responsive to said intercept information, routing said call request to an intercepting party.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said intercept information includes call intercept routing instructions.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein said calling party information includes calling party location information.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of: prior to said step of receiving intercept information, sending called party information to said register.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein said called party information includes called party location information.

7. A method of operating a switch in a cellular communications system, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving a call request for a call from a calling party;  
 sending called party information to a register, said register determining from an intercept list located within said register, based on said call party location information, whether said call request requires monitoring;

receiving intercept information from said register, said intercept information includes a field that specifies whether the call should be intercepted; and

routing said call request.

8. The method of claim 7 further comprising the step of:

responsive to said intercept information, routing said call request to an intercepting party.

9. The method of claim 7 wherein said intercept information includes call intercept routing instructions.

10. The method of claim 7 wherein said called party information includes called party location information.

11. The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of prior to said step of receiving intercept information, sending calling party information to said register.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein said calling party information includes calling party location information.

13. The method of claim 7 wherein said party to a call information includes calling party location information.

14. A method of operating a monitoring location register, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving call request information associated with a call, said call request information includes a calling party location or a called party location; and  
 responsive to said call request information, sending call intercept information.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein said call intercept information includes a field specifying whether the call should be intercepted.

16. The method of claim 14 further comprising the step of prior to said step of sending, searching a database of parties to retrieve said call intercept information.

17. A method of maintaining intercept lists comprising the steps of:

receiving intercept information into a master intercept list, said master intercept list being maintained within a monitoring location register; and  
 disbursing said intercept information to a plurality of switches wherein each of said plurality of switches includes a local intercept list.

18. A method of updating an intercept list comprising the steps of:

a switch receiving a user identification from a user;  
 said switch querying a monitoring location register with said user identification;  
 said monitoring location register sending an intercept list entry to said switch; and  
 said switch updating an intercept list included in said switch with said intercept list entry.

19. The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of: prior to said querying step, said switch receiving call request information from said user;

and wherein said querying step further comprises the step of querying said monitoring location register with said call request information.

20. The method of claim 18 where said user identification includes information relating to said user's current location.

21. A monitor location register comprising:

a data storage device for storing user intercept information, said storage device including an intercept list, said intercept list including a plurality of intercept records, said intercept records including a location data field denoting physical locations in which a user named in user identification data may be monitored by a monitoring authority;

an input interface for receiving call request information; and

an output interface for sending said user intercept information.

22. The monitoring location register of claim 21 wherein said intercept records include calling party location information.