telephones **10**A–C coupled to computers **135**E, integrated access devices **135**C, or caller identification devices **135**B; or wireless phones **135**D. It is known in the art that such devices may be coupled via a single or multiple number of networks **110**.

In some embodiments, integrated access device **135**C may be a personal computer, personal digital assistant (PDA), wireless phone, or other such network-computing device. Integrated access device **135**C may be any apparatus known in the art that is able to communicate on the network **110**.

Caller identification device **135**B may be a caller ID box or other such data-collecting device. In addition to performing caller ID functions, caller identification device **135**B may include features to perform passive call blocking. For example, caller identification device **135**B may be a caller ID box that incorporates a modifiable caller database which is used in determining whether to block a call.

The network **110** may also include other networkable devices known in the art, such as other integrated access devices **135**C, storage media **140**, a call server **135**A, telephone server **150** and wireless telephone base station **160**. Call server **135**A may be any server coupled to network **110** that is accessed in connection with any communication across the network **110**. Call server **135**A may perform passive call blocking as disclosed herein. For example, a call may be routed through a call server **13 5**A that determines whether or not to block the call.

It is well understood in the art that any number or variety of networkable devices or components may be coupled to the network **110** without inventive faculty, such as printers **170**. Examples of other devices include, but are not limited to, servers, computers, workstations, terminals, input devices, output devices, printers, plotters, routers, bridges, cameras, sensors, or any other such device known in the art.

Network **110** may be any communication network known in the art, including a conventional telephone network, the Internet, a local-area-network (LAN), a wide-area-network (WAN), or any system that links a call server **135**A to a telephone **10**. Further, network **110** may be configured in accordance with any topology known in the art, including star, ring, bus, or any combination thereof.

Passive call block device **135** is connected to a network **110** that supports the receipt and transmission of digital packets. Telephone network server **150** may be configured to allow different networks to communicate, as well as communicate with a public switched telephone network (PSTN), plain old telephone service (POTS), Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN), or any other telephone network. In some system embodiments, a call server **135**A may obviate the use of integrated access devices **135**C by call participants.

Furthermore, as shown in FIG. **1**, telephone network server **150** may be coupled to wireless base station **160**, which allows communication to wireless phone **135**D.

Embodiments will now be disclosed with reference to a functional block diagram of an exemplary passive call block device **135** of FIG. **2**, constructed and operative in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Passive call block device **135** runs a multi-tasking operating system and includes at least one processor or central processing unit (CPU) **102**. Processor **102** may be any microprocessor or micro-controller as is known in the art.

The software for programming the processor **102** may be found at a computer-readable storage medium **140** or, alternatively, from another location across network **110**. Processor **102** is connected to computer memory **104**. Passive call block device **135** may be controlled by an operating system (OS) that is executed within computer memory **104**.

Processor **102** communicates with a plurality of peripheral equipment, including communication interface **116**. Additional peripheral equipment may include a display **106**, manual input device **108**, storage medium **140**, microphone **112**, video input **122**, and data port **114**.

Display **106** may be a visual display such as a cathode ray tube (CRT) monitor, a liquid crystal display (LCD) screen, touch-sensitive screen, or other monitors as are known in the art for visually displaying images and text to a user.

Manual input device **108** may be a conventional keyboard, keypad, mouse, trackball, or other input device as is known in the art for the manual input of data.

Storage medium **140** may be a conventional read/write memory such as a magnetic disk drive, floppy disk drive, compact-disk read-only-memory (CD-ROM) drive, transistor-based memory or other computer-readable memory device as is known in the art for storing and retrieving data. Significantly, storage medium **140** may be remotely located from processor **102**, and be connected to processor **102** via a network **110** such as a local area network (LAN), a wide area network (WAN), or the Internet.

Microphone **112** may be any suitable microphone as is known in the art for providing audio signals to processor **102**. In addition, a speaker **118** may be attached for reproducing audio signals from processor **102**. Video input **122** may be a digital or analog video camera device to record still or moving images. In some embodiments, video input **122** may be a scanner device. It is understood that microphone **112**, speaker **118**, and video input **122** may include appropriate digital-to-analog and analog-to-digital conversion circuitry as appropriate.

Data port **114** may be any data port as is known in the art for interfacing with an external accessory using a data protocol such as RS-232, Universal Serial Bus (U SB), or Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Standard No. 1394 ('Firewire'). In some embodiments, data port **114** may be any interface as known in the art for communicating or transferring files across a computer network, examples of such networks include Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP), Ethernet, Fiber Distributed Data Interface (FDDI), token bus, or token ring networks. In addition, on some systems, data port **114** may consist of a modem connected to communication interface **116**. Similarly, communication interface **116** provides connectivity to passive call block device **135** to communicate with a telephone network server **150**. Thus, the communication interface **116** allows the passive call block device **135** to communicate and process input and output from a telephone line.

FIG. **3** is an expanded functional block diagram of CPU **102** and storage medium **140**. It is well understood by those in the art that the functional elements of FIG. **3** may be implemented in hardware, firmware, or as software instructions and data encoded on a computer-readable storage medium **140**. As shown in FIG. **3**, central processing unit **102** comprises a data processor **202**, an application interface **204**, a media interface **200**, and a call manager **210**. These structures may be implemented as hardware, firmware, or software encoded on a computer readable medium, such as storage media **140**. In addition, as shown in FIG. **3**, storage media **140** may also contain a voice mail database **242** and a caller database **244**.

Data processor **202** interfaces with display **106**, manual input device **108**, storage medium **140**, microphone **112**, data port **114**, video input **122**, and communication interface