

a) determining a state of at least one parameter of at least one piece of the remote equipment;

5 b) communicating [messages regarding] a message indicative of the state from the piece of remote equipment to a computer server [central location] as an incoming message[s]; [and]

c) enabling a user to remotely configure or modify a user-defined message profile containing outgoing message routing instructions, the user-defined message profile being storable on the computer server;

10 d) determining whether an incoming message is an incoming exception message indicative of improper operation of the piece of remote equipment;

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[c]e) if it is determined in step d) that an incoming message is an incoming exception message, forwarding at least one outgoing exception message[s] based on the incoming message[s] to at least one user-defined communication device specifiable in the user-defined message profile.

15 wherein the user can remotely configure or modify the user-defined message profile by remotely accessing the computer server.

2. (Amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said step b) further comprises the step of communicating [the] a plurality of incoming messages to the computer server [central location] via one of a plurality of different communication media.

3. (Amended) A method according to Claim 2, further comprising the step of [d)] normalizing the incoming messages into a uniform format to create normalized messages, wherein the outgoing exception messages are generated based on the normalized messages.

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5. (Amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein step (e) further comprises [comprising] the step of [e)] determining whether an incoming message is [an incoming

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exception message or] a normal status message indicative of proper operation of the piece of remote equipment.

Kindly cancel Claims 6-8 without prejudice or disclaimer.

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9. (Amended) A method according to Claim [8] 1, wherein [said step h)] the remote configuring or modifying of the message profile enabled in step c) is performed by the user via the Internet.

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10. (Amended) A method according to Claim [8] 1, wherein [step g)] the remote configuring or modifying of the message profile enabled in step c) further comprises the steps of:

5 1) selecting at least one type of user-defined communication device to which outgoing exception messages are to be forwarded;

2) selecting specific user-defined communication devices of the types selected in step 1);
and

3) determining the content of the outgoing exception messages forwarded in step [c)] d).

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11. (Amended) A method according to Claim 5, wherein if the incoming message is determined in step [e] d) to be a normal status message from the remote equipment indicating proper operation of the equipment, the method further comprises the step of 1) storing the normal status message in a normal status memory.

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12. (Amended) A method according to Claim 8, further comprising the steps of:

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1) providing a main list having information identifying [of] all pieces of the remote equipment being monitored;

5 k) comparing the contents of the normal status memory with the main list to determine [which pieces of remote equipment did not communicate] whether a normal status message was not communicated within a predetermined period of time for any pieces of the remote equipment being monitored; and

l) generating an outgoing exception message in accordance with the message profile for each piece of equipment identified in step k) as not having sent a normal status message.

Kindly cancel Claims 13 and 14 without prejudice or disclaimer.

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15. (Amended) A method according to Claim [14] 1, wherein the computer server [central location] includes a [computer] database in which a plurality of message profiles may be stored, and [said step h)] wherein the remote configuring or modifying of the message profile enabled in step c) is performed by the user via the Internet.

Kindly cancel Claim 16 without prejudice or disclaimer.

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17. (Amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the at least one remote communication devices specifiable by the message profile include at least one of a facsimile machine, an e-mail receiving device [account], a cellular telephone, a beeper, a pager, a PCS device, and a telephone.

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18. (Amended) A method according to Claim 2, wherein the plurality of communication media of step b) includes at least one of a cellular telephone network, radio transmissions, telephone lines, and the Internet.

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~~19~~. (Amended) A method according to Claim [13] 1, wherein step [c)] e) further comprises forwarding multiple outgoing exception messages to multiple user-defined communication devices in response to a single incoming message in accordance with the user-defined message profile.

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~~20~~. (Amended) A method according to Claim [13] 1, wherein step [c)] e) further comprises forwarding a single outgoing exception message to a user-defined communication device in response to multiple incoming messages in accordance with the user-defined message profile.

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~~21~~. (Amended) A method according to Claim [13] 1, further comprising the step of [m)] storing a plurality of user-defined message profiles on [at] the computer server [central location].

Kindly cancel Claims ~~22-24~~ without prejudice or disclaimer.

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~~26~~. (Amended) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said step b) further comprises the step of communicating in the incoming message an identification code of the piece of remote equipment to which the incoming message pertains [in the incoming messages].

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~~27~~. (Amended) A method according to Claim ¹⁷~~26~~, wherein said step [c)] e) further comprises the step of forwarding the identification code in the outgoing exception message to the at least one user-defined communication device in accordance with the user-defined message profile.

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~~28~~. (Amended) A method according to Claim [7] 1, wherein step [g)] c) further comprises the step of enabling selection of different user-defined communication devices to receive outgoing exception messages at different time periods in accordance with the message profile.

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the message profile being definable to have the exception messages forwarded to different specified remote communication devices at different times.

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30. (Amended) A method according to Claim [11] 5, [further comprising the step of forwarding] wherein each normal status message includes operational information concerning the piece of remote equipment to which the [embedded within a] normal status message pertains.

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31. (Amended) A system for monitoring remote equipment, comprising:
a sensor in local communication with a piece of remote equipment, said sensor detecting a state of at least one parameter of the piece of remote equipment;

5 an interface unit, locally connected to said sensor, said interface unit having a message generating mechanism; and

at [central] computer server in remote communication with said interface unit, said server adapted to receive messages generated by said interface unit, said computer server having a user interface, a user being capable of remotely accessing said computer server via said user interface to remotely configure a user-defined message profile containing outgoing message routing instructions,

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10 wherein when said sensor detects an exception condition in the piece of remote equipment, said interface unit generates an incoming exception message indicative of the exception condition and forwards said message to said server,

15 and wherein said server forwards at least one outgoing exception message to at least one predetermined user-defined remote communication device based on said incoming exception message as specified in said user-defined message profile.

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22. (Amended) A system according to Claim ²²31, wherein said message generating mechanism of the interface unit forwards said incoming exception messages to said computer

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