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(54) INFLATABLE AIR MATTRESS ALERT AND MONITORING SYSTEM

ALARM- UND ÜBERWACHUNGSSYSTEM FÜR EINE AUFBLASBARE LUFTMATRATZE
 SYSTÈME D'ALERTE ET DE SURVEILLANCE DE MATELAS PNEUMATIQUE GONFLABLE

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EP 2 967 226 B1

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Description

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] This patent document pertains generally to mattresses and more particularly, to an inflatable air mattress system.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Air bed systems, such as the one described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,904, 172 which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety, generally allow a user to select a desired pressure for each air chamber within the mattress. Upon selecting the desired pressure, a signal is sent to a pump and valve assembly in order to inflate or deflate the air bladders as necessary in order to achieve approximately the desired pressure within the air bladders.

[0003] In various examples, an air mattress control system allows a user to adjust the firmness or position of an air mattress bed. The mattress may have more than one zone thereby allowing a left and right side of the mattress to be adjusted to different firmness levels. Additionally, the bed may be adjustable to different positions. For example, the head section of the bed may be raised up while the foot section of the bed stays in place. In various examples, two separate remote controls are used to adjust the position and firmness, respectively.

[0004] US 5,948,303 describes a temperature control apparatus for a bed includes at least one heating element, mounted in a resting surface on a mattress of the bed for warming at least a first area of the resting area. A temperature sensor is located to detect the temperature of the first area of the resting area, and transmits the information to a central control unit. The central control unit includes a central processing unit which is interconnected with both the heating element and the temperature sensor to adjust the temperature in the first, area of the resting area as desired.

[0005] JP 2004-229875 describes a sleep tool control apparatus. The internal pressure of air cells of the sleeping tool or temperature of the sleeping tool is controlled based on the sleeping stage information brought by presumptive calculation which is performed based on the biological information on a sleeping person.

[0006] US 2008/0052837 describes a digital bed system that is comprised of an array of support cells. Each support cell is capable of communicating with a controller and increasing and decreasing in firmness in response to commands issued by a controller. The support cells are operatively connected to a communication channel that is also connected to a controller. The controller is capable of receiving data from the support cells and is also capable of issuing commands to each of the support cells. The controller is programmed issue commands to increase or decrease the firmness of individual support cells within the support cells.

[0007] US 6,396,224 describes a hand-held controller that is used to control an apparatus that supports a person. The hand-held controller includes a display that displays graphical images pertaining to functions of the apparatus.

SUMMARY

[0008] The present invention is defined by independent claims 1 and 9. The dependent claims depict other embodiments of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0009] Some embodiments are illustrated by way of example and not limitation in the figures of the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a diagrammatic representation of an air bed system, according to an example.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram of various components of the air bed system of FIG. 1, according to an example.

FIG. 3 is a block diagram of an air bed system architecture, according to an example.

FIG. 4 is a block diagram of machine in the example form of a computer system within which a set instructions, for causing the machine to perform any one or more of the methodologies discussed herein, may be executed.

FIG. 5 is a flow diagram depicting an example method of waking a person by changing the person's sleep environment, in accordance with various techniques of this disclosure.

FIG. 6 is a flow diagram depicting an example method of waking a person using biometric signals, in accordance with various techniques of this disclosure.

FIG. 7 is a flow diagram depicting an example method of remote monitoring, in accordance with various techniques of this disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0010] FIG. 1 is a diagrammatic representation of air bed system 10. System 10 can include bed 12, which can comprise at least one air chamber 14 surrounded by a resilient border 16 and encapsulated by bed ticking 18. The resilient border 16 can comprise any suitable material, such as foam.

[0011] As illustrated in FIG. 1, bed 12 can be a two chamber design having a first air chamber 14A and a second air chamber 14B. First and second air chambers 14A and 14B can be in fluid communication with pump 20. Pump 20 can be in electrical communication with a remote control 22 via control box 24. Remote control 22 can communicate via wired or wireless means with control box 24. Control box 24 can be configured to operate

pump 20 to cause increases and decreases in the fluid pressure of first and second air chambers 14A and 14B based upon commands input by a user through remote control 22. Remote control 22 can include display 26, output selecting means 28, pressure increase button 29, and pressure decrease button 30. Output selecting means 28 can allow the user to switch the pump output between the first and second air chambers 14A and 14B, thus enabling control of multiple air chambers with a single remote control 22. For example, output selecting means may be a physical control (e.g., switch or button) or an input control displayed on display 26. Alternatively, separate remote control units can be provided for each air chamber and may each include the ability to control multiple air chambers. Pressure increase and decrease buttons 29 and 30 can allow a user to increase or decrease the pressure, respectively, in the air chamber selected with the output selecting means 28. Adjusting the pressure within the selected air chamber can cause a corresponding adjustment to the firmness of the air chamber.

[0012] FIG. 2 is a block diagram detailing data communication between certain components of air bed system 10 according to various examples. As shown in FIG. 2, control box 24 can include power supply 34, processor 36, memory 37, switching means 38, analog to digital (A/D) converter 40, and radios for communication with remotes and smartphones. Switching means 38 can be, for example, a relay or a solid state switch. Switching means 38 can be located in the pump 20 rather than the control box 24.

[0013] Pump 20 and remote control 22 can be in two-way communication with the control box 24. Pump 20 can include a motor 42, a pump manifold 43, a relief valve 44, a first control valve 45A, a second control valve 45B, and a pressure transducer 46, and can be fluidly connected with the first air chamber 14A and the second air chamber 14B via a first tube 48A and a second tube 48B, respectively. First and second control valves 45A and 45B can be controlled by switching means 38, and can be operable to regulate the flow of fluid between pump 20 and first and second air chambers 14A and 14B, respectively.

[0014] In an example, pump 20 and control box 24 can be provided and packaged as a single unit. Alternatively, pump 20 and control box 24 can be provided as physically separate units.

[0015] In operation, power supply 34 can receive power, such as 110 VAC power, from an external source and can convert the power to various forms required by certain components of the air bed system 10. Processor 36 can be used to control various logic sequences associated with operation of the air bed system 10, as will be discussed in further detail below.

[0016] The example of the air bed system 10 shown in FIG. 2 contemplates two air chambers 14A and 14B and a single pump 20. However, other examples may include an air bed system having two or more air chambers and

one or more pumps incorporated into the air bed system to control the air chambers. In an example, a separate pump can be associated with each air chamber of the air bed system or a pump may be associated with multiple chambers of the air bed system. Separate pumps can allow each air chamber to be inflated or deflated independently and simultaneously. Furthermore, additional pressure transducers can also be incorporated into the air bed system such that, for example, a separate pressure transducer can be associated with each air chamber.

[0017] In the event that the processor 36 sends a decrease pressure command to one of air chambers 14A or 14B, switching means 38 can be used to convert the low voltage command signals sent by processor 36 to higher operating voltages sufficient to operate relief valve 44 of pump 20 and open control valves 45A or 45B. Opening relief valve 44 can allow air to escape from air chamber 14A or 14B through the respective air tube 48A or 48B. During deflation, pressure transducer 46 can send pressure readings to processor 36 via the A/D converter 40. The A/D converter 40 can receive analog information from pressure transducer 46 and can convert the analog information to digital information useable by processor 36. Processor 36 may send the digital signal to remote control 22 to update display 26 on the remote control in order to convey the pressure information to the user.

[0018] In the event that processor 36 sends an increase pressure command, pump motor 42 can be energized, sending air to the designated air chamber through air tube 48A or 48B via electronically operating corresponding valve 45A or 45B. While air is being delivered to the designated air chamber in order to increase the firmness of the chamber, pressure transducer 46 can sense pressure within pump manifold 43. Again, pressure transducer 46 can send pressure readings to processor 36 via A/D converter 40. Processor 36 can use the information received from A/D converter 40 to determine the difference between the actual pressure in air chamber 14A or 14B and the desired pressure. Processor 36 can send the digital signal to remote control 22 to update display 26 on the remote control in order to convey the pressure information to the user.

[0019] Generally speaking, during an inflation or deflation process, the pressure sensed within pump manifold 43 provides an approximation of the pressure within the air chamber. An example method of obtaining a pump manifold pressure reading that is substantially equivalent to the actual pressure within an air chamber is to turn off pump 20, allow the pressure within the air chamber 14A or 14B and pump manifold 43 to equalize, and then sense the pressure within pump manifold 43 with pressure transducer 46. Thus, providing a sufficient amount of time to allow the pressures within pump manifold 43 and chamber 14A or 14B to equalize may result in pressure readings that are accurate approximations of the actual pressure within air chamber 14A or 14B. In various examples, the pressure of 48A/B is continuously monitored

using multiple pressure sensors.

[0020] In an example, another method of obtaining a pump manifold pressure reading that is substantially equivalent to the actual pressure within an air chamber is through the use of a pressure adjustment algorithm. In general, the method can function by approximating the air chamber pressure based upon a mathematical relationship between the air chamber pressure and the pressure measured within pump manifold 43 (during both an inflation cycle and a deflation cycle), thereby eliminating the need to turn off pump 20 in order to obtain a substantially accurate approximation of the air chamber pressure. As a result, a desired pressure setpoint within air chamber 14A or 14B can be achieved without the need for turning pump 20 off to allow the pressures to equalize. The latter method of approximating an air chamber pressure using mathematical relationships between the air chamber pressure and the pump manifold pressure is described in detail in U.S. Application Serial No. 12/936,084.

[0021] FIG. 3 illustrates an example air bed system architecture 300. Architecture 300 includes bed 301, central controller 302, firmness controller 304, articulation controller 306, temperature controller 308 in communication with one or more temperature sensors 309, external network device 310, remote controllers 312, 314, and voice controller 316. While described as using an air bed, the system architecture may also be used with other types of beds.

[0022] As illustrated in FIG. 3, network bed architecture 300 is configured as a star topology with central controller 302 and firmness controller 304 functioning as the hub and articulation controller 306, temperature controller 308, external network device 310, remote controls 312, 314, and voice controller 316 functioning as possible spokes, also referred to herein as components. Thus, in various examples, central controller 302 acts a relay between the various components.

[0023] In yet another example, central controller 302 listens to communications (e.g., control signals) between components even if the communication is not being relayed through central controller 302. For example, consider a user sending a command using remote 312 to temperature controller 308. Central controller 302 may listen for the command and check to determine if instructions are stored at central controller 302 to override the command (e.g., it conflicts with a previous setting). Central controller 302 may also log the command for future use (e.g., determining a pattern of user preferences for the components).

[0024] In other examples, different topologies may be used. For example, the components and central controller 302 may be configured as a mesh network in which each component may communicate with one or all of the other components directly, bypassing central controller 302. In various examples, a combination of topologies may be used. For example, remote controller 312 may communicate directly to temperature controller 308 but

also relay the communication to central controller 302.

[0025] In various examples, the controllers and devices illustrated in FIG. 3 may each include a processor, a storage device, and a network interface. The processor may be a general purpose central processing unit (CPU) or application-specific integrated circuit (ASIC). The storage device may include volatile or non-volatile static storage (e.g., Flash memory, RAM, EPROM, etc.). The storage device may store instructions which, when executed by the processor, configure the processor to perform the functionality described herein. For example, a processor of firmness control 304 may be configured to send a command to a relief valve to decrease the pressure in a bed.

[0026] In various examples, the network interface of the components may be configured to transmit and receive communications in a variety of wired and wireless protocols. For example, the network interface may be configured to use the 802.11 standards (e.g., 802.11a/b/c/g/n/ac), PAN network standards such as 802.15.4 or Bluetooth, infrared, cellular standards (e.g., 3G/4G etc.), Ethernet, USB for receiving and transmitting data, and powerline networking. The previous list is not intended to be exhaustive and other protocols may be used. Not all components of FIG. 3 need to be configured to use the same protocols. For example, remote control 312 may communicate with central controller 302 via Bluetooth while temperature controller 308 and articulation controller 306 are connected to central controller using 802.15.4. Within FIG. 3, the lightning connectors represent wireless connections and the solid lines represent wired connections, however, the connections between the components is not limited to such connections and each connection may be wired or wireless.

[0027] Moreover, in various examples, the processor, storage device, and network interface of a component may be located in different locations than various elements used to affect a command. For example, as in FIG. 1, firmness controller 302 may have a pump that is housed in a separate enclosure than the processor used to control the pump. Similar separation of elements may be employed for the other controllers and devices in FIG. 3.

[0028] In various examples, firmness controller 304 is configured to regulate pressure in an air mattress. For example, firmness controller 304 may include a pump such as described with reference to FIG. 2 (see e.g., pump 20). Thus, in an example, firmness controller 304 may respond to commands to increase or decrease pressure in the air mattress. The commands may be received from another component or based on stored application instructions that are part of firmness controller 304.

[0029] As illustrated in FIG. 3 central controller 302 includes firmness controller 304 and pump 305. Thus, in an example, the processor of central controller 302 and firmness control 304 may be the same processor. Furthermore, the pump may also be part of central controller 302. Accordingly, central controller 302 may be responsible for pressure regulation as well as other functionality

as described in further portions of this disclosure.

[0030] In various examples, articulation controller 306 is configured to adjust the position of a bed (e.g., bed 301) by adjusting the foundation that supports the bed. In an example, separate positions may be set for two different beds (e.g., two twin beds placed next to each other). The foundation may include more than one zone that may be independently adjusted. Articulation control 306 may also be configured to provide different levels of massage to a person on the bed.

[0031] In various examples, temperature controller 308 is configured to increase, decrease, or maintain the temperature of a user. For example, a pad may be placed on top of or be part of the air mattress. Air may be pushed through the pad and vented to cool off a user of the bed. Conversely, the pad may include a heating element that may be used to keep the user warm. In various examples, the pad includes the temperature sensor 309 and temperature controller 308 receives temperature readings from the temperature sensor 309. In other examples, the temperature sensor 309 can be separate from the pad, e.g., part of the air mattress or foundation.

[0032] In various examples, additional controllers may communicate with central controller 302. These controllers may include, but are not limited to, illumination controllers for turning on and off light elements placed on and around the bed and outlet controllers for controlling power to one or more power outlets. In some examples, one or more of these controllers can be located offsite, e.g., cloud computing implementations.

[0033] In various examples, external network device 310, remote controllers 312, 314 and voice controller 316 may be used to input commands (e.g., from a user or remote system) to control one or more components of architecture 300. The commands may be transmitted from one of the controllers 312, 314, or 316 and received in central controller 302. Central controller 302 may process the command to determine the appropriate component to route the received command. For example, each command sent via one of controllers 312, 314, or 316 may include a header or other metadata that indicates which component the command is for. Central controller 302 may then transmit the command via central controller 302's network interface to the appropriate component.

[0034] For example, a user may input a desired temperature for the user's bed into remote control 312. The desired temperature may be encapsulated in a command data structure that includes the temperature as well as identifies temperature controller 308 as the desired component to be controlled. The command data structure may then be transmitted via Bluetooth to central controller 302. In various examples, the command data structure is encrypted before being transmitted. Central controller 302 may parse the command data structure and relay the command to temperature controller 308 using a PAN. Temperature controller 308 may be then configured its elements to increase or decrease the temperature of the pad depending on the temperature originally input into

remote control 312.

[0035] In various examples, data may be transmitted from a component back to one or more of the remote controls. For example, the current temperature as determined by a sensor element of temperature controller 308, e.g., temperature sensor 309, the pressure of the bed, the current position of the foundation or other information may be transmitted to central controller 302. Central controller 302 may then transmit the received information and transmit it to remote control 312 where it may be displayed to the user. In some examples, the data can be transmitted to a customer service center to help diagnose a problem with system.

[0036] In various examples, multiple types of devices may be used to input commands to control the components of architecture 300. For example, remote control 312 may be a mobile device such as a smart phone or tablet computer running an application. Other examples of remote control 312 may include a dedicated device for interacting with the components described herein. In various examples, remote controls 312/314 include a display device for displaying an interface to a user. Remote control 312/314 may also include one or more input devices. Input devices may include, but are not limited to, keypads, touchscreen, gesture, motion and voice controls.

[0037] Remote control 314 may be a single component remote configured to interact with one component of the mattress architecture. For example, remote control 314 may be configured to accept inputs to increase or decrease the air mattress pressure. Voice controller 316 may be configured to accept voice commands to control one or more components. In various examples, more than one of the remote controls 312/314 and voice controller 316 may be used.

[0038] With respect to remote control 312, the application may be configured to pair with one or more central controllers. For each central controller, data may be transmitted to the mobile device that includes a list of components linked with the central controller. For example, consider that remote control 312 is a mobile phone and that the application has been authenticated and paired with central controller 302. Remote control 312 may transmit a discovery request to central controller 302 to inquiry about other components and available services. In response, central controller 302 may transmit a list of services that includes available functions for adjusting the firmness of the bed, position of the bed, and temperature of the bed. In various embodiments, the application may then display functions for increasing/decreasing pressure of the air mattress, adjusting positions of the bed, and adjusting temperature. If components are added/removed to the architecture under control of central controller 302, an updated list may be transmitted to remote control 312 and the interface of the application may be adjusted accordingly.

[0039] In various examples, central controller 302 is configured as a distributor of software updates to components in architecture 300. For example, a firmware up-

date for temperature controller 308 may become available. The update may be loaded into a storage device of central controller 302 (e.g., via a USB interface or using wireless techniques). Central controller 302 may then transmit the update to temperature controller 308 with instructions to update. Temperature controller 308 may attempt to install the update. A status message may be transmitted from temperature controller 308 to central controller 302 indicating the success or failure of the update.

[0040] In various examples, central controller 302 is configured to analyze data collected by a pressure transducer (e.g., transducer 46 with respect to FIG. 2) to determine various states of a person lying on the bed. For example, central controller 302 may determine the heart rate or respiration rate, motion, presence, arrhythmias, apneas, and sleep state of a person lying in the bed. Additional processing may be done using the collected data to determine a possible sleep state of the person. For example, central controller 302 may determine when a person falls asleep and, while asleep, the various sleep states of the person.

[0041] In various examples, external network device 310 includes a network interface to interact with an external server for processing and storage of data related to components in architecture 300. For example, the determined sleep data as described above may be transmitted via a network (e.g., the Internet) from central controller 302 to external network device 310 for storage. In an example, the pressure transducer data may be transmitted to the external server for additional analysis. The external network device 310 may also analyze and filter the data before transmitting it to the external server.

[0042] In an example, diagnostic data of the components may also be routed to external network device 310 for storage and diagnosis on the external server. For example, if temperature controller 308 (or a leak detector or system health monitor) detects an abnormal temperature reading (e.g., a drop in temperature over one minute that exceeds a set threshold) diagnostic data (sensor readings, current settings, etc.) may be wireless transmitted from temperature controller 308 to central controller 302. Central controller 302 may then transmit this data via USB to external network device 310. External device 310 may wirelessly transmit the information to a WLAN access point where it is routed to the external server for analysis.

EXAMPLE MACHINE ARCHITECTURE AND MACHINE-READABLE MEDIUM

[0043] FIG. 4 is a block diagram of machine in the example form of a computer system 400 within which instructions, for causing the machine to perform any one or more of the methodologies discussed herein, may be executed. In alternative embodiments, the machine operates as a standalone device or may be connected (e.g., networked) to other machines. In a networked deploy-

ment, the machine may operate in the capacity of a server or a client machine in server-client network environment, or as a peer machine in a peer-to-peer (or distributed) network environment. The machine may be a personal computer (PC), a tablet PC, a set-top box (STB), a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), a cellular telephone, a web appliance, a network router, switch or bridge, or any machine capable of executing instructions (sequential or otherwise) that specify actions to be taken by that machine. Further, while only a single machine is illustrated, the term "machine" shall also be taken to include any collection of machines that individually or jointly execute a set (or multiple sets) of instructions to perform any one or more of the methodologies discussed herein. In some examples, one or more of machines can be located off-site, e.g., cloud computing implementations.

[0044] The example computer system 400 includes a processor 402 (e.g., a central processing unit (CPU), a graphics processing unit (GPU), ASIC or a combination), a main memory 404 and a static memory 406, which communicate with each other via a bus 408. The computer system 400 may further include a video display unit 410 (e.g., a liquid crystal display (LCD) or a cathode ray tube (CRT)). The computer system 400 also includes an alphanumeric input device 412 (e.g., a keyboard and/or touchscreen), a user interface (UI) navigation device 414 (e.g., a mouse), a disk drive unit 416, a signal generation device 418 (e.g., a speaker) and a network interface device 420.

30

MACHINE-READABLE MEDIUM

[0045] The disk drive unit 416 includes a machine-readable medium 422 on which is stored one or more sets of instructions and data structures (e.g., software) 424 embodying or utilized by any one or more of the methodologies or functions described herein. The instructions 424 may also reside, completely or at least partially, within the main memory 404 and/or within the processor 402 during execution thereof by the computer system 400, the main memory 404 and the processor 402 also constituting machine-readable media.

[0046] While the machine-readable medium 422 is shown in an example embodiment to be a single medium, the term "machine-readable medium" may include a single medium or multiple media (e.g., a centralized or distributed database, and/or associated caches and servers) that store the one or more instructions or data structures. The term "machine-readable medium" shall also be taken to include any tangible medium that is capable of storing, encoding or carrying instructions for execution by the machine and that cause the machine to perform any one or more of the methodologies of the present invention, or that is capable of storing, encoding or carrying data structures utilized by or associated with such instructions. The term "machine-readable medium" shall accordingly be taken to include, but not be limited to, solid-state memories, and optical and magnetic media.

Specific examples of machine-readable media include non-volatile memory, including by way of example semiconductor memory devices, e.g., Erasable Programmable Read-Only Memory (EPROM), Electrically Erasable Programmable Read-Only Memory (EEPROM), and flash memory devices; magnetic disks such as internal hard disks and removable disks; magneto-optical disks; and CD-ROM and DVD-ROM disks.

TRANSMISSION MEDIUM

[0047] The instructions 424 may further be transmitted or received over a communications network 426 using a transmission medium. The instructions 424 may be transmitted using the network interface device 420 and any one of a number of well-known transfer protocols (e.g., HTTP). Examples of communication networks include a local area network ("LAN"), a wide area network ("WAN"), the Internet, mobile telephone networks, Plain Old Telephone (POTS) networks, and wireless data networks (e.g., WiFi and WiMax networks). The term "transmission medium" shall be taken to include any intangible medium that is capable of storing, encoding or carrying instructions for execution by the machine, and includes digital or analog communications signals or other intangible media to facilitate communication of such software.

ALARM--ALERT TECHNIQUES

[0048] In addition to the techniques described above, this disclosure is directed to techniques for waking a user by changing the user's sleep environment. As described in more detail below, by changing the user's sleep environment, e.g., air mattress pressure, air mattress foundation motion, temperature, the techniques of this disclosure can provide the user with a "minimally invasive" alert system that gently wakes the user, in contrast with an alert clock, for example.

[0049] In one example, the user can set a desired time and method for waking via a user interface (or "alert settings"), e.g., remote controllers 312, 314 or voice controller 316. In some examples, the user can set a desired time and method for waking via a web portal connected to the Internet. In response to receiving the user's alert settings, the web portal can communicate the user's desired wake setting(s) to the central controller 302 via the Internet to a WiFi module, for example, in communication with the central controller 302. In some examples, upon receiving the user settings, the central controller 302 can store the settings in a memory device.

[0050] In one example implementation, the user can choose to change the pressure of one or more air chambers, e.g., air chambers 14A, 14B of FIG. 2, of the mattress as a method for waking. For example, the user may program the system architecture 300 and, in particular, the central controller 302, to increase the pressure in an air chamber via the firmness controller 304 at a particular time, e.g., in order to wake the user by way of a minimally

invasive alert.

[0051] In another example implementation, the user can choose to adjust the position of the bed and/or add motion to the bed, e.g., via a massage function, as a method for waking. For example, the user may program the system architecture 300 and, in particular, the central controller 302, to transmit instructions to the articulation controller 306 at a particular time. In response, the articulation controller 306 can adjust the foundation of the bed 301, e.g., in a manner specified by the user during programming or in a default manner, to move from its current position to another, different position. Alternatively or in addition to adjusting the position of the foundation of the bed 301, the articulation controller can provide the user with one or more levels of massage, e.g., in order to wake the user by way of a minimally invasive alert.

[0052] In another example implementation, the user can choose to adjust the temperature of the bed as a method for waking. For example, the user may program the system architecture 300 and, in particular, the central controller 302, to transmit instructions to the temperature controller 308 at a particular time. In response, the temperature controller 308 can adjust the temperature of the user, e.g., via a cooling or heating mechanism provided by a pad placed on top of or forming a part of the air mattress e.g., in order to wake the user by way of a minimally invasive alert.

[0053] Although the minimally invasive techniques for waking a user were described above separately, each of the described techniques can be used in combination with one another, as desired. For example, a user may program the central controller 302 to provide an alert function that includes changes to both air mattress pressure and temperature. Or, a user may program the central controller 302 to provide an alert function that includes changes to both air mattress pressure and temperature and that further includes adjusting the position of and/or providing motion to the foundation of the bed 301.

[0054] In some example implementations, the user can program two or more minimally invasive techniques for waking the user in a pattern, e.g., one after another. For example, the user can program the central controller 302 to provide an alert function that initially changes the pressure of one or more air chambers, e.g., air chambers 14A, 14B of FIG. 2, and then change the temperature of the user a predetermined period of time after the change to the pressure of the air chambers. In addition, the user can, for example, program the central controller 302 to control the articulation controller 306 to adjust the foundation of the bed 301 a period of time after changing the temperature or, in some examples, substantially simultaneously with changing the temperature. In this manner, a waking function pattern can be achieved by sequentially or progressively changing various aspects of the user's sleep environment.

[0055] In some examples, presence detection can be included in order to prevent an alert from occurring or terminate an alert in progress. For example, the pressure

transducer 46 (of FIG. 2) can be used to detect the user's presence within the bed 301, e.g., via a gross pressure change determination and/or via one or more of a respiration rate signal, heart rate signal, and/or other biometric signals. Upon determining that the user has gotten out of bed, e.g., via a gross pressure change determination, the central controller 302 can terminate any active minimally invasive alerts, e.g., changes to pressure, temperature, motion of the foundation, etc. In other examples, upon determining that the user is not present in the bed, e.g., the user is away on a business trip, the central controller 302 can prevent any pending minimally invasive alerts from occurring, e.g., changes to pressure, temperature, motion of the foundation, etc.

[0056] This disclosure is not limited to the example minimally invasive alerts mentioned above. In addition to changes to pressure, temperature, and motion of the foundation, other example minimally invasive alerts include, but are not limited to, changes to lighting, e.g., turning lights on/off as well as opening and/or closing window shades, turning on/off a television, and turning on/off a sound system.

[0057] FIG. 5 is a flow diagram depicting an example method of waking a person by changing the person's sleep environment. In FIG. 5, the central controller 302 receives alert settings from a user, e.g., via a user interface such as the remote controllers 312, 314, voice controller 316, or via a web portal connected to the Internet (500). In response to receiving the user's alert settings, e.g., a time and method for waking, the central controller 302 transmits alert instructions to one or more components of the bed system, e.g., firmness controller 304, articulation controller 306, and temperature controller 308, based on the received user alert settings (502). Upon receiving the instructions, the component(s) operate to change the user's sleep environment, e.g., change the air pressure in a chamber, change the temperature, etc.

[0058] In some examples the method of FIG. 5 further includes determining whether the user is present in the bed (504). For example, the central controller 302 can determine whether a user is present using a change in gross pressure as using received pressure signals from the pressure transducer 46 of FIG. 2. If the central controller 302 determines that the user is not present, the central controller 302 can transmit instructions to the component(s) of the bed system to terminate any active alerts.

[0059] In some examples, presence can be determined using the presence of human or animal biosignals.

[0060] In one example implementation, the central controller 302 can detect user presence using temperature changes detected in the mattress, e.g., using one or more temperature sensors positioned in or on the mattress. The temperature sensors and the central controller 302 can detect a rise in temperature, e.g., over a specified period of time, and determine that a user is present in the bed. For example, if the central controller 302 detects a rise in temperature and then determines that the de-

tected rise in temperature was not caused by the system's temperature controller 308, the central controller 302 can determine that the user is present.

[0061] In addition to the techniques described above, this disclosure is directed to techniques for waking a user using a biometric alert system. As indicated above, the central controller 302 can determine a user's sleep state, e.g., rapid eye movement ("REM") or non-rapid eye movement ("NREM"). The central controller 302 can determine a user's sleep state by using various biometric signals such as heart rate, respiration, and/or movement of the user. Techniques for monitoring a user's sleep using heart rate information, respiration rate information, and other user information are disclosed in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 20100170043 to Steven J. Young et al., titled "APPARATUS FOR MONITORING VITAL SIGNS". Using various techniques of this disclosure, the user can set a window of time in which to wake up (or "alert window") and allow the central controller 302 to determine the optimum time within that window to wake the user based on the determined sleep state.

[0062] By way of specific example, a user can set a desired window of time for waking of between 5:00 AM and 6:00 AM via a user interface, e.g., remote controllers 312, 314, voice controller 316, or via a web portal connected to the Internet. In some examples, upon receiving the user settings, the central controller 302 can store the settings in a memory device. While the user is sleeping, the central controller 302 can receive one or more of the user's biometric signals, e.g., heart rate, respiration, and motion, and determine the user's present sleep state based on the received biometric signals. It may be desirable to wake a person during a particular portion of a sleep cycle, e.g., in NREM sleep in contrast to REM sleep.

[0063] If the central controller 302 has determined that at the beginning of the user-defined window, e.g., 5:00 AM, the user is not in an optimum state in their sleep cycle for waking, e.g., in REM sleep, the central controller 302 can delay transmitting any instructions to one or more components of the bed system, e.g., firmness controller 304, articulation controller 306, and temperature controller 308, to activate and wake the user. Then, the central controller 302 can continue to receive one or more of the user's biometric signals and continue to determine the user's sleep state. Once the user's sleep state transitions from one portion of a sleep cycle to a more desirable portion at which to be awakened, e.g., from REM sleep to NREM sleep, the central controller 302 can transmit any instructions to one or more components of the bed system, e.g., firmness controller 304, articulation controller 306, and temperature controller 308, to activate and wake the user. In this manner, the user is awakened.

[0064] Of course, if the central controller 302 has determined that at the beginning of the user-defined window, e.g., 5:00 AM, the user is in an optimum state for waking based on the determine sleep cycle, e.g., NREM sleep, the central controller 302 can transmit any instruc-

tions to one or more components of the bed system, e.g., firmness controller 304, articulation controller 306, and temperature controller 308, to activate and wake the user. In this manner, the user is awakened.

[0065] In some examples, if the central controller 302 has determined that the user is still in REM sleep once the end of the user-defined window has been reached (thus not in an optimum sleep state for waking), then the central controller 302 will nevertheless wake the user. That is, once the end of the user-defined window has been reached, e.g., 6:00 AM in the example above, the central controller 302 can transmit any instructions to one or more components of the bed system, e.g., firmness controller 304, articulation controller 306, and temperature controller 308, to activate and wake the user even if the user is not in an optimum sleep state.

[0066] FIG. 6 is a flow diagram depicting an example method of waking a person using biometric signals. In FIG. 6, the central controller 302 receives a user-defined alert window from a user, e.g., via a user interface such as the remote controllers 312, 314, voice controller 316, or via web portal connected to the Internet (600), indicating a desired window of time in which to wake up, e.g., 5:00 AM to 6:00 AM. The central controller 302 can receive biometric signals of the user, such as heart rate, respiration, and/or motion signals, via the pressure transducer 46 of FIG. 2 (602).

[0067] Using the received biometric signal(s), the central controller 302 can determine the user's present sleep state, e.g., REM or NREM (604). If the central controller 302 determines that the user is in an optimum sleep state, e.g., NREM, and that the current time is within the user-defined alert window, then the central controller 302 can transmit alert instructions to one or more components of the bed system, e.g., firmness controller 304, articulation controller 306, and temperature controller 308 to wake the user (606).

[0068] In some example implementations, if the central controller 302 determines that the user is not an optimum sleep state, e.g., REM, and that the current time is beyond the user-defined alert window, then the central controller 302 can nevertheless transmit alert instructions to one or more components of the bed system, e.g., firmness controller 304, articulation controller 306, and temperature controller 308 to wake the user within the defined window of time.

[0069] In some examples, the biometric signal(s) can be processed by another device or component instead of by the central controller 302, e.g., remote server. In such an implementation, the other device or component can process the biometric signal(s) and transmit a signal representing the processed signal to the central controller 302. Then, the central controller 302 can determine a sleep state based on the received signal. Or, in other examples, the other device or component can process the biometric signal(s), determine the sleep state of the user, and transmit a signal representing the determined sleep state to the central controller 302.

REMOTE MONITORING TECHNIQUES

[0070] In addition to the techniques described above, this disclosure is directed to remote monitoring techniques. Using various techniques of this disclosure, a first bed system 300 can detect when a first user of the first bed system 300, e.g., a child in a first room, is out of bed and, in response to detecting that the first user is out of bed, transmit an alert signal to a second bed system 300 that can alert a second user of the second bed system, e.g., a parent in a second room, that the first user is out of bed.

[0071] According to the invention, the bed system detects whether a user is out of the bed using a presence detection technique. For example, the pressure transducer 46 (of FIG. 2) can be used to detect the user's presence within the bed 301, e.g., via a gross pressure change determination, presence of biosignals, or a vision system. Upon determining that the user has gotten out of bed, e.g., via a gross pressure change determination, the central controller 302 of the first bed system generates and transmits one or more instructions that, when received and executed by a central controller 302 of a second bed system, can cause one or more components of the second bed system to alert a user of the second bed system, e.g., changes to pressure, temperature, motion of the foundation, etc. The instruction(s) from the first central controller 302 to the second central controller using wired or wireless techniques and protocols, some of which are described above.

[0072] By way of specific example, upon determining that a first user, e.g., child, has gotten out of bed, the central controller 302 of the first bed system can generate and transmit an instruction that, when received and executed by a central controller 302 of a second bed system, can cause the articulation controller of the second bed system to move the foundation of the second bed system in order to alert the user of the second bed system, e.g., parent, that the first user is out of bed. In other examples, the instruction generated and transmitted by the central controller 302 of the first bed system can alternatively or additionally cause the temperature controller of the second bed system and/or the firmness controller of the second bed system to change temperature or pressure, respectively, of the second bed system.

[0073] The disclosure is not limited to these specific components for alerting a user of the second bed system. Instead, the central controller 302 can, for example, be used to turn lights on/off, open and/or close window shades, turn on/off a television, and turn on/off a sound system.

[0074] FIG. 7 is a flow diagram depicting an example method of remote monitoring, in accordance with various techniques of this disclosure. In FIG. 7, a central controller 302 of a first bed system can determine whether a user of the first bed system, e.g., a child, is present (700). For example, the central controller 302 of the first bed system can use a gross pressure change technique to

determine presence. If the central controller 302 of the first bed system determines that the user has gotten out of the bed, the central controller 302 generates and transmits an instruction that, when received and executed by a central controller of a second bed system, can one or more instructions that, when received and executed by a central controller of a second bed system, can cause one or more components of the second bed system to alert a user of the second bed system, e.g., changes to pressure, temperature, motion of the foundation, etc.

Claims

1. A method comprising:

determining, at a central controller of a first air mattress system (300), whether a user is present on a mattress of the air mattress system; if the user is not present, generating, via the central controller (302) of the first air mattress system, an instruction to adjust a feature of a component of a second air mattress system that is remote from the first air mattress system; and transmitting, to a central controller of the second air mattress system, the instruction to adjust the feature of the component of the second air mattress system.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the first air mattress system (300) is for a child in a first room;
the second air mattress system is for a parent in a second room.

3. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the presence of the user on the air mattress system (300) is determined using a pressure transducer (46) coupled to sense pressure within a pump manifold (43).

4. The method of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the presence of the user on the air mattress system (300) is determined using the pressure transducer (46) via a presence of biosignals.

5. The method of any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the instruction is transmitted from the central controller (302) of the first air mattress system (300) to the central controller of the second air mattress system using a wireless technique.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the instruction to adjust the feature of the component of the second air mattress system is configured to alert a user of the second air mattress system.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the instruction to

adjust the feature of the component of the second air mattress system is an instruction to change pressure of an air mattress of the second air mattress system.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the instruction to adjust the feature of the component of the second air mattress system is an instruction to move a foundation of the second air mattress systems.

9. A sleep system comprising:

a first air mattress system (300) comprising: a first air mattress (301); and a first central controller (302) configured to:

determine that the first air mattress (301) does not have a user present; responsive to determining that the first air mattress of the first air mattress system does not have a user present, generate an instruction to adjust a feature of a component of a second air mattress system that is remote from the first air mattress system; (300) and transmit the instruction to adjust the feature of the component of the second air mattress system; and the sleep system further comprising:

a second air mattress system comprising: a second central controller configured to:

receive the instruction to adjust the feature of the component of the second air mattress system; and responsive to receiving the instruction to adjust the feature of the component of the second air mattress system, adjust the component of the second air mattress system.

10. The sleep system of claim 9, wherein, to determine that the first air mattress (301) does not have a user present, the first central controller (302) is configured to detect a gross pressure change.

11. The sleep system of claim 9, wherein, to determine that the first air mattress (301) does not have a user present, the first central controller (302) is configured to detect a lack of a biosignal.

12. The sleep system of claim 9, wherein the instruction to adjust the feature of the component of the second air mattress system is configured to alert a user of the second air mattress system.

13. The sleep system of claim 9, wherein the instruction to adjust the feature of the component of the second

air mattress system is an instruction to change pressure of an air mattress of the second air mattress system.

14. The sleep system of claim 9, wherein the instruction to adjust the feature of the component of the second air mattress system is an instruction to change temperature of the component of the second air mattress system.

Patentansprüche

1. Verfahren, umfassend:

Ermitteln, ob ein Benutzer auf einer Matratze des Luftmatratzensystems vorhanden ist, an einer zentralen Steuerung eines ersten Luftmatratzensystems (300);

falls der Benutzer nicht vorhanden ist, Generieren einer Anweisung, um ein Merkmal einer Komponente eines zweiten Luftmatratzensystems anzupassen, das sich fern von dem ersten Luftmatratzensystem befindet, über die zentrale Steuerung (302) des ersten Luftmatratzensystems; und

Übertragen der Anweisung zum Anpassen des Merkmals der Komponente des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems an eine zentrale Steuerung des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems.

2. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, wobei:

das erste Luftmatratzensystem (300) für ein Kind in einem ersten Raum ist;

das zweite Luftmatratzensystem für ein Eltern-
teil in einem zweiten Raum ist.

3. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, wobei die Anwesenheit des Benutzers auf dem Luftmatratzensystem (300) unter Verwendung eines Druckwandlers (46) ermittelt wird, der gekoppelt wird, um Druck innerhalb einer Pumpensammelleitung (43) abzufühlen.

4. Verfahren nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 3, wobei die Anwesenheit des Benutzers auf dem Luftmatratzensystem (300) unter Verwendung des Druckwandlers (46) über eine Anwesenheit von Biosignalen ermittelt wird.

5. Verfahren nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4, wobei die Anweisung von der zentralen Steuerung (302) des ersten Luftmatratzensystems (300) unter Verwendung einer Drahtlostechnik an die zentrale Steuerung des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems übertragen wird.

6. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Anweisung zum Anpassen des Merkmals der Komponente des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems ausgelegt ist, um einen Benutzer des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems zu alarmieren.

7. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Anweisung zum Anpassen des Merkmals der Komponente des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems eine Anweisung zum Ändern des Drucks einer Luftmatratze des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems ist.

8. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Anweisung zum Anpassen des Merkmals der Komponente des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems eine Anweisung zum Bewegen eines Unterbaus des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems ist.

9. Schlafsystem, umfassend:

ein erstes Luftmatratzensystem (300), umfassend:

eine erste Luftmatratze (301), und
eine erste zentrale Steuerung (302), die ausgelegt ist zum:

Ermitteln, dass auf der ersten Luftmatratze (301) kein Benutzer vorhanden ist;

Generieren einer Anweisung, um ein Merkmal einer Komponente eines zweiten Luftmatratzensystems anzupassen, das fern von dem ersten Luftmatratzensystem (300) ist, in Reaktion auf die Ermittlung, dass auf der ersten Luftmatratze des ersten Luftmatratzensystems kein Benutzer vorhanden ist; und

Übertragen der Anweisung zum Anpassen des Merkmals der Komponente des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems; und wobei das Schlafsystem ferner umfasst:

ein zweites Luftmatratzensystem, umfassend:

eine zweite zentrale Steuerung, die ausgelegt ist zum:

Empfangen der Anweisung zum Anpassen des Merkmals der Komponente des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems;

Anpassen der Komponente des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems in Reaktion auf das Empfangen der Anweisung zum Anpassen des Merkmals der Komponente des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems.

10. Schlafsystem nach Anspruch 9, wobei die erste zentrale Steuerung (302) ausgelegt ist, um eine grobe Druckänderung zu detektieren, um zu ermitteln, dass auf der ersten Luftmatratze (301) kein Benutzer

vorhanden ist.

11. Schlafsystem nach Anspruch 9, wobei die erste zentrale Steuerung (302) ausgelegt ist, um das Fehlen eines Biosignals zu detektieren, um zu ermitteln, dass auf der ersten Luftmatratze (301) kein Benutzer vorhanden ist.
12. Schlafsystem nach Anspruch 9, wobei die Anweisung zum Anpassen des Merkmals der Komponente des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems ausgelegt ist, um einen Benutzer des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems zu alarmieren.
13. Schlafsystem nach Anspruch 9, wobei die Anweisung zum Anpassen des Merkmals der Komponente des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems eine Anweisung zum Ändern des Drucks einer Luftmatratze des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems ist.
14. Schlafsystem nach Anspruch 9, wobei die Anweisung zum Anpassen des Merkmals der Komponente des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems eine Anweisung zum Ändern der Temperatur der Komponente des zweiten Luftmatratzensystems ist.

Revendications

1. Procédé consistant à :

déterminer, au niveau d'un contrôleur central d'un premier système de matelas pneumatique (300), si un utilisateur est présent sur un matelas du système de matelas pneumatique ;
si l'utilisateur n'est pas présent, générer, par l'intermédiaire du contrôleur central (302) du premier système de matelas pneumatique, une instruction de réglage d'une caractéristique d'un composant d'un second système de matelas pneumatique qui est éloigné du premier système de matelas pneumatique ; et
transmettre, à un contrôleur central du second système de matelas pneumatique, l'instruction de réglage de la caractéristique du composant du second système de matelas pneumatique.

2. Procédé selon la revendication 1, dans lequel :

le premier système de matelas pneumatique (300) est pour un enfant dans une première pièce ;
le second système de matelas pneumatique est pour un parent dans une seconde pièce.

3. Procédé selon la revendication 1 ou 2, dans lequel la présence de l'utilisateur sur le système de matelas pneumatique (300) est déterminée au moyen d'un

capteur de pression (46) couplé pour détecter une pression dans un collecteur de pompe (43).

4. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 3, dans lequel la présence de l'utilisateur sur le système de matelas pneumatique (300) est déterminée au moyen du capteur de pression (46) par l'intermédiaire d'une présence de biosignaux.
5. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4, dans lequel l'instruction est transmise du contrôleur central (302) du premier système de matelas pneumatique (300) au contrôleur central du second système de matelas pneumatique au moyen d'une technique sans fil.
6. Procédé selon la revendication 1, dans lequel l'instruction de réglage de la caractéristique du composant du second système de matelas pneumatique est configurée pour alerter un utilisateur du second système de matelas pneumatique.
7. Procédé selon la revendication 1, dans lequel l'instruction de réglage de la caractéristique du composant du second système de matelas pneumatique est une instruction de variation de la pression d'un matelas pneumatique du second système de matelas pneumatique.

8. Procédé selon la revendication 1, dans lequel l'instruction de réglage de la caractéristique du composant du second système de matelas pneumatique est une instruction de déplacement d'une base du second système de matelas pneumatique.

9. Système de couchage, comprenant :

un premier système de matelas pneumatique (300) comprenant :

un premier matelas pneumatique (301) ; et
un premier contrôleur central (302) configuré pour :

déterminer qu'aucun utilisateur n'est présent sur le premier matelas pneumatique (301) ;

en réponse à la détermination du fait qu'aucun utilisateur n'est présent sur le premier matelas pneumatique du premier système de matelas pneumatique,

générer une instruction de réglage d'une caractéristique d'un composant d'un second système de matelas pneumatique qui est éloigné du premier système de matelas pneumatique (300) ;
et

transmettre l'instruction de réglage de la caractéristique du composant du second système de matelas pneumatique ; et

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le système de couchage comprenant en outre :
un second système de matelas pneumatique comprenant :

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un second contrôleur central configuré pour :
recevoir l'instruction de réglage de la caractéristique du composant du second système de matelas pneumatique ; et
en réponse à la réception de l'instruction de réglage de la caractéristique du composant du second système de matelas pneumatique, régler le composant du second système de matelas pneumatique.

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10. Système de couchage selon la revendication 9, dans lequel, pour déterminer qu'aucun utilisateur n'est présent sur le premier matelas pneumatique (301), le premier contrôleur central (302) est configuré pour détecter une variation de pression brute.

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11. Système de couchage selon la revendication 9, dans lequel, pour déterminer qu'aucun utilisateur n'est présent sur le premier matelas pneumatique (301), le premier contrôleur central (302) est configuré pour détecter une absence de biosignal.

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12. Système de couchage selon la revendication 9, dans lequel l'instruction de réglage de la caractéristique du composant du second système de matelas pneumatique est configurée pour alerter un utilisateur du second système de matelas pneumatique.

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13. Système de couchage selon la revendication 9, dans lequel l'instruction de réglage de la caractéristique du composant du second système de matelas pneumatique est une instruction de variation de la pression d'un matelas pneumatique du second système de matelas pneumatique.

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14. Système de couchage selon la revendication 9, dans lequel l'instruction de réglage de la caractéristique du composant du second système de matelas pneumatique est une instruction de variation de la température du composant du second système de matelas pneumatique.

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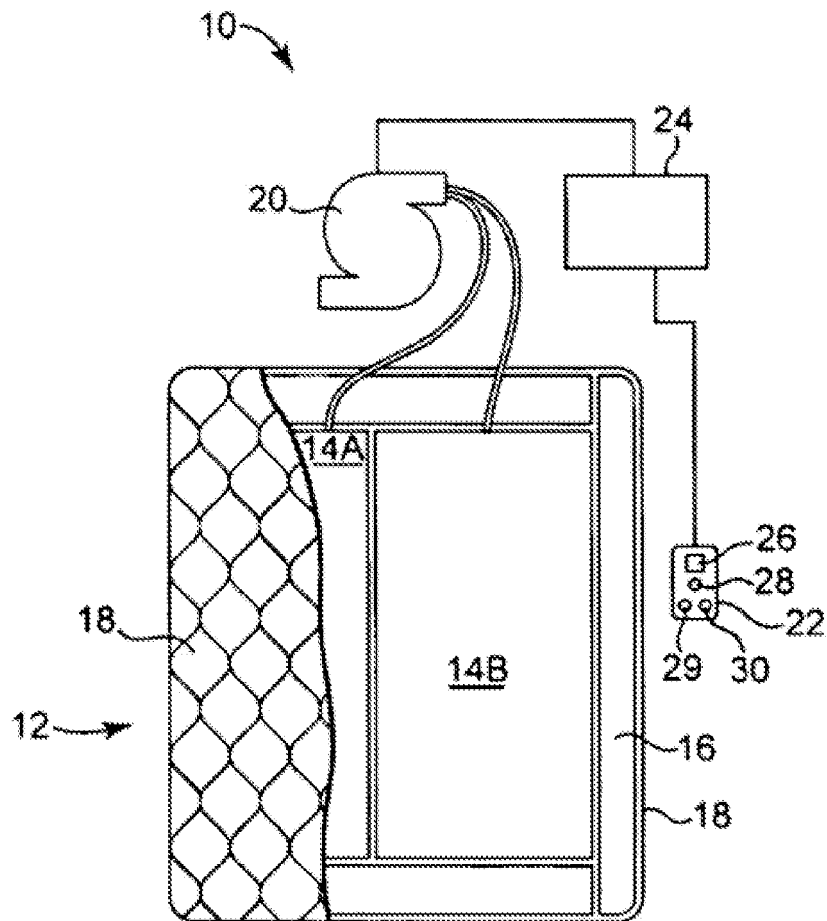


Fig. 1

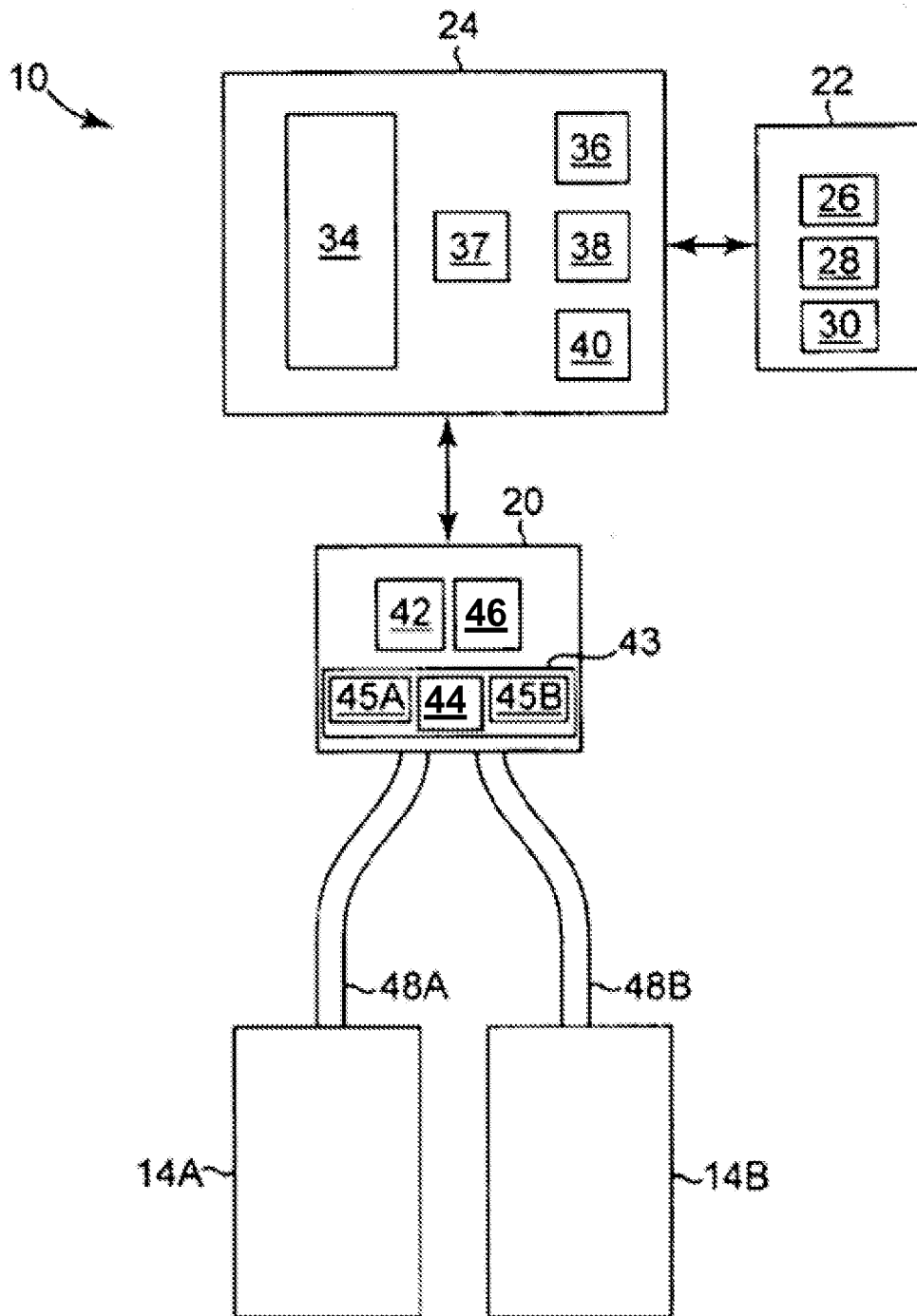


Fig. 2

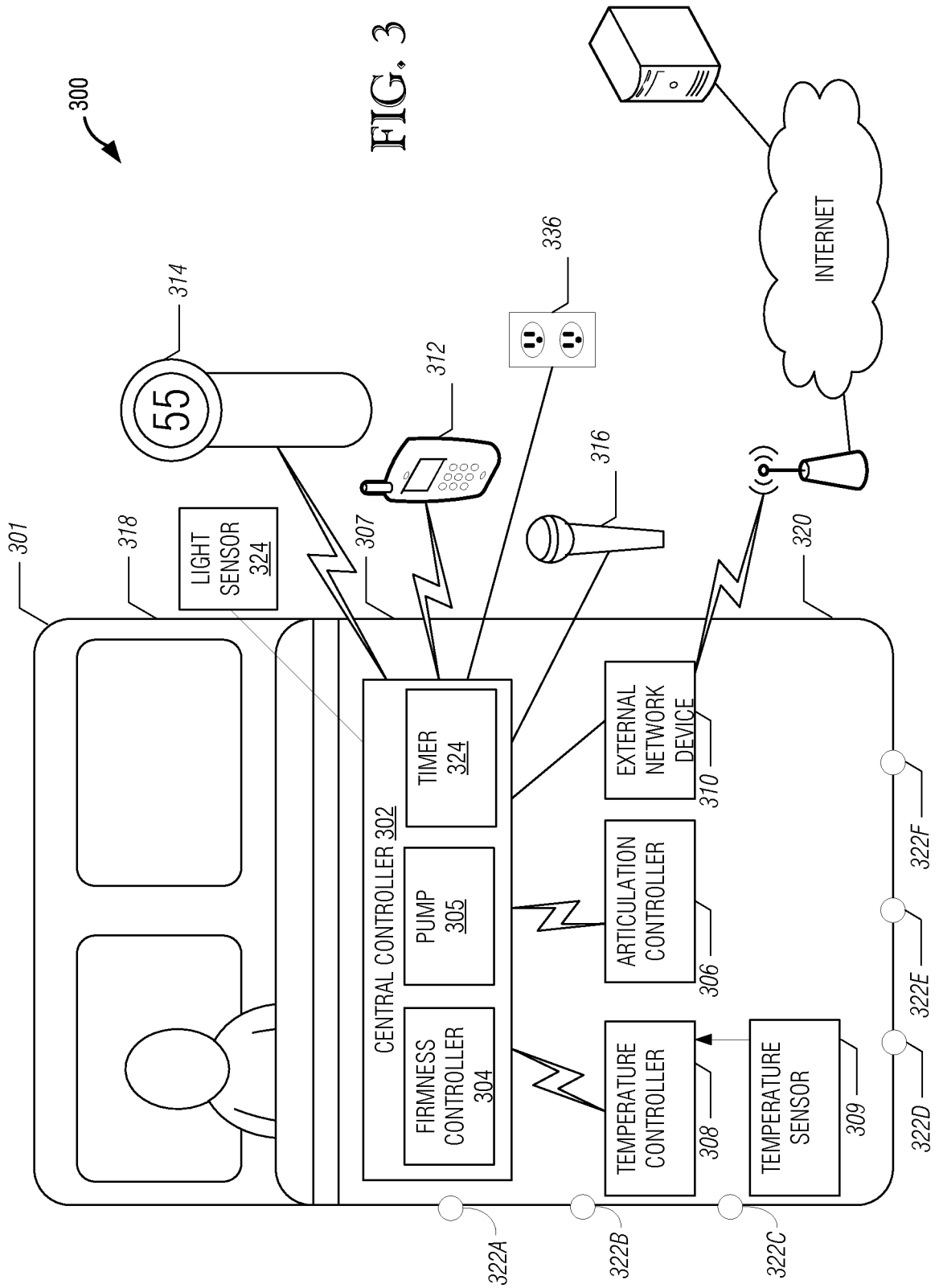


FIG. 3

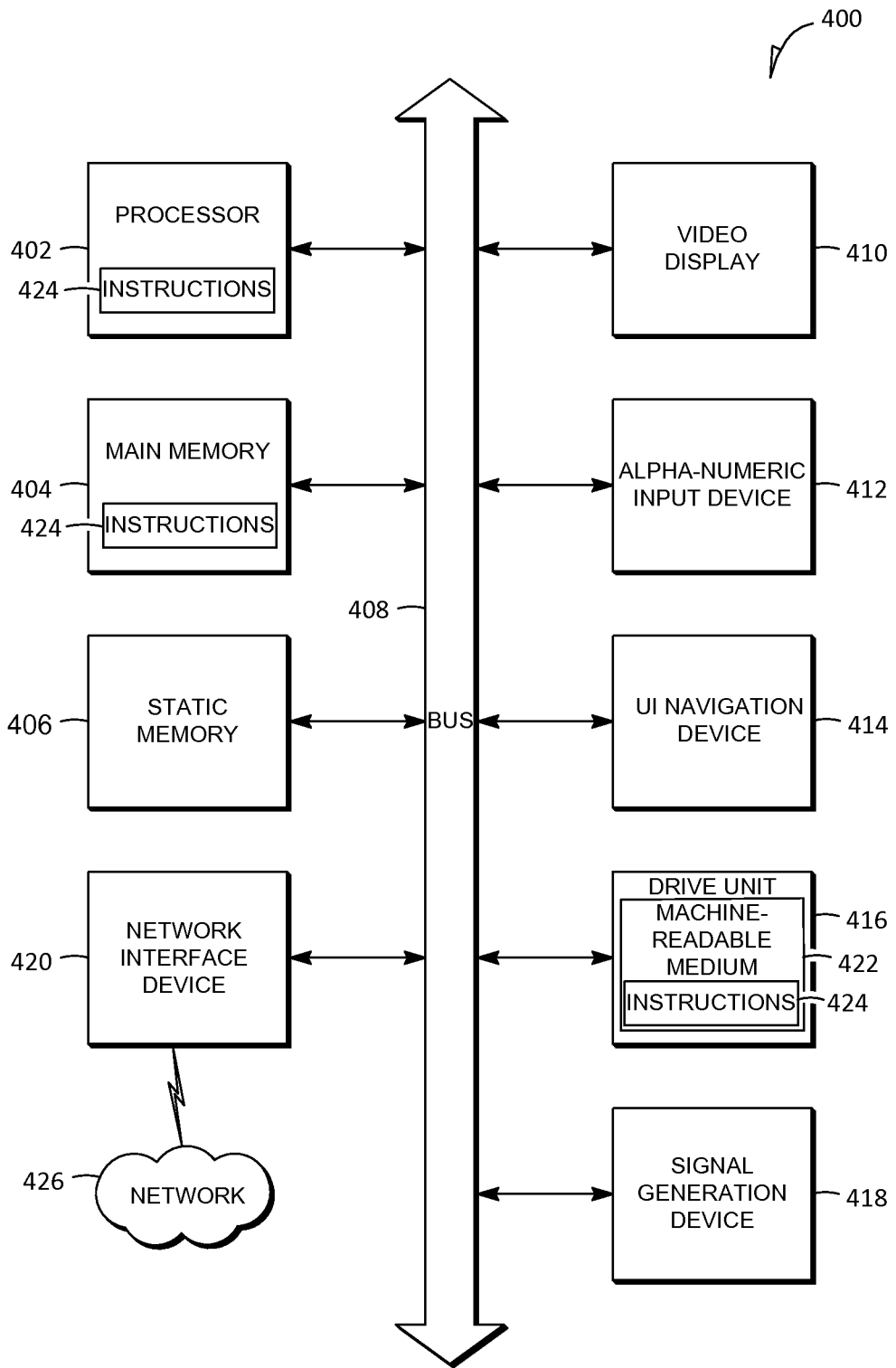


FIG. 4

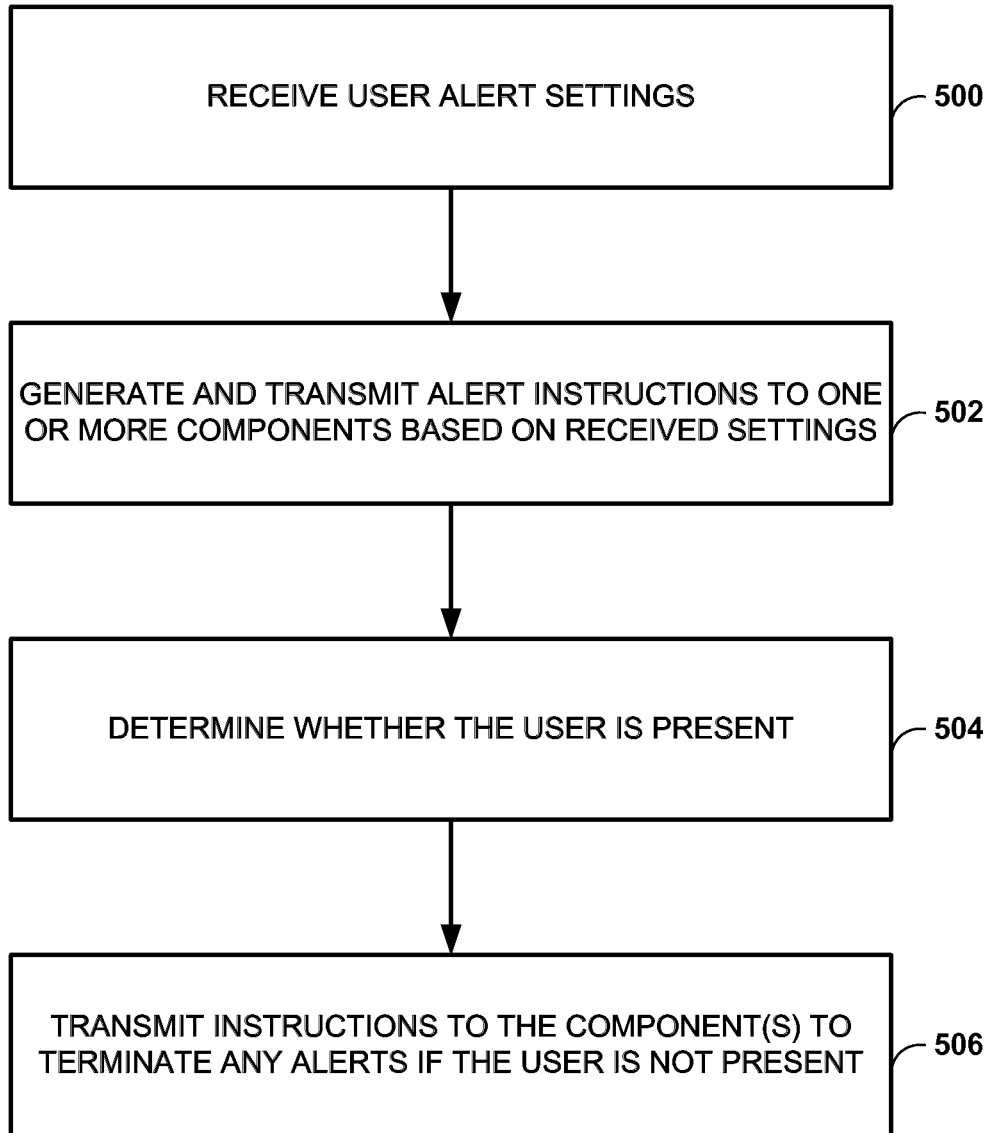


FIG. 5

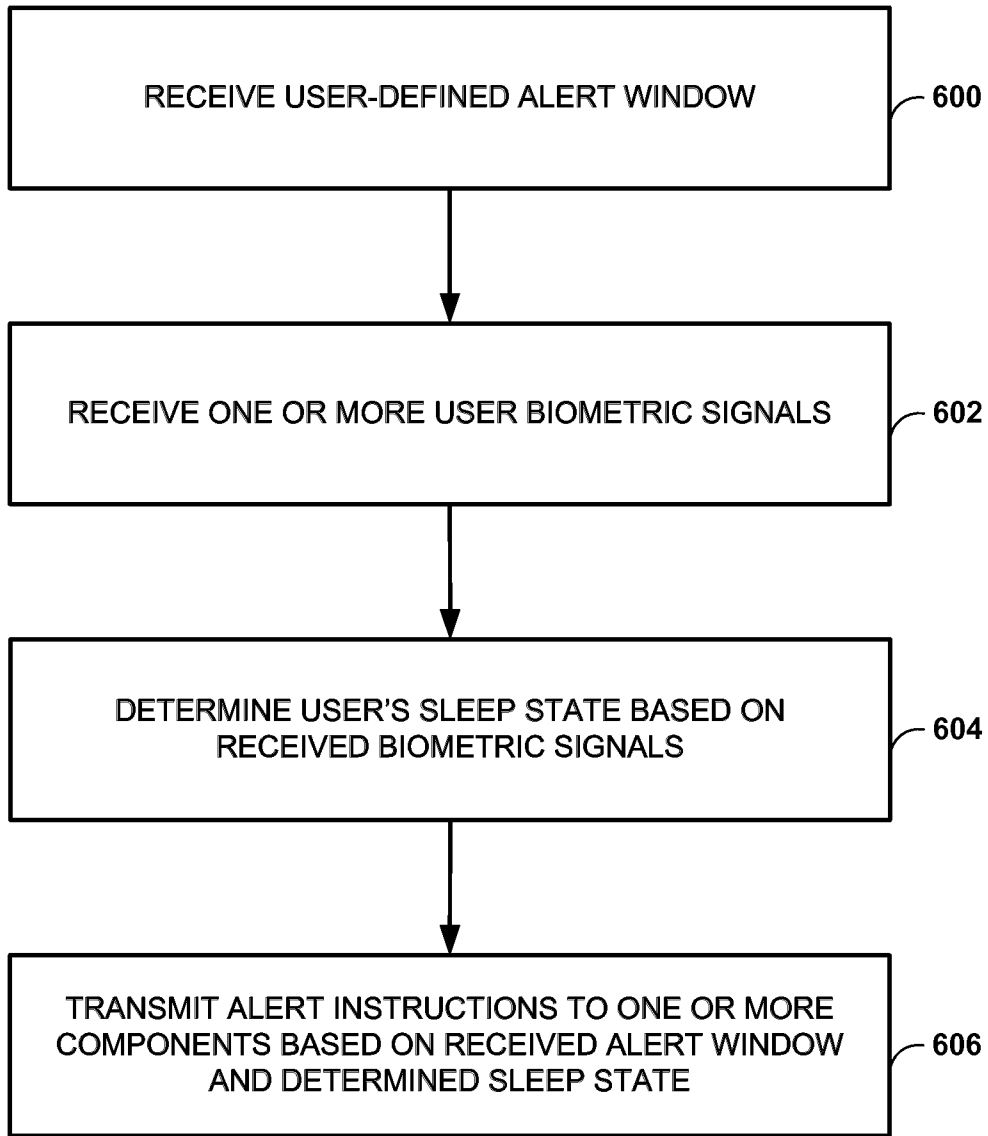


FIG. 6

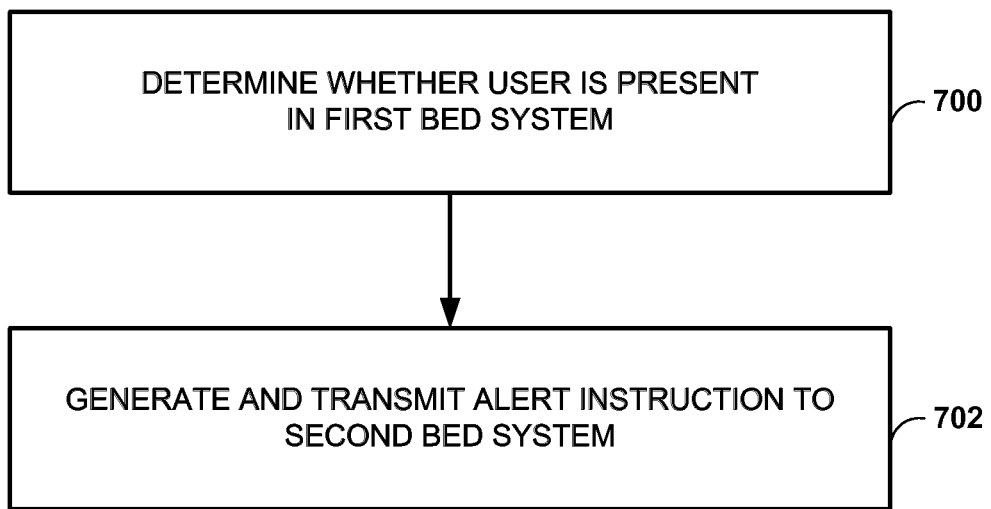


FIG. 7

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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外部链接	Espacenet		

摘要(译)

除了别的以外, 本公开描述了通过改变用户的睡眠环境来唤醒用户的技术。在一个示例中, 一种方法包括在充气床垫系统的中央控制器处接收至少一个用户警报设置, 经由中央控制器基于所接收的用户警报设置生成至少一个指令, 并且从所述用户警报设置发送中央控制器, 至少一个指令到充气床垫系统的第一部件以调节第一部件的特征。

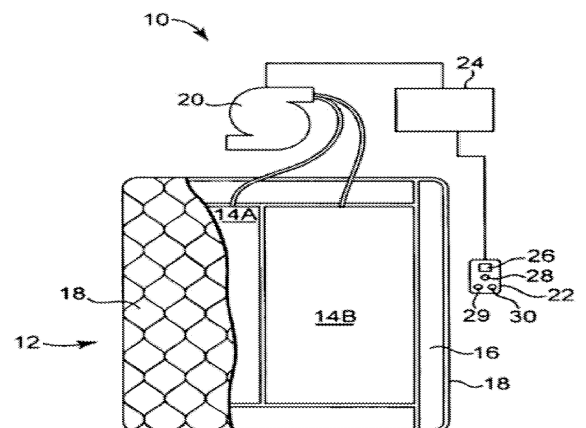


Fig. 1