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[54] **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PROVIDING AND MONITORING COUPONS VIA A NETWORK**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **455/5.1; 455/6.2; 348/10; 705/14**

[58] **Field of Search** **348/1, 3, 10, 12, 348/13, 7; 455/6.2, 6.3, 5.1, 2; 345/327; 709/217, 218, 219; 705/10, 14; H04N 7/16, 7/173**

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

The present invention provides a method and apparatus for targeting specific audiences for coupon distribution. In one embodiment, users of an entertainment network are monitored to determine specific preferences. Alternatively, the users may be surveyed to determine preferences. A preference profile is determined based on the preferences. Coupons are distributed only to the users that fit a coupon distributor's chosen preference profile. The coupons may be delivered in a variety of ways. For example, coupons may be downloaded to a user's system automatically or on demand. Alternatively, coupons may be mailed to the user automatically or on demand. The coupons may then be redeemed by the user. Coupons are provided and monitored such that each coupon may be redeemed a predetermined number of times.

14 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets

