UNMUTE KEY WORD FOR CONFERENCE CALL DERIVED FROM ATTENDEE LIST, PERSONAL GREETING OR TRAINING

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A method for training a voice-activated “unmute” for an audio call is disclosed. The method involves identifying the names of participants on the call, such that when those names are uttered the intention of the speaker to be heard on the call is clear and the microphone of the person speaking is unmuted.

Many networked modern communication devices have a microphone mute switch. The use of the microphone mute switch is to shield the person on the receiving sound from ambient noise around the other speaker at the near end. These mute controls are typically manually actuated, familiarly activated by pushbuttons. A common problem, especially on conferences where multiple participants are sharing a common discussion, is the inadvertent “speaking on mute.” Speaking on Mute is when a person’s line is muted against their intention, and occurs frequently when the person intending to speak on the call forgets or confuses their own Mute status. Or, the physical action of unmuting (especially for a cell phone, where muting may require the user to draw the phone away from their ear in order to use an on-screen display) itself may be inconvenient. Unmute by a voice command could be convenient, this idea relies on a natural process of speaking the name of one of the participants on the call. The active listening software will listen to the muted person talking, the speaker, and when the names for any of the participants on the call is said the Mute will be disabled by an unmute control, allowing the microphone to work and participate to the networked audio call. Figure 1 shows a networked call with distant participants, and a mute control by the active listening software. The physical location of the active listening software could be anywhere that has access to the speaker’s unmuted microphone. For example, the network itself can perform the steps of audio muting and active listening.

Figure 2 shows the flow diagram for the operation by the active listening software. The components needed for unmuting by participant name include an active listening software in control of the microphone mute, associated to a keyword list of names for the call. The list of names can be created by different methods, one possible method is to use digital identification of the participants on the call. Almost all modern real time communication devices available today have a kind of “caller ID” function that associates the network address of the speaker to a name. A second method of identifying names of the participants on the call are to train during the call by associating common phrases. For example, the listening software agent may identify salutations such as “Good morning, xxxx” or introductions as “hello, this is xxxx” where the utterance XXXX is captured as a formal name of the participant. By capturing the name of a participant on the call, an association to the intended audience is created and used as a Keyword by the listening software to cause an “unmute” to the expected speaker.
Figure 1, a Mute control for a networked audio call

Figure 2, operation of the active listening software

- Develop keyword list of participant names on the call
- Listen for utterance by the speaker of a participant name
- Unmute the microphone if a participant's name is used

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