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(57) Abstract :

A method of encoding source data (20) to generate corresponding encoded data (30) for transmission or storage is provided, wherein the method includes: (a) matching one or more portions of the source data (20) to one or more elements (E) in one or more databases (100), wherein the one or more elements (E) are representative of corresponding one or more data blocks, and recording reference values (R, 300) which relate the one or more portions of the source data (20) to the one or more matched elements (E); and (b) including the reference values (R, 300) in the encoded data (30) together with the one or more databases (100) and/or information identifying the one or more databases (100). A method of decoding encoded data (30) to generate corresponding decoded output data (60) is also provided, wherein the method includes: (a) receiving encoded data (30) including reference values (R, 300) and information regarding area identifiers (U) and information regarding one or more databases (100); (b) decoding from the encoded data (30) the reference values (R, 300); (c) accessing one or more elements (E) from the one or more databases (100) as directed by the reference values (R, 300), wherein the one or more elements (E) are representative of one or more corresponding data blocks; and (d) generating the one or more data blocks for assembling corresponding decoded data (60) for output. The methods are beneficially implemented in an encoder (10), a decoder (50) and in a codec (5). In the codec (5), the at least one encoder (10) and the at least one decoder (50) share one or more databases (100) referred to by reference values (R) included in the encoded data (30). FIG. 1 for the Abstract.

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