



US 20040268451A1

(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication** (10) **Pub. No.: US 2004/0268451 A1****Robbin et al.**(43) **Pub. Date: Dec. 30, 2004**(54) **GRAPHICAL USER INTERFACE FOR BROWSING, SEARCHING AND PRESENTING MEDIA ITEMS**

(60) Provisional application No. 60/465,410, filed on Apr. 25, 2003. Provisional application No. 60/534,555, filed on Jan. 5, 2004.

(75) Inventors: **Jeffrey L. Robbin**, Los Altos, CA (US);
David Heller, San Jose, CA (US);
Peter K. Wagner, Redwood City, CA (US); **Mike Wiese**, Cupertino, CA (US)**Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.⁷** **G09G 5/00**
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **999/999.999**

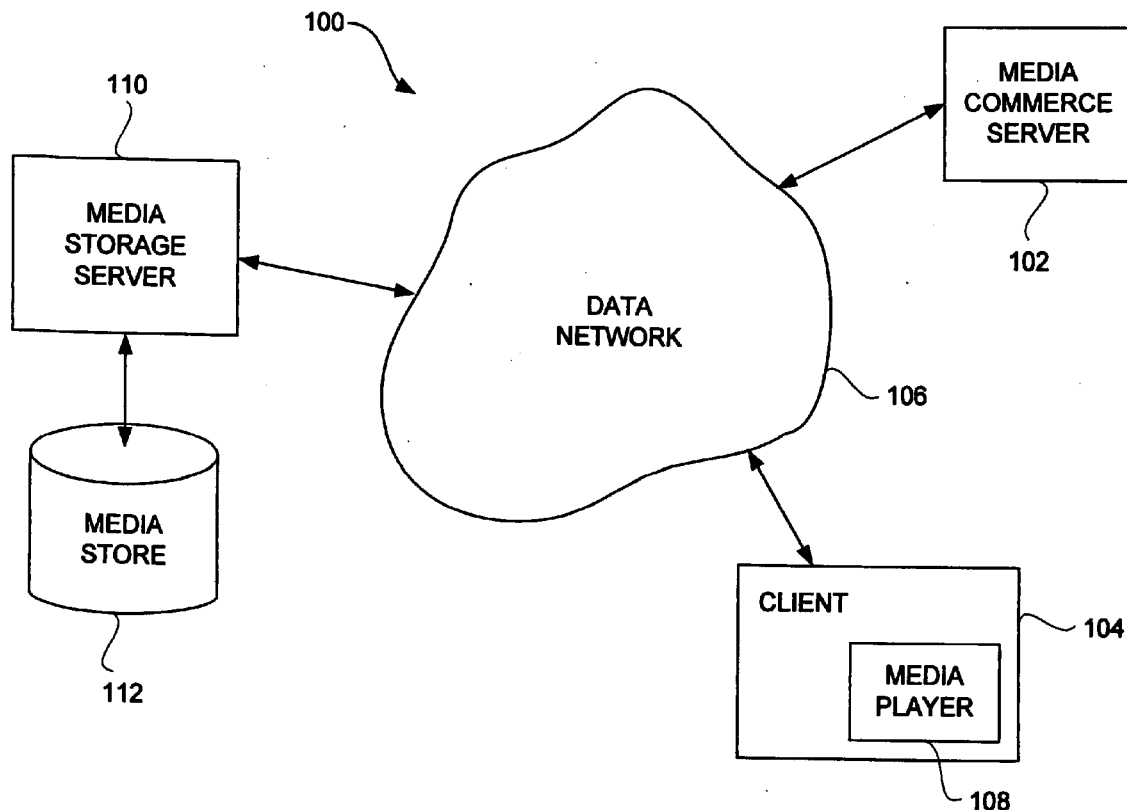
Correspondence Address:

BEYER WEAVER & THOMAS LLP
P.O. BOX 778
BERKELEY, CA 94704-0778 (US)(57) **ABSTRACT**

Improved graphical user interfaces suitable for reviewing, browsing, previewing and/or purchasing media items are also disclosed. The graphical user interfaces are suitable for reviewing or browsing numerous media items. The graphical user interfaces are also suitable for previewing or purchasing media items in an on-line manner. The graphical user interfaces are particularly useful for a system that provides purchase and distribution of media in a client-server environment.

(73) Assignee: **Apple Computer, Inc.**(21) Appl. No.: **10/832,984**(22) Filed: **Apr. 26, 2004****Related U.S. Application Data**

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 10/776,652, filed on Feb. 10, 2004, now abandoned.



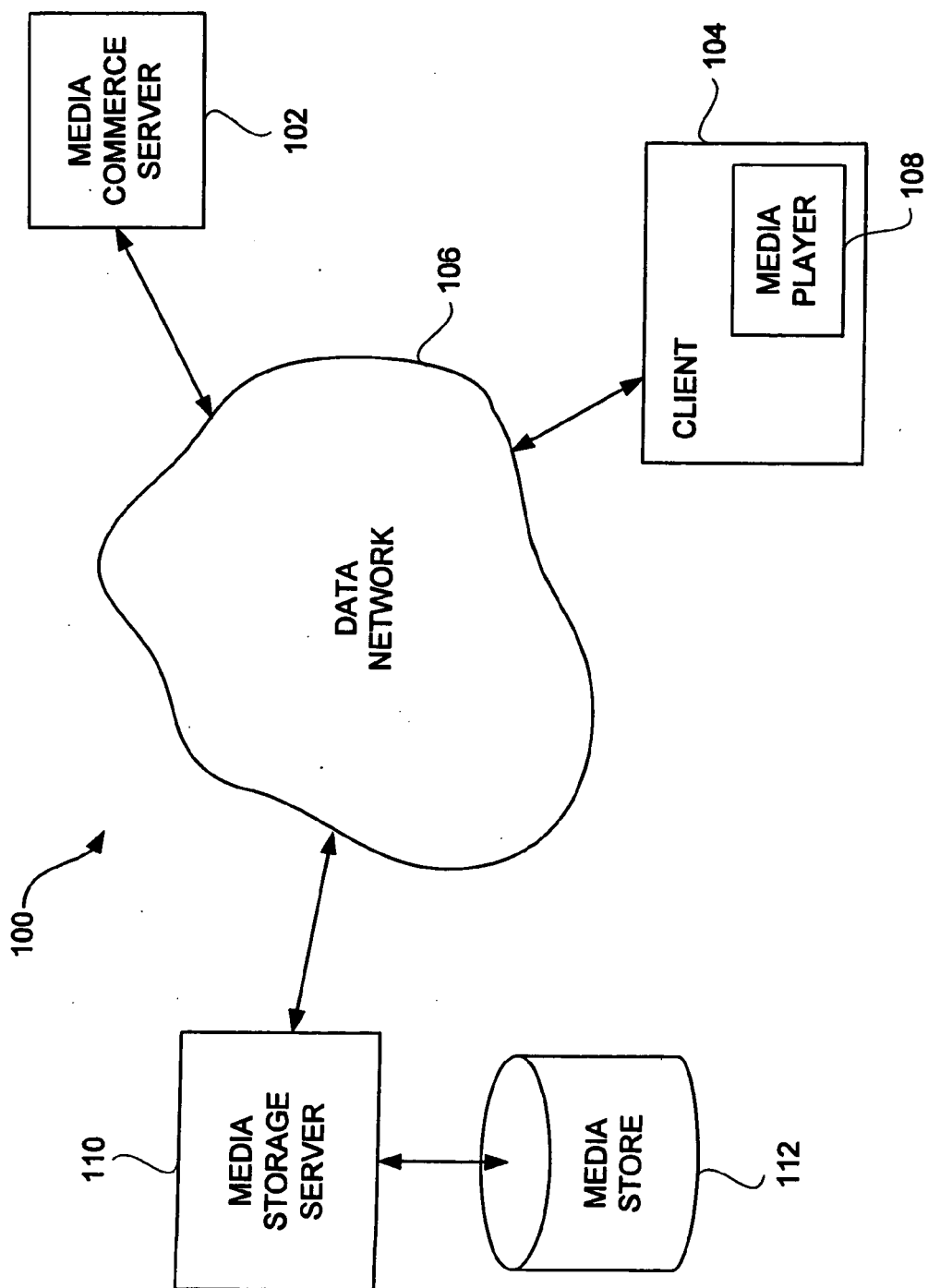
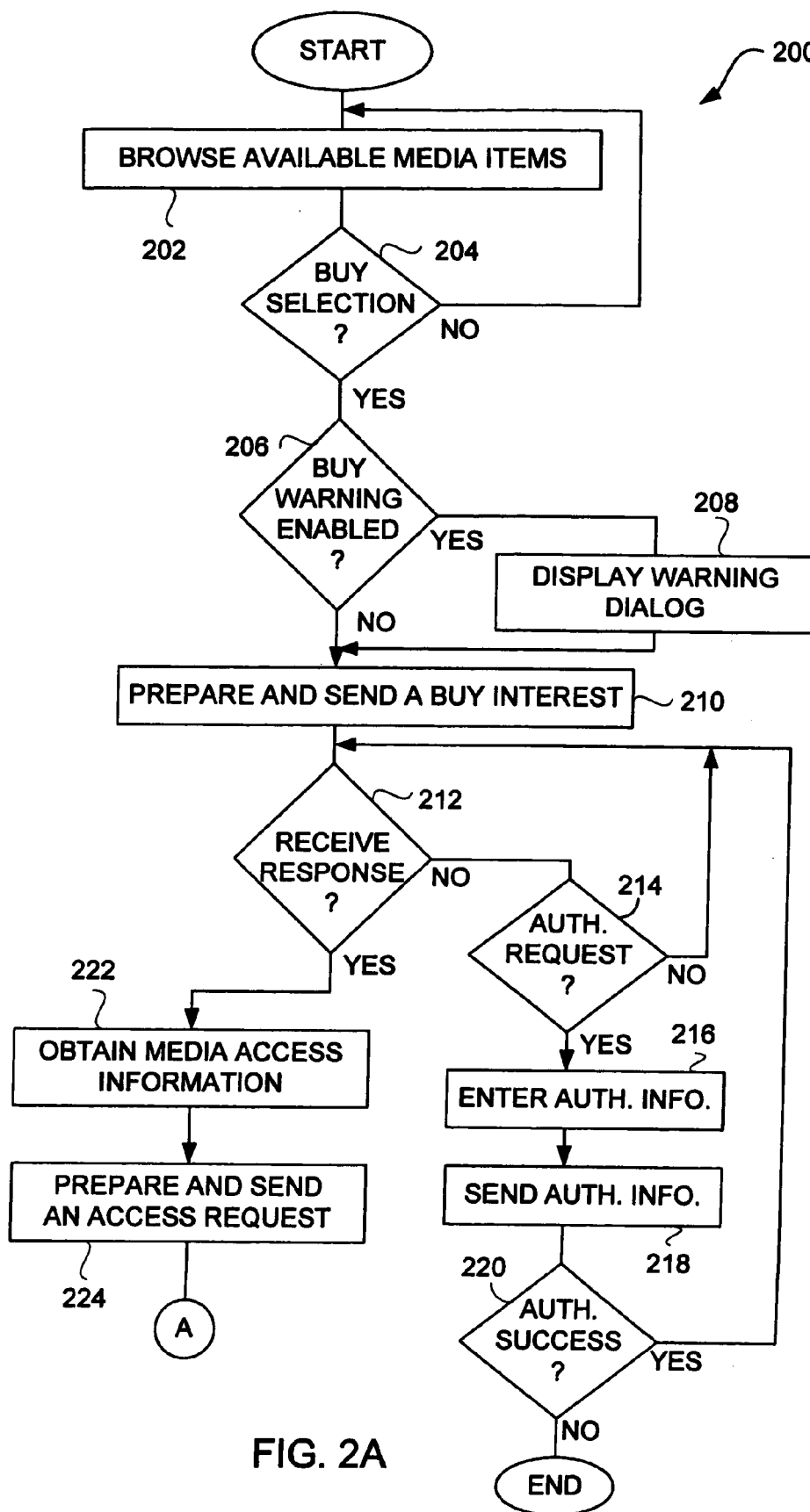


FIG. 1



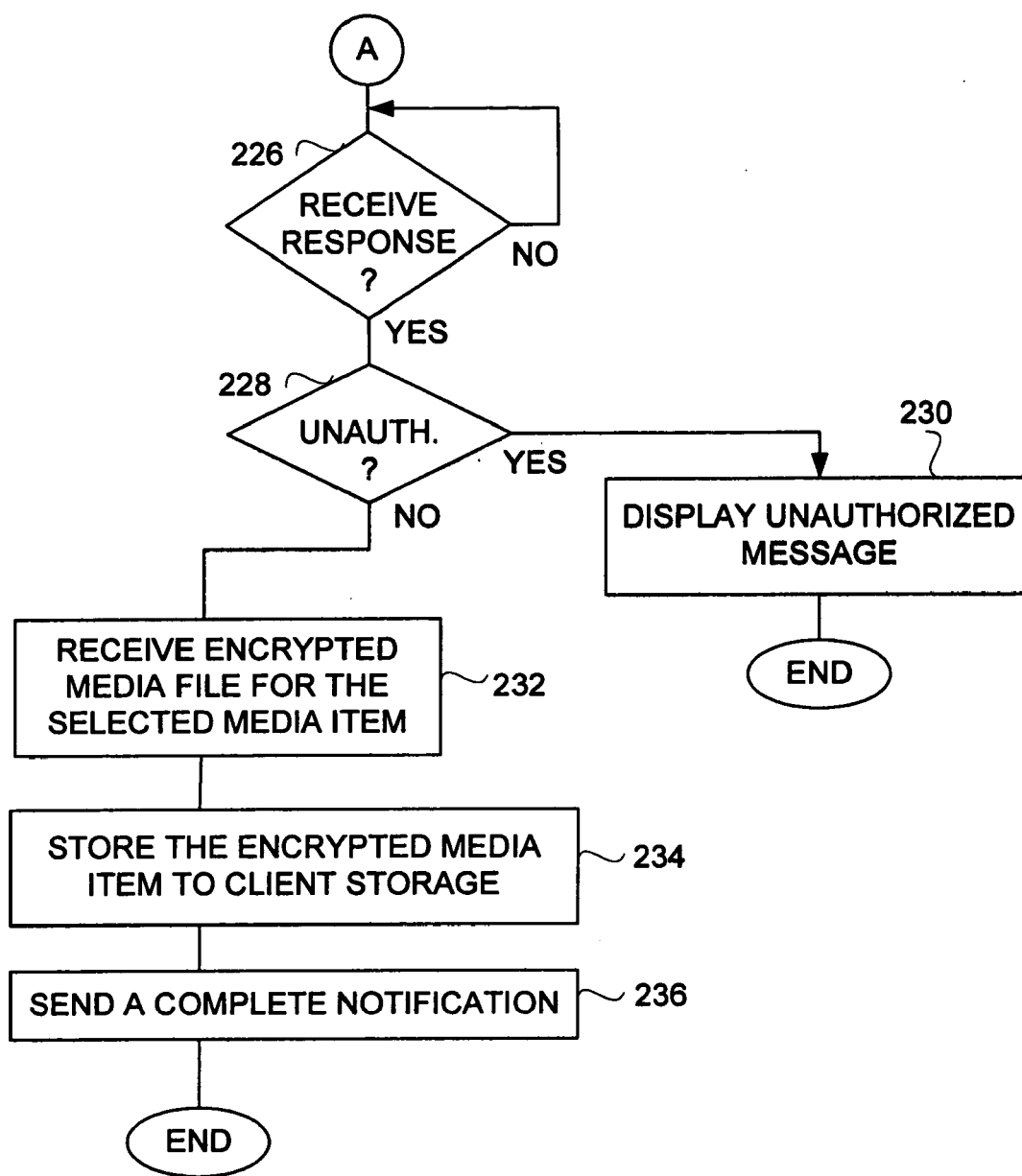


FIG. 2B

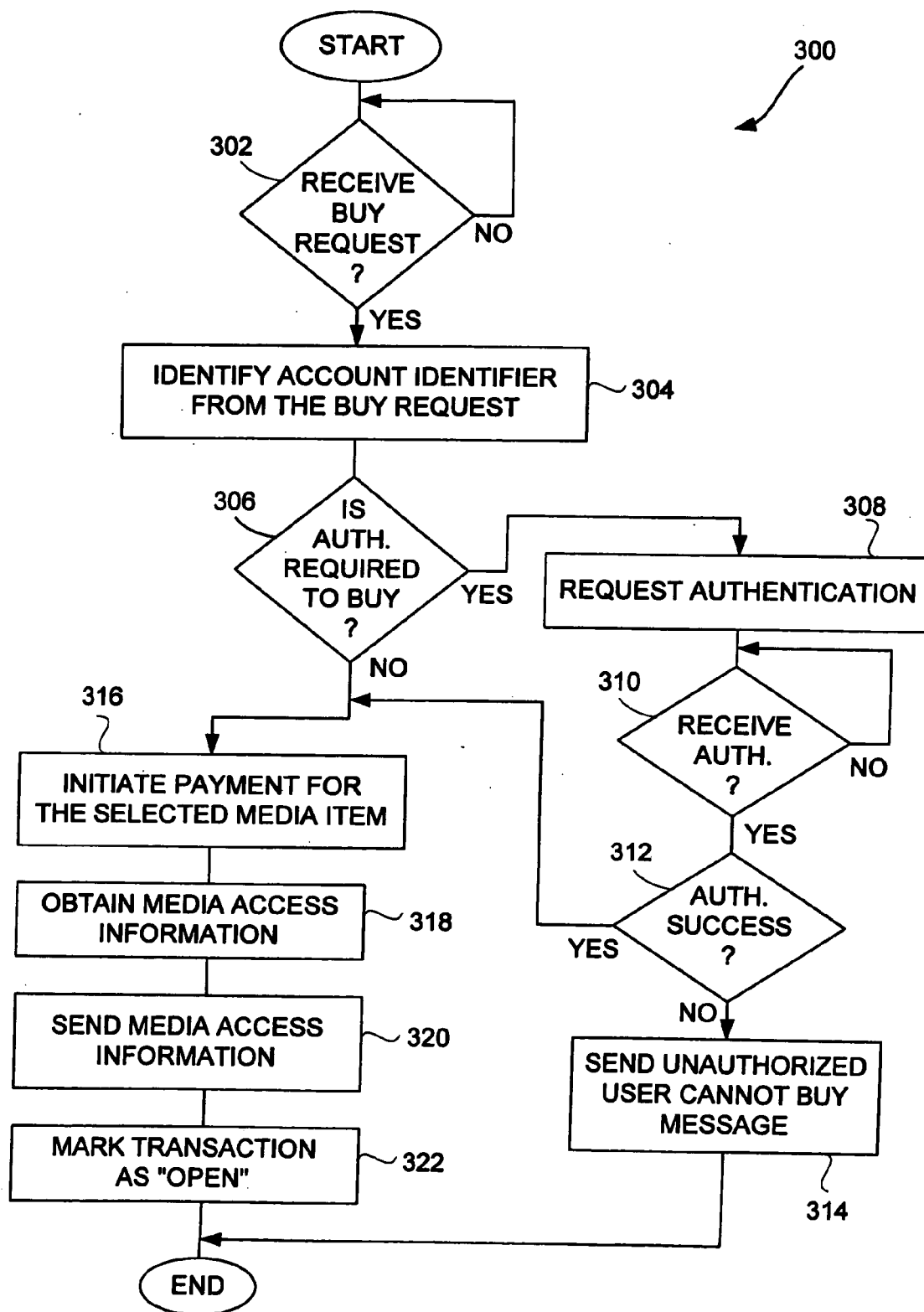


FIG. 3

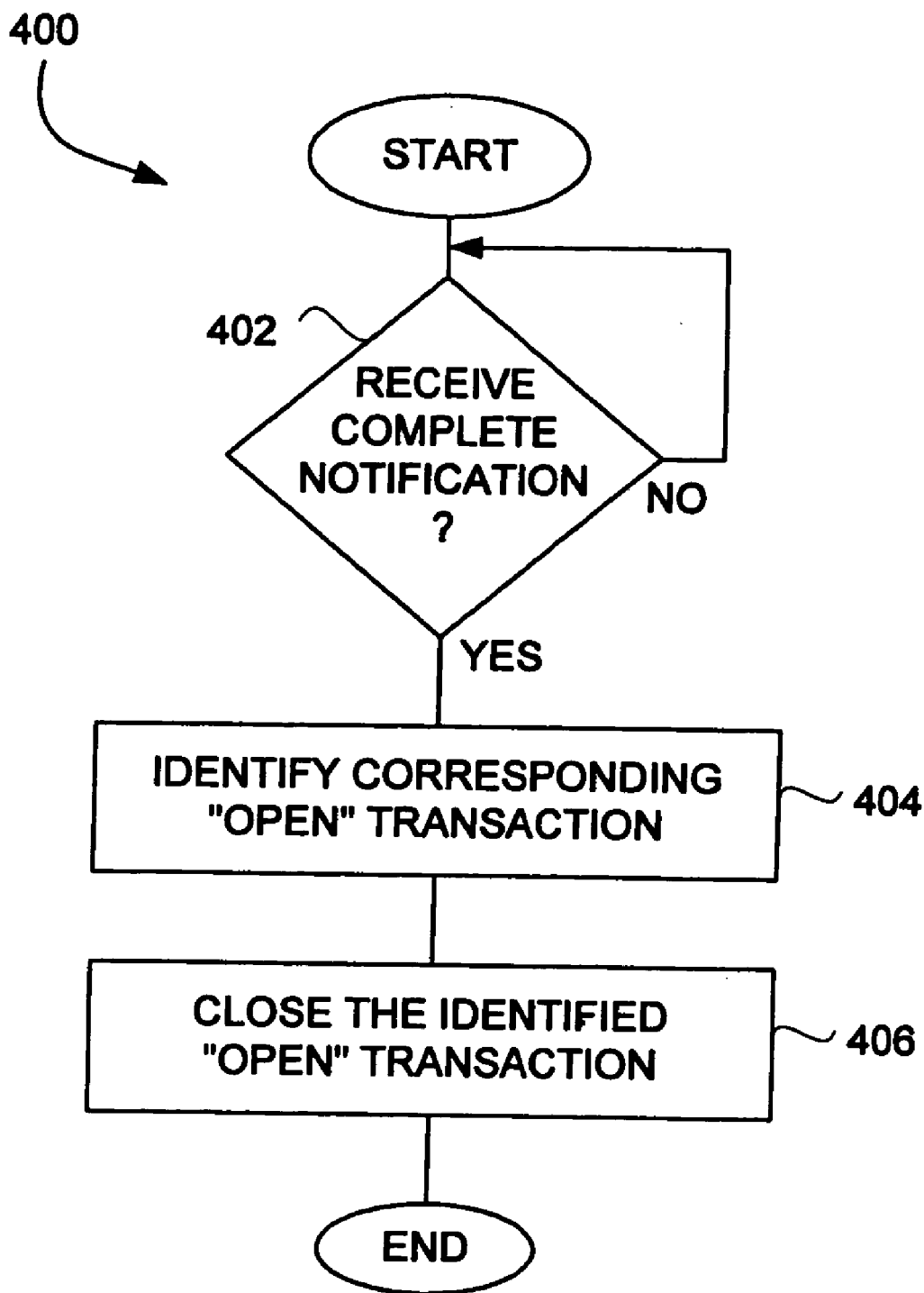


FIG. 4

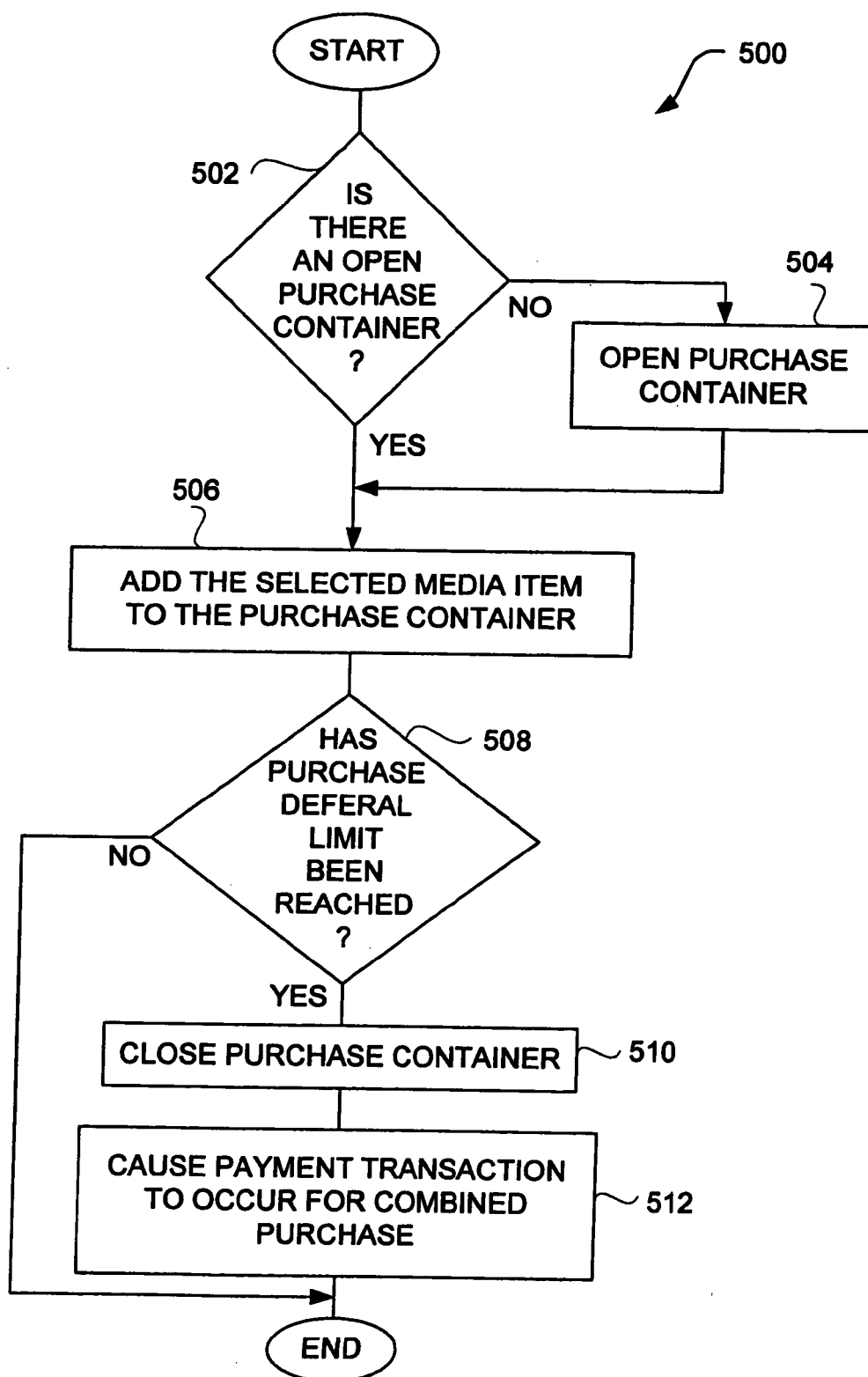


FIG. 5A

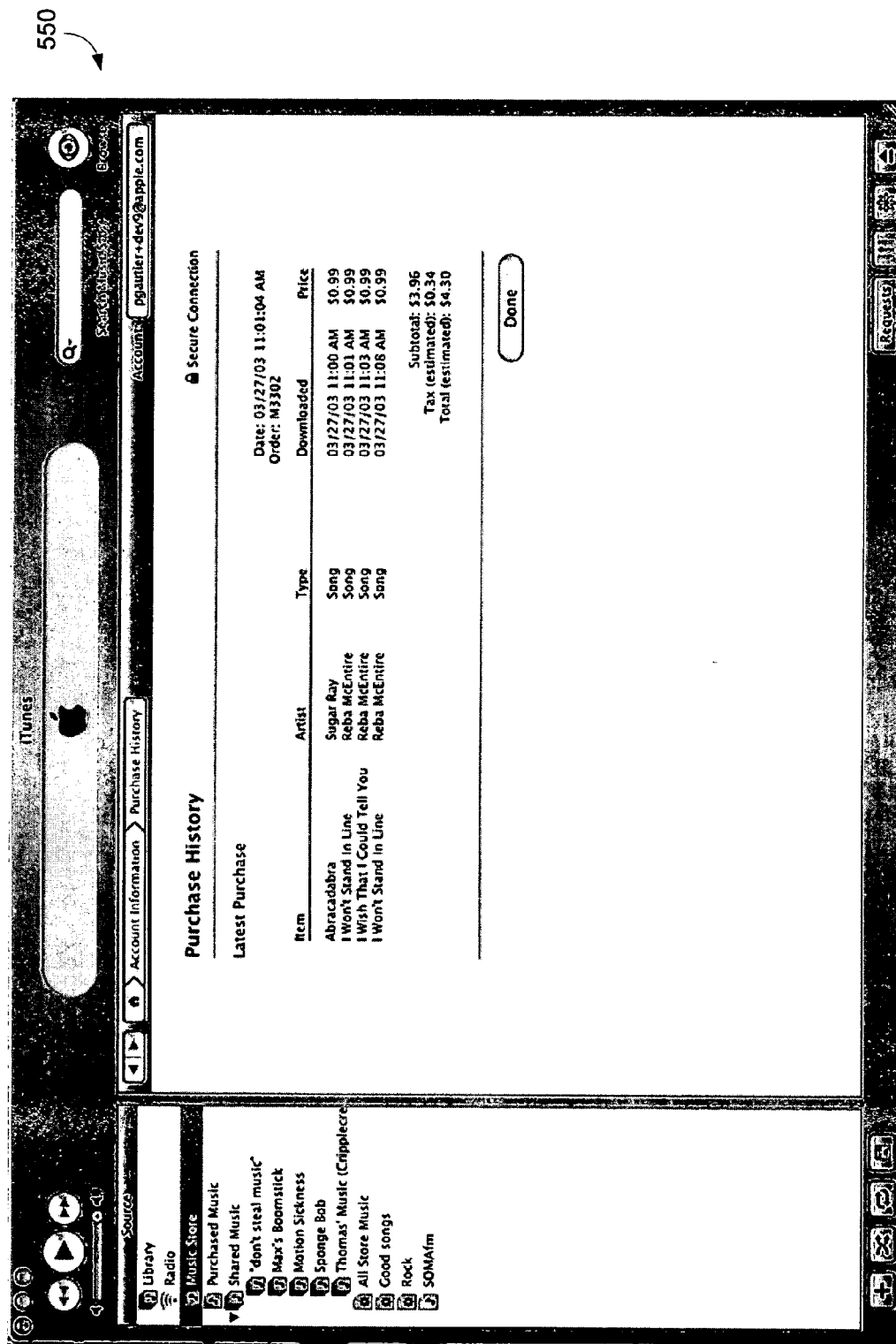


FIG. 5B

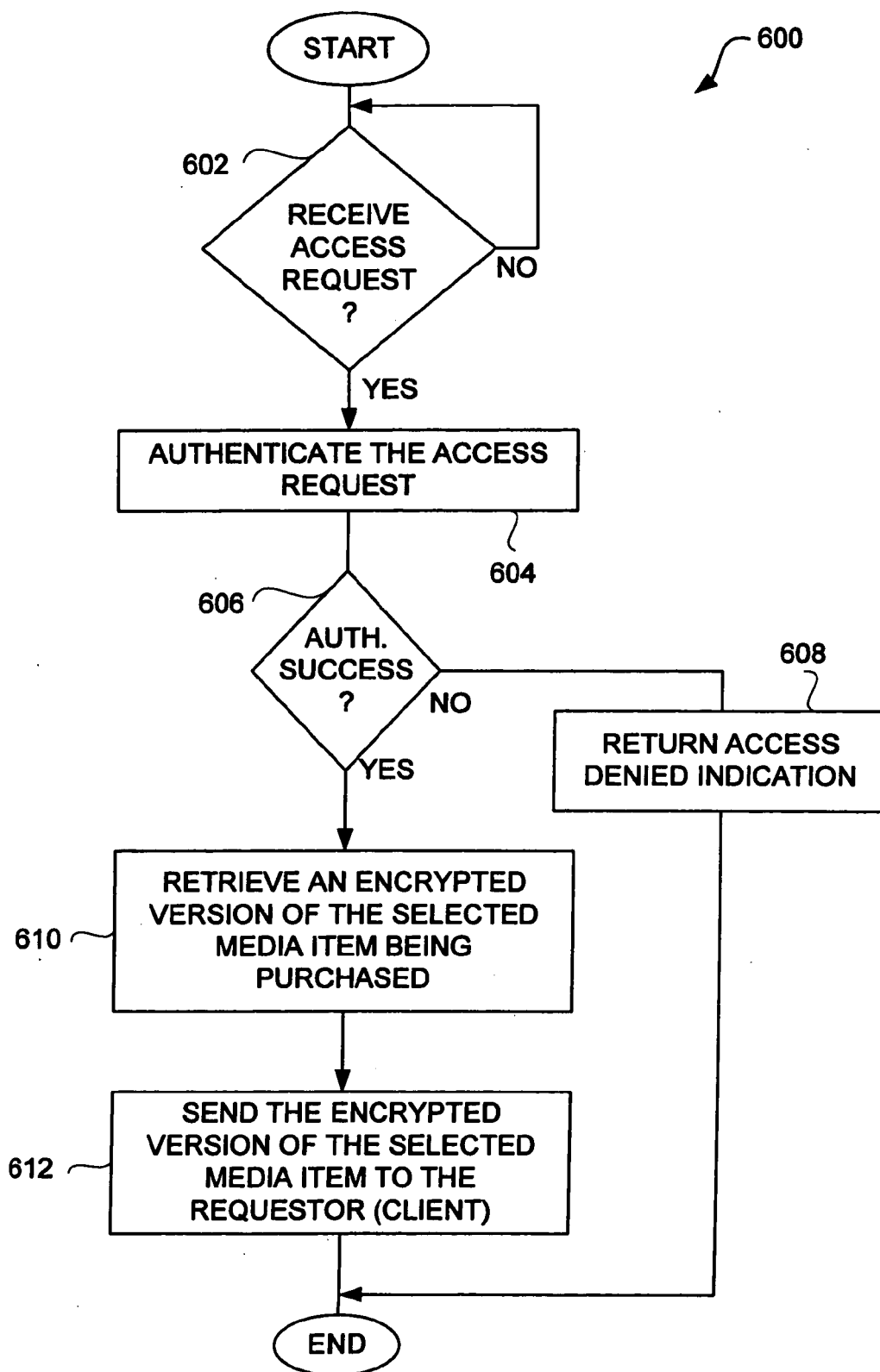


FIG. 6

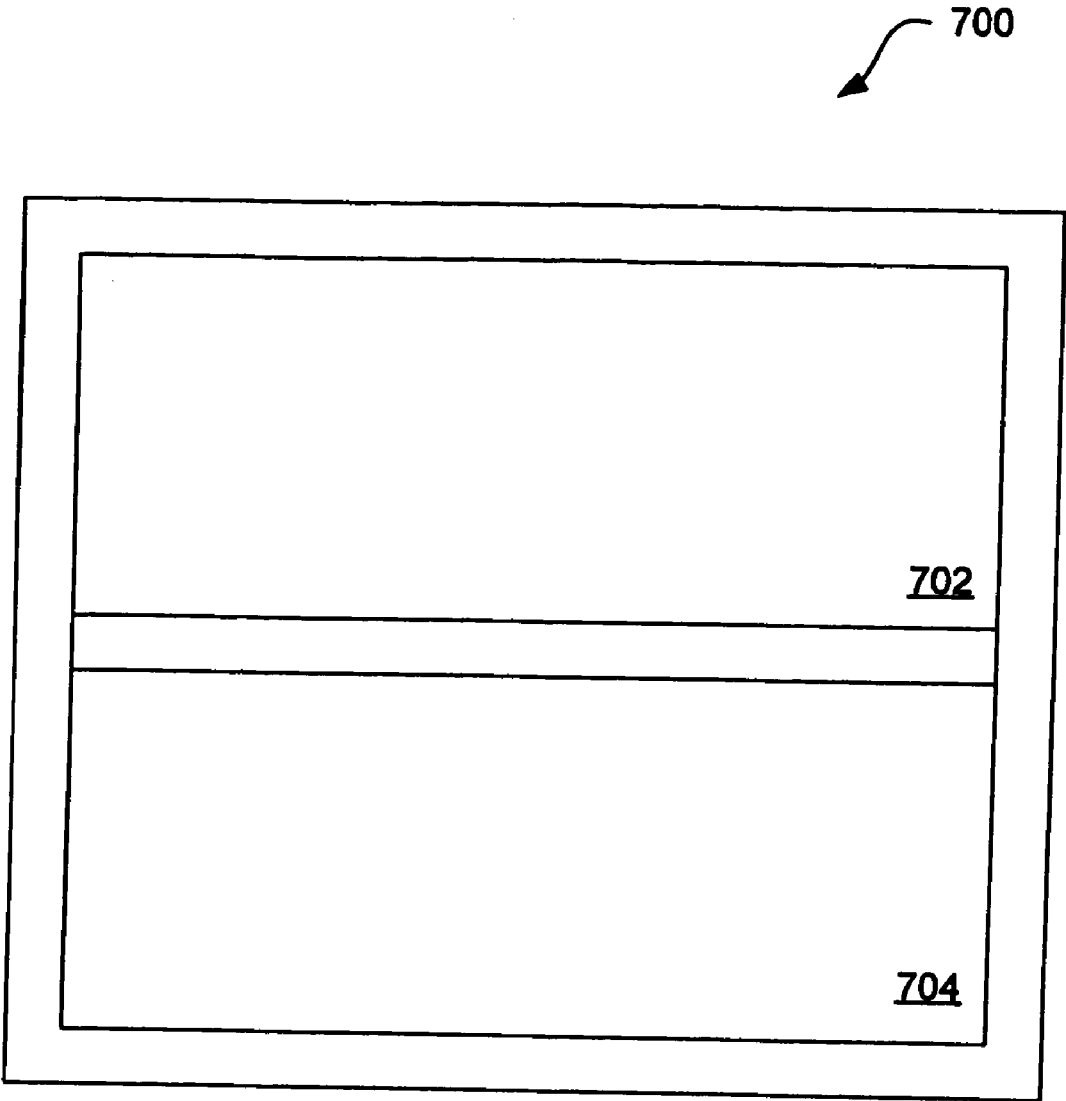


FIG. 7A

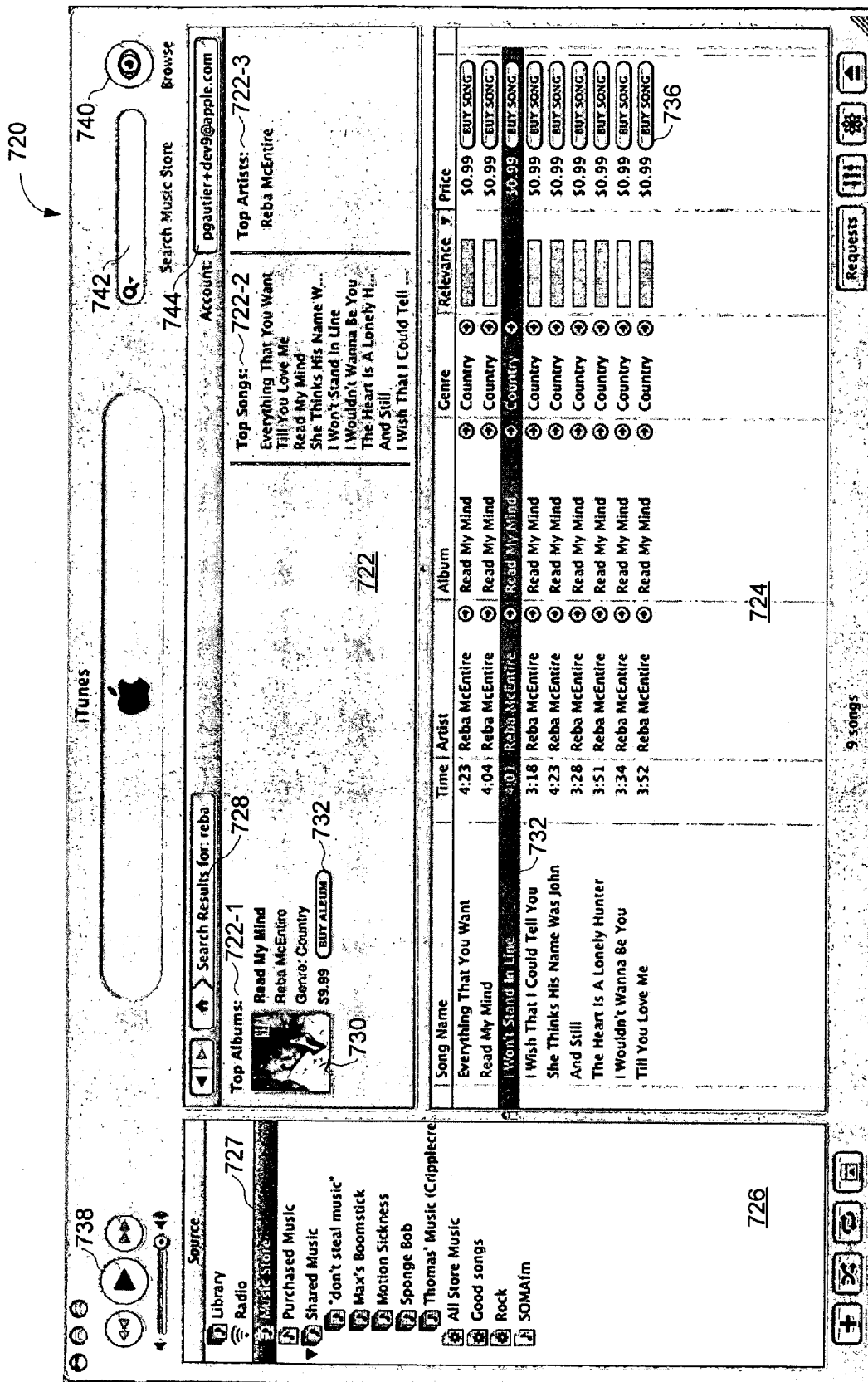


FIG. 7B

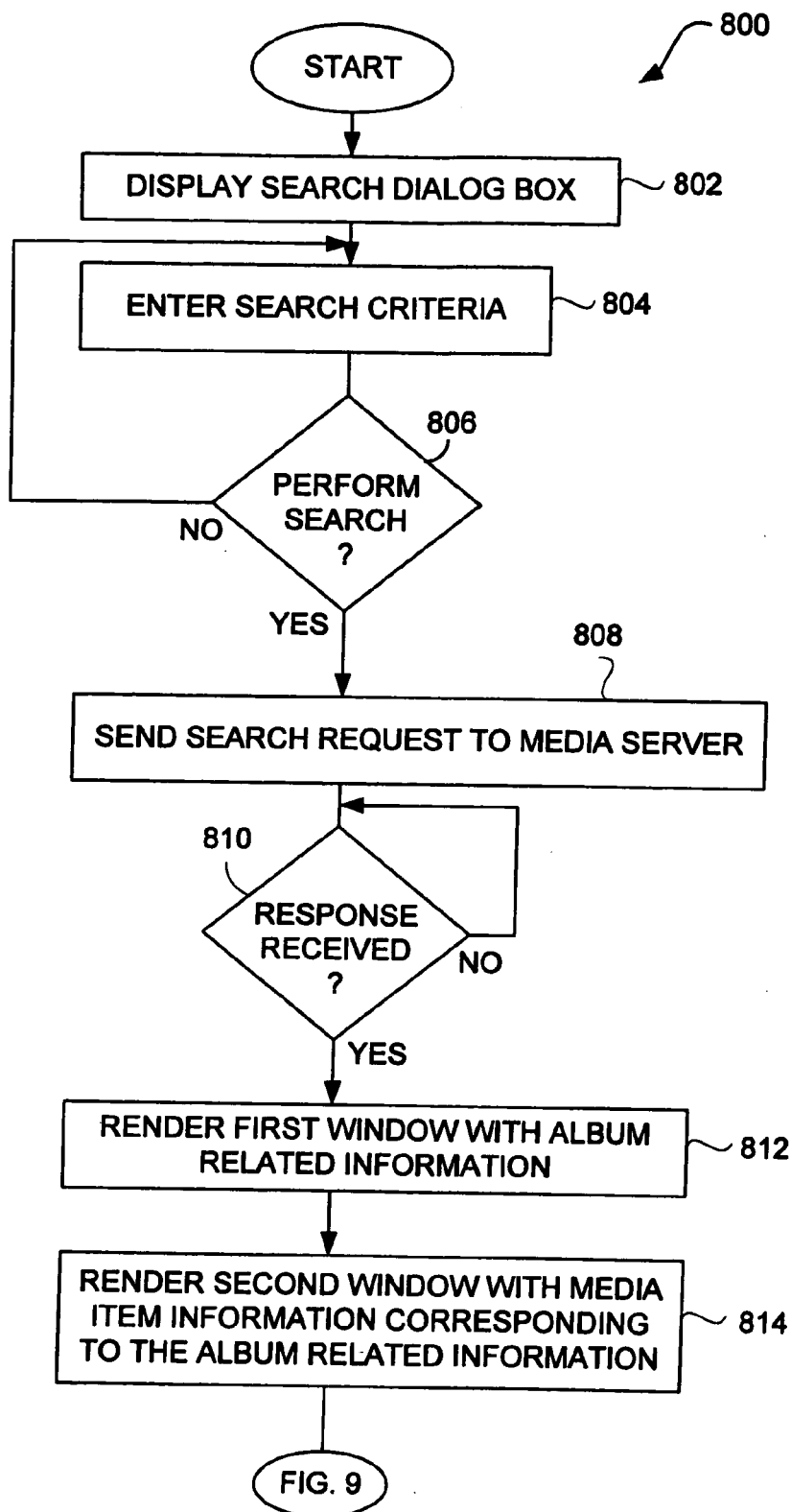


FIG. 8

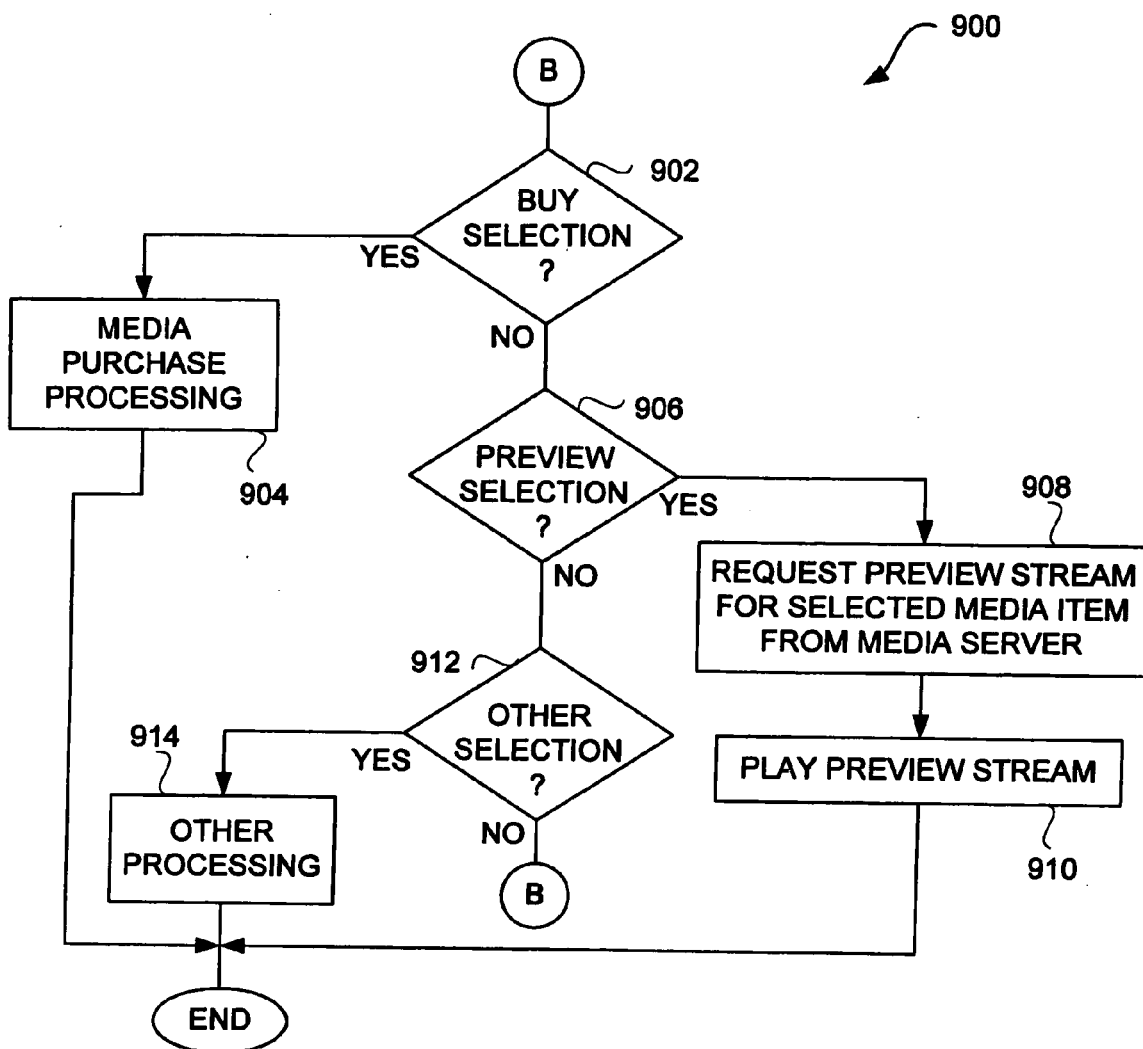


FIG. 9

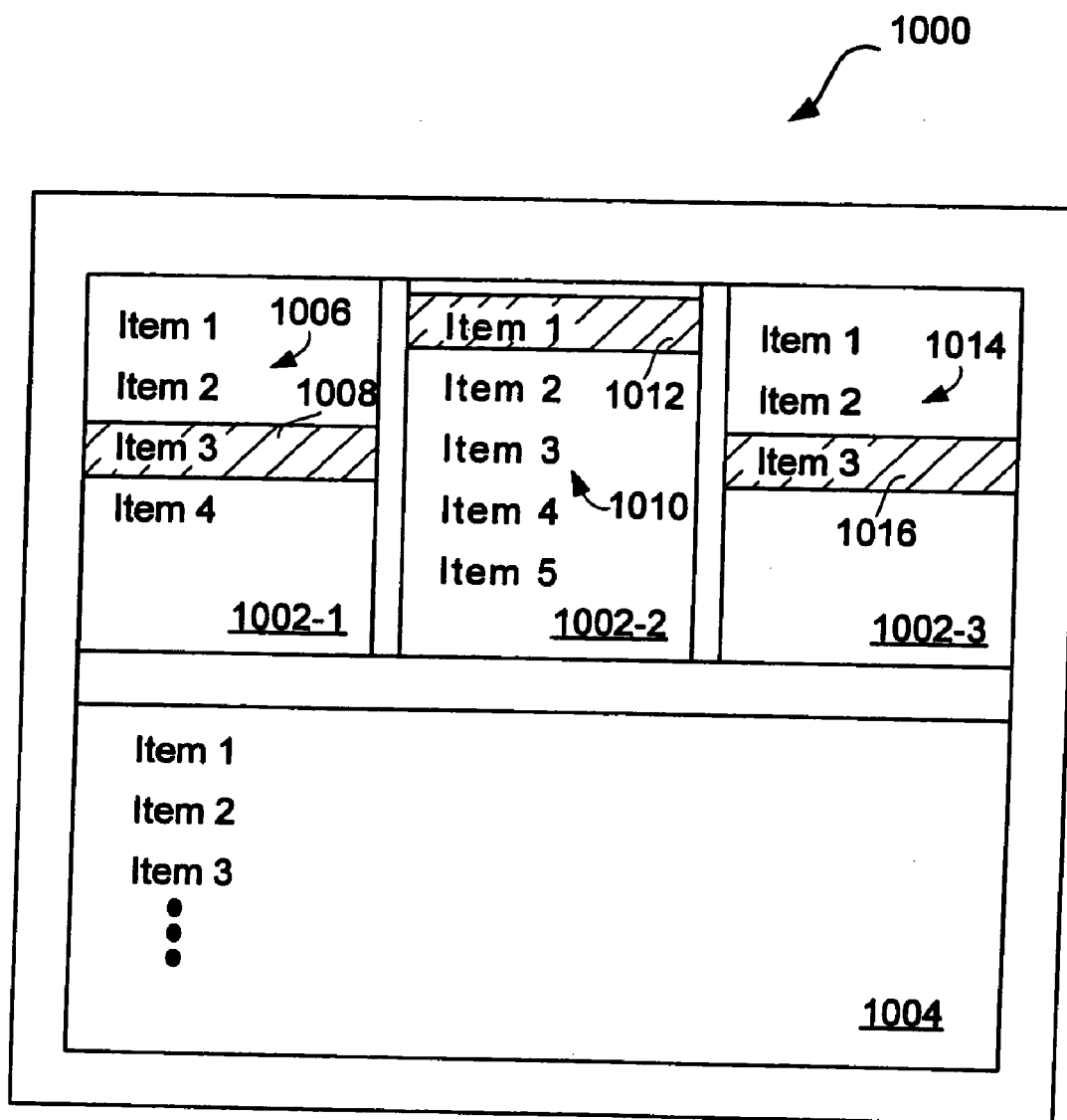


FIG. 10

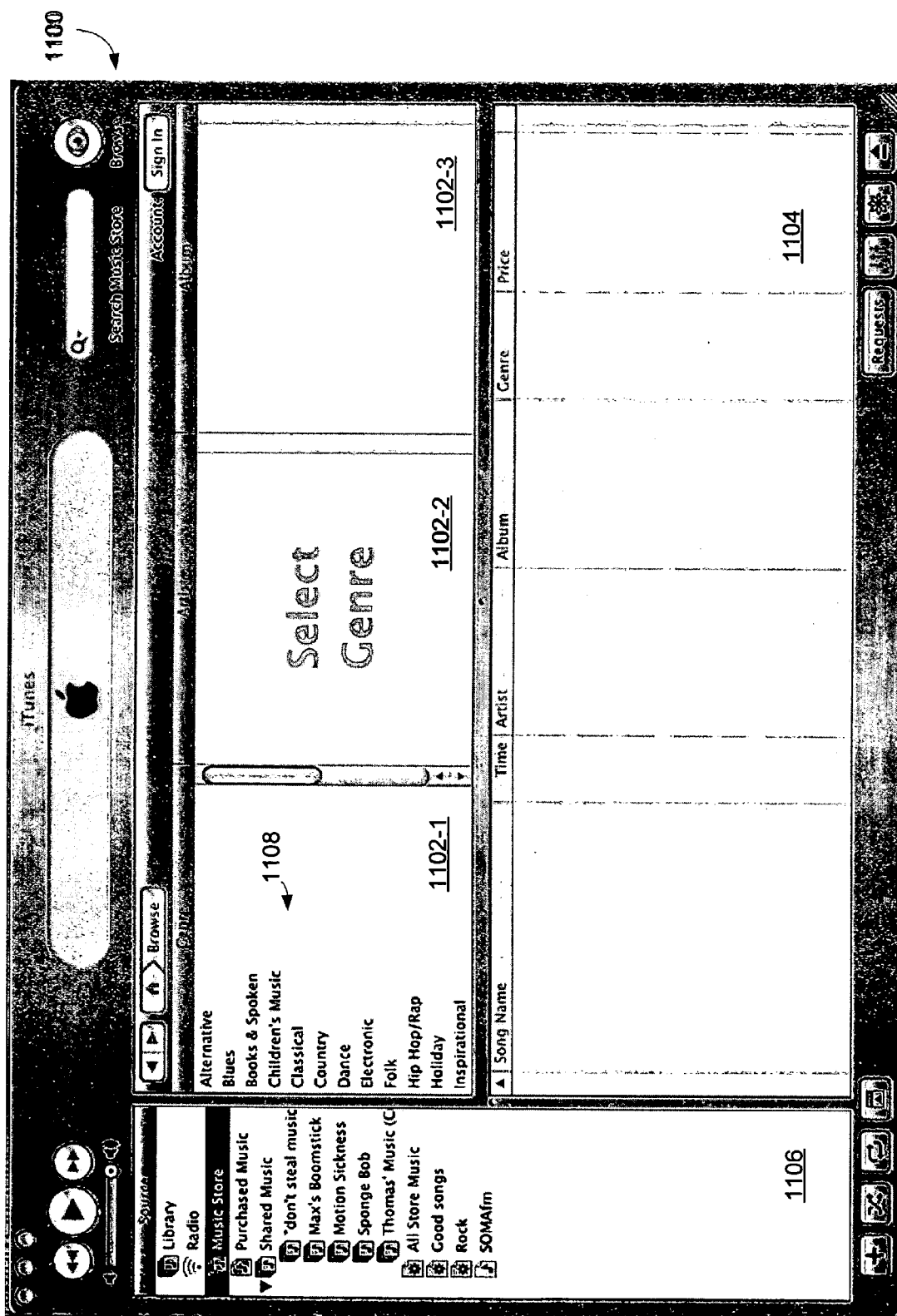


FIG. 11A

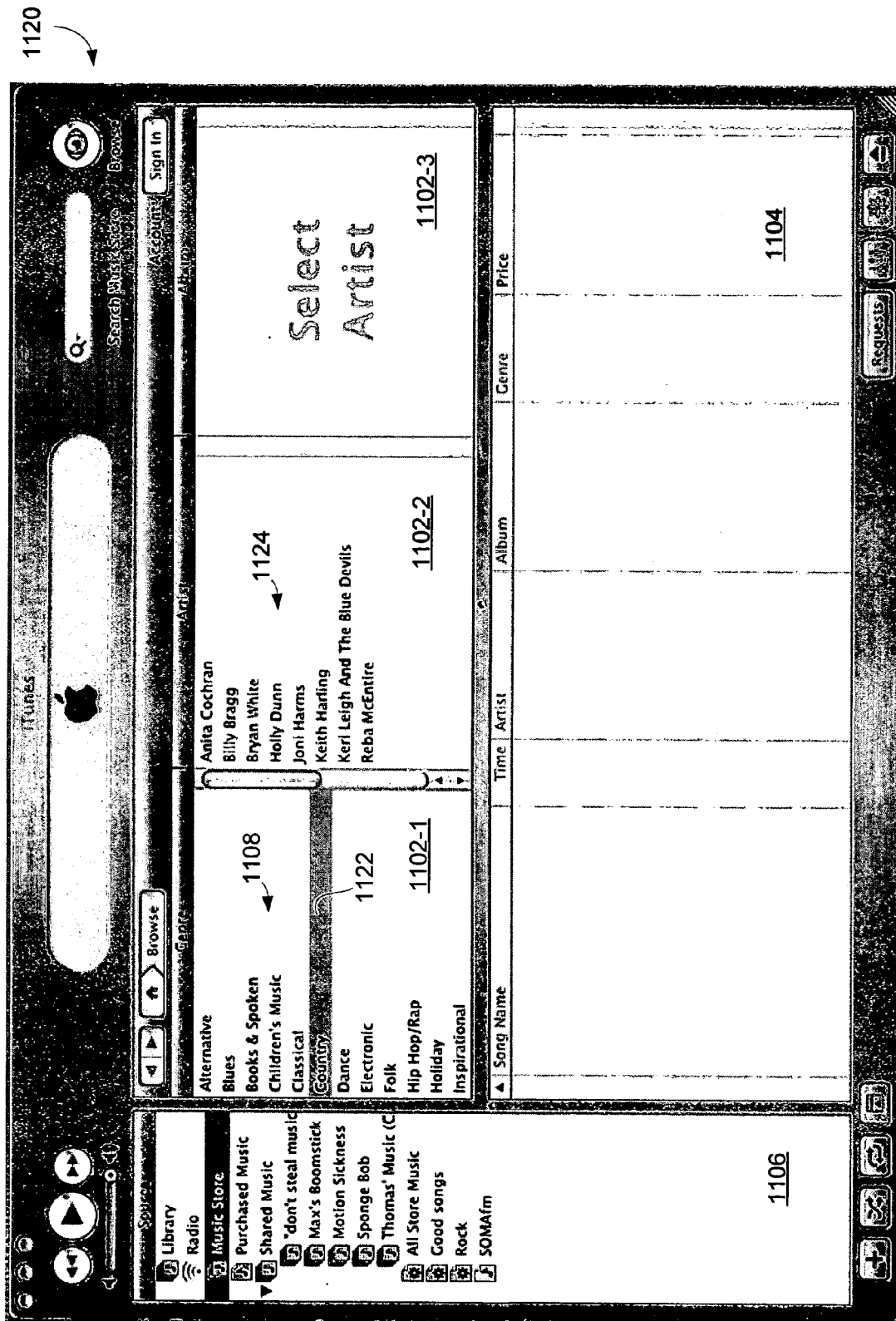


FIG. 11B

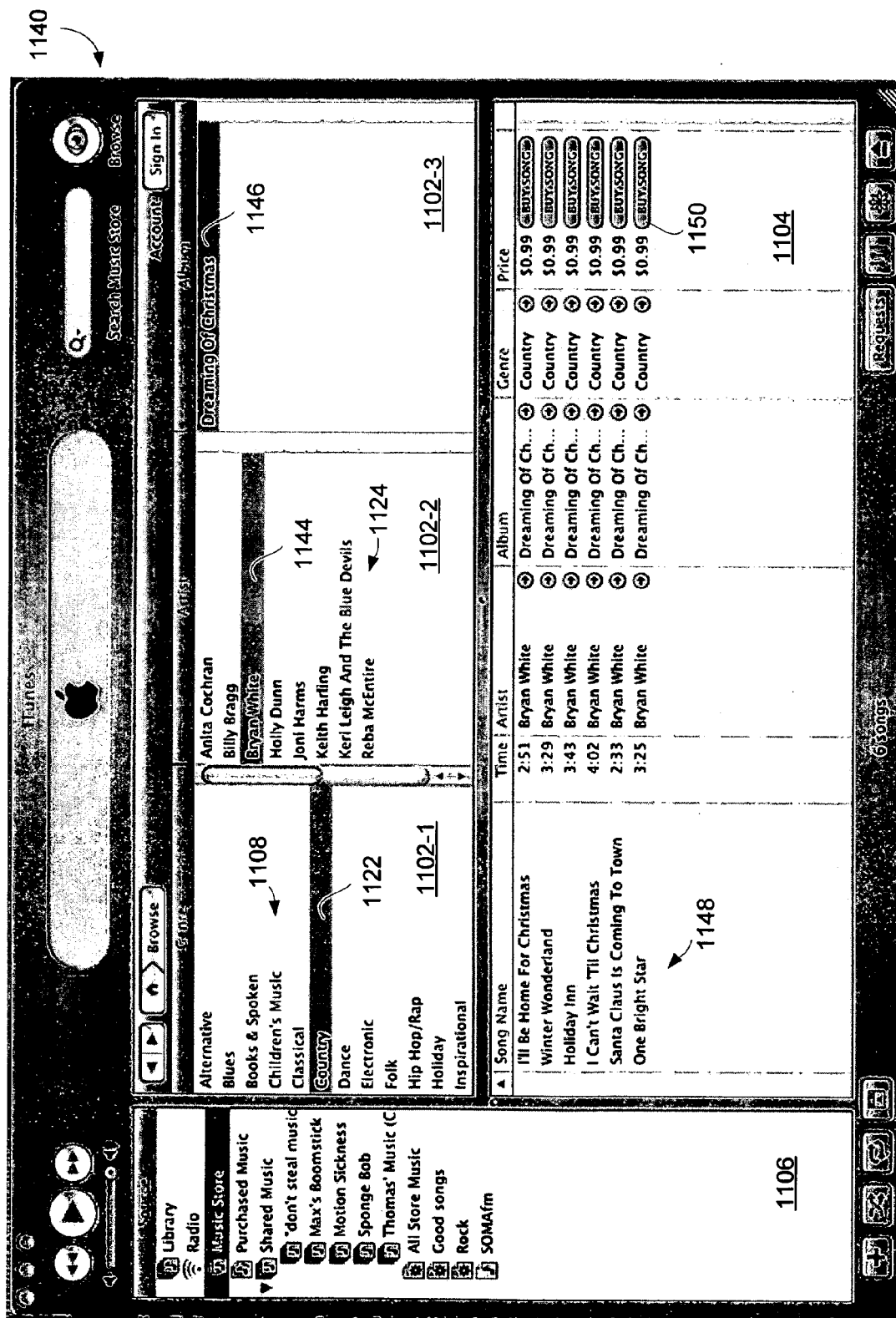


FIG. 11C

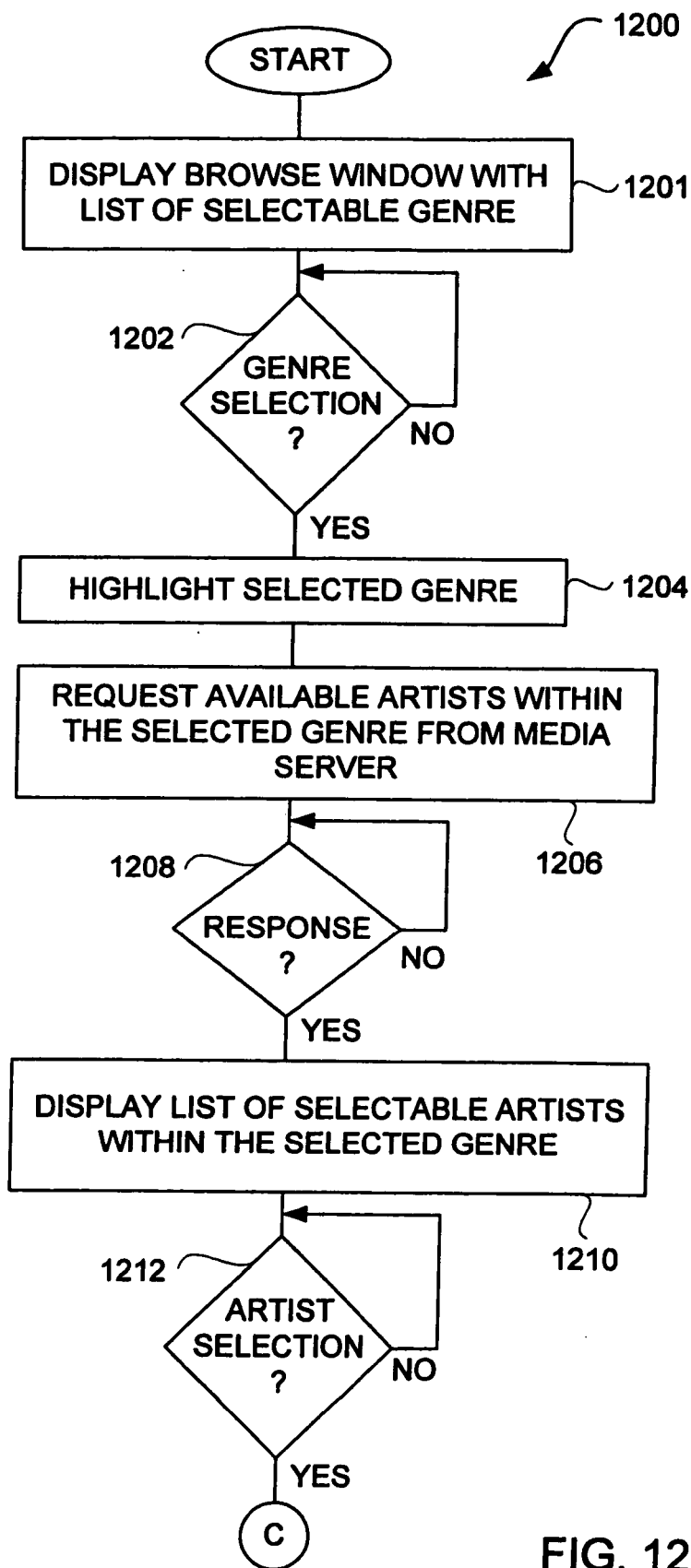


FIG. 12A

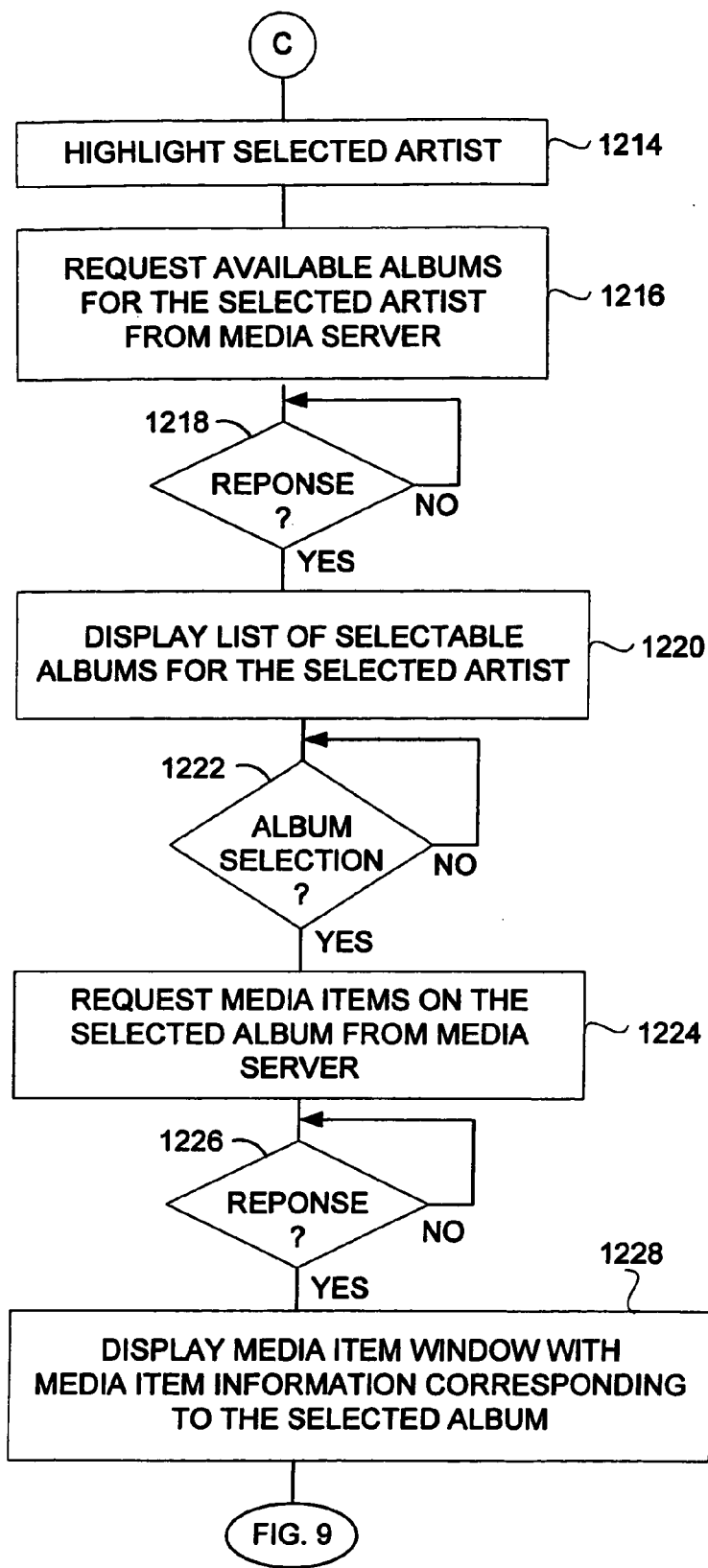


FIG. 12B

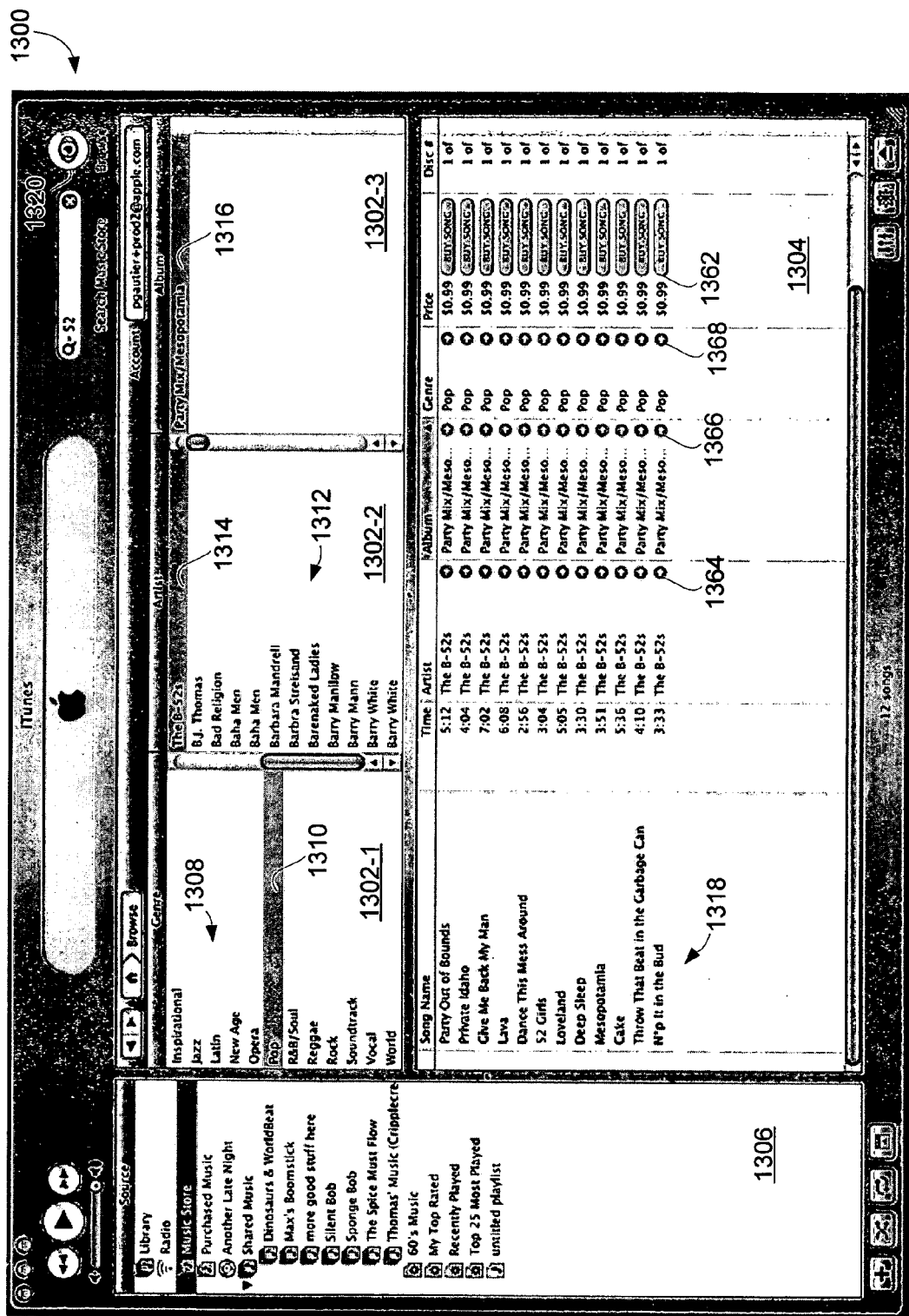


FIG. 13A

1350

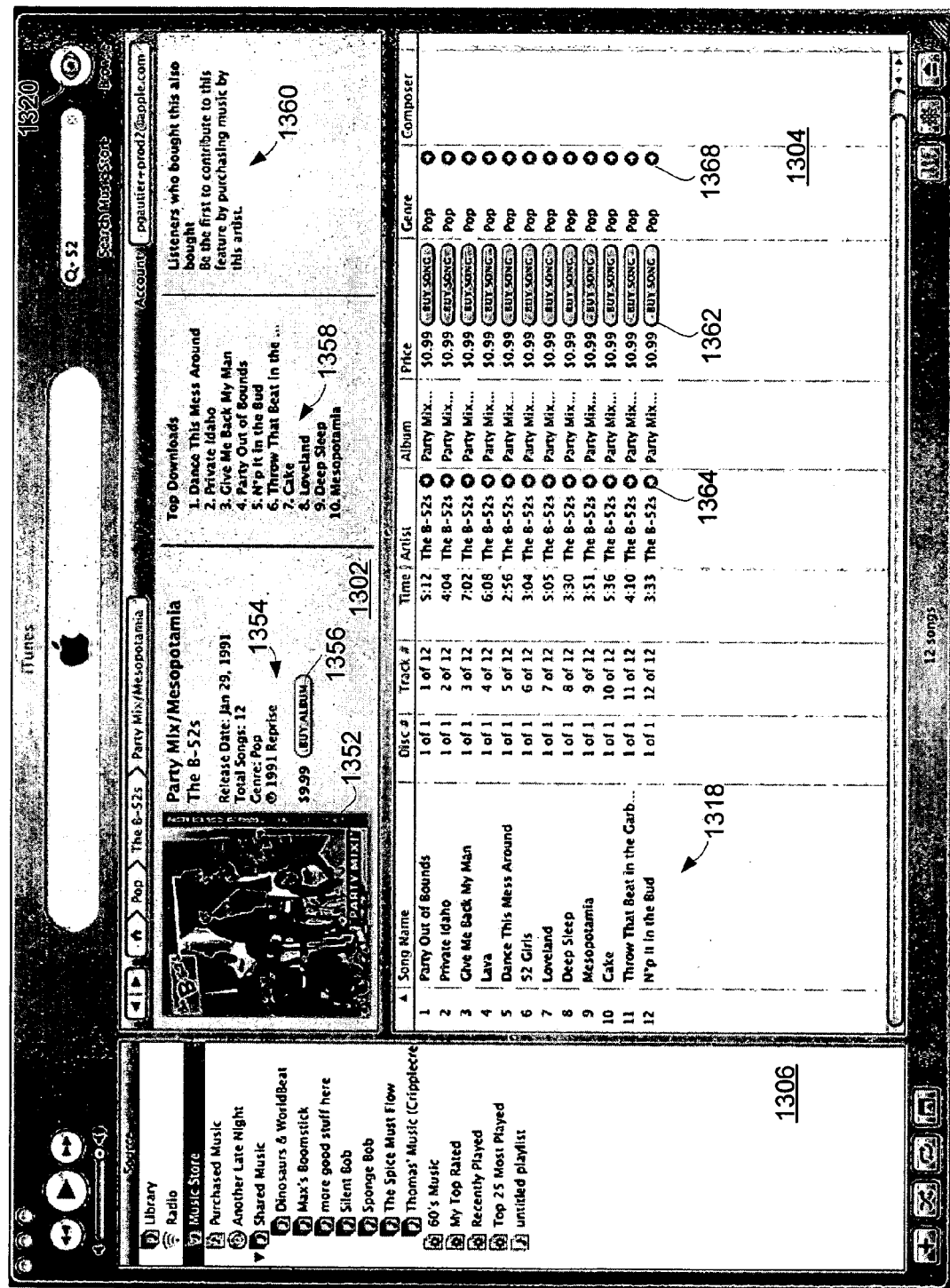


FIG. 13B

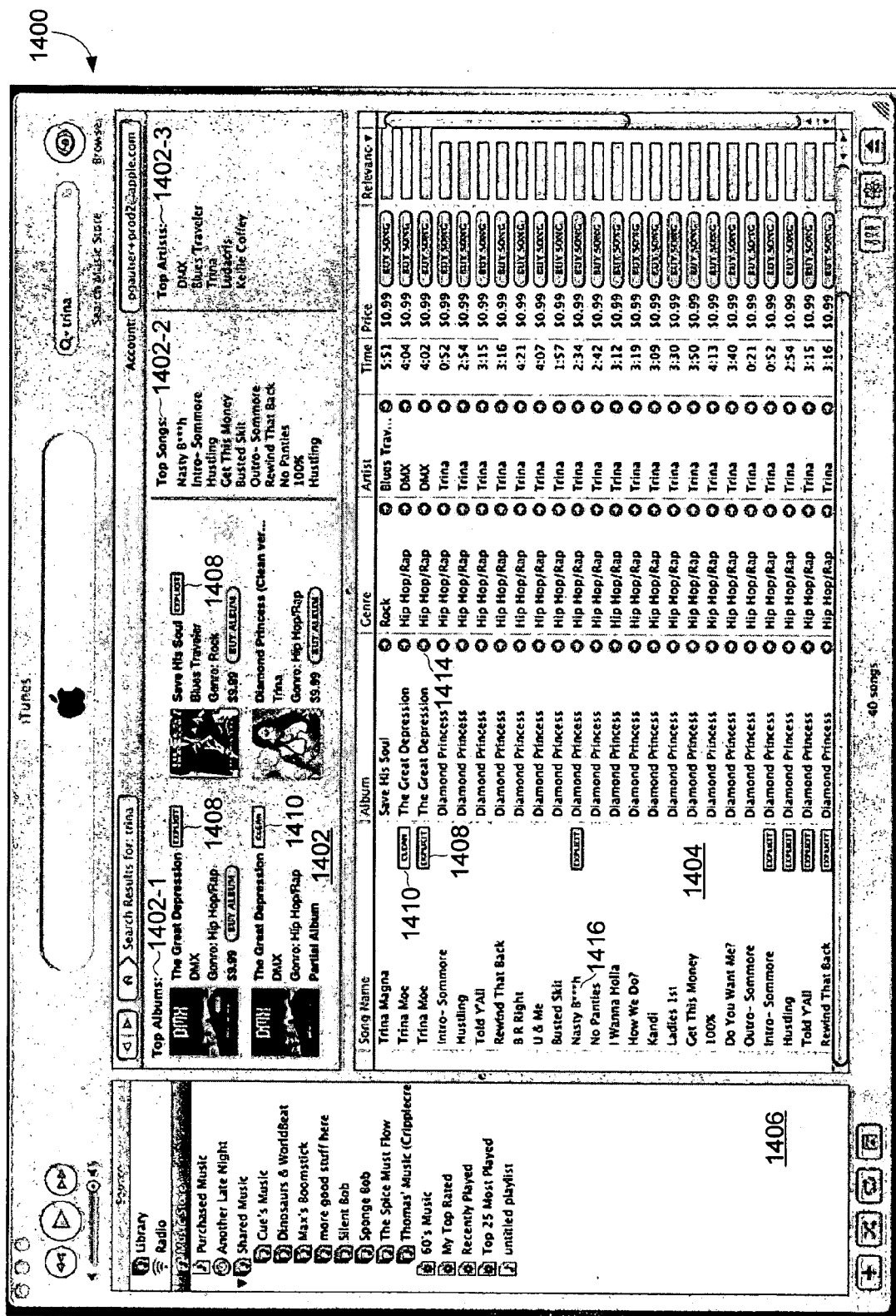


FIG. 14A

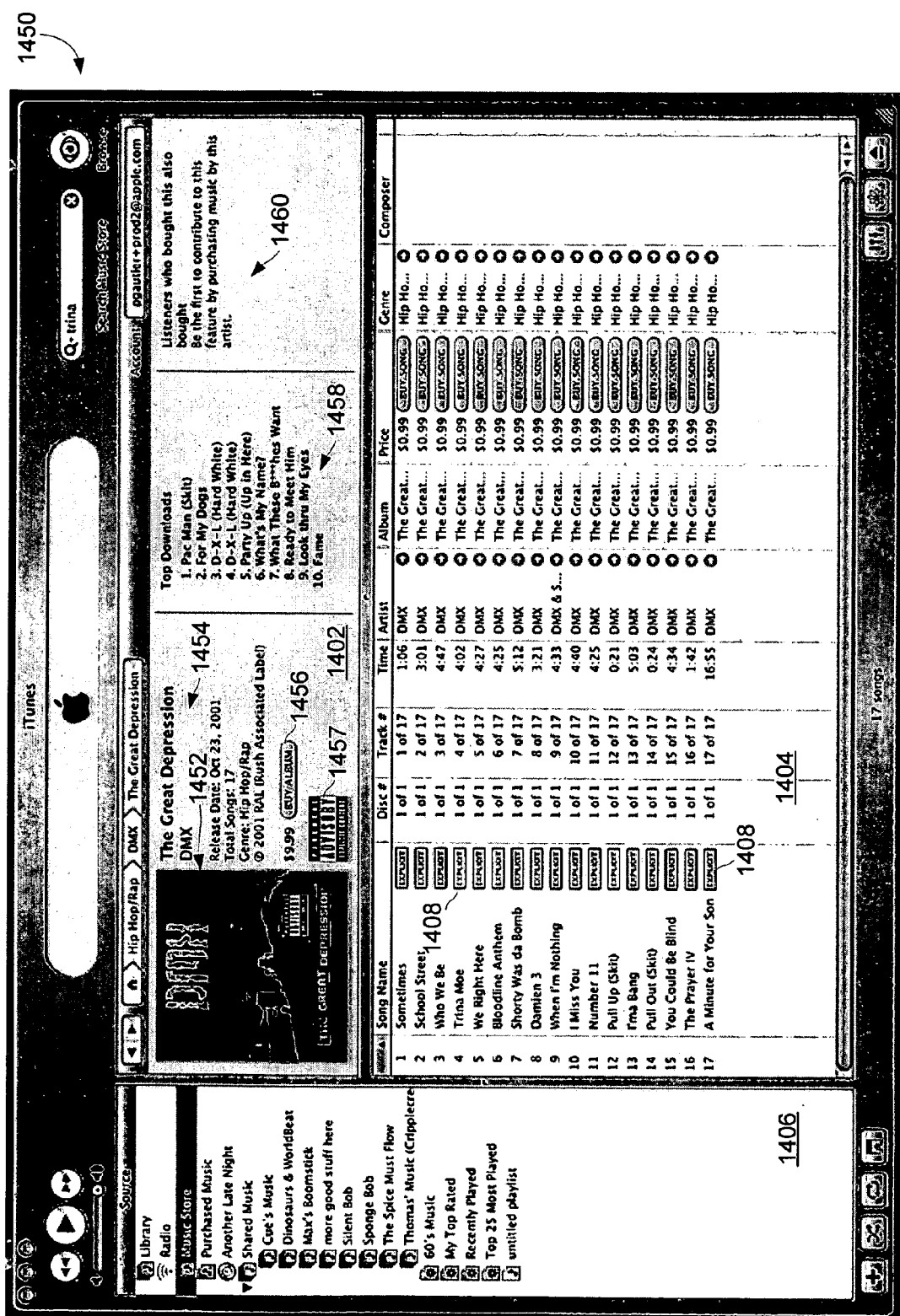


FIG. 14B

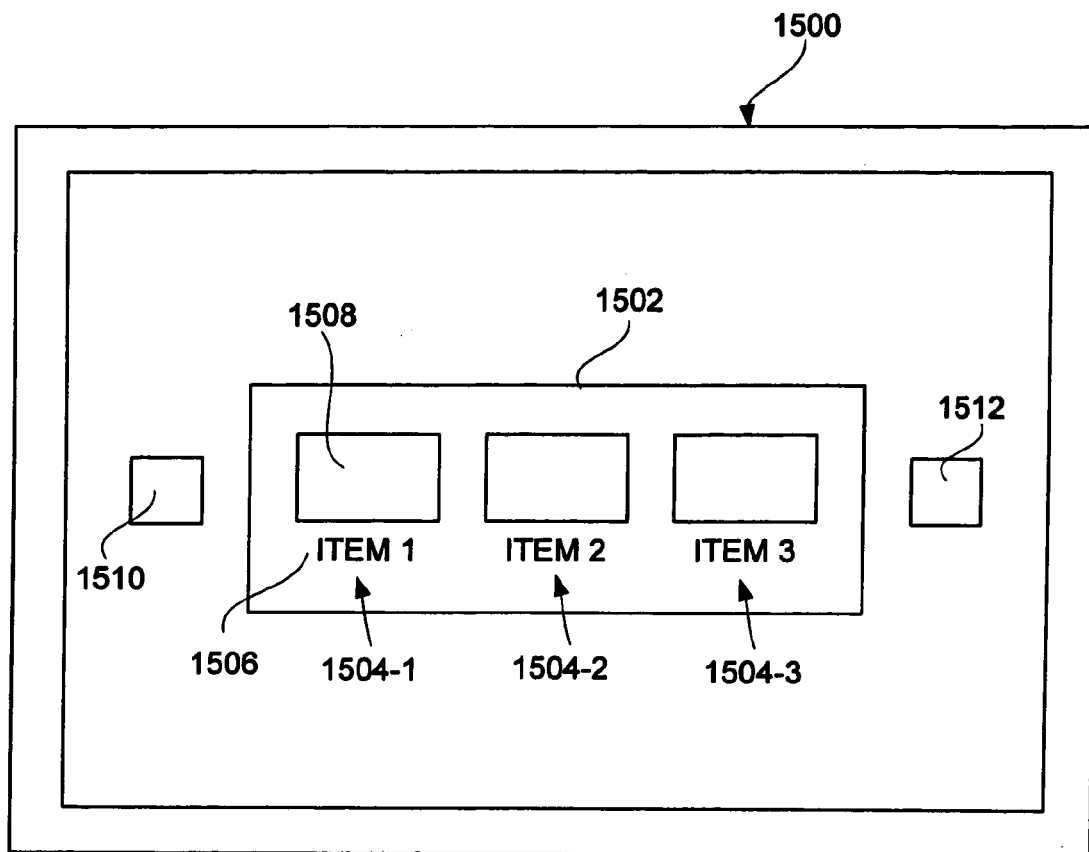


FIG. 15A

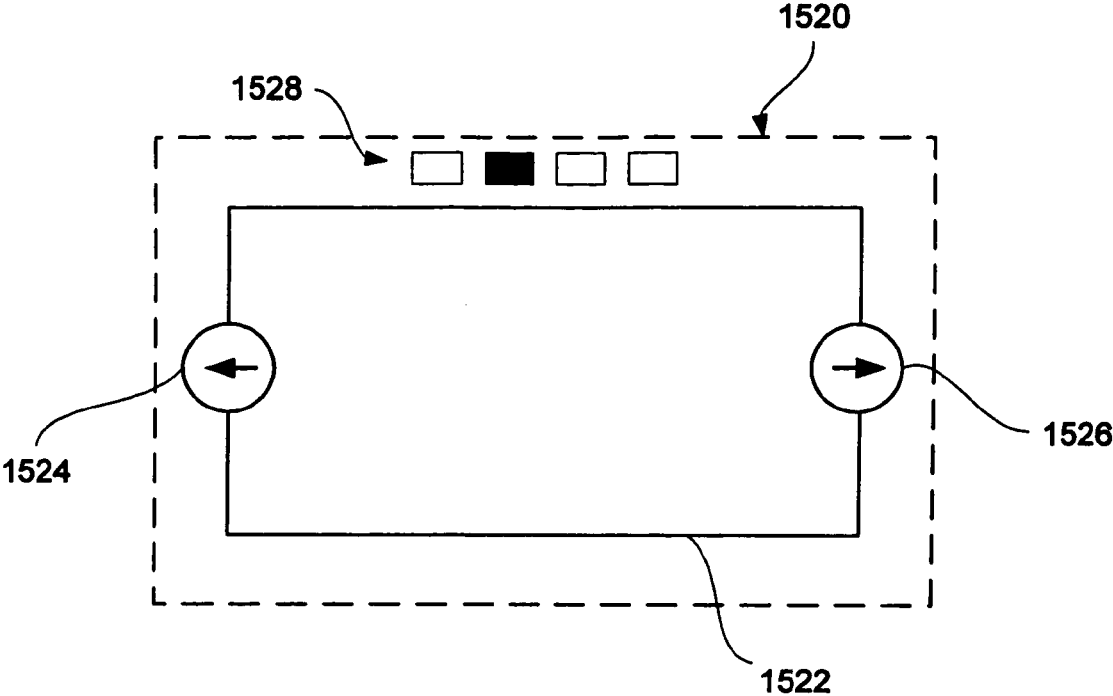
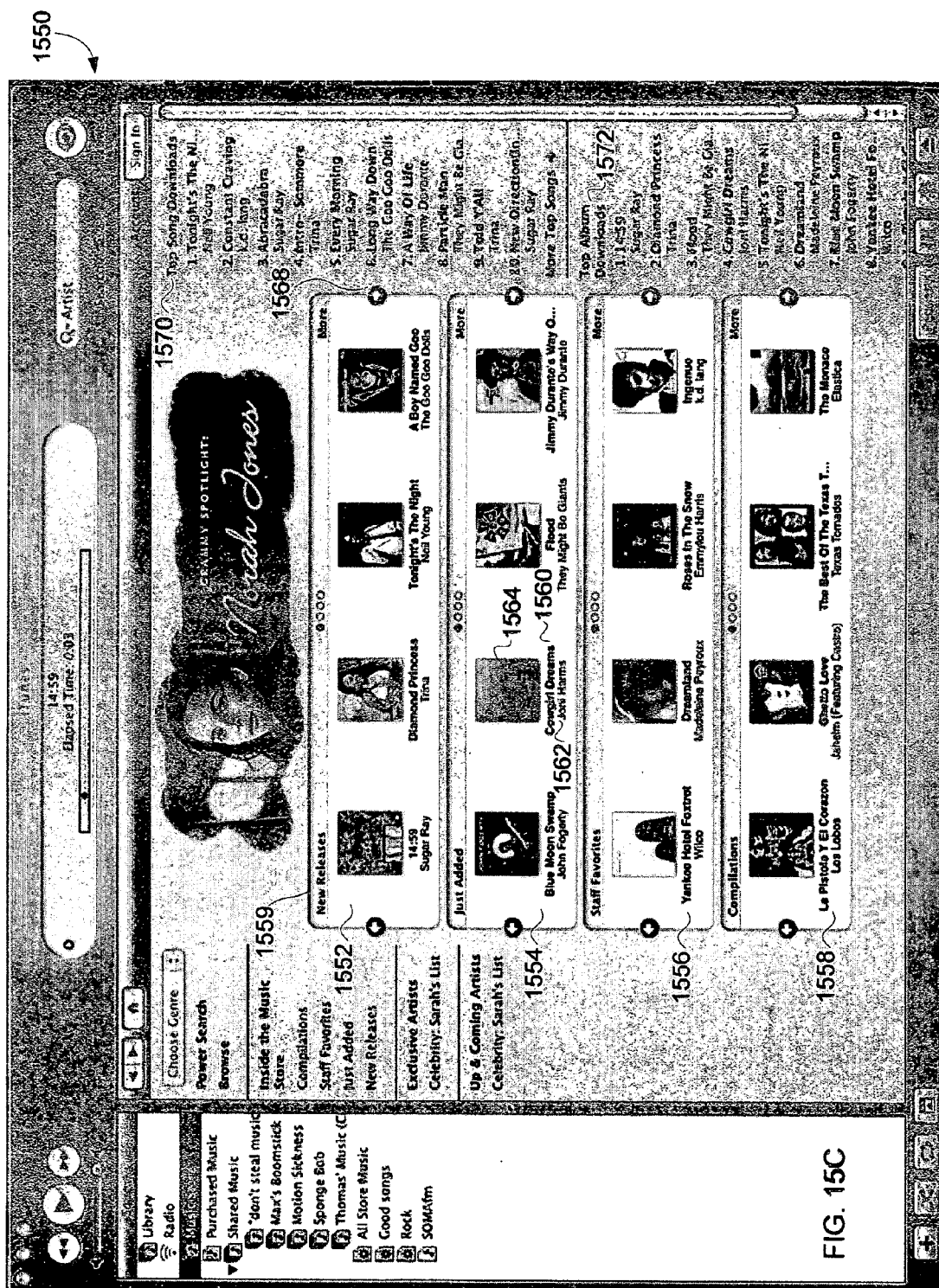


FIG. 15B



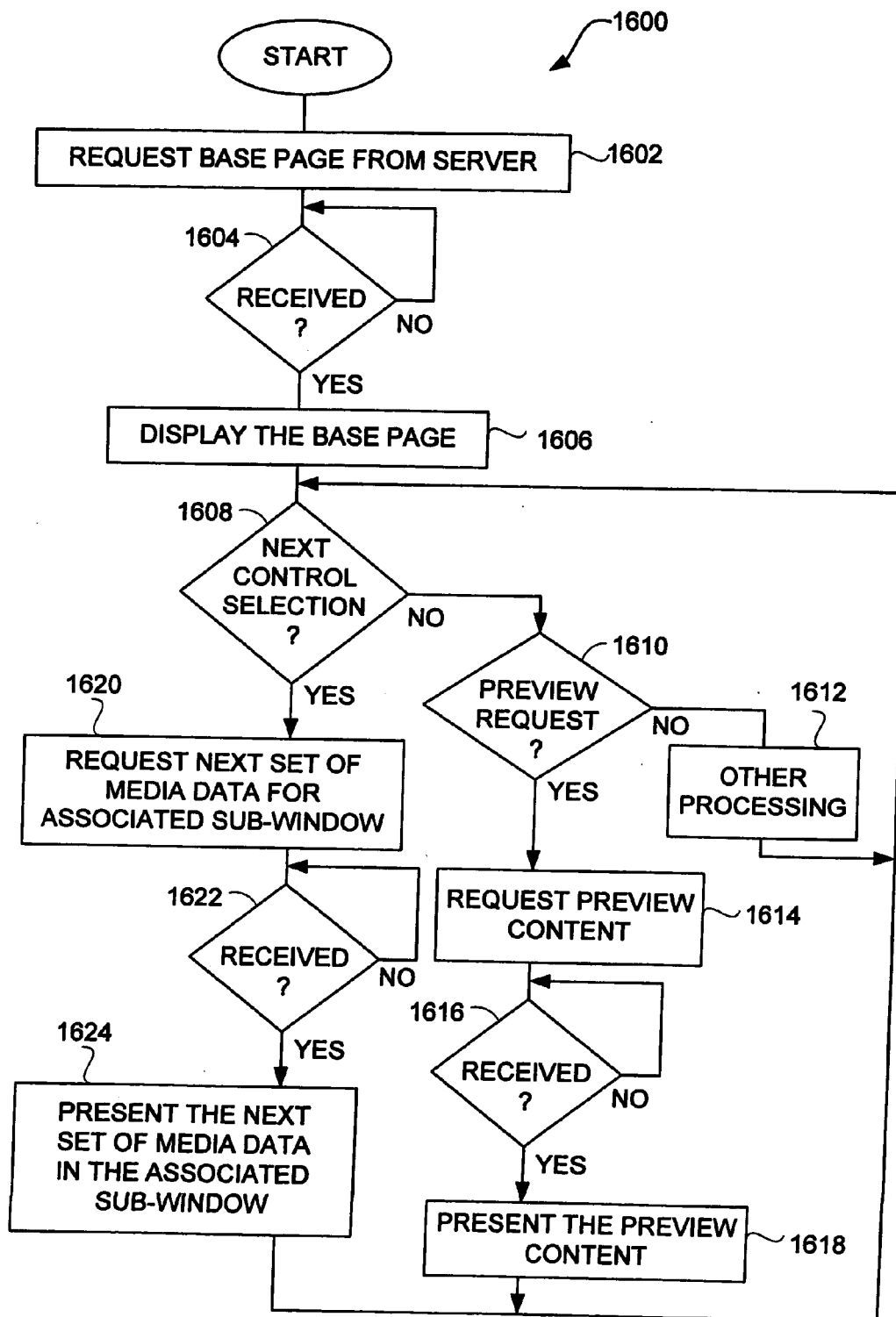


FIG. 16

GRAPHICAL USER INTERFACE FOR BROWSING, SEARCHING AND PRESENTING MEDIA ITEMS**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

[0001] This application is a Continuation-In-Part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/776,652, filed Feb. 10, 2004, and entitled "GRAPHICAL USER INTERFACE FOR BROWSING, SEARCHING AND PRESENTING MEDIA ITEMS", which is hereby incorporated by reference herein, and which claims the benefit of: (i) U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/465,410, filed Apr. 25, 2003, and entitled "METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR SECURE NETWORK-BASED DISTRIBUTION OF MEDIA", which is hereby incorporated by reference herein; and (ii) U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/534,555, filed Jan. 5, 2004, and entitled "GRAPHICAL USER INTERFACE FOR BROWSING, SEARCHING AND PRESENTING MEDIA ITEMS", which is hereby incorporated by reference herein.

[0002] In addition, this application claims priority benefit of: (i) U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/465,410, filed Apr. 25, 2003, and entitled "METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR SECURE NETWORK-BASED DISTRIBUTION OF MEDIA", which is hereby incorporated by reference herein; and (ii) U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/534,555, filed Jan. 5, 2004, and entitled "GRAPHICAL USER INTERFACE FOR BROWSING, SEARCHING AND PRESENTING MEDIA ITEMS", which is hereby incorporated by reference herein.

[0003] This application is also related to: (i) U.S. patent application Ser. No. _____, filed concurrently, and entitled "METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR NETWORK-BASED PURCHASE AND DISTRIBUTION OF MEDIA", which is hereby incorporated by reference herein; and (ii) U.S. patent application Ser. No. _____, filed concurrently, and entitled "METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR SECURE NETWORK-BASED DISTRIBUTION OF CONTENT", which is hereby incorporated by reference herein.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**[0004] 1. Field of the Invention**

[0005] The present invention relates to media purchase and distribution and, more particularly, to media purchase and distribution in a client-server environment.

[0006] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0007] Traditionally, music has been purchased at music stores or music departments of larger stores. A consumer will visit the music store or department and manually browse for albums or compact discs (CDs) of interest. Often, the music in the music store or department is categorized by genre, and then indexed by artist. For example, genre can include rock, country, pop, soul, jazz, etc. After the consumer selects an album or CD of interest, the consumer proceeds to a check-out register to pay for the album or CD being purchased.

[0008] In recent years music delivery or distribution over the Internet has become popular. Due to the advances in efficient file formats, such as MP3 and MPEG4, the size of media files have become small enough to make their download via the Internet practical. Also, technological advances

have led to higher-speed Internet connections and lower cost of memory. The combination of these advances make downloading media files, such as for music and videos, manageable and not too time consuming.

[0009] One popular approach to music distribution was mp3.com which uses a centralized server for storage of the numerous songs that are available for download. Another popular approach to music distribution was Napster in which peer-to-peer sharing was utilized. With peer-to-peer sharing, the numerous songs reside on the user machines of the many users, not on a centralized server.

[0010] However, unrestricted use and distribution of music files can lead to copyright violations. It is, therefore, desirable for companies to be endorsed by the music industry. However, to obtain endorsement, companies must charge users for access to the songs. Some companies charge a monthly subscription fee and permit subscribers to play songs by streaming such to the subscriber's machine where the songs are played. Streaming does not store the music files on the subscriber's machine, and thus is less of a concern for the music industry. However, such a system requires a network connection and network availability in order for subscribers to play songs.

[0011] As a result, there is a need to permit songs to be purchased and then made available locally to purchasers so that the purchaser is not dependent and constrained by the availability of a network connection for playback of the songs. However, the music industry requires its songs be secured against unauthorized copying or other copyright violations. Thus, there is also the need to incorporate security measures to restrain the susceptibility to unauthorized use or distribution of the songs.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0012] Broadly speaking, the invention relates a graphical user interface suitable for reviewing, browsing, previewing and/or purchasing media items. The graphical user interface can be presented to a user at a client (client machine). In one embodiment, the graphical user interface is presented to the user by an application program that runs on the client.

[0013] The graphical user interface is also suitable for previewing or purchasing media items in an on-line manner. The graphical user interface can be presented to a user at a client (client machine). In one embodiment, the graphical user interface is presented to the user by an application program that runs on the client.

[0014] The graphical user interface is particularly useful for a system that provides purchase and distribution of media in a client-server environment. The purchase and distribution of media can not only be secure but also controlled. The controlled distribution can use encryption and user accounts to not only restrict unauthorized access to the media but also to limit usage rights to the media by authorized users. The security restricts access to media within media files during downloads as well as while stored at a server and/or client. The graphical user interface can assist users in locating media to be purchased. The media can, for example, be audio, video, or image data.

[0015] The invention can be implemented in numerous ways, including as a method, system, device, apparatus,

graphical user interface, or computer readable medium. Several embodiments of the invention are discussed below.

[0016] As a graphical user interface produced by an application program, one embodiment of the invention includes at least an application program window generated by the application program. The application program window concurrently includes at least a first sub-window and a second sub-window. The first sub-window displays first content in a network browser-like manner, and the second sub-window displays second content in an application-like manner. The first and second content are received by the application program from a remote server over the network.

[0017] As a method for browsing through a plurality of media items, one embodiment of the invention includes at least the acts of: requesting first selectable items for a first list from a remote server; displaying a browse window with the first list of the first selectable items; receiving a first user selection of one of the first selectable items in the first list; distinctively displaying the one of the first selectable items in the first list that the user has selected; requesting second selectable items for a second list from the remote server, the second selectable items being dependent on the one of the first selectable items in the first list that the user has selected; displaying the browse window with the first list of the first selectable items and the second list of the second selectable items; receiving a second user selection of one of the second selectable items in the second list; distinctively displaying the one of the second selectable items in the second list that the user has selected; requesting third selectable items for a third list from the remote server, the third selectable items being dependent on the one of the second selectable items in the second list that the user has selected; and displaying the browse window with the first list of the first selectable items, the second list of the second selectable items, and the third list of the third selectable items.

[0018] As a graphical user interface produced by an application program, one embodiment of the invention includes at least a browse window generated by the application program. The browse window enables a user of the application program to browse through a plurality of media items. The browse window includes at least: a first list of first selectable items, with at least one of the first selectable items being capable of being selected by the user; a second list of second selectable items, with at least one of the second selectable items being capable of being selected by the user; and a third list of third selectable items, with at least one of the third selectable items being capable of being selected by the user. The second selectable items of the second list are dependent on a first selection by the user of at least one of the first selectable items from the first list. The second list is displayed along with the first list after the user has selected at least one of the first selectable items from the first list. The third selectable items of the third list is dependent on a second selection by the user of at least one of the second selectable items from the second list, and the third list is displayed along with the first list and the second list after the user has selected at least one of the second selectable items from the second list.

[0019] As a graphical user interface produced by an application program, one embodiment of the invention includes at least an application program window generated by the application program. The application program window con-

currently includes at least a sub-window and a next control. The sub-window displays media information for a first set of media items. The media information for the first set of media items is received by the application program from a remote server over a network. When the next control is activated, the sub-window displays media information for a second set of media items. The media information for the second set of media items is also received by the application program from the remote server over the network.

[0020] As a method for reviewing information on a plurality of media items, one embodiment of the invention includes at least the acts of: displaying a window having at least one sub-window and at least one next control, the at least one sub-window displaying first media data pertaining to a first set of the media items, the first media data being provided by a remote server; determining whether a user selects the at least one next control; requesting next media data pertaining to a next set of the media items from the remote server when it is determined that the user has selected the at least one next control; subsequently receiving the next media data pertaining to the next set of the media items; and displaying the next media data in the at least one sub-window of the window.

[0021] Other aspects and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings which illustrate, by way of example, the principles of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0022] The invention will be readily understood by the following detailed description in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein like reference numerals designate like structural elements, and in which:

[0023] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a media purchase system according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0024] FIGS. 2A and 2B are flow diagrams of media purchase processing according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0025] FIG. 3 is flow diagram of media commerce processing according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0026] FIG. 4 is a flow diagram of transaction completion processing according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0027] FIG. 5A is a flow diagram of payment processing according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0028] FIG. 5B is a screen shot of a representative application program window that displays purchase history information corresponding to a user's account.

[0029] FIG. 6 is a flow diagram of media delivery processing according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0030] FIG. 7A is a diagram of an application program window according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0031] FIG. 7B is a screen shot of a representative application program window according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0032] FIG. 8 is a flow diagram of media search processing according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0033] FIG. 9 is a flow diagram of additional processing according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0034] FIG. 10 is a diagram of an application program window according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0035] FIGS. 11A-11C are screen shots illustrating successive views of a browse feature according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0036] FIGS. 12A and 12B are flow diagrams of media browse processing according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0037] FIGS. 13A-13B are screen shots illustrating additional features of a graphical user interface according to other embodiments of the invention.

[0038] FIGS. 14A and 14B are screen shots illustrating explicit content notification features according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0039] FIG. 15A is a diagram of an application program window according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0040] FIG. 15B is a diagram of a window according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0041] FIG. 15C is a screen shot of an application program window according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0042] FIG. 16 is a flow diagram of media page processing according to one embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0043] The invention relates a graphical user interface suitable for reviewing, browsing, previewing and/or purchasing media items. The graphical user interface can be presented to a user at a client (client machine). In one embodiment, the graphical user interface is presented to the user by an application program that runs on the client.

[0044] The graphical user interface is particularly useful for a system that provides purchase and distribution of media in a client-server environment. The purchase and distribution of media can not only be secure but also controlled. The controlled distribution can use encryption and user accounts to not only restrict unauthorized access to the media but also to limit usage rights to the media by authorized users. The security restricts access to media within media files during downloads as well as while stored at a server and/or client. The graphical user interface can assist users in locating media to be purchased. The media can, for example, be audio, video, or image data.

[0045] Embodiments of various aspects of the invention are discussed below with reference to FIGS. 1-16. However, those skilled in the art will readily appreciate that the detailed description given herein with respect to these figures is for explanatory purposes as the invention extends beyond these limited embodiments.

[0046] One aspect of the invention pertains to a system and method for purchasing media items over a network. A potential purchaser can search and browse through numerous media items that are available for purchase. A potential purchaser can purchase a media item with great ease. Upon purchasing a media item, the content for the media item can

be downloaded over the network to the purchaser. The content for the media item is then encrypted for the purchaser's use and stored on the purchaser's machine. Thereafter, the purchaser can make use of the media item (e.g., play the media item). However, the use of the media item can still be limited. For example, only up to a predetermined number user machines can be authorized to use the media item, or only up to a predetermined number of compact disc copies can be made of a grouping or collection of media items (e.g., a playlist).

[0047] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a media purchase system 100 according to one embodiment of the invention. The media purchase system 100 includes a media commerce server 102. The media commerce server 102 coordinates review and/or purchase of media items through on-line transactions. On-line transactions to purchase media items is also referred to as electronic commerce (e-commerce). The media purchase system 100 also includes a client 104. Typically, the media purchase system 100 would include a plurality of different clients 104. Each client 104 includes a media player 108. The media player 108 is an application program (e.g., software application) that operates on the client 104, which is a computing device. The client 104 is coupled to the media commerce server 102 through a data network 106. Hence, any of the clients 104 can interact with the media commerce server 102 to review and/or purchase media items. In one embodiment, the data network 106 includes at least a portion of the Internet. The clients 104 can vary with application but generally are computing devices that have memory storage. Often, the clients 104 are personal computers or other computing devices that are capable of storing and presenting media to their users.

[0048] The media purchase system 100 also includes a media storage server 110 and a media store 112. The media storage server 110 represents a remote storage server that couples to the data network 106. The media store 112 provides mass storage of the numerous media items that are available for purchase via the media purchase system 100. Once purchased, the media items can be accessed from the media store 112 over the data network 106 by way of the media storage server 110.

[0049] More particularly, the media purchase system 100 allows a user of the client 104 to utilize the media player 108 to browse, search or sort through a plurality of media items that can be purchased from the media commerce server 102. The media player 108 may also allow the user to preview a media clip of the media items. In the event that the user of the media player 108 desires to purchase a particular media item, the user (via the media player 108) and the media commerce server 102 engage in an on-line commerce transaction in which the user pays for access rights to the particular media item. In one embodiment, a credit card associated with the user is credited for the purchase amount of the particular media item.

[0050] In the media purchase system 100 shown in FIG. 1, the media items are stored in the media store 112 and retrieved via the media storage server 110. Hence, the media commerce server 102 need not burden its resources to deliver any of the media items that may be purchased to the client 104. Instead, on purchasing a particular media item, the media commerce server 102 sends download information to the media player 108 on the client 104. The download

information can then be used by the media player **108** (and the client **104**) to retrieve the media content for the particular media item by interacting with the media storage server **110** through the data network **106**. In this regard, the media storage server **110** obtains the media content corresponding to the particular media item from the media store **112** and downloads such content through the data network **106** to the client **104**. The downloaded media content can then be stored on the client **104**. In one embodiment, the downloaded media content is stored on the client **104** as received. In another embodiment, the downloaded media content is transcribed from one encryption key to another encryption key before persistent storage on the client **104**. In still another embodiment, the downloaded media content is encrypted as received at the client **104** but is decrypted and then re-encrypted before persistent storage on the client **104**. Thereafter, the media player **108** can present (e.g., play) the media content at the client **104**.

[0051] The connections through the data network **106** between the media commerce server **102**, the client **104** and the media storage server **110** can be through secure connections, such as Secure Sockets Layer (SSL). Further, the media content is stored at the client **104** in an encrypted manner.

[0052] As discussed in greater detail below, the media player **108** can utilize an improved graphical user interface. More particularly, in one embodiment, a window presented on a display device of the client **104**, when executing the media player **108**, includes an upper window that displays content provided by the media commerce server **102** in a browser-like manner, and a lower window displays content provided by the media commerce server **102** in a typical media player-like manner. In another embodiment, a window presented on a display device of the client **104**, when executing the media player **108**, includes an upper window that displays a multi-tier browse interface that implements a browse function with respect to the media items through interaction with the media commerce server **102**.

[0053] FIGS. 2A and 2B are flow diagrams of media purchase processing **200** according to one embodiment of the invention. The media purchase processing **200** is, for example, processing associated with a media player of a media purchase system. The media player can, for example, be the media player **108** operating on the client **104** illustrated in FIG. 1.

[0054] The media purchase processing **200** initially permits a user to browse **202** available media items. Typically, the media purchase system supports the purchase of a large number of media items. Hence, the ability to browse, sort and search the available media items is beneficial.

[0055] Next, a decision **204** determines whether a buy selection has been made. Here, in one embodiment, the buy selection is a single user interface action, such as one click of a button. The buy selection is with respect to a selected media item. The buy selection means that the user desires to purchase the selected media item. When the decision **204** determines that the buy selection has not yet been received, then the processing returns to repeat the operation **202** and subsequent operations. Once the decision **204** determines that a buy selection has been made, a decision **206** determines whether a buy warning is enabled. When the decision **206** determines that a buy warning is enabled, then a

warning dialog is displayed **208** to the user of the media player. The warning dialog serves to warn the user that the buy transaction will be performed unless now canceled.

[0056] Following the operation **208**, as well as directly following the decision **206** when the buy warning is not enabled, a buy request is prepared and sent **210** to a media server (e.g., the media commerce server **102**) of the media purchase system. After the buy request has been prepared and sent **210**, a decision **212** determines whether a response has been received. When the decision **212** determines that a response has not yet been received, a decision **214** determines whether an authentication request is instead received. When the decision **214** determines that an authentication request is not received, then the media purchase processing **200** returns to repeat the decision **212** and subsequent operations. On the other hand, when the decision **214** determines that an authentication is to be performed, then authorization information is entered **216**. Here, the authorization information can be provided or entered **216** by the user associated with the media player. Subsequently, the authentication information that has been entered **216** is sent **218** to the media server.

[0057] Following the operation **218**, a decision **220** determines whether the authentication has been successful. When the decision **220** determines that authentication has been successful, then the media purchase processing **200** returns to repeat the decision **212** and subsequent operations. On the other hand, when the decision **220** determines that authentication has been unsuccessful, the media purchase processing **200** is complete and ends.

[0058] Alternatively, when the decision **212** determines that a response to the buy request has been received, media access information is obtained **222**. The response to the buy request includes at least the media access information. According to one embodiment, the media access information informs the media player as to where to locate the appropriate media file that has been purchased as well as a download key and a security token. The download key is later used in decrypting the media file. The security token is used in verifying that the right to download the media file has been purchased. In one embodiment, the location of the appropriate media file resides on a media storage server, such as the media storage server **110**. Typically, the media storage server is a centralized repository for media files. After the media access information has been obtained **222**, an access request for the appropriate media file is prepared and sent **224**. The access request is a request to the media storage server that stores the appropriate media file. In one example, the location of the appropriate media file can be designated by a Universal Resource Locator (URL).

[0059] Next, a decision **226** determines whether a response has been received. Here, the response, if received, pertains to the access request that was prepared and sent **224**. When the decision **226** determines that a response to the access request has not yet been received, the media purchase processing **200** awaits such a response. Next, a decision **228** determines whether the user is authorized. Here, the response will either indicate that the request failed due to a lack of authorization or has succeed and provides (e.g., downloads) the requested media file. When the decision **228** determines that the received response indicates failed authorization, then an unauthorized message is displayed **230**.

indicating that access to the requested media file is denied. Following the operation **230**, when the user is not authorized, the media purchase processing **200** is complete and ends.

[**0060**] On the other hand, when the decision **228** determines that the user is authorized to receive the response, the encrypted media file for the selected media item is received **232**. The encrypted media file can be received as part of the response or following the response. Then, the encrypted media item can be stored **234** to the client storage, and a complete notification can be sent **236**. The complete notification can be sent **236** before or after the storage **234**. At this point, the user of the client can thereafter present (e.g., play) the media content within the encrypted media item from the client storage after first decrypting the same using an appropriate key. The appropriate key is, for example, a user key that is associated with a user's account with the media purchase system **100**. Optionally, after the encrypted media item is received **232** and before its storage to the client storage, the encryption imposed on the media item can be altered, such as by transcription from one encryption key (e.g., download key) to another encryption key (e.g., user key) or by decryption from one encryption key (e.g., download key) followed by re-encrypted with another encryption key (e.g., user key).

[**0061**] **FIG. 3** is flow diagram of media commerce processing **300** according to one embodiment of the invention. The media commerce processing **300** is, for example, performed by a media commerce server, such as the media commerce server **102** illustrated in **FIG. 1**.

[**0062**] The media commerce processing **300** begins with a decision **302** that determines whether a buy request has been received. When the decision **302** determines that a buy request has not yet been received, the media commerce processing **300** awaits such a request. On the other hand, when the decision **302** determines that a buy request has been received, the media commerce processing proceeds to process the buy request. In this regard, an account identifier is identified **304** from the buy request. Here, the buy request is sent by a client to the media commerce server on behalf of a user of the client (namely, user of a media player operating on the client). In one embodiment, the buy request that is sent to the media commerce server includes not only an account identifier for the user of the client but also at least one media item identifier, media price, and a password token. The password token is random value (e.g., 128 bit string) that is different for every user. The media storage server provides the password token to the client as a result of successful authentication of the user. When the buy request includes a valid password token, the media commerce server can deem the client as properly authenticated.

[**0063**] Next, a decision **306** determines whether authentication is required prior to purchase of the media items. When the decision **306** determines that authentication is required, additional processing can be performed to determine whether such authentication exists. In one embodiment, the user's account or client can configure whether such authentication is required or can be overridden by the user. In one embodiment, the authentication is provided to help protect the user of the client (e.g., media player) from other unauthorized users who might access the media commerce server from the client after the user has successfully

been authenticated to the media commerce server. The re-authentication is thus used to confirm that the particular user of the client (e.g., media player) is indeed the authorized user for such a system. In this regard, authentication is requested **308**. Then a decision **310** determines whether an authentication response has been received. Once the decision **310** receives the authentication response, a decision **312** determines whether the authentication response is able to successfully authenticate the user. When the decision **312** determines that authentication has not been successful, a message indicating that an unauthorized user cannot buy media items is sent **314** to the client for display to the user.

[**0064**] On the other hand, when the decision **312** determines that authentication has been successful, then additional processing is performed to facilitate the purchase of the selected media item identified in the buy request. In this regard, payment for the selected media item is initiated **316**. Here, according to one embodiment, the payment can be made by a credit card, and the initiation of such payment can verify the credit card's existence, but may or may not seek to post the charge at this time. As discussed in more detail below, it may be more efficient and desirable to defer the actual posting of the credit to the credit card until a later time. Nevertheless, after the payment for the selected media item has been initiated **316**, media access information is obtained **318**. The media access information is information that will enable the client (e.g., media player) to retrieve and then access the media content for the selected media item. The media access information, in one embodiment, includes a URL, a download key, and a security token. Next, the media access information is sent **320**. Here, the media access information is sent from the media commerce server to the client, namely, the media player operating on the client. Then, the transaction associated with the purchase of the selected media item is marked **322** and remembered as being "open." At this point, the transaction is not fully completed because the media content for the selected media item has not yet been received by the client. Following the operations **314** and **322**, the media commerce processing **300** is complete and ends.

[**0065**] **FIG. 4** is a flow diagram of transaction completion processing **400** according to one embodiment of the invention. The transaction completion processing **400** begins with a decision **402**. The decision **402** determines whether a complete notification has been received. Here, a complete notification is a notification provided by a client to the media commerce server that indicates that a previously "open" transaction is now complete. Once the decision **402** determines that a complete notification has been received, the corresponding "open" transaction is identified **404**. Then, the identified "open" transaction is closed **406**. Once the identified "open" transaction is closed **406**, the client is no longer able to download the media content for a purchased media item from a media storage server (**FIG. 6**). In other words, the transaction is "closed" only after the client has confirmed receipt of the entire media content for the selected media item. By this approach, the client, after having paid for a particular media item, is guaranteed to receive a full copy of the media content even in the event the download process gets interrupted or dropped several times before it is successfully completed.

[0066] Another aspect of the invention pertains to processing of online payment for one or more media items being purchased.

[0067] FIG. 5A is a flow diagram of payment processing 500 according to one embodiment of the invention. The payment processing 500 is, for example, performed by a server. The server can be a media commerce server, such as the media commerce server 102 illustrated in FIG. 1. In one embodiment, the payment processing 500 is invoked by block 316 illustrated in FIG. 3 which initiates payment for a selected media item that is being purchased. However, the payment processing 500 can also be periodically invoked or invoked on event. The payment processing 500 can also be implemented by one or a plurality of processes.

[0068] The payment processing 500 begins with a decision 502 that determines whether there is an open purchase container. Here, a purchase container is a file, folder or other data storage means that provides a temporary holding area for purchases being made with respect to media items. A purchase container can hold information for a number of different purchases for media items. When the decision 502 determines that there is no open purchase container, then a purchase container is opened 504. Then, following the block 504 directly or following the decision 502 when there is already an open purchase container, the selected media item being purchased is added 506 to the purchase container. Here, the purchase container is particular to the user or the user account. At a minimum, for the selected media item, the media purchase container would contain at least a price and a text descriptor for the selected media item. Alternatively, the purchase container could contain a link or reference to such information.

[0069] Next, a decision 508 determines whether a purchase deferral limit has been reached. According to the payment processing 500, individual purchases are deferred until the purchase deferral limit has been reached. The purchase deferral limit serves to batch up one or more individual media item purchases for consolidated or block processing. One advantage of the purchase deferral limit is that transaction costs associated with electronic payment systems are reduced. The purchase deferral limits can vary depending upon implementation. As one example, a purchase deferral limit can be based on the number of purchased media items that are in the purchase container. Another example of a purchase deferral limit is time-based, for example, the duration of time since the purchase container was first opened. As another example, the purchase deferral limit can be based upon the aggregate cost of the media items being purchased.

[0070] As a more specific example, the purchase deferral limit might use a combination of dollar amount or time limit, whichever occurs first. For example, the dollar amount could be ten US dollars (\$10.00), and the time limit could be one day. Then, once the media items within the purchase container have a purchase price that exceeds ten dollars, the payment processing 500 would continue so as to obtain electronic payment for such media items within the purchase container. Also, should the time limit of one day be reached before the dollar limit is reached, then the payment processing 500 would also continue so as to obtain electronic payment for such media items within the purchase container even though the dollar limit was not met.

[0071] In any case, when the decision 508 determines that the purchase dollar limit has been reached, then the purchase container is closed 510. Then, the payment processing 500 causes 512 a payment transaction to occur for the combined purchase. In other words, if twelve media items at one dollar cost each were contained within the purchase container, then the payment transaction would cause 512 the total amount of twelve dollars (plus any tax or service charge) to be credited to the electronic payment means associated with the user account of the purchaser. An electronic payment system associated with the electronic payment means would then process the payment transaction and charge the user for the media items being purchased. Given that the media items can be accumulated and processed as a batch in this manner, the ability to reduce transaction costs is achieved. Alternatively, when the decision 508 determines that the purchase deferral limit has not yet been reached, then the operations 510 and 512 are bypassed. Following the operation 512, or its deferral, the payment processing 500 is complete until again invoked.

[0072] As an optional feature, the payment processing 500 could be customized on a user (e.g., user account) basis. For example, those users that are deemed "good" users or "credit-worthy" users can be given higher purchase deferral limits than other users. The advantage of increased purchase deferral limits is further reduction in transaction costs by additional batching. As one example, a user can be deemed a "good" user if they are a frequent user, such as having already purchased fifty or more media items.

[0073] Another aspect of the invention is that a graphical user interface can allow users to access account information. By accessing account information, a user is able to view their current account information and make changes thereto. The account information can include a purchase history for the account. The purchase history can provide the user with a list or report of those media items that have been previously purchased using the user's account. FIG. 5B is a screen shot of a representative application program window 550 that displays purchase history information corresponding to a user's account. As shown in FIG. 5B, the purchase history can include information on the latest purchase, and can include information pertaining to each of the media items purchased. For example, as shown in FIG. 5B, a table of the purchased media items is provided, with the table providing the information on item, artist, type, when downloaded, and price.

[0074] FIG. 6 is a flow diagram of media delivery processing 600 according to one embodiment of the invention. The media delivery processing 600 is, for example, performed by the media storage server 110 illustrated in FIG. 1.

[0075] The media delivery processing 600 begins with a decision 602. The decision 602 determines whether an access request has been received. An access request is a request from a client to obtain the media content for one or more media items that are stored in a media store (e.g., media store 112) associated with the media storage server (e.g., media storage server 110). In one embodiment, the access request includes at least a URL for the selected media item and a security token from the client. When the decision 602 determines that an access request has been received, then the media delivery processing 600 is effectively

invoked. In other words, once an access request has been received, the access request is authenticated **604**. The authentication **604** involves the analysis of at least a portion of the access request to authenticate that the request is legitimate and from one that was authorized by the media commerce server. In one embodiment, a hash algorithm can be applied to the URL, a name of the media commerce server, a time of purchase. The result of the hash algorithm is then compared with the security token which is the product of a complimentary hash algorithm performed at the media commerce server. A decision **606** then determines whether the authentication was successful. Here, in one embodiment, if the hashing algorithm approach is used, the result of the hash algorithm should match the security token within some tolerance set by a time limitation. For example, the tolerance due to time might permit the access request to remain authenticate for forty-eight (48) hours after purchase.

[**0076**] When the decision **606** determines that the authentication was not successful, then an access denied indication is returned **608**. Here, the access request is denied and the client is so notified. On the other hand, when the decision **606** determines that the authentication was successful, then an encrypted version of the selected media item that has been purchased is retrieved **610**. Here, the media storage server would retrieve the encrypted version of the selected media item from the media store. Then, the encrypted version of the selected media item is sent **612** to the requester (client). In other words, the encrypted version of the selected media item is downloaded to the client that has requested the selected media item. Following the operations **608** and **612**, the media delivery processing **600** is complete and ends.

[**0077**] Another aspect of the invention pertains to a graphical user interface suitable for reviewing numerous media items. The graphical user interface is also suitable for previewing or purchasing media items in an on-line manner. The graphical user interface is presented to a user at a client (client machine). In one embodiment, the graphical user interface is presented to the user by an application program that runs on the client, such application program being referred to as a media player (see **FIG. 1**).

[**0078**] **FIG. 7A** is a diagram of an application program window **700** according to one embodiment of the invention. The application program window **700** includes a first sub-window **702** and a second sub-window **704**. The first sub-window **702** presents information in a browser-like manner, while the second sub-window presents information in an application-like manner. In other words, the application program that is producing the application program window **700** can operate in a local mode manner in which case the content displayed in the application program window **700** would not include the first sub-window **702**. However, in a remote mode, when the application program is interacting with a remote server, the application program window **700** can include the first sub-window **702** and the second sub-window **704** as shown in **FIG. 7**. In such an environment, the first sub-window **702** displays content provided by the remote server in a browser-like manner. This gives the user the feeling of interacting with the remote server in a browser-like style. However, in the second sub-window **704**, the user of the application still retains the interface and thus the feel of interacting with the application program as it would as if the application was operating locally (local

mode) instead of through interaction with the remote server. However, even in this case, the content for the second sub-window **704** can be retrieved from the remote server.

[**0079**] **FIG. 7B** is a screen shot of a representative application program window **720** according to one embodiment of the invention. The application program window **720** includes a first sub-window **722** and a second sub-window **724** which correlate to the first sub-window **702** and the second sub-window **704** of the application program window **700** shown in **FIG. 7A**. Additionally, the application program window **720** includes a source window **726**. The source window **726** is shown listing a variety of different sources for media content. As shown in **FIG. 7B**, the source window **726** shows the source being a music store, as shown by highlight bar **727**. The music store, in this embodiment, represents a remote media server that contains media (e.g., music) that can be purchased by a user of the application program. Hence, as shown in **FIG. 7B**, a user has performed a search **728** for music available on the music store by the artist that includes the term "Reba". The results for the search **728** are the content that is provided by the remote media server to the application program. Such content is used to populate the region of the first sub-window **722** and the second sub-window **724**. As shown in **FIG. 7B**, the first sub-window **722** includes three regions, namely, a Top Albums region **722-1**, a Top Songs region **722-2**, and a Top Artists Region **722-3**. The Top Albums region **722-1** references only a single album and thus depicts the album cover art **730** for that album as well as a "buy album" button **732**. A user is able to purchase the album indicated in the Top Albums region **722-1** by selecting the corresponding "buy album" button **732**. Typically, if the user's account has been so configured, the user can buy the album by the single graphical user interface action of "clicking" on the "buy album" button **732**. The Top Songs region **722-2** lists the top songs associated with the artist(s) or album(s) of the Top Albums region **722-1**, and the Top Artists region **722-3** indicates the top artist(s) or album(s) associated with the Top Albums region **722-1**.

[**0080**] In the second sub-window **724**, a list of media items associated with the one or more albums identified by the Top Albums region **722-1** are displayed. In one embodiment, the media items are displayed in a list-like manner that can resemble or mimic the technique utilized to present a list of media items to the user by the application program in cases where the media source is local to the client (i.e., the media items are stored locally). Hence, although the media items specified within the second sub-window **724** are provided by the remote media server, they are presented in a manner that is sophisticated and frequently utilized by the application program in other situations. As shown in **FIG. 7B**, a particular one of the media items within the list of media items has been selected as shown by a highlight bar **734**. Further, any of the media items listed in the second sub-window **724** can be purchased by selection of the associated "buy song" button **736**. Again, through a single graphical user interface action, such as "clicking" on the associated "buy song" button **736**, the associated media item can be purchased. Further, as shown in **FIG. 7B**, for a given media item being displayed in the second sub-window **724**, characteristic information about the media item can be presented in a column-like fashion. The characteristic information, for example, includes song name, duration of song (time), artist, album, genre, relevance indication, and price.

[0081] Still further, the application program window **720** can display other controls or information. For example, the application program window **720** can display a play control **738**. Upon selection of the play control **738**, a preview audio clip pertaining to a selected one of the media items from the second sub-window **724** is played. Similarly, by “double clicking” on a particular media item in the second sub-window **724**, the associated preview audio clip can also be played. Hence, users deciding which media items to purchase are able to easily obtain and hear a preview audio clip. The application program window **720** can also include a browse control **740**. Upon selection of the browse control **740**, a browse process is performed. The browse process is another way (besides the search process) to identify media items of interest to the user. A search box **742** can also be provided within the application program window **720** to enable a user to perform a further search. Still further, an account area indication **744** provides an indication of whether a user account is active. For example, as shown in **FIG. 7B**, when an account identifier (such as an email address) for an authorized user is displayed in the account identifier region **744**, the application program recognizes that the associated user of the account is logged on (signed in) and their account is active such that the user is able to purchase desired media content from the media store.

[0082] **FIG. 8** is a flow diagram of media search processing **800** according to one embodiment of the invention. The media search processing **800** is, for example, performed by an application program operating on a client. The application program is, for example, the media player **108** illustrated in **FIG. 1**.

[0083] The media search processing **800** is activated once a user of the application program desires to perform a search in order to identify media content of interest to the user. Hence, a search dialog box is initially displayed **802** to the user. In this embodiment, we assume that the user desires to perform a sophisticated search using field-base restrictions. However, if the user just wants to perform a simple search using merely a term, then the search box **742** shown in **FIG. 7B** could be utilized. In any case, search criteria is entered **804**. Then, a decision **806** determines whether a search is to be performed. When the decision **806** determines that a search is not to be performed, the media search processing **800** returns to repeat the operation **804** and subsequent operations so that the search criteria can be changed. However, once the decision **806** determines that a search is to be performed, then a search request is sent **808** to a remote media server. Here, in one example, the remote media server is the media commerce server **102** illustrated in **FIG. 1**. The search request is a request to the remote media server to perform a search in accordance with the search criteria. Here, the remote media server includes at least information (e.g., metadata) for a large number of media items that are available to be purchased from the remote media server, though the content of the media items that are purchased may be acquired at the client via download with respect to another remote server, such as the media storage server **110**.

[0084] After the search request has been sent **808** to the remote media server, a decision **810** determines whether a response has been received. Here, the media search processing **800** waits until a response to the search request has been received back at the application program. Once the decision **810** determines that a response has been received, an appli-

cation program window is produced or rendered by the application program. More specifically, a first window (e.g., first sub-window) of the application program window is rendered **812** with album related information. Additionally, a second window (e.g., second sub-window) of the application program window is rendered **814** so as to display media item information corresponding to the album related information. In one embodiment, the media item information can be displayed in the second window in a list format or in a row and column format.

[0085] For example, the search criteria of “Reba” and such was sent to the remote media server. The remote media server returned the album related information that is depicted in the first sub-window **722** illustrated in **FIG. 7B**, and the corresponding media item information depicted in the second sub-window **724** shown in **FIG. 7B**.

[0086] In one embodiment, the response from the remote media server is a list media items (e.g., tracks) that result from a search request. The second window displays media item information for the media items (e.g., tracks) on the list of media items. The first window can display album related information for the most relevant media items (e.g., tracks) on the list of media items.

[0087] At this point, the media search processing **800** has received search criteria and performed a search at a media server, and then returned results that are displayed in the first window and the second window. At this point, and using graphical user interface components that are also provided within the first window and the second window, the user of the application program is able to further interact with the graphical user interface to perform other operations from the results view such as shown in **FIG. 7B**.

[0088] **FIG. 9** is a flow diagram of additional processing **900** according to one embodiment of the invention. The additional processing **900** is processing that can be invoked and performed by the application program following either the media search processing shown in **FIG. 8** or the media browse processing discussed below with reference to **FIGS. 12A and 12B**.

[0089] As shown in **FIG. 9**, a decision **902** determines whether a buy selection has been made. For example, with respect to **FIG. 7B**, whether the user selected a “buy album” button **732** or a “buy song” button **736**. When the decision **902** determines that a buy selection has been made, then media purchase processing **904** is performed. As an example, the media purchase processing **904** can be the media purchase processing **200** shown in **FIGS. 2A and 2B**. Alternatively, when the decision **902** determines that a buy selection has not been made, then a decision **906** determines whether a preview selection has been made. For example, as noted above with respect to **FIG. 7B**, a preview can be selected through use of a preview control **738** or by “double-clicking” on a particular media item listed within the second sub-window **724**. In any case, when the decision **906** determines that a preview selection has been made, then a preview stream for the selected media item is requested **908** from the remote media server. Here, the application program does not locally store the media content needed to preview media items. Hence, to preview a particular media item, the application program sends a preview request to the remote media server to instruct the media server to stream the preview for the selected media item to the particular appli-

cation program. Once the stream for the preview request has been initiated by the remote media server, the preview stream is played **901** at the application program, thereby permitting the user of the application program to hear the audio associated with the preview clip for the selected media item.

[**0090**] On the other hand, when the decision **906** determines that a preview selection has not been made, then a decision **912** determines whether any of a variety of other selections have been made. The user is able to interact with an application program window in a variety of different ways beyond search, buy and preview. For example, the user could interact with the graphical user interface to sort the media items in the second sub-window **724** in a different manner, or might request a browse operation using the browse control **740**, might proceed to a home page for the music store, etc. These other types of processing can be performed at **914** when one or more such other selections are determined by the decision **912** to have been made. If the decision **912** determines that there are no other selections, then the media search processing **900** can return to repeat the decision **902** and subsequent operations so that these additional operations or functionality that can be utilized from the application program window are available. Following the operations **904**, **910** and **914**, the media search processing **900** is complete and ends.

[**0091**] Still another aspect of the invention pertains to a graphical user interface suitable for efficiently browsing through numerous media items. The graphical user interface is also suitable for purchasing media items in an on-line manner. The graphical user interface is presented to a user at a client (client machine). In one embodiment, the graphical user interface is presented to the user by an application program that runs on the client, such application program being referred to as a media player (see **FIG. 1**).

[**0092**] **FIG. 10** is a diagram of an application program window **1000** according to one embodiment of the invention. The application program window **1000** is a graphical user interface. A user can interact with the graphical user interface to browse media items that are available on a remote server for purchase or preview. The remote server can, for example, include one or both of the media commerce server **102** and the media storage server **110** shown in **FIG. 1**.

[**0093**] The application program window **1000** includes a first sub-window **1002** and a second sub-window **1004**. The first sub-window **1002** includes a first region **1002-1**, a second region **1002-2**, and a third region **1002-3**. As shown in **FIG. 10**, the first region **1002-1** includes a first list **1006** of items. A user would interact with the first region **1002-1** to select one of the items in the first list **1006** of items. The selected item can then be highlighted **1008** (or otherwise visually distinguished). Once a particular item within the first list **1006** is selected and thus highlighted **1008**, a request is sent to the remote server to identify the appropriate items for a second list **1010** of items that are displayed in the second region **1002-2**. In other words, the remote server responds to the request with the items for the second list **1010** that are to be displayed within the second region **1002-2**. Again, a user can interact with the second region **1002-2** to select one of the items within the second list **1010**. The selected item can then be highlighted **1012** (or other-

wise visually distinguished). Then, the selected and highlighted item **1012** causes a request to be sent to the remote server to obtain items that are associated with the selected and highlighted item **1012**. The response from the remote server is one or more items that are displayed in a third list **1014** within the third region **1002-3**. A user can interact with the third region **1002-3** to select one of the items within the third list **1014**. The selected item can then be highlighted **1016** (or otherwise visually distinguished).

[**0094**] After one of the items within the third list **1014** has been selected and highlighted **1016**, still another request can be sent to the remote server to obtain items that are associated with the selected and highlighted item **1016**. In response to the request, the remote server supplies one or more items that are displayed in the second sub-window **1004**. These items can be displayed in a variety of different ways and generally also include descriptive or characteristic information for each of the items. The one or more items can be displayed as a list or as a row and column (e.g., table) format. In one embodiment, the second sub-window **1004** is larger than each of the regions of the first sub-window **1002**, and thus the second sub-window **1004** has additional display area for information pertaining to each of the media items being displayed therein. In one embodiment, the items being displayed in the second sub-window **1004** are media items. These media items can, for example, be songs, videos or images that can be previewed or purchased.

[**0095**] **FIGS. 11A-11C** are screen shots illustrating successive views of a browse feature according to one embodiment of the invention.

[**0096**] **FIG. 11A** is a screen shot of an application program window **1100** according to one embodiment of the invention. The application program window **1100** includes a first sub-window **1102**, a second sub-window **1104**, and a third sub-window **1106**. The first sub-window **1102** includes a first region **1102-1**, a second region **1102-2** and a third region **1102-3**. As shown in **FIG. 11A**, the first region **1102-1** is shown displaying a list of available genre (genre list) **1108**. The second area **1102-2** displays the text "select genre" which is intended to inform the user to select one of the items within the genre list **1108** being displayed in the first region **1102-1**.

[**0097**] **FIG. 11B** is a screen shot of an application program window **1120** after a user has selected one of the items within the genre list **1108** being displayed in the first region **1102-1**. A selected item **1122** from the genre list **1108** can be highlighted as shown in **FIG. 11B**. Once a user has selected one of the items within the list **1108** (selected genre), the second region **1102-2** can be populated with a list of artists (artist list) **1124** that are associated with the selected genre from the genre list **1108**. The artist list **1124** is provided by the remote server to the application program that presents the application program window **1120**. The third region **1102-3** displays the message "select artist" to encourage the user to select one of the artists from the artist list **1124** being displayed in the second region **1102-2**.

[**0098**] **FIG. 11C** is a screen shot of an application program window **1140** after the user has selected one of the available artists from the artist list **1124** of the second region **1102-2**. When a user has selected one of the artists (selected artist) **1144** from the artist list **1124** of the second region **1102-2**, the selected artist **1144** can be illustrated in a

highlighted manner. Then, the third region **1102-3** displays one or more albums in an album list **1146**. The albums within the album list **1146** are those albums that are the product of the selected artist **1144**. The album list **1146** is provided by the remote server. When the album list **1146** has a plurality of items, the user would select one of the items. However, as shown in **FIG. 11C**, the album list **1146** has but a single item (album). Hence, the single item is deemed selected. Once an item in the album list **1146** is selected, the second sub-window **1104** can be populated with a music list **1148** of the songs that are on the selected album. The music list **1148** can display descriptive information for each of the songs. For example, as shown in **FIG. 11C**, the song list **1148** is presented in a row and column (e.g., table) format with each row pertaining to a different song on the selected album, and with the columns pertaining to song name, title, artist, album, genre, and price. Further, within the price column, each of the rows can include a “buy song” button **1150** that allows for ease of purchase of the particular song by the user. In one embodiment, the price is a fixed price per song/track. For example, the fixed price could be \$0.99 per song.

[0099] **FIGS. 12A and 12B** are flow diagrams of media browse processing **1200** according to one embodiment of the invention. The media browse processing **1200** is, for example, performed by a media player, such as the media player **108** operating on the client **104** illustrated in **FIG. 1**. The media player also communicates with a remote server (media server) to obtain information pertaining to available media content that can be viewed, presented, previewed or purchased. The remote server can, for example, include one or both of the media commerce server **102** and the media storage server **110** shown in **FIG. 1**.

[0100] The media browse processing **1200** initially displays **1201** a browse window with a list of selectable genre. The genre within the list is provided by the remote server to the application program that produces the browse window. As an example, the browse window can pertain to the application program window **1000**, **1100**, **1120** or **1140** shown in **FIGS. 10 and 11A-11C**.

[0101] Next, a decision **1202** determines whether a genre selection has been made. When the decision **1202** determines that a genre selection has not yet been made, the media browse processing **1200** awaits for the user to make such a selection. Once the decision **1202** determines that a genre selection has been made, then the selected genre is highlighted **1204**. In addition, those available artists within the selected genre are requested **1206** from the remote server.

[0102] A decision **1208** then determines whether a response has been received from the remote server. When the decision **1208** determines that a response has not yet been received, the media browse processing **1200** awaits such a response. Once the decision **1208** determines that a response has been received, a list of selectable artists that are within the selected genre is displayed **1210**. In other words, the response from the remote server identifies those selectable artists that are within the selected genre. The selectable artists are then displayed **1210** in the list of selectable artists. In one embodiment, while displaying the list of selectable artists, the list of selectable genre is also still displayed.

[0103] After the list of selectable artists is displayed **1210**, a decision **1212** determines whether an artist selection has

been made. Here, the user is able to interact with the browse window to select an artist from the list of selectable artists that is being displayed **1210**. When the decision **1212** determines that an artist selection has not been made, the media browse processing **1200** awaits such a selection. Once the decision **1212** determines that an artist selection has been made, the selected artist is highlighted **1214**. Then, available albums for the selected artist are requested **1216** from the remote server (media server). A decision **1218** then determines whether a response to the request has been received from the remote server. When the decision **1218** determines that a response has not yet been received, the media browse processing **1200** awaits such a response. Once the decision **1218** determines that a response has been received, a list of selectable albums for the selected artist is displayed **1220**. The response from the media server in this case includes the selectable albums that were produced by the selected artist. In one embodiment, the list of selectable albums can be displayed **1220** while the list of selectable artists and the list of selectable genre are also concurrently being displayed.

[0104] After the list of selectable albums is displayed **1220**, a decision **1222** determines whether an album selection has been made. When the decision **1222** determines that an album selection has not yet been made, the media browse processing **1200** awaits such a selection. When the decision **1222** determines that an album selection has been made, then media items that are on the selected album are requested **1224** from the media server. A decision **1226** then determines whether a response to the request has been received. When the decision **1226** determines that a response has not yet been received, then the media browse processing **1200** awaits such a response. When the decision **1226** determines that a response has been received, then a media item window is displayed **1228** having media item information corresponding to the selected album. Typically, the media item window would display a list of media items that correspond to the selected album. For example, the media items could be songs that are present on the selected album. For example, as shown in **FIG. 11C**, the second sub-window **1104** can pertain to the media item window and display a list of media items (songs) together with other descriptive or characteristic information pertaining to the media items.

[0105] Following the operation **1228**, the user can interact with the media item window to preview, sort, and purchase any of the media items. Such additional operations can be performed, in one embodiment, as shown in **FIG. 9** discussed above.

[0106] Furthermore, the graphical user interface discussed above with respect to **FIGS. 10-12B** was primarily discussed in terms of musical songs. However, as previously noted, the graphical user interface is generally applicable to browsing media items. For example, the media items can be video (e.g., DVDs), audio books or a grouping (e.g., charts). For example, in the case of audio books, the graphical user interface might permit the user to first select “Audio books,” then select a category, and then select an author. Once an author is selected, a list of available audio books could be displayed in another window, from which the user could preview and/or buy any of the listed audio books. For example, with respect to the application program window **1000** shown in **FIG. 10**, in one embodiment, the first region **1002-1** can display a list of genre in which “audio books” is included as one genre, the second region **1002-2** can display

a list of categories of audio books (arts & entertainment, sports, history, etc.), and the third region **1002-3** can list the authors of having audio books in the selected category.

[0107] As another example, when the media items pertain to a grouping, the graphical user interface can enable a user to browse the groupings. In one implementation, the groupings can pertain to charts. For example, the graphical user interface might permit the user to first select “charts,” then select a particular chart, and then select a particular year for that chart. Once a year is selected, a list of media items (e.g., songs) associated with the particular chart for the particular year can be displayed in another window, from which the user could preview and/or buy any of the listed media items. For example, with respect to the application program window **1000** shown in **FIG. 10**, in one embodiment, the first region **1002-1** can display a list of genre in which “charts” is included as one genre, the second region **1002-2** can display a list of charts (e.g., Billboard Hot 100, Rick Dees Weekly Top 40 Chart, etc.), and the third region **1002-3** can list the years for the selected chart.

[0108] One genre of music is “classical.” The graphical user interface discussed above with respect to **FIGS. 10-12B** can also be used to browse classical music. For example, with respect to the application program window **1000** shown in **FIG. 10**, in one embodiment, the first region **1002-1** can display a list of genre in which “classical” is included as one genre, the second region **1002-2** can display a list of artists of classical music (e.g., Mozart, Beethoven, etc.), and the third region **1002-3** can list the albums (CDs) of the selected artist. The one or more items that are displayed in the second sub-window **1004** can be individual media items (e.g., tracks) or a grouping of media items (e.g., a group of tracks). For example, a media item “Piano Concerto No. 19” can be displayed in a row within the second sub-window **1004**. However, such a media item can represent a grouping of different movements, tempos, arrangements, etc., such as “Piano Concerto No. 19 In F, KV 459: Allegro Vivace,” “Piano Concerto No. 19 In F, KV 459: Allegretto,” and “Piano Concerto No. 19 In F, KV 459: Allegro Assai.” The grouping can be displayed initially in a single row in a condensed fashion. In one embodiment, besides a descriptor for the grouping, an indicator (e.g., symbol or icon) can be displayed at each row in the second sub-window **1004** in which the descriptor represents a grouping. The indicator can also be user-selectable so that the user can cause the single row to expand to a plurality of rows as needed to display information on the individual media items (e.g., tracks) of the grouping. The indicator can thus permit the user to view a grouping of media items in a compressed or an expanded fashion.

[0109] **FIGS. 13A-13B** are screen shots illustrating additional features of a graphical user interface according to other embodiments of the invention. The screen shot shown in **FIG. 13A** is similar to that shown in **FIG. 11C**, and can be arrived at by similar processing.

[0110] **FIG. 13A** is a screen shot of an application program window **1300** according to another embodiment of the invention. The application program window **1300** includes a first sub-window **1302**, a second sub-window **1304**, and a third sub-window **1306**. The first sub-window **1302** includes a first region **1302-1**, a second region **1302-2** and a third region **1302-3**. As shown in **FIG. 13A**, the first region

1302-1 is shown displaying a list of available genre (genre list) **1308**. After user has selected one of the items within the genre list **1308**, the selected item **1310** can be indicated by highlighting such as shown in **FIG. 13A**. The second area **1302-2** displays a list of artists (artist list) **1312** that are associated with the selected genre from the genre list **1308**. Then, after the user has selected one of the available artists from the artist list **1312** of the second region **1302-2**, the selected artist **1314** can be illustrated in a highlighted manner. The third region **1302-3** displays one or more albums in an albums list **1316**. When the albums list **1316** has a plurality of items, the user would select one of the items. However, as shown in **FIG. 13A**, the albums list **1316** has but a single item (album). Hence, the single item is deemed selected. Once an item in the album list **1316** is selected, the second sub-window **1304** can be populated with a song list **1318** of the songs that are on the selected album. The song list **1318** can display descriptive information for each of the songs. For example, as shown in **FIG. 13A**, the song list **1318** is presented in a row and column (e.g., table) format with each row pertaining to a different song on the selected album, and with the columns pertaining to song name, title, artist, album, genre, and price.

[0111] At this point, the user has completed the browse operation and can then interact with the application program window **1300** in a variety of different ways. One way that the user can interact with the application program window **1300** is through use of a toggle control **1320**. The toggle control **1320** is a button, image or other user interface control that is selectable by a user. The toggle control **1320**, when selected, toggles the graphical user interface from the browse interface in the first sub-window **1302** to an informational mode.

[0112] **FIG. 13B** is a representative application program window **1350** that is displayed after the user interacts with the browse control **1320** shown in **FIG. 13A**. In such case, the first sub-window **1302** is altered to contain descriptive information for associated media items. In particular, for the example shown in **FIG. 13B**, the first sub-window **1302** contains an image **1352** associated with a selected album, information **1354** pertaining to the selected album, and a “buy album” button **1356** to facilitates a user’s purchase of access rights to all the songs on the selected album. In this example, the particular selected album “Party Mix/Mesopotamia” by the B-52s was previously selected through a browse operation with respect to **FIG. 13A**. However, upon the user selecting the toggle control **1320**, the graphical user interface alters the first sub-window **1302** to that shown in **FIG. 13B**. The resulting graphical user interface facilitates the user’s review of the album that has been identified by the browse operation. The user can not only directly buy the album through use of the “buy album” button **1356**, but can also review the information **1354** and the associated image **1352**. In one embodiment, the price is a fixed price per album. For example, the fixed price could be \$9.99 per album. Additionally, the first sub-window **1302** can further include a Top Downloads region **1358** and a Related Items region **1360**. The Top Downloads region **1358** can contain a list of the most frequently downloaded songs from the selected album. The Related Items region **1360** can contain a list of other songs that purchasers of the music from the artist of the selected album have also bought.

[0113] In the representative application program window **1350** shown in **FIG. 13B**, the second sub-window **1304** may or may not change as compared to the second sub-window **1318** shown in **FIG. 13A**. However, in other embodiments, the second sub-window **1318** can have its displayed list of songs changed or updated, or even be eliminated. Likewise, the third sub-window **1306** is not necessarily always present.

[0114] Further, it should be understood that the toggle control **1320** is also provided with the graphical user interface shown in **FIG. 13B**. Hence, the user can interact with the toggle control **1320** as shown in **FIG. 13B** to return to the graphical user interface depicted in the application program window **1300** shown in **FIG. 13A**. Further, a user could have performed a music search to initially produce the application program window **1350** shown in **FIG. 13B**. Such an approach would be an alternative to the use of the browse process such as depicted in **FIG. 13A**. In any case, through a search operation, the user can identify or locate a selected album and thus be presented with the graphical user interface shown in the application program window **1350** shown in **FIG. 13B**. Then, should the user desire to enter a browse mode, the user can select the browse control **1320** shown in **FIG. 13B** and thus be presented with the graphical user interface provided with the application program window **1300** shown in **FIG. 13A**. In other words, the user can use the browse control **1320** to transition between a browse mode and an informational mode.

[0115] Still another feature associated with the invention is illustrated with respect to **FIGS. 13A and 13B**. The second sub-window **1304** includes “buy song” buttons **1362** and “go to” buttons **1364**, **1366** and **1368** for each of the songs listed in the second sub-window **1304**. The “go to” buttons **1364**, **1366** and **1368** are shown as small buttons with arrows symbols therein. As previously discussed, the “buy song” button **1362** can facilitate a user in easily purchasing access to the associated song. The selection of the “go to” button **1364** causes the first sub-window **1302** to display information pertaining to the associated artist (e.g., The B52s). The selection of the “go to” button **1366** causes the first sub-window **1302** to display information pertaining to the associated selected album. For example, if the user had selected the “go to” button **1366** shown in **FIG. 13A**, the first sub-window **1302** would then display the album information such as shown in **FIG. 13B**. If the user selects the “go to” button **1368** of either the application program window **1300** or the application program window **1350**, a genre window for would be presented in the first sub-window **1302** (and/or the second sub-window **1304**). In this example, the genre window would pertain to the genre of “pop.” From the genre window, the user could interact to specify one or more selected genre and then proceed to locate music of interest.

[0116] Alternatively, when the media items being browsed as audio books, the “go to” button can cause a book page to be displayed and the buy buttons can indicate “buy book.” Given that the audio data to be downloaded in the case of an audio book is sizeable, in one embodiment, the audio data for the audio book can be divided into a plurality of files which are separately downloaded. The audio quality for audio books can also be reduced as compared to musical songs as another means to reduce the amount of audio data required to be downloaded.

[0117] Still another aspect of the invention pertains to informing the users about explicit content that may be present in songs or albums. **FIGS. 14A and 14B** are screen shots illustrating explicit content notification features according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0118] **FIG. 14A** is a screen shot of an application program window **1400** according to one embodiment of the invention. The application program window **1400** includes a first sub-window **1402**, a second sub-window **1404**, and a third sub-window **1406**. The first sub-window **1402** includes a Top Albums region **1402-1**, a Top Songs region **1402-2**, and a Top Artists region **1402-3**. The Top Albums region **1402-1** contains those albums that match search criteria. For example, in this example, the search criteria was “trina” and the Top Albums regions **1402-1** depicts four separate albums that were identified by searching the music database with respect to the search criteria “trina”. The Top Songs region **1402-2** includes a list of top songs with respect to any of the albums listed in the Top Albums regions **1402-1**. The Top Artists region **1402-3** can represent the top artists with respect to the albums within the Top Albums region **1402-1**. Alternatively, the Top Songs region **1402-2** in the top artists region **1402-3** could be top songs for the larger categories of genre, time period, or overall. Additionally, the second sub-window **1404** displays those songs that are associated with the albums within the Top Albums region **1402-1**. In other words, the songs listed within the second sub-window **1404** are those songs that somehow relate to the search criteria.

[0119] It should also be noted that the application program window **1400** further includes explicit content indicators **1408** and clean content indicators **1410**. In this regard, it is known that songs or albums can contain offensive language (e.g., expletives or other foul language) that is not appropriate for all audiences. Hence, albums or songs can be indicated as containing such explicit content through use of the explicit content indicator **1408**. As shown in **FIG. 14A**, the explicit content indicator **1408** can be associated with an album, such as shown in the first sub-window **1402**, and/or can be associated with individual songs, such as shown in the second sub-window **1404**.

[0120] Further, in the case in which an album or song has explicit content, another version of the same album or song can be provided and thus made available for purchase with modifications to remove the explicit and potentially offending material. These types of songs or albums are indicated by the clean content indicator **1410**.

[0121] If desired, a user can select one of the albums within the Top Albums region **1402-1** or through selection of one of the “go to” buttons **1414** for album information within the second sub-window **1404**. If the user does select either the image **1412** or the “go to” button **1414**, an application program window **1450** as shown in **FIG. 14B** would be produced according to one embodiment of the invention. In other words, the user selection was to select the album “The Great Depression” by DMX, namely, the explicit content version. As such, the first sub-window **1402** displays an image **1452** associated with the selected album, information **1454** pertaining to the album, and a “buy album” button **1456**. Additionally, since the selected album has explicit content, the first sub-window **1402** can also display a parental advisory warning indication **1457** to alert

potential purchasers that the selected album contains explicit content. The first sub-window **1402** can further include top downloads information **1458** and related song purchases information **1460**. The second sub-window region **1404** can list those songs on the selected album. As shown in **FIG. 14B**, the selected album, "The Great Depression" contains seventeen songs or tracks, each of which is identified by an explicit content indicator **1408**, thereby indicating that each of the songs or tracks contains explicit content.

[0122] Another aspect of the invention pertains to modification of media descriptors that contain offensive language. For example, media descriptors are often provided as titles to media items, such as albums, songs, videos or pictures. Occasionally, these media descriptors can contain offensive language. Hence, when media items are provided to a media store (or media database) to be stored and thus available for subsequent purchase, these media items can be reviewed to determine whether any offensive language is present within their media descriptors. Alternatively, the review for offensive language in the media descriptors can be done dynamically as these media items are requested by various media players. In either case, the offending portion of the media descriptors can be altered to remove the offensive language.

[0123] In one embodiment, each word within each of the media descriptors can be compared with a list of identified offending words stored in a file or database. For each offending word found with a media descriptor, a portion of the offending word in the media descriptor can be altered through use of replacement characters. As an example, as shown in **FIG. 14A**, one of the song names (e.g., media descriptors) on the selected album is "Nasty Bitch". However, the song name is displayed as shown in **FIG. 14A** with a modified media designator **1416**, namely, "Nasty B****h". Hence, in this embodiment, the internal characters of the offending word "bitch" were altered and thus replaced with an asterisk. The user knows how many characters were replaced by the number of asterisks and thus is provided with some context for the word even after it has been modified. However, once modified, the offending word is no longer offensive.

[0124] Another aspect of the invention pertains to a graphical user interface in which a scrolling type action that permits a user to scroll or flip through media items being displayed in an efficient, user-friendly manner. In one embodiment, a graphical user interface action or control can cause update (or replacement) from a displayed set of media items to a next set of media items. The update can, for example, include a transition effect when transitioning between different sets of media items.

[0125] **FIG. 15A** is a diagram of an application program window **1500** according to one embodiment of the invention. The application program window **1500** is, for example, produced at a client machine by a media player, such as the media player **108** operating on the client **104** of **FIG. 1**. The application program window **1500** includes at least one sub-window **1502**. Typically, the sub-window **1502** is associated with a category or grouping of media. Within the sub-window **1502** are displayed a plurality of media item representations **1504**. As illustrated in **FIG. 15A**, the sub-window **1502** includes a first media item representation **1504-1**, a second media item representation **1504-2**, and a

third media item representation **1504-3**. For each of the media item representations **1504**, the sub-window **1502** depicts a text descriptor **1506** and an image descriptor **1508**. For example, the text descriptor can be a name that corresponds to the media item, and the image descriptor **1508** can pertain to an image (e.g., artwork) that is associated with the media item. In one embodiment, the image is rather small and thus can be referred to as a "thumbnail" image. In one implementation, the media items are albums of music, and thus the text descriptor **1506** pertains to the title of the album and the image descriptor **1508** pertains to the artwork of the album cover.

[0126] The sub-window **1502** typically displays only a small portion of the total number of media items that correspond to the category or grouping of media associated with the sub-window **1502**. As such, the user needs the ability to transition to a next set of media items. The application program window **1500** includes next controls **1510** and **1512** to assist the user in transitioning to a next set of media items. The next control **1510** permits the user to transition to the left, and the next control **1512** allows the user to transition to the right. As discussed in more detail below with respect to **FIG. 16**, the content for the sub-window **1502**, either initially or following the selection of one of the next controls **1510** and **1512** is provided by a remote server that stores the media item information that is displayed within the sub-window **1502**. For example, the remote server can, in one embodiment, pertain to the media commerce server **102** illustrated in **FIG. 1**.

[0127] **FIG. 15B** is a diagram of a window **1520** according to one embodiment of the invention. The window **1520** is, for example, suitable for use as the sub-window **1502** illustrated in **FIG. 15A**. The window **1520** can also be considered a frame. In any case, the window **1520** includes window (frame) objects that pertain to objects of the window **1520** (frame). As shown in **FIG. 15B**, the window **1520** includes a display region **1522** and next controls **1524** and **1526**. The display region **1522** represents a portion of the window **1520** that displays server-provided information pertaining to a of the media items available from the server. The next controls **1524** and **1526** are used by a user to request a next set of the media items available from the server. In particular, when the next control **1522** is selected, a load window (load frame) request is sent to the server. In one embodiment, the next control **1524** is an object of the window **1520** (frame) and contains information on the next set of the media items as well as a transition effect therefor. The transition effect can have various characteristics and styles that provide an animated transition between the display of a current set of media items and a subsequent set of media items. Although various transition effects can be used, some examples of transition effects are wipe, dissolve, drop-in, etc. Also the transition effect can have an acceleration/deceleration or speed characteristics that can, if provided, control the rate (e.g., speed and/or acceleration) of the transition effect (animation). Even with the transition effect, the new content for the display portion **1522** is display such that the next controls **1524** and **1526** are on top of the display region **1522**. In other words, the animation (transition) effect causes the new content for the display portion **1522** to arrive in the display portion **1522** in a manner that is underneath the next controls **1524** and **1526**. Similarly, if desired, the boundary of the window **1520** and the display region **1522** can have a shading effect, such shading effect can be an

object of the frame and can also be displayed over top of the display region **1522**. The server-provided information in response to the request is, for example, a markup language document (e.g., XML) that describes the layout therefore and its objects as well as contains links for data (e.g., artwork, title) for each of the media items within the set being displayed. In one embodiment, the frame can be displayed like a composite image such that back-to-front with the content for the display region **1522** being in the back and the other possible frame features (objects) being in the front, e.g., the next controls and a shading effect. The window **1520** can also include a position indicator **1528** that informs the user of the relative position within the various media items that are associated with and able to be displayed within the display portion **1522** (see also **FIG. 15C**).

[0128] **FIG. 15C** is a screen shot of an application program window **1550** according to one embodiment of the invention. The application program window **1550** represents one implementation of the application program window **1500** illustrated in **FIG. 15A**.

[0129] The application program window **1550**, although produced by an application program, is presented in a network browser style, and thus looks like a web page in many respects. The application program window **1550**, among other things, includes a first sub-window **1552**, a second sub-window **1554**, a third sub-window, **1556**, and a fourth sub-window **1558**. Each of the sub-windows **1552-1558** displays four media items. More particularly, for each media item within each of the sub-windows **1552-1558**, media information for each of the four media items is displayed. In one embodiment, for each media item being displayed within one of the sub-windows **1552-1558**, the media item information being presented includes an album title **1560**, an artist **1562**, and album artwork **1564**. The different sub-window **1552-1558** represent different groupings or categories that the albums can be arranged in. In **FIG. 15C**, the exemplary groupings or categories are New Releases, Just Added, Staff Favorites, and Compilations. In one embodiment, each of the sub-windows **1552-1558** pertains to a frame. For example, a frame boundary **1559** surrounds the sub-window **1552**.

[0130] Hence, the user can simultaneous view the basic information on four media items (e.g., albums) within each of the sub-windows **1552-1558**. However, when the user desires to view other albums within one of the groups or categories, then the user can select one of the next controls **1566** and **1568**. For example, with respect to the first sub-window **1552**, the user is able to transition to the left using the next control **1566**, or transition to the right using the next control **1568**. The other sub-windows **1554-1558** similarly have next controls. Upon the user's selection of the next control **1568**, a next set of four albums would be requested from the remote server, and then when received, would be displayed within the first sub-window **1552**, thereby replacing the four media items previously displayed therein. The transition from the former set of media items to a next set of media items can be performed with an animated transition such that the user is shown the effect of the transition or scroll to the next set.

[0131] Additionally, the application program window **1550** shown in **FIG. 15C** includes a top song downloads region **1570** and a top albums download region **1572**. The

top song downloads region **1570** includes a list of the top songs that have been downloaded from the music store that is offering the various media items for purchase. The top albums download region **1572** displays a list of top albums that have been downloaded by users of the music store.

[0132] In one embodiment, the set of media data for the associated sub-window is provided in a markup language format. In one example, the markup language format is extensible Markup Language (XML) based. In the case where the media items are albums, such as shown in **FIG. 15C**, the artwork images are thumbnail sized so that the amount of data associated with a set of media data is relatively small and thus easily transmitted over a network from the remote server.

[0133] **FIG. 16** is a flow diagram of media page processing **1600** according to one embodiment of the invention. The media page processing **1600** is, for example, performed by a media player, such as the media player **108** operating on the client **104** illustrated in **FIG. 1**. The media page processing **1600** can be performed by an application program to produce an application program window, such as the application program window **1500** illustrated in **FIG. 15A** and the application program window **1550** illustrated in **FIG. 15B**.

[0134] The media page processing **1600** is activated whenever a base page is to be presented within an application program window. Once the media page processing **1600** begins, a base page is requested **1602** from a remote server. The remote server is, for example, the media commerce server **102** illustrated in **FIG. 1**. The base page can vary with implementation but has the characteristics shown in **FIG. 15A** and **15B** with respect to a sub-window and next controls.

[0135] A decision **1604** then determines whether the base page has been received from the server. Once the decision **1604** determines that the base page has been received, then the base page is displayed **1606**. At this point, the base page is presented on a display screen and includes at least one sub-window and at least one next control.

[0136] Then, a decision **1608** determines whether a next control selection has been made. When the user interacts with the base page to select the next control, then a next control selection has been made. However, the user may interact with the base page in a variety of different ways, including a next control selection or a preview request, or not at all. When the decision **1608** determines that a next control selection has not been made, then a decision **1610** determines whether a preview request has been made. When the decision **1610** determines that a preview request has not been made, then other processing **1612** can be performed and then the media page processing **1600** can return to repeat the decision **1608** and subsequent blocks. Alternatively, when the decision **1610** determines that a preview request has been made, then preview content is requested **1614** from the remote server. A decision **1616** then determines whether the preview content has been received. Once the decision **1616** determines that the preview content has been received, then the preview content is presented **1618**. In one embodiment, the presentation **1618** of the preview content causes the preview content to be played. In one example, the preview content is a short audio file that is played by the media player for the benefit of the user. Following the

operation **1618**, the media page processing **1600** returns to repeat the decision **1608** and subsequent operations.

[**0137**] On the other hand, when the decision **1608** determines that a next control selection has been made, then a next set of media data for the associated sub-window is requested **1620**. A decision **1622** then determines whether the next set of media data has been received. When the decision **1622** determines that the next set of media data has been received, then a next set of media data is presented **1624** in the associated sub-window. Typically, the next set of media data completely replaces the previous set of media data residing within the associated sub-window. An animated transition between the prior set of media data and the new set of media data can be performed to facilitate user awareness of the transitioning or updating operation. Following the operation **1624**, the media page processing **1600** returns to repeat the decision **1608** and subsequent operations so that additional user interactions can be processed.

[**0138**] The various aspects, features, embodiments or implementations of the invention described above can be used alone or in various combinations.

[**0139**] The media items can pertain to audio items (e.g., audio files or songs, such as for music or audiobooks), video items (e.g., video files or movies), or image items (e.g., photos).

[**0140**] The invention is preferably implemented by software, but can also be implemented in hardware or a combination of hardware and software. The invention can also be embodied as computer readable code on a computer readable medium. The computer readable medium is any data storage device that can store data which can thereafter be read by a computer system. Examples of the computer readable medium include read-only memory, random-access memory, CD-ROMs, DVDs, magnetic tape, optical data storage devices, and carrier waves. The computer readable medium can also be distributed over network-coupled computer systems so that the computer readable code is stored and executed in a distributed fashion.

[**0141**] The advantages of the invention are numerous. Different embodiments or implementations may, but need not, yield one or more of the following advantages. One advantage of the invention is that purchased media items are able to be securely downloaded to a user's machine. Another advantage of the invention is that media items can be purchased with a single user interface action. Still another advantage of the invention is that media items available for purchase can be searched or browsed in an efficient, user-friendly manner. Yet another advantage of the invention is that media items having offensive content or descriptors can be distinguishably displayed and/or altered to signal the presence of or remove of the offensive matter.

[**0142**] The many features and advantages of the present invention are apparent from the written description and, thus, it is intended by the appended claims to cover all such features and advantages of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, the invention should not be limited to the exact construction and operation as illustrated and described. Hence, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to as falling within the scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A graphical user interface produced by an application program, comprising:

an application program window generated by the application program, said application program window concurrently including at least a first sub-window and a second sub-window,

wherein said first sub-window displays first content in a network browser-like manner, the first content being received by the application program from a remote server over a network, and

wherein said second sub-window displays second content in an application-like manner, the second content being received by the application program from the remote server over the network.

2. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 1, wherein said first sub-window uses hyperlinks, and wherein said second sub-window uses a table or a row and column format.

3. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 1, wherein the application program is a non-browser application program.

4. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 1, wherein the first content is descriptive information pertaining to media items.

5. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 4, wherein the second content includes at least a list of media items.

6. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 5, wherein the second content further includes a specific item request link presented for each of the particular media items in the list of media items.

7. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 5, wherein those of the media items in the list of media items that contain explicit content are visibly identified by an explicit content indicator.

8. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 5, wherein those of the media items in the list of media items that contain a cleaned version of an otherwise explicit content version are identified by a clean content indicator.

9. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 5, wherein those of the media items in the list of media items are identified by names for the media items, and

wherein when the name of a particular one of the media items contains an offensive word, the name of the particular one of the media items is displayed in a modified manner so as to not be offensive.

10. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 1, wherein the first content pertains to an album, and wherein the second content pertains to particular media items associated with the album.

11. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 10, wherein the second content includes a buy button for each of the particular media items, the buy button allowing for one-click purchase of the associated media item.

12. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 10, wherein the first content includes a buy button for the album, and the selection of the buy button for the album causes one-click purchase of all the media items within the album.

13. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 1, wherein said application program window further includes an account window that displays an active account identifier.

14. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 1, wherein said application program window further includes a source window that is concurrently displayed with the first sub-window and the second sub-window.

15. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 1, wherein said graphical user interface further comprises:

- a toggle control which when selected causes the first content in the first sub-window to be replaced with a browse interface that facilitates a user browsing of a plurality of media items.

16. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 15, wherein said browse interface includes at least:

- a first list of first selectable items, with at least one of the first selectable items being capable of being selected by the user;

- a second list of second selectable items, with at least one of the second selectable items being capable of being selected by the user, the second selectable items of the second list being dependent on a first selection by the user of at least one of the first selectable items from the first list, and the second list being displayed along with the first list after the user has selected at least one of the first selectable items from the first list; and

- a third list of third selectable items, with at least one of the third selectable items being capable of being selected by the user, the third selectable items of the third list being dependent on a second selection by the user of at least one of the second selectable items from the second list, and the third list being displayed along with the first list and the second list after the user has selected at least one of the second selectable items from the second list.

17. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 16,

wherein the first selectable items, the second selectable items, the third selectable items and the fourth selectable items are genre types, artists, albums and media items, respectively, and

wherein, for each of the particular media items in the fourth selectable items, a first specific item request link is presented for linking to an associated artist page, a second specific item request link is presented for linking to an associated album page, and a third specific item request link is presented for linking to an associated genre page.

18. A method for browsing through a plurality of media items, said method comprising:

- requesting first selectable items for a first list from a remote server;

- displaying a browse window with the first list of the first selectable items;

- receiving a first user selection of one of the first selectable items in the first list;

- distinctively displaying the one of the first selectable items in the first list that the user has selected;

- requesting second selectable items for a second list from the remote server, the second selectable items being dependent on the one of the first selectable items in the first list that the user has selected;

- displaying the browse window with the first list of the first selectable items and the second list of the second selectable items;

- receiving a second user selection of one of the second selectable items in the second list;

- distinctively displaying the one of the second selectable items in the second list that the user has selected;

- requesting third selectable items for a third list from the remote server, the third selectable items being dependent on the one of the second selectable items in the second list that the user has selected; and

- displaying the browse window with the first list of the first selectable items, the second list of the second selectable items, and the third list of the third selectable items.

19. A method as recited in claim 18, wherein the first selectable items, the second selectable items and the third selectable items are one of genre types, artists, albums and media items.

20. A method as recited in claim 19, wherein the media items are songs.

21. A method as recited in claim 18, wherein said method further comprises:

- receiving a third user selection of one of the third selectable items in the third list; and

- distinctively displaying the one of the third selectable items in the third list that the user has selected.

22. A method as recited in claim 21, wherein a browse operation through the plurality of media items is achieved by the combination of the first user selection, the second user selection, and the third user selection.

23. A method as recited in claim 21, wherein said method further comprises:

- requesting fourth selectable items for a fourth list from the remote server, the fourth selectable items being dependent on the one of the third selectable items in the third list that the user has selected; and

- displaying the browse window with the first list of the first selectable items, the second list of the second selectable items, and the third list of the third selectable items.

24. A method as recited in claim 23, wherein a browse operation through the plurality of media items is achieved by the combination of the first user selection, the second user selection, and the third user selection, and wherein the fourth selectable items in the fourth list represent results of the browse operation.

25. A method as recited in claim 24, wherein the first selectable items, the second selectable items, the third selectable items and the fourth selectable items are genre types, artists, albums and media items, respectively.

26. A method as recited in claim 25, wherein the media items are songs.

27. A method as recited in claim 18, wherein said method further comprises:

- distinctively displaying the one of the third selectable items in the third list that the user has selected;

- requesting fourth selectable items for a fourth list from the remote server, the fourth selectable items being dependent on the one of the third selectable items in the third list that the user has selected; and

displaying the browse window with the first list of the first selectable items, the second list of the second selectable items, the third list of the third selectable items, and the fourth list of the fourth selectable items.

28. A graphical user interface produced by an application program, comprising:

- a browse window generated by the application program, said browse window enabling a user of the application program to browse through a plurality of media items, said browse window including at least:

- a first list of first selectable items, with at least one of the first selectable items being capable of being selected by the user;

- a second list of second selectable items, with at least one of the second selectable items being capable of being selected by the user, the second selectable items of the second list being dependent on a first selection by the user of at least one of the first selectable items from the first list, and the second list being displayed along with the first list after the user has selected at least one of the first selectable items from the first list; and

- a third list of third selectable items, with at least one of the third selectable items being capable of being selected by the user, the third selectable items of the third list being dependent on a second selection by the user of at least one of the second selectable items from the second list, and the third list being displayed along with the first list and the second list after the user has selected at least one of the second selectable items from the second list.

29. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 28, wherein said graphical user interface further comprises:

- a media item window that includes at least a fourth list of fourth selectable items, with at least one of the fourth selectable items being capable of being selected by the user, the fourth list representing a subset of the plurality of the media items, and the fourth selectable items of the fourth list being dependent on a third selection by the user of at least one of the third selectable items from the third list.

30. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 29, wherein the fourth list is displayed along with the first list, the second list after the user has selected at least one of the second selectable items from the second list, and the third list after the user has selected at least one of the third selectable items from the third list.

31. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 30, wherein the browse through the plurality of media items is achieved by the combination of the first selection, the second selection, and the third selection.

32. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 30, wherein the first selectable items, the second selectable items, the third selectable items and the fourth selectable items are genre types, artists, albums and media items, respectively.

33. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 32, wherein the media items are songs.

34. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 32, wherein a buy button is presented for each of the particular media items in the fourth selectable items.

35. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 34, wherein each of the buy buttons allows for one-click purchase of the associated media item.

36. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 29, wherein said graphical user interface further comprises:

- a toggle control which when selected causes the browse window to be replaced with an information window, the information window including information pertaining to at least one of the first selection, the second selection and a third selection by the user of at least one of the third selectable items from the third list.

37. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 29, wherein a specific item request link is presented for each of the particular media items in the fourth selectable items.

38. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 29,

- wherein the first selectable items, the second selectable items, the third selectable items and the fourth selectable items are genre types, artists, albums and media items, respectively, and

- wherein, for each of the particular media items in the fourth selectable items, a first specific item request link is presented for linking to an associated artist page, a second specific item request link is presented for linking to an associated album page, and a third specific item request link is presented for linking to an associated genre page.

39. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 29, wherein those of the media items of the fourth selectable items that contain explicit content are visibly identified by an explicit content indicator.

40. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 29, wherein those of the media items of the fourth selectable items that contain a cleaned version of an otherwise explicit content version are identified by a clean content indicator.

41. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 29, wherein those of the media items of the fourth selectable items being displayed in said browse window are identified by names for the media items, and

- wherein when the name of a particular one of the media items contains an offensive word, the name of the particular one of the media items is displayed in a modified manner so as to not be offensive.

42. A graphical user interface produced by an application program, comprising:

- an application program window generated by the application program, said application program window concurrently including at least a sub-window and a next control,

- wherein the sub-window displays media information for a first set of media items, the media information for the first set of media items being received by the application program from a remote server over a network, and

- wherein when the next control is activated, the sub-window displays media information for a second set of media items, the media information for the second set of media items being received by the application program from the remote server over the network.

43. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 42, wherein the media items include albums, and the media

information being displayed in the sub-window for each of the albums within the set includes at least a name and artwork associated therewith.

44. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 42, wherein the media items in the second set of media items are completely different from the media items in the first set of media items.

45. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 42, wherein the media items include videos, and the media information being displayed in the sub-window for each of the videos within the set includes at least a name and artwork associated therewith.

46. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 42, wherein said application program window comprises a plurality of next controls.

47. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 46, wherein each of the next controls provides a transition to a next set of media items in a particular direction.

48. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 46, wherein each of the next controls provides a scroll to a next set of media items in a particular direction.

49. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 42, wherein the next control has a transaction effect associated therewith that specifies how the transition from the first set of media items to the second set of media items is achieved.

50. A graphical user interface as recited in claim 42, wherein the next control is, in effect, displayed on top of the sub-window.

51. A method for reviewing information on a plurality of media items, said method comprising:

displaying a window having at least one sub-window and at least one next control, the at least one sub-window displaying first media data pertaining to a first set of the media items, the first media data being provided by a remote server;

determining whether a user selects the at least one next control;

requesting next media data pertaining to a next set of the media items from the remote server when said determining determines that the user has selected the at least one next control;

subsequently receiving the next media data pertaining to the next set of the media items; and

displaying the next media data in the at least one sub-window of the window.

* * * * *