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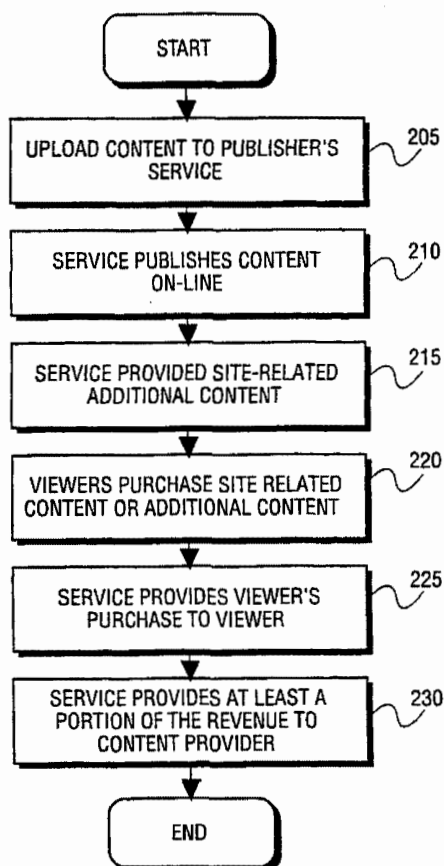
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR NETWORK REVENUE SHARING



(57) Abstract: A system and method for revenue sharing between an author of content and publisher across electronic media such as the Internet. In one embodiment, the author produces at least a portion of content and uploads it to the publisher (205). The publisher publishes at least the author's content, for example, on a web site, for access by consumers (210). The web site may also contain revenue generating content such as advertising and purchasing options. The publisher, in one embodiment, tracks the numbers of accesses to the web site and provides the author a portion of revenue generated therefrom due to the number of accesses (230).

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SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR NETWORK REVENUE SHARING

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is related to the distribution of revenue generated by access to on-line content.

2. RELATED APPLICATION

This application is related to U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/181,815, filed February 11, 2000 titled "Revenue Share Method" and claims priority under U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/181,815, filed February 11, 2000.

3. ART BACKGROUND

Today it is quite common to purchase and access product and services on-line through various networks including the Internet. For example, an on-line service can generate revenue from content provided on the service.

Revenue may be generated by publishing the picture, for example, by selling the picture. In such instances, commission may be paid to the picture owner due to the sale of the picture.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The system and method of the present invention provides a model for sharing revenue between a publisher of content and an author who provides the content. In one embodiment, the author produces at least a portion of the content and provides it to the publisher. The publisher then publishes the content, for example, on a web site, for access by a consumer. If the consumer accesses the

content, the publisher provides at least a portion of the revenue derived from the access to the author.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The objects, features and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the following detailed description in which:

Figures 1a and 1b illustrate embodiments of system which can perform the revenue sharing process of the present invention.

Figure 1c illustrates one embodiment of a processor which can be used in the system of **Figures 1a and 1b**.

Figures 2a and 2b are flowcharts of embodiments of the process of the present invention.

Figures 3a and 3b are flowcharts of embodiments of the process of the present invention which counts "hits" to "authors" content.

Figure 4 is a flowchart of one embodiment of the process of the present invention based on advertising sales.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In the following description, for purposes of explanation, numerous details are set forth in order to provide a through understanding of the present invention. However, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that these specific details are not required in order to practice the present invention. In other instances, well known electrical structures and circuits are shown in block diagram form in order not to obscure the present invention unnecessarily.

The system of the present invention provides a capability of an author to publish content on an on-line service and receive revenue directly due or indirectly due to the particular content.

One embodiment of the system is illustrated by the simplified block diagram of **Figure 1a**. In this embodiment, a publisher 10 interfaces with an author 15 and a consumer 20. The publisher may be an entity that provides a server or other network interconnect capability to enable the consumer 20 and the author 15 to access information at the publisher 10.

In one embodiment, as shown in **Figure 1b**, the publisher 30 is part of or coupled to an ISP (Internet Service Provider) 35 to provided content over the Internet. It is readily apparent that the present invention is not limited to Internet access and Internet web-based sites; directly coupled and private networks are also contemplated.

One embodiment of a publisher, for example publisher 10 or 30, is illustrated in **Figure 1c**. The publisher, in one embodiment, includes a processor 50, memory 55 and input/output capability 60. The memory 55 is configured to store instructions, which when executed by the processor 50, perform the methods described herein. The memory may also store the content and revenue information used in the methods described herein.

Input/output of content and related content components 60 include delivery or display of content/related content, or a portion of content/related content or a representation of the content/related content.

One embodiment of a method for sharing revenue is illustrated in the simplified flow diagram of **Figure 2a**. At step 205 the author uploads content to the publisher's service. For example, the author may upload a photograph to the publisher's server. At step 210 the publisher's service provides the content, for example, the photo, for viewing access. The content may be the original content provided by the author or may be modified content. In alternate embodiments, step 215, the publisher may add on content to the original content received. For example, the publisher may provide advertising for related products, content or services.

At step 220, viewers of the content may purchase content or form of the content or services or additional content related to the content from the publisher's service. This may be, for example continuing with our present illustration, still images, video, music, text, games, and application programs related to the content provided by the consumer.

At step 220, the publisher's service provides the purchased material to the viewer. At step 225, the publisher's service provides at least a portion of the revenue derived from the viewer's purchase to the content provider, that is, the original author who uploaded the photographs.

The mechanism to provide the revenue may be embodied a variety of ways. In one embodiment, funds are electronically transferred from the publisher to the author. Alternately, more traditional funds transfers services may be utilized.

The content to be delivered may be sent to the viewer a variety of ways. For example, in one embodiment, the content may be sent electronically, in the clear or in encrypted form. Alternately, other delivery methods may be used including the postal service and other delivery services.

An alternate embodiment of the processes are illustrated in **Figure 2b**. At step 250, the author's content is uploaded to the publisher's service. At step 255 the service provides the content to viewers. The viewers may view the content, purchase the content or a form of the content, purchase or access service capabilities related to the content, purchase merchandise, move on to other sites via links on the site containing the author's content, etc. from the service, step 260. The service provides, at step 265, the purchase to the viewer. At step 270 the service provides at least a portion of the revenue direct from the viewer's purchase to the content provider.

Thus, in this embodiment, the viewer may go to a particular site because of the content, but then view advertising material, make purchases, or move on to

other web sites reached by the viewer, due to being at the site containing the author's content.

In alternate embodiments, the author is compensated based upon the number of accesses or hits to the site containing the author's content. One embodiment is illustrated in **Figure 3a**. At step 300, the author uploads the content to the publisher. The publisher, at step 310, displays the content on the publisher's site. At step 320, the consumer views the author's content on the publisher's site. At step 330, the publisher tracks the number of "hits" to the author's content. At step 340, the publisher compensates the author based on the publisher's tracking.

An alternate embodiment is illustrated in **Figure 3b**. In this embodiment, advertising revenue is generated. Thus, at step 350, the publisher tracks the number of the hits to the author's content and at step 360 charges the advertiser based on the publisher's tracking. The author is compensated based on the advertising revenue generated, step 370. Other embodiments of revenue may be due to links and links accessed at the site containing the author's content.

The compensation structure may be organized a variety of ways. As noted above, the amount of compensation may be an amount derivable from the number of accesses or hits to the site containing the author's content. The actual value could be a percentage of revenue generated, a value derived from viewing exposure, as well as a predetermined value. Alternately, it could be based on advertising revenues generated. For example, in one embodiment the site may contain the author's content and advertising materials related or unrelated to the author's content. The advertiser pays fees to the publisher in order to be able to put advertising materials on the site. The fees may be determined a variety of ways, including fees based upon hits to the site generated from the advertising on the site. For example, a site may contain the author's content with a sale banner shown on the same site.

One embodiment of the process illustrated in **Figure 4**. At step 400, the author uploads content to the publisher. The publisher displays the content on the publisher's site with at least one banner advertisement from an advertiser, step 410. A consumer views the author's content on the publisher's site step 420. The publisher tracks sales of products by consumers associated with consumers viewing the author's content, step 430. Thus, it is concluded that the sales were due to the viewer's viewing the sales banners that are co-located with the author's content or alternately navigatable through the site containing the author's content. At step 440, the publisher charges the advertiser based on sales generated and tracked by the publisher. At step 450, the publisher compensates the author based upon the charges to the advertiser.

The invention has been described in conjunction with one embodiment. It is evident that numerous alternatives, modifications, variations and uses will be apparent to those skilled in the art in light of the forgoing description.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for sharing revenue between a publisher and an author comprising:
the author producing at least a portion of a content to a publisher (205);
the publisher publishing the content for access by a consumer (210); and
if the content is accessed by at least one consumer, the publisher providing to the author at least a portion of revenue determined from accesses (230).
2. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the content is selected from the group consisting of still images, moving images, music, text, games and applications.
3. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the revenue derived from the content is selected from the group and consisting of advertising, subscriptions, and output content.
4. The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising if the content is accessed by the consumer, providing the content to the consumer.
5. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein providing is selected from the group consisting of electronically transmitted and physically transporting.
6. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein accesses are determined by counting "hits" to a particular web site.

7. The method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising co-locating advertising content with the content.

8. The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein the revenue is determined from advertising revenues, the advertising revenues determined by a number of accesses by consumers.

9. The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein the revenue is determined from consumer purchases made due to the advertising content.

10. A publishing system comprising:
an input to receive author content (60);
a server (10) to provide the content to consumers on a consumer-accessible site;
a revenue-sharing subsystem (10) configured to provide the author with at least a portion of revenue determined from accesses by consumers.

11. The system as set forth in claim 10, further comprising if the content is accessed by the consumer , a delivery subsystem to provide the content to the consumer.

12. The system as set forth in claim 11, wherein the delivery subsystem is selected from the group consisting of a subsystem to electronically transmit and a subsystem to physically transport.

13. The system as set forth in claim 10, wherein the revenue sharing subsystem determines accesses by counting "hits" to a particular web site.

14. The system as set forth in claim 10, wherein the server further co-locates advertising content with the content.

15. The system as set forth in claim 14, wherein the revenue is determined from advertising revenues, the advertising revenues determined by a number of accesses by consumers.

16. The system as set forth in claim 14, wherein the revenue is determined from consumer purchases made due to the advertising content.

17. An on-line publishing system comprising:
an input (60) to receive author content; and
a server (10) to provide author content to consumers if the content is accessed by at least one consumer, the server providing to the author at least a portion of revenue determined from the accesses.

18. The system as set forth in claim 17, further comprising if the content is accessed by the consumer, the server initiating providing the content to the consumer.

19. The system as set forth in claim 17, wherein the server determines accesses by counting "hits" to a particular web site.

20. The system as set forth in claim 17, wherein the server further co-locates advertising content with the content.

21. The system as set forth in claim 20, wherein the revenue is determined from advertising revenues, the advertising revenues determined by a number of accesses by consumers.

22. The system as set forth in claim 20, wherein the revenue is determined from consumer purchases made due to the advertising content.

23. A computer readable medium comprising instructions, which when executed by a processing system, performs steps for sharing revenue between a publisher and an author, said method comprising:

the author producing at least a portion of a content to a publisher (205);

the publisher publishing the content for access by a consumer (210); and

if the content is accessed by at least one consumer, the publisher providing to the author at least a portion of revenue determined from accesses (230).

24. The computer readable medium as set forth in claim 23, wherein the content is selected from the group consisting of still images, moving images, music, text, games and applications.

25. The computer readable medium as set forth in claim 23, wherein the revenue derived from the content is selected from the group and consisting of advertising, subscriptions, and output content.

26. The computer readable medium as set forth in claim 23, further comprising instructions, which when executed, and if the content is accessed by the consumer, providing the content to the consumer.

27. The computer readable medium as set forth in claim 26, wherein providing is selected from the group consisting of electronically transmitting and physically transporting.

28. The computer readable medium as set forth in claim 26, wherein accesses are determined by counting "hits" to a particular web site.

29. The computer readable medium as set forth in claim 26, further comprising instructions, which when executed, co-locates advertising content with the content.

30. The computer readable medium as set forth in claim 29, wherein the revenue is determined from advertising revenues, the advertising revenues determined by a number of accesses by consumers.

31. The computer readable medium as set forth in claim 29, wherein the revenue is determined from consumer purchases made due to the advertising content.

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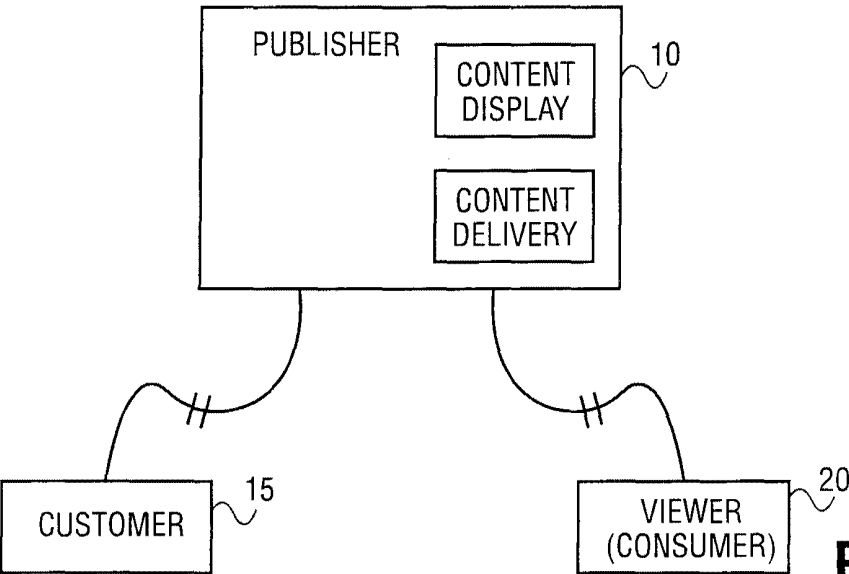


FIG. 1A

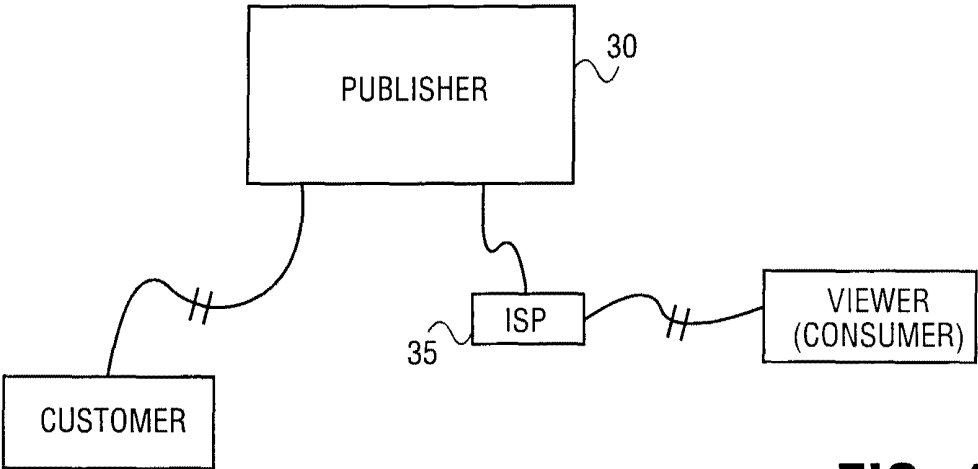


FIG. 1B

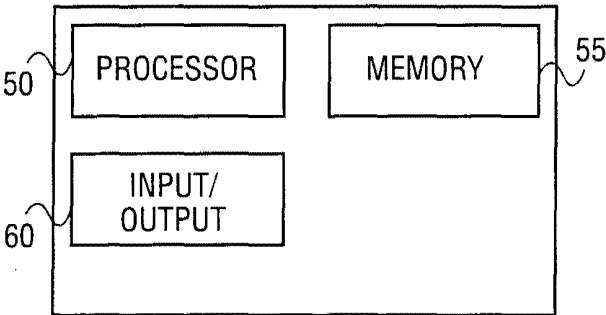
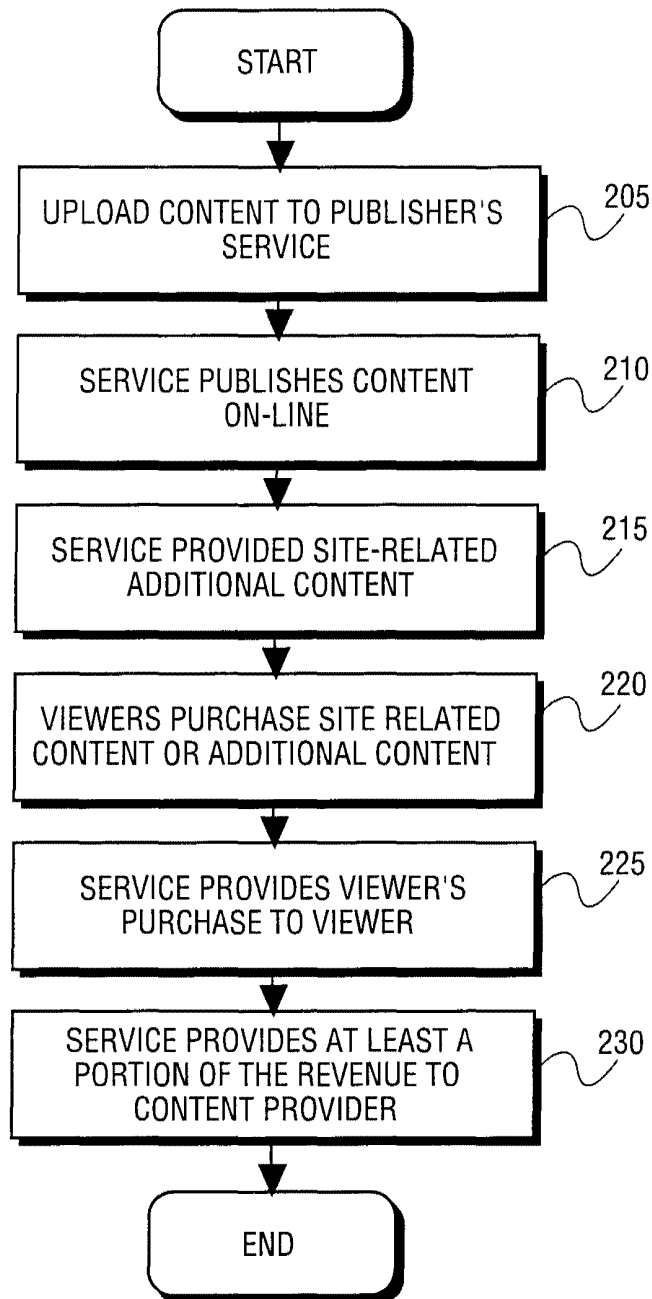
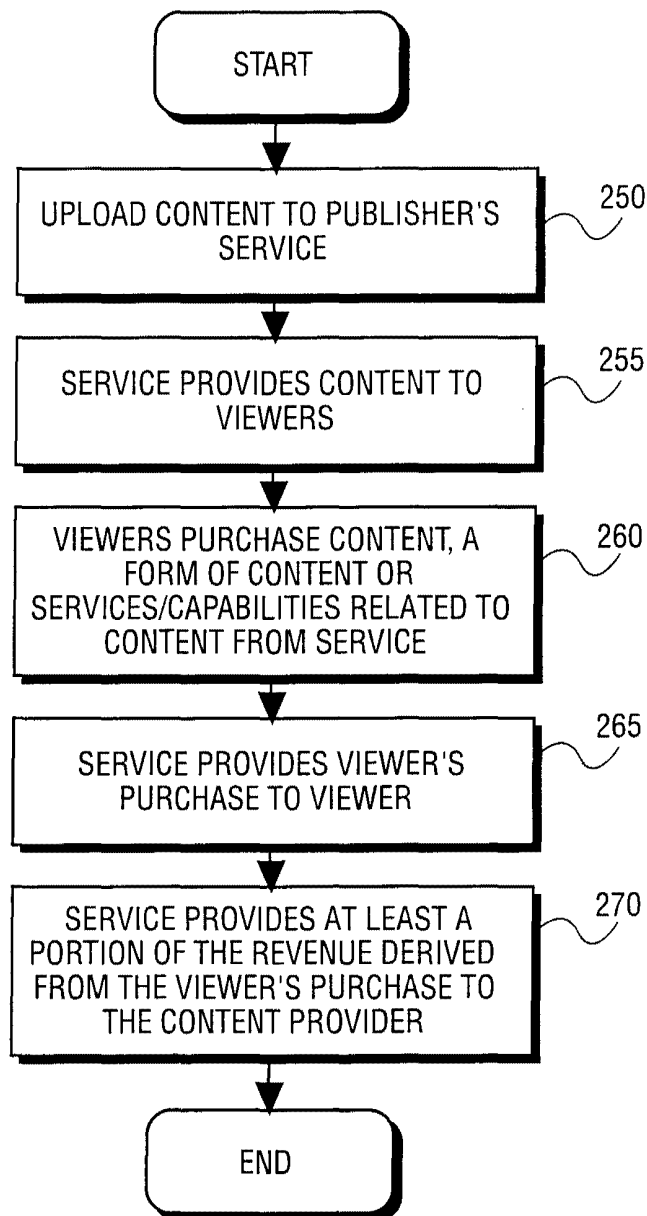


FIG. 1C

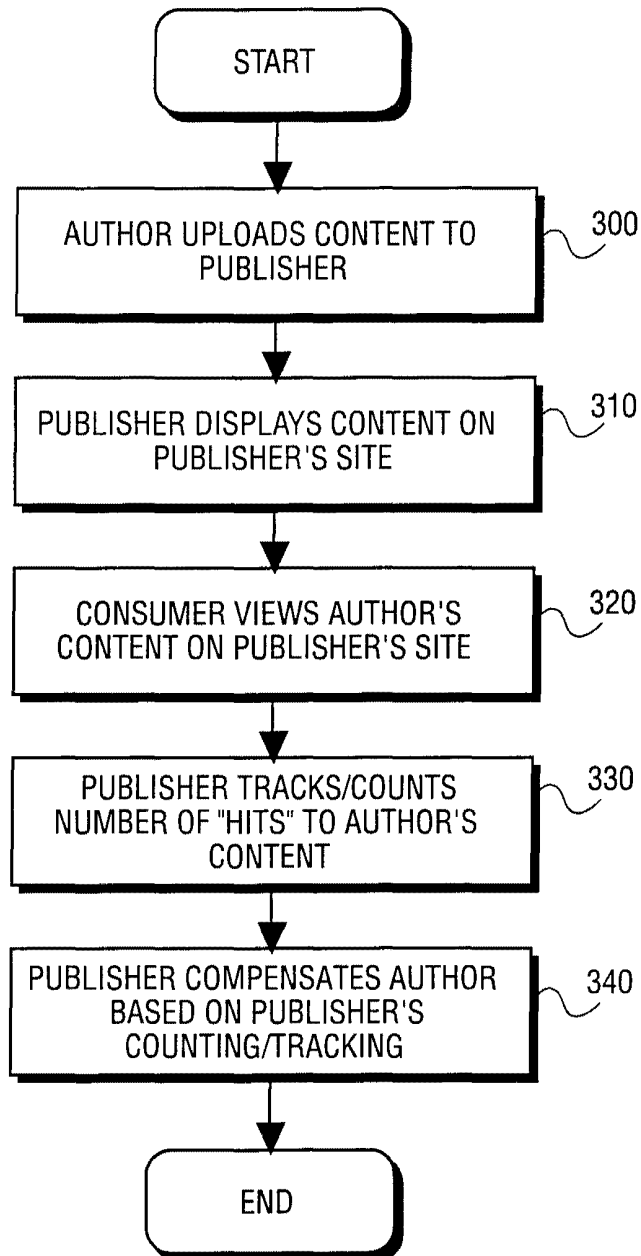
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**FIG. 2A**

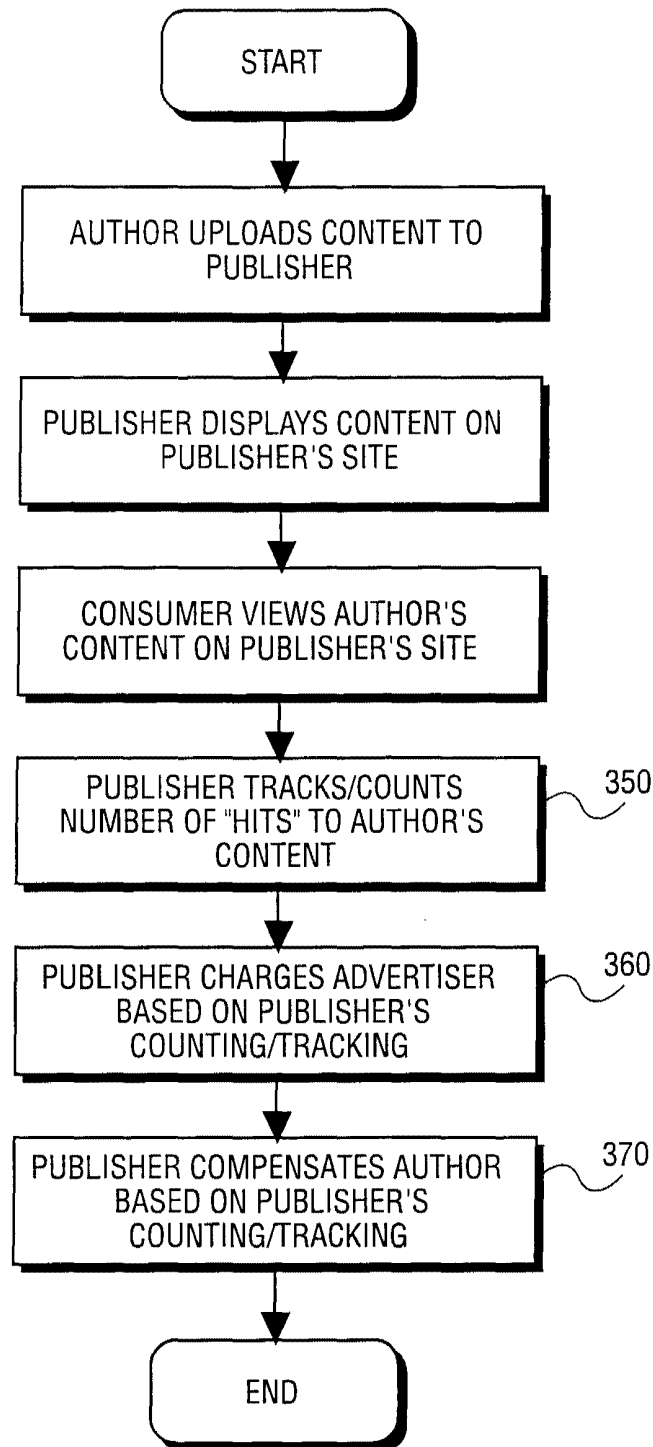
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**FIG. 2B**

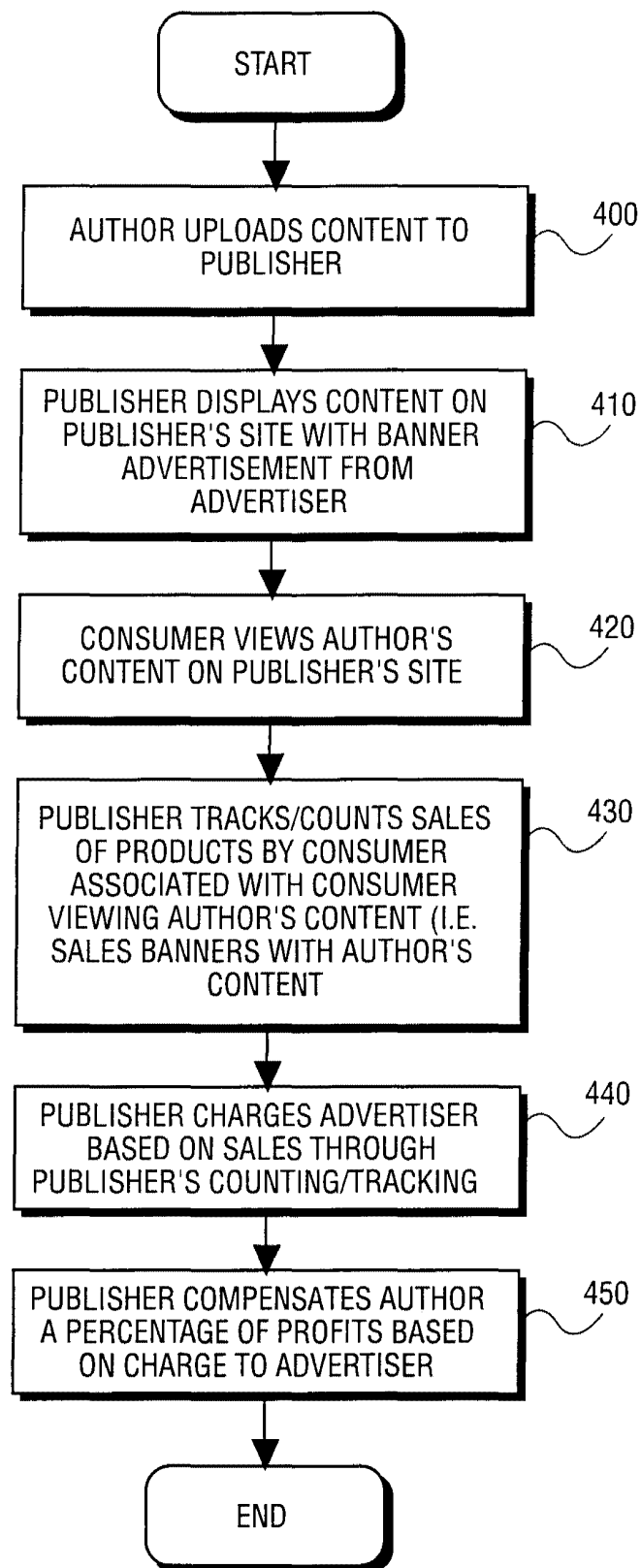
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**FIG. 3A**

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**FIG. 3B**

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**FIG. 4**

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US01/03223

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) : G06F 17/60

US CL : 705/1

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 705/1, 51, 52, 53, 54, 14, 26, 27

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 5,634,012 A (STEFIK et al) 27 May 1997 (27.05.1997), See entire document	1-31
Y	US 5,884,280 A (YOSHIOKA et al) 16 March 1999 (16.03.1999), See entire document	1-31
Y	US 5,948,061 A (MERRIMAN et al) 07 September 1999 (07.09.1999), See entire document	1-31
Y	US 5,949,875 A (WALKER et al) 07 September 1999 (07.09.1999), See entire document	1-31
Y	US 5,960,409 A (WEXLER) 28 September 1999 (28.09.1999), See entire document	1-31
Y	US 5,982,891 A (GINTER et al) 09 November 1999 (09.11.1999), See entire document	1-31
Y	US 5,991,740 A (MESSER) 23 November 1999 (23.11.1999), See entire document	1-31
Y	US 6,006,197 A (D'EON et al) 21 December 1999 (21.12.1999), See entire document	1-31
Y,P	US 6,041,316 A (ALLEN) 21 March 2000 (21.03.2000), See entire document	1-31
Y,P	US 6,076,077 A (SAITO) 13 June 2000 (13.06.2000), See entire document	1-31



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



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