



US005983227A

[54] DYNAMIC PAGE GENERATOR

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[52] U.S. Cl. **707/10; 707/104; 707/500;**
707/513; 707/517; 395/200.47; 705/1; 705/10

[58] Field of Search **707/10, 104, 200,**
707/500, 513, 517; 395/200.47, 200.48,
200.49; 705/1, 10

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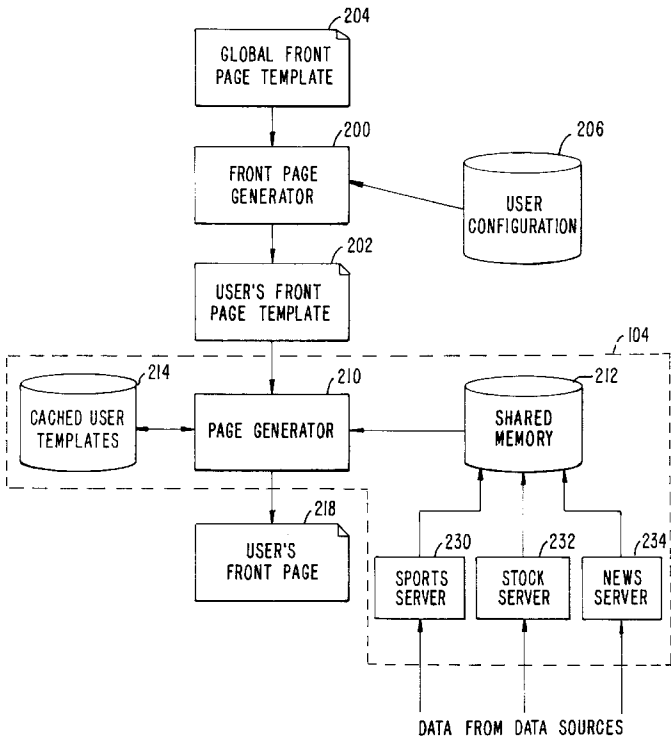
Primary Examiner—Paul R. Lintz

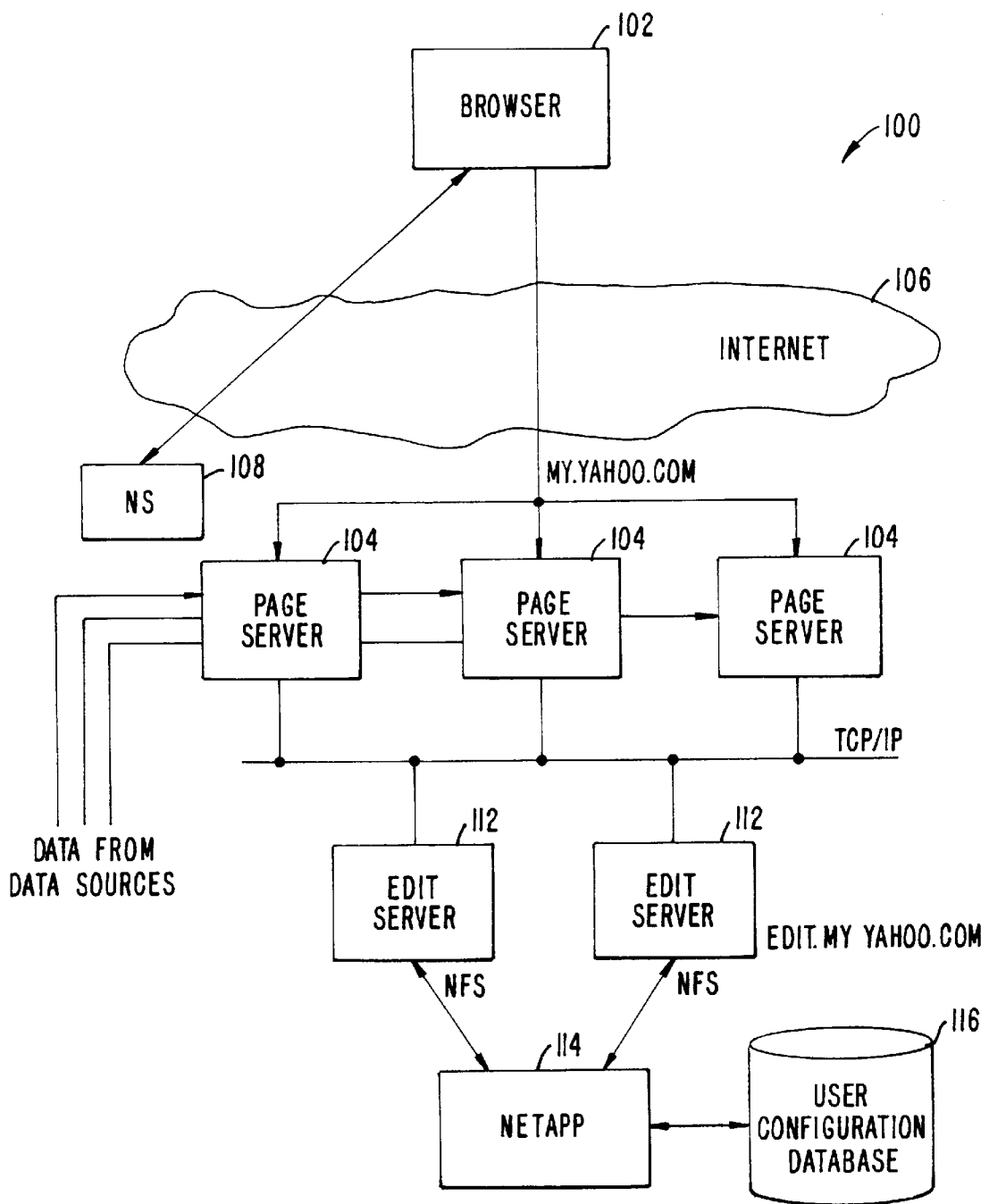
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Philip H. Albert; Townsend and Townsend and Crew LLP

[57] **ABSTRACT**

An custom page server is provided with user preferences organized into templates stored in compact data structures and the live data used to fill the templates stored local to the page server which is handing user requests for custom pages. One process is executed on the page server for every request. The process is provided a user template for the user making the request, where the user template is either generated from user preferences or retrieved from a cache of recently used user templates. Each user process is provided access to a large region of shared memory which contains all of the live data needed to fill any user template. Typically, the pages served are news pages, giving the user a custom selection of stock quotes, news headlines, sports scores, weather, and the like. With the live data stored in a local, shared memory, any custom page can be built within the page server, eliminating the need to make requests from other servers for portions of the live data. While the shared memory might include RAM (random access memory) and disk storage, in many computer systems, it is faster to store all the live data in RAM.

9 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets



**FIG. 1.**

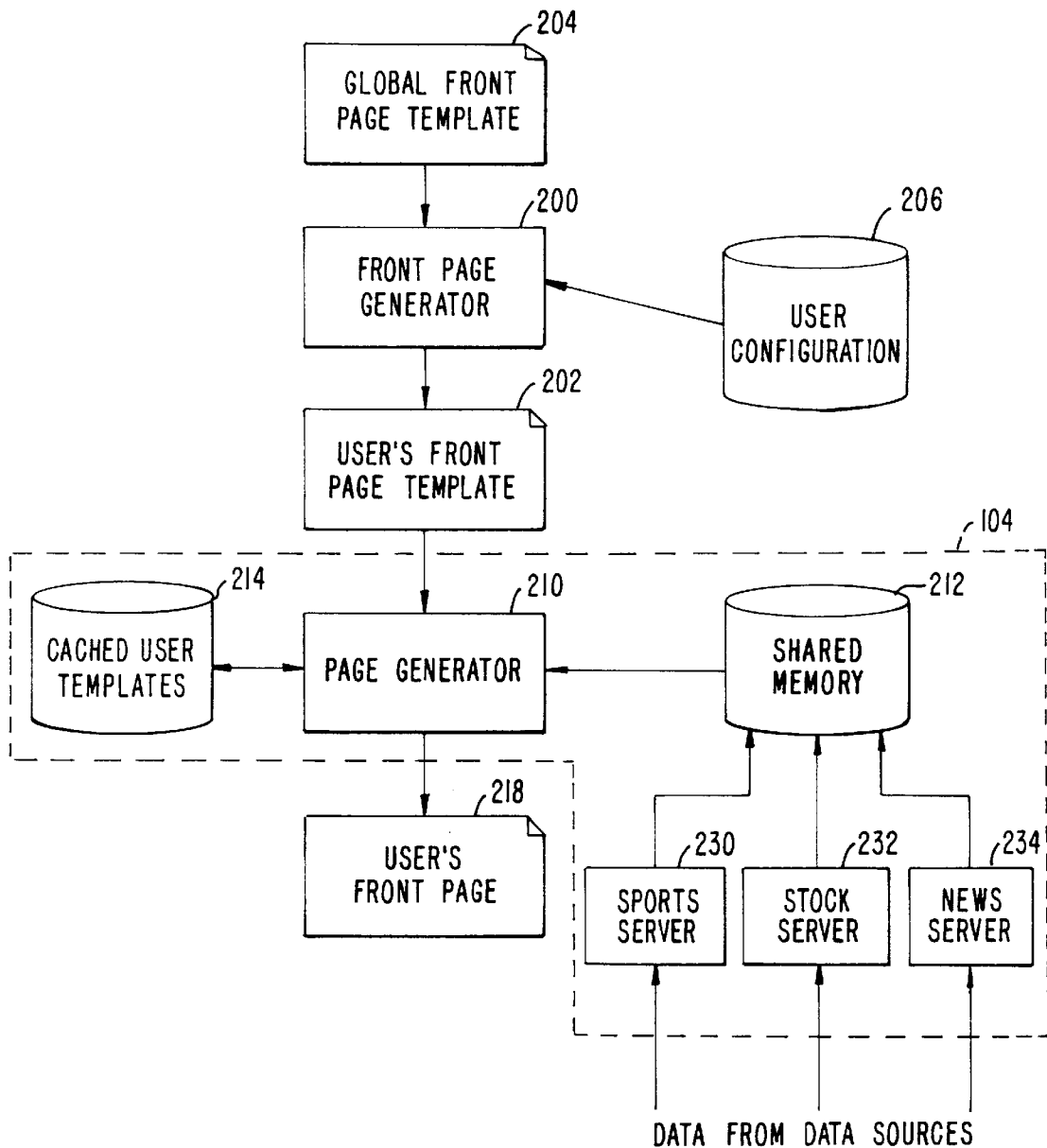


FIG. 2.

```
<html>
<head>
<title>My Yahoo! news summary for <!-- login --></title>
</head>
<body>

<center>
<!--banner:sum -->

<!-- ad -->
<!-- nav bar --> 302
</center>

<table border=1 cellpadding=4 cellspacing=0 width=100%>
<tr><td align=center valign=top width="1%">
<!-- leftside:nsum --> 302

<p></td>
<td align=center valign=top width="100%">
<!-- mode bar:"FRONT_PAGE" -->
<!-- channel:nsum --> 302

</td></tr>
</table>

<center>
<table border=1 cellpadding=2 cellspacing=0 width=100%>
<!-- motd:motn.html -->
</table>
</center>
<!-- search -->

<!-- copyright:sum -->

</body>
</html>
```

204

FIG. 3.

202

```
<!-- timezone:-8,PT 0 -->
<!-- ad:M,85,95035,T,* 792 -->
<!-- portfolio:Quotes,pf_1,1,^DJI,^NYA,^IXIC,^SPX,^XAX,YHOO,NSCP,IOM,NSCP,YHOO
2836 -->
<!--
404 { scoreboard:NCAAFSSC,NHLSAN,MLSSAN,NCAAFSSS,ALOAK,NBAGSW,NFLOAK,NCAAFCCD,NFLSFO
,NLSFO 3803 -->
<!-- weather:f,30901,uk_londo,94601,95101 4368 -->
<!--
mode_bar:"FRONT_PAGE",.hier=News+Summary%3aEdit&.done=http://my.yahoo.com/news
/summary2:3,rt,rw,z0000,mlb,re,vf 4597 -->
<!-- motd:us_motn.html 4696 -->
<html>
<head>
<title>My Yahoo! news summary for ash802</title>
</head>
<body>

...

</body>
</html>
```

FIG. 4.

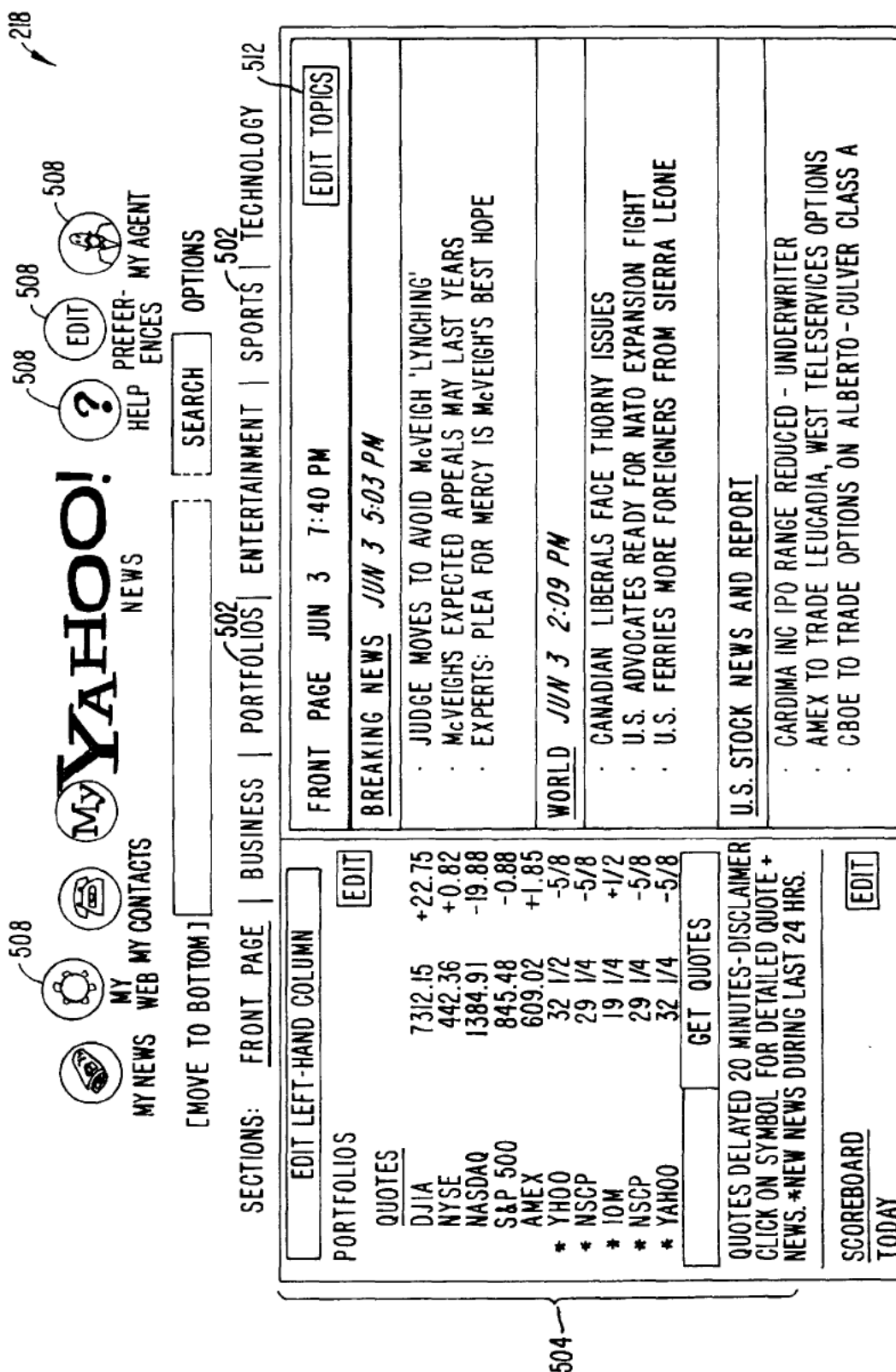


FIG. 5A.

AL

DETROIT

8

F

OAKLAND

9

F

NL

SAN FRANCISCO

9

F

FLORIDA

1

F

YESTERDAY

AL

DETROIT

8

F

OAKLAND

7

F

NL

SAN FRANCISCO

2

F

FLORIDA

4

F

WEATHER

EDIT

AUGUSTA, GA

63...78 F

LONDON, UK

50...73 F

OAKLAND, CA

59...70 F

SAN JOSE, CA

54...75 F

CLICK ON CITY FOR EXTENDED FORECAST

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL JUN 3 5:15PM

1997 BASEBALL FREE AGENT DRAFT FIRST ROUND SELECTIONS

MIKE PIAZZA LEADS BALLOTING IN NL ALL-STAR VOTING

NATIONAL LEAGUE ALL-STAR VOTING RESULTS

ENTERTAINMENT TOP STORIES JUN 3 6:35PM

CLINTON REFLECTS ON MUSIC

GIFFORD: MARRIAGE IS SOLID

ROCKABILITY LEGEND HOSPITALIZED

MOVIES + FILM JUN 3 10:13AM

FEATURE: NICOLAS CAGE ASKS, WHERE ARE THE HEROES?

NICK CASSAVETES UPDATES FATHER'S 'BOOKIE'

'LOST WORLD' PROPS UP SLOW BOX OFFICE

504

506

510

504

TIP CLICKING ON THE MY YAHOO! LOGO AT THE TOP WILL RELOAD AND UPDATE YOUR DEFAULT PAGE.

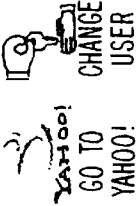
YAHOO! BACK WEB CHANNEL GUIDE

YAHOO! COMMUNITY RELATIONS

GET LOCAL · NEWS TICKER · MOTLEY FOOL

FIG. 5A.
FIG. 5B.

FIG. 5B.



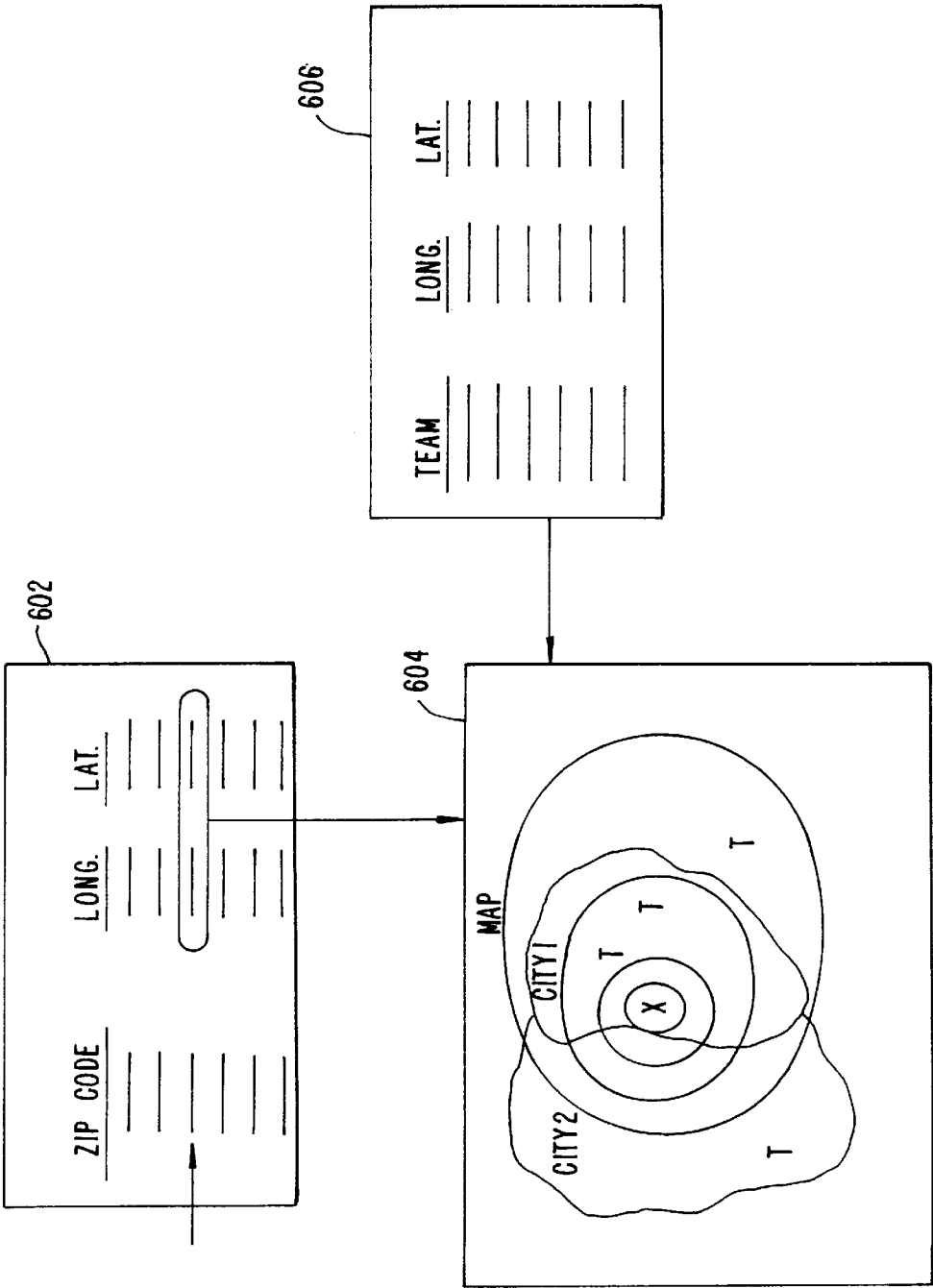


FIG. 6.

DYNAMIC PAGE GENERATOR

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to the field of customized information presentation. More specifically, one embodiment of the invention provides a custom page server which can quickly serve custom pages and is scalable to handle many users simultaneously.

Web servers for serving static documents ("Web pages") over the global Internet are known. While static documents are useful in many applications where the information to be presented to each requesting user is the same, some applications require customization to appeal to users. For example, in presenting news to users, custom pages present news which is more relevant to the requesting users than static pages. With static pages, a user will often have to scroll through many topics not of interest to that user to get to the information of interest. With custom pages, the information is filtered according to each user's interest.

Customizing a server response based on the requester is known, however known systems do not scale well. One method of serving custom pages is to execute a script, such as a CGI (Common Gateway Interface) script, or other program to collect the information necessary to generate the custom page. For example, if the custom page is a news page containing stock quotes, sports scores and weather, the script might poll a quote server to obtain the quotes of interest, poll a sports score server to obtain the scores of interest and poll a weather server to obtain the weather. With this information, the server generates the custom page and returns it to the user. This approach is useful where there are not many requesters and where the attendant delay is acceptable to users. While it may be the case that current users are willing to wait while pages load in their browsers, growing impatience with waiting will turn users away from such servers, especially as use increases.

One approach to avoiding long waits is to transfer the custom information in non-real-time, so that the information is stored local to the user as it arrives and is presented to the user on request. A disadvantage of such a system is that the networks used by the user become clogged with data continually streaming to the user and require large amounts of local storage. Another disadvantage is that the locally stored information will become out of date as the server receives new data.

From the above it is seen that an improved system for delivering custom pages is needed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An improved custom page server is provided by virtue of the present invention. In one embodiment, user preferences are organized into templates stored in compact data structures and the live data used to fill the templates is stored local to the page server which is handing user requests for custom pages. One process is executed on the page server for every request. The process is provided a user template for the user

making the request, where the user template is either generated from user preferences or retrieved from a cache of recently used user templates. Each user process is provided access to a large region of shared memory which contains all of the live data needed to fill any user template. Typically, the pages served are news pages, giving the user a custom selection of stock quotes, news headlines, sports scores, weather, and the like. With the live data stored in a local, shared memory, any custom page can be built within the page server, eliminating the need to make requests from other servers for portions of the live data. While the shared memory might include RAM (random access memory) and disk storage, in many computer systems, it is faster to store all the live data in RAM.

If the volume of requests becomes too great for one page server to handle, the system is easily scaled by adding additional page servers. Each page server maintains its own copy of the live data in its shared memory, and needs to maintain only the user templates for the requests it is handling, so no communication between page servers is needed.

A further understanding of the nature and advantages of the inventions herein may be realized by reference to the remaining portions of the specification and the attached drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a client-server architecture according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a schematic diagram showing how a user's custom page is generated from a user configuration, a global template and live data.

FIG. 3 is an illustration of a global front page template as might be used to generate user templates.

FIG. 4 is an illustration of a user template generated from the global front page template of FIG. 3 as might be used to generate a custom user page.

FIG. 5 is an illustration of a user page generated using the global template of FIG. 4.

FIG. 6 is an illustration of how intelligent defaults are selected.

Two appendices are included at the end of this description. Appendix A is a full listing of the user template shown in part in FIG. 4. Appendix B is an HTML source code listing of the HTML page used to generate the browser display shown in FIG. 5.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIG. 1 shows a client-server system 100 which is used to display custom news pages. A custom news page is displayed on a browser 102 which obtains the page from a page server 104 via Internet 106. While only one browser 102 is shown, a typical system will have many browsers connecting and disconnecting to the system.

The art of client-server systems using HTTP (HyperText Transport Protocol) messaging or other protocols is well known and will not be addressed in detail here. Essentially, browser 102 makes a request for a particular page by specifying a Uniform Resource Locator ("URL") for the page. In the example shown in FIG. 1, the request is directed to the URL "http://my.yahoo.com/". Normally, this URL is directed to the root directory of a machine named my.yahoo.com. As is the convention in Internet communications, browser 102 submits the domain portion ("my.yahoo.com")

of the URL to a name server, such as name server **108**, to determine an actual address for the page server **104**. Name server **108** returns an IP (Internet Protocol) address to browser **102** directing it to a page server **104**. Where multiple page servers **104** are used, name server **108** returns IP addresses in a round-robin fashion to distribute the load over multiple page servers. Alternatively, name server **108** might distribute the load more deterministic by tracking browser addresses and hashing the browser address to select a page server **104**. It is deterministic in that any given browser always accesses the same page server **104**. This allows for more efficient caching of user templates, since more cache hits are likely where a given browser always returns to one page server.

When a page server receives the URL for its root directory, it interprets that as a request for the user's custom summary page. The user is determined not from the URL, but from a "cookie" provided by browser **102** with the URL. Cookies are strings of data stored by browsers and sent along with any request to a URL having a domain associated with the cookie.

Page servers **104** obtain the live data from many disparate sources and reformat the data into a form suitable for use by the page server. Page servers **104** are coupled, via a network, to edit servers **112**, which are used when a user changes his or her user template. The user templates are stored in a user configuration database **116** and are stored and provided to edit servers by a network appliance **114** written for this purpose. Network appliance **114** is a process tuned to quickly locate files in large directories (N400 files/directory) and return them to the edit servers or page servers. One embodiment of network appliance **114** is the F330 fault-tolerant scalable server supplied by Network Appliance, of Mountain View, Calif.

In a specific embodiment, page servers **104** are micro-computers running the Unix® operating system with 64 to 128 megabytes of shared memory, page servers **104** and edit servers **112** are coupled using TCP/IP (Transport Control Protocol/Internet Protocol) and the user configuration database **116** is a Unix file structure which stores each user configuration in a text file. The particular file used by a user is a combination of the user's user name and a hash result, to allow for quick access when many user configurations are stored. For example, the user configuration for summary "front" page for a user "ash802" might be stored at /de/13/y.ash802, where "de" and "13" are hash results of a hash of the user name "ash802".

FIG. 2 shows in more detail the generation of a custom page for a user, using a front page generator **200** and page server **104**. Front page generator **200** generates a user template **202** from a global front page template **204** and a user configuration record **206**. FIG. 3 shows an example of a global front page template. User configuration record **206** is a record selected from user configuration database **116**. The record might have been obtained from a cache, but in the preferred embodiment, the records are not cached, the user templates are.

Page server **104** is shown comprising a page generator **210**, a shared memory **212** for storing live data and a cache **214** for caching user templates such as user template **202**. Page generator **210** generates a custom front page **218** from a user template and the live data stored in shared memory **212**. Although not shown, custom pages other than the front page can be generated in a similar fashion. Using user templates and a shared memory for the live data, page server **104** can quickly build custom pages in response to a user

request. Where the user template is cached, the page can be generated entirely within page server **104**.

Shared memory **212** is organized as a set of memory mapped files. With memory mapped files, the operating system maintains the data in permanent storage, but permanently caches the files in shared memory **212**. This allows for quick recovery should a page server crash, since all of the shared memory can simply be reloaded from the permanent storage. This is a great feature from a user convenience standpoint, since the user will never be faced with a situation where they have to wait for a server to rebuild a page for them by querying the various data providing servers, such as sports server **230**, stock server **232** and news server **234**. As should be apparent from this description and FIG. 2, page generator **210** can generate custom front page **218** much more quickly using shared memory **212** as compared with using servers **230**, **232**, **234** and page template **202**. One reason for this is that the time it takes to retrieve data from shared memory **212** does not appreciably increase relative to the bandwidth delay time when more data is retrieved. For example, if stock server **232** were queried for each individual stock quote, a page with fifty stock quotes might take ten times as long to generate as a page with five stock quotes.

One aspect of the present invention is the realization that every piece of information a person can request on a page is storable in a shared memory closely coupled to a page generator. For example, page server **104** shown in FIG. 2 can accommodate 65,000 different symbols for which quotes are provided. In one embodiment, all of the stock information for all 65,000 symbols is stored in a 13 to 14 megabytes section of the shared memory. Where shared memory **212** is a 64 MB or 128 MB memory, this leaves sufficient room for other data, such as news headlines, sport scores, and memory used by the operating system for each process running on page server **104**. In some embodiments, shared memory **212** is large enough to also accommodate more than just news headlines. For example, news summaries (as described further in connection with FIG. 5) can be stored in shared memory **212** for quick access.

As shown in FIG. 2, the user's front page template **202** does not need to be generated each time, but rather is stored in cache **214**. In a preferred embodiment, user templates are stored in cache **214** for long enough to be reused. Some users might choose to access their front page only infrequently, while others might choose to access their front page hourly. Since the pages are customized and dynamic, the user would see different information each time, but the same user template would be used each time. Of course, when the user edits his or her template, any cached copy of a user template is flushed. A garbage-collection process may also flush the cache of user pages which have been inactive for several days. In one implementation, cache **214** would accommodate 60,000 to 70,000 user templates. Where a particular page server is assigned on a random round robin basis, multiple page servers may cache their own copy of a given user template, but where a user is directed always to a particular server (except in the case where the particular server fails and a secondary server is used), that page server will be the only one which needs to cache that user's user template. Even where the round robin name server scheme is used, some browsers may cache IP addresses, even longer than the specified "time to live" variable associated with the IP address, in order to save the time required to obtain an IP address each time. With such a browser, the user is effectively directed to the same page server each time and the server side of the page serving system does not need to direct users to particular page servers. With newer browsers,

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however, the “time to live” variable is honored and new requests are made for IP addresses after the “time to live” has expired. In these cases, if the assignment of a user to a single page server is desired, name server **108** (see FIG. 1) will use the user name from the provided cookie or the user’s IP address to assign a page server based on a hash of the user name or IP address.

FIG. 3 is an illustration of global user template **204**. Global user template **204** is an HTML (HyperText Markup Language) document with additional tags as placeholders for live data. Several placeholders **302** are shown in FIG. 3.

FIG. 4 is an illustration of user template **202** as might be generated from global user template **204** (see FIG. 3) and a user configuration record **206**. A full listing of user template **202** is included herewith in Appendix A. User template **202** is determined by the user configuration and is independent of the live data, therefore it can be cached without needing to be updated, unless the user chooses to edit the configuration information. Preferably, the user templates are cached rather than the user configuration, to save a step and reduce the time to respond to a request for the page. Caching is more effective where the typical user makes several requests in a short time span and then doesn’t make any requests for a long period of time.

Essentially, user template **202** contains the information about the user which does not change until the user changes his or her preferences. Of course, the system operator could choose to make changes to how the system operates, thus requiring changes to the user preferences and user templates. User template **202** is shown comprising internal variables such as a time zone and demographic information. The demographic information, on the second line in FIG. 4 is used for selection of an advertisement which will be part of the custom page. In this example, the advertisement is targeted by the demographic information in the user template “M,85,95035,T,” indicating that a suitable ad should be targeted to a male user, age 85, located in zip code 95035, etc. As shown, the portfolio section contains selected stock symbols, the scoreboard section contains selected team symbols, and the weather section contains selected weather cities/zip codes.

The selections of stock quote symbols, team scores, and weather cities are set by the user. In a preferred embodiment, intelligent defaults are selected by the system prior to user selection, so that users unfamiliar with the customization process will nonetheless be able to view non empty custom pages. This is described in further detail below in connection with FIG. 6.

FIG. 5 is an illustration of a user front page **218** returned by page server **104**. User front page **218** as shown in FIG. 5 includes many elements, some of which are described here in further detail. User front page **218** is built according to a user template and live data. The user template specifies, for example which quotes are shown in the portfolio module, which cities are displayed in the weather module, etc. Each of the modules **504** can be customized by a user and moved about front page **218**. The modules **504** are also reusable, in that any customized module which appears on multiple pages can be edited from any one of those pages and the edits will be reflected on each of the pages. Other custom pages for the user can be viewed by selecting one of the page buttons **502** appearing below the header. Other pages and utilities can be selected using the buttons **508** which are part of the header.

In addition to all of the live data shown in FIG. 5 being stored in the shared memory, summaries from each of the

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major news topics can also be stored in the shared memory and viewed by pressing on the news topic header, such as news topic header **506**. As should be noted, the page generator can also intelligently display dates **510** customized for a particular user, using a time zone variable in the user template. This time zone variable is shown as the first line in user template **202** in FIG. 4. In addition to being able to modify each of the modules, in many cases the order of appearance of the modules is customizable. For example, the order of the various sections of user template **202** shown in FIG. 4 is not fixed.

The preference editing process can be initiated by the user pressing the appropriate edit button **512**. As explained above, once the editing process is complete, the user template is flushed from the cache and regenerated. Since each of the news stories is essentially a static page linked to a headline shown in the news section, these can simply be linked to static pages on a news server.

Referring now to FIG. 6, an illustration of intelligent defaulting for populating a user template, and consequently a user summary page. As part of a registration process, a user indicates, among other things, his or her zip code. This zip code is used to locate an approximate longitude and latitude for the user using a zip code lookup table **602**. This allows the user’s location to be located on a map **604**. Map **604** provides city boundaries and, with team location table **606**, also provides locations for various sports teams which can be selected in a sports module. In selecting a default predetermined number of cities and sports teams for inclusion as initial selections for a particular user, a circle is drawn around the user and increased in diameter until the circle envelopes a suitable predetermined number of cities and sports teams. In this way, each user is guaranteed a default number of nearby teams and cities for sports and weather, respectively. While this assumes that the user is interested in only the teams nearest the user, the system can be arranged to provide intelligent defaults where geographic anomalies are known to exist. Geographic anomalies occur in communities which have more loyalty to distant teams than nearby teams, such as might occur when the distant team is much better than the nearby team or when the nearby team recently moved to a distant location. In any case, the user is allowed to customize his or her pages beginning with the intelligent defaults selected.

Other intelligent defaults can be provided in other contexts. For example, the header of user front page **218** includes a button **508** labelled “myweb” which, when pressed, would lead the user to a custom listing of web sites. The initial defaults for that custom listing of web sites might be generated based on the keywords of interest to that user or based on the news topics, sports teams or weather cities selected by the user.

The above description is illustrative and not restrictive. Many variations of the invention will become apparent to those of skill in the art upon review of this disclosure. The scope of the invention should, therefore, be determined not with reference to the above description, but instead should be determined with reference to the appended claims along with their full scope of equivalents.

Listing of a User Template

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APPENDIX A-continued

Listing of a User Template

```
src="http://www.yahoo.com/images/my/logout.gif" alt="Change
User"></a></td>
</tr>
</table>
</center>
<map name=logout>
<area coords="0,0,50,68" href="/my/?http://www.yahoo.com/">
<area coords="51,0,100,68"
href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/login?logout=1">
</map>

</body>
</html>
```

APPENDIX B

Listing of a User Page

```
<html>
<head>
<title>My Yahoo! news summary for ash802</title>
</head>
<body>

<center>
<map name="top"><area shape=rect coords="0,0,45,66"
href="/news/summary.html?v"><area shape=rect coords="45,0,90,66"
href="/internet/directory.html?v"><area shape=rect coords="90,0,135,66"
href="/contacts/white_pages.html?v"><area shape=rect coords="135,0,346,66"
href="/?myHome"><area shape=rect coords="346,0,389,66"
href="/help/news/summary.html"><area shape=rect coords="389,0,431,66"
href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/eval_profile"><area shape=rect
coords="431,0,477,66" href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/toflly">
</map>
<center><a href="/bin/top_menu"></a></center>
<font size="-5"><p><!-- SpaceID=0 noad -->

<font size="-5"><p></font>
<p>
<center><form action="http://search.my.yahoo.com/search/my"><font size="-2">[ <a
href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/set_attr?attr=sloc&value=b&.done=http://my.y
ahoo.com/news/summary.html?v">move to bottom</a> ] </font><input size=25 name=p>
<font size="-1">&nbsp;<input type=submit value=Search><input type=hidden name=n
value="25">&nbsp;<a href="http://search.my.yahoo.com/search/my/options"
>Options</a></font></form></center><p>
<center>
<table border=0 cellpadding=0 cellspacing=2>
<tr>
<td align=center><font color="#000000"><b>Sections:</b>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;</font></td>
<td align=center bgcolor="#dcdcdc"><font
color="#000000"><b>Front&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;Page</b></font></td>
<td>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;</td>
<td align=center><a href="/news/business/summary.html?v">Business</a></td>
<td>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;</td>
<td align=center><a href="/news/portfolio_summary.html?v">Portfolios</a></td>
<td>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;</td>
<td align=center><a href="/news/entertainment/summary.html?v">Entertainment</a></td>
<td>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;</td>
<td align=center><a href="/news/sports/summary.html?v">Sports</a></td>
<td>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;</td>
<td align=center><a href="/news/technology/summary.html?v">Technology</a></td>
</tr>
</table>
</center>
</center>

<table border=1 cellpadding=4 cellspacing=0 width="100%">
<tr><td align=center valign=top width="1%">
<a
href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/eval_left?mode=left_nsum&.done=http%3a%2f%2f
my%2eyahoo%2ecom%2fnews%2fsummary%2html%3fv"><img border=0
```

Listing of a User Page

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APPENDIX B-continued

Listing of a User Page

```
size=-1>2<br>4</font></td><td valign=top>&#160;</td><td valign=top><font size=-1><a href="http://sports.yahoo.com/nl/rcps/970602/sfofla.html">F</a></font></td></tr></table>

<hr size=0><table border=0 cellpadding=2 cellspacing=0 width="100%">
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<li><a href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603/news/stories/bombing_61.html">Judge Moves to Avoid McVeigh 'Lynching'</a>
<li><a href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603/news/stories/bombingappeals_1.html">McVeigh's Expected Appeals May Last Years</a>
<li><a href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603/news/stories/bombingpenalty_1.html">Experts: Plea for Mercy is McVeigh's Best Hope</a>
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<li><a href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603/international/stories/canada_6.html">Canadian Liberals Face Thorny Issues</a>
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APPENDIX B-continued

Listing of a User Page

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<li><a
href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603/international/stories/nato_10.html">U.
S. Advocates Ready for NATO Expansion Fight</a>
<li><a
href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603/international/stories/leone_11.html">U
.S. Ferries More Foreigners from Sierra Leone</a>
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News and Report</b></a>&nbsp;<i></i></td></tr>
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<li><a href="http://biz.yahoo.com/finance/97/06/03/crdm_y001_1.html">Cardima Inc
IPO range reduced - underwriter</a>
<li><a href="http://biz.yahoo.com/finance/97/06/03/luk_wtsc_1.html">AMEX to trade
Leucadia, West TeleServices options</a>
<li><a href="http://biz.yahoo.com/finance/97/06/03/acv_acva_1.html">CBOE to trade
options on Alberto-Culver Class A</a>
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<li><a href="http://sports.yahoo.com/mlb/fgns/970603/draftlist.html">1997 baseball
free agent draft first round selections</a>
<li><a href="http://sports.yahoo.com/nl/fgns/970603/nlstars.html">Mike Piazza
leads balloting in NL All-Star voting</a>
<li><a href="http://sports.yahoo.com/nl/fgns/970603/nlvotes.html">National League
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/entertainment/summary_1.html#headline_1">Clinton Reflects on Music </a>
<li><a href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603
/entertainment/summary_1.html#headline_2">Gifford: Marriage is Solid </a>
<li><a href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603
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/stories/film_cage_1.html">FEATURE: Nicolas Cage Asks, Where Are The Heroes? </a>
<li><a href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603/entertainment
/stories/film_cassavetes_1.html">Nick Cassavetes Updates Father's 'Bookie' </a>
<li><a href="http://www.yahoo.com/headlines/970603/entertainment
/stories/film_boxoffice_9.html">'Lost World' Props Up Slow Box Office </a>
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Yahoo! logo at the top will reload and update your default page.</font></td>
<td align=center width="28%" nowrap><font size="-1"><a
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Relations</a></td>
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APPENDIX B-continued

Listing of a User Page

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<td>&nbsp; &nbsp; &nbsp;</td>
<td align=left valign=bottom width="100%"><font size="-1"><i>Copyright &copy;
1994-1997 Yahoo! Inc. All rights reserved.</i><br>Portions copyright &copy; 1997
Reuters Ltd. All rights reserved.<br>
Portions copyright &copy; 1997 SportsTicker Enterprises LP. All rights
reserved. <br>
Portions copyright &copy; 1997 Weathernews Inc. All rights reserved.<br>
Portions copyright &copy; 1997 Business Wire. All rights reserved.<br>
Portions copyright &copy; 1997 PR Newswire. All rights reserved.<br>
Questions, comments, or suggestions? Send us <a
href="http://my.yahoo.com/feedback.html">feedback</a>.</font></td>
</tr>
</table>
</td>
<td>&nbsp; &nbsp; &nbsp;</td>
<td align=right><a href="/bin/logout_menu"></a></td>
</tr>
</table>
</center>
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<area coords="51,0,100,66" href="http://edit.my.yahoo.com/config/login?logout=1">
</map>

</body>
</html>
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What is claimed is:

1. A server system for serving a customized information page to a user at a browser on request, comprising:

- a database of user configurations;
- means for obtaining information from the user referencing a record in the database of user configurations, the record being a record for the user;
- means for generating a template based on the record for the user;
- a plurality of user processes, one process per user accessing the server system;
- a shared memory;
- a data structure within the shared memory for storing the dynamic information needed to generate the customized information page;
- response means for responding to a request with an information page containing dynamic information from the data structure formatted according to the template generated for the user making the request;
- configuration generating means for generating default user configurations based on user demographic information, including means for determining a default list of cities for a weather report and sports teams for sports reporting based on the user demographic information, wherein the means for determining the default list of cities and default lists of sports teams uses user postal code information;
- means for translating postal code information to user geographic position;
- means for comparing the user geographic position to geographic positions assigned to each city and sports team; and

means for determining a threshold distance from the user geographic position that is greater than or equal to a distance to a predetermined nonzero number of cities and a predetermined nonzero number of sports team geographic positions.

2. Using a page server, a method of providing real-time responses to user requests for customized pages, the method comprising the steps of:

- obtaining user preferences, wherein a user's user preferences indicate items of interest to that user;
- obtaining real-time information from information sources;
- storing the real-time information in a storage device;
- combining the user preferences for the user and a template to form a template program specific to the user;
- receiving, from a user and at the server, a user request for a customized page customized according to the user preferences;
- executing the template program specific to the user using the real-time information stored in the storage device as input to the template program to generate the customized page; and
- providing the user with the customized page, wherein the steps of executing and providing are performed in real-time response to receipt of the user request in the step of receiving and wherein the customized page includes at least one item of real-time information selected from the storage device.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the real-time information comprises stock quotes, sports scores and news headlines.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of storing the real-time information in a storage device is a step of storing

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the real-time information in a memory having a capacity to simultaneously contain all of the real-time information that could be required for execution of the template program.

5. The method of claim 2, wherein the server simultaneously handles more than one thousand user requests using a plurality of servers, the method further comprising a step of assigning a user request to one of the plurality of servers.

6. The method of claim 2, further comprising a step of template programs for users for whom user requests have been recently serviced.

7. The method of claim 2, further comprising a step of generating a default user configuration for a user based on demographic information of that user.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the step of generating a default user configuration comprises the steps of:

determining a default list of cities for a weather report based on user demographic information; and

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determining one or more sports teams for sports reporting based on user demographic information.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the steps of determining comprise the steps of:

obtaining user postal code information;
translating the postal code information to user geographic position;

comparing the user geographic position to geographic positions assigned to each city and sports team; and

determining a threshold distance from the user geographic position which is greater than or equal to a distance to a predetermined nonzero number of cities and a predetermined nonzero number of sports team geographic positions.

* * * * *