



US005877765A

United States Patent [19]
Dickman et al.

[11] Patent Number: 5,877,765
[45] Date of Patent: *Mar. 2, 1999

- [54] METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR DISPLAYING INTERNET SHORTCUT ICONS ON THE DESKTOP
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- [73] Assignee: Microsoft Corporation
- [*] Notice: This patent issued on a continued prosecution application filed under 37 CFR 1.53(d), and is subject to the twenty year patent term provisions of 35 U.S.C. 154(a)(2).
- [21] Appl. No.: 526,314
- [22] Filed: Sep. 11, 1995
- [51] Int. Cl.⁶ G06F 3/00
- [52] U.S. Cl. 345/349; 345/357; 345/329
- [58] Field of Search 395/326-358, 395/806-807, 762, 200.04, 200.03, 200.47, 200.48, 200.49; 345/326-356, 302; 701/501

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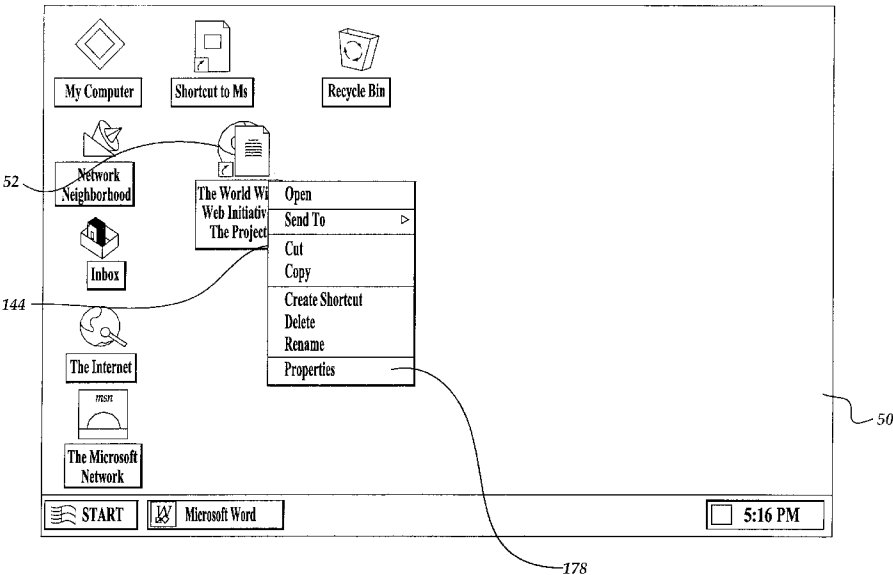
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Primary Examiner—John E. Breene
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Christensen, O'Connor, Johnson & Kindness PLLC

[57] ABSTRACT

A client computer has a facility for encapsulating location information, such as a uniform resource locator (URL), for a resource that is available on a server computer. The facility is especially well-adapted for use with Internet documents. The location information for such a resource is encapsulated into an object known as an Internet shortcut. The Internet shortcut appears to a user as an icon that may be used to gain access to the underlying resource. The Internet shortcut icon holds a link to a remote resource and will automatically activate the web browser when selected. The Internet shortcut icons may be implemented as objects that are visible on the desktop of the operating system. File operations such as copy, delete, and copy may be performed on the Internet shortcut icon through a context menu. In addition, Internet shortcuts may be transferred to E-mail, facsimile, floppy disk destinations through a context menu.

13 Claims, 32 Drawing Sheets



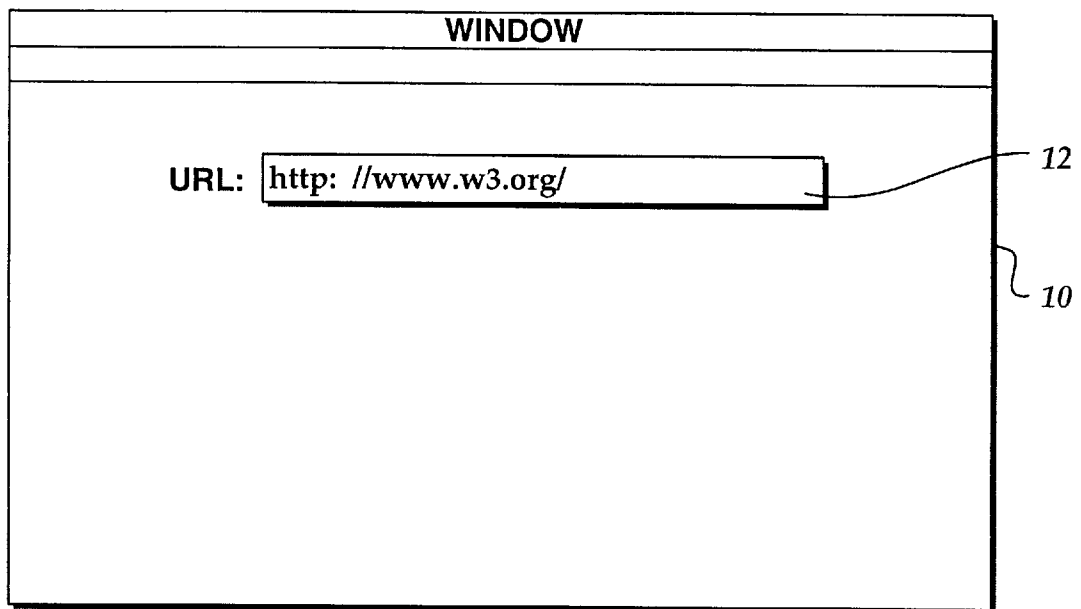


Figure 1A
(PRIOR ART)

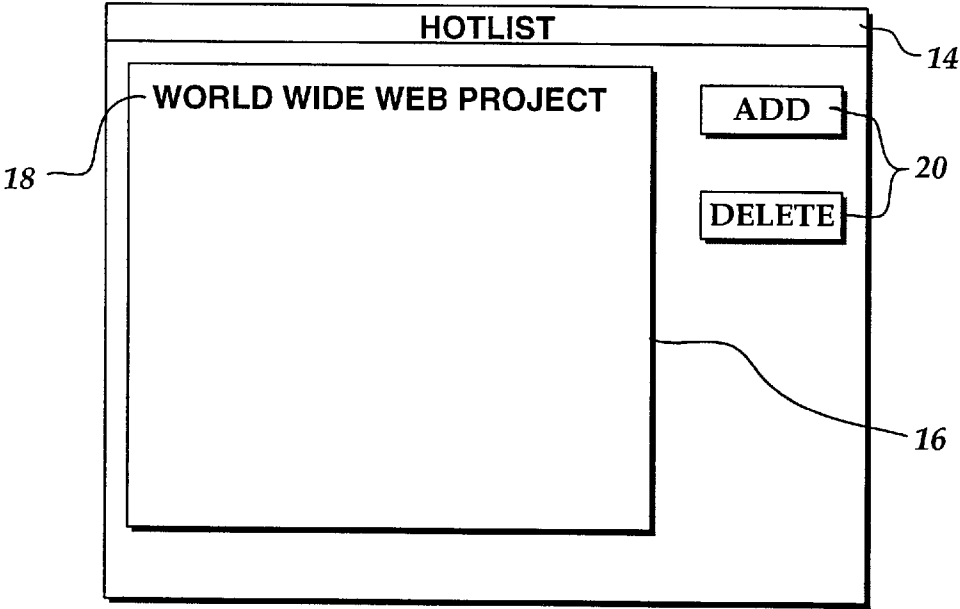
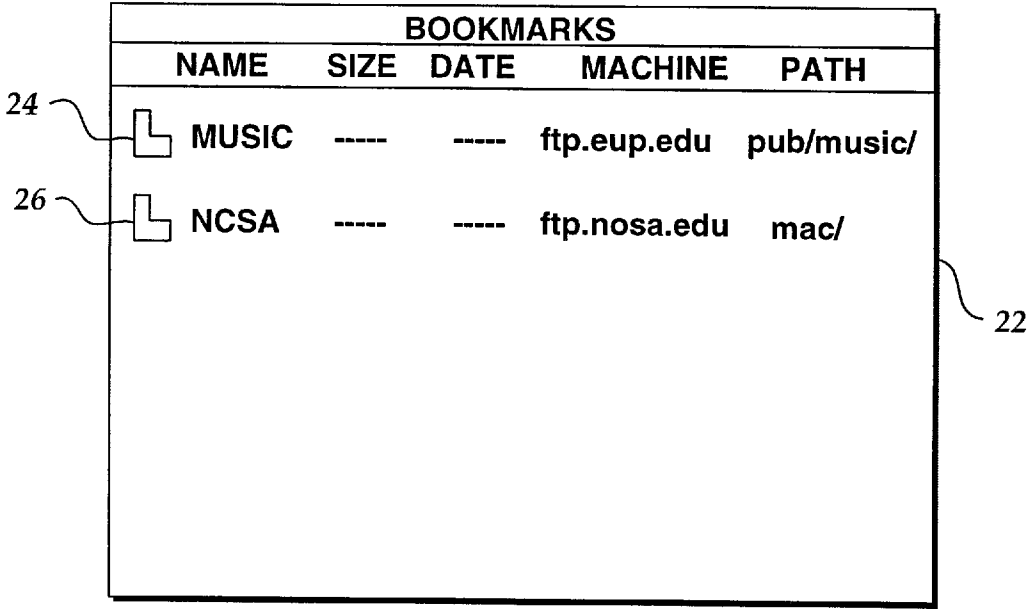


Figure 1B
(PRIOR ART)



BOOKMARKS				
NAME	SIZE	DATE	MACHINE	PATH
 MUSIC	----	----	ftp.eup.edu	pub/music/
 NCSA	----	----	ftp.nosa.edu	mac/

Figure 1C
(PRIOR ART)

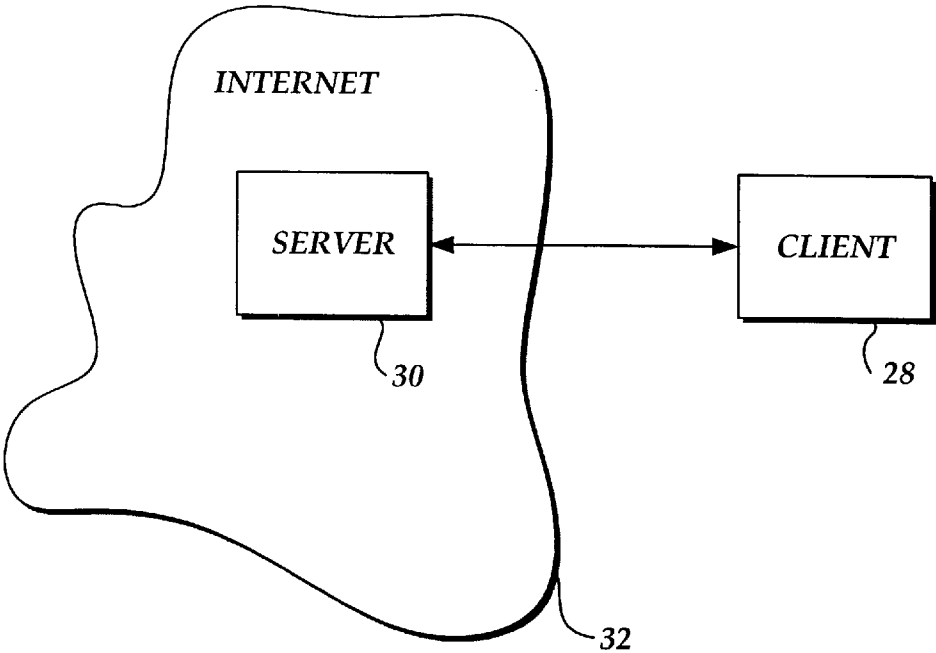


Figure 2

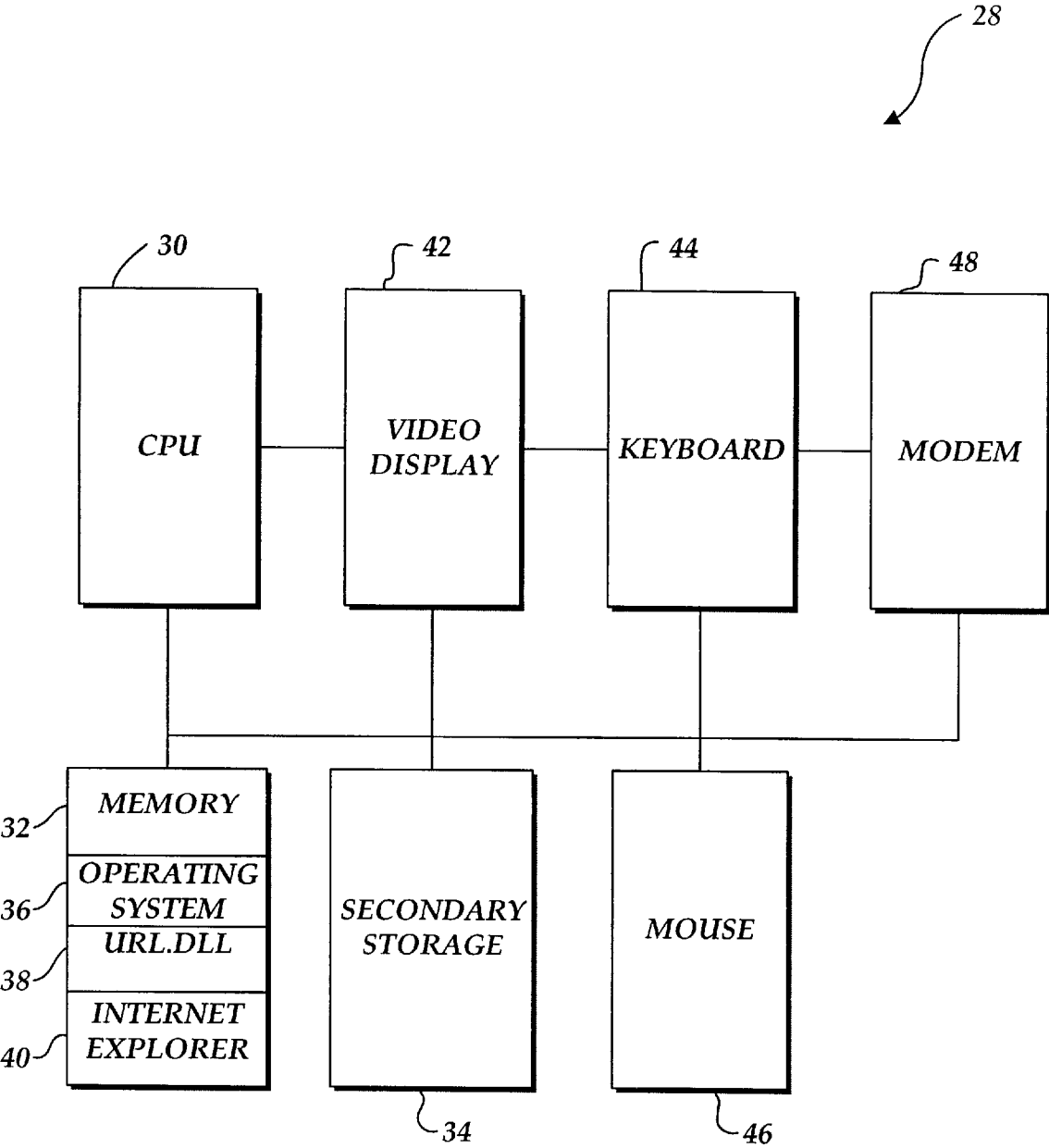


Figure 3

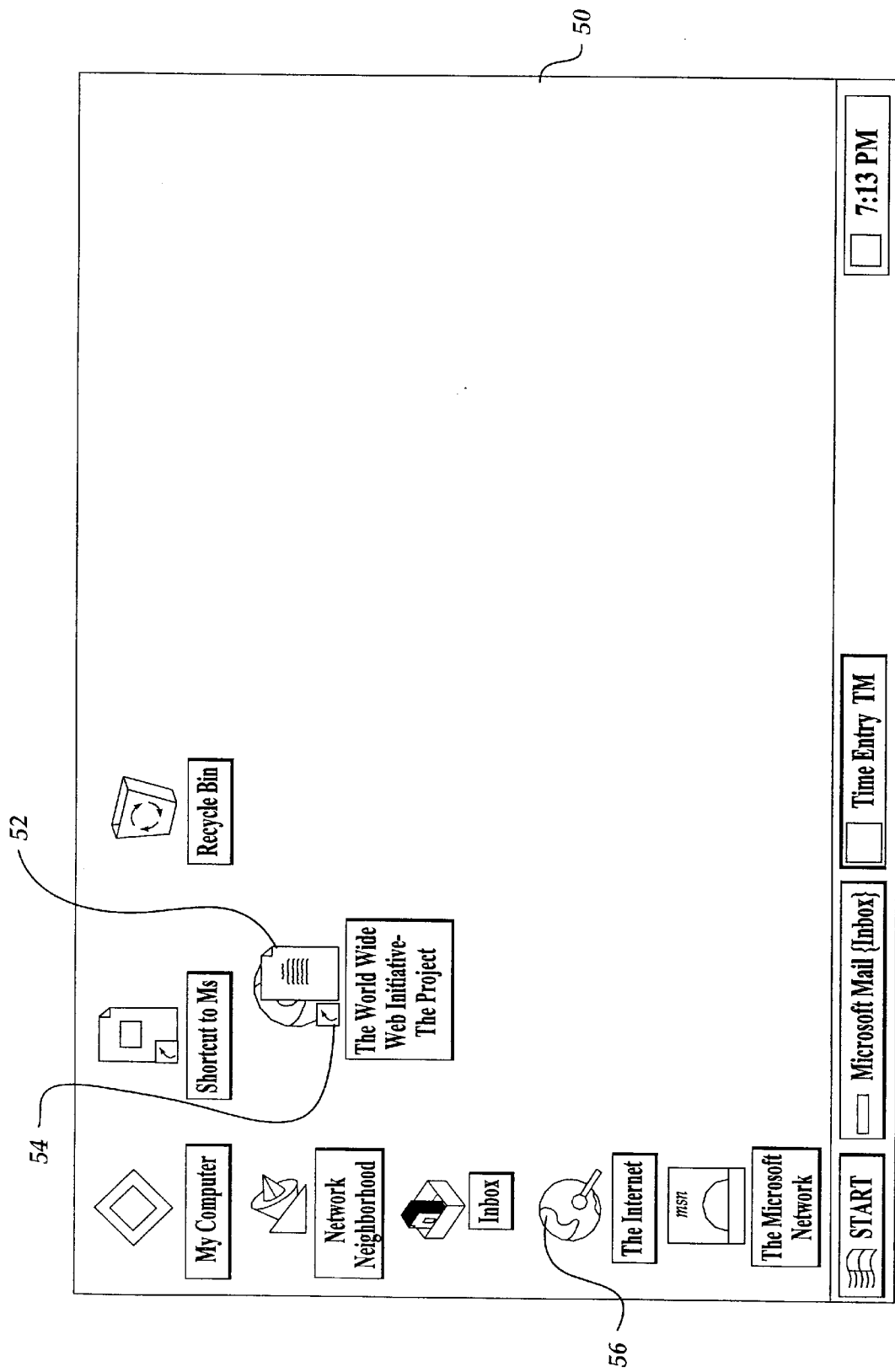


Figure 4

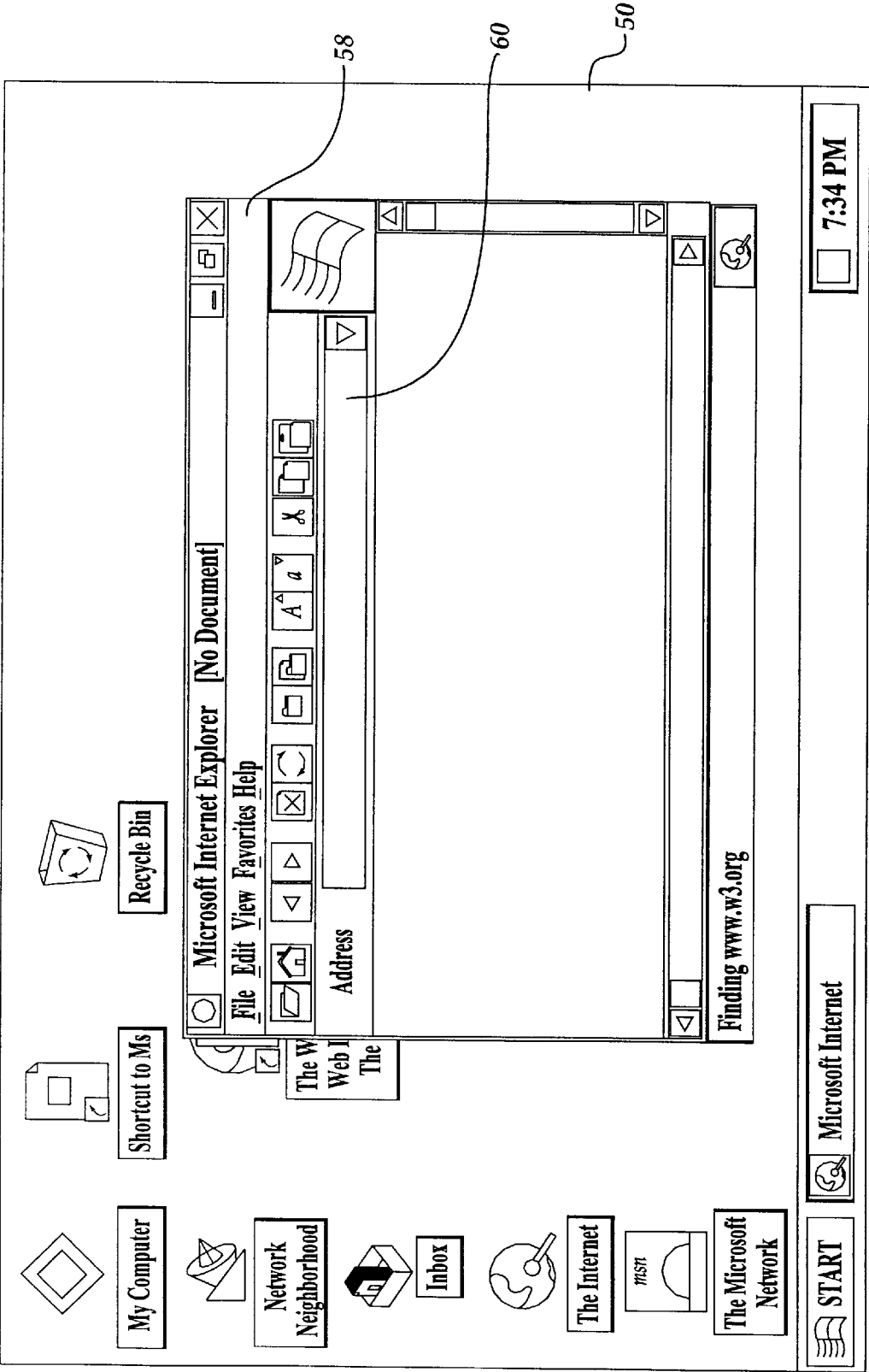


Figure 5

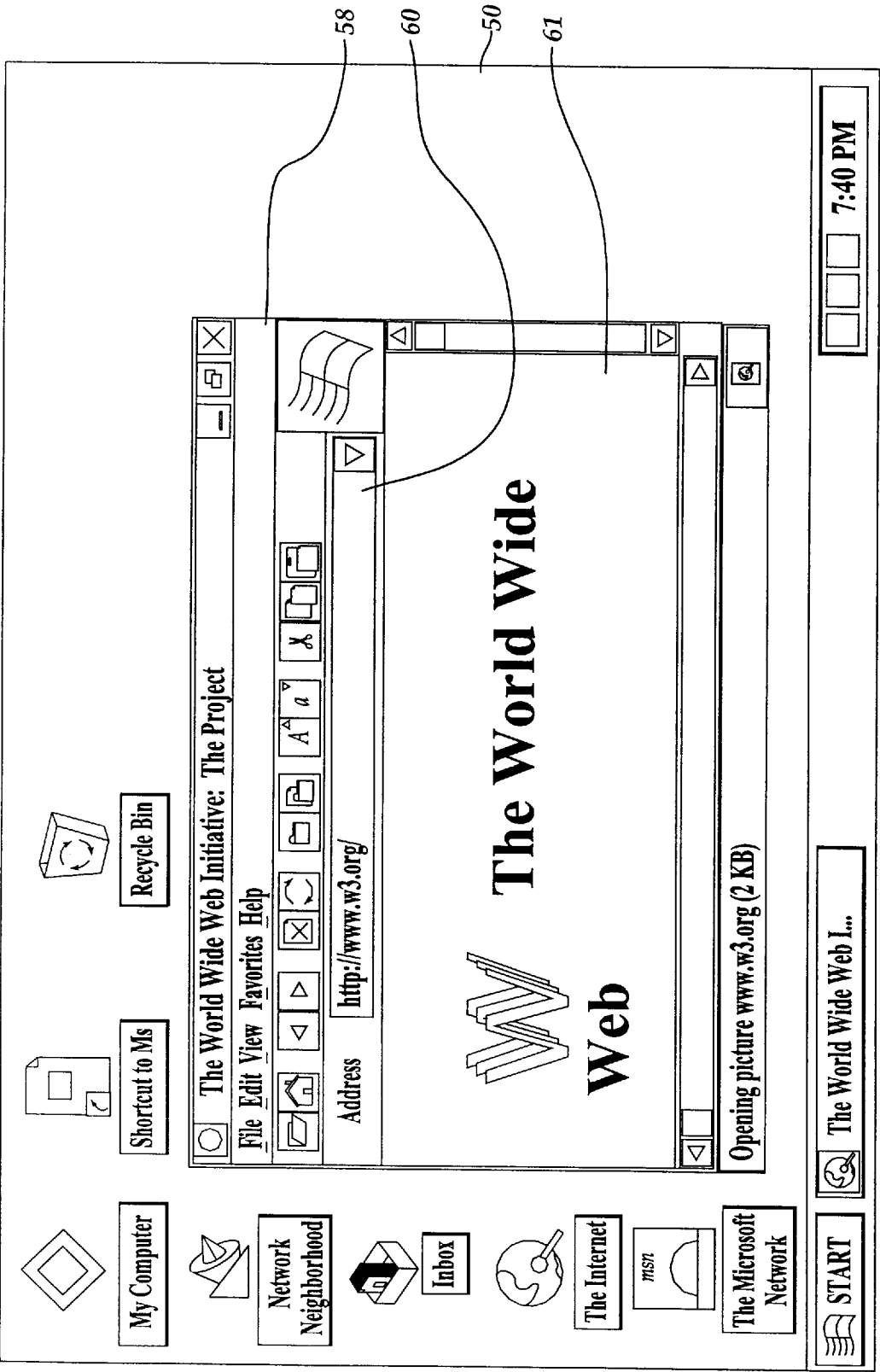


Figure 6

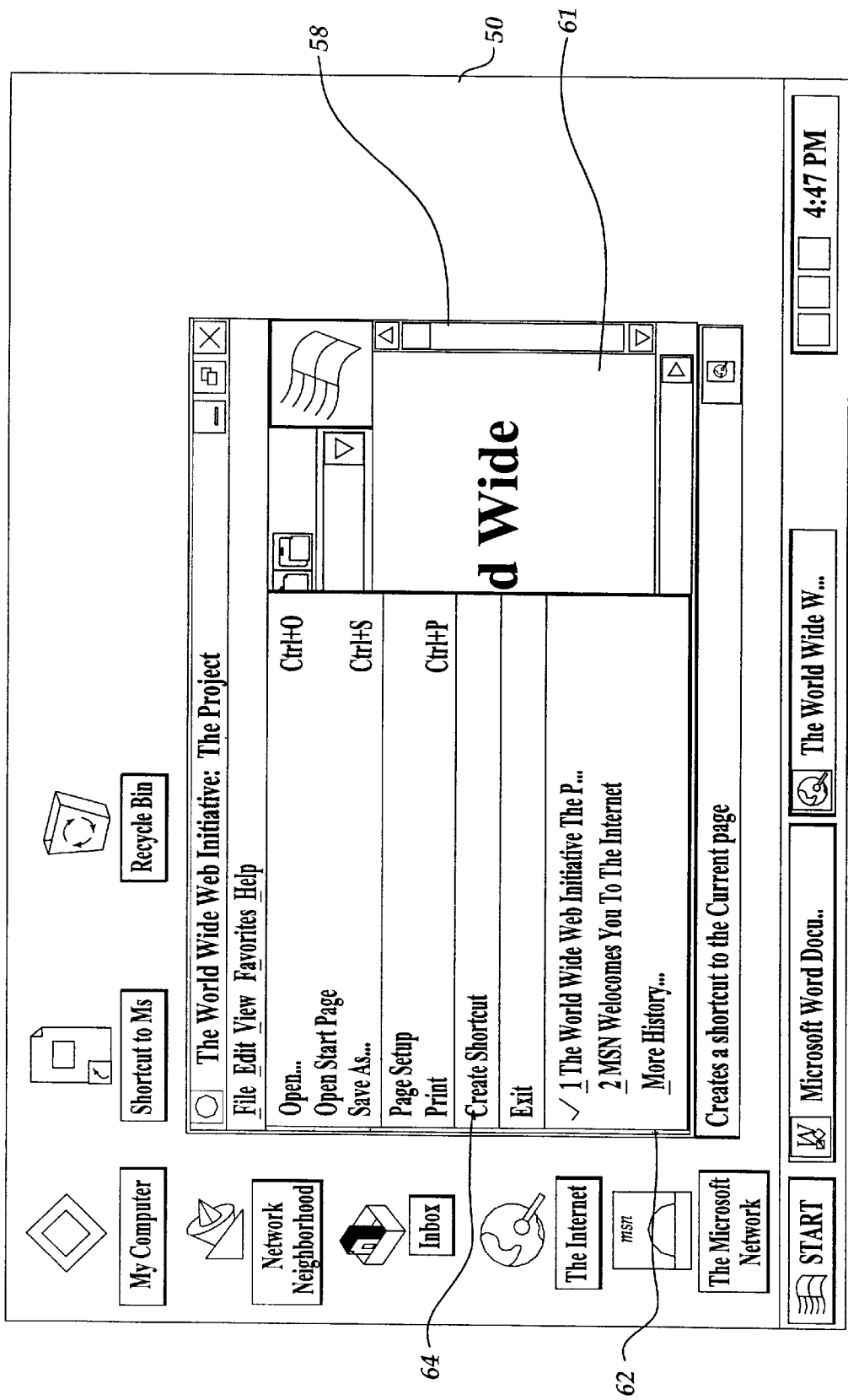


Figure 7

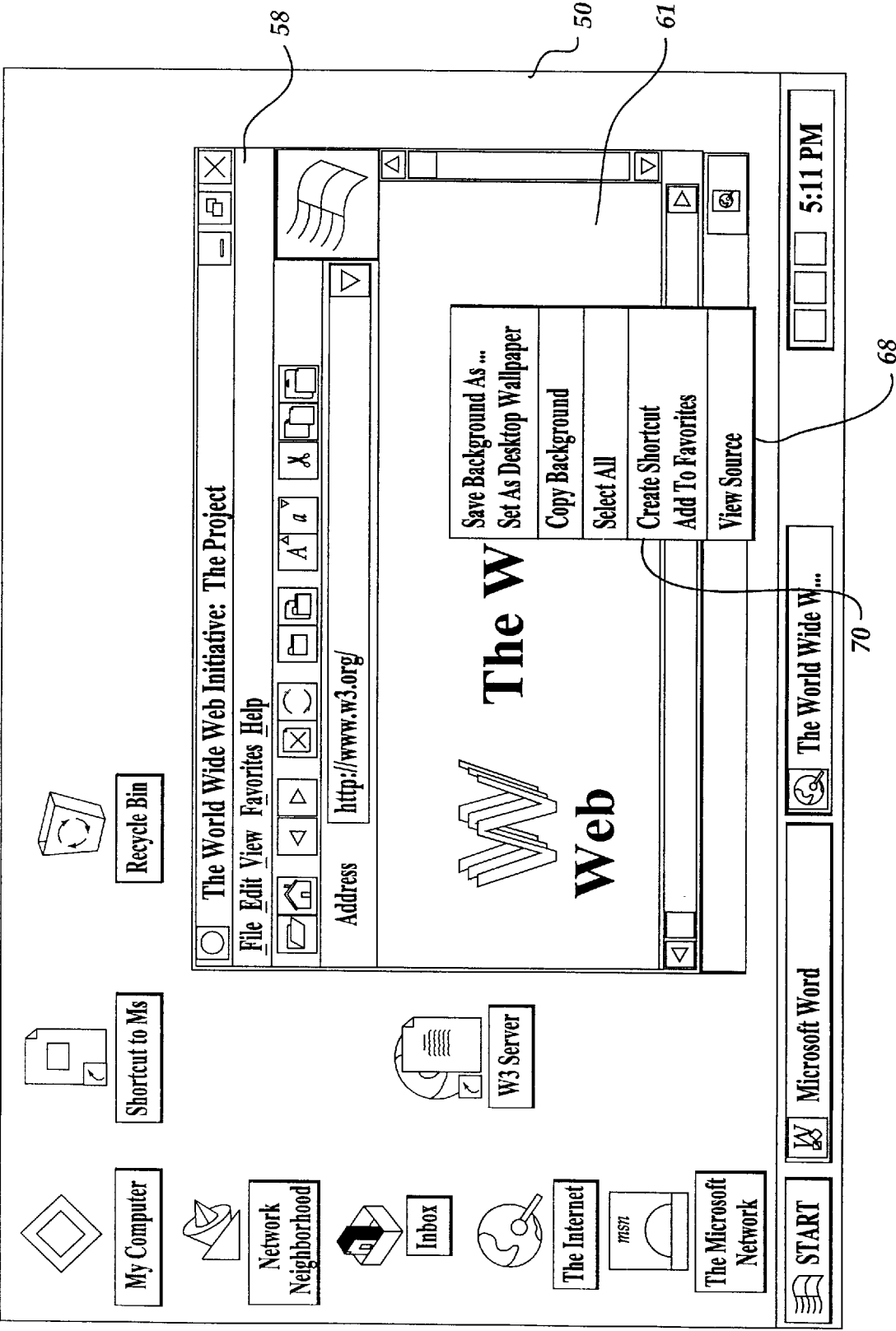


Figure 8

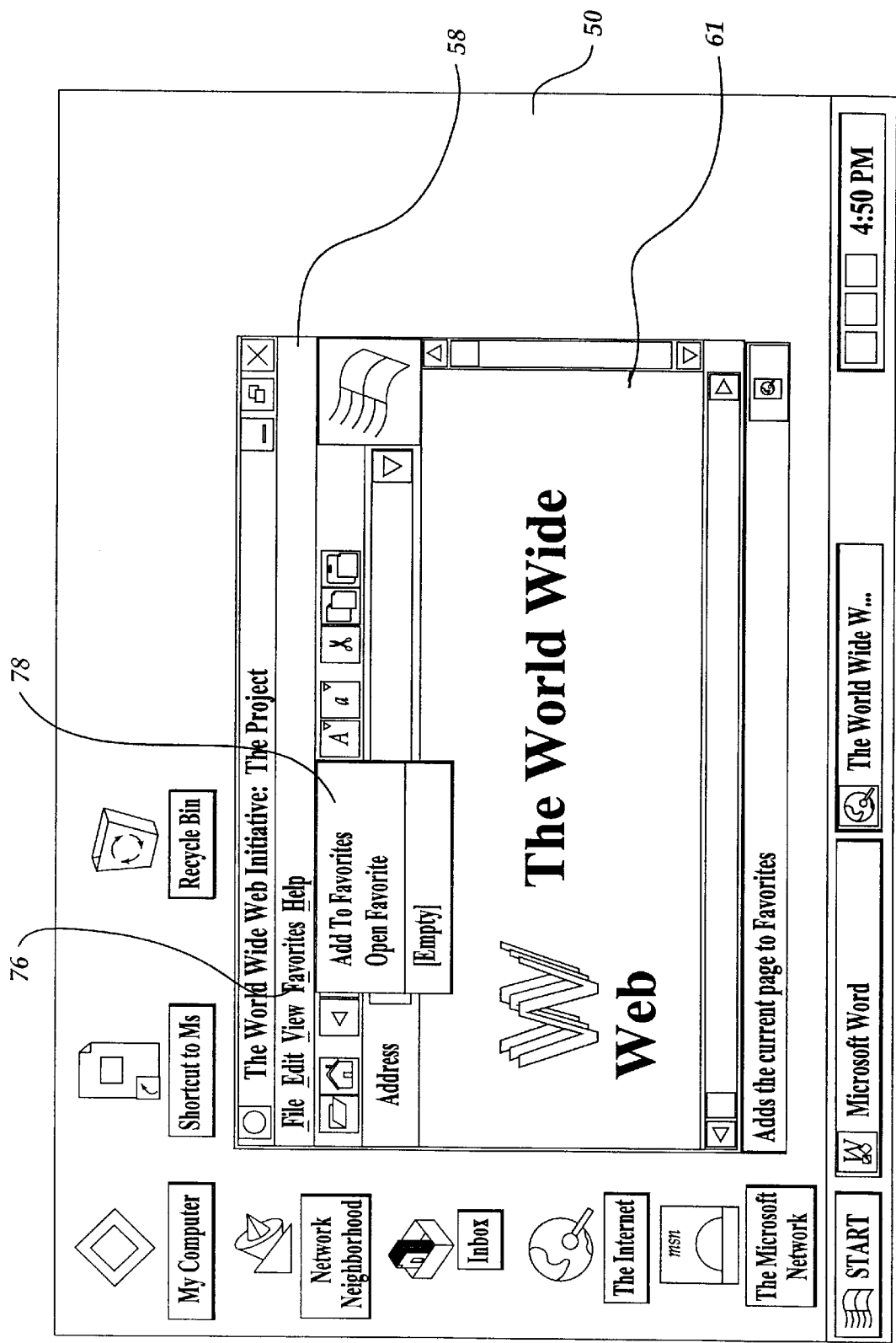


Figure 9A

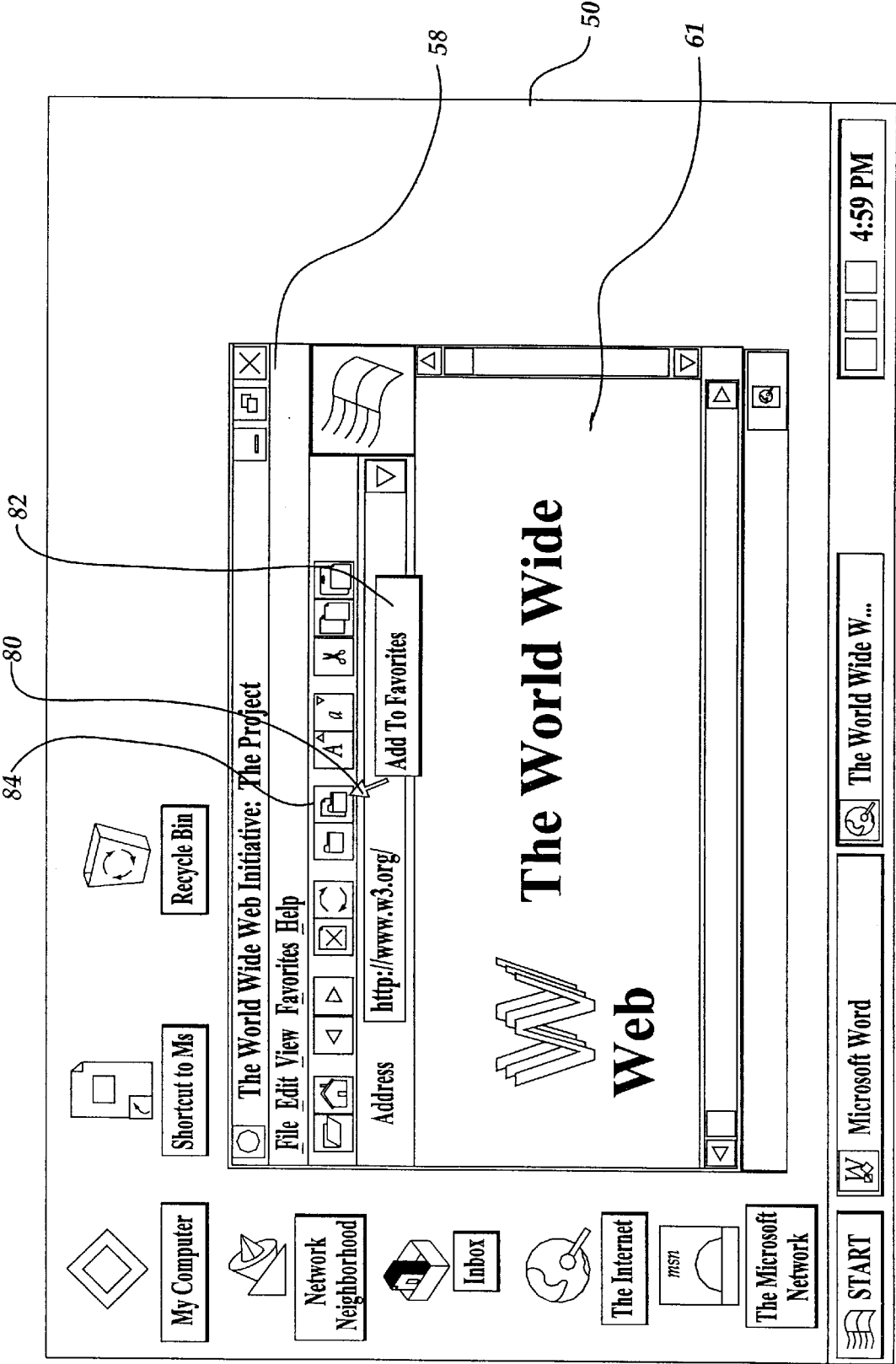


Figure 9B

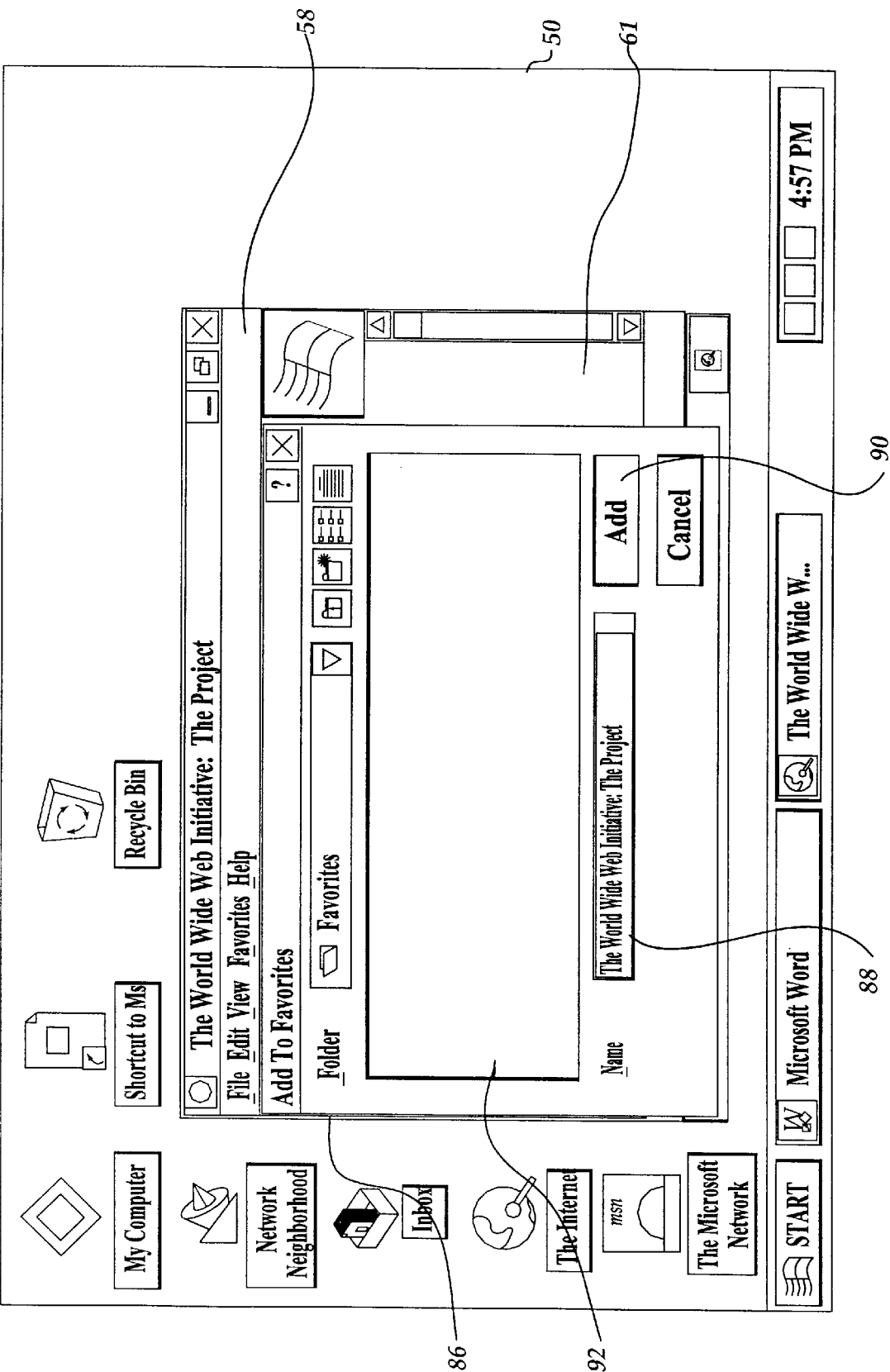


Figure 9C

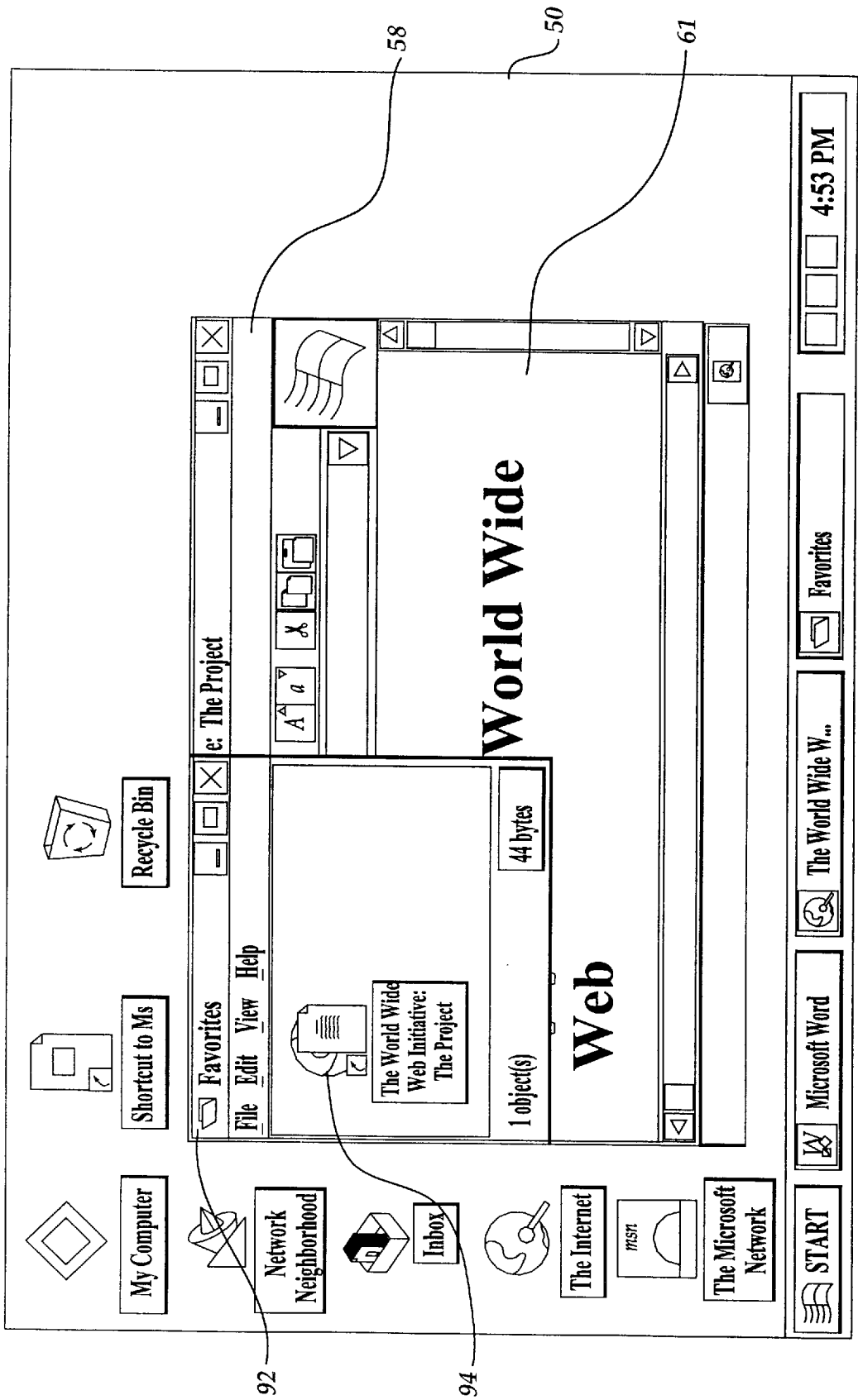
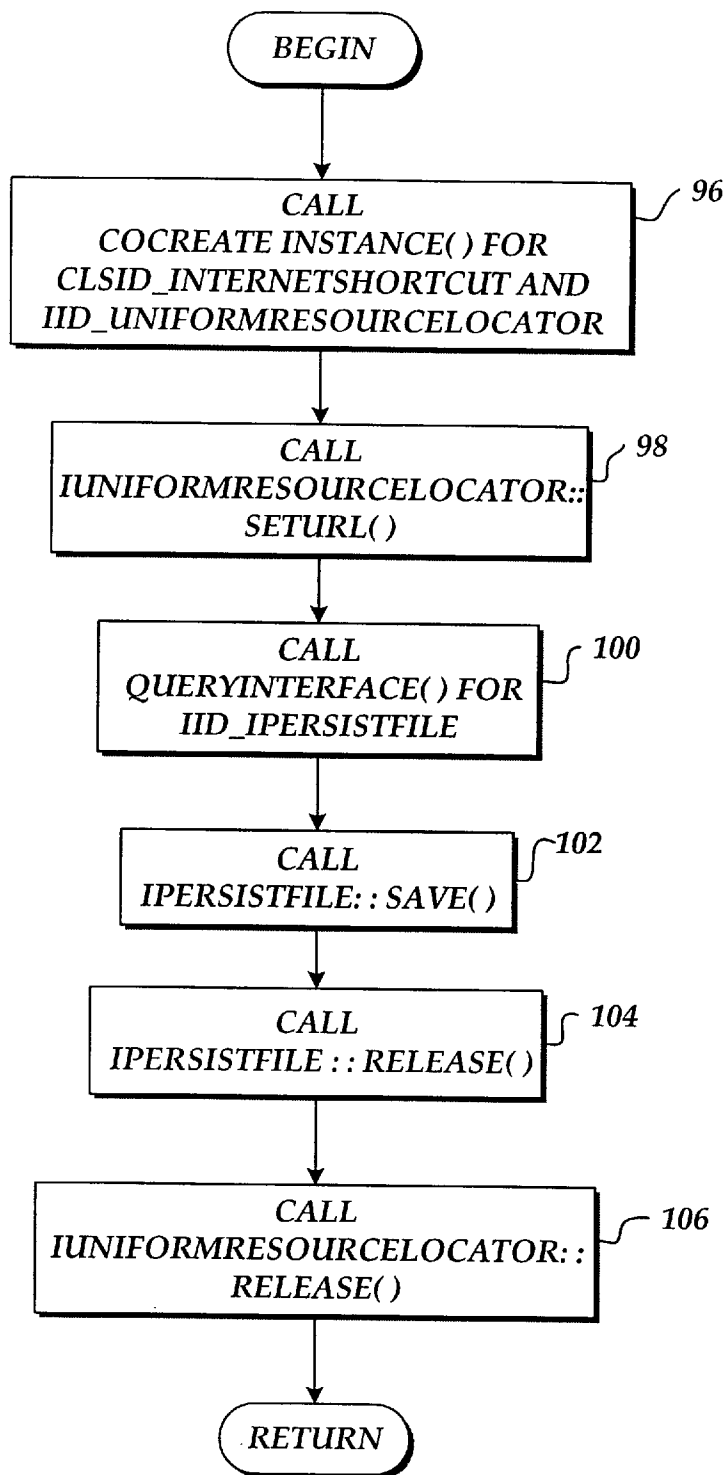


Figure 9D

*Figure 10*

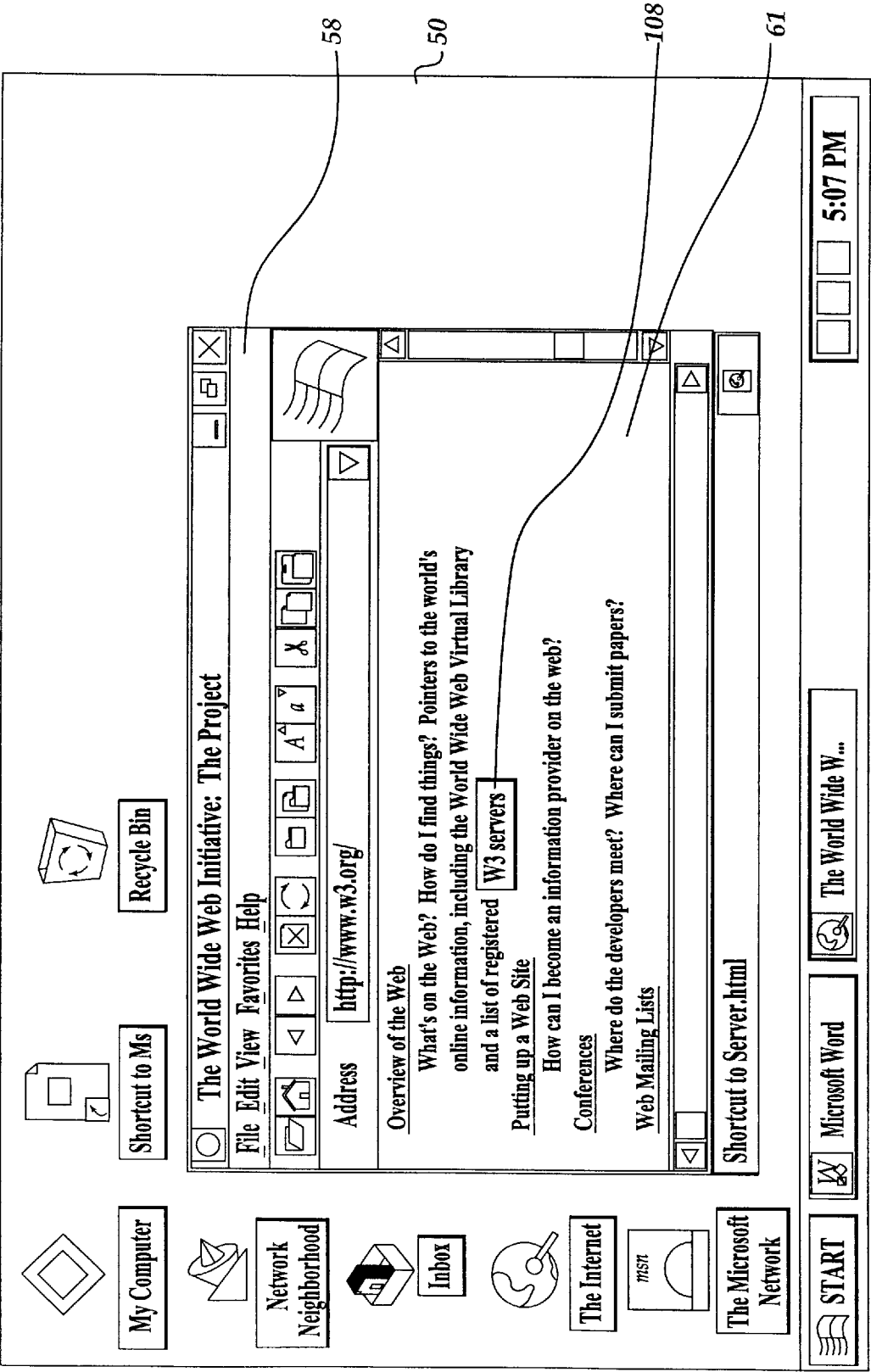


Figure 11A

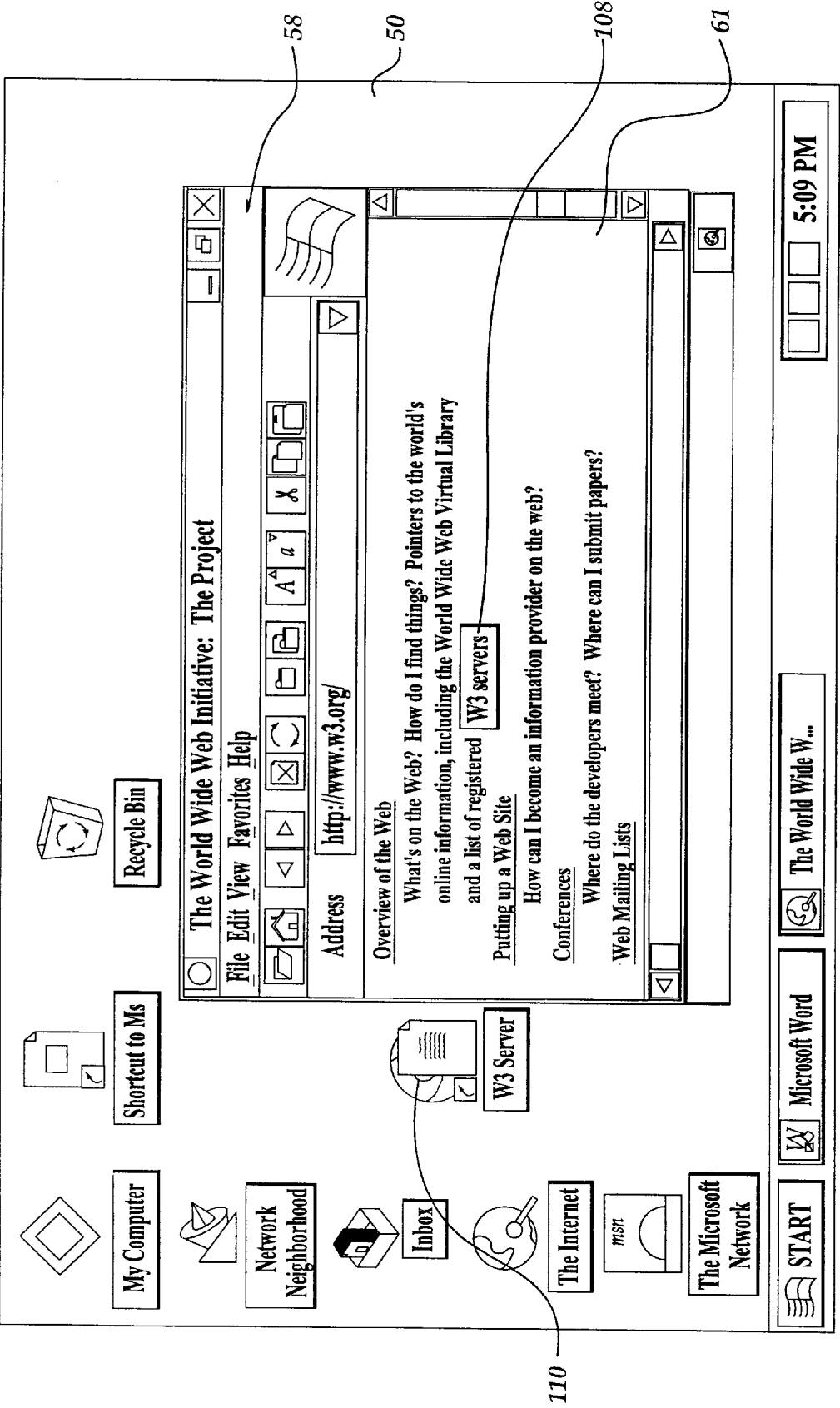
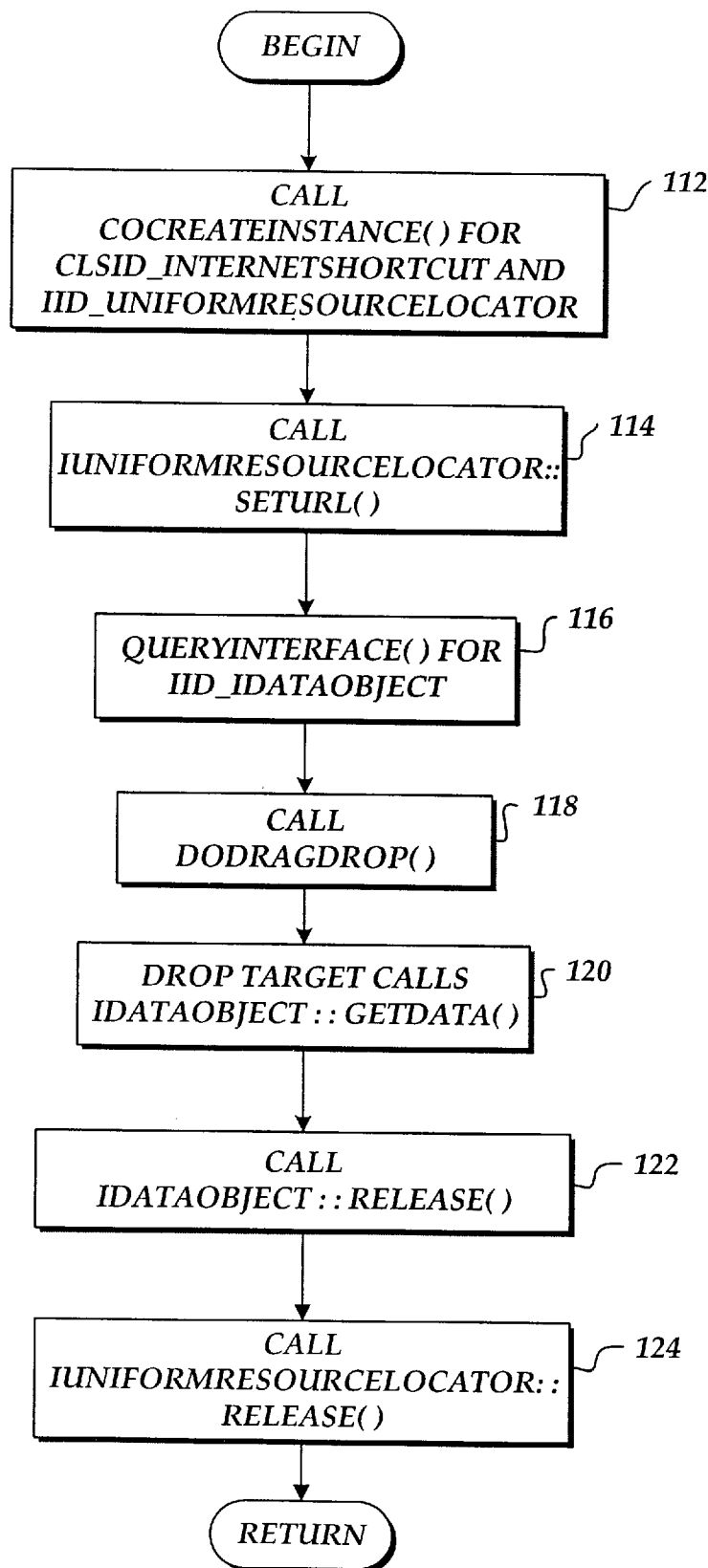


Figure 11B

*Figure 12*

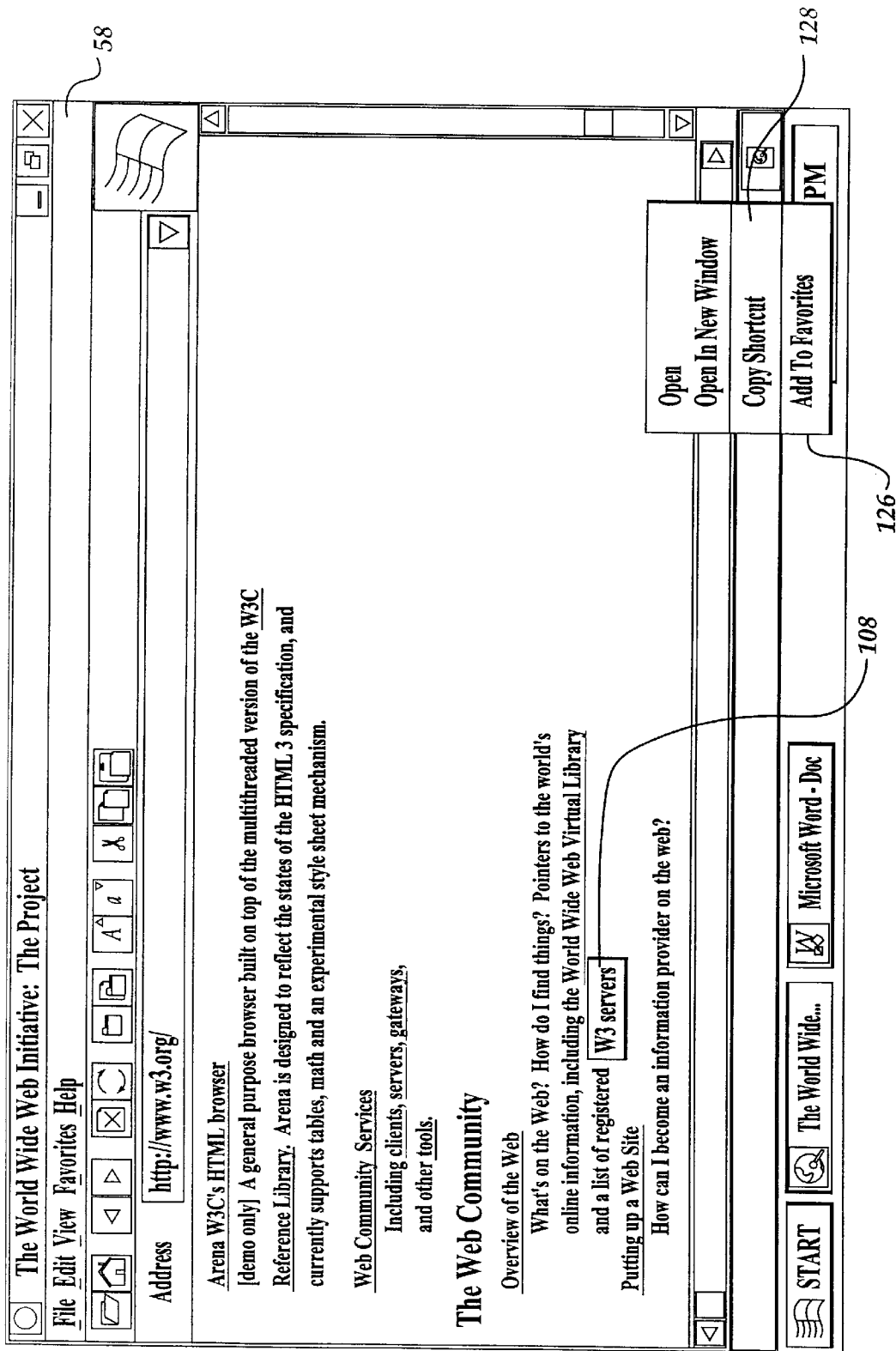
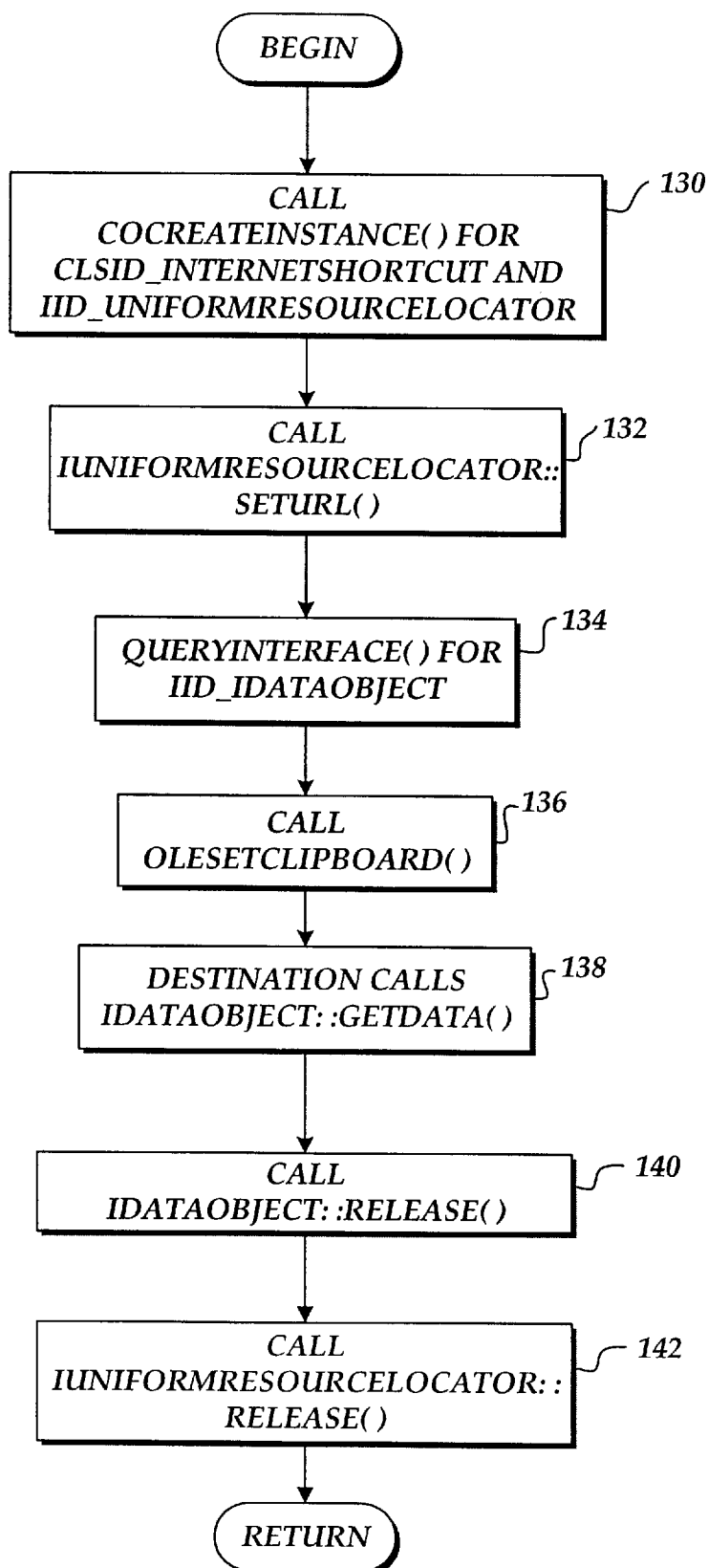


Figure 13

*Figure 14*

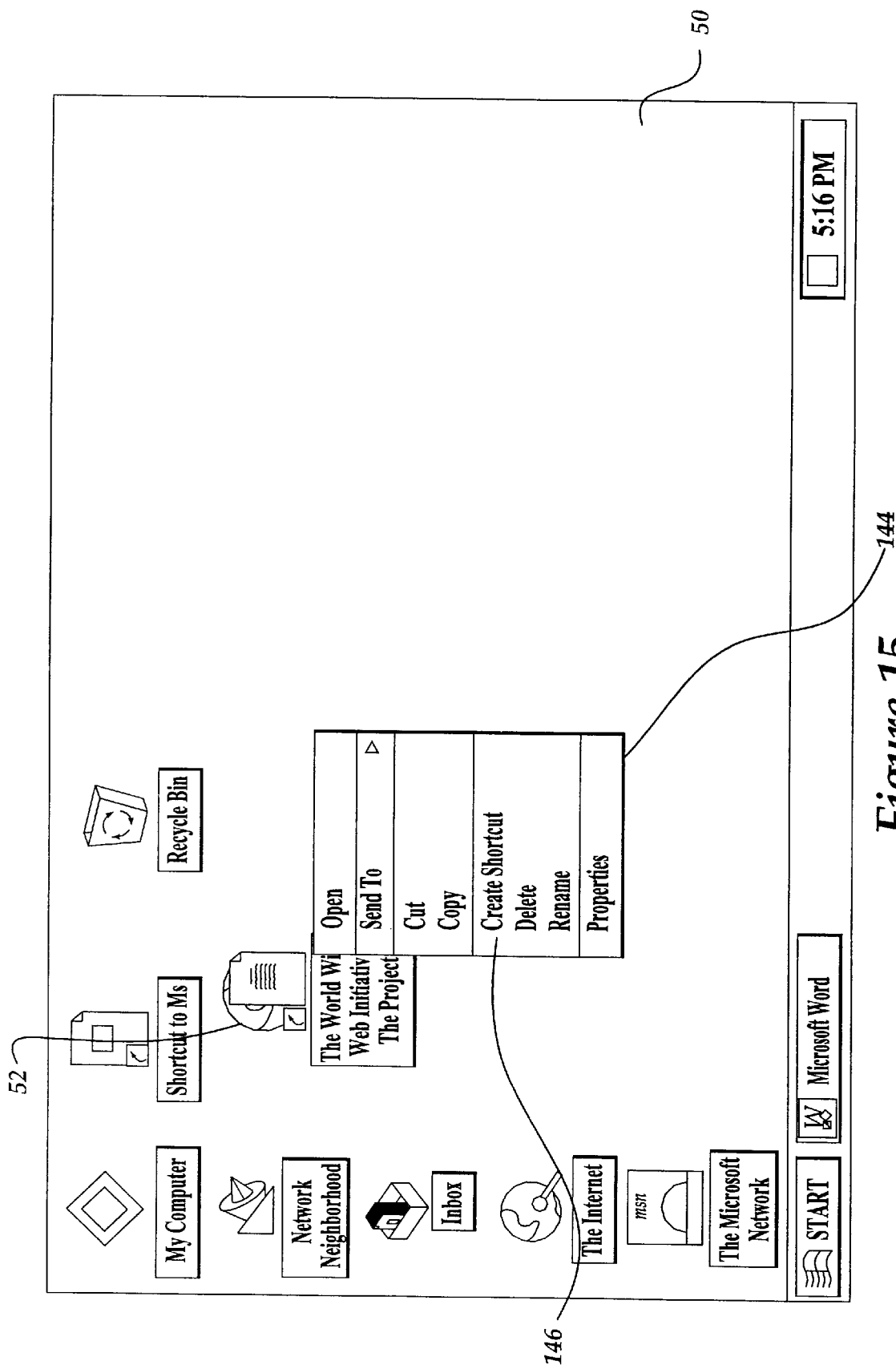


Figure 15

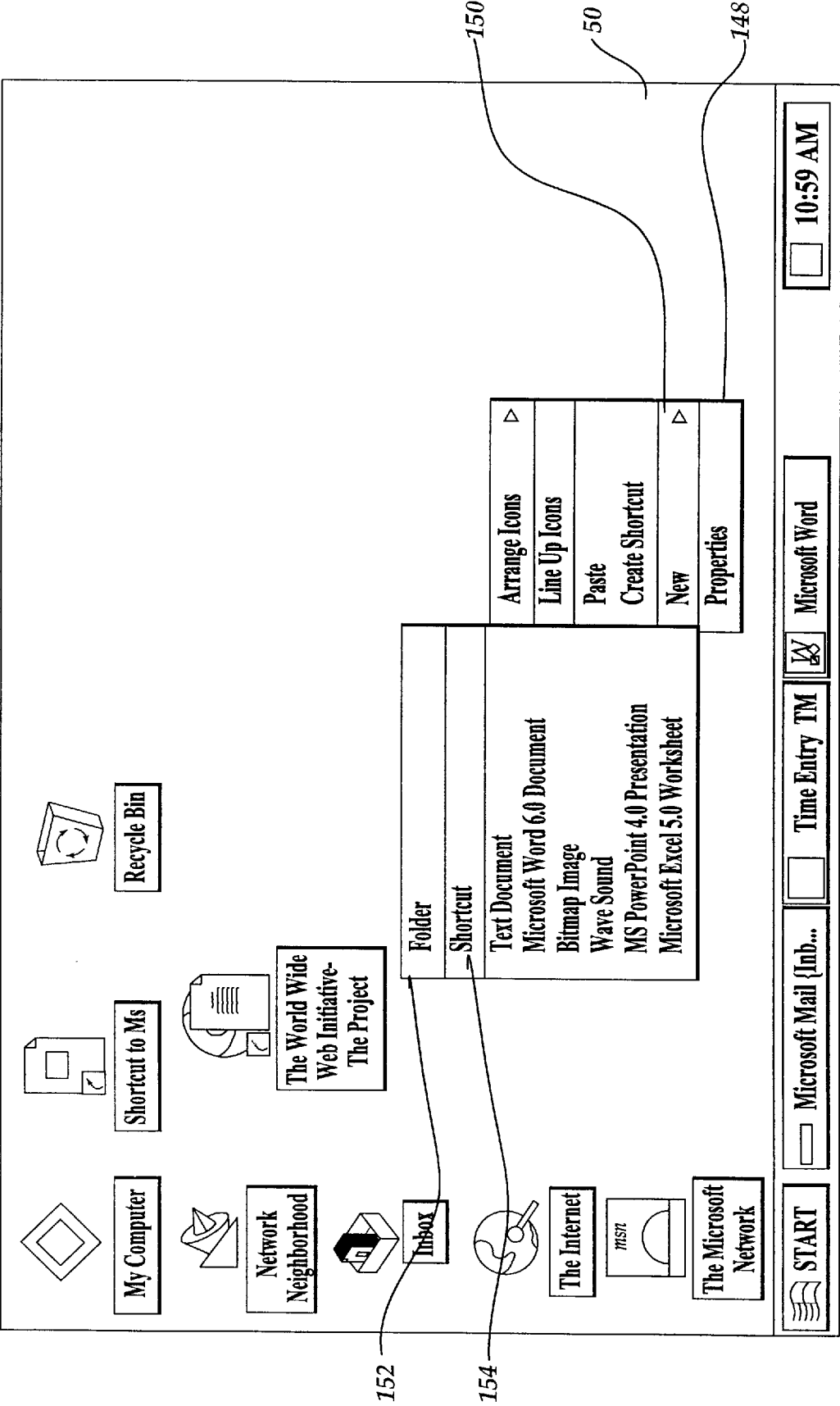


Figure 16A

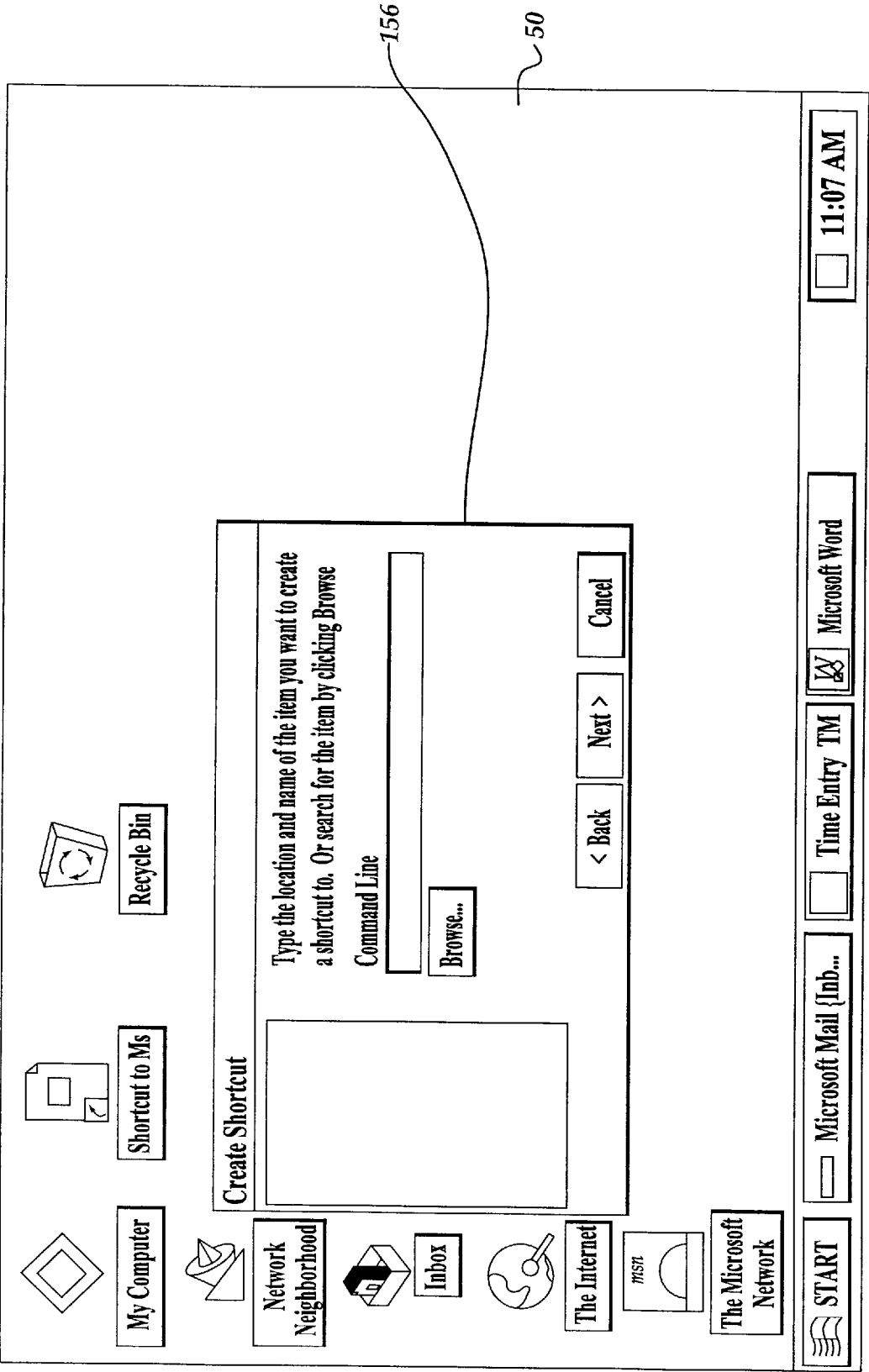


Figure 16B

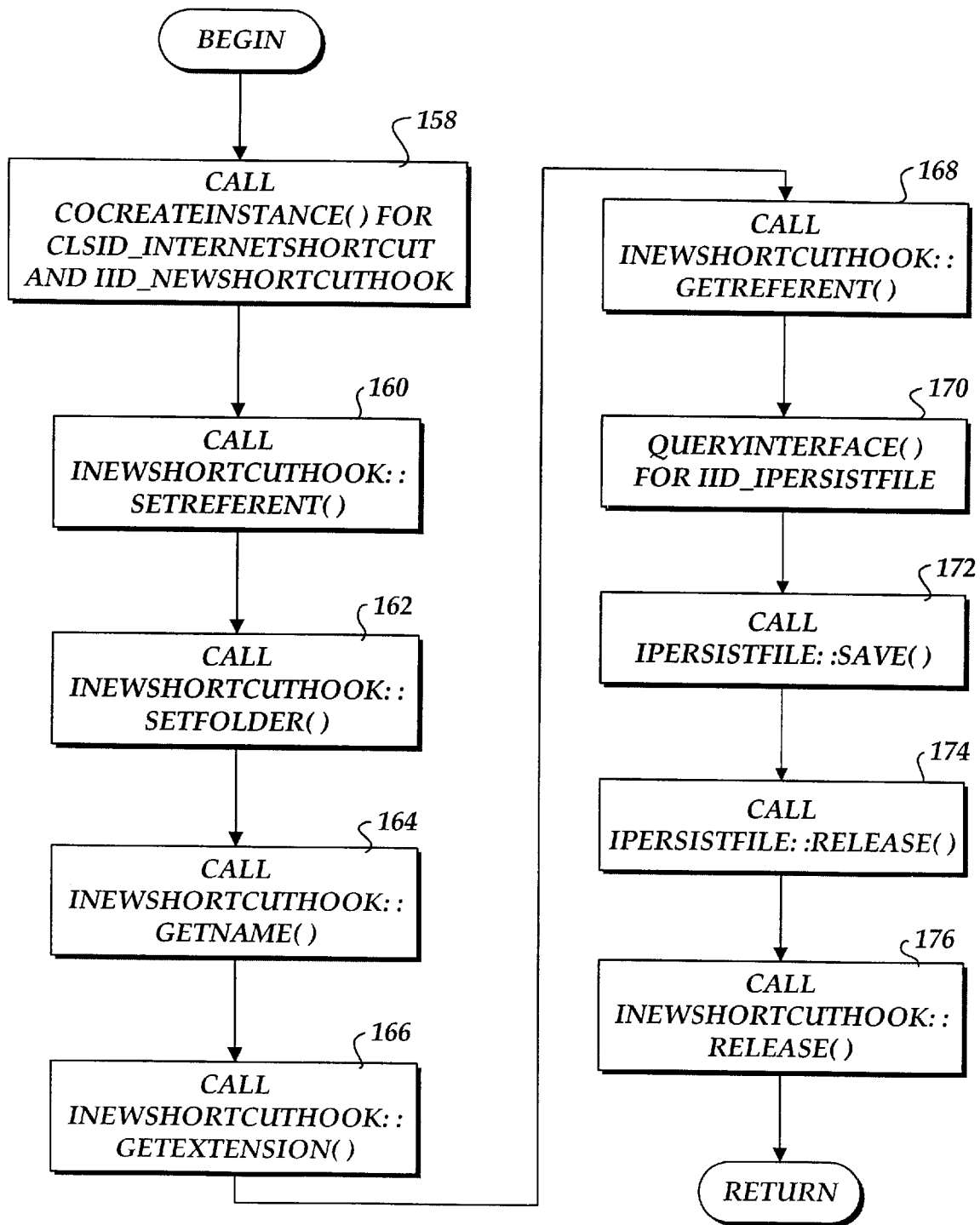


Figure 17

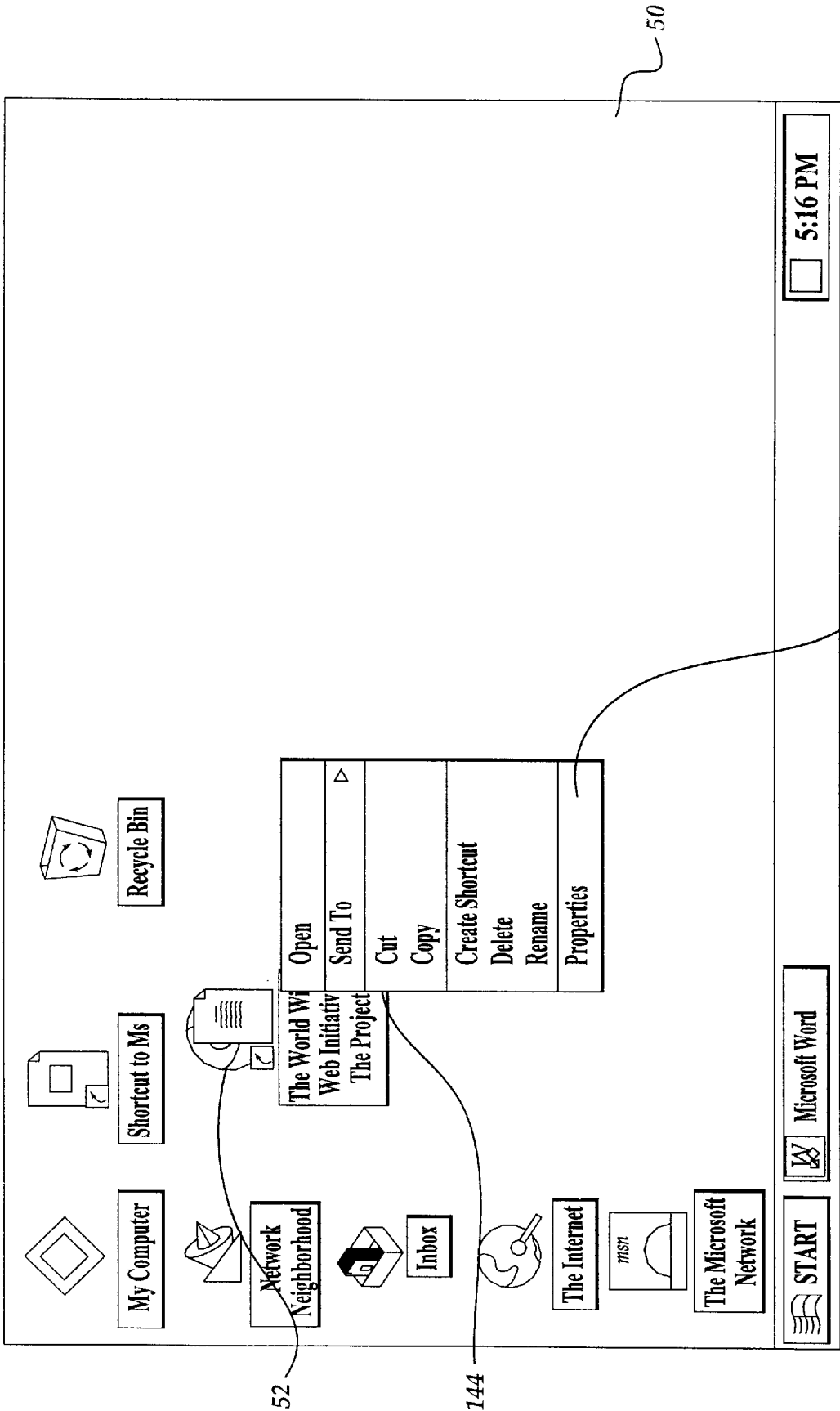


Figure 18

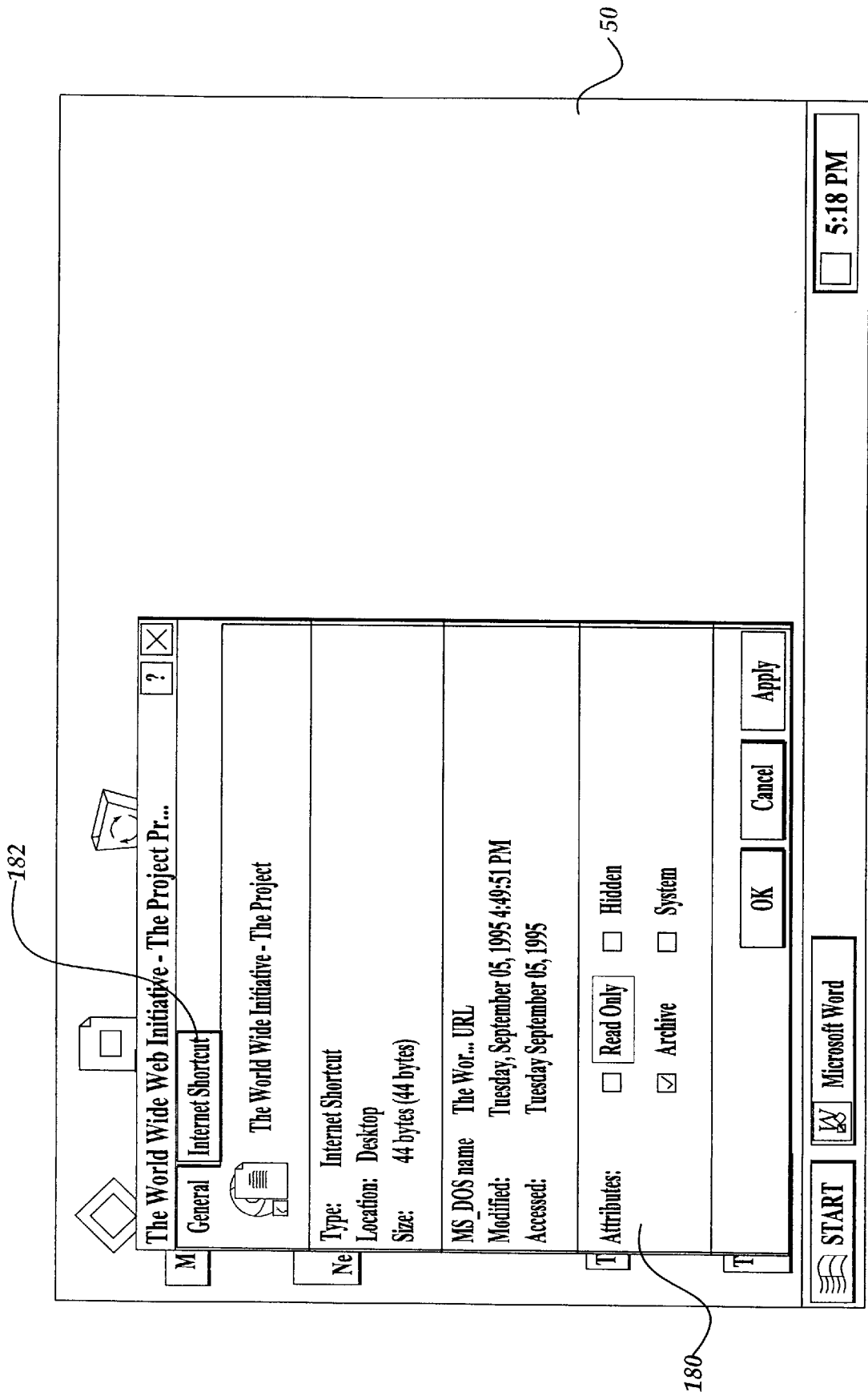


Figure 19

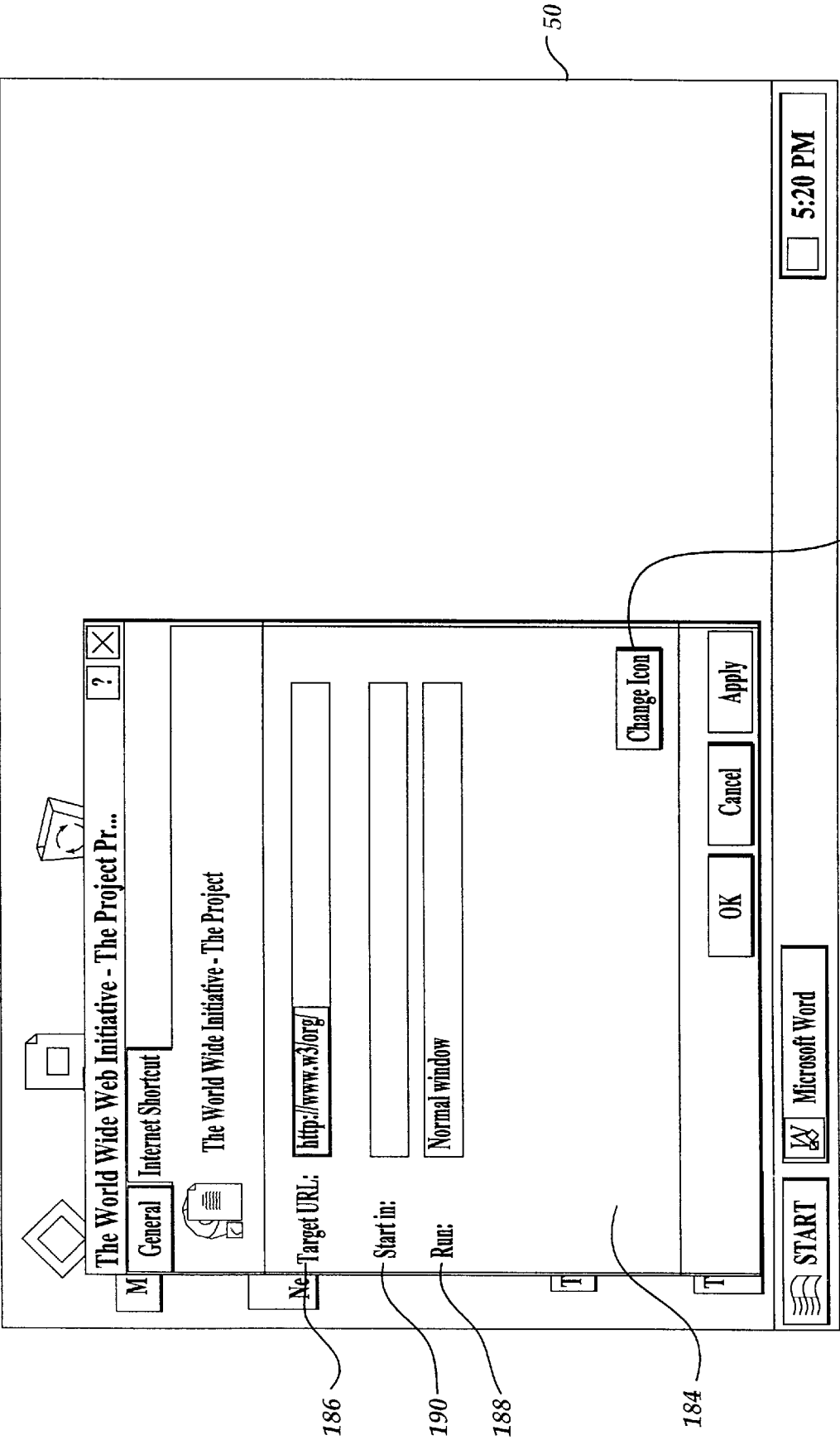


Figure 20

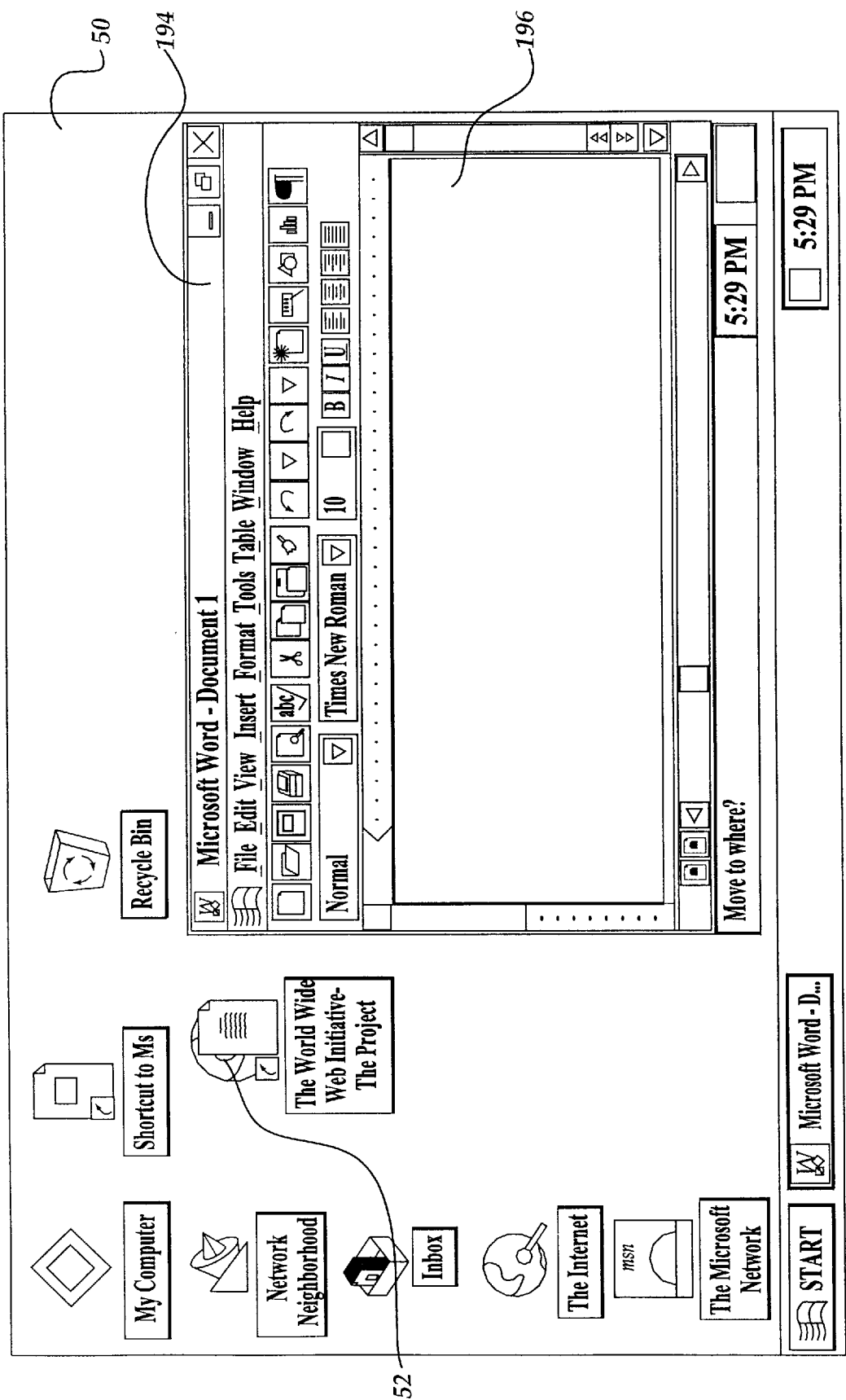


Figure 21A

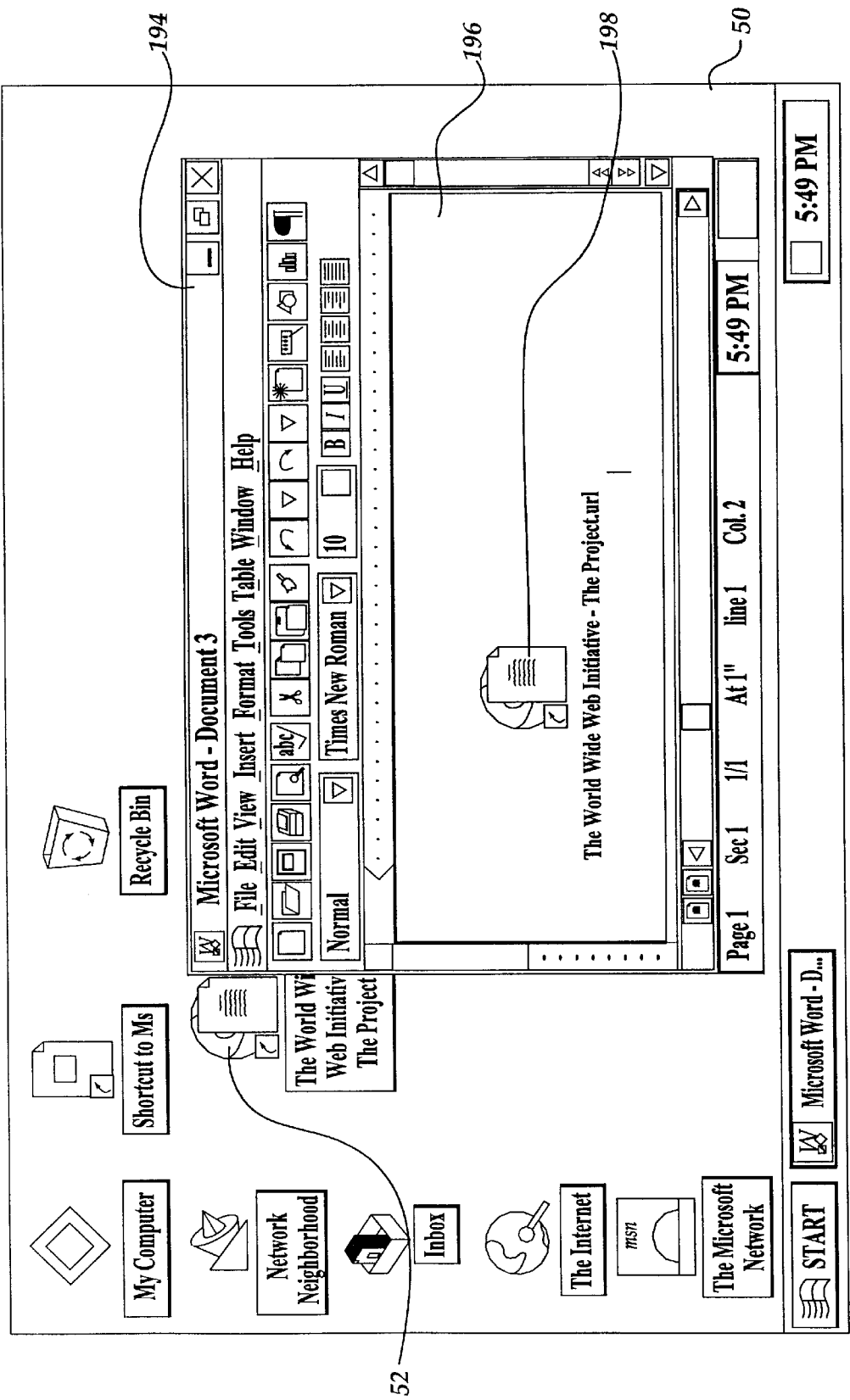


Figure 21B

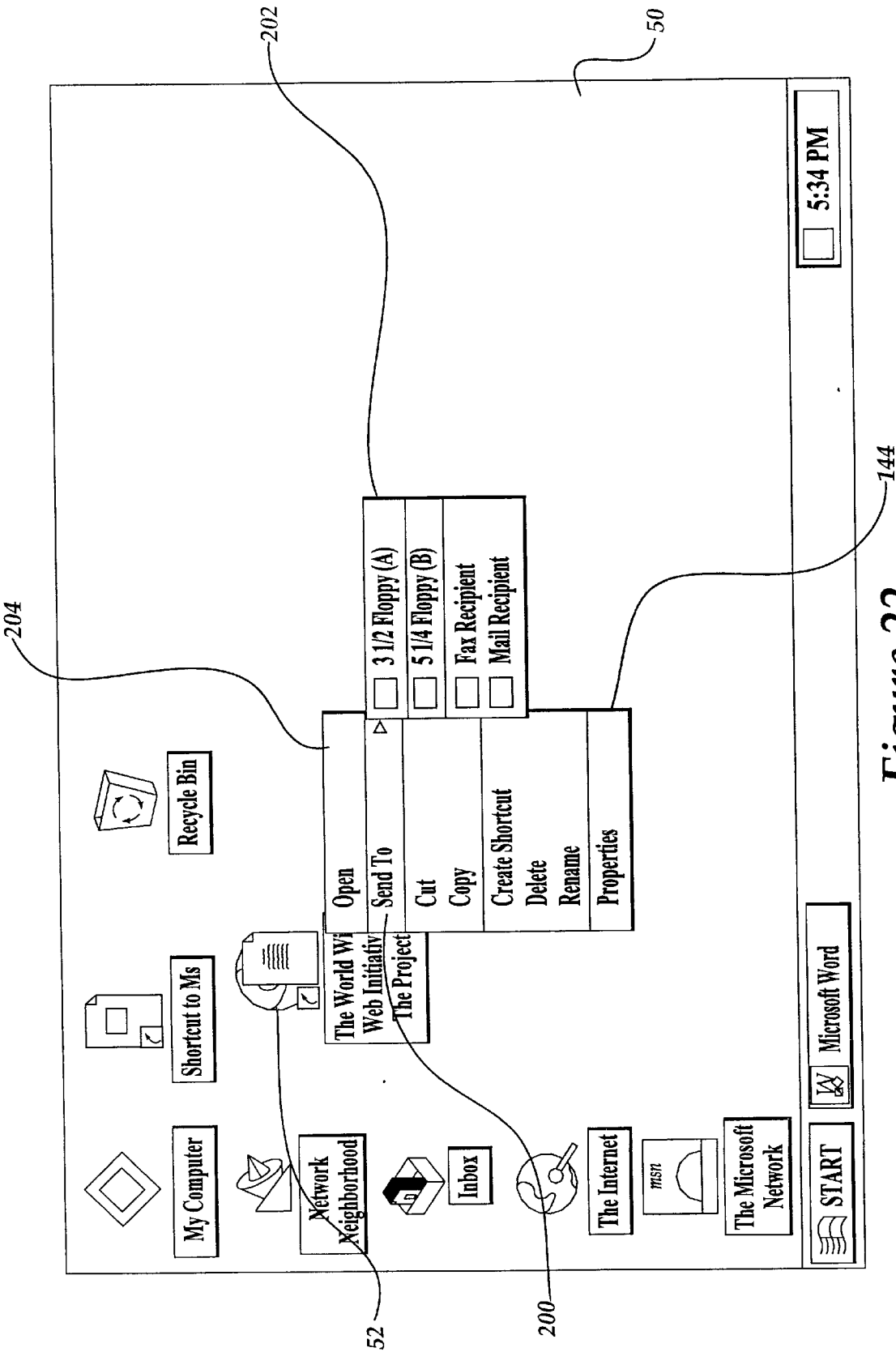


Figure 22

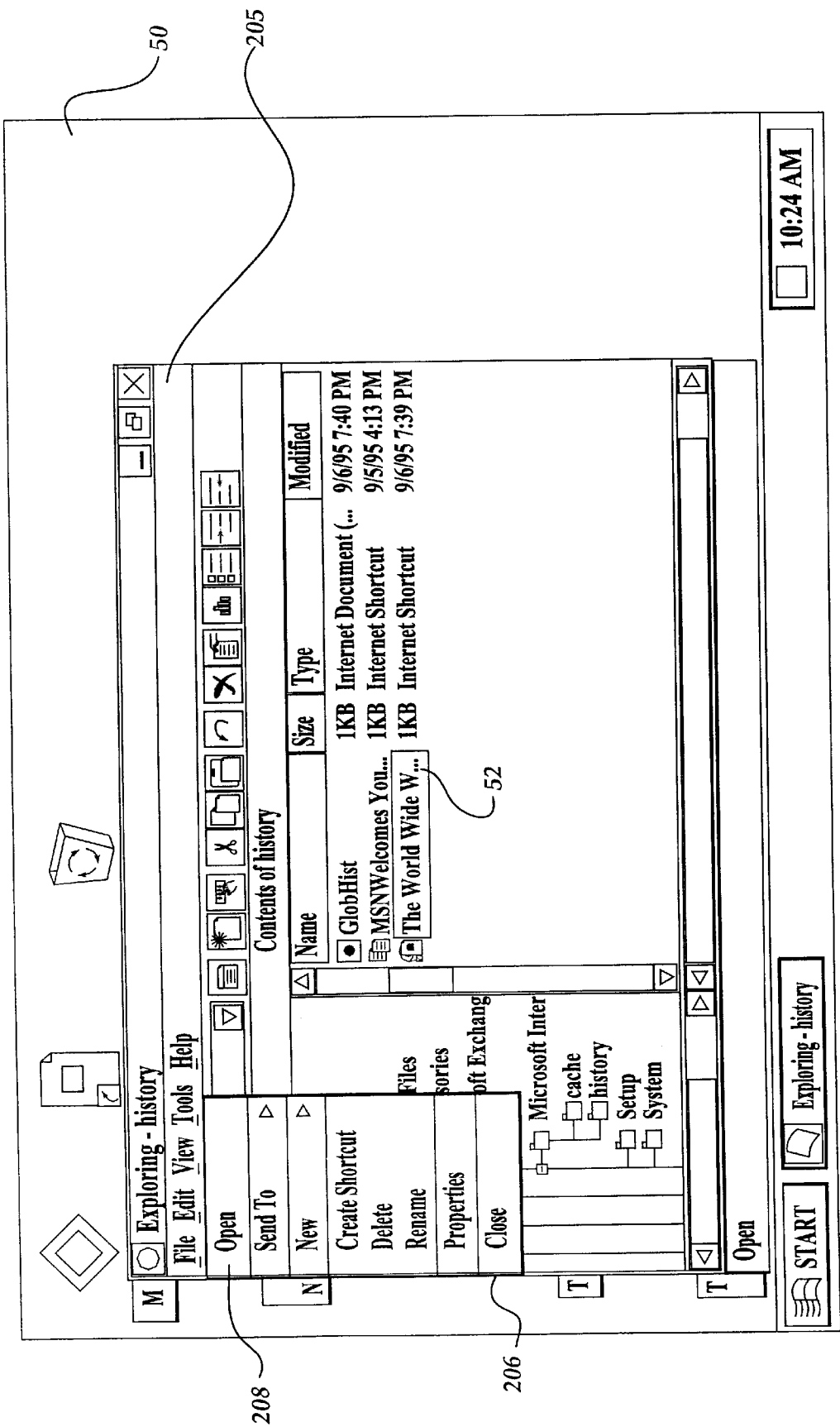
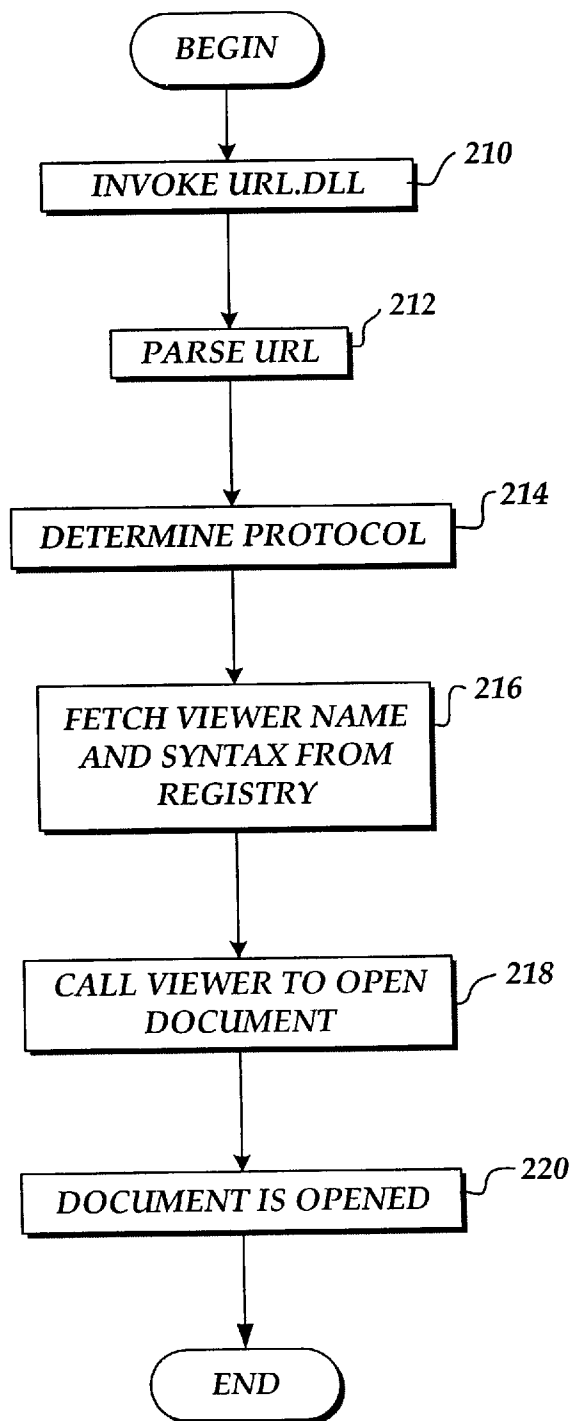


Figure 23

*Figure 24*

METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR DISPLAYING INTERNET SHORTCUT ICONS ON THE DESKTOP

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates generally to computer systems and more particularly to locating resources on the Internet.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

One of the difficulties that users of the Internet have encountered is the difficulty in locating and identifying resources within the Internet. In order to help standardize the location and identification information for Internet resources, the notion of a uniform resource locator (URL) has been developed. A URL is a string that describes the location of a resource on the Internet. A URL may include a number of different components, including the identification of a scheme (i.e., Internet protocol) and a path name. A URL may be utilized by an Internet protocol handler to locate the resource that is identified by the URL.

Navigation tools have been developed to assist users in navigating the Internet. These navigation tools include Web browsers that are used to browse the World Wide Web portion of the Internet. The Web browsers have provided a number of mechanisms for assisting a user in quickly locating documents on the Internet. FIG. 1A depicts an example of one mechanism that is employed within a window 10 of a Web browser. The mechanism is a text box 12 in which a user may enter a URL. After the user enters the URL, the corresponding document is retrieved and displayed.

Another mechanism that has been employed in Web browsers is a list, such as a hot list or a history list. FIG. 1B depicts an example of a hot list. A hot list contains a list of the user's favorite document sites. In this regard, the hot list acts as a sort of cache of documents from the Internet. In FIG. 1B, the hot list has its own window 14 that includes a list portion 18 and buttons 20. The buttons 20 may be used to add or delete items from the list 18. To view a particular document on the hot list, the user selects the item from the hot list and requests that the item be opened by double clicking on the item or using another opening mechanism. History lists are similar to hot lists, but maintain a historical list of Web sites that have been visited by a user.

Certain Web browsers utilize bookmarks. A bookmark is a pointer to an Internet site. A user may create a number of bookmarks that are stored in a list like that shown in FIG. 1C. The list 22 has separate entries 24 and 26 for each of the bookmarks the user has saved.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides an improved ability to locate resources in a distributed environment, such as the Internet. In accordance with a first aspect of the present invention, a method is practiced in a client computer system that runs an operating system. The operating system provides a name space of objects that are visible to a user. The client computer system is coupled to a network that has a server for providing an Internet resource. The Internet resource has an associated uniform resource locator (URL). Per the method of this aspect of the present invention, the URL for the resource is encapsulated into a selected object. The selected object is stored on the client computer system so that it is visible in the name space.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, a client computer system has a storage and a name space of objects that are visible to a user. The client computer system is coupled to a network that is a server for providing a resource to the client computer system. The resource has associated location information that the client computer system may use to locate the resource. The location information for the resource is encapsulated into a selected object. The selected object is stored in the storage of the client computer system such that the selected object is visible in the name space of the client computer system.

In accordance with a further aspect of the present invention, a resource is provided on a server computer that is part of a distributed system. The resource on the server computer is provided for access by the client computer. Location information is associated with the resource to enable the client computer to locate the resource. An application is run on the client computer for locating and accessing the resource on the server computer. The application has a window that is associated with it. The location information for the resource is encapsulated into an object. A visual representation of the object is displayed on a video display at a location that lies outside of the window of the application. The visual representation facilitates access to the resource.

In accordance with an additional aspect of the present invention, a selected object is provided that encapsulates location information for a remote resource at a server computer. The location information enables the remote resource to be located by a client computer. A visual representation of the selected object that encapsulates the location information for the remote resource is provided at the first location on an output device. A user uses the input device and, in response, the visual representation of the selected object is dragged to a target location on the output device that is associated with the target object. The visual representation is dropped at the target location. In response, a copy of the selected object is embedded in the target object.

In accordance with yet another aspect of the present invention, location information for locating a first resource on a server in a network is encapsulated into the first object. The first object is visible in a name space of a client computer system. Location information for locating a second resource on one of the servers in the network is encapsulated into a second object that is visible in the name space of the client computer system. A user makes a request and, in response, the first object or the second object is used to access the location information therein, and thus access the first or second resource.

In accordance with an additional aspect of the present invention, a client computer system is coupled to a server computer that has a resource for access by the client computer system. The resource has location information for enabling location of the document by the client computer system. The client computer system includes a storage device for storing objects, and an operating system for providing a name space of the objects. The client computer system also includes a module for encapsulating the location information of the resource into a selected object that is visible in the name space. The client computer system further includes an access module for using the location information encapsulated into the selected object to locate and access the resource on behalf of the client computer system.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A preferred embodiment of the present invention will be described below relative to the following figures.

FIG. 1A depicts an example of a text box that is used to locate documents in a conventional system.

FIG. 1B shows an example of a hot list that is used to locate documents in a conventional system.

FIG. 1C illustrates a list of bookmarks that are used to locate documents in a conventional system.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating an environment in which the preferred embodiment of the present invention may be practiced.

FIG. 3 is a block diagram showing the client computer system of FIG. 2 in more detail.

FIG. 4 is an example of a user interface that shows an Internet shortcut in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 5 is an example of an Internet explorer window that may be used in the preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 6 is an example of an open Internet document being displayed within the Internet explorer window.

FIG. 7 illustrates a file menu that may be accessed from the Internet explorer window.

FIG. 8 illustrates a context menu that may be accessed for an Internet document.

FIG. 9A illustrates a "Favorites" menu that is available in the Internet explorer.

FIG. 9B illustrates a "Add To Favorites . . ." button that is available in the Internet explorer.

FIG. 9C illustrates a dialog that is provided in the preferred embodiment of the present invention for adding Internet shortcuts to a "Favorites" folder.

FIG. 9D illustrates an Internet shortcut that resides within the "Favorites" folder.

FIG. 10 is a flowchart of the programmatic steps that are performed to create an Internet shortcut when the approaches of FIGS. 7-9D are used.

FIG. 11A illustrates a portion of an Internet document that includes a hypertext link.

FIG. 11B illustrates an Internet shortcut that is created by dragging and dropping a hypertext link from an Internet document in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 12 is a flowchart illustrating the programmatic steps that are performed when an Internet shortcut is created by dragging and dropping a hypertext link.

FIG. 13 depicts a context menu for a hypertext link.

FIG. 14 is a flowchart illustrating the programmatic steps that are performed when an Internet shortcut is created using the context menu of a hypertext link.

FIG. 15 illustrates a context menu for an Internet shortcut.

FIG. 16A illustrates a desktop context menu and associated cascading "New" menu.

FIG. 16B illustrates the first sheet in a "Create Shortcut" wizard.

FIG. 17 is a flowchart illustrating the programmatic steps that are preferred to create an Internet shortcut from a context menu of a file system container.

FIG. 18 illustrates a context menu for an Internet shortcut.

FIG. 19 illustrates a "General" properties sheet for an Internet shortcut.

FIG. 20 illustrates a "Internet Shortcut" properties sheet for an Internet shortcut.

FIGS. 21A and 21B illustrate how an Internet shortcut may be dragged and dropped to embed it in a new location.

FIG. 22 illustrates a context menu and cascading "Send To" menu for an Internet shortcut.

FIG. 23 illustrates a "File" menu for an explorer application that may be used to open an Internet shortcut.

FIG. 24 is a flowchart illustrating the steps that are performed to open a document that is associated with an Internet shortcut.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The preferred embodiment of the present invention provides a facility for creating Internet shortcuts. Internet shortcuts are like other shortcuts found in the Microsoft® Windows® 95 operating system, sold by Microsoft Corporation of Redmond, Wash., except that they point to resources (such as documents or services) that reside on the Internet. Each Internet shortcut appears to the user as a shortcut icon. The user may double click on the Internet shortcut icon to access the associated Internet resource. As Internet shortcuts are objects that comply with the Microsoft OLE 2.0 component object model, they exhibit the behavior associated with such types of objects. For example, as will be explained in more detail below, the Internet shortcuts may be dragged and dropped. The Internet shortcuts encapsulate URLs (or other location information) and other information. The Internet shortcuts are implemented as objects that are visible within the shell name space.

The preferred embodiment of the present invention provides a user with the ability to manipulate Internet resources in a well understood environment (i.e., the environment of the operating system's shell). The Internet shortcuts eliminate the need for the user to know the physical location of the resource that the user wishes to access. In other words, the Internet shortcuts provide a layer of abstraction that hides the physical location from the user. Moreover, the Internet shortcuts provide a consistent approach to accessing Internet resources across different Internet protocols.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram that depicts the environment that is of interest to the preferred embodiment of the present invention. In particular, the preferred embodiment of the present invention is concerned with the situation where a client computer 28 wishes to connect to a server computer 30 that is part of the Internet 32. The client computer 28 wishes to access a resource that is on the server 30.

FIG. 3 is a block diagram that shows in more detail a suitable client computer configuration for practicing the preferred embodiment of the present invention. The client computer 28 includes a central processing unit (CPU) 30 that has access to a primary memory 32 and a secondary storage 34. The primary memory 32 holds a copy of an operating system 36. For purposes of the discussion below, it is assumed that the operating system 36 is the Microsoft® Windows® 95 operating system. The primary memory 32 also holds a copy of URL.DLL 38, which is the Internet shortcut shell extension handler that provides the facilities for implementing the Internet shortcuts in the preferred embodiment of the present invention. Although the Internet shortcut handler 38 is shown in FIG. 3 as being separate from the operating system 36, those skilled in the art will appreciate that it may in alternative embodiments be incorporated as part of the operating system. An Internet explorer 40 is also held within the memory 32. The Internet explorer 40 enables a user to explore the Internet and view documents from the Internet. The Internet explorer 40 may include client programs for protocol handlers for different Internet protocols (e.g., HTTP, FTP and Gopher) to facilitate brows-

ing using different protocols. The client computer **28** also has a number of input/output devices. These input/output devices include a video display **42**, keyboard **44**, a mouse **46**, and a modem **48**.

As mentioned above, an Internet shortcut extension handler is provided in the preferred embodiment of the present invention. The Internet shortcut extension handler is an example of a shell extension handler. Shell extension handlers are described in more detail in copending application, “Shell Extensions for an Operating System”, Ser. No. 08/355,410, which was filed on Dec. 13, 1994, and which is explicitly incorporated by reference herein. The Internet shortcut extension handler is registered within a registry that is maintained by the operating system **36** of the client computer **28**. The registration of the Internet shortcut extension handler within the registry helps the client computer to be aware of the handler and to utilize it when needed. All Internet shortcuts are implemented in the preferred embodiment as files that contain the .url filename extension. The Internet shortcut extension handler serves as a class handler for files of the url class. The Internet shortcut extension handler contains support for creating, opening and displaying Internet shortcuts and other additional operations that may be performed relative to Internet shortcuts.

The registry is implemented as a hierarchically structured tree having a number of nodes. Each node is identified by a keyname composed of ANSI characters. Keys may contain other keys, known as subkeys. The registry has a predefined key called HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT. At the same level of the hierarchy are other predefined keys including: HKEY_CURRENT_USER, HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE, HKEY_USERS, HKEY_CURRENT_CONFIG, HKEY_PERFORMANCE_DATA and HKEY_DYN_DATA. Each of these predefined keys acts as a root of a separate subtree in the registry.

Before an application program may add data to the registry, the application program must open a key within the registry. To open a key within the registry, the application program must supply the handle of another key in the registry that is already open. The predefined keys listed above serve as entry points to the registry for application programs. Of particular interest to the preferred embodiment of the present invention is the HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT key. Registry entries that are subordinate to this key define types or classes of documents and properties associated with such types or classes.

Client programs for protocol handlers for the respective protocols are also registered in the registry. The registry entries for the protocol handlers are stored under the HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT subkey. For each protocol, there is a definition of the name of the protocol, the open command that is used for the protocol, and the icon to be used for the protocol. An example of such a portion of the registry for the http and ftp protocols is:

```
HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT
ftp
  <Default> REG_SZ“URL:File Transfer Protocol”
  EditFlags REG_BINARY 0x00000002
  URL Protocol REG_SZ“”
  DefaultIcon
    <Default> REG_SZ “c:\windows\ftp.exe,0”
  shell
    open
      command REG_SZ “c:\windows\ftp.exe”
      ddeexec REG_SZ “[%1]”
```

-continued

```
Application
  <Default> REG_SZ “FTP”
Topic
  <Default> REG_SZ “FTP_OpenURL”
http
  <Default> REG_SZ “URL:HyperText Transfer Protocol”
  EditFlags REG_BINARY 0x00000002
  URL Protocol REG_SZ“”
  DefaultIcon
    <Default> REG_SZ “c:\nca\mosaic.exe,0”
  shell
    open
      command REG_SZ “c:\nca\mosaic.exe”
      ddeexec REG_SZ “[%1]”
      Application
        <Default> REG_SZ “Mosaic”
      Topic
        <Default> REG_SZ “WWW_OpenURL”
```

Note that different protocols may employ different default icons.

In order to gain a fuller understanding of Internet shortcuts, it is helpful to review how Internet shortcuts appear and how they are used by a user. FIG. 4 shows an example of the visual appearance of an Internet shortcut **52** on a virtual desktop **50** that is produced by the operating system **36**. The Internet shortcut **52** is displayed on the virtual desktop **50** as an icon with a distinguishing arrow portion **54** drawn in its lower left-hand corner to denote that the icon refers to a shortcut. The name of the Internet shortcut **52** is displayed beneath the icon. The virtual desktop **50** also displays an icon **56** for the Internet explorer **40**.

A user has a number of options for creating an Internet shortcut. The discussion below will first focus on the user interface components for creating Internet shortcuts and then focus on the programmatic steps that are taken to create Internet shortcuts. One way in which a user may create an Internet shortcut is to position a mouse cursor over the Internet explorer icon **56** and double click a designated button on the mouse **46** in order to open the Internet explorer. The Internet explorer **40** initially appears to the user as shown in FIG. 5. Specifically, window **58** for the Internet explorer is shown on the virtual desktop **56**. The window **58** includes a text box **60** that may be used to enter a URL for a document that is to be opened. Suppose that the user enters the URL “http://www.w3.org” in the text box **60**, as shown in FIG. 6. If the user then requests to open the document associated with the URL in the text box **60**, the document **61** is displayed within the client area of the Internet explorer window **58**.

Once the Internet document is displayed within the client area of the Internet explorer window **58**, the user has a number of options for creating a shortcut to the document. First, the user may open a file menu **62** that includes a “Create Shortcut” menu option **64** which when selected causes a shortcut for the active Internet document to be created on the virtual desktop **56**. Another option to create a shortcut is for the user to click a right button on the mouse **46** to cause a context menu **68** to be displayed for the Internet document. The context menu **68** includes a menu option **70** for creating a shortcut.

The preferred embodiment of the present invention also provides a “Favorites” folder which may be used to hold Internet shortcuts to favorite Internet sites of a user. A “Favorites” menu item **76** (FIG. 9A) is provided on menu bar of the Internet explorer window **58**. When the “Favorites” menu is opened, an “Add To Favorites . . .” menu option **78** is provided. The selection of this menu option causes the shortcut to the current page to be added to the

"Favorites" folder. An "Add To Favorites . . ." button **84** is provided on the toolbar of the Internet explorer window **58** (FIG. 9B). A user may add an Internet shortcut to the "Favorites" folder by positioning a mouse cursor **80** over the button **84** and activating the button. The button has an associated tool tip **82** that may be displayed when the mouse cursor is positioned over it for a sufficient amount of time. When a user selects the "Add To Favorites . . ." menu option **78** or activates the "Add To Favorites . . ." button **84**, an "Add To Favorites . . ." dialog **86** (FIG. 9C) is displayed. A list **92** lists the Internet shortcuts that are currently in the "Favorites" folder. The name of the page for which an Internet shortcut is to be added is listed in the Name text box **88**. The user has the option of creating a different name for the Internet shortcut. When a user wishes to add an Internet shortcut for the current page to the "Favorites..." folder, the user activates the "Add" button **90**. As a result, an Internet shortcut **94** (FIG. 9D) is visible in the window for the "Favorites" folder **92**.

Each Internet shortcut is implemented as an object that supports a number of Microsoft OLE 2.01 interfaces. In particular, each Internet shortcut supports the following standard OLE interfaces: IDataObject, IPersist, IPersistFile, IPersistStream, and IUnknown. In addition, each Internet shortcut supports the following shell extension OLE interfaces: IExtractIcon, IShellExtInit, IShellLink, and IShellPropSheetExt interfaces. These shell extension interfaces are described in more detail in the copending application entitled "Shell Extensions for an Operating System", Ser. No. 08/355,410. In addition, each Internet shortcut object must support the IUniformResourceLocator interface. This interface includes three methods. The first method is the Get method for retrieving a URL from the Internet shortcut object. The second method is the Set method for setting a URL for an Internet shortcut object. Lastly, an Invoke method is provided for invoking a command on the Internet shortcut object.

The four above-described approaches for creating an Internet shortcut (described relative to FIGS. 7-9D) require the same programmatic steps to be performed. FIG. 10 is a flowchart illustrating the programmatic steps that are performed to create an Internet shortcut in such an instance. First, the predefined function CoCreateInstance() is called to create an object of the Internet shortcut object class and to obtain an IUniformResourceLocator interface for the created Internet shortcut object (step **96** in FIG. 10). The SetURL() function within the IUniformResourceLocator interface of the Internet shortcut object is called to set the URL value for the Internet shortcut object (Step **98**). A QueryInterface() function is called to obtain an IPersistFile interface that is supported by the Internet shortcut object (Step **100**). The Save() function of the IPersistFile interface is called to save the Internet shortcut as a .url file in the file system of the operating system **36** (step **102**). The Release() function of the IPersistFile interface is then called to release the interface (step **104**). Lastly, the Release() function of the IUniformResourceLocator interface is called to release that interface (step **106**).

Documents that are set forth in the HTML (HyperText Markup Language) format include hyperlinks. These are links that may be used to gain access to related documents. These hyperlinks may be dragged and dropped to create Internet shortcuts. For example, as shown in FIG. 11A, the Internet document **61** includes a hyperlink **108** associated with the term "W3 servers". It should be appreciated that this hyperlink is surrounded by a broken border in FIG. 11A solely for illustrative purposes. A user may use the mouse **46**

to position the mouse cursor over the hyperlink **108** and drag the hyperlink to a destination where the hyperlink is dropped. FIG. 11B illustrates an example of the appearance of the virtual desktop when the hyperlink **108** has been dragged and dropped onto the virtual desktop **56** to create an Internet shortcut **110**.

FIG. 12 illustrates the programmatic steps that are performed to create an Internet shortcut object when the drag and drop technique described above relative to FIGS. 11A and 11B is used. Initially, the CoCreateInstance() function is called to create an object of the Internet shortcut class and to retrieve an IUniformResourceLocator interface (step **112**). The SetURL() function of the IUniformResourceLocator interface of the Internet shortcut object is called to set the URL for the Internet shortcut (step **114**). The QueryInterface() function is then called to obtain an IDataObject interface for the Internet shortcut object (step **116**). The DoDragDrop() function is called to perform the drag and drop operation with that IDataObject (step **118**). The drop target calls the GetData() function within the IDataObject interface to obtain data for the Internet shortcut (step **120**). It should be appreciated that other methods within the IDataObject interface may also be called to retrieve data. The Release() function in the IDataObject interface is called to release the IDataObject interface (step **122**). Similarly, the Release() function of the IUniformResourceLocator interface is called to release the IUniformResourceLocator interface (step **124**).

An Internet shortcut may additionally be created from the context menu of a hyperlink. FIG. 3 shows an example of a context menu **126** that may be produced from the hyperlink **108** by clicking a right button of the mouse **46** while a mouse cursor is positioned over the hyperlink. The context menu **126** includes a "Copy Shortcut" menu option **128** that causes an Internet shortcut to the hyperlink to be copied to the clipboard. The user may then paste the Internet shortcut at desired destination.

FIG. 14 is a flowchart that illustrates the programmatic steps that are performed when the Internet shortcut is created using the context menu for a hyperlink. Initially, the CoCreateInstance() function is called to create an object of the Internet shortcut class and to return an IUniformResourceLocator interface (step **130**). The SetURL() function within the IUniformResourceLocator interface of the Internet shortcut object is called to set the URL to the appropriate value (step **132**). The QueryInterface() function is called to obtain an IDataObject interface that is supported by the Internet shortcut object (step **134**). The OleSetClipboard() function provided by Microsoft OLE 2.01 is called to put the Internet shortcut on the clipboard (step **136**). When the paste operation occurs, the GetData() function of the IDataObject interface is called (step **138**). The Release() function of the IDataObject interface is called to release the IDataObject interface (step **140**). Lastly, the Release() function of the IUniformResourceLocator interface is called to release that interface (step **142**).

An Internet shortcut may also be created from an existing Internet shortcut. In particular, a copy of an Internet shortcut may be created from a context menu of an existing shortcut. FIG. 15 depicts an example of a context menu **144** for Internet shortcut **52**. The context menu **144** may be displayed by clicking the right button of the mouse **46** when the mouse cursor points to the Internet shortcut **52**. The context menu **144** includes a "Create Shortcut" menu option **146** for creating an Internet shortcut. Programmatically, the Explorer simply copies the existing Internet shortcut to a new file to create the new Internet shortcut.

An Internet shortcut may, likewise, be created from the virtual desktop **56** or from any file system container. Specifically, a user may position the mouse cursor to point at a location on the virtual desktop **56** or other file system container window and click a right button of the mouse **46**. This causes a context menu **148** (FIG. 16A) to be displayed. The context menu **148** includes a "New" menu option **150**. The "New" menu option **150** has a cascading menu **152** that is displayed when the mouse cursor is positioned over the "New" menu option. The cascading menu **152** includes a menu option **154** for creating a shortcut. When the user selects the "shortcut" menu option **154**, a shortcut wizard **156** (like that shown in FIG. 15B) is displayed. The user may use the shortcut wizard to create a number of different types of shortcuts, including Internet shortcuts. The preferred embodiment of the present invention embellishes the code provide in the operating system **36** to facilitate the creation of Internet shortcuts.

In order to appreciate the programmatic steps that are performed to create an Internet shortcut using the Internet shortcut wizard, it is helpful to first review a new interface that is defined by the preferred embodiment of the present invention. This new interface is the `INewShortcutHook` interface. This interface includes functions that enable the user to create an Internet shortcut from a full or partial URL using the shortcut wizard. The `INewShortcutHook` interface includes several functions. The `SetReferent()` function sets the referent for the Internet shortcut (where the referent is a URL or other indication of location). The `GetReferent()` function gets the referent for the shortcut. The `SetFolder()` function sets the folder that contains the Internet shortcut, whereas the `GetFolder()` function gets the folder that contains the Internet shortcut. The `GetName()` function gets the name of the Internet shortcut within the containing folder and the `GetExtension()` function retrieves the extension for the Internet shortcut.

FIG. 17 illustrates the programmatic steps that are performed to create an Internet shortcut using the Internet shortcut wizard. Initially, the `CoCreateInstance()` function is called to create an instance of an object of the Internet shortcut class and to return an `INewShortcutHook` interface (step **158**). The `SetReferent()` function within the `INewShortcutHook` interface is called to set the appropriate referent for the Internet shortcut object (step **160**). The `SetFolder()` function within the `INewShortcutHook` interface is called to set the folder that contains the Internet shortcut (step **162**). Next, the `GetName()` function of the `INewShortcutHook` interface is called to obtain a suggested file name for the Internet shortcut (step **164**). The `GetExtension()` function of the `INewShortcutHook` interface is then called to get the .url extension for the Internet shortcut (step **166**). The `GetReferent()` function is called to obtain the referent for the Internet shortcut object (step **168**).

A `QueryInterface()` call is then made to retrieve the `IPersistFile` interface for the Internet shortcut object (step **170**). The `Save()` function within the `IPersistFile` interface is called to save the Internet shortcut as a .url file (step **172**). The `Release()` function of `IPersistFile` is called to release the `IPersistFile` interface (step **174**). Lastly, the `Release()` function of the `INewShortcutHook` interface is called to release that interface (step **176**).

It should be appreciated that the operating system **36** and/or the Internet shortcut extension handler may define certain Internet shortcuts a priori that do not require the user to explicitly create them.

Each Internet shortcut object has a number of properties associated with it that may be viewed and edited through

property sheets. To display a property sheet for an Internet shortcut, a user may click the right button of mouse **46** while the mouse cursor points to Internet shortcut **52**. As was described above relative to FIG. 15, such user action causes a context menu **146** to be displayed. This context menu **146**, includes a "Properties" menu option **178** as shown in FIG. 18. When the user selects the "Properties" menu option **178**, a property sheet **180** (FIG. 19) is displayed. The "General" property sheet **180** specifies general information about the Internet shortcut. The user may also position the mouse cursor to point at tab **182** and click a left mouse button on mouse **46** to display the "Internet Shortcut" property sheet (FIG. 20). The "Internet Shortcut" property sheet **184** includes a text box **186** for viewing and editing the URL that is associated with the shortcut. The "Internet Shortcut" property sheet **184** additionally includes a "Run" drop down list **188** that allows a user to specify the start state of the window when the associated application for displaying the Internet document is run. A user may specify the start state as minimized, normal or maximized through the "Run" drop down list **188**. Text box **190** allows a user to specify what directory to start in when the associated application is run. Lastly, "Change Icon . . ." button **192** is provided to allow a user to change the icon that is associated with the Internet shortcut. These property sheets are implemented as property sheet extensions as described in the copending application entitled "Shell Extensions for an Operating System", Ser. No. 08/355,410. The property sheet handler is provided by `URL.DLL`.

The .url files have a predefined format. Each .url file may include a URL and other information such as working directory, icon file, icon index and hot key. An example of a contents of a .url file for an Internet shortcut is as follows:

```
[InternetShortcut]
URL=http ://www.unitedmedia.com/comics/dilbert/
archive/dilbert950826.gif
Hotkey=1604
WorkingDirectory=d : \temp
ShowCommand=3
IconFile=C:\WINDOWS\system\shell32.dll
IconIndex=21
```

As mentioned above, Internet shortcuts may be dragged and dropped. The Internet shortcuts utilize the Microsoft OLE 2.01 mechanism described in copending application "Uniform Data Transfer", Ser. No. 08/199,853, filed on Feb. 22, 1994, which is explicitly incorporated by reference herein. FIGS. 21A and 21B illustrate an example of how this drag and drop capability may be utilized. Suppose that a user has a word processing window **194** open with an open document **196**. If the user drags Internet shortcut icon **52** and drops the Internet shortcut icon in the document **196**, the Internet shortcut becomes embedded within the document. A corresponding Internet shortcut icon **198** is displayed within the document **196**. The drop behavior that is exhibited is a product of the drop target as established by the Microsoft OLE 2.01 protocol.

Because Internet shortcuts are objects that are visible in the name space, they may be treated like other objects in the name space. Accordingly, the Internet shortcut icons may be transferred in a fashion like other objects. One way in which these Internet shortcuts may be transferred is through the context menu **146**. The context menu includes a "Send To" menu option **200** (FIG. 22) that has an associated cascading menu **202** that lists the number of possible destinations. These destinations include floppy disk, facsimile recipients and e-mail recipients.

A user may open an Internet shortcut in a number of different ways. A first option is for the user to select the open

menu option **204** from the context menu **146** for the Internet shortcut **52** FIG. **22**). A second option is for a user to position a mouse cursor over the Internet shortcut icon **52** and double click the designated button of the mouse **46**. An Internet shortcut may also be opened in the explorer application **205** (FIG. **23**). In particular, a user may open a file menu **206** and select the "Open" menu option **208**.

All of the above described approaches for opening an Internet shortcut cause the steps in FIG. **24** to be performed. Initially, the Internet shortcut extension handler (URL.DLL) is invoked (step **210**). The Internet shortcut extension handler retrieves the URL from the Internet shortcut object and parses the URL (step **212**). The Internet shortcut extension handler then determines the protocol for the URL from the parsed URL (step **214**). Using the protocol identification information that has been determined from the parsed URL, the Internet shortcut extension handler looks to the registry to fetch the client program for the protocol handler name (based on protocol) and syntax for passing the URL argument (step **216**). The Internet shortcut extension handler then calls the client program using the determined syntax to request opening of the associated document (step **218**). The document is then opened by the Internet viewer (step **220**). The Internet viewer includes the appropriate intelligence for using the URL to locate the corresponding document.

In order to support activation of the corresponding Internet document from an Internet shortcut, the preferred embodiment of the present invention defines the IShellExecuteHook interface that is supported by the Interface shortcut objects. The IShellExecuteHook interface is used to allow a full or partial URL to be programmatically activated by calling the ShellExecuteO API in the operating system **36**. The interface supports a single function :Execute(). The Execute method executes a given argument, such as a URL.

While the present invention has been described with reference to a preferred embodiment thereof, those skilled in the art will appreciate that various changes in form or detail may be made without departing from the intended scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims. For example, the present invention may be used to encapsulate other kinds of location information that differ from URLs.

We claim:

1. In a client computer system that runs an operating system that provides a name space of objects that are visible to a user on an output device and that is coupled to a network having a server for providing a resource, said resource having an associated uniform resource locator (URL), said operating system enabling a web browser to employ the associated URL to locate a web page that provides access to the resource, a method comprising:

- (a) searching the network with the web browser to locate the web page that provides access to the resource;
- (b) entering a create shortcut command from within said web browser for encapsulating the URL associated with the resource into a shortcut object;
- (c) displaying a virtual desktop generated by said operating system on said output device;
- (d) displaying a visual representation of the shortcut object on the virtual desktop;
- (e) storing the shortcut object in the client computer system so that it is visible in the name space; and
- (f) automatically activating said web browser to locate and access the resource with said web browser when said shortcut object is selected.

2. The method of claim **1** wherein the display of the visual representation of the shortcut object on the virtual desktop

includes a graphic for identifying the shortcut object as a shortcut to the resource.

3. The method of claim **2** wherein the visual representation of the shortcut object is an icon.

4. The method of claim **2** wherein the client computer includes a pointing input device that is adapted for enabling the user to drag and drop the visual representation of the shortcut object in response to the selection of the shortcut object by the pointing input device.

5. The method of claim **1** wherein the shortcut object is a shortcut to access the resource.

6. A client computer system that is coupled to a server computer that has a resource for access by the client computer system, said resource having a uniform resource locator (URL) for enabling location of the resource by the client computer system, said operating system enabling a web browser to locate and access the resource, said client computer system comprising:

- (a) a storage device for storing at least one object;
- (b) an operating system that provides a name space for at least one object;
- (c) an output device for displaying each object in said name space to a user;
- (d) a navigation module for searching the network with the web browser to locate and access the resource;
- (e) a module for encapsulating the URL of the resource into a shortcut object that is visible in the name space, said module performing said encapsulation of the URL when a create shortcut command is performed by said browser; and
- (f) an access module for using the URL encapsulated in the shortcut object to automatically activate the web browser to locate and access the resource on behalf of the client computer system when said user activates said shortcut object.

7. The client computer system of claim **6** further comprising an output device for generating a display that includes a visual representation of the shortcut object.

8. The client computer system of claim **7** further comprising a facility for enabling the visual representation of the shortcut object to be dragged and dropped on the display.

9. In a client computer system that runs an operating system that provides a name space of objects that are visible to a user on an output device and that is coupled to a network having a server for providing a resource, said resource having an associated uniform resource locator (URL), said operating system enabling a web browser to locate a web page that provides access to the resource, a method comprising:

- (a) searching the network with the web browser to locate the web page that provides access to the resource;
- (b) executing a create shortcut command from within said web browser to encapsulate the URL for the resource into a shortcut object;
- (c) displaying a virtual desktop generated by said operating system on said output device;
- (d) displaying a visual representation of the shortcut object on the virtual desktop;
- (e) storing the shortcut object in the client computer system so that it is visible in the name space; and
- (f) automatically activating said web browser to provide access to the resource when said shortcut object is selected.

10. A client computer system that is coupled to a server computer that has a resource for access by the client com-

13

puter system, said resource having a uniform resource locator (URL) for enabling location of the resource by the client computer system, said operating system enabling a web browser to locate and access the resource, said client computer system comprising:

- (a) a storage device for storing at least the object;
- (b) an operating system for providing a name space for at least one object;
- (c) an output device for displaying each object in said name space to a user;
- (d) a navigation module for employing the web browser to locate the resource;
- (e) a module for encapsulating the URL of the resource into a shortcut object that is visible in the name space, said module performing said encapsulation of the URL when a create shortcut command is received by said web browser; and
- (f) an access module that employs the web browser and the URL encapsulated in the shortcut object to automatically activate the web browser to locate and access the resource on behalf of the client computer system when said shortcut object is selected.

14

11. In a computer system, a method for producing a shortcut for a user to access a resource on a network, comprising:

- (a) searching the network with a web browser to locate a resource, the web browser being adapted for a user to determine how the search for the resource is performed;
- (b) employing the web browser to encapsulate a URL for the resource into a shortcut object when the resource is located, the shortcut object being separately visible in a name space of an operating system;
- (c) displaying the shortcut object on a display generated by the operating system, the displayed shortcut object being selectable by the user; and
- (d) automatically activating the web browser when the shortcut object is selected, so that the web browser will employ the URL encapsulated in the shortcut object to locate and provide access to the resource.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein searching the network with the web browser, further comprises locating a web page that provides access to the resource.

13. A medium having computer executable instructions for performing the method recited in claim 11.

* * * * *

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 5,877,765
DATED : March 2, 1999
INVENTOR(S) : D.R. Dickman et al.

Page 1 of 4

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

COLUMN

LINE

[56] Pg. 1, col. 2	Refs. Cited (Other publs., Item 3)	"Files:" should read --Files,--
[56] Pg. 1, col. 2	Refs. Cited (Other publs., Item 3)	"and Alias Manager, pp." should read --and "Alias Manager," pp.--
1	28	"FIG. 1.A" should read --FIG. 1A--
1	50	after "list" insert --22--
3	27	"illustrates a" should read --illustrates an--
3	64	"illustrates a" should read --illustrates an--
4	44	"the Internet 32." should read --an Internet 32.--
5	3	before "keyboard 44," insert --a--
5	21	"url" should read --.url--
6	40	before "window 58" insert --a--
6	41	"desktop 56." should read --desktop 50.--
6	46	"the" (third occurrence) should read --a--

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 5,877,765
DATED : March 2, 1999
INVENTOR(S) : D.R. Dickman et al.

Page 2 of 4

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

6	55	"desktop 56." should read --desktop 50.--
6	63	after "provided on" insert --the--
7	13	"the Name" should read --a Name--
7	26	"IShellLink" should read --IShellLink--
7	50	"QueryInterfaceo" should read --QueryInterface()--
8	5	"desktop 56" should read --desktop 50--
8	30	"FIG. 3" should read --FIG. 13--
8	36	after "shortcut at" insert --a--
8	41	"CoCreateInstance()" should read --CoCreateInstance()--
8	46	"QueryInterface()" should read --QueryInterface()--
9	2	"desktop 56" should read --desktop 50--
9	13	"FIG. 15B" should read --FIG. 16B--
9	17	"provide" should read --provided--
9	33	"GetNameo" should read --GetName()--
9	42	"INewS- hortCutHook" should break as follows: --INew- ShortCutHook--

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 5,877,765
DATED : March 2, 1999
INVENTOR(S) : D.R. Dickman et al.

Page 3 of 4

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

<u>COLUMN</u>	<u>LINE</u>	<u>ERROR</u>
9	42	"INew-ShortCutHook" should read --INew-ShortcutHook--
9	45	"SetFolderO" should read --SetFolder()--
9	49	"GetExtensiono" should read --GetExtension()--
9	54	"QueryInterface()" should read --QueryInterface()--
9	55	"PersistFile" should read --IPersistFile--
10	5	"a context menu" should read --the context menu--
10	5	"146" (both instances) should read --144--
10	12	"display the" should read --display an--
10	12	after "property sheet" insert --189--
10	20	"Text box" should read --A text box--
10	22	after "Lastly," insert --a--
10	34	"http ." should read --http:--
10	37	"d :\\temp" should read --d:\\temp--
10	40	"IconilIndex" should read --IconIndex--

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

Page 4 of 4

PATENT NO. : 5,877,765
DATED : March 2, 1999
INVENTOR(S) : D.R. Dickman et al.

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

10	61	"146" should read --144--
10	67	"select the open" should read --select an open--
11	1	"146" should read --144--
11	2	before "FIG. 22)" insert --(--
11	5	"the explorer" should read --an explorer--
11	7	"select the" should read --select an--
11	32	"ShallExecuteO" should read --ShallExecute()--

Signed and Sealed this
Fifth Day of October, 1999

Attest:



Q. TODD DICKINSON

Attesting Officer

Acting Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 5,877,765
DATED : March 2, 1999
INVENTOR(S) : D. R. Dickerman et al.

Page 1 of 1

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

Title page.

Item {73} Assignee: after "Microsoft Corporation" insert -- , Redmond, W.A.

Signed and Sealed this

Fourth Day of September, 2001

Attest:

Nicholas P. Godici

Attesting Officer

NICHOLAS P. GODICI
Acting Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office