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United States Patent and Trademark Office

August 20, 2024

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APPLICATION NUMBER: ***13/963,050***
FILING DATE: ***August 09, 2013***
PATENT NUMBER: ***RE45971***
ISSUE DATE: ***April 12, 2016***

Certified by

Katherine Kelly Vidal

Performing the Functions and Duties of the
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for Intellectual Property
and Director of the United States
Patent and Trademark Office

PTO/AIA/50 (03-13)
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REISSUE PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

Address to:		
Mail Stop Reissue **Commissioner for Patents** **P.O. Box 1450** **Alexandria, VA 22313-1450**	Attorney Docket No.	8201-0015
	First Named Inventor	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III
	Original Patent Number	7996259
	Original Patent Issue Date (Month/Day/Year)	08/09/2011
	Express Mail Label No.	

APPLICATION FORREISSUE OF: (*Check applicable box*) ☑ Utility Patent ☐ Design Patent ☐ Plant Patent

APPLICATION ELEMENTS (37 CFR 1.173)	ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS
1. ☑ **Fee Transmittal Form** (PTO/SB/56)	11. ☑ **Statement of status and support for all changes to the claims.** See 37 CFR 1.173(c).
2. ☑ **Applicant asserts small entity status.** See 37 CFR 1.27	12. ☑ **Power of Attorney**
3. ☐ **Applicant certifies micro entity status.** See 37 CFR 1.29. Applicant must attach form PTO/SB/15A or B or equivalent.	13. ☑ **Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)** PTOSB/08 or PTO-1449 ☐ Copies of citations attached
4. ☑ **Specification and Claims** in double column copy of patent format (*amended, if appropriate*)	14. ☐ **English translation of Reissue Oath/Declaration** (*if applicable*)
5. ☑ **Drawing(s)** (*proposed amendments, if appropriate*)	16. ☐ **Return Receipt Postcard** (MPEP § 503) (Should be specifically itemized)
6. ☑ **Reissue Oath/Declaration or Substitute Statement** (37 CFR 1.175) (PTO/AIA/05, 06, or 07)	17. ☐ **Other:** _____
7. ☑ **Application Data Sheet** **NOTE:** Benefit claims under 37 CFR 1.78 and foreign priority claims under 37 CFR 1.55 MUST be set forth in an Application Data Sheet (ADS).	
8. ☑ **Original U.S. Patent currently assigned?** ☑ Yes ☐ No (*If Yes, check applicable box(es)*) ☑ Written Consent of all Assignees (PTO/AIA/53) ☑ 37 CFR 3.73(c) Statement (PTO/AIA/96)	☐ This is a continuation reissue or divisional reissue application (*i.e.*, a second or subsequent reissue application for the same issued patent). (*Check box if applicable.*)
9. ☐ **CD-ROM or CD-R** in duplicate, Computer Program (*Appendix*) or large table ☐ Landscape Table on CD	
10. **Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission** (*if applicable, items a. – c. are required*) a. ☐ Computer Readable Form (CRF) b. ☐ Specification Sequence Listing on: i. ☐ CD-ROM (2 copies) or CD-R (2 copies); **or** ii. ☐ Paper c. ☐ Statements verifying identity of above copies	

18. CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

☑ The address associated with Customer Number: 55246 **OR** ☐ Correspondence address below

Name					
Address					
City		State		Zip Code	
Country		Telephone			
Email					

Signature	/SCOTT D. PAUL/	Date	2013-08-09
Name (Print/Type)	SCOTT D. PAUL	Registration No.	42984

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.173. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.11 and 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Mail Stop Reissue, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

If you need assistance in completing the form, call 1-800-PTO-9199 and select option 2.

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Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015
	Application Number	
Title of Invention	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS	

The application data sheet is part of the provisional or nonprovisional application for which it is being submitted. The following form contains the bibliographic data arranged in a format specified by the United States Patent and Trademark Office as outlined in 37 CFR 1.76.
This document may be completed electronically and submitted to the Office in electronic format using the Electronic Filing System (EFS) or the document may be printed and included in a paper filed application.

Secrecy Order 37 CFR 5.2

☐ Portions or all of the application associated with this Application Data Sheet may fall under a Secrecy Order pursuant to 37 CFR 5.2 (Paper filers only. Applications that fall under Secrecy Order may not be filed electronically.)

Inventor Information:

Inventor 1 Remove

Legal Name

Prefix	Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	Suffix
	THOMAS	L.	DISTEFANO	III

Residence Information (Select One) ◉ US Residency ○ Non US Residency ○ Active US Military Service

City	BOCA RATON	State/Province	FL	Country of Residence i	US

Mailing Address of Inventor:

Address 1	2910 NW 26TH AVENUE		
Address 2			
City	BOCA RATON	State/Province	FL
Postal Code	33434	Country i	US

All Inventors Must Be Listed - Additional Inventor Information blocks may be generated within this form by selecting the **Add** button. Add

Correspondence Information:

Enter either Customer Number or complete the Correspondence Information section below.
For further information see 37 CFR 1.33(a).

☐ **An Address is being provided for the correspondence Information of this application.**

Customer Number	55246		
Email Address	PTOMAIL@IPLAWPRO.COM	Add Email	Remove Email

Application Information:

Title of the Invention	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS		
Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015	Small Entity Status Claimed	☒
Application Type	Nonprovisional		
Subject Matter	Utility		
Total Number of Drawing Sheets (if any)	23	Suggested Figure for Publication (if any)	

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Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015
	Application Number	
Title of Invention	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS	

Publication Information:

☐	Request Early Publication (Fee required at time of Request 37 CFR 1.219)
☐	**Request Not to Publish.** I hereby request that the attached application not be published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b) and certify that the invention disclosed in the attached application **has not and will not** be the subject of an application filed in another country, or under a multilateral international agreement, that requires publication at eighteen months after filing.

Representative Information:

Representative information should be provided for all practitioners having a power of attorney in the application. Providing this information in the Application Data Sheet does not constitute a power of attorney in the application (see 37 CFR 1.32).
Either enter Customer Number or complete the Representative Name section below. If both sections are completed the customer Number will be used for the Representative Information during processing.

Please Select One:	◉ Customer Number	○ US Patent Practitioner	○ Limited Recognition (37 CFR 11.9)
Customer Number	55246		

Domestic Benefit/National Stage Information:

This section allows for the applicant to either claim benefit under 35 U.S.C. 119(e), 120, 121, or 365(c) or indicate National Stage entry from a PCT application. Providing this information in the application data sheet constitutes the specific reference required by 35 U.S.C. 119(e) or 120, and 37 CFR 1.78.

Prior Application Status			Remove
Application Number	Continuity Type	Prior Application Number	Filing Date (YYYY-MM-DD)

Additional Domestic Benefit/National Stage Data may be generated within this form by selecting the **Add** button. Add

Foreign Priority Information:

This section allows for the applicant to claim priority to a foreign application. Providing this information in the application data sheet constitutes the claim for priority as required by 35 U.S.C. 119(b) and 37 CFR 1.55(d). When priority is claimed to a foreign application that is eligible for retrieval under the priority document exchange program (PDX) [i] the information will be used by the Office to automatically attempt retrieval pursuant to 37 CFR 1.55(h)(1) and (2). Under the PDX program, applicant bears the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that a copy of the foreign application is received by the Office from the participating foreign intellectual property office, or a certified copy of the foreign priority application is filed, within the time period specified in 37 CFR 1.55(g)(1).

Remove

Application Number	Country [i]	Filing Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	Access Code [i] (if applicable)

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Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015
	Application Number	
Title of Invention	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS	

Statement under 37 CFR 1.55 or 1.78 for AIA (First Inventor to File) Transition Applications

☐ This application (1) claims priority to or the benefit of an application filed before March 16, 2013 and (2) also contains, or contained at any time, a claim to a claimed invention that has an effective filing date on or after March 16, 2013.

Authorization to Permit Access:

☒ Authorization to Permit Access to the Instant Application by the Participating Offices

If checked, the undersigned hereby grants the USPTO authority to provide the European Patent Office (EPO), the Japan Patent Office (JPO), the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO), and any other intellectual property offices in which a foreign application claiming priority to the instant patent application is filed access to the instant patent application. See 37 CFR 1.14(c) and (h). This box should not be checked if the applicant does not wish the EPO, JPO, KIPO, WIPO, or other intellectual property office in which a foreign application claiming priority to the instant patent application is filed to have access to the instant patent application.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.14(h)(3), access will be provided to a copy of the instant patent application with respect to: 1) the instant patent application-as-filed; 2) any foreign application to which the instant patent application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d) if a copy of the foreign application that satisfies the certified copy requirement of 37 CFR 1.55 has been filed in the instant patent application; and 3) any U.S. application-as-filed from which benefit is sought in the instant patent application.

In accordance with 37 CFR 1.14(c), access may be provided to information concerning the date of filing this Authorization.

Applicant Information:

Providing assignment information in this section does not substitute for compliance with any requirement of part 3 of Title 37 of CFR to have an assignment recorded by the Office.

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TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
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Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015
	Application Number	
Title of Invention	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS	

Applicant 1 Remove

If the applicant is the inventor (or the remaining joint inventor or inventors under 37 CFR 1.45), this section should not be completed. The information to be provided in this section is the name and address of the legal representative who is the applicant under 37 CFR 1.43; or the name and address of the assignee, person to whom the inventor is under an obligation to assign the invention, or person who otherwise shows sufficient proprietary interest in the matter who is the applicant under 37 CFR 1.46. If the applicant is an applicant under 37 CFR 1.46 (assignee, person to whom the inventor is obligated to assign, or person who otherwise shows sufficient proprietary interest) together with one or more joint inventors, then the joint inventor or inventors who are also the applicant should be identified in this section.

Clear

(•) Assignee	( ) Legal Representative under 35 U.S.C. 117	( ) Joint Inventor
( ) Person to whom the inventor is obligated to assign.	( ) Person who shows sufficient proprietary interest	

If applicant is the legal representative, indicate the authority to file the patent application, the inventor is:

Name of the Deceased or Legally Incapacitated Inventor :

If the Applicant is an Organization check here. [X]

Organization Name	PT 259, LLC		
Mailing Address Information:			
Address 1	2910 NW 26TH AVENUE		
Address 2			
City	BOCA RATON	**State/Province**	FL
Country i	US	Postal Code	33434
Phone Number		Fax Number	
Email Address			

Additional Applicant Data may be generated within this form by selecting the Add button. Add

Non-Applicant Assignee Information:

Providing assignment information in this section does not subsitute for compliance with any requirement of part 3 of Title 37 of CFR to have an assignment recorded by the Office.

Assignee 1

Complete this section only if non-applicant assignee information is desired to be included on the patent application publication in accordance with 37 CFR 1.215(b). Do not include in this section an applicant under 37 CFR 1.46 (assignee, person to whom the inventor is obligated to assign, or person who otherwise shows sufficient proprietary interest), as the patent application publication will include the name of the applicant(s).

Remove

If the Assignee is an Organization check here. [X]

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Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015
	Application Number	
Title of Invention	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS	

Organization Name	PT 259, LLC

Mailing Address Information:

Address 1	2910 NW 26TH AVENUE		
Address 2			
City	BOCA RATON	**State/Province**	FL
Country i	US	Postal Code	33434
Phone Number		Fax Number	
Email Address			

Additional Assignee Data may be generated within this form by selecting the Add button. Add

Signature:

Remove

NOTE: This form must be signed in accordance with 37 CFR 1.33. See 37 CFR 1.4 for signature requirements and certifications

Signature	/SCOTT D. PAUL/			Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2013-08-09
First Name	SCOTT	Last Name	PAUL	Registration Number	42984

Additional Signature may be generated within this form by selecting the Add button. Add

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.76. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 23 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application data sheet form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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The Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579) requires that you be given certain information in connection with your submission of the attached form related to a patent application or patent. Accordingly, pursuant to the requirements of the Act, please be advised that: (1) the general authority for the collection of this information is 35 U.S.C. 2(b)(2); (2) furnishing of the information solicited is voluntary; and (3) the principal purpose for which the information is used by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is to process and/or examine your submission related to a patent application or patent. If you do not furnish the requested information, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office may not be able to process and/or examine your submission, which may result in termination of proceedings or abandonment of the application or expiration of the patent.

The information provided by you in this form will be subject to the following routine uses:

1. The information on this form will be treated confidentially to the extent allowed under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) and the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a). Records from this system of records may be disclosed to the Department of Justice to determine whether the Freedom of Information Act requires disclosure of these records.

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3. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Member of Congress submitting a request involving an individual, to whom the record pertains, when the individual has requested assistance from the Member with respect to the subject matter of the record.

4. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a contractor of the Agency having need for the information in order to perform a contract. Recipients of information shall be required to comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(m).

5. A record related to an International Application filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization, pursuant to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

6. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to another federal agency for purposes of National Security review (35 U.S.C. 181) and for review pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 218(c)).

7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (i.e., GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.

8. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the public after either publication of the application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b) or issuance of a patent pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 151. Further, a record may be disclosed, subject to the limitations of 37 CFR 1.14, as a routine use, to the public if the record was filed in an application which became abandoned or in which the proceedings were terminated and which application is referenced by either a published application, an application open to public inspections or an issued patent.

9. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency, if the USPTO becomes aware of a violation or potential violation of law or regulation.

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US007996259B1

(12) **United States Patent**
DiStefano, III

(10) **Patent No.: US 7,996,259 B1**
(45) **Date of Patent: Aug. 9, 2011**

(54) **METHOD FOR DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS**

(75) Inventor: **Thomas L. DiStefano, III**, Boca Raton, FL (US)

(73) Assignee: **Perfect Web Technologies, Inc.**, Boca Raton, FL (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 2500 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **09/589,551**

(22) Filed: **Jun. 7, 2000**

(51) **Int. Cl.**
G06Q 30/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **705/14.1**

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 705/14, 705/14.1, 26, 27
See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

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6,601,057	B1 *	7/2003	Underwood et al.	707/1
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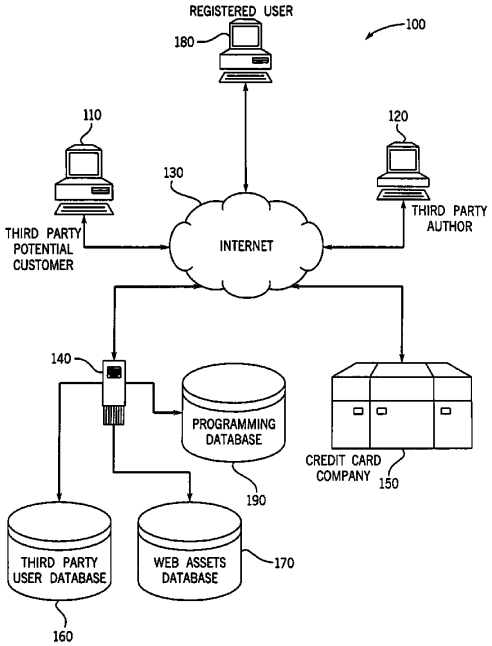
* cited by examiner

Primary Examiner — Daniel Lastra
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Steven M. Greenberg, Esq.; Carey Rodriguez Greenberg & Paul LLP

(57) **ABSTRACT**

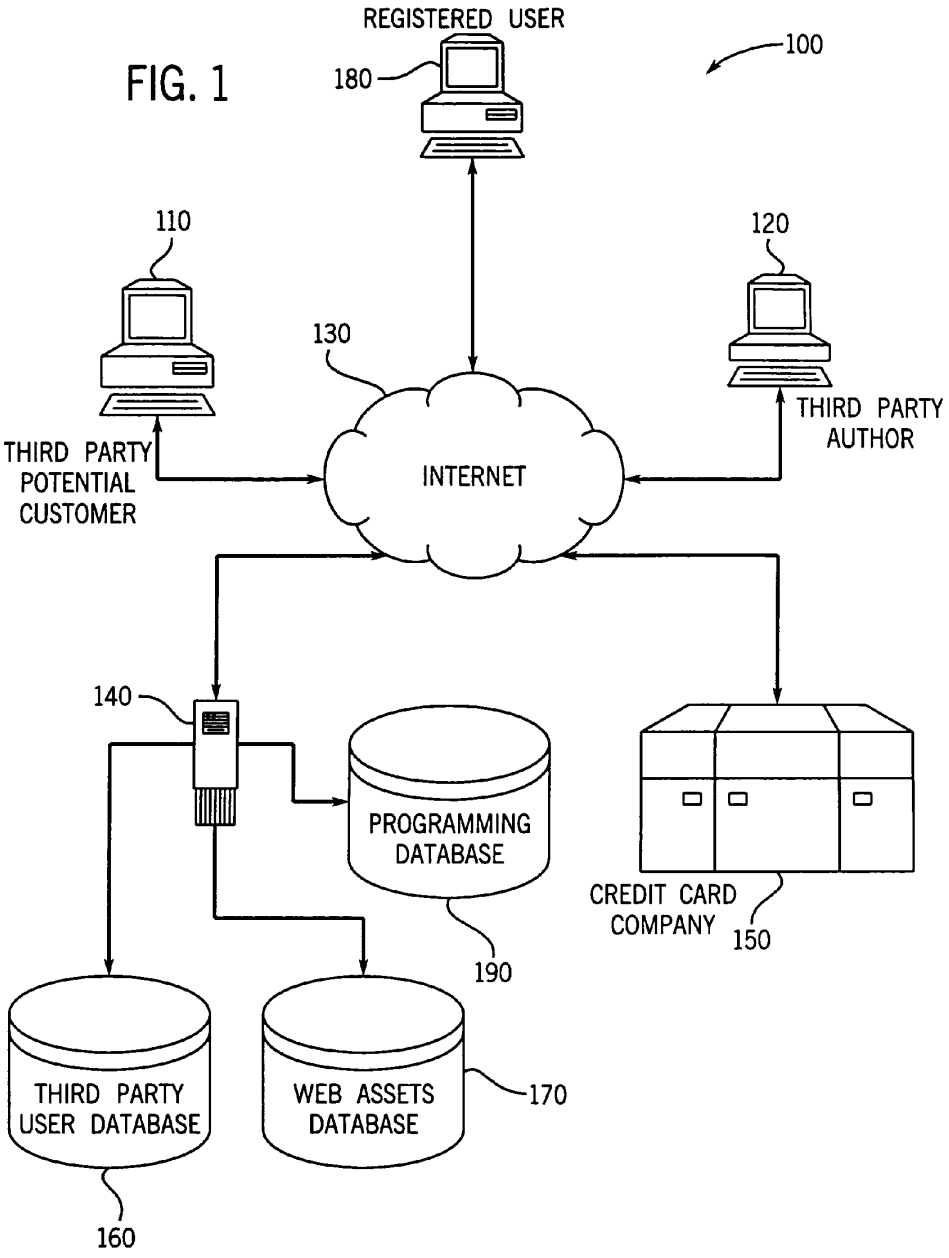
A method of assisting a website designer in establishing an arrangement between a first website being designed by the website designer and a second website in order to market the first website at the second website upon the activation of the first website on the internet is provided. The method includes, during design of the first website, receiving information at a user interface indicating a type of an element for marketing that is to be displayed at the second website, and information specifying the second website at which the element is to be displayed; saving the information at a first database that is coupled to the user interface; obtaining the element for marketing of the type indicated; and causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website when the first website is activated with respect to the internet. The element for marketing includes at least one of a banner ad concerning the first website and a link to the first website. Further provided is a method of assisting a website designer in establishing an e-commerce feature on a first website being designed by the website designer for access by third parties upon the activation of the first website on the internet, wherein the e-commerce feature is at least one of a shopping cart and an auction.

7 Claims, 23 Drawing Sheets



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FIG. 1


REGISTERED USER
180
100
110
120
130
THIRD PARTY POTENTIAL CUSTOMER
INTERNET
THIRD PARTY AUTHOR
140
PROGRAMMING DATABASE
CREDIT CARD COMPANY
150
190
THIRD PARTY USER DATABASE
WEB ASSETS DATABASE
170
160

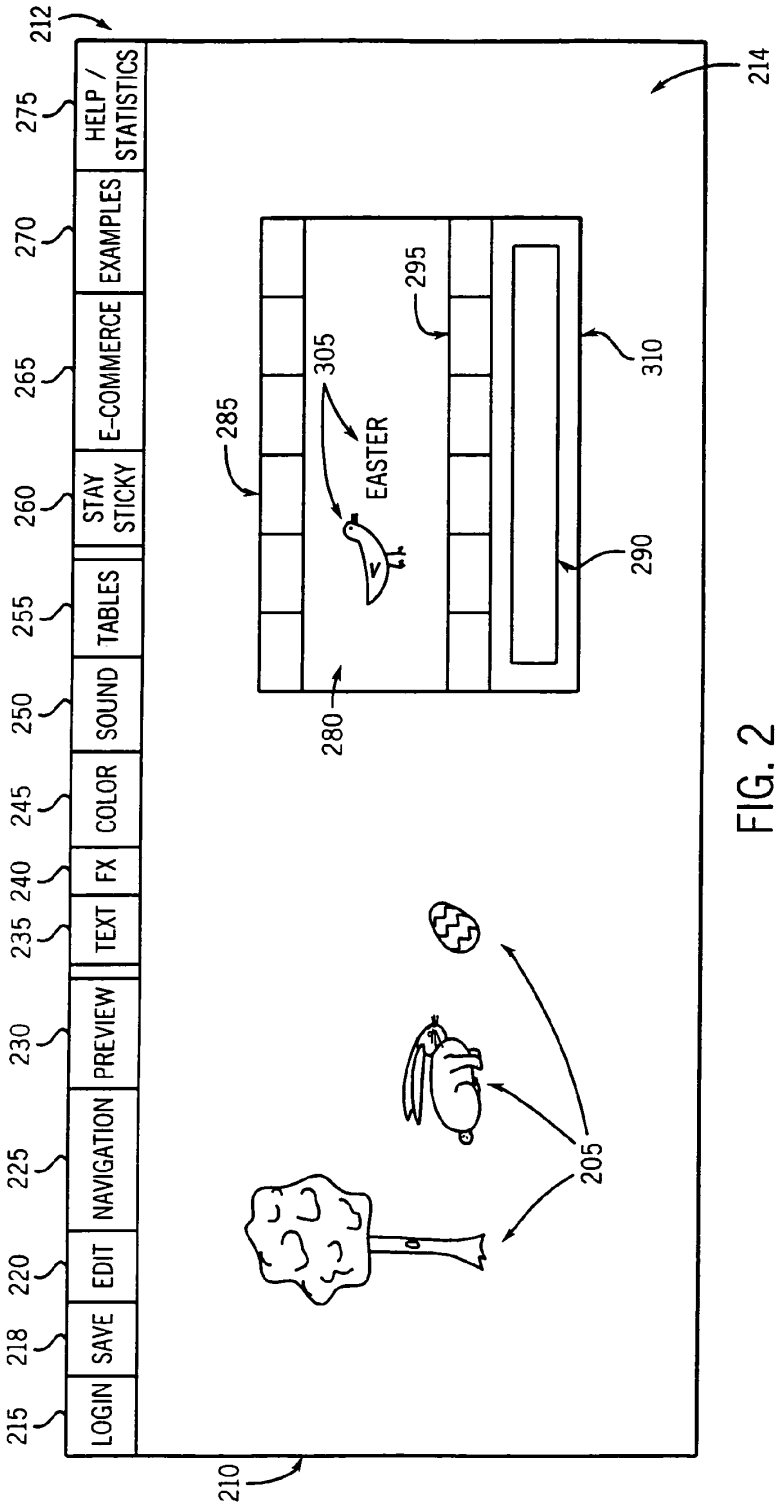
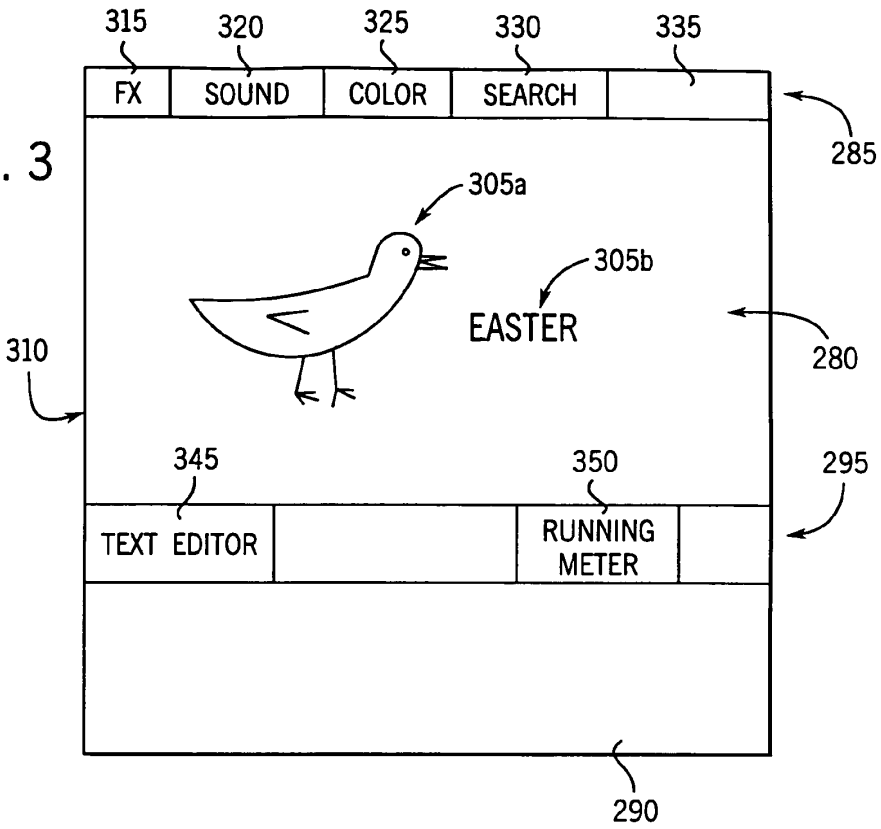

212
214
275
HELP / STATISTICS
270
EXAMPLES
265
E-COMMERCE
260
STAY STICKY
255
TABLES
250
SOUND
245
COLOR
240
FX
235
TEXT
230
PREVIEW
225
NAVIGATION
220
EDIT
218
SAVE
215
LOGIN
210
285
305
EASTER
295
310
290
280
205

FIG. 2

FIG. 3


315
320
325
330
335
FX
SOUND
COLOR
SEARCH
285
305a
305b
EASTER
310
280
345
350
295
TEXT EDITOR
RUNNING METER
290

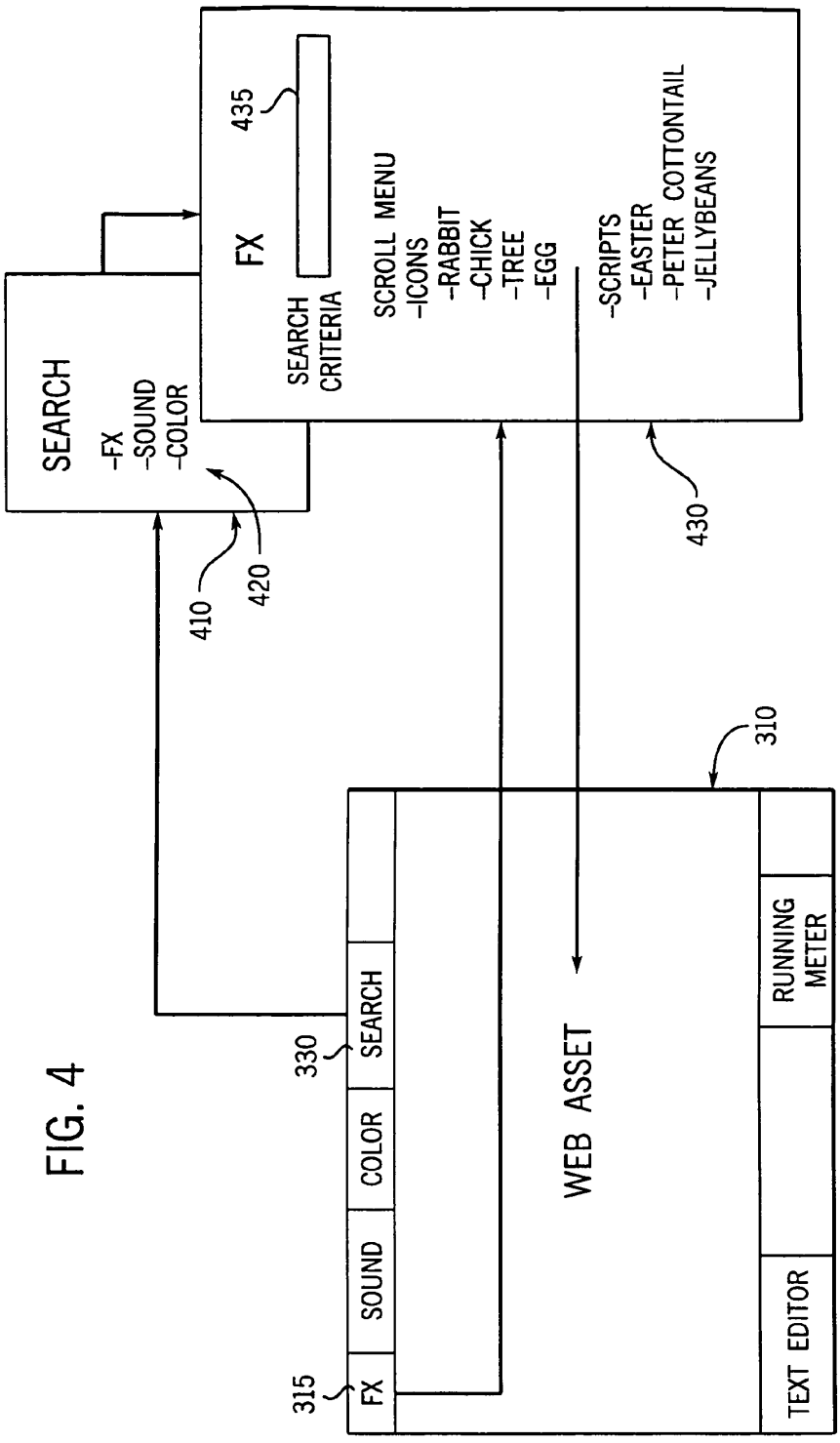

SEARCH
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-COLOR
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-RABBIT
-CHICK
-TREE
-EGG
-SCRIPTS
-EASTER
-PETER COTTONTAIL
-JELLYBEANS
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FX
SOUND
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WEB ASSET
TEXT EDITOR
RUNNING METER

FIG. 4

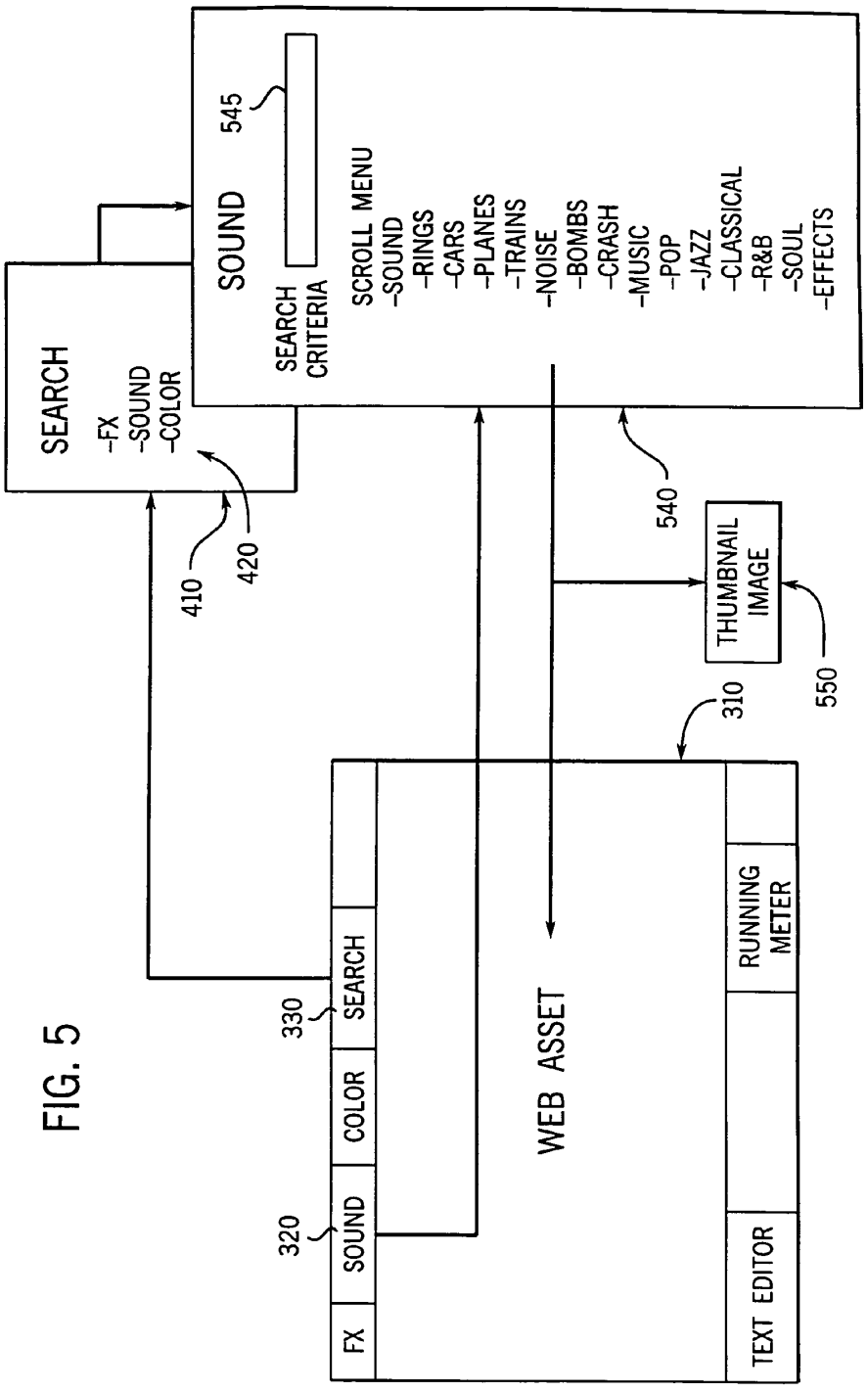

SEARCH
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-COLOR
SOUND
SEARCH CRITERIA
545
SCROLL MENU
-SOUND
-RINGS
-CARS
-PLANES
-TRAINS
-NOISE
-BOMBS
-CRASH
-MUSIC
-POP
-JAZZ
-CLASSICAL
-R&B
-SOUL
-EFFECTS
410
420
540
THUMBNAIL IMAGE
550
310
WEB ASSET
330
SEARCH
COLOR
320
SOUND
FX
RUNNING METER
TEXT EDITOR

FIG. 5

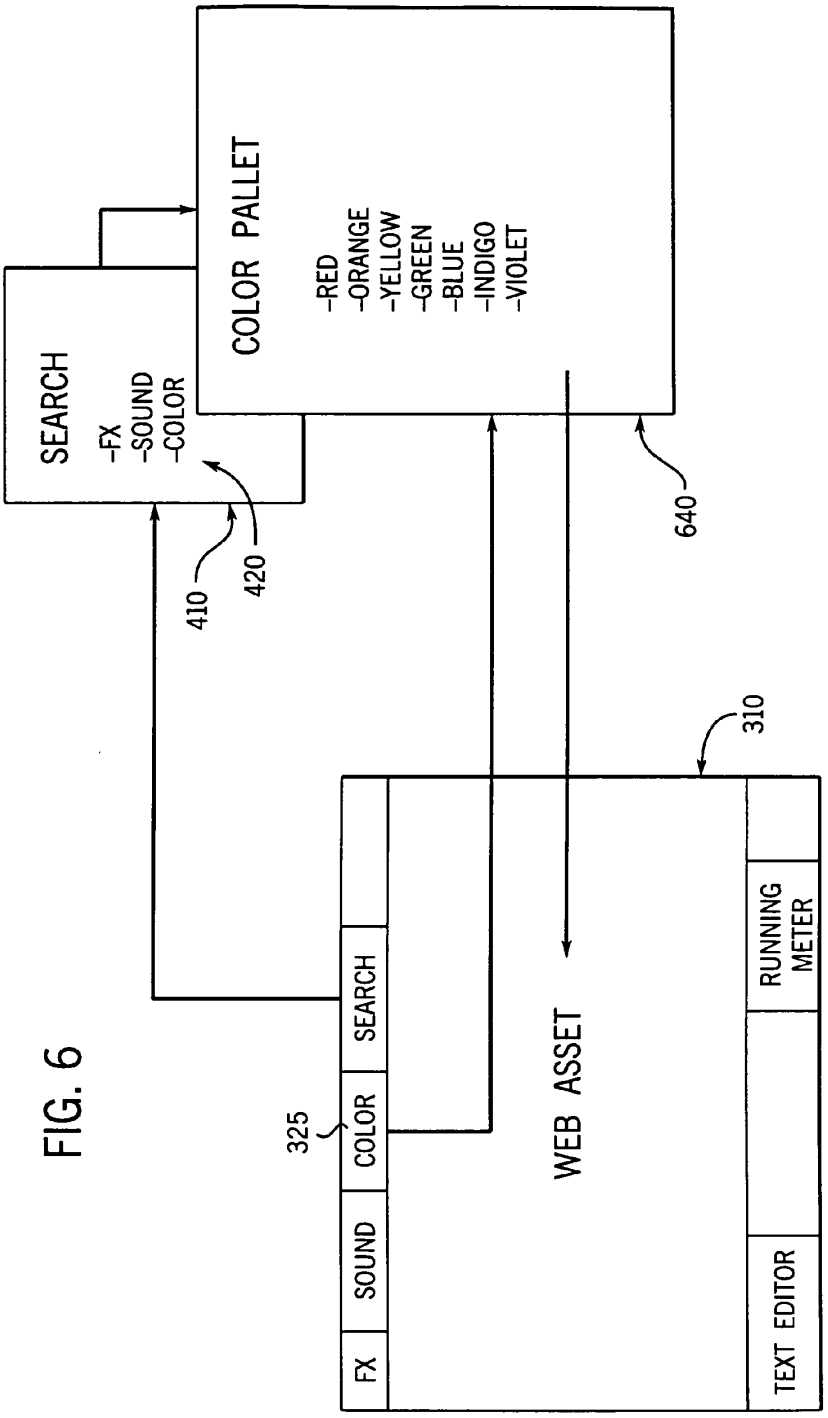

COLOR PALLET
-RED
-ORANGE
-YELLOW
-GREEN
-BLUE
-INDIGO
-VIOLET
SEARCH
-FX
-SOUND
-COLOR
410
420
640
310
WEB ASSET
FX
SOUND
COLOR
SEARCH
325
RUNNING METER
TEXT EDITOR

FIG. 6

FIG. 7

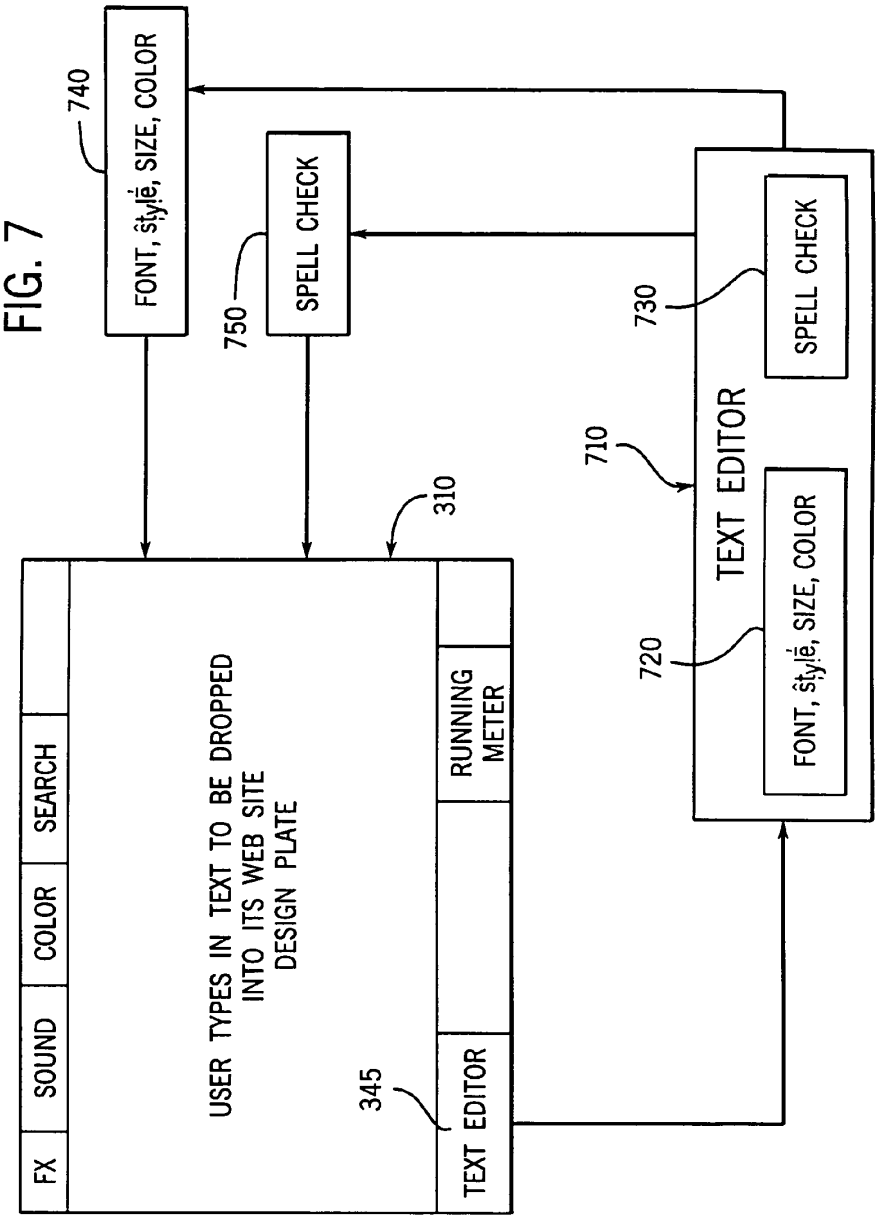
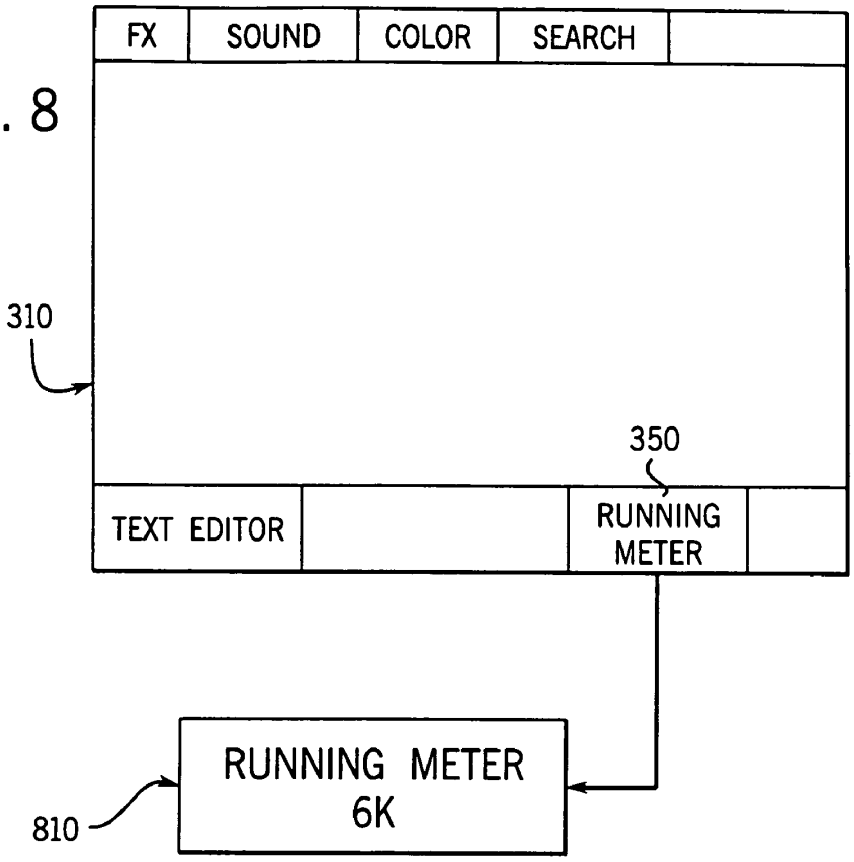

740
FONT, style, SIZE, COLOR
750
SPELL CHECK
730
SPELL CHECK
710
TEXT EDITOR
720
FONT, style, SIZE, COLOR
310
FX
SOUND
COLOR
SEARCH
USER TYPES IN TEXT TO BE DROPPED
INTO ITS WEB SITE
DESIGN PLATE
RUNNING METER
345
TEXT EDITOR

FIG. 8


FX
SOUND
COLOR
SEARCH
310
350
TEXT EDITOR
RUNNING METER
RUNNING METER 6K
810

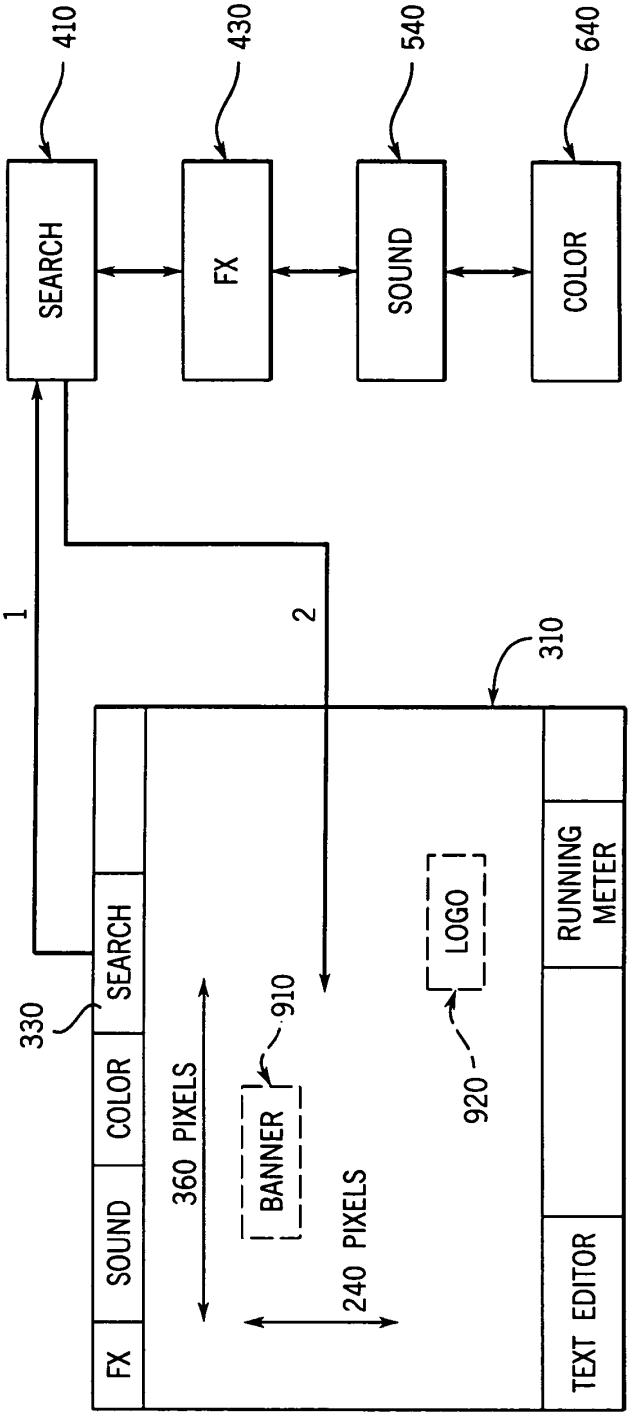

410
430
540
640
SEARCH
FX
SOUND
COLOR
1
2
310
330
SEARCH
COLOR
SOUND
FX
360 PIXELS
910
BANNER
240 PIXELS
LOGO
920
RUNNING METER
TEXT EDITOR

FIG. 9

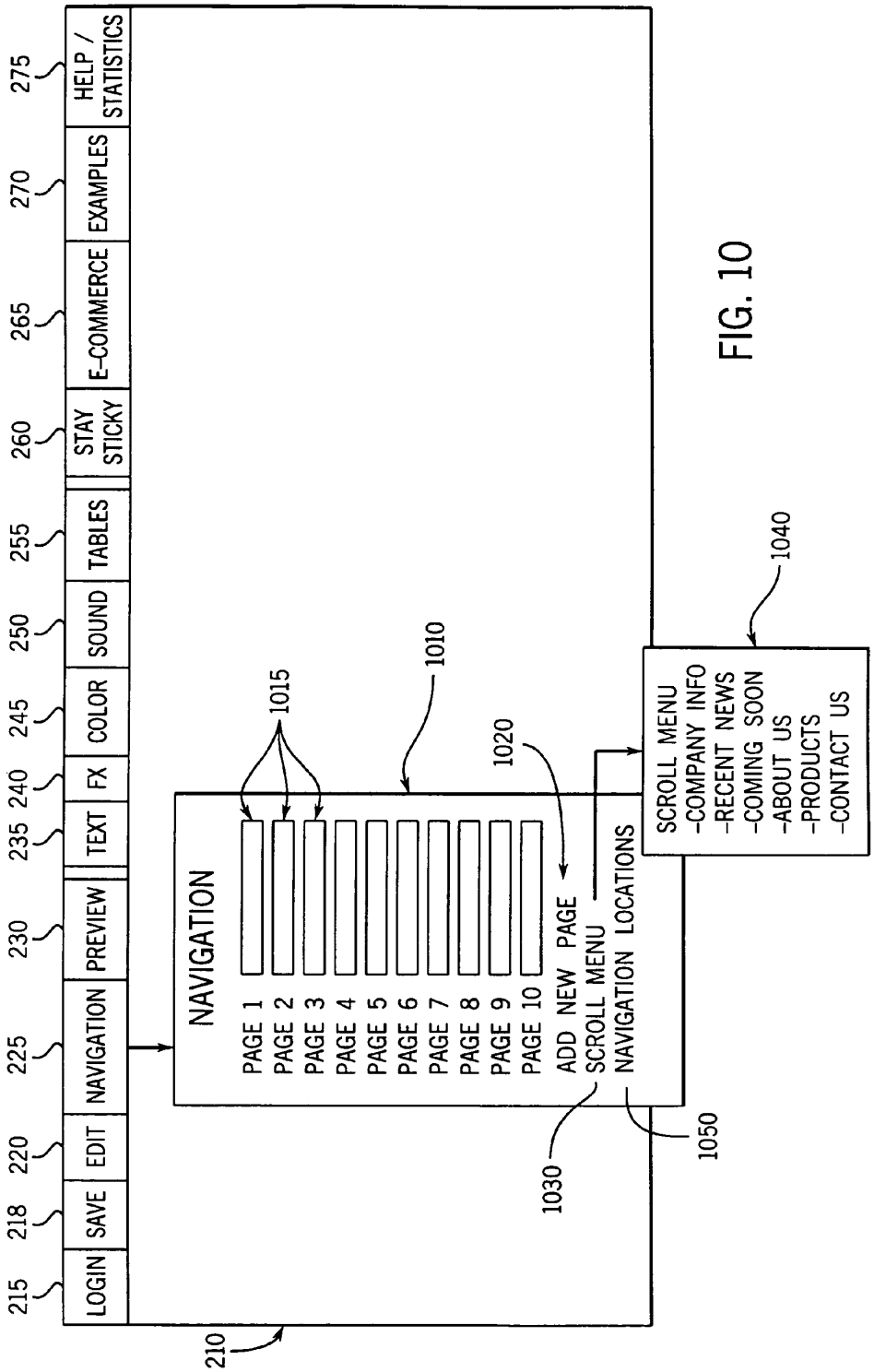

LOGIN
SAVE
EDIT
NAVIGATION
PREVIEW
TEXT
FX
COLOR
SOUND
TABLES
STAY STICKY
E-COMMERCE
EXAMPLES
HELP / STATISTICS
215
218
220
225
230
235
240
245
250
255
260
265
270
275
210
NAVIGATION
PAGE 1
PAGE 2
PAGE 3
PAGE 4
PAGE 5
PAGE 6
PAGE 7
PAGE 8
PAGE 9
PAGE 10
ADD NEW PAGE
SCROLL MENU
NAVIGATION LOCATIONS
1015
1010
1020
1030
1050
1040
SCROLL MENU
-COMPANY INFO
-RECENT NEWS
-COMING SOON
-ABOUT US
-PRODUCTS
-CONTACT US

FIG. 10

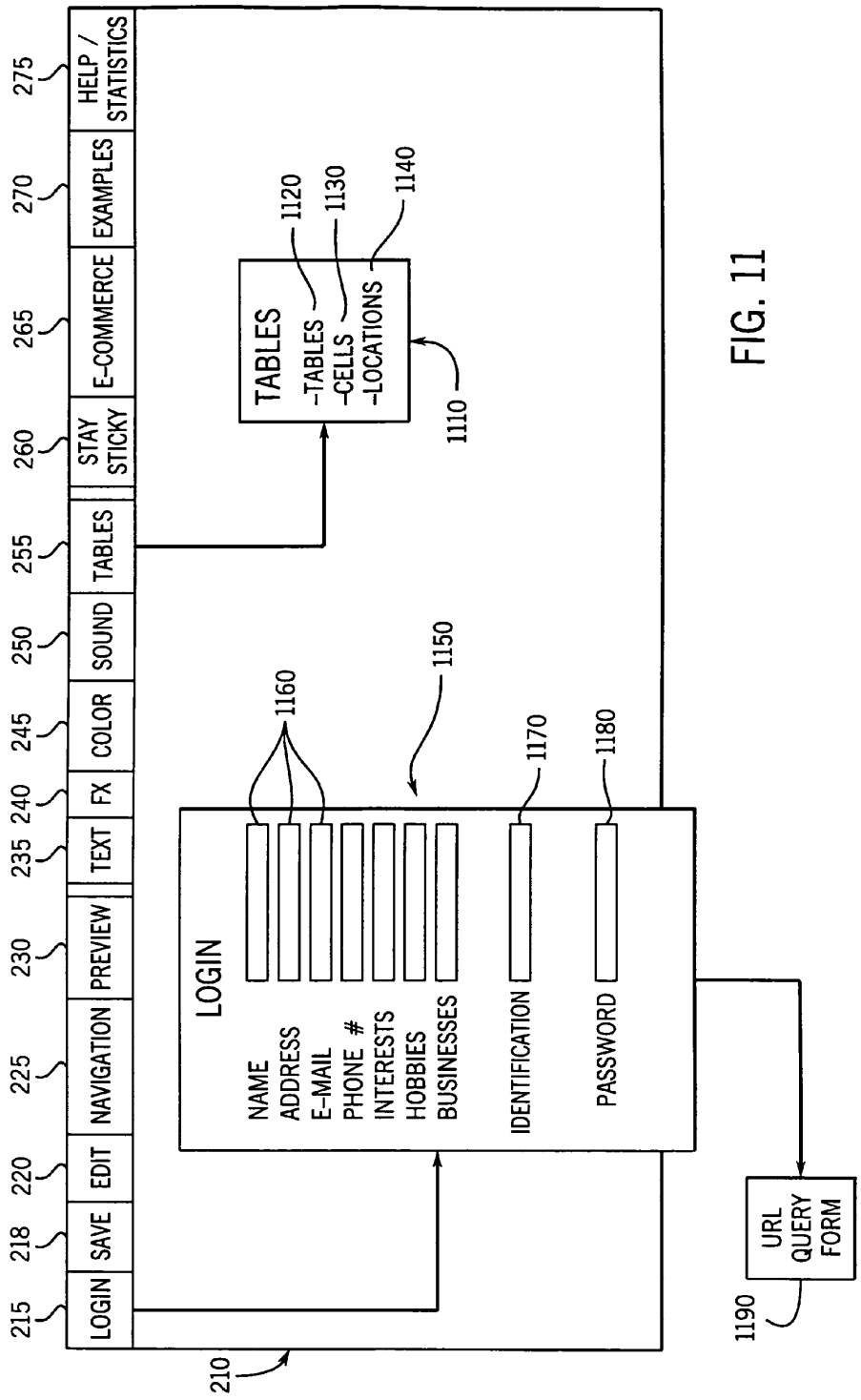

LOGIN
SAVE
EDIT
NAVIGATION
PREVIEW
TEXT
FX
COLOR
SOUND
TABLES
STAY STICKY
E-COMMERCE
EXAMPLES
HELP / STATISTICS
215
218
220
225
230
235
240
245
250
255
260
265
270
275
210
TABLES
-TABLES
-CELLS
-LOCATIONS
1120
1130
1140
1110
LOGIN
NAME
ADDRESS
E-MAIL
PHONE #
INTERESTS
HOBBIES
BUSINESSES
IDENTIFICATION
PASSWORD
1160
1150
1170
1180
URL QUERY FORM
1190

FIG. 11

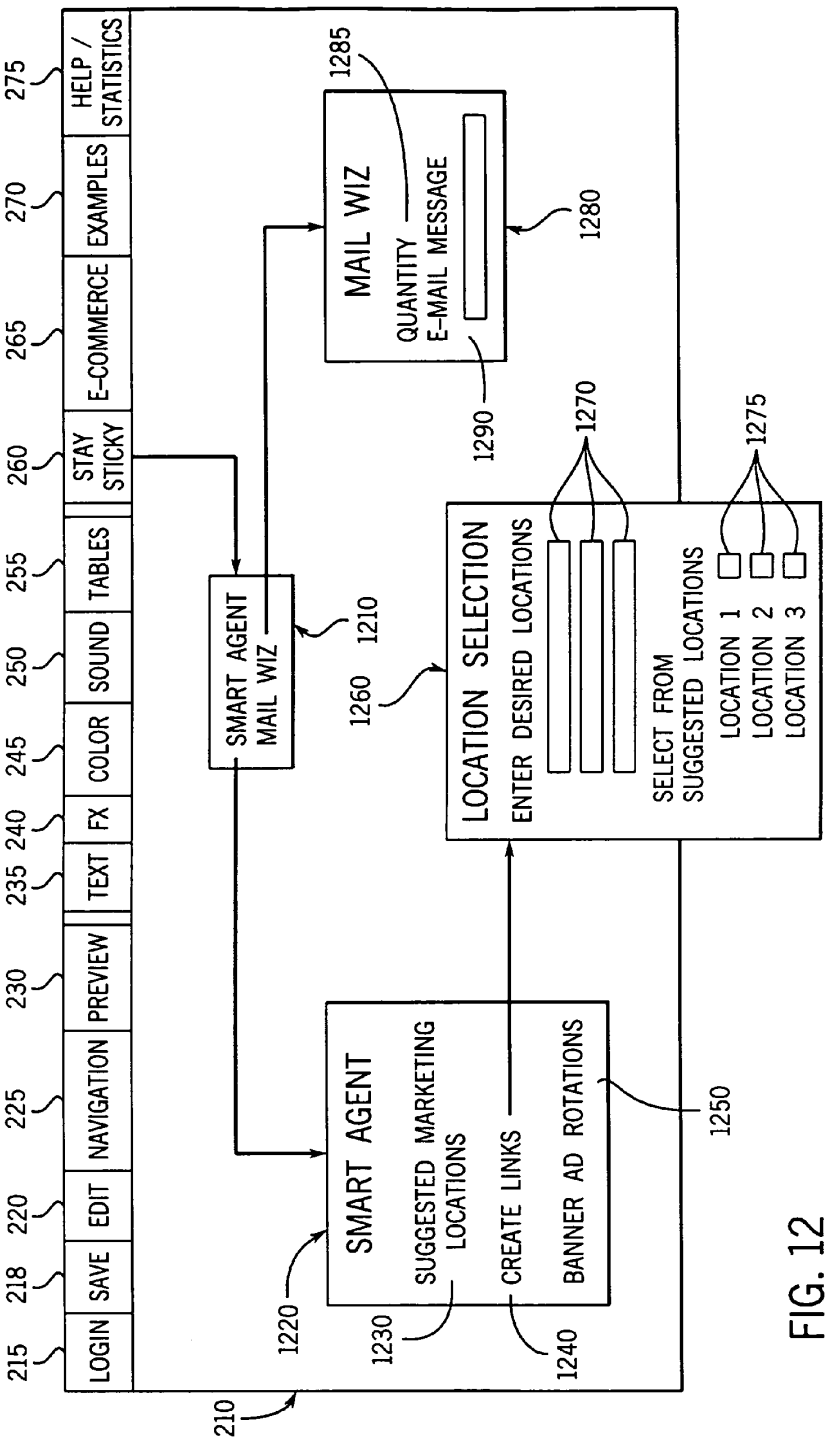

LOGIN
SAVE
EDIT
NAVIGATION
PREVIEW
TEXT
FX
COLOR
SOUND
TABLES
STAY STICKY
E-COMMERCE
EXAMPLES
HELP / STATISTICS
215
218
220
225
230
235
240
245
250
255
260
265
270
275
210
SMART AGENT MAIL WIZ
1210
SMART AGENT
SUGGESTED MARKETING LOCATIONS
CREATE LINKS
BANNER AD ROTATIONS
1220
1230
1240
1250
MAIL WIZ
QUANTITY
E-MAIL MESSAGE
1280
1285
1290
LOCATION SELECTION
ENTER DESIRED LOCATIONS
SELECT FROM SUGGESTED LOCATIONS
LOCATION 1
LOCATION 2
LOCATION 3
1260
1270
1275

FIG. 12

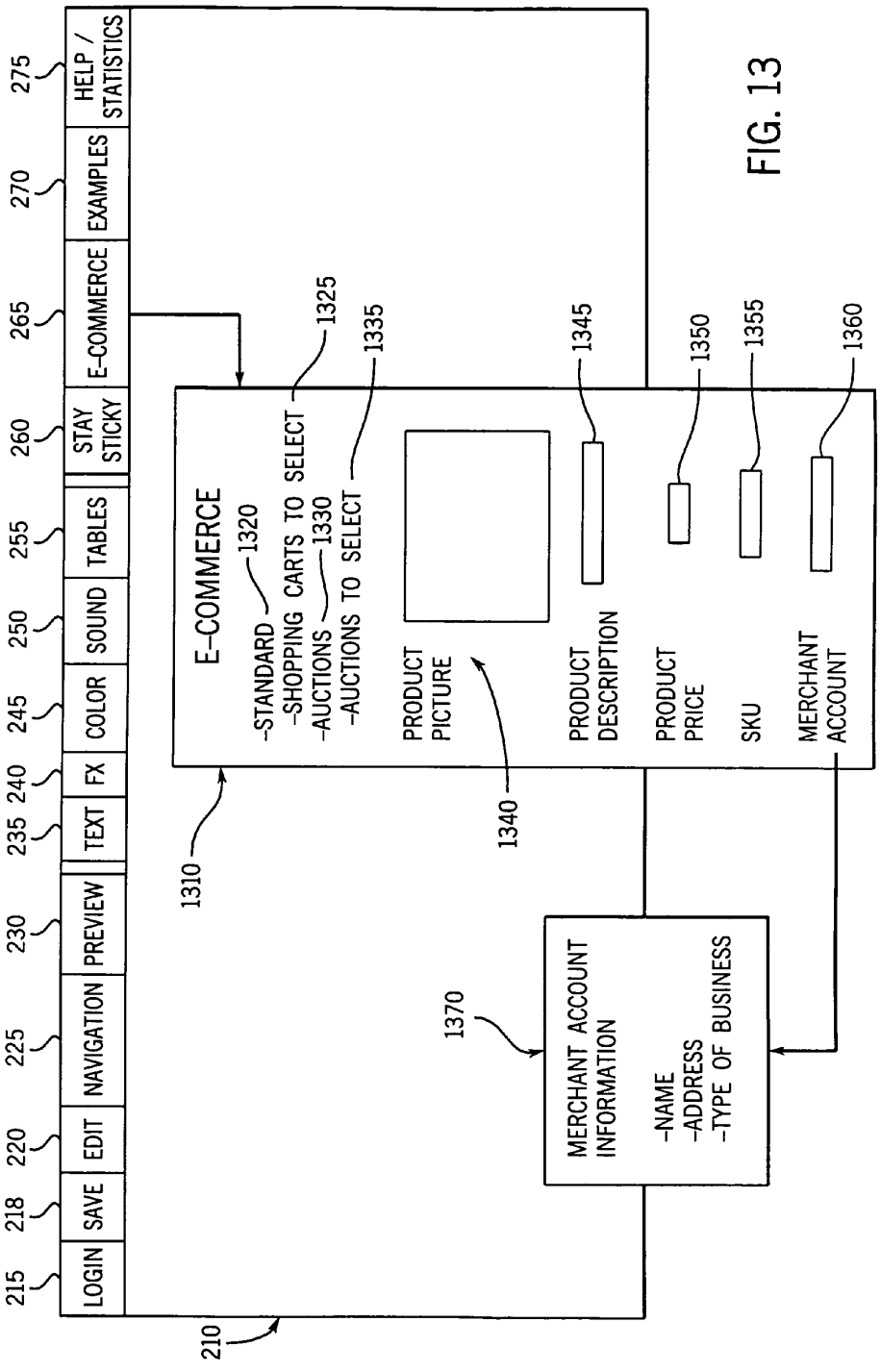

LOGIN
SAVE
EDIT
NAVIGATION
PREVIEW
TEXT
FX
COLOR
SOUND
TABLES
STAY STICKY
E-COMMERCE
EXAMPLES
HELP / STATISTICS
215
218
220
225
230
235
240
245
250
255
260
265
270
275
210
1310
E-COMMERCE
1320
-STANDARD
-SHOPPING CARTS TO SELECT
1325
-AUCTIONS
1330
-AUCTIONS TO SELECT
1335
PRODUCT PICTURE
1340
PRODUCT DESCRIPTION
1345
PRODUCT PRICE
1350
SKU
1355
MERCHANT ACCOUNT
1360
1370
MERCHANT ACCOUNT INFORMATION
-NAME
-ADDRESS
-TYPE OF BUSINESS

FIG. 13

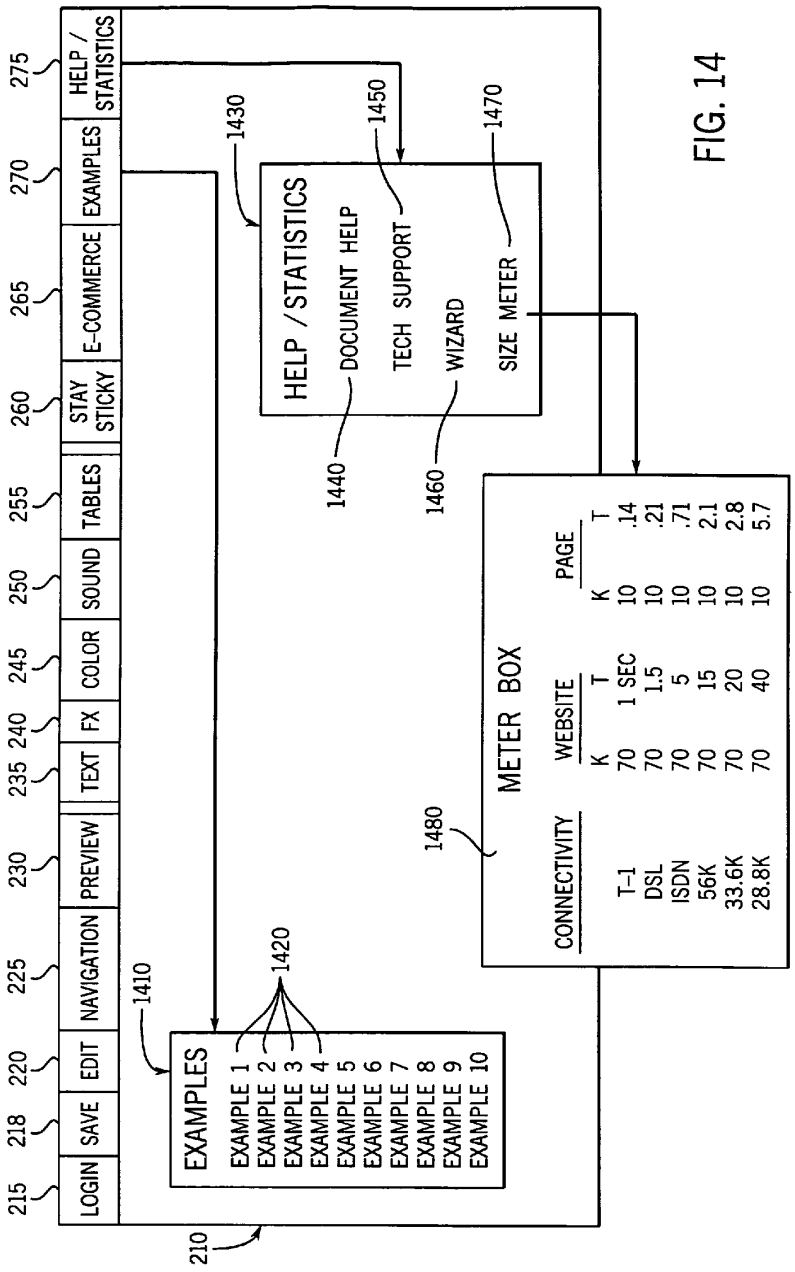

LOGIN
SAVE
EDIT
NAVIGATION
PREVIEW
TEXT
FX
COLOR
SOUND
TABLES
STAY STICKY
E-COMMERCE
EXAMPLES
HELP / STATISTICS
215
218
220
225
230
235
240
245
250
255
260
265
270
275
210
1410
1420
1430
1440
1450
1460
1470
1480
EXAMPLES
EXAMPLE 1
EXAMPLE 2
EXAMPLE 3
EXAMPLE 4
EXAMPLE 5
EXAMPLE 6
EXAMPLE 7
EXAMPLE 8
EXAMPLE 9
EXAMPLE 10
HELP / STATISTICS
DOCUMENT HELP
TECH SUPPORT
WIZARD
SIZE METER
METER BOX
CONNECTIVITY
WEBSITE
PAGE
K
T
K
T
T-1 70 1 SEC 10 .14
DSL 70 1.5 10 .21
ISDN 70 5 10 .71
56K 70 15 10 2.1
33.6K 70 20 10 2.8
28.8K 70 40 10 5.7

FIG. 14

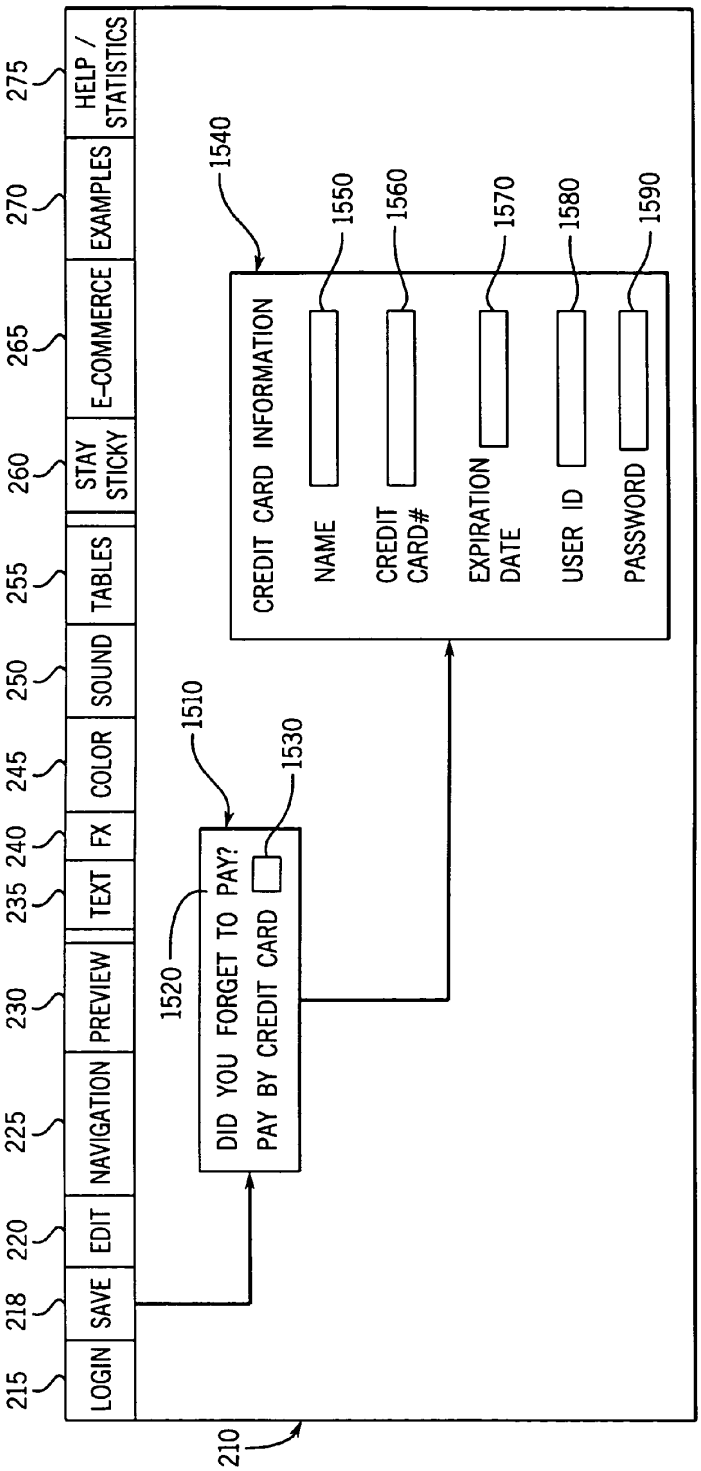

LOGIN
SAVE
EDIT
NAVIGATION
PREVIEW
TEXT
FX
COLOR
SOUND
TABLES
STAY STICKY
E-COMMERCE
EXAMPLES
HELP / STATISTICS
215
218
220
225
230
235
240
245
250
255
260
265
270
275
210
1510
1520
1530
DID YOU FORGET TO PAY?
PAY BY CREDIT CARD
1540
CREDIT CARD INFORMATION
NAME
CREDIT CARD#
EXPIRATION DATE
USER ID
PASSWORD
1550
1560
1570
1580
1590

FIG. 15

FIG. 16

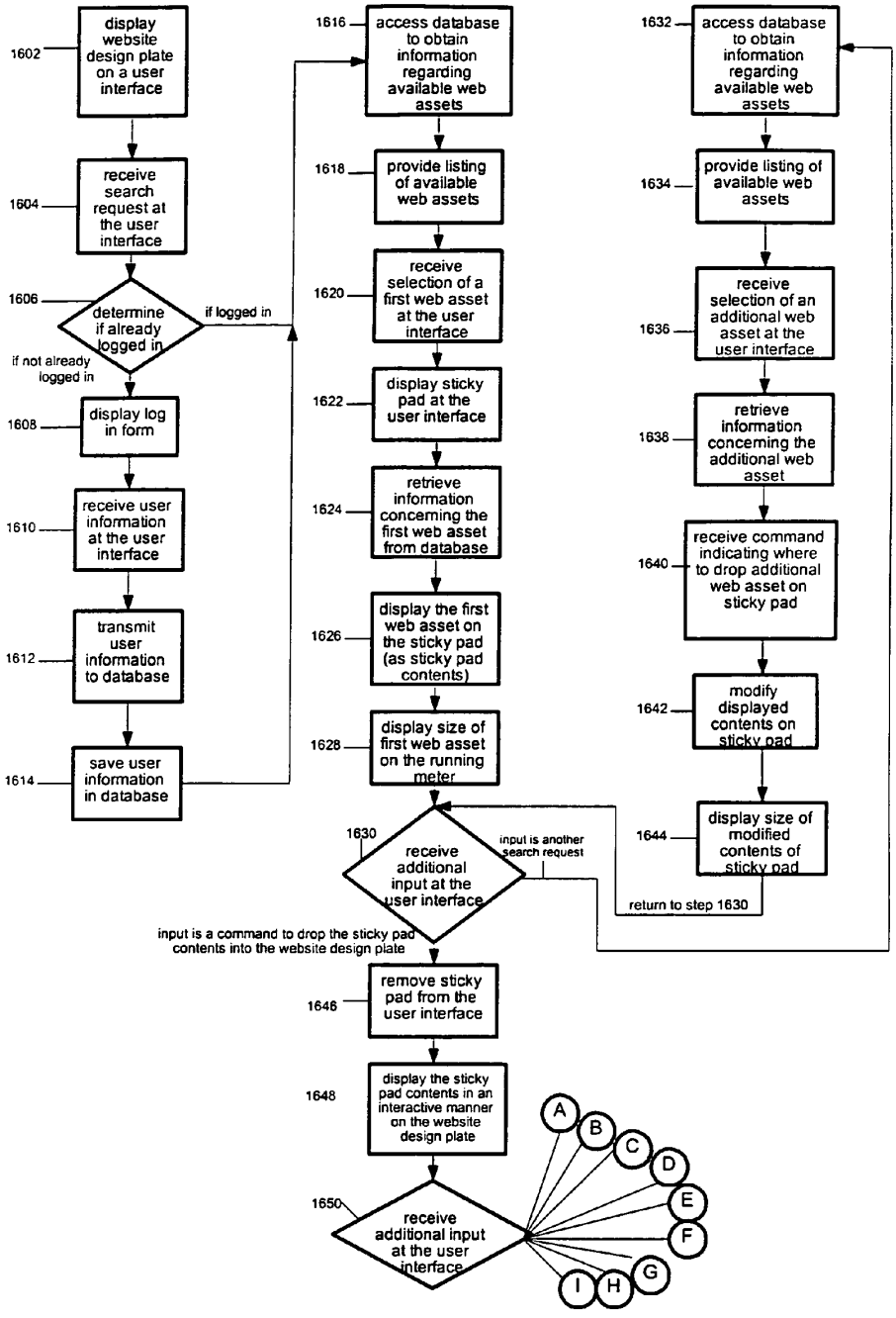

1602
display website design plate on a user interface
1604
receive search request at the user interface
1606
determine if already logged in
if logged in
if not already logged in
1608
display log in form
1610
receive user information at the user interface
1612
transmit user information to database
1614
save user information in database
1616
access database to obtain information regarding available web assets
1618
provide listing of available web assets
1620
receive selection of a first web asset at the user interface
1622
display sticky pad at the user interface
1624
retrieve information concerning the first web asset from database
1626
display the first web asset on the sticky pad (as sticky pad contents)
1628
display size of first web asset on the running meter
1630
receive additional input at the user interface
input is another search request
return to step 1630
input is a command to drop the sticky pad contents into the website design plate
1632
access database to obtain information regarding available web assets
1634
provide listing of available web assets
1636
receive selection of an additional web asset at the user interface
1638
retrieve information concerning the additional web asset
1640
receive command indicating where to drop additional web asset on sticky pad
1642
modify displayed contents on sticky pad
1644
display size of modified contents of sticky pad
1646
remove sticky pad from the user interface
1648
display the sticky pad contents in an interactive manner on the website design plate
1650
receive additional input at the user interface
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I

FIG. 17A

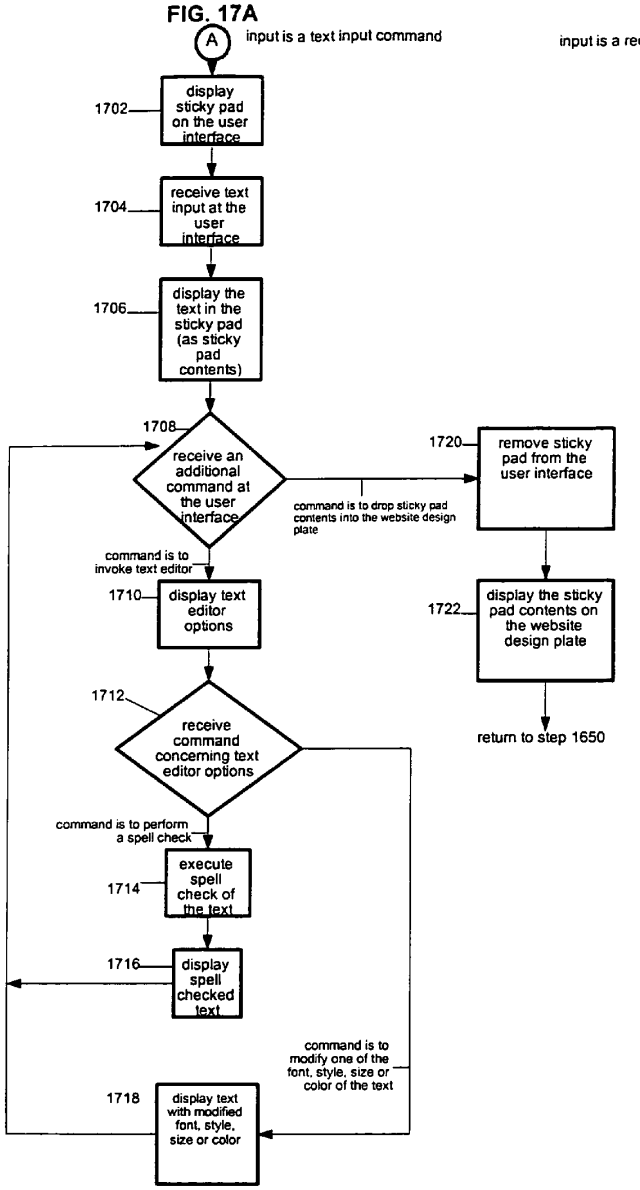


FIG. 17B

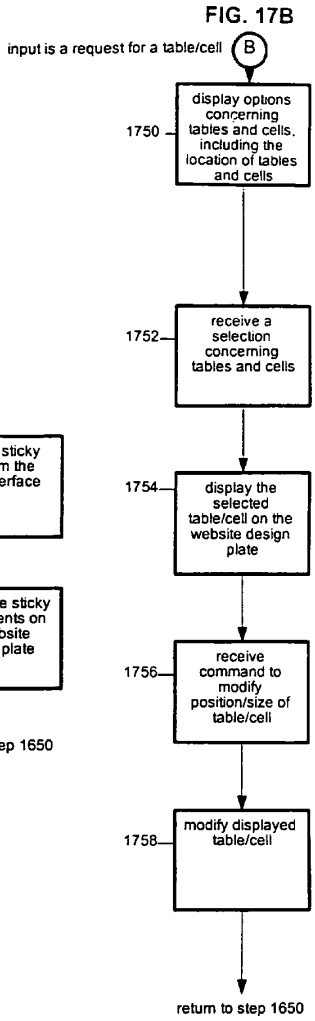


FIG. 18A

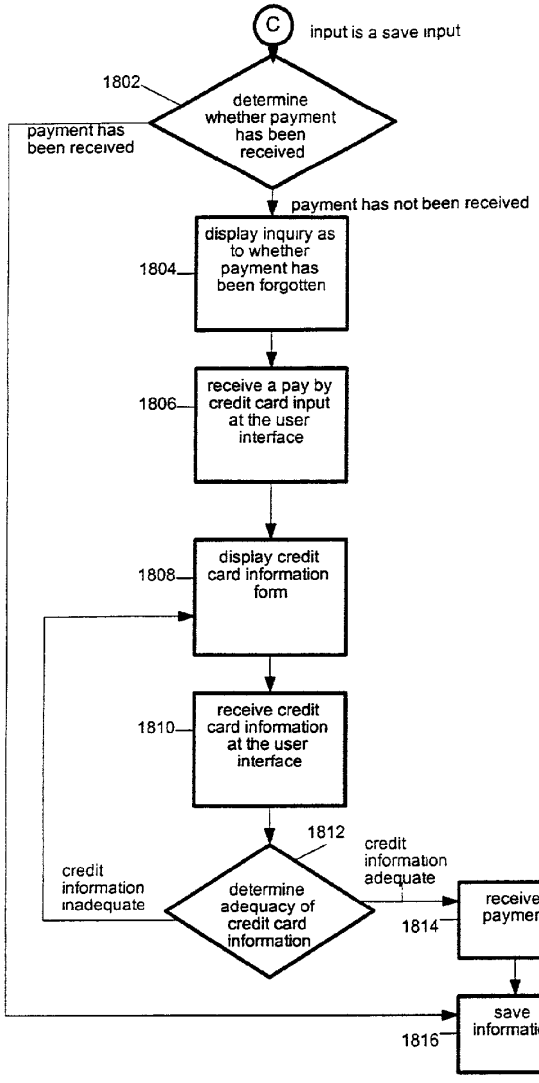


FIG. 18B

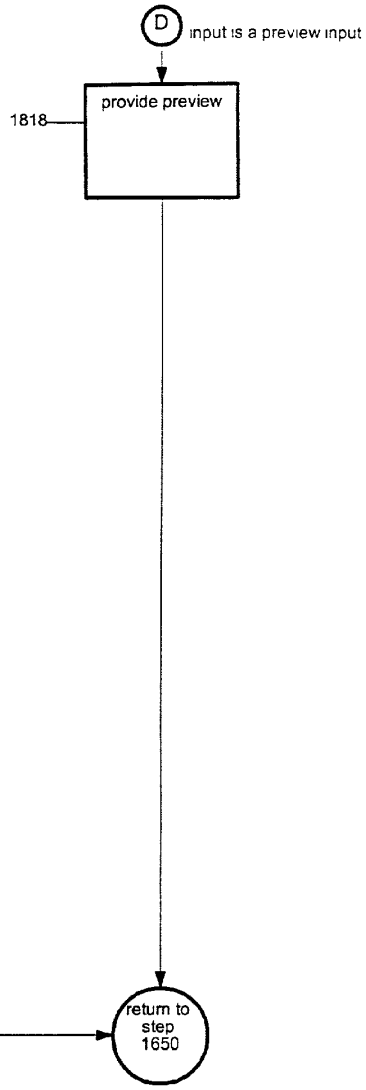


FIG. 19

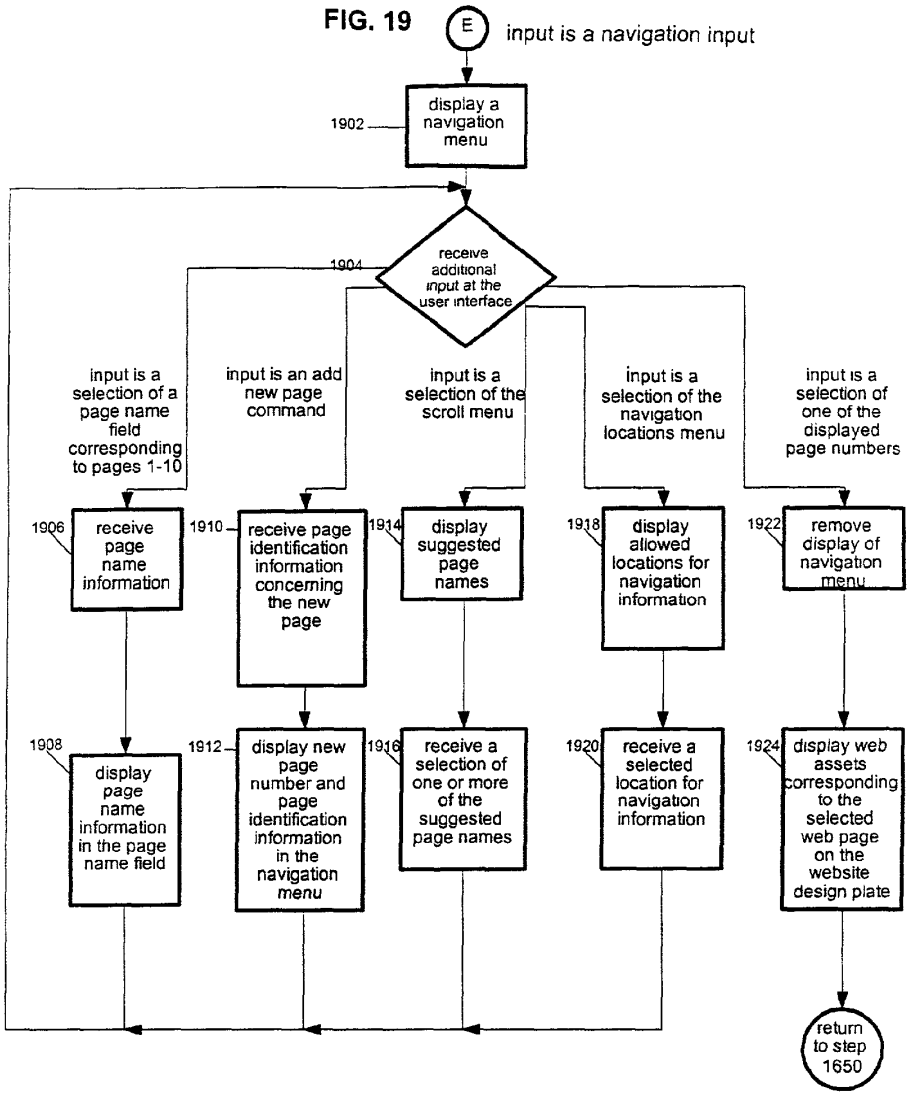

E
input is a navigation input
1902
display a navigation menu
1904
receive additional input at the user interface
input is a selection of a page name field corresponding to pages 1-10
input is an add new page command
input is a selection of the scroll menu
input is a selection of the navigation locations menu
input is a selection of one of the displayed page numbers
1906
receive page name information
1910
receive page identification information concerning the new page
1914
display suggested page names
1918
display allowed locations for navigation information
1922
remove display of navigation menu
1908
display page name information in the page name field
1912
display new page number and page identification information in the navigation menu
1916
receive a selection of one or more of the suggested page names
1920
receive a selected location for navigation information
1924
display web assets corresponding to the selected web page on the website design plate
return to step 1650

FIG. 20

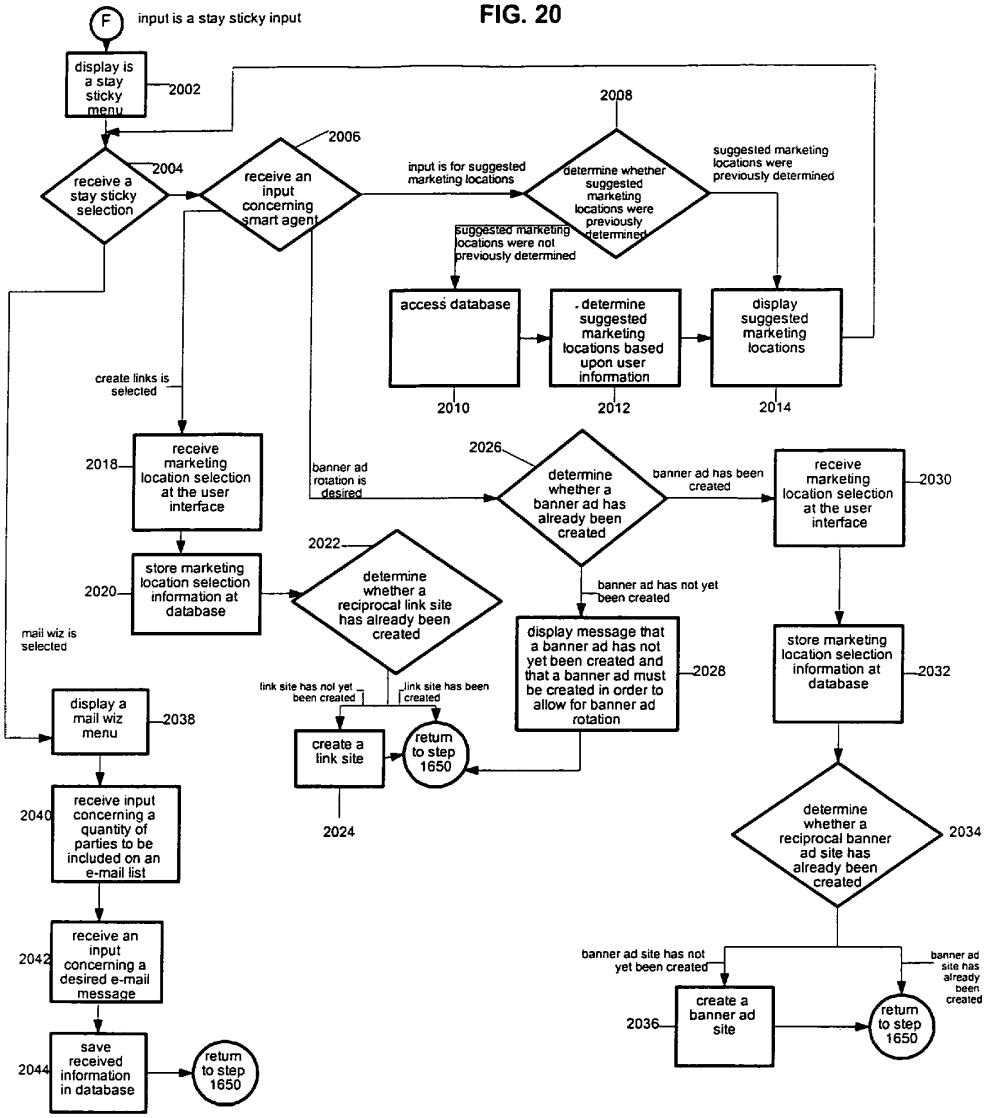

F
input is a stay sticky input
display is a stay sticky menu
2002
receive a stay sticky selection
2004
receive an input concerning smart agent
2006
2008
input is for suggested marketing locations
determine whether suggested marketing locations were previously determined
suggested marketing locations were previously determined
suggested marketing locations were not previously determined
access database
2010
determine suggested marketing locations based upon user information
2012
display suggested marketing locations
2014
create links is selected
receive marketing location selection at the user interface
2018
store marketing location selection information at database
2020
banner ad rotation is desired
2026
determine whether a banner ad has already been created
banner ad has been created
receive marketing location selection at the user interface
2030
2022
determine whether a reciprocal link site has already been created
banner ad has not yet been created
display message that a banner ad has not yet been created and that a banner ad must be created in order to allow for banner ad rotation
2028
store marketing location selection information at database
2032
mail wiz is selected
link site has not yet been created
link site has been created
create a link site
2024
return to step 1650
display a mail wiz menu
2038
receive input concerning a quantity of parties to be included on an e-mail list
2040
receive an input concerning a desired e-mail message
2042
save received information in database
2044
return to step 1650
determine whether a reciprocal banner ad site has already been created
2034
banner ad site has not yet been created
banner ad site has already been created
create a banner ad site
2036
return to step 1650

FIG. 21

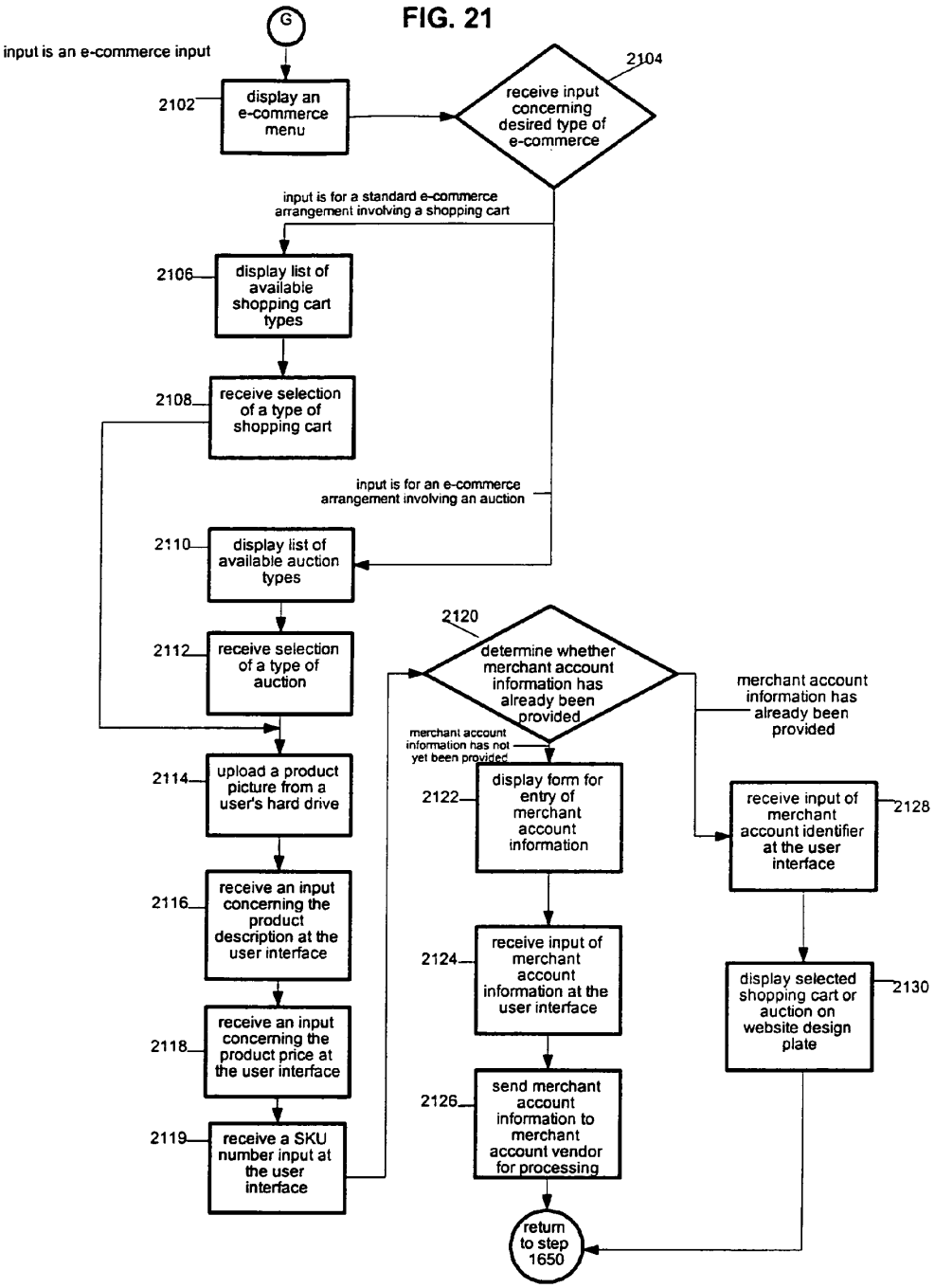

G
input is an e-commerce input
2102
display an e-commerce menu
2104
receive input concerning desired type of e-commerce
input is for a standard e-commerce arrangement involving a shopping cart
2106
display list of available shopping cart types
2108
receive selection of a type of shopping cart
input is for an e-commerce arrangement involving an auction
2110
display list of available auction types
2112
receive selection of a type of auction
2114
upload a product picture from a user's hard drive
2116
receive an input concerning the product description at the user interface
2118
receive an input concerning the product price at the user interface
2119
receive a SKU number input at the user interface
2120
determine whether merchant account information has already been provided
merchant account information has not yet been provided
2122
display form for entry of merchant account information
2124
receive input of merchant account information at the user interface
2126
send merchant account information to merchant account vendor for processing
merchant account information has already been provided
2128
receive input of merchant account identifier at the user interface
2130
display selected shopping cart or auction on website design plate
return to step 1650

FIG. 22A

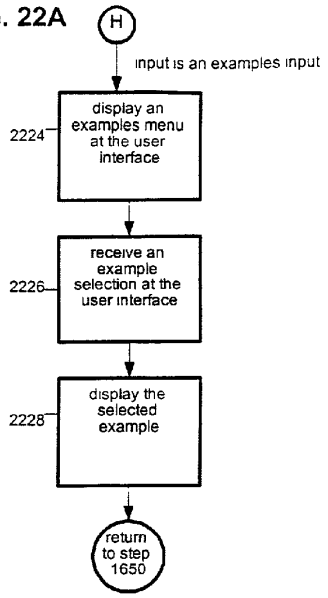


FIG. 22B

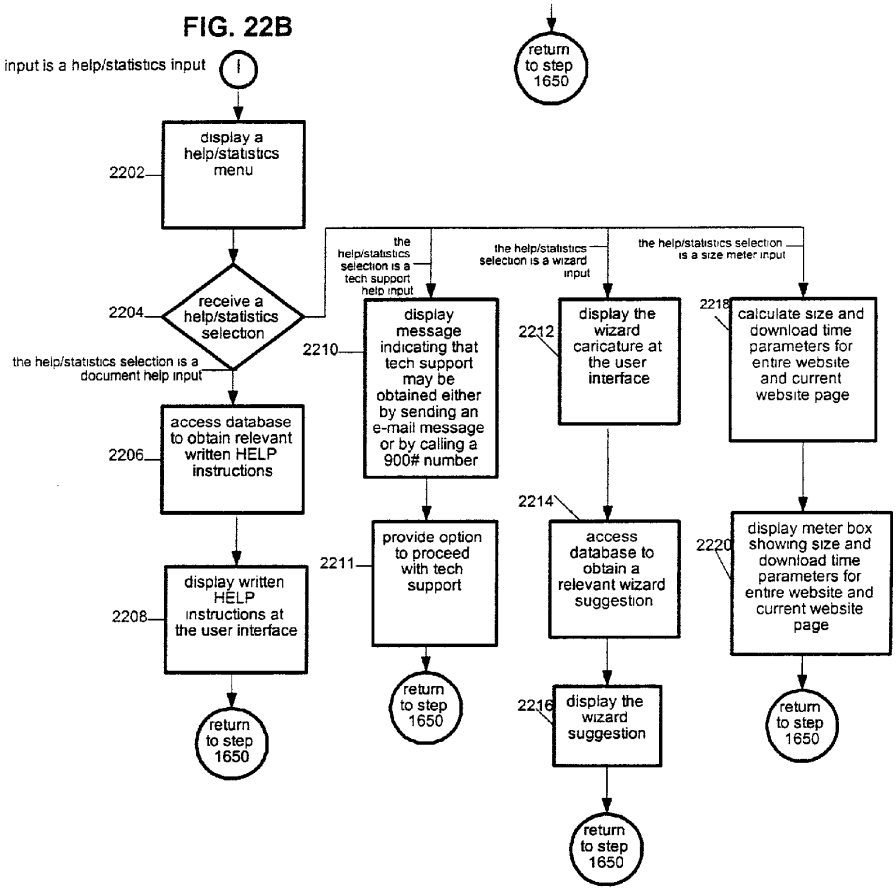
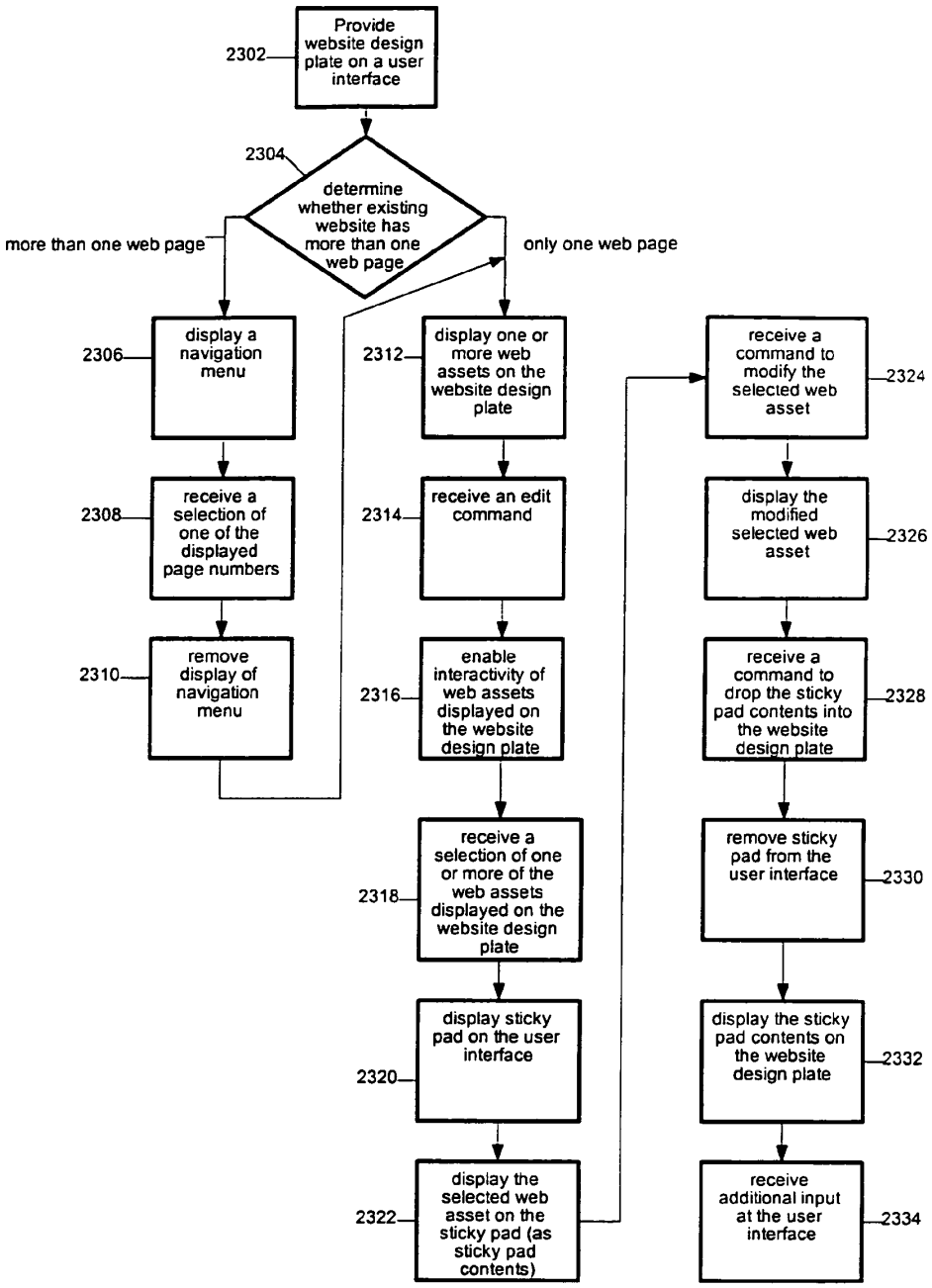


FIG. 23

(Re-entry, Navigation and Edit)



METHOD FOR DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

(Not Applicable)

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to creating and posting web pages to the internet, and more specifically, to a method for more easily developing web pages through the use of a graphical user interface.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The World Wide Web (web) has rapidly become an invaluable tool to individuals and businesses. Not only can an individual or business post information on the web, but it can also use the web to transact business. Because the public is acutely aware of the web's business and personal benefits, millions of web pages are being added to the web each year.

Typically, a web page is defined by a document containing HyperText Markup Language (HTML) code. An HTML document suitable for posting on the internet includes both "content" and "markup." The content is information which describes a web page's text or other information for display or playback on a computer's monitor, speakers, etc. The markup is information which describes the web page's behavioral characteristics, such as how the content is displayed and how other information can be accessed via the web page.

In order to provide web-based information and services over the internet, the web employs "client" computers, "browser" software, and "server" computers. A client computer is a computer used by an individual to connect to the internet and access web pages. A browser is a software application, located on a client computer, which requests, via the internet, a web page from a server computer. After receiving the web page, the browser displays the web page on the client computer's monitor. A server computer is a computer which stores web page information, retrieves that information in response to a browser's request, and sends the information, via the internet, to the client computer. Thus, after a web page is created, the page must be "posted" to a particular server computer which "hosts" the page, so that the page can be accessed over the internet.

In order to have one's web page hosted by a server, the individual must contract with an internet service provider (ISP) associated with the server. This contract specifies, among other things, the duration of the time that the ISP will host the page, and how much the individual will pay for that hosting service.

Even though the idea of having one's own web page is appealing, the average individual has little or no knowledge about how to create a web page. Particularly, the average individual does not know how to create an HTML document or to post that document to a server computer. Unless that individual is willing to learn how to create and post their own web page, that individual is faced with few options.

The most commonly used avenue for an individual to get his web page on the internet is to employ one of numerous companies to provide, for a fee, web page/website development services. After contacting such a website development company, the individual would meet with one of the company's web page designers to explain the individual's concept

for his web page. The designer would then create the associated HTML document. After approval by the individual, the designer may provide the service of posting the web page to a server. The server typically is not associated with the website development company. Thus, the individual must separately contract with an ISP associated with the server to host the web page. Typically, this web page creation and posting process is time consuming and expensive, because it requires the individual and the designer to spend a significant amount of time together working on a particular page design. In addition, the process is inefficient because the individual must work separately with a website development company and an ISP.

The difficulties and expense associated with web page creation and design are exacerbated by the fact that many individuals who desire to set up web pages are doing so for commercial reasons, i.e., the individuals desire to conduct business or "e-commerce" over the internet using their web pages. Developing a web page/website suitable for e-commerce typically requires at least two types of features above and beyond those required for a standard (non-commercial) web page/website. First, an e-commerce website typically requires marketing features. As noted, there are millions of web pages already existing on the interest, and so the success of an internet-based business employing a website depends critically upon whether consumers on the internet are aware of, and can easily access, the website.

With respect to these marketing features, a common way of marketing a website on the internet is to have other websites display advertising messages ("banner ads") concerning the website. A second way of marketing a particular website on the internet is simply to have other websites display selectable commands ("links") which, if selected by a person accessing the other websites using his browser, cause the browser to access the particular website. Although the use of such banner ads and links is very common, the setting up of such mechanisms is not always easy. In particular, other websites typically do not display banner ads and links for a particular website without contractual arrangements, including payment, which can be difficult for a novice web designer to arrange and expensive to arrange via a website development company.

In addition to marketing features, an e-commerce website typically also requires features that allow the conducting of sales transactions, i.e., features for executing transactions involving the buying and selling of goods and/or services. Such features typically include a sales mechanism, i.e., a "shopping cart" mechanism or an "auction." Further, such features typically include a payment arrangement, i.e., an arrangement allowing for transfers from a purchaser's credit card to a merchant account associated with the e-commerce website. The setting up of such sales mechanisms and payment arrangements also can be difficult for a novice web designer and expensive if performed by a website development company.

What is needed, therefore, is a method for enabling an individual to conveniently design a web page without requiring that individual to learn HTML or to interact extensively with a web page designer at a website development company. What is further needed is a streamlined method for web page/website development and, in particular, a method of facilitating the development of e-commerce websites having key marketing and sales transaction features.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

The present invention relates to a method of assisting a website designer in establishing an arrangement between a

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TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
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first website being designed by the website designer and a second website in order to market the first website at the second website upon the activation of the first website on the internet. The method includes, during design of the first website, receiving information at a user interface indicating a type of an element for marketing that is to be displayed at the second website, and information specifying the second website at which the element is to be displayed. The method further includes saving the information at a first database that is coupled to the user interface, obtaining the element for marketing of the type indicated, and causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website when the first website is activated with respect to the internet. The element for marketing includes at least one of a banner ad concerning the first website and a link to the first website.

The present invention additionally relates to a method of assisting a website designer in establishing an e-commerce feature on a first website being designed by the website designer for access by third parties upon the activation of the first website on the internet. The method includes receiving at a user interface a selection of the e-commerce feature that is desired to be implemented on the first website, wherein the e-commerce feature is at least one of a shopping cart and an auction. The method further includes receiving at the user interface information concerning a picture of a product desired to be sold using the e-commerce feature, receiving at the user interface information concerning a written description of the product, receiving at the user interface information concerning a price of the product, and receiving at the user interface information concerning an identification number of the product. The method additionally includes, when the first website is activated on the internet, displaying the e-commerce feature on the first website. The display of the e-commerce feature includes the display of at least some of the picture, written description, price and identification information of the product.

The present invention further relates to a computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code for instructing at least one computer to perform several steps. In particular, the computer executable code instructs the computer to perform the step of, during design of a first website, receiving information at a user interface indicating a type of an element for marketing that is to be displayed at a second website, and information specifying the second website at which the element is to be displayed. The steps further include saving the information at a first database that is coupled to the user interface, obtaining an element for marketing of the type indicated, and causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website when the first website is activated with respect to the internet. The element for marketing includes at least one of a banner ad concerning the first website and a link to the first website.

The present invention additionally relates to a computer-readable storage medium containing computer executable code for instructing at least one computer to perform several steps. In particular, the computer executable code instructs the computer to perform the step of receiving at a user interface a selection of an e-commerce feature that is desired to be implemented on a first website, wherein the e-commerce feature is at least one of a shopping cart and an auction. The computer executable code further instructs the computer to perform the steps of receiving at the user interface information concerning a picture of a product desired to be sold using the e-commerce feature, receiving at the user interface information concerning a written description of the product, receiving at the user interface information concerning a price of the product, receiving at the user interface information concerning an identification number of the product and, when the first website is activated on the internet, displaying the e-commerce feature on the first website. The display of the e-commerce feature includes the display of at least some of the picture, written description, price and identification information of the product.

The present invention further relates to an internet-based system for assisting a website designer in establishing an arrangement between a first website being designed by the website designer and a second website in order to market the first website at the second website upon the activation of the first website on the internet. The system includes a server computer accessible by a plurality of registered user computers and a plurality of unregistered computers using the internet. The server computer receives at a user interface displayed at one of the registered user computers information indicating a type of an element for marketing that is to be displayed at the second website, and information specifying the second website at which the element is to be displayed. The server computer additionally saves the information at a first database that is coupled to the server computer, and obtains an element for marketing. The server computer further hosts the second website, activates the first website on the internet by hosting the first website on the internet, provides a web page of the second website to one of the unregistered computers, and displays the element for marketing on the web page.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** illustrates a system in which the method of the present invention can be practiced;

FIG. **2** illustrates an exemplary graphical user interface (GUT), including a website design plate and a STICKY PAD™, which is employed in performing the method of the present invention;

FIG. **3** illustrates in greater detail the STICKY PAD™ of the GUI of FIG. **2**;

FIG. **4** illustrates searching for graphic images ("web assets" or "fx") using the STICKY PAD™™;

FIG. **5** illustrates searching for sounds using the STICKY PAD™;

FIG. **6** illustrates searching for colors using the STICKY PAD™;

FIG. **7** illustrates text editing using the STICKY PAD™;

FIG. **8** illustrates the operation of a running meter on the STICKY PAD™;

FIG. **9** illustrates the creation of a banner ad and a logo using the STICKY PAD™;

FIG. **10** illustrates the generation of a website outline using the navigation feature of the website design plate;

FIG. **11** illustrates providing log in information and generating a table/cell at the website design plate;

FIG. **12** illustrates the operation of STAY STICKY™ features, including smart agent and MAIL WIZ™ features;

FIG. **13** illustrates the development of website e-commerce mechanisms, including shopping carts and auctions, as well as the setting-up of a merchant account, using the e-commerce feature of the website design plate;

FIG. **14** illustrates the operation of examples and help/statistics features (including a size meter/meter box) of the website design plate;

FIG. **15** illustrates providing payment (including credit card) information when attempting to save website information assembled on the website design plate;

FIG. **16** illustrates a flowchart with method steps for developing a web page of a website, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **17** illustrates a flowchart with method steps for providing text and tables/cells into a web page of a website that is being developed, including text editing, which can be performed as part of the flowchart of FIG. **16**;

FIG. **18** illustrates flowcharts with method steps for saving website information and previewing website operation, which can be performed as part of the flowchart of FIG. **16**;

FIG. **19** illustrates a flowchart with method steps for generating a website outline using a navigation feature, which can be performed as part of the flowchart of FIG. **16**;

FIG. **20** illustrates a flowchart with method steps for performing STAY STICKY™ features, including smart agent features and MAIL WIZ™ features, which can be performed as part of the flowchart of FIG. **16**;

FIG. **21** illustrates a flowchart with method steps for performing e-commerce features, which can be performed as part of the flowchart of FIG. **16**;

FIG. **22** illustrates a flowchart with method steps for performing examples and help/statistics features, which can be performed as part of the flowchart of FIG. **16**; and

FIG. **23** illustrates a flowchart with method steps for recommencing development of, and editing, a website that has already been partially developed using the GUI of FIG. **2**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

It is to be understood that the phraseology or terminology employed herein is for the purpose of description, and not of limitation. Accordingly, the invention is intended to embrace all such alternatives, modifications, equivalents, and variations as fall within the spirit and broad scope of the appended claims. The present invention is a method for developing a website through the use of a graphical user interface. FIG. **1** is a block diagram illustrating a generalized computer/internet system **100** in which the method of the present invention can be practiced. Specifically, the preferred system **100** includes a server computer **140** operably connected to the internet **130** using standard techniques well-known in the art, for instance the TCP/IP protocol. The method preferably can be implemented through the use of the server computer **140** using standard computer programming techniques well-known in the art. As an example, the server computer **140** can preferably be programmed using the Java™ programming language distributed by Sun Microcomputer Corp. of Palo Alto, Calif.

Three types of other parties can interact with the server computer **140**. First, registered users who have logged in with respect to the server computer **140**, as discussed with reference to FIG. **11**, can fully access the server computer at one or more registered users computers **180**. Second, third party potential customers who have not yet logged in with respect to the server computer **140** can obtain limited access to the server computer at one or more third party potential customers computers **110**. Finally, third party authors who contribute web assets for use in web pages created by registered users can access the server computer **140**, from one or more third party author computers **120**, for the limited purpose of uploading web assets to the server computer for distribution. Registered users computers **180**, third party potential customers computers **110** and third party authors computers **120** are home computers or other interface devices (not necessarily complete computers) that are capable of accessing the server computer **140** through the internet **130** using standard web-browsers, well-known in the art.

The server computer **140** preferably has or is coupled to a third party user database **160**, a web assets database **170**, and a programming database **190**. The third party user database **160** preferably includes a listing of all third party users registered to access the server computer **140**. Specifically, information provided during the log in process by registered users is included in the third party user database **160**. Also, information regarding websites that have been or are being designed by registered users can be saved (as discussed with reference to FIG. **15**) in the third party user database **160**. Moreover, third party user database **160** preferably includes a listing of third party authors who have uploaded web assets to the web assets database **170** for use by the registered users in creating their websites, and who have been authorized by the system **100** to receive payment for the use of their web assets by the registered users. Web assets database **170** stores a catalog of web assets uploaded by third party authors. In addition, web assets that are stored in web assets database **170** can include web assets that are derived from other sources, such as web assets designed by the operator of the server computer **140**. System **100** automatically compensates a third party author whose uploaded web asset has been distributed to a registered user. When system **100** posts a web page having a web asset uploaded by a third party author on behalf of a registered user, the system **100** credits the credit card account of the third party author in compensation for the use of the web asset. Specifically, the server computer **140** contacts the credit card company **150** corresponding to the third party author's credit card and submits a credit over the internet **130** to the credit card company **150**.

Referring to FIG. **2**, the present invention employs a graphical user interface (GUI) to allow a registered user to easily develop a website comprising one or more web pages. In one embodiment, all or nearly all of the programming required to operate the GUI is stored on programming database **190**, and is accessed by potential customers and registered users by way of their web browsers (and is viewed via the internet **130** when needed by those potential customers and registered users). However, in the preferred embodiment, the programming required to operate the GUI is provided to potential customers and registered users as software (i.e., on a floppy disk or a CD-ROM), and is stored directly in the programming database **190**. Potential customers are capable of interacting with the GUI to perform certain website design functions by logging into computer **140**. However, key functions such as searching for web assets, and saving/submitting a fully-designed website for posting on the internet **130**, can only be performed once the potential customers have logged into the server computer **140** and become registered users such that they have full access to the server computer **140** via the internet **130**. Hereinafter (except with respect to FIG. **11** concerning the log in process), all discussion regarding use of the GUI will concern use of the GUI by registered users at registered user computers **180**; however, it should be understood that third party potential customers can also perform limited functions with respect to the GUI before logging into the system **100**.

The GUI is provided on a display at the registered user computer **180** and includes a primary display screen, which is termed a STICKY WEB™ website design plate **210** (or web design plate) (STICKY WEB™ is a trademark of the Perfect Web Corporation, of Delray Beach, Fla.). Website design plate **210** has a plurality of selection buttons **212**, which in the preferred embodiment include a log in button **215**, a save button **218**, an edit button **220**, a navigation button **225**, a preview button **230**, a text button **235**, an fx button **240**, a color button **245**, a sound button **250**, a tables button **255**, a STAY STICKY™ button **260**, an e-commerce button **265**, an examples button **270** and a help/statistics button **275**. In one embodiment, a registered user selects or actuates selection buttons **212** by pointing at the buttons using a mouse of the

registered user computer **180**, and clicking on the mouse. In alternate embodiments, a registered user can select or actuate selection buttons **212** by providing appropriate keystrokes on a keyboard of the registered user computer **180**, by appropriately touching a touch screen of the registered user computer, or by providing an input signal at another conventional type of input device known in the art.

In addition to selection buttons **212**, website design plate **210** further includes a design space **214** in which can be displayed one or more web assets **205**, which together form a web page. Web assets can include JAVA applets, scripts (including moving scripts and scripts written in a variety of internet languages such as PERL, CGI, SQL, JAVA, XML and HTML), stock art, clip art, digital art, background images, textures, GIF, JPEG, TIF, BMP, chat rooms, message boards, web objects, buttons, templates, themes, fading color, mouse over effects, borders, buttons, shadows, icons, internet designs, sounds, music, etc. In general, web assets are graphic images, including text and related color, sound and animation features, which can be displayed on a website. When displayed for a registered user who has logged into the system **100** (as discussed with reference to FIG. **11**), the web assets are interactive, i.e., information can be exchanged between the registered user and the system **100** via the web assets.

As shown in FIG. **2**, during design of a website using the GUI, a second display screen, termed a STICKY PAD™ **310**, is often shown within (or over) website design plate **210** (STICKY PAD™ is a trademark of the Perfect Web Corporation, of Delray Beach, Fla.). STICKY PAD™ **310** includes a design space **280** on which one or more web assets **305** can be displayed. Web assets **305** can be manipulated on the STICKY PAD™ **310**, which acts as the editing platform for the registered user and appears when it is necessary to edit or otherwise modify web assets. STICKY PAD™ **310** further includes a plurality of selection buttons **285**, **295**, which are selected by a registered user in the same manner as selection buttons **212** are selected. As shown in FIG. **3**, buttons **285** include an fx button **315**, a sound button **320**, a color button **325** and a search button **330**, and buttons **295** include a text editor button **345** and a running meter button **350**, in one embodiment of the invention. Buttons **285**, **295** are described in further detail with reference to FIGS. **4-9**. STICKY PAD™ **310** additionally includes, in certain embodiments, a banner bar **290**. Banner bar **290** is capable of displaying one or more banner ads corresponding to other websites designed by other registered users through the use of system **100**, which allow for marketing of those websites. Also, banner bar **290** is capable of displaying banner ads corresponding to outside advertisers.

A registered user can interact with STICKY PAD™ **310** to perform a variety of operations. The registered user can select (by way of a mouse or other input device) any of the web assets **305** that are currently shown on the STICKY PAD™ **310**, move the web assets relative to one another, and alter the size of the web assets. Referring to FIGS. **4-6**, the registered user also can select search button **330** to identify and obtain new web assets and other elements, including sound elements and color elements, which can be added to the website that is being developed. Upon selecting search button **330**, a search menu **410** appears having selectable options **420** for fx (web assets), sound and color. As shown in FIG. **4**, if the registered user selects fx (web assets) from search menu **410**, an fx menu **430** appears. As shown in FIG. **5**, if the registered user selects sound from search menu **410**, a sound menu **540** appears. As shown in FIG. **6**, if the registered user selects color from search menu **410**, a color pallet **640** appears. To streamline operation of the STICKY PAD™ **310**, the STICKY PAD™ further includes individual fx, sound and color buttons **315**, **320** and **325** which, when selected, result in the immediate display of fx menu **430**, sound menu **540** and color pallet **640**.

In the preferred embodiment, fx (web assets) menu **430** includes a search entry field **435** in which the registered user can enter keywords or other search criteria indicative of the type of web assets that the registered user desires to implement within its website. Upon receiving search criteria from the registered user, the system **100** (particularly the server computer **140**) searches the web assets database **170** for web assets that meet the search criteria. System **100** employs any of a number of conventional search engines to perform the searches. Upon the commanding of a search by the registered user, the fx menu **430** lists all available web assets that meet the search criteria in a scroll menu, as shown in FIG. **4**. Also in the preferred embodiment, sound menu **540** includes a search entry field **545** in which the registered user can enter keywords or other search criteria indicative of the type of sounds that the registered user desires to implement within its website. Upon receiving search criteria from the registered user, the system **100** performs a search for sounds meeting the search criteria and then lists all available sound elements that meet the search criteria in a scroll menu, as shown in FIG. **5**.

Fx menu **430** and sound menu **540** typically list available elements in categories. For example, for fx/web assets, the categories can include icons, scripts, chat rooms and message boards and, for sound elements, the categories can include general sounds, noises, music and sound effects. Although in the preferred embodiment, fx menu **430** and sound menu **540** list web assets and sound elements that are identified based upon searches of web assets database **170** and meet search criteria specified in search entry fields **435**, **545**, in alternate embodiments searches need not be performed. In such embodiments, fx menu **430** and sound menu **540** directly list all available web assets and sound elements that are available for implementation into a website, without receiving search criteria from the registered user. Further, with respect to color pallet **640**, in the preferred embodiment the color pallet lists all available colors without receiving search criteria from the registered user or performing any searches to narrow down the list of available colors. However, in alternate embodiments, color pallet **640** can include a search entry field for receiving search criteria from the registered user and, upon performing a search, display colors that meet the specified search criteria.

Once fx menu **430**, sound menu **540** and color pallet **640** list available web assets, sound elements and color elements, respectively, the registered user can select one or more of the elements for implementation in the registered user's website (i.e., by selecting one or more of the elements using a mouse). The registered user can, upon selecting a web asset, sound or color, cause the selected element to appear within design space **280** of STICKY PAD™ **310** (i.e., by double-clicking on the element using a mouse). The registered user also can apply selected web assets, sound elements or color elements to existing web assets or other elements within STICKY PAD™ **310**. The registered user applies the selected elements to existing elements within the STICKY PAD™ **310** by dragging and dropping the selected elements onto the existing elements. In the preferred embodiment, sound and color elements can be dragged, dropped and otherwise manipulated around the STICKY PAD™ **310** in the same manner as web assets; when the registered user selects a sound or color element, the selected sound or color element is displayed as an icon or thumbnail image **550**.

For example, once a chick icon has been selected from fx menu **430** and is displayed in design space **280** as web asset

305*a* (as shown in FIG. **3**), the registered user can further modify the chick to make a peep or other noise by selecting the desired noise from sound menu **540**, dragging the noise to the chick, and dropping the noise onto the chick. If the color of the chick as obtained from fx menu **430** is not the desired color, i.e., the color is white and not yellow, the registered user can further modify the color of the chick by selecting the color yellow from color pallet **640**, dragging the color to the chick, and dropping the color onto the chick. Although in the preferred embodiment, sound and color elements can be dragged and dropped in the same manner as web assets, in alternate embodiments, a registered user can instead apply a particular sound or color element to an existing element within the STICKY PAD™ **310** simply by selecting the existing element before (or immediately after) selecting the particular sound or color element. The web assets, sound elements and color elements displayed in fx menu **430**, sound menu **540** and color pallet **640**, respectively, are provided from server computer **140**, which accesses web assets database **170**. Web assets database **170** stores web assets that are provided from a variety of sources including internet companies, publishers, geeks, designers, and artists. In the preferred embodiment, some of the web assets stored on web assets database **170** are provided from independent third party authors who access system **100** by way of third party author computers **120**. System **100** compensates the independent third party authors when their web assets are utilized by registered users in designing websites. Web assets can also be provided under license from major digital and stock art publishers (i.e., Adobe, Corel, Com Stock, etc.). Although the system **100** is designed to allow the registered user to obtain web assets and sound and color elements from web assets database **170**, the system also allows the registered user to obtain web assets from other sources. For example, the registered user can upload its own web assets from a memory device (i.e., the hard drive) of registered user computer **180**. Also, in certain embodiments, the registered user can obtain web assets by independently accessing third party websites via the internet, and selecting web assets displayed on those websites.

The web assets that can be selected from fx menu **430** include web assets that consist partly, or even entirely, of text. However, STICKY PAD™ **310** further allows a registered user to enter text directly into the STICKY PAD™ by typing in the desired text at a keyboard at registered user computer **180**. The text is displayed within design space **280** of the STICKY PAD™ **310** once the registered user hits the "enter" key on the keyboard. In certain embodiments, text that is desired for entry into the STICKY PAD™ **310** can be uploaded from a memory associated with registered user computer **180** rather than typed in by the registered user. Once the text is displayed within the design space **280**, the text can be selected by the registered user and moved around within design space **280** like any other web asset. The text can also be edited if the registered user selects the text editor button **345**. As shown in FIG. **7**, upon the selection of text editor button **345**, a text editor menu **710** appears. Displayed on text editor menu **710** are a font/style/size/color button **720** and a spell check button **730**. Upon selection of the font/style/size/color button **720**, a font/style/size/color menu **740** appears, from which the registered user can select a plurality of fonts, styles and colors for the text as well as select a size setting for the text.

Upon selection of the spell check button **730**, a spell check is performed using computer algorithms that are well known in the art. In one embodiment, a spell check result box **750** appears once the spell check has been performed in relation to the text, and suggested changes to the text appear in the spell check result box. In alternate embodiments, the spell check is executed without the display of any spell check result box. For example, if a spelling error is detected in the text, the spelling error is highlighted in the text itself. The registered user can identify which text is to be edited in a variety of ways. In one embodiment, the registered user must select the text (i.e., highlight the text, using a mouse) that is to be edited, and then subsequently select text editor button **710**. In another embodiment, the registered user first selects text editor button **710** and then subsequently selects the text that is to be edited.

Referring to FIG. **8**, STICKY PAD™ **310** additionally includes running meter button **350**. Upon being selected by the registered user, running meter button **350** provides a running meter block **810** that shows an indication of the size of the web asset(s) that are displayed on STICKY PAD™ **310**. As shown in FIG. **8**, in one embodiment, the indication provided by running meter block **810** is an indication (preferably displayed on a single line of text) of the memory required for storing the web assets. In alternate embodiments, other or additional information can be displayed by running meter block **810**, e.g., the time required to download or execute the web assets. In the preferred embodiment, this other information is not displayed by way of selecting running meter button **350** of STICKY PAD™ **310**, but is displayed by way of help/statistics button **275** of website design plate **210**, as described below with reference to FIG. **14**. Although in the present embodiment, size information is only displayed when running meter button **350** is selected by the registered user, in alternate embodiments the running meter button is replaced by a running meter display region, which always displays the total size of all web assets currently being displayed in display region **280**.

In the preferred embodiment, the web assets that are selectable by a registered user are standardized to facilitate the registered user's creation of a website that operates in an efficient and user-friendly manner and, in particular, does not require too much memory or require excessive time to be downloaded from the internet. Thus, in the preferred embodiment, an authenticating team reviews all web assets that are provided from third party authors before the web assets are stored on web assets database **170** and accessible by registered users in designing their websites. The authenticating team only allows web assets that do not exceed a maximum kilobytes (K) allowed per web asset and web page to be stored on the web assets database **170**. In addition to storing information concerning the characteristics of the web assets, web assets database **170** also stores accounting information regarding the usage of the web assets stored on the web assets database. At the end of each time period (i.e., month or quarter), the server computer **140** reviews the accounting information and determines the amount of usage of each of the web assets by each registered user. The web asset usage is assigned a cash amount per use so that a total amount of money owed by each registered user can be calculated (and charged to each respective registered user).

Turning to FIG. **9**, a registered user can utilize STICKY PAD™ **310** to design a banner ad **910** to be used to advertise the registered user's website. The registered user can search for a desired banner ad design by selecting search button **330** and then selecting fx from search menu **410** (or simply by selecting fx button **315**), to obtain fx menu **430**, at which a search can be requested. In the fx menu **430**, all available banner ads have standard size configurations, namely 240×360 pixels or 240×240 pixels. As with respect to other web assets that are displayed within STICKY PAD™ **310**, the banner ad **910** that is being developed using the STICKY PAD™ can be moved within the design space **280** and modi-

fied through the addition of other web assets (including text), which are obtained by selecting search button **330** (or fx button **315**) and bringing up fx menu **430**. Also, the banners can be modified through the addition of sounds and colors, which are obtained by selecting search button **330** (or by selecting sound and color buttons **320** and **325**, respectively) to bring up sound menu **540** and color pallet **640**, respectively.

Also as shown in FIG. **9**, the registered user can utilize STICKY PAD™ **310** to design a logo **920** for the registered user's website. As with respect to the design of banner ads, the registered user can search for a desired logo design in, and select the desired logo design from, fx menu **430**. Alternatively, the registered user can upload an already-designed logo from a memory device at registered user computer **180** (e.g., the registered user's hard drive) into STICKY PAD™ **310**. The selected or uploaded logo can then be further edited and modified within the STICKY PAD™ **310**, for example, through the addition of other web assets (including text), sounds and colors. Although in the present embodiment logos and banner ads are designed using the same searching and design procedures that are employed in the design of other website elements, in other embodiments STICKY PADS™ **310** and/or website design plate **210** have specific "logo design" and "banner design" buttons that the registered user can select to design logos and banner ads, respectively.

When the registered user finishes developing and modifying the web assets in the design space **280** of the STICKY PAD™ **310**, the registered user drags and drops (i.e., using a mouse) the web assets into website design plate **210**. In alternate embodiments, the registered user can provide a command to the system **100** to terminate the display of the STICKY PAD™ **310**, at which time all of the elements being displayed in the STICKY PAD™ appear in the website design plate **210**. When the web assets are dropped into website design plate **210**, the web assets become interactive (as long as the registered user has logged in to the system **100**, as discussed with reference to FIG. **11**). That is, the web assets become functional so that the registered user is able to exchange information with respect to the web assets, i.e., interact with system **100** through the use of the web assets. When dropped into website design plate **210**, the web assets form or are added to a particular web page of the website being developed.

A website that is being developed typically will have more than one web page. As shown in FIG. **10**, the registered user can provide information to the system **100** indicating the number of web pages in the website, as well as determine the web page that is currently being displayed by website design plate **210**, by selecting navigation button **225** on website design plate **210**. Upon selecting navigation button **225**, a navigation menu **1010** appears. Navigation menu **1010** includes a list of web pages 1 through 10. In alternate embodiments, navigation menu **1010** can list fewer or greater than ten web pages. Adjacent to the web page numbers are fields **1015** for inputting names/identifiers for the respective web pages. The registered user can input a name/identifier corresponding to each of web pages 1-10 by selecting the respective field **1015** (i.e., by way of a mouse) and typing in the name/identifier. The registered user determines which web page is currently being displayed by website design plate **210** by selecting one of the page numbers in the list. In certain embodiments of the invention, the website design plate **210** always displays a web page number indication corresponding to the web page that is currently being displayed, for example, at a corner of design space **214**.

Websites that are designed using the system **100** are not limited to ten web pages. As shown in FIG. **10**, the registered user can select an add new page, button **1020** on navigation menu **1010** to add additional pages (and to provide names/identifiers corresponding to those additional pages). Also, although the registered user can type in original names/identifiers corresponding to the web pages (e.g., in fields **1015**), the registered user can also utilize standard names/identifiers by selecting a scroll menu button **1030**. Upon selecting scroll menu button **1030**, a scroll menu **1040** appears that lists various standard web page names/identifiers such as, for example, Company Information, Recent News, Coming Soon, About Us, Products, and Contact Us. Navigation menu **1010** further includes a navigation locations button **1050**. Upon selecting the navigation locations button **1050**, the registered user is able to determine where a navigation bar or website map/outline will be positioned on one or more web pages of the website (e.g., at the top, bottom, left or right). The navigation bar or website map/outline allows website users to visualize the website as a whole and the various web pages that are available for access by the website users.

As discussed, the STICKY PAD™ **310** acts as the editing platform for the registered user, and appears when it is necessary to edit or otherwise modify web assets. During development of a website, the registered user can select (by way of a mouse or other input device) one or more of the web assets **205** that are displayed on website design plate **210** to activate STICKY PAD™ **310** and allow editing of the selected web assets, which appear in design space **280**. If an item of text within the design space **214** is selected by the registered user, both the STICKY PAD™ **310** and then the text editor menu **710** appear to allow for editing of the text. STICKY PAD™ **310** also appears when the registered user proceeds with a search to obtain a desired web asset by selecting the fx button **240**. Upon the selecting of the fx button **240** by the registered user, the fx menu **430** appears, and the registered user can search for and select a desired web asset. Once the registered user selects a desired web asset from the fx menu **430**, the STICKY PAD™ **310** appears with the selected web asset being displayed in design space **280**.

Additionally, STICKY PAD™ **310** appears when either the color or sound buttons **245**, **250** are selected by the registered user. Upon the selecting of the color or sound buttons **245**, **250** by the registered user, the color pallet **640** or sound menu **540** appear, respectively. Once the registered user selects a desired color or sound from the color pallet or sound menu, respectively, the STICKY PAD™ **310** appears with a thumbnail image **550** representing the selected color or sound being displayed in design space **280**. Further, STICKY PAD™ **310** appears when the text button **235** of website design plate **210** is selected. When text button **235** is selected, the STICKY PAD™ **310** immediately appears and the registered user is allowed to type in text at the keyboard of registered user computer **180**. Text editor button **345** can then be selected by the registered user from the STICKY PAD™ **310** to edit the text.

In addition to web assets (from fx menu **430**), sounds, colors and text, the GUI of system **100** is also capable of adding tables and cells to the website being designed in order to provide depth and perception to the website. As shown in FIG. **11**, when tables button **255** is selected by the registered user, a tables menu **1110** appears. The registered user can then select from the tables menu **1110** one or more tables **1120** and cells **1130**, and also specify the locations of the tables/cells on a web page by selecting a locations button **1140**. In one embodiment, the possible locations of tables/cells on a web page include a top location, a bottom location, a left location and a right location. Unlike the editing of web assets, sounds, colors and text, in the preferred embodiment STICKY PAD™

310 does not appear upon the selection of tables button 255. Rather, once a table/cell is selected, the registered user can drag and drop the selected table/cell directly into website design plate 210.

Upon being dropped into the website design plate 210, the table/cell automatically aligns at an edge of the design space 214, with the appropriate edge being determined by the location selected by the registered user. Also upon being dropped into the website design plate 210, the table/cell becomes interactive. The registered user can move the table/cell from its original location, and also can adjust the size of the table/cell by selecting the table/cell (i.e., by way of a mouse) and stretching or contracting the boundaries of the table/cell. Web assets and other elements can be dragged and dropped both from STICKY PAD™ 310 and from other locations on website design plate 210 into tables and cells, and the color of tables/cells can be modified by selecting color button 245. Tables differ from cells in that cells typically form enclosed areas within tables. Cells cannot be moved outside of (or moved to overlap) a table boundary enclosing the cells. In alternate embodiments, tables/cells can be created and modified by way of the STICKY PAD™ 310.

Further shown in FIG. 11 is a log in menu 1150 that appears upon the selection of log in button 215 by a potential customer. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, several features of the GUI can be operated before completion of the log in process, such as uploading web assets from a hard drive of a third party potential customer computer 110 into the website design plate 210. However, key functions such as searching for web assets, and saving/submitting a fully-designed website for posting on the internet can only be performed by registered users who have full access to the server computer 140 via the internet. To obtain full access to the server computer 140 and perform such functions, log in information must be provided to the system 100. By requiring this log in information, the system 100 can monitor the activity of the registered users and bill the registered users for their usage of the system, including their usage of web assets provided from third party author computers 120 and saved on web assets database 170. Additionally, the information provided by registered users during the log in process can be used by the system 100 to determine appropriate markets for the registered users' websites. The use of this market information is discussed further in reference to FIG. 12. As shown in FIG. 11, the selection of log in button 215 brings up log in menu 1150. The log in menu 1150 includes a scroll and input form with multiple fields 1160 that must be filled in to complete the log in process. The fields 1160 can include, for example, fields for the potential customer's (i.e., prospective registered user's) name, address, e-mail address, telephone number, interests, hobbies and businesses. Upon the completing of fields 1160, a desired identification name is further provided into an identification field 1170 and a desired password is provided into a password field 1180. The information from fields 1160-1180 is then provided from the third party potential customer (i.e., prospective registered user) computer 110 via the internet 130 to the server computer 140, where the information is processed and then provided for storage on third party user database 160. Although in the preferred embodiment, the identification name and/or password are chosen by the potential customer, in alternate embodiments, the identification name and password are assigned by the system 100.

Assuming that the information provided into the fields 1160-1180 of log in menu 1150 is not rejected by the server computer 140 (e.g., because information was not entered for some of the fields, or because the e-mail address that was entered is invalid), the server computer logs in the potential customer as a registered user and allows the new registered user to access all of the functionality of the system 100. Also upon successfully logging in the new registered user, the system prompts the new registered user regarding a web address for the registered user's website by displaying a URL query form 1190. The web address typically concludes with any top-level domain name, i.e., .com, .net, etc. The query form is licensed for use on the system 100 from Internic and/or the other five URL registrants. Further, upon successfully logging in to the system 100, the new registered user can thereafter bypass the full log in process when reentering the system by simply inputting its identification name and password into the identification and password fields 1170, 1180. Upon reentering the system 100, the registered user selects edit button 220 on website design plate 210 to cause the registered user's website (in its current state of development) to become interactive. Additionally, upon selecting edit button 220, the registered user can modify any element of the website that is shown within design space 214 by selecting that element (i.e., by clicking on the element using a mouse) to bring up STICKY PAD™ 310, and then modifying the element within the STICKY PAD™ as discussed above.

Turning to FIG. 12, website design plate 210 further includes STAY STICKY™ button 260, which brings up a STAY STICKY™ menu 1210 when selected by the registered user (STAY STICKY™ is a trademark of the Perfect Web Corporation of Delray Beach, Fla.). STAY STICKY™ menu 1210 lists STAY STICKY™ features that are available to the registered user in designing and marketing its website. The STAY STICKY™ features provide the registered user with special information concerning, and marketing opportunities with respect to, other registered users who have designed their websites using the system 100. That is, the STAY STICKY™ features provide special marketing benefits to registered users of the system 100 vis-a-vis one another. Specifically, the registered user can select from two options on the STAY STICKY™ menu 1210, smart agent and MAIL WIZ™ (MAIL WIZ™ is a trademark of the Perfect Web Corporation of Delray Beach, Fla.). Upon the selection of the smart agent option from the STAY STICKY™ menu 1210, a smart agent menu 1220 appears. The registered user can select (e.g., by way of a mouse) from among three options on the smart agent menu 1220, a suggested marketing locations option 1230, a create links option 1240, and a banner ad rotations option 1250.

When the registered user selects suggested marketing locations option 1230, the server computer 140 determines the best possible places to market the registered user's website on the internet. That is, the server computer 140 determines other websites on which it would be most beneficial to display a link to, or banner concerning, the registered user's website. The server computer 140 makes this determination based upon the information provided by the registered user during the log in process, particularly the information provided in fields 1160 as described with reference to FIG. 11. Using this information, the server computer 140 searches the information stored in third party user database 160 to identify other websites on which it would be desirable to market the registered user's website. Server computer 140 can utilize any one of a number of search engines that are currently well known in the art to identify such websites using the log in information provided by the registered user. In alternate embodiments, server computer 140 can also access other information other than that within third party user database 160, including information concerning websites or other marketing locations that were not developed through the use of the system

100. Upon determining desirable marketing locations, the system **100** can display the identified marketing locations to the registered user.

Upon selection by the registered user of the create links option **1240**, the GUI provides a location selection menu **1260**, in which the registered user can identify addresses for websites to which the registered user desires its website to be linked. In the preferred embodiment, the websites can be selected from among the websites that have been created by other registered users using the system **100**. Location selection menu **1260** includes several open fields **1270** in which the registered user can specify desired websites. Further, location selection menu **1260** lists the suggested websites that were identified in the search performed by server computer **140** upon selection of the suggested marketing locations option **1230**. The list includes selection boxes **1275** that the registered user can check to indicate its selection of the various suggested websites. If the registered user has not yet selected suggested marketing locations option **1230**, the server computer **140** performs the search for suggested websites when it generates location selection menu **1260**. Once the registered user has selected its desired marketing locations on location selection menu **1260**, the system **100** has sufficient information to create links to the registered user's website at other websites.

The registered user can further select the banner ad rotations option **1250** from the smart agent menu **1220**. Upon the selecting of banner ad rotations option **1250**, the system **100** determines whether the registered user has already designed (or uploaded or otherwise provided to the system) a banner ad, as discussed with reference to FIG. **9**. If the registered user has not already designed a banner ad, the system displays a message indicating that it is necessary to create a banner ad in order to participate in banner ad rotations. The system **100** also provides banner ad design options from which the registered user can select a desired banner design. The design options can be obtained by the registered user by using fx menu **430** to perform a search for banner ads. Following selection of a desired banner ad design, STICKY PAD™ **310** appears, allowing the registered user to further modify and then complete its design of the banner ad. Once a banner ad design is completed, a location selection menu identical to location selection menu **1260** appears following selection of the banner ad rotations option **1250**. The location selection menu allows the registered user to specify the websites at which the registered user desires its banner ad to appear. Once the registered user has selected its desired locations on the location selection menu, the system **100** has sufficient information to create banner ads advertising the registered user's website at other websites.

By completing these steps relating to the create links option **1240** and/or the banner ad rotations option **1250**, the registered user causes its website to participate in linking and/or banner ad display functions with other websites that also were created using the system **100** by registered users who opted to participate in these linking and/or banner ad display functions. Once the design of the new website by the registered user is completed and the new website is posted/activated, the system **100** causes the selected websites of other registered users (i.e., the websites selected during the design of the new website) to display a link and/or banner ad concerning the new website. In the preferred embodiment, each website that is developed by a registered user who opts to participate in the linking functions can display unlimited links to other registered users' websites. If the number of links to be displayed exceeds the available display space on the display screen, links can be rotated on and off the screen. Each website that is developed by a registered user who opts to participate in the banner ad display functions can rotate an unlimited number of banner ads for other registered users' websites. The banner ads can be shown sequentially over a period of time at the registered user's website.

System **100** will cause each website that is designed to participate in the linking and/or banner ad functions to include, on at least one web page of the website, a link region and/or a banner ad region for the display of links to and/or banner ads for other websites. The links displayed in the link region of a given website can change as new websites are created using the system **100** by registered users, or as old websites are deactivated. In certain embodiments, a registered user is allowed to change its selections of desired marketing locations after the posting of its website; in such embodiments, it can be the case that a link displayed at a given marketing location is removed from display because the registered user who selected the link changed its preferences. Likewise, the banner ads that are sequentially shown in the banner ad rotation region of a given website can change as new websites are created, old websites are deactivated or marketing location preferences change. System **100** charges the registered user's website a fee for participation in the linking and/or banner ad functions whenever links to the registered user's website are shown on other websites, or whenever the banner ad for the registered user's website is shown on other websites. For the registered user's website to participate in the linking and/or banner ad functions, the registered user must complete the website design process and save the selected locations for links and/or banner ads (as well as, in the case of participation in the banner ad functions, save the banner ad design for the registered user's website) at the server computer **140**. In some embodiments, credit card (and payment) information must be provided by the registered user when the registered user is setting up the linking and/or banner ad rotation functions, i.e., after the registered user specifies the locations at which the registered user desires links and/or banner ads for its website to appear. The amount of payment can depend upon the number of links and/or banner ads to be displayed, i.e., the number of desired marketing locations.

Upon selection of the mail wiz option from the STAY STICKY™ menu **1210**, a MAIL WIZ™ menu **1280** appears, which provides the registered user with a field **1285** for entering a desired quantity **1285** of e-mail messages to be sent out, and also provides an e-mail message field **1290** in which the registered user can input a desired e-mail message. Once the registered user completes the design of the website, and the website is posted/activated, the system **100** sends the specified e-mail message to other registered users (or their websites), whose e-mail addresses are located in third party user database **160**. In certain embodiments, e-mail messages are only sent to selected locations that are specified by the registered user during development of the website, for example, the locations specified by the registered user in location selection menu **1260**. In other embodiments, e-mail messages are also sent to the e-mail addresses of parties who are not registered users. In still further embodiments, the system **100** determines suggested e-mail addresses based upon the log in information provided by the registered user and the information in third party user database **160**. In the preferred embodiment, the number of e-mail messages that are sent from the registered user's website to other e-mail addresses is recorded in a statistic log, and the number of e-mail messages that are received by the registered user's website is also recorded in the statistic log. Further in the preferred embodiment, the registered user provides payment to the system **100** for the

quantity of e-mail messages to be sent as specified on MAIL WIZ™ menu **1280**. System **100** continues to send e-mail messages on behalf of the registered user's website to other e-mail messages until the specified number of e-mail messages has been sent.

Turning to FIG. **13**, the registered user can select e-commerce button **265** to add to its website various features that allow for e-commerce (i.e., allow for the selling of goods and services over the internet). Upon the selecting of e-commerce button **265**, an e-commerce menu **1310** appears. In the preferred embodiment, the registered user can select from two different types of e-commerce features, a standard e-commerce feature **1320** and an auction feature **1330**. Upon selecting the standard e-commerce feature **1320**, the registered user then can select one or more shopping carts from a shopping carts to select list **1325**. Upon selecting the auction feature **1330**, the registered user can select one or more types of auction features from an auction to select list **1335**. After determining the type of e-commerce feature to be implemented on its website, the registered user then can upload (i.e., from a memory device at registered user computer **180**) a picture of the product to be sold on the registered user's website, at product picture field **1340**. Further, in a product description field **1345**, a product price field **1350** and a SKU field **1355**, a registered user can respectively input a description of the product to be sold at its website, the product's price and a SKU number correlating to the product. In the case where an auction feature has been selected, the product price entered in product price field **1350** is a reserve price. Also, in certain embodiments, the creation of an auction feature further requires the input of information, by the registered user, concerning starting and finishing times for the holding of auctions.

Finally, the registered user must input a merchant account identifier in a merchant account field **1360** indicating a merchant account that will apply to sales conducted using the shopping cart/auction of the registered user's website. If a merchant account relationship has not yet been established such that the registered user cannot enter a merchant account identifier, a merchant account information form **1370** appears, at which the registered user can enter necessary information for setting up a merchant account relationship. This information can include, for example, the name of the registered user's business, the address of the business, and the business type, among other types of information. In the preferred embodiments, the merchant account information form **1370** is a standard form that is provided by a credit card and/or merchant account provider. The credit card and/or merchant account provider providing the merchant account information form **1370** in certain embodiments pays a licensing or other fee to the system **100** in order to display its merchant account information form using the system. When the registered user has completed filling out the merchant account information form **1370**, the filled out form is sent to the credit card and/or merchant account provider. The merchant account provider eventually responds back to the registered user with follow-up information concerning the setting up of the merchant account. The registered user cannot activate any of the e-commerce functions (i.e., functions employing a shopping cart or auction) without having completed the setting up of a merchant account with a merchant account provider. Once the merchant account is set up, however, the registered user enters the merchant account identification information into field **1360** and the e-commerce functionality can be activated.

Referring to FIG. **14**, the system **100** is also capable of providing several types of assistance to the registered user during design of its website. The registered user can select the examples button **270** to bring up an examples menu **1410**, which in the preferred embodiment lists ten examples **1420** that can be selected by the registered user. Each of the examples **1420**, upon being selected by the registered user, shows how a web page, banner, logo, or other element can be designed using website design plate **210**, STICKY PAD™ **310**, and other features of the system **100**. In the preferred embodiment, selection of an example 1420 produces a visual demonstration of an example website being taken apart and then put back together. While the example website is being put back together, a tutorial program runs that instructs the registered user on operating website design plate **210**, STICKY PAD™ **310**, and other features of system **100** to allow for the creation, saving, and posting/activation of a website using the system. In certain embodiments, the system **100** will conduct contests among registered users concerning the registered users' prowess in designing websites.

The registered user can also select the help/statistics button **275** to bring up a help/statistics menu **1430**. Help/statistics menu **1430** lists four different options that are selectable by the registered user: a document help option **1440**; a tech support option **1450**, a wizard option **1460**, and a size meter option **1470**. Upon the selection of the document help option **1440**, the GUI displays written instructions concerning various features of the system **100**. For example, the GUI can display explanation messages concerning the purposes and operation of the various buttons **215-275** when the registered user selects any of those buttons (or, in certain embodiments, merely positions a cursor or other selection marker over one of those buttons). Also, for example, the GUI can display instructions as to how a web asset can be modified if that web asset is positioned within website design plate **210** or STICKY PAD™ **310**.

With respect to tech support option **1450**, the registered user can reach tech support for the system **100** by telephoning a particular telephone number (i.e., a 900 number), or by sending an e-mail to tech support. Then, by selecting tech support option **1450**, tech support personnel for the system **100** can view the registered user's website online and provide the registered user with any needed website design information or other assistance either by way of telephone or e-mail while viewing the registered user's website online. Upon selection of the wizard option **1460**, a wizard caricature appears that offers helpful hints and suggestions to the registered user during different steps in the website design process. The information provided by the wizard is similar to that provided in connection with document help option **1440**, although the text shown is typically in a shortened form so that the text can be provided in a caption along side the wizard caricature. In alternate embodiments, the helpful hints and suggestions from the wizard caricature are verbalized using speech synthesis technology.

The registered user can further select size meter option **1470** to obtain information regarding how well the registered user's website, as currently designed, will perform upon posting. Upon the selection of the size meter option **1470**, a meter box **1480** appears, in which a variety of information regarding the operability of the current website design is provided. In one embodiment, as shown in FIG. **14**, the meter box **1480** includes information regarding each of the size of the entire website currently being designed, the time required to download the entire website via the internet (to a computer accessing the website using a browser) the size of the current web page that is being displayed on website design plate **210**, and the time for downloading that particular web page. Further in the preferred embodiment, each of these types of information

is provided for the website when operating on different types of internet systems with different connectivities, such as internet systems using a T-1 communication link, a DSL or ISDN communication link, or modems having operation speeds of 56K, 316K or 28.8K. In certain embodiments, the registered user has an option to select the desired/expected connectivity of the website and to obtain information for that connectivity only.

In certain embodiments of the invention, meter box **1480** can contain less or more information concerning the expected operation of the website being designed. For example, in certain embodiments, the meter box **1480** only includes size information. In other embodiments, meter box **1480** includes not only size information regarding the entire website and individual web pages, but also provides a breakdown of the sizes of each web asset or other element on a given web page. In certain embodiments, running meter block **810** displayed in conjunction with STICKY PAD™ **310** contains the same information that is displayed in meter box **1480**. Although in one embodiment, the meter box **1480** is only displayed when the size meter option **1470** is selected, in alternate embodiments, the meter box **1480** (or at least some of the information displayed in meter box **1480**) is always displayed on website design plate **210**. In such embodiments, the information being displayed that corresponds to the particular web page that is being edited varies as the registered user changes from editing one web page to editing a different web page using navigation button **225**. The information can be shown on multiple lines or be provided in a single-line format to save display space. In the preferred embodiment, the information provided in meter box **1480** changes whenever a new web asset or other element is dropped into website design plate **210**.

Further, in the preferred embodiment, the system **100** always monitors the current sizes of the website and web pages that are being designed, and provides a warning message whenever the website as a whole or individual web pages have exceeded maximum limits for size and download times (e.g., "Your site has exceeded download time parameters."). When the website being designed exceeds maximum size and/or download time parameters, the system **100** automatically displays relevant help message to provide the registered user with suggestions for reducing the size and/or download time of the website/web page. These warning and help messages can be provided by the wizard feature discussed above. If the registered user does not heed the warning concerning the size and/or download time of the website/web page, the system **100** automatically restricts the ability of the registered user to add additional web assets and other elements to the website/web page and thereby guarantees that the website, when completed, will be within acceptable size and download time guidelines.

At any time during the course of the design of a website using website design plate **210** (assuming the log in process has been completed, as discussed with reference to FIG. **11**), the registered user can select preview button **230** to view the operation of the website in its current state of design. The registered user can view the operation of the website as it would appear using a variety of different internet browsers, e.g., the Netscape Navigator™ browser or the Microsoft Internet Explorer™ browser. Previewing the website does not save the website for activation, but rather gives the registered user a "snapshot" of the website in its current state, and allows the registered user to view the alignment, color schemes and other features of the website before the website is saved and activated. Further, at any time during the design of a website (assuming the log in process has been completed, as discussed with reference to FIG. **11**), the registered user can select save button **218** to save the website in its present form at server computer **140** (specifically at third party user database **160**). If the website design has been completed and the website is ready for submission and activation on the internet, the registered user can provide such an indication (in certain embodiments, an additional submit button is displayed on website design plate **210** to allow the registered user to immediately submit a completed website for activation on the internet).

If the registered user selects the save button **218** but has not yet provided payment information concerning the manner in which the registered user will be paying for its use of system **100**, a payment box **1510** appears. Within payment box **1510**, a message **1520** is provided to the registered user indicating that payment information is necessary (e.g., "Did you forget to pay?") and the registered user is provided with an option **1530** to pay by credit card. When the pay by credit card option **1530** is selected, a credit card information menu **1540** appears, in which the registered user can provided the necessary information for enabling credit card payment to the system **100** from the registered user's credit card. In one embodiment, the registered user must enter its name, credit card number, and expiration date in a name field **1550**, a credit card number field **1560**, and an expiration date field **1570**, respectively. Once the credit card information is received at, and approved by, the system **100**, the registered user can save its website design information. In the preferred embodiment, the registered user provides the same user identification and password information that were provided during the log in process at a user identification field **1580** and a password field **1590**, respectively, for additional security. In addition to requiring credit card information for allowing the saving and submission of website design information by the registered user, the system **100** also requires credit card information to be provided before allowing the registered user to access certain other features. For example, tech support will only be provided when the registered user has provided credit card information or contacts tech support via the 900 number or e-mail. Also, the system **100** does not accept web addresses specified by the registered user for the purpose of creating links or participating in banner ad rotation unless the registered user has provided credit card information.

FIGS. **16-23** provide flow charts showing exemplary steps of operation of the system **100** as it is used by the registered user to design a website. In particular, the flow charts concern the operation of the GUI, i.e., website design plate **210** and STICKY PAD™ **310**. The flow charts of FIGS. **16-22** can be combined together to form a larger collection of steps. Referring to FIG. **16**, the operation of the GUI of the system **100** begins with the display of the website design plate **210** on a user interface at step **1602**. The user interface can be a computer monitor, a television screen or any other input/output device that includes a display screen that is known in the art. Next, at step **1604**, a search request is received at the user interface. At step **1606**, the system **100** determines if the party accessing the system has already logged into the system. If the registered party has not already logged in (i.e., the party is a potential customer rather than a registered user), the system proceeds to step **1608**, in which a login form such as that discussed with reference to FIG. **11** is displayed. At step **1610**, the system **100** receives user information at the user interface in the login form). At steps **1612** and **1614**, respectively, the user information is transmitted to and saved at a database of the system, i.e., third party user database **160**.

Upon completing the log in process (such that the potential customer is now a registered user), or if it was determined in step **1606** that the registered user was already logged in, the

system proceeds to step **1616**, at which the system accesses a database to obtain information regarding web assets or other elements. The information that is obtained is responsive to the search request entered at step **1604**; that is, the information concerns web assets, if the search request was made via fx menu **430**, concerns sound elements if the search request was made via sound menu **540** and concerns color elements if the search request was made via color pallet **640**. The information concerning the web assets or other elements comes from web assets database **170**. At step **1618**, the GUI provides a listing of the available web assets or other elements, in fx menu **430**, sound menu **540** or color pallet **640** depending upon the type of search request that was received at step **1604**. At step **1620**, the system **100** receives a selection indication from the registered user at the user interface that indicates a first web asset or other element that the registered user desires to implement in its website. Upon receiving this selection of a web asset or other element, the STICKY PAD™ **310** is displayed at the user interface. At step **1624**, any further information that is necessary to display the selected web asset or other element is obtained from web assets database **170**, and then, at step **1626**, the selected web asset or other element is displayed on the STICKY PAD™ **310**. In step **1628**, the size of the selected web asset or other element is displayed on the STICKY PAD™ in the running meter block **810**, which in alternate embodiments can also display the download time or other information regarding the selected web asset or other element.

At step **1630**, the system **100** receives an additional input at the user interface from the registered user. If the additional input is another search request (as in step **1604**), the system **100** again accesses web assets database **170** to Obtain information regarding available web assets or other elements, at step **1632**. At step **1634**, the system **100** again provides a listing of available web assets or other elements that is responsive to the search request. At step **1636**, the system **100** receives an input from the registered user indicating which of the listed web assets or other elements is desired for implementation in the registered user's website. Then, in step **1638**, the system **100** retrieves information concerning the selected web asset or other element. Further, at step **1640**, the system **100** receives an additional input from the registered user that is a command indicating where to position the newly selected web asset or other element on the STICKY PAD™ **310**. The input can be a command to drag and drop the selected web asset or other element onto the first web asset or other element that is already positioned within the STICKY PAD™ **310**, or can be merely a command to display the selected web asset or other element at some location within design space **280** of STICKY PAD™ **310**. In response to this input command, the displayed contents of the STICKY PAD™ **310** are modified to include the newly selected web asset or other element at step **1642**. Upon modifying the displayed contents of the STICKY PAD™ **310**, the size of the modified contents of the STICKY PAD™ is displayed (i.e., updated) at the running meter block **810** of the STICKY PAD™, at step **1644**. The program then returns to step **1630**.

The additional input received at the user interface at step **1630** can also be a command to drop the STICKY PAD™ contents into the website design plate **210**. If this occurs, the STICKY PAD™ **310** is removed from the user interface, i.e., is no longer displayed, at step **1646**. Then, at step **1648**, the STICKY PAD™ contents are displayed in an interactive manner on the website design plate **210**. The system **100** then is ready to receive an additional input at the user interface, at step **1650**. In certain embodiments in which the GUI can display both website design plate **210** and STICKY PAD™ **310** simultaneously (e.g., on different parts of the display screen of the user interface), the STICKY PAD™ **310** need not be removed from display. Rather, the contents of the STICKY PAD™ **310** need only be moved or copied to the website design plate **210**.

Referring to FIG. **17**A, if the input received at the user interface at step **1650** is a text input command, the system **100** immediately displays STICKY PAD™ **310** again on the user interface at step **1702**. The text input command is a selection of text button **235**. Once STICKY PAD™ **310** is displayed, the registered user can input text by typing text at the user interface, which is received by the system **100** at step **1704**. The text that is input at the user interface by the registered user is displayed in the STICKY PAD™ **310**, at step **1706**. Then, at step **1708**, the system **100** receives an additional command at the user interface. If the command is to invoke the text editor, i.e., the registered user selects text editor button **345** of STICKY PAD™ **310**, the system **100** proceeds to step **1710**, and displays text editor options.

At step **1712**, the system **100** receives a command concerning the text editor options. If the registered user provides a command to perform a spell check, the system **100** then executes a spell check of the text at step **1714** and displays the spell checked text at step **1716**, before returning to step **1708** to receive an additional command. If the received command at step **1712** is to modify one of the font, style, size or color of the text, the system **100** performs the requested modification and then displays the modified text at step **1718** before returning to step **1708** to receive an additional command. The command to modify the font, style, size or color of the text can include a selection of a change font, change style, change size or change color button, followed by a selection of a desired font, style, size or color to be applied to the text being edited. At step **1708**, it is also possible to receive a command to drop the STICKY PAD™ contents back into the website design plate **210**. If such a command is received, the STICKY PAD™ **310** is removed from the user interface (i.e., is no longer displayed) at step **1720**, and then the STICKY PAD™ contents are displayed on the website design plate **210**, at step **1722**. The program then returns to step **1650** for receipt of an additional input at the user interface.

Referring to FIG. **17**B, the additional input received at step **1650** can also be the selection of tables button **255** of the website design plate **210** by the registered user, indicating that the registered user wishes to generate a table or cell. Upon selection of the tables button **255**, the system **100** displays the options concerning the creation of tables and cells, including their location within a website (i.e., by displaying tables menu **1110**), at step **1750**. At step **1752**, the system **100** receives a selection concerning the tables and cells from the registered user at the user interface. At step **1754**, the selected table or cell is displayed on the website design plate **210**. Next, at step **1756**, a command can be received to modify the position or size of the table or cell. Upon receiving such a command, the table or cell is appropriately adjusted in position and/or size at step **1758**. The command to modify the position or size of the table or cell at step **1756** can include a command or selection input concerning the location of the table or cell within the website or on a web page (i.e., by way of locations button **1140**). Upon completion of the table or cell, the system **100** returns to step **1650**.

Turning to FIGS. **18**A and **18**B, the additional input received at the user interface at step **1650** can be a save input or a preview input, which the registered user can provide by selecting save button **218** or preview button **230** of the website design plate **210**, respectively. Upon receiving the save input, the system **100** determines in step **1802** whether payment has

been received from the registered user. If payment has not yet been received from the registered user, the system **100** displays at the user interface an inquiry as to whether payment has been forgotten at step **1804**. Upon receiving a pay by credit card input at the user interface, at step **1806**, the system displays a credit card information form at step **1808** (i.e., credit card information menu **1540**). In step **1810**, credit card information is received from the registered user at the user interface and, at step **1812**, the system **100** determines whether the information provided is adequate. If the credit card information is inadequate, the system **100** returns to step **1808** and the credit card information form is again displayed. If the credit card information is adequate, the system **100** proceeds to step **1814**, in which payment is received from the registered user's credit card by way of a standard e-commerce credit card transaction. Upon receiving payment at step **1814**, or having determined that payment was already received at step **1802**, the system **100** saves all of the website design information that is currently existing in website design plate **210** at the server computer **140**, at step **1816**. The saved website design information can then be used to post/activate an operational website on the internet. Upon saving the information, the system **100** returns to step **1650**. With respect to FIG. **18**B, if the input at step **1650** is a preview input, the system **100** proceeds to step **1818**, at which a preview of the website's operation given its current state of development is provided. This allows for the registered user to view a simulation of the operation of its website, before the website is saved or activated on the internet. After providing this preview or simulation, the system **100** returns to step **1650**.

Referring to FIG. **19**, the additional input received at step **1650** can also be a navigation input, which the registered user provides by selecting navigation button **225** of website design plate **210**. Upon receiving the navigation input, the system **100** displays a navigation menu (i.e., navigation menu **1010**), and then receives an additional input at the user interface, at steps **1902** and **1904**, respectively. If the additional input received at the user interface at step **1904** is a selection of a page name field corresponding to pages 1-10 (i.e., fields **1015**), the system **100** receives page name information from the registered user at step **1906** and then displays the page name information in the page name field at step **1908**, before returning to step **1904** to receive an additional input at the user interface. If the input received at step **1904** is an add new page command (i.e., provided by selecting add new page button **1020**), the system **100** receives page identification information concerning the newly added page at step **1910** and displays the new page number and page identification information on the navigation menu at step **1912** before returning to step **1904**.

If the input at step **1904** is a selection of the scroll menu (i.e., provided by selecting scroll menu button **1030**), the system **100** displays suggested page names at step **1914**, and then receives a selection of one or more of the suggested page names from the registered user at step **1916** before returning to step **1904**. If the input received at step **1904** is a selection of the navigation locations menu (i.e. selection of navigation locations button **1050**), the system **100** displays a list of locations within a web page at which navigation information can be displayed, at step **1918**. Upon receiving a selected location for the navigation information from the registered user at step **1920**, the system returns to step **1904**. Further, if the input received at step **1904** is a selection of one of the displayed page numbers on the navigation menu **1010**, the display of the navigation menu is ended at step **1922**, and the selected web page is displayed on the website design plate **210** at step **1924**. The system **100** then returns to step **1650**.

Referring to FIG. **20**, the registered user can provide a STAY STICKY™ input at step **1650** by selecting STAY STICKY™ button **260**. Upon receiving such an input, the system **100** displays STAY STICKY™ menu **1210** at step **2002** and then receives a STAY STICKY™ selection at step **2004**. If the received selection is for the smart agent feature, the system **100** then receives an input concerning the smart agent feature at smart agent menu **1220**, at step **2006**. If the received input is a request for suggested marketing locations, the system **100** checks third party user database **160** to determine whether suggested marketing locations had previously been determined, at step **2008**. If suggested marketing locations had been previously determined, these suggested marketing locations are then displayed at the user interface, at step **2014**. If suggested marketing locations had not been previously determined, the system **100** accesses third party user database **160** to obtain the registered user's log in information, and then determines suggested marketing locations based upon this log in information, at steps **2010** and **2012**, respectively. Once the suggested marketing locations are determined, these suggested marketing locations are then displayed at step **2014**. Following display of the suggested marketing locations at step **2014**, the system **100** returns to step **2004**.

If the STAY STICKY™ selection received at step **2004** is to create links, the system **100** then receives marketing location selections at the user interface at step **2018**. The marketing location selection information can be provided by the registered user at location selection menu **1260**. Upon receiving the marketing location selection information, the marketing location selection information is stored at third party user database **160** at step **2020**. This stored information is later used to generate links at the selected marketing locations (i.e., websites) when the registered user's website is activated. The system **100** then proceeds to step **2022**, at which the system determines whether a reciprocal link site has already been created in the registered user's website, for displaying links to other websites. If a link site has not yet been created, the system creates a link site on the registered user's website, at step **2024** before returning to step **1650**. Otherwise, the system **100** immediately returns to step **1650**.

If the STAY STICKY™ selection received at step **2004** is for banner ad rotation, the system **100** proceeds to step **2026**, at which the system determines whether a banner ad has already been created by the registered user. If a banner ad has not yet been created, the system **100** proceeds to step **2028**, in which the system displays at the user interface a message indicating that a banner ad needs to be created by the registered user in order to participate in banner ad rotation, before returning to step **1650**. A banner ad can then be created by the registered user using the capabilities of the website design plate **210** and the STICKY PAD™ **310**, including the search capabilities. If it is determined at step **2026** that a banner ad has already been created by the registered user, the system **100** proceeds to step **2030**, at which it receives marketing location selection information at the user interface. The marketing location selection information can be provided at location selection menu **1260** or a similar menu, and can include marketing location selections that were determined by the system at step **2012**.

At step **2032**, the marketing location selection information provided from the registered user is stored in third party user database **160**, where it can be later accessed upon activation of the registered user's website. The system **100** then proceeds to step **2034**, at which it determines whether a reciprocal banner ad site has already been created on the registered user's website, so that banner ads from other websites can be

displayed on the registered user's website once it is activated. If a banner ad site has not yet been created, the system **100** creates a banner ad site at step **2036** before returning to step **1650**. Otherwise, if a banner ad site has already been created, the system **100** immediately returns to step **1650**. Upon activation of the registered user's website, the registered user's website can display an unlimited number of banner ads from other websites on its reciprocal banner ad site, and the system **100** also displays the registered user's banner ad at the marketing locations (websites) that the registered user specified at step **2030**.

If, at step **2004**, the STAY STICKY™ selection is for the MAIL WIZ™ feature, the system **100** proceeds to step **2038** and displays MAIL WIZ™ menu **1280**. The system **100** then receives an input from the registered user concerning the number of parties that the registered user desires to be included on the registered user's e-mail list, at step **2040**. Further, at step **2042**, the system **100** receives an input at the user interface concerning the registered user's desired e-mail message. All of the received information is then saved in third party user database **160**, before the system **100** returns to step **1650**. Upon activation of the registered user's website, e-mail messages are sent to other registered user's websites, and the number of e-mail messages sent is monitored by the system **100**. Although not shown in FIG. **20**, in some embodiments credit card information (and payment) must be received by the system **100** in order to set up and activate the STAY STICKY™ features, i.e., banner ad rotation, links creation, and MAIL WIZ™. In such embodiments, the system **100** performs steps **1808-1814** (shown with respect to FIG. **18**) during or immediately following its performance of steps **2018-2024**, **2026-2036** and **2038-2044** concerning links creation, banner ad rotation and MAIL WIZ™, respectively.

Referring to FIG. **21**, the registered user can provide an e-commerce input at step **1650** by selecting e-commerce button **265** from website design plate **210**. Upon receiving the e-commerce input, the system **100** displays e-commerce menu **1310**, at step **2102**. The system **100** then receives at step **2104** an input from the registered user concerning the desired type of e-commerce. If the received input indicates that the registered user desires to employ a standard e-commerce arrangement involving a shopping cart, the system **100** displays a list of available shopping cart types at step **2106**. The system then receives a selection of a type of shopping cart from the registered user at step **2108**, before proceeding to step **2114**. If the received input at step **2104** is for an e-commerce arrangement involving an auction, the system **100** displays a list of available auction types at step **2110**, and then receives a selection of a type of auction from the registered user at step **2112** before proceeding to step **2114**. At step **2114**, the system **100** uploads a product picture provided from the registered user, i.e., from the hard drive of the registered user computer **180**. Then, the system **100** further receives inputs concerning the product description, the product price and the product SKU number at the user interface, at steps **2116**, **2118**, and **2119**, respectively. If the e-commerce arrangement selected by the registered user involves an auction, the product price information received from the registered user at step **2118** concerns a reserved price.

Next, at step **2120**, the system **100** determines whether merchant account information has already been provided from the registered user. If merchant account information has not yet been provided, the system **100** displays merchant account information form **1370**, at step **2122**. Upon receiving merchant account information at the user interface from the registered user at step **2124**, the system **100** then sends the merchant account information to the merchant account vendor for processing at step **2126**, before returning to step **1650**. Although, because the registered user has not yet concluded its merchant account arrangement, the system **100** cannot finalize the registered user's e-commerce arrangement, the information provided by the registered user in steps **2104** to **2119** can be saved and utilized again once the registered user's merchant account arrangement has been finalized. If, at step **2120**, it is determined that the merchant account information has already been provided by the registered user, the system **100** receives a merchant account identification number or other identifier at the user interface, at step **2128**, and then proceeds to display the finalized shopping cart or auction feature at website design plate **210**. The system **100** then returns to step **1650**.

Turning to FIG. **22**A, the registered user can provide an examples input by selecting examples button **270** from website design plate **210**. Upon such a selection, the system **100** displays an examples menu at the user's interface, at step **2124**. The system **100** then receives an example selection by the registered user at the user interface, at step **2226**, and then displays the selected example, at step **2228**, before returning to step **1650**. With respect to FIG. **22**B, if the registered user provides a help/statistics input by selecting help/statistics button **275** of the web design plate **210** at step **1650**, the system **100** proceeds to display help/statistics menu **1430**, at step **2202**. The system **100** then receives a help/statistics selection at step **2204**. If the help/statistics selection is a document help input, the system **100** accesses programming database **190** to obtain relevant written help instructions, at step **2206**, and then displays the written help instructions at the user interface, at step **2208**, before returning to step **1650**. If the received help/statistics selection concerns tech support, the system **100** displays a message indicating that tech support can be obtained either by sending an e-mail message or by telephone, at step **2210**. The system **100** then provides the registered user with an option to proceed with tech support, which option must be selected by the registered user in order for a tech support specialist to view the current status of the registered user's GUI and provide assistance, at step **2211**. Once assistance has been provided, the system **100** returns to step **1650**.

If the received help/statistics selection concerns a wizard input, the system **100** displays the wizard caricature at the user interface, at step **2212**. The system **100** then accesses programming database **190** to obtain any relevant wizard suggestions, at step **2214**, and then displays the relevant wizard suggestions, at step **2216**, before returning to step **1650**. If the help/statistics selection received at step **2204** is a size meter input, then the system calculates size and download time parameters for the registered user's website, as well as for the current web page being displayed by website design plate **210**, at step **2218**. Then, at step **2220**, the system **100** displays at the user interface meter box **1480**, which shows the size and download time parameters for the registered user's website and the currently displayed web page, before returning to step **1650**.

Turning to FIG. **23**, an additional flow chart is provided showing operation of the system **100** when the registered user is returning to the system to complete a website design that was previously begun. At step **2302**, website design plate **210** is provided at the user interface. If the system **100** determines that the registered user's website in its current state of development has more than one web page, at step **2304**, the system **100** displays navigation menu **1010** at step **2306**. The system **100** then receives a selection of one of the web page numbers displayed on navigation menu **1010**, at step **2308**. Upon receiving a selected web page number, the system **100**

removes navigation menu **1010** from the user interface, at step **2310**, and displays the one or more web assets and other elements of the selected web page on the website design plate **210**, at step **2312**. Further, if the system **100** determines, at step **2304**, that the registered user's website in its current state of development has only web page, the system displays the one or more web assets or other elements of that web page on the website design plate **210**, at step **2312**.

Next, at step **2314**, the system **100** receives an edit command provided by the registered user by selecting edit button **220**. Upon receiving the edit command, the system **100** causes each of the web assets and other elements that are displayed on the website design plate **210** to become interactive, at step **2316**. The system **100** then receives a selection of one or more of the web assets or other elements displayed on the website design plate, at step **2318**. In response to this selection, the system **100** displays STICKY PAD™ **310** on the user interface, at step **2320**, and further displays the selected web asset or other element on the STICKY PAD™ as the STICKY PAD™ contents, at step **2322**. At step **2324**, the system **100** receives a command to modify the selected web asset or other element displayed within STICKY PAD™ **310**. This command can involve adding additional web assets, sounds or colors to the selected web asset or to the design space **280** surrounding the selected web asset, as well as involve moving the selected web asset within design space **280** or resizing the selected web asset, among other modifications.

At step **2326**, the modified web asset or other element, or modified contents of the STICKY PAD™ **310**, are displayed within the STICKY PAD™. At step **2328**, the system **100** receives a command to drop the contents of the STICKY PAD™ **310** into the website design plate **210**. Next, at step **2330**, the STICKY PAD™ **310** is removed from the user interface (i.e., is no longer displayed) and the contents of the STICKY PAD™ **310** are moved onto the website design plate **210**, at step **2332**. The design of the registered user's website can continue with the receiving of additional inputs from the registered user at the user interface, at step **2334**.

While the foregoing specification illustrates and describes the preferred embodiments of this invention, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the precise construction herein disclosed. The invention can be embodied in other specific forms without departing from the spirit or essential attributes. Accordingly, reference should be made to the following claims, rather than to the foregoing specification, as indicating the scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of assisting a website designer in establishing an arrangement between a first website being designed by the website designer and a second website in order to market the first website at the second website upon the activation of the first website on the internet, the method comprising:

during design of the first website, receiving information at a user interface indicating a type of an element for marketing that is to be displayed at the second website, and information specifying the second website at which the element is to be displayed;

saving the information at a first database that is coupled to the user interface;

obtaining the element for marketing of the type indicated;

causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website when the first website is activated with respect to the internet, wherein the element for marketing includes at least one of a banner ad concerning the first website and a link to the first website;

determining whether a reciprocal site for the display of at least one marketing element of a third party website exists in the first website being designed; and

creating the reciprocal site for the display of the at least one marketing element of the third party website when the reciprocal site does not yet exist in the first website being designed.

2. The method of claim **1**, further comprising:

when the element for marketing the first website is a banner ad concerning the first website, causing the sequential display at the reciprocal site of the first website of a plurality banner ads respectively concerning a plurality of third party websites, when the first website is activated with respect to the internet.

3. The method of claim **1**, further comprising:

when the element for marketing the first website is a link to the first website, causing the display at the reciprocal site of the first website of a plurality of links to the plurality of third party websites, when the first website is activated with respect to the internet.

4. A method, within a computer hardware website implementation system, of establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, comprising:

registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving, by the website implementation system, a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving, by the website implementation system, a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing, by the website implementation system, a reciprocal site in the first website for a first functional marketing element; and

upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, the computer website implementation system implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

5. A computer hardware website implementation system for establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, comprising:

at least one processor, the at least one processor configured for

registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing a reciprocal site in the first website for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing, upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

6. The website implementation system of claim **5**, further comprising a database of registered websites.

7. A computer program product including a computer-readable storage medium having stored therein computer usable program code for establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, the computer usable program code, which when executed by a computer hardware implementation system, causing the computer hardware implementation system to perform:

registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing a reciprocal site in the first website for the first functional marketing element; and

upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement a first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

* * * * *

Attorney Docket No.: 8201-0015 **PATENT**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of	:	Customer Number: 55246
Thomas DISTEFANO III	:	Confirmation Number: Not yet assigned
Application No.: Not yet assigned	:	Group Art Unit: Not yet assigned
Filed: August 8, 2013	:	Examiner: Not yet assigned
Reissue of Patent No.: 7,996,259	:	

For: DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS (as amended)

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.173(b)

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.173(b), the following Amendment and Remarks are submitted herewith.

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the Title of the Invention as follows:

~~METHOD FOR~~ DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A method of assisting a website designer in establishing an arrangement between a first website being designed by the website designer and a second website in order to market the first website at the second website upon the activation of the first website on the internet, the method comprising:

during design of the first website, receiving information at a user interface indicating a type of an element for marketing that is to be displayed at the second website, and information specifying the second website at which the element is to be displayed;

saving the information at a first database that is coupled to the user interface;

obtaining the element for marketing of the type indicated;

causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website when the first website is activated with respect to the internet, wherein the element for marketing includes at least one of a banner ad concerning the first website and a link to the first website;

determining whether a reciprocal site for the display of at least one marketing element of a third party website exists in the first website being designed; and

creating the reciprocal site for the display of the at least one marketing element of the third party website when the reciprocal site does not yet exist in the first website being designed.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

when the element for marketing the first website is a banner ad concerning the first website, causing the sequential display at the reciprocal site of the first website of a plurality

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banner ads respectively concerning a plurality of third party websites, when the first website is activated with respect to the internet.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

when the element for marketing the first website is a link to the first website, causing the display at the reciprocal site of the first website of a plurality of links to the plurality of third party websites, when the first website is activated with respect to the internet.

4. (Original) A method, within a computer hardware website implementation system, of establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, comprising:

registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving, by the website implementation system, a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving, by the website implementation system, a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing, by the website implementation system, a reciprocal site in the first website for a first functional marketing element; and

upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, the computer website implementation system implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

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the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

5. (Original) A computer hardware website implementation system for establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, comprising:

at least one processor, the at least one processor configured for registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing a reciprocal site in the first website for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing, upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

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6. (Original) The website implementation system of claim 5, further comprising a database of registered websites.

7. (Original) A computer program product including a computer-readable storage medium having stored therein computer usable program code for establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, the computer usable program code, which when executed by a computer hardware implementation system, causing the computer hardware implementation system to perform:

registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing a reciprocal site in the first website for the first functional marketing element; and

upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement a first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

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the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

8. (New) A method, within a computer hardware web page implementation system, of establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first web page, associated with a first user, and a second web page, comprising:

generating, by the web page implementation system, a second functional marketing element, associated with the first user, to be activated on the second web page;

establishing, by the web page implementation system, a reciprocal site in the first web page for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing, by the web page implementation system, the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first web page to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second web page to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first web page.

9. (New) The method of claim 8, further comprising

including, within the first web page, a web asset provided by a third party separate from the computer hardware system.

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10. (New) The method of claim 9, further comprising

causing, based upon the web asset being included within the first web page site, the third party to be compensated.

11. (New) The method of claim 9, wherein

the web asset is a functional application.

12. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein

the second functional identification element includes an image.

13. (New) The method of claim 12, further comprising

receiving, from the first user, the image.

14. (New) A computer hardware web page implementation system configured to establish a reciprocal arrangement between a first web page, associated with a first user, and a second web page, comprising:

at least one processor, wherein the at least one processor is configured to perform:

generating a second functional marketing element, associated with the first user, to be activated on the second web page;

establishing a reciprocal site in the first web page for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

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(i) the first web page to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second web page to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first web page.

15. (New) The system of claim 14, wherein the at least one processor is further configured to perform:

including, within the first web page, a web asset provided by a third party separate from the computer hardware system.

16. (New) The system of claim 15, wherein the at least one processor is further configured to perform:

causing, based upon the web asset being included within the first web page site, the third party to be compensated.

17. (New) The system of claim 15, wherein

the web asset is a functional application.

18. (New) The system of claim 14, wherein

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the second functional identification element includes an image.

19. (New) The system of claim 18, wherein the at least one processor is further configured to perform:

receiving, from the first user, the image.

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REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are found in U.S. Patent No. 7,996,259 (hereinafter the '259 Patent). Claims 8-19 have been added. Support for claims 8-19 are found in the originally-filed application, for example, in column 13, line 23, through column 16, line 41 and column 24, line 1 through column 25, line 33 of the '259 Patent (claims 8 and 14); column 9, lines 15-39 of the '259 Patent (claims 9 and 15); column 6, lines 12-26 of the '259 Patent (claims 10 and 16); column 7, lines 8-24 of the '259 Patent (claims 11 and 17); and column 9, lines 34-36 and column 24, lines 12-60 of the '259 Patent (claims 12-13 and 18-19).

The present amendment **broadens** the claims of the '259 Patent by adding claims that do not recite certain of the limitations found within claims 1-7 of the '259 Patent. The added claims do not violate the rule against recapture since the omitted limitations were not the basis for Applicant's previous arguments regarding the patentability of the claims over the Patent Office's patentability determination.

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For ease of reference, Applicants have included a marked up copy of independent claim 8 that shows the differences between newly-added claim 8 of the present reissue application and claim 4 of the '259 Patent:

> 8. (New) A method, within a computer hardware web page ~~website~~ implementation system, of establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first web page, associated with a first user, ~~website~~ and a ~~preexisting~~ second web page ~~website~~, comprising:
>
> ~~registering the second website with the website implementation system;~~
>
> ~~receiving, by the website implementation system, a request by a first user to implement the first website;~~
>
> generating ~~receiving~~, by the web page ~~website~~ implementation system, ~~a selection by the first user as to~~ a second functional marketing element, associated with the first user, to be activated on the second web page ~~website~~;
>
> establishing, by the web page ~~website~~ implementation system, a reciprocal site in the first web page ~~website~~ for a first functional marketing element; and
>
> ~~upon the first web page being activated with respect to the internet~~ implementing, by the ~~computer~~ web page ~~website~~ implementation system, ~~implementing~~ the reciprocal arrangement by causing
>
> (i) the first web page ~~website~~ to implement the first functional marketing element, and
>
> (ii) the second web page ~~website~~ to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein
>
> the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second web page ~~website~~, and
>
> the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first web page ~~website~~.

Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 503611, and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Date: August 9, 2013

Respectfully submitted,

/Scott D. Paul/
Scott D. Paul
Registration No. 42,984
CUSTOMER NUMBER 55246

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TRANSMITTAL FOR POWER OF ATTORNEY TO ONE OR MORE REGISTERED PRACTITIONERS

NOTE: This form is to be submitted with the Power of Attorney by Applicant form (PTO/AIA/82B or equivalent) to identify the application to which the Power of Attorney is directed, in accordance with 37 CFR 1.5. If the Power of Attorney by Applicant form is not accompanied by this transmittal form or an equivalent, the Power of Attorney will not be recognized in the application.

Application Number	Unassigned
Filing Date	2013-08-09
First Named Inventor	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III
Title	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS
Art Unit	UNASSIGNED
Examiner Name	UNASSIGNED
Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

SIGNATURE of Applicant or Patent Practitioner

Signature	/SCOTT D. PAUL/	Date	2013-08-09
Name	SCOTT D. PAUL	Telephone	561-801-7700
Registration Number	42984		

NOTE: This form must be signed in accordance with 37 CFR 1.33. See 37 CFR 1.4(d) for signature requirements and certifications.

■ *Total of 1 forms are submitted.

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.31, 1.32 and 1.33. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.11 and 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 3 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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POWER OF ATTORNEY BY APPLICANT

I hereby revoke all previous powers of attorney given in the application identified in the attached transmittal letter.

☒ I hereby appoint Practitioner(s) associated with the following Customer Number as my/our attorney(s) or agent(s), and to transact all business in the United States Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith for the application referenced in the attached transmittal letter (form PTO/AIA/82A or equivalent): 55246

OR

☐ I hereby appoint Practitioner(s) named below as my/our attorney(s) or agent(s), and to transact all business in the United States Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith for the application referenced in the attached transmittal letter (form PTO/AIA/82A or equivalent):

Name	Registration Number	Name	Registration Number

Please recognize or change the correspondence address for the application identified in the attached transmittal letter to:

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OR

☐ The address associated with Customer Number:

OR

☐ Firm or Individual Name					
Address					
City		State		Zip	
Country					
Telephone		Email			

I am the Applicant:

☐ Inventor or Joint Inventor

☐ Legal Representative of a Deceased or Legally Incapacitated Inventor

☒ Assignee or Person to Whom the Inventor is Under an Obligation to Assign

☐ Person Who Otherwise Shows Sufficient Proprietary Interest (*e.g.*, a petition under 37 CFR 1.46(b)(2) was granted in the application or is concurrently being filed with this document)

SIGNATURE of Applicant for Patent

Signature		Date	
Name	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO, III	Telephone	(561) 705-4386
Title and Company	MEMBER MANAGER, PT259, LLC		

NOTE: Signature - This form must be signed by the applicant in accordance with 37 CFR 1.33. See 37 CFR 1.4 for signature requirements and certifications. Submit multiple forms for more than one signature, see below *.

☒ *Total of 1 forms are submitted.

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.31, 1.32 and 1.33. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.11 and 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 3 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: **Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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REISSUE APPLICATION: CONSENT OF ASSIGNEE; STATEMENT OF NON-ASSIGNMENT	Docket Number (Optional) 8201-0015

This is part of the application for a reissue patent based on the original patent identified below.

Name of Patentee(s)
THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III

Patent Number	Date Patent Issued
7996259	08-09-2011

Title of Invention
METHOD FOR DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

1. [✓] Filed herein is a statement under 37 CFR 3.73(c). (Form PTO/AIA/96)

2. [ ] Ownership of the patent is in the inventor(s), and no assignment of the patent is in effect.

One of boxes 1 or 2 above must be checked. If multiple assignees, complete this form for each assignee. If box 2 is checked, skip the next entry and go directly to "Name of Assignee."

The written consent of all assignees and inventors owning an undivided interest in the original patent is included in this application for reissue.

The assignee(s) owning an undivided interest in said original patent is/are PT 259, LLC, and the assignee(s) consents to the accompanying application for reissue.

Name of assignee/inventor (if not assigned)
PT 259, LLC

Signature	Date
x	x 8/8/13

Typed or printed name and title of person signing for assignee (if assigned)

THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III, MEMBER MANAGER FOR PT 259, LLC

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.172. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 6 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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Doc Code: REIS.DECL
Document Description: Reissue Declaration Filed In Accordance With MPEP 1414

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REISSUE APPLICATION DECLARATION BY THE ASSIGNEE	Docket Number (optional) 8201-0015

I hereby declare that:

The residence and mailing address of the inventor or joint inventors are stated below.

I am authorized to act on behalf of the following assignee: PT 259, LLC

The entire title to the patent identified below is vested in said assignee.

Inventor THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III

Residence: City	State	Country
BOCA RATON	FL	US

Mailing Address
2910 NW 26TH AVENUE

City	State	Zip	Country
BOCA RATON	FL	33434	US

☐ Additional Inventors are named on separately numbered sheets attached hereto.

Patent Number 7996259 Date of Patent Issued 08-09-2011

I believe said inventor(s) to be the original inventor or original joint inventors of the subject matter which is described and claimed in said patent, for which a reissue patent is sought on the invention titled:

METHOD FOR DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

the specification of which

☑ is attached hereto.

☐ was filed on _____ as reissue application number _____.

The above-identified application was made or authorized to be made by me.

I hereby acknowledge that any willful false statement made in this declaration is punishable under 18 U.S.C. 1001 by fine or imprisonment of not more than five (5) years, or both.

I believe the original patent to be wholly or partly inoperative or invalid, for the reasons described below.
(Check all boxes that apply.)

☐ by reason of a defective specification or drawing.

☑ by reason of the patentee claiming more or less than he had the right to claim in the patent.

☐ by reason of other errors.

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.175. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.11 and 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 30 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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REISSUE APPLICATION DECLARATION BY THE ASSIGNEE | Docket Number (Optional) 8201-0015

At least one error upon which reissue is based is described below. If the reissue is a broadening reissue, a claim that the application seeks to broaden must be identified and the box below must be checked:

Patentee seeks broadening of claim 4 of the patent via addition of claims 8-19, which are found in the accompanying Preliminary Amendment.

[Attach additional sheets, if needed.]

☐ **The application for the original patent was filed under 37 CFR 1.46 by the assignee of the entire interest.**

I hereby appoint:

☑ Practitioners associated with Customer Number: 55246

OR

☐ Practitioner(s) named below:

	Name	Registration Number

as my/our attorney(s) or agent(s) to prosecute the application identified above, and to transact all business in the United States Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

Correspondence Address: Direct all communications about the application to:

☑ The address associated with Customer Number: 55246

OR

☐ Firm or Individual Name					
Address					
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Country					
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Petitioner/applicant is cautioned to avoid submitting personal information in documents filed in a patent application that may contribute to identity theft. Personal information such as social security numbers, bank account numbers, or credit card numbers (other than a check or credit card authorization form PTO-2038 submitted for payment purposes) is never required by the USPTO to support a petition or an application. If this type of personal information is included in documents submitted to the USPTO, petitioners/applicants should consider redacting such personal information from the documents before submitting them to the USPTO. Petitioner/applicant is advised that the record of a patent application is available to the public after publication of the application (unless a non-publication request in compliance with 37 CFR 1.213(a) is made in the application) or issuance of a patent. Furthermore, the record from an abandoned application may also be available to the public if the application is referenced in a published application or an issued patent (see 37 CFR 1.14). Checks and credit card authorization forms PTO-2038 submitted for payment purposes are not retained in the application file and therefore are not publicly available.

Signature X	Date (Optional) X 5/6/13
Full name of person signing (given name, family name)	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III, MEMBER MANAGER
Address of Assignee	PT 259, LLC, 2910 NW 26th AVENUE, BOCA RATON, FL 33434

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Page 64 of 771

PTO/AIA/96 (08-12)
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STATEMENT UNDER 37 CFR 3.73(c)

Applicant/Patent Owner: PT 259, LLC

Application No./Patent No.: 7996259 Filed/Issue Date: 08-09-2011

Titled: METHOD FOR DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

PT 259, LLC, a corporation

(Name of Assignee) (Type of Assignee, e.g., corporation, partnership, university, government agency, etc.)

states that, for the patent application/patent identified above, it is (choose **one** of options 1, 2, 3 or 4 below):

1. ☑ The assignee of the entire right, title, and interest.

2. ☐ An assignee of less than the entire right, title, and interest (check applicable box):

☐ The extent (by percentage) of its ownership interest is _____%. Additional Statement(s) by the owners holding the balance of the interest must be submitted to account for 100% of the ownership interest.

☐ There are unspecified percentages of ownership. The other parties, including inventors, who together own the entire right, title and interest are:

Additional Statement(s) by the owner(s) holding the balance of the interest must be submitted to account for the entire right, title, and interest.

3. ☐ The assignee of an undivided interest in the entirety (a complete assignment from one of the joint inventors was made). The other parties, including inventors, who together own the entire right, title, and interest are:

Additional Statement(s) by the owner(s) holding the balance of the interest must be submitted to account for the entire right, title, and interest.

4. ☐ The recipient, via a court proceeding or the like (*e.g.*, bankruptcy, probate), of an undivided interest in the entirety (a complete transfer of ownership interest was made). The certified document(s) showing the transfer is attached.

The interest identified in option 1, 2 or 3 above (not option 4) is evidenced by either (choose **one** of options A or B below):

A. ☐ An assignment from the inventor(s) of the patent application/patent identified above. The assignment was recorded in the United States Patent and Trademark Office at Reel _____, Frame _____, or for which a copy thereof is attached.

B. ☑ A chain of title from the inventor(s), of the patent application/patent identified above, to the current assignee as follows:

1. From: THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III To: THE PERFECT WEB CORPORATION

The document was recorded in the United States Patent and Trademark Office at
Reel 010861, Frame 0100, or for which a copy thereof is attached.

2. From: THE PERFECT WEB CORPORATION To: STICKY WEB, INC.

The document was recorded in the United States Patent and Trademark Office at
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This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 3.73(b). The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.11 and 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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STATEMENT UNDER 37 CFR 3.73(c)

3. From: STICKY WEB, INC. To: PERFECT WEB TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

The document was recorded in the United States Patent and Trademark Office at
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4. From: STICKY WEB, INC. To: PERFECT WEB TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

The document was recorded in the United States Patent and Trademark Office at
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5. From: PERFECT WEB TECHNOLOGIES, INC. To: PATENT TRUST LLC

The document was recorded in the United States Patent and Trademark Office at
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6. From: PATENT TRUST, LLC To: PT 259, LLC

The document was recorded in the United States Patent and Trademark Office at
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☐ Additional documents in the chain of title are listed on a supplemental sheet(s).

☑ As required by 37 CFR 3.73(c)(1)(i), the documentary evidence of the chain of title from the original owner to the assignee was, or concurrently is being, submitted for recordation pursuant to 37 CFR 3.11.

[NOTE: A separate copy (i.e., a true copy of the original assignment document(s)) must be submitted to Assignment Division in accordance with 37 CFR Part 3, to record the assignment in the records of the USPTO. See MPEP 302.08]

The undersigned (whose title is supplied below) is authorized to act on behalf of the assignee.

X _____ X 2/8/13
Signature Date

THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III MEMBER MANAGER, PT 259, LLC
Printed or Typed Name Title or Registration Number

09/589,551	METHOD FOR DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS	8201.0004	08-07-2013::16:08:01

Patent Assignment Abstract of Title

Total Assignments: 6

Application #: 09589551 **Filing Dt:** 06/07/2000 **Patent #:** 7996259 **Issue Dt:** 08/09/2011
PCT #: NONE **Publication #:** NONE **Pub Dt:**
Inventor: Thomas L. DiStefano III
Title: METHOD FOR DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

Assignment: 1

Reel/Frame: 010861 / 0100 **Received:** 06/22/2000 **Recorded:** 06/07/2000 **Mailed:** 08/11/2000 **Pages:** 3
Conveyance: ASSIGNMENT OF ASSIGNORS INTEREST (SEE DOCUMENT FOR DETAILS).
Assignor: DISTEFANO, THOMAS L. III **Exec Dt:** 06/03/2000
Assignee: PERFECT WEB CORPORATION, THE
411 EAST ATLANTIC AVENUE, #6
DELRAY BEACH, FLORIDA 33483
Correspondent: QUARLES & BRADY LLP
GREGORY A. NELSON
222 LAKEVIEW AVENUE
P.O. BOX 3188
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33402-3188

Assignment: 2

Reel/Frame: 019102 / 0809 **Received:** 04/04/2007 **Recorded:** 04/04/2007 **Mailed:** 04/04/2007 **Pages:** 5
Conveyance: MERGER (SEE DOCUMENT FOR DETAILS).
Assignor: THE PERFECT WEB CORPORATION **Exec Dt:** 11/14/2000
Assignee: STICKY WEB, INC.
136 NW 16TH STREET
#8
BOCA RATON, FLORIDA 33432
Correspondent: STEVEN M. GREENBERG
950 PENINSULA CORPORATE CIRCLE
SUITE 3020
BOCA RATON, FL 33487

Assignment: 3

Reel/Frame: 028371 / 0541 **Received:** 06/13/2012 **Recorded:** 06/13/2012 **Mailed:** 06/15/2012 **Pages:** 3
Conveyance: CHANGE OF NAME (SEE DOCUMENT FOR DETAILS).
Assignor: STICKY WEB, INC. **Exec Dt:** 12/05/2006
Assignee: PERFECT WEB TECHNOLOGIES, INC.
21218 ST. ANDREWS BLVD.
SUITE 131
BOCA RATON, FLORIDA 33433
Correspondent: CUENOT, FORSYTHE & KIM, LLC
20283 STATE ROAD 7
SUITE 300
BOCA RATON, FL 33498

Assignment: 4

Reel/Frame: 019102 / 0814 **Received:** 04/04/2007 **Recorded:** 04/04/2007 **Mailed:** 04/04/2007 **Pages:** 3
Conveyance: CHANGE OF NAME (SEE DOCUMENT FOR DETAILS).
Assignor: STICKY WEB, INC. **Exec Dt:** 12/06/2006
Assignee: PERFECT WEB TECHNOLOGIES, INC.
136 NW 16TH STREET
#8
BOCA RATON, FLORIDA 33432
Correspondent: STEVEN M. GREENBERG
950 PENINSULA CORPORATE CIRCLE
SUITE 3020
BOCA RATON, FL 33487

Assignment: 5

Reel/Frame: 028367 / 0377 **Received:** 06/13/2012 **Recorded:** 06/13/2012 **Mailed:** 06/14/2012 **Pages:** 5
Conveyance: ASSIGNMENT OF ASSIGNORS INTEREST (SEE DOCUMENT FOR DETAILS).
Assignor: PERFECT WEB TECHNOLOGIES, INC. **Exec Dt:** 06/13/2012
Assignee: PATENT TRUST LLC
2910 NW 26TH AVENUE
BOCA RATON, FLORIDA 33434
CUENOT, FORSYTHE & KIM, LLC

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Correspondent: 20283 STATE ROAD 7
SUITE 300
BOCA RATON, FL 33498

Assignment: 6

Reel/Frame: 028800 / 0343 **Received:** 08/16/2012 **Recorded:** 08/16/2012 **Mailed:** 08/17/2012 **Pages:** 4

Conveyance: ASSIGNMENT OF ASSIGNORS INTEREST (SEE DOCUMENT FOR DETAILS).

Assignor: PATENT TRUST, LLC **Exec Dt:** 08/16/2012

Assignee: PT 259, LLC
2910 NW 26TH AVENUE
BOCA RATON, FLORIDA 33434

Correspondent: CUENOT, FORSYTHE & KIM, LLC
20283 STATE ROAD 7
STE. 300
BOCA RATON, FL 33498

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Doc Code: REIS.DECL
Document Description: Reissue Declaration Filed In Accordance With MPEP 1414

PTO/AIA/05 (06-12)
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REISSUE APPLICATION DECLARATION BY THE INVENTOR	Docket Number (Optional) 8201-0015

I hereby declare that:
Each inventor's residence and mailing address are stated below next to their name.
I believe I am the original inventor or an original joint inventor of the subject matter which is described and claimed in patent number 7996259, granted 08-09-2011 and for which a reissue patent is sought on the invention titled

METHOD FOR DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

the specification of which

☑ is attached hereto.

☐ was filed on _____ as reissue application number _____.

The above-identified application was made or authorized to be made by me.

I hereby acknowledge that any willful false statement made in this declaration is punishable under 18 U.S.C. 1001 by fine or imprisonment of not more than five (5) years, or both.

I believe the original patent to be wholly or partly inoperative or invalid, for the reasons described below. (Check all boxes that apply.)

☐ by reason of a defective specification or drawing.

☑ by reason of the patentee claiming more or less than he had the right to claim in the patent.

☐ by reason of other errors.

At least one error upon which reissue is based is described below. If the reissue is a broadening reissue, a claim that the application seeks to broaden must be identified:

Patentee seeks broadening of claim 4 of the patent via addition of claims 8-19, which are found in the accompanying Preliminary Amendment.

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.175. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.11 and 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 30 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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(REISSUE APPLICATION DECLARATION BY THE INVENTOR, page 2)

Docket Number (Optional): 8201-0015

Note: To appoint a power of attorney, use form PTO/AIA/81.

Correspondence Address: Direct all communications about the application to:

☑ The address associated with Customer Number: 55246

OR

☐ Firm or Individual Name					
Address					
City		State		Zip	
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Legal name of sole or first inventor (*E.g.*, Given Name (first and middle (if any) and Family Name or Surname)

THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III

Inventor's Signature x		Date (Optional) x 8/F/13
Residence: City BOCA RATON	State FL	Country US

Mailing Address

2910 NW 26TH AVENUE

City	State	Zip	Country
BOCA RATON	FL	33434	US

Additional joint inventors are named on the _____ supplemental sheet(s) PTO/AIA/10 attached hereto.

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PTO/SB/08a (01-10)
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	Application Number	
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	
	Examiner Name	
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

U.S.PATENTS						Remove
Examiner Initial*	Cite No	Patent Number	Kind Code[1]	Issue Date	Name of Patentee or Applicant of cited Document	Pages,Columns,Lines where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
	1	5778367		1998-07-07	WESINGER, JR. et al.	
	2	5913212		1999-06-15	SUTCLIFFE et al.	
	3	5950200		1999-09-07	SUDAI et al.	
	4	5963951		1999-10-05	COLLINS	
	5	5987440		1999-11-16	O'NEIL et al.	
	6	6029141		2000-02-22	BEZOS et al.	
	7	6052122		2000-04-18	SUTCLIFFE et al.	
	8	6061681		2000-05-09	COLLINS	

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	Application Number	
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	
	Examiner Name	
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

	9	6073105		2000-06-06	SUTCLIFFE et al.	
	10	6073138		2000-06-06	DE L'ETRAZ et al.	
	11	6009410		1999-12-28	LEMOLE et al.	
	12	6175831	B1	2001-01-16	WEINREICH et al.	
	13	6253216	B1	2001-06-26	SUTCLIFFE et al.	
	14	6269369	B1	2001-07-31	ROBERTSON	
	15	6360222	B1	2002-03-19	QUINN	
	16	6480885	B1	2002-11-12	OLIVIER	
	17	6839680	B1	2005-01-04	LIU et al.	
	18	5937392		1999-08-10	ALBERTS	
	19	5960409		1999-09-28	WEXLER	

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	Application Number	
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	
	Examiner Name	
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

	20	6058417		2000-05-02	HESS et al.	
	21	6330575	B1	2012-12-11	MOORE et al.	
	22	6401075	B1	2002-06-04	MASON et al.	
	23	6601057	B1	2003-07-29	UNDERWOOD et al.	
	24	6629135	B1	2003-09-30	ROSS et al.	
	25	8335713	B2	2012-12-18	DISTEFANO III	
	26	8412570	B1	2013-04-02	DISTEFANO III	
	27	8417567	B2	2013-04-09	DISTEFANO III	
	28	8423399	B2	2013-04-16	DISTEFANO III	
	29	8442860	B2	2013-05-14	DISTEFANO III	
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	Application Number	
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	
	Examiner Name	
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

Examiner Initial*	Cite No	Publication Number	Kind Code[1]	Publication Date	Name of Patentee or Applicant of cited Document	Pages,Columns,Lines where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
	1	20120185339	A1	2012-07-19	DISTEFANO III	
	2	20130066727	A1	2013-03-14	DISTEFANO III	
	3	20130066728	A1	2013-03-14	DISTEFANO III	
	4	20130066729	A1	2013-03-14	DISTEFANO III	
	5	20130073397	A1	2013-03-21	DISTEFANO III	
	6	20130151338	A1	2013-06-13	DISTEFANO III	
	7	20130151982	A1	2013-06-13	DISTEFANO III	
	8	20130173401	A1	2013-07-04	DISTEFANO III	

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Examiner Initial*	Cite No	Foreign Document Number[3]	Country Code[2] i	Kind Code[4]	Publication Date	Name of Patentee or Applicant of cited Document	Pages,Columns,Lines where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear	T[5]

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	1	CASEY, C., "Creating and managing webrings: a step-by-step guide," [online] Information Technology and Libraries, Vol. 18, No. 4, pp. 214-224, Dec. 1, 1999 [retrieved July 27, 2013], retrieved from the Internet: <http://www.accessmylibrary.com/article/print/1G1-59021370>, 12 pgs.	☐
	2	DONATH, J. et al., "Public Displays of Connection," BTTechnology Journal, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 71-82, Oct. 2004.	☐
	3	BOYD, D. M. et al., "Social Network SIte: Definition, History, and Scholarship," [online] In Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, Vol. 13, No. 1, Art. 11, pp. 210-230, Oct. 2007 [retrieved Aug. 1, 2013], retrieved from the Internet: <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html>, 20 pg.	☐

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	Application Number	
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	
	Examiner Name	
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Please see 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 to make the appropriate selection(s):

☐ That each item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(1).

OR

☐ That no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, and, to the knowledge of the person signing the certification after making reasonable inquiry, no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was known to any individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(2).

☐ See attached certification statement.

☐ The fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17 (p) has been submitted herewith.

☒ A certification statement is not submitted herewith.

SIGNATURE

A signature of the applicant or representative is required in accordance with CFR 1.33, 10.18. Please see CFR 1.4(d) for the form of the signature.

Signature	/SCOTT D. PAUL/	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2013-08-09
Name/Print	SCOTT D. PAUL	Registration Number	42984

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REISSUE APPLICATION FEE TRANSMITTAL FORM

Docket Number (Optional): 8201-0015

Application as Filed – Part 1

	(1) Claims in Patent	(2) Claims Filed in Reissue Application	(3) Number Extra	Micro Entity Rate ($)	Micro Entity Fee ($)	Small Entity Rate ($)	Small Entity Fee ($)	Undiscounted Rate ($)	Undiscounted Fee ($)
Total Claims (37 CFR 1.16(i))	(A) 7	(B) 19	* 0 =	x =		x =		x =	
Ind. Claims (37 CFR 1.16(h))	(C) 1	(D) 3	** 0 =	x =		x =		x =	
Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))	If the specification and drawings exceed 100 sheets of paper, the application size fee due is $400 ($200 for small entity, $100 for micro entity) for each additional 50 sheets or fraction thereof. See 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(1)(G) and 37 CFR 1.16(s).								
	Filing Fee (37 CFR 1.16(e))						140		
	Search Fee (37 CFR 1.16(n))						300		
	Examination Fee (37 CFR 1.16(r))						1080		
	Total Filing Fee						1520		

Application as Amended – Part 2

	(1) Claims Remaining After Amendment	(2) Highest Number Previously Paid For	(3) Extra Claims Present	Micro Entity Rate ($)	Micro Entity Fee ($)	Small Entity Rate ($)	Small Entity Fee ($)	Undiscounted Rate ($)	Undiscounted Fee ($)
Total Claims (37 CFR 1.16(i))	*** 19 -	**** 21	= 0	x =		x =		x =	
Ind. Claims (37 CFR 1.16(h))	*** 1 -	***** 5	= 0	x =		x =		x =	
Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))	If the specification and drawings exceed 100 sheets of paper, the application size fee due is $400 ($200 for small entity, $100 for micro entity) for each additional 50 sheets or fraction thereof. See 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(1)(G) and 37 CFR 1.16(s).								
			Total Additional Fee		0				

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☑ Applicant asserts small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27.

☐ Applicant certifies micro entity status. See 37 CFR 1.29.
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☑ The Director is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees under 37 CFR 1.16 or 1.17 which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 503611.

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/SCOTT D. PAUL/ — Signature
08-09-2013 — Date
SCOTT D. PAUL — Typed or Printed Name
42984 — Registration Number, if applicable
561-801-7700 — Telephone Number

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Electronic Patent Application Fee Transmittal

Application Number:	
Filing Date:	
Title of Invention:	METHOD FOR DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0015

Filed as Small Entity

Reissue (Utility) Filing Fees

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Basic Filing:				
Utility Reissue Basic	2014	1	140	140
Design and utility Reissue Basic	2114	1	300	300
Design and utility Reissue Basic	2314	1	1080	1080
Pages:				
Claims:				
Miscellaneous-Filing:				
Petition:				
Patent-Appeals-and-Interference:				

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5	Application Data Sheet	8201-0015_ADS.pdf	1503442 ed205c0d962ed3b75600b2334f5f4bc4965b1583	no	6
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Abstract	1	1
Drawings-only black and white line drawings	2	24
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Claims	38	39

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Preliminary Amendment	1	1
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8	Power of Attorney	8201-0015_PowerofAttorney.pdf	905981 bf01926aab61914fda7a3492eeed88f974416773	no	2

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9	Consent of Assignee accompanying the declaration	8201-0015_ConsentofAssignee.pdf	93604 34959a54eb20d64dbee3bb405531f84e2f5e4255	no	1

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boyd, d. m., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *13*(1), article 11.
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Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship

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Go to a section in the article:

Abstract

Social network sites (SNSs) are increasingly attracting the attention of academic and industry researchers intrigued by their affordances and reach. This special theme section of the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* brings together scholarship on these emergent phenomena. In this introductory article, we describe features of SNSs and propose a comprehensive definition. We then present one perspective on the history of such sites, discussing key changes and developments. After briefly summarizing existing scholarship concerning SNSs, we discuss the articles in this special section and conclude with considerations for future research.

Introduction

Since their introduction, social network sites (SNSs) such as MySpace, Facebook, Cyworld, and Bebo have attracted millions of users, many of whom have integrated these sites into their daily practices. As of this writing, there are hundreds of SNSs, with various technological affordances, supporting a wide range of interests and practices. While their key technological features are fairly consistent, the cultures that emerge around SNSs are varied. Most sites support the maintenance of pre-existing social networks, but others help strangers connect based on shared interests, political views, or activities. Some sites cater to diverse audiences, while others attract people based on common language or shared racial, sexual, religious, or nationality-based identities. Sites also vary in the extent to which they incorporate new information and communication tools, such as mobile connectivity, blogging, and photo/video-sharing.

Scholars from disparate fields have examined SNSs in order to understand the practices, implications, culture, and meaning of the sites, as well as users' engagement with them. This special theme section of the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* brings together a unique collection of articles that analyze a wide spectrum of social network sites using various methodological techniques, theoretical

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traditions, and analytic approaches. By collecting these articles in this issue, our goal is to showcase some of the interdisciplinary scholarship around these sites.

The purpose of this introduction is to provide a conceptual, historical, and scholarly context for the articles in this collection. We begin by defining what constitutes a social network site and then present one perspective on the historical development of SNSs, drawing from personal interviews and public accounts of sites and their changes over time. Following this, we review recent scholarship on SNSs and attempt to contextualize and highlight key works. We conclude with a description of the articles included in this special section and suggestions for future research.

Social Network Sites: A Definition

We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

While we use the term "social network site" to describe this phenomenon, the term "social networking sites" also appears in public discourse, and the two terms are often used interchangeably. We chose not to employ the term "networking" for two reasons: emphasis and scope. "Networking" emphasizes relationship initiation, often between strangers. While networking is possible on these sites, it is not the primary practice on many of them, nor is it what differentiates them from other forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC).

What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. This can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently between "latent ties" (Haythornthwaite, 2005) who share some offline connection. On many of the large SNSs, participants are not necessarily "networking" or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network. To emphasize this articulated social network as a critical organizing feature of these sites, we label them "social network sites."

While SNSs have implemented a wide variety of technical features, their backbone consists of visible profiles that display an articulated list of Friends[1] who are also users of the system. Profiles are unique pages where one can "type oneself into being" (Sundén, 2003, p. 3). After joining an SNS, an individual is asked to fill out forms containing a series of questions. The profile is generated using the answers to these questions, which typically include descriptors such as age, location, interests, and an "about me" section. Most sites also encourage users to upload a profile photo. Some sites allow users to enhance their profiles by adding multimedia content or modifying their profile's look and feel. Others, such as Facebook, allow users to add modules ("Applications") that enhance their profile.

The visibility of a profile varies by site and according to user discretion. By default, profiles on Friendster and Tribe.net are crawled by search engines, making them visible to anyone, regardless of whether or

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not the viewer has an account. Alternatively, LinkedIn controls what a viewer may see based on whether she or he has a paid account. Sites like MySpace allow users to choose whether they want their profile to be public or "Friends only." Facebook takes a different approach—by default, users who are part of the same "network" can view each other's profiles, unless a profile owner has decided to deny permission to those in their network. Structural variations around visibility and access are one of the primary ways that SNSs differentiate themselves from each other.

After joining a social network site, users are prompted to identify others in the system with whom they have a relationship. The label for these relationships differs depending on the site—popular terms include "Friends," "Contacts," and "Fans." Most SNSs require bi-directional confirmation for Friendship, but some do not. These one-directional ties are sometimes labeled as "Fans" or "Followers," but many sites call these Friends as well. The term "Friends" can be misleading, because the connection does not necessarily mean friendship in the everyday vernacular sense, and the reasons people connect are varied (boyd, 2006a).

The public display of connections is a crucial component of SNSs. The Friends list contains links to each Friend's profile, enabling viewers to traverse the network graph by clicking through the Friends lists. On most sites, the list of Friends is visible to anyone who is permitted to view the profile, although there are exceptions. For instance, some MySpace users have hacked their profiles to hide the Friends display, and LinkedIn allows users to opt out of displaying their network.

Most SNSs also provide a mechanism for users to leave messages on their Friends' profiles. This feature typically involves leaving "comments," although sites employ various labels for this feature. In addition, SNSs often have a private messaging feature similar to webmail. While both private messages and comments are popular on most of the major SNSs, they are not universally available.

Not all social network sites began as such. QQ started as a Chinese instant messaging service, LunarStorm as a community site, Cyworld as a Korean discussion forum tool, and Skyrock (formerly Skyblog) was a French blogging service before adding SNS features. Classmates.com, a directory of school affiliates launched in 1995, began supporting articulated lists of Friends after SNSs became popular. AsianAvenue, MiGente, and BlackPlanet were early popular ethnic community sites with limited Friends functionality before re-launching in 2005-2006 with SNS features and structure.

Beyond profiles, Friends, comments, and private messaging, SNSs vary greatly in their features and user base. Some have photo-sharing or video-sharing capabilities; others have built-in blogging and instant messaging technology. There are mobile-specific SNSs (e.g., Dodgeball), but some web-based SNSs also support limited mobile interactions (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, and Cyworld). Many SNSs target people from specific geographical regions or linguistic groups, although this does not always determine the site's constituency. Orkut, for example, was launched in the United States with an English-only interface, but Portuguese-speaking Brazilians quickly became the dominant user group (Kopytoff, 2004). Some sites are designed with specific ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, political, or other identity-driven categories in mind. There are even SNSs for dogs (Dogster) and cats (Catster), although their owners must manage their profiles.

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While SNSs are often designed to be widely accessible, many attract homogeneous populations initially, so it is not uncommon to find groups using sites to segregate themselves by nationality, age, educational level, or other factors that typically segment society (Hargittai, this issue), even if that was not the intention of the designers.

A History of Social Network Sites

The Early Years

According to the definition above, the first recognizable social network site launched in 1997. SixDegrees.com allowed users to create profiles, list their Friends and, beginning in 1998, surf the Friends lists. Each of these features existed in some form before SixDegrees, of course. Profiles existed on most major dating sites and many community sites. AIM and ICQ buddy lists supported lists of Friends, although those Friends were not visible to others. Classmates.com allowed people to affiliate with their high school or college and surf the network for others who were also affiliated, but users could not create profiles or list Friends until years later. SixDegrees was the first to combine these features.

SixDegrees promoted itself as a tool to help people connect with and send messages to others. While SixDegrees attracted millions of users, it failed to become a sustainable business and, in 2000, the service closed. Looking back, its founder believes that SixDegrees was simply ahead of its time (A. Weinreich, personal communication, July 11, 2007). While people were already flocking to the Internet, most did not have extended networks of friends who were online. Early adopters complained that there was little to do after accepting Friend requests, and most users were not interested in meeting strangers.

From 1997 to 2001, a number of community tools began supporting various combinations of profiles and publicly articulated Friends. AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet, and MiGente allowed users to create personal, professional, and dating profiles—users could identify Friends on their personal profiles without seeking approval for those connections (O. Wasow, personal communication, August 16, 2007). Likewise, shortly after its launch in 1999, LiveJournal listed one-directional connections on user pages. LiveJournal's creator suspects that he fashioned these Friends after instant messaging buddy lists (B. Fitzpatrick, personal communication, June 15, 2007)—on LiveJournal, people mark others as Friends to follow their journals and manage privacy settings. The Korean virtual worlds site Cyworld was started in 1999 and added SNS features in 2001, independent of these other sites (see Kim & Yun, this issue). Likewise, when the Swedish web community LunarStorm refashioned itself as an SNS in 2000, it contained Friends lists, guestbooks, and diary pages (D. Skog, personal communication, September 24, 2007).

The next wave of SNSs began when Ryze.com was launched in 2001 to help people leverage their business networks. Ryze's founder reports that he first introduced the site to his friends—primarily members of the San Francisco business and technology community, including the entrepreneurs and investors behind many future SNSs (A. Scott, personal communication, June 14, 2007). In particular, the people behind Ryze, Tribe.net, LinkedIn, and Friendster were tightly entwined personally and professionally. They believed that they could support each other without competing (Festa, 2003). In the end, Ryze never acquired mass popularity, Tribe.net grew to attract a passionate niche user base,

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LinkedIn became a powerful business service, and Friendster became the most significant, if only as "one of the biggest disappointments in Internet history" (Chafkin, 2007, p. 1).

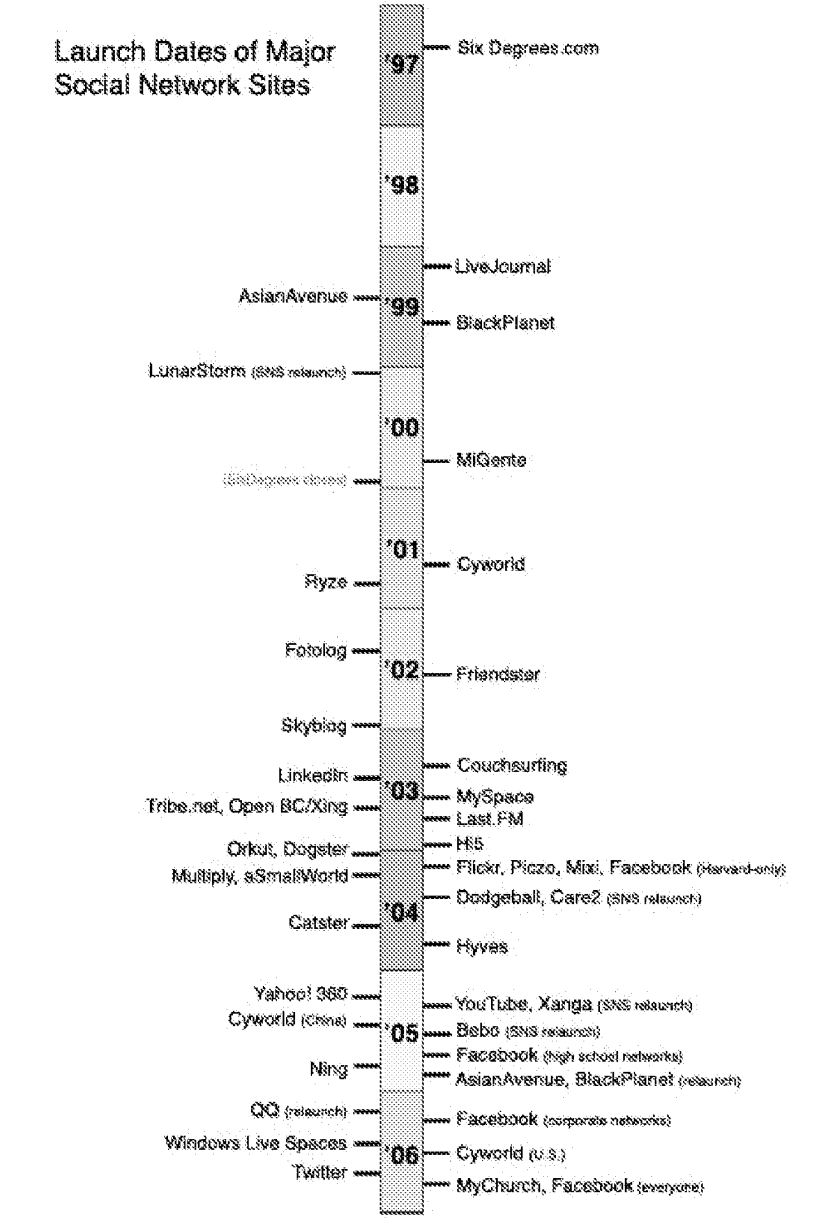


Figure 1. Timeline of the launch dates of many major SNSs and dates when community sites re-launched with SNS features

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Like any brief history of a major phenomenon, ours is necessarily incomplete. In the following section we discuss Friendster, MySpace, and Facebook, three key SNSs that shaped the business, cultural, and research landscape.

The Rise (and Fall) of Friendster

Friendster launched in 2002 as a social complement to Ryze. It was designed to compete with Match.com, a profitable online dating site (Cohen, 2003). While most dating sites focused on introducing people to strangers with similar interests, Friendster was designed to help friends-of-friends meet, based on the assumption that friends-of-friends would make better romantic partners than would strangers (J. Abrams, personal communication, March 27, 2003). Friendster gained traction among three groups of early adopters who shaped the site—bloggers, attendees of the Burning Man arts festival, and gay men (boyd, 2004)—and grew to 300,000 users through word of mouth before traditional press coverage began in May 2003 (O'Shea, 2003).

As Friendster's popularity surged, the site encountered technical and social difficulties (boyd, 2006b). Friendster's servers and databases were ill-equipped to handle its rapid growth, and the site faltered regularly, frustrating users who replaced email with Friendster. Because organic growth had been critical to creating a coherent community, the onslaught of new users who learned about the site from media coverage upset the cultural balance. Furthermore, exponential growth meant a collapse in social contexts: Users had to face their bosses and former classmates alongside their close friends. To complicate matters, Friendster began restricting the activities of its most passionate users.

The initial design of Friendster restricted users from viewing profiles of people who were more than four degrees away (friends-of-friends-of-friends-of-friends). In order to view additional profiles, users began adding acquaintances and interesting-looking strangers to expand their reach. Some began massively collecting Friends, an activity that was implicitly encouraged through a "most popular" feature. The ultimate collectors were fake profiles representing iconic fictional characters: celebrities, concepts, and other such entities. These "Fakesters" outraged the company, who banished fake profiles and eliminated the "most popular" feature (boyd, in press-b). While few people actually created Fakesters, many more enjoyed surfing Fakesters for entertainment or using functional Fakesters (e.g., "Brown University") to find people they knew.

The active deletion of Fakesters (and genuine users who chose non-realistic photos) signaled to some that the company did not share users' interests. Many early adopters left because of the combination of technical difficulties, social collisions, and a rupture of trust between users and the site (boyd, 2006b). However, at the same time that it was fading in the U.S., its popularity skyrocketed in the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia (Goldberg, 2007).

SNSs Hit the Mainstream

From 2003 onward, many new SNSs were launched, prompting social software analyst Clay Shirky (2003) to coin the term YASNS: "Yet Another Social Networking Service." Most took the form of profile-centric sites, trying to replicate the early success of Friendster or target specific demographics. While socially-organized SNSs solicit broad audiences, professional sites such as LinkedIn, Visible Path, and Xing

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(formerly openBC) focus on business people. "Passion-centric" SNSs like Dogster (T. Rheingold, personal communication, August 2, 2007) help strangers connect based on shared interests. Care2 helps activists meet, Couchsurfing connects travelers to people with couches, and MyChurch joins Christian churches and their members. Furthermore, as the social media and user-generated content phenomena grew, websites focused on media sharing began implementing SNS features and becoming SNSs themselves. Examples include Flickr (photo sharing), Last.FM (music listening habits), and YouTube (video sharing).

With the plethora of venture-backed startups launching in Silicon Valley, few people paid attention to SNSs that gained popularity elsewhere, even those built by major corporations. For example, Google's Orkut failed to build a sustainable U.S. user base, but a "Brazilian invasion" (Fragoso, 2006) made Orkut the national SNS of Brazil. Microsoft's Windows Live Spaces (a.k.a. MSN Spaces) also launched to lukewarm U.S. reception but became extremely popular elsewhere.

Few analysts or journalists noticed when MySpace launched in Santa Monica, California, hundreds of miles from Silicon Valley. MySpace was begun in 2003 to compete with sites like Friendster, Xanga, and AsianAvenue, according to co-founder Tom Anderson (personal communication, August 2, 2007); the founders wanted to attract estranged Friendster users (T. Anderson, personal communication, February 2, 2006). After rumors emerged that Friendster would adopt a fee-based system, users posted Friendster messages encouraging people to join alternate SNSs, including Tribe.net and MySpace (T. Anderson, personal communication, August 2, 2007). Because of this, MySpace was able to grow rapidly by capitalizing on Friendster's alienation of its early adopters. One particularly notable group that encouraged others to switch were indie-rock bands who were expelled from Friendster for failing to comply with profile regulations.

While MySpace was not launched with bands in mind, they were welcomed. Indie-rock bands from the Los Angeles region began creating profiles, and local promoters used MySpace to advertise VIP passes for popular clubs. Intrigued, MySpace contacted local musicians to see how they could support them (T. Anderson, personal communication, September 28, 2006). Bands were not the sole source of MySpace growth, but the symbiotic relationship between bands and fans helped MySpace expand beyond former Friendster users. The bands-and-fans dynamic was mutually beneficial: Bands wanted to be able to contact fans, while fans desired attention from their favorite bands and used Friend connections to signal identity and affiliation.

Futhermore, MySpace differentiated itself by regularly adding features based on user demand (boyd, 2006b) and by allowing users to personalize their pages. This "feature" emerged because MySpace did not restrict users from adding HTML into the forms that framed their profiles; a copy/paste code culture emerged on the web to support users in generating unique MySpace backgrounds and layouts (Perkel, in press).

Teenagers began joining MySpace *en masse* in 2004. Unlike older users, most teens were never on Friendster—some joined because they wanted to connect with their favorite bands; others were introduced to the site through older family members. As teens began signing up, they encouraged their friends to join. Rather than rejecting underage users, MySpace changed its user policy to allow minors. As the site grew, three distinct populations began to form: musicians/artists, teenagers, and the post-college urban

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social crowd. By and large, the latter two groups did not interact with one another except through bands. Because of the lack of mainstream press coverage during 2004, few others noticed the site's growing popularity.

Then, in July 2005, News Corporation purchased MySpace for $580 million (BBC, 2005), attracting massive media attention. Afterwards, safety issues plagued MySpace. The site was implicated in a series of sexual interactions between adults and minors, prompting legal action (Consumer Affairs, 2006). A moral panic concerning sexual predators quickly spread (Bahney, 2006), although research suggests that the concerns were exaggerated.[2]

A Global Phenomenon

While MySpace attracted the majority of media attention in the U.S. and abroad, SNSs were proliferating and growing in popularity worldwide. Friendster gained traction in the Pacific Islands, Orkut became the premier SNS in Brazil before growing rapidly in India (Madhavan, 2007), Mixi attained widespread adoption in Japan, LunarStorm took off in Sweden, Dutch users embraced Hyves, Grono captured Poland, Hi5 was adopted in smaller countries in Latin America, South America, and Europe, and Bebo became very popular in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia. Additionally, previously popular communication and community services began implementing SNS features. The Chinese QQ instant messaging service instantly became the largest SNS worldwide when it added profiles and made friends visible (McLeod, 2006), while the forum tool Cyworld cornered the Korean market by introducing homepages and buddies (Ewers, 2006).

Blogging services with complete SNS features also became popular. In the U.S., blogging tools with SNS features, such as Xanga, LiveJournal, and Vox, attracted broad audiences. Skyrock reigns in France, and Windows Live Spaces dominates numerous markets worldwide, including in Mexico, Italy, and Spain. Although SNSs like QQ, Orkut, and Live Spaces are just as large as, if not larger than, MySpace, they receive little coverage in U.S. and English-speaking media, making it difficult to track their trajectories.

Expanding Niche Communities

Alongside these open services, other SNSs launched to support niche demographics before expanding to a broader audience. Unlike previous SNSs, Facebook was designed to support distinct college networks only. Facebook began in early 2004 as a Harvard-only SNS (Cassidy, 2006). To join, a user had to have a harvard.edu email address. As Facebook began supporting other schools, those users were also required to have university email addresses associated with those institutions, a requirement that kept the site relatively closed and contributed to users' perceptions of the site as an intimate, private community.

Beginning in September 2005, Facebook expanded to include high school students, professionals inside corporate networks, and, eventually, everyone. The change to open signup did not mean that new users could easily access users in closed networks—gaining access to corporate networks still required the appropriate .com address, while gaining access to high school networks required administrator approval. (As of this writing, only membership in regional networks requires no permission.) Unlike other SNSs, Facebook users are unable to make their full profiles public to all users. Another feature that differentiates Facebook is the ability for outside developers to build "Applications" which allow users to

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personalize their profiles and perform other tasks, such as compare movie preferences and chart travel histories.

While most SNSs focus on growing broadly and exponentially, others explicitly seek narrower audiences. Some, like aSmallWorld and BeautifulPeople, intentionally restrict access to appear selective and elite. Others—activity-centered sites like Couchsurfing, identity-driven sites like BlackPlanet, and affiliation-focused sites like MyChurch—are limited by their target demographic and thus tend to be smaller. Finally, anyone who wishes to create a niche social network site can do so on Ning, a platform and hosting service that encourages users to create their own SNSs.

Currently, there are no reliable data regarding how many people use SNSs, although marketing research indicates that SNSs are growing in popularity worldwide (comScore, 2007). This growth has prompted many corporations to invest time and money in creating, purchasing, promoting, and advertising SNSs. At the same time, other companies are blocking their employees from accessing the sites. Additionally, the U.S. military banned soldiers from accessing MySpace (Frosch, 2007) and the Canadian government prohibited employees from Facebook (Benzie, 2007), while the U.S. Congress has proposed legislation to ban youth from accessing SNSs in schools and libraries (H.R. 5319, 2006; S. 49, 2007).

The rise of SNSs indicates a shift in the organization of online communities. While websites dedicated to communities of interest still exist and prosper, SNSs are primarily organized around people, not interests. Early public online communities such as Usenet and public discussion forums were structured by topics or according to topical hierarchies, but social network sites are structured as personal (or "egocentric") networks, with the individual at the center of their own community. This more accurately mirrors unmediated social structures, where "the world is composed of networks, not groups" (Wellman, 1988, p. 37). The introduction of SNS features has introduced a new organizational framework for online communities, and with it, a vibrant new research context.

Previous Scholarship

Scholarship concerning SNSs is emerging from diverse disciplinary and methodological traditions, addresses a range of topics, and builds on a large body of CMC research. The goal of this section is to survey research that is directly concerned with social network sites, and in so doing, to set the stage for the articles in this special issue. To date, the bulk of SNS research has focused on impression management and friendship performance, networks and network structure, online/offline connections, and privacy issues.

Impression Management and Friendship Performance

Like other online contexts in which individuals are consciously able to construct an online representation of self—such as online dating profiles and MUDS—SNSs constitute an important research context for scholars investigating processes of impression management, self-presentation, and friendship performance. In one of the earliest academic articles on SNSs, boyd (2004) examined Friendster as a locus of publicly articulated social networks that allowed users to negotiate presentations of self and connect with others. Donath and boyd (2004) extended this to suggest that "public displays of connection" serve as important

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identity signals that help people navigate the networked social world, in that an extended network may serve to validate identity information presented in profiles.

While most sites encourage users to construct accurate representations of themselves, participants do this to varying degrees. Marwick (2005) found that users on three different SNSs had complex strategies for negotiating the rigidity of a prescribed "authentic" profile, while boyd (in press-b) examined the phenomenon of "Fakesters" and argued that profiles could never be "real." The extent to which portraits are authentic or playful varies across sites; both social and technological forces shape user practices. Skog (2005) found that the status feature on LunarStorm strongly influenced how people behaved and what they choose to reveal—profiles there indicate one's status as measured by activity (e.g., sending messages) and indicators of authenticity (e.g., using a "real" photo instead of a drawing).

Another aspect of self-presentation is the articulation of friendship links, which serve as identity markers for the profile owner. Impression management is one of the reasons given by Friendster users for choosing particular friends (Donath & boyd, 2004). Recognizing this, Zinman and Donath (2007) noted that MySpace spammers leverage people's willingness to connect to interesting people to find targets for their spam.

In their examination of LiveJournal "friendship," Fono and Raynes-Goldie (2006) described users' understandings regarding public displays of connections and how the Friending function can operate as a catalyst for social drama. In listing user motivations for Friending, boyd (2006a) points out that "Friends" on SNSs are not the same as "friends" in the everyday sense; instead, Friends provide context by offering users an imagined audience to guide behavioral norms. Other work in this area has examined the use of Friendster Testimonials as self-presentational devices (boyd & Heer, 2006) and the extent to which the attractiveness of one's Friends (as indicated by Facebook's "Wall" feature) impacts impression formation (Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, & Westerman, in press).

Networks and Network Structure

Social network sites also provide rich sources of naturalistic behavioral data. Profile and linkage data from SNSs can be gathered either through the use of automated collection techniques or through datasets provided directly from the company, enabling network analysis researchers to explore large-scale patterns of friending, usage, and other visible indicators (Hogan, in press), and continuing an analysis trend that started with examinations of blogs and other websites. For instance, Golder, Wilkinson, and Huberman (2007) examined an anonymized dataset consisting of 362 million messages exchanged by over four million Facebook users for insight into Friending and messaging activities. Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield (2007) explored the relationship between profile elements and number of Facebook friends, finding that profile fields that reduce transaction costs and are harder to falsify are most likely to be associated with larger number of friendship links. These kinds of data also lend themselves well to analysis through network visualization (Adamic, Büyükkökten, & Adar, 2003; Heer & boyd, 2005; Paolillo & Wright, 2005).

SNS researchers have also studied the network structure of Friendship. Analyzing the roles people played in the growth of Flickr and Yahoo! 360's networks, Kumar, Novak, and Tomkins (2006) argued that there are passive members, inviters, and linkers "who fully participate in the social evolution of the network" (p. 1). Scholarship concerning LiveJournal's network has included a Friendship classification

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scheme (Hsu, Lancaster, Paradesi, & Weniger, 2007), an analysis of the role of language in the topology of Friendship (Herring et al., 2007), research into the importance of geography in Friending (Liben-Nowell, Novak, Kumar, Raghavan, & Tomkins, 2005), and studies on what motivates people to join particular communities (Backstrom, Huttenlocher, Kleinberg, & Lan, 2006). Based on Orkut data, Spertus, Sahami, and Büyükkökten (2005) identified a topology of users through their membership in certain communities; they suggest that sites can use this to recommend additional communities of interest to users. Finally, Liu, Maes, and Davenport (2006) argued that Friend connections are not the only network structure worth investigating. They examined the ways in which the performance of tastes (favorite music, books, film, etc.) constitutes an alternate network structure, which they call a "taste fabric."

Bridging Online and Offline Social Networks

Although exceptions exist, the available research suggests that most SNSs primarily support pre-existing social relations. Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) suggest that Facebook is used to maintain existing offline relationships or solidify offline connections, as opposed to meeting new people. These relationships may be weak ties, but typically there is some common offline element among individuals who friend one another, such as a shared class at school. This is one of the chief dimensions that differentiate SNSs from earlier forms of public CMC such as newsgroups (Ellison et al., 2007). Research in this vein has investigated how online interactions interface with offline ones. For instance, Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield (2006) found that Facebook users engage in "searching" for people with whom they have an offline connection more than they "browse" for complete strangers to meet. Likewise, Pew research found that 91% of U.S. teens who use SNSs do so to connect with friends (Lenhart & Madden, 2007).

Given that SNSs enable individuals to connect with one another, it is not surprising that they have become deeply embedded in user's lives. In Korea, Cyworld has become an integral part of everyday life—Choi (2006) found that 85% of that study's respondents "listed the maintenance and reinforcement of pre-existing social networks as their main motive for Cyworld use" (p. 181). Likewise, boyd (2008) argues that MySpace and Facebook enable U.S. youth to socialize with their friends even when they are unable to gather in unmediated situations; she argues that SNSs are "networked publics" that support sociability, just as unmediated public spaces do.

Privacy

Popular press coverage of SNSs has emphasized potential privacy concerns, primarily concerning the safety of younger users (George, 2006; Kornblum & Marklein, 2006). Researchers have investigated the potential threats to privacy associated with SNSs. In one of the first academic studies of privacy and SNSs, Gross and Acquisti (2005) analyzed 4,000 Carnegie Mellon University Facebook profiles and outlined the potential threats to privacy contained in the personal information included on the site by students, such as the potential ability to reconstruct users' social security numbers using information often found in profiles, such as hometown and date of birth.

Acquisti and Gross (2006) argue that there is often a disconnect between students' desire to protect privacy and their behaviors, a theme that is also explored in Stutzman's (2006) survey of Facebook users and Barnes's (2006) description of the "privacy paradox" that occurs when teens are not aware of the

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public nature of the Internet. In analyzing trust on social network sites, Dwyer, Hiltz, and Passerini (2007) argued that trust and usage goals may affect what people are willing to share—Facebook users expressed greater trust in Facebook than MySpace users did in MySpace and thus were more willing to share information on the site.

In another study examining security issues and SNSs, Jagatic, Johnson, Jakobsson, and Menczer (2007) used freely accessible profile data from SNSs to craft a "phishing" scheme that appeared to originate from a friend on the network; their targets were much more likely to give away information to this "friend" than to a perceived stranger. Survey data offer a more optimistic perspective on the issue, suggesting that teens are aware of potential privacy threats online and that many are proactive about taking steps to minimize certain potential risks. Pew found that 55% of online teens have profiles, 66% of whom report that their profile is not visible to all Internet users (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). Of the teens with completely open profiles, 46% reported including at least some false information.

Privacy is also implicated in users' ability to control impressions and manage social contexts. Boyd (in press-a) asserted that Facebook's introduction of the "News Feed" feature disrupted students' sense of control, even though data exposed through the feed were previously accessible. Preibusch, Hoser, Gürses, and Berendt (2007) argued that the privacy options offered by SNSs do not provide users with the flexibility they need to handle conflicts with friends who have different conceptions of privacy; they suggest a framework for privacy in SNSs that they believe would help resolve these conflicts.

SNSs are also challenging legal conceptions of privacy. Hodge (2006) argued that the fourth amendment to the U.S. Constitution and legal decisions concerning privacy are not equipped to address social network sites. For example, do police officers have the right to access content posted to Facebook without a warrant? The legality of this hinges on users' expectation of privacy and whether or not Facebook profiles are considered public or private.

Other Research

In addition to the themes identified above, a growing body of scholarship addresses other aspects of SNSs, their users, and the practices they enable. For example, scholarship on the ways in which race and ethnicity (Byrne, in press; Gajjala, 2007), religion (Nyland & Near, 2007), gender (Geidner, Flook, & Bell, 2007; Hjorth & Kim, 2005), and sexuality connect to, are affected by, and are enacted in social network sites raise interesting questions about how identity is shaped within these sites. Fragoso (2006) examined the role of national identity in SNS use through an investigation into the "Brazilian invasion" of Orkut and the resulting culture clash between Brazilians and Americans on the site. Other scholars are beginning to do cross-cultural comparisons of SNS use—Hjorth and Yuji (in press) compare Japanese usage of Mixi and Korean usage of Cyworld, while Herring et al. (2007) examine the practices of users who bridge different languages on LiveJournal—but more work in this area is needed.

Scholars are documenting the implications of SNS use with respect to schools, universities, and libraries. For example, scholarship has examined how students feel about having professors on Facebook (Hewitt & Forte, 2006) and how faculty participation affects student-professor relations (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007). Charnigo and Barnett-Ellis (2007) found that librarians are overwhelmingly aware of Facebook and are against proposed U.S. legislation that would ban minors from accessing SNSs at libraries, but that

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most see SNSs as outside the purview of librarianship. Finally, challenging the view that there is nothing educational about SNSs, Perkel (in press) analyzed copy/paste practices on MySpace as a form of literacy involving social and technical skills.

This overview is not comprehensive due to space limitations and because much work on SNSs is still in the process of being published. Additionally, we have not included literature in languages other than English (e.g., Recuero, 2005 on social capital and Orkut), due to our own linguistic limitations.

Overview of This Special Theme Section

The articles in this section address a variety of social network sites—BlackPlanet, Cyworld, Dodgeball, Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube—from multiple theoretical and methodological angles, building on previous studies of SNSs and broader theoretical traditions within CMC research, including relationship maintenance and issues of identity, performance, privacy, self-presentation, and civic engagement.

These pieces collectively provide insight into some of the ways in which online and offline experiences are deeply entwined. Using a relational dialectics approach, **Kyung-Hee Kim** and **Haejin Yun** analyze how Cyworld supports both interpersonal relations and self-relation for Korean users. They trace the subtle ways in which deeply engrained cultural beliefs and activities are integrated into online communication and behaviors on Cyworld—the online context reinforces certain aspects of users' cultural expectations about relationship maintenance (e.g., the concept of reciprocity), while the unique affordances of Cyworld enable participants to overcome offline constraints. **Dara Byrne** uses content analysis to examine civic engagement in forums on BlackPlanet and finds that online discussions are still plagued with the problems offline activists have long encountered. Drawing on interview and observation data, **Lee Humphreys** investigates early adopters' practices involving Dodgeball, a mobile social network service. She looks at the ways in which networked communication is reshaping offline social geography.

Other articles in this collection illustrate how innovative research methods can elucidate patterns of behavior that would be indistinguishable otherwise. For instance, **Hugo Liu** examines participants' performance of tastes and interests by analyzing and modeling the preferences listed on over 127,000 MySpace profiles, resulting in unique "taste maps." Likewise, through survey data collected at a college with diverse students in the U.S., **Eszter Hargittai** illuminates usage patterns that would otherwise be masked. She finds that adoption of particular services correlates with individuals' race and parental education level.

Existing theory is deployed, challenged, and extended by the approaches adopted in the articles in this section. **Judith Donath** extends signaling theory to explain different tactics SNS users adopt to reduce social costs while managing trust and identity. She argues that the construction and maintenance of relations on SNSs is akin to "social grooming." **Patricia Lange** complicates traditional dichotomies between "public" and "private" by analyzing how YouTube participants blur these lines in their video-sharing practices.

The articles in this collection highlight the significance of social network sites in the lives of users and as a topic of research. Collectively, they show how networked practices mirror, support, and alter known

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everyday practices, especially with respect to how people present (and hide) aspects of themselves and connect with others. The fact that participation on social network sites leaves online traces offers unprecedented opportunities for researchers. The scholarship in this special theme section takes advantage of this affordance, resulting in work that helps explain practices online and offline, as well as those that blend the two environments.

Future Research

The work described above and included in this special theme section contributes to an on-going dialogue about the importance of social network sites, both for practitioners and researchers. Vast, uncharted waters still remain to be explored. Methodologically, SNS researchers' ability to make causal claims is limited by a lack of experimental or longitudinal studies. Although the situation is rapidly changing, scholars still have a limited understanding of who is and who is not using these sites, why, and for what purposes, especially outside the U.S. Such questions will require large-scale quantitative and qualitative research. Richer, ethnographic research on populations more difficult to access (including non-users) would further aid scholars' ability to understand the long-term implications of these tools. We hope that the work described here and included in this collection will help build a foundation for future investigations of these and other important issues surrounding social network sites.

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Notes

1. To differentiate the articulated list of Friends on SNSs from the colloquial term "friends," we capitalize the former.
2. Although one out of seven teenagers received unwanted sexual solicitations online, only 9% came from people over the age of 25 (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2006). Research suggests that popular narratives around sexual predators on SNSs are misleading—cases of unsuspecting teens being lured by sexual predators are rare (Finkelhor, Ybarra, Lenhart, boyd, & Lordan, 2007). Furthermore, only .08% of students surveyed by the National School Boards Association (2007) met someone in person from an online encounter without permission from a parent.

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ACCESS my LIBRARY
Search Information that Libraries Trust

Information Technology and Libraries

Creating and Managing Webrings: A Step-By-Step Guide. (library web site webrings)

Information Technology and Libraries | December 01, 1999 | Casey, Carol

As a means of collecting Web sites on a single topic into separate navigable universes on the Internet, Webrings are not only an alternative to a list of links, but to keyword search engines. Because of this, Webrings can be developed to enhance a library collection or support an educational curriculum. Unfortunately, the loosely structured instructions WebRing provides for establishing and managing Webrings makes the process more detailed and complicated than it really is. This article describes how to set-up and manage Webrings by clarifying these suggestions and suggests methods of streamlining the procedure.

Webrings are an interesting alternative to the ubiquitous list of links and to spider driven search engines found on the Web. As "a way to group together sites with similar content by linking them together in a circle or ring,"(1) Webrings have a versatility that a list of links does not. Unlike search engines, they give "the user the opportunity to explore single topic Web sites without having to deal with dead links and non-relevant Web sites that are swept into a keyword search."(2)

One of the most unique characteristics of a Webring is that all of the sites in the ring can be accessed from each other, creating a small navigable universe. Even more advantageous for the ring owner is that ring members can participate in the growth and maintenance of the ring. Members can alert the ring manager if they want to leave the ring, and they have the capability of updating their own ring profiles if their Web site URL changes. Members can also help the managers of large rings by checking for broken links; they can even assist in adding new sites.

Webrings are a unique opportunity for libraries to develop high quality groupings of Web sites devoted not only to specialized pockets of knowledge but to different aspects of librarianship. They can also be used as a flexible, dynamic way of linking Web sites within institutions, departments, or organizations without dealing with the constant updating of link lists. They may require more attention and dedication than a list of links, but they have the potential to be a more satisfying endeavor with lasting value to both the library and the global community.

This step-by-step guide is based on personal experience and the study of others' efforts in Webring creation and management. It is an attempt to cut through many confusing aspects of the procedure and present the most straightforward approach.

A Brief History

The first ring of Web sites was created by Denis Howe at London's Imperial College in December, 1994.(3) EUROPa, the Expanding Unidirectional Ring of Pages, is "comprised of sites chained together and the only way to move through the ring is in a single direction. When a new site is added, the owner of the previous site has to add a link to it. It is also up to the Web site owner to keep track of the next Web site in the chain, in case it disappears and causes a break in the ring."(4) Two features place EUROPa firmly in the novelty category. First, it is simply a string of unrelated Web sites. Second, it can only be traversed in a single direction.

The concept of a ring of Web sites caught the imagination of seventeen-year-old Sage Weil when he discovered EUROPa while surfing the Web in the summer of 1995. Within a few months, Weil solved the unidirectional problem by devising a centralized CGI script to link all the sites. This "allowed site maintainers to point to a Webring address that would in turn look up the current URL for the next site in the ring, eliminating the need to update anchor tags."(5) In September of the same year, Weil made a few modifications to the script that enabled the creation of multiple rings. This opened the Webring to many possible practical uses. In March 1996, he officially launched WebRing, offering free use of the HTML code and server space for ring management to anyone who wanted to form a single-theme ring. WebRing moved to its own server in September of 1996.

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By August 1997, Weil realized that WebRing needed a better server and that he could not handle all the administrative duties of managing WebRing alone. Starseed, Inc. bought WebRing with an interest in pursuing more commercial uses of Webrings. Despite this, Charley Lanusse, president of Starseed, continues to offer free WebRing service to anyone with an idea for a topic-driven ring. Starseed feels that "in serving the three primary World Wide Web groups: visitors, member sites, and advertiser-merchants, this extraordinary system remains entirely open and free of charge to both visitors and member sites."(6)

GeoCities, "the largest and fastest growing Community of personal websites on the Internet,"(7) announced in November of 1998 that it was merging with Starseed and the WebRing system. At that time, WebRing had 66,000 rings and 900,000 member sites.

The most amazing aspect of WebRing is that it is truly a grassroots phenomenon that has remained unscathed through its changes in ownership. After the merger with GeoCities, Starseed assured WebRing's loyal followers that it "will continue to operate WebRing as a division of GeoCities, and WebRing will retain its unique identity."(8) Not only are people free to join and create rings, Starseed asserts that "the WebRing system can support a nearly unlimited number of separate and distinct rings in a unique structure that allows the creation and evolution of tens of thousands of different communities."(9) Just two months after the Starseed and GeoCities merger, Yahoo! acquired GeoCities. Only time will tell what impact this latest shift in ownership will have on Webrings.

The rings are listed by subject and searchable by keyword at Ring World, located at WebRing's Web site (http://webring.com). Visitors and potential ring members browse through this centralized index as a quick means of finding Web sites on subjects of interest. Potential ring owners should do a thorough search of this index before registering a ring. With more than 66,000 rings, it's a good possibility that a subject has been covered, possibly more than once. Even though WebRing encourages participants to limit the number of rings on a single subject, they also refuse to enforce this, stating "we are not limiting the number of Rings on a specific subject because some topics are so diverse."(10)

Webrings and Libraries

Although it's impossible to determine the number of librarians maintaining Webrings as a personal pursuit, there are several rings devoted to libraries and library resources. A good example is the International Medical Libraries on the Web Ring (www.glenlib.demon.co.uk/medlib) maintained by the Glenfield Hospital Medical Library in Leicester, England. The purpose of this ring is to "help bring medical and healthcare libraries spread throughout the world closer together, and that it will lead to a sharing of ideas and maybe even resources."(11) A ring that is open to any library site on the Web is the Ring of Libraries (www.sun.ac. za/local/library/ROL/) maintained by the Computer Services Librarian at the University of Stellenbosch Library in South Africa. An example of a library resources ring is the Government Information Web Ring (www.geocities.com/Athens/6274/ ring.html) maintained by Gall Stern Kwak, government documents librarian at Northwestern State University in Louisiana. A site must contain federal government information to be a member of this ring.

The first step in finding innovative uses for Webrings in libraries is for librarians to tap into existing rings as reference aids and for research. The subjects covered by Webrings are diverse and often focus on specific areas of study found in college and university curriculum yet are rarely used as an information resource in libraries. The Quotation Ring (www.gunnar.cc/webring/ quotes.html), for instance, is one of the few rings cited in an article on information resources available on the Internet.(12) It's possible that a ring already exists within the institution the library supports. There are countless rings devoted to university sports teams, alumni organizations, individual departments, and student organizations. Librarians can utilize students' familiarity with Webrings by showing them how to explore specific topics within these controlled cyber environments and by creating Webrings that meet specific curriculum and study goals.

How Webrings Work

The concept behind Webrings is simple but logical: "Instead of forcing a user to plow through thousands of search engine results to find, say, dinosaur sites, organize dinosaur sites into interlinked `rings,' enabling the surfer to move between sites known to be on the topic."(13) The single topic idea is central to the success of Webrings, the goal

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being "an alternative to the major search engines by offering Web rings as a starting point for locating information."(14)

For a Webring to function, the same navigational information must be on each member site. All of this information is consolidated into a script that WebRing calls the HTMLfragment. This fragment can be customized by the ring manager by adding graphics, different font sizes, faces, and colors; the possibilities are limitless as long as the result is a recognizable representation of the ring. The navigational links work so "visitors can travel all or any of the sites in the ring. They can move through a ring in either direction, going to the next or previous site, or listing the next five sites in the ring. They can jump to a random site in the ring, or survey all the sites that make up the ring."(15) A ring can be entered from any member site just by following the navigational links. So "if you've found a page on a subject you like, and you see a Web ring `block' at the bottom, you can safely assume that following the ring will lead to other pages of interest."(16) (see figure 1)

[Figure 1 ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

The ring manager decides how members' sites join a ring. All rings have a home page that contains the description of the ring and the procedure for joining. Some are invitation only while most are open to anyone with a site that meets the criteria of the ring. A potential member fills out a submission form on the ring home page. Their site is assigned an ID number and put in a queue. They receive an e-mail message instructing them to copy the HTMLfragment and paste it into their Web site, sometimes making minor edits to it reflecting the site's position in the ring. The new member then sends an e-mail to the ring manager saying that the HTMLfragment is in place and that the site can be added to the ring. The ring manager goes into the management area of WebRing where there is a list of Web sites that have been submitted to the queue. The manager visits the new site, checks to see if it meets the criteria for the ring and makes sure the HTMLfragment is correct and that there aren't any other problems. If everything is fine the ring manager adds the site to the ring.

Preliminary Steps to Creating a WebRing

The best Webrings are the ones that have a sharp focus on the ring's topic. They keep the member sites down to a manageable number, and the visitor knows, more or less, what to expect from the other sites in the ring. Rings such as The Cajun Life ring, devoted to "pages of Cajuns/Louisianians who are sharing their culture with everyone"(17) have hundreds of amazingly diverse Web sites on them. Rings like The Abyssinian Cat Ring which is "only for pages that are about Abyssinian Cats,"(18) have enough focus to keep the number of member sites to a manageable number and the subject thread is a strong factor in all the sites.

The first step for anyone who wishes to start a ring is to search through the existing Webrings to see if and how a subject is covered. If there are rings on the subject, take a look at their descriptions and visit the ring's home pages to study their approach. To determine a need for a new ring on a subject, it's a good idea to keep two factors in mind. Although Web sites can be on more than one ring, be sure that this new ring encompasses a set of sites that are not already a part of existing rings. If this isn't possible then perhaps another ring on the subject is not needed. Keep in mind that a ring is an imposition on a member site. It interrupts the layout and design of a site and increases download time. Web site owners may want to limit the number of rings on their sites and will decline an invitation to join another ring for this reason.

Potential ring owners should read through everything at the WebRing home page (http:// webring.com), especially the Help Sections. Understanding WebRings and the philosophy behind them gives the potential ring developer an idea of what managing a Webring involves. WebRing recommends that ring managers possess the following:

1. a good understanding of the World Wide Web and how it works.

2. the ability to create a Web page.

3. a Web account where they can put a Web page.

4. a working e-mail account.(19)

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Add to this an enthusiasm for the subject, the time to devote to managing the ring, and an infinite amount of patience and good humor. Running Webrings involves as much interaction with humans as it does with machines. Unlike composing a list of links, the ring manager not only makes a commitment to the ring itself, but to the member sites on it.

Signing Up a WebRing

The first step in creating a Webring is to register it by filling out the step-by-step form on the WebRing site. Before beginning the process, it's a good idea to have several things decided; a title, a description, keywords, a URL, and an e-mail address are necessary for the completion of the registration form. All of this information can be changed or updated once the ring is registered.

1. Devise a brief but descriptive title for the ring. Look through existing rings for examples of successful and not-so-successful titles. Remember, the titles are indexed alphabetically in Ring World, so if it begins with "the" it will be in the t's. Visitors scanning a list of ring titles often check alphabetically for a subject of interest. So "The Ring of History" might get more visitors and potential members if the title were simply "History Ring."

2. Prepare a description of the ring, fewer than one hundred words. Because this description is displayed as a part of the listing in Ring World, it must be both informative and interesting enough to draw visitors or potential ring members.

3. Compile a list of up to twenty keywords. The combination of the keywords and description are picked up by the internal search engine for Ring World so it might be wise to list keywords not found in the description.

4. Have a URL for the ring. Even if there isn't a site at the address, reserve Web space and a full URL for the future home of the ring. WebRing doesn't house the home page for a ring, just the management pages for it. A ring home page is no different from any other Web page; in fact, many of them are a part of a larger Web site. Many ring managers take advantage of free Web space providers but have to pay the price of banners and pop-up window advertising.

5. Have an e-mail address that you want to use for ring-related business. Since this address is used for all the correspondence and management of the ring, many managers choose to use an address dedicated to the ring. Many sign up with one of the free e-mail services or use the email address that comes with some of the free Web space providers.

The link to the submission form for creating a new ring is embedded in the text on the main page, the Join page, the "What is WebRing" page, and in Section 2 of the Help FAQ.

The sign-up process consists of four steps and takes only a few minutes to fill out if the basic information is prepared beforehand.

Step 1. This step consists of a friendly warning that creating and maintaining a Webring can be time consuming, a lot of work, and requires a good understanding of HTML. It also includes a disclaimer on WebRing's policy on ring content. Although WebRing does not censor rings or ring content, it reserves the right "to deny service to anyone, and terminate/suspend your ring if the system is being abused."(20) These terms must be accepted before proceeding to the second step.

Step 2. The steps seem to be divided into logical parts to build the internal structure of the ring. This step creates a unique identifier for the ring in the form of a Ring ID. "This is a short code that will be used by the system to distinguish your ring from the thousands of others on the system."(21) The Ring ID must be more than two alphanumeric characters, contain no whitespaces, and is case sensitive. It should also be similar to the ring title. For example, the "History Ring" could have a Ring ID of "history" or "historyring."

Step 3. The information needed for this section is the ring title, ring home page URL, your name or organization, an e-mail address, and a password The password is used in conjunction with the Ring ID to access the ring management areas of WebRing.

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Step 4. The information provided in this step is for the ring's listing in Ring World, the directory of WebRings. Since a ring has to have a minimum of five sites to be listed in Ring World, the first question concerns whether it should be automatically listed when the ring has five member sites. There is also the opportunity to indicate the appropriate age group for the site using standard movie ratings. The subject category taken from the Ring World list, the brief description of the ring, and the keywords are also input in this step.

The final step actually takes all the submitted information and creates the Webring. At this point, only the administrative part of the ring is complete. It is then up to the ring manager to create the actual ring.

The Ring Home Page

The main purpose of the home page is to describe and outline the parameters of the Webring and to explain the procedure for joining. Looking through a sample of rings, it is clear that there are as many approaches to ring home pages as there are rings. On some, the Webring is just a small section of the site; on others, the ring is the site. The best place to start is to study different home pages to get an idea of the endless variety and approaches to layout and design.

The Help Sections located at WebRing outline what should be on a home page, but much of it is redundant, unnecessary, and confusing, and ring managers use it only as a starting point. The diversity of ring home pages attests to the freedom allowed in, not only the customization in design and layout, but in which suggested element to include. If it works, the page is successful.

The most difficult part of the ring home page is interpreting the method of conveying the proper information and instructions to a potential new member of the ring. The seven suggestions for what a home page should include are listed in Section 2 of the WebRing Help FAQ:

1. Description of your Ring and qualifications for sites wanting to join.

2. Instructions on how to join.

3. Form for Submitting potential site information.

4. An example of the "HTMLfragment" code.

5. Link to random site in the Ring, and a list of all sites.

6. Link to the Edit Site page.

7. If you are allowing members to add sites to the ring, a link to the Queue.(22)

A detailed look at these suggestions can help alleviate some common problems that plague many ring home pages.

1. Description of your ring and qualifications for sites wanting to join. The description should be as precise as possible in expressing the parameters of the ring. For example, if the ring is only for non-commercial sites or if the subject area is limited in a specific way, this should be clearly stated. The more vague the parameters for membership, the greater the misinterpretation by potential members.

Some rings are invitation only, which places all the work of building the ring on the ring manager. Every potential member site has to be located by the manager. Invitations to join the ring must then be composed, sent out, and, if the manager is lucky, responded to. One of the major problems with invitation-only rings is convincing reluctant Web site owners to join.

The most common approach to building ring membership is to allow unsolicited submissions, which the ring manager can approve or reject. If the ring is open to submissions, there should be a submission form on the ring home page.

2. Instructions on how to join. This is probably the most confusing part of building a ring home page because WebRing presents several suggestions of what to do, and does not state that they are really options from which to choose. As a result, many home pages have redundant, confusing, and even contradictory instructions and

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explanations. The more complicated the process of joining a ring appears to be, the more reluctant some potential members may be to join. Basically the instructions should include:

a. Instructions on how to submit a site to the ring. In the simplest case, these instructions are variations on "fill out the submission form below." It might be a good idea to explain that filling out the form does not automatically add the site to the ring, but places it in a queue until the submission process is complete. To be really thorough, an explanation of the difference between a queue and a ring can be included, although this may be too much detail for visitors who are only interested in the parts of the procedure they have to perform.

b. A description of what happens after the form is submitted. This depends on how well the ring manager understands the process. Following WebRing's suggestions to the letter creates an extremely complicated interpretation of the submission process. The best solution is to work out a logical procedure using the basic necessary steps. This part of the instructions should be a variation on: "When you submit the form, you'll receive an e -mail with your Site ID number and the URL for the HTMLfragment that needs to be pasted into your Web site." The ring manager also has the option to set a time limit for how long a site can remain in a queue before being automatically deleted; this should be clearly stated in the instructions.

c. Instructions on how the HTMLfragment should be added to the member site. Some members specifically ask that the fragment be placed on the site's main page, while others allow the placement to fit into the logical layout of the site.

d. Instructions on how to handle graphics in the HTMLfragment. Graphics can be accessed from the ring manager's server or downloaded and added to the member site's server. Some Web space providers have limitations on the traffic to a site, and putting the graphic on the member's server not only saves bandwidth, but sometimes an extra expense for the ring manager. Include instructions on how to download the graphics for both PCs and Macs.

e. Instructions on what to do after the HTMLfragment has been added to the member site. This is basically a variation on: "When you have added the HTMLfragment to your site, upload the page to your server and send me an e-mail letting me know that your site is ready to be checked and added to the ring." If a site remains in a queue too long, it might be prudent to check to see of the HTMLfragment is on it. Sometimes Web site owners forget to send the e-mail message.

3. Form for submitting potential site information. The HTML code for the submission form is provided by WebRing. It can be pasted onto the home page and customized as much or as little as desired. It's a good idea, especially for those not used to working with CGI forms, to paste the generic form into the page and take a look at the results through a browser before making changes to it. This shows what sections of the script go where on the form and prevents accidental tampering with the essential parts of the script. It also helps determine how to place the form into the overall design of the page (see figure 2).

[Figure 2 ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

4. An example of the HTMLfragment code. Including the HTMLfragment on the home page can be confusing because it is not the code that is meant to be pasted into the member site. That fragment is provided in an e-mail message to the potential member and includes the information assigned specifically to that site. If the only purpose of displaying the fragment on the page is to show what it looks like, then that purpose must be clearly stated. Unfortunately, the reason for displaying the fragment is not made clear in the instructions to ring managers, so many home pages state that the fragment is for pasting into a member site. There is nothing wrong with this, but it creates a lot of unnecessary work for both the new member and the ring manager, who has to instruct the new member to customize the code. Many ring managers choose not to display the HTMLfragment on the home page because it is redundant and can cause confusion.

5. Link to random site in the ring, and list of all sites. This is only necessary if the ring home page is not a part of the ring. The ring home page has to be added to the ring like any other member site. A benefit of adding the home page is that it gives the ring manager the opportunity to check the submission process from beginning to end, making sure all the customized e-mail messages, etc., work as anticipated. As a part of the ring, the home page has the same

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block of text and graphics representing the ring as its member sites, including all of the navigational options and a full list of member sites.

6. Link to the Edit Site page. When a site is submitted to the queue, the follow-up e-mail message not only reiterates the site information but includes the URL to the Edit Site page. This is where information entered in the submission form can be modified. Putting the ability for a ring member to access their Edit Site page on the ring home page is a convenience in case the member does not retain the follow-up e-mail message. The link can either be a small form that asks for the member Site ID and password to gain entrance to the page or a link to the same form on the WebRing site.

7. If you are allowing members to add sites to the Ring, a link to the Queue. Some ring managers have members who help manage the ring. This link allows these members into the queue so they can add sites to the ring.

Perhaps the most difficult part of creating a Webring is devising the block of text and graphics that represent the ring on each of the member sites. The actual text is standard, for the most part, since it involves the navigational links for the ring. How the text is arranged and factors such as font type, color, and size can be customized. Many rings have one or two graphics that represent the subject. There are several things to keep in mind when devising these graphics. First, keep them small but recognizable since they will impact on the download time of a page. Second, consider making parts of an image transparent because it has to fit against every conceivable background color and image. Lastly, try to create something that will work with as many design and color schemes as possible; the ring is meant to be visible, not obtrusive. The design can be as creative as the ring manager's imagination, as long as the site's navigation is clear.

E-mail and Page Forms

To make the ring home page work as efficiently as possible, the e-mail messages and pages that are automatically generated during the submission and acceptance process need special customization. These forms can be accessed through the ring management pages at WebRing. Requiring the most attention are the HTMLfragment and the add_mail message.

The HTMLfragment is the heart of the ring, and the logistics for getting a new member to correctly paste it into a site sometimes seem more complicated than they really are. Unfortunately, the most confusing instructions on how to build a Webring concern the HTMLfragment. Barring the few who "just don't get it" even when the instructions and the procedure are painfully simple, most people who have managed to put at least one site on the Web can, at least, recognize the code. Given the number of member sites on rings with complicated and confusing instructions, most Web site owners have enough knowledge to figure out and understand the process, sometimes better than the ring manager. The ideal situation is to make the process as simple as possible for both the ring manager and the new member. Customizing the HTMLfragment form and letting it be the only version of the fragment that the new member has access to is the simplest approach.

The HTMLfragment is the code for the block of text and graphics that represent the ring. Once it has been customized for the ring, copy it and paste it into the HTMLfragment form found on the Customizable Forms page in the ring management section of WebRing. The trick is to retain the default variables so that when a new member accesses the fragment from a special URL provided for them, it will automatically include all the information from the member site. This means that the fragment can be pasted into their site without any changes.

The raw HTMLfragment contains just the essentials for ensuring that the ring's navigational links work properly (see figure 3). Customization should only affect the design and layout of the code. Although the ring manager has the option to exclude all of the navigational links, the parts of the code that allow the ring to operate must not be altered (see figure 4). When the fragment has been customized, paste it into the HTMLfragment form. When a new member submits a site, the system pulls this form into a page created for the new member and fills in the variables for "--mail--", "name-", and "--id--" with the information from the submission form. The new member simply copies the URL provided in the follow-up e-mail message and pastes it into their page (see figure 5).

[Figures 3-5 ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

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To ensure that the above scenario works smoothly, the add_mail message sent to a potential member after the site information is submitted has to be customized. It contains a summary of the information submitted for the ring and instructions on what to do next. It also contains the URL to the Edit Site page and to the page containing the HTML-fragment. The generic add_mail form is a hodgepodge of instructions to both the new member and the ring manager (see figure 6).

[Figure 6 ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

Any word between two dashes is a variable that is filled in with information from the submission form and from the ring manager's profile. For example, the top portion for the member site may read:

```
Your site has been successfully submitted to the My Favorite Ring for
review. Your Ring information is listed below. Please save this email for
future reference as it contains important information.

Ring Name: My Favorite Ring

Ring ID: myring

RingMaster: Ring Manager's Name Ring manager@ myplace.com

Site ID: 23

Password: pass (don't forget this!)

Title: Member Site Title

URL: freespace.net/ myfreespace--(this should be your webpage and will be
the page you add your HTMLfragment to)

E-mail: me@freespace.net

Password: pass (No, really ... don't forget this or your Site ID, which is
23 and your Ring ID which is myring)
```

The next section explains what needs to be done to add the member site to the ring.

```
Please note that your site has NOT been added to the ring yet. Standard
steps to become a member of any WebRing are as follows:

a. Submit your site (you've already done this). You are now in the
RingMaster's "queue"

b. Add the correct HTMLfragment to your webpage then email
manager@myplace.com

c. RingMaster reviews correctness of your HTMLfragment

d. RingMaster adds you to the ring

e. Traffic to your site increases!:)
```

If the information above is incorrect, you can edit your site information by entering your Site ID 23 and password pass at the URL

```
http://www.webring.org/ cgi-bin/webring?ring=23;edit
```


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The next part of the e-mail message requires modification to make the submission process as simple as possible.

```
he   M fragment to cut and paste on your homepage should be shown below.
owe er  please note it is possible the  ingMaster for-My  a orite  ing has
not configured their   M fragment within the Webring system in which case
the   M fragment below will say  his is a generic  default
 M fragment-modify me or remo e this line.   f this is the case  you
should find instructions for obtaining and editing the   M fragment
manually on the My  a orite  ing homepage  at http://myplace.com/ myring.

http://www.webring.org / cgi-bin / webring ring -- ringid-- id 23 html code

Please do not email Web ing Support Ser ices to be added to this ring.
the  ingMaster can add your site.  f you ha e  uestions regarding your
membership in this ring  please address them to the  ingMaster
(ringmanager myplace.com).
```

This is the most confusing part of the instructions for both the ring manager and the new member. The fact is, even if the ring manager modifies the HTMLfragment form and pastes it into the e-mail message so that it displays to the new member, the member still has to add their site ID, e-mail address and name to the fragment when they paste it into their page. If the new member simply selects the URL http://www. webring.org/cgi-bin/web ring? ring=--ringid--;id=--id--;html-code, they will get the modified code with all the information from the member site. So instead of looking something like this:

```
ere is the   M fragment to cut and paste on your homepage:

 -- Begin   M comment

his is an   M fragment to be pasted onto your Web site for the My  a orite
ing Web ing.  t is what lin s you to the rest of the ring. :)

nd   M comment --

p

center

his  a href  --ringurl--  -- ringtitle-- /a  site owned by

a href  mailto:--mail--   --name-- /a . br  img src  myringlogo.gif   br

 a href  http://www. webring.org/cgi-bin/ webring ring --ringid-- id --
id-- pre 5  Pre ious 5 Sites /a

 a href  http://www. webring.org/cgi-bin/ webring ring --ringid-- id
--id-- pre   Pre ious /a   a href  http://www. webring.org/cgi-bin/
webring ring --ringid-- id  --id-- ne t  e t /a

 a href  http://www. webring.org/cgi-bin/ webring ring --ringid-- id --
id-- ne t5  e t 5 Sites /a

 a href  http://www. webring.org/cgi-bin/ webring ring --ringid--
random  andom Site /a
```


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```
|<a href="http://www. web ring. org / cgi-bin / webring?ring=--ringid
--;list">List Sites</a> ]

</center>

<p>

You should find instructions for obtaining and editing the HTMLfragment
manually on the My Favorite Ring homepage, at http://myplace.com/ myring.

The HTMLfragment with your site specifications is also available at:

http://www.webring.org/ cgi-bin/webring?ring=-- ringid--;id=23;htmlcode
```

The message can be streamlined into this:

```
The HTMLfragment can be found at the following URL:

http://www.webring.org/ cgi-bin/webring?ring= smithring;id=23;htmlcode

Your e-mail address, name, and site ID should be already inserted into the
code. All you have to do is copy the code and paste it into your site. Then
send me an e-mail letting me know your site is ready to be added to the
ring.
```

Not only is this message easier for the new member to understand, it also makes it easier for the ring manager to explain what to do if there is a problem.

The other forms generated by the system for the new member include the page shown after a site has been submitted to the queue, the e-mail message sent after a site has been inserted into the ring, and notification messages when a site will be removed from a queue. All these forms can be customized, reflecting the general tone and layout of the ring home page.

Managing the Ring

Once the ring home page is in place and the forms are customized, the ring is ready to be launched. However, since a ring is not a Webring until it has a number of member sites on it, the first step is to announce its existence. This can be done in a number of different ways and, in the beginning, the more the better. The most direct method is to compile a list of suitable Web sites to invite to join the ring. This can be time consuming but helps build an immediate foundation for the ring. The ring can be registered with search engines just like any other Web site, and this may pull in general visitors and the occasional potential member. Posting announcements to message boards and mailing lists that cover the subject of the ring will probably yield the best results for quick growth spurts. Once the ring has a respectable number of member sites, the sites themselves become a form of advertisement. The listing in Ring World as well attracts a number of potential members.

The ring manager has access to a group of management pages for the ring. This is where all the customizable forms, ring statistics, the queue, and everything else relating to the management of the ring reside. It's a good idea to become familiar with these pages since a lot of potential questions are answered within them.

The ring manager can see the sites in the queue but cannot take any action on them, except maybe to reject them because they don't meet the guidelines for the ring, until an email message is sent from a potential member letting the manager know that the HTMLfragment has been added to the new site. The listing in the queue looks like this:

```
[Edit] | [Add] | [Remove] 020 My Really Great Site - me@ mysite.com (My
Name)
```

To add a site, the manager selects the link to the site and checks it for appropriateness and for errors in the HTMLfragment. A solid knowledge of HTML and of how to access the source code of a Web page is necessary. The

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ring manager must be able to spot errors in the HTMLfragment and write clear instructions on how to correct them. It cannot be assumed that a person who managed to create and post a Web site understands HTML. The other extreme are those who are secure in their HTML skills and freely customize the code. It's up to the ring manager to decide whether the graphics and texts in the Ring must be uniform on each site or if they can be adapted to the overall design of the site as long as it's still recognizable. If the HTML code is correct, the manager returns to the ring management page and selects "add." The information from the member's submission form is displayed in case it needs correcting. Check to make sure that "http://" is in front of the URL. This is commonly left out and is necessary for the navigational links of the ring to work properly. If everything is correct the site is added to the ring.

As the ring grows, periodic integrity checks are necessary. On large rings, managers enlist the help of the members to check the sites on either side of their own or take on helpers to add sites and check the links. There is a ringmasters' mailing list for those who want to interact with other ring managers. Many questions and problems are discussed on this list. WebRing also compiles statistics on traffic to the individual sites on a ring and within the ring itself. These statistics are useful is making sure all the sites in a ring receive an equal amount of traffic. If it appears as though only parts of the ring are getting the majority of hits, a ring manager has the option of rearranging the order of the sites.

Conclusion

Being a ring manager can be a rewarding or frustrating experience. Dedication to the subject of the ring and a commitment to the purpose can make managing a ring a very satisfactory experience. The potential for their use as an educational or collection development tool has barely been tapped. It is up to librarians to decide how to fashion Webrings into an alternative method of offering Internet resources to patrons. Webrings can be used as subject extensions of library collections or be tailored to cover the specific resources for individual courses. No matter what they are created for, Webrings can take the waste out of searching the Internet and create a unique surfing experience for the student and patron.

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Public displays of connection

J Donath and d boyd

Participants in social network sites create self-descriptive profiles that include their links to other members, creating a visible network of connections — the ostensible purpose of these sites is to use this network to make friends, dates, and business connections. In this paper we explore the social implications of the public display of one's social network. Why do people display their social connections in everyday life, and why do they do so in these networking sites? What do people learn about another's identity through the signal of network display? How does this display facilitate connections, and how does it change the costs and benefits of making and brokering such connections compared to traditional means? The paper includes several design recommendations for future networking sites.

1. Introduction

'Orkut [1] is an on-line community that connects people through a network of trusted friends'

'Find the people you need through the people you trust' — LinkedIn [2].

'Access people you want to reach through people you know and trust. Spoke Network helps you cultivate a strong personal network by keeping you in touch with your relationships' — Spoke [3].

'Friendster Beta [4]: The new way to meet people. Friendster is an on-line community that connects people through networks of friends for dating or making new friends'.

Social networking sites, in which participants create a self-descriptive profile and make links to other members, have recently become quite popular. 'Networking' is the ostensible purpose of these sites — using one's chain of connections to make new friends, dates, business partners, etc. Underlying all the networking sites are a core set of assumptions — that there is a need for people to make more connections, that using a network of existing connections is the best way to do so, and that making this easy to do is a great benefit.

The first dedicated on-line networking site was sixdegrees.com, which, like today's social networking sites, helped people connect to an extended network of friends of friends and beyond. Sixdegrees.com folded after four years in operation. Since then, use of the Internet has greatly expanded and today it is much more likely that one's friends and the people one would like to befriend are present in cyberspace. People are accustomed to thinking of the on-line world as a social space. Today, networking sites are suddenly extremely popular.

Social networks — our connections with other people — have many important functions. They are sources of emotional and financial support, and of information about jobs, other people, and the world at large. The types of social networks that develop in different communities have a profound effect on the way people work, the opportunities they have, and the structure of their daily life [5, 6]. There are societies in which network ties reflect a rigid hierarchy and close kinship relationships, and others in which they reflect a mobile culture structured around work and school. Today, we are seeing the advent of social networks formed in cyberspace. People meet in on-line forums and through on-line dating services; they keep in touch with an unprecedentedly large number of people via electronic media.

people are accustomed to thinking of the on-line world as a social space

In today's society, access to information is a key element of status and power and communication is instant, ubiquitous and mobile. The social networking sites we will be discussing in this paper are a product of this emerging culture. They

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function both as environments in which these new ties are formed and as depictions of these networks in the display of individual connections.

Social networking sites are on-line environments in which people create a self-descriptive profile and then make links to other people they know on the site, creating a network of personal connections. Participants in social networking sites are usually identified by their real names and often include photographs; their network of connections is displayed as an integral piece of their self-presentation.

The public display of connections is one of the most salient features of the social sites. The focus of this paper is on the social implications of this display. Why do people display their social connections in everyday life — and why do they do so in these networking sites? What do people learn about another's identity through the signal of network display? How does this display facilitate connections, and how does it change the costs and benefits of making and brokering such connections as opposed to doing so via traditional means?

The profile and network of links are the fundamental features of these sites, but the specific instantiation varies from site to site. The examples and observations in this paper are drawn from several contemporary services, including Friendster [4], Orkut [1], Tribe.net [7], Ryze [8] and LinkedIn [2]. These sites undergo frequent redesign and new ones appear often; thus, while we have grounded our analysis on observation [9], we try to speak generally about approaches to design.

Most networking sites share a similar model of interpersonal links — they are mutual, public, unnuanced, and decontextualised:

- links are mutual: if A shows B as a connection, then B has also agreed to show A as a connection,
- the links are public: they are permanently on display for others to see — here, the sites do differ, e.g. LinkedIn allows you to see only the connections made by your immediate links, and only if they allow it, whereas Orkut allows users to explore freely, and others limit network viewings to a still more broad class of friends of friends of friends,
- the links are unnuanced: there is no distinction made between a close relative and a near stranger one chatted with idly on-line one night,
- the links are decontextualised: there is no way of showing only a portion of one's network to some people — some sites do allow users to adjust the closeness by degree of the people who are to be allowed to see their connections, and within that degree everyone can see all connections (there is no ability to segregate one's links), and similarly for one's profile, and a few sites allow limiting parts of the profile to closer connections, but again connection degree is the only distinction made.

The features of the links in the displays of connection — that are public, mutual, unnuanced, and decontextualised — shape the culture that is evolving on these sites.

2. What does the display of connections mean?

In the physical world, people display their connections in many ways. They have parties in which they introduce friends who they think would like — or impress — each other [10, 11]. They drop the names of high status acquaintances casually in their conversation. They decorate their refrigerator with photos. Simply appearing in public with one's acquaintances is a display of connection. These displays serve various purposes. The high status name-dropping may be a deliberate ploy to impress the listener of the speaker's importance or ability to effect some action. The refrigerator display may be prompted by the good feeling engendered by memories of pleasant times with friends [12]. The introductions may be done as a favour, as a way of gaining social capital, or as a way of uniting compatible but disconnected circles [10].

social status, political beliefs, musical taste, etc, may be inferred from the company one keeps

Seeing someone within the context of their connections provides the viewer with information about them. Social status, political beliefs, musical taste, etc, may be inferred from the company one keeps. Furthermore, knowing that someone is connected to people one already knows and trusts is one of the most basic ways of establishing trust with a new relationship [13, 14]. The reliability of the inferences drawn from these displays varies. The social climber who is continuously dropping the names of famous friends may be taking advantage of the listener's inability to verify the stories to create an impressive but imaginary resumé. An intimate dinner party in which the guests are clearly familiar with the host tells much more about the host's social circle than does a giant loft party where the attendees are only vaguely aware of the evening's provenance. The friends depicted in photos on the refrigerator are likely to be just that — but there does exist a market in faux family photos and other material meant to create the impression of aspired to life and history [15]. How important is the reliability of the information gleaned from the display of connections depends on what one is planning to do with it. If one is simply being entertained by a celebrity-laced story, suspension of disbelief is harmless. Yet, if one is being recruited for an investment scheme the desirability of which is based on claims of association with the rich and famous, a deeper analysis would be sensible.

A useful way of analysing the reliability of displays of connections is to think of them in the framework of signalling theory. This theory, developed in both biology [16—18] and economics [19, 20], describes the relationship between a signal and the underlying quality it represents. Most of the qualities we are interested in about other people — Is this person nice? Trustworthy? Can she do this job? Can he be relied on in an emergency? Would she be a good parent? — are not directly observable. Instead, we rely on signals, which are more or less reliably correlated with an underlying quality.

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Some signals, often termed honest or assessment signals are inherently reliable because they are costly in terms of the quality they are signalling [18]. For example, a fast and energetic gazelle will exhibit a behaviour called 'stotting' when it sees a predator. Instead of running off, it jumps up and down in place, expending a lot of energy and wasting time. This is a reliable signal of its great speed, for a slower animal could not afford to do this and still outrun the predator. Sometimes, the expense of producing and/or assessing a costly signal is too high, and a less costly but also less reliable signal is used [16]. Such signals are often called conventional signals, because the connection between signal and quality exists by convention rather than necessity. For example, driving an expensive car is a signal of wealth, for to own such a car is quite costly in the domain being signalled, in this case money. Yet a car can be rented and thus a person who is unable to afford to buy a late model Jaguar may still be able to drive one around for a few days. If, however, we add the cost of time for extensive observation, we can increase the reliability of the signal. Seeing someone driving the Jaguar month after month is a more reliable signal of their ownership of it than is a single sighting. If one is only casually interested in the financial status of the driver, a long term investment of time in observing them is unnecessary and undesirable and one is likely to be satisfied with the possibly unreliable information gleaned from the less costly signal of a single observation. If the costs of being mistaken are high, then it is worthwhile to invest in the cost of the assessment signal, which in this case is the monetary investment of the driver and the temporal investment of both driver and observer.

the reliability of social connections can be analysed in terms of signalling theory

There is another important source of costs in determining the reliability of a signal and that is reputation and the ability of receivers to punish deceivers. In a system where interactions are not repeated and there is no communication within a community, receivers must rely on the signal alone. Yet in a situation in which there is persistent identity and repeated interaction, receivers can punish deceivers through the social mechanism of reputation. Here, the information gleaned through experience by an individual can spread through a community. The deceptive signaller then pays a cost in terms of difficulty in finding future interaction partners, etc. This is an important concept in evaluating social networking displays, for they place the individual within a social context that fosters co-operation through the structure of reputation maintenance.

Signalling theory focuses our analysis of the displays of connection in social networking sites on questions such as: What are the qualities that are being represented by the signal of the network display? What are the costs of producing these displays? What are the benefits that can come from them? What are the receivers attempting to discern? What are the costs they will bear if the signal is deceptive? It also focuses our attention on the signalling value of the network itself — what are the implications of an articulated social network, that is, a network in which the connections are explicitly depicted, in terms of reputation and the costs that a deceived receiver can impart?

3. Displaying connections to verify personal identity and ensure co-operation

A public display of connections is an implicit verification of identity. In order to understand the significance of this, we start by briefly discussing how widespread less reliable identity representations are in the on-line world. We then discuss two predictions that can be made about the effect of a public display of connections. First, since one's connections are linked to one's profile, which they have presumably viewed and implicitly verified, it should ensure honest self-presentation. Secondly, since the display makes one's connections and the means of contacting them public, it should ensure co-operative behaviour by putting one's reputation on the line with all transactions, for an unhappy date or client, etc, can easily contact the connections. The section concludes with a discussion of displays of connection and identity theft.

3.1 Verifying personal identity

Identity deception is prevalent in the on-line world. In the real world the body anchors identity, making it both singular and difficult to change. Identity deception, though not unheard of, is difficult — convincingly representing oneself as a member of the opposite gender is quite costly, requiring extensive makeup, costuming, and possibly surgery, while portraying oneself as a different person requires acquiring another's documents, avoiding known acquaintances, and risking a lengthy incarceration. On-line, identity is mutable and unanchored by the body that is its locus in the real world [21]. In many situations, creating pseudonyms has little cost and if one ruins the on-line reputation tied to one screen name, it is simple to acquire a new name and return afresh [22]. Behind the new name is the same problematic person, but the equivalence between the disreputable old name and the clean new name — the fact that they are both names for the same person — is invisible.

In some situations, such as game playing, the ease of creating imaginary personas and unsullied pseudonyms is acceptable. But for many purposes, such as providing support, exchanging goods and services, finding friends and seeking employees, it is not. Here, the cost of being deceived can be quite high, and it is worthwhile for people to assume and demand greater costs in order to be more confident in their belief in the other's identity.

A public display of connections can be viewed as a signal of the reliability of one's identity claims. If I write a description of myself for strangers to read, it is easy to prevaricate. Yet if I take that description and ask a number of people who know me to link to it and implicitly vet it, this should increase the reliability of the description. In theory, the public display of connections found on networking sites should ensure honest self-presentation because one's connections are linked to

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one's profile; they have both seen it and, implicitly, sanctioned it.

A comparison of identity presentation in contexts with and without social networks can be made by comparing social networking sites and dating sites. Both are used to find dates and both feature self-written profiles. They differ in that the dating sites are pseudonymous and have no display of connection while the network sites feature real names and displays of connection. Dating sites are thriving, with millions of users reportedly every month [23]. Yet there have also been numerous reports of identity deception in such sites, ranging from the relatively innocuous misrepresentation of personal appearance and achievements, to more serious deceptions about marital status and intentions. The costs of creating a deceptive dating site profile are relatively low and are often not in the domain being advertised. For example, stating 'I am a kind, thoughtful and romantic person' does not impose any costs on one's kindness or romantic nature and requires little thought. Social networking sites should be more reliable. The use of one's real name and the network both imply that if one were to prevaricate extensively in one's profile, real acquaintances would see this and presumably, make some rebuke — or at least, one would be embarrassed to be seen exaggerating accomplishments in front of one's friends. More serious deceptions, such as a married person posing as an available single, are far more difficult to perform in a networking site. In order to remain innocent in the eyes of one's friends and family one would need to create a new persona and then surround oneself with invented friends and very weak ties or would need to appear as acutely alone. Appearing on a networking site with a full network of acquaintances is a relatively reliable signal that one's participation on the site is within the boundaries of acceptable behaviour within that network.

Does this mean that the display of connections on social networking sites makes the presentation of identity in these environments very reliable? If the connections listed on the profile were always a) real people who b) knew the subject and c) would impose sanctions on false self-portrayals, then yes, these sites would be quite reliable. Yet these assumptions do not always hold.

- Real people

  It is possible that the connections listed are not real people. There is often little or no verification of people when they sign up to join most networking sites. It is easy to create a false persona; the costs lie in building the network. The determined deceiver can create a series of false profiles and have them link to each other, creating the illusion of a network of well-connected participants. The cost here is the effort required to create these multiple personas. This cost is dependent on the registration requirements of the site and sites that make registration more difficult raise the cost and lower the likelihood of such deception. Today, most sites are free. Some require an invitation from an existing member, but it would be possible simply to invite the made-up profiles oneself. A site that requires an invitation from an existing member AND that keeps the host member's name on the invitee's profile (which is seldom if ever done today) would make the cost of creating a circle of deception higher, by making it possible to trace the chain of links to a real person. While such elaborate deceptions are rare, if the benefits of creating a believable but false persona are high enough, it is likely that they will occur. Sites that value their own reputation as a place where people can find trustworthy others should be cognisant of the value of registration costs and of maintaining invitation chains.

- Who knew the subject

  It is possible that the connections are real people, but that they do not know the subject. The culture of the networking sites varies. In some, it is common for strangers to happen upon an interesting profile, and contact the person requesting a connection; in others, it is common for people to link only to others they do know. Linking to externally unknown people became so common on Friendster that the phrase 'she's not my friend, she's my friendster' [9] arose to explain the relationship one has with a person known only through that site. This is not inherently bad — after all, the social sites are designed to help people meet and linking to one another is the obvious action to take upon introduction in this environment. The drawback is that this ease of meeting means that the degree of acquaintanceship signified by a link may be very minimal. If the people on someone's display of connections do not know the subject in real life, they have no way to verify the profile — they, like the receiver, know only the on-line presentation and thus they do not add new information. One cost here is that it can take more effort to get strangers to agree to link to you than real friends; friends, upon receiving the link request, are likely to say yes (the cost of establishing the relationship has already been paid) whereas a stranger is more likely to refuse such requests. What would make someone agree to link to a complete stranger? One possibility is that they simply want more links — perhaps they are a newcomer to the site and feel conspicuous in the small size of their network or they may be one of the participants who is seeking to build as large a network as they can. Another possibility is that the link seeker has created a particularly intriguing profile and people agree to link to it — or even seek out links with it — because it is so well crafted or features an aesthetic or political viewpoint they wish to espouse. By paying the cost of carefully crafting an interesting profile one can make more connections. Here we see how the various meanings of a link can be conflated by different participants — a link may be made in response to appreciation of a witty entry, and yet be interpreted as meaning that the linked people know each other.

  Furthermore, a connection may know the subject, but not all aspects of his or her personality, work history, etc. Relationships are contextual — a friend known as a supportive shoulder to lean on may not be recognisable as the ruthless poker player or somewhat lax manager he or she also is. Identity is faceted [24]; we have different interests, beliefs, traits, etc, and share different ones with different people. Feld's [10] formulation of how networks form uses the word 'focus' to encompass the different

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situations, people, ideas, etc, that bring people together. These foci, he pointed out, organise the structure of social networks because they are the circumstances and reasons people meet each other and form ties with each other. The type of information that flows through a tie, whether about the person or about the world at large, depends on the focus that brought them together and on the shared facets of their identity.

The subject's profile may touch upon various facets of his or her identity, and those who are displayed as links may know only some of these. Other claims in the profile may be untrue, yet unquestioned by friends and colleagues, who may simply assume this is an aspect of their acquaintance about which they do not know.

LinkedIn has developed an interesting approach to recognising the focused natured of people's connections. Like several other sites, it includes testimonials, which are comments people write about the subject and which appear alongside the profile and display of connections (see Fig 1 for a sample User Profile page). Unlike links, these need not be reciprocal. They are almost invariably complimentary, since they are displayed at the discretion of the subject (though notions of what is complimentary is quite context dependent). On LinkedIn, these testimonials are situated in specific sections of the profile, rather than as general comments. This is a professional site, aimed at business connections, so the profile sections correspond to different jobs; the testimonials speak about the work the subject did at each work place. The endorsement of one aspect of the profile does not imply any knowledge about the rest. As we will discuss later in this paper, there are a number of reasons for making a self-presentation more faceted; these situated testimonials are a step in that direction.

- Who would impose sanctions

  Finally, it is possible that the connections are real people, and they know the subject and know that the profile is deceptive, but they do not care. The culture of the networking sites varies. Some are more playful and participants may see them as an environment for performative expression. On Orkut, a law professor lists his career skills as 'small appliance repair', his career interests as 'large appliance repair'. To those who know him, the joke is obvious. Presented on a site where people often creatively embellish their profiles we can see it not as a deceptive self-description, but as a signal of the author's dry humour[1]. Other sites, such as LinkedIn, are quite business-like and emphasise one's personal responsibility in vouching for another person. Here, a clearly deceptive statement, such as claiming a higher title at a previous job than was actually held, might indeed be challenged.

3.2 Ensuring co-operation

Yet confrontation is difficult. It is easier to ignore such actions, especially when acting as an individual. But social groups have

[1] In fact, Orkut features the category 'sense of humour' as a line in everyone's main profile, with the multiple choice answers including 'obscure', 'clever/quick witted', 'raunchy', etc. Note that this description of one's humour is a conventional signal, with no cost in that domain. Creative and funny use of the profile, however, is a much more reliable signal of one's wit, even as it becomes a less reliable description at face value.

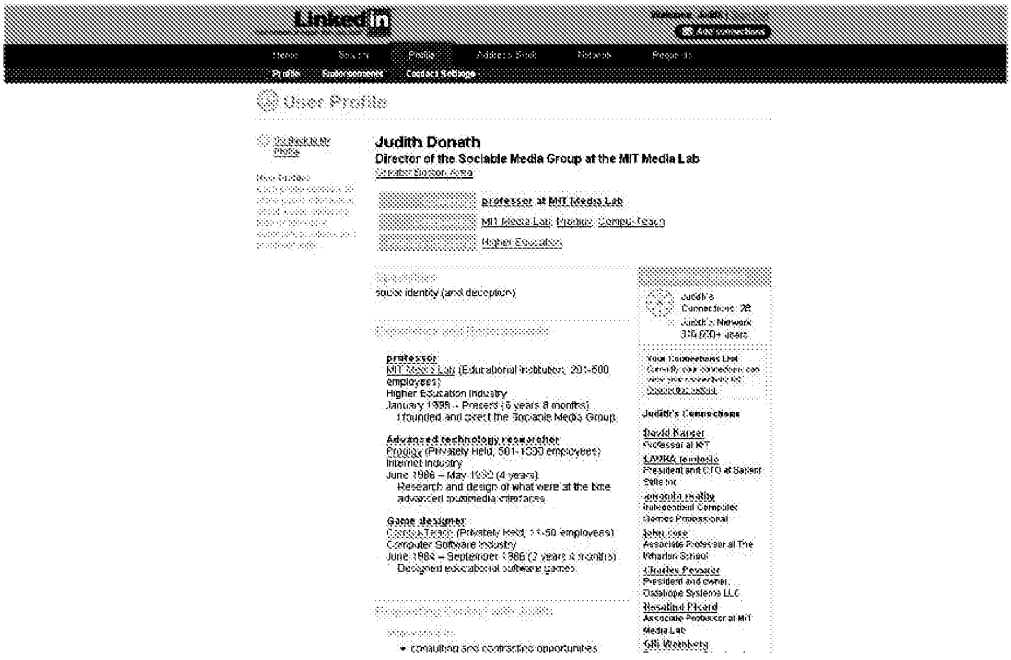


Fig 1 Sample LinkedIn user profile page.

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considerable power in enforcing norms. The power of reputation to enforce co-operative behaviour lies not in confrontation with the subject, but in conversation surrounding him.

Displaying connections is a way of signalling a willingness to risk one's reputation. In the real world, as Burt [13] has pointed out, reputation is a powerful force in groups with dense affiliations. This can be due to repeated interactions — we gather a reputation around our identity that, if good, is quite valuable and we benefit from continuing to act in ways that enhance that reputation. But it can also be due to having mutual acquaintances — he cites Granovetter who says that the 'mortification' at having mutual friends discover one's poor behaviour towards another friend is 'unbearable' [25]. A public display of connections, listed along with contact information, arguably provides all viewers of one's network site profile with a virtual set of mutual acquaintances.

a public display of connections can help someone else establish that they are you

In the pseudonymous dating scene, a frequent complaint is that people act rudely towards each other in ways that they would not do to people they knew in a more integrated social environment. A common complaint concerns dates who break off communication with no explanation, as well as dates who behave boorishly in person. By publicly displaying connections, one provides others with a means of getting in touch with one's circle of friends and acquaintances. One is less likely to treat a date rudely when they are equipped with contact information for many of one's friends. Similarly, poor behaviour is a problem in many on-line discussion forums, where pseudonymity and disconnection provide cover for angry or malicious postings. Several of the social networking sites, such as Orkut and Tribe.net, include user created discussion forums. Here, the participants can be seen in the context of their on-line social network, a context that provides accountability.

The cost of this accountability is a reduction in privacy. The pseudonymous dating sites give people at least the illusion that none of their friends need know how much they would like to find a mate; the pseudonymous forums allow people to express opinions or ask questions on topics that they prefer their acquaintances not know. In the social networking sites, one acts in the company of friends and acquaintances. The security of the named and networked systems comes at the cost of reduced privacy.

The value of the display of connections for ensuring co-operation depends upon the type of connection they represent. If they are vague acquaintances, people known only in the context of the virtual world, there may be little repercussion for poor behaviour, even if the victim complains to the subject's list of contacts. Still, for many people, having bad things said about them, even to distant acquaintances, would be painful and embarrassing. Knowing that everyone they interact with knows of and can communicate with a group of their acquaintances can influence their behaviour. The public display of connections places them in a still virtual, but now public, space.

3.3 Identity theft

The public display of connections can help verify that you are who you say you are. But it can also help someone else establish that they are you, too.

In the face-to-face world, people signal status and seek common ground by selectively divulging information about their own social network.

Name dropping is used to position oneself in a status hierarchy. People may claim connections to celebrities or other high-status people to raise their own status. Here, the goal is not to seek mutual acquaintances but to impress. Such claims to the proximity of fame are often questionable, for once the signaller ascertains that the receiver does not know the famous person he may feel free to make stronger claims of friendship, weaving them with unverifiable yet convincing details.

Name display is also used to discover whether there is a common bond between new acquaintances. People who lived in the same city or attended the same school may go through long lists of names seeking common ground. They find cues about the other's social position in both the lack and presence of mutual acquaintances. There is seldom a question of the veracity of the friendship claims to non-celebrities. If you do not know them, then my claim of friendship with them is meaningless to you and if you do know them, you will be able to easily discover that my claim is false.

Both of these displays of social connection rely on the premise that one's social network is, while not secret, not public either.

John Guare's play 'Six Degrees of Separation' [26], based on the true story of David Hampton [27], is about the power of name-dropping and deceptive display of social network information. The central character is an imposter, Paul, who manoeuvres his way into the lives of several wealthy families with the claim of a close connection to a very famous celebrity and by displaying detailed social network information about their children. Paul says he is the illegitimate son of Sidney Poitier. His listeners cannot directly corroborate or disprove his claim and they end up believing it both because of the wealth of details he supplies, all of which he was able to find in public documents, but also because of their own desire to believe it and to thus have this connection with fame. He becomes even more deeply enmeshed in their lives by saying that he attends Harvard with their children. He know all their children's names and information about them, and he also knows their children's friends and where they live and what they do; this is what gives him the greatest credibility. It turns out that he had acquired the address book of Trent, a friend of one of the children and had used this normally private information to weave a convincing but deceptive display of what he claimed to be his own network.

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Trent had fallen in love with Paul and was coaching him on upper class manners, and offered to provide him with information about all the people in the address book:

> Trent: 'I don't want you to leave me, Paul. I'll go through my address book and tell you about family after family. You'll never not fit in again. We'll give you a new identity. I'll make you the most eagerly sought after young man in the East....
>
> Trent: Paul stayed with me for three months. We went through the address book letter by letter. Paul vanished by the L's. He took the address book with him ...'

'Six Degrees of Separation' shows the power of social network display. Paul's knowledge of each person was minimal, but he was able to weave a convincing portrait of himself as a member of the group with a few well-chosen details about each.

Participants in social networking sites make this sort of information about their personal social world publicly available — an extensive list of their friends, with a wealth of detail about each individual. Perhaps one day if social network displays become ubiquitous, the signalling value of detailed social network information will decline. But that decline will only occur because the signal loses value through repeated deceptive use. In the meantime, users of on-line social network systems should be aware of the value of the data they are making available on-line — and of the ways that it can potentially be used.

4. Forming connections and combining contexts

The main point of social networking sites is to help people make new connections. Underlying their model is the assumption that having a mutual acquaintance, or even just being connected via a chain of acquaintances, provides context for connecting.

This is born out in our everyday experience. When people meet, they often attempt to establish mutual acquaintances: 'Oh, you were in Colorado in 1997? Did you know so-and-so?' Finding a mutual acquaintance establishes common ground — to whatever extent knowing that person defines a certain set of beliefs and interests, mutual acquaintanceship establishes that both people share some of these. Claiming to have close ties with the person makes it likely that many things are shared, disavowing close ties also provides key contextual information: 'Yes, but not well. He was part of that weird astro-therapy scene.'

4.1 Forming connections around foci of interest

People can meet randomly in all kinds of ways. But to turn an encounter into a connection, there generally must be some common ground. Feld [10] used the term focus to refer to the situations, interests, and individuals, etc, that bring people together and shape the dynamics of network formation. Connections between people, he said, are often, but not exclusively, made through these foci. He characterised foci in terms of how constraining they are. People who share a highly constraining focus, such as being in the same close-knit family, interact with each other frequently and are all tied to each other. People who share a lightly constraining focus, such as living in the same urban neighbourhood, may have only a slightly higher chance of interacting with and being tied to others with that focus. People form ties when they share a focus; the more constraining the focus and/or the greater number of foci they share, the more likely it is that they will form a tie.

A person can be a focus — people who host regular get-togethers of their various friends function this way. People on social networking sites are foci, bringing people together in a common list. Being on such a list is very lightly constraining; like sharing a neighbourhood, it brings only a minimally greater likelihood of interaction. Yet as one peruses the connection display of one's various acquaintances, it often happens that a particular person appears repeatedly — here, the connection is stronger, for multiple foci are shared, and the likelihood of making a real connection higher.

Connections are not just the natural effect of shared interests: people deliberately try to reconfigure the network in order to bring disparate acquaintances together: '[W]hen an individual is confronted with the typical situation of ties to disconnected others, he or she may try to change the situation by creating and/or finding a new focus around which to organise his or her joint activities with the others... Individuals are most likely to engage in such creative network manipulation in situations where relationships involve a high proportion of their time, effort and emotion, and where the relationships are based on compatible foci' [10]. Feld's conception of ties emphasises the cost of maintaining them, as well as the benefits that ensue from having them.

> we use time and space to keep incompatible contexts of our lives separate

For Feld, bringing one's friends together makes social life easier and more efficient; activities that used to sustain one group of friendships now sustain two. This is an important concept for social networking sites, for it posits a benefit to the person who serves as the introducer of two others. Some sites are designed to help users create foci. Tribe.net, for instance, encourages users to form topical discussion groups (i.e. tribes) and to invite people whom they would like to bring together, in the context of that topic, to join them.

4.2 Incompatible connections

Feld is careful to always add the caveat that bringing people together is desirable only if the foci are compatible. His formal definition of compatibility is that it is the extent to which two foci are involved in similar interactions and activities, a somewhat bland description that sounds as if the worst that would happen should the two groups be introduced is mutual boredom. Yet in a parenthetical statement he gives as a more vivid example of incompatibility: '... a married man will be

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unlikely to introduce his friend from the singles bar to his family or his work associates'.

In the physical world, we use time and space to keep incompatible contexts of our lives separate. We may choose not to introduce some acquaintances to each other and may carefully orchestrate our activities to prevent overlap. Of course, some chance encounters we would have preferred to avoid inevitably occur — you are running around a park playing silly games with your children, and run right into a colleague you have been trying to impress with your steely coolness; Goffman [28], who wrote extensively about the performance of identity, discussed the salvaging of such situations as the repair of face.

By making all of one's connections visible to all the others, social networking sites remove the privacy barriers that people keep between different aspects of their lives. One school-teacher in San Francisco described the discomfort she felt as her high school students became involved with Friendster. She had originally joined with some friends, many of whom had created 'crazy, fun' profiles, including suggestive testimonials, risqué photographs, and references to wild times at the Burning Man festival. Friendster allows users to set who can see their profile — immediate friends, friends of friends, their friends, or everyone (see Fig 2 for a sample MyProfile page). She had set her profile to be viewable only by friends — but then was asked by one of her students to be a 'friend'. Although she could edit her own profile to be quite sedate, her friends' profiles were not. Accepting her student's friendship request would reveal her full network to her class, while saying 'no' felt rude and distancing. When people from different contexts in one's life meet, it is possible that the different facets of one's life will be revealed to each other. This need not involve explicit gossip or even any discussion of the common friend at all; sometimes simply encountering people from different aspects of someone's life can be quite revealing. The discomfort can be felt both by the performer caught in two roles and the observer. A posting in a discussion group on Tribe.net about social network sites says:

> 'My issue with Tribe is that the boundaries between personal and professional are TOO fuzzy. I want to get to the person, rather than to the pitch. On the other hand, I really DON'T want to know that the person I'm getting ready to do business with is in an open marriage and into kinky redheads. I don't want to see half-naked pictures of them from Burning Man. It's not that I'm a prude, or offended by that stuff in general, it's just not stuff that I want to have pushed on me when I'm talking business'.

One solution for the uncomfortable mixing of too heterogeneous a set of connections is for the sites themselves to be well-defined and limited contexts, places with a clear set of situational rules. LinkedIn does this by emphasising the business focus. The profiles are limited to material that is appropriate in a business setting and every aspect of the interface encourages a relatively impersonal style of interaction. Such an approach is less likely to be successful in the social sites, however. There would need to be a vast Balkanisation in which each group with incompatible mores made its own site. This would also be counterproductive, as the creation and strengthening of heterogeneous ties, when they are not actually incompatible, is one of the key benefits of these sites. It is, however, possible to design social networking sites that allow for contextual privacy.

For example, today some sites allow users to designate that some information will be seen by everyone and some only by people within a particular degree of connection. On Orkut, one can decide whether everyone, or just immediate connections, can see information such as birthday or sexual preference. However, connection degree is a very broad classification — it does not allow you to make any distinctions among the people you are linked to.

A more promising design solution is the ability to define a set of categories and designate each person as a member of one or more of these categories. One could then set which sections of one's profile or people in one's network were for viewing by particular acquaintances. Thus, to close friends one might still show everything, but one could have a category of 'work colleagues' who would see only work related information, and not be made aware of the more outrageous connections. This faceting of profile and network would not be apparent to anyone unless two people sat down and compared what each could see of a third; that is analogous to real world situations in which two people discuss a third whom they each know in a different context. One could readjust what people saw as relationships and individuals grew and changed. A friend who starts off with a fairly innocuous self-presentation might be made visible to all friends. But if he then chooses to use his profile to make extremist political statements that one disagrees with, he could be made visible as a connection only to, say, other friends who are very politically engaged or to close friends with whom everything is shared; to the rest, the friendship would not be advertised. The ability to make one's network display nuanced and adaptable could be an important piece in making social networking sites more generally useful.

5. The expanding network

The great exhortation of the social networking sites is to 'grow your network now!' Meet new people, form new connections. The goal is ever increasing social girth. The networking sites make it much easier to form some kind of connection with other people. On many of them, a simple click on the profile of a person who intrigues you is all that it takes to launch an e-mail to them, stating that you would like to be their 'friend' or 'connection'. But what is our ability to sustain larger networks? The emphasis of the networking sites is on network growth, but the cost of maintaining large numbers of ties is not addressed. Can new communications technologies expand the number of people we can keep track of as friends? Having a meaningful conversation with 500 friends would be very temporally costly — but does sending a mass e-mail to all of them in any way substitute for that bonding experience?

Wellman [5, 6] emphasises that network structures vary considerably, both from culture to culture, and from person to person. In some societies, one's personal network is essential for obtaining the necessities of daily life, including access to health care, work, repairs, etc. In others, such as

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Fig 2 Sample Friendster profile page.

contemporary urban North America, the close personal network often focuses on domestic life, providing companionship and emotional support. Ties have many characteristics: the context in which they formed, the frequency of contact, the closeness of the relationship. Individuals also have a wide social variability across characteristics such as gregariousness, range of interests, available time, resources, etc. To understand an individual's network-based social situation is necessary to look beyond just their immediate structure. Two people who each have a network consisting of a few close ties can have structurally quite different access to information and support. One whose network is composed of ties within a single dense cluster is likely to have more support, but less access to information than one whose ties are to busy people who themselves have large, heterogeneous networks.

For this discussion, we will use a simplified typology of strong and weak ties and their effect on support and information flow. Strong ties, the kinds of ties that exist among close friends and families, the kinds of ties that connect dense clusters, are, in general, good sources for social support. Such ties can be costly to maintain, requiring much time and attention. Strong ties generally feature frequent contact,

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multiple foci, and are found in dense networks. A person who is a member only of a densely linked group will be privy to all the information that flows through that group, but is limited to the opportunities present in that cluster. Weak ties, the kinds of ties that exist among people one knows in a specific and limited context, are good sources for novel information. Such ties often bridge disparate clusters, providing one with access to new knowledge [13]. Weak ties can be less costly to maintain, and a person who has many weak yet heterogeneous ties has access to a wide range of information and opportunities (see Wellman and Potter [5], Wellman and Gulia [6], Burt [13], Granovetter [25, 29] and Lin [30] for more detailed models of social networks).

Wellman observed that a typical personal network included 3—6 very close and intimate ties, 5—15 less close but still significant and active ties, and about 1000 more distant acquaintances. People have made connections all along this continuum via social network sites. There are people who have ended up married to someone they met via such a site, thus making a very close connection. Especially for people whose local network is limited (such as someone who has recently moved to a new city), the networking sites provide a useful service, helping them find new friends and community. In many cases, the resulting personal network is similar to the sort of network they would have had had they met through more traditional means. There are also people who use the networking sites to make a very large number of new connections — connections made more quickly, for less cost and in much greater numbers than is commonly done. It is this phenomenon that we will examine here.

We hypothesise that the number of strong ties an individual can maintain may not be greatly increased by communication technology (although such technologies may decrease the importance of physical proximity [6, 29]), but that the number of weak ties one can form and maintain may be able to increase substantially, because the type of communication that can be done more cheaply and easily with new technology is well suited for these ties. If this is true, it implies that the technologies that expand one's social network will primarily result is an increase in available information and opportunities — the benefits of a large, heterogeneous network [25, 31].

Given that benefit, is there any reason not to grow one's network as large as possible? Certainly there are participants on these sites whose goal is to build huge personal networks, for a variety of reasons. For some amassers of giant networks they are an end in themselves. On Friendster, which provides personal network counts showing how many 1st, 2nd, and 3rd degree connections one has, people made a game of collecting as many connections as possible. One user said, 'What else is the site good for? It's not like you can do anything there besides look at the number of people in your network.' These energetic collectors of links were often referred to as 'Friendster whores', a pejorative term that was sometimes used self-mockingly, but also reflects the negative reaction of people who realised that an invitation to join someone's network of friends arrived not because they were perceived as an interesting or desirable person, but simply as an addition to a collection of links, one among hundreds. For other extensive network builders, the network is a means to an end. One participant on LinkedIn with over 3500 connections says in his profile: 'You just clicked through to the most active networker in London, the UK and aiming to be the most connected person in the world by 2050 when I reach 86 years of age.' His business is social networking and he claims to have found numerous associates through his LinkedIn network; testimonials describe him as acutely gregarious.

For the wholesale collectors of links, the 'Friendster whores', the benefit of creating a huge network was the game — the challenge and competition. But what about the more serious network builders? What benefits do they derive from amassing big sets of links? For some, the sites function as an awareness tool, a way to be reminded of friends and acquaintances. For others, the sites — as promised — provide opportunities to find information, dates, and jobs. These are the people who are using these sites as exploratory vehicles for navigating an extended social network.

The cost of growing a network varies from site to site. The more socially oriented sites, such as Orkut and Friendster, make adding new connections very easy: just click on a link and a message is sent with the connection request; one can optionally add a message to the request. LinkedIn makes this process a bit harder, by requiring the requestor to provide the desired connection's e-mail address, as proof that he or she knows the person (or has been able to find it through Google). Otherwise, LinkedIn will facilitate an introduction. Here, one supplies a note explaining why the connection is desired, and LinkedIn will forward it along the chain of connections reaching from requestor to target. Each of those people must read the request and forward it on with their approval or the connection is not made. Everyone is paying a cost in time and energy; furthermore, they are paying a cost in terms of social favours. Each person is requesting a favour of the person above. The initiator stands to gain a desired connection but the benefit to the intermediaries is less clear. It is important that the requestor make a compelling case for the introduction, something that will make the intermediaries feel that they are doing the recipient a favour, rather than using up some of their own good will with the recipient for the benefit of an unknown requestor. By adding these costs into the process of making connections to unknown people, LinkedIn makes the display of connections more significant — either they are known to each other, or some higher cost has been paid for the connection. Furthermore, LinkedIn members are reminded in the connection request e-mail that they may be asked to vouch for the person who is making the request, a reminder that accepting a connection is an implicit endorsement. A large network will engender numerous connection requests; here, connectivity has a cost.

networking sites streamlines the introduction process, but at a cost

It is interesting to note that even though the cost of making connections is higher on LinkedIn than on the social sites, the large-scale network builders on LinkedIn have far more links

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than the top participants in Friendster and Orkut. Presumably, the benefit of having a large network here outweighs the cost.

Being the bridge between two otherwise disconnected people or groups is a strategically important role [13], particularly if there is valuable information or opportunites to be shared between them. The bridge, being connected to these disparate groups, has access to a broad range of information. And, the bridge may be seen as valuable for the connections he or she can make. In the traditional realm of personal interaction, being the bridge requires considerable output in time and energy to maintain a heterogeneous network, to transmit information and to make introductions. Networking sites streamlines much of this process, but does the loss of the cost paid in personal interaction devalue the structure? A truly personal request is enmeshed in a complex weave of social obligations, but a semi-automated one, freed from this entanglement, may in the end feel more like spam.

the socially promiscuous networker could be the unwitting conduit of the next generation of spam

Indeed, that has been a problem with some of the more socially oriented sites. Orkut and others make it possible to broadcast messages to one's network of friends and friends of friends. In theory, this is a wonderful idea. Everyone has had situations where they needed something — a babysitter, an apartment — and asked everyone they could for leads. The networking sites make it possible to do this with just a click and a note. Then again, by making the process so low cost, the value of asking people with whom one is at least indirectly connected is lost. We look to our network of connections for favours such as apartment leads not because they are the people most likely to know about these things, but because they are the people most likely to want to help us. We may feel obligated to help out a friend, or by request, the friend of a friend, in a way we may not feel towards an unconnected stranger. When the ties are too loose, when their cost is too low, their function as the distinction between connection and stranger is lost.

It is possible to imagine a scenario in which social networking software plays an increasingly important role in our lives. For instance, e-mail is becoming increasingly unusable as spam fills inboxes, keeping one step ahead of the filtering heuristics. Perhaps a social network based filter is the solution — e-mail from your connections would always go through, and perhaps from the next degree out. Anyone else would need to go through a chain of connections to reach your inbox (or at least, to reach it with the seal of approved non-junk). Here we see again the balance of growth versus boundaries. A larger network lets you be more easily reachable, and connections who themselves are highly connected bring more opportunities for easy contact — or for renewed junk mail. The socially promiscuous networker who happily accepts every connection request could easily be the unwitting conduit of next-generation spam. Here, one might choose to limit one's connections to people who in turn chose their connections carefully — thus making indiscriminate connections costly in terms of opportunities lost in what might be preferred connections.

Networks are the extension of our social world; they also act as its boundary. We may use the network to extend the range of people we can contact; we may use it to limit the people who can contact us. Most of the networking sites so far are designed to grow networks, not limit them. Yet costs and limits can add value. The expenditure of energy to maintain a connection is a signal of its importance and of the benefits it bestows.

6. The evolution of social networking sites

Social networking sites are booming. Many have received venture funding and there are numerous enthusiastic reports that cite them as the next great wave in technology, business and/or social life. Yet, there are also signs that social networking, at least in its present incarnation, may be more craze than lasting revolution. The early and once enthusiastic users of these sites are frequently quoted as saying that they are 'over', that once one has amassed a big collection of 'friends' there is really nothing to do on the sites, and that they have ceased using them. This is a typical fashion diffusion pattern. The innovators lead, then when the rest imitate, it is time for differentiation. This has been happening among these sites, as users moved from Friendster to Tribe.net to Orkut, but will at some point the fashion that is over be the sites themselves? Or will they play an increasingly important role in defining one's personal on-line neightbourhoods?

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She studies Friendster and blogging in order to understand how people negotiate their presentation of self in mediated social contexts to an unknown audience.

Previously, she studied computer science at Brown University and sociable media at the MIT Media Lab.

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	1	"Overview of Webboard," [online] O'Reilly & Associates, Inc. © 1998, retrieved from the Internet: <http://domin.dom.edu/documents/webboard/overviewwb.PDF>, 16 pg.	☐

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	Examiner Name	Unassigned
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Please see 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 to make the appropriate selection(s):

☐ That each item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(1).

OR

☒ That no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, and, to the knowledge of the person signing the certification after making reasonable inquiry, no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was known to any individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(2).

☐ See attached certification statement.

☐ The fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17 (p) has been submitted herewith.

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A signature of the applicant or representative is required in accordance with CFR 1.33, 10.18. Please see CFR 1.4(d) for the form of the signature.

Signature	/SCOTT D. PAUL/	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2013-08-28
Name/Print	SCOTT D. PAUL	Registration Number	42984

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 1 hour to complete, including gathering, preparing and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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The Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579) requires that you be given certain information in connection with your submission of the attached form related to a patent application or patent. Accordingly, pursuant to the requirements of the Act, please be advised that: (1) the general authority for the collection of this information is 35 U.S.C. 2(b)(2); (2) furnishing of the information solicited is voluntary; and (3) the principal purpose for which the information is used by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is to process and/or examine your submission related to a patent application or patent. If you do not furnish the requested information, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office may not be able to process and/or examine your submission, which may result in termination of proceedings or abandonment of the application or expiration of the patent.

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5. A record related to an International Application filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization, pursuant to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

6. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to another federal agency for purposes of National Security review (35 U.S.C. 181) and for review pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 218(c)).

7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (i.e., GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.

8. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the public after either publication of the application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b) or issuance of a patent pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 151. Further, a record may be disclosed, subject to the limitations of 37 CFR 1.14, as a routine use, to the public if the record was filed in an application which became abandoned or in which the proceedings were terminated and which application is referenced by either a published application, an application open to public inspections or an issued patent.

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OVERVIEW OF WEBBOARD

WebBoard is copyright ©1998 O'Reilly & Associates, Inc.
This documentation is largely adapted from the WebBoard help screens within the program.

WebBoard Basics

WebBoard is a tool for online conferencing. Sometimes referred to as forums or discussion groups, online conferencing allows you to share information with others quickly and easily.

You can share information by posting messages directly to WebBoard conferences (and reading responses). When you need to make a file available to your conference-mates, simply attach the file to a message. If you or others in your group travel, WebBoard lets you participate by email, both reading and responding to posted messages. And, if you need or want to discuss something in real time, WebBoard's chat (if enabled) provides instant interaction.

Since WebBoard is a Web-based application, you work with it through a browser-an interface with which you are already familiar. For email participation, your favorite email client is your interface.

This documentation walks you through all the steps you need to get started with WebBoard. First it provides an overview of the WebBoard structure. Then it shows you how to establish an account, navigate, and find information. With these basics in hand, you will be prepared to jump right into the conversation.

What is WebBoard?

WebBoard is a collection of messages posted by various participants. In Dominican's case, the boards are usually course-related and have been established by the instructor. To keep track of those messages and foster meaningful information exchange, WebBoard messages are organized in a hierarchy with four levels:

- Board (also called virtual board)
- Conference
- Topic
- Message (new topic or response)

You can liken this hierarchy to the relationship of pages in books to the bookcase that houses the book. The bookcase is the board, which houses multiple books, or conferences, on similar or varying subjects. Each book contains chapters with numbers or titles, just as conferences contain topics, with more focused subjects.

Each chapter in a book has specific content that relates to the chapter title, just as topics have messages discussing that topic.

WebBoards at Dominican are set up by the WebBoard administrator while conferences within each WebBoard are set up by the board managers--usually the instructor of a class. The manager decides how to arrange the subject matter of conferences within a board. However, you create the topics and messages by posting and replying in conferences that interest you. You can start a new topic in a conference any time you want to change the subject. Your instructor will provide directions regarding which conference is relevant for which topic(s).

Dominican's WebBoard can have different types of boards and conferences for different purposes. Some boards may be closed to you and some conferences may let you read, but not post, messages. The WebBoard administrator and board managers configure the settings that control board and conference types. You don't need to know about the settings, but you do need to understand how your work with WebBoard may vary depending on those settings.

Getting Started

WebBoard is a web-based application. Your instructor will provide the exact address (URL) of the WebBoard for a class. You can reach it by entering the board's URL (or web address) directly in your browser. At Dominican, the address will typically look like this:

http://dom172.dom.edu/~[number of course][semester]

Therefore, the WebBoard for your English 200 class during the Spring of 2001 will have an address of:

http://dom172.dom.edu/~engl200sp01

When classes have more than one section the Board may be followed by a section number and/or semester:

http://dom172.dom.edu/~engl200sec3sp01

Browser Requirements

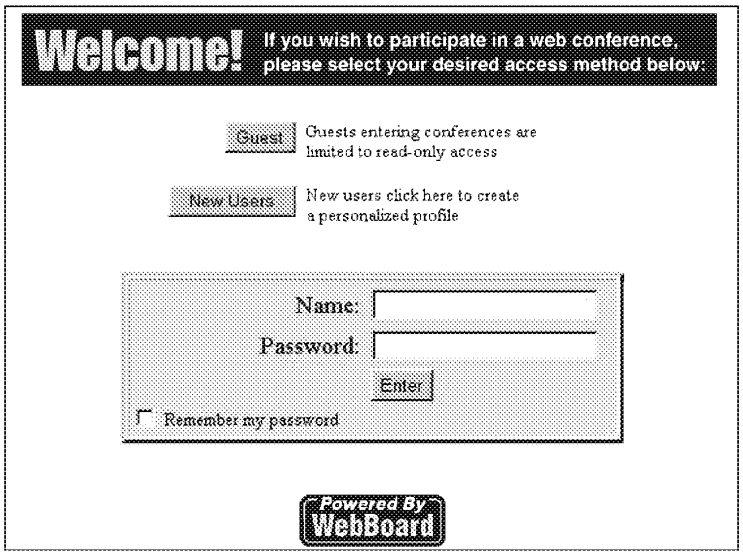
Some of WebBoard's features such as frames, file attachments, Cookie Authentication, and Chat have certain browser requirements. At minimum you should use a level 3 browser such as Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer. Note that Internet Explorer 3.0 does not support file attachments without an additional plug-in, which is available from Microsoft. In general, we recommend you use a level 4 browser such as Netscape Communicator or Internet Explorer 4.0, both of which are available from their respective vendors. If you are using a WebBoard from home, you must set your browser to *accept cookies*. Accepting

cookies is necessary for WebBoard to authenticate you. The proprietary browser that once came bundled with AOL with *not* work.

If you are using Internet Explorer, go to the **View** pull-down menu, then select **Internet Options**. Next, click the **Advanced** tab. Scroll down to the section on **Security**, where you will see options on cookies. Click ***Always accept cookies***. If you are using Netscape Communicator, go to the **Edit** pull-down menu, then select **Preferences**. Click the **Advanced** category in the window, where you will see on the right options for cookies. Click ***Accept all cookies***.

Logging in to WebBoard

After entering the WebBoard address you wish to access, you will be greeted by the following screen:



If you are accessing WebBoard on campus, you should *not* click the box labeled **Remember my password**. This will enable any following users at your terminal access to a WebBoard logged in as you! From home, however, you can have WebBoard remember your login name and password (with a cookie, a bit of information stored safely on your own computer) to make subsequent logins quicker by bypassing the login page by clicking the box. The cookie is valid for up to six months.

Logging in as an Existing User

If you already have an account, you simply enter your login name and password in the textbox on the login page. Click **Enter** to complete the login. If you are already a member of ***any*** active Dominican WebBoard, you **do not** have to log in

as a new user (see below). It is also important that you keep the ***same Name and Password*** you have already used on other WebBoards. Note that an administrator can choose to limit access to any board (called a closed board) and unless you are an authorized user, you will be denied access to the board.

Logging in as a New User

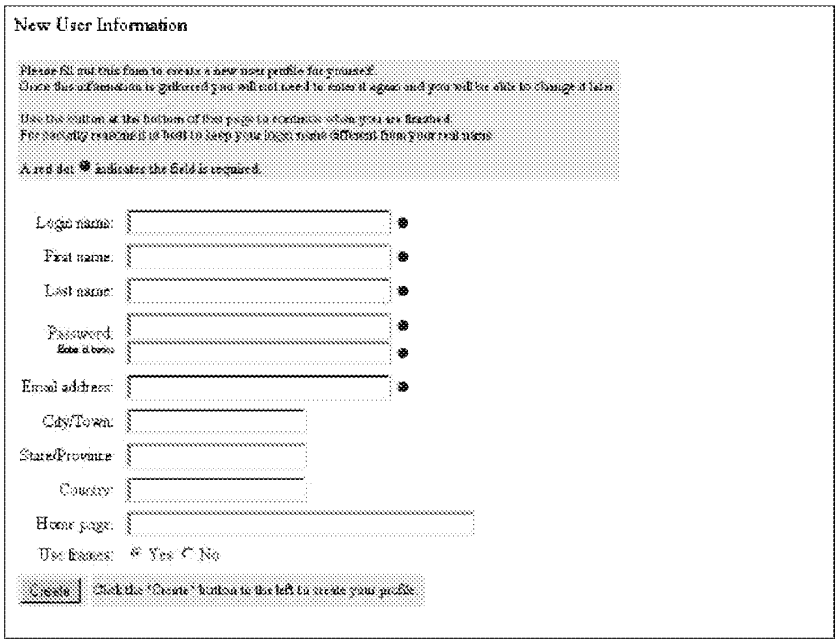
If you want to participate in a board either by posting messages or chatting, you must be a registered user and have your own WebBoard account. In some instances, the WebBoard administrator has already set up an account for you with a login name and password. If so, go to the section above on "Logging in as an Existing User." If you do not yet have an account, you can self-register and create your own account by selecting a login name and password and providing some additional information such as your real name and email address.

When selecting your login name and password, keep in mind the following:

- Your login name should be the same as your Dominican email account name (usually first four letters of the last name followed by first four letters of the first name).
- Your password **does not** have to be the same as your Dominican email account password, and should not be the same as your login name.

To log in as a new user, follow these steps:

1. On the WebBoard login page, click the **New User** button. The New User Information form appears, as shown below:



2. Follow the directions on this page and fill in the required blanks (marked with red dots). You can later change or add to this information by editing your user profile by clicking the **MORE** button on the WebBoard menubar and choosing **Edit Your Profile**.
3. At the end the form, select whether to view WebBoard in frames or non-frames mode. The default is frames, which enables you to view the Conferences list while reading and posting messages. To use frames, you must be using a level 3 or higher browser. If your browser does not support frames or you prefer to not use frames, select the No frames mode. However, it is *strongly recommended* you enable frames.
4. When you have completed entering information on the form, click **Create**. If your login name is unique, WebBoard creates the account and displays the main WebBoard page. If your login name was already being used or some other information was missing, you must complete the form again and resubmit it.

Logging in as a Guest

Some boards allow guest access. To login as a guest, click Guest. WebBoard displays the board's main page with the conference list. You may browse conferences and read messages but not post messages or participate in chat sessions. If there is no Guest button, you must create a new account to work with this board.

Working with WebBoard

Before you start posting messages and participating in chat sessions, you'll want to take a few minutes to become familiar with WebBoard's layout and basic operation, including navigation and functionality. Once you've successfully logged in, either as an existing user, new user, or guest, you will see the board's main page, where most WebBoard activity occurs.

If you selected frames mode (recommended), you will see a page similar to that shown in Figure 1 below. Typically, a board's main page has three main activity areas, which are listed below and described in the next sections:

- The conference list (left frame) displays the conferences, topics, and messages. This list can toggle between displaying the conference list and the list of new messages.

- The menubar (top frame) has buttons for using WebBoard's commands and features.

- The message window (right frame) is the working area where information and forms are displayed. For example, the message window is where you read and post messages, complete user profile information, and execute searches.

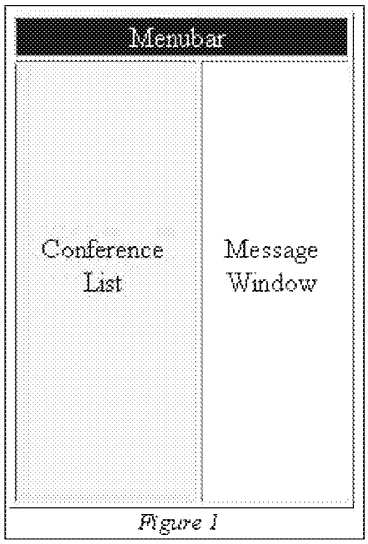


Figure 1

In non-frames mode, you will see the menubar and either the conference list or message window, but not both at the same time. You can switch between modes by editing your WebBoard user profile.

Using the Menubar

You can accomplish many WebBoard tasks quickly by using WebBoard's menubar, located at the top of your browser window. This section describes each of the functions you can perform from the menubar. The menubar is at the top of your WebBoard screen and looks like this:



Post
opens a form in the message window to compose and post a new topic to a conference (note, you must select a conference first).

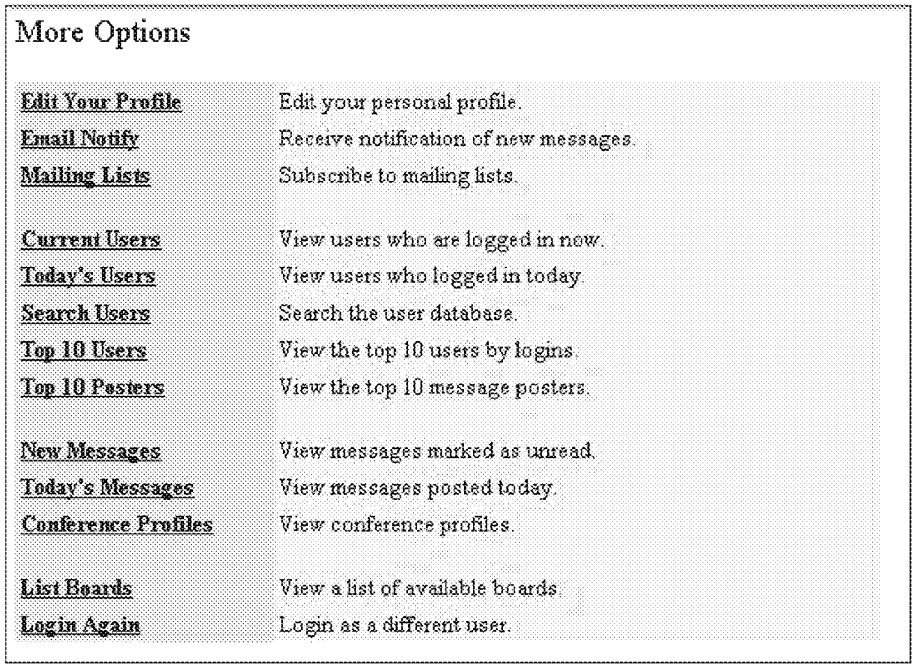
Refresh
updates the Conferences list. In general, WebBoard refreshes the list when new messages are posted, but you may want to manually refresh the list on occasion.

Chat
displays the Available Chat Rooms list, which gives links to each chat room and tells how many active users are in each. If chat is not available for this board (the WebBoard administrator's and your instructor's prerogative), this button does not appear.

Search
opens the Message Search form for finding specific content in topics and/or messages (see "Searching Messages" later in this document).

Mark All Read
displays a list of all conferences and allows you to mark messages as read in one or all of them. Marking messages as read eliminates the NEW icon next to the message and changes the title of the message from italic to regular font. WebBoard does not automatically mark messages read; you must do it manually.

More
opens the More Options menu, pictured below:



From here, you can select the features and functions listed below.

•	**Edit Your Profile** displays your user profile information and allows you update it, including changing your password.
•	**Email Notify** displays a list of conferences from which you can select which conferences should let you know by email that a new message has been posted.

•	**Mailing Lists** displays a list of conferences from which you can select which conferences you want to receive all postings via email. By default, conferences are *not* set up with email capability, unless your instructor decides to change this.
•	**Current Users** lists the users who are currently logged on (updates every 60 seconds).
•	**Today's Users** lists the names of people who have logged in today.
•	**Search Users** displays a form for finding active WebBoard users by first or last name. From the search results you can look at any user's profile information.
•	**Top 10 Users** lists the top 10 users by the number of logins.
•	**Top 10 Posters** lists the top 10 message posters.
•	**New Messages** lists all messages that are marked New. The new messages are listed in the Conferences list frame.
•	**Today's Messages** lists conferences that have messages posted today.
•	**Conference Profiles** lists each conference with a brief description of its purpose.
•	**List Boards** lists each virtual board on this site that you have visited. Each board name is a link to that board, which lets you move easily among boards.
•	**Login as a Different User** lets you to log in as a different user to the current board. This is particularly important if you are at a terminal in the Lab where the previous user forgot to logoff of his/her WebBoard!
•	**Help** displays Help for WebBoard features. This documentation is based largely on WebBoard's very useful help files.
•	**Logoff** ends your WebBoard session and displays another page. Logging off provides a bit more security for WebBoard users. Note that after logging off in the Labs, you should also **close** your Web browser!

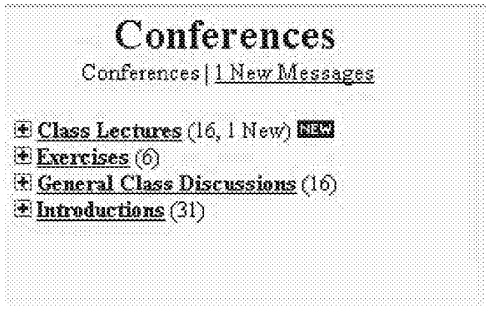
If you have been designated as a WebBoard manager or moderator by the WebBoard administrator, you will see more items on this menu. Please consult our documentation on managing WebBoards.

Browsing Conferences, Topics, and Messages

Conferences are the idea starters for the board. Topics and messages provide the content for conferences. A conference is created by a WebBoard administrator or

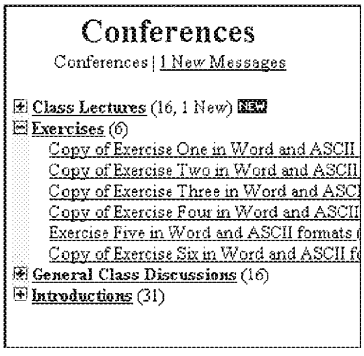
manager but the real discussion begins when someone posts a topic to it. Other users can reply to the topic by posting reply messages at any time. All messages in a topic may have the same name as the original topic or a different name; however, reply messages are indented under the topic message-a visual clue to show the relationships.

WebBoard's ability to let you browse by conference or topic from the Conferences list means you can either follow a subject exhaustively or pick and choose just the messages you want. The Conferences list shows all the conferences on this board. An expansion box (**+** icon) to the left of a conference name indicates that the conference has topics and messages. The numbers in parentheses to the right of the conference name tells how many total and how many new messages are in it. Conferences with new messages have a **NEW** icon to the right of the conference name. Here is a typical listing of Conference names from a WebBoard used for a graduate school class at Dominican:



To display the topics in a conference, click the conference name or the expansion box. You can expand one conference at time. When you expand another conference, the previous topic list collapses. Or, you can close the conference list by clicking the expansion box again.

An expansion box to the left of the topic name indicates that this topic contains more than one message. Topics and messages both have hyperlinks that you can click to open them in the right frame. To the right of each topic and message is the poster's name and date. The poster's name is also a hyperlink to that person's profile.



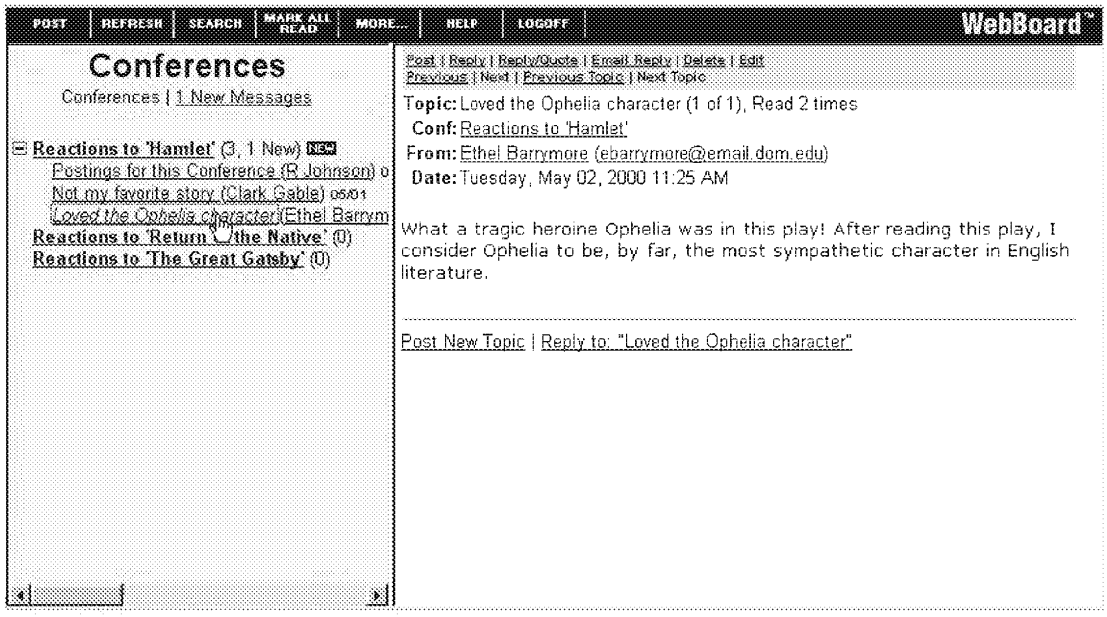
Reading Messages

WebBoard's messages are arranged logically with the earliest (original topic) message at the top of each topic list. You can follow a thread from its beginning if you desire, or jump in at a later point. When you click a message on the Conferences list, the message appears in the right frame (unless you are using non-frames mode). By default, all subsequent messages in the topic are displayed so you can read them in order. This viewing mode is called the Full topic view, which you can change to a one-message-at-a-time mode by editing your user profile. Note that you cannot see messages earlier in the list; however, you can click the Previous hyperlink in the Message menu.

Follow these steps to read specific messages:

1. From the Conferences list, select the conference you want to view and click its name or the expansion box (**+** icon).
2. Locate the topic you want to read and click its name or the topic expansion box. If you click on the name, the message and replies are displayed in the message window. If you click the topic expansion box, the subsequent messages are displayed.
3. If you expanded the topic list in step 2 but did not display the message, locate the message you want to read and click its name. The message displays in the Message window. You may need to scroll to read the entire message(s).
4. When you have finished reading the message, you can select another message to read or you can post a new topic or reply.

Here is an example of what a message window looks like when opened. In this case, the user clicked on the hyperlink in the **Reactions to Hamlet** conference to display the message content for ***Loved the Ophelia Character***:



Displaying New Messages

WebBoard gives you several ways to see and read new messages quickly. Conferences that have new messages are marked with a **NEW** icon to the right of the conference name. The numbers in parentheses following a conference name tell you how many total messages there are in the conference as well as how many new messages. When you expand a conference, you can quickly identify new topics and messages by their italic titles.

However, looking for **NEW** icons and italic titles can be a bit tedious, especially in a large conference. Instead, WebBoard has three ways you can get to new messages instantly:

•	**New Messages Link: Welcome Page** Each time you log in to WebBoard, the Welcome page in the right frame includes a link indicating how many new messages you have. Click on the link and a list of conferences with new messages appears in the Conferences list frame (to the left). Expanding any conference listed displays only the new messages in that conference.
•	**New Messages Link: Conferences List** At the top of the Conferences list are two links: Conferences and New Messages. Clicking on these two links toggles between the full conference list and a list of conferences with new messages. To see the new messages, click the New Messages link and expand any conference listed.
•	**New Messages Link: More Options Menu** The More Options menu (available from the **More** button on the menubar) includes a link labeled New Messages. Click on this link and a list of conferences with new messages appears in the Conferences list frame (to the left). Expanding any conference listed displays only the new messages in that conference.

The first time you log in to WebBoard, you will have no new messages. You will still want to read through several messages, but only once you are a registered WebBoard user, do messages appear as new.

If you are still confused about posting, you may want to check our Web-based version of this document, which links to a viewlet that guides you step-by-step through how to post a message. The Web-based version of this document is at:
http://domin.dom.edu/documents/webboard/webboard.htm

Updating Message Status

WebBoard considers all messages to be new until you update their status. That means even if you have read a message, WebBoard thinks it is new until you manually mark it as read. Although probably more desirable from a user perspective, automatically updating message status adds huge computing overhead and has not been practical for a Web-based application like WebBoard. Automatic updates are on the list to implement when feasible.

To manually update message status from new to read, select **Mark All Read** from the menubar. A page opens listing the conference names. Select the conferences that you want to have marked read. WebBoard instantly updates the information and refreshes the Conferences list. +To update all conferences at once (for example, if you've been away from WebBoard for a period of time or have been reading messages by email), select Mark All Conferences Read.

Searching for Messages

Sometimes you may need to find messages with specific content or titles from one or more conferences. WebBoard lets you search for content in topic titles or in both titles and message bodies. You can also request varying counts of search results and whether search results are shown in a detailed or short (standard) format. When WebBoard finds messages that match your search criteria, it lists them by date order, grouped by conference. Each entry in the list is a hyperlink, so you can click on any message and view it.

Your search request can be for a single word, part of a word, or a group of words. So, if you search for the word "boil" in topics only and standard format results, you enter the word boil and WebBoard returns the match of How to Boil Water from the Cooking conference. If you search for "spring flowers" in topics and messages detailed format results, WebBoard find matches including "lovely pink spring flowers," "buying small spring flowers," "daffodils are spring flowers," and so forth.

To search for words within topics and/or message bodies, follow these steps:

1. From the WebBoard menubar, select **Search**. The Message Search form opens.

2. Enter the word(s) you want to search for in the textbox field, for example, coffee. For a phrase, you may want to enclose the words in quotation marks.

3. Select how many matches should be displayed (Display count). For example, if you know that the word coffee is used often, specify 120. Of course, the higher the display count, the longer the search takes.

4. Select how the matches should be displayed (Display detail). Standard results shows the topic/message title for the matched word. Detailed results shows the matched word in partial-sentence context of the match. If the word you want to

find is frequently used, specify Detailed results to see the context. For example, to find "Bring coffee to the meeting," specify Detailed results so that you can see the context of the word coffee.

5. Select whether matches should be found in topics only or in topics and message bodies. Topics refers to the title of a topic or message, not just topic messages.

6. Select the conference(s) containing the search word. To select more than one conference, hold down the Control key as you select additional conference name(s) with the mouse. (The Shift key also works to select contiguous conferences.)

7. Click **Search**. The Message Search Results form appears displaying the conference name, the subject, and the date. If you have selected Detailed results, the details of each result appears below the conference name. Click Search Messages to return to the Message Search form.

Editing Your User Profile

Each user has a profile, which contains information WebBoard uses in various ways. The most important way is that it stores your login name and password which WebBoard uses to give you access to a board. It also contains personal information about you that other WebBoard users can view, such as your address, professional information, hobbies, and other interests.

Your user profile is also a place for selecting how you will work with WebBoard, such as using frames or non-frames mode. When you first log in as a new user, WebBoard asks you to fill out a New User Information form. This information is part of what makes up your user profile. This section tells you how to change that information and what else makes up your user profile.

You can edit your user profile at any time. In fact, you should review your user profile shortly after logging in the first time, to ensure that all the information is complete and correct. To edit your user profile, follow these steps:

1. Select **More** from the WebBoard menubar. The More Options menu appears.

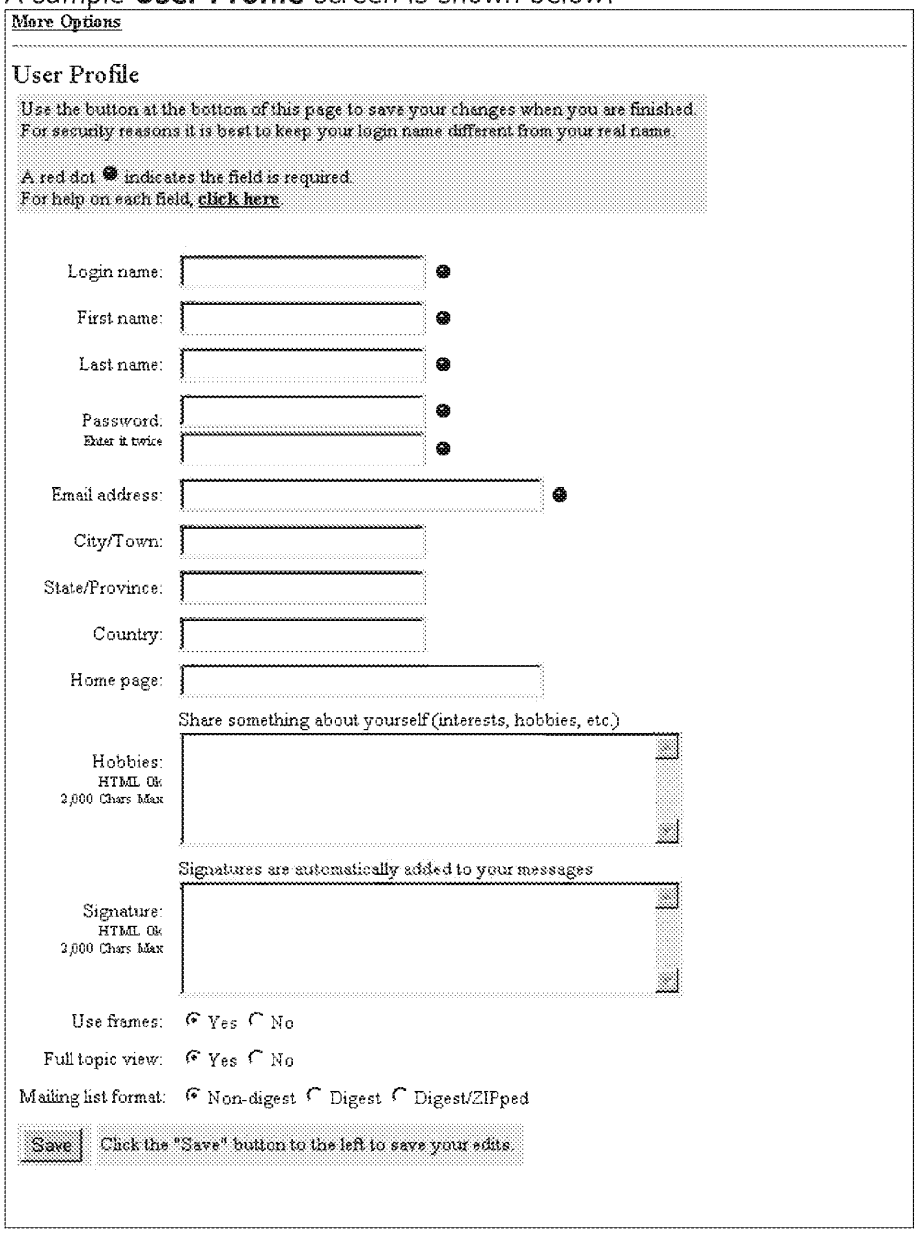
2. Click **Edit Your Profile** from the More Options menu. The User Profile page appears, as shown below.

3. Make any changes necessary (see the rest of this section for descriptions of items on the profile). Note that you cannot leave a required field blank.

4. Click Save to update your profile. WebBoard responds with an **Edits Saved** message.

5. Continue with your WebBoard session.

A sample **User Profile** screen is shown below:



The information you can change in your user profile includes:

Login Name (required)
This name is your unique key for entering WebBoard. You were either assigned this name or created it when you registered on WebBoard the first time you logged in as

a new user. In general, this name is not displayed to other users unless the WebBoard administrator has chosen to use login names instead of real names. At Dominican, the login name should be the same as your email user name.

Password (required)
This entry is masked (shown as *s) for security. You can change your password to protect your postings and user information. If you do, you must enter it twice on the form to ensure you typed it correctly. The password is never shown to other users. Your password for WebBoard ***does not*** (and probably *should not*) be the same as your email password.

Email Address (required)
This address is used for WebBoard's email notification and mailing list features. It is also included with each message you post to make it easy for other board members to respond to you directly.

Signature
This field holds information that is attached to every message you post. Similar to an email signature, you may want to include your name, contact information, a quotation or vision statement, and so forth. Your signature can be up to 2,000 characters and contain HTML. Remember, however, that other users probably appreciate short signatures that don't take long to download over the Web.

The **Home Page** information can be filled in if you have a home page on the Internet. **Hobbies** is not necessary, since other users can't view it anyway!

Use Frames
This option allows you to switch between viewing WebBoard in frames mode or non-frames mode. The default is **Yes, use frames**, which means WebBoard displays both the Conferences list and the message window at the same time. *This is highly recommended*. If your browser does not support frames or you find frames too slow for your connection, choose No for this option.

Full Topic View
This option allows you switch between viewing messages in full topic mode or single message mode. The default is **Yes, full topic mode**, which means that all subsequent messages posted to a topic are displayed in the message window. In single message mode, only one message is shown at a time and you must click a link to show the next message in the topic. We recommend using full topic view.

Mailing List Format
This option allows you to choose which format WebBoard uses to send you mailing lists. Mailing lists allow you to keep track of WebBoard discussions at an email address of your choice. It does, however, somewhat defeat the purpose of WebBoard, since Conference threads of discussion are more difficult to follow in the mailing list format. The three mailing list formats are non-digest, messages sent

individually when they are posted; digest, messages sent once a day in a single email that is indexed by message; digest/zipped, messages put into digest format and then zipped up to compress the size of the email. Depending on the traffic and your need to respond to the conferences you participate in by email, you can select the best delivery method. For example, if you want to respond to many messages that are posted, you should select the non-digest form. If you simply need a record of messages posted on a board, select the digest/zipped format. Selecting a mailing list format does not subscribe you to any WebBoard mailing lists; you complete that task from the **More Options** menu, then selecting **Mailing Lists**. Mailing lists are described in more detail here. We recommend you read the appropriate help screens on mailing lists before changing the mailing list format.

Logging Off

When you are finished with your WebBoard session, you can simply point your browser at another site on the Web (if you're at home) or you can officially log off WebBoard. The **Logoff** button in the menubar takes you to another page designated by the WebBoard administrator (such as your instructor's syllabus or the Dominican home page). Note that if you click the Back button in your browser, you will be returned to WebBoard without having to log in again. This is why it is important that you should ***close your browser*** or clear your browser's cache if in the Lab. You should also not have WebBoard remember your password!

Ready to Start?

This documentation has probably provided you with sufficient information to begin using WebBoard. If you would like more detailed documentation on using Conferences (posting messages, replies, attachments, etc.), consult our separate documentation ***Participating in WebBoard Conferences***.

If you have questions about WebBoard, contact Dominican's WebBoard Administrator, Ken Black, at ext. 6512 (Off campus: 708-524-6512), or via email at ***kblack@email.dom.edu*** .

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This documentation is largely adapted from the WebBoard help screens within the program.

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt	
EFS ID:	16706055
Application Number:	13963050
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	1571
Title of Invention:	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Customer Number:	55246
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Filer Authorized By:	Scott David Paul
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0015
Receipt Date:	28-AUG-2013
Filing Date:	
Time Stamp:	11:57:11
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	no

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) Form (SB08)	8201-0015_SupplementalIDS_08-28-13.pdf	612382 0d87fc72303334cf625795b97e7ee0ccbb2a6c4d	no	4
Warnings:					
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A U.S. Patent Number Citation or a U.S. Publication Number Citation is required in the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) form for autoloading of data into USPTO systems. You may remove the form to add the required data in order to correct the Informational Message if you are citing U.S. References. If you chose not to include U.S. References, the image of the form will be processed and be made available within the Image File Wrapper (IFW) system. However, no data will be extracted from this form. Any additional data such as Foreign Patent Documents or Non Patent Literature will be manually reviewed and keyed into USPTO systems.

2	Non Patent Literature	WebBoard_PA_08-28-13.pdf	226199 3ea8d998184d47101c84d51fd574f31e9d6a68c5	no	16

Warnings:

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Total Files Size (in bytes):	838581

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If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office
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APPLICATION NUMBER	FILING or 371(c) DATE	GRP ART UNIT	FIL FEE REC'D	ATTY.DOCKET.NO	TOT CLAIMS	IND CLAIMS
13/963,050	08/09/2013	3629	2150	8201-0015	19	6

CONFIRMATION NO. 1571

55246
Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12230 FOREST HILL BLVD.
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414

FILING RECEIPT

OC000000065281767

Date Mailed: 12/02/2013

Receipt is acknowledged of this reissue patent application. The application will be taken up for examination in due course. Applicant will be notified as to the results of the examination. Any correspondence concerning the application must include the following identification information: the U.S. APPLICATION NUMBER, FILING DATE, NAME OF APPLICANT, and TITLE OF INVENTION. Fees transmitted by check or draft are subject to collection. Please verify the accuracy of the data presented on this receipt. **If an error is noted on this Filing Receipt, please submit a written request for a Filing Receipt Correction. Please provide a copy of this Filing Receipt with the changes noted thereon. If you received a "Notice to File Missing Parts" for this application, please submit any corrections to this Filing Receipt with your reply to the Notice. When the USPTO processes the reply to the Notice, the USPTO will generate another Filing Receipt incorporating the requested corrections**

Inventor(s)
THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III, BOCA RATON, FL;

Applicant(s)
PT 259, LLC, Boca Raton, FL

Assignment For Published Patent Application
PT 259, LLC, BOCA RATON, FL

Power of Attorney: The patent practitioners associated with Customer Number 55246

Domestic Priority data as claimed by applicant
This application is a REI of 09/589,551 06/07/2000 PAT 7996259

Foreign Applications for which priority is claimed (You may be eligible to benefit from the **Patent Prosecution Highway** program at the USPTO. Please see http://www.uspto.gov for more information.) - None.
Foreign application information must be provided in an Application Data Sheet in order to constitute a claim to foreign priority. See 37 CFR 1.55 and 1.76.

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The country code and number of your priority application, to be used for filing abroad under the Paris Convention, is **US 13/963,050**
Projected Publication Date: None, application is not eligible for pre-grant publication
Non-Publication Request: No
Early Publication Request: No

TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
IPR2025-01224
Page 151 of 771

**** SMALL ENTITY ****
Title

DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

Preliminary Class

705

Statement under 37 CFR 1.55 or 1.78 for AIA (First Inventor to File) Transition Applications: No

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Since the rights granted by a U.S. patent extend only throughout the territory of the United States and have no effect in a foreign country, an inventor who wishes patent protection in another country must apply for a patent in a specific country or in regional patent offices. Applicants may wish to consider the filing of an international application under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). An international (PCT) application generally has the same effect as a regular national patent application in each PCT-member country. The PCT process **simplifies** the filing of patent applications on the same invention in member countries, but **does not result** in a grant of "an international patent" and does not eliminate the need of applicants to file additional documents and fees in countries where patent protection is desired.

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TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
IPR2025-01224
Page 152 of 771

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Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, 5.11 & 5.15

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To: ptomail@iplawpro.com,tforsythe@iplawpro.com,kcuenot@iplawpro.com
From: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Cc: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Subject: Private PAIR Correspondence Notification for Customer Number 55246

Dec 02, 2013 05:25:21 AM

Dear PAIR Customer:

Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12230 FOREST HILL BLVD.
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414
UNITED STATES

The following USPTO patent application(s) associated with your Customer Number, 55246 , have new outgoing correspondence. This correspondence is now available for viewing in Private PAIR.

The official date of notification of the outgoing correspondence will be indicated on the form PTOL-90 accompanying the correspondence.

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Application	Document	Mailroom Date	Attorney Docket No.
13963050	APP.FILE.REC	12/02/2013	8201-0015

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PATENT APPLICATION INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

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PATENT APPLICATION FEE DETERMINATION RECORD Substitute for Form PTO-875	Application or Docket Number 13/963,050	Filing Date 08/09/2013	☐ To be Mailed

ENTITY: ☐ LARGE ☒ SMALL ☐ MICRO

APPLICATION AS FILED – PART I

	(Column 1)	(Column 2)			
FOR	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA		RATE ($)	FEE ($)
☐ BASIC FEE (37 CFR 1.16(a), (b), or (c))	N/A	N/A		N/A	
☐ SEARCH FEE (37 CFR 1.16(k), (i), or (m))	N/A	N/A		N/A	
☐ EXAMINATION FEE (37 CFR 1.16(o), (p), or (q))	N/A	N/A		N/A	
TOTAL CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(i))	minus 20 =	*		X $ =	
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(h))	minus 3 =	*		X $ =	
☐ APPLICATION SIZE FEE (37 CFR 1.16(s))	If the specification and drawings exceed 100 sheets of paper, the application size fee due is $310 ($155 for small entity) for each additional 50 sheets or fraction thereof. See 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(1)(G) and 37 CFR 1.16(s).				
☐ MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM PRESENT (37 CFR 1.16(j))					
* If the difference in column 1 is less than zero, enter "0" in column 2.				TOTAL	

APPLICATION AS AMENDED – PART II

	(Column 1)		(Column 2)	(Column 3)		
AMENDMENT	**08/09/2013**	CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
	Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	* 19	Minus	** 21	= 0	X $40 =	0
	Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	* 1	Minus	***5	= 0	X $210 =	0
	☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
	☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
						TOTAL ADD'L FEE	**0**

	(Column 1)		(Column 2)	(Column 3)		
AMENDMENT		CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
	Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	*	Minus	**	=	X $ =	
	Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	*	Minus	***	=	X $ =	
	☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
	☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
						TOTAL ADD'L FEE	

* If the entry in column 1 is less than the entry in column 2, write "0" in column 3.
** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 20, enter "20".
*** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 3, enter "3".
The "Highest Number Previously Paid For" (Total or Independent) is the highest number found in the appropriate box in column 1.

LIE
/BRENDA HINES/

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Doc code: IDS
Doc description: Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) Filed

PTO/SB/08a (01-10)
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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (**Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)**		
	Application Number	13963050
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	3681
	Examiner Name	LASTRA, DANIEL
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

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Examiner Initials*	Cite No	Include name of the author (in CAPITAL LETTERS), title of the article (when appropriate), title of the item (book, magazine, journal, serial, symposium, catalog, etc), date, pages(s), volume-issue number(s), publisher, city and/or country where published.	T[5]

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
	Application Number	13963050
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	3681
	Examiner Name	LASTRA, DANIEL
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

	1	KUMAR, N.S. et al., "Social Networking Site for Self Portfolio," [online] In UREAT Int'l. J. of Research in Engineering & Advanced Technology, Vol. 1, No. 1, March 2013, retrieved from the Internet: <http://www.ijreat.org/Papers%202013/Volume1/IJREATV1I1055.pdf>, 4 pg.	☐
	2	"LiveJournal.com", [online] LiveJournal, Inc. © 1999, retrieved Jan. 27, 2014, retrieved from the Internet: <http://web.archive.org/web/20000604011251/http://www.livejournal.com/>, 15 pg.	☐
	3	"AsianAvenue.com", [online] Community Connect Inc. © 1997-2000, retrieved Jan. 27, 2014, retrieved from the internet: <https://web.archive.org/web/20000510055338/http://www.asianavenue.com/>, 11 pg.	☐
	4	"BlackPlanet.com," [online] BlackPlanet.com © 2000, retrieved Jan. 27, 2014, retrieved from the Internet: <https://web.archive.org/web/20000606010618/http://www.blackplanet.com/>, 10 pg.	☐

If you wish to add additional non-patent literature document citation information please click the Add button Add

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Examiner Signature		Date Considered	

*EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through a citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

[1] See Kind Codes of USPTO Patent Documents at www.USPTO.GOV or MPEP 901.04. [2] Enter office that issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST.3). [3] For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. [4] Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST.16 if possible. [5] Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language translation is attached.

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
	Application Number	13963050
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	3681
	Examiner Name	LASTRA, DANIEL
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Please see 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 to make the appropriate selection(s):

☐ That each item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(1).

OR

☐ That no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, and, to the knowledge of the person signing the certification after making reasonable inquiry, no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was known to any individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(2).

☐ See attached certification statement.

☐ The fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17 (p) has been submitted herewith.

☒ A certification statement is not submitted herewith.

SIGNATURE

A signature of the applicant or representative is required in accordance with CFR 1.33, 10.18. Please see CFR 1.4(d) for the form of the signature.

Signature	/SCOTT D. PAUL/	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2014-01-27
Name/Print	SCOTT D. PAUL	Registration Number	42984

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 1 hour to complete, including gathering, preparing and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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Privacy Act Statement

The Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579) requires that you be given certain information in connection with your submission of the attached form related to a patent application or patent. Accordingly, pursuant to the requirements of the Act, please be advised that: (1) the general authority for the collection of this information is 35 U.S.C. 2(b)(2); (2) furnishing of the information solicited is voluntary; and (3) the principal purpose for which the information is used by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is to process and/or examine your submission related to a patent application or patent. If you do not furnish the requested information, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office may not be able to process and/or examine your submission, which may result in termination of proceedings or abandonment of the application or expiration of the patent.

The information provided by you in this form will be subject to the following routine uses:

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2. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, in the course of presenting evidence to a court, magistrate, or administrative tribunal, including disclosures to opposing counsel in the course of settlement negotiations.

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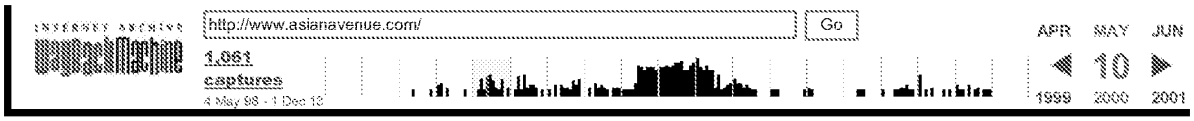
6. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to another federal agency for purposes of National Security review (35 U.S.C. 181) and for review pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 218(c)).

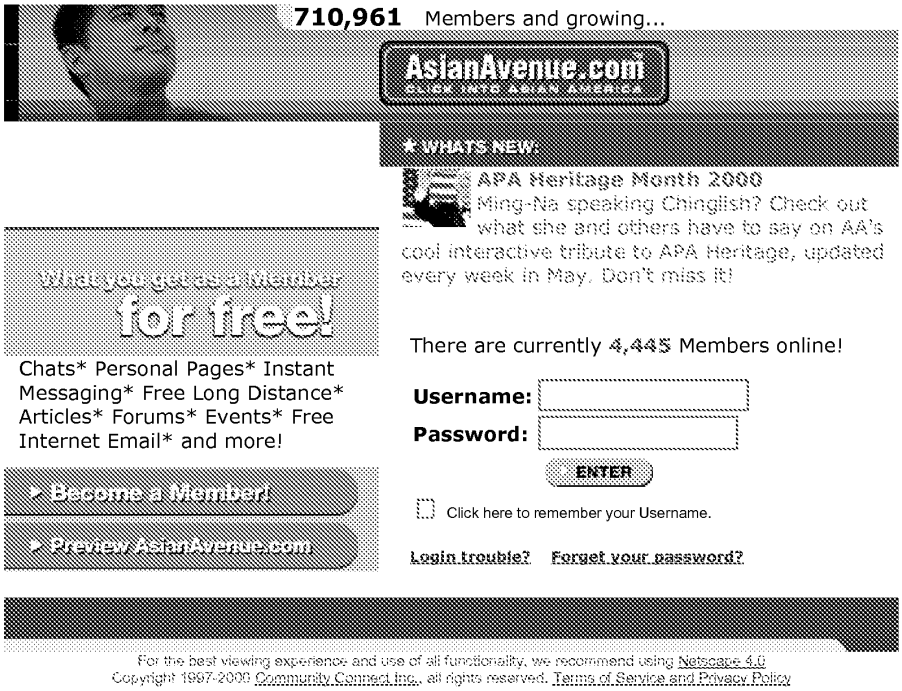
7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (i.e., GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.

8. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the public after either publication of the application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b) or issuance of a patent pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 151. Further, a record may be disclosed, subject to the limitations of 37 CFR 1.14, as a routine use, to the public if the record was filed in an application which became abandoned or in which the proceedings were terminated and which application is referenced by either a published application, an application open to public inspections or an issued patent.

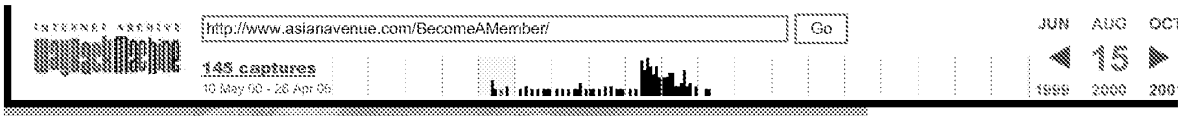
9. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency, if the USPTO becomes aware of a violation or potential violation of law or regulation.

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Use only letters, numbers, dashes(-), or underscores(_). Do not use blank spaces. You must use at least three characters. You cannot change your username, so choose carefully.

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Please check the items you WANT SHOWN on your personal page:

- [x] Age
- [ ] Real Name

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Accounts created under sexually explicit or profane user names will be closed.

Username
Password (Max: 8 Characters)
Retype Password

GENERAL ACCOUNT INFORMATION

First Name
Last Name
Email

For U.S. & Canada Residents

State/Province Select One
Zip Code

For Non-U.S. & Canada Residents

Province
Country Select One
Postal Code

PROFILE INFORMATION

Gender Select One
Date of Birth Month Day 19 Ex: 1975
Relationship Status Select One
Household Income Select One (This will not be displayed)
Highest Education Level Completed Select One
College Never attended
Year of Graduation 19 Ex:1975
Job Industry Select One
Occupation Select One

REFERRAL

You will get 5 Member Points every time someone you refer visits AsianAvenue.com. You can trade in Member Points for prizes, and more! Enter the Email addresses of friends below:

INTERESTS AND BACKGROUND (Check all that apply.)

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Ethnicity
- Burmese
- Cambodian
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Hmong
- Indian
- Indonesian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Laotian
- Malay
- Pacific Islander
- Pakistani
- Singaporean
- Taiwanese
- Thai
- Vietnamese
- Other

Lifestyle
- Kid
- Teen
- College
- Graduate Student
- Young Professional
- Parent
- Senior
- Gay/Bisexual

Music Tastes
- Alternative
- Asian Pop
- Classical
- Country Western
- Dance
- Hip Hop/Rap
- Jazz/Blues
- Reggae
- Rock & Roll

Arts
- Architecture
- Fashion
- Film/Movies
- Fine Arts
- Literature
- Performing Arts
- Photography

News
- Business
- Culture
- Current Events
- Entertainment
- Health
- Investing
- Politics
- Technology

Sports
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Football
- Golf
- Hockey
- Martial Arts
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Volleyball

Recreation/Hobbies
- Cars/Motorcycles
- Computers
- Eating Out
- Musical Instruments
- Shopping
- Travel
- Video Games
- Web Surfing
- Writing

OTHER INTERESTS (Please separate multiple interests with commas.)

ORGANIZATIONS YOU BELONG TO (to multiple select press Control or Shift key)

None/Not Listed
AAA Berkeley
AAA-Columbia University
ACT-TUFTS
APALSA-Cardozo

Submit All Entries

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- Content and Conduct
- Copyright Regulations
- General
- NETIQUETTE

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Please read the Terms of Service carefully. By using the Service, you agree to the terms and conditions outlined below. If you do not agree to these terms and conditions, please do not use the Service. AsianAvenue.com reserves the right to change, modify, add or remove portions of the Terms of Service at any time, in its sole discretion. If you continue to use the Service after AsianAvenue.com has posted changes to the Terms of Service, it means you have accepted those changed terms.

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Software files, text, sounds or other information (collectively, "Content") transmitted, posted, linked or uploaded on or through the Service by Members may not be abusive, defamatory, obscene, fraudulent, in violation of applicable laws, or otherwise offensive to other Members, and must comply with AsianAvenue.com's Netiquette Rules.

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AsianAvenue.com may terminate your access to the Service at any time for any reason. Once your access to the Service is terminated, you cannot engage in the Service in any manner or for any reason without the express written consent of AsianAvenue.com, and you cannot assist in enabling a terminated member access to the Service via your Account.

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Copyright Regulations

Everything you see or read on the Service is owned by us or used with permission. You may not copy, use, or retransmit anything for the Service without our express written permission. Furthermore, you are not allowed to post or distribute any material you do not own or which you do not have permission to use. Violation of this policy may result in copyright, trademark, or other intellectual property rights violation and subject you to civil or criminal penalties.

AsianAvenue.com respects the intellectual property of others, and we ask you to do the same. AsianAvenue.com is in compliance with the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. In order to protect the intellectual property of people from misuse we ask you to help us. If you believe that your work has been copied in a way that constitutes copyright infringement and is accessible on the Service, please provide AsianAvenue.com's Copyright Agent the following information:

1. An electronic or physical signature of the owner of the copyright or of the person authorized to act on behalf of the owner of the copyright interest.

2. A description of the copyrighted work that you claim has been infringed including the URL (i.e., Internet address) or other specific location on the Service where the material that you claim is infringing is

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located, including enough information to allow us to locate the material and why you believe an infringement has taken place.

3. A description of the location where the original or an authorized copy of the copyrighted work exists, for example the URL (i.e., Internet address) where it is posted or the name of the book in which it has been published.

4. Your address, telephone number, and email address.

5. A statement by you that you have a good faith belief that the disputed use is not authorized by the copyright owner, its agent, or the law.

6. A statement by you made under penalty of perjury, that the information in your Notice is accurate and that you are the copyright owner or authorized to act on the copyright owner's behalf.

AsianAvenue.com's Copyright Agent for Notice of claims of copyright infringement can be reached as follows:

Copyright Agent
c/o AsianAvenue.com
494 Broadway, 4th floor
New York, NY 10012
By fax: 212.431.3254
By email: copyright@mail.asianavenue.com

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General

These Terms of Service constitute the entire understanding of you and AsianAvenue.com with respect to the subject matter hereof. There are no understandings, agreements, conditions or representations, oral or written, express or implied, with reference to the subject matter hereof that are not merged herein, expressly referenced herein, or superseded hereby.

Nothing contained in these Terms of Service shall be construed as creating any agency, partnership, joint venture or other form of joint enterprise between you and AsianAvenue.com.

The provisions of these Terms of Service are independent of each other and the invalidity of any provision or a portion thereof shall not affect the validity or enforceability of any other provision. In the event that any particular provision is found to be invalid or unenforceable, such provision shall be deemed to have been replaced with a valid and enforceable provision that approximates as closely as possible the intent of you and AsianAvenue.com as reflected in the original provision.

Any delay or failure on the part of AsianAvenue.com to enforce any rights hereunder to which it may be entitled shall not be construed as a waiver of the right and privilege to do so at any subsequent time.

You indemnify and hold harmless AsianAvenue.com, and the officers, directors, employees, partners, principals, agents and representatives of AsianAvenue.com, from, against and in respect of any and all demands, claims, actions or causes of action, liabilities, losses, and expenses, including reasonable attorneys' fees, arising out of or relating to any breach by you of any covenant, representation or warranty made pursuant to these Terms of Service.

All provisions which must survive in order to give effect to their meaning, shall survive any expiration or termination of these Terms of Service, including without limitation all of your representations, warranties and

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indemnification obligations.

The Terms of Service shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of New York, without regard to conflict of laws principles. You and AsianAvenue.com consent to the exclusive jurisdiction and venue of the state and federal courts located in New York County for resolution of any and all disputes arising out of or related to the Terms of Service.

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In no event shall AsianAvenue.com have any liability for any incidental, consequential, or indirect damages (including, but not limited to, damages relating to loss of business, profits, goodwill, data, programs or information, and the like) arising out of the use of or inability to use the Service or any information, advice, or services provided on or downloaded from the Service or accessed on the Internet from the Service, even if advised of the possibility of such damages and regardless of the cause of action under which such damages are sought, including, without limitation, breach of contract, negligence or other tort. Because some states do not allow the exclusion of implied warranties or the limitation of liability for sequential or incidental damages, the above exclusions and limitations may not apply to you. In such states, AsianAvenue.com's liability is limited to the greatest extent permitted by law.

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convenience only.

Privacy

Community Connect Inc. ("AsianAvenue.com") believes that communities can only truly be built through interaction and participation among community Members based on trust, privacy and freedom of expression.

AsianAvenue.com wants all Members to have the freedom to express themselves, however at the same time, AsianAvenue.com wants all Members to feel secure.

The following Privacy Policy demonstrates our intent and commitment to protect Members' rights online.

A. Profile information will be used to create personalized content, service, and advertise on the Service. AsianAvenue.com may also use your profile to generate aggregate reports and market research.

B. All profile data stored by the Service has been entered solely by the respective member.

C. Members can modify registration data associated with their account, and can control selected private information from being disclosed on their member page.

D. Communication transcripts of online chats are not retained except for scheduled chat sessions.

E. E-mail communications are only accessible by the designated recipients, except that AsianAvenue.com personnel involved in maintenance of the system may have access to the Service mail communications.

Personally identifying information, or personal information, includes your name, home or other address (like the school you attend), email address, or any other information that tells another person who you are. When you register as a Member, we ask for some personal information such as your email address.

Our policy regarding this information is simple: Except as provided in this statement, AsianAvenue.com will not disclose, sell nor rent any of the registration information you provide without giving you notice and an opportunity to refuse disclosure. We make an effort to include a link to this Privacy Policy wherever we ask you for personal information.

We also collect other information at registration such as your birthday, city where you live, hobbies, and interests. This information cannot be used to identify you. We place this information in your Member profile, which is publicly available so that other Members who share your interests can connect with you.

Some of our services, such as email and LiveTalk are offered in conjunction with partner companies. In order to provide these services, we must disclose certain information to our partners including your Username and email address. Our content partners may also ask you for some additional personal information. Our partners are all upstanding companies that will treat your personal information responsibly. But, since we don't own these companies, we can't speak for them on privacy issues.

Other companies also may sponsor promotions, contests and sweepstakes running on the Service. These companies may choose to collect personal information from you. If you don't want your information collected by these sponsors, you can decide not to participate in the promotion, contest or sweepstakes. You should be aware that our advertisers or Web sites that have links on the Service may collect

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personally identifiable information about you. This privacy statement does not address the information practices of those Web sites or advertisers.

One last thing to keep in mind: Whenever you voluntarily disclose personal information on forums, through email, or in chat areas, that information can be collected and used by others. If you post personal information in public places, others may send you unsolicited email messages. Always be smart about the information you provide online.

Finally, we may disclose Member information when we are required to by law, or when have reason to believe that someone is causing injury to or interference with our rights or property, other Service Members, or anyone else that could be harmed by such activities.

Your Member profile is password-protected so that you and only you have access to this information. In order to maintain this protection, do not give your password to anyone. Also, we recommend that, if you share your computer with other people, you sign out of your Account and close your browser window when you are done. Signing off will protect your information if you share a computer with someone else or are using a computer in a public place like a library.

We make every effort to ensure that your information is secure on our system. Unfortunately, no data transmission over the Internet can be guaranteed to be 100% secure. As a result, we cannot guarantee the security of any information you transmit to us, and you do so at your own risk.

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In our effort to provide you services customized to your interests, we use cookies to keep and sometimes track information about you. A cookie is a small piece of data that is sent to your browser from a Web server and stored on your computer's hard drive. We use cookies to: access your account information (stored on our computers) in order to deliver better and more personalized services; estimate our audience size for our advertisers; track the number of entries in our promotions, sweepstakes and contests; identify which areas of the Service you have visited. You should also be aware that companies that advertise on the Service might use their own cookies. This privacy policy does not cover how these companies use their cookies.

Age Restriction

The Service is not directed to children under the age of 13. After April 20, 2000, the Service will prohibit registration by and will not knowingly collect personally identifiable information from anyone under 13.

This restriction will be posted at points of data collection within the Service, such as registration for services.

Note to Parents: If you have any concerns about the Service or its related services, wish to find out if your child is a member of one of our services, or wish to cancel your child's membership, please contact us at memberservices@mail.communityconnect.com.

Fees and Costs

You are responsible for paying any applicable taxes and for all hardware, software, service and other costs you may incur in connection with the Service, including costs incurred in connecting to the Service via the Internet. AsianAvenue.com reserves the right, at any time, to charge fees for access to the Service, and will notify you of any such fees by posting information regarding such fees on the Service.

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NETIQUETTE

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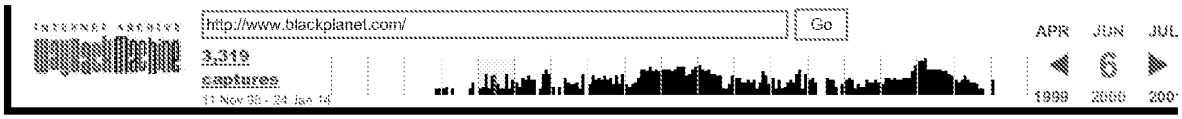
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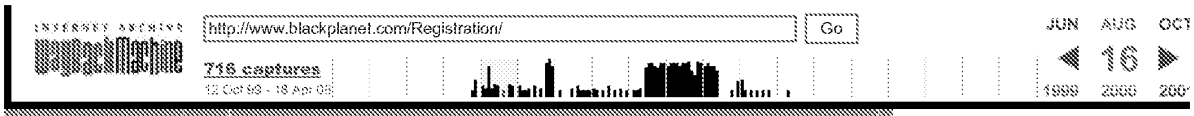
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Password (Max: 8 Characters)

Retype Password

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First Name

Last Name

E-mail

For U.S. & Canada Residents

State/Province Select One

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For Non-U.S. & Canada Residents

Province

Country Select One

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Profile Information

Gender Select One

Date of Birth Month Day 19 Ex: 1975

Relationship Status Select One

Sexual Orientation Select One

Household Income Select One

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Highest Education Level Completed (This will not be displayed) Select One

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Interests and Background

Check all that apply.

Race
- Black
- Asian
- Latino
- Native American
- White

Recreation/Hobbies
- Activism
- Cars/Motorcycles
- Computers
- Eating Out
- Musical Instruments
- Pet Owner
- Shopping
- Travel
- Video Games
- Web Surfing
- Writing

Sports
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Cricket
- Football
- Golf
- Hockey
- Martial Arts
- Skiing
- Soccer
- Tennis
- Volleyball

Music Tastes
- Alternative
- Caribbean/Reggae
- Classical
- Country Western
- Dance
- Hip Hop/Rap
- Jazz/Blues
- Latin
- Pop
- R&B
- Rock
- World Music

Arts
- Architecture
- Fashion
- Film/Movies
- Fine Arts
- Literature
- Performing Arts
- Photography
- Urban Arts

News
- Beauty/Fashion
- Business
- Culture
- Current Events
- Entertainment
- Health
- Investing
- Politics
- Technology

Other Interests
(Please separate multiple interests with commas.)

Submit All Entries

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We also collect other information at registration such as your birthday, city where you live, hobbies, and interests. This information cannot be used to identify you. We place this information in your BlackPlanet.com profile, which is publicly available so that other Members who share your interests can connect with you.

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One last thing to keep in mind: Whenever you voluntarily disclose personal information on forums, through email, or in chat areas, that information can be collected and used by others. If you post personal information in public places, others may send you unsolicited email messages.

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Social Networking Site For Self Portfolio

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Abstract

Online social networking concept is a global phenomenon and there are millions of sites which help in being connected with friends and family. This project focuses on creating self-portfolios for the users which makes the users engaging with their skills. The users follow the other users to interact and communicate with them. Users can encourage the other user's blogs and videos by clicking the hit button.The functionality of this site is designed to focus on both professional as well as academics. Each user is given a dashboard for uploading videos and writing blogs.

Keywords: *Network Visualization Social network analysis Information categorization Information analysis*

1. Introduction

Since their introduction, social network sites (SNSs) such as MySpace, Facebook, Cyworld, and Bebo have attracted millions of users, many of whom have integrated these sites into their daily practices. As of this writing, there are hundreds of SNSs, with various technological affordances,supporting a wide range of interests and practices. While their key technological features are fairly consistent, the cultures that emerge around SNSs are varied. Most sites support the maintenance of pre-existing social networks, but others help strangers connect based on shared interests, political views, or activities. Some sites cater to diverse audiences, while others attract people based on common language or shared racial, sexual, religious, or nationality-based identities. Sites also

vary in the extent to which they incorporate new information and communication tools, such as mobile connectivity, blogging, and photo/video-sharing.

Scholars from disparate fields have examined SNSs in order to understand the practices, implications, culture, and meaning of the sites, as well as users' engagement with them. This special theme section of the Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication brings together aunique collectionof articles that analyze a wide spectrum of social network sites using various methodological techniques, theoretical traditions, and analytic approaches. By collecting these articles in this issue, our goal is to showcase some of the interdisciplinary scholarship around these sites[7].

The purpose of this introduction is to provide a conceptual, historical, and scholarly context for the articles in this collection. We begin by defining what constitutes a social network site and then present one perspective on the historical development of SNSs, drawing from personal interviews and public accounts of sites and their changes over time. Following this, we review recent scholarship on SNSs and attempt to contextualize and highlight key works. We conclude with a description of the articles included in this special section and suggestions for future research.

2. Portfolio

Rick Stiggins (1994) defines a portfolio as a collection of student work that demonstrates achievement or improvement. The material to be collected and the story to betold can vary greatly as a function of the assessment context.

The Northwest Evaluation Association offers a similar definition: A purposeful collection of student work that illustrates efforts, progress, and achievement in one or moreareas [over time]. The collection must include: student participation in selecting contents, the criteria forselection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection.

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3. Web service

A **Web service** is a method of communication between two electronic devices over the World Wide Web. A **Web service** is a software function provided at a network address over the web or the cloud, it is a service that is "always on" as in the concept of utility computing [3].

3.1 Motivation of research problem

1. What are the benefits of developing self-portfolios in social networking site?
2. What are the benefits of uploading certificates in our profile?
3. What are the benefits of using chat rooms in our site?

4. Social Network Sites

We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

While we use the term "social network site" to describe this phenomenon, the term "social networking sites" also appears in public discourse, and the two terms are often used interchangeably. We chose not to employ the term "networking" for two reasons: emphasis and scope. "Networking" emphasizes relationship initiation, often between strangers. While networking is possible on these sites, it is not the primary practice on many of them, nor is it what differentiates them from other forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC) [5].

What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. This can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently between "latent ties" (Haythornthwaite, 2005) who share some offline connection. On many of the large SNSs, participants are not necessarily "networking" or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network. To emphasize this articulated social network as a critical organizing feature of these sites, we label them "social network sites."

4.1 A History of Social Network Sites The Early Years

According to the definition above, the first recognizable social network site launched in 1997. SixDegrees.com allowed users to create profiles, list their Friends and, beginning in 1998, surf the Friends lists. Each of these features existed in some form before SixDegrees, of course. Profiles existed on most major dating sites and manycommunity sites. AIM and ICQ buddy lists supported lists of Friends, although those Friends were not visible to others. Classmates.com allowed people to affiliate with their high school or college and surf the network for others who were also affiliated, but users could not create profiles or list Friends until years later. SixDegrees was the first to combine these features.

SixDegrees promoted itself as a tool to help people connect with and send messages to others. While SixDegrees attracted millions of users, it failed to become a sustainable business and, in 2000, the service closed. Looking back, its founder believes that SixDegrees was simply ahead of its time (A. Weinreich, personal communication, July 11, 2007). While people were already flocking to the Internet, most did not have extended networks of friends who were online. Early adopters complained that there was little to do after accepting Friend requests, and most users were not interested in meeting strangers[10].

From 1997 to 2001, a number of community tools began supporting various combinations of profiles and publicly articulated Friends. AsianAvenue, BlackPlanet, and MiGente allowed users to create personal, professional, and dating profiles—users could identify Friends on their personal profiles without seeking approval for those connections (O. Wasow, personal communication, August 16, 2007). Likewise, shortly after its launch in 1999, LiveJournal listed one-directional connections on user pages. LiveJournal's creator suspects that he fashioned these Friends after instant messaging

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buddy lists (B. Fitzpatrick, personal communication, June 15, 2007)—on LiveJournal, people mark others as Friends to follow their journals and manage privacy settings. The Korean virtual worlds site Cyworld was started in 1999 and added SNS features in 2001, independent of these other sites (see Kim & Yun, this issue). Likewise, when the Swedish web community LunarStorm refashioned itself as an SNS in 2000, it contained Friends lists, guestbooks, and diary pages (D. Skog, personal communication, September 24, 2007).

The next wave of SNSs began when Ryze.com was launched in 2001 to help people leverage their business networks. Ryze's founder reports that he first introduced the site to his friends—primarily members of the San Francisco business and technology community, including the entrepreneurs and investors behind many future SNSs (A. Scott, personal communication, June 14, 2007). In particular, the people behind Ryze, Tribe.net, LinkedIn, and Friendster were tightly entwined personally and professionally. They believed that they could support each other without competing (Festa, 2003). In the end, Ryze never acquired mass popularity, Tribe.net grew to attract a passionate niche user base, LinkedIn became a powerful business service, and Friendster became the most significant, if only as "one of the biggest disappointments in Internet history" (Chafkin, 2007, p. 1)[12].

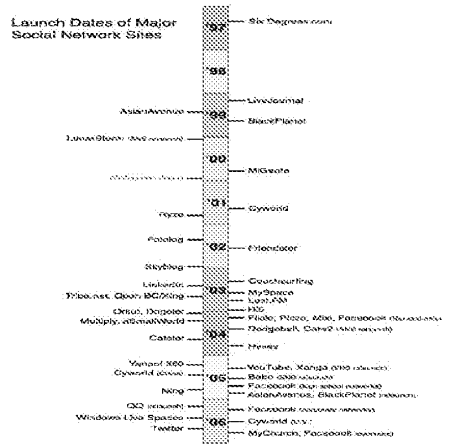


Figure 1. Timeline of the launch dates of many major SNSs and dates when community sites re-launched with SNS features. Like any brief history of a major phenomenon, ours is necessarily incomplete. In the following section we discuss Friendster, MySpace, and Facebook, three key SNSs that shaped the business, cultural, and research landscape.

4.2 Networks and Network Structure

Social network sites also provide rich sources of naturalistic behavioral data. Profile and linkage data from SNSs can be gathered either through the use of automated collection techniques or through datasets provided directly from the company, enabling network analysis researchers to explore large-scale patterns of friending, usage, and other visible indicators (Hogan, in press), and continuing an analysis trend that started with examinations of blogs and other websites [12]. For instance, Golder, Wilkinson, and Huberman (2007) examined an anonymized dataset consisting of 362 million messages exchanged by over four million Facebook users for insight into Friending and messaging activities. Lampe, Ellison, and Steinfield (2007) explored the relationship between profile elements and number of Facebook friends, finding that profile fields that reduce transaction costs and are harder to falsify are most likely to be associated with larger number of friendship links. These kinds of data also lend themselves well to analysis through network visualization (Adamic, Büyükkökten, & Adar, 2003; Heer&boyd, 2005; Paolillo& Wright, 2005).

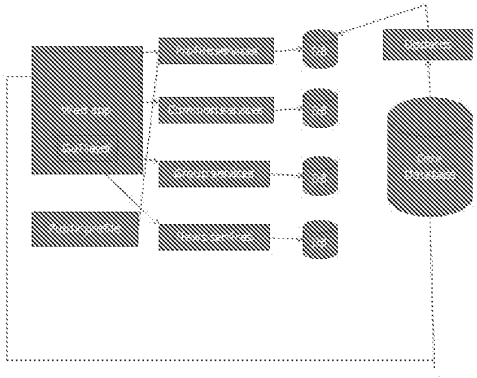
5. Research objective

1. The most important benefit of developing self-portfolio in social networking site is solving storage problem associated with traditional paper based portfolios,additionally instructors can easily comment on learners work by tap into the portfolio,also anyone in the world can be granted access to the portfolio and students can have perfect control on what artifacts can be presented and who can see them.

2. The important benefit of uploading certificates in our profile is solving the problem of taking the traditional paper based certificates for an interview; attending an online examination these certificates in our profile can be used.

3. Chat rooms are available for the users who wants to interact and communicate with the professionals in any domain the user is interested discuss about the ideas, ask solutions about the problems.

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6. Conclusion

Portfolio can facilitate long-life, meaningful learning. Besides the students developed more self-monitoring and self-regulation and self-assessment by producing more reflective works. In the recent mode of instruction the educators can keep in touch with learners and provide editing fast online feedback as a guide and simulator and facilitator rather than proving the correct answer. Taking participants reflections into consideration the teacher can promote learners responsibility and feeling of ownership toward their portfolio. Consequently it would support students to use portfolio as a tool in order to promote their learning process.

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LiveJournal.com

What is LiveJournal.com?

LiveJournal.com is a free service that allows you to create and customize your very own "live journal" ... an online journal that you can update with short entries many times a day, or with long entries a few times a week... however you'd like to use it. It's free, it's fun, it's easy to use!



***"Baaaah,"* says Frank.**

How do I use my LiveJournal?

It's easy!!! You update your LiveJournal whevnever you want either on the web, or by a small easy-to-use program you install on your computer.

Perhaps the best way to understand LiveJournal is to see it in action. Look at the LiveJournals of Eli and Evan. See how LiveJournal users Brad and Erik have integrated their LiveJournals right into their personal homepage!

So come and create your very own LiveJournal. Let the world know the story of your life, as it happens! *(whether they want to or not)*

Create your own LiveJournal!

Getting Started

Create A Journal
Come and create your very own LiveJournal!

Download
Download a version of the LiveJournal update tool for your computer.

Update Journal
Update your LiveJournal online.

Customize Journal
Customize the appearance and options for your LiveJournal.

Other Options

Edit Personal Info
Edit your personal information and preferences.

Edit Journal Entries
Edit or delete journal entries you've made in the past.

Edit Your Friends
Edit your list of online LiveJournal friends to track from your LiveJournal friends page.

Tech Support & Documentation

Support
Mail the support team and get a quick answer to your question.

Developer Info
Information about the LiveJournal protocol, style system, and journal embedding.

Contributors
Who made LiveJournal? Come and find out. We're doing this for you, afterall.

Banner Ads
Want to spread the word about how cool LiveJournal is? Use these banners!

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Home

× Log In

× Home
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- Update Journal
  - Full Update
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× LiveJournal
- News
- Paid Accounts
- To-Do list

× Customize
- Modify Journal
- Create Style
- Edit Style

× Find Users
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- By Interest
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- By Topic

× Edit ...
- Personal Info & Settings
- Your Friends
- Old Entries
- Your Password

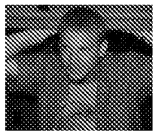
× Developer Area

× Need Help?
- Lost Password?
- Freq. Asked Questions
- Support Area

User Info

User Information

Below is user information for Brad Fitzpatrick. If you are this user, you can edit your information (or choose what information is considered public) at the Edit Info page.



User: bradfitz (1)

Name: Brad Fitzpatrick

Text Message: Send bradfitz a text message on his cellphone/pager.

Website: bradfitz.com

Location: Seattle, Washington, United States

Birthdate: 1980-02-05

Email: bradfitz@bradfitz.com
bradfitz@livejournal.com

AOL IM: SirBradly (**Add Buddy**, **Send Message**)

ICQ UIN: 489151 (**Add User**, **Send Message**)

Bio: Computer Science student at the University of Washington in Seattle. CS people scare me. Don't be a CS major... you won't learn anything applicable to real life. Go study something fun. Go study in a department that has more than 7 girls.

For fun I sleep. (I must not have much fun.)

Naah, but seriously... um. Wait, I'm never really too serious. Blah.

I make websites. Websites stress me out. I have companies around my websites. Companies stress me out. I think I need a big staff to help me run some of this stuff. But wait, a big staff requires a big budget to pay the big staff. I need venture capital. But wait, that dried up in March. I think I need a good revenue model. Paid accounts work pretty well... I need to make those more attractive.

Ah crap, I'm rambling. It's 3:42 am.

Interests: alternative music, anthropology, beach, beer, biking, blowing things up, boating, c, caffeine, cannon beach, cars, cheese, company, compression, computer science, computers, cuddling, databases, dr. pepper, drinking, dvds, ethiopian food, explosions, fire, free software, friends, frisbee, fsf, genetics, gnome, goats, gpl, grass, gtk, hacking, home theater, iced tea, java, jumping off things, learning, linguistics, linux, livejournal, macaroni and cheese, math, meatballs, mexican food, modest mouse, movies, mp3s, music, networking, night, open source, optimization, oregon, perl, pop

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tarts, portland, programming, rain, rap, running, sand, science, seattle, skiing, sleep, sleeping, snow skiing, solitude, sql, subway, swimming, techno music, traveling, trees, unix, volleyball, washington, water, white water rafting, wireless, women, word booty

Friends: **38:** 5251, achoo, ahze, anilnaik, blythe, bradfitz, cole88, daberna, dana, demo, djdegree, eli, erik, evan, garrettpalm, ian, kailani, kelly, leanora, loserjabber, mattrope, megan, mrwiz, news, nick, nolegs, olliejeff, patrick, paula, quill, revjim, rhys, rodester, sahrie, sandy, sheehan, shortypoke, whitaker

Friend of: **197:** 5251, absolution, achoo, agent_orange, ahze, ajose, alachicky, alexl, alysia, amberskye, ameigirl, amygirl, anabella, andrew, angelfsh, anilnaik, annalytical, annegirl, art, axodys, azulskies, babytears81, belladonna, bethany, billijean, blythe, bradfitz, carley, carrietherage, catscratch, celiacam, chelle, chrisg, chubbyd, chuck, cino101, circlek, clf, cole88, comius, compfreak, cyph, czircon, d4b, daberna, dabigguy, dana, dani, dankitti, dannisan, darksight, daydream, deathskull, demo, detritus, djdegree, dpb, durandal, dweezil, edmcbride, eli, emmet, epiphany, erik, evan, firelegend, freshie, gabby_bc, gadfly, garrettpalm, geekgrrrl, gigglecam, gorgonous, gramcracker, grapek0olaid, greg, hamster, harvey, headcase, heathers, hellothere, herrzoot, homewrecker, hubbycam, ian, iloveholly, insomnia, ironhead1957, ironman1231, itchi, jacqui, jannygirl, jenacam, jesse, jimmiebeeee, jlb, jodilyn, jonny, josh, joylugod, kailani, kea, kelly, kill, kishore, kneb, leanora, leslie03, lianne, lizvang, loserjabber, lovepotion69, magicwoman, marcoo, marcus, martmart, mattrope, megan, mhek, mikeage, missily, mobley, moonsis, mrwiz, mudflapgirl, muerte, myfriends, nick, nine, nolegs, nycgallucy, obelus, obitus, olliejeff, onejdc, opalcat, opaldreams, orangecone, outsider, patrick, paula, peekaboo, petfish, petit_chou, phalen, pinkycam, plastik, princess, princessa, punquin, quill, revjim, rhys, risingentropy, robobrien, rodester, rosarita, samr7, sandy, seadawg, seer, sephire, shannonkringen, shen_vizhe, shortypoke, shuet, shuperstar, skeeter853, skeets, southernbelleca, starla, stef2dope, steve, steve_maximus, stompmgood, sunshine_two, susan0406, sylvie, teferi, test, thp, tommyx, trinity, tsutton, twjordan, twoseventy, tydel, val, vettybird, visions, warrend, whitaker, wilco, xmf42, yizhe, yourmother, zuul

Account type: Permanent Account

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- Paid Accounts
- To-Do list

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- Modify Journal
- Create Style
- Edit Style

× Find Users
- Random!
- By Region
- By Interest
- Search

× Find Entries
- By Topic

× Edit ...
- Personal Info & Settings
- Your Friends
- Old Entries
- Your Password

× Developer Area

× Need Help?
- Lost Password?
- Freq. Asked Questions
- Support Area

User Info

User Information

Below is user information for Brad Whitaker. If you are this user, you can edit your information (or choose what information is considered public) at the Edit Info page.

User: **whitaker** (15)

Name: Brad Whitaker

Text Message: Send **whitaker** a text message on their cellphone/pager.

Website: bradland.com

Location: Trenton, Ohio, United States

Birthdate: 1982-09-17

Email: brad@bradland.com
whitaker@livejournal.com

AOL IM: bradwhit2 (**Add Buddy**, **Send Message**)

ICQ UIN: 15985610 (**Add User**, **Send Message**)

Bio: I am Brad. I am interesting. You should read my LiveJournal. You should also give me lots of money, but I guess no matter what you should do, you're going to do no whatever you want. I like programming, I like PERL, I like lots of stuff. Lots of stuff also pisses me off. Program a lot... too much. I also do a lot of sitting on my ass. I should get more done, but I'm just stupid like that. I have a website which I should probably update: bradland.com. Maybe if you bug me enough, I'll update it... probably not. However, if you get on AIM and just start talking about useless stuff, that'll probably get my attention, I waste time with the best of em. Yeah, you should probably be able to find anything you'd ever want to know about me at one place ont he net or another, so I think I'm just going to stop typing this now.

Interests: apache, belinda, boating, computers, dr. dre, dvds, linux, money, mp3, music, nextel, perl, php, programming, skiing, sleeping, snoop, soccer, sql, two-way radios

Friends: **20:** 5251, ajslamka, basketballjones, becky1399, big_al, bradfitz, caralou, d4b, damn_the_man, erik, jesus, jgambrell, josh, lloyd, news, nolegs, spanishprincess, treehugger, whitaker, zaneboyyy

Friend of: **34:** ajslamka, basketballjones, becky1399, big_al, bradfitz, callie, caralou, catscratch, d4b, damn_the_man, datoppestari, diva, donkey, eli, elizabethwolf, evilrex, intech, jesus, jgambrell, jimmy, josh, lloyd, minutemaid, mo, necrolvr69, nieman, nolegs, reno, spanishprincess, treehugger, tydel, whitaker, xmf42, zaneboyyy

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Eli Lehmann's LiveJournal



[Most Recent Entries] [Calendar View] [Friends]

Below is a log of the past 20 items recorded in Eli Lehmann's LiveJournal.

Sunday, June 18th, 2000

5:49 pm Taylor and I cleaned my Dad's car for him this morning. Then went to one of our baby cousin's birthday party. I'm heading up the gorge now, going to get home, try to organize my room and get ready for work. Start at 7:00 tomorrow, I haven't been awake at 7:00 in a very long time.

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

10:04 am ::.YAWN.::

(Comment on this)

12:17 am Taylor and I just got back from 'Gone in 60 Seconds'. Definitely not the best movie I've ever seen but still worth the money. Plot was kind of sketchy, dialouge almost matched that of Arnold Schwartzenager in 'Batman Forever' but the sexy cars and Angelina Jolie made it worth it. Liked it more than the all of the reviewers so that was cool. Think I'm going to head to bed now, hopefully I'll get some sleep tonight.

(3 Comments | Comment on this)

Saturday, June 17th, 2000

3:28 pm Best Breasts goes to the girl in the pink halter top ..Hands Down!!!

(This is btw going to be a fairly long post, just warning)The show and the trip was Awesome. Dana and I made it to central Washington Friday afternoon and rescued Kailani from some RV park/campground. She was waiting for us there, talking to a Texan employee about their earlier life selling cocaine. She was happy to see us. She hopped in our car and we drove a few miles to George, Washington (No, I'm not kidding that's actually the name of the town).

The Gorge Amphitheater is basically the best outdoor concert environment imaginable. It's in the middle of nowhere so it doesn't matter how loud you are. Every single person there is there for the exact same reason, to see a concert and have a damn good time in doing so. And, there's even a campground so that all of the drugged up, stoned, horny, drunken youthfull party-goers that we're forced to call "peers" can continue having a good time into the late hours of the night.

We paid our $25 camping pass, walked back and forth between our car and the Ticket office a couple of extra times because SOMEBODY forgot to put their purse in the car :-) and were eventually ready to head down into the gorge. (This all of course after I applied a heavy dosage of Sure Powder Fresh deodarant to my *underarms*.. forgot my damn deodarant at home.)

Dana, Kailani and I are walking along the pedestrian trail (basically a huge gravel road) that leads us down into the amphilitheater when I hear Kailani give a very faint squeal and dart backwards. I glance down and there sure enough, no more than 4 feet away, is a rattlesnake slithering across the path(This was quite ironic because just a few hours earlier on the car ride over I was talking to dana about how I used to have to work around rattlesnakes, and, how I had developed quite the distaste for the poisonous bastards). I grab and stop Dana (she didn't see it) then stop 5 or 6 other people who were walking along the trial also oblivious (thank god Kailani saw it, could have been bad.) Some dumb-ass punk teenagers were like "hey let's catch it, let's catch it." (::sigh::) The concert staff wasn't to far away so we yelled to them and they took care of it. We continued on and soon became apart of the mass of skin(it was really really hot so everybody was skimping pretty heavily on the clothing. .and yeah, you already know where this leads) that was headed past the ticket gates and into the amphitheater.

The amphitheater itself was really cool. There's a huge grass hill for people to sit on, and then the floor up front for everybody who wants to get up close and personal. The cliffs and river make an awesome backdrop, the sun sets right behind the band. It's a very cool place to have a concert. We walk down to the floor right in front of the stage, and find our other friends chilling in what little shade was provided by a side fence. Went and sat with them for the next 2 and a half hours, entertained ourselves by making fun

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of everybody's outfits.

7:30, concert Starts. Everybody rushes up to the state to listen to Fenix TX. They're a strong punk band who managed to get the crowd pumped up without any problem at all. I'm looking foward to seeing them again at Big Stink later this summer. By they time they finish playing Dana and I have pretty much lost everybody else. We decide to head up to where the crowd gets a little more rowdy during the break between sets.

The girl upfront in the black was the first to start it. You see her rise up above the crowd on the shoulders of a willing soul. Then, the little clothing that has up until now held her bare chest invisible to our eyes, suddenly dissapears. Cheers and whistles follow, then another girl pops up out of the crowd, heads turn, and the cylce repeats itself...over and over and over. God, you've just really got to appreciate a good *concert* ;-)

Bad Religion, an old school punk rock band, starts up the next set and the flashing dies down. Dana and I are getting shoved around like the best of them now. I do my best to try and protect her/help her out, but it get's pretty rowdy in there. People shoving you, flying above you, lots of fun. Dana has finally had enough, she leaves and I push farther into the crowd. I'm probably 5 rows back from the boards/security guards and I see a family friend Kevin Whitson, insane to run into him in the middle of this mosh pit. (Kevin is 6'4 and a good 240lbs, state shotput champion...a good friend to have in a mosh pit, I hang around him)

Bad Religion finishes, I have no idea where any of my friends are and Kevin heads out of the crowd, says I should go with him but there was no way I was backing out just before blink. It's dark, and more flashing commences. The girl in the pink halter top, the one I'd mentioned before is getting quite the bit of attention. Everybody is screaming for her to flash but she's kind of hesitant. She lifts her shirt up but the bra remains on, obviously nobody is satisfied. Finally she goes for it and at least 50 camera flashes go off. As I said before, she without a doubt gets the best breasts of the night award :-)

It's dark, Blink runs onto the stage and everybody goes crazy. By the second song I somehow manage to shove my way to a spot on the boards (very front row, only thing left between me and the band is this wodden barracade and a row of security guards.)

Blink was awesome, I love their music the show was great, I was completely stoked to be so close. Probably the best part about the band is their sense of humor. They incorporated some Eminem lyrics into one of the songs, and then they made fun of that damn 'thong song' by running out in nothing more than their boxers and shaking their asses at the crowd to the music. Damn good show.

My ribs feel like I've just been through a boxing match, my head, aching with bumps from the shoes of the crowd-surfers. Every time I touch my right ear it hurts like hell, my nose got smacked pretty hard by somebody's head so that doesn't feel to great either. My sunglasses fell victim to the stopping crowd, my necklace was ripped off my neck by the wandering hand of a crowd-surfer grasping desperatly for something to hold onto. At the end of the show I find Dana and Kailani, my shirt is completely soaked(I don't however have BO thanks to that Sure Powder Fresh). We walk back to the campground, don't manage to fall asleep until 3:30 and drive home this morning exhausted. "But was it worth it you ask?" OH HELL YES!!!

(8 Comments | Comment on this)

Thursday, June 15th, 2000

9:56 pm LOL Well since Erik has been sharing some of his wonderfull FreeVote emails with you I'm going to have to post this one. The booth name is "Wuz Your Favorite Soda" and this guy wants it shut down because...
"I hate coke and i want this site taken away cuz me and this kid had a fight about cookies"

Tempting, but probably not enough to justify a booth suspension :-)

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(2 Comments | Comment on this)

9:35 pm We shampooed the carpet in my room today so EVERYTHING is off of the ground. I'm not supposed to walk in my room for 24 hours because it'll get it dirty so I dodged this problem by wrapping my shoes in some plastic wrap. Looks really damn retarded, I however prefer to refer to it as *ingenious*. So I'm sitting on my bed with my keyboard and looking between 2 massive speakers that are sitting on my desk to see my monitor. I do not think my room has ever been this clean. You should see the hallway. I guess Dana is showing up tomorrow at 10:30 and we're going to head to the Blink concert (Think she's just going to follow me there) so tomorrow should be a really good day. Been waiting for blink for quite awhile. Wow, the moon is really full and is rising above this huge tree outside my windo.. looks really cool. Wonder if it's full tonight. Anyway, think I'm going to works little FreeVote from my re-arranged workstation, should be interesting.

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

1:28 pm Home now, got back about 30 minutes ago. Really nice day so that's cool. I took my clothes out of the laundry this morning at my dad's and about half of my shirts were ruined from bleach stains. I guess they used tide WITH BLEACH and there was too much or something..dont' know. But that really sucks. Guess I just found some new work shirts. Think I'm going to go out on a bike-ride. It's way to nice to be inside.

(Comment on this)

Wednesday, June 14th, 2000

11:41 pm LOL...listening to loveline and this guy calls up and asks adam for the correct technique for anal sex. Adam goes ..well lets just say I wouldn't go for the running start approach, you're gonna need some lube.....hehehh..funny stuff.

(Comment on this)

11:29 pm Decided to stay in Vancouver. My dad and I watched some show on TV about rescues and stuff, pretty cool I guess. I'm talking to Kyle about work. (he has pretty much the same job as I do but in a different place) He got 40 minutes and 37 seconds on the pack test today. I'm going to have to try and beat that :-) So yeah, neck burns, bored, not tired, but think I might have to head to bed here pretty soon.

(Comment on this)

10:03 pm So, we finished detailing my car, looks really nice. I talked to Erik and it looks like he's not coming down for the Blink concert afterall. Dana may or may not ride up with me I'm not sure, I might be riding solo. My neck is getting sore from the sun earlier, sure I'm going to have a nice red burn there in the morning. Was going to hang out here tonight but think I might just head up the gorge. Everybody goes to bed early so not much to do.

(Comment on this)

3:01 pm Well, looks like Dana isn't riding with me to blink anymore (think she's going to follow me or meet me there) and possibly not Erik either (but he's still planning) I'm going to head outside and clean my car....my dad and I are going to give it the really good througouh clean. Got a little sun earlier when I was out there so hopefully I'm not burnt before I get to Blink.

(3 Comments | Comment on this)

11:15 am Damn car won't start. I think the battery died while I was away at school and not driving. I hooked it up to the charger and am now pressure washing the driveway waiting for it to charge. Fun fun fun.

(Comment on this)

9:38 am Woke up kind of early, have to go get the snow tires taken off of my car. Drew Erik a map to my house here in Vancouver, think he'll probably show up sometime around 6 or 7 tonight. Off to the tire company.

(4 Comments | Comment on this)

12:24 am Wow, they're playing Kottonmouth Kings on the radio, just thought I'd let Ian know.

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

Tuesday, June 13th, 2000

11:19 pm LOL...listening to loveline, this chick calls up, sounds stoned off her ass and says. "uhhhhh..I was wondering what the uhhh...effects of acid are after 50 hits." :.sigh.:

(2 Comments | Comment on this)

10:48 pm finally saw the new bond movie, it was pretty good I guess. My sinuses have been going crazy since I got down here, always do. Listening to some more love line, going to draw dana a map to my house.

(Comment on this)

7:02 pm Ahh Yeah!!!

(2 Comments | Comment on this)

4:25 pm Down at my Dad's.. just got a haircut. I'm talking to dana online, trying to give her directions to my house in willard so that she'll have a ride to blink, but she seems to be more interested in playing with her cat.

(Comment on this)

12:43 pm Lunch time...Ice Cream again :-)

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Going to try to clean up the hallway a bit and then head to my dad's. Going to hang out there tonight and then come home tomorrow.

(1 Comment | Comment on this)

Monday, June 12th, 2000

11:02 pm Sitting here listening to Loveline on the radio. I used to listen to this all the time in high school from 9th grade on. Bringing me back.

(2 Comments | Comment on this)

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Eli Lehmann's Friends

[Most Recent Entries] [Calendar View] [Friends View]

Below is a log of the past **25** LiveJournal entries that Eli Lehmann's friends have entered.

Saturday, June 10th, 2000

whitaker

7:37a Awake. Feel like shit. Need a day to sleep in.

(Comment on this)

starla

5:58a it's almost freakin' 6 AM and i'm *just* getting to bed... 'cause *someone* kept me up all night... and even though i had an amazing time, laurienne's gonna kick my ass when i'm sleepwalking through our day together, and both she and buttercup will abuse me later at the clubs... oh well! :)

(Comment on this)

marcus



1:26a ***getting more than five hours of sleep tonight, ahhhh yeaahhh***
spent the afternoon checking people out, then chilled with Jamey for a while, maxed out my A La Carde account with $50 of stuff from Steven's, score! Had dinner with Claire, then got her checked out and watched Tommy Boy with Jason and Christy. was going to be with the whole staff, but everyone left really quickly, oh well. Bethany gave us a ride to the airport, so that was really really cool. Thank you so much. It's going to be a long summer, but worth the wait, at Mercer now, going to watch Men in Black, and help Bethany pack and get stuff into her truck. Then try to get some sleep and then checkouts tomorrow morning, bright and early at 9:30. oh yesss.

(Comment on this)

megan

12:46a time to get in bed and gossip :)

(Comment on this)

dana

12:45a way bored, lots more to do than i thought. this is how tired i am....im looking for my bikini bottom to pack cause all i can find is the top, and i dont realize til like 15 minutes later that im actually wearing the thing ::sigh:: time for bed soon

(Comment on this)

bradlitz

12:43a ***Movie***
Went and saw "Gone in 60 seconds" with Nick and Ollie .... pretty good movie. Helping my brother burn a CD now ....

(Comment on this)

12:23a well home from chelan, had a nice three days before i have to go home. got up on the kneeboard. i would be cheering and all but it was super easy so nothing really to brag about. tried wakeboarding today, couldnt get up, next time though im gonna kick some

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dana

butt!!!!took the wave runner out, almost knocked brian off a few times too :-) hehe so now gonna clean up a bit pack, clean the fridge, then brian is going to come over and see me, im leaving tomorrow at like 1115, kinda sad. said goodbye to eli erik marcus and mike on thuesday, that was way sad, but im going to blink on friday with them so shouldnt be too long til i see my s.campus boys. said goodbye to trav on wednesday, another sad one hmmm and val and megan and brittney and monica. what a sad day :-(so tomorrow my mom is gonna get here around 9 supposedly, that is if she doesnt sleep in as always. not much to do around here, getting pretty tired and my arms are sore from the stupid rope getting ripped outa my hands today, so bedtime for me soon i think since im getting up at 8! ahh!! 8 freaking o'clock!!!!

(Comment on this)

lenz

12:11a Home from Chelan. Had an awesome time with Dana. She's gotta go home tomorrow though :(I'm gonna pack up my computer and dishes now so all I have to do tomorrow is check out. Then, off to Dana's...

(Comment on this)

megan

12:08a just got back from Applebee's with some hs people... it was really cool to see everyone and just chat... Kerry and I talked about old times and cleaned up my room earlier so I can get ready to move all my other stuff back into my room.... yes, I do have WAY too much stuff, I realize this :) anyways... not sure what's up now, prooobbably should go to bed soon, but we'll see. I think we have more catching up to do first :0

(**1 Comment** | Comment on this)

Friday, June 9th, 2000

eli



11:57p I'm home now, my room's a complete mess, boxes all over the place....BUT, got my computer unpacked, that's what's importnat. I'll just keep everything else in boxes, that way I won't have to pack back up when I head to school in the fall :-) Probably going to head to bed soon, too tired to attempt to do anything

(Comment on this)

Saturday, June 10th, 2000

just got in after a night with my buttercup. i still can't believe she's been my bestest friend for almost four whole years... she's so amazing. i was worried we'd be a little strained because of our little tiff, but it was as perfect as ever.

starla

2:50a instead of hitting the private party like we were supposed to, we impulsively decided to jump the train to the city and go bar-hopping... even though we were decked out for a par-tay, me in a turquoise tank top and her in red, both of us in black vinyl-esque pants. (i think we just wanted to do some BJ shots -- hehe!) we got such an early start -- 10:30 -- that we wound up enjoying the gorgeous summertime weather and the yummylicious NYC scenery by walking around for a while, eventually winding up at an all-night Starbucks. buttercup had a caramel machiato and a wildberry tiazzi, and i had a white-chocolate mocha and a peach tiazzi. then of course, we had a big ol' sugar high... nothing's more fun than riding the subway with perfect strangers, giggling madly. :)

i love my buttercup so much... when i'm with her i want to cry, because she understands me so well. i can say anything, and she'll never judge me, she usually shares my feelings, from love to school to just rating the cute passerby on the street. i feel stronger, more confident, more beautiful. she truly compliments me and helps me through everything... and when we're together, there's absolutely *nothing* i can't do.

(Comment on this)

Friday, June 9th, 2000

9:40p ***Cable Modem***

Ah yea' ..... today at 6 pm or so the cable guys came and install our cable modem. They

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bradfitz



were gonna install a USB device and I was like, "No ... use an extra ethernet card." And he goes, "Okay, but why?" I say, "So we don't have to run Windows if we don't want." He goes, "But if you don't have Windows, what would you run? How would you use Internet Explorer?" *sigh* Linux, I say. Win98SE's Internet Connection sharing (IP masquerading, or NAT, whatever you want to call it) works okay, but it's still on Windows, so whenever somebody reboots, the house network connection goes down. Anyway, it's all working now, after shitloads of resource conflicts ... the 3rd network card did the trick (an old NE2000 ISA card... heh.) But yeah, hella fast now.... lovin' it.

(**7 Comments** | Comment on this)

megan



8:13p grabbed Mongolian grill for dinner, yum! and ice cream :) diet starts tomorrow, I promise... ooh, I need to call bryan to figure out when I'm going over there to go to his graduation tomorrow... Kerry and I are relaxing now, going to watch Much Ado about Nothing,,,, again. :)

(Comment on this)

whitaker



10:47p Going to get cleaned up and go to bed. Night all.

(Comment on this)

whitaker



10:35p New LiveJournal is cool.

(Comment on this)

whitaker



10:21p Didn't sleep at ALL last night. Fucked with NT instead... and when it became clear that NT would NEVER cooperate, I installed 98 in a half hour, rendering those many hours of toil and sleep loss useless. Then spent a fun filled day at the truck show with my favorite friend, Mr. Andrew Nieman. Got a good hour nap there, then went back to his house and at a sandwich/started a huge file transfer. After that, was driving, my nose started bleeding all over, so I stopped by Belinda's house to clean up, where Belinda was nowhere to be found. Saddened, I went to the theater where I saw Jon & Amy & Carl and other theater people... then Angie and Vance stopped by and I talked to them for a couple of minutes. I'm home now, dreading tomorrow... I'm gonna die... mainly because I'm not very tired right now, but I MUST sleep... but I want to get a shower first. Maybe that will help get me tired. Anyway. Lata'.

(Comment on this)

kailani



Done with my final, Yay! Now what? I have nothing to do now...I love it :-)

6:48p Eli, the final went well. I was short on time for my essay but that's how it always goes. Glad you got home safe and sound!

(Comment on this)

megan



5:50p I'm home!!! Just drove in and unloaded the U-haul... let me explain... I had to bring the futon and tv home and some of dana's stuff, so it's ok to rent a trailor right??? Anyways, kerry is here now and we're going to go return the trailer and maybe grab dinner. Very happy to be here,,, HAVE AN AWESOME SUMMER EVERYONE!!

(Comment on this)

5:37p *Heh ...*
My computers are setup in the basement, right next to the ethernet hub for the house, then I have my ethernet hub plugged into that... whenever I move my mouse on my windows machine, the house router blinks on my port, since I'm using x2vnc to use one mouse/keyboard between Linux and Windows.... I need to get a 100mbps switch ... how much do those cost? Hubs are retarded.

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bradfitz

(**1 Comment** | Comment on this)

nolegs

quake

9:26p

uhoh, somebody just decided to play some quake online... been months but im still kickin ass. just take a look (im mappy)...

owned some lpbs, yeah, i owned them and i will own you too BITCH (still got the shit-talkin in my system)

(Comment on this)

marcus



whew!! almost done

4:07p

spent the last two days running all over the place checking people out, helping people move, saying goodbye to everyone, not eating that well and getting very little sleep. all done with checkouts tonight, and hopefully going out to dinner tonight with Claire, then going to kick back and watch some movies with the staff, then taking Claire to the airport and hopefully getting more than five hours of sleep tonight

(**4 Comments** | Comment on this)

bradfitz

awake

2:47p

Awake ... finally. Damn mom was annoying ... trying to wake me up all morning. I stayed up 'till 5am ... what to you expect? Woke up to livejournal being down ... I messed with too much stuff last night. Does anybody know how to determine on FreeBSD what FD_SETSIZE is set at in libc? I remember increasing it oh-so-long-ago from its pathetic 256, but can't remember what I set it to ... I need to know to tell Apache, since it can't even figure it out on its own. Evan? Any of Evan's friends?

(**12 Comments** | Comment on this)

kailani

2:09p

I let Trisha borrow my card to buy some breakfast at Terry Cafe. Those idiots confiscated my card. GRRR! The one person that actually cares whose card you use is working this morning. :::sigh:::

(**1 Comment** | Comment on this)

nolegs

pervert

5:58p

Amazing how many 15 year old girls try to talk to me on IM, it scares me, I dont wanna be one of those people that talks to little girliez on da intanet. Its hard enough for me to try and talk to someone through any chat type shit, I mean I just dont like 'chat' I prefer face to face talk, but then when its jailbait, shudder, I try not to say anything. and how can it be that today 6 people have started talking to me and 5 of them are 15 year old girls? Its a conspiracy.

(Comment on this)

starla

8:07p

right now i'm watching *happy, texas* with my mommie... but i had a great day at work. not only did i get to leave an hour early (woo!) but the director of the office told me she loved my work, and that all my clientele were incredibly impressed. she also said i had a great phone voice. :) i'm so happy... i finally found a job that i love. :)

speaking of lovingness, my buttercup should be calling soon... woo!

(Comment on this)

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79 captures
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Brad Whitaker's LiveJournal

[Most Recent Entries] [Calendar View] [Friends]

Below are the **20** most recent journal entries recorded in Brad Whitaker's LiveJournal:

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Friday, July 7th, 2000

10:06 am In Alabama. Frickin' tired all day. Ended up having to deplane in Memphis. Don't really remember either of my flights... I trust they were enjoyable. Waiting on Mel to get home so we can head off to the beach. I'll update if I can lata'.

(**1 Comment** | Comment on this)

Thursday, July 6th, 2000

9:41 pm Home from a fun fillled day. Spend the first half of the day at my grandma's after taking her to the oral surgeon. Slept a little there. She fixed me lunch. Got a haircut. Went to Belinda's. Saw Shara's new **VAN**. Heh, classic. Went for a walk. Came home. Called Dad. Lots of stuff to do to get packed/mobilize for my Alabama trip.

(**3 Comments** | Comment on this)

10:14 am Off to get grandma.

(Comment on this)

10:07 am Guess what? As I expected, I'm DEAD today. Heh.

(Comment on this)

6:02 am Need to get in bed here in a few... have to wake up at 10:00.

(Comment on this)

5:52 am Damn. Guess I stayed up a little bit too late. Hrm. At least Postgres is installed properly and working. Even got it in the startup configuration finally.

(Comment on this)

4:47 am PostgreSQL... it's ALIVE! Finally! Damn, am I happy.

(Comment on this)

4:41 am Up at the dark-and early ass-crack of dawn. Have a flight at 7:27. Maybe I'll get to eat some Burger King breakfast this morning? Mmmmmmm... Have badass computer setup ready to go to Alabama/Florida with me. Dunno how much I'll be able to get on the internet... might be able to, might now. Either way, I'll probably jot notes down in Herman... although those won't be posted to the LiveJournal server until I get home. You guys can wait and then read a massive flux of my comments. Heh. I have that terrible feeling again... you know? The one where you know you're forgetting that you're going to get pissed off about when you realize you left it. I decided not to take any DVDs because Nic is taking some and we're going to be away from the house 90% of the time. That, and my bag is full... You guys can email me if you want, not sure if I'll be able to get it. Have laptop and stuff, but it all depends on whether or not the local access numbers I looked up are free (from hotel) and how much Dad decides to bitch about me being on the computer... also, how much free time I have where I shouldn't be out on the beach having fun. Computer shit is slightly lower on the tree than throwing frisbee on the beach. Heh. Lata' all.

(**1 Comment** | Comment on this)

3:31 am Damned Windows... hadn't locked up in a day or two... heh.

(Comment on this)

Wednesday, July 5th, 2000

11:06 pm Damn, I'm being a good boy... I HATE documenting shit.

(Comment on this)

10:09 pm Oh man... just reminded that I have to be at my grandma's house at 10:30 tomorrow morning to take her to the oral surgeon. Heh. Suck.

(**1 Comment** | Comment on this)

9:34 pm Watched some TV for the first time in a while. Called Nic. Everything's cool for friday. Working now. Hrm. Does the "f" in "friday" need to be capitalized?

(**1 Comment** | Comment on this)

9:04 pm Shoot... left AIM on AGAIN. Oops.

(Comment on this)

3:41 pm ...after several naps.

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(Comment on this)

3:41 pm Finally got a shower...

(Comment on this)

12:09 pm Jon woke me up at the ungodly hour of 11:00. We played with Atari a bit... now watching Fight Club DVD parts...

(Comment on this)

3:37 am Time to stop screwing around and go to sleep... I should go to sleep earlier... I'm a dumbass... who's going to take some initiative and force me to go to sleep early???

(Comment on this)

12:25 am Damn, all I have to do is mention that I am having some Linux trouble and everyone wants to help me. Heh.

(Comment on this)

12:21 am Home. Fun day. Hung out with family at Cindy's.. then met Zane, Danielle, Tyler, and Jill and went to Applebee's then saw Gone in 60 Seconds... then went to UDF... THEN watched fireworks. Heh.

(Comment on this)

Tuesday, July 4th, 2000

1:53 pm Zane... "fun fun fun" didn't mean I wasn't excited. Don't get sad. ;-)

(**1 Comment** | Comment on this)

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Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

EFS ID:	18040333
Application Number:	13963050
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	1571
Title of Invention:	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Customer Number:	55246
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Filer Authorized By:	Scott David Paul
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0015
Receipt Date:	27-JAN-2014
Filing Date:	09-AUG-2013
Time Stamp:	21:59:25
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

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File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) Form (SB08)	8201-0015_IDS_01-27-14.pdf	612688 9b7711f5e7f841adb9e0bff35ad2cd0d36ed6d47	no	4
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Warnings:					
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3	Non Patent Literature	8201_BlackPlanet_PA_01-27-14.pdf	498308 4e427d832bf91a92561ddb293956a4c545a15ca1	no	10
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4	Non Patent Literature	8201_Kumar_PA_01-27-14.pdf	328390 710589df09d2467389fe07d162521d785d2cd162	no	4
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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/963,050	08/09/2013	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III	8201-0015	1571

55246 7590 01/30/2014

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EXAMINER	
LASTRA, DANIEL	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3681	

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

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Office Action Summary	Application No. 13/963,050	Applicant(s) DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.	
	Examiner DANIEL LASTRA	Art Unit 3681	AIA (First Inventor to File) Status No

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE *3* MONTHS FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *Amendment 08/09/13*.

☐ A declaration(s)/affidavit(s) under **37 CFR 1.130(b)** was/were filed on _____.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ An election was made by the applicant in response to a restriction requirement set forth during the interview on _____; the restriction requirement and election have been incorporated into this action.

4)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims*

5)☒ Claim(s) *1-19* is/are pending in the application.

5a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

6)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

7)☒ Claim(s) *1-19* is/are rejected.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

9)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

* If any claims have been determined allowable, you may be eligible to benefit from the **Patent Prosecution Highway** program at a participating intellectual property office for the corresponding application. For more information, please see http://www.uspto.gov/patents/init_events/pph/index.jsp or send an inquiry to PPHfeedback@uspto.gov.

Application Papers

10)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

11)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

Certified copies:

a)☐ All b)☐ Some** c)☐ None of the:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

** See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08a and/or PTO/SB/08b) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

3) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .

4) ☐ Other: _____.

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The present application is being examined under the pre-AIA first to invent provisions.

Claims 1-19 have been examined.

Double Patenting

A rejection based on double patenting of the "same invention" type finds its support in the language of 35 U.S.C. 101 which states that "whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process... may obtain a patent therefor..." (Emphasis added). Thus, the term "same invention," in this context, means an invention drawn to identical subject matter. See *Miller v. Eagle Mfg. Co.*, 151 U.S. 186 (1894); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Ockert*, 245 F.2d 467, 114 USPQ 330 (CCPA 1957).

A statutory type (35 U.S.C. 101) double patenting rejection can be overcome by canceling or amending the claims that are directed to the same invention so they are no longer coextensive in scope. The filing of a terminal disclaimer cannot overcome a double patenting rejection based upon 35 U.S.C. 101.

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as claiming the same invention as that of claims 1-7 of prior U.S. Patent No. 7,996,259. This is a statutory double patenting rejection.

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory double patenting rejection is appropriate where the claims at issue are not identical, but at least

one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the reference application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement. A terminal disclaimer must be signed in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(b).

The USPTO internet Web site contains terminal disclaimer forms which may be used. Please visit http://www.uspto.gov/forms/. The filing date of the application will determine what form should be used. A web-based eTerminal Disclaimer may be filled out completely online using web-screens. An eTerminal Disclaimer that meets all requirements is auto-processed and approved immediately upon submission. For more information about eTerminal Disclaimers, refer to http://www.uspto.gov/patents/process/file/efs/guidance/eTD-info-I.jsp.

Claims 8-19 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory double patenting as being unpatentable over claim8-19 of U.S. Patent No. 7,996,259 Although the claims at issue are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DANIEL LASTRA whose telephone number is 571-272-6720 and fax 571-273-6720. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jami Plucinski can be reached on (571) 272-6811. The official Fax number is (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or /DANIEL LASTRA/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3681 Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/DANIEL LASTRA/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3681
01/25/14

Notice of References Cited	Application/Control No. 13/963,050	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.	
	Examiner DANIEL LASTRA	Art Unit 3681	Page 1 of 1

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		Document Number Country Code-Number-Kind Code	Date MM-YYYY	Name	Classification
*	A	US-7,996,259	08-2011	DiStefano, III, Thomas L.	705/14.1
	B	US-			
	C	US-			
	D	US-			
	E	US-			
	F	US-			
	G	US-			
	H	US-			
	I	US-			
	J	US-			
	K	US-			
	L	US-			
	M	US-			

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		Document Number Country Code-Number-Kind Code	Date MM-YYYY	Country	Name	Classification
	N					
	O					
	P					
	Q					
	R					
	S					
	T					

NON-PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		Include as applicable: Author, Title Date, Publisher, Edition or Volume, Pertinent Pages)
	U	
	V	
	W	
	X	

*A copy of this reference is not being furnished with this Office action. (See MPEP § 707.05(a).)
Dates in MM-YYYY format are publication dates. Classifications may be US or foreign.

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Doc code: IDS
Doc description: Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) Filed

PTO/SB/08a (01-10)
Approved for use through 07/31/2012. OMB 0651-0031
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it contains a valid OMB control number.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (**Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)**		
	Application Number	13963050
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	DiSTEFANO III
	Art Unit	3629
	Examiner Name	Unassigned
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

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Examiner Initial*	Cite No	Patent Number	Kind Code[1]	Issue Date	Name of Patentee or Applicant of cited Document	Pages,Columns,Lines where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
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Examiner Initial*	Cite No	Foreign Document Number[3]	Country Code[2] i	Kind Code[4]	Publication Date	Name of Patentee or Applicant of cited Document	Pages,Columns,Lines where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear	T[5]
	1							☐
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NON-PATENT LITERATURE DOCUMENTS			Remove
Examiner Initials*	Cite No	Include name of the author (in CAPITAL LETTERS), title of the article (when appropriate), title of the item (book, magazine, journal, serial, symposium, catalog, etc), date, pages(s), volume-issue number(s), publisher, city and/or country where published.	T[5]

EFS Web 2.1.17

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
	Application Number	13963050
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	DiSTEFANO III
	Art Unit	3629
	Examiner Name	Unassigned
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

/D.L./	1	"Overview of Webboard," [online] O'Reilly & Associates, Inc. © 1998, retrieved from the Internet: <http://domin.dom.edu/documents/webboard/overviewwb.PDF>, 16 pg.	☐

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EXAMINER SIGNATURE

Examiner Signature	/Daniel Lastra/ (01/25/2014)	Date Considered	

*EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through a citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

[1] See Kind Codes of USPTO Patent Documents at www.USPTO.GOV or MPEP 901.04. [2] Enter office that issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST.3). [3] For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. [4] Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST.16 if possible. [5] Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language translation is attached.

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
	Application Number	13963050
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	DiSTEFANO III
	Art Unit	3629
	Examiner Name	Unassigned
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Please see 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 to make the appropriate selection(s):

☐ That each item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(1).

OR

☒ That no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, and, to the knowledge of the person signing the certification after making reasonable inquiry, no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was known to any individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(2).

☐ See attached certification statement.

☐ The fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17 (p) has been submitted herewith.

☐ A certification statement is not submitted herewith.

SIGNATURE

A signature of the applicant or representative is required in accordance with CFR 1.33, 10.18. Please see CFR 1.4(d) for the form of the signature.

Signature	/SCOTT D. PAUL/	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2013-08-28
Name/Print	SCOTT D. PAUL	Registration Number	42984

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 1 hour to complete, including gathering, preparing and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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Privacy Act Statement

The Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579) requires that you be given certain information in connection with your submission of the attached form related to a patent application or patent. Accordingly, pursuant to the requirements of the Act, please be advised that: (1) the general authority for the collection of this information is 35 U.S.C. 2(b)(2); (2) furnishing of the information solicited is voluntary; and (3) the principal purpose for which the information is used by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is to process and/or examine your submission related to a patent application or patent. If you do not furnish the requested information, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office may not be able to process and/or examine your submission, which may result in termination of proceedings or abandonment of the application or expiration of the patent.

The information provided by you in this form will be subject to the following routine uses:

1. The information on this form will be treated confidentially to the extent allowed under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) and the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a). Records from this system of records may be disclosed to the Department of Justice to determine whether the Freedom of Information Act requires disclosure of these record s.

2. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, in the course of presenting evidence to a court, magistrate, or administrative tribunal, including disclosures to opposing counsel in the course of settlement negotiations.

3. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Member of Congress submitting a request involving an individual, to whom the record pertains, when the individual has requested assistance from the Member with respect to the subject matter of the record.

4. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a contractor of the Agency having need for the information in order to perform a contract. Recipients of information shall be required to comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(m).

5. A record related to an International Application filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization, pursuant to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

6. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to another federal agency for purposes of National Security review (35 U.S.C. 181) and for review pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 218(c)).

7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (i.e., GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.

8. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the public after either publication of the application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b) or issuance of a patent pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 151. Further, a record may be disclosed, subject to the limitations of 37 CFR 1.14, as a routine use, to the public if the record was filed in an application which became abandoned or in which the proceedings were terminated and which application is referenced by either a published application, an application open to public inspections or an issued patent.

9. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency, if the USPTO becomes aware of a violation or potential violation of law or regulation.

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Index of Claims	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13963050	DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**
	DANIEL LASTRA	3681

✓	Rejected	-	Cancelled	N	Non-Elected	A	Appeal
=	Allowed	÷	Restricted	I	Interference	O	Objected

☐ Claims renumbered in the same order as presented by applicant ☐ CPA ☐ T.D. ☐ R.1.47

CLAIM		DATE								
Final	Original	01/25/2014								
	1	✓								
	2	✓								
	3	✓								
	4	✓								
	5	✓								
	6	✓								
	7	✓								
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	9	✓								
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	15	✓								
	16	✓								
	17	✓								
	18	✓								
	19	✓								

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CONFIRMATION NO. 1571

SERIAL NUMBER	FILING or 371(c) DATE	CLASS	GROUP ART UNIT	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
13/963,050	08/09/2013 RULE	705	3681	8201-0015

APPLICANTS
PT 259, LLC, Boca Raton, FL, Assignee (with 37 CFR 1.172 Interest);

INVENTORS
THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III, BOCA RATON, FL;

**** CONTINUING DATA ***************************
This application is a REI of 09/589,551 06/07/2000 PAT 7996259

**** FOREIGN APPLICATIONS ***************************

**** IF REQUIRED, FOREIGN FILING LICENSE GRANTED **** ** SMALL ENTITY **
11/29/2013

Foreign Priority claimed ☐ Yes ☐ No 35 USC 119(a-d) conditions met ☐ Yes ☐ No Verified and Acknowledged _____ Examiner's Signature	☐ Met after Allowance _____ Initials	STATE OR COUNTRY	SHEETS DRAWINGS	TOTAL CLAIMS	INDEPENDENT CLAIMS
		FL	23	19	6

ADDRESS

Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12230 FOREST HILL BLVD.
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414
UNITED STATES

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT
(Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)

Application Number	
Filing Date	2013-08-09
First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
Art Unit	
Examiner Name	
Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

U.S.PATENTS						Remove
Examiner Initial*	Cite No	Patent Number	Kind Code[1]	Issue Date	Name of Patentee or Applicant of cited Document	Pages,Columns,Lines where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
/D.L./	1	5778367		1998-07-07	WESINGER, JR. et al.	
	2	5913212		1999-06-15	SUTCLIFFE et al.	
	3	5950200		1999-09-07	SUDAI et al.	
	4	5963951		1999-10-05	COLLINS	
	5	5987440		1999-11-16	O'NEIL et al.	
	6	6029141		2000-02-22	BEZOS et al.	
	7	6052122		2000-04-18	SUTCLIFFE et al.	
	8	6061681		2000-05-09	COLLINS	

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
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	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	
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	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

/D.L./	9	6073105		2000-06-06	SUTCLIFFE et al.	
	10	6073138		2000-06-06	DE L'ETRAZ et al.	
	11	6009410		1999-12-28	LEMOLE et al.	
	12	6175831	B1	2001-01-16	WEINREICH et al.	
	13	6253216	B1	2001-06-26	SUTCLIFFE et al.	
	14	6269369	B1	2001-07-31	ROBERTSON	
	15	6360222	B1	2002-03-19	QUINN	
	16	6480885	B1	2002-11-12	OLIVIER	
	17	6839680	B1	2005-01-04	LIU et al.	
	18	5937392		1999-08-10	ALBERTS	
	19	5960409		1999-09-28	WEXLER	

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	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	
	Examiner Name	
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

	20	6058417		2000-05-02	HESS et al.	
	21	6330575	B1	2012-12-11	MOORE et al.	
	22	6401075	B1	2002-06-04	MASON et al.	
	23	6601057	B1	2003-07-29	UNDERWOOD et al.	
	24	6629135	B1	2003-09-30	ROSS et al.	
	25	8335713	B2	2012-12-18	DISTEFANO III	
	26	8412570	B1	2013-04-02	DISTEFANO III	
	27	8417567	B2	2013-04-09	DISTEFANO III	
	28	8423399	B2	2013-04-16	DISTEFANO III	
	29	8442860	B2	2013-05-14	DISTEFANO III	

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
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	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	
	Examiner Name	
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

Examiner Initial*	Cite No	Publication Number	Kind Code[1]	Publication Date	Name of Patentee or Applicant of cited Document	Pages,Columns,Lines where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
/D.I./	1	20120185339	A1	2012-07-19	DISTEFANO III	
	2	20130066727	A1	2013-03-14	DISTEFANO III	
	3	20130066728	A1	2013-03-14	DISTEFANO III	
	4	20130066729	A1	2013-03-14	DISTEFANO III	
	5	20130073397	A1	2013-03-21	DISTEFANO III	
	6	20130151338	A1	2013-06-13	DISTEFANO III	
	7	20130151982	A1	2013-06-13	DISTEFANO III	
	8	20130173401	A1	2013-07-04	DISTEFANO III	

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Examiner Initial*	Cite No	Foreign Document Number[3]	Country Code[2]	Kind Code[4]	Publication Date	Name of Patentee or Applicant of cited Document	Pages,Columns,Lines where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear	T[5]

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
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	Art Unit	
	Examiner Name	
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

	1							☐

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Examiner Initials*	Cite No	Include name of the author (in CAPITAL LETTERS), title of the article (when appropriate), title of the item (book, magazine, journal, serial, symposium, catalog, etc), date, pages(s), volume-issue number(s), publisher, city and/or country where published.	T[5]
/D.L./	1	CASEY, C., "Creating and managing webrings: a step-by-step guide," [online] Information Technology and Libraries, Vol. 18, No. 4, pp. 214-224, Dec. 1, 1999 [retrieved July 27, 2013], retrieved from the Internet: <http://www.accessmylibrary.com/article/print/1G1-59021370>, 12 pgs.	☐
/D.L./	2	DONATH, J. et al., "Public Displays of Connection," BTTechnology Journal, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 71-82, Oct. 2004.	☐
/D.L./	3	BOYD, D. M. et al., "Social Network SItes: Definition, History, and Scholarship," [online] In Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, Vol. 13, No. 1, Art. 11, pp. 210-230, Oct. 2007 [retrieved Aug. 1, 2013], retrieved from the Internet: <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html>, 20 pg.	☐

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Examiner Signature	/Daniel Lastra/ (01/25/2014)	Date Considered	

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TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
	Application Number	
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	
	Examiner Name	
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Please see 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 to make the appropriate selection(s):

☐ That each item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(1).

OR

☐ That no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, and, to the knowledge of the person signing the certification after making reasonable inquiry, no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was known to any individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(2).

☐ See attached certification statement.

☐ The fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17 (p) has been submitted herewith.

☒ A certification statement is not submitted herewith.

SIGNATURE

A signature of the applicant or representative is required in accordance with CFR 1.33, 10.18. Please see CFR 1.4(d) for the form of the signature.

Signature	/SCOTT D. PAUL/	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2013-08-09
Name/Print	SCOTT D. PAUL	Registration Number	42984

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3. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Member of Congress submitting a request involving an individual, to whom the record pertains, when the individual has requested assistance from the Member with respect to the subject matter of the record.

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7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (i.e., GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.

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Search Notes	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13963050	DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	DANIEL LASTRA	3681

CPC- SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner
G06Q 90/00	01/25/14	DL

CPC COMBINATION SETS - SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner

US CLASSIFICATION SEARCHED			
Class	Subclass	Date	Examiner
705	14.1	01/25/14	dl

SEARCH NOTES		
Search Notes	Date	Examiner
EAST	01/25/14	DL

INTERFERENCE SEARCH			
US Class/ CPC Symbol	US Subclass / CPC Group	Date	Examiner

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13963050	CTNF	01/30/2014	8201-0015
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(Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)

Application Number	13963050
Filing Date	2013-08-09
First Named Inventor	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III
Art Unit	3681
Examiner Name	LASTRA, DANIEL
Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

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Examiner Initial*	Cite No	Patent Number	Kind Code[1]	Issue Date	Name of Patentee or Applicant of cited Document	Pages,Columns,Lines where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
	1	5560006	A	1996-09-24	LAYDEN et al.	
	2	5787254	A	1998-07-28	MADDALOZZO JR. et al.	
	3	5995099	A1	1999-11-30	HORSTMANN	
	4	6035334	A	2000-03-07	MARTIN et al.	
	5	6199111	B1	2001-03-06	HARA et al.	
	6	8589222	B1	2013-11-19	DISTEFANO III	
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	Examiner Name	LASTRA, DANIEL
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

Examiner Initial*	Cite No	Publication Number	Kind Code[1]	Publication Date	Name of Patentee or Applicant of cited Document	Pages,Columns,Lines where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
	1	20130305132	A1	2013-11-14	DISTEFANO III	
	2	20130311876	A1	2013-11-21	DISTEFANO III	

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	1	0016210	WO	A1	2000-03-23	NEXCHANGE CORP.		☐
	2	9923591	WO	A1	1999-05-14	SAGE ENTERPRISES INC.		☐
	3	0021012	WO	A2	2000-04-13	ELECTRONIC COMMERCE & CATALOG SERVICES, INC.		☐
	4	0140968	WO	A2	2001-06-07	MOGHUL		☐
	5	H10301911	JP	A	1998-11-13	FUJITSU LTD.		☒
	6	H10162029	JP	A	1998-06-19	DAEWOO ELECTRON CO. LTD.		☒

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	First Named Inventor	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	3681
	Examiner Name	LASTRA, DANIEL
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

	7	20000012595	KR	A	2000-03-06	WEBEASY CORP.		☒

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	1	LAZAR, J., "THE 10 BIGGEST BLUNDERS THAT BUSINESSES MAKE ON THE WEB," [online] Adapted from Interactive Age, May 22, 1995. Copyright 1995, Lazar Productions [retrieved 04/24/14] retrieved from the Internet: <http://www.jr.co.il/training/web01.txt>, 4 PG.	☐
	2	KENNEDY, D.M., "PRACTICE MANAGEMENT: SITE PLAN 12 STEPS TO PROMOTING YOUR WEBSITE," [online] In General Practice, Solo & Small Firm Division Magazine, Vol. 17, No. 6, Sep. 2000 [retrieved 04/24/14] retrieved from the Internet: <http://www.americanbar.org/newsletter/publications/gp_solo_magazine_home/gp_solo_magazine_index/sep2000kennedy.html>, 4 pg.	☐
	3	"SELLING ONLINE: MORE THAN HITTING A FEW KEYS," In ProQuest, Interactive Daily, Phillips Business Information Corporation © Sep 5, 1995.	☐
	4	PALMER, A. et al., "THE ROLE OF ELECTRONIC COMMERCE IN CREATING VIRTUAL TOURISM DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANISATIONS," [online] In Int'l. J. of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 198-204, 2000.	☐
	5	IYER, S., "FACTORS DISTINGUISHING HIGH TRAFFIC ONLINE STORES FROM LOW TRAFFIC ON-LINE STORES," Thesis - Carleton University, Sprott School of Business, 2000, 94 pg.	☐
	6	SCHWABACH, A., "Intellectual Property: A Reference Handbook," ABC-CLIO, 2007, Pub. Apr. 26, 2007, 318 pg, [Abstract only].	☐

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Signature	/SCOTT D. PAUL/	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2014-04-25
Name/Print	SCOTT D. PAUL	Registration Number	42984

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General Practice, Solo & Small Firm DivisionMagazine

Volume 17, Number 6
September 2000

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

SITE PLAN 12 STEPS TO PROMOTING YOUR WEBSITE

By Dennis M. Kennedy

Even the greatest website in the world does you no good if no one visits it. It's what you do after you publish the site that will determine its ultimate success. Follow these 12 steps to create a strategic plan for promoting you law firm's website.

1. Determine Your Purpose. Your plan to promote your website begins with a basic question: Why do you have the site? Your answer will help you define your target audience and suggest the level of promotional efforts needed.

2. Set Goals. Your goals should be specific, well defined, and attainable. Websites can be used to market services or products directly. Other valuable uses include streamlining client intake and support, providing technical legal information, and reducing the costs of printing and postage for brochures and other marketing information. Goals can change over time, but they will help you create a framework for your promotional efforts. Goal number one will be finding the best ways to reach your target audience.

3. Put the Plan in Writing. Promoting your website is a continuing process that will

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evolve after a number of false starts. You will need to develop some checklists and logs of what you have done and plan to do to promote the site. Take notes on how well each strategy has worked. A written record of this information will help you avoid duplicating your efforts and will give you a road map for promoting new sites you may develop.

4. Choose Your Domain Name Wisely. Web searchers typically will try the most obvious domain name (www.yourlawfirm .com.) to find your site before they resort to search engines or other finding techniques. If you do not choose a good domain name, you will make it unnecessarily difficult for people to find your site. Don't use non-intuitive names such as initials familiar only to insiders in your firm. Try to get a first-level domain name (www.yourlawfirm .com), and avoid long, unwieldy Web addresses with second- or third-level names. Many law firms today use the common name of the firm or the common name with "law" added. There is also a bit of a trend toward more creative domain names, like www.visalaw.com for an immigration law firm.

5. List Your Site Effectively in Search Engines. The highest-quality traffic probably will not come from search engines, but being findable with a search engine is nonetheless important. Many visitors will find your website by using a search engine such as AltaVista, Hotbot, Excite or Google-but sometimes for unexpected reasons. Your website will not appear magically in a search engine index. As a general rule, you must affirmatively add your site to an index. Usually, you can do this simply by clicking an "Add URL" button at the bottom of most search engine home sites and submitting the requested information. You also need to design your site and promote it so that someone performing a keyword search on a topic will be directed to your site. Keep your target audience in mind. There are many ways to enhance your findability with search engines. Visit www. searchenginewatch.com for an eye-opening lesson in how search engines operate.

6. List Your Site in Direc-tories and Finding Lists. There are other, better ways to reach your target audience. These include directories such as FindLaw (www.findlaw.com) and Catalaw (www.catalaw.com). You can get your site included on a specialized list of sites relating to a given legal topic or practice area. This technique narrows the scope of your promotion and helps you attract Web users specifically interested in your topic.

7. Consider Reciprocal Links and Targeted Web Advertising. If you do your homework before you publish your site, you will find several excellent websites and lists of resources that can be linked with your site. The real utility of the Web comes from these lists of hyperlinked sites. The easiest way to get your site linked from a site you like is simply to ask the site's webmaster to add a link (generally, they will

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ask you to add a reciprocal link on your site).

8. Use Offline Tools. Excellent, focused promotions of your site can come from both Web and non-Web efforts. Telling existing clients about your website is an important first step. Put the address of your site on your business card and stationery and in telephone directories. Announce the debut of your site with a special mailing, including e-mail. Even on the Internet, nothing works better than word of mouth. Tell your clients, employees, colleagues, and friends about your site. Press releases and biographies in articles and seminar materials can also publicize your site.

9. Obtain Favorable Mentions. People are eight times more likely to believe a recommendation from an independent source than they are to believe an advertisement. An excellent way to promote your website is to secure favorable mentions from independent sources. This requires that you have good content, design, or something else that will earn favorable reviews. Enhance your prospects of favorable publicity by sending e-mail to columnists and other journalists who write on Internet topics.

10. Continue Your Promotional Efforts. Law firms often put a lot of effort into promoting the rollout of a website, but then neglect to follow up with other promotional efforts. A key aspect of promotion is achieving and sustaining good momentum. Monitor what's happening. You might get a great placement in a search engine and then find a few months later that your website has fallen in priority. If you are adding content regularly and updating the graphic design of your site, it makes good sense to focus on promotional efforts at the same time. Promotion is as important as updating content.

11. Evaluate Your Results Regularly. Simple hit counters are inadequate to help with promotional efforts and indicate a certain lack of Web sophistication to many Internet users. Sophisticated Web traffic reports can be supplied as part of your website hosting arrangement. You can learn fascinating things about the flow of traffic into and through your site and study the success of different promotion techniques. The number of subscribers to e-mail newsletters available at your site is an excellent indicator of the number of quality visits. Use this information to reinforce existing sources of traffic and to help find new locations for reciprocal links or advertising.

12. Go Back to Item No. 1. Do you still have the same reason for maintaining a website? Like content and design, your promotional efforts will evolve as you learn and as new techniques become available. A written plan will help you focus your marketing efforts and improve them on an ongoing basis. Checklists can be especially helpful. A promotional plan can put you well ahead of many other law firms that have websites. It can give you an important competitive advantage and help you

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connect with the audience you want to find.

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This article is an abridged and edited version of one that originally appeared on page 40 of Law Practice Management, March 2000 (26:2).

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FACTORS DISTINGUISHING HIGH TRAFFIC ON-LINE STORES FROM LOW TRAFFIC ON-LINE STORES

by

Sangeeta Iyer, M.Comm.

M.M.S. THESIS

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Management Studies

School of Business
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Ottawa, Ontario

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Dedicated to my father Shri. P.V. Iyer....

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FACTORS DISTINGUISHING HIGH TRAFFIC ON-LINE STORES FROM LOW TRAFFIC ON-LINE STORES

by

Sangeeta Iyer

ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to identify the factors that distinguish high traffic from low traffic on-line stores. Data was collected from 200 on-line stores. High traffic on-line stores were identified from the website 100hot.com. The 100 low traffic on-line stores were selected at random from shopguide.com.

Twelve variables (security, privacy, affiliate networks, reciprocal links, banner advertising, breadth of products, chat, customer participation, e-mail marketing, newsletter, on-line distribution and order tracking) were considered as distinguishing factors. These variables were hypothesized and tested using Multiple Logistic Regression Analysis. The analysis reveals security, privacy, reciprocal links, chat, customer participation, and order tracking as distinguishing factors between high traffic and low traffic on-line stores.

The results of the study suggest that high traffic in on-line stores is due to the interactivity and connectivity that the on-line stores establish with their customers. The features of interactivity and connectivity have been highlighted in the Marketspace model developed by Dutta et al (1997). The Marketspace model analyzes how organizations can transform their business models in the electronic marketplace created by the Internet and the World Wide Web. The model has been used in this research to recognize the key features of on-line stores that attract high traffic.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On-line stores are stores that sell products and services over the Internet. On-line stores operate directly with customers without layers of middle men, and have the ability to reach a global audience, operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and provide customers with a broad selection of products and services. The products and services being sold by on-line stores range from consumer products like appliances and apparel to services like banking and trading services.

The need to attract, acquire, leverage and retain customers is of primary concern to most on-line stores. Revenue growth through customer acquisition and retention remains a major competitive requirement. Each time a customer visits an on-line store, an opportunity to provide the customer with the respective products or services arises. In the event of planning for success, an on-line store must possess certain features and perform certain activities in order to attract traffic to their website (Shikar Ghosh, 1997). Traffic is defined as the number of first time and repeat visitors to an on-line store. High traffic increases the likelihood of profits for on-line stores (http://www.cyberm.com/ecsd.htm).

Successful on-line stores understand that traditional business designs and organizational models are insufficient to meet the challenges of doing business on-line. On-line stores with high traffic, like Dell, Cisco and Amazon, have adopted a new business design, one that emphasizes a finely tuned integration of business technology and process that lays stress on interactivity and connectivity with the customers. Many

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traditionally successful companies that have opened on-line stores without adopting the new paradigm have not been attracting high traffic.

Research in the field of on-line stores, especially with respect to traffic, is scarce due to its recent nature. The features required for a successful, high traffic on-line store have been mentioned by a number of people, but not much has been proved with empirical research. This research seeks to bring out the factors that will lead to high traffic, and thus to more successful on-line stores.

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1.1 Research Question

What are the factors that distinguish high traffic from low traffic on-line stores ?

1.2 Contribution of Research

1.2.1 To Academic Literature

This research is the first empirical study on the distinguishing factors between high traffic and low traffic on-line stores.

1.2.2 To Management Practice

New entrants to on-line business and low traffic on-line stores can identify important features to be possessed and functions to be performed in order to attract traffic. They can also prioritize their budgets, by concentrating on the important features proved to attract traffic, develop business skills to design an on-line store, and establish partnerships with other on-line stores by means of affiliate networks and reciprocal links.

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1.3 Organization of the Thesis

There are six chapters. The Introduction is included in chapter 1. Chapter 2 comprises the Literature Review, where all the concepts pertaining to this research are explained. In chapter 3, the various factors responsible for attracting on-line traffic are explained, and the relevant hypotheses are developed. Chapter 4 describes the research design employed in the thesis. This chapter includes the sample selected, the method of data collection, the measures of the hypotheses developed, and the data analysis. Chapter 5 explains the results obtained from the analysis performed. Chapter 6 discusses the results obtained from the research, and the limitations of the research.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter comprises :

Section 2.1 reviews types of products sold on the Internet. Section 2.2 describes the benefits of on-line stores. Section 2.3 introduces a business model for on-line stores developed by Dutta et al., and evaluates the application of the model with this research.

2.1 Types of products sold on the Internet

As more consumers go on-line, growth will be explosive for many product areas and companies. In general, the more difficult and time-consuming a purchase category is, the more likely consumers will prefer to use the Internet versus standard physical means. The most popular selling categories according to e-marketer (http://www.emarketer.com/estats/ec_sell_3.html) are given in the following table :

Table 1 - Projected On-line Shopping Revenue (in Million Dollars) by Category,1996-2000

Category	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Computer Products	140	323	701	1,228	2,105
Travel	126	276	572	961	1,579
Entertainment	85	194	420	733	1,250
Apparel	46	89	163	234	322
Gifts and Flowers	45	103	222	386	658
Food and Drink	39	78	149	227	336
Other	37	75	144	221	329
TOTAL	**518**	**1,138**	**2,371**	**3,990**	**6,579**

Source : Forrester Research

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a. Computer Products - Computer products include hardware and software. Some on-line stores like Dell offer computer products where the configuration is entirely left to the customer to chose. The customer can chose the memory, speed etc. Software is offered to customers by regular mail and electronically. When delivered electronically, customers can download the software soon after payment. Delivery of such products is instantaneous. Lately, customers can also rent software, where they use the software for the job required, and return the software with a particular fee.

b. Travel - More than in any other area of electronic commerce, consumers and business travelers feel totally comfortable placing orders on-line to purchase airline tickets, hotel reservations, and other travel-related services. According to surveys conducted by Forrester Research, travel services are among the most popular activities on the Internet. Travel services have always been popular on the commercial on-line services. Many travel agencies offer free information and pictures of exotic destinations. Hotel chains, too, have gone on-line to post information and pictures about their rooms and rates.

c. Entertainment - Entertainment, which includes music, and activities such as adult entertainment, on-line games, on-line gambling, and video is the largest on-line business. Many areas of the music world are gaining or serving clients on-line. Sellers of CDs, records, tapes and musical equipment, and publishers of musical magazines are on-line.

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d. Apparel - This is a popular product sold on-line. On-line apparel stores offer clothing for any age group, and present the colors and sizes available. On-line stores like Lands' end also offer measuring instructions to assist their customers chose the right size.

e. Gifts and Flowers - Gifts and flowers sold on-line are probably the most useful when customer wish to send gifts or flowers to someone living in another city. Customers can chose from a variety of gifts, and the same is delivered to the person receiving the gift. Flowers can be sent in a similar fashion. These days, people can even send electronic flowers like an electronic greeting card.

f. Food and Dining - on-line food vendors sell almost any kind of food. Caterers, consultants, cooking schools, and cookbooks are racking up sales on-line. Restaurants are a natural business for the Internet. They market on the Web because travelers and vacationers always ask for recommendations, while making travel plans.

g. Other - The other categories include :

- Books - On-line bookstores do not necessarily have a physical bookstore. They can function as a front end for a drop-shipping business. In other words, they place information on-line about the book, such as title, topic, overview, and price, and then wait for the orders. When a customer is interested, they process the order information and then call their supplier, who ships the book(s) directly to the customer. In either case, an on-line bookstore can offer collections of books that appeal to specialized audiences, such as business books, comic books, romance novels, art books, or any form of literature.
- Housing and Real Estate - Realtors can show property without leaving the office by listing properties on Web sites. Customers can select properties by location, price

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and amenities. Consumers can see traditional house pictures; new software programs allow views from specific locations, such as the view of the master bedroom from the hallway. Mortgage brokers are available on-line as well. Customers are given the option of analyzing the competitive bids from different lending sources.

- Job Seeking On-line - The Internet is becoming a resource center for employers seeking new workers and employees seeking jobs. Businesses that match the employers and employees are successful. The various services provided are career counseling, job banks, newsletters, newspapers, and resume services.

2.2 Benefits of on-line stores

The following are some of the main reasons for businesses to conduct transactions on-line:

a. Communication - On-line communications offer merchants benefits of interacting with consumers that cannot exist in one-way print or television communications. Using e-mail, infobots (automated e-mail, similar to fax-back system), and other on-line tools, merchants can create a dialog with consumers that leads to long-term relationships and sales (Ellsworth, J & M : 1996; Janal : 1997).

b. Reach a Worldwide Audience in an " *any time, any place, no matter economy*" - People in virtually every country have access to the Internet and can place orders for products across the globe. *Reach*, as defined by Evans and Wurster (1997), is one of the dimensions of navigation used by on-line stores to offer products and compete with one another. It means the number of customers a business can access or how

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many products it can offer. On-line stores can access millions of people, unconstrained by physical limitations.

In 1987, Davis introduced the concept of "*any time, any place, no matter economy*". With respect to *any time*, he said that, consumers can order products and services at any time. They are not restricted by store hours. The concept of real time was also brought out. Producers deliver their products and services in *real time*, which means no lag-time between identification and fulfillment of the need. Banking services, for example, can be utilized by customers any time, and in real time. With respect to *any place*, according to Davis, making products and services less fixed in space increases their competitive edge. This means that products and services can be accessed from any place.

With respect to *no matter*, Davis emphasized the importance of 'intangibles' in the economy. Money, for example, is a medium of exchange, that is changing its tangible paper form into an intangible form, as in electronic funds transfer and Smart Cards. For traditional retailers, the industry is based on physical aspects like location, buildings, physical logistics involving warehouses and trucks. Such assets become largely redundant in the electronic world. Intangibles like knowledge capture, information management and brand equities become new core competencies and drivers of value (de Kare-Silver, 1999).

c. Cost Containment - Many businesses are using the Internet to contain telephone and mailing costs. With first-class letters costing $0.45 each, a mailing of 1,000 pieces to customers would cost $450 for postage alone, whereas the same information sent by e-mail would cost $2 to $3 and the messages would arrive in seconds as opposed to

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days or weeks. Overnight mail (which typically costs $8 to $12 for each delivery) cannot compete with e-mail for speed or cost (Ellsworth, J & M : 1996; Janal : 1997).

d. Reduce or eliminate inventory, warehouse, and money costs - Internet-based businesses can rely on drop-shipping their products to meet their customers' orders. They don't have to stock large supplies or products in expensive warehouses. Instead, they can offer the product for sale in their on-line catalog and order the products from their suppliers only when they receive payment from their on-line customers. Because the product is not bought until required, the on-line merchant doesn't have to tie up money in goods or pay interest on that money. Instead, the money earned can generate interest or be invested on other profitable ventures (Ellsworth, J & M : 1996; Janal : 1997).

e. Information Retrieval and Utilization - The key aspect of the Internet is information. Businesses can offer information (like a newsletter, report, or on-line research) about their products. According to Evans and Wurster (1997), *richness*, is another dimension of navigation, and it is defined by three aspects of information itself. The first is *bandwith*, or the amount of information that can be moved from sender to receiver in a given time. The second aspect is the degree to which the information can be *customized*. For example, an advertisement on television is far less customized than a personal sales pitch. The third aspect is *interactivity*. Richness holds enormous potential for building close relationships with customers in a future dominated by e-commerce. Traditional businesses have always had to make a trade-off between richness and reach. Getting highly detailed, customized information to and from a large number of consumers is extremely expensive. On-line stores can exploit the

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displacement of the trade-off permitted by electronic connectivity and information standards.

f. Affiliation - According to Evans and Wurster (1997), *affiliation*, which is the third dimension of navigation, is directed towards the customer. Affiliation is about whose interest the business represents. Customers become 'prosumers' according to Alvin Toffler (1990). The *Prosumer*, has been defined to describe the breakdown of the distinction between producer and consumer. According to Toffler, the consumer not only buys the product or service, but also participates in its production and delivery. By allowing customers to take part in the transaction process, affiliation is directed to the customer and on-line stores are able to enhance customer relationships.

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2.3 The Business Model for On-line Stores

A business model, known as the Marketspace model, has been developed by Dutta et al.(1997) for on-line stores, and is referred to as the *Theory of Cyber Transformation.*

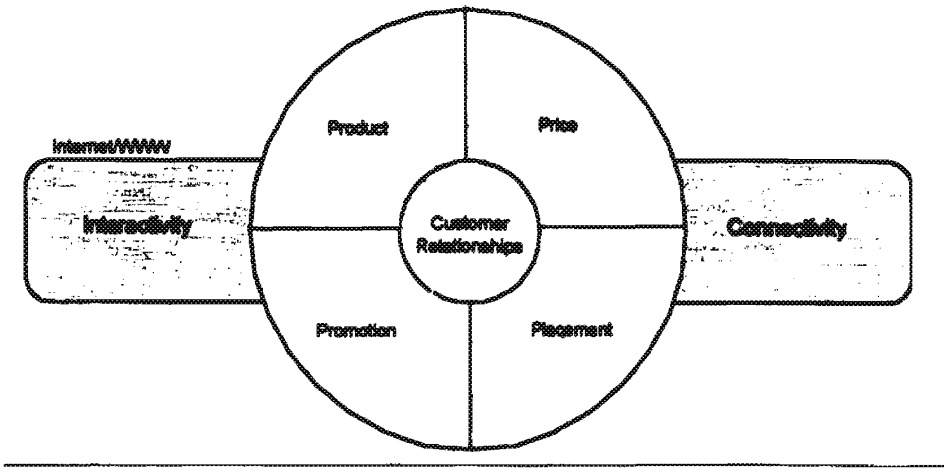


Figure 1 The Marketspace Model

The Marketspace model is built on two dimensions, namely, a technological capability dimension, and, a strategic business dimension. The **technological capability** dimension comprises of the following :

a. *Interactivity* : due to the real-time, on-line nature of the Internet, relationships between organizations and customers are becoming more interactive in the Marketspace. This is enhancing the richness of customer relationships and creating new paradigms of product design and customer service.

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b. *Connectivity* : the open and global nature of the Internet is fostering the creation of a shared global Marketspace. The radical increase in connectivity enabled by the Internet is giving rise to new communication and co-ordination mechanisms both across organizations and customers, and also within groups of customers themselves.

The **strategic business** dimension comprises of the classical strategic marketing model of 4Ps - Product (refers to tangible and intangible products and services), Price, Promotion and Placement (or Distribution). This model has the dual advantages of simplicity and time-tested acceptance. The authors have augmented the 4Ps with one C - the additional dimension of Customer relationships, as this aspect is not captured adequately by the 4Ps.

The Marketspace model was used to design a questionnaire that probed into the following question : "to what degree are the '4Ps+C' getting transformed due to the real time interactivity and global connectivity of the Internet ?" The overall evaluation for each dimension was obtained by aggregating a number of items related to the degree and extent to which specific features/aspects have been transformed/achieved. The transformations of the "4Ps+C" are as follows :

Technological Sophistication

- The ease of navigation of the site;
- The degree of customization possible of the web interface;
- Speed and ease of access to site features; and
- Advanced capabilities (such as video)

Transformation of Products

- The availability of product related information on-line;
- The customization of products for individual or groups of customers; and

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- The participation of customers in the specification and design of products.

Transformation of Promotion

- The use of on-line advertising;
- The use of on-line promotions such as sales and discounts;
- The customization of on-line promotions;
- The participation of customers in on-line promotions; and
- Links with other organizations in organizing on-line promotions.

Transformation of Pricing

- The availability of pricing information on-line;
- The dynamic customization of prices;
- The availability of on-line price negotiation; and
- The possibility to charge customers for only proportions of products consumed.

Transformation of Place

- The availability of on-line ordering;
- The availability of secured on-line payment;
- Distribution of products on-line; and
- The involvement of partner organizations in on-line distribution.

Transformation of Customer Relationships

- The on-line identification and tracking of customers to provide customized services;
- The provision of on-line communications to customers;
- The creation of on-line communities for customers; and
- The solicitation of on-line feedback from customers.

2.3.1 The variables derived from the Marketspace Model

Given that on-line stores are a recent method of doing business in the market, there is no specific model developed to attract or increase traffic to these on-line stores. The field of electronic commerce is relatively new, and as such little statistical data or empirical research is available. Therefore, we formulate the framework presented in

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chapter 3, as a set of propositions, which are based on examples from pioneers in the field and our intuition. The Marketspace model explained above has been analyzed, and recognized as the closest fit to the current research.

The Marketspace Model indicates clearly, the features of on-line stores, and the functions that can be performed with the help of on-line stores, and this research attempts to identify the important functions and features of on-line stores in order to distinguish the high traffic from low traffic on-line stores. It is however, in the capacity of this research to choose only those features and activities that are available on the website of the on-line store and those that can be measurable.

The features (variables) derived from the Marketspace Model are given below, and the hypotheses developed with the respective rationale are explained in chapter 3.

Technological Sophistication

- The ease of navigation of the site
- The degree of customization possible of the web interface
- Speed and ease of access to site features
- Advanced capabilities (such as video)

The aspect of technological sophistication has not been taken into consideration because it is not explicitly stated in the marketspace model. Also, most of the dimensions of technological sophistication depend on the hardware and software used by the customer. Since the focus of this research is from the store point of view, these dimensions are not being measured.

Transformation of Products

- The availability of product related information on-line : This variable has not been

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taken due to non-measurability. It is not measurable, because there are various levels of product related information, and these are not clearly defined. In other words, what is adequate information for one on-line store might not be adequate for another on-line store.

- The participation of customers in the specification and design of products : Customer participation (Appendix A).
- The customization of products for individual or groups of customers : Customer participation. This dimension is included in the same variable (customer participation), because customization can take place only if the customers participate in the specification and design of products.

Transformation of Promotion

- The use of on-line advertising : Banner advertising (Appendix B).
- The use of on-line promotions such as sales and discounts : This dimension is not being measured because sales and discounts are not consistently present in any on-line store.
- The customization of on-line promotions : This dimension is not being measured because sales and discounts are not consistent in any on-line store, and hence even the customization might not be consistent.
- The participation of customers in on-line promotions : If customization might not be consistent, participation will not be possible.
- Links with other organizations in organizing on-line promotions : Reciprocal Links (Appendices C and D).

Transformation of Pricing

- The availability of pricing information on-line : This dimension is not being considered as a distinguishing factor. Price availability is necessary for any store, and is a common factor for all on-line stores.
- The dynamic customization of prices : It has been found from the data, that this dimension and the following two dimensions of the pricing aspect are not available in the on-line stores analyzed, and hence are considered redundant for this research.

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- The availability of on-line price negotiation; and
- The possibility to charge customers for only proportions of products consumed.

Transformation of Place

- The availability of on-line ordering : This dimension is not being considered as a distinguishing factor. On-line ordering is necessary for any store, and is a common factor for all on-line stores.
- The availability of secured on-line payment : Security (Appendix E).
- Distribution of products on-line : On-line distribution of products (Appendix F).
- The involvement of partner organizations in on-line distribution : Affiliate Networks (Appendix G).

Transformation of Customer Relationships

- The on-line identification and tracking of customers to provide customized services : Privacy (Appendix H);
- The solicitation of on-line feedback from customers : Privacy (Appendix H).
- The provision of on-line communications to customers : E-mail marketing, Newsletter (Appendices I and J).
- The creation of on-line communities for customers : Chat (Appendix K).

Two factors (variables) that have been hypothesized in this research, but not present in the Marketspace Model are *breadth of products*, and *order tracking*. These features are based on examples from pioneers in the field of electronic commerce, and intuition.

Breadth of products (Appendix L) - When an on-line store offers products or services related to their core offering, process integration is said to take place. This typically answers the question : "What other things do customers need or do when they buy from us (E-Commerce Guide : http://www.quidnunc.com/banner/ecommerce.asp) ?" Customers can shop conveniently at one stop, rather than spend more time and visit other websites.

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Order Tracking (Appendix M) - On-line stores also allow customers to keep track of their products while in transit, and when an item is being transferred from one place to another, customers can make sure that the item has reached its destination.

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CHAPTER 3

TESTABLE HYPOTHESES

3.1 Security

A robust security scheme is an absolute requirement and the leading barrier to widespread commerce on the Internet (C.Agres et al., 1998). A security threat is defined as " a circumstance, condition, or event with the potential to cause economic hardship to data or network resources in the form of destruction, disclosure, modification of data, denial of service, and/or fraud, waste and abuse" (R.Nath et al.,1998).

Secure Socket Layer, or SSL, is an Internet standard developed to ensure private and authenticated communication by encrypting all data between two parties (customer and Web site). SSL also provides the added benefit for customers on the Internet to be assured by a Third Party (The Certificate Issuing Authority) that the website they are purchasing from is indeed a real company (http://www.infodial.net/features/secureserver/index.htm).

Encryption is the process of transforming information so it can't be decrypted or read by anyone except the intended recipient. This encrypted information is called ciphertext. It is the ciphertext that is sent across the network. For example, if a financial report is stored at a particular web site and SSL is enabled on that server, the server encrypts the report and sends the ciphertext to a client, who then decrypts the ciphertext back into the financial report. Decryption reverses the process, turning the ciphertext back into the original message. The recipient is the only one who can do this because only the recipient has a key to "unlock" a message.

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SSL provides:

- server authentication, which allows any SSL-compatible client to verify the identity of the server using a certificate and a digital signature;
- data encryption, which ensures the privacy of client-server communications by encrypting the data stream between the two entities; and
- data integrity, which verifies that the contents of a message arrive at their destination in the same form as they were sent.

H1 *SSL encryption is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

3.2 Privacy

Information privacy refers to the claims of individuals that data about themselves should generally not be available to other individuals and organizations, and that, where data is possessed by another party, the individual must be able to exercise a substantial degree of control over that data and its use (www.anu.edu.au/people/Roger.Clarke/DV/Intro.html) Internet users are concerned about the privacy of information they supply to websites, not only in terms of personal data, but information that websites may derive by tracking their on-line activities (Wang et al., 1998). Information privacy is regulated by agencies such as the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) of the United States that proposed a legislative model, which is built around *four* basic fair information practices: Give consumers notice of what information is collected and how it is used; let consumers choose whether to allow secondary uses of information (for example, to decide whether their name can be used for follow-up marketing from the company or be sold to a third party); give

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consumers "reasonable access" to their information and let them correct any errors; and ensure the information's security (Source : October 1, 1998 CIO Web Business Magazine titled " Saving Private Data" by Sari Kalin).

H2 *The privacy of customers is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

3.3 Affiliate Networks

Affiliate programs (also known as affiliate networks) are emerging as a major force in Internet retail economics, with most major Internet stores offering them and participants numbering in the tens of thousands ("Partners in Affiliate Marketing Struggle With Branding Issues" by Whit Andrews April 13, 1998; Internet World). Using an Affiliate Network is a practice that combines the principal of direct marketing and franchising with the Internet technologies. The resulting business model has been drawing significant attention among large and small Internet commerce entities (CanadaOne Technologies, *by Jeff Molander* at www.canadaone.com/technology/estrat070198.html).

Affiliate networks allow commerce sites to embed their product offerings into other Websites on the Internet that have specific content related to the products. From a pre-existing on-line business or any set of products or services that have a price, description, and a picture, an affiliate program is created. Affiliate programs usually allow website owners to integrate a product or link with other websites to drive traffic back through their store generating sales and earning the affiliate site a commission based upon a percentage of the sale. For example, www.art.com possesses affiliate programs on the Internet at art.com&trade. Some of the linking options offered to other on-line retailers

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are: Linking to their home page or specific galleries, utilizing their banners which will automatically update the affiliate's website.

H3 *Affiliate Networks are more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

3.4 Reciprocal Links

A reciprocal link means that an on-line store agrees to list another site, and gets listed in the other site in return. These simple links can lead to new customers. Links with related sites are likely to attract more customers than links with non-related sites. Related links reflect the free and open nature of the Internet. They are a goodwill gesture, a user-oriented public service ("Why Having a Large Set of Related Links Makes Sense" by Andrew Marlatt, Internet World, August 18, 1997 at http://www.internetworld.com/print/1997/08/18/undercon/19970818-links.html). The more link exchanges an on-line business acquires, the better are the chances to win more customers ("Creating Stores on the Web" by Sawyer et al., 1998).

H4 *Reciprocal links are more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

3.5 Banner Advertising

Banner ads are the most popular form of advertising on the Internet ("Creating Stores on the Web" by Sawyer et al., 1998). A banner ad can basically be described as a piece of visual communication (either animated or still image, with no "set" size standards) that is placed within a web site. Its goal is to attract the netizen (citizen on the Net) long enough to compel a "click-through." The term click-through comes from the

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act of clicking on a link, thereby taking the user "through" to another location (in the case of banner ads, to the advertiser's site). Banner advertising serves two major purposes:

- Promoting a positive brand image, reinforced through repetition.
- Compelling users to click in order to take them away to the sponsor's site.

(Banner Secrets: How to Run a Successful Campaign *by Raymond Pirouz* in http://www.searchz.com/clickz/011398.shtml)

H5 *Banner advertising is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

3.6 Customer Participation

In order to give customers the feeling of power and convenience, on-line stores are allowing them to participate in the specification and design of products. Products are designed according to the customers' demands. For example, Dell Computers configures computers according to the customers' preferences, which include some specifications like memory and speed of a computer required. Other examples include customized PC banking, and customized travel bookings where customers can book the required flight, rent a car, and make a reservation for accommodation for the travel period. Although this might seem like an impersonal way to do business, a growing number of companies are coming to realize that self-service provides for the highest level of customer comfort ("Webonomics: Nine Essential Principles for Growing Your Business on The World Wide Web" by Schwartz, Evan I; 1997).

H6 *Customer participation is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

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3.7 Chat

Chat has long been a popular recreational activity on the Internet. Chat is considered a valuable communication and collaboration tool. Two areas where chat can be particularly useful are customer service and group communication (internet.com). Chat is a text-based, real-time conversation between two or more people typing into a window on computer screens. Other people can see what is being typed, and responses can be seen instantly. While real-time chat on the web is estimated to generate between 30% and 70% of total revenue for commercial on-line services, the category is just starting to take off. By the year 2000, chat is expected to generate about 7.9 billion hours of on-line use, leading to $1 billion in advertising revenues, according to Montgomery Securities (http://www.emarketer.com/estats/ec_hot_10.html , March 1999).

H7 *Chat is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

3.8 E-mail Marketing

On-line retailers are increasingly using e-mail to build customer relationships (More sites use E-mail for marketing" by Roberta Fusaro, Computer World, 1998). Stamford, Conn.-based Meta Group Inc. predicts that in the next two years, e-mail list management will become more sophisticated and a core part of sales and marketing campaigns for companies that sell over the Internet. That's because direct e-mail based on Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), the Web programming language, provides a more dynamic way to present marketing information, is infinitely cheaper than printing and delivering marketing materials and is easier to mine for customer data and response rates, according to the research firm. "Instead of spending $3 to $4 per call by a tele-marketer, companies

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are realizing they can send e-mail messages at a penny a piece and eliminate the likelihood of a hang-up," said Forrester analyst David Cooperstein. And marketers are waking up to the value of having one-on-one, continuous relations with customers via personalized e-mail, a user said ("E-mail marketing goes mainstream Expected to be $1B business in 2002" by Roberta Fusaro, ComputerWorld, 1999).

H8 *E-mail marketing is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

3.9 Newsletter

On-line newsletters allow marketers to "push" information to prospects and customers who want to receive it. By establishing a periodic electronic newsletter and distributing it to an "approved e-mail list" (individuals who ask for it), a real need can be fulfilled —especially if the newsletter contains helpful, objective information. E-mail newsletters and "e-zines" are also ideal for keeping in periodic touch with customers, partners and others who are important. They can build loyalty and promote products and services on an on-going basis (http://www.emergemarketing.com/newslet.htm). Businesses are finding that increase in on-line traffic is from on-line newsletters. Many newsletters include briefs on the latest news in the field. 'How-to' articles are also popular. As the newsletter is published regularly, stronger ties can be established with customers, which will in turn build the on-line business substantially over a period of time (http://www.webmarketingtoday.com/articles/newsletter.htm).

H9 *Newsletters are more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

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3.10 On-line Distribution of Products

In the case of "soft" products, the electronic commerce medium actually becomes the delivery medium. In some cases (for instance, ZDNet at www.zdnet.com, a service reporting on the computer industry), there is actually no paper version of the service. By sharing a digital infrastructure such as the Internet compared to owning a physical one, marketing, distribution and customer service costs can be drastically reduced. This is especially important in service industries, where the cost of customer service usually exceeds the product costs (e.g. for banks, credit card or telecommunications companies). In some markets or for some products, the ability to distribute or receive a product as soon as it's been created is of primary importance. This is obviously the case of information distribution. A company such as Newspage (http://www.newspage.com/), for instance, distributes information on hundreds of topics using electronic mail or the Web, to make sure it reaches its targets as soon as it is available.

Electronic commerce has also had a profound impact on the traditional retail securities brokerage industry as the rapid growth of the Internet has taken personal investing to the next level via on-line broker dealers. Investors can use the vast amount of information available on-line to make investment decisions and actually enter into transactions without traditional broker assistance. The increase of on-line trading is phenomenal as evidenced by 27% of all individual investor trades being completed on-line during 1998, indicating a 65% increase over the previous year. Another staggering number is the 250,000 trades that occur each day through on-line trading. This growth is expected to continue as can be seen by the number of on-line accounts estimated to be over 10 million in 1999. Electronic commerce has acted as a catalyst to expedite the

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efficiency of this process and has become a serious threat to the traditional and discount brokerage firms, as the consumer now possesses greater power (http://www2.cob.ohio-state.edu/~mimnaugh/838.html). Increasingly, software buyers also are turning to the Internet as the most efficient way to evaluate and purchase software products. According to IDC (International Data Corporation), estimated worldwide revenue from Electronic Software Distribution (ESD), defined as software that is both purchased and transmitted on-line, will reach $5.9 billion by 2001 (http://www.comtexnews.com/siia2/indnews.htm).

H10 *On-line distribution of products and services is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

3.11 Breadth of products

Selling similar products is referred to as bundling : a combination of products that are needed for a common task or related in the way we consume. These products may be vertically related. Products combined in this manner are often personalized and constitute a distinct product or service that takes on an enhanced value from the sum of its components. A combination may be a collection of goods and services. For example, airline tickets, hotel rooms, a rental car, meals, and amusement park admission tickets can be bundled as a packaged leisure product. In physical markets, finding, assembling, and personalizing various products for an individual customer would be extremely costly and pose an enormous challenge in pricing and management. On the other hand, computing and networking technologies make bundling and integrating different products and services much easier (Choi and Whinston, 1999).

H11 *A larger variety of products is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

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3.12 Order Tracking

One of the most popular strategies with customers, is outsourcing to them. WISMO or 'Where Is My Order?' is considered one of the best features offered by an on-line store or service. At any point in time, customers can find out where their order is (E-Commerce Guide : http://www.quidnunc.com/banner/ecommerce.asp). Customers are comfortable doing things themselves because it provides them with control and convenience. They don't have to rely on someone else to enter and read the correct information. The first company to offer this service, FedEx, claims to save millions of dollars by allowing customers to find out information by themselves. Surveys have shown that it actually enhances customer satisfaction.

H12 *Order tracking is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

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3.13 Summary of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been examined to distinguish between high traffic and low traffic on-line stores :

1. SSL encryption is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.
2. The privacy of customers is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.
3. Affiliate Networks are more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.
4. Reciprocal links are more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.
5. Banner advertising is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.
6. Customer participation is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.
7. Chat is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.
8. E-mail marketing is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.
9. Newsletters are more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.
10. On-line distribution of products and services is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.

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11. A larger variety of products is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.

12. Order tracking is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.

13. All the twelve factors mentioned above, namely, security, privacy, affiliate networks, reciprocal links, banners, customer participation, chat, e-mail marketing, newsletter, on-line distribution of products, breadth of products and order tracking are more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.

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CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is the on-line store.

4.2 Sample

The sample comprises of two groups: 100 on-line stores ranked in the 'shop' category of the website 100hot.com and 100 on-line stores present in the website shopguide.com.

4.3 On-line Store Selection

Two types of on-line stores were selected. High traffic on-line stores and low traffic on-line stores. High traffic on-line stores are those that are ranked in the website 100hot.com.The website 100hot.com is a directory that ranks websites objectively by web traffic, providing consumers with a listing of the top websites in a variety of categories. The high traffic on-line stores were selected directly from the website 100hot.com. Low traffic on-line stores are those that are not listed in the website 100hot.com and were selected from the website shopguide.com. Shopguide.com is a directory that lists, but not ranks on-line stores. The low traffic on-line stores were selected by matching the types of products sold in 100hot.com. For example, if a book store was present in 100hot.com, a book store was chosen from shopguide.com. Among these stores selected, random sampling was implemented to chose the stores for the research.

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4.4 Time of Data Collection

Data was collected between July - October 1999.

4.5 Research Sources

The research for this study utilized the following sources :

a. The website of each on-line business selected for the sample - All the features will be tested according to the hypotheses mentioned in Chapter 3, and the measures mentioned in sub section 4.6 of this chapter.

b. A review of the existing literature, e-magazines and on-line resources like Internet.com's E-Commerce Guide at http://e-comm.internet.com/

4.6 Measures

The data was collected with the help of the following measures (Appendix N) :

4.6.1 Security

An on-line store is considered to have adequate security measures only if it uses SSL encryption. The security measures implemented by the on-line stores are mentioned in their websites. A score of 1 is given to indicate the usage of SSL and a score of 0 is given to indicate the absence of SSL.

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4.6.2 Privacy

The model proposed by the FTC comprises of four measures[1]. If any one of the measures are complied with, a score of 1 is given. If any two of the measures are complied with, a score of 2 is given. Similarly, if any three conditions are complied with, a score of 3 is given. If all four measures are complied with, a score of 4 is given. If none of the measures are complied with, a score of 0 is given.

4.6.3 Affiliate Networks

This will be measured by giving a score of 1 if the on-line store is connected to an affiliate network, and a score of 0 is given if the on-line store is not connected to an affiliate network. If on-line stores are connected to affiliate networks, they mention the same in their websites.

4.6.4 Reciprocal Links

This will be measured by counting the number of other websites the current website is linked to, and vice-versa. The links in the website of each on-line store are analyzed and if they take the user to another on-line store, and the second on-line store has a similar link to the current on-line store, a reciprocal link exists.

[1] The FTC measures are : (a) Give consumers notice of what information is collected and how it is used; (b) let consumers choose whether to allow secondary uses of information (for example, to decide whether their name can be used for follow-up marketing from the company or be sold to a third party); (c) give consumers "reasonable access" to their information and let them correct any errors; and (d) ensure the information's security.

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4.6.5 Banner Advertising

This will be measured by counting the number of banners in the home page of the website of the on-line store.

4.6.6 Customer Participation

On-line stores inform customers that they can participate in the specification and design of products and services in their websites. Any form of customer participation in the transaction is given a score of 1, and the absence of any form of participation is given a score of 0.

4.6.7 Chat

A score of 1 is given if the facility of chat is available in the on-line store, and a score of 0 is given if it is not available. The availability of chat is mentioned in the websites of the on-line stores.

4.6.8 E-mail Marketing

If the on-line store performs e-mail marketing, a score of 1 is given. If the on-line store does not perform e-mail marketing, a score of 0 is given. When on-line stores ask for the customer's e-mail address and offer to send customers information on products, special offers etc., this is considered as e-mail marketing.

4.6.9 Newsletter

If a newsletter is provided, a score of 1 is given, and if the same is not offered, a score of 0 is given. On-line stores mention the offer of a newsletter in their websites.

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4.6.10 On-line Distribution of products

If any product or service offered by the on-line store can be delivered electronically, a score of 1 will be given. If the product or service cannot be delivered electronically, a score of 0 will be given. When on-line stores offer products or services electronically, they inform the customer of the same. For example, when software can be transmitted electronically, on-line stores mention " downloadable".

4.6.11 Breadth of products

This will be measured by counting the categories of products offered by the on-line store. The categories were counted as per those classified by Yahoo. Yahoo is ranked #1 search engine by 100hot.com.

4.6.12 Order Tracking

If on-line stores allows customers to track the purchased goods or services, a score of 1 is given. If the same is not offered, a score of 0 is given. When on-line stores allow their customers to track their products, the same is mentioned in their websites.

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4.7 Data Analysis

Statistical Technique : Multiple Logistic Regression

Method : Stepwise Logistic Regression

Model : $E(Y) = \dfrac{1}{1 + \exp[- (\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + ...+ \beta_{12} X_{12})]}$

The above model describes the relationship of several predictor variables X_1 , X_1,... X_{12} to a dichotomous dependent variable Y, where Y is typically coded as 1 or 0 for its two possible categories.

In the above model :

E(Y) - is the expected value of Y, which is analogous to the probability that Y = 1.

$\mathbf{X_j}$ - represents the independent variables, where X is the independent variable, and j is the variable number. The independent variables are : Security (X_1) , Privacy (X_2), Affiliate Networks (X_3), Reciprocal Links (X_4), Breadth of products (X_5), Banner advertising (X_6), E-mail marketing (X_7), Newsletter (X_8), Chat (X_9), Customer Participation (X_{10}), Tracking (X_{11}), On-line distribution of products (X_{12}).

β_0 - is the constant term

β_1 **to** β_{12} - are the regression coefficients associated with X_1,..... X_{12}

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CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Section 5.1 provides the breakdown of the data collected. Section 5.2 describes the procedure followed in order to choose the best model, and also explains how well the model represents the data. Section 5.3 explains the Research model with the coefficients and the respective hypotheses. Section 5.4 explains the variables not in the model.

5.1 Data Collected

The data was collected directly from each of the 200 on-line stores. 100 on-line stores (Appendix O) were analyzed from the website 100hot.com. These represent the high traffic on-line stores. The other sample of 100 on-line stores (Appendix P) was analyzed from the website shopguide.com. These represent the low traffic on-line stores. Each on-line store was visited by the researcher, and the proposed distinguishing factors (security, privacy, affiliate networks, reciprocal links, banner advertising, breadth of products, chat, e-mail marketing, newsletter, on-line distribution of products and order tracking) were examined in each on-line store. After a thorough examination, the factors were measured according to the procedures mentioned in section 4.6.

Since the data was collected by the researcher, a third party was requested to verify the data. 25% of the sample (i.e. 200 on-line stores), or 50 on-line stores were verified, and the verification results are indicated in Appendix Q.

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5.1.1 Frequency Table

Table 2(a) - Frequency Table for binary data

VARIABLE	HIGH TRAFFIC			LOW TRAFFIC		
	1	0	Total	1	0	Total
Security	82	17	99	42	55	97
Affiliate Networks	61	38	99	29	68	97
Customer Participation	78	21	99	16	81	97
Chat	40	59	99	7	90	97
E-mail marketing	83	16	99	44	53	97
Newsletter	52	47	99	21	76	97
Order Tracking	73	26	99	20	77	97
On-line Distribution	50	49	99	13	84	97

In the frequency table above :

1 - indicates the presence of the respective variable in the on-line store.

0 - indicates the absence of the respective variable in the on-line store.

Total - indicates the number of valid cases in each group.

The above frequency table comprises of only those variables that have a binary measure. It can be seen that for all the variables, high traffic on-line stores have a greater frequency than the low traffic on-line stores.

Table 2(b) - Frequency Table for continuous data

VARIABLE	HIGH TRAFFIC - AVERAGE	LOW TRAFFIC - AVERAGE
Privacy	3.3333	1.1340
Reciprocal Links	1.1313	0.0909
Breadth of Products	5.1111	2.8041
Banner Advertising	18.8081	10.8557

The above frequency table comprises of those variables that are measured by counting. It can be seen that for all the variables, high traffic on-line stores have a greater average

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than low traffic on-line stores. For a more detailed description of the frequencies, please refer to Appendix R.

5.2 Model Fit

Selecting predictor variables - In logistic regression, as in other multivariate statistical techniques, it would be necessary to identify those independent variables that are good predictors of the dependent variable. There are six methods of model selection : Forward Conditional, Forward LR (likelihood ratio), Forward Wald, Backward LR, Backward Wald, and Backward conditional.

All the six methods of model selection were implemented, and the model with the Forward conditional method was chosen. Also, it was found that the other methods of model selection provided results that were not very different from those provided by the Forward conditional method.The model fit was determined by the Hosmer and Lemeshow Goodness-of-fit test, the classification table and the significance (p value) of the variables in the model.

Table 3 - Hosmer and Lemeshow Goodness-of-Fit Test

	GROUP = 0.00		GROUP = 1.00		
Group	Observed	Expected	Observed	Expected	Total
1.	23.000	22.955	.000	.045	23.000
2.	21.000	20.690	.000	.310	21.000
3.	20.000	20.739	2.000	1.261	22.000
4.	17.000	16.302	3.000	3.698	20.000
5.	11.000	11.694	9.000	8.306	20.000
6.	3.000	3.427	17.000	16.573	20.000
7.	2.000	.764	12.000	13.236	14.000
8.	.000	.362	19.000	18.638	19.000
9.	.000	.062	20.000	19.938	20.000
10.	.000	.005	17.000	16.995	17.000

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The Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness-of-fit index is useful for assessing overall model fit. This test utilizes a grouping strategy based on the percentiles of the estimated probabilities. The methods of Hosmer and Lemeshow (1980, 1982), according to Ryan (1997) , specify that 10 groups (g) be used to indicate the probabilities. A comparison of the observed and expected frequencies in each of the cells in the above table shows that the model fits the data well.

Table 3 contd.

	Chi-Square	df	Significance
Goodness-of-fit test	3.6981	8	.8833

The Hosmer and Lemeshow Goodness-of-fit statistic C, is obtained by calculating the Pearson chi-square statistic from the table of observed and estimated expected frequencies. As can be seen, the significance level of the goodness-of-fit statistic is quite high, thus indicating that the model fits the data well.

Classification Table for GROUP

		Predicted .00 (0)	Predicted 1.00 (1)	Percent Correct
Observed .00	0	90	7	92.78%
1.00	1	13	86	86.87%
			Overall	89.80%

The classification table indicates that 90 low traffic on-line stores have been correctly predicted by the model as low traffic on-line stores. Similarly, 86 high traffic on-line stores have been correctly predicted by the model as high traffic on-line stores. A total of 20 on-line stores have been misclassified. Overall, 89.90% of the 196 on-line stores have been correctly classified.

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5.3 Research Model

5.3.1 Variables in the Equation

Table 4(a) - Variables in the Equation

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig	R
SECURITY	2.0583	.6864	8.9917	1	.0027	.1604
PRIVACY	.9082	.2041	19.8051	1	.0000	.2560
RECLNK	1.0898	.5171	4.4408	1	.0351	.0948
CUSTPN	2.4925	.6018	17.1527	1	.0000	.2362
CHAT	2.4113	.8778	7.5453	1	.0060	.1429
TRACK	1.8972	.5779	10.7772	1	.0010	.1797
CONSTANT	-6.2380	1.0161	37.6863	1	.0000	--

Sig p < 0.05

Table 4(a) shown above comprises of those variables that have been selected with the Forward conditional method of model selection. For each variable in the equation: coefficient (B), standard error of B, Wald statistic, the significance of the Wald statistic (Sig) and the value of *R* are given. The significance of the Wald statistic indicates that all the variables are significant at the significance value of $p < 0.05$. The *R* statistic is used to look at the partial correlation between the dependent variable and each of the independent variables. A positive value indicates that as the variable increases in value, so does the likelihood of the event occurring.

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The probability of being high traffic is calculated as follows :

$\frac{\hat{p}_{new}}{\hat{p}_{old}}$: The relative change in pold that is caused by a one unit increase in the variable under study.

$\hat{p}_{new}$: the new probability, given a one unit increase in the variable under study.

$\hat{p}_{old}$: the original probability.

$$\frac{\hat{p}_{new}}{\hat{p}_{old}} = \frac{1 / 1 + e^{-(b0 + b1X1 + \ldots\ldots bk(Xk+1)}}{1 / 1 + e^{-(b0 + b1X1 + \ldots\ldots bkXk)}}$$

In the above equation, the variable X_k is the variable that is being increased by one unit, while other variables are held constant.

The probability of being high traffic, calculated with the regression co-efficient of each independent variable is given below :

1. **SECURITY**

Hypotheses : *SSL encryption is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

$$\frac{\hat{p}_{new}}{\hat{p}_{old}} = \frac{1 / 1 + e^{-(-6.2380 + 2.0583(1)}}{1 / 1 + e^{-(-6.2380)}}$$

$$= \frac{1 + e^{-(-6.2380)}}{1 + e^{-(-6.2380 + 2.0583(1)}}$$

$$= 7.7297$$

*Hence, it can be concluded that, the probability of being high traffic increases by approx. 7.7 times when **Security** exists.*

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2. **PRIVACY**

Hypotheses : *The privacy of customers is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

$$\frac{\hat{p}_{new}}{\hat{p}_{old}} = \frac{1 / 1 + e^{-(-6.2380 + 0.9082(1)}}{1 / 1 + e^{-(-6.2380)}}$$

$$= \frac{1 + e^{-(-6.2380)}}{1 + e^{-(-6.2380 + 0.9082(1)}}$$

$$= 2.4727$$

Hence, it can be concluded that, the probability of being high traffic increases by approx. 2.4 times when ***Privacy*** *increases by one unit.*

3. **RECLNK**

Hypotheses : *Reciprocal links are more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

$$\frac{\hat{p}_{new}}{\hat{p}_{old}} = \frac{1 / 1 + e^{-(-6.2380 + 1.0898(1)}}{1 / 1 + e^{-(-6.2380)}}$$

$$= \frac{1 + e^{-(-6.2380)}}{1 + e^{-(-6.2380 + 1.0898(1)}}$$

$$= 2.9623$$

Hence, it can be concluded that, the probability of being high traffic increases by approx. 2.9 times when ***Reciprocal Links*** *increases by one unit.*

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4. **CUSTPN**

Hypotheses : *Customer participation is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

$$\frac{\hat{p}_{new}}{\hat{p}_{old}} = \frac{1 / 1 + e^{-(-6.2380 + 2.4925(1)}}{1 / 1 + e^{-(-6.2380)}}$$

$$= \frac{1 + e^{-(-6.2380)}}{1 + e^{-(-6.2380 + 2.4925(1)}}$$

$$= 11.8355$$

Hence, it can be concluded that, the probability of being high traffic increases by approx. 11.8 times when ***Customer Prticipation*** *exists.*

5. **CHAT**

Hypotheses : *Chat is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

$$\frac{\hat{p}_{new}}{\hat{p}_{old}} = \frac{1 / 1 + e^{-(-6.2380 + 2.4113(1)}}{1 / 1 + e^{-(-6.2380)}}$$

$$= \frac{1 + e^{-(-6.2380)}}{1 + e^{-(-6.2380 + 2.4113(1)}}$$

$$= 10.9321$$

Hence, it can be concluded that, the probability of being high traffic increases by approx. 10.9321 times when ***Chat*** *exists.*

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6. TRACK

Hypotheses : *Order tracking is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*

$$\frac{\hat{p}_{new}}{\hat{p}_{old}} = \frac{1 \,/\, 1 + e^{-(-6.2380 + 1.8972(1)}}{1 \,/\, 1 + e^{-(-6.2380)}}$$

$$= \frac{1 + e^{-(-6.2380)}}{1 + e^{-(-6.2380 + 1.8972(1)}}$$

$$= 6.5943$$

Hence, it can be concluded that, the probability of being high traffic increases by approx. 6.5 times when ***Order Tracking*** *exists.*

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Table 4(b) - Variables in the equation with the odds ratio

Variable	Exp(B)	95% CI Exp(B) Lower	Upper
SECURITY	7.8327	2.0400	30.0739
PRIVACY	2.4798	1.6623	3.6993
RECLNK	2.9737	1.0792	8.1938
CUSTPN	12.0911	3.7171	39.3306
CHAT	11.1482	1.9953	62.2891
TRACK	6.6671	2.1479	20.6944

Table 4(b) comprises of the variables in the equation, and for each variable in the equation : estimated odds ratio (exp(B)), confidence interval for exp(B). Exp(B) is the value by which the odds of the event change when the *i*th independent variable increases by one unit. If the value is greater than 1, the odds are increased; if the value is less than 1, the odds are decreased. A value of 1 leaves the odds unchanged. The confidence interval at 95% for exp(B) indicates the range in which the average estimated odds ratio can exist.

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Other Statistics

Correlation Matrix

	SECURITY	PRIVACY	RECLNK	CUSTPN	CHAT	TRACK
SECURITY	*1.00000*	.08601	.22965	.28357	.28502	.04573
PRIVACY	.08601	1.00000	.16577	.16663	.23123	.16067
RECLNK	.22965	.16577	1.00000	-.03286	-.19453	-.03537
CUSTPN	.28357	.16663	-.03286	1.00000	.13794	.08603
CHAT	.28502	.23123	-.19453	.13794	1.00000	.25418
TRACK	.04573	.16067	-.03537	.08603	.25418	1.00000

From the correlation matrix above, it can be seen that correlation among the independent variables is very low, thus confirming the absence of multicollinearity in the current model.

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5.3.2 Variables not in the equation

Table 5 - Variables not in the equation

Variable	Score	df	Sig	R
AFFNET	.0738	1	.7858	.0000
BRPR	.1110	1	.7390	.0000
BANAD	2.9379	1	.0865	.0588
EMMK	1.3203	1	.2505	.0000
NEWSL	.6986	1	.4032	.0000
ONDISTR	1.7318	1	.1882	.0000

Table 5 comprises of those variables that were removed from the model during the model selection process. This means that these independent variables are not significant in this research. Even though the variables are not significant, the *R* statistic is positive for all the variables. The *R* statistic is used to look at the partial correlation between the dependent variable and each of the independent variables. A positive value indicates that as the variable increases in value, so does the likelihood of the event occurring.

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CHAPTER 6

Section 6.1 discusses the results obtained in this research. Section 6.2 expresses the limitations of this research.

6.1 Discussion of Results

The results of the analysis indicate six distinguishing factors (customer participation, chat, security, order tracking, reciprocal links and privacy) between high traffic and low traffic on-line stores. The results also convey the role and importance of the interactivity and connectivity features of the Internet and the World Wide Web, developed in the Marketspace model.

From the results obtained, it is observed that Customer Participation is the most significant distinguishing factor. This brings out the importance of customers in the transaction process. The 'prosumer' has emerged as a successful element of high traffic on-line stores. By allowing their customers to participate in the specification and design of their products and services, on-line stores develop a good interaction with the customers. On-line stores are not only able to interact with their customers, but also able to connect with them, thus enhancing customer relationships and customer service.

The next significant distinguishing factor is Chat. By providing a forum for customers to *Chat* with one another, on-line stores develop a community's interactive space. Customers tend to attract and retain others like themselves to participate in conversations, whether for entertainment or education, thus enhancing connectivity. Since the conversations are inclined to revolve around a particular interest, common task

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or hobby, they can be sources for sharing information, and become deep reservoirs of information.

Security and Privacy are also significant factors that distinguish high traffic and low traffic on-line stores. When on-line stores provide security and privacy in the transactions, connectivity is enhanced by attracting more people to confidently use the on-line stores and provide information like credit card numbers and other confidential information. Statement of privacy in on-line stores gives customers the confidence to give their information which enhances interactivity and thus customer relationship is enriched.

Order Tracking stems partially from customer participation, in the sense that the customer has the capacity and convenience to find out where the purchased product is while in transit, at any desired time. The customer does not have to entirely depend on, and wait for a third party to provide the required information. This is another way for on-line stores to connect with their customers.

Having Reciprocal Links is another distinguishing factor, and is advantageous to on-line stores. They provide their customers with the opportunity to shop for more products and services with ease. Reciprocal links help on-line stores to develop connectivity not only with their customers, but also amongst themselves.

On-line stores must introduce the factors proven to be responsible for high traffic in order to gain a competitive edge over their counterparts.

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6.2 Limitations of the Study

The following are the limitations of this study:

- The sample of high traffic on-line stores is selected from an existing database. While it is unlikely, there may be a few high traffic on-line stores that are not included in the selected list. It is not in the capacity of this research to measure traffic in on-line stores.
- Differentiating factors are only those that can be seen on the website of the on-line store. The distinguishing factors identified are mainly external features. There are probably internal distinguishing features as well. The scope of this research is limited to the external features.
- Since the variables have been measured by the researcher, there is a possibility of error in the analysis of the variables.

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http://www.quidnunc.com/banner/ecommerce.asp

http://www.searchz.com/clickz/011398.shtml

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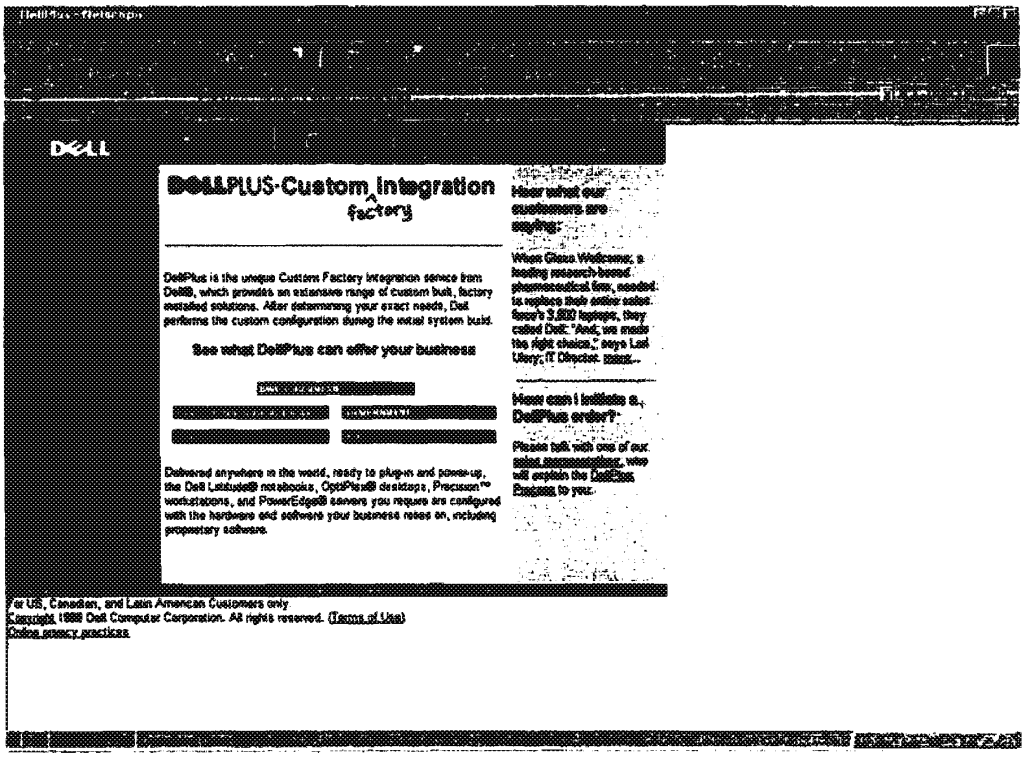
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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Customer Participation

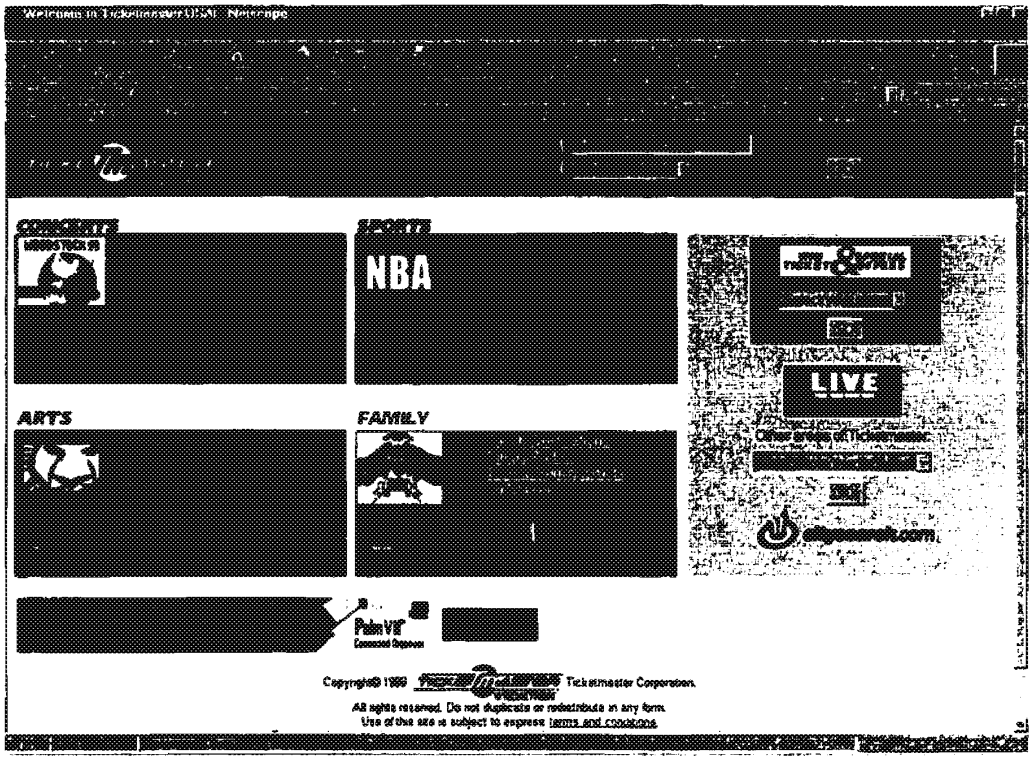
http://www.dell.com/dellplus/index.htm



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Appendix B - Banner Advertising

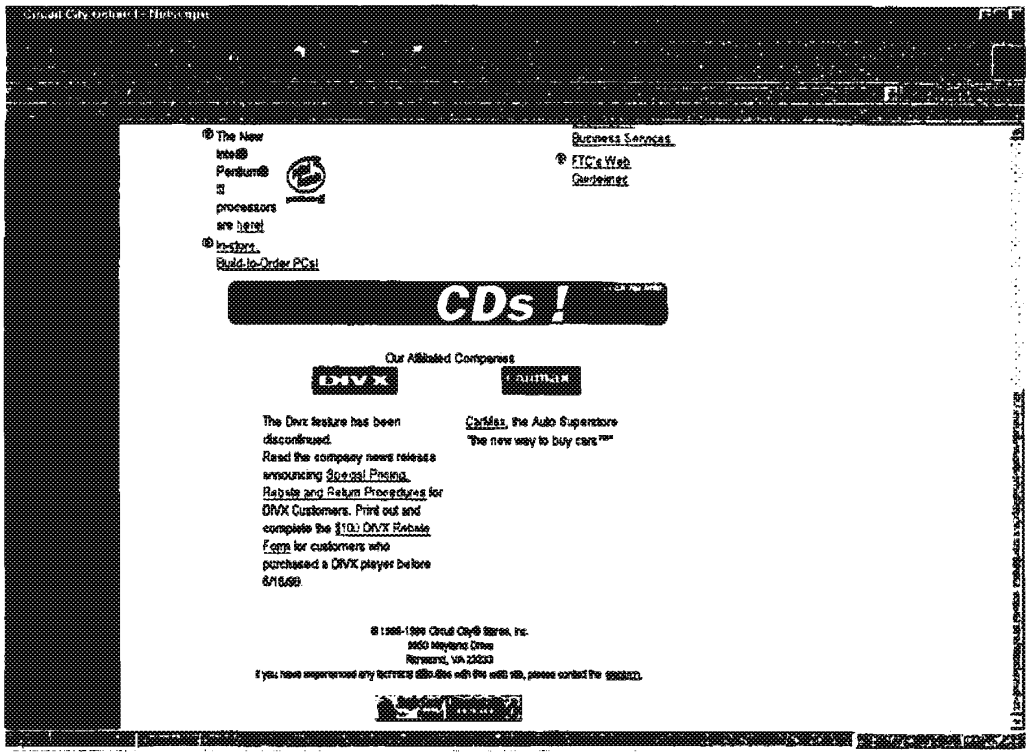
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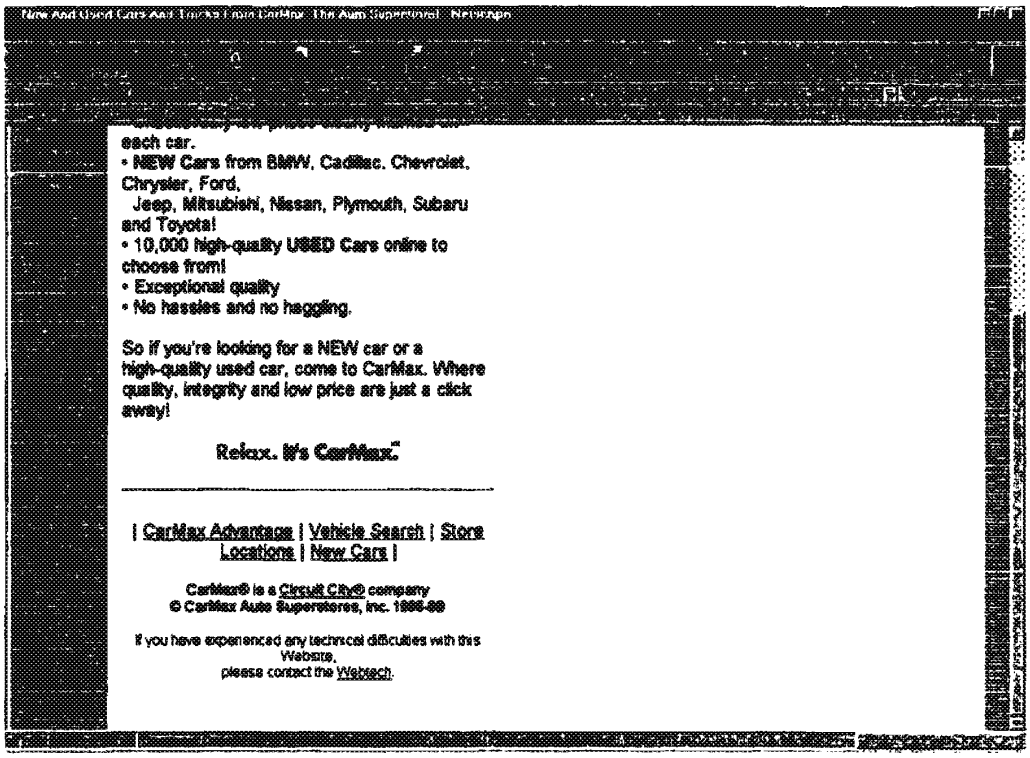
Appendix C - Reciprocal Links (a)

http://www.circuitcity.com/ and www.carmax.com



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Appendix D - Reciprocal Links (b)



each car.
• NEW Cars from BMW, Cadillac, Chevrolet, Chrysler, Ford,
Jeep, Mitsubishi, Nissan, Plymouth, Subaru and Toyota!
• 10,000 high-quality USED Cars online to choose from!
• Exceptional quality
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So if you're looking for a NEW car or a high-quality used car, come to CarMax. Where quality, integrity and low price are just a click away!

Relax. It's CarMax.™

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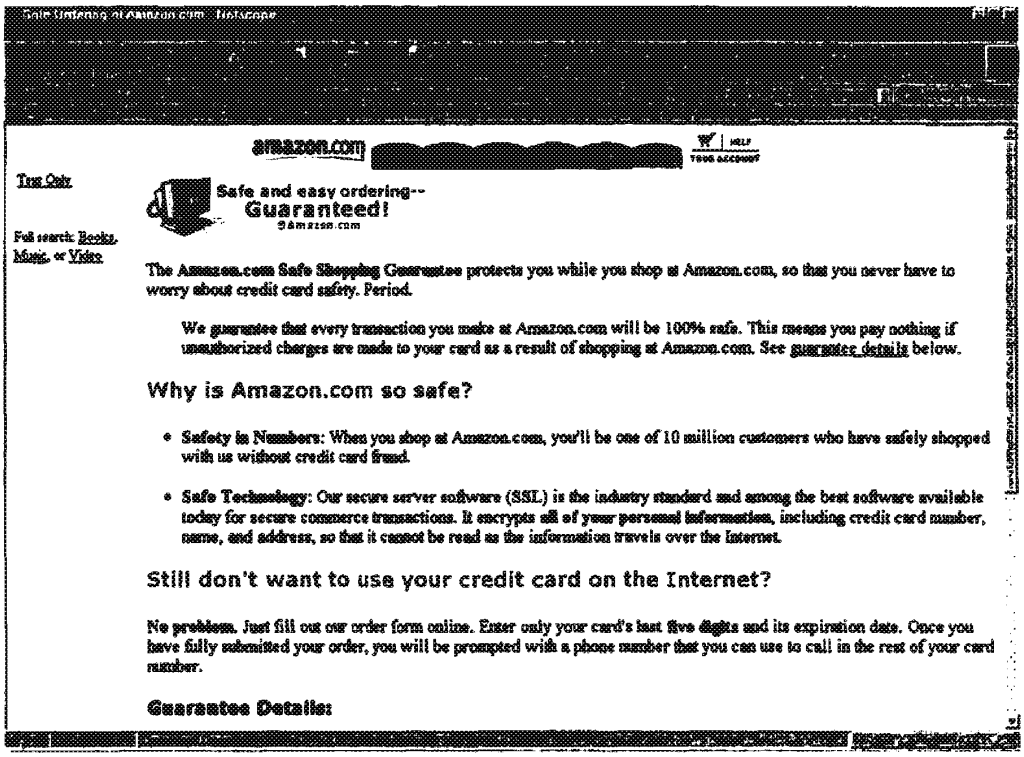
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Appendix E - Security

http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/subst/help/security-guarantee.html/002-1423508-1139019



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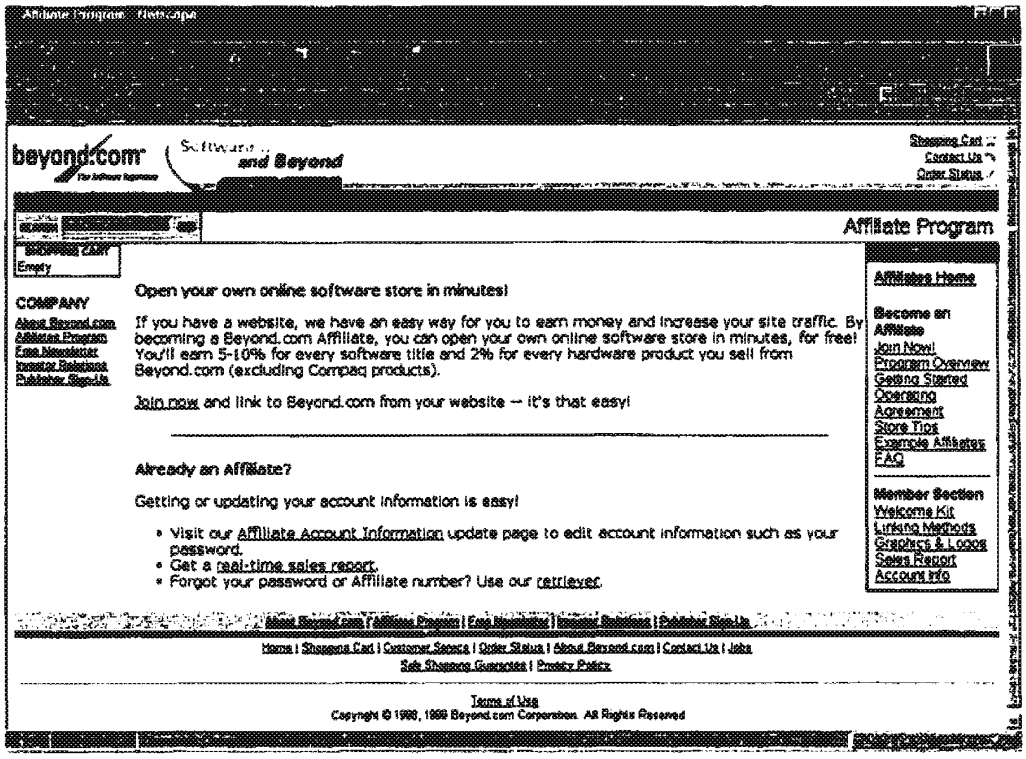
Appendix F - On-line Distribution of Products



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Appendix G - Affiliate Networks

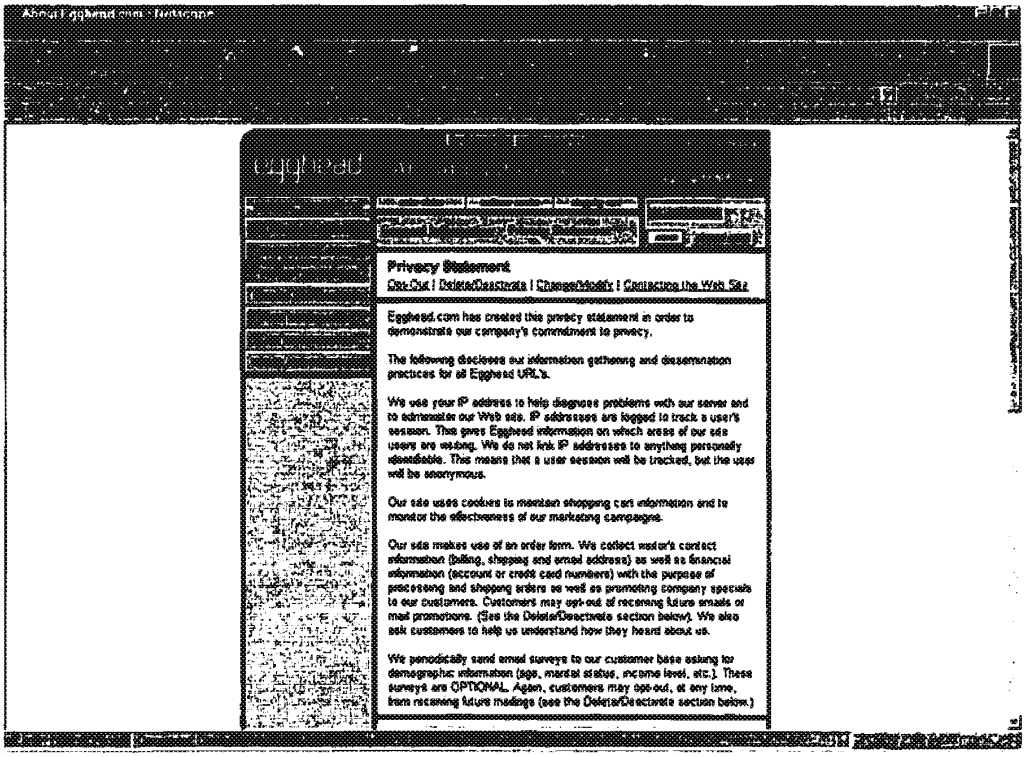
http://www.beyond.com/affiliates/



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Appendix H - Privacy

http://www.egghead.com/about/corp_privacy.html



Privacy Statement

Opt-Out | Delete/Deactivate | Change/Modify | Contacting the Web Site

Egghead.com has created this privacy statement in order to demonstrate our company's commitment to privacy.

The following discloses our information gathering and dissemination practices for all Egghead URL's.

We use your IP address to help diagnose problems with our server and to administer our Web site. IP addresses are logged to track a user's session. This gives Egghead information on which areas of our site users are visiting. We do not link IP addresses to anything personally identifiable. This means that a user session will be tracked, but the user will be anonymous.

Our site uses cookies to maintain shopping cart information and to monitor the effectiveness of our marketing campaigns.

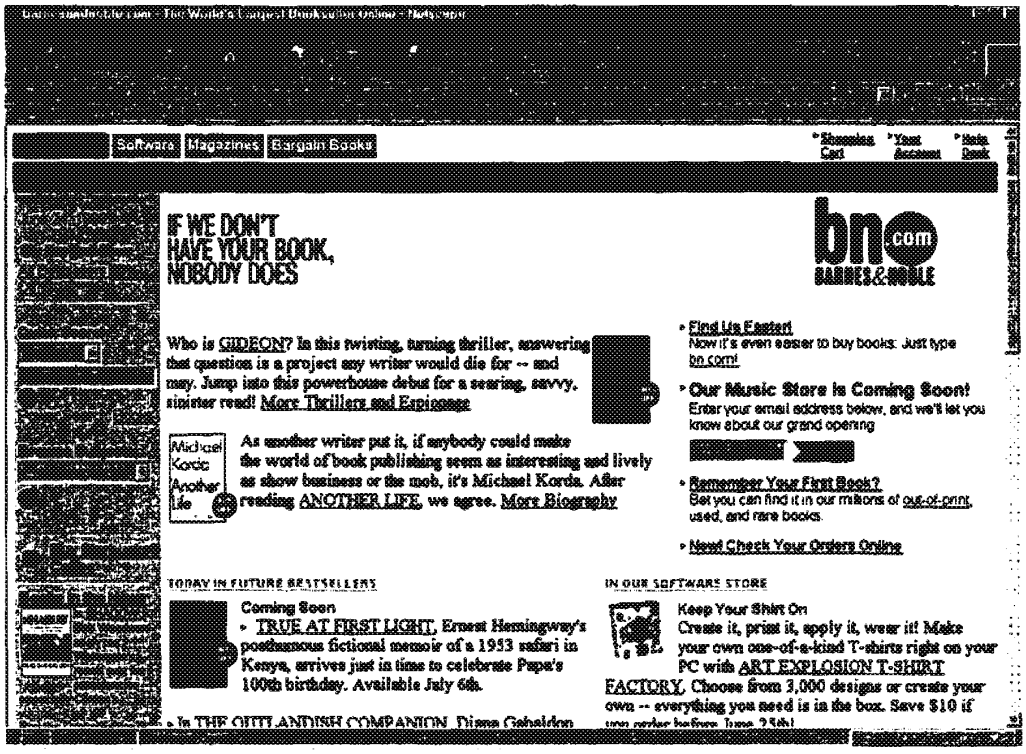
Our site makes use of an order form. We collect visitor's contact information (billing, shipping and email address) as well as financial information (account or credit card numbers) with the purpose of processing and shipping orders as well as promoting company specials to our customers. Customers may opt-out of receiving future emails or mail promotions. (See the Delete/Deactivate section below). We also ask customers to help us understand how they heard about us.

We periodically send email surveys to our customer base asking for demographic information (age, marital status, income level, etc.). These surveys are OPTIONAL. Again, customers may opt-out, at any time, from receiving future mailings (see the Delete/Deactivate section below.)

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Appendix I - E-mail Marketing

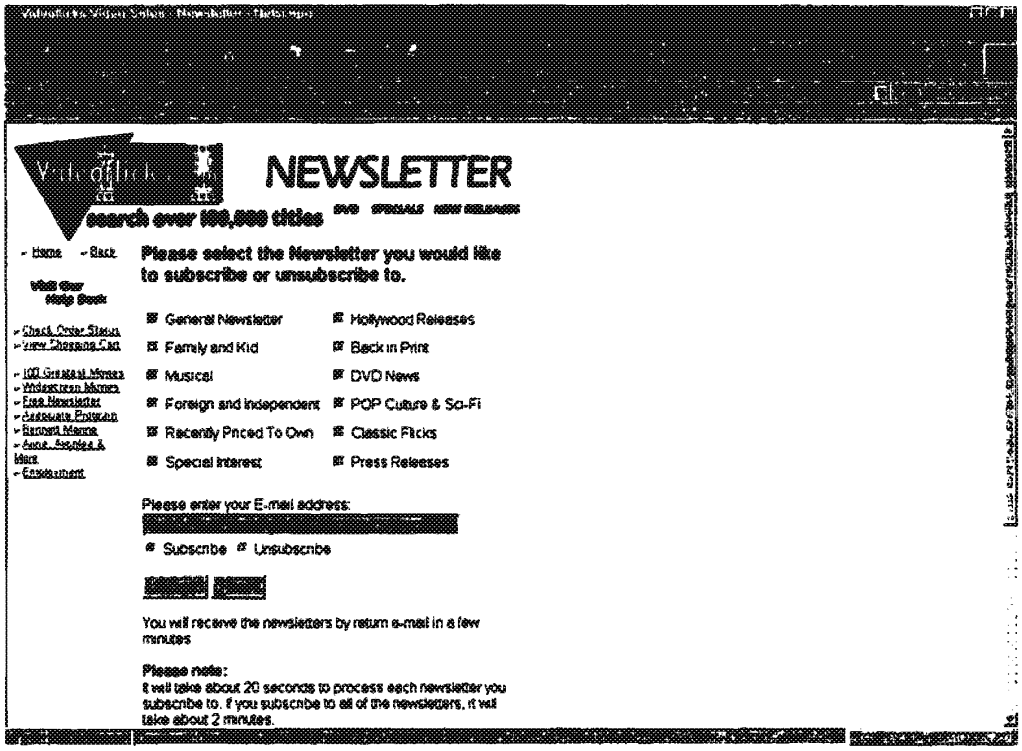
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Appendix J - Newsletter

http://www.videoflicks.com/join.html



NEWSLETTER

search over 100,000 titles

Please select the Newsletter you would like to subscribe or unsubscribe to.

- General Newsletter
- Family and Kid
- Musical
- Foreign and Independent
- Recently Priced To Own
- Special Interest
- Hollywood Releases
- Back in Print
- DVD News
- POP Culture & Sci-Fi
- Classic Flicks
- Press Releases

Please enter your E-mail address:

Subscribe Unsubscribe

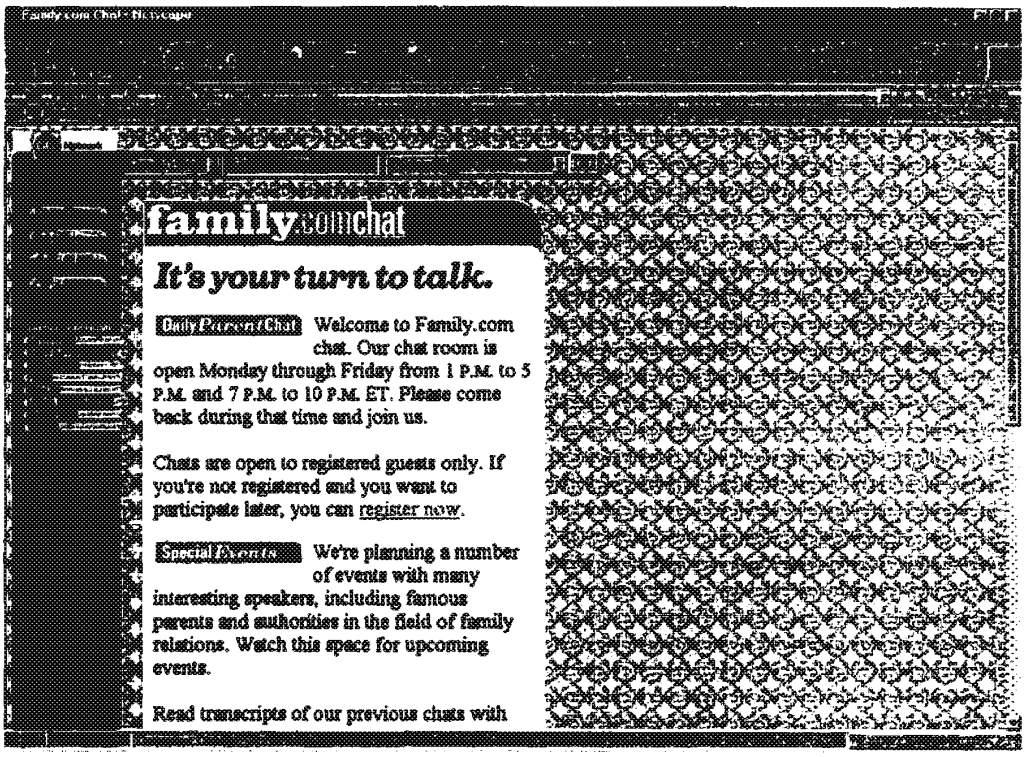
You will receive the newsletters by return e-mail in a few minutes

Please note:
It will take about 20 seconds to process each newsletter you subscribe to. If you subscribe to all of the newsletters, it will take about 2 minutes.

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Appendix K - Chat

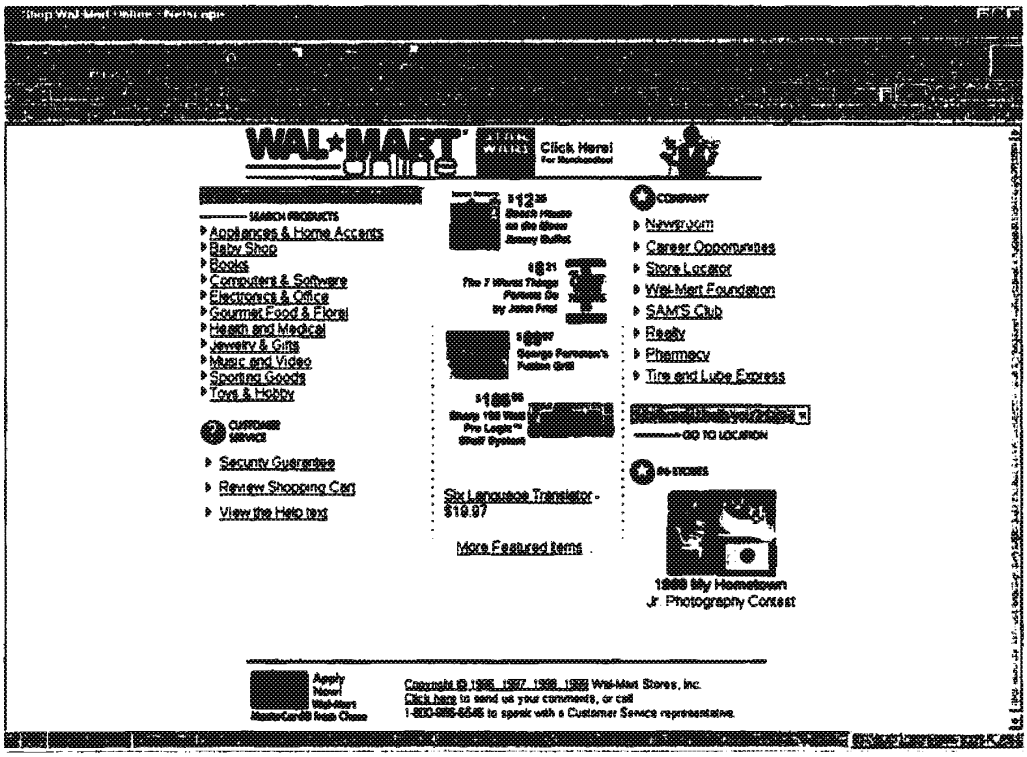
http://family.go.com/Chat/



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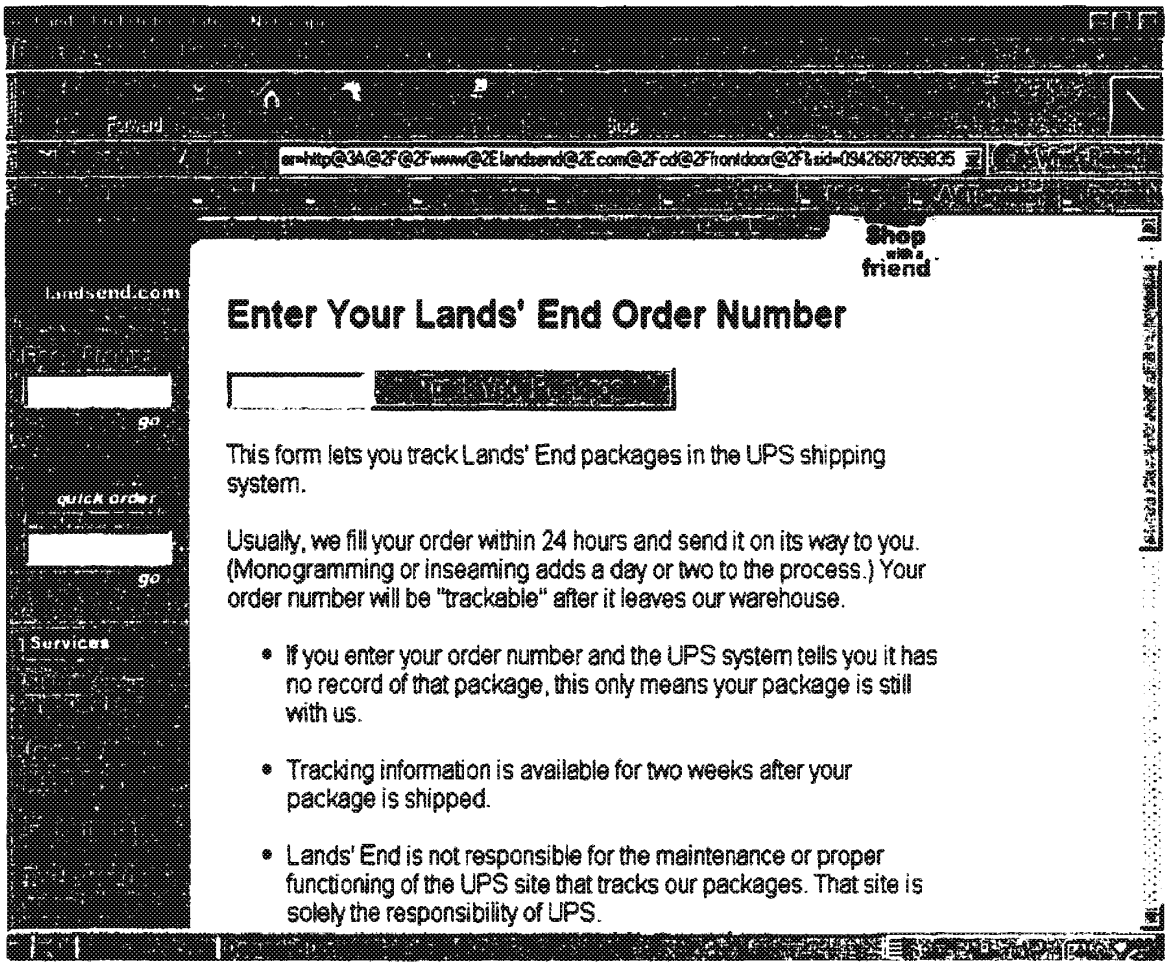
Appendix L - Breadth of Products

http://www.wal-mart.com/



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Appendix M - Order Tracking



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Appendix N - Checklist of Variables Measured

S.No	Variable	Hypotheses	Measure
1.	Security	*SSL encryption is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*	SSL present - 1 SSL not present - 0
2.	Privacy	*The privacy of customers is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*	One FTC [2] measure - 1 Two FTC measures - 2 Three FTC measures - 3 Four FTC measures - 4 No FTC measures - 0
3.	Affiliate Networks	*Affiliate Networks are more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*	Connected to Affiliate Network - 1 Not connected to Affiliate Network - 0
4.	Reciprocal Links	*Reciprocal links are more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*	Count the number of links to other on-line stores that are linked back to the evaluated on-line store.
5.	Banner Advertising	*Banner advertising is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*	Count the number of banners in the home page of the on-line store.
6.	Customer Participation	*Customer participation is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*	Customized products and services offered : 1 Customized products and services not offered : 0
7.	Chat	*Chat is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*	Chat is available : 1 Chat is not available : 0
8.	E-mail Marketing	*E-mail marketing is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*	E-mail marketing present : 1 E-mail marketing not present : 0
9.	Newsletters	*Newsletters are more likely to be*	Newsletter offered : 1

[2] The FTC measures are : (a) Give consumers notice of what information is collected and how it is used; (b) let consumers choose whether to allow secondary uses of information (for example, to decide whether their name can be used for follow-up marketing from the company or be sold to a third party); (c) give consumers "reasonable access" to their information and let them correct any errors; and (d) ensure the information's security.

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		associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.	Newsletter not offered : 0
10.	On-line distribution of products	*On-line distribution of products and services is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*	If product or service can be transferred to the customer via the electronic medium : 1 If product or service cannot be transferred to the customer via the electronic medium : 0
11.	Breadth of products	*A larger variety of products is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*	Count the number of categories of products available in the on-line store.
12.	Order Tracking	*Order tracking is more likely to be associated with high traffic on-line stores than with low traffic on-line stores.*	Order tracking allowed : 1 Order tracking not allowed : 0

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Appendix O - List of 100 hot On-line Stores

S.No.	Name of On-line Store
1.	Amazon.com
2.	Blue Mountain
3.	eBay
4.	Onsale.com
5.	TicketMaster
6.	Macy
7.	3D Animated Greeting Cards
8.	Levi Strauss
9.	Egghead Computers
10.	Autobytel
11.	Beyond.com
12.	Tower Records
13.	BarnesandNoble
14.	Virtual Flowers
15.	MicroWarehouse Inc.
16.	Jcrew
17.	Classifieds 2000
18.	Outpost.com
19.	QVC
20.	IUMA
21.	REI
22.	CDW (Computer Discount Warehouse)
23.	NECX
24.	Tiger Direct.com
25.	Access Micro
26.	Creative Computers
27.	CompUSA
28.	iMall
29.	RandomHouse Inc.
30.	Reel.com
31.	FreeShop
32.	The Sharper Image
33.	Fashion Mall
34.	GORP
35.	Wal-Mart
36.	Trip.com
37.	Airwalk
38.	Circuitcity.com
39.	Auction Universe
40.	Garden Escape

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41.	Brooks Brothers
42.	Schwinn Cycling and Fitness
43.	JamTV
44.	VideoFlicks.com
45.	Campmor.com
46.	Swords'n'Stuff
47.	e-greetings
48.	CDNow
49.	Homearts
50.	DVD Express
51.	GoNetwork
52.	e-toys
53.	Shopping.com
54.	LL Bean
55.	Peapod
56.	ColumbiaHouse
57.	Gateway 2000
58.	Electronics Boutique
59.	e-music
60.	Cool Savings.com
61.	Kenneth Cole
62.	CD Universe
63.	Improvenet
64.	DAMARK
65.	Office Max
66.	JC Penney
67.	Access Galaxy Mall
68.	CatalogLink
69.	Avon.com
70.	Shades.com
71.	Kmart
72.	KCWeb
73.	1-800-Flowers
74.	BigDeal.com
75.	Internet Shopping Outlet
76.	Dooney.com
77.	Official Fossil
78.	FTD
79.	Sony Music Store
80.	Lands' End
81.	NetGrocer
82.	www.vr-mall.com
83.	Specialized Systems Consultants Inc.
84.	Choice World
85.	Wig Outlet

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86.	The OS/2 Supersite
87.	bloomingdales.com
88.	www.dealdeal.com
89.	iBaby.com
90.	Fingerhut On-line
91.	Classifieds and Auctions
92.	Powell's Bookstore-used
93.	www.juara.com
94.	Cliffs.com
95.	auctions.lycos.com
96.	www.wwcd.com
97.	www.20-20consumer.com
98.	tias.com
99.	ViaMall
100.	Tower Records-@Tower.JP

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Appendix P - List of Non-100 hot On-line Stores

S.No.	Name of on-line store
1.	Coldwater Creek
2.	Hanna Anderson
3.	Medsite
4.	BoxLot.com
5.	DVD Empire
6.	ccmusic.com
7.	Kingdom Computers
8.	Decor-accessories.com
9.	Stuff.com
10.	a1books.com
11.	Advanced Electronics
12.	21store.com
13.	Flower Stop
14.	flowerfarm.com
15.	Zirh
16.	1Bookstreet.com
17.	Your Grocer
18.	2Bid.com
19.	Esco
20.	abeam.com
21.	Sierra Trading Post
22.	Braun's.com
23.	Grass Roots
24.	auction-sales.com
25.	World Traveller
26.	Auctionscape.com
27.	BorrowORrob
28.	CDSource.com
29.	Shopping-Hawaii.com
30.	Lind Electronics
31.	WinAuction
32.	Blowout Video
33.	Executive Greeting cards
34.	BigE.Hollywood.com
35.	The Clothes Store
36.	Travelocity.com
37.	Bigwords.com
38.	GetMusic
39.	Cybershop.com
40.	eCost.com

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41.	First Auction
42.	Boomiso.com
43.	Marketplaza
44.	Ally Office Furniture
45.	Aadvark Cycles
46.	Enchantments
47.	Bluefly
48.	C.Dickens
49.	MusicMachine
50.	DCG Computers
51.	Crate and Barrel
52.	Dynamic Sound Systems
53.	Rafaelloties
54.	Buyiton-line
55.	800.com
56.	Behome.com
57.	Office Base
58.	Pearsall's Garden
59.	Rainbow Ink Jet
60.	Zootsports
61.	Handmade Paradise
62.	Anymountain gear
63.	Bookscloseouts.com
64.	C and D Merchants
65.	Charityville
66.	In Touch Travel
67.	Alphabetstreet Books
68.	Discount CD's
69.	CyberWarehouse
70.	Sutter Tel.Com
71.	Mercata
72.	Gifts Galore
73.	Homeatrium
74.	Efootwear
75.	Anime World
76.	Uauction.com
77.	eoffprice.com
78.	BestFares.com
79.	Top 5.com
80.	Coast to Coast Memory
81.	Nordstorm
82.	Digital and Video.com
83.	1 Click Flowers
84.	Cosmetics.com
85.	Household Products

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86.	Ni3D.com
87.	MountainZone.com
88.	World Wide Auctions
89.	Tech Jungle.com
90.	Books.com
91.	CDWorld.com
92.	Computer-Show.com
93.	Ezbid online auction
94.	electronics4sale
95.	Van Ness Water Gardens
96.	Bruder Toys
97.	123greetings.com
98.	Bonus Books
99.	CactusFlower
100.	Buy Music

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Appendix Q - Verification of data collected

The sample size in this research is a total of 200 on-line stores. 25% of the data collected was verified, and since there are 200 on-line stores in total, 50 on-line stores were verified. 25 on-line stores were analyzed from the 100hot.com list of on-line stores, and 25 on-line stores were analyzed from the shopguide.com list of on-line stores.

The data collected by the researcher has been verified, and the following has been observed :

1. SECURITY - The presence or absence of SSL has been identified correctly in all the on-line stores.
2. PRIVACY - There are four FTC measures given to measure this variable, namely, (a) Give consumers notice of what information is collected and how it is used; (b) Let consumers choose whether to allow secondary uses of information (for example, to decide whether their name can be used for follow-up marketing from the company or be sold to a third party); (c) Give consumers "reasonable access" to their information and let them correct any errors; and (d) Ensure the information's security.

   The data collected with the help of these measures is precise and accurate.
3. AFFILIATE NETWORKS - Whether or not the on-line stores belonged to an affiliate network, was identified easily and accurately.
4. RECIPROCAL LINKS - The number of links from and to the on-line stores have been counted, and have been found to be the same when compared to the number of links counted by the researcher.

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5. BREADTH OF PRODUCTS - The Yahoo listing has been chosen to categorize the products offered by the on-line stores, thus providing a standard for easy classification and counting.
6. BANNER ADVERTISING - The number of banners in the home page of each on-line store was counted, and there was no variance in the data that was collected and the data that was verified.
7. CHAT - The chat facility provided by the on-line stores has been identified with ease and accuracy. On-line stores either have chat, or they do not.
8. CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION - The participation of customers in the transaction process was analyzed, and it was found that the results obtained by the researcher were the same as those found on verification.
9. E-MAIL MARKETING - On-line stores offer to provide their customers with discounts and product information via e-mail. This variable like CHAT, has been easy and accurately identified.
10. NEWSLETTER - The provision of a newsletter is similar to that of chat, or being part of an affiliate network. The newsletter is either offered, or it is not. This variable has also been identified and measured accurately.
11. TRACKING - On-line stores allow customers to track their products while in transit. This procedure has been analyzed and it has been ascertained that the researcher has analyzed the data with precision.
12. ON-LINE DISTRIBUTION - The on-line distribution of products and services includes those products and services that can be transmitted electronically. The data collected on this variable is precise in all the on-line stores that were verified.

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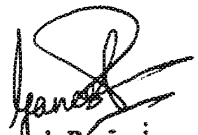
List of on-line stores verified from the 100hot.com list.

S.No.	Name of on-line store
1.	Amazon.com
2.	Jcrew
3.	eBay
4.	Onsale.com
5.	TicketMaster
6.	Macy
7.	iBaby.com
8.	Levi Strauss
9.	Egghead Computers
10.	Autobytel
11.	Reel.com
12.	Lands' End
13.	The Sharper Image
14.	Fashion Mall
15.	GORP
16.	Wal-Mart
17.	DVD Express
18.	Powell's Bookstore-used
19.	e-toys
20.	bloomingdales.com
21.	LL Bean
22.	Peapod
23.	Sony Music Store
24.	Dooney.com
25.	VideoFlicks.com

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List of on-line stores verified from the shopguide.com list.

S.No.	Name of On-line Store
1.	Coldwater Creek
2.	Hanna Anderson
3.	Medsite
4.	BoxLot.com
5.	DVD Empire
6.	ccmusic.com
7.	Kingdom Computers
8.	Decor-accessories.com
9.	CDSource.com
10.	a1books.com
11.	Lind Electronics
12.	WinAuction
13.	Blowout Video
14.	Office Base
15.	BigE.Hollywood.com
16.	The Clothes Store
17.	Zootsports
18.	Handmade Paradise
19.	Anymountain gear
20.	Bookscloseouts.com
21.	C and D Merchants
22.	Bonus Books
23.	CactusFlower
24.	Buy Music
25.	MountainZone.com



Verified by : Ganesh Ramasivan

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Appendix R - Frequency Tables for Continuous Data

1. PRIVACY

GROUP			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.00	Valid	.00	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
		1.00	12	12.0	12.1	13.1
		2.00	9	9.0	9.1	22.2
		3.00	8	8.0	8.1	30.3
		4.00	69	69.0	69.7	100.0
		Total	99	99.0	100.0	
	Missing	System	1	1.0		
	Total		100	100.0		
.00	Valid	.00	50	50.0	51.5	51.5
		1.00	15	15.0	15.5	67.0
		2.00	13	13.0	13.4	80.4
		3.00	7	7.0	7.2	87.6
		4.00	12	12.0	12.4	100.0
		Total	97	97.0	100.0	
	Missing	System	3	3.0		
	Total		100	100.0		

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2. RECIPROCAL LINKS

GROUP			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.00	Valid	.00	58	58.0	58.6	58.6
		1.00	12	12.0	12.1	70.7
		2.00	12	12.0	12.1	82.8
		3.00	4	4.0	4.0	86.9
		4.00	5	5.0	5.1	91.9
		5.00	4	4.0	4.0	96.0
		6.00	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
		Total	99	99.0	100.0	
	Missing	System	1	1.0		
	Total		100	100.0		
.00	Valid	.00	89	89.0	91.8	91.8
		1.00	7	7.0	7.2	99.0
		2.00	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
		Total	97	97.0	100.0	
	Missing	System	3	3.0		
	Total		100	100.0		

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3. BREADTH OF PRODUCTS

GROUP			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.00	Valid	1.00	25	25.0	25.3	25.3
		2.00	14	14.0	14.1	39.4
		3.00	12	12.0	12.1	51.5
		4.00	5	5.0	5.1	56.6
		5.00	7	7.0	7.1	63.6
		6.00	10	10.0	10.1	73.7
		8.00	4	4.0	4.0	77.8
		9.00	2	2.0	2.0	79.8
		10.00	5	5.0	5.1	84.8
		11.00	1	1.0	1.0	85.9
		12.00	1	1.0	1.0	86.9
		13.00	3	3.0	3.0	89.9
		14.00	10	10.0	10.1	100.0
		Total	99	99.0	100.0	
	Missing	System	1	1.0		
	Total		100	100.0		
.00	Valid	.00	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
		1.00	48	48.0	49.5	50.5
		2.00	16	16.0	16.5	67.0
		3.00	9	9.0	9.3	76.3
		4.00	7	7.0	7.2	83.5
		5.00	3	3.0	3.1	86.6
		6.00	2	2.0	2.1	88.7
		7.00	3	3.0	3.1	91.8
		8.00	2	2.0	2.1	93.8
		9.00	1	1.0	1.0	94.8
		10.00	1	1.0	1.0	95.9
		12.00	1	1.0	1.0	96.9
		14.00	3	3.0	3.1	100.0
		Total	97	97.0	100.0	
	Missing	System	3	3.0		
	Total		100	100.0		

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4. BANNER ADVERTISING

GROUP			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.00	Valid	3.00	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
		5.00	1	1.0	1.0	2.0
		7.00	2	2.0	2.0	4.0
		8.00	2	2.0	2.0	6.1
		9.00	3	3.0	3.0	9.1
		10.00	2	2.0	2.0	11.1
		11.00	3	3.0	3.0	14.1
		12.00	5	5.0	5.1	19.2
		13.00	4	4.0	4.0	23.2
		14.00	5	5.0	5.1	28.3
		15.00	5	5.0	5.1	33.3
		16.00	4	4.0	4.0	37.4
		17.00	4	4.0	4.0	41.4
		18.00	9	9.0	9.1	50.5
		19.00	2	2.0	2.0	52.5
		20.00	5	5.0	5.1	57.6
		21.00	10	10.0	10.1	67.7
		22.00	7	7.0	7.1	74.7
		23.00	3	3.0	3.0	77.8
		24.00	2	2.0	2.0	79.8
		25.00	5	5.0	5.1	84.8
		26.00	4	4.0	4.0	88.9
		27.00	1	1.0	1.0	89.9
		28.00	2	2.0	2.0	91.9
		31.00	2	2.0	2.0	93.9
		32.00	4	4.0	4.0	98.0
		36.00	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
		Total	99	99.0	100.0	
	Missing	System	1	1.0		
	Total		100	100.0		
.00	Valid	2.00	2	2.0	2.1	2.1
		3.00	2	2.0	2.1	4.1
		4.00	6	6.0	6.2	10.3
		5.00	6	6.0	6.2	16.5
		6.00	12	12.0	12.4	28.9
		7.00	9	9.0	9.3	38.1
		8.00	7	7.0	7.2	45.4
		9.00	8	8.0	8.2	53.6
		10.00	3	3.0	3.1	56.7
		11.00	4	4.0	4.1	60.8

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BANNER ADVERTISING (...Continued)

GROUP			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
		12.00	4	4.0	4.1	64.9
		13.00	4	4.0	4.1	69.1
		14.00	6	6.0	6.2	75.3
		15.00	3	3.0	3.1	78.4
		16.00	1	1.0	1.0	79.4
		17.00	2	2.0	2.1	81.4
		18.00	4	4.0	4.1	85.6
		19.00	4	4.0	4.1	89.7
		20.00	2	2.0	2.1	91.8
		21.00	1	1.0	1.0	92.8
		22.00	2	2.0	2.1	94.8
		23.00	3	3.0	3.1	97.9
		25.00	1	1.0	1.0	99.0
		26.00	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
		Total	97	97.0	100.0	
	Missing	System	3	3.0		
	Total		100	100.0		

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Espacenet

Bibliographic data: JPH10162029 (A) — 1998-06-19

AUTOMATIC LINKING METHOD FOR INDEX DATA AND VIDEO DATA IN RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

No documents available for this priority number.

Inventor(s): RI BINSAI ± (RI BINSAI)

Applicant(s): DAEWOO ELECTRON CO LTD ± (DAEWOO ELECTRON CO LTD)

Classification: **- international:** ***G06F12/00; G06F17/30;*** (IPC1-7): G06F12/00; G06F17/30

- cooperative:

Application number: JP19970140033 19970529

Priority number(s): KR19960059818 19961129

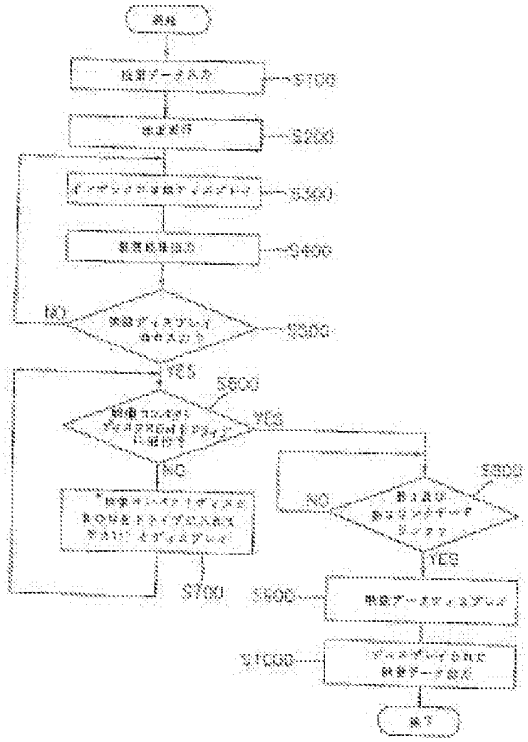
Also published as: KR100355458 (B1)

Abstract of JPH10162029 (A)

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To obtain an automatic linking method for index data and video data in a retrieval system by constituting linked video data of drawings, etc., recorded on a 2nd recording medium at a stage of output when 1st and 2nd link data are linked to each other. SOLUTION: Retrieval data is inputted and a control part excuter a retrieval procedure (S100, S200). An index catalogue included in a retrieval result is displayed, and when one is selected, a corresponding retrieval result is recorded (S300, S400). A control part judges whether or not a video display instruction has been inputted (S500) and when it has been inputted, the control part judges whether or not a video compact disk ROM has been loaded in a drive (S600). When it has been loaded, the control part judges whether or not 1st link data on a 1st recording medium is linked with 2nd link data on a 2nd recording medium (S800) and when it is linked, the linked video data on the 2nd recording medium is displayed (S900).

Last updated: 11.12.2013 Worldwide Database 5.8.15.10; 93p

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Espacenet

Bibliographic data: JPH10301911 (A) — 1998-11-13

NETWORK COMPUTER SYSTEM LED BY CLIENT AND ITS METHOD

No documents available for this priority number.

Inventor(s): HARA HIROTAKA; MATSUZUKA TAKAHIDE; KANETANI NOBUYUKI; OKUBO TAKAO; UEHARA SANPACHI ± (HARA HIROTAKA, ; MATSUZUKA TAKAHIDE, ; KANETANI NOBUYUKI, ; OKUBO TAKAO, ; UEHARA SANPACHI)

Applicant(s): FUJITSU LTD ± (FUJITSU LTD)

Classification: **- international:** ***G06F13/00; G06F15/00; G06F9/46; G06F9/48; H04L29/06; H04L29/08;*** (IPC1-7): G06F13/00; G06F15/163
- cooperative: **G06F9/465**; **H04L29/06**; **H04L67/1002**; H04L67/42

Application number: JP19970112781 19970430

Priority number(s): JP19970112781 19970430

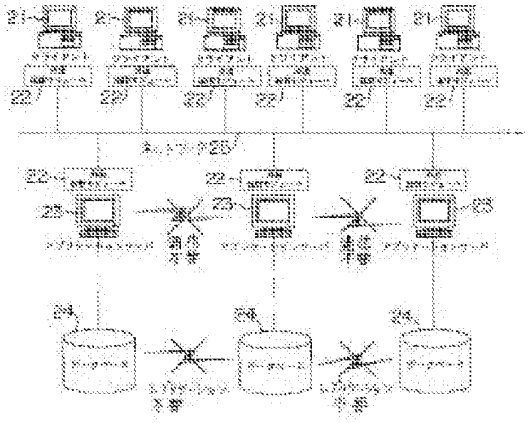
Also published as: JP3652834 (B2) US6199111 (B1) EP0856790 (A2) EP0856790 (A3) EP0856790 (B1)

Abstract of JPH10301911 (A)

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To easily execute the updating and addition of information in a distributed client-server system. SOLUTION: Each client 21 can be connected to an optional server 23 by using a common communication module 22 and is allowed to utilize the functions of respective servers 23 and access the information of respective data bases 24 by switching its connection. Thereby it is basically unnecessary to execute communication between servers 23 and replication between data bases 24.

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Espacenet

Bibliographic data: KR20000012595 (A) — 2000-03-06

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DIRECTLY FORWARDING SERVICE

No documents available for this priority number.

Inventor(s): LEE MAN KYUN [KR] ± (LEE, MAN KYUN)

Applicant(s): WEBEASY CORP [KR] ± (WEBEASY CORPORATION)

Classification: **- international:** ***G06F15/00;*** (IPC1-7): G06F15/00
- cooperative:

Application number: KR19990057368 19991214

Priority number(s): KR19990057368 19991214

Abstract of KR20000012595 (A)

PURPOSE: A method and apparatus for directly forwarding service are provided, which directly inputs a sub item, a home page of a special web site, a special page, or service name and connects a service which provides an information desired by a user. CONSTITUTION: An apparatus for directly forwarding service comprises: a plurality of client machines (11, 12); object units (21) to be linked with a home page of a special web site for providing various information or a service to client machines (11, 12); and link server units (40,50) for connecting client machines (11, 12) with the object unit (21), including a web server (30) for receiving a web address including a domain name and a link name, a link name database server (51) for storing registering information, a request blocker (41) for judging whether the domain name and the link name are suitable to a defined format, and an application server (42) for detecting an object from the link name database server (51) to directly link a corresponding web address. Thereby, corresponding information is instantly provided to a internet user.

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THE 10 BIGGEST BLUNDERS THAT BUSINESSES MAKE ON THE WEB
By Jerry Lazar

In the mad rush to set up shop on the Web, businesses tend to make some common blunders. Here are the top 10:

1) Rushing in without a master plan.

Companies are so dazzled by the prospect of establishing a Web presence, that they lose sight of the original reasons for being there: Promoting product and/or service? Point-of-purchase sales transactions? Building a customer database? Soliciting customer feedback? Even though it's still difficult to assemble meaningful projections, it's still important to make a list of short- and long-term goals.
But don't go to the other extreme. It's better to experiment with a test site now, and make your mistakes while the medium is young and the audience still limited to a few million. Too many Websites are bottlenecked in committee meetings or stillborn while awaiting budget approval. A site can be established for a relatively small expenditure, and then tweaked and cultivated as needed. And thanks to the interactive nature of the medium, you'll know quickly what is and isn't working.
"You don't need to spend $100,000 to put up a homepage," says David Scott Lewis, president of Presence.
"You can get established and then build incrementally."

2) Appointing the wrong person to the task.

In too many corporate boardrooms, this week's VP of New Media is last week's marketing director who has never ventured past e-mail, if he's ever used a modem at all!
"Invariably, when people from the Old School get handed this job, they try to fit this new technology into the same old pigeon holes," says Ryan Bernard, founder of Wordmark Associates, a Web consultancy in Houston.
"They want to deliver their brochure over the Internet. What they really need to do is give customers a complete on-line transaction, from first peek to showroom tour to final handshake."
The solution: save money in the long run and subcontract Webdesign to the pros. "People who do not understand the mechanics of Web construction end up redoing their site endlessly until they finally get it right," says Bernard.
"They end up paying for it a dozen times. Why not just hire someone who knows what they're doing, and do it right the first time?"

3) Failing to research the competition.

Chances are, whatever you're promoting or selling, there are already hundreds of sites devoted to the identical product or service. "See what the standard is, and who's the pacesetter," advises Jim Wray, VP of WebNet Services.

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But don't be discouraged. "Most Web sites going up now are really as a result of people trying to catch up," speculates Bernard. "They wake up one morning to discover that their strongest rivals are up on the Internet. Then they make the mistake of trying to ape the competition, rather than figuring out how they could do a better job." Presence's Lewis was approached by a computer company that requested a site that looked like IBM's. "We told them we'd rather kick butt than give them a clone site," he says, citing 3D data visualization and Video User Interface (VUI) as examples of impending technologies that can give new Websites a critical edge.

4) Not appreciating the unique interactive aspect of the medium.
"Many of the biggest companies still don't understand that it is not just a matter of slapping information up there with pretty pictures," says Wordmark's Bernard. "And just putting up a form does not really work unless the customer has some impetus to fill it out." But even those who comprehend that a Web page is not a display ad or a brochure still don't fully understand that interactivity is a two-way street. Soliciting customer feedback is only the first step. "Be prepared to respond to e-mail," warns Digital Planet CEO Paul Grand. "The first goal is to get the audience to respond to you, but then it's a big mistake if you don't follow through and respond to them." Or, as Jim Griffin, Geffen Records' director of information technology, advises: "Get your content on the Net, but also get the people in your company on the Net."

5) Being too commercial.

Internet protocol dictates that you supply free information and entertainment first, and then ask for the sale. "The clients I have that offer something free -- a sample of some software, a book chapter, a collection of recipes, a cut off an album -- have 2 to 3 times the hit level that [other] clients have," reports Eric Ward of NetPost. "The trick is to lure customers by providing non-commercial hooks: information and services that they vitally need," agrees Bernard. "A company selling industrial solvents might provide a generic solvent selection guide.
Also, use the proper tone of voice and personality. Be mindful of the fact that you're talking to a single individual. The best sites simulate a one-on-one conversation. Save the slick marketing hype for another medium. Don't be afraid to let down your corporate hair.

6) Disorganization.

You're competing with hundreds of thousands of webpages for a customer's attention. If he gets lost or confused, he's gone. Snazzy graphics will make your home page memorable, but the only sites that entice customers past the front door are those that obey the first commandment of webdesign: Content is King. And it better be easy to find. Make sure that the sale is never more than a click away. "If a

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customer can't navigate easily," notes Lewis, "he won't stick around." Most importantly, says Bob Novick of Impulse Research, "Your product or service should be the 'hero' of your site; you should be promoting and enhancing what you have to offer, not detracting from it."

7) Using unnecessarily large graphics.

The single most frequently heard complaint is that those hefty GIFs take way too long to download, forcing visitors to beat a hasty retreat. "Simple, crisp, attractive icons are the way to go," instructs Stuart Halperin, Hollywood Online's executive vp of marketing. Webmedia director Steve Bowbrick blames designers whose oversized egos belie an insensitivity to the medium. "It is quite possible to create compelling, graphically-rich pages without squeezing monolithic, square graphics down ill-suited channels," he says.

8) Not supplying sufficient reason to return.

Sites that fail to constantly update and revise their material run the risk of quickly becoming flame bait. "Spotlight 'What's New' and 'Coming Attractions' with special icons," advises Mark Kelly, marketing director of DirectNet, a Los Angeles Web provider and server. "The most successful Web sites are like magazines," adds Bernard. "People go there to get the latest news about a particular set of products or a particular market. The customers will know they can always learn something new." Paul Grand says that he strives to freshen his sites "at least every three weeks."

9) Forgetting to promote your Website, on and off the Net.

Negotiate reciprocal links with compatible sites, submit your site to Web directories, judiciously post notices in appropriate Usenet Groups, alert the trade and consumer press. And tout your site in all your corporate literature, and on your packaging. "There are so many ways to build awareness" says Eric Ward. "There are at least 100 sites that will give you a free link, from Yahoo or Infoseek to BizWeb. I find new ones everyday. Then there are magazines, both e-zines and print, all over the world. Every one of them needs stuff to write about. Why not about you?" Jim Wray offers one caveat: "You don't want to get press too soon, so make sure your site's ready before you publicize it."

10) Overlooking the fact that it's a global medium.

"There are Web pages now in French, Italian, Mandarin, and Czechoslovakian," observes Bernard. Accordingly, counsels DirectNet's Mark Kelly, "Offer translations of your contents in several languages. Make it possible for the remote user to click on a choice in their native tongue." Ross Veitch, of the Australian Tourist Commission, says he perceives "a need to provide a certain amount of content targeted at specific nationalities." He foresees accomplishing this by

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having users select customized mirror sites that "carry a certain amount of local content on top of a core of global content that would be [universally] replicated."

The biggest mistake of all, of course, is not to establish a Web presence. There's too much potential reward for such small risk. "We're not talking $50,000 in print costs," scoffs Jim Wray. "Corporations can gain from this technology if they are willing to look at it as more than just a simple marketing tool," says Bernard. "They need to think of it as an environment that can enhance communications both externally and internally between employees, customers, suppliers, and dealers."
If you build it, customers will come. "It's like putting a piece of cake on the balcony of a fourteenth-floor highrise," jokes Jim Griffin. "You'll be saying, 'How did all these ants get here?' " "It's raining, and you want to get water in your bucket," notes Wray, employing another metaphor. "Where do you put the bucket? It doesn't matter! Just put it somewhere... I haven't heard a bad idea for the Web yet."

Jerry Lazar, a veteran magazine editor and TV producer, is president of Lazar Productions, a Los Angeles-based Web consulting company.

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The role of electronic commerce in creating virtual tourism destination marketing organisations

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Keywords
Electronic commerce, Co-operative marketing, Internet, Tourism

Abstract
Co-operation is crucial to the successful marketing of tourism destinations, and electronic commerce offers exciting new opportunities for co-operation among tourism suppliers. This article examines the reciprocal linking of Websites to create "virtual" tourism destination organisations, whereby consumers can access information and purchase multiple components of a holiday online. A very simple starting point in the formation of a virtual destination marketing organisation is the linking of individual suppliers' Websites, so that a visitor arriving at one site can click through to complementary sites which contribute to the total destination offer. This paper examines the theoretical and practical benefits of virtual co-operation and reports on a survey, which examines the extent to which electronic commerce is superseding or complementing traditional hierarchical marketing organisations. Based on a sample of tourism suppliers' Websites in Northern Ireland, very little co-operation was observed. The reasons for this are discussed and recommendations made for future co-operation.

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Introduction

A tourism destination typically comprises numerous autonomous suppliers, yet consumers make purchase and repurchase decisions based on the totality of the experience available at a destination (Williams and Palmer, 1999). There are now many studies which have shown the methods by which co-operation between suppliers can add value to the tourism destination product (Leiper, 1996; Palmer and Bejou, 1995; Heath and Wall, 1991). Co-operative promotion of tourism destinations has conventionally focused on the production of joint publicity brochures, often distributed through shared stands at exhibitions. The development of electronic commerce now offers new opportunities for collaboratively marketing tourism destinations. There is the potential to create "virtual co-operation", whereby potential tourists can browse through Websites of individual facilities at a destination and develop a coherent picture of the destination experience on offer. The creative linking of Websites facilitates the profiling of enquiries in a way that allows potential tourists to develop their own package of experiences from a visit to a destination.

This paper aims to add to our understanding of electronic commerce as a medium for developing co-operation between organisations that make up a tourism destination. Specifically, the research examines the role of electronic commerce in creating "virtual tourism destinations" over the Internet.

Co-operation and tourism destination marketing

The success of a tourism destination product typically depends on a network of independent and inter-dependent organisations (Gartrell, 1991; Kotler *et al.*, 1996). A frequently used approach to the study of inter-organisational relationships is based on network analysis (Achrol, 1991; Quinn, 1992). The network rationale is that a single organisation is unable or unwilling to cope with the complexity and risks of its environment and similarly unable or unwilling to meet the skill and resource demands essential for competing in the global market (Cravens *et al.*, 1993). Members of a network are not completely dependent on each other, as they remain independent along certain dimensions of the relationship. Each partner contributes some part of its core competence that others need, but which it does not have available internally. The 1990s saw growing interest in a new form of organisation often referred to as the virtual organisation (Davidow and Malone, 1992). The virtual organisation in this context refers to a network of independent companies, suppliers, customers, even erstwhile rivals linked by information technology to share skills, cost, and access to one another's markets. A characteristic is that they may have no central office or internal hierarchy (Byrne, 1993).

Electronic commerce has facilitated the development of virtual organisations. Hale and Whitlam (1997) define as "virtual" any organisation that is continually evolving, redefining, and reinventing itself for practical business purposes. The virtual organisation is characterised by the lack of a physical presence and recognisable hierarchies. The aim of such organisations is to deliver services through structures and processes that are fast, flexible, and flat. Virtual organisations are more flexible and responsive than traditional organisational structures because of "computer-mediated communication" (Hoffman and Novak, 1995; Barnatt, 1997). They can allow small businesses to collaborate with minimal bureaucracy and can create value cost

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effectively. The virtual organisation has particular relevance to individual businesses within the hospitality and tourism industry – particularly within the small business sector whose limited resources require the outsourcing of many specialist functions. By drawing together essentially freelance individuals, virtual organisations can benefit from an inherent responsiveness to change in the business environment (Barnatt, 1997). Virtual organisations can be focused solely around the processing of information into knowledge and consequently into expertise without having a dedicated physical infrastructure. There are many variants of virtual organisation, which capitalise on the prominence of knowledge and information as key inputs and outputs. Owing to the intangibility of the resources they process, there is no necessity for many virtual organisations to exhibit or support a definite physical architecture nor a clear bureaucracy; a tight employment structure, nor a dedicated resource base which characterise conventional organisational structures. In this paper, the term virtual organisation describes the network of independent companies that constitute and market a tourist destination. The outcome of this co-operation is the composite tourism destination product which consumers experience. Recent growth in accessibility to information technology has fuelled the development of virtual tourism destination organisations, with particularly rapid growth in travel-related sites (Kate, 1998, *Marketing*, 1999).

Electronic marketing of tourism destinations

Tourism-related services have emerged as a leading product category to be promoted and distributed to consumer markets through the Internet (Connolly *et al.*, 1998; Sussman and Baker, 1996; Archdale *et al.*, 1992; Millman, 1998; Underwood, 1996). The nature of consumers' search activity, involving multiple choice of suppliers and comparison of facilities, prices and availability is facilitated by the search capabilities of the Internet. Increasingly, information intermediaries are able to profile consumers and provide a selection that is based on their needs.

Electronic commerce offers great flexibility for tourism suppliers operating in volatile markets. The promotional message can be changed much more quickly than is the case where the need to print documents leads to long lead times between a policy decision being made and the implementation of that decision. Electronic commerce is very good at handling clearance of perishable capacity close to the time of use and for managing yields effectively (Wolff, 1997; Connolly *et al.*, 1998). Customers benefit from such channels by gaining immediate gratification of their requests, greater choice, multi-sensory, accurate and up-to-date information and an easy to use interface (Pollock, 1996). Similarly, the costs of obtaining information are reduced for customers and travel agents and the wide diversity of information can be represented on one terminal, which further reduces the information search costs for potential tourists (Bakos, 1991).

Many tourism destination marketing organisations have developed Websites with varying levels of interactivity. An interactive Website provides a good opportunity for the multiple suppliers involved in a tourism destination to uniquely fashion together the specific components of a destination offer which are sought by individual visitors.

A crucial role is played by methods of guiding individuals through the enormous range of destination options available. In this sense the Internet is no different to traditional marketing in that consumers seek to simplify their choice by using a combination of intermediaries, trusted brand names and established business relationships. Within the tourism sector, the role of tour operators has simplified the purchase process of tourism buyers by pre-packaging the elements of a vacation that would otherwise be difficult to assemble individually. The use of trusted brand name tour operators and the emergence of branded virtual intermediaries has reduced the riskiness of a purchase. Tourist destinations can benefit from the Internet by developing a coherent position in the marketplace; increasing their market share by getting closer to customers (actual and potential); and subsequently by providing greater customer satisfaction (Sussmann and Baker, 1996). The role of information integration and brokerage is especially applicable to destination marketing organisations (state tourism departments, national tourism offices, and city convention and visitor bureaux) as they rarely have a product of their own to sell. Instead, their role is to match buyers with sellers, demand with supply and producers with consumers by positioning and promoting a place as a tourism destination brand (Pollock, 1995).

The issue of simplifying consumers' choice process raises two important concerns in the adaptation of electronic commerce. First, the

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ability of electronic commerce to learn about the needs of individual consumers, and secondly the ability of individual tourism suppliers to link together their Websites to present a complete "virtual" tourism experience which is appropriate to individuals' needs. Many tourism destination marketing groups have achieved success in representing diverse business interests through the media of exhibitions, advertising and joint promotional brochures (Chetwynd, 1999). A new challenge for tourism groups is to develop co-operation in a way that is meaningful for electronic commerce through business-led strategies. Hotlinks out of a company's site have the potential to take potential business away from a company, but there can be no guarantee that such a hotlink will be reciprocated by other organisations. While self-interest may initiate many marketing exchange relationships, reciprocity is instrumental in sustaining those relationships (Bagozzi, 1995; Becker, 1990). Reciprocation can also be considered in terms of members' ability and willingness to adapt their basic business procedures to suit the needs of their partners (Campbell, 1985; Jackson, 1985).

Tourism destinations present an ideal scenario for the development of virtual organisations, linked together by information technology. It should be possible for all businesses within a tourist destination to link their Websites so that a visitor to one site would easily be able to find out about related facilities at other companies' Websites. Despite the potential for creating virtual destinations out of the component organisations, the marketing of many tourist destinations appears to remain dominated by the central role of a hierarchical tourist board. This study seeks to test the following proposition:

P. The marketing of tourism destinations through the Internet supports a virtual organisation structure, rather than a hierarchical one.

Methodology

The proposition was tested by direct observation of all known tourism-related Websites offered by companies in a specified area. The destination and its associated Websites defined a system, which comprised endogenous and exogenous Websites. Endogenous Websites comprised all of those sites operated by businesses based within a selected geographical study area. These were subdivided into stand-alone organisational sites and regional/consortia sites. Exogenous sites comprised all other sites in the rest of the world, some of which would have hyperlinks into the sample of endogenous sites.

The system chosen for this study comprised the Greater Belfast area in Northern Ireland. Numerous public and private sector organisations have been actively seeking to promote inward tourism to Belfast, which has grown since the ending of a period of civil disturbances. The area is actively promoted as a tourism destination on the strength of its heritage, festivals, sporting activities and links with expatriates. Within this system, two Websites were defined as regional sites, administered by government agencies (Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Belfast City Council). The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) has a statutory responsibility for promoting the province to overseas visitors, and works with a number of regional tourism offices at achieving this. The study area was defined as the area within a 20-mile radius of the centre of Belfast.

It is important to define a link. This research identifies a link as a hypertext link within a unique resource locator (URL) that leads to a separate and independent page that is maintained by that other individual business. It was found that the regional Websites did not have a hypertext link *per se* to other individual businesses. Rather, the regional Website only allowed the surfer to locate another page within the site that related to a specific enquiry. In short, the regional Websites did not provide a hypertext link into another independent URL that was operated and maintained solely by the business in question. Thus, in order to examine the proposition it was necessary to assess the extent to which constituents of a tourism destination were using hypertext links within their own pages in the promotion of that area. The key of the research therefore was to examine those independent businesses with URLs and follow all (if any) links out of that site to see where they led to. In turn, hypertext links that led to another URL were examined to see if the link was reciprocated. When we talk about Websites, we refer to organisations with their own independent URL. This means that the NITB and Belfast City Council Websites were only regarded as two separate Websites.

A schematic diagram of the boundaries and linkages of the study is shown in Figure 1.

Having identified constituents of the destination, the first task was to enumerate the population of Websites within the system

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that had their own URL. This was initially undertaken using the Yahoo! search engine with at first general keywords followed by an advanced search for specific known business names. This was supplemented with other sources that gave individual Website addressees, for example company brochures. Finally, all sites found through these methods were inspected and any further sites referred to within them noted. Using these methods of enumeration, the number of Websites within the system was found to be 49. The research ignored search results that listed a constituent under any form of marketing alliance or consortia, as this does not qualify a company as having an independent URL. Many of the individual Websites listed other facilities in their surrounding area, but if no link to a URL was provided for such facilities, such lists were not treated as links for the purpose of this research. To reiterate, the key to proving/disproving the proposition lies with constituents of the tourism product that have an independent URL.

To test the research proposition, all enumerated Websites were examined and the existence of four types of potential links recorded (see Figure 1):

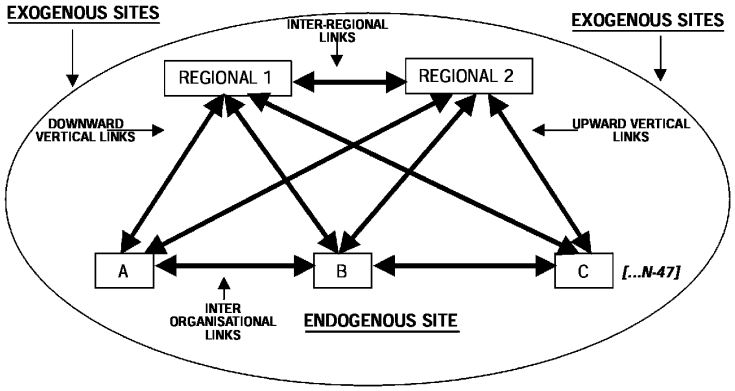
1 downward vertical links from regional Websites to individual organisation Websites;
2 upward vertical links from individual organisation Websites to regional Websites;
3 horizontal links between individual organisations;
4 horizontal links between regional Websites.

In the process of carrying out the research, a matrix of all Websites within the system was developed. This showed each enumerated site as both a destination for a hyperlink and a source for an outward hyperlink. With 49 Websites within the system, this gave a total of 2,401 (49 × 49) possible links between sites. Within the matrix, it was noted whether a hyperlink out of a site to another site within the system was reciprocated. In addition, the practical research was done twice so as to minimise discrepancies and errors in the analyses. It was beyond the scope of this research to examine reciprocation of hyperlinks to endogenous sites that were outside the system.

Analysis

Information from the matrix of origin and destination sites was used to build a model of network relationships (Figure 1). The first point of note was the importance of the two regional Websites. The NITB regional Website had 275 individual pages and provided a high degree of interactivity for users. The Belfast City Council Website had links to 124 individual organisations. A series of questions guided users to individual pages, which were likely to be of greatest interest to them. Because of its interactivity and comprehensiveness, it was a useful tool for creating in users' minds a virtual picture of the facilities available to tourists in Belfast. However, there were no links from either regional Website to individual organisations with their own URL. This implies that once a surfer is logged onto the regional sites he/she does not need a hypertext link to other independent URLs to gain a holistic view of all that is on offer there. Further, the research only found eight tourism constituents that had a link back to

Figure 1
The structure of the network of Websites studied



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either regional Website. Thus, out of 628 potential links from regional Websites and back, only 1.3 per cent were reciprocated. In addition, out of 47 individual constituents that had an independent URL, only eight (8.5 per cent) had a reciprocated link to either regional Website. This is a very significant finding and it appears that there is still a hierarchical organisational structure dominating the marketing of tourism destinations in the study area. This is potentially important for the promotion of Belfast as a holistic tourism experience, because it cannot be assumed that Internet users would arrive within the system via the regional Websites. Indeed, in compiling the list of sites within the system using the keywords noted in the methodology section, a direct link to the NITB regional site was never listed above number 180 in the Yahoo! listing of matching sites. Ironically, the majority of searches undertaken in Yahoo! using various keywords listed the Belfast City Council Website address as a search result more often than it promoted the use of the NITB Website. The implication is that a user arriving at the site of a tourism constituent (for example through that company's own publicity) would have difficulty obtaining the broader perspective of tourism opportunities available at the regional Websites.

Of the 47 individual businesses that had their own Websites, 17 had links to other organisations' Websites within the system. Out of these 17 links, 11 of them were reciprocated representing 68.75 per cent of them. This must be considered a very low level of linkage, when it is remembered that there are 2,209 (47 × 47) possible linkages between individual organisations. Moreover, of these potential links, only 11 (or 0.5 per cent) were actually found to be reciprocated. Linkages between individual organisations are potentially a very useful facility, because a user arriving at a site can quickly identify complimentary facilities; for example, a hotel may provide hyperlinks to nearby golf courses, restaurants and night clubs. This is particularly important where a user has arrived at the site directly from outside the system, rather than via one of the regional Websites.

No reciprocation was found between the two regional Websites. This is quite surprising considering that the organisations they represent are similar in their aims and have publicly stated their desire to co-operate with each other. Table I provides a summary of linkages between sites within the system studied and gives disappointing evidence of reciprocity between individual constituent's having an independent URL.

Discussion/management implications

Electronic commerce is increasingly allowing organisations to join together in virtual communities to develop networks which add to the collective value of members' output, and in doing so, the literature has suggested that flatter and more open organisation structures may be more appropriate.

This research has questioned the extent of virtual organisation in an area where the form could be most expected to succeed. There is disappointing evidence so far of use of Websites for co-operative tourism destination marketing in the study area. This is particularly significant in the horizontal dimension of Figure 1 where only 11 of 2,209 possible links (0.5 per cent of the total) have reciprocated hypertext links between. What is most disappointing is that if a potential tourist "lands" on an individual Website that is not reciprocated or linked to surrounding amenities, the opportunity for that particular surfer to gain a holistic view of the totality of experiences available in that destination is lost.

The structure of the system of Websites studied indicated a dominant role played by the two regional Websites, especially the longer-established site operated by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. The NITB site provided a comprehensive top-down facility for tourism businesses within the study area, but the level of reciprocated linkages back to the site was very low. The regional Website adopts a profiling technique and lists attractions, accommodation, restaurants, and public houses. An additional link then provides information on "what you can do around here", and lists fishing, rent-a-car, bird-watching, horseback riding, golf, sailing, adventures on foot, and courses available. The surfer is given the opportunity to avail of a holiday planner by administering a login name and password at the beginning of the search. If a particular service or amenity is of interest it may be added to the itinerary which is automatically produced on request. An important implication is that once the surfer has entered this site he/she has no need to undertake an additional search for other Websites relating to the area.

The result of the analysis of upward vertical linkages is surprising considering that the impact of individual Websites for

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Table I
Analysis of hyperlinks within the system

Type of link	A Number of potential links	B Actual links found	C Number of actual links reciprocated	C/A Percentage of potential links found reciprocated	C/B Percentage of actual links reciprocated
Downward vertical	328 x 2 = 656	399	8	1.3	2.0
Upward vertical	46 x 2 = 94	8	8	8.5	100.0
Horizontal inter-organisational	47 x 47 = 2,209	17	11	0.5	64.75
Horizontal inter-regional	1	0	0	0	0

organisations may be of little use for potential tourists wishing to gain an holistic impression of all that is on offer there. Therefore, if an Internet user landed on the site of a particular tourism constituent from outside the system studied, they would most likely not be linked back to either the Belfast City Council or Northern Ireland Tourist Board Websites. From initial searches using Yahoo!, the official Northern Ireland Tourist Board Website and the Belfast City Council Website were not immediately apparent. There was no direct link to either regional Website in the top ten. However, they could be accessed from indirect channels, which were not primarily related to hospitality and tourism.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Belfast City Council play a key role in promoting tourism in Belfast. In both regional Websites there is a top-down approach for promoting individual businesses. Tourism marketing is therefore driven by a central organisation in which enquiries may be made, accommodation reserved, and information gathered on particular amenities, although the use of electronic commerce for reservations is still in its infancy (Gulliver is thought to provide the infrastructure to links all constituents). This may create less initiative for a potential tourist to search for individual Websites pertaining to facilities in the same area, especially where direct reservations cannot be made online. Nevertheless, this ease of information retrieval in turn promotes the existence of central organisations to promote tourism as a whole. *Thus, the very existence of virtual tourism organisations as an aid to promote tourism is put into question.* In light of the technological development in marketing communication there is a notable lack of co-operative initiatives in the marketing of destinations between individual businesses using the methods of electronic commerce.

Recommendations

This study has provided disappointing evidence so far in the use of Websites for co-operative tourism destination marketing. The research indicates a number of action points worthy of consideration:

1 More onus should be put on the constituent or independent suppliers of tourism to promote a destination more rigorously using the opportunities presented by new media. Government incentives may facilitate this move, but evidence from this study appears to suggest that policy so far has mainly served to emphasise the centralising tendency of government agencies.
2 There is a role for third party initiatives to promote tourism destinations. Local suppliers of digital technology could spur the initiative in the promotion of tourism destinations using virtual organisations. This is turn promotes the third party, and indeed if promotion of the initiative is effective, will lead to increased profit for the organisation as well as increased tourism activity throughout the region.
3 There needs to be an awareness campaign in tourist areas to emphasise the benefits to individual businesses of co-operative marketing. While there is now a widespread acceptance of the value of co-operatively produced print media, this must be extended with the encouragement and development of Websites. These should be comprehensive, user-friendly and have hypertext links that are reciprocated with all facilities available in that area. Conventional media is expensive and is becoming less cost effective. Co-operative marketing is much more cost effective and can stimulate greater travel urges. It is imperative to detail basic information such as tariffs and opening times where applicable and provide the surfer with a direct telephone number for enquiries and reservations.

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4 Initially, specific segments should be targeted and the positioning in these segments of conventional and/or electronic media is important. The businessperson is leading the way in creating packages over the Web. Hence the need for specificity in the design of Websites and the degree of reciprocity inherent in such initiatives. Placement of these sites is also important in search engines, as consumers are more likely to interact with a site that is automatically displayed in a search result. Conventional media must actively promote these sites in turn through trade exhibitions in the first instance so as to increase its familiarity to potential tourists.

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Contemporary world issues

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Excerpt: In 1983 ARPANET, now connecting hundreds of computers, switched to the TCP /IP networking protocols still in use today. In 1990 ARPANET ceased to exist, but the computers remained connected. New networks had grown up using those connections, including NSFNet, another government sponsored project. These various networks were connected to each other, making it possible, in theory, for a computer connected to any one network to communicate with computers connected to one of the other networks. In the 1980s the Internet moved from universities and government research facilities to private homes, with the appearance of for-profit, proprietary networks like America Online, CompuServe, and Prodigy. The World Wide Web, however, can be traced to a specific event. In the late1980s Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailliau, working at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), created a hypertext to find documents on CERN's computers. The system differed from previous hypertext systems in using unidirectional, rather than bidirectional, links; this made it possible for a person creating a hypertext document to link to another document without having to alter that second document to include a reciprocal link. This made it possible to create a constantly expanding network of linked pages. Berners-Lee had created his first Web page and the first Web browser by 1991 (CERN no date).

ProQuest

SELLING ONLINE: MORE THAN HITTING A FEW KEYS

Interactive Daily (Sep 5, 1995): 1.

Abstract (summary)

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Full Text

It's hard enough to come up with a dynamite entertainment property or an innovative new online offering. But it's quite another thing to actually sell it (and, perhaps, even make money at it), especially in a developing cyber-market no one fully understands yet. The challenge to media companies, marketers, and their agents is to bring traffic to the well, but without offending the many sensibilities that make marketing and promoting on the Internet such a minefield.

The first thing to remember is that, since cyberspace is still just a technological frontier, there really aren't many rules yet. There's nothing carved in stone saying there's a "right" way (or, for that matter, a "wrong" way) to promote a given property. But there are plenty of things to consider, many of which come from traditional marketing, sales promotion, and even public relations.

"As with other forms of selling, online marketing demands that you know what kind of audience you're looking for," advises Tony Winders, whose new company, InterActive Agency (Los Angeles) represents the marketing interests of new media companies. "Naturally, you need to determine what Web sites are drawing their attention now, and then figure how best to bring them to your site." Reciprocal Links Boost Traffic One effective way of building traffic is through reciprocal links with other Web sites, whereby both parties benefit from some common component of the audiences they draw. Basically, these are similar to other "win-win" arrangements marketing partners team up on. In cyberspace, Winders says, the key is finding other sites that lure the same kind of people in your target market and reach an agreement about mutual links.

But there are a few things to watch for, Winders warns. "It's important to know the policies of individual sites you'd like to link with," he says. "Not all will want a link. And some will charge you for it. With Time Inc. 's Pathfinder, for example, you get a lot of consumer traffic, but you also pay the price." (That arrangement isn't for everyone, especially new developers short on capital.) Moreover, many sites will be discriminating about what kinds of material they link up with. Make sure yours is a good fit.

Needless to say, you won't build much online traffic without a compelling draw. This is important everywhere, but critical when marketing computer games or movies.

One of IAA's current projects is cultivating interest in a new Web site for the Twentieth Century Fox film Strange Days. The ultimate goal, of course, is to sell plenty of tickets when the movie opens October 13. Winders tells us the site gets users involved, introduces key characters, and recaps the story line --but without giving the store away. As part of its promotion, IAA is making movie posters available as giveaways for sites where it has reciprocal links.

"Movie marketing is hitting a whole new plateau," Winders says. "Many print film ads now include a URL for the Web site. These days, the best Web sites are more than just a promotional vehicle or electronic press kit. They're

becoming a form of entertainment in their own right, without just re-dumping the film."

Obviously, interactive games are a necessary component in many online marketing efforts. IAA client Hollywood Online, for instance, always has a game as part of its entertainment news service. Winders believes games are an effective way of capturing ongoing consumer interest, especially for a commercial service like Hollywood Online (which is paid a fee by movie studios) where material is changing constantly.

"There are plenty of surfers, but lots of online users actually go to the best sites over and over," Winders says. "Part of our job is getting them to come to our clients." Hard Work & Shoe Leather Of course, online marketing is much more than just playing around on a computer. In fact, it requires lots of hard work and old- fashioned shoe leather. A lot of IAA's activity involves using conventional marketing and PR to build traffic for new media.

For instance, last week Winders faxed news releases to 700 sports writers touting a new online sports book service. Comspan's Monday Night Madness site (designed by Animaniacs writer Nicholas Hollander), debuting yesterday, offers simulated wagering on pro football, using real odds culled from Vegas desks but without money changing hands. The goal, of course, is to drive sports junkies to the site (and, probably, to give bettors a way to test their skills without losing the deed to the house). Winders also hopes to sell subscriptions to the client's electronic service, The Expert's Newsletter.

Winders believes new media, properly used, can accommodate almost any marketing task. Even product placement, a specialty IAA hopes to develop soon. "If you've already got thousands of people hitting a site every day, why not put a product there, too?" he muses. "It can work, if you do it in the right context of the site.

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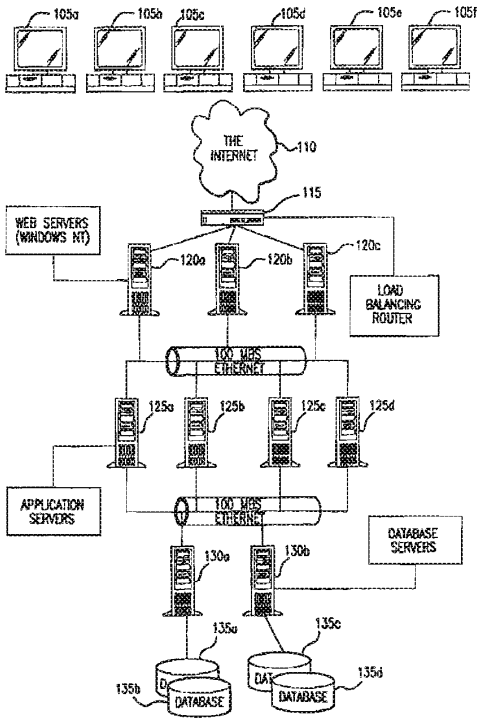
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(57) Abstract

The present invention is directed to an e–commerce outsourcing system and method that provides hosts (105d–f) with transparent, context sensitive e–commerce supported pages over the Internet (110). The look and feel of a target host (105f) is captured for future use (135a–d). The look and feel is captured by receiving the identification of an example page on the target host (105f), retrieving the page (120a–c), identifying the look and feel elements of the identified page (125a–d) and storing the identified elements (135a–d). The host (105f) is provided with links correlating the host with a link for inclusion within a page on the host website for serving to a visitor computer (105a–c), wherein the provided link correlates the host website with a selected commerce object contextually related to material in the page. The commerce object can be a product, a product category or a dynamic selection indicator. Upon activation of the product link, the visitor computer (105a–c) is served with an e–commerce support page.



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AFFILIATE COMMERCE SYSTEM AND METHOD

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED PATENT APPLICATION

This application claims the benefit, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §119(e), of applicants' provisional U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 60/100,697, filed September 17, 1998, entitled "AFFILIATE COMMERCE SYSTEM AND METHOD".

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

1. FIELD OF INVENTION

The invention relates to a system and method supporting commerce syndication. More specifically, the invention relates to a system and method for computer based information providers to receive outsourced electronic commerce facilities in a context sensitive, transparent manner.

2. DESCRIPTION OF PRIOR ART

The World Wide Web began as a simple interface to the Internet using HTML (hypertext markup language) as a means of linking documents together. This allowed a researcher, for example, to embed "active" references in his or her documents that, if selected, would enable the reader to review the source of the reference first-hand. Programmers quickly capitalized on this technology, creating "web sites" which reflected less staid purposes, laying the groundwork for the literal "web" of content and interactive applications that exists today. In the early stages, website programmers increased visitor traffic by placing "links" within their websites to other websites, usually related in content or function, in exchange for a reciprocal link. Additionally, directories of websites, such as Yahoo, and search engines, such as WebCrawler, began to appear in an attempt to organize the content of the Internet so that its users could create "custom links pages" related to specific topics.

In these early days, the Web was mostly trafficked by programmers and "techies," and a commune-type "share and share alike" mindset prevailed. As a result, people were happy to litter their sites with links, knowing that, odds were, others would do the same for them and the traffic gain/loss would probably balance out. So, despite the fact that by including and promoting a "links" page, website operators were effectively encouraging people to leave their website, link sharing developed into a standard practice.

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Then, entrepreneurs and other business-oriented individuals came along and introduced capitalism to the Internet. Profit-oriented website operators began to seek visitors wherever they could find them, and opportunistic owners of popular sites began to realize that they had an increasingly scarce resource – visitors. Such website owners began to sell the links they had previously offered for free in the form of paid advertisements. Search engines and directories became increasingly popular for two main reasons. First, the number of websites was growing astronomically, so it was becoming harder for users to find what they wanted. Second, since reciprocal links were either going away or were being replaced by links exclusively to non-competing websites, search engines and directories were the only way to find multiple resources for a single topic.

Amid frantic efforts on the part of corporate websites to get noticed, the sale of banner ads blossomed into a large industry called Internet advertising. Thousands of websites created space for banner ads and called the space "inventory." At first, they priced ads as a print ad might be priced: by CPM, or cost per thousand "impressions" each ad made on website visitors. Over time this pricing model gave way to arrangements more favorable to advertisers such as Cost Per Click-through and Cost Per Inquiry (meaning the advertiser only needs to pay when a visitor sees a banner ad and clicks on it and completes an information request form on the advertiser's site).

Some of the most successful Internet commerce websites, led by online bookseller Amazon.com, have begun to take an even more results-driven approach to the purchase of banner ads. They have offered to pay only for ads that, when clicked, result in a product sale. To provide a stronger incentive than a simple banner ad, these companies let third-party website owners list a subset of their goods (e.g., 10 of Amazon.com's millions of books, selected by the website owner) and promote them as they choose within their websites. Initiatives such as these have come to be described as "affiliate programs", "associate programs" or "commission based advertising programs".

The benefits of affiliate programs are significant. To the website owner, they constitute revenue-generating web content without requiring an investment in product inventory or additional infrastructure. They also create new revenues without

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necessarily reducing the website's available ad inventory. However, the greater benefit almost always accrues not to the affiliate, but to Amazon.com and other online stores. Not only do these sites benefit from the marketing resources of the affiliate operators, they are also able to lure the visitor traffic away from the affiliate. Once a visitor clicks on an affiliate ad and enters an online store, that visitor has left the affiliate's site and is gone. At best, affiliates are able to use "frames" to keep a shell of their own website around the vendor's site, but this is only a marginally effective solution. No alternatives have been able to address a fundamental drawback of the affiliate programs – the loss of the visitor to the vendor. At best, some Internet affiliate sales vendors have begun placing "return to referring website" links on their order confirmation screens, an approach that is largely ineffective. This limitation of an affiliate program restricts participation to less trafficked websites that are unconcerned about losing visitors. Meanwhile, search engines and directories continue to increase in their usefulness and popularity, while banner ads and old-style links continue their rapid loss of effectiveness and popular usage.

The present invention overcomes these limitation of present affiliate commerce systems and provides other benefits as will become clearer to those skilled in the art from the foregoing description.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The affiliate commerce system and method of the present invention represents a new paradigm of co-marketing on the Internet. Not only does the present invention provide its Hosts with the added value and incremental revenues of traditional affiliate programs, but the company also enables Hosts to control the customer experience before, during, and after the purchase transaction. At the same time, Merchants receive the same benefits as with older affiliate programs, i.e., increased marketing potential, incremental sales, and new customer relationships, but without the restrictive limitations of affiliate programs -- the loss of hard-won visitor traffic.

Additionally, the present invention can actually obviate the need for some merchants to invest in their own unique Internet presence. By using the present invention as their primary online sales channel, these Merchants can focus on product

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development, production, and order fulfillment and leave the exploration of the Internet to experts. The resulting ongoing cost savings and operational efficiencies magnify the potential benefits of the Internet while reducing the initial costs.

According to the present invention the look and feel of each participating Host is captured and stored. Hosts may include links to selected products or product categories within pages residing on the Hosts' website. Upon actuation of such a link by a visitor of the Host website, a page is presented to the visitor incorporating a replica of the Host's look and feel directed to the sale of the selected products or product categories.

The look and feel of a host is captured and stored by receiving an identification of an example page of a target host. The identified page is retrieved. The look and feel elements of the page are identified, and these elements are stored for future use in generating outsourced transparent pages, pages served by a server other than the host but with the host's look and feel. Such pages give the viewer of the page the impression that she is viewing pages served by the host.

The links included by the host directed to the outsource provider need not be statically linked to a particular product or product category. Such links may direct the outsource provider to dynamically select content to serve within the host's look and feel. This content may be selected based upon a contextual analysis of the page which includes the link. Further, the dynamic content need not be limited to products or product categories but may include any content within the system's data store that is amenable to contextual correlation with content in the page containing the link.

A cost effective, scalable architecture may be used to serve dynamically constructed pages such as those served by the e-commerce outsource provider. This architecture includes three levels: a Web server layer, an application server layer and a database server layer.

The Web server layer provides a front end presentation layer for interacting with end users. This layer may consist of one or more interchangeable low cost server systems. Any request from an end user may be fielded by any system within the layer. The selected system can contact any application server within the application layer to provide processed data for use in responding to the end user request.

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The application layer supports interacting with the database server level to acquire needed data and processing it prior to presentation by the Web server layer. As with the Web server layer, this layer may consist of one or more interchangeable low cost server systems. Any Web server system may submit a request to any application server. The application server includes processing functionality suitable for the types of pages to be dynamically constructed.

The database server layer supports low level management of data used in dynamic page construction. The data store across the one or more low cost server systems is seamlessly viewed as an integrated whole. As a consequence, any database server within the layer can field any request for data submitted by an application server.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 depicts a typical hardware architecture implementing the present invention.

FIG. 2 illustrates the software architecture of the Web server layer.

FIG. 3 illustrates the software architecture of the application server layer.

FIG. 4 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the host signup process.

FIG. 5 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the host account information maintenance process.

FIG. 6 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the host look and fee capture process.

FIG. 7 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the host link generation process.

FIG. 8 is a flow chart of the dynamic content selection and presentation process.

FIG. 9 is a screen capture of a Merchant Manager page in a preferred embodiment.

FIG 10 is a screen capture of a Host Manager page in a preferred embodiment.

FIGs 11 - 18 are screen captures of the page in a preferred embodiment of a look and feel capture process.

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FIG. 19 is a screen capture of a typical e-commerce supported page served in a preferred embodiment.

FIG 20 is a screen capture of a System Manager page in a preferred embodiment.

FIG. 21 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the host view reports process.

FIG. 22 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the shopping process.

FIG. 23 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the merchant account maintenance process.

FIG. 24 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the merchant catalog maintenance process.

FIG. 25 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the merchant view reports process.

FIG. 26 is a flow chart of the pages and procedures in the merchant view hosts process.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

A preferred embodiment of the invention is now described in detail. Referring to the drawings, like numbers indicate like parts throughout the views. As used in the description herein and throughout the claims that follow, the meaning of "a," "an," and "the" includes plural reference unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. Also, as used in the description herein and throughout the claims that follow, the meaning of "in" includes "in" and "on" unless the context clearly dictates otherwise.

A typical embodiment of the present invention will include a data store including a look and feel description associated with a host website, a communications link to a visitor computer, and a processor. The processor performs the tasks of capturing a look and feel description associated with a host website, storing the captured look and feel description in the data store, providing the host website with a link that link correlates the host website with a commerce object for inclusion within a page on the host website and which, when activated, causes the processor to serve an e-commerce supported page via the communication link with a look and feel

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corresponding to the captured look and feel description of the host website associated with the provided link and with content based on the commerce object associated with the provided link. The Internet serves as the communication link to visitor computers.

In a preferred embodiment as exhibited by FIG. 1, the duties of the processor are split among several computer systems **120a - 120c, 125a - 125d, 130a - 130b**. The data store may be implemented through a database system **130a - 130b, 135a - 135d**. The Internet **110** serves as the communication link to visitor computers **105a - 105f**. In this preferred embodiment, the system utilizes multiple inexpensive computer systems at every level of the architecture. Routing between levels will automatically distribute the load amongst the functioning computers. Increasing throughput becomes a matter of adding more computers, not scaling up the existing ones. This arrangement also provides fault tolerance since the failure of one server will not incapacitate the system as long as another server providing the same service is alive. This approach also permits the distribution of servers geographically. A router **115** may also provide further load balancing.

The tasks performed by the processor may utilize a variety of underlying software technology. In a preferred embodiment, the software architecture can be divided into 3 tiers: web server, application-server and database-server. Each tier is comprised of a number of software layers.

Web Server Tier

The Web Server tier accesses application functionality by calling a single "Request" Application Programming Interface (API). The API will take a Document Object Model (DOM) (as specified by W3C in http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-DOM-Level-1, which is expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety) object as a parameter and return a DOM object as the response. The request will be relayed to the application server tier where a dispatching method will unpack the request object, inspect it, invoke the desired method, and send back the response object. This approach means that new functionality becomes available as soon as the application server is upgraded. It is not necessary to develop a set of "stubs" that mirror the new API call. This is a major advantage because new functionality in the application tier can be exploited immediately simply by modifying the Active Server Page (ASP)

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scripts. No web server resident Dynamic Link Libraries (DLLs) need to be upgraded so the server does not need to be shut down. The web server tier will typically run on server computers **120a - 120c** having a multitasking operating system such as Windows NT from Microsoft or other suitable operating system software. The Web Server tier contains the following layers as illustrated in FIG. 2:

- Web Server Software **210**. In a preferred embodiment, IIS by Microsoft is the server software. It supports serving side scripting using the VBScript scripting language.
- ASP Scripts **220**. All HTML content is rendered by ASP server scripts. The ASP scripting environment can interact with software modules written to Microsoft's COM specification.
- COM Adapters **230**. A set of COM wrappers provides the bridge between the ASP scripts and other elements of the system. The wrappers provide the necessary data conversions but do not contain any substantial functionality. The wrappers are not application specific.
- API Client Layer **240**. The API Client Layer consists of the very thin "request" API described above. This layer cooperates with the Object Cache layer. For example, before retrieving a catalog from the application layer, this layer may check to see if the requested catalog is already in the object cache.
- Object Cache **250**. The object cache contains the responses to previously submitted requests. All items in the cache are marked with an expiration time that is set at the time they are originally retrieved. The purpose of this layer is to reduce the load on the application tier.
- Remote Procedure Call Client **260**. The Remote Procedure Call Client provides connectivity to the application tier. It also provides request routing. In the event of application server failure, this client will automatically reconnect to a working server. This piece of software is not application dependent. In a preferred embodiment, the DBMS Component Server Client is the Objectstore Component Server Client (OCSC).

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In a preferred embodiment, the Web server layer supports the following four Web interface modules. In a preferred embodiment, these modules are encoded with ASP to generate appropriate HTML and Javascript. The four modules are as follows:

1. Merchant Manager

The Merchant Manager is the "Control Center" for Merchants. This module allows the merchant to maintain their products, catalogs, contact information, track orders, process returns, run reports, etc.

A merchant representative must login before performing any system activities. Any valid merchant user will be able to perform all possible actions on the merchant to which it is related. Only registered merchants will have a valid account. An account for a merchant is established when the merchant registers with the system. A merchant representative may initiate registration via a web interface. The signup process must collect basic merchant information, including the information necessary to pay the merchant, and a password, which will be used to create a user account for the merchant. Once the merchant is approved (this may be automatic), the merchant will be sent an email containing a unique user id which can be used to login to the system.

When a representative logs in, she is taken directly to the Merchant Manager as seen in FIG. 9 and assigned a Merchant Session ID (Merchant SID). All pages within the merchant system must retrieve the MerchantSID from the HTTP request and validate it. If the session does not validate, the representative is taken back to the Login screen.

This module contains the following submodules:

- Account Information

A merchant representative will be able to maintain the basic merchant profile, which includes the information needed to pay the merchant, the merchant's password, and the merchant's shipping policy information. FIG. 23 depicts the pages and procedures in a typical merchant account maintenance process. The representative selects to maintain account information **2305** from the Merchant Manager page **2300** leading to the display of the a basic information modification page **2310**. Each modifiable information type could be altered through a designated page available through the basic information

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page **2310**. Each such page could provide functionality to save any changes made to the particular page.

This sub-module allows a merchant to maintain the following types of information:

- Basic information **2310** – name, description, address, logo
- Contacts **2320** – for admin, finance, returns, support, order notification
- Product Defaults **2330** – price labels, unit of weight, display options
- Payment Info **2340** – check or ACH, payee info, bank info
- Shipping Option **2350** – by price, items, weight, other or NA
- Shipping Table **2360** – maintain shipping methods and prices
- Tax Schedule **2370** – set tax rate for states in which taxes are collected. This may be automated in the future.

- Products and Catalogs

Here the merchant can both maintain products and arrange them into catalogs. Example product attributes include:

- name
- description
- attributes - such as size, color, etc.
- price(s) – normal, sale, competitor's and the price can be set or changed by an attribute
- small image – used in most places
- large image – used for zoom-in in shopping

The merchant can also maintain their catalogs and categories. A catalog is the top level category. A merchant can have one or more catalogs. Each catalog will be presented to Hosts as a separate entity. However, it is still tied back to the merchant. The merchant logo can be assigned to the catalog or a different image selected.

A catalog is considered a commerce object. Further, a catalog is populated with product or product category commerce objects. An indicator for

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dynamic selection of a product or product category may also be considered a commerce objects; however, such objects would not appear in a catalog.

Categories are then placed in the catalog(s). Categories can also be placed into other categories. A catalog or category can contain an infinite number of categories but really should be kept to less than 10 at any given level for presentation purposes. The bottom level categories contain products. The product node is actually a pointer to the product in the inventory table. This allows for a product to be placed into multiple categories.

A catalog, category or a product can be set to be inactive. If it is set as inactive, it will not be available to the hosts to browse or sell. It will also not be available to customers in the shopping area. If a catalog or category is set as inactive, then every item beneath it (categories or products) is also inactive.

A product also has a flag to indicate it is out of stock. When a product is no longer going to be sold by the merchant, it should be set to inactive. If the product is simply out of stock, thus temporarily unavailable, the out of stock flag should be used.

If a host has an existing link that points to an inactive or out of stock product or an inactive catalog or category, the customer will be taken to the first level above that is active. For example, if a customer clicks on a Link that points to coffee pot A, and coffee pot A has been set to inactive, the shopping page will display the entire coffee pot category (all the active coffee pots). If the coffee pot category was set to inactive, then the shopping page would go to the next level up (such as Kitchen Appliances). In this case the shopper will be given a message indicating the selected product or category is not available. If a host has a link associated with a dynamic selection indicator commerce object, the triggering of such a link will cause the dynamic selection of a product or product category.

FIG. 24 depicts pages and procedures used in a merchant catalog and product maintenance process. When a merchant representative logs into the system, she is presented with the merchant manager page **2300**. From this page, she may choose to proceed to the edit products and catalogs page **2400**. On this

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page, she may elect to search for a product through entering criteria **2405**. She may elect to preview a particular product **2410** and, from the preview, view additional information associated with the particular product **2415**.

From the edit products and catalogs page **2400**, she may also choose to edit a particular product **2420** or edit by catalog or category **2442**. In editing a particular product **2420**, she may elect to save the information associated with the product **2422**, select a current attribute to edit **2424** leading to the attribute edit page **2430** or create a new attribute associated with the product **2426**. An attribute includes a collection of options such as sizes or colors. If she selects to add a new attribute **2426**, a new attribute creation page is presented **2428**. Upon creation of the new attribute, the new attribute is saved, and the representative proceeds to the attribute edit page **2430**. From this page, she may choose to save or cancel the current attribute edit **2435**.

If the representative chooses to edit by catalog or category **2442**, she is presented a page allowing selection of catalogs or categories **2440** through navigating the catalog/category hierarchies **2444**. Once a particular catalog or category is identified, she may edit it via a catalog/category edit page **2450**. After editing, the alterations are saved **2455** returning her to the catalog or category selection page **2440**.

- Reports

A merchant representative may request on-demand reports. Such reports include an account statement that details all payments to the merchant, and statistics about catalog visits and sales. Statistics can be correlated to hosts, links, products and time periods.

As illustrated in FIG. 25, a merchant representative begins at the Merchant Manager page **2300**. She selects the view reports option **2505** to view the report menu page **2510**. From the reports menu page **2510**, she may enter criteria **2514, 2518** leading respectively to a revenue summary page **2520** or a monthly statement page **2530**. From the monthly statement page **2530**, she may change criteria **2535** to view a revised monthly statement **2530** or return to the report menu **2510**. From the revenue summary page **2520**, she may select a

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specific item **2525** for receiving a detailed revenue page **2550**, alter the criteria **2527** to receive a revised revenue summary **2520**, or return to the reports menu page **2510**. From the detailed revenue page **2550**, she may return to the revenue summary page **2520**.

The following reports are available for the merchants to track their results:

- Revenue Summary by Month

  This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by month. Data includes number of sessions, number of orders, gross and net sales, etc. Summarizes at the month level and allows 'Drill Down' to daily information.

- Revenue Summary by Host

  This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by host. Data includes number of sessions, number of orders, gross and net sales, etc.

- Revenue Summary by Product

  This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by Product. Data includes number of sessions, quantity in shopping cart and gross order amount.

All reports can be run as quick reports (this month, last month, this year, last year, all sales) or by inputting a specific date range.

- Order Tracking

A merchant representative can access a web interface that allows her to report the status of orders. This includes: reporting when the order was shipped, along with tracking information, and the status of all returned items.

The order tracking sub-module allows the merchant to manage all areas of an order. An order can have the following status:

- new – the order has been received and credit card information validated
- pending – the merchant has acknowledged the order, it is waiting to be shipped

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- shipped – the merchant has shipped the order

An order can be shipped in multiple shipments. The merchant is credited for sales on shipped items.

The customer may also return part of an order or the entire order. The customer will obtain an RMA number (see the Shopping sub-module). All the merchant needs to do is acknowledge they have received the product back from the customer.

- Review Hosts

The Merchant Manager also allows the merchant to review which hosts have built links to that merchant's products. The merchant can also view the host web page containing such links.

A merchant representative will be able to review the list of hosts with which the merchant has a relationship. The merchant will have access to some basic information about the host, including at least one of the host's links, so that the host's look and feel can be evaluated.

In a preferred embodiment, a representative may review hosts through pages and procedures as depicted in FIG. 26. She begins at the Merchant Manager page **2300**. She selects the review hosts option to view the merchant-host relationship page **2600**. From this page, she may elect to view one of her products in the host's look and feel **2610** or view a list of links with the selected host that are directed to her commerce objects **2620**.

Automated interfaces can be introduced for merchants wishing to integrate their business systems with the functionality supported by the present inventions. Merchants can update their online catalogs, retrieve information on orders placed, and send order status updates back via automated interfaces. This integration is accomplished through the establishment and use of a standardized communication protocol.

In a preferred embodiment, merchants integrate by exchanging specially formatted XML documents over secure HTTP connections (i.e. HTTP over SSL). If the request is a query, the HTTP response will contain an XML document with the query results. Likewise, if the request is a command, the

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response will be an XML document containing the success or failure of the command.

Automated requests and responses are XML documents as described by the W3C's XML 1.0 specification, which may be found at http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-xml and which is expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. The XML specification only describes the syntax of an XML document, it does not place any restrictions on the content of the document. The content of requests and responses is described using a formal notation known as DCD (for Document Content Description). DCD's are described in a note that was submitted to the W3C by Microsoft and IBM. The DCD note can be viewed online at: http://www.w3.org/TR/NOTE-dcd and which is expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. A specific DCD describes the format of a request or response in the same way that the SMTP specification describes the format of an email. Typical DCDs for Automated Interfaces may be accessed at the following URLS: http://automation.nexchange.net/dcd/ManageInventory.01.02.dcd.xml and http://automation.nexchange.net/dcd/ManageCatalog.01.02.dcd.xml, both documents are expressly incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

All interfaces have the same basic structure. The table below illustrates the basic structure of Automated Interface requests and responses.

		<ManageOrders specification='http://www.nexchange.net/automated/xml/ ManageOrders.01.01.dcd'>
HE		<RequestHeader>
		<Authentication username='xxx' password='xxx' scope='xxx' /> <Instructions OnFail='HALT'/>

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	Response		<Receipt Processor='xxx' Date='xxx' Number='xxx'/> <ResponseSummary Status='SUCCESS'> Error Message Here </ResponseSummary>
			</RequestHeader>
BODY			<RequestBody>
	Query		<Command status='SUCCESS'>
			<QueryNewOrders />
		query	<QueryNewOrdersResponse> *Query Results Here* </QueryNewOrdersResponse>
			</Command>
	Operation		<Command status='SUCCESS'> <AcknowledgeOrder order_id='xxx' item_price_total='xxx'/> </Command>
			</RequestBody>
			</ManageOrders>

All responses contain the original request with status information and query results appended. The table above shows a response to a Manage Orders request. The response is divided into a header and a body section ("RequestHeader" & "RequestBody" respectively).

The RequestHeader element contains authentication information and global instructions. When the request is returned, the request header will also contain a receipt and a response summary. The authentication element carries the information needed to identify and authenticate the requesting party. The global instruction element contains instruction on how the request is to processed if an error is received. The remainder of the commands in the request can be processed or the request can be discontinued. In a response, the receipt element is added to the request header. Information in the receipt can be used to

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recover the response. The response summary element contains a status code, which will be set to "SUCCESS" if all commands were completed successfully.

The RequestBody element contains one or more command elements. The exact content of a command element depends on the interface being used. When a command is submitted, its status attribute will always be "REQUESTED". When the command has been processed, the response will echo back the command with the status changed to "SUCCESS", "FAILURE" or "SKIP". In the case of a query command, the response will contain a query response in addition to the status.

If the request conforms to the DCD, the response will contain the original request with the status and query results embedded. The command status codes must be inspected to determine what has been done.

If the request did not conform to the specification, two possible error types can occur:

- XML Parsing Error
- DCD Validating Error

Errors are returned as NexError node. If a NexError is returned, the XML document has not been processed. The returned XML should always be examined for a NexError.

If the request document is not valid XML, an XML Parsing Error will be returned. A NexError node will be added around the entire document. It will look similar to the following:

```
<NexError Msg=" XML Parsing Error" … >
  <XMLParseError errorcode=" " reason=" " line=" "
linepos=" ">
          offending section of document
  </XMLParseError>
</NexError>
```

The errorcode, reason, line and linepos will contain information explaining what the error is and the location in the file.

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If the request document is valid XML but does not match the published Interface DCD, a DCD Validating Error will be returned. A NexError node will be added around the entire document. A DCDError node will be embedded in the document at the location of the error. It will look similar to the following:

```
<NexError Msg=" XML Validating Error" … >
  <XMLValidateError msg="Find the DCDError Node in the
document for detailed error information."/>
        … Valid Portion of document …
        <DCDError message=" ">
            offending section of document
        </DCDError>
        … Valid Portion of document …
  </ XMLValidateError >
</NexError>
```

The following is an example request attempt to add one new product and to update the price of an existing product.

```
<ManageInventory
specification='http://automation.nexchange.net/dcd/Manage
Inventory.01.02.dcd.xml'>
    <RequestHeader>
        <Authentication username='xxxxx'
     password='xxxx' scope='MNNN'/>
        <Instructions onfail='CONTINUE'/>
    </RequestHeader>
    <RequestBody>
        <Command status='REQUESTED'>
            <AddProductDef updateifexists='1'>
                <ProductDef
                    id='saw'
                    skumask='saw'
                    name='saw'
```

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```
                description='A Circular Saw From Festo'
                 shortdescription='Festo Circular Saw'
                            info='no comment'
                                                                    -
      image='http://216.0.58.242/rmtools/fw132saw.jpg'

    largeimage='http://216.0.58.242/rmtools/fw132saw.jpg
                                    '
                            usualprice='145.00'
                            saleprice='135.00'
                            compareprice='215.00'
                            salelabel='HOT PRICE'
                            instock='1'
                            commplan='default'
                        >
                            <AttributeDefList/>
                            <KeywordList/>
                        </ProductDef>
                    </AddProductDef>
            </Command>
            <Command status='REQUESTED'>
                <UpdateProductDef
                    id='saw'
            image='http://216.0.58.242/rmtools/fw132saw.jpg
                                    '
                />
            </Command>
        </RequestBody>
    </ManageInventory>
```

2. Host Manager

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The Host Manager is the "Control Center" for Hosts. Here, a Host can track sales, design their store front, generate links to merchant products, get traffic/order reports, update account information, etc

For a host to gain access to the host manager system, the host must be registered. FIG. 4 depicts a flow chart for a typical registration process. A host representative may initiate contact **410** with the system via a web interface. The signup process must collect basic host information **420**, including the information necessary to pay the host a commission for purchases through his site, which is saved by the system **430**. Optionally, a click agreement containing terms of use **440** may be presented requiring agreement **444** to proceed. If at some point the representative elects to cancel **425, 458** or reject the use agreement **448**, he or she is returned to her point of entry **410**. The system may then request the representative to select a user identification and a password **450**. If the selected user identification is already in use **454**, the representative may be prompted to select a user identification **450**. The information associated with the host is stored **460**, and the representative may proceed to the host manager system page **470**.

When a host logs in, they are taken directly to the Host Manager, as seen in FIG. 10, and assigned a Host Session ID (Host SID). All pages within the host system must request the Host Sid and call the ValidateHostSessionID function. If the session does not validate, the user is taken back to the Login screen.

This module contains the following submodules:

- Account Information

This sub-module allows a host to maintain the following types of information:

  - Administrative Contact – name, address, phone
  - Payee Contact – name, address, phone, SSN
  - Site Information – site name, URL, description
  - Site Demographics – # of visitors, type of visitors, comments

A host representative will be able to maintain basic host information, including the information needed to pay the host, and the host's password. FIG. 5 depicts a flow chart of the pages and actions in a typical maintenance process.

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The representative has previously logged into the system to reach the host manager system page **470**. From the host manager system, the representative selects to update her account **510** leading to a host information maintenance page **520**. The representative can modify host information and, then choose to save or cancel the modification **530**. In either case, the representative is returned to the host manger system page **470**.

- Store Front Design

The store front design is where the host's look and feel is captured. The look and feel is captured by selecting an example page the host, retrieving the sample page from the host, identifying the look and feel elements from the sample page and saving the identified look and feel elements. "Look and feel elements" include logos, colors, page layout, navigation systems, frames, 'mouse-over' effects, or other elements that are consistent through some or all of a Host's website. A typical system for accomplishing this task would include a data store for storing look and feel descriptions, a communication channel to the host whose look and feel is to be captured and a processor for executing the capture.

When a customer clicks on a host buying opportunity (link), the next page loaded will be a shopping page. However, this shopping page should retain the host's look and feel. This is accomplished by capturing the HTML text and images that comprise their look and feel and embed within it the shopping HTML content. Any relative URLs in the host look and feel may be changed to absolute URLs back to the host system.

In a preferred embodiment, there are five steps to a process capturing the host's look and feel, converting relative URLs to absolute URLs and validation of links.

A host representative will be able to capture host look and feel information and to update host look and feel information through recapture. FIG. 6 depicts a flow chart of the pages and actions in a typical look and feel capture process. The representative has previously logged into the system to reach the host manager system page **470**. From this page, the representative

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selects to initiate host look and feel capture through a design storefront wizard **605**. An introduction page is presented explaining the process **610** from which the representative proceeds in the following manner:

- Base URL **615** – the URL used to convert relative links to absolute links, as seen in FIG. 11
- header **620** – the HTML to be rendered BEFORE the shopping html. Selection may be made by code, as seen in FIG. 12, by graphical point and click selection or other suitable selection method.
- footer **625** – the HTML to be rendered AFTER the shopping html. Selection may be made by code, as seen in FIG. 13, by graphical point and click selection or other suitable selection method.
- preview **630** – shows what the shopping page will look like (nothing has been captured yet). From this preview page **630**, as seen in FIG. 14, the representative may elect to return to earlier stage to perform a change **635**, **640** or **645** of base URL, header or footer respectively. The user may also have access to a preview **650** with example content included to demonstrate a typical page with both content and look and feel **680**, as seen in FIG. 15. From the generic preview page **630**, the representative may choose to continue **655** with finalizing the look and feel **660**.
- final check **660** - finalize the captured look and feel, as seen in FIG. 16, this page may allow validation of links and images and offer to save the captured look and feel. Once validation, if any has been performed, and the look and feel has been saved, the process completes **675**.
    - validation **665** – validate the link and image URLs in the header and footer HTML. FIG. 17 displays the screen capture of page that could be used to display validation progress.

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- save 670 – Actually captures, processes and saves the storefront information. A completion page such as seen in FIG. 18 may be displayed.

For security reasons, javascript is accepted but applets are stripped out in the preferred embodiment.

- Link Generator

The Link Generator allows host to create and maintain the shopping opportunities that they can then place on their site. Each Link is assigned a unique Link ID. The Link ID identifies who the host is, who the merchant is, and what commerce object (catalog, category, product or dynamic selection) is linked to.

The first time a host builds a Link to a merchant's product, category or catalog, an approval of that host for that merchant may be made. Until the host is approved, they cannot see the Link ID that has been assigned to the newly created Link.

The code the host embeds on their web site is as follows:

```
<!-- BEGIN NEXCHANGE LINK -->
<!-- For more information go to http://www.nexchange.com -->
<!-- The following 2 lines MUST NOT BE CHANGED to ensure proper crediting -->
<IMG BORDER='0' SRC='http://www.nexchange.net/img.asp?LinkID=xxxx'>
<a href='http://www.nexchange.net/route.asp?LinkID=xxxx'>
<!-- Substitute your own text or image below -->
** YOUR TEXT OR IMAGE HERE **</a>
<!-- END NEXCHANGE LINK -->
```

There are several points to note here:

- The image src (img.asp) is actually an ASP program that returns a single transparent pixel. This is used to track impressions (how many times the link was displayed on the host site).
- The route.asp page is a page that routes the customer to the shopping page. As additional servers are added, this will become very important for load balancing.

- The 'xxxx' for the LinkID='xxxx' is the Link ID assigned to the Link in the Link Generator.

A host representative will be able to generate links to commerce objects. FIG. 7 depicts a flow chart of the pages and actions in a typical link generation process. The representative has previously logged into the system to reach the host manager system page **470**. From this page, the representative selects to generate links **705**, which transfers her to a page containing a list of all previously generated links for that host **710**.

From this page, the representative may choose among several options: view an existing link **722**, remove an existing link **735**, edit an existing link **728** or add a new link to either a merchant with whom a link already exists **720** or a merchant without an existing link **715**. In viewing an existing link **722**, the page containing the link may optionally displayed in a separate window **725**; as a consequence, the representative could continue to interact with the list of available links page **710** in the primary window. The representative could select a link for removal **735** and, upon removal, return to the list of links page **710**. The representative may choose to edit an existing link **728** leading to a link modification page **730**. After modifying the link, the new link information would be saved **740**, and the representative would return to the list of available links **710**.

In adding a new link, a distinction may be made whether a link is made to a merchant to whom the host has previously linked **720** or to a merchant to whom a previous link does not exist **715**. In the latter case, an extra optional step may be involved to approve the host with respect to the new merchant as part of the catalog selection process **745**. In other embodiments, such a distinction need not be made. In linking to a merchant to whom a previous link does exist **720**, a catalog may implicitly be selected. In either situation, the creation process continues by allowing the representative to choose a commerce object to associate with the link **750**. Such a commerce object will be a product, a product category, a catalog or an indication that a product, product category or catalog should be chosen dynamically. From this page, the representative may

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go back to the catalog selection page **745** or proceed with setting link attributes **755** such as the destination upon return from the link (e.g. the point of departure into the e-commerce page or a destination designated by the representative). From this page **755**, the representative can return to the commerce object selection page **750** or continue forward with naming and saving the new link **760**. Upon completion of naming and saving page **760**, the link is saved to the system database **765**, and the representative is provided with a link to include within a page on the host website **770**. After cancellation at any time, or upon completion, the representative is returned to the list of available links page **710**.

Where a host representative chooses a dynamic indicator as the commerce object, the specific content will be chosen contextually based upon the content of the page that includes the link. In a preferred embodiment, keywords in the page are cross-reference with available catalogs, product categories and products to choose the appropriate content for the destination page associated with the link. FIG. 8 is a flow chart of the selection process in such a preferred embodiment.

A visitor is viewing the host page including a link associated with a dynamic selection commerce object **810**. The visitor activates the link. Receiving the activation, a determination is made as to whether content has previously been dynamically selected for the activated link **820**. If yes, a second determination is made as to whether the previously dynamically selected content is current **830**. If this is answered in the affirmative, a page is constructed with the previously dynamically selected content along with the look and feel associated with the host from which the link originated **840**.

If either determination is negative, the host page including the link is retrieved **850**. The page content is analyzed, and based upon the analysis, content for the link destination is selected **860**. The selected content is cached for potential future use **870**. Finally, a page is constructed with the dynamically selected content along with the look and feel associated with the host from which the link originated **840**. The analysis in **860** may take a variety of forms including, in a preferred embodiment, identification of marked keywords. In

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another embodiment, keywords may be dynamically determined using word count statistics.

In a more elaborate system, the retrieval process might encompass not only the page containing the link but also other pages linked to the page of link origin. Keywords or word count analysis could be used to determine context based upon the aggregation of pages retrieved. In a further embodiment, differing weights could be given based upon the source of the keyword identified; keywords from the page of origin would have a greater weight than keywords derived from pages one link away.

- Reports

A valid host representative will have on-demand access to a report showing visits to their links and sales. The report will be scoped by date range. Visits can be summarized by merchant and by link. Sales can be summarized by merchant and by link.

As illustrated in FIG. 21, a host representative begins at the Host Manager page **470**. She selects the view reports option **2105** to view the report menu page **2110**. From the reports menu page **2110**, she may enter criteria **2114, 2118** leading respectively to a revenue summary page **2120** or a monthly statement page **2130**. From the monthly statement page **2130**, she may change criteria **2135** to view a revised monthly statement **2130** or return to the report menu **2110**. From the revenue summary page **2120**, she may select a specific item **2125** for receiving a detailed revenue page **2150**, alter the criteria **2127** to receive a revised revenue summary **2120**, or return to the reports menu page **2110**. From the detailed revenue page **2150**, she may return to the revenue summary page **2120**.

The following reports are available for the hosts to track their results:

- Revenue Summary by Month

  This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by month. Data includes number of sessions, number of orders, gross and net sales, etc. Allows 'Drill Down' to daily totals.

- Revenue Summary by Merchant

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This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by merchant. Data includes number of sessions, number of orders, gross and net sales, etc.

- Revenue Summary by Link

This report provides sales and traffic information summarized by Link. Data includes number of sessions, number of orders, gross and net sales, etc.

3. Shopping

The shopping module is the part of the application that allows customers to find, search, select and buy a product. There is also a return product section accessible to the customer after the order has been placed.

Shopping is the part of the application that the general public will encounter. FIG. 19 displays a screen capture of a typical shopping page in a preferred embodiment. FIG. 22 depicts pages and procedures in a shopping process as implemented in a preferred embodiment.

The customer was on a host site and saw a link to buy something created via the Link generator **2200**. When he or she clicks on the link, he or she is taken to the shopping page parameterized with the Link ID **2210**. If an error occurs during this transition, the visitor is routed to a link error page **2205**.

A variety of generic information may be available from any shopping page within the system. Such information could include information about the e-commerce outsource provider **2222**, information about the merchant offering the current commerce object **2224**, information about an involved party's privacy policy **2226**, or information about an involved party's security policy **2228**.

Customers will be able to browse a merchant's catalogue and place items in their shopping cart **2212**. When the customer is ready to checkout **2260**, the system will acquire payment information **2262** and shipping information **2264** from the user, confirm this information **2266**, and execute the transaction. The receipt including a URL that can be used to track the order status (e.g. - it could be bookmarked) will be displayed to the customer **2268**. By visiting the URL provided upon checkout from the

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shopping experience, the customer can check the status of their order, initiate returns, and check on their return status.

This module contains the following submodules:

- Session

Each time a new shopping session is started, a customer session is created for the shopper. This Customer Session is assigned a Session ID (SID). All pages within the shopping system must request the SID and call the ValidateSessionID function. At any time if a session error occurs, a session error page **2215** may be presented.

Unlike the merchant and host sessions, the shopping session is persistent. The session information retained is what the customer has placed in the cart and if they have checked out. The SID is also written back to the customers browser as a cookie. If a customer returns to the Shopping page an attempt will be made to use the last session they had. It will only be reused if the ALL of the following are true:

  - The host the customer is coming from now is the same host as in the previous session
  - The merchant for the current link is the same as the merchant in the previous session
  - The previous session was not "Checked Out"
  - The session is not older than a certain age.

- Product Search and Selection

The main shopping page begins at the entry point that the host used to build the Link. This can be to a specific product, a category of products, a category of sub-categories, a complete catalog or a dynamically selected destination. However, no matter what entry point was chosen, the customer can navigate to every item contained in the merchant catalog used for the Link serving as the customer's entry point to the shopping. The customer may browse the catalog **2230** or search for a specific product or product category **2240**.

- Shopping Cart

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The Shopping Cart is the main information saved in a customer session. As a customer places products in the shopping cart, we retain information such as:

- name of the product
- price of the product
- any attributes (size, color, etc)
- host commission rate
- merchant revenue percent

This information must be stored redundantly in the shopping cart because the price, name, etc may change later and the values at the time of purchase need to be retained. The shopping cart interface also allows the shopper to remove a product and/or change the quantity through a view shopping cart page **2250**.

- Check Out

The check out process is separated into two distinct pieces.

- Order Capture
- Credit Validation

Order capture is the process of obtaining the customers billing and shipping information and creating a pending order. The credit card information is checked to make sure it is a valid number for the card type but it is not actually processed with a credit card authorization service (i.e. CyberCash). The order is accepted, assigned an order id and the customer is given an on screen and email confirmation. The pending order has a status of new.

The credit validation process happens sometime after the order capture has occurred. The customer's billing information is sent to the authorization service. The pending order now has the status of authorized.

If the card is validated, the order is accepted and placed into the TheOrder table. The pending order has a status of accepted. If the billing information fails validation, the pending order status is set to rejected and an email is sent to the customer informing that the credit card information could not be validated.

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4. System Manager

The System Manager is the "Control Center" for administrators. The administrator can monitor the day-to-day activities and status of the system. When an administrator logs in, he or she is taken directly to the System Manager and assigned a Nexchange Session ID (NexchangeSID). All pages within the System Manager system must request the NexchangeSID and call the ValidateNexchangeSessionID function. If the session does not validate, the user is taken back to the Login screen. Access to administration functions will require authentication using the name and password for a valid administration account.

The home/main page of the System Manager provides a quick summary of the current system status; a screen capture of a typical main page in a preferred embodiment is seen in FIG. 20. This summary includes pending orders, orders, host statistics, merchant statistics and an unattended orders list.

An administrator will be able to configure a hosts or merchant's payment policy. This includes specifications for any holdbacks, and a method for calculating commission/payment. At the request of a merchant, an administrator will be able to configure the system to reject all shopping traffic from a particular host-merchant arrangement. The host and merchant contacts will be notified via email. An administrator will also be able to activate or deactivate a host. The system will reject shopping traffic from inactive hosts. When a host's status is changed, the host contact will be notified via email. An administrator will configure the system to enforce system-wide policies. System-wide policies include the number of days allowed for returns.

The system will periodically run an audit process and report on situations of concern. For example, an audit could search for orders that have not been serviced for a certain period of time. The system may also report on possible security situations such as an inordinate number of account lockout incidents.

This module contains the following submodules:

- Utilities

The following utilities are available:

- List Pending Orders

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- List Orders
- List Rejected Orders
- List Returns

- Host

The following actions are available:

- List Promos
- List Hosts
- Maintain Host Tiers
- Host with Pending Merchants

- Merchant

The following actions are available:

- List Merchants
- Copy a Category
- Find Category Links
- Add a New Merchant
- Maintain Brands

Application Server Tier

The business functionality is provided via "application servers". An application server will consist of one or more of the business modules, wrapped with an appropriate middleware adapter. This arrangement allows delivery of services via many different mechanisms. For example, if it becomes desirable to serve some functions to a Java client, a Java Remote Method Invocation (RMI) version of an application server could be built. The new server could be developed rapidly because only an RMI "wrapper" would need to be developed, while the application logic would be reused. In a preferred embodiment, this layer consists of a set of core C++ software modules that encapsulate business functions.

The Application Server tier may run on one or more application server computers. The application servers are stateless. This means that, for two application servers serving the same functionality, "one is as good as another". In the event of failure, a client's requests may be handled by a different server than before the failure. Since it does not matter which server services a request, routing is greatly simplified.

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The stateless server approach also provides excellent fault tolerance since all application servers can back each other up. Use of a combination of "sticky routing" and caching to significantly ameliorate any detrimental performance implications of the stateless approach, while preserving most of the benefit. Once a client begins using a particular service, the system will show a preference for routing future requests from that client to the same server. The servers maintain a cache recently used data and will only access the database if the desired item cannot be used in cache. Since the routing is sticky, the client's data will often be in cache, and in many cases, no database access will be required. Should the client be routed to a new server, the session data can be retrieved from the database as occurs in the "vanilla" stateless model. In a preferred embodiment, the functionality of this layer utilizes one or more low cost server systems **125a - 125d** running a suitable operating system such as Microsoft Windows NT. This tier is also composed of several software layers as illustrated in FIG. 3:

- Remote Procedure Call Server **310**. This software provides connectivity to the Web Server layer and is not application dependent. In a preferred embodiment, this software layer is the Objectstore Component Server.
- Application Logic **320**. This software encapsulates the business functionality. The design of this software layer and the various application servers is more fully described below.
- Virtual Database **330**. The virtual database layer allows the application data to be distributed across multiple Database servers while insulating the application layer from the physical storage configuration. The virtual database contains a table that maps object types to physical databases. All database objects or records of a given type are distributed across the permissible databases. Databases can be added while the system is live to permit expansion onto new servers. Overburdened databases can be closed to prevent assignment of new data to them. Databases can be moved to different physical servers. All stored objects are referenced by a handle which is unaffected by the physical location of the referenced data. The virtual database layer also permits a collection of objects distributed across multiple servers to be indexed and searched.

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- DBMS Client **340**. This software provides access to data stored in the databases. In a preferred embodiment, the DBMS client is Object Design's Objectstore client. All Objectstore clients contain a cache of recently used database pages. An optimistic locking scheme is used to ensure cache consistency. The caching scheme is very effective in the present invention because it is optimized for many readers and few writers.

In a preferred embodiment, the application server layer includes the following eight application servers:

1. Cashier - Collects checkout information: billing info, shipping preferences, etc.

The Cashier server is analogous to a cashier in a "bricks and mortar" store. The cashier's responsibilities are listed below:

- Collecting Information Necessary To Complete a Sale. This information will include billing information, shipping address(s) and preferred shipping methods. In some cases, the information to be collected may depend on the contents of the order. The cashier will also access the appropriate merchant policy information to assist in determining what data should be collected.
- Providing an Itemized Account of the Total. Upon receiving the necessary data, the cashier will compute the applicable taxes, shipping charges, etc, and provide an itemized account of the order total.
- Execute the Sale. Upon request, the cashier will execute the sale. A copy of the relevant information will be sent to the credit processor. When the credit processor approves the orders, the cashier will break the customer's order into individual merchant orders and forward them to the Merchants' Order Tracking server. The cashier will also post a record to the Ledger at this time.

2. Catalog - Houses product hierarchies. Conducts product searches.

The catalog is an arrangement of product information. The catalog server supports a hierarchical browsing mode and various searching functions. Its responsibilities are listed below:

- Retrieve a catalog upon request. The catalog will include all content for a shopping experience. For products, the information will include the product description, price and options.

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- Retrieve a list of products matching a query. This will initially support simple keyword searching, but may be expanded to more sophisticated searching techniques.

3. Credit Processor - Conducts card validation and fraud screening.

The credit processor takes a candidate order and performs card authorization and fraud screening. The card processor cooperates with the order tracker to keep the status of the order updated.

- Perform Credit Card Authorization. Contact the card processing vendor and authorize the card. Retrieve the Address Verification System (AVS) code for use in fraud screening.
- Perform Fraud Screening. The system performs a fraud screening analysis based on the following factors: dollar amount of the order, AVS code, whether the billing and shipping address match, and whether the email address given is a free e-mail account.

4. Notifier - Sends messages.

The Notifier keeps track of who wants to be notified of what and how they should be notified. The notifier receives notification of various system events and takes the appropriate course of action. The appropriate course of action will depend upon the event and the party to be notified. For example, a merchant that does a high volume of sales and is already integrated with the system may not wish to receive email notification of every order.

5. Ledger - Records and reports on all financial events.

The Ledger is a record of all financial events. The ledger contains interfaces for posting events and interfaces querying and inspecting the ledger. Responsibilities include:

- Post an Order Event. The order event happens when the shopper confirms an order.
- Post a Sale Event. The sale event occurs when a merchant marks the last item in an order shipped.
- Post an Return Merchandise Authorization (RMA) Open Event/Post an RMA Completed Event/Post an RMA Canceled Event

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- Post a Journal Entry. This interface will be used to record non-standard events. The posted ledger entries must collectively have an equal number of debits and credits.

6. Order Tracker - Records and reports on order status.

This is the repository of order information. The order tracker includes a cashier's interface for creating a new order, a Merchant's interface for keeping the order status updated, and a Customer Service interface for checking on the status of the order and making relevant annotations.

- Query Order Status. This method is used by purchaser to check on the status of a pending order.
- Ship Order. This method is used by a merchant to document the parceling of an order into shipments.

7. Shopping Cart - Holds products that have been selected for purchase.

The shopping cart is simply a collection of Inventory Reservation documents that represent the items that have been selected by the shopper. The shopping cart includes methods for adding and removing Inventory Reservations and for inspecting the contents of the cart.

8. Warehouse - Inventory availability information. Product configuration interfaces.

The Warehouse represents a collection of physical items that are in stock. Responsibilities of the Warehouse are listed below:

- Provide Information on Stock Levels of a Particular Item/Order Items Having Low Inventory Levels. This is an advanced capability by which inventory may be dynamically reserved from a merchant, based on the current inventory levels.
- Provide Information on Product Configuration Options. The warehouse will provide a blank Inventory Reservation document that will specify all of the product's configuration options.
- Issue Reservations Against Inventory. A shopper will fill out an Inventory Reservation (which includes all configuration options) and submit it to the warehouse. If the item, as configured, is available, the reservation will be issued. This will serve to reserve the inventory for a fixed period of time.

Database Server Tier

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Finally, the Database server tier is composed of a single software layer. This layer is responsible for low level manipulation of the data in the one or more databases. This tier may consist of multiple database servers. Using multiple servers is a major advantage for obvious reasons. The system's database chores can be distributed to many different servers. In a preferred embodiment, the database server is Object Design's Objectstore server. Objectstore supports a "warm failover" mode which allows a backup server to take over automatically if the primary should fail. An Microsoft SQL server is also used in the preferred embodiment to maintain financial records although properly configured another DBMS such as Objectstore or a commercially available accounting package could provide capability suitable for financial record keeping.

The foregoing discussion describes the primary actors interacting with a system according to the present invention. After identifying these actors, typical transaction flows through the system are presented.

There are three main parties in the outsourced e-commerce relationship, excluding the end consumer. These parties include Merchants, Hosts, and the e-commerce outsource provider. This folds into two parties where one party plays the dual role of Host and Merchant.

Merchants

Merchants are the producers, distributors, or resellers of the goods to be sold through the outsource provider. The primary responsibilities of a Merchant are to:

- Maintain an up-to-date catalog within the system including all products that are available for sale in storefronts served by the outsource provider
- Create approval standards for passively recruited Host applicants based upon website profiles and target audience characteristics
- Fulfill all orders received from the e-commerce outsource provider
- Provide assistance to outsource provider regarding promotional strategies. This can be accomplished by supplying marketing literature and materials, as well as any sales incentives. The Merchant *owns* the marketing literature and materials, and may access and modify these items as necessary.

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- Provide service and support to customers generated via the outsource e-commerce provider
- Maintain internal records of orders filled through the outsource provider and process payments from the outsource provider for these orders
- Inform the e-commerce outsource provider of any backlogs, fulfillment delays, product changes, or other significant situations

Hosts

A Host is the operator of a website that engages in Internet commerce by incorporating one or more link to the e-commerce outsource provider into its web content. The responsibilities of a Host are to:

- Use the outsource provider Host Manager service bureau to select the Merchants and products that will be offered from the Host's website
- Promote transactions through the e-commerce outsource provider hosted by the website
- Regularly review the Merchant offerings for which they have been approved in order to take advantage of new products and to review sales and promotional strategies made available to them by the Merchant

E-commerce Outsource Provider

The role of outsource provider is to:

- Develop and maintain the outsource provider service bureau -- the systems and software which provide the platform for e-commerce support services
- Identify and recruit target Host websites and monitor/manage these relationships
- Create customer-transparent Host processing "pages" on a secure server to receive order and payment information
- Create, maintain, and update the "look & feel capture" process through which consumers are able to shop in a Merchant-controlled storefront within the design and navigational context of the Host website, preserving the ownership of the visit experience by the Host
- Authorize credit card transactions (in most cases)
- Process credit card payments for orders received (in most cases)

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- Pay periodic commissions to Hosts for orders shipped during a prior period
- Transmit orders to Merchants
- Pay Merchants for orders filled
- Manage the commission structure for Merchant-Host relationships to maximize sales and revenues
- Screen and approve Host applications
- Support and monitor the merchandise return/refund process and other customer service functions

This following describes the order entry and settlement process from the initial promotion on a Host website all the way through to fulfillment, payment processing, commission payment, and Merchant payment.

Order Placement, Fulfillment, and Settlement Overview

The overall transaction process is very straightforward. The following is a list of the steps involved in receiving and processing an order request.

a) A customer visits a Host website and, through contextually relevant content, becomes interested in a product offered.

b) The customer selects the item(s) that she wishes to purchase by clicking a product image, banner-style link, or text link, or other offer format taking her to a dynamically generated web pages which retain the look and feel of the referring Host and are served by the e-commerce outsource provider.

c) The customer browses through the products offered, indicating which items are to be purchased and in what quantities via forms on-screen. Selected items appear within the shopping cart at the top of the shopping interface. The user remains on the product screen without ever being involuntarily removed to a detailed shopping cart-only screen, representing a significant enhancement over most shopping cart technology in place today. When all desired products are selected, the customer initiates the checkout procedure, never leaving the Host website.

d) The secure checkout interface appears, still consistent in look and feel with the Host's referring website. The customer completes the order form, provides all billing and shipping information required, confirms the items selected for purchase, and remits credit card information for payment processing.

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e) Assuming the payment method is authorized, the customer is returned to another section of the Host's website, possibly just returning to the page in which the offer was placed, as determined by the Host.

f) The e-commerce outsource provider passes the order to the Merchant in real time. The credit card may be charged at this point or upon confirmation of shipment.

g) The Merchant receives and logs the order.

h) The Merchant then assembles and ships the order to the customer, keeping the outsource provider apprised of the order status.

i) Periodically, the outsource provider will remit payment to the Merchant for that period's filled orders.

j) Periodically, the outsource provider will remit payment to Hosts for all commissions earned in the prior period.

Host Process Flow

The process flow for a prospect to become a Host and be fully able to endorse/promote/offer Merchant products is as follows:

a) Hosts are recruited from three sources: direct recruiting, in which the Host prospect is identified by and approached by an e-commerce outsource provider representative; passive recruiting, in which the Host has been referred to the outsource provider by other Hosts, relevant meta-sites (sites that contain lists of and links to other sites/services), or other sources; and Host Agent recruits, in which a specialized third party Agent identifies and approaches Host prospects. In many cases, the use of online signup forms and brochures may be a factor in recruitment.

b) Prospect completes the Host application form (except where preapproved), providing information about the type of website(s) operated by the Host, some traffic statistics about these websites and general visitor demographics, and complete contact information. The prospect also selects an outsource provider system user ID and password which will later be used to access the system, retrieve important Hosting information and programming, and modify the custom materials in the outsource provider transaction processing engine.

c) The application is received and the information therein is reviewed, and the application is either approved or rejected (unless this is a preapproved Host). If

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approved, the Host's ID and password are activated, and an automated message is sent to the new Host informing them of their approval. This message will also contain instructions for accessing the e-commerce outsource provider system, setting up their links to the outsource provider, and inserting outsource provider data into their website(s). Preapproved Hosts will be immediately able to access this system upon submission of their application.

d) Host accesses e-commerce outsource provider system to begin the step-by-step setup process. The Host first identifies a page from their own website which will provide the look and feel to be replicated. Following this, the Host configures product selections for each of its approved Merchants and downloads product images, text, and CGI/HTML code for their own website. Host then completes changes to website and activates new content. Hosts are free to promote their use of the outsource provider as they feel is suitable to the product at any time and with any frequency, subject to reasonable limitations.

e) Hosts will be able to access real-time reports about transaction volume including number of users, average purchase amount per user, number of purchases on specified days or within specified date ranges. Hosts can create customized reports to determine conversion rates, top selling products, commissions earned, paid, and due, and other pertinent information. This information can be leveraged by the e-commerce outsource provider and the Host to improve the efficacy of targeted marketing efforts on the Host's website.

Internal System Transaction Flow

The e-commerce outsource provider system acts as a clearinghouse for all orders. The system maintains a real-time interface with a credit card authorization and processing service and a robust database engine which is able to process transactions, record all transaction activities, generate reports used for commission payments and auditing of Merchant invoices, and track order status. The transaction flow for the outsource provider service bureau is directly related to the structure of the underlying database.

This flow can be described as follows:

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a) Customer, visiting Host, activates link to commerce object within context of Host's website. This activation is typically accomplished by clicking on a hyperlink of some kind within a webpage of the Host's website.

b) The e-commerce outsource provider launches new storefront featuring specific products or product category for Merchant, as determined by Host, with the look and feel of the Host's site. The user is not made aware of the fact that this shopping experience is taking place on an outsourced server.

c) As customer browses through featured items in the Merchant's catalog, the outsource provider serves additional pages while maintaining the look and feel of the Host. The system maintains a dynamic record of customers activities including products reviewed, items selected for purchase (placed into shopping cart), and time spent shopping. The e-commerce outsource provider uses a highly reliable and accurate tracking technology throughout the shopping experience.

d) Upon checkout, the system processes customer billing, shipping, and order information via secure (encrypted) data transmission (unless the consumer opts for non-encrypted transmission). This process includes an order confirmation process and a process by which a non-approved credit card transaction may be corrected and resubmitted.

e) Upon approval, the outsource provider performs several simultaneous functions:

- Thank you screen is displayed to customer
- Customer is prompted to "continue" browsing Host's website.
- E-mail confirmation is sent to customer detailing order information, fulfillment process, customer service terms and procedures, and other relevant information.
- Order is transmitted to the Merchant electronically, via e-mail or direct link to order entry system.
- Order is logged into transaction database and logged by system in conjunction with Host referral information.
- Host is notified that a sale has been made and commission dollars have been earned.

The second part of the e-commerce outsource provider service bureau transaction process pertains to reconciliation and settlement with the Merchants.

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a) Orders are transmitted to each Merchant as received and are logged into the system for future reference and reporting.

b) Periodically, the outsource provider will pay each Merchant for orders processed during the prior period. Payment will be driven by shipped orders as recorded within the system. Merchants can view their accumulated sales within the system at any time during the period, and historical information will be available as well.

The final part of the e-commerce outsource provider Service Bureau transaction process pertains to the payment of commissions to Hosts.

c) Periodically, the e-commerce outsource provider will calculate the accumulated commissions due to each Host from the prior period's results. Hosts will be able to review their earnings on a real-time basis at any point during a period.

d) The outsource provider will then pay each Host the appropriate commission amount via electronic payment or check along with a copy of the transactions and total report for the period being settled.

Merchant Transaction Flow

Each Merchant will be required to fulfill every order received through the e-commerce outsource provider within a designated time frame. Merchants must also be able to track certain information regularly and accurately. Merchants will be monitored to ensure timely fulfillment in order to provide the best quality customer service.

The steps of the Merchants transaction flow after they have been established within the system are as follows:

a) The designated recipient of orders within the Merchant organization will check for new orders at least on a daily basis, if not more frequently. Orders are received by the Merchant via e-mail or other electronic notification, including automated direct input to legacy order management systems owned or operated by the Merchant. These orders include all pertinent customer data required for fulfillment of each order. Merchants may also view all orders online, sorted by date, status (new/viewed), or other criteria, and download orders in bulk form directly from the outsource provider.

b) After receiving the order, the Merchant will ship the order to the Customer within a reasonable time period for the type of merchandise ordered. Merchant will have the

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ability to modify the shipping status of the orders within the system. Merchants are obligated to provide timely shipping of their products. If any item ordered is out of stock or discontinued, the Merchant must update their catalog on the e-commerce outsource provider immediately and notify any affected customers immediately via e-mail or regular mail. Orders should be processed according to whatever internal process flow has been established by the Merchant.

c) Upon receipt of payment for the prior month's orders, the Merchant is responsible for reconciling the amount remitted with their own fulfillment records. Any disputes should be addressed by accessing the Merchant interface and querying/updating records.

The embodiments described above are given as illustrative examples only. It will be readily appreciated that many deviations may be made from the specific embodiment disclosed in this specification without departing from the invention. Accordingly, the scope of the invention is to be determined by the claims below rather than being limited to the specifically described embodiment above.

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What is claimed is:

1. An e-commerce outsourcing process providing a host website in communication with a visitor computer with context sensitive, transparent e-commerce support pages, comprising the steps of:
   a) capturing a look and feel description associated with a host website;
   b) providing the host website with a link for inclusion within a page on the host website for serving to a visitor computer, wherein the provided link correlates the host website with a selected commerce object; and
   c) upon receiving an activation of the provided link from the visitor computer, serving to the visitor computer an e-commerce supported page with a look and feel corresponding to the captured look and feel description of the host website associated with the provided link and with content based on the commerce object associated with the provided link.

2. The process of claim 1, wherein the selected commerce object is a selected product.

3. The process of claim 1, wherein the selected commerce object is a selected product category.

4. The process of claim 1, wherein the selected commerce object is an indicator for dynamic content selection.

5. The process of claim 4, wherein the content within the served page is dynamically selected according to contextual information derived from the page on the host website including the provided link.

6. An e-commerce outsourcing system providing a host website in communication with a visitor computer with context sensitive, transparent e-commerce support pages, comprising:

a) a data store including a look and feel description associated with a host website;

b) a communications link to a visitor computer; and

c) a processor for executing instructions that perform the steps of:

i) capturing a look and feel description associated with a host website;

ii) storing the captured look and feel description in the data store;

iii) providing the host website with a link for inclusion within a page on the host website correlating the host website with a selected commerce object; and

iv) upon receiving an activation of the provided link via the communication link, serving an e-commerce supported page via the communication link with a look and feel corresponding to the captured look and feel description of the host website associated with the provided link and with content based on the commerce object associated with the provided link.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein the data store further includes a product record and wherein the selected commerce object is a selected product record.

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8. The process of claim 6, wherein the data store further includes a product category record and wherein the selected commerce object is a selected product category record.

9. The process of claim 6, wherein the selected commerce object is an indicator for dynamic content selection.

10. The process of claim 9, wherein the content within the served page is dynamically selected according to contextual information derived from the page on the host website including the provided link.

11. A look and feel description capture system, comprising:

a) a data store for storing look and feel descriptions;

b) a communication link to a target website; and

c) a processor for executing instructions that perform the steps of:

i) receiving an identification for an example page from the target website;

ii) retrieving the example page via the communication link;

iii) identifying look and feel elements within the retrieved example page; and

iv) storing the identified look and feel elements as a look and feel description associated with the target website in the data store.

12. A look and feel description capture process, comprising the steps of:

a) receiving an identification for an example page from a target website;

b) retrieving the example page via a communication link to the target website;

c) identifying look and feel elements within the retrieved example page; and

d) storing the identified look and feel elements as a look and feel description associated with the target website in a data store.

13. A system for serving pages containing dynamically selected content, comprising:

a) an index data store including records associated with pages containing links designated for dynamic content selection;

b) a content data store including dynamically selectable content;

c) a communication link to a visitor computer

d) a processor for executing instructions that perform the steps of:

i) receiving the activation of a link designated for dynamic content selection via the communication link;

ii) accessing a record in the index data store associated with the page containing the activated link;

iii) selecting content from the content data store based upon the accessed record;

iv) constructing a page containing the selected content; and

v) serving the constructed page via the communication link.

14. A cost effective, scalable system for serving dynamically constructed Web pages, comprising:

a) a Web server layer comprising one or more processors;

b) an application server layer comprising one or more processors, wherein each processor executes one or more application servers; and

c) A database server layer comprising one or more processors and a data store including content for use in dynamically constructing Web pages;

wherein a processor of the Web server layer is programmed to perform the following:

i) receive an end user request;

ii) determine a way to process data as required to respond to the end user request;

iii) select an application server that processes data in the determined way;

iv) request processed data from the selected application server running on a selected processor of the application server layer;

v) receive the requested processed data from the determined application server running on the selected application server layer processor;

vi) construct a Web page containing the received processed data; and

vii) serve the constructed Web page; and

wherein a processor of the application server layer is programmed to perform the following:

i) receive a request for processed data from a selected processor of the Web server layer directed to a selected application server;

ii) request data required to fulfill the received request from a database server running on a selected processor of the database server layer;

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iii) receive the required data from the database server running on the selected database server layer processor;

iv) process the received, required data using the selected application server into the requested processed data; and

v) forward the requested processed data to the selected Web server layer processor; and

wherein a processor of the database server layer is programmed to perform the following:

i) receive a request for data from a selected processor of the application server layer;

ii) retrieve the request data from the data store; and

iii) forward the requested data to the selected processor of the application server.

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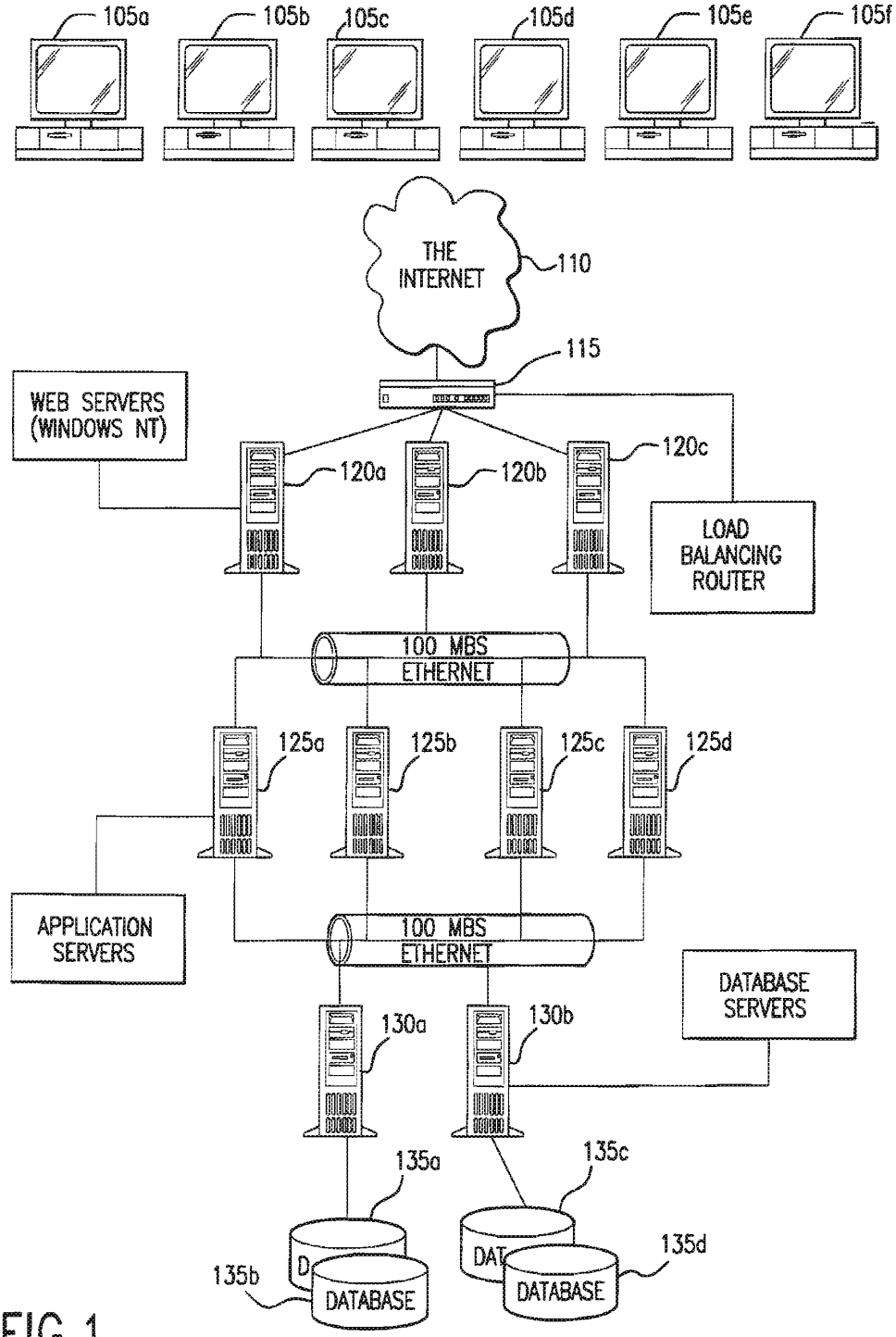


FIG.1

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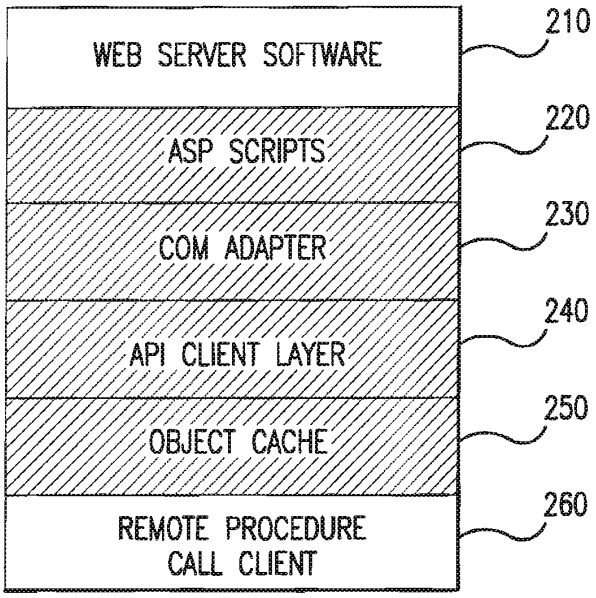


FIG.2

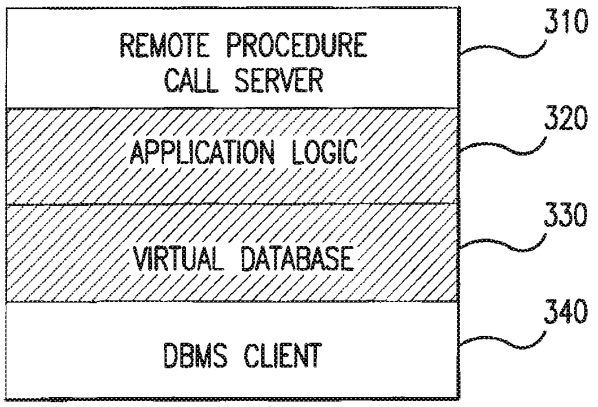


FIG.3

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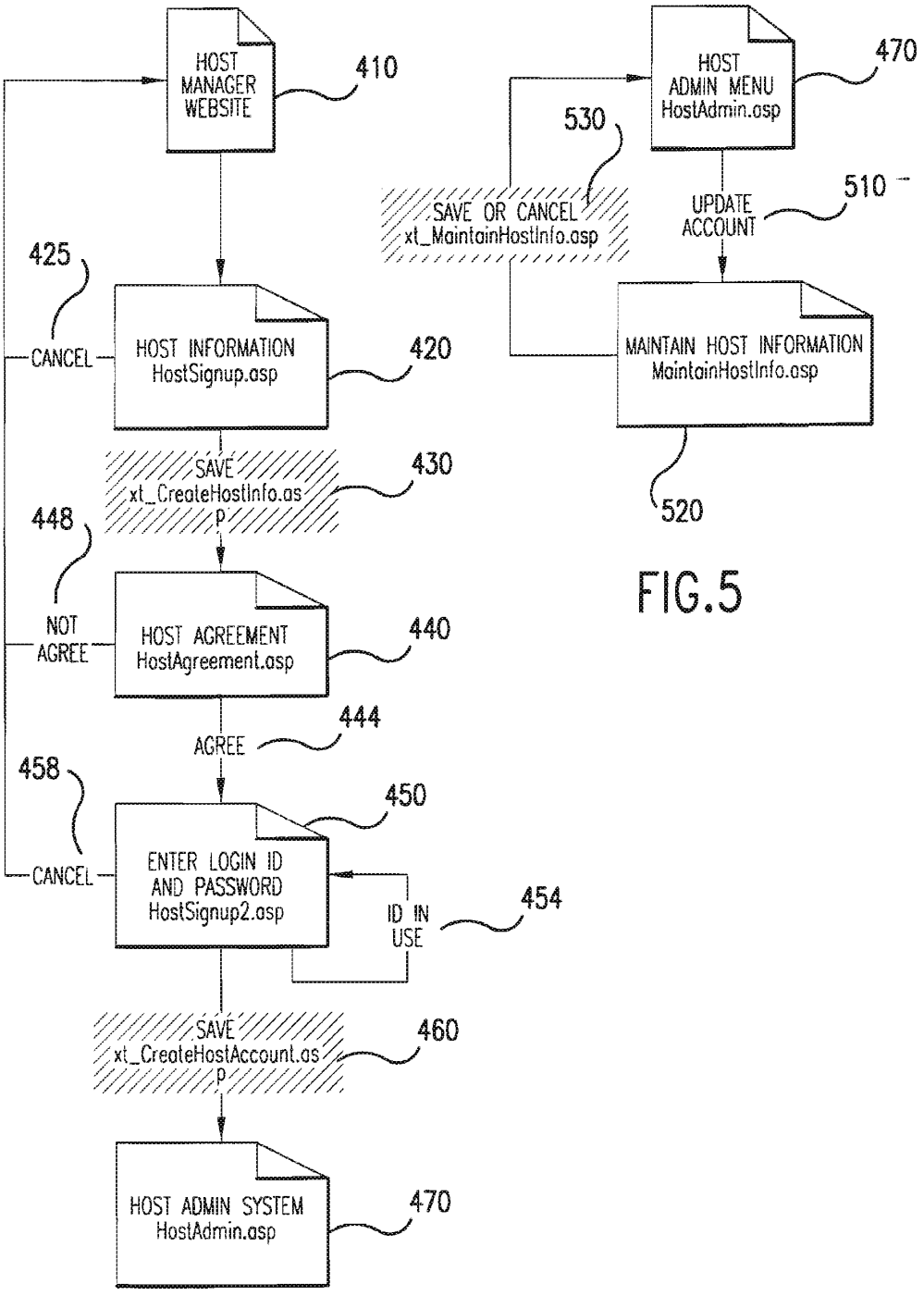


FIG.5

FIG.4

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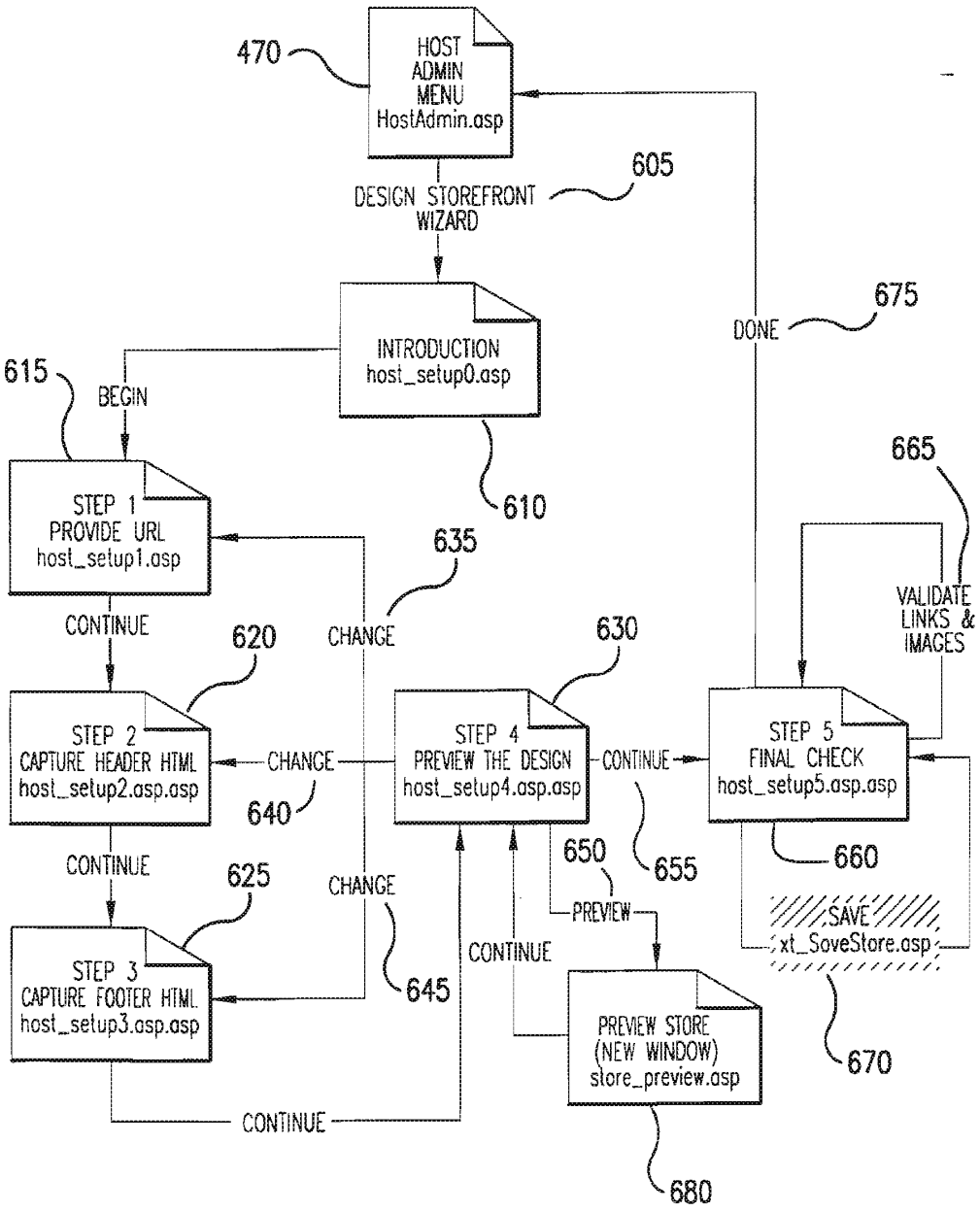


FIG.6

SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

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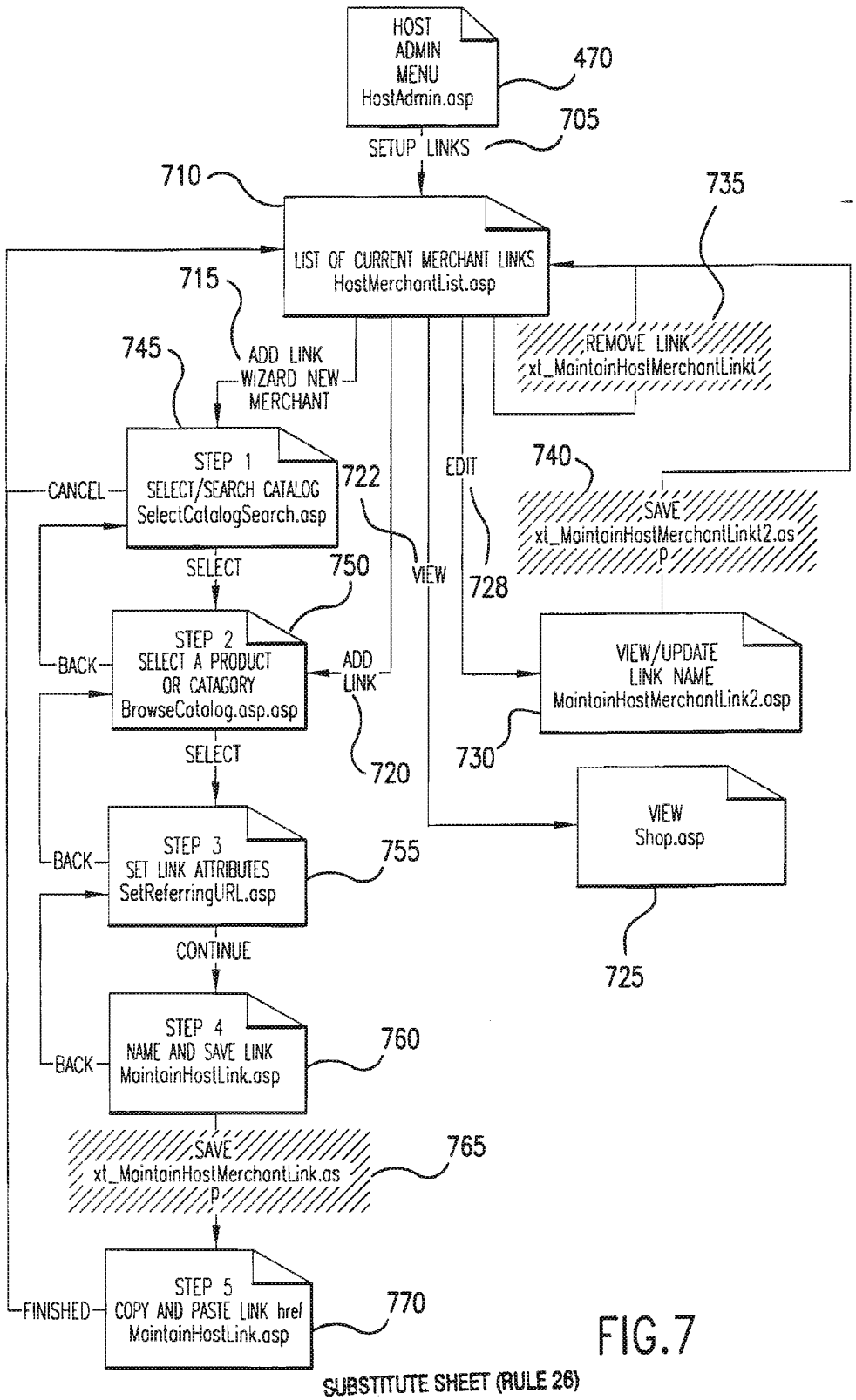


FIG.7

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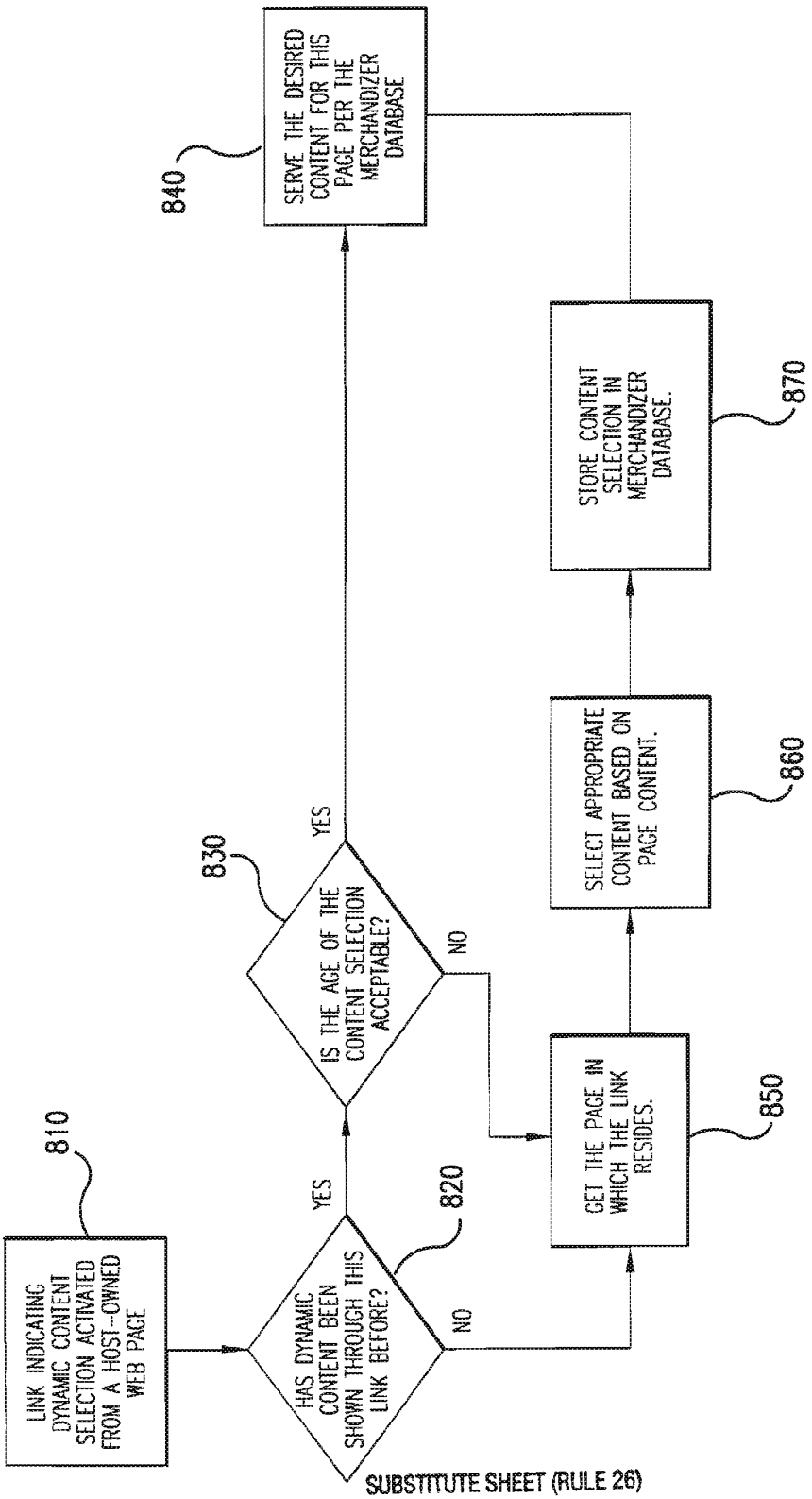


FIG.8

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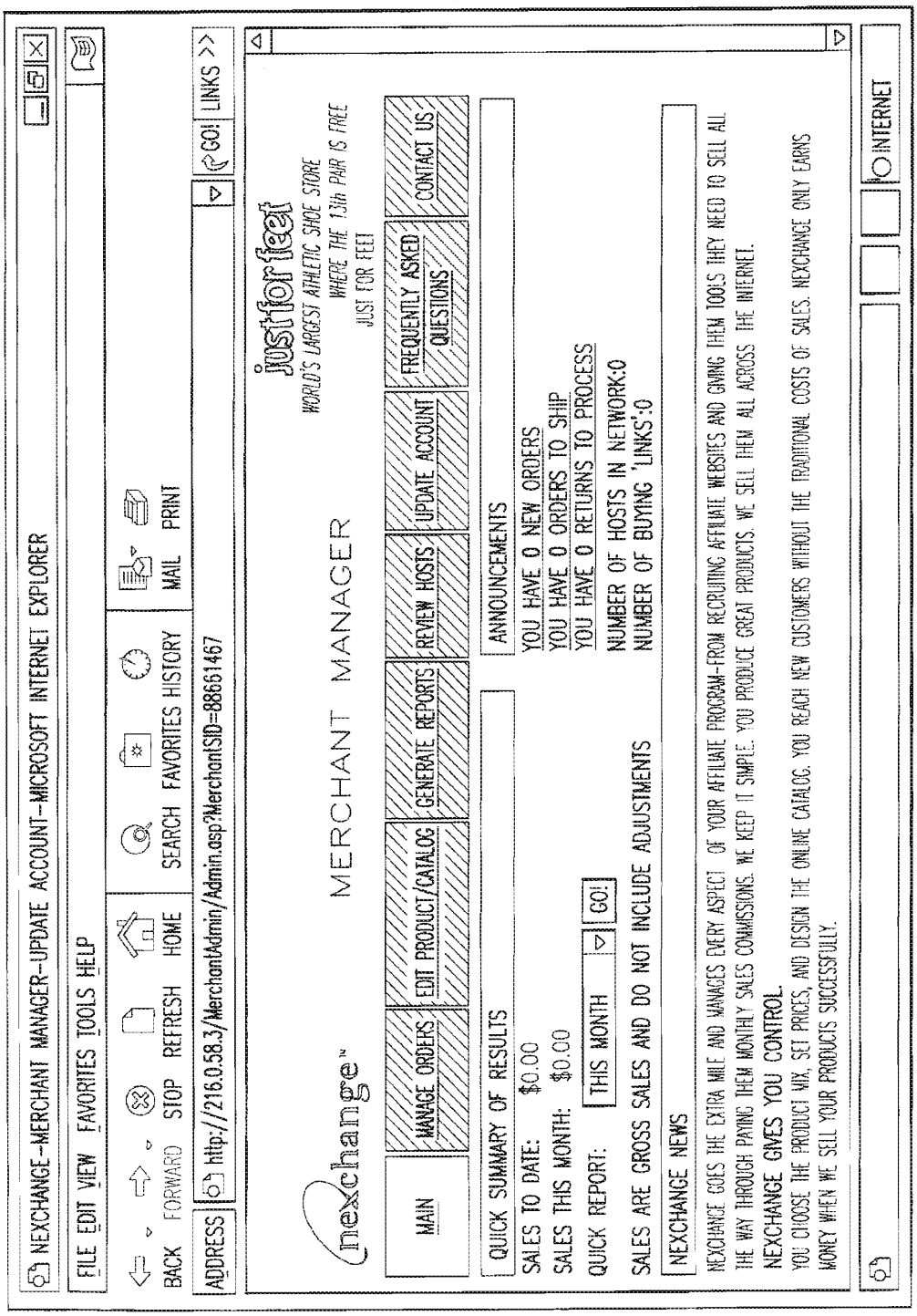


FIG.9

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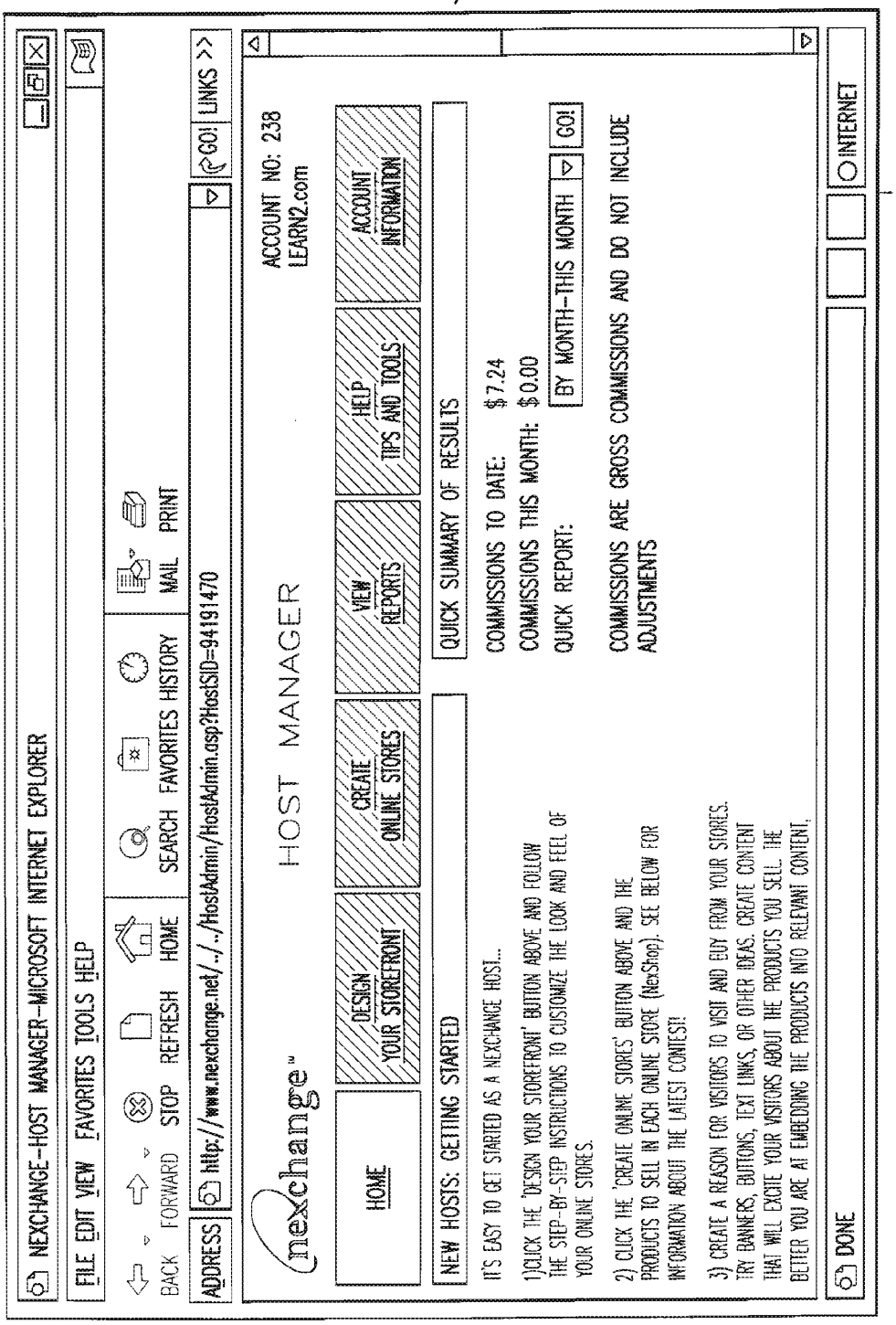


FIG.10

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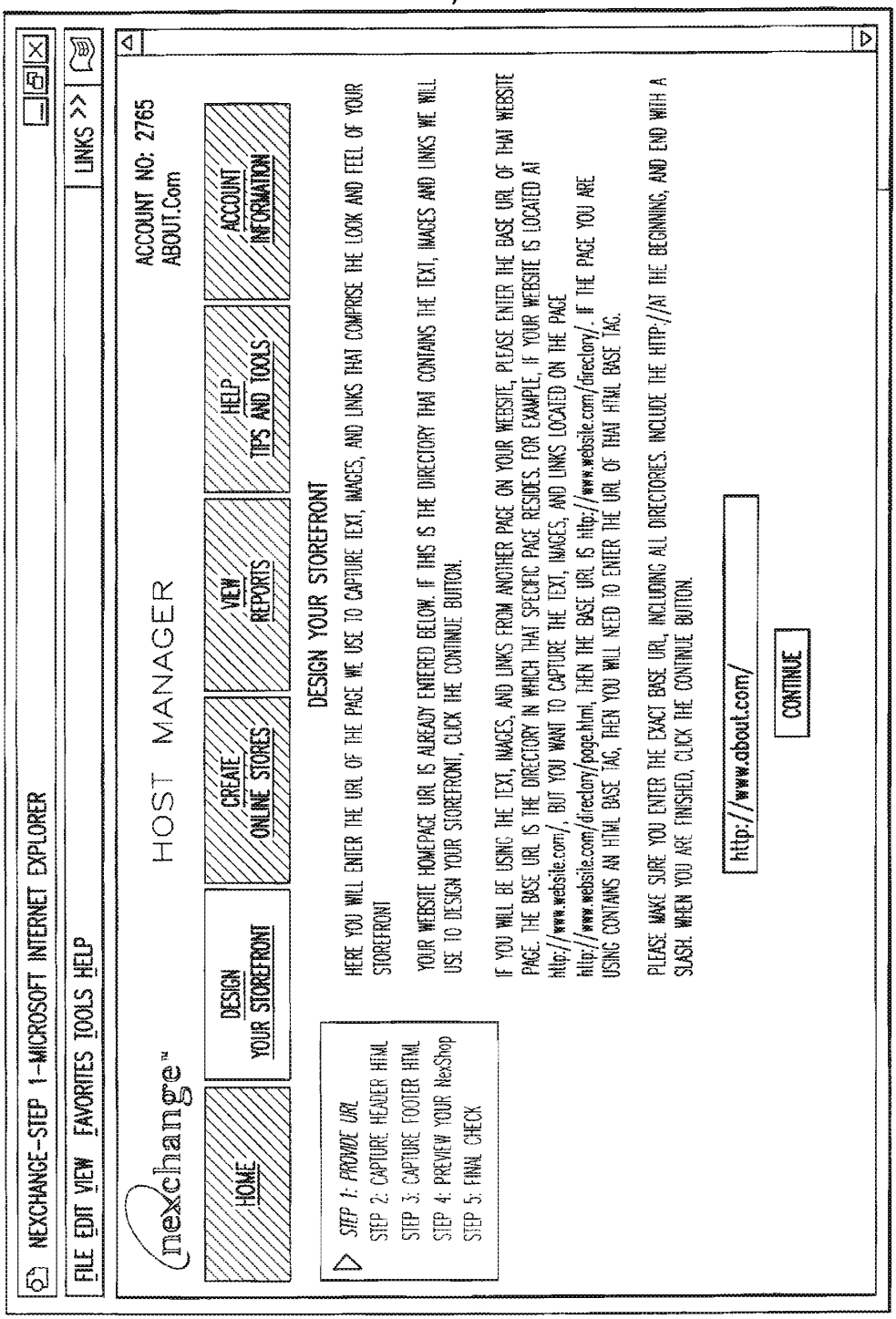


FIG.11

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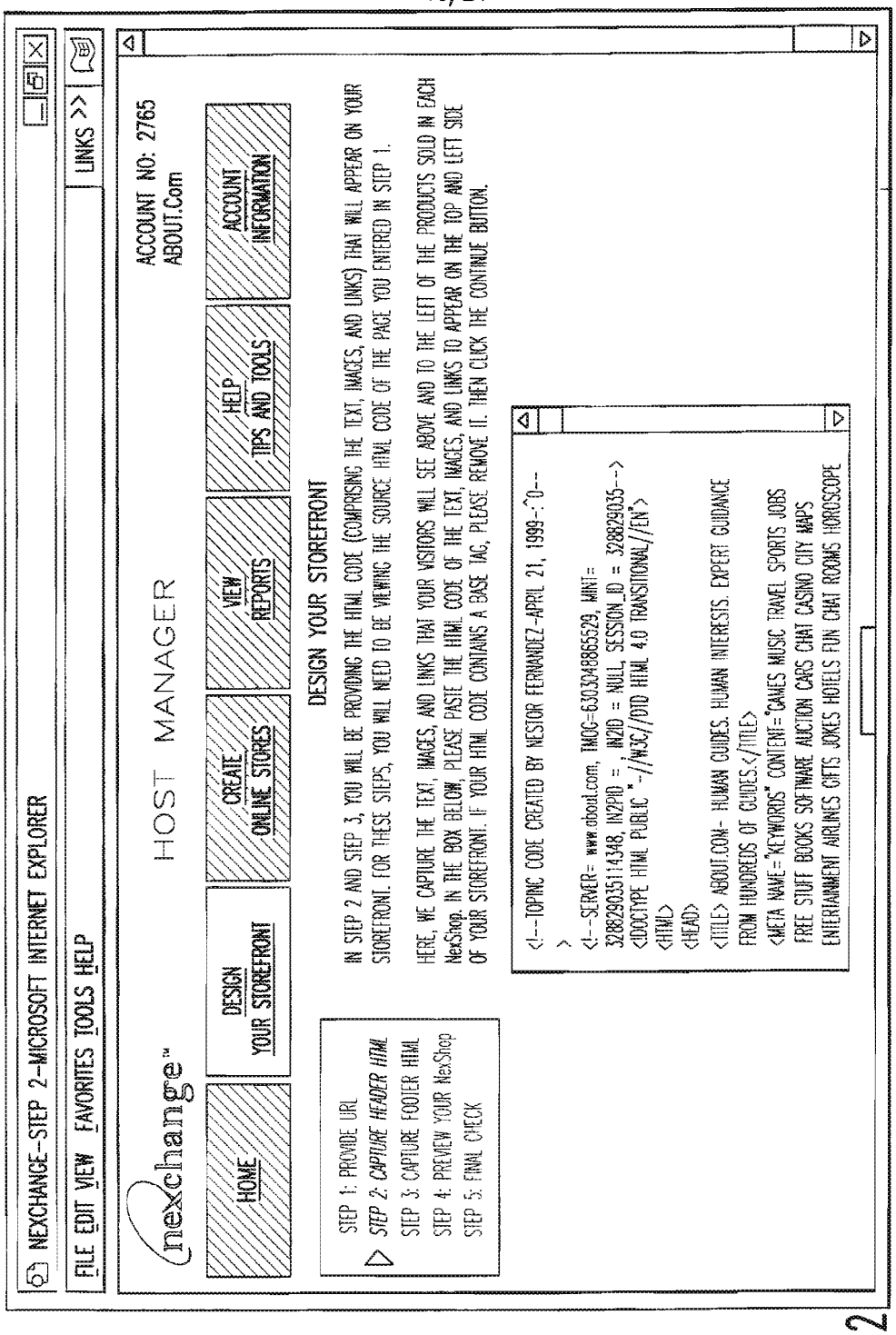


FIG. 12

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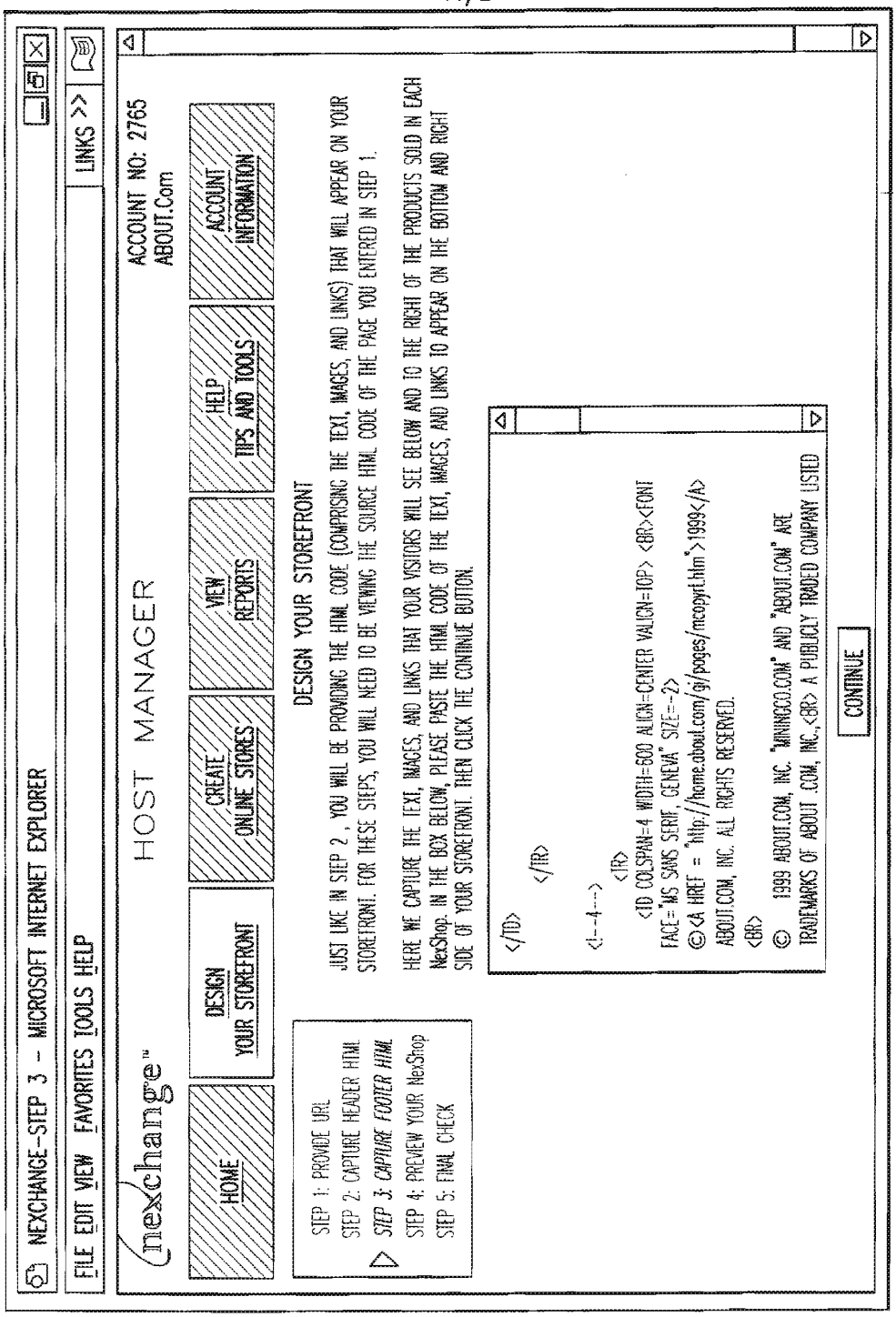


FIG. 13

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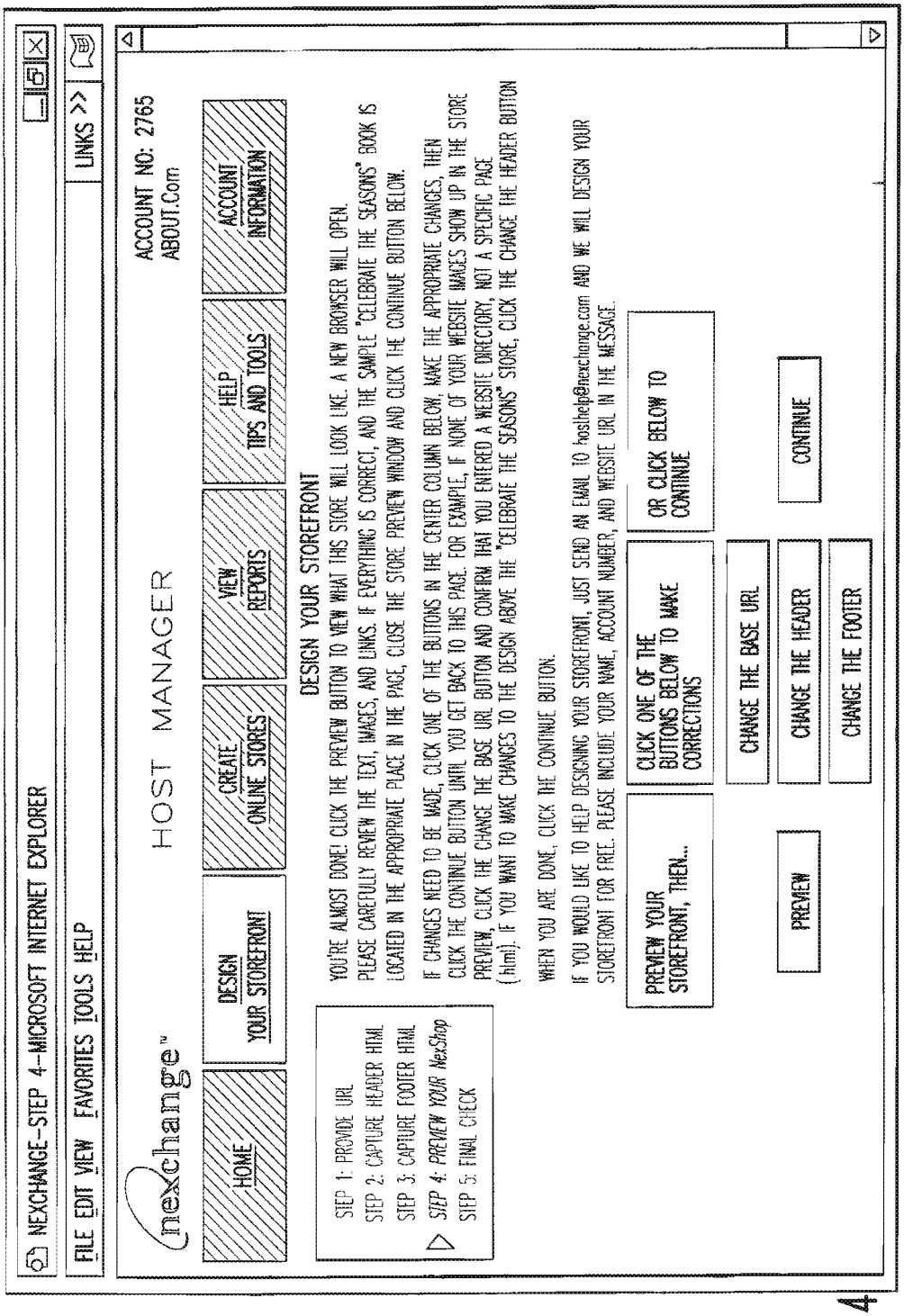


FIG. 14

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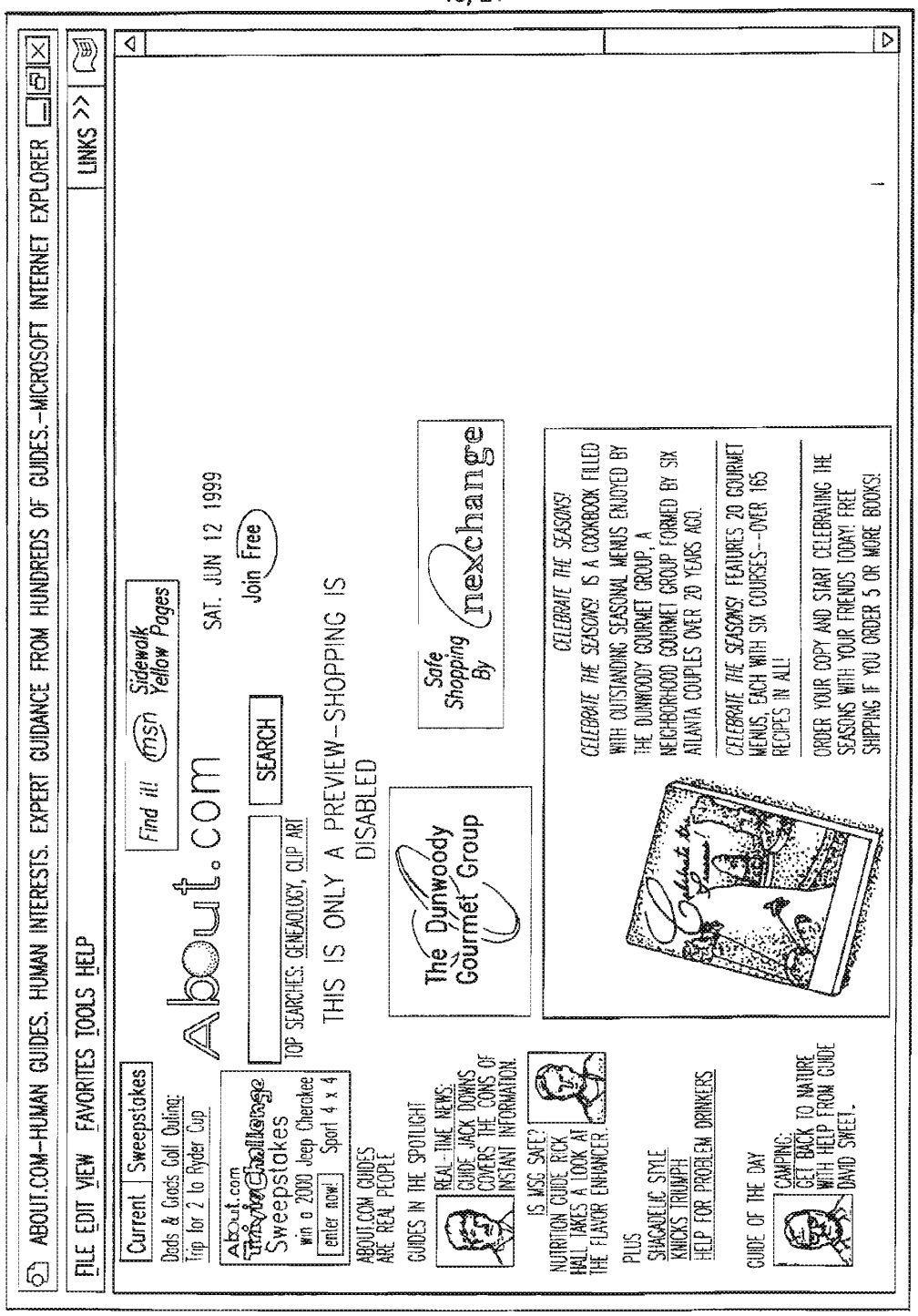


FIG.15

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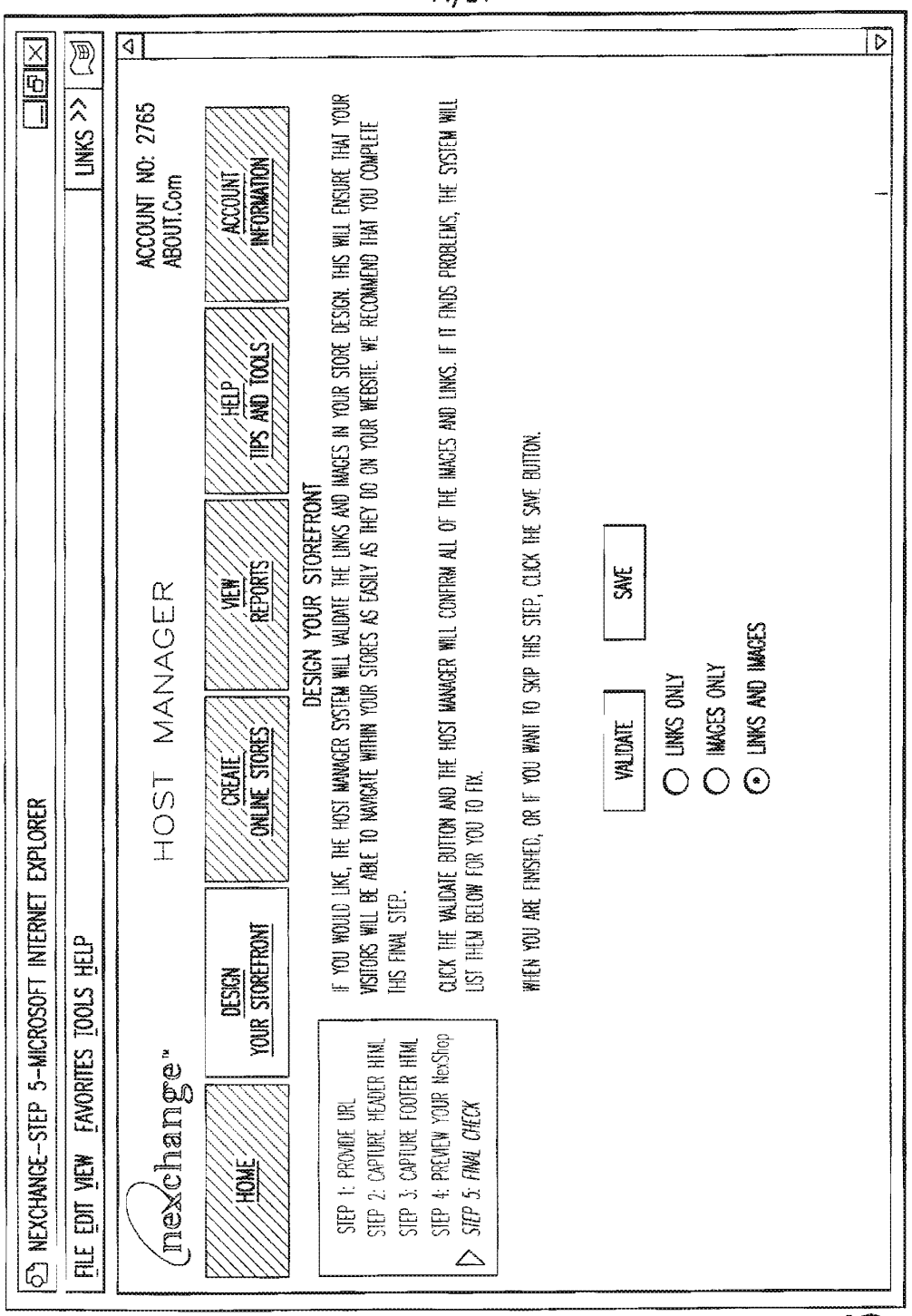


FIG.16

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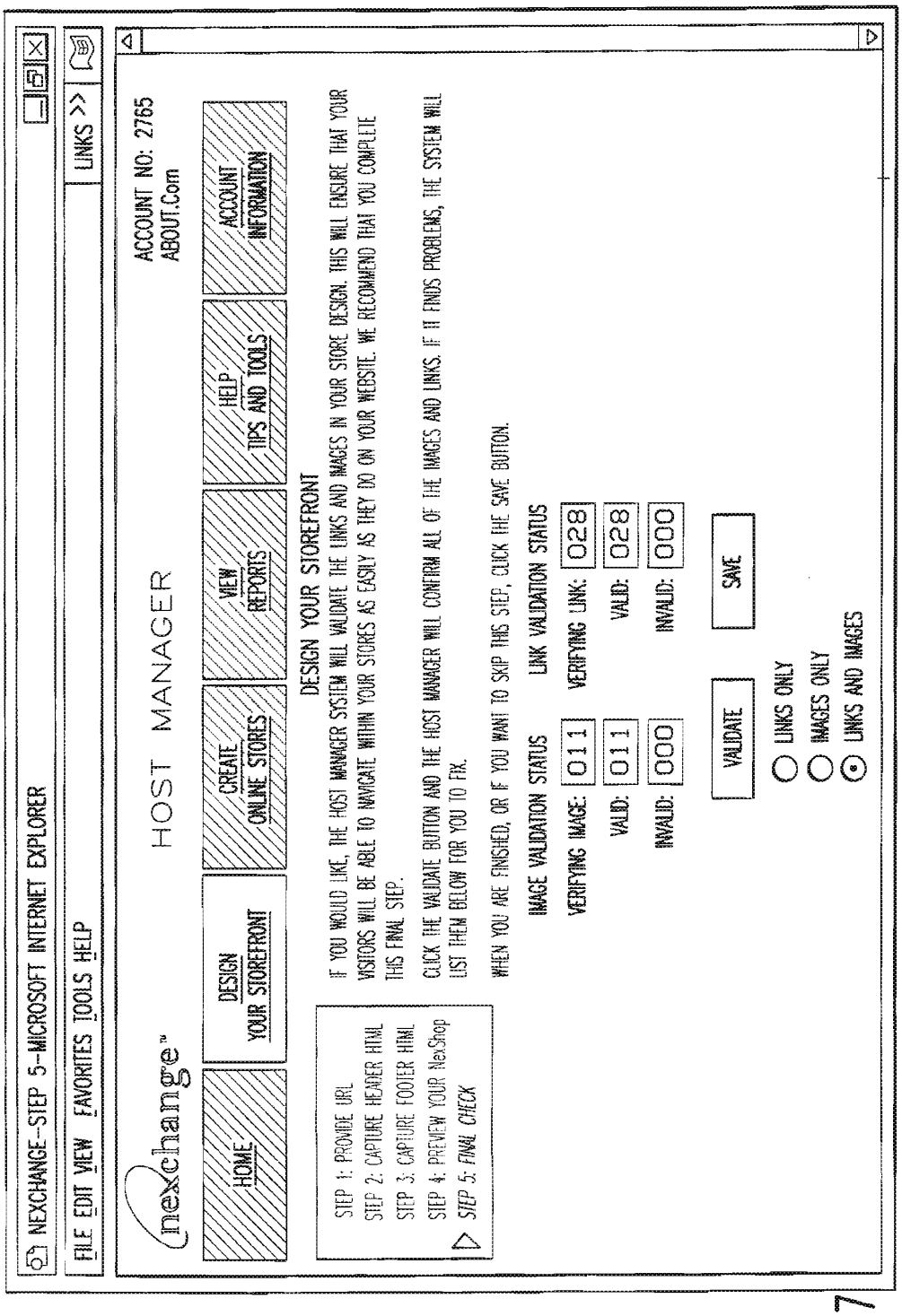


FIG.17

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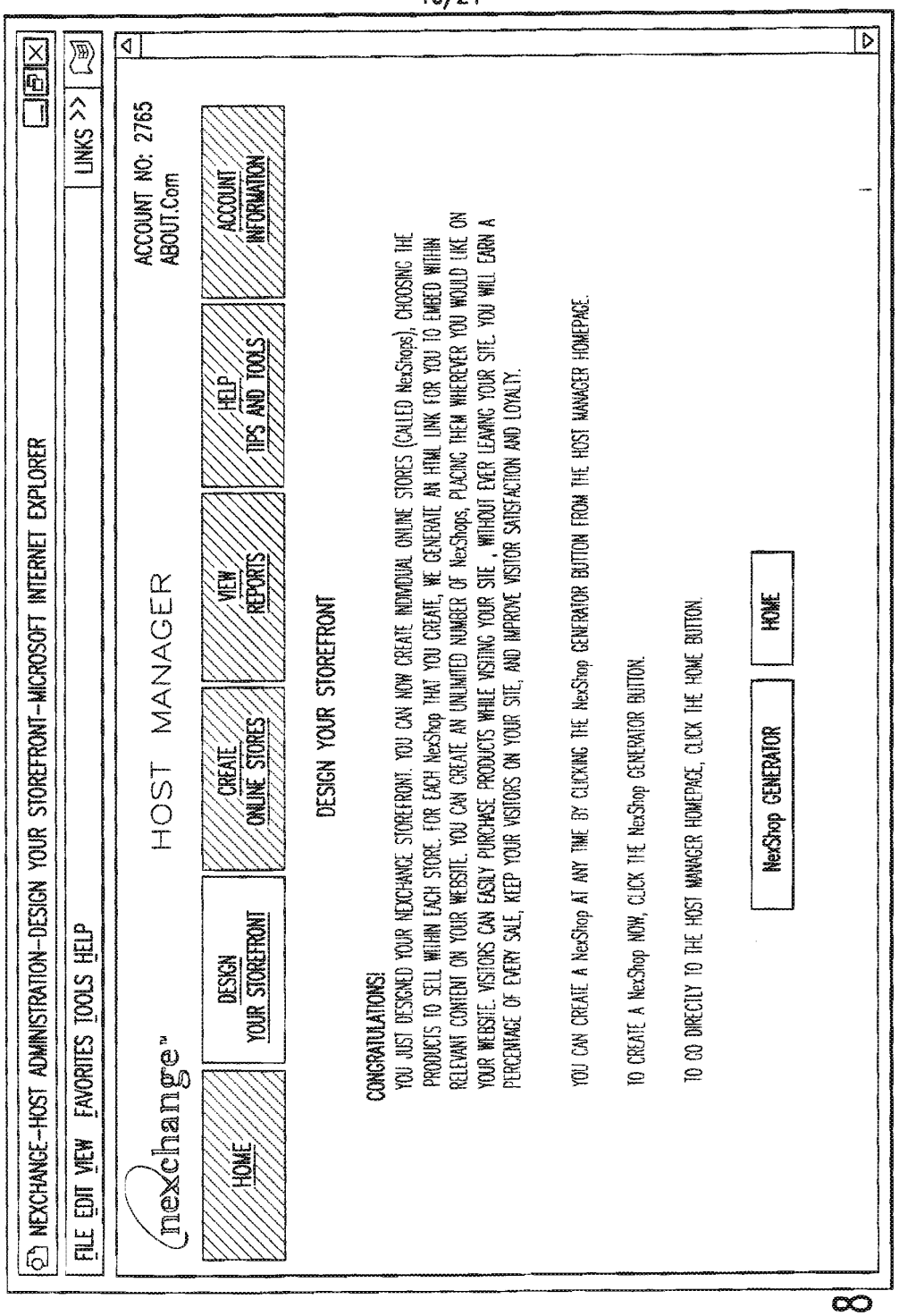


FIG.18

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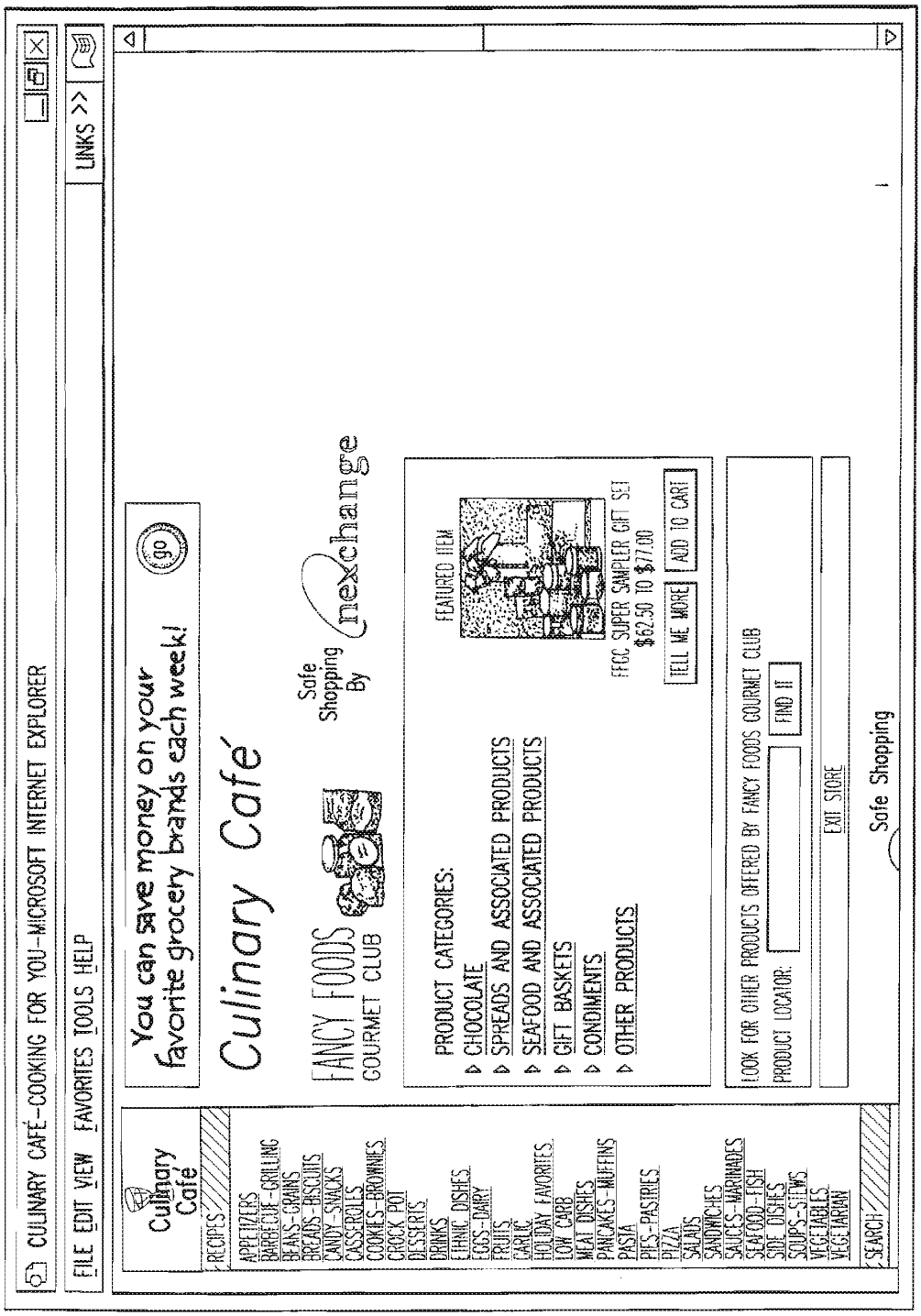


FIG. 19

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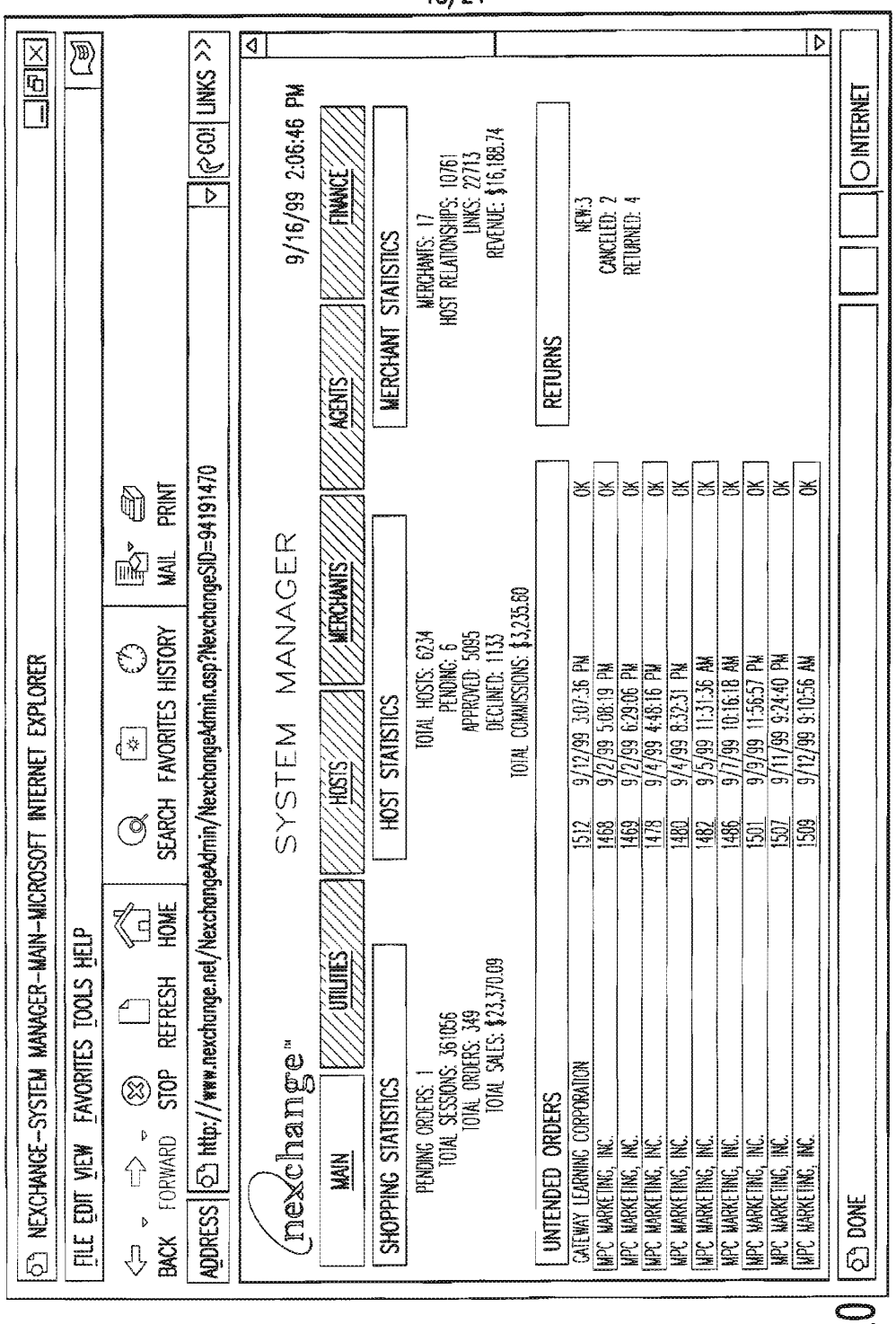


FIG.20

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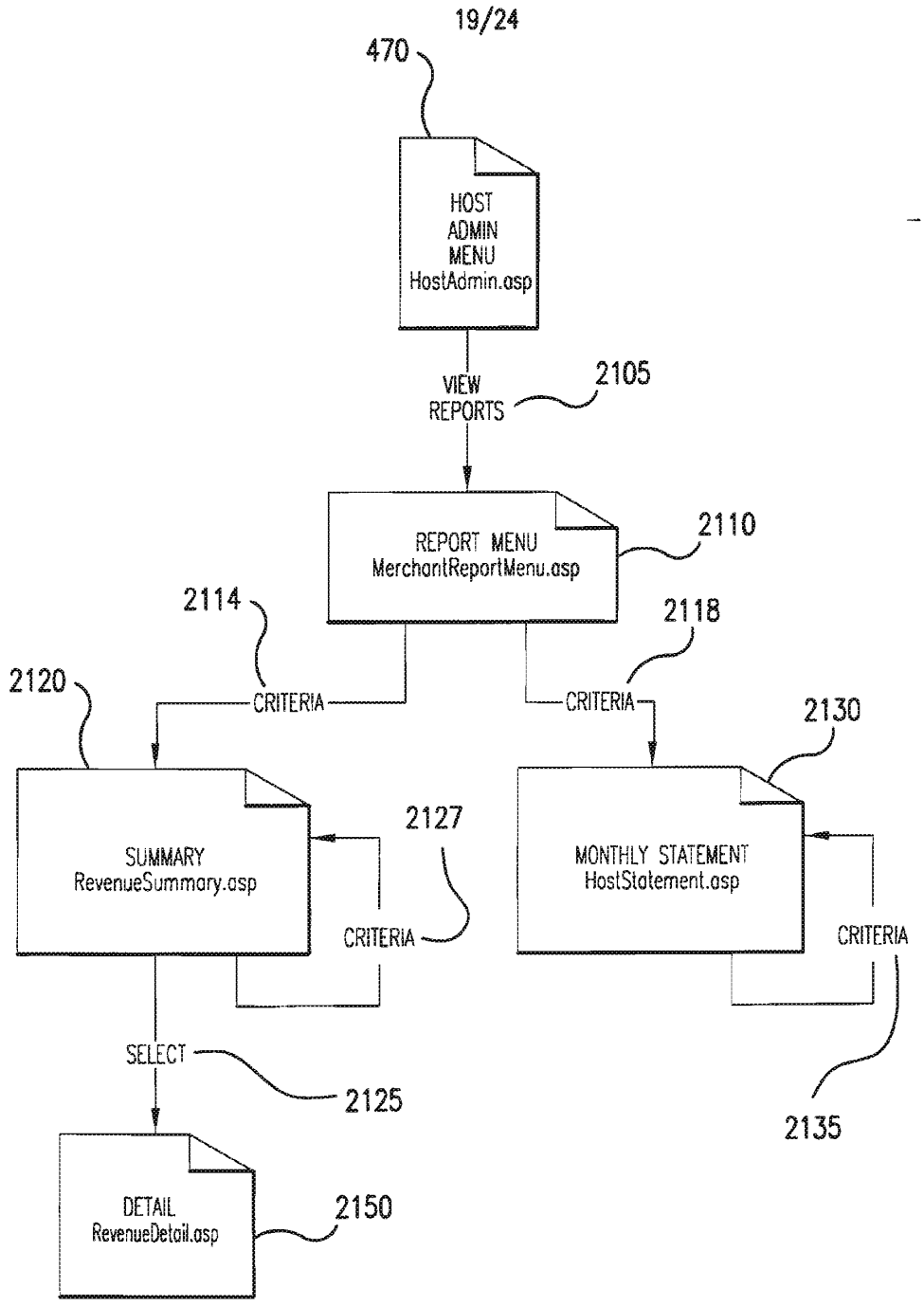


FIG.21

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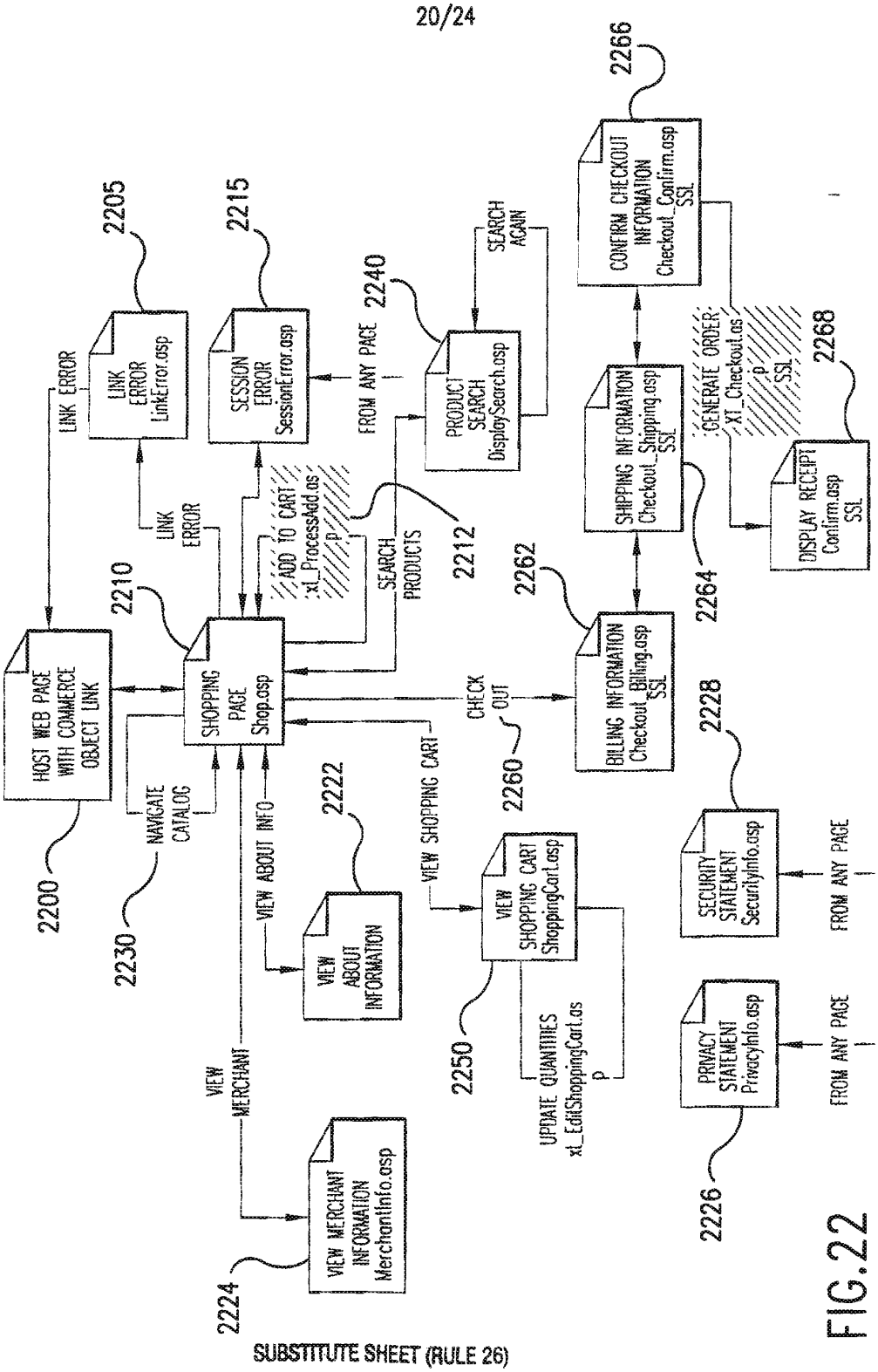


FIG. 22

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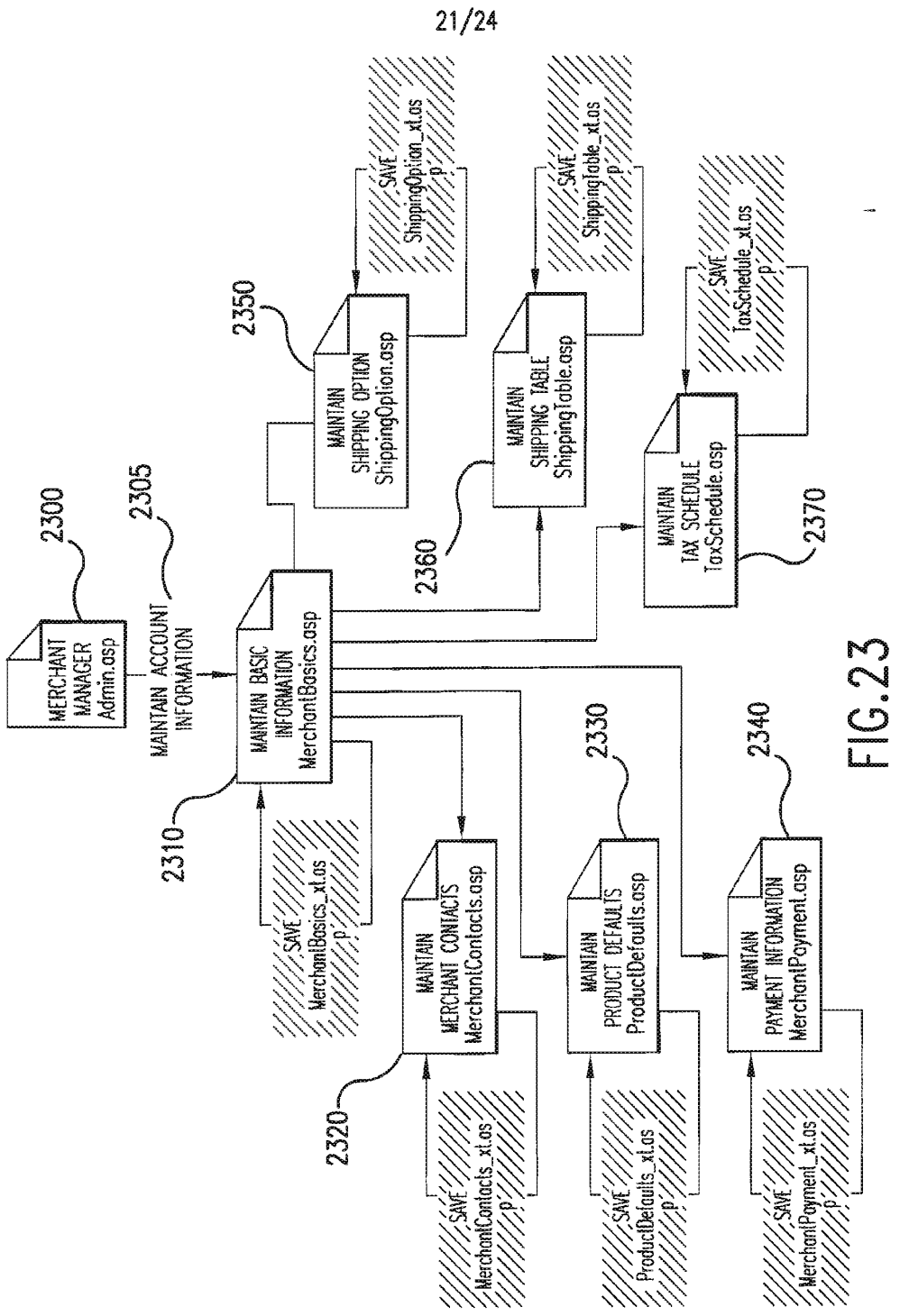


FIG.23

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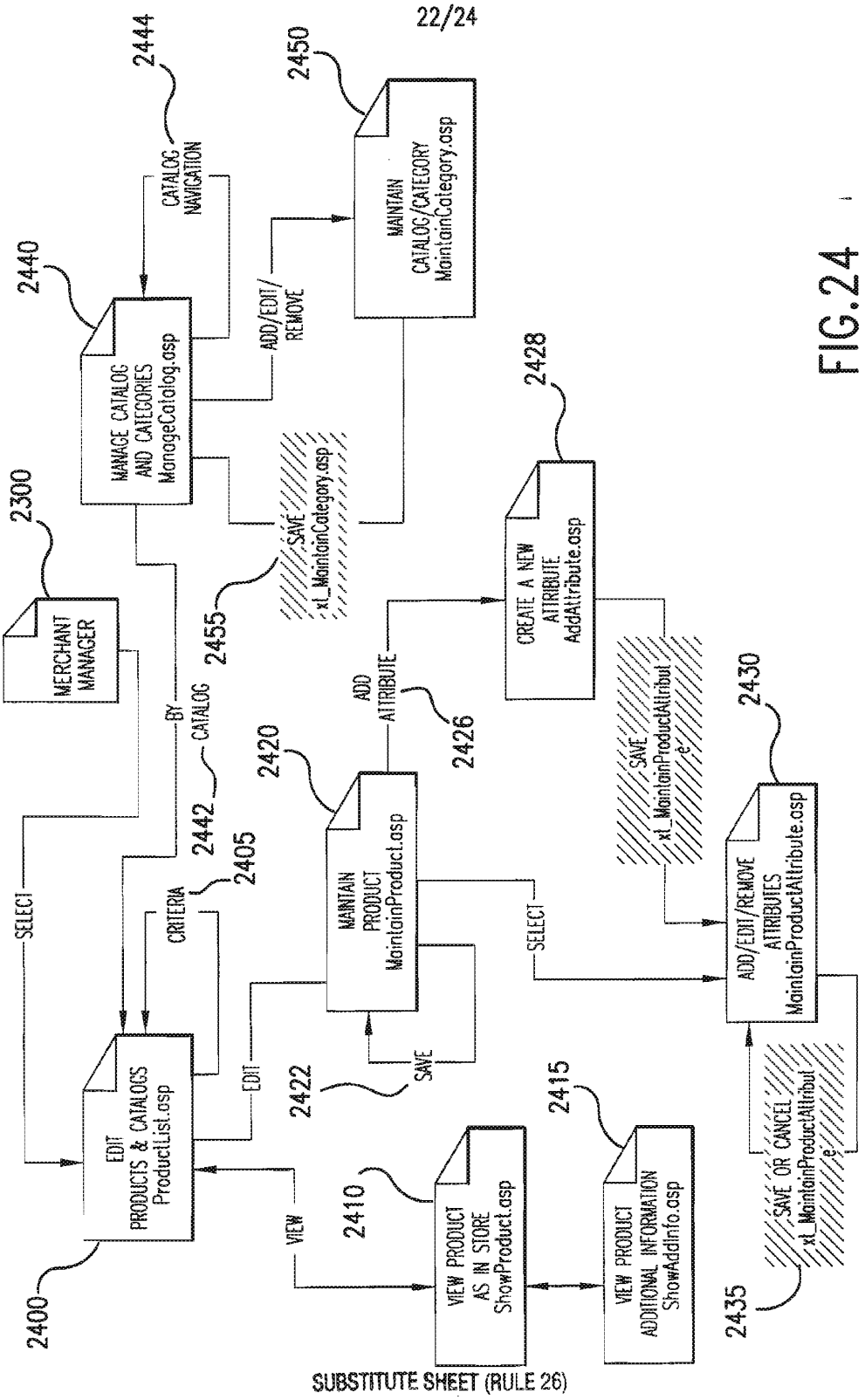


FIG.24

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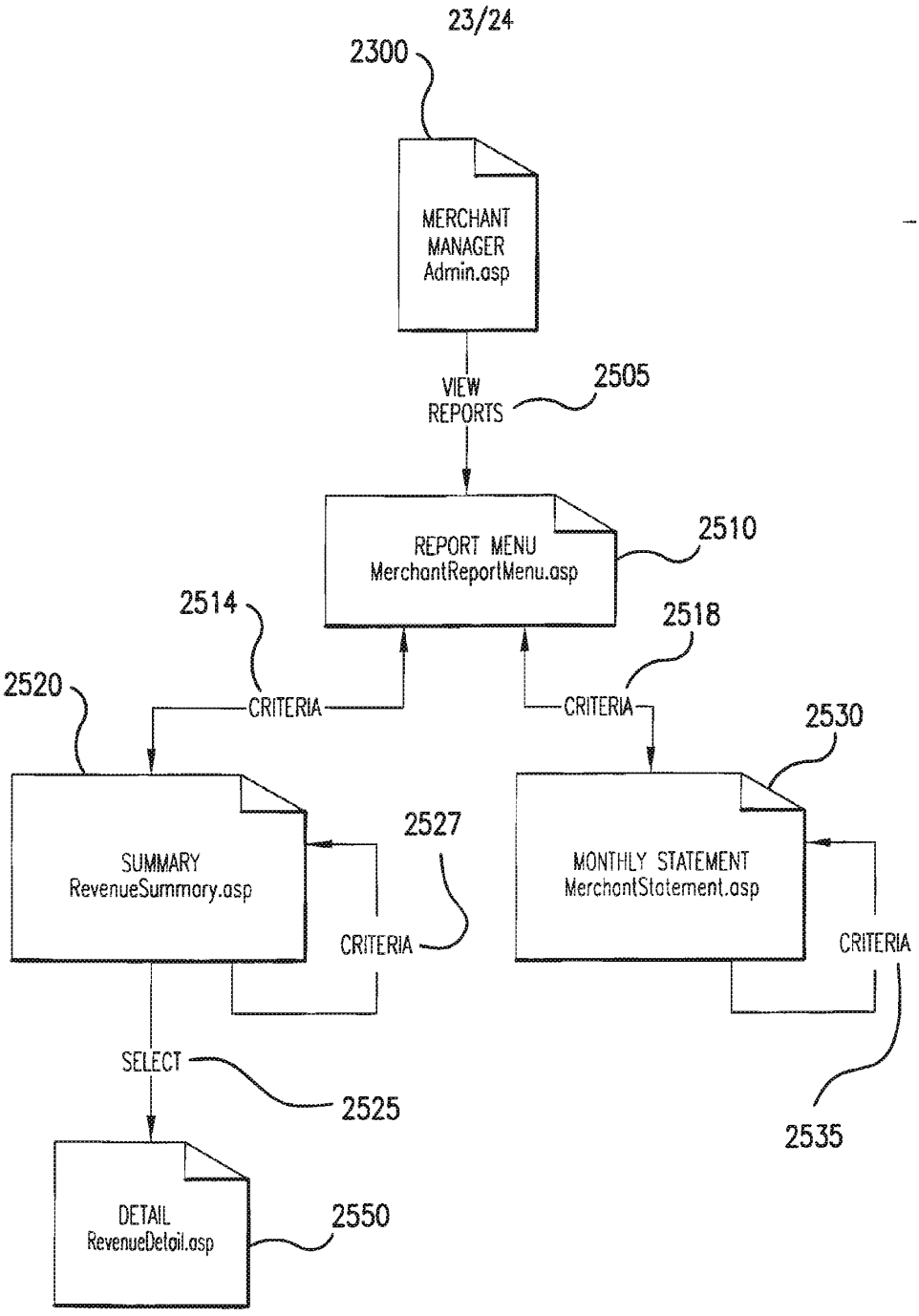


FIG.25

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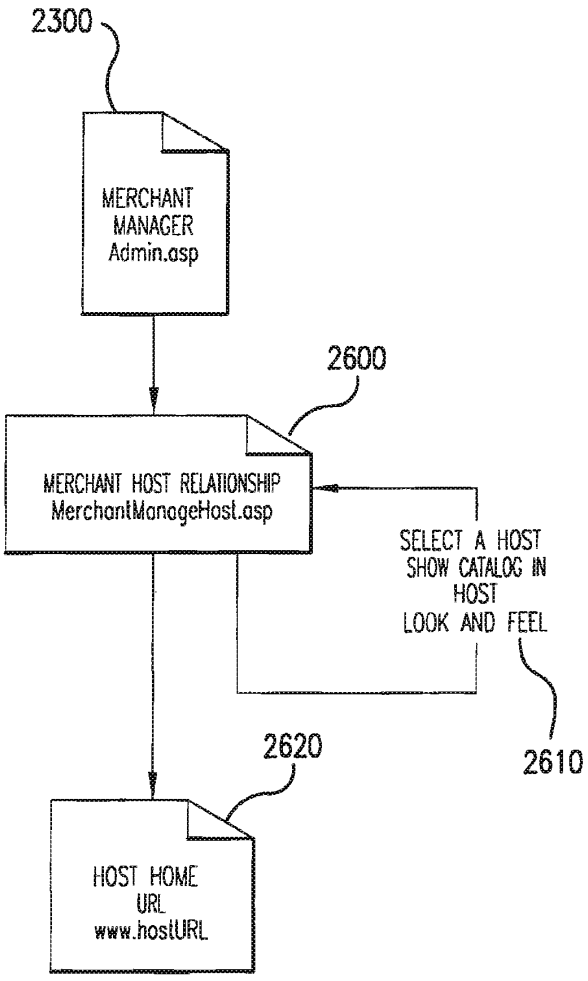


FIG.26

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US99/21656

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC(6) :G06F 15/16, 15/167
US CL :709/212, 217, 218, 219
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
U.S. : 709/212, 217, 218, 219

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

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
EAST, STN
search terms: web layer, emulation, replication, proxy, GUI, Web page, ecommerce, ebusiness

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 5,596,702 A (STUCKA et al.) 21 January 1997, col. 5, lines 1-26 and col. 30, lines 32-67.	1, 6, 11-14
A	US 5,630,125 A (ZELLWEGER) 13 May 1997, col. 11, lines 10-52.	1, 6, 11-14
A	US 5,796,952 A (DAVIS et al.) 18 August 1998, col. 4, lines 1-64 and col. 9, lines 15-65.	1 and 6
A	US 5,727,159 A (KIKINIS) 10 March 1998, see entire document.	1, 6, 11-14
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[X] Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. [ ] See patent family annex.

*	Special categories of cited documents:	"T"	later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
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C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y,P	US 5,897,622 A (BLINN et al.) 27 April 1999, col. 7, line 5 - col. 12, line 6.	1-14
Y,P	US 5,940,834 A (PINARD et al.) 17 August 1999, col. 1, line 52 - col. 2, line 67 and col. 8, lines 5-65.	1-14

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(54) **Title:** ELECTRONIC CATALOG AND SHARED ELECTRONIC TRANSACTION SYSTEM

(57) **Abstract**

An electronic catalog and shared electronic systems which can be accessed over a computer network. Various items of the catalog are stored in a database and can be selected by a user in accordance with user determined parameters.

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ELECTRONIC CATALOG AND SHARED ELECTRONIC TRANSACTION SYSTEM

PRIORITY TO PRIOR APPLICATION

This application claims priority to Provisional Application Serial No. 60/102,967 filed October 2, 1998.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention generally relates to the field of electronic databases and, more particularly, is directed to an electronic catalog and shared electronic transaction system which enables users of the system to retrieve requested data conveniently and economically.

The present invention will be described in the context of a government order processing system, but the novel and unobvious features of the invention have application in a wide variety of government and commercial (business-to-business) environments where large amounts of information must be cataloged and made available to users in an expeditious manner. The invention is described for its use on the World Wide Web part of the Internet. It should be understood, however, that the benefits of the invention may be

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realized with any computer network (LAN, etc.) that supports multiple users.

One of the most important requirements of an economy is to bring buyer's wishing to buy products into contact with sellers [having products to sell]. In an economy driven by competition, there are often many competing products from which a buyer can choose. Moreover, as modern day communications make the world smaller and greatly expand market territories, a buyer is often confronted with a confusing array of considerations when making a purchasing decision. Price, quality, suitability, and delivery time are but a few of the many factors a purchaser must consider when making a purchasing decision. Thus, an informed purchasing decision often requires the purchaser evaluate the offerings of several vendors. Doing so can be time consuming and a busy purchaser may simply opt to make a purchase without doing any real comparison shopping. While making purchasing decisions in this manner may not be detrimental for a small number of purchases, the potential savings that result from a more careful purchasing decision can mount substantially when large numbers of purchases are involved. For example, federal, state and local governments routinely make purchasing decisions involving large numbers of items and large sums of money. The ability to make purchasing decisions quickly

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while simultaneously ensuring the proper item is purchased at the lowest cost is critical to maintaining the effectiveness of a procurement system.

In addition, vendors also require an efficient and cost-effective way of informing potential customers of their wares. Traditionally, paper catalogs, advertisements and personal sales calls have served this purpose. Each of these methods has its inherent drawbacks. For example, paper catalogs are expensive to print and distribute and usually do not remain current for any significant length of time. Advertising and personal sales calls also are expensive and tradeoffs must be made over which products will be promoted to which potential customers.

Accordingly, there is a great need for a system which can effectively catalog large amounts of information such as product description, prices and the like, make it available to those in need of such information in the form of multiple comparative shopping listings, and allow for real-time purchase transactions, including credit facility use, all in a secure electronic environment.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In order to meet this need, Applicant has invented an electronic catalog and shared electronic transaction system. The

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novel features of the invention will be understood more fully and clearly from the following description of the invention as set forth in the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is an illustration of the system architecture of the present invention;

Figure 2 is an illustration of a product mapping process in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 3 is an illustration of a 3-step catalog search in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 4 is an illustration of how transactions may be shared in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 5 is an illustration of a process for printing completed PDF forms using data entered into HTML forms in accordance with the present invention; and

Figure 6 is a data flow of the interaction between a buyer and a seller in accordance with the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

As mentioned above, the present invention and processes will be described in the context of a government order processing system as implemented on the World Wide Web and will be referred to as an "Electronic Catalog Service." Figure 1 illustrates the system architecture. The invention and processes can also be applied in

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the commercial setting.

Electronic Catalog Service

The Electronic Catalog Service is the common entry point for all buyers and sellers. The supplier catalogs with MSRP prices can be searched by anyone. Private contract catalogs are only searched and used to create RFQs (Request for Proposal) and purchase orders by authorized buyers.

The Electronic Catalog Service provides the ability for a governmental entity to post its term contracts, schedule contracts, surplus property and other buying vehicles that are available to multiple buying jurisdictions, on an on-line, Internet environment.

This selective "electronic catalog" capability also permits buyers to make their purchase selections on-line, and have them converted into EDI or FAX purchase/release orders for transmission to the catalog supplier. The buyer vehicles are in themselves small "catalogs" that contain items, part numbers, and previously negotiated or set prices. These mini contract "catalogs" are maintained in the private part of the catalog database where buyers can access them through the Internet. Only those buyers that have the authority to make purchases off of a particular contract can see items and prices. When a buyer has access to multiple

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contracts covering the same products or a buyer wants to check published MSRP prices from public catalogs, he or she is able to compare the prices for the different suppliers and manufacturers of similar items.

The backbone of the catalog holds three major types of items that make up the products and services that the buyers buy and the sellers sell, First there are the generic items -- 175,000 covered by the NIGP 11 digit code and over 6 million in the Federal Supply Catalog. Second, each generic item is replicated 5 to 10 times with each occurrence associated with a different manufacturer's part number - over 20 million in the Federal Supply Catalog. Third, these specific items can be replicated 10 to 20 times for the different contracts or catalogs that carry them. These items carry the additional supplier's stock or price list number.

Internet technology is rapidly evolving. As it continues to improve, the catalog will become more graphical and support multimedia presentations that will surpass the quality of the message that suppliers make now in their print catalogs. While links are routinely provided to supplier web-sites so that buyers can investigate a particular product or service, many small merchants will not want to build their own web site capable of sending out streaming audio, video and animation feeds.

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An integral part of the Electronic Catalog Service is to work directly with site promotion services to ensure the maximum and most appropriate visibility of Web site facilities to Web search engines and other appropriate points of publicity, including placement of animated "tile" advertising on appropriate Web pages (e.g., the Netscape Net Search page) and active promotion of reciprocal hypertext linking with related Web sites.

Catalog Enhancements

A number of pre-existing databases make the service offered by the present invention unique and much easier to find items than services that just load contract items into a database. Even before any contracts items are loaded into the database, it is already filled with the following databases:

NIGP Code

The foundation of the procurement catalog data management system of the present invention is the NIGP Commodity code. Contract and open market catalog data is mapped to the NIGP code as the common delineator so familiar to public sector purchasing agents. The code is licensed from NIGP.

The NIGP coding scheme provides familiar, visible classifications that buyers will use to search for items to

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purchase. The unique capability of the central catalog is the neutral link and cross reference that it provides to other major catalogs. Multi-vendor catalogs such as those built by Granger, Sweets or Sears as well as those from single manufacturers like Caterpillar whose catalog, though proprietary, are completely replicated by independent catalog companies.

Another enhancement to the catalog is to add tools that assist the buyer in preparing RFQs for complex products and services and that assist the seller in working up their Bids. Using the latest Internet technology, these tools are being converted into Java applets that run at the user's PC and work on data files linked to the product or service being solicited.

Trade Services Catalogs

Trade Service Corporation is the recognized leader in providing Benchmark Pricing to agencies throughout the United States. As a neutral third party provider of data, Trade Service gathers information from thousands of manufacturers throughout the country. This information is compiled into industry standard databases. The information is massaged to ensure consistent output, and then disseminated in multiple formats depending on user

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requirements. The information is constantly updated to reflect the manufacturers' latest suggested resale price, as well as catalog number, UPC, unit of measure, etc.

Benchmark pricing, and electronic catalogs developed around live information, generally results in deeper discounts for agencies. This is due to the varied commodity structures against which vendors are able to bid. Rather than provide a single discount for commodities, the vendors can provide multiple discounts against commodities, sub commodities, manufacturer lines or single items. Bids can be received against a fair fixed price for the life of the contract, or allowed to float as economic changes occur. In this case, the negotiated discount is factored against the changing list price. The database always remains current reflecting negotiated contract pricing. Benchmark, or neutral third party pricing benefits public sector agencies throughout the solicitation, pre-and post-award processes.

Trade Service databases are used as a benchmark throughout the bid process. Because the information is neutral, containing Universal Product Codes (UPC's) and manufacturer catalog numbers, rather than vendor specific SKU numbers, all vendors can respond to solicitations with the assurance that they are bidding against a level playing field. Vendors provide discounts against the

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manufacturer's list price, rather than the vendors' list price. This streamlines the process for evaluating bids, comparing responses, and awarding contracts; and ultimately saves considerable time and taxpayer dollars.

The electronic catalog becomes a powerful tool for ordering materials and auditing vendor invoices. Because the database contains UPC's, it reflects the same schema as vendors' internal systems making ordering consistent.

A central data repository managed by a neutral third party data provider will improve the purchasing and materials management functions. Improvements are through the reduction in data errors inherent in manual input, accessibility to bar code and product identification information, current contract pricing, and material safety data sheets. Through the use of industry standard data that utilizes universal product codes cross referenced to manufacturer part/stock numbers, the jurisdiction can expect reduced transaction costs, increased buying power through aggregated purchasing, and streamlined contracting processes.

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Federal Supply Catalog

This catalog, built and maintained by the Department of Defense over the last 50 years, provides over 6 million National Stock Number (NSN) items that have been identified as having unique form, fit and function and have been classified by three coding schemes that will link to the NIGP codes:

- Federal Supply Class (FSC)
- Federal Item Identification Guide (FIIG)
- Approved Items Name (AIN)

Once links have been made between the NIGP codes and the NSNs, other valuable information can be made available, such as:

- Specific Manufacturer Part Numbers
- Prices for Previously Awarded Contracts
- Searchable Technical Characteristics

Excess/Surplus Inventory Items

The service also has the capability for governmental entities to advertise excess and surplus property on the Internet. The advertisements are searchable by the NIGP Code (both class 998 and the class-item for the item when originally purchased; i.e. 070-06 for automobiles). Advertising jurisdictions will have several options:

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- Restrict sale of the item to other units of government; sale to be by electronic bid with a specified bid opening date.

- Permit the item to be sold to anyone, including the general public; sale to be by electronic bid with a specified bid opening date.

- Offer the item for sale at a pre-established price (restricted or unrestricted).

Agencies are able to advertise upcoming auctions of excess and surplus property. This information can be made available on the Internet to the general public who could search by commodity code or geographic location.

Currently there is no established marketplace for selling excess and surplus property that is unique to government; such as voting machines, police radios, etc. This capability provides a low cost method for creating an electronic marketplace.

Product Mapping Process

Figure 2 illustrates how the product mapping process occurs in accordance with the present invention. The system administrator receives computer files from buyers and vendors. These files contain lists of product names and contract or manufacturer

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suggested prices for various products. The contract prices are usually ones which have been the subject of negotiation between the buyer and the vendor and will remain in effect for some period of time. The manufacturer suggested prices, on the other hand, are prices which are available to the general public.

In addition to product prices, the computer files may also contain manufacturer model numbers for each of the products, products descriptions, the manufacturer's name, quantity price breaks and may even include a graphical representation of the product. In essence, the computer file is an electronic equivalent of a conventional paper catalog. The computer file, however, can be searched electronically based on key words and various other search parameters and relationships.

The objective of the mapping process is to take product catalog information from various buyers and vendors which is often not consistent between catalogs and map it to an existing reference catalog of product data (i.e., the proprietary data structure illustrated in Figure 2). The reference catalog is created from a number of sources, including industry codes such as the National Stock Number ("NSN"), the National Institute of Government Purchases (NIGP) and the Universal Product Code ("UPC"). These codes represent classifications for various products and are well

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understood by the purchasing industry. A classification for most products can be found in each of the codes. Many states and local governments also have product coding systems which the present invention may use as well.

In mapping the buyer and vendor catalog files, various key words such as product name and model number are used to find the proper classification in the reference catalog. The process is greatly aided if the buyer and/or vendor catalog files also include an NSN, NIGP or UPC code for each product. If the buyer and vendor catalog files do not include such a code, the file may be compared to a stored database of invoices, purchase orders, bills of lading and the like in search of an NSN, NIGP or UPC code which matches the product. Such purchasing records are available from the Federal Government as well as other sources. If an appropriate classification cannot be determined automatically, a human operator can make the determination.

Once a classification for the product has been determined, it is given a new reference code from the reference catalog. Using the techniques of the present invention, it has been found that a proper classification can automatically be determined 85 percent of the time.

Product Catalog Search

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Figure 3 is a flow chart of a 3-step catalog search in accordance with the present invention. For example, if an end-user wishes to retrieve information on a particular product, appropriate key words are used to find the product classification. Once the classification is found, the second step involves finding a particular sub-category for the product.

This sub-category may well include several similar products from different manufactures, thus enabling the user to do product comparisons. The user then completes the third step by making a product selection based on, for example, manufacture and model number.

The steps involved in preparing and using the catalog for a state or local government purchasing offices are described in the following sections:

Verify Catalogs & Set Up Contracts

Contract officers browse items in the Contract Catalogs they received after they have been loaded or updated by them or their suppliers. Contract officers also set-up, confirm or change the prices and terms for each contract they are administering. Larger suppliers can also perform these same functions. Smaller suppliers using the first level service cannot make changes to the catalog items.

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Browse Contract Catalogs

Buyers can search through items in the catalogs limited to the catalogs from which they are authorized to purchase and their product profiles. Both of these filters can be easily modified for a particular session by turning on and off specific contract and/or product groups. There are two basic methods of locating an item. The keyword method is a two step process with the first search returning those product families that match the entered keywords. Then the user picks the lowest level product family to see the items available for purchase. The second method of browsing the catalog database is to navigate down a product family hierarchy that often has small pictures related to the type of product. When the lowest level product family is reached, the user picks those he or she wishes to purchase. The final list of actual items to purchase can be filtered by manufacturer, price and keyword in the product name.

Query Public Catalogs

If a buyer cannot find an item on the Contract Catalogs issued to them by their Contract Administrator, they can search the public Supplier Catalogs maintained at the Catalog Service. This can be done at the same time as the search of authorized contracts or separately by modifying the catalog profile for that session. The

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Buyer can do comparison shopping between the prices of items that may appear on multiple private contracts or public catalogs. The result is a list of similar items from different manufacturers and different suppliers.

Electronic Procurement System

Figure 4 illustrates a business model for conducting commerce in accordance with the present invention. The top portion of Figure 4 shows the conventional manner in which buyers and vendors interact. The arrows indicate the exchange of purchase information in the form of request for quotes, purchase orders, invoices, bill of sales, shipping notices and the like. The exchange of each piece of information is in many cases only for the purpose of creating a "paper trail" should reconciliation become necessary. Creating this "paper trail" is, however, expensive, time consuming, and is wasteful of resources. The need to dispose of these paper records when they are no longer needed poses additional concerns.

Applicant has discovered that a more efficient way of tracking commercial transactions is to maintain them in a shared database as illustrated in the bottom portion of Figure 4. When a buyer wishes to submit, for example, a purchase order, it is stored in the shared database and is immediately available for review by a vendor. Thus, there is no reconciliation necessary because only one

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copy of the transaction exists, i.e., the copy which is stored in the shared database.

The Electronic Procurement System is for those procurement offices that wish to maintain an electronic link with their suppliers, but do not want to undergo the time and expense to setup direct EDI links between themselves and all their suppliers under contract. Using a secure Internet browser, buyers can look at records of all intermediate revisions or cancellations of purchase orders, shipping notices and invoices that flow back on forth between them and the buyer. The electronic link on the supplier side can be either through the Internet if they are using the Bidder's Service or through their established EDI VAN.

The introduction of "Purchasing Cards" has helped to reduce overall administrative costs. The service accepts these purchasing cards, along with other general purpose credit cards.

Administer Buyers & Suppliers

Contract administrators set-up and assign Buyers who are authorized to make purchases off of each contract and/or if they can make purchases of public catalogs at suggested retail prices. Contract administrators or the Buyers themselves can also set up a product profile that will be used to limit the items in the public catalogs or private contract catalogs. Suppliers that do not have

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a contract or public catalog loaded at the Catalog Service can register themselves and maintain their own product profiles for filtering RFQs that they are interesting in bidding on.

Prepare RFQs or Purchase Orders

The Buyer selects the items they wish to purchase from the private contract or public supplier catalogs on their Internet Site. The Buyer has the following options as to how they would like to proceed when looking at a list of similar items:

Pick specific items to put on Request For Quotes to be sent to the appropriate suppliers. In this case the item is known and the supplier responds with their best price.

Pick generic items without a Manufacturer and Product Number to put on a Request for Quote that is sent to the appropriate Suppliers. In this case the Supplier selects the specific item in their response.

Pick generic items without indicating a Supplier. This is known as an un-addressed RFQ that is addressed each night by the Electronic Catalog Service according to Supplier profiles. These requests are also

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placed on the Electronic Bidder's Service for Suppliers to search if they do not received notice of the item due to their product Profile.

Pick specific items with a manufacturer and part number to put on purchase orders to be sent to the appropriate suppliers.

Buyer orders are immediately updated in the Electronic Procurement System databases and are immediately available for any Supplier that is a customer of the Bidder's Service. For those that are not, the order is transmitted through the EDI VAN service if the Supplier is registered as EDI-capable. If not the order is sent either via e-mail or fax depending on preference of the registered Suppliers.

Authorize Payment for Orders

If the user wants to pay for the order immediately with a credit card, digital certificate smart card or procurement card, the service takes control of the operations to perform the payment and order fulfillment processes. The exchanges between the browser and the server are encrypted to insure confidentiality and performed behind a firewall. The check-out procedure is as follows.

After establishing a secure link with the browser, the server

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receives the content of the shopping cart and presents an order form to the buyer for collection of secure personal information to complete the transaction. The client then enters the requested personal information (billing and shipping addresses, phone number, E-mail address, etc.); chooses among the payment options offered; then enters the requested payment information, e.g. credit card type, account number, etc.

All information that is captured in the above process is recorded in a secure transaction database for subsequent use in daily and monthly reports. The process also adds the applicable taxes and shipping costs.

Review or Update Orders

The Supplier receives its orders from the Buyers either immediately through the Catalog Service if the are a customer, or via an EDI transmission, Fax or E-mail depending on their level of service. The supplier then indicates if the order can be shipped in full, or if one or more line items must be back ordered.

When a supplier is an EDI customer or a Bidder's Service customer, the buyer will receive acknowledgments, adjusted purchase orders and intent to ship documents soon after the supplier releases them. For any item on an order that is not yet indicated as being shipped, the buyer can cancel or change and re-submit it to the

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supplier.

Receive Shipping Notices and Invoices

Suppliers that are customers of the Bidders Service can "turn-around" the Purchase Order into multiple Shipping Notices or Invoices when they are ready to ship. The Supplier can indicate that some items must be back-ordered and thus create partial Shipment Notices or Invoices by picking a subset of the line items or by splitting the quantity ordered into shipped and not-shipped quantities for individual line items.

EDI capable suppliers use their own internal system to process the order and send it back to the Buyer through their EDI VAN Service. Suppliers that received their orders either via Fax or E-mail notify the Buyer of the intention to ship via traditional means or via E-mail. In all cases, however, the status of the order will simply be "PO Sent" until the Buyer authorizes a payment for the purchase. Buyers will immediately see these shipping notices and invoices if they are a customer of the Order Management Service.

Update Order History

A copy of all sales invoices processed by the Catalog Service or received by the VAN service are recorded by the Order Management Service. These award notices can be kept as part of the Contract

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Catalogs. Copies of all transactions processed by the Catalog Service or sent through the VAN Service are kept in the Order Management database for daily and monthly reporting.

Billing and Payment Methods

In order to complete the purchase cycle and capture important data about the procurement process, an electronic payment must be made. It can be by credit card and the traditionally paper-based part of the transaction is over. But most business and governments would rather pay monthly bills and only pay after goods have been received and inspected to be in good condition. Converting this method of payment is a challenge for everyone involved, now including the buyer's and seller's bank. The service was the first to support a totally secure environment including credit cards, and bank independent Electronic Funds Transfer, in addition to providing a unique capability to connect with suppliers using Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) for managing and processing of orders and invoices.

This system has a comprehensive payment and order fulfillment capability. It includes a transaction server and many back-office functions: processing credit card payments (Visa, MasterCard, AMEX, Discover and all other popular cards); business purchase cards for business-to-business transactions; tax calculations; shipping method

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selection and billing; e-mail confirmations; inventory verification and complete order fulfillment including delivery of orders to multiple suppliers in any format of choice - EDI, fax, e-mail or computer file. These functions take place behind a "firewall" which prevents unauthorized access to the back-office functions. The system provides access to transactional and statistical information pertaining to a customer purchases either on-line or as report files.

The system has integrated payment and order-processing capabilities into its catalog web-site using Industry-standard security software that supports Microsoft and Netscape Internet browsers as well as the new Secure Electronic Transaction (SET) protocol developed by MasterCard and Visa International.

State and local government purchasers can securely market products and services, accept orders, process payments and fulfill orders on the Internet. Delivery can be immediate in the case of soft goods such as publication material, registrations and software. In the case of hard goods, a transaction will be transmitted to the suppliers and goods will be shipped in the normal fashion.

The moment that the customer commits to make a purchase by clicking on the prepare order button, the Catalog Service completes the payment and order fulfillment process in a secure back-office

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environment. The payment can be accompanied by a remittance notice if the supplier is capable of receiving EDI transactions.

Credit Card Transactions

An example illustrates the flow of information for a credit card transactions. An on-line credit check with the appropriate financial institution is made through the normal credit card authorization process if the credit is authorized, the required funds for order settlement is temporarily held until it is determined if the merchant is able to fulfill the order and the customer is notified on-line of the status; if the credit request is denied, the customer is notified on-line that his order can not be accepted the order is sent to the supplier via the Internet as an E-mail, fax or a computer file or in EDI format.

The supplier acknowledges receipt of order following an inventory verification, an invoice confirmation is returned to the Order Management Service by the supplier if the order can be fulfilled; if the order can not be fulfilled, notification to this effect is transmitted. The pending payment transaction is processed through the financial institutions. Where the order is fulfilled both the customer and the supplier are notified of the outcome of the purchase request (e.g. by E-mail, or Fax) and the customer receives a final invoice if the order is being fulfilled, or a

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notification that the order cannot be fulfilled in accordance with contract or delivery requirements.

Upon completion of the processing of an order, the Order Management Service provides confirmation on the acceptance/refusal of the order to the intervening parties. An important feature of the service is that the system can accept all popular credit cards for which the individual merchants have been accredited, including VISA, Mastercard and American Express, while the debiting of purchaser accounts and crediting of merchant accounts can take place with any financial institution. Furthermore, the system will also accept a large number of private credit cards, e.g. from retail organizations.

On-Account Transactions

In the case of a state and local jurisdiction, ordering from a supplier under some form of blanket purchase agreement or indefinite delivery contract, it is more common to pay on account as opposed to use of a credit card as per the previous examples. The supplier in this case will have established terms of payment with its clients, e.g. net 30 days.

The process for on-account payments is similar to the credit card process with the following differences. The first step is to confirm that the customer has a valid pre-established account with

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the merchant. The order processing proceeds in the same manner the order confirmation proceeds in the same manner with an invoice being sent to the customer; however, there is no immediate debiting of the customer account and crediting of the merchant account, as was the case with credit card payments, as payment will only be due at some future date as established between the merchant and the customer the invoice can be paid on-line through the Internet at any time after receipt, with the option of specifying the deferred date on which payment is to be made.

Procurement Card Transactions

These type of transactions are similar to the credit card transactions in that an on-line check with the appropriate financial institution is made.

Complete Transactions Reporting

A complete record of all buyer transactions is available, made through the Catalog Service. In addition to the standard transaction reporting, many other analysis type reports can be generated for improved management information.

An example of a report is an open purchase order journal produced on an ad-hoc basis including vendor order details and order fulfillment status. The Order Management Service can also provide information that helps to determine which products are being

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frequently ordered that might be better purchased in larger lot sizes.

Daily Transactions

This report gives a list of all transactions performed so far during the current day. The information contained in the report is:

Transaction number

Date and Time of transaction

Organization ID

Buyer ID

Seller ID

Session ID (recorded sequentially for each buyer)

Contract ID

Payment Type

Sales Total

Shipping cost charged

State or Provincial sales Tax

Federal Sales Tax

Transaction Total (sum of sales amount + shipping + sales taxes)

Seller's Name

Seller's Address (excluding City, State/Region, Zip and Country).

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Seller's City, State/Region, Zip and Country

Telephone number of Seller

E-mail Address of Seller

Shipping Name (Name appearing in shipping address)

Shipping Address (excluding City, State/Region, Zip and Country).

Shipping City, State/Region, Zip and Country

Billing Name (Name appearing in the billing address)

Billing Address (excluding City, State/Region Zip and Country).

Billing City, State/Region, Zip and Country

Telephone number of Buyer

E-mail address of Buyer

Status code indicating the completion status of the transaction.

Confirmation code (this is the credit acceptance code).

Daily Transaction Detail

This report gives the details on the products involved in a specific transaction. This report provides the information contained in the transactions of the day listed above plus the following product information (one line per product):

Transaction number

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Product number.

Quantity ordered.

Product description (obtained from the catalog).

Unit price of the product.

Monthly Transactions

This report will list all products and services for all transactions performed during a specified month. The information given in this report is:

Transaction number

Date and Time of transaction

Product number

Quantity

Product Description

Unit Price of product

Monthly Transaction Summary

The information provided in report summarizes the daily transactions with the following information:

Total number of transactions during the period.

Total State or Provincial sales tax for the period

Total Federal sales tax for the period

Total shipping charge for the period

Total transaction amounts for the period.

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The information is grouped by:

Completed transactions

Rejected transactions

Canceled transactions

Problem transactions

Product and Services Purchased Summary

A monthly file which contains a list of all products sold during the month along with the class, name, supplier, purchase amount, manufacturer and quantity (if applicable) sold for each product and service.

HTML-PDF Forms

Figure 5 illustrates another concept in accordance with the present invention related to business forms. There are many situations known in the prior art wherein filling out a paper form is a prerequisite to obtaining a service or benefit. Insurance and medical forms readily come to mind. In most cases, the service or benefit will not be rendered unless the proper form is used and is completed in the proper way.

Applicant has discovered a novel way in which much of the tedium can be eliminated when completing complex and cumbersome forms. The invention builds on the advances in printing documents made possible by the Adobe PDF technology. Although PDF technology

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represents a major advance in printing complex documents, there remained deficiencies in how the printed information is compiled.

In accordance with the present invention, a process is provided in which data for a printed form can be entered into, for example, a user friendly HTML form. The data is then checked for accuracy and/or a determination is made whether the entries fall within predefined ranges. The user can then be alerted to any errors and given an opportunity to correct them before proceeding further. Once the HTML form is completed, the form data is transferred to the corresponding PDF form for printing by both the one filling out the form and also by the form recipient.

Because it is time consuming to convert a regular form to an HTML form, Applicant has also invented a process to generate automatically the HTML form, the CGI program that verifies and checks the user entries as well as automatically creates a database for the form data.

It should be obvious from the above-discussed apparatus embodiment that numerous other variations and modifications of the present invention are possible, and such will readily occur to those skilled in the art. Accordingly, the scope of this invention is not to be limited to the embodiment disclosed, but is to include any such embodiments as may be encompassed within the scope of the

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claims.

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WE CLAIM:

1. An electronic catalog system comprising:

memory means for storing a peramater of catalog items;

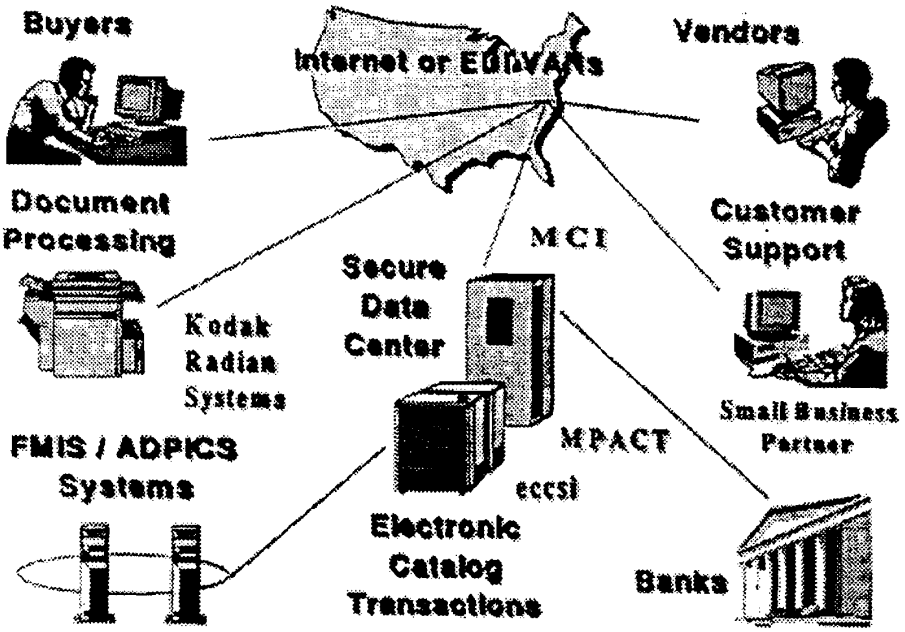
selection means for selecting one of said catalog items;

user input means for making said selection in accordance with user determined peramaters; and

control means for controlling said selection process.

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Figure 1



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Figure 2

Product Mapping process

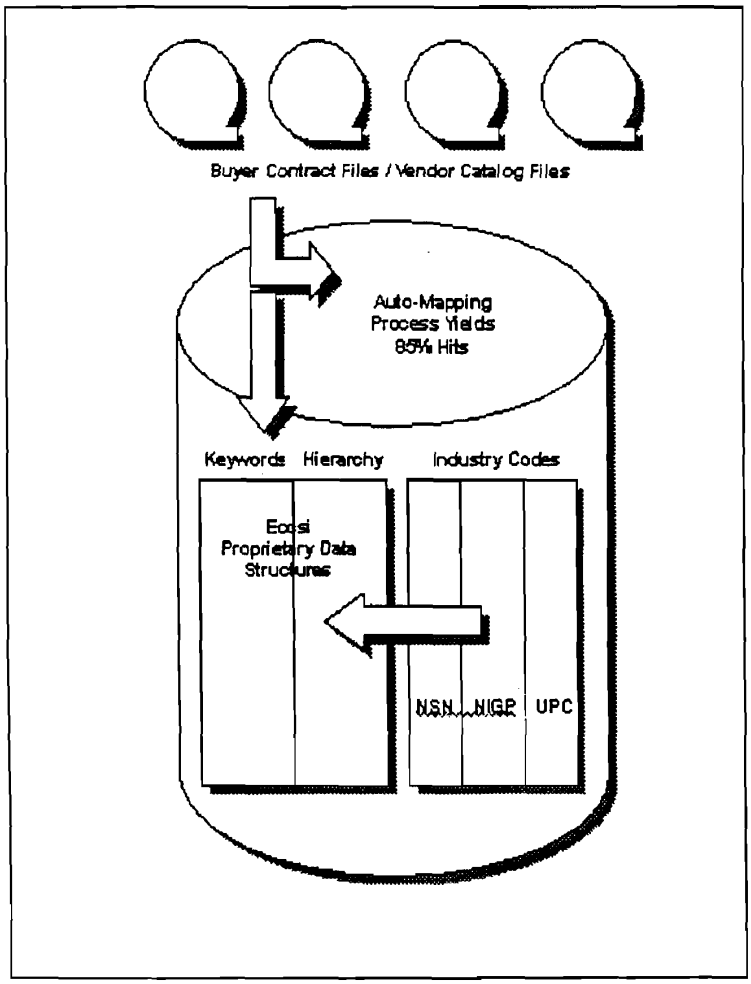
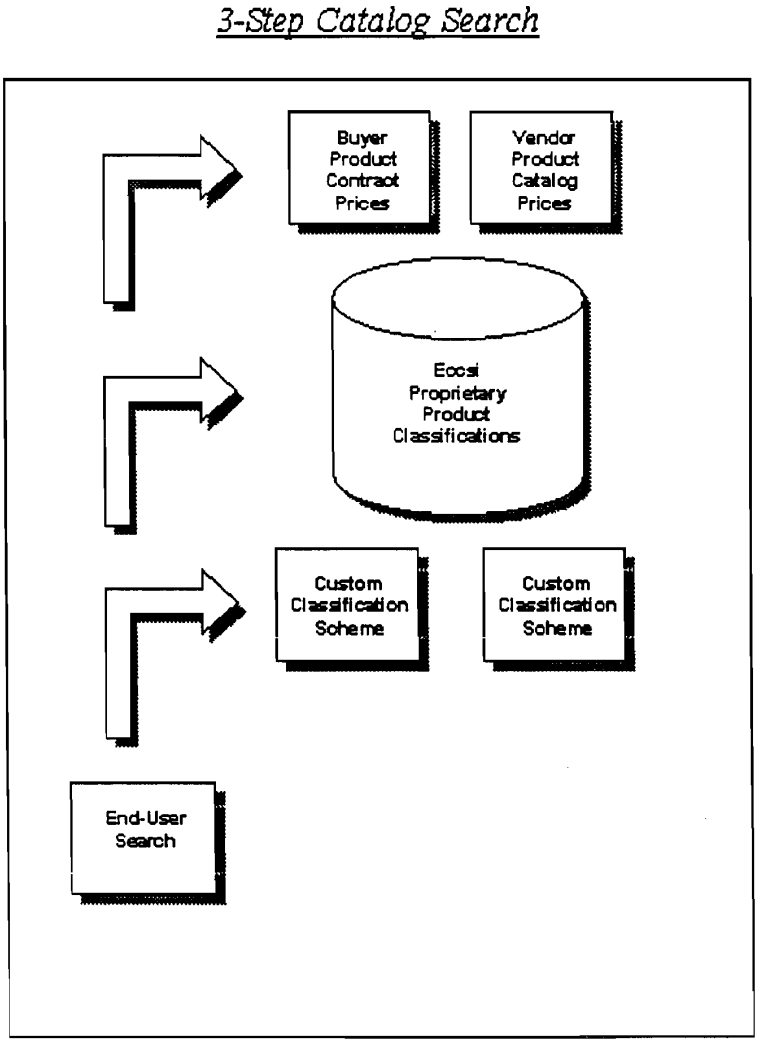
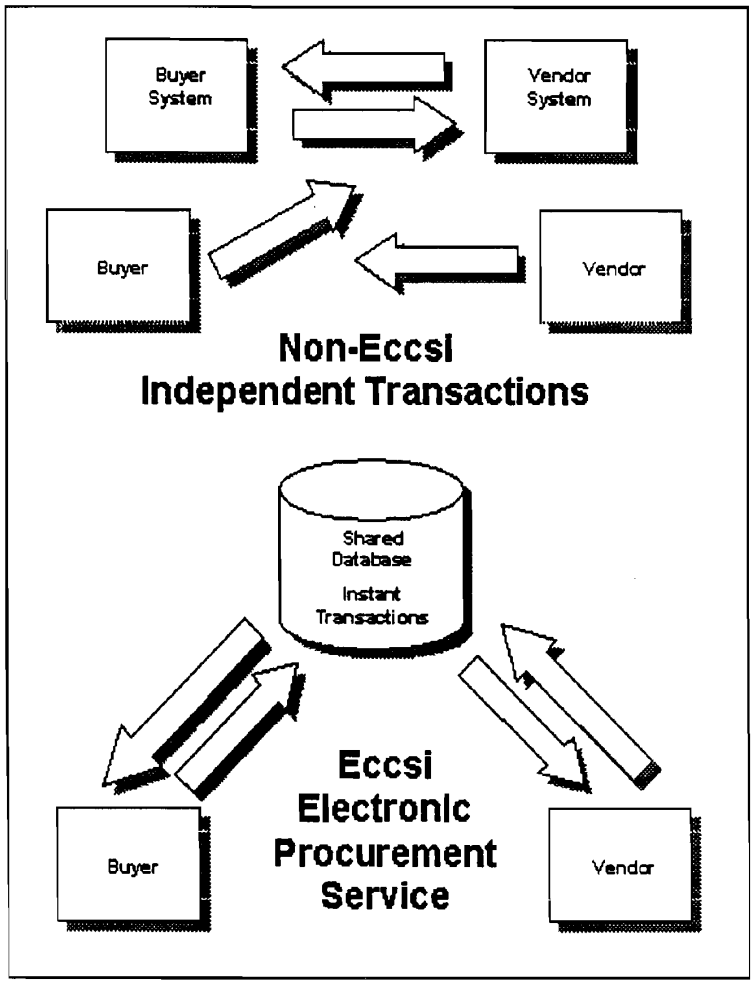


Figure 3



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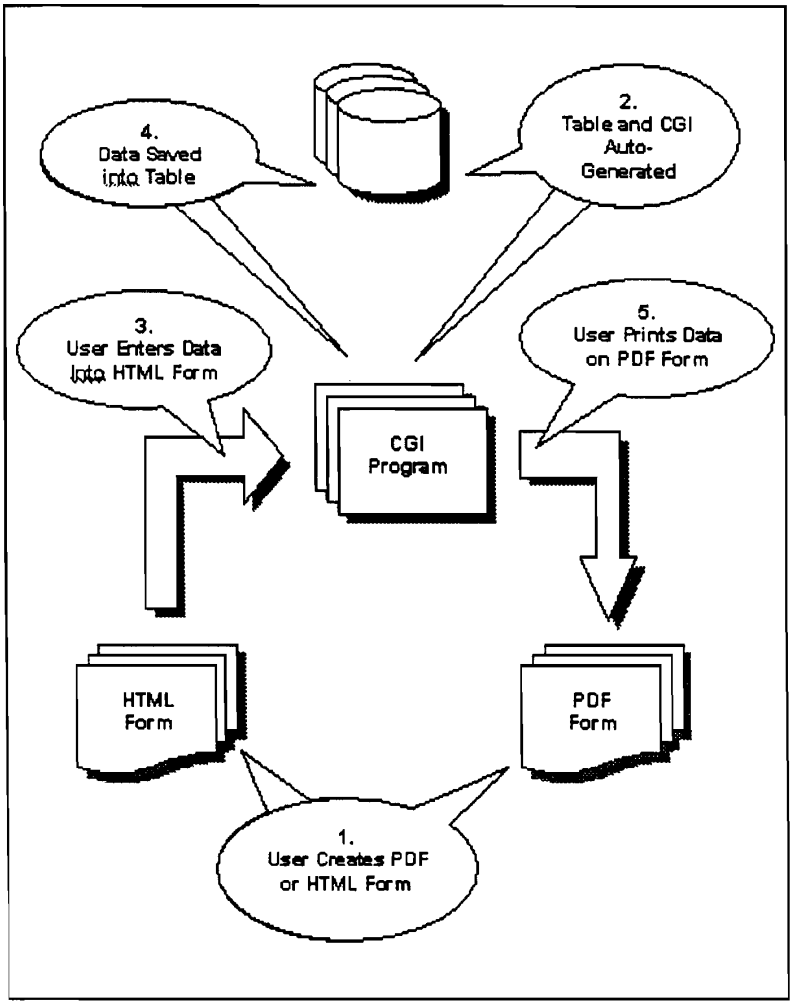
Figure 4



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Figure 5

HTML-PDF Forms



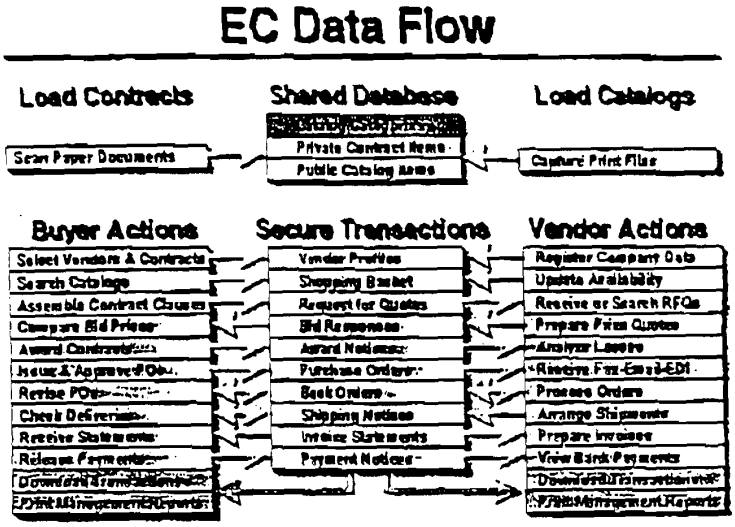
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Figure 6

Purchasing reviews the requisition, checks whether or not the item is in user inventory and selects a vendor. Vendor selection generates an electronic purchase order that is sent directly to the supplier's electronic mailbox. A secure electronic confirmation is returned confirming receipt and acceptance of the order. Upon receipt of the confirmation, entries are automatically sent to the client's accounting and control systems. Orders can contain information that references a number of accounts including accounts that are funded by federal sources and often require extensive compliance reporting. There are various payment options, ranging from credit card authorization that is suitable for very small purchases, to more elaborate Electronic Funds Transfer mechanisms involving the overall financial management system.

Management reports are updated and status reports can be made available directly from the web site.

The following illustration represents the structure of the ECCSI system.



Summary of Product Features

- The system software is year 2000 compliant.
- Underlying detail information is accessible from the display location.
- The system is menu drive.
- There is an on line help function.
- There is an on line tutorial function.
- The system is optimized to present underlying and important information as efficiently and possible given the task. The number of screens that may be used to access information regarding a specific

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(54) Title: SEARCH SYSTEM AND METHODS

(57) Abstract: The invention relates to systems and methods for providing and accessing searchable information, particularly via the Internet, whereby the search for suitable service providers is based upon information specific to the service providers and information specific to the person carrying out the search, in particular to the geographical locations of the searcher and the service providers, to produce search results which are more useful and more appropriate to the user.

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SEARCH SYSTEM AND METHODS

The present invention relates to a system and methods for providing and accessing searchable information, particularly via the Internet.

The Internet has become increasingly important to business users, for providing information on the goods and services they offer. It has also become an important tool for users looking for specific information. However, the Internet now contains a vast amount of information and, because this information is so diverse and wide-ranging and formatted in many different ways, the information required is not always easily found.

This makes the Internet less efficient than it could be for advertisers and businesses, as there is no guarantee that their services will be found by users looking for something within their range of specialisation. The user looking for information may also find less information than is actually available.

Because of the increasing amount of information held on the Internet, there has become a need for efficient and reliable information retrieval and various search engines have evolved.

A Search Engine is essentially a large database of links to different documents on the Internet. The person looking for the information, a 'Web Browser Client', can enter one or more keywords. The Search Engine then searches for the occurrence of these words throughout the entire database of all documents indexed. Any article or document that contains the selected keyword(s) is presented to the user as a 'hit'. Hits in the list can be selected and the document to which the hit relates can then be called up from its address on the Internet.

There are a number of mainstream search engines, for example, Lycos, Yahoo, Alta Vista. These all

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provide links to information from the whole of the Internet which has been collected by 'Internet Spiders'. These 'Spiders', also known as 'Robots' or 'Crawlers' are automated programs which go from site to site recording and following links provided at the sites. The 'Spider' travels from URL (Uniform Resource Locator) to URL, recording the full text of every page, and then continues by following external links. The sites are periodically revisited to refresh the recorded information.

The sites are indexed on the basis of content, and particularly based on the html code. They work on the basis of algorithms, i. e. the number of times a keyword or text appears. The 'Spider' collects the information and returns it to the database for indexing. If this matches the search request, the database calls up the site located, usually listing the site in the list of hits based on the number of times or the relevance of occurrence of the selected keyword(s).

Because the mainstream search engines work using information collected by Internet Spiders, they essentially all report on the same data set.

The Search Engines all also basically use the same rules for searching or identifying the business that the user is looking for.

The Search Engines essentially operate on a keyword basis. They assign 'points' to web site where hits occur, based on the prominence of the keyword, i. e. how early the keywords appear; the frequency of appearance of the keywords in the document; the popularity of the site, i. e. the number of reciprocal links to the site; the number of keywords found at that site as a percentage of the total number of keywords found in the search; the proximity of the keywords in relation to the words with a similar meaning and the placement of the keywords on the site.

Although the Search Engines are useful in that the

user can input keywords and have access to a wide range of information, several problems have been identified including:

The information held on the database is not always up to date. Indeed, the information may have even been removed, in which case the search engine might list it but the link to load the information will produce an error.

Because the system is keyword based, some companies which provide relevant information for the user, may not be found because they use different words to describe their products/services. This is disadvantageous to the businesses providing the information and also to the searcher.

Submitting information to search engines requires the users to follow set rules and restrictions as to the presentation of the information.

Because these mainstream search engines search for documents containing the keyword(s) on the entire Internet, as described above, the amount of information returned can, in many cases, be overwhelming. Furthermore, many 'hits' may not, in fact, be relevant and may have only been found because they incidentally include the selected keyword.

As mentioned above, the search systems search the entire Internet and the information is, therefore, global. The search engine will, therefore, find all items on the Internet containing the selected keyword(s), worldwide. Much of this information will, therefore, not be useful to the user, particularly in the situation where the user is looking for businesses or companies which provide goods or services locally.

Furthermore, the method used by search systems for sorting and refining the information found is very rigid which can lead to problems in locating the correct information.

Some of the problems identified with the search

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engines, particularly the problems of providing too much irrelevant information when, for example, the user is looking for local information, have been solved by another form of business indexing - Business Directories. Many of these Business Directories provide information on a local or regional basis.

To find a service provider listed in a business directory, the user searches through an alphabetical listing of business names or, first, selects a business classification and then selects a service provider or company from the list of companies advertised in the selected category.

The advantage of these systems is that they only hold information about businesses, and are generally restricted to a specific area, rather than being global. This is more useful for a searcher who is looking for a particular service provider within a particular geographical area.

Although these Business Directories again have proved very useful, they still suffer from a number of limitations:

Each directory is 'local' and, therefore, only contains information about businesses within a specified area. The usefulness of each directory, therefore, is limited to users in that locality or looking for business in that locality.

Furthermore, these business indexes only contain lists of businesses, generally sorted into different business classifications. They do not contain any further information about the activities of the businesses and, therefore, will only be found if the user actually selects the correct category. This can be difficult, for example, where a business perhaps provides goods or services in an unusual field or in several different fields and where the searcher perhaps selects a slightly different category.

As these directories are limited to specified

geographical locations, generally based on towns, counties etc., they would not provide information on service providers outside of that town, even though, because of the particular location of the searcher, the service provider may, actually, be closer to the searcher.

One example of a business directory is the Yahoo Yellow Pages Directory, which does go some way to meeting the problems identified above. The directory is a business index list which is fairly complete. It gives a distance, in miles, of the location of the business or service provider from the geographical position of the location being searched. The results page gives the business name and address and also provides links to a new page which shows a local map, and provides links to the Service Provider's website.

This directory is, however, still restricted to geographic boundaries or locations and only lists businesses in business categories. No further information is provided on the various businesses listed.

Another example of a business directory is the Scoot Yellow Pages which is a directory with a conventional directory lookup mechanism. The user selects a business classification, a subclassification and the geographical area within which to search. This system, however, suffers from the same problems as above, relating to the geographical restrictions and still depends on the business being categorised correctly and the searcher selecting the same category.

Another local business directory is the Thomweb Directory in which the user selects a search area by town. This then accesses the local directory for that town and, again, searches are carried out according to business categories.

There is one business directory, 'AskAlex', which allows the user to search for information by inputting

keywords and selecting a search region, i. e. a town, county or national (UK). The results are not, however, ordered in any way and some of the service providers listed have not utilised the keyword facility. Thus, there is no guarantee that all appropriate service providers will be found by a keyword search.

The present invention aims to solve the problems identified with Search Engines and Business Directories by providing a powerful Business Search System in which the information found is information more targeted to the requirements of the searcher.

The searcher will not be presented with an overwhelming amount of information most of which is not useful to him. Furthermore, service providers providing information on the system will have a greater chance of being found by searchers who are likely to require their services.

According to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided an information search system comprising a database containing information on a plurality of service providers, the information including an indication of the geographical location of each of said service providers; means for inputting search criteria and means for inputting or obtaining information indicative of the geographical location of a user; the search system further comprising means for selecting one or more of said service providers based on the input search criteria, the geographical location of the service provider and the geographical location of the user.

According to a second aspect of the invention, there is provided an information search system comprising a database containing information on a plurality of service providers, the information including service provider specific parameters for each of said service providers; means for inputting search criteria and means for inputting a user-specific

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parameter; the search system further comprising means for selecting one or more of said service providers based on said search criteria, the service provider-specific parameter and the user-specific parameter.

Whilst the user-specific parameter is, preferably, an indication of the geographical location of the user, it may, instead, or also, include other information about the user used to restrict the search.

According to a third aspect, there is provided a method of identifying information stored in a database containing information on a plurality of service providers, the method comprising inputting search criteria and one or more user-specific parameters, comparing said search criteria and said user-specific parameter(s) with information stored for each of said business providers, and identifying those of said business providers for which information is stored corresponding to said search criteria and said user-specific parameter(s).

Again, preferably, the user-specific parameter is an indication of the geographical location of the user and the information for each of said service providers contains information on the geographical location of the service provider. The search criteria may include an indication of the search range with respect to the geographical location of the user such that only the service providers whose geographical location falls within said range are identified.

According to a fourth aspect, there is provided a method of providing searchable information on a database, comprising providing a database of service providers, the database comprising information on each of said service providers including a number of keywords defining the services provided by said service provider, and an indication of the geographical location of each of said service providers.

In all of the aspects of the invention, the

information provided on the plurality of service providers preferably includes information on the services provided, in the form of a number of 'keywords', the search criteria may then include one or more keywords and those service providers having keywords corresponding to the keywords included in the input search criteria will then be identified. In the preferred systems, where key-words are used as search criteria, only those service providers whose information includes such keywords, and which also match the other criteria, e. g. have a geographical location falling within the specified range with respect to the user's geographical location, will be selected.

According to another aspect of the invention there is provided a system whereby a telephone connection can be made between a user and a service provider, wherein the user requests the connection by inputting a command to a computer, and wherein the computer uses information on the user's telephone number and the service provider's telephone number to make a telephone connection between the two parties.

In the preferred embodiment of this aspect of the invention, the user and the service provider both pay a percentage of the call cost, the total amount payable by the user and the service provider amounting to more than 100% of the actual call charge.

Preferred embodiments of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only.

Essentially, the business search system of the invention contains 'pages' of information about service providers, with all of the key words describing the services/goods provided by the service providers being indexable. Information is also stored about the geographical location of each service provider.

When a user wishes to search for a business for a particular purpose, the search system selects service providers based on the information stored about them and

also based on one or more parameters specific to the user. In particular, the 'hits' produced by the search may be selected based on the actual location of the user and on the geographical location of the service provider, in relation to the user (which may be defined by a number of different parameters, e. g. postcode, town, telephone number, distance away from the user's geographical location, etc.).

Other features specific to the user may also affect the search results and a user profile may be built up to focus the search hits even more to the requirements of the user.

The main advantage of the system of the present invention is that the information presented as 'hits' is more targeted to the user, based on the actual geographical location of the user and/or other user-specific parameters, i. e. the search system also uses information about the user in locating appropriate hits.

The database searched is made up of pages of information about the different service providers subscribing to the system. Each service provider provides their own page of information about their business or company, outlining their main services and products. This page can be in any format, and the service providers can use their own corporate style, typeface, colouring, images, etc. All of the textual information on the page can be indexed so that a searcher can carry out a search by a keyword and will find businesses or companies incorporating that keyword in the description of that company, services and products. When a service provider is located in a search, the searcher can then look at the 'page' of that service provider to get a better idea of the nature of the company.

A business which subscribes to or registers with the system may also be given a system address in the form of a URL or Sub-URL defined under the domain name

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of the system.

Each service provider may also be assigned a unique alphanumeric identification number which will allow the user to identify a business merely by entering that number, rather than having to type a long URL.

Also, or alternatively, businesses may be provided with a 'meaningful' or easy to remember or easy to guess URL.

The 'page' of information provided on the system also acts as a virtual 'single page Website' allowing the company to advertise its services and products to a wide audience.

Whilst most subscribers will submit a page having a number of keywords against which users can search, it is envisaged that there would also be a second group of users, perhaps being allowed a free listing. This will allow the business index to be complete, but it is envisaged that businesses requesting a 'free listing' will not be allowed to register keywords and will only be indicated as a hit if the business falls within a particular business classification searched by the user. Such businesses would also be 'low priority' and would be named at the end of any listing. With these listings, a logging system may be provided which indicates the number of times that such an entry is listed as a hit. This may encourage free listed business to register as fully paid-up subscribers.

It will be possible for service providers to have all words provided on the page indexed. Alternatively, they may specify keywords to be indexed.

Amongst other parameters, a service provider will be required to provide the following information:

company name, contact details and postcode,
company information for the creation of the information page,
keywords to be indexed,
opening hours

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availability of facilities for disabled people, etc.
accreditations held, e. g. hotel star classification,
business facilities, e. g. extra services or facilities which the business can provide, etc.

Electronic forms may be provided on the system to allow the service providers to obtain specific information from users e. g. when quoting for insurance, etc. These forms may be associated with a specific service provider and/or standard forms may be provided for use by a particular industry sector, e. g. insurance companies.

The service provider may link into the electronic form system at a later date. A business classification may hold an electronic form link-number. If a business classification has more than one electronic form, the various forms may be selectable from an advanced Search Page.

The system will have the ability to be extended to include further classifications. Furthermore, if, for example, a class of service providers are found later to have specific requirements, the database can be later enhanced by attaching new tables that record the information that those service providers wish the user to search on. Thus, the database will gradually build up by the addition of new tables to meet specific requirements of various business sectors. For an example, for car hire companies, a database extension could be added later to hold types of vehicles and hire rates, allowing users to find a car within their budget.

When a user wishes to carry out a search for service providers meeting his requirements, in addition to the keyword or business category information, the user would also define the 'local' area to be searched in relation to his own location. The search system of

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the invention gives information in a 'local' area where 'local' is defined by the user. The user can define the search area in terms of miles around his position, in a specific town, region, postcode area, telephone code area, a country, the world, etc. For example, the user may define the local parameter in terms of a telephone number. Then, all business meeting the specified search criteria (keywords etc.) that have the specified dialling code will be returned. This is useful, for example, if the user is looking for entries which can be called at a local call cost.

Alternatively, the user can define 'local' by naming a town, county or region. All businesses meeting the specified search criteria that are in the town etc. selected will then be returned. This is useful if the user wants to send post to local companies or to travel there easily.

Alternatively, the user may specify a radius around his location within which the search results are to be restricted.

Another parameter which may be used to define what is meant by 'local' is the postcode and only businesses having that specific postcode will be selected.

The user also needs, when using the system for the first time, to enter his own geographical location. A 'cookie' placed on the user's hard disc will allow the user's input to be saved in the database so that when the user carries out a search a second time or on subsequent occasions, the information does not need to be input again.

The user can then search for information or business listings meeting his requirements by entering one or more keywords either with or without a business classification.

The user will be required to enter various criteria to enable a search to be performed. It is envisaged that various types and levels of searching will be

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available.

The 'basic search' will require the minimum amount of data and will be the default search method. The user will enter a keyword and/or a business classification and may also define a search area. If not, the default search area of, e. g., a five mile radius around the user's location will be used.

Another type of search envisaged is a 'step-by-step' search which will allow users to perform a more advanced or 'power' search with the system. The system will structure queries by getting the user to answer simple questions and building up a complex search strategy.

There will also be an advanced or 'power' search mode in which the user can enter an optional number of items. The user can specify which server should be searched, e. g. a world server, a continent server, a country server or a town server and can specify the radius, in miles or kilometres, of a given location within which the search results should be found. The forms, for particular industry sectors or service providers may also be provided in this advanced search mode and will allow the service providers to have more customised searches. More advanced search pages may be available and may interact with the user for the transfer of information between the user and the service provider.

To further focus or target searches to the particular user, information about the user, e. g. from a user's profile and/or built up from previous searches, may be incorporated into the search parameters automatically from the user's 'cookie' or input later by the user.

In addition to the search results being more focused, special offers, schemes, etc. which may be useful to the user, based on the user's profile, may be displayed.

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Where a user's profile has been established, previous searches can also be saved and presented to the user on returning to the site.

The search results are presented on a 'results page' which may be sortable in a number of various ways including:

by distance from the user,

by company name,

by business classification,

by the significance of the keyword in the service provider's page, e. g. its position, its frequency of occurrence, etc.,

by the significance of the service provided to the user based on the user's profile, e. g. if the user is a student and the service provider gives a student discount, this company could be listed higher.

The search results page may also indicate, for example, which companies currently have special offers available, which companies have, for example, facilities for disabled people, etc. The list may also allow users to select the service provider's information for printing, display or for linking directly to the service provider's page.

If a user selects a service provider listed and wishes to view their page, he may, for example, click on the name of the provider and the page will be displayed, providing more information about that particular service provider. This page may then provide links to forms, etc. to allow the user to provide required information, e. g. for quotation.

Each service provider may also have, associated with their postal address, an on-line map providing information to users as to how to locate the business, etc.

A facility may also be provided for service providers to indicate special offers, etc. The service

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provider may specify a limited time during which the special offer is to be available and the indication of the offer may be deleted automatically at the end of that time.

Another facility which may be provided is a button on the service provider's page which automatically sends the service provider's business card as an e-mail to the user.

Other facilities allow the user to be put on a mailing list of the service provider or to link to the service provider's main website or to recommend the company to somebody else, etc.

A search may be further enhanced by the use of by so-called 'Activity Assistants'. A service provider can submit information to be listed by an 'Activity Assistant', which can then be searched by a user. Essentially, an Activity Assistant will identify service providers according to an activity carried out by the user. For example, a user wishing to organise an outdoor birthday party for a child may locate details of service providers providing children's entertainment, equipment for events, e. g. marquees, caterers, toy shops, etc.

A similar 'Business Assistant' facility may also be provided in searching for service providers that can assist a business type. For example, a business owner can use a Business Assistant to locate all service providers that have listed themselves as being potentially useful to that business.

One of the main features of the system of the present invention is that the search results are presented and controlled to some extent by a parameter or parameters specific to the user, for example a user's geographical location. The search may be even more targeted by building up a 'user profile' containing more information about the user to be used in carrying out the search. The more data that the user provides, the

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better and more suitable will be the results provided by the search system. For example, the user may specify his marital status, age group, religion, disabilities, hobbies etc. These profiles may be stored against the 'cookie' on the user's hard disc and accessed and incorporated into the search criteria whenever a user revisits the search system site.

In addition to information on businesses appropriate to the user's requirements, further information may also be presented to the user based on the user's location, or other user-specific parameters. For example, community information pages may be presented to the user for the user's local area. This may include, amongst many other things, facilities provided in the region, local government information, radio stations, TV stations, useful information, useful contact numbers, weather, etc. Local jobs could also be advertised to the user, as well as local announcements on events, etc., advertisement, etc., functions, etc. Which things are displayed may be controlled partly or fully according to the user's profile, to ensure that only information relevant to the user is displayed.

Service providers registered with this system may have their number of search hits logged, to allow the service providers to assess the effectiveness of the system as an advertising mechanism. Statistics may be provided on, for example, the number of hits on the user's classification, the number of hits on the business, the number of hits from an Activity Assistant and/or a Business Assistant and the total number of hits.

The system may also log the number of page visits, the number of times the service provider was automatically telephoned from the site, the number of times the information about the service provider was printed out, the number of times any e-mails were sent to or from the page (if appropriate), etc. The

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statistical information may be further broken down into, for example, the number of visitors to the page at different time bands, daily, per month, etc. This may also be tied up with user profile information so that the service provider can have some idea of the type of person visiting their site. Statistics on the geographical location of the visitors to sites may also be provided. In this way, service providers can plan their business and future advertising taking into account the current market requirements.

Feedback pages may also be provided for use by the user.

A facility may also be provided to Service Providers to control their inclusion on Search Results pages. For example, a search provider may choose to be listed only if the searcher is within a certain distance from the Service Provider's position, or in a certain telephone area code, or post code area, or town.

Another preferred feature provides a mechanism for users to set up a telephone call with the service provider merely by clicking a button on the screen. In connection with this service, various charging and call charge allocation structures can be provided.

The service providers may have, on their information page, a 'Connect to Service Provider' button. If the user wishes to make a call to the service provider he can merely click on this button. The system knows the user's telephone number and also knows the service provider's telephone number and uses this information to set up a telephone connection between the two parties. The information is preferably provided to a third party who will establish the telephone link and ensure that both parties are billed for the same call.

Usually with such systems, the user or calling party is charged for the call. In the preferred system, however, the search system provider or a third party can

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provide the connection and the call charges can be allocated between the user and the service provider.

For example, in one preferred system, when a user wishes to call a service provider, he clicks on the 'Connect to Service Provider' button on the service provider's page. The user is then warned, by a message, that he will be charged for the call at a specified discount, e. g. 20%, and, if he accepts this, he should press or click on a continue button. When the user accepts, a message is generated by the system and sent to a third party to connect the user's telephone number with the service provider's telephone number at a particular time, as chosen by the user.

This information can be used by a third party to connect the two parties and, at the same time, to charge both parties at a rate which is lower than they would be charged if they would call conventionally. This allows the overall call costs to be increased, whilst reducing the costs to the individual parties.

The advantage of this arrangement to the user is that his call will be discounted by 20% and also that the call could be made via the computer without the user having to physically pick up the telephone and dial.

Although the service provider will have to meet part of the call costs, this will usually be acceptable as he will be calling a potential customer.

A third party can collect, from the two connecting parties, over 100% of the call cost. The call cost would then be paid to the telephone company, leaving a profit to be split between the search system provider and the third party company providing the call connection and inter-carrier-billing.

The system could be used on an international basis, using the principles described above. A service provider may indicate whether or not they do wish to be listed for international business. To allow this, the

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address field of the search system will need to be internationalised. One possible way is to include a 'Country Address Format' table as shown below (table 1). For each country, the field labels should be taken from the table and information entered according to the field.

The location should be determined from the postcode.

Each server may use different rules for addresses/postcodes.

Country Code	Field 1 Label	Field 2 Label	Field 3 Label	Field 4 Label	Field 5 Label	Field 6 Label	Field 7 Label	Field 8 Label
USA	Name	Company Name	Address 1	Address 2			Zip Code	
UK	Name	Company Name	Address 1	Address 2	Town	County	Post Code	

TABLE 1

As discussed above, using the search system of the present invention, the search results are not restricted to already-defined boundaries such as known towns, counties, etc. but can still give the searcher true 'local' results set. The definition of 'local' is controlled by the user.

As mentioned above, when a user first visits the search system site and requests a search within a given radius, the system will ask for the user's location. This location can be specified as a postcode, town name, etc. and the system may then convert this to a map grid reference.

When this information is known, the system can start to query the database for the search results and the query will be built with e. g. the following parameters:

user specified search parameters,

optimized for the user's profile, depending on what is being searched, and

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such data to fall in the region of x and y grid limits as shown below.

Assume that

the user's position is given by (x_u, y_u) and known because the system will determine it on day 1;

the area to search is a radius (R) in miles/km, round the user's position.

We can perform a data query to determine all service providers that satisfy the other requirement of the user and have an x coordinate that lies between (x_u-R) and (x_u+R), and have a y coordinate that lies between (y_u-R) and (y_u+R).

The information that is returned is all service providers within a square area whose side is 2R, centered on the user's position at (x_u, y_u). To refine this information to the required data set, we need to do a calculation on all the point found thus far.

By calculating the linear distance between the service provider's grid location and the user's grid location, we can immediately produce a list of service providers ordered 'in distance from the user'.

$$\text{Straight Line Distance} = \sqrt{((x_{sp}-x_u)^2+(y_{sp}-y_u)^2)} \quad \text{(km)}$$

The system will be able to give the results in the user's preferred units simply by multiplying the results with the appropriate factor.

Depending on the accuracy of Post Codes/grid references data and specified radius R, the system will round up or down the calculated value by an appropriate value.

The system of the present invention is particularly advantageous over the prior art in that businesses are searched according to user-specified criteria and can be ordered according to the distance from the user and, if desired, according to other user-specific criteria.

The user can be given some indication of the significance of the search result, e. g. how close the search system believes that the company has matched the user's

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criteria. Furthermore, where a user's profile has been set up, a 'significance value' can be attached to the appropriateness of the company to the user's profile.

The system is, therefore, an efficient and powerful search system for putting suppliers of products and services in touch with customers and allowing searchers to locate targeted suppliers.

Users will be able to search for businesses using keywords, rather than being restricted to searching in specified business categories and will also be able to specify the 'local' area within which the search is to be carried out. The search is, therefore, much more focused and accurate both for the user and for the service provider.

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CLAIMS

1. An information search system comprising a database containing information on a plurality of service providers, the information including an indication of the geographical location of each of said service providers; means for inputting search criteria and means for inputting or obtaining information indicative of the geographical location of the user; the search system further comprising means for selecting one or more of said service providers based on the input search criteria, the geographical location of the service provider and the geographical location of the user.

2. An information search system comprising a database containing information on a plurality of service providers, the information including service provider-specific parameters for each of said service providers; means for inputting search criteria and means for inputting or obtaining a user-specific parameter; the search system further comprising means for selecting one or more of said service providers based on said search criteria, the service provider-specific parameter and the user-specific parameter.

3. A system according to claim 2, wherein said user-specific parameter is an indication of the geographical location of the user.

4. A method of identifying information stored in a database containing information on a plurality of service providers, the method comprising inputting search criteria and one or more user-specific parameters, comparing said search criteria and said user-specific parameter(s) with information stored for each of said business providers, and identifying those of said business providers for which information is

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stored corresponding to said search criteria and said user-specific parameter(s).

5. A method according to claim 4, wherein the user-specific parameter is an indication of the geographical location of the user, and wherein the information on said plurality of service providers includes information on the geographical location of said service providers.

6. A method according to claims 4 or 5, wherein said search criteria includes an indication of the search range with respect to the geographical location of the user such that only the service provider whose geographical location falls within said range are identified.

7. A method of providing searchable information on a database, comprising providing a database of service providers, the database comprising information on each of said service providers including a number of keywords defining the services provided by said service provider, and an indication of the geographical location of each of said service providers.

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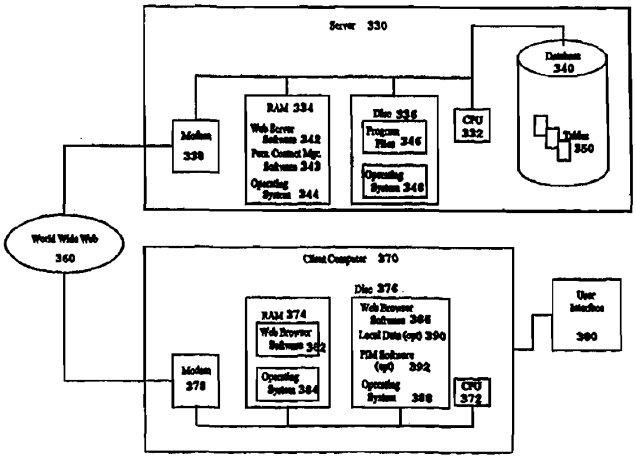
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(57) Abstract

A network computer based personal contact manager system (343) is disclosed wherein users of networked clients (370) maintain and update a set of user information which is stored in a relational database (340) on a networked server (330). The personal contact manager system (343) allows each user to specify on an individual basis which of their contacts are permitted to access respective datums of their user information. When permission is granted, the system will issue notifications to a user's contacts. The system also allows users to find contacts based on group affiliations and notifies users when there are coincidences in their data. The system supports the retrieval of information on the contacts of contacts, if a permission has been granted by the contacts and their contacts, and can also be used to synchronize the server database with a PIM database of the user (390) and any of his contacts who have the appropriate permissions.

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NETWORKED PERSONAL CONTACT MANAGER

The present invention relates generally to computer software used to manage contact information--such as mailing addresses, e-mail addresses, phone numbers, and birthdays--and more specifically to a method of creating links between members over a network and providing information to each member based on levels of permission maintained by the other members to which they are linked.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Several types of prior art for managing contact information exist, including Personal Information Management software applications, Groupware Applications, and Internet-based "White Pages" and e-mail services.

Personal Information Management Software. As represented generally in FIG. 1, in a typical prior art Personal Information Management (PIM) software application (e.g., Lotus Organizer, Microsoft Outlook, or U.S. Robotics Palm Pilot), a PIM software application 120, 124 that stores contact information in a database resides on a workstation or handheld computer 100 having a central processing unit 102, a display 108, a keyboard and/or mouse 110, a primary memory 104 (e.g., random access memory) for program execution, a secondary memory 106 (e.g., a hard disc) for program storage, and peripheral devices 112. As is well known, programs, such as the PIM software 120, are executed in the RAM 104 by the CPU 102 under control of the operating system software 122, 126.

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In the prior art, users themselves enter the contact information that they want to store in the PIM software. A variety of methods exist for entering this contact information. It may be entered manually using the keyboard, imported from an existing file on their computer, or imported via a peripheral device such as a business card scanner. The defining characteristic of this class of prior art is that the input of the contact information is performed by the user of the software and, when the information changes, the user must modify the information himself. What this class of prior art lacks is a means for information to be shared between multiple users and a means for a given user to post changes to his own information for the benefit of others.

Groupware Applications. As generally represented in FIG. 2, in a typical prior art Groupware application.(e.g., Lotus Notes), a user workstation 160 accesses information stored on a central server computer 130 over a computer network 150, such as a Local Area Network or Intranet. The server system consists of a central processing unit 132, a primary memory 134 (e.g., random access memory) for program execution, a secondary storage device 136 (e.g., a hard disc) for program storage, and a modem 138 or other device for connecting to the computer network. The user workstation 160 is the same as the user workstation 100 described in reference to FIG. 1 with the addition of a modem 162 or other device for connecting to the computer network. The file server or database contains data files 148 that can be accessed only by authorized users. The user uses client software 174, 176 running on the user workstation 160 to access the files 148 under the mediation of server software 140, 144 running on the server 130.

Typically, in such a system a central system administrator organizes users into classes and the creator of a file 148 determines what classes of users may view the file. The rules governing which individual users or classes of users have the authorization to view a particular file 148 may be stored as part of the file itself. Alternatively, these rules are based upon the hierarchical directory structure of the file server in which the file is stored. That is, a particular user may view files in one directory but not another.

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FIG. 3 represents a common deployment of a contact management system based on Groupware. Each user enters information 202 about himself and specifies a set of permissions 204 that define what classes of users are able to view various pieces of the information 202. What this deployment of the prior art lacks is the ability to authorize viewing privileges on a user-by-user basis rather than on a class-by-class basis. For instance, a user would be able to grant access to his home phone number 206 to the Human Resources department of his employer (e.g., Class A) while denying access to the same information to his co-workers (e.g., Class C). The user would not be able to give access to his home phone number selectively to a first co-worker while denying it to a second co-worker if both co-workers were part of the same class of users as organized by the central system administrator. Furthermore, such a system would lack a practical notification methodology. There would be no way for a user to specify "notify me when the first co-worker changes his information but not when the second co-worker changes his information."

Internet-Based "White Pages" and E-Mail Directory Services. In a typical prior art "white pages" or e-mail service, client computers and a server computer are connected via the World Wide Web as depicted in FIG. 4. A user subscribes to a White Pages or E-Mail service via a client computer 270 operating a web browser 282 or other software application residing in memory 274 that allows it to display information downloaded from a server computer 230 over the World Wide Web 260. The server computer system accesses a database 240 containing contact information entered by registered users. The service enables users to view contact information entered by other users. The authorization scheme may allow all users to limit certain classes of users from viewing certain parts of their user record as represented in FIG. 3. However, there are no linkages between individual users and thus users cannot restrict the viewing of their information on a user-by-user basis. Furthermore, users cannot be notified when information for particular users has changed.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is a computer-network-based contact management system that allows members to create and maintain contact with other members and determine on a person-by-person basis what information to share or withhold. The system is based on a relational database scalable to millions of users that resides on a server computer.

The invention was developed shortly after the advent of the World Wide Web, which promoted millions of people worldwide to connect their computers with a standard protocol, a phenomenon which made the invention practical and beneficial.

When a user becomes a member of the system, the member associates himself with any number of affinity groups and creates a data record for himself by entering information in specific data fields. Based on the affinity groups with which the user has associated himself, the system then informs the user of other members in the same groups and allows the user to establish a link to any of those members on an individual basis.

For each second user to which a first user has established a link, the second user can specify which data fields in his data record can be viewed by the first user. Each second user to which the first user has established a link is informed that a link has been established. The second user can in turn decide whether or not to establish a link to the first user. If the second user chooses to establish a link to the first user, he can specify which data fields in his personal data record can be viewed by the first user. In addition, each time a new user associates himself with a group with which an existing user has associated himself, the present invention informs the existing user that the new user has joined that group and allows the existing member to establish a link to the new user.

For each first user, the present invention maintains a database of information about the second users to whom the first user has established a link. The personal address book of the first user contains the information in the data fields that the

second users have given the first user permission to view. Whenever a second user changes any information in any data field of his data record, the information in that field is automatically updated in the information database of each first user whom he has given permission to view the information in that data field.

In addition, if a first user has given a second user the proper form of data field permission for the personal data record of the first user, the present invention will inform the second user whenever first user's birthday or anniversary is approaching, whenever the first user will be travelling in the vicinity of the second user, and whenever the astrological sign of the first user is compatible with the astrological sign of the second user.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and form a part of this specification, illustrate embodiments of the invention and, together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention, wherein:

FIG. 1 depicts a computer loaded with Personal Information Management software;

FIG. 2 generally depicts the data schema of a category of prior art known as groupware applications;

FIG. 3 shows a common scheme for authorizing permission to view information in the prior art;

FIG. 4 depicts two computers interconnected via the Internet, one of which is a server connected to a database and the other of which represents a user's client workstation, both of which are configured according to the prior art;

FIG. 5 depicts two computers interconnected via the Internet, one of which is a server connected to a database and the other of which represents a user's client workstation, both of which are configured according to the present invention;

FIG. 6 represents an object model of the key tables in the relational database maintained on the server computer in the preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 7 represents a pseudo graphical user interface in which a user enters information in specific data fields to create a personal data record;

FIG. 8 represents a pseudo graphical user interface for listing other users with the same group affiliation as that specified by a first user;

FIG. 9 represents a pseudo graphical user interface for specifying what type of data fields from a first user's personal data record to which the first user wishes to grant a specific second user access;

FIG. 10 represents a pseudo graphical user interface that displays the information stored in a user's personal address book;

FIG. 11 represents a pseudo graphical user interface that provides a first user with specific information that has changed about the other users to which the first user is linked;

FIG. 12 represents a pseudo graphical user interface that allows a first user to enter travel information and find out which contacts have overlapping travel schedules

FIG. 13 represents a pseudo graphical user interface that allows a first user to gather information about the contacts of his contacts; and

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FIG. 14 is a data flow diagram of an alternative embodiment of the present invention where a personal digital assistant is synchronized with a server database of user information.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Reference will now be made in detail to the preferred embodiments of the invention, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying figures. While the invention will be described in conjunction with the preferred embodiments, it will be understood that they are not intended to limit the invention to those embodiments. On the contrary, the invention is intended to cover alternatives, modifications and equivalents, which may be included within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

As represented in FIG. 5, the preferred embodiment follows a standard Internet architecture, in which client computers 370 and a server computer 330 are connected via the World Wide Web 360 and modems 338, 378 or other communications channels. A user accesses the server 360 via a client computer 370 operating a web browser 382 or other software application residing in memory 374 that allows it to display information downloaded from a server computer 330. The server computer system 330 runs server software 342, including the network-computer-based personal contact manager 343 of the present invention, which interacts with the client computers 370 and a user information database 340. In a commercial embodiment of the present invention, the personal contact manager 343 is the heart of a Web-based personal contact management service called PlanetAll. The database 340 contains contact information entered by registered users. The personal contact manager 343 in some situations will notify a set of users of updates made to the database 340 by another user to whom the notified set is related.

A distinction over the prior art is that the database 340 in the present invention is necessarily a relational database built from a set of relational tables 350. In the

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conventional manner, both the server 330 and the clients 370 include respective storage devices, such as hard disks 336 and 376 and operate under the control of operating systems 344, 384 executed in RAM 334, 374 by the CPUs 332, 372. The server storage device 336 stores program files 346 and the operating system 348. Similarly, the client storage devices 376 store the web browser software 386 and the operating systems 388. In an alternative configuration, in which the client is a personal information manager (PIM), such as the U.S. Robotics Palm Pilot, the disc 376 can also include a local PIM database 390 and PIM software, which performs data management and synchronization functions.

FIG. 6 outlines the data structure of the relational database 340 in the preferred embodiment, in which seven tables 350 are employed to enable most of the functionality of the present invention:

(1) Customer Table 440 ;
(2) Friend Table 460;
(3) Group Table 400;
(4) Affinity Table 420;
(5) Address Table 480;
(6) Phone Table 500; and
(7) Travel Event Table 520;

The Customer Table 440 contains one record for each unique user. The key field in this table is CustomerID 440-2. All information stored in the various database tables relating to a particular member is linked together by a unique number in this field. Other important fields in this table include information used by users to login to the system (Username 440-6 and Password 440-8), information which helps users identify each other (First Name 440-10, Last Name 440-12, and E-mail 440-20), information required to provide Birthday Notification (Birthday 440-16) and information required to provide Crossing Paths notification (CityID 440-14). Each record in the Customer Table 440 is time-stamped via the RecordDate field 440-4. Other fields 440-22 can also be included in the Customer Table 440 (and the other tables as well).

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The Friend Table 460 is a key to the present invention because it relates users to each other. Each record in the table represents a relationship between one user, identified by CustomerID 460-4, and another, identified by FriendID 460-6, with a certain level of permissions 460-10. The user interface of the present invention provides a multitude of ways for users to view information about other users, and every one of these ways relies on a database query of the Friend Table 460 to determine the list of other users whose information a particular user may see. Each record is time-stamped via the RecordDate field 460-8 so that users may be notified when their contacts' records change. Each record is uniquely identified by a RelationID 460-2.

The Group Table 400 contains one record for each unique group with which users may affiliate. Each group is identified by a GroupName 400-4 and GroupType 400-6. Examples of these groups would be GroupName 400-4 = "Massachusetts Institute of Technology" (GroupType = "University") and GroupName 400-4 = "Sigma Chi" (GroupType = "Fraternity"). Each record has a time-stamp 400-8 and a unique identifier 400-2.

Each record of the Affinity Table 420 relates a user, identified by CustomerID 420-4, to a group, identified by GroupID 420-6. If a user affiliates with six groups, there would be six records in the Affinity Table 420. This table stores information about the time period of a user's affiliation with a particular group in the FromYear and ToYear fields 420-8, 420-10 so that the system may help users find their contemporaries. Each record is time-stamped 420-12 so that the system may report to users when other users join the group, has a unique identifier 420-2 and can include additional fields 420-14.

The Address Table 480 stores information for any number and kind of addresses for a particular user, identified by CustomerID 480-4. For instance, if a user wants to make his home address, work address and summer home address available to his contacts, there would be three records for that user in the Address Table 480, each being identified in part by an appropriate AddressType 480-8 (e.g., home, work, summer home). Each record is time-stamped 480-16 so that the system can notify

users when their contacts have added or modified address information and has a unique identifier 480-2. Address information is conventional, including street Address 480-8, CityID 480-10, Postal code 480-12, and military Base 480-14 fields.

The Phone Table 500 is directly analogous to the Address Table 480, but it stores telephone and fax number information instead of address information. Each record is identified by a unique PhoneRecordID 500-2 and includes the CustomerID 500-4 of the user whose phone information is contained in the record, a phone type ID 500-6 indicating, e.g., whether the record is for a telephone or fax, the phone number 500-8 and a time-stamp 500-10.

The Travel Event Table 520 stores information about users' travel plans. This table is required to notify users when their travel plans intersect with the travel plans of their contacts. A record in the Travel Event Table 520 includes the CustomerID 520-4 of the user whose travel information is contained in the record, arrival and departure dates 520-6, 520-8 and a CityID 520-10 identifying the travel destination. Each record is uniquely identified by a Travel_EventID 520-2 and is time-stamped with a RecordDate 520-14.

In the preferred embodiment, a multitude of other tables 540 are used to enable a variety of user services. The Permission Type Table 542 contains one record for each of the varieties of permission levels the system allows members to assign to their contacts in the Friend Table 460. In the preferred embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. 9, permission information is grouped into five categories for the purpose of user interface simplicity (crossing paths notification permission 600-6, personal information 600-8, work information 600-10, birthday notification 600-12, and friends of friends information 600-14). However, the Permission Type table 542 could just as easily be structured to allow members to grant and deny access to information on a field by field basis.

The City Table 550 stores latitude and longitude information for two million cities to enable the system to notify users when their contacts travel within a defined geographical radius. The Zodiac Table 552 allows the system to associate

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birthdays with signs of the Zodiac and thereby notify which of their contacts have compatible astrological signs on a particular day. The AddressType, PhoneType and GroupType tables 544, 546, 548 define the types of address, phone and group that can be defined in the respective Address, Group and Phone tables 480, 400, 500. The advantage of this normalized relational database architecture is that it permits scaling and speed far in excess of any embodiment of the prior art.

FIGs. 7 through 12 display pseudo software graphical user interfaces (GUIs). In the preferred embodiment, the web server software 342 on the server computer 330 displays these GUIs via the computer communications interface 360 on the user interface 380 of the user workstation computer 370. The database and communications operations necessary to perform the described functions are controlled by the personal contact manager 343, which employs where necessary the services of the web server software 342. For example, the personal contact manager 343 updates the database tables 350 when a user submits a new home address and then determines whether any of that user's contacts need to be notified of the change. If so, the personal contact manager 343 will issue the notifications via the web server software 342. It should be assumed, unless a statement to the contrary is made, that all of the operations described herein which are aspects of the present invention are embodied by the personal contact manager 343.

Referring now to FIG. 7, a pseudo GUI 560 is shown that allows members to enter information about themselves in order to create a personal data record. Users can enter information in this GUI in various data fields. In the preferred embodiment, these fields include: Name 560-2, Home Address 560-4, Home Phone 560-6, Work Address 560-8, Work Phone 560-10, Birthday 560-12, High School 560-14, Year of High School Enrollment 560-16, High School Graduation Year 560-18, College 560-20, Year of College Enrollment 560-22, and College Graduation Year 560-24.

In certain of these data fields, the user can specify groups with which he wishes to affiliate himself, and the beginning and ending dates of the affiliation. In the preferred embodiment, the data fields High School 560-14 and College 560-20 represent categories of groups. In the data field Year of High School Enrollment

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560-16, the user enters the beginning date of the affiliation with the group specified in the data field High School 560-14. In the data field High School Graduation Year 560-18, the user enters the ending date of the affiliation with the group specified in the data field High School 560-14. In the data field Year of College Enrollment 560-22, the user enters the beginning date of the affiliation with the group specified in the data field College 560-20. In the data field College Graduation Year 560-24, the user enters the ending date of the affiliation with the group specified in the data field College 560-20. In both of these cases, the beginning date and ending date establish a date range during which time the user was affiliated with the group in question.

Once the user of the client computer 370 (FIG. 5) enters information in each data field in the GUI 560 shown in FIG. 7, he clicks the Submit button 560-26 (or performs some equivalent action) and the information entered is transferred via the computer communications network 360 (FIG. 5) to the server computer 330, where the server personal contact manager software 343 stores the information in the appropriate tables 350 of a database 340.

Referring now to FIG. 8, a pseudo GUI 580 is shown that allows a first user to select other users they wish to add to their personal address book. The list of contacts is created based on the group affiliation information the first user enters in the data fields College 560-20, Year of College Enrollment 560-22, and College Year of Graduation 560-24 in the Pseudo Registration GUI 560 shown in FIG. 7. A similar GUI 580 would exist for the group specified in the data field High School 560-14 in the pseudo 560 GUI shown in FIG. 7.

In each version of the GUI 580 shown in FIG. 8, a text description 580-2 at the top of the GUI explains to the first user that other members have been found who had the same affiliation as the first user during the same period of time as the first user. The name 580-6 of the group in which the first and second users share an affiliation is displayed and the date range 580-8 of the first user's affiliation with that group is displayed.

If a second user whose personal information is stored in the tables 350 of the database 340 on the server computer 330 has specified the same group affiliation as that specified by the first user in the College 560-20 data field, and that second user has specified a date range for that affiliation that intersects with the date range specified by the first user in the Year of College Enrollment 560-22 and College Graduation Year 560-24 data fields, the Name 580-10 of the second user and the ending date 580-12 of the second user's affiliation with that group are displayed.

A second text description 580-4 at the top of the GUI 580 instructs the first user to select any of the second users listed whom the first user wishes to add to his personal address book. If the first user wishes to add a second user to his personal address book, the first user clicks the checkbox 580-14 to the left of the Name 580-10 (e.g., "John Doe") for that second user. Once the first user has finished specifying the users he wants to add to his address book, he clicks the Submit button 580-16, and the information entered is transferred via the computer communications network 360 to the server computer 330 where it is stored in the appropriate tables 350 of the database 340.

A pseudocode description of the actions performed by the personal contact manager software 343 to display the group member list is shown in Appendix A. This pseudocode fragment (and the others that follow) is written in a structured English that is similar to computer languages such as Pascal, FORTRAN and C. The pseudocode fragments are not described herein as they are self-explanatory. The tables and fields referred to in the pseudocode fragments correspond to the tables and fields described in reference to FIG. 6.

Referring now to FIG. 9, a pseudo GUI 600 is shown allowing a first user to specify which types of data fields from the first user's personal data record to grant a specific second user permission to view. If a first user specifies a second user whom the first user would like to add to his personal address book, as explained in the description of FIG. 8, the second user will receive notification (issued by the contact manager program 343 - FIG. 5) that the first user has "linked" to him. If the second user chooses to return the link to the first user, the preferred embodiment of

the present invention will display the pseudo GUI 600 shown in FIG. 9 with the name of the first user 600-5, allowing the second user to set data field permissions for the first user. Unlike the prior art, which does not allow the first user to specify data field permissions for individual other users, the preferred embodiment of the present invention allows the first user to specify permissions separately for each individual other user in whose personal database the first user has chosen to be included.

A text description 600-2 at the top of the pseudo GUI in FIG. 9 instructs the first user to specify which types of data fields from the first user's personal data record to allow to appear in the personal address book of the second user, whose name 600-4 is shown below. Several types of data field permission are listed, each with a check box to the left enabling the first user to select or deselect the permission type. For example, to grant the second user 600-4 permission to view the information from the first user's personal data record indicated by the permission type denoted "Crossing Paths Notification Permission," the first user would check the box 600-7 to the left of the permission type Crossing Paths Notification Permission 600-6. To deny the second user 600-4 permission to view the information from the first user's personal data record indicated by the permission type denoted "Personal Information," the first user would uncheck the box 600-9 to the left of the permission type Personal Information 600-8.

In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the levels of permission are as follows: Crossing Paths Notification Permission 600-6, Personal Information 600-8, Work Information 600-10, Birthday Notification 600-12, and Friends of Friends Information 600-14. However, the present invention is not limited to the levels of permission shown in the preferred embodiment. The present invention is flexible to allow permission categories to be modified as needed.

Each permission type allows the second user to view information from the first user's personal data record in specific data fields, according to a specific set of rules. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, these permission rules are as follows:

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If member A links to member B, member A can grant any of the permissions discussed below to member B.

Even if member B does not reciprocate the link to member A, an e-mail forwarding address for member B will be included in the Virtual Address Book for member A. For example, the e-mail address "memberB@planetall.com," which maps to the actual e-mail address that member B has entered into his/her own record, will appear in member A's Virtual Address Book, but nothing else.

When member A first links to member B, member B is notified on the Web site and in an e-mail.

If member B elects not to grant any permissions to member A, member A will not appear in member B's Virtual Address Book.

If member B grants any permissions to member A, a listing in member B's Virtual Address Book will be created for member A, and the listing will contain whatever information member A has given permission for member B to see.

If member B grants Personal Information 600-8 permission to member A, member B's home address and phone number (if available) will appear in member A's Virtual Address Book and member A will be informed when member B changes the relevant information in his/her own listing.

If member B grants Work Information 600-10 permission to member A, member B's work address and phone number (if available) will appear in member A's Virtual Address Book and member A will be informed when member B changes the relevant information in his/her own listing.

If member B grants Crossing Paths Notification Permission 600-6 to member A, member A will be able to be informed when member B will be in the same city as member A. If member A and member B are both based in the same city, member A will only be informed when member A and member B are traveling to the same destination.

If member B grants Birthday Notification 600-12 permission to member A, member B's birthday and anniversary (if available) will appear in member A's Virtual Address Book and member A will be notified when member B's birthday or anniversary are approaching.

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If member B grants Friends of Friends Information 600-14 permission to member A, if member A searches for information about the contacts of his/her contacts, such as who lives in a particular city or is associated with a particular group, information from member B's circle of contacts will be included in the search results, if applicable.

Either member can modify permissions at any time. Either member can delete the other member as a contact at any time.

Pseudocode descriptions of the actions performed by the personal contact manager software 343 to display address information of contacts and to perform birthday and address change notifications are shown in Appendices B, C and D, respectively. Each of these operations depends on which permissions respective users have been granted by the owner of the information.

Once the first user has finished specifying the data field permissions for the second user 600-4, he clicks the Submit button 600-16 and the information entered is transferred via the computer communications network 360 to the server computer 330 where it is stored in the appropriate tables 350 of the database 340 (see FIG. 5). A pseudocode description of the actions performed by the personal contact manager software 343 to enable a user to change the permissions of contacts is shown in Appendix H.

Referring now to FIG. 10, a pseudo GUI 618 that displays the information stored in a user's personal address book is shown. The information in a user's personal address book is stored in the appropriate tables 350 of the database 340 on the server computer 330, to which the client computer 370 is connected via the world wide web 360 (see FIG. 5). The information in each user's personal address book is customized for that user, as described below. Each first user's personal address book contains information about each second user who has given the first user permission to view information in the second user's personal data record 636. Which categories of each second user's information are displayed in the first user's personal address book is controlled completely by the second user, as explained in the description of FIG. 9. In addition, each second user's information is entered and

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maintained completely by the second user (e.g., "Donald Tully"), as explained in the description of FIG. 7.

FIG. 10 illustrates the Address Book pseudo GUI 620 at three levels, in which each next level allows the user to view progressively more detail about the contacts in his personal address book.

In level 1 620 of the pseudo address book GUI 618, each letter of the alphabet is shown 622. By clicking on any letter of the alphabet 622, a first user can display a listing of the contacts whose last names begin with the letter of the alphabet selected, and about whom information is stored in the first user's personal address book. This information is displayed in the level 2 626 of the pseudo address book GUI. For example, if the first user clicks on the letter "T" 624 in level 1 620 of the pseudo address book interface, all contacts whose last names begin with the letter T and about whom information is stored in the first user's personal address book will be displayed 628 in level 2 626 of the pseudo address book GUI.

In level 2 626 of the pseudo address book GUI, a listing of the second users whose last names begin with the letter of the alphabet selected in level 1 620 of the pseudo address book GUI, and about whom information is stored in the first user's personal address book, is shown. By clicking on any second user's name, the first user can display the information about that second user stored in the first user's personal address book. This information is displayed in level 3 632 of the pseudo personal address book GUI. For example, if the first user clicks on the second user name "Tully, Donald" 630, the information pertaining to Donald Tully stored in the first user's personal address book will be displayed in level 3 632 of the pseudo address book GUI.

In level 3 632 of the pseudo address book GUI, information 634 is shown about a specific second user that is stored in a first user's personal address book. Only the categories of information from the second user's personal data record that the second user gave the first user permission to view are displayed. The second user's information is entered and maintained completely by the second user.

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In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the second user's e-mail address 634-2 is displayed if the second user gave the first user any type of data field permission. The second user's work address and phone number 634-4 are displayed only if the second user gave the first user Work Information permission. The second user's home address and phone number 634-6 are displayed only if the second user gave the first user Personal Information permission. The second user's birthday and birth year 634-8 are displayed only if the second user gave the first user Birthday Notification permission. These permission rules are simply examples from the preferred embodiment. The present invention is not limited to the permission rules used in the preferred embodiment.

A pseudocode description of the actions performed by the personal contact manager software 343 to display the address book listing is shown in Appendix B.

Referring now to FIG. 11, a member update pseudo GUI 650 is shown. This pseudo GUI 650 provides a first user with specific information that has changed about the other users to which the first user is linked, plus new information about contacts to whom the first user may wish to link. The information displayed in a user's member update is stored in the appropriate tables 350 of the database 340 on the server computer 330, to which the client computer 370 is connected via the world wide web 360. The member update pseudo GUI 650 is automatically displayed on the user interface 380 of the user workstation 370, at an interval preset by the user. For example, FIG. 11 displays a hypothetical member update 650-2 released on December 7, 1998. The information displayed in the data fields below is information that has changed between December 7, 1998 and the date of the previous update, the interval between which has been previously specified by the user. The information shown in each user's member update is customized for that user, as described below.

In a first portion of the member update pseudo GUI 650 shown in FIG. 11, if one or more of the second users who have linked to a first user and have provided Birthday Notification permission to the first user have upcoming birthdays, a text description 650-4 alerts the first user of the upcoming birthday(s). The names and birthdays

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650-6 for those second users are listed below. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the first user will receive this notification 2 weeks, 1 week, 2 days, and 1 day in advance of a particular upcoming birthday, and on the actual date of the birthday. The first user does not need to collect and input the birthday dates for each second user who has linked to the first user. Each second user's birthday information is entered and maintained completely by the second user, as shown in the Birthday field 560-12 of FIG. 7, the registration form pseudo GUI 560.

In another portion of the member update pseudo GUI shown in FIG. 11, if one or more of the second users who have linked to the first user and have provided Personal Information permission or Work Information permission to the first user have changed their work or home address, a text description 650-8 alerts the first user. If a second user has changed his work address information and has given the first user Work Information permission, the second user's new work address information 650-10, 650-12 is displayed. If a second user has changed his home address information and has given the first user Personal Information permission, the second user's new home address information is displayed.

Each second user's address information is entered and maintained completely by the second user, as shown in the registration form pseudo GUI 560 of FIG. 7. After changing his address information in his personal data record, the second user does not need to specify that the new address information be provided to each first user to whom he has linked and given the proper form of data field permission. The new address information is provided to each first user quickly and automatically. In addition, the architecture of the present invention is scalable to include millions of users.

In another portion of the member update pseudo GUI 650 shown in FIG. 11, if one or more members has affiliated with a group with which the first user is also affiliated, a text description 650-14 will alert the first user. The name of the second user, the name of the group in which the first and second users share an affiliation, and the ending date of the second user's affiliation with that group are displayed 650-16.

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This portion of the registration form pseudo GUI 650 functions similarly to the group list form pseudo GUI shown in FIG. 8. If a new second user who fills out a registration form such as the pseudo GUI in FIG. 7, and therefore whose personal information is stored in the tables 350 of the database 340 on the server computer 330 has specified the same group affiliation as that specified by the first user in the College 560-20 data field, and that second user has specified a date range for that affiliation that intersects with the date range specified by the first user in the Year of College Enrollment 560-22 and College Graduation Year 560-24 data fields, the Name of the second user and the ending date of the second user's affiliation with that group 650-16 are displayed. Similarly, if the first user and the new second user were affiliated during an intersecting period of time with the group specified in the data field High School 560-14 in the pseudo GUI 560 shown in FIG. 7, the Name of the second user and the ending date of the second user's affiliation with that group 650-16 are displayed.

A pseudocode description of the actions performed by the personal contact manager software 343 to display a list of service members who have recently joined a user's groups (i.e., members who are not current contacts of the user) is shown in Appendix E.

If the first user wishes to add contact information to his personal address book for any of the second users listed 650-16, the first user can do so in a GUI similar to the group list form pseudo GUI 580 shown in FIG. 8. Each second user to whom the first user has initiated a link will then be informed of the link, and can then return the link and specify data field permissions for the first user, if any, as explained in the description of FIG. 9.

A pseudocode description of the actions performed by the personal contact manager software 343 to identify people who have linked to a particular user are shown in Appendix F.

In another portion of the member update pseudo GUI 650 shown in FIG. 11, if a second user has initiated a link to a first user, the first user will be automatically

notified 650-18 that a link has been made. For each second user that has initiated a link, the user's name 650-20 is shown. If the first user wishes, the first user can then return the link and specify data field permissions for the second user, if any, as explained in the description of FIG. 9.

Another section 650-22 of the member update pseudo GUI 650 shown in FIG. 11 is used to inform a first user when the travel plans he has entered into the system overlap with the travel plans that any of his contacts has entered into the system, as long as the contact has granted the first user Crossing Paths Notification permission.

This system, termed "Crossing Paths Notification" in the preferred embodiment of the present invention, operates as follows. The home city or "base city" for each user is determined from information entered by that user in the Home Address data field 560-4, as explained in the description of FIG. 7. The "City" table 550 (FIG. 6) stored on the server computer 330 includes 1.7 million names of cities around the world. Each of these cities is associated with a precise latitude and longitude. If the user's base city cannot be matched to a city in the "City" table, the user can add the new city to the "City" table by giving the name of another city that is already in the "City" table that is nearby the user's base city. The user's base city is assigned the same latitude and longitude as the existing city. This information is used to associate each user with a precise longitude and latitude, and determine all cities within a 29-mile radius of the user's base city.

Whenever a user is planning to travel, he can specify the dates during which he will be away and the city he will be visiting. If a second user has granted a first user Crossing Paths Notification permission, and the first user has entered a Travel Event to a city that is within a 29-mile radius of the base city of the second user, the first user will be notified 650-22 (FIG. 11) that he will be crossing paths with the second user 650-24 (e.g., "Andrew Kress"), as long as the second user has not also scheduled a travel event for the same time period. In another scenario, if a second user has granted a first user Crossing Paths Notification permission, and the first user has entered a travel event to a city that is within a 25-mile radius of a city to

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which the second user has scheduled a travel event during the same time period, the first user will be notified 650-22 that he will be crossing paths with the second user 650-24. Travel events are described more fully in reference to FIG. 12.

The Crossing Paths Notification system is able to handle multiple cities in a single day. For instance, if a first user lives in Boston but is traveling to New York on March 5, then the first user will be informed if any contacts will be crossing paths on that day in either city. In addition, this system is scalable to millions of users. A pseudocode description of the actions performed by the personal contact manager software 343 to enable a user to receive crossing paths notification is shown in Appendix I.

The final section 650-26 of the member update pseudo GUI 650 shown in FIG. 11 is used to inform a first user which of his contacts has an astrological sign compatible with that of the first user on the date of the member update. Each member is associated with one of the twelve astrological signs based on the information he entered in the Birthday data field 560-12 in the registration form pseudo GUI 560 shown in FIG. 7. Each day of the year is mapped to one of these twelve signs. This information is stored in the appropriate table 350 in the database 340 on the server computer 330. On a given day, all of a member's contacts who are associated with "sign of the day" are deemed to be compatible with the member. Only the names of contacts who have given the first user Birthday Notification permission will be shown in the member update pseudo GUI for the first user. A pseudocode description of the actions performed by the personal contact manager software 343 to enable a user to receive notification of compatible contacts is shown in Appendix J.

The permission rules used in reference to FIG. 11 are simply examples from the preferred embodiment. The present invention is not limited to the permission rules used in the preferred embodiment.

Referring now to FIG. 12, a pseudo Add Travel Form GUI 660 and a pseudo Crossing Paths List GUI 670 are shown. These two screens are used in the Crossing Paths Notification System. If a first member is planning a trip, the first

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member can use the pseudo Add Travel Form GUI 660 to add a Travel Event, in which he specifies the location 660-2, 660-4, 660-6, dates 660-8, 660-10, and contact information 660-20 for the intended trip. In the pseudo Crossing Paths List GUI 670, the first member is informed which of the second members to whom he is linked and who have granted him Crossing Paths Permission will be in the vicinity of the city to which the first user is travelling, during the time period of the specified Travel Event. The first user can then use the pseudo Crossing Paths List GUI 670 to select which of the displayed second users the first user would like to inform of the first user's specified Travel Event.

The pseudo Add Travel Form 660 is displayed on the user interface 380 (FIG. 5) of a user's client computer 370 when the user chooses to schedule a Travel Event. The user enters information about his scheduled trip in the data fields shown. In the Traveling To City field 660-2, the user enters the name of the city to which he is traveling. In the State field 660-4, the user enters the name of the state in which is located the city to which he is traveling. In the Country 660-6 field, the user enters the name of the country in which the city to which he is traveling is located. The information entered in these three fields 660-2, 660-4, 660-6 is used to locate the city for the Travel Event in the City table 550 on the server computer 330. The exact latitude and longitude of the Travel Event city is then determined and a list is created of all cities located within a 25-mile radius of the Travel Event city. In the Arrive in City on Date field 660-8, the user enters the first date on which he will be in the Travel Event city. In the Leave City on Date field 660-10, the user enters the date beginning on which he will no longer be in the Travel Event city. The information entered in these two fields 660-8, 660-10 is used to determine the date range for the Travel Event. Finally, in the How to Get in Touch While in This City data field 660-20, the user enters the method for contacting him during the Travel Event. After the user has finished entering information in the pseudo Add Travel Form GUI (12-1), the information entered is stored by the personal contact manager 343 in the Travel_Event table 520 on the server computer 330.

The pseudo Crossing Paths List 670 is displayed on the user interface 380 of the first user's client computer 370 after a first user has scheduled a Travel Event using

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the pseudo Add Travel Form 660. A text message 670-2 issued by the personal contact manager 330 informs the first user that one or more of his contacts will be in the same city as the first user during the first user's scheduled Travel Event. Those contacts (e.g., Scott Ulem, Taylor Pierce, Betsy Klein) who live in the city of the first user's scheduled Travel Event are listed 670-6, as well as those contacts (e.g., Tania Gutsche) who will be visiting the city of the first user's scheduled Travel Event 670-8. The contacts listed in the field 670-6 are those second users who have granted the first user Crossing Paths Permission, and who have listed in the Home Address field 560-4 (FIG. 7) of their Personal Data Record the city of the first user's scheduled Travel Event, or any city within a 25-mile radius of the first user's scheduled Travel Event. The contacts listed in the field 670-8 are those second users who have granted the first user Crossing Paths Permission, and who have scheduled a Travel Event to the city of the first user's scheduled Travel Event, or any city within a 25-mile radius of the first user's scheduled Travel Event, during the date range of the first user's scheduled Travel Event. For each contact name listed in both fields 670-6, 670-8, the first user can choose to inform that contact of the first user's scheduled Travel Event by clicking on the checkbox to the left of that contacts name. When the first user is finished selecting contacts, he then clicks the Submit button 670-10, which copies the information entered to the server computer (5-45) to be stored in the tables 350 by the networked personal contact manager 343. For each second user whom the first user selected, the second user is informed, in a screen similar to the pseudo Member Update GUI shown in FIG. 11, of the first user's Travel Event and the means of contacting the first user 660-20 during the Travel Event.

Referring now to FIG. 13, a diagram illustrating the Friends of Friends system is shown. The Friends of Friends system allows a first member to search for the names of contacts of their contacts who live in the same city as the first member or are affiliated with a group with which the first member is also affiliated. When a first user performs a Friends of Friends search, the personal contact manager 343 displays, via the web server software 342, the results of the search on the user interface 380 (FIG. 5) of the first user's client computer 370 in a GUI similar to the pseudo Friends of Friends report GUI 688. After locating a second member who is

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a friend of a friend, the first member can then link to that second member in order to add the second member to the first user's Personal Address Book, as explained in the descriptions of FIG. 8 and FIG. 9 above.

In the preferred embodiment of the personal contact manager 343, the Friends of Friends system operates as follows. If a Member A 680 is linked to a Member B 682 with any level of permissions 681 and the Member B 682 is linked to a Member C 684 with any level of permissions 685, then if Member C 684 grants to Member B 682 Friends of Friends permissions 687 and Member B 682 also grants to Member A 680 Friends of Friends permissions 683, then Member A is eligible to receive Friends of Friends notification about Member C. When a first user performs a Friends of Friends search, the results of the search will include all second users who have affiliated themselves with a group with which the first user is affiliated and all second users who live in the same city in which the first user lives, so long as the first user is eligible to receive Friends of Friends notification about those second users, as described above. For example, if Member A and Member C both belong to Group A 686, and Member A is eligible to receive Friends of Friends notification about Member C, then the result of Member A's Friends of Friends search 688 generated by the personal contact manager 343 will include Member C 690.

A pseudocode description of the actions performed by the personal contact manager software 343 to perform a search for friends and friends of friends in a specific city is shown in Appendix G.

The present invention is not limited to the search criteria or levels of separation in the preferred embodiment. The database architecture in the present invention is flexible to allow searches to be extended to more than one degree of separation. For instance, it would be possible to add a Friends of Friends of Friends search feature. The architecture is also flexible to allow new search criteria to be added.

Referring to FIG. 5, in each of the embodiments described above, the user information is stored on the server 330 and all user access to the user information is mediated by a client web browser 382, the web server software 342 and the server

personal contact manager software 343. In an alternative embodiment, which is configured for personal information managers (PIMs), such as the U.S. Robotics Palm Pilot, a user is able to synchronize their user information and their PIM database 390 through an importation/synchronization function performed by the personal contact manager software 343. The synchronization operation can be performed in either direction (i.e., client to server or server to client). The server personal contact manager software 343 will then use the web server software 342 to communicate with the PIM software 392 of the user's contacts, if applicable, and, in accordance with the permission scheme already described, synchronize the databases 390 in the contacts' PIMs. All database, personal contact management and linking operations already described are operable in the altenative embodiment, except the GUIs might be different, depending on the graphical capabilities of the client 370 running the PIM program 392. Thus, the alternative embodiment allows full synchronization of PIMs and the server database 340.

A data flow diagram illustrating the operation of the alternative embodiment is shown in FIG. 14. In the illustrated situation a user A submits an address change from their client computer 370A. In response to the update, the personal contact manager 343 running on the server 330 updates user A's address information in the server database 340 (not shown) and issues an update notification to the client computer 370B used by user B, who is a contact of user A. This alternative embodiment assumes that user B has a PIM (also referred to as a personal digital assistant or PDA) that they would like to synchronize with the server database 340. In such a case PIM Software 392 running on the client 370B performs the synchronization operation based on the user A address update information provided by the server 330. Following the synchronization operation, the PDA database 390 has the same information for user A as the server database 340. Alternatively, the PDA 750 can be coupled directly to the Internet (indicated by the dashed line), in which case it operates substantially as a typical client computer 370 described in reference to FIG. 5. However, one difference is that the PDA 750 maintains its own database 390 instead of relying solely on the server database 340.

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While the present invention has been described with reference to a few specific embodiments, the description is illustrative of the invention and is not to be construed as limiting the invention. Various modifications may occur to those skilled in the art without departing from the true spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

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Appendix A
Display Group Member List

Submit group name.

Match group name to GroupID in Group table.

Join Affinity table to Customer table and CustomerPrefs table based on CustomerID.

Show contact information from Customer and CustomerPrefs tables when the the Affinity table contains a record matching the CustomerID to the specified GroupID.

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Appendix B
Display Address Book Listing

```
if MemberFriend AND a Reciprocated Link then
    If have Personal or Professional Permissions then
        Show person's real email address.
    else
        Show person's PlanetAll address.
    end if

    If have Personal Permission and Biography Exists then
        Show Biography.
    end if

    If (have Personal or Professional Permissions) AND universal resource
locator (URL) exists then
        Show URL.
    end if

    If (Person is visible in group and Group Perms > 0) AND you have Common
Groups then
        Show the groups you have in common.
    end if

    If Person is in one of more of your personal email lists then
        Show the lists the person belongs to.
    end if

    If have Personal Permissions and Phone Type is one of personal phone
types then
        Show phone.
    end if

    If have Professional Permissions and phone type is one of professional
phone types then
        Show phone.
    end if

    If have Personal Permissions and address Type is one of personal address
types then
        Show address.
```

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```
                if address is in USA then
                    Show map link.
                end if
            end if

        If have Professional Permissions and address type is one of professional
    address types then
                Show address.
                if address is in USA then
                    Show map link.
                end if
            end if

            If have Professional Permissions and Professional Info Exists then
                Show the professional info the person has entered.
            end if

            If have Occasions Permissions and Birthday exists then
                Show the contact's birthday.
            end if

            If have Occasions Permissions and Anniversary exists then
                Show the contact's Anniversary.
            end if

            If contact has entered spouse's name then
                Show spouse's name.
            end if

            If contact has entered self description then
                Show self description.
            end if

    else if MemberFriend AND a Non-Reciprocated Link then
            Show message person has not linked back and give link so person can
            email the unlinked person to tell them they have linked to them. (after
            com/ASP rewrite will not show email so spammers can't make lists).
    end if
```

Appendix C
Birthday Notification

Birthdays are determined by the DayOfYear field in the customers table.

Create a list of all my contacts:

Go to the Friend table and select all Customers where FriendID = my CustomerID.

For each of my contacts, check to see if the DayOfYear is within seven days of the current DayOfYear.

Select the DayOfYear from the Customers table for all of the customers in my list of contacts.

If the DayOfYear is within seven days of the current DayOfYear, then select the name of the customer.

Display the names of all my contacts who have birthdays in the next seven days.

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Appendix D
Address Change Notification

To determine which of a member's contacts' addresses have changed:

Create a list of all my contacts:

Go to the Friend table and select all Customers where FriendID = my CustomerID.

Find out which of these contacts have changed their addresses:

Link the Customers table and find records for my contacts where AddressID is greater than the lowest Address ID having a date greater than the date on which my last email update was sent.

Find out which of these contacts have given me permission to see the address information that has changed:

Make sure that the appropriate permission appears in the record in the friend table linking me to the contact.

Display information for these contacts.

Appendix E
Show New Group Members

Create a list of all my groups:
Go to the affinity table and select all the records for my CustomerID
Select the GroupID for each of the records.
Do not include other customers' private groups to which I have been added
For each of my affinity records, check to see that Group Perms are > 0.

Create a list of all my contacts:
Go to the Friend table and select all Customers where FriendID = my CustomerID.

Create a list of people who joined my groups:
Go to the affinity table and select all the affinity records for my groups.
Select only affinity records for customers who joined the group after I joined.
Select affinity records where the date of the record is after the date for my affinity record in the same group.
Select only affinity records for people who joined the groups after my last email was sent.
Select affinity records where the date of the record is after my Sent date in the Email table.

Do not include people that are in my list of contacts:
Select only affinity records where the CustomerID is not included in the list of all my contacts.

Select the CustomerID from each affinity record in the list of people who joined my groups.

Go to the Customers table to find the name of each customer who joined my groups.

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Appendix F
People Who Have Linked To You

Linking the Friends table and the Customers table based on the CustomerID field, select the following information from the two tables:

CustomerID from the Friends table.
First Name from the Customers table.
Last Name from the Customers table.
Record Date from the Friends table.
Permission level from the Friends table.

Where my CustomerID is not among the CustomerIDs found in the following search:
CustomerID in the Friends Table is my CustomerID
AND the Record Date from the Friends table is within the last 30 days
AND I haven't already linked to the person

Appendix G
Search for Friends of Friends in a Particular City

Specify City. Match to CityID in City table.

Create a list of all my contacts
Go to the Friend table and select all Customers where FriendID = my CustomerID

Make a temporary table linking the Friends table to itself called Friend_1 and establish the following relationships:
CustomerIDs for the contacts of my contacts appear in the Customer field of the Friends table
CustomerIDs for my contacts appear in the Friend field of the Friends table
CustomerIDs for my contacts also appear in the Customer field of the Friends_1 table (this is how the tables are joined)
My Customer ID appears in the Friend field of the Friend_1 table
The Friend and Friend_1 tables are joined on t

Show information for the contacts of my contacts (i.e. the Customers from the Friends table) where the following conditions are true:
The Friends of Friends permission was granted from the contacts of my contacts to my contacts.
The Friends of Friends permission was granted from my contacts to me.
The contact does not already appear in the list of all my contact created above.
The city for the contact of my contact matches the specified city.

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Appendix H
Change Permissions

Join the Customer table to the Friend table based on CustomerID.

Create a list of all my contacts:

Go to the Friend table and select all Customers where FriendID = my CustomerID.

Show First Name and Last Name for my contacts from the Customer table.

Allow me to pick a name from this list as the contact whose permissions I would like to change.

Display the permission level that I have given this contact. It is stored as the PermissionType field in the Friend table.

Allow access to the PermissionType for this record in the Friend table.

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Appendix I
Crossing Paths Notification

Create a list of all my contacts:

Go to the Friend table and select all Customers where FriendID = my CustomerID.

Create a list of all my contacts' travel events:

Go to the Queue Travel Event table and select all QueueIds where the CustomerID is in my list of contacts.

Do not include trips for people who linked to me but did not give me crossing paths permission:

Check the permissions field in the Friend table for each of my contacts to see if I have crossing paths permissions.

Do not include trips if my contact specified that I should not be informed:

For each of my contacts' trips, check the Travel Exception table to see if my CustomerID is included in the list of people who should not be informed of the trip.

Create a list of my location for the next seven days:

Select the arrival date, departure date, and city for all my trips in Queue Travel Event for the next seven days.

For days when I am not travelling, select my city from the customers table.

Select from the list of my friends' trips, all the trips to cities that are within 3000 latitude and 3000 longitude to my location for each of the next seven days.

Go to the Customers table and find the names of all the people with whom I will be crossing paths.

Select first name and last name from the customers table for all the CustomerIDs in the list of my contacts trips

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Appendix J
Compatible Contacts

Create a list of all my contacts:

Go to the Friend table and select all Customers where FriendID = my CustomerID.

Determine my Zodiac sign:

Select my DayOfYear from the Customers table.

Select the Zodiac sign from the Zodiac table where my DayOfYear is between the DayFrom and DayTo fields.

Determine my compatible Zodiac sign for today:

Go to the Horoscope table and select the Compatible field from the row for my Zodiac sign and today's date.

Find my compatible contacts for today:

Select the DayFrom and DayTo fields from the Zodiac table for my compatible zodiac sign.

Select my contacts from the list of all my contacts whose DayOfYear is between the DayFrom and DayTo fields for my compatible sign.

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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A computer-network-based contact management system, comprising:

a computer network;

a server computer coupled to the computer network;

a client computer coupled to the computer network configured to interact with the server computer; and

a set of user information stored by and only accessible via the server computer, the set of user information including respective information for each of a plurality of users of the contact management system, the respective information including a plurality of datums, each of which is associated with a respective permission granted by a first user indicating on an individual basis a second set of users who are permitted to access the associated datum;

wherein the server computer is configured to permit access by the plurality of users to respective ones of the first user's datums solely in accordance with associated permissions granted by the first user.

2. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 1, wherein the server computer comprises:

a relational database configured to store the set of user information; and

a server computer program configured to:

interact with the client computer,

maintain and update the set of user information in the relational database in response to inputs of the first user entered from the client computer, and

control access by the plurality of users to respective ones of the first user's datums solely in accordance with the associated permissions granted by the first user.

3. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 2, wherein the client computer comprises a client computer program configured to enable the first user to interact with the server computer program.

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4. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 3, wherein:

the computer network is the World-Wide Web; and

the client computer program is a web browser.

5. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 2, wherein:

the respective information for the first user includes an address book listing at least a subset of the respective information for a set of contacts selected by the first user from the plurality of users;

the server computer program is configured to update automatically the datums in the address book for a particular contact when the particular contact updates their own user information in the relational database as long as the first user has been granted such permission by the particular contact.

6. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 5, wherein the server computer program is further configured to notify the first user whenever selected datums of any of the contacts of the first user come into a defined coincidence with the datums of the first user.

7. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 6, wherein the defined coincidence includes at least one of the following:

hometown;

group affiliation;

travel plans; and

astrological compatibility.

8. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 5, wherein the set of user information includes a groups datum that lists for each respective user their group affiliations.

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9. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 8, wherein each member of a particular group is notified when other users have joined the particular group.

10. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 5, wherein the computer server program is configured to notify the first user when they have been added to the address book of another of the plurality of users.

11. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 5, wherein the computer server program is configured to notify the first user when important dates of respective contacts are approaching based on the respective user information entered by the contacts into the relational database as long as the first user has been granted such permission by the contacts.

12. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 11, wherein the important dates include:

birth date; and

wedding anniversary.

13. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 5, wherein the set of user information includes a travel plans datum that lists for each respective user their travel plans.

14. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 13, wherein the computer server program is configured to notify the first user when the travel plans of the first user overlap with the travel plans of respective contacts based on the respective user information entered by the contacts into the relational database as long as the first user has been granted such permission by the contacts.

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15. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 8, wherein:

the set of user information includes a city datum for each respective user; and

the computer server program is configured to enable the first user to search for contacts of their contacts who belong to the particular group or live in a particular city based on the respective group and city information entered by the contacts of the contacts into the relational database as long as the first user has been granted such permission by the contacts and the contacts have been granted such permission by the contacts of the contacts.

16. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 5, wherein:

the set of user information includes an astrological sign datum for each respective user; and

the computer server program is configured to notify the first user of those of their contacts who have compatible astrological signs on a given date based on the respective astrological sign information contacts into the relational database as long as the first user has been granted such permission by the contacts.

17. The computer-network-based contact management system of claim 5, further comprising:

a personal digital assistant (PDA) coupled to the client computer that is employed by the first user;

wherein:

the server computer program is configured to issue notifications to the to the client computer when the contacts of the first user have updated their own user information in the relational database or when an event/situation associated with the contacts of the first user is about to occur; and

the client computer is configured to update a PDA database maintained in the PDA in response to the notifications;

such that the PDA database and the server relational database are maintained in a synchronized state in accordance with the permissions granted to the first user.

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Figure 1
PRIOR ART

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Figure 2
PRIOR ART

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USER INFORMATION 202	USER DEFINED PERMISSIONS 204
Home Phone	Class A and B can see but not Class C
Work Phone	All can see
Home Address	Class A and B can see but not Class C
Work Address	All can see
Job Title	Only Class A can see
Birthday	None can see
Group Affiliations	Only Class A can see
Email Address	All can see

Figure 3
PRIOR ART

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Figure 4
PRIOR ART

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Figure 5

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Figure 6

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SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)

Figure 7

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Figure 8

PSEUDO GROUP LIST FORM
580

Following are the other members who went to 580-2
your college at about the same time.

Click on the boxes next to the names of the people 580-4
you'd like to add to your Address Book.

580-6 580-8
State University, 1982-1986

580-14 ☒ 580-10 John Doe (Graduated 1985) 580-12 ☐ Robert Johnson(Graduated 1986)

☐ Jane Smith (Graduated 1986)

Submit
580-16

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Figure 9

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Figure 10

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Figure 11

PSEUDO MEMBER UPDATE
650

Member Update
December 7, 1998 650-2

The following of your contacts have upcoming birthdays: 650-4
- **Avery Rogers (Dec. 11)**
- Jane Bigelow (Dec. 14) 650-6

Your contacts have registered the following address changes: 650-8
- **Tom Kohn**
  New work address:
  1000 Wilson Boulevard 650-10
  Arlington, VA 22229

  New work phone:
  703-558-3312 650-12

The following new members have affiliated with the same groups as you: 650-14
- Gary Clayton (State College, 1985) 650-16

The following members have linked to you and have requested that 650-18 you reciprocate:
- Jun Ohama 650-20
- Lee Rogers

You have scheduled a trip to Phoenix on December 14. The following of your contacts live in Phoenix or will be in Phoenix on that date: 650-22
- **Andrew Kress**
- Taylor Pierce 650-24

According to Astrology, the following of your contacts are compatible with you today (Libras) 650-26
- **Bryan Jamieson**
- Anne Thierry 650-28

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Figure 12

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Figure 13

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Figure 14

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US98/22926

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC(6) : G06F 17/60; H04M 3/42
US CL : 704/1; 705/7,14; 707/104; 379/202
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 704/1; 705/7, 14 ; 707/104; 379/202

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

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

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y,P	US 5,794,210 A (GOLDHABER et al) 11 August 1998, col. 2, lines 1-68.	1-17
Y	US 5,539,813 A (JONSSON et al) 23 July 1996, abstract, col. 5, lines 1-68.	1-17
Y	US 5,737,726 A (CAMERON et al) 07 April 1998, abstract, col. 1-col. 4, lines 1-68.	1-17
Y,P	US 5,831,611 A (KENNEDY et al) 03 November 1998, abstract.	1-17
Y	RANDALL A. TAMURA et al. Lotus Notes 4, pages 32-34, 39, 64-65, 176, 1996.	1-17

[X] Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. [ ] See patent family annex.

*	Special categories of cited documents:	"T"	later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"A"	document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"X"	document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"E"	earlier document published on or after the international filing date	"Y"	document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"L"	document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"&"	document member of the same patent family
"O"	document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means		
"P"	document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed		

Date of the actual completion of the international search 23 DECEMBER 1998	Date of mailing of the international search report 12 APR 1999
Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks Box PCT Washington, D.C. 20231 Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230	Authorized officer HIEU C. LE Telephone No. (703) 306-3101

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet)(July 1992)*

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US98/22926

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	GS Lotus Organizer 1997 Edition/Exploring Organizer/Windows 95 edition, pages iii-vii and chapter 8/1-8/6.	1-17
Y	Lotus "Domino 4.6 Features Overview", July 1997, 2 pages.	1-17

Form PCT/ISA/210 (continuation of second sheet)(July 1992)*

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Electronic Patent Application Fee Transmittal	
Application Number:	13963050
Filing Date:	09-Aug-2013
Title of Invention:	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0015
Filed as Large Entity	

Utility under 35 USC 111(a) Filing Fees

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Basic Filing:				
Pages:				
Claims:				
Miscellaneous-Filing:				
Petition:				
Patent-Appeals-and-Interference:				
Post-Allowance-and-Post-Issuance:				
Extension-of-Time:				

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Miscellaneous:				
Submission- Information Disclosure Stmt	1806	1	180	180
		Total in USD ($)		**180**

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt	
EFS ID:	18866084
Application Number:	13963050
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	1571
Title of Invention:	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Customer Number:	55246
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Filer Authorized By:	Scott David Paul
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0015
Receipt Date:	25-APR-2014
Filing Date:	09-AUG-2013
Time Stamp:	17:05:56
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	yes
Payment Type	Deposit Account
Payment was successfully received in RAM	$180
RAM confirmation Number	3369
Deposit Account	503611
Authorized User	
The Director of the USPTO is hereby authorized to charge indicated fees and credit any overpayment as follows: Charge any Additional Fees required under 37 C.F.R. Section 1.17 (Patent application and reexamination processing fees)	

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) Form (SB08)	8201-0015_IDS_04-25-14.pdf	613939 339391d1274e5d09fdab9633985e49d0436191f5	no	6
Warnings:					
Information:					
2	Non Patent Literature	8201-0015_GPSOLO_PRACTICE MANAGEMENT_04-25-14.pdf	601289 cd9a288e5a3f43abc55b9c349870d5428b9bfbdc	no	4
Warnings:					
Information:					
3	Non Patent Literature	8201-0015_IYER_PA_04-25-14.pdf	2084136 856ed474fd9b1afa9cff32e3c86b8acf97acc331	no	94
Warnings:					
Information:					
4	Foreign Reference	8201-0015_JPH10162029A_PA_04-25-14.pdf	119099 7acd812982545a72d71e4e7810effc647c0626b7	no	2
Warnings:					
Information:					
5	Foreign Reference	8201-0015_JPH10301911A_PA_04-25-14.pdf	120301 fb91c8f72e8b0c9206ac63858f0e11c5b42aa21c	no	2
Warnings:					
Information:					
6	Foreign Reference	8201-0015_KR20000012595_PA_04-25-14.pdf	91408 c720e883d4ddba7c016b894baf5595f260e927d0	no	1
Warnings:					
Information:					
7	Non Patent Literature	8201-0015_LAZAR_PA_04-25-14.pdf	1800128 01a7a02e11a92195d7dce493c0de2f1fa7713cce	no	4
Warnings:					
Information:					
8	Non Patent Literature	8201-0015_PALMER_PA_04-25-14.pdf	247949 ca293ab154cfd9dbf0ece47f7c3eddd13e5b032c	no	7
Warnings:					
Information:					

9	Non Patent Literature	8201-0015_SCHWABACH_PA_04-25-14.pdf	80915 c92956659fa35b1e8620419ccd09c8a74aad088d	no	1
Warnings:					
Information:					
10	Non Patent Literature	8201-0015_SellingOnline_PA_04-25-14.pdf	37812 1bcd2af1b148f82347a313b77d4fc90f7e97a62e	no	2
Warnings:					
Information:					
11	Foreign Reference	8201-0015_WO0016210A1_PA_04-25-14.pdf	816678 82aa854f6c7ab2718f8712348c1076aedf3041a2	no	77
Warnings:					
Information:					
12	Foreign Reference	8201-0015_WO0021012A2_PA-04-25-14.pdf	368664 384cc28837ccf63a9a04070a7613b94dae676cd8	no	42
Warnings:					
Information:					
13	Foreign Reference	8201-0015_WO0140968A2_PA_04-25-14.pdf	212012 ad66e6dfc0127f58b91b3c080eec822a75b9842c	no	24
Warnings:					
Information:					
14	Foreign Reference	8201-0015_WO9923591A1_PA_04-25-14.pdf	597386 7f0d3ccd2e5bf428d4c0f8eb9380da614a352006	no	60
Warnings:					
Information:					
15	Fee Worksheet (SB06)	fee-info.pdf	30245 3f0e2a21302b1161b68a3bc6f119664d1843d7ab	no	2
Warnings:					
Information:					
		Total Files Size (in bytes):	7821961		

This Acknowledgement Receipt evidences receipt on the noted date by the USPTO of the indicated documents, characterized by the applicant, and including page counts, where applicable. It serves as evidence of receipt similar to a Post Card, as described in MPEP 503.

New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111
If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371
If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office
If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

Attorney Docket No.: 8201-0015 **PATENT**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of	:	Customer Number: 55246
Thomas DISTEFANO III	:	Confirmation Number: 1571
Application No.: 13/963,050	:	Group Art Unit: 3681
Filed: August 9, 2013	:	Examiner: D. Lastra

For: DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

AMENDMENT

Mail Stop Amendment
Commissioner For Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

The following Amendment and Remarks are submitted in response to the Office Action dated January 30, 2014.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A method of assisting a website designer in establishing an arrangement between a first website being designed by the website designer and a second website in order to market the first website at the second website upon the activation of the first website on the internet, the method comprising:

during design of the first website, receiving information at a user interface indicating a type of an element for marketing that is to be displayed at the second website, and information specifying the second website at which the element is to be displayed;

saving the information at a first database that is coupled to the user interface;

obtaining the element for marketing of the type indicated;

causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website when the first website is activated with respect to the internet, wherein the element for marketing includes at least one of a banner ad concerning the first website and a link to the first website;

determining whether a reciprocal site for the display of at least one marketing element of a third party website exists in the first website being designed; and

creating the reciprocal site for the display of the at least one marketing element of the third party website when the reciprocal site does not yet exist in the first website being designed.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

when the element for marketing the first website is a banner ad concerning the first website, causing the sequential display at the reciprocal site of the first website of a plurality

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banner ads respectively concerning a plurality of third party websites, when the first website is activated with respect to the internet.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

when the element for marketing the first website is a link to the first website, causing the display at the reciprocal site of the first website of a plurality of links to the plurality of third party websites, when the first website is activated with respect to the internet.

4. (Original) A method, within a computer hardware website implementation system, of establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, comprising:

registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving, by the website implementation system, a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving, by the website implementation system, a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing, by the website implementation system, a reciprocal site in the first website for a first functional marketing element; and

upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, the computer website implementation system implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

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the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

5. (Original) A computer hardware website implementation system for establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, comprising:

at least one processor, the at least one processor configured for registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing a reciprocal site in the first website for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing, upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

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6. (Original) The website implementation system of claim 5, further comprising a database of registered websites.

7. (Original) A computer program product including a computer-readable storage medium having stored therein computer usable program code for establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, the computer usable program code, which when executed by a computer hardware implementation system, causing the computer hardware implementation system to perform:

registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing a reciprocal site in the first website for the first functional marketing element; and

upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement a first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

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the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

8. (Previously amended) A method, within a computer hardware web page implementation system, of establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first web page, associated with a first user, and a second web page, comprising:

generating, by the web page implementation system, a second functional marketing element, associated with the first user, to be activated on the second web page;

establishing, by the web page implementation system, a reciprocal site in the first web page for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing, by the web page implementation system, the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first web page to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second web page to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first web page.

9. (Previously amended) The method of claim 8, further comprising

including, within the first web page, a web asset provided by a third party separate from the computer hardware system.

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10. (Previously amended) The method of claim 9, further comprising

causing, based upon the web asset being included within the first web page site, the third party to be compensated.

11. (Previously amended) The method of claim 9, wherein

the web asset is a functional application.

12. (Previously amended) The method of claim 8, wherein

the second functional identification element includes an image.

13. (Previously amended) The method of claim 12, further comprising

receiving, from the first user, the image.

14. (Previously amended) A computer hardware web page implementation system configured to establish a reciprocal arrangement between a first web page, associated with a first user, and a second web page, comprising:

at least one processor, wherein the at least one processor is configured to perform:

generating a second functional marketing element, associated with the first user, to be activated on the second web page;

establishing a reciprocal site in the first web page for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

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(i) the first web page to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second web page to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first web page.

15. (Previously amended) The system of claim 14, wherein the at least one processor is further configured to perform:

including, within the first web page, a web asset provided by a third party separate from the computer hardware system.

16. (Previously amended) The system of claim 15, wherein the at least one processor is further configured to perform:

causing, based upon the web asset being included within the first web page site, the third party to be compensated.

17. (Previously amended) The system of claim 15, wherein

the web asset is a functional application.

18. (Previously amended) The system of claim 14, wherein

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the second functional identification element includes an image.

19. (Previously amended) The system of claim 18, wherein the at least one processor is further configured to perform:

receiving, from the first user, the image.

20. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein

the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first web page.

21. (New) The method of claim 20, wherein

the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second web page opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

22. (New) The system of claim 14, wherein

the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first web page.

23. (New) The system of claim 22, wherein

the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second web page opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

24. (New) The method of claim 4, wherein

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the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first website.

25. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein

the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second website opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

26. (New) The system of claim 5, wherein

the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first website.

27. (New) The system of claim 26, wherein

the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second website opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

28. (New) The computer program product of claim 7, wherein

the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first website.

29. (New) The computer program product of claim 28, wherein

the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second website opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

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REMARKS

At the time of the First Office Action dated January 30, 2014, claims 1-19 were pending and rejected in this application. Claims 20-29 have been added, and Applicant respectfully submit that the present Amendment does not generate any new matter issue. The subject matter of claims 20, 22, 24, 26, and 28 find adequate descriptive support throughout the originally-filed disclosure, for example, in column 2, lines 30-34 of U.S. Patent No. 7,996,259 (hereinafter the '259 Patent). The subject matter of claims 21, 23, 25, 27, and 29 find adequate descriptive support throughout the originally-filed disclosure, for example, in column 15, lines 4-25 and 51-56 of the '259 Patent.

On page 2 of the First Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-7 for statutory double patenting based upon claims 1-7 of the '259 Patent. On pages 2-4 of the First Office Action, the Examiner also rejected claims 8-19 for nonstatutory double patenting based upon claims 8-19[1] of the '259 Patent. These rejections are respectively traversed.

The Examiner is referred to 35 U.S.C. § 252, which states "[t]he surrender of the original patent shall take effect upon the issue of the reissued patent." Similarly, reference is made to 37 C.F.R. § 1.178(a), which states "[t]he application for reissue of a patent shall constitute an offer to surrender that patent, and the surrender shall take effect upon reissue of the patent." In Pfizer v. Apotex, 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 65448 (N.D. Ill. June 30, 2010), the Court observed the following:

[1] Applicant presumes that the Examiner intended to refer to claims 1-7 of the '259 Patent since claims 8-19 are not present.

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> Once the original patent is surrendered, it "cannot be infringed" because "[t]he original claims are dead." *Seattle Box Co., Inc. v. Industrial Crating & Packing, Inc.*, 731 F.2d 818, 827 (Fed. Cir. 1984). Therefore, where a patentee seeks to surrender an original patent in favor of a single reissue patent, the matter is very straightforward: the surrender of the original patent takes effect when the reissue patent is granted, and after reissue, the original patent is no longer enforceable. In other words, in the case of a single reissue patent, surrender and reissuance go hand-in-hand, and the original patent is invalid after the date of reissue. The parties do no dispute that characterization of the law.

The above-identified law is relevant to the Examiner's rejections for both statutory and nonstatutory double patenting. Specifically, both of the Examiner's rejections are for double patenting – in other words, having two or more patents on the same (or substantially the same) invention. However, since the present application is a reissue application, there cannot be double patenting based upon the '259 Patent. At the time the present application issues, by law, the '259 Patent is surrendered and "is no longer enforceable." Thus, only a single patent will be in effect at the time of issuance of the present application.

By way of example, reference is made to reissue U.S. patents RE44921 (U.S. Application No. 13/468,532), RE44914 (U.S. Application No. 13/659,488), RE44950 (U.S. Application No. 13/687,343), and RE44917 (U.S. Application No. 13/722,653). In each of these applications, a preliminary amendment was filed. Also, in each of these applications, the preliminary amendment added new claims but did not change the originally-patented claims. Thus, each of these applications share a common fact pattern with the present application, and notably, none of these applications included a double patenting rejection.

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For the reasons presented above, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections of the present claims for double patenting based upon the '259 Patent is not proper and should be withdrawn.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 503611, and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Date: June 30, 2014

Respectfully submitted,

/Scott D. Paul/
Scott D. Paul
Registration No. 42,984
CUSTOMER NUMBER 55246

TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
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Page 568 of 771

Electronic Patent Application Fee Transmittal	
Application Number:	13963050
Filing Date:	09-Aug-2013
Title of Invention:	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0015
Filed as Small Entity	

Utility under 35 USC 111(a) Filing Fees

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Basic Filing:				
Pages:				
Claims:				
Claims in excess of 20	2202	9	40	360
Miscellaneous-Filing:				
Petition:				
Patent-Appeals-and-Interference:				
Post-Allowance-and-Post-Issuance:				
Extension-of-Time:				

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Extension - 2 months with $0 paid	2252	1	300	300
Miscellaneous:				
		Total in USD ($)		**660**

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt	
EFS ID:	19450609
Application Number:	13963050
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	1571
Title of Invention:	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Customer Number:	55246
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Filer Authorized By:	Scott David Paul
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0015
Receipt Date:	30-JUN-2014
Filing Date:	09-AUG-2013
Time Stamp:	13:53:19
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	yes
Payment Type	Deposit Account
Payment was successfully received in RAM	$660
RAM confirmation Number	131
Deposit Account	503611
Authorized User	
The Director of the USPTO is hereby authorized to charge indicated fees and credit any overpayment as follows: Charge any Additional Fees required under 37 C.F.R. Section 1.17 (Patent application and reexamination processing fees)	

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1		8201-0015_AmendmenttoOfficeAction1_06-30-14.pdf	103739 3c8bf0179fb82ffe568b5592498591106cfcfcc5	yes	13

	Multipart Description/PDF files in .zip description		
	Document Description	**Start**	**End**
	Amendment/Req. Reconsideration-After Non-Final Reject	1	1
	Claims	2	10
	Applicant Arguments/Remarks Made in an Amendment	11	13

Warnings:

Information:

2	Fee Worksheet (SB06)	fee-info.pdf	32226 8576374596f1685e6e1565a900bb281e89f43949	no	2

Warnings:

Information:

Total Files Size (in bytes):	135965

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New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111
If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371
If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office
If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

PTO/SB/06 (09-11)
Approved for use through 1/31/2014. OMB 0651-0032
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

PATENT APPLICATION FEE DETERMINATION RECORD Substitute for Form PTO-875	Application or Docket Number 13/963,050	Filing Date 08/09/2013	☐ To be Mailed

ENTITY: ☐ LARGE ☒ SMALL ☐ MICRO

APPLICATION AS FILED – PART I

FOR	(Column 1) NUMBER FILED	(Column 2) NUMBER EXTRA	RATE ($)	FEE ($)
☐ BASIC FEE (37 CFR 1.16(a), (b), or (c))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ SEARCH FEE (37 CFR 1.16(k), (i), or (m))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ EXAMINATION FEE (37 CFR 1.16(o), (p), or (q))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
TOTAL CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(i))	minus 20 =	*	X $ =	
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(h))	minus 3 =	*	X $ =	
☐ APPLICATION SIZE FEE (37 CFR 1.16(s))	If the specification and drawings exceed 100 sheets of paper, the application size fee due is $310 ($155 for small entity) for each additional 50 sheets or fraction thereof. See 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(1)(G) and 37 CFR 1.16(s).			
☐ MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM PRESENT (37 CFR 1.16(j))				
* If the difference in column 1 is less than zero, enter "0" in column 2.			TOTAL	

APPLICATION AS AMENDED – PART II

AMENDMENT **06/30/2014**

	(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	* 29	Minus	** 20	= 9	X $40 =	360
Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	* 6	Minus	***5	= 1	X $210 =	210
☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
					TOTAL ADD'L FEE	**570**

AMENDMENT

	(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	*	Minus	**	=	X $ =	
Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	*	Minus	***	=	X $ =	
☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
					TOTAL ADD'L FEE	

* If the entry in column 1 is less than the entry in column 2, write "0" in column 3.
** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 20, enter "20".
*** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 3, enter "3".
The "Highest Number Previously Paid For" (Total or Independent) is the highest number found in the appropriate box in column 1.

LIE
/WANDA MEREDITH/

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.16. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

If you need assistance in completing the form, call 1-800-PTO-9199 and select option 2.

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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/963,050	08/09/2013	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III	8201-0015	1571

55246 7590 09/23/2014

Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12230 FOREST HILL BLVD.
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414

EXAMINER	
LASTRA, DANIEL	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3681	

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
09/23/2014	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

ptomail@iplawpro.com
tforsythe@iplawpro.com
kcuenot@iplawpro.com

TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
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Office Action Summary	Application No. 13/963,050	Applicant(s) DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.	
	Examiner DANIEL LASTRA	Art Unit 3681	AIA (First Inventor to File) Status No

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE *3* MONTHS FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *06/30/14*.

☐ A declaration(s)/affidavit(s) under **37 CFR 1.130(b)** was/were filed on _____.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ An election was made by the applicant in response to a restriction requirement set forth during the interview on _____; the restriction requirement and election have been incorporated into this action.

4)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims*

5)☒ Claim(s) *1-29* is/are pending in the application.

5a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

6)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

7)☒ Claim(s) *1-29* is/are rejected.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

9)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

* If any claims have been determined allowable, you may be eligible to benefit from the **Patent Prosecution Highway** program at a participating intellectual property office for the corresponding application. For more information, please see http://www.uspto.gov/patents/init_events/pph/index.jsp or send an inquiry to PPHfeedback@uspto.gov.

Application Papers

10)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

11)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

Certified copies:

a)☐ All b)☐ Some** c)☐ None of the:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

** See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08a and/or PTO/SB/08b) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

3) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .

4) ☐ Other: _____.

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The present application is being examined under the pre-AIA first to invent provisions.

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-29 have been examined.

35 U.S.C. 101, Non-Statutory (Abstract Idea Implemented on a Generic Computer – Not Significantly More than the Abstract Idea Itself)

The claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter because the claim(s) as a whole, considering all claim elements both individually and in combination, do not amount to significantly more than an abstract idea. The claim(s) is/are directed to the abstract idea of a method of organizing human activities. The additional element(s) or combination of elements in the claim(s) other than the abstract idea per se amount(s) to no more than: (i) mere instructions to implement the idea on a computer, and/or (ii) recitation of generic computer structure that serves to perform generic computer functions that are well-understood, routine, and conventional activities previously known to the pertinent industry. Viewed as a whole, these additional claim element(s) do not provide meaningful limitation(s) to transform the abstract idea into a patent eligible application of the abstract idea such that the claim(s) amounts to significantly more than the abstract idea itself. Therefore, the claim(s) are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DANIEL LASTRA whose telephone number is 571-272-6720 and fax 571-273-6720. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jami Plucinski can be reached on (571) 272-6811. The official Fax number is (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or /DANIEL LASTRA/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3681 Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/DANIEL LASTRA/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3681
09/18/14

Index of Claims	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13963050	DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**
	DANIEL LASTRA	3681

✓	Rejected	-	Cancelled	N	Non-Elected	A	Appeal
=	Allowed	÷	Restricted	I	Interference	O	Objected

☐ Claims renumbered in the same order as presented by applicant ☐ CPA ☐ T.D. ☐ R.1.47

CLAIM		DATE								
Final	Original	01/25/2014	07/11/2014	09/18/2014						
	1	✓	=	✓						
	2	✓	=	✓						
	3	✓	=	✓						
	4	✓	=	✓						
	5	✓	=	✓						
	6	✓	=	✓						
	7	✓	=	✓						
	8	✓	=	✓						
	9	✓	=	✓						
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	12	✓	=	✓						
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	19	✓	=	✓						
	20		=	✓						
	21		=	✓						
	22		=	✓						
	23		=	✓						
	24		=	✓						
	25		=	✓						
	26		=	✓						
	27		=	✓						
	28		=	✓						
	29		=	✓						

TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
IPR2025-01224
Page 578 of 771

Doc code: IDS
Doc description: Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) Filed

PTO/SB/08a (01-10)
Approved for use through 07/31/2012. OMB 0651-0031
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it contains a valid OMB control number.

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (**Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)**		
	Application Number	13963050
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	3681
	Examiner Name	LASTRA, DANIEL
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

U.S.PATENTS						Remove
Examiner Initial*	Cite No	Patent Number	Kind Code[1]	Issue Date	Name of Patentee or Applicant of cited Document	Pages,Columns,Lines where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
/D.L./	1	5560006	A	1996-09-24	LAYDEN et al.	
/D.L./	2	5787254	A	1998-07-28	MADDALOZZO JR. et al.	
/D.L./	3	5995099	A1	1999-11-30	HORSTMANN	
/D.L./	4	6035334	A	2000-03-07	MARTIN et al.	
/D.L./	5	6199111	B1	2001-03-06	HARA et al.	
/D.L./	6	8589222	B1	2013-11-19	DISTEFANO III	
/D.L./	7	8650076	B2	2014-02-11	DISTEFANO III	
If you wish to add additional U.S. Patent citation information please click the Add button.						Add
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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
	Application Number	13963050
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	3681
	Examiner Name	LASTRA, DANIEL
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

Examiner Initial*	Cite No	Publication Number	Kind Code[1]	Publication Date	Name of Patentee or Applicant of cited Document	Pages,Columns,Lines where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
/D.L./	1	20130305132	A1	2013-11-14	DISTEFANO III	
/D.L./	2	20130311876	A1	2013-11-21	DISTEFANO III	

If you wish to add additional U.S. Published Application citation information please click the Add button. Add

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS Remove

Examiner Initial*	Cite No	Foreign Document Number[3]	Country Code[2]	Kind Code[4]	Publication Date	Name of Patentee or Applicant of cited Document	Pages,Columns,Lines where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear	T[5]
/D.L./	1	0016210	WO	A1	2000-03-23	NEXCHANGE CORP.		☐
/D.L./	2	9923591	WO	A1	1999-05-14	SAGE ENTERPRISES INC.		☐
/D.L./	3	0021012	WO	A2	2000-04-13	ELECTRONIC COMMERCE & CATALOG SERVICES, INC.		☐
/D.L./	4	0140968	WO	A2	2001-06-07	MOGHUL		☐
/D.L./	5	H10301911	JP	A	1998-11-13	FUJITSU LTD.		☒
/D.L./	6	H10162029	JP	A	1998-06-19	DAEWOO ELECTRON CO. LTD.		☒

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TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
	Application Number	13963050
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	3681
	Examiner Name	LASTRA, DANIEL
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

/D.L./	7	20000012595	KR	A	2000-03-06	WEBEASY CORP.		☒

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Examiner Initials*	Cite No	Include name of the author (in CAPITAL LETTERS), title of the article (when appropriate), title of the item (book, magazine, journal, serial, symposium, catalog, etc), date, pages(s), volume-issue number(s), publisher, city and/or country where published.	T[5]
/D.L./	1	LAZAR, J., "THE 10 BIGGEST BLUNDERS THAT BUSINESSES MAKE ON THE WEB," [online] Adapted from Interactive Age, May 22, 1995. Copyright 1995, Lazar Productions [retrieved 04/24/14] retrieved from the Internet: <http://www.jr.co.il/training/web01.txt>, 4 PG.	☐
/D.L./	2	KENNEDY, D.M., "PRACTICE MANAGEMENT: SITE PLAN 12 STEPS TO PROMOTING YOUR WEBSITE," [online] In General Practice, Solo & Small Firm Division Magazine, Vol. 17, No. 6, Sep. 2000 [retrieved 04/24/14] retrieved from the Internet: <http://www.americanbar.org/newsletter/publications/gp_solo_magazine_home/gp_solo_magazine_index/sep2000kennedy.html>, 4 pg.	☐
/D.L./	3	"SELLING ONLINE: MORE THAN HITTING A FEW KEYS," In ProQuest, Interactive Daily, Phillips Business Information Corporation © Sep 5, 1995.	☐
/D.L./	4	PALMER, A. et al., "THE ROLE OF ELECTRONIC COMMERCE IN CREATING VIRTUAL TOURISM DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANISATIONS," [online] In Int'l. J. of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 12, No. 3, pp. 198-204, 2000.	☐
/D.L./	5	IYER, S., "FACTORS DISTINGUISHING HIGH TRAFFIC ONLINE STORES FROM LOW TRAFFIC ON-LINE STORES," Thesis - Carleton University, Sprott School of Business, 2000, 94 pg.	☐
/D.L./	6	SCHWABACH, A., "Intellectual Property: A Reference Handbook," ABC-CLIO, 2007, Pub. Apr. 26, 2007, 318 pg, [Abstract only].	☐

If you wish to add additional non-patent literature document citation information please click the Add button Add

EXAMINER SIGNATURE

Examiner Signature	/Daniel Lastra/ (09/18/2014)	Date Considered	

*EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through a citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
	Application Number	13963050
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	3681
	Examiner Name	LASTRA, DANIEL
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

[1] See Kind Codes of USPTO Patent Documents at www.USPTO.GOV or MPEP 901.04. [2] Enter office that issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST.3). [3] For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. [4] Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST.16 if possible. [5] Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language translation is attached.

TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
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Page 582 of 771

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
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	First Named Inventor	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	3681
	Examiner Name	LASTRA, DANIEL
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Please see 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 to make the appropriate selection(s):

☐ That each item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(1).

OR

☐ That no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, and, to the knowledge of the person signing the certification after making reasonable inquiry, no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was known to any individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(2).

☐ See attached certification statement.

☒ The fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17 (p) has been submitted herewith.

☐ A certification statement is not submitted herewith.

SIGNATURE

A signature of the applicant or representative is required in accordance with CFR 1.33, 10.18. Please see CFR 1.4(d) for the form of the signature.

Signature	/SCOTT D. PAUL/	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2014-04-25
Name/Print	SCOTT D. PAUL	Registration Number	42984

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 1 hour to complete, including gathering, preparing and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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Privacy Act Statement

The Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579) requires that you be given certain information in connection with your submission of the attached form related to a patent application or patent. Accordingly, pursuant to the requirements of the Act, please be advised that: (1) the general authority for the collection of this information is 35 U.S.C. 2(b)(2); (2) furnishing of the information solicited is voluntary; and (3) the principal purpose for which the information is used by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is to process and/or examine your submission related to a patent application or patent. If you do not furnish the requested information, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office may not be able to process and/or examine your submission, which may result in termination of proceedings or abandonment of the application or expiration of the patent.

The information provided by you in this form will be subject to the following routine uses:

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2. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, in the course of presenting evidence to a court, magistrate, or administrative tribunal, including disclosures to opposing counsel in the course of settlement negotiations.

3. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Member of Congress submitting a request involving an individual, to whom the record pertains, when the individual has requested assistance from the Member with respect to the subject matter of the record.

4. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a contractor of the Agency having need for the information in order to perform a contract. Recipients of information shall be required to comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(m).

5. A record related to an International Application filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization, pursuant to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

6. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to another federal agency for purposes of National Security review (35 U.S.C. 181) and for review pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 218(c)).

7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (i.e., GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.

8. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the public after either publication of the application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b) or issuance of a patent pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 151. Further, a record may be disclosed, subject to the limitations of 37 CFR 1.14, as a routine use, to the public if the record was filed in an application which became abandoned or in which the proceedings were terminated and which application is referenced by either a published application, an application open to public inspections or an issued patent.

9. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency, if the USPTO becomes aware of a violation or potential violation of law or regulation.

TikTok Inc. EX1002
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Search Notes	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13963050	DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	DANIEL LASTRA	3681

CPC- SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner
G06Q 90/00	01/25/14	DL
G06Q 90/00	07/11/14	DL
(G06F17/2247 OR G06F3/0481 OR G06F17/2235 OR G06Q30/02 OR G06Q30/0207 OR G06Q30/0256 OR G06Q30/0273 OR G06Q30/0276 OR G06Q30/0277 OR G06Q30/0641 OR G06Q30/08).CPC.)	09/18/14	dl

CPC COMBINATION SETS - SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner

US CLASSIFICATION SEARCHED			
Class	Subclass	Date	Examiner
705	14.1	01/25/14	dl
705	14.1	07/11/14	DL
705	14.1	09/18/14	dl

SEARCH NOTES		
Search Notes	Date	Examiner
EAST	01/25/14	DL
EAST	07/11/14	DL
east	09/18/14	dl

INTERFERENCE SEARCH			
US Class/ CPC Symbol	US Subclass / CPC Group	Date	Examiner
705 / G06Q	14.1 / 30/00	07/11/14	DL

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To: ptomail@iplawpro.com,tforsythe@iplawpro.com,kcuenot@iplawpro.com
From: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Cc: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Subject: Private PAIR Correspondence Notification for Customer Number 55246

Sep 23, 2014 05:22:52 AM

Dear PAIR Customer:

Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12230 FOREST HILL BLVD.
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414
UNITED STATES

The following USPTO patent application(s) associated with your Customer Number, 55246 , have new outgoing correspondence. This correspondence is now available for viewing in Private PAIR.

The official date of notification of the outgoing correspondence will be indicated on the form PTOL-90 accompanying the correspondence.

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Application	Document	Mailroom Date	Attorney Docket No.
13963050	CTNF	09/23/2014	8201-0015
	1449	09/23/2014	8201-0015

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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

PATENT APPLICATION INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

Attorney Docket No.: 8201-0015 **PATENT**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of	:	Customer Number: 55246
Thomas DISTEFANO III	:	Confirmation Number: 1571
Application No.: 13/963,050	:	Group Art Unit: 3622
Filed: August 9, 2013	:	Examiner: D. Lastra

For: DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

Mail Stop Amendment
Commissioner For Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

The following Remarks are submitted in response to the Office Action dated September 23, 2014.

REMARKS

At the time of the Second Office Action dated September 23, 2014, claims 1-29 were pending and rejected in this application.

CLAIMS 1-29 ARE REJECTED UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 101

On page 2 of the Second Office Action, the Examiner asserted that the claimed invention, as recited in claims 1-29, fails to meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 101. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner's analysis is not consistent with the either the guidelines issued by the Patent Office on December 16, 2014, entitled "2014 Interim Guidelines on Patent Subject Matter Eligibility," 79 Fed. Reg. 74618 (2014) (hereinafter Guidelines), or the case law discussed therein. The Guidelines describes a series of 'steps' used to evaluate a claim under 35 U.S.C. § 101 based upon the case law, and these 'steps' are discussed below.

Step 1

As described in the Guidelines, the first step in testing for subject matter eligibility involves a determination whether the claim is directed to a process, machine, manufacture or composition of matter. See 35 U.S.C. § 101. Claims 1-4, 8-13, 20-21, 24-25 are directed to a method (i.e., a process) and, thus, fall within the scope of 35 U.S.C. § 101. Claims 5-6, 14-19,

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22-23, and 26-27 are directed to a computer hardware system (i.e., a machine) and also fall within the scope of 35 U.S.C. § 101. Claims 7 and 28-29 are directed to a computer program product (i.e., a manufacture or an improvement to a machine) and also fall within the scope of 35 U.S.C. § 101. Therefore, all of currently-pending claims 1-29 meet the explicit requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 101.

Step 2A

The second step in testing for subject matter eligibility involves a determination whether the claims are *directed* to one of the exceptions to statutory subject matter. See Bilski v. Kappos, 561 U.S. 593 (2010) ("[t]he Court's precedents provide three specific exceptions to § 101's broad patent-eligibility principles: 'laws of nature, physical phenomena, and abstract ideas'" citing Diamond v. Chakrabarty, 447 U. S. 303, 308 (1980)). Clearly, the claims are directed to neither "laws of nature" nor "physical phenomena." As such, at best, the Examiner can only allege that the claims are directed to an abstract idea. Referring to the Guidelines, the Patent Office asserts that the courts have identified certain classes of impermissible abstract ideas, which include: "fundamental economic practices, certain methods of organizing human activities, an idea 'of itself,' and mathematical relationships/formula."

Certain methods of organizing human activities

Regarding this issue, the entirety of the Examiner's analysis is found on page 2 of the Second Office Action and reproduced below:

> The claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter because the claim(s) as a whole, considering all claim elements both individually and in combination, do not

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> amount to significantly more than an abstract idea. The claim(s) is/are directed to the abstract idea of a method of organizing human activities. The additional element(s) or combination of elements in the claim(s) other than the abstract idea per se amount(s) to no more than: (i) mere instructions to implement the idea on a computer, and/or (ii) recitation of generic computer structure that serves to perform generic computer functions that are well-understood, routine, and conventional activities previously known to the pertinent industry. Viewed as a whole, these additional claim element(s) do not provide meaningful limitation(s) to transform the abstract idea into a patent eligible application of the abstract idea such that the claim(s) amounts to significantly more than the abstract idea itself. Therefore, the claim(s) are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. (emphasis added)

The Patent Office acknowledges within the Guidelines only certain (i.e., not all) methods of organizing human activities are deemed to be abstract ideas.[1] Therefore, merely alleging that a claim involves organizing a human activity is not sufficient to establish that the claim is directed to impermissible abstract idea. Turning to the Examiner's analysis, the Examiner neither identifies the alleged human activity nor explains how the invention is directed to organizing the yet-to-be-identified human activity. Notwithstanding this lack of analysis, the claims are not directed to organizing a human activity. Instead, the claims involve the creation of a web page and/or website, which is necessarily performed with a computer.

[1] The Patent Office's assertion that "certain methods of organizing human activities" constitutes a distinct class of impermissible abstract ideas does not appear to be supported by the case law. The Patent Office points to page 10 of the slip opinion of Alice for support, in which the Supreme Court characterizes the claims in Bilski (i.e., "hedging is a longstanding commercial practice … it is a method of organizing human activity"). However, within the same paragraph, the Supreme Court stated that the Bilski conclusion was grounded on the basis that all of the claims were directed to the abstract idea of risk hedging (i.e., a "fundamental economic practice"). The Patent Office also refers to the *non-precedential* opinion of Planet Bingo, LLC v. VKGS LLC. However, the only mention of "organizing human activity" within that decision is in the context of alleging that the invention was directed to "minimiz[ing] other security risks," which was comparable to the "risk hedging" of Bilski. Thus, the case law that refers to "organizing human activity" occurs in the context of describing the inventions as being directed to risk hedging (i.e., a "fundamental economic practice"). Therefore, "organizing human activities" is not a distinct class of impermissible abstract ideas but part of the class of "fundamental economic practices."

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Moreover, as noted in the footnote immediately above, the concept of "organizing a human activity" is described in the case law as being related to a fundamental economic practice (e.g., risk hedging). The claims of the present invention, as will be discussed below, are not directed to a fundamental economic practice. Thus, for the reasons discussed above, the claims of the present application are not "directed" to "organizing a human activity," as that term is used within the case law.

Fundamental economic practices

Although the Examiner did not allege that the claimed invention is directed to a "fundamental economic practices," Applicant will address this proposed class of impermissible abstract ideas. The concept of "fundamental economic practices" is discussed in both Bilski (i.e., risk hedging) and Alice Corp. (i.e., use of shadow accounts). Consistent with this case law, Applicant has been unable to identify anything within the present claims that would support a finding that the invention is "directed" to either an *economic* practice or a *fundamental* economic practice. Thus, the claimed invention is not directed to a fundamental economic practice.

An idea 'of itself'

In the Guidelines, the Patent Office asserts that "an idea 'of itself'" is another distinct class of impermissible abstract ideas. This prohibition is discussed in Gottschalk v. Benson, 409 U.S. 63, 67 (1972) and is based upon a citation from Rubber-Tip Pencil Co. v. Howard, 87 U.S. 498 (1874). Neither the Guidelines nor the case law provide substantial guidance regarding the contours of this proposed class of impermissible abstract ideas. However, claims directed to an idea "of itself" would necessarily be filtered out in Step 1 of the Guidelines since an idea of itself

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is not a process, machine, manufacture or composition of matter. Since, as discussed above, the claims are directed to a process, machine, manufacture and/or improvement thereof, the claims are not directed to an idea *of itself*.

Mathematic relationships/formulas

The last of the proposed distinct classes of impermissible abstract ideas identified within the Guidelines is mathematical relationships/formulas. However, the mere presence of mathematical relationships/formulas within a claim is not dispositive. It is improper to dissect a claimed invention into discrete elements and then evaluate the elements in isolation. Instead, the claim as a whole must be considered. See, e.g., Diamond v. Diehr, 450 U.S. 175, 188 (1981) ("In determining the eligibility of respondents' claimed process for patent protection under 101, their claims must be considered as a whole."). The claims of the present application, however, recite neither mathematical relationships nor mathematical formulas. Thus, without any need for additional analysis regarding the claimed invention *as a whole*, it would improper to assert that the claimed invention is "directed" to mathematical relationships/formulas.

As discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that the claimed invention is not "directed" to an abstract idea consistent with either the Guidelines or the case law. Therefore, referring to the Guidelines, the answer to Step 2A is "NO" and the claims qualify as eligible subject matter under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

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Step 2B

Referring to the Guidelines, Step 2B (also known as part 2 of the Mayo test) involves determining whether the claim recites additional elements that amount to significantly more than the judicial exception. However, as noted above, the Examiner has not properly identified a judicially recognized exception to which the claims are directed. Therefore, an analysis under Step 2B is not required. Moreover, unless and until the Examiner can properly identify a judicially recognized exception to which the claims are directed, Applicant cannot address Step 2B.

DDR Holdings, LLC v. Hotels.com L.P.

Although not reflected in the Guidelines, the Federal Circuit recently issued the decision of DDR Holdings. Notably, in characterizing the invention of DDR Holdings, the Federal Circuit wrote:

> Rather, they recite a specific way to automate the creation of a composite web page by an "outsource provider" that incorporates elements from multiple sources in order to solve a problem faced by websites on the Internet. (emphasis added)

Similar to the Federal Circuit's description of the invention of DDR holdings, the present invention also involves the creation of a web page/website. The Federal Circuit also noted the following:

> It is also clear that the claims at issue do not attempt to preempt every application of the idea of increasing sales by making two web pages look the same, or of any other variant suggested by NLG.

Similarly, the claims of the present application do not attempt to preempt every instance in which two websites/web pages are linked to one another. Therefore, the claims of the present

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application have more in common with the claims at issue with DDR holdings, in which the Federal Circuit held that the claims were directed to statutory subject matter under 35 U.S.C. § 101, than that with the claims of Bilski or Alice.

For the above-described reasons, Applicant respectfully solicits withdrawal of the imposed rejection of claims 1-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 503611, and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Date: January 23, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

/Scott D. Paul/
Scott D. Paul
Registration No. 42,984
CUSTOMER NUMBER 55246

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Electronic Patent Application Fee Transmittal	
Application Number:	13963050
Filing Date:	09-Aug-2013
Title of Invention:	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0015
Filed as Small Entity	
Filing Fees for Utility under 35 USC 111(a)	

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Basic Filing:				
Pages:				
Claims:				
Miscellaneous-Filing:				
Petition:				
Patent-Appeals-and-Interference:				
Post-Allowance-and-Post-Issuance:				
Extension-of-Time:				

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Extension - 1 month with $0 paid	2251	1	100	100
Miscellaneous:				
		Total in USD ($)		**100**

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt	
EFS ID:	21295148
Application Number:	13963050
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	1571
Title of Invention:	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Customer Number:	55246
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Filer Authorized By:	Scott David Paul
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0015
Receipt Date:	23-JAN-2015
Filing Date:	09-AUG-2013
Time Stamp:	15:54:56
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	yes
Payment Type	Deposit Account
Payment was successfully received in RAM	$100
RAM confirmation Number	2620
Deposit Account	503611
Authorized User	
The Director of the USPTO is hereby authorized to charge indicated fees and credit any overpayment as follows: Charge any Additional Fees required under 37 C.F.R. Section 1.17 (Patent application and reexamination processing fees)	

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Amendment/Req. Reconsideration-After Non-Final Reject	8201-0015_AmendmenttoOfficeAction2_01-23-15.pdf	101467 fbc9a4f475ad32d7c0d6163d088b7e8a1eede868	no	8
Warnings:					
Information:					
2	Fee Worksheet (SB06)	fee-info.pdf	30625 b9f66675d7df557a7217afc6353688acd23098e3	no	2
Warnings:					
Information:					
		Total Files Size (in bytes):	132092		

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If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371
If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office
If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/963,050	08/09/2013	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III	8201-0015	1571

55246 7590 02/24/2015

Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12230 FOREST HILL BLVD.
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414

EXAMINER	
LASTRA, DANIEL	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3622	

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
02/24/2015	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

ptomail@iplawpro.com
tforsythe@iplawpro.com
kcuenot@iplawpro.com

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Office Action Summary	Application No. 13/963,050	Applicant(s) DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.	
	Examiner DANIEL LASTRA	Art Unit 3622	AIA (First Inventor to File) Status No

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE *3* MONTHS FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *1/23/15*.

☐ A declaration(s)/affidavit(s) under **37 CFR 1.130(b)** was/were filed on _____.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ An election was made by the applicant in response to a restriction requirement set forth during the interview on _____; the restriction requirement and election have been incorporated into this action.

4)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims*

5)☒ Claim(s) *1-29* is/are pending in the application.

5a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

6)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

7)☒ Claim(s) *1-29* is/are rejected.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

9)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

* If any claims have been determined allowable, you may be eligible to benefit from the **Patent Prosecution Highway** program at a participating intellectual property office for the corresponding application. For more information, please see http://www.uspto.gov/patents/init_events/pph/index.jsp or send an inquiry to PPHfeedback@uspto.gov.

Application Papers

10)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

11)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

Certified copies:

a)☐ All b)☐ Some** c)☐ None of the:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

** See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08a and/or PTO/SB/08b) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

3) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .

4) ☐ Other: _____.

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The present application is being examined under the pre-AIA first to invent provisions.

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-29 have been examined.

Rejection, 35 U.S.C. 101, Non-Statutory (Directed to a Judicial Exception without Significantly More)

the claimed invention is directed to a judicial exception (i.e., a law of nature, a natural phenomenon, or an abstract idea) without significantly more. Claim(s) 1-29 is/are directed to abstract idea determining whether a reciprocal site for the display of at least one marketing element of a third party website exists in the first website being designed; and creating the reciprocal site for the display of the at least one marketing element of the third party website when the reciprocal site does not yet exist in the first website being designed. The claim(s) does/do not include additional elements that are sufficient to amount to significantly more than the judicial exception because the determining do not add a meaningful limitation to the method as they would be routinely used by those of ordinary skill in the art in order to apply the determining.

.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DANIEL LASTRA whose telephone number is 571-272-6720 and fax 571-273-6720. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thomas M. Hammond III can be reached on (571) 270-1829. The official Fax number is (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or /DANIEL LASTRA/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3622 Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/DANIEL LASTRA/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3622
02/15/15

Search Notes	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13963050	DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	DANIEL LASTRA	3681

CPC- SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner
G06Q 90/00	01/25/14	DL
G06Q 90/00	07/11/14	DL
(G06F17/2247 OR G06F3/0481 OR G06F17/2235 OR G06Q30/02 OR G06Q30/0207 OR G06Q30/0256 OR G06Q30/0273 OR G06Q30/0276 OR G06Q30/0277 OR G06Q30/0641 OR G06Q30/08).CPC.)	09/18/14	dl

CPC COMBINATION SETS - SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner

US CLASSIFICATION SEARCHED			
Class	Subclass	Date	Examiner
705	14.1	01/25/14	dl
705	14.1	07/11/14	DL
705	14.1	09/18/14	dl

SEARCH NOTES		
Search Notes	Date	Examiner
EAST	01/25/14	DL
EAST	07/11/14	DL
east	09/18/14	dl

INTERFERENCE SEARCH			
US Class/ CPC Symbol	US Subclass / CPC Group	Date	Examiner
705 / G06Q	14.1 / 30/00	07/11/14	DL

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Index of Claims	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13963050	DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**
	DANIEL LASTRA	3681

✓	Rejected	-	Cancelled	N	Non-Elected	A	Appeal
=	Allowed	÷	Restricted	I	Interference	O	Objected

☐ Claims renumbered in the same order as presented by applicant ☐ CPA ☐ T.D. ☐ R.1.47

CLAIM		DATE								
Final	Original	01/25/2014	07/11/2014	09/18/2014	02/15/2015					
	1	✓	=	✓	✓					
	2	✓	=	✓	✓					
	3	✓	=	✓	✓					
	4	✓	=	✓	✓					
	5	✓	=	✓	✓					
	6	✓	=	✓	✓					
	7	✓	=	✓	✓					
	8	✓	=	✓	✓					
	9	✓	=	✓	✓					
	10	✓	=	✓	✓					
	11	✓	=	✓	✓					
	12	✓	=	✓	✓					
	13	✓	=	✓	✓					
	14	✓	=	✓	✓					
	15	✓	=	✓	✓					
	16	✓	=	✓	✓					
	17	✓	=	✓	✓					
	18	✓	=	✓	✓					
	19	✓	=	✓	✓					
	20		=	✓	✓					
	21		=	✓	✓					
	22		=	✓	✓					
	23		=	✓	✓					
	24		=	✓	✓					
	25		=	✓	✓					
	26		=	✓	✓					
	27		=	✓	✓					
	28		=	✓	✓					
	29		=	✓	✓					

TikTok Inc. EX1002
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To: ptomail@iplawpro.com,tforsythe@iplawpro.com,kcuenot@iplawpro.com
From: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Cc: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Subject: Private PAIR Correspondence Notification for Customer Number 55246

Feb 24, 2015 05:30:23 AM

Dear PAIR Customer:

Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12230 FOREST HILL BLVD.
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414
UNITED STATES

The following USPTO patent application(s) associated with your Customer Number, 55246 , have new outgoing correspondence. This correspondence is now available for viewing in Private PAIR.

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Application	Document	Mailroom Date	Attorney Docket No.
13963050	CTNF	02/24/2015	8201-0015

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If you have any questions, please email the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at EBC@uspto.gov with 'e-Office Action' on the subject line or call 1-866-217-9197 during the following hours:

Monday - Friday 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.

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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/963,050	08/09/2013	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III	8201-0015	1571

55246 7590 03/19/2015

Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12230 FOREST HILL BLVD.
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414

EXAMINER	
TARAE, CATHERINE MICHELLE	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3992	

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
03/19/2015	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

ptomail@iplawpro.com
tforsythe@iplawpro.com
kcuenot@iplawpro.com

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Office Action Summary	Application No. 13/963,050	Applicant(s) DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.	
	Examiner MICHELLE TARAE	Art Unit 3992	AIA (First Inventor to File) Status No

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE *3* MONTHS FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *1/23/15*.

☐ A declaration(s)/affidavit(s) under **37 CFR 1.130(b)** was/were filed on _____.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ An election was made by the applicant in response to a restriction requirement set forth during the interview on _____; the restriction requirement and election have been incorporated into this action.

4)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims*

5)☒ Claim(s) *1-29* is/are pending in the application.

5a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

6)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

7)☒ Claim(s) *1-29* is/are rejected.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

9)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

* If any claims have been determined allowable, you may be eligible to benefit from the **Patent Prosecution Highway** program at a participating intellectual property office for the corresponding application. For more information, please see http://www.uspto.gov/patents/init_events/pph/index.jsp or send an inquiry to PPHfeedback@uspto.gov.

Application Papers

10)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

11)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

Certified copies:

a)☐ All b)☐ Some** c)☐ None of the:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

** See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08a and/or PTO/SB/08b) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

3) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .

4) ☐ Other: _____.

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TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
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REISSUE NON-FINAL OFFICE ACTION

The following is a Non-Final Office Action ("Non-Final")* in Reissue Application 13/963,050 ("'050") for U.S. Patent No. 7,996,259 ("'259") filed August 9, 2013.

This Non-Final is in response to Applicant's arguments filed January 23, 2015 ("Jan 2015 Args").

** It is noted that a new examiner has been assigned to '050. The previous Non-Final Office Action mailed February 24, 2015 is hereby withdrawn.*

Preliminary and Other Amendments

The preliminary amendment filed with '050 on August 9, 2013, which added new claims 8-19, has been entered and considered.

Another amendment filed June 30, 2014 added new claims 20-29 ("Jun 2014 Clm. Amndmnt.").

Claims 1-29 are pending herein.

Claim Objections

The Jun 2014 Clm. Amendmnt. proposed amendments to the claims that do not comply with 37 CFR 1.173(d), which sets forth the manner of making amendments in reissue applications.

Specifically, 37 CFR 1.173(d) sets forth that any changes *relative to the patent being reissued* which are made to the specification, including the claims, upon filing, or

by an amendment paper in the reissue application, must include enclosed brackets to indicate matter to be omitted and underlining to indicate matter to be added.

The Jun 2014 Clm. Amendmnt. does not show claims 8-29, which are new claims relative to ‘259, as underlined. A supplemental paper correctly amending the reissue application is required. See MPEP § 1453.

Claims 5-6 are objected to because of the following informalities: It appears claim 5 contains a typographical error making unclear what Applicant is claiming. It appears that a colon (:) is missing after the line, “at least one processor, the at least one processor configured for.” The missing colon raises the question whether the “system” claim is attempting to include a processor as well as method steps versus having the system include a processor *configured for* performing the listed steps.

Appropriate correction is required.

Reason for Reissue - Broadening

The error upon which '050 is based is “by reason of the patentee claiming more or less than he had the right to claim in the patent.” Specifically, the Reissue Declaration filed August 9, 2013 (“Reissue Dec”) states, "Patentee seeks broadening of claim 4 of the patent via addition of claims 8-19, which are found in the accompanying Preliminary Amendment."

Accordingly, ‘050 added new claims 8-29 to remedy the error provided in the Reissue Dec.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 251

Defective Declaration

For reissue applications filed before September 16, 2012, all references to 35 U.S.C. 251 and 37 CFR 1.172, 1.175, and 3.73 are to the law and rules in effect on September 15, 2012. Where specifically designated, these are "pre-AIA" provisions.

For reissue applications filed on or after September 16, 2012, all references to 35 U.S.C. 251 and 37 CFR 1.172, 1.175, and 3.73 are to the current provisions.

The Reissue Dec filed with this application is defective because it fails to identify at least one error which is relied upon to support the reissue application. See 37 CFR 1.175 and MPEP § 1414.

Specifically, the Reissue Dec has failed to identify the error by reference to the specific claim(s) and the specific claim language that the error is in. See MPEP § 1414 II. C., which says, "Any error in the claims must be identified by reference to the specific claim(s) and the specific claim language wherein lies the error." If a new claim(s) is presented, its difference from the original claims must be pointed out.

Claims 1-29 are rejected as being based upon a defective reissue declaration under 35 U.S.C. 251 as set forth above. See 37 CFR 1.175.

Improper Recapture

Claims 8-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 251 as being an improper recapture of broadened claimed subject matter surrendered in the application for the patent upon which the present reissue is based. See *Greenliant Systems, Inc. et al v. Xicor LLC*, 692

F.3d 1261, 103 USPQ2d 1951 (Fed. Cir. 2012); *In re Shahram Mostafazadeh and Joseph O. Smith*, 643 F.3d 1353, 98 USPQ2d 1639 (Fed. Cir. 2011); *North American Container, Inc. v. Plastipak Packaging, Inc.*, 415 F.3d 1335, 75 USPQ2d 1545 (Fed. Cir. 2005); *Pannu v. Storz Instruments Inc.*, 258 F.3d 1366, 59 USPQ2d 1597 (Fed. Cir. 2001); *Hester Industries, Inc. v. Stein, Inc.*, 142 F.3d 1472, 46 USPQ2d 1641 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Clement*, 131 F.3d 1464, 45 USPQ2d 1161 (Fed. Cir. 1997); *Ball Corp. v. United States*, 729 F.2d 1429, 1436, 221 USPQ 289, 295 (Fed. Cir. 1984).

The record of the application for the patent shows that the broadening aspect (in the reissue) relates to claimed subject matter that applicant previously surrendered during the prosecution of the application. Accordingly, the narrow scope of the claims in the patent was not an error within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. 251, and the broader scope of the claim subject matter surrendered in the application for the patent cannot be recaptured by the filing of the present reissue application.

The following is the three step test for determining recapture in reissue applications (see: MPEP 1412.02(I)):

"(1) first, we determine whether, and in what respect, the reissue claims are broader in scope than the original patent claims;

(2) next, we determine whether the broader aspects of the reissue claims relate to subject matter surrendered in the original prosecution; and

(3) finally, we determine whether the reissue claims were materially narrowed in other respects, so that the claims may not have been enlarged, and hence avoid the recapture rule."

(Step 1: MPEP 1412.02(A)) In the instant case and by way of the preliminary amendment, Applicant seeks to broaden independent claim 4 in this reissue by at least doing the following to the patent claim language, which is reflected in claim 8:

- changing “website” to “web page” (This change is considered broadening since patent owner would be able to sue a new party for infringement who previously could not have been sued for infringement (i.e., previously two websites were required by the claim language, now only two web pages are required, where the web pages may exist within the same website, thereby only requiring a single website.). See MPEP 1412.03 I);
- changing “preexisting second website” to “second web page;”
- deleting “receiving, by the website implementation system, a request by a first user to implement the first website;”
- deleting “upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet;” and
- changing “selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element” to “a second marketing element, associated with the first user” (This change is considered broadening since previously a selection by a first user of a second functional marketing element was required, whereas now, applying the broadest reasonable interpretation in light of the specification of '259, which does not provide a special definition of

"associated," all that is required is for the first user to be somehow connected with the second functional marketing element.).

(Step 2: MPEP 1412.02(B)) The prosecution history of the prior 09/589,551 application shows that in the Appeal Brief filed December 13, 2010 ("Dec 2010 App. Brief"), Applicant argued with respect to independent claim 4 that the cited prior art failed to disclose the "reciprocity" limitations, and in particular that the "reciprocity" steps "occur while the first website is being designed (i.e., created)." Applicant specifically argued:

> "To be clear, the term "reciprocity" is shorthand for the actual limitations being claimed. Specifically, the limitations at issue are as follows:
>
> determining whether a reciprocal site for the display of at least one marketing element of a third party website exists in the first website being designed; and
>
> creating the reciprocal site for the display of the at least one marketing element of the third party website when the reciprocal site does not yet exist in the first website being designed.
>
> Additionally, when considering the claimed invention, as a whole, these steps occur while the first website is being designed (i.e., created).
>
> :
>
> Notably, the Examiner's cited passage does not teach all of the limitations for which the combination of Mason and Moore fail to teach. Specifically, the placement of the reciprocal link into a website occurs <u>after</u> the website has already been designed. Additionally, the Examiner's cited

passage fails to teach creating a specific reciprocal site for the display of marketing elements of third party websites." (Emphasis in original.)

(Dec 2010 App. Brief, pp. 12-13)

Applicant further argued:

"Additionally, the Examiner's alleged motivation of "in order to increase visitor traffic to said second website" would not have motivated one having ordinary skill in the art, *who is considering how to design a first website*, to arrive at the claimed invention." (Emphasis added.)
(*Id.* at 16)

Subject matter is previously surrendered during the prosecution of the original application by reliance on an argument/statement made by applicant that a limitation of the claim(s) defines over the art. It is noted that a patent owner (reissue applicant) is bound by the argument that applicant relied upon to overcome an art rejection in the original application for the patent to be reissued, regardless of whether the Office adopted the argument in allowing the claims.

In the instant case, from the Dec 2010 App. Brief arguments, it is clear the "reciprocity" limitations were meant to occur during the creation of the first website (i.e., before the first website is implemented), and further that Applicant made such arguments to overcome the art rejections. Applicant further applied the arguments to all of the pending claims indicating that the claims would stand or fall together with independent claim 4 (now claim 1 in '259). (Dec 2010 App. Brief, p. 11)

Accordingly, the claimed limitations of “receiving, by the website implementation system, a request by a first user to implement the first website” and “upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet” is surrendered subject matter as these limitations relate to arguments made by Applicant to overcome rejections during the prosecution history of ‘259.

(Step 3: MPEP 1412.02(C)) Independent claims 8 and 14 were not materially narrowed in other respects that relate to the surrendered subject matter to avoid recapture.

Therefore improper recapture of broadened claimed subject matter surrendered in the application is clearly present in claims 8 and 14 of the instant reissue application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 112(b):
(b) CONCLUSION.—The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the inventor or a joint inventor regards as the invention.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 112 (pre-AIA), second paragraph:
The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 4-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112(b) or 35 U.S.C. 112 (pre-AIA), second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the inventor or a joint inventor, or for pre-AIA the applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 4 recites a “functional marketing element.” It is not clear what is meant by “functional marketing element.” Looking to the disclosure of ‘259, the term “functional marketing element” is not defined, nor is it mentioned anywhere in the disclosure. It is first introduced in claim 4.

At best, ‘259 discusses web assets becoming “functional” when they are dropped into the website design plate (11:37-40). Further, the disclosure of ‘259 appears to refer to “elements” when it discusses sound and color features (7:57-58). Also, while ‘259 discusses that “web assets” can include a variety of items from GIFs to JAVA applets to color, sound and animation features (7:8-20); a user can select both web assets and elements for the design of his website (8:51-53). The terms "elements” and “web assets” appear to be used interchangeably throughout the disclosure, adding to the ambiguity of what a “functional marketing element” is.

For examination purposes, “functional marketing element” will be construed to mean any one of the examples provided for web assets as they have been discussed in 7:11-20.

Claims 5-19 also recite “functional marketing element" and are rejected for the same reasons as set forth above with respect to claim 4.

Claim 17 recites a “functional application.” It is not clear what is meant by “functional application.” Looking to the disclosure of ‘259, the term “functional application” is not defined, nor is it mentioned anywhere in the disclosure.

For examination purposes, “functional application” will be construed to mean any one of the examples provided for web assets as they have been discussed in 7:11-20.

Claim 18 recites the limitation "functional identification element" in line 2. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Further, it is not clear what is meant by “functional identification element.” Looking to the disclosure of ‘259, the term “functional identification element” is not defined, nor is it mentioned anywhere in the disclosure.

For examination purposes, “functional identification element” will be construed to mean any one of the examples provided for web assets as they have been discussed in 7:11-20.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

In the event the determination of the status of the application as subject to AIA 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103 (or as subject to pre-AIA 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103) is incorrect, any correction of the statutory basis for the rejection will not be considered a new ground of rejection if the prior art relied upon, and the rationale supporting the rejection, would be the same under either status.

The following is a quotation of pre-AIA 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 1 is rejected under pre-AIA 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 5,995,099 to Horstmann (“Horstmann”).

As per claim 1, Horstmann discloses a method of assisting a website designer in establishing an arrangement between a first website being designed by the website designer and a second website in order to market the first website at the second website upon the activation of the first website on the internet (1:60-61, “A method establishes reciprocal page links between pages on the Internet.”), the method comprising:

receiving information at a user interface indicating a type of an element for marketing that is to be displayed at the second website (2:57-62, “Assume that the bike-shop owner is viewing the bookstore's page A (step 1). If the bike-shop owner wishes to add a link from the bookstore's page A to bike-shop site 2, then the bike-shop owner could select the "add link" link 3 on page A (step 2).”; Figs. 1-2), and information specifying the second website at which the element is to be displayed (3:1-10, “Form 4 also solicits from the bike shop: 1) second link information indicative of a page (in this example page B) that will contain link back 5 (third link information), and 2) fourth link information indicative of which of the bike shop's pages (in this example, page D) the bike shop wishes the bookstore to provide a link to. Forms, such as form 4, are a conventional type of electronic document used to elicit responses from users through graphical interfaces that may include text, fill-in blanks, buttons, and check boxes.”);

saving the information at a first database that is coupled to the user interface (9:41; 10:1; step 57 in Fig. 5.);

obtaining the element for marketing of the type indicated (3:14-26, “Once the bike-shop owner fills out form 4, the bike-shop owner selects a "form complete" button 7, which initiates a transfer of the form data to the server supporting form 4 (hereafter the "links server"). The links server includes software that presents and processes forms, and could be the same server that maintains the bookstore's pages or some other server. Software on the links server (step 4) automatically modifies page A to include a link 6 (the fourth link information) from page A to page D as requested by the bike-shop owner. The new page A, including the link to page D, is then redisplayed to the bike-shop owner. Thus, page A is modified and redisplayed without any intervention from the bookstore owner.”);

causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website when the first website is activated with respect to the internet (3:20-24, “Software on the links server (step 4) automatically modifies page A to include a link 6 (the fourth link information) from page A to page D as requested by the bike-shop owner. The new page A, including the link to page D, is then redisplayed to the bike-shop owner. Thus, page A is modified and redisplayed without any intervention from the bookstore owner.”), wherein the element for marketing includes at least one of a banner ad concerning the first website and a link to the first website (1:12-14, “Such links are typically represented as highlighted text or graphic representations that may be selected using a mouse-type pointer (a "mouse").”);

determining whether a reciprocal site for the display of at least one marketing element of a third party website exists in the first website being designed (3:27-34, “After a period of time (typically a few days), verification software, typically located on the links server, verifies (step 5) that the bike-shop owner reciprocated by providing a link back 5 to page C as requested on form 4. Because the bike-shop owner indicated on form 4 that the back link would be provided on page B, the verification software searches page B for link back 5 (the third link information) to page C.”); and

creating the reciprocal site for the display of the at least one marketing element of the third party website when the reciprocal site does not yet exist in the first website being designed (3:37-43, “Alternatively, the software may issue a reminder to the bike shop (via e-mail, for example) to add link back 5 to the bookstore. Once link back 5 (third link information) is verified to exist on the bike shop's page B, the method terminates. In this way, the inventive method provides for the creation of reciprocal page links;” Examiner notes this is a conditional limitation as it only occurs “when the reciprocal site does not yet exist in the first website.” Accordingly, the method does not always perform this step.).

Horstmann does not expressly disclose “during design of the first website.” However, it is old and well known to establish marketing/advertising arrangements of a website while it is being designed. Doing so helps to ensure that a website’s marketing campaign starts when the website is launched on the internet, thereby also helping to ensure its success. Additionally, the disclosure of ‘259 discusses the updating of marketing elements even after a website has been activated on the internet (16:13-18,

"In certain embodiments, a registered user is allowed to change its selections of desired marketing locations after the posting of its website; in such embodiments, it can be the case that a link displayed at a given marketing location is removed from display because the registered user who selected the link changed its preferences.").

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Horstmann to include deciding marketing elements to be displayed at a second website *during design of the first website* as doing so helps to ensure that the website will be visited and accessed as soon as it is live on the internet, which helps to ensure a successful internet presence ('259, Background of the Invention, 2:23-26, "[t]he success of an internet-based business employing a website depends critically upon whether consumers on the internet are aware of, and can easily access, the website.").

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of pre-AIA 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –
>
> (a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.
>
> (e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 8 and 14 are rejected under pre-AIA 35 U.S.C. 102(a, e) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,995,099 to Horstmann (“Horstmann”).

As per claim 8, Horstmann discloses a method, within a computer hardware web page implementation system, of establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first web page, associated with a first user, and a second web page (1:60-61, “A method establishes reciprocal page links between pages on the Internet.”), comprising:

generating, by the web page implementation system, a second functional marketing element, associated with the first user, to be activated on the second web page (2:57-62, “Assume that the bike-shop owner is viewing the bookstore's page A (step 1). If the bike-shop owner wishes to add a link from the bookstore's page A to bike-shop site 2, then the bike-shop owner could select the "add link" link 3 on page A (step 2).”; Figs. 1-2);

establishing, by the web page implementation system, a reciprocal site in the first web page for a first functional marketing element (3:1-10, “Form 4 also solicits from the bike shop: 1) second link information indicative of a page (in this example page B) that will contain link back 5 (third link information), and 2) fourth link information indicative of which of the bike shop's pages (in this example, page D) the bike shop wishes the bookstore to provide a link to. Forms, such as form 4, are a conventional type of electronic document used to elicit responses from users through graphical interfaces that may include text, fill-in blanks, buttons, and check boxes.”); and

implementing, by the web page implementation system, the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first web page to implement the first functional marketing element (Fig. 1), and

(ii) the second web page to implement the second functional marketing element (Fig. 1), wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the intemet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second web page (3:37-43, “Alternatively, the software may issue a reminder to the bike shop (via e-mail, for example) to add link back 5 to the bookstore. Once link back 5 (third link information) is verified to exist on the bike shop's page B, the method terminates. In this way, the inventive method provides for the creation of reciprocal page links.”), and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the intemet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first web page (3:20-24, “Software on the links server (step 4) automatically modifies page A to include a link 6 (the fourth link information) from page A to page D as requested by the bike-shop owner. The new page A, including the link to page D, is then redisplayed to the bike-shop owner. Thus, page A is modified and redisplayed without any intervention from the bookstore owner.”).

As per claim 14, Horstmann discloses a computer hardware web page implementation system configured to establish a reciprocal arrangement between a first

web page, associated with a first user, and a second web page {1:60-61, "A method establishes reciprocal page links between pages on the Internet."}, comprising:

at least one processor (Figs. 8A-8C), wherein the at least one processor is configured to perform:

generating a second functional marketing element, associated with the first user, to be activated on the second web page {2:57-62, "Assume that the bike-shop owner is viewing the bookstore's page A (step 1). If the bike-shop owner wishes to add a link from the bookstore's page A to bike-shop site 2, then the bike-shop owner could select the "add link" link 3 on page A (step 2)."; Figs. 1-2);

establishing a reciprocal site in the first web page for a first functional marketing element {3:1-10, "Form 4 also solicits from the bike shop: 1) second link information indicative of a page (in this example page B) that will contain link back 5 (third link information), and 2) fourth link information indicative of which of the bike shop's pages (in this example, page D) the bike shop wishes the bookstore to provide a link to. Forms, such as form 4, are a conventional type of electronic document used to elicit responses from users through graphical interfaces that may include text, fill-in blanks, buttons, and check boxes."}; and

implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first web page to implement the first functional marketing element (Fig. 1), and

(ii) the second web page to implement the second functional marketing element (Fig. 1), wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second web page (3:37-43, “Alternatively, the software may issue a reminder to the bike shop (via e-mail, for example) to add link back 5 to the bookstore. Once link back 5 (third link information) is verified to exist on the bike shop's page B, the method terminates. In this way, the inventive method provides for the creation of reciprocal page links.”), and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first web page (3:20-24, “Software on the links server (step 4) automatically modifies page A to include a link 6 (the fourth link information) from page A to page D as requested by the bike-shop owner. The new page A, including the link to page D, is then redisplayed to the bike-shop owner. Thus, page A is modified and redisplayed without any intervention from the bookstore owner.”).

Response to Arguments

In the Jan 2015 Args, Applicant argues the 35 U.S.C. 101 rejection set forth in the Office Action mailed September 23, 2014.

These arguments are moot in light of the withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 101 rejection. The reason for the withdrawal of the rejection is as follows.

Subject Matter Eligibility Standard

Considering subject matter eligibility under 35 U.S.C. 101 is a two-step process:

1. First it must be determined whether the claim is directed to one of the four statutory categories of invention, i.e., process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter.

2. If the claim falls within one of the statutory categories, (2A) it must then be determined whether the claim is directed to a judicial exception (i.e., law of nature, natural phenomenon, or abstract idea), and if so, (2B) it must additionally be determined whether the claim recites additional elements that amount to significantly more than the exception.

See *2014 Interim Guidance on Patent Subject Matter Eligibility* issued Dec. 16, 2014, 79 FR 74618. ("*Interim Eligibility Guidance*").

Analysis

1. Claim 1 recites a method comprising several steps and therefore, is directed to a statutory category of invention.

2A. Claim 1 further recites, "assisting a website designer in establishing an arrangement between a first website being designed by the website designer and a second website in order to market the first website at the second website upon activation of the first website on the internet." This is directed to an abstract idea inasmuch as such activity is considered creating contractual relationships by providing opportunities for users to establish marketing arrangements with other website owners. (See slide 16 from the training slides, which lists *creating a contractual relationship* as one of the examples of abstract ideas, *Interim Eligibility Guidance*.)

2B. However, claim 1, as whole, amounts to significantly more than the abstract idea. In particular, claim 1 recites "causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website when the first website is activated with respect to the internet, wherein the element for marketing includes at least one of a banner ad concerning the first website and a link to the first website" and "determining whether a reciprocal site for the display of at least one marketing element of a third party website exists in the first website being designed." To better understand the problem to be solved, what Applicant invented to solve the problem, and for the broadest reasonable interpretation ("BRI") of the "causing" and "determining" limitations, some relevant citations from the disclosure of '259 include:

> *Problem to be solved*:
> "What is needed, therefore, is a method for enabling an individual to conveniently design a web page without requiring that individual to learn HTML or to interact extensively with a web page designer at a website development company. What is further needed is a streamlined method for web page/website development and, in particular, a method of facilitating the development of e-commerce websites having key marketing and sales transaction features." ('259 at 2:55-62)
>
> *Applicant's invention to solve the problem*:
> "[t]he present invention employs a graphical user interface (GUI) to allow a registered user to easily develop a website comprising one or more web pages. In one embodiment, all or nearly all of the programming required to operate the GUI is stored on programming database 190, and is accessed by potential customers and registered

users by way of their web browsers (and is viewed via the internet 130 when needed by those potential customers and registered users). However, in the preferred embodiment, the programming required to operate the GUI is provided to potential customers and registered users as software (i.e., on a floppy disk or a CD-ROM), and is stored directly in the programming database 190. Potential customers are capable of interacting with the GUI to perform certain website design functions by logging into computer 140. However, key functions such as searching for web assets, and saving/submitting a fully-designed website for posting on the internet 130, can only be performed once the potential customers have logged into the server computer 140 and become registered users such that they have full access to the server computer 140 via the internet 130." (*Id.* at 6:27-47)

BRIs of "causing" and "determining":

"By completing these steps relating to the create links option 1240 and/or the banner ad rotations option 1250, the registered user causes its website to participate in linking and/or banner ad display functions with other websites that also were created using the system 100 by registered users who opted to participate in these linking and/or banner ad display functions. Once the design of the new website by the registered user is completed and the new website is posted/activated, *the system 100 causes the selected websites of other registered users (i.e., the websites selected during the design of the new website) to display a link and/or banner ad concerning the new website*." (Emphasis added) (*Id.* at 15:51-62)

"System 100 will cause each website that is designed to participate in the linking and/or banner ad functions to include, on at least one web page of the website, a link region and/or a banner ad region for the

> display of links to and/or banner ads for other websites." (*Id.* at 16:6-10)
>
> "The system 100 then proceeds to step 2022, at which the system determines whether a reciprocal link site has already been created in the registered user's website, for displaying links to other websites. If a link site has not yet been created, the system creates a link site on the registered user's website, at step 2024 before returning to step 1650." (Emphasis added) (*Id.* at 24:34-40)
>
> "The system 100 then proceeds to step 2034, at which it determines whether a reciprocal banner ad site has already been created on the registered user's website, so that banner ads from other websites can be displayed on the registered user's website once it is activated. If a banner ad site has not yet been created, the system 100 creates a banner ad site at step 2036 before returning to step 1650. Otherwise, if a banner ad site has already been created, the system 100 immediately returns to step 1650. Upon activation of the registered user's website, the registered user's website can display an unlimited number of banner ads from other websites on its reciprocal banner ad site, and the system 100 also displays the registered user's banner ad at the marketing locations (websites) that the registered user specified at step 2030." (Emphasis added) (*Id.* at 24:64-25:11)

Accordingly, the claims of '259 solve an Internet-centric problem of enabling users, with little or no programming knowledge, to interact with a GUI to create a website that displays banner ads that link to other websites over the internet. Further, as shown above, the BRI of the "causing" limitation necessarily includes special "behind

the scenes" programming of the GUI/system since it is the system that creates the websites with banner ads that link to other websites over the internet (through the user's interaction with the GUI). Similarly, the BRI of the "determining" limitation necessarily requires special programming of the system to make the determination if a website has a banner ad site on it. It is the system that performs the technical implementation of the invention versus a contractual or human arrangement. "[T]hese claims stand apart because they do not merely recite the performance of some business practice known from the pre-Internet world along with the requirement to perform it on the Internet. Instead, the claimed solution is necessarily rooted in computer technology in order to overcome a problem specifically arising in the realm of computer networks." See *DDR Holdings, LLC v. Hotels.com et al.*, 113 USPQ2d 1097 (Fed. Cir. 2014)

Therefore, claim 1 requires a particular machine since the system and GUI that cause the creation of websites with banner ads and links that link to other websites over the Internet are specially programmed to do so. As such, claim 1, as a whole amounts to significantly more than the exception since it applies the judicial exception with the use of a particular machine.

See Example 2 of the Abstract Ideas Examples and slide 21 of the training slides, which are part of the *Interim Eligibility Guidance*.

The analysis above also applies to independent claims 4, 5, 7, 8 and 14. Claims 4, 5, 7, 8 and 14 recite similar limitations to claim 1. Claim 4 is representative and it recites,

"upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, the computer website implementation system implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website."

Thus, claims 4, 5, 7, 8 and 14 also require a particular machine and therefore, each of claims 4, 5, 7, 8 and 14 as a whole amounts to significantly more than the exception since each applies the judicial exception with the use of a particular machine.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis provided above, claims 1-29 are eligible under 35 U.S.C. 101.

Notification of Prior or Concurrent Proceedings

Applicant is reminded of the continuing obligation under 37 CFR 1.178(b), to timely apprise the Office of any prior or concurrent proceeding in which '259 is or was involved. These proceedings would include interferences, reissues, reexaminations, and litigation.

Information Material to Patentability

Applicant is further reminded of the continuing obligation under 37 CFR 1.56, to timely apprise the Office of any information which is material to patentability of the claims under consideration in this reissue application.

These obligations rest with each individual associated with the filing and prosecution of this application for reissue. See also MPEP §§ 1404, 1442.01 and 1442.04.

Future Correspondence

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michelle Tarae whose telephone number is (571) 272-6727. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Woo Choi can be reached on 571-272-4179.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a

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Signed:

/C. Michelle Tarae/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3992

Conferees:

/D.M.H./, PE AU3992

/Woo H. Choi/
Supervisory Patent Reexamination Specialist, Art Unit 3992

Notice of References Cited	Application/Control No. 13/963,050	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.	
	Examiner MICHELLE TARAE	Art Unit 3992	Page 1 of 1

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		Document Number Country Code-Number-Kind Code	Date MM-YYYY	Name	Classification
*	A	US-5,995,099	11-1999	Horstmann, Jens U.	715/205
	B	US-			
	C	US-			
	D	US-			
	E	US-			
	F	US-			
	G	US-			
	H	US-			
	I	US-			
	J	US-			
	K	US-			
	L	US-			
	M	US-			

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		Document Number Country Code-Number-Kind Code	Date MM-YYYY	Country	Name	Classification
	N					
	O					
	P					
	Q					
	R					
	S					
	T					

NON-PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		Include as applicable: Author, Title Date, Publisher, Edition or Volume, Pertinent Pages)
	U	
	V	
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*A copy of this reference is not being furnished with this Office action. (See MPEP § 707.05(a).)
Dates in MM-YYYY format are publication dates. Classifications may be US or foreign.

TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
IPR2025-01224
Page 634 of 771

EAST Search History

EAST Search History (Prior Art)

Ref #	Hits	Search Query	DBs	Default Operator	Plurals	Time Stamp
S1	1	"7996259".pn.	USPAT	OR	OFF	2015/02/25 14:51
S2	20	reciproc$6 near10 (ad$1 or advertis$6 or banner$1 or bannerad$1) near10 (web$1 or website$1 or webpage$1 or (web near2 site$1) or (web near2 page$1))	USPAT	OR	ON	2015/03/06 11:14
S3	27	reciproc$6 near10 (ad$1 or advertis$6 or banner$1 or bannerad$1) near10 (web$1 or website$1 or webpage$1 or (web near2 site$1) or (web near2 page$1))	US-PGPUB	OR	ON	2015/03/06 11:20
S4	79	reciproc$6 near10 (ad$1 or advertis$6 or banner$1 or bannerad$1 or link) near10 (web$1 or website$1 or webpage$1 or (web near2 site$1) or (web near2 page$1))	USPAT	OR	ON	2015/03/06 11:21
S5	207	reciproc$6 near10 (ad$1 or advertis$6 or banner$1 or bannerad$1 or link) near10 (web$1 or website$1 or webpage$1 or (web near2 site$1) or (web near2 page$1))	US-PGPUB	OR	ON	2015/03/06 11:25
S6	1024	(reciproc$6 near8 (ad$1 or advertis$6 or banner$1 or bannerad$1 or link or url)) and (web$1 or website$1 or webpage$1 or (web near2 site$1) or (web near2 page$1))	USPAT	OR	ON	2015/03/06 11:27
S7	80	reciproc$6 near8 (ad$1 or advertis$6 or banner$1 or bannerad$1 or link or url) near8 (web$1 or website$1 or webpage$1 or (web near2 site$1) or (web near2 page$1) or internet)	USPAT	OR	ON	2015/03/06 11:33
S8	30	("20010044818" | "20020087577" | "20020091907" | "20030055816" | "20030195901" | "20040143600" | "5855020" | "5935210" | "5974455" | "5995099" | "5999929" | "6078866" | "6115545" | "6185587" | "6212545" | "6212649" | "6282567" | "6321242" | "6360215" | "6389458" | "6421675" | "6449636" | "6476833" | "6529950" | "6629135" | "6662230" | "6714933" | "6745204" | "6868389" | "6983236").PN.	US-PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR	OR	OFF	2015/03/06 11:38
S9	91	reciproc$6 near8 (ad$1 or advertis$6 or banner$1 or bannerad$1 or link or url) near8 (web$1 or website$1 or webpage$1 or site$1 or page$1 or (web near2 site$1) or (web near2 page$1) or internet)	USPAT	OR	ON	2015/03/06 11:41
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S11	1501	exchang$3 near8 (ad$1 or advertis$6 or	USPAT	OR	ON	2015/03/06

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TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
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		banner$1 or bannerad$1 or link or url) near8 (web$1 or website$1 or webpage$1 or site$1 or page$1 or (web near2 site$1) or (web near2 page$1) or internet)				11:44
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S13	9	(ad or advertis$6 or market$3) near8 (web$4 or (web near2 site$1) or (web near2 page$1)) near8 (before near5 (live or launch or implement$6))	US-PGPUB	OR	ON	2015/03/12 07:37
S14	16	(ad or advertis$6 or market$3 or campaign$3) near9 (web$4 or (web near2 site$1) or (web near2 page$1)) near9 (before near6 (live or launch$3 or implement$6))	US-PGPUB	OR	ON	2015/03/12 07:39
S15	8	(ad or advertis$6 or market$3 or campaign$3) near9 (web$4 or (web near2 site$1) or (web near2 page$1)) near9 (before near6 (live or launch$3 or implement$6))	USPAT	OR	ON	2015/03/12 07:41

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TikTok Inc. EX1002
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EIC 3600

SEARCH REPORT

STIC Database Tracking Number: 478528

To: MICHELLE TARAE
Location: MDE-4B03
Art Unit: N/A
Friday, February 27, 2015

Case Serial Number: 13/963050

From: Etelka Robinson Griffin
Location: EIC3600
KNX-4B68
Phone: (571)272-4230

etelka.griffin@uspto.gov

Search Notes

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589551 (09) 7996259 August 9, 2011

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE GRANTED PATENT

7996259

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Link to Claims Section

August 9, 2011

Method for developing electronic documents providing e-commerce tools

INVENTOR: DiStefano, III, Thomas L. - Boca Raton, Florida, United States of America (US), United States of America ()

APPL-NO: 589551 (09)

FILED-DATE: June 7, 2000

GRANTED-DATE: August 9, 2011

PRIORITY: June 7, 2000 - 09589551, United States of America (US)

LEGAL-STATUS:

June 7, 2000 - ASSIGNMENT
April 4, 2007 - ASSIGNMENT
April 4, 2007 - ASSIGNMENT
June 13, 2012 - ASSIGNMENT
June 13, 2012 - ASSIGNMENT
August 16, 2012 - ASSIGNMENT
December 24, 2013 - REISSUE APPLICATION FILED

CORE TERMS: user, registered, website, web, button, menu, computer, display, displayed, banner, interface, color, input, marketing, internet, server, database, select, selecting, e-commerce, credit card, merchant, meter, navigation, cell, message, log, e-mail, ads, designer

ENGLISH-ABST:

A method of assisting a website designer in establishing an arrangement between a first website being designed by the website designer and a second website in order to market the first website at the second website upon the activation of the first website on the internet is provided. The method includes, during design of the first website, receiving information at a user interface indicating a type of an element for marketing that is to be displayed at the second website, and information specifying the second website at which the element is to be displayed; saving the information at a first database that is coupled to the user interface; obtaining the element for marketing of the type indicated; and causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website when the first website is activated with respect to the internet. The element for marketing includes at least one of a banner ad concerning the first website and a link to the first website. Further provided is a method of assisting a website designer in establishing an e-commerce feature on a first website being designed by the website designer for access by third parties upon the activation of the first website on the internet, wherein the e-commerce feature is at least one of a shopping cart and an auction.

Source: **Legal > / . . . / > Utility, Design and Plant Patents**
Terms: **patno=7996259**
View: Custom
Segments: Abst, Assign-type, English-abst, Expiration, Filed-date, Granted-date, Inventor, Legal-status, Lit-reex, Priority,

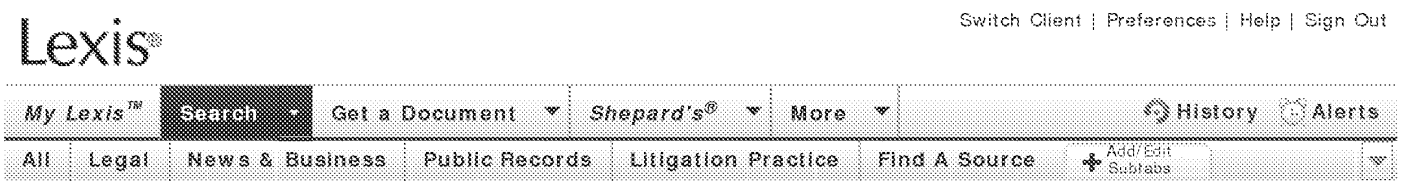
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Publication, Title
Date/Time: Friday, February 27, 2015 - 3:47 PM EST

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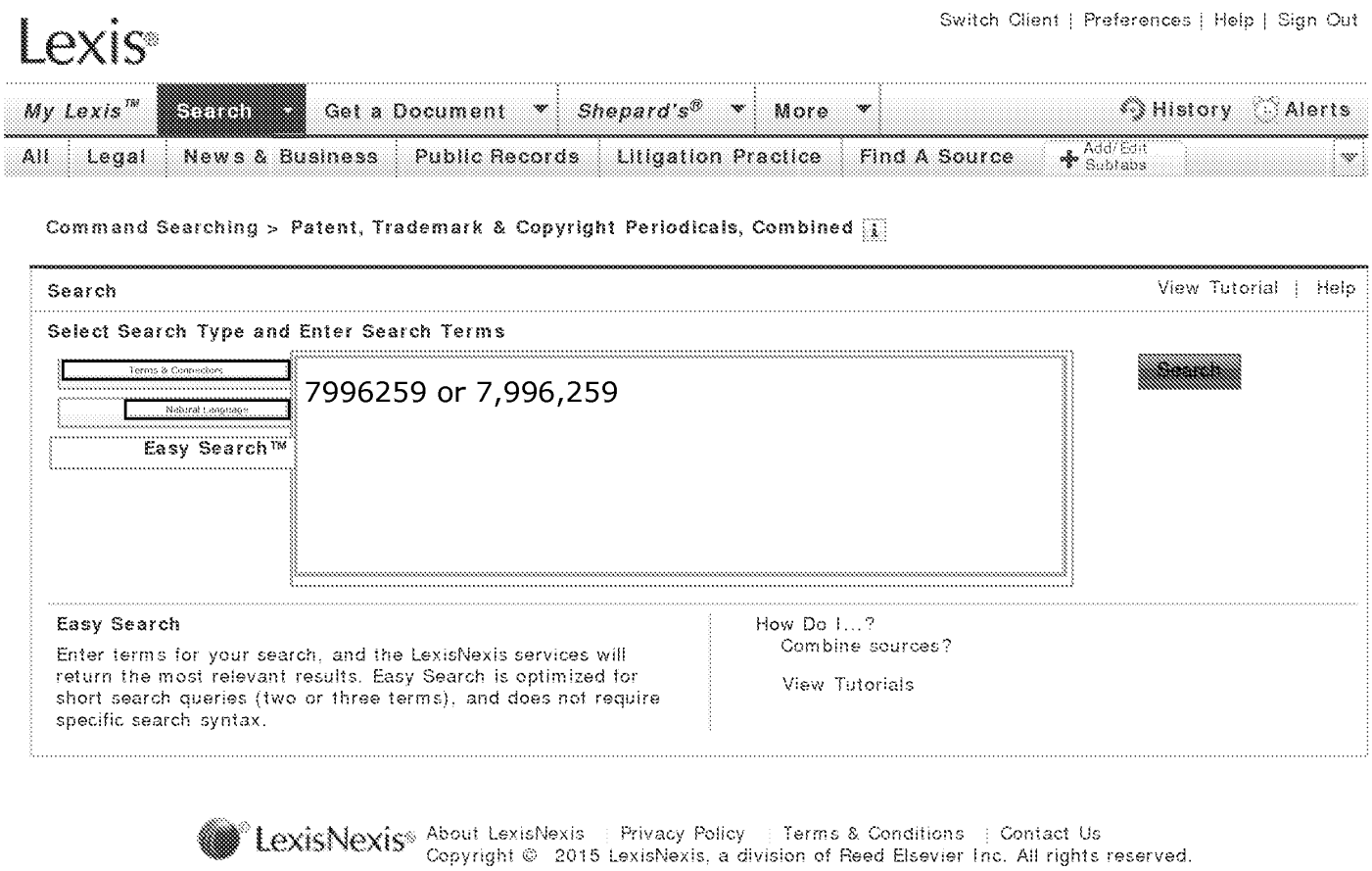
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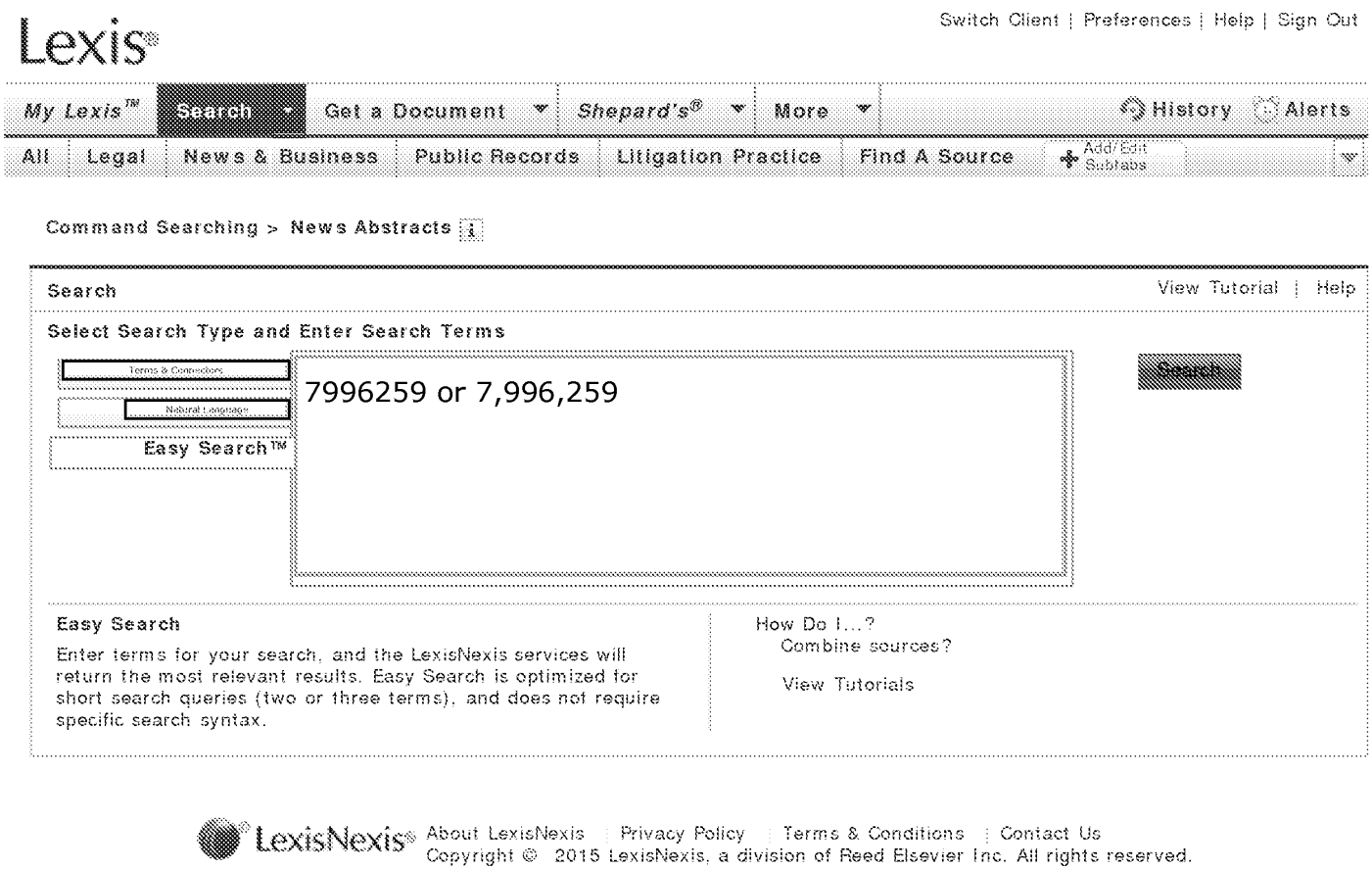
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Search Notes	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13963050	DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	MICHELLE TARAE	3992

CPC- SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner
G06Q 90/00	01/25/14	DL
G06Q 90/00	07/11/14	DL
(G06F17/2247 OR G06F3/0481 OR G06F17/2235 OR G06Q30/02 OR G06Q30/0207 OR G06Q30/0256 OR G06Q30/0273 OR G06Q30/0276 OR G06Q30/0277 OR G06Q30/0641 OR G06Q30/08).CPC.)	09/18/14	dl

CPC COMBINATION SETS - SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner

US CLASSIFICATION SEARCHED			
Class	Subclass	Date	Examiner
705	14.1	01/25/14	dl
705	14.1	07/11/14	DL
705	14.1	09/18/14	dl

SEARCH NOTES		
Search Notes	Date	Examiner
EAST	01/25/14	DL
EAST	07/11/14	DL
east	09/18/14	dl
See attached EAST search history and litigation search history	3/16/15	cmt

INTERFERENCE SEARCH			
US Class/ CPC Symbol	US Subclass / CPC Group	Date	Examiner
705 / G06Q	14.1 / 30/00	07/11/14	DL

TikTok Inc. EX1002
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13963050	NRES	03/19/2015	8201-0015
	892	03/19/2015	8201-0015

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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/963,050	08/09/2013	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III	8201-0015	1571

55246 7590 04/22/2015

Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
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EXAMINER	
TARAE, CATHERINE MICHELLE	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3992	

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TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
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Applicant-Initiated Interview Summary	**Application No.** 13/963,050	**Applicant(s)** DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.	
	Examiner MICHELLE TARAE	**Art Unit** 3992	

All participants (applicant, applicant's representative, PTO personnel):

(1) *MICHELLE TARAE*.

(2) *Woo Choi (PTO)*.

(3) *Deann Hughes (PTO)*.

(4) *Scott Paul (Reg. No. 42, 984)*.

Date of Interview: *15 April 2015*.

Type: ☒ Telephonic ☐ Video Conference
☐ Personal [copy given to: ☐ applicant ☐ applicant's representative]

Exhibit shown or demonstration conducted: ☐ Yes ☒ No.
If Yes, brief description: _____.

Issues Discussed ☐101 ☒112 ☐102 ☐103 ☐Others
(For each of the checked box(es) above, please describe below the issue and detailed description of the discussion)

Claim(s) discussed: *4-19*.

Identification of prior art discussed: *n/a*.

Substance of Interview
(For each issue discussed, provide a detailed description and indicate if agreement was reached. Some topics may include: identification or clarification of a reference or a portion thereof, claim interpretation, proposed amendments, arguments of any applied references etc...)

We discussed the 112, 2nd paragraph rejections. Mr. Paul explained that the phrase "marketing element" had support from the original application and what is meant by "functional marketing element." He also explained what is meant by "functional application" and "functional identification element." Examiner Tarae cautioned that since each of the aforementioned phrases were not in the specification of US Pat No 7,996,259, Mr. Paul would need to show support (ie., in '259, ordinary meaning, knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art, etc.) for his definitions/meanings of the terms. Examiner Tarae will reconsider the 112, 2nd rejections upon reviewing Mr. Paul's formal response.

Applicant recordation instructions: The formal written reply to the last Office action must include the substance of the interview. (See MPEP section 713.04). If a reply to the last Office action has already been filed, applicant is given a non-extendable period of the longer of one month or thirty days from this interview date, or the mailing date of this interview summary form, whichever is later, to file a statement of the substance of the interview

Examiner recordation instructions: Examiners must summarize the substance of any interview of record. A complete and proper recordation of the substance of an interview should include the items listed in MPEP 713.04 for complete and proper recordation including the identification of the general thrust of each argument or issue discussed, a general indication of any other pertinent matters discussed regarding patentability and the general results or outcome of the interview, to include an indication as to whether or not agreement was reached on the issues raised.

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/MICHELLE TARAE/ Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3992	/D.M.H./, PE AU3992

TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
IPR2025-01224
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Summary of Record of Interview Requirements

Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP), Section 713.04, Substance of Interview Must be Made of Record
A complete written statement as to the substance of any face-to-face, video conference, or telephone interview with regard to an application must be made of record in the application whether or not an agreement with the examiner was reached at the interview.

Title 37 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 1.133 Interviews
Paragraph (b)

In every instance where reconsideration is requested in view of an interview with an examiner, a complete written statement of the reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action must be filed by the applicant. An interview does not remove the necessity for reply to Office action as specified in §§ 1.111, 1.135. (35 U.S.C. 132)

37 CFR §1.2 Business to be transacted in writing.
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The action of the Patent and Trademark Office cannot be based exclusively on the written record in the Office if that record is itself incomplete through the failure to record the substance of interviews.

It is the responsibility of the applicant or the attorney or agent to make the substance of an interview of record in the application file, unless the examiner indicates he or she will do so. It is the examiner's responsibility to see that such a record is made and to correct material inaccuracies which bear directly on the question of patentability.

Examiners must complete an Interview Summary Form for each interview held where a matter of substance has been discussed during the interview by checking the appropriate boxes and filling in the blanks. Discussions regarding only procedural matters, directed solely to restriction requirements for which interview recordation is otherwise provided for in Section 812.01 of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure, or pointing out typographical errors or unreadable script in Office actions or the like, are excluded from the interview recordation procedures below. Where the substance of an interview is completely recorded in an Examiners Amendment, no separate Interview Summary Record is required.

The Interview Summary Form shall be given an appropriate Paper No., placed in the right hand portion of the file, and listed on the "Contents" section of the file wrapper. In a personal interview, a duplicate of the Form is given to the applicant (or attorney or agent) at the conclusion of the interview. In the case of a telephone or video-conference interview, the copy is mailed to the applicant's correspondence address either with or prior to the next official communication. If additional correspondence from the examiner is not likely before an allowance or if other circumstances dictate, the Form should be mailed promptly after the interview rather than with the next official communication.

The Form provides for recordation of the following information:
- Application Number (Series Code and Serial Number)
- Name of applicant
- Name of examiner
- Date of interview
- Type of interview (telephonic, video-conference, or personal)
- Name of participant(s) (applicant, attorney or agent, examiner, other PTO personnel, etc.)
- An indication whether or not an exhibit was shown or a demonstration conducted
- An identification of the specific prior art discussed
- An indication whether an agreement was reached and if so, a description of the general nature of the agreement (may be by attachment of a copy of amendments or claims agreed as being allowable). Note: Agreement as to allowability is tentative and does not restrict further action by the examiner to the contrary.
- The signature of the examiner who conducted the interview (if Form is not an attachment to a signed Office action)

It is desirable that the examiner orally remind the applicant of his or her obligation to record the substance of the interview of each case. It should be noted, however, that the Interview Summary Form will not normally be considered a complete and proper recordation of the interview unless it includes, or is supplemented by the applicant or the examiner to include, all of the applicable items required below concerning the substance of the interview.

A complete and proper recordation of the substance of any interview should include at least the following applicable items:
1) A brief description of the nature of any exhibit shown or any demonstration conducted,
2) an identification of the claims discussed,
3) an identification of the specific prior art discussed,
4) an identification of the principal proposed amendments of a substantive nature discussed, unless these are already described on the Interview Summary Form completed by the Examiner,
5) a brief identification of the general thrust of the principal arguments presented to the examiner,
   (The identification of arguments need not be lengthy or elaborate. A verbatim or highly detailed description of the arguments is not required. The identification of the arguments is sufficient if the general nature or thrust of the principal arguments made to the examiner can be understood in the context of the application file. Of course, the applicant may desire to emphasize and fully describe those arguments which he or she feels were or might be persuasive to the examiner.)
6) a general indication of any other pertinent matters discussed, and
7) if appropriate, the general results or outcome of the interview unless already described in the Interview Summary Form completed by the examiner.

Examiners are expected to carefully review the applicant's record of the substance of an interview. If the record is not complete and accurate, the examiner will give the applicant an extendable one month time period to correct the record.

Examiner to Check for Accuracy

If the claims are allowable for other reasons of record, the examiner should send a letter setting forth the examiner's version of the statement attributed to him or her. If the record is complete and accurate, the examiner should place the indication, "Interview Record OK" on the paper recording the substance of the interview along with the date and the examiner's initials.

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13963050	INTV.SUM.APP	04/22/2015	8201-0015

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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/963,050	08/09/2013	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III	8201-0015	1571

55246 7590 05/29/2015

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EXAMINER	
TARAE, CATHERINE MICHELLE	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
IPR2025-01224
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Applicant-Initiated Interview Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	13/963,050	DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	MICHELLE TARAE	3992	

All participants (applicant, applicant's representative, PTO personnel):

(1) *MICHELLE TARAE*.

(2) *Woo Choi (USPTO)*.

(3) *Deandra Hughes (USPTO)*.

(4) *Scott Paul (Reg. No. 42,984)*.

Date of Interview: *20 May 2015*.

Type: ☐ Telephonic ☐ Video Conference
☒ Personal [copy given to: ☐ applicant ☐ applicant's representative]

Exhibit shown or demonstration conducted: ☐ Yes ☒ No.
If Yes, brief description: _____.

Issues Discussed ☐101 ☒112 ☒102 ☐103 ☐Others
(For each of the checked box(es) above, please describe below the issue and detailed description of the discussion)

Claim(s) discussed: *8*.

Identification of prior art discussed: *Horstmann (US 5,995,099)*.

Substance of Interview
(For each issue discussed, provide a detailed description and indicate if agreement was reached. Some topics may include: identification or clarification of a reference or a portion thereof, claim interpretation, proposed amendments, arguments of any applied references etc...)

Mr. Paul explained the differences between the claimed invention and the invention of Horstmann. We discussed the recapture and defective declaration issues raised by the 35 USC 251 rejection. We also discussed the 35 USC 112, 2nd paragraph rejections. Mr. Paul argued that the terms rejected under 112, 2nd were terms well understood by one of ordinary skill in the art. Since Examiner Tarae could not find any special definitions in the disclosure of US 7,996,259 for the terms rejected under 112, 2nd, Examiner Tarae requested evidence (either from the disclosure of '259, or from other sources) to support Mr. Paul's assertions. No agreements were reached.

Applicant recordation instructions: The formal written reply to the last Office action must include the substance of the interview. (See MPEP section 713.04). If a reply to the last Office action has already been filed, applicant is given a non-extendable period of the longer of one month or thirty days from this interview date, or the mailing date of this interview summary form, whichever is later, to file a statement of the substance of the interview

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/MICHELLE TARAE/ Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3992	

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Summary of Record of Interview Requirements

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- An identification of the specific prior art discussed
- An indication whether an agreement was reached and if so, a description of the general nature of the agreement (may be by attachment of a copy of amendments or claims agreed as being allowable). Note: Agreement as to allowability is tentative and does not restrict further action by the examiner to the contrary.
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Applicant Initiated Interview Request Form

Application No.: 13/963,050 First Named Applicant: THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III
Examiner: _____ Art Unit: 2453 Status of Application: PENDING

Tentative Participants:
(1) CATHERINE TARAE (2) SCOTT D. PAUL
(3) _____ (4) _____

Proposed Date of Interview: 05/20/15 **Proposed Time:** 1:30 pm **(AM/PM)**

Type of Interview Requested:
(1) [ ] Telephonic (2) [✓] Personal (3) [ ] Video Conference

Exhibit To Be Shown or Demonstrated: [ ] YES [✓] NO
If yes, provide brief description: _____

Issues To Be Discussed

Issues (Rej., Obj., etc)	Claims/ Fig. #s	Prior Art	Discussed	Agreed	Not Agreed
(1)			[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(2)			[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(3)			[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
(4)			[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

[✓] Continuation Sheet Attached [ ] Proposed Amendment or Arguments Attached
Brief Description of Arguments to be Presented: SEE ATTACHED

An interview was conducted on the above-identified application on _____

NOTE: This form should be completed and filed by applicant in advance of the interview (see MPEP § 713.01). If this form is signed by a registered practitioner not of record, the Office will accept this as an indication that he or she is authorized to conduct an interview on behalf of the principal (37 CFR 1.32(a)(3)) pursuant to 37 CFR 1.34. This is not a power of attorney to any above named practitioner. See the Instruction Sheet for this form, which is incorporated by reference. By signing this form, applicant or practitioner is certifying that he or she has read the Instruction Sheet. After the interview is conducted, applicant is advised to file a statement of the substance of this interview (37 CFR 1.133(b)) as soon as possible. This application will not be delayed from issue because of applicant's failure to submit a written record of this interview.

/SCOTT D. PAUL/
Applicant/Applicant's Representative Signature

Examiner/SPE Signature

SCOTT D. PAUL
Typed/Printed Name of Applicant or Representative

42984
Registration Number, if applicable

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.133. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.11 and 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 24 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

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US PATENT APPLN. 13/963,050
ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. 8201-0015
ATTACHMENT TO APPLICANT INITIATED
INTERVIEW REQUEST FORM
PAGE 2

Applicant proposes discussion as follows:

Claim 8 recites "implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing (i) the first web page to implement the first functional marketing element, and (II) the second web page to implement the second functional marketing element." On page 17 of the Office Action, for all of these limitations, Figure 1 of Horstmann was cited without any additional comment. Reference is made to Figures 1 and 2 of Horstmann. Bookstore Site 1 and Bike Shop Site 2 are separate entities. The claimed "generating," "establishing," and "implementing" are performed by a single entity (i.e., the web page implementation system).

Figures 1 and 2 are referenced in the example described in column 2, lines 28 through column 3, line 42. In step 4 of Figure 2, Bookstore 1 generates link to Bike Shop 2 (see discussion within column 3, lines 14-26). This step compares to the claimed "generating, by the web page implementation system, a second functional marketing element [link to Bike Shop 2], associated with the first user, to be activated on the second web page [website of Bookstore 1]." The web page implementation system also "establish[es] a reciprocal site in the first web page for a first functional market element." However, the first web page [website of Bike Shop 2] is being hosted by an entirely different system. Thus, if a reciprocal site is created in the website of Bike Shop 2, it is created by a different system. As claimed, the web page implementation system also causes "the first web page [website of Bike Shop 2] to implement the first functional marketing element." This cannot occur because, again, the first web page [website of Bike Shop 2] is being hosted by an entirely different system.

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Since the first web page [website of Bike Shop 2] is being hosted by an entirely different system, Horstmann describes step 5 as "Bookstore verifies that bike shop put link back to page C on page B" (see column 3, lines 27-42). Therefore, Bookstore 1 does not (and cannot) implement the reciprocal arrangement.

Discussion of rejection based upon improper recapture to follow.

Respectfully submitted,

/ Scott D. Paul /
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May 19, 2015

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To: ptomail@iplawpro.com,tforsythe@iplawpro.com,kcuenot@iplawpro.com
From: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Cc: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Subject: Private PAIR Correspondence Notification for Customer Number 55246

May 29, 2015 05:25:52 AM

Dear PAIR Customer:

Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
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WELLINGTON, FL 33414
UNITED STATES

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13963050	INTV.SUM.APP	05/29/2015	8201-0015

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Thank you for prompt attention to this notice,

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

PATENT APPLICATION INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

Attorney Docket No.: 8201-0015 **PATENT**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of	:	Customer Number: 55246
Thomas DISTEFANO III	:	Confirmation Number: 1571
Application No.: 13/963,050	:	Group Art Unit: 3992
Filed: August 9, 2013	:	Examiner: C. Tarae

For: DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

AMENDMENT

Mail Stop Amendment
Commissioner For Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

The following Amendment and Remarks are submitted in response to the Office Action dated March 19, 2015.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A method of assisting a website designer in establishing an arrangement between a first website being designed by the website designer and a second website in order to market the first website at the second website upon the activation of the first website on the internet, the method comprising:

during design of the first website, receiving information at a user interface indicating a type of an element for marketing that is to be displayed at the second website, and information specifying the second website at which the element is to be displayed;

saving the information at a first database that is coupled to the user interface;

obtaining the element for marketing of the type indicated;

causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website when the first website is activated with respect to the internet, wherein the element for marketing includes at least one of a banner ad concerning the first website and a link to the first website;

determining whether a reciprocal site for the display of at least one marketing element of a third party website exists in the first website being designed; and

creating the reciprocal site for the display of the at least one marketing element of the third party website when the reciprocal site does not yet exist in the first website being designed.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

when the element for marketing the first website is a banner ad concerning the first website, causing the sequential display at the reciprocal site of the first website of a plurality

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banner ads respectively concerning a plurality of third party websites, when the first website is activated with respect to the internet.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

when the element for marketing the first website is a link to the first website, causing the display at the reciprocal site of the first website of a plurality of links to the plurality of third party websites, when the first website is activated with respect to the internet.

4. (Original) A method, within a computer hardware website implementation system, of establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, comprising:

registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving, by the website implementation system, a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving, by the website implementation system, a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing, by the website implementation system, a reciprocal site in the first website for a first functional marketing element; and

upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, the computer website implementation system implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

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the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

5. (Original) A computer hardware website implementation system for establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, comprising:

at least one processor, the at least one processor configured for

registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing a reciprocal site in the first website for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing, upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

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the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

6. (Original) The website implementation system of claim 5, further comprising a database of registered websites.

7. (Original) A computer program product including a computer-readable storage medium having stored therein computer usable program code for establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, the computer usable program code, which when executed by a computer hardware implementation system, causing the computer hardware implementation system to perform:

registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing a reciprocal site in the first website for the first functional marketing element; and

upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement a first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

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the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

8. (Twice Amended) A method, within a computer hardware web page implementation system, of establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first web page, associated with a first user, and a second web page, comprising:

generating, by the web page implementation system, a second functional marketing element, associated with the first user, to be activated on the second web page;

establishing, by the web page implementation system, a reciprocal site in the first web page for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing, by the web page implementation system and upon the first web page being activated with respect to the internet, the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first web page to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second web page to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first web page.

9. (Previously amended) The method of claim 8, further comprising

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including, within the first web page, a web asset provided by a third party separate from the computer hardware system.

10. (Previously amended) The method of claim 9, further comprising

causing, based upon the web asset being included within the first web page site, the third party to be compensated.

11. (Previously amended) The method of claim 9, wherein

the web asset is a functional application.

12. (Twice Amended) The method of claim 8, wherein

the second functional marketing element includes an image.

13. (Previously amended) The method of claim 12, further comprising

receiving, from the first user, the image.

14. (Twice Amended) A computer hardware web page implementation system configured to establish a reciprocal arrangement between a first web page, associated with a first user, and a second web page, comprising:

at least one processor, wherein the at least one processor is configured to perform:

receiving a request by the first user to implement the first web page;

generating a second functional marketing element, associated with the first user, to be activated on the second web page;

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establishing a reciprocal site in the first web page for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing the reciprocal arrangement upon the first web page being activated with respect to the internet by causing

(i) the first web page to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second web page to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first web page.

15. (Previously amended) The system of claim 14, wherein the at least one processor is further configured to perform:

including, within the first web page, a web asset provided by a third party separate from the computer hardware system.

16. (Previously amended) The system of claim 15, wherein the at least one processor is further configured to perform:

causing, based upon the web asset being included within the first web page site, the third party to be compensated.

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17. (Previously amended) The system of claim 15, wherein the web asset is a functional application.

18. (Twice Amended) The system of claim 14, wherein the second functional marketing element includes an image.

19. (Previously amended) The system of claim 18, wherein the at least one processor is further configured to perform:

receiving, from the first user, the image.

20. (Previously amended) The method of claim 8, wherein the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second web page, and the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first web page.

21. (Previously amended) The method of claim 20, wherein the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second web page opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

22. (Previously amended) The system of claim 14, wherein the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second web page, and the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first web page.

23. (Previously amended) The system of claim 22, wherein

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the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second web page opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

24. (Previously amended) The method of claim 4, wherein

the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first website.

25. (Previously amended) The method of claim 24, wherein

the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second website opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

26. (Previously amended) The system of claim 5, wherein

the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first website.

27. (Previously amended) The system of claim 26, wherein

the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second website opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

28. (Previously amended) The computer program product of claim 7, wherein

the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first website.

29. (Previously amended) The computer program product of claim 28, wherein

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the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second website opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

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REMARKS

At the time of the Fourth Office Action dated March 19, 2015, claims 1-29 were pending and rejected in this application.

On pages 2 and 3 of the Fourth Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims. Applicant respectfully submits that the issues raised by the Examiner have been addressed by the present Amendment.

On page 4 of the Fourth Office Action, the Examiner asserted that the Reissue Declaration filed in this application is defective. In response, Applicant notes that a second Reissue Declaration will subsequently be filed to address the issues raised by the Examiner.

CLAIMS 8-29 ARE REJECTED UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 251

On pages 4-9 of the Fourth Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 8-29 as being an improper recapture of subject matter surrendered in the application for the patent upon which the present reissue application is based. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Referring to page 9 of the Fourth Office Action, the Examiner asserted that "the claimed limitations of 'receiving, by the website implementation system, a request by a first user to implement the first website,' and 'upon the first website being activated with respect to the

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internet' is surrendered submit matter as these limitations relate to arguments made by Applicant." In response, Applicant notes that independent claims 8 and 14 have been amended to include limitations comparable to the aforementioned limitations.[1] As such, Applicant respectfully solicits withdrawal imposed rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 251.

CLAIMS 4-19 ARE REJECTED UNDER THE SECOND PARAGRAPH OF 35 U.S.C. § 112

On pages 9-11 of the Fourth Office Action, the Examiner asserted that claims 4-19 are indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As stated by the Supreme Court, the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 requires that "a patent's claims, viewed in light of the specification and prosecution history, inform those skilled in the art about the scope of the invention with reasonable certainty." Nautilus v. Biosig Instruments, 572 U.S. __, __ (2014).

Reference is made to M.P.E.P. § 2173.02, entitled "Interpreting the Claims." As stated therein, the first step in an analysis under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 involves an interpretation of the claim language at issue. The issue of claim interpretation is discussed in M.P.E.P. § 2111, entitled "Claim Construction; Broadest Reasonable Interpretation," a portion of which is reproduced below:

> During patent examination, the pending claims must be "given their broadest reasonable interpretation consistent with the specification." … The broadest reasonable interpretation of the claims must also be consistent with the

[1] The attached Appendix illustrates the changes made to the claims relative to the previously-presented claims.

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> interpretation that those skilled in the art would reach. *In re Cortright*, 165 F.3d 1353, 1359, 49 USPQ2d 1464, 1468 (Fed. Cir. 1999).

Reference is made to M.P.E.P. § 2173.02, entitled "Determining Whether Claim Language is Definite." As stated therein, "when a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112(b) or pre-AIA 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, is appropriate based on the examiner's determination that a claim term or phrase is indefinite, the examiner should clearly communicate in an Office action any findings and reasons which support the rejection and avoid a mere conclusion that the claim term or phrase is indefinite" (emphasis added).

According to the Federal Circuit, "[t]he purpose of claims is not to explain the technology or how it works, but to state the legal boundaries of the patent grant. A claim is not 'indefinite' simply because it is hard to understand when viewed without benefit of the specification." S3 Inc. v. nVIDIA Corp., 259 F.3d 1364, 1369 (Fed. Cir. 2001). Also, claim breadth should not be confused with indefiniteness. See, e.g., In re Johnson, 558 F.2d 1008, 1016, 194 USPQ 187, 194 (CCPA 1977); M.P.E.P. § 2173.02. Reference is also made to M.P.E.P. § 2173.05(e), entitled "Lack of Antecedent Basis." As stated therein:

> The mere fact that a term or phrase used in the claim has no antecedent basis in the specification disclosure does not mean, necessarily, that the term or phrase is indefinite. There is no requirement that the words in the claim must match those used in the specification disclosure. Applicants are given a great deal of latitude in how they choose to define their invention so long as the terms and phrases used define the invention with a reasonable degree of clarity and precision. (emphasis added)

"functional marketing element"

On page 10 of the Fourth Office Action, the Examiner's analysis began with the assertion that "[l]ooking to the disclosure of '259, the term 'functional marketing element' is not defined,

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nor is it mentioned anywhere in the disclosure." Applicant respectfully submits that this statement is misleading. As already noted above, there is no requirement that the words in the claim must match those used in the specification disclosure. This lack of a requirement notwithstanding, the phrases "at least one marketing element"[2] and "element for marketing"[3] are found within the originally-filed specification of parent U.S. Application No. 09/589,551 (hereinafter the '551 Application). Additionally, originally-filed claims 4 and 5 within the '551 Application provide illustrative examples of an element for marketing by respectively disclosing "the element for marketing the first website is a banner ad concerning the first website" and "the element for marketing the first website is a link to the first website." Thus, adequate descriptive support for the phrase "marketing element" is found within the '551 Application.

Referring to the second full paragraph on page 10 of the Fourth Office Action, the Examiner further asserted the following:

> At best, '259 discusses web assets becoming "functional" when they are dropped into the website design plate (11:37-40). Further, the disclosure of '259 appears to refer to "elements" when it discusses sound and color features (7:57-58). Also, while '259 discusses that "web assets" can include a variety of items from GIFs to JAVA applets to color, sound and animation features (7:8-20); a user can select both web assets and elements for the design of his website (8:51-53). The terms 'elements" and "web assets" appear to be used interchangeably throughout the disclosure, adding to the ambiguity of what a "functional marketing element" is. (emphasis added)

Referring to the underlined portion of the above-reproduced passage, the Examiner is correct in noting that the terms "elements" and "web assets" have been used within the specification interchangeably (e.g., " a new web asset or other element," "selected web asset or other element," "modified web asset or other element," "the first web asset or other element,"

[2] See original claim 4.
[3] See original claims 5 and 6.

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"listing of available web assets or other elements"). However, using terms interchangeably does not render these terms indefinite, and the Examiner has not cited any case law to support a conclusion that interchangeably using terms within a specification renders these claims indefinite. The plain and ordinary meaning of the term "element" is "a constituent part."[4]

Within the specification, Applicant frequently used the term "web assets" to refer to an entire class of assets/components/elements that are used as constituent parts of a web page. On the other hand, Applicant often used the term "element" to refer to a particular type of web asset (e.g., "element for marketing," "sound elements and color elements," "selected elements," "existing elements"). Applicant's position is that the term "element," when reasonably interpreted in light of the specification, means a constituent part of a web page (e.g., a particular type of web asset). Additionally, the term "marketing" within the phrase "marketing element" clarifies the "type" of web asset being claimed.

The Examiner did not raise the issue that the term "marketing element" was indefinite. However, the term "marketing element" is not one that is unknown in the art. For example, reference is made to U.S. Patent No. 7,617,122 (hereinafter the '122 Patent), which was filed on August 28, 2002. The term "marketing element" is found throughout the claims. Moreover, under the heading of "Terminology," reference is made to column 4, lines 55-57 of the '122 Patent, which states "marketing elements (MEs) such as banner advertisements are provided at nominated locations on a web page." Therefore, Applicant respectfully submit that the term "marketing element" is not indefinite to those skilled in the art.

[4] See http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/element.

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The term "functional" is an adjective within the phrase "functional marketing element." The term "functional" was first introduced in the Amendment filed March 15, 2010. In both the Decision on Appeal dated June 15, 2009, and the Decision on Request for Rehearing dated September 13, 2009, the Board presented an analysis in which the claimed "banner ad" (i.e., a recited example of an "element for marketing") involved "non-functional descriptive material and are accorded no patentable weight."[5] In the context of this analysis, while presenting new claims, Applicant used the phrase "functional marketing element" instead of "element for marketing" to clarify that the marketing element was "functional" as opposed to being "nonfunctional" (e.g., merely descriptive).

Notably, referring to pages 6 and 7 of the Decision on Request for Rehearing, the Board recognized the functionality of at least one aspect of the element for marketing, e.g., banner ad ("[w]e equated a banner ad to a link attached to non-functional descriptive material. To the extent the link is functional, both we and the Examiner found that Moore's price URL's described the use of such links") (emphasis added). As stated by the Supreme Court within Nautilus, whether the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 is invoked involves a determination that a patent claim does not inform those skilled in the art about the scope of the invention with reasonable certainty when "viewed in light of the specification and prosecution history" (emphasis added). Applicant's position is that the meaning of the term "functional," when added to the phrase "marketing element," is reasonably certain when considered in view of the aforementioned prosecution history.

[5] See pages 15-16 of Decision on Appeal and pages 5-7 of the Decision on Request for Rehearing.

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Therefore, for the reasons submitted above, Applicant respectfully submits that the term "functional marketing element" informs those skilled in the art, with reasonable certainty, about the scope of the invention.

"functional application"

Referring to the last two full paragraphs on page 10 of the Fourth Office Action, the Examiner asserted the following:

> Claim 17 recites a "functional application." It is not clear what is meant by "functional application." Looking to the disclosure of '259, the term "functional application" is not defined, nor is it mentioned anywhere in the disclosure.
>
> For examination purposes, "functional application" will be construed to mean any one of the examples provided for web assets as they have been discussed in 7:11-20. (emphasis added)

The Examiner's only substantive analysis is to assert that "the term 'functional application' is not defined, nor is it mentioned anywhere in the disclosure." However, as noted above, there is no requirement that the words in the claim must match those used in the specification disclosure. Since this is the Examiner's only substantive analysis, the Examiner has not presented a prima facie case of indefiniteness with regard to the claimed "functional application."

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The lack of a prima facie case of indefiniteness notwithstanding, the term "application," as used by those skilled in the art, is extremely well-known. In this regard, reference is made to the following dictionary[6] definition:

> **application** [COMPUT SCI] A computer program that performs a specific task, for example, a word processor, a Web browser, or a spread sheet.[7]

The context in which "functional application" is used in claim 17 is within the phrase "the web asset is a functional application." As discussed on pages 15 and 16 of the '551 Application:

> Web assets can include JAVA applets, scripts (including moving scripts and scripts written in a variety of internet languages such as PERL, CGI, SQL, JAVA, XML and HTML), stock art, clip art, digital art, background images, textures, GIF, JPEG, TIF, BMP, chat rooms, message boards, web objects, buttons, templates, themes, fading color, mouse over effects, borders, buttons, shadows, icons, internet designs, sounds, music, etc. In general, web assets are graphic images, including text and related color, sound and animation features, which can be displayed on a website.

As would be recognized by those skilled in the art, JAVA applets are but one example of an application, and thus, the term "application" finds adequate descriptive support within the specification.

Regarding the term "functional" as it applies to "application," this term has the same meaning as it is applied to both "functional marketing element" and "functional identification

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[6] The Federal Circuit has frequently relied upon McGraw-Hill Dictionary of Scientific and Technical Terms in construing claim language. See, e.g., L.B. Plastics, Inc. v. Amerimax Home Prods., Inc., 499 F.3d 1303, 1308 (Fed. Cir. 2007)(construing "weld"); Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Electronics for Imaging, Inc. v. Abacus Software, 462 F.3d 1344, 1351 (Fed. Cir. 2006)(construing "scanner"); Intellectual Property Development, Inc. v. UA-Columbia Cablevision of Westchester, Inc., 336 F.3d 1308, 1314, (Fed. Cir. 2003)(construing "high frequency"); CSS Fitness v. Brunswick Corp., 288 F.3d 1359, 1367 (Fed. Cir. 2002)(construing "reciprocating member").

[7] McGraw-Hill Dictionary of Scientific and Technical Terms, 6th Edition, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 2003, pg. 124.

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element." Specifically, the term "functional" is used to reinforce that the noun being modified (e.g., "application") is not nonfunctional (i.e., merely descriptive).

Therefore, for the reasons submitted above, Applicant respectfully submits that the term "functional application" informs those skilled in the art, with reasonable certainty, about the scope of the invention.

"functional identification element"

Referring to the first and second full paragraphs on page 11 of the Fourth Office Action, the Examiner asserted the following:

> Claim 18 recites the limitation "functional identification element" in line 2. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Further, it is not clear what is meant by "functional identification element." Looking to the disclosure of '259, the term "functional identification element" is not defined, nor is it mentioned anywhere in the disclosure.
>
> For examination purposes, "functional identification element" will be construed to mean any one of the examples provided for web assets as they have been discussed in 7:11-20. (emphasis added)

The Examiner's only substantive analysis is to assert that "the term 'functional identification element' is not defined, nor is it mentioned anywhere in the disclosure." However, as noted above, there is no requirement that the words in the claim must match those used in the specification disclosure. Since this is the Examiner's only analysis, the Examiner has not presented a prima facie case of indefiniteness with regard to the "functional identification element."

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The lack of a prima facie case of indefiniteness notwithstanding, Applicant notes that claims 12 and 18 have been amended to replace the term "identification element" with "marketing element." The phrase "the functional marketing element" within claims 12 and 18 finds antecedent basis, respectively, within independent claims 8 and 14.

Therefore, for the reasons submitted above, Applicant respectfully solicits withdrawal of the imposed rejection of claims 4-19 under the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 102.

CLAIM 1 IS REJECTED UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103 FOR OBVIOUSNESS BASED UPON HORSTMANN, U.S. PATENT NO. 5,995,099

On pages 12-15 of the Fourth Office Action, the Examiner concluded that one having ordinary skill in the art would have considered the claimed invention to be obvious in view of Horstmann. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 recites, in part, the limitations of "causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website" and "creating the reciprocal site … exist in the first website being designed." Regarding these limitations, the Examiner asserted the following on pages 13 and 14 of the Fourth Office Action:

> causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website when the first website is activated with respect to the internet (3:20-24, "Software on the links server (step 4) automatically modifies page A to include a link 6 (the fourth link information) from page A to page D as requested by the bike-shop owner. The new page A, including the link to page D, is then redisplayed to the bike-shop owner. Thus, page A is modified and redisplayed without any intervention from the bookstore owner."), wherein the element for marketing

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> includes at least one of a banner ad concerning the first website and a link to the first website (1:12-14, "Such links are typically represented as highlighted text or graphic representations that may be selected using a mouse-type pointer (a "mouse").");
> …
> creating the reciprocal site for the display of the at least one marketing element of the third party website when the reciprocal site does not yet exist in the first website being designed (3:37-43, "Alternatively, the software may issue a reminder to the bike shop (via e-mail, for example) to add link back 5 to the bookstore. Once link back 5 (third link information) is verified to exist on the bike shop's page B, the method terminates. In this way, the inventive method provides for the creation of reciprocal page links;" Examiner notes this is a conditional limitation as it only occurs "when the reciprocal site does not yet exist in the first website." Accordingly, the method does not always perform this step.). (emphasis added)

As claimed, the reciprocal site (for the marketing element) is created in the first website being designed. Referring to the second underlined portion of the above-reproduced passage, the software of the links server (i.e., the entity that modifies page A to include link 6) does not create the reciprocal site. At best, the software *issues a reminder* to the bike shop (i.e., a separate entity) to create a link.

For at least the reasons discussed above, the Examiner has not established a proper prima facie of obviousness since the Examiner's Graham findings of fact have mischaracterized the scope and content of Horstmann. Therefore, Applicant respectfully solicits withdrawal of the imposed rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 for obviousness based upon Horstmann.

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CLAIMS 8 AND 14 ARE REJECTED UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102 AS BEING ANTICIPATED BY HORSTMANN

On pages 16-19 of the Fourth Office Action, the Examiner asserted that Horstmann identically discloses the invention corresponding to that claimed. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 8 recites, in part, the limitations of "generating, by the web page implementation system …, a second functional marketing element," "establishing, by the web page implementation system, a reciprocal site in the first web page," and "implementing, by the web page implementation system, the reciprocal arrangement by causing (i) the first web page to implement the first functional marketing element, and (ii) the second web page to implement the second functional marketing element." Claim 14 recites similar limitations. Notably, the limitations of claim 8 are performed by the web page implementation system and claim 14 is directed to a web page implementation system.

As previously discussed with regard to the Examiner's rejection of claim 1 for obviousness based upon Horstmann, while the software of the links server modifies page A to include link 6, this software only *issues a reminder* to the bike shop (i.e., a separate entity) to create a link. No single entity performs the above-identified steps recited in claim 8. Thus, Horstmann fails to identically disclosed the claim invention.

For at least the above-described reasons, the Examiner has not established that Horstmann identically discloses the claimed invention, as recited in claims 8 and 14, within the meaning of 35

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U.S.C. § 102. Applicant, therefore, respectfully solicits withdrawal of the imposed rejection of claims 8 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 for anticipation based upon Horstmann.

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35 U.S.C. § 101

While Applicant agrees with the Examiner's ultimate conclusion that the pending claims are directed to eligible subject matter under 35 U.S.C. § 101, Applicant disagree with certain characterizations of the claimed invention made by the Examiner. For example, on page 21, the Examiner asserted "[t]his is directed to an abstract idea inasmuch as such activity is considered creating *contractual* relationships by providing opportunities for users to establish marketing arrangements with other website owners." The Examiner's identification of "creating contractual relationships" apparently refers to the Federal Circuit decision of BuySafe v. Google, __ F.3d __ (Fed. Cir. 2014), in which the Court noted "[t]he claims are squarely about creating a contractual relationship – a 'transaction performance guaranty' – that is beyond question of ancient lineage."

Contrary to the Examiner's characterization, no "contractual" relationship is created as a result of the claimed invention. Moreover, linking one website to another is neither a concept of "ancient lineage" nor "a fundamental economic practice long prevalent in our system of commerce." As such, Applicant respectfully disagree that the claims are directed to an abstract idea. This point notwithstanding, Applicant agrees with the Examiner's conclusion that the claims, as a whole, are directed to significantly more than an abstract idea.

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To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 503611, and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Date: June 19, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

/Scott D. Paul/
Scott D. Paul
Registration No. 42,984
CUSTOMER NUMBER 55246

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APPENDIX

1. A method of assisting a website designer in establishing an arrangement between a first website being designed by the website designer and a second website in order to market the first website at the second website upon the activation of the first website on the internet, the method comprising:

during design of the first website, receiving information at a user interface indicating a type of an element for marketing that is to be displayed at the second website, and information specifying the second website at which the element is to be displayed;

saving the information at a first database that is coupled to the user interface;

obtaining the element for marketing of the type indicated;

causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website when the first website is activated with respect to the internet, wherein the element for marketing includes at least one of a banner ad concerning the first website and a link to the first website;

determining whether a reciprocal site for the display of at least one marketing element of a third party website exists in the first website being designed; and

creating the reciprocal site for the display of the at least one marketing element of the third party website when the reciprocal site does not yet exist in the first website being designed.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

when the element for marketing the first website is a banner ad concerning the first website, causing the sequential display at the reciprocal site of the first website of a plurality

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banner ads respectively concerning a plurality of third party websites, when the first website is activated with respect to the internet.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

when the element for marketing the first website is a link to the first website, causing the display at the reciprocal site of the first website of a plurality of links to the plurality of third party websites, when the first website is activated with respect to the internet.

4. A method, within a computer hardware website implementation system, of establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, comprising:

registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving, by the website implementation system, a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving, by the website implementation system, a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing, by the website implementation system, a reciprocal site in the first website for a first functional marketing element; and

upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, the computer website implementation system implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

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the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

5. A computer hardware website implementation system for establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, comprising:

at least one processor, the at least one processor configured for registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing a reciprocal site in the first website for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing, upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

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6. The website implementation system of claim 5, further comprising a database of registered websites.

7. A computer program product including a computer-readable storage medium having stored therein computer usable program code for establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, the computer usable program code, which when executed by a computer hardware implementation system, causing the computer hardware implementation system to perform:

registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing a reciprocal site in the first website for the first functional marketing element; and

upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement a first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

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the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

8. A method, within a computer hardware web page implementation system, of establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first web page, associated with a first user, and a second web page, comprising:

receiving, by the web page implementation system, a request by the first user to implement the first web page;

generating, by the web page implementation system, a second functional marketing element, associated with the first user, to be activated on the second web page;

establishing, by the web page implementation system, a reciprocal site in the first web page for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing, by the web page implementation system and upon the first web page being activated with respect to the internet, the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first web page to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second web page to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first web page.

9. The method of claim 8, further comprising

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including, within the first web page, a web asset provided by a third party separate from the computer hardware system.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising

causing, based upon the web asset being included within the first web page site, the third party to be compensated.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein

the web asset is a functional application.

12. The method of claim 8, wherein

the second functional marketing ~~identification~~ element includes an image.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising

receiving, from the first user, the image.

14. A computer hardware web page implementation system configured to establish a reciprocal arrangement between a first web page, associated with a first user, and a second web page, comprising:

at least one processor, wherein the at least one processor is configured to perform:

receiving a request by the first user to implement the first web page;

generating a second functional marketing element, associated with the first user, to be activated on the second web page;

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establishing a reciprocal site in the first web page for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing the reciprocal arrangement upon the first web page being activated with respect to the internet by causing

(i) the first web page to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second web page to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first web page.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the at least one processor is further configured to perform:

including, within the first web page, a web asset provided by a third party separate from the computer hardware system.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein the at least one processor is further configured to perform:

causing, based upon the web asset being included within the first web page site, the third party to be compensated.

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17. The system of claim 15, wherein

the web asset is a functional application.

18. The system of claim 14, wherein

the second functional marketing ~~identification~~ element includes an image.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the at least one processor is further configured to perform:

receiving, from the first user, the image.

20. The method of claim 8, wherein

the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first web page.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein

the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second web page opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

22. The system of claim 14, wherein

the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first web page.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein

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the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second web page opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

24. The method of claim 4, wherein

the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first website.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein

the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second website opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

26. The system of claim 5, wherein

the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first website.

27. The system of claim 26, wherein

the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second website opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

28. The computer program product of claim 7, wherein

the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first website.

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29. The computer program product of claim 28, wherein

the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second website opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

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Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt	
EFS ID:	22684535
Application Number:	13963050
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	1571
Title of Invention:	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Customer Number:	55246
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
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Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0015
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Time Stamp:	14:08:17
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

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File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1		8201-0015_AmendmenttoOfficeAction4_06-19-15.pdf	156556 e102d0f588b1f5aaa6a48b88135381e08f406bef	yes	35

	Multipart Description/PDF files in .zip description		
	Document Description	**Start**	**End**
	Amendment/Req. Reconsideration-After Non-Final Reject	1	1
	Claims	2	11
	Applicant Arguments/Remarks Made in an Amendment	12	25
	Claims	26	35
Warnings:			
Information:			
	Total Files Size (in bytes):	156556	

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<u>New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111</u>
If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

<u>National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371</u>
If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

<u>New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office</u>
If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

PTO/SB/06 (09-11)
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PATENT APPLICATION FEE DETERMINATION RECORD Substitute for Form PTO-875	Application or Docket Number 13/963,050	Filing Date 08/09/2013	☐ To be Mailed

ENTITY: ☐ LARGE ☒ SMALL ☐ MICRO

APPLICATION AS FILED – PART I

FOR	(Column 1) NUMBER FILED	(Column 2) NUMBER EXTRA	RATE ($)	FEE ($)
☐ BASIC FEE (37 CFR 1.16(a), (b), or (c))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ SEARCH FEE (37 CFR 1.16(k), (i), or (m))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ EXAMINATION FEE (37 CFR 1.16(o), (p), or (q))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
TOTAL CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(i))	minus 20 =	*	X $ =	
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(h))	minus 3 =	*	X $ =	
☐ APPLICATION SIZE FEE (37 CFR 1.16(s))	If the specification and drawings exceed 100 sheets of paper, the application size fee due is $310 ($155 for small entity) for each additional 50 sheets or fraction thereof. See 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(1)(G) and 37 CFR 1.16(s).			
☐ MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM PRESENT (37 CFR 1.16(j))				
* If the difference in column 1 is less than zero, enter "0" in column 2.			TOTAL	

APPLICATION AS AMENDED – PART II

AMENDMENT **06/19/2015**

	(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	* 29	Minus	** 29	= 0	X $40 =	0
Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	* 6	Minus	***6	= 0	X $210 =	0
☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
					TOTAL ADD'L FEE	0

AMENDMENT

	(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	*	Minus	**	=	X $ =	
Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	*	Minus	***	=	X $ =	
☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
					TOTAL ADD'L FEE	

* If the entry in column 1 is less than the entry in column 2, write "0" in column 3.
** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 20, enter "20".
*** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 3, enter "3".
The "Highest Number Previously Paid For" (Total or Independent) is the highest number found in the appropriate box in column 1.

LIE
/GAIL WOOTEN/

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.16. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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Doc Code: REIS.DECL
Document Description: Reissue Declaration Filed In Accordance With MPEP 1414

PTO/AIA/05 (06-12)
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REISSUE APPLICATION DECLARATION BY THE INVENTOR	Docket Number (Optional) 8201-0015

I hereby declare that:
Each inventor's residence and mailing address are stated below next to their name.
I believe I am the original inventor or an original joint inventor of the subject matter which is described and claimed in patent number 7996259 granted August 9, 2011 and for which a reissue patent is sought on the invention titled Method for developing electronic documents providing e-commerce tools,

the specification of which

☐ is attached hereto.

☑ was filed on August 9, 2013 as reissue application number 13/963,050.

The above-identified application was made or authorized to be made by me.

I hereby acknowledge that any willful false statement made in this declaration is punishable under 18 U.S.C. 1001 by fine or imprisonment of not more than five (5) years, or both.

I believe the original patent to be wholly or partly inoperative or invalid, for the reasons described below. (Check all boxes that apply.)

☐ by reason of a defective specification or drawing.

☑ by reason of the patentee claiming more or less than he had the right to claim in the patent.

☐ by reason of other errors.

At least one error upon which reissue is based is described below. If the reissue is a broadening reissue, a claim that the application seeks to broaden must be identified:

Patentee seeks broadening of claim 4 of the patent via addition of independent claims 8 and 14. The limitations of "registering the second website with the website implementation system" within claim 4 are unnecessarily limiting. Newly added independent claims 8 and 14 have been broadened by not including these limitations.

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.175. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.11 and 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 30 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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(REISSUE APPLICATION DECLARATION BY THE INVENTOR, page 2)

Docket Number (Optional): 8201-0015

Note: To appoint a power of attorney, use form PTO/AIA/81.

Correspondence Address: Direct all communications about the application to:

☑ The address associated with Customer Number: 55246

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Legal name of sole or first inventor (*E.g.*, Given Name (first and middle (if any) and Family Name or Surname)

THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III

Inventor's Signature		Date (Optional): 5/26/2015
Residence: City: BOCA RATON	State: FL	Country: US

Mailing Address

2910 NW 26TH AVENUE

City	State	Zip	Country
BOCA RATON	FL	33434	US

☐ Additional joint inventors are named on the _____ supplemental sheet(s) PTO/AIA/10 attached hereto

TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
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Privacy Act Statement

The **Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579)** requires that you be given certain information in connection with your submission of the attached form related to a patent application or patent. Accordingly, pursuant to the requirements of the Act, please be advised that: (1) the general authority for the collection of this information is 35 U.S.C. 2(b)(2); (2) furnishing of the information solicited is voluntary; and (3) the principal purpose for which the information is used by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is to process and/or examine your submission related to a patent application or patent. If you do not furnish the requested information, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office may not be able to process and/or examine your submission, which may result in termination of proceedings or abandonment of the application or expiration of the patent.

The information provided by you in this form will be subject to the following routine uses:

1. The information on this form will be treated confidentially to the extent allowed under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) and the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C 552a). Records from this system of records may be disclosed to the Department of Justice to determine whether disclosure of these records is required by the Freedom of Information Act.
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6. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to another federal agency for purposes of National Security review (35 U.S.C. 181) and for review pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 218(c)).
7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (*i.e.*, GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.
8. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the public after either publication of the application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b) or issuance of a patent pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 151. Further, a record may be disclosed, subject to the limitations of 37 CFR 1.14, as a routine use, to the public if the record was filed in an application which became abandoned or in which the proceedings were terminated and which application is referenced by either a published application, an application open to public inspection or an issued patent.
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Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

EFS ID:	23315321
Application Number:	13963050
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	1571
Title of Invention:	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Customer Number:	55246
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Filer Authorized By:	Scott David Paul
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0015
Receipt Date:	26-AUG-2015
Filing Date:	09-AUG-2013
Time Stamp:	13:04:59
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	no

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Reissue dec filed in accordance with MPEP 1414	8201-0015_SupplementalDeclaration_08-26-15.pdf	1283026 02503e7b543bc3e5c746eebc7de9b34a280a7a65	no	3
Warnings:					
Information:					

Total Files Size (in bytes):	1283026

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New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111
If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371
If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office
If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/963,050	08/09/2013	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III	8201-0015	1571

55246 7590 10/20/2015

Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12161 KEN ADAMS WAY
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414

EXAMINER	
TARAE, CATHERINE MICHELLE	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3992	

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
10/20/2015	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

ptomail@iplawpro.com
tforsythe@iplawpro.com
kcuenot@iplawpro.com

TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
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Office Action Summary	Application No. 13/963,050	Applicant(s) DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.	
	Examiner MICHELLE TARAE	Art Unit 3992	AIA (First Inventor to File) Status No

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE *3* MONTHS FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *6/19/15, 8/26/15*.

☐ A declaration(s)/affidavit(s) under **37 CFR 1.130(b)** was/were filed on _____.

2a)☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☐ This action is non-final.

3)☐ An election was made by the applicant in response to a restriction requirement set forth during the interview on _____; the restriction requirement and election have been incorporated into this action.

4)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims*

5)☒ Claim(s) *1-29* is/are pending in the application.

5a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

6)☒ Claim(s) *4-29* is/are allowed.

7)☒ Claim(s) *1* is/are rejected.

8)☒ Claim(s) *2-3* is/are objected to.

9)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

* If any claims have been determined allowable, you may be eligible to benefit from the **Patent Prosecution Highway** program at a participating intellectual property office for the corresponding application. For more information, please see http://www.uspto.gov/patents/init_events/pph/index.jsp or send an inquiry to PPHfeedback@uspto.gov.

Application Papers

10)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

11)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

Certified copies:

a)☐ All b)☐ Some** c)☐ None of the:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

** See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08a and/or PTO/SB/08b) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

3) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .

4) ☐ Other: _____.

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REISSUE FINAL OFFICE ACTION

The present application is being examined under the pre-AIA first to invent provisions.

The following is a Final Office Action ("Final") in Reissue Application 13/963,050 ("'050") for U.S. Patent No. 7,996,259 ("'259") filed August 9, 2013.

This Final is in response to Patent Owner's ("PO") arguments/claim amendments filed June 19, 2015 ("June 2015 Args") and new Reissue Declaration filed August 26, 2015 ("Aug 2015 Reissue Dec").

Reason for Reissue - Broadening

The error upon which '050 is based is "by reason of the patentee claiming more or less than he had the right to claim in the patent." The Aug 2015 Reissue Dec states, "Patentee seeks broadening of claim 4 of the patent via addition of independent claims 8 and 14. The limitations of "registering the second website with the website implementation system" within claim 4 are unnecessarily limiting. Newly added independent claims 8 and 14 have been broadened by not including these limitations."

Accordingly, '050 added new claims 8-29 to remedy the error provided in the Reissue Dec.

The Aug 2015 Reissue Dec is sufficient to obviate the previous 35 USC 251 rejection based on a defective reissue declaration.

Response to Amendments

The June 2015 Args amended claims 8, 12, 14 and 18. Claims 1-29 are pending herein.

The claim amendments are sufficient to overcome the 35 USC 251 rejection relating to improper recapture and the 35 USC 112, second paragraph rejection relating to "functional identification element." Therefore, the rejections are withdrawn.

Response to Arguments

35 USC 112, second paragraph rejections

PO's arguments with regard to the 35 USC 112, second paragraph rejection and the phrase "functional marketing element" have been fully considered and are found persuasive. In particular, PO points to the prosecution history of '259 and explains that the term "functional" was added to the phrase "marketing element" to avoid claim construction by the Board that "marketing element" included nonfunctional descriptive material that is not accorded patentable weight. (Remarks at 17) PO also explains that, in light of the specification, "element" is a constituent part of a web page and "marketing" is a type of web asset. (Remarks at 16) As such, for examination purposes, "functional marketing element" will be given a broadest reasonable interpretation ("BRI") in light of the specification and the prosecution history of a constituent part of a web page that affords some type of functionality like a banner ad associated with a link (i.e., URL) or a link itself. This BRI is also consistent with the claims as originally filed. Examiner notes that banner ads without an associated link would not be considered a

functional marketing element as they would not have the requisite associated functionality, and as construed by the Board, would be considered nonfunctional descriptive material.

PO makes similar arguments with regard to the 35 USC 112, second paragraph rejection and the phrase "functional application." (Remarks at 20) PO also provides a dictionary definition and points to examples of "web assets" in the specification to explain that a "functional application" is a computer program that performs a specific task… such as a JAVA applet or script. (Remarks at 19) For examination purposes, "functional application" will be given a BRI of a computer program that performs a specific task.

These arguments have been found persuasive; therefore, the 35 USC 112, second paragraph rejections relating to these arguments are withdrawn.

35 USC 103 rejections

PO argues with regard to the rejection of claim 1 over Horstmann that "the software of the links server… does not create the reciprocal site. At best, the software issues a reminder to the bike shop… to create a link." (Remarks at 22)

However, this argument is moot since all that claim 1 requires is for the reciprocal site to be created; nothing in the claim positively recites what/who creates the reciprocal site. Therefore, Horstmann discloses this limitation in its teaching that the reciprocal link is verified (i.e., was created), "Once link back 5 (third link information) is verified to

exist on the bike shop's page B, the method terminates. In this way, the inventive method provides for the creation of reciprocal page links." (Horstmann at 3:40-43)

35 USC 102 rejections

PO argues with regard to the rejection of claims 8 and 14 that Horstmann does not disclose a web page implementation system that performs all of the limitations. (Remarks at 23) This argument is found persuasive; therefore, the 35 USC 102 rejections of claims 8 and 14 are withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

In the event the determination of the status of the application as subject to AIA 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103 (or as subject to pre-AIA 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103) is incorrect, any correction of the statutory basis for the rejection will not be considered a new ground of rejection if the prior art relied upon, and the rationale supporting the rejection, would be the same under either status.

The following is a quotation of pre-AIA 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 1 is rejected under pre-AIA 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 5,995,099 to Horstmann ("Horstmann").

As per claim 1, Horstmann discloses a method of assisting a website designer in establishing an arrangement between a first website being designed by the website designer and a second website in order to market the first website at the second website upon the activation of the first website on the internet (1:60-61, “A method establishes reciprocal page links between pages on the Internet.”), the method comprising:

receiving information at a user interface indicating a type of an element for marketing that is to be displayed at the second website (2:57-62, “Assume that the bike-shop owner is viewing the bookstore's page A (step 1). If the bike-shop owner wishes to add a link from the bookstore's page A to bike-shop site 2, then the bike-shop owner could select the "add link" link 3 on page A (step 2).”; Figs. 1-2), and information specifying the second website at which the element is to be displayed (3:1-10, “Form 4 also solicits from the bike shop: 1) second link information indicative of a page (in this example page B) that will contain link back 5 (third link information), and 2) fourth link information indicative of which of the bike shop's pages (in this example, page D) the bike shop wishes the bookstore to provide a link to. Forms, such as form 4, are a conventional type of electronic document used to elicit responses from users through graphical interfaces that may include text, fill-in blanks, buttons, and check boxes.”);

saving the information at a first database that is coupled to the user interface (9:41; 10:1; step 57 in Fig. 5.);

obtaining the element for marketing of the type indicated (3:14-26, “Once the bike-shop owner fills out form 4, the bike-shop owner selects a "form complete" button 7, which initiates a transfer of the form data to the server supporting form 4 (hereafter the "links server"). The links server includes software that presents and processes forms, and could be the same server that maintains the bookstore's pages or some other server. Software on the links server (step 4) automatically modifies page A to include a link 6 (the fourth link information) from page A to page D as requested by the bike-shop owner. The new page A, including the link to page D, is then redisplayed to the bike-shop owner. Thus, page A is modified and redisplayed without any intervention from the bookstore owner.”);

causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website when the first website is activated with respect to the internet (3:20-24, “Software on the links server (step 4) automatically modifies page A to include a link 6 (the fourth link information) from page A to page D as requested by the bike-shop owner. The new page A, including the link to page D, is then redisplayed to the bike-shop owner. Thus, page A is modified and redisplayed without any intervention from the bookstore owner.”), wherein the element for marketing includes at least one of a banner ad concerning the first website and a link to the first website (1:12-14, “Such links are typically represented as highlighted text or graphic representations that may be selected using a mouse-type pointer (a "mouse").”);

determining whether a reciprocal site for the display of at least one marketing element of a third party website exists in the first website being designed (3:27-34,

"After a period of time (typically a few days), verification software, typically located on the links server, verifies (step 5) that the bike-shop owner reciprocated by providing a link back 5 to page C as requested on form 4. Because the bike-shop owner indicated on form 4 that the back link would be provided on page B, the verification software searches page B for link back 5 (the third link information) to page C."); and

creating the reciprocal site for the display of the at least one marketing element of the third party website when the reciprocal site does not yet exist in the first website being designed (3:37-43, "Alternatively, the software may issue a reminder to the bike shop (via e-mail, for example) to add link back 5 to the bookstore. Once link back 5 (third link information) is verified to exist on the bike shop's page B, the method terminates. In this way, the inventive method provides for the creation of reciprocal page links;" Examiner notes this is a conditional limitation as it only occurs "when the reciprocal site does not yet exist in the first website." Accordingly, the method does not always perform this step.).

Horstmann does not expressly disclose "during design of the first website." However, it is old and well known to establish marketing/advertising arrangements of a website while it is being designed. Doing so helps to ensure that a website's marketing campaign starts when the website is launched on the internet, thereby also helping to ensure its success. Additionally, the disclosure of '259 discusses the updating of marketing elements even after a website has been activated on the internet (16:13-18, "In certain embodiments, a registered user is allowed to change its selections of desired marketing locations after the posting of its website; in such embodiments, it can be the

case that a link displayed at a given marketing location is removed from display because the registered user who selected the link changed its preferences.").

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Horstmann to include deciding marketing elements to be displayed at a second website *during design of the first website* as doing so helps to ensure that the website will be visited and accessed as soon as it is live on the internet, which helps to ensure a successful internet presence ('259, Background of the Invention, 2:23-26, "[t]he success of an internet-based business employing a website depends critically upon whether consumers on the internet are aware of, and can easily access, the website.").

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 2-3 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 4-29 are allowed. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: Horstmann does not disclose all of the limitations of the independent claims being performed by a single entity, a website/web page implementation system.

Notification of Prior or Concurrent Proceedings

Applicant is reminded of the continuing obligation under 37 CFR 1.178(b), to timely apprise the Office of any prior or concurrent proceeding in which '259 is or was involved. These proceedings would include interferences, reissues, reexaminations, and litigation.

Information Material to Patentability

Applicant is further reminded of the continuing obligation under 37 CFR 1.56, to timely apprise the Office of any information which is material to patentability of the claims under consideration in this reissue application.

These obligations rest with each individual associated with the filing and prosecution of this application for reissue. See also MPEP §§ 1404, 1442.01 and 1442.04.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any

extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Future Correspondence

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michelle Tarae whose telephone number is (571) 272-6727. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Woo Choi can be reached on 571-272-4179.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Signed:

/C. Michelle Tarae/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3992

Conferees:

/RSD/ /WHC/

To: ptomail@iplawpro.com,tforsythe@iplawpro.com,kcuenot@iplawpro.com
From: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Cc: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
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Oct 20, 2015 05:28:13 AM

Dear PAIR Customer:

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WELLINGTON, FL 33414
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13963050	CTFR	10/20/2015	8201-0015

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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

PATENT APPLICATION INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

Attorney Docket No.: 8201-0015 **PATENT**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of	:	Customer Number: 55246
Thomas DISTEFANO III	:	Confirmation Number: 1571
Application No.: 13/963,050	:	Group Art Unit: 3992
Filed: August 9, 2013	:	Examiner: C. Tarae

For: DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116

Mail Stop AF
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

The following Amendment and Remarks are submitted in response to the Final Office Action dated October 20, 2015, pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Amended) A method of assisting a website designer in establishing an arrangement between a first website being designed by the website designer and a second website in order to market the first website at the second website upon the activation of the first website on the internet, the method comprising:

during design of the first website, receiving information at a user interface indicating a type of an element for marketing that is to be displayed at the second website, and information specifying the second website at which the element is to be displayed;

saving the information at a first database that is coupled to the user interface;

obtaining the element for marketing of the type indicated;

causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website when the first website is activated with respect to the internet, wherein the element for marketing includes at least one of a banner ad concerning the first website and a link to the first website;

determining whether a reciprocal site for the display of at least one marketing element of a third party website exists in the first website being designed; [[and]]

creating the reciprocal site for the display of the at least one marketing element of the third party website when the reciprocal site does not yet exist in the first website being designed; and

when the element for marketing the first website is a banner ad concerning the first website, causing the sequential display at the reciprocal site of the first website of a plurality banner ads respectively concerning a plurality of third party websites, when the first website is activated with respect to the internet.

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Claim 2 (Cancelled)

3. (Amended) A [[The]] method [[of claim 1, further]] of assisting a website designer in establishing an arrangement between a first website being designed by the website designer and a second website in order to market the first website at the second website upon the activation of the first website on the internet, the method comprising:

during design of the first website, receiving information at a user interface indicating a type of an element for marketing that is to be displayed at the second website, and information specifying the second website at which the element is to be displayed;

saving the information at a first database that is coupled to the user interface;

obtaining the element for marketing of the type indicated;

causing the display of the element for marketing at the second website when the first website is activated with respect to the internet, wherein the element for marketing includes at least one of a banner ad concerning the first website and a link to the first website;

determining whether a reciprocal site for the display of at least one marketing element of a third party website exists in the first website being designed;

creating the reciprocal site for the display of the at least one marketing element of the third party website when the reciprocal site does not yet exist in the first website being designed; and

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when the element for marketing the first website is a link to the first website, causing the display at the reciprocal site of the first website of a plurality of links to the plurality of third party websites, when the first website is activated with respect to the internet.

4. (Original) A method, within a computer hardware website implementation system, of establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, comprising:

registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving, by the website implementation system, a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving, by the website implementation system, a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing, by the website implementation system, a reciprocal site in the first website for a first functional marketing element; and

upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, the computer website implementation system implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

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5. (Original) A computer hardware website implementation system for establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, comprising:

at least one processor, the at least one processor configured for

registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing a reciprocal site in the first website for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing, upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

6. (Original) The website implementation system of claim 5, further comprising a database of registered websites.

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7. (Original) A computer program product including a computer-readable storage medium having stored therein computer usable program code for establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first website and a preexisting second website, the computer usable program code, which when executed by a computer hardware implementation system, causing the computer hardware implementation system to perform:

registering the second website with the website implementation system;

receiving a request by a first user to implement the first website;

receiving a selection by the first user as to a second functional marketing element to be activated on the second website;

establishing a reciprocal site in the first website for the first functional marketing element; and

upon the first website being activated with respect to the internet, implementing the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first website to implement a first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second website to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second website, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first website.

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8. (Previously amended) A method, within a computer hardware web page implementation system, of establishing a reciprocal arrangement between a first web page, associated with a first user, and a second web page, comprising:

generating, by the web page implementation system, a second functional marketing element, associated with the first user, to be activated on the second web page;

establishing, by the web page implementation system, a reciprocal site in the first web page for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing, by the web page implementation system and upon the first web page being activated with respect to the internet, the reciprocal arrangement by causing

(i) the first web page to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second web page to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first web page.

9. (Previously amended) The method of claim 8, further comprising

including, within the first web page, a web asset provided by a third party separate from the computer hardware system.

10. (Previously amended) The method of claim 9, further comprising

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causing, based upon the web asset being included within the first web page site, the third party to be compensated.

11. (Previously amended) The method of claim 9, wherein the web asset is a functional application.

12. (Previously amended) The method of claim 8, wherein the second functional marketing element includes an image.

13. (Previously amended) The method of claim 12, further comprising receiving, from the first user, the image.

14. (Previously amended) A computer hardware web page implementation system configured to establish a reciprocal arrangement between a first web page, associated with a first user, and a second web page, comprising:

at least one processor, wherein the at least one processor is configured to perform:

receiving a request by the first user to implement the first web page;

generating a second functional marketing element, associated with the first user, to be activated on the second web page;

establishing a reciprocal site in the first web page for a first functional marketing element; and

implementing the reciprocal arrangement upon the first web page being activated with respect to the internet by causing

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(i) the first web page to implement the first functional marketing element, and

(ii) the second web page to implement the second functional marketing element, wherein

the first functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a second user of the first functional marketing element to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element directs, via the internet, a third user of the second functional marketing element to the first web page.

15. (Previously amended) The system of claim 14, wherein the at least one processor is further configured to perform:

including, within the first web page, a web asset provided by a third party separate from the computer hardware system.

16. (Previously amended) The system of claim 15, wherein the at least one processor is further configured to perform:

causing, based upon the web asset being included within the first web page site, the third party to be compensated.

17. (Previously amended) The system of claim 15, wherein

the web asset is a functional application.

18. (Twice Amended) The system of claim 14, wherein

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the second functional marketing element includes an image.

19. (Previously amended) The system of claim 18, wherein the at least one processor is further configured to perform:

receiving, from the first user, the image.

20. (Previously amended) The method of claim 8, wherein

the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first web page.

21. (Previously amended) The method of claim 20, wherein

the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second web page opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

22. (Previously amended) The system of claim 14, wherein

the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second web page, and

the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first web page.

23. (Previously amended) The system of claim 22, wherein

the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second web page opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

24. (Previously amended) The method of claim 4, wherein

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the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second website, and the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first website.

25. (Previously amended) The method of claim 24, wherein the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second website opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

26. (Previously amended) The system of claim 5, wherein the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second website, and the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first website.

27. (Previously amended) The system of claim 26, wherein the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second website opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

28. (Previously amended) The computer program product of claim 7, wherein the first functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the second website, and the second functional marketing element consists of a hyperlink to the first website.

29. (Previously amended) The computer program product of claim 28, wherein the reciprocal arrangement is based upon both the first user and a user associated with the second website opting into the reciprocal arrangement.

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REMARKS

At the time of the Fifth Office Action dated October 20, 2015, claims 1-29 were pending in this application. Applicants acknowledge, with appreciation, the Examiner's allowance of claims 4-29. Applicants also acknowledge, with appreciation, the Examiner's indication that claims 2 and 3 contain allowable subject matter.

Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 2 therein and, consequently, claim 2 has been cancelled. Claim 3 has also been amended to include the limitations of claim 1, upon which claim 3 depends. Applicant is not conceding in this application that claim 1, as originally presented, is not patentable over the prior art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments and cancellation are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the allowable subject matter noted by the Examiner. Applicant respectfully reserves the right to pursue these and other claims in one or more continuations and/or divisional patent applications.

While Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 for Obviousness Based upon Horstmann, U.S. Patent No. 5,995,099, Applicant notes that claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 2. Thus, the Examiner's rejection of claim 1 is moot.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper,

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including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 503611, and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Date: October 23, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

/Scott D. Paul/
Scott D. Paul
Registration No. 42,984
CUSTOMER NUMBER 55246

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Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

EFS ID:	23876542
Application Number:	13963050
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	1571
Title of Invention:	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Customer Number:	55246
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Filer Authorized By:	Scott David Paul
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0015
Receipt Date:	23-OCT-2015
Filing Date:	09-AUG-2013
Time Stamp:	15:00:38
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	no

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1		8201-0015_AmendmenttoOfficeAction5_10-23-15.pdf	86505 6f7b20bc6bcd0cce97dacdd53df09a77843566b3	yes	13

	Multipart Description/PDF files in .zip description		
	Document Description	**Start**	**End**
	Response After Final Action	1	1
	Claims	2	11
	Applicant Arguments/Remarks Made in an Amendment	12	13
Warnings:			
Information:			
	Total Files Size (in bytes):	86505	

This Acknowledgement Receipt evidences receipt on the noted date by the USPTO of the indicated documents, characterized by the applicant, and including page counts, where applicable. It serves as evidence of receipt similar to a Post Card, as described in MPEP 503.

New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111
If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371
If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office
If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

PTO/SB/06 (09-11)
Approved for use through 1/31/2014. OMB 0651-0032
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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PATENT APPLICATION FEE DETERMINATION RECORD Substitute for Form PTO-875	Application or Docket Number 13/963,050	Filing Date 08/09/2013	☐ To be Mailed

ENTITY: ☐ LARGE ☒ SMALL ☐ MICRO

APPLICATION AS FILED – PART I

FOR	(Column 1) NUMBER FILED	(Column 2) NUMBER EXTRA	RATE ($)	FEE ($)
☐ BASIC FEE (37 CFR 1.16(a), (b), or (c))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ SEARCH FEE (37 CFR 1.16(k), (i), or (m))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
☐ EXAMINATION FEE (37 CFR 1.16(o), (p), or (q))	N/A	N/A	N/A	
TOTAL CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(i))	minus 20 =	*	X $ =	
INDEPENDENT CLAIMS (37 CFR 1.16(h))	minus 3 =	*	X $ =	
☐ APPLICATION SIZE FEE (37 CFR 1.16(s))	If the specification and drawings exceed 100 sheets of paper, the application size fee due is $310 ($155 for small entity) for each additional 50 sheets or fraction thereof. See 35 U.S.C. 41(a)(1)(G) and 37 CFR 1.16(s).			
☐ MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM PRESENT (37 CFR 1.16(j))				
* If the difference in column 1 is less than zero, enter "0" in column 2.			TOTAL	

APPLICATION AS AMENDED – PART II

AMENDMENT **10/23/2015**

	(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	* 29	Minus	** 29	= 0	X $40 =	0
Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	* 6	Minus	***6	= 0	X $210 =	0
☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
					TOTAL ADD'L FEE	0

AMENDMENT

	(Column 1) CLAIMS REMAINING AFTER AMENDMENT		(Column 2) HIGHEST NUMBER PREVIOUSLY PAID FOR	(Column 3) PRESENT EXTRA	RATE ($)	ADDITIONAL FEE ($)
Total (37 CFR 1.16(i))	*	Minus	**	=	X $ =	
Independent (37 CFR 1.16(h))	*	Minus	***	=	X $ =	
☐ Application Size Fee (37 CFR 1.16(s))						
☐ FIRST PRESENTATION OF MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM (37 CFR 1.16(j))						
					TOTAL ADD'L FEE	

* If the entry in column 1 is less than the entry in column 2, write "0" in column 3.
** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 20, enter "20".
*** If the "Highest Number Previously Paid For" IN THIS SPACE is less than 3, enter "3".
The "Highest Number Previously Paid For" (Total or Independent) is the highest number found in the appropriate box in column 1.

LIE
/DEANNA RORIE/

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.16. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

If you need assistance in completing the form, call 1-800-PTO-9199 and select option 2.

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NOTICE OF ALLOWANCE AND FEE(S) DUE

55246 7590 11/24/2015

Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12161 KEN ADAMS WAY
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414

EXAMINER
TARAE, CATHERINE MICHELLE

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3992	

DATE MAILED: 11/24/2015

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/963,050	08/09/2013	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III	8201-0015	1571

TITLE OF INVENTION: DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

APPLN. TYPE	ENTITY STATUS	ISSUE FEE DUE	PUBLICATION FEE DUE	PREV. PAID ISSUE FEE	TOTAL FEE(S) DUE	DATE DUE
nonprovisional	SMALL	$480	$0	$0	$480	02/24/2016

THE APPLICATION IDENTIFIED ABOVE HAS BEEN EXAMINED AND IS ALLOWED FOR ISSUANCE AS A PATENT. PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS CLOSED. THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWANCE IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS. THIS APPLICATION IS SUBJECT TO WITHDRAWAL FROM ISSUE AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE OFFICE OR UPON PETITION BY THE APPLICANT. SEE 37 CFR 1.313 AND MPEP 1308.

THE ISSUE FEE AND PUBLICATION FEE (IF REQUIRED) MUST BE PAID WITHIN THREE MONTHS FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS NOTICE OR THIS APPLICATION SHALL BE REGARDED AS ABANDONED. THIS STATUTORY PERIOD CANNOT BE EXTENDED. SEE 35 U.S.C. 151. THE ISSUE FEE DUE INDICATED ABOVE DOES NOT REFLECT A CREDIT FOR ANY PREVIOUSLY PAID ISSUE FEE IN THIS APPLICATION. IF AN ISSUE FEE HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN PAID IN THIS APPLICATION (AS SHOWN ABOVE), THE RETURN OF PART B OF THIS FORM WILL BE CONSIDERED A REQUEST TO REAPPLY THE PREVIOUSLY PAID ISSUE FEE TOWARD THE ISSUE FEE NOW DUE.

HOW TO REPLY TO THIS NOTICE:

I. Review the ENTITY STATUS shown above. If the ENTITY STATUS is shown as SMALL or MICRO, verify whether entitlement to that entity status still applies.

If the ENTITY STATUS is the same as shown above, pay the TOTAL FEE(S) DUE shown above.

If the ENTITY STATUS is changed from that shown above, on PART B - FEE(S) TRANSMITTAL, complete section number 5 titled "Change in Entity Status (from status indicated above)".

For purposes of this notice, small entity fees are 1/2 the amount of undiscounted fees, and micro entity fees are 1/2 the amount of small entity fees.

II. PART B - FEE(S) TRANSMITTAL, or its equivalent, must be completed and returned to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) with your ISSUE FEE and PUBLICATION FEE (if required). If you are charging the fee(s) to your deposit account, section "4b" of Part B - Fee(s) Transmittal should be completed and an extra copy of the form should be submitted. If an equivalent of Part B is filed, a request to reapply a previously paid issue fee must be clearly made, and delays in processing may occur due to the difficulty in recognizing the paper as an equivalent of Part B.

III. All communications regarding this application must give the application number. Please direct all communications prior to issuance to Mail Stop ISSUE FEE unless advised to the contrary.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Utility patents issuing on applications filed on or after Dec. 12, 1980 may require payment of maintenance fees. It is patentee's responsibility to ensure timely payment of maintenance fees when due.

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PART B - FEE(S) TRANSMITTAL

Complete and send this form, together with applicable fee(s), to: Mail **Mail Stop ISSUE FEE**
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
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INSTRUCTIONS: This form should be used for transmitting the ISSUE FEE and PUBLICATION FEE (if required). Blocks 1 through 5 should be completed where appropriate. All further correspondence including the Patent, advance orders and notification of maintenance fees will be mailed to the current correspondence address as indicated unless corrected below or directed otherwise in Block 1, by (a) specifying a new correspondence address; and/or (b) indicating a separate "FEE ADDRESS" for maintenance fee notifications.

CURRENT CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS (Note: Use Block 1 for any change of address)

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Note: A certificate of mailing can only be used for domestic mailings of the Fee(s) Transmittal. This certificate cannot be used for any other accompanying papers. Each additional paper, such as an assignment or formal drawing, must have its own certificate of mailing or transmission.

Certificate of Mailing or Transmission

I hereby certify that this Fee(s) Transmittal is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage for first class mail in an envelope addressed to the Mail Stop ISSUE FEE address above, or being facsimile transmitted to the USPTO (571) 273-2885, on the date indicated below.

(Depositor's name)
(Signature)
(Date)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/963,050	08/09/2013	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III	8201-0015	1571

TITLE OF INVENTION: DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

APPLN. TYPE	ENTITY STATUS	ISSUE FEE DUE	PUBLICATION FEE DUE	PREV. PAID ISSUE FEE	TOTAL FEE(S) DUE	DATE DUE
nonprovisional	SMALL	$480	$0	$0	$480	02/24/2016

EXAMINER	ART UNIT	CLASS-SUBCLASS
TARAE, CATHERINE MICHELLE	3992	705-014100

1. Change of correspondence address or indication of "Fee Address" (37 CFR 1.363).

❑ Change of correspondence address (or Change of Correspondence Address form PTO/SB/122) attached.

❑ "Fee Address" indication (or "Fee Address" Indication form PTO/SB/47; Rev 03-02 or more recent) attached. **Use of a Customer Number is required.**

2. For printing on the patent front page, list

(1) The names of up to 3 registered patent attorneys or agents OR, alternatively,

(2) The name of a single firm (having as a member a registered attorney or agent) and the names of up to 2 registered patent attorneys or agents. If no name is listed, no name will be printed.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

3. ASSIGNEE NAME AND RESIDENCE DATA TO BE PRINTED ON THE PATENT (print or type)

PLEASE NOTE: Unless an assignee is identified below, no assignee data will appear on the patent. If an assignee is identified below, the document has been filed for recordation as set forth in 37 CFR 3.11. Completion of this form is NOT a substitute for filing an assignment.

(A) NAME OF ASSIGNEE

(B) RESIDENCE: (CITY and STATE OR COUNTRY)

Please check the appropriate assignee category or categories (will not be printed on the patent) : ❑ Individual ❑ Corporation or other private group entity ❑ Government

4a. The following fee(s) are submitted:

❑ Issue Fee

❑ Publication Fee (No small entity discount permitted)

❑ Advance Order - # of Copies _____

4b. Payment of Fee(s): (**Please first reapply any previously paid issue fee shown above**)

❑ A check is enclosed.

❑ Payment by credit card. Form PTO-2038 is attached.

❑ The director is hereby authorized to charge the required fee(s), any deficiency, or credits any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number _____ (enclose an extra copy of this form).

5. **Change in Entity Status** (from status indicated above)

❑ Applicant certifying micro entity status. See 37 CFR 1.29

NOTE: Absent a valid certification of Micro Entity Status (see forms PTO/SB/15A and 15B), issue fee payment in the micro entity amount will not be accepted at the risk of application abandonment.

❑ Applicant asserting small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27

NOTE: If the application was previously under micro entity status, checking this box will be taken to be a notification of loss of entitlement to micro entity status.

❑ Applicant changing to regular undiscounted fee status.

NOTE: Checking this box will be taken to be a notification of loss of entitlement to small or micro entity status, as applicable.

NOTE: This form must be signed in accordance with 37 CFR 1.31 and 1.33. See 37 CFR 1.4 for signature requirements and certifications.

Authorized Signature _____ Date _____

Typed or printed name _____ Registration No. _____

PTOL-85 Part B (10-13) Approved for use through 10/31/2013. OMB 0651-0033 U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/963,050	08/09/2013	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III	8201-0015	1571

55246 7590 11/24/2015

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SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414

EXAMINER	
TARAE, CATHERINE MICHELLE	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3992	

DATE MAILED: 11/24/2015

Determination of Patent Term Extension or Adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154 (b)

A reissue patent is for "the unexpired part of the term of the original patent." See 35 U.S.C. 251. Accordingly, the above-identified reissue application is not eligible for Patent Term Extension or Adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b).

Any questions regarding the Patent Term Extension or Adjustment determination should be directed to the Office of Patent Legal Administration at (571)-272-7702. Questions relating to issue and publication fee payments should be directed to the Customer Service Center of the Office of Patent Publication at 1-(888)-786-0101 or (571)-272-4200.

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OMB Clearance and PRA Burden Statement for PTOL-85 Part B

The Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995 requires Federal agencies to obtain Office of Management and Budget approval before requesting most types of information from the public. When OMB approves an agency request to collect information from the public, OMB (i) provides a valid OMB Control Number and expiration date for the agency to display on the instrument that will be used to collect the information and (ii) requires the agency to inform the public about the OMB Control Number's legal significance in accordance with 5 CFR 1320.5(b).

The information collected by PTOL-85 Part B is required by 37 CFR 1.311. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Privacy Act Statement

The Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579) requires that you be given certain information in connection with your submission of the attached form related to a patent application or patent. Accordingly, pursuant to the requirements of the Act, please be advised that: (1) the general authority for the collection of this information is 35 U.S.C. 2(b)(2); (2) furnishing of the information solicited is voluntary; and (3) the principal purpose for which the information is used by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is to process and/or examine your submission related to a patent application or patent. If you do not furnish the requested information, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office may not be able to process and/or examine your submission, which may result in termination of proceedings or abandonment of the application or expiration of the patent.

The information provided by you in this form will be subject to the following routine uses:

1. The information on this form will be treated confidentially to the extent allowed under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) and the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C 552a). Records from this system of records may be disclosed to the Department of Justice to determine whether disclosure of these records is required by the Freedom of Information Act.
2. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, in the course of presenting evidence to a court, magistrate, or administrative tribunal, including disclosures to opposing counsel in the course of settlement negotiations.
3. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Member of Congress submitting a request involving an individual, to whom the record pertains, when the individual has requested assistance from the Member with respect to the subject matter of the record.
4. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a contractor of the Agency having need for the information in order to perform a contract. Recipients of information shall be required to comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(m).
5. A record related to an International Application filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization, pursuant to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.
6. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to another federal agency for purposes of National Security review (35 U.S.C. 181) and for review pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 218(c)).
7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (i.e., GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.
8. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the public after either publication of the application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b) or issuance of a patent pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 151. Further, a record may be disclosed, subject to the limitations of 37 CFR 1.14, as a routine use, to the public if the record was filed in an application which became abandoned or in which the proceedings were terminated and which application is referenced by either a published application, an application open to public inspection or an issued patent.
9. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency, if the USPTO becomes aware of a violation or potential violation of law or regulation.

Notice of Allowability	Application No. 13/963,050	Applicant(s) DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.	
	Examiner MICHELLE TARAE	Art Unit 3992	AIA (First Inventor to File) Status No

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to *After Final mailed 10/23/15*.
   ☐ A declaration(s)/affidavit(s) under **37 CFR 1.130(b)** was/were filed on_____.
2. ☐ An election was made by the applicant in response to a restriction requirement set forth during the interview on _____; the restriction requirement and election have been incorporated into this action.
3. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are *1 and 3-29*. As a result of the allowed claim(s), you may be eligible to benefit from the **Patent Prosecution Highway** program at a participating intellectual property office for the corresponding application. For more information, please see http://www.uspto.gov/patents/init_events/pph/index.jsp or send an inquiry to PPHfeedback@uspto.gov .
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

   Certified copies:

   a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some *c) ☐ None of the:
      1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
      2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____ .
      3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

   * Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
   ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

   Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
3. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
4. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____ .
5. ☐ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
6. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
7. ☐ Other _____.

/MICHELLE TARAE/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3992

TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
IPR2025-01224
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NOTICE OF ALLOWANCE

The following is a Notice of Allowance ("Allowance") in Reissue Application 13/963,050 ("'050") for U.S. Patent No. 7,996,259 ("'259") filed August 9, 2013.

This Allowance is in response to the After Final amendments filed October 23, 2015 ("After Final").

The After Final places allowable subject matter from dependent claims 2 and 3 into independent claims and cancels claim 2. Claims 4-29 had been indicated as allowable in the Final Office Action mailed October 20, 2015.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1 and 3-29 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

As per claim 1, none of the prior art of record teach, *inter alia*, *causing the sequential display at the reciprocal site of the first website of a plurality banner ads respectively concerning a plurality of third party websites, when the first website is activated with respect to the internet*.

As per claim 3, none of the prior art of record teach, *inter alia*, *when the element for marketing the first website is a link to the first website, causing the display at the reciprocal site of the first website of a plurality of links to the plurality of third party websites, when the first website is activated with respect to the internet*.

As per claims 4-29, none of the prior art of record teach, *inter alia*, *all of the limitations of independent claims 4, 5, 7, 8 and 14 being performed by a single entity, a website/web page implementation system*.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled “Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance.”

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michelle Tarae whose telephone number is (571) 272-6727. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone unsuccessful, the examiner’s supervisor, Woo Choi can be reached on 571-272-4179.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a

USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information

system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Signed:

/C. Michelle Tarae/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3992

Conferees:

/RSD/

/ALEXANDER KOSOWSKI/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3992

EAST Search History

EAST Search History (Prior Art)

Ref #	Hits	Search Query	DBs	Default Operator	Plurals	Time Stamp
L2	2377	705/14.1.ccls.	US-PGPUB; USPAT	OR	OFF	2015/11/10 15:35
L5	6449	g06q30/00.cpc.	US-PGPUB; USPAT	OR	OFF	2015/11/10 15:41

EAST Search History (Interference)

Ref #	Hits	Search Query	DBs	Default Operator	Plurals	Time Stamp
L3	1081	705/14.1.ccls.	USPAT	OR	OFF	2015/11/10 15:36
L4	2020	g06q30/00.cpc.	USPAT	OR	OFF	2015/11/10 15:40

11/10/2015 4:01:48 PM
C:\Users\ctarae\Documents\EAST\Workspaces\13963050.wsp

TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
IPR2025-01224
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Attorney Docket No.: 8201-0015 **PATENT**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of	:	Customer Number: 55246
Thomas DISTEFANO III	:	Confirmation Number: 1571
Application No.: 13/963,050	:	Group Art Unit: 3992 OK TO ENTER: /M.T./
Filed: August 9, 2013	:	Examiner: C. Tarae

For: DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116

Mail Stop AF
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

The following Amendment and Remarks are submitted in response to the Final Office Action dated October 20, 2015, pursuant to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

BIB DATA SHEET

CONFIRMATION NO. 1571

SERIAL NUMBER	FILING or 371(c) DATE RULE	CLASS	GROUP ART UNIT	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
13/963,050	08/09/2013	705	3992	8201-0015

APPLICANTS
PT 259, LLC, Boca Raton, FL, Assignee (with 37 CFR 1.172 Interest);

INVENTORS
THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III, BOCA RATON, FL;

**** CONTINUING DATA ***************************
This application is a REI of 09/589,551 06/07/2000 PAT 7996259

**** FOREIGN APPLICATIONS ***************************

**** IF REQUIRED, FOREIGN FILING LICENSE GRANTED **** ** SMALL ENTITY **
11/29/2013

Foreign Priority claimed ☐ Yes ☑ No 35 USC 119(a-d) conditions met ☐ Yes ☑ No Verified and Acknowledged /MICHELLE TARAE/ Examiner's Signature	☐ Met after Allowance Initials	STATE OR COUNTRY	SHEETS DRAWINGS	TOTAL CLAIMS	INDEPENDENT CLAIMS
		FL	23	19	6

ADDRESS

Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12161 KEN ADAMS WAY
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414
UNITED STATES

TITLE

DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

FILING FEE RECEIVED	FEES: Authority has been given in Paper	☐ All Fees
2510	No._____ to charge/credit DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	☐ 1.16 Fees (Filing)
	No._____ for following:	☐ 1.17 Fees (Processing Ext. of time)
		☐ 1.18 Fees (Issue)
		☐ Other _____
		☐ Credit

Search Notes	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13963050	DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	MICHELLE TARAE	3992

CPC- SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner
G06Q 90/00	01/25/14	DL
G06Q 90/00	07/11/14	DL
(G06F17/2247 OR G06F3/0481 OR G06F17/2235 OR G06Q30/02 OR G06Q30/0207 OR G06Q30/0256 OR G06Q30/0273 OR G06Q30/0276 OR G06Q30/0277 OR G06Q30/0641 OR G06Q30/08).CPC.)	09/18/14	dl
G06Q 30/00	11/10/15	cmt

CPC COMBINATION SETS - SEARCHED		
Symbol	Date	Examiner

US CLASSIFICATION SEARCHED			
Class	Subclass	Date	Examiner
705	14.1	01/25/14	dl
705	14.1	07/11/14	DL
705	14.1	09/18/14	dl
705	14.1	11/10/15	cmt

SEARCH NOTES		
Search Notes	Date	Examiner
EAST	01/25/14	DL
EAST	07/11/14	DL
east	09/18/14	dl
See attached EAST search history and litigation search history	3/16/15	cmt

INTERFERENCE SEARCH			
US Class/ CPC Symbol	US Subclass / CPC Group	Date	Examiner

TikTok Inc. EX1002
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INTERFERENCE SEARCH			
US Class/ CPC Symbol	**US Subclass / CPC Group**	**Date**	**Examiner**
705 / G06Q	14.1 / 30/00	07/11/14	DL
705 / G06Q	14.1 / 30/00	11/10/15	cmt

TikTok Inc. EX1002
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Issue Classification	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13963050	DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**
	MICHELLE TARAE	3992

CPC							
Symbol						**Type**	**Version**
G06Q		30	/	00		F	2013-01-01
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CPC Combination Sets							
Symbol					**Type**	**Set**	**Ranking**	**Version**
			/					
			/					

NONE		**Total Claims Allowed:**	
(Assistant Examiner)	(Date)	28	
/MICHELLE TARAE/ Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3992	11/10/2015	O.G. Print Claim(s)	O.G. Print Figure
(Primary Examiner)	(Date)	14	1

TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
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Page 750 of 771

Issue Classification	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13963050	DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**
	MICHELLE TARAE	3992

US ORIGINAL CLASSIFICATION		INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION	
CLASS	SUBCLASS	CLAIMED	NON-CLAIMED
705	14.1	G 0 6 Q 30 / 00 (2012.01.01)	

CROSS REFERENCE(S)						
CLASS	SUBCLASS (ONE SUBCLASS PER BLOCK)					

NONE (Assistant Examiner)	(Date)	**Total Claims Allowed:** 28	
/MICHELLE TARAE/ Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3992 (Primary Examiner)	11/10/2015 (Date)	O.G. Print Claim(s) 14	O.G. Print Figure 1

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Page 751 of 771

Issue Classification	Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination
	13963050	DISTEFANO, THOMAS L.
	Examiner	**Art Unit**
	MICHELLE TARAE	3992

☒ Claims renumbered in the same order as presented by applicant ☐ CPA ☐ T.D. ☐ R.1.47

Final	Original	Final	Original	Final	Original	Final	Original	Final	Original	Final	Original	Final	Original	Final	Original

NONE (Assistant Examiner)	(Date)	**Total Claims Allowed:** 28	
/MICHELLE TARAE/ Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3992 (Primary Examiner)	11/10/2015 (Date)	O.G. Print Claim(s) 14	O.G. Print Figure 1

TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
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PART B - FEE(S) TRANSMITTAL

Complete and send this form, together with applicable fee(s), to: Mail **Mail Stop ISSUE FEE**
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
or Fax (571)-273-2885

INSTRUCTIONS: This form should be used for transmitting the ISSUE FEE and PUBLICATION FEE (if required). Blocks 1 through 5 should be completed where appropriate. All further correspondence including the Patent, advance orders and notification of maintenance fees will be mailed to the current correspondence address as indicated unless corrected below or directed otherwise in Block 1, by (a) specifying a new correspondence address; and/or (b) indicating a separate "FEE ADDRESS" for maintenance fee notifications.

CURRENT CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS (Note: Use Block 1 for any change of address)

55246 7590 11/24/2015

Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12161 KEN ADAMS WAY
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414

Note: A certificate of mailing can only be used for domestic mailings of the Fee(s) Transmittal. This certificate cannot be used for any other accompanying papers. Each additional paper, such as an assignment or formal drawing, must have its own certificate of mailing or transmission.

Certificate of Mailing or Transmission

I hereby certify that this Fee(s) Transmittal is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage for first class mail in an envelope addressed to the Mail Stop ISSUE FEE address above, or being facsimile transmitted to the USPTO (571) 273-2885, on the date indicated below.

(Depositor's name)
(Signature)
(Date)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/963,050	08/09/2013	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III	8201-0015	1571

TITLE OF INVENTION: DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS

APPLN. TYPE	ENTITY STATUS	ISSUE FEE DUE	PUBLICATION FEE DUE	PREV. PAID ISSUE FEE	TOTAL FEE(S) DUE	DATE DUE
nonprovisional	SMALL	$480	$0	$0	$480	02/24/2016

EXAMINER	ART UNIT	CLASS-SUBCLASS
TARAE, CATHERINE MICHELLE	3992	705-014100

1. Change of correspondence address or indication of "Fee Address" (37 CFR 1.363).

☐ Change of correspondence address (or Change of Correspondence Address form PTO/SB/122) attached.

☐ "Fee Address" indication (or "Fee Address" Indication form PTO/SB/47; Rev 03-02 or more recent) attached. **Use of a Customer Number is required.**

2. For printing on the patent front page, list

(1) The names of up to 3 registered patent attorneys or agents OR, alternatively,

(2) The name of a single firm (having as a member a registered attorney or agent) and the names of up to 2 registered patent attorneys or agents. If no name is listed, no name will be printed.

1 Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim, LLC
2
3

3. ASSIGNEE NAME AND RESIDENCE DATA TO BE PRINTED ON THE PATENT (print or type)

PLEASE NOTE: Unless an assignee is identified below, no assignee data will appear on the patent. If an assignee is identified below, the document has been filed for recordation as set forth in 37 CFR 3.11. Completion of this form is NOT a substitute for filing an assignment.

(A) NAME OF ASSIGNEE (B) RESIDENCE: (CITY and STATE OR COUNTRY)

Please check the appropriate assignee category or categories (will not be printed on the patent) : ☐ Individual ☐ Corporation or other private group entity ☐ Government

4a. The following fee(s) are submitted:

☒ Issue Fee

☐ Publication Fee (No small entity discount permitted)

☐ Advance Order - # of Copies _____

4b. Payment of Fee(s): (**Please first reapply any previously paid issue fee shown above**)

☐ A check is enclosed.

☐ Payment by credit card. Form PTO-2038 is attached.

☒ The director is hereby authorized to charge the required fee(s), any deficiency, or credits any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 503611 (enclose an extra copy of this form).

5. **Change in Entity Status** (from status indicated above)

☐ Applicant certifying micro entity status. See 37 CFR 1.29

NOTE: Absent a valid certification of Micro Entity Status (see forms PTO/SB/15A and 15B), issue fee payment in the micro entity amount will not be accepted at the risk of application abandonment.

☒ Applicant asserting small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27

NOTE: If the application was previously under micro entity status, checking this box will be taken to be a notification of loss of entitlement to micro entity status.

☐ Applicant changing to regular undiscounted fee status.

NOTE: Checking this box will be taken to be a notification of loss of entitlement to small or micro entity status, as applicable.

NOTE: This form must be signed in accordance with 37 CFR 1.31 and 1.33. See 37 CFR 1.4 for signature requirements and certifications.

Authorized Signature /SCOTT D. PAUL/ Date NOVEMBER 24, 2015

Typed or printed name SCOTT D. PAUL Registration No. 42984

PTOL-85 Part B (10-13) Approved for use through 10/31/2013. OMB 0651-0033 U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
IPR2025-01224
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Electronic Patent Application Fee Transmittal

Application Number:	13963050
Filing Date:	09-Aug-2013
Title of Invention:	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0015

Filed as Small Entity

Filing Fees for Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Basic Filing:				
Pages:				
Claims:				
Miscellaneous-Filing:				
Petition:				
Patent-Appeals-and-Interference:				
Post-Allowance-and-Post-Issuance:				
Reissue Issue Fee	2511	1	480	480

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD($)
Extension-of-Time:				
Miscellaneous:				
		Total in USD ($)		**480**

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt	
EFS ID:	24174089
Application Number:	13963050
International Application Number:	
Confirmation Number:	1571
Title of Invention:	DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:	THOMAS L. DISTEFANO
Customer Number:	55246
Filer:	Scott David Paul/Alaine Allison
Filer Authorized By:	Scott David Paul
Attorney Docket Number:	8201-0015
Receipt Date:	24-NOV-2015
Filing Date:	09-AUG-2013
Time Stamp:	11:33:21
Application Type:	Utility under 35 USC 111(a)

Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	yes
Payment Type	Deposit Account
Payment was successfully received in RAM	$480
RAM confirmation Number	10885
Deposit Account	503611
Authorized User	PAUL, SCOTT
The Director of the USPTO is hereby authorized to charge indicated fees and credit any overpayment as follows: Charge any Additional Fees required under 37 C.F.R. Section 1.17 (Patent application and reexamination processing fees)	

File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Issue Fee Payment (PTO-85B)	8201-0015_IssueFeePayment_11-24-15.pdf	1005005 e495ff538114de4319cb1d0d570eeb1aece3e033	no	1
Warnings:					
Information:					
2	Fee Worksheet (SB06)	fee-info.pdf	30378 e6d64debbecb068bd40b33b26e553816e0eec415	no	2
Warnings:					
Information:					
		Total Files Size (in bytes):	1035383		

This Acknowledgement Receipt evidences receipt on the noted date by the USPTO of the indicated documents, characterized by the applicant, and including page counts, where applicable. It serves as evidence of receipt similar to a Post Card, as described in MPEP 503.

New Applications Under 35 U.S.C. 111
If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371
If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office
If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.

To: ptomail@iplawpro.com,tforsythe@iplawpro.com,kcuenot@iplawpro.com
From: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Cc: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
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Nov 24, 2015 05:31:54 AM

Dear PAIR Customer:

Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12161 KEN ADAMS WAY
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414
UNITED STATES

The following USPTO patent application(s) associated with your Customer Number, 55246 , have new outgoing correspondence. This correspondence is now available for viewing in Private PAIR.

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Application	Document	Mailroom Date	Attorney Docket No.
13963050	NOA	11/24/2015	8201-0015

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PATENT APPLICATION INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

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(PTO ASSISTANCE)

Application:	13963050	**Examiner:**	Tarae	**GAU:**	3992
From:	Patricia Pacenski	**Location:**	IDC	**Creation Date:**	11/30/2015

Tracking #: Week Date: 11/23/2015

DOC CODE	DOC DATE	MISCELLANEOUS
[ ] 1449		[ ] Continuing Data
[X] IDS	01/27/2014	[ ] Foreign Priority
[ ] CLM		[ ] Document Legibility
[ ] IIFW/FWCLM		[ ] Fees
[ ] SRFW		[ ] Petition (TC)
[ ] DRW		[ ] Other
[ ] OATH		
[ ] 312		
[ ] SPEC		

[RUSH] Message:

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REV: JUL 15

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(PTO ASSISTANCE)

Application:	13963050	**Examiner:**	Tarae	**GAU:**	3992
From:	Patricia Pacenski	**Location:**	IDC	**Creation Date:**	11/30/2015

Tracking #: Week Date: 11/23/2015

DOC CODE	DOC DATE	MISCELLANEOUS
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☐ DRW		☐ Other
☐ OATH		
☐ 312		
☐ SPEC		

[RUSH] Message:

Please initial/line through citations.
Thank you

[XRUSH] Response:

The IDS dated 1/27/2014 has been considered and annotated. Thank you.

Initials: /MT/

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REV: JUL 15

Doc code: IDS
Doc description: Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) Filed

PTO/SB/08a (01-10)
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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (**Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)**		
	Application Number	13963050
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	3681
	Examiner Name	LASTRA, DANIEL
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
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	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	3681
	Examiner Name	LASTRA, DANIEL
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

	1	KUMAR, N.S. et al., "Social Networking Site for Self Portfolio," [online] In UREAT Int'l. J. of Research in Engineering & Advanced Technology, Vol. 1, No. 1, March 2013, retrieved from the Internet: <http://www.ijreat.org/Papers%202013/Volume1/IJREATV1I1055.pdf>, 4 pg.	☐
	2	"LiveJournal.com", [online] LiveJournal, Inc. © 1999, retrieved Jan. 27, 2014, retrieved from the Internet: <http://web.archive.org/web/20000604011251/http://www.livejournal.com/>, 15 pg.	☐
	3	"AsianAvenue.com", [online] Community Connect Inc. © 1997-2000, retrieved Jan. 27, 2014, retrieved from the internet: <https://web.archive.org/web/20000510055338/http://www.asianavenue.com/>, 11 pg.	☐
	4	"BlackPlanet.com," [online] BlackPlanet.com © 2000, retrieved Jan. 27, 2014, retrieved from the Internet: <https://web.archive.org/web/20000606010618/http://www.blackplanet.com/>, 10 pg.	☐

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EXAMINER SIGNATURE

Examiner Signature	/Michelle Tarae/	Date Considered	02/01/2016

*EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through a citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

[1] See Kind Codes of USPTO Patent Documents at www.USPTO.GOV or MPEP 901.04. [2] Enter office that issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST.3). [3] For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. [4] Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST.16 if possible. [5] Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language translation is attached.

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TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
IPR2025-01224
Page 762 of 771

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT (Not for submission under 37 CFR 1.99)		
	Application Number	13963050
	Filing Date	2013-08-09
	First Named Inventor	DISTEFANO III
	Art Unit	3681
	Examiner Name	LASTRA, DANIEL
	Attorney Docket Number	8201-0015

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Please see 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 to make the appropriate selection(s):

☐ That each item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(1).

OR

☐ That no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application, and, to the knowledge of the person signing the certification after making reasonable inquiry, no item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was known to any individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement. See 37 CFR 1.97(e)(2).

☐ See attached certification statement.

☐ The fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17 (p) has been submitted herewith.

☒ A certification statement is not submitted herewith.

SIGNATURE

A signature of the applicant or representative is required in accordance with CFR 1.33, 10.18. Please see CFR 1.4(d) for the form of the signature.

Signature	/SCOTT D. PAUL/	Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2014-01-27
Name/Print	SCOTT D. PAUL	Registration Number	42984

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 1 hour to complete, including gathering, preparing and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

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TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
IPR2025-01224
Page 763 of 771

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The Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579) requires that you be given certain information in connection with your submission of the attached form related to a patent application or patent. Accordingly, pursuant to the requirements of the Act, please be advised that: (1) the general authority for the collection of this information is 35 U.S.C. 2(b)(2); (2) furnishing of the information solicited is voluntary; and (3) the principal purpose for which the information is used by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is to process and/or examine your submission related to a patent application or patent. If you do not furnish the requested information, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office may not be able to process and/or examine your submission, which may result in termination of proceedings or abandonment of the application or expiration of the patent.

The information provided by you in this form will be subject to the following routine uses:

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5. A record related to an International Application filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization, pursuant to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

6. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to another federal agency for purposes of National Security review (35 U.S.C. 181) and for review pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 218(c)).

7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (i.e., GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.

8. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the public after either publication of the application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b) or issuance of a patent pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 151. Further, a record may be disclosed, subject to the limitations of 37 CFR 1.14, as a routine use, to the public if the record was filed in an application which became abandoned or in which the proceedings were terminated and which application is referenced by either a published application, an application open to public inspections or an issued patent.

9. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency, if the USPTO becomes aware of a violation or potential violation of law or regulation.

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TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
IPR2025-01224
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
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Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	ISSUE DATE	PATENT NO.	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
13/963,050	04/12/2016	RE45971	8201-0015	1571

55246 7590 03/23/2016

Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim
12161 KEN ADAMS WAY
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414

ISSUE NOTIFICATION

The projected patent number and issue date are specified above.

Determination of Patent Term Extension or Adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154 (b)

A reissue patent is for "the unexpired part of the term of the original patent." See 35 U.S.C. 251. Accordingly, the above-identified reissue application is not eligible for Patent Term Extension or Adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154(b).

Any questions regarding the Patent Term Extension or Adjustment determination should be directed to the Office of Patent Legal Administration at (571)-272-7702. Questions relating to issue and publication fee payments should be directed to the Application Assistance Unit (AAU) of the Office of Data Management (ODM) at (571)-272-4200.

APPLICANT(s) (Please see PAIR WEB site http://pair.uspto.gov for additional applicants):

PT 259, LLC, Boca Raton, FL, Assignee (with 37 CFR 1.172 Interest);
THOMAS L. DISTEFANO III, BOCA RATON, FL;

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To: ptomail@iplawpro.com,tforsythe@iplawpro.com,kcuenot@iplawpro.com
From: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Cc: PAIR_eOfficeAction@uspto.gov
Subject: Private PAIR Correspondence Notification for Customer Number 55246

Mar 24, 2016 05:37:57 AM

Dear PAIR Customer:

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12161 KEN ADAMS WAY
SUITE 120
WELLINGTON, FL 33414
UNITED STATES

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Application	Document	Mailroom Date	Attorney Docket No.
13963050	ISSUE.NTF	03/23/2016	8201-0015

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PATENT APPLICATION INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEM

PATENT ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET

Electronic Version v1.1
Stylesheet Version v1.2

EPAS ID: PAT6517326

SUBMISSION TYPE:	NEW ASSIGNMENT
NATURE OF CONVEYANCE:	ASSIGNMENT

CONVEYING PARTY DATA

Name	Execution Date
DISTEFANO PATENT TRUST III, LLC	01/26/2021

RECEIVING PARTY DATA

Name:	DISTEFANO WEBSITE INNOVATIONS, INC.
Street Address:	2910 N.W. 26TH AVENUE
City:	BOCA RATON
State/Country:	FLORIDA
Postal Code:	33434

PROPERTY NUMBERS Total: 3

Property Type	Number
Application Number:	13963050
Application Number:	13946461
Application Number:	13946489

CORRESPONDENCE DATA

Fax Number: (561)423-9297

Correspondence will be sent to the e-mail address first; if that is unsuccessful, it will be sent using a fax number, if provided; if that is unsuccessful, it will be sent via US Mail.

Phone: 5618017700
Email: ptomail@iplawpro.com
Correspondent Name: CUENOT, FORSYTHE & KIM, LLC
Address Line 1: 20283 STATE ROAD 7
Address Line 2: SUITE 300
Address Line 4: BOCA RATON, FLORIDA 33498

ATTORNEY DOCKET NUMBER:	8201-0013, -0014 & -0015
NAME OF SUBMITTER:	SCOTT D. PAUL
SIGNATURE:	/SCOTT D. PAUL/
DATE SIGNED:	01/27/2021
	This document serves as an Oath/Declaration (37 CFR 1.63).

Total Attachments: 3
source=DiStefano_Patent_Trust_III_LLC_Assignment_to_DiStefano_Website_Innovations (1)#page1.tif
source=DiStefano_Patent_Trust_III_LLC_Assignment_to_DiStefano_Website_Innovations (1)#page2.tif

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PATENT ASSIGNMENT AGREEMENT

This PATENT ASSIGNMENT AGREEMENT, dated as of January 26, 2021, is entered into by DISTEFANO PATENT TRUST III, LLC, a company established under the laws of the State of Florida ("Assignor");

WHEREAS, Assignor has the right to assign the "Assigned Patents" as defined in Exhibit "A";

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises and mutual covenants herein contained, Assignor agrees as follows:

For good and valuable consideration, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, Assignor assigns to DISTEFANO WEBSITE INNOVATIONS, INC., a company established under the laws of the State of Florida ("Assignee"), all of Assignor's right, title and interest in and to the Assigned Patents identified in Exhibit "A" hereto, to have and to hold the same, unto Assignee for its own use and enjoyment and for the use and enjoyment of its successors and assigns, for the full term or terms of all such rights, together with the entire right, title and interest in and to the application, and in and to the Letters Patent which may be issued upon the listed applications, and upon any divisions, extensions, continuations or reissues thereof.

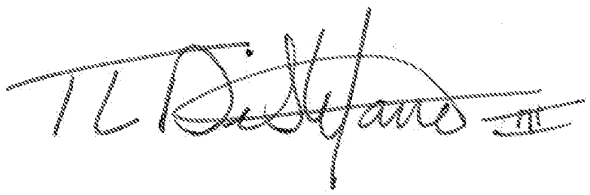
Assignor hereby also sells, assigns and transfers unto Assignee, the entire right, title and interest in and to the invention and in and to applications for Letters Patent therefore in all countries foreign to the United States of America, including all rights under any and all international conventions and treaties in respect of the invention and the applications for Letters Patent in foreign countries, and Assignor, further authorizes Assignee to apply for Letters Patent in foreign countries directly in its own name, and to claim priority of the filing date of the application for

Letters Patent of the United States of America under the provisions of any and all international conventions and treaties.

Assignor hereby authorizes and requests the Commissioner of Patents of the United States of America to issue Letters Patent upon the aforesaid applications, divisions, extensions, continuations or reissues, to DISTEFANO WEBSITE INNOVATIONS, INC., for the sole use and benefit of DISTEFANO WEBSITE INNOVATIONS, INC., its successors, assigns and legal representatives, to the full end of the term for which the Letters Patent may be granted, the same as they would have been held and enjoyed by Assignor had this assignment note been made, and Assignor hereby authorizes and requests the equivalent authorities in foreign countries to issue the patents of their respective countries to DISTEFANO WEBSITE INNOVATIONS, INC.

Assignor:

DISTEFANO PATENT TRUST III, LLC



By: _____

Name: Thomas L. DiStefano III

Title: Member Manager of DISTEFANO PATENT TRUST III, LLC

TikTok Inc. EX1002
TikTok Inc. v. Distefano Website Innovations, LLC
IPR2025-01224
Page 770 of 771

EXHIBIT A

ASSIGNED PATENTS AND APPLICATIONS

Title	Identifying Number
DEVELOPING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS PROVIDING E-COMMERCE TOOLS	U.S. Patent Application No. 13/963,050 Filed August 9, 2013 U.S. Reissue Patent No. RE45,971 Issued April 12, 2016
RECIPROCAL INSERTION OF IDENTIFICATION ELEMENTS FOR WEB PAGES	U.S. Patent Application No. 13/946,461 Filed July 19, 2013 U.S. Published Application No. 2013-0305132 Published November 14, 2013
CLIENT SYSTEM DISPLAYING IDENTIFICATION ELEMENTS FOR WEB PAGE	U.S. Patent Application No. 13/946,489 Filed July 19, 2013 U.S. Published Application No. 2013-0311876 Published November 21, 2013