US008768760B1

(12) **United States Patent**
Distefano

(10) **Patent No.: US 8,768,760 B1**
(45) **Date of Patent: *Jul. 1, 2014**

(54) **RECIPROCAL LINKING ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN WEB PAGES**

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(72) Inventor: **Thomas L. Distefano**, 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 0 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

(21) Appl. No.: **14/191,746**

(22) Filed: **Feb. 27, 2014**

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 13/763,128, filed on Feb. 8, 2013, which is a continuation of application No. 13/669,027, filed on Nov. 5, 2012, now Pat. No. 8,423,399, which is a continuation of application No. 13/206,483, filed on Aug. 9, 2011, now Pat. No. 8,335,713, which is a continuation of application No. 09/589,551, filed on Jun. 7, 2000, now Pat. No. 7,996,259.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
G06Q 30/00 (2012.01)
G06F 17/22 (2006.01)
G06Q 30/02 (2012.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***G06F 17/2235*** (2013.01); ***G06Q 30/0277*** (2013.01)
USPC **705/14.1**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC G06Q 90/00
USPC 705/14.1
See application file for complete search history.

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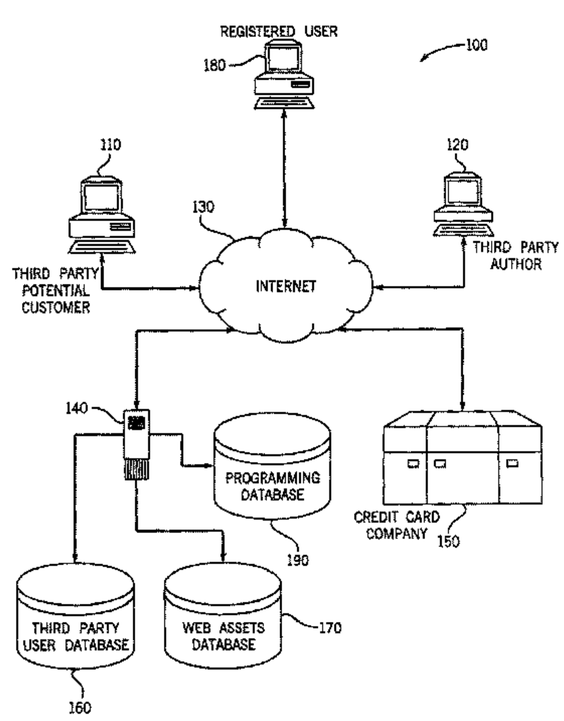
(Continued)

Primary Examiner — Daniel Lastra
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Cuenot, Forsythe & Kim, LLC

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method, within and by a computer hardware system configured to serve a first web page associated with a first user and a second web page associated with a second user includes the following. A first indication to opt into a reciprocal linking arrangement is received from a first computer associated with the first user. A second indication to opt into the reciprocal linking arrangement is received from a second computer associated with the second user. The reciprocal linking arrangement is established based upon both the first and second users opting to participate in the reciprocal linking arrangement. Based upon the reciprocal linking arrangement, second and first functional identification elements, respectively associated with the first and second entities, are respectively included within the second and first web pages. The reciprocal linking arrangement is established within a database associated with the computer hardware system.

20 Claims, 29 Drawing Sheets



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8,335,713	B2	12/2012	Distefano, III	
8,412,570	B1	4/2013	Distefano	
8,417,567	B2	4/2013	Distefano	
8,423,399	B2 *	4/2013	Distefano, III	..... 705/14.1
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8,589,222	B2	11/2013	Distefano, III	
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2012/0185339	A1	7/2012	Distefano	
2013/0066727	A1	3/2013	Distefano	
2013/0066728	A1	3/2013	Distefano	
2013/0066729	A1	3/2013	Distefano	
2013/0073397	A1	3/2013	Distefano	
2013/0151338	A1	6/2013	Distefano	
2013/0151354	A1	6/2013	Distefano	
2013/0151982	A1	6/2013	Distefano	
2013/0173401	A1	7/2013	Distefano	
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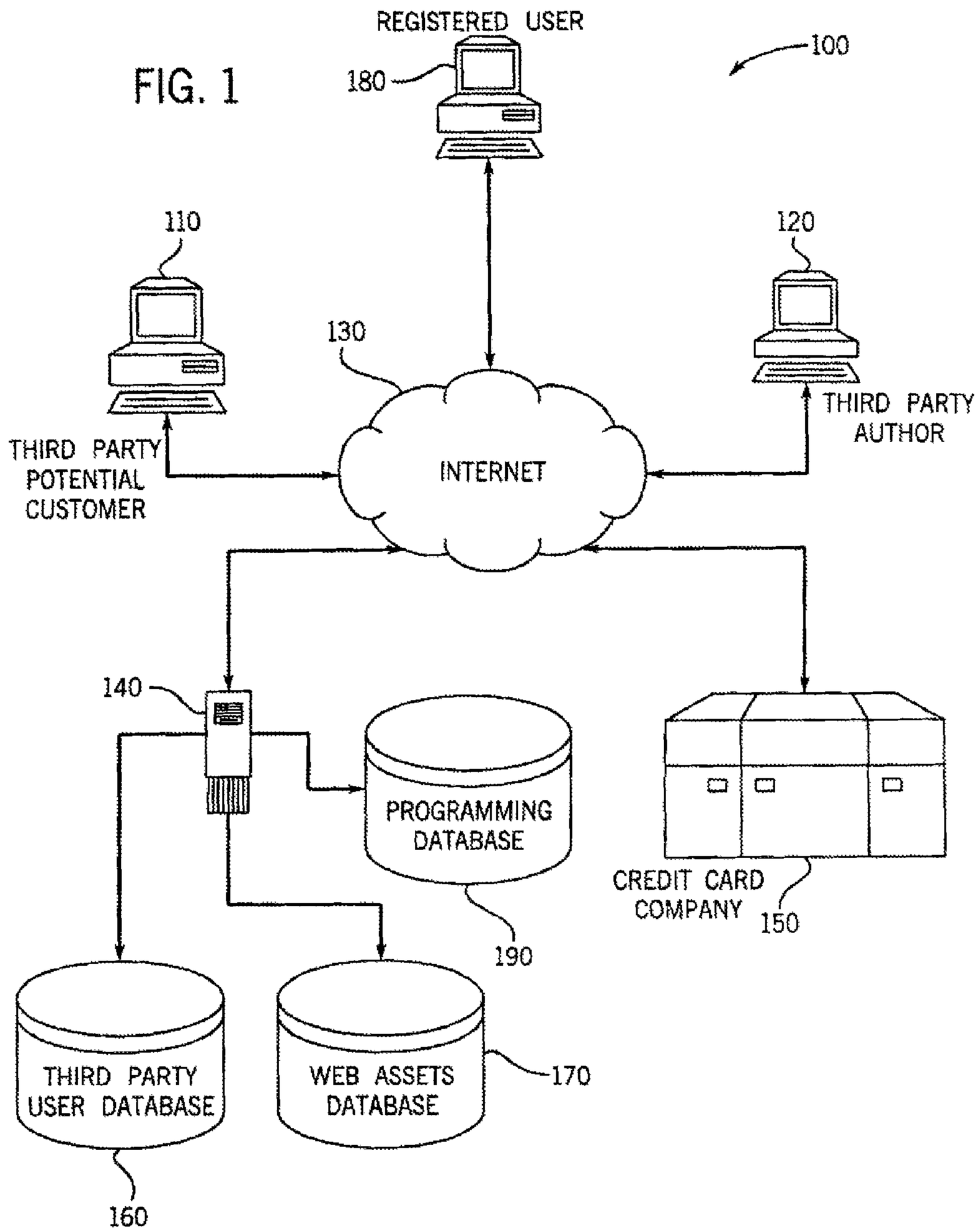
FIG. 1


REGISTERED USER
100
180
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

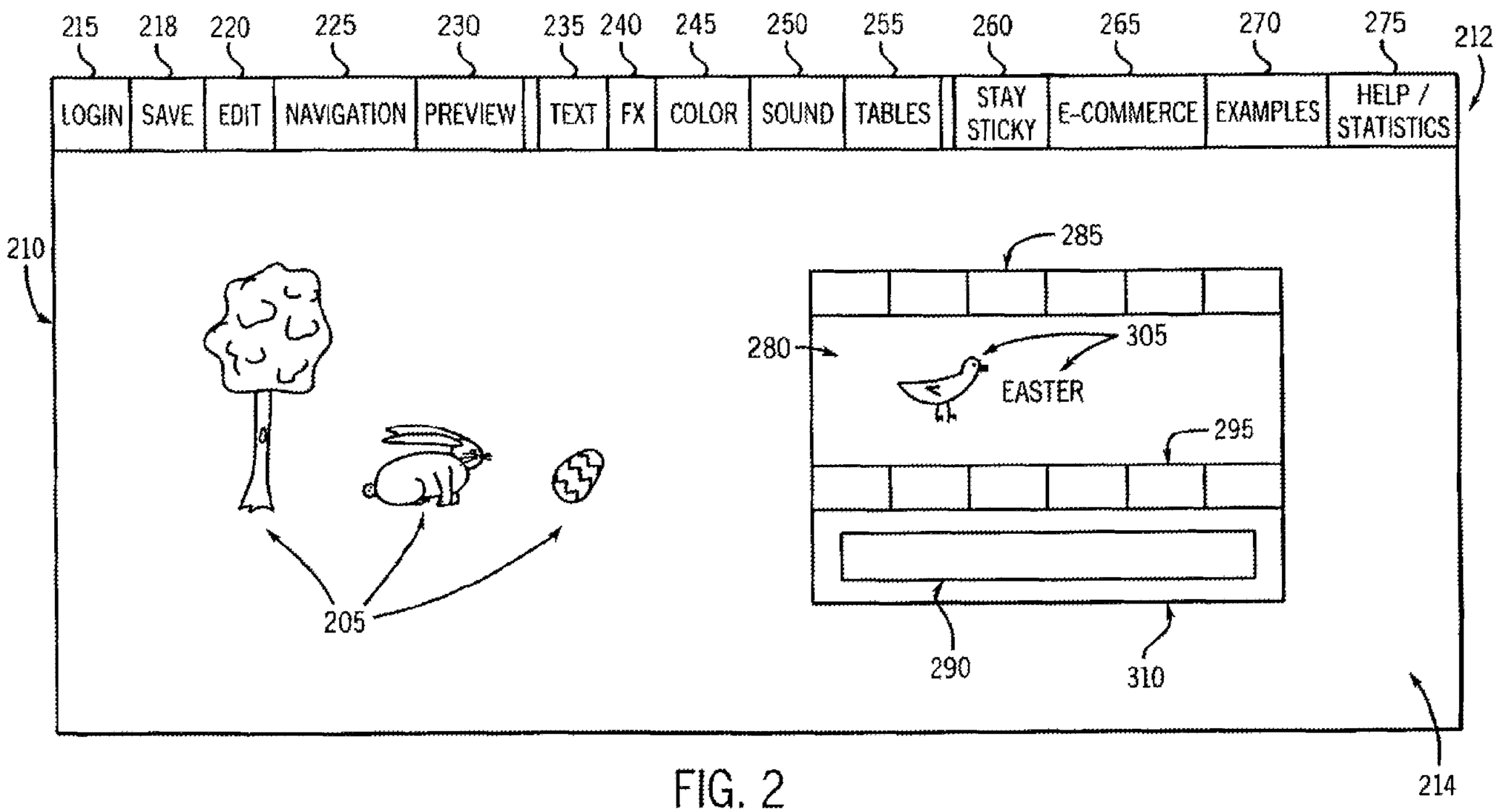

215
218
220
225
230
235
240
245
250
255
260
265
270
275
212
LOGIN
SAVE
EDIT
NAVIGATION
PREVIEW
TEXT
FX
COLOR
SOUND
TABLES
STAY STICKY
E-COMMERCE
EXAMPLES
HELP / STATISTICS
210
285
280
305
EASTER
295
205
290
310
214

FIG. 2

FIG. 3

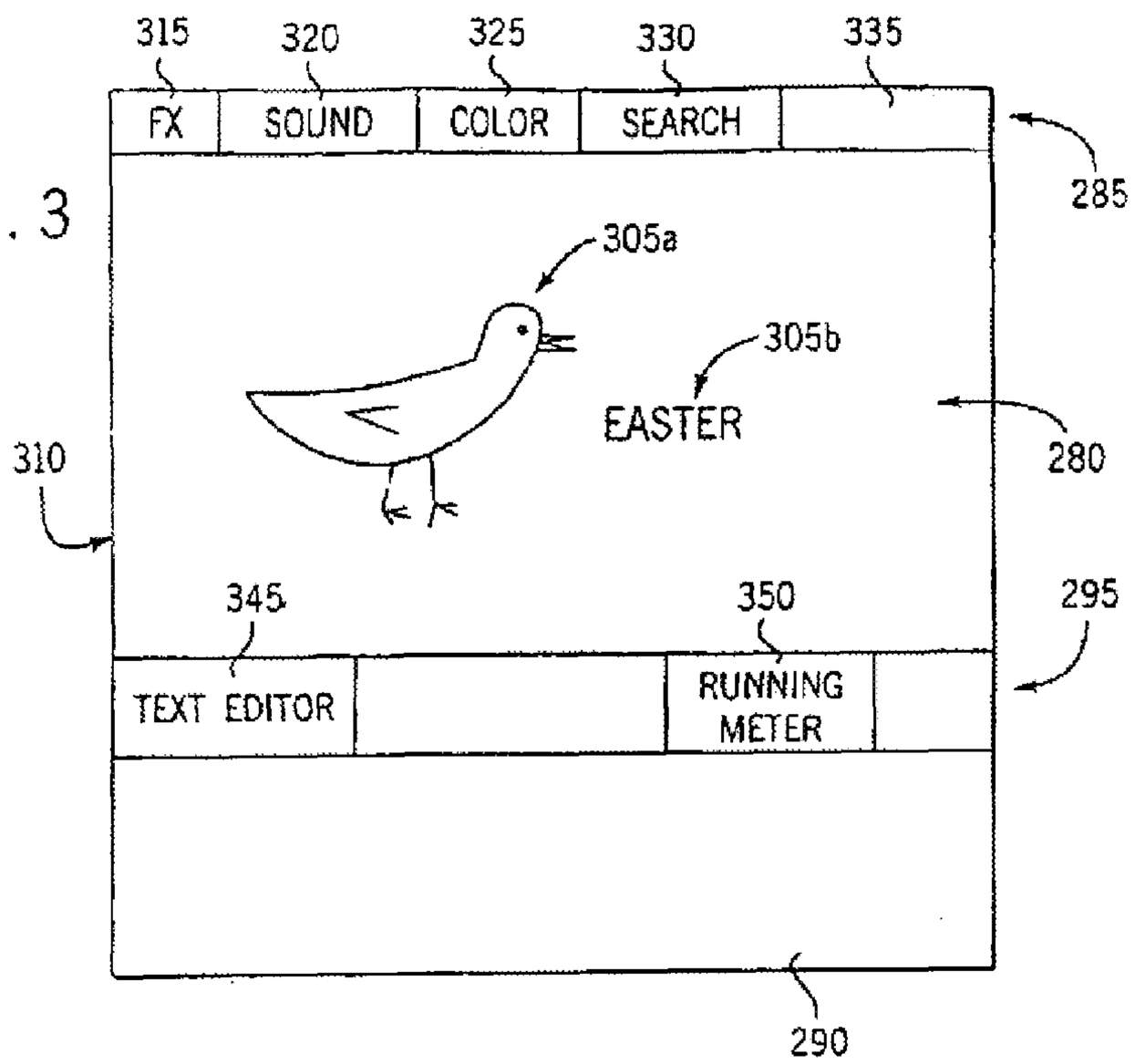

315
320
325
330
335
FX
SOUND
COLOR
SEARCH
285
305a
305b
EASTER
280
310
345
350
295
TEXT EDITOR
RUNNING METER
290

FIG. 4

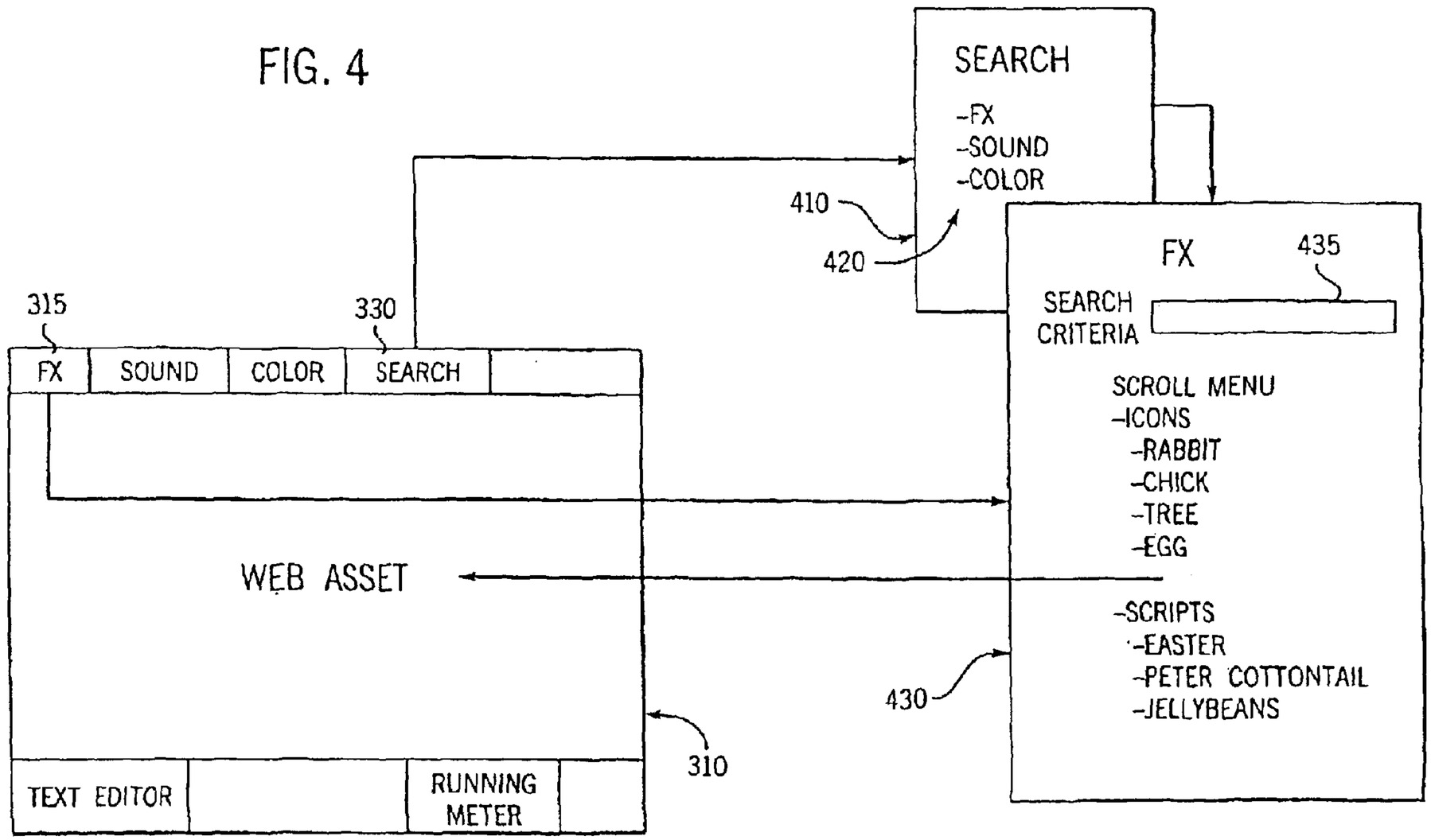

SEARCH
-FX
-SOUND
-COLOR
410
420
FX
435
SEARCH CRITERIA
SCROLL MENU
-ICONS
-RABBIT
-CHICK
-TREE
-EGG
-SCRIPTS
-EASTER
-PETER COTTONTAIL
-JELLYBEANS
430
315
330
FX
SOUND
COLOR
SEARCH
WEB ASSET
310
TEXT EDITOR
RUNNING METER

FIG. 5

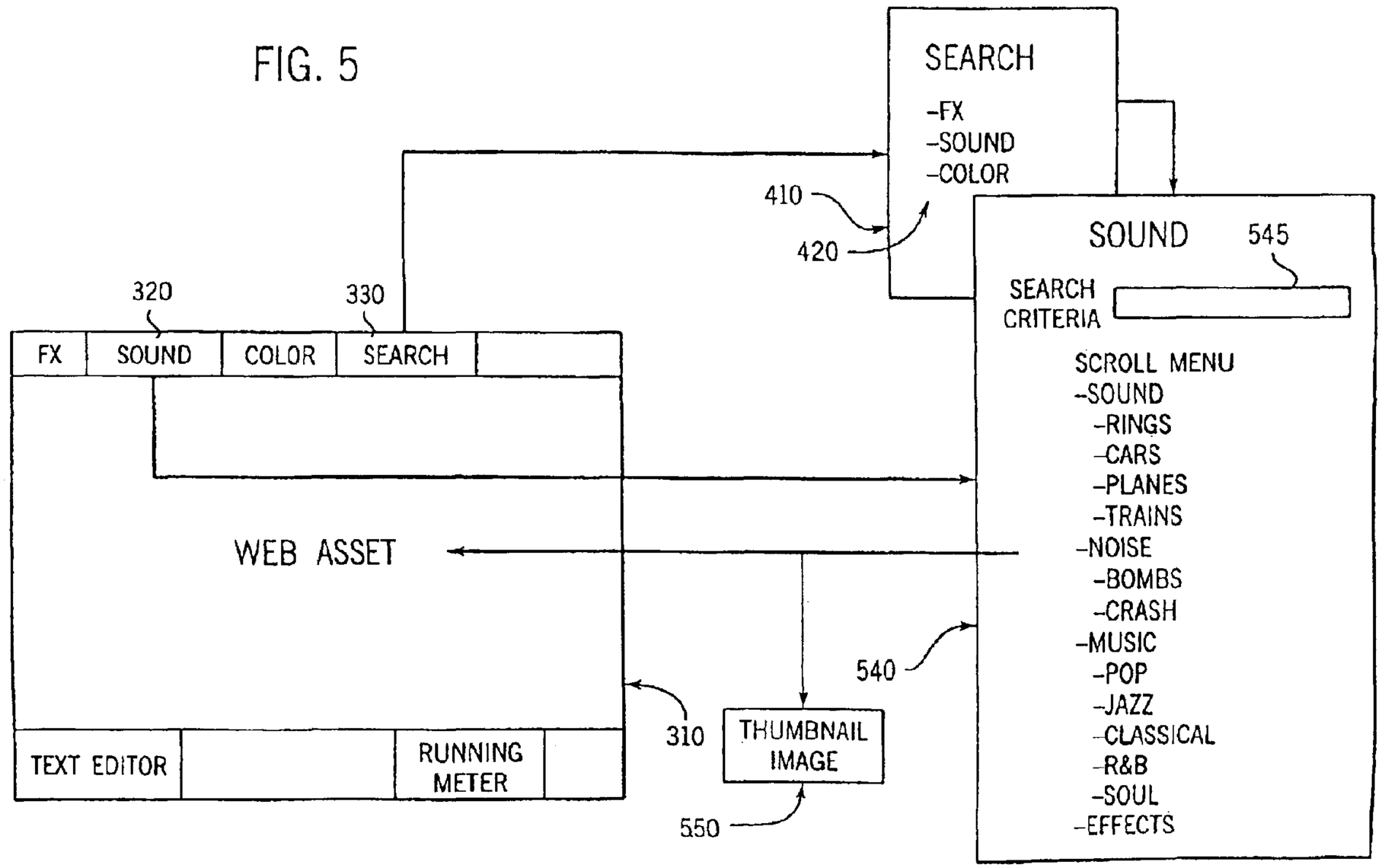
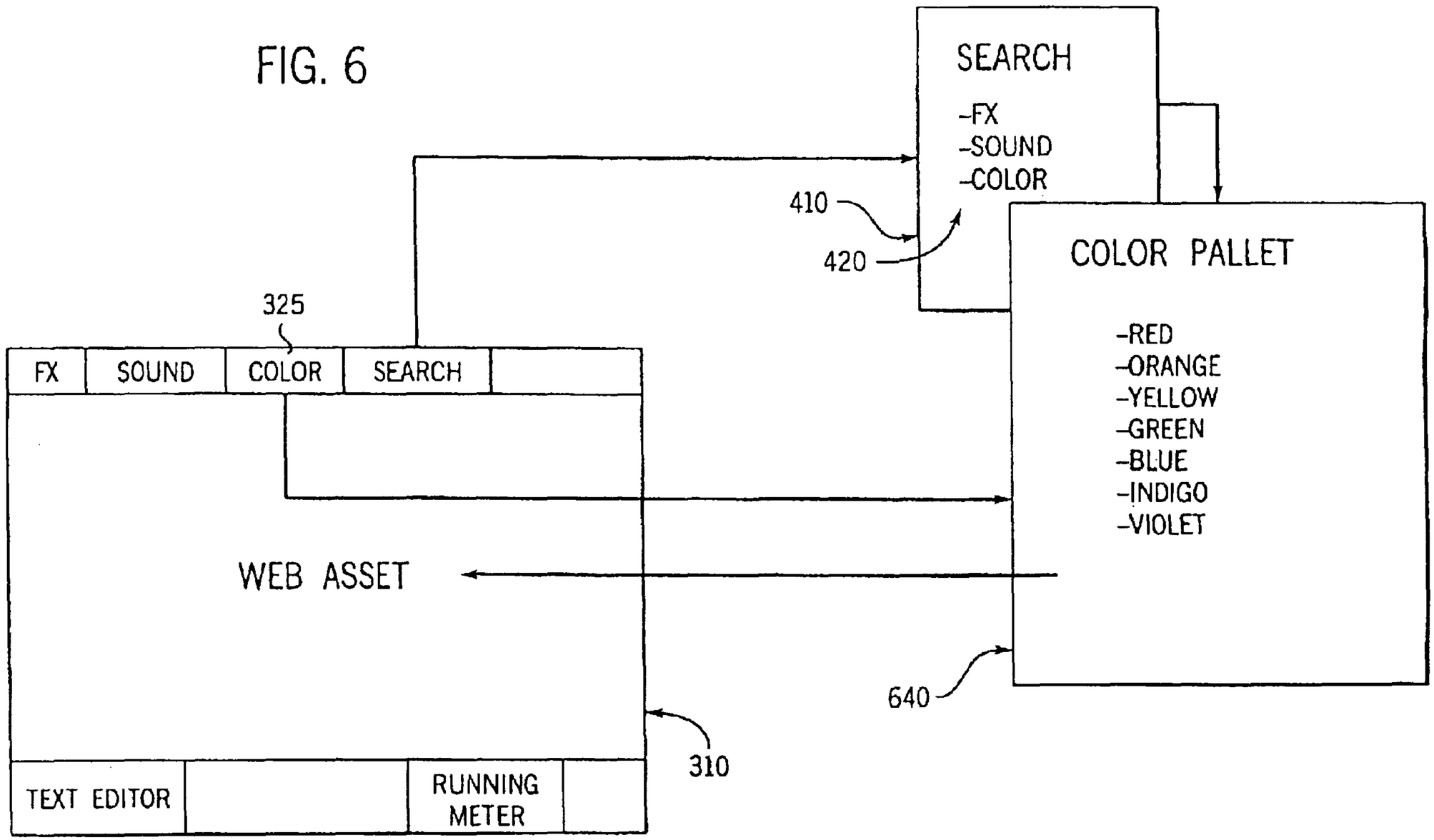

SEARCH
-FX
-SOUND
-COLOR
410
420
SOUND
545
SEARCH CRITERIA
SCROLL MENU
-SOUND
-RINGS
-CARS
-PLANES
-TRAINS
-NOISE
-BOMBS
-CRASH
-MUSIC
-POP
-JAZZ
-CLASSICAL
-R&B
-SOUL
-EFFECTS
320
330
FX
SOUND
COLOR
SEARCH
WEB ASSET
540
310
THUMBNAIL IMAGE
550
TEXT EDITOR
RUNNING METER

FIG. 6


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

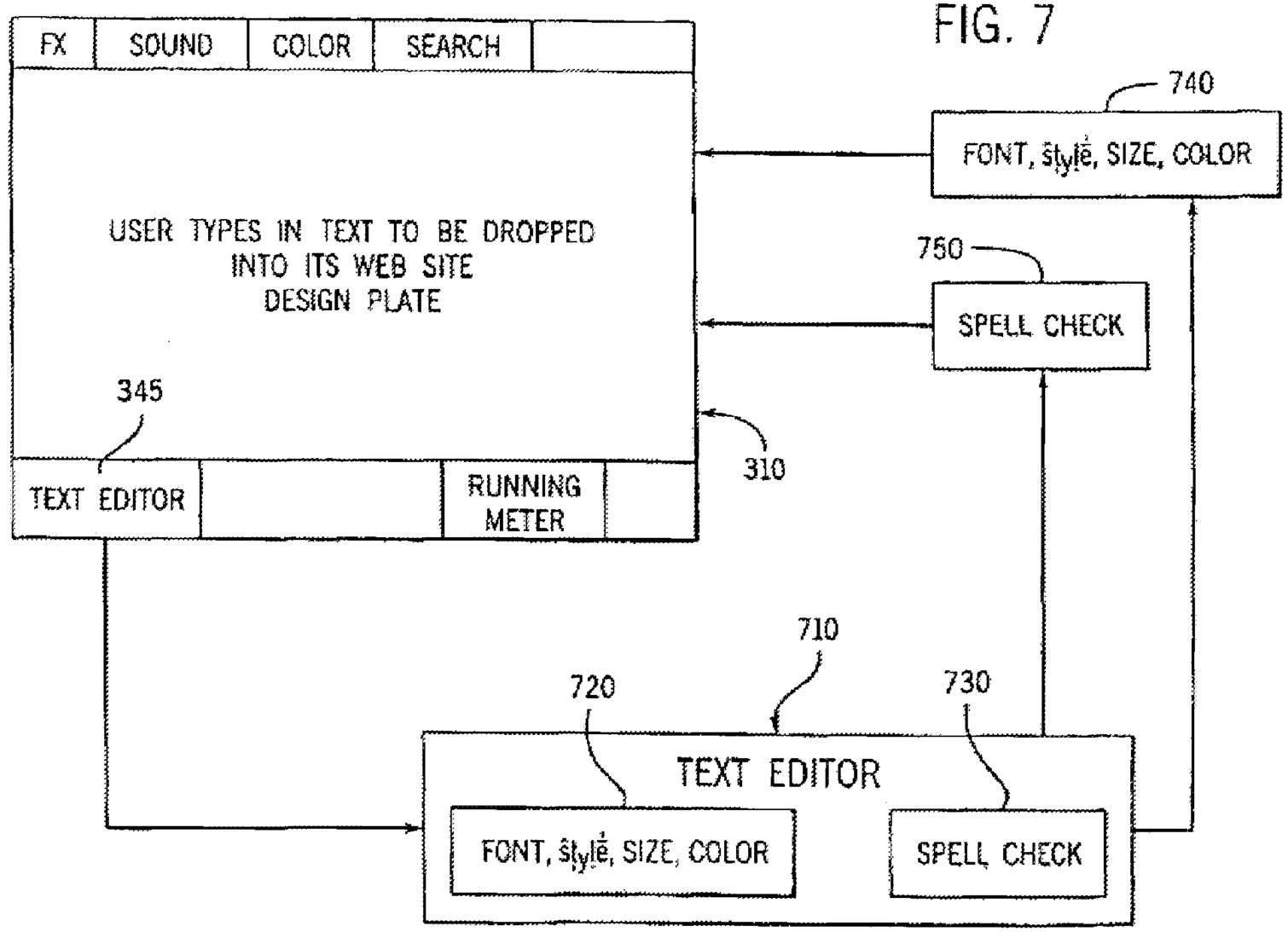

FX
SOUND
COLOR
SEARCH
USER TYPES IN TEXT TO BE DROPPED INTO ITS WEB SITE DESIGN PLATE
345
TEXT EDITOR
RUNNING METER
310
740
FONT, style, SIZE, COLOR
750
SPELL CHECK
710
720
730
TEXT EDITOR
FONT, style, SIZE, COLOR
SPELL CHECK

FIG. 7

FIG. 8

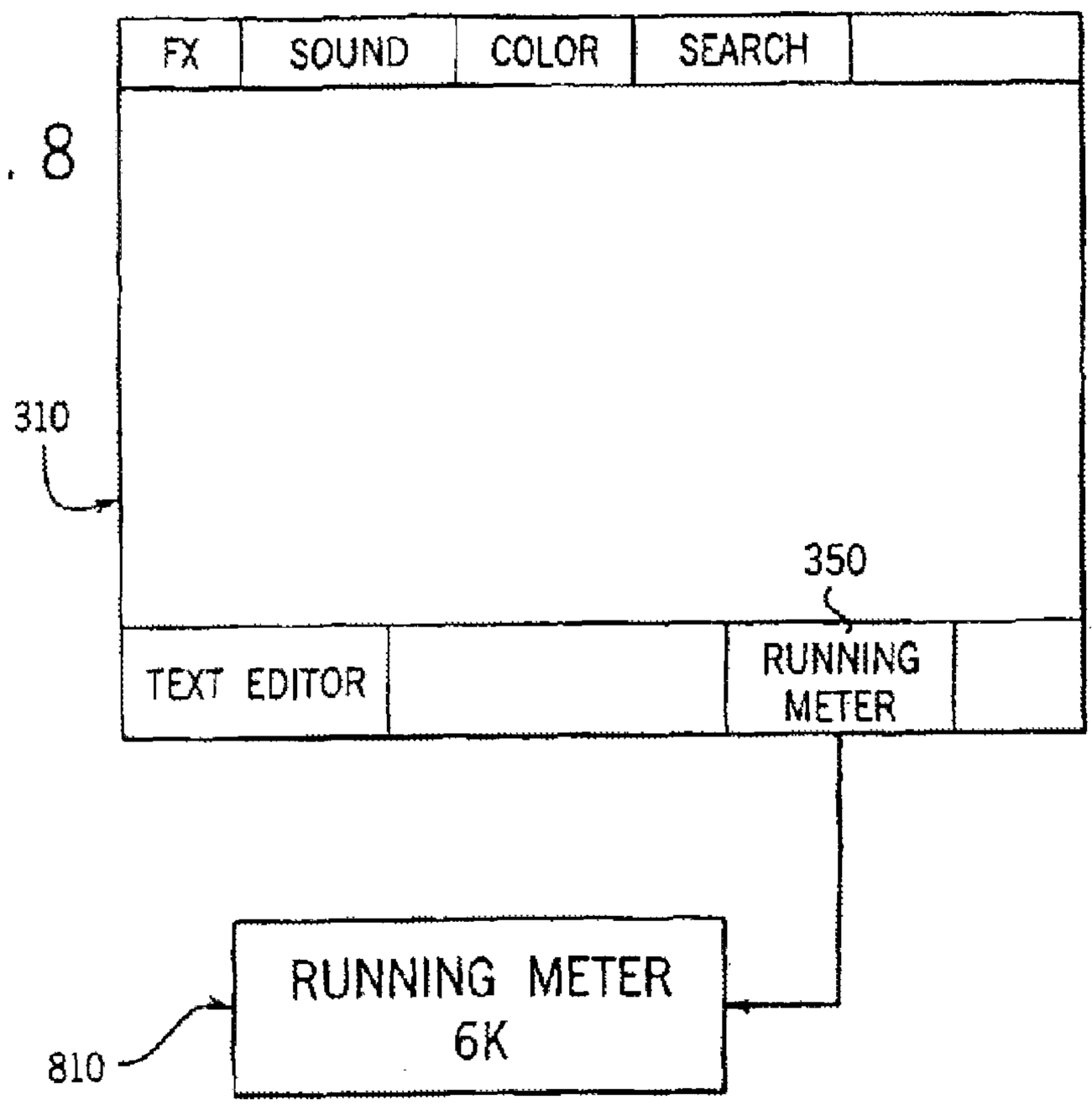
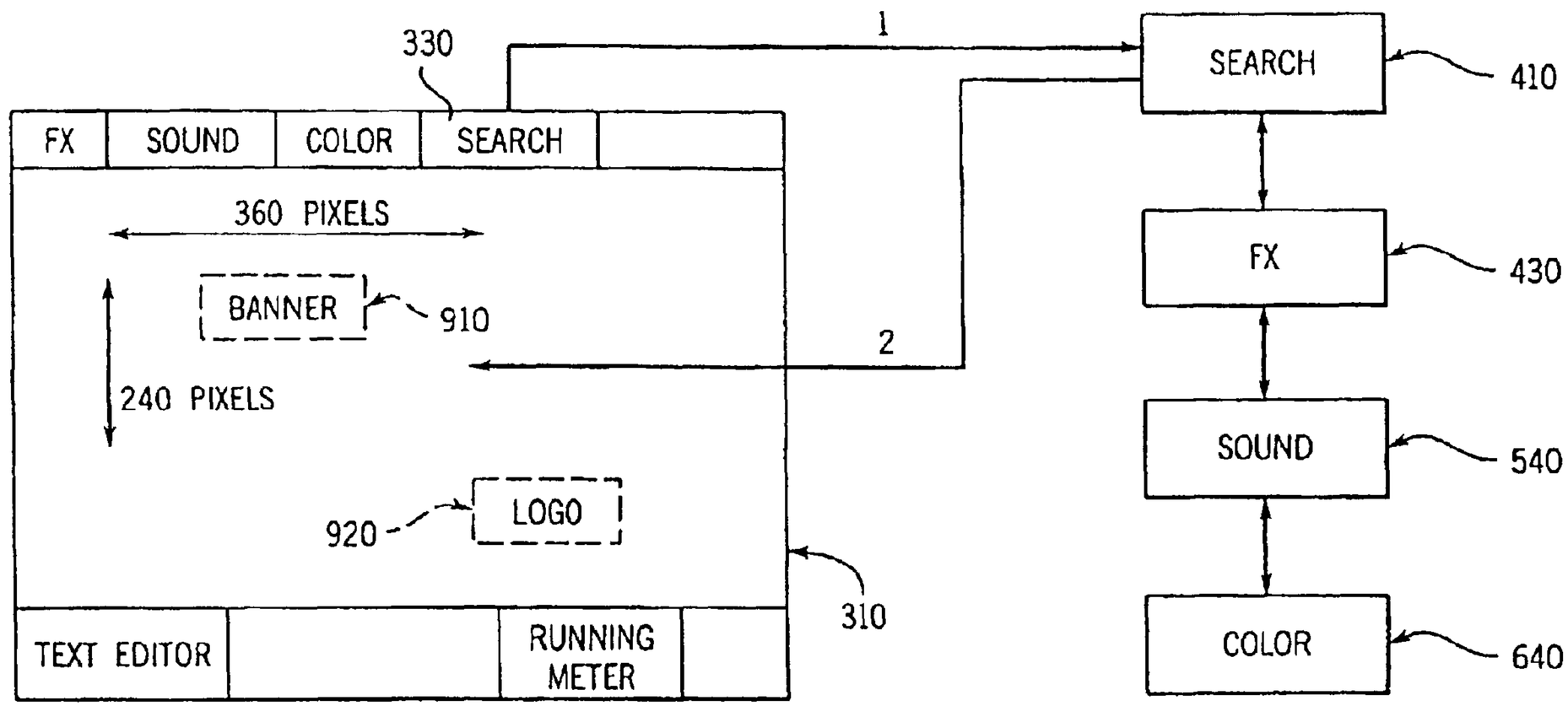
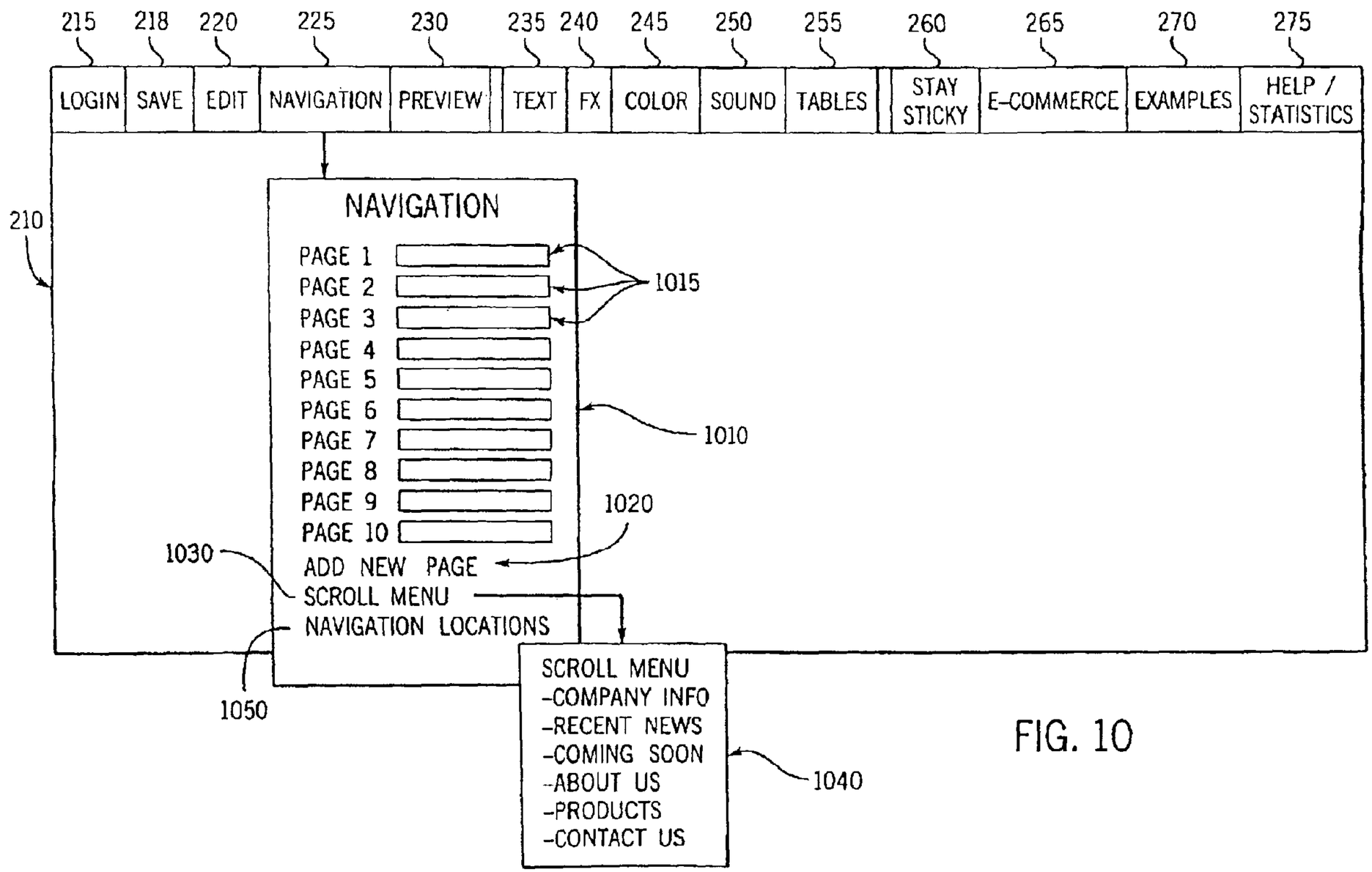

FX
SOUND
COLOR
SEARCH
310
350
TEXT EDITOR
RUNNING METER
RUNNING METER 6K
810

FIG. 9


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


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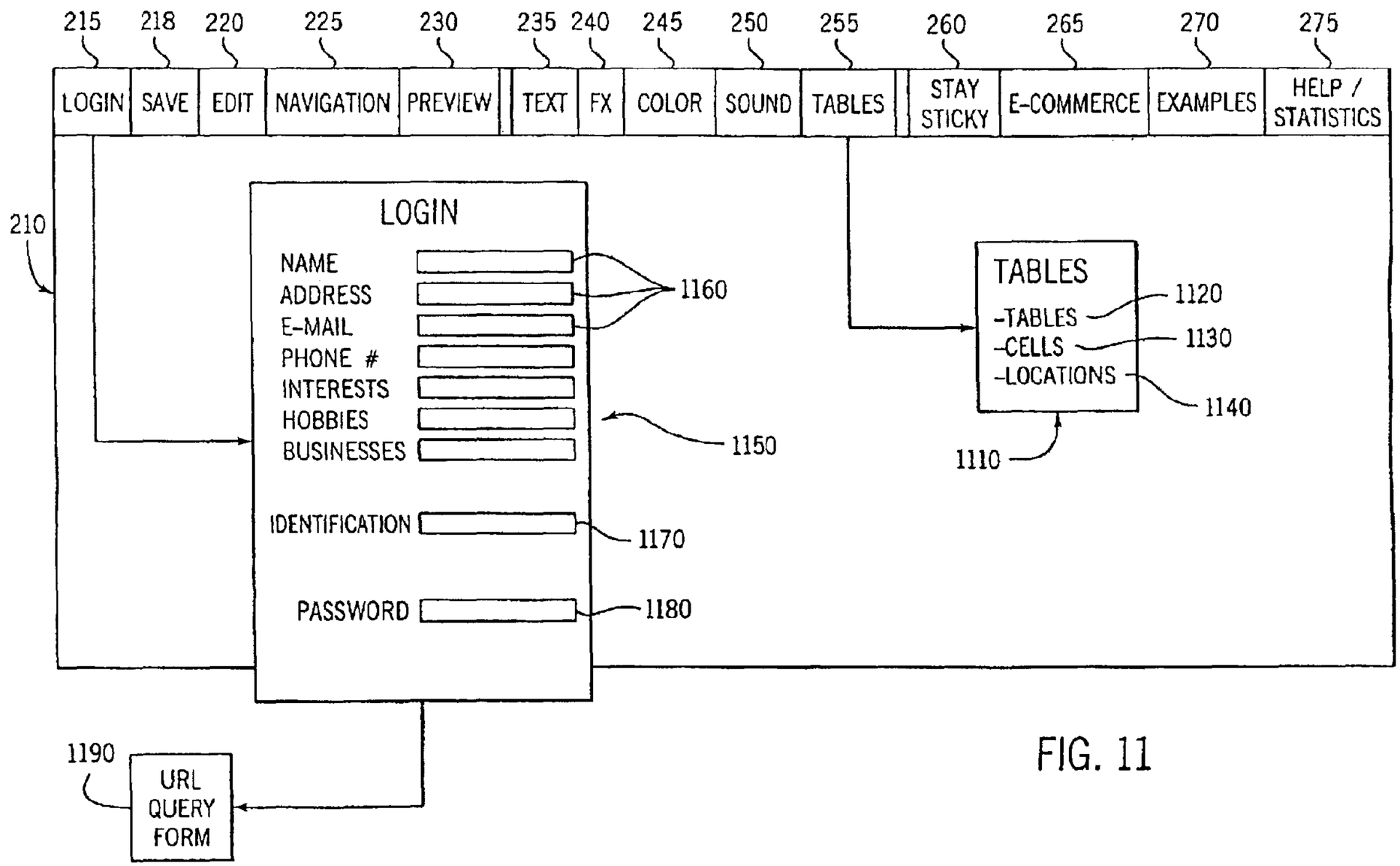
275
LOGIN
SAVE
EDIT
NAVIGATION
PREVIEW
TEXT
FX
COLOR
SOUND
TABLES
STAY STICKY
E-COMMERCE
EXAMPLES
HELP / STATISTICS
210
NAVIGATION
PAGE 1
PAGE 2
PAGE 3
PAGE 4
PAGE 5
PAGE 6
PAGE 7
PAGE 8
PAGE 9
PAGE 10
ADD NEW PAGE
SCROLL MENU
NAVIGATION LOCATIONS
1015
1010
1020
1030
1050
SCROLL MENU
-COMPANY INFO
-RECENT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

FIG. 10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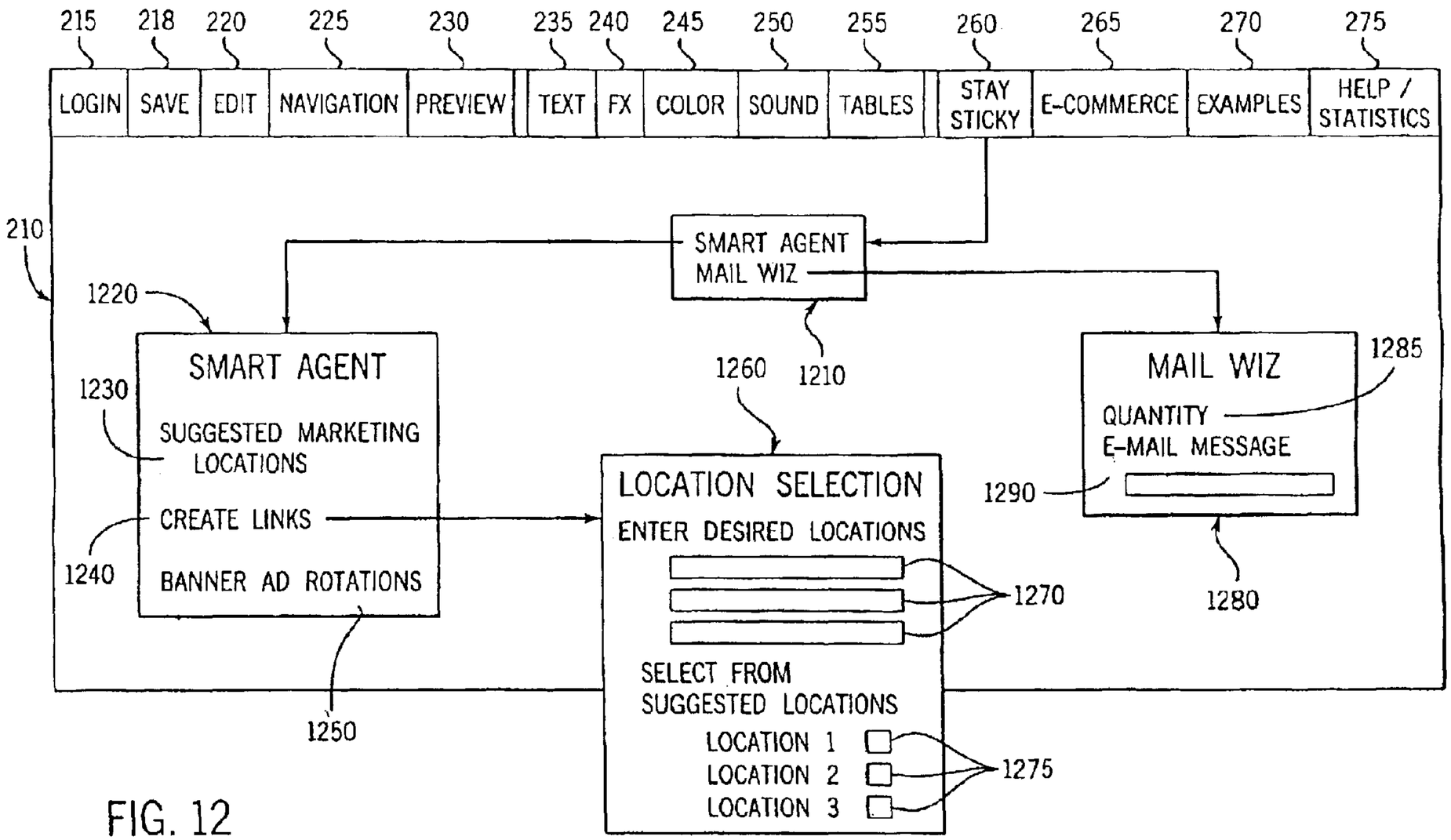
LOGIN
SAVE
EDIT
NAVIGATION
PREVIEW
TEXT
FX
COLOR
SOUND
TABLES
STAY STICKY
E-COMMERCE
EXAMPLES
HELP / STATISTICS
210
LOGIN
NAME
ADDRESS
E-MAIL
PHONE #
INTERESTS
HOBBIES
BUSINESSES
IDENTIFICATION
PASSWORD
1160
1150
1170
1180
TABLES
-TABLES
-CELLS
-LOCATIONS
1120
1130
1140
1110
1190
URL QUERY FORM

FIG. 11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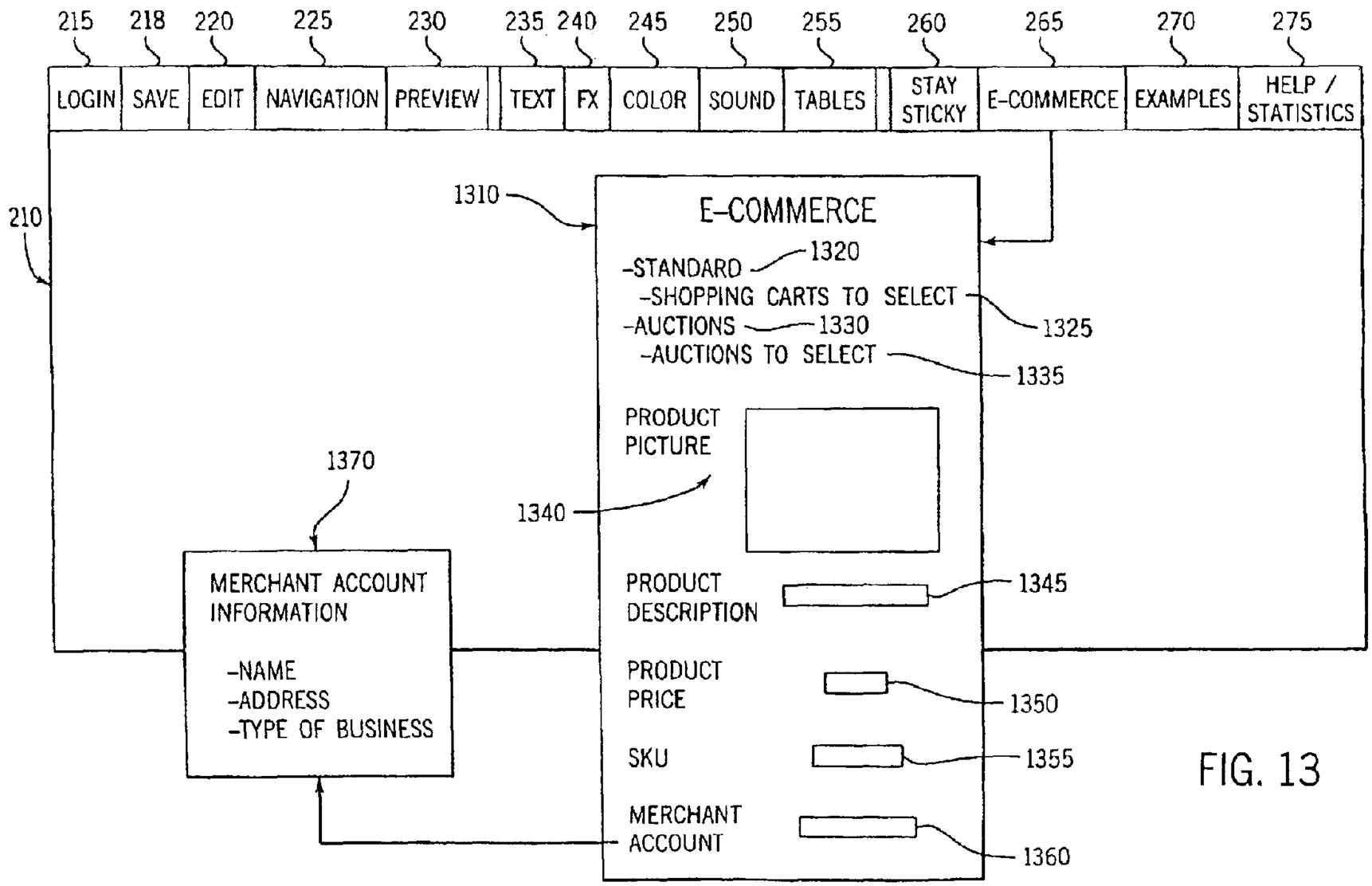
LOGIN
SAVE
EDIT
NAVIGATION
PREVIEW
TEXT
FX
COLOR
SOUND
TABLES
STAY STICKY
E-COMMERCE
EXAMPLES
HELP / STATISTICS
210
SMART AGENT
MAIL WIZ
1220
1210
SMART AGENT
1230
SUGGESTED MARKETING LOCATIONS
CREATE LINKS
1240
BANNER AD ROTATIONS
1250
1260
LOCATION SELECTION
ENTER DESIRED LOCATIONS
1270
SELECT FROM SUGGESTED LOCATIONS
LOCATION 1
LOCATION 2
LOCATION 3
1275
MAIL WIZ
1285
QUANTITY
E-MAIL MESSAGE
1290
1280

FIG. 12


215
218
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LOGIN
SAVE
EDIT
NAVIGATION
PREVIEW
TEXT
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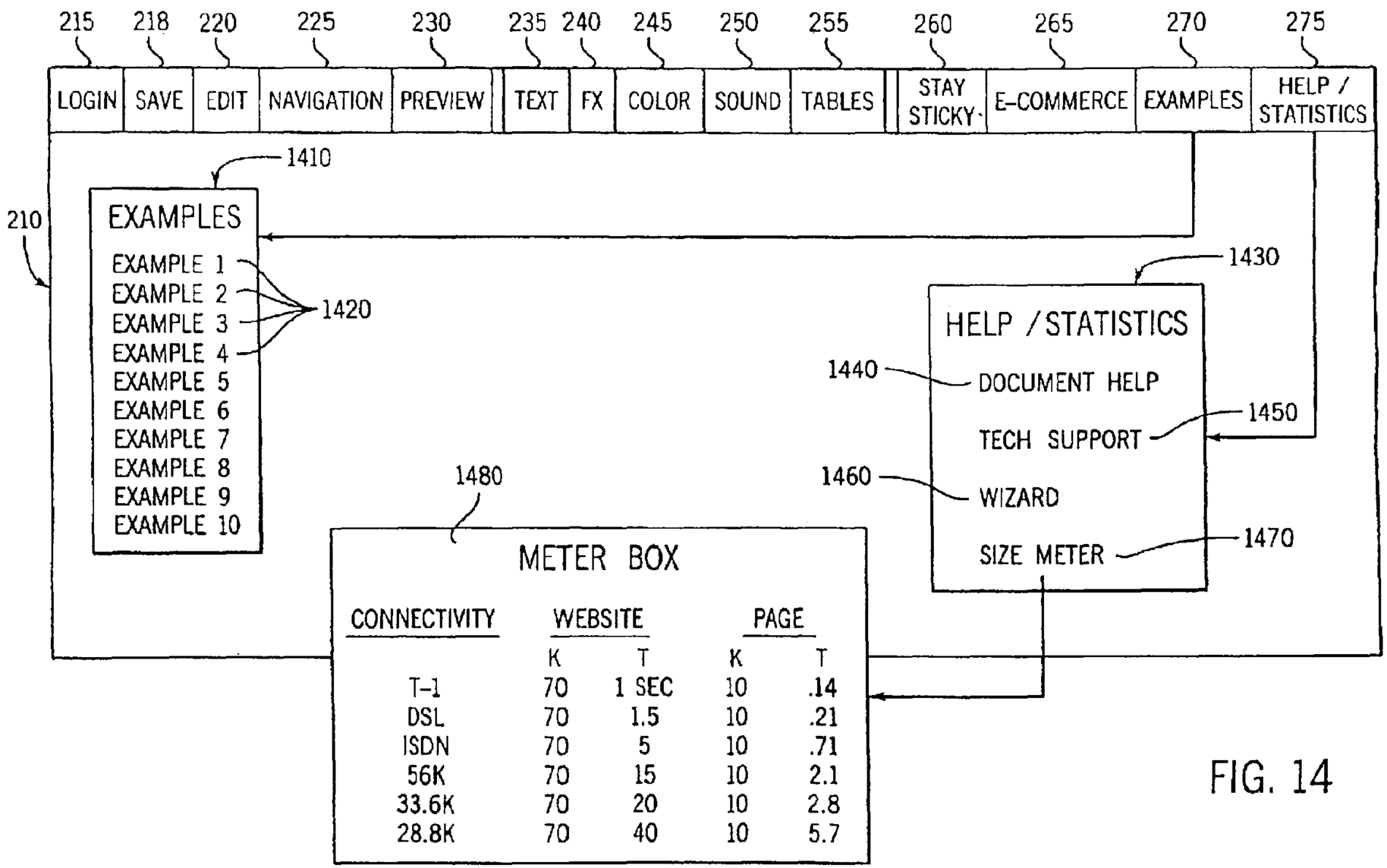
COLOR
SOUND
TABLES
STAY STICKY
E-COMMERCE
EXAMPLES
HELP / STATISTICS
210
1310
E-COMMERCE
-STANDARD
1320
-SHOPPING CARTS TO SELECT
1325
-AUCTIONS
1330
-AUCTIONS TO SELECT
1335
PRODUCT PICTURE
1340
1370
MERCHANT ACCOUNT INFORMATION
-NAME
-ADDRESS
-TYPE OF BUSINESS
PRODUCT DESCRIPTION
1345
PRODUCT PRICE
1350
SKU
1355
MERCHANT ACCOUNT
1360

FIG. 13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275
LOGIN
SAVE
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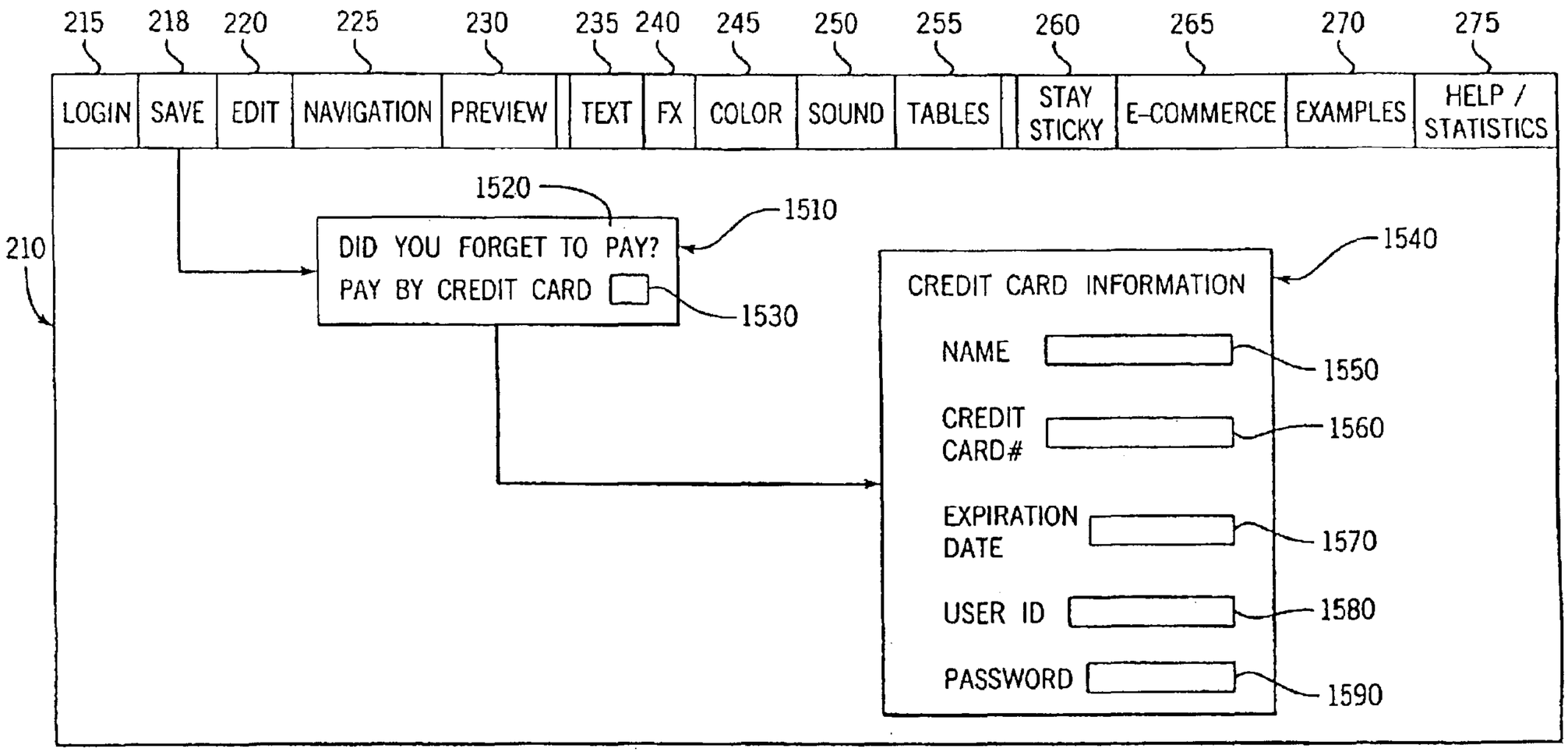
NAVIGATION
PREVIEW
TEXT
FX
COLOR
SOUND
TABLES
STAY STICKY
E-COMMERCE
EXAMPLES
HELP / STATISTICS
210
1410
EXAMPLES
EXAMPLE 1
EXAMPLE 2
EXAMPLE 3
EXAMPLE 4
EXAMPLE 5
EXAMPLE 6
EXAMPLE 7
EXAMPLE 8
EXAMPLE 9
EXAMPLE 10
1420
1430
HELP /STATISTICS
1440
DOCUMENT HELP
1450
TECH SUPPORT
1460
WIZARD
1470
SIZE METER
1480
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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230
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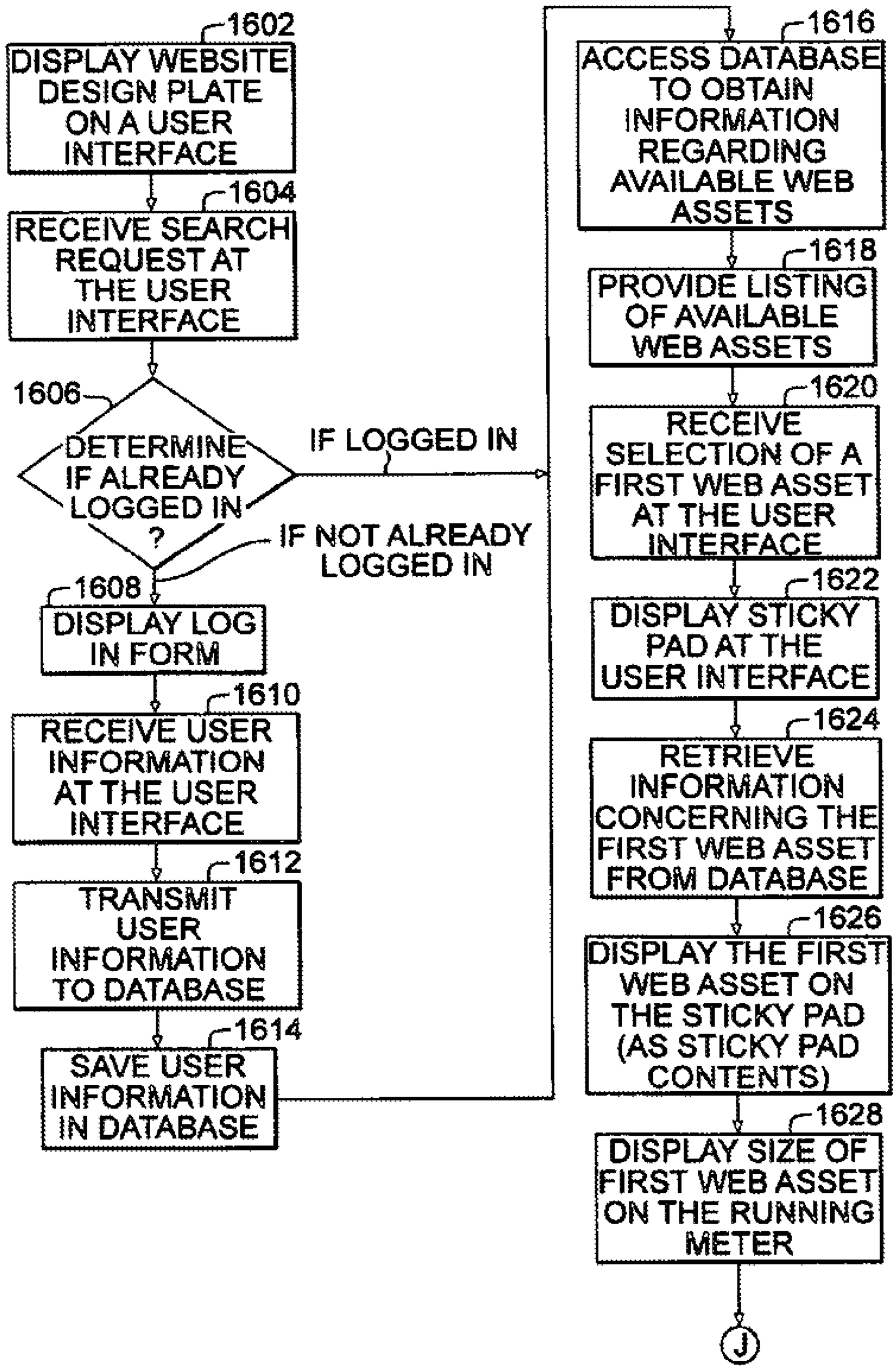
255
260
265
270
275
LOGIN
SAVE
EDIT
NAVIGATION
PREVIEW
TEXT
FX
COLOR
SOUND
TABLES
STAY STICKY
E-COMMERCE
EXAMPLES
HELP / STATISTICS
210
1520
1510
DID YOU FORGET TO PAY?
PAY BY CREDIT CARD
1530
1540
CREDIT CARD INFORMATION
NAME
1550
CREDIT CARD#
1560
EXPIRATION DATE
1570
USER ID
1580
PASSWORD
1590

FIG. 15

FIG. 16A


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
J

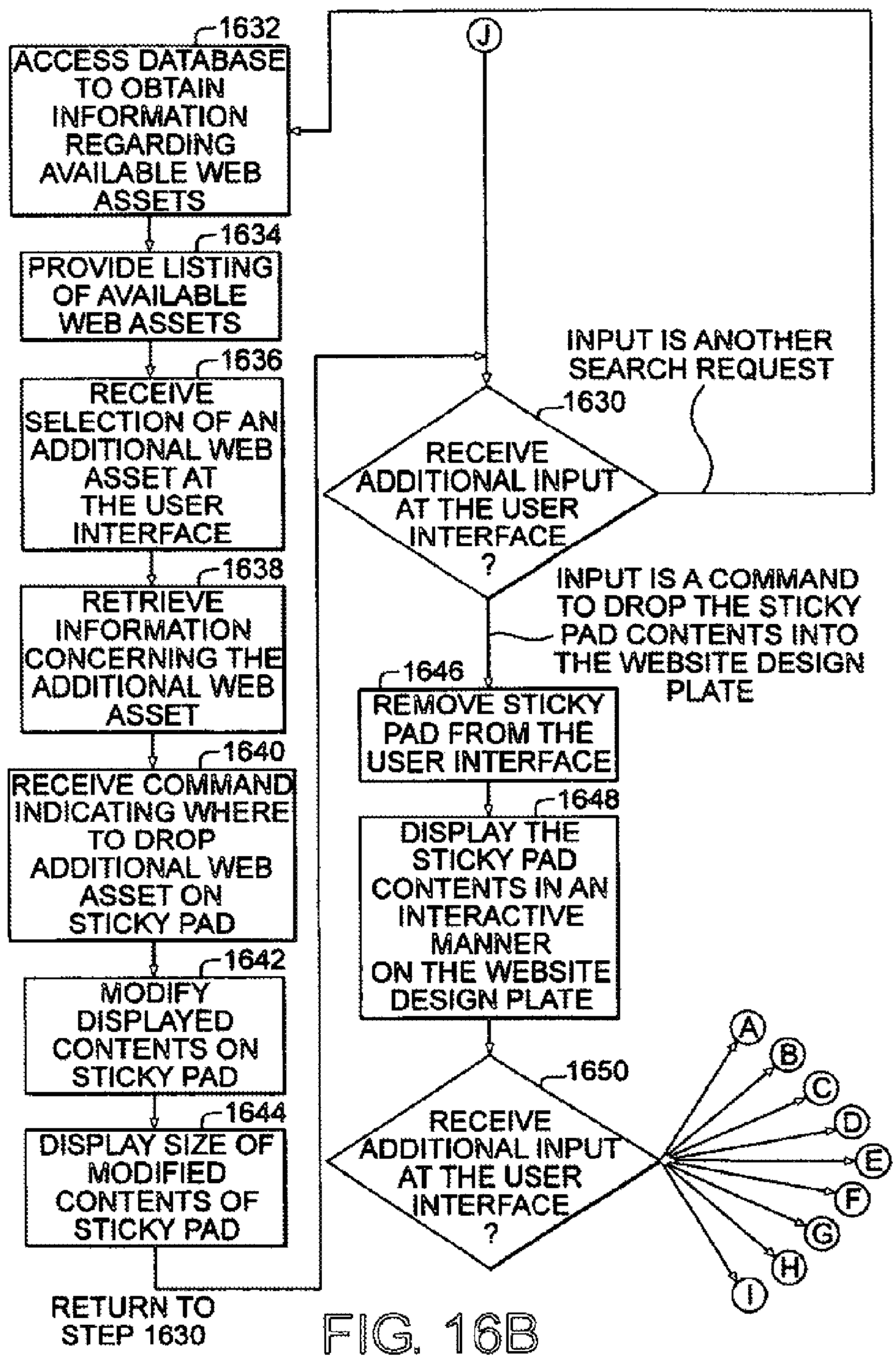

1632
ACCESS DATABASE TO OBTAIN INFORMATION REGARDING AVAILABLE WEB ASSETS
1634
PROVIDE LISTING OF AVAILABLE WEB ASSETS
1636
RECEIVE SELECTION OF AN ADDITIONAL WEB ASSET AT THE USER INTERFACE
1638
RETRIEVE INFORMATION CONCERNING THE ADDITIONAL WEB ASSET
1640
RECEIVE COMMAND INDICATING WHERE TO DROP ADDITIONAL WEB ASSET ON STICKY PAD
1642
MODIFY DISPLAYED CONTENTS ON STICKY PAD
1644
DISPLAY SIZE OF MODIFIED CONTENTS OF STICKY PAD
RETURN TO STEP 1630
J
1630
RECEIVE ADDITIONAL INPUT AT THE USER INTERFACE ?
INPUT IS ANOTHER SEARCH REQUEST
INPUT IS A COMMAND TO DROP THE STICKY PAD CONTENTS INTO THE WEBSITE DESIGN PLATE
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. 16B

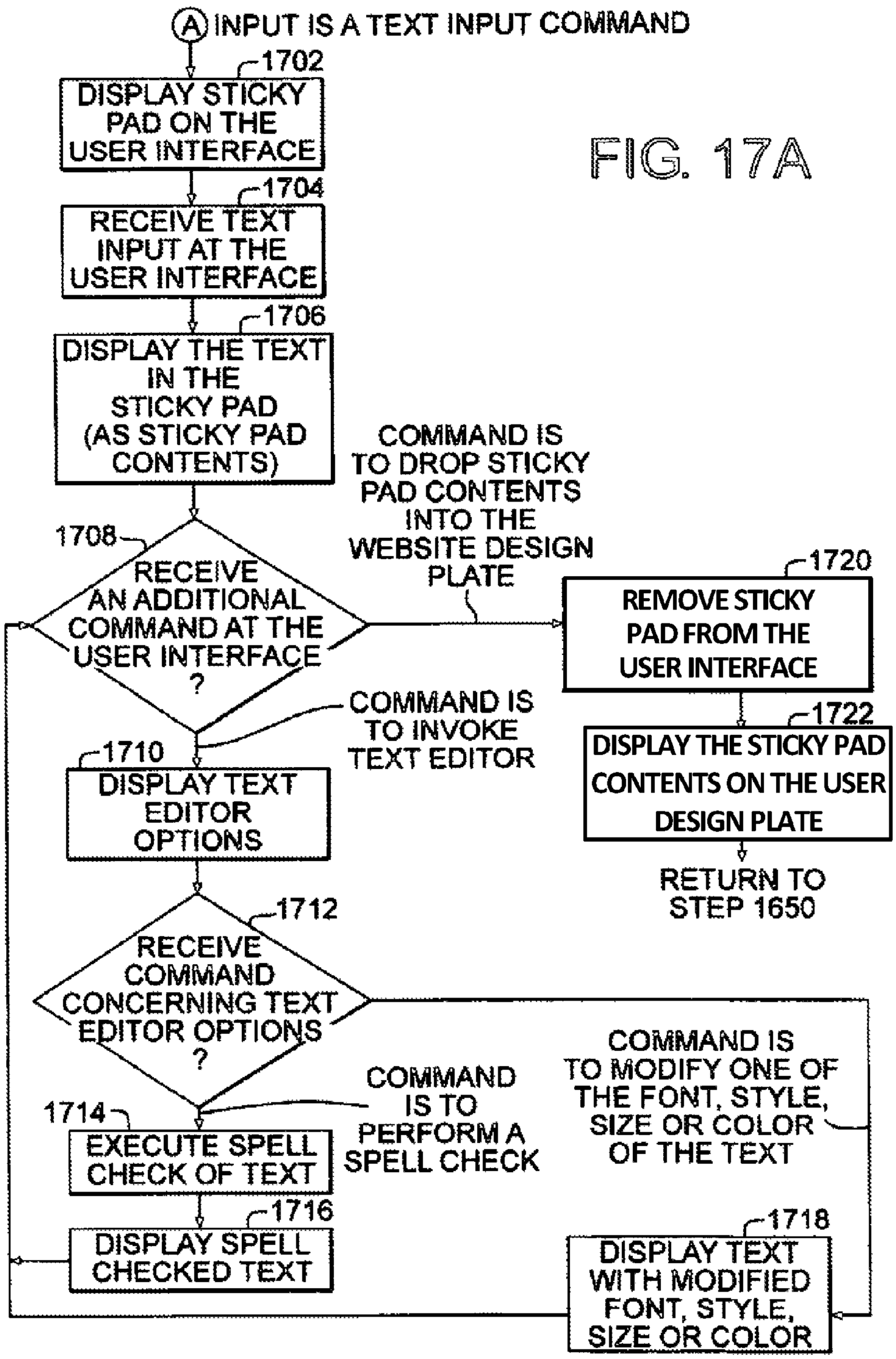

A INPUT IS A TEXT INPUT COMMAND
1702
DISPLAY STICKY PAD ON THE USER INTERFACE
1704
RECEIVE TEXT INPUT AT THE USER INTERFACE
1706
DISPLAY THE TEXT IN THE STICKY PAD (AS STICKY PAD CONTENTS)
1708
RECEIVE AN ADDITIONAL COMMAND AT THE USER INTERFACE ?
COMMAND IS TO DROP STICKY PAD CONTENTS INTO THE WEBSITE DESIGN PLATE
1720
REMOVE STICKY PAD FROM THE USER INTERFACE
1722
DISPLAY THE STICKY PAD CONTENTS ON THE USER DESIGN PLATE
RETURN TO STEP 1650
COMMAND IS TO INVOKE TEXT EDITOR
1710
DISPLAY TEXT EDITOR OPTIONS
1712
RECEIVE COMMAND CONCERNING TEXT EDITOR OPTIONS ?
COMMAND IS TO PERFORM A SPELL CHECK
1714
EXECUTE SPELL CHECK OF TEXT
1716
DISPLAY SPELL CHECKED TEXT
COMMAND IS TO MODIFY ONE OF THE FONT, STYLE, SIZE OR COLOR OF THE TEXT
1718
DISPLAY TEXT WITH MODIFIED FONT, STYLE, SIZE OR COLOR

FIG. 17A

FIG. 17B

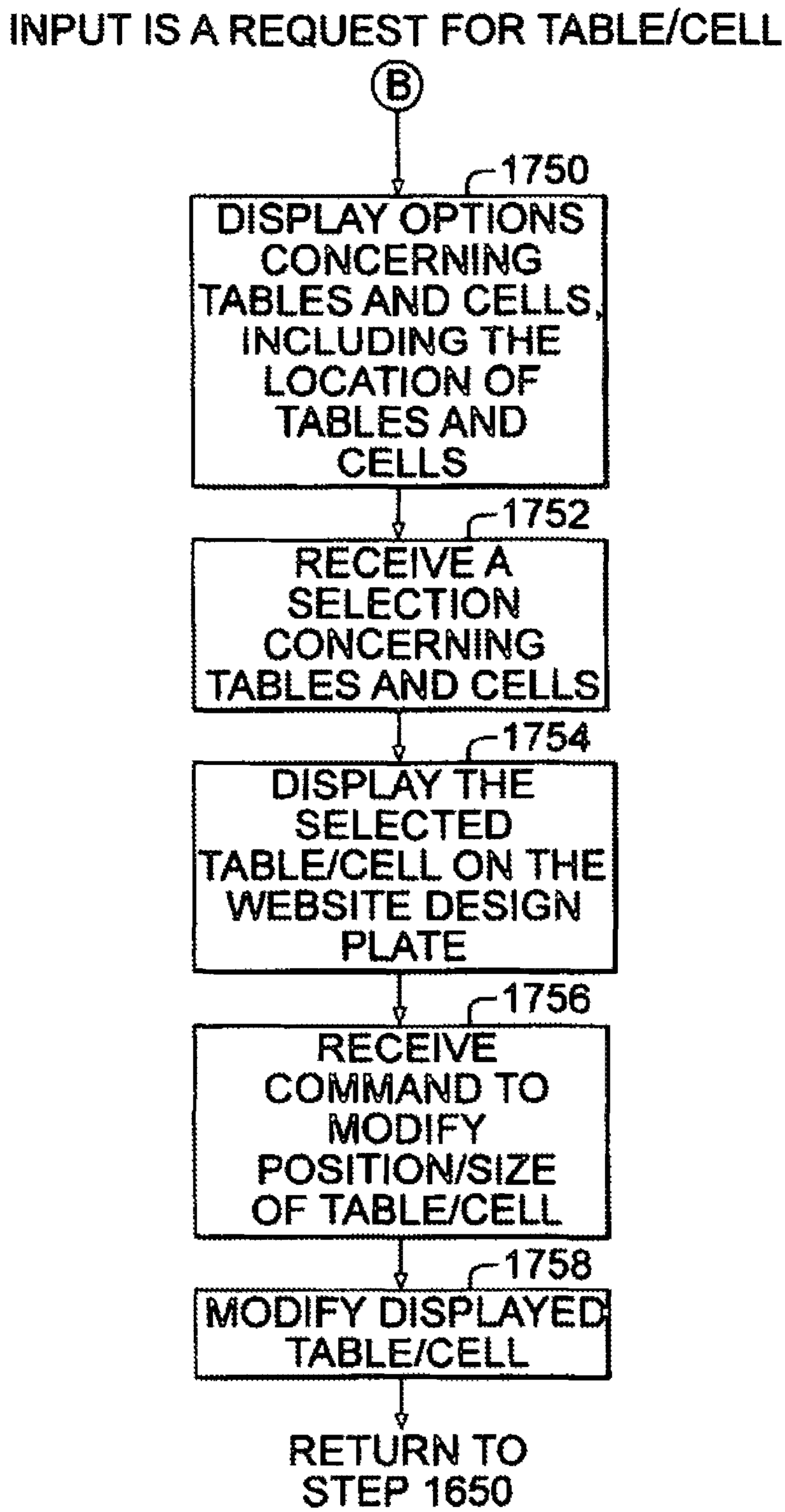

INPUT IS A REQUEST FOR TABLE/CELL
B
1750
DISPLAY OPTIONS CONCERNING TABLES AND CELLS, INCLUDING THE LOCATION OF TABLES AND CELLS
1752
RECEIVE A SELECTION CONCERNING TABLES AND CELLS
1754
DISPLAY THE SELECTED TABLE/CELL ON THE WEBSITE DESIGN PLATE
1756
RECEIVE COMMAND TO MODIFY POSITION/SIZE OF TABLE/CELL
1758
MODIFY DISPLAYED TABLE/CELL
RETURN TO STEP 1650

FIG. 18A

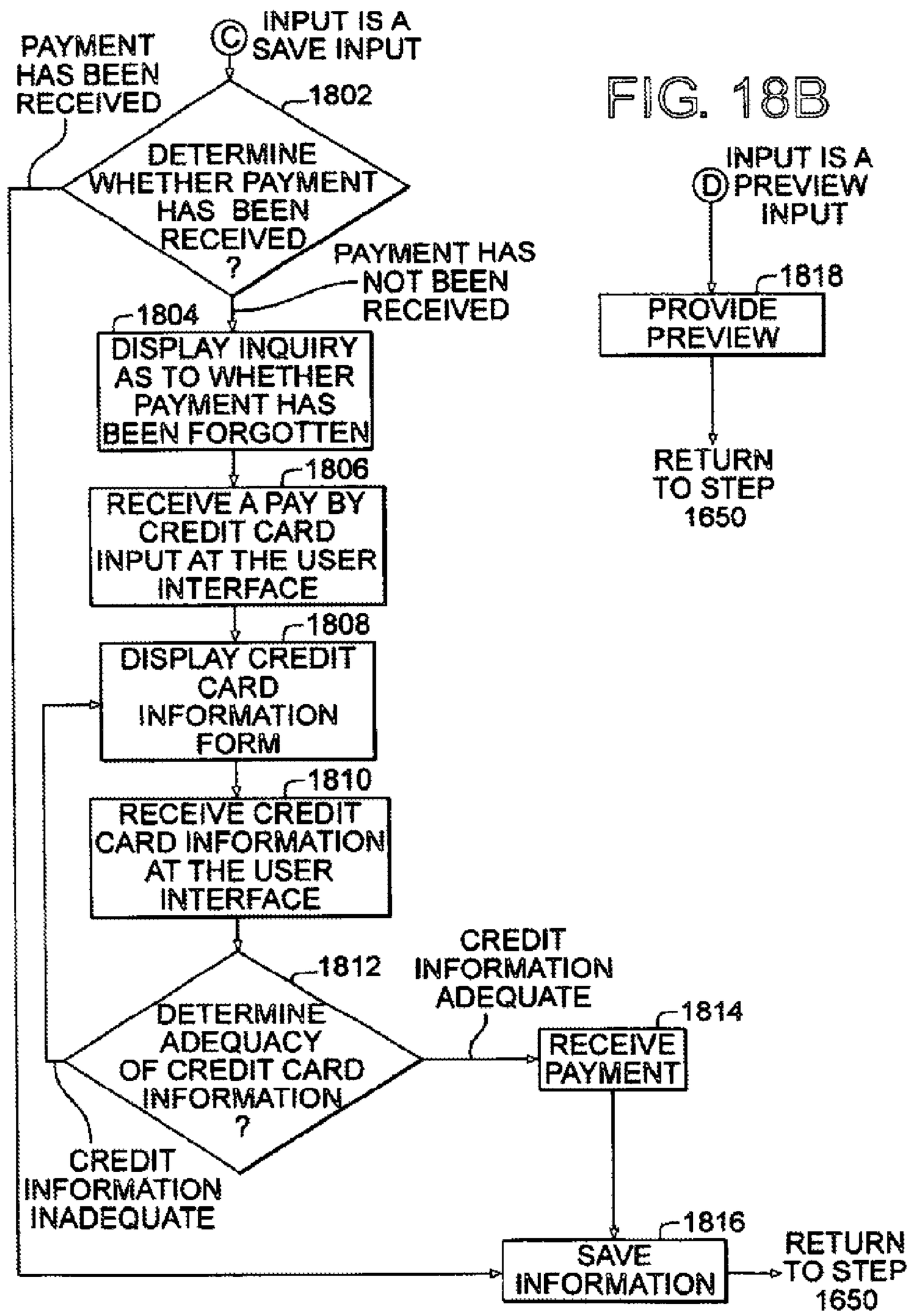

INPUT IS A SAVE INPUT
C
PAYMENT HAS BEEN RECEIVED
1802
DETERMINE WHETHER PAYMENT HAS BEEN RECEIVED ?
PAYMENT HAS NOT BEEN RECEIVED
1804
DISPLAY INQUIRY AS TO WHETHER PAYMENT HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN
1806
RECEIVE A PAY BY CREDIT CARD INPUT AT THE USER INTERFACE
1808
DISPLAY CREDIT CARD INFORMATION FORM
1810
RECEIVE CREDIT CARD INFORMATION AT THE USER INTERFACE
1812
DETERMINE ADEQUACY OF CREDIT CARD INFORMATION ?
CREDIT INFORMATION ADEQUATE
CREDIT INFORMATION INADEQUATE
1814
RECEIVE PAYMENT
1816
SAVE INFORMATION
RETURN TO STEP 1650
FIG. 18B
INPUT IS A PREVIEW INPUT
D
1818
PROVIDE PREVIEW
RETURN TO STEP 1650

FIG. 19A

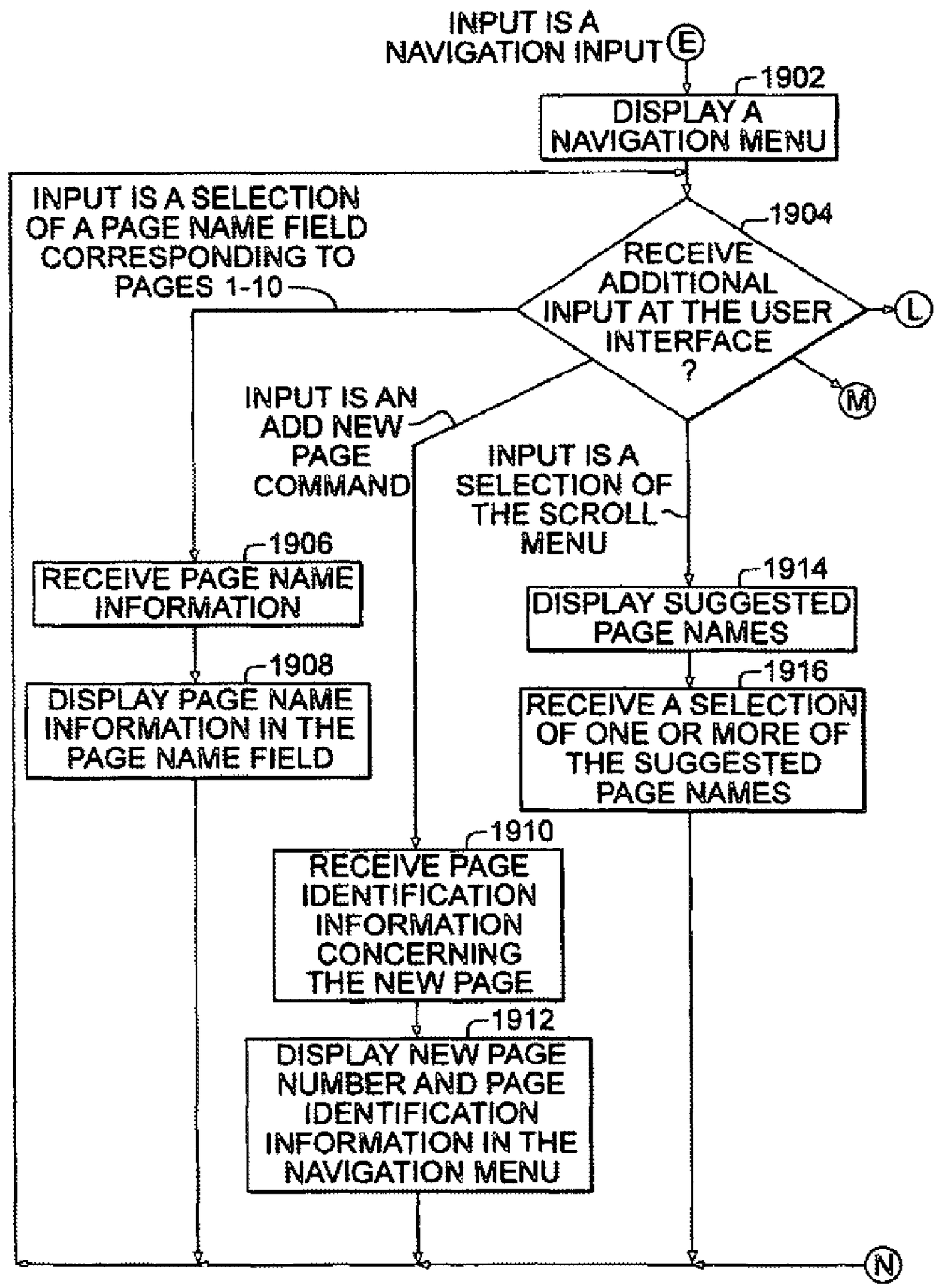
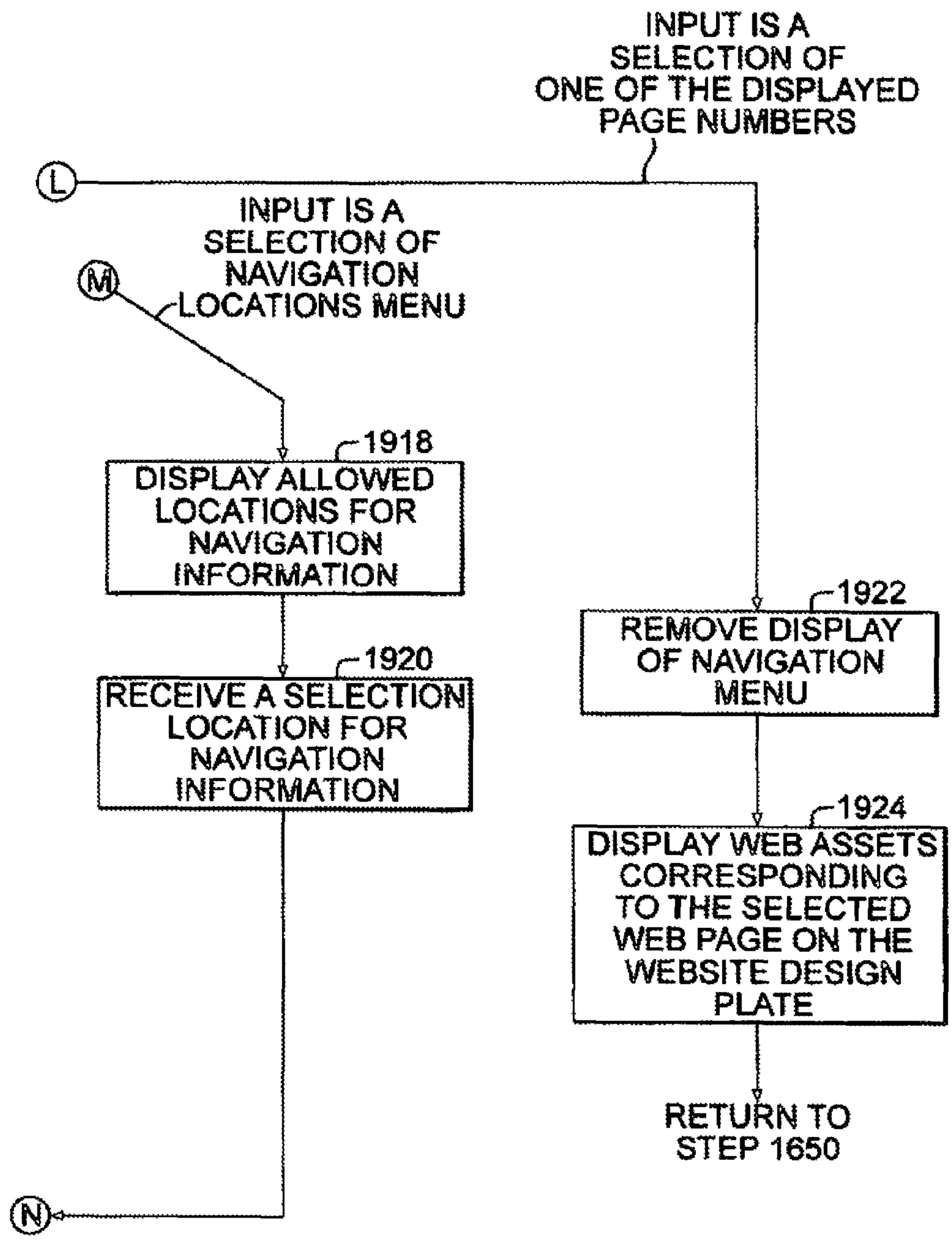

INPUT IS A NAVIGATION INPUT
E
1902
DISPLAY A NAVIGATION MENU
1904
RECEIVE ADDITIONAL INPUT AT THE USER INTERFACE ?
L
M
INPUT IS A SELECTION OF A PAGE NAME FIELD CORRESPONDING TO PAGES 1-10
INPUT IS AN ADD NEW PAGE COMMAND
INPUT IS A SELECTION OF THE SCROLL MENU
1906
RECEIVE PAGE NAME INFORMATION
1908
DISPLAY PAGE NAME INFORMATION IN THE PAGE NAME FIELD
1914
DISPLAY SUGGESTED PAGE NAMES
1916
RECEIVE A SELECTION OF ONE OR MORE OF THE SUGGESTED PAGE NAMES
1910
RECEIVE PAGE IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION CONCERNING THE NEW PAGE
1912
DISPLAY NEW PAGE NUMBER AND PAGE IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION IN THE NAVIGATION MENU
N

FIG. 19B


INPUT IS A SELECTION OF ONE OF THE DISPLAYED PAGE NUMBERS
L
INPUT IS A SELECTION OF NAVIGATION LOCATIONS MENU
M
1918
DISPLAY ALLOWED LOCATIONS FOR NAVIGATION INFORMATION
1920
RECEIVE A SELECTION LOCATION FOR NAVIGATION INFORMATION
N
1922
REMOVE DISPLAY OF NAVIGATION MENU
1924
DISPLAY WEB ASSETS CORRESPONDING TO THE SELECTED WEB PAGE ON THE WEBSITE DESIGN PLATE
RETURN TO STEP 1650

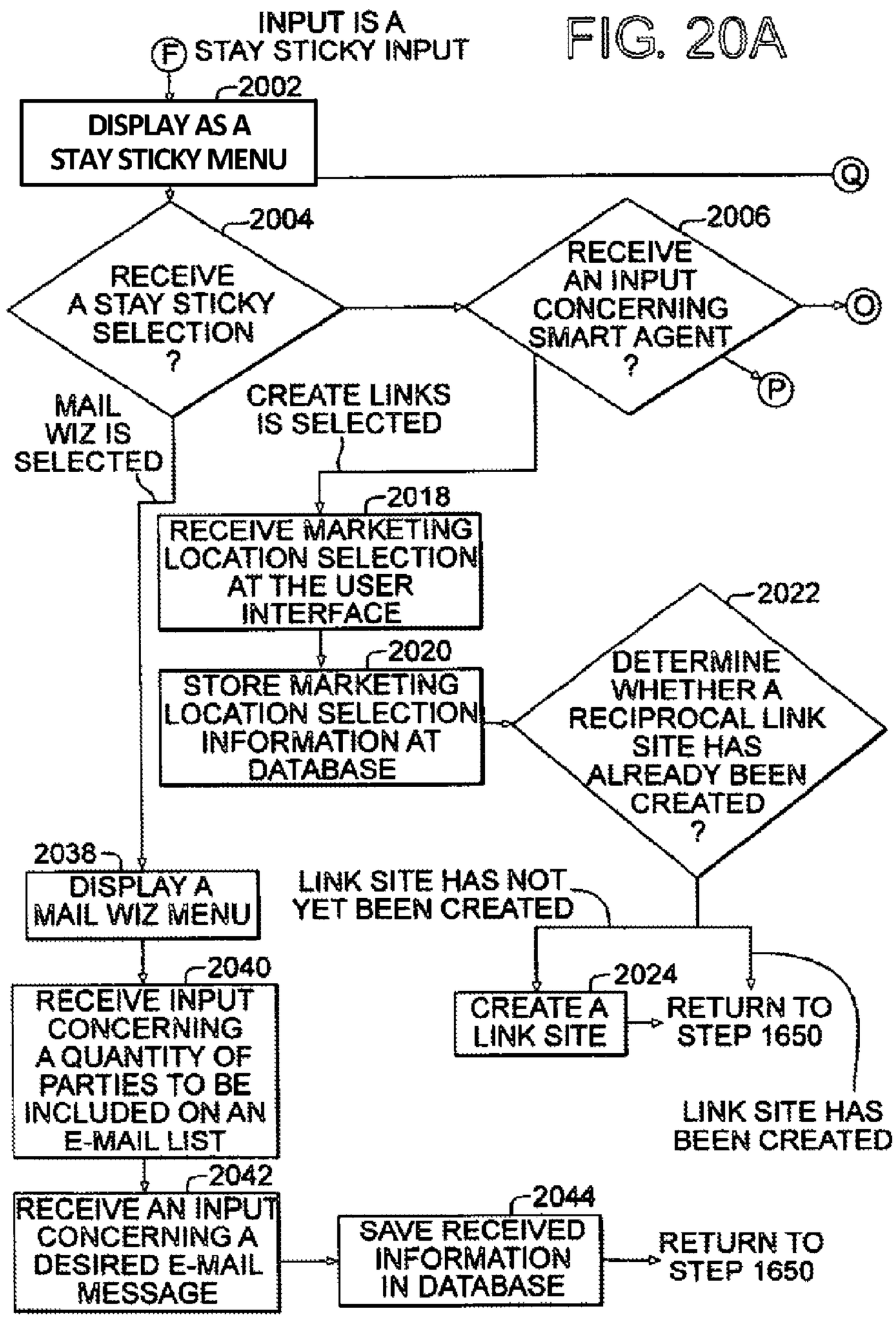
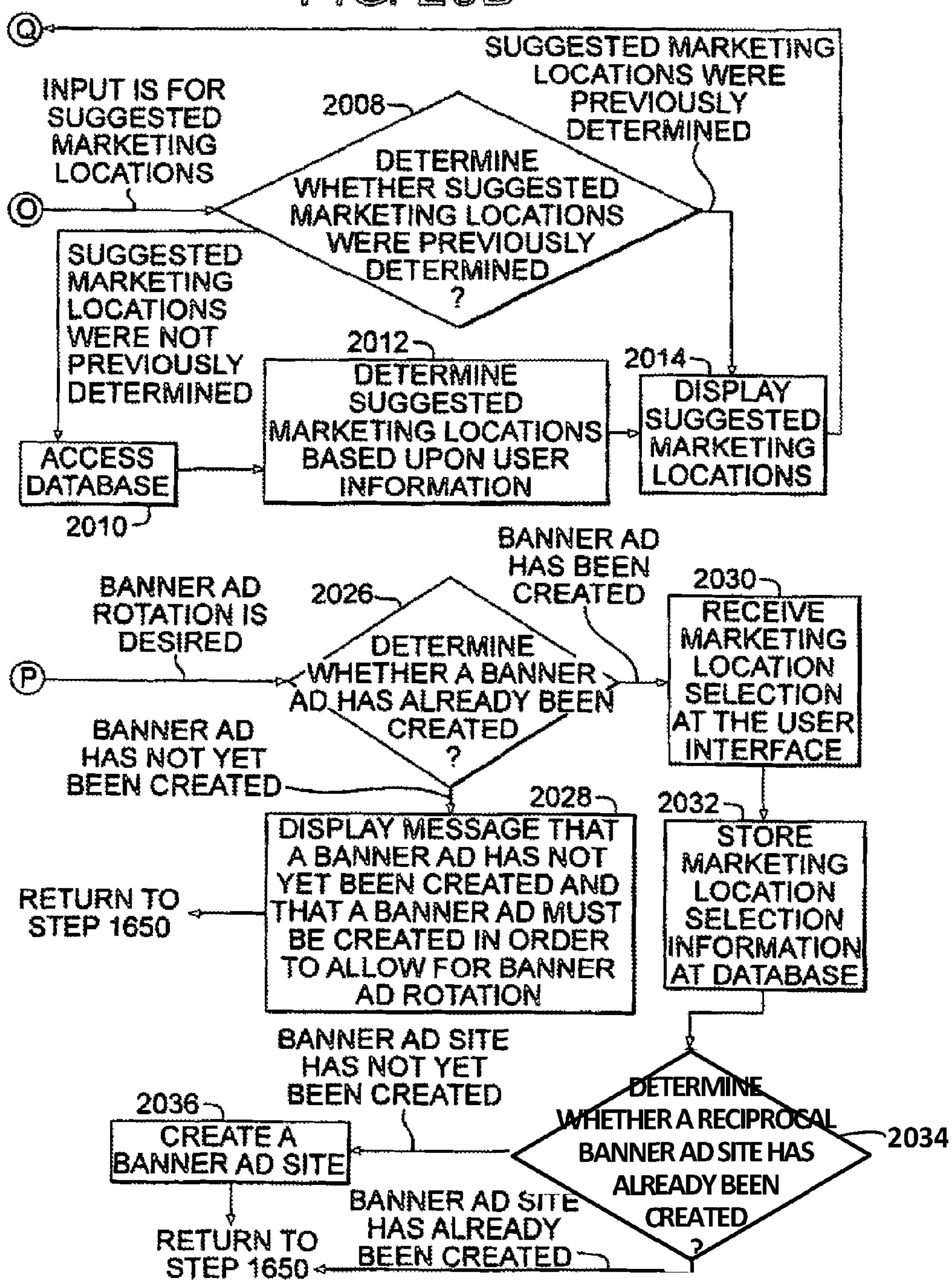


FIG. 20A
INPUT IS A STAY STICKY INPUT
F
2002
DISPLAY AS A STAY STICKY MENU
Q
2004
RECEIVE A STAY STICKY SELECTION ?
2006
RECEIVE AN INPUT CONCERNING SMART AGENT ?
O
P
MAIL WIZ IS SELECTED
CREATE LINKS IS SELECTED
2018
RECEIVE MARKETING LOCATION SELECTION AT THE USER INTERFACE
2020
STORE MARKETING LOCATION SELECTION INFORMATION AT DATABASE
2022
DETERMINE WHETHER A RECIPROCAL LINK SITE HAS ALREADY BEEN CREATED ?
2038
DISPLAY A MAIL WIZ MENU
LINK SITE HAS NOT YET BEEN CREATED
2024
CREATE A LINK SITE
RETURN TO STEP 1650
LINK SITE HAS BEEN CREATED
2040
RECEIVE INPUT CONCERNING A QUANTITY OF PARTIES TO BE INCLUDED ON AN E-MAIL LIST
2042
RECEIVE AN INPUT CONCERNING A DESIRED E-MAIL MESSAGE
2044
SAVE RECEIVED INFORMATION IN DATABASE
RETURN TO STEP 1650

FIG. 20B


Q
INPUT IS FOR SUGGESTED MARKETING LOCATIONS
O
2008
DETERMINE WHETHER SUGGESTED MARKETING LOCATIONS WERE PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED ?
SUGGESTED MARKETING LOCATIONS WERE PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED
SUGGESTED MARKETING LOCATIONS WERE NOT PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED
ACCESS DATABASE
2010
2012
DETERMINE SUGGESTED MARKETING LOCATIONS BASED UPON USER INFORMATION
2014
DISPLAY SUGGESTED MARKETING LOCATIONS
P
BANNER AD ROTATION IS DESIRED
2026
DETERMINE WHETHER A BANNER AD HAS ALREADY BEEN CREATED ?
BANNER AD HAS BEEN CREATED
BANNER AD HAS NOT YET BEEN CREATED
2030
RECEIVE MARKETING LOCATION SELECTION AT THE USER INTERFACE
2028
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
RETURN TO STEP 1650
2032
STORE MARKETING LOCATION SELECTION INFORMATION AT DATABASE
BANNER AD SITE HAS NOT YET BEEN CREATED
2036
CREATE A BANNER AD SITE
DETERMINE WHETHER A RECIPROCAL BANNER AD SITE HAS ALREADY BEEN CREATED ?
2034
BANNER AD SITE HAS ALREADY BEEN CREATED
RETURN TO STEP 1650

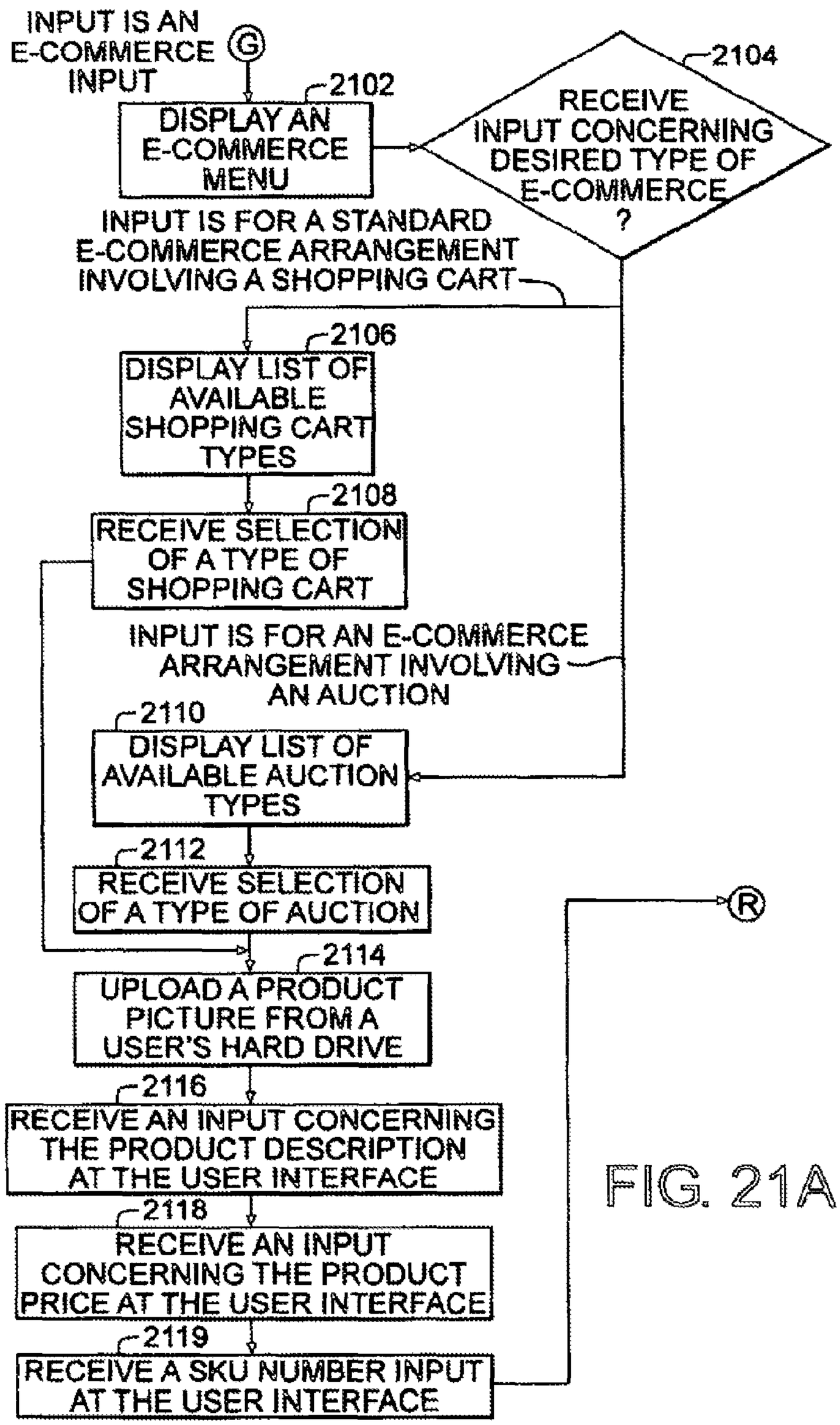
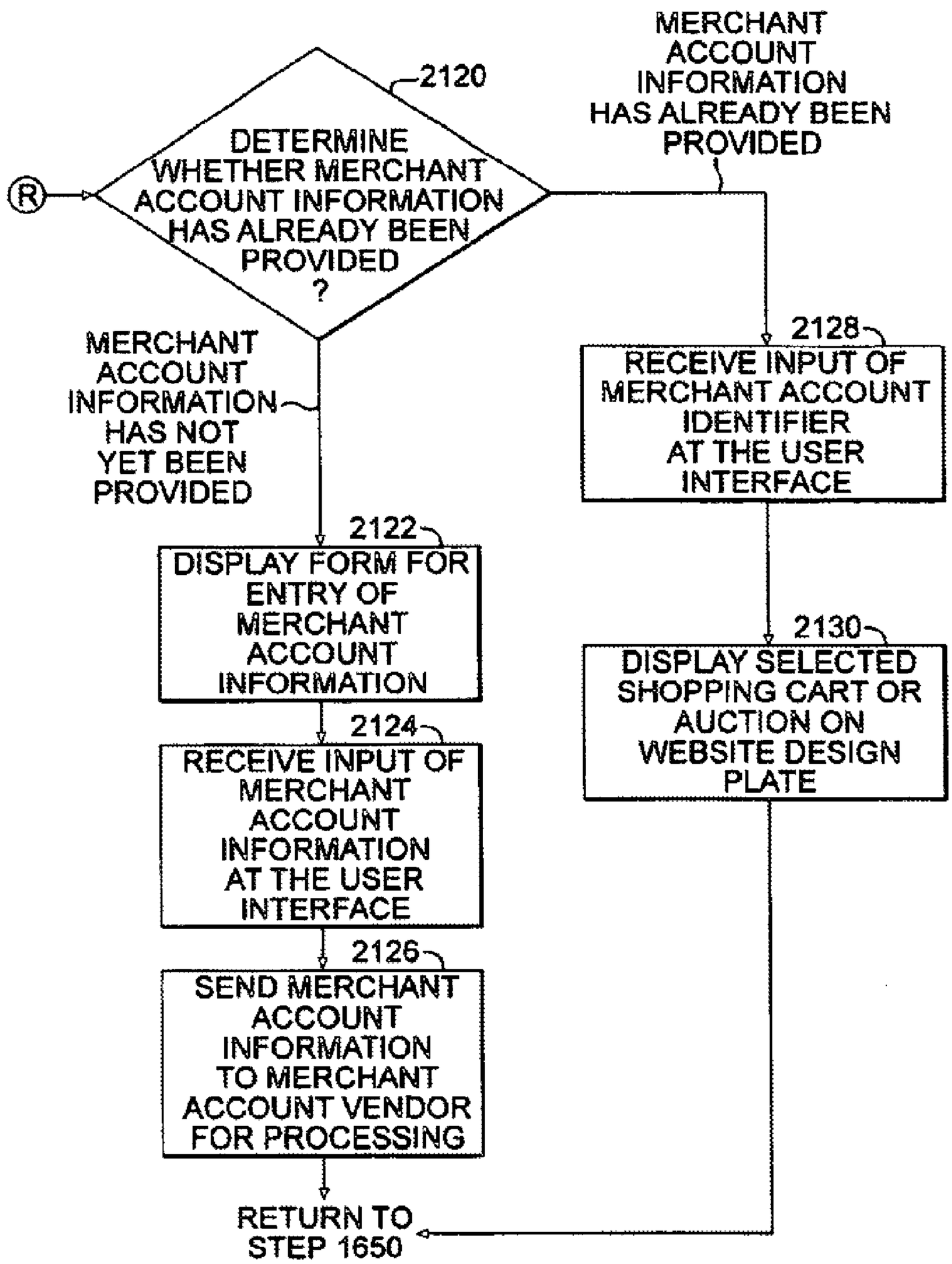

INPUT IS AN E-COMMERCE INPUT
G
2102
DISPLAY AN E-COMMERCE MENU
2104
RECEIVE INPUT CONCERNING DESIRED TYPE OF E-COMMERCE ?
INPUT IS FOR A STANDARD E-COMMERCE ARRANGEMENT INVOLVING A SHOPPING CART
2106
DISPLAY LIST OF AVAILABLE SHOPPING CART TYPES
2108
RECEIVE SELECTION OF A TYPE OF SHOPPING CART
INPUT IS FOR AN E-COMMERCE ARRANGEMENT INVOLVING AN AUCTION
2110
DISPLAY LIST OF AVAILABLE AUCTION TYPES
2112
RECEIVE SELECTION OF A TYPE OF AUCTION
R
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

FIG. 21A

FIG. 21B


2120
DETERMINE WHETHER MERCHANT ACCOUNT INFORMATION HAS ALREADY BEEN PROVIDED ?
R
MERCHANT ACCOUNT INFORMATION HAS ALREADY BEEN PROVIDED
MERCHANT ACCOUNT INFORMATION HAS NOT YET BEEN PROVIDED
2128
RECEIVE INPUT OF MERCHANT ACCOUNT IDENTIFIER AT THE USER INTERFACE
2122
DISPLAY FORM FOR ENTRY OF MERCHANT ACCOUNT INFORMATION
2130
DISPLAY SELECTED SHOPPING CART OR AUCTION ON WEBSITE DESIGN PLATE
2124
RECEIVE INPUT OF MERCHANT ACCOUNT INFORMATION AT THE USER INTERFACE
2126
SEND MERCHANT ACCOUNT INFORMATION TO MERCHANT ACCOUNT VENDOR FOR PROCESSING
RETURN TO STEP 1650

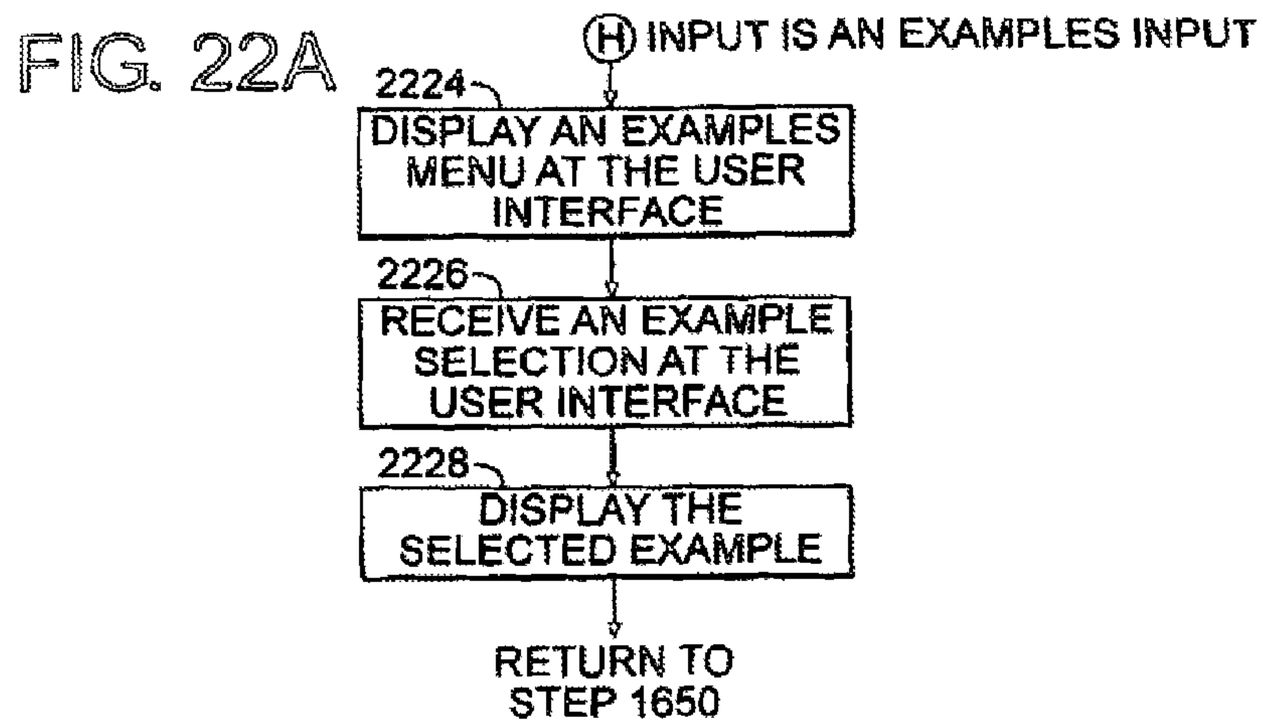


FIG. 22A
H INPUT IS AN EXAMPLES INPUT
2224
DISPLAY AN EXAMPLES MENU AT THE USER INTERFACE
2226
RECEIVE AN EXAMPLE SELECTION AT THE USER INTERFACE
2228
DISPLAY THE SELECTED EXAMPLE
RETURN TO STEP 1650

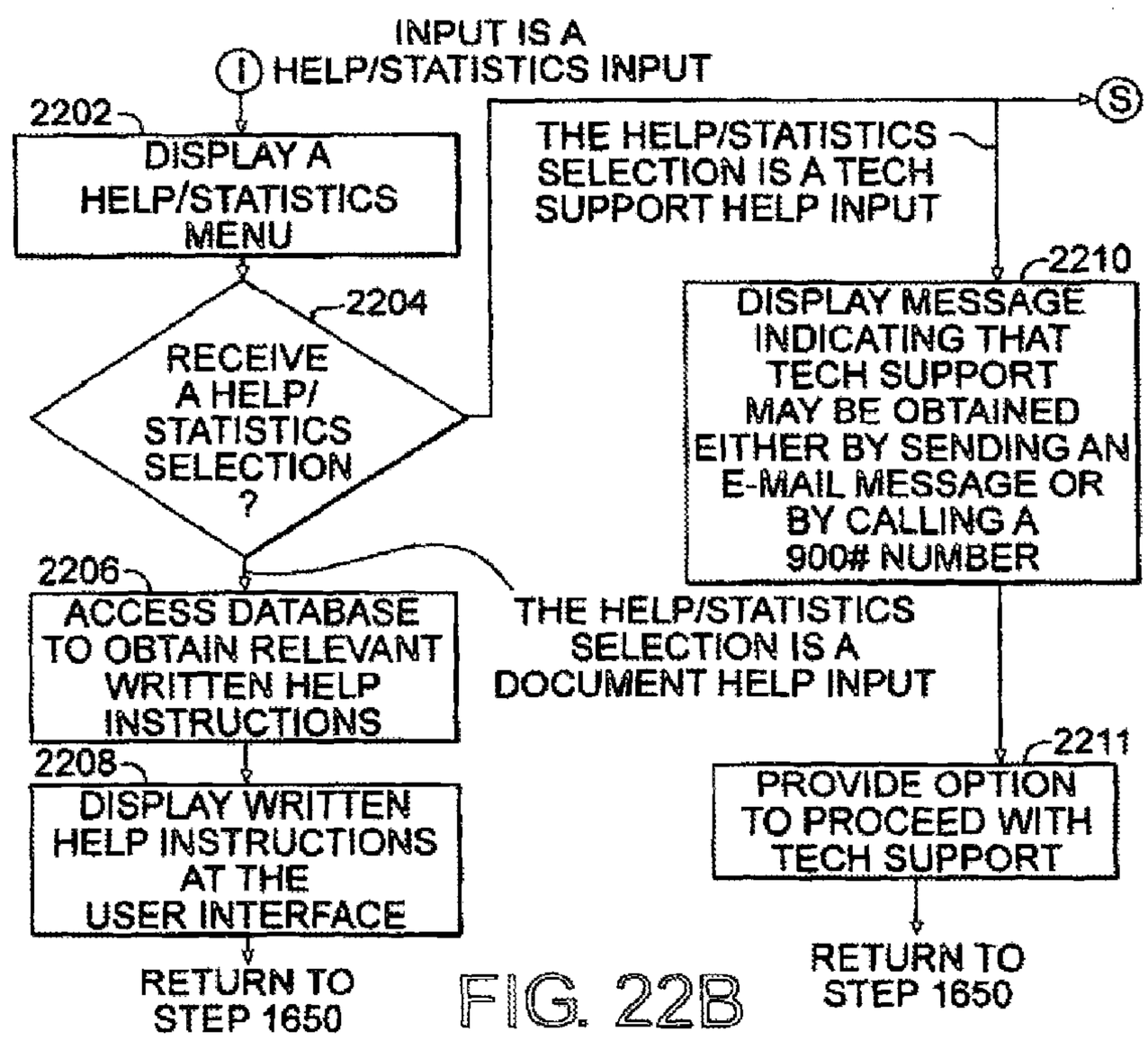
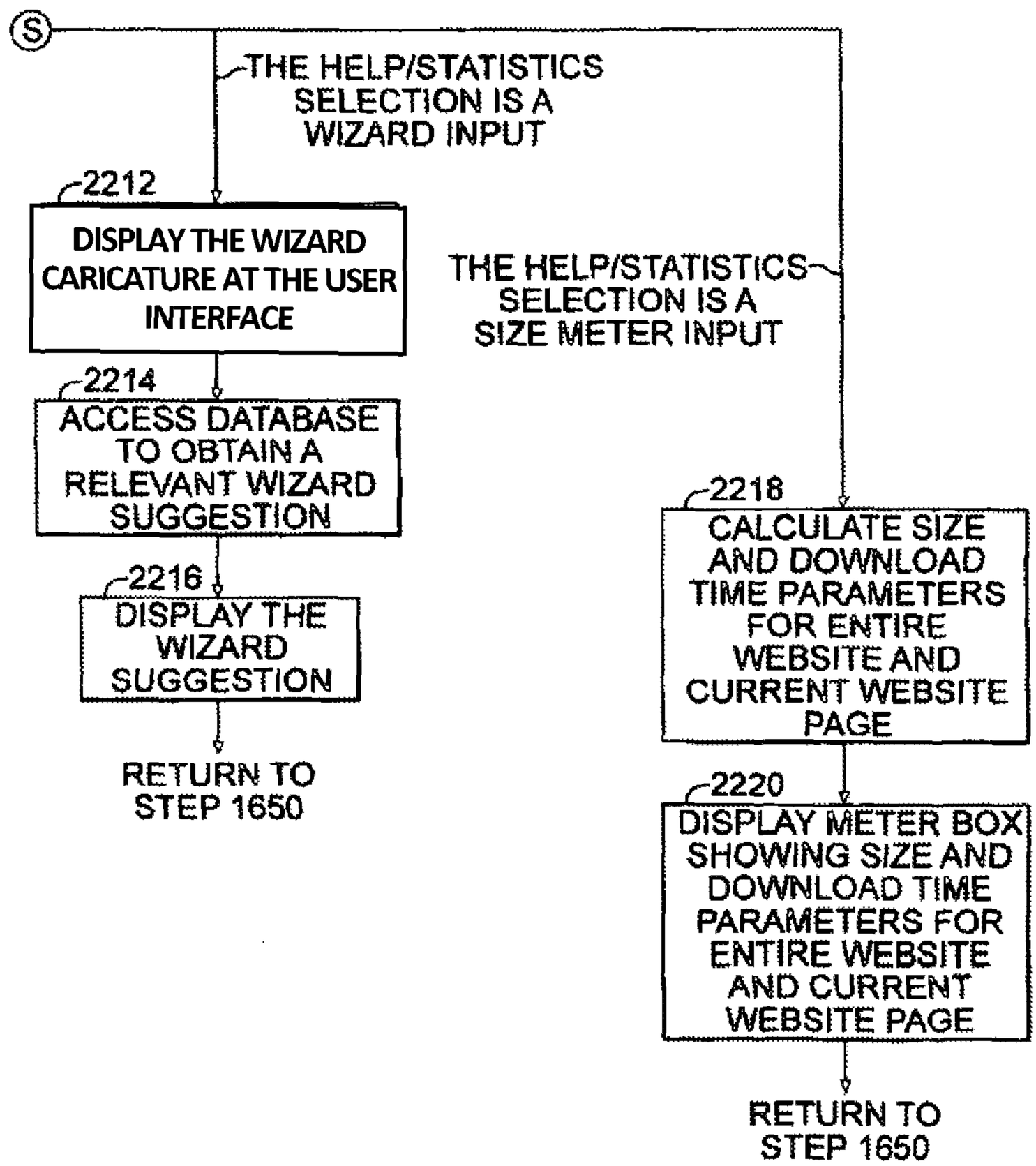

INPUT IS A I HELP/STATISTICS INPUT
2202
DISPLAY A HELP/STATISTICS MENU
2204
RECEIVE A HELP/ STATISTICS SELECTION ?
THE HELP/STATISTICS SELECTION IS A TECH SUPPORT HELP INPUT
S
2210
DISPLAY MESSAGE INDICATING THAT TECH SUPPORT MAY BE OBTAINED EITHER BY SENDING AN E-MAIL MESSAGE OR BY CALLING A 900# NUMBER
2206
ACCESS DATABASE TO OBTAIN RELEVANT WRITTEN HELP INSTRUCTIONS
THE HELP/STATISTICS SELECTION IS A DOCUMENT HELP INPUT
2208
DISPLAY WRITTEN HELP INSTRUCTIONS AT THE USER INTERFACE
2211
PROVIDE OPTION TO PROCEED WITH TECH SUPPORT
RETURN TO STEP 1650
RETURN TO STEP 1650

FIG. 22B

FIG. 22C


S
THE HELP/STATISTICS SELECTION IS A WIZARD INPUT
2212
DISPLAY THE WIZARD CARICATURE AT THE USER INTERFACE
2214
ACCESS DATABASE TO OBTAIN A RELEVANT WIZARD SUGGESTION
2216
DISPLAY THE WIZARD SUGGESTION
RETURN TO STEP 1650
THE HELP/STATISTICS SELECTION IS A SIZE METER INPUT
2218
CALCULATE SIZE AND DOWNLOAD TIME PARAMETERS FOR ENTIRE WEBSITE AND CURRENT WEBSITE PAGE
2220
DISPLAY METER BOX SHOWING SIZE AND DOWNLOAD TIME PARAMETERS FOR ENTIRE WEBSITE AND CURRENT WEBSITE PAGE
RETURN TO STEP 1650

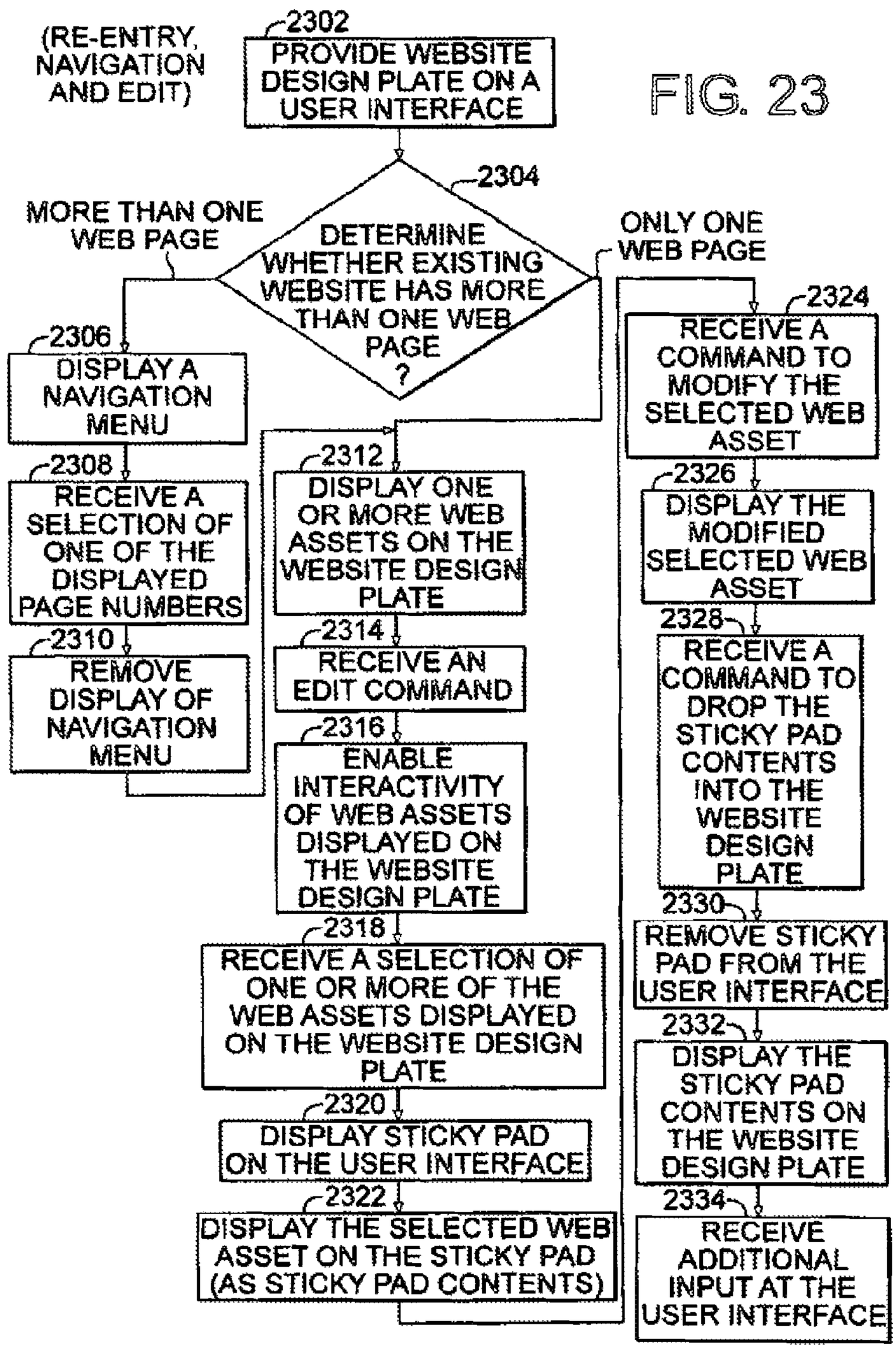

(RE-ENTRY, NAVIGATION AND EDIT)
2302
PROVIDE WEBSITE DESIGN PLATE ON A USER INTERFACE
2304
DETERMINE WHETHER EXISTING WEBSITE HAS MORE THAN ONE WEB PAGE ?
MORE THAN ONE WEB PAGE
ONLY ONE WEB PAGE
2306
DISPLAY A NAVIGATION MENU
2308
RECEIVE A SELECTION OF ONE OF THE DISPLAYED PAGE NUMBERS
2310
REMOVE DISPLAY OF NAVIGATION MENU
2312
DISPLAY ONE OR MORE WEB ASSETS ON THE WEBSITE DESIGN PLATE
2314
RECEIVE AN EDIT COMMAND
2316
ENABLE INTERACTIVITY OF WEB ASSETS DISPLAYED ON THE WEBSITE DESIGN PLATE
2318
RECEIVE A SELECTION OF ONE OR MORE OF THE WEB ASSETS DISPLAYED ON THE WEBSITE DESIGN PLATE
2320
DISPLAY STICKY PAD ON THE USER INTERFACE
2322
DISPLAY THE SELECTED WEB ASSET ON THE STICKY PAD (AS STICKY PAD CONTENTS)
2324
RECEIVE A COMMAND TO MODIFY THE SELECTED WEB ASSET
2326
DISPLAY THE MODIFIED SELECTED WEB ASSET
2328
RECEIVE A COMMAND TO DROP THE STICKY PAD CONTENTS INTO THE WEBSITE DESIGN PLATE
2330
REMOVE STICKY PAD FROM THE USER INTERFACE
2332
DISPLAY THE STICKY PAD CONTENTS ON THE WEBSITE DESIGN PLATE
2334
RECEIVE ADDITIONAL INPUT AT THE USER INTERFACE

FIG. 23

RECIPROCAL LINKING ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN WEB PAGES

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a Continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 13/763,128, filed on Feb. 8, 2013, which is a Continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 13/669,027, filed on Nov. 5, 2012 (now U.S. Pat. No. 8,423,399), which is a Continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 13/206,483 (now U.S. Pat. No. 8,335,713), filed on Aug. 9, 2011, which is a Continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 09/589,551 (now U.S. Pat. No. 7,996,259), filed on Jun. 7, 2000.

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 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 (GUI), 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;

FIGS. **16**A and **16**B illustrate flowcharts with method steps for developing a web page of a website, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

FIGS. **17**A and **17**B illustrate flowcharts 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 flowcharts of FIGS. **16**A and **16**B;

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

FIGS. **19**A and **19**B illustrate flowcharts with method steps for generating a website outline using a navigation feature, which can be performed as part of the flowchart of FIGS. **16**A and **16**B;

FIGS. **20**A and **20**B illustrate flowcharts 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 FIGS. **16**A and **16**B;

FIGS. **21**A and **21**B illustrate flowcharts with method steps for performing e-commerce features, which can be performed as part of the flowchart of FIGS. **16**A and **16**B;

FIGS. **22**A, **22**B and **22**C illustrate flowcharts with method steps for performing examples and help/statistics features, which can be performed as part of the flowchart of FIGS. **16**A and **16**B; 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 under-

stood 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, Corn 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 quar-

ter), 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 n the fx menu **430**, all available banner ads have standard size configurations, namely 240.times.360 pixels or 240.times.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 modified 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 PAD™ **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, Coining 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 *e- 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, 33.6K 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. **16A-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.

16A-22C can be combined together to form a larger collection of steps. Referring to FIGS. **16** A and **16**B, 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 (i.e., 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 FIGS. **19**A and **19**B, 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 FIGS. **20**A and **20**B, 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 FIGS. **20**A and **20**B, 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**A) 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 FIGS. **21**A and **21**B, 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, as shown in FIG. **22**C, 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, within and by a computer hardware system that is configured to serve a first web page associated with a first user and a second web page associated with a second user, comprising:

receiving, from a first computer associated with the first user, a first indication to opt into a reciprocal linking arrangement;

receiving, from a second computer associated with the second user, a second indication to opt into the reciprocal linking arrangement;

establishing, within a database associated with the computer hardware system, the reciprocal linking arrangement based upon both the first and second users opting to participate in the reciprocal linking arrangement;

including, within the second web page and based upon the reciprocal linking arrangement, a second functional identification element associated with the first entity; and

including, within the first web page and based upon the reciprocal linking arrangement, a first functional identification element associated with the second entity, wherein

the second functional identification element includes a link to the first web page, and

the first functional identification element includes a link to the second web page.

2. The method of claim **1**, wherein

the first and second users are both registered users with the computer hardware system.

3. The method of claim **1**, wherein

the first indication identifies the second web page of the second user.

4. The method of claim **1**, further comprising

receiving, from a third user, a request for the first web page;

dynamically generating the first web page; and

serving, to the third user, the dynamically-generated first web page.

5. The method of claim **1**, wherein

the first web page includes one or more web pages.

6. The method of claim **1**, further comprising

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

7. The method of claim **6**, wherein

the web asset is a functional application.

8. The method of claim **1**, further comprising

providing, to the first user, a plurality of recommended web pages associated with the computer hardware system.

9. The method of claim **8**, wherein

the first indication identifies one of the plurality of recommended web pages.

10. The method of claim **1**, wherein

the second functional identification element includes an image.

11. A webpage implementation server system that is configured to serve a first web page associated with a first user and a second web page associated with a second user, comprising:

a database storing information associated with the first and second web pages;

a computer hardware system configured to perform:

receiving, from a first computer associated with the first user, a first indication to opt into a reciprocal linking arrangement;

receiving, from a second computer associated with the second user, a second indication to opt into the reciprocal linking arrangement;

establishing, within the database, the reciprocal linking arrangement based upon both the first and second users opting to participate in the reciprocal linking arrangement;

including, within the second web page and based upon the reciprocal linking arrangement, a second functional identification element associated with the first entity; and

including, within the first web page and based upon the reciprocal linking arrangement, a first functional identification element associated with the second entity, wherein

the second functional identification element includes a link to the first web page, and

the first functional identification element includes a link to the second web page.

12. The server system of claim **11**, wherein

the first and second users are both registered users with the computer hardware system.

13. The server system of claim **11**, wherein

the first indication identifies the second web page of the second user.

14. The server system of claim **11**, wherein the computer hardware system is further configured to perform

receiving, from a third user, a request for the first web page;

dynamically generating the first web page; and

serving, to the third user, the dynamically-generated first web page.

15. The server system of claim **11**, wherein

the first web page includes one or more web pages.

16. The server system of claim **11**, further comprising

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

17. The server system of claim **16**, wherein

the web asset is a functional application.

18. The server system of claim **11**, wherein the computer hardware system is further configured to perform

providing, to the first user, a plurality of recommended web pages associated with the computer hardware system.

19. The server system of claim **18**, wherein

the first indication identifies one of the plurality of recommended web pages.

20. The server system of claim **11**, wherein

the second functional identification element includes an image.

* * * * *

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 8,768,760 B1
APPLICATION NO. : 14/191746
DATED : July 1, 2014
INVENTOR(S) : Thomas L. DiStefano, III

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

In the Claims

Column 28, Line 20: delete "with the first entity" and replace with --with the first user--;

Column 28, Line 24: delete "with the second entity" and replace with --with the second user--.

Column 29, Lines 10-11: delete "with the first entity" and replace with --with the first user--;

Column 29, Lines 14-15: delete "with the second entity" and replace with --with the second user--.

Signed and Sealed this
Twenty-eighth Day of November, 2017

Joseph Matal

Joseph Matal
Performing the Functions and Duties of the
Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office