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(54) SYSTEMS, METHODS AND COMPUTER PROGRAM PRODUCTS FOR MANAGING MULTIMEDIA CONTENT

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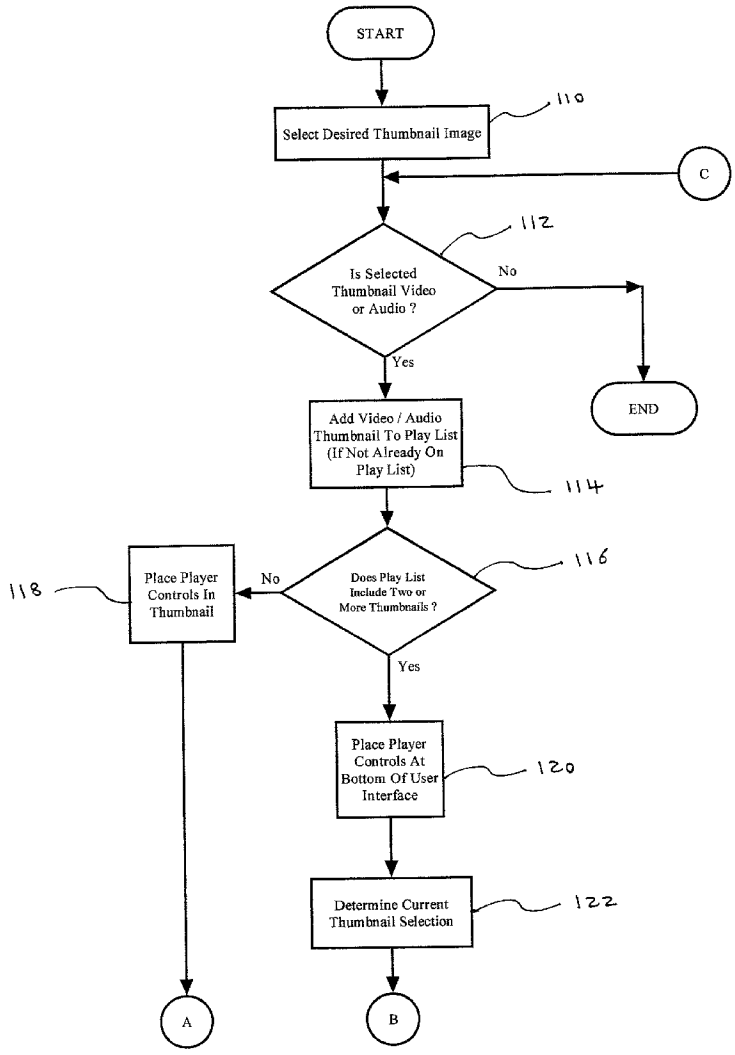
(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present invention is a multimedia management system for storing, manipulating, and displaying multimedia content. The system comprises a user interface, a plurality of predefined functions, a multimedia acquisition interface, and system controls. The system provides users with a simple and intuitive method and computer program for reviewing multimedia content, which can include digital video, digital audio and text, still images, animation, and MIDI.



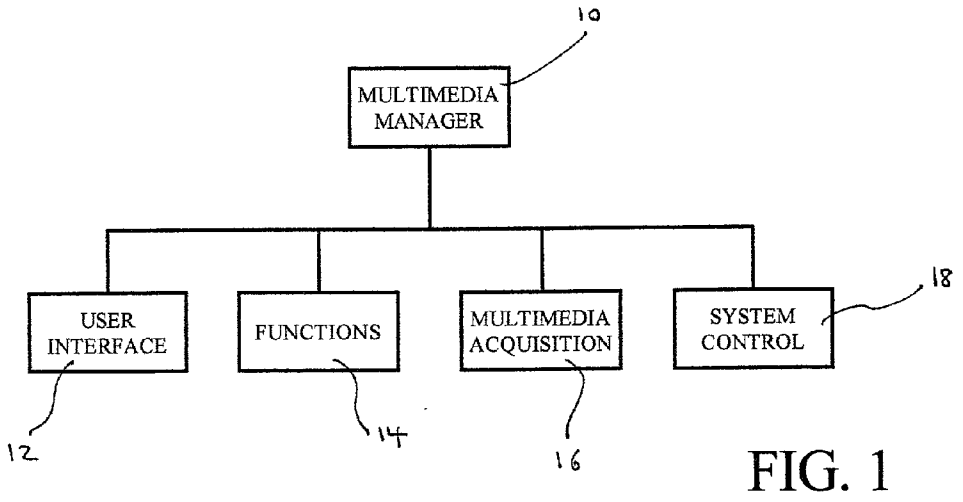

10
MULTIMEDIA MANAGER
USER INTERFACE
FUNCTIONS
MULTIMEDIA ACQUISITION
SYSTEM CONTROL
18
12
14
16

FIG. 1

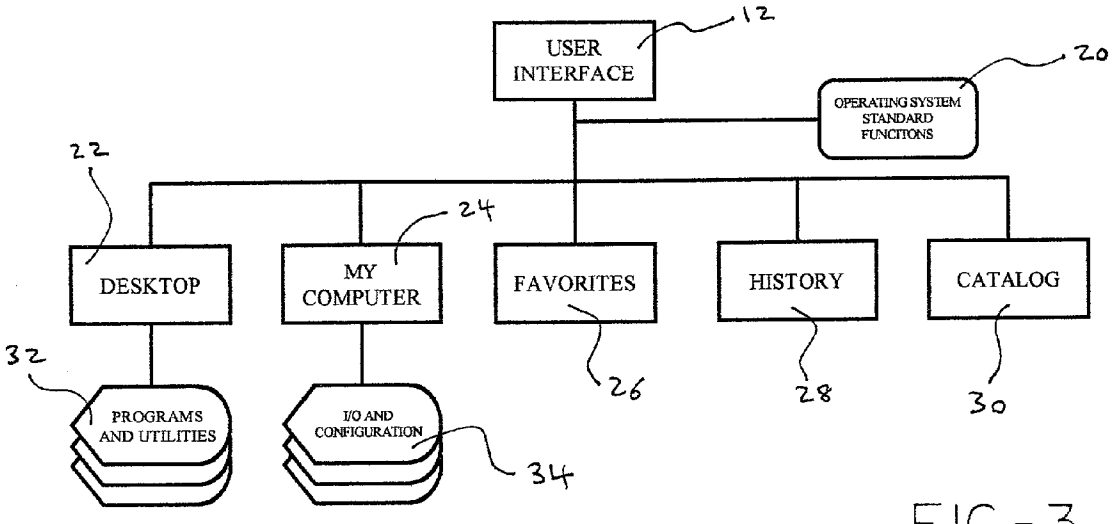
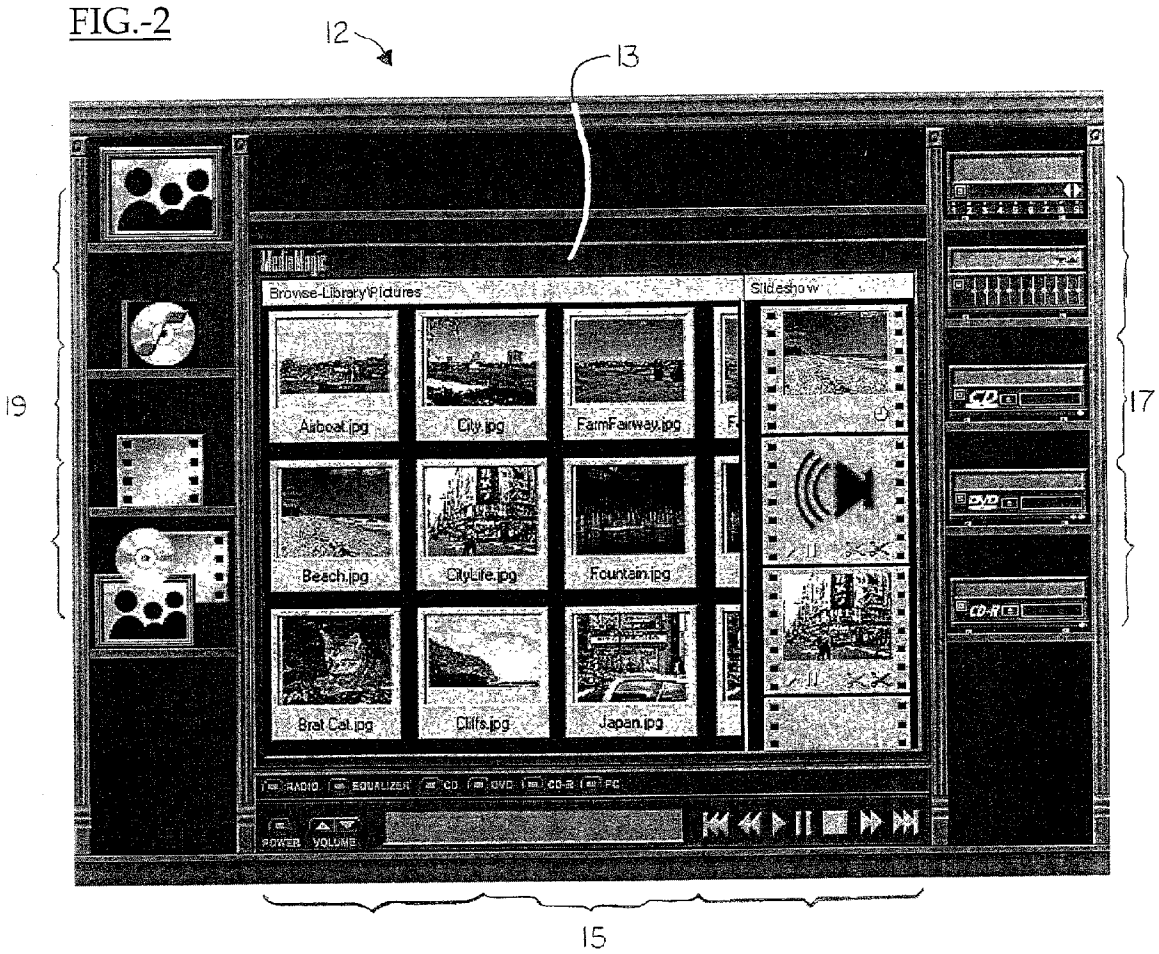

12
USER INTERFACE
20
OPERATING SYSTEM STANDARD FUNCITONS
22
24
DESKTOP
MY COMPUTER
FAVORITES
HISTORY
CATALOG
32
PROGRAMS AND UTILITIES
I/O AND CONFIGURATION
34
26
28
30

FIG.-3

FIG.-2


12
13
19
17
15
Browse-Library\Pictures
Slideshow
Airboat.jpg
City.jpg
FarmFairway.jpg
Beach.jpg
CityLife.jpg
Fountain.jpg
Brat Cat.jpg
Cliffs.jpg
Japan.jpg
RADIO
EQUALIZER
CD
DVD
CD-R
PC
POWER
VOLUME

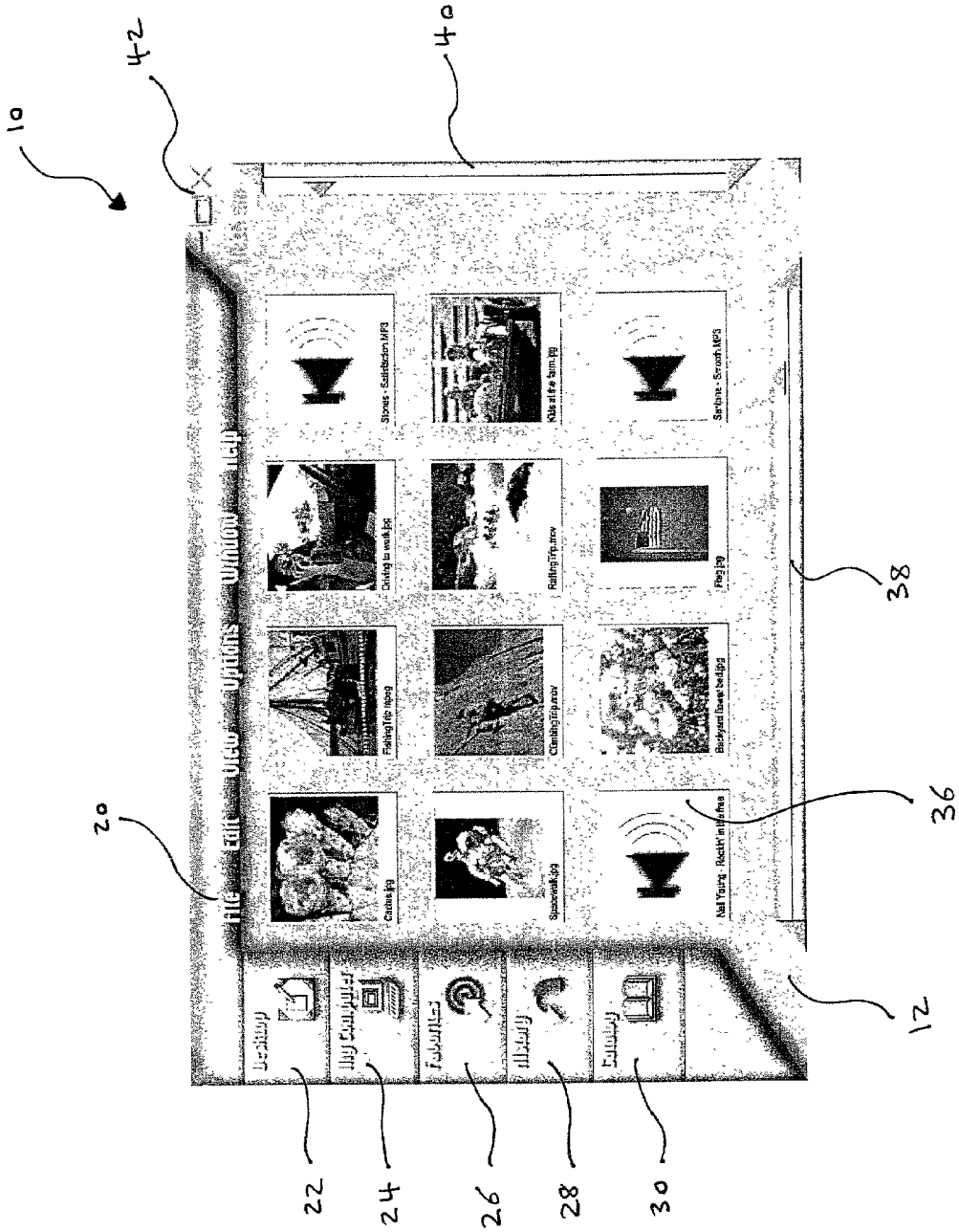

10
42
40
20
File Edit View Options Window Help
Desktop
My Computer
Favorites
Library
Playlists
Stones - Satisfaction.MP3
Kids at the farm.jpg
Santana - Smooth.MP3
Driving to work.jpg
RaftingTrip.mov
Flag.jpg
FishingTrip.jpeg
ClimbingTrip.mov
Backyard Bowling.jpg
Canoe.jpg
Spacewalk.jpg
Neil Young - Rockin' in the Free
38
36
12
22
24
26
28
30

FIG-4

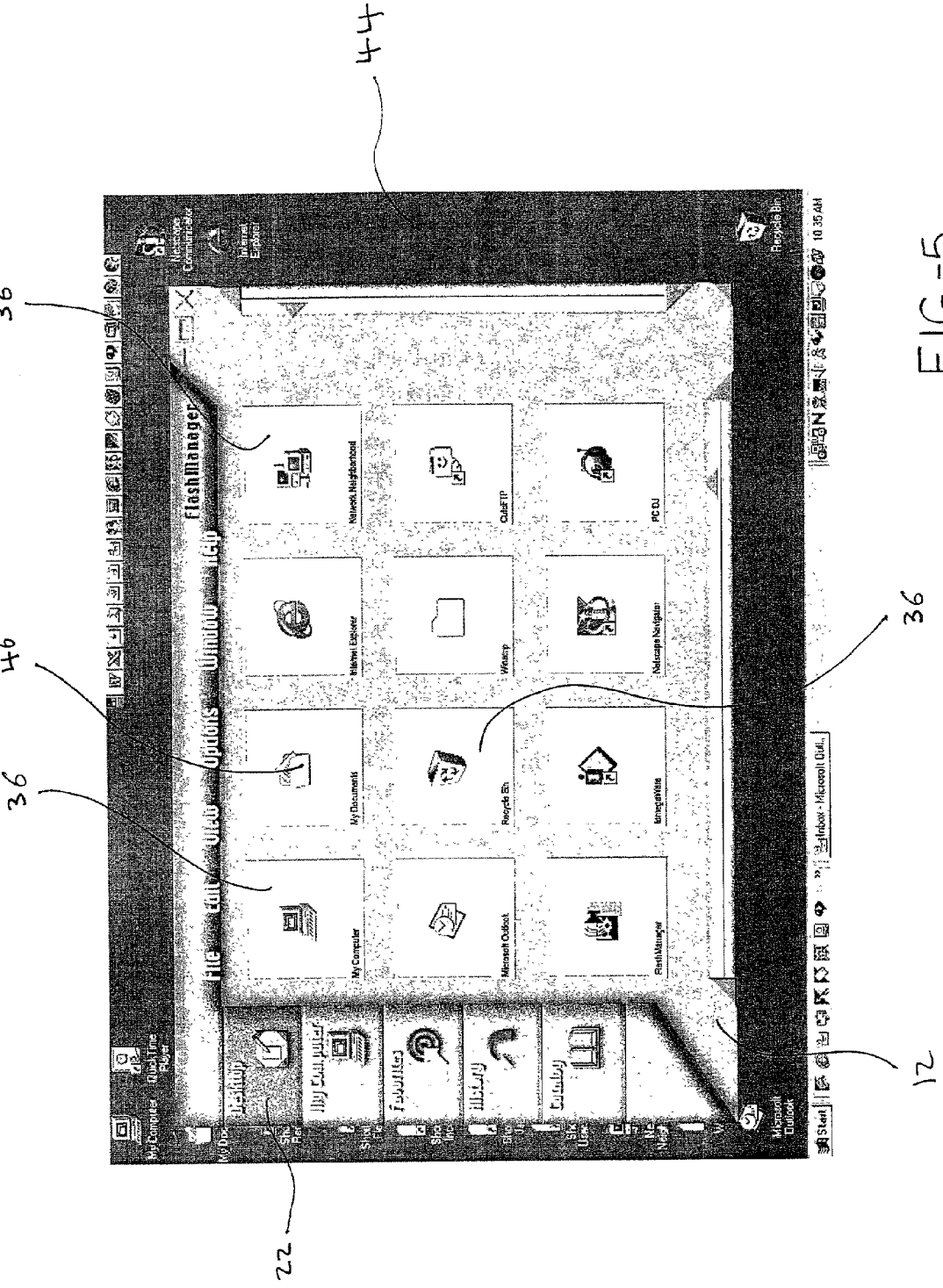

44
36
46
36
36
12
22
FlashManager
Start
Microsoft Outlook
Recycle Bin
10:35 AM

FIG.-5

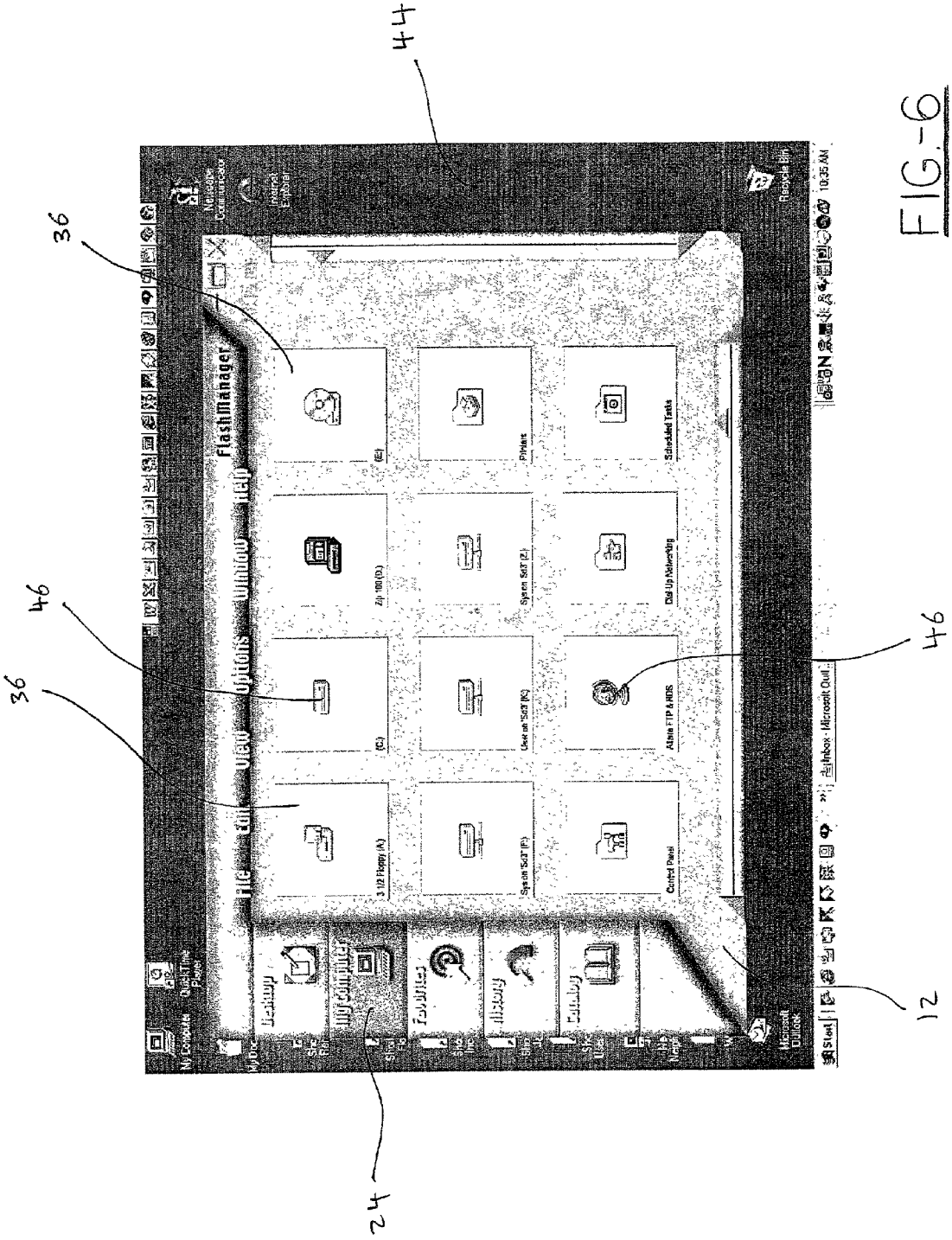

44
36
46
36
46
12
24
FlashManager
File
Edit
View
Options
Window
Help
Desktop
My Computer
Favorites
History
Control Panel
Alarm FTP & NDS
Dial Up Networking
Scheduled Tasks
Printers
Recycle Bin
Microsoft Outlook
Inbox - Microsoft Quit
Start

FIG.-6

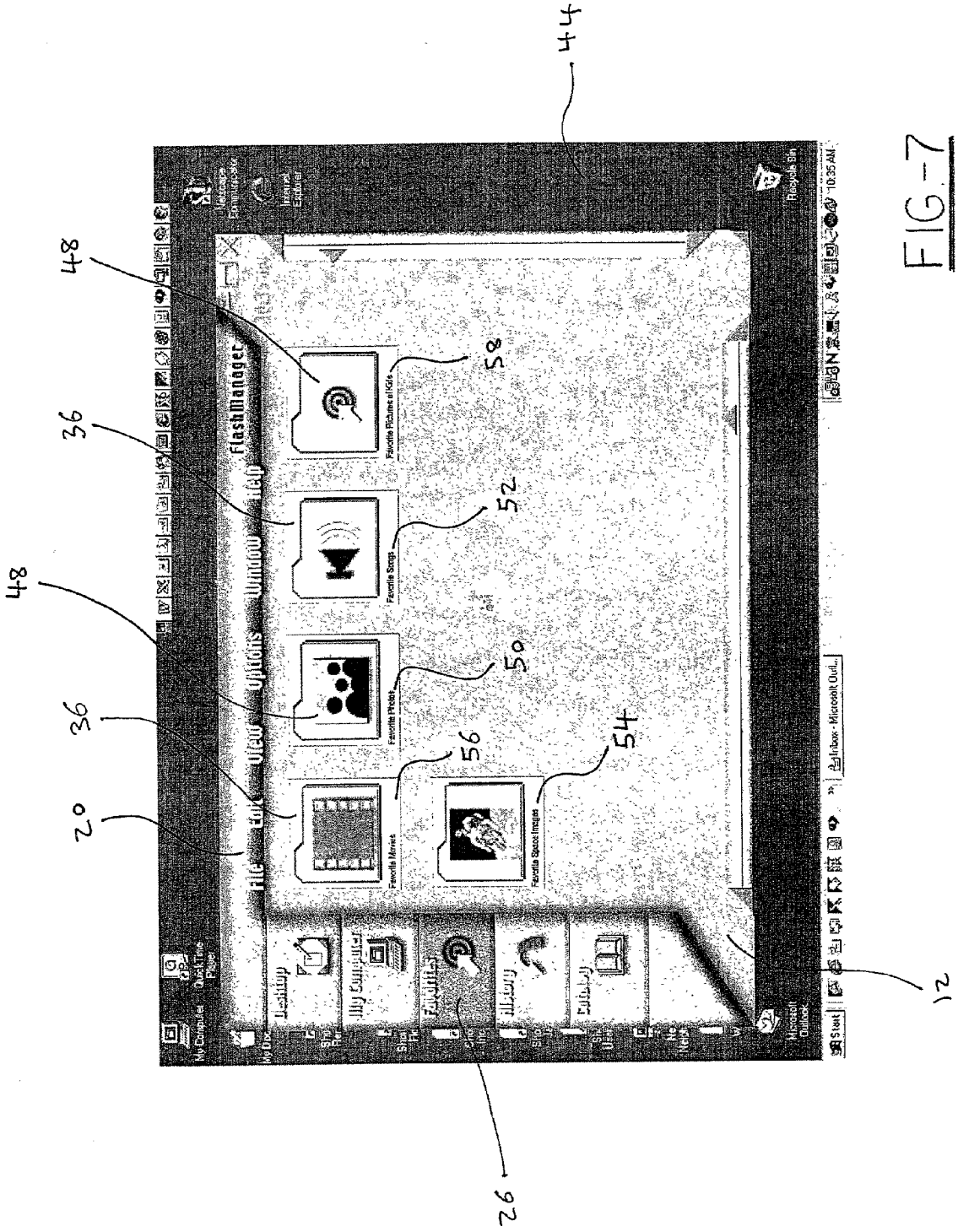

44
48
36
48
36
20
58
52
50
56
54
12
26
FlashManager
File
Edit
View
Options
Window
Help
Favorite Pictures of Kids
Favorite Songs
Favorite Photos
Favorite Movies
Favorite Space Images
Desktop
My Computer
Favorites
History
Subway
Start
Microsoft Outlook
Inbox - Microsoft Out...
Recycle Bin
10:35 AM

FIG-7

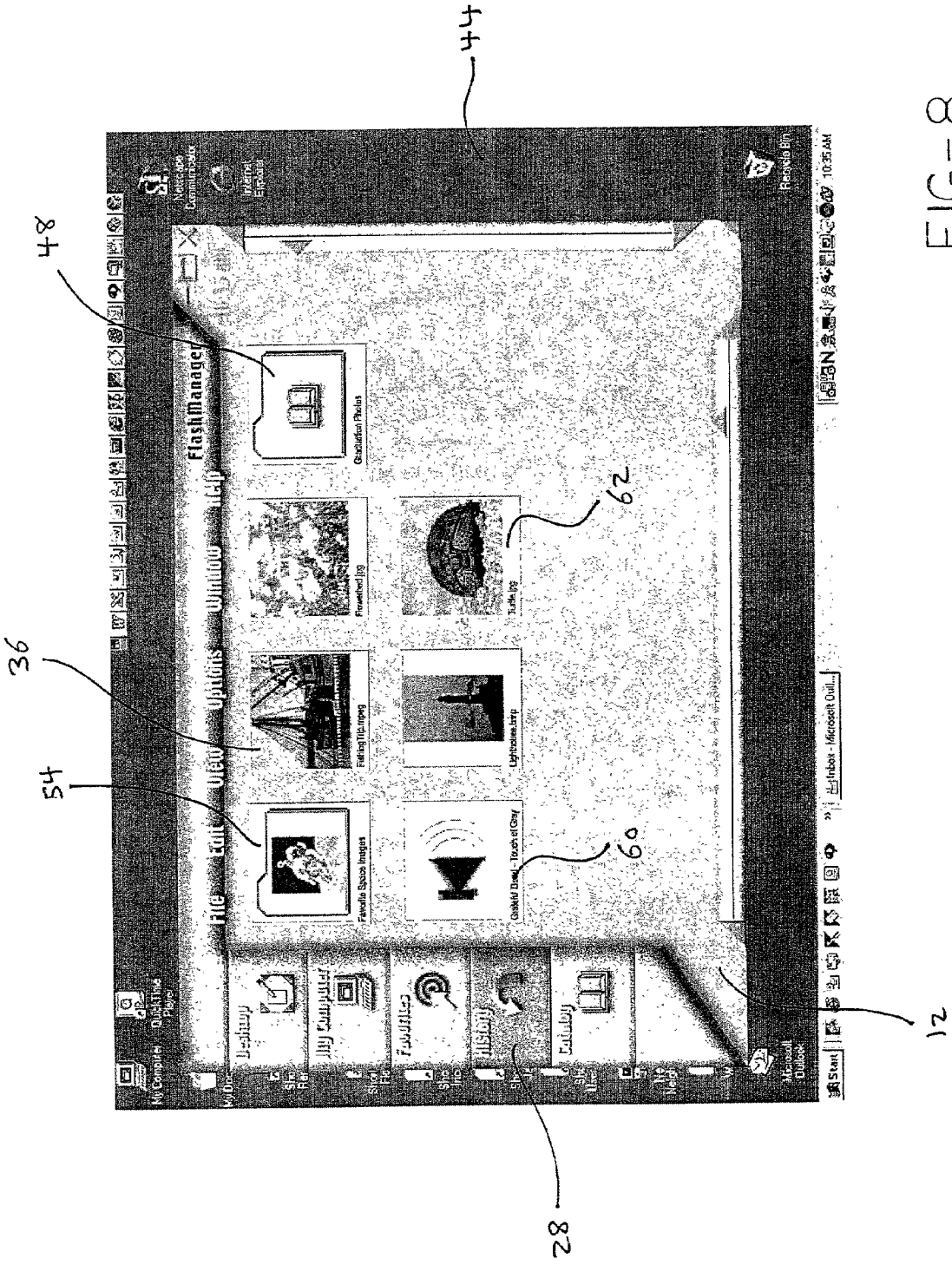

44
48
36
54
62
60
12
28
FlashManager
File
Edit
View
Options
Window
Help
Favorite Space Images
Gateful Dead - Touch of Gray
Lighthouse.bmp
Turtle.jpg
Graduation Photos
Fishing Tip.mpeg
Fireworked.jpg
Desktop
My Computer
Favorites
History
Catalog
Start
Inbox - Microsoft Outl...
Microsoft Outlook
Resvela Bin
10:35 AM

FIG-8

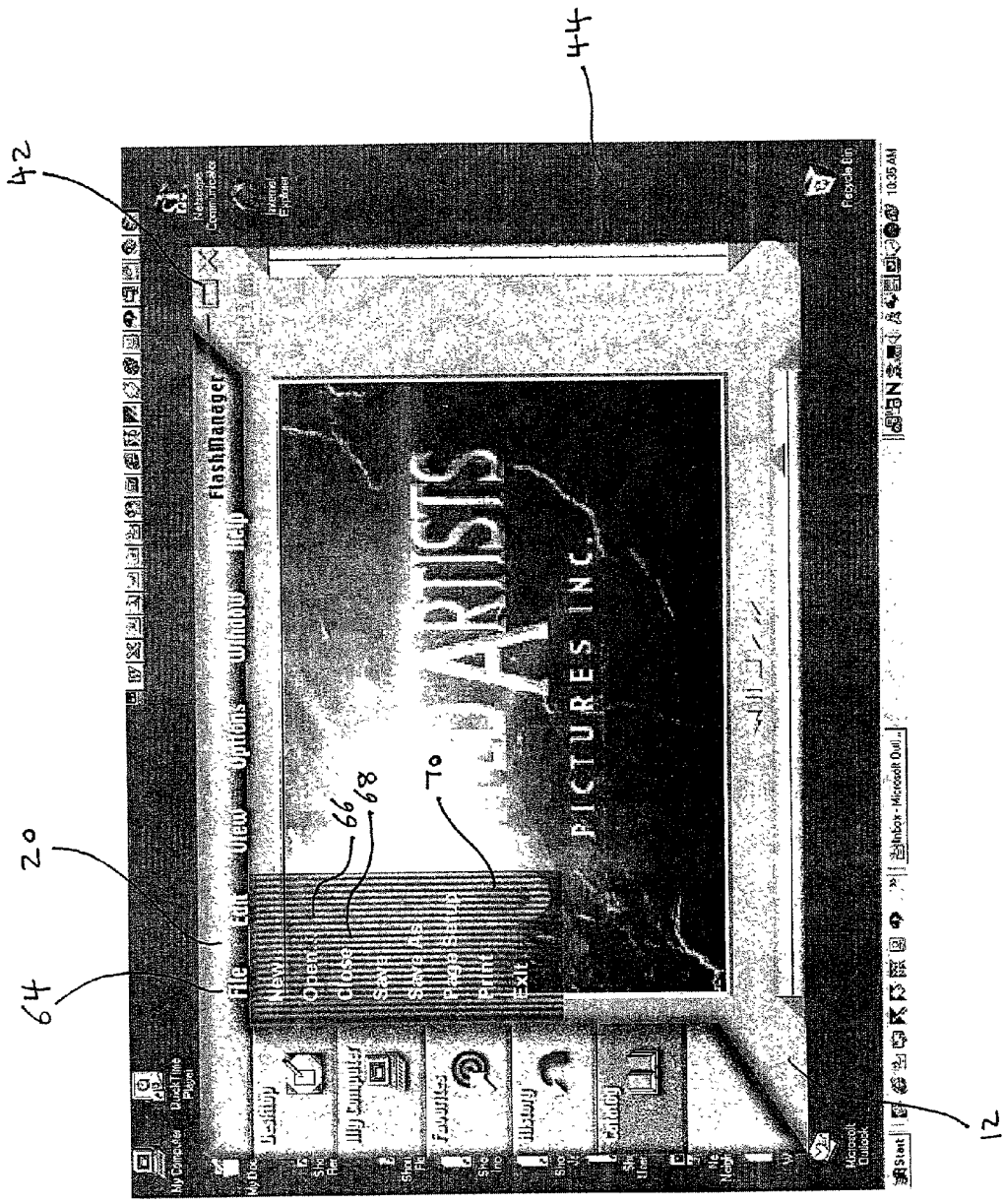

42
44
20
64
66
68
70
12
FlashManager
File
Edit
View
Options
Window
Help
New
Open
Close
Save
Save As
Page Setup
Print
Exit
ARTISTS
PICTURES INC.
Desktop
My Computer
Favorites
History
Catalog
Start
Inbox - Microsoft Out...
Recycle Bin
10:35 AM

FIG.-9

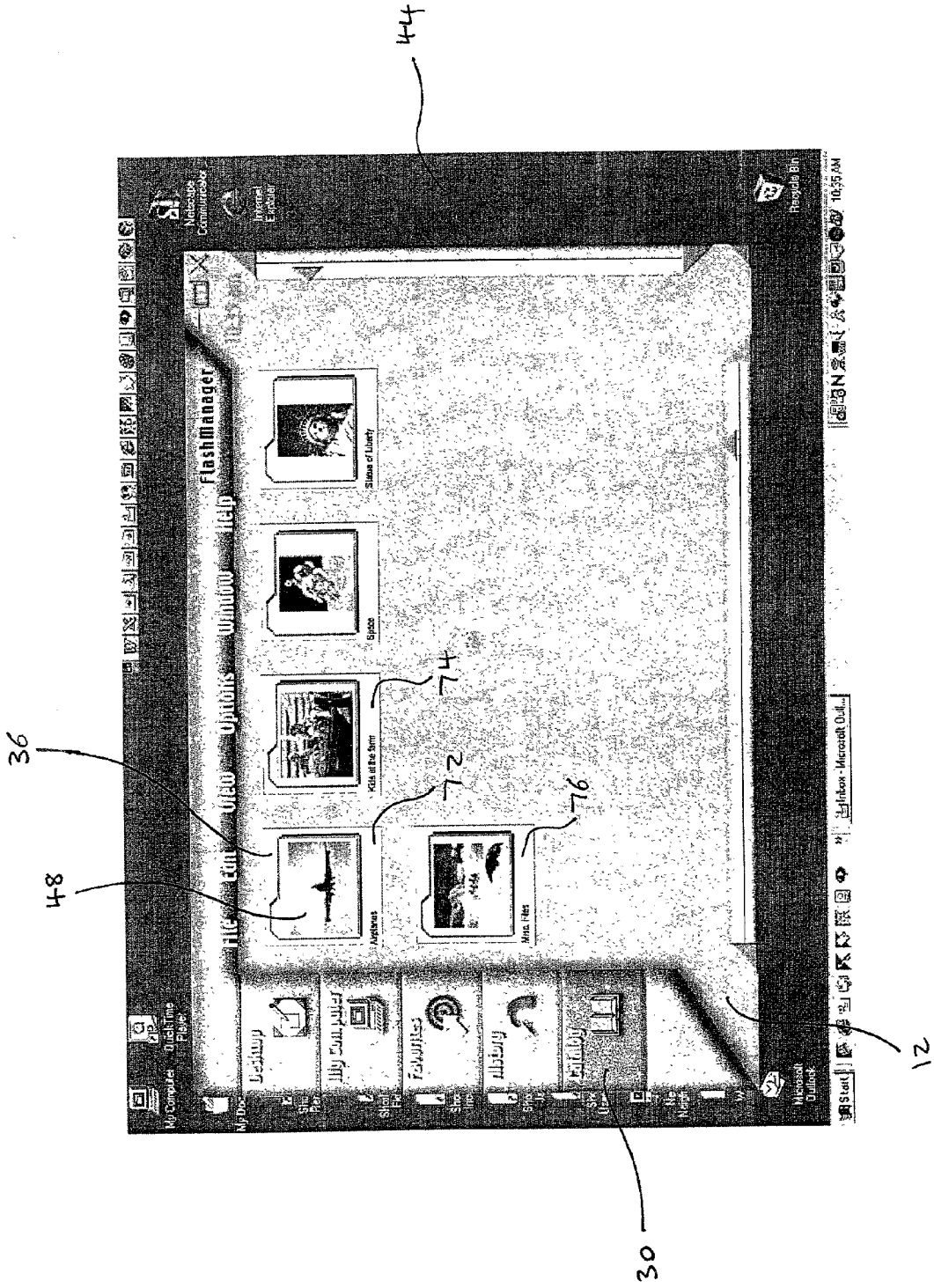

44
36
48
72
74
76
12
30
FlashManager
File Edit View Options Window Help
Desktop
My Computer
Favorites
History
Catalog
Start
Microsoft Outlook
Inbox - Microsoft Outl...
Recycle Bin
Internet Explorer
Netscape Communicator
Kids at the farm
Space
Status of Liberty
Airplanes
Misc. Files

FIG.-10

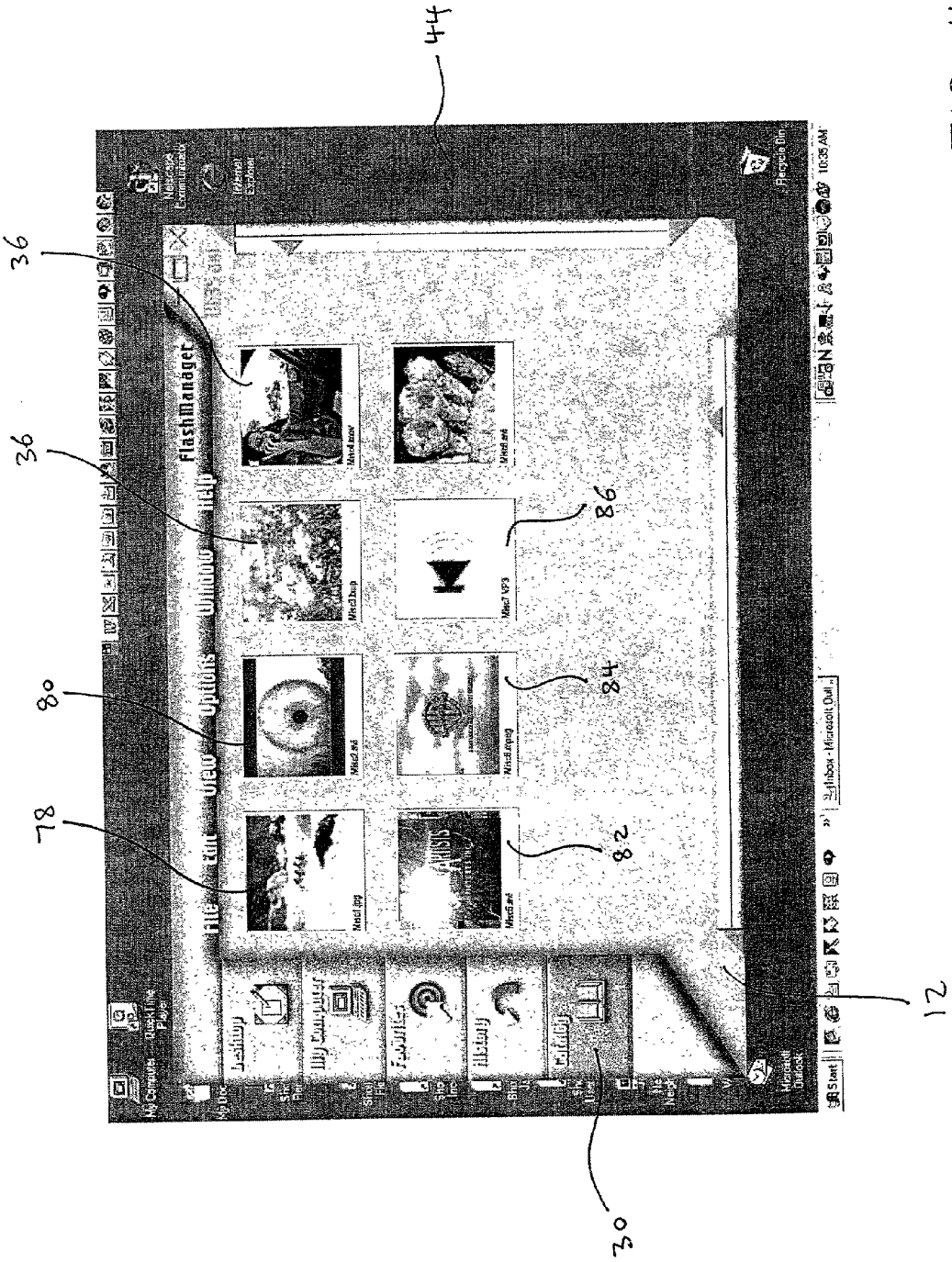

44
36
36
86
80
84
78
82
12
30
FlashManager
File Edit View Options Window Help

FIG-11

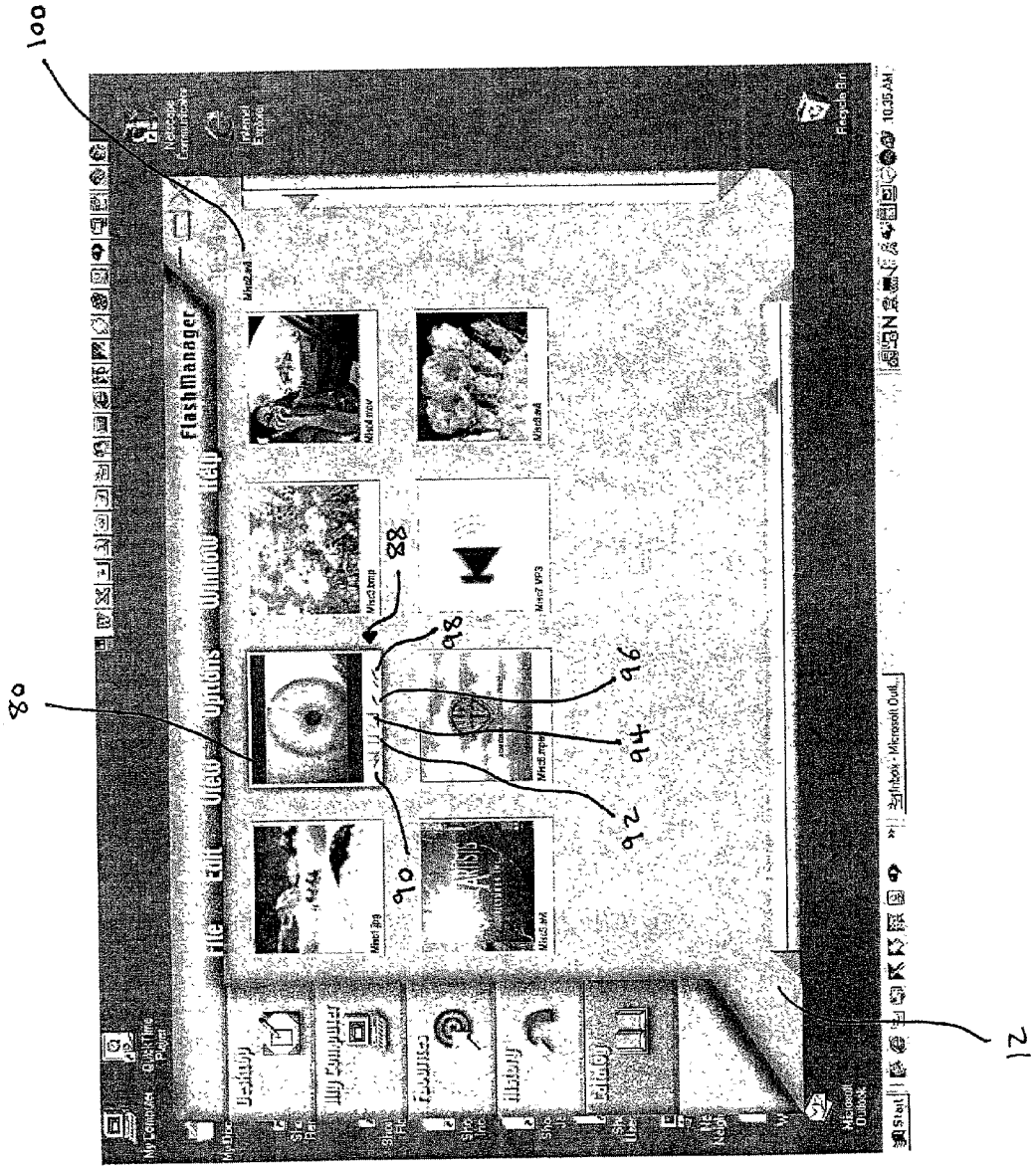

100
80
88
98
96
94
92
90
12
FlashManager
File
Edit
View
Options
Window
Help
Desktop
My Computer
Favorites
History
Fantasy

FIG.-12

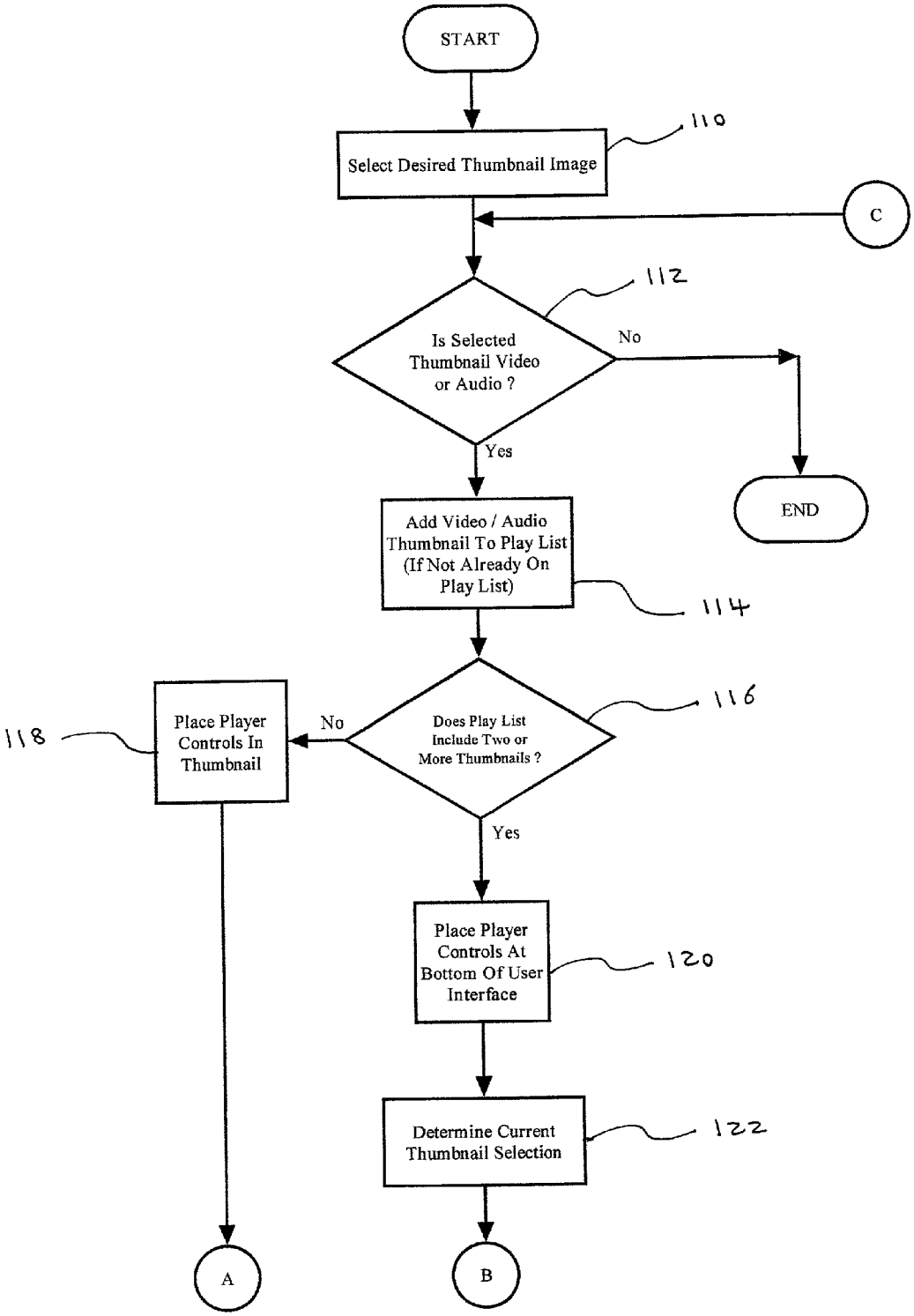

START
Select Desired Thumbnail Image
110
C
112
Is Selected Thumbnail Video or Audio ?
No
Yes
END
Add Video / Audio Thumbnail To Play List (If Not Already On Play List)
114
116
Does Play List Include Two or More Thumbnails ?
No
118
Place Player Controls In Thumbnail
Yes
Place Player Controls At Bottom Of User Interface
120
Determine Current Thumbnail Selection
122
A
B

FIG.-13A

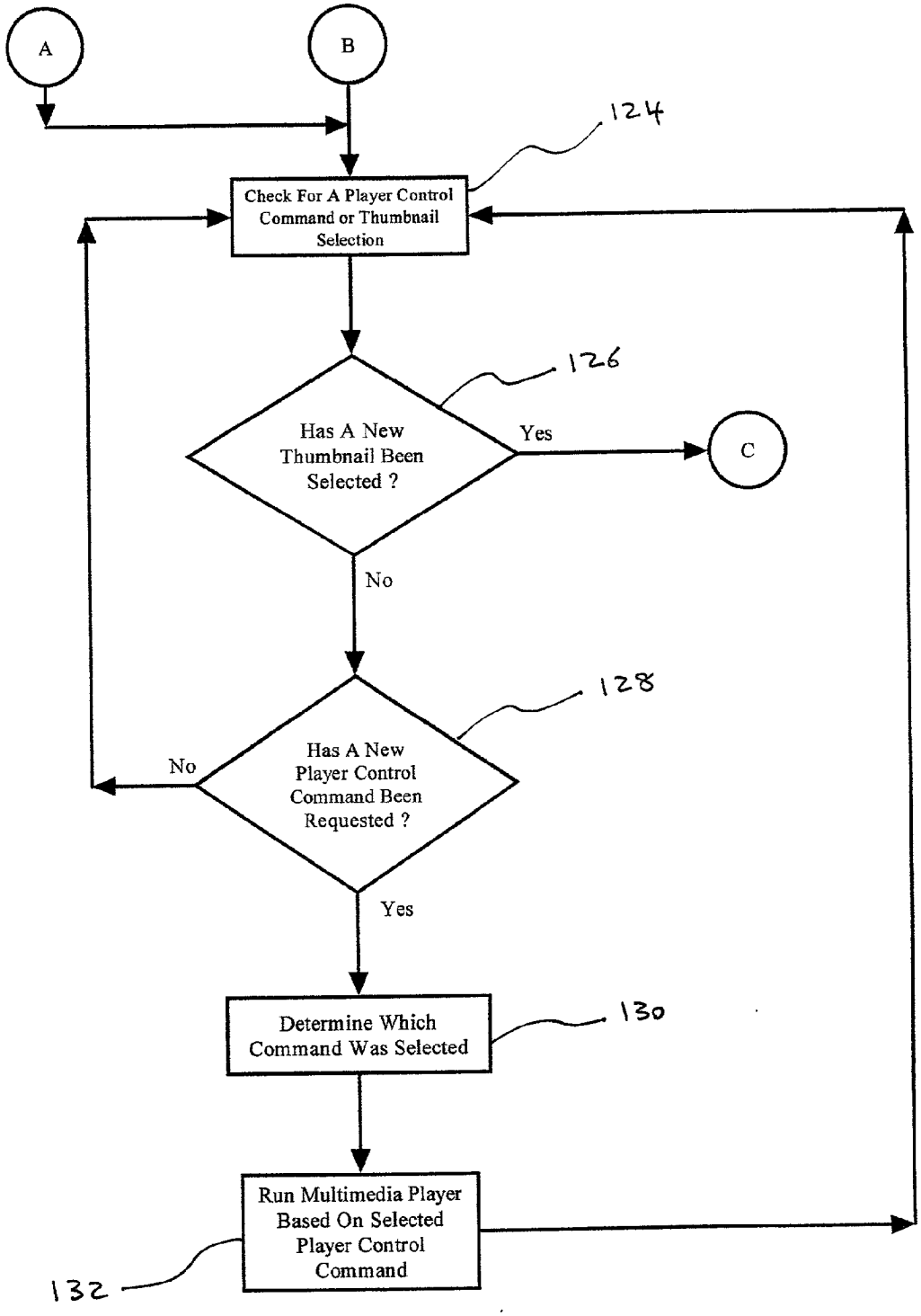

A
B
124
Check For A Player Control Command or Thumbnail Selection
126
Has A New Thumbnail Been Selected ?
Yes
C
No
128
Has A New Player Control Command Been Requested ?
No
Yes
Determine Which Command Was Selected
130
Run Multimedia Player Based On Selected Player Control Command
132

FIG.-13B

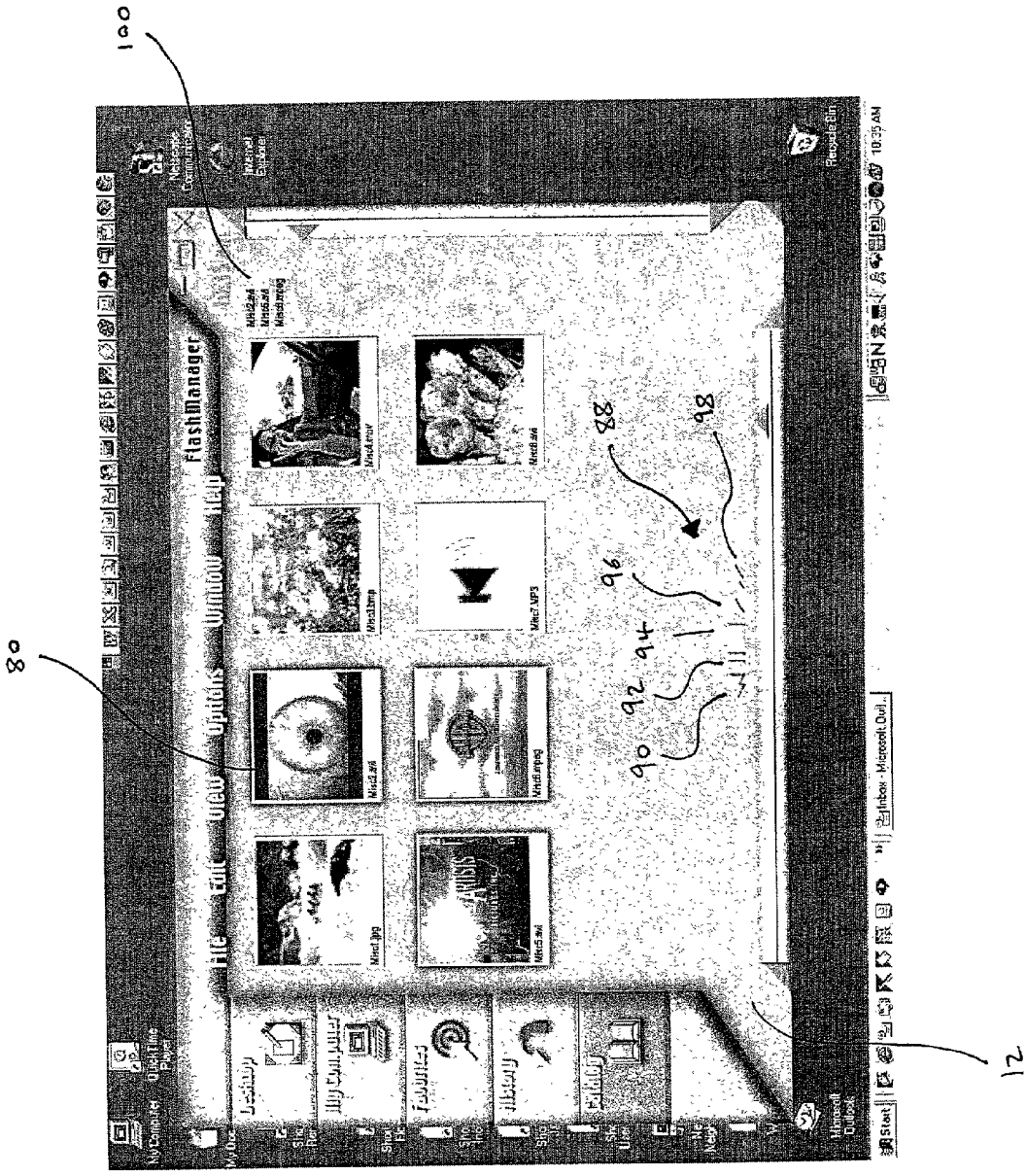

FlashManager
File
Edit
View
Options
Window
Help
80
100
88
98
96
90
92
94
12

FIG-14

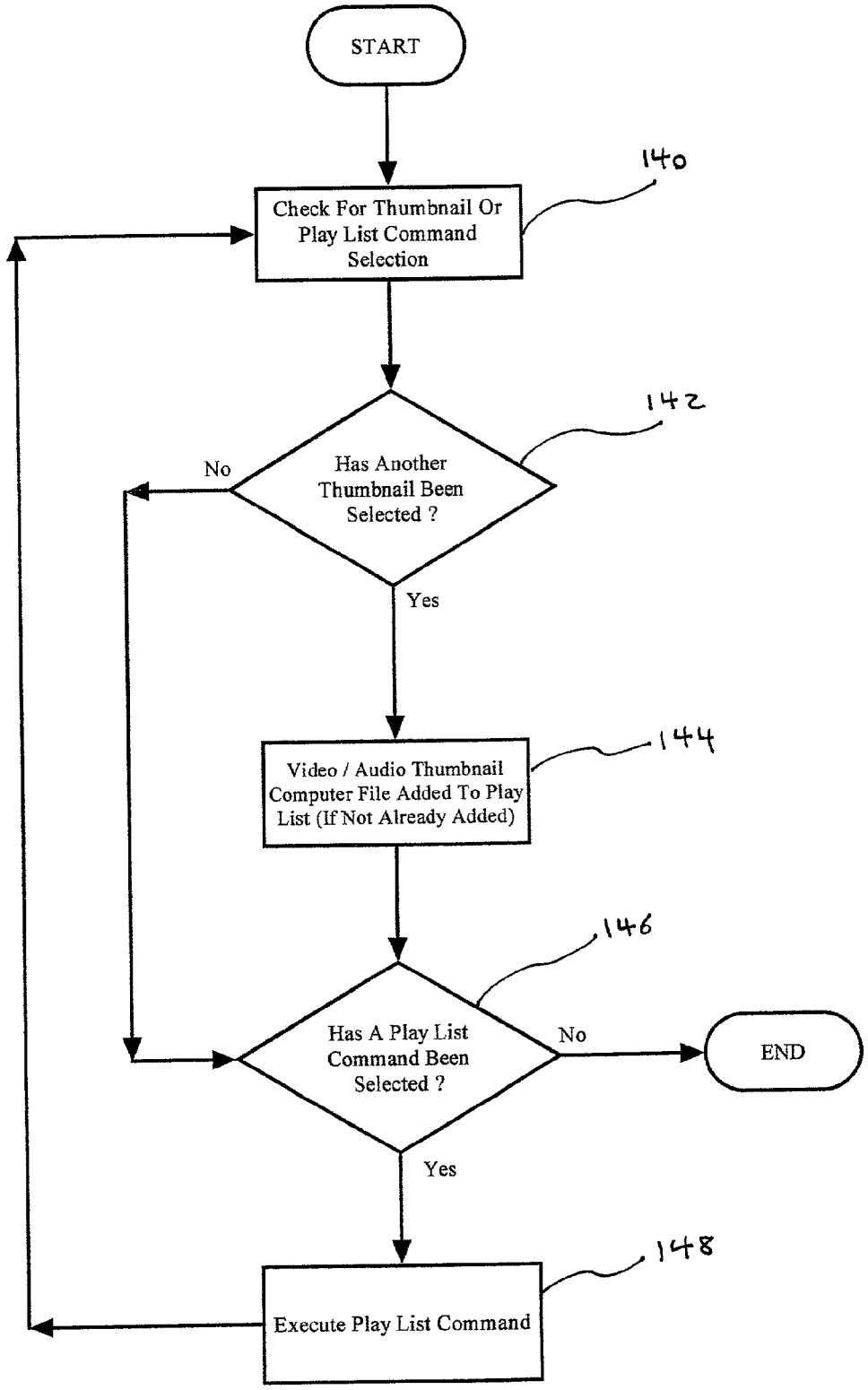

START
140
Check For Thumbnail Or Play List Command Selection
142
Has Another Thumbnail Been Selected ?
No
Yes
144
Video / Audio Thumbnail Computer File Added To Play List (If Not Already Added)
146
Has A Play List Command Been Selected ?
No
END
Yes
148
Execute Play List Command

FIG.-15

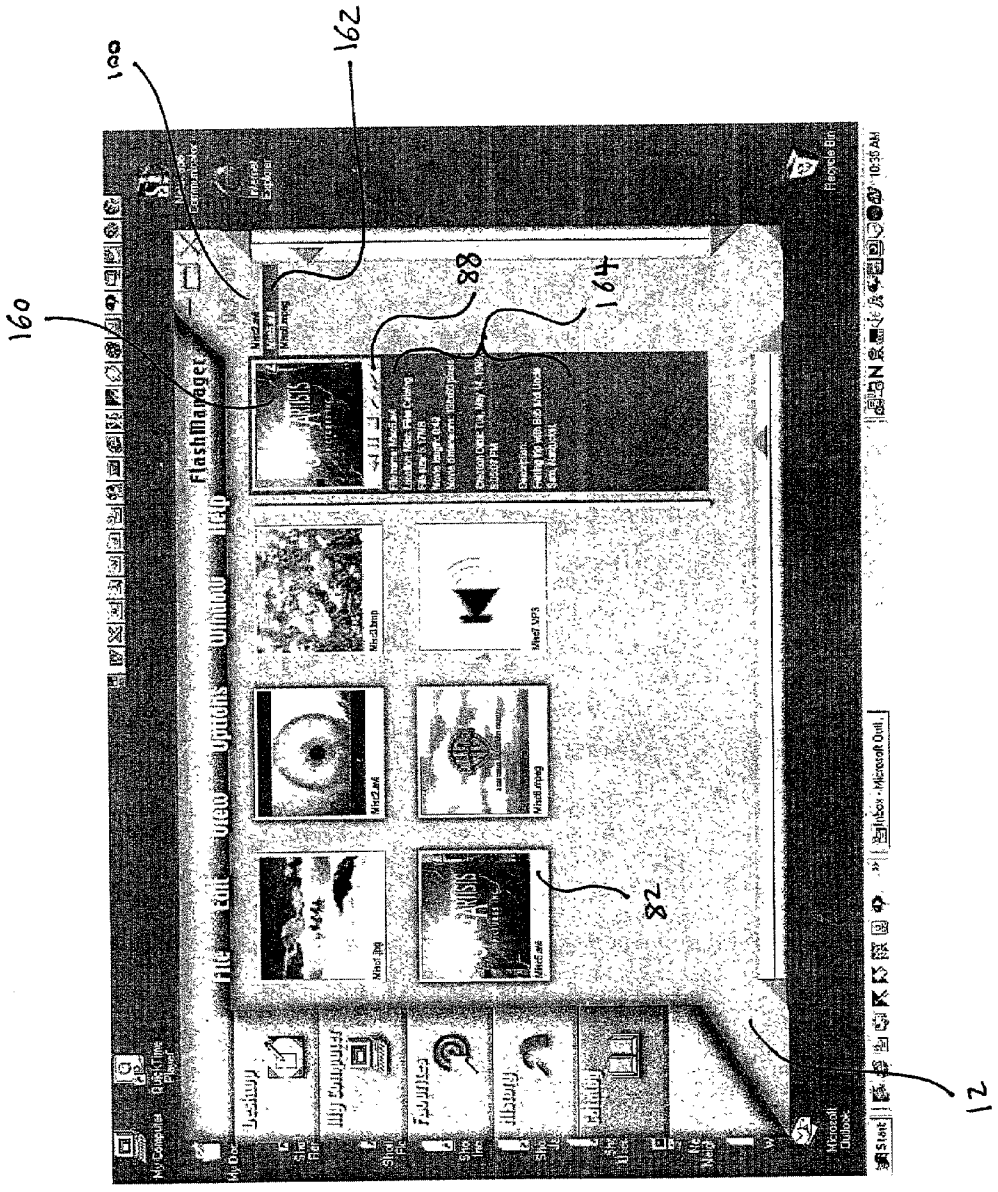

160
100
162
88
164
82
12
FlashManager
File
Edit
View
Options
Window
Help

FIG.-16

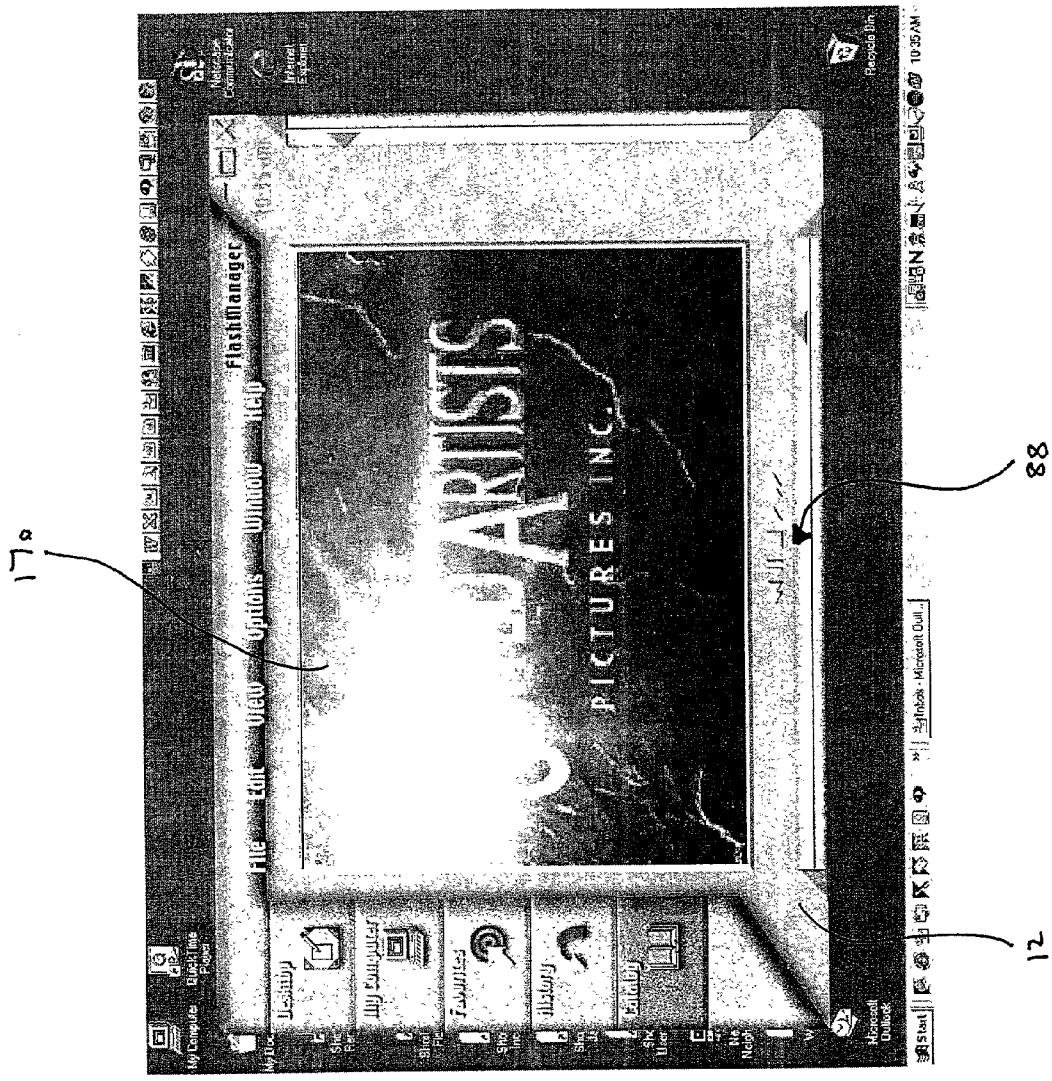

17a
88
12
FlashManager
File Edit View Options Window Help
ARTISTS
PICTURES INC.

FIG.-17

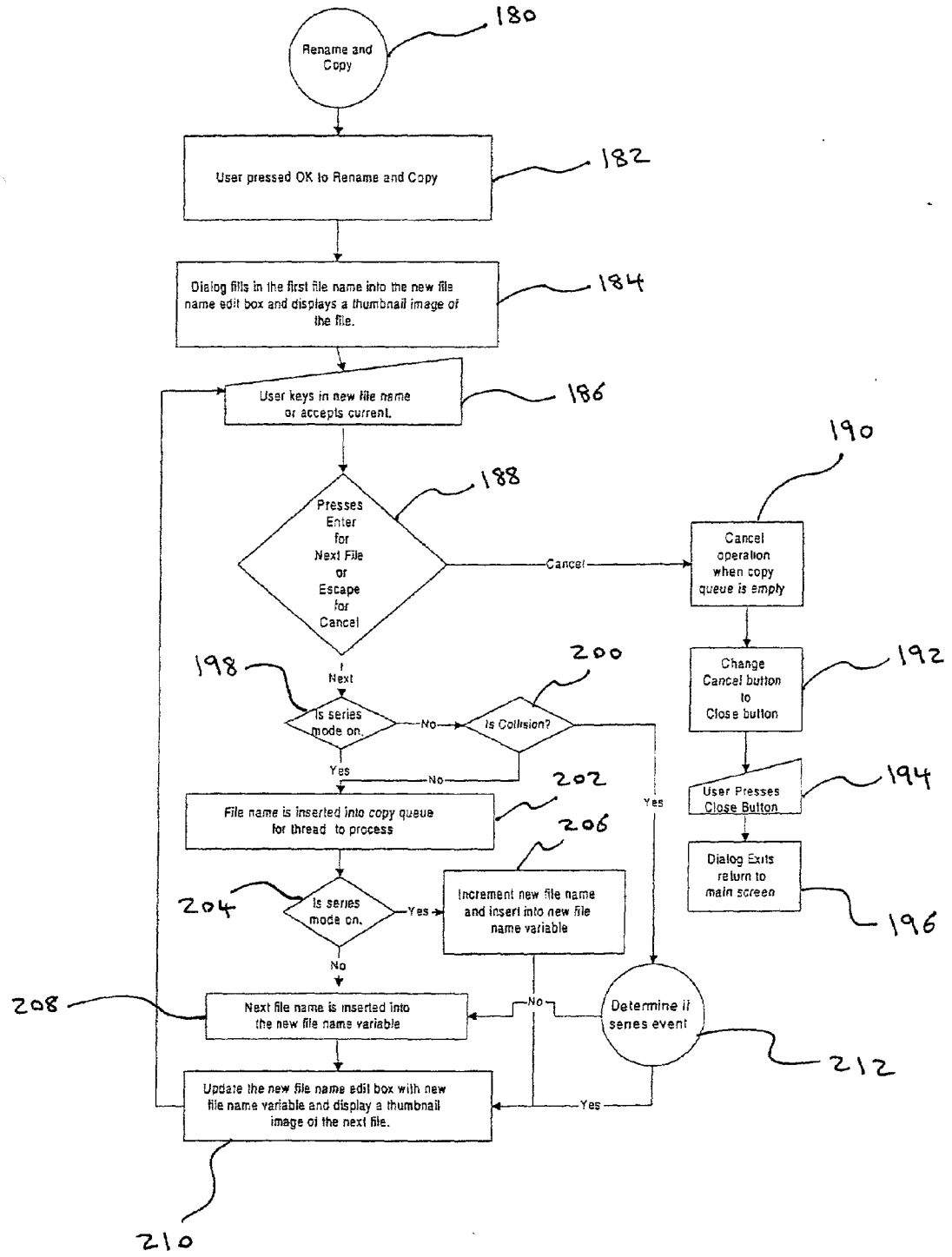

180
Rename and Copy
182
User pressed OK to Rename and Copy
184
Dialog fills in the first file name into the new file name edit box and displays a thumbnail image of the file.
186
User keys in new file name or accepts current.
188
Presses Enter for Next File or Escape for Cancel
Cancel
190
Cancel operation when copy queue is empty
192
Change Cancel button to Close button
194
User Presses Close Button
196
Dialog Exits return to main screen
Next
198
Is series mode on.
No
200
Is Collision?
Yes
No
202
File name is inserted into copy queue for thread to process
Yes
206
Increment new file name and insert into new file name variable
204
Is series mode on.
Yes
No
208
Next file name is inserted into the new file name variable
No
Determine if series event
212
Update the new file name edit box with new file name variable and display a thumbnail image of the next file.
Yes
210

FIG.-18

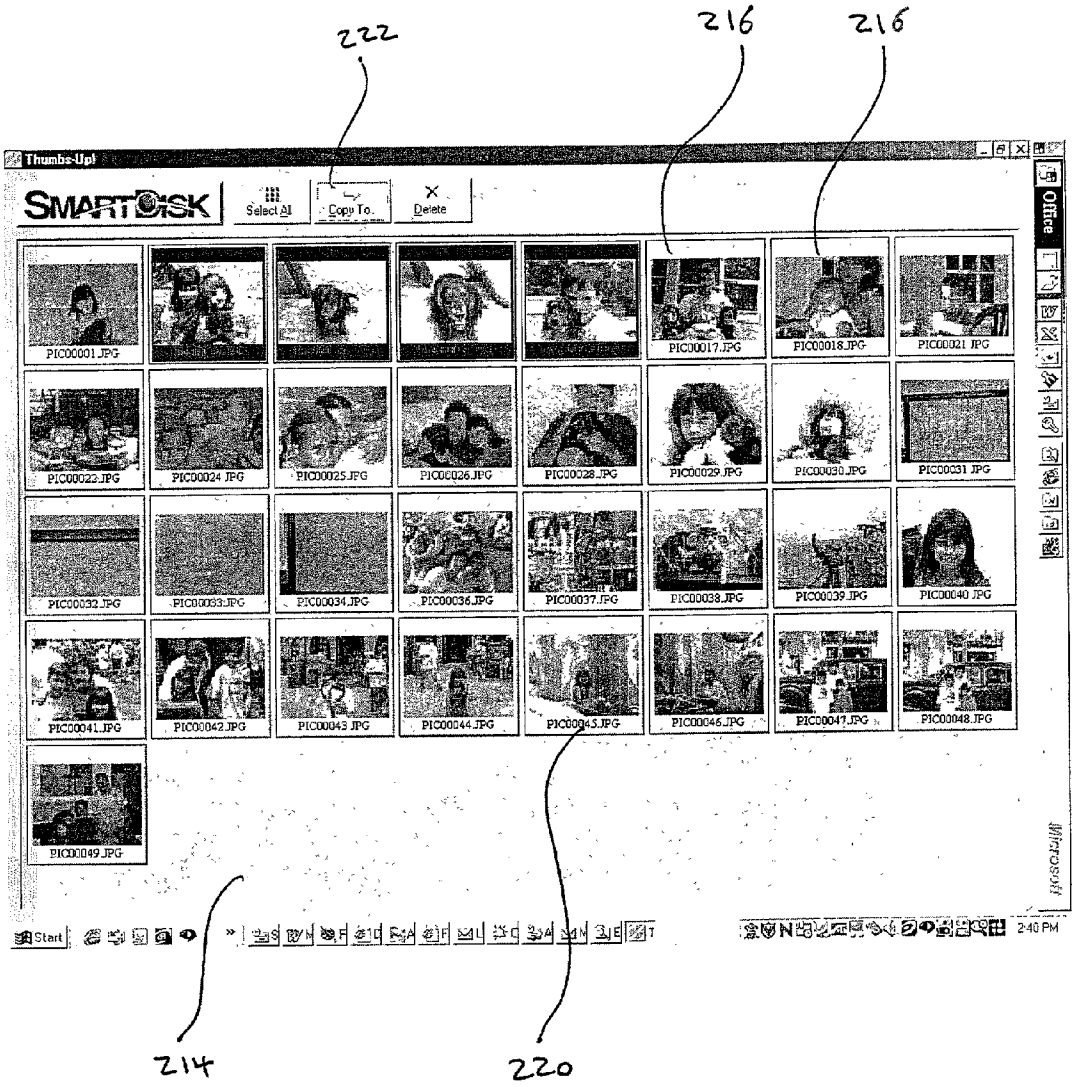

222
216
216
Thumbs-Up!
SMARTDISK
Select All
Copy To...
Delete
Office
PIC00001.JPG
PIC00017.JPG
PIC00018.JPG
PIC00021.JPG
PIC00023.JPG
PIC00024.JPG
PIC00025.JPG
PIC00026.JPG
PIC00028.JPG
PIC00029.JPG
PIC00030.JPG
PIC00031.JPG
PIC00032.JPG
PIC00033.JPG
PIC00034.JPG
PIC00036.JPG
PIC00037.JPG
PIC00038.JPG
PIC00039.JPG
PIC00040.JPG
PIC00041.JPG
PIC00042.JPG
PIC00043.JPG
PIC00044.JPG
PIC00045.JPG
PIC00046.JPG
PIC00047.JPG
PIC00048.JPG
PIC00049.JPG
Start
2:40 PM
214
220

FIG.-19

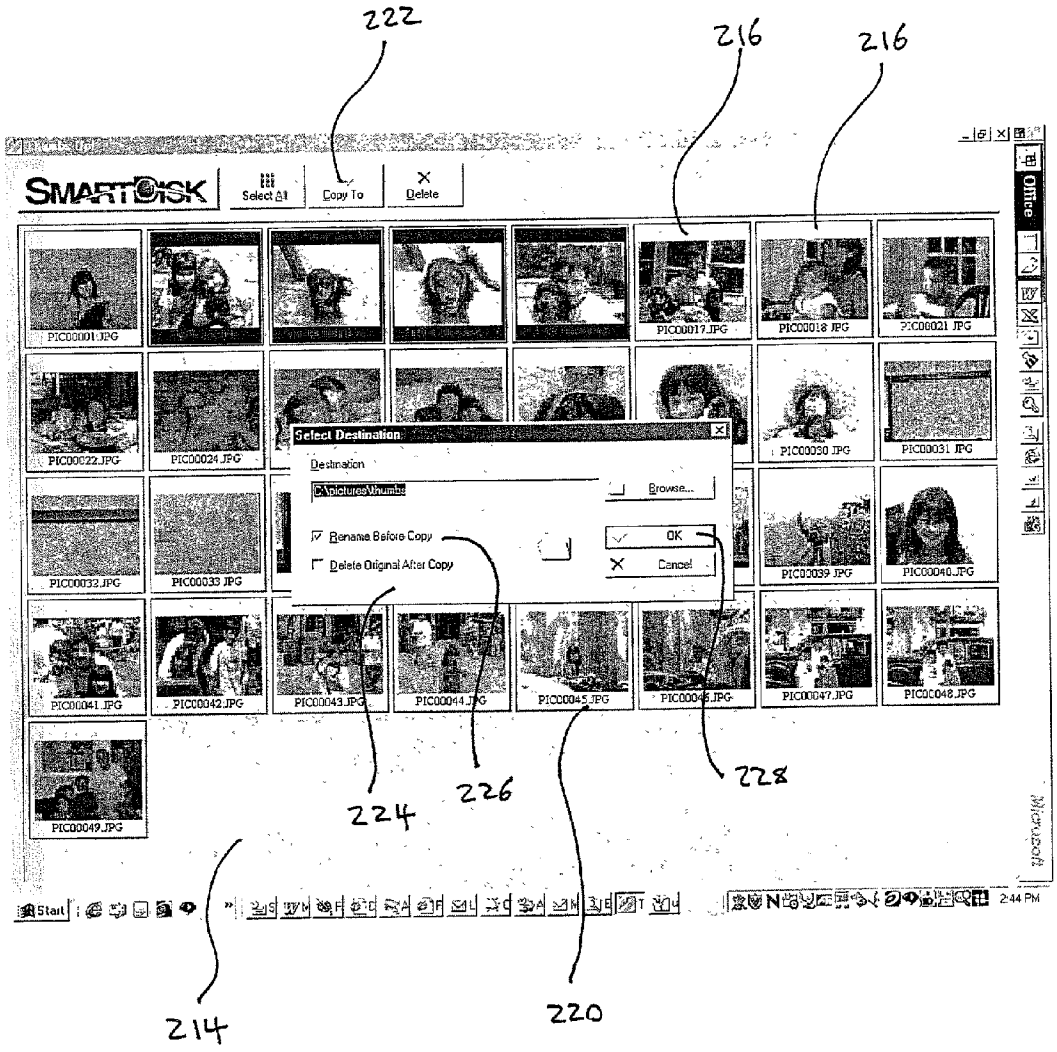

222
216
216
SMARTDISK
Select All
Copy To
Delete
Office
PIC00001.JPG
PIC00017.JPG
PIC00018.JPG
PIC00021.JPG
PIC00022.JPG
PIC00024.JPG
PIC00030.JPG
PIC00031.JPG
PIC00032.JPG
PIC00033.JPG
PIC00039.JPG
PIC00040.JPG
PIC00041.JPG
PIC00042.JPG
PIC00043.JPG
PIC00044.JPG
PIC00045.JPG
PIC00046.JPG
PIC00047.JPG
PIC00048.JPG
PIC00049.JPG
Select Destination
Destination
Browse...
Rename Before Copy
Delete Original After Copy
OK
Cancel
224
226
228
Start
2:44 PM
214
220

FIG.-20

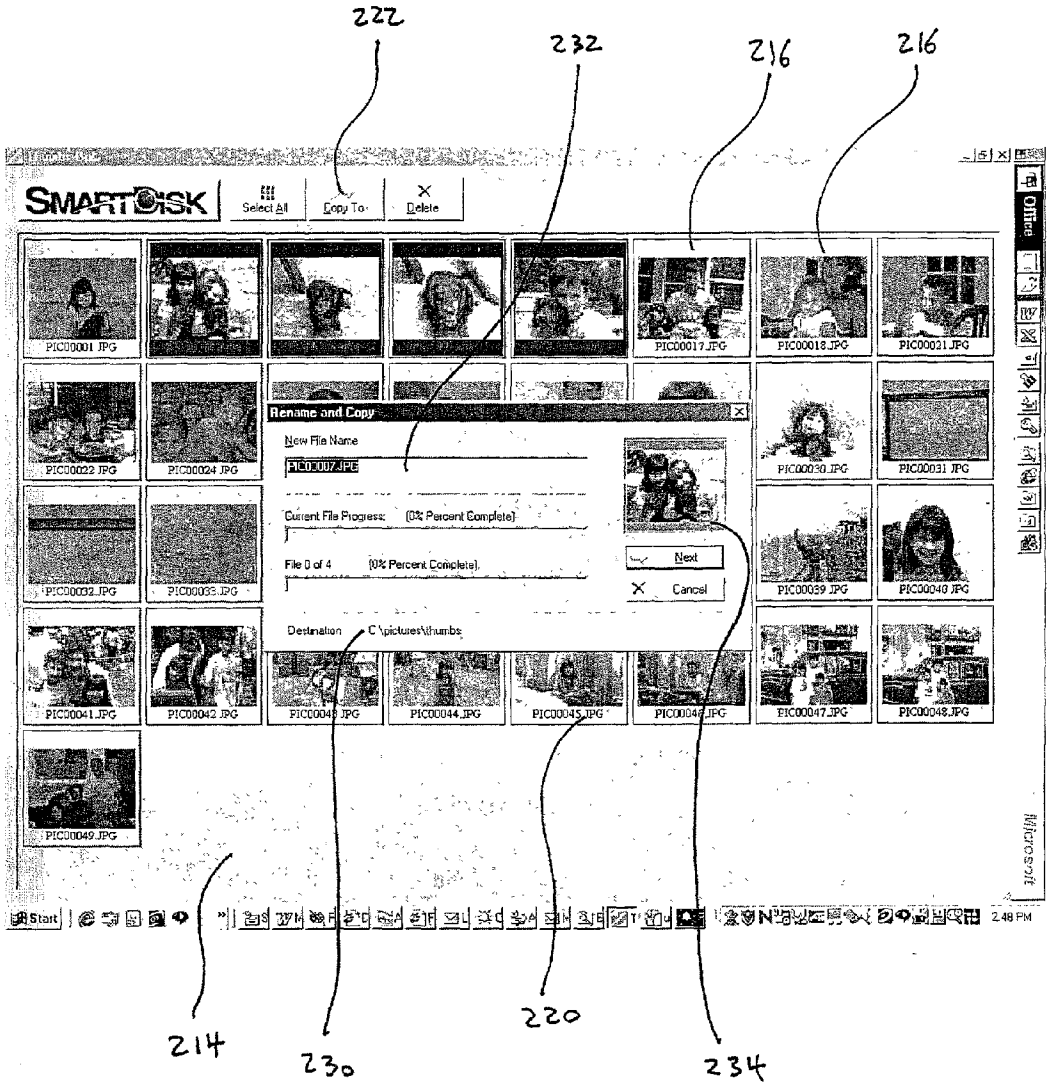

222
232
216
216
SMARTDISK
Select All
Copy To
Delete
Office
PIC00001.JPG
PIC00017.JPG
PIC00018.JPG
PIC00021.JPG
PIC00022.JPG
PIC00024.JPG
PIC00031.JPG
PIC00039.JPG
PIC00040.JPG
PIC00041.JPG
PIC00042.JPG
PIC00044.JPG
PIC00047.JPG
PIC00048.JPG
PIC00049.JPG
Rename and Copy
New File Name
PIC00007.JPG
Current File Progress: (0% Percent Complete)
File 0 of 4 (0% Percent Complete)
Next
Cancel
Destination C:\pictures\thumbs
Microsoft
Start
2:48 PM
214
230
220
234

FIG.-21

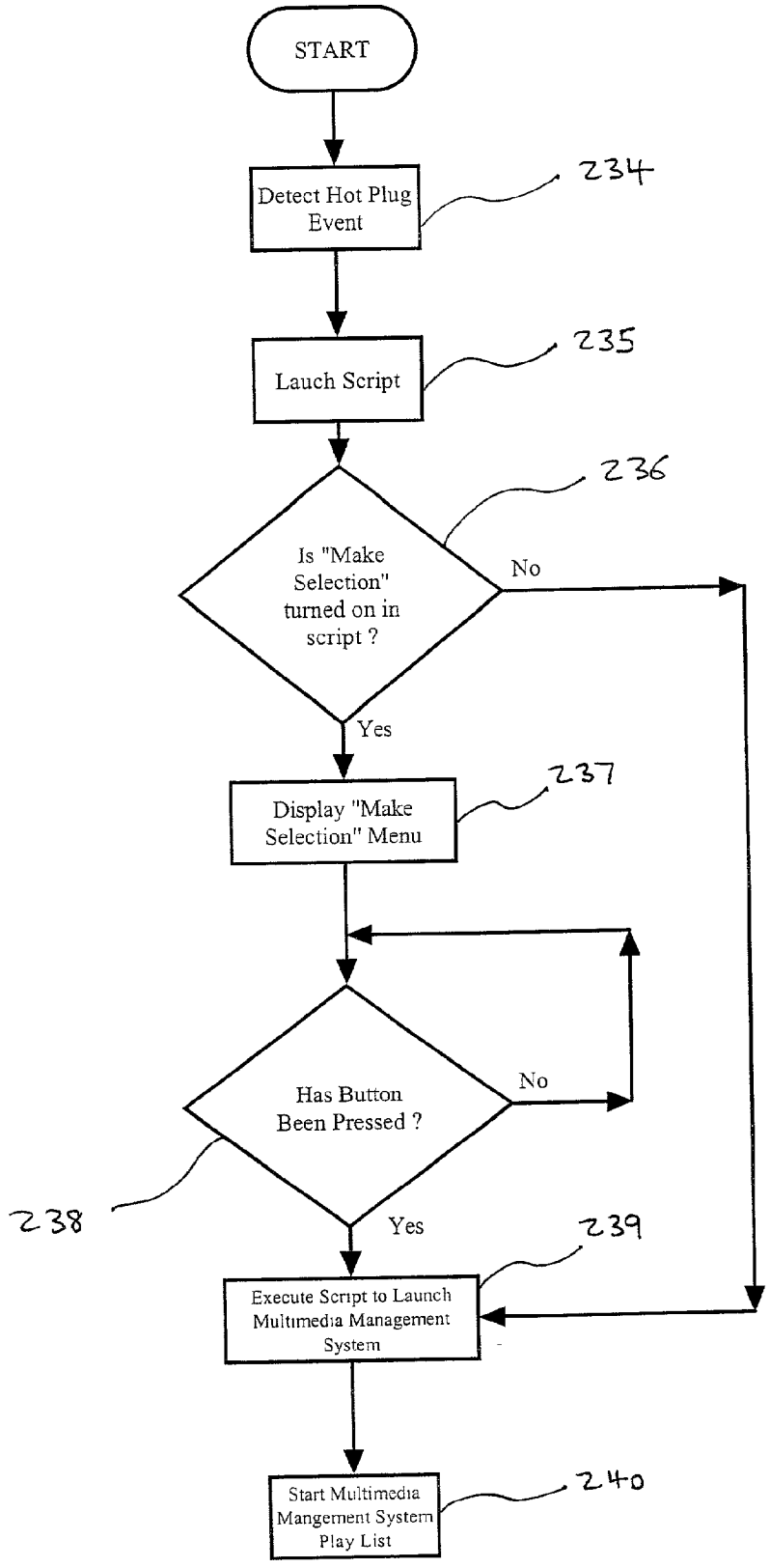

START
Detect Hot Plug Event
234
Lauch Script
235
236
Is "Make Selection" turned on in script ?
No
Yes
Display "Make Selection" Menu
237
Has Button Been Pressed ?
No
238
Yes
239
Execute Script to Launch Multimedia Management System
Start Multimedia Mangement System Play List
240

FIG.-22

SYSTEMS, METHODS AND COMPUTER PROGRAM PRODUCTS FOR MANAGING MULTIMEDIA CONTENT

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates generally to data processing systems, methods, and computer products, and more particularly to multimedia content and digital data processing systems, methods, and computer products.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The popularity of multimedia content is rapidly expanding on personal computers (PCs) and across the Internet. Today, the ability to stream or download multimedia content, such as movies and music, to a PC from the Internet is increasing daily. The number and types of computer program data files are also increasing. Currently, there are computer program file formats for digital video, digital audio and text, still images, animation and 3D, and MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface). Several examples of such data files include JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group), GIF (Graphic Interchange Format), TIFF (Tag Image File Format), MOV, WAV, AVI (Audio Visual Interleaved), and MP3 (Moving Picture Exports Group 1, Audio Layer 3).

[0003] On the Internet today, PC users can access multimedia versions of television and cable network programs. Users can also stream or download movie or music trailers for popular movies and music videos. Due to advancements in PCs and related technology, users are also generating their own multimedia content at an astounding rate. Musicians use PCs to create digital music using MIDI. Writers and directors are filming and editing their own feature films on PCs using a variety of digital movie formats. Everyone from large corporations to individuals are creating their own web sites that incorporate any number of multimedia formats. As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult for even the most technical individuals to keep track of and organize their computer files containing multimedia content.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The present invention is a multimedia management system for storing, manipulating, and displaying multimedia content. The system comprises a user interface, a plurality of predefined functions, a multimedia acquisition interface, and system controls. The system provides users with a simple and intuitive method and computer program for reviewing multimedia content, which can include digital video, digital audio and text, still images, animation, and MIDI.

[0005] The multimedia management system includes a user interface that consists of a computer display having a primary set of options. In one preferred embodiment, the primary options include Desktop, My Computer, Favorites, History, and Catalog. The user interface presents all information and multimedia content through thumbnails, which are small image representations of larger images or content.

[0006] Another feature of the multimedia management system is called Play in Place. Users activate video and audio multimedia content directly within thumbnails thereby further simplifying previewing and selection of active multimedia content. A further feature of the present invention is called a Play List, which records the order that a user selects video and/or audio files and allows them to be played back in sequence.

[0007] The multimedia management system also includes a Rename and Copy function with a serialization option. Generally, the Rename and Copy function with the serialization option allows a user to designate a descriptive name for a series of digital images to be downloaded to a computer. The system will automatically renames each image with the descriptive name as it copies the image from a digital camera to a computer. A serial number is also added to the descriptive name to identify an entire series of images.

[0008] The present invention also includes powerful search capabilities for locating multimedia content on local personal computers, networks, Intranets and the Internet. The two primary search features include the use of customized tags added to HTML content and biometric recognition technology including but not limited to image, voice, music, and movie recognition.

[0009] Finally, an alternate preferred embodiment of the present invention combines the Play List and the accompanying multimedia content stored on high density removable media. A user connects the removable media to a computer or dedicated device. Once connected, an AutoPlay function automatically loads the multimedia management system, initiates the predetermined Play List, and then loads each selection of multimedia content in the predetermined sequence programmed by the user.

[0010] These along with other objects and advantages of the present invention will become more readily apparent from a reading of the detailed description taken in conjunction with the drawings and the claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] **FIG. 1** is a block diagrammatic depiction of one embodiment of the multimedia management system in accordance with the present invention;

[0012] **FIG. 2** is a graphical representation of a user interface for the multimedia management system according to the invention;

[0013] **FIG. 3** is a block diagrammatic depiction of one embodiment of control functions of the multimedia management system according to the invention;

[0014] **FIG. 4** is a graphical representation of the control options available to a user via an interface;

[0015] **FIG. 5** is a graphical representation of an interface depicting the Desktop primary option provided by the present invention;

[0016] **FIG. 6** is a graphical representation of an interface depicting the My Computer primary option provided by the present invention;

[0017] **FIG. 7** is a graphical representation of an interface depicting the Favorites primary option provided by the present invention;

[0018] **FIG. 8** is a graphical representation of an interface depicting the History primary option provided by the present invention;

[0019] **FIG. 9** is a graphical representation of an interface depicting one of the transparent pull down menus provided by the present invention;

[0020] **FIG. 10** is a graphical representation of an interface depicting the Catalog primary option provided by the present invention;

[0021] **FIG. 11** is another graphical representation of an interface depicting the Catalog primary option provided by the present invention;

[0022] **FIG. 12** is a further graphical representation of an interface depicting the Catalog primary option provided by the present invention;

[0023] **FIGS. 13A and 13B** comprise a flow chart showing one embodiment of the computer program that implements the Play in Place function provided by the present invention;

[0024] **FIG. 14** is a graphical representation of an interface depicting the shared Player Controls provided by the present invention;

[0025] **FIG. 15** is a flow chart showing one embodiment of the computer program that implements the Play List function provided by the present invention;

[0026] **FIG. 16** is a graphical representation of an interface depicting the Play List detailed information option provided by the present invention;

[0027] **FIG. 17** is a graphical representation of an interface depicting the fall screen viewing option provided by the present invention;

[0028] **FIG. 18** is a flow chart showing one embodiment of the computer program that implements the Rename and Copy function provided by the present invention;

[0029] **FIG. 19** is a graphical representation of an interface depicting a plurality of digital images provided by the present invention;

[0030] **FIG. 20** is a graphical representation of the user interface of the embodiment described in **FIG. 18** depicting the Select Destination window provided by the present invention; and

[0031] **FIG. 21** is a graphical representation of the user interface of the embodiment described in **FIG. 18** depicting Rename and Copy window provided by the present invention;

[0032] **FIG. 22** is a flow chart showing one embodiment of the computer program that implements the AutoPlay function provided by the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0033] The present invention is fully described hereinafter with reference to the drawings, in which preferred embodiments of the invention are shown. The invention may also be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to only the disclosed embodiments. The provided embodiments are included so the disclosure will be thorough, complete and will fully convey the scope of the invention to persons of ordinary skill in the art.

[0034] A person of ordinary skill in the art would appreciate that the present invention may be embodied as a method, data processing system, or computer program product. As such, the present invention may take the form of an embodiment comprised entirely of hardware; an embodiment comprised entirely of software or an embodiment combining software and hardware aspects. In addition, the present invention may take the form of a computer program product on a computer-readable storage medium having computer-readable program code means embodied in the medium. Any suitable computer readable medium may be utilized including hard disks, flash memory cards, CD-ROMs, optical storage devices, or magnetic storage devices.

[0035] The present invention is described with reference to flowcharts and/or diagrams that illustrate methods, apparatus or systems and computer program product. It should be understood that each block of the various flowcharts, and combinations of blocks in the flowcharts, can be implemented by computer program instructions. Such computer program instructions can be loaded onto a general-purpose computer, special purpose computer, or other programmable data processing device to produce a machine, such that the instructions that execute on the computer or other programmable data processing apparatus create means for implementing the functions specified in the flowcharts. The computer program instructions can also be stored in a computer-readable memory that directs a computer or other programmable data processing device to function in a particular manner, such that the instructions stored in the computer-readable memory produce an article of manufacture including instruction means which implement the function specified in the flowcharts or diagrams. The computer program instructions may also be loaded onto a computer or other programmable data processing apparatus to cause a series of operational steps to be performed on the computer or other programmable apparatus to produce a computer implemented process such that the instructions which execute on the computer or other programmable apparatus provide steps for implementing the functions specified in the flowcharts or diagrams.

[0036] It will be understood that blocks of the flowcharts support combinations of means for performing the specified functions, combinations of steps for performing the specified functions and program instruction means for performing the specified functions. It is also to be understood that each block of the flowcharts or diagrams, and combinations of blocks in the flowcharts or diagrams, can be implemented by special purpose hardware-based computer systems which perform the specified functions or steps, or combinations of special purpose hardware and computer instructions.

[0037] The present invention could be written in a number of computer languages including, but not limited to, C, C++, Basic, Visual Basic, Fortran, Cobol, Smalltalk, Java, and other conventional programming languages. It is to be understood that various computers and/or processors may be used to carry out the present invention without being limited to those described herein. The present invention can be implemented on an IBM or IBM-compatible personal computer, preferably utilizing a DOS, Windows 3.1, Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows NT, Unix, Linux or OS/2 operating system. The present invention could also be implemented on an Apple or Apple-compatible personal computer, preferably utilizing its own operating system.

However, it should be understood that the present invention could be implemented using other computers and/or processors, including, but not limited to, mainframe computers and mini-computers.

[0038] Referring now to **FIG. 1, a** block diagram of a preferred embodiment of a multimedia management system **10** for storing, manipulating, and displaying multimedia content in accordance with the present invention is shown. The system **10** comprises a user interface **12**, a plurality of predefined functions **14**, a multimedia acquisition interface **16**, and system controls **18**. The system **10** provides users with a simple and intuitive method and computer program for reviewing their multimedia content, which can include digital video, digital audio and text, still images, animation, and MIDI. The various types of multimedia content are typically in the form of digital computer file formats. Today there are dozens of multimedia file formats such as JPEG, GIF, TIFF, MOV, WAV, AVI, and MP3.

[0039] The multimedia management system **10** may include a user interface **12** as shown in **FIG. 2**. In the embodiment shown, the user interface **12** may comprise an entertainment center appearance with media displayed on a "monitor or TV" representation **13**. The "monitor"**13** may be configured to have several viewing areas, such as to browse through the Library of still pictures shown on the left side of monitor representation **13**, or to watch a slideshow or the like as shown on the right of the monitor **13**. The interface **12** may also have control buttons **15**, for controlling viewing and other options associated with the multimedia management system **10**, as well as organizing and handling media and media presentations. There also may be representations of audio/video components **17**, and representations of media types **19**, which may be selected by the user. As seen in the interface shown in **FIG. 2**, the representations of audio/video components **17**, and representations of media types **19** allow easy access to media in Libraries created by the user, with the multimedia data represented in thumbnails in the monitor representation **13**.

[0040] Referring to **FIG. 3**, the functions associated with the user interface **12** are shown. These functions may be carried out via control buttons provided in association with an interface such as shown in **FIG. 2**, or on a further interface accessed by the user, such as shown in **FIG. 4**. As seen in **FIG. 3, a** primary set of options may be provided via an interface to a user. In an embodiment, the primary options include Desktop **22**, My Computer **24**, Favorites **26**, History **28**, and Catalog **30**. Each primary option may be represented on an interface as a "button." To select one of the primary options, the user typically will move and click a mouse pointer over the desired button. Selection of the primary options is not limited to input via a mouse. Other means of activating the primary options include keyboard entry, direct contact by the user to a touch screen display, and voice recognition devices. Because the most popular PC operating system available today is Microsoft Windows, the interface for controlling functions of the multimedia management system may include operational options that correspond to common features of the Windows operating system. For instance, as shown in **FIG. 5**, the Desktop **22** button will display each of the icons **46** that are normally displayed by the Windows operating system on its desktop **44** or default display. One of the advantages to the user interface **12** of the present invention is that all information and multimedia content is displayed through thumbnails **36**, which are small image representations of larger images. Generally, thumbnails **36** provide users with a more intuitive method of managing computer files, such as multimedia content, because users do not have to remember file names. The use of thumbnails **36** will subsequently be fully described. Other standard features of user interface **12** include horizontal and vertical screen scrolling actuators **38** and **40** respectively and control functions **42**. The horizontal and vertical screen scrolling actuators **38** and **40** allow the user to scroll the display to view additional thumbnails **36** that would not otherwise fit on a single sized display. The control functions **42** emulate the standard control functions of the Windows operating system and allow the display to be closed, opened fully, or fully shrunken from the Windows desktop **44**.

[0041] Referring to **FIG. 6**, the My Computer **24** primary option button displays a plurality of thumbnails **36** that each contain an icon **46** that corresponds to the icons normally associated with the My Computer option in the Windows operating system. Both the Desktop **22** and My Computer **24** primary options provide the user with access to standard functions available through the Windows operating system using the more intuitive thumbnail image interface. Not only does the graphical thumbnail interface make the user interface **12** easy to use, but by interfacing to the general Windows operating system commands, anyone familiar with the operating system will be instantly familiar with the user interface **12** of multimedia management system **10**.

[0042] Referring now to **FIG. 7**, the Favorites **26** primary option button displays a plurality of thumbnails **36** that each represent and display a container **48**. Essentially, containers **48** are graphical representations of the albums or entries in the multimedia database which point to the actual physical file in the computer system. Each container **48** includes a graphical representation displayed in a thumbnail **36** that allows users to identify the contents of the container **48** based upon the graphical representation or image displayed. The containers **48** displayed by the Favorites **26** primary option button allow users to store their favorite multimedia content in a convenient and quick to find location. Any number of containers **48** can be set up by the user to represent various types or categories of multimedia content. Once a container **48** is designated the user then assigns it an image that will appear in the thumbnail **36** for that container **48**. The image assigned to the thumbnail **36** will be used to identify the contents of the particular container **48**. In one preferred embodiment of the present invention, a series of default containers **48** are set up to hold types of multimedia content for movies **56**, photos **50**, and songs **52**. Several examples of user designated categories of multimedia content include images of space **54** and pictures of kids **58**. Users can store their favorite movies in the "movie" container **56**, their favorite pictures of their children in the "pictures of kids" container **58**, and so on. Once the user's favorite multimedia content is stored in the appropriate container, to access the multimedia content the user only has to use the mouse to click (hereinafter referred to only as "click") on the Favorites **26** primary option button, then click on the appropriate container **48**.

[0043] In association with organizing multimedia content, the multimedia management system may also allow the user to add a music track to the multimedia data to go along with the multimedia content when downloaded to removable

media. The audio added to a multimedia data file could include multi track or surround sound capabilities, which would allow a great amount of flexibility in the types of audio information added to the multimedia content, such as voice and music. Thus, in addition to or apart from music, voice data may be added, allowing narration to be added to go along with a slideshow created from the multimedia content, which could then be downloaded to the CD as an example. The multimedia management system may allow narration to be added by a user when previewing the media presentation or slide show on the PC by means of a microphone connected to the PC. The multimedia management system could be configured to provide user selectable functions on the user interface when previewing a slide show, such as record and stop buttons to facilitate adding narration in association with current slides being viewed. The management system also allows audio files to be stored with other multimedia content, wherein the present invention would allow audio or other information to be automatically assigned across all media files in a folder when authoring a multimedia presentation.

[**0044**] To further assist the user, the multimedia management system **10** will prompt the user as to which container **48** a particular piece of multimedia should be stored. The user will normally store multimedia content in the various containers **48** using standard operating system functions **20**, such as FILE, EDIT, VIEW, OPTIONS, WINDOW, and HELP. For example, the user may us the FILE function **20** to then copy a multimedia content file into one of the Favorites **26** containers **48**. When the system **10** detects the user attempted to copy and/or move the file it will assist the user by asking which container to store the file within. The system **10** can also detect the type of file based upon its extension or other identifying characteristics. For example, if the system **10** detects a multimedia content file in the MP3 format, the system **10** will detect that the file contains music and either automatically store the file in the "songs" container **52** or suggest to the user that the file be stored in the "songs" container **52**. Of course, the user is free to store the multimedia content file in any container **48** they wish. The management system provides a visual inventory of all multimedia content, whether on the PC or stored on external removable media, to facilitate retrieval of desired content from external removable media such as CD's, DVD's or removable disk drives. Content is indexed by the system for easy retrieval from such removable media or from the PC database by reference to a relevant index file to minimize the searching necessary to locate specific content. As an example, with the burgeoning use of digital cameras and digital video recorders, individuals are creating a voluminous amount of digital files stored on CD's or other external storage media, and any specific photograph or movie clip must be searched for throughout the user's collection of removable media. The present invention provides a completely seamless and integrated multimedia handling system is established. To facilitate the storage and subsequent retrieval of the multimedia data files, the multimedia management system user interface provides a plurality of predefined functions to uniquely index multimedia files, create an index database file, and create visual representations of the files for later retrieval. This function relates to a media library function of the media management system resident on a PC. The indexed file stores a pointer in the management system database to the physical file location, while providing a thumbnail image that can be used to represent the file in the management system user interface. This allows multiple pointers in the media management database, which relate to a single physical file stored on computer media. Thus, there is no need to store multiple physical files of the multimedia data, thereby saving storage space. Additionally, the media management system allows organization of the multimedia files into virtual albums of favorite multimedia files for easy access, while archiving the source material. The indexing system will automatically drop the indexing information into the library files for access.

[**0045**] Referring to **FIG. 8**, the History **28** primary option button displays a predetermined number of thumbnails **36** that the user has recently accessed. If the user's most recent activity within the user interface **12** consists of viewing images in the "space" container **54**, followed by listening to music **60**, then followed by viewing a picture of a turtle **62**, each of these thumbnails **36** will be displayed by the History **28** primary option button. This feature makes it simple for a user to access multimedia content that was most recently accessed.

[**0046**] The Desktop **22**, My Computer **24**, Favorites **26**, and History **28** primary option buttons are designed to make navigating through large amounts of multimedia content intuitive and simple for users. As discussed briefly above, to provide users with a familiar interface to the operating system, and in one preferred embodiment the Windows® operating system, a user interface **12** may include standard operating system functions **20**, which consist of the following pull down menus: FILE, EDIT, VIEW, OPTIONS, WINDOW, and HELP. For example as shown in **FIG. 9**, if the user clicks on the FILE function **64**, the pull down menu **70** containing a number of computer file operations such as OPEN **66** for open a file and CLOSE **68** for closing a file. So as not to block or disrupt the user's view of the thumbnails or multimedia content itself, the pull down menu **70** is see through or transparent. In one preferred embodiment of the pull down menu **70**, any text or images behind the pull down menu **70** will show through allowing the user to access the standard operating system functions **20** while visually keeping track of the multimedia content displayed on the user interface **12**.

[**0047**] Turning to **FIG. 10**, the Catalog **30** primary option button displays a number of containers **48**, which each include a thumbnail **36** that displays an image representative of the category of multimedia content stored by the user in the particular container **48**. The thumbnails **36** allow users to easily determine what multimedia content is stored in which container **48**, making accessing the multimedia content intuitive and simple for even the least technically inclined users. For example, the user can set up an "Airplanes" container **72** and a "Kids at the Farm" container **74**. Within each container the user could store digital photographs, digital movie files, audio files and any other multimedia content related to either "Airplanes" or the "Kids at the Farm." If the user clicks on one of the containers **48**, for example the "Misc. Files" container **76**, the user interface **12** displays the contents of that particular container **48**.

[**0048**] In one preferred embodiment, to store multimedia content within a predetermined container **48**, the user simply uses the "drag and drop" feature provided by the computer and mouse (not shown). A user positions the mouse pointer

over the desired thumbnail **36** and then clicks and holds the left mouse button. While still holding the left mouse button the user drags the desired thumbnail **36** over the Catalog **30** primary option button by moving the mouse pointer over the same button. Once the thumbnail **36** has been positioned or dragged over the Catalog **30** primary button, the user releases the left mouse button or "drops" the thumbnail **36** on the button. By using the left mouse button, the multimedia management system **10** is instructed to create a new Catalog thumbnail container **48** for storing the multimedia content. If the same drag and drop sequence is performed using the right mouse button, the system **10** will prompt the user to select one of the current Catalog thumbnail containers **48** to store the multimedia content.

[**0049**] When the user decides to create a new multimedia content thumbnail **36** container **48** within the Catalog **30** primary option, the first thumbnail **36** image stored in the container **48** can be used on the container **48** to provide an indication of its contents. For example, if a new container **48** is created with pictures of airplanes, then the first thumbnail **36** picture of an airplane in the container **48** will be placed on the container **48** acting as that container's **48** icon. If desired, the user can also select a specific thumbnail **36** image and/or change the selected thumbnail **36** image at any time.

[**0050**] Referring to **FIG. 11**, the user interface **12** displays thumbnails **36** with images that identify the individual multimedia content computer files. For instance, thumbnail **78** is a JPG file meaning it is a digital image. The thumbnail **78** displays a small picture of the image showing white water rafters. All the user has to do is click on the thumbnail **78** image of the rafters to view the JPG image of the same picture. Additional thumbnails **36** display images, movies and music multimedia content. For example, thumbnails **80**, **82**, and **84** display images representing movies saved in the AVI and MPEG multimedia file formats. Thumbnail **86** displays an image representing an audio recording, which could include music, voice messages, dictation or any other form of audio content.

[**0051**] An additional feature of multimedia management system **10** allows users to play multimedia content, such as video and audio recordings, in place. In other words, users can activate video and audio multimedia content directly within the thumbnails **36** to further simplify previewing and selection of active multimedia content. This feature is generally referred to as "Play in Place." Referring now to **FIG. 12**, when the user selects a movie or audio thumbnail **80** the multimedia management system **10** automatically places Player Controls **88** at the bottom of the thumbnail **80** to allow the user to preview the multimedia content within the thumbnail **80** or "in place." In addition, the user interface **12** displays the computer file name **100** for the selected multimedia content. In a preferred embodiment, the Play Controls **88** include play **96**, stop **94**, pause **92**, reverse **90**, fast forward **98**, and could further comprise other functions such as slow motion or the like. The Player Controls **88** are identical to standard functions found on common audio/video cassette recorders and/or CD/DVD players. The Play Controls **88** are shown at the bottom of the selected thumbnail **80** using standard symbols, also found on common audio/video cassette recorders and/or CD/DVD players. The Play Controls **88** allow the user to view the movie or audio multimedia content, stop or pause the content, forward or reverse the content, or the like. These functions allow users to easily preview video and audio multimedia content to quickly determine which content to play.

[**0052**] Referring now to **FIGS. 13A and 13B**, the Play in Place sequence of functions will now be described in further detail. The user first moves the mouse pointer over and clicks on a thumbnail with the mouse to select the desired thumbnail image **110**. Once the user selects a thumbnail image the multimedia management system **10** checks to see if the thumbnail is a video or audio computer file **112**. If the selected thumbnail is any format other than a video or audio file, such as a single image or document file, the Play in Place sequence of functions ends. If the selected thumbnail is a video or audio computer file, then the system **10** adds the file to the Play List **114**. The Play List will be described in more detail later. For now, the Play List is represented by the file names **100** displayed along the right side of the user interface **12**, shown in **FIG. 14**. If the selected video/audio computer file is already in the Play List then step **114** is not executed.

[**0053**] Next, the Play in Place function checks to see whether the Play List now has two or more thumbnail video/audio files listed **116**. It should be noted that single images or other file formats could be added to the Play List if desired. This function will be described later. To simplify the description of the Play in Place function single images and other file formats will not be included at this time. If only one thumbnail is listed in the Play List then a set of Player Controls **88** is placed in the selected thumbnail itself **118**. If the Play List contains more than one video/audio thumbnail, the multimedia management system **10** placed the Player Controls **88** directly on the user interface **12** near the bottom of the computer screen **120**, as shown in **FIG. 14**. By placing the Player Controls **88** on the user interface **12** one set of controls can be used to operate whichever thumbnail is selected. This arrangement is more convenient for the user then if a separate set of Player Controls **88** was placed on each thumbnail, although such an arrangement could be configured in order to play multiple files at once. The system **10** then determines which thumbnail from the Play List (when there are multiple thumbnails) is currently selected **122**.

[**0054**] At this point, whether the Play List only includes one thumbnail or several with one currently selected, the system **10** checks to see if a Player Control **88** command has been selected by the user or whether the user has selected a new thumbnail **124**. If a new thumbnail has been selected **126** the system **10** then loops back and determines whether the newly selected thumbnail is a video, audio and/or still image computer file **112**. If the user has not selected a new thumbnail then system **10** checks to see if the user has selected an initial or new Player control **88** command **128**. If an initial or new command has not been selected the system **10** loops back and rechecks to see if a Player Control **88** command or a new thumbnail has been selected **124**. If the user has selected a Player Control **88** command then the system **10** determines which command has been chosen **130**, e.g., Play, Stop, Pause, Reverse, Fast Forward, or the like. The system **10** then runs the appropriate multimedia player based on the command chosen **132**, thereby allowing the user to operate and preview the video, audio or still image selection. The multimedia players consist of computer programs and/or subroutines that play the multimedia file for

viewing or listening by the user. One or more multimedia players are incorporated into the system **10** in order to run the multitude of multimedia computer file formats, e.g., MP3, WAV, MOV, AVI, etc. A person of ordinary skill in the art would be familiar with such multimedia players as they widely known and used on computers. In addition, it is contemplated that the present invention can accept multimedia players that developed for new multimedia computer file formats subsequently developed. Once the multimedia player has executed the selected command **132**, the system **10** loops back and continues checking for new Player Control **88** commands or newly selected thumbnails **124**.

[**0055**] It should be appreciated that although the flow charts of **FIGS. 13A and 13B**, as well as all flow charts of the present application, show the use of looping to implement various functions, a person of ordinary skill in the computer program arts would understand that the functions could be implement without looping. For example, each of the Player Control **88** commands could be interrupt driven based upon computer hardware and/or software inputs. In addition, any number of multitasking computer program methods could be used to provide the user with the various functions. The looping structures used in the various flow charts included herein are for convenience and not intended in any way to limit the scope of the present invention.

[**0056**] As previously mentioned, the Play List is represented by the file names **100** displayed along the right side of the user interface **12**, shown in **FIG. 12**. The Play List is created as the user selects one or more thumbnails from the user interface **12**. It does not matter where or in what container the user selects a particular thumbnail, it is automatically added to the Play List once selected. The user is able to select multiple video, still images and/or audio files to preview. The Play List records the order in which the user selects the video and/or audio files and allows them to be played back in sequence. Referring to **FIG. 15**, the Play List is created by the multimedia management system **10** by first checking to see if the user has selected a thumbnail or initiated a Play List command **140**. If the user has selected a thumbnail **142** that is not already on the Play List, system **10** adds the thumbnail to the Play List **144**. If no thumbnail has been selected **142**, the system **10** checks to see if a Play List command has been selected **146**. If no Play List command has been selected the computer program subroutine ends. If a Play List command has been selected **146**, the command is executed **148** and the system **10** loops back and continues to check for a thumbnail or Play List command selection **140** by the user. The Play List commands are comprised of essentially the same functions as the Player Control **88** commands discussed previously.

[**0057**] Although not described in detail, it should be noted that a variety of standard key sequences, including key sequences specific to the Windows operating system, can be used to select and/or deselect files from the Play List. A person of ordinary skill in the art would understand that the Play List could be manipulated in a number of different ways, including but not limited to deleting, rearranging, copying, pasting, and moving files on the Play List. One particular feature is the ability of the user to obtain detailed information and details regarding the contents of each thumbnail included in the Play List. Referring to **FIG. 16**, at any time a user can click on a multimedia computer file **162** included in the Play List and obtain detailed information **164**, including but not limited to the file name, location of the file within the multimedia management system **10**, the file size, the video length in minutes, the video dimensions, the date and time the file was created, and a brief description of the subject matter of the file. The user interface **12** also places an additional copy of the thumbnail **160** for the file selected from the Play List with the detailed information. For the convenience of the user, Player Controls **88** are included within the thumbnail **160**, thereby allowing the user to preview the video/audio thumbnail selected while reviewing the detailed information. Another feature of user interface **12** is the ability to preview any selected video computer file in full screen mode. Referring to **FIG. 17**, the user interface **12** shows thumbnail **160** (from **FIG. 16**) expanded to fill a much larger portion of user interface **12**, otherwise referred to as a full screen **170**. As with previous embodiments, full screen **170** includes Player Controls **88** at the bottom of the screen to allow the user to preview the video file. The Play Controls **88** allow the user to view the movie or audio multimedia content, stop or pause the content, forward or reverse the content, or choose the next selection or previous selection. If desired, the user interface **12** could also be configured to provide optional full, three-quarter, half and other fractional screen sizes. To play a video file in a full screen **170**, the user simply double clicks on the thumbnail containing the video file. The preferred embodiment of the multimedia management system **10** also includes a view option (not shown). The view option is selected from a pull down menu and allows the video file to be displayed within the entire computer screen, not just a full screen **170** within the user interface **12**.

[**0058**] While many of the foregoing features of the multimedia management system **10** center around video and audio multimedia content, the present invention also provides a simple and efficient means for managing, organizing, and viewing single images such as digital photographs. These single images can include photographs or drawings that are digitized through common scanning techniques. In addition, the present invention is particularly well suited for use with digital cameras. Most digital cameras generate digital photograph computer files that can be directly downloaded to a computer. There are also a number of interface devices that allow video tape images to be digitized and downloaded to computers. The multimedia management system **10** manages and provides a simple and intuitive user interface through the use of thumbnails, as previously described in detail.

[**0059**] One problem encountered in downloading digital photographs is with the digital file naming conventions. Many digital cameras automatically label each image from **00** to **100** or with a similar consecutive numbering scheme. The problem with this numbering scheme is encountered when a user wishes to download a new set of digital images but has an existing set of images already stored on the computer. Because the digital camera keeps using the same numbering scheme of 00 through 100, if the user is not careful the previously stored images will be written over during the downloading of the new images. When the computer is controlled by the Windows operating system, the file will not automatically be written over but instead the user will repeatedly be prompted with a message asking if the user wants to write over the preexisting file. Either way, this can be a time consuming and frustrating problem. To overcome this problem, the multimedia management system

10 of the present invention includes a Rename and Copy function with a serialization option. Generally, the Rename and Copy function with the serialization option allows a user to designate a descriptive name for a series of digital images to be downloaded to a computer. The system **10** automatically renames each image with the descriptive name as it copies the image from the digital camera to the computer. A serial number is also added to the descriptive name to identify an entire series of images.

[**0060**] Referring generally to FIGS. **17-20**, the Rename and Copy function with the serialization option will be described in more detail. **FIG. 19** shows a computer screen **214** with a series of digital image thumbnails **216** displayed, each containing an individualized file name **220**. The individualized file names **220** are the default file names assigned by the digital camera, e.g., PIC00017.JPG, PIC00018.JPG, PIC00019.JPG, etc. To copy the digital images represented by the thumbnails **216** to the computer, the user simply clicks on the Copy To **222** button. In response to this selection, the multimedia management system **10** prompts the user with a Select Destination window **224**, shown in **FIG. 20**, which allows the user to determine where on the computer the digital images will be stored. Within the Select Destination window **224** the user has the option of requesting the Rename Before Copy **226** option. If the user selects this option the Rename and Copy function will be automatically initiated once the user clicks on the OK button **228** within the Select Destination window **224**. The user is next prompted with the Rename and Copy window **230**, shown in **FIG. 21**, which displays a thumbnail image **234** of the selected digital image and prompts the user to provide a new file name **232** for the image.

[**0061**] Referring more specifically to **FIG. 18**, the Rename and Copy **180** computer program or subroutine begins by checking to see if the user pressed "OK" or selected the Rename and Copy function **182**. The dialog box then fills in the first file name within the new file name edit box and displays a thumbnail image of the file **184**. At this point, as described generally above, the user enters or keys in a new file name for the digital image or accepts the currently assigned (default) name **186**. The Rename and Copy **180** program then checks to see whether the user pressed/clicked the Enter key to move on to the next digital image or whether the Escape key was pressed in order to cancel any further digital image copying **188**. If the Escape key is selected, all further copying operations are canceled after the copy queue for the preceding digital image is empty **190**. Next, the dialog box or window (not shown) changes the Cancel button to a Close button **192**. The user can then select the Close button **194** and the dialog box or window will exit and the computer program will return to the main screen **196**.

[**0062**] If the user selects the Enter key **188** then the computer program checks to see if the series or serialization option is turned on **198**. If the series option is not turned on then the computer program checks to see if the collision option is on **200**. The collision option **200** is used to detect and prevent two digital images from being assigned the same file name, which would cause one file to be written over the preexisting file having the same name. For example, if the preexisting digital image file name is "granddaughter playing in park **1**" and then another file has the same name, the two files will collide with each other. If the collision option **200** is enabled, the computer program will automatically prompt the user as to whether or not to assign the second file the name "granddaughter playing in park **2**."

[**0063**] If the serialization option is enabled **198** or the serialization option is disabled **198** and the collision option **200** is disabled, the computer program then inserts the file name assigned to the digital image in step **186** into the copy queue for further processing **202**, i.e., copying of the file under the file name assigned to the computer. At that point the computer program again checks to see if the serialization option or series mode is enabled **204**. If it is, then the new file name is incremented and inserted into a new file name variable **206**. The new file name edit box is then updated with the new file name variable along with a thumbnail of the next digital image about to be assigned the new file name variable **210**. The computer program then loops back and the user is then prompted to key in a new file name or accept the currently assigned file name **186**.

[**0064**] If the serialization option (serial mode) is not enabled **198** and the collision option is enabled **200**, then the computer program determines whether there is a series event **212**, meaning whether or not the current file name for the digital image needs to be incremented or changed to avoid a collision. If not, the computer program inserts the current file name into the new file name variable **208** and then the new file name variable edit box is updated with the current file name and displayed with a thumbnail of the next digital image. The computer program then loops back and prompts the user to enter a new file name or accept the currently assigned name **186**. If the computer program determines that a series event has occurred **212**, the edit box is updated with a new file name variable and again displayed with a thumbnail of the next digital image **210**.

[**0065**] The multimedia management system **10** of the present invention also includes powerful search capabilities for locating multimedia content on local personal computers, networks, Intranets and the Internet. The two primary search features include the use of customized tags added to HTML content and biometric recognition technology.

[**0066**] The first methodology entails adding specialized tags to the HTML content of web pages on Intranets and the Internet. Each tag is specifically designed to be located and parsed by the multimedia management system **10** of the present invention. For example, specific tags could include information that would instruct the system **10** as to whether a particular piece of multimedia content was a picture, what the subject of the picture is, the size of the multimedia computer file, or any number of other useful pieces of information. In addition, tags could include Keywords that allow the system **10** to recognize the multimedia content as belonging to a specific type of content. For example, a Keyword might be the word "bird" and all multimedia content that is tagged with the same Keyword is automatically recognized as in some way being related to birds. This would be true whether the multimedia content was a photograph of a bird, an advertisement for bird food, or a recipe for chicken. The Keywords use the content to drive the search as opposed to just the Keyword itself. The only drawback to the tag methodology is that it requires third parties to incorporate information specific to the multimedia management system **10** within their Intranets and Internet web pages or other multimedia content. Despite this potential drawback, the use of custom tags provides an extremely powerful methodology of searching for multimedia content.

[**0067**] The second search methodology incorporated within one preferred embodiment of the present invention uses biometric technology, which matches unique image characteristics in order to locate information. For example,

the key characteristics of a celebrity's face could be analyzed and labeled with the celebrity's name. To find images of the celebrity on the Internet or other computer or networks, the searching computer program would analyze images until a match of the facial characteristics is found. Biometric matching is a widely used technology for identifying individuals, particularly for security reasons. Biometrics is the statistical study of biological information such but not limited to iris or retina patterns, facial characteristics, fingerprints, hand shapes, hand writing characteristics, writing or linguistic styles, or voice patterns. The system **10** of the present invention incorporates known methods of biometric matching including but not limited to picture recognition, voice recognition, music recognition, and movie recognition. Biometric matching and searching methods currently exist as shown in U.S. Pat. No. 6,047,282 for an Apparatus and Method for Expandable Biometric Searching, a copy of which is attached to this application and incorporated herein by reference.

[**0068**] Although the foregoing description of the multimedia management system **10** of the present invention is primarily targeted for use with personal computers, either alone or connected to various types of local or international networks, the system **10** can be used with or incorporated into any number of devices. For example, such devices include but are not limited to hand-held computers, dedicated computers, video games, mobile communications equipment, or incorporated within television sets, home audio equipment and car stereos.

[**0069**] One example of an alternate application for the present invention is in the use of high definition television (HDTV). One or more HDTV sets could incorporate the multimedia management system **10** directly within themselves or the HDTV sets could be network together by a computer network. Using the Play List feature of system **10**, the user could designate what multimedia content is played on which HTDV set (or a regular television set for that matter) within a home or office. This would allow, for example, a user to provide children's television programming in one room, viewing of the latest movie in another room, and music playing in a third room. The same type of arrangement can be implemented within an automobile. The system **10** could run multimedia content from the Play List to allow one type of music to be played in the front seat of the automobile, while a movie is played in the back seat to entertain children or other passengers.

[**0070**] In an alternate preferred embodiment of the present invention, the Play List and the accompanying multimedia content are stored on high density removable media, including but not limited to CD-ROMs and large, portable hard drives. Currently existing multi gigabyte, portable hard drives manufactured by Smartdisk Corporation are ideally suited for storing Play Lists and the related multimedia content. A user simply connects the portable hard drive to a computer or dedicated device, i.e., a device such as a HDTV set with a hard drive port including but not limited to a USB, USB20, or FireWire port, and lets an AutoPlay function operate the multimedia management system **10** incorporated within the portable hard drive. The portable hard drive or other removable media also includes any computer programs necessary to run or view the multimedia content stored on the hard drive. Once the portable hard drive is connected to a computer or dedicated device, the AutoPlay function automatically loads the multimedia management system **10**, initiates the predetermined Play List, and then loads each selection of multimedia content in the predetermined sequence programmed by the user. An entire evening of multimedia content can be stored and operated automatically through a portable, removable media.

[**0071**] It is also contemplated that a manufacturer could preprogram the portable, removable media so that users could purchase entire sets or Play Lists of predetermined multimedia content. For example, one preprogrammed portable, removable media could have a disco theme for use at parties. The removable media could be programmed with disco music, the movie Saturday Night Fever, and a number of still images of people dancing. Of course the number and variety of preprogrammed multimedia content is only limited by ones imagination. Rather than purchasing entirely new portable, removable media such as hard drives, users could also purchase preprogrammed multimedia content over the Internet or through kiosks located in shopping malls or stores and have their preexisting portable, removable media reprogrammed. The user could also store multiple preprogrammed multimedia content on a personal computer and simply select which preprogrammed content to place on their portable, removable media.

[**0072**] **FIG. 22** is a flow chart showing the AutoPlay feature. The AutoPlay software waits for notification of a device being hot plugged into the computer **234** (e.g., plugging a fire wire hard drive into the computer). When the hot plug event is detected the AutoPlay software automatically searches for a multimedia management system script file and executes the commands in the script file **235**. If user input is required by the script **236**, then the user is prompted to make a selection **237** using the mouse or keyboard **238**. Next, the AutoPlay software starts executing the multimedia management system **10** commands **239**. One use for the AutoPlay feature is to automatically start the multimedia management system **10** Play List **240**.

[**0073**] The foregoing disclosure is illustrative of the present invention and is not to be construed as limiting thereof. Although one or more embodiments of the invention have been described, persons of ordinary skill in the art will readily appreciate that numerous modifications could be made without departing from the scope and spirit of the disclosed invention. As such, it should be understood that all such modifications are intended to be included within the scope of this invention. The written description and drawings illustrate the present invention and are not to be construed as limited to the specific embodiments disclosed.

What is claimed is:

1. A system for managing a multimedia data files comprising:

a user interface providing control functions which are selectable by a user,

a representation of the multimedia files selectively viewable in association with the user interface, wherein the representation comprises an image representing the data file and a pointer to the multimedia data file accessible in a computer readable memory device, and

a system for displaying the multimedia data file in association with the representation on the user interface.

2. The system according to claim 1, further comprising controls provided in association with the user interface for selective control of display functions associated with the display of the multimedia data file in association with the representation.

3. The system according to claim 2, wherein the controls are selected from the group consisting essentially of play, stop, pause, reverse, previous selection, next selection and fast forward functions.

4. The system according to claim 1, wherein the multimedia data files are selected from the group consisting essentially of still images, video, audio or combinations thereof.

5. The system according to claim 2, wherein the controls are associated with a representation of a multimedia data file.

6. The system according to claim 2, wherein the controls are positioned in association with the user interface and not at particular representation of a multimedia data file, wherein the controls will operate to control display of a multimedia data file which has been highlighted on the user interface.

7. The method for managing multimedia data files comprising the steps of:

storing a multimedia data file in a data storage system,

creating a representation of the multimedia data file in a user interface in association with a media display system, and

playing the multimedia data file in association with the representation upon selection of the representation on the user interface.

8. A multimedia data management system comprising:

at least one multimedia data file stored on a storage system, the file designated with at least a first name,

a computer program having instructions to copy a selected multimedia data file and store the data file in a database, and

a computer program selectively implemented by a user for renaming the data file with a second name prior to storage in the database.

9. The data management system according to claim 8, wherein the computer program further promotes the user to select a destination for the multimedia data file stored in the database.

10. The data management system according to claim 8, wherein the computer program further comprises a serialization option, which if enabled will increment the multimedia data file and insert a new file name variable along with a representation of a next multimedia data file for renaming the data file.

11. The data management system according to claim 8, wherein the computer program further comprises a collision option, which if enabled determines whether a current file name for a multimedia data file needs to be incremented or changed to avoid overwriting a preexisting file having the same name.

12. A multimedia management system for creating a multimedia presentation comprising:

a database of multimedia data files,

a user interface having representations of the multimedia data file;

a program of instructions to select multimedia data files from the database using the representations to create a list of multimedia data files,

a program of instructions to store the list of multimedia data files along with a set of instructions to play the list of multimedia data files on a display system.

13. The multimedia management system of claim 12, wherein the program of instructions to store the list of multimedia data files is designed to store the data files on a removable storage media.

14. The multimedia management system according to claim 13, wherein, the set of instructions to play the list of data files will automatically play the list of data files when the removable media is operatively connected to a playback system.

15. The multimedia management system according to claim 12, wherein the program of instructions to play the list of data files can specify playback of predetermined data files from the list.

16. The multimedia management system according to claim 12, wherein the program of instructions can specify multiple groups of predetermined data files for playback on a plurality of predetermined playback devices.

17. The multimedia management system according to claim 16, wherein the plurality of predetermined playback devices are selected from the group consisting essentially of televisions, high definition television (hdtv), a video display associated with a computer system, video monitors and video displays.

18. A system for managing multimedia data files comprising:

a database of multimedia data files in a computer readable memory,

a user interface having representations of the data files and a pointer to the data file in the computer readable memory, and

a program of instructions allowing the user to navigate through the database of multimedia data files using the representations of the multimedia data files in the user interface.

19. The system according to claim 18, wherein the computer readable memory is selected from the group consisting essentially of a memory device associated with a computer system, removable storage media or combinations thereof.

20. A system for managing multimedia data files comprising

a database of multimedia data files,

a user interface having representations of the data files, wherein multiple representations of a data file can be presented in the user interface, with any representation of a data file having a pointer to a single data file stored on computer readable memory.

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