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Wiklem et al.

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(45) **Date of Patent: Apr. 28, 2020**

(54) **MULTILAYER FRAMEWORK ARCHITECTURE AND USER INTERFACE FOR VIDEO GAMING APPLICATIONS**

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(73) Assignee: **CP Studios LLC**, Salt Lake City, UT (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.

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Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 13/889,274, filed on May 7, 2013, and a continuation of application No.
(Continued)

(51) **Int. Cl.**
A63F 13/00 (2014.01)
A63F 13/79 (2014.01)
(Continued)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***A63F 13/79*** (2014.09); ***A63F 13/35*** (2014.09); ***A63F 13/537*** (2014.09); ***A63F 13/87*** (2014.09); *H04L 67/38* (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC A63F 13/12; G07F 17/3225
See application file for complete search history.

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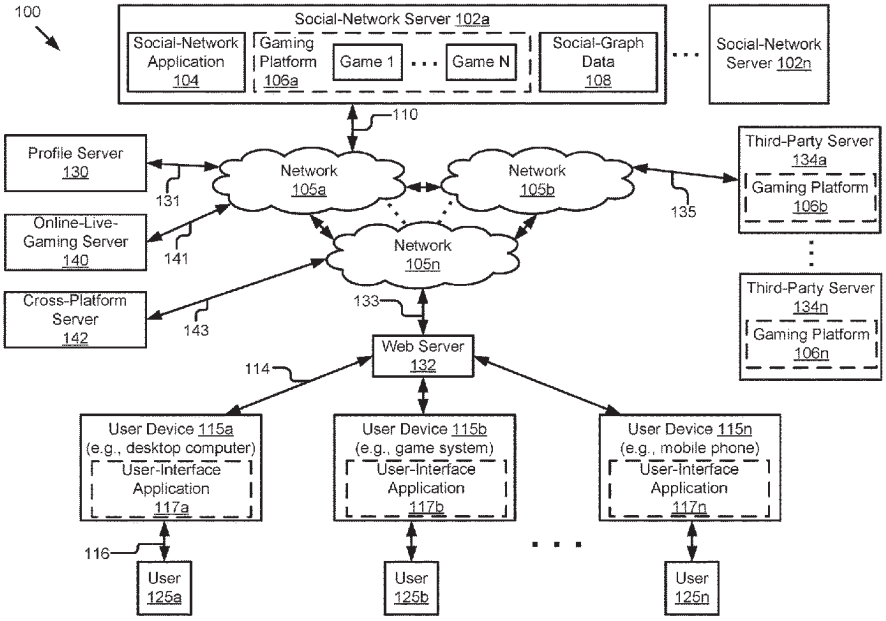
Assistant Examiner — Eric M Thomas
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Patent Law Works LLP

(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present disclosure is directed to a flexible architecture for video gaming applications. In some embodiments, the flexible architecture is platform agnostic and provides a continuous visual experience for players across different platforms while engaging them at different levels of play. The architecture provides user interfaces that facilitate access to video gaming applications in various ways that may include: via social networks or sites; via wall posts or via an online social networking service that enables its users to send and read text-based posts; via mobile devices (iOS, Android, or Windows-based smart phones); or via dedicated game consoles. In some embodiments, the flexible architecture provides multiple levels of play options, which may include a peer-to-peer competitive challenge level for "core" players, a "casual" play level for play with friends with whom a player shares an affinity, for example, in a social network; or a "spectator" mode that permits non-players in a network to assist friends. In some embodiments, feed-based triggers may allow for greater rewards to players and ease of discovering games.

23 Claims, 54 Drawing Sheets



Related U.S. Application Data

13/889,276, filed on May 7, 2013, now Pat. No. 9,889,373, and a continuation of application No. 13/889,266, filed on May 7, 2013, now Pat. No. 9,604,132, and a continuation of application No. 13/889,284, filed on May 7, 2013, now Pat. No. 9,597,586.

(60) Provisional application No. 61/643,352, filed on May 7, 2012.

(51) **Int. Cl.**

A63F 13/35	(2014.01)
A63F 13/537	(2014.01)
A63F 13/87	(2014.01)
H04L 29/06	(2006.01)

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Madden NFL Cooperative Multiplayer Impressions: Ready on Three, Teamwork!, retrieved from http://kotaku.com/5567763/madden-nfl-11-cooperative-multiplayer-impressions-ready-on-three-teamwork on Oct. 10, 2016 (5 pages).

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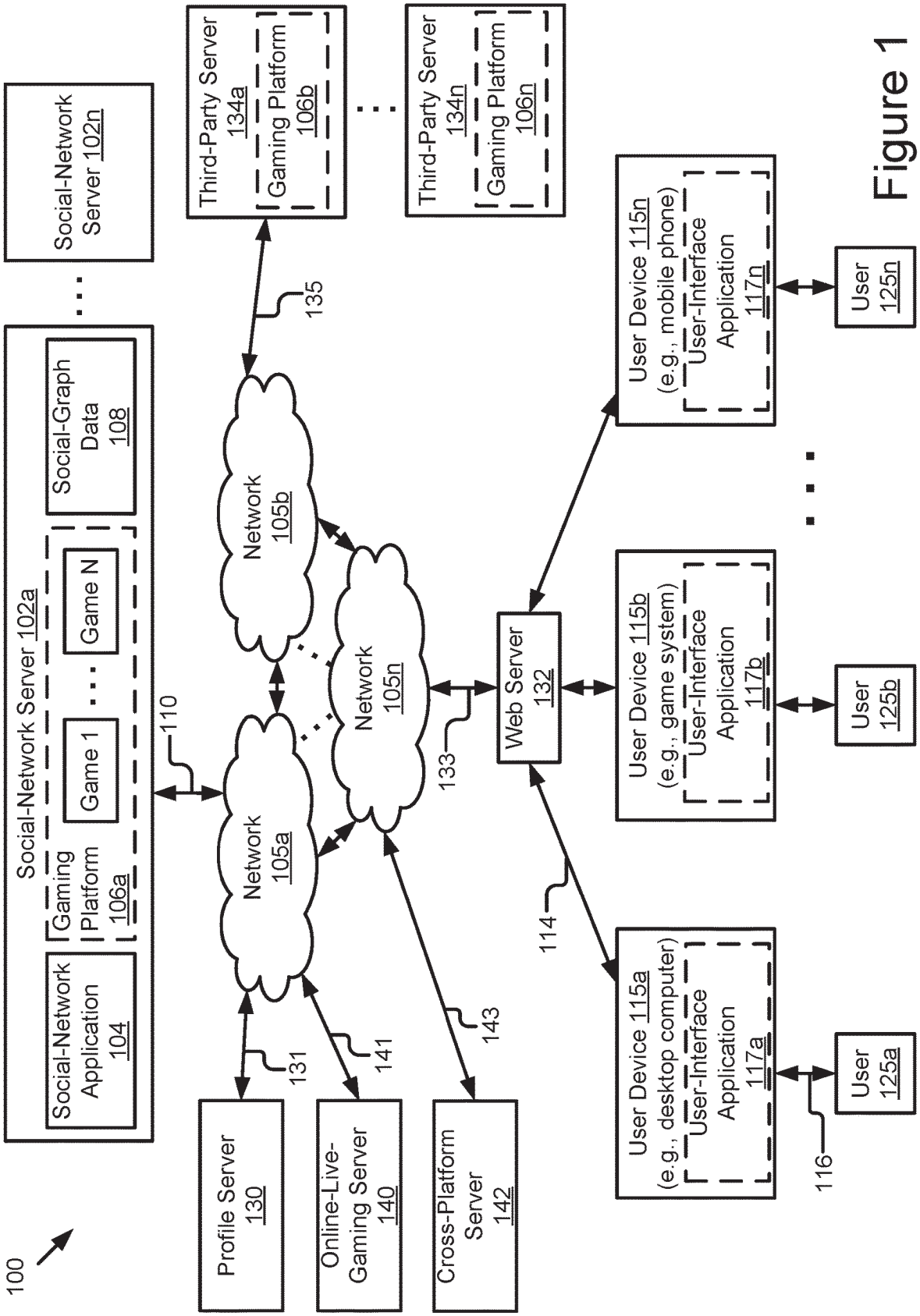
100
Social-Network Server 102a
Social-Network Application 104
Gaming Platform 106a
Game 1
Game N
Social-Graph Data 108
Social-Network Server 102n
110
Network 105a
Network 105b
Network 105n
133
135
Third-Party Server 134a
Gaming Platform 106b
Third-Party Server 134n
Gaming Platform 106n
Web Server 132
114
User Device 115a (e.g., desktop computer)
User-Interface Application 117a
User Device 115b (e.g., game system)
User-Interface Application 117b
User Device 115n (e.g., mobile phone)
User-Interface Application 117n
User 125a
User 125b
User 125n
116
Profile Server 130
131
Online-Live-Gaming Server 140
141
Cross-Platform Server 142
143

Figure 1

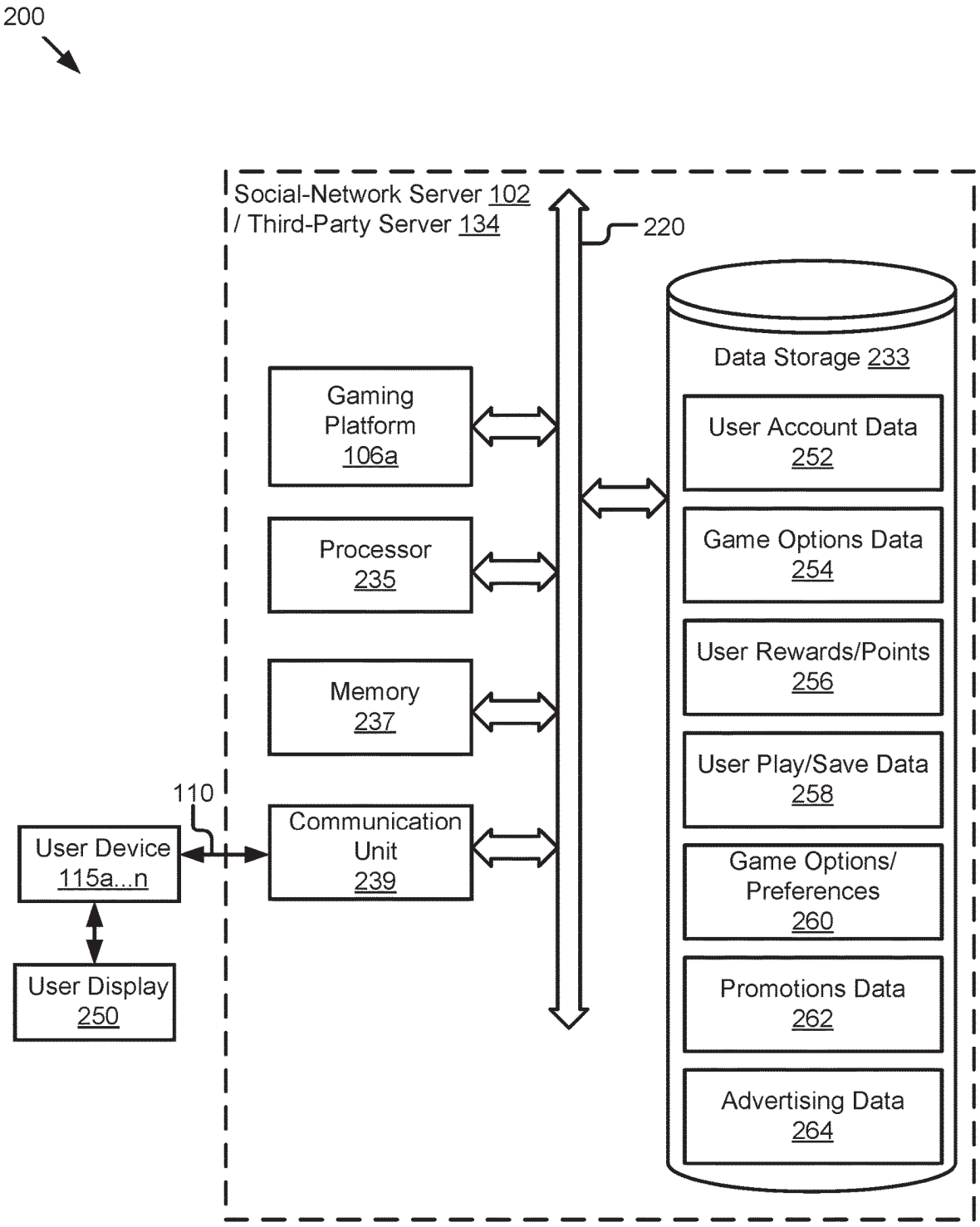
200
Social-Network Server 102
/ Third-Party Server 134
220
Data Storage 233
Gaming Platform 106a
Processor 235
Memory 237
Communication Unit 239
User Account Data 252
Game Options Data 254
User Rewards/Points 256
User Play/Save Data 258
Game Options/ Preferences 260
Promotions Data 262
Advertising Data 264
110
User Device 115a...n
User Display 250

Figure 2

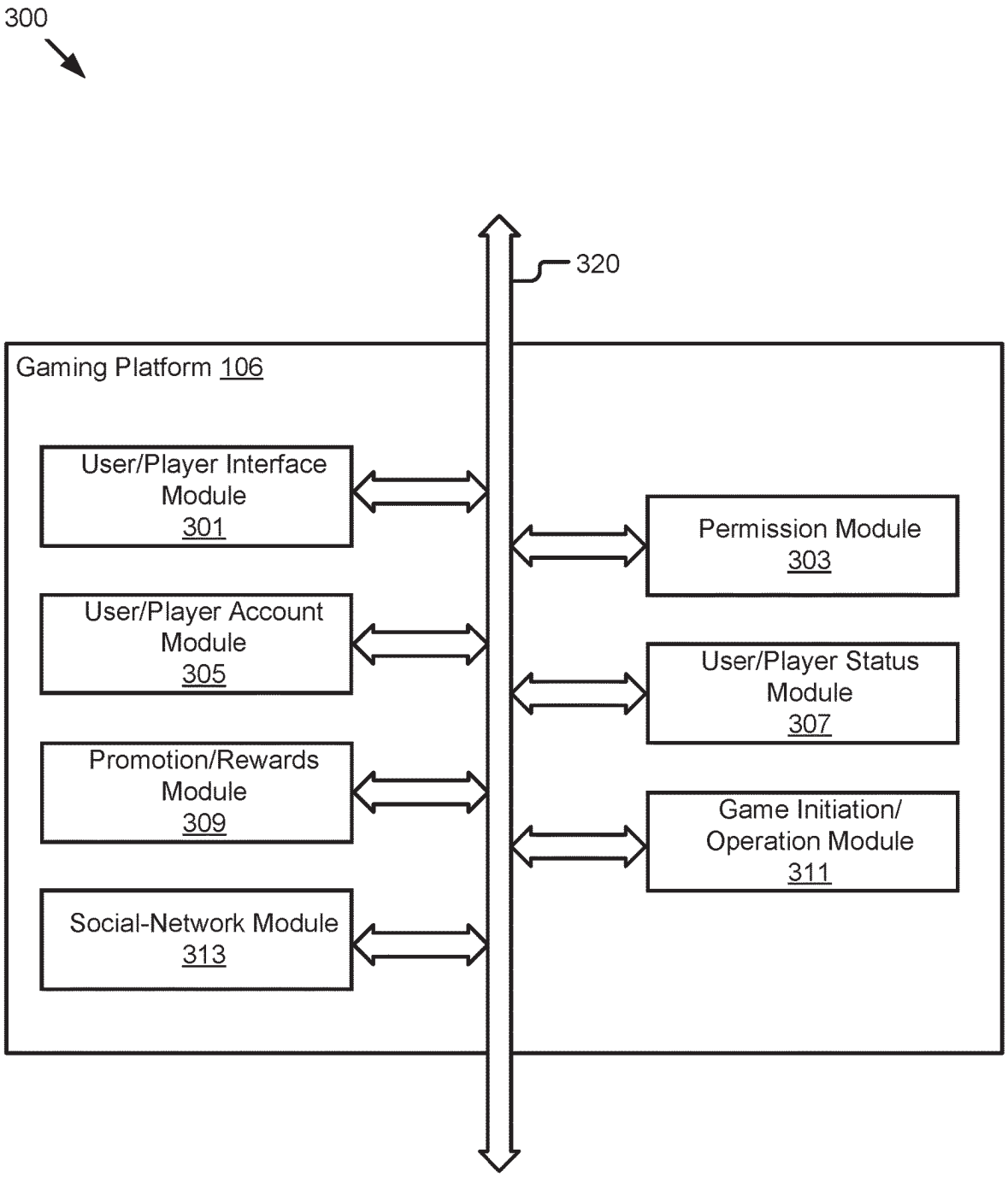
300
320
Gaming Platform 106
User/Player Interface Module 301
User/Player Account Module 305
Promotion/Rewards Module 309
Social-Network Module 313
Permission Module 303
User/Player Status Module 307
Game Initiation/ Operation Module 311

Figure 3

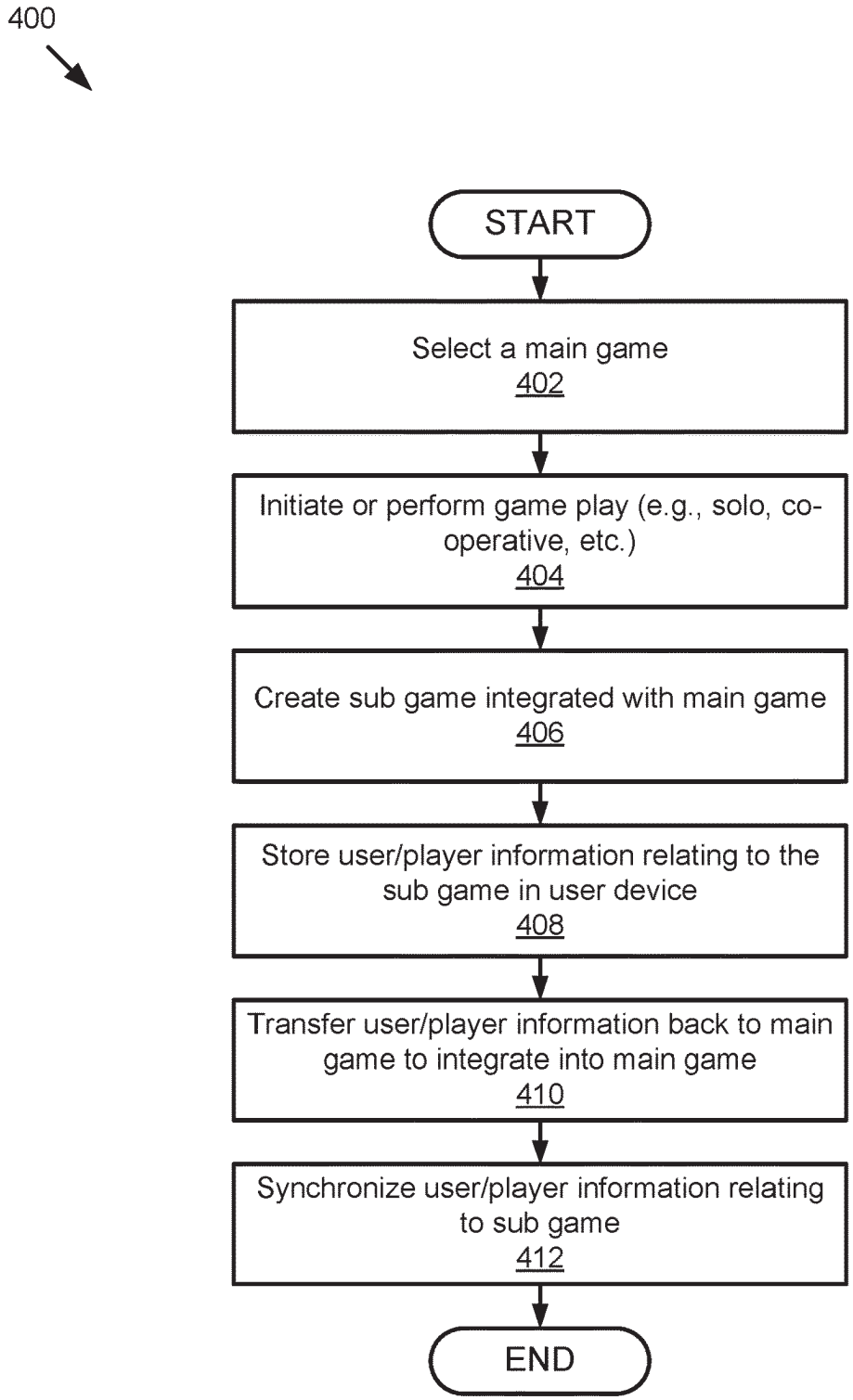
400
START
Select a main game
402
Initiate or perform game play (e.g., solo, co-operative, etc.)
404
Create sub game integrated with main game
406
Store user/player information relating to the sub game in user device
408
Transfer user/player information back to main game to integrate into main game
410
Synchronize user/player information relating to sub game
412
END

Figure 4

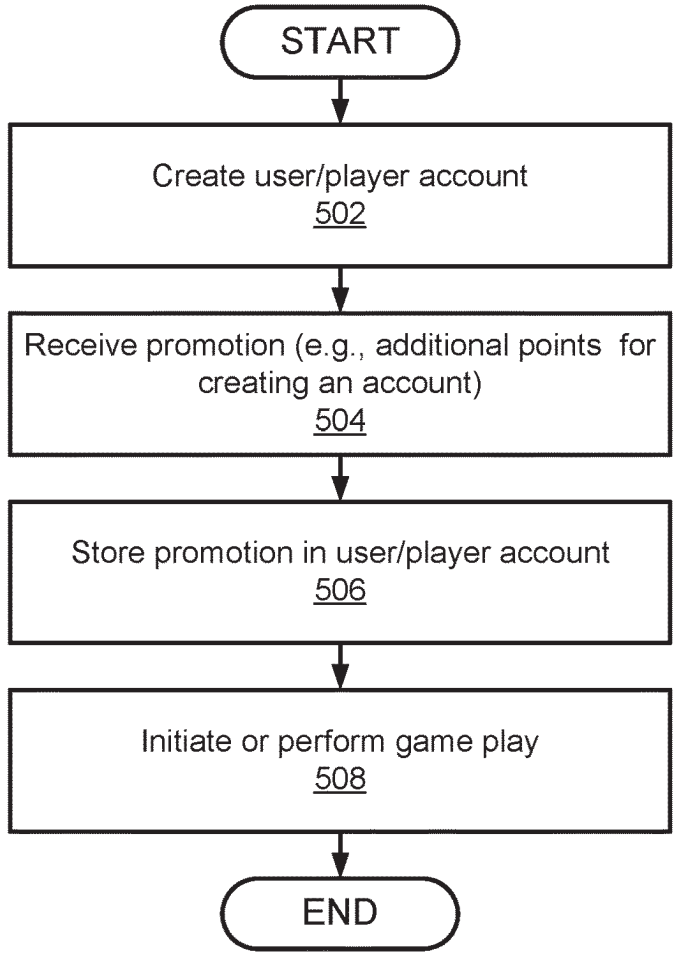
500
START
Create user/player account
502
Receive promotion (e.g., additional points for creating an account)
504
Store promotion in user/player account
506
Initiate or perform game play
508
END

Figure 5

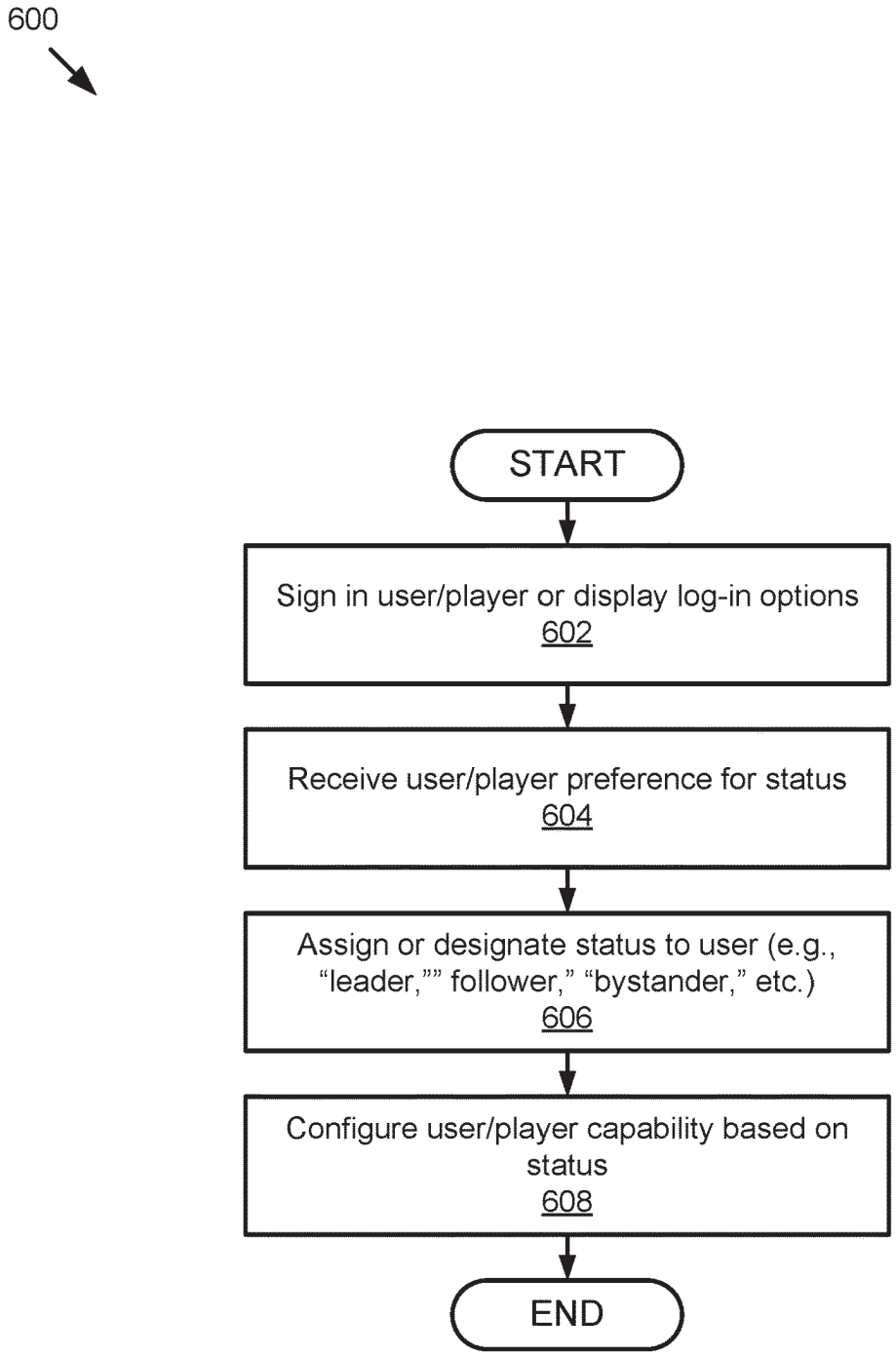
600
START
Sign in user/player or display log-in options
602
Receive user/player preference for status
604
Assign or designate status to user (e.g., "leader,"" follower," "bystander," etc.)
606
Configure user/player capability based on status
608
END

Figure 6

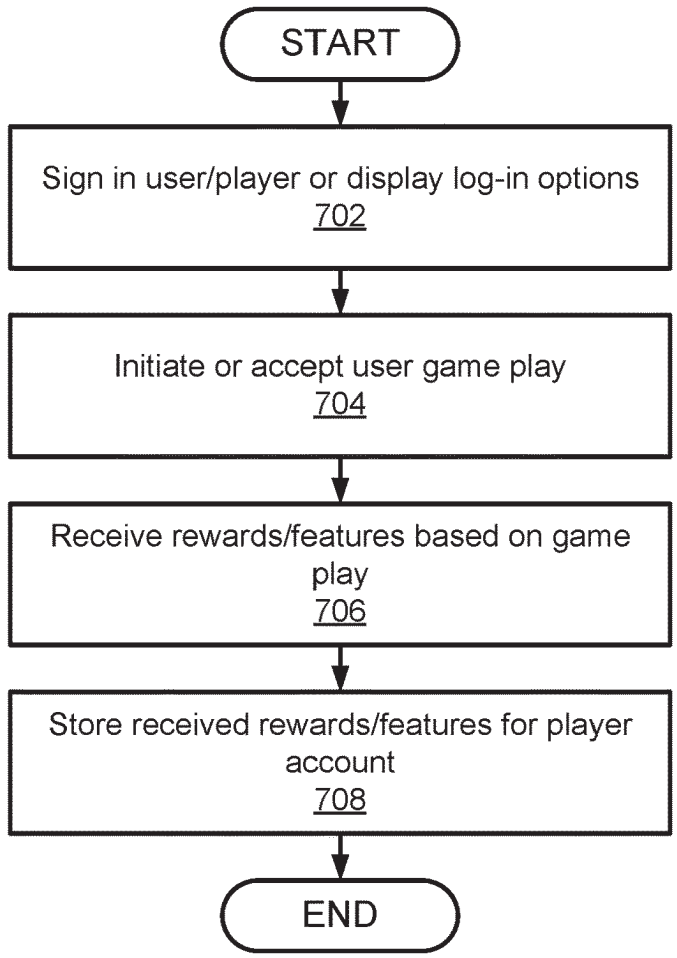
700
START
Sign in user/player or display log-in options
702
Initiate or accept user game play
704
Receive rewards/features based on game play
706
Store received rewards/features for player account
708
END

Figure 7

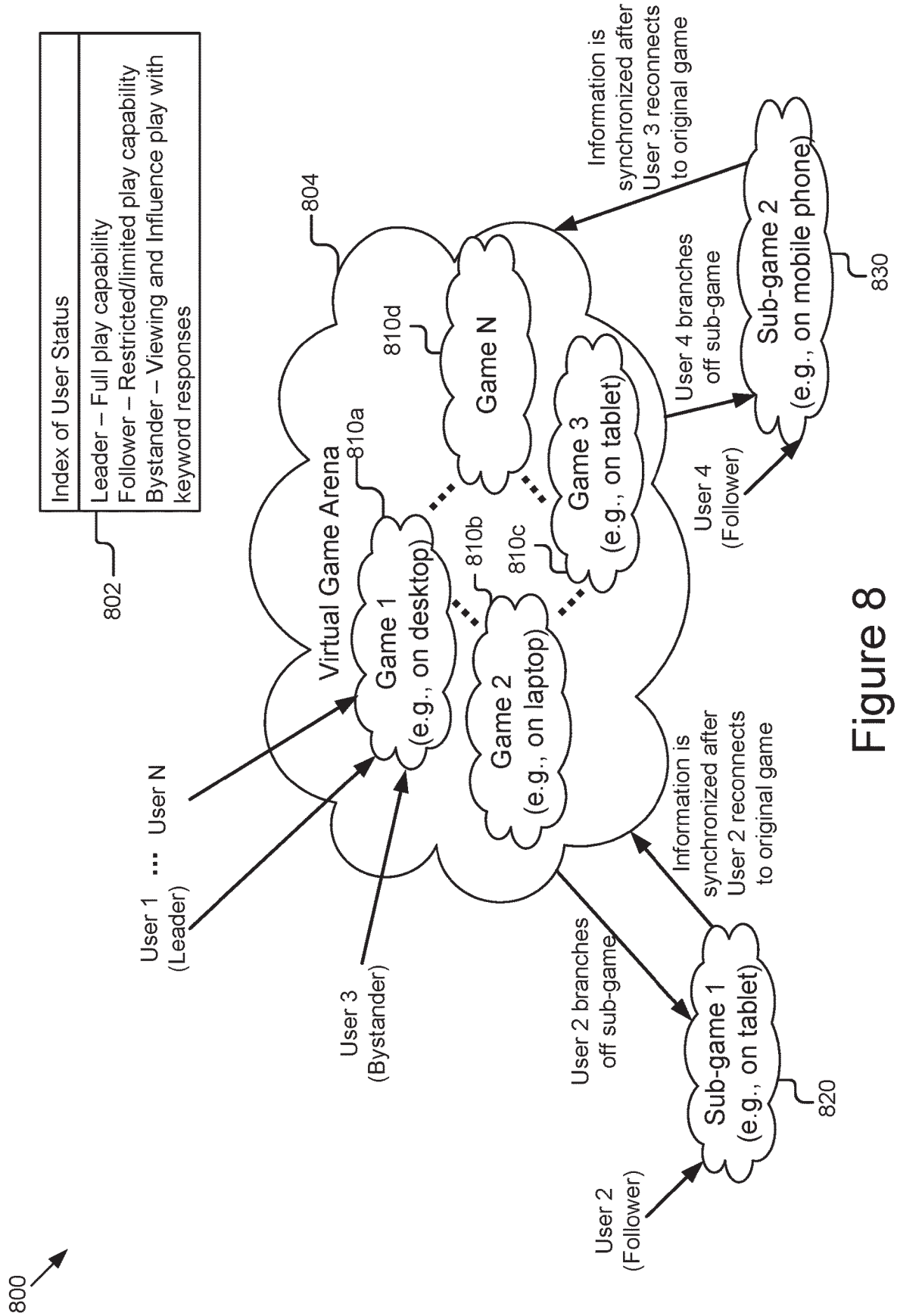
Index of User Status
Leader – Full play capability
Follower – Restricted/limited play capability
Bystander – Viewing and Influence play with keyword responses
802
804
Virtual Game Arena
810a
Game 1 (e.g., on desktop)
810b
Game 2 (e.g., on laptop)
810c
Game 3 (e.g., on tablet)
810d
Game N
User 1 (Leader)
User N
User 3 (Bystander)
User 2 (Follower)
User 2 branches off sub-game
Sub-game 1 (e.g., on tablet)
820
Information is synchronized after User 2 reconnects to original game
User 4 (Follower)
User 4 branches off sub-game
Sub-game 2 (e.g., on mobile phone)
830
Information is synchronized after User 3 reconnects to original game
800

Figure 8

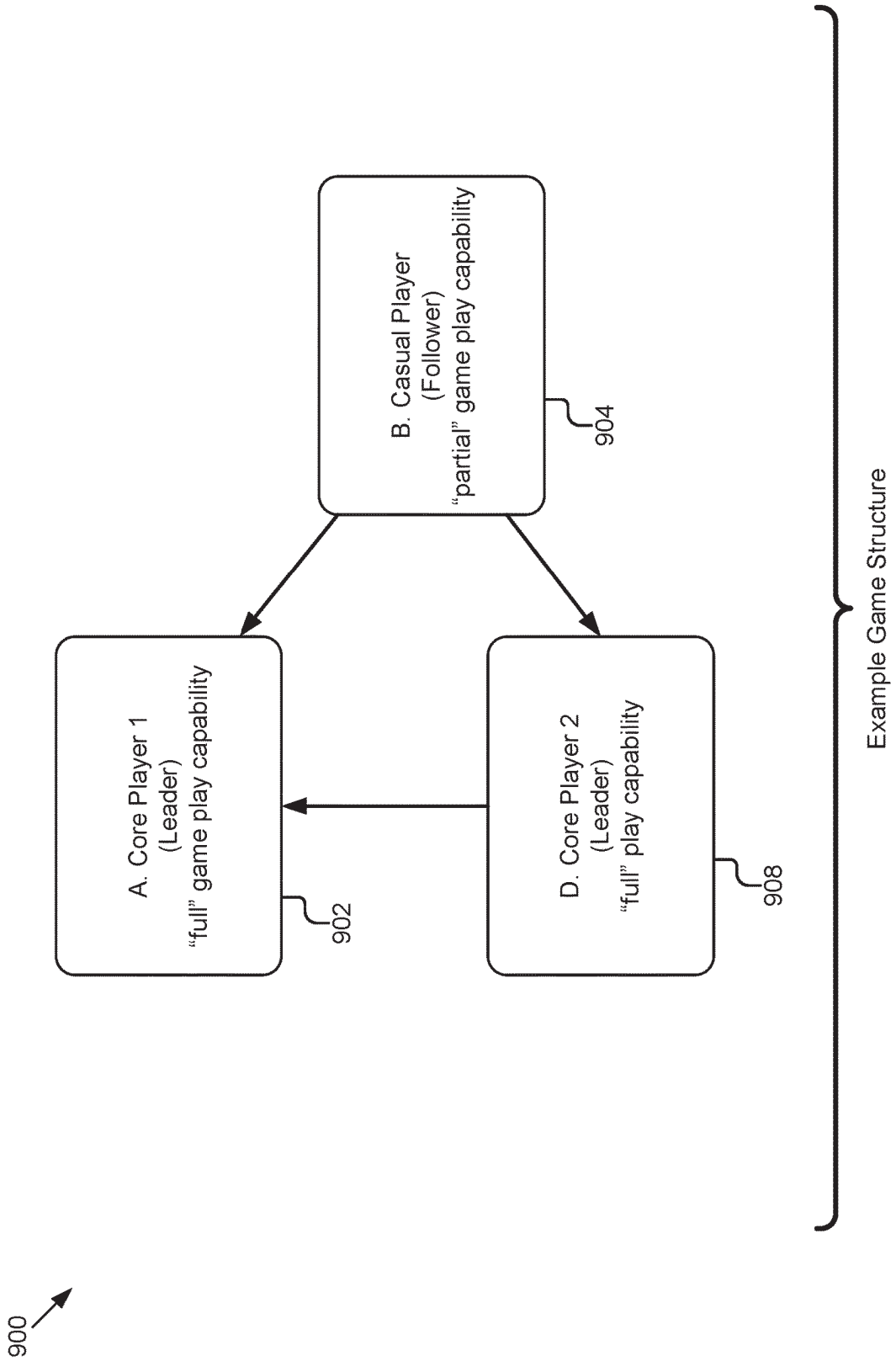
900
A. Core Player 1
(Leader)
"full" game play capability
902
B. Casual Player
(Follower)
"partial" game play capability
904
D. Core Player 2
(Leader)
"full" play capability
908
Example Game Structure

Figure 9

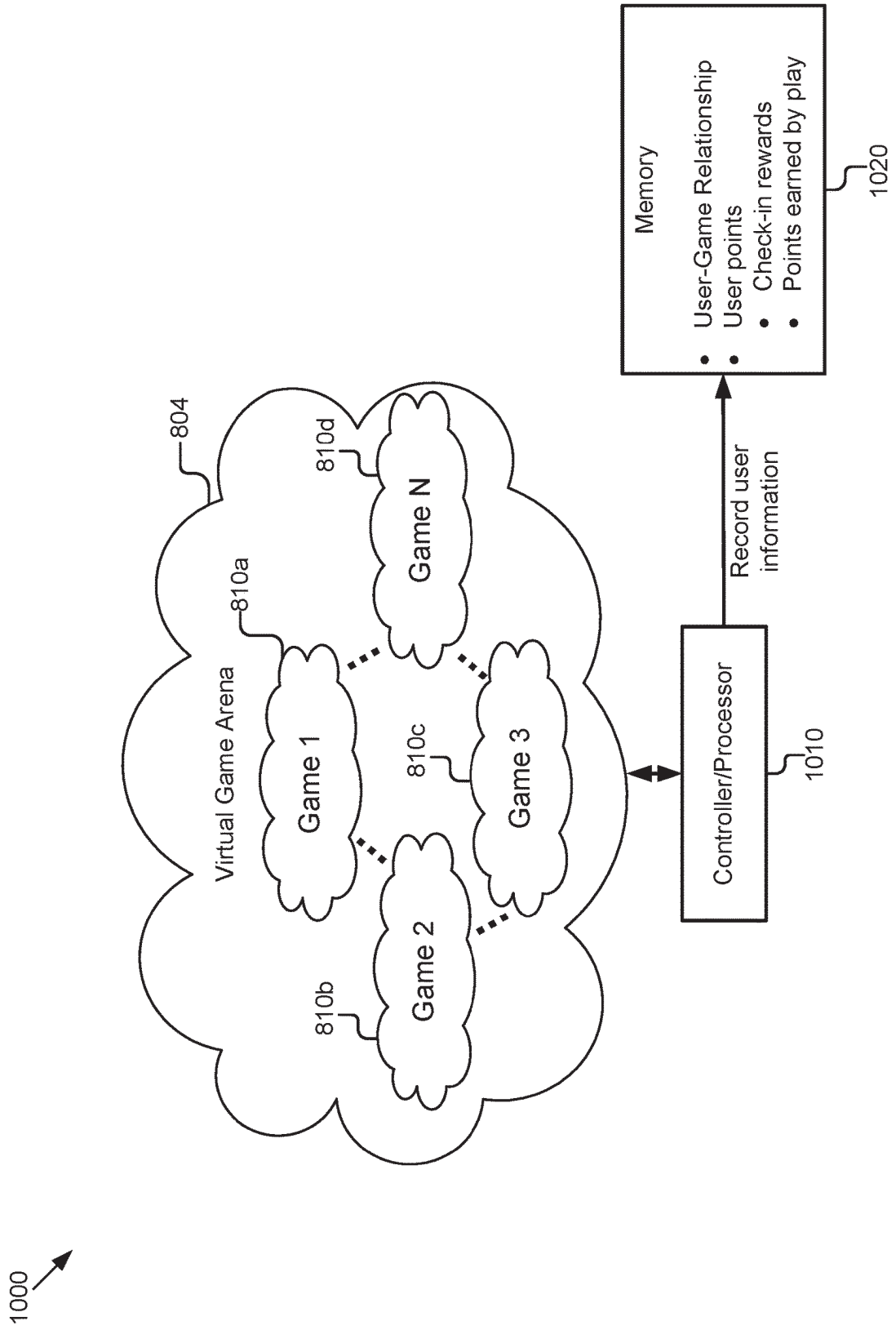
1000
804
Virtual Game Arena
810a
Game 1
810b
Game 2
810c
Game 3
810d
Game N
Controller/Processor
1010
Record user information
Memory
User-Game Relationship
User points
Check-in rewards
Points earned by play
1020

Figure 10

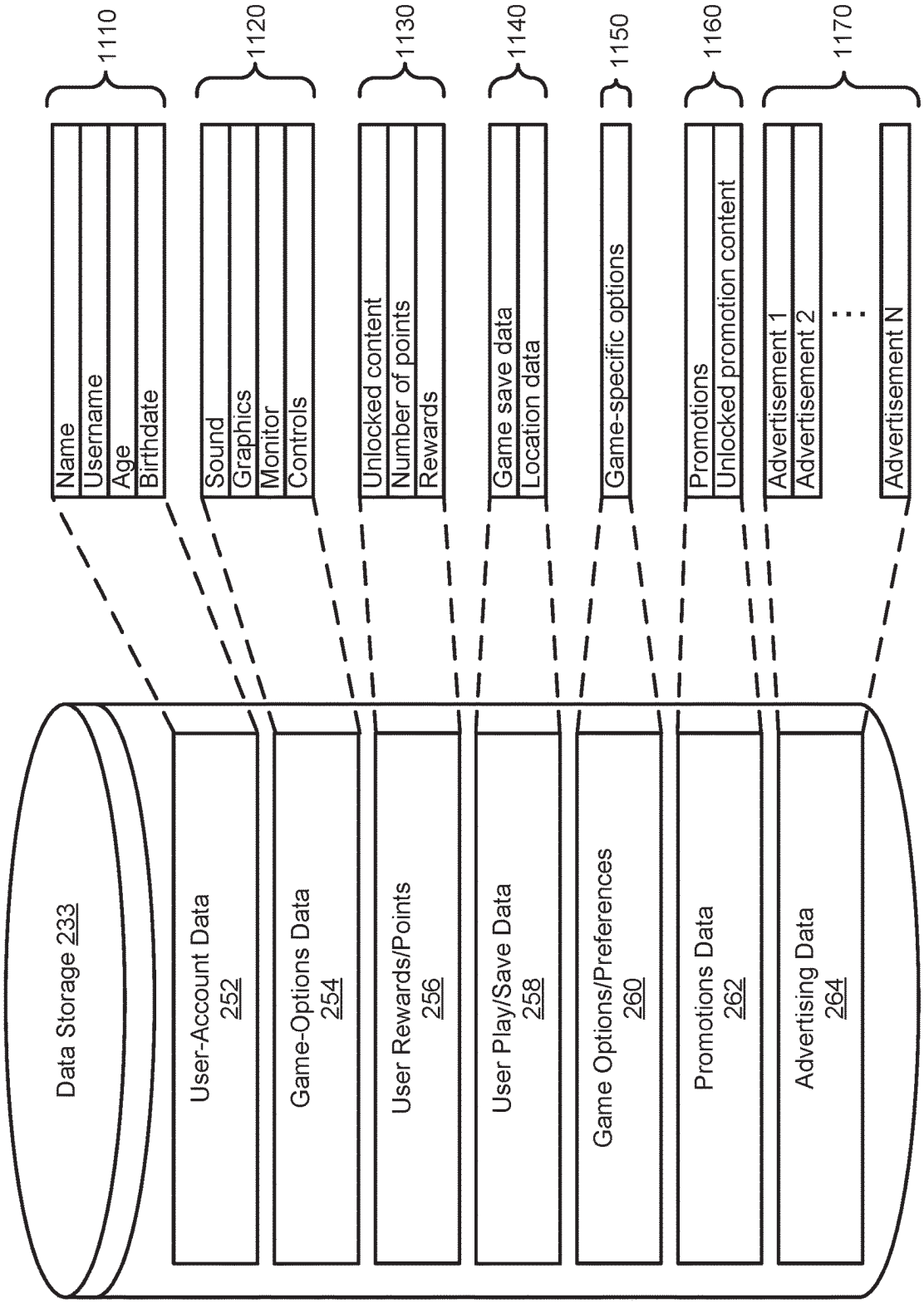
1110
Name
Username
Age
Birthdate
1120
Sound
Graphics
Monitor
Controls
1130
Unlocked content
Number of points
Rewards
1140
Game save data
Location data
1150
Game-specific options
1160
Promotions
Unlocked promotion content
1170
Advertisement 1
Advertisement 2
Advertisement N
Data Storage 233
User-Account Data 252
Game-Options Data 254
User Rewards/Points 256
User Play/Save Data 258
Game Options/Preferences 260
Promotions Data 262
Advertising Data 264

Figure 11

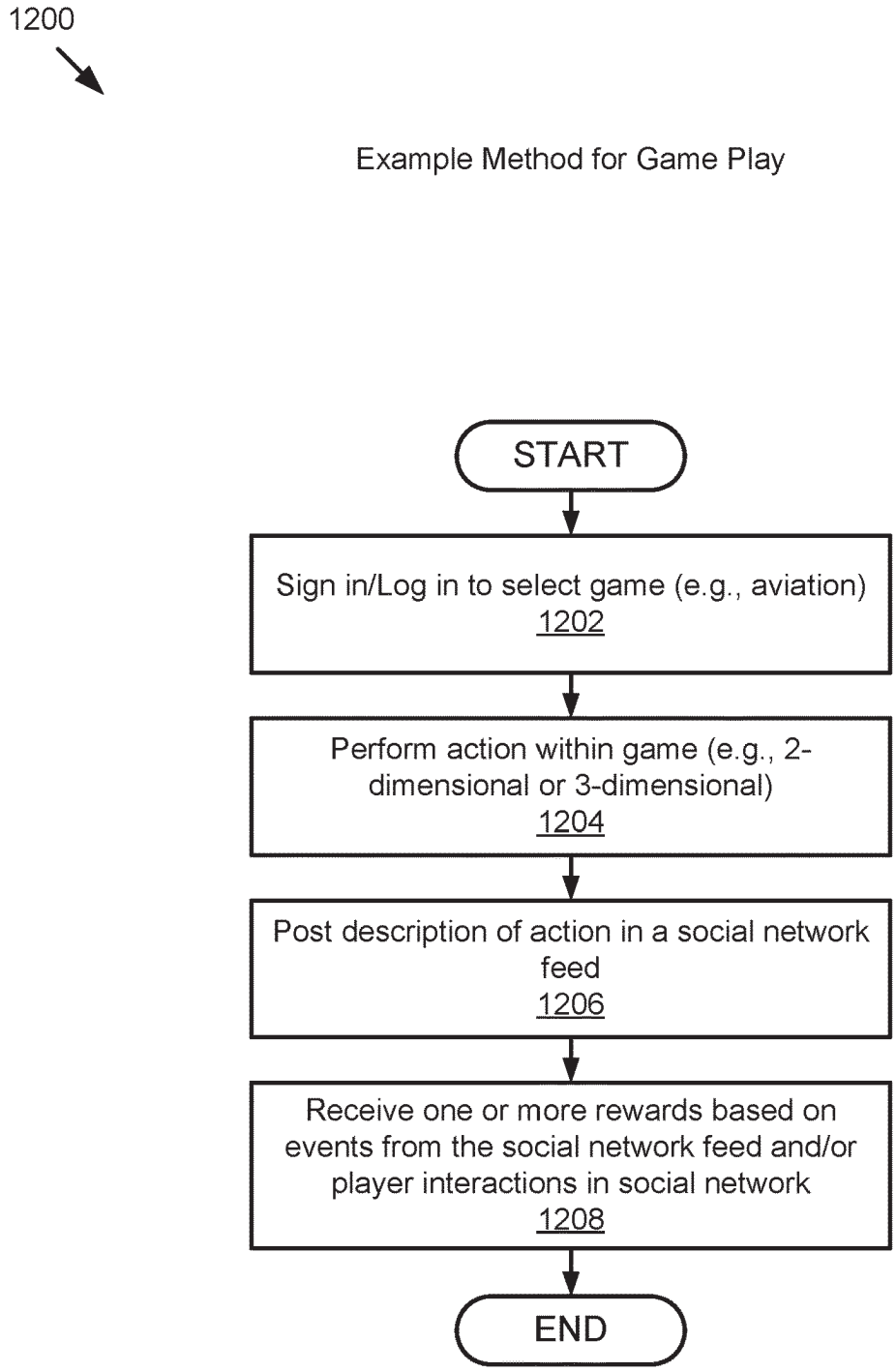
1200
Example Method for Game Play
START
Sign in/Log in to select game (e.g., aviation)
1202
Perform action within game (e.g., 2-dimensional or 3-dimensional)
1204
Post description of action in a social network feed
1206
Receive one or more rewards based on events from the social network feed and/or player interactions in social network
1208
END

Figure 12

Figure 13

1300

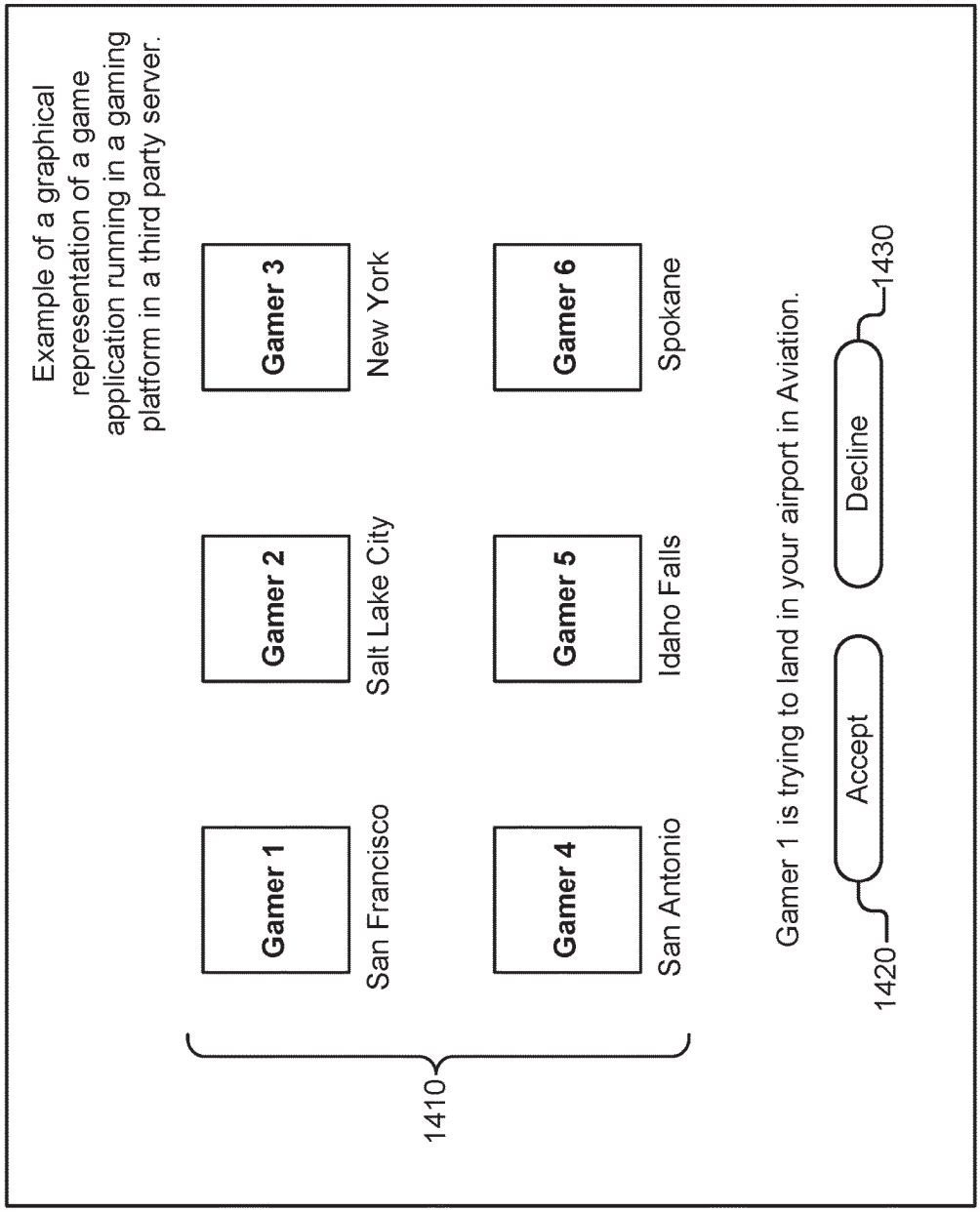

Figure 14

1400

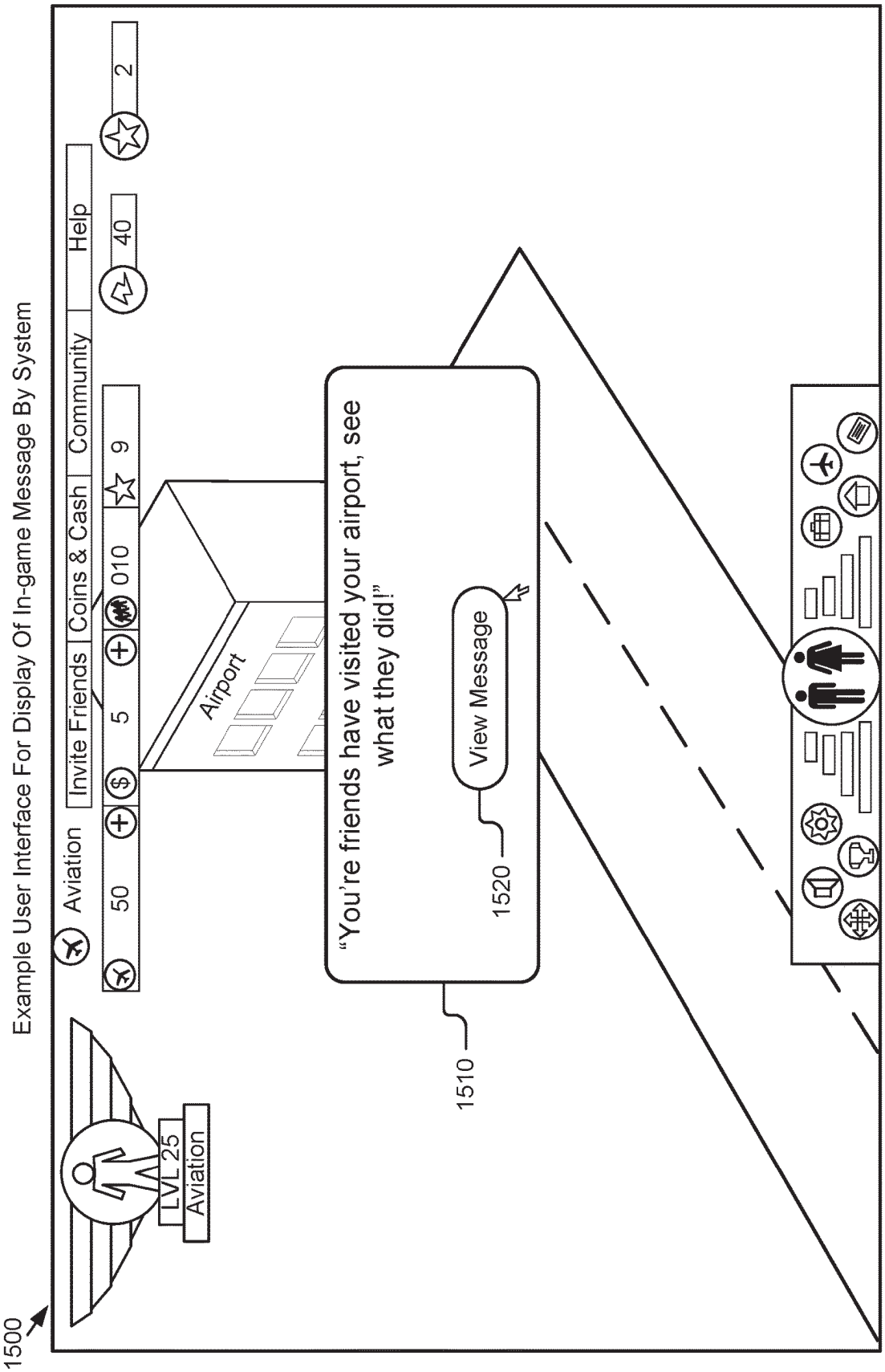
Example User Interface For Display Of In-game Message By System
1500
LVL 25
Aviation
Aviation
50
Invite Friends
5
Coins & Cash
010
9
Community
40
Help
2
Airport
"You're friends have visited your airport, see what they did!"
View Message
1510
1520

Figure 15

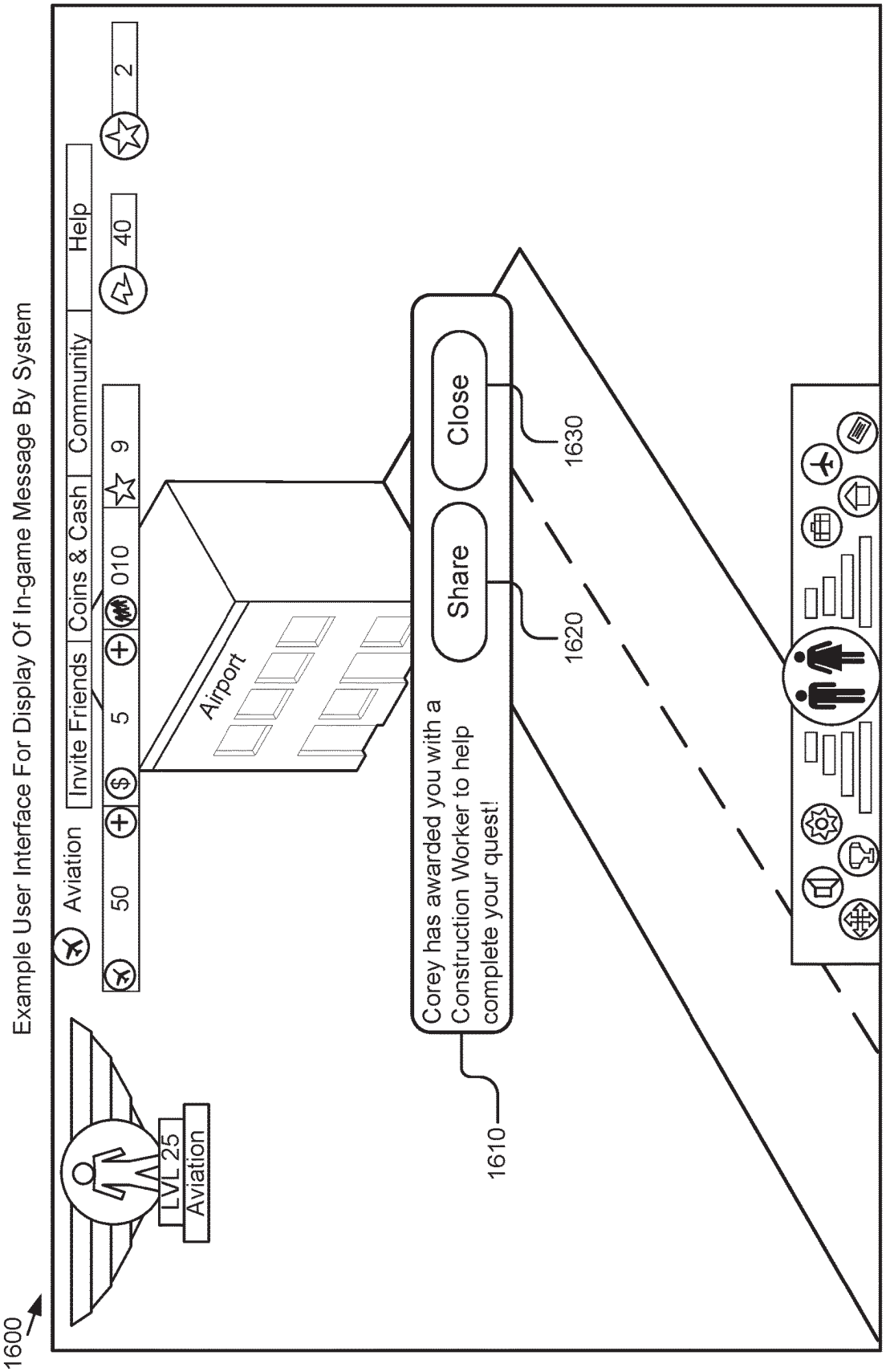
1600
Example User Interface For Display Of In-game Message By System
LVL 25
Aviation
Aviation
Invite Friends
Coins & Cash
Community
Help
50
5
010
9
40
2
Airport
Corey has awarded you with a Construction Worker to help complete your quest!
Share
Close
1610
1620
1630

Figure 16

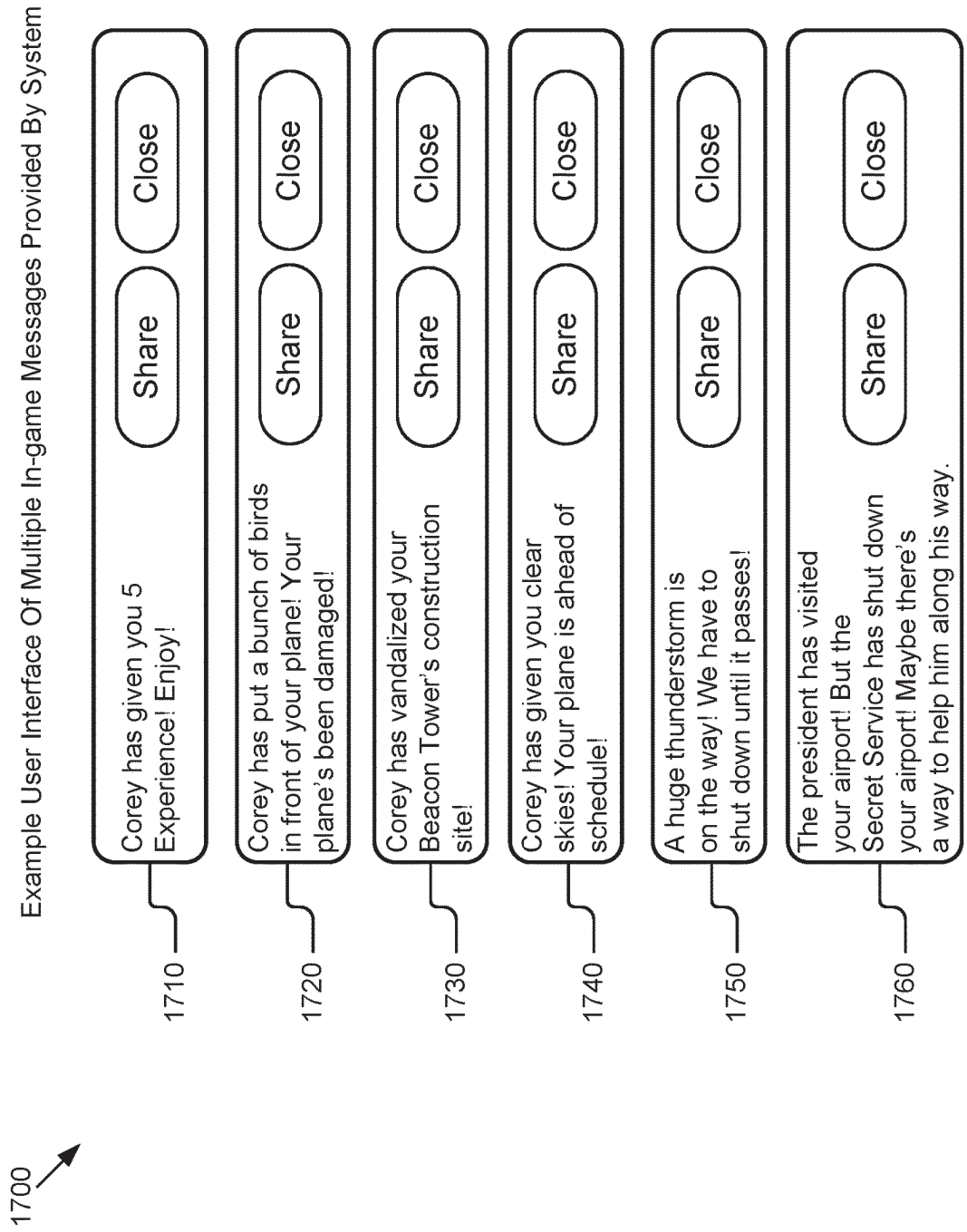
Example User Interface Of Multiple In-game Messages Provided By System
1700
1710
Corey has given you 5 Experience! Enjoy!
Share
Close
1720
Corey has put a bunch of birds in front of your plane! Your plane's been damaged!
Share
Close
1730
Corey has vandalized your Beacon Tower's construction site!
Share
Close
1740
Corey has given you clear skies! Your plane is ahead of schedule!
Share
Close
1750
A huge thunderstorm is on the way! We have to shut down until it passes!
Share
Close
1760
The president has visited your airport! But the Secret Service has shut down your airport! Maybe there's a way to help him along his way.
Share
Close

Figure 17

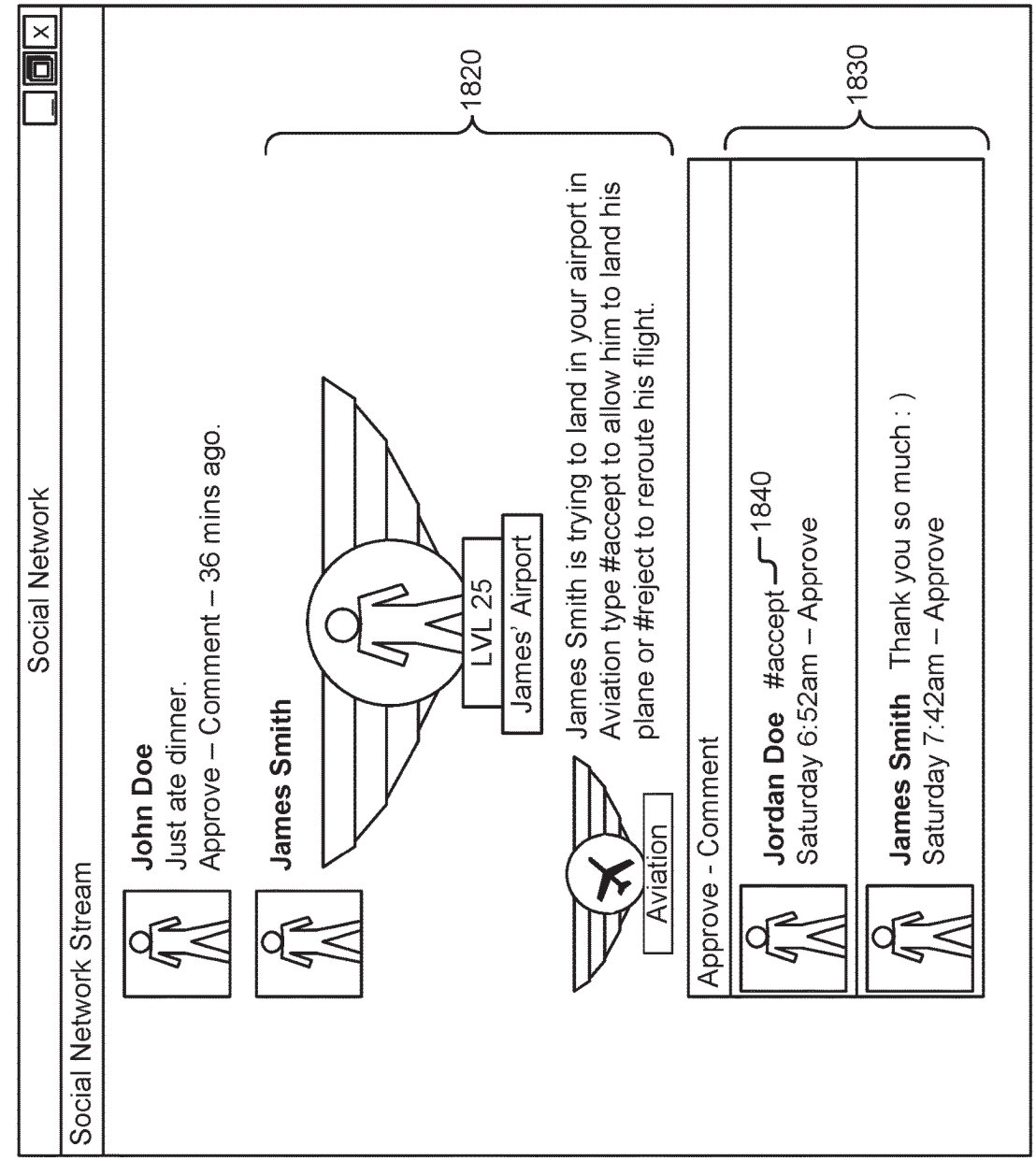

Figure 18

1800

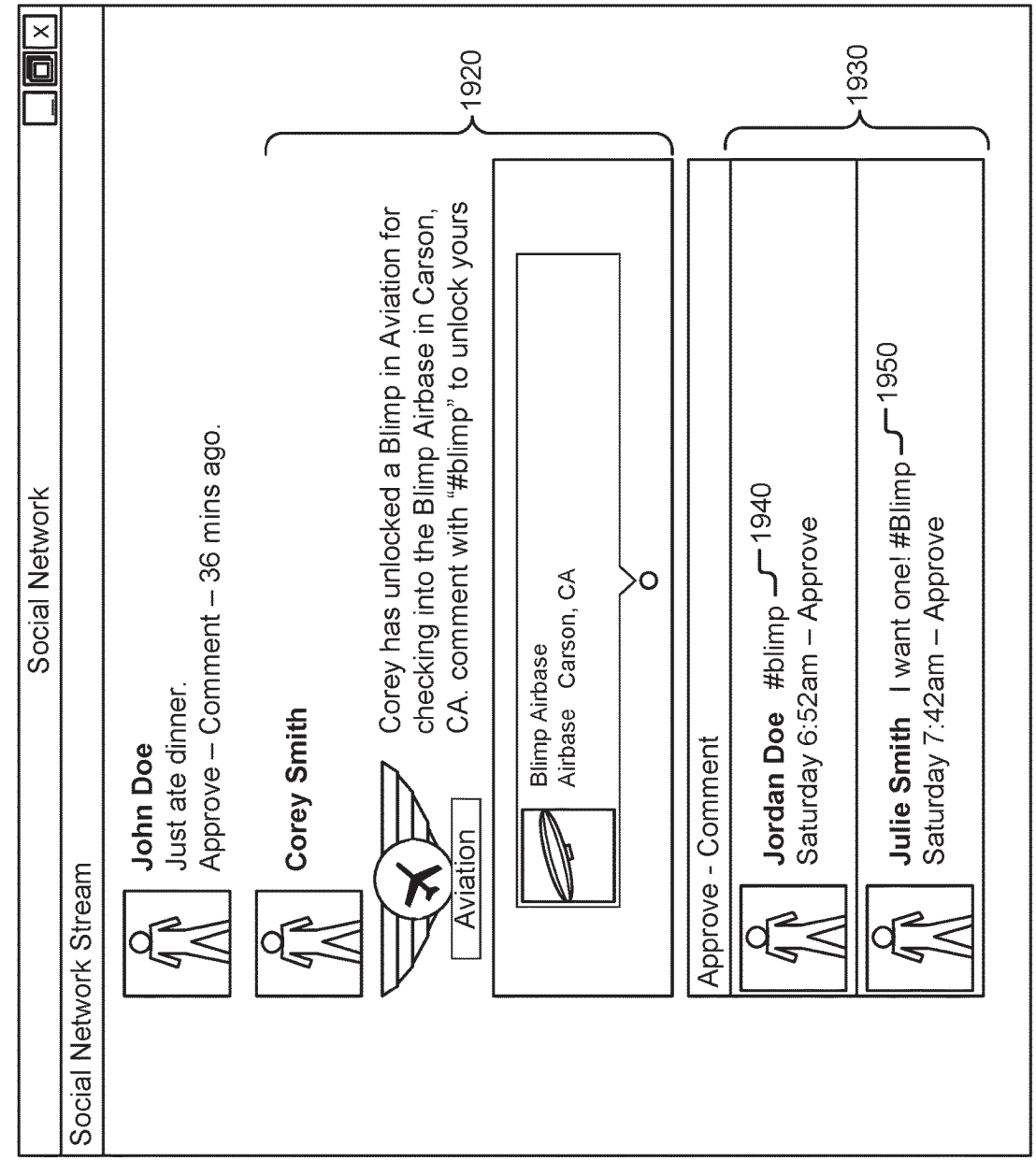

Figure 19

1900

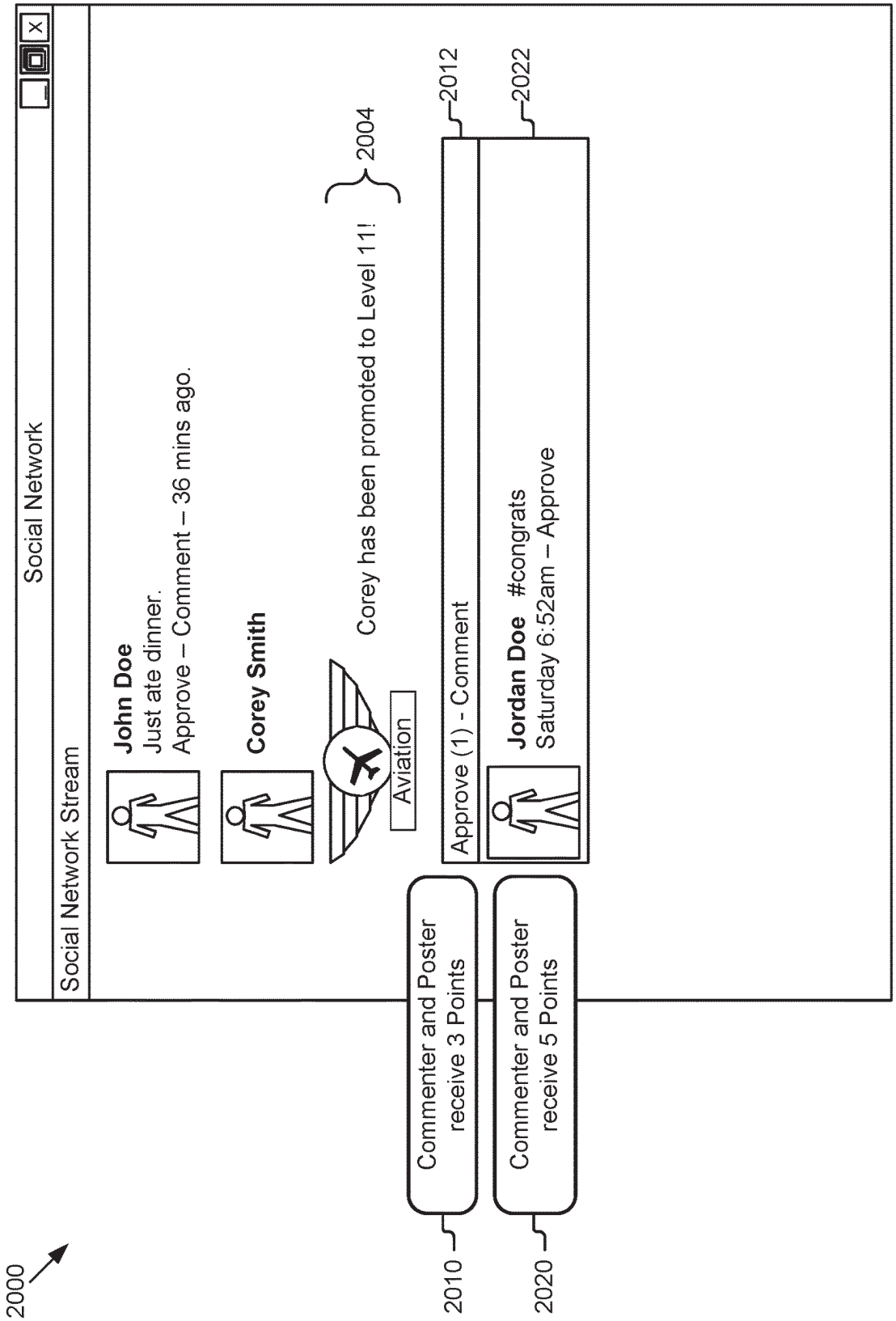
2000
Social Network
Social Network Stream
John Doe
Just ate dinner.
Approve – Comment – 36 mins ago.
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey has been promoted to Level 11!
2004
2012
2022
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #congrats
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Commenter and Poster receive 3 Points
Commenter and Poster receive 5 Points
2010
2020

Figure 20A

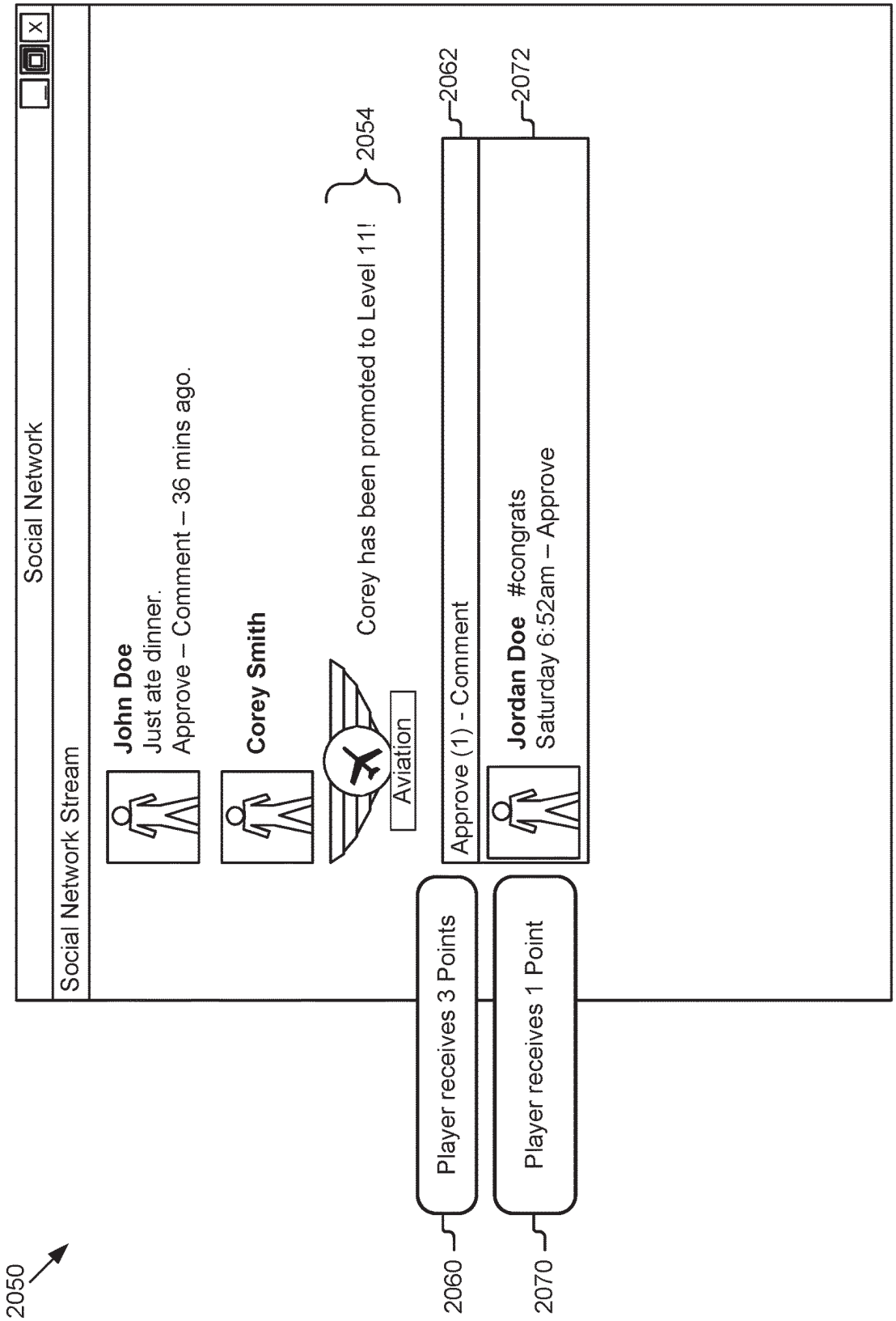
Social Network
Social Network Stream
John Doe
Just ate dinner.
Approve – Comment – 36 mins ago.
Corey Smith
Corey has been promoted to Level 11!
Aviation
2054
Approve (1) - Comment
2062
Jordan Doe #congrats
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
2072
Player receives 3 Points
Player receives 1 Point
2060
2070
2050

Figure 20B

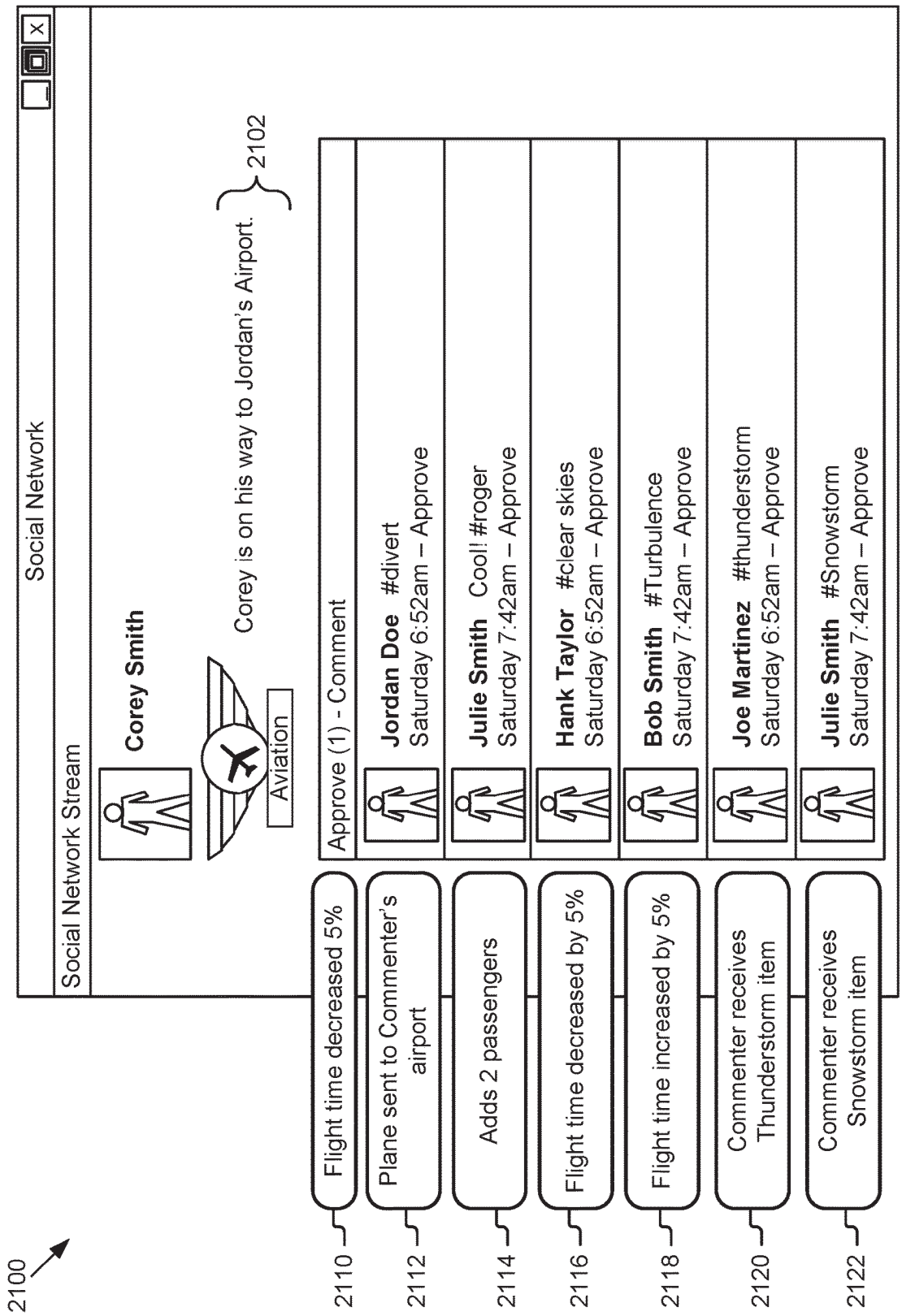
2100
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey is on his way to Jordan's Airport.
2102
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #divert
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith Cool! #roger
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Hank Taylor #clear skies
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Bob Smith #Turbulence
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Joe Martinez #thunderstorm
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith #Snowstorm
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Flight time decreased 5%
2110
Plane sent to Commenter's airport
2112
Adds 2 passengers
2114
Flight time decreased by 5%
2116
Flight time increased by 5%
2118
Commenter receives Thunderstorm item
2120
Commenter receives Snowstorm item
2122

Figure 21A

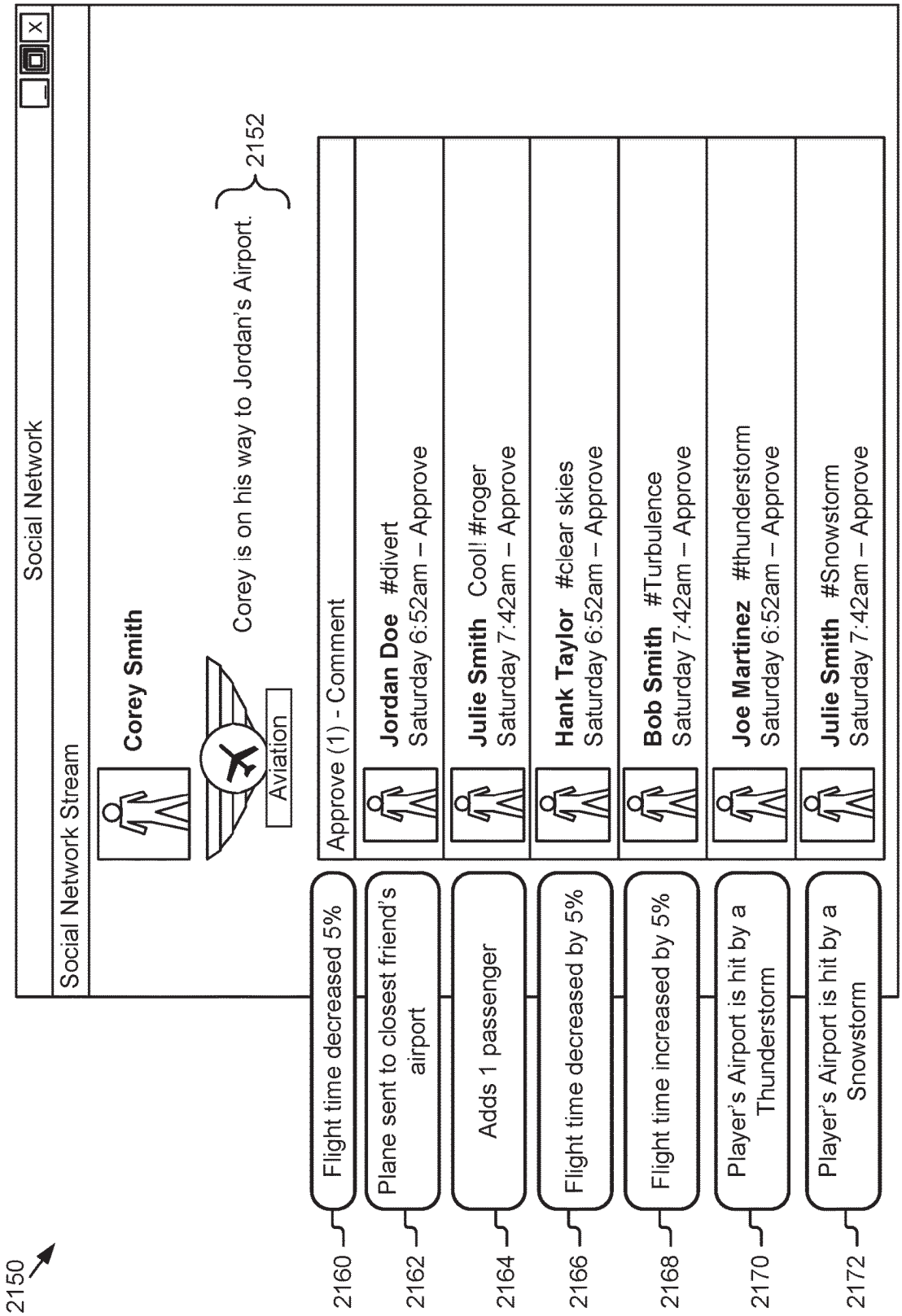
2150
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey is on his way to Jordan's Airport.
2152
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #divert
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith Cool! #roger
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Hank Taylor #clear skies
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Bob Smith #Turbulence
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Joe Martinez #thunderstorm
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith #Snowstorm
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Flight time decreased 5%
2160
Plane sent to closest friend's airport
2162
Adds 1 passenger
2164
Flight time decreased by 5%
2166
Flight time increased by 5%
2168
Player's Airport is hit by a Thunderstorm
2170
Player's Airport is hit by a Snowstorm
2172

Figure 21B

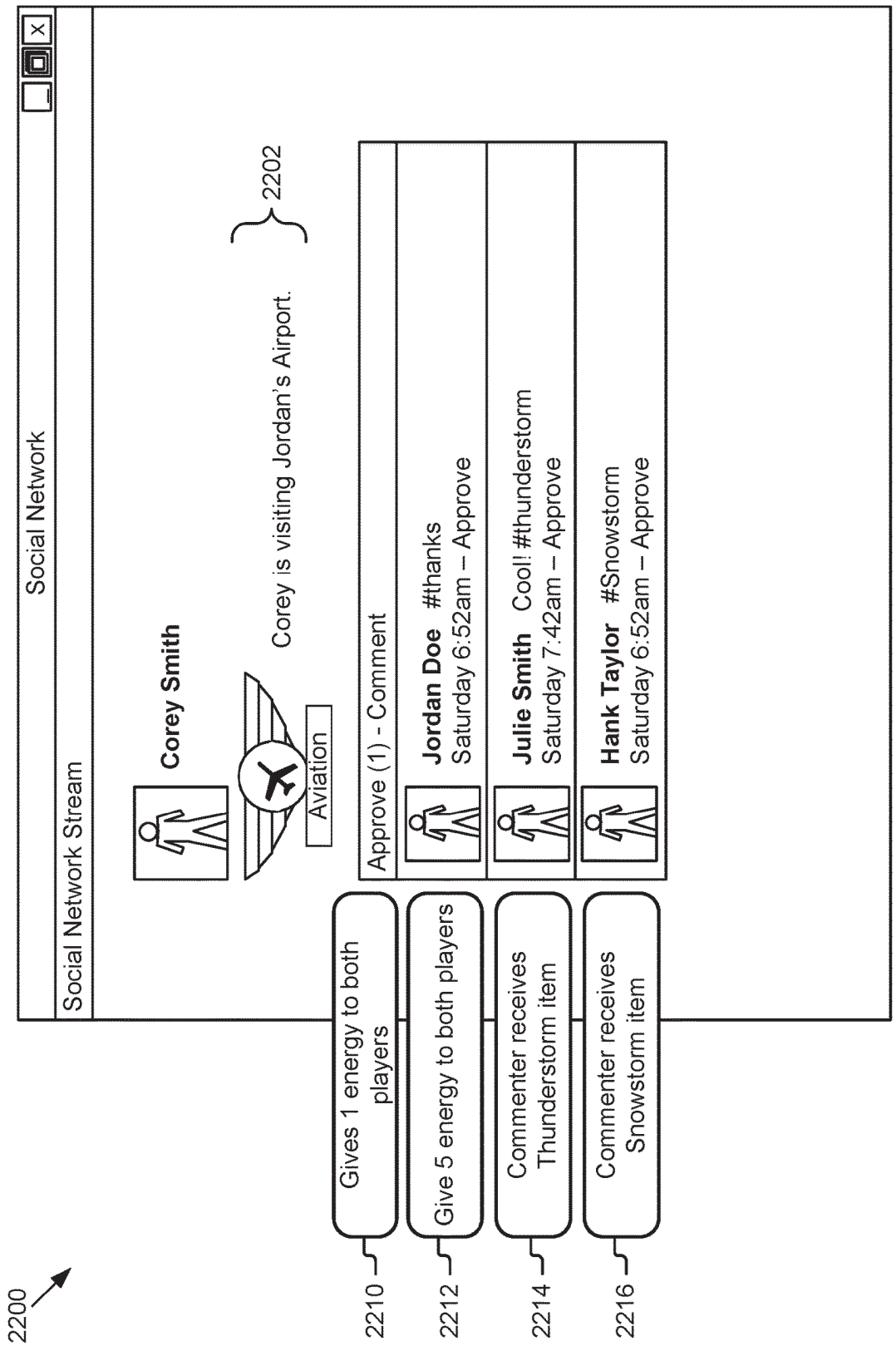
2200
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey is visiting Jordan's Airport.
2202
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #thanks
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith Cool! #thunderstorm
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Hank Taylor #Snowstorm
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Gives 1 energy to both players
Give 5 energy to both players
Commenter receives Thunderstorm item
Commenter receives Snowstorm item
2210
2212
2214
2216

Figure 22A

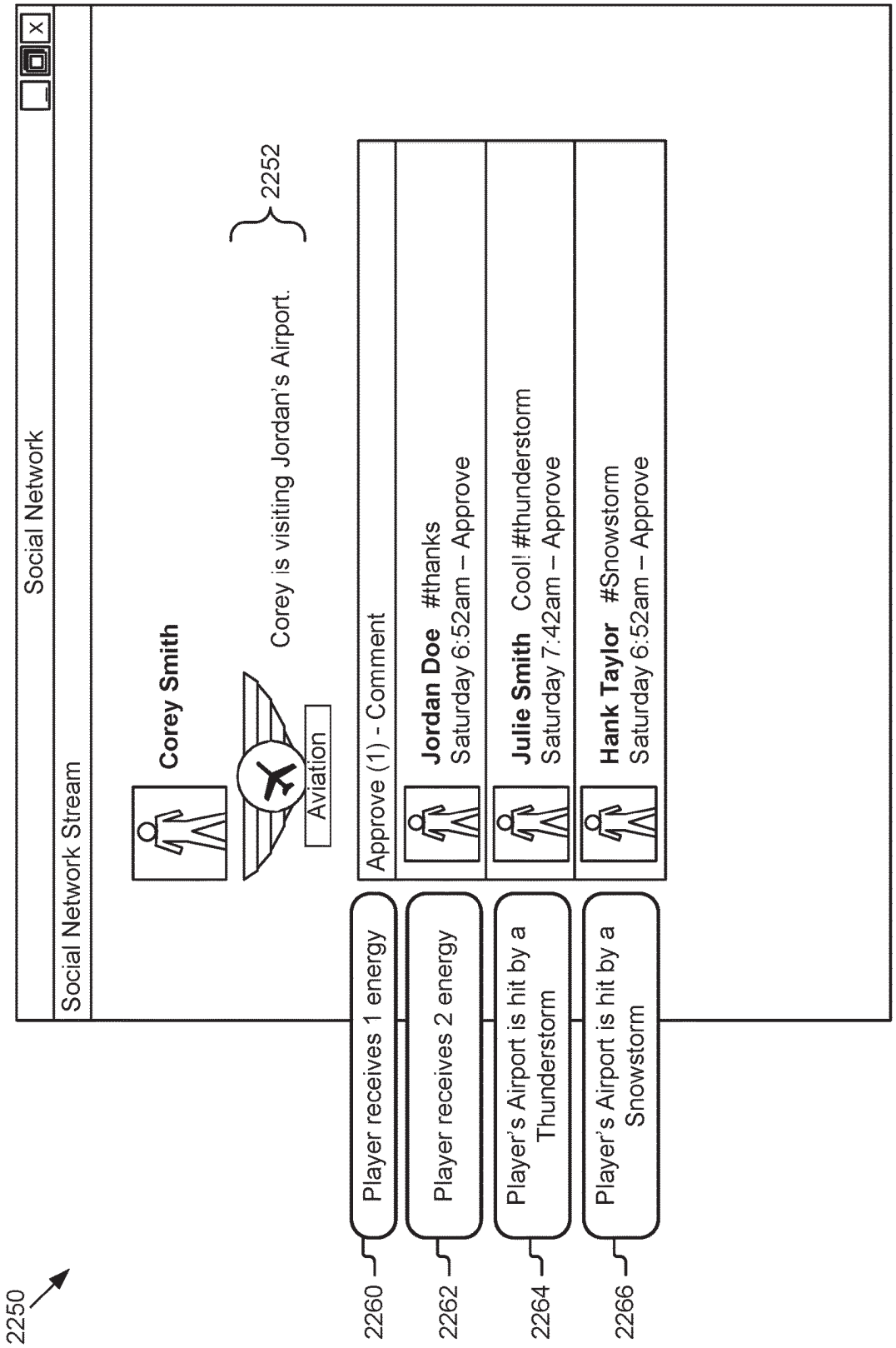
2250
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey is visiting Jordan's Airport.
2252
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #thanks
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith Cool! #thunderstorm
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Hank Taylor #Snowstorm
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Player receives 1 energy
Player receives 2 energy
Player's Airport is hit by a Thunderstorm
Player's Airport is hit by a Snowstorm
2260
2262
2264
2266

Figure 22B

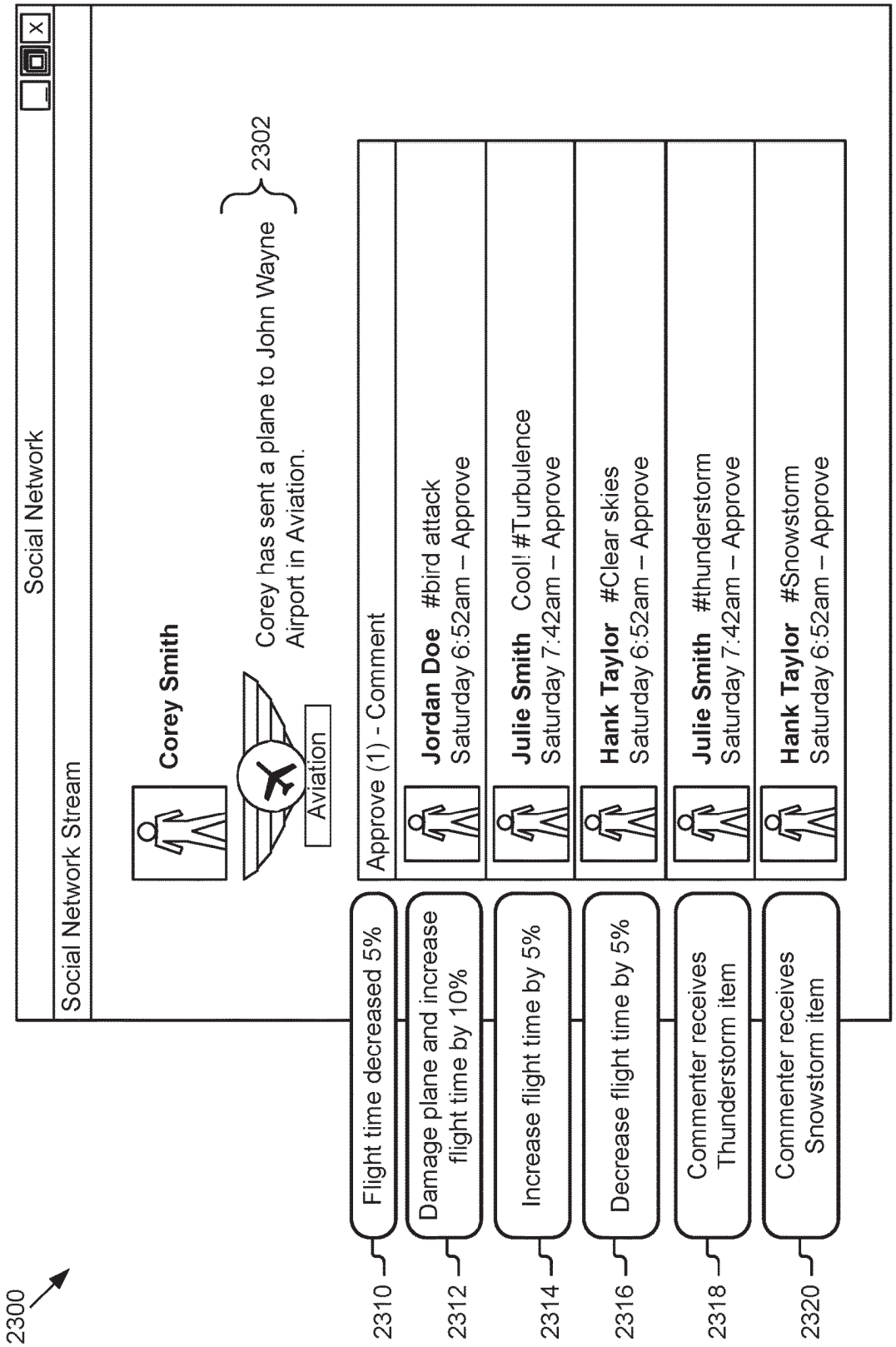
2300
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey has sent a plane to John Wayne Airport in Aviation.
2302
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #bird attack
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith Cool! #Turbulence
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Hank Taylor #Clear skies
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith #thunderstorm
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Hank Taylor #Snowstorm
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Flight time decreased 5%
Damage plane and increase flight time by 10%
Increase flight time by 5%
Decrease flight time by 5%
Commenter receives Thunderstorm item
Commenter receives Snowstorm item
2310
2312
2314
2316
2318
2320

Figure 23A

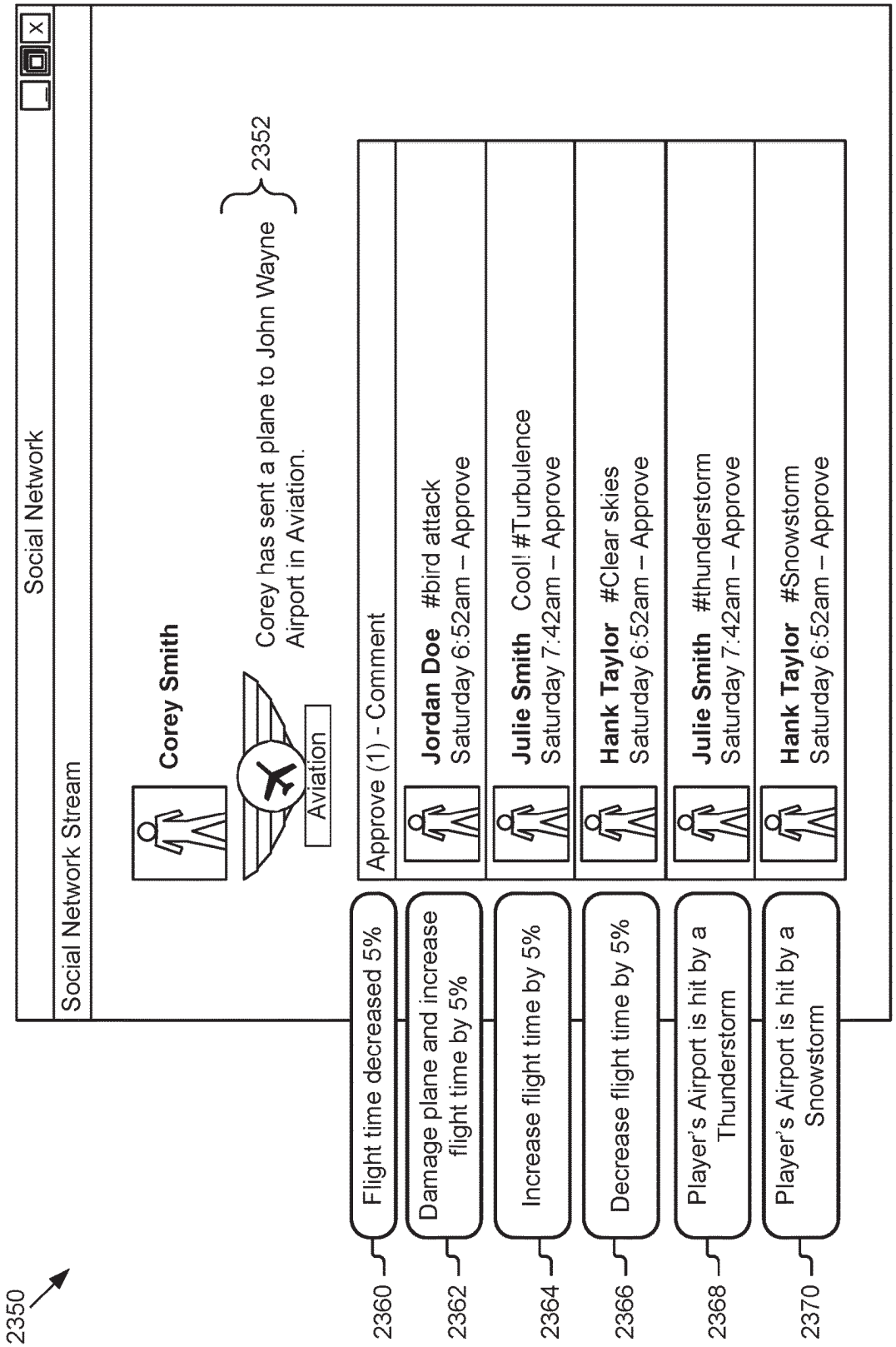
2350
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey has sent a plane to John Wayne Airport in Aviation.
2352
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #bird attack
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith Cool! #Turbulence
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Hank Taylor #Clear skies
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith #thunderstorm
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Hank Taylor #Snowstorm
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Flight time decreased 5%
Damage plane and increase flight time by 5%
Increase flight time by 5%
Decrease flight time by 5%
Player's Airport is hit by a Thunderstorm
Player's Airport is hit by a Snowstorm
2360
2362
2364
2366
2368
2370

Figure 23B

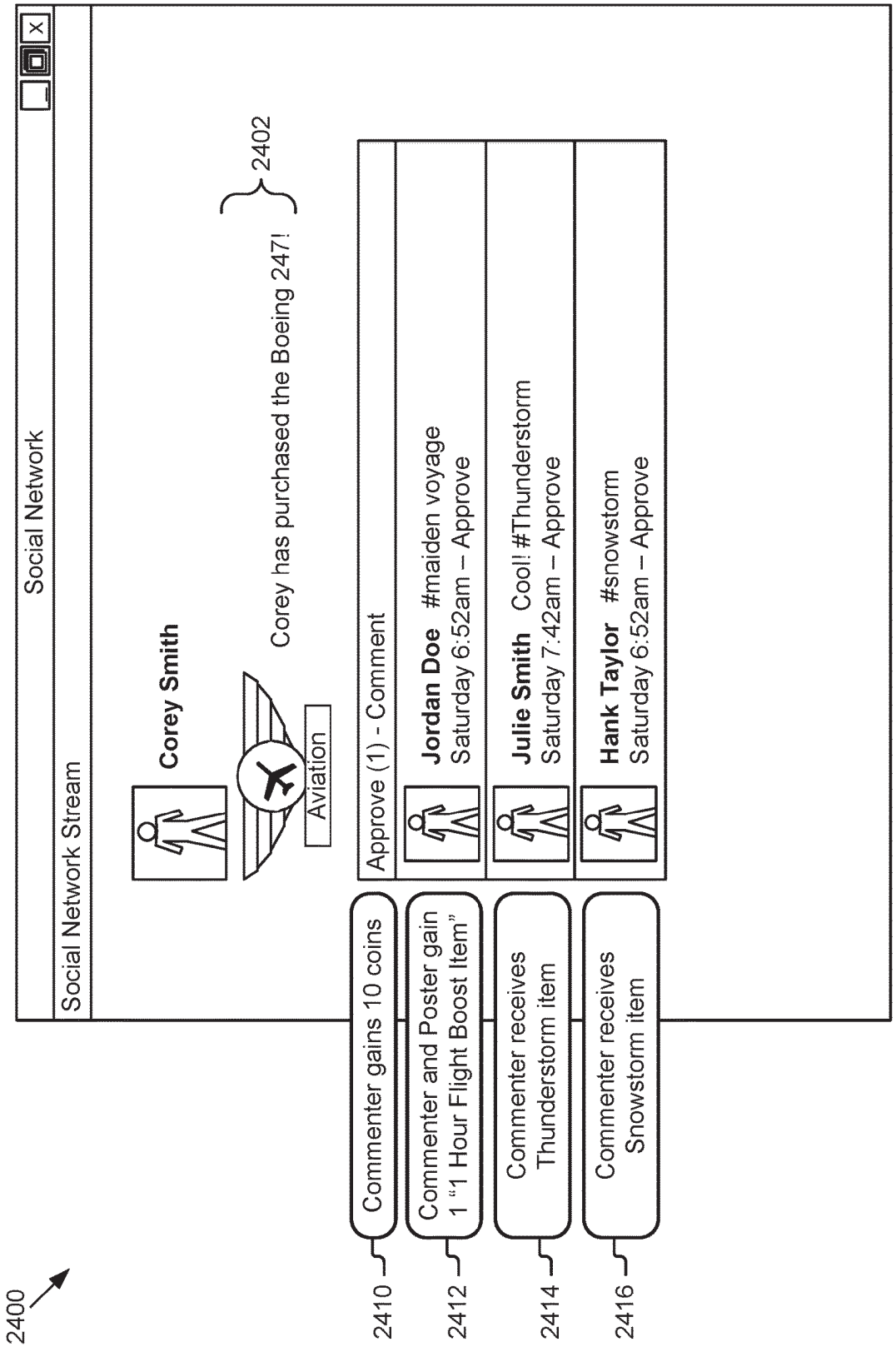
2400
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey has purchased the Boeing 247!
2402
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #maiden voyage
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith Cool! #Thunderstorm
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Hank Taylor #snowstorm
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Commenter gains 10 coins
2410
Commenter and Poster gain 1 "1 Hour Flight Boost Item"
2412
Commenter receives Thunderstorm item
2414
Commenter receives Snowstorm item
2416

Figure 24A

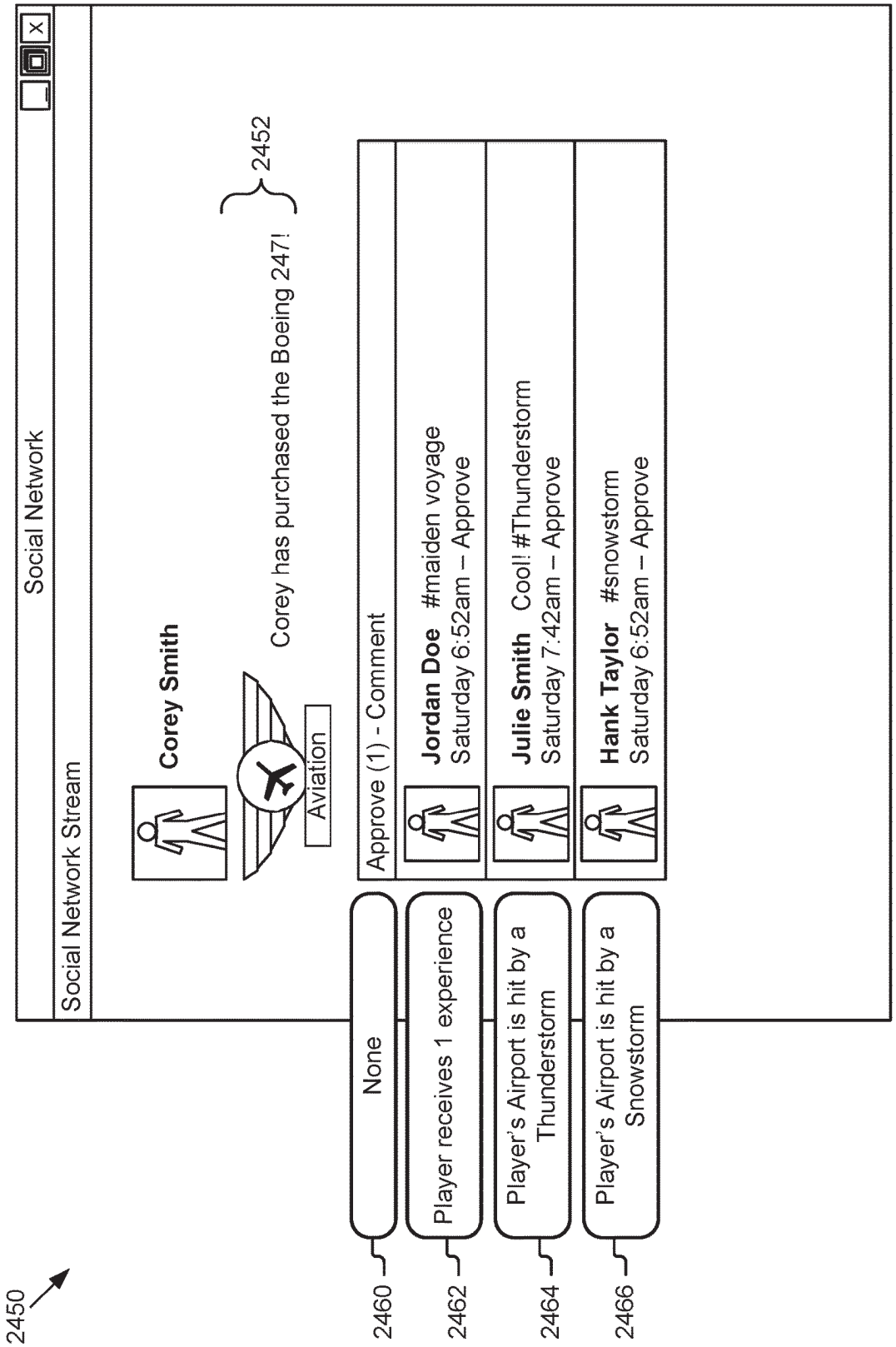
2450
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey has purchased the Boeing 247!
2452
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #maiden voyage
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith Cool! #Thunderstorm
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Hank Taylor #snowstorm
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
None
2460
Player receives 1 experience
2462
Player's Airport is hit by a Thunderstorm
2464
Player's Airport is hit by a Snowstorm
2466

Figure 24B

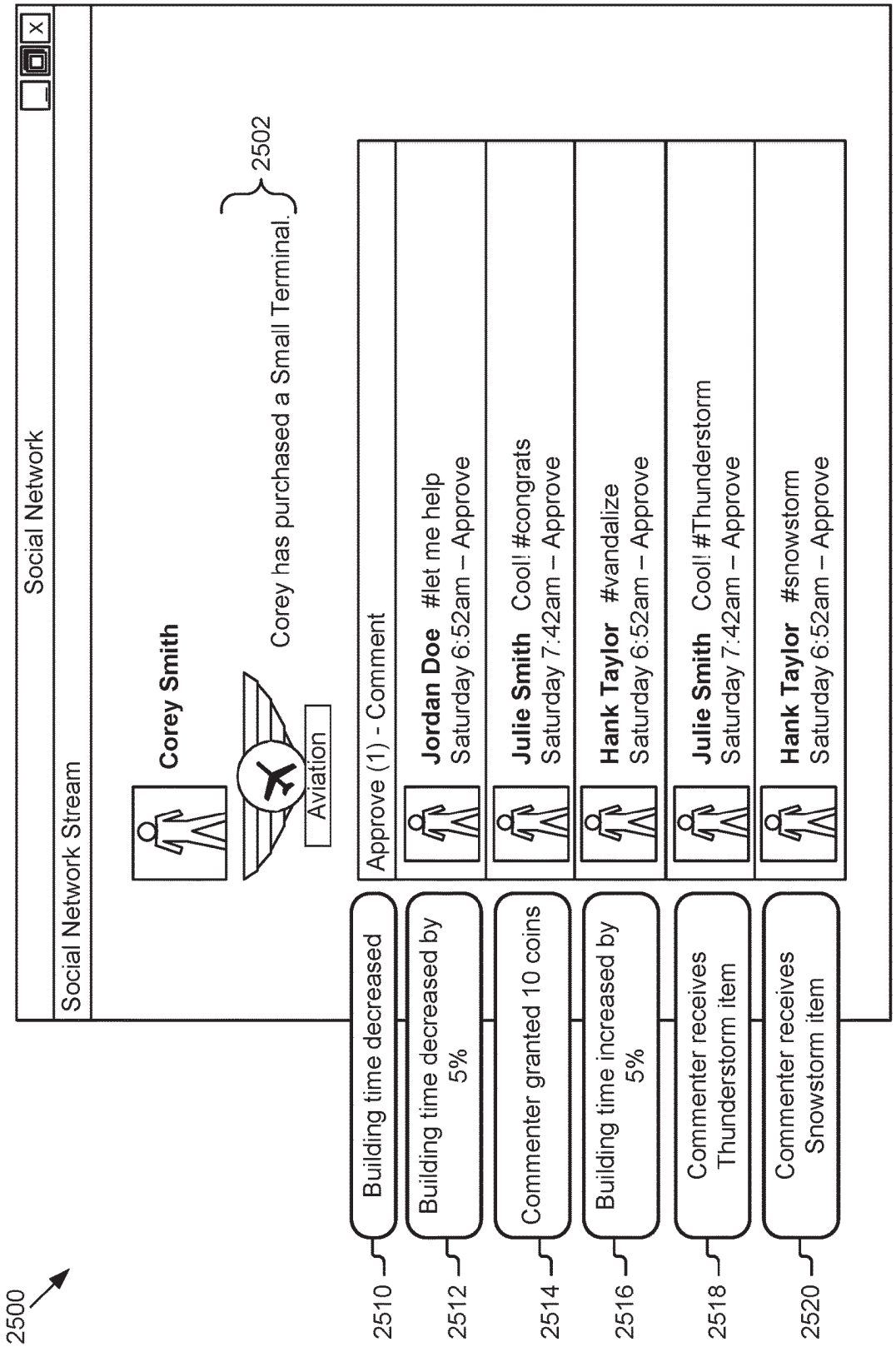
2500
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey has purchased a Small Terminal.
2502
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #let me help
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith Cool! #congrats
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Hank Taylor #vandalize
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith Cool! #Thunderstorm
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Hank Taylor #snowstorm
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Building time decreased
2510
Building time decreased by 5%
2512
Commenter granted 10 coins
2514
Building time increased by 5%
2516
Commenter receives Thunderstorm item
2518
Commenter receives Snowstorm item
2520

Figure 25A

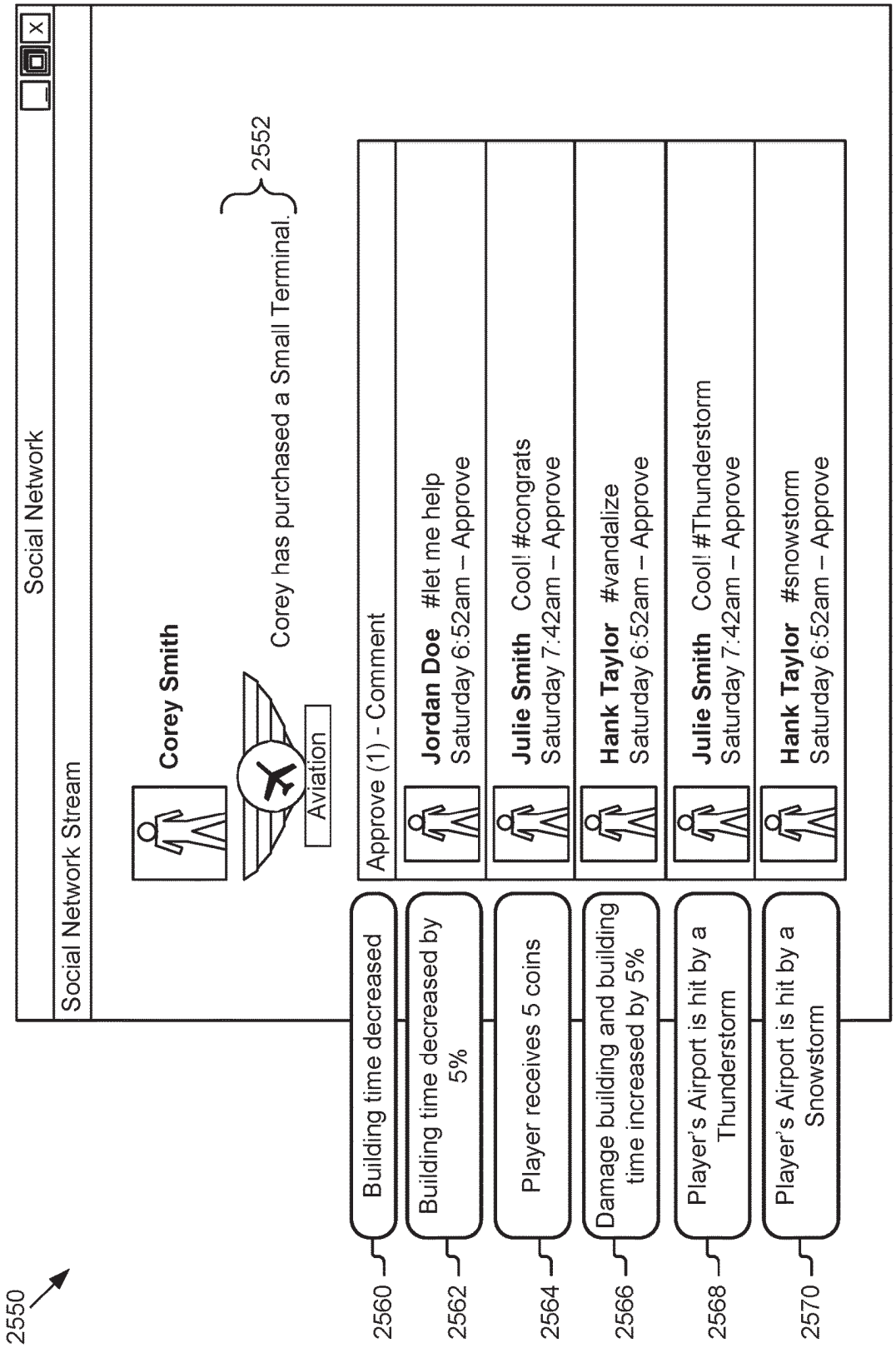
2550
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey has purchased a Small Terminal.
2552
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #let me help
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith Cool! #congrats
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Hank Taylor #vandalize
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Julie Smith Cool! #Thunderstorm
Saturday 7:42am – Approve
Hank Taylor #snowstorm
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Building time decreased
2560
Building time decreased by 5%
2562
Player receives 5 coins
2564
Damage building and building time increased by 5%
2566
Player's Airport is hit by a Thunderstorm
2568
Player's Airport is hit by a Snowstorm
2570

Figure 25B

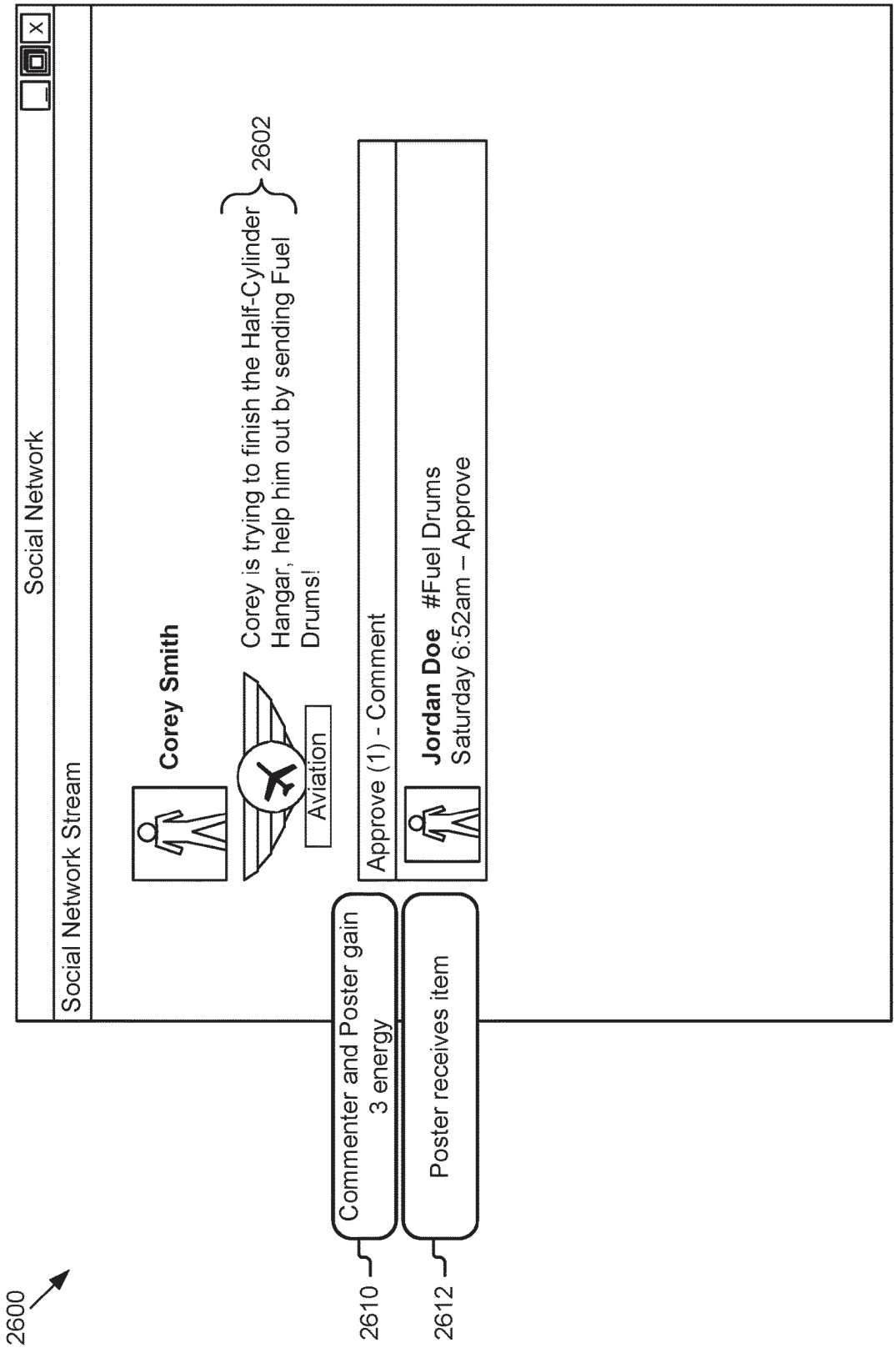
2600
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Corey is trying to finish the Half-Cylinder Hangar, help him out by sending Fuel Drums!
2602
Aviation
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #Fuel Drums
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Commenter and Poster gain 3 energy
Poster receives item
2610
2612

Figure 26A

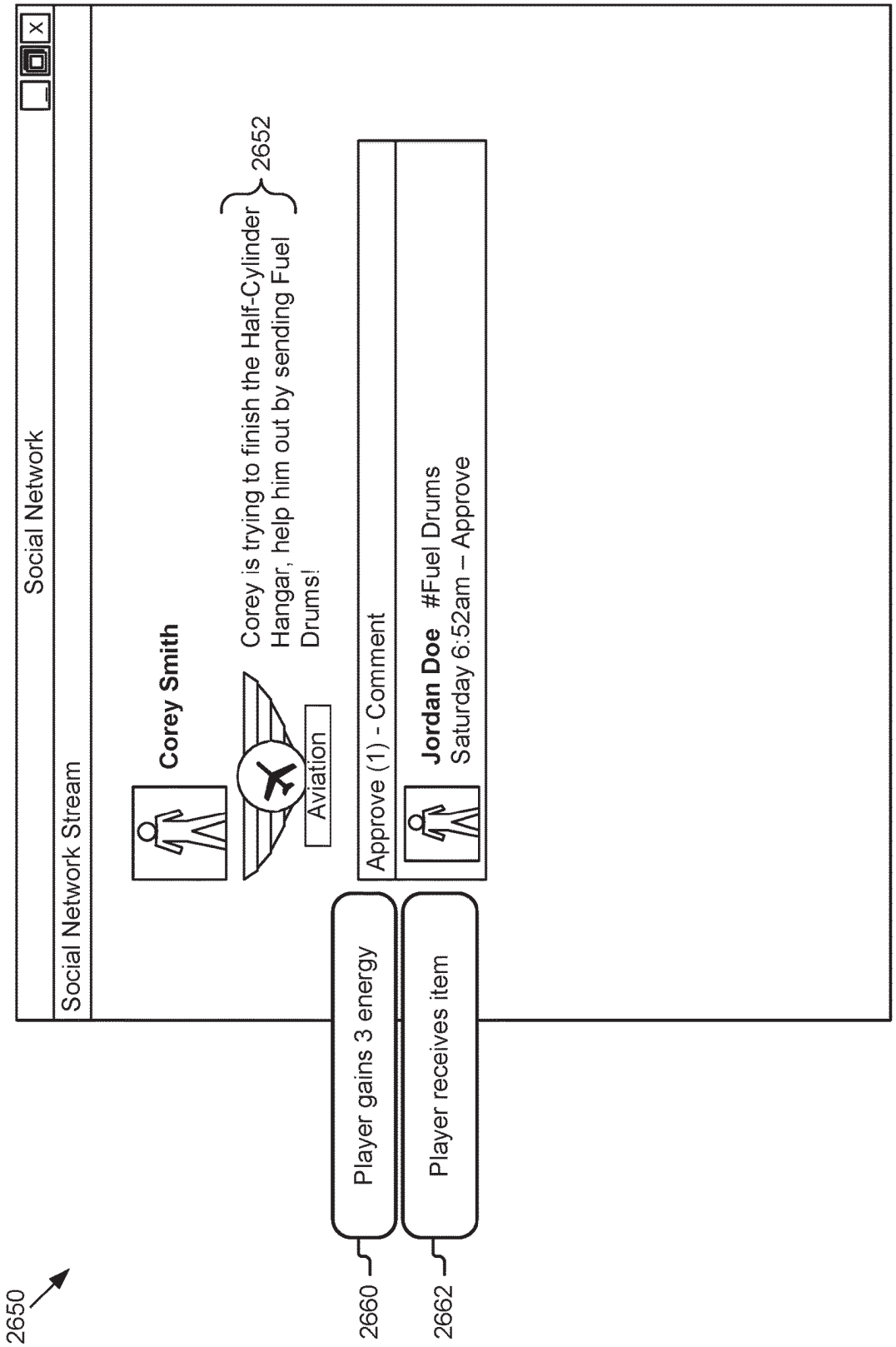
2650
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Corey is trying to finish the Half-Cylinder Hangar, help him out by sending Fuel Drums!
2652
Aviation
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #Fuel Drums
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Player gains 3 energy
Player receives item
2660
2662

Figure 26B

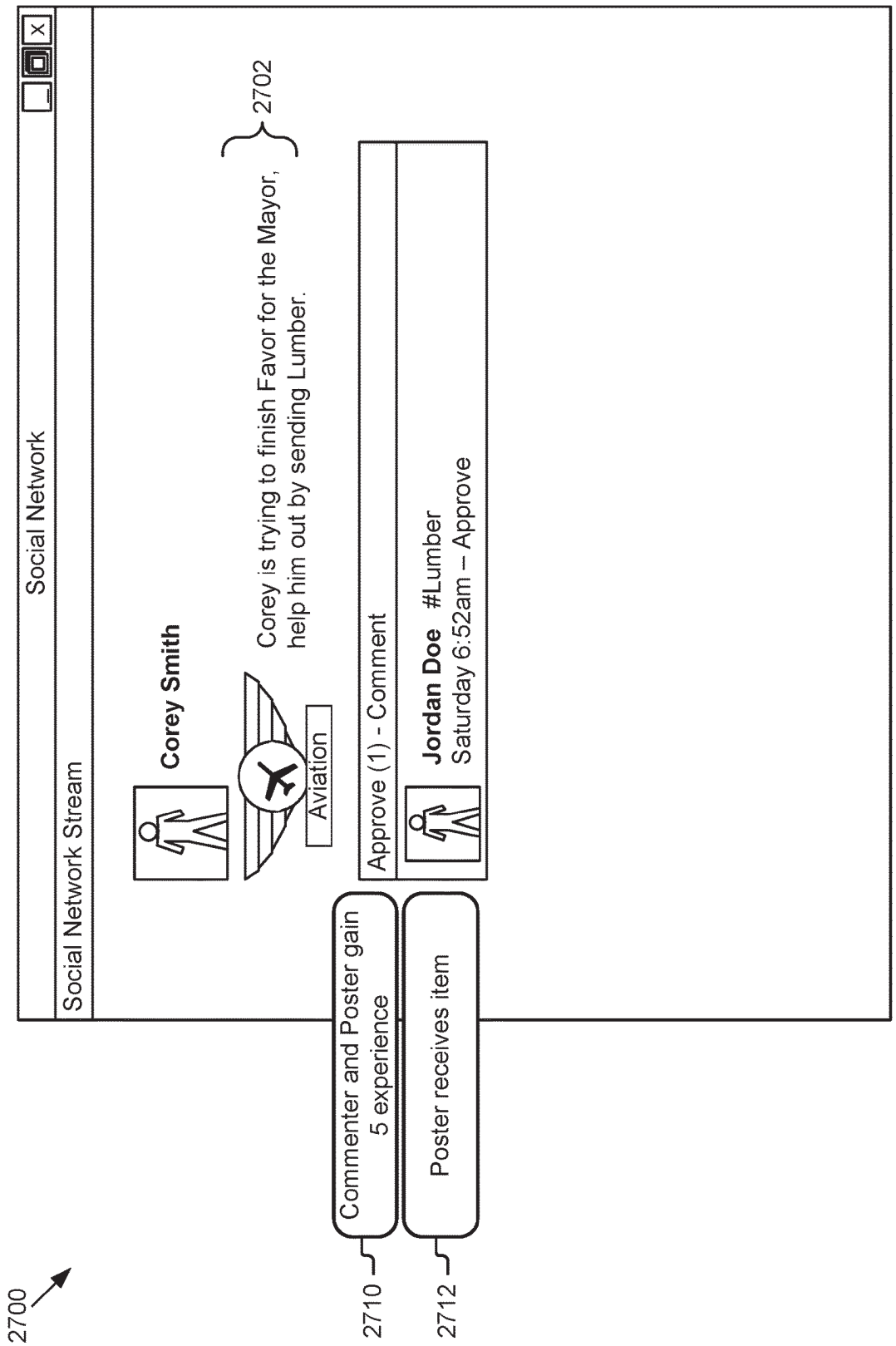
2700
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey is trying to finish Favor for the Mayor, help him out by sending Lumber.
2702
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #Lumber
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Commenter and Poster gain 5 experience
Poster receives item
2710
2712

Figure 27A

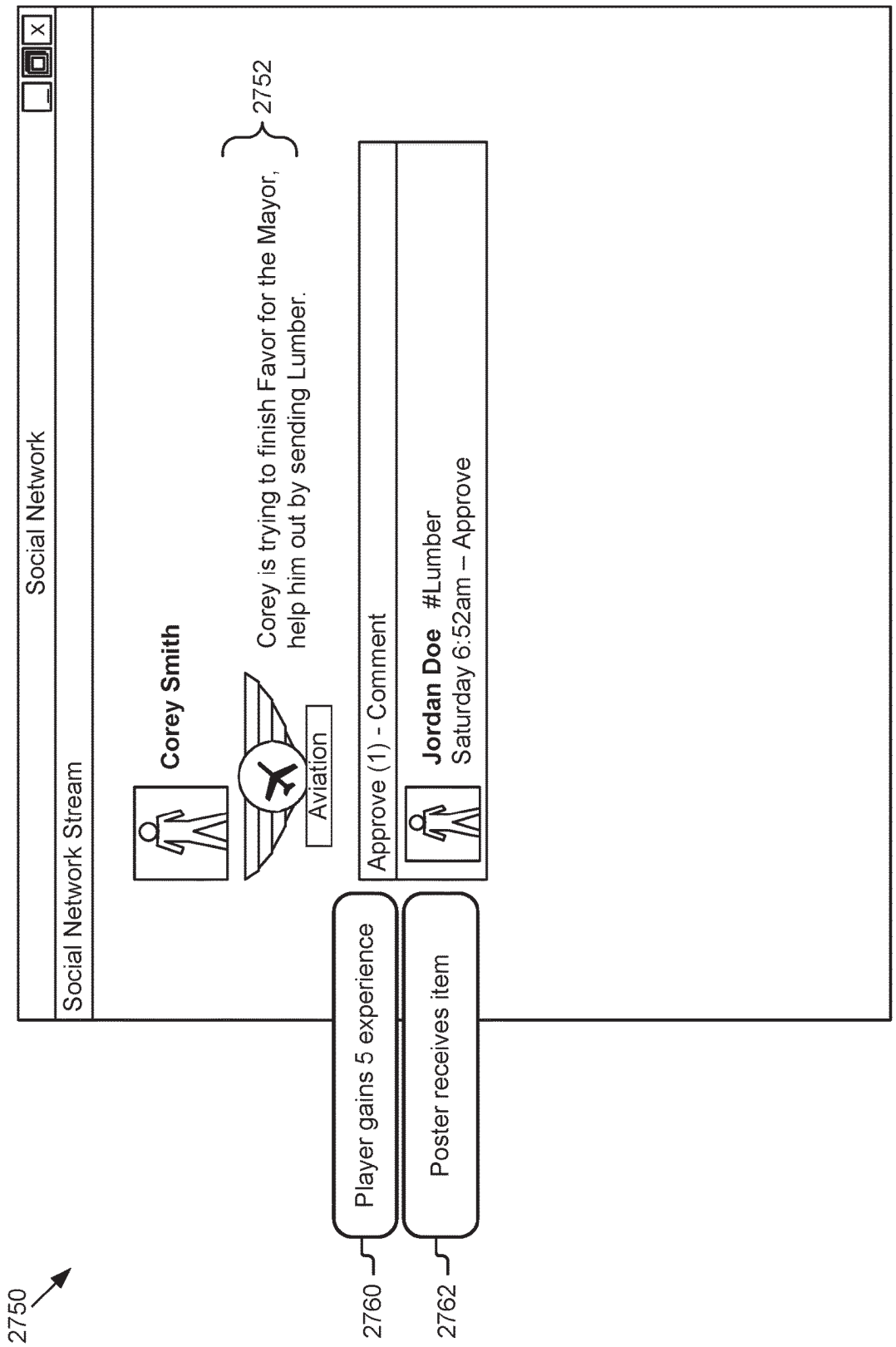
2750
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey is trying to finish Favor for the Mayor, help him out by sending Lumber.
2752
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #Lumber
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Player gains 5 experience
Poster receives item
2760
2762

Figure 27B

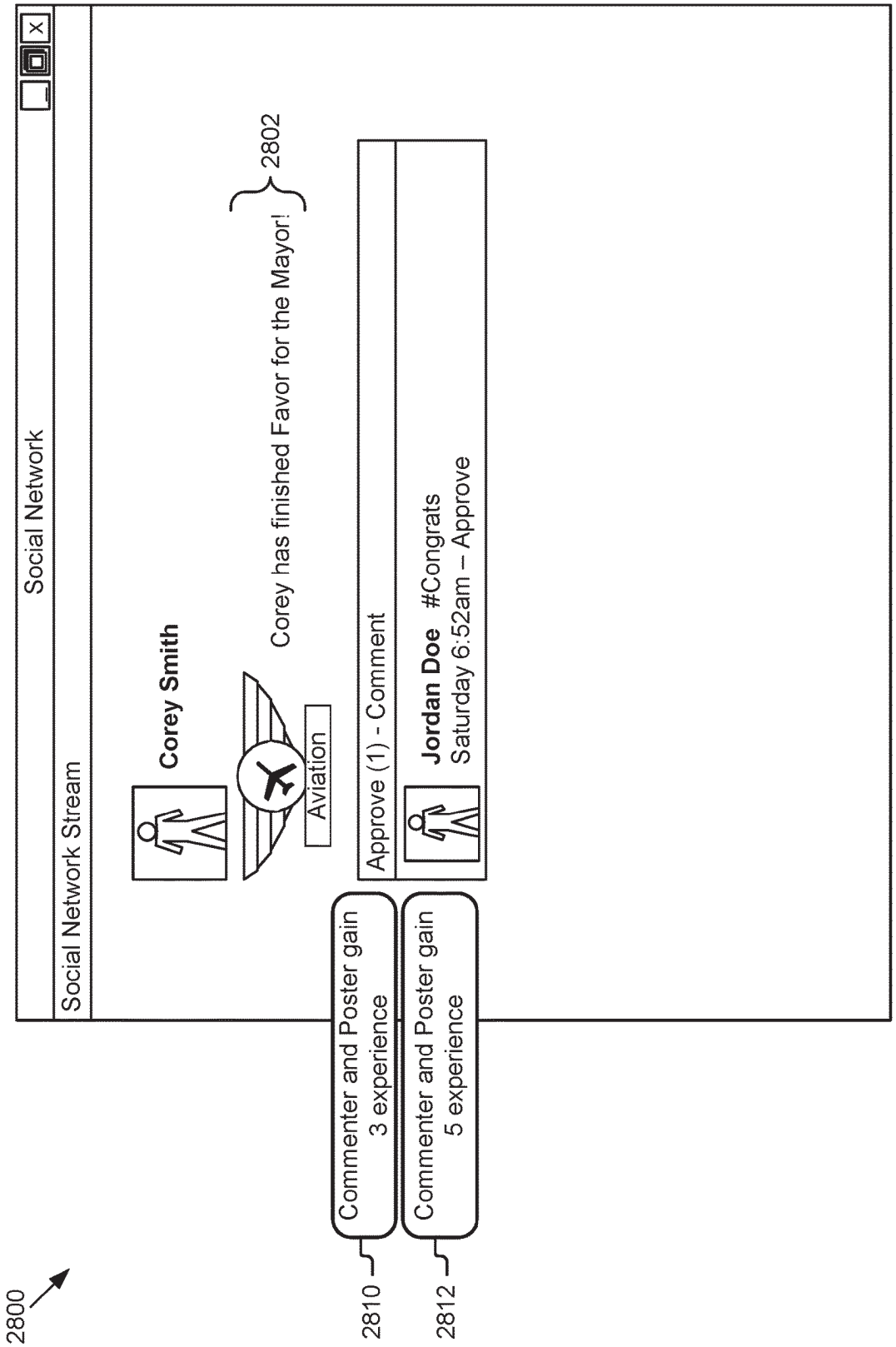
2800
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey has finished Favor for the Mayor!
2802
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #Congrats
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Commenter and Poster gain
3 experience
2810
Commenter and Poster gain
5 experience
2812

Figure 28A

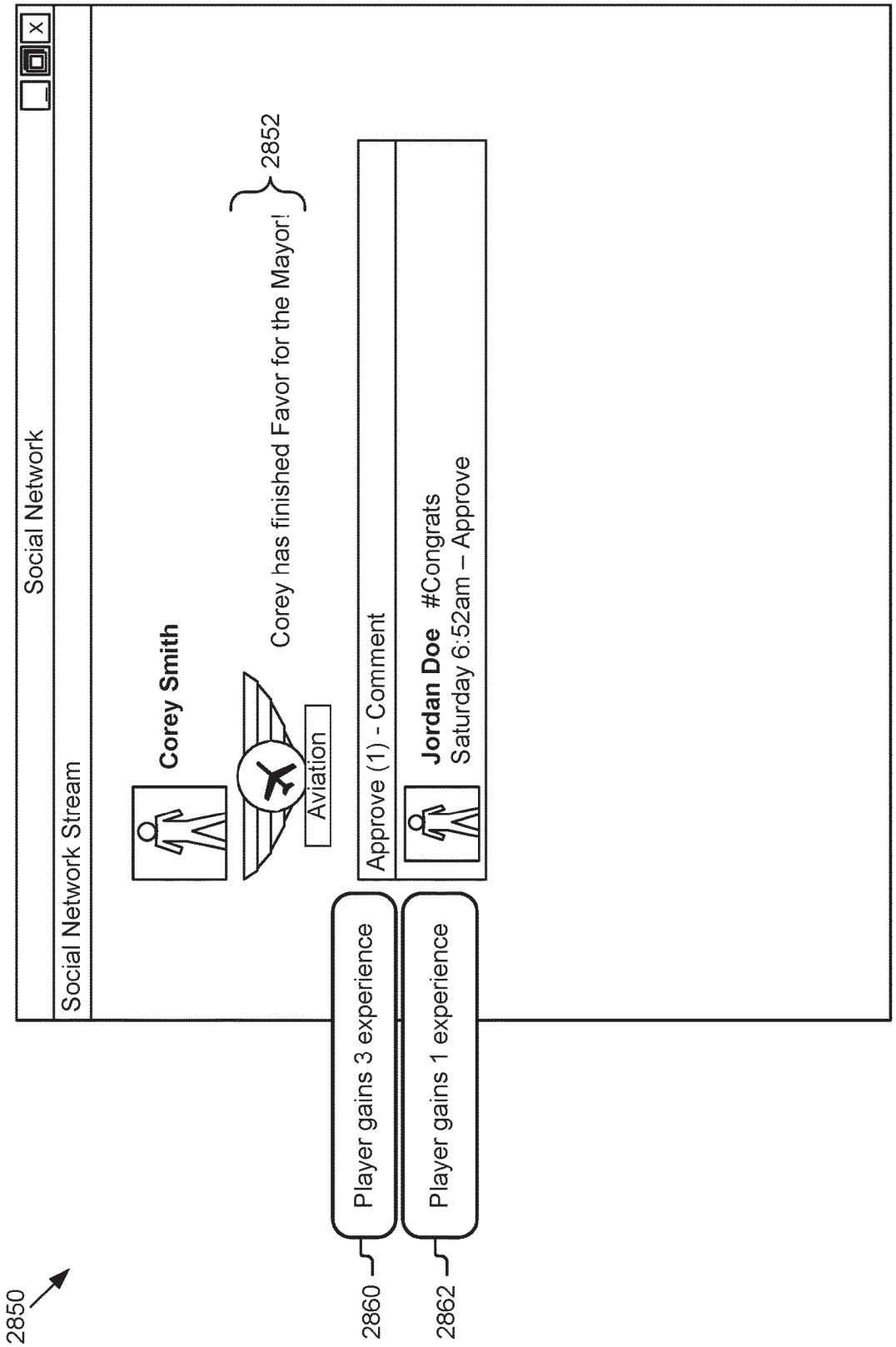
2850
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey has finished Favor for the Mayor!
2852
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #Congrats
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Player gains 3 experience
Player gains 1 experience
2860
2862

Figure 28B

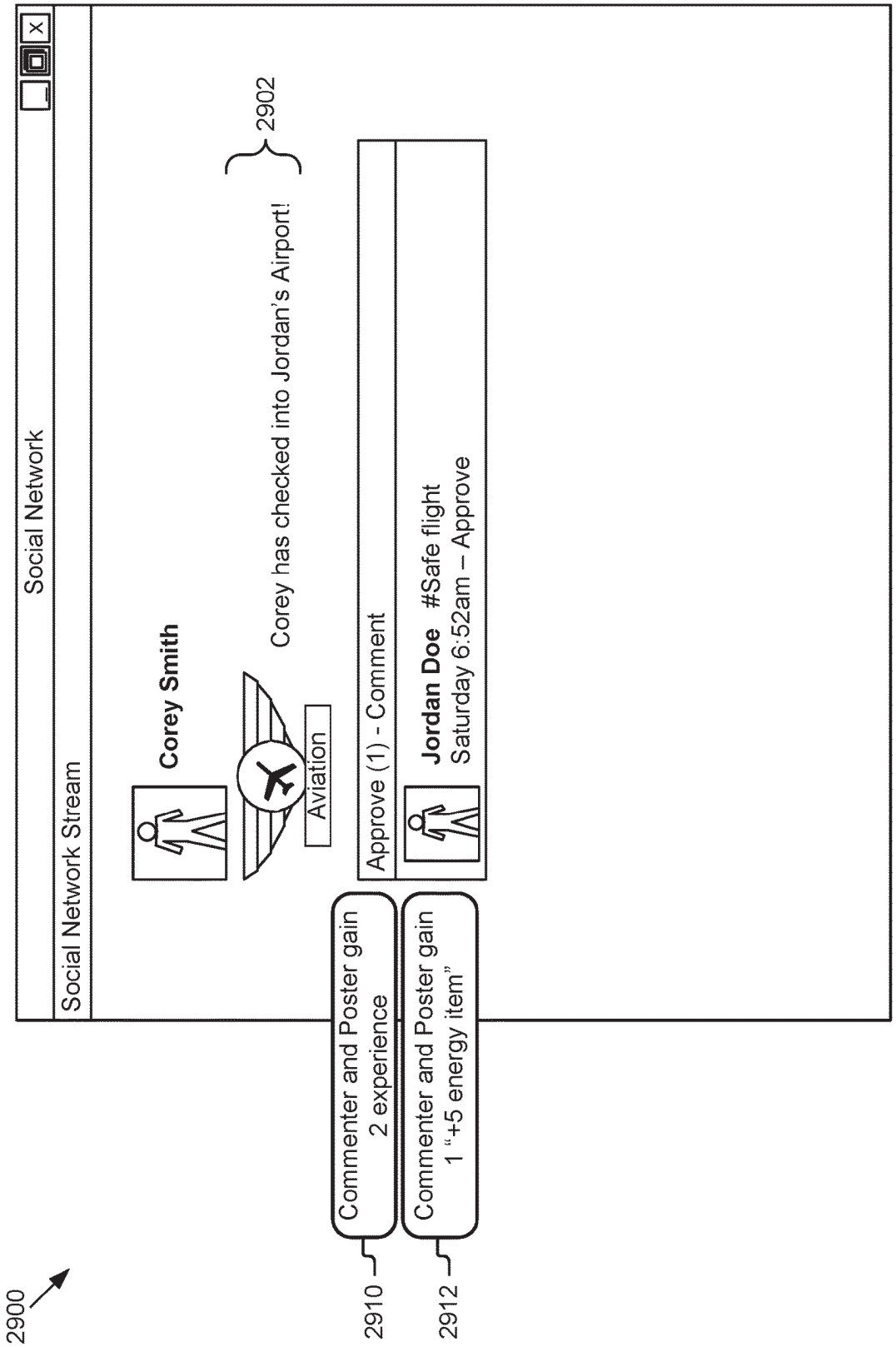
2900
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey has checked into Jordan's Airport!
2902
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #Safe flight
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Commenter and Poster gain
2 experience
2910
Commenter and Poster gain
1 "+5 energy item"
2912

Figure 29A

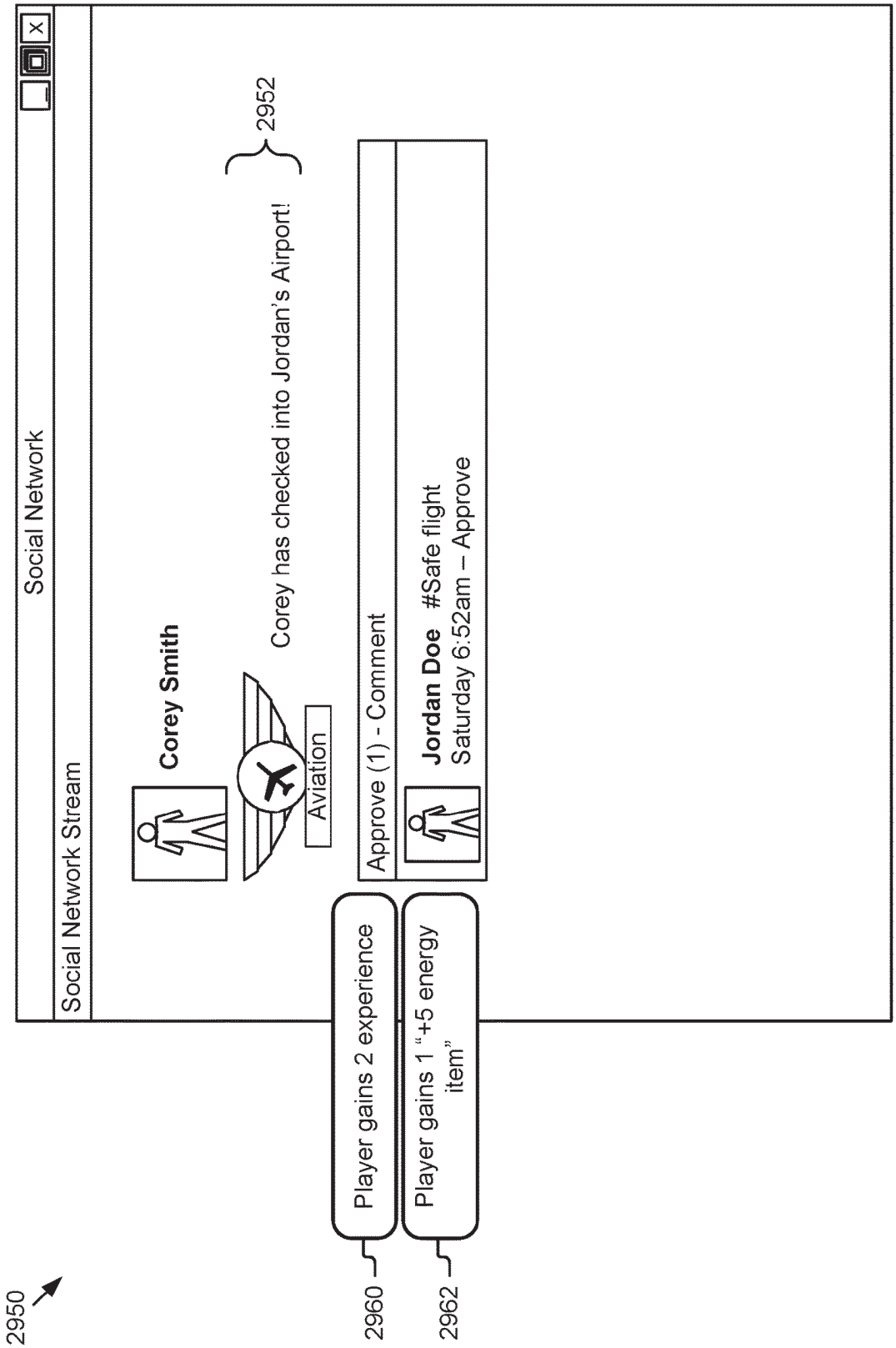
2950
Social Network
Social Network Stream
Corey Smith
Aviation
Corey has checked into Jordan's Airport!
2952
Approve (1) - Comment
Jordan Doe #Safe flight
Saturday 6:52am – Approve
Player gains 2 experience
2960
Player gains 1 "+5 energy item"
2962

Figure 29B

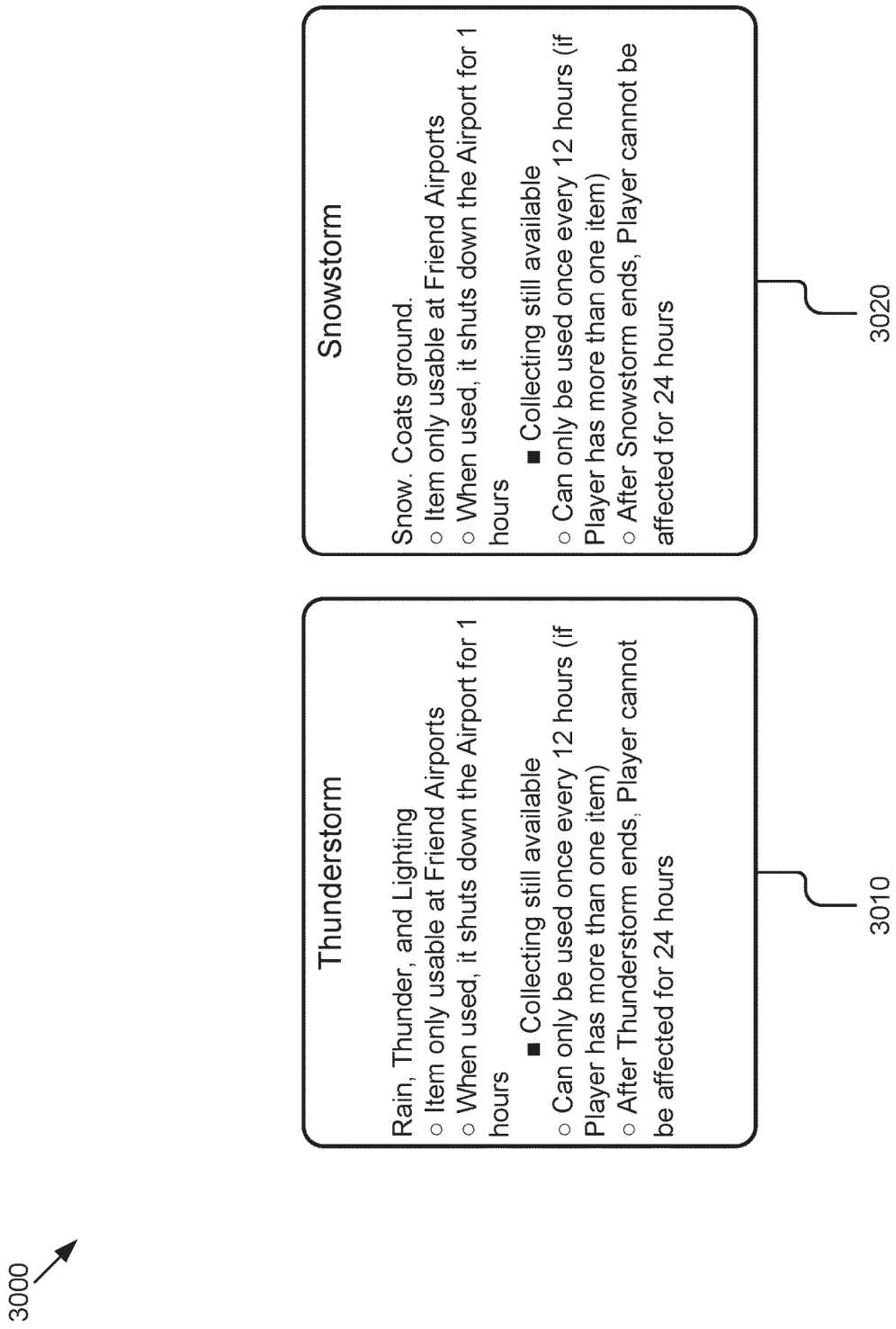
3000
Thunderstorm
Rain, Thunder, and Lighting
○ Item only usable at Friend Airports
○ When used, it shuts down the Airport for 1 hours
■ Collecting still available
○ Can only be used once every 12 hours (if Player has more than one item)
○ After Thunderstorm ends, Player cannot be affected for 24 hours
3010
Snowstorm
Snow. Coats ground.
○ Item only usable at Friend Airports
○ When used, it shuts down the Airport for 1 hours
■ Collecting still available
○ Can only be used once every 12 hours (if Player has more than one item)
○ After Snowstorm ends, Player cannot be affected for 24 hours
3020

Figure 30

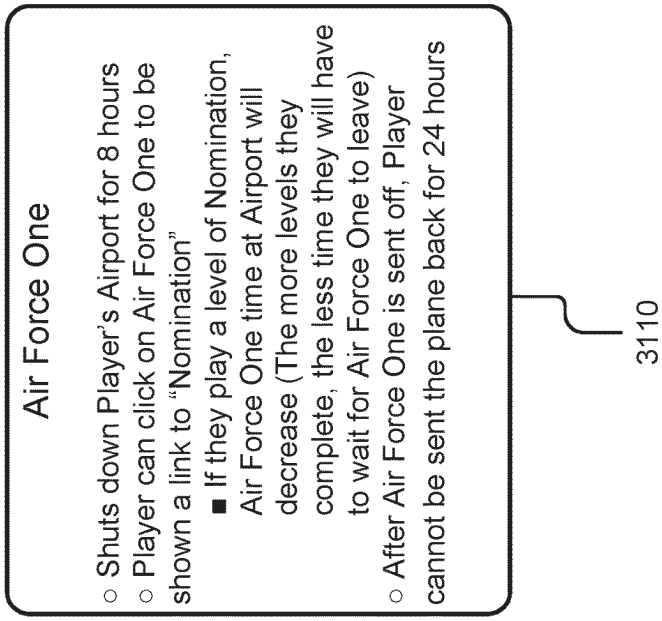

Figure 31

3100

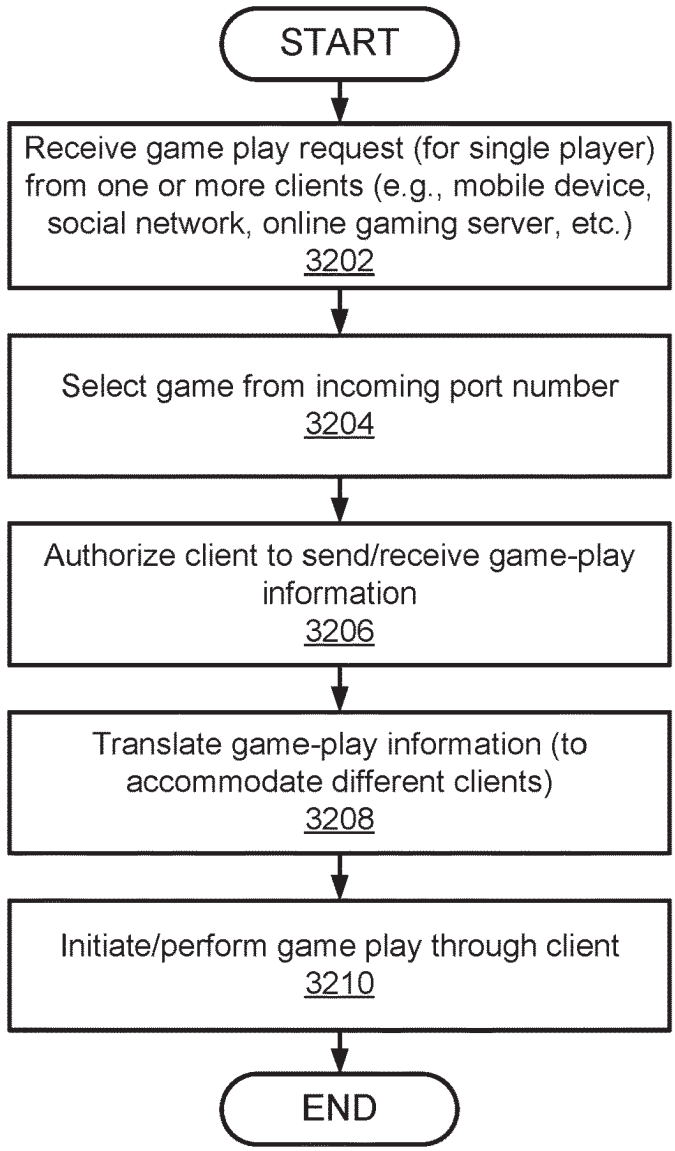
3200
START
Receive game play request (for single player) from one or more clients (e.g., mobile device, social network, online gaming server, etc.)
3202
Select game from incoming port number
3204
Authorize client to send/receive game-play information
3206
Translate game-play information (to accommodate different clients)
3208
Initiate/perform game play through client
3210
END

Figure 32

3300

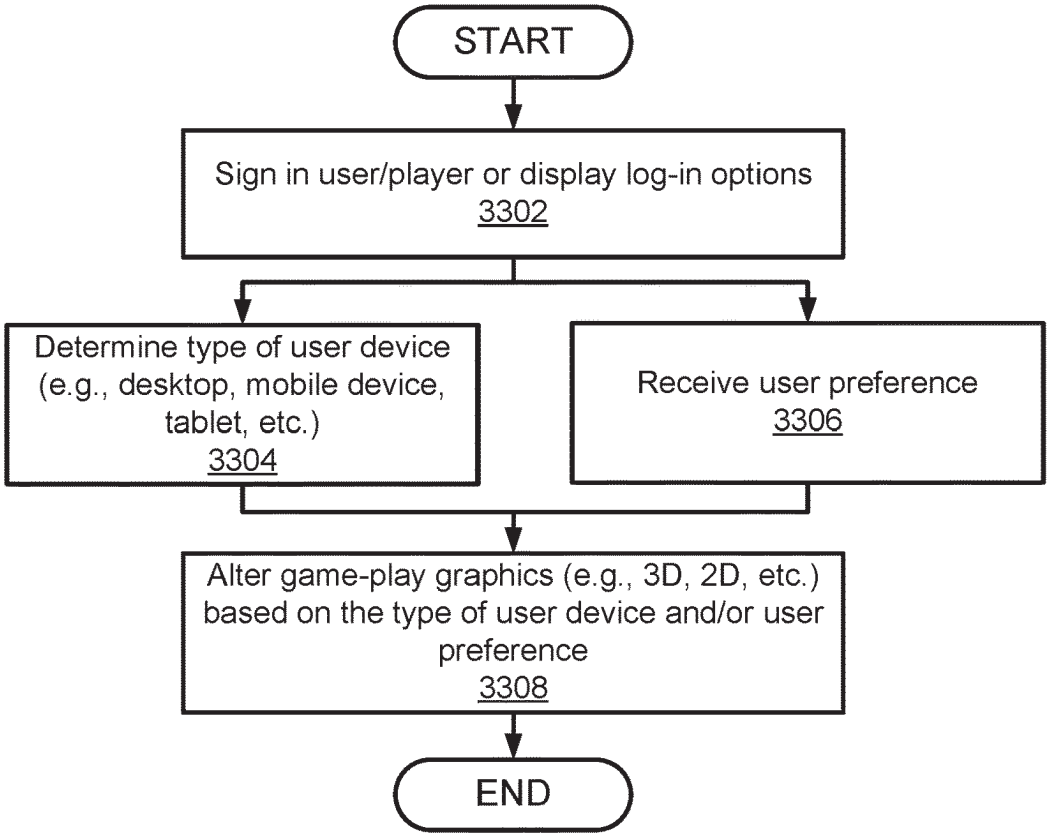
START
Sign in user/player or display log-in options
3302
Determine type of user device (e.g., desktop, mobile device, tablet, etc.)
3304
Receive user preference
3306
Alter game-play graphics (e.g., 3D, 2D, etc.) based on the type of user device and/or user preference
3308
END

Figure 33

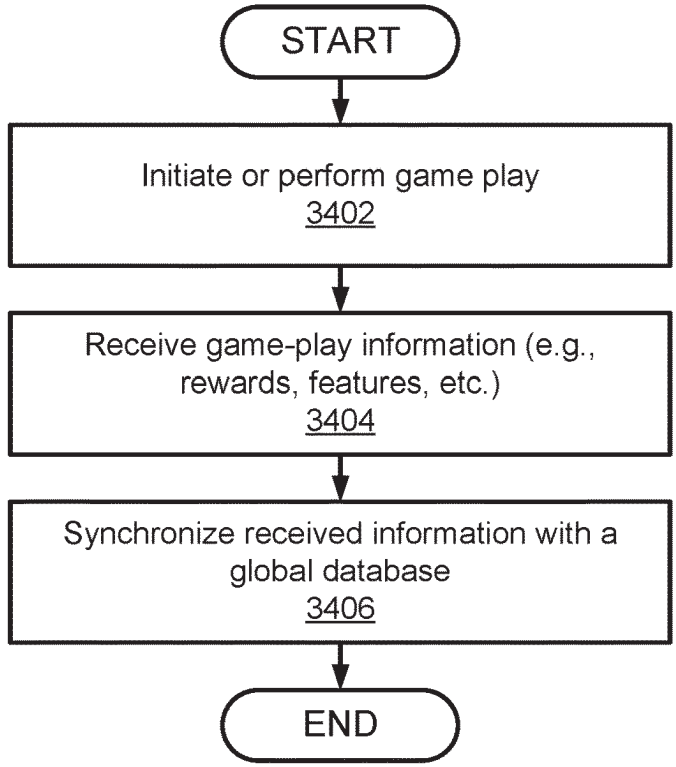
3400
START
Initiate or perform game play
3402
Receive game-play information (e.g., rewards, features, etc.)
3404
Synchronize received information with a global database
3406
END

Figure 34

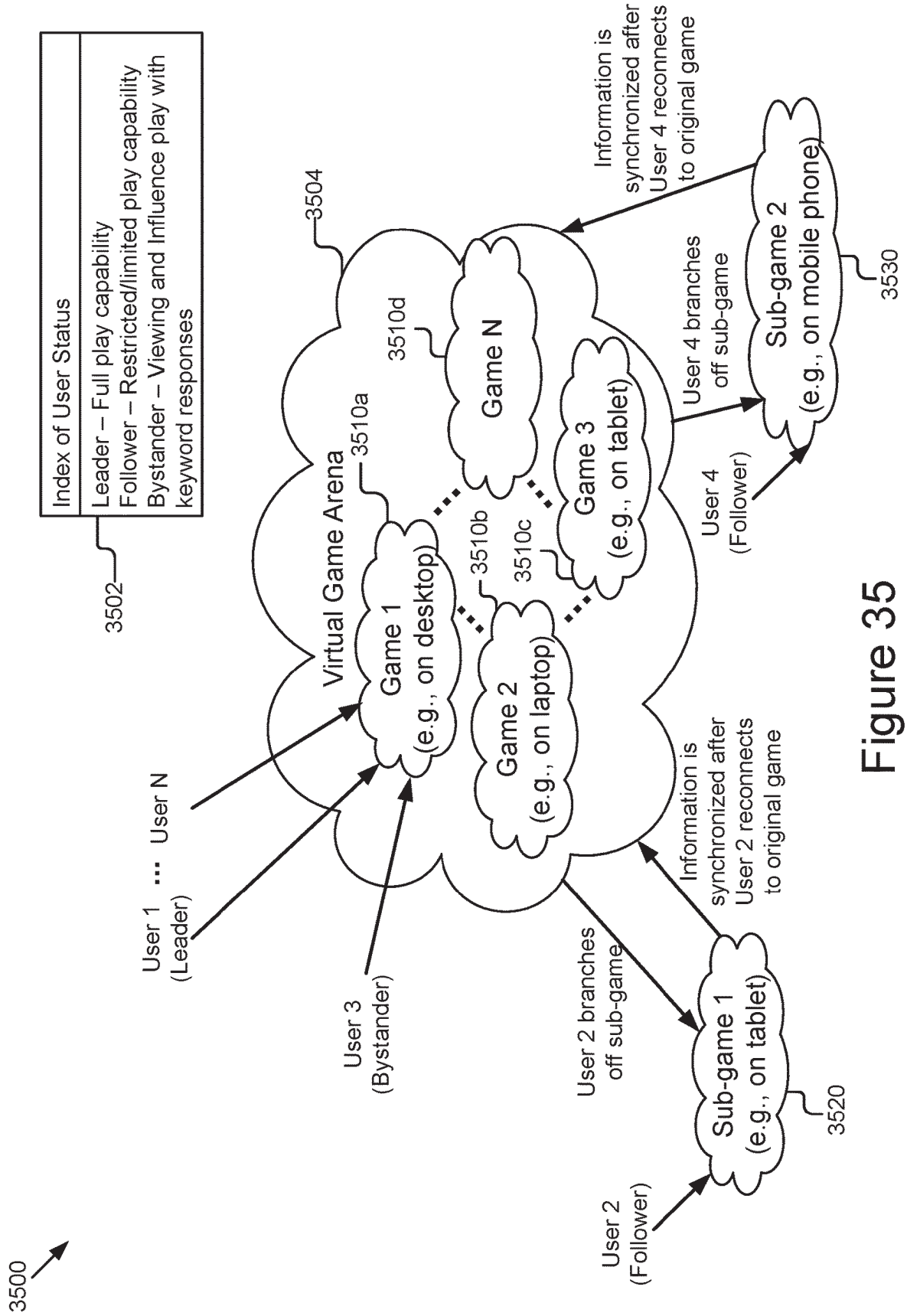
3500
Index of User Status
Leader – Full play capability
Follower – Restricted/limited play capability
Bystander – Viewing and Influence play with keyword responses
3502
3504
Virtual Game Arena
3510a
3510b
3510c
3510d
Game 1 (e.g., on desktop)
Game 2 (e.g., on laptop)
Game 3 (e.g., on tablet)
Game N
User 1 (Leader)
User N
User 3 (Bystander)
User 2 (Follower)
User 4 (Follower)
User 2 branches off sub-game
User 4 branches off sub-game
Sub-game 1 (e.g., on tablet)
Sub-game 2 (e.g., on mobile phone)
3520
3530
Information is synchronized after User 2 reconnects to original game
Information is synchronized after User 4 reconnects to original game

Figure 35

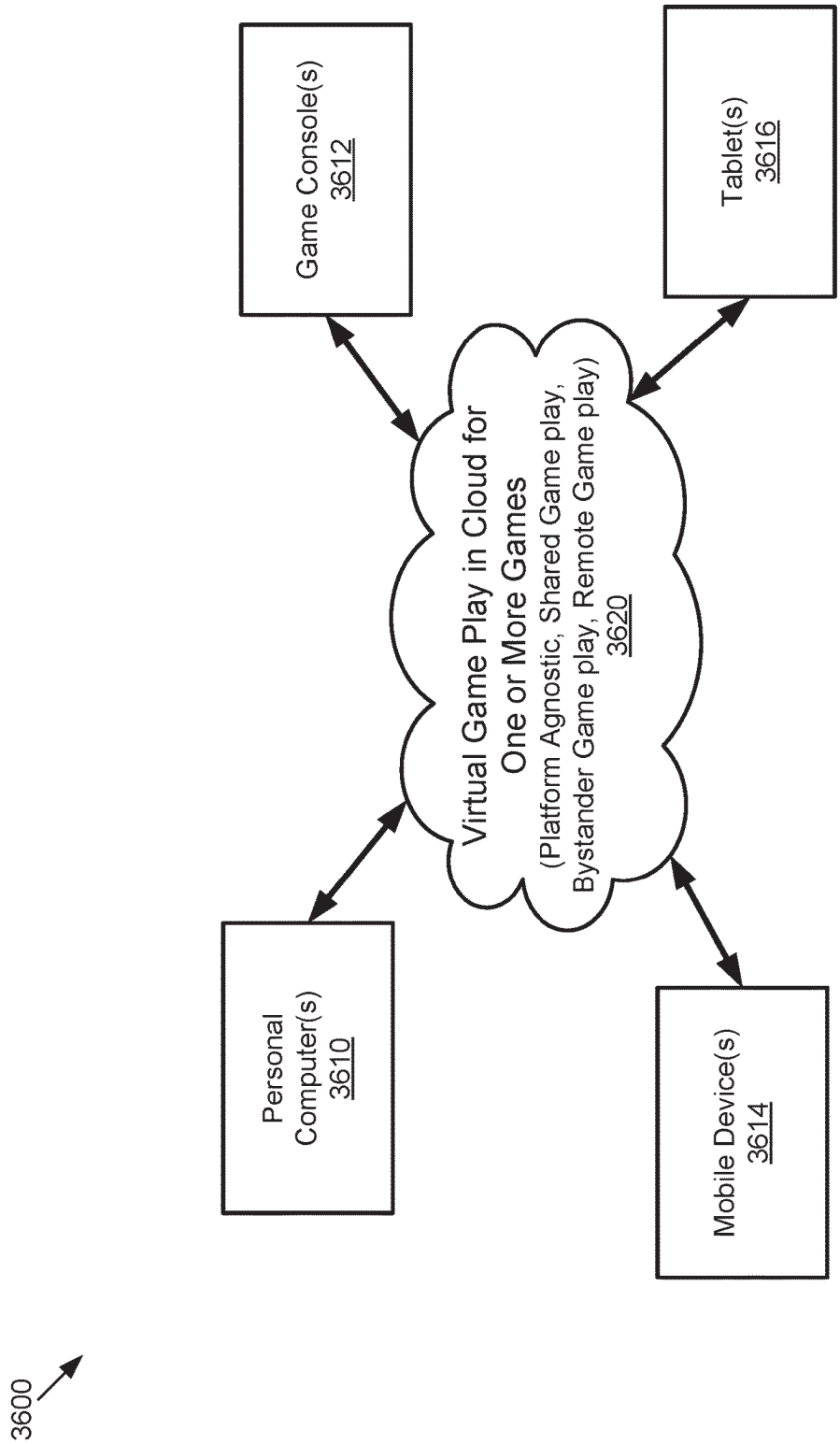
3600
Personal Computer(s) 3610
Game Console(s) 3612
Virtual Game Play in Cloud for One or More Games (Platform Agnostic, Shared Game play, Bystander Game play, Remote Game play) 3620
Mobile Device(s) 3614
Tablet(s) 3616

Figure 36

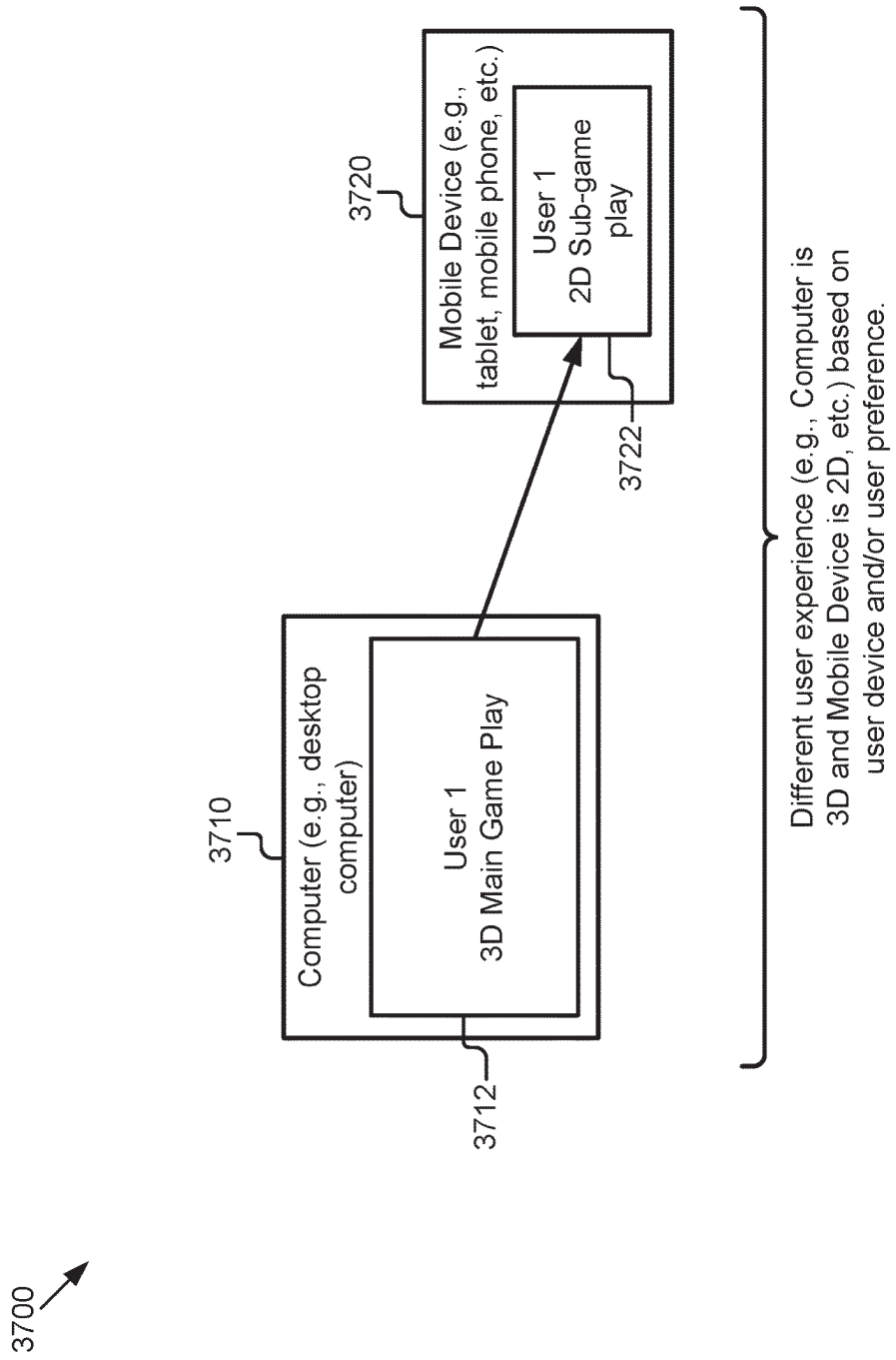
3700
3710
Computer (e.g., desktop computer)
User 1
3D Main Game Play
3712
3720
Mobile Device (e.g., tablet, mobile phone, etc.)
User 1
2D Sub-game play
3722
Different user experience (e.g., Computer is 3D and Mobile Device is 2D, etc.) based on user device and/or user preference.

Figure 37

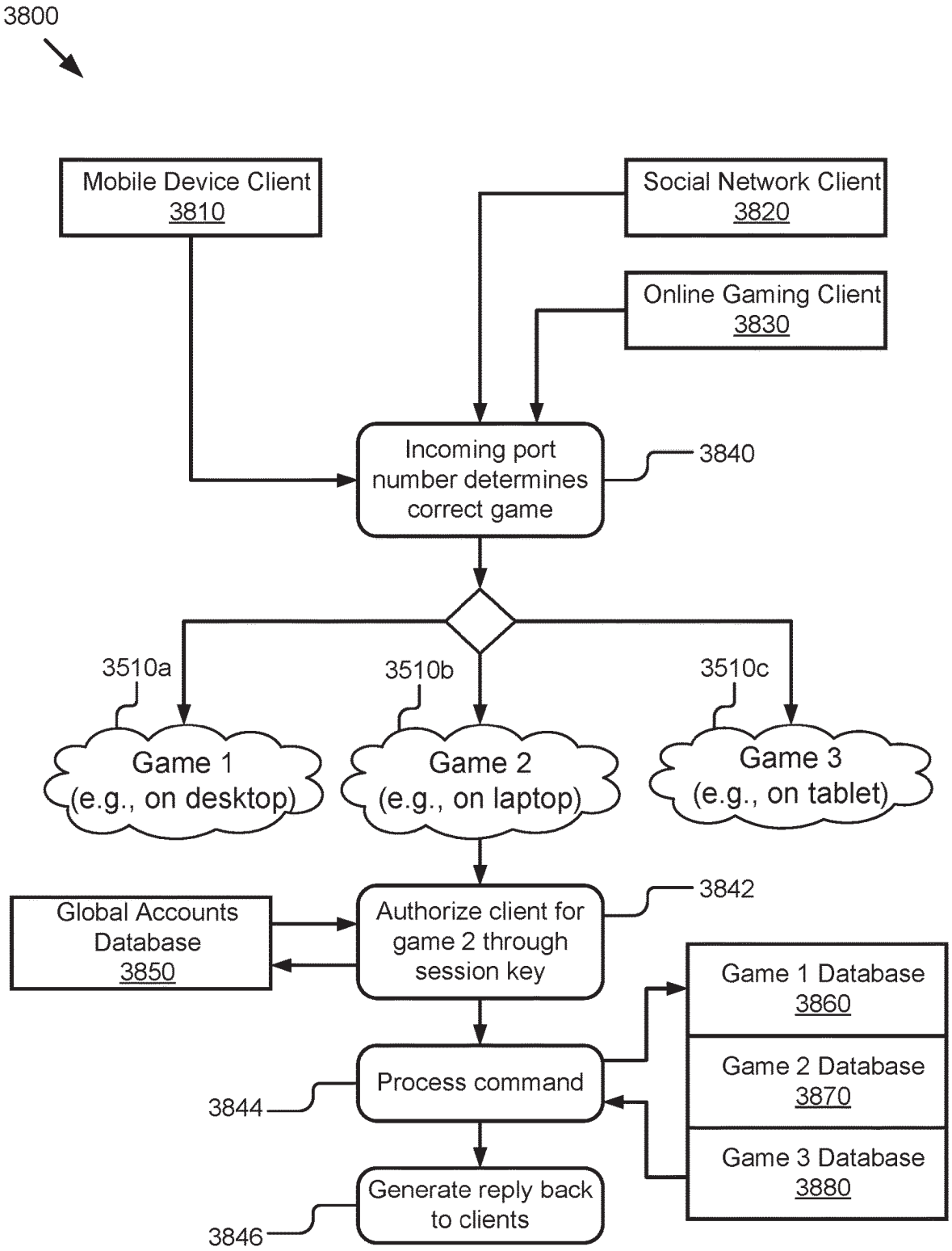
3800
Mobile Device Client
3810
Social Network Client
3820
Online Gaming Client
3830
Incoming port number determines correct game
3840
3510a
3510b
3510c
Game 1 (e.g., on desktop)
Game 2 (e.g., on laptop)
Game 3 (e.g., on tablet)
Global Accounts Database
3850
Authorize client for game 2 through session key
3842
Game 1 Database
3860
Game 2 Database
3870
Game 3 Database
3880
Process command
3844
Generate reply back to clients
3846

Figure 38

3900

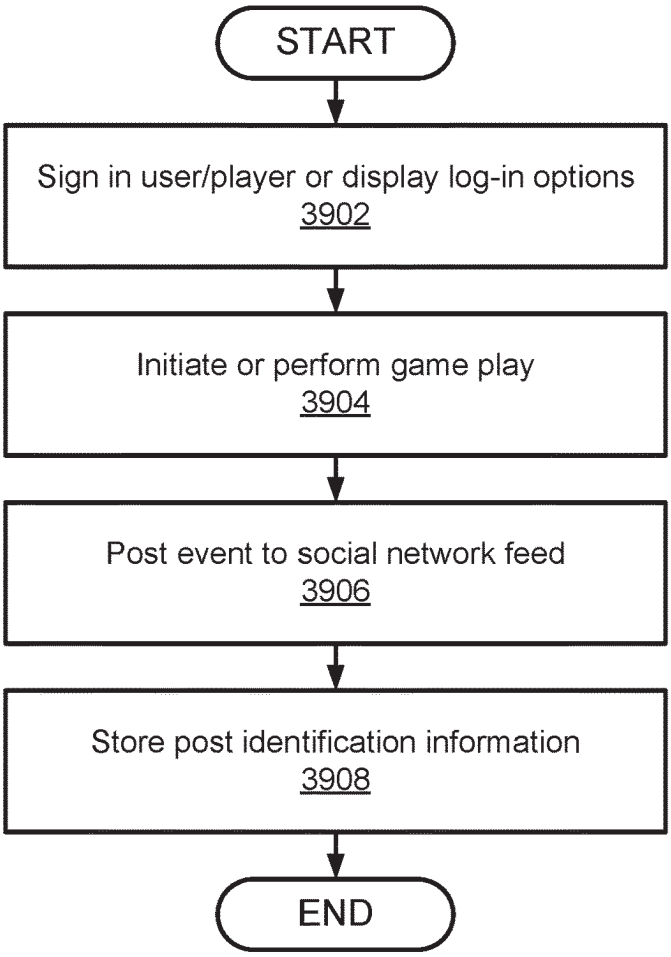
START
Sign in user/player or display log-in options
3902
Initiate or perform game play
3904
Post event to social network feed
3906
Store post identification information
3908
END

Figure 39

4000

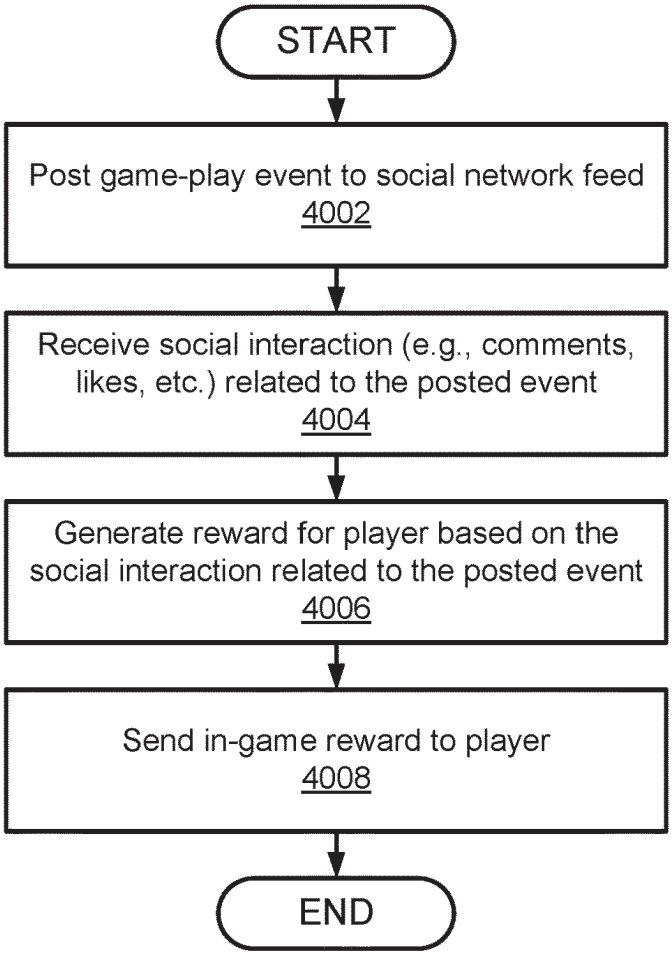
START
Post game-play event to social network feed
4002
Receive social interaction (e.g., comments, likes, etc.) related to the posted event
4004
Generate reward for player based on the social interaction related to the posted event
4006
Send in-game reward to player
4008
END

Figure 40

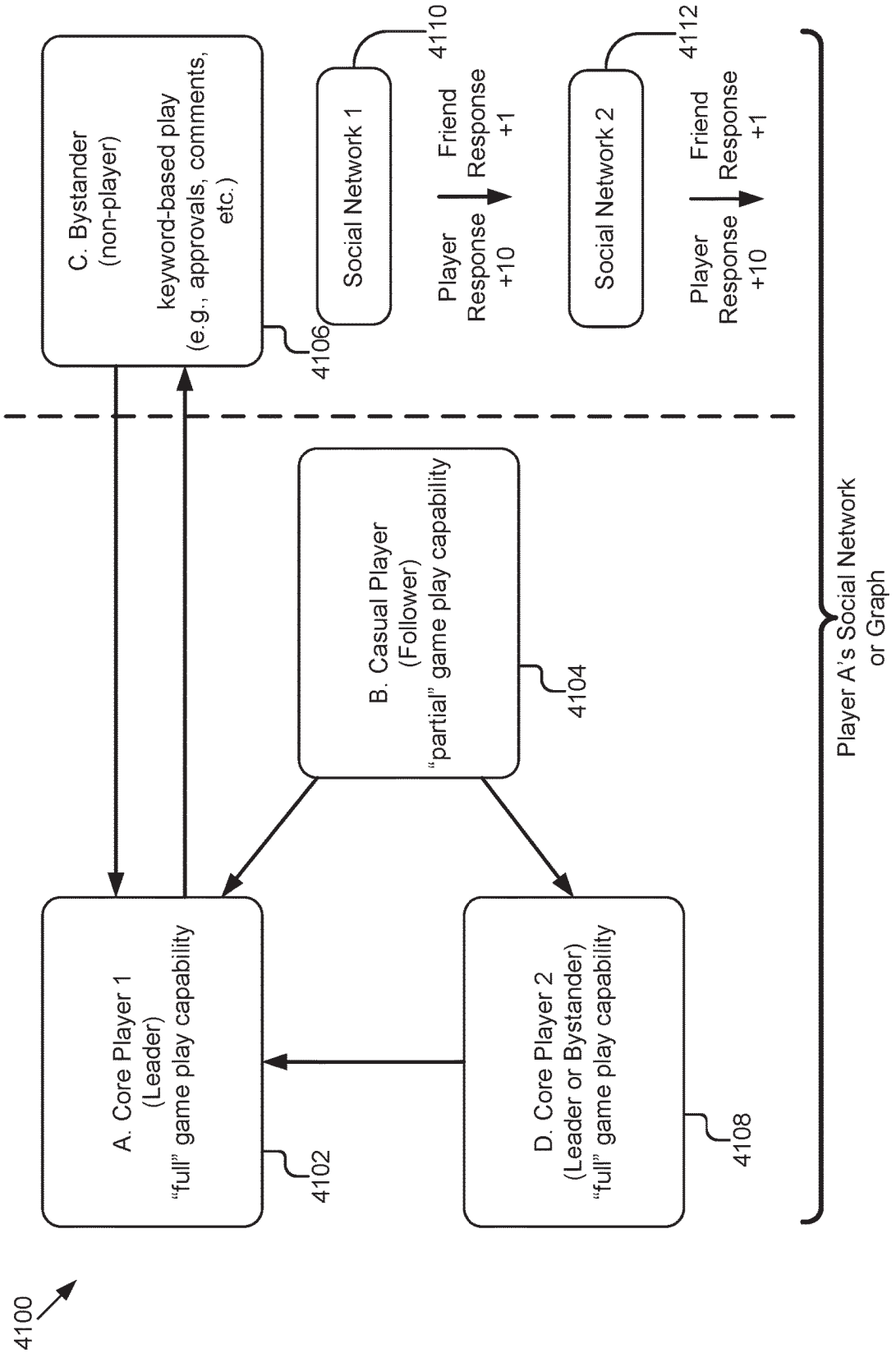
4100
A. Core Player 1
(Leader)
"full" game play capability
4102
B. Casual Player
(Follower)
"partial" game play capability
4104
C. Bystander
(non-player)
keyword-based play
(e.g., approvals, comments, etc.)
4106
D. Core Player 2
(Leader or Bystander)
"full" game play capability
4108
Social Network 1
4110
Player Response +10
Friend Response +1
Social Network 2
4112
Player Response +10
Friend Response +1
Player A's Social Network or Graph

Figure 41

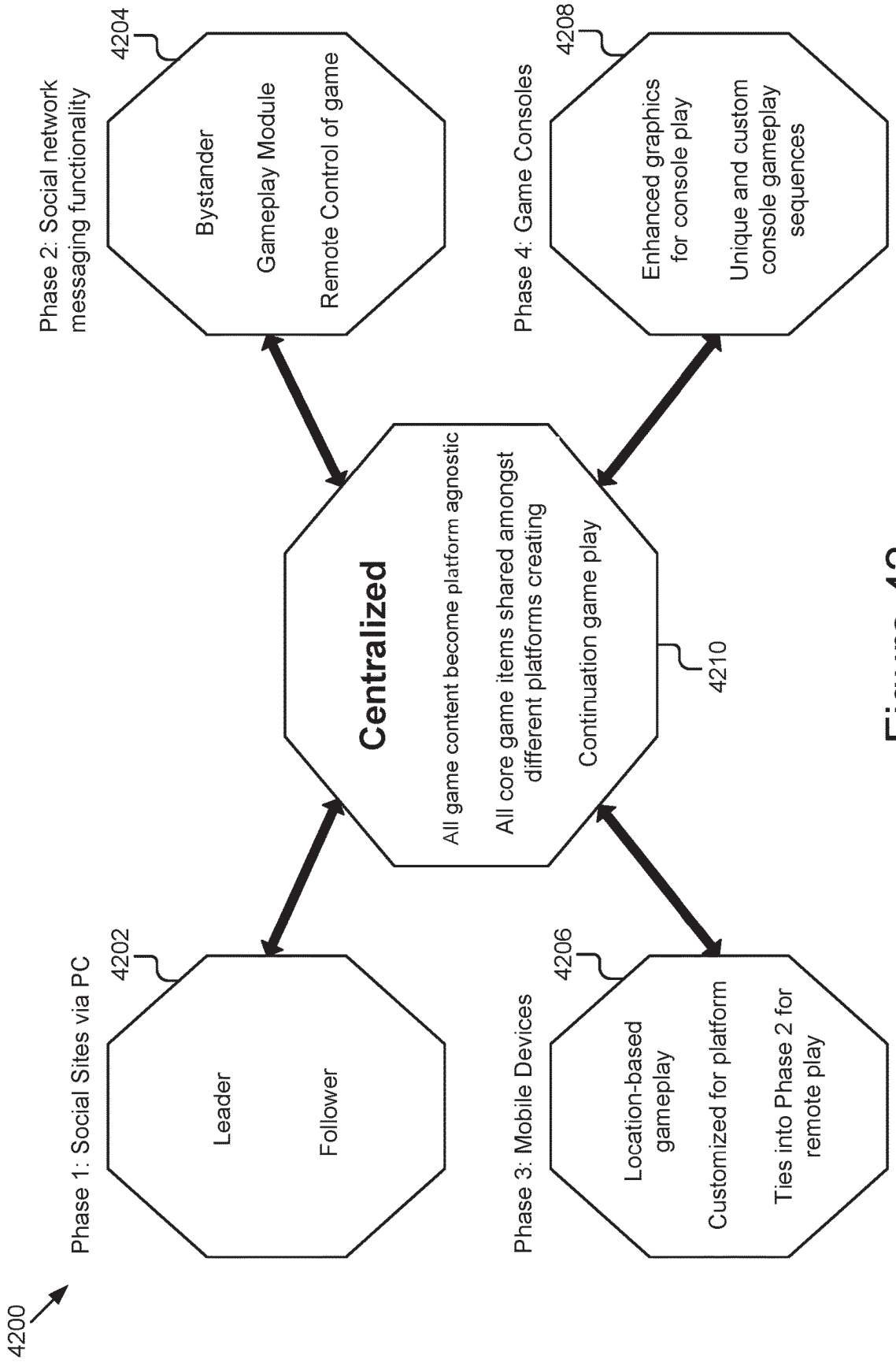
4200
Phase 1: Social Sites via PC
4202
Leader
Follower
Phase 2: Social network messaging functionality
4204
Bystander
Gameplay Module
Remote Control of game
Phase 3: Mobile Devices
4206
Location-based gameplay
Customized for platform
Ties into Phase 2 for remote play
Phase 4: Game Consoles
4208
Enhanced graphics for console play
Unique and custom console gameplay sequences
Centralized
All game content become platform agnostic
All core game items shared amongst different platforms creating
Continuation game play
4210

Figure 42

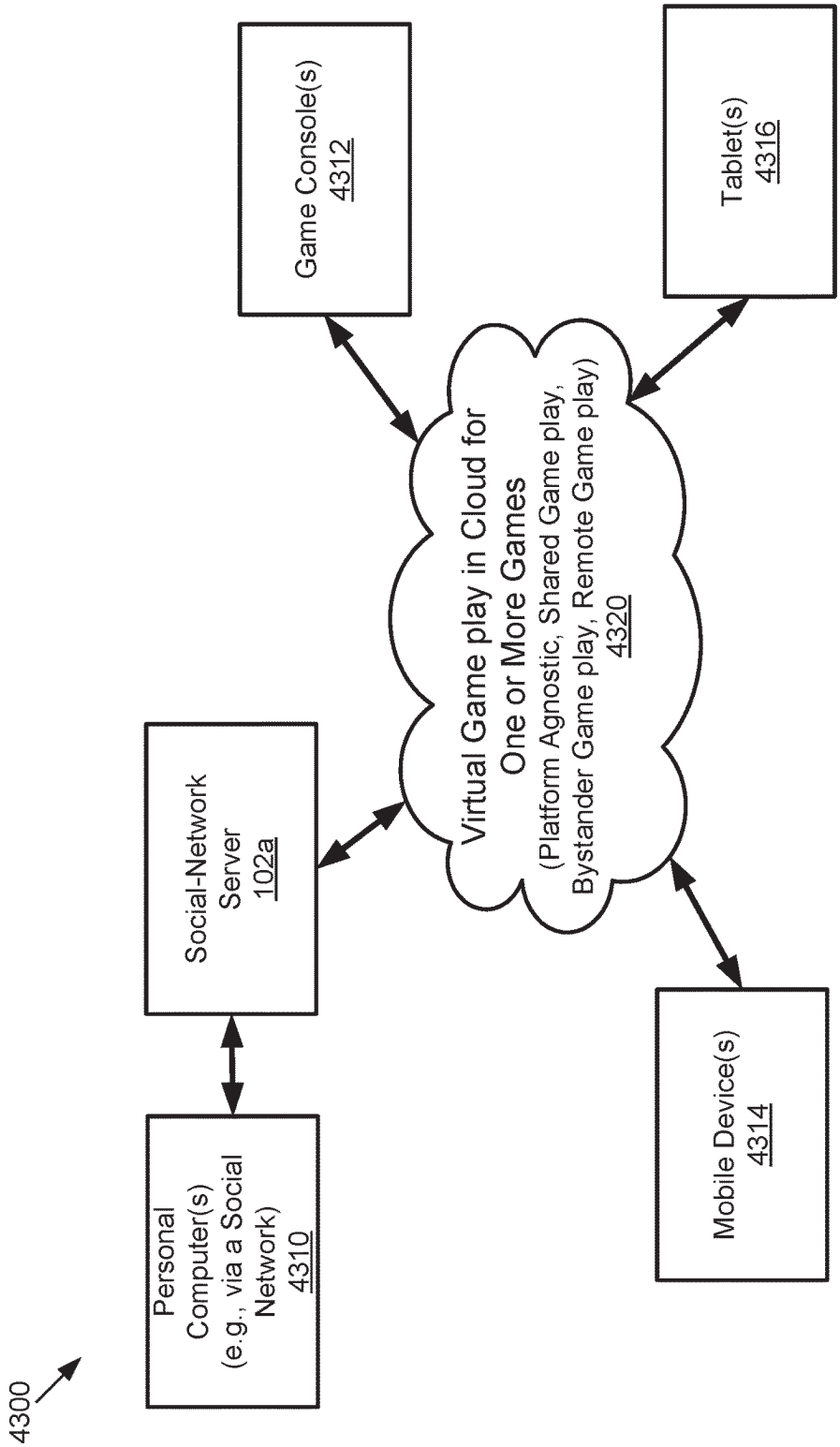
4300
Personal Computer(s) (e.g., via a Social Network) 4310
Social-Network Server 102a
Game Console(s) 4312
Virtual Game play in Cloud for One or More Games (Platform Agnostic, Shared Game play, Bystander Game play, Remote Game play) 4320
Tablet(s) 4316
Mobile Device(s) 4314

Figure 43

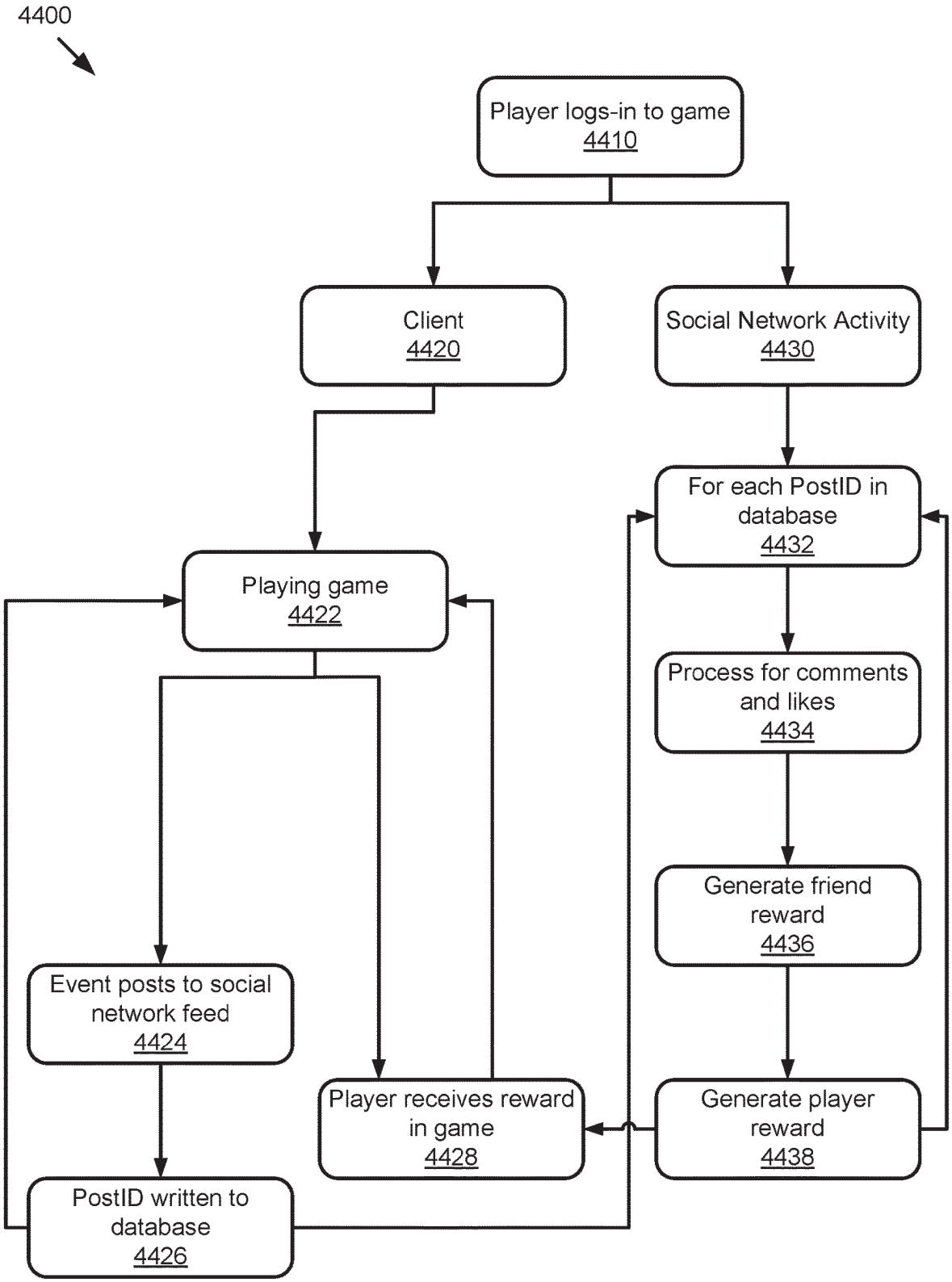
4400
Player logs-in to game
4410
Client
4420
Social Network Activity
4430
For each PostID in database
4432
Playing game
4422
Process for comments and likes
4434
Generate friend reward
4436
Event posts to social network feed
4424
Player receives reward in game
4428
Generate player reward
4438
PostID written to database
4426

Figure 44

MULTILAYER FRAMEWORK ARCHITECTURE AND USER INTERFACE FOR VIDEO GAMING APPLICATIONS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/889,276, titled "Multilayer Framework and Architecture with Variable Video Gaming Capabilities," filed May 7, 2013; a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/889,266, titled "Video Gaming Platform and User Interface," filed May 7, 2013; a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/889,274, titled "Providing Synchronized and Integrated Video Gaming," filed May 7, 2013; a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/889,284, titled "Providing Video Gaming Action Via Communications In A Social Network," filed May 7, 2013; which each incorporate each other by reference and each claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/643,352, entitled "Multilayer Framework Architecture and User Interfaces for Video Gaming Applications", filed on May 7, 2012, the entire contents of all of which are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

BACKGROUND

The present disclosure relates to video gaming platforms and applications, including those accessed via online or digital services or communities, for example, social networks, or directly via hosted websites, dedicated either wholly or partially for the purpose of implementing video gaming applications. In particular, the present disclosure relates to multilayer system framework and architecture with variable video gaming capabilities.

In recent years, video games have become extremely popular. Video games are used not only for entertainment, but also for instructional purposes. Players typically interact with a gaming application through computer or console peripherals such as keyboard, mouse, joysticks, a wide variety of game pads, and funny controllers such as the NES Zapper®. More recently, nontraditional controller technologies such as dance pads, the Wii-mote® or the Kinect®, offering new types of gaming experiences are beginning to emerge. These technologies are capable of enhancing games to incorporate movement, creating a new experience and attracting new audiences.

With the popularity of social networks reaching epic proportions, social games have also become very popular.

With the ongoing trends and exponential growth in video gaming, it would certainly be beneficial to find better architectures for gaming applications that continue to enhance the user experience.

SUMMARY

The present disclosure overcomes the deficiencies and limitations of the prior art by providing a technology with a flexible architecture for video gaming applications. In some embodiments, the flexible architecture provides a continuous visual experience for players across different platforms (platform agnostic) and engages them at different levels. Each of the players may have a unique and different visual experience, depending upon the gaming platform a player uses. The architecture facilitates access to video gaming applications in various ways, including 1) via social networks or sites, for example, accessed via personal computers or laptops; 2) via wall posts or via an online social networking service that enables its users to send and read text-based posts; 3) via mobile devices (iOS®, Android™, or Windows-based smart phones); and 4) via game consoles (for example, PS3®, Xbox 360®, or Wii®).

In some embodiments, the present disclosure overcomes the deficiencies and limitations of the prior art by providing a technology with a synchronized and integrated architecture for video gaming applications. In some embodiments, the synchronized and integrated architecture provides a continuous visual experience for players across different platforms (platform agnostic) and engages them at different levels as they access a particular game from the different platforms. In some instances, each of the players may have a unique and different visual experience, depending upon the gaming platform a player uses. The architecture facilitates access to video gaming applications via personal computers, via mobile devices, via game consoles, via tablets or the like. In some instances, a single player can play a particular game including a main component and a sub-component from the different platforms, where play in the sub-component is seamlessly integrated into the main component.

Video gaming applications may be purchased via platform application stores. These applications are supported by Android (Android is a Linux-based operating system for mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers—it is developed by the Open Handset Alliance), iOS (a mobile operating system developed by Apple Inc.) platforms, and phones operating windows. The user interface of an iOS platform is based on the concept of direct manipulation, using multi-touch gestures. Interface control elements consist of sliders, switches, and buttons. The response to user input is immediate and provides a fluid interface.

Video gaming applications (e.g., in association with social networks) may be hosted or accessed via social networks, other third-party services or on third-party servers, standalone platforms, tablets, smartphones or the like. Multiple players (hundreds, thousands, if not millions) may access gaming applications via any or all of these ways. In addition, the flexible architecture provides a scalable infrastructure with cross-platform pollination technology (achievements and rewards are transferred between platforms used by particular players) and secure collection of data. Video gaming applications may be based on universal themes that appeal to a broad range of demographics and provides a continuous flow of data analytics. They offer opportunities for configuring advertisements and promotions to accomplish strategic goals.

In some embodiments, the flexible (and/or synchronized and integrated) architecture provides multiple levels of play, permitting players to engage in different ways from different platforms or a single player to engage from multiple platforms. The different levels of play options include 1) a peer-to-peer competitive challenge level for core players, 2) a casual play option for play with friends with whom a player shares an affinity, for example, in a social network; and a 3) spectator mode that permits non-players in a network to assist friends. Feed-based triggers allow for greater rewards to players and ease of discovering games.

In yet other embodiments, which may include any or all of the aspects described above, the flexible architecture permits mobile play, extending the gaming arena or world to different platforms, so achievements in a particular game may be earned and shared more easily across platforms. In addition, a player may earn location-based rewards.

Moreover, the flexible architecture provides a system of rewards at check-in, to coax players by providing greater incentives. The flexible architecture permits concurrent "solo" play by a player or gamer, collaborative and competitive play by multiple players. The flexible architecture has user interfaces that are configured to provide different experiences for different players, including for example, a three-dimensional user experience. In some embodiments, the video gaming applications include story-driven quests and game play, giving players more than just tasks and chores. As one example, an aviation gaming application may utilize a collection of two hundred and fifty or more aircrafts and include transactions relating to the aircrafts and their environment, creation of the environment in which the aircrafts operate, etc. In this particular application, players may create and manage their experience (for example, build and manage an aviation empire), enjoy the thrill of history (aviation's past), and travel the globe and fly through an open network of friendly and rival airports.

In yet other embodiments, the system provides a plurality of features for player control of the virtual arena including control of "play" times, "gifts" and "rewards," "collect" and "decorate" features, monitor types of "play" (for example, acceleration progress), generate user content, etc.

In some embodiments, the video gaming applications may be free, when accessed via social-network platforms, in which instances revenue is generated via market place for products used during the game, direct advertising, etc. The flexible architecture permits for easy access through a particular player's social network, allowing other players to discover a particular game and permit conversion as necessary.

In yet other embodiments, linking or connecting platforms creates a more interesting gaming world.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present disclosure is illustrated by way of example, and not by way of limitation, in the figures of the accompanying drawings, in which like reference numerals are used to refer to similar elements.

FIG. **1** is a high-level block diagram illustrating some embodiments of a system architecture for providing video gaming platforms, accessed either via a social network (hosted on a social network server or a server associated with it), an online or digital live gaming server, or a third-party video gaming website (hosted by a third party on its server).

FIG. **2** is a block diagram illustrating some embodiments of a social network server or a third party server shown in FIG. **1**, including its hardware components.

FIG. **3** is a block diagram illustrating some embodiments of a gaming platform shown in FIGS. **1** and **2**, and its software components.

FIG. **4** is an example flow chart illustrating an example general method for creating or branching off a sub game.

FIG. **5** is an example flow chart illustrating an example method for obtaining a promotion.

FIG. **6** is an example flow chart illustrating an example method for assigning a status ("leader" or "core," "follower" or "casual," or "bystander" or "spectator") to a player.

FIG. **7** is an example flow chart illustrating an example method for earning rewards or features within a game.

FIG. **8** is a graphical representation illustrating a virtual game arena accessed by various users with varying status and an index of user status.

FIG. **9** is a graphical representation illustrating one example of a game structure.

FIG. **10** is a graphical representation illustrating a virtual game arena with concurrent operation of multiple games.

FIG. **11** is a graphical representation of a data storage configuration with storage of game-related information.

FIG. **12** is a flow chart illustrating an example method for game play, in this instance an aviation game.

FIG. **13** is a graphical representation of an example action via a user interface, by a user in a gaming application (e.g. aviation), for example, where a user creates or sets an aviation route.

FIG. **14** is a graphical representation illustrating a gaming applications operating on a third-party server, with concurrent play by users (gamers or players) from remote locations linked by an integrated user interface.

FIG. **15** is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface display to one player with an in-game message related to another player's activity.

FIG. **16** is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface display to one player with an in-game message awarding items from another player.

FIG. **17** is a graphical representation illustrating several example in-game messages displayed to one player on another player's activity.

FIG. **18** is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface configured within a social network for accepting requests for user game play within a game.

FIG. **19** is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including unlocking new content.

FIG. **20**A is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface display within a social network with a player's notification about one player's promotion within the game and other player comments on the player notification.

FIG. **20**B is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface display within a social network with a player notification about one player's promotion within the game and other non-player comments on the player notification.

FIG. **21**A is a graphical representation illustrating an example use interface within a social network with a player notification on a particular player traveling to another player's area within the game and posting of other player comments further to the player notification.

FIG. **21**B is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including non-players commenting on a player's activity within the game.

FIG. **22**A is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including players commenting on a player visiting a player's virtual area within the game.

FIG. **22**B is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including non-players commenting on a player visiting a player's virtual area within the game.

FIG. **23**A is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including players commenting on a player sending items within the game.

FIG. **23**B is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including comments from non-players on a player sending items within the game.

FIG. **24**A is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including players commenting on an item purchase within the game.

FIG. **24**B is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including non-players commenting on an item purchase within the game.

FIG. **25**A is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including players commenting on an area purchase within the game.

FIG. **25**B is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including non-players commenting on an area purchase within the game.

FIG. **26**A is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including players commenting on building an item within the game.

FIG. **26**B is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including non-players commenting on building an item within the game.

FIG. **27**A is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including players commenting on a task within the game.

FIG. **27**B is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including non-players commenting on a task within the game.

FIG. **28**A is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including players commenting on completing a task within the game.

FIG. **28**B is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including non-players commenting on completing a task within the game.

FIG. **29**A is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including players commenting on arriving at another player's virtual area within the game.

FIG. **29**B is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface for interacting with a game via a social network including non-players commenting on arriving at another player's virtual area within the game.

FIG. **30** is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface with displays of weather items and their descriptions.

FIG. **31** is a graphical representation illustrating an example user interface configured to provide a game state that affects game play.

FIG. **32** is a flow chart illustrating an example general method for allowing access from one or more clients (e.g., players or gamers).

FIG. **33** is a flow chart illustrating an example method for determining graphics based on a user device or platform.

FIG. **34** is a flow chart illustrating an example method for synchronizing information across platforms.

FIG. **35** is a graphical representation of a "virtual" game arena illustrating several games (Game 1 through Game N) at play and reflecting variable user status for each of the users and the platforms used by each user to facilitate synchronized and integrated play.

FIG. **36** is a graphical representation/block diagram of example virtual game play in a cloud of one or more games, each accessed via different platforms.

FIG. **37** is a graphical representation illustrating an example of a different user experience based on a user device and/or user preference.

FIG. **38** is a block diagram illustrating integrated and synchronized play from various access points.

FIG. **39** is a flow chart illustrating an example general method for posting game-play activity on a social network.

FIG. **40** is a flow chart illustrating an example general method for interacting with a game based on social network activity.

FIG. **41** is a graphical representation of a particular user's (Player A) social network or social graph.

FIG. **42** is a graphical representation illustrating some embodiments of flexible architecture for the video gaming application shown in FIG. **1**, showing the various types of platforms.

FIG. **43** is a graphical representation illustrating some embodiments of multiple devices connected for centralized game play.

FIG. **44** is a graphical representation illustrating some embodiments of receiving an in-game reward based on social network activity.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The present technology is directed to a video gaming platform and multilayer or multi-tier architecture or framework for video games or video gaming applications with variable video gaming capabilities accorded to players or gamers. The video games are for play by users (players or gamers), accessed either via social networks, or directly, on games hosted by third party servers, or otherwise in a cloud or coordinated web sites etc. The specification describes examples of the video gaming platform and user interfaces that facilitate a unique user experience and methods involved in the platform and user interface and for operating them to facilitate play by remotely located players or gamers. These video gaming applications referenced or described here may either be hosted by an online community, for example, one or more social networks, or alternatively, by third party servers that are wholly or partially dedicated to gaming applications.

In some embodiments, the flexible and multilayer architecture provides a continuous game and visual experience for players across different platforms (platform agnostic) and engages them at different levels of play and capability. Each of the players may have a unique and different gaming experience, depending upon the level of play and capability accorded to each player. This flexible architecture facilitates access to video gaming applications in various ways, including 1) via social networks or sites, for example, accessed via personal computers (desktops or laptops); 2) via wall posts or via an online social networking service that enables its users to send and read text-based posts; 3) via mobile devices (iOS, Android, or Windows-based smart phones); and 4) via game consoles (for example, PS3, Xbox 360, or Wii).

Video gaming applications may be purchased via platform application stores. These applications are supported by Android (Android is a Linux-based operating system for mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers—it is developed by the Open Handset Alliance), iOS (a mobile operating system developed by Apple Inc.) platforms, and phone operating windows. The user interface of

iOS is based on the concept of direct manipulation, using multi-touch gestures. Interface control elements consist of sliders, switches, and buttons. The response to user input is immediate and provides a fluid interface.

Video gaming applications may be hosted or accessed via social networks, other third party services or on third party servers, stand-alone platforms, tablets, smartphones, or the like. Multiple players (hundreds, thousands, if not millions) may access gaming one or more applications via any or all of these ways. In addition, the flexible architecture provides a scalable infrastructure with cross-platform pollination technology (achievements and rewards are transferred between platforms for particular players depending on their status) and secure data collection. Video gaming applications may be based on universal themes that appeal to a broad range of demographics and provides a continuous flow of data analytics. They offer opportunities for configuring advertisements and promotions to accomplish strategic goals.

In some embodiments, the flexible architecture provides multiple levels of play, permitting players to engage in different ways and at different levels. The different levels of play options include 1) a peer-to-peer competitive challenge level for "core" players, 2) a "casual" play option for play with friends with whom a particular player shares an affinity, for example, in a social network; and 3) a "spectator" mode that permits non-players in a network to assist friends. Feed-based triggers allow for greater rewards to players and ease of discovering games.

In yet other embodiments, which may include any or all of the aspects described above, the architecture permits play via mobile devices, extending the gaming arena or world to different environments, so achievements in a particular game may be earned and shared more easily across environments, depending upon player status. In addition, a player may earn location-based rewards.

Moreover, the system provides rewards at check-in, to coax players by providing greater incentives. The architecture permits for concurrent "solo" play by a player or gamer and collaborative and competitive play between multiple players. User interfaces are configured to provide different experiences for different players, including a three-dimensional user experience in some environments. In some embodiments, the video gaming applications include story-driven quests and game play, giving players more than just tasks and chores. As one example, a "core" player in an aviation gaming application, may utilize a collection of 250 aircrafts and include transactions relating to the aircrafts and its environment, to create an environment in which the aircrafts operate, etc. In this particular application, "core" players may create and manage their experience (for example, by creating an aviation empire), enjoy the thrill of history (aviation's past), and travel the globe and fly through an open network of friendly and rival airports. Other players, for example, "followers" may be accorded more restricted play and capability.

The system provides variable features for player control (depending upon player status) of the virtual arena (e.g., associated with a social network) including control of "play" times, "gifts" and "rewards," "collect" and "decorate," monitor "play" (for example, acceleration progress), generate user content, etc.

The video gaming applications may be free, when accessed via social-network platforms, in which instances revenue is generated via market place for products used during the game, direct advertising, etc. The flexible architecture permits for easy access through a particular player's social network, allowing other players to discover a particular game and permit conversion as necessary. Linking or connecting platforms creates a more interesting and viable gaming world.

In some implementations, the architecture accords variable status to players who can opt for different levels of play. A "core" game play status enables players to be "leaders" and play the entire game. A leader has control of all aspects of a particular gaming application. A "casual" or "follower" game play status enables players to play from a different perspective, providing access to only a portion of the entire game. A "spectator" or "bystander" game play enables players to play from a reactive perspective. Players are accorded this status when they initiate play via a social network wall posting, a response to a social networking service facilitating exchange of text or via any other key word response, which has direct impact on game play. Players with this status can request permission to visit game play arenas of other players. This request may be in response to advertising or promotion displays.

Players (with any status described above) may access game play via mobile devices, at any location, and receive location-based rewards. They may access a virtual game arena, their own or that of other players, via several platforms and take up play where they left off. They may link up friends for collaborative play. Players may also participate in standalone game play, via tablets, mobile devices, console-based game play, target-based game play or the like. In addition, the system permits cross-pollination game play, sending game objects from one game world or arena to another.

In the following description, for purposes of explanation, numerous specific details are indicated in order to provide a thorough understanding of the technology described. This technology may be practiced without these specific details. In the instances illustrated, structures and devices are shown in block diagram form in order to avoid obscuring the technology. For example, the present technology is described with some implementations illustrated below with reference to user interfaces and particular hardware. However, the present technology applies to any type of computing device that can receive data and commands, and any devices providing services. Moreover, the present technology may be described below primarily in the context of providing video game architecture; however, the present technology applies to any type of situation and may be used for other applications beyond video games. In particular, this technology may be used in other contexts besides video games. The present technology may be described below primarily in the context of video gaming applications configured to enhance and improve the quality of these gaming applications in order to facilitate synchronous play by hundreds, thousands, if not millions of players. The players may enjoy different user experiences based on their individual preferences and may enjoy seamless play across different gaming platforms or devices (desktop computer, mobile device or the like). However, those skilled in the art should understand that the present technology applies to any type of application and can be used for other applications beyond gaming applications. The present technology may be described below primarily in the context of video gaming applications configured to enhance and improve the quality of these gaming applications in order to facilitate synchronous play by hundreds, thousands, if not millions of players. The players may enjoy different user experiences based on their individual preferences and may enjoy seamless play across different gaming platforms or devices (desktop com-

puter, mobile device or the like). However, those skilled in the art should understand that the present technology applies to any type of application and can be used for other applications beyond gaming applications.

Reference in the specification to "one embodiment," "an embodiment," or "some embodiments" means simply that one or more particular features, structures, or characteristics described in connection with the one or more embodiments is included in at least one or more embodiments that are described. The appearances of the phrase "in one embodiment or instance" in various places in the specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment or instance.

Some portions of the detailed descriptions that follow are presented in terms of algorithms and symbolic representations of operations on data bits within a computer memory of either one or more computing devices. These algorithmic descriptions and representations are the means used to most effectively convey the substance of the technology. An algorithm as indicated here, and generally, is conceived to be a self-consistent sequence of steps leading to a desired result. The steps are those requiring physical manipulations of physical quantities. Usually, though not necessarily, these quantities take the form of electrical or magnetic signals capable of being stored, transferred, combined, compared, and otherwise manipulated. It has proven convenient at times, principally for reasons of common usage, to refer to these signals as bits, values, elements, symbols, characters, terms, numbers, or the like.

It should be understood, however, that all of these and similar terms are to be associated with the appropriate physical quantities and are merely convenient labels applied to these quantities. Unless specifically stated otherwise, as apparent from the following discussion, it should be appreciated that throughout the description, discussions utilizing terms, for example, "processing," "computing," "calculating," "determining," or "displaying" or the like, refer to the action and processes of a computer system, or similar electronic computing device, that manipulates and transforms data represented as physical (electronic) quantities within the computer system's registers and memories into other data similarly represented as physical quantities within the computer system memories or registers or other such information storage, transmission, or display devices.

The present technology also relates to an apparatus for performing the operations described here. This apparatus may be specially constructed for the required purposes, or it may include a general-purpose computer selectively activated or reconfigured by a computer program stored in the computer. For example, a computer program may be stored in a computer-readable storage medium, for example, but not limited to, any type of disk including floppy disks, optical disks, CD-ROMs, magnetic disks, read-only memories (ROMs), random access memories (RAMs), EPROMs, EEPROMs, magnetic or optical cards, flash memories including USB keys with non-volatile memory or any type of media suitable for storing electronic instructions, each coupled to a computer system bus.

This technology may take the form of an entirely hardware implementation, an entirely software implementation, or an implementation including both hardware and software components. In some instances, this technology is implemented in software, which includes but is not limited to firmware, resident software, microcode, etc.

Furthermore, this technology may take the form of a computer program product accessible from a computer-usable or computer-readable medium providing program code for use by or in connection with a computer or any instruction execution system. For the purposes of this description, a computer-usable or computer-readable medium may be any apparatus that can include, store, communicate, propagate, or transport the program for use by or in connection with the instruction execution system, apparatus, or device.

A data processing system suitable for storing and/or executing program code includes at least one processor coupled directly or indirectly to memory elements through a system bus. The memory elements may include local memory employed during actual execution of the program code, bulk storage, and cache memories, which provide temporary storage of at least some program code in order to reduce the number of times code may be retrieved from bulk storage during execution.

Input/output or I/O devices (including but not limited to keyboards, displays, pointing devices, etc.) may be coupled to the system either directly or through intervening I/O controllers.

Communication units including network adapters may also be coupled to the systems to enable them to couple to other data processing systems, remote printers, or storage devices, through either intervening private or public networks. Modems, cable modems, and Ethernet cards are just a few examples of the currently available types of network adapters.

Finally, the algorithms and displays presented in this application are not inherently related to any particular computer or other apparatus. Various general-purpose systems may be used with programs in accordance with the teachings here, or it may prove convenient to construct more specialized apparatus to perform the required method steps. The required structure for a variety of these systems is outlined in the description below. In addition, the present technology is not described with reference to any particular programming language. It should be understood that a variety of programming languages may be used to implement the technology as described here.

Example Architecture Overview

FIG. **1** is a high-level block diagram illustrating some embodiments of systems for providing gaming applications, either via social networks, an online live gaming server, or on third party servers. The system **100** illustrated in FIG. **1** provides gaming platforms **106***a* or **106***b* so that participants (players or gamers) may access one or more gaming applications, initiate a play on one device or gaming platform and continue play at another device or gaming platform, making transitions between devices or platforms essentially seamless and enabling a continuous playing experience.

The system **100** includes one or more social network servers **102***a* through **102***n* that may be accessed via user devices **115***a*, **115***b* through **115***n*, which are used by users **125***a*, **125***b*, through **125***n*, to connect to any one of the social network servers **102***a* through **102***n*. The user devices **115***a* through **115***n* may be a desktop computer, a game system or a mobile phone. These entities (user devices **115***a*-**115***n* and social network servers **102***a*-**102***n*) are communicatively coupled via one or more networks **105***a*, **105***b*, and **105***n*. Although only three user devices or platforms **115***a*, **115***b* through **115***n* are illustrated, any numbers of user devices or platforms **115***n* may be used by any number of users (players, gamers, or the like) **125***n*. Moreover, those skilled in the art should recognize that while the present disclosure is described below primarily in the context of providing gaming applications, the present disclosure may be applicable to other types of applications, for entertainment or

otherwise. As some examples, gaming applications may include operations for creating plays, participating in plays, etc.

The user devices **115***a* through **115***n* in FIG. **1** are illustrated by way of example. Although FIG. **1** illustrates only three devices, the present disclosure applies to any system architecture having one or more user devices **115***a* through **115***n* (with user-interface applications **117***a* through **117***n*), therefore, any number of user devices **115***n* (hundreds, thousands, even millions or more) may be used.

Furthermore, while only three networks **105***a*, **105***b*, and **105***n* are illustrated as coupled to the user devices **115***a*, **115***b* through **115***n*, the social network servers **102***a*-**102***n*, the profile server **130**, the web server **132**, the online live gaming server **140**, the cross-platform server **142**, and one or more third party servers **134***a* through **134***n*, in practice, any number of networks **105***n* may be connected, either directly or indirectly, to these entities. In addition, although only two third party servers **134***a* through **134***n* are shown, the system architecture **100** may include one or more third party servers **134***n*, each with a gaming platform **106***b* through **106***n*, operating one or more gaming applications that are similar or different.

In some embodiments, the social network server **102***a* is coupled to the network **105***a*, via a signal line **110**. The social network server **102***a* includes a social network application **104**, which comprises the software routines and instructions to operate the social network server **102***a* and its functions and operations. Although only one social network server **102***a* is described here, persons of ordinary skill in the art should recognize that multiple servers may be present, as illustrated by social network servers **102***n*, each with functionality similar to social network server **102***a* or different.

The term "social network" as used here encompasses its plain and ordinary meaning including, but not limited to, any type of social structure where the users are connected by a common feature or link. The common feature includes relationships/connections, e.g., friendship, family, work, a similar interest, etc. The common features are provided by one or more social networking systems, such as those included in the system architecture **100**, including explicitly-defined relationships and relationships implied by social connections with other online users, where the relationships form a social graph **108**.

The term "social graph" as used here encompasses its plain and ordinary meaning including, but not limited to, a set of online relationships between users (players and non-players), such as provided by one or more social networking systems, operating on social network servers **102***a* through **102***n*, including explicitly-defined relationships and relationships implied by social connections with other online users, where the relationships form a social graph. In some examples, the social graph **108** may reflect a mapping of these users and how they are related.

It should be understood that social network server **102***a* and the social network software/application **104** are representative of a single social network. Each of the plurality of social networks **102***a* through **102***n* is coupled to any one of the networks **105***a*, **105***b*, and **105***n*, each having its own server, application, and social graph. For example, a first social network system operated or hosted on a social network server may be directed to business networking, a second directed to or centered on academics, a third directed to local business, a fourth directed to dating or gaming, and yet others directed to other general interests or perhaps a specific focus. Yet, each may provide access to a gaming platform **106***a* for operating or providing access to video gaming applications.

A profile server **130** is illustrated as a stand-alone server in FIG. **1**. In other embodiments of the system architecture **100**, all or part of the profile server **130** may be part of the social network server **102***a*. The profile server **130** is directly connected to the network **105***a*, via a line **131**. The profile server **130** stores profiles for all the users that belong to a social network. A third party server **134***a* is connected to the network **105***b*, via a signal line **135**. A web server **132** is connected, via a line **133**, to the network **105***n*. The web server **132** delivers access to content, via the internet, for example, by hosted websites or the like. Users may use the web browsers on their electronic devices or gaming platforms to browse for gaming applications and access websites hosting gaming applications. An online-live-gaming server **140** is connected to the network **105***a* by line **141** and a cross-platform server **142** is connected to a network **105***n* by line **143**. The cross-platform server **142** may serve as a gateway to different servers and accommodating access by different user platforms.

An online live gaming server **140** is an online multiplayer gaming and digital media delivery service connected to the network **105***a* through **105***n* via signal line **141** for providing users (i.e., players) with online gaming capabilities. This allows users to interact (e.g., play games) with multiple players (hundreds, thousands, if not millions) via the online live gaming server **140** (e.g., Xbox Live, Playstation Network, etc.).

A cross-platform server **142** is an online server connected to the network **105***a* through **105***n* via signal line **143** that receives information from one or more clients (e.g., mobile device, social network, gaming server, etc.) and translates the data such that it becomes usable by the gaming platform **106***a* through **106***n*. The cross-platform server **142** also translates information from the gaming platform **106***a* through **106***n* such that it becomes usable by the one or more clients (e.g., mobile device, social network, gaming server, etc.).

The user devices or player gaming platforms **115***a* through **115***n* can be a computing device, for example, a laptop computer, a desktop computer, a tablet computer, a mobile telephone (iOS, Android, or windows-based phone, a personal digital assistant (PDA), a mobile email device, a portable game player, a game console (PS3, Xbox 360, Wii or the like) a portable music player, a television with one or more processors embedded in the television or coupled to it, or any other electronic device capable of accessing a network and participating in a gaming application. The user devices **115***a* through **115***n* include user-interface applications indicated by reference numerals **117***a*, **117***b*, through **117***n*.

The network **105***a*, **105***b*, or **105***n*, is of conventional type, wired or wireless, and may have any number of configurations, such as a star configuration, token ring configuration, or other configurations known to those skilled in the art. Furthermore, the network **105** may comprise a local area network (LAN), a wide area network (WAN, e.g., the Internet), and/or any other interconnected data path across which one or more devices may communicate.

In another embodiment, the network **105***a*, **105***b*, or **105***n* may be a peer-to-peer network. The network **105***a*, **105***b*, or **105***n* may also be coupled to or include portions of one or more telecommunications networks for sending data in a variety of different communication protocols.

In yet another embodiment, the network **105***a*, **105***b*, or **105***n*, includes Bluetooth communication networks or a cellular communications network for sending and receiving data such as via short messaging service (SMS), multimedia messaging service (MMS), hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP), direct data connection, WAP, email, etc.

In some embodiments, the social network server **102***a*, the profile server **130**, the web server **132**, the online-live-gaming server **140**, and cross-platform server **142**, and the third party servers **134***a* through **134***n* are hardware servers including a processor, memory, and network communication capabilities. One or more of the users (players or gamers) **125***a* through **125***n* access any of the social network servers **102***a* through **102***n*, or the third party servers **134***a* through **134***n*, or any of the other servers, via browsers in their user devices or gaming platforms and via the web server **132**. The user devices **115***a* through **115***n* have user interface applications **117***a*, **117***b*, through **117***n*, that manage access by particular players to select gaming applications or their choice.

FIG. **2** is a block diagram illustrating some embodiments of the social network server **102** (a through n) or third party server **134** (a through n) or any other server hosting a gaming environment. In FIG. **2**, like reference numerals have been used to reference like components with the same or similar functionality that has been described above with reference to FIG. **1**. Since those components have been described above that description is not repeated here. The social network server **102***a* generally comprises one or more processors, although only one processor **235** is illustrated in FIG. **2**. The processor is coupled via a bus **220** to memory **237** and database storage **233**, which stores user account data **252**, game options data **254**, user rewards/points **256**, user play/save data **258**, game options/preferences **260**, promotion data **262** and advertising data **264**.

In some embodiments, the database storage **233** is a database organized by the hosting server and the user or either one. For each user or player, the data storage **233** stores data on the user and user game plays, etc. For example, this data may include related social network activity such as posts, shares, invitations, status changes, etc., associated with each user engaged in a video gaming application.

A user or player **125***a*, via a user or gaming device **115***a*, communicates a request to initiate a gaming application or reacts to a keyword via communication unit **239**. The "set up" for a video gaming application is managed by the gaming platform **106***a*. It should be recognized that the gaming platform **106***a* (illustrated in the social network server **102***a*) and **106***b* (illustrated in the third party server **134***a*) are shown separately, but include similar functionality, at least for purposes of operating the gaming applications. A user or player display **25** coupled to the user device **115***a* through *n*, is configured to provide the video source of the gaming application in one of many formats, high definition graphics, three dimensional formats, etc.

Referring now to FIG. **3**, like reference numerals have been used to reference like components with the same or similar functionality that has been described above with reference to FIG. **1**. Since those components have been described above, that description is not repeated here. The gaming platform or environment **106** (a orb) includes various modules that are programmed to perform the functionalities described here. These modules may be variously distributed or may be in a single unit. The gaming platform **106** includes a user/player interface module **301**, a permissions module **303**, a user/player account module **305**, a user/player status module **307**, a promotion/rewards module **309**, a game initiation/operation module **311**, and a social-network module **313**. Each of these modules is coupled to a software communication mechanism **320** to communicate the other modules. Examples of a software communications mechanism **320** may be an object bus (such as COBRA), direct socket communication (such as TCP/IP sockets) among software modules, remote procedure calls, UDP broadcasts and receipts, HTTP connections, function or procedure calls, etc. Further, any or all of the communication could be secure (SSH, HTTPS, etc.). The software communication can be implemented on any underlying hardware, such as a network, the Internet, a bus **220** of FIG. **2**, or a combination thereof, etc.

By way of example, a particular user **125***a* communicates via a user device **115***a*, to either initiate or react to a game play. The user interface module **301** facilitates a connection of the user device **115***a* with the social network server **102***a*, in the event the player wishes to engage or participate in a gaming application via the social network server **102***a*. The permission module **303** ensures that the user device is compliant with protocols and any privacy concerns. Once a video gaming application has been set up, the user/player account module **305** makes a note of the user to determine if the user has an existing account or must create one. The user/player status module **307** considers the status of the various users ("leader," "follower," or "spectator"). A promotion/rewards module **309** operates the necessary promotions permitting players to earn rewards accorded by the promotions. The game initiation/operation module **311** initiates play and the social network module **313** tracks the applications engaged by a particular player and updates the player's social profile accordingly.

Example Methods

FIG. **4** is a flow chart illustrating one example method **400** for one or more users (players or gamers) to select a "main" game and branch off for playing a portion of the "main" game. The method **400** begins with selecting a "main" game at block **402**, and initiating a game play, for either "solo" play or collaborative or cooperative play, illustrated by block **404**. The method **400** proceeds to the next block **406**, at which point, one or more players (with their user devices) create one or more sub games based on the "main" game or branching off from the "main" game. As explained above, players may pursue a particular aspect of the "main" game, separately, either via the same player device, or via another user device (for example, move from a desktop or dedicated game console, to a mobile device, for example, a smartphone).

The method **400** proceeds to block **408**, at which stage, user information relating to the sub game is stored on the user device. At block **410**, the method **400** proceeds and transfers the user information to the "main" game. Finally, the method **400** proceeds to block **412**, at which stage, the "main" game is synchronized with the user information obtained from the sub game.

Referring now to the flow chart illustrated in FIG. **5**, an example method for obtaining a promotion is described. As described above, video gaming applications may be used in conjunction with promotions or advertising in order to coax players to purchase products or services that are either related to the gaming applications or otherwise. The user interface is configured to provide rewards to players upon receiving the promotions or advertising. The example method **500** illustrated here begins at block **502**, where user or player accounts are created when a user or player decides to initiate play of a particular gaming application. The player

then participates in the promotion, for example, by viewing the particulars of a promotion (advertising on a product or service), and receives additional points for creating an account, as indicated at block **504**. The method **500** proceeds to block **506**, where the promotion is stored into the particular player's account and at block **508** the player initiates game play.

Referring now to the flow chart illustrated in FIG. **6**, some example operations for providing multiple levels of play are illustrated. In particular, FIG. **6** illustrates an example method **600** for assigning a status to a player. The method **600** begins and proceeds to block **602**, at which point users are signed in. The user or player can indicate preferences for the level of play the user desires to participate at, which are received by the video gaming platform, as illustrated at block **604**. The video gaming platform assigns a status to the user, at block **606**, for example, designating the user as a "leader," a "follower," a "bystander" or any other designation used by the video gaming application. Each of these designations imposes limits on play associated with them. For example, as indicated above, a "leader" is permitted to play the entire game whereas a "follower" is permitted to play only a portion of the game. The video gaming platform modifies player capabilities based on user status, as illustrated at block **608**. User "status" accords full play capabilities to a "leader," "restricted" or "limited" play capabilities to a "follower" and "viewing" and capability to "influence" play with keyword responses to a "bystander."

FIG. **7** illustrates an example method **700** for earning rewards/features within a game. The example method **700** begins and proceeds to block **702**, at which stage, a user or player signs in or is displayed log-in options. The method **700** proceeds to block **704** including one or more operations for initiating or accepting user game play. The method **700** proceeds to block **706**, at which stage, one or operations receive rewards and/or features for players based on game play. The method **700** proceeds to the next block **708**, which includes one or more operations for storing received rewards and/or features for player accounts.

FIG. **8** illustrates that multiple users, for example, Users 1, 2, 3, through N, each with a different status, for example, either "leader," "bystander," or "follower," may initiate games, for example Game 1 (indicated by reference numeral **810***a*), Game 2 (indicated by reference numeral **810***b*), Game 3 (indicated by reference numeral **810***c*), through Game N (indicated by reference numeral **810***d*). Each of these games is played in a virtual game arena **804**, either individual or shared, hosted on a dedicated server or in a cloud. User 2 is illustrated as branching off a sub game 1 (indicated by reference numeral **820**), for separate play. Any information accumulated during the sub game is synchronized after User 2 reconnects to the original game. A user with "bystander" status may influence the game by responding to wall posts or responding with a key word. Reward or point allocation is based on the status of the player. For example, a player playing a game (for example, a follower), receives rewards or takes away from the main game player more than a bystander does. A bystander does not receive any rewards; its role is simply to assist a friend or influence game play by a "core" player.

FIG. **9** illustrates a video gaming scenario, with two core players 1 and 2 (at A and D), who have a "leader" status, illustrated at **902** and **908**. A "casual" player or "follower" (at B) is illustrated by reference numeral **904** and has the capability to influence both the core players, as indicated by the arrows. Additionally, a "core" player, for example, Player 2, can participate as a "bystander" as well and influence another "core" player, Player 1. A non-player or "bystander" may also participate and provide keyword-based participation. All the various players interact with each other, some having larger impact (those that are "leader" or "core" players) on the play of another "core" player, whereas a "casual" player has a smaller or little impact on the play of others, and a "bystander" has even less impact.

As one example, a religious gaming application is described here. A "core" player may create his or her own church or organization. Another "core" player 2 may create his or her own church or organization as well. The "casual" player 3 may be a follower of both "core" Player 1 and Player 2, such that acts by the "follower" either enhance or detract a play by Player 1 or Player 2. For example, the "follower" Player 3 may give virtual money ($10 per day out of a $20) to each of the "core" players. Circumstances may change this flow of money, for example, "core" Player 2 upsets follower Player 3, who routes all of his virtual money to Player 1. Player 2 may retaliate against Player 3, by initiating an action against Player 1, creating a deficit in his or her account, thereby impacting the play by Player 1. Likewise, the bystander C may continue to influence plays by Player 1 or Player 2.

FIG. **10** illustrates a gaming scenario with the virtual game arena **804** with Game 1 (indicated by reference numeral **810***a*), Game 2 (indicated by reference numeral **810***b*), Game 3 (indicated by reference numeral **810***c*) through Games N (indicated by reference numeral **810***d*) engaged by users. A user creates an account to play any of these games and may receive display of a promotion or advertisement. The user may acknowledge the promotion and instantly earn points or rewards from the game. These operations are controlled by a controller or processor **1010**. User information is recorded in memory **1020**. The user information may be user-game relationship data, user points (check-in rewards and points earned by play).

FIG. **11** illustrates an example data storage configuration. The data storage **233** may include various types of data. In a first data cell **252**, the data storage **233** includes user-account data **252**, which may include a name, user name, age and birthdate, all of these items indicated generally by reference numeral **1110**. The data storage **233** in a second cell may include a game-options data, including data on sound, graphics, monitor, and controls, indicated generally by reference numeral **1120**. The data storage **233** may include in a third cell, user rewards/points including data on unlocked content, number of points, and rewards, all of these items indicated generally by reference numeral **1130**. In a fourth cell, the data storage **233** includes a user play/save data indicated by reference numeral **258** including as examples "game save" data or "location" data, both examples indicated generally by reference numeral **1160**. In a fifth cell, the data storage **233** includes game options/preferences, indicated by reference numeral **260**, including as one example game-specific options, indicated by reference numeral **1150**. In a sixth cell, the data storage **233** may include promotions data, indicated by reference numeral **262**, including as examples data on promotions, and unlocked promotion content, indicated generally by reference numeral **1160**. In a seventh cell, the data storage **233** includes advertising data, indicated by reference numeral **264**, which may include data on advertisements 1, 2, through N, all of this data indicated generally by reference numeral **1170**.

FIG. **12** illustrates an example method for aviation game play. It should be understood that the order of the operations

in FIG. **12** is merely by way of example and may be performed in different orders than those that are illustrated and some operations may be excluded, and different combinations of the operations may be performed. In the example method illustrated, one or more operations may include signing in/logging in to a select game (for example, an aviation game), as illustrated by block **1202**. The method **1200** then proceeds to the next block **1204** and may include one or more operations to perform an action within the game (for example, displayed as a two-dimensional or three-dimensional display). The method **1200** then proceeds to the next block **1206** and may include one or more operations to post a description of the action in a social network feed. The method **1200** then proceeds to the next block **1208** and may include one or more operations to receive one or more rewards based on events from the social network feed and/or player interactions.

FIG. **13** illustrates an example of a graphical representation of a flight route that may be created in this gaming application (aviation game). Multiple players (Gamers **1** through **6**) may engage in this game, as illustrated by reference numeral **1410** in FIG. **14**. Each of these gamers may be at remote locations and may access this game operated on a third party server. An action by gamer **1** impacting another gamer is indicated to any of the other gamers impacted, requiring acceptance or denial by the gamer impacted. The impacted gamer may "accept" the action, indicated by reference numeral **1420** or may "decline" the action, indicated by reference numeral **1430**.

As one example of a select game, an aviation video gaming application is described here in FIG. **15** through FIG. **31**. FIG. **15** illustrates some embodiments of a user interface **1500** for displaying an in-game message related to another player's activity. A player may receive an in-game notification (indicated by reference numeral **1510**) describing certain activities relating to the player. For example the in-game notification (indicated by reference numeral **1510**) states that friends have visited the player's airport and allows the player to view the description (by pressing the button **1520**) of what the friends' did while at the player's airport.

FIG. **16** illustrates some embodiments of a user interface **1600** for displaying an in-game message related to awarding items. A player may receive an in-game notification (indicated by reference numeral **1610**) describing an in-game item that was given to the player by a friend to assist the player in completing a quest (i.e., challenge). The in-game notification (indicated by reference numeral **1610**) may also allow the user (via the share button **1620**) to share this information and/or the in-game item with one or more additional players. The in-game notification (indicated by reference numeral **1610**) may also allow the user (via the close button **1620**) to hide the in-game notification.

FIG. **17** illustrates some embodiments **1700** of example in-game messages related to another player's activity. For example, a player may give experience points to another player, as indicated by the in game notification **1710**. A player may sabotage another player's flight by damaging the airplane, as indicated by the in game notification **1720**. A player may sabotage another player's airport by damaging a construction site, as indicated by the in game notification **1730**. A player may improve another player's travel time by giving them clear skies, as indicated by the in game notification **1740**. A player may have their airport shut down due to in-game weather conditions, as indicated by the in game notification **1750**. A player may have their airport shut down due to a particular event, for example, the president visiting a player's airport, as indicated by the in game notification **1760**.

FIG. **18** illustrates an example of the user interface display **1800** to a user in the event a video gaming application is hosted or accessed by a social network. A user may accept a request via posting a comment (# accept in this example) to the social network post. User posts are indicated by **1810**, user activities or operations during play are indicated by **1820**, and user acceptances (indicated by reference numeral **1840**) and approvals are indicated by reference numeral **1830**.

FIG. **19** illustrates an example of a user interface **1900** for unlocking game play content within the game. A user may unlock in-game content by posting a comment on a player's social network post. A friend's activities and status during a game are indicated by **1920**, and promotion approvals are indicated by **1930**. Approvals may be by the user's friends **1940** and **1950**.

As one example, an aviation video gaming application is described here. The specific rules of the social network aspect of the aviation gaming application (e.g., AviNation) are indicated below, simply by way of example:

GPS/Check-in Game Play—Airport Specific

Player must log back into the game to collect all that they have earned every time someone posts. If not, they are subject to losing benefits (see comments)

1. Airport Check-ins (only players who are playing the game):
    1. For the player who checks in receives:
        1. Passengers (e.g. Extra 10/100)—[can only check-in to same airport once per day]
        2. Virtual currency (e.g. $10,000) [automatically added to players account]
        3. Either experience or energy points (not both)
    2. For the players who "like" the check-in:
        1. The player who checked in receives:
            1. Passengers
            2. Energy points
        2. The player who clicked "like" receives:
            1. Additional passengers
            2. Energy points
        3. Non-Players who "like" the check-in, the main player is awarded a fraction of passengers/energy (e.g., ⅕ or less)
    3. Comments (Key Words)—each player can only post one key word—subsequent posts from the same player are ignored.
        1. "Oversold"
            1. Each player of AviNation receive 10% of the passengers that the primary check-in player has earned but not collected yet;
            2. Each non-player results in a loss of one-passenger from the primary check-in player has earned but not collected yet;
        2. "Flight Cancelled"
            1. Player who first posts this that plays AviNation receives all of the passengers that the primary check-in player has earned but not yet collected;
            2. Player who second posts this receives all the energy a player has earned upon check-in but has not yet collected;
        3. "Mechanical"—anyone can post
            1. One of the check-in player's aircraft must be repaired (random aircraft) before it can fly again—only one airplane can be affected and only once by a player.

4. "Frequent Flyer"
    1. Each player of AviNation receives a 10% passenger bump for the day; check-in player receives a 10% bump on uncollected passengers

Airport specific check-ins should be focused on passengers, money, and possibly experience or energy (not both).

Player Wall Post of a New Route Established

For players advertising a new route on their wall:

1. "like" post:
    1. Player who posted the new route receives:
        1. New passengers for the day (player must log in to collect)
        2. Experience or Energy (not both)
    2. Player who "liked" the post that plays the game receives:
        1. Certain number of passengers for the day
    3. Non-players who "like" the post add ⅕ (or minimum number) of the passengers (e.g., 1)
2. Comments (key words):
    1. "Oversold"
        1. Each player of AviNation receive 10% of the passengers that primary check-in player has earned but not collected yet;
        2. Each non-player results in a loss of one-passenger from the primary check-in player has earned but not collected yet;
    2. "Flight Cancelled"
        1. Player who first posts this that plays AviNation receives all of the passengers that the primary check-in player has earned but not yet collected;
        2. Player who second posts this receives all the energy a player earned upon check-in but has not yet collected;
    3. "Mechanical"—anyone can post
        1. One of the check-in players aircraft must be repaired (random aircraft) before it can fly again—only one airplane can be affected and only once by a player.
    4. "Frequent Flyer"
        1. Each player of AviNation receives a 10% passenger bump for the day; check-in player receives a 10% bump on uncollected passengers

Action of a Player Who Buys a New Airplane:

1. "like"
    1. Player who posted receives:
        1. Additional fuel (free)
    2. Player who "liked" the post receives:
        1. 5 additional passengers
1. Comments (key words):
    1. "Mechanical"—anyone can post
        1. One of the check-in players aircraft must be repaired (random aircraft) before it can fly again—only one airplane can be affected and only once by a player.
    2. "Frequent Flyer"
        1. Each player (original post and respondent) of AviNation receives a 10% passenger bump for the day; check-in player receives a 10% bump on uncollected passengers

In general for each action, the following are examples:

1. Each post does NOT have to award a lot of game items to the original poster or the respondent. It is kept in context to what is being posted. Examples:
    1. Setting up a new route may earn experience and passengers
    2. Buying an airplane may award fuel and passengers
    3. Setting up a terminal may award passengers and energy
2. There needs to be competitive play in the spectator wall posts with key words:
    1. Key words that continue to award to the primary poster and also the spectator;
    2. Key words that 'steal' items away from primary poster to respondent player;
    3. Key words that are detrimental to a player (whether completely detrimental or just gives everything not collected to the respondent player)
    4. Key words that are descriptive to the action involved.
3. The "like" button should award items to both players
4. Players who are being awarded items must go back (log-in) to the game to collect them or they are fair game for other players

FIG. **20**A illustrates an example of a user interface **2000** within a social network with a player notification about one player's promotion within the game and other player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2004** indicates that the player has been promoted within the game. The notification **2010** indicates that for the approval **2012** from a player, the commenter and the poster receive three points within the game. The notification **2020** indicates that for the comment **2022**, the commenter and the poster receive five points within the game.

FIG. **20**B illustrates an example of a user interface **2050** within a social network with a player notification about one player's promotion within the game and other non-player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2054** indicates that the player has been promoted within the game. The notification **2060** indicates that for the approval **2062**, the player (i.e., poster) receives three points within the game. The notification **2070** indicates that for the comment **2072** from a non-player, the player (i.e., poster) receives one point within the game.

FIG. **21**A illustrates an example of a user interface **2100** within a social network with a player notification about one player traveling to another player's area within the game and other player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2102** indicates that the player is traveling to another player's airport. The notification **2110** indicates that for the approval, the flight time is decreased by 5%. The notification **2112** indicates that for the comment "# divert" from a player, the airplane is sent to the commenter's airport. The notification **2114** indicates that for the comment "# roger" from a player, the airplane receives two passengers. The notification **2116** indicates that for the comment "# clear skies" from a player, the flight time is decreased by 5%. The notification **2118** indicates that for the comment "# turbulence" from a player, the flight time is increased by 5%. The notification **2120** indicates that for the comment "# thunderstorm" from a player, the commenter receives a thunderstorm item (in-game item). The notification **2122** indicates that for the comment "# snowstorm" from a player, the commenter receives a snowstorm item (in-game item).

FIG. **21**B illustrates an example of a user interface **2150** within a social network with a player notification about one player traveling to another player's area within the game and other non-player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2152** indicates that the player is traveling to another player's airport. The notification **2160** indicates that for the approval, the flight time is decreased by 5%. The notification **2162** indicates that for the comment "# divert" from a non-player, the airplane is sent to the closest friend's airport. The notification **2164** indicates that for the comment "# roger" from a non-player, the airplane receives one

passenger. The notification **2166** indicates that for the comment "# clear skies" from a non-player, the flight time is decreased by 5%. The notification **2168** indicates that for the comment "# turbulence" from a non-player, the flight time is increased by 5%. The notification **2170** indicates that for the comment "# thunderstorm" from a non-player, the player's airport is hit by a thunderstorm. The notification **2172** indicates that for the comment "# snowstorm" from a non-player, the player's airport is hit by a snowstorm.

FIG. **22**A illustrates an example of a user interface **2200** within a social network with a player notification about one player visiting another player's area within the game and other player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2202** indicates that the player is visiting another player's airport. The notification **2210** indicates that for the approval, one energy point is given to both players. The notification **2212** indicates that for the comment "# thanks" from a player, five energy points are given to both players. The notification **2214** indicates that for the comment "# thunderstorm" from a player, the commenter receives a thunderstorm item (in-game item). The notification **2216** indicates that for the comment "# snowstorm" from a player, the commenter receives a snowstorm item (in-game item).

FIG. **22**B illustrates an example of a user interface **2250** within a social network with a player notification about one player visiting another player's area within the game and other non-player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2252** indicates that the player is visiting another player's airport. The notification **2260** indicates that for the approval, one energy point is given to the player (i.e., poster). The notification **2262** indicates that for the comment "# thanks" from a non-player, two energy points are given to the player (i.e., poster). The notification **2264** indicates that for the comment "# thunderstorm" from a non-player, the player's (i.e., poster) airport is hit by a thunderstorm. The notification **2266** indicates that for the comment "# snowstorm" from a non-player, the player's (i.e., poster) airport is hit by a snowstorm.

FIG. **23**A illustrates an example of a user interface **2300** within a social network with a player notification about one player sending a game-play item within the game and other player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2302** indicates that the player has sent an airplane to an in-game airport (in this example John Wayne Airport). The notification **2310** indicates that for the approval, the flight time is decreased by 5%. The notification **2312** indicates that for the comment "# bird attack" from a player, the airplane is damaged and the flight time is increased by 5%. The notification **2314** indicates that for the comment "# turbulence" from a player, the flight time is increased by 5%. The notification **2316** indicates that for the comment "# clear skies" from a player, the flight time is decreased by 5%. The notification **2318** indicates that for the comment "# thunderstorm" from a player, the commenter receives a thunderstorm item (in-game item). The notification **2320** indicates that for the comment "# snowstorm" from a player, the commenter receives a snowstorm item (in-game item).

FIG. **23**B illustrates an example of a user interface **2350** within a social network with a player notification about one player sending a game-play item within the game and other non-player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2352** indicates that the player has sent an airplane to an in-game airport (in this example John Wayne Airport). The notification **2360** indicates that for the approval, the flight time is decreased by 5%. The notification **2362** indicates that for the comment "# bird attack" from a non-player, the airplane is damaged and the flight time is increased by 5%. The notification **2364** indicates that for the comment "# turbulence" from a non-player, the flight time is increased by 5%. The notification **2366** indicates that for the comment "# clear skies" from a non-player, the flight time is decreased by 5%. The notification **2368** indicates that for the comment "# thunderstorm" from a non-player, the player's (i.e., poster) airport is hit by a thunderstorm. The notification **2370** indicates that for the comment "# snowstorm" from a non-player, the player's (i.e., poster) airport is hit by a snowstorm.

FIG. **24**A illustrates an example of a user interface **2400** within a social network with a player notification about one player purchasing a game-play item within the game and other player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2402** indicates that the player has purchased an in-game airplane. The notification **2410** indicates that for the approval, the commenter gains 10 coins. The notification **2412** indicates that for the comment "# maiden voyage" from a player, the commenter and the poster gain one "1 hour boost item". The notification **2414** indicates that for the comment "# thunderstorm" from a player, the commenter receives a thunderstorm item (in-game item). The notification **2416** indicates that for the comment "# snowstorm" from a player, the commenter receives a snowstorm item (in-game item).

FIG. **24**B illustrates an example of a user interface **2450** within a social network with a player notification about one player purchasing a game-play item within the game and other non-player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2452** indicates that the player has purchased an in-game airplane. The notification **2460** indicates that for the approval, no award is given. The notification **2462** indicates that for the comment "# maiden voyage" from a non-player, the player (i.e., poster) receives one experience point. The notification **2464** indicates that for the comment "# thunderstorm" from a non-player, the player's (i.e., poster) airport is hit by a thunderstorm. The notification **2466** indicates that for the comment "# snowstorm" from a non-player, the player's (i.e., poster) airport is hit by a snowstorm.

FIG. **25**A illustrates an example of a user interface **2500** within a social network with a player notification about one player purchasing a game-play area within the game and other player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2502** indicates that the player has purchased a small terminal. The notification **2510** indicates that for the approval, the building time is decreased. The notification **2512** indicates that for the comment "# let me help" from a player, the building time is decreased by 5%. The notification **2514** indicates that for the comment "# congrats" from a player, the commenter is given 10 coins. The notification **2516** indicates that for the comment "# vandalize" from a player, the building time is increased by 5%. The notification **2518** indicates that for the comment "# thunderstorm" from a player, the commenter receives a thunderstorm item (in-game item). The notification **2520** indicates that for the comment "# snowstorm" from a player, the commenter receives a snowstorm item (in-game item).

FIG. **25**B illustrates an example of a user interface **2550** within a social network with a player notification about one player purchasing a game-play area within the game and other non-player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2552** indicates that the player has purchased a small terminal. The notification **2560** indicates that for the approval, the building time is decreased. The notification **2562** indicates that for the comment "# let me help" from a non-player, the building time is decreased by 5%. The

notification **2564** indicates that for the comment "# congrats" from a non-player, the player (i.e., poster) is given 5 coins. The notification **2566** indicates that for the comment "# vandalize" from a non-player, the building is damaged and the building time is increased by 5%. The notification **2568** indicates that for the comment "# thunderstorm" from a non-player, the player's (i.e., poster) airport is hit by a thunderstorm. The notification **2570** indicates that for the comment "# snowstorm" from a non-player, the player's (i.e., poster) airport is hit by a snowstorm.

FIG. **26**A illustrates an example of a user interface **2600** within a social network with a player notification about one player building a game-play item within the game and other player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2602** indicates that the player is trying to finish building a hangar. The notification **2610** indicates that for the approval, the poster and commenter receive three energy points. The notification **2612** indicates that for the comment "# fuel drums" from a player, the poster receives an in-game item.

FIG. **26**B illustrates an example of a user interface **2650** within a social network with a player notification about one player building a game-play item within the game and other non-player comments on the player notification. The notification **2660** indicates that for the approval, the player (i.e., poster) receives three energy points. The notification **2662** indicates that for the comment "# fuel drums" from a non-player, the player (i.e., poster) receives an in-game item.

FIG. **27**A illustrates an example of a user interface **2700** within a social network with a player notification about one player performing a task within the game and other player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2702** indicates that the player is trying to finish a task, in this example, "favor for the mayor." The notification **2710** indicates that for the approval, the poster and commenter receive five experience points. The notification **2712** indicates that for the comment "# lumber" from a player, the poster receives an in-game item.

FIG. **27**B illustrates an example of a user interface **2750** within a social network with a player notification about one player performing a task within the game and other non-player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2752** indicates that the player is trying to finish a task, in this example, "favor for the mayor." The notification **2760** indicates that for the approval, the player (i.e., poster) receives five experience points. The notification **2762** indicates that for the comment "# lumber" from a non-player, the player (i.e., poster) receives an in-game item.

FIG. **28**A illustrates an example of a user interface **2800** within a social network with a player notification about one player finishing a task within the game and other player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2802** indicates that the player has finished a task, in this example, "favor for the mayor." The notification **2810** indicates that for the approval, the poster and commenter receive three experience points. The notification **2812** indicates that for the comment "# congrats" from a player, the poster and commenter receive five experience points.

FIG. **28**B illustrates an example of a user interface **2850** within a social network with a player notification about one player finishing a task within the game and other non-player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2852** indicates that the player has finished a task, in this example, "favor for the mayor." The notification **2860** indicates that for the approval, the player (i.e., poster) receives three experience points. The notification **2862** indicates that for the comment "# congrats" from a non-player, the player (i.e., poster) receives one experience point.

FIG. **29**A illustrates an example of a user interface **2900** within a social network with a player notification about one player arriving at another player's area within the game and other player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2902** indicates that the player has checked into a friend's airport. The notification **2910** indicates that for the approval, the poster and commenter receive two experience points. The notification **2912** indicates that for the comment "# safe flight" from a player, the poster and commenter receive one "+5 energy item."

FIG. **29**B illustrates an example of a user interface **2950** within a social network with a player notification about one player arriving at another player's area within the game and other non-player comments on the player notification. For example, the post **2952** indicates that the player has checked into a friend's airport. The notification **2960** indicates that for the approval, the player (i.e., poster) receives two experience points. The notification **2962** indicates that for the comment "# safe flight" from a non-player, the player (i.e., poster) receives one "+5 energy item."

FIG. **30** illustrates an example of a user interface **3000** including two examples of game states that affect game play. The first example **3010** is a thunderstorm game item that may be used at friend's airports to add rain, thunder, lightning to the airport, and to shut down the airport for an hour. For example, this item can only be used once every 12 hours and after the thunderstorm ends the player cannot be affected for 24 hours. The second example **3020** is a snowstorm game item that may be used at friend's airports to add snow to the airport, and to shut down the airport for an hour. For example, this item can only be used once every 12 hours and after the thunderstorm ends the player cannot be affected for 24 hours.

FIG. **31** illustrates an example of a user interface **3100** including one example of a game state that affects game play. The example **3110** is of Air Force One (i.e., the president) visiting the player's airport. For example, this shuts down the player's airport for 8 hours, the player can interact with Air Force One via a nomination link for decreasing the time Air Force One is at the airport, and after Air Force One is sent off, the player cannot be sent the airplane again for 24 hours.

Referring now to FIG. **32**, an example method **3200** illustrates the operations involved with allowing access from one or more clients (users, players, or gamers) to a game. The method **3200** begins and proceeds (either directly or via other operations) to a block **3202** including one or more operations configured to receive a game play request (for a single player) from one or more clients (for example, via a mobile device, a social network, online gaming server etc.). From there the method **3200** proceeds to the next block **3204**, which includes one or more operations configured to select a game from an incoming port number. From there, the method **3200** proceeds to the next block **3206**, which includes one or more operations configured to authorize a client to send/receive game-play information. From that point the method **3200** proceeds to the next block **3208**, which includes one or more operations for translating game-play information in order to accommodate different clients. From there, the method **3200** proceeds to the next block **3210** including one or more operations configured to either initiate or perform game play through the client. From there, the method **3200** (or subroutine) may either end or proceed to other blocks of operations.

Referring now to FIG. **33**, an example method **3300** illustrates how to determine game-play graphics based on a user device. The method **3300** begins and proceeds to block **3302**, which includes one or more operations configured to sign in a user/player or display log-in options. The method **3300** proceeds to either block **3304** or **3306**. In block **3304**, the method **3300** includes one or more operations for determining the type of user device (for example, desktop, mobile device, tablet etc.) In block **3306**, the method **3300** includes one or more operations for receiving user preferences. From blocks **3304** and **3306**, the method **3300** proceeds to block **3308**, at which stage, with one or more operations, the method alters game-play graphics (for example, 3D, 2D, etc.) based on the type of user device and/or user preference. From there the method **3300** (or subroutine) may end or proceed to other subroutines.

Referring now to FIG. **34**, a method **3400** for synchronizing information across platforms begins and proceeds (either directly or via other operations) to a block **3402**, including one or more operations for either initiating or performing game play. From there, the method **3400** proceeds to the next block **3404**, including one or more operations for receiving game-play information (for example, rewards, features, etc.) From there, the method **3400** proceeds to the next block **3406**, which includes one or more operations configured to synchronize information that is received with a global database. From there, the method **3400** (a subroutine) may either end or proceed to other operations.

Referring now to FIG. **35**, a graphical representation illustrates generally as indicated by reference numeral **3500** integrated play by various users with a different user status. An index of user status is indicated by reference numeral **3502** indicating a "leader," a "follower," and a "bystander." The examples of user "status" indicated accords full play capabilities to a "leader," "restricted" or "limited" play capabilities to a "follower" and "viewing" and capability to "influence" play with keyword responses to a "bystander." FIG. **35** illustrates that multiple users, for example, Users 1, 2, 3, through N, each with a different status, for example, either "leader," "bystander," or "follower," may initiate games, for example, Game 1 (indicated by reference numeral **3510***a*), Game 2 (indicated by reference numeral **3510***b*), Game 3 (indicated by reference numeral **3510***c*) through Game N (indicated by reference numeral **3510***d*). Each of these games is played in a virtual game arena **3504**, either individual or shared, hosted on a dedicated server or in a cloud. Game 1 is displayed or accessed on a desktop, Game 2 on a laptop, Game 3 on a tablet. As one example, User 1 (a "leader") is illustrated as accessing Game 1 on a desktop. As another example, User 3 (a "bystander") is illustrated as viewing Game 1. As yet another example, User 2 (a "follower") is illustrated as branching off to a sub game 1 (indicated by reference numeral **3520**), for separate play on a tablet. Any information accumulated during the sub game is synchronized after User 2 reconnects to the original game. A user with "bystander" status (User 3) may influence the game by responding to wall posts or responding with a key word. Reward or point allocation is based on the status of the player. For example, a player playing a game (for example, a follower), receives rewards or takes away from the main game player more than a bystander does. A bystander does not receive any rewards; its role is simply to assist a friend or influence game play by a "core" player. As another example, User 4 (for example, a follower) may branch off to a sub-game on a mobile phone. Any information for or on the game is synchronized after User 4 reconnects to the original game.

Referring now to FIG. **36**, a graphical representation illustrates that virtual game play may be operated in a cloud for one or more games, concurrently or otherwise, as indicated by reference numeral **3620**. The platform may be agnostic facilitating shared game play, bystander game play or remote game play. Players or gamers may access this virtual game play either via a personal computer **3610**, a game console **3612**, a mobile device **3614**, or a tablet **3616**.

FIG. **37** illustrates a graphical representation indicated generally by reference numeral **3700** to show different user experience. For example, a particular user (User 1) may experience a three-dimensional (3D) display on a computer **3710** (for example, a desktop) during the main game **3712**. From the main game, the same user (User 1) may branch off to a sub-game play to experience a two-dimensional display (2D) as indicated by reference numeral **3722** on a mobile device **3720** (for example, on either a tablet, a mobile device, etc.).

FIG. **38** illustrates integrated play of Game 1 on a desktop (**3510***a*), Game 2 on a laptop (**3510***b*), and Game 3 on a tablet (**3510***c*). As illustrated, each of these games may be accessed via a mobile device client **3810**, a social network client **3820**, and an online gaming client **3830**. An incoming port number determines the appropriate game (**3840**). As one example, a client may be authorized for play in Game 2 through a session key, as illustrated by reference numeral **3842**. Authorization may be with communication with a global accounts database **3850**. Commands are processed (**3840**) with communication with databases (Game 1 database **3860**, Game 2 database **3870**, and Game 3 database **3880**) and replies are generated back to clients (**3846**).

FIG. **39** illustrates an example method for posting game-play activity on a social network. It should be understood that the order of the operations in FIG. **39** is merely by way of example and may be performed in different orders than those that are illustrated and some operations may be excluded, and different combinations of the operations may be performed. In the example method illustrated, one or more operations may include signing in or displaying log-in options, as illustrated by block **3902**. The method **3900** then proceeds to the next block **39039** and may include one or more operations to initiate or perform game play. The method **3900** then proceeds to the next block **3906** and may include one or more operations to post an event to a social network feed. The method **3900** then proceeds to the next block **3908** and may include one or more operations to store post identification information.

FIG. **40** illustrates an example method for interacting with a game based on social network activity. It should be understood that the order of the operations in FIG. **40** is merely by way of example and may be performed in different orders than those that are illustrated and some operations may be excluded, and different combinations of the operations may be performed. In the example method illustrated, one or more operations may include posting game-play event to the social network feed, as illustrated by block **4002**. The method **4000** then proceeds to the next block **4004** and may include one or more operations to receive social interaction (e.g., comments, likes, etc.) related to the posted event. The method **4000** then proceeds to the next block **4006** and may include one or more operations to generate a reward for the player based on the social interaction related to the posted event. The method **4000** then proceeds to the next block **4008** and may include one or more operations to send in-game reward to player.

FIG. **41** illustrates a video gaming scenario, with two core players 1 and 2 (at A and D), who have a "leader" status, indicated by reference numerals **4102** and **4108**. A "casual" player or "follower" (at B) is illustrated by reference numeral **4104** and has the capability to influence both the core players, as indicated by the arrows. Additionally, a "core" player, for example, Player 2, can participate as a "bystander" as well and influence another "core" player, Player 1. A non-player or "bystander" also participates (at C), providing keyword-based participation, as indicated by reference numeral **4106**. All the various players interact with each other, some having larger impact (those that are "leader" or "core" players) on the play of another "core" player, whereas a "casual" player has a smaller or little impact on the play of others, and a "bystander" has even less impact.

As one example, a religious gaming application is described here. A "core" player may create his or her own church or organization. Another "core" player 2 may create his or her own church or organization as well. The "casual" player 3 may be a follower of both "core" Player 1 and Player 2, such that acts by the "follower" either enhance or detract a play by Player 1 or Player 2. By way of example, the follower Player 3 may give virtual money ($10 per day out of a $20) to each of the core players. Circumstances may change this flow of money, for example, "core" Player 2 upsets follower Player 3, who routes all of his virtual money to Player 1. Player 2 may retaliate against Player 3, by initiating an action against Player 1, creating a deficit in his or her account, thereby impacting the play by Player 1. Likewise, the bystander C may continue to influence plays by Player 1 or Player 2. Finally, FIG. **6** illustrates a social network 1, illustrated by reference numeral **4110** and a social network 2 illustrated by reference numeral **4112**, each indicating Player responses and friend responses in Player A's social network or social graph.

FIG. **42** illustrates an example general architecture configuration with a "leader" or "follower" gaming platform **4202**, a "bystander" platform **4204**, location-based game play platforms **4206**, and game consoles **4208**. The "leader" or "follower" platform may facilitate access to video gaming application via social sites and the "bystander" platform **4204** via social network messaging functionality. A flexible platform **4206** may facilitate location-based game play via mobile devices and game consoles **4208** may facilitate unique and custom console gameplay sequences. A central unit **4210** may facilitate continuous game play that is shared across all platforms, thereby making the game content agnostic.

FIG. **43** is a graphical representation **4300** illustrating some embodiments of multiple devices connected for centralized game play in a gaming application linked with a social network. For example, multiple user devices may be connected to a virtual game-play cloud **4320**. The multiple user devices may be all the same or different and may include, for example, one or more personal computers **4310** via a social network server **102***a*, one or more game consoles **4312**, one or more mobile devices **4314**, and one or more tablets **4316**. All or some of these devices are connected to the virtual game-play cloud for platform agnostic, shared, and synchronized gameplay.

FIG. **44** is a graphical representation **4400** illustrating some embodiments of receiving an in-game reward based on social network activity. In some implementations, in-game rewards (experience, coins, special game events etc.) may be triggered by the player's friends commenting or interacting with the player's game activity wall post. For example, the player signs in/logs-in to the game illustrated by block **4410**. Simultaneously the player is logged into the client (that hosts the game application) and the social network to perform social network activity illustrated by blocks **4420** and **4430**. While logged-in to the client, the player may participate in game play, as illustrated by block **4422**. While playing the game, the player may post an event to a social network feed, as illustrated by block **4424** at which point the postID (for access) is written to a database, as illustrated by block **4426**. Also while playing the game, the player may receive an in-game reward, as illustrated by block **4428**.

In the social network, when the postID (for access) is written to a database, as illustrated by block **4426**, the social network application (e.g., game application) loops through all postIDs generated in the game, as illustrated by block **4432**. The social network application then processes each post for comments and likes, as illustrated by block **4434**. The social network application then generates a friend reward within the social network, as illustrated by block **4436**. The social network application then generates a player reward, as illustrated by block **4438** which also sends a request to the game to give the reward to the player in the game.

The comments and game actions they invoke which are described in FIGS. **5-44** are used by way of example, one skilled in the art will recognize that other examples and configurations are possible.

The foregoing description of the implementations of the present technology has been presented for the purposes of illustration and description. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the present technology to the precise form disclosed. Many modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teaching. It is intended that the scope of the present technology be limited not by this detailed description, but rather by the claims of this application. As should be understood by those familiar with the art, the present technology may be implemented in other specific forms, without departing from the spirit or essential characteristics thereof. Likewise, the particular naming and division of the modules, routines, features, attributes, methodologies, and other aspects are not mandatory or significant, and the mechanisms that implement the present disclosure or its features may have different names, divisions and/or formats. Furthermore, as should be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the relevant art, the modules, routines, features, attributes, methodologies and other aspects of the present technology can be implemented as software, hardware, firmware, or any combination of the three. Also, wherever a component, an example of which is a module, of the present technology is implemented as software, the component can be implemented as a standalone program, as part of a larger program, as a plurality of separate programs, as a statically or dynamically linked library, as a kernel loadable module, as a device driver, and/or in every and any other way known now or in the future to those of ordinary skill in the art of computer programming. Additionally, the present technology is in no way limited to implementation in any specific programming language, or for any specific operating system or environment. Accordingly, the disclosure of the present technology is intended to be illustrative, but not limiting, of the scope of the present disclosure, which is set forth in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A computer-implemented method for providing a video gaming environment hosted on a server to one or more users, comprising:

providing access to the video gaming environment, by the server, to the one or more users via one or more user devices, the one or more user devices including a user interface configured to display the video gaming environment;

transmitting, by the server, a content item to a social online service, the content item representing an event associated with a first user in the video gaming environment;

receiving, by the server, an interaction via the social online service of a second user with the content item on the social online service;

determining, by the server, an influence to the video gaming environment based on the interaction via the social online service of the second user with the content item on the social online service; and

modifying, by the server, the video gaming environment based on the influence.

2. The method of claim **1**, wherein the interaction of the second user with the content item includes a comment including a keyword.

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

determining a keyword from the interaction of the second user with the content item; and

determining the influence to the video gaming environment based on the keyword.

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

determining a gameplay status associated with the second user, the gameplay status associated with the second user indicating a role of the second user in the video gaming environment; and

determining the influence to the video gaming environment based on the gameplay status associated with the second user.

5. The method of claim **4**, wherein the gameplay status is selected from a group consisting of a core player status, a casual player status, and a non-player status.

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

determining that a gameplay status associated with the second user is a non-player status; and

responsive to the gameplay status associated with the second user being the non-player status, applying the influence to a game item associated with the first user in the video gaming environment.

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

determining that a gameplay status associated with the second user is a player status; and

responsive to the gameplay status associated with the second user being the player status, applying the influence to a game item associated with the second user in the video gaming environment.

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

responsive to receiving the interaction of the second user with the content item on the social online service, providing a reward to the first user in the video gaming environment.

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

responsive to receiving the interaction of the second user with the content item on the social online service, providing a reward to the second user in the video gaming environment, the reward for the second user being an amount of uncollected reward associated with the first user in the video gaming environment.

10. The method of claim **1**, wherein modifying the video gaming environment based on the influence includes:

applying the influence to a game item in the video gaming environment; and

responsive to applying the influence to the game item, preventing the influence from being applied to the game item for a predetermined time period.

11. A system for hosting and providing a video gaming environment to one or more users, comprising:

one or more processors; and

a memory storing instructions that, when executed by the one or more processors, cause the system to:

provide access to the video gaming environment to the one or more users via one or more user devices, the one or more user devices including a user interface configured to display the video gaming environment;

transmit a content item to a social online service, the content item representing an event associated with a first user in the video gaming environment;

receive an interaction via the social online service of a second user with the content item on the social online service;

determine an influence to the video gaming environment based on the interaction via the social online service of the second user with the content item on the social online service; and

modify the video gaming environment based on the influence.

12. The system of claim **11**, wherein the interaction of the second user with the content item includes a comment including a keyword.

13. The system of claim **11**, wherein the instructions, when executed, cause the system to:

determine a keyword from the interaction of the second user with the content item; and

determine the influence to the video gaming environment based on the keyword.

14. The system of claim **11**, wherein the instructions, when executed, cause the system to:

determine a gameplay status associated with the second user, the gameplay status associated with the second user indicating a role of the second user in the video gaming environment; and

determine the influence to the video gaming environment based on the gameplay status associated with the second user.

15. The system of claim **11**, wherein the instructions, when executed, cause the system to:

determine that a gameplay status associated with the second user is a non-player status; and

responsive to the gameplay status associated with the second user being the non-player status, apply the influence to a game item associated with the first user in the video gaming environment.

16. The system of claim **11**, wherein the instructions, when executed, cause the system to:

determine that a gameplay status associated with the second user is a player status; and

responsive to the gameplay status associated with the second user being the player status, apply the influence to a game item associated with the second user in the video gaming environment.

17. The system of claim **11**, wherein the instructions, when executed, cause the system to:

responsive to receiving the interaction of the second user with the content item on the social online service, provide a reward to the first user in the video gaming environment.

18. The system of claim **11**, wherein the instructions, when executed, cause the system to:

responsive to receiving the interaction of the second user with the content item on the social online service, providing a reward to the second user in the video gaming environment, the reward for the second user being an amount of uncollected reward associated with the first user in the video gaming environment.

19. The system of claim **11**, wherein to modify the video gaming environment based on the influence, the instructions, when executed, cause the system to:

apply the influence to a game item in the video gaming environment; and

responsive to applying the influence to the game item, prevent the influence from being applied to the game item for a predetermined time period.

20. A computer program product comprising a non-transitory computer usable medium including a computer readable program for hosting and providing a video gaming environment to one or more users, wherein the computer readable program when executed on a computer causes the computer to:

provide access to the video gaming environment to the one or more users via one or more user devices, the one or more user devices including a user interface configured to display the video gaming environment;

transmit a content item to a social online service, the content item representing an event associated with a first user in the video gaming environment;

receive an interaction via the social online service of a second user with the content item on the social online service;

determine an influence to the video gaming environment based on the interaction via the social online service of the second user with the content item on the social online service; and

modify the video gaming environment based on the influence.

21. The method of claim **1**, wherein the server is a third-party server.

22. The method of claim **1**, wherein the server is a third-party server that hosts the video gaming environment.

23. The method of claim **1**, wherein the server is a social networking server that hosts the video gaming environment and the social online service.

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