



[54] SYSTEM AND METHODS FOR CONTROLLED ASSET DISPOSITION

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[51] Int. Cl.<sup>6</sup> ..... G06F 153/00

[52] U.S. Cl. .... 364/401; 364/403; 364/478

[58] Field of Search ..... 364/401, 403, 478, 468

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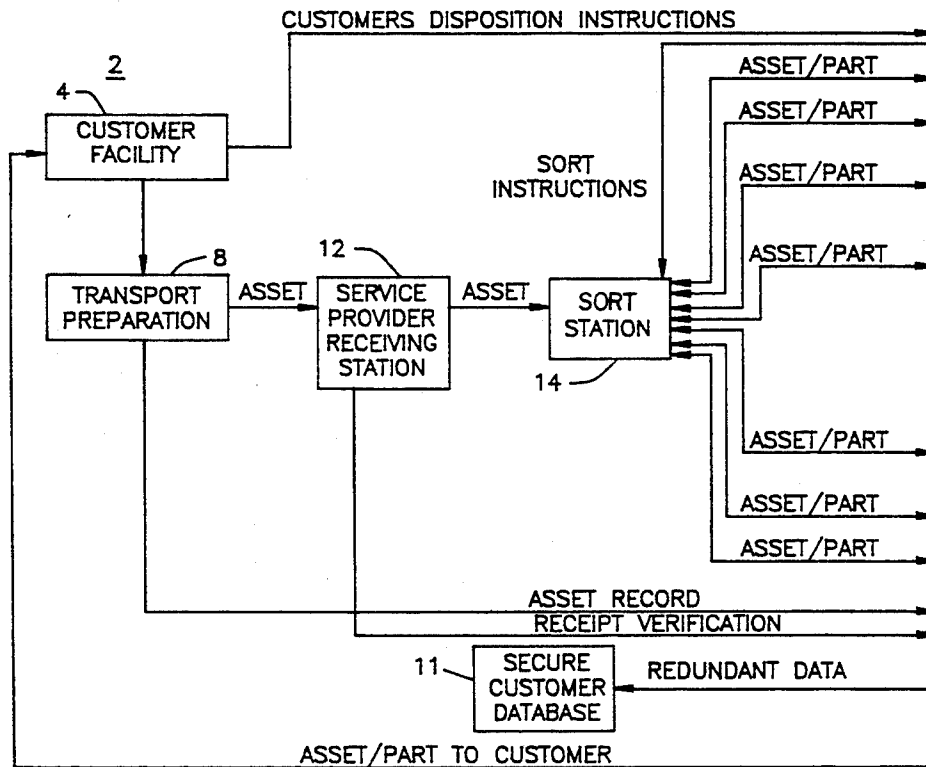
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Primary Examiner—Donald E. McElheny, Jr.  
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Hedman, Gibson & Costigan

[57] ABSTRACT

Disclosed is a method of controlling the disposition of an asset comprising the steps of transporting the asset from a customer facility to a disposition facility, receiving the asset at the disposition facility and creating a receipt record thereof, sorting the asset in accordance with a preselected method of disposition, and disposing of the asset in accordance with said preselected method of disposition; wherein the preselected method of disposition is one of a plurality of methods of disposition comprising: selling the asset on an as-is basis in the same condition that the asset was received at the disposition facility and creating a sale record thereof, refurbishing the asset in accordance with predetermined customer instructions and creating a refurbishment record thereof; dismantling the asset into an assembly of parts in accordance with predetermined customer instructions and creating a dismantle record thereof; dysfunctioning the asset in accordance with predetermined customer instructions and creating a dysfunction record thereof; reclaiming the asset in accordance with predetermined customer instructions and creating a reclaim record thereof; destroying the asset and creating a destruction record thereof; and storing the asset and creating an inventory record thereof. The method is carried out by a multimedia system comprising image capture means, data capture means, computing means, and multimedia devices strategically located throughout.

23 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



DELL EXHIBIT 1001

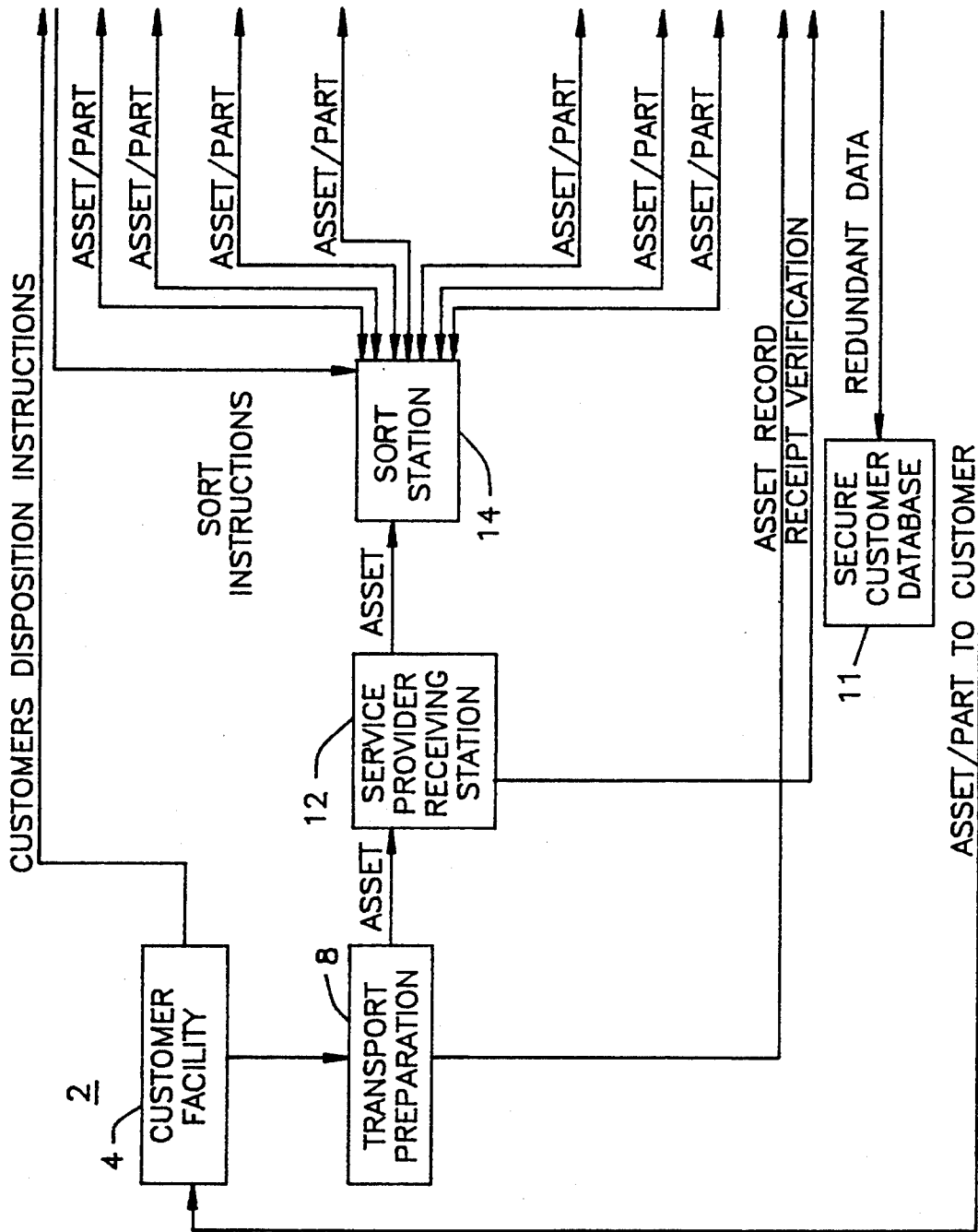


FIG. 1A

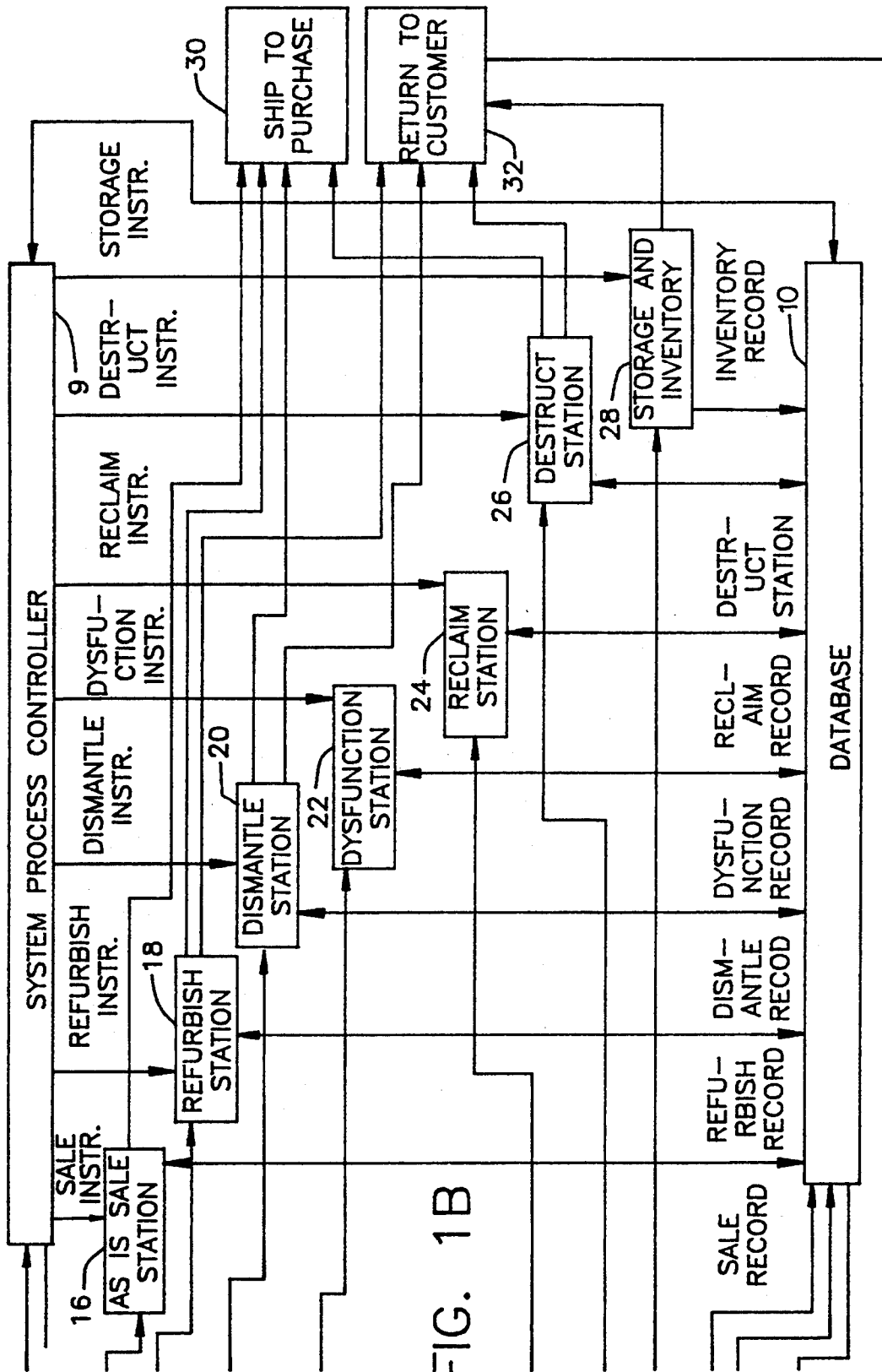


FIG. 1B

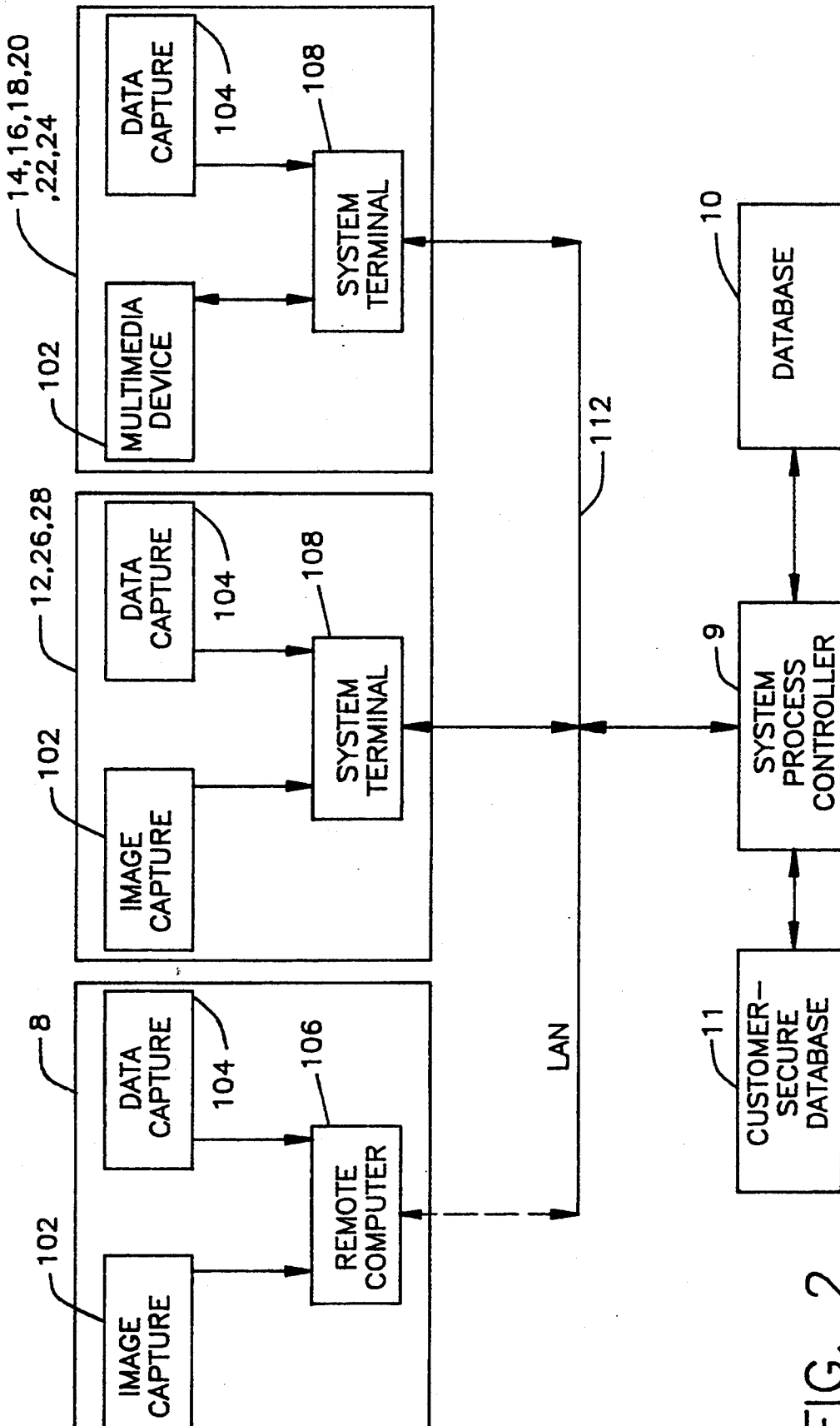


FIG. 2

## SYSTEM AND METHODS FOR CONTROLLED ASSET DISPOSITION

### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a system and method for the controlled disposition of selected capital assets.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In many industries there is a need to control the disposition of certain capital assets for various reasons. Assets may become surplus due to obsolescence or overproduction, they may need refurbishing with new parts, they may need environmentally unsound parts removed or replaced, and the like.

One method in the prior art of controlling the disposition of such assets is complete disposal, which may be accomplished through an outside source. In some instances, the obsolete product may contain subassemblies or parts which have value. For example, a computer manufacturer may introduce a new model mainframe computer and have in its stock a surplus of an older model mainframe. Although the older model mainframe is unsalable, it likely contains many usable parts, such as memory devices, display devices, and the like.

There is thus a need for managing various types of dispositions of surplus or obsolete assets. In the prior art, this may be accomplished by simply providing the surplus products to an outside source which disassembles the products. It has been found, however, that these vendors often inadvertently or fraudulently mismanage the disassembly and disposition of the surplus. For example, parts which should be kept out of the marketplace may be sold on a "black market." This results in fraudulent warranty claims to the original asset manufacturer, poor customer relations, and substantial losses in revenues to the manufacturer.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a system and method for the controlled disposition of assets which overcomes the problems of the prior art.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with this and other objects, the present invention is a controlled capital asset disposition process supported by an interactive multi-media system which combines images of the assets with relevant data and audio records and disposition instructions for security and reconciliation purposes. The method of the present invention of controlling the disposition of an asset comprises the steps of transporting the asset from a customer facility to a disposition facility, receiving the asset at the disposition facility and creating a receipt record thereof, sorting the asset in accordance with a preselected method of disposition, and disposing of the asset in accordance with the preselected method of disposition. In the present invention, the method of disposition which is preselected may be one or any desired combination of certain options, which options include selling the asset on an as-is basis in the same condition that the asset was received at the disposition facility and creating a sale record thereof, refurbishing the asset in accordance with predetermined customer instructions and creating a refurbishment record thereof, dismantling the asset into an assembly of parts in accordance with predetermined customer instructions and creating a dismantle record thereof, dysfunctioning the asset in accordance with predetermined

customer instructions and creating a dysfunction record thereof, reclaiming the asset in accordance with predetermined customer instructions and creating a reclaim record thereof, destroying the asset and creating a destruction record thereof, or storing the asset and creating an inventory record thereof.

The major processes supported by the present invention are the transport process, the receipt process, the sort process, the disposition process, and the certification or verification process.

In accordance with the present invention, the asset to be disposed of is first prepared for transport to the disposition facility. The disposition service provider obtains from the customer an asset record containing pertinent information regarding the asset such as the machine type, model number, serial number or other unique company identifier. In the alternative, the service provider creates an asset record at the customer facility using portable computer means (e.g. a laptop computer). In either case, a unique asset identifier code is assigned by the service provider for continuous tracking and accountability throughout the disposition process. The asset is loaded onto the transporting vehicle, and the vehicle is sealed with a unique sealing device and witnessed by the customer. The service provider creates an image record of the asset that is linked to the unique sealing image with the appropriate transport date.

The receipt process is initiated upon arrival at the service provider's disposition facility. The transport seal is removed, and an image and data record is created in the same fashion as that created at the transport station. The vehicle receipt content data is reconciled with the transport data record to ensure that the asset shipment has not been tampered with.

During the sort process, the asset is routed to the appropriate disposition station (as-is sale, refurbish, dismantle, dysfunction, reclaim, destruct, or storage) in accordance with the customer's instructions. The asset and/or its component parts may be routed to more than one station in accordance with the particular requirements of the customer. For example, a customer may wish to have a computer disassembled and then have a certain part dysfunctioned and destroyed, a certain part refurbished and sold, and a certain part stored in inventory. The asset would be routed first to the dismantle station, and the component parts would be routed to the appropriate disposition station as required.

Thus, during the disposition process, there are several alternative actions which may be taken, depending on the requirements of the customer. The first option is an as-is sale, for which the service provider creates a marketing record of the asset to be used in an electronic bidding process. This process consists of creating an electronic image/data record for distribution to potential buyers on a predetermined mailing list. The service provider also creates this same record for the customer and adds the expected financial return data based on the service provider's data base of prior sales and returns. This creates for the customer the initialization of its financial control process. Upon sale of the asset, the service provider creates a financial record tied to the initial identifier assigned in the receipt process to complete the management and control process.

For the refurbish option of the disposition process, the customer can instruct the service provider to refurbish an asset or a component part in any desired manner.

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