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- JPH10247183A

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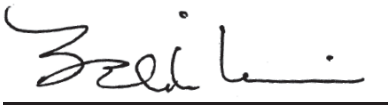

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(54) [Title of the Invention] Computer System and Method

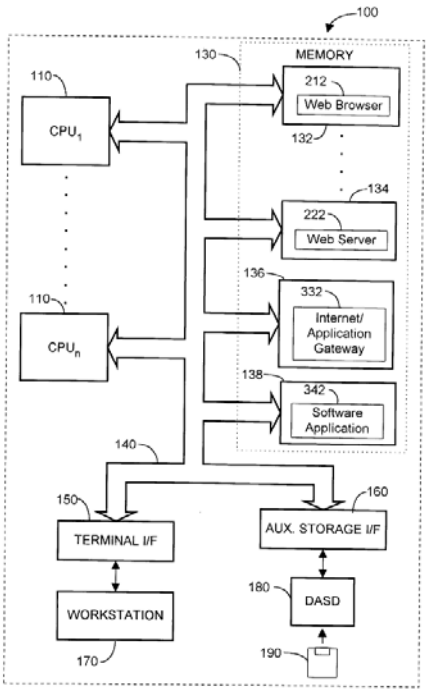
(57) ABSTRACT

PROBLEM

An object of the present invention is to provide the capability to easily access many different application programs over the WWW via a common user interface.

RESOLUTION MEANS

By providing standard procedures, routines, tools, and software “hooks” for accessing software applications over the WWW, software developers can concentrate on the functionality of the application program and easily use HTML to provide a GUI interface for the application program.



What is claimed is:

1. A computer system that provides a common user interface for communicating between a plurality of web browsers and a software application over the World-Wide Web, the computer system comprising:

at least one Central Processing Unit (CPU);

a memory coupled to the CPU; and

a transaction support mechanism, the transaction support mechanism residing in the memory and being executed by the at least one CPU, wherein the transaction support mechanism is capable of receiving and transmitting data to and from the plurality of web browsers via the common user interface, the transaction support mechanism using an identifier mechanism to identify and track the data.

2. The computer system of claim 1, further comprising a security mechanism, the security mechanism residing in the memory and being executed by the at least one CPU, the security mechanism coupled to and providing an interface between the software application and the plurality of web browsers, the security mechanism receiving user input from the plurality of web browsers, the security mechanism retrieving authentication parameters for the software application corresponding to the received input.

3. The computer system of claim 1, further comprising an interface mechanism, the interface mechanism comprising a gateway mechanism for handling at least one variable, the gateway mechanism residing in the memory and being executed by the at least one CPU, the gateway mechanism comprising a universal common gateway interface for communicating between the plurality of web browsers and the software application without requiring reprogramming for the software application.

4. The computer system of claim 1, further comprising a disconnect mechanism, the disconnect mechanism residing in the memory and being executed by the at least one CPU, the disconnect mechanism storing state data and a conversation identifier relating to each conversation between one of the plurality of web browsers and a software application process when the software application process is suspended such that the data can be retrieved when the software application process is resumed.

5. The computer system of claim 1, further comprising:

a security mechanism, the security mechanism residing in the memory and being executed by the at least one CPU, the security mechanism coupled to and providing an interface between the software application and the plurality of web browsers, the security mechanism receiving user input from the plurality of web browsers, the security mechanism retrieving authentication parameters for the software application corresponding to the received input;

an interface mechanism, the interface mechanism comprising a gateway mechanism for handling at least one variable, the gateway mechanism residing in the memory and being executed by

the at least one CPU, the gateway mechanism comprising a universal common gateway interface for communicating between the plurality of web browsers and the software application without requiring reprogramming for the software application; and

a disconnect mechanism, the disconnect mechanism residing in the memory and being executed by the at least one CPU, the disconnect mechanism storing state data and a conversation identifier relating to each conversation between one of the plurality of web browsers and a software application process when the software application process is suspended such that the data can be retrieved when the software application process is resumed.

6. The computer system of claim 1, wherein the transaction support mechanism further comprises a mechanism for communicating with a native interface to the software application.

7. The computer system of claim 1 wherein the transaction support mechanism comprises:

an application gateway in communication with the web server application and the software application, the application gateway residing in the memory and being executed by at least one of the plurality of CPUs, the application gateway including the identifier mechanism, the identifier mechanism generating an identifier for each of the plurality of web browsers and routing data from the software application to the selected one of the plurality of web browsers that correspond to the identifier.

8. The computer system of claim 7 wherein the application gateway processes data received from the plurality of web servers and processes data received from the application program.

9. The computer system of claim 1 wherein the software application is a process engineering software application.

10. The computer system of claim 1 further comprising at least one activity program interface (API) in communication with at least one activity program that executes under the direction of the software application, the at least one activity program interface communicating between the at least one activity program and the application gateway.

11. A computer system that provides a common user interface for communicating between a web browser and a software application over the World-Wide Web, the computer system comprising:

a plurality of Central Processing Units (CPUs);

a memory coupled to the plurality of CPUs;

a plurality of web browsers, each of the plurality of web browsers residing in the memory and being executed by at least one of the plurality of CPUs;

a web server application in communication with at least one of the plurality of web browsers, the web server application residing in the memory and being executed by at least one of the plurality of CPUs;

a software application residing in the memory and being executed by at least one of the plurality of CPUs;

and an application gateway in communication with the web server application and a native interface to the software application, the application gateway residing in the memory and being executed by at least one of the plurality of CPUs, the application gateway including: an identifier mechanism, the identifier mechanism generating an identifier for each of the plurality of web browsers and routing data from the software application to the selected one of the plurality of web browsers that correspond to the identifier.

12. The computer system of claim 11 wherein the application gateway processes data received from the web server application and the application program.

13. The computer system of claim 11 wherein the software application is a process engineering software application.

14. The computer system of claim 11 further comprising at least one activity program interface (API) in communication with at least one activity program that executes under the direction of the software application, the at least one activity program interface communicating between the at least one activity program and the application gateway.

15. The computer system of claim 11 wherein the web server application comprises:

an authenticator, the authenticator determining from authentication data passed from one of the plurality of web browsers whether the selected web browser is authorized to access the web server application; and wherein the web server processes data received from the plurality of web browsers and data received from the application gateway.

16. The computer system of claim 11 wherein the web browser is executed on a client workstation by at least one of the plurality of CPUs.

17. The computer system of claim 11 wherein the web server application is executed on a web server computer by at least one of the plurality of CPUs.

18. The computer system of claim 11 wherein the application gateway is executed on the web server computer by at least one of the plurality of CPUs.

19. The computer system of claim 11 wherein the application gateway is executed on a first computer by at least one of the plurality of CPUs.

20. The computer system of claim 11 wherein the software application is executed on a second computer by at least one of the plurality of CPUs.

21. The computer system of claim 11 wherein the application gateway is executed on the second computer by at least one of the plurality of CPUs.

22. A computer-implemented method for providing a common user interface for communicating between a web browser and a software application over the World-Wide Web, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of Central Processing Units (CPUs);

providing a memory coupled to the plurality of CPUs;

executing at least one of the plurality of web browsers residing in the memory by at least one of

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