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Blinn et al.

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- [54] **ELECTRONIC SHOPPING AND MERCHANDISING SYSTEM**
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- [73] Assignee: **Microsoft Corporation**, Redmond, Wash.
- [21] Appl. No.: **08/732,012**
- [22] Filed: **Oct. 16, 1996**
- [51] Int. Cl.⁶ **G06F 17/60**; G06F 13/00; G06F 15/16
- [52] U.S. Cl. **705/26**; 705/27; 707/3; 707/104; 707/501; 707/513
- [58] **Field of Search** 705/26, 27, 30, 705/35, 39; 707/1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 100, 102, 103, 104, 501, 509, 513; 395/200.31, 200.33, 200.47, 200.49

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Primary Examiner—Stephen R. Tkacs
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Lee & Hayes, PLLC

[57] ABSTRACT

The present invention provides a merchant system for online shopping and merchandising. The merchant system architecture provides great flexibility for a merchant to adapt the merchant system to their existing business practices, promotions and databases. The merchant system includes a dynamic page generator, a configurable order processing module and a database module capable of retrieving data from the database without regard to its schema. The present invention enables merchants to create electronic orders which are easily adaptable for different sales situations. The order processing module includes multiple configurable stages to process a merchant's electronic orders. The merchant system is capable of generating pages dynamically using templates having embedded directives. The database module and the dynamic page generator allow merchants to modify their databases and page displays without having to reengineer the merchant system.

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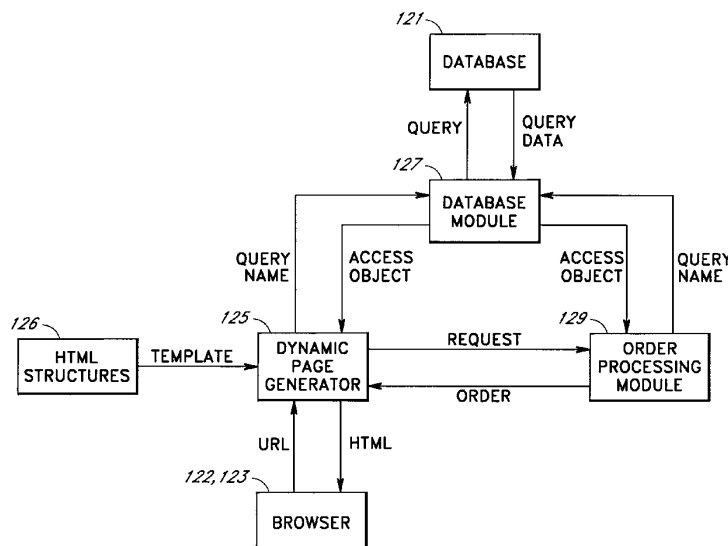
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64 Claims, 18 Drawing Sheets



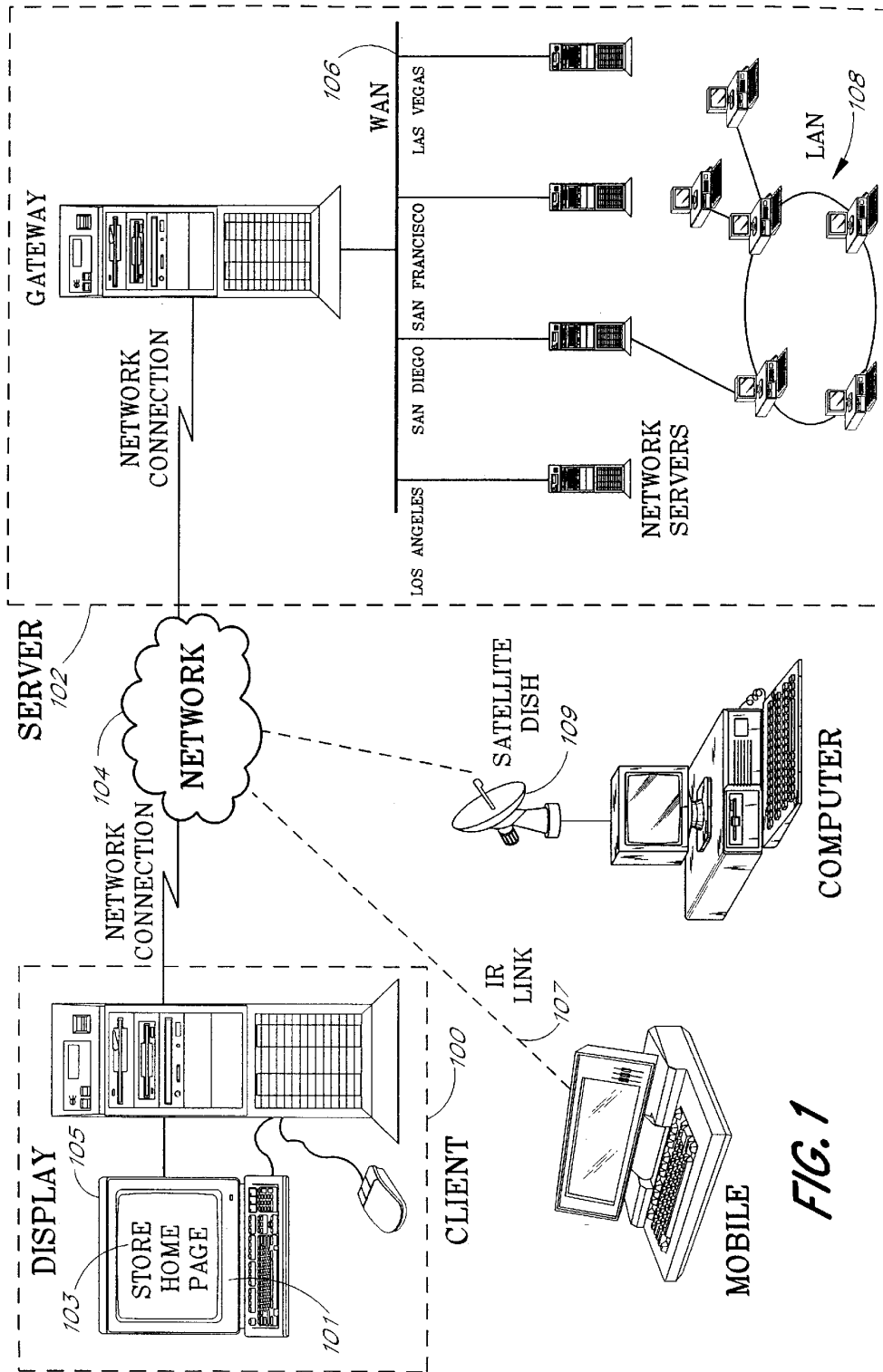


FIG. 1

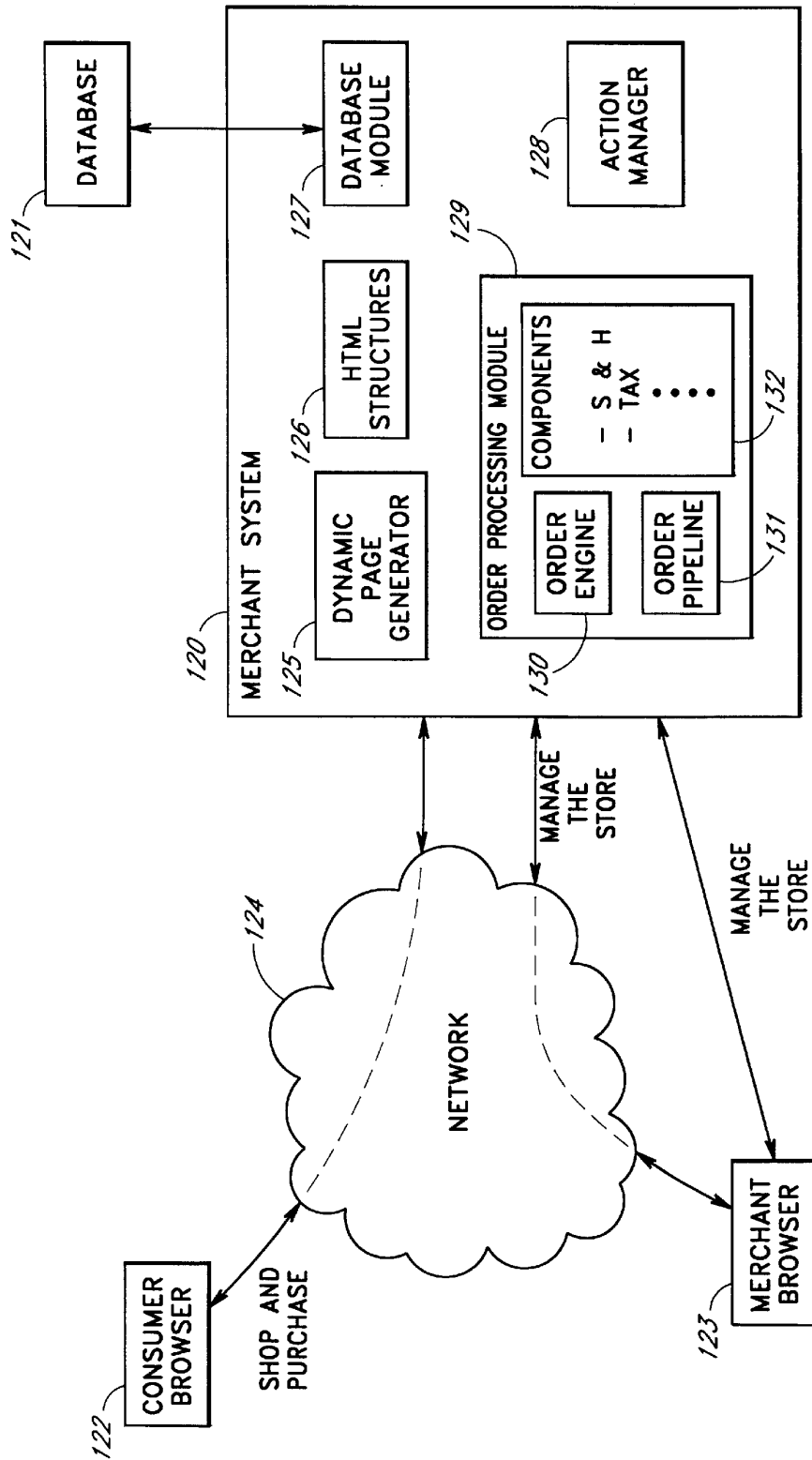


FIG. 2

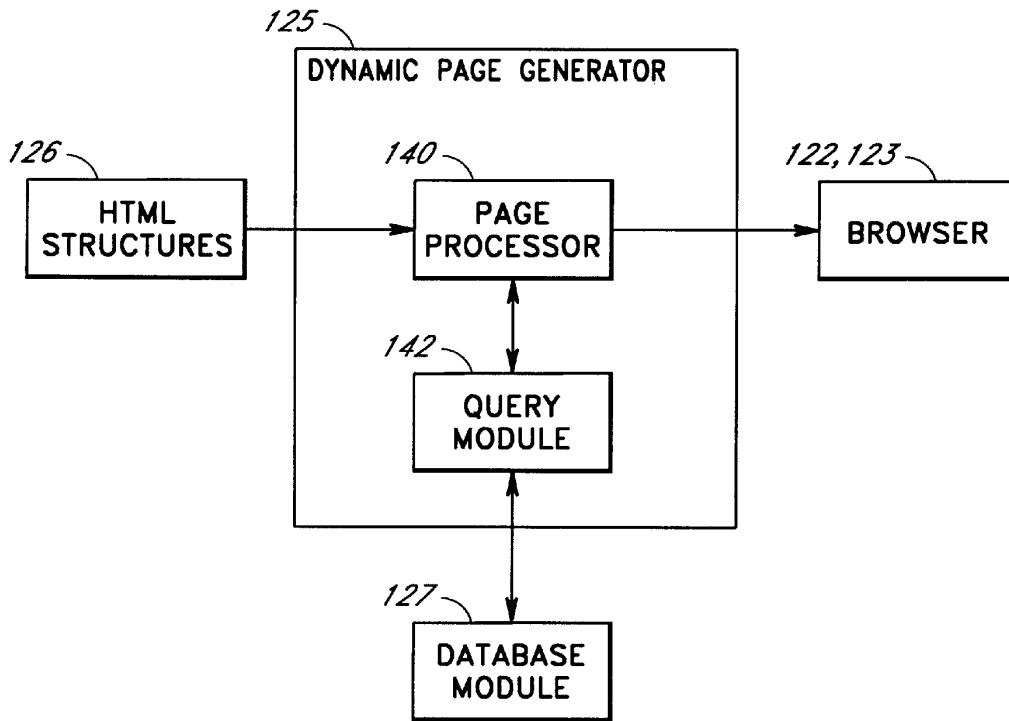


FIG. 3A

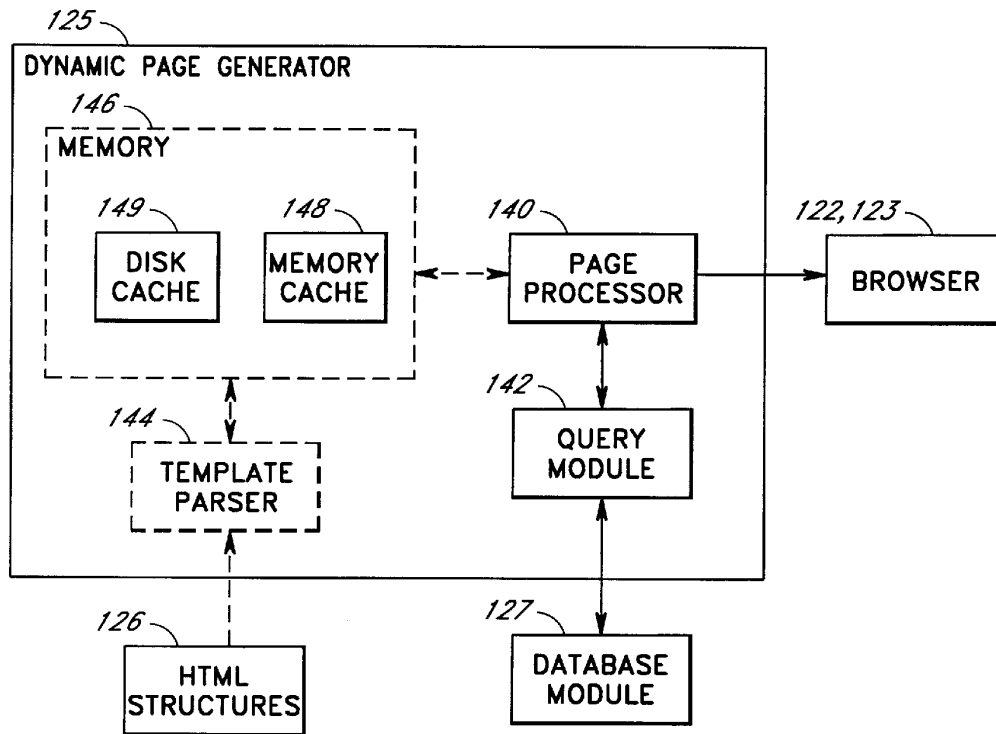


FIG. 3B

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