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United States Patent [19]
Dedrick

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[45] **Date of Patent:** Mar. 3, 1998

[54] **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PROVIDING ELECTRONIC ADVERTISEMENTS TO END USERS IN A CONSUMER BEST-FIT PRICING MANNER**

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

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A method and apparatus for providing electronic advertisements to end users in a consumer best-fit pricing manner includes an index database, a user profile database, and a consumer scale matching process. The index database provides storage space for the titles of electronic advertisements. The user profile database provides storage for a set of characteristics which correspond to individual end users of the apparatus. The consumer scale matching process is coupled to the content database and the user profile database and compares the characteristics of the individual end users with a consumer scale associated with the electronic advertisement. The apparatus then charges a fee to the advertiser, based on the comparison by the matching process. In one embodiment, a consumer scale is generated for each of multiple electronic advertisements. These advertisements are then transferred to multiple yellow page servers, and the titles associated with the advertisements are subsequently transferred to multiple metering servers. At the metering servers, a determination is made as to where the characteristics of the end users served by each of the metering servers fall on the consumer scale. The higher the characteristics of the end users served by a particular metering server fall, the higher the fee charged to the advertiser.

[51] **Int. Cl.**⁶ **H01J 13/00**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **395/226; 348/7; 395/210**

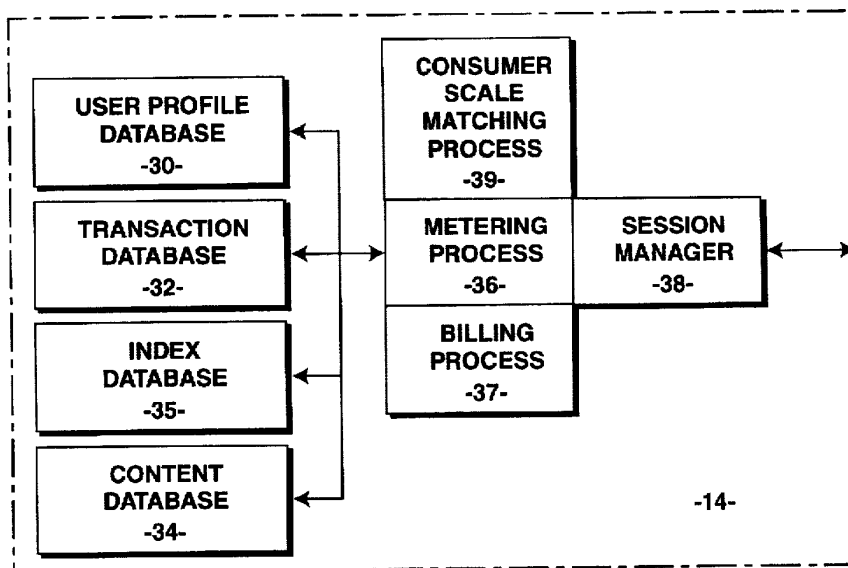
[58] **Field of Search** 364/401 R, 401 M, 364/408; 348/8, 10, 385, 9; 455/6.2; 351/246; 395/200.09, 226, 210

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18 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets



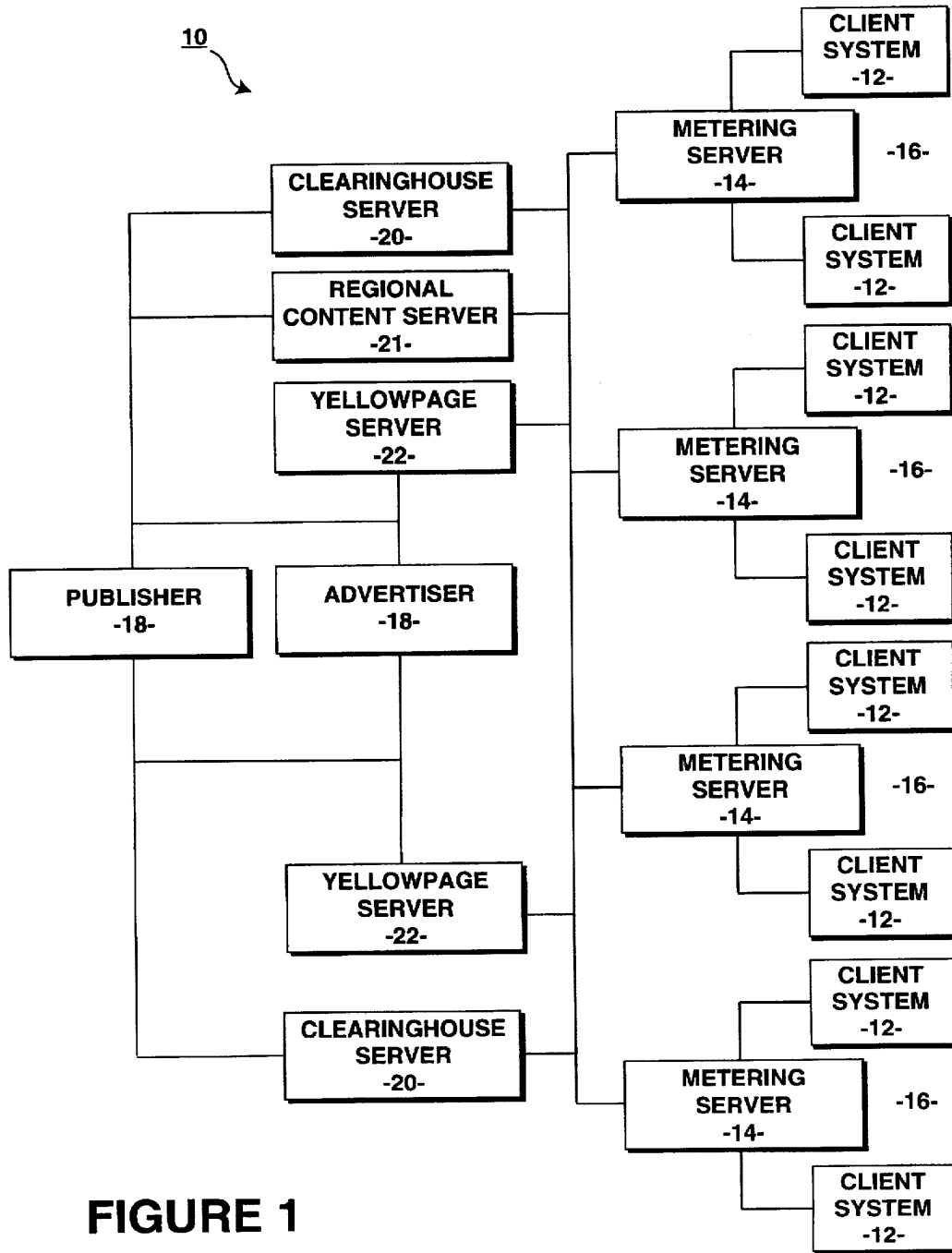


FIGURE 1

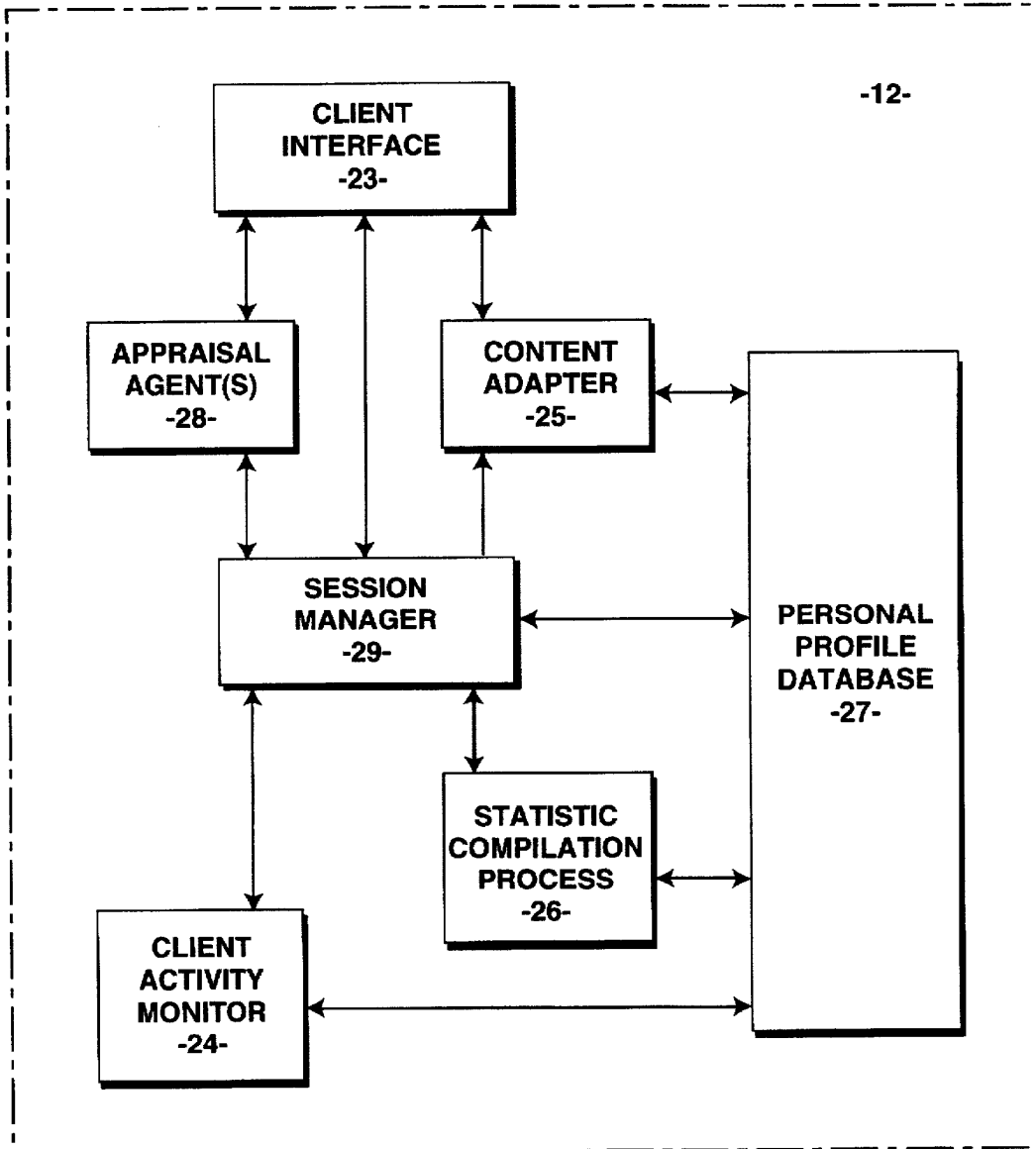


FIGURE 2

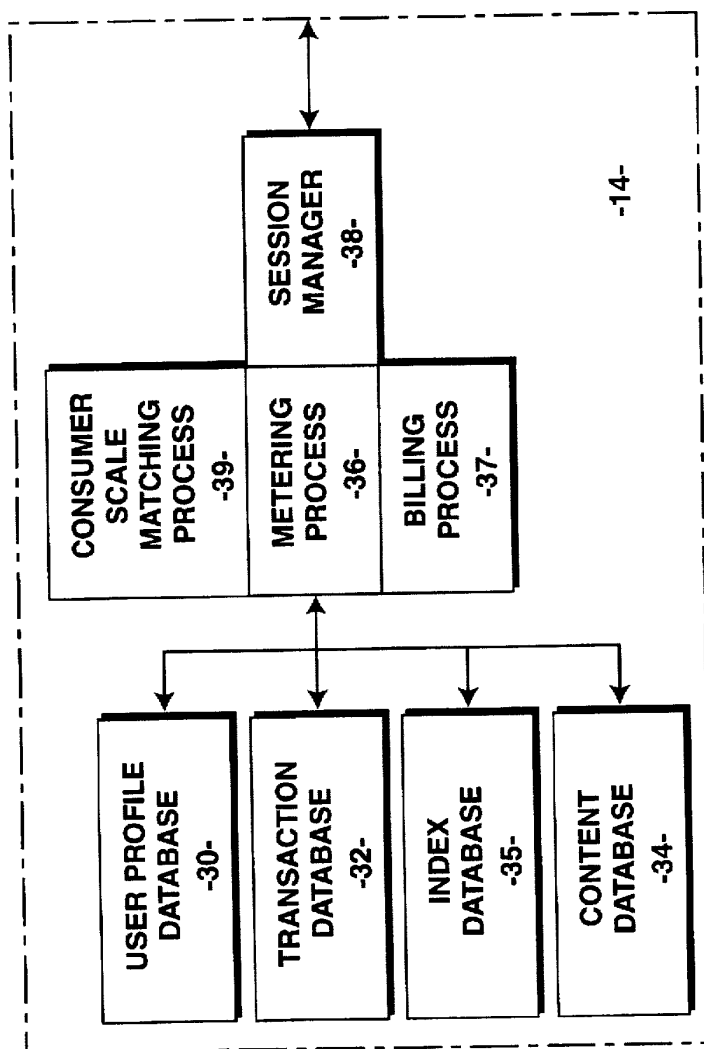


FIGURE 3

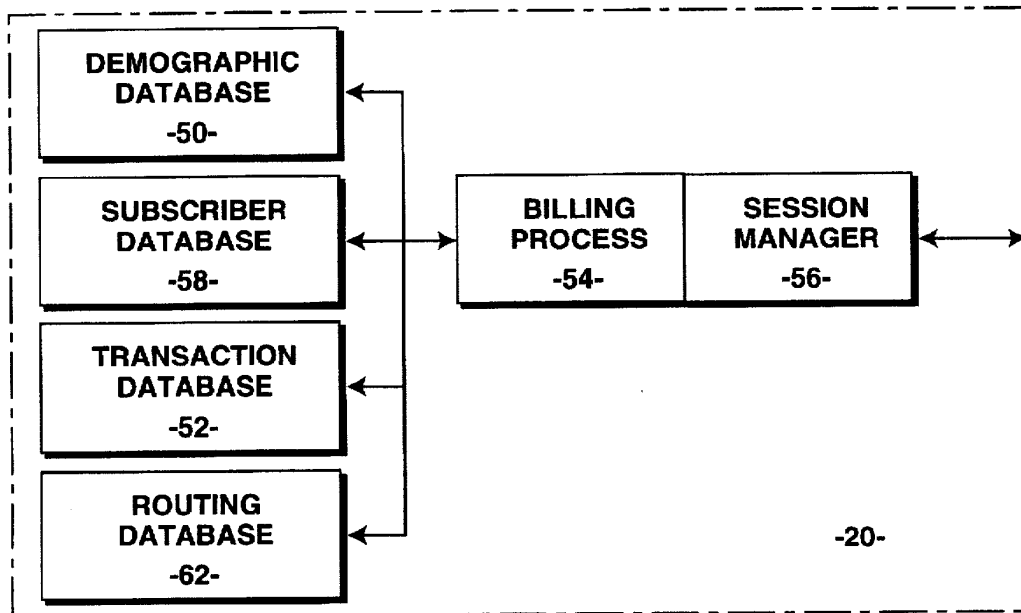


FIGURE 4

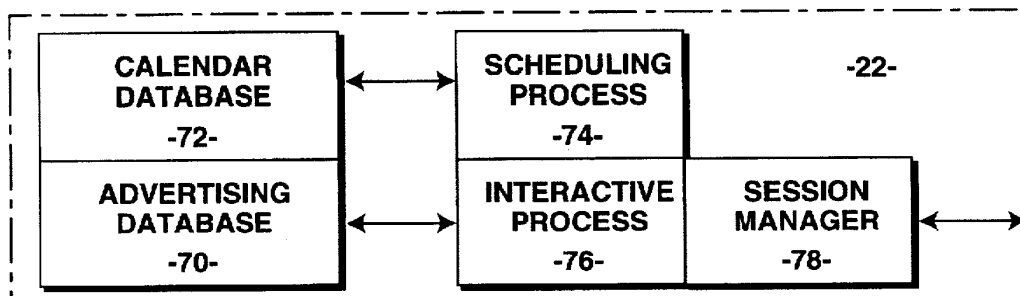


FIGURE 5

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