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Bates et al.

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(45) **Date of Patent: Jun. 12, 2001**

(54) **APPARATUS, PROGRAM PRODUCTS AND METHODS UTILIZING INTELLIGENT CONTACT MANAGEMENT**

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(21) Appl. No.: **09/096,243**

(22) Filed: **Jun. 11, 1998**

(51) **Int. Cl.**[7] **G06F 19/00**
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **709/200**; 709/206
(58) **Field of Search** 709/203, 206, 709/200; 707/3–5, 10

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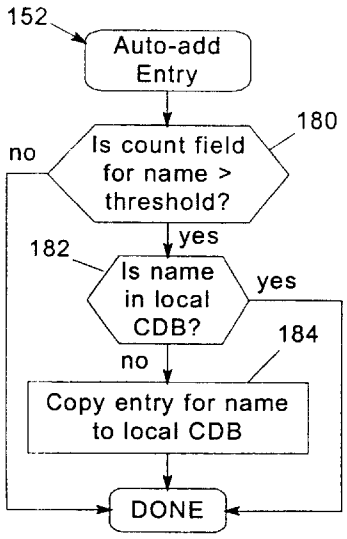
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Wood, Herron & Evans, L.L.P.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Apparatus, program products, and methods implement various intelligent contact management operations to improve the productivity of users of electronic messaging systems and the like. To perform an intelligent name lookup, for example, a subset of the users in a contact database that meet a predetermined search criteria is identified, and a favored user is selected therefrom based upon a predetermined affinity criteria. Also, the automated addition of new entries to a contact database is supported by accumulating the number of contacts between a first user and a second user, with a new entry associated with the second user added to the contact database associated with the first user in response to the number of contacts between the first and second users exceeding a predetermined threshold. The automated addressing of electronic messages is also supported by determining, in response to a first user addressing an electronic message to a second user, whether the second user is a member of an electronic messaging group that defines a plurality of member users, and if so, to address the electronic message to at least one additional member user in the electronic messaging group. The automated creation of electronic messaging groups is also supported by addressing an electronic message to a plurality of recipient users in response to user input, and automatically creating a new electronic messaging group including the plurality of recipient users. Furthermore, the automated updating of electronic messaging groups is supported by addressing an electronic message to an electronic messaging group including a plurality of member users in response to user input, selectively updating an address list for the electronic message in response to user input, and selectively updating the electronic messaging group based upon the updates to the address list.

8 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets



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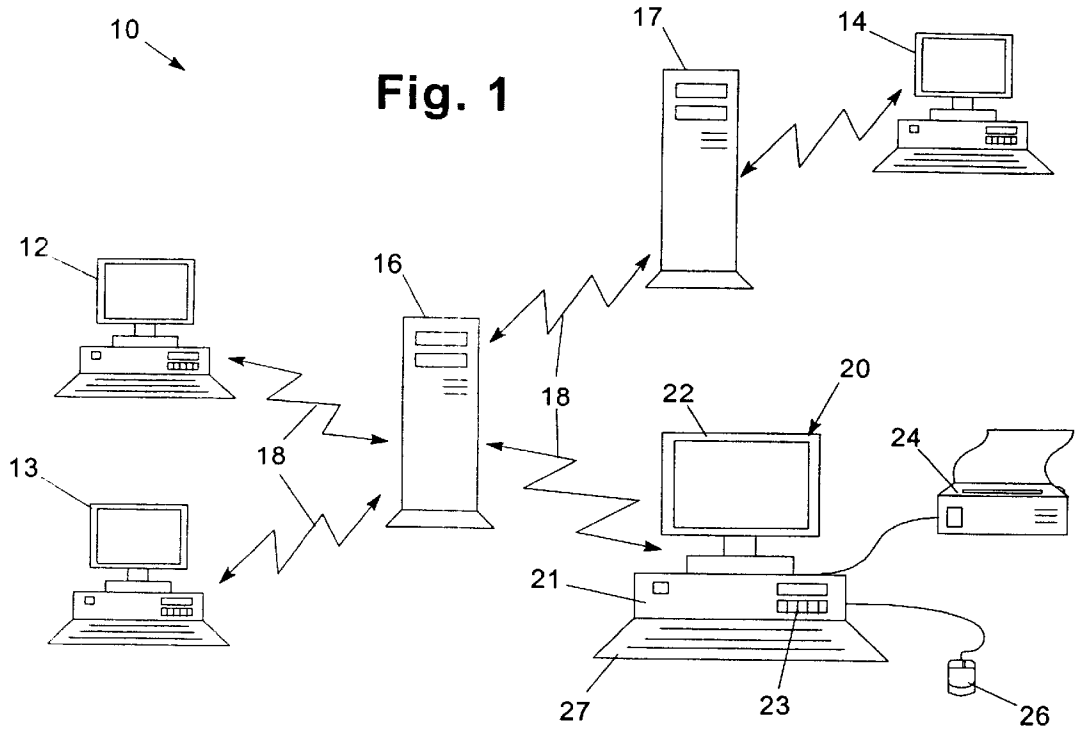

Fig. 1

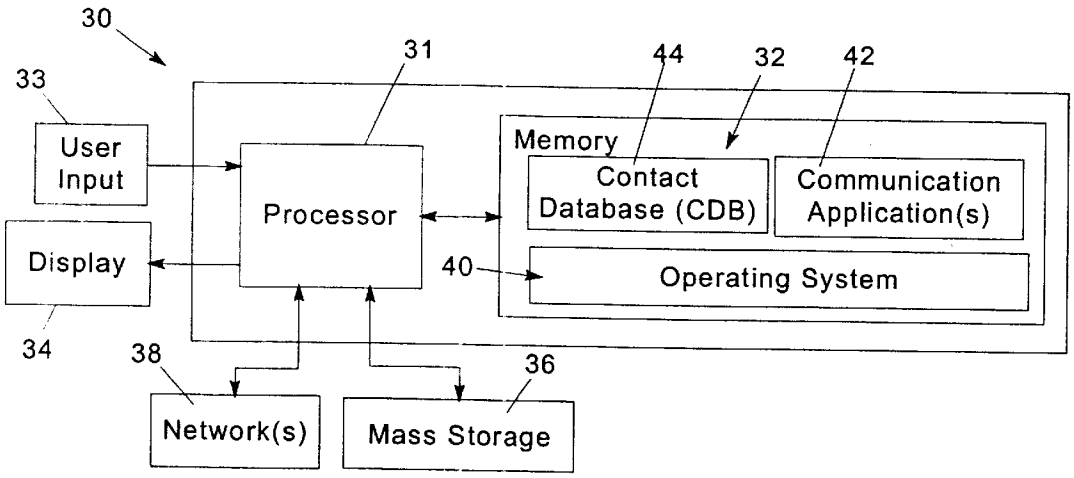

Fig. 2

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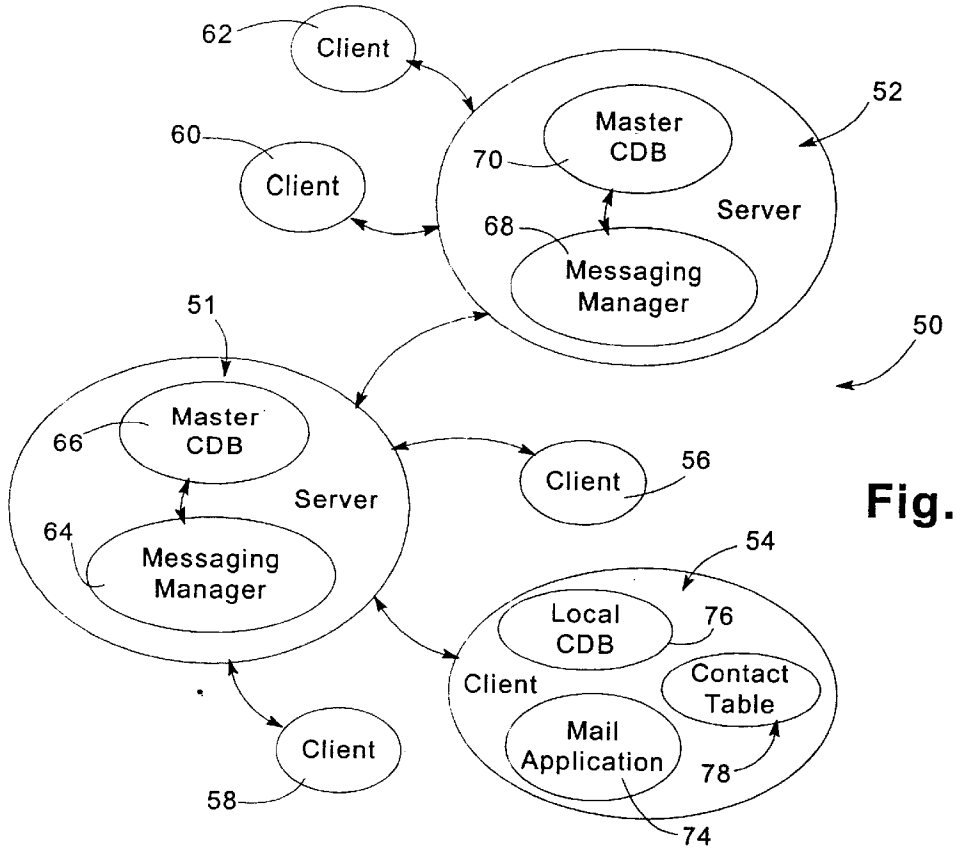

Fig. 3

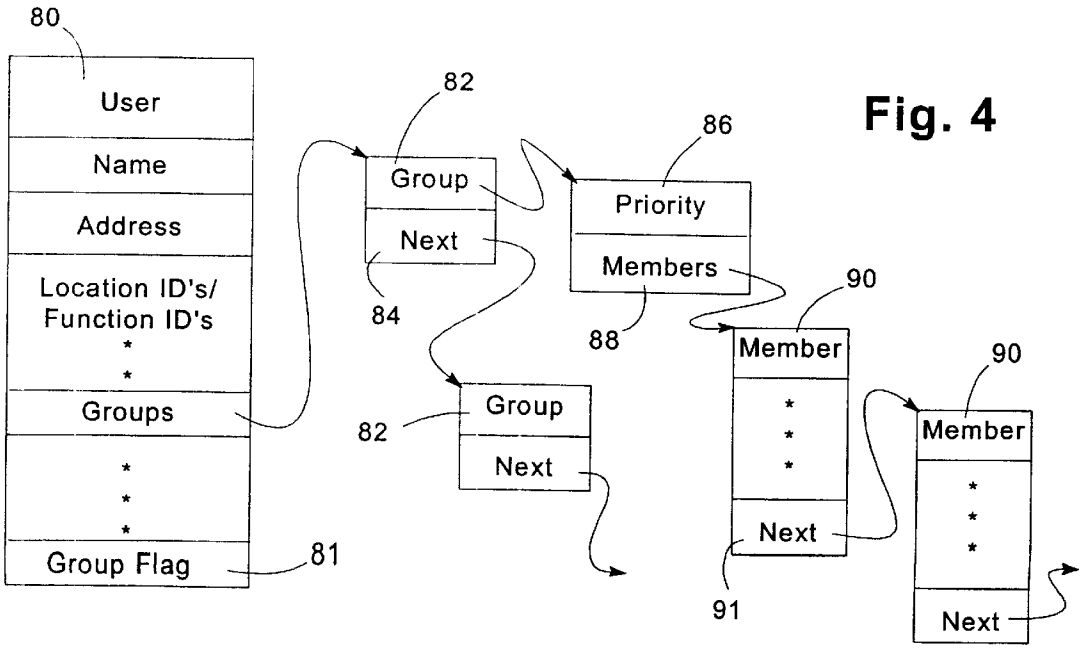

Fig. 4

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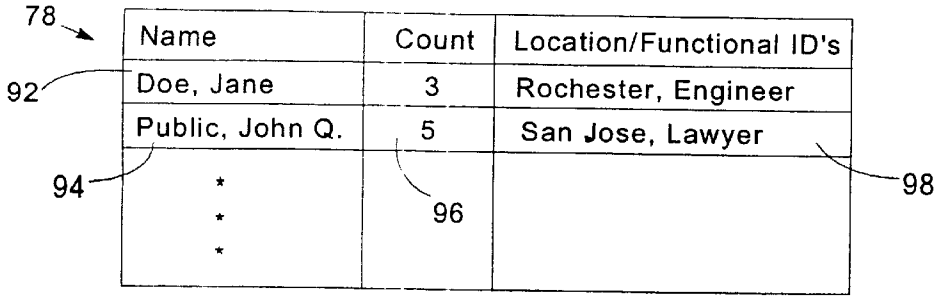
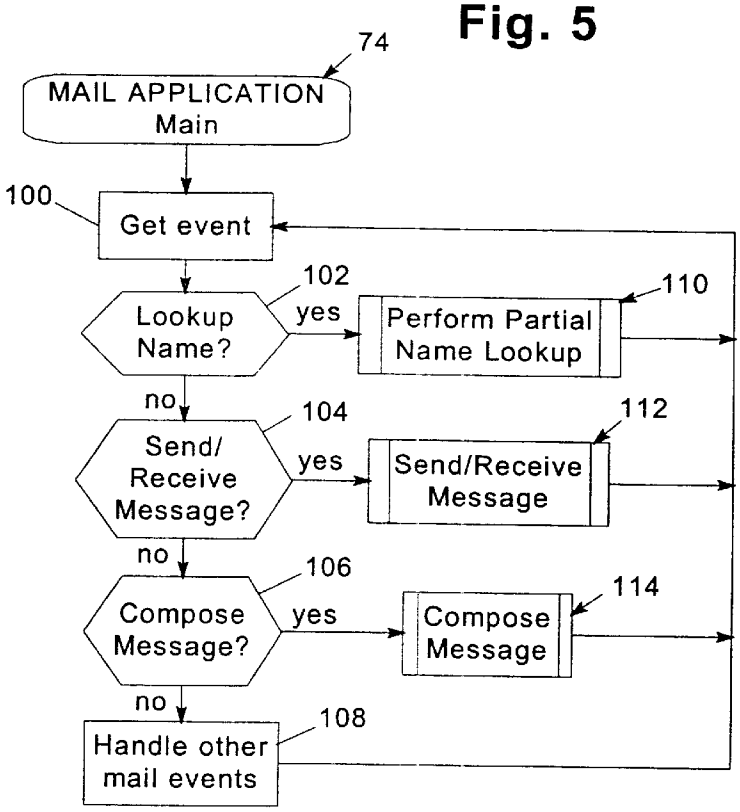


Fig. 5



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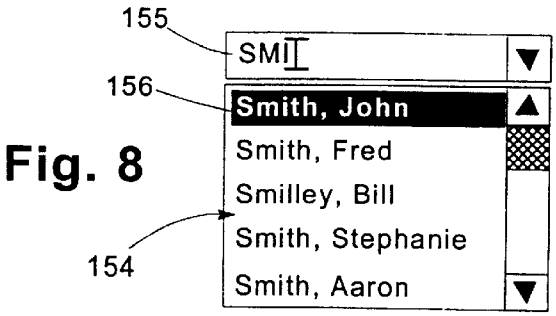

Fig. 8

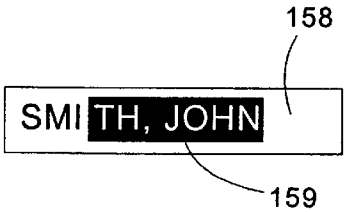

Fig. 9

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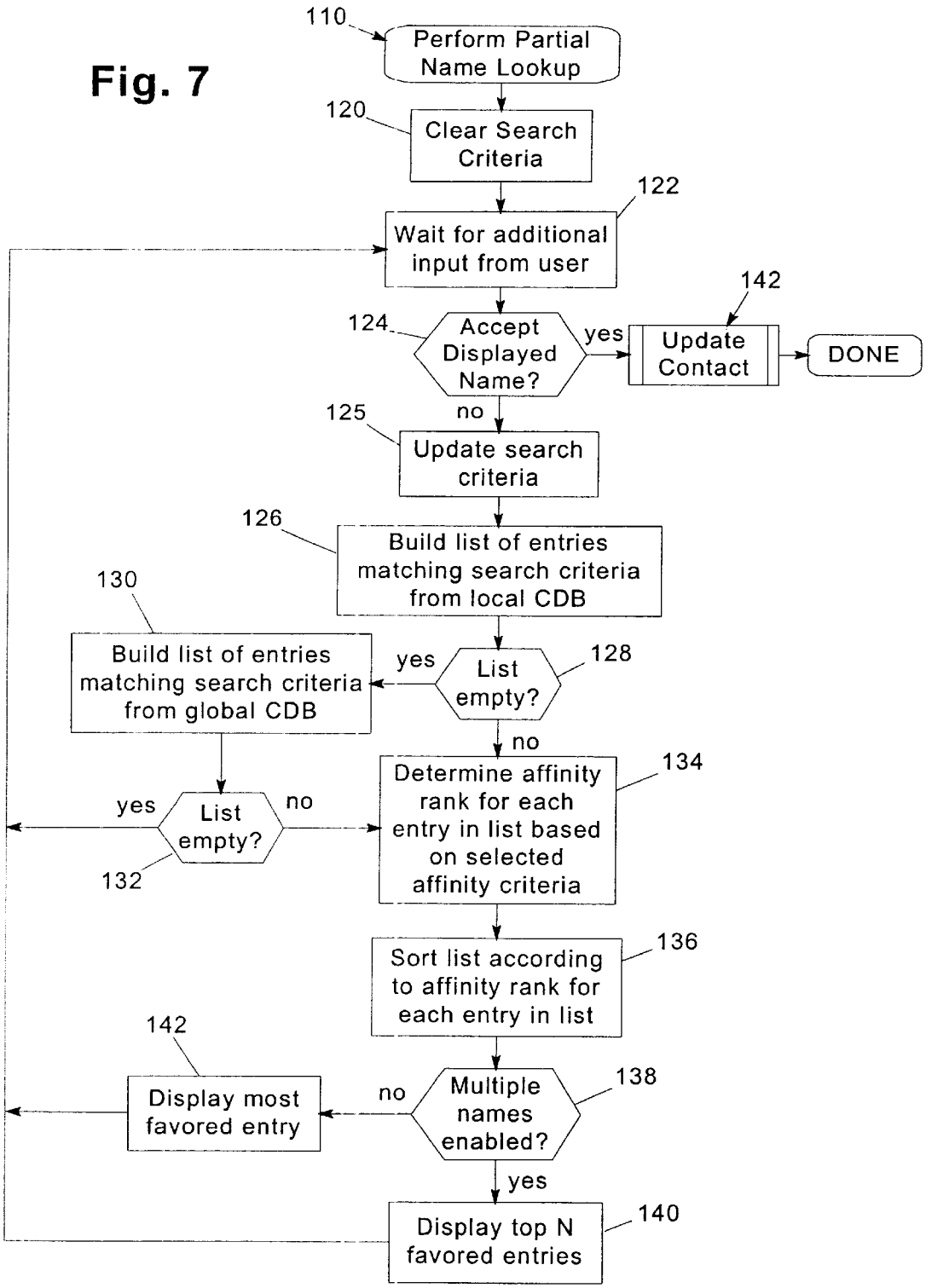
Fig. 7



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