# United States Patent [19]

## Moncreiff

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[45] **Date of Patent:** **Oct. 27, 1998**

[54] **COMPUTER NETWORK CHAT ROOM BASED ON CHANNEL BROADCAST IN REAL TIME**

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[73] Assignee: **Interactive Broadcaster Services Corp.**, La Jolla, Calif.

[21] Appl. No.: **749,091**

[22] Filed: **Nov. 14, 1996**

[51] **Int. Cl.**[6] ...................................................... G06F 15/16
[52] **U.S. Cl.** ................................. 395/200.34; 395/200.47
[58] **Field of Search** ......................... 395/200.34, 200.57, 395/200.6, 200.47, 200.54; 345/330; 370/260

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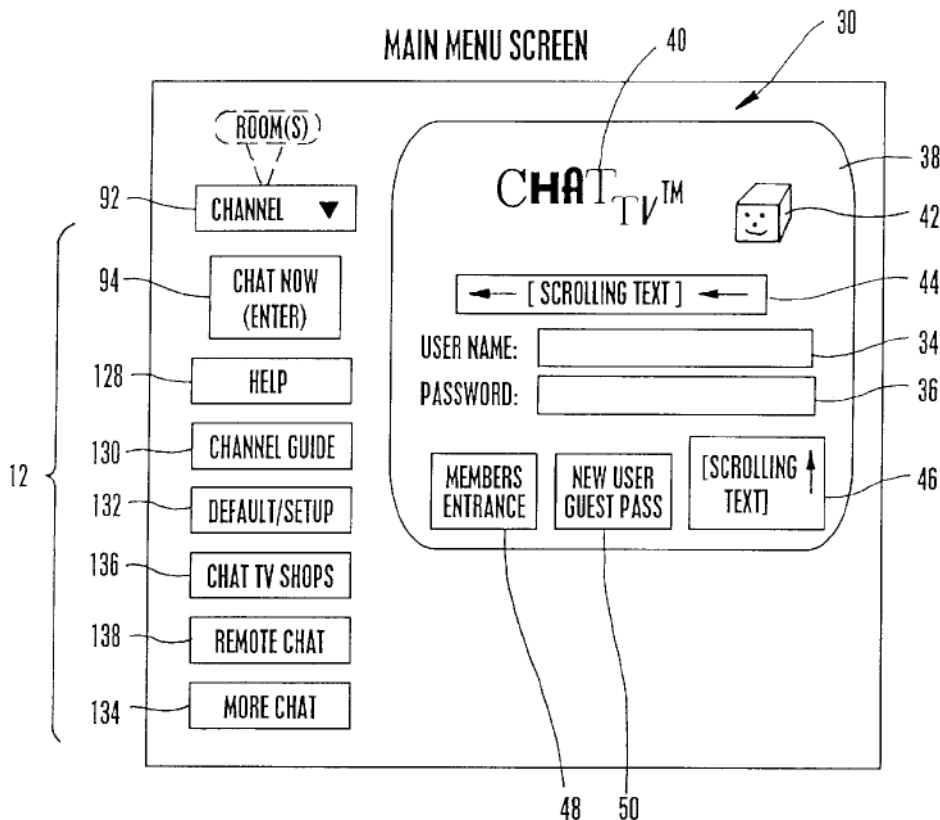"AOL Web Browser Previews Online," Newsbytes News Network, May 10, 1995.

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A computer network chat room system includes plural chat rooms, with the conversation in each chat room being related to the program being broadcast real-time over a respective TV or radio channel in a user-defined time zone. Computer users access the chat rooms via the Internet by inputting their desired television or radio channel, along with a request to enter a chat room. A chat window is presented to the users of the system, along with a Web page window relating to the program currently being broadcast over the respective channel, and two advertising windows that also relate to the current program that is the discussion topic of the respective chat room. Additionally, a merchandising window can be presented for effecting transactions of merchandise that relates to the current program. A time zone-dependent channel guide is also advantageously provided to the computer users.
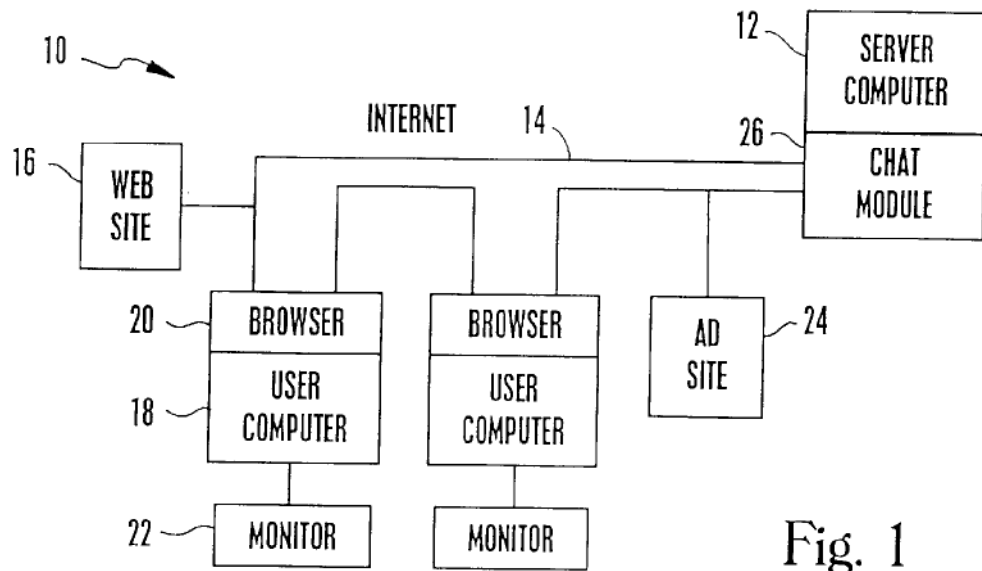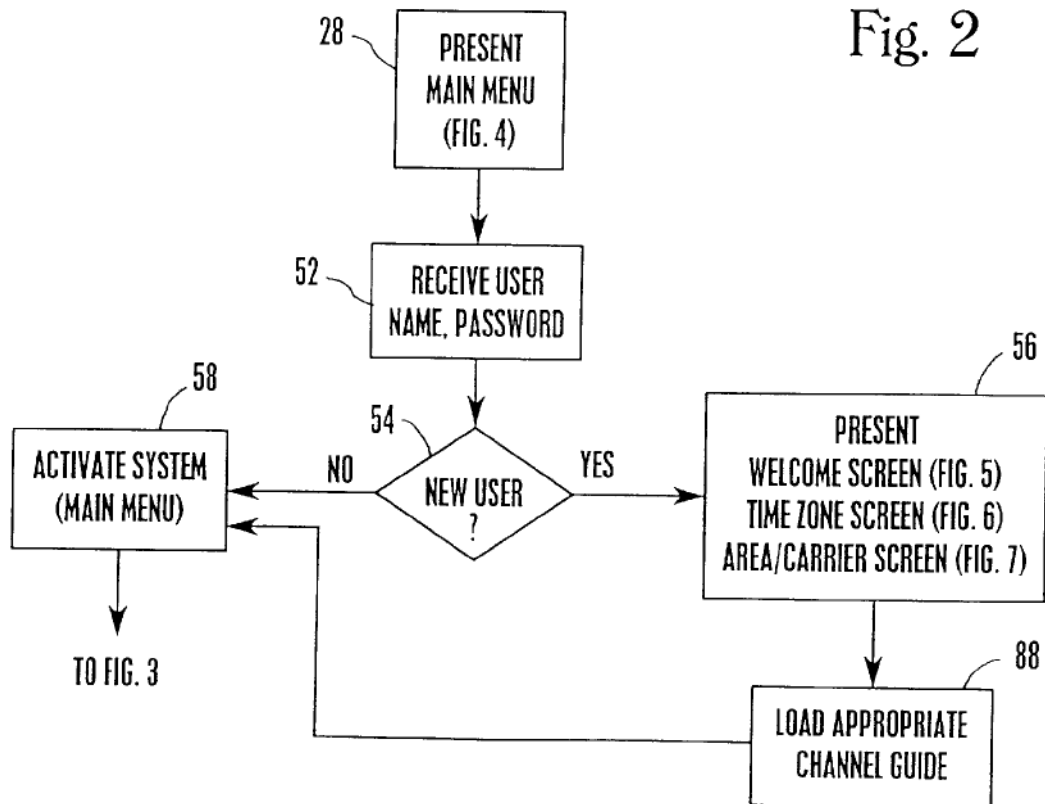
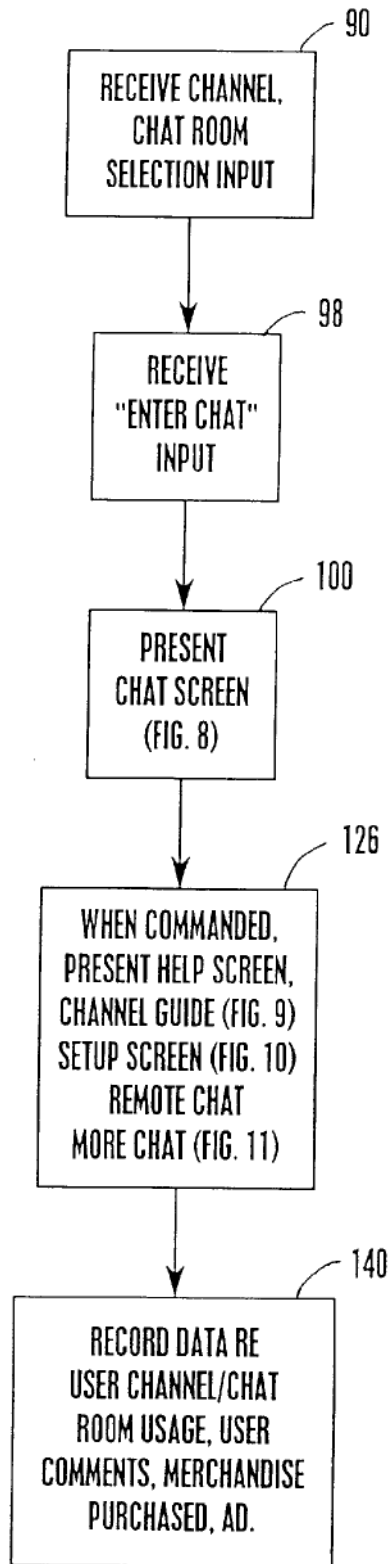**17 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets**

Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Fig. 3

90

RECEIVE CHANNEL,
CHAT ROOM
SELECTION INPUT

98

RECEIVE
"ENTER CHAT"
INPUT

100

PRESENT
CHAT SCREEN
(FIG. 8)

126

WHEN COMMANDED,
PRESENT HELP SCREEN,
CHANNEL GUIDE (FIG. 9)
SETUP SCREEN (FIG. 10)
REMOTE CHAT
MORE CHAT (FIG. 11)

140

RECORD DATA RE
USER CHANNEL/CHAT
ROOM USAGE, USER
COMMENTS, MERCHANDISE
PURCHASED, AD.

Fig. 4

MAIN MENU SCREEN

ROOM(S)

92 — CHANNEL ▼

94 — CHAT NOW (ENTER)

128 — HELP

130 — CHANNEL GUIDE

132 — DEFAULT/SETUP

136 — CHAT TV SHOPS

138 — REMOTE CHAT

134 — MORE CHAT

12

30

40 — CHAT$_{TV}$™

38

42

44 — ← [ SCROLLING TEXT ] ←

34 — USER NAME:

36 — PASSWORD:

MEMBERS ENTRANCE          NEW USER GUEST PASS          [SCROLLING ↕ TEXT] — 46

48    50

Fig. 8

CHAT SCREEN

104 — WEB PAGE/MERCHANDISE WINDOW

112 — GIFTS | APPAREL | OTHER | INDEX

114

102

106 — BROAD-CASTER

108 — PROGRAM

110 — MERCH.

GAMES

OTHER

AD "A" — 116

AD "B" — 118

124

USER NAME (1) : XXX
USER NAME (2) : YYY

122 — USER COMMENTS

CHAT WINDOW — 120

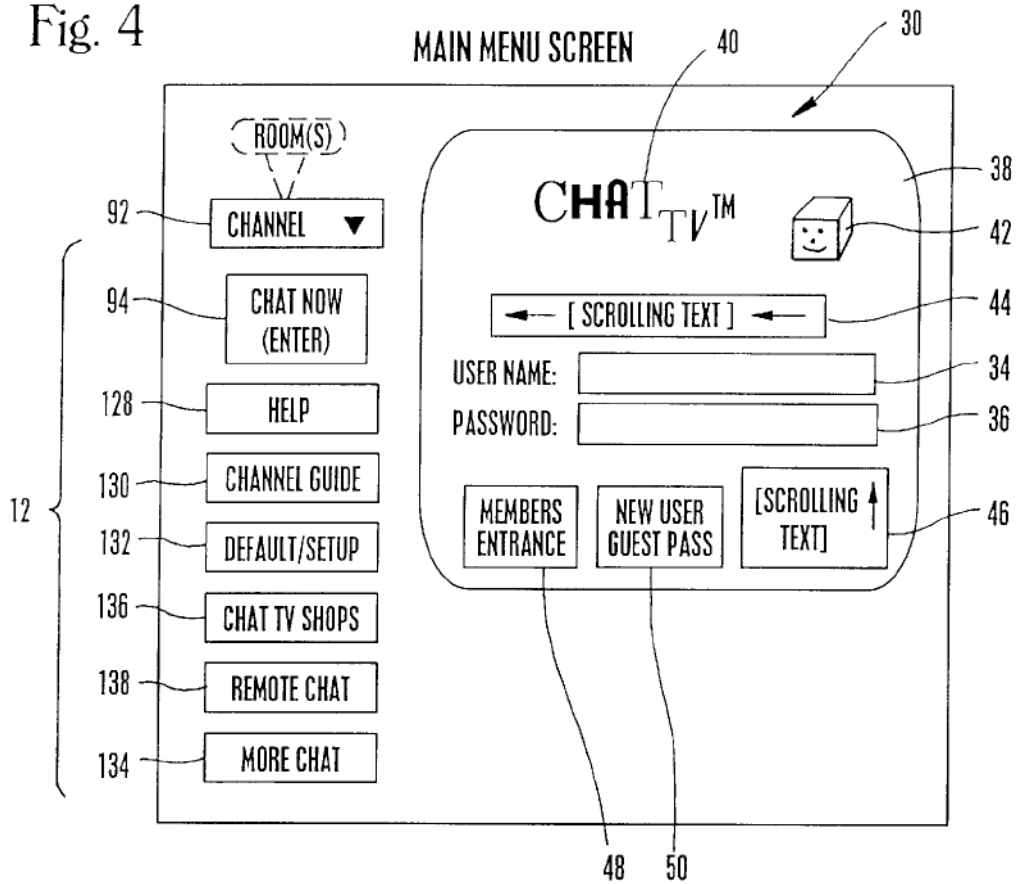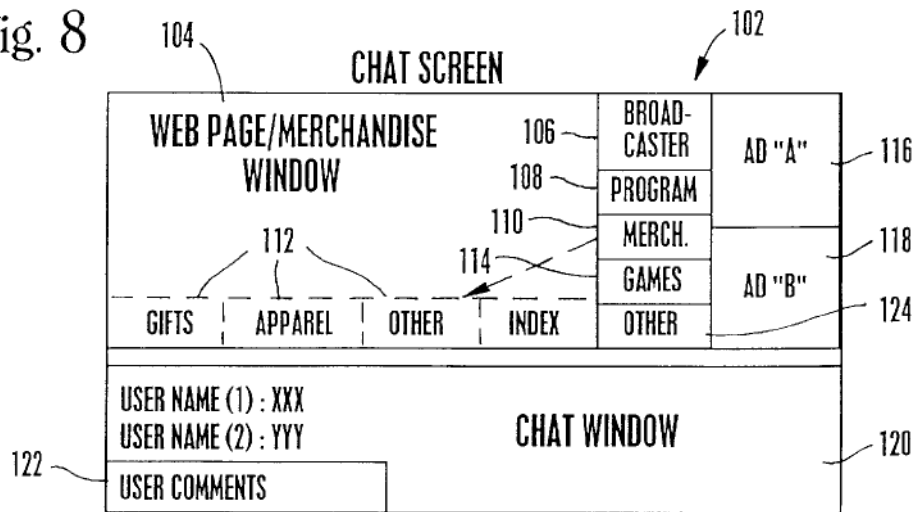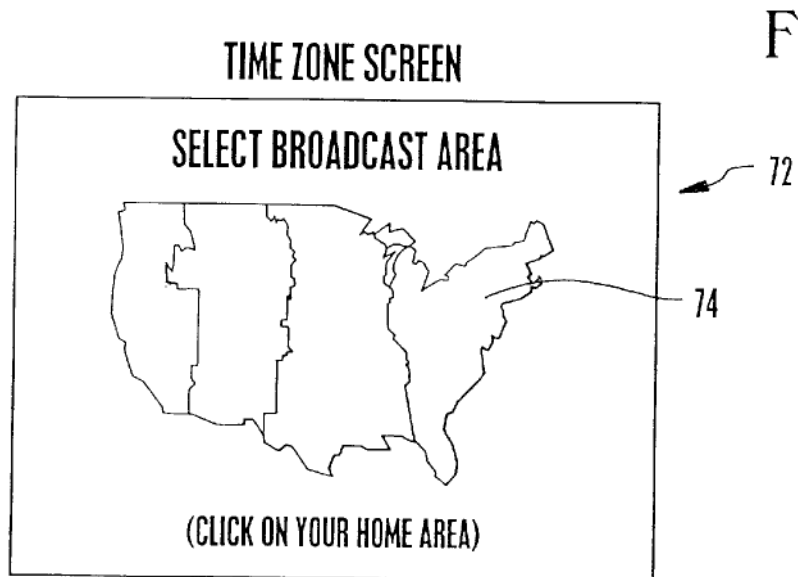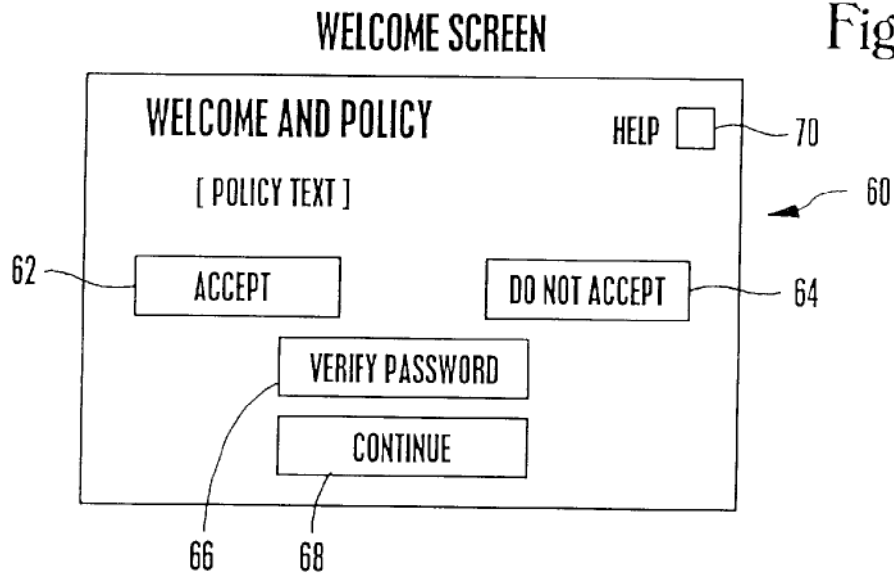WELCOME SCREEN

Fig. 5



TIME ZONE SCREEN

Fig. 6

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