United States Patent [19]

Wiggins

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[54] NETWORK MONITORING SYSTEM FOR TRACKING, BILLING AND RECOVERING LICENSES

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[52] U.S. Cl. .... 364/514 C; 395/200.11; 395/187.01

[58] Field of Search .... 364/514 C, 464.01; 380/4, 30, 49; 395/187.01, 200.11, 326, 340, 680, 682, 838

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Assistant Examiner—Thomas Peeso
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[57] ABSTRACT

A network monitoring system operates on a computer including processor for running a multi-tasking operating system capable of having active and inactive windows. The computer is connected to a server or a service which provides access to a user application subject to a license restriction. When the user application is associated with the active window, the user application is executed by the processor. A license recovering system includes a display coupled to the processor for displaying a user interface of the operating system. A user prompting device, run by the processor, the display and associated with an inactive window, prompts a user when the the inactive window has been inactive for a period greater than a first predetermined period. A closing device closes the user application when the inactive window has been inactive for a period greater than a second predetermined period. The network monitoring system also includes a real-time billing system for billing the computer user for access time to the user application subject to the license restriction to alleviate problems occurring in shared license pools on a network. The network monitoring system also includes a user priority system which defines user priorities for the application shared on the network. The priority system closes a current user accessing the user application if the priority of a new user requesting access is greater than the priority of the current user or if the application of the current user is idle.
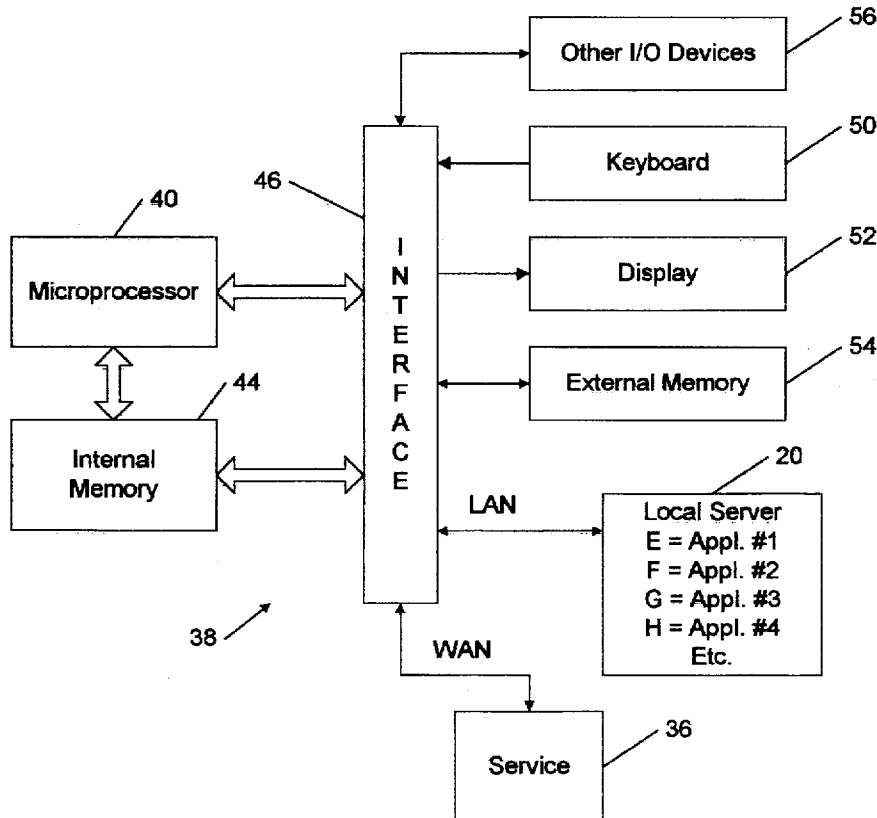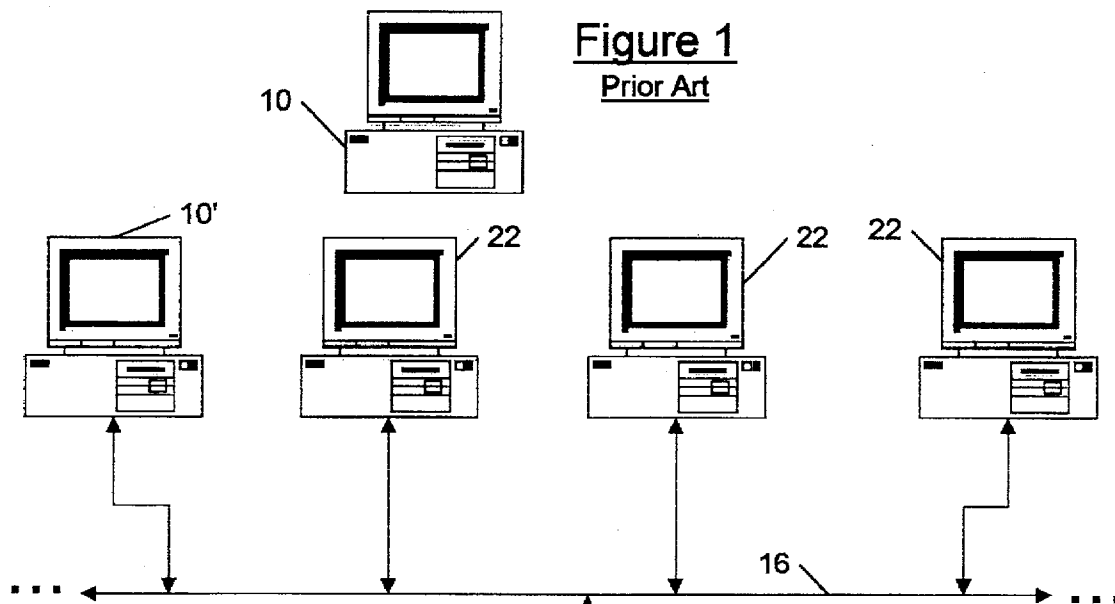
29 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets
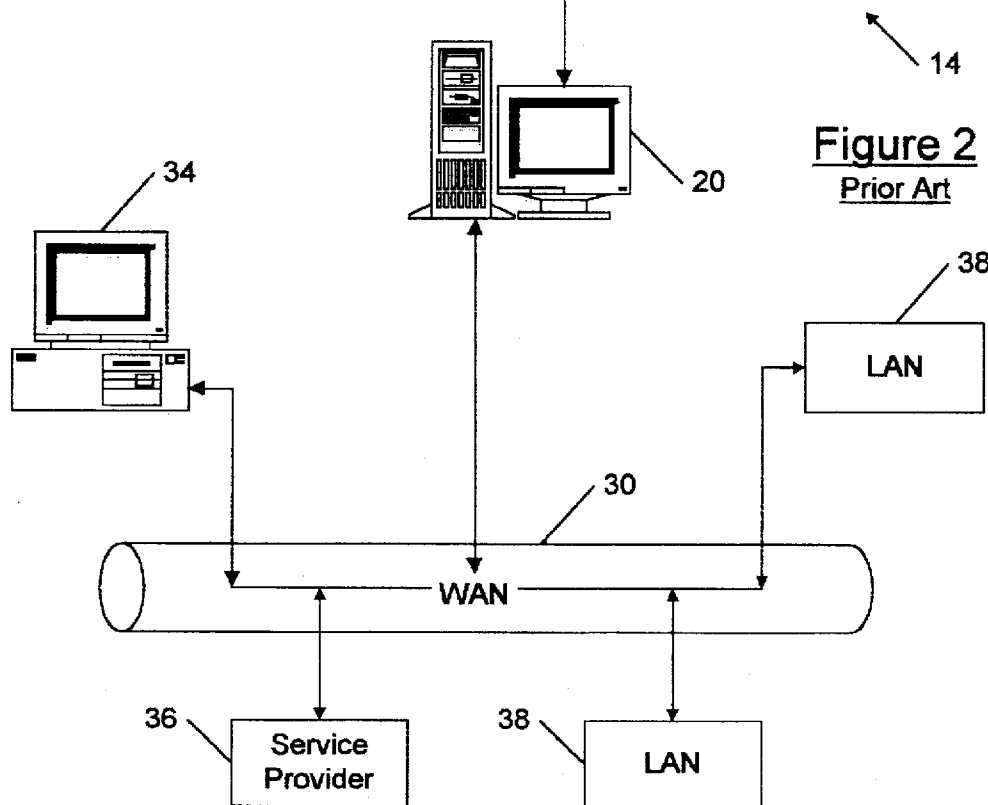
Figure 1
Prior Art

Figure 2
Prior Art

Figure 3

Figure 4

Start

150

Appl'n Open? 164

No

Yes

Reset Timer1 and Timer2 166

Wait CHKTIME 168

Appl'n Idle? 170

No

Yes

Start TIMER1 and TIMER2 174

TIMER1 >= IDLETIME? 176

No

Yes

Display Idle Message 180

160

| CHKTIME |
| TIMER1 |
| TIMER2 |
| IDLETIME |
| CLOSINTIME |
| IDLEMESSAGE |

Figure 5

184

Timer2>= CLOSINTIME?
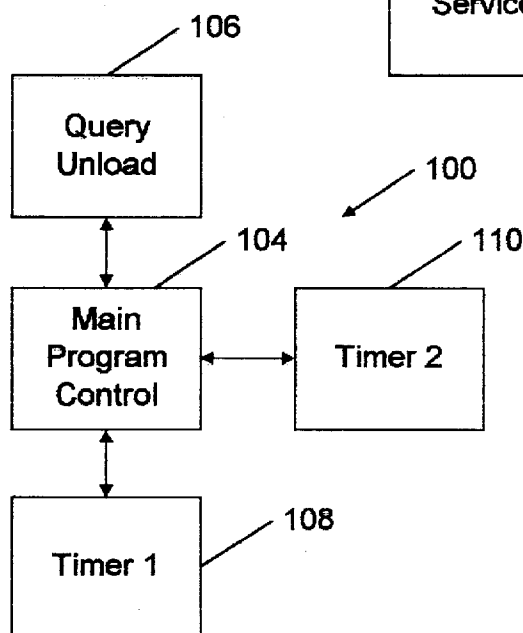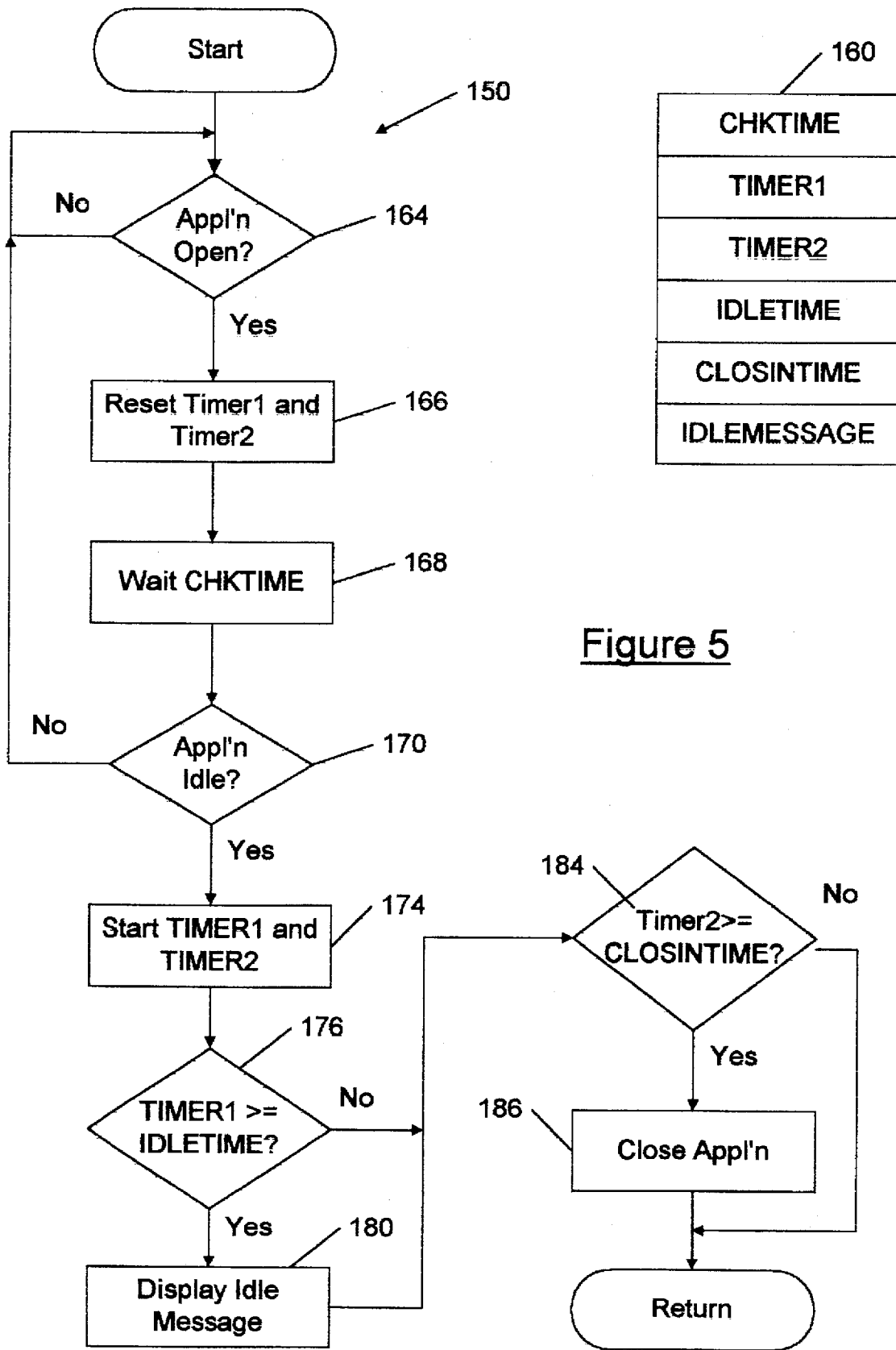
No

Yes
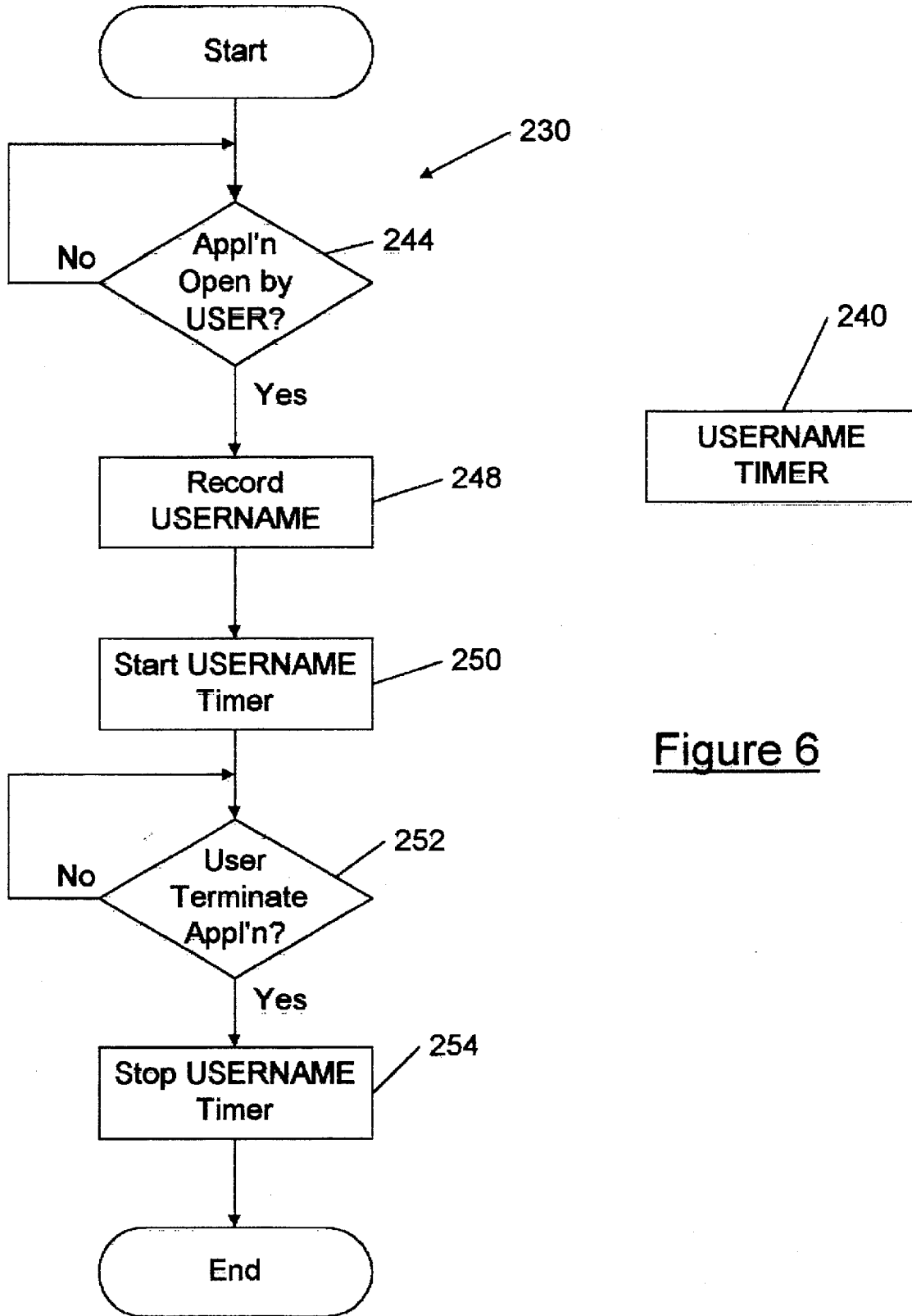
Close Appl'n 186

Return
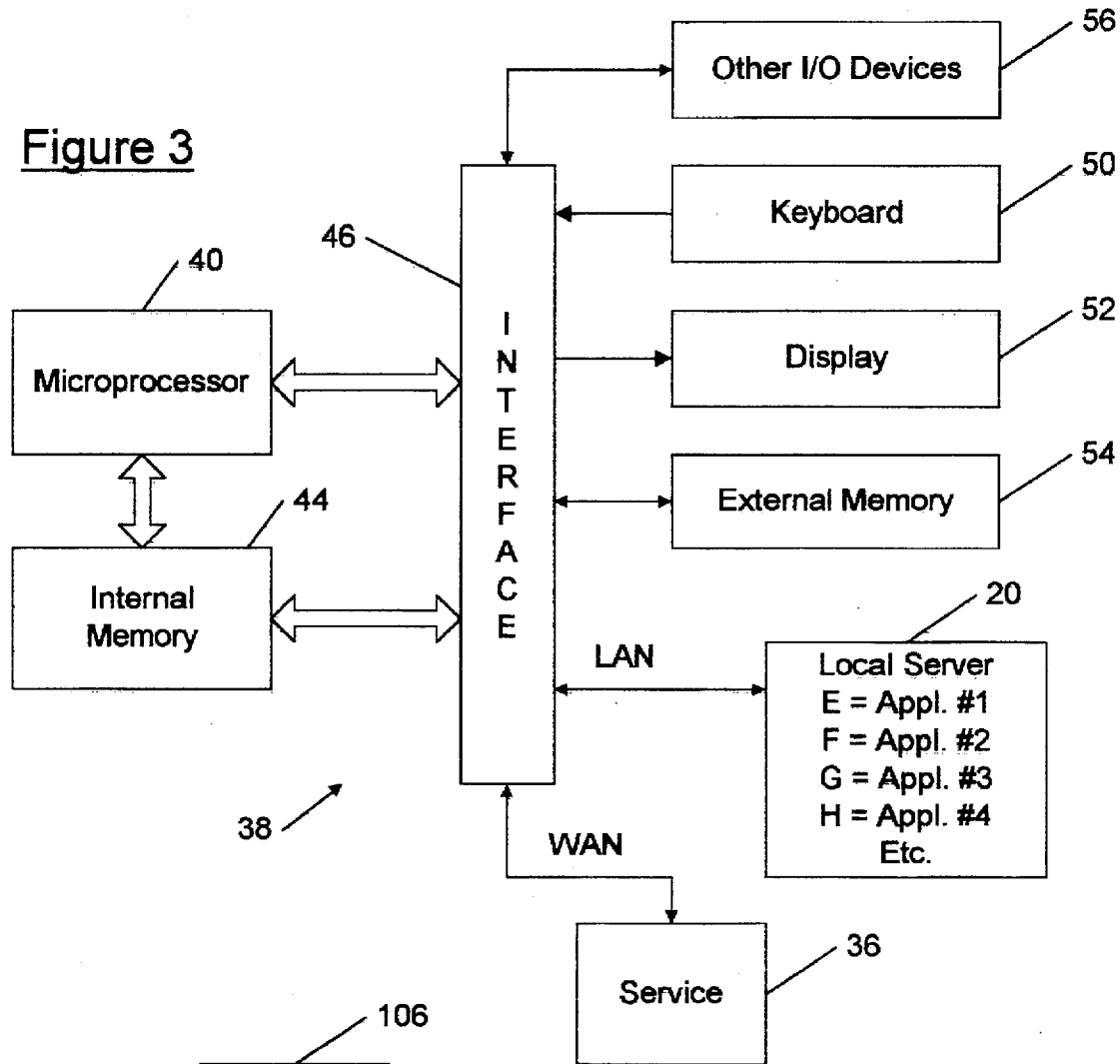
Figure 6

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