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PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT COVER SHEET
This is a request for filing a PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT under 37 CFR 1.53(c).

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TITLE OF THE INVENTION (280 characters max)

META-RIGHTS

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ENCLOSED APPLICATION PARTS (check all that apply)

☒ Specification   *Number of Pages*   8   ☐ CD(s), Number _____

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☐ Application Data Sheet. See 37 CFR 1.76

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☐ Applicant claims small entity status. Se 37 CFR 1.27.

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$160.00

The invention was made by an agency of the United States Government or under a contract with an agency of the United States Government.

☒ No.

☐ Yes, the name of the U.S. Government agency and the Government contract number are: _____

Respectfully submitted,   Date   11/20/2001

SIGNATURE _____

REGISTRATION NO. *(if appropriate)*   35,212

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USE ONLY FOR FILING A PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT

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Meta-Rights

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Introduction

This application is related to United States patents 5,629,980, 5,634,012, 5,638,443, 5,715,403 and 5,715,40, the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference, and initoduces the concept of meta-rights which is the rights that deal with, manipulate, modify, and derive other rights.

Meta-rights include rights to offer, grant, obtain, transfer, delegate, track, surrender, exchange, and revoke other rights. This includes the rights to modify any of the conditions associated with other rights. For example, the right to extend or reduce the scope, extend or reduce the validation period of a particular right.

Meta-rights can be hierarchical and can be structured as objects within objects. Just as rights can have conditions, meta-rights can also have conditions. Meta-rights can also be associated with meta-rights.

The concept of meta-rights is useful because in a real world scenario, there are entities that are not interested in the digital content, but in manipulating the rights associated with the content. For example, in a multi-tier content distribution model, the intermediate entities (distributors) will not consume the content but will be given the right to issue rights for the content they distribute. In other words, the distributor or reseller will need to obtain rights to issue rights (meta-rights).

Examples of using meta-rights

Multi-tier content distribution

In a multi-tier content distribution system, there exist "middle-man" entities that do not consume or produce content. Their role is to distribute content and the rights associated with those content.

Consider a model where a publisher publishes content, a distributor distributes content and a retailer sells content to a consumer. The publisher negotiates commerce deals with the distributor and the distributor negotiates business deals with the retailer. In a digital workflow that utilizes a system to control the access of content, content (in protected form) can travel from publishers to consumers through any digital mean. When the consumer wishes to access the content, he contacts the appropriate retailer and obtains a "license" that allows him/her to access the content. The license is where the rights are expressed.

In this multi-tier scenario, the retailer will only issue the rights that have been predetermined by the distributor. For example, a distributor may specify that the retailer can only issue 500 licenses and the rights that the retailer can issue to a consumer can only be "view" and "print-once". In other words, the distributor has issued meta-rights to the retailer. Similarly, the publisher will issue meta-rights to the distributor that will govern what kind (and how many) of rights can the distributor issue to retailers.

Private Documents

Consider a model where a person's medical records are in digital form and are managed by the affiliated hospital. In this scenario, the person gives authority to the hospital to access and update the medical records. Now consider that the person needs treatment at another hospital and wishes to transfer the records to the new establishment. The person will now grant the right to the affiliated hospital the right to transfer the access rights to the new hospital. In other words, the person has specified meta-rights.

Consider a model where a person's will is in digital form and managed by a law firm. The will is to be kept in the law firm and no one should have access to it (besides the law firm and the author of the will). The person wishes to allow a neutral 3rd review of the will. The person issues a right to the law firm to issue access rights to this 3rd party. The person has specified meta-rights.

Power of Attorney

In a digital economy, specifying meta-rights is analogous to power-of-attorney. Suppose a person wishes to give another person the power of attorney to liquidate (sell) equity. The person issues the right for the right to sell certain financial instruments. The person has issued meta-rights.

Overview of Process to Exercise Meta-Rights

At a high level the process of exercising rights are the same for both usage rights and meta-rights. However the different between usage rights and meta-rights are the result from exercising the rights (or meta-rights). When exercising rights, actions result, for example *viewing* or *using* a digital content. With meta-rights new rights

are created or derived from the meta-rights as the result of exercising those rights. The recipient of the new rights may be the same principal (same person or same machine, etc), who exercises the meta-rights, or a new principal.

The principals and/or the repositories who receive the derived rights must be authenticated and authorized before receiving/storing the derive rights. Thus the process of exercising a meta-right is the same as exercising an usage right

The system in this invention incorporate ideas from other patents and invention proposals, especially the "State of Rights" invention and "During Conditions" invention which is used for the authorization processes.

The following diagram describes the overall process of exercising meta-rights.

Exercise meta-rights
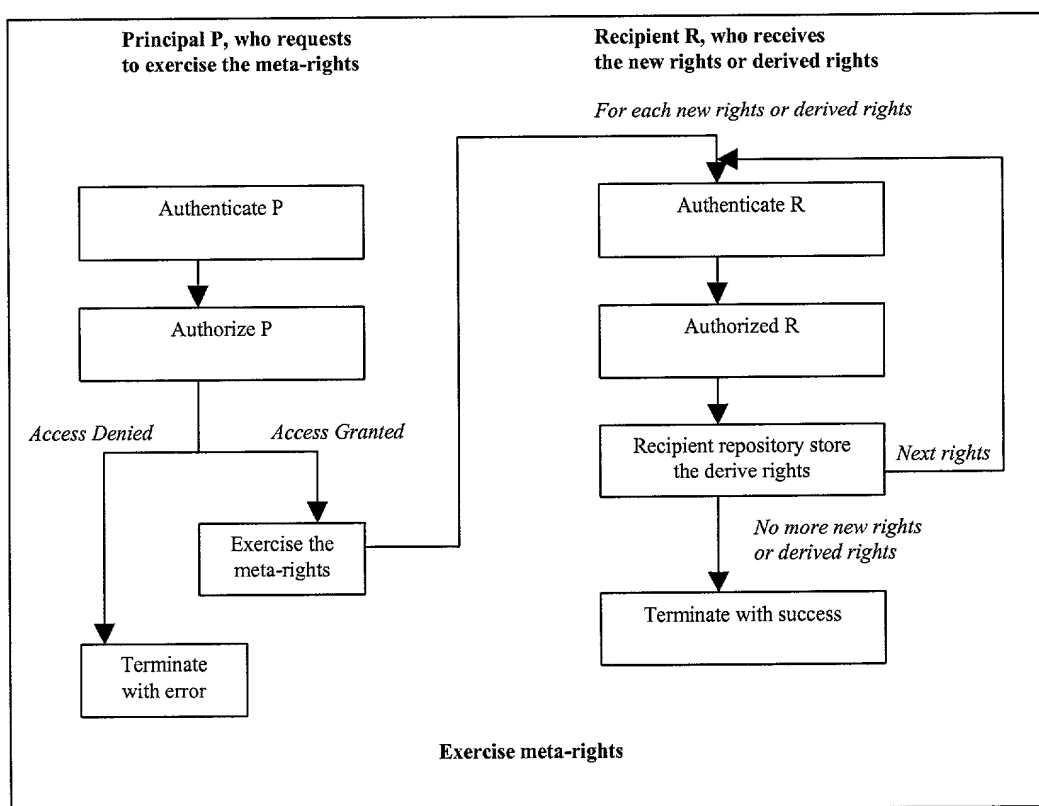
The concept of License (XrML License)

Like usage rights the representation of meta-rights in this invention is a XrML license (however the representation of meta-rights is not limited to XrML). An XrML License encapsulates the idea of specifying meta-rights.

The structure of a license consists of a list of "grants" and one or more "digital signatures". Each grand includes a specific granted meta-rights such as rights to offer (rights), grant (rights), obtain (rights), transfer (rights), exchange (rights),

transport (rights), exercise (rights), surrender (rights), revoke (rights) reuse (rights), or management meta-rights such as the rights to backup (rights), restore (rights), recover (rights), reissue (rights), escrow the rights for management meta-rights, etc.

The structure of the grant also includes one or more principals -who the specified meta-rights are granted to, a list of conditions and state variables. Like usage rights access and exercise the granted meta-rights are controlled by the condition list and state variables.

Various systems to control the access and exercise a given rights have been described in our previous patents United States patents 5629980, 5634012, 5638443, 5715403 and 5715403 and pending provisional applications for "State of Rights" and "During-Condition" inventions. The integrity of the license is ensured by the use of digital signature as an element of the structure of the license. Structure of digital signature includes signature itself, the method of how the signature is computed, the key information needed to verify the signature and also the issuer identification. The following diagram describes a structure of a license that represents the list of meta-rights granted to an authenticable principle.
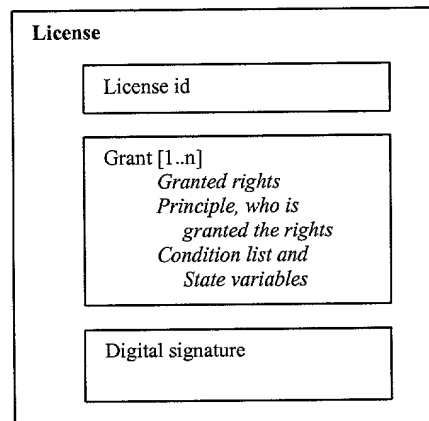
Following is the example in XrML describing how to map the above license structure into a specific implementation.

System for managing and exercising meta-rights

The major functions provided by the system in this invention are to manage the meta-rights and its derived rights.

Managing and exercising meta-rights include these two processes:

- The authorization process for exercising a given meta-right and

- The process of exercising the meta-rights

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