

(12) **United States Patent**  
Gruse et al.

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(54) **SYSTEM FOR TRACKING END-USER ELECTRONIC CONTENT USAGE**

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(73) Assignee: **International Business Machines Corporation**, Armonk, NY (US)

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(21) Appl. No.: **09/177,096**

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**Related U.S. Application Data**

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 09/133,519, filed on Aug. 13, 1998, now Pat. No. 6,226,618.

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(51) **Int. Cl.**<sup>7</sup> ..... **G06F 11/30**; G06F 12/14; H04L 9/32

(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **713/194**; 713/168; 713/171; 713/182; 705/51; 705/57

(58) **Field of Search** ..... 705/51, 56-57, 705/55; 380/4, 24, 25; 713/200, 201, 68, 194, 182, 171, 150; 384/4, 3, 6

(57) **ABSTRACT**

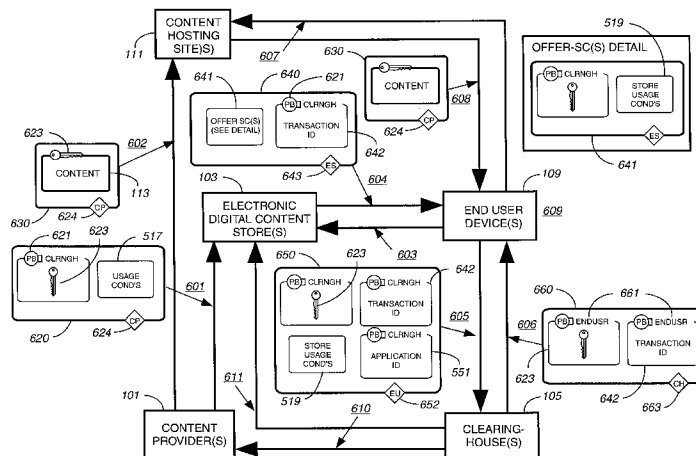
A system for tracking usage of digital content on user devices. Electronic stores coupled to a network sell licenses to play digital content data to users. Content players, which receive from the network the licensed content data, are used to play the licensed content data. Additionally, a logging site that is coupled to the network tracks the playing of the content data. In particular, the logging site receives play information from the network, and the play information includes the number of times that the content data has been played by the associated content player. Also provided is a method for tracking usage of digital content on user devices. According to the method, a license to play digital content data is sold to a user, and the licensed content data is transmitted to a content player for the user. Further, information is transmitted to a logging site whenever the content data is played by the content player or copied from the content player to an external medium so that usage of the licensed content data can be tracked.

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**44 Claims, 21 Drawing Sheets**



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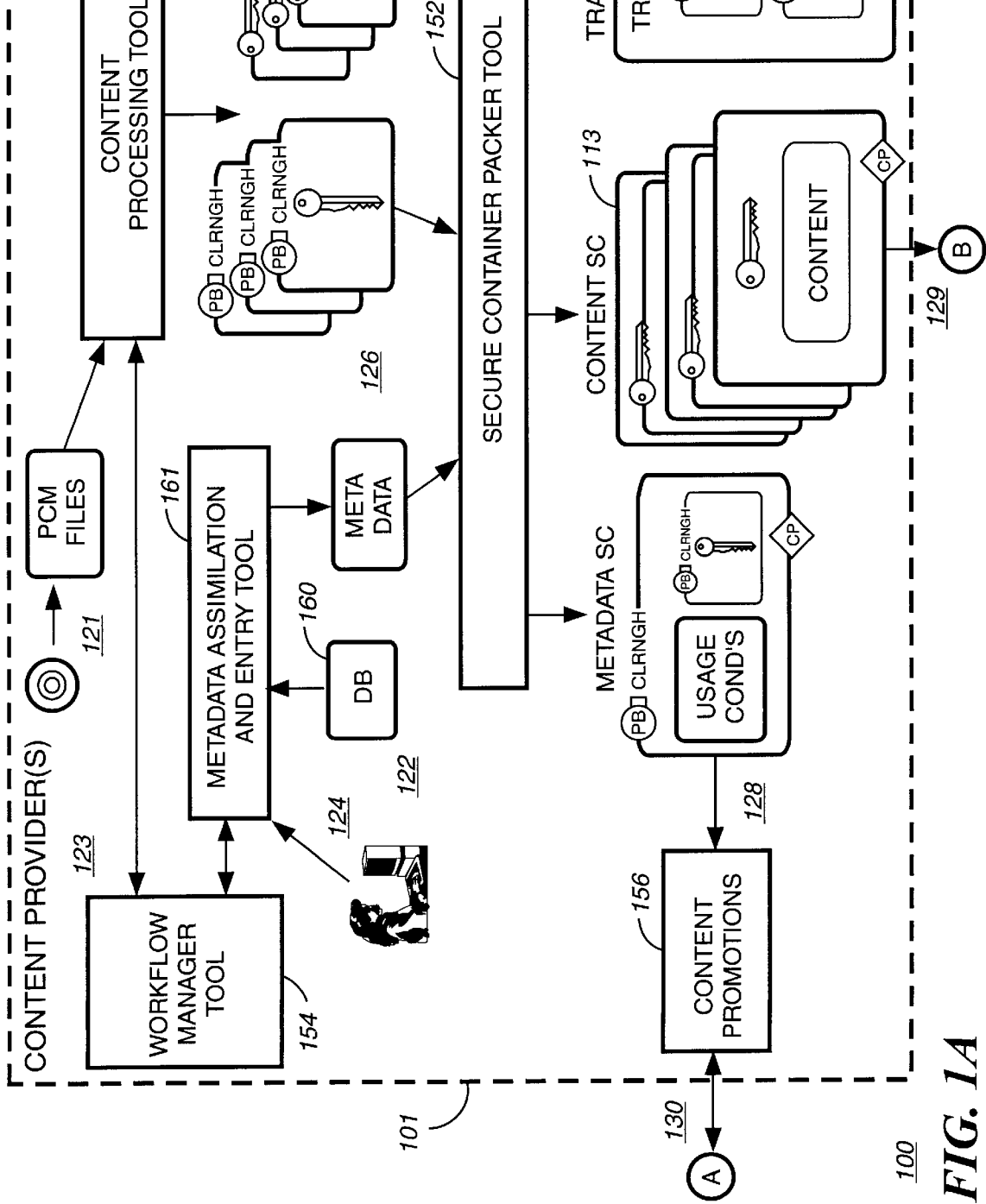
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**FIG. 1A**

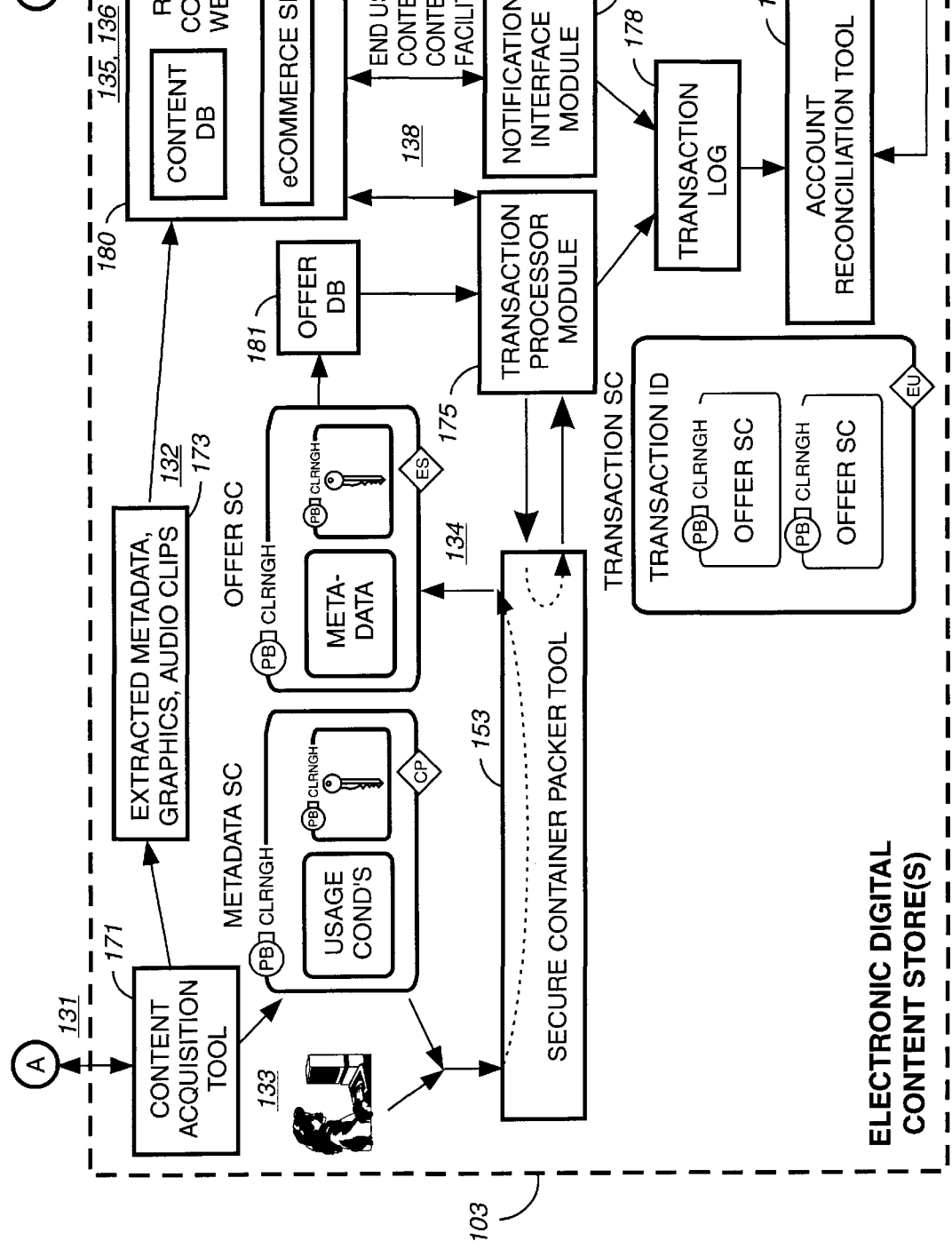


FIG. 1B 100

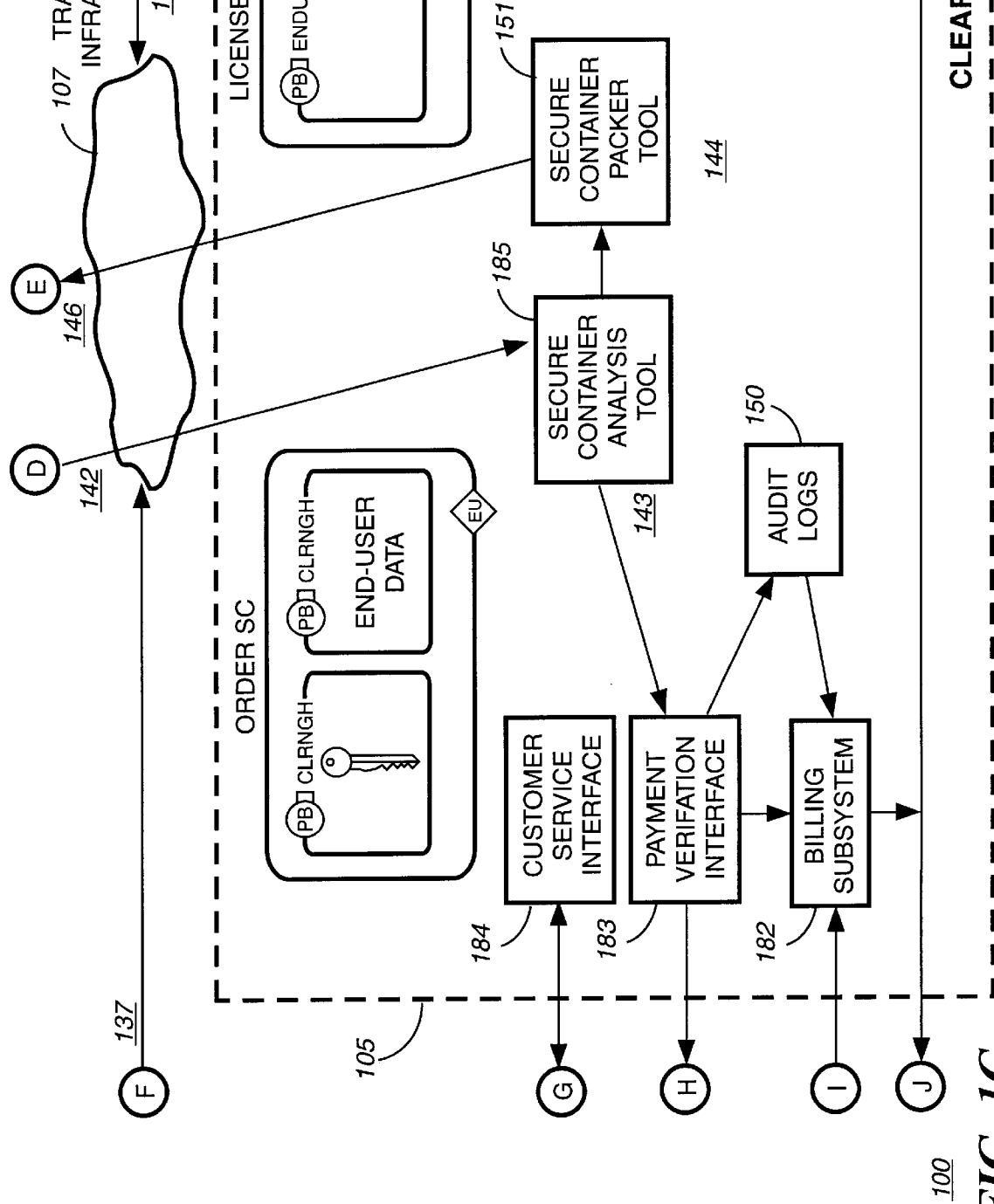


FIG 1C

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