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Date: **April 10, 1998**

Hon. Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

Re: Title: NETWORK SYSTEM FOR UNIQUELY IDENTIFYING AND TRACKING ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

Atty. Docket: 9919-000002

Sir:

This is a request for filing a provisional patent application. Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.51(2)(i), the following information and documents are provided:

1. The names and addresses of the inventor(s):

First Inventor: Marshall Bruce Cummings
Residence: Canton, Michigan

Second Inventor: John Frederick Austermann, III
Residence: Huntington Woods, Michigan

Third Inventor: _____
Residence: _____

Fourth Inventor: _____
Residence: _____

2. A specification having 11 pages.

3. [✓] SIX sheets of drawings showing Figures 1-8.

4. [ ] This invention was made by an agency of the United States Government or under a contract with an agency of the United States Government under contract number _____.

5. [ ] A Verified Statement Claiming Small Entity Status is enclosed.

6a. [ ] A check is enclosed to cover the fees as calculated below. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750. A duplicate copy of this document is enclosed.

6b. [ ] The fees calculated below will be paid within the time allotted for completion of the filing requirements.

6c. [✓] The fees calculated below are to be charged to Deposit Account No. 08-0750. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to said Deposit Account. A duplicate copy of this

Atty. Docket No. 9919-000002 Date: April 10, 1998

FILING FEE CALCULATION - BASIC FEE	$150.00
FILING FEE – NON-SMALL ENTITY	150.00
FILING FEE - SMALL ENTITY: Reduction by 1/2 . . . . . A Verified Statement is enclosed.	$.00
Assignment Recordal Fee ($40.00)	
TOTAL	**$150.00**

7. [ ] An Assignment of the invention is enclosed. The required cover sheet under 37 C.F.R. §3.11, §3.28 and §3.41 is attached.

8. [ ] Because the enclosed application is in a non-English language, a verified English translation for examination purposes of same [ ] is enclosed [ ] will be filed within the allotted time period.

9 [✓] An Express Mailing Certificate is enclosed.

10. [ ] Other _____

_____

_____

11. Please direct all correspondence and telephone calls relative to this application to the undersigned at the following address:

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P. O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

If, for some reason, Applicant(s) has/have not paid a sufficient fee, please charge our Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any further fees which may be due or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750. A duplicate copy of this document is enclosed.

Respectfully,

G. Gregory Schivley
Reg. No. 27,382

A IP90V

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
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Date: **April 10, 1998**

Hon. Commissioner of Patents
and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

EH293848242US

Sir:

EXPRESS MAILING CERTIFICATE

Applicant: Marshall Bruce Cummings and John Frederick Austermann, III

Serial No. (if any):

For: NETWORK SYSTEM FOR UNIQUELY IDENTIFYING AND TRACKING ELECTRONIC EUQIPMENT

Docket. 9919-000002

Attorney: G. Gregory Schivley

"Express Mail" Mailing Label Number EH293848242US

Date of Deposit .... April 10, 1998

I hereby certify and verify that the accompanying transmittal letter (in duplicate); 11-page provisional patent application; 6 sheets informal drawings (Figs. 1-8) are being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office To Addressee" service under 37 C.F.R. 1.10 on the date indicated above and are addressed to the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, Washington, D.C. 20231.

Sharon Morse
Sharon Morse

NETWORK SYSTEM FOR UNIQUELY IDENTIFYING AND TRACKING ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Technical Field

Invention relates generally to computerized asset tracking systems and, more particularly, to a network security system for tracking the relocation of remotely located electronic equipment from a network.

2. Discussion

Over the last several years, one of the largest problems in managing the computerized office environment has been identified as controlling the Total Cost of Ownership, or TCO of the office computer. Controlling TCO includes not only the cost of the asset but also all costs associated with that asset such as support costs, software costs, and costs due to loss or theft, including hardware, software, and most importantly, information.

An additional aspect of TCO is asset movement. Today, many employees have more than one computer; when that employee is moved to another location, the assets must be moved as well. A typical organization can have as much as 40% of its employees move from one location to another over the course of a year. When these movements occur daily, tracking each asset over time is nearly impossible. In addition to these physical movements, the asset may also be changed over time through hardware and software modifications. Even if an asset is successfully, tracked over a period of time, the asset may not be the same at the end of the period. Due to this constant asset relocation and reorganization, an organization may not always know where all of its assets are located. In fact, it is very likely that a company may not even know how many assets they own or if those assets are still in their possession. A method for permanently identifying an asset by attaching an

external or internal device to the asset and communicating with that device using existing network wiring is desirable. Such a device would allow a company to track its asset as well as locate any given asset and count the total number of identified assets at any given time, thus significantly reducing its TCO of identified assets.

One method that attempted to control the theft aspect of TCO is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,406,260 issued to Cummings et. al, (hereby incorporated by reference) which discusses a means of detecting the unauthorized removal of a networked device by injecting a low current power signal into each existing communications link. A sensor monitors the returning current flow and can thereby detect a removal of the equipment. This method provides a means to monitor the connection status of any networked electronic device thus providing an effective theft detection/deterrent system.

It would, however, be desirable to provide a further means in which a networked device may also be identified by a unique identification number using the existing network wiring as a means of communicating this information back to a central location. More particularly, it is desirable to provide a means for identification that feasibly employs separate current loops provided through an existing data communication link. In addition, it is desirable to provide an identification system that is easily and inexpensively implemented in an existing network system.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the teachings of the present invention, an identification system is provided for generating and monitoring a unique number that may easily be attached to networked computer equipment. The system includes current loops internally coupled to identified pieces of equipment so that each piece of associated equipment has an associated

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