



US005715402A

United States Patent [19]
Popolo

[11] **Patent Number:** **5,715,402**
[45] **Date of Patent:** **Feb. 3, 1998**

[54] **METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR MATCHING SELLERS AND BUYERS OF SPOT METALS**

[75] Inventor: **Carl A. Popolo**, Carlisle, Mass.
[73] Assignee: **Spot Metals Online**, Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

[21] Appl. No.: **554,899**

[22] Filed: **Nov. 9, 1995**

[51] Int. Cl.⁶ **G06F 17/60**

[52] U.S. Cl. **395/237; 395/227**

[58] Field of Search **395/201, 226, 395/227, 237**

Primary Examiner—Gail O. Hayes
Assistant Examiner—Steven R. Yount
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Brooks & Kushman P.C.

[57] **ABSTRACT**

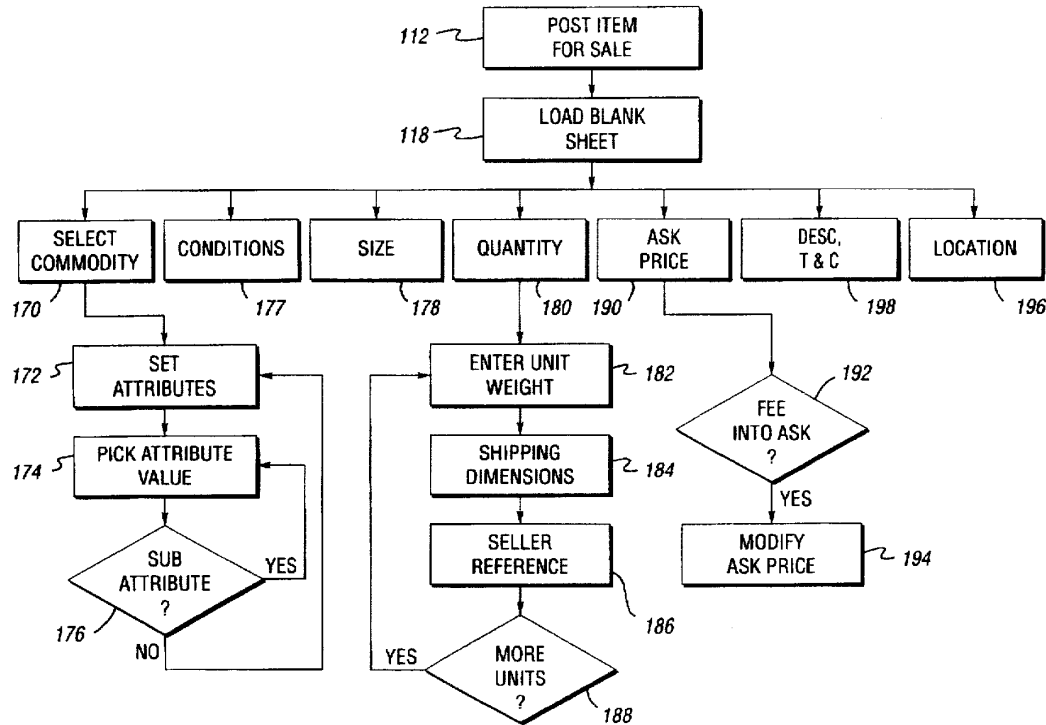
A system for managing steel inventories in order to reduce the time and expense associated with selling prime and secondary steel that is no longer needed for the original intended application. The system permits sellers to post detailed specification of an item for sale and permits buyers to browse or search the posted inventory to locate items filling specific needs. A buyer may bid on part or all of an item posted and the seller may accept or reject any bid. The buyer and seller engage in an auction by electronic mail and optionally by facsimile. The detailed specifications of the item may be expressed in a variety of unit of measure. Regardless of unit of measure used by a seller in posting an item, the system performs the necessary conversions to display information to an interested buyer in a unit of measure set by the buyer. A hierarchial menu structure permits ease of use in selecting available options during posting or bidding an item.

[56] **References Cited**

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9 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets



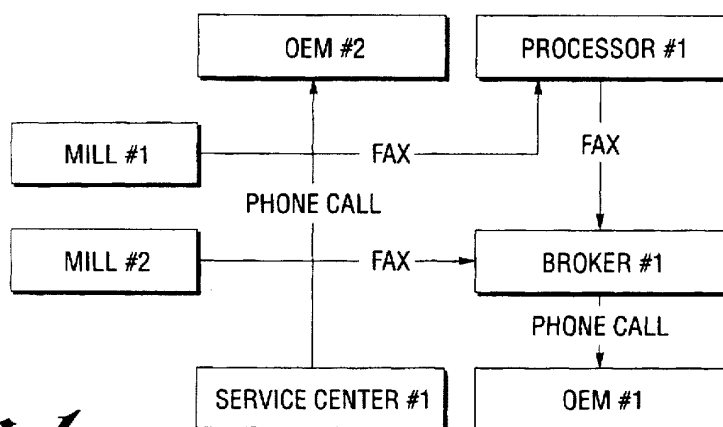
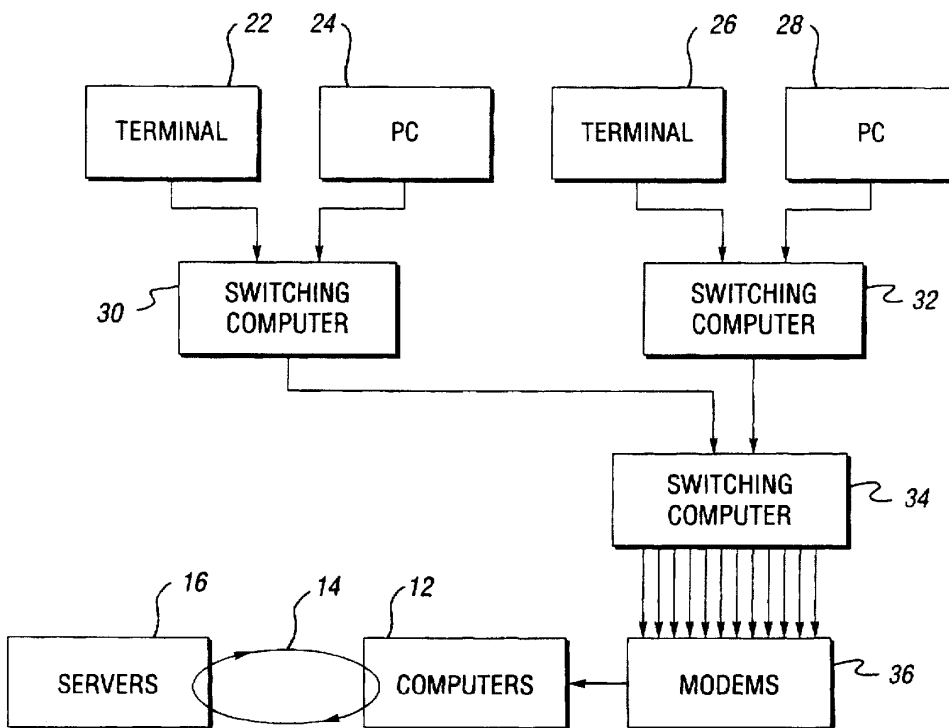
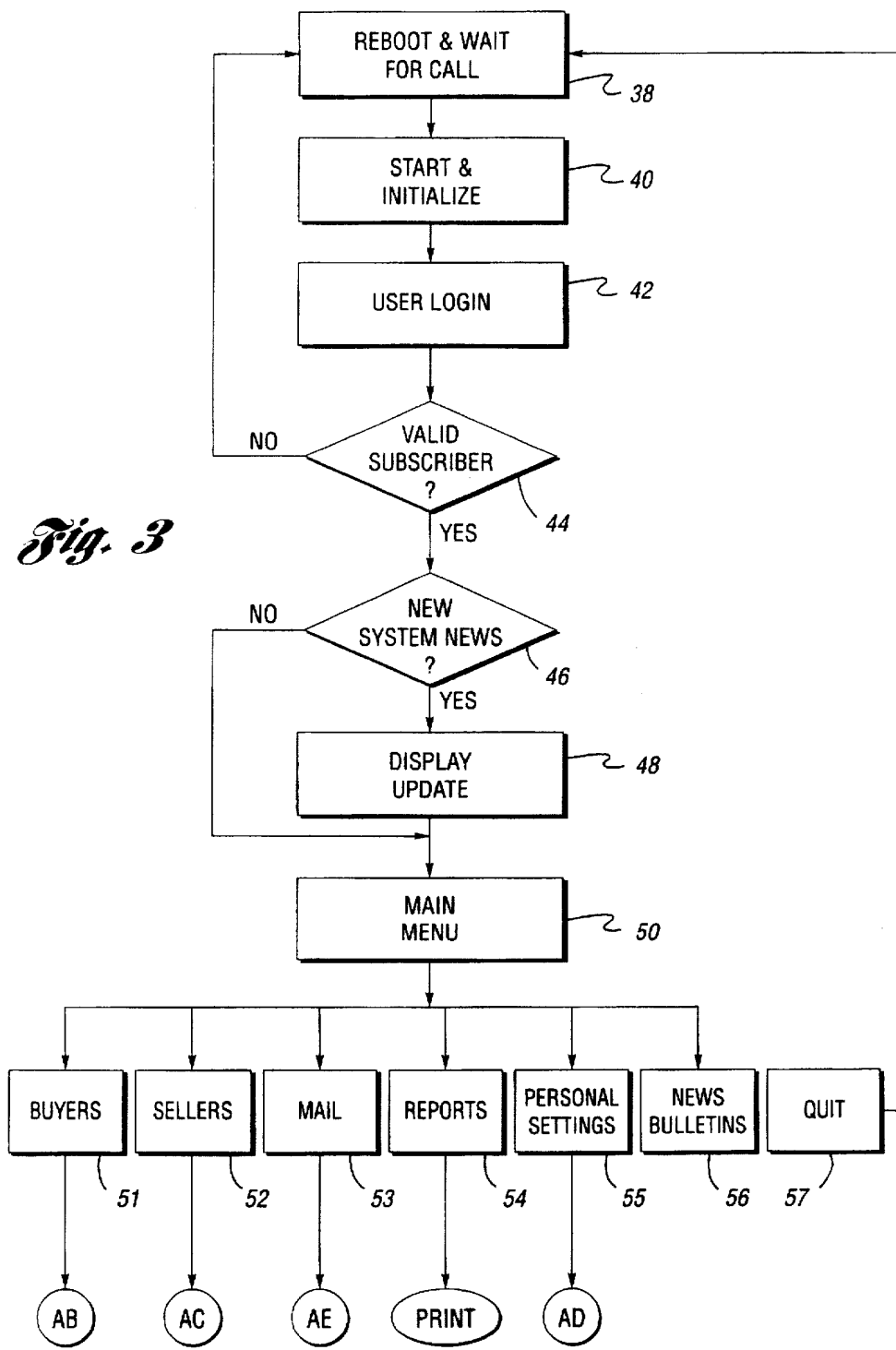


Fig. 1
(PRIOR ART)

Fig. 2





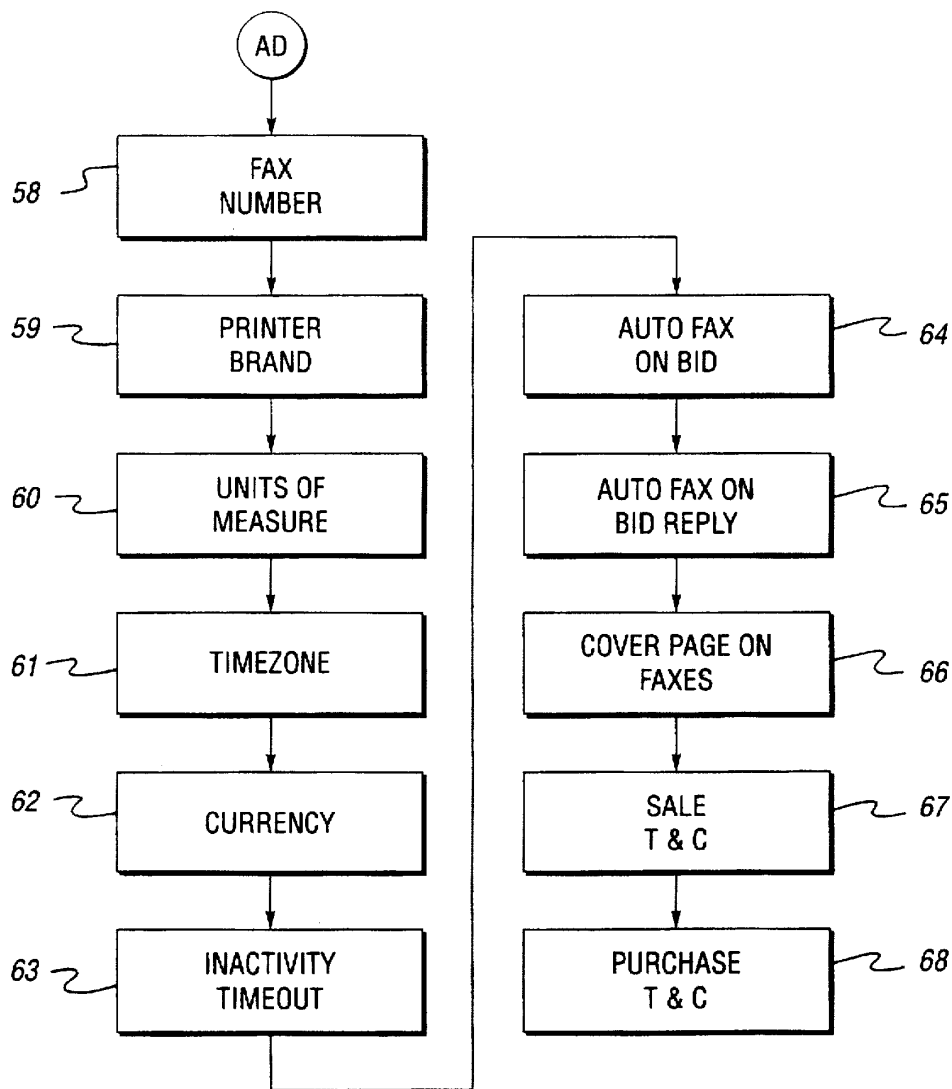
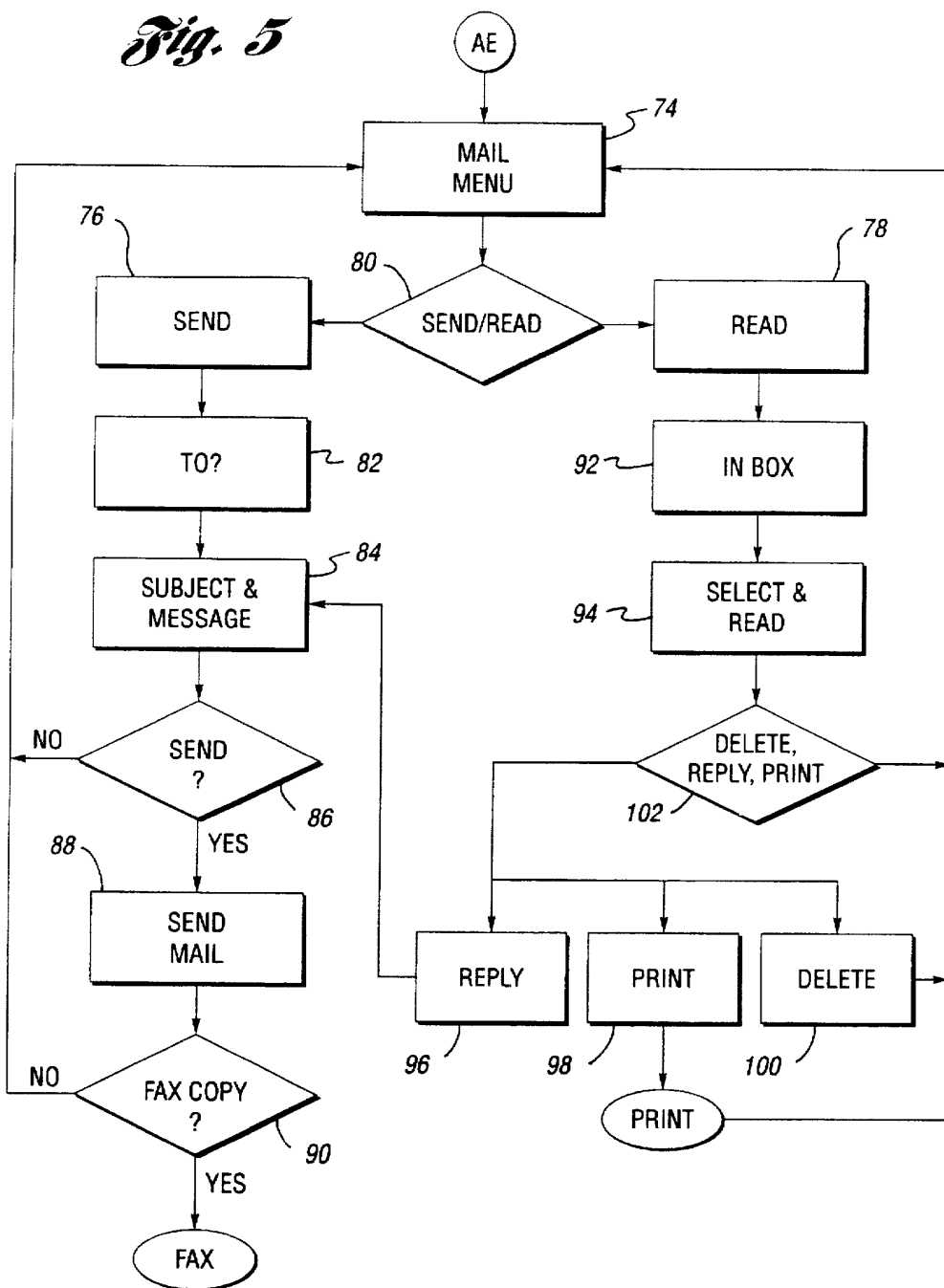


Fig. 4

Fig. 5



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