United States Patent [19]

Christiano

[11] **Patent Number:** 5,671,412

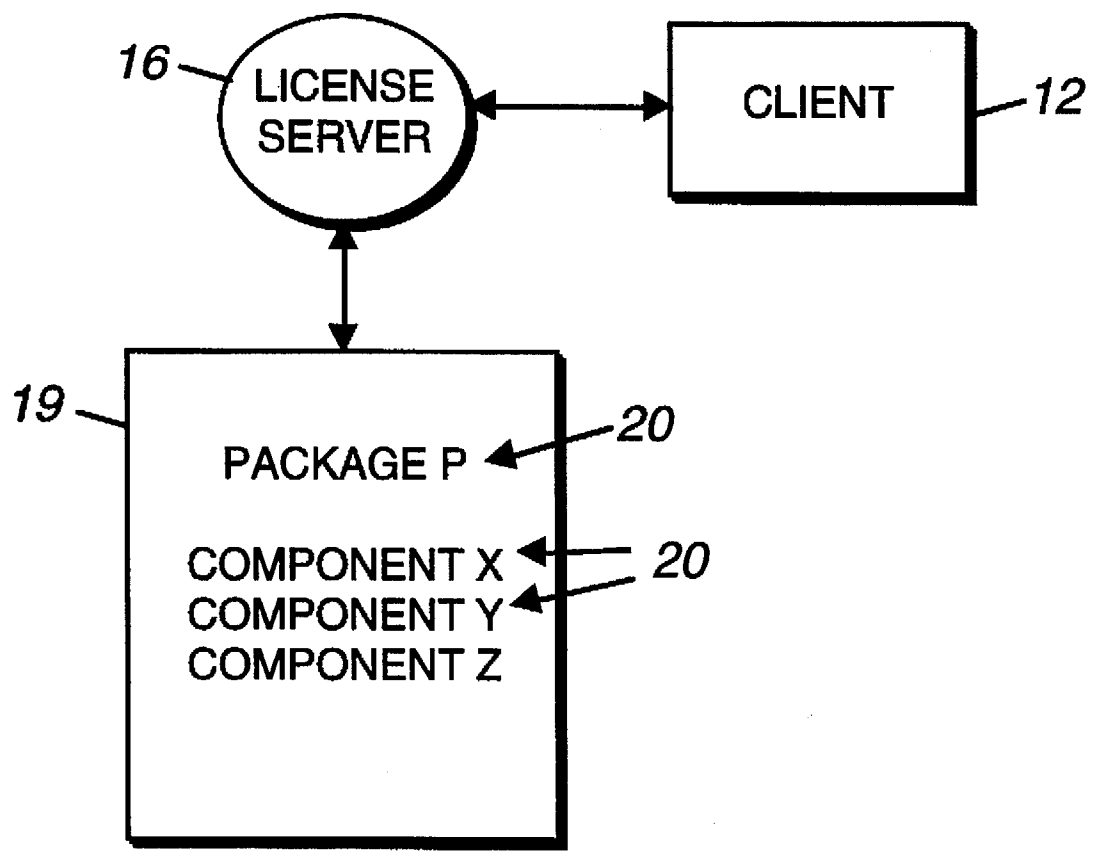[45] **Date of Patent:** Sep. 23, 1997

[54] **LICENSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS**

[75] Inventor: **Matt Christiano**, Saratoga, Calif.

[73] Assignee: **Globetrotter Software, Incorporated**, Campbell, Calif.

[21] Appl. No.: **508,829**

[22] Filed: **Jul. 28, 1995**

[51] **Int. Cl.^{6}** **G06F 17/30**
[52] **U.S. Cl.** **395/615**
[58] **Field of Search** 395/615, 186

[56] **References Cited**

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Primary Examiner—Wayne Amsbury
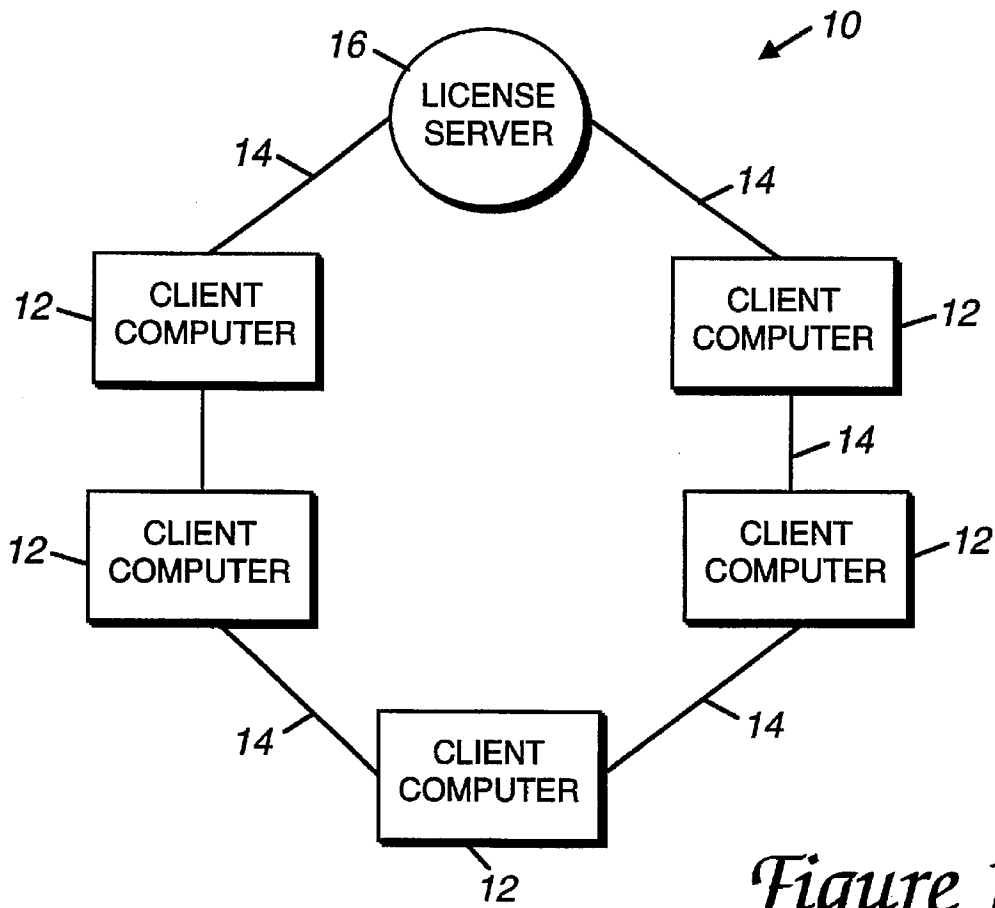*Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Hickman Beyer & Weaver, LLP

[57] **ABSTRACT**

An improved software license management system in accordance with the present invention is disclosed. A license server initializes a license database by receiving a package license description that includes component license descriptions for component software products in a package. Licenses for software products are also received, and license records are created in the license database for components and suite packages, where each record includes a number of licenses available to be checked out. A client computer system can request a license for a component product in a package. A license is granted to the client when the client is allowed to receive the license according to a license policy. When a component license is checked out, a linked suite license is also automatically checked out. No other client thus may use a component license linked with the suite license record unless another suite license is checked out. The license management system also provides a number of modifiers to be included in license records, including an overdraft quantity, a fail safe indicator, a minimum license quantity, and a capacity indicator. A finder and a diagnostic process can be implemented at the client computer system to find the license server over a network and provide a tool to diagnose failures in the license management system.

70 Claims, 15 Drawing Sheets

Figure 1

Figure 2a

PACKAGE CERTIFICATE   ←18

PACKAGE DESCRIPTION ←20

1) PACKAGE NAME—24

2) LIST OF COMPONENTS—26

   FOR EACH COMPONENT:—28

     a) COMPONENT NAME—34

     b) COMPONENT VERSION—36

     c) LICENSE MULTIPLIER—37

3) PACKAGE VERSION—30

4) SUITE INDICATOR—32

5) KEY—33

PACKAGE LICENSE ITEM ←22

1) NUMBER OF PACKAGE LICENSES—40

2) OTHER LICENSE INFORMATION—42

3) OVERDRAFT, FAILSAFE, MINIMUM,—44
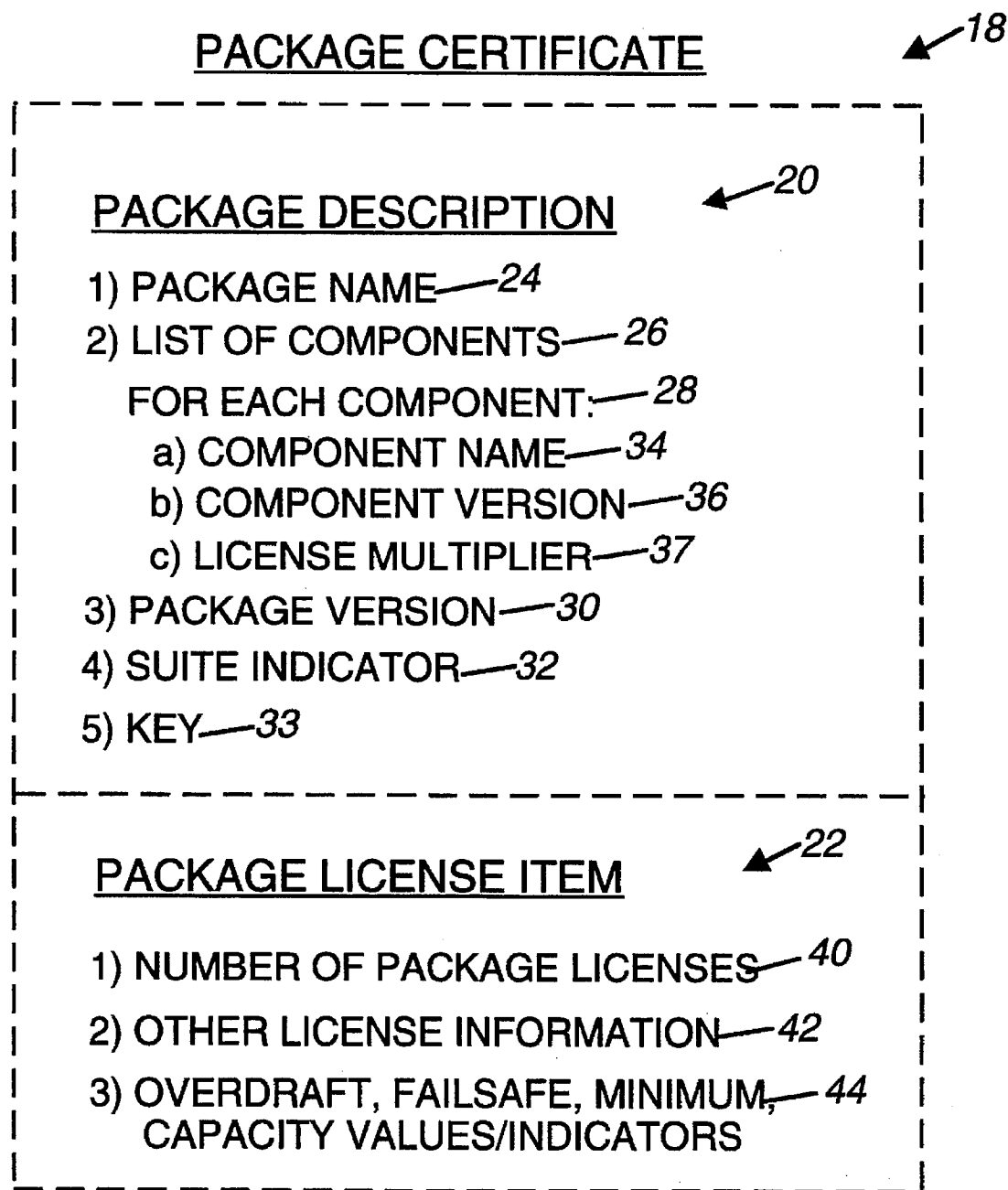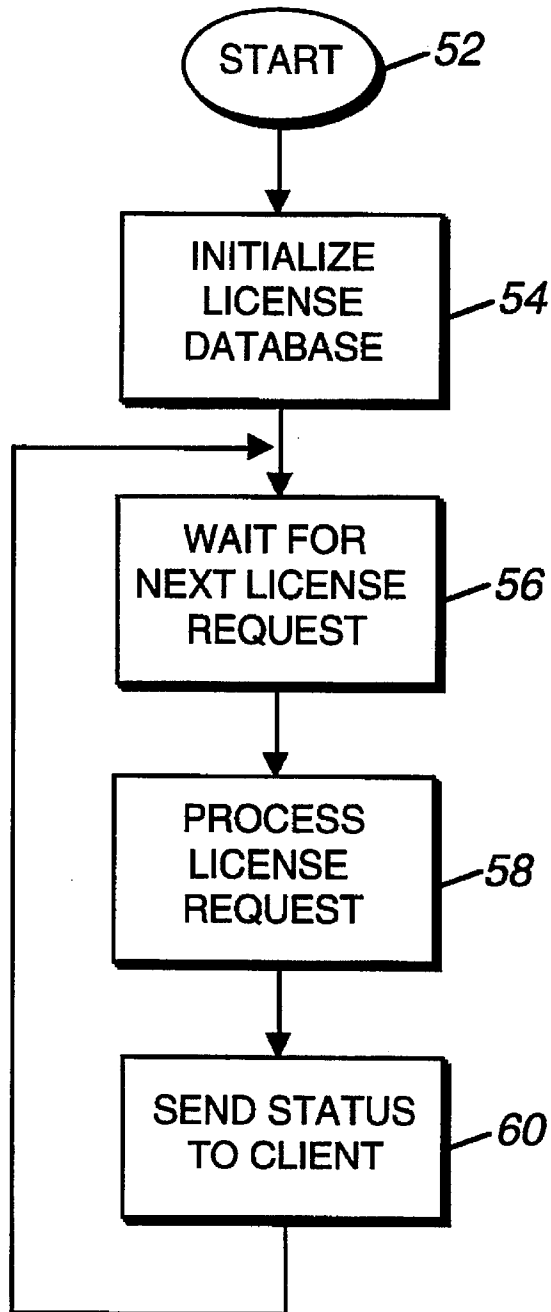CAPACITY VALUES/INDICATORS
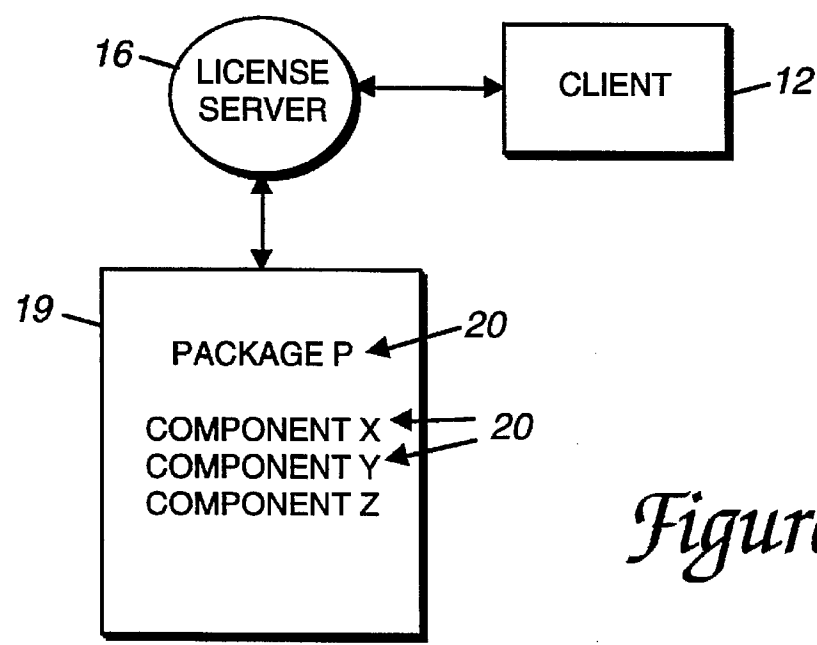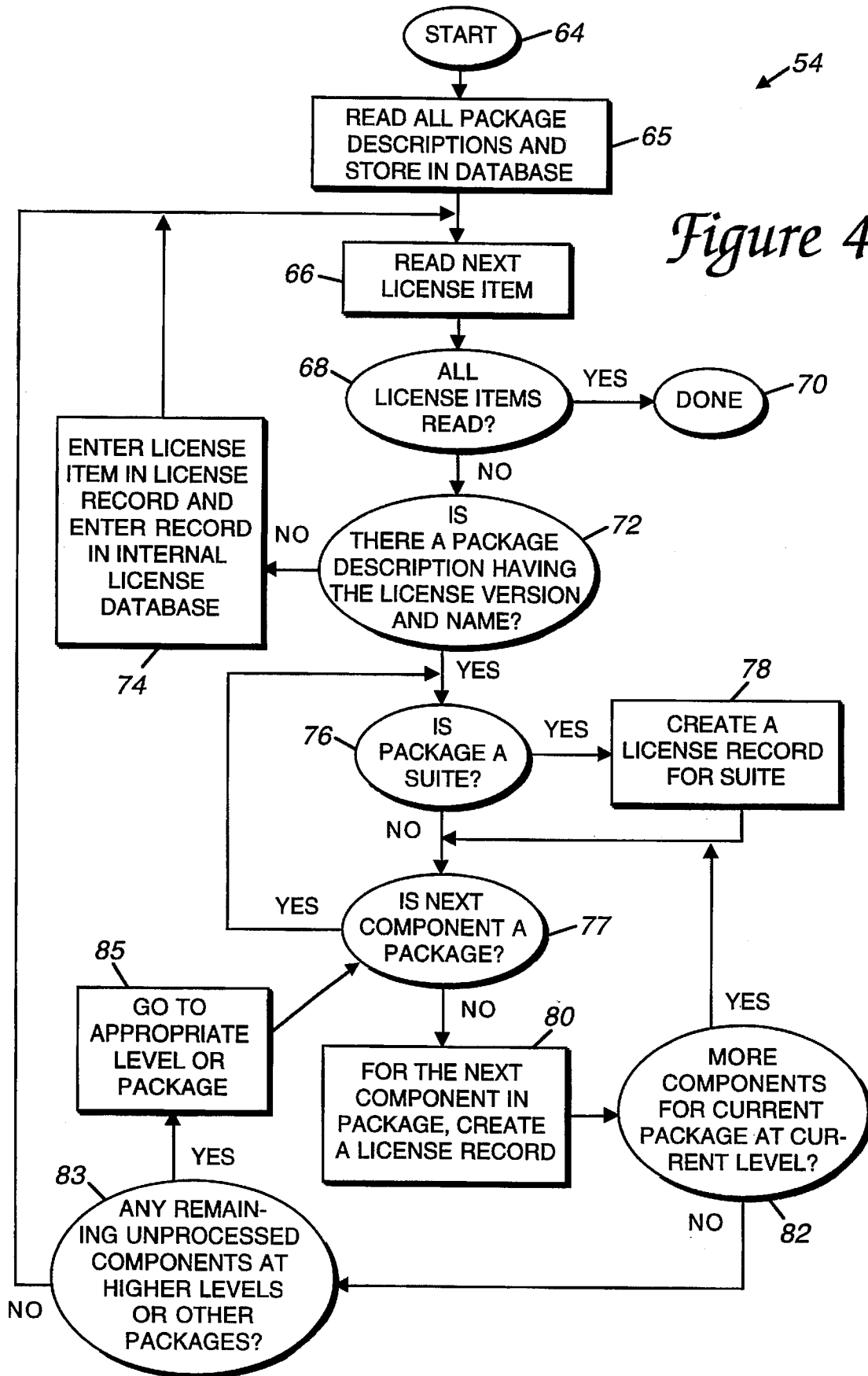
Figure 2b

Figure 3

Figure 4

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